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**Luz, Ulrich**

***Matthew 21–28***

Hermeneia

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This volume covering chapters 21–28 [the Jerusalem ministry and the passion and resurrection accounts] completes the English translation of Ulrich Luz’s massive commentary on Matthew. Volume 2, *Matthew 8–20*, appeared in 2001 in the Hermeneia series, while volume 1, *Matthew 1–7* (translated by Wilhelm Linss; Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1989), will appear in a revised Hermeneia edition. This rich, detailed, comprehensive commentary far outreaches what this review can say. It is now the basic commentary that every interpreter of Matthew must consult.

What contribution does this work make to the interpretation of Matthew? It fulfills the series title, providing a critical and historical commentary on the text. Luz gives rich bibliographies for the entire work and for each section, although the concentration is on German-language publications. The outline for the interpretation of Matt 23:37–39 is typical: “Bibliography,” “Original Translation” (reflecting the nuances of the German translation), “Structure,” “Tradition History,” “Origin and Original Meaning,” “Interpretation,” “Summary and History of Interpretation” (158–65); at time he also discusses the “Meaning for Today.” This goes beyond what the Hermeneia series usually does, since the four-volume German original in the *Evangelisch-Katholischer Kommentar zum Neuen Testament* includes sections titled “Wirkungsgeschichte,” “History of Interpretation” in this English translation. (I find the translation “History of Influence” in the Linss translation of volume 1 much better, more accurately reflecting what is actually done in these sections.) Lutz departs from the design of the German

original, which asked contributors to stress the role these texts played in interconfessional controversy and dialogue, rarely noticed in this commentary.

Luz includes and comments on sixty-four illustrations of art as part of the history of interpretation, something not done in the earlier volumes (although there is no list of this anywhere in the volume). The end papers display Oxyrhynchus Papyri 2685 and 4405 (P<sup>77</sup>, from the late second century, containing Matt 23:30–34 and 35–39, the earliest fragment of the Gospel).

What is the specific character of Luz's interpretation? He says in the preface (xv) that he found it difficult to identify with some parts of the text, such as Matt 23 ("I sometimes wished that this chapter was not in the Bible") and sections of Matt 24–25. On the contrary, he feels much more empathy with the passion and resurrection accounts. This is clearly an interpretation after the Holocaust, sensitive to possible evil implications for Jewish-Christian relations today (see 94). Luz is clearly troubled by the anti-Judean character of Matthew in these chapters. (I intentionally avoid the term anti-Semitic as anachronistic.) Luz recognizes the anti-Judaic *Tendenz* of the Gospel and presents it clearly in many places, while also expressing his unease with it.

Matthew wrote his Gospel after 70 C.E., when Jews and Jewish Christians diverged, each going through the process of self-definition. Luz recognizes this (176). Exclusion from Judaism led Matthew to stress that Jesus already rejected the Judeans and Jerusalem, that his community keeps its Jewish heritage, and that it differs from the Judeans in terms of leadership. Luz notes the omission of δίκαιος καὶ σώζων αὐτὸς in Matt 21:5 but does not correlate it with the cleansing of the temple or the enacted parable of the fig tree in Matt 21:18–22 or the series of three parables in 21:28–22:14. He stresses rather the word πρᾶϋς in 21:5 and argues that Jesus enters Jerusalem as a peaceable messiah with an absence of force (no horse but a donkey). Jesus, as I read Matthew, enters Jerusalem and the temple as its judge, a motif that runs through these eight chapters. Matthew 23 follows up on the temple series and continues the motif of rejection, here clearly recognized and disliked by Luz (97–177). He calls it the "unloveliest chapter in the Gospel" (94); his struggle to come to terms with it will benefit every reader (168–75, where calls for "public theological criticism of its contents [Sachkritik]").

The commentary on the passion and resurrection is detailed. I have little to disagree with here, although I find that his interpretation of the actual death puzzles me. The words ἀφῆκεν τὸ πνεῦμα (Matt 27:50) introduce the events that follow, including the resurrection of the dead saints (Matt 27:52). Luz does not consider the possibility that Ezek 37 lies behind the sending out of the spirit or breath. Here he leans too heavily on Mark's language to interpret the phrase. Matthew 26–28 are the most heavily illustrated

(nos. 3–64) section. I wish he had included some other illustrations here: mosaics of crucifixion and resurrection from Hosios Loukas or Daphne in Greece or the Isenheim Altarpiece of Matthias Gruenewald. But Luz makes marvelous use of the ones he does present.

Luz is a careful guide through the details of the text. His extensive notes, his presentation of alternative interpretations, and his clear presentation as to why he opts for his interpretation offer the careful reader the possibility of intelligently differing with specific items. See, for example, his discussion of the four words *μετὰ τὴν ἔγερσιν αὐτοῦ* in Matt 27:53 on pages 568–69. He regards them as extremely difficult, presents three possible ways to account for them, and makes clear why he opts for alteration: rather careless gloss. That is a mark of an outstanding commentary. His comments about the meaning for today will assist the preacher to come to terms with difficult passages and find a message for today. Finally, he gives a brief summary of “The Basic Message of Matthew’s Story of Jesus” on pages 637–44. One should read this before consulting his comments on specific passages in the Gospel. This commentary makes a significant contribution to Matthean scholarship and beyond that to the use of this Gospel in the proclamation and life of the church.