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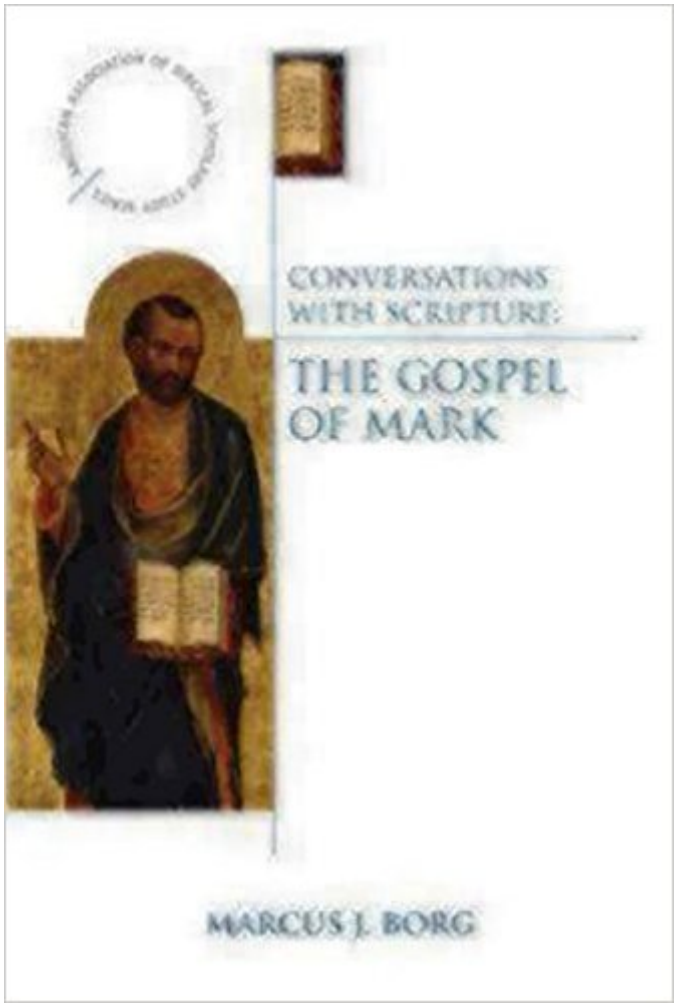
Conversations With Scripture - The Gospel Of Mark (Anglican Association Of Biblical Scholars Study)



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Synopsis

Most Christians are familiar with the story told in Mark’s gospel -- from the fishermen leaving their nets, to the miracle of the loaves and fishes, to the political rumblings and the crucifixion. But no one knows who "Mark" really was or why this gospel was written or why it’s charged with such a sense of immediacy. For noted Jesus scholar Marcus Borg, reading Mark is like "meeting Jesus again for the first time." Individual readers and parish study groups will learn about this earliest gospel from the perspective of an important Anglican theologian. Conversations with Scripture is the umbrella title of the Anglican Association of Biblical Scholars Study Series. Written in accessible language and sensitive to those who have little or no experience in reading the Bible, each book in the series focuses on exploring the historical and critical background, plus modern application of the texts. Other books in the series focus on the Gospel of John, Revelation, the Law, the Parables, and 2 Isaiah. From the Introduction: "In thousands of congregations...this emerging way has been a means of revitalizing and deepening Christian understanding and commitment. It is a way that integrates faith and reason, head and heart, intellect, experience, and yearning. For me, it has made all the difference. This book is a small contribution to this process of adult theological re-education."

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

I admit a bias in favor of Marcus Borg. That said, "Conversations with Scripture: The Gospel of

Mark" Puts together the range of Borg's scholarship on the Gospels in a format that lures you further and further into what he has to say. You'll want the Gospel of Mark handy just because you'll want to read it with fresh eyes. The study questions in the back are especially useful if you're mentoring adult study groups.

With 133 pages of text, Scripture popularizer Marcus Borg makes the earliest and shortest gospel come alive for the lay reader. He encourages the reader to read "Mark" through in one two-hour sitting before doing anything else, a great suggestion. The Gospel is a structured narrative in three parts: Jesus in Galilee at the start of his ministry; Jesus enroute to Jerusalem to symbolize his "way"; Jesus in Jerusalem to suffer, die and be reborn.Marcus clearly loves "Mark" and sees the Gospel as the closest text we have to the historical Jesus and his central message: God's reign is upon us; here is the way to it.If you are familiar with Borg and his recent collaborator on popular books like "The Last Week," the more serious Jesus scholar John Dominic Crossan, you know his familiar themes and controversies.There are also what I call the "Borgian Code Words." Take the word "rich," as in "rich in meanings," or "rich in symbolic import." When it refers to a passage, it means "never really happened." Take the Baptism of Jesus by John when the heavens opened and a voice from above claimed Jesus was the voice's son. Borg does his tap dance around the fact that believers have traditionally believed it actually happened by reinterpreting the event as wholly symbolic. In this case, the event is some kind of internal vision and "audition" experienced only by Jesus.Matthew and Luke in their Gospels make it an actual visitation by God, but, says Borg, they are just embellishing Mark who knows it was not a publicly witnessed divine appearance. Typically, and not at all compellingly, Borg goes on to claim that the event as a private experience inside Jesus' head "does not in any way diminish its significance." Of course it does! On the one hand you have a direct divine intervention with God speaking and loudly affirming Jesus sonship in the presence of crowds of awed witnesses. On the other hand, you have a trance or vision experienced only by Jesus. Excuse me: BIG difference.A much more important tap dance occurs at the end of the book, when Borg recounts Mark's account of Jesus burial and resurrection. Borg clearly believes that Jesus did not physically rise from the dead, though he does not admit that in this book designed for Anglican believers. He merely makes the stupefying claim that arguing about whether the resurrection really happened or not is no more than a "distraction." Distraction from what? From the symbolism, which is the really important matter. I'm sorry, Marcus; tap dance all you want. There is a huge difference between Jesus rising bodily from the dead and Jesus not rising bodily from the dead.So why do I give this 4 stars? Because even with the tap dance around miracles and cures

that Borg simply believes never happened, this is an excellent brief, lay exegesis of Mark. If you do believe that Jesus performed miracles and rose from the dead, the book is still a great guide.Tap dance or not, Marcus does a terrific tango with Mark!

I have been a fan of Marcus Borg for some time now. He is one of a handful of biblical scholars who have as a mission of bringing the fruits of critical biblical scholarship into the pew. Conversations with Scripture: The Gospel of Mark is not a verse by verse commentary on Mark. Rather it is an overview that breaks the gospel into five segments for discussion: Overture and Beginning (Mk. 1-3); Parables and Miracles (Mk. 4-5); Rejection, Miracles and Conflict (Mk. 6-8); From Galilee to Jerusalem (Mk. 8-10) and Jerusalem, Execution and Ressurection (Mk. 11-16). Borg writes ffrom both a Christian perpective and a mainstream scholarly perspective. Each chapter explores different themes found in the related chapters of Mark, what they meant to the hearers of Mark's gospel in the 1st century and what they might mean to us today. The book includes an extensive Study Guide (not written by Borg) with excellent questions for group or individual study. While Borg is a world-recognized bilical scholar he is gentle with those who are unfamiliar with this work and whose understanding may be more traditional. For me, it is high time that the church embrace this kind of work and include its findings in its own messaging. Co-incidentally, I am starting a Bible Study tomorrow based on this book and am quite excited about it.

Dr. Borg is so gifted in taking complex knowledge based on years of study and distilling it so anyone can have access. He is as valuable to the professional as he is to a novice bible student. Not all the people agree with his perspectives, for sure. Nevertheless, those perspectives are important to hear and ponder. I have no apology to make for offering his thoughts to others. How they respond is always interesting and the basis for further dialogue. For me, this is an incredible formation process for the people of God.

I've been a Christian for over 30 years. Only recently have I been getting into Marcus Borg's work. I must say that he presents things in a realistic and applicable fashion that is easily understandable without getting into high level exegesis, which he is quite capable of in some works. I find this book to be refreshing and informative, I walk away from this work feeling complete and not asking more questions than I had when I first started reading as I do with a lot of Christian writing. He presents the facts and not developed traditon, although he explains how the tradition develops over time. I encourage readers to purchase this book as well as other works by Marcus Borg. The voice of

reality.

This gives you a lot to think about and great for small groups. Be prepared for some liberal thoughts. Definitely worth reading and given some liberal thinking will give a group a lot to share and discuss.

This is one of the best curricula I seen in many years of Bible study classes. It stimulates thinking and conversation. Well organized and thought provoking.

We are using this book for a Bible study at church! Very thought provoking!

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