

Beth M. Stovell, *Mapping Metaphorical Discourse in the Fourth Gospel*. John's Eternal King (Linguistic Biblical Studies 5; Leiden – Boston: Brill, 2012). Pp. 381. \$200. ISBN 978-9004223615.

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The rarity of the phrase “kingdom of God” was one of many factors that historically contributed to downplaying of the metaphor of kingship in the Johannine scholarship. Beth M. Stovell reclaims this important theme as one of the unifying themes in the whole Gospel.

Her monograph entitled *Mapping Metaphorical Discourse in the Fourth Gospel* is a revision of her doctoral dissertation written under Dr. Stanley E. Porter in the interdenominational McMaster Divinity College affiliated with the Canadian Baptists. It is an ambitious attempt to provide framework for examining the metaphor of Jesus as king in the backdrop of other relevant metaphors in the Gospel of John. The author uses her strong Old Testament background (she is currently an Assistant Professor of OT at Ambrose University in Calgary, Canada) to build a conceptual network of kingship metaphor that includes Hebrew Bible metaphors of Messiah, “eternal life/ life of the age”, shepherd, and exaltation. This network is in turn applied to the Fourth Gospel to assess how these OT metaphors function within a new context. The major strength of this monograph is a fresh research methodology based on application of interdisciplinary linguistic-literary approach that facilitates precision and accounts for intricate relationships between metaphors.

The structure of the book is divided into 9 chapters: introduction (chap. 1), description of the linguistic-literary method (chap. 2), metaphors of kingship in the Hebrew Bible (chap. 3), the analysis of kingship metaphor in John's Gospel focusing on the following passages: J 1; 3; 9-10; 12; 18-19 (chaps. 4-8), and the summary (chap. 9). The last part contains appendixes followed by bibliography and indexes.

In the introduction Stovell presents the *status quaestionis* by means of a well written and concise history of overlooking the “kingdom of God” theme

in the Johannine scholarship. Acknowledging, however, a recent interest in the issues of kingship, the author sees the need for a new and broad analysis of the metaphor of Jesus as king.

The methodology described in chapter 2 is based on interdisciplinary approach including three areas: philosophy, linguistics and literary analysis. Although the book lacks depth and precision in the philosophical part of the theory, the linguistic and literary sections are well written. The key figures behind Stovell's method are: George Lakoff and Mark Johnson (conceptual metaphor mapping), Gilles Fauconnier and Mark Turner (conceptual blending), and M. A. K. Halliday (functional linguistics). They are all scholars with important achievements in their respective areas. The method followed by Stovell has three parts. The first one involves functional linguistic analysis (coherence and prominence), which aims at delineating the linguistic function of metaphor within a given discourse. The second part uses conceptual metaphor and conceptual blending theory to examine the metaphors themselves. The third part combines the results of the previous two sections to provide rhetorical and theological implications. The strength of this method is that it is well grounded in text (functional linguistics) and explores how metaphors work together in a wider context (conceptual linguistics).

The third chapter of the monograph does not follow the methodology previously described. It is meant to provide a conceptual groundwork for the metaphor of kingship as it is presented in the Hebrew Bible. For this purpose the author carefully chooses several representative texts: description of kingship in Deut 17, historical texts connected with the kingship of David (1 and 2 Sam), royal psalms (2, 72, 89, 118, 146), and prophetic texts (Isa 40-55, Ezek 34, Zech 9-10). The multiple metaphors extracted from these OT passages serve as a necessary background for understanding how the conceptual metaphor network is formed within the Fourth Gospel.

Chapter four is the first in the series that traces this network within selected textual passages. Here, the author analyzes John 1 (excluding the prologue) using the defined methodology. In the first two sections Stovell establishes the centrality of the question of Jesus' identity and shows how the titles given to Jesus overlap in their royal associations. This overlapping becomes a key argument for suggesting that the theme of kingship is central for this passage epitomized by the title Messiah. The third section extends the analyzed material to Martha's confession in John 11 and the stated purpose in John 20. The goal is to demonstrate that Messiah (Anointed King) is used in other key parts of the Gospel in close proximity to the title Son of God and the theme of life. In this way Stovell is able to show a fuller picture of the kingship metaphor which includes blending of anointing, familial

and life metaphors so characteristic to the OT descriptions of Yahweh the Great King. This chapter closes with a list of theological implications: high Christology present in the Gospel, power inherent in Jesus' kingship that is able to destabilize the rulers of the world, and the required response of self-giving discipleship to Jesus as life-giving king.

In the fifth chapter the author continues her methodic examination of the metaphor of kingship, but now she focuses on its relationship with the metaphor of eternal life in John 3:1-21. Through her analysis Stovell demonstrates how these two metaphors combine to form one polyphonic chorus with other minor metaphors present in the passage. These minor metaphor domains – familial, birthing, sensory, salvific, judging, and naming – provide a harmonic background for the two major ones (kingship and eternal life). Together, this symphony of metaphors enriches our understanding of kingship in John 3:1-21 as it applies to the Father, Son and Spirit. The Father as the Great King gives eternal life through the King's Son to those, who believe in him. This life giving entry into the kingdom is allowed through the action of the Spirit, who makes possible the inheritance of the kingdom by spiritual rebirth. The implication for those who inherit the kingdom through rebirth is to respond by personal holiness that is characteristic of the King and exemplified by his Son.

The pastoral metaphors (shepherd, sheep) and sensory metaphors (sight/blindness, light/darkness) are the main topics of the sixth chapter. Stovell examines how these metaphors blend in John 9-10 to form an image of Jesus as the Shepherd-King. It is interesting to note that the analysis of the relationships between these metaphors shows a remarkable discourse coherence in John 9-10. This makes an important argument for upholding the unity of the two chapters, which past scholarship has often questioned.

The seventh chapter is focused on John 12 with its presentation of Jesus as the King of Israel. The highlight of this part of the book is the analysis of the allusions to OT in John 12:15. Through insightful linguistic study of Zech 9:9 Stovell discovers tension between the Davidic king – the one who is saved by Yahweh (in the MT) and also the one who saves others (in the LXX). This tension present in the OT fits perfectly into the structure of John 12, where Jesus is portrayed on one hand as a humble king on a donkey (v. 14) in need of God's help amidst hostilities and on the other hand as the savior of the world with full power and authority of the Divine Warrior-King (v. 13, 47). Such a King gives comfort for the oppressed and disadvantaged, but at the same time threatens the authority of the socio-political rulers of the world.

The intricate mystery of blended metaphors skillfully mapped by the author throughout her monograph unravels in chapter eight. The term "King

of Israel” resonates in full clarity in the Passion narrative (J 18:28 – 19:37) not veiled by the preparatory “Son of Man” metaphor so prevalent in the previous chapters of the Fourth Gospel. “From the abstract and ambiguous description of Jesus as Son of Man Jesus is directly described as the crucified king” (296). It is a rewarding experience to see at the end of the book how the concrete event of crucifixion is revealed as the core of John’s Gospel carefully interpreted via metaphor network. Only the reader aware of the interplay of metaphors concerning Jesus’ kingship will be able to appreciate the meaning of the Passion as portrayed by the Fourth Evangelist.

The last chapter provides clear and concise summary followed by implications for further research. The most helpful elements of the book, however, are at the end. The appendices contain graphical diagrams, which allow the reader to see how the conceptual blending theory works on the examples of passages analyzed in the monograph. It is especially needed, since the methodology is sometimes difficult to follow in the text alone. The scope of Stovell’s work is most vividly shown by the breadth of bibliography. It contains almost 900 positions, although not many of them cross the English language barrier. The indexes at the end allow searching by authors, names, subjects and ancient sources, which makes this monograph a great book to have on a shelf. The expense, however, may be prohibitive for many.

By looking at John’s Gospel through the lens of F. Moloney’s favorite saying: “it is a pool that a child can play in and an elephant can drown”, it is possible to conclude that the monograph by Beth Stovell makes the pool much safer to swim at. Its innovative method fits well into the difficult area of intertwined metaphors in the Fourth Gospel, while the synchronic approach – so appreciated in the current biblical scholarship – allows a reader to take a fresh look at old problems and close the book with the head full of new ideas.