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On Hermeneutical Crisis in Theology Studies: Recovering "*Apostolic Interpretation*" through Linnemann and Spirit Hermeneutics of C.S. Keener

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ABSTRACT

The present article discusses a rarely-debated crisis in theological studies, arguing that contemporary epistemological fragmentation stems fundamentally from unresolved methodological tensions in biblical hermeneutics. Drawing on George Pattison's diagnosis of theology's "end" in the modern academy, this paper traces the hermeneutical crisis back to the pervasive dominance of historical-critical methodology across global theological institutions. We examine the paradigm-shifting testimony of Eta Linnemann—a former student of Rudolf Bultmann who renounced historical *criticism as ideological rather than methodological*—as providing crucial illumination for understanding how presuppositional commitments disguised as scientific neutrality have undermined scriptural authority. The article proposes a recovery approach that moves beyond traditional Jewish *Pardes* hermeneutics toward what we term (possibly) "*Apostolic Hermeneutics*," examining the interpretive practices of Jesus, Paul, and Peter as modelled in canonical texts. A comparative analysis evaluates Linnemann's radical self-criticism alongside Craig S. Keener's "*Spirit Hermeneutics*" framework, which seeks to balance cognitive analysis, right-brain imaginative engagement, and Holy Spirit empowerment in biblical interpretation. We assess contributions from conservative evangelical scholars including Howard I. Marshall, Gordon D. Fee, and Craig L. Blomberg, whose work demonstrates that historical-critical tools can be employed under inerrant presuppositions without surrendering theological authority. The article concludes with practical recommendations for Pentecostal-Charismatic communities seeking to recover the empowering role of the Holy Spirit in

Keywords:
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believer's hermeneutical practice while maintaining scholarly rigor. More than 35 scholarly sources inform this synthesis.

Introduction

Theological scholarship in the twenty-first century faces an unprecedented convergence of problems that likely impact its coherence, credibility, and ecclesial utility. Professor George Pattison, in his 2026 editorial for *Theology* journal, diagnoses what he terms "*the end of theology*"—a condition not marking absolute cessation but signalling the disintegration of theology's traditional unity as a coordinated scholarly discipline grounded in authoritative Christian teaching (Pattison, 2026). Pattison observes that "the scholarly discipline of theology is in a perilous state," noting that changes in university life, secularizing trends, and the collapse of Christian culture have created an increasingly challenging environment for academic theology (Pattison, 2026).

However, Pattison's analysis suggests that the external pressures of secularization and institutional monetization, while significant, may be symptoms rather than causes of a deeper pathology. This article argues that the fundamental crisis can be found not primarily in theology's reception by the broader academy but in its internal hermeneutical reasoning. Specifically, we contend that contemporary theological fragmentation traces directly to an unresolved crisis in biblical interpretation methodology—one that has permeated theological seminaries worldwide since the nineteenth century.

The historical-critical method, developed initially as a tool for analysing biblical texts within their ancient contexts, has gradually transformed from *methodology* into *ideology*. As Andreas J. Köstenberger observed in his review of Eta Linnemann's work, historical criticism under the guise of scientific objectivity has often functioned as an ideology rather than a mere methodology (Köstenberger,

1992, p. 96). This transformation has produced what Grant R. Osborne described as a period where "the criteria of heterodoxy are set by one group of scholars," within evangelical circles (Osborne, 2000, p. 114).

This article proceeds through six major thematic sections: (1) a review of methodology in theological studies, examining how current hermeneutical practices evolved; (2) Pattison's diagnosis of theology's contemporary plight; (3) Eta Linnemann's radical repudiation of historical criticism based on her conversion experience and re-evaluation of her Bultmannian training; (4) the search for recovering the hermeneutics of Jesus, Paul, and Peter beyond conventional *Pardes* frameworks; (5) a comparative evaluation of Linnemann and Keener's Spirit Hermeneutics approaches; and (6) conclusions offering practical recommendations for Pentecostal-Charismatic communities seeking to restore the Holy Spirit's empowering role in interpretive practice while maintaining scholarly integrity (cf. Menzies, 2007; Blomberg & Mackley, 2016).

2. Methodology

2.1 Corpus Selection and Textual Delimitation

To systematically evaluate the hermeneutical crisis in contemporary theology, the present article employs a structured comparative literary survey methodology integrating primary theological texts, secondary scholarly commentary, and contemporary ecclesial documents. The selected corpus encompasses three major pillars:

Primary Hermeneutical Texts: Foundational works on biblical interpretation methodology including Eta Linnemann's *Historical Criticism of the Bible: Methodology or Ideology?* (1990), Craig S. Keener's *Miracles: The Credibility of the New Testament Accounts* (2011) and *Acts: An Exegetical Commentary* (2012-

2015), George Pattison's *God Speaks Within: From Mystical Vision to Devout Listening* (2019), and Pattison's 2026 editorial note for *Theology* journal.

Critical Response Literature: Scholarly reviews and responses to primary texts, including Andreas Köstenberger's 1992 review of Linnemann in *Trinity Journal*, Grant R. Osborne's 2000 response to Robert Thomas in *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society*, and contemporary commentaries from evangelical scholarship.

Conservative Evangelical Scholarship: Works from scholars who maintain inerrancy while engaging critical tools, including Howard I. Marshall, Gordon D. Fee, Craig L. Blomberg, Darrell Bock, D.A. Carson, and Moisés Silva.

Supplementary Sources: Peer-reviewed journal articles especially in the field of theology.

2.2 Thematic Mapping

Selected texts undergo cross-mapping to identify shared hermeneutical assumptions, divergent methodological commitments, and points of potential integration. Specifically, we trace the invariant thematic chain regarding presuppositional commitments: *Scientific Neutrality Claim* → *Ideological Undercutting* → *Authority Fragmentation* → *Hermeneutical Recovery Proposal*. This structural sequence is evaluated across both liberal and conservative theological corpora to demonstrate how pre-suppositional premises shape interpretive outcomes.

2.3 Spirit Hermeneutics Integration

Following frameworks articulated by Missio Alliance¹, this study incorporates Spirit-guided interpretive methodologies recognizing:

1. The ongoing work of the Holy Spirit illuminating Scripture beyond historical-critical analysis alone;
2. Communal and experiential dimensions of biblical interpretation within faith communities;
3. Applicability of ancient texts to contemporary crises through pneumatological reading;
4. Integration of charismatic and Pentecostal interpretive traditions alongside scholarly exegesis.

2.4 Limitations and Boundaries

This study acknowledges several methodological constraints. First, while Linnemann's testimony carries considerable weight as a former insider's critique, her positions remain contested within mainstream biblical scholarship. Second, Pattison's phenomenological approach, while illuminating regarding modern religious experience, operates within philosophical frameworks that may not fully accommodate Pentecostal-Charismatic pneumatological assumptions.² Third, the integration of conservative evangelical scholarship with more radical critiques of historical criticism requires careful delineation to avoid premature synthesis of incompatible epistemological commitments.

¹ Craig S. Keener, <http://missioalliance.org/spirit-hermeneutics-reading-scripture-light-pentecost/>

² Note: As far as this writer can follow the existing literatures, there is no wide consensus of what constitutes a correct pneumatological hermeneutics, although this theme has been debated for quite a long time, see for instance Craig S. Keener, *Spirit Hermeneutics*, and also Roger Stronstad's books, etc.

3. Methodology Review in Contemporary Theological Studies

3.1 The Historical-Critical Dominance and Its Presuppositions

The historical-critical method emerged in eighteenth- and nineteenth-century European universities as part of broader Enlightenment commitments to rational inquiry, empirical evidence, and methodological naturalism. Initially conceived as tools for understanding biblical texts within their ancient Near Eastern and Mediterranean contexts, these methodologies gradually acquired normative status within theological faculties across Protestant, Catholic, and Orthodox institutions.³

The method's foundational presuppositions, however, rarely received explicit scrutiny. As Köstenberger noted in reviewing Linnemann's work, historical criticism claims "*scientific neutrality and objectivity*" while operating with often unspoken premises that favour humanistic over revelatory categories (Köstenberger, 1992, pp. 96, 115). These presuppositions include:

1. Methodological Naturalism: The assumption that all phenomena must be explained through natural causes without supernatural intervention;
2. Historical Probabilism: The privileging of probable reconstructions over textual claims regarding miraculous events;
3. Redactional Skepticism: The presumption that discrepancies between texts indicate editorial modification rather than multiple authentic witnesses;
4. Form-Critical Development: The assumption that oral traditions evolved through predictable developmental stages before written fixation.

These presuppositions, while never formally adopted as doctrinal statements, effectively functioned as operating assumptions determining which interpretive

³ Nonetheless, it is worth noting here, that in recent literatures, there are known approaches which are different to historical-criticism method, to mention a few: philosophical hermeneutics of Gadamer, Ricoeur etc.; dialogical hermeneutics of Buber; and a method called "*biblical theology*" (see for instance, *Forum Biblika* bulletin, 2004; Craig L. Blomberg & J.F. Mackley, *A handbook of New Testament Exegesis*, Penerbit Gandum Mas, 2016, p. 303-307).

conclusions were considered acceptable. As Osborne observed, "Thomas's position seems clear—all of us who use form or redaction criticism in any sense or who hold either to Markan or Matthean priority are *de facto* denying the historicity of the Gospels" (Osborne, 2000, p. 113).

3.2 The Pervasiveness Across Theological Seminaries

By the late twentieth century, historical-critical methodology had achieved near-universal dominance across major theological institutions. Köstenberger documented that Linnemann's former mentors—Rudolf Bultmann, Gerhard Ebeling, and Ernst Fuchs—"were some of the most renowned historical-critical theologians of their day" and that Linnemann herself taught in Marburg contributing to scholarship from an historical-critical perspective before her conversion (Köstenberger, 1992, p. 95).

This dominance extended beyond European and North American institutions. As Pattison observed in his 2026 editorial, "*changes in university life that are felt across the humanities have made for an increasingly challenging environment for academic theology*" with "increasing dominance of universities' research agendas relative to teaching and learning" connected to "changing patterns of funding and *ever increasing managerialism*" (Pattison, 2026, pp. 2-3).

3.3 The Resulting Hermeneutical Fragmentation

The widespread adoption of historically-critical methods without corresponding attention to their philosophical and theological presuppositions produced significant fragmentation within theological communities (Osborne, 2000, p. 114).

This fragmentation manifested in several ways:

1. Ecclesial Schisms: Debates over biblical authority are likely to produce denominational divisions;

2. Academic Marginalization: Evangelical scholarship struggling for recognition within mainstream theological discourse;
3. Pedagogical Confusion: Seminary students receiving conflicting hermeneutical instruction;
4. Pastoral Disempowerment: Local church leaders lacking tools for integrating scholarship with proclamation.

As Pattison lamented regarding cultural knowledge of Christianity evaporating "to an extraordinary degree, including among many who identify as believers," *theology* "may have much to say to the world but it must first earn the attention of those to whom it is addressed" (Pattison, 2026, p. 3).

3.4 Alternative Methodological Approaches

Recognizing these crises, various alternative methodological proposals have emerged throughout the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries:

Narrative Criticism: Focusing on literary structure and story-telling strategies rather than historical reconstruction (Rhoads & Michie, 1982; Aune, 1983)

Canonical Approach: Emphasizing final-form readings within the context of canonical collection (Childs, 1979; Sailhamer, 1992)

Reader-Response Criticism: Acknowledging the interpreter's role in constructing meaning (Kaiser & Silva, 1994)

Postcolonial Hermeneutics: Examining power dynamics in interpretation (Segovia, 1998; Imbert, 2000)

Spirit Hermeneutics: Integrating pneumatological frameworks with traditional exegesis (Keener, 2004; Menzies, 2007)

While each of these approaches offers valuable corrective insights, none has achieved the transformative impact necessary to address the fundamental hermeneutical crisis identified by Pattison and articulated so sharply by Linnemann's testimony.

4. George Pattison's Diagnosis of Theology's Contemporary Plight

4.1 "The End of Theology" as Existential Urgency

Professor George Pattison's 2026 editorial for *Theology* journal articulates a sobering assessment of contemporary theology's condition. Nearly thirty years after publishing *The End of Theology and the Task of Thinking about God*, Pattison reaffirms that "the fundamental challenges regarding the place, scope and identity of theology... have changed" and that "if anything, the challenges have only deepened" (Pattison, 2026, p. 1).

Crucially, Pattison distinguishes between theology as a scholarly discipline coordinated within "a single unifying horizon that was itself grounded in authoritative Christian teaching" versus the fragmented reality of the contemporary academy. He notes that "for much of the modern era the nature and form of theology have been profoundly shaped by what happens in academic theology" (Pattison, 2026, p. 1).

4.2 Institutional and Cultural Factors

Pattison identifies multiple converging pressures:

Academic Restructuring: "Changes in university life that are felt across the humanities have made for an increasingly challenging environment for academic theology" including "increasing dominance of universities' research agendas relative to teaching and learning" (Pattison, 2026, p. 2).

Secularization Trends: "The social context in which theology is practised today has been entirely transformed within the space of a lifetime," with "the last census reported that a majority in Scotland claim to have no religion and at least one survey has suggested that England and Wales are going the same way" (Pattison, 2026, p. 2).

Cultural Knowledge Collapse: "Cultural knowledge of Christianity has evaporated to an extraordinary degree, including among many who identify as believers" (Pattison, 2026, p. 2).

Media Representations: "Ignorance allows the often one-dimensional and mostly negative representations of Christian believers found in the media, where the puritanical, dogmatic and emotionally insensitive type is well to the fore, to pass as the real thing" (Pattison, 2026, pp. 2-3).

4.3 The Hermeneutical Dimension

While Pattison does not explicitly trace these crises to hermeneutical methodology, his analysis points decisively in that direction. His observation that "theology is in a perilous state" connects to the underlying fragmentation of interpretive frameworks that produce inconsistent theological outputs (Pattison, 2026, p. 1).

Furthermore, Pattison's advocacy for "theology as essentially conversational" suggests the need for hermeneutical frameworks that enable genuine dialogue rather than ideological polarization (Pattison, 2026, pp. 3-4). This conversational model resonates with the integrative approach we propose through combining Linnemann's critical self-reflection with Keener's Spirit Hermeneutics framework.

4.4 The Call to Conversational Theology

Pattison's invocation of Mikhail Bakhtin's account of Dostoevsky's novels as "polyphonic" offers a compelling model: "Dostoevsky does not preach but sets out the 'pro and contra' of the ideological debates of his time, exposing even his own favoured views to alternative and, for many, more attractive counterarguments" (Pattison, 2026, p. 3).

This polyphonic/conversational approach requires hermeneutical frameworks capable of sustaining genuine dialogue across theological divides while maintaining theological integrity. Such frameworks must accommodate diverse interpretive commitments without collapsing into relativism—a challenge requiring both critical self-awareness (Linnemann's contribution) and constructive pneumatological resources (Keener's contribution).

5. Eta Linnemann's Radical Self-Criticism of Historical Criticism

5.1 Biography and Intellectual Formation

Eta Linnemann (1925-2008) occupies a unique position in twentieth-century biblical scholarship as both insider and critic. As Köstenberger documented, "In her 'former life,' as she now calls it, Eta Linnemann was a student of Bultmann, Ebeling and Fuchs, some of the most renowned historical-critical theologians of her day" (Köstenberger, 1992, p. 95). She taught at the University of Marburg and published scholarly work on Jesus' parables from an historical-critical perspective (*Jesus of the Parables: Introduction and Exposition*, 1967).

Her conversion to evangelical Christianity led to what Köstenberger termed a "radical reevaluation" of her own historical-critical work. As Linnemann herself expressed, she came to consider her previous scholarship as "dead works" (Köstenberger, 1992, p. 95). This transformation produced *Historical Criticism of the Bible: Methodology or Ideology? Reflections of a Bultmannian turned*

Evangelical (1990), a work that combines autobiographical reflection with systematic critique.

5.2 A Critique: Ideology Masquerading as Methodology

Linnemann's fundamental charge is that historical criticism operates not as neutral methodology but as ideological framework. Köstenberger summarized her position: "She claims that, under the guise of scientific objectivity, historical criticism is an ideology rather than a mere methodology" (Köstenberger, 1992, p. 96).

This ideological character manifests through several mechanisms:

Cloak of Scientific Neutrality: Linnemann draws attention to "the cloak of scientific neutrality and objectivity protruding from a writer like Kümmel who seems to leave the impression that while 'dogmatic theology' is based on often unspoken (and generally incorrect?) premises, historical-critical theology is free from such presuppositions" (Köstenberger, 1992, p. 96).

One-Sided Emphasis: Historical criticism exhibits "often one-sided emphasis on Scripture as 'the work of human authors... documents of ancient religious history, written in a dead language... and a conceptual world no longer immediately comprehensible to us'" (Köstenberger, 1992, p. 96).

Division Between Believing Hearing and Critical Investigation: Historical criticism has "driven a wedge between a believing hearing of the Bible and its critical investigation" (Köstenberger, 1992, p. 96).

5.3 The Anti-Christian University Critique

Linnemann extends her critique beyond hermeneutical methodology to the broader institutional context.⁴ Her chapter on the "anti-Christian roots of the university" argues that "Christ, not man, is the centre of creation," quoting Colossians 1:15-18 (Köstenberger, 1992, p. 95). She "charges the university with promoting a spirit of competition" and "by implication, with a 'compulsive preoccupation with progress'" (Köstenberger, 1992, p. 95).

Her prescription is stark: "The altering of structures of thought can come about only by rejecting and departing from sites where harmful structures of thought reign," supporting this assertion with 2 Corinthians 6:17, "come out from them" (Köstenberger, 1992, p. 95).

5.4 Evaluation: Strengths and Limitations

Strengths:

1. Insider Testimony: As a former Bultmann student, Linnemann speaks with authority regarding historical-critical assumptions rarely examined by practitioners;
2. Presuppositional Awareness: Her insistence that "presuppositionless exegesis is impossible" echoes Bultmann's own admissions (Köstenberger, 1992, p. 97);

⁴ In Prof. E. Linnemann's book (1990, etc.), arguments were drawn to carefully consider a flawed premise, i.e. that secular philosophy stood side by side with Biblical studies, even from the formation of University of Bologna around 1088 AD (or, alternatively, even went back as far as to 6th century AD of the first African university-like institution); and the situation became more adverse, according to her, by thoughts of Francis Bacon, the father of modern scientific methods. It is also interesting to note here, that there is so called Francis Bacon Society with their own journal which is probably still active today, and also there are frequent discussions if there were certain occultism influence behind Bacon's philosophy. But let us leave this kind of discussion for another forum.

3. Exposé of Ideology: Her documentation of how historical criticism became inflected with "godless presuppositions" contributes to scholarly self-understanding;
4. Conversion Narrative: Her testimony provides empirical evidence that conversion can radically alter hermeneutical commitments.

Limitations:

1. Demonization Tendency: Köstenberger notes Linnemann "frequently strikes a reactionary note by 'demonizing' historical-critical methodology as a whole" (Köstenberger, 1992, p. 97);
2. Extremism: Linnemann leaves "no room for an integration of historical criticism and faith—one has to choose (Köstenberger, 1992, p. 97);
3. Unclear Alternatives: "The alternative remains unclear" with proposals remaining "rather unspecific with regard to scholarly methodology" (Köstenberger, 1992, p. 97);
4. Maintaining Dichotomy: Linnemann "unfortunately remains largely captive to the very dichotomy between believing and critical inquiry that much of the historical-critical theology itself has helped create" (Köstenberger, 1992, p. 97).

5.5 Comparison with Other Critics

Linnemann stands within a broader tradition of critics questioning historical criticism's adequacy. Köstenberger notes that Gerhard Maier pronounced "the end of the historical-critical method" as early as 1974, and Peter Stuhlmacher, Ernst Käsemann's successor in Tübingen, is "more measured and qualified in his critique" (Köstenberger, 1992, p. 97-98).

Stuhlmacher, while affirming historical criticism's indispensability for theology, "questions the method's adequacy in dealing with its object the Bible" noting that

"historical criticism has neglected to consider God's acts in history as well as the church's tradition" (Köstenberger, 1992, p. 98).

Jürgen Moltmann, Friedrich Hahn, Martin Hengel, Ulrich Wilckens, and others similarly demonstrate "awareness of the limitations and shortcomings of the historical-critical method" (Köstenberger, 1992, p. 98).

6. Recovering the Hermeneutics of Jesus, Paul, and Peter

6.1 The Apostolic Interpretive Paradigm

Beyond traditional Jewish *Pardes* hermeneutics (Peshat, Remez, Derash, Sod), the apostolic writings present distinctive interpretive practices warranting independent examination. Jesus' own hermeneutical approach, as modelled in the Gospels, demonstrates several characteristic features:

Scriptural Fulfilment Framework: Jesus reads Scripture teleologically, viewing earlier texts as finding fulfilment in his person and mission (Matthew 5:17; Luke 24:27)

Authority Declaration: Jesus asserts interpretive authority surpassing traditional rabbinic methods ("But I say unto you," Matthew 5:22, 28, 32, etc.)

Kingdom-Centred Reading: All scriptural interpretation relates ultimately to the coming Kingdom of God (Mark 1:15; Luke 4:16-21)

Personal Embodiment: Jesus identifies himself as the ultimate hermeneutical key—"I am the way, the truth, and the life" (John 14:6)

6.2 Paul's Hermeneutical Innovations

The Apostle Paul's interpretive practices, particularly in Galatians, Romans, and 1 Corinthians, exhibit distinctive features:

Christological Centre: All Scripture finds its ultimate meaning in Christ crucified and risen (1 Corinthians 1:23; 2:2)

Spirit-Guided Interpretation: Paul emphasizes Spirit-enabled understanding distinguishing believers from natural persons (1 Corinthians 2:10-16; 2 Corinthians 3:6)

Eschatological Framework: Interpretation occurs within eschatological tension between "already" and "not yet" (Romans 8:18-25)

Community Context: Interpretation serves community edification rather than individual speculation (1 Corinthians 14:26; Ephesians 4:11-16)

6.3 Peter's Pneumatological Emphasis

Peter's letters emphasize Spirit-inspired prophetic origin and communal application:

Inspired Origin: "Men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit" (2 Peter 1:21)

Prophetic Fulfilment: Old Testament prophecies find fulfilment in Christ's sufferings and glory (1 Peter 1:10-12)

Communal Testing: Prophetic utterances subject to communal discernment (1 Peter 4:10-11)

Living Hope Orientation: Interpretation serves living hope rather than abstract speculation (1 Peter 1:3-5)

6.4 Beyond *Pardes*: Toward Apostolic Hermeneutics

Traditional Jewish *Pardes* hermeneutics, while valuable, does not fully capture apostolic distinctives. The apostles operated with assumptions unavailable to pre-Christian Judaism:

Resurrection Confirmation: The resurrection validates Jesus' messianic claims and transforms interpretive horizons

Pentecostal Empowerment: The Spirit's descent at Pentecost enables new interpretive capacities

Gentile Inclusion: Interpretation accommodates Gentile incorporation without Torah observance

Church as Hermeneutical Community: The emerging Church becomes the primary interpretive community

Apostolic hermeneutics thus represents not merely continuation of Jewish interpretive traditions but radical transformation through Christ-event and Spirit-empowerment.

6.5 Contemporary Applications

Recovering apostolic hermeneutics requires deliberate cultivation of:

Christ-Centred Reading: Consistently relating texts to Christ's person and work

Spirit-Dependent Interpretation: Praying for Spirit illumination while studying

Eschatological Awareness: Reading Scripture within redemptive-historical framework

Community Accountability: Engaging interpretation within faith communities rather than isolation

Mission-Oriented Application: Applying texts to evangelism and discipleship rather than abstract theology

7. Comparing Linnemann and Keener: Toward Integrated Hermeneutics

7.1 Craig S. Keener's Spirit Hermeneutics

Craig S. Keener's work on Spirit Hermeneutics, as articulated in articles and presentations accessible through Missio Alliance, proposes balancing cognitive analysis with right-brain engagement and Holy Spirit empowerment. Key features include:

Triadic Balance: Integrating left-brain (analytical), right-brain (imaginative), and spiritual (pneumatological) modes of engagement (Missio Alliance, n.d.);

Contextual Sensitivity: Recognizing how cultural context shapes interpretation without surrendering text's claims;

Experiential Validation: Allowing contemporary spiritual experiences to inform interpretation without granting them normative authority;

Pentecostal-Charismatic Resources: Incorporating gifts of the Spirit, particularly prophecy and tongues, into interpretive process.

7.2 Comparative Analysis

Table 1, Comparative review between Eta Linnemann and Craig Keener

Dimension	Linnemann	Keener
View of Historical Criticism	Rejects as ideology masquerading as method	Employs selectively under inerrant presuppositions
Role of Holy Spirit	Implicit in conversion narrative; unclear in methodology	Explicit centrality in interpretive process
Alternative Proposed	Unspecified; leans toward devotional reading	Spirit Hermeneutics balancing cognitive/pneumatological
Scholarly Engagement	Minimal; rejects mainstream scholarship	Extensive; engages critically with scholarship

Dimension	Linnemann	Keener
Community Orientation	Implicit in conversion to church family	Explicit in Pentecostal-Charismatic ecclesiology
Practical Guidance	Limited; remains largely critique-focused	Detailed; includes practical exercises for integration

7.3 Complementary Strengths

Linnemann and Keener offer complementary rather than competing contributions:

Linnemann's Critical Edge: Provides uncompromising exposure of historical criticism's ideological pretensions—essential for theological clarity

Keener's Constructive Vision: Offers practical framework for Spirit-empowered interpretation—essential for ecclesial implementation

Together: Linnemann clears ground by demolishing false pretensions; Keener builds upon cleared ground with Spirit-oriented alternatives

7.4 Integration Possibilities

Three integrative possibilities emerge:

Sequential Model: Apply Linnemann's critique first to identify problematic presuppositions, then employ Keener's framework for Spirit-guided interpretation

Layered Model: Maintain Linnemann's vigilance regarding ideological contamination while utilizing Keener's triadic balance for active interpretation

Dialogical Model: Keep both voices in ongoing conversation—Linnemann as critical conscience, Keener as constructive partner

Each model offers distinct advantages depending on educational setting, ecclesial context, and learner's prior formation.

7.5 Conservative Evangelical Contributions

Other evangelical scholars contribute additional resources:

Howard I. Marshall: Demonstrates robust arguments to support gospel historicity while employing critical tools (Marshall, 1978; Marshall, 2004)

Gordon D. Fee: Combines Pentecostal spirituality with rigorous grammatical-historical exegesis (Fee, 1994; Fee, 2014)

Craig L. Blomberg: Defends historical reliability of Gospels using historical-critical methods under inerrancy (Blomberg, 1987; Blomberg, 2001)

Darrell Bock: Engages cultural questions while maintaining conservative commitments (Bock, 1994; Bock, 2002)

D.A. Carson: Provides comprehensive hermeneutical introductions serving evangelical scholarship (Carson, 1984; Carson & Woodbridge, 1986)

Moisés Silva: Advances philological precision within evangelical framework (Silva, 1987; Silva, 2014)

These scholars collectively suggest that critical engagement need not surrender theological authority when conducted under explicit evangelical presuppositions.

8. Concluding remark: for Pentecostal-Charismatic Communities

8.1 Balanced Hermeneutical Recovery

For Pentecostal-Charismatic readers seeking to recover the Holy Spirit's empowering role in interpretive practice while maintaining scholarly rigor, several integrative recommendations emerge:

1. Cultivate Hermeneutical Self-Awareness Regularly examine interpretive presuppositions against Linnemann's warnings regarding ideological contamination. Maintain vigilance regarding unconscious adoption of historical-critical assumptions disguised as neutral methodology.
2. Integrate Triadic Engagement Adopt Keener's triadic framework balancing analytical study, imaginative engagement, and Spirit-dependence. Ensure all three modes receive adequate attention rather than privileging one to exclusion of others.
3. Anchor in Apostolic Models Study Jesus', Paul's, and Peter's interpretive practices as presented in canonical texts. Allow apostolic patterns to shape contemporary hermeneutical commitments more than later methodological frameworks.
4. Maintain Scholarly Rigor Engage serious scholarship from both critical and conservative sources. As Osborne noted, "Disagreement is the heart of scholarship" and "None of us should ever blindly follow one individual as a *'utmost authority'*" (Osborne, 2000, p. 116; Note: use of 'utmost' word is ours).
5. Foster Communal Interpretation Practice interpretation within faith community accountability structures. Avoid private interpretation divorced from ecclesial wisdom traditions.
6. Prioritize Spiritual Formation Ensure interpretive practice contributes to personal and communal holiness rather than merely intellectual mastery. Follow Pattison's call for theology serving "*spiritual formation of its students*" (Pattison, 2026, p. 1).

8.2 Practical Implementation Possibilities

Seminary Curriculum Rethinking: Incorporate courses examining historical criticism's philosophical assumptions alongside Spirit Hermeneutics frameworks

Small Group Study: Develop hermeneutical reading groups combining scholarly texts with devotional application

Leadership Training: Prepare pastoral leaders for hermeneutical integrity balancing scholarship and spirituality

Publishing Initiatives: Support works integrating critical rigor with evangelical conviction

Conference Programming: Facilitate dialogue between critical scholars and Pentecostal-Charismatic practitioners

8.3 A Synthesis

The hermeneutical crisis identified by Pattison and illuminated by Linnemann requires responses both critical and constructive. Linnemann provides essential demolition work—exposing historical criticism's ideological pretensions—while Keener offers constructive alternatives integrating pneumatology with scholarship. Conservative evangelical scholars demonstrate viable middle paths maintaining inerrancy while engaging critical tools responsibly.

Ultimately, recovering apostolic hermeneutics requires humility before Scripture, dependence on the Spirit, and commitment to community. As Pattison concluded, theology "must first earn the attention of those to whom it is addressed and it must be inventive in doing so" (Pattison, 2026, p. 3). For Pentecostal-Charismatic communities, this inventiveness involves recovering Spirit-empowered

interpretation while maintaining scholarly integrity—a path both demanding and hopeful.

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Maranatha

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Appendix: a parody / satirical review

"Sorry, We Are Returning Your Manuscript"

A Radical-Critical Peer Review of Luke's Two-Volume Work (*Luke–Acts*) by Dr. Theophilus von Alexandria (*In the Satirical Style of Umberto Eco's 'Misreadings'*)

JOURNAL OF RADICAL CRITICISM JUDAEA

Editorial Board Chambers, Alexandria & Jerusalem Branch

Date: Autumn, AD 65

MEMORANDUM / FORMAL REJECTION LETTER

To: Luke, Itinerant Physician & Amateur Biographer (Antioch)

From: Prof. Dr. Theophilus von Alexandria, Senior Managing Editor, *Journal of Radical Criticism Judaea*

Subject: Editorial Review of Submitted Manuscripts: *Volume I: A Narrative of the Things Fulfilled & Volume II: The Acts of Certain Galilean Radicals* (Ref Code: Lk-Acts-65CE)

Dear Dr. Luke,

I am writing this formal letter with professional exhaustion. The editorial board of the *Journal of Radical Criticism Judaea* has completed its peer-review of your two-volume submission, dedicated to myself under the complimentary title "Most Excellent Theophilus" (*Kratiste Theophile*). While we appreciate the flattering dedication and your polished Koine Greek prose—which is far better to the coarse dialect of that Markan draft floating around Rome—our verdict is unanimous:

"Sorry, we are returning your manuscript."

Your work cannot be accepted for publication in our journal without major revision and complete demythologization. Inspired by modern critical standards, our peer reviewers have highlighted several major methodological flaws:

1. Methodological Naivety and Reliance on Intimate Eyewitnesses

In your preface (Luke 1:1–4), you claim to offer an "orderly account" based on investigations with "eyewitnesses and ministers of the word". However, our reviewers suspect that your primary source was none other than Mary of Nazareth and her immediate family circle!

How can a scholar accept a mother's retrospective memories regarding a "virginal birth" (*parthenogenesis*) without independent verification from Roman civil records or Quirinius's census

registries? You also have filled your infancy narrative with poetic canticles (*Magnificat*) that clearly reflect early church liturgical creation rather than objective history.

2. Excessive Dramatization: From Folk Healer to Pneumatological Prototype

Our main objection, however, concerns your presentation of Jesus of Nazareth. Objective historical analysis reveals that Jesus was simply an itinerant folk healer operating in marginal Galilee—a common phenomenon alongside figures like Honi the Circle-Drawer.

Yet, you transform this local exorcist into a figure filled with the *Pneuma Hagion* (Holy Spirit) from the womb to His ascension! At His baptism, you even claim the sky opened and the Spirit descended in physical shape like a dove. As Senior Editor, I must ask: how can a peer-reviewed journal publish meteorologically implausible claims about sky-opening birds to explain psychological leadership?

3. Dangerous Ideological Premises for Future Charismatics

Our editorial board warns that your narrative will lay the groundwork for future dogmatic excesses. Two thousand years from now, scholars like Roger Stronstad (*The Charismatic Theology of St. Luke*) will use your text to argue that Luke possesses a distinct pneumatology—viewing the Spirit not merely as an agent of moral sanctification (like Paul), but as a Spirit of Charismatic Empowerment!

Your narrative will lead readers to believe that the church in *Acts* is a "Charismatic Community" destined to perform signs and wonders. This distorts historical reality. Hans Conzelmann will correctly point out that you simply invented a three-stage history of salvation (*Heilsgeschichte*) to cope with the delayed *Parousia*!

Editorial Decision

If you wish to resubmit your work to the *Journal of Radical Criticism Judaea*, you must:

1. Strip away all miraculous embellishments, bodily resurrections, and supernatural angelophanies.
2. Provide a naturalistic explanation for the phenomena on the Day of Pentecost (e.g., collective mass hysteria or wind-driven acoustics).
3. Reclassify Jesus as a socio-ethical reformer rather than the divine Son of God.

Until such revisions are executed, your manuscript remains unpublishable.

Signed,

Prof. Dr. Theophilus von Alexandria

Senior Managing Editor, Journal of Radical Criticism Judaea