

could identify with the struggle, not only between men and women, but also between their own faith and imperial rule.

The Cradle, the Cross, and the Crown: An Introduction to the New Testament

Andreas Köstenberger, L. Scott Kellum, Charles L. Quarles. Nashville: B & H Publishing Group, 2009.

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The ‘Preface’ to *The Cradle, the Cross, and the Crown* states that its *modus operandi* has its source in two texts from the pastorals: 2 Timothy 2:15 (the exhortation to be diligent in deeds and teachings), and 2 Timothy 3:16 (that Scripture is ‘inspired’). Köstenberger *et al* maintain that diligent study in all questions relating to the NT—the history of the documents, the literary genre and theological teaching—is imperative for a correct understanding of these books. Thus the authors seek to explore these facets in connection with contemporary scholarship.

The book is divided into five major sections. *Part One* overviews the nature of the NT writings, including questions regarding the canon (the Protestant canon *sans* apocrypha is defended), pseudepigrapha (which is rejected for any NT book), textual criticism, Bible translations, and the issues of biblical inspiration and inerrancy. This last section, succinct in style and apologetic in nature, can be read with profit by anyone who wishes to understand an *evangelical* perspective of these doctrines.

Part Two addresses the Gospels. Chapter three, “Jesus and the Relationship Between the Gospels” contends with questions and issues about the ‘quests’ concerning the ‘historical’ Jesus, noncanonical sayings of Jesus, as well as the Synoptic problem. The editors argue that the Gospel portrayal of Jesus is in fact historical and theological, both aspects being historically reliable. This section alone covers over 70 pages and nearly 250 footnotes, which gives the reader a good idea of the amount of research and detail covered.

Part Three introduces the book of Acts and the Pauline corpus of letters. Instead of approaching the letters from a canonical order, they approach Paul from a *chronological* perspective thus beginning with Galatians, and ending with Titus. All of this is done while correlating the letters of Paul with the chronology of Acts. This is an interesting change, since it reveals the authors’ contention that the Paul of the letters is identical with the Paul of Acts, all the while anchoring the Pauline letters (when possible) within the panorama of Acts.

Part Four brings us to the General Epistles and Revelation. Here issues of pseudepigraphy and pseudonymity are discussed in detail, and the varying schools of interpretation concerning the book of Revelation are explained and evaluated.

Lastly, *Part Five* is a single chapter devoted to the unity and diversity within the NT—a discussion not unlike that of Dunn and Wenham.

There are six 'distinctives' describing their work: it is User-friendly, Comprehensive, Conservative, Balanced, Up-to-date, and Spiritually nurturing. These six distinctives quite accurately describe the volume at hand, and the authors generally succeed in this regard. There is an Outline and Unit-by-Unit Discussion for the NT writings providing exegetical and historical analysis, to which is appended a separate Theological section, where the basic theology of each book is discussed. Furthermore, the book is replete with Sidebars, Tables, and Text-boxes, all of which contain detailed discussion or ethical/spiritual precepts contributing further to the treatment of the text. At the beginning of each chapter there is a brief summary of the topics discussed as well as the minimum knowledge required of the student, and each chapter closes with review questions helping students focus on the main points discussed (all organized quite systematically, facilitating their use).

The authors appropriately interact with the wealth of non-biblical writings, in particular the church fathers, although actual citations from the fathers could have been presented more frequently. Further exposure to non-biblical writings pertinent to NT studies would have been an asset—perhaps even an appendix containing the primary non-canonical texts which would allow immediate access to these important writings.

Admittedly, the authors seek to provide the undergraduate student a conservative (read, conservative *evangelical*) approach to the NT. This can be seen in numerous instances where their conclusions differ significantly from numerous contemporary scholars, i.e. the authorship of the Gospels, the rejection of pseudepigraphy for the catholic letters, the Pauline authorship of the pastorals, the compatibility of unity and diversity within the NT, etc. Students must be exposed to varying perspectives and schools of thought within the NT world in order to appreciate the strengths and weaknesses of each position. In this respect, *Cradle* is certainly one of the best evangelical introductions to the NT published so far, and it should be consistently used alongside other standard Introductions, such as those by Ehrman, Brown, and Köster. Non-Evangelicals need to take seriously views from an evangelical perspective, and professors wishing to provide their students with perspectives from both sides of the coin will do no better than commend *Cradle* as required reading.