

introduction to the issues which enables the novice to plot a personal course through rough terrain.

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Stein, Robert H. *The Gospels and Tradition: Studies on Redaction Criticism of the Synoptic Gospels*. Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1991. 208 pp. \$10.95.

Gospels and Tradition by Robert H. Stein apparently attempts to introduce conservative Christians to the discipline of redaction criticism, complete with praise of the merits and warnings of the dangers involved in the methodology. Stein endeavors to play a mediating role between evangelical theology and critical biblical studies. His efforts, though worthy, are not always successful from the viewpoint of either party. Furthermore, the effectiveness of the book is limited by its being a collection of discrete elements rather than a continuous narrative.

The nine chapters in *Gospels and Tradition* are reprintings of various articles published by Stein between 1969 and 1983, combined with a paper read to the Evangelical Theological Society in 1982. The preface provides a bibliography of the original publication information for the chapters as found in the book. The introduction provides a brief report on the surge and decline of redaction critical studies, a statement of the central premise of the priority of Mark, and a warning concerning what redaction criticism can and cannot do. Stein defines redaction criticism as "the attempt to ascertain the unique theological purpose or purposes, views, and emphases that the Evangelists have imposed upon the materials available to them" (30).

The first chapter is a brief account of the rise of redaction criticism. It contains a short definition of the term and a description of how redaction criticism differs from form criticism.

Chapter 2 uses Luke 1:1-4 to illustrate three distinct *Sitze im Leben* visible within the Gospels. Stein identifies these "situations" as (1) the events themselves, (2) the oral handing on of these events, and (3) the recording of the oral traditions both in their initial forms (which Gospel writers like Luke himself used) and in their reuse in the Gospels as we know them. This recognition of the existence of different layers in the tradition is, indeed, foundational to redaction-critical study.

In chapter 3, Stein identifies and gives examples of recognized categories of Mark's redactional activities, which involve: (1) connectors between individual pericopes (story units); (2) insertions into the tradition; (3) composed summaries; (4) created pericopes; (5) modifications, selections, omissions, and arrangements of material; (6) composition of an introduction to the Gospel; (7) composition of a conclusion for the Gospel; (8) vocabulary; and (9) Christological titles.

Stein's examination of a Marcan seam (1:21-22) in chapter 4 attempts to apply the procedures of redaction criticism to this passage in order to demonstrate the methodology in practice.

Chapters 5 and 7 concern themselves with resurrection appearances, chapter 5 arguing that Mark 9:2-8 dealing with the transfiguration is not a misplaced resurrection account, and chapter 7 arguing that both Mark 14:28 and 16:7 are references to Jesus' resurrection and not to the parousia.

Chapter 6 endeavors to illustrate the value of redaction criticism in practical ways by addressing the question of whether the cleansing of the temple in Mark 11:15-19 was understood by Mark as an act to reform Jewish worship or as judgment upon Israel.

Chapter 8 is a brief lexical statement of the differences between the terms "authentic" and "authoritative" as utilized in the study of the sayings of Jesus. It has an additional purpose: to suggest a continuity between Jesus' own words and the interpretation placed on those words by the NT.

The final chapter provides a helpful description of the basic criteria for authenticity. However, its conclusion extends beyond the reasonable bounds of the arguments presented in the chapter. Stein's conclusion to the chapter states, "Finally it should be pointed out that if by the use of these various criteria, certain sayings in our Gospels can in fact be demonstrated as being authentic and this, in turn, can establish a continuity between the historical Jesus and kerygmatic Christ, there is then no a priori reason to be skeptical about the general portrait of Jesus found in our Gospels" (186-187). Throughout the book, the fact that the Gospels are not simply objective documentary works on the life of Jesus, but that each Gospel is a finely honed theological work designed to portray Jesus in the particular light of each author's understanding of Jesus, is kept front and center. The conclusion sounds like a final reassurance to the weak-hearted that this method will not destroy faith in the Gospels' portrayals of Jesus.

Unfortunately, Stein occasionally abandons careful scholarship. Consider, for example, pp. 41-42, where Luke's opening 4 verses are said to refer to the twelve, the seventy, and perhaps Paul and Stephen. Such speculation seems out of place, especially in a book dedicated to careful analysis of what the text says.

This reviewer wishes the book had attempted to be only an introduction to redaction criticism for conservatives. The appearance of yet another book affirming historicity without addressing the contemporary issues of Marcan scholarship (such as Burton Mack's *Myth of Innocence*) is disappointing and dates the book. On the other hand, *The Gospels and Tradition* is a helpful conservative introduction to the extensive editorial activity of the Gospel writers, especially Mark. It is unlikely that anyone could read Stein's book and still feel it necessary to argue that the Gospels were not composed by authors with focused theological interests that led them to connect, interpret, summarize, modify, select, omit, arrange, add to, create, and adjust the foci of the story units regarding Jesus in order to proclaim Him to their individual audiences.