



Images of Zion: Biblical Antecedents for the New Jerusalem (New Testament Monographs)

Lois K. Fuller Dow

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This study, unparalleled in recent scholarly writing, sets out to examine the broad sweep of the biblical theological tradition about Jerusalem/Zion as the antecedent to Revelation's depiction of the New Jerusalem. In the Old Testament, Jerusalem/Zion is depicted in both its ideal form and its actual manifestation. In the Psalms (and seminally in the Pentateuch), Zion is depicted as similar to the holy mountains of the gods in Ugaritic religion. But it is not only a dwelling-place of the deity: it is also an earthly city inhabited by humans, and so it becomes a place of community of the divine and the human. The historical books of course make no secret of the realities of life in the far from holy Jerusalem, and, in the prophets also, the city of Jerusalem is the site of wrongdoing and corruption, a place attracting judgment; but equally it is the focus for eschatological anticipations of a renewed community that does fulfil the ideal. In the New Testament, by its rejection of the Messiah earthly Jerusalem forfeits its role as the true Jerusalem/Zion, which is taken over by Jesus and the church. Occasionally we get glimpses of the belief that the true Jerusalem is in heaven (a development begun in Second Temple literature). The book of Revelation picks up as well from Second Temple literature the theme of the identity of Jerusalem with the Garden of Eden, combining this idea with renewal-of-Zion passages from the prophets to depict the final state of God's people as a place of blessedness, community, life and safety, as well of intimacy with God.

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