

MICHAEL R. JOST, *Engelgemeinschaft im irdischen Gottesdienst: Studien zu Texten aus Qumran und dem Neuen Testament* (WUNT 2/505; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2019). Pp. xvi + 456. Paper €104.

Michael Reno Jost's study is based on his Ph.D. thesis at the University of Bern in Switzerland (2018). His goal is to analyze the motif of the liturgical communion with the angels in early Jewish writings as well as in the NT. This volume is divided into four main sections ("Alttestamentliche und frühjüdische Aspekte," "Gottesdienstliche Engelgemeinschaft in Texten vom Toten Meer," "Gottesdienstliche Engelgemeinschaft in neutestamentlichen Texten," and "Rabbinische und patristische Perspektiven"), along with an introduction and a summary.

The introductory chapter provides not only an overview of the scope and structure of

the entire study but also clarifies certain key words like “community,” “liturgy,” “angel(s),” and “liturgical community with the angels.” J. offers a traditio-historical approach to this topic, and, in addition to that, addresses the question of whether a text has also a “performative” (p. 7) aspect, which he assumes to be the case if a text represents not only literature but a liturgy. For those particular kinds of texts J. also analyzes their “social” (p. 8) and “spiritual” (p. 9) functions.

In part 1, J. approaches the topic by looking for key aspects in texts from the OT and early Judaism that might be of interest for a research project like the present one. Without yet drawing any traditio-historical developments, he mentions here aspects such as the temple as the place for God’s presence, the presence of the heavenly cherubim in the temple, the vision of the seraphim in the temple (Isaiah 6), the cosmic doxology in the Book of Psalms, the mutual celebration of the Sabbath on earth and in heaven, the angels’ assistance during prayer, and the eschatological community with the angels.

In part 2, J. addresses the question of the liturgical communion with the angels in the Dead Sea Scrolls. After a short general introduction, J. mainly analyzes the *Community Rule* (1QS), the *Thanksgiving Hymns* (1QH<sup>a</sup>), the *Rule of the Blessing* (1QSB), the *Daily Prayers* (4Q503), the *Words of the Luminaries* (4Q504), the *Songs of the Sage*<sup>b</sup> (4Q511), the *Songs of the Sabbath Sacrifice* (also referred to as the *Angelic Liturgy* [4Q400–407; 11Q17; and Mas1k]), and three shorter passages from 4Q181, 4Q286, and 4Q301. J.’s analysis leads to a very diverse picture that emerges from the Qumranic texts on the matter of liturgical communion with the angels. He therefore recommends a threefold distinction between a cosmic, a liturgical, and an eschatological communion with the angels regarding the writings from the Dead Sea.

Subsequently, in part 3, J. approaches the image of the liturgical communion with the angels with regard to NT writings, predominantly 1 Corinthians, Hebrews, and Revelation, but also Ephesians and Colossians. He concludes that only very few texts in the NT address the topic of a liturgical communion. He points out, moreover, that there is not even one text that describes this communion between angels and humans as one actually happening during liturgy. The communion with the angels, still widely attested in the texts from the Dead Sea, in the NT now somehow gets replaced by the communion with Christ.

In part 4, J. considers rabbinic and patristic aspects of the liturgical communion with the angels. Since the rabbis do not expect to receive a new Torah at the end of days but a final and full understanding of the Torah already received, it is not surprising that the motif of the liturgical community with the angels is of less importance in halakic literature. Angels, as heavenly messengers, are not really needed anymore. In contrast, community with the angels gets more attention in the haggadic literature. J.’s study of the patristic sources leads to a similar outcome, showing that different concepts of community with the angels existed at the same time. He finds that in the fourth century C.E. the interest lies more and more in the earthly dimension of the liturgical community, especially the role of bishops, priests, and deacons.

Finally, in the conclusion J. outlines the main findings of the study and also formulates recommendations for scholarship regarding aspects that might need further attention.

Jost’s volume offers a thorough exegesis of the relevant passages from the Dead Sea Scrolls as well as from the NT regarding the motif of the liturgical communion with the angels. Furthermore, he tries to contextualize his exegesis within traditio-historical

developments not only from the Hebrew Bible but from rabbinic and patristic texts as well. The study provides a good introduction to the topic as well as an extensive exegesis of each chosen text. It will be interesting to see to what extent J.'s main conclusions and outlines are accepted by scholars.

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