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William R. Farmer, ed. *Anti-Judaism and the Gospels*. Harrisburg: Trinity, 1999. Pp. 319 \$24.00 (Paper).

[1] This volume represents the fruits of a three-year project, featuring Southwestern American New Testament scholars who discuss their research on anti-Judaism and three canonical gospels, Matthew, Luke, and John.

[2] The essay contributors and their respondents are aware of the potentially inflammatory nature of their work on anti-Judaism and the gospels, and their prefatory and closing remarks are ecumenical in tone. Without exception, the scholars recognize that the definition of "anti-Judaism" necessarily governs their hermeneutical presuppositions when working with gospel texts. The project's research committee issued the following working definition for the term "anti-Judaism": "As distinct from the term Anti Semitism, Anti-Judaism is a specifically Christian, theologically driven attitude toward Jews, including concepts of the divine rejection and punishment of Jews, as well as Christian supersessionism and triumphalism" (49). Most of the contributors argue that the gospels were composed in the context of intra-Jewish disputes about the Law, the Temple, messianic expectations, and specifically, the mission and identity of Jesus of Nazareth, a first-century Jew. Generally, these scholars conclude that the gospels are not anti-Jewish, but may be interpreted, and indeed have been interpreted as such.

[3] Amy Jill Levine's essay, in contradistinction to the majority opinion, has as its thesis that Matthew's Gospel is not "prophetic polemic," an in-house dispute among Jews, but it may be characterized as "subordinating polemic" leading to "abrogating anti-Judaism." She argues that anti-Jewish readings of Matthew have persisted in a variety of cultural contexts and across geographical boundaries, and states that "even in Matthew's own community, the Gospel would have stirred up hostility toward any Jew who favored the synagogue over the church, the teachings of the Pharisees over those of Jesus, the sacrifices of the Temple or deeds of loving-kindness over baptism and eucharist" (35).

[4] Utilizing reader-response criticism, Warren Carter conditionally agrees with Levine, noting that "parts of Matthew can be construed as anti-some-forms-of-Judaism by some readers and at some times" (62). Philip L. Schuler notes that Levine's conclusion

presupposes the soteriological thrust of Matthew, placing faith in Jesus at the center of the insider-outsider conflict for its Jewish-Christian community, and that the Gospel's literary clues may "signal an anti-Judaism within the reader who is predisposed to receive it" (41).

[5] Daryl D. Schmidt discusses the "world of the text" of Luke's Gospel, to determine if it is told from an anti-Jewish point of view (89). His final assessment is that although Luke-Acts contains negative stereotypes, and that an implied reader would be convinced by the Gospel's messianic rhetoric about Jesus, the rhetoric would not lead an implied reader to condemn and reject non-Christian Jews (95). David L. Balch concurs with Schmidt's opinion that Luke-Acts has close affinity with "apologetic historiography," which serves a primarily epideictic function. He maintains that Luke-Acts suggests an intra-Jewish debate over Jesus' and Paul's interpretation of Scripture, especially in respect to the mission to the Gentiles (102). Although Luke is not anti-Jewish, Allan J. McNicol thinks that the Gospel's rhetoric "would cause a reader to be sharply critical of considerable segments of the expressions of Judaism of the first century of our era" (118).

[6] David Rensberger rejects the notion that John's community understands the term *hoi Ioudaioi* (the Jews) to be thoroughly anti-Jewish. He considers the Gospel's negative portrayal of "the Jews" to refer to religious authorities in John's locale who are at odds with the community over a specific matter (155). The Gospel was composed in a transitional period between purely intra-Jewish sectarianism and the emergence of Christianity as a completely separate religion (142). John's portrayal of authorities hostile to Jesus as "the Jews" nevertheless served the purpose of demonizing Jews for later interpreters removed from John's historical setting. Mark Goodwin questions whether, as in Rensberger's reconstruction, John's community can still be viewed as "Jewish" during its transition into a Christian group separate from its Jewish roots (170).

[7] In his essay, "Something Greater Than the Temple," Robert Louis Wilken maintains that early Christian exegesis was not anti-Jewish but anti-halachic (187). He also finds that Jesus' death was understood by early Christians as a prefiguring of the destruction of the Jerusalem Temple, and that this correlation exacerbated the debate about Jesus between Christians and their Jewish brothers (192). Wilken emphasizes Origen's anti-Marcionite, anti-Heracleon insistence upon the notion that "salvation is from the Jews" (John 4:22). He concludes that the generally supersessionist arguments found in early Christian interpretations of Scripture were still deferential to Jewish antecedents.

[8] Joseph B. Tyson reviews the effects of anti-Judaism in nineteenth- and twentieth-century biblical scholarship, and highlights the work of Luke-Acts scholars, Adolf von Harnack, writing at the turn of the twentieth century, and Hans Conzelmann, writing in the aftermath of the Holocaust. Tyson's essay, entitled "Anti-Judaism in the Critical Study of the Gospels," concludes that the German scholars he surveys, from Ferdinand Weber to Rudolf Bultmann, "created a tradition of interpretation that saw in early Judaism the antithesis of Christianity," one based on legalism rather than the spirit of the Law (250).

[9] The final essay in the volume is E.P. Sanders', "Reflections on Anti-Judaism in the New Testament and in Christianity." In this piece, he contextualizes early Christianity as a Jewish movement and discusses whether Jesus or Paul can be properly considered "anti-Jewish," as well as how anti-Judaism is evident in the Middle Ages and the modern world.

[10] *Anti-Judaism and the Gospels* represents an awareness among some biblical scholars of the negative effects of Christian interpretation of gospel texts. I agree that although the rhetorical stereotypes the gospels employ have been misconstrued to justify Christian persecution of Jews in certain historical settings, the gospels themselves represent intra-Jewish polemic, and cannot be judged "anti-Jewish" as such. The working definition of anti-Judaism offered by the research committee presupposes that Christians are distinct in respect to Jews, but the majority of scholars in this volume have convincingly argued that those Christians responsible for the gospels perceived themselves as Jewish insiders. I am inclined to agree with McNicol that the modern relationship of Mormonism vis-à-vis orthodox Christianity may be an apt analogy, and that perspective, in this debate, is key.

Reviewed by Laura Weber, Creighton University