

SIMON J. JOSEPH, *The Nonviolent Messiah: Jesus, Q, and the Enochic Tradition* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2014). Pp. xiv + 352. Paper \$39.

This is a mature and well-researched work that would be useful for doctoral seminars or higher-level courses on the Synoptic Gospels. Joseph surveys scholarly opinions on Jesus, Q, various “Messiah” ideas, and the intriguing figures in *1 Enoch*, adding his own judgments on these opinions. Despite the survey-like nature of most chapters, the writing style is engaging. There is an eighty-four-page bibliography.

Without apparent bias, J. argues for a nuanced reflection on these topics, resisting “scholarly reconstructions” of Jesus that involve “the uncritical conflation of various messianic roles” and their projection onto Jesus (p. 97). Rather, we are encouraged to notice the *differing* messianic concepts found in the literature.

A plausible explanation for the absence of “Christ” in Q is given: “the term Χριστός was problematic for the author of Q, who both appropriated and subverted traditional messianic expectations” (p. 114). Q drew on “royal messianism but aimed higher,” picturing Jesus as “the embodiment of an eschatological reversal of royal messianic expectations” (p. 123).

Joseph accepts the common scholarly view that the earliest version of Q was predominantly sapiential, and that apocalypticism is “characteristic of the final redaction of Q,” a product of “a period of frustration” and of social opposition to the Jesus movement (pp. 141-42). “This second stream” draws on the apocalyptic “son of man” found in “the Enochic *Book of Parables*,” and has a profound influence on Q and the Synoptics (p. 144).

This leads to chap. 8 and a key argument of the book. J. asserts that Q and Mark share a number of son of man/Elect One themes found in the Parables of Enoch but not in Daniel 7. For instance, Q 17:26-27, 30 connects Noah’s flood to an eschatological coming of the son of man, as does *1 En.* 65.1-67.3. At first J. does not argue for a *direct* literary dependence of Q on the Parables but for a sharing of common tradition. But he goes on to argue that Q brings together “two streams of tradition,” one in which Jesus is Son of God and teacher of the kingdom, and the other a Book of Parables-influenced stream in which he is “the rejected son of man who will return as a heavenly judge to punish the wicked. The major problem in Q studies . . . is . . . the failure to recognize the influence of the *Book of Parables*, which bifurcated the tradition into (at least) two different Christological orientations” (p. 159). This is an interesting thesis, but it seems to overlook the fact that both of these streams are present in all three Synoptics, and that none of the evangelists has seen a need to choose between a sapiential Jesus and an apocalyptic Christ. Unless I have misunderstood him, J. implies that a Parables-influenced redactor added an apocalyptic “layer” to Q, splitting the Jesus movement for or against apocalypticism.

Scholars have noticed the presence of Parables-like theology in Paul, in Matthew, and in Jude, which tends to suggest that the Parables of Enoch entered the Christian tradition at more than one point, although J. does not explore the implications of this. Readers will have to judge for themselves. I found myself disappointed that J. settled for such a purely literary theory, one that leaves the historical Jesus behind. Much more interesting to me is the possible influence of Enoch literature on Jesus himself. There is no need to postpone the effect to the later phases of Q composition. Why could not the very important Enoch literature, which brings together moral reflection and eschatology, have influenced the historical Jesus, and thus entered the “tradition” from the start?

Apparently the field is wary of believing that the Book of Parables existed early enough for Jesus to have encountered it, solely because the Parables were not present among the copies of *Enoch* found at Qumran. It is assumed that the Parables had not yet been composed when the Qumran library was buried. Another possibility is that the Parables simply come from a different branch of the Enochian movement, one that was not affiliated with the sect at Qumran. Some scholars argue that the Qumran community was just one part of a larger Enochian movement. J. does not examine this position, and that is disappointing.

In chap. 9, J. looks at the Enochic Adam and the influence of the Animal Apocalypse (*1 Enoch* 85–90), which has “a non-Davidic redeemer” who carries out “universal salvation” without military violence (p. 172). In chap. 10, J. returns to the Gospels and surveys themes of trust and nonviolence, such as the very radical teaching about loving one’s enemies, and the “hermeneutic [of] *sonship*” (pp. 214, 216), which can be found in other Jewish writings. Q merges “Jesus as the Enochic son of man and the Enochic/Adamic Son of God” (p. 226).

In the conclusion, J. argues that the historical Jesus preached and demonstrated non-violence and “unconditional love,” but the tradition that followed could not hold onto “this radical vision in its original form for long” (p. 229–30). Altogether an intriguing book.

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