

Is the apostle Paul given more credit than he deserves by modern scholars? Here is what has (recently) raised the question for me.

As many readers of the blog know, the corpus of early Christian writings known as the “Apostolic Fathers” is a collection of ten (or eleven) proto-orthodox authors who were, for the most part, producing their writings just after the New Testament period. For anyone interested I have a two-volume edition / translation of these important texts, The Apostolic Fathers, in the Loeb Classical Library series (Harvard University Press, 2004) (it gives the original Greek on one side of the page and an English translation on the other) (the books are included, only in English, in my anthology After The New Testament).

These are fascinating books - they include a number of letters (e.g. by Ignatius of Antioch, Polycarp of Smyrna, and one later attributed to Clement of Rome - the last of which was actually written before some of the books of the New Testament), some treatises (e.g., the book of Barnabas), an apocalypse (called “The Shepherd” written by an author named Hermas), and our first full-length account of a martyrdom (of the aforementioned Polycarp).

One of the questions that has long fascinated scholars of these texts is the degree to which their authors were familiar with the writings that later came to be called the New Testament. Just this past year a book came out that explored the relationship of these writings to the letters of Paul (Todd D. Still and David E. Wilhite, eds, The Apostolic Fathers and Paul. T&T Clark, 2017). I read the volume carefully, and found it scholarly and insightful. It made me think about lots of things, but one of them was whether it was a volume that scholars actually needed or not.

Over the past eight years, there have been five other learned books on pretty much the same topic (or closely related ones)....

**The Rest of this post is for members' only. If you don't belong yet, there's is still time for you to join. The End is Near! So fork out now and enjoy the blog while you can. Remember: all proceeds go to charity!**

You need to be logged in to see this part of the content. Please [Login](#) to access.



[Are Paul and Jesus on the Same Page?](#)  
[Was Paul a Misogynist?](#)