



Ancient Christian Gospels: Their History and Development

Helmut Koester

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In this magisterial volume, which is destined to become the standard test for studying the tradition and history of the early Christian Gospel literature, the author treats more than a dozen Gospel writings from the first two centuries. These Gospels include more than the standard canonical Gospels, covering also such writings as the Gospel of Thomas, the Apocryphon of James, and the Gospel of Mary and others. The book is divided into six major sections. The first examines the origins and meanings of the term “Gospel.” Then follows a section on early collections of saying including, of course, a study of Q. A third section traces the movement from the dialogue Gospels through narratives about Jesus to the Gospel of John. Mark, Matthew and Luke receive thorough consideration in the fourth section, followed by an exploration of the early extant harmonization’s of the canonical Gospels (Justin martyr, Tatian, Epistula Apostolorum, etc.) The concluding section deals with various Gospel fragments known from papyri and from casual mentions in the church fathers. Throughout Ancient Christian Gospels, the author provides all technical information (attestation, manuscripts, etc.) needed by the scholar, but also translations of all data, general introductions and explanations in an effort to make the book accessible and useful for the general reader. Helmut Koester is John H. Morison Professor of New Testament and Winn Professor of Ecclesiastical History of Harvard University and author of the widely used two-volume Introduction to the New Testament.



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