

## BOOK REVIEW ON THEOLOGICAL STUDIES

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*Rhetoric and the New Testament. Essays from the 1992 Heidelberg Conference*, edited by Stanley E. Porter and Thomas H. Olbricht. JSNT Supplement Series 90. Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1993. Pp. 538 (hardcover)

The monograph is a collection of essays read in the 1992 Heidelberg Conference on Rhetorical Analysis of Biblical Documents, and is dedicated to Professor Wilhelm Wuellner, who has internationally promoted the rhetorical reading of Scripture since the 1970s.

Though the volume contains articles of diverse nature, definition, and application of rhetorical studies of the New Testament, the collection of essays is divided into two parts -- criticism and methodology. The first part pertains to rhetorical criticism whereby various rhetorical models and techniques are used to analyze and examine the biblical texts in order to demonstrate the persuasiveness and effectiveness of New Testament rhetoric. The first five essays in this part are devoted to the reading of Luke-Acts: Frank Hughes, "The Parable of the Rich Man and Lazarus (Luke 16:19-31) and Graeco-Roman Rhetoric," reads the parable as declamation in light of the ancient *imitatio* tradition; Folker Siegert, "Mass Communication and Prose Rhythm in Luke-Acts," reads the orality and prose rhythmic structure of Luke-Acts in light of ancient public communication theory; J. Ian H. McDonald, "Rhetorical Issue and Rhetorical Strategy in Luke 10:25-37 and Acts 10:1-11:18," reads the two pericopae in light of their rhetorical unit and situation (exigence) to show the moral reality of biblical texts; Daniel Marguerat, "The End of Acts (28:16-31)

and the Rhetoric of Silence," reads the intentionally incomplete ending of Acts in light of the rhetoric of silence in antiquity; and James J. Murphy, "Early Christianity as a 'Persuasive Campaign': Evidence from the Acts of the Apostles and the Letters of Paul," argues that proclamation of the gospel in early Christianity was a rhetorical enterprise.

While the first group of five papers deals with the narrative literature of the New Testament, the next fourteen essays focus on the reading of Pauline writings. Four essays focus on the reading of Romans: Stanley E. Porter, "The Theoretical Justification for Application of Rhetorical Categories to Pauline Epistolary Literature," argues that there is no theoretical justification to apply the ancient rhetorical categories (except style only) as he shows in his reading of the species and structure of Romans; in contrast to Porter's thesis however, David Hellholm, "*Amplificatio* in the Macro-Structure of Romans," argues that Romans exhibits a series of amplifications on almost all hierarchical levels: "What we find in this letter is nothing less than a distinct *syntagmata-coniuncta* structure in which both the more *langue*-determined *dispositio* and the more *parole*-conditioned *amplificatio* have been utilized to their utmost limits" (145); Johannes N. Vorster, "Strategies of Persuasion in Romans 1:16-17," reads the two verses from an interactional model and argues that the intention of Paul here is not to state the righteousness of God but to confirm the good news; and Marc Schoeni, "The Hyperbolic Sublime as a Master Trope in Romans," reads Romans 5 and 9-13 in light of tropes and the sublime in Graeco-Roman rhetoric.

The next group of articles focus on the Corinthian correspondence: Dennis L. Stamps, "Rethinking the Rhetorical Situation: The Entextualization of the Situation in New Testament Epistles," argues from the textual presentation of the rhetorical situation that rhetorical situation is literary rather than historical; Joop Smit, "Argument and Genre of 1 Corinthians 12-14," argues 1 Corinthians 12 and 14 are deliberative with 13 as demonstrative digression; Duane F. Watson, "Paul's Rhetorical Strategy in 1 Corinthians 15," provides a detailed analysis of 1 Corinthians 15 as a deliberative piece in terms of rhetorical invention, arrangement and style; and Glenn Holland, "Speaking Like a Fool: Irony in 2

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Corinthians 10-13," explores Paul's use of 'foolishness' as irony in order to persuade and win back the trust of his audience.

The final group of articles in the first part deals with shorter epistles of Paul: C. Joachim Classen, "St. Paul's Epistles and Ancient Greek and Roman Rhetoric," re-evaluates rhetorical categories used in the interpretation of Galatians and challenges for more precision and care in their use by rhetorical critics; Jeffrey T. Reed, "Using Ancient Rhetorical Categories to Interpret Paul's Letters: A Question of Genre," warns against "illegitimate totality transfer" of rhetorical handbooks to Pauline epistles (because functional similarities do not prove formal relationship) and argues that there is no "epistolary-rhetorical" genre in antiquity; A.H. Snyman, "Persuasion in Philippians 4:1-20," offers the insights derived from reading the pericope in light of rhetorical ethos, pathos and logos; Claudio Basevi and Juan Chapa, "Philippians 2:6-11: The Rhetorical Function of a Pauline 'Hymn'," understands the hymn as an encomium to Christ to encourage the afflicted Philippian community; John W. Marshall, "Paul's Ethical Appeal in Philippians," reads Philippians as a deliberative piece in light of authorial persona; and Thomas H. Olbricht, "Hebrews as Amplification," outlines the structure of Hebrews and argues that the author, more than any ancient funeral orator amplified his Christo-centric argument through comparison.

The second part pertains to the appraisal of various rhetorical methodologies hoping to reconstruct new rhetorical models. Klaus Berger, "Rhetorical Criticism, New Form Criticism and New Testament Hermeneutics," proposes a form-rhetorical criticism; Bernard Lategan, "Textual Space as Rhetorical Device," uses time and space to analyze Paul's relationship with the Galatians; Pieter J.J. Botha, "The Verbal Art of the Pauline Letters: Rhetoric, Performance and Presence," discusses the orality of textual production such as the role of amanuensis, and community documents; Jeffrey A. Crafton, "The Dancing of an Attitude: Burkean Rhetorical Criticism and the Biblical Interpreter," uses the Burkean notion of texts as acting and doing to understand biblical text as creating a symbolic universe; Vernon K. Robbins, "Rhetoric and Culture: Exploring Types of Cultural Rhetoric in a Text," continues the work of Wuellner

as he explores the role and significance of cultural and social ideology in rhetoric; Lauri Thurén, "On Studying Ethical Argumentation and Persuasion in the New Testament," presents the essential purpose of ethical argumentation in a complete rhetorical model; Angelico-Salvatore Di Marco, "Rhetoric and Hermeneutic - On a Rhetorical Pattern: Chiasmus and Circularity," expands chiasm to include a myriad of texts and structures in rhetorical structure; and finally Wilhelm Wuellner, "Biblical Exegesis in the Light of the History and Historicity of Rhetoric and the Nature of the Rhetoric of Religion," draws lessons from the history of rhetoric and religion and argues for the closeness between rhetoric and biblical studies.

The monograph is an excellent resource for rhetorical critics and students for the wealth of information, examples, and definition contained therein. The monograph is a major milestone in western study of the rhetorical approach to the New Testament.

As it can be seen from the collection of essays in the monograph, rhetorical studies of the New Testament has in one sense blossomed into a diverse and lively rendition of textual meanings, but in another sense, into a diversity of no consensus, due to its polyvalence. Many of the wooden structural readings as well as the forceful applications of rhetorical categories on the biblical texts in the articles look too "neat" to be true, but some articles in the volume have offered corrective voices. It is a myth that Graeco-Roman rhetoric is so monolithic and static. It is also a myth that New Testament texts sit within the milieu of Graeco-Roman rhetoric only. With that regard, one of the best articles in the volume remains to be Vernon K. Robbins' challenging piece with his cultural sensitivity in rhetorical study. Perhaps, one of the next tasks of the conference will be exploring the use of rhetorical insights from other traditions (Jewish and Old Testament) and cultures (Africa, Latin America and Asia) so that the complexity of biblical rhetoric will be evidenced.

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