



**Endo, Masanobu.**

*Creation and Christology: A Study on the Johannine Prologue in the Light of Early Jewish Creation Accounts*

Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament.  
Second series 149.

Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2002. Pp. xx + 292. Paper. €54.00.

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Rightly Dividing the Word of Truth

New Jersey

*Creation and Christology* is the published version of Masanobu Endo's 2000 University of St. Andrews doctoral dissertation written under the supervision of Richard Bauckham. Endo's stated purpose is to "explore the hypothesis that the Johannine Christology in the prologue of the Fourth Gospel is developed on the basis of the biblical and early Jewish exegetical traditions of the Genesis creation account" (1).

Endo conducts his investigation through an examination of several Second Temple Jewish texts that draw from the Genesis creation account (Gen. 1:1-2:3) as well as a handful of other biblical passages. After an introductory chapter noting the influence of Bultmann and the subsequent shift away from his views, Endo proceeds to survey a variety of narrative creation accounts, which are long retellings of the Genesis creation account; descriptive creation accounts, which are shorter accounts that focus on particular events of creation; and brief references to creation in chapters 2-4 respectively. In all of this Endo has an eye on the literary and thematic features of each passage under examination, which show a concern for the LORD's uniqueness as Creator and sovereign Ruler. A summary chapter and an excursus on Philo conclude this section.

The second section turns to the Johannine prologue and proceeds along the same lines of literary and thematic analysis, although a much more detailed and sustained treatment is offered on each account. Chapter 6 looks at the structure of the prologue, which Endo believes should be divided

into three parts rather than two. Chapter 7 is a thematic analysis that focuses on the Logos and also how it relates to life, light, and the children of God, and all of this with an eye on both protology and eschatology. Chapter 8 sets the prologue in the context of the rest of John's Gospel by showing how it relates to other important motifs, such as the Son's preexistence; his relationship with the Father; his Lordship; and ministry. Chapter 9 summarizes the second section and offers concluding remarks on the study as a whole.

*Creation and Christology* is a carefully researched monograph that I believe makes an important contribution to the study of Christology in general and the debate over divine Christology in particular. Bauckham's influence is evident throughout the study, as Endo adopts his "divine identity" category/terminology, but Endo localizes subject matter that Bauckham treats more generally in his published works. By focusing in on how Second Temple Jewish exegesis utilized the Genesis creation account (along with a few other creation texts from the OT, mainly in the Psalms and Isaiah) to say something about God, Endo has been able to make an argument from analogy concerning the early Christian view of Jesus via John's utilization of these same texts.

Just as Jewish exegetes used these creation accounts to bolster their views of God's uniqueness as Creator and sovereign Ruler and how they relate creation to eschatological hopes of salvation that is to be accomplished through God's word or wisdom, so John uses these accounts to say many of the same things about Jesus. This type of argument has been recently utilized with reference to Paul's writings by Mehrdad Fatehi and Chris Tilling and with reference to the Synoptic Gospels by Sigurd Grindheim, and has been persuasive, to my mind, in each case. I find Endo equally as convincing in his overall argument but there are a couple of points of concern.

Endo rightly notes the depiction of God as creator of life and light in the Genesis account and the Logos as life and light in the prologue. He says that "the prologue modifies the Logos with the terms which clearly refer to the Genesis creation account, and also which indicate the divine identity of God in first century Judaism" (227). But if God is described as creating the light and life and the Logos is described as being light and having life in him, could this not be taken as an indication that the Logos was produced by God? And if so, wouldn't that make the references to him as God and Creator references to a derivative deity or demiurge of some sort? In other words, does this particular point work in favor or against the argument for "divine identity"? I would have liked if Endo showed a little more care at this point of his argument.

And related to the last point, I would have liked to have seen Endo critically interact with Bauckham's concept of "divine identity" rather than appropriating it without argument. Much of

his study presupposes the validity of this conceptual category but the reader is left having to turn to Bauckham himself for the justification of it. But what for the reader unfamiliar with Bauckham's work or lacking access to it? They're left to guess exactly what "divine identity" is and how exactly it is determined. Even a brief summary of Bauckham's argument would have been welcomed at this point. But these concerns aside I will reiterate that I think Endo's work is a helpful contribution, the pros of which far outweigh the cons.