

1-1-2001

## Review of "Who is Jesus? History in Perfect Tense" by Leander E. Keck

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stories in this mostly readable volume. Her theoretical approach is feminist and literary—emphasizing the reader’s response—and heavily influenced by the psychoanalytic theory of Freud and Lacan. She focuses on those biblical stories that bring to the forefront the “dysfunctional” family, defined as “those family relationships that are proscribed in the text and hence contrary to the societal norms embedded within the Hebrew Bible” (8).

After describing her approach, R. begins by examining the sexual relations prohibited in the biblical tradition: incest, adultery, prostitution, and homosexuality. She correctly notes that “legitimate” human sexuality is defined in relation to the heterosexual male, and discusses the implications for understanding biblical Israel as a phallic society—a society in which the human penis is the explicit, emblematic, and exclusive symbol of community membership and religious identity. In the remainder of the book, R. illustrates how this phallicism is encoded in the text of the Hebrew Bible. She reads the stories of Adam (God) and Eve, Moses and his rod, Noah’s drunkenness before Ham, and Lot and his daughters against the backdrop of Freud’s Oedipal complex. Similarly, in the stories of sibling rivalry—Jacob and Esau, Amnon and Tamar (Absalom), and Cain and Abel—she finds examples in which Oedipal feelings associated with the parents are displaced to the sibling. Her readings are also framed by reference to works of art and literature.

R.’s interpretations are creative and original, though also idiosyncratic. The value of her interpretations, however, will largely depend on whether one values the contribution of psychoanalytic literary theory or a reader’s response approach to the Bible. Although provocative and fun to read, many who value the historical and social contexts of the biblical narratives will find her interpretations unconvincing or uninteresting. R.’s interpretations provide insight into her own response to the biblical stories in the light of Freudian and Lacanian psychoanalysis, but they give little insight into understanding the sto-

ries within the historical and social contexts in which they were composed and told.

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WHO IS JESUS? HISTORY IN PERFECT TENSE. By Leander E. Keck. *Studies on Personalities of the New Testament*. Columbia, S.C.: University of South Carolina, 2000. Pp. x + 207. \$24.95.

This work represents Leander Keck’s mature reflections on a topic that has engaged him since his 1957 Yale dissertation. The book grew out of 1995 and 1998 lectures, with an added chapter (3) on Jesus the teacher. It retains an engaging oral style, with pleasant humor.

K. moves beyond historical questions about “Who was Jesus” to “Who is Jesus.” His subtitle refers to the perfect tense of the Greek verb that stresses continuing moral and theological import of completed (historical) action. K. claims that Christians do not internalize Jesus himself, but an image of him (167, 170). As criteria for “self-viewing are socially conditioned into ‘conscience,’ so the internalization of Jesus occurs in the community that looks to Jesus and in which the Jesus story is told and retold” (175). Because of the importance of Jesus’ image, history remains the key to preserving Jesus’ otherness. Chapters on Jesus’ Jewishness, kingdom preaching, crucifixion, and role as judge accentuate his otherness.

K. stresses the importance of history for respecting the integrity of the past in images of Jesus. His approach, however, seems ultimately Protestant in almost exclusively focusing on Scripture’s “image” of Jesus. A more Catholic (even Pauline) approach would internalize not only Jesus’ Scripture-derived image but Jesus himself, the living Jesus of resurrection faith. K.’s mention of a community internalization of Jesus (175) would be enriched by an emphasis on the Church as living body of Christ, not just the society “that hands on the Jesus story and relies on it” (169). I would like to have seen K. dialogue with Luke Timothy Johnson’s *The Living Jesus* (1999). K.’s emphasis on Jesus’ current

identity beyond historical reconstructions would profit by Johnson's emphasis not on a "dead Jesus" of history, but on the risen Jesus now living and interacting with those who believe in him.

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THE FOUR GOSPELS AND THE ONE GOSPEL OF JESUS CHRIST: AN INVESTIGATION OF THE COLLECTION AND ORIGIN OF THE CANONICAL GOSPELS. By Martin Hengel. Translated from the German by John Bowden. Harrisburg, Pa.: Trinity, 2000. Pp. xii + 354. \$30.

Martin Hengel, emeritus professor of New Testament and Early Judaism at the University of Tübingen, offers a very bold and provocative account of the origins of the four Gospels. Convinced that we have had enough literary-critical hypotheses, H. provides a mainly historical argument based on his thorough investigation of the early Church Fathers.

H. argues persuasively that the titles of each of the four Gospels were not secondary additions but part of each Gospel from the beginning of its circulation. The Gospels did not first circulate anonymously, as is often thought. Furthermore, contrary to conventional wisdom, H. intriguingly holds that each Gospel was written from the beginning not just for a particular community but for the whole Church.

With regard to the historical order of the Gospels, H. asserts that Mark is the earliest (ca. 70), written in Rome and based on Petrine tradition. The title "gospel" for the Jesus narrative arose from Mark—the John Mark from Jerusalem as mentioned in the New Testament. Luke (ca. 75–80), whose author is a gentile "God-fearer" and the companion of Paul, used Mark, a logia source(s), and other unrecoverable sources. Matthew (ca. 90–100) is the first Gospel to be attributed to an Apostle. The author, a Jewish Christian from southern Syria, utilized primarily Mark and a logia source(s), but also Luke. H. maintains that an original "Q" sayings source cannot be reconstructed. The Gospel of John (ca. 100–105) was written by the

Apostle John in Ephesus with knowledge of Mark and Luke. There is an overall unity in the multiplicity of the four gospel narratives and the gospel proclamation of Paul.

Although H.'s unconventional ideas will not convince everyone, his erudite and fascinating argumentation deserves serious consideration. This stimulating tome will force many to rethink their positions regarding Gospel origins.

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UNDERSTANDING EARLY CHRISTIAN ART. By Robin Margaret Jensen. New York: Routledge, 2000. Pp. xii + 221. \$25.99.

In the past two centuries there have been few books on Christian iconography published in the English language. Among them one can count important contributions made by some Protestant women: Anna Jameson and Mrs. Clement in the 19th century and Jane Dillenberger in the 20th century. Now Robin Margaret Jensen deservedly adds her name to this illustrious list with a study of early Christian art, its symbols and its themes. J., of Andover Newton Theological School, has produced a valuable primer on the subject. Beginning with an awareness of the conflict that has historically existed between scholars of Christian texts and scholars of images, J. skillfully negotiates the biases of the two camps and reexamines the art for interpretive clues suggested in the literature of the period. Her approach fortifies the notion of Christian art emerging from a complex but receptive community of believers who considered visual material to be a legitimate expression of faith.

The scope of J.'s book is useful. She begins by analyzing the Christian application of classical symbols in non-narrative images and progresses to an exegesis of the pictorial "types" recurrent in catacomb art and sarcophagus sculpture. Themes like the Good Shepherd, Jonah, Abraham and Isaac, Noah, and Daniel are deftly treated. But her work centers on the early images of Christ, both as the incarnate God and