



The Sermon on the Mount in the Light of the Temple

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No religious text has influenced the world more than has the New Testament's Sermon on the Mount, and yet this crucial text still begs to be more clearly understood. Why was it written? What unifying theme or purpose holds it all together? Should it be called a sermon? Or is it some other kind of composition? How would its earliest listeners have heard its encoded allusions and systematic program?

This book offers new insights into the Sermon on the Mount by seeing it in the shadow of the all-pervasive Temple in Jerusalem, which dominated the religious landscape of the world of Jesus and his earliest disciples. Analyzing Matthew 5-7 in light of biblical and Jewish backgrounds, ritual studies, and oral performances in early Christian worship, this reading coherently integrates every line in the Sermon. It positions the Sermon as the premier Christian mystery.

Contents

Preface; The quest for a unifying understanding of the Sermon on the Mount; The temple on the mount; Hearing a temple register in the Beatitudes; The creation of a new covenantal relationship; A higher order of righteousness and consecration; Blessings and consequences of righteousness or unrighteousness; Unifying the Sermon with temple themes and ritual theory; Conclusions and further implications; Select bibliography; Indexes.

About the Author

John W. Welch is the Robert K. Thomas Professor of Law and Editor-in-Chief of BYU Studies at Brigham Young University in Provo, Utah. He studied as a Woodrow Wilson Fellow at Oxford University and is a member of the Jewish Law Association. In the Society of Biblical Literature, he has served on the steering committee of the Section on Biblical Law and as chair of the program unit on Latter-day Saints and the Bible.

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