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"Review of *Mark*"

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and the life and teaching of Jesus and his first followers. Greatly less probable, however, is B.'s further claim that what Acts reports (11:1-18; 15:1-29; 21:20-22) about the controversy surrounding the acceptance and integration of gentile converts answers to the actual situation of the intended readers, who, in his interpretation, were struggling to resolve the same issues with a prefigured memory of Peter and Paul as antagonists in this debate.

Baker devotes the second half of the study (chaps. 3-6) to examining the entire Acts narrative, in which he comments on those features that invite readers to view Peter and Paul as "prototypical" leaders who continue, equally and harmoniously, the mission initiated by Jesus. The first half of Acts (1:1-15:29), B. argues, credits Peter and Paul with establishing the essential norms that define what it means to be a Christian: belief in Jesus as the resurrected Messiah and the demonstration of that belief in the "boundary-crossing rituals" of baptism and reception of the Holy Spirit. Certain dietary and moral regulations are set in place for the sake of table fellowship, while Jewish converts are left free to observe their ancestral customs. The second half of Acts (15:30-28:31) responds directly to those who remember Paul with suspicion as the divisive champion of freedom from the Mosaic law. The narrative invites readers to remember Paul as an exemplary leader who never faltered in his commitment to the beliefs and practices of his fellow Jews. At the end of the book B. offers a brief summary of his conclusions, an extensive bibliography, and indexes of ancient sources, modern authors, and important topics.

This study will certainly appeal to those who have confidence in the usefulness of sociological models for NT exegesis, although those more skeptical will find much to confirm their reservations. Particularly problematic, in my judgment, is B.'s reconstruction of the historical situation of Acts. It is hard to avoid the conclusion that his heuristic model has, in fact, predetermined the historical conclusions he draws from what Acts narrates about the controversy surrounding the gentile mission (see pp. 55-56, 62-69). No less troubling are B.'s highly selective readings, which leave unexamined those details that appear to disconfirm his hypothesis. Why, for example, is there no reference in the text to tensions between Jewish and gentile converts in Antioch, where the first mixed community appears (11:19-26), or in Ephesus, where the text allegedly originates (19:1-41)? What about the attention given to groups defined by nonethnic criteria, such as clan affiliation (Samaritans, see Luke 17:18), religious disposition (God-fearers), or language (Hellenists and Hebrews)? What is to be said of Paul's repeated avowal that the main issue of dispute is not his loyalty to Judaism but his belief in the resurrection (23:6; 24:21; 26:22-23; 28:17-20)? Finally, the book is marred by proofreading errors (a glaring example appears in the title of chap. 4 [p. 109]: "The Second Narrative Block [81:b-12:25]"), and many Greek words are printed with incorrect letters and accents. These critical comments notwithstanding, B. is to be commended for investigating with diligence and creativity the social concerns that occupied the author and the audience of Acts.

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C. CLIFTON BLACK, *Mark* (ANTC; Nashville: Abingdon, 2011). Pp. 406. Paper \$27.

"Mark is a book about God's shattering of human expectations; Mark as a book shatters everything its readers thought they understood" (p. 362). So concludes C. Clifton Black

in his commentary on Mark's Gospel. One could well add that B.'s work shatters everything, or nearly everything, that biblicists have come to expect from a commentary. Whereas all too often one approaches commentaries as if they were dictionaries, that is, to see what the exegete says about a particular verse, anyone trying such an approach with this volume will find that tack neither easy nor useful. B.'s contribution is above and beyond most books in the genre.

The layout offers no chapters dividing the Gospel into tidy units, such as "Jesus' Miracles and Healings" or "Jesus and Sinners." The Table of Contents is well delineated and informative, but it reads episodically, with succinct descriptions: "Parables and Perception (4:10-12)" and "A Christological Interlude (9:2-29)." The style matches what B. writes about the evangelist: "Mark's genius lies not in telling a story about Jesus, but in creating conditions under which the reader may *experience* the peculiar quality of God's good news (1:4)" (p. 38; emphasis original). Indeed, B.'s *Mark* helps readers experience the Gospel text.

In addition to its presentation of Mark's text, B.'s work possesses other strengths. While holding that the account of Jesus' curing the man with the withered hand on the Sabbath (3:1-7) is a transitional passage, B. elucidates the full irony of the pericope: "The throngs' attraction to Jesus inverts the response of Pharisees and Herodians so repulsed by him that they plot his elimination (3:6). Yet, by nearly crushing him, the multitudes also threaten Jesus' well-being" (p. 103). Such nuances are typical of what B. draws out.

Black brings originality and insight to his interpretations. One of the most noteworthy examples is his treatment of the messianic secret: he offers nothing specific on the subject. One can find it in the index, but after a few citations the reader is referred to "mystery/secrecy," thus situating the topic within the whole Gospel context in which christological mystery is a dominant theme. Moreover, as B. explains, Jesus' commands for silence have more to do with the situation at hand and with stifling misunderstandings (p. 104). The messianic secret is really about how the kingdom of God is open to those truly seeking it (4:3-34) and then finding it in God's eschatological agent, Jesus (p. 148).

Where his explanation may not be sufficient to demonstrate a particular point, B. provides over twenty clear and uncomplicated tables. Eight diagram the Gospel's overall structure; these reveal interesting points in the Marcan makeup. The first three lay out a chiasmic framework for 2:1-36; 4:1-34; and 4:35-6:6a, respectively. From this treatment one could conclude that the whole structure of Mark could be seen as a series of chiasms or even one great chiasm. B. does not allow such an easy conclusion. Chiasm is but one framework Mark employs; subsequent passages are arranged as a narrative line, a liturgical prayer, a tripartite structure, and interludes. The conclusion I drew is that the evangelist exercises a range of methods but does not rely on any one exclusively.

If one were to select B.'s major contribution, it would be his discussion of Mark 16, the resurrection narratives. In nearly thirty pages, B. offers a view of 16:9-20 distinct from the dual approaches commonly proffered: either these verses are not original to Mark and therefore should not be considered canonical, or these verses, though not original, have become "effectively canonized" and therefore should be treated as such (p. 359). Rather, B. champions the Longer Endings as ancient commentaries on the Gospel independent of the evangelist's own viewpoint. Both provide glimpses into the early church's understanding of its own Scriptures and call subsequent exegetes to some humility in making their own conclusions.

Black's *Mark* is also an enjoyable read, with references to Mozart, Beethoven, and Mahler as well as Alfred Hitchcock and Agatha Christie. There is even the occasional chuckle, as in the parable of the Mustard Seed, where Mark compares the tiniest of seeds with the greatest of all vegetables, that is, zucchini (p. 128). A scriptural index would have been helpful. The book is recommended for undergraduate honors programs, graduate students, and researchers.

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DARRELL L. BOCK, *A Theology of Luke and Acts: God's Promised Program, Realized for All Nations* (Biblical Theology of the New Testament; Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2012). Pp. 495. \$39.99.

This is the second of eight volumes projected in a series entitled Biblical Theology of the New Testament, under the editorship of Andreas J. Köstenberger of Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary in Wake Forest, NC. Köstenberger's own volume on the theology of John's Gospel and Letters was published in 2009 (see *CBQ* 73 [2011] 164-65). The stated approach is that each volume will include: (1) a survey of recent scholarship and of the state of research, (2) a treatment of the relevant introductory issues, (3) a thematic commentary following the narrative flow, (4) a treatment of important individual themes, and (5) discussions of the relation of the text to the rest of the NT and the Bible.

The present volume reaps the harvest of the study of Luke and Acts over the last thirty years by Darrell Bock of Dallas Theological Seminary; his work began with his dissertation at the University of Aberdeen under the direction of I. Howard Marshall on the use of the OT for christology in Luke-Acts. He fulfills the aims of the series very well, and with his command of the scholarship he is able to present not only a study of Lucan theology but a masterly introduction to the whole field.

The book is divided into three unequal parts, with a long study of the major theological themes flanked by an introduction including a narrative survey of the two volumes and a conclusion including an assessment of Luke's place in the NT canon. Bock has a nuanced approach to the historical issues that is critical but not skeptical, a welcome relief from some of the extremes of the Haenchen school.

Bock follows the recent work of Richard Burridge (e.g., *What Are the Gospels? A Comparison with Graeco-Roman Biography* [SNTSMS 70; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992]), which breaks with much analysis of the last century arguing for the uniqueness of the gospel genre, and locates the NT Gospels within the field of Greco-Roman biography. Regarding the genre of Acts, B. cites approvingly the work of his mentor Martin Hengel, which maintains that, though Acts does not have the Hellenistic form of acts celebrating the deeds of a single great individual, it has the corresponding form of a historical monograph, with some of the same attributes more widely diffused.

In chap. 6, under "Major Theological Themes," B. describes the canopy under which the many aspects of Luke's theology, especially the roles of the members of the Trinity, are discussed: "The God of Promise, Fulfillment, and Salvation." The meaning of salvation for Luke receives extended treatment, along with the question of the correspondences between



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