



Proclaiming the Gospel: First-Century Performance of Mark

Whitney Shiner

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Scholars have long understood that the texts we now know as the Gospels were read aloud in the Greco-Roman world, but few have actually envisioned what a performance of the Gospel of Mark would have been like in the first century and how it would have shaped the experience of its audience. *Proclaiming the Gospel* shows us. Oral performances in the New Testament world were lively affairs. In the performance of Greco-Roman theater, readers lose their voices from the stress of emotional passages. Audiences cheer for philosophers as if at a rock concert, and in law courts, they are paid for their responses. Storytellers compete for attention with jugglers, and some speakers must fend off hostile crowds. Congregations at churches and synagogues cheer as if at the theater. Shiner reveals the ways that Mark wrote his Gospel to compete in this arena and how his audiences would have responded: applause for the miracles of Jesus, then an altogether different response at the cross. Whitney Shiner is Assistant Professor of Christian Origins at George Mason University, Fairfax, Virginia, and the author of *Follow Me: Disciples in markan Rhetoric*.

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