

Spiritual Landscape, Images of the Spiritual Life in the Gospel of Luke, by JAMES RESSEGUIE. Peabody, Massachusetts: Hendrickson Publishers, 2004. 192 pp. \$19.95

Using narrative criticism James Resseguie "examines the physical, social, and economic landscapes along with the action and discourse ... to develop ... Luke's understanding of the spiritual life." (8) He defines the characteristics of the spiritual life in Luke in three ways: first, life is a journey or exodus leading to the Kingdom of God, second, everyday decisions are linked to spiritual matters, and third, it is a struggle to know God's will for one's life. Within this construct six items become metaphors to describe the spiritual life: topography, journeys, families/households, meals, clothing, and consumption.

The author employs literary criticism tending to various, formal elements of narrative to develop his themes. In his hands Jesus' journey to Jerusalem and the disciples on the way to Emmaus become not only a symbol of what transformations take place along the way but also a reminder of the hardships awaiting the disciple willing to walk the journey with Jesus. The household becomes a metaphor for the spiritual life in that the lowest member of the household, the slave, becomes the exalted member in the Kingdom of God. Meals in Luke's Gospel provide moments of hospitality as Jesus often welcomes sinners and draws lessons about his presence from the act of feasting. Such analyses provide Resseguie with explanations and exhortations about the spiritual life.

The notion of spirituality implied here seems to be that new insight helps develop the soul. But the whole idea of spirituality must also include changed behavior that allows us to enter the presence of God. Much of what Resseguie does is commentary and interpretation, and essentially he explains spirituality in terms of his interpretations. Although he challenges us with good insights pertaining to our walk with God, helping us develop the tools necessary for real transformation would have been a welcome addition to the material. Perhaps rightly he assumes that transformation is the work of the reader, and explanations into how the landscape metaphors facilitate our entering into the presence of God may be the foundation for another volume-or more likely a workbook. His interpretations of Luke's landscape at the very least stimulate the impetus for change and the copious endnotes offer further details for the more stout-hearted researcher although most will just want to read and reflect. In the hands of a skilled Bible class teacher this book has the potential to transform those who take the time to meditate on it.

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