

ROBERT H. GUNDRY

*Peter – False Disciple and Apostate according to Saint Matthew*Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2015, Paperback, 139 pages,
\$20.00, ISBN: 978-0-8028-7293-7

In *Peter: False Disciple and Apostate according to Saint Matthew*, Robert H. Gundry attempts at overturning the scholarly consensus that Matthew has a positive view of Peter, and instead claiming that Matthew portrays Peter as an apostate “headed for hell” (104). Although rather extreme in its conclusion, this is a thought provoking redaction critical study encouraging scholars to interact with the Matthean text from a new perspective.

In his first chapter, Gundry positions his study in the discussions concerning both the historical Peter and Peter as literary figure that have followed Oscar Cullman’s classic study on the subject (O. Cullman, *Petrus: Jünger – Apostel – Märtyrer*) from 1952. Gundry is dealing neither with the historical nor the received Peter, but rather with Matthew’s distinctive portrayal of the apostle.

Chapter two deals with Peter in Matthew prior to the key passage in Matt 16:13–23. Gundry notes that in contrast to Mark, Matthew does not indicate that Peter is an honorific name given by Jesus in this part of his gospel. The designation of Peter as $\pi\rho\tilde{\omega}\tau\omicron\varsigma$ in Matt 10:2 is connected to Matt 19:30, where many “first ones” will be “last ones.” Matthew’s addition of Peter walking on water is viewed as a negative portrayal of Peter, since Jesus reproves his lack of faith, whereas those in the boat (i.e. not Peter) confessed Jesus as the Son of God.

The third chapter is devoted to Matt 16:13–23, the key text for examining Matthew’s view of Peter. Yet this chapter contains some of the weakest arguments for Gundry’s proposal. He repeats the argument from his 1982 commentary (*Matthew: A Commentary on His Literary and Theological Art*, Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1982) that if Jesus was really calling Peter a rock, he would rather have said that he would build his rock on “you” rather than “this rock.” However, preferring a different wording for a first-century text is not helpful for discerning its meaning.

In chapter four, Gundry continues to treat other significant Peter-texts. Gundry notes Peter's foolish suggestion at the transfiguration and argues that Jesus corrects Peter when he has answered the authorities that Jesus does pay temple tax. Jesus' reproving of the disciples' falling asleep in Gethsemane is directly aimed at Peter.

In chapter five, dealing with Peter's denials, Gundry argues that Matthew's portrayal of the events should be understood towards the background of the recurring Matthean theme that false disciples would be thrown outside, where there is weeping and gnashing of teeth. He notes that Peter is never rehabilitated in Matthew and replies to a number of proposals that read Peter's rehabilitation into the text. Gundry ends by paralleling Peter with Judas Iscariot, concluding that they both would be excluded from the kingdom of heaven, according to Matthew.

The sixth chapter deals with Matthew's omissions of Peter compared to Mark. Whereas most omissions can probably be explained by Matthew's general abbreviation of Mark, the omission of Peter from Matt 28:7 (par. Mark 16:7) is significant. The women at the tomb are told to tell "the disciples" rather than "the disciples and Peter." Gundry takes this as an indication that Peter is now to be considered a false disciple.

In chapter seven, Gundry studies the concept of false discipleship in Matthew. He concludes that this is a central theme and argues that just as Judas Iscariot was a false disciple although he partook in Jesus' miraculous ministry, so was also Peter. He then goes on in chapter eight, dealing with the view of persecution in Matthew, and concludes that persecution is necessary to expose false disciples such as Peter.

In his final chapter, Gundry suggests some implications of his study. He argues that portraying Peter as a false disciple who was bound for eternal damnation would only be relevant if Peter was still alive when Matthew was composed. He therefore argues that Matthew should be dated previous to the death of Peter in the mid-sixties. Gundry recalls the common idea of placing the composition of Matthew in Antioch and suggests the conflict between Paul and Peter in Gal 2:11–14 as the background for Matthew's anti-Petrine attitude.

Gundry writes with energy and clarity but will probably still have a hard time convincing Matthean scholars of his conclusions. After all, if the author of Matthew intended to portray Peter as a false disciple and apostle heading to hell, nearly 2000 years of interpretation history have proven that this intent has utterly failed.

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RICHARD B. HAYS

Echoes of Scripture in the Gospels

Waco: Baylor University Press, 2016, Hardback, xix + 504 pages,
\$49.95, ISBN: 978-1-481-30947-9

Richard Hays' magisterial study of how the gospels cite, allude to, and echo the Old Testament should become a standard gospel reference work. The complexity and extent of the gospels' intertextual character demonstrate that the evangelists intended for their narratives to be read with the Old Testament in order to interpret rightly the meaning of Jesus. This compelling work demonstrates how the Gospels use Israel's Scriptures to interpret Jesus, not least as the one in whom the God of Israel fulfilled his promise to come to his people.

Hays' ambition in this book is to make us better readers of the gospels. Ever since Old and New Testament theology were separated into two distinct fields, New Testament authors have generally been interpreted in isolation from one another. Hays' point is that this goes against the explicit intention of the authors. In particular, the evangelists inform us that their history belongs to the narrative world of the Old Testament, and that we as readers need to know Israel's Scriptures well in order to draw full conclusions about Jesus from the gospel narrative. At the same time, the gospel writers reinterpret the Old Testament in light of the resurrection. As Jesus explained to his disciples on the road to Emmaus, the only way to understand him is through the Old Testament, and the truest reading of the Old Testament recognizes that it speaks everywhere of Jesus.

To read the gospels well, then, we need to read the evangelists as they expected to be read, identifying the world of the gospels with the world