

Hervé Talom

**BOOK REVIEW 3:
REACHING THE NEW JERUSALEM:
A BIBLICAL AND THEOLOGICAL FRAMEWORK FOR THE CITY,
SEONG HYUN PARK**



**UR 510-NA/NOS:
URBAN THEOLOGY
SPRING 2023
JOSÉ CARLOS MONTES**

MARCH 8TH, 2023

a) Author's purpose for writing the book, including the author's Main point

This book's primary task is to examine the City's biblical and theological meaning and mission. It starts with the premise that the garden is lost, and we are headed toward the New Jerusalem, the City of God. Seong explores the views of several scholars to support this book.

b) Author's social analysis of the target urban context and its connection to the resulting theological reflection and formation

Seong believe for centuries believers have waited for the New Jerusalem. In fact, from the beginning of time, the characteristic of a true believer was one “looking forward to the city with foundations, whose architect and builder is God” (Heb 11:10). (p. 26).

In addition he motioned the attitudes and action of a rebuilder.

Seong reflects on the Roadblocks Hindering the New Jerusalem (p. 68).

- School dropouts

- Social Costs of Gross Inequality

- Biblical Interlude

c) Author's urban theological reflection and formation, including biblical themes & principles and theological framework

Seong argues that for many today, this imagery has been lost. We no longer view the city as the positive symbol it was for Jesus. Instead, many of us fear the city. For us, it is a dangerous place. We go outside of it and seek to create "suburbs of refuge." Throughout history, however, as for Jesus, the city was the sanctuary of safety. (p. 2).

In addition, Seong equates the new Jerusalem with the creation of the church. The birth of the first church at Jerusalem on Pentecost, as described in the book of Acts, reveals one overriding theme: unity across cultures. We find that the birth was attended by a diverse array of followers, including Parthians, Medes, Elamites, Egyptians, Libyans, "strangers of Rome," Cretans, and Arabians (Acts 2:5–11). This was multiculturalism.) (p. 172).

d) Author's theological implementation approach and practice as it correlates to the stated urban theological reflection and formation

The problem of ethnocentrism raises the question of who we are. Is our identity as an immigrant church consistent with biblical teaching? Indeed, in the Old Testament, there are abundant examples of immigration. (p. 171).

Seong explores two of many theological/biblical foundations. Understanding the New Jerusalem is a challenging task. Most agree that the Bible needs theological interpretation and that the New Jerusalem is Scripture's contrast to its symbolic Babylon. (p. 67).

e) The extent to which the book informs the process of urban theological reflection and formation and may impact urban theological implementation

In attempting to address the origin of life, Seong asks How Did Urban Life Begin?

A watchword in Christian studies is that all good theology goes back to Genesis. Furthermore, we find our study's beginning in Genesis 4:9–17: (p. 3).

Seong highlights Understanding the Urban Church as a way towards building Jerusalem. Understanding our time and culture is significant.

But rebuilding is in the heart of God. He raised up Nehemiah to rebuild Jerusalem; where is he sending you to rebuild? There are areas of vast devastation: lives, families, organizations, communities, cities, and entire countries, waiting for the ambassadors of the kingdom of life to engage them. (p. 36).

Rebuilding is in the heart of God. He raised up Nehemiah to rebuild Jerusalem; where is he sending you to rebuild? There are areas of vast devastation: lives, families, organizations, communities, cities, and entire countries, waiting for the ambassadors of the kingdom of life to engage them. With our hands joined with Christ's and our hearts aligned to his, it is my prayer that as we address the evils of this world, as we address oppression and need, then the words of the prophet Isaiah will be true of us: (pp. 36-37).

In 2018 I had two jobs offered, the first to serve as an assistant pastor in Buffalo, NY, and the second in NYC as an Outreach Coordinator with the New York School of Urban Ministry, Queens, NY. After spending time with the Lord, God confirmed NYSUM's offer, and I moved to NYC. Being a non-New Yorker, and coming from Lima, NY, was a big transition. The City is green to urban ministry, with opportunities to reach out and serve the broken people on the street of New York City and through NYSUM and the connections with the various churches across NY and beyond. Coming to NYC was challenging; it was like stepping into the unknown. Praise God for His Grace. Leading teams to the various urban mission sites require much preparation (Prep Classes - Meetings- Prayers, and connections with the community leaders). I have witnessed life-changing encounters in the soup kitchen, the street, the subway, the Ferry to Staten Island, and the various shelters across NYC.

Biography:

Seong Hyun Park. *Reaching for the New Jerusalem: A Biblical and Theological Framework for the City* (Urban Voice) (p. 167). Wipf & Stock - An Imprint of Wipf and Stock Publishers. Kindle Edition.