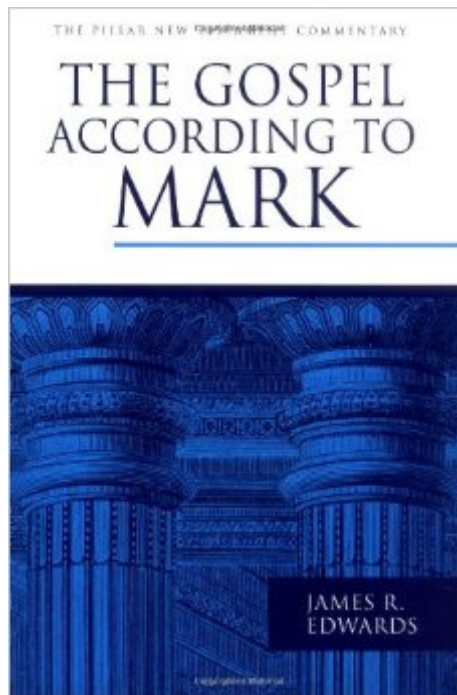


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The Gospel According To Mark (The Pillar New Testament Commentary (PNTC))



Synopsis

This new Pillar volume offers exceptional commentary on Mark that clearly shows the second Gospel • though it was a product of the earliest Christian community • to be both relevant and sorely needed in today's church. Written by a biblical scholar who has devoted thirty years to the study of the second Gospel, this commentary aims primarily to interpret the Gospel of Mark according to its theological intentions and purposes, especially as they relate to the life and ministry of Jesus and the call to faith and discipleship. Unique features of James Edwards's approach include clear descriptions of key terms used by Mark and revealing discussion of the Gospel's literary features, including Mark's use of the "sandwich" technique and of imagistic motifs and irony. Edwards also proposes a new paradigm for interpreting the difficult "Little Apocalypse" of chapter 13, and he argues for a new understanding of Mark's controversial ending.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

It may be hard to find a better commentary on Mark. The writer is extremely well-informed and he shares his learning without wasting words. Edwards obviously loves Mark's gospel, taking on all detractors and defending Mark's historicity. In fact he is so zealous about Mark's reliability he seems to show little hesitation about making the other gospels look inferior in comparison. Some of this one-sided comparison is ok. Many of today's scholars believe Mark is the earliest gospel and the other Synoptic gospels are partially dependent on it for source material. That's alright. But if you

read this commentary carefully, soon it might dawn on you that the writer sees the other gospels in a way conservative evangelicals should not. The problem reaches a climax in Mark 14, the episode of Jesus' arrest where the ear of the high priest's servant was severed. John 18:10 names the attacker as Peter but Edwards considers this to be nothing more than unreliable "later tradition". Let me quote from the commentary (pp 438-439): "Later tradition identified Peter as the sword-wielding assailant, but this is not as certain as is often assumed, for Mark attributes the deed not to a disciple but "to one of those standing near". This same phrase will appear in vv 69-70, where it obviously does not refer to disciples. It is far more likely that the arrest squad, and not the disciples, were armed with swords. Indeed, if the assailant were a disciple we should expect an arrest to follow. But no arrest follows, which at least suggests that the severed ear fell from the misguided valor of a henchman rather than of a disciple or Peter. Peter, of course, figures prominently in the events of chap. 14 and is likely Mark's source of much of it.

I find it truly amazing that there is still so much lively discussion about a Gospel of the New Testament which has been a cornerstone of Christian faith for almost 2000 years; however, the more I study New Testament exegesis, the less I'm surprised. The thing that makes the dialogue over The Gospel of Mark special is not Romans' deep theological arguments. Martin Luther, for example, in his 55 volumes of works translated into English barely mentions the Gospel, while doing an entire commentary on the Gospel of John. The primary interest lies in the fact that less than 200 years ago, the basic opinions on dating Mark changed from its being considered a copy of Matthew to being an earlier source of both Matthew and Luke. This lively discussion was enriched even further by exegesis in the last 50 years, with the founding of 'redactive' analysis by Marxson in Germany. I've surveyed five different exegeses of Mark and have found much common ground, but also many differences, lying primarily in the translations and in the extent to which they address the history of commentary on Mark. Even though some of the volumes deal much more deeply with previous scholarship than others, all limit themselves to work done in the 20th century, and even to work done in the last 50 years. One thing I must say that although there are important differences, all of these volumes represent sound work at the deepest levels of scholarship. Some are more suitable for pastoral use than others, but none are 'lightweights'. The six volumes I surveyed follow: 'The Gospel According to Mark', William L. Lane, 1974, Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 'The New International Commentary on the New Testament' Series. 'Mark 1-8:26', Robert A.

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