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In the world of literary criticism, Borgman and Clark's *Written to Be Heard: Recovering the Messages of the Gospel* provides a practical guide for "reading" the Gospels as they were originally intended: to be heard. Paul Borgman has spent his life studying the biblical narrative through the lens of literary criticism. He currently teaches literature at Gordon College. Kelly James Clark is a research fellow at Kaufman Interfaith Institute and an international advocate for interfaith dialogue, focusing on the Abrahamic religions. He joins Borgman for Borgman's fourth book on scripture and literary criticism.

*Written to be Heard* focuses on the gospels and Acts. Borgman and Kelly claim we most often approach the Gospels as a portion of the larger story of scripture. While this reading has value, it causes us to focus only on the beginning and end of the story, and "we ignore their 'missing middles'—precisely where we learn what the life and death of Jesus mean. The main body of each gospel, which tells us what it is about, has been lost" (3).

Borgman and Clark suggest we should instead approach the Bible as a text meant to be listened to—or written to be heard. An oral reading of the gospel pays attention to repeated words, phrases, and themes, and notices chiasmic structures. Reading the Gospels as a book meant to be heard will fill in that missing middle as these tools of oral literature highlight the larger themes of each individual gospel.

Contrary to what the title may suggest, this book is not a lengthy argument regarding the orality of scripture. Instead, Borgman and Clark make their case for hearing the Gospels in their first chapter and then argue their case through what follows: commentaries on the four Gospels and Acts. Each section focuses on a different biblical book, highlighting overarching themes and then briefly walking through the book, taking note of literary repetitions and structuring.

The book in totality is just under four hundred pages, including the endnotes, so the commentary is not as extensive as one would experience in most verse-by-verse explorations of biblical texts. But it is clearly well researched. The book contains an extensive bibliography and a notes section that highlights significant cross-references and explains more about the literary culture of the Gospels.

The commentary itself has minimal footnotes by design. Borgman and Clark want the reader to experience the text as close to the original hearing/reading as possible, so they believe extensive footnoting might distract. But those who have not done work with the orality of biblical literature (and particularly the field of performance criticism) may miss the footnotes and textual references that have been eliminated in Borgman and Clark's commentary.

Though the opening argument for reading the Gospels as oral texts is interesting and important for understanding the methodology of the commentaries that follow, I think this book is best used as a commentary companion when studying the Gospels or Acts. It is short enough that one could skim the entire section on a given gospel, getting an overview of the book's themes, and then zero in on a particular section to see those themes reflected through specific repetition and chiasmic structure.

While many other commentaries provide word-by-word dissection, *Written to Be Heard* fills in the often missing literary angle by providing a valuable overview of the themes of each book, helping the reader not to lose the forest in the trees. As a future minister of Word and Sacrament, I find *Written to Be Heard* an incredibly practical guide to noticing what the oral literary approach to the Gospels can teach us about the kingdom of God.