

why he used it, and most interestingly an analysis of the 'bi-referential' function of these citations in Matthew. For instance, when Matthew cites Isaiah 7.14 (Mt. 1.23), he does so for two reasons: 1) to give OT support for the virgin birth, and 2) to initiate the theme of 'God with us' (Immanuel) prevalent throughout the rest of the gospel.

Chapter 4 is titled 'Isaiah 42.1-4 within the context of Matthew 11-13' (pp. 122-73) and comprises the main focus of the study. As with the previous chapter, Beaton analyses the text form of Isaiah 42.1-4 and after a lengthy (and somewhat tedious) discussion (30 pages) he concludes: 'Matthew's unique text-form, it seems, demonstrates his use of either the Hebrew, or more likely a Greek (or Aramaic) text conformed to the Hebrew, which he then altered in the light of his own concerns' (p. 141). The rest of this chapter and the next are an exposition of what these concerns were. In the end, Beaton is convinced that 'Matthew's employment of the Old Testament is fundamentally theological and best described as complex' (p. 192). 'Matthew is the source of many modifications' (p. 193) and his quotations 'are essentially bi-referential' functioning both on a narrative and theological level' (p. 194).

Beaton has certainly made a fine contribution to the field of Judeo-Christian exegetical practices and toward a better understanding of Matthean Christology. I particularly found his discussions regarding the text form available to Matthew to be the most enlightening. However, as with many dissertations that reach the printing press, this work is dense. The reader should be prepared to read slow, think hard and even re-read the various sections that fail to make sense at first glance – there are a few.

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Les Derniers Jours de Jésus

François Bovon

Genève: Labor et Fides, 2004.

P.b., n.p., 109 pages. ISBN: 2-8309-1116-4.

SUMMARY

This brief volume is a reprint with minor changes of a book originally published in 1974 but now published in the wake of the controversy aroused by Mel Gibson's film, *The Passion of the Christ*. In fact, the book does not address issues relating to the film but rather provides a historical-critical perspective on the ancient accounts of Jesus' last days in Jerusalem, both canonical and non-canonical. While Bovon's measured treatment of the sources offers the reader insight into the process of historical-critical evaluation of texts, his reading of the passages is ultimately unsatisfying due to considerable scepticism concerning the historical foundations of the accounts.

RÉSUMÉ

Ce court ouvrage est une réimpression comportant quelques changements mineurs d'un livre publié en 1974, mais

qui reparait maintenant dans le contexte de la controverse suscitée par le film de Mel Gibson, *La passion du Christ*. Le livre ne traite pas directement de questions liées à ce film, mais présente, d'un point de vue historico-critique, les récits anciens, tant canoniques que non canoniques, des derniers jours de Jésus à Jérusalem. L'auteur traite les sources de manière mesurée et apporte ainsi au lecteur une bonne compréhension de la démarche d'évaluation historico-critique des textes, mais sa lecture des textes reste en fin de compte insatisfaisante à cause d'un grand scepticisme concernant la fiabilité historique des récits.

ZUSAMMENFASSUNG

Dieser kurze Band ist ein mit unwesentlichen Veränderungen versehener Neudruck eines ursprünglich 1974 veröffentlichten Buches. Es ist jetzt im Nachlauf der von Mel Gibsons Film *Die Passion Christi* erzeugten Kontroverse erschienen. Das Buch bespricht allerdings keine auf den Film bezogenen Fragen, sondern bietet eine historisch-kritische Perspektive auf die alten Darstellungen der letzten Tage Jesu in Jerusalem. Es werden sowohl kanonische als auch nicht-kanonische Texte benutzt. Bovons maßvolle Behandlung der Quellen bietet dem Leser Einblick in den Prozess der historisch-kritischen Bewertung von Texten, aber seine Leseweise der Passagen ist letztlich aufgrund der beträchtlichen Skepsis bezüglich der historischen Grundlagen der Darstellungen unbefriedigend.

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This slim volume by the Professor of New Testament at Harvard Divinity School is, in fact, a reissue of a book first published in 1974 with only minor corrections and updating. A significant reason for the reissue of the book at this time appears to be (according to the 'blurb' on the back cover) the controversy stirred up by Mel Gibson's film, *The Passion of the Christ*, and particularly the notion that it presents 'history as the Bible tells it' since 'the gospel is a complete script' ('l'évangile est un script complet' – the quotation is not attributed but it is presented as if it were Gibson's view).

The short main text (pages 13-78) is divided into six sections: a brief introduction (13-14); a discussion of available sources (15-34); some comments on methodology (35-37) which affirm Jesus' crucifixion under Pilate as a securely attested fact of history; the major section (39-65) which highlights some of the distinctive aspects of Jesus' ministry, with particular reference to the events of the final week before Jesus' crucifixion; a short note on issues relating to time and place of the events; and, finally, a conclusion which draws the discussion to a close (71-78).

The final fifteen pages of the book are appendices which simply reproduce the French text of Luke 22:1-24:53 and of the Gospel of Peter.

If the reader is looking for a scholarly response to Gibson's film here, he or she will be disappointed. In fact, Bovon makes no mention of the film in the text of the book and one cannot help feeling that the reference

to it on the cover is a piece of opportunistic marketing on the part of the publisher. (Those looking for a readable yet scholarly discussion of Gibson's film may wish to read a recently published collection of essays edited by R. L. Webb and K. E. Corley, *Jesus and Mel Gibson's The Passion of the Christ* [London: Continuum, 2004] which is devoted entirely to consideration of the film.)

If, on the other hand, the reader simply takes this book on its own terms then it provides a generally helpful introduction to the events leading up to and including the crucifixion, as viewed through the historical-critical method. Bovon helpfully examines the various canonical and non-canonical sources. He rightly comments that the gospel accounts are not 'disinterested reports of objective witnesses' (24), but he appears to accept that the faith of the authors necessarily affects their ability to provide a sober account of what has taken place – a highly contestable position. For example, he claims that the gospel accounts of Jesus' predictions of his passion derive from church tradition rather than from Jesus himself (18). I was also surprised at his claim that the resurrection account of the Gospel of Peter, with its sky-high figures and moving, speaking cross, is 'neither more miraculous nor more legendary than the canonical accounts' (28). He explains 'There is, here as there, cohabitation of memories and interpretation.' Fair enough, to a point. Human beings have no access to such a thing as an uninterpreted fact. Yet there must surely be some recognition of the difference in character between the restrained canonical accounts and the startling features of Gospel of Peter.

Bovon's brief sketch of the events of the last week of Jesus' life prior to the crucifixion is typical of discussions of the 'historical Jesus'. It deals with standard historical questions relating to the passion narrative (e.g., whether the Sanhedrin had the authority to pronounce a capital sentence) and, in general, is characterised by even-handed treatment of the evidence. Even in the very brief compass of the discussion, one has the sense that Bovon is carefully evaluating the sources. Yet, once again, I was left frustrated when Bovon concluded his comments on the sayings from the cross (which were sensitive to the significance of these sayings in the gospel narratives) by claiming that these sayings are not historical (63).

In his conclusion, Bovon addresses the issue of the resurrection. It is commendable that he does so, but it is unfortunate that he excludes this event, to some extent, from the realm of history. Contrast this with, for example, the very different argument of N. T. Wright in *The Resurrection of the Son of God* (London: SPCK, 2003).

The bibliography largely reflects literature prior to 1974, but around two-dozen more recent works are added.

The brevity of this book might suggest that it is a popular paperback for a general readership. In fact, although Bovon writes clearly, the level of the discussion would probably be demanding for those without some theological training. Those who are ready to weigh carefully the arguments in this slight book will doubtless

learn much, even in disagreement.

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Contours of Pauline Theology
A Radical Survey of the Influences on Paul's
Biblical Writings
Tom Holland

Geanies House, Fearn, Ross-shire: Christian Focus
Publications, 2004, 384 pp., £14.99, hb, ISBN 1-
85792-469-X

SUMMARY

The thesis of this book is that two important axioms have been missing from the interpretation of Paul's writings. The first is that the story of the Passover and the exodus are the interpretive keys to Paul's thought and, in particular, to his interpretation of Jesus' death. The second lens is that the Pauline writings should be read as being implicitly corporate and covenantal in their approach. Holland excludes the literature of Second Temple Judaism and the pseudographical writings from the interpretation of Paul's writings. The strengths of the book are its robust challenge to many scholarly presuppositions and an impetus to new research on Paul's debt to the Old Testament.

RÉSUMÉ

L'auteur défend la thèse selon laquelle deux axiomes importants ont fait défaut à l'interprétation des écrits pauliniens. Premièrement, l'histoire de la pâque et de l'exode constitue à ses yeux la clé de la pensée de l'apôtre Paul et, en particulier, de sa compréhension de la mort de Jésus. Deuxièmement, il pense que les textes devraient être lus en tenant compte du fait que Paul pense implicitement en termes de communauté et d'alliance. Holland exclut que la littérature du judaïsme du second Temple et les pseudépigraphe soient pertinents pour l'interprétation des écrits pauliniens. La critique sévère de bien des présupposés des spécialistes et la stimulation à explorer la dette de Paul à l'égard de l'Ancien Testament sont les points forts de ce livre.

ZUSAMMENFASSUNG

Die These dieses Buches lautet, dass zwei wichtige Axiome bei der Interpretation der paulinischen Schriften bisher gefehlt haben. Das erste besteht darin, dass die Geschichte vom Passah und vom Exodus der interpretative Schlüssel zur paulinischen Gedankenwelt und insbesondere zu seiner Interpretation des Todes Jesu ist. Die zweite Linse lautet, dass die paulinischen Schriften als solche gelesen werden sollen, die in ihrem Ansatz implizit gemeinschafts- und bundesorientiert sind. Holland schließt die Literatur des Judentums der Periode des zweiten Tempels und die pseudographischen Schriften bei der Interpretation der paulinischen Schriften aus. Die Stärken des Buches liegen in seiner robusten Herausforderung vieler wissenschaftlicher Voraussetzungen und in einem Anstoß zu neuer Forschung