

He also makes some useful observations about how we perceive these ideas in the text and how we apply them in our situation. So though this book may be a splendid example of theorising about hermeneutics, it is a disappointing example of hermeneutical practice.

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The Biblical Flood: A Case Study of the Church's Response to Extrabiblical Evidence

Davis A. Young

Grand Rapids: Eerdmans; Carlisle: Paternoster Press, 1995, xiii + 327 pp., £14.99, pb., ISBN 0-8028-0719-4 (Eerdmans); 0-85364-678-3 (Paternoster)

ZUSAMMENFASSUNG

Das Buch bringt einen hervorragenden Überblick über die Beziehungen zwischen biblischer Exegese und naturwissenschaftlichen Entdeckungen von neutestamentlicher Zeit bis heute. Relativ viel Platz wird der Darstellung und Widerlegung exzentrischer konservativer Erklärungen der Flut gewidmet. Young selbst sieht eine lokale mesopotamische Flut (als berechtigtes Paradigma universalen Gerichts) im Hintergrund des biblischen Berichtes.

RÉSUMÉ

Le livre donne un excellent aperçu de la relation entre l'exégèse biblique et les découvertes scientifiques depuis le temps du Nouveau Testament jusqu'à nos jours. L'auteur consacre une large place à l'exposé et à la critique des explications conservatrices plutôt excentriques du déluge. Il considère pour sa part que le récit biblique du déluge a pour arrière-plan un événement local, qui s'est produit en Mésopotamie, et qui fonctionne comme un paradigme du jugement universel.

Belief in a universal flood was part of standard Christian belief until the nineteenth century. Indeed, in the early days of geology fossils and sedimentary layers were often ascribed to Noah's flood. But as geological knowledge grew, traditional views of the flood became less and less credible.

Young in this book gives a magnificent survey of the interaction of biblical exegesis and scientific discovery from New Testament times to the present. It is salutary to realise how many older interpretations have rested on ephemeral scientific theory and how more recent evangelical studies have often ignored well established geological facts.

European readers may be surprised at the amount of space devoted to eccentric American conservative Christian explanations of the flood and geological discovery, but clearly these ideas have much more currency on the other side of the Atlantic. Young is concerned to confute such views. Those who have never taken them seriously may be tempted to ignore this book, but Young's concern to integrate geological discovery with the testimony of Scripture is an important one for Christian apologetics. He believes that a Mesopotamian local flood lies behind the biblical story, but that the Bible is right to affirm this as a paradigm of universal judgement. He is also right to hint that Christians should stop being defensive about the relations between science and faith. The age, size and complexity of the universe witness to a Creator of unimaginable wisdom and power.

I should also have liked him to have gone further and discussed the *Tendenz* of Genesis in its use of Mesopotamian tradition. Its monotheistic theology, the place it assigns mankind in the divine purpose, and its scepticism about human progress give the theology of Genesis a strikingly original thrust that still resonates today.

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The Jesus Debate: Modern Historians Investigate the Life of Christ

Mark Allan Powell

Oxford: Lion, 1999, 238 pp., £16.99, hb., ISBN 0-7459-4209-1

ZUSAMMENFASSUNG

Powells Buch besteht aus einer Darstellung und Wertung von sechs wichtigen Beiträgen zur wissenschaftlichen Suche nach dem historischen Jesus. Besprochen werden die Arbeiten des Jesus Seminars, J.D. Crossans,

M.J. Borgs, E.P. Sanders', J.P. Meiers und N.T. Wrights. *Die Darstellungen sind auch für Nichtspezialisten gut verständlich. Die Wertungen sind ausgewogen und fair. Powell beleuchtet auch die ideologischen Hintergründe der einzelnen Projekte und bietet neben der Konzentration auf die zentralen Probleme auch humorvolle Randbemerkungen, die die Lektüre zu einer angenehmen, aber informativen machen. Die Hauptkapitel sind umschlossen von einleitenden historischen und methodologischen Kapiteln und einem Schlußkapitel, in dem die wichtigsten Probleme und Trends in der neuesten Forschung zum historischen Jesus hilfreich gebündelt werden.*

RÉSUMÉ

Cet ouvrage présente les six contributions importantes à la recherche scientifique du Jésus historique et en propose une évaluation: il s'agit des travaux du « Séminaire sur Jésus », et de J. Crossan, M. Borg, E. Sanders et N. Wright. Les évaluations sont substantielles et appropriées. Powell met en lumière l'arrière-plan idéologique de chaque projet. À côté du traitement des problèmes centraux, les commentaires marginaux pleins d'humour rendent la lecture plaisante. L'ouvrage s'ouvre par des chapitres d'introduction aux questions historiques et méthodologiques, et se clôt sur un chapitre qui fait le tour des problèmes les plus importants et des tendances de la recherche récente sur le Jésus historique.

Powell's book, the American edition of which was published in 1998 as *Jesus as a Figure in History*, consists mainly of a presentation of six contributions to the 'third quest' for the historical Jesus. These include the work of the Jesus Seminar, J.D. Crossan, M.J. Borg, E.P. Sanders, J.P. Meier and N.T. Wright, arguably the most prolific scholars in the field. In each case, Powell reviews the methods and the general approach used, and summarises the results that have been obtained as well as the criticisms that have been levelled against the approach by other historians. The summaries are clear and easy to understand for a wider audience of non-specialists, and the assessment is fair and balanced.

Apart from carrying out a descriptive and evaluative task, Powell also puts the different approaches into their larger contexts and points out the agendas behind various projects. This is visible not only in whole

sections devoted to this task (e.g. on 'Implications of the Jesus Seminar's work', focusing on Robert Funk's vision of a new Christianity in terms of secularised spirituality rather than institutionalised religion), but throughout the book in numerous remarks that reflect Powell's awareness that scholarship has never been done in an ideological vacuum.

While focusing on the crucial issues of each of the contributions, Powell also provides interesting background information. He does not miss humorous bits, such as the comment of Hollywood producer and member of the Jesus Seminar Paul Verhoeven, who during preparations for a Jesus movie commented on the Seminar's minimalist portrait of Jesus: 'You'd have a man walking about from marketplace to marketplace saying aphorisms. That isn't much of a movie.' Details such as this combined with a well-informed knowledge of the more serious issues help the reader to get a good introduction into all significant problems of the third quest for the historical Jesus while being entertained in the process.

The chapters dealing with the major contributions are sandwiched between introductory chapters on the history of Jesus research as well as a number of methodological problems, and by a concluding chapter summarising the key issues in the debate. The short but informative historical introductions include the work of Reimarus, Paulus, Strauss, Renan and Schweitzer as pioneers of the quest for the historical Jesus. They also present Bultmann as a negative foil for the work of Käsemann, Bornkamm and Perrin, and refer to Wrede, Mack and Schüssler-Fiorenza as important figures for understanding why the historical Jesus became so difficult to get at. After explaining the major criteria of authenticity, Powell also includes snapshots of some authors who influenced in one way or another the work of the six contributions under discussion (i.e. R.A. Horsley, G. Vermes, M. Smith, B. Witherington and F.G. Downing). One would have expected Ben Meyer in this section, but he is mentioned only in three footnotes, one of which recognises his influence on N.T. Wright.

The diversity of methods, approaches and results visible in the six contributions are helpfully highlighted in the last chapter. Here Powell shows again his ability not to get lost in details but to point out clearly the crucial issues involved. He notes the

differences in the evaluation of sources, such as the Gospel of Thomas, Q and Mark, and highlights the criterion of dissimilarity and the 'double criterion of similarity and dissimilarity' as proposed by Wright. He also points to a major methodological difference by noting that, whereas some scholars try to include a maximum amount of historical data (Wright, Sanders), others base their portraits on a minimum of data that seem most reliable (Crossan, Jesus Seminar). Powell also directs our attention to the related issue of whether one should start with a piecemeal approach to the data, first judging the reliability of each saying or event and then constructing a hypothesis (a method employed by scholars as diverse as Meier and the Jesus Seminar), or whether one should begin with an overall hypothesis and then interpret the data in the light of it (Sanders, Wright). Although the issues involved in these alternatives are more complex (cf. e.g. the epistemological problems mentioned by Wright in *The New Testament and the People of God*), to focus the problem in this way nevertheless helps the non-specialist to get an idea of some of the major differences between the third questers.

All in all, Powell's book is a helpful guide for everyone interested in recent developments in the third quest for the historical Jesus.

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Rhetoric and Galatians: Assessing an Approach to Paul's Epistle
Philip H. Kern

Society for New Testament Studies
Monograph Series 101. Cambridge:
Cambridge University Press, 1998, xiv +
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ZUSAMMENFASSUNG

Philip Kern geht es darum, die durch Betz und Kennedy stark verbreitete Einstufung des Galaterbriefes als rhetorisches Kunstwerk zu hinterfragen. Er tut dies vor allem dadurch, dass er zeigt, dass die rhetorischen Handbücher der Antike nicht auf den Galaterbrief anwendbar sind. Sie setzen in aller Regel gerichtliche Szenen voraus und sind nicht für eine Übertragung auf andere Situa-

tionen konzipiert. Allenfalls lässt sich vermuten, dass man sowohl die Handbücher als auch den Galaterbrief mit Formen mündlicher Darbietung in Verbindung setzen kann, aber das bedeutet noch lange nicht, dass der Galaterbrief nach den Kriterien der Handbücher geschrieben worden sei. Vielmehr stellt sich heraus, dass aus dem Blickwinkel klassischer griechisch-römischer Rhetorik die paulinischen Briefe eher durch Grobschlächtigkeit auffallen und auch seitens der Kirchenväter entsprechend eingestuft wurden. Konsequenterweise dürfte es bei der Interpretation dieser Briefe nicht darum gehen, rhetorische Klassifizierungen anzuwenden, sondern der theologischen Aussage ihr volles Gewicht zukommen zu lassen. Kerns These überzeugt zumindest in ihren Grundzügen. Man könnte aber nachfragen, ob er seine Kritik der Anwendung rhetorischer Kategorien auf den Galaterbrief nicht etwas überzeichnet hat.

RÉSUMÉ

L'auteur considère la thèse de Betz et Kennedy qui voient l'épître aux Galates comme un chef d'œuvre rhétorique. Il montre que l'épître ne correspond pas à ce que l'on trouve dans les manuels de rhétorique de l'antiquité. Ceux-ci présupposent généralement des scènes de procès qui ne sont pas conçues pour être transposées à d'autres situations. On peut bien sûr supposer que les manuels de rhétorique ainsi que l'épître peuvent être mis en relation avec des formes orales, mais il ne s'ensuit nullement que l'épître a été écrite en suivant les règles des manuels. Au contraire, il est clair que les épîtres pauliniennes tranchent par leur style peu raffiné avec la rhétorique gréco-romaine classique et se rattachent d'avantage aux œuvres des premiers pères de l'Église. Par conséquent, il n'est pas approprié de faire appel aux catégories classiques pour l'interprétation de ces lettres, mais il est préférable de leur accorder leur propre valeur théologique. La thèse de Kern est convaincante, tout du moins dans sa perspective générale, mais sa critique de l'application des critères rhétoriques est peut-être excessive.

Rhetoric and Galatians seeks to challenge the kinds of assumptions about Paul's use of rhetoric in Galatians which were introduced into Pauline scholarship (and accepted by many) by scholars such as Betz, Kennedy and others. This book is the result of a Sheffield PhD investigation under the supervision of L. Alexander. In its single-mindedness it is a