

Marianus Pale Hera, *Christology and Discipleship in John 17* (WUNT II/342; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck 2013). Pp. 206 + XIV. €64. ISBN 978-3-16-152219-2.

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The recent interest in the theme of discipleship among Johannine scholars is shared by Marianus Pale Hera. In his book *Christology and Discipleship in John 17* he investigates the relationship between discipleship and the more traditional theme of Christology as it unfolds throughout the fourth Gospel and culminates in chapter 17. The exceptional clarity of this book is an appreciated highlight, which makes for an enjoyable and fruitful reading.

The author is a native Indonesian and a member of the Japanese Province of the Society of the Divine Word. Since April 2013 he is a lecturer at the Faculty of Theology at The Catholic University of Nanzan in Nagoya-Japan. This monograph is a slightly revised version of his doctoral dissertation written under Dr. Frank J. Matera and submitted at The Catholic University of America in Washington DC in 2012. The book is premised on Hera's observation that "for John Christology results in discipleship". His study fills a void in the current Johannine scholarship by describing a close relationship between the two important themes as they are interwoven in the Gospel narrative and particularly in John 17.

The structure of the book is divided into four chapters: recent scholarship on John 17 and Johannine discipleship (chap. 1), the christological character of Johannine discipleship in John 1–12 (chap. 2), the literary context, text, and structure of John 17 (chap. 3), and Christology and discipleship in John 17 (chap. 4). The ending of the book includes bibliography and helpful indexes of references, authors, and subjects.

The first chapter presents the *status questionis*. It starts with a section on the history of research, which is constructed to show different scholarly positions on all the important elements of the studied text: the given title, historicity, genre, source and redaction, significance within its literary context, structure and general themes. The next section presents current research on

the theme of discipleship in the fourth Gospel (R. Moreno, R. Schnackenburg, M. de Jonge, M. M. Pazdan, M. Vellanickal, A. J. Köstenberger, R. M. Chennattu, N. Farelly) and particularly in chapter 17 (articles by B. Rigaux and D. van der Merwe). Systematic arrangement makes it an excellent point of reference for the readers and leads the author to present his own rationale for the study. Hera succinctly concludes that the theme of discipleship has sparked attention among scholars, but it has not been sufficiently explored in connection with the theme of Jesus' identity.

The second chapter examines the relationship between Christology and discipleship in the Johannine "Book of Signs" using the narrative-critical approach. The structure of the chapter is organized into sections, which correspond to Gospel passages that the author selected for investigation. These passages illustrate John's teaching on discipleship: the prologue (1:1-18), Jesus' first disciples (1:35-51), the first sign at Cana (2:1-11), the healing of the man born blind (chap. 9), and the "I Am" sayings: bread of life (6:35), light of life (8:12), the gate for the sheep (10:7), the good shepherd (10:11), and the resurrection and life (11:25-26). Although the list is not comprehensive (excludes 3:1-21; 4:1-42; 5:1-18), it is representative of the Evangelist's diverse teaching on following Jesus. Each section contains a narrative reading of the given text and shows the movement from Christology to discipleship. This approach allows Hera to show christological character of Johannine discipleship, which he encapsulates in the following conclusions. *First*, the knowledge of Jesus' identity is closely connected with being his disciple. The first followers seek Jesus, because they hear various christological titles. *Second*, Jesus is the prime model of discipleship. His relationship with the Father is shown to be a paradigm for his relationship with those, who believe in him. *Third*, discipleship is a result of an interplay between sovereignty of God and human responsibility of being a disciple. Both elements are necessary since no one can come to Jesus unless the Father draws him (6:44), and yet the gift of discipleship requires human response, namely coming to Jesus and believing in him. *Fourth*, Jesus is at the center as the ultimate goal of discipleship, since his disciples leave everything to follow him (1:37). These conclusions can be substantiated in the text, but their argumentation is somewhat arbitrary. Hera chooses particular fragments to support his propositions, but omits others that are contradictory. For example in his interpretation of 1:36 the author shows correctly that the two disciples of John begin to follow Jesus, because of John's testimony: "Behold, the Lamb of God". This is meant as the argument for the proposition that knowledge of Jesus' identity is the motive for their act of discipleship (p. 60). This proposition can be deduced from 1:36, but other encounters with Jesus (Simon Peter's lack of response in vv.

40-42, calling of Philip without him hearing any testimony in v. 43) do not make it evident that disciple's motivation is connected with knowing who Jesus is. In view of this shortcoming Hera's argumentation in this chapter may leave the reader wishing for more. Nevertheless, the general thesis that there is a connection between Christology and discipleship in John 1-12 is well supported and cannot be disputed.

The third chapter prepares the stage for detailed analysis of John 17 by providing its literary context, text criticism, and structure. The *literary context* of Jesus' prayer points to its centrality and importance within the whole Gospel narrative. The author observes that Jesus' prayer is sandwiched between his farewell speech (13:31-16:33) and the passion narrative (18:1). This unique position emphasizes the imminent coming of the "hour" (13:1), which gives Jesus an opportunity to remind his disciples "who he is" and "how he wants the disciples to be". Thus, Christology and discipleship are underscored to be the main themes of the farewell discourse culminating in Jesus' prayer. The section on *text criticism* is very concise (3 pages long) and does not wander off the well-trodden path of NA²⁷. There is a deficiency, however, in the way Hera quotes textual variants. He uses minuscule without any diacritic marks, which results in $\delta\omega\sigma\eta$ without *iota subscriptum* as an aorist subjunctive. The last section of this chapter discloses author's proposition for the five-fold *structure* of John 17: Jesus' glorification and the disciples' eternal life (1b-5), Jesus' revelation and the disciple's faith and understanding (6-11a), protection and consecration of the disciples in truth (11b-19), Jesus' unity with the Father and the unity of the disciples (20-23), Jesus' revelation and the disciples' dwelling in love (24-26). By suggesting this partition the author shows a dependency between Christology and the message of discipleship, which helps to explain the constant movement of focus between Jesus and his followers.

The fourth chapter finally gives an answer to the difficulties with John 17 prevalent among biblical scholars. These difficulties have their source in seemingly chaotic structure of the chapter, multiple themes and recurring words, which gave rise to a wide range of interpretations. Through his analysis Hera proposes a new hermeneutical key to understanding John's message. This key is the relationship between Christology and discipleship. From this perspective John 17 presents Jesus' prayer on one hand as a way to highlight his identity as "the Son who is sent into the world to reveal the Father". On the other hand intricately connected with this christological aim is the message about disciples and their relationship to Jesus, the Father, and the world. This mutual correspondence of Christology and discipleship is convincingly demonstrated by Hera in each of the five sections of Jesus' prayer and leads to matching conclusions in chapter 2 of this book.

The single point that makes Hera's work so attractively convincing is its remarkable coherence. He recaptures the beautiful simplicity of John's message as it is introduced in chapters 1–12 and brought to its climax in chapter 17. This message of Christology leading to discipleship is also in agreement with the overall goal of the fourth Gospel as stated in John 20:30–31. Hera's much needed monograph allows the readers to enjoy once again the peaceful harmony of the forest without being lost among the trees of multiple and complicated interpretations. Its lucidity makes it readable and rewarding not only for the distinguished scholars, but also for students who are beginning their biblical journey. Although the bibliography is mostly English and spans only about 230 positions, it is well employed throughout the book. The reader is grateful for crisp summaries of other scholars' viewpoints. The *Christology and Discipleship in John 17* by Marianus Pale Hera may have a significant impact on the development of the theme of discipleship among biblical scholars. Bringing to light all the implications of the connection between Jesus' identity and being a disciple, is still waiting for realization. From this perspective Hera's monograph is inspirational and well worth recommending to all students and scholars interested in the fourth Gospel.