Introduction to the Review Issue

Darrell L. Bock and Robert L. Webb (eds.),
Key Events in the Life of the Historical Jesus
and
Pieter F. Craffert, The Life of a Galilean Shaman

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This issue of *JSHJ* presents discussions arising from two recent works on Jesus. Both are the products of a decade's labor; and, if the question they pose is, 'Whither Jesus research?', the answer they give is, 'In diametrically opposite directions'.

The first, *Key Events in the Life of the Historical Jesus*, provides the results of collaborative work done by eleven members of the Institute for Biblical Research (IBR) between 1999 and 2008. Concerned with 'the diversity in the range of Jesus portraits' being proposed in recent research, this IBR Jesus Group traced the cause of that variety to the methodological complexity required for the task. To ameliorate the problem they selected twelve events (or sets of events) in the Gospel portrayals of Jesus' life that they believed could furnish a framework for understanding Jesus' significance; and, this done, they set out to establish that framework by organizing a ten-year project around a uniform and collectively vetted procedure. Each participant was assigned an event in Jesus' life and at a given annual meeting was to submit a draft paper to the others, treating (1) the core

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2) Bock and Webb, *Key Events in the Life of the Historical Jesus*, p. 3.
historicity of that event, (2) its first-century (particularly Jewish) context and (3) its significance for interpreting Jesus. After discussion at that meeting, the member was to modify his draft accordingly, sometimes submitting it again at a future gathering. And, though ‘[e]ach author...remains alone responsible for the views expressed in their particular essay’, the amalgam of their contributions is deemed a coherent context for understanding Jesus and, thus, a corrective to the miscellany of views dominating the field. ‘We think we have shown a compelling case’, write editors Darrell L. Bock and Robert L. Webb in their introduction, ‘for a path that makes sense for a Jesus rooted historically in the complex cultural backdrop of the Second Temple period’.

The chapters dealing with the twelve events, along with their authors, are as follows: ‘Jesus’ Baptism by John: Its Historicity and Significance’ (Webb), ‘Exorcisms and the Kingdom: Inaugurating the Kingdom of God and Defeating the Kingdom of Satan (Craig A. Evans), ‘Jesus and the Twelve’ (Scot McKnight), ‘The Authenticity and Significance of Jesus’ Table Fellowship with Sinners’ (Craig L. Blomberg), ‘Jesus and the Synoptic Sabbath Controversies’ (Donald A. Hagner), ‘Peter’s Declaration concerning Jesus’ Identity in Caesarea Philippi’ (Michael J. Wilkins), ‘Jesus’ Royal Entry into Jerusalem’ (Brent Kinman), ‘The Temple Incident’ (Klyne R. Snodgrass), ‘The Last Supper’ (I. Howard Marshall), ‘Blasphemy and the Jewish Examination of Jesus’ (Bock), ‘The Roman Examination and Crucifixion of Jesus: Their Historicity and Implications’ (Webb) and ‘Jesus’ Empty Tomb and His Appearance in Jerusalem’ (Grant R. Osborne). Six of these chapters are revisions of previously published articles: Webb on Jesus’ baptism, Evans, McKnight, Blomberg, Kinman and Bock on Jesus’ examination and crucifixion. Preceding them is an essay by Webb on historical method, ‘The Historical Enterprise and Historical Jesus Research’; but this, we are cautioned, was written at the end of the project and reflects neither a guideline to which the contributors adhered nor all the methodological views which those contributors hold. And closing the volume is an essay by Bock, having the same title as the book, in which he endeavors to demonstrate that the portrait painted by these twelve contributions carries ‘depth coherence’; that is, that its elements blend ‘in such a variety of

3) Bock and Webb, *Key Events in the Life of the Historical Jesus*, p. 5.
4) Bock and Webb, *Key Events in the Life of the Historical Jesus*, p. 6; for this synopsis, see pp. v-vi, 1-7.
5) Bock and Webb, *Key Events in the Life of the Historical Jesus*, pp. 5-6, 11, 83-84.