

Veli-Matti Kärkkäinen, *Christology: A Global Introduction*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2003. 177 pp. ISBN: 0-8010-2621-0

This book clearly lends itself to the use of the classroom. The focus of this book is to relate the biblical formation of Christology with various Christologies both ecumenically broad and culturally contextual. Veli-Matti Kärkkäinen's style is lucid and comprehensive. He has been able to portray the various perspectives in a clear way without creating inaccurate representations. The author followed the same basic format that he did previously: *Pneumatology: They Holy Spirit in Ecumenical, International and Contextual Perspectives* (Baker Academic, 2002); *An Introduction to the Theology of Religions: Biblical, Historical & Contemporary Perspectives* (InterVarsity Press, 2003); and *Doctrine of God: A Global Introduction* (Baker Academic, 2004).

Veli-Matti Kärkkäinen begins his book in the first section with an introduction to the doctrine Christology. He focuses his first chapter and a discussion of the diversity of perspectives relating to Christ. He then spends the next two chapters on the Gospel portrayals of Christ and on Pauline Christology. Whereas he does a basic summary, it would be easy to see New Testament scholars responding to these chapters as painted with a very broad brush, and that the non-Pauline, non-Gospel portrayals of Christ were neglected.

In the second section, there is a historical description of Christology throughout church history. In the first two chapters (4, 5) is a summary of the Christology debates in the first few centuries, such as Ebionitism and Docetism, and the Christological debates during the times of the Council of Nicea to the Council of Chalcedon, such as Nestorianism and Apollinarianism. The following two chapters emphasize the Christology of the Reformation, like Luther's Theology of the Cross, and the later chapter summarized the Rationalism of the eighteenth century. Chapters 8-10 track the beginning of the 'Quest for the Historical Jesus' through the Classical Liberalism of the nineteenth century to the second and third 'Quests for the Historical Jesus' from the 1950's and 1980's, respectively.

In the third section, major theologians' Christologies of the twentieth century were delineated. Karl Barth's Dialectical theology in terms of Christ, Rudolf Bultmann's Christology within his 'Demythologization' project and Paul Tillich's existential Christology all from the earlier part of the century were the former presentations. John Zizoulas' Communion Christology based on the Eastern theological background, Karl Rahner's Transcendental view of Christ, Jürgen Moltmann's Messianic Christology with its suffering component, and Wolfhart Pannenberg's Universal Christology were also detailed. Norman Kraus' Christology from the Anabaptist

perspective, the Evangelical Christology of Stanley Grenz and John Hick's Universalist view of Christ round out the section.

In the fourth section, various contextual Christologies from around the world are summarized. Contemporary Process, Feminist, Black and Postmodern Christologies were presented. Then, Latin American perspectives and Jon Sobrino's, the African view and Benezet Bujo's, and Asian representation and Stanely Samartha's Christologies, were all presented with the former general perspectives and later individual representatives explicated.

Kärkkäinen sets out to achieve an admirable goal to summarize the doctrine of Christology biblically, historically, ecumenically, and contextually. In spite of the overwhelming task, his enterprise as a textbook surveying this doctrine was generally concise and accurate.

As for some basic criticisms, there were a few times where certain information was inaccurate or misleading. For instance, the author lists David Strauss's *Life of Christ Critically Examined* as being published in 1836 (p. 97), whereas the original publication was 1835, and the first English translation appeared in 1846 by George Eliot. Also, Alfred North Whitehead's noted work *Process and Reality* was cited as being published in 1957 (p. 189), whereas the original noted work actually dates from 1929. It should be noted that these are minor details and considering the large number of factual items noted in the book of this type, these mistakes are comparatively very few.

This book is a great survey of the Doctrine of Christ throughout the church. As such, this would be a very helpful book for those studying Christology in upper level in Bible College or even in seminary.

Paul W. Lewis