

ASIAN

HORIZONS

Vol. 5, No. 3, September 2011

BOOK REVIEW

George Edayadiyil, C.M.I., *Beyond Exodus: The Exodus as a Paradigm for Interpretation of the Bible and History*, Bangalore: Asian Trading Corporation, 2011. ISBN: 81-7086-608-1. Pages: xxx+290.

Dr George Edayadiyil's book *Beyond Exodus: the Exodus as a Paradigm for Interpretation of the Bible and History* is the third volume of his doctoral research publication. The first volume, *Exodus Event: Its Historical Kernel* was a scientific and systematic study of the origin of the biblical people and the Egyptian Exodus based on archaeological and extra-biblical documents. The second volume, *Israel in the Light of the Exodus Event*, was a careful analysis of the impact of the Exodus event in the life of the Old Testament people, their history, nation building, religion, theology, faith and worship. In the third and final volume the author focuses on the Exodus event as a paradigm of creative interpretation and plunges into the inexhaustible reservoir of its meaning.

The author divides the work into two parts: the first part (chapters 1-7) deals with the dynamics of the Exodus event, considering it as a theological theme which has its meaning beyond the happening. The second part (chapters 8-14), "Beyond Exodus", discusses the dynamics of the Exodus in the major historical events of the Bible with special emphasis on the Babylonian Exile, the Christ Event, the Final Exodus and the on-going exoduses. In the first chapter, the author examines the theological dynamics of the Exodus, basing it on the Scriptural text and looking back to its socio-cultural context. The author argues that a mutual and continuous interaction between events, text and context gives meaning to the event for all times. The second chapter is a discussion of how the Exodus event unveils the nature of God, the world and humanity. The author clearly depicts the way the event reveals the transcendent and immanent nature of God, his interest and connection to the people and the discontinuity between the divine and the cosmos. Chapters 3-5 unveil the theology of God's presence in the Exodus event, his saving act due to his mercy and election and his mediation through the prophets. In chapters 6 and 7 the author discusses the theology of journey, a typical theme found in the biblical tradition, and the theology of fulfilment and hope. He presents the Exodus as a progressive event which fulfils the promises of the past and gives hope for the future. Thus, the author emphasises that the Exodus stands as a historical saving memory with a significance far exceeding the original event.

The second part of the book begins with a discussion of new exoduses. Here (chapter 8) the author draws forth the exodus paradigms in the Hebrew bible, the nature of typology and the continuity between the Testaments. In chapter

9, under the title “The Second Exodus,” the author presents the return from Exile as a new exodus enacted through the strength of Yahweh, the saving God of the original Exodus. The various Exodus dynamics, such as continuity and discontinuity, the creation motif, revelation, the divine presence, the saving act of God, the prophetic mediation, the promise and fulfilment, are all seen in the narratives of the Exile. The next chapter is a discussion of the various exodus patterns in the NT. The author successfully shows that since the exodus motif is used as a paradigm of interpretation in the Gospels, in Paul and in other NT writings, inter-textual studies can illuminate the richness of the biblical teachings and the entire Bible can be read in the light of this paradigm.

In chapters 11-12 the author interprets the Exodus and Christ Event as master stories of the Bible which combine together to form the one salvation history of the Bible. While the Passover celebration in the OT stands as the heart of the first Exodus, the Passover of Christ is the core of the Christ event in the NT. Just as the Hebrew people were born out of the first Exodus, the new Israel of the NT was formed through the new exodus – the Christ event. In chapter 13 the author speaks of the journey of the saved to their eternal rest as the final exodus of humanity. All the former exoduses lead to this final exodus which guides the people to the ultimate Promised Land where there is no death or pain. In the final chapter under the title “The On-going Exoduses”, the author discusses the various socio-political liberation struggles which use the Exodus paradigm. Thus, through a careful analysis of the Exodus dynamics, the author brings out the theological nuances of the Exodus event and powerfully depicts that the event generates texts.

This exhaustive study is an outstanding and monumental contribution of the author to study the Exodus from a historical, exegetical, theological and a spiritual perspective. Through this classical work the author masterfully succeeds in relating the foundational event of the Bible to the other key events in the Bible and to the context of the contemporary world. This admirable work helps the reader look at salvation history with a new perspective and provides him with rich insights and creative ideas to struggle for total liberation at the individual, social, political and religious levels. This is a useful book not only for Jews and Christians but for any seekers of truth who wish to widen the horizons of their knowledge and wisdom. I appreciate the passion, commitment and enthusiasm with which the author approached the issue and I am sure that this excellent research work will receive wide circulation and influence among scholars and students.

Sebastian Mulloparambil, CMI (dharmacbts@gmail.com) DVK,
Bangalore