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This groundbreaking commentary is the first to provide a detailed social and rhetorical analysis of the book of Acts. Ben Witherington draws on the best new insights from a number of disciplines to provide readers with the benefits of recent innovative ways of analyzing the text of Acts. In addition,

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Witherington gives detailed attention to major theological and historical issues, including the question of the relationship of Acts to the Pauline letters, the question of early Christian history and how the church grew and developed, the relationship between early Judaism and early Christianity, and the relationship between Christians and the officials of the Roman Empire.

Witherington gleans fresh insights from reading the text of Paul's epistle in light of early Jewish theology, the historical situation of Rome in the middle of first century A.D., and Paul's own rhetorical concerns.

Paul's two letters to the Thessalonians stand as some of the very earliest Christian documents, yet they appear well into Paul's missionary career, giving them a unique context well worth exploring. In this first full-scale socio-rhetorical commentary on 1 and 2 Thessalonians, Ben Witherington gleans fresh insight from reading Paul's text in the light of rhetorical concerns and patterns, early Jewish theology, and the first-century historical situation in Macedonia. Witherington's distinctive socio-rhetorical approach helps unearth insights that would otherwise remain hidden using only form criticism, epistolary categories, and traditional criticism. Witherington details Thessalonica's place as the "metropolis" of Macedonia, and he carefully unpacks the social situation of Paul and his recipients. Scholars will appreciate the careful analysis and rhetorical insights contained here, while Witherington's clear prose and sensitivity to Paul's ideas make this work ideal for all who desire a useful, readable commentary on 1 and 2 Thessalonians.

This commentary applies an exegetical method informed by both sociological insight and rhetorical analysis to the study of 1 and 2 Corinthians. The study also analyzes the two letters of Paul in terms of Greco-Roman rhetoric and ancient social conditions and customs to shed fresh light on the context and content of the message.

This book offers the first sustained attempt to read the Gospel of Mark both as an ancient biography and as a form of ancient rhetoric. Ben Witherington applies to Mark the socio-rhetorical approach for which he is well known, opening a fresh new perspective on the earliest Gospel. Written when the fledgling Christian faith was experiencing a major crisis during the Jewish war, Mark provides us with the first window on how the life and teachings of Jesus were presented to a largely non-Jewish audience. According to Witherington, the structure of Mark demonstrates that this Gospel is biographically focused on the identity of Jesus and the importance of knowing who he is--the Christ, the Son of God. This finding reveals that Christology stood at the heart of the earliest Christians' faith. It also shows how important it was to these earliest Christians to persuade others about the nature of Jesus, both as a historical figure and as the Savior of the world.

This title offers an innovative way of looking at Ephesians, Colossians and Philemon as inter-related documents written at different levels of moral discourse. The author also analyses these documents as examples of Asiatic rhetoric.

For over one hundred years, the International Critical Commentary series has held a special place among works on the Bible. It has sought to bring together all the relevant aids to exegesis — linguistic and textual no less than archaeological, historical, literary and theological—with a level of comprehension and quality of scholarship unmatched by any other series. No attempt has been made to secure a uniform theological or critical approach to the biblical text: contributors have been invited for their scholarly distinction, not for their adherence to any one school of thought. The first paperback editions to be

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published cover the heart of the New Testament, providing a wealth of information and research in accessible and attractive format.

New Testament Interpretation through Rhetorical Criticism provides readers of the Bible with an important tool for understanding the Scriptures. Based on the theory and practice of Greek rhetoric in the New Testament, George Kennedy's approach acknowledges that New Testament writers wrote to persuade an audience of the truth of their messages. These writers employed rhetorical conventions that were widely known and imitated in the society of the times. Sometimes confirming but often challenging common interpretations of texts, this is the first systematic study of the rhetorical composition of the New Testament. As a complement to form criticism, historical criticism, and other methods of biblical analysis, rhetorical criticism focuses on the text as we have it and seeks to discover the basis of its powerful appeal and the intent of its authors. Kennedy shows that biblical writers employed both "external" modes of persuasion, such as scriptural authority, the evidence of miracles, and the testimony of witnesses, and "internal" methods, such as ethos (authority and character of the speaker), pathos (emotional appeal to the audience), and logos (deductive and inductive argument in the text). In the opening chapter Kennedy presents a survey of how rhetoric was taught in the New Testament period and outlines a rigorous method of rhetorical criticism that involves a series of steps. He provides in succeeding chapters examples of rhetorical analysis, looking closely at the Sermon on the Mount, the Sermon on the Plain, Jesus' farewell to the disciples in John's Gospel, the distinctive rhetoric of Jesus, the speeches in Acts, and the approach of Saint Paul in Second Corinthians, Thessalonians, Galatians, and Romans.

Peterson focuses on how Luke framed his narrative and speeches as well as his theology, demonstrating that Acts was written for Christian edification and to encourage mission.

Acts is the sequel to Luke's gospel and tells the story of Jesus's followers during the 30 years after his death. It describes how the 12 apostles, formerly Jesus's disciples, spread the message of Christianity throughout the Mediterranean against a background of persecution. With an introduction by P.D. James

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