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A critical and exegetical commentary on the Pastoral Epistles

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(Jesus as Jewish sage), and F. Gerald Downing (Jesus as Cynic philosopher).

In the main portion of the book, chapters 4 through 9, Powell presents a thorough analysis of six pre-eminent recent studies of the historical Jesus, including the work of the Jesus Seminar, John Dominic Crossan, Marcus J. Borg, E.P. Sanders, John P. Meier, and N.T. Wright. In each chapter Powell describes the methods used by the scholar(s) in question, the picture of Jesus which has resulted, and criticisms of each position which have been proposed by other scholars. One inescapable conclusion is that Schweitzer's century old critique still holds true: the assumptions which a historian brings to the study of Jesus will largely dictate their resulting picture of the historical Jesus.

The final chapter of the book lists a number of key issues which continue to be debated in the field: methodology; the type of first century Judaism in which Jesus is best situated and his relation to Greco-Roman culture; Jesus' eschatological views; his relation to the politics of his day; his self-consciousness; and presuppositions regarding the supernatural. Powell also discusses the relevance of current Jesus scholarship for the church, concluding that the Jesus of the church's story is only partially informed by the results of historians' research. Just as the Jesus of the church's story produced the earliest hymns which were the first traditions about Jesus, so too it is the church's story of Jesus which evokes the worship of people of faith today.

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The Pastoral Epistles. The International Critical Commentary

I. Howard Marshall

Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1999

869 pages, \$115.00 Hardcover

The Pastoral Epistles (PE) may confront the modern reader with some uncomfortable difficulties, in terms of content and, for some, debates about authorship. In his recent commentary, I. Howard Marshall emphasizes that the PE are "inspirational documents" (p.98) in their own right. Marshall does two things particularly well: he aptly articulates

and evaluates the debates over the origins of these letters, and he formulates a solid exegetical foundation, suitable for fruitful hermeneutics. Marshall's well-researched and detailed work is intended for a scholarly audience with adequate Greek skills, though the novice would find the lengthy introduction (over 100 pages in length) and the bulk of the textual analysis generally accessible and useful. Marshall's own explicit approach to these letters is that they are creative expressions of Pauline theology, exhibiting ideas relevant for modern application to ethics and spirituality. In the commentary itself, however, he concentrates on the exegetical exercise of discerning the flow of the argument and the underlying theology of the PE.

In his remarkably thorough introduction, Marshall combines an informative, well-organized summary and evaluation of twentieth-century contributions to the study of the PE with a refreshingly thoughtful reconsideration of authorship issues (previously articulated in several journal articles). The majority view in critical scholarship is that the PE are pseudonymous documents written one or two generations after Paul's death, though a minority of scholars support Pauline authorship. Both positions have problematic aspects. Marshall attempts to "find an understanding of the origin of these letters which will do justice to their closeness to Paul while recognising the difficulties in attributing them to his pen" (p. xiii). From an admittedly more "conservative" point of view, he proposes that an author (or authors, potentially including Timothy and Titus themselves) composed the letters, shortly after the death of Paul in order to address a new situation of opposition. Marshall emphasizes that these letters embodied a fresh, creative approach that kept within the limits of Pauline theology and ideas. He wants to avoid the negative connotations of pseudepigraphy while affirming the worth of these documents for Christian values. While his hypothesis cannot be proven and does not escape difficulties, Marshall does creatively grapple with the issue of pseudonymity within the canon.

In his overall approach, Marshall takes into account recent studies of the PE, which highlight the uniqueness of each letter. Rather than allow the content of 1 Timothy to overshadow discussions of 2 Timothy and Titus, Marshall clearly identifies the unique character and emphases of each letter. At the same time, he uses their literary and historical unity as a corpus in order to explore larger themes, particularly in a series of worthwhile excursions on features unique to the PE within the New Testament.

In each section of the actual commentary, Marshall offers a supplementary bibliography and summarizes how the section fits into the overall flow of the text. A short list of textual variants precedes his detailed exegetical work of the Greek text. Marshall's word studies and syntax analyses are especially useful. He also incorporates and evaluates a substantial variety of viewpoints from other scholars' work. Marshall is well aware of and sensitive to controversial hermeneutical topics in the PE. For instance, in his discussion of women's conduct in the church (1 Timothy 2:8-15), he effectively summarizes various positions, indicating that exegesis is always affected by a priori viewpoints (including his own). Marshall's interpretation emphasizes the circumstantial nature of the exhortation to particular women who were linked with the heterodox teaching addressed throughout 1 Timothy.

Whether or not a person agrees with Marshall's hypothesis of the origins of the PE, this book is an extremely useful tool in terms of clearly articulating the difficulties that critical scholarship has raised, reviewing a wide range of twentieth-century interpretations of the text, and clearly elucidating the Greek text with careful but generally accessible exegetical work. Marshall's approach is balanced, positive and useful, particularly for those who desire a solid exegetical foundation to utilize the PE for application to the modern context.

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The Manichaean Body: In Discipline and Ritual

Jason David BeDuhn

Baltimore & London: John Hopkins University Press, 2000

354 pages, \$66.50 Hardcover

The Manichaean movement began in the middle of the third century CE with the teachings of the Persian prophet Mani, who intentionally set out to establish a universal church for all of humanity, for which he composed his own sacred texts. At the foundation of Mani's theological vision was the belief that the cosmos was the tragic product of a conflict between the powers of Light and the powers of Darkness, and that the ultimate purpose of the pious individual was to assist in the liberation