

***Jesus and Archaeology.* Edited by James H. Charlesworth. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, xxv + 740 pages. Softcover, \$50.00.**

Recent searches for the historical Jesus attempt to set Jesus free from centuries of theological overlay. Ironically, the attempt to set Jesus within his first-century context has tended to recast Jesus in the image of the particular theology of various New Testament scholars of the twenty-first century. While biblical archaeology has emphasized research into Old Testament sites, there has been a quiet trend of research into sites associated with the New Testament period. While archaeology of the second temple period has focused on the Hellenistic and Roman political structure, several scholars are now addressing currents in New Testament studies with the results of archaeological investigation. Unfortunately, these trends have not impacted the wider attempt to place Jesus in his historical context. The publication of *Jesus and Archaeology* solves this problem. This book is an excellent example of the coalescing of archaeological and textual data to address issues of the historical Jesus.

This book is a collection of papers presented at a conference held to celebrate the new millennium. It contains contributions by thirty-one Christian and Jewish scholars in the fields of historic Jesus studies and archaeology of the second temple period. Most of the scholars are either archaeologists or historians. Each contributor excels at presenting their data in the context of the life and times of ancient Palestine during the early Roman period (e.g., during the life of Jesus). All the articles purposefully integrate material culture and text. Several of the contributors purposefully address the context of Jesus' teachings within his cultural and sociological environment.

The book is divided into two major parts: the first part is entitled "Studies in Archaeology." It contains twenty-four essays dealing with the archaeological data. Several essays are site reports (e.g., Sepphoris, Cana, Bethsaida, Mount Tabor, Beth Alpha, Mount Zion, Ramat Hanadiv, En Gedi, and Qumran) or regional reports (e.g., "Between Jerusalem and the Galilee: Samaria in the Time of Jesus"). In addition to site reports, various architectural elements and epigraphic and textual data are discussed. Some essays deal with historical figures (e.g., "Excavating Caiaphas, Pilate, and Simon of Cyrene: Assessing the Literary and Archaeological Evidence"). The second part is entitled "Archaeology and Theology" and contains six articles addressing the historicity of the Gospel of John, early Christology, and the resurrection. An introductory essay on "What is Biblical Archaeology" by A. Biran and a synthetic overview by the editor, "Jesus Research and Archaeology: A New Perspective," provide useful frameworks for the importance of the research for New Testament studies. In addition, Charlesworth provides a conclusion that places Biblical Archaeology of the New Testament within a broader research agenda.

While the book is not a synthetic work, it is still valuable for classroom use as a complementary text for the backgrounds to the life and times of Jesus or Gospel studies. It is well written with the non-special-

ist in mind, providing a selected bibliography, glossary, and index of scripture and other ancient texts. This book is a required reference for every student and scholar of the New Testament. It will provide many new insights into the historical, cultural, and political context of the world of Jesus.

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John. By Andreas J. Köstenberger. Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2004. 700 pages. Hardcover, \$44.99.

Andreas Köstenberger, professor of New Testament and director of Ph.D. and Th.M. studies at Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary, has written a number of significant works on the Gospel of John of various lengths. He therefore brings much previous reflection to the task of writing a significant commentary on John.

Köstenberger presents his commentary as one that examines John with respect to history, theology, and literary art (xi-xii). He finds much evidence in John in favor of its historical reliability and brings this out. Readers, especially conservative readers, will appreciate this attempt to hold together history and theology, while paying attention to helpful literary observations that have come to light and are coming to light through recent focus on the literary dimension of John. At the end of the day, it is Köstenberger's attention to historical background and historical reliability that stands out. He defends the reliability of John at a time when this is not popular in the broader academy of biblical scholarship. Sometimes he does this by providing evidence that John could be correct in his knowledge about a place like Bethesda (177-78). Another way he does this is by providing evidence that John and the Synoptic Gospels agree about the day on which Jesus was crucified (537, 551). Helpful footnotes direct one to places where one could do further research on these points. The indexes are also quite thorough and helpful for locating information relevant to many topics of interest.

Given the multiple commentaries that are available, this commentary will be a valuable addition for those who care about historical reliability issues in John. It is also a welcome addition in the Evangelical tradition in that it makes reference to recent scholarship through a consistent use of substantive footnotes. It is more up-to-date in this respect than reliable Evangelical commentaries like those of D. A. Carson and Leon Morris. The judicious use of footnotes also means that this commentary is quite accessible for a variety of readers. Pastors and teachers will especially benefit from Köstenberger's distillation in one place of much useful information that one can bring to bear on the interpretation and proclamation of the Gospel of John.

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