

Michael J. Gorman, *Apostle of the Crucified Lord: A Theological Introduction to Paul and His Letters*, Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2004. 618pp. \$39.00, paper.

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Michael Gorman teaches New Testament at St. Mary's Seminary and University in Baltimore, Maryland, where he is also dean of the Ecumenical Institute of Theology. He has produced a textbook that is a cross between a Pauline theology and an introduction to Paul's life and letters. The format of the book is attractive and user-friendly, and Gorman's writing style is both engaging and fresh. The text is accompanied by relevant maps of Paul's journeys and the cities in which he ministered, and each chapter is concluded with questions for reflection and an annotated bibliography pointing students to related reading for further study. Of special note also are some helpful photographs in the book, such as the one of an ancient letter written on papyrus, which is rolled and sealed for delivery (80).

The first six chapters introduce the reader to Paul's context and ideas, followed by a chapter on each of Paul's thirteen letters. The first chapter on the Greco-Roman context of Paul's mission includes informative summaries of Paul's Jewish contemporaries and the issues generated by the "new perspective." Especially helpful is Gorman's discussion of the light shed on Paul's context by the Roman Imperial Cult. This first chapter is followed by chapters on Paul's mission, his letters and what they were intended to do, his gospel, his spirituality, and his theology. The chapters on the thirteen letters situate the documents in Paul's life, introduce major themes, and then briefly summarize the message of the letter's major sections.

Gorman makes productive use of recent scholarship on Paul, providing helpful overviews of major topics. For this reason, this book will be useful to scholars who are not Pauline specialists but nevertheless have occasion to teach on Paul in introductory surveys of the New Testament.

Several aspects of the volume, however, make it unfit for use in evangelical classrooms. This includes an acceptance of pseudonymous authorship of Paul's first letter to Timothy and his letter to Titus. Gorman's discussion of these issues does not deal with the early church's rejection of pseudonymous writings, glosses over the ethical problem of a Christian author deliberately deceiving his intended readers, and concludes that whoever wrote these documents was so good at imitating Paul that he fooled everyone for 1800 years, and yet he was such a bumblehead that modern scholars easily detect his hand.

Gorman also tends to invite disagreement with the Bible on the gender issue. Clear and compelling explanations of the disputed texts—1 Corinthians 11 and 14, 1 Timothy 2—are available in such volumes as *Recovering Biblical Manhood and Womanhood* and *Evangelical Feminism and Biblical Truth*. When Gorman comes to 1 Corinthians 11, Paul's words are labelled "confusing remarks" (265), and 1 Corinthians 14:33–35 is "another confusing text" (276). The interpretation of these texts is difficult, to be sure, but they can be coherently interpreted if we are willing to let Paul speak. The issue is exacerbated in the discussion of 1 Timothy, where it is tacitly assumed that the "patriarchy many find in the text" needs to be blunted, if it is really there at all (560, cf. 551). The fourth question for reflection at the end of this chapter then treats the rejection of the Bible's teaching as a live option when students are

invited to consider, “Which aspects of 1 Timothy’s ministerial charge to Timothy should be (a) appropriated, (b) modified, or (c) rejected today?” (570). Those for whom the Bible is authoritative do not reject its teaching, nor should we present the outright rejection of what the Bible says as a way to deal with its statements that do not conform to modern Western notions of right and wrong. We seek to be transformed by the renewing of our minds through the Bible, not to be liberated from it that we might be conformed to this world (Rom 12:2).

For evangelical classrooms, a better introduction to Paul’s letters may be found in John Polhill’s *Paul and His Letters*, and the best Pauline theology is Thomas R. Schreiner’s *Paul: Apostle of God’s Glory in Christ*.

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