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Kirk's "A man attested by God: The human Jesus of the synoptic gospels" (Book Review)

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This board book would be a good asset for home or nursery purchases. Its sturdy design will allow it to be used for a long time with little concern for the wear.

Reviewer

Jennifer A. Rich, Hope International University

Kirk, J. R. D. (2016). *A man attested by God: The human Jesus of the synoptic gospels*. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans. 638 pp. \$43.10. ISBN 0802867952

J. R. Daniel Kirk holds a doctorate in New Testament from Duke University. Kirk argues in *A Man Attested by God: The Human Jesus of the Synoptic Gospels* that one must read the synoptic gospels through the paradigm of an idealized human being, which is described as humans playing “roles that properly belong to God alone, without redefining ‘Jewish monotheism’” (p. 2). If one were to focus primarily on the synoptic gospels in order to determine the divinity of Jesus they unfortunately miss the distinct human nature of Jesus which is on full display. For Kirk, a human Jesus is necessary as he “shares in the identity of God in ways analogous to what idealized human figures are supposed to do throughout the stories of early Judaism” (p. 582). Thus, Jesus should be interpreted in the synoptic gospels hermeneutically as an idealized human being.

Kirk emphasizes that it was his former teacher Dan McCartney that placed the seed for this present volume. For McCartney, he interprets the entire New Testament through the lens of an idealized human being. Kirk takes that concepts and gives special attention to the Synoptic Gospels (p. 1). Kirk describes his book as primarily being “concerned with issues of literary and historical-critical exegesis,” however he does note that further theological explorations are necessary (p. 578).

Overall, this is a study concerning the Christology of the Synoptic Gospels. This project is not a study of the historical Jesus (p. 9). It is not a theory of Christian origins (p. 13); nor is it a “full-orbed Christian Christology” (p. 15). Instead, Kirk argues that the preferred reading of the Synoptic Gospels is one that “demonstrates Jesus to be the messiah and lord,” rather than merely concluding that Jesus is “preexistent or otherwise divine” (p. 39). Kirk’s volume is scholarly in nature and accomplishes his goal to present the reader with a unique method of interpreting the Synoptic Gospels.

Reviewer

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