Rethinking the Ethics of John

Ed. by Jan G. van der Watt and Ruben Zimmermann


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Ethics is a neglected field of research in the Gospel and Letters of John. Judgments about even the presence of ethics in the Gospel are often negative, and even though ethics is regarded as one of the two major problem areas focused on in 1 John, the development of a Johannine ethics from the Letters receive relatively little attention. This book aims at making a positive contribution and even to stimulating the debate on the presence of ethical material in the Johannine literature through a series of essays by some leading Johannine scholars. The current state of research is thoroughly discussed and new developments as well as new possibilities for further investigation are treated. By utilizing different analytical categories and methods (such as narratology) new areas of research are opened up and new questions are considered. Therefore, aspects of moral thinking and normative values can be discovered and put together to the mosaic of an »implicit ethics« in the Johannine Writings. More familiar themes like the law or deeds in the Gospel are reconsidered in a new light, while the ethical role of the opponents or the ethical use of Scripture are explored as new avenues for describing the dynamics of ethics in the Gospel. The ethical nature of the Letters is also considered, focusing not only on the theological nature of ethics in the Letters, but also on the ethical impact of some rhetorical material in 1 John. The culminative result of these series of essays is to illustrate that the ethical material in the Gospel is not as absent as was believed by many in the past. The essays not only open up a wider spectrum of Johannine ethical material but also invite further exploration and research in this much neglected area of Johannine studies.

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