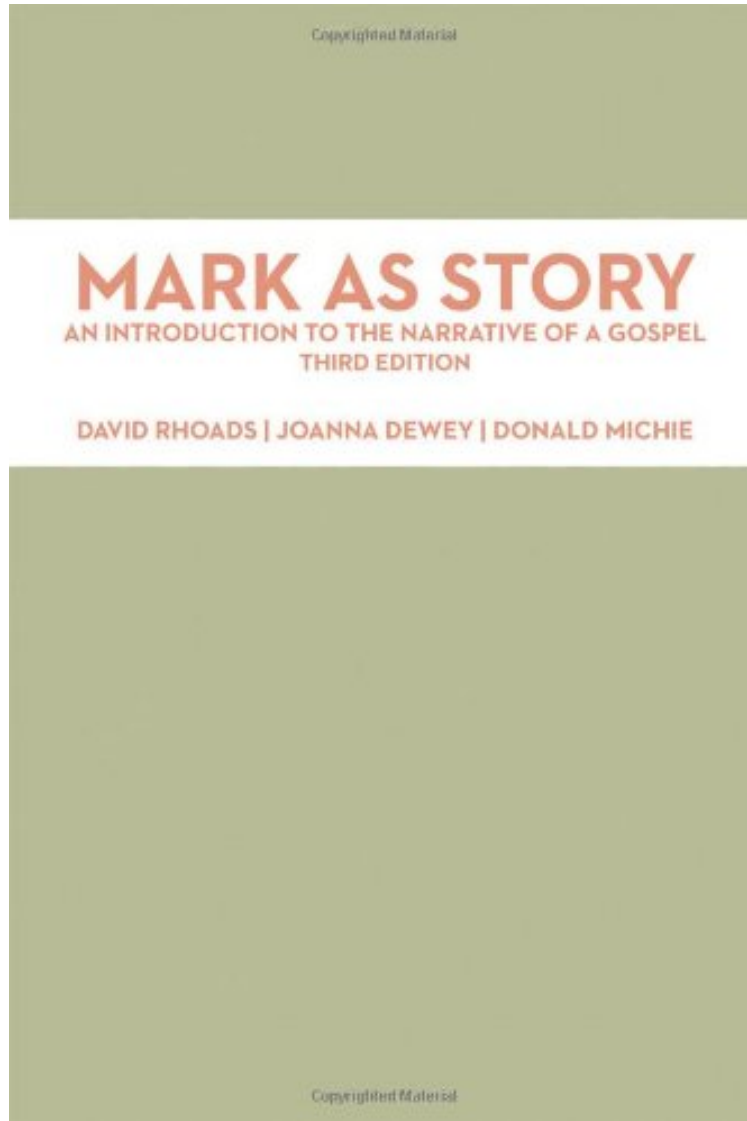


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Mark As Story: An Introduction to the Narrative of a Gospel

David Rhoads, Joanna Dewey, Donald Michie
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David Rhoads, Joanna Dewey, Donald Michie : Mark As Story: An Introduction to the Narrative of a Gospel before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Mark As Story: An Introduction to the Narrative of a Gospel:

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Mark as Story, book reviewBy JDRDavid Rhoads book, Mark as Story: an Introduction to the Narrative of a Gospel takes an unique approach to the Gospel of Mark through what the book calls narrative analysis. What Rhoads does in his book is to contextualize not only the historical and social

context of the writing of Marks gospel account, but also the narrative writing of Marks author. Rhoads makes it plain that his approach analyses Mark as a story, rather than an historic accounting of Jesus life by Marks author. Rhoads examines storytelling culture in first century Mediterranean culture, which he notes was primarily done by oral composition. The Gospel of Mark, he argues, is not only intended to be read, but also performed. By this, Rhoads means that the story told in Mark was to be told in a lively and meaningful way. In this sense, Mark is filled with all the necessary attributes of storytelling such as tone, voice, volume, body language, etc, all designed to evoke a response from its intended audience. The meat of Rhoads book include sections on the narrator, the settings, the plot and the characters of Jesus, the disciples and other characters secondary to the story within Mark. In all these sections, Rhoads argues that there is a storytelling intent to everything about the Gospel of Mark; a narrator who tells the story as well as its first writer, settings designed to place the story in a time, place and culture, and a plot that twists and turns to climax in the death of Jesus of Nazareth, and dynamic characters existing with purpose within the story. Rhoads concludes with a section on the audience; how it was read two thousand years ago and to whom it was read and how it may be read by contemporary readers today. There are aspects of Rhoads book on which I whole-heartedly agree. His narrative analysis reinvigorates the text of Marks gospel account, giving it life that for myself and other readers of Mark may not have been there before. We tend to read the gospel accounts as mere history, which for bible believing Christians is true, but we also believe that the Holy Spirit used each author in a unique way, leaving marks of their personality, passions, and style all throughout the text of scripture. Rhoads points out that everything from the pace of the story, to the characters and their dimensionality is absolutely intentional on the part of the author. In this way, everything about Marks gospel can be understood as purposeful, not just by the author, but by the Holy Spirit himself. It is fascinating to look at Mark through that lense. There is nothing nonsensical about understanding all of Mark to be written with careful detail and purpose. In fact, backed with a biblical theology, the authors intentional and purposed writing, coupled with Gods sovereignty truly attest to the beauty of not just Mark, but of all the gospel accounts and the rest of scripture. There are many things in which I disagree with in this book, however I will highlight only two of them. The first is that Im not quite sold on the performance part where Rhoads suggest that the proper context of Mark was for the to reader perform and act out all the characters. I accept the purposefulness in the story writing of Mark and I also affirm that it necessarily was read out loud to illiterate Christians in the early church, but I find it a stretch to say that it was to be performed. Not only is there no early church evidence of this being the case, but the Christian tradition of preaching has been remarkably well preserved over two thousand years, taking direction from Jesus, the Apostles and early church fathers. It would make sense that if the performing of Marks gospel were to be truly intended and practiced in the early church, then it is likely that this would be preserved in some manner to this day. Thus, it is a bit too far to suggest that the writer of Mark intended his account to be performed like a dramatic story around a campfire or on a stage. The second issue I take with Rhoads is the imposition of his presupposed theological views onto Mark. At times it felt like Rhoads and I were not reading the same Mark. Rhoads states in his book that Jesus becomes Gods son at his baptism, and that he had no divine nature. He even seems to manipulate his translation of Mark to imply just that by changing Mark 1:11 from You are my beloved son; with you I am well pleased. to You are my beloved son. I delighted choosing you. Every honest Bible translation has translated Mark 1:11 in some manner of the former; Rhoads personal translation appears to be intentionally translated as the latter, most likely to accommodate his own theological views of Christ not being a divine member of the trinity. In another passage, Rhoads draws a conclusion that Jesus death as depicted in Mark is merely to show human faithfulness to God, when in reality Jesus death as detailed in Mark shows Gods faithfulness to a broken and sinful people. In many ways, Rhoads distorted theology plays into a misunderstanding of the fundamental nature of Marks gospel: to proclaim Jesus life, death and resurrection and the ushering in of Gods kingdom. Mark as Story is a good book for the seasoned Christian, firmly founded in biblical theology. Any new believer, or immature Christian should stay away from this book for they would be treading into waters too deep and rough for their stage in spiritual life. That being said and the bad theology aside, there is much that a mature and equipped follower of Christ can glean from Rhoads book. Namely a fresh way to look at the scriptures which can give some insight as to how Marks gospel was not only written, but masterfully crafted to tell the story of Jesus Christ and the good news he brought with him. 4 of 4 people found the following review helpful. Very nice! By Suzanne Miller aka Laughing Scholar This is a great analysis of the Gospel of Mark as well as introduction to narrative criticism. Be aware that this book is not organized as a commentary. Instead, it is much more interested in the matters of narrative criticism and examining the story aspect of Mark. It uses accessible language. It is really a quick read, and I would recommend it for a variety of uses (narrative criticism, study of Mark, character study, etc) 2 of 2 people found the following review helpful. This book has given me a better understanding of the Gospel of Mark By Shelly This book has given me a better understanding of the Gospel of Mark. It gave insight about the narrator and helped me look at things described in the book differently. Now it all makes sense. A must read, especially for someone learning the word.

For thirty years, Mark as Story has introduced readers to the rhetorical and narrative skill that makes Mark so arresting and compelling a story. Rhoads, Dewey, and Michie have helped to pioneer our appreciation of the Gospels, and Mark

in particular, as narratives originally created in an oral culture for oral performance. New in this edition are a revised preface and an afterword describing the significant role Mark as Story has played in the development of narrative criticism. Chapters discuss the Gospel's genre, narrator, settings, plot, characters (Jesus, authorities, disciples, #34the people#34), and implied reader, with final reflections on #34the ethics of reading" and exercises in literary and narrative analysis well suited for the introductory classroom. Mark as Story is the ideal resource for readers encountering Mark's Gospel for the first time and for those long familiar with the Gospel to rediscover the skill and immediacy it conveys.

About the Author David Rhoads is Professor of New Testament at Lutheran School of Theology in Chicago and the author of *The Challenge of Diversity: The Witness of Paul and the Gospels* (1996) and *Reading Mark: Engaging the Gospel* (2004); editor of *From Every People and Nation: The Book of Revelation in Intercultural Perspective* (2005); and coeditor of *The Season of Creation: A Preaching Commentary* (2011), all from Fortress Press. Joanna Dewey is the Harvey Guthrie Jr. Professor Emerita of Biblical Studies and Former Academic Dean at the Episcopal Divinity School, Cambridge, Mass., the author of *Disciples of the Way: Mark on Discipleship* (1976) and *Markan Public Debate* (1980), and editor of *Orality and Textuality in Early Christian Literature* (1994). Donald Michie is Professor of English Emeritus at Carthage College, Kenosha, Wisconsin