

St. Andrew Advent Retreat

Saturday, November 23, 2024

The Shepherd of Hermas

Presented by Brian Ephrem Fitzgerald, PhD

The early second-century work and apocalypse, *The Shepherd of Hermas*, is **one of the earliest pieces of Christian literature** extant outside of the New Testament. In early Christian times it was so highly regarded in some circles that some Christian writers, such as Irenaeus of Lyon, Clement of Alexandria, and Origen, regarded it as canonical scripture. Although advocacy for its canonicity soon faded, *The Shepherd* was still considered **spiritually beneficial**, as reflected in the *Muratorian Canon* and the works of Athanasius of Alexandria, Rufinus, and Jerome. This apocalypse sets forth a **final call to repentance before the end** of the current age. As such, it is a stirring testimonial to the efficacy of repentance. It also reflects the spirituality of the common Christian in an age wherein the works of the New Testament were recently composed, in which memories of Christ's sojourn on earth were not so distant, and in which the nearness of Christ's Second Coming was still strongly felt.



Brian Fitzgerald is an independent scholar, adjunct professor at Eastern University, and long-term Orthodox Christian with publications at Liverpool University Press, the Abdul Hameed Shoman Foundation, and the *Annual of the Department of Antiquities of Jordan*. He has special interests in Byzantine and Syriac Christian history and theology, as well as Roman, Late Antique, Byzantine, and Middle Eastern history in general. He also has a series of online Patristic-related lectures freely available at the URL: https://sites.google.com/site/brianephrem/adult_patristic_studies

Retreat Schedule:

- 09:30 am: Coffee and welcome
- 10:00 am: Third Hour and First Presentation: Introduction: About Hermas and His Work
- 11:15 am: Break
- 11:30 am: Second Presentation: Repentance: Its Character, Time, and Place
- 12:45 pm: Lunch
- 02:00 pm: Sixth Hour and Third Presentation: Paraenesis: What underlies Hermas' Ethics?
- 03:15 pm: Break
- 03:30 pm: Fourth Presentation: Ecclesiology: The Church as Hermas understands it, and Final Conclusion and Q&A

All are welcome to remain for coffee, fellowship, and Vespers at 6:00 pm.

Lunch will be provided. (Free-will offerings will be accepted)

Please register so we may plan accordingly:

♦ Email standrewlewes@gmail.com

St. Andrew Orthodox Church

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