

to investigate the potential of visual art, theatre, architecture, etc. in living with wonder-full wisdom. Overall, whether one is interested in learning more about Old Testament literature or gaining theological and practical insights for living wisely today, this is an excellent place to begin, orienting us toward God's world and Word in which God continues to reveal his Wisdom.

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*Constructing Jesus: Memory, Imagination,
and History*

Dale C. Allison

London: SPCK, 2010, xxix + 588 pp., £25.00, pb.;
ISBN 978-0-801-03585-2

ZUSAMMENFASSUNG

Der Autor nimmt einen hermeneutischen und exegetischen Bruch mit der traditionellen Leben-Jesu-Forschung vor. Statt mit den besonderen Logia des Dienstes von Jesus zu beginnen und nur in der Folge danach zu trachten, diese Einzelheiten mit einem allgemeinen, rekonstruierten Bild des Historischen in Verbindung zu bringen, bietet Allison eine umfangreiche Abhandlung zeitgenössischer Studien über die Funktion der Erinnerung. Dabei legt er die Deutung nahe, dass das Gedächtnis dann am genauesten funktioniert, wenn das umfassende allgemeine Bild einer Situation berichtet wird. In verschiedenen synoptischen Kontexten wird die traditionelle Methode, den vorösterlichen Jesus vom nachösterlichen Jesus zu scheiden, größtenteils beiseite gelegt. Allison zeigt klar und präzise die radikale Wende auf, die er vorschlägt.

SUMMARY

The author has provided a hermeneutical and exegetical overturning of the traditional *Leben-Jesu-Forschung*. Rather than moving from the particular logia of Jesus' ministry, and only subsequently seeking to relate these details to a general, reconstructed picture of the historical, Allison supplies a lengthy treatment of contemporary memory studies, suggesting that memory functions most accurately when relating the wider 'gist' of a situation. In differing synoptic contexts, the traditional method of separating the pre- from the post-Easter Jesus is largely done away with. Allison demonstrates with ease and precision the radical hermeneutical turn that he proposes.

RÉSUMÉ

L'auteur opère ici un renversement herméneutique et exégétique de l'approche traditionnelle dans la recherche sur la vie de Jésus. Plutôt que de partir des *logia* particuliers concernant le ministère de Jésus pour seulement ensuite chercher à construire à partir de ces détails une image générale du Jésus historique, Allison se lance dans un long exposé des études contemporaines sur la manière montrant que la mémoire fonctionne de la manière la plus

fiable lorsqu'elle traite de l'élément principal d'une situation. Dans différents contextes synoptiques, la méthode traditionnelle consistant à chercher à séparer l'interprétation post-pascale de l'Église du Jésus pré-pascal doit être largement abandonnée. Allison défend avec aisance et précision sa proposition de changement radical de ligne herméneutique.

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Dale Allison's fourth (and possibly 'final', ix) book on the historical Jesus provides a fresh turn for traditional *Leben-Jesu-Forschung*. He attempts to undercut the kind of criteria widely assumed to be proper to the Synoptic Gospels. In part, this is owing to the inability of memory to re-present the past in any objective sense, 'output does not match input' (5, 435ff). What memory does retain, however, is the 'gist' of an event or person. Having established this perspective on cognitive studies at length (1ff.), Allison can critique the criteria often applied to the historical Jesus, which seeks to elicit authentic logia through a winnowing of the 'ecclesial chaff from the pre-Easter wheat' (10). Rather, he contends, the historical Jesus is to be found in the 'repeating patterns that run throughout the tradition' (23). As such, the Synoptic traditions are our most historically trustworthy statements (15-16), indeed, 'the most reliable statements of all' (19). The 'sins of ecclesial recall' do not corrupt, but crystallize, the historical impact that Jesus had on his contemporaries (see 23ff., where an account of what this looks like, pre-Easter, is outlined). Or stated slightly differently, '[T]he Synoptic evangelists were, for the most part, not writing creative fiction but rather reconfiguring traditions informed by the past' (435).

The outworking of this thesis follows at length. The 'Eschatology of Jesus' (31-220), for example, provides substantial evidence that Jesus himself possessed, in some sense, an apocalyptic eschatology. If our knowledge of the historical Jesus begins with the various impressions that his teaching left on (behind?) the Synoptic tradition, then we find ourselves presented with an ultimatum, '[O]ur choice is not between an apocalyptic Jesus and some other Jesus; it is between an apocalyptic Jesus and no Jesus at all' (47; cf. 82). What ground might we have, in other words, for reading any of the synoptic traditions (and their various logia) as historical, if from the outset we are to disregard the inherent historical dimension behind their editorial presentation?

In his chapter on the 'Christology of Jesus' (221-304), a discussion which has often become hung up on debates surrounding the mind of Christ and messianic self-consciousness, Allison suggests, in tandem with his turn in methodology, that Jesus most likely saw himself as a type of Moses, though indeed greater than Moses, '[W]hen he looked into the future, he saw thrones, including one for himself' (303).

In the 'Discourses of Jesus' (305-386), Allison acknowledges the scholarly trend to assume that Jesus'

teaching was little more than an aphoristic collection of pearls on a string. He admits to his own past hypnotism over the form critical isolation of logia and pericopes (161, cf. 306, 348), and while he accepts some advances of form-critical isolation, he nevertheless provides a critique of key form-critical assumptions by way of comparing Jesus' discourses with other relevant texts in antiquity. A lengthy treatment of Q 6:27-42, for example, suggests that that text is to be understood not as 'an anthology of originally independent logia', but as a 'consistent whole' (351). This is not to suggest that the alleged text is 'a word-perfect transcript of somebody's oral performance', but that it is 'a version or adaptation of a more or less stable composition' (377).

In his treatment of the 'Passion of Jesus', Allison notes John Dominic Crossan's unwillingness to afford the earliest Christians any substantial amount of accessible history (Crossan, *Who Killed Jesus?* San Francisco, 1996). To what extent do the synoptic portrayals of the passion actually reflect the historical event? Allison turns to the Pauline 'memory' of the passion event, asking what we might be able to say of it if we had only Pauline material ('The Death of Jesus Based on Paul Alone', 392-403). He cites extensive evidence to the effect that 'Paul, writing a decade or more before Mark, knew an early passion narrative, a relative or ancestor of what we find in Mark 14-16' (404; cf. 421). Using the methodological contention that memory preserves according to 'impressions', Allison gives further contour: 'Jesus' decision to die, whenever made and whatever the motivation and whatever his precise interpretation, left a vivid impression' (433).

Finally, we find a reflection on 'how much history' we may account for, given Allison's methodological and exegetical work. Unsurprisingly, he confesses to be rather disillusioned with the attempt to get back to original events and sayings, 'a bit like trying to separate streams after they have flowed into a river' (436). Nevertheless, he does not capitulate to a simple dichotomy of 'fact versus fiction'. Non-historical features were present in antiquity (in Graeco-Roman, early Christian and rabbinic literature), though Allison finds few, if any, real parallels in the Synoptics.

In summary, Allison has supplied the reader with a breathtakingly well-researched project. There is a clear move away from 'historicism', yet always toward history (462). Combined with clarity of writing punctuated with frequent wit ('Consistency is the hobgoblin of non-apocalyptic minds', 96; 'We should hold a funeral for the view that Jesus entertained no exalted thoughts about himself', 304), the extensive research lends a credibility and intelligibility that will undoubtedly bring the project to the forefront of historical and hermeneutical scholarship on the Gospels.

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The Acts of the Risen Lord Jesus. Luke's account of God's unfolding plan

New Studies in Biblical Theology 27 (ed. D.A. Carson)

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Nottingham: Apollos / Downers Grove: IVP, 2011
pb, 232pp, £12.99, ISBN 978-1-84474-535-7

SUMMARY

Thompson presents a non-technical, theological introduction to the Acts of the Apostles. Discussions with other theologians are kept in the footnotes and the Greek is transcribed. The author shows how Luke presents an inaugurated eschatology and how the Kingdom of God, the resurrection of Jesus, the position of Israel and the work of the Spirit are key themes in the story. This is a solid study which lacks connections with the practice of the church.

ZUSAMMENFASSUNG

Thompson legt eine nicht technische, theologische Einführung in die Apostelgeschichte vor. Die Auseinandersetzung mit anderen Theologen findet in den Fußnoten statt, und das Griechische ist transkribiert. Der Autor zeigt, wie Lukas eine bereits vorhandene Eschatologie präsentiert und wie als Schlüsselthemen in der Erzählung das Königreich Gottes, die Auferstehung von Jesus und die Position Israels auftreten. Hier handelt es sich um eine aner kennenswerte Studie, der es aber an Bezug zur Praxis in Kirche und Gemeinde mangelt.

RÉSUMÉ

Voici une introduction à la théologie du livre des Actes qui ne se veut pas technique. Les discussions de points de vue d'autres théologiens n'apparaissent que dans les notes de bas de page et les mots grecs sont transcrits. L'auteur montre que Luc développe une eschatologie inaugurée. Le Royaume de Dieu, la résurrection de Jésus, le sort d'Israël et l'œuvre de l'Esprit sont des thèmes clé du récit. L'étude est solide mais ne propose pas d'applications pour la pratique de l'Église.

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Although the author is from New Zealand, studied in the USA and teaches in Australia, this study was largely written in Tyndale House, Cambridge. In the first chapter Thompson shows that Father, Son and Holy Spirit are all three actively involved in the activities of the earliest churches. What happens in Jerusalem is based on God's sovereign plan. Chapter two highlights the importance of the Kingdom of God, the Kingdom of Jesus Son of David, for Acts. The kingdom has come, albeit not yet fully, and its arrival fulfils the hope of Israel. Thompson here also highlights the role of the speeches. Chapter three argues that the inclusion of the gentiles with Israel into one people of God is evidence for the success of God's plan. Here the author argues that in Acts 1:6-8 Jesus *does* answer the disciples' question. Chapter four highlights the work of the Holy Spirit