



The Four Fabulists: The Literary Genres of the Gospels and the Acts of Apostles

Dr. Suresh A. Shenoy

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"The Four Fabulists" is a practical book on how to read the Gospels and Acts of Apostles. There is none other like it. It first identifies the genre of each book as classical history and the individual ancient historians they imitate. Then it uses the conventions of the genre and the specific conceptual design of each of the books to reach the true intentions of the authors. Thus what seems like a historical account at first, actually turns out to be no more than 'fictional' or what is humanly possible and 'fictitious' or what is humanly impossible. Thus Mark imitated the conventions of classical history as found in Livi's "Ab Urbe Condita". Matthew followed the approach of Dionysius of Halicarnassus in his "Roman Antiquities". Luke for his part used the first part of "The Jewish War" of Flavius Josephus for the Gospel and the second part for the Acts of Apostles. John for his part takes "The Historia" of Herodotus as his model. "The Four Fabulists" it is argued that in following the genre of classical history, the Gospel writers must accept the constraints and the possibilities of expressing their authorial intentions through the conventions of the genre. That means, the uses of facts, 'fiction' and the 'fictitious' are consistent in the Gospels as they are with the classical histories. It leads us to the conclusion, that much of what is accepted as revealed facts are neither revealed nor factual. They are human constructs with a high dose of 'fictional' and the 'fictitious'. Moreover, the Gospels are generally acceptable as sacred biographies of Jesus Christ, but not of Jesus of Nazareth. The first is a fictional construct while the second is historically demonstrable. That means, the Gospels have been written in the conventions of more than one genre. For the purposes of "the Four Fabulists" the focus is narrowed only to the classical history. Further, research will reveal a variety of texts in the works known among Christians as New Testament Gospels and the Acts of Apostles.

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