

to evaluate prophecy or to teach. He speaks as if everything is perfectly clear, but leaves to the reader the task of resolving what sounds like a rather paradoxical position.

In spite of using a few texts loosely, Grudem has done a good job of highlighting and explaining many facets of a spiritual gift that is more understandable because of his research. In fact, it is a work that must now be reckoned with by anyone who makes a serious study of NT or contemporary charismata.

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MacArthur, John F., Jr. *The Gospel According to Jesus*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1988. 300 pp. \$14.95.

In *The Gospel According to Jesus*, John MacArthur examines the contemporary evangelical debate over the nature of the gospel in the light of the teachings of Jesus as outlined in the four Gospels. Must Jesus be accepted as Lord or only as Saviour? Is regeneration a necessary corollary of justification? The content of the book is divided into three main parts. The first section explores the significance of Jesus' dealings with individuals, such as Nicodemus, the Samaritan woman, and the rich young ruler. The second examines Jesus' illustrations of salvation, such as the parables of the soils, the wheat and the tares, and the hidden treasure. The third focuses on Jesus' key theological terms, such as repentance, faith, salvation, and discipleship. MacArthur concludes from all this that "no one can be saved who is either unwilling to obey Christ or consciously rebellious against the lordship of Christ" (p. xiv). Thus he proclaims what some have come to call "lordship salvation."

In this conclusion, MacArthur takes issue with the gospel teaching of such evangelical scholars as Zane Hodges, Charles C. Ryrie, and Lewis Sperry Chafer. He argues that they encourage people to claim Jesus as Saviour while deferring a commitment to obey Him as Lord. Beyond that, he suggests that the recent foibles of "televangelists" can be blamed on a cheap-grace theology that divorces behavior from faith.

MacArthur laments that contemporary Christians have been conditioned to believe that because they recited a prayer, walked down an aisle, or spoke in tongues, they are saved and should never question that salvation. Jesus, by contrast, asserts that no past experience, not even prophesying or casting out demons, should be viewed as evidence of salvation where there is no ongoing life of obedience (cf. Matt 7:21-23). The gospel is more than just a plea to make a decision or to pray the sinner's prayer; it is a call to follow Jesus in submissive obedience.

The Gospel According to Jesus is aimed at the people in the pew and their pastors rather than scholars. Thus the title is somewhat misleading.

One expects a book that outlines the significance of the gospel concept in the sayings attributed to Jesus in the NT. In fact, however, the book is theological/homiletical in orientation. As homiletics, it is often superb. As exegesis, it has its excellent moments, and MacArthur's conclusions are consistent with the general tenor of the "gospel" as portrayed in the NT. But he exhibits a lack of awareness of the best in current NT scholarship. As a result, his arguments are sometimes grounded on questionable assertions. For example, on page 39 he writes that "the Pharisees were hyper-legalists who externalized religion." This leads him to conclude that Nicodemus believed in salvation by works. While one could get such an impression of the Pharisees from a casual reading of the NT, recent studies in early Judaism suggest that this is at best an oversimplification.

A far more serious weakness is the author's assumption of the essential correctness of the dispensational hermeneutic of the NT. This limits the book's value to readers who share similar presuppositions. Right or wrong, dispensationalists read the NT differently from those who reject dispensational assumptions. Thus, as correct as MacArthur's conclusions may be, the nondispensational reader must always ask to what degree the argument stands or falls on the author's presuppositions. One is left wondering if the distortion of the gospel that MacArthur decries is not inherent in the dispensational system itself (see *AUSS* 22 [1984]: 373-376). Perhaps it is MacArthur who is inconsistent in accepting dispensationalism while denying its implications for the gospel.

The above is not intended to discredit MacArthur's book. While it contains many insights that can be appreciated by a wider audience, its limitations must be noted. As an in-house response in a dispensationalist debate, it is primarily valuable for a lay audience that has been affected by the teachings of MacArthur's opponents. For most readers, another recent Zondervan publication, *Justification by Faith* by Alister McGrath, is much to be preferred. Full of sound scholarship, McGrath's book offers much more convincing support for MacArthur's conclusions.

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Mustard, Andrew G. *James White and SDA Organization: Historical Development, 1844-1881*. Andrews University Seminary Doctoral Dissertation Series, vol. 12. Berrien Springs, MI: Andrews University Press, 1988. vii + 320 pp. Paperback, \$14.95.

Andrew Mustard's dissertation portrays James White as one who "overcame his bias against organized religion to become known as 'the father of church order among Sabbatarians'" (p. 190). He was the "driving force" (p. 1) behind Seventh-day Adventist church organization. Both the