

RESPONSE

ON THE PETERING OUT OF PETER'S FAITH

Histos 11 (2017) XIV–XXVIII carried a review by R. Jarrett Van Tine of my book *Peter: False Disciple and Apostate According to Saint Matthew* (Grand Rapids, Mich. and Cambridge, 2015). Unlike some other reviewers of the book, Van Tine did not shy away from detailing what he called ‘The Heart of Gundry’s Thesis’. So my hearty ‘Thank you’ to him. Since the review sets out my arguments fairly as well as in detail, I do not need to rehearse them here. Following, then, are several responses to counter-arguments set forth in the review.

Van Tine appeals to Zebedee’s sons as both false and true disciples in Matthew’s portrayal of them: false, because they fall asleep in Gethsemane (26:36–46) as do the foolish virgins in a parable (25:1–10), and true, because the sons ‘will suffer Christ-like persecution for their faithful witness’ (20:22–3). According to Van Tine, then, Matthew portrays Peter too as both false and true. But Van Tine has neglected to note that with ‘the two sons of Zebedee’ (26:37) Matthew erases the names ‘James and John’ (each probably emphasized with the definite article in the Greek of Mark 14:33), so that they fade into anonymity in favor of spotlighting ‘Peter’ by name. Favoring the consequent alleviation of negativity toward James and John is Matthew’s similarly attributing the request for seats on Jesus’ right and left in the coming kingdom to ‘the mother of the sons of Zebedee’ (20:20), rather than to ‘James and John’ (Mark 10:35). See too the erasure of their names in Matt. 20:24, in contrast with Mark 10:41.

To buttress his interpretation of disciples as at once *both false and true*, Van Tine makes an intratextual distinction between a level of paraenesis and a story level. Though I reject a both/and for Peter in Matthew, this distinction strikes me happily as not far removed from my distinction between Matthew’s portrayal of Peter as primarily paraenetic (a warning against apostasy) and the other evangelists’ portrayal of him as primarily story-like (a history of rehabilitation).

I could understand an interpretation of Jesus in Gethsemane as a model of prayerfulness *for* his disciples. But is it feasible for Van Tine to say that Jesus is portrayed ‘*as the faithful disciple*’? To the contrary, does not Matt. 23:8–10 portray Jesus as a rabbinic ‘teacher’ and ‘tutor’? And does not Matt. 25:1–10 portray him as a *bridegroom* rather than as ‘the ideal of the wise *bridesmaid*’?

Van Tine cites John R. Markley’s argument that Judas Iscariot, listed last among the Twelve, must (impossibly) be ‘first in the eschatological reversal’ if Peter as ‘first’ (Matt. 10:2) is to become ‘last’ and therefore lost, according to my argument, based as it is on Matt. 19:30; 20:8, 10, 12, 14, 16. But Markley

has failed to note that Judas is not *designated* ‘last’ as Peter is designated ‘first’, whereas both these designations appear time after time in those later passages. Markley’s further argument that the tares and, presumably, bad fish in Matt. 13:24–30, 36–43, 47–50 represent the scribes and Pharisees rather than false disciples seems to me highly unlikely, but I would have to see Markley’s unpublished paper to make sure (cf. Robert H. Gundry, ‘On True and False Disciples in Matthew 8.18–22’, *New Testament Studies* 40 (1994): 433–41; id., ‘In Defense of the Church in Matthew as a *Corpus Mixtum*’, *Zeitschrift für die Neutestamentliche Wissenschaft* 91 (2000): 153–65).¹

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¹ My thanks to the editorial staff of *Histos* for accepting (at Van Tine’s magnanimous suggestion) the foregoing response.