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(This page updated November 12, 2018)

In a previous work, *Mark: Servant of God*, I looked at Mark in the context of its Jewish background. In the current study, I want to look at Mark more extensively in relation to its history, scholarship, and literary components. In posting this, I am well aware that no work on Mark can ever really be said to be complete, and my intent will be to continue work on these pages as I have time.

Since an interpretive approach always reveals itself, this study should be guided by some preliminary remarks. Much of what follows anchors itself in a historical approach, meaning simply that what is historical has a beginning and end within eternity. No historical person can step outside the existing historical box to make definitive statements about Truth, the Absolute, God; history works within its own boundaries using the tools of reason and logic, observation and science. The Bible comes to human beings within their historical setting, and in that context, like any other book, it must be read and interpreted, hopefully with every tool that can be brought to careful study; this, however, does not reduce the Bible to being "just a book or books." Rather, within history the Incarnate Word reveals everything and all that the finite mind can understand, and unaided by faith, interpretation of God's Word encounters severe boundaries in its understanding of God and the eternal. What God reveals of eternity and the wonder and awe of what lies beyond the grasp of human cognition will always require humble submission of that which is natural to the presence of the Supernatural. The limits of reason and science force the inevitable conclusion that existence itself points to and suggests a dependence upon what is outside itself. Beyond simple knowledge, the Bible always invites individuals into relationship and not relationship with the Transcendent but into the person of God. The writer of *Mark* asks the quintessential question about the Jesus of history: "But who do you say I am?" History presents the man while faith humbly and gratefully responds, "You are the Christ."

Much of what has been written here can be considered an investigation. As with any investigation, conclusions derive from a sifting of information. While conclusions will remain to be drawn only after investigation has ended, I am ready at this point to begin with some conclusions I have reached in other papers:

"Son of Man: the Story of Jesus in Mark" states the Gospel of Mark has gained unprecedented and growing importance for both theology and literature. Acknowledged as one of the great pieces of world literature, Mark has come across time and space to give us Jesus the man in a connected, if periscopic, narrative, however brief, stark, and oracular, absent of birth stories and resurrection. This image has vividly affected modern culture, and it is the image of "the Son of Man" that becomes the focus of this paper. Scholarship, granting the possibility that Jesus may not have said the words attributed to him, seems to have settled on three possible interpretations of "Son of Man": a present, earthly Son of Man, a suffering Son of Man, and a future coming Son of Man. At the heart of most of the ambiguity and controversy lies a question of authority: whether Jesus got his power from heaven or from earthly origins. Jesus refused to answer this question: "Neither will I tell you by what authority I am doing these things." Instead, Jesus then, as now, asks another question about identity: "But who do you say that I am? This paper concludes the following: Readers today will encounter Mark the storyteller as he tells the story of Jesus, a man who came into history, lived in history, and died as a man in history; they will encounter a metaphorical narrative in which ultimately the quest for factuality vanishes. They will hear again the familiar words, "Who do you say I am?" and hear Jesus' own words, "Neither will I tell you by what authority I am doing these things."

"The Messiah Has Done It: A Structural Approach to Jesus' Identity in Mark" identifies an overall structure in Mark that climatically satisfies the question of who Jesus says he is." The paper focuses on Mark 14:61-62 as the climactic and pivotal point of the Gospel: "Jesus' actions in leaving the temple, speaking of its destruction and a coming future, lead directly into the actual climatic chapter 14, where Jesus, before the council, is asked by the high priest whether He is 'the Messiah, the Son of the Blessed One' (61). Jesus not only accepts the title but speaks to its fulfillment in a future when people 'will see the Son of Man seated at the right hand of the Power,' and 'coming with the clouds of heaven'" (62). "The Longer Ending of Mark" takes up another question—whether Mark's account ends with verse 8 or includes the last twelve verses. The longer ending, readers will recall, contains the appearance of Jesus to Mary Magdalen early on the first day of the week, who relates this to those who have been with Jesus only to have them not believe he is alive (9-11); included, also, is an appearance to two disciples, who went back and told the rest, only to be met with disbelief on their part (12); Jesus commissions the disciples (14-18); and finally, the account ends with the ascension of Jesus. If, in fact, Mark can be understood structurally as building to the point of Jesus' own identity of himself as Messiah, with this question satisfied, why should Mark continue on past Jesus's final Messianic cry from the cross: 'Eloi, Eloi, lema sabachthani?' which means, 'My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?'" (15:34). Crain declares: "The final chapter serves as Mark's dénouement; readers find themselves left to contemplate all that has happened, and invited to think about it." The final twelve verses, of course, move well beyond what has happened into an account of what becomes the result of what has happened: his appearances, commission, and ascension. It may be further observed of denouement that any remaining mysteries, questions, secrets can be explained by the author. In the case of Mark, understood as answering definitively, the matter of Jesus' Messiahship, what remains to be said is what will come of Jesus raised from the dead. How very logical that Mark should end with his appearances, his commission, and his ascension These serve to wrap up the story of an eschatological event, which has moved its readers from Temple traditions into the advent of the Church of the Messiah.

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Summary: Controversy continues about the authorship, date, literature, and structure of the Gospel of Mark.

Authorship: The early Church held the belief that John Mark penned the Gospel of Mark; other scholarship suggests the common Marcus as one of seventy disciples, a conservative; possibly an individual belonging to a persecuted group near Jerusalem; an anonymous writer; and possibly, a woman. Critics wonder about the abrupt ending of Mark in light of the resurrection as the linchpin for Christianity. N.T. Wright points out a Christian praxis that makes the second-Temple view and that of Christianity essentially an overlap of two ages that includes the "age to come" longed for by Israel and an age begun--the present, still-continuing--but moving to full and final redemption."

Date: The content of Mark reads points to the destruction of the Temple in 70 CE, but the writer and the period should be kept distinct. Now common, Mark is said to be the first gospel written with the other gospels using Mark's work.

Literature: Historical, literary, and hermeneutical approaches lead to different conclusions about the genre of this Gospel which probably should not be read as biography. Classified as story, and lending itself to narrative criticism, the genre lends itself to drama, parable (faith, life of Jesus, God), and parable-myth (the Kingdom of God).

Structure: The complexity of Mark unfolds in its multiple structures--chapters, clusters, chiasm, geography, and genres or events (good news and callings, healings, parables, miracles, feedings, confessions, teachings, journey and geography, ministries (Galilee and Jerusalem), themes, and Crucifixion story.

Exploration usually hints at outcome, and it should come as no surprise to find some semblance of interpretation and conclusion growing out of a mass of considerations. Far into the structure discussion, I suggest careful and close reading of each of the chapters and verses in Mark. Doing so will require consideration of the historical Jesus and the theological Christ as presented in Mark. On another level, I propose to explore the literary features and structure of Mark, telling readers they may want to keep in mind that verse one in Mark has sometimes been taken to be the title, "The Beginning of the Good News of Jesus Christ, the Son of God," with some manuscripts omitting Son of God. What follows then will be a series of opportunities to recognize who Jesus is prior to the crucifixion; the Christ of resurrection, in fact, does belong to Christian theology, but that does not mean, necessarily, that the title's use of Jesus Christ owes itself simply to Christian overtones (interpolation) in the way oral tradition becomes authorized document. All Mark asks the simple question concerning the identity of Jesus, itself meaningless apart from a suggestion of the "something more" that propels readers through the narrative, beginning with them in Galilee and then returning them to Galilee to take the journey all over again--and perhaps, along the way, to make the confession, "Thou art the Christ."

In a study of Mark I completed in 1999 entitled *Jesus: Servant of God*, I wrote the following introduction, emphasizing 1. two major divisions, 2. a date of 64-72 CE for authorship, 3. Jesus in relation to Jewish background, and 4. the separation of Christianity from Judaism, points I still consider generally in line with biblical scholarship.

Introduction: Jesus, Servant of God

Mark, as the earliest gospel, should be read carefully as the foundational knowledge for the person of Christ. This gospel begins with the baptism and the life of Jesus in Galilee (chapters 1-9); following the transfiguration, we follow Jesus and his disciples from Galilee to Jerusalem, concluding with his entry into that holy city (chapter 11); the final section is the story of Jesus' passion (chapters 14 and 15). Chapter thirteen is apocalyptic and addresses the end of time; the final chapter contains the resurrection.

As the first gospel, Mark is dated about 64-72 CE. This would be just prior to the decisive Roman destruction of the temple in 70 CE. The Romans, as we will recall, conquered this Jewish nation in 63 BCE. The Christian movement began in an era of violence and national upheaval. From a conquered nation came the person Jesus, usually said to have been born about 8 to 4 BCE; he is said to have died between 27 and 33 CE. Paul's death in 64 CE puts him as having written before the cataclysmic Roman temple destruction. Importantly, the other gospels are post-70 CE, as are, arguably, Acts, the books of Timothy, Titus, Peter, Jude, James and John, and, of course, Revelation.

In a social context, Jesus was born a Jew into a Jewish world. After 70 CE, the survival of the Jews meant survival through scripture simply because the nation, holy city, temple and priesthood had been destroyed. This is, of course, the time of the writing of the later gospels. Up until 70 CE, Jerusalem could be peopled with those who compromised with the Romans (Sadducees), resisted through a conservative interpretation of their scripture (Pharisees) or violence (Zealots), while still others simply withdrew (Gnostics). With the temple destruction, the Jews essentially lost their identity. With Massada in 73 CE, Jewish resistance ended with suicide. The only possession left for wandering Jews was their Torah.

Christianity, born within Jewish synagogues and interpreting Christ as a new revelation of God, separated itself from its Jewish origin after 70 CE and became more Gentile in nature. Before 70 CE, Christians and Jews co-existed with a tension between Torah as full revelation of God and Jesus as Christianity, born within Jewish synagogues new revelation. After 70 CE, Christians clearly began to go their own way, reinterpreting all of the existing scriptures in light of the new revelation. In the 80s, Jews no longer allowed anything other than strict orthodoxy within their synagogues and actually ex-communicated Jewish Christians. This schism between Jew and Gentile lends a peculiarly misguided hard-headedness about the recognition of their common ancestry.

This study will attempt to read Mark as closely related to its Jewish background.

Concerning authorship

In fact, reading Mark as closely related to its Jewish background remains a challenge for most readers; in her essay, "A Blind Promise: Mark's Retrieval of Esther (1994, Duke University Press, < <http://www.jstor.org/stable/1773206> >, Brenda Deen Schildgen describes an intertextuality in Mark sufficiently rich to demand readers to read Mark in the context of the time written and in a desire to establish Jesus' continuity with a Hebraic past:

Despite Mark's reputation for a simple style,² his literary technique is remarkably rich in its adoption and deployment of sacred texts, which permeated the discourse of the times in the regular liturgical celebrations and daily prayers that were conducted in either the synagogue or the home. These earlier texts both intrude into and harmonize with Mark's rendering of the Gospels' message. Beneath an apparently simple surface lies a rich juxtaposition of present and past that is saturated with Judaic textual tradition and used to mirror the moral, social, and political context in which Mark placed Jesus. His primary sources were the sacred texts of Judaism, but he also employed Greco-Roman phrases, often pointing ironically to the meaning of these diverse references in their new setting. Direct and indirect quotations of both oral and written sources come primarily from the Pentateuch, Psalms, and the Prophets, with a few additional references to Kings, Chronicles, Daniel, Esther, and Judith. This breakdown of sources shows the heterogeneity of Mark's appropriations from his textual heritage, which include moral and cultic laws, chronological and apocalyptic history, prophecy, and poetry. His selection spans the earliest Hebraic writings up to 140 B.C.E, a terminus ad quem suggested by the affinities among the Books of Esther, Daniel, and Judith by which they are dated to the period between 165 and 140 B.C.E. (see Stiehl 1982 [1956]).

The NRSV introduction to Mark describes the author as an associate of Peter based on Papias and goes on to identify Mark with John Mark in the NT.

Although there is no direct internal evidence of authorship, it was the unanimous testimony of the early church that this Gospel was written by John Mark ("John, also called Mark," Ac 12:12,25;15:37). The most important evidence comes from Papias (c. a.d. 140), who quotes an even earlier source as saying: (1) Mark was a close associate of Peter, from whom he received the tradition of the things said and done by the Lord; (2) this tradition did not come to Mark as a finished, sequential account of the life of our Lord, but as the preaching of Peter -- preaching directed to the needs of the early Christian communities; (3) Mark accurately preserved this material. The conclusion drawn from this tradition is that the Gospel of Mark largely consists of the preaching of Peter arranged and shaped by Mark (see note on Ac 10:37).

Matthew Henry's *Commentary* sees Mark likely as one of the seventy disciples who accompanied the apostles:

I. Concerning this witness. His name is Mark. Marcus was a Roman name, and a very common one, and yet we have no reason to think, but that he was by birth a Jew; but as Saul, when he went among the nations, took the Roman name of Paul, so he of Mark, his Jewish name perhaps being Mardocai; so Grotius. We read of John whose surname was Mark, sister's son to Barnabas, whom Paul was displeas'd with (Acts 15:37, 38), but afterward had a great kindness for, and not only order'd the churches to receive him (Col. 4:10), but sent for him to be his assistant, with this encomium, He is profitable to me for the ministry (2 Tim. 4:11); and he reckons him among his fellow-labourers, Philemon 24. We read of Marcus whom Peter calls his son, he having been an instrument of his conversion (1 Pt. 5:13); whether that was the same with the other, and, if not, which of them was the penman of this gospel, is altogether uncertain. It is a tradition very current among the ancients, that St. Mark wrote this gospel under the direction of St. Peter, and that it was confirm'd by his authority; so Hieron. Catal. Script. Eccles. Marcus discipulus et interpres Petri, juxta quod Petrum referentem audierat, legatus Roma à fratribus, breve scripsit evangelium—Mark, the disciple and interpreter of Peter, being sent from Rome by the brethren, wrote a concise gospel; and Tertullian saith (Adv. Marcion. lib. 4, cap. 5), Marcus quod edidit, Petri affirmetur, cujus interpres Marcus—Mark, the interpreter of Peter, deliver'd in writing the things which had been preach'd by Peter. But as Dr. Whitby very well suggests, Why should we have recourse to the authority of Peter for the support of this gospel, or say with St. Jerome that Peter approv'd of it and recommend'd it by his authority to the church to be read, when, though it is true Mark was no apostle, yet we have all the reason in the world to think that both he and Luke were of the number of the seventy disciples, who companied with the apostles all along (Acts 1:21), who had a commission like that of the apostles (Lu. 10:19, compar'd with Mk. 16:18), and who, it is highly probable, receiv'd the Holy Ghost when they did (Acts 1:15; 2:1-4), so that it is no diminution at all to the validity or value of this gospel, that Mark was not one of the twelve, as Matthew and John were? St. Jerome saith that, after the writing of this gospel, he went into Egypt, and was the first that preach'd the gospel at Alexandria, where he found'd a church, to which he was a great example of holy living. Constituit ecclesiam tantâ doctrinâ et vitæ continentiâ ut omnes sectatores Christi ad exemplum sui cogeret—He so adorn'd, by his doctrine and his life, the church which he found'd, that his example influenc'd all the followers of Christ.

Henry, M. 1996, c1991. Matthew Henry's commentary on the whole Bible: Complete and unabridged in one volume (Mk 1:1). Hendrickson: Peabody

In a review of *The Orphan Gospel: Mark's Perspective on Jesus*, by Dean W. Chapman, James W. Aageson outlines several assumptions made about the Gospel:

THE AIM of this book is to test a set of assumptions about the Gospel of Mark. Among these assumptions are the claims that Mark was a conservative Jew, probably from near Jerusalem, who belonged to a persecuted sect that saw itself as chosen by God and that expected the present age to come to an end shortly. The God of Israel, according to this group, was about to intervene and establish his kingly rule. The promise made to David centuries earlier was about to be fulfilled. An anointed one, sent by God, would set up his throne in Jerusalem, break the "iron fist" of Roman oppression, and rule with justice. With Jesus' arrival, however, certain troubling incongruities required Mark and his community to make some adjustments: The one considered to be the Christ was crucified; Jews were not flocking to Jesus' cause in large numbers; the land of Israel was still controlled by foreigners; and John the Baptist continued to be more popular than Jesus. While most of Mark's Gospel can be explained on the basis of these assumptions, one final assumption is required, according to Chapman: Mark wrote his Gospel for a community other than his own. Chapman argues that Mark's date of authorship is around 50 C.E. and that the Gospel was written for a Western, gentile congregation probably in Rome. Roman Christians requested from the Jerusalem church a "story of Jesus," and the Gospel of Mark was the result. Following the writing of the Gospel, a so-called "guide" in the recipient community added brief marginal notes to the text of Mark. A third stage in the development of the Markan text occurred when a "copyist," in the process of copying the Gospel, made further additions to the text. Hence, various contradictions, inconsistencies, and other peculiarities of the text may be explained, according to Chapman, by stratigraphic analysis.

(Aageson 106

Pasted from <<http://www.questia.com/read/1P3-4461459/shorter-reviews-and-notice-the-orphan-gospel>>

Michael Turton in his work on Mark (http://www.michaelturton.com/Mark/GMark_intro.html#interp) points out that the traditional view of the authorship of Mark has been questioned and suggests anonymity.

This view is adhered to only by conservative exegetes today, as it has been clear for a couple of centuries that the Gospel we know as Mark cannot possibly be the Gospel Papias is referring to, even assuming that the citation itself is genuine and not a later forgery either made or discovered by Eusebius. As you read the Gospel, the complexity of its references, allusions, and constructions off the Old Testament, its attitude toward the disciples, its use of Cynic sayings and constructions, its familiarity with Greek literary conventions, and other factors will make it clear to you why few scholars today accept the traditional view. For a vigorous defense of the traditional view, see Robert Gundry's Mark.

The reality is that today no one can say who wrote the Gospel of Mark. Not even the writer's gender is known, though traditionally it is ascribed to a man. However, John D. Crossan (1991, p416) has pointed out that verse 14:9: And truly, I say to you, wherever the gospel is preached in the whole world, what she has done will be told in memory of her" may well be a slyly ironic reference to the author herself. Additionally, a number of exegetes have felt that the mysterious young man of Mark 14:51-52 is actually the author of Mark. Whatever the case, given the low taste for high irony of the writer of Mark, it is perhaps fitting that the writer of one of the great pieces of world literature has gone anonymously into history.

In sorting through scholarship, though, Turton quotes from Crossan yet another possibility:

Crossan (1991, p416) has noted that one could make a much better case for the woman here being the author of Mark, than for the young man in 14:51-2. Her confession of Jesus' identity opens a frame that closes with the centurion's confession in 15:39. Though her memory will last forever, her name is never given. Markan irony again? Wills (1997, p117) points out that she is an ironic counterpart to the disciples, who do not understand (as usual). It should be added that the irony is increased because we know the disciples' names, while hers is not recorded.

Pasted from <<http://www.michaelturton.com/Mark/GMark14.html>>

Dom Henry Wansbrough also remarks on reasons Markian authorship should be questioned:

The traditional link of Mark with Peter and Rome is similarly unfounded. It rests on 1 Peter 5.16, 'Your sister in Babylon, who is with you among the chosen, sends you greetings. So does my son, Mark.' It is acceptable that 'Babylon' is a cryptogram for 'Rome'. But the identification begs two questions:

Is the apostle Peter really author of the letter, or is the letter pseudepigraphic?
'Mark' is a very common name in the Roman world. Is this Mark the evangelist?

('How the Bible Came to Us," <http://users.ox.ac.uk/~sben0056/booklets.htm>)

After an interesting exploration of John Mark as more likely the author of the book of John than Mark, Pierson Parker concludes to the effect that the author of *Mark* remains open, in degree, to debate ("John and John Mark, 1960, <<http://www.jstor.org/stable/3264460>>):

Indeed the reader must long since have asked, If Mark wrote the Fourth Gospel, who wrote the Second? It seems almost too easy to suggest (though some have done so) that it was *another* Mark.³⁵ The name Marcus, while rare among Jews, was common enough among gentiles. However, no such Marcus, living at a suitable time and place, is known to us. Ascribing the Second Gospel to such a one merely pushes the problem a step back, while solving nothing.

Some, not afraid of wild suggestions, might even propose John the son of Zebedee. In other words the two authors, both named John, got interchanged in the tradition. The Second Gospel does pay unusual attention to John son of Zebedee, naming him as often as do all the others combined. Its strong apocalyptic flavor would fit his temper. Its eyewitness stories could have come from him. Its depreciation of the Twelve might stem from the rivalries in which John figured so prominently. Its pro-gentile tone might reflect his later work in Samaria and Asia Minor. Its relatively poor Greek, its ill acquaintance with the OT, and its hesitant treatment of Jerusalem, might all be due to the "unlearned and ignorant" John of Acts 4 13. One might even propose, by these means, to account for the variant order in some early canons: Matthew-John-Luke-Mark instead of Matthew-Mark-Luke-John. The difference stemmed from a prior uncertainty as to which was which! Yet it is not easy to see how a son of Zebedee could have erred about Galilean geography, as the Second Evangelist sometimes does. It is still harder to see why that John should have needed written sources.

If, however, we find no suitable author for the Second Gospel, this does not entitle us to fall back on Mark of Jerusalem. We have seen too many objections to that, and there are others. It was never attributed to that Mark until the time of Jerome, and then only tentatively.³⁶ Its Greek is too colloquial for one of his education. It contains historical uncertainties, even blunders, regarding Herod Antipas, and regarding the government of Bethsaida, Gerasa, Phoenicia, and Jericho. It greatly exaggerates the ceremonial strictness of the Jews. Its account of the Trial is inadequate and misleading, e.g., as to the time and procedures of the Sanhedrin hearing, and the time of the Crucifixion. It shows little knowledge of Jesus' family, although James the Lord's brother was in Jerusalem for years. John Mark of Jerusalem should have done better than all this.

Readers may wish to note a theology developing out of Deuteronomy, echoed in Acts by both Peter and Paul, as part of the consideration of authorship. Deuteronomy 6:16 and 17 addresses the issue of disbelief in the power of God under the motif of test:

16 Do not put the Lord your God to the test, as you tested him at Massah. **17** You must diligently keep the commandments of the Lord your God, and his decrees, and his statutes that he has commanded you.

Pasted from <<http://www.biblestudytools.com/nrs/deuteronomy/6.html> >

Deuteronomy further explains the testing as a means of humbling a people, as well as underlining the important point that the purpose ultimately is to do good to the people:

3 He humbled you by letting you hunger, then by feeding you with manna, with which neither you nor your ancestors were acquainted, in order to make you understand that one does not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes from the mouth of the Lord.

Pasted from <<http://www.biblestudytools.com/nrs/deuteronomy/8.html> >

16 and fed you in the wilderness with manna that your ancestors did not know, to humble you and to test you, and in the end to do you good.

Pasted from <<http://www.biblestudytools.com/nrs/deuteronomy/8.html> >

Before moving on to Acts and Peter and Paul, another point must be made relative to the choice of these people and the issue of God's showing favoritism or partiality:

7 It was not because you were more numerous than any other people that the Lord set his heart on you and chose you—for you were the fewest of all peoples. **8** It was because the Lord loved you and kept the oath that he swore to your ancestors, that the Lord has brought you out with a mighty hand, and redeemed you from the house of slavery, from the hand of Pharaoh king of Egypt.

Pasted from <<http://www.biblestudytools.com/nrs/deuteronomy/7.html>>

A Deuteronomic insistence is that God shows no partiality:

17 For the Lord your God is God of gods and Lord of lords, the great God, mighty and awesome, who is not partial and takes no bribe,

Pasted from <<http://www.biblestudytools.com/nrs/deuteronomy/10.html> >

The point is that in Deuteronomy, a people have been chosen, they have been asked to obey (chapter 8) and not to rebel (9), and they carry God's presence with them (10); the testing humbles them and prepares them for "end purposes" which are ultimately good. With this in mind, we can move to Acts and a reinterpretation of this tradition. Peter takes up the issue of partiality, extending acceptability to God's presence to all nations:

34 but in every **35** Then Peter began to speak to them: "I truly understand that God shows no partiality, nation anyone who fears him and does what is right is acceptable to him.

Pasted from <<http://www.biblestudytools.com/nrs/acts/10.html> >

He follows this with an interpretation of Jesus's mission as that of preaching peace:

36 You know the message he sent to the people of Israel, preaching peace by Jesus Christ—he is Lord of all. **37** That message spread throughout Judea, beginning in Galilee after the baptism that John announced: **38** how God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and with power; how he went about doing good and healing all who were oppressed by the devil, for God was with him. **39** We are witnesses to all that he did both in Judea and in Jerusalem. They put him to death by hanging him on a tree; **40** but God raised him on the third day and allowed him to appear, **41** not to all the people but to us who were chosen by God as witnesses, and who ate and drank with him after he rose from the dead. **42** He commanded us to preach to the people and to testify that he is the one ordained by God as judge of the living and the dead. **43** All the prophets testify about him that everyone who believes in him receives forgiveness of sins through his name."

Pasted from <<http://www.biblestudytools.com/nrs/acts/10.html> >

Acts 11 then picks up Peter's vision concerning what is clean and unclean, then interprets it relative to the inclusion of Gentiles in God's plan: prevalent, too, is the idea that the people of Jerusalem and their leaders condemned Jesus and asked Pilate to have him killed:

15 And as I began to speak, the Holy Spirit fell upon them just as it had upon us at the beginning. **16** And I remembered the word of the Lord, how he had said, "John baptized with water, but you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit." **17** If then God gave them the same gift that he gave us when we believed in the Lord Jesus Christ, who was I that I could hinder God?" **18** When they heard this, they were silenced. And they praised God, saying, "Then God has given even to the Gentiles the repentance that leads to life."

Pasted from <<http://www.biblestudytools.com/nrs/acts/11.html>>

Readers will note that to Spirit has been added the later developing concept of the "Holy Spirit." In coming to Paul, Acts gives this rather long account of how God worked among the Israelites, giving them their land, kings, and in their own day, a Savior Jesus, long promised:

16 The God of **17** So Paul stood up and with a gesture began to speak: "You Israelites, and others who fear God, listen. this people Israel chose our ancestors and made the people great during their stay in the land of Egypt, and with uplifted arm he led them out of it. **18** For about forty years he put up with them in the wilderness. **19** After he had destroyed seven nations in the land of Canaan, he gave them their land as an inheritance **20** for about four hundred fifty years. After that he gave them judges until the time of the prophet Samuel. **21** Then they asked for a king; and God gave them Saul son of Kish, a man of the tribe of Benjamin, who reigned for forty years. **22** When he had removed him, he made David their king. In his testimony about him he said, "I have found David, son of Jesse, to be a man after my heart, who will carry out all my wishes." **23** Of this man's posterity God has brought to Israel a Savior, Jesus, as he promised; **24** before his coming John had already proclaimed a baptism of repentance to all the people of Israel. **25** And as John was finishing his work, he said, "What do you suppose that I am? I am not he. No, but one is coming after me; I am not worthy to untie the thong of the sandals on his feet." **26** "My brothers, you descendants of Abraham's family, and others who fear God, to us the message of this salvation has been sent. **27** Because the residents of Jerusalem and their leaders did not recognize him or understand the words of the prophets that are read every sabbath, they fulfilled those words by condemning him. **28** Even though they found no cause for a sentence of death, they asked Pilate to have him killed. **29** When they had carried out everything that was written about him, they took him down from the tree and laid him in a tomb. **30** But God raised him from the dead; **31** and for many days he appeared to those who came up with him from Galilee to Jerusalem, and they are now his witnesses to the people. **32** And we bring you the good news that what God promised to our ancestors **33** he has fulfilled for us, their children, by raising Jesus; as also it is written in the second psalm, "You are my Son; today I have begotten you." **34** As to his raising him from the dead, no more to return to corruption, he has spoken in this way, "I will give you the holy promises made to David." **35** Therefore he has also said in another psalm, "You will not let your Holy One experience corruption." **36** For David, after he had served the purpose of God in his own generation, died, was laid beside his ancestors, and experienced corruption; **37** but he whom God raised up experienced no corruption. **38** Let it be known to you therefore, my brothers, that through this man forgiveness of sins is proclaimed to you; **39** by this Jesus everyone who believes is set free from all those sins from which you could not be freed by the law of Moses. **40** Beware, therefore, that what the prophets said does not happen to you: **41** "Look, you scoffers! Be amazed and perish, for in your days I am doing a work, a work that you will never believe, even if someone tells you." "

Pasted from <<http://www.biblestudytools.com/nrs/acts/13.html>>

Paul ends his account of the life of Jesus with a focus on resurrection and a warning against disbelieving in the power of God to accomplish historically divine plan. Concerning the resurrection, a pivotal point in the discussion of historicity and theology in the life of Jesus and the Christ, the following point should be observed:

"There is no doubt that Mark's abrupt ending would have sparked serious consideration. For not only do both Matthew and Luke provide resurrection accounts, but Paul argues that the resurrection is the linch pin of the Christian faith (

[1 Cor 15:17](http://www.bible.org/article/irony-end-textual-and-literary-analysis-mark-168)). " Pasted from <<http://www.bible.org/article/irony-end-textual-and-literary-analysis-mark-168>>

In chapter 15 of Acts, when Paul and Barnabas come to Jerusalem, a controversy arises about circumcision, to which Peter answers with a resounding note of inclusion, with which James agrees (13), linking what God is doing to Amos 9:17, a prophecy already indicating the inclusion of the Gentiles:

4 Now **10** and in cleansing their hearts by faith he has made no distinction between them and us. **9** And God, who knows the human heart, testified to them by giving them the Holy Spirit, just as he did to us; **8** After there had been much debate, Peter stood up and said to them, "My brothers, you know that in the early days God made a choice among you, that I should be the one through whom the Gentiles would hear the message of the good news and become believers. **7** The apostles and the elders met together to consider this matter. **6** But some believers who belonged to the sect of the Pharisees stood up and said, "It is necessary for them to be circumcised and ordered to keep the law of Moses." **5** When they came to Jerusalem, they were welcomed by the church and the apostles and the elders, and they reported all that God had done with them. therefore why are you putting God to the test by placing on the neck of the disciples a yoke that neither our ancestors nor we have been able to bear? **11** On the contrary, we believe that we will be saved through the grace of the Lord Jesus, just as they will."

Pasted from <<http://www.biblestudytools.com/nrs/acts/15.html>>

This preamble can now focus on its original purpose relative to the authorship of the book of Mark. In Acts 12:25, John Mark has been with Barnabas and Paul; by Acts 15, however, a disagreement breaks out between Barnabas and Paul about John Mark: Paul does not want him on the mission to the Gentiles because he had deserted them previously; Barnabas ends up taking John Mark with him to Cyprus (largely Jewish), while Paul takes Silas to Syria and Cilicia. The point about authorship is that John Mark has opportunity to have been influenced by both Paul and Peter, but that he chooses to leave Paul at Pamphylia and to return to Jerusalem.

At this point, N.T. Wright's work, *The Resurrection of the Son of God* (Fortress, 2003, 580) provides a useful and succinct summation of **Christian praxis, related perhaps indirectly to authorship**, suggesting a point of departure between the available Jewish and pagan maps, particularly as pertains to resurrection:

So far as we can tell, the early Christian praxis in relation to resurrection can be categorized as belonging firmly on the Jewish map, rather than the pagan one, but within signs that from within the Jewish worldview a new clarity and sharpness of belief had come to birth.

Wright next notes the transfer of "The Lord's Day" to Sunday, anchored in the resurrection as "the rationale of the new practice" and as suggesting "new creation"; Wright then addresses the difficulty of changing an existing praxis:

It takes a conscious, deliberate and sustained effort to change or adapt one of the most powerful elements of symbolic praxis within a worldview...

He then says this is exactly what happened with the Sabbath, circumcision, and food laws; with the transfer of the Sabbath comes a new set of symbolic actions in baptism and Eucharist. Wright further understands the grounding of Christianity in Jewish stories about "Israel's and the world's history reaching its divinely ordained climax and new birth, and as stories of the coming of the long-awaited kingdom of Israel's god" (581), all these stories reflecting the exodus, return from exile, with a Christian emphasis upon a new creation already begun. In Jesus, an overlap of two ages includes the "age to come" longed for by Israel and an age begun--the present still continuing--but moving to full and final redemption. Wright now finds the Christian worldview substantially the same as that of the second-Temple Jewish view:

There is one god, who has made the world, and who remains in an active and powerful relationship with the world, and whose primary response to the problem of evil in the world is the call of Israel, which itself generates a second-order set of problems and questions (why has Israel herself apparently failed? what is the solution to Israel's own problems, and hence to the world's problem?). But the resurrection of Jesus [two-stage], and the powerful work of the Spirit...has reshaped this view of the one god and the world, by providing the answer, simultaneously, to the problems of Israel and the world: Jesus is shown to be Israel's representative Messiah, and his death and resurrection is the proleptic achievement of Israel's restoration and *hence* of the world's restoration. The first Christians...were committed to living and working *within history* (582).

He points to later authorship during a period between 65 and 75 CE, or perhaps the opening phases of the war, based largely on interpreting Mark 13 as referring to the First Jewish Revolt in 66-70, suggesting "the Temple in Jerusalem either has been or is about to be destroyed."

As literature. Mark generally is viewed as "story," ending itself well to narrative criticism, a direction taken by Rhoads, Dewey, and Micie (*Mark as Story: An Introduction to the Narrative of a Gospel*. Contributors: David Rhoads - author, Joanna Dewey -author, Donald Michie - author. Publisher: Fortress Press. Place of Publication: Minneapolis. Publication Year: 1999. Page Number: iii.) As genre, the work bears resemblance to Greco-Roman literature, ancient biography, Greek tragedy, popular novella, story telling in the mode of rhetoric, Judean "apocalypse," midrashic commentary on the Hebrew Bible, Hebrew Bible narrative, and as a mixed genre, a gospel acclaiming good news, and still more broadly, narrative. The plot is about Jesus' struggle to establish "the rule of God in the face of obstacles and opposition" (1,2, and 73).

Werner H. Kelber (genre, reminds readers that genres serve as heuristic tools. He points to Gilbert G. Bilezikian's (1977) as suggesting Greek drama with its complication-crisis-denouement. The complication is the disciples' blindness; Peter's confession is the critical turning point, the remainder is the hero's downfall. Dan O. Via (1975), Kelber says, sees Mark as tragicomedy, "maintaining the life-through-death pattern of comedy; Via also deconstructs Mark into textemes, including death and resurrection, upset and recovery. Moses Hadas and Morton Smith (1965) understand Mark as being aretalogy, a form of religious biography. Johann Weiss (1907, on the other hand, points to authorial absence and lack of birth and childhood stories as reasons not to read Mark as biography. Philip L. Shuler (1975) finds the genre to be more aptly that of encomium, a laudatory biographical genre. Kelber next turns to parable, citing Theodore Weeden as noting "cryptically that 'the evangelist intended a parabolic effect,'" with Jesus' life and death, according to Frederich H. Borsch (1975), understood as the "consummate parable of the new faith." Robert Tannehill (1977) traces the role of the disciples in Mark as parable. John R. Donahue, S.J. (1978) reads the gospel as "narrative parable of the meaning of the life and death of Jesus, with a connection between the mystery of the kingdom and parable, "by shaking conventions and shattering expectations and shattering conventions." John Dominic Crossan (1973) reinterprets Rudolph Bultmann's (1951) Proclaimer becoming Proclaimed as "the parabler becoming the parable." Kelber quotes Crossan to the effect that "Jesus announced the kingdom of God in parables, but the primitive church announced Jesus as Christ, the parable of God." Elizabeth Struthers Malbon (1980) understands Mark to be parable-myth, "powered by the reversal of expectations." Amos Wilder long ago, Kelber says, interpreted the parables as presenting the larger story in microcosm. Kelber himself concludes:

The features that constitute Mark's so-called parable theory--esoteric teaching and corresponding alienation, and the complementary roles of insiders versus outsiders--reflect genuine implications of parabolic discourse.

Kelber then quotes a lengthy passage from Madeleine Boucher:

The charge made in much of the scholarly literature since the nineteenth century that Mark has distorted the parable as a verbal construct is simply unfounded. Mark has not taken clear, straightforward speech, the parable, and transformed it into obscure, esoteric speech, the allegory. He has rather taken what is essential to the parable, the double-meaning effect, and made it the starting point of a theological theme concerning the audience's resistance to hearing the word.

After noting a few critics of parabolic theory, Kelber uses Schneidau to remark that "it is the nature of parable to turn on itself." Kelber then shows that the insider-outsider motif is itself part of the parabolic process. Jesus first creates an apostolic leadership of insiders privy to the announcement of the kingdom of God, with only Judas being the crack in the expectancy. Meanwhile, the Jerusalem scribes and Jesus' own family have been relegated to the outside. Kelber argues that the disciples' failure to grasp the parables spoken by Jesus serve as the

parabolic reversal that puts them back on the outside, this broken only by a final question (8:21): "Do you not yet understand?" The passion story, Kebler says, shows the disciples as decisively crushed, playing their roles as outsiders to the bitter end. The three women, Kebler understands as vital intermediaries, "commissioned to carry the message of the resurrection to the disciples, they fail to deliver it." Kebler's major point is one about textuality versus the oral tradition: "Mark as a writer, had to maneuver himself into an outside position vis-a-vis oral tradition." Mark estranges himself from the tradition--exclusion of family, rejection of prophets, and the incomprehension of the disciples. Kebler concludes:

Mark, the storywriter, suffers and accomplishes the death of living words for the purpose of inaugurating the life of textuality. Linguistic and narrative perspectives concur in acknowledging death as the key to live. The protagonist's arduous and paradoxical journey from life to death to life again may thus be conceived as a narrative manifestation of the medium experience of drifting away from oral life in the exercise of writing for life...

[A compelling parabolic logic] shapes the narrative, disorienting away from oral authorities and reorienting toward the textually recaptured Jesus, and all along gesturing toward the mystery of God's kingdom. There is a deep sense, therefore, in which the gospel as a novel language project narrates the story of its own story.se

This discussion of genre and parable will be picked up again in chapter four; as here discussed, it lends itself early to alert readers that historical, literary, and hermeneutical theories lead in different directions. Albert Schweizer in *The Quest of the Historical Jesus* (1962)remarks on the irony of historical approaches:

It was no small matter, therefore, that in the course of the critical study of the Life of Jesus, after a resistance lasting for two centuries, during which first one expedient was tried and then another, theology was forced by genuine history to doubt the artificial history with which it had thought to give new life to our Christianity, and to yield to the facts, which as Wrede strikingly said, force the most radical critics of all. History will force it to find a way to transcend history, and to fight for the lordship and rule of Jesus over the world with weapons tempered in a different forge.

What is said of history here may also, perhaps, be said about literary and hermeneutical approaches.

Special characteristics of Mark include Mark's Gospel "a simple, succinct, unadorned, yet vivid account of Jesus' ministry, emphasizing more what Jesus did than what he said," episodic structure and the use of the adverb immediately (NRSV Introduction). NRSV also sees Mark's "beginning of the gospel" as continuing with Acts. Turton cues readers to look beyond the face of Mark "to realize the brilliance and complexity of its composition:

The text of the Gospel of Mark is not impressive on its face. The Greek is often appears awkward and was smoothed out by later writers who used Mark as a source text. Events occur without apparent reason, in fulfillment of a design not clearly expressed in the text. Characters pop into existence for a verse or two, then fade away. Many Markan locations do not appear to have existed at the time the Gospel was written, and the travels of Jesus in Mark sometimes seem to run counter to common sense. All this is enhanced by the numerous emendations made to the text by scribes who tried to alter what they perceived as Markan errors and misunderstandings. The writer of Mark manages to combine ambiguity, plainness, dynamism, inevitability, pathos, and irony in a way that has spawned numerous scholarly interpretations of his Gospel, none of which have managed to attract a very large following.

In a less complimentary fashion, George Aichele points to the peculiarly Markan features which set Mark apart from the other gospels and make the book unpopular with believers:

The questions presented by Mark's ending are, however, not unusual in the Gospel of Mark. Among the features of Mark which distinguish it from other canonical gospels and which leave the entire Gospel quite ambiguous are:

- a) the lack of a Christmas story;
- b) the theological ambiguities of Jesus' baptism (which Matthew, Luke, and John go far toward resolving);
- c) the enduring problem of Jesus' identity (which is not resolved in Mark's version of the dialogue with Peter at Caesarea Philippi, Mark 8:27-33);
- d) the mystery or "secret" of the kingdom of God, from which "those who are outside" are excluded (Mark 4:11-12);
- e) the "amazement" and "astonishment" (Mark uses these words more than any other Gospel) of the crowds and the disciples at everything which Jesus does and says;
- f) the undiminished stupidity and failure of the disciples.

All of these features are consistent with Mark's troublesome ending. Indeed, Mark's story is throughout the most "difficult" of the Gospels, and this is no doubt a cause of Mark's unpopularity with believers.

Pasted from <<http://www.crosscurrents.org/mark.htm>>

The fact that I come back to Mark for another study indicates that **I, too, am attracted to Mark, this time for its intricate structure**--and for what it presents to readers in the personages of Jesus and Christ. This approach, decidedly, is literary in an attempt to address the Gospel as a whole, but at the same time, appropriate attention is also given to historical and theological issues.

The challenge of literary criticism confronts a guild of biblical scholars who have been predisposed to disintegrate the Gospels into supposed component pieces. The church, too, has often stifled the voice of each evangelist, either by disintegrating his Gospel into bite-sized lectionary texts, or by harmonizing the Gospels, melting them together into one variegated lump of Gospel lore. Few biblical scholars have taken seriously both feeding stories in Mark; similarly, how many sermons have you heard on both stories, as a pair? Such sermonizing would feel awkward for most of us, for that is simply not the way expository preaching is usually done. And yet a literary critical reading of Mark suggests that this pair of stories belongs together, and if we wish to understand what Mark had in mind by writing his Gospel, we had best keep them together. Or to state the challenge of literary criticism yet another way, perhaps we should note that the Gospel writers produced neither volumes of learned exegesis nor sermons. Rather, they told stories; and if we wish to understand what the Gospels say, we should study how stories are told.

<http://www.religion-online.org/showarticle.asp?title=1565>

Most readers will discover easily certain prevailing themes in Mark, as pointed out by Marion L. Soards in a review of *The Death of Jesus in Early Christianity* (John T Carroll and Joel B. Green, et al, 1995):

"Mark treats the literary phenomenon of anticipation, the theological themes of Jesus' identity and destiny, and the sociological and ecclesiological matrix of 'discipleship and the cross.'"

Pasted from < <http://www.questia.com/read/1P3-25482292/the-death-of-jesus-in-early-christianity> >

The ESV Introduction to Mark as a "docudrama" made up of a "collection of discrete units":

Of the four Gospels, Mark is most overtly a "docudrama," consisting of noteworthy "clips" as well as typical or representative events; snatches of speeches or dialogues; and commentary by the narrator. Mark's approach to the biographical data is that of a careful recorder. Mark's Gospel, however, is not a biography in the modern sense, as there is no attempt to describe Jesus physically, treat his family origins, or portray Jesus' inner life. Rather, like other ancient biographies (which were called a bios or "life"), Mark's purpose is to speak about the actions and teachings of Jesus that present his ministry and mission. Of course, the book is at the same time an implied proclamation and apologetic work that hints at the redemptive meaning of the events recorded. All of the Gospels are hero stories.

Additionally, Mark's Gospel is made up of the usual array of subgenres found in the NT Gospels, including calling stories, recognition stories, witness/testimony stories, encounter stories, conflict or controversy stories, pronouncement stories, miracle stories, parables, discourses and sermons, proverbs or sayings, passion stories, and resurrection stories.

Even though the overall format of Mark's Gospel is narrative, it does not possess a continuous story line but is a collection of discrete units. There are crowd scenes, small-group scenes, public scenes, and private scenes. The resulting book is a collage or mosaic of the life of Jesus. The best way to negotiate this format is to regard oneself as Mark's traveling companion as he assembles his documentary on the life of Christ. The main unifying element in the mosaic is the protagonist, Christ himself.

Pasted from < <http://www.esvbible.org/resources/esvsb/introduction-to-mark/>>

Structurally, Mark is an amazing work. I have used *The New Interpreter's Study Bible* and its extensive notes to reveal a cluster of structures, suggesting a richer complexity than the two-fold division into chapters 1-13 and chapters 14-16:

1. Introduction--including inclusion in verse 14 relative to "good news" and a calling of disciples (1:16) followed by four healings (the last involving controversy), another calling (and another four healings, the last with controversy).
2. Two extended parables--"The Sower" (chapter 4 and "The Wicked Tenants" (chapter 12)--and shorter parables about "The Lamp" (4:21), "The Growing Seed" (4:26), "The Mustard Seed" (4:30), and an act of "Stilling the Storm" (4:35). Briefly, without moving deeply into theology at this point, the parables say something about insiders and outsiders, and the difficulty of faith for even insiders.
3. Three extended healing miracles--demoniac who recognizes Jesus, the daughter of Jairus, and the hemorrhaging woman (both of these latter concerned with fertility, or at least the possibility of life and death). Through all of these, Jesus expresses amazement at unbelief; the crowds, on the other hand, are amazed at the miracles and authority of Jesus.
4. Mission--Death of John--note that John is buried by his disciples while Jesus is taken care of by a stranger; John baptizes by immersion (purity); the Spirit descends on Jesus at baptism. Readers should note that while John baptizes with water, Jesus baptizes with the Spirit (1:8).
5. Two feedings--Feeding Five Thousand in deserted place(chapter 6, five and two fish, groups of hundreds and fifties, twelve baskets of left over pieces of bread and fish); Feeding Four Thousand (chapter 8, seven loaves and a few fish, seven baskets full left over. Both feedings involve a following scene with water--walking on water and getting into boat. Note incomprehension and obduracy from disciples.
6. Peter's Confession , "You are the Messiah" (8:29) followed by Jesus' foretelling his death and resurrection and Peter's rebuke (32). Note that the writer's treatment of Peter, the rebuke and later denials, suggest to some that the author may not have been a follower of Peter. Some see this recognition as the turning point in the narrative.
7. Kingdom of God is imminent (:1) and "comes with power" and Transfiguration--the latter associated with Ezekiel and Merkavah (throne chariot: analogy of the way YHWH works in the world). Note the inner circle of Peter, James, and John, who see Jesus talking with Elijah and Moses, two prophets believed not to have died but to have been taken up directly to heaven; according to Malachi (4:5-6) Elijah was to come as precursor to the Messiah. Notes to the NRSV says some have viewed the transfiguration as a "misplaced resurrection." Mark may also be read as an initiation story: the initiates must be prepared for inclusion in the mystery of the coming Kingdom of God, this touching on how one reads--whether literally or metaphorically--as well as defines who is inside or outside the mystery. The throne of God, Merkavah, represented the vortex of creative energy which determines significance of any given historical period; this tradition of thinking dates back to Mesopotamia (twenty-third century BCE) and to Babylonia (Cambridge Companion to the Bible, 520). Readers must remember that the ancient view of the world was that of multiple, hard shells that had to be rended by the divine, thus the descent of the Spirit at the baptism of Jesus (Mark 1: 9-13). The term *son of god*, often used to describe angels and their relationship to God, expressed, not biological relationship but revelatory relationship (*Companion*, 521). By this view, Jesus may be viewed as a practitioner of divine presence. In Hebrew use, Son of God was used to express what is human while Son of Man expressed divinity.
8. Entry into Jerusalem, Fig Tree (11:4m 20-25) and Temple (chapters 11 and 12)--Note that the two scenes of the cursing of the fig tree ("not its time") and the withering (20-25) sandwich the Temple disruption, which symbolically suggests Jesus' displeasure with the temple and religious leaders of Jerusalem (notes NRSV). The NRSV notes that

"time now begins to be marked much more precisely, a characteristic of the final recognition sequence of Greco-Roman narratives." The Wicked Tenants allegory (12) parallels the life of Jesus; questions about the resurrection contrast the finite and eternal; the coin story (13-17), an enthymeme, works with the suppressed premise that whatever bears the image on someone belongs to that one; this also occurs in the question about David's Son (12:35-37) with the minor suppressed premise that "fathers do not call their sons *lord*" (NRSV notes).

9. Destruction of Temple foretold and lesson of the Fig Tree which has learned its lesson--the time is near, necessitating the need for watchfulness (32-37) and for keeping awake. Chapter 13 belongs to apocalypse, lending to speculation about the events to which it refers and significant to the dating of the work of Mark. NRSV says the writer "drops the veil of narrative and addresses the audience of the story directly" with the Markan wink of verse 14.
10. Story of arrest, trial, death and resurrection of Jesus (14:1-16:1-8).

Interestingly, *The New Interpreter's Study Bible* divides Mark geographically into an introduction, Galilean ministry, and Jerusalem ministry. The Galilean is divided into four sections: first major section (1:14-2:12)--the good news of God and (2:13-3:6)--call story and four controversy stories, second major section (3:7-6:32)--designation and mission of twelve, (6:33-8:21)--two feedings, boat trip, and growing conflict with scribes and Pharisees, (8:22-10:52)--surrounded by giving of sight stories, organized around three teaching sections following major misunderstanding by the disciples, with each of the teaching sections introduced by a predictions of Jesus' upcoming arrest, trial, death, and resurrection. The last part of the Gospel (11:116:8) is also divided at another point (14:1-16:8). More will be said about this structure in later commentary.

Another traditional direction of structure emphasizes the "servant" theme:

Outline

- I. Prologue: Identity of the Servant Son of God (1:1-13)
- II. The Servant Son's initial message and ministry (1:14-8:30)
 - A. Fame and popularity (1:14-45)
 1. Preaching and discipling (1:14-20)
 2. Exercising power and authority (1:21-45)
 - B. Opposition and conflict (2:1-3:35)
 - C. Explanation of opposition (4:1-41)
 1. Jesus' parables (4:1-34)
 2. Jesus' power over the elements (4:35-41)
 - D. Belief and unbelief (5:1-8:30)
 1. Triumphs over demons, disease, and death (5:1-43)
 2. Unbelief around Nazareth (6:1-6)
 3. Greater ministry with the twelve (6:7-56)
 4. The Pharisees' defense of tradition (7:1-23)
 5. Jesus' withdrawal and teaching (7:24-8:26)
 6. Peter's confession (8:27-30)
- III. The Servant Son's approach to the Cross (8:31-10:52)
 - A. Jesus' announcement of His coming death and resurrection (8:31-10:34)
 - B. Jesus' teaching and practice of servanthood (10:35-52)
- IV. The Servant Son's ministry and death in Jerusalem (11:1-15:47)
 - A. Jesus' initial ministry in Jerusalem (11:1-33)
 - B. Rising opposition to Jesus (12:1-44)
 - C. The Olivet Discourse (13:1-37)
 - D. Jesus' preparation for His death (14:1-42)
 - E. Jesus' rejection by disciples, people, and His Father (14:43-15:47)
- V. Epilogue: The living and victorious Servant Son (16:1-20)

Radmacher, E. D. 1999. *Nelson's new illustrated Bible commentary*. T. Nelson Publishers: Nashville

The servant theme is also used by Narry F. Santos in a discussion about the use of the rhetorical device of paradox, employed, Santos illustrates, throughout the book of Mark; first he establishes the thrust of his study:

The Gospel of Mark has been described as a paradoxical gospel, a riddle that teases its readers' response, and a narrative that possesses an enigmatic and puzzling character.

1

This para- doxical and puzzling character is seen clearly in the paradox of authority and servanthood in Mark's Gospel. The paradox highlights the relationship of two important Marcan motifs: the

Christological motif of authority and the discipleship motif of servanthood—motifs that interact intricately in Mark.

This paradox serves as a key Marcan rhetorical device that urges readers to show servanthood in their exercise of authority within the community of believers and beyond.

He then next provides a structural view of Mark based on this paradox:

APPLICATION OF AN ECLECTIC APPROACH
TO THE MARCAN NARRATIVE

In addition to the prologue (1:1-15) and epilogue (15:42-16:8), the Book of Mark may be divided into three major sections. The first major section (1:16-8:21) has key dramatic instances of the

paradox. Though both motifs of authority and servanthood are present, this first major section highlights Jesus' authority.

The second major section (8:22-10:52) features several verbal instances of the paradox within the narrative's three paradoxical discipleship discourses (8:27-38; 9:30-50; 10:32-44).

The third major section (11:1-15:41) highlights the servanthood motif (though it also has episodes that show authority), culminating in Jesus' passion and death, His highest expression of servanthood.

Not surprisingly, the conclusion simply restates the paradox: "In summary Mark's use of the authority/servanthood paradox in the narrative reinforces the truth that the way of authority is the way of service."

At least one author (Michael Turton) has reconstructed the entire work of Mark as a chiasm, structures that are parallel and inverted, a structure that the author admits to be only "reasonably possible" (<http://www.michaelturton.com/Mark/GMarko1.html>).

The actual possibilities for structure in Mark have been classified into five approaches: topography/geography; theological themes; Sitz im Leben of the recipients; literary factors. Each model has proponents and critics; what I include below is meant to be suggestive rather than conclusive, all taken from Kevin Larsen's "The Structure of Mark's Gospel" <http://www.sagepub.com/upm-data/4799_CBI_sample_copy.pdf>.

Taylor (1966) has five sections marked off with a geographical designation, excluding the Introduction (1.1-13) and the Passion/Resurrection (14.1-16.8).

- 1.14-3.6 Galilean ministry
- 3.7-6.13 Height of Galilean ministry
- 6.14-8.26 Ministry beyond Galilee
- 8.27-10.52 Journey to Jerusalem
- 11.1-13.37 Ministry in Jerusalem

Concerning this geographical division, Chalmer E. Faw argues for major sections clearly delineated by a pattern of topics--all ending with a well placed saying: popularity, controversy, parable, apocalyptic, ransom (*The Heart of the Gospel of Mark*, 1956, Journal of Bible and Religion : <<http://www.jstor.org/stable/1458876>>

The other obstacle is the concern with geography already illustrated from Grant and Taylor. Enslin' well illustrates the ambivalence of scholars at this point when he first states that geographical interest is "quite subordinate" in the Gospel but goes on to say that the writer has arranged the material into two sharply defined periods; one in Galilee and the other at Jerusalem. What he seems to be saying here is that the author himself was not primarily concerned about geography but structured his whole book on a geographical pattern. One might observe that a more realistic reading of Mark would indicate that there are geographical notes here and there and a general movement of the ministry from Galilee to Jerusalem but that topical interests such as popularity, opposition, teaching in parables, wonder working, the true meaning of messiah-ship and discipleship, the apocalyptic, and others are after all the dominant and determining factors in outline. Neither the existence of multiple sources nor the presence of geographical notes should divert the careful student's attention from the fact that the final work which we know as the Gospel of Mark is made up of a series of rather well defined, although not always artfully composed, sections of material.

David Palmer in his dissertation *The Markan Matrix (a literary-structural analysis of the Gospel of Mark)* (1969) makes a compelling case for Mark's being a structured narrative of seven days framed by both Prologue and Epilog and then reduces Mark thematically to a few words:

The Prologue: The Gospel appears to be for the Jews
 The scheme for each of the four Series:
 first sub-Series: Jews and the Old Covenant
 turning point: Jews/Gentiles
 second sub-Series: the New Covenant and Gentiles
 The Epilogue: The Gospel is for the World.
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Palmer identifies Mark as a rhetorician of his own age:

Though my analysis of Mark's text has been fundamentally literary-structural from the beginning, it has been informed increasingly by the rules of ancient rhetoric, as Mark more and more demonstrated himself to be an exponent of the ancient writing art (302)

He understands Mark to have followed the practice of ancient rhetoric, including invention, arrangement, style, memory, and delivery (302).

The theme of his book was "Good News". His book would demonstrate how, in the beginning, it was presented to the Jews, but in the end, it was for presenting to the whole World. The Prologue would cover the former, the Epilogue the latter, and in his narrative between, he would develop a series of presentations which would begin with the Jews and Old Covenant issues; they would develop through a turning point concerned with both Jews and Gentiles; and he would end them with the Gentiles and New Covenant issues. (My reading of the Acts of the Apostles well Demonstrates something very similar: the scheme is 'Jerusalem/Antioch/Rome). The "bad news" that he would counter would be the Fall of Jerusalem, the destruction of the temple, And what appeared to be the end of Judaism. He would re-interpret it as Good News not only for the Gentiles, but also for the Jews.

His exchange of the word "world" for "Gentiles" in the concluding of his last Series, and his use of the word, "world" in his Epilogue, would show that the New Covenant was for all, not just the Gentiles. He would show how both Jews and Gentiles were complicit in the death of the story's central character. Through his death, his audience will know that God establishes the New Covenant. In presenting Jesus, at the point of his dying as the Son of God, he would demonstrate that for the "world", it was an act of New Creation like that at the time of Noah. The creation account would have its reference and allusion. He would show how God should be seen to have dealt with evil in the world, in this new way.

For his presentation of his argument, he would choose to tell his story in Series of "Days" as in the creation account'. The 'twenty-seventh day' in his account would replicate that in the Account of Noah, as a day of new creation. The book would be expressive of the "Day of the Lord", a day of both judgement and salvation. A telling in Days would be understood not only by the Jews, but also by the Greeks who had their epic" about their origins, which we know as the Gospel of Mark is made up of a series of rather well defined, although not always artfully composed, sections of material.

Dom Henry Wansbrough (users.ox.ac.uk/~shen0056/newbooklets/) provides useful notes on Mark that include several approaches to structure:

Mark's gospel is full of wonder, a wonder gradually focussing on the person of Christ. Like so many of his individual short phrases and expressions, as a whole it falls into two halves, pivoting on the episode at Caesarea Philippi; the first half is devoted to the gradual discovery that he is the Christ, the Messiah, as Peter acknowledges for the first time on that occasion; the second half is devoted to the gradual and painful discovery of the nature of his messiahship, that it is the way of suffering and rejection.

The gospel is defined not only in the middle, but at both ends as well. The first section and the last are particularly significant. Although the gospel is a gradual process of wondering discovery, this amazement applies primarily to the actors in the drama, and especially to the disciples. To the reader the first section gives the game away. The introductory section is as true an introduction as the Prologue of John or the Infancy Stories of Matthew and Luke, for it sets the scene and informs the reader of the true nature and import of the story to come.

1. The prologue of Mark (1.1-13) sets the scene carefully. It falls into three sections: the testimony of tradition, the baptism and the testing of Jesus. But before that comes the heading, which is itself highly significant; 'the beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ, son of God'. These last three words are missing in some manuscripts, but are supremely apt. With the declaration of the centurion at the foot of the Cross, 'Truly this was son of God', they bracket the gospel. In accordance with the ancient literary (and the modern mathematical) convention, this is a way of showing that everything within the bracket is defined and characterised by the bracket itself. In this case, therefore, that means the gospel is characterised as the gospel of the son of God. This expression arches over the gospel, which consists in showing that and how Jesus is son of God.

Wansbrough further remarks that the writer presents Jesus' message about the "kingdom of God" and that this, rather than messianic status, characterizes the work; he then explains that Christian evolution introduces the "incarnate Son of God":

For Christians Jesus is the Word made flesh, the incarnate Son of God. This understanding of Jesus is, however, the product of centuries of deepening of understanding. 'Word', 'flesh', 'incarnate' are all terms which have no place in Mark, and 'Son of God' is an expression which can bear a variety of meanings in the Old Testament. Mark stands early in the Christian development of understanding of the Master, and it cannot be assumed that his view of Christ is in all respects explicitly the same as that of the Council of Nicaea, or even of the gospel of John. It is an important point of departure to realise that Jesus never calls himself 'God'. Nowhere in Mark is Jesus called 'God'. Indeed, only three times in the New Testament is Jesus explicitly so called, and all of these instances stand at the very end of the process of development and reflection (Jn 1.1; 20.28; Heb 1.8). It is possible, therefore, and necessary, to ask how Mark's good news sees Jesus, and what it contributes to the deepening understanding of his role and being.

The Prologue, Wansbrough explains as shaping the direction of the rest of the gospel. First, Jesus is presented in the tradition and climax of the prophets; second, the central baptism scene uses the well-known Jewish convention of a voice from heaven to authenticate Jesus' mission; and third, Jesus successfully resists the temptation of forty days, unlike Israel itself, this evidenced later in his expulsion of evil spirits and his testing by suffering and persecution. Like the Transfiguration, the turning point of the story placed immediately after Peter's confession, the empty tomb in the ending confirms the message of the prologue, the divine sonship of Jesus recognized in the resurrection as the divine bursting upon human history, this attested to by another Jewish convention, that of angelic interpretation. Likewise, the young man in white is a stock figure used to explain supernatural happenings (Ezek 40.3; Zech 1.14; 2.2, 7, etc; Dn 8.16; 9.21-22; 2 Mc 3.33).

Faw provides the following summary of structure:

1. Jesus begins a successful and popular ministry (ch. 1)
2. Opposition arises, culminating in the foreshadowing of his death (2 :1-3 :6)
3. He appoints the disciple band, the true family of Christ (3 :7-35)
4. He teaches in parables, both to reveal and to conceal (4:1-34)
5. He engages in vigorous wonder-working, evoking an amazed response (4:35-7:37) (8:1-26?)
6. He announces the way of the cross and resurrection for both Master and disciples (8:27-10:45)
7. In Jerusalem he is again met with popularity and opposition and teaches with a parable (10:46- 12 :44)
8. He teaches alertness to the signs of the end (ch. 13)
9. Then is arrested, tried and killed (14 :1-15 :41)
10. He is carefully buried but startlingly rises again (15 :42-16 :8)

(Source: *Journal of Bible and Religion*, Vol. 25, No. 1 (Jan., 1957), pp. 19-23 Published by: Oxford University Press Stable URL: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/1457367> Accessed: 25/02/2012 21:48)

Themes

Myers has identified three key moments in the gospel where the reader's attention is focused on the identity of Jesus, which then lends support to the thesis statement in 1.1 (Myers 1990: 390-91). Consequently, these three high revelatory episodes strengthen a biographical interest on the part of Mark. 146 *Currents in Biblical Research* 3.1 (2004)

Baptism	Transfiguration	Crucifixion
Heavens rent	Garments white	Veil rent
Dove descends	Cloud descends	Darkness spreads
Voice from heaven	Voice from cloud	Jesus' great voice
'You are my Beloved Son'	'This is my Son'	'Truly, this man was the

Son of God'

John the Baptist as Elijah	Jesus appears with Elijah	Is he calling Elijah
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Other organizational patterns under themes include titles of Jesus, rejection and understanding, Jesus' interactions with his disciples, and the Way.

Stephen S. Short ("Mark" in *The International Bible Commentary with the NIV*, Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1986) explains the thesis of Mark as being that "Jesus Christ is Son of God" (1157), pointing to this identification in the prologue (1:1), by the heavenly Father (1:11; 9:7), by demons (3:11; 5:7), and by himself (12:5; 14:61 f), and by the Roman (15:39), seeing this as the climax of the story. He, then, outlines in terms of introductory events (1:1-13), the Galilean Ministry (1:14-7:23), the Northern journey (7:24-8:26), the journey to Jerusalem ((8:27-10:52), the Jerusalem ministry (11:1-13:37), the Passion (14:1-15:47), and the resurrection (16:1-20).

In chapter twelve, I have spent significant time with Herbert W. Bateman's "Defining the Titles 'Christ' and 'Son of God' in Mark's Narrative Presentation of Jesus," where the essential argument is that Mark presents Jesus as the "the Christ" who was empowered by God via his Spirit to teach and act with authority as God's royal 'Son'" (JETS 50/3, Sept. 2007, 558). He understands all of the identifying titles used for Jesus as appositional or parallel epithets all referring to "the Christ": the titles include "Son of David," " Son of God," " Son of the Most High God," and "Holy One of God." Bateman makes the point that later creeds and confessional statements should not cloud the earlier and simpler understanding of the "Messiah" presented in Mark, which ultimately does not include the latter developing theology of Jesus as divine Son of God. Nonetheless, Bateman asserts, "Scripture supports the Christian orthodox doctrine that Jesus, the exalted Christ, was and is God" (557). Bateman understands Jesus as exalting himself thus at his trial to this place of "Christological honor" (556). Bateman outlines Mark into three sections after the introduction found in 1:2-13: Galilee and beyond--1:14-8:21; Passion predictions on the way--8:22-10:52; and the Temple and Cross--11:1-16:8.

Sitz im Leben of the Recipients

A third approach to understanding Mark's structure is to see the alleged needs of the early church in the text, thus having those needs dictate the gospel's organization.

Literary Factors

A literary approach to the Gospel of Mark will include genres as they evolve broadly from the mythopoetic through legend, history, and science. Before looking more closely at technique and structure, Benjamin W. Bacon explains this evolution:

The mythopoetic imagination responds to the innate instinct of curiosity in the face of such phenomena, and creation stories, flood stories, sun myths, shrine stories, and the like, result. In the case of legend the starting point is some historical event, a migration, a battle, a deliverance; or the relations, amicable or otherwise, of tribes, families, and nations, and their boundaries. Myth and legend is the primitive form of physical and political geography and history. In legend we have a great advance upon mere myth. Roughly we may say, the book of Genesis is in substance *mythical*, the narrative from the exodus onward is *legendary*. Legend, I have said, commemorates great historical events. But even here the motive is not primarily historical. National or tribal *amour propre* glorifies the great achievements of the past, ancestor-worship and hero-worship contribute their part. The songs of a people come first, their Homers, Pindars, Tyrtaeuses, their Deborahs and Davids, because what men want of the bard and minstrel and story-teller at the camp-fire and in the city gate is not primarily a scientific record, but the kindling of the martial spirit, or of the sense of social right, by great examples of the past. The historian comes along afterward to gather up the fragments, to turn the poetry to prose, transform the myth and song and legend of the people into the formal chronicles of the scribe.

(The Purpose of Mark's Gospel, *Journal of Biblical Literature*, Vol. 29, No. 1, 1910, pp. 41-60 Published by: [The Society of Biblical Literature](#), Stable URL: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/3260133>, Accessed: 22/02/2012 10:11)

He then moves to his obvious point that "The narrative material of the New Testament has practically nothing of myth" and says, "this at least it has in common with Old Testament story, that it is made up of individual anecdotes, more or less popular in character, very loosely strung together, and not originally meant to form part of a continuous history." He goes on to remark that Peter, according to internal evidence and external tradition, is "the source of practically all of a narrative character that is related about Jesus." At the time of the writing of Mark, with Peter dead, Bacon says that the early Church had lost the chronological thread and simply strung together "pearls of evangelic anecdote." He goes on to point out that Luke among the gospels, purporting historical design, depended upon Markan outline, concluding, "There is no more extraordinary fact in the whole domain of gospel criticism than this complete dominance of the Marcan outline. Every subsequent Gospel, canonical or uncanonical, has this for its vertebral column, and outside of it there is practically nothing." Mark stands "at the transition point between anecdote and history," with Matthew retaining Markan order and focusing on how best to present the teachings of Jesus. Luke, too, retains mostly the order and added to it 'Matthwan Precepts and Petrine Anecdotes.' Matthew's purpose is didactic and Luke's, historical; that of John is "philosophy of history."

Norman Perrin, likewise, in "Criticism, Literary Criticism, and Hermeneutics: The Interpretation of the Parables of Jesus and the Gospel of Mark Today" (*The Journal of Religion*, Vol. 52, No. 4, Oct., 1972, pp. 361-375, Published by: [The University of Chicago Press](#), Stable URL: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/1201589>, Accessed: 15/03/2012 10:59) discusses three distinct but interrelated aspects involved in interpretation-- "historical criticism," "literary criticism," and "hermeneutic":

To begin with, we have the fact that the text is a historical entity written (or spoken—in the case of the parables of Jesus and the Gospel of Mark, the distinction is immaterial) by one man, in a distinct set of circumstances, and for a definite purpose, intended to have a particular meaning and understood by its addressees in a particular kind of way. As I am using the term, it is the task of "historical criticism" to recover this information, and in the case of the parables of Jesus and the Gospel of Mark this has in fact been done. Then we have the further fact that the text as a text takes on a life and vitality of its own, independent of the historical circumstances of its creation. It is interpreted and reinterpreted in any number of new and different situations, and therefore takes on new and different meanings and is understood in new and different ways. But even here, there are rules to the game. A text has a given form, and this form functions in one way and not another. A text is written in a certain kind of language, and this language has a certain force and not another. A text may be and indeed is open-ended, but it is not inchoate. Its form and language are in no small way determinative of the manner in which it may be understood and interpreted. It is this aspect of the act of interpreting the text which I am designating "literary criticism." Then, finally, we have the fact that a text is read by a given individual and understood in a certain way by that individual; it says something to that individual. It is this dynamic relationship between the text and the individual reader that I am designating "hermeneutics."

Perrin then goes on to explain the significance of these interrelated aspects--author, text, and reader--in the following way:

Any given text then must be considered from these three standpoints. It must be considered from the standpoint of historical criticism, as a text intended to say something and saying something to its first readers or hearers. We must respect the act of authorship and the intent of the author, as we must also respect the understanding of a text reached by its intended readers or hearers. To do anything less than this is to commit an act of rape on the text. But at the same time, we must admit that something happens when a text is committed to writing and hence broadcast to the world for anyone to read who can master the language in which it is written. It is now no longer a private communication with its potentiality for meaning limited to the intent of the author and the understanding of its intended reader. It now exists in its own right, essentially independent of the original author and intended reader, and its potentiality for meaning is limited only by the function of its form and its language. In practice, of course, its potentiality for meaning is not even limited in that way, but it is an argument of this paper that it should be so limited. Even with independently existing literary objects, there is a difference between exegesis and eisegesis! Finally, a text is read and something happens, or does not happen, between the text and the reader. This is the most difficult area to explore, and yet we must attempt to explore it (364).

Textually, then, one looks at form and technique, including for Mark, the following significant approaches:

Intercalations- "In each case Mark begins to tell a story, interrupts it by inserting another, and then returns to the original in order to complete it."

Asking of Questions

Use of Summary Statements

Perrin breaks down the literary structure of Mark as follows, with the major divisions occurring where summary statements and geographical notices coincide.

- 1.1-13 Introduction
- 1.14-15 Transitional Markan summary
- 1.16-3.6 First major section: The authority of Jesus in word and deed
- 3.7-12 Transitional Markan summary
- 3.13-6.6a Second major section: Jesus as Son of God and rejection
- 6.6b Transitional Markan summary
- 6.7-8.22 Third major section: Jesus as Son of God and misunderstood
- 8.23-26 Transitional giving-of-sight story
- 8.27-10.45 Fourth major section: Christology and Christian discipleship
- 10.46-52 Transitional giving-of-sight story
- 11.1-12.44 Fifth major section: the days in Jerusalem prior to the passion
- 13.1-5a Introduction to the apocalyptic discourse
- 13.5b-37 Apocalyptic discourse
- 14.1-12 Introduction to the passion narrative
- 14.13-16.8 The passion narrative

Joanna Dewey, arguing that Mark survived because it was a good story, observed the following oral characteristics:

The plot as well as the style is typical of oral composition.¹⁷ The structure does not build toward a linear climactic plot; the plot to kill Jesus is first introduced in Mark 3:6 but not picked up and developed until Mark 11, and it does not really get under way until Mark 14. Rather than linear plot development, the structure consists of repetitive patterns, series of three parallel episodes, concentric structures, and chiasmic structures. Such structures are characteristic of oral literature, helping the performer, the audience, and new performers and audiences remember and transmit the material. From what we know of oral literature there is no reason why it could not have been composed and transmitted in oral form.

Pasted from < <http://www.questia.com/read/1P3-712541541/the-survival-of-mark-s-gospel-a-good-story>>

Dewey, engaging in text-critical data although confessing no expertise in it, nonetheless provides some useful insights relative to Mark's history; she finds evidence to conclude the following:

If Mark was more dependent on oral transmission than the other Gospels were, we would expect it to have more variants than the other Gospels, and this indeed is the case.

The rubbish heap at Oxyrhynchus now provides 57 percent of all early manuscripts and represents all existing text types. At Oxyrhynchus, thirteen fragments of Matthew, ten of John, two of Luke and none of Mark have been found.⁴¹ The finds also include two fragments of the Gospel of Peter, a variety of other apocryphal NT writings, and a portion of Irenaeus's *Against Heresies*.⁴² These findings may be the result of random survival; however, the pattern is sufficiently consistent to suggest that there were, overall, fewer copies made of Mark than of the other Gospels.

The third aspect of the early evidence is the incidence of patristic citations. Here we are dealing with the writings of relatively elite men, and, not surprisingly, they prefer the more literary Gospels to Mark. But what I find interesting and suggestive here is the sharp drop-off in the number of citations of Mark from the second century to the third century.⁴³ In each case, the most cited Gospel is Matthew, with about 3,900 quotations in the second century and 3,600 in the third; the least cited is Mark. The Gospel of Mark is still prominent in the second-century writings, with about 1,400 citations, whereas in the third century there are only about 250.⁴⁴ The status of Mark continued to decline, with Augustine finally declaring Mark to be merely an abbreviation of Matthew.

By the third century, the fourfold Gospel was well accepted as canonical, and codices containing all four were becoming the norm. Certainly Mark was included in all the great majuscules of the fourth and fifth centuries; however, it was increasingly ignored.⁴⁵ Once Mark became one more written Gospel included in a collection, it failed to interest the church, or at least its leaders. But in the second century, it was still alive as oral performance and was referred to by church leaders.

Dewey then concludes that oral viability explains why Mark survived as part of the fourfold gospel:

I suggest that it is the widespread oral knowledge of the Gospel of Mark among Christians of all social locations that made it salient enough to be included in the fourfold Gospel. If it had not been widely known and loved on its own (not just as incorporated in Matthew), it easily could have been omitted as just a poorer rendition of Matthew. Harry Gamble writes, "The currency of so many gospels also shows that the eventual development of a collection of only four Gospels was the result of a selective process. Nothing dictated that the church should honor precisely four Gospels, or these four in particular."⁴⁶ In his attempt to defend a plurality of Gospels, Ireneaus could have as easily defended a threefold Gospel as upholding the apostolic tradition or rule of faith. He might have used the triadic formula for the divine or anthropological analogies such as spirit, soul, and body; but he did not. We have four Gospels. I suggest that the oral viability and popular support of the story of Mark may be the reason—or at least part of the reason—that Mark indeed made it into the fourfold Gospel, into the canon, and thus we have it today.

Pasted from < <http://www.questia.com/read/1P3-712541541/the-survival-of-mark-s-gospel-a-good-story>>

Norman Perrine, after making the important points about historical criticism, literary criticism, and hermeneutics, identifies the Gospel of Mark as apocalypse (later made into foundation myth, this without damage to the text itself). As apocalypse, he says that Mark is realistic narrative in which time is that of Jesus and his hearers (parables) and Mark and his readers (apocalypse). Myth, as Perrine presents it, narrates sacred history (as opposed to actual time):

I want to stress the fact that I am using the term "myth" as Mircea Eliade uses it, to denote the story of how something came into being. "Myth narrates a sacred history: it relates an event that took place in primordial time, the fabled time of the beginnings. . . . Myth . . . is always an account of a creation ' ; it relates how something was produced, began to be." ⁶ When I describe the Gospel of Mark as a foundation myth, I intend to call attention to the fact that the story narrated is the story of the time of Jesus now seen as sacred time, the story of the ministry of Jesus now seen as the event in relationship to which Christian reality is constituted, the story of Jesus wherein he is viewed as Lord and as Christ, as the *foes et origo* of Christian faith. As a foundation myth, the Gospel of Mark separates this sacred time from the time of the reader, and a means now has to be provided whereby the reader can relate to the sacred time. A myth that relates the sacred time of origins has to be accompanied by a ritual by means of which it becomes possible for the hearer or reader to relate to that time. In fact, both Matthew and Luke in interpreting the Gospel of Mark as a foundation myth do provide their readers with the equivalent of a ritual, a point I shall develop in my next section...

Moreover, both provide means whereby the reader may relate to the time of Jesus—which is now no longer the reader's time—Matthew by the Great Commission (Matt. 28:16-20) and the authoritative teaching church, and Luke by the concept of a *Heilsgeschichte* wherein his readers live in an epoch parallel to and related to the time of Jesus, but not the same time as the time of Jesus.⁵

⁵ Here we are at a point of very real significance. For Mark, who is in this sense essentially an apocalypticist, the time of Jesus and the time of himself and his readers are one and the same time, whereas for Matthew and Luke the time of Jesus has become different from their time and that of their readers; it has become a sacred time to which they and their readers must relate. The apocalypse has become a foundation myth. (368-369)

As apocalypse, "the evangelist sees himself and his readers caught up in a divine-human drama which began with the mission of John the Baptist and will shortly reach its climax with the return of Jesus on the clouds of heaven as Son of Man" (366). Perrine then understands the gospel writer's purpose as presenting his view of Christian discipleship as

emphasizing suffering moreso than glorified Christ:

In the Gospel of Mark there is one intensely personal element, the use of Son of Man. I believe that I may claim that I have shown in various publications⁷ that the particular use of Son of Man in Mark—present authority, necessary suffering, future glory—is *Markan*, that it represents the evangelist Mark's own vision of the reality of Christology and of Christian discipleship in the world. (372)

Classical Rhetoric

Standaert proposes an elementary structure of the Gospel of Mark following the divisions common within classical rhetoric: exordium (1.1-13), narratio (1.14–6.13), probatio (6.14–10.52), refutatio (11.1–15.47), conclusio (16.1-8) (1978: 42).

Kevin Larsen describes Mark as the result of a long tradition, quoting Johnson:

"Though now made thirty years ago, Johnson offers a fitting insight to conclude this survey: 'Only further study on the part of many scholars will bring agreement as to which alleged patterns are real and significant, but surely it is clear that the earliest gospel is not a naïve and fortuitous collection of incidents but the result of a long tradition of preaching and teaching'" (Johnson 1972: 23-24).

http://www.sagepub.com/upm-data/4799_CBI_sample_copy.pdf

I should also acknowledge here John M. Depoe's useful summation of twentieth century scholarship on the historical Jesus and the Christology of Mark; below, I provide just the sketch of this work, beginning with the conclusion: "the gospels can be affirmed as confirming that Jesus claimed to be the Messiah without compromising historical accuracy" <http://www.johndepoe.com/Messianic_secret.pdf >. Depoe sorts through the scholarship reacting to William Wrede (1901):

Prior Scholarship:

The theological stage upon which Wrede played a leading role had as its backdrop and scenery the myriad murals of the historical Jesus, as painted by the "liberal school" of the period. Any serious attempt to speak concerning Jesus to the intellectual circles of Europe during the nineteenth century had to assume the past studies of men such as David F. Strauss and Bruno Bauer. < James L. Blevins, *The Messianic Secret in Markan Research* 1901-1976.

Eichorn

Eichorn's "History of Religions" advocated that Pauline theology was shaped by the surrounding pagan religions. Julius Wellhausen: taught that Jesus' life was not messianic or eschatological, and that these faith traditions emerged from the early Christian community after the Resurrection.

Wrede:

Wrede's thoughts came to fruition in the Messianic Secret, published in 1901. This work attempted to undermine all of the writings of his contemporaries, who tried to construct a historical Jesus given Markan priority. Wrede advocated his thesis using three lines of support. These lines of support fall under three categories: the gospel of Mark, the other gospels, and historical elucidation

In Mark:

First, Wrede sought to demonstrate that Mark's gospel portrays Jesus as someone who rejects messianic claims in an enigmatic method.

In Mark's gospel, Wrede specifically points to Jesus' encounters with demons, the disciples inability to comprehend Jesus' ministry, and the cryptic style of Jesus' teaching as central support for his messianic secret theory. For Wrede, if the Markan Jesus really upheld the motif of messianic secret, then it is wrought with bizarre puzzles. The problem is not simply that Jesus is portrayed in two different ways, but that he is depicted in one paradoxical fashion. Why does Jesus command demons not to reveal his identity after they had already blurted it out? Why does Jesus ask for the healing of Jarius' daughter be kept asecret when everyone already

knew she was dead (or in a coma)? If Jesus performs miracles in order to show that he is Messiah, then why does he ask people to stop proclaiming them? These questions do not add up to actual history for Wrede but to theological additions from the church into the gospel tradition.

William Wrede, *Über Aufgabe und Methode der sogennten neutestamentlichen Theologie*, (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1897).

Other Gospels

In Mark the secrecy of the revelations is essential. The whole phenomenon of Jesus in its higher and true significance must remain hidden. Matthew no longer had this idea. Only residual traces of it remain.

Wrede understands Luke to have dropped a robust theme of secrecy and replaced it with a weaker one. Wrede explains that in Luke the people “do not appear in possession of the knowledge that he is Messiah but they await in hope that he will become this.”

Wrede concludes that Luke is much more in accord with Mark than Matthew is, yet it is not without traces of further theological development and the redaction of the author.

Most lucidly in accord with Mark, John’s gospel offers a clear demarcation between the faith of the disciples before and after the resurrection. Prior to the resurrection the disciples represent blindness to Jesus’ life and mission, and afterwards they demonstrate total enlightenment.

Historical

Foremost was his claim that Jesus never claimed to be the Messiah.

He writes:

To my mind this is the origin of the idea which we have shown to be present in Mark. It is, so to speak, a transitional idea and it can be characterised as the after-effect of the view that the resurrection is the beginning of the messiahship at a time when the life of Jesus was already being filled materially with messianic content. Or else it processes from the impulse to make the earthly life of Jesus messianic, but one inhibited by the older view, which was still potent.

If my deductions are correct, then they are significant for the assessment of Jesus’ historical life itself. If our view could only arise when nothing is known of an open messianic claim on Jesus’ part, then we would seem to have in it a positive historical testimony for the idea that Jesus did not give himself out as messiah.

Wrede's Conclusions

The one is an idea about Jesus and it rests on the fact that Jesus became messiah – so far as the belief of his followers was concerned – with the Resurrection, and the other is an idea about the disciples which rests upon the fact that they acquire a new understanding of Jesus as a result of the Resurrection. But the starting point manifests itself in the end to be one and the same. Both ideas rest upon the fact that the Resurrection is the decisive event for the messiahship and that Jesus’ earthly life was not to begin with regarded as messianic.

Depoe's Conclusion

Therefore, Wrede’s research not only threatened a historical messianic Jesus but also any hope of recovering a historical Jesus with any degree of certainty.

Depoe next sorts through scholarly reaction to Wrede:

1902-1910 Historicism

Sanday:

If the early Christians’ Easter faith accounts for the marred historicity of the gospel, then what event birthed this postresurrection faith? Surely such a faith only existed because these people witnessed a historical resurrection. Utilizing a metaphorical analogy, Sanday asks, “The elephant stands upon the tortoise; but what does the

tortoise stand upon?" The only plausible solution left, according to Sanday, was to suppose that Jesus revealed to his disciples his identity as Messiah prior to the resurrection.

Albert Schweitzer

And yet they are written from quite different standpoints, one from the point of view of literary criticism, the other from that of historical recognition of eschatology. It seems to be the fate of the Marcan hypothesis that at the decisive periods its problems should always be attacked simultaneously and independently from the literary and historical sides, and the results declared in two different forms which corroborate each other.

He goes on to further enumerate the impetus behind these works: The meaning of that is that the literary and the eschatological view, which have hitherto been marching parallel, on either flank, to the advance of modern theology, have now united their forces, brought theology to a halt, surrounded it, and compelled it to give battle.

Depoe's Conclusion regarding Schweitzer

However, many found Schweitzer's depiction of Jesus as a frustrated eschatological Messiah to be guilty of reading between the lines of the gospels, which violates his very method. Nonetheless, his view played an important role in shaping Marcan christology and the messianic secret

1911-1920 Mediating Interpretation

Johannes Weiss

Johannes Weiss developed a Marcan theory that confessed the gospel had some historical and fictitious accounts, but he also contended that the two were capable of being discerned from one another. In keeping with the Marcan criticisms of his day, he was willing to test the contents of the text. Weiss speculated that Mark relied on an earlier source, Ur-Markus, which had four definite sources: (1) Petrine Narratives; (2) Teaching discourses; (3) Words and discourses of Jesus (with or without historical framework); (4) Folk myths and legends.

Weiss also worked under the assumption that Mark was not written without theological intent. Rather, Mark was written to show that Jesus was the Son of God.

Yet, this intention does not mar all hope for keeping the historical content of the gospel. Weiss rejected Wrede's radical conclusion that Jesus himself never claimed to be the Messiah.

Adolf Jülicher

Adolf Jülicher represented another attempt at a mediating position. Jülicher did not believe many of the liberal school's criticisms of Mark to be a genuine hindrance to the content of Mark's gospel. He affirmed that the gospel was the product of a postresurrection community, which must be accounted for in historical evaluation. He declares:

If we call the picture of Jesus which this man [Mark] has drawn – half historical,...we admit, thereby, that we cannot permit his uncontested tradition to become the authentic basis for our investigation.

1921-1930-The Messianic Secret and Form Criticism

Like Wrede, many scholars began to analyze each individual narrative unit in an attempt to

delineate what could be attributed to the historical Jesus and what was invented by the community of those who believed a Christ of faith. This attempt to fractionate the gospel stories and determine their origins is known as form criticism.

Rudolf Bultmann

Perhaps what demonstrated the failure of the moderates from the preceding decade most clearly was Bultmann's total acceptance of Wrede's messianic secret. Bultmann unequivocally affirmed Wrede's conclusions and their implications for New Testament studies. He candidly writes, "Indeed it must remain questionable whether Jesus held himself for the Messiah at all and did not rather first become Messiah in the faith of the community."

"Following the lead of Dibelius, Bultmann believed Mark's role in writing the gospel was mainly as an editor who provided the connecting links between each narrative unit."

A. E. J. Rawlinson

1. The repetitious identification of Jesus' messiahship by demoniacs betrays the hand of a redactor.
2. The resurrection is the turning point in the lives of the disciples in which they gain spiritual insight.
3. The teaching of Jesus was introduced in the early church with the understanding that its origin was in his private instruction of his disciples.
4. Mark viewed Jesus' miraculous works as signs of his messiahship, while the Galileans did not.

Rawlinson comes to closest agreement with Wrede on the fourth point regarding miracles. He confirms this himself when he admits:

It is possible, therefore, that it was actually upon some such grounds as Wrede suggests that Mk. conceived the Lord as having normally enjoined that the miracles should be kept secret: though he is at the same time sufficiently in touch with the facts of history to be well aware that it was largely by the rumor of Jesus' miraculous deeds that the multitudes were attracted.

However, from these points of agreement with Wrede, it would be hasty to infer that Rawlinson held the same skepticism as Wrede concerning the historical Jesus. In order to make sense of the messianic secret Rawlinson believed that Jesus tried to conceal his miracles in order to avoid being known as a miracle worker to the crowds, however, he ultimately was unable to do so.

Conservative Modification of the Messianic Secret (1931-1950)

Julius Schniewind

Schniewind's criticism of Wrede's messianic secret was supported by his studies in first century Jewish culture. Even though Schniewind believed Wrede to be completely wrongheaded in attributing the messianic secret to a completely fictional account, he concurred that the gospel was typified by the theme of messianic secret. From his studies of the Jewish background of the New Testament, Schniewind claimed that Jesus fulfilled, not reinterpreted, the role of Messiah. Hence he claims "The Messianic expectation of the Old Testament, as it still existed in Judaism of the time, was both adopted and fulfilled by Jesus."

F. C. Grant

F. C. Grant exhibited the influence of form critics like Bultmann in his approach to the messianic secret. By using form criticism, Grant believed the careful scholar could decipher what was the original event and what had been produced by the early church. Perhaps the most important distinction he made in form criticism was its purpose. For

Grant, the kerygma was handed down, not for maintaining the historical integrity of Jesus, but rather in order to meet the needs of the early Christian community. As might be expected, Grant upheld the messianic secret with very few alterations from Wrede's original presentation.

The Messianic Secret and New Critical Approaches (1951-1980)

Willi Marxsen

Willi Marxsen utilized the method of redaktionsgeschichte, which emphasized the role of the evangelist in bringing connecting unity to the form of the gospel. Indeed, Mark's creative work is seen in the backdrop in which he arranges the pericope units. In order to properly understand the context that the redactor is operating under, Marxsen follows Joachim Jeremias' lead proposed in his paramount work on miracles where a two-fold Sitz im Leben is delineated: the historic life of Jesus and the church.

Depoe

Marxsen obviously deviates from Wrede's original theory by speculating the messianic secret originated in the redactor of the gospel, rather than the early Christian community. However, he is in more agreement than disagreement with Wrede in claiming that the messianic secret is a theological motif, rather than an historical account of Jesus' life.

Vincent Taylor

Taylor recognized several types of forms: pronouncement stories, miracle stories, sayings and parables, and stories about Jesus.

The pronouncement stories are among the most authentic for Taylor because they express a unique aspect of Jesus' character rather than the innovation of the early church. Taylor also believed that the miracle stories should be accepted as authentic. After all, if Jesus is divine, then one should have no problem acknowledging Jesus could perform supernatural acts. Taylor also notes that the vivid details in the miracle stories sets their origin on more reliable grounds.

The sayings and parables are also regarded as generally reflecting the bona fide words of Jesus. By comparing the gospels, the teachings of Jesus can confidently be identified. Finally, Taylor also held that the stories of Jesus represent an accurate depiction of the historical Jesus. These stories can be traced to personal accounts either by Peter or other informants in some cases.

Contemporary Approaches to the Messianic Secret (1981-2002)

N. T. Wright

N. T. Wright finds Wrede's explanation for the messianic secret extremely implausible. The first difficulty Wright has with Wrede's thesis is that it supposes a high speed of theological evolution. Furthermore, Wright finds it difficult to believe such a complex concoction is more probable than supposing Jesus claimed to be Messiah.

Burton Mack

On the opposite spectrum of Wright is Jesus Seminar advocate Burton Mack. Mack suggests an interpretation of Mark's gospel that is in close agreement with Wrede's original thesis. One of the central tenets that is present throughout all his writings is that the Christian myth is a development which added Jesus' claims to messiahship. In fact, he argues that much of Jesus' life as recorded in the gospels has been ascribed to him by the Christian community.

Morna Hooker

Morna Hooker represents a middle position in the contemporary portrait of scholarship on the messianic secret. She finds the responses that attempt to keep the messianic secret as historical lacking.

Depoe's Conclusion

After one hundred years of scrutiny, Wrede's initial statement of the messianic secret still has no overwhelming judgment from scholarship. Representing conservative scholarship, N. T. Wright rejects Wrede's hypothesis wholesale. Opposite of Wright is the interpretation of Burton Mack who largely accepts the groundwork and conclusion Wrede explicated. Somewhere between the complete rejection and acceptance of Wrede's messianic secret is the mediating approach Morna Hooker employs that accepts and rejects aspects of both readings of the messianic secret.

Dom Henry Wansbrough concludes critically of Wrede's theory:

The major Christological contention of Wrede cannot be upheld. Even if the commands to silence after the miracles of healing are invented subsequently, the fact of these miracles (unless they too are invented) must constitute a messianic claim; this is made clear in the Mt 11.2-6//Lk saying, where the meaning of the healing-miracles as the fulfilment of Isaiah's predictions is explained to the messengers of John the Baptist; but the whole tone of Jesus' proclamation, from its first opening with "The kingship of God has come near" (1.14-15), is messianic. A much larger demolition-job needs to be done on the historicity of Mark if all public messianic indications are to be removed from the lifetime of Jesus. The miraculous feedings are a sign that Jesus is a second Moses, and so a messianic figure. Peter's messianic confession cannot have been invented subsequently because of its slur on the chief apostle. The messianic entry into Jerusalem may have been built up, but the deliberate entry on a donkey must have been intended by Jesus messianically. Finally the cleansing of the Temple must have messianic overtones, as the reaction to it by the Jewish authorities shows, both in their demand for Jesus' authority and in the accusation at the trial.

It is further impossible to explain Jesus' own claims unless they include messianic overtones. In particular his assembly of his own little community of the Twelve, his own qahal (= community, 3.13-14), parallel to Israel, implies that he is the representative of the Lord who originally gathered Israel to be his own special people. The same (delegated?) divine authority is implied by the claim to forgive sin (2.10) and to be Lord of the Sabbath (2.28). Particularly related to the end-time expectation of the messiah is the claim to be the bridegroom (2.19).

<http://users.ox.ac.uk/~sbeno056/tutorialessays.htm>

On the second question, of how Mark uses the secrecy motif, Wansbrough concludes the personality of Jesus is revealed in two stages; he also says the function is twofold--to reveal progressively the difficult theme of necessary suffering and to maintain a note of irony:

The answer to this question therefore provides the answer to the theology behind the secrecy commands. The structure of Mark's gospel makes clear that the instruction into Jesus' personality comes in two stages: first, leading up to Caesarea Philippi, the gradual process of learning that Jesus is messiah. This is prepared by the blindness of the disciples suddenly being shattered at the symbolic healing of the blind man at Bethsaida. But the first silence-command to the disciples comes immediately after it (8.30), showing that this knowledge is not yet sufficient. They have still to learn what sort of messiah is Jesus. The second command (whose explicit mention of the resurrection excludes at least verbal historicity) is related explicitly to the resurrection (9.9); it is only then that they will have received the full message. At this stage a third element may be introduced, the centurion's confession (15.39). This public protestation in a public scene must be significant, the more so because it is made by a gentile and because it uses the title 'son of God' which is of such significance for Mark. It would seem that for Mark as for John the moment of the resurrection has already begun in the death of Jesus.

Theologically, the Spirit descending into Jesus (1:11) and the Transfiguration (9:2-8) speak to the presence of YHWH in the man Jesus. What Christianity makes of this reveals itself in the Resurrection of Jesus (chapter 16) coupled to the Ascension in the longer ending of Mark. The longer ending completes the inclusio begun in chapter 1 of "the good news of Jesus Christ," the disciples now going out to proclaim "the good news everywhere." Jesus himself begins his mission in Galilee proclaiming the "good news of God" (1:14). A shorter ending of Mark has the women returning to Peter as commanded and Jesus himself sending out through them "the sacred and imperishable proclamation of eternal salvation" (NRSV). Readers will want to note that the section "A Preaching Tour in Galilee" has Jesus saying to Simon, Andrew, James, and John, "Let us go on to the neighboring towns so that I may do what I came out to do. And he went throughout Galilee, proclaiming the message in their synagogues (these more a late century presence) and casting out demons" (1:38-39). NRSV notes the use of "As it is written" in the first chapter of Mark as usually referring to what precedes it, in this case, "the announcement

of good news of Jesus Christ." NRSV says the extended sequence would then read:

The beginning of the good news of Jesus Christ, Son of God, as it has been recorded in the prophet Isaiah, "See, I am sending my messenger ahead of you, who will prepare your way; the voice of one crying out in the wilderness: 'Prepare the way of the Lord, make his paths straight.'" Here, Jesus becomes the messenger. Perhaps a question to be raised in Mark is whether "messenger" refers to function or nature and to whether the messenger is human or divine. The Old Testament uses malak multiple times to refer to human messengers, with prophets, in particular being designated as messengers of God. King David had been specifically noted as having a special relationship, God's anointed and God's servant, in the working of God's purpose, roles taken on by Jesus in the first century (Cambridge Companion, 518).. What many see as the original ending of Mark concludes with a prediction that Jesus will again be seen in Galilee, this returning readers to begin reading the Gospel all over again with the "good news" of the messenger.

In the rest of this work, I turn to careful and close reading of each of the chapters and verses in Mark. The object of this scrutiny will be to look at the historical Jesus and the theological Christ as presented in Mark. On another level, I will, at the same time, be exploring the literary features and structure of Mark. Readers may want to keep in mind that verse one in Mark has sometimes been taken to be the title, "The Beginning of the Good News of Jesus Christ, the Son of God," with some manuscripts omitting Son of God. What follows then will be a series of opportunities to recognize who Jesus is prior to crucifixion; the Christ of resurrection belongs to Christian theology. That would mean, of course, that the title's use of Jesus Christ suggests Christian overtones (interpolation) in the way oral tradition becomes authorized document (See cluster 7). As an example of how this happens, readers need only look at the Jewish apocalypses and Revelation to see how Judaism and Christianity adapted traditional genres to meet new historical challenges. Fourth Ezra, for example, is rewritten from an original context of fifth century BCE (First Temple) to 70 CE Second Temple destruction to move the people from discouragement and lack of confidence to restored faith in God's justice and divine plan for history (Cambridge Companion, 455).

The Jewish context of Mark must also be an important consideration. Robert McFarlane has presented Jesus as non-anti-Jewish and observed largely heated discussions among groups and a sectarian attempt to introduce a new interpretation of Torah; he identifies these groups as the following:

Herodians: 3:6; 8:15; 12:13ff (also by inference 6:14-29)
 Pharisees: 2:16; 2:24; 3:6; 7:1; 8:15
 Sadducees: 12:18-27
 Scribes: 1:22; 2:6; 2:16; 3:22; 9:14; 12:28-34; 12:38-40
 Elders: 8:31
 Chief Priests: 10:32; 11:18; 11:27; 14:1,53-65; 15:31,32a

He notes that Mark is favorable to the people generally at the expense of leadership.

There are two instances in the text where Mark shows a positive link with other Jewish groups. The first may be too obvious to make the observation, but we need to recall that the teaching of the figure who has come to be known as John the Baptist also represents a *halakhic* way. In both 1:1-14 and 6:14-29 Jesus' and the Baptist's renewal movements are closely related. What is even more significant for the purpose of our argument is to notice that at 2:18 the Baptist's movement is seen to be in accord with Pharisaic practice rather than Jesus' way. In this we see again that we are not looking at a hard and fast division between Christianity and Judaism, but a diverse debate concerning ways of interpretation. The surprises we have noted include the Baptist being bracketed with the Pharisees concerning fasting, and scribes and Pharisees being bracketed with Jesus over the issue of resurrection.

Pasted from < http://www.jcrelations.com/The_Gospel_of_Mark_and_Judaism.2208.o.html?id=720&L=3&searchText=tHE+gOSPEL+OF+mARK+AND+jUDAISM&searchFilter=%2A >

McFarlane, in addition to recognizing the diversity of groups, also looks at the range of issues under debate:

Having recognized the diversity of groups represented within Mark's portrayal of Judaism we are now in a position to look briefly at the range of issues under debate between Jesus' and other forms of *halakhah*. These include fasting (2:18), patterns of Sabbath observance (2:23-27; 3:1-5), a complex passage regarding ritual washing and offerings (7:1-23), grounds for divorce (10:1-12), Roman taxes (12:13-17), resurrection (12:18-27), 'the greatest commandment' (12:28-31), the Messiah (12:37), robe length and synagogue seat (12:38-40), the relative value of offerings from rich

and poor (12:41-44), and the Temple (11:15-18; 13:2).

McFarlane then remarks on the traditional roles Jesus portrays, that of prophet and teacher, as well as his patterns of "remarkably Jewish observance." He then concludes:

Thus, both in Mark's conflict narratives and in his portrayal of Jesus' positive actions, we discern a figure more representative of, than disjunctive with, elements within the rich tapestry of contemporary Judaism.

In reading Mark, readers will want to approach the task hermeneutically--with an eye to both the whole as well as the chapter and verse; NRSV provides a useful overall outline that can guide thinking about the book as a whole, dividing it into the beginning of Jesus' ministry, his work in Galilee and his withdrawal, his ministry in Judea and Perea, and the Passion:

Outline

- The Beginnings of Jesus' Ministry ([1:1-13](#))
 - o His Forerunner ([1:1-8](#))
 - o His Baptism ([1:9-11](#))
 - o His Temptation ([1:12-13](#))
- Jesus' Ministry in Galilee ([1:14](#) ;[6:29](#))
 - o Early Galilean Ministry ([1:14](#);[3:12](#))
 1. Call of the first disciples ([1:14-20](#))
 2. Miracles in Capernaum ([1:21-34](#))
 3. Preaching and healing in Galilee ([1:35-45](#))
 4. Ministry in Capernaum ([2:1-22](#))
 5. Sabbath controversy ([2:23](#) ; [3:12](#))
 - o Later Galilean Ministry ([3:13](#);[6:29](#))
 1. Choosing the 12 apostles ([3:13-19](#))
 2. Teachings in Capernaum ([3:20-35](#))
 3. Parables of the kingdom ([4:1-34](#))
 4. Calming the Sea of Galilee ([4:35-41](#))
 5. Healing a demon-possessed man ([5:1-20](#))
 6. More Galilean miracles ([5:21-43](#))
 7. Unbelief in Jesus' hometown ([6:1-6](#))
 8. Six apostolic teams preach and heal in Galilee ([6:7-13](#))
 9. King Herod's reaction to Jesus' ministry ([6:14-29](#))
- Strategic Withdrawals from Galilee ([6:30](#) ;[9:29](#))
 - o To the Eastern Shore of the Sea of Galilee ([6:30-52](#))
 - o To the Western Shore of the Sea ([6:53](#);[7:23](#))
 - o To Syrian Phoenicia ([7:24-30](#))
 - o To the Region of the Decapolis ([7:31](#);[8:10](#))
 - o To the Vicinity of Caesarea Philippi ([8:11-30](#))
 - o To the Mount of Transfiguration ([8:31](#) ; [9:29](#))
- Final Ministry in Galilee ([9:30-50](#))
- Jesus' Ministry in Judea and Perea ([ch. 10](#))
 - o Teaching concerning Divorce ([10:1-12](#))
 - o Teaching concerning Children ([10:13-16](#))
 - o The Rich Young Man ([10:17-31](#))
 - o A Request of Two Brothers ([10:32-45](#))

- o Restoration of Bartimaeus's Sight ([10:46-52](#))
- The Passion of Jesus (chs. [11-15](#))
 - o The Triumphal Entry ([11:1-11](#))
 - o The Clearing of the Temple ([11:12-19](#))
 - o Concluding Controversies with Jewish Leaders ([11:20](#) ; [12:44](#))
 - o Signs of the End of the Age ([ch. 13](#))
 - o The Anointing of Jesus ([14:1-11](#))
 - o The Lord's Supper ([14:12-26](#))
 - o The Arrest, Trial and Death of Jesus ([14:27](#);[15:47](#))
- The Resurrection of Jesus ([ch. 16](#))

Pasted from <<http://www.biblestudytools.com/nrs/mark/>>

An alternative to this outline is one provided by Daniel B. Wallace, this one focusing on the easy two divisions into ministry in Galilee in two cycles and then in Judea as well as emphasizing the activities of the servant and then presenting the suffering servant.

III. Outline⁴⁶

I. The Beginning of the Servant's Ministry (1:1-13)

- A. His Forerunner (1:1-8)
- B. His Baptism (1:9-11)
- C. His Temptation (1:12-13)
- II. The Servant's Ministry in Galilee (1:14–6:6a)
 - A. Cycle One: Jesus' Early Galilean Ministry (1:14–3:6)
 - 1. Introductory Summary: Jesus' Message in Galilee (1:14-15)
 - 2. A Call to Four Fishermen (1:16-20)
 - 3. Authority over Demons and Disease (1:21-45)
 - a. An Exorcism in the Synagogue (1:21-28)
 - b. The Healing of Simon's Mother-in-Law (1:29-34)
 - c. A Solitary Prayer (1:35-39)
 - d. The Cleansing of a Leper (1:40-45)
 - 4. Confrontations with Religious Leaders (2:1–3:5)
 - a. Concerning the Healing and Forgiveness of a Paralyzed Man (2:1-12)
 - b. Concerning the Calling of a Tax-Collector (2:13-17)
 - c. Concerning Fasting (2:18-22)
 - d. Concerning Jesus' Authority over the Sabbath (2:23–3:5)
 - 1) Plucking Grain on the Sabbath (2:23-28)
 - 2) Healing on the Sabbath (3:1-5)
 - 5. Conclusion: Jesus' Rejection by the Pharisees (3:6)
 - B. Cycle Two: Jesus' Later Galilean Ministry (3:7–6:6a)
 - 1. Introductory Summary: Jesus' Activity in Galilee (3:7-12)
 - 2. Appointment of the Twelve Disciples (3:13-19)
 - 3. Accusation regarding Beelzebub, the Prince of Demons (3:20-30)
 - 4. Invitation to Join Jesus' Family (3:31-35)
 - 5. Invitation to Enter the Kingdom (Parables) (4:1-34)
 - a. The Setting (4:1-2)
 - b. The Responsibility of the Hearers (4:3-25)
 - 1) The Parable of the Sower (4:3-9)
 - 2) The Purpose of the Parables (4:10-12)
 - 3) The Parable of the Sower Explained (4:13-20)
 - 4) The Parable of the Lamp (4:21-25)
 - c. The Parables of the Character of the Kingdom (4:26-32)

- 1) The Parable of the Growing Seed (4:26-29)
- 2) The Parable of the Mustard Seed (4:30-32)
- d. Conclusion (4:33-34)
- 6. Miraculous Demonstration of Jesus' Authority (4:35-5:43)
 - a. The Calming of a Storm (4:35-41)
 - b. The Healing of a Gerasene Demoniac (5:1-20)
 - c. The Raising of Jairus' Daughter and the Healing of a Hemorrhaging Woman (5:21-43)
- 7. Conclusion: Jesus' Rejection in his Hometown (6:1-6a)
- III. The Servant's Withdrawals from Galilee (6:6b-8:21)
 - A. The Catalyst: The News about Jesus Spreading (6:6b-29)
 - 1. By Jesus' Activities (6:6b)
 - 2. By Jesus' Disciples (6:7-13)
 - 3. As far as Herod (6:14-29)
 - a. The Report to Herod (6:14-16)
 - b. The Beheading of John (6:17-29)
 - B. The Withdrawals (6:30-8:21)
 - 1. To a Deserted place (6:30-7:23)
 - a. Miracles Performed (6:30-56)
 - 1) Feeding of the Five Thousand (6:30-44)
 - 2) Walking on the Water (6:45-56)
 - b. Pharisees Confronted: Clean Vs. Unclean (7:1-23)
 - 1) Confrontation with the Pharisees (7:1-13)
 - 2) Declaration to the Crowd (7:14-15)
 - 3) Instruction of the Disciples (7:17-23)
 - 2. To the Vicinity of Tyre: The Healing of the Syrophenician Woman's Daughter (7:24-30)
 - 3. To the Region of Decapolis: The Healing of a Deaf-Mute (7:31-37)
 - 4. To the Sea of Galilee: The Feeding of the Four Thousand (8:1-9)
 - 5. To Dalmanutha (= Magadan) (8:10-21)
 - a. The Withdrawal to Dalmanutha (8:10)
 - b. The Pharisees' Demand for a Sign (8:11-13)
 - c. The Pharisees' Teaching Warned Against (8:14-21)
 - IV. Revelation of the Servant's Suffering at Caesarea Philippi (8:22-38)
 - A. Introductory Object Lesson: The Two-Stage Healing of a Blind Man at Bethsaida (8:22-26)
 - B. Peter's Confession: Jesus is the Christ (8:27-30)
 - C. Jesus' Disclosure: Death and Resurrection (8:31-38)
 - 1. The Statement by Jesus (8:31)
 - 2. Resistance by Peter (8:32-33)
 - 3. The Principle: Suffering before Glory (8:34-38)
- V. The Suffering Servant's Journey to Jerusalem (9:1-10:52)
 - A. Lessons in Galilee (9:1-50)
 - 1. The Transfiguration (9:1-13)
 - 2. The Healing of a Demon-Possessed Boy (9:14-30)
 - 3. Prediction of Death and Resurrection: Second Mention (9:31-32)
 - 4. The Greatest Disciple (9:33-37)
 - 5. Doing Good in Jesus' Name (9:38-41)
 - 6. Stumbling Blocks (9:42-48)
 - 7. Worthless Salt (9:49-50)
 - B. Lessons in Perea and Judea (10:1-52)
 - 1. In Perea (10:1-31)
 - a. Divorce (10:1-12)
 - b. Childlikeness (10:13-16)
 - c. Riches (10:17-31)

- 1) The Rich Young Man: Security in Riches (10:17-22)
- 2) The Disciples: Security in Christ (10:23-31)
- 2. In Judea (10:32-52)
 - a. Prediction Death and Resurrection: Third Mention (10:32-34)
 - b. True Leadership (10:35-52)
 - 1) John's and James' Request (10:35-37)
 - 2) Jesus' Response (10:38-45)
 - 3) Jesus' Example: Healing of Blind Bartimaeus (10:46-52)
- VI. The Suffering Servant's Ministry in Jerusalem (11:1-13:37)
 - A. The Presentation of the Suffering Servant: Entrance into Jerusalem (11:1-11)
 - 1. Preparation: The Unbroken Colt (11:1-6)
 - 2. Coronation: The Recognition of Jesus' Messiahship (11:7-10)
 - 3. Prolepsis: Investigation of the Temple (11:11)
 - B. The Judgment of the Nation in Symbols (11:12-26)
 - 1. The Entrance into the Temple (11:12-19)
 - a. Proleptic Rejection of the Nation: Cursing of the Fig Tree (11:12-14)
 - b. The Cleansing of the Temple (11:15-17)
 - c. Proleptic Rejection of the Messiah: The Plot to Kill Jesus (11:18-19)
 - 2. The Withered Fig Tree (11:20-26)
 - C. Confrontations with Religious Leaders (11:27-12:44)
 - 1. The Authority of Jesus Questioned (11:27-33)
 - 2. The Parable of the Wicked Tenants (12:1-12)
 - 3. Paying Taxes to Caesar (12:13-17)
 - 4. Marriage at the Resurrection (12:18-27)
 - 5. The Greatest Commandment (12:28-34)
 - 6. Whose Son is the Christ? (12:35-37a)
 - 7. The Hypocrisy of the Religious Leaders (12:37b-44)
 - a. Condemnation of Hypocrisy (12:37b-40)
 - b. Commendation of the Widow's Sincerity (12:41-44)
 - D. The Judgment of the Nation in Prophecy (13:1-37)
 - 1. The Setting in the Temple (13:1-2)
 - 2. The Discourse on the Mount of Olives (13:3-37)
 - a. Signs of the End of the Age (13:3-31)
 - b. The Day and Hour Unknown (13:32-37)
- VII. The Culmination of the Suffering Servant's Ministry: Death and Resurrection (14:1-16:8)
 - A. The Preparation for Death (14:1-52)
 - 1. The Anointing at Bethany (14:1-11)
 - a. Anointing of Jesus by a Woman (14:1-5)
 - b. Prediction of her Memorial by Jesus (14:6-9)
 - c. Agreement to Betrayal by Judas (14:10-11)
 - 2. The Last Passover (14:12-26)
 - 3. The Prediction of Peter's Denials (14:27-31)
 - 4. Gethsemane (14:32-42)
 - 5. The Arrest of Jesus (14:43-52)
 - B. The Death of Jesus (14:53-15:47)
 - 1. The Trials of Jesus (14:53-15:15)
 - a. The Trial Before the Sanhedrin (14:53-65)
 - b. Peter Denies Jesus (14:66-72)
 - c. The Trial Before Pilate (15:1-15)
 - 2. The Crucifixion of Jesus (15:16-41)
 - a. The Mocking of the Soldiers (15:16-20)
 - b. The Actual Crucifixion of Jesus (15:21-32)

- c. The Death of Jesus (15:33-41)
- 3. The Burial of Jesus (15:42-47)
- C. The Resurrection of Jesus (16:1-8)
 - 1. The Empty Tomb (16:1-5)
 - 2. The Angel's Announcement (16:6-7)
 - 3. The Open Ending (16:8)

Pasted from < <http://bible.org/seriespage/mark-introduction-argument-and-outline>>

Other approaches, of course, may be taken. The above, clearly, takes both geography and chronology into consideration, an approach criticized by Chalmer E. Faw (Source: *Journal of Bible and Religion*, Vol. 25, No. 1, Jan., 1957< <http://www.jstor.org/stable/1457367>> in his "Outline of Mark":

Geography is minor, applying to the over-all Galilee-to-Jerusalem movement and to minor shifts of locale here and there, sometimes within sections and characteristically between sections. Chronology likewise is subordinate, again pertaining only to the over-all movement from Jesus' baptism to his death and cropping out here and there in minor connections between stories. What is major is the topically oriented development of forces leading to the death and resurrection of Christ.

Chalmers then provides a topical outline for which his article provides a fuller discussion that the sections are based on a pronounced emphasis or motif, later ones accumulative but adding a new distinctive note underscored by a well-chosen saying or an editorial epitome:

1. Jesus begins a successful and popular ministry (ch. 1)
2. Opposition arises, culminating in the foreshadowing of his death (2 :1-3 :6)
3. He appoints the disciple band, the true family of Christ (3 :7-35)
4. He teaches in parables, both to reveal and to conceal (4:1-34)
5. He engages in vigorous wonder-working, evoking an amazed response (4:35-7:37) (8:1-26?)
6. He announces the way of the cross and resurrection for both Master and disciples (8:27-10:45)
7. In Jerusalem he is again met with popularity and opposition and teaches with a parable (10:46- 12 :44)
8. He teaches alertness to the signs of the end (ch. 13)
9. Then is arrested, tried and killed (14 :1-15 :41)
10. He is carefully buried but startlingly rises again (15 :42-16 :8)

Another theological ordering of Mark has been provided by N.T. Wright; he understands the genre of Mark to be that of apocalypse, this designed to unveil the truth about Jesus in revelatory moments, with the parables functioning as stories about how God is fulfilling "his strange purposes"; the predictions function to explain that the son of man must suffer, be rejected and killed, and rise again. Wright understands Mark as presenting Jesus as Israel's, and the world's, Messiah, and describes the book as having "a stark and simple structure" (620):

Chs.1-8	Build up the recognition of Jesus' Messiahship.
Chs. 9-15	Build up to his death, always looking ahead to the resurrection, with chapters 14 and 15 detailing fulfillment of the predictions.
Ch. 16	Even if the chapter ends with verse 8, Mark believed Jesus had been bodily raised from the dead.

Wright sees the climax of the book in Peter's confession (8:29), a challenge to the predicted suffering, death, and vindication--a confession confirmed by the transfiguration (9:2-8). The final account includes the empty tomb, the frightened women, Caiphas' statement (14:6), and the centurion's declaration (15:39). Wright sees Jesus as a true prophet in predicting his own death. He finds the shorter ending of Mark, the women running from the tomb, as part of the fear motif but remarks that Mark, as a whole, makes the point that fear should be overcome by faith. Further, the instruction on

several occasions to remain quiet, Wright says, is rescinded when the son of man is raised from the dead, as alluded to earlier (9:9) in instructions to the disciples.

Yet another lengthy outline for Mark has been provided by Ernest De Witt Burton following his conclusion that the book largely presents the events of the historical person:

Is such a book intended to convince unbelievers or to instruct those who already believe? Certainly it could be used for either purpose. But the absence of anything like a controversial tone, the simple straightforwardness of the story, without comment, or even arrangement for argumentative purposes, leads us to think of it as a book written for Christians rather than for unbelievers, and chiefly for instruction rather than for conviction. That it was intended, as we believe Matthew was, to play a part in the controversies of the apostolic age, of which we learn from Acts and the epistles, there is no evidence. The writer is certainly not a Judaistic Christian, but neither does he show any distinctly anti-Judaistic interest. He writes in an atmosphere, or from a point of view, unaffected by these controversies. Its aim is undoubtedly edification, but it seeks this, not so much by convincing its readers of something they did not believe, or even by setting itself to confirm a conviction already held, as by informing them of facts which are useful to them to know. The book has argumentative value for believers and unbelievers, but it must be doubted whether its author thought of it as argumentative in any sense.

The Purpose and Plan of the Gospel of Mark. II

Ernest De Witt Burton

The Biblical World, Vol. 15, No. 5 (May, 1900), pp. 331-340

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ANALYSIS OF THE GOSPEL.

I. INTRODUCTION: PREPARATION FOR THE PUBLIC WORK OF JESUS. I :1-13

I. Preaching of John

the Baptist. I : I-8

2. Baptism of Jesus. I : 9-11

3. Temptation in the wilderness. I :12, 13

II.

THE GALILEAN MINISTRY. I : 14-9:50

I. The work begun and favorably received. I : 14-45

a. Jesus begins preaching in Galilee. I : 14, 15

b. Call of the four fishermen. I : 16-20

c. A sabbath in Capernaum. I :21-34

d. A preaching tour in Galilee. I : 35-45

2. The opposition of the scribes and Pharisees excited and rapidly developed. 2: I-3 : 6

a. A paralytic healed and his sins forgiven. 2 : 1-12

b. Call of Levi, and the feast in his house. 2: 13-17

c. Jesus' answer to a question concerning fasting. 2 : I8-22

d. Plucking grain on the sabbath. 2: 23-28

e. A withered hand healed on the sabbath. 3: I-6

s'5 At one point only in the gospel is there any considerable indication of arrangement upon a topical plan involving a departure from chronological order, viz., in 2 : 1-3: 6. This group of five short narratives certainly does exhibit the growth of the hostility of the scribes and Pharisees to Jesus, and this seems to be clearly the link of connection joining them. That they should have occurred thus in rapid succession seems somewhat improbable, and the plot to put him to death

(3 :6) strikes one as strange so early in the ministry. It is altogether possible that the grouping here was that of one of Peter's discourses, and that 3:1-6, or at least vs. 6, is anachronistically narrated. Even this, however, must remain only a conjecture, and the general order of events in Mark remains, if not chronological, yet apparently the nearest approximation to such an arrangement that we possess. Cf. SWETE, *St. Mark*, pp. liii ff.; BRUCE, in the *Expositor's Greek Testament*, Vol. I, pp. 27-32. 338 THE BIBLICAL WORLD 3.

The beginnings of the separation between the followers of Christ and the rest of the community; the organization of the band of twelve personal attendants and helpers. 3; 7-35

- a. The widespread fame of Jesus. 3:7-12
- b. The choosing of the Twelve. 3 : 13-19
- c. Concerning eternal sin. 3 : 20-30
- d. Natural and spiritual kinsmen. 3:31-35
4. The parables of the kingdom's growth, in which is also illustrated its separating power. 4 : 1-34
5. Sundry manifestations of his power, which meet with varied reception, some believing, some unbelieving, some slow to believe. 4: 35-6:6
 - a. Stilling of the tempest. 4 : 35-4 I
 - b. The Gerasene demoniac. 5 : 1-20
 - c. Jairus' daughter raised to life. 5:21-43
 - d. The rejection at Nazareth. 6: 1-6
6. The sending out of the Twelve to engage in work like his own. 6:7-29
7. The continuance of his work in Galilee, with the reappearance of the same features: he heals and feeds the multitudes; his disciples are slow of understanding; the multitudes follow him ; the Pharisees oppose him. 6 : 30-7 : 23
 - a. The feeding of the five thousand. 6: 30-46
 - b. Jesus walking on the sea. 6:47-52
 - c. Many healed in Galilee. 6:53-56
 - d. On eating with unwashed hands. 7 :1-23
8. A withdrawal from Galilee into Gentile territory, and the ready faith which Jesus finds there. 7 24-37
 - a. The Syrophenician woman's daughter. 7:24-30
 - b. The deaf and dumb man healed. 7 : 31-37
9. Further experiences in Galilee in which the same features as before appear. 8: 1-26
 - a. The feeding of the four thousand. 8: 1-10
 - b. Pharisees demanding a sign from heaven. 8:I[1-2I
 - c. A blind man healed near Bethsaida. 8 : 22-26
10. A second withdrawal from Galilee: tour to Caesarea Philippi and return to the sea. He draws out from Peter the confession of him as the Christ, and begins to teach his disciples concerning his own sufferings, and the conditions of discipleship to him. 8 :27-9: 50
 - a. Peter's confession of Jesus' Messiahship. 8 :27-30 PURPOSE AND PLAN OF THE GOSPEL OF MARK 339
 - b. Jesus' prediction of his own death and resurrection. 8 : 31-9: I
 - c. The transfiguration. 9 : 2-13
 - d. The demoniac boy healed. 9:14-29
 - e. Jesus again foretells his death and resurrection. 9: 30-32
 - f. The ambition and jealousy of the disciples reprov'd. 9: 33-50
- III. THE JOURNEY FROM GALILEE TO JUDEA, and instructions on the way; on nearing Jerusalem he is publicly saluted as Son of David. chap. 10
 1. Departure from Galilee into Perea. 10: 1
 2. Concerning divorce. 10 : 2-12
 3. Blessing little children. 10: 13-16
 4. The rich young ruler. 10 : 17-3
- 11
 5. Announcement of his crucifixion. 10: 32-34
 6. Ambition of James and John reprov'd. 10: 35-45
 7. The blind man near Jericho healed. 10: 46-52
- IV. THE MINISTRY IN JERUSALEM : Jesus causes himself to be announced as Messiah; comes into conflict with the leaders of the people; predicts the downfall of the Jewish temple and capital. chaps. 11-13
 1. The triumphal entry ; he is saluted as Messiah. 11 : 1-11
 2. The cursing of the fig tree. 11 : 12-14
 3. The cleansing of the temple. 11 : 15-19
 4. Comment on the withered fig tree. 11 :20-25
 5. Conflict with the Jewish leaders. 11: 27--12 : 40
 - a. Christ's authority challenged. 11 : 27-33
 - b. The parable of the vineyard. 12: -12
 - c. Three questions by the Jewish rulers. 12: 13-34

- (d. Jesus' question concerning David's son. 12: 35-37
- e. Warning against the scribes. 12 :38-40
- 6. The widow's two mites. 12 : 41-44
- 7. The prophetic discourse concerning the downfall of the temple and city. chap. 13
- V. THE PASSION HISTORY. chaps. 14, 15
- I. The plot of the Jews. 14 : I, 2
- 2. The anointing in the house of Simon the leper. 14 :3-9
- 3. The bargain with Judas. 14: 10, 11
- 4. The last Passover of Jesus and his disciples. 14 : 12-26
- 5. Prediction of Peter's denial. 14 : 27-31
- 6. The agony in Gethsemane. 14:32-42
- 7. The betrayal and arrest. 14 : 43-52
- 8. The trial before the Jewish authorities. 14:53-65
- 9. The denials of Peter. 14 :66-72

Perhaps readers should be reminded that canonization did not occur over night as well as be reminded that the earliest Gospel of Mark came after the period of Paul's taking his Christ forward:

THE historical origins of Christianity are hidden in impenetrable obscurity. Of the actual history of The Canon, the first half of the first century we have no knowledge. Of the history of the next hundred years also we have for the most part to rely on conjecture. The now universally received canonical account was a selection from a mass of tradition and legend; it is only in the second half of the second century that the idea of a Canon of the New Testament makes its appearance, and is gradually developed by the Church of Rome and the Western Fathers. The early Alexandrian theologians, such as Clement, are still ignorant of a precise Canon. Following on the lines of the earliest apologists of a special view of Christianity, such as Justin, and using this evolving Canon as the sole test of orthodoxy, Irenæus, Tertullian and Hippolytus, supported by the Roman Church, lay the foundations of "catholicity,"

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and begin to raise the first courses of that enormous edifice of dogma which is to-day regarded as the only authentic view of the Church of Christ.

The first two centuries, however, instead of confirming the boast of the later orthodox, "one church, one faith, always and everywhere," on the contrary present us with the picture of many lines of evolution of belief, practice, and organisation. The struggle for life was being fiercely waged, and though the "survival of the fittest" resulted as usual, there were frequent crises in which the final "fittest" is hardly discernible and at times disappears from view.

The Gospels. The view of the Christian origins which eventually became the orthodox tradition based itself mainly upon Gospel-documents composed, in all probability, some time in the reign of Hadrian (A.D. 117-138). The skeleton of three of these Gospels was presumably a collection of Sayings and a narrative of Doings in the form of an ideal life, a sketch composed by one of the "Apostles" of the inner communities and designed for public circulation. Round this nucleus the compilers of the three documents wove other matter selected from a vast mass of myth, legend, and tradition; they were evidently men of great piety, and their selection of material produced narratives of great dignity, and cast aside much in circulation that was foolish and fantastic, the remains of which we have still preserved in some of the apocryphal Gospels. The writer of the fourth document was a natural mystic who adorned his account with a beauty of conception

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and a charm of feeling that reflect the highest inspiration.

At the same time the canonical selection most fortunately preserved for us documents of far greater historic value.

In the Letters of Paul, the majority of which are in the main, I believe, authentic, we have the earliest The Letters of Paul, historic records of Christianity which we possess. The Pauline Letters date back to the middle of the first century, and are the true point of departure for any really historic research into the origins. On reading these Letters it is almost impossible to persuade ourselves that Paul was acquainted with the statements of the later historicized account of the four canonical Gospels; all his conceptions breathe a totally different atmosphere.

Instead of preaching the Jesus of the historicized Gospels, he preaches the doctrine of the mystic Christ <*Fragments of a Faith Forgotten*, by G.R.S. Mead, [1900], at sacred-texts.com>

I will not resist the temptation to conclude this section with the words of Schweitzer, a pioneer in historical Jesus studies:

It [study of the life of Jesus] set out in quest of the historical Jesus, believing that when it had found Him it could bring Him straight into our time as a Teacher and Saviour. It loosed the bands by which He had been riveted for centuries to the stony rocks of ecclesiastical doctrine, and rejoiced to see life and movement coming into the figure once more, and the historical Jesus advancing, as it seemed, to meet it. But He does not stay; He passes by our time and returns to His own. What surprised and dismayed the theology of the last forty years was that, despite all forced and arbitrary interpretations, it could not keep Him in our time, but had to let Him go. He returned to His own time, not owing to the application of any historical ingenuity, but by the same inevitable necessity by which the liberated pendulum returns to its original position.

He comes to us as One unknown, without a name, as of old, by the lake-side, He came to those men who knew Him not. He speaks to us the same word: "Follow thou me!" and sets us to the tasks which He has to fulfil for our time. He commands. And to those who obey Him, whether they be wise or simple, He will reveal Himself in the toils, the conflicts, the sufferings which they shall pass through in His fellowship, and, as an ineffable mystery, they shall learn in their own experience Who He is.

<http://www.earlychristianwritings.com/schweitzer/chapter20.html>

Pasted from <<http://crain.english.missouriwestern.edu/Jesus/>>

Ch1

(updated November 12, 2018)

Home	Introduction	Ch1	Ch2	Ch3	Ch4	Ch5	Ch6	Ch7
Ch8	Ch9	Ch10	Ch11	Ch12	Ch13	Ch14	Ch15	Ch16

Overview

Controversy arises at almost every point in a close reading of Mark. It begins with whether to identify Jesus as the Son of God, to conclude with the shorter **16:8** or longer ending of Mark **16:9-20**, and to decide what structure best fits any reading of the book (paratactic style, thematic groupings, encapsulating or summarizing action, threefold patterns with progressive heightening, inclusions and intercalations). Felix Just makes the point that Mark, carefully and artistically structured, creates a structure nothing short of amazing.

Chapter 2 of Mark may be summarized as follows:

Synoptic Parallels to Mark

	Mark	Matthew	Luke
1:1-8	The Preaching of John the Baptist	3:1-12	3:1-20
1:9-11	The Baptism of Jesus	3:13-17	3:21-22
1:12-13	The Temptation of Jesus	4:1-11	4:1-13
1:14-15	The Beginning of the Galilean Ministry	4:12-17	4:14-15
1:16-20	The Calling of the First Disciples	4:18-22	5:1-11
1:21-28	The Man with an Unclean Spirit	-	4:31-37
1:29-34	The Healing of Many People	8:14-17	4:38-41
1:35-39	A Preaching Tour	-	4:42-44
1:40-45	The Cleansing of a Leper	8:1-4	5:12-16

<Inactive: <http://www.silk.net/RelEd/gospemark1.htm> > For Synoptic parallels, see <http://sites.utoronto.ca/religion/synopsis/>

The New Interpreter's Study Bible (NISV) serves as an extremely useful guide for studying Mark and will be used to provide a topical structure for each chapter:

The Proclamation of John the Baptist--1-8

The Baptism of Jesus--9-11

The Temptation of Jesus--12-13

The beginning of the Galilean Ministry--14-20

The Man with the Unclean Spirit--21-28

Jesus Heals Many at Simon's House--29-34

A Preaching Tour in Galilee--35-39

Jesus Heals a Leper--40-45

1 The beginning of the good news of Jesus Christ, the Son of God. **2** As it is written in the prophet Isaiah, "See, I am sending my messenger ahead of you, who will prepare your way; **3** the voice of one crying out in the wilderness: "Prepare the way of the Lord, make his paths straight," " **4** John the baptizer appeared in the wilderness, proclaiming a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins. **5** And people from the whole Judean countryside and all the people of Jerusalem were going out to him, and were baptized by him in the river Jordan, confessing their sins. **6** Now John was clothed with camel's hair, with a leather belt around his waist, and he ate locusts and wild honey. **7** He proclaimed, "The one who is more powerful than I is coming after me; I am not worthy to stoop down and untie the thong of his sandals. **8** I have baptized you with water; but he will baptize you with the Holy Spirit." **9** In those days Jesus came from Nazareth of Galilee and was baptized by John in the Jordan. **10** And just as he was coming up out of the water, he saw the heavens torn apart and the Spirit descending like a dove on him. **11** And a voice came from heaven, "You are my Son, the Beloved; with you I am well pleased." **12** And the Spirit immediately drove him out into the wilderness. **13** He was in the wilderness forty days, tempted by Satan; and he was with the wild beasts; and the angels waited on him. **14** Now after John was arrested, Jesus came to Galilee, proclaiming the good news of God,

Pasted from <<http://www.biblestudytools.com/nrs/mark/1.html>>

In a prior work, I summarized Mark 1 in the following way, then moved into commentary:

Summary The first chapter of Mark opens with a declaration of who Jesus Christ is: the Son of God, written about by Isaiah as one who has been prepared for by his messenger; the messenger is to make straight the paths of the Lord. John is introduced as the messenger, and there follows the account of people going out to John to be baptized, coming from Judea and Jerusalem and being baptized in the Jordan for the forgiveness of sins. He tells his followers that while he baptizes with water, the one who follows will baptize with the Holy Spirit. Shortly, Jesus of Nazareth of Galilee is baptized, sees the heavens opening and the Spirit descending. A voice from heaven acknowledges him. Jesus then departs into the wilderness for forty days. When the narrative picks up, the reader learns John has been arrested; Jesus goes into Galilee preaching, "The kingdom of God is at hand; repent and believe in the

gospel." Passing by the Sea of Galilee, (other names are Sea of Tiberias and Lake of Gennesaret. It is 12¾ miles long by 7½ miles wide. Jesus calls Simon and Andrews, fishermen brothers, and then brothers James and John, sons of Zebedee, also fishermen in the work of mending their nets. These four accompany Jesus into Capernaum, where Jesus immediately begins teaching in the synagogue, astonishing those who listened with his authority. He heals a man of unclean spirit, who acknowledges him as Jesus of Nazareth, the "Holy One of God." This further amazes those who observe that this man has authority over evil, and thus, his fame spreads. At Simon's house, Jesus and His followers find Simon's mother-in-law with a fever; Jesus takes her by the hand, and she is healed. By sundown, others have gathered: the sick and those possessed with demons--in fact, the whole city, it would seem. The demons acknowledge Jesus as authority. How long the day was is not revealed, but very early the next morning, Jesus departs to pray, pursued by Simon and others. With little respite, Jesus says, ":Let us go on to the next towns...to preach...for that is why I came." Throughout Galilee, Jesus continues to preach in synagogues and to cast out demons. In the process, he heals a leper, who talked freely and spread the news of his healing with the result that Jesus was so beset by crowds that he could not freely enter into the cities but had to stay in the country. It should be noted that Jesus does not oppose current religious practice: he says, "See that you say nothing to anyone; but go, show yourself to the priest, and offer for your cleansing what Moses commanded, as a testimony to them."

Pasted from <<http://jcrain.name/siteback/Mark/interpre.htm>>

It should be noted at the outset of any discussion that Mark has generated much controversy and scholarly discussion, and the easy identification that Jesus is Son of God has been part of this ongoing discussion, much of this seated in historical and textual criticism with the possibility for short and long readings, the shorter omitting the phrase "Son of God":

The long reading has the earliest and strongest support by manuscripts, as well as versional and patristic witnesses and the text-types to which the witnesses have traditionally been assigned. The short reading has early and widespread, but much weaker, support. The internal evidence, to which the defenders of the short reading have normally appealed, is actually ambiguous. The traditional intrinsic argument from Markan style in favour of the long reading is possibly balanced by the corresponding possibility of a stylistic scribal addition. In regard to transcriptional probability, an early accidental omission, even in the opening of a book, cannot be ruled out, since this apparently happened on several occasions in the history of transmission in Mark 1:1 and elsewhere. This argument, however, is balanced by the general tendency to expand book titles as well as divine names and titles. In conclusion, the balance of probabilities favours the long reading in Mark 1:1—the 'Son of God' was indeed in the beginning.

Tommy Wasserman	http://jts.oxfordjournals.org/content/62/1/20.full.pdf?keytype=ref&ijkey=AT2IoWFHZyWQb93
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The first fourteen verses have been identified as presenting a prologue. NISV remarks on the nature of prologue in ancient use "to orient the reader unambiguously to what they were about to hear" and contrasts this to the ancient view that doing so would suspend suspense and keep the hearing mind focused on what is being presented. This is probably a good point to remind readers that narrative was considered by the ancients as a form of argument, this commented on later. According to NISB, the prologue has Jesus of Nazareth of Galilee come to John in Judea, replicating the overall structure of the movement of the Gospel from Galilee to Jerusalem. It also presents the hero of the story and his divine association, letting readers understand this clearly even if secrecy becomes a developing motif. Jesus comes preaching the good news of God.

John Lightfoot (English Biblical critic and Hebraist; born at Stoke-upon-Trent, Staffordshire, Mar. 29, 1602; died at Ely, Cambridgeshire, Dec. 6, 1675) explained the reference to Isaiah in verse two in the following way:

The whole knot of the question lies in the cause of changing the reading; why, as it is written in Esaias the prophet, should be changed into, as it is written in the prophets. The cause is manifest, saith that very learned man, namely, because a double testimony is taken out of two prophets. "But there could be no cause (saith he) of changing of them." For if Mark, in his own manuscript, wrote, as it is written in the prophets, by what way could this reading at last creep in, as it is written in Esaias, when two prophets are manifestly cited? Reader, will you give leave to an innocent and modest guess? I am apt to suspect that in the copies of the Jewish Christians it was read, in Isaiah the prophet; but in those of the Gentile Christians, in the prophets: and that the change among the Jews arose from hence, that St. Mark seems to go contrary to a most received canon and custom of the Jews: "He that reads the prophets in the synagogues let him not skip from one prophet to another. But in the lesser prophets he may skip; with this provision only, that he skip not backward: that is, not from the latter to the former." But you see how Mark skips here from a prophet of one rank, namely, from a prophet who was one of the twelve, to a prophet of another rank: and you see also how he skips backward from Malachi to Isaiah. This, perhaps, was not so pleasing to the Christian Jews, too much Judaizing yet: nor could they well bear that this allegation should be read in their churches so differently from the common use. Hence, in Isaiah the prophet, was inserted for in the prophets. And that they did so much the more boldly, because those words which are cited out of Malachi are not exactly agreeable either to the Hebrew original or the Greek version, and those that are cited from Isaiah are cited also by Matthew and Luke; and the sense of them which are cited from Malachi may also be fetched from the place alleged out of Isaiah.

Pasted from <<http://www.biblestudytools.com/commentaries/lightfoot-new-testament/mark/1.html>>

Almost at every line, the prologue, and this is typical of Mark in general, should cause readers to stop and ask questions: What do we mean by good news? Why is this "The beginning of the good news of Jesus Christ"? Who is Jesus Christ? What is meant by "Son of God"? Who is the messenger? What is the relationship between Jesus and John? Why does John so quickly disappear from the action? What are the differences between the two baptisms? Why is Jesus baptized by John, if he is proclaiming a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins"? Why does Jesus come from Nazareth? What is the wilderness, and why is Jesus tested? What does it mean that the time is fulfilled? Why is it important "to repent and believe in the good news"? With just these questions, readers have plenty to consider. Unfortunately, inattentive reading as well as reliance upon traditions of theology all interfere with getting to the bottom of such

questions.

Several patterns of structure may be remarked in this prologue. First, use of the rhetorical device of inclusio--"the use of a phrase or theme at both the beginning and end of a passage"-- "good news"-- marks the beginning of the first major section of the Gospel (1:14-10:52). Whereas I address readers, Mark was originally meant to be "heard with the ear rather than read with the eye" (Introduction to Mark, NISB). This accounts for repetitions, summaries and rhetorical devices used in aural narratives. The narrator uses narrative "to draw audiences" into the story's action and helps them "align their responses to those of the hero and narrator." To be noted, too, is a journey described as taking Jesus from Nazareth to John in the wilderness which "foreshadows the overall movement of the Gospel from his ministry in Galilee to his trial, death, and resurrection in Jerusalem (completing the circle is the final prediction in 16:7 that he would be seen again by his followers in Galilee" (Notes, NISB). The "heavens torn apart" (10-11) at Jesus' baptism have a counterpart in the curtain of the temple torn apart at the death of Jesus (chapter 15).

The Blue Letter Bible supports variation in the views that have been taken to finding structural patterns in Mark:

There is not much consensus on how to divide up Mark's Gospel. The first thirteen verses designate the beginnings of Jesus' ministry. Following that is Jesus' ministry in Galilee. Jesus then goes to Caesarea Philippi, after which he makes his way up to Jerusalem where the passion takes place. The story ends with and the resurrection of Christ. Many have noted that Peter's confession in 8:27-30 constitutes a structural turning point in Mark, because this is the first recognition of who Jesus is within the Gospel. After this point, Jesus puts an emphasis on things that pertain to his Messiahship. This would involve such things as Cole points out: "rejection, suffering, death, apparent failure and ultimate vindication by God in resurrection." [10]

The greatest textual issue in Mark's Gospel is the ending (16:9-20). There are a couple manuscript deviations affecting the conclusion that have led to a plethora of literature on the subject. In short, the 16:9-20 ending and the ending at 16:8 both hold merit. The former is found in a large amount of manuscripts, and even appears to have been known by Tatian (ca. 170) and others. [11] On the other hand, two of the most important manuscripts (Sinaiticus and Vaticanus) end the Gospel at 16:8. Besides the manuscript evidence, many who hold to the second view also look to Mark's theology and writing style for support.

Pasted from <<http://www.blueletterbible.org/study/intros/mark.cfm>>

What can be agreed readily is that the ministry of Jesus begins with 1:14, 15 after the arrest of John when Jesus comes to Galilee proclaiming "good news" and asking that people repent and believe that "the Kingdom of God has come near." What follows is the calling of disciples" Simon, Andrew, and John. Felix Just outlines the first chapter in the following way:

- **Evangelist's Literary Introduction** - "The beginning of the *good news* (gospel; *euangelion*) of Jesus Christ, the Son of God." (v. 1)
 - As written by the prophet Isaiah (and Malachi), John the Baptist preaches repentance in the wilderness (vv. 2-6)
 - John *speaks about Jesus* coming after him: "I baptize with water; he will baptize with holy Spirit" (vv. 7-8)
 - Jesus comes from Nazareth and is baptized by John in the Jordan river; heavens open; the Spirit descends (vv. 9-10)
 - A voice from heaven *speaks to Jesus*: "You are my beloved Son; with you I am well pleased." (v. 11)
 - The Spirit drives Jesus into the wilderness, where he remains for forty days, tested by Satan (vv. 12-13)
- **Jesus' Initial Preaching** - "The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God has come near; repent, and believe in the *good news*." (vv. 14-15) [The first words of Jesus in Mark's Gospel proclaim the urgency of his message, his focus on God, and the response expected from the listeners.]

Some Typical Events in Jesus' Ministry (1:16-45):

- **The first Vocation story:** Jesus calls four fishermen, who follow him as his disciples (vv. 16-20)
 - **The first Exorcism: Jesus exorcises an unclean spirit in Capernaum** (vv. 21-28)
 - **The first Healing narrative:** Jesus heals Simon's Mother-in-law of a fever (vv. 29-31)
 - **The first Healing summary:** Jesus heals many sick people and drives out many demons (vv. 32-34)
 - **The first Journey: Jesus expands his preaching beyond Capernaum** (vv. 35-39)
- **The first Restoration story:** Jesus cleanses a leper, restoring him to health and to society (vv. 40-45)

Pasted from <<http://catholic-resources.org/Bible/Mark-Outlines.htm>>

Theology Library *The Gospel of Mark* provides a wealth of material for the study of Mark (<http://www.shc.edu/theolibrary/mark.htm>); among these can be found a comprehensive list of structural patterns for Mark; among the more useful are paratactic style, thematic groupings, encapsulating or summarizing action, threefold patterns with progressive heightening, inclusions and intercalations:

Paratactic Style:

- **Parataxis** - stringing together (lit. “placing next to”) short loosely connected episodes, like pearls on a string.
 - An amazing 410 of the 678 verses in the original Greek version of Mark’s Gospel begin with the word “**And**” (Gk. *kai*)!
- **Immediacy** - Mark’s Gospel emphasizes action, as seen in the frequent use of the Greek word *euthys* (“**immediately**, right away, at once, as soon as”), used an astounding 42 times, especially near the beginning of the Gospel (1:10, 12, 18, 20, 21, 23, 28, 29, 30, 42, 43; 2:8, 12; 3:6; 4:5, 15, 16, 17, 29; 5:2, 29, 30, 42; 6:25, 27, 45, 50, 54; 7:25; 8:10; 9:15, 20, 24; 10:52; 11:2, 3; 14:43, 45, 72; 15:1).
 - One could feel exhausted after reading Mark’s Gospel, so quickly does the action seem to occur!

Thematic Groupings:

- Mark sometimes **places similar stories together** for thematic continuity, even if the events related might not have occurred one right after the other, chronologically speaking. Examples:
 - Several **miracle stories** interconnecting Jesus’ preaching and healing activity are in the first chapter (1:21-45)
 - Five **controversy stories** involving various opponents are in a connected block (2:1–3:6)
 - Three **parables** and further teachings about Jesus’ parables are in one chapter (4:1-34)
 - Four more **miracles stories** (of different types) are found together (4:35–5:43)
 - Three “**passion predictions**” are near the middle of the Gospel (8:31–10:45)
 - Seven **controversy dialogues** with or about Jesus’ opponents in Jerusalem (11:35–12:44)
 - Many of Jesus’ **eschatological teachings** are collected in one chapter (13:1-37)
- Mark also periodically **encapsulates or summarizes the action**, in contrast to telling individual stories:
 - 1:14-15 - Jesus’ initial preaching about the Kingdom/Reign of God
 - 1:32-34 - Jesus heals many different people one evening
 - 1:39 - Jesus goes throughout Galilee preaching and exorcizing
 - 3:7-12 - Great crowds acknowledge Jesus’ power
 - 6:6b - Jesus goes throughout the villages of Galilee teaching
 - 6:12-13 - Jesus’ disciples go out preaching, exorcizing, and healing
 - 6:53-56 - Mark summarizes Jesus’ healing activity

Three-fold Patterns, with Progressive Heightening:

- Three times Jesus calls his core disciples to follow him (1:16-20; 2:14-17; 3:13-19)
- Three times Jesus predicts his suffering, death, and resurrection (8:31; 9:31; 10:32-34)
- Three times Jesus warns, “If your hand/foot/eye causes you to stumble...” (9:43, 45, 47)
- Three times Jesus returns and speaks to the sleeping disciples in Gethsemane (14:32-42)

Three times Peter denies knowing Jesus or being his disciple (14:66-72)

- Three groups of people deride Jesus as he is hanging on the cross (15:29-30, 31-32a, 32b)
- Other groups of three: Peter, James, John (9:2; 14:33); priests, scribes, elders (11:27; 14:43); women (15:40; 16:1)

Inclusio and Intercalations:

- **Inclusio** - bracketing or “enclosing” a story or section by using the same or similar words, phrases, or themes at the beginning and the end
- **Intercalation** - enclosing or “sandwiching” one story in the middle of a different story (forming an **A1, B, A2** pattern), so that each affects the interpretation of the other
- **Examples** of inclusio and intercalation in Mark, some of which involve larger blocks of material:

A1) 2:1-5 – A paralytic is brought to Jesus

B) 2:6-10 – Dispute over Jesus’ authority to forgive sins

A2) 2:11-12 – Jesus heals the paralytic

A1) 4:3-8 – Jesus tells parable of the sower and the seed

B) 4:10-12 – Why does Jesus speak in parables?

A2) 4:13-20 – Jesus explains parable of the sower and the seed

A1) 6:7-13 – Jesus sends out the twelve apostles on a mission

B) 6:14-29 – the death of John the Baptist is recalled

A2) 6:30-31 – the apostles return, reporting what they had done

A1) 9:1 – the coming of the Kingdom of God in power

B) 9:2-8 – the Transfiguration of Jesus

A2) 9:9-13 – the coming of Elijah and of the Son of Man

A1) 14:1-2 – chief priests want to arrest and kill Jesus

B) 14:3-9 – a woman anoints Jesus at Bethany

A2) 14:10-11 – Judas arranges to betray Jesus to the chief priests

A1) 3:20-21 – Jesus’ family goes out to restrain him

B) 3:22-30 – the Beelzebul controversy

A2) 3:31-35 – Jesus’ family arrives; who is his “true family”?

A1) 5:21-24 – Jairus asks Jesus to heal his dying daughter

B) 5:25-34 – a hemorrhaging woman touches Jesus’ clothes

A2) 5:35-43 – Jesus raises the daughter of Jairus to life

A1) 8:22-26 – Jesus gives sight to a blind man near Bethsaida

B) 8:28–10:45 – three passion predictions; discipleship teachings

A2) 10:46-52 – Jesus gives sight to blind Bartimaeus near Jericho

A1) 11:12-14 – Jesus curses a fig tree outside of Bethany

B) 11:15-19 – Jesus expels sellers and buyers from the Temple

A2) 11:20-25 – the fig tree is withered; the importance of faith

A1) 14:54 – Peter enters the courtyard of the high priest, and sits by a fire

B) 14:55-65 – Jesus is interrogated by the council of the chief priests

A2) 14:66-72 – in the courtyard, Peter denies knowing Jesus three times

Pasted from <<http://catholic-resources.org/Bible/Mark-Literary.htm>>

James R. Edwards has called the above patterns “sandwiching” and gives the several other names for the pattern: intercalations, interpolations, insertions, framing, and *Schiebungen*. He then outlines his criteria for a sandwich and identifies nine, these varying from those identified above:

Each Markan interpolation concerns a larger (usually narrative) unit of material consisting of two episodes or stories which are narrated in three paragraphs or pericopes. The whole follows an A¹-B-A² schema, in which the B-episode forms an independent unit of material, whereas the flanking A-episodes require one another to complete their narrative. The B-episode consists of only one story; it is not a series of stories, nor itself so long that fails to link A²

reader
the with

A^{1,17} Finally, A² normally contains an allusion at its beginning which refers back to A¹, e.g., repetition of a theme, proper nouns, etc.

1. 3:20-35

A Jesus’ companions try to seize him, vv 20-21

B The religious leaders accuse Jesus of being in league with Beelzeboul, vv 22-30

A Jesus’ family seeks him, vv 31-35

2. 4:1-20

A Parable of the Sower, vv 1-9

B Purpose of parables, vv 10-13

A Explanation of the Parable of the Sower, vv 14-20

3. 5:21-43

A Jairus pleads with Jesus to save his daughter, vv 21-24

B Woman with a hemorrhage touches Jesus, vv 25-34

A Jesus raises Jairus's daughter, vv 35-43

4. *A Mission of the Twelve, vv 7-13*

B Martyrdom of John the Baptist, vv 14-29

A Return of the Twelve, v 30

5. *11:12-21*

A Cursing of the fig tree, vv 12-14

B Clearing of the temple, vv 15-19

A Withering of the fig tree, vv 20-21

6. *14:1-11*

A Plot to kill Jesus, vv 1-2

B Anointing of Jesus at Bethany, vv 3-9

A Judas's agreement to betray Jesus, vv 10-11

7. *14:17-31*

A. Jesus predicts his betrayal, vv 17-21

B Institution of the Lord's Supper, vv 22-26

A Jesus predicts Peter's betrayal, vv 27-31

8. *14:53-72*

A Peter follows Jesus to the courtyard of the high priest, vv 53-54

B Jesus' inquisition before the Sanhedrin, vv 55-65

A Peter's denial of Jesus, vv 66-72

9. *15:40-16:8*

A Women at the cross, vv 15:40-41

B Joseph of Arimathea requests Jesus' body, vv 15:42-46

A Women at the empty tomb, vv 15:47-16:8

Edwards then makes the important point that the technique is used theologically:

J. Donahue is correct in regarding the purpose of Markan sandwiches as theological and not solely literary, although, as our investigation evinces, their purpose cannot be limited, as Donahue supposes, to the way of Jesus' suffering and the necessity of discipleship. They are equally concerned with the meaning of faith, bearing witness, judgment, and the dangers of apostasy.

Just further lists literary echoes and repetitions:

Use of "Literary Echoes" for retrospectives or foreshadowing:

◦ **Literary Echoes *within* the Gospel narrative:**

- 1:7 – someone will come who is "more powerful" than John the Baptist (see 1:21-28; 3:27)
- 1:14 – "after John is arrested" (imprisonment narrated more fully in 6:14-27)
- 2:20 – "the bridegroom will be taken away" (cf. Passion narrative, 14:43–16:3)
- 3:6 – Pharisees and Herodians plot to destroy Jesus (cf. 8:15; 11:18; 12:13; 14:1)
- 8:19-20 – Jesus recalls previously feeding the 5000 & 4000 (cf. 6:30-44; 8:1-10)

8:27-28 – a discussion of Jesus' identity recalls previous opinions of his being a prophet (6:14-16)

- 8:31; 9:31; 10:32-33 – Jesus predicts his upcoming passion (cf. 14:43–16:3)
- 9:7 – a voice from heaven again declares that Jesus is God's beloved Son (cf. 1:11)
- 14:17-21 – Jesus foretells his betrayal by Judas (cf. 14:10-11; 14:43-50)
- 14:26-31 – Jesus foretells the disciples' desertion and Peter's denial (cf. 14:50-52; 66-72)

◦ **Foreshadowing of events *beyond* the narrative:**

- 1:8 – “He will baptize with the Holy Spirit”
- 1:16-20 – “I will make you fish for people”
- 10:38-39 – the deaths of James and John
- 13:2 – the destruction of the Jerusalem Temple
- 14:25 – “until that day... in the Kingdom of God”

Repetition of Key Words and Phrases:

◦ **Key Words used throughout Mark's Gospel:**

- ***Gospel / Good News*** – 1:1, 14-15; 8:35; 10:29; 13:10; 14:9; [16:15]
- ***Christ*** – 1:1; 8:29; 9:41; 12:35; 13:21; 14:61; 15:32
- ***Son of God*** – 1:1; 3:11; 5:7; 15:39; cf. 1:11; 9:7; 13:32; 14:61
- ***Authority*** – 1:22, 27; 2:10; 3:15; 6:7; 11:28-33; 13:34
- ***Kingdom of God*** – 1:15; 4:11; 4:26, 30; 9:1; 9:47; 10:14-15; 10:23-25; 12:34; 14:25; 15:43
- ***Believe / Faith*** – 1:15; 2:5; 4:40; 5:34, 36; 9:23, 24, 42; 10:52; 11:22, 23, 24, 31; 13:21; 15:32; 16:13, 14, 16, 17
- ***Follow / Behind*** – 1:17, 18, 20; 2:14, 15; 3:7; 5:24; 6:1; 8:33, 34; 9:38; 10:21, 28, 32, 52; 11:9; 14:13, 54; 15:41
- ***The Way / Road*** – 1:2-3; 2:23; 6:8; 8:3, 27; 9:33-34; 10:17, 32; 10:46, 52; 11:8; 12:14

◦ **Phrases repeated in close proximity:**

- “rise, take up your mat, and walk/go” (2:9, 11, 12)
- “he appointed twelve” (3:14, 16)
- “healed of her disease” (5:29, 34)
- “the head of John the Baptist... on a platter” (6:24, 25, 28)
- “Don't you understand?” (8:17, 21)
- “If your [x/y/z] causes you to stumble...” (9:43, 45, 47)
- “How hard it is... to enter the Kingdom of God” (10:23, 24, 25)
- “Son of David, have mercy on me” (10:47, 48)
- “Call him... They called him... He is calling you” (10:49)

- “their testimony did not agree” (14:56, 59)

Pasted from <<http://catholic-resources.org/Bible/Mark-Literary.htm>>

Likewise, Dom Henry Wansbrough (Pasted from <<http://www.textweek.com/mkjnacts/mark.htm>> provides the following list of literary features used by the writer of Mark:

Here is a list of the more prominent features of Mk's writing. They need to be understood and remembered, since they will be widely used in what follows.

The 'and' and 'and at once' with the historic present gives a breathless speed to the narrative which emphasizes the urgency of Jesus' message.

Mk repeatedly uses two phrases of similar meaning for emphasis, e.g. 1.32 'at evening//when the sun had set', or 1.42 'the leprosy left him//and he was cleansed', or 2.20 'then//on that day'. Particularly frequent are double questions: 4.30: What can we say that the kingdom of heaven is like? What parable can we find for it?' (or 3.13; 4.40; 6.2). This repetition is a technique of oral teaching.

Mk zooms in, to focus on one memorable material object: 4.38 Jesus was asleep in the stern, his head on the cushion', or 5.27 'she touched his cloak from behind', or 6.28 'he brought the head on a dish'.

A delayed explanation with 'for...', rationing the information till the reader asks a question, when it could have been logical to explain earlier: 1.16; 2.15; 5.8; 16.1, 8.

The sandwich-technique, by which Mk inserts a piece between two halves of another piece in such a way that the outer halves and the central piece illustrate and clarify one another.

Thus 2.1-4 Story about physical healing, 2.5-11 Story about healing of sin, 2.12 Story about physical healing, 3.20-21 Jesus' family fails to understand him, 3.22-30 The scribes misunderstand him, 3.31-35 Jesus' family fail to understand him, 4.1-9 Parable of the Sower, 4.10-12 Jesus' use of parables, 4.13-20 Parable of the Sower explained, 11.12-14 The fruitless fig tree cursed, 11.15-19 The Temple rubbishes, 11.20-25 The fig tree found to be withered.

The controversy-technique. This occurs in the controversies about divorce, about Jesus' authority in the Temple, about paying tax to Caesar and about the yeast of the Pharisees.

- | | | | | |
|---|------|--------|-------|------|
| (1) The opponents put a question to Jesus | 10.2 | 11.27 | 12.14 | 8.16 |
| (2) Jesus replies with a counter-question | 10.3 | 11.30 | 12.15 | 8.17 |
| (3) The opponents give inadequate answer | 10.4 | 11.33a | 12.16 | 8.19 |
| (4) Jesus clinches the matter | 10.5 | 11.33b | 12.17 | 8.21 |

Wansbrough provides the following overall map of Mark's structure:

These seven instances of pattern show that Mk is a real author, receiving his material in an oral and flexible form, and shaping this material consistently according to his own patterns of thought in such a way as to bring out the lessons and emphases which he wishes to underline. For the understanding of Mk as a whole, however, it is important to be aware of the architectonic lines of the whole story:

The gospel begins with an Introduction, in which the reader/listener is told – still somewhat mysteriously - who Jesus is, namely, that he is 'son of God', whatever that may mean (see p. 40-41). First comes the witness of scripture, then the witness of John the Baptist, then the overwhelming witness of the Voice from heaven. This witness is all the more overpowering because it uses the conventions of apocalyptic (see p. 45), and alludes especially to Is 42.1 ('my beloved son, in whom I am well pleased' is a possible alternative translation to 'my chosen one in whom my soul delights'). Finally the Testing in the Desert shows Jesus in the messianic peace with the wild animals (as Is 11.6-9) and ministered by angels (Ps 91.11), a return to the peace of the Garden of Eden.

Next begins the first half of the diptych, two panels, hinged in the middle (8.29), one matching the other. The curtain comes down, so to speak, and the actors on stage have no idea who Jesus is – only we, the privileged readers, know that. The actors discover slowly and painfully who Jesus is from a crescendo of incidents in which they are repeatedly bowled over by Jesus' charismatic authority. They still, however, fail to understand what this means, and three times are rebuked, each time on the Lake of Galilee, for their lack of understanding (4.40; 6.50-51; 8.17). This leads up eventually to Peter's declaration at Caesarea Philippi, which, however, is immediately preceded by the symbolically-placed gift of sight to the blind man of Bethsaida. At Caesarea Philippi Peter's eyes are at last opened, and he declares (8.29), 'You are the Christ'. This is the turning-point of the gospel.

Peter has reached the truth that Jesus is the Messiah, but he immediately fails to understand what this implies, what sort of Messiah Jesus is. So in the second half of the diptych there follow the three great formal prophecies of the Passion. Each of these is misunderstood, the first by Peter's rebuke to Jesus (8.32), the second by the squabble about precedence (9.33), the third by the sons of Zebedee asking for the best places (10.35-40). After each of these failures Jesus re-iterates that his followers must share his Cross.

Finally comes the climax at Jerusalem. At they leave Jericho and enter the Wadi Qilt for the final three-hour walk up to Jerusalem (look at a map!), the other cure of the blind man, Bartimaeus, signals that the disciples, too, are about to receive their full sight. The full revelation of who Jesus is occurs in two scenes, first the scene before the High Priest, where Jesus for the first time accepts the three great titles, son of God, Christ and son of man. The second scene is the acknowledgement of the centurion, the first human being to give Jesus the title, 'son of God' (15.39). Whatever the centurion meant by that formula, Mk must read it with Christian eyes. So the declaration of the Voice at the baptism has returned again with the declaration of the centurion. This title therefore functions as a bracket which binds together the whole gospel, showing that the whole gospel is precisely about the revelation of the personality of Jesus as son of God.

There are other balances between the two halves of the diptych, for example the group of controversies with the Jewish leaders in Galilee at the beginning of Jesus' ministry (2.1-3.6)

and at the end in Jerusalem (12.1-37). Mk has gathered these two groups of controversies together.

Mk's practice of gathering incidents together at least raises the question whether Mk's presentation of the ministry at Jerusalem in a few days is not itself a gathering together of incidents which in fact occurred over a wider time-span. The overall arrangement of Jn differs widely from that of the synoptic gospels, which ultimately stems from Mk. Conventionally preference is given to the synoptic arrangement, in which Jesus makes only one visit to Jerusalem, at the end of his ministry. Jn presents four visits to Jerusalem over the course of Jesus' ministry, beginning with the Cleansing of the Temple. Each time Jesus goes up to Jerusalem in Jn the authorities attempt to get rid of Jesus, but they succeed only when Judas gives them the opportunity on the eve of Passover. This offers at least as plausible a scenario as the single short visit to Jerusalem given by Mk. Just as at the beginning of Jesus' ministry Mk offers a sample day of his activity (1.21-38), so his careful time-indications serve Mk to knit together Jerusalem incidents into a tight time-frame: 'next day' (11.12), 'next morning' (11.20), 'two days before the Passover' (14.1), 'on the first day of Unleavened Bread' (14.12). The traditional placing of the messianic entry into Jerusalem on 'Palm Sunday', six days before the Passover, comes, however, from Jn 12.1, and Jn allows a considerably less packed timetable by placing at least some of the incidents in previous visits to Jerusalem.

Because the first chapter of Mark is largely an introduction, having these structural devices up front will help with the discussion to come in the following chapters. Taken together, Just's list makes a compelling argument for a view of Mark as carefully, and artistically, structured, a structure nothing short of amazing.

Beginning of Good News

Mark 1: 1-3 may be read as "one extended sentence," this making Jesus the referent and the messenger of the coming of God (NISN Notes), this reading lending possible new ways of viewing the work of both John and Jesus. Already, too, readers should begin to ask questions: Why is it "the beginning of good news?" What is the good news? Is it the good news of Jesus Christ, as found in the NRSV? What does it mean to be "the Son of God"? Does it make any difference to interpretation to know that "the Son of God" was left out of ancient manuscripts? What does one make of the fact that ancient authorities replace the reference to Isaiah with "in the prophets"? What is meant by "messenger"? What way is being prepared? Does it make any difference that 1:1 has been viewed as a title?

In my earlier work on Mark, in the tradition of the other Gospels, I stated emphatically that John was the messenger, a position clearly open for question if Jesus is the referent of the quotation; I quote what I wrote in this early work:

John clearly is the messenger who is to prepare "the way of the Lord." The scriptural tie is to the books of Isaiah and Malachi. Malachi reads thus:

3.1: Behold, I will send my messenger, and he shall prepare the way before me: and the Lord, whom ye seek, shall suddenly come to his temple, even the messenger of the covenant, whom ye delight in: behold, he shall come, saith the LORD of hosts.

4.4: Remember ye the law of Moses my servant, which I commanded unto him in Horeb for all Israel, with the statutes and judgments.

5: Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the LORD:

It's clear that John is to be identified with Elijah as the messenger indicated by Malachi, not the name of a person but a name meaning "my messenger." Jesus is securely located within the tradition of Jewish predecessors. It should be recalled that Zechariah, preceding Malachi, proclaims that the Lord of Hosts will return to Jerusalem to initiate the Kingdom of God. Mark is aware of this tradition and places Jesus Christ clearly as this Lord of Hosts. Baptized by John, he is immediately declared as God's revelation: 1.11: And there came a voice from heaven, saying, Thou art my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.

In summary, the Son of God designation seems to have undergone some metamorphosis: used at first to designate divine being or a human being in special relationship to a divine figure; a king who has his kingdom from God; God as Father and His followers as sons of God; the pious or suffering righteous; connected to the resurrection and exaltation of Jesus; Jesus' unique addressing of God as Father and a connection with the kingship relationship:

The origin of the title seems, in the first place, to be Jesus' unique addressing God as father (see especially Mark 14.36, where the Aramaic *abba* is preserved), and second, its connection with kingship ideology in view of the conviction that Jesus was the anticipated son of David. Yet characteristically in the New Testament it stands beside the usage of the phrase sons of God, referring to those whom Jesus has brought to salvation (Romans 8.14-21; Romans 9.8; Romans 9.26; Galatians 3.26; Matthew 5.9; Matthew 5.45; John 1.12; 1 John 3.1). (ON)

Pasted from <<http://crain.english.missouriwestern.edu/Mark/interpre.htm>>

I concluded, somewhat ambiguously, "The relationship of Christ is, according to Mark, then that of being a human being/servant identified with God, or said in another way, God-presence lived out in the life of a human being. The two are so closely identified as to become one: that is, the Son is God." Part of my aim in the current study is to delineate more carefully the person of Jesus and the Christology of theology.

Pasted from <<http://jcrain.name/siteback/Mark/interpre.htm>>

It may be useful at this point to be reminded that this voice from heaven occurs on three strategic occasions in Mark:

1:11 Three times during Christ's earthly ministry a voice came from heaven. It was the Father's testimony to Christ's unique and divine Sonship. The other two confirming incidents were at the Transfiguration (9:7) and on the day of Christ's triumphal entry into Jerusalem (John 12:28).

Radmacher, E. D. 1999. Nelson's new illustrated Bible commentary. T. Nelson Publishers: Nashville

Turton, concerning "Son of God," addresses the possible heresy involved:

v1: "Son of God." In Judaism before, during, and after the time of Jesus there was a heresy of "two powers" in heaven that was opposed by later rabbis, and which Christians were accused of. This consisted of interpreting scripture to say that there was a principal angel or entity in Heaven that was equal to God. This "heresy" was common enough that those who advocated it did not feel the need to justify their beliefs, indicating that they were writing to audiences comfortable with such beliefs. James McGrath (2001) writes:

Let us begin with the earliest evidence available to us, namely the writings of Philo and the NT. What is immediately striking is that there is no real indication in the writings of Philo and Paul that they felt their beliefs, which resemble the 'two powers' belief in rabbinic literature, were controversial.

Pasted from <<http://www.michaelturton.com/Mark/GMark01.html>>

In their *Commentary Critical and Explanatory on the Whole Bible* (1871), Robert Jamieson, A. R. Fausset and David Brown explain that critical editors have preferred "As it is written in Isaiah the prophet" which refers to the whole prophetic matter, including Malachi's later development of Isaiah's perspective:

2, 3. As it is written in the prophets, Behold, I send my messenger before thy face, which shall prepare thy way before thee--(Malachi 3:1 , Isaiah 40:3).

3. The voice of one crying in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make his paths straight--The second of these quotations is given by Matthew and Luke in the same connection, but they reserve the former quotation till they have occasion to return to the Baptist, after his imprisonment ([Matthew 11:10](#) , [Luke 7:27](#)). (Instead of the words, "as it is written in the Prophets," there is weighty evidence in favor of the following reading: "As it is written in Isaiah the prophet." This reading is adopted by all the latest critical editors. If it be the true one, it is to be explained thus--that of the two quotations, the one from Malachi is but a later development of the great primary one in Isaiah, from which the whole prophetic matter here quoted takes its name. But the received text is quoted by IRENÆUS, before the end of the second century, and the evidence in its favor is greater in *amount*, if not in weight. The chief objection to it is, that if this was the true reading, it is difficult to see how the other one could have got in at all; whereas, if it be not the true reading, it is very easy to see how it found its way into the text, as it removes the startling difficulty of a prophecy beginning with the words of Malachi being ascribed to Isaiah). For the exposition,

Pasted from <<http://www.biblestudytools.com/commentaries/jamieson-fausset-brown/mark/mark-1.html>>

Turton summarizes the matter of prophets and messenger by quoting Helms to the effect that Mark has used Exodus and Malachi:

You who bring good tidings to Zion, go up on a high mountain. You who bring good tidings to Jerusalem, lift up your voice with a shout, lift it up, do not be afraid; say to the towns of Judah, "Here is your God!" (NIV)

"Good tidings" is of course *euangelion* (gospel) in Greek.

v2: Helms (1997, p3) points out that this verse is built out of Exodus 23:20 and a paraphrase of Malachi. 3:1.

Here is my herald whom I send on ahead of you
Idou, apostello ton aggelon mou pro prosopou sou
taken directly from the Greek of the Septuagint version of Exodus:

Idou, apostello ton aggelon mou pro prosopou sou
The passage in its entirety reads:

Exodus 23:20 "See, I am sending an angel ahead of you to guard you along the way and to bring you to the place I have prepared. 21 Pay attention to him and listen to what he says. Do not rebel against him; he will not forgive your rebellion, since my Name is in him. (NIV)

v2: Malachi 3:1 says:

"See, I will send my messenger, who will prepare the way before me. Then suddenly the Lord you are seeking will come to his temple; the messenger of the covenant, whom you desire, will come," says the LORD Almighty. (NIV)

The last section of Malachi's prophecies, Mal 4:5, contains a reference to Elijah:

"See, I will send you the prophet Elijah before that great and dreadful day of the LORD comes. 6 He will turn the hearts of the fathers to their children, and the hearts of the children to their fathers; or else I will come and strike the land with a curse." (NIV)

Elijah will play an important role in the gospel of Mark.

Pasted from <<http://www.michaelturton.com/Mark/GMark01.html>>

Authorship relates directly to how readers interpret this very first, and important verse, in Mark. I have agreed generally with those who date the composition to the 60s CE; Eusebius, quoting Papias of the first half of the second century, to the effect that the composition was written after Peter's death and the persecutions of Nero, the writer being a follower of Peter; Jerome, the translator of the Bible into Latin, identified the writer as John Mark, an associate of Paul's. At stake, theologically, is the message conveyed by a Gospel written after Peter's death and certainly, after Paul's proclamation to the Gentiles. In the Preface to Mark, the NISB says, "It may well be that in addition to encouraging faithfulness in those Christians facing persecution, the Gospel of Mark was also intended to reach out to others interested in Christianity but not yet committed to it." Given the possibility that "The Gospel of Mark, like the other canonical Gospels, probably originally circulated anonymously among Christian groups" and the reality that early church fathers identified the author, is it possible that the title is a Christian interpolation? Turton has summarized scholarship on this matter in the following way:

v1: Ehrman (1996, p72-5) makes a strong case that the phrase "Son of God" in v1 is a later interpolation. See also Head (1991). Adella Yarbro Collins (1995) concludes in her review article that the field is evenly split on the matter. It is important to keep in mind, as Koester once pointed out, that texts are generally far more variable *before* they are canonized. Several exegetes have argued, based on the grammar of v2 and other arguments, that the beginning of the Gospel has been lost (see discussion in Willker 2004, p9-10).

Pasted from <<http://www.michaelturton.com/Mark/GMark01.html>>

If one moves far in this direction, it soon becomes possible to ask what else in Mark belongs to the earliest traditions? If the title is a Christian interpolation, that certainly explains the use of "Jesus Christ" as well "Son of God"; it explains, too, perhaps, why the traditional messenger is identified as John. Interestingly, of course, after the prologue and at the beginning of Jesus' ministry, Jesus is described as coming to Galilee "proclaiming the good news of God" and saying, "the kingdom of God has come near; repent and believe in the good news." Thus, productively, readers can ask what difference does it make to read this gospel as the gospel of Jesus Christ, the gospel of Jesus, the gospel about Jesus, or the gospel of God (NISB Notes). Turton asks this question in the following way: "Does the opening phrase "Gospel of Jesus Christ" mean the Gospel *about* Jesus, or the Gospel *preached by* Jesus? Or some combination of both? Weeden (1971) along with other exegetes, argues that for the writer of Mark, Jesus is the Gospel."

Pasted from <<http://www.michaelturton.com/Mark/GMark01.html>>

One could add, or is it the gospel that is Jesus?

A tradition of reading Mark as an early apostolic witness is described by G. A. Chadwick:

1. "The beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God. Even as it is written in Isaiah the prophet, Behold, I send My messenger before Thy face, who shall prepare Thy way; The voice of one crying in the wilderness, make ye ready the way of the Lord, Make His paths straight; John came, who baptized in the wilderness and preached the baptism of repentance unto remission of sins. And there went out unto him all the country of Judea, and all they of Jerusalem; and they were baptized of him in the river Jordan, confessing their sins. And John was clothed with camel's hair, and had a leathern girdle about his loins, and did eat locusts and wild honey." MARK 1:1-6 (R.V.)
2. THE opening of St. Mark's Gospel is energetic and full of character. St. Matthew traces for Jews the pedigree of their Messiah; St. Luke's worldwide sympathies linger with the maiden who bore Jesus, and the village of His boyhood; and St. John's theology proclaims the Divine origin of the Eternal Lord. But St. Mark trusts the public acts of the Mighty Worker to do for the reader what they did for those who first "beheld His glory." How He came to earth can safely be left untold: what He was will appear by what He wrought. It is enough to record, with matchless vividness, the toils, the energy, the love and wrath, the defeat and triumph of the brief career of "the Son of God."
3. In so deciding, he followed the example of the Apostolic teaching. The first vacant place among the Twelve was filled by an eye-witness, competent to tell what Jesus did "from the baptism of John to the day when he was received up," the very space covered by this Gospel. That "Gospel of peace," which Cornelius heard from St. Peter (and hearing, received the Holy Ghost) was the same story of Jesus "after the baptism which John preached." And this is throughout the substance of the primitive teaching. The Apostles act as men who believe that everything necessary to salvation is (implicit or explicit) in the history of those few crowded years. Therefore this is "the gospel."

Pasted from <<http://www.ccel.org/ccel/chadwick/mark.iii.i.html>>

Allow me to return to several points I made in the Introduction to this work:

1. Kingdom of God is imminent (:1) and "comes with power" and Transfiguration--the latter associated with Ezekiel and Merkavah (throne chariot: analogy of the way YHWH works in the world). Note the inner circle of Peter, James, and John, who see Jesus talking with Elijah and Moses, two prophets believed not to have died but to have been taken up directly to heaven; according to Malachi (4:5-6) Elijah was to come as precursor to the Messiah. Notes to the NRSV says some have viewed the transfiguration as a "misplaced resurrection." Mark may also be read as an initiation story: the initiates must be prepared for inclusion in the mystery of the coming Kingdom of God, this touching on how one

reads--whether literally or metaphorically--as well as defines who is inside or outside the mystery. The throne of God, Merkavah, represented the vortex of creative energy which determines significance of any given historical period; this tradition of thinking dates back to Mesopotamia (twenty-third century BCE) and to Babylonia (Cambridge Companion to the Bible, 520). Readers must remember that the ancient view of the world was that of multiple, hard shells that had to be rended by the divine, thus the decension of the Spirit at the baptism of Jesus (Mark 1: 9-13). The term *son of god*, often used to describe angels and their relationship to God, expressed, not biological relationship but revelatory relationship (*Companion, 521*). By this view, Jesus may be viewed as a practitioner of divine presence.

The last point states succinctly: "Jesus may be viewed as a practitioner of divine presence" as well as makes the point that Jesus proclaimed "the good news of God" saying, "The time is fulfilled and the kingdom of God has come near" (1.14); people are being asked to repent and believe the good news. Jesus "as practitioner of divine presence" in the Transfiguration demonstrates a close relationship that perhaps can be associated with the throne chariot and "the way YHWH works in the world." According to NISB Notes, "one sign of the end times was to be a new outpouring of God's Spirit (Acts 2:17-21; Joel 2:28-32) and some within the early Christian community understood the presence of the Spirit to be the necessary proof of community membership." One suspects Christian interpolation in John's remark that "he [Jesus] will baptize you with the Holy Spirit" (1:8). At the baptism of Jesus by John, it is the Spirit of God that descends "like a dove on him" 1:10). Jesus seems to be the only one hearing this voice here, but at the Transfiguration, "the disciples are addressed as well" (NISB Notes), perhaps preparing for the disciples' preparation to become human messengers concerning the mission of Jesus. Additionally, Turton explains the traditional numerology that can be associated with the dove as well as the descent:

v10: The Marcosians and perhaps certain other gnostic groups saw the "dove" here as representing "God." In Jewish alphabetical numerology, the Greek letters for 'dove' total 801, same as for "alpha" (1) plus "omega" (800) (Ehrman 1996, p142). The underlying numerological meaning may well be a pointer to the constructed nature of the passage.

v10: The writer of Mark uses the Greek preposition *eis* (into) while Matthew and Luke use *epi* (upon) to describe how the Spirit comes to Jesus. Robert Fowler (1996) pointing out that the understanding of the later writers is often read back in Mark, observes:

"...Mark is portraying for us a person being invaded and possessed by a spirit. In Mark, Jesus becomes spirit-possessed."(p16)

Fowler also points out that in Mark the Spirit is not specified as Holy, though Matthew and Luke are careful to make that clear.
Pasted from <<http://www.michaelturton.com/Mark/GMark01.htm>>

The dove has also been associated with the start of a new creation (*Oxford Bible Commentary 889*).Turton quotes Joel Marcus (1995) as wondering why Jesus does not afterward refer to himself more often as "Son of God":

v11: Joel Marcus (1995) points out that it is odd that, if Jesus really heard this voice, we don't hear him refer to himself as "Son of God" more often in the Gospel. If Jesus presumably told this to his followers, why do they not show more awareness of it?

Pasted from <<http://www.michaelturton.com/Mark/GMark01.htm>>

Turton further explains that "Son of God" may be connected to later Christology:

v9: Jesus simply appears, without parents or antecedents. Many exegetes interpret the Christology of Mark as Adoptionist (Jesus is a human adopted as God's son) as opposed to Matthew and Luke, who posit Jesus as the Son of God from the beginning. Brenda Schildgen (1999), commenting on the silences in Mark, and the early lack of interest in, and low reputation of, the Gospel of Mark among the Patristic Fathers, notes:

"The 'absences' in the Gospel of Mark may well have been responsible for its egregious early reputation. The lapses are linguistic, literary, and narrational. That is, Mark has grammatical errors, it lacks any sophistication in rhetorical style, and, as noted above, it has specific narrative gaps. For example, there is no genealogy, no motivation for Judas, no reconciliation between Peter and Jesus after Peter's denial, no concrete teaching like the Sermon on the Mount or the Lord's Prayer. These absences may well have been disconcerting to early readers...but our own era finds Mark's gaps and silences precisely the source of its interest, as commentators seek to understand these absences literarily or intellectually."(p21)

Pasted from <<http://www.michaelturton.com/Mark/GMark01.htm>>

Yet another question lies at the heart of this discussion: is the imminent Kingdom of God eschatological (end time) or does it refer to a utopian and idealistic rule rooted in justice? Turton provides a possibility for the latter interpretation in his reference to Thompson:

v15: Thomas L. Thompson (2005) observes:

"Like the 'kingdom of God,' the metaphor of my father's kingdom is not apocalyptic in the sense that it implies expectations of the end of the world as Schweitzer thought. It is rather a utopian and idealistic metaphor for a world of justice. In ancient Near Eastern and biblical literature, it is related to the figure of the savior-king who, by reestablishing divine rule,

returns creation to the original order."(p198)

Pasted from <<http://www.michaelturton.com/Mark/GMarko1.html>>

Given what is recorded of Jesus in action and words--the Great Commandments to love God and love people, his ministry to the marginalized, Mark's presentation of Jesus as servant--Thomas's view that the "Kingdom of God" is a metaphor for just rule would seem to be justified. Interpreted in this way, Jesus begins his mission with "just rule" has come near, and it has something to do with people who need to repent and believe. The NISB Notes makes the point that "the Kingdom of God, which Jesus proclaims, precedes Jesus' own ministry; indeed, Jesus' ministry may be toward the culmination of this process," basing this explanation on the use of the perfect tense in Greek. After a brief remark on belief (*pistis* in Greek), NISB says belief "becomes a standard for those who hear Jesus' message" and "The *Kingdom of God* refers to the period or place in which God reigns as undisputed King over the people and the creation."

What is the "good news"? Turbins quotes Aichele (2003):

"In the Old Testament, *euaggelion* appears only in 2 Samuel (LXX 2 Kings) 4:10, where David kills the messenger who brings the "good news" of Saul's death. In addition, the plural form, *euaggelia*, appears four times in 2 Samuel 18:20, 22, 25, and 27, where it is used in the description of David's reception of the "tidings" of Absalom's death, and in 2 Kings (LXX 4 Kings) 7:9, where lepers discover the abandoned camp of the Syrian army. With the exception of this last instance, the message that is brought is not clearly a good one. None of these texts throws much light on the gospel of Mark's use of the term, unless one wishes to argue that Mark is using the term ironically."

Pasted from <<http://www.michaelturton.com/Mark/GMarko1.html>>

Certainly, the messenger is crucified, but in this case, the "good news" probably should be accepted, based on earlier discussion, as the good news (gospel as genre, a later development) of God brought to the world by Jesus, a world that continues to see in Jesus a "practitioner of divine presence" whose ministry was all about God's just rule as opposed the political hegemony in place in the first century; certainly, in the controversy about paying taxes (12:13-17), Jesus replies in such a way as to remind individuals that they bear the image of God and, thus, belong to God. The NISB notes provides the following information about the use of Greco-Roman rhetoric:

An enthymeme, a more convincing form of proof than example, according to Aristotle (*Rhetoric 1.2.10-11*). An enthymeme... drew conclusions from widely believed major and minor premises (like a syllogism); but suppressed parts of the argument," letting the audience fill them in: the coin bears the image of the emperor; the emperor, as human being, bears the image of God. And consequently, "give to god that which is God's."

The "good news" and "Son of God" discussion lead naturally to the discussion of Messiah- ship. Rudolf Bultman may be of help; the following is extensive but critical. Bultman begins by describing the Jewish hope for a time when "the misery of life, its poverty and sickness, will end; the foreign rule of the heathen will be over." He next shows the prophets as influenced by Oriental mythology which results in " a new and peculiar literary form, apocalyptic, which sought to unravel the secrets of the divine plan for the world, to recognize the signs of the end, to calculate the time of its arrival, and to invent fantastic elaborations of the heavenly glory" (<http://www.religion-online.org/showchapter.asp?title=426&C=278>). Bultman describes rabbinical Judaism as abandoning this apocalyptic vision and returning to concentrate on Law.

One particular expectation especially filled many minds: the hope that God would destroy the rule of the heathen, that He would again make of Palestine a completely holy land in which only the law of their fathers would prevail. It is true that the official class of the Jewish people welcomed the Roman rule, which gave peace to the land and, in the very act of depriving the race of its national existence, allowed the religious man to work in peace and live faithful to the Law. In the temple at Jerusalem, too, sacrifices and prayers were offered regularly for the Caesar, and Jewish leaders were satisfied so long as the Romans showed a certain consideration for the holiness of Jerusalem. But among the people themselves, and especially in the strictly legalistic group, the Pharisees, there grew out of the Messianic hope a flaming activism, which itself undertook to end the rule of the heathen. From the time of Herod the Great the *Messianic movements* did not cease, until they finally culminated in the destruction of Jerusalem and the annihilation of the Jewish state in so far as it could be called a state.

2. The Messianic Movements

Herod had already had to use force to suppress a conspiracy which had begun when he had aroused religious antagonism by setting up trophies in the theatre at Jerusalem. As he lay on his deathbed, Jewish youths tore down and destroyed the golden eagle which he had brought into the temple. At the beginning of the reign of Archelaus, to avenge the execution of these offenders, there was a revolt at the feast of the Passover; it was put down by violence. Similarly after the death of Herod an insurrection broke out in Galilee under a certain Judas; it was merely the continuation of earlier disturbances with which Herod had had to deal. In Perea a certain Simon proclaimed himself "king." In Judea a brawny shepherd assumed a crown and began war against the Romans and Herodians. The Jewish historian Josephus calls the rebels "bandits"; the context shows however that without exception these were Messianic movements. When in 6 A.D. the Syrian legate Quirinius took a census in Palestine, there was a revolt in Galilee, and the Judas before mentioned together with the Pharisee Zadok founded the party of the Zealots; religiously the Zealots belonged with the Pharisees, but they made their Messianic hope into a political program. They considered it shameful to pay tribute to the Romans, and to endure mortal men as lords instead of God, the only Lord and King. As they accepted willingly for themselves any kind of death, so also was the murder of relatives and friends a matter of indifference to them, if only they need not call any man their lord. Until the fall of Jerusalem these Zealots continued to defy the Romans, and with them were the like-minded Sicarii, who did not shrink even from the murder of the high priest. Pilate had to suppress in Judea two smaller uprisings, called forth by the offending of Jewish religious feeling; in Samaria he was forced to resort to bloodshed in order to put down a Messianic revolt.

After 40 A.D. such movements multiplied. The old unrest continued. Here and there in Jerusalem and in the country insurrections occurred. Here and there Messianic prophets and even "kings" appeared; under Cuspius Fadus, the "prophet" Theudas; under Ventidius Cumanus, the "bandit" Eleasar; under Felix, a "prophet" who came out of Egypt, who led the crowd of his adherents to the Mount of Olives and attempted to enter Jerusalem with them, expecting the walls to fall at his command; under Festus, a "prophet" who promised "salvation" and deliverance from all suffering. In fact, there was a whole succession of prophets who, according to the account of Josephus, "behaving as if they were chosen by God,

caused disturbances and revolutions and drove the people insane with their oratory, and enticed them into the desert, as if God might there announce to them the miracle of their deliverance." All these Messianic insurrections the Romans suppressed and crucified their instigators or executed them in other ways whenever they could get their hands on them. Here it must be emphasized that some of these movements had no political character. The crowds stirred with Messianic hopes often used no violence, but expected the end of the Roman rule and the coming of the Kingdom of God to be achieved purely by a miracle of God's working. The Romans did not distinguish, and indeed they could not; for them, all these movements were suspected as hostile to the Roman authority.

Pasted from <<http://www.religion-online.org/showchapter.asp?title=426&C=278>>

This summation of Messianic movements leads Bultman to assess the ministry of John the Baptist and Jesus as Messianic, explaining that outsiders could not have understood "the essentially unpolitical character of the leadership of both" and that both were suppressed: John, beheaded, and Jesus, crucified:

3. John the Baptist and Jesus

At this time a prophet appeared by the Jordan, John the Baptist. His coming, too, belongs in the series of Messianic movements. It had of course no political character, but it was inspired by the certainty that the time of the end was now come. On the ground of this conviction he preached repentance.

"You brood of vipers! Who has taught you to flee from the wrath to come? Bring forth then fit fruits of repentance, and think not to say within yourselves: We have Abraham for our father. For I tell you, God can raise up from these stones children to Abraham. Already the axe is laid at the root of the trees, and every tree which does not bear fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire!" (Matt. 3:7-10)

He came as an ascetic, and fasting was characteristic of his sect. (Mark 2 :18, Matt. 11 :18) In addition he practised baptism. Judaism, like the other religions of the east, had long practised the washings which were intended to preserve cultic and ritual purity. At the time of the rise of Christianity, however, there had appeared in that part of the world a whole group of baptismal sects, to which for example the so-called Essenes belong. There was a special significance ascribed to baptism, which was obviously connected with eschatological speculations. Hence the baptism which John proclaimed must be understood as an eschatological sacrament. Whoever submitted himself to it, and to the obligation of repentance bound up with it, purified himself for the coming Kingdom of God, and belonged to the company of those who would escape the day of wrath and judgment.

Clearly ancient eastern, non-Jewish conceptions influenced this Baptist movement; old mythology of Persia or Babylon perhaps also influenced the Baptist's preaching of the coming Judge. But we know little about it from the earliest sources -- the gospel and Josephus. Possibly the Gnostic sect which emerged later is a development of this old Baptist sect, and perhaps many of the Mandæan conceptions go back to the beginning of the movement. It is worth noting that the Mandæans called themselves "Nazarenes"; and that Jesus is often so called in the early Christian tradition. Since this epithet cannot be derived from the name of his own village Nazareth, and since the early Christian tradition has preserved the recollection that Jesus was baptized by John, it might be concluded that Jesus originally belonged to the sect of the Baptist, and that the Jesus-sect was an offshoot of the John-sect. To this conclusion other traces in the gospel tradition point, sayings which stress now the agreement between Jesus and the Baptist, now the superiority of Jesus over John; sayings which show now the solidarity of the two sects as against orthodox Judaism, now the rivalry between them.

But this matter must not be further discussed here. The important point is that among the many Messianic movements of the time, in close relation to the sect of the Baptizer, that movement also grew up which Jesus initiated by his preaching. His followers saw in Jesus the Messiah, whose return after his execution they expected. (We know of something similar in the case of a Samaritan sect.) *Both movements, that of John and that of Jesus, were Messianic.* Their connection with each other and also with other Messianic movements is recognizable in the fact that disciples of the Baptist came over to Jesus, and that there was even a Zealot among Jesus' followers.

Outsiders certainly could not recognize the essentially unpolitical character of the leadership of both John and Jesus, especially as both aroused considerable popular excitement. Both movements were therefore suppressed quickly by the execution of their leaders. John the Baptist was beheaded by Herod Antipas. Mark 6:17-29 gives us an entirely legendary account of his death, while Josephus states that Herod, in view of the crowds which flocked to the Baptist, was afraid that John would incite the people to rebellion, and prevented this by executing him. Jesus was crucified by the Roman procurator Pontius Pilate. What role the Jewish authorities, on whom the Christian tradition put the chief blame, actually played is no longer clearly discernible. It is probable that they, as in other cases, worked hand in hand with the Romans in the interest of political tranquillity. At least there can be no doubt that Jesus like other agitators died on the cross as a Messianic prophet

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In keeping with ongoing discussion about the nature of messiah ship, Robert A. Kraft suggests the notion of messiah-ship, specifically, the connection between Jesus-Joshua, may have been filtered through Christian interpretations: he describes his research:

The question that intrigued me is indicated by the title of this presentation: was there a pre-Christian Jewish expectation of a "messiah-Joshua" figure? The methodological conundrum presented by such a query should be fairly obvious: once we have Christians proclaiming that their Joshua/Jesus is Messiah and defending the claim in part with reference to Jewish traditions it is difficult to determine from the data that has survived by means of the Christian transmission filters whether such a picture of a Joshua/Jesus Messiah is a Christian creation or not. And most of the data has come to us by means of the Christian filtering process. Thus many of the clearest pieces of evidence are among the most suspect.

Pasted from <<http://ccat.sas.upenn.edu/gopher/other/courses/rels/535/4.%20Articles/Joshua%20Messianology%20%28RAK%29>>

He further says:

It is not surprising that Christian interpreters should rather quickly capitalize on the name identity between their Joshua/Jesus Messiah and the successor of Moses in "Jewish" tradition, broadly defined so as to include Samaritan. They also picked up on other Joshua/Jesus figures, especially the high priestly personage in the Zechariah materials. Our earliest extensive witness to these developments is Justin, a non-circumcized Greek speaking native of the Palestinian Samaritan area. Later authors including Clement and Origen "of Alexandria" developed the theme in their own ways. I find these materials fascinating, but will not detail them here. The conceptual and terminological context that emerges from such a study includes references to the "prophet like Moses," to the "angel" who arises to lead God's children out of the desert and into their promised terminus and who somehow bears God's "name," to the victor in the

visible and "hidden" battle with the diabolic Amalek, and to the high priestly anointed partner with Zerubbabel (Zech 4.14), among others.

Pasted from <<http://ccat.sas.upenn.edu/gopher/other/courses/rels/535/4.%20Articles/Joshua%20Messianology%20%28RAK%29>>

It may be useful to review Mark's use of Messiah, these directly addressed only twice by Jesus, one of these perhaps attesting to the possibility of several conflicting messianic claims; certainly, the expectation for a Messiah seems to be at the threshold of the age.

- **Mark 8:29 NRS**

He asked them, "But who do you say that I am?" Peter answered him, "You are the **Messiah**."

[Read Mark 8](#) | [View in parallel](#) | [Compare Translations](#)

- **Mark 2:35 NRS**

While Jesus was teaching in the temple, he said, "How can the scribes say that the **Messiah** is the son of David?"

[Read Mark 12](#) | [View in parallel](#) | [Compare Translations](#)

- **Mark 13:21 NRS**

And if anyone says to you at that time, "Look! Here is the **Messiah**!" or "Look! There he is!"—do not believe it.

[Read Mark 13](#) | [View in parallel](#) | [Compare Translations](#)

- **Mark 14:61 NRS**

But he was silent and did not answer. Again the high priest asked him, "Are you the **Messiah**, the Son of the Blessed One?"

Mark 15:32 NRS

Let the **Messiah**, the King of Israel, come down from the cross now, so that we may see and believe." Those who were crucified with him also taunted him.

[Read Mark 15](#) | [View in parallel](#) | [Compare Translations](#)

Pasted from <<http://www.biblestudytools.com/search/?q=Messiah&t=nrs&s=Bibles&p=3>>

Readers will note that Jesus rebuked Peter, questioned the scribe's understanding of the Messiah, warned about false messiahs, did not answer the high priest about being "the Messiah, the Son of the Blessed One," and was mocked at the crucifixion for being anything but a Messiah. George Eldon Ladd in *A Theology of the New Testament* understands the last entrance of Jesus into Jerusalem as a symbolic act; he also sees "a strong element of historical control over the gospel tradition in the Christian community" and believes Christ did not appear in the early verses of Mark where the original may well have read "because you are mine" (Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1974, revised 1972, pp. 139, 141). Ladd understands Peter as having in mind "the contemporary Jewish hopes of a divinely anointed, supernaturally endowed Davidic king who would destroy the contemporary evil political power structure and gather Israel into God's kingdom" (139). He notes that some scholarship interprets Jesus as flatly rejecting messiah-ship.

With respect to Jesus and John, attention must be paid to two baptisms: the baptism of John (confession and purification) and the baptism of Jesus (Spirit). Theologically, it has been noted that Mark seems to have no embarrassment that Jesus should be baptized for the forgiveness of sins (*Oxford Bible Commentary* 888).

The above, of course, points to questions about the relationship of Jesus to John the Baptist, but it may well to address the baptism itself prior to the relationship since at stake is Christology as well as how people read and interpret Mark:

As Jesus is being baptized, he has a vision of the Holy Spirit descending from the opened heavens and hears a heavenly voice (Jerome Murphy-O'Connor, "Why Jesus Went Back to Galilee" in *The Galilee Jesus Knew* © 2008 Biblical Archeology Society 30 Scala/Art Resource, NY) Did these things really happen? Or are they a theological interpretation of Jesus' baptism? The second alternative is the more probable, because Jewish theologians were using the same technique at this time to interpret events in their scriptures. To appreciate this fact, simply contrast the text of Genesis 22:10 with the midrashic expansion in the Targum, an Aramaic paraphrase/translation of the biblical text used in synagogues at the turn of the era. In the Hebrew text, Abraham raises the knife to sacrifice his son Isaac, in accordance with God's direction, when an angel of the Lord calls to him from heaven and tells him to desist. In the Aramaic Targum (the text known as Pseudo-Jonathan), the heavens apparently open at this point for, we are told, "the eyes of Isaac were scanning the angels on high" and "a voice came forth from the heavens." In the Targum, the original text of Genesis 22:10 is expanded to include an interpretation of the sacrifice of Isaac as involving a vision and a voice.

How would first-century Jews, hearing this version in the synagogue, have understood it? Would they have taken the vision and the voice as a description of something that really happened? I think not. They knew the Hebrew text of their scriptures, which contain nothing like that. Similarly, when Christian theologians wanted to bring out the meaning of the baptism of Jesus, of which everyone had heard, they naturally turned to a familiar interpretive technique, whose implications would have been understood immediately by their first-century hearers/readers. The people hearing and reading these accounts would not have taken the vision and the voice literally. Their training in the synagogue would have led them to ask what the symbols were meant to convey. In all probability, the cluster of highly charged terms in the evangelists' descriptions were designed to evoke the great prayer of Isaiah 63:7

through 64:11. Note the correspondences between the italicized words in the following quotation from Isaiah and the descriptions of Jesus' vision in the first sidebar to this article, especially in Mark's version of Jesus' vision when John baptized him:

Then they remembered the days of old and Moses, his servant. Where is he who brought up out of the sea the shepherd of his flock? Where is he who put his holy spirit in their midst...A spirit from the Lord descended guiding them...Look down from heaven and regard us from your holy and glorious palace! O Lord, hold not back, for you are our father. Were Abraham not to know us, nor Israel to acknowledge us, you, Lord are our father, our redeemer you are named forever...Oh, that you would rend the heavens and come down, with the mountains quaking before you...All that was dear to us was laid waste. Can you hold back, O Lord, after all this? Can you remain silent, and afflict us so severely? (Isaiah 63:11, 14, 15-16, 19; 64:10-11)

The number of the correspondences excludes coincidence. Christian theologians intended in the Gospels to present the beginning of the public life of Jesus as the response of God to the petition of his people. His people are no longer alone because God is no longer silent. God has spoken about Jesus, and God acts in and through Jesus. This interpretation, however, presupposes the whole ministry of Jesus culminating in his death and resurrection. The interpretation grew out of the experience of divine grace in the early Church, which was the medium by which the first believers gradually came to know who Jesus really was. Our concern here, however, is with the historical question. What did Jesus' baptism mean to Jesus?

The same article quoted above says the following about the relationship of Jesus and John the Baptist and includes a carefully articulated rationale for the conclusion: "I shall argue here that Jesus went to Galilee to replace John the Baptist after the latter had been arrested by Herod Antipas. As we shall see, the Baptist had been preaching in Galilee. His arrest put a stop to this. Jesus felt it was his responsibility to takeover where the Baptist had been forced to leave off." Once there, Murphy-O'Connor understands Jesus as going through a second conversion and changing his message from "Repent" to "Follow Me." To get to this point, the reader must follow Murphy-O'Connor's reconstruction of events, noting that some in the early Church must have found some embarrassment in Jesus' being baptized by John and sought to correct the theology, with John having Jesus say, "I need to be baptized by you" (3:14). John, Murphy-O'Connor says, started his work in Samaria while Jesus worked in Judea, both building upon passages in Isaiah 63 and 64 that indicated God was breaking silence and effecting a eschatological judgment. After time, John went to Galilee, the remaining Jewish province. Jesus followed and continued the work with a changed message.

Felix Just in his discussion of literary structures in Mark remarks on the secrecy motif:

The "Messianic Secret":

- In Mark's Gospel, Jesus frequently tells people *not to tell* others about his healings or exorcisms:
 - After performing exorcisms, he silences the demons and forbids them from speaking (1:23, 34; 3:11-12)
 - He warns a leper not to speak publicly about his cleansing (1:43-45)
 - He tells the family of Jairus not to tell of their daughter's raising (5:43)
 - After healing a deaf man, he orders the witness to tell no one (7:36)
 - He tells a blind man to go home, rather than going into his village (8:26)
 - *One exception:* Jesus tells the Gerasene demoniac (a Gentile!) to tell his relatives (5:19)
- The Markan Jesus also admonishes his disciples *not to tell* others that he is the Messiah:
 - After Peter's "Confession of Faith" at Caesarea (8:30)
 - After coming down from the Mount of the Transfiguration (9:9)
- Somewhat related is the distinction Jesus makes between his disciples and "outsiders":
 - "To you has been given the secret (or mystery) of the Kingdom of God, but for those outside everything comes in parables..." (4:10-12)
 - Similarly, while Jesus is teaching his disciples inside a house, his family remains "outside" (3:31-32)

Pasted from <<http://catholic-resources.org/Bible/Mark-Literary.htm>>

This discussion will be taken up later in the discussion of some of the parables, but readers can be alert, even at this point, that the disciples had to be prepared to understand the power of God that presented itself in Jesus in the baptism and would have to learn what "Baptism by Spirit" meant. Many have noted that Mark is not hesitant to reveal the disciples' lack of understanding, their slowness in learning to understand what Jesus is about in his ministry in the world. *The Oxford Bible Commentary(2001)* notes that a characteristic of Mark is the introduction of "characters that fail to understand who Jesus is or what his ministry is about" (888). It also relates secrecy to the evolving "full significance of what it means to be a/the true Son of God." Noted, too, is the fact that readers have been let in on the secret from the beginning. The issue of what is the beginning plays into this: if, as found in older editions and commentaries, the introduction is found in verses 1-8, then 9-13, or the identity, have been left out. And again, Son of God is left out in some Greek manuscripts.

Concerning "The beginning of the good news of Jesus Christ, the Son of God," William Loader in *The Gospel of Mark* concludes God is doing something, about to do something, the reign of God is at hand, and this is the "good news":

The Beginning 1:1-15

When the writer commences with the words, 'The beginning of the good news', it is obvious that he is writing about something which is more than interesting. It is news that he thinks will benefit people and from which he has benefited. 'Good news' can be translated 'gospel' and this has given rise to an understanding of verse one according to which the author is talking about the beginning of his book. But 'gospel' as a description of a book or writing comes first to expression in the second century. Mark is speaking about 'good news' and tells us how it all began.

The obvious content is given: 'of Jesus Christ, the Son of God'. The news is not that Jesus is the Christ, the Messiah, the Son of God. We see this when we compare 1:14. Here we find the word, 'good news', appears again. It is in the phrase, 'the good news of God.' Again it is not that there is a God, but that God is doing something, about to do something. 1:15 explains: 'The reign of God is at hand.' That is the good news. These two references to good news explain each other. It was common in a culture where what people wrote would be read aloud, that the beginning and ends of sections or the beginning of one and the beginning of another, were signalled to the hearer by the repeating of key words and ideas. What we see as paragraph markers, indentation or a blank line, they heard as a repeated theme, a closing of the circle and a beginning again.

1:1 clearly identifies the good news with Jesus and it is connected with his identity as Christ and Son of God. In 1:1 we are not told more than that. We have to wait. But there is much more. The word, good news was loaded. It was a word associated in Old Testament passages, likely to be known to hearers, with the hopes of Israel. It carries echoes of the famous prophecy of Isaiah 52:7, 'How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of the one who brings good news, who declares to Israel: your God reigns!' It also echoes Isaiah 61:1: 'The Spirit of the Lord is upon me because he has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor.' In other words, this is not just good news. It is good news which people have been expecting and they have been expecting it in the light of God's actions in the past, recorded in the Scriptures. 'Good news' is a theologically loaded term. It is the 'good news of God', of what God is doing and will do and it is clearly connected to Jesus who is Christ and Son of God.

Thus already the first verse indicates that this writing is addressing what it sees as human longing for God's action and assumes that this is to be expected. It is about hope and fulfillment of hope. It invites us to read and hear it in the light of human yearning and hope and to expound it with that in mind.

The sense of promise and fulfilment comes strongly to the fore in what follows.

Pasted from <<http://wwwstaff.murdoch.edu.au/~loader/mark.html>>

Loader further explains that the good news is Jesus is coming to baptize with the Spirit, that the Spirit descends at his own baptism, and that "The divine has broken through into our space in Jesus." As for the beginning, Loader concludes:

"The baptising in the Spirit has begun. God's rule has begun. Mark speaks of it in process. He is not declaring that whereas God did not rule, now from a particular moment God does rule. Rather the good news is the beginning of a reality in space and time and he locates it in Jesus. It has a future. It has a struggle. It has a victory. It is reality and hope. It is present and to come.

Pasted from <<http://wwwstaff.murdoch.edu.au/~loader/mark.html>>

Loader continues by remarking "Son of God" as designating a special relationship:

The words of the first verse find their echo in the words from heaven: 'You are my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased.' This, too, is a small tapestry of biblical allusions. The prophet of Isaiah 42:1 reported God's call in the words, 'You are my servant in whom I am well pleased.' The psalmist spoke for the king who reported God's word at his coronation: 'You are my Son. Today I have made you my child.' (Ps 2:8). The imagery of 'beloved son' echoes Abraham's affection for Isaac and will find an echo in the parable of the vineyard where a landlord sends his 'beloved son' who is murdered by tenants (12:1-12). Possibly all of these images play a role in the passage. The primary focus in Mark's narrative is the special relationship between Jesus and God. This is why he endows him with the Spirit for his task. The language of family stands beside the language of time and space: here in Jesus we are close to God, here God's reality breaks through, here the hope for God finds fulfilment. If we ask: doing what? So far our answer is: baptising with the Holy Spirit. We have just been told of his status and his equipment for that task. His fulfilling it is the good news. That, Mark is about to tell.

Pasted from <<http://wwwstaff.murdoch.edu.au/~loader/mark.html>>

And finally, Loader understands "the Spirit leads Jesus to the wilderness" for preparation and heightened expectation.

1:12-13 makes us wait, but in a way which gives us further important information. The Spirit leads Jesus. That is what we might have expected: the Spirit is the driving force and basis for what Jesus is to do. But first a spell in the wilderness - of biblical proportions. The place, the wilderness, the figure forty, the fasting, all underline preparation and heighten expectation. Again we can too easily read Matthew and Luke's version into the story and reflect about Israel in the wilderness, but that is only a hint in Mark. The primal character of the wilderness, the wild animals, suggests, if not a return to the reality of creation, at least exposure to ultimate danger. That comes to expression primarily in the temptation or testing encounter with Satan. Here is the power of darkness. Here are also angels supporting Jesus. The scene foreshadows what is to come: Jesus with the Spirit facing the powers of evil. The good news must, therefore, entail the positive aspect of this struggle. The baptising with the Holy Spirit must indicate a successful countering of the powers of evil. We are now ready to begin. It may well be that Mark sees 1:14-15 as a new beginning. In any case it echoes the beginning of the gospel as we have seen. Now we are ready to have the good news presented. We know it is about God's action. We know it reaches fulfilment and finds presence in Jesus. We know it is about his role as baptiser with the Spirit and that it belongs in the context of struggle against the powers of evil. Now we have Jesus' first words, but before that, in a subordinate clause, there is a foreshadowing of rejection as Mark tells of John's arrest. Just when we were getting ready for the triumphant good news, we have this earthing reminder, which helps us recall what will also be Jesus' fate. Mark will return to John's arrest and execution when he turns again to the sending out of the disciples in 6:7-29. John's fate, Jesus' fate and theirs are closely connected.

Pasted from <<http://wwwstaff.murdoch.edu.au/~loader/mark.html>>

When Jesus returns from the wilderness (desert), his mission and the possibility of "new creation" begin.

Through Loader's interpretations, readers catch a glimpse into the relationship of John and Jesus: John prepares people for "a reality in space and time" located in Jesus:

Mark now presents Jesus' first initiatives: he comes out of the wilderness, for now is the time of fulfilment. He declares this time. He proclaims 'the good news of God'. He announces that the kingdom of God is at hand. This is the language of power, and this is what we might have expected from listening closely to Mark. The good news is, as it was for Isaiah, that God reigns, and that now means: he is about to establish his rule through Jesus' activity. This is what John was preparing people for and so John's exhortations still apply: people should change. They should believe and trust in the kingdom, in God's action in Jesus. They should believe and support Jesus and live accordingly. The baptising in the Spirit has begun. God's rule has begun. Mark speaks of it in process. He is not declaring that whereas God did not rule, now from a particular moment God does rule. Rather the good news is the beginning of a reality in space and time and he locates it in Jesus. It has a future. It has a struggle. It has a victory. It is reality and hope. It is present and to come. This comes to expression strongly in the first action of Jesus in Mark. He engages four disciples to join him (1:16-20). In doing so he uses the imagery of fishing, a harvest image. It has less to do with throwing in a line and catching numbers of fish, a numbers game, and more to do with what the image of harvest represents: the fulfilment of hope, the victory of God over powers of evil. The gathering of men and women into the safety and responsibility of being God's people and then engaging them in the struggle to set others free. Mark has no sense of Jesus being a solo act. Jesus is always the stronger one, the unique one, but always also the one who gathers others around him who are to share his joy and his task.

Pasted from <<http://wwwstaff.murdoch.edu.au/~loader/mark.html>>

Loader concludes:

Good news is then, for Mark, God's transformative power to liberate people from powers which oppress them. In Mark's terms it is what occurred in Jesus through the Spirit. It is the coming near of the kingdom of God. And it is something entrusted to the community of his followers.

Pasted from <<http://wwwstaff.murdoch.edu.au/~loader/mark.html>>

Finally, Loader sees Jesus' system of self-giving compassion as contrasted to the world's self-seeking power and giving of power. The Oxford Bible Commentary (OBC) leaves open two possible meanings for "beginning": whether it refers only to the introductory verses with the full gospel following or whether "the whole of Mark's story is only a 'beginning', and it is up to each reader to carry on where the story leaves off to find the complete gospel" (888).

At this point, it is useful to stop and reassess our progress thus far: all of the questions asked at the beginning have now been addressed:

1. Why is it "the beginning of" good news"? It is a process: It is the beginning of a reality in space and time" located in Jesus.
2. What is the good news? Is it the good news of Jesus Christ, as found in the NRSV? The good news is Jesus's coming to baptize with the Spirit.
3. What does it mean to be "the Son of God"? Does it make any difference to interpretation to know that "the Son of God" was left out of ancient manuscripts? Jesus may be viewed as a practitioner of divine presence.
4. What does one make of the fact that ancient authorities replace the reference to Isaiah with "in the prophets"? "As it is written in Isaiah the prophet.' This reading is adopted by all the latest critical editors. If it be the true one, it is to be explained thus--that of the two quotations, the one from Malachi is but a later development of the great primary one in Isaiah, from which the whole prophetic matter here quoted takes its name."
5. What is meant by "messenger"? Jesus is the messenger, and in Mark, he is a real human being. Christology belongs to theology.

6. What way is being prepared? The way being prepared is that of self-giving compassion enabled through the transformative power of God.
7. Does it make any difference that 1:1 has been viewed as a title? It is a title for the narrative as a whole in which the hero of the story is Jesus and later, the Christ of the Church.

One other approach to the interpretation of Mark should be noted at this point; it makes of Mark, again, a structural wonder: Brenda Dean Schildgen in "A Blind Promise: Mark's Retrieval of Esther" (1994, Published by: Duke University Press Stable URL: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/1773206>) argues generally that the Markan author seeks 'to establish continuity with the past by showing deference to its most revered textual resources,' similar to uses made of the book of Esther:

The Book of Esther's recensions, redactions, colophons, and haggadic commentary tradition show that the story was deployed in numerous settings (see Clines [1984] and Aus [1988: 25] for overviews of the range of recensions of haggadic commentaries on the Esther text, which include the Masoretic text, the Septuagint version, the "Lucianic" Greek text, Josephus in *Antiquities of the Jews* XI, Tannaïm, and "Amoraim"). A neglected but provocative retrieval of the Book of Esther occurs in the Gospel of Mark's version of the death of John the Baptist. Mark's is the only gospel which specifically summons the Esther story to the context of any event retold in the Gospels. Also, Mark develops the story of John's death with greater detail than any other gospel. Since Mark's is generally briefer and often contains much less narrative elaboration on specific events than the other gospels, this degree of development suggests a special concern with the significance of both the Esther story and that of John the Baptist. Although Roger Aus has drawn attention to the parallels between Herod's and Ahasuerus's birthday banquets (Aus 1988: 39-74), Mark's emphasis on John has traditionally been attributed to his desire to draw a parallel between John's and Jesus' fates, to foreshadow the Crucifixion, and to point out the differences between the two prophets (ibid.: 71-74). Another parallel is suggested by the intriguing intertextual reference to the Book of Esther and to "purim," the celebration of God's intercession on behalf of "Israel," which Mark renders as paradoxical in the corrupt era of the Herodian tetrarchy.

Schildgen says the writer's choice "to write a narrative of Jesus' life which shows its connection to Hebraic literary sources suggests that he viewed the act of writing itself as an essential mechanism for recording, preserving, and understanding that life," and then concludes, "It also shows the author's desire to maintain cultural continuity with Jesus' Hebraic past, an objective that was to some degree dependent on the act of writing itself (Kelber 1983)." The emphasis upon connection is the important point being made, giving voice to Mark's continuity with the Hebrew past:

The writer may be connecting his work to a literary past, to a canon with which he remains socially, religiously, or culturally affiliated; he may be contrasting the current social/historical situation in which he cites the passage to its original situation. Conversely, he may be calling up the former text as commentary on the present situation. In a historically minded culture like Judaism, time is certainly linear, but it moves back and forth in historical linearity, not only forward into the future.

The selections that a writer makes define his textual community, as he relates to a past and establishes his continuity with it, for the act of incorporating earlier texts into later ones, in fact, retrieves a canon of readings that pertain culturally and literarily as well as historically to the time when the later writer is composing his text. In contrast, the "anxiety" and "fulfillment" relationships proposed for textual references deny this cultural continuity and posit a radical distinction or rupture between authors, texts, and their models that can be healed only through a new act of creation and interpretation by which the later text usurps the original meaning of its precursor. Although this is not the place to discuss the breach reflected in the religious and denomination-directed commentaries on the Hebrew and New Testament Scriptures, on some occasions in the history of the reception of these two texts, the breach has been so extreme that the integrity of both has been undermined; such scholarly marginalization has denied the interconnection of these texts as products of the Hebraic/Jewish cultural continuum.

Schildgen provides an approach that, perhaps, mitigates between the extreme arguments for historicity of the gospel and theology by suggesting that the hegemony of Christianity has not emerged very fully at the time Mark was written:

Mark's gospel emerged in the fragmented world of early Christianity, when the Romans had laid siege to Jerusalem and the destruction of the Temple and the dispersal of the Jewish people were imminent. The anticipated Second Coming of Jesus had not occurred; Peter and Paul's dispute had divided their missions, the one adopting the gospel for the Jews and the other the gospel for the Gentiles (Acts 15:1-35; Paul, Epistle to the Galatians 2:6-14); Roman rule had triumphed, and the original witnesses to the life of Jesus were dead or dying out.

This was not a time for a writer immersed in the present to undermine and dismantle the past, to sever the stranglehold of oppressive traditions or appropriate the past to a triumphant present; nor was it an age of ebullient optimism about the future of the Christian Church, which saw itself as the fulfillment of prophecy embedded in the Hebraic tradition. The hegemony of Christianity was some three centuries off, when the post-Constantinian Church would reject its charismatic origins and systematically reassess the Hebraic, Roman, and Greek cultures, while co-opting their political and civic structures as well as their texts and methods for interpreting them. Rather, in Mark's period, the religious climate was one of earnest desire and anxious hope that these literary fragments of a disappearing past could be preserved and ultimately reassembled into a mosaic that would constitute the "Good News."

In contrast to Schildgen, Benjamin Bacon, "The Purpose of Mark's Gospel (1910, *The Society of Biblical Literature* < <http://www.jstor.org/stable/3260133> > finds in Mark the kernel of story about which all the gospels form, put together out of unconnected anecdotes, put together in a "highly artificial, a rhetorical, a dramatic character," the ordering principle being the "practical exigency of church conditions." Bacon points to complete agreement about a structure based on two nearly equal parts, a Galilean (closing with Mk. 7:1-8, 26) and a Judean ministry (the latter with the Crucifixion, and in un mutilated form, the Resurrection and Dissemination of the Gospel. Bacon further points to three divisions of two to three chapters in each of these main divisions, and then goes on to explain how Mark is structured to conform with rites and observances of the Church related to Holy Week and Easter:

Some one might say that the very nature of the case made it inevitable that the two great foci of the narrative should be the two sacraments of Baptism and the Lord's Supper, since Jesus' career necessarily began with the former and ended with the latter, and that therefore it would be merely fanciful to consider that these two fundamental rites of the Church had anything to do with the main grouping of material. I am quite prepared to admit that this main grouping may be dictated purely and solely by the historical fact that Jesus' public career was naturally thus divided, the Exile from Galilee compelling him to confront the probability of martyrdom as the outcome of an attempt to win Judaea. It will hardly do, however, in face of the later attempts to carry back the beginnings of the story beyond the limits of Mark, to say that the story of Jesus' career had necessarily to begin with the baptism; and it is quite impossible to account for the evangelist's system of datings at the end of his Gospel, without a recognition of the observances which in the early Church marked the

completion of the ecclesiastical year. It is not a question merely of the well-known framing of the story of the ministry within the limits of a single year, but of a narration of its closing events in such manner that the very days of the great annual observance, and at last even the successive watches of the Passover vigil, of the day of the Crucifixion, and of the Easter dawn, are each marked by their appropriate event. On the "Preparation" of the Passover Jesus directs the arrangements for the Supper, and institutes the rite. The night — "a night of vigil unto the Lord" in that Mosaic ritual which passed over into Christian practice in the form of a night of vigil at the Easter celebration—is devoted to the story of Gethsemane, and the fruitless struggle of the three disciples to obey the exhortation of Jesus to "watch and pray that ye enter not into temptation," and to emulate his example. Cock-crowling, dawn, the third hour, the sixth hour, the ninth hour, and sunset, of the great day of fasting are marked each by its separate event. Only the Sabbath remains *a dies non*; while the Resurrection is set "long before dawn on the first day of the week." The beginning and ending of the story, corresponding as they do, the former with the initiatory rite of the Church, the latter with its annual "Passover of the Lord," are significant of the practical purpose of its construction. The more closely we study the ancient ritual the more apparent becomes this practical adaptation.

If the rites and observances of the Church in connection with its "true Passover of the Lord" are here distinctly marked, not merely by datings, but by the form and phraseology of the language; if we can here see distinctly reflected the ancient observance of Holy Week and Easter, and the still more ancient observance of the 14th Nisan as the anniversary of Christ's victory over the gates of Sheol, the Choosing of the Lamb, the Preparation, the Supper, the Vigil, the Periods of the Cross, the Resurrection celebration, the Breaking of fast at dawn of Easter morning, it is no more than we ought to anticipate from the fact that so early as *ca.* 50 A.D. we find Paul's regulation of Corinthian observance of the Supper beginning with a reference to the story: "I delivered unto you that which I also received (by transmission) from the Lord, how that our Lord Jesus, that same night in which he was betrayed, took bread and blessed and brake it and gave to his disciples."

Paul Danove, mixing structure and theology, has remarked on the inextricable connection between God and Jesus in "The Narrative Function of Mark's Characterization of God," locating a preponderance of references in the first verses of the first chapter:

Table 2 indicates that the narrative unit containing the greatest relative frequency of references to God is 1:1-15. Within this very brief passage (only 2.25% of the whole Gospel), the narration establishes seventeen points of information about God:

- a. God has a son, Jesus (1:1)
- b. God has a prophet through whom God spoke [about Jesus] (1:2)
- c. God initiates the action of the Gospel by enacting the content of what was written in Isaiah by sending God's messenger before Jesus [God] (1:2 [cf. Mal. 3:1])
- d. God has a messenger (a-176.og) who will prepare Jesus' [God's] way (1:2 [cf. Mal. 3:1])
- e. God has a way (6665; cf. Isa. 40:3) which is Jesus' (1:3)
- f. the paths (30t; cf. Isa. 40:3) for God are for Jesus (1:3)
- g. God has a holy spirit with which Jesus will baptize (1:8)
- h. God undoes God's setting of the firmament (cf. Gen 1:6) by rending the sky at Jesus' baptism (1:10)
- i. God has a spirit that descends onto Jesus (1:10)
- j. God has a voice that addresses Jesus (1:11)
- k. God has a beloved son (note the repetition of *viol*; cf. 1:1), Jesus (1:11)
- l. God is pleased with Jesus (1:11)
- m. God has a spirit that drives Jesus into the desert (1:12)
- n. God has messengers who serve Jesus (1:13)
- o. God has a gospel which Jesus proclaims (1:14)
- p. God fulfills the time for God's reign which is part of the content of Jesus' proclamation (1:15)
- q. God has a reign which is part of the content of Jesus' proclamation (1:15)

These seventeen references, which initiate Mark's characterization of God, simultaneously assert information about Jesus and stress Jesus' positive and intimate relationship with God that approaches identification with God at certain points. The narration of 1:1-15 reiterates that Jesus is God's Son, grants one of only three Marcan insights into God's own experience (delight in Jesus), ascribes to Jesus as benefactive what belongs to God, indicates that God's spirit directs Jesus' actions, places God's messengers in the service of Jesus, and establishes Jesus as the agent who proclaims and makes present what belongs to God. The direct or indirect insinuation of Jesus into every aspect of the characterization of God in 1:1-15 engenders an indelible bond between the characters, God and Jesus, that precludes any understanding of either character without immediate reference to the other. Once the direct characterization of Jesus begins in 1:16-8:26, reference to God under all semantic categories diminishes precipitously. The density of references then builds from this low, more than doubling in 8:27-10:52 and reaching a crescendo in 11:1-13:7. With the onset of Jesus' passion in 14:1-15:41, the density of references to God again decreases sharply, reaching a nadir in 15:42-16:8 (25-26).

Danove, in summary, shows how the characterization of God, which intensifies the relationship of Jesus with God, also helps readers to identify with Jesus and to establish ongoing fidelity with him:

Even as the earliest references to God (1:1-15) assert God's initiative in and centrality to the following narration, their focus on attributes of God that are defined primarily in relation to Jesus serves to introduce Jesus and establish his close alignment with God. The initial frequency of references (1:1-15) followed by a paucity of references (1:16-8:26) first engenders expectations concerning God's presence and involvement in the story and then encourages their transfer to Jesus, resulting in an identification of Jesus with God that far exceeds the demands of the content of the narration to that point. The gradual increase in references to God and repetition intensifying the relationship of Jesus with God through 11:1-13:37 and paucity of such references and absence of such repetition in 14:1-15:41 engender new expectations whose frustration invites a deeper identification of the reader with Jesus and encourages a more profound apprehension of the rewards and perils that a relationship with God entails. Within Mark, the characterization of God is placed in the service of establishing and redundantly reinforcing the credentials of Jesus, encouraging the reader's identification with Jesus, especially in his suffering and death, and inviting the reader to a deeper relationship with God grounded in the knowledge that this relationship demands fidelity unto death (30).

The Wilderness

I have already alluded to Loader, who interprets the wilderness as preparation and heightened expectation relative to God's establishing his rule through Jesus' activity. Structurally, "The Prologue opens with a scriptural prediction of a voice in the wilderness (v. 3), and it ends with Jesus in the wilderness" (NISB Notes) and returning to the wilderness many times (1:35, 45; 6:31, 32, 35; 8:4). Everyone recalls the wilderness period of wandering and testing in the Old Testament, Moses' experience on Mt. Sinai (Exod 34:28), and Elijah's flight (1Kgs 19:4-8). The important points already made is that the Spirit drove Jesus into the wilderness and that there angels waited on Jesus. Loader suggests the possibility of a return to primal creation and its dangers as well as "the countering of the powers of evil":

The Spirit leads Jesus. That is what we might have expected: the Spirit is the driving force and basis for what Jesus is to do. But first a spell in the wilderness - of biblical proportions. The place, the wilderness, the figure forty, the fasting, all underline preparation and heighten expectation. Again we can too easily read Matthew and Luke's version into the story and reflect about Israel in the wilderness, but that is only a hint in Mark. The primal character of the wilderness, the wild animals, suggests, if not a return to the reality of creation, at least exposure to ultimate danger. That comes to expression primarily in the temptation or testing encounter with Satan. Here is the power of darkness. Here are also angels supporting Jesus. The scene foreshadows what is to come: Jesus with the Spirit facing the powers of evil. The good news must, therefore, entail the positive aspect of this struggle. The baptising with the Holy Spirit must indicate a successful countering of the powers of evil.

Pasted from <<http://wwwstaff.murdoch.edu.au/~loader/mark.html>>

Turton sorts through several exegetes and Scripture to cast light on how to view this passage, pointing out the prophetic use of ministering angel, Jesus' human nature, and the possible use of Matthew:

v13: Some exegetes have seen Isa 11:6-9, which posits a paradise in the future, as laying behind this scene.

6: The wolf shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid, and the calf and the lion and the fatling together, and a little child shall lead them. 7: The cow and the bear shall feed; their young shall lie down together; and the lion shall eat straw like the ox. 8: The sucking child shall play over the hole of the asp, and the weaned child shall put his hand on the adder's den. 9: They shall not hurt or destroy in all my holy mountain; for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the LORD as the waters cover the sea. (RSV)

v13: Exodus 23:20 also contains a ministering angel. The writer of Mark has just cited that verse at the beginning of the gospel.

20: "Behold, I send an angel before you, to guard you on the way and to bring you to the place which I have prepared. . (RSV)

v13: Van Henten (1999) points out that the writer of Mark does not specify that Jesus actually passed the test. Instead, the motif of testing returns at other points in the Gospel, such as in the Garden of Gethsemane. Ven Henten concludes;

"Jesus' testings in the wilderness and in Gethsemane show, of course, that Mark's Christology was far removed from Jesus' status as *homo-ousios*, 'being of the same nature' with God, as decided during the Council of Chalcedon (451 CE). Although Son of God, Jesus' nature was human; otherwise his testings would have been superfluous."(p365)

v13: A few conservative exegetes believe that Matthew was the first gospel, and argue that the use of the definite article *the* (angels) indicates that the writer was thinking of Matthew, since no angels have been mentioned in Mark prior to this point.

Pasted from <<http://www.michaelturton.com/Mark/GMark01.html>>

A complete accounting of biblical use of "the wilderness" results in an extensive list of 280 references and suggests the "universality" of the wilderness experience as symbolic:

3 A voice cries out:

"In the wilderness prepare the way of the LORD,
make straight in the desert a highway for our God.

4 Every valley shall be lifted up,
and every mountain and hill be made low;
the uneven ground shall become level,
and the rough places a plain.

5 Then the glory of the LORD shall be revealed,
and all people shall see it together,
for the mouth of the LORD has spoken."

An Oxford search finds 280 hits.

Genesis 14.6-- on the edge of the wilderness; Genesis 16.7-- spring of water in the wilderness, the spring on the way to Shur. Genesis 21.14-- wandered about in the wilderness of Beer-sheba. Genesis 21.20-- up; he lived in the wilderness, and became an expert with the bow. Genesis 21.21-- He lived in the wilderness of Paran; and his mother got a wife for him from the land of Genesis 36.24-- the springs † in the wilderness, as he pastured the donkeys of his father Zibeon. Genesis 37.22-- this pit here in the wilderness, but lay no hand on him"—that he might rescue him out of Exodus 3.1-- his flock beyond the wilderness, and came to Horeb, the mountain of God. Exodus 3.18-- days' journey into the wilderness, so that we may sacrifice to the LORD our God.' Exodus 4.27-- to Aaron, "Go into the wilderness to meet Moses." So he went; and he met him at the Exodus 5.1-- a festival to me in the wilderness.' "Exodus 5.3-- days' journey into the wilderness to sacrifice to the LORD our God, or he will fall upon us Exodus 7.16-- may worship me in the wilderness." But until now you have not listened.' Exodus 8.27-- days' journey into the wilderness and sacrifice to the LORD our God as he commands us." Exodus 8.28-- LORD your God in the wilderness, provided you do not go very far away. Pray for me." Exodus 13.18-- roundabout way of the wilderness toward the Red Sea. † The Israelites went up out of the Exodus 13.20-- on the edge of the wilderness. Exodus 14.3-- in the land; the wilderness has closed in on them.' Exodus 14.11-- us away to die in the wilderness? What have you done to us, bringing us out of Egypt? Exodus 14.12-- than to die in the wilderness." Exodus 15.22-- and they went into the wilderness of Shur. They went three days in the wilderness and Exodus 16.1-- and Israel came to the wilderness of Sin, which is between Elim and Sinai, on the fifteenth Exodus 16.2-- Moses and Aaron in the wilderness. Exodus 16.3-- us out into this wilderness to kill this whole assembly with hunger." Exodus 16.10-- they looked toward the wilderness, and the glory of the LORD appeared in the cloud. Exodus 16.14-- on the surface of the wilderness was a fine flaky substance, as fine as frost on the ground. Exodus 16.32-- which I fed you in the wilderness, when I brought you out of the land of Egypt.' "Exodus 17.1-- the Rock 17 From the wilderness of Sin the whole congregation of the Israelites journeyed Exodus 18.5-- came into the wilderness where Moses was encamped at the mountain of God, bringing Exodus 19.1-- day, they came into the wilderness of Sinai. Exodus 19.2-- Rephidim, entered the wilderness of Sinai, and camped in the wilderness; Israel camped Exodus 23.31-- and from the wilderness to the Euphrates; for I will hand over to you the inhabitants of the Leviticus 7.38-- to the LORD, in the wilderness of Sinai. Leviticus 16.10-- be sent away into the wilderness to Azazel. † Leviticus 16.21-- it away into the wilderness by means of someone designated for the task. † Leviticus 16.22-- be set free in the wilderness. Numbers 1.1-- spoke to Moses in the wilderness of Sinai, in the tent of meeting, on the first day of the Numbers 1.19-- he enrolled them in the wilderness of Sinai. Numbers 3.4-- before the LORD in the wilderness of Sinai, and they had no children. Eleazar and Ithamar Numbers 3.14-- spoke to Moses in the wilderness of Sinai, saying; Numbers 9.1-- spoke to Moses in the wilderness of Sinai, in the first month of the second year after they Numbers 9.5-- at twilight, † in the wilderness of Sinai. Just as the LORD had commanded Moses, so the Numbers 10.12-- out by stages from the wilderness of Sinai, and the cloud settled down in the wilderness of Numbers 10.31-- we should camp in the wilderness, and you will serve as eyes for us. Numbers 12.16-- and camped in the wilderness of Paran. Numbers 13.3-- sent them from the wilderness of Paran, according to the command of the LORD, all of Numbers 13.21-- out the land from the wilderness of Zin to Rehob, near Lebo-hamath. Numbers 13.26-- the Israelites in the wilderness of Paran, at Kadesh; they brought back word to them and Numbers 14.2-- we had died in this wilderness! Numbers 14.16-- slaughtered them in the wilderness.'

Numbers 14.22-- did in Egypt and in the wilderness, and yet have tested me these ten times and have not Numbers 14.25-- and set out for the wilderness by the way to the Red Sea.' † An Attempted Invasion is Numbers 14.29-- shall fall in this very wilderness; and of all your number, included in the census, from Numbers 14.32-- shall fall in this wilderness. Numbers 14.33-- be shepherds in the wilderness for forty years, and shall suffer for your faithlessness, until Numbers 14.35-- against me: in this wilderness they shall come to a full end, and there they shall die. Numbers 15.32-- Israelites were in the wilderness, they found a man gathering sticks on the sabbath day. Numbers 16.13-- honey to kill us in the wilderness, that you must also lord it over us? Numbers 20.1-- came into the wilderness of Zin in the first month, and the people stayed in Kadesh. Miriam Numbers 20.4-- of the LORD into this wilderness for us and our livestock to die here? Numbers 21.5-- of Egypt to die in the wilderness? For there is no food and no water, and we detest this Numbers 21.11-- at Iye-abarim, in the wilderness bordering Moab toward the sunrise. Numbers 21.13-- of the Arnon, in † the wilderness that extends from the boundary of the Amorites; for the Numbers 21.18-- the staff." From the wilderness to Mattanah, Numbers 21.23-- against Israel to the wilderness; he came to Jahaz, and fought against Israel. Numbers 24.1-- set his face toward the wilderness. Numbers 26.64-- the Israelites in the wilderness of Sinai. Numbers 26.65-- "They shall die in the wilderness." Not one of them was left, except Caleb son of Numbers 27.3-- "Our father died in the wilderness; he was not among the company of those who gathered Numbers 27.14-- against my word in the wilderness of Zin when the congregation quarreled with me. † Numbers 32.13-- made them wander in the wilderness for forty years, until all the generation that had done Numbers 32.15-- abandon them in the wilderness; and you will destroy all this people." Numbers 33.6-- is on the edge of the wilderness. Numbers 33.8-- the sea into the wilderness, went a three days' journey in the wilderness of Etham, and Numbers 33.11-- Sea † and camped in the wilderness of Sin. Numbers 33.12-- They set out from the wilderness of Sin and camped at Dophkah. Numbers 33.15-- and camped in the wilderness of Sinai. Numbers 33.16-- They set out from the wilderness of Sinai and camped at Kibroth-hattaavah. Numbers 33.36-- and camped in the wilderness of Zin (that is, Kadesh). Numbers 34.3--

shall extend from the wilderness of Zin along the side of Edom. Your southern boundary Deuteronomy 1.1-- the Jordan—in the wilderness, on the plain opposite Suph, between Paran and Tophel, Deuteronomy 1.19-- that great and terrible wilderness that you saw, on the way to the hill country of the Deuteronomy 1.31-- and in the wilderness, where you saw how the LORD your God carried you, just as Deuteronomy 1.40-- journey back into the wilderness, in the direction of the Red Sea." † Deuteronomy 2.1-- journeyed back into the wilderness, in the direction of the Red Sea, † as the LORD had Deuteronomy 2.7-- through this great wilderness. These forty years the LORD your God has been with Deuteronomy 2.8-- along the route of the wilderness of Moab, Deuteronomy 2.26-- messengers from the wilderness of Kedemoth to King Sihon of Heshbon with the Deuteronomy 4.43-- Bezer in the wilderness on the tableland belonging to the Reubenites, Ramoth in Deuteronomy 8.2-- forty years in the wilderness, in order to humble you, testing you to know what was in Deuteronomy 8.15-- the great and terrible wilderness, an arid wasteland with poisonous † snakes and Deuteronomy 8.16-- and fed you in the wilderness with manna that your ancestors did not know, to humble Deuteronomy 9.7-- God to wrath in the wilderness; you have been rebellious against the LORD from the Deuteronomy 9.28-- to let them die in the wilderness.' Deuteronomy 11.5-- he did to you in the wilderness, until you came to this place; Deuteronomy 11.24-- shall extend from the wilderness to the Lebanon and from the River, the river Deuteronomy 29.5-- you forty years in the wilderness. The clothes on your back have not worn out, and the Deuteronomy 32.10-- land, in a howling wilderness waste; he shielded him, cared for him, guarded him Deuteronomy 32.51-- Meribath-kadesh in the wilderness of Zin, by failing to maintain my holiness among Joshua 1.4-- From the wilderness and the Lebanon as far as the great river, the river Euphrates, all the land Joshua 5.4-- the journey through the wilderness after they had come out of Egypt. Joshua 5.5-- the journey through the wilderness after they had come out of Egypt had not been circumcised.

Joshua 5.6-- forty years in the wilderness, until all the nation, the warriors who came out of Egypt, Joshua 8.15-- in the direction of the wilderness. Joshua 8.20-- people who fled to the wilderness turned back against the pursuers. Joshua 8.24-- of Ai in the open wilderness where they pursued them, and when all of them to the very last Joshua 12.8-- in the slopes, in the wilderness, and in the Negeb, the land of the Hittites, Amorites, Joshua 14.10-- journeying through the wilderness; and here I am today, eighty-five years old. Joshua 15.1-- of Edom, to the wilderness of Zin at the farthest south. Joshua 15.61-- In the wilderness, Beth-arabah, Middin, Secacah, Joshua 16.1-- of Jericho, into the wilderness, going up from Jericho into the hill country to Bethel; Joshua 18.12-- and it ends at the wilderness of Beth-aven. Joshua 20.8-- appointed Bezer in the wilderness on the tableland, from the tribe of Reuben, and Ramoth in Joshua 24.7-- you lived in the wilderness a long time. Judges 1.16-- city of palms into the wilderness of Judah, which lies in the Negeb near Arad. Then they went Judges 8.7-- on the thorns of the wilderness and on briers." Judges 8.16-- he took thorns of the wilderness and briers and with them he trampled † the people of Judges 11.16-- Israel went through the wilderness to the Red Sea † and came to Kadesh. Judges 11.18-- journeyed through the wilderness, went around the land of Edom and the land of Moab, Judges 11.22-- the Jabbok and from the wilderness to the Jordan. Judges 20.42-- in the direction of the wilderness; but the battle overtook them, and those who came out of Judges 20.45-- and fled toward the wilderness to the rock of Rimmon, five thousand of them were cut down Judges 20.47-- and fled toward the wilderness to the rock of Rimmon, and remained at the rock of Rimmon

1 Samuel 4.8-- sort of plague in the wilderness.

1 Samuel 13.18-- of Zeboim toward the wilderness.

1 Samuel 17.28-- those few sheep in the wilderness? I know your presumption and the evil of your heart;

1 Samuel 23.14-- the strongholds in the wilderness, in the hill country of the Wilderness of Ziph. Saul

1 Samuel 23.24-- and his men were in the wilderness of Maon, in the Arabah to the south of Jeshimon.

1 Samuel 23.25-- rock and stayed in the wilderness of Maon. When Saul heard that, he pursued David into

1 Samuel 24.1-- told, "David is in the wilderness of En-gedi."

1 Samuel 25.1-- up and went down to the wilderness of Paran. David and the Wife of Nabal

1 Samuel 25.4-- David heard that Nabal in the wilderness that Nabal was shearing his sheep.

1 Samuel 25.14-- messengers out of the wilderness to salute our master; and he shouted insults at them.

1 Samuel 25.21-- this fellow has in the wilderness, so that nothing was missed of all that belonged to him;

1 Samuel 26.3-- David remained in the wilderness. When he learned that Saul came after him into the

2 Samuel 2.24-- Giah on the way to the wilderness of Gibeon.

2 Samuel 15.23-- moved on toward the wilderness.

2 Samuel 15.28-- at the fords of the wilderness until word comes from you to inform me."

2 Samuel 16.2-- drink who faint in the wilderness."

2 Samuel 17.16-- at the fords of the wilderness, but by all means cross over; otherwise the king and all the

2 Samuel 17.29-- and thirsty in the wilderness."

1 Kings 2.34-- his own house near the wilderness.

1 Kings 9.18-- Baalath, Tamar in the wilderness, within the land,

1 Kings 19.4-- day's journey into the wilderness, and came and sat down under a solitary broom tree. He

1 Kings 19.15-- on your way to the wilderness of Damascus; when you arrive, you shall anoint Hazael as

2 Kings 3.8-- "By the way of the wilderness of Edom."

1 Chronicles 12.8-- the stronghold in the wilderness mighty and experienced warriors, expert with shield

1 Chronicles 21.29-- Moses had made in the wilderness, and the altar of burnt offering were at that time in

2 Chronicles 1.3-- LORD had made in the wilderness, was there.

2 Chronicles 8.4-- He built Tadmor in the wilderness and all the storage towns that he built in Hamath.

2 Chronicles 20.16-- the valley, before the wilderness of Jeruel.

2 Chronicles 20.20-- and went out into the wilderness of Tekoa; and as they went out, Jehoshaphat stood

2 Chronicles 20.24-- the watchtower of the wilderness, they looked toward the multitude; they were corpses

2 Chronicles 24.9-- laid on Israel in the wilderness.

2 Chronicles 26.10-- He built towers in the wilderness and hewed out many cisterns, for he had large herds, Nehemiah 9.19-- not forsake them in the wilderness; the pillar of cloud that led them in the way did not Nehemiah 9.21-- sustained them in the wilderness so that they lacked nothing; their clothes did not wear Psalm 29.8-- of the LORD shakes the wilderness; the LORD shakes the wilderness of Kadesh. Psalm 55.7-- I would lodge in the wilderness; Selah Psalm 65.12-- 12 The pastures of the wilderness overflow, the hills gird themselves with

joy, Psalm 68.7-- you marched through the wilderness, Selah Psalm 74.14-- the creatures of the wilderness. Psalm 75.6-- west and not from the wilderness comes lifting up; Psalm 78.15-- split rocks open in the wilderness, and gave them drink abundantly as from the uninhabited wilderness, and pitched their tents in untrodden places. Wisdom of Solomon 17.17-- who toiled in the wilderness, they were seized, and endured the inescapable Sirach 13.19-- Wild asses in the wilderness are the prey of lions; likewise the poor are feeding grounds for Sirach 43.21-- and burns up the wilderness, and withers the tender grass like fire. Sirach 45.18-- and envied him in the wilderness, Dathan and Abiram and their followers and the

1 Maccabees 2.29-- went down to the wilderness to live there,
 1 Maccabees 2.31-- hiding places in the wilderness.
 1 Maccabees 3.45-- was uninhabited like a wilderness; not one of her children went in or out. The
 1 Maccabees 5.24-- days' journey into the wilderness.
 1 Maccabees 5.28-- turned back by the wilderness road to Bozrah; and he took the town, and killed every
 1 Maccabees 9.33-- and they fled into the wilderness of Tekoa and camped by the water of the pool of
 1 Maccabees 9.62-- to Bethbasi in the wilderness; he rebuilt the parts of it that had been demolished, and
 1 Maccabees 13.21-- to them by way of the wilderness and to send them food.
 2 Maccabees 5.27-- others, got away to the wilderness, and kept himself and his companions alive in the
 2 Esdras 1.17-- and thirsty in the wilderness, did you not cry out to me,
 2 Esdras 1.18-- you led us into this wilderness to kill us? It would have been better for us to serve the
 2 Esdras 1.22-- † When you were in the wilderness, at the bitter stream, thirsty and blaspheming my name,
 2 Esdras 9.29-- to our ancestors in the wilderness when they came out from Egypt and when they came into Matthew 3.1-- Baptist appeared in the wilderness of Judea, proclaiming, Matthew 3.3-- one crying out in the wilderness: 'Prepare the way of the Lord, make his paths straight.' " Matthew 4.1-- by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil. Matthew 11.7-- did you go out into the wilderness to look at? A reed shaken by the wind? Matthew 24.26-- 'Look! He is in the wilderness,' do not go out. If they say, 'Look! He is in the inner Mark 1.3-- one crying out in the wilderness: 'Prepare the way of the Lord, make his paths straight,' " Mark 1.4-- appeared † in the wilderness, proclaiming a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins. Mark 1.12-- drove him out into the wilderness. Mark 1.13-- He was in the wilderness forty days, tempted by Satan; and he was with the wild beasts; and Luke 1.80-- and he was in the wilderness until the day he appeared publicly to Israel. Luke 3.2-- son of Zechariah in the wilderness. Luke 3.4-- one crying out in the wilderness: 'Prepare the way of the Lord, make his paths straight. Luke 4.1-- by the Spirit in the wilderness, Luke 7.24-- did you go out into the wilderness to look at? A reed shaken by the wind? Luke 15.4-- the ninety-nine in the wilderness and go after the one that is lost until he finds it? John 1.23-- one crying out in the wilderness, 'Make straight the way of the Lord,' " as the prophet Isaiah John 3.14-- up the serpent in the wilderness, so must the Son of Man be lifted up, John 6.31-- ate the manna in the wilderness; as it is written, 'He gave them bread from heaven to eat.' " John 6.49-- ate the manna in the wilderness, and they died. John 11.54-- in the region near the wilderness; and he remained there with the disciples. Acts 7.30-- appeared to him in the wilderness of Mount Sinai, in the flame of a burning bush. Acts 7.36-- the Red Sea, and in the wilderness for forty years. Acts 7.38-- the congregation in the wilderness with the angel who spoke to him at Mount Sinai, and with Acts 7.42-- forty years in the wilderness, O house of Israel? Acts 7.44-- of testimony in the wilderness, as God † directed when he spoke to Moses, ordering him to Acts 8.26-- to Gaza." (This is a wilderness road.) Acts 13.18-- up with † them in the wilderness. Acts 21.38-- assassins out into the wilderness?"

1 Corinthians 10.5-- were struck down in the wilderness.
 2 Corinthians 11.26-- the city, danger in the wilderness, danger at sea, danger from false brothers and Hebrews 3.8-- day of testing in the wilderness, Hebrews 3.17-- bodies fell in the wilderness? Revelation 12.6-- the woman fled into the wilderness, where she has a place prepared by God, so that there Revelation 12.14-- the serpent into the wilderness, to her place where she is nourished for a time, and times, Revelation 17.3-- in the spirit † into a wilderness, and I saw a woman sitting on a scarlet beast.

Also, useful is what early church fathers said about the wilderness experience, this clearly a marked step away from the historical Jesus to the theological Christ; here, the wilderness is about temptation, the power of the Spirit (interpreted now as Holy Spirit), obedience, victory, and salvation:

12. And immediately the spirit drives him into the wilderness.

13. And he was there in the wilderness forty days, tempted of Satan; and was with the wild beasts; and the angels ministered to him.

CHRYS. Because all that Christ did and suffered was for our teaching, He began after His baptism to dwell in the wilderness, and fought against the devil, that every baptized person might patiently sustain greater temptations after His baptism, nor be troubled, as if this which happened to Him was contrary to His expectation, but might bear up against all things, and come off conqueror. For although Goth allows that we should be tempted for many other reasons, yet for this cause also He allows it, that we may know, that man when tempted is placed in a station of greater honor. For the Devil approaches not save where he has beheld one set in a place of greater honor; and therefore it is said, And immediately the Spirit drove him into the wilderness. And the reason why he does not simply say, that He went into the wilderness, but was driven, is, that you may understand that it was done according to the word of Divine Providence. By which also he shows, that no man should thrust himself into temptation, but that those who from some other state are as it were driven into temptation, remain conquerors.

BEDE; And that no one might doubt, by what spirit he said that Christ was driven into the wilderness, Luke has on purpose premised, that Jesus being full of the Spirit returned from Jordan, and then has added, and was led by the Spirit in to the wilderness; lest the evil spirit should he thought to have any power over Him, who, being full of the Holy Spirit, departed whither He was willing to go, and did what He was willing to do.

CHRYS. But the Spirit drove Him into the wilderness, because He designed to provoke the devil to tempt Him, and thus gave Him an opportunity not only by hunger, but also by the place. For then most of all does the devil thrust himself in, when he sees men remaining solitary.

BEDE; But He retires into the desert that He may teach us that, leaving the allurements of the world, and the company of the wicked, we should in all things obey the Divine commands. He is left alone and tempted by the devil, that He might teach us, that all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution; whence it follows, And he was in the wilderness forty days and forty nights, and was tempted by Satan. But He was tempted forty days and forty nights, that He might show us, that as long as we live here and serve God, whether prosperity smile upon us, which is meant by the day, or adversity smite us, which agrees with the figure of night, at all times our adversary is at hand, who ceases not to trouble our way by temptations. For the forty days and forty nights imply the whole time of this world, for the globe in which we are serving God is divided into four quarters. Again, there are Ten Commandments, by observing which we fight against our enemy, but four times ten are forty.

There follows, and he was with the wild beasts.

PSEUDO-CHRYS. But He says this to show of what nature was the wilderness, for it was impassable by man and full of wild beasts. It goes on; and angels ministered to him. For after temptation, and a victory against the devil, He worked the salvation of man. And thus the Apostle says, Angels are sent to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation. We must also observe, that to those who conquer in temptation angels stand near and minister.

BEDE; Consider also that Christ dwells among the wild beasts as man, but, as God, uses the ministry of Angels. Thus, when in the solitude of a holy life we hear with unpolluted mind the bestial manners of men, we merit to have the ministry of Angels, by whom, when freed from the body, we shall be transferred to everlasting happiness.

PSEUDO-JEROME; Or, then the beasts dwell with us in peace, as in the ark clean animals with the unclean, when the flesh lusts not against the spirit. After this, ministering Angels are sent to us, that they may give answers and comforts to hearts that watch.

Pasted from <<http://catecheticonline.com/CatenaAurea-Mark1.php>>

The Beginning of the Galilean Ministry

We have already remarked that 1:14, 15 relates to the first major section of the Gospel, 1:14-10:52 (NISB Notes). Structurally, too, 1:16 through 3:6 consists of parallel units:

A calling of disciples (1:16-20 and 2:13-14)
 Four stories (of healing in the first --1:21-2:12) controversy in the second (2:15-3:6)
 Ends with a combined healing-controversy story (2:1-12 and 3:1-16) NISB Notes

Then as introduction into introduction, the section serves as yet another introduction into "all the characters and groups that will take part in the rest of the narrative.

In re-approaching Mark, I have found myself agreeing with Edward Hobbs' (1998) understanding that Mark writes carefully with respect to themes, word choice, and structure:

Mark writes with remarkable attention to his wording! He is often accused of writing poor Greek, and/or of woodenly reproducing his sources. On the contrary, IMHO, he builds theme after theme upon careful choice of words, a characteristic which is usually missed. The commonest reason for missing it, I believe, is that most readers today know Mark in their own language (English or whatever), and then when they read Mark in Greek, are constantly "translating" in their minds, missing the distinctive features of his Greek text. One aspect of this arises from the fact that few of us grow up reading the LXX as our OT--we read it in English, and then some of us learn Hebrew and read it in that language, but ignore the OT in the language used by Mark. Hence, we seldom catch the frequent-in-Mark quotations, allusions, and hints of the OT text, all of which are essential to understand his full meaning.

Pasted from <<http://www.michaelturton.com/Mark/GMarko1.html>>

The Kingdom of God

In my earlier Mark study, I spoke about Jesus's radical message outlined in Luke that says "the Kingdom of God is in the midst of you"; as I re-approach this work, I have already suggested by the title of my study that I wish to make a clearer distinction between history and theology. In the case of what follows, I still find it useful to look at all the gospels and what they have said about the "Kingdom of God": a change I would make in the introductory paragraph is to change "The message Christ preached while on earth" to "The message Jesus preached while on earth."

Jesus' Radical Message: The Kingdom of God Is in the Midst of You (Lu.17:21 nor will they say, 'Lo, here it is!' or 'There!' for behold, the kingdom of God is in the midst of you.")

1Co.15:50 I tell you this, brethren: flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God, nor does the perishable inherit the imperishable.

Much like the orthodox of the first century, people today devoutly expect God's kingdom to come; the emphasis here is that the kingdom is not present and is to come at some future point. This leads to living in expectation rather than with the present. For many, the end of time (which heralds the kingdom of God) is to be preceded by tribulation. As the prophets

understood, the end is darkness and not light, at least from the temporal perspective. Matthew calls this the 24:15 the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet. If Christ were present in human form, we might be startled to hear him say, **Mt. 22: 13: But woe unto you, churched, hypocrites! for ye shut up the kingdom of heaven against men: for ye neither go in yourselves, neither suffer ye them that are entering to go in.** The message Christ proclaimed while on earth, after all, was the kingdom is here now, in our midst. How differently would we behave if we lived this truth in the present moment: the kingdom of God here now, in the moment: the eternal in the temporal! In some ways, this is the predictable message to come to the Hebrew-Judaic world which has been reshaped by Greek thinking, with an emphasis upon unity, harmony, and the ideal.

Mt.12:28 But if it is by the Spirit of God that I cast out demons, then the kingdom of God has come upon you.

Mt.19:24 Again I tell you, it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God."

Mt.21:31 Which of the two did the will of his father?" They said, "The first." Jesus said to them, "Truly, I say to you, the tax collectors and the harlots go into the kingdom of God before you.

Mt.21:43 Therefore I tell you, the kingdom of God will be taken away from you and given to a nation producing the fruits of it."

Mk.1:15 and saying, "The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand; repent, and believe in the gospel."

Mk.4:11 And he said to them, "To you has been given the secret of the kingdom of God, but for those outside everything is in parables; [the secret is known.]

Mk.4:26 And he said, "The kingdom of God is as if a man should scatter seed upon the ground,

Mk.4:30 And he said, "With what can we compare the kingdom of God, or what parable shall we use for it?

Mk.9:1 And he said to them, "Truly, I say to you, there are some standing here who will not taste death before they see that the kingdom of God has come with power." [need not taste death to see that the kingdom of God has come.]

Mk.9:47 And if your eye causes you to sin, pluck it out; it is better for you to enter the kingdom of God with one eye than with two eyes to be thrown into hell,

Mk.10:14 But when Jesus saw it he was indignant, and said to them, "Let the children come to me, do not hinder them; for to such belongs the kingdom of God.

Mk.10:15 Truly, I say to you, whoever does not receive the kingdom of God like a child shall not enter it."

Mk.10:23 And Jesus looked around and said to his disciples, "How hard it will be for those who have riches to enter the kingdom of God!"

Mk.10:24 And the disciples were amazed at his words. But Jesus said to them again, "Children, how hard it is to enter the kingdom of God!

Mk.10:25 It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God."

Mk.12:34 And when Jesus saw that he answered wisely, he said to him, "You are not far from the kingdom of God." And after that no one dared to ask him any question. [not far from kingdom of God]

Mk.14:25 Truly, I say to you, I shall not drink again of the fruit of the vine until that day when I drink it new in the kingdom of God."

Mk.15:43 Joseph of Arimathea, a respected member of the council, who was also himself looking for the kingdom of God, took courage and went to Pilate, and asked for the body of Jesus.

Lu.4:43 but he said to them, "I must preach the good news of the kingdom of God to the other cities also; for I was sent for this purpose."

Lu.6:20 And he lifted up his eyes on his disciples, and said: "Blessed are you poor, for yours is the kingdom of God.

Lu.7:28 I tell you, among those born of women none is greater than John; yet he who is least in the kingdom of God is greater than he."

Lu.8:1 Soon afterward he went on through cities and villages, preaching and bringing the good news of the kingdom of God. And the twelve were with him, [brings the good news of the kingdom of God.]

Lu.8:10 he said, "To you it has been given to know the secrets of the kingdom of God; but for others they are in parables, so that seeing they may not see, and hearing they may not understand.

Lu.9:2 and he sent them out to preach the kingdom of God and to heal.

Lu.9:11 When the crowds learned it, they followed him; and he welcomed them and spoke to them of the kingdom of God, and cured those who had need of healing.

Lu.9:27 But I tell you truly, there are some standing here who will not taste death before they see the kingdom of God."

Lu.9:60 But he said to him, "Leave the dead to bury their own dead; but as for you, go and proclaim the kingdom of God."

Lu.9:62 Jesus said to him, "No one who puts his hand to the plow and looks back is fit for the kingdom of God."

Lu.10:9 heal the sick in it and say to them, "The kingdom of God has come near to you." [has come near.]

Lu.10:11 'Even the dust of your town that clings to our feet, we wipe off against you; nevertheless know this, that the kingdom of God has come near.'

Lu.11:20 But if it is by the finger of God that I cast out demons, then the kingdom of God has come upon you. [kingdom of God has come.]

Lu.13:18 He said therefore, "What is the kingdom of God like? And to what shall I compare it?

Lu.13:20 And again he said, "To what shall I compare the kingdom of God?

Lu.13:28 There you will weep and gnash your teeth, when you see Abraham and Isaac and Jacob and all the prophets in the kingdom of God and you yourselves thrust out.

Lu.13:29 And men will come from east and west, and from north and south, and sit at table in the kingdom of God.

Lu.14:15 When one of those who sat at table with him heard this, he said to him, "Blessed is he who shall eat bread in the kingdom of God!"

Lu.16:16 "The law and the prophets were until John; since then the good news of the kingdom of God is preached, and every one enters it violently.

Lu.17:20 Being asked by the Pharisees when the kingdom of God was coming, he answered them, "The kingdom of God is not coming with signs to be observed;

Lu.17:21 nor will they say, 'Lo, here it is!' or 'There!' for behold, the kingdom of God is in the midst of you." [The kingdom of God is in the midst of you.]

Lu.18:16 But Jesus called them to him, saying, "Let the children come to me, and do not hinder them; for to such belongs the kingdom of God.

Lu.18:17 Truly, I say to you, whoever does not receive the kingdom of God like a child shall not enter it."

Lu.18:24 Jesus looking at him said, "How hard it is for those who have riches to enter the kingdom of God!

Lu.18:25 For it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God."

Lu.18:29 And he said to them, "Truly, I say to you, there is no man who has left house or wife or brothers or parents or children, for the sake of the kingdom of God,

Lu.19:11 As they heard these things, he proceeded to tell a parable, because he was near to Jerusalem, and because they supposed that the kingdom of God was to appear immediately.

Lu.21:31 So also, when you see these things taking place, you know that the kingdom of God is near.
 Lu.22:16 for I tell you I shall not eat it until it is fulfilled in the kingdom of God."
 Lu.22:18 for I tell you that from now on I shall not drink of the fruit of the vine until the kingdom of God comes."
 Lu.23:51 who had not consented to their purpose and deed, and he was looking for the kingdom of God.
 Jn3:1: In those days came John the Baptist, preaching in the wilderness of Judaea,
 2: And saying, Repent ye: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.
 Jn.3:3 Jesus answered him, "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born anew, he cannot see the kingdom of God."
 Jn.3:5 Jesus answered, "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God.
 Jn.3:5 Jesus answered, "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God.
 Mt 4:17: From that time Jesus began to preach, and to say, Repent: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.
 Mt 4:23: And Jesus went about all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, and preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing all manner of sickness and all manner of disease among the people.
 Mt 5:3: Blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.
 Mt 5:10: Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness' sake: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.
 Mt. 9:35: And Jesus went about all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues, and preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing every sickness and every disease among the people.
 Mt. 22: 13: But woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye shut up the kingdom of heaven against men: for ye neither go in yourselves, neither suffer ye them that are entering to go in.
 Ac.1:3 To them he presented himself alive after his passion by many proofs, appearing to them during forty days, and speaking of the kingdom of God.
 Ac.8:12 But when they believed Philip as he preached good news about the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized, both men and women.
 Ac.14:22 strengthening the souls of the disciples, exhorting them to continue in the faith, and saying that through many tribulations we must enter the kingdom of God.
 Ac.19:8 And he entered the synagogue and for three months spoke boldly, arguing and pleading about the kingdom of God;
 Ac.28:23 When they had appointed a day for him, they came to him at his lodging in great numbers. And he expounded the matter to them from morning till evening, testifying to the kingdom of God and trying to convince them about Jesus both from the law of Moses and from the prophets.
 Ac.28:31 preaching the kingdom of God and teaching about the Lord Jesus Christ quite openly and unhindered.
 Ro.14:17 For the kingdom of God is not food and drink but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit;
 1Co.4:20 For the kingdom of God does not consist in talk but in power.
 1Co.6:9 Do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived; neither the immoral, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor sexual perverts, 1Co.6:10 nor thieves, nor the greedy, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor robbers will inherit the kingdom of God.
 1Co.15:50 I tell you this, brethren: flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God, nor does the perishable inherit the imperishable.
 Ga.5:21 envy, drunkenness, carousing, and the like. I warn you, as I warned you before, that those who do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God.
 Col.4:11 and Jesus who is called Justus. These are the only men of the circumcision among my fellow workers for the kingdom of God, and they have been a comfort to me.
 2Th.1:5 This is evidence of the righteous judgment of God, that you may be made worthy of the kingdom of God, for which you are suffering --

Pasted from <<http://crain.english.missouriwestern.edu/Mark/newpage21.htm>>

Jesus Calls the First Disciples (1:16-20)

I have previously remarked on the two broad parallel structures in Mark involving "calling," noting that each is followed by four stories, the first involving healing and the second involving controversies, with a concluding story that explores both healing and controversy. In this immediate section, what stands out structurally is the "action of James and John in (Gk. *Aphentes*) their father" which "foreshadows their last action in the Gospel of deserting (*aphentes*) Jesus when he is arrested" (NISB Notes). The NISB Notes also points out that *immediately* occurs forty-times in this Gospel, speeding up the narrative to "breathless pace." Also previously noted has been the structure in Mark that moves Jesus from Galilee to Jerusalem and a prediction that he will again be seen in Galilee, a structure that returns full circle to allow the reader to begin all over again to follow Jesus in his ministry.

It may be useful to sort through and summarize Michael Turton's notes from other scholars about Galilee, since this is where it all begins in Mark; these are extensive. Jesus seems to come into Galilee with no hint that this is a return trip, leading to the possibility that this is the original beginning of Mark before it was interpolated. He says debate continues about the stability of Galilee, noting the origin of several rebels here. He quotes a passage from Burton Mack (1995), which summarizes Galilean history as being added by David with the tribes of Naphthali, Asher, Issachar, Zebulun, and Dan settling there; described also is Solomon's giving twenty Galilean cities to Hiram, King of Tyre; what was left of Galilee was the part of the country of the Ptolemies and Seleucids, this run over by the Hasmonians of Jerusalem in 104 BCE. Galilee, importantly, is Gentile--not Samaritan, not Jews; Galilee was also heavily influenced by the Greeks. In short, at issue is the identity of Galilee's people; Turton quotes Mark A. Chancey contention that "the idea of a strongly gentile-influenced Galilee" is a myth. Archaeologically, research shows no residual pig bones characteristic of Gentile diet but does find evidence of Jewish ritual baths and pottery. Turton then suggests little evidence exists for finding a connection between Jesus and Galilee. He concludes by bringing into focus Isaiah 9:1 as a basis for the designation of Galilee. He also points out "Additional influences on the writer of Mark may have been popular ideas of demonology contained in works like 1 Enoch and the Book of Tobit, in which Galilee plays a key role"

<<http://www.michaelturton.com/Mark/GMark01.html>>.

The *Oxford Bible Commentary*, while noting that the disciples later get bad press for failing to understand Jesus and in ultimately deserting him, notes the very positive overtones of the four disciple's, called by Jesus, obedience in immediately following Jesus (889).

Turton lays out scholarship to associate the calling with Elijah-Elisha, quoting Brodie, and noting parallels:

The OT source for this story, like so many in Mark, is the Elijah-Elisha cycle. Brodie has shown that this passage is modeled on the Elijah story in 1 Kings 19:19-21:

19 And he goeth thence, and findeth Elisha son of Shaphat, and he is plowing; twelve yoke [are] before him, and he [is] with the twelfth; and Elijah passeth over unto him, and casteth his robe upon him,
 20 and he forsaketh the oxen, and runneth after Elijah, and saith, 'Let me give a kiss, I pray thee, to my father and to my mother, and I go after thee.' And he saith to him, 'Go, turn back, for what have I done to thee?'
 21 And he turneth back from after him, and taketh the yoke of oxen, and sacrificeth it, and with instruments of the oxen he hath boiled their flesh, and giveth to the people, and they eat, and he riseth, and goeth after Elijah, and serveth him.(YLT)
 Note the parallels, listed in Brodie (2000, p91):

*the action begins with a caller...and with motion toward those to be called;

*those called are working (plowing/fishing);

*the call, whether by gesture (Elijah) or word (Jesus) is brief;

*later, the means of livelihood are variously destroyed or mended, the plow is destroyed, but the nets are mended -- a typical inversion of images...;

*after further movement, there is a leave-taking of home;

*there is also a leave-taking of other workers;

*finally, those who are called follow the caller.

Additional parallels, not noted by Brodie, include Elisha plowing with twelve yoke of oxen, just as Jesus will spread his religion with twelve disciples. Further, Elisha drives a pair of oxen, just as Jesus later appoints a pair of brothers.

Pasted from <<http://www.michaelturton.com/Mark/GMark01.html>>

In keeping with the ongoing argument that the book of Mark is wonderfully structured and always layered in meaning, Turton explores the possible influences for calling disciples from the Sea of Galilee:

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 21 And he turneth back from after him, and taketh the yoke of oxen, and sacrificeth it, and with instruments of the oxen he hath boiled their flesh, and giveth to the people, and they eat, and he riseth, and goeth after Elijah, and serveth him.(YLT)
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Pasted from <<http://www.michaelturton.com/Mark/GMark01.html>>

He returns discussion to the question of why the disciples should be called from Galilee, suggesting they serve as foils to Jesus and provide an opportunity for Jesus to explain his mission or, more negatively, that structurally, when viewed in the light of Elisha's taking time to feed his family, the disciples here show no such responsible behavior:

First, the reason may be narrative and structural. In some interpretations the disciples function in the Gospel of Mark as foils whose stupidity and incomprehension provide opportunities for the narrator or Jesus to explain his mission and ideas. Thus their inclusion at the start in Galilee may simply be a necessary device to ensure that they are present throughout the mission to serve in their important role as foils for Jesus.

Another possibility lies in the writer of Mark's attitude toward the disciples. The Gospel presents them in an extremely unflattering light. Here the writer defines them as men of no particular origin, working-class, probably not very educated, and from a part of Palestine notorious for not being Jewish, who leave their positions without so much as a wave good-bye. Further, the Galileans were lampooned by their southern brethren for being idiots and not understanding Aramaic well (Theissen and Merz, 1998, p169). In Mark 14:70 Peter is identified as a Galilean; perhaps the writer meant to imply this was due to his accent. It doesn't take much to see that the idea that the disciples had come from Galilee might be construed as reflecting negatively on them, at least in some quarters.

In support of this one need merely compare the passage the writer is paralleling with the passage he created. In the sequence in 1 Kings 19, Elisha stops to kill his oxen and feed them to his family. Not so Peter, James, John, and Andrew. They take off with work unfinished and leave family without a backward glance. The detail about the "father and the hired servants" may be there to emphasize the sudden power of Jesus' call, as well as show that the Christian follower puts aside his family, but it may also be there to make the disciples look bad.

Pasted from <<http://www.michaelturton.com/Mark/GMark01.html>>

Three Healing Stories

What follows next in the first chapter of Mark are three healing stories--that of exorcism in a synagogue in Capernaum on the sabbath, where the unclean spirit (or demons) recognizes Jesus as "the Holy One of God" (24); the healing of Simon's mother-in-law (29-34,) followed by other healings; and the cleansing of a leper (40-45). Concerning the exorcism, Turton remarks on the similarity to passages in Kings:

1 Kings 17:18, where the woman rebukes Elijah as her son lies dying:

17 Some time later the son of the woman who owned the house became ill. He grew worse and worse, and finally stopped breathing. 18 She said to Elijah, "**What do you have against me, man of God? Did you come to remind me of my sin and kill my son?**" (NIV)

The significance of this relationship between Mark 1:24 and 1 Kings 17 is simple: 1 Kings 17 is the chapter where Elijah makes his first appearance. The writer is linking Jesus and Elijah in a subtle and striking way.

The same theme occurs with Elisha in 2 Kings 3:13:

13 Elisha said to the king of Israel, "What do we have to do with each other? Go to the prophets of your father and the prophets of your mother." (NIV)

The function of such a phrase is to deny that the speaker and listener share a common community (Donahue and Harrington 2002, p80).

Pasted from <<http://www.michaelturton.com/Mark/GMark01.html>>

Turton has, in his Introduction, already noted the many references to the Tanakh (over 150) and the use of Eliza and Elisha stories in 1 and 2 Kings as a key structural element, indicating that these have "generated an enormous controversy among scholars. Does the writer of Mark use the OT to interpret the history of Jesus, or to create it? If the answer to either is "sometimes," when does he do which, and how do we know?" <http://www.michaelturton.com/Mark/GMark_intro.html#intro> Even in "the Holy One of God," allusions may be to Psalms:

"holy one of God" Grant (1963) observes that "this title may be based on Psalm 16:10 ("thou wilt not suffer thy holy one to see corruption") or Psalm 106:16 (Aaron as the holy one of God). Later Jesus will be raised, his body uncorrupted) <<http://www.michaelturton.com/Mark/GMark01.html>> .

Concerning the synagogues, NISB Notes their presence and popularity as places for the study of scripture and for sacrificial rituals., although Turton states we have no solid evidence for the presence of synagogues other than house synagogues in the first century, a point in opposition to the one taken by Nelson's Commentary, quoted fully here:

In Jesus' day, synagogues (Mark 1:21) were common throughout Palestine. Synagogues (from the Greek *sunagoge*, meaning "a leading or bringing together") were local congregations of Jews that met for the reading and explanation of Scripture and for prayer. The original emphasis was not on preaching but instruction in the Law of Moses.

Synagogues began during the Babylonian captivity experience. Lacking a temple but longing for communion with God, Jewish captives in Babylon met in local groups for worship and Torah reading. Some of the captives eventually returned to their land, where Zerubbabel rebuilt the temple and Ezra the scribe promoted the reading of the Law and prayer (Neh. 8). But many Jews remained in Persia and spread elsewhere, notably to Alexandria, Egypt. Both in and outside of Palestine, Jews continued to meet in synagogues, which became centers of community life.

Some synagogues functioned as local courts of justice which could sentence offenders as well as inflict the punishment of scourging (Matt. 10:17; 23:34). They also became grammar schools teaching children to read. And much of Jewish social life revolved around synagogue activities.

By Jesus' time, synagogues were well established and had customary officials, including:

Elders, a board made up of devout and respected men who regulated the policies of the synagogue. Custom seated the elders in the chief seats at the front of the synagogue (Matt. 23:6). *A ruler of the synagogue*, appointed by the elders, whose duty was to attend to matters concerning the building and the planning of the services. There could be more than one ruler. On one occasion, a ruler named Jairus approached Jesus about healing his daughter (Mark 5:21–43).

The minister (chazzan), who had charge of the sacred scrolls kept in the ark, attended to the lamps, and kept the building clean. If an offender was found guilty by the council of elders, this official was the one who administered the number of lashes prescribed for the scourging. During the week he taught children how to read.

The delegate of the congregation. This was not a permanent office. Before each service the ruler chose a capable person to read the Scripture lesson, lead in prayer, and preach or comment on the Scripture. Jesus was selected for this office in the synagogue in Nazareth (Luke 4:16–20).

The interpreter. The Scriptures were written in Hebrew, but by Jesus' day most Jews in Palestine spoke Aramaic, a language related to Hebrew but different enough to call for an interpreter.

Almoners, two or three persons who received money or other necessities for the poor.

A synagogue could not be formed unless there were at least ten Jewish men in the community—apparently a condition met in a great many towns throughout the Roman world, as Paul found synagogues at Damascus (Acts 9:2), Salamis (13:5), Antioch in Pisidia (13:14), Iconium (14:1), Thessalonica (17:1), Berea (17:10), Athens (17:16, 17), and Ephesus (19:1, 8). Indeed, whenever Paul entered a city to preach the gospel, he invariably spoke first in the synagogue before reaching out to the larger community.

Not surprisingly, synagogue worship had a profound influence on Christian worship. The Jewish service began with a recitation of the shema by the people. *Shema* (“Hear”) is the first Hebrew word in the passage, “Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one!” (Deut. 6:4–9). The speaker for the day then led the congregation in prayer as they stood facing Jerusalem with hands extended. At the close of the prayer the people said “Amen.”

The chosen speaker stood and read the Law while the interpreter translated it into Aramaic. Then a passage from the Prophets was read and translated. For the commentary or sermon, the speaker usually sat down. After the sermon, a priest, if one was present, pronounced a benediction and the people said “Amen.” Since the earliest Christians were Jews, they tended to follow this synagogue pattern in their own assemblies.

Radmacher, E. D. 1999. *Nelson's new illustrated Bible commentary*. T. Nelson Publishers: Nashville

Turton also notes the relation of Jesus (authority) to scribes (wise men) as perhaps referencing Jeremiah: Jeremiah 8:8-9 says:

8: "How can you say, 'We are wise, and the law of the LORD is with us'? But, behold, the false pen of the scribes has made it into a lie. 9: The wise men shall be put to shame, they shall be dismayed and taken; lo, they have rejected the word of the LORD, and what wisdom is in them? (RSV)

Pasted from <<http://www.michaelturton.com/Mark/GMarko1.html>>

With this first healing comes a first whisper of the urgency of silence in the face of Jesus' growing popularity. NISB Notes indicate that the purpose of keeping the identity of "the Holy One" is much debated.

Readers may want to note the emergence in this healing of a miracle story:

Bultmann noted the story "displays the typical features of a miracle story, especially the conjuration of a demon: 1. the demon senses the presence of the exorcist and struggles; 2. threat and command by the exorcist; 3. the demon departs with a demonstration; 4. the impression on the on-lookers." (cited in Ludemann, 2001, p.13). Ludemann (2001, p13) also notes that v24 contains a formula of the demon to ward off the miracle worker.

Pasted from <<http://www.michaelturton.com/Mark/GMarko1.html>>

What one makes of this is that, once again, Mark is no careless writer: he is picking and choosing among the tools that he has at hand to structure carefully this interpretation or creation of the work of Jesus.

Catholic Resources on Mark online has provided the following structural outline of Mark under the general title of Typical Events in Jesus' Ministry:

Some Typical Events in Jesus' Ministry (1:16-45):

- **The first Vocation story:** Jesus calls four fishermen, who follow him as his disciples (vv. 16-20)
 - **The first Exorcism: Jesus exorcises an unclean spirit in Capernaum** (vv. 21-28)
 - **The first Healing narrative:** Jesus heals Simon's Mother-in-law of a fever (vv. 29-31)
 - **The first Healing summary:** Jesus heals many sick people and drives out many demons (vv. 32-34)
 - **The first Journey: Jesus expands his preaching beyond Capernaum** (vv. 35-39)

- **The first Restoration story:** Jesus cleanses a leper, restoring him to health and to society (vv. 40-45)

Pasted from <<http://catholic-resources.org/Bible/Mark-Outlines.htm>>

What should probably be noted, in addition to the Messianic Secret already commented upon, is that the first exorcism and what is called here the first healing summary is that sections are linked by opposing powers (demons) recognizing Jesus in contrast to reactions of astoundment at teaching and authority and the push of crowds to be healed. NISB Notes remark that the knowledge of Jesus which the Demons throughout Mark seem to have can be related either to fight Jesus, related to gaining power over someone by identification, or as a cosmic recognition of Jesus' power. Turton, by way of Crossan, has questioned the history of the entire set of healings, saying that the entire day (v 21-39) is a Markan creation <<http://www.michaelturton.com/Mark/GMark01.html>>. Crossan has also suggested that when Simon and his companions come hunting for Jesus, it is to call him back to the task of ministering to the people who come to him (fixed position) in contrast to an itinerancy in Jesus' going forth to neighboring towns (38). More importantly, I think, is the fact that the "good news of God" and a time fulfilled and a kingdom come near (14) is linked to the message that must be proclaimed (39). The chapter ends with the spreading fame of Jesus (28) linked to the people crowding Jesus at every quarter (45).

Before leaving chapter one of Mark, two other points should be made: these relating to Jesus' s interaction with the marginalized and his attention to the demands of law. Turton quotes Meyers (1998) concerning the first:

"Mark's story of Jesus stands virtually alone among the literary achievements of antiquity for one reason: it is a narrative for and about the common people. The Gospel reflects the daily realities of disease, poverty, and disenfranchisement that characterized the social existence of first-century Palestine's 'other 95%.'"(p39)

Pasted from <<http://www.michaelturton.com/Mark/GMark01.html>> \

He further quotes Meyers concerning the attention Jesus gives to Mosaic requirements:

Myers (1988, p153) interprets the command for the leper to show himself to the priests as an injunction to become a witness on behalf of Jesus that the old order has been overturned and the new one announced by Jesus has begun. The Greek translated here as "for a proof to the people" is actually a technical term for bearing witness in a hostile situation. Most exegetes see this as Jesus carefully following the precepts of Mosaic law, which calls for a healed leper to prove it to the priests so that he may be considered ritually clean again.

Pasted from <<http://www.michaelturton.com/Mark/GMark01.html>>

Introduction

Ch2

Home	Introduction	Ch1	Ch2	Ch3	Ch4	Ch5	Ch6	Ch7
Ch8	Ch9	Ch10	Ch11	Ch12	Ch13	Ch14	Ch15	Ch16

Chapter 2 of Mark may be summarized as follows:

Summary Jesus continues his mission in Galilee, controversy following him; this chapter opens in Capernaum, a city on the northern coast of the Sea of Galilee, a fishing village of not more than one thousand in the first century. He creates controversy by healing a paralytic and telling him his sins are forgiven. The scribes accuse him of blasphemy. He calls the tax collector Levi, son of Alphaeus, to follow him, again causing the scribes to cite him for the offense of eating with sinners. Next, the people generally see that Jesus and his disciples are not fasting like his predecessor John the Baptist and followers, and they want to know why; Jesus replies in the parables of the bridegroom and new wine in old wineskins. His disciples again cause offense when they pluck from corn on the Sabbath and eat. This time, Jesus responds by telling his critics that the Sabbath is made for humankind, not humankind for the Sabbath. He bases himself authoritatively in scripture, citing I Samuel 21.1-6 and the example of David and his companions eating from the bread of Presence.

Pasted from < <http://crain.english.missouriwestern.edu/Mark/interpre1.htm> >

Mark	Matthew	Luke
2:1-12	9:1-8	5:17-26
2:13-17	9:9-13	5:27-32
2:18-22	9:14-17	5:33-39
2:23-28	12:1-8	6:1-5

[Mark 2: 1-12](#) (7th Sunday of ordinary time - B)

Pasted from < <http://www.silk.net/RelEd/gospelmark2.htm> >

Readers may well be advised to begin the study of Mark 2 by remembering the structural outline suggested in the Introduction to this study:

1. Introduction--including inclusio in verse 14 relative to "good news" and a calling of disciples (1:16) followed by four healings (the last involving controversy), another calling (and another four healings, the last with controversy).

Chapter two, then, begins with the fourth healing story, this followed by controversy about who has the power to declare "sins forgiven" (5). Again, it is the scribes who are sitting nearby; in the first chapter, Jesus was declared to have authority unlike that of the scribes (22).

When he returned to Capernaum after some days, it was reported that he was at home. 2 So many gathered around that there was no longer room for them, not even in front of the door; and he was speaking the word to them. 3 Then some people came, bringing to him a paralyzed man, carried by four of them. 4 And when they could not bring him to Jesus because of the crowd, they removed the roof above him; and after having dug through it, they let down the mat on which the paralytic lay. 5 When Jesus saw their faith, he said to the paralytic, "Son, your sins are forgiven." 6 Now some of the scribes were sitting there, questioning in their hearts, 7 "Why does this fellow speak in this way? It is blasphemy! Who can forgive sins but God alone?" 8 At once Jesus perceived in his spirit that they were discussing these questions among themselves; and he said to them, "Why do you raise such questions in your hearts? 9 Which is easier, to say to the paralytic, 'Your sins are forgiven,' or to say, 'Stand up and take your mat and walk'? 10 But so that you may know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins"—he said to the paralytic— 11 "I say to you, stand up, take your mat and go to your home." 12 And he stood up, and immediately took the mat and went out before all of them; so that they were all amazed and glorified God, saying, "We have never seen anything like this!"

Pasted from < <http://www.biblestudytools.com/nrs/mark/2.html> >

Readers will note that Jesus works in Capernaum, where he was when he healed the man of unclean spirit in chapter one and was recognized as "the Holy One of God" (24). Turton sorting through scholarship, makes the first focal point of this section a discussion of whether the hometown of Jesus was that of Nazareth or Capernaum, then rounds this out with an interesting explanation of why the early church may have wanted the mission of Jesus to be located here.

[v1](#): Capernaum: sometimes explained as a reference to the house of Simon, but clearly states that Jesus' home was in

Capernaum, not Nazareth. This casts further doubt on the "Nazareth" in Mark 1:9. Capernaum is mentioned 16 times in the Gospels, but nowhere else in the New Testament. Like "Galilee," the various individuals writing under the name of "Paul" do not mention it. The idiom used here, *eis oikon*, "to house," means "at home."

v1: Frank Zindler (2000) argues:

"While most scholars are correct in tracing Capernaum to the root from which Nahum derives, I think they have all missed the crucial nuance in the root's meaning which caused the evangelists to choose it as the symbolic name of the place where their nascent cult's most important progress should occur. When we see how this Hebrew word was translated into Greek in several ancient versions of the Old Testament, we find that it could be translated as Paraclete, or Comforter. It is this possible link to the Paraclete, I believe, that reveals the symbolic intent of the New Testament writers when they created Capernaum. As 'the village of the Paraclete', Capernaum would focus the idea that the Holy Spirit was guiding the early church, as well as the idea that the early church (as symbolized by the Jesus character) was fulfilling the role of intercessor or advocate."

He adds:

"In the oldest gospel materials, even the location of Capernaum in Galilee is not certain. Capernaum could be located anywhere around the Sea of Galilee. Both Mark and John indicate that the city is located not too far from a shore of the Sea of Galilee, and it contains a synagogue."

Pasted from <<http://www.michaelturton.com/Mark/GMark02.html>>

Nelson's Commentary takes a more traditional approach, locating Capernaum and pointing out that the ruins of a synagogue have been found there:

1:21 Capernaum sits beside the northern edge of the Sea of Galilee, a pear-shaped freshwater lake eight miles wide and twelve miles long. It was a cross section of trade routes between Egypt and Syria (Cairo and Damascus), located on the Sea of Galilee on the primary trade route between Egypt and Damascus and points to the east. The town's name means "Village of Nahum." Capernaum was Christ's ministry "headquarters" and is mentioned twenty-two times in the Gospels. By contrast, only one recorded event during Christ's ministry occurred at Nazareth (Luke 4:16). The ruins of a synagogue at Capernaum, just a few hundred feet from the water's edge, date from the second to fourth century a.d. Radmacher, E. D. 1999. Nelson's new illustrated Bible commentary. T. Nelson Publishers: Nashville

Here, the crowds still press in (2, 4), and the paralytic man is lowered from the roof. The result is that Jesus, as told by the writer, sees this action and ascribes it to "faith." In chapter 1, the message of the "good news of God," is to be accompanied by belief or "pistis" and becomes the standard for acting upon hearing the message (NISB Notes). It is the result then of Jesus' speaking the "good news" that the crowds come. Jesus responds to the paralytic that his sins are forgiven (5), and while the scribes have not spoken aloud, Jesus perceives the questions they were asking in their hearts; remember, the heart for the Hebrew people was the seat of emotional and intellectual life as well as of volition:

The seat of the emotional and intellectual life. "Keep thy heart with all diligence; for out of it are the issues of life" (Prov. iv. 23), refers to the moral and spiritual as well as the physical life. Animals have simply a sentient heart without personal consciousness or reason. This is what is meant when it is said that a beast's heart was given to Nebuchadnezzar (Dan. iv. 13 [A. V. 16]). Delitzsch ("System der Biblischen Psychologie," p. 252) calls attention to the fact that the Arabic *Hamasa* (p. 513) says explicitly that the brute is without heart ("bi-ghair lubb"). The three special functions, knowing, feeling, and willing, ascribed by modern psychologists to the mind, were attributed to the heart by the Biblical writers (comp. Assyrian "libbu" = "heart," in Delitzsch, "Assyrisches Handwörterb." p. 367). In the Book of Daniel intellectual functions are ascribed not to the head only (Dan. ii. 28; iv. 2, 7, 10 [A. V. 5, 10, 13]; vii. 1, 15), but also to the heart (ib. ii. 30).

Its Psychical Aspects.

The heart as the seat of thought is referred to in "mašshebot libbo" (thoughts of his heart; Ps. xxxiii. 11) and in "morashe lebabi" (possessions or thoughts of my heart; Job xvii. 11). So "amar beleb" (Obad. i. 3), "amar el leb" (Gen. viii. 21), "dibber 'im leb" (Eccl. i. 16) (= "to speak to the heart" or "to oneself"), mean "to think." The heart knows and perceives (Deut. xxix. 3

[A. V. 4]); it remembers and forgets (I Sam. xxi. 13 [A. V. 12]; Deut. iv. 9). "A dead man out of heart" (A. V. "mind"; Ps. xxxi. 13 [A. V. 12]) means a dead man forgotten. The man of understanding is called "ish [plur. "anshe"] lebab" = "the man of heart" (Job xxxiv. 10, 34), and the man without understanding "hasar leb" (Prov. x. 13) or "en leb" (Jer. v. 21), "the man void of heart" or "without heart."

That the heart is the seat of emotion is the generally accepted opinion of all investigators into the psychology of the Bible, though Carl Grüneisen ("Der Ahnenkultus und die Urreligion Israels," p. 39) denies it. All modes of feeling, from the lowest physical forms, as hunger and thirst, to the highest spiritual forms, as reverence and remorse, are attributed by the Hebrews to the heart (comp. Gen. xviii. 5; Judges xix. 5; Ps. cii. 5 [A. V. 4]); so joy and gladness, sorrow and grief, fear and reverence (Zeph. iii. 14; Isa. lxvi. 14; Ps. xiii. 3 [A. V. 2]; Deut. xx. 3, 7, 8; Jer. xxxii. 40). Still the term "nefesh" (soul) is more frequently used with reference to the appetites.

Is the Seat of Volition.

The heart is also the seat of volition. It is self-directing and self-determining. All conscious resolves emanate from that source (comp. "mela'olibbo" [Esth. vii. 5]; "nadab libbo oto" [Ex. xxxv. 29]; "nesa'o libbo" [Ex. xxxv. 21]; and "natan libbo" [Eccl. i. 13]). When the words "heart" and "soul" are used in connection with each other (Deut. vi. 5), they are not used merely as synonymous terms in order to add force to the expression, for the phrase "with all your heart" denotes the love of conscious resolve, in which the whole being consents, and which must at once become a natural inclination (see Cremer, "Biblico-Theological Lexicon," s.v. καρδία, transl. by William Urwick, p. 347).

It is in the heart that the heart becomes conscious of itself and of its own operations. It recognizes its own suffering. It is the seat of self-consciousness: "the heart knoweth its [A. V. "his"] own bitterness" (Prov. xiv. 10). As the whole physical and psychological life is centralized in the heart, so the whole moral life springs from and issues out of it. This is clear from such expressions as "shalem" and "tam" (perfect), "tahor" (pure), "tov" (good), and "yashar" (upright), used in connection with the heart. The Biblical writers speak of the false heart, the stubborn and obstreperous heart, and the heart distant from God (Ps. ci. 4; Jer. v. 23; Isa. xxix. 13). The hypocrite is the man with a double or divided heart: where one would say "two-faced," the Psalmist says "two-hearted" ("beleb waleb"; Ps. xii. 3 [A. V. 2]). Lazarus ("The Ethics of Judaism," Engl. transl., ii. 60, note) observes that "the Talmudic 'libbo' rarely reaches the inclusive meaning of the Hebrew 'leb,' which comprises the whole psychic phenomena. As a rule, the Talmudic expression approaches the modern 'heart,' primarily indicating inner conviction as contrasted with external deed" (see Sanh. 106b; Ber. 20a, Munich MS.). There is an interesting discussion between Rabbi Eliezer and Rabbi Joshua as to whether the heart or the head should be regarded as the seat of wisdom (Yalk., Prov. 929).

Maimonides, in discussing the term "leb," says that it is a word used homonymously, primarily signifying the organ of life and then coming to mean "center," "thought," "resolution," "will," "intellect" ("Moreh Nebukim," i. 39). See Psychology of the Bible.

"Leb" is used figuratively for the center or innermost part of objects other than the human body, in expressions such as "the heart of the sea" (Ex. xv. 8; Jonah ii. 3); "the heart of heaven" (Deut. iv. 11; A. V. "midst"); "the heart [A. V. "midst"] of an oak-tree" (II Sam. xviii. 14). In this use "heart" has gone over into the English language as a Hebraism when mention is made of the "heart" or "core" (Latin "cor") of a subject or object, meaning its central or innermost part, its central idea or essence. "She'er" (flesh) and "leb" (heart) are used conjointly to designate the whole inner and outer life of man (Ps. lxxiii. 26).

Pasted from < <http://www.jewishencyclopedia.com/articles/7436-heart>>

Modern psychology, as we know, has, of course, moved this seat to the mind itself, with cognition referring to the process of coming to know and understand, and involving the storing, processing, and retrieving of information; the affective has been associated with interpretation of perceptions and our attachments to whatever; conation refers to the connection of knowledge and affect to behavior and associated with motivation and volition < <http://www.edpsycinteractive.org/topics/conation/conation.html>> The emphasis in this section of Mark is to some special power whereby Jesus knows the internal thoughts of those surrounding him. Knowing however this ancient perception of closely knit parts into a "whole person," it should be possible to view the condition as a disruption in the relationship to God. The scribes, however, immediately conclude "blasphemy."

Strictly speaking, Jesus has not spoken the name of God, has not cursed the NAME, but only said that sins are forgiven, enacting, perhaps, God's power. It is, of course, blasphemy which Jesus is accused of when he answers affirmatively later in Mark that he is the Messiah, the Son of the Blessed One (used to circumlocute blasphemy on the part of the high priest); how Jesus sees himself as the Son of God is at issue here, as is what it means for a Son of God to be seated "at the right hand of the Power" (62). Isaiah 53:7 offers a new way for individuals through suffering to understand a way of being made righteous, or whole, and into right relationship with God. Bart D. Ehrman in *The New Testament: A Historical Introduction to the Early Christian Writings* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997) points out that the terms "Son of God" and "Son of Man" in the first century meant opposite what they do to most today--with "son of man" referring to divinity as in Daniel (66). This issue is complicated by the addition or omission of capital letters in translations. The Greek may be noted: uioV tou anqrwpou.

10 But that ye may know that the Son of man hath power on earth to forgive sins, (he saith to the sick of the palsy,) [hina~2443](#) [de~1161](#) [eido~1492](#) [hoti~3754](#) [exousia~1849](#) [echo~2192](#) [ho~3588](#) [huios~5207](#)[tou~5120](#) [anthropos~444](#) [aphiemi~863](#) [epi~1909](#)[ho~3588](#) [ge~1093](#) [hamartia~266](#) [lego~3004](#) [ho~3588](#)[paralutikos~3885](#)
ina de eidhte oti exousian ecei o uioV tou anqrwpou affenai epi thV ghV amartias legei tw paralutikw

Pasted from < <http://www.charlesfinney.com/bible/?m=3&t=Mark%202:6>>

Ehrman then remarks on three ways of using "son of man": indirect reference to Jesus; reference to his impending suffering; and finally, reference to a cosmic figure. Questionable is whether either of the three can be used to refer to the historical Jesus. In short, at issue, is theology.

Pasted from < <http://www.greeknewtestament.com/B41C002.htm>>

With respect to blasphemy, the issue is whether "Son of Man" meant divinity or humanity; I have previously referred to the possible Adoptionist view that Jesus is human:

Many exegetes interpret the Christology of Mark as Adoptionist (Jesus is a human adopted as God's son) as opposed to Matthew and Luke, who posit Jesus as the Son of God from the

beginning. Brenda Schildgen (1999), commenting on the silences in Mark, and the early lack of interest in, and low reputation of, the Gospel of Mark among the Patristic Fathers, notes:

Pasted from < <http://www.michaelturton.com/Mark/GMarko1.html>>

A question being asked, perhaps, is whether a "son of man," practicing God-presence, can be viewed as s(Son) of God? Further at issue is the relationship of Messiah (whether warrior-king or cosmic judge) and the related issue of suffering. Apart from the controversy of forgiving sins, what seems to motivate the people to amazement is the action:

12 And he stood up, and immediately took the mat and went out before all of them; so that they were all amazed and glorified God, saying, "We have never seen anything like this!"
< <http://www.biblestudytools.com/nrs/mark/2.html>>

Concerning the issue of Messiahship, it is always good to remember that the Hebrew word "Mashiach" meant "Anointed." Kings, of course were commonly anointed. One of the central themes in the Old Testament is, of course, a future age of perfection, universal peace, and justice: Isaiah 11:1-9; Jeremiah 23:5-6, 30:7-10, 33:14-16; Ezekiel 34:11-31, 37:21-28; Hosea 3:4-5. Many passages speak of a descendant of David: Isaiah 11:1-9; Jeremiah 23:5-6, 30:7-10, 33:14-16; Ezekiel 34:11-31, 37:21-28; Hosea 3:4-5. Nelson's Commentary finds the healing of the paralytic as an implicit acknowledgment by the paralytic that Jesus was the Messiah.

Radmacher, E. D. 1999. Nelson's new illustrated Bible commentary. T. Nelson Publishers: Nashville

In the next section of Mark, we find the second calling intercalated, enveloped, sandwiched between the healing/controversy surrounding the paralytic and the arise of another controversy about the people with whom Jesus interacts:

3 Jesus went out again beside the sea; the whole crowd gathered around him, and he taught them. 14 As he was walking along, he saw Levi son of Alphaeus sitting at the tax booth, and he said to him, "Follow me." And he got up and followed him. 15 And as he sat at dinner in Levi's house, many tax collectors and sinners were also sitting with Jesus and his disciples—for there were many who followed him. 16 When the scribes of the Pharisees saw that he was eating with sinners and tax collectors, they said to his disciples, "Why does he eat with tax collectors and sinners?" 17 When Jesus heard this, he said to them, "Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick; I have come to call not the righteous but sinners."

Pasted from < <http://www.biblestudytools.com/nrs/mark/2.html>>

Turton has sorted through scholarship to come to the following pertinent points about this calling of a disciple. First, we encounter the common themes of crowds, the sea, and Jesus teaching; the Levi, son of Alphaeus here, is referred to elsewhere as James, the son of Alphaeus (Codex Bezae), the name "Levi," perhaps, being used ironically against the priestly caste; Jesus has called five men not yet appointed disciples until Mark 3:13-19; the three religious groups involved in this controversy include, in addition to the scribes appearing previously, the Pharisees--raising a question about evidence for Pharisees in Galilee as well as whether they had any function of power; with respect to authorship, Turbin wonders if the author is aware of the dispute between Peter and Paul over table fellowship (Gal. 2:11); an early precedent exists here for house gatherings; and finally, Turbin asks whether affinities exist in Jesus' teaching to the Cynics for witty and clever riposted in the "Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick: I came not to call the righteous, but sinners" <<http://www.michaelturton.com/Mark/GMarko2.html>>. The NISB suggests the presence of a proverb to which Jesus attaches his mission to sinners.

Our third controversy is about fasting, practiced by John's disciples and the disciples of the Pharisees, followed by the sayings/parables of the bridegroom, sewing unshrunk cloth on old material, and putting new wine into old wineskins. Since the Pharisees are here present, they need to be placed among influential groups:

the Pharisees were one of the three main religious groups of the time of Jesus. According to Josephus, they appear to be a group of at least 6,000, forming a powerful counterweight to Herodian authority. However, many scholars view Josephus' account of their history rather skeptically, and a minority of critical scholars see their prominence as purely a phenomenon of post-70 Judaism. In the majority view, by contrast, they date back to Hasmonean times and survive the fall of the Temple to form the nucleus of rabbinical Judaism.

Pasted from < <http://www.michaelturton.com/Mark/GMarko2.html>>

18 Now John's disciples and the Pharisees were fasting; and people came and said to him, "Why do John's disciples and the disciples of the Pharisees fast, but your disciples do not fast?" 19 Jesus said to them, "The wedding guests cannot fast while the bridegroom is with them, can they? As long as they have the bridegroom with them, they cannot fast. 20 The days will come when the bridegroom is taken away from them, and then they will fast on that day. 21 "No one sews a piece of unshrunk cloth on an old cloak; otherwise, the patch pulls away from it, the new from the old, and a worse tear is made. 22 And no one puts new wine into old wineskins; otherwise, the wine will burst the skins, and the wine is lost, and so are the skins; but one puts new wine into fresh wineskins."

Pasted from < <http://www.biblestudytools.com/nrs/mark/2.html>>

If we return to the idea that "The Spirit leads Jesus. That is what we might have expected: the Spirit is the driving force and basis for what Jesus is to do" <

<http://wwwstaff.murdoch.edu.au/~loader/mark.html>> , then it may be possible to understand why this "new wine" cannot be put into old wineskins or new and unshrunk cloth on an old cloak. At issue here, once again, is that of taking language literally or symbolically; Turton, in refuting Robert Funk in The Jesus Seminar, explains: " the presence of food-related vocabulary in connection with Jesus and his mission throughout the Gospel of Mark indicates that the meaning [for fasting] is allegorical and cannot be taken literally " < <http://www.michaelturton.com/Mark/GMarko2.html>> . As saying, precedent exists for earlier similar statements in the Mishnah and in Job 32:18, 19. What seems to be said here is that "the old cannot contain the new thing that is happening" (NISB Notes).

The next story is a controversy about working on the sabbath (forbidden by Jewish Law) concluded with another proverb expanded, that 'the sabbath was made for humankind and not humankind for the sabbath," with yet another self-reference to Son of Man. Actually, what the disciples have been doing can hardly be construed as work.

Structurally, Felix Just has suggested a grouping of five controversy stories, picking up the first section of chapter three:

Mark	Pericope Title	Who Objects?	Against Whom?	About What?
2:1-12	Healing a Paralytic	scribes	among themselves	forgiving/blaspheming
Jesus' Saying: "the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins" (2:10).				
2:13-17	Calling Levi, a Tax Collector	scribes of the Pharisees	Jesus' disciples	eating with tax collectors and sinners
Jesus' Sayings: "Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick" (2:17a); "I have come to call not the righteous but sinners" (2:17b).				
2:18-22	About Fasting	people	Jesus	disciples not fasting
Jesus' Sayings: "The wedding guests cannot fast while the bridegroom is with them." (2:19-20); "No one sews a piece of unshrunk cloth on an old cloak." (2:21-22).				
2:23-28	Plucking Grain on the Sabbath	Pharisees	Jesus	breaking the sabbath
Jesus' Sayings: "The sabbath was made for humankind, and not humankind for the sabbath" (2:27); "so the Son of Man is lord even of the sabbath" (2:28).				
3:1-6	Restoring a Man's Withered Hand	Jesus	"them" (Pharisees & Herodians)	healing on the sabbath
Jesus' Question: "Is it lawful to do good or to do harm on the sabbath, to save life or to kill?" (3:4).				

Pasted from < <http://catholic-resources.org/Bible/Mark-Outlines.htm>>

Bart D. Ehrman (The New Testament: A Historical Introduction to the Early Christian Writings, Oxford University Press, 1907) essentially summarizes the first two chapters of Mark as

describing Jesus as not being recognized by the Jewish leaders, and worse, as offending them in his sayings and actions. He summarizes 2:1-3:6 as "a group of conflict stories that show a crescendo in the tension between Jesus and the Jewish leaders, the scribes, and Pharisees." They question actions, take offense with Jesus' associations, and activities. Particularly, they "take umbrage at Jesus' refusal to follow their own practices of purity" and "prescriptions for keeping the seventh day holy." Ehrman says, "From the Pharisees' perspective (as portrayed by Mark), these are not honest disagreements over matters of policy. They are dangerous perversions of their religion." The conflict continues through ensuing chapters until finally, the chief priests triumph, "convincing the Roman governor that Jesus has to die" (60-61). Ehrman concludes, "They oppose Jesus because he is God's unique representative on earth--God's authoritative Son and they, the leaders of Israel, cannot understand who he is or what he says... And they are not alone" (61). Ehrman sees Peter's confession in 8:29 as the climatic point in the narrative, the point at which Peter says, "You are the Christ." Misunderstood, halfway through the account, Jesus is recognized but only in part; Ehrman's point is that this recognition has been slow in coming and that it still does not accept the nature of a "suffering messiah" (64-65).

In the final chapter of this work, I have included the following intriguing suggestion from David Ulansey, suggesting the conscious use of *inclusio* and a dramatic tearing apart of the heavens for the historical Jesus:

We may therefore conclude (1) that Mark did indeed have in mind the outer veil, and (2) that Mark did indeed imagine a link between the tearing of the heavens and the tearing of the temple veil-- since we can now see that in fact in both cases the heavens were torn-- and that he intentionally inserted the motif of the "tearing of the heavenly veil" at both the precise beginning and at the precise end of the earthly career of Jesus, in order to create a powerful and intriguing symbolic *inclusio*.

Pasted from < <http://www.mysterium.com/veil.html> >

In the fifteenth chapter, I looked at Dominic Rudman's argument the events of the crucifixion can be explained as "chaoskampf": Dominic Rudman has pointed out that the Synoptic Gospels' depiction of the events surrounding the crucifixion "have provoked varying responses from New Testament scholars and says the references can be explained relative to the chaoskampf typology of the Old Testament... Jesus is presented as a creator figure who confronts the powers of chaos. In this instance however, the powers of chaos emerge temporarily triumphant. The old creation is destroyed, paving the way for a renewal of creation with Jesus's resurrection."

Pasted from < <http://www.bsw.org/Biblica/Vol-84-2003/The-Crucifixion-As-Chaoskampf-A-New-Reading-Of-The-Passion-Narrative-In-The-Synoptic-Gospels/196/article-p103.html> >

Rudman's suggestion opens up the possibility, too, of taking a closer look at chapter two in Mark. Readers will keep in mind the arguments that the historical Jesus comes to us as an irruption of eternity, and with Mark as the first gospel, the good news that signals a new creation, Consider then the words in Genesis, "Let us make man in our image" (1.8) and Mark 1:38, "Let us go on to the next towns, that I may preach there also, for that is why I came out." Mark propels readers immediately into the effect Jesus will have on the world and all of history after him.

Pasted from < <http://www.esvbible.org/search/Mark%2B2/> >

Home	Introduction	Ch1	Ch2	Ch3	Ch4	Ch5	Ch6	Ch7
Ch8	Ch9	Ch10	Ch11	Ch12	Ch13	Ch14	Ch15	Ch16

Chapter three of Mark can be quickly summarized:

Summary The Pharisees conspire with the Herodians against Jesus because he heals a man's withered hand on the Sabbath. Questioning their legal and ritualistic piety, Jesus challenges them: "Is it lawful to do good or to do harm on the Sabbath, to save life or to kill?" The fame of Jesus has apparently grown because Mark next records him as being surrounded by a throng near the Sea of Galilee; because the press of the crowd is so great, he asks his disciples to take him out upon the sea in a boat. Unclean spirits fell down before him and proclaimed "You are the Son of God!" Jesus admonished those healed not to make him known. From the sea, Jesus goes up into the mountains where he appoints the twelve:

16 So he appointed the twelve: Simon (to whom he gave the name Peter); 17 James son of Zebedee and John the brother of James (to whom he gave the name Boanerges, that is, Sons of Thunder); 18 and Andrew, and Philip, and Bartholomew, and Matthew, and Thomas, and James son of Alphaeus, and Thaddaeus, and Simon the Cananaean, 19 and Judas Iscariot, who betrayed him.

He next returns home with a crowd following him. His family describes Jesus as having gone mad; the scribes say he has been infected by Beelzebul and demons. Jesus points out to the scribes that it is illogical that he would be infected by Beelzebul at the same time that he is casting out Satan; a divided kingdom, Jesus reminds them, is a kingdom which will not stand. This section concludes with a warning about blasphemy of the Holy Spirit:

28 "Truly I tell you, people will be forgiven for their sins and whatever blasphemies they utter; 29 but whoever blasphemes against the Holy Spirit can never have forgiveness, but is guilty of an eternal sin"— 30 for they had said, "He has an unclean spirit."

This chapter concludes with word that Jesus' mother and brothers are asking for him; Jesus responds by saying that everyone gathered there are his brothers and sisters: "Whoever does the will of God is my brother and sister and mother."

Pasted from <<http://crain.english.missouriwestern.edu/Mark/interpre2.htm>>

Mark		Matthew	Luke
3:1-6	The Man with a Withered Hand	12:9-14	6:6-11
3:7-12	A Multitude at the Seaside	-	-
3:13-19	The List of the Twelve	10:1-4	6:12-16
3:20-30	Jesus and Beelzebul	12:22-32	11:14-23: 12:10
3:31-35	The Mother and Brothers of Jesus	12:46-50	8:19-21

from <<http://www.silk.net/RelEd/gospelmark3.htm>>

Readers recognize Mark 3 as continuing the Sabbath controversy against the disciples' plucking grain as they, perhaps, casually walked through the grain fields. This time, however, Jesus is, once again, in the synagogue being watched whether he would heal a withered hand on this special day--do good work (3:1-6). NISV remarks that this is a very general and double question: while it was lawful to save life on the sabbath, to "do good" is general; irony exists between the work involved in doing good and that involved with conspiring with the Herodians, Jewish leaders associated with Herod, to destroy Jesus. Turbin quotes Meir to show that Jesus performs no work here unless the command itself be so construed:

"One of the remarkable aspects of the story of Jesus healing the man with the withered hand on the Sabbath is that, quite literally, Jesus does nothing. That is to say, he performs no action whatever. He does not touch the man, lay hands upon him, seize him by the hand, or raise him up, as is the case in some other Gospel accounts of Jesus' miracles. Jesus simply issues two verbal orders: the man is to stand up in the sight of the congregation and to stretch forth his hand. On doing that, the man finds his hand healed. Since Jesus has engaged in no physical activity whatever, it is unbelievable that the Pharisees, who differed both among themselves and with other Jewish groups on precise points of Sabbath observance, would think that they could have Jesus put to death merely for speaking healing words on a Sabbath."

Pasted from <<http://www.michaelturton.com/Mark/GMark03.html>>

In his summary of this section, the familiar, and somewhat facile "not history" reemerges with Turton at his best when he looks for associations with Old Testament literature:

Historicity cannot be supported here. First, it contains an impossible supernatural healing. Second, it is based on 1 Kings 13:4-6:

4 When King Jeroboam heard what the man of God cried out against the altar at Bethel, he stretched out his hand from the altar and said, "Seize him!" But the hand he stretched out toward the man shriveled up, so that he could not pull it back. 5 Also, the altar was split apart and its ashes poured out according to the sign given by the man of God by the word of the LORD. 6 Then the king said to the man of God, "Intercede with the LORD your God and pray for me that my hand may be restored." So the man of God interceded with the LORD, and the king's hand was restored and became as it was before. (NIV)

In 1 Kings the event takes place in an altar, in Mark it occurs in a synagogue. It is interesting to note that in the verse in 1 Kings 13 prior to this there is a reference to the 'Son of David' (Josiah) who will sacrifice the priests of the high places on the altar. After the Temple was taken, Titus had the Jewish priests slain.

Pasted from <<http://www.michaelturton.com/Mark/GMarko3.html>>

As noted earlier about overall structure, Mark 1:16-3:6 forms a first major segment of Mark, composed of two parallel units each beginning with a calling story, four healing stories and four controversy stories, each ending with a combined healing/controversy (NISB Notes). Mark 3:7-6:32 begins the next major segment:

This second major section of the Gospel begins with a summary of Jesus' actions and then the designation of the special twelve disciples to 'be with him' (3:14); and it ends with the mission of the twelve disciples. In between the designation and the sending out of the twelve, the first long teaching speech of Jesus is Mark is presented (4:1-34)...This second segment clarifies the responses of the various groups Jesus encounters to his message of healing/salvation and provides the listening audience with orientation and direction about what to expect as the story continues. (NISB Notes).

Mark's intercalating technique is demonstrated in the short story of Jesus' family (20-21, 31-35) which is intertwined with a controversy with the scribes (22-30) as remarked in NISB notes. Here, the family of Jesus go out to rescue him from a crowd that says "Jesus has gone out of his mind" (21); the scribes say, "He has Beelzebul, and by the ruler of demons he casts out demons" (22). Turton sees in Beelzebul a reference to 2 Kings 1, "a passage Mark has already paralleled twice, in the opening account of John the Baptist, who resembled Elijah, and in the story of the paralytic in Mark 2":

2 Kings 1:1

Now Ahaziah had fallen through the lattice of his upper room in Samaria and injured himself. So he sent messengers, saying to them, "Go and consult Baal-Zebub, the god of Ekron, to see if I will recover from this injury." (NIV)

Pasted from <<http://www.michaelturton.com/Mark/GMarko3.html>>

To these accusations, the narrator tells readers specifically that Jesus begins to teach in parables (23):

Pasted from <<http://www.biblestudytools.com/nrs/mark/3.html>>

Since the purpose of parables will be addressed in chapter 4, here it may be worthwhile to explain that Mark's parables have traditionally been interpreted allegorically as "expressing the meaning of one thing in language about something different" (NISB Notes). According to NISB Notes, Mark follows Greek rhetorical tradition, referring to a large class of brief writing, including riddles, proverbs, fables, and symbolic acts contrasting to Roman rhetoric which uses brief comparisons or metaphors to illustrate an argument. In this case, the parables appear in the form of two questions followed by assertions:

23 And he called them to him, and spoke to them in parables, "How can Satan cast out Satan? 24 If a kingdom is divided against itself, that kingdom cannot stand. 25 And if a house is divided against itself, that house will not be able to stand. 26 And if Satan has risen up against himself and is divided, he cannot stand, but his end has come. 27 But no one can enter a strong man's house and plunder his property without first tying up the strong man; then indeed the house can be plundered. 28 "Truly I tell you, people will be forgiven for their sins and whatever blasphemies they utter; 29 but whoever blasphemes against the Holy Spirit can never have forgiveness, but is guilty of an eternal sin"— 30 for they had said, "He has an unclean spirit."

Pasted from <<http://www.biblestudytools.com/nrs/mark/3.html>>

Readers will note a couple of matters here: Jesus replies in response to the accusations of being out of his mind and being Beelzebul and effectively to the earlier charge of blasphemy (2:7); in this case, the scribes have blasphemed by calling good evil (1:28-30). Bible translations have usually opted to translate the Greek "Adversary" into Satan, Young's literal translation translating it as "Adversary," this also the case with Paul McReynolds Word Study Greek English New Testament with Complete Concordance using "adversary." A divided Satan/kingdom/house will not be able to stand; a strong entity would have to be tied up before his house could be plundered (27), and in the case of Satan, "his end has come" (23). Turton quotes Tolbert in response to what he considers short allegories:

Either of two allegories may be in action here. Perhaps the "strong man" is Satan and Jesus is now plundering his house by casting out demons. Or perhaps the strong man is Jesus, who will eventually be led away bound, his house plundered by the betrayal of Judas, denounced as a blasphemer and executed as a criminal (Tolbert 1989, p100).

Pasted from <<http://www.michaelturton.com/Mark/GMarko3.html>>

This story is further tied to chapter 1:23 and the healing of the man with the "unclean spirit." Here, the blasphemy is that the scribes have said that Jesus "has an unclean spirit" (30). Readers will note the close tie between demons and "unclean spirits." Ironically, earlier the demons have recognized Jesus (24), but here, the scribes have sought to possess power over Jesus by identifying him as Satan/Adversary. Turton points to the use of enthymemes as argument:

v23-28: Vernon Robbins (2002) states "As Jesus elaborates his response to the scribes, he uses the argumentative procedures of wisdom discourse that features parables, enthymemes, and contraries." Here he lays out the structure of the argumentation:

Proposition/Result: (23) How can Satan cast out Satan? [= Satan cannot cast out Satan.]

Rationale:

Case: (24) If a kingdom is divided against itself,

Result: that kingdom cannot stand.

Case: (25) And if a house is divided against itself,

Result: that house will not be able to stand.

Case: (26) And if Satan has risen up against himself and is divided,

Result: he cannot stand, but is coming to an end.i"

[Unstated Rule: If a powerful domain rises up against itself, it will destroy itself.]

Argument from the Contrary:

Case: (27) "But no one can enter a strong man's house and plunder his goods, unless he first binds the strong man;

Result: then indeed he may plunder his house."

[Unstated Contrary Rule: If one powerful domain overpowers another, it may plunder the domain it subdues.]

Conclusion As Authoritative Apocalyptic Judgment:

Rule: (28) "Truly, I say to you, all sins will be forgiven the sons of men, and whatever blasphemies they utter; (29) but whoever blasphemes against the Holy Spirit never has forgiveness, but is guilty of an eternal sin" iX

Case: (30) for they [the scribes] had said, "He has an unclean spirit." [= they had said that he cast out unclean spirits by an unclean spirit (Beelzebul), thus blaspheming against the Holy Spirit.]

[Unstated Result: The scribes never have forgiveness for their assertion about Jesus.]

Pasted from <<http://www.michaelturton.com/Mark/GMark03.html>>

Structurally, Mark 3 and 6 parallel in such a way as make both Jesus' family and scribes into outsiders:

Tolbert (1989, see table below) also sees this pericope and the opening of Mark 6 as related at the structural level.

<u>Mark 3</u>	<u>Mark 6</u>
<u>3:7-12</u> by the sea, crowd from many towns, boat ready so as not to be crushed, heals many	<u>6:31-34</u> go to lonely place by boat, crowd from all the towns teaches crowd
<u>3:13-19</u> calls and appoints twelve twelve to be sent out to preach and have authority over demons	<u>6:7-13,30</u> calls and sends out twelve gives them mission instructions and authority over demons
<u>3:19-35</u> seized by those near him as "beside himself."	<u>6:1-6</u> teaches in his native place, rejected by relatives

and neighbors

Ludemann (2001, p24) considers the information that Jesus' family thought he was out of his mind and wanting to seize him to be historical, since it was "too offensive for it to have been invented." He also notes that Matt and Luke delete these ideas. Once again we have a naive, faulty deployment of the embarrassment criterion, since neither writer nor audience are known, so it cannot be known who would have taken offense, and at what. Many exegetes interpret this gospel as a handbook on how to be a disciple. Here Jesus acts as the model, showing that his way is more important than relationships with families. Further, far from being too offensive to invent, it is a signature Markan theme that those close to Jesus did not understand him. Finally, recall that the writer's Christology is Adoptionist. That means that he sees Jesus as an ordinary human whom God Adopted to be his Son (in [Mk 1:11](#)). As Paul noted in Romans 8:14-17, believers were the adopted sons of God.

Pasted from <<http://www.michaelturton.com/Mark/GMarko3.html>>

Leander E. Kech sets out to prove in his "Mark 3:7-12 and Mark's Christology" (1965, Journal of Biblical Literature <<http://www.jstor.org/stable/3264861>> that 3:7-12 forms an important conclusion to a section started at 1:16 and that it contributes significantly to the identity of Jesus:

Instead of beginning a new section, 3 7-12 is the conclusion of the section begun at 1 16. There are two fundamental reasons for this contention: (a) 3 7-12 does not introduce anything. The much-discussed boat does not link the pericopes, for it has entirely different purposes in 3 9 (escape) and 4 1 (teaching platform).²⁵ The crowds, moreover, are not only avoided but simply ignored in what follows, and from this lakeside scene we are abruptly shunted to "the mountain" in 3 13. Besides, the material that begins with 3 13 all deals with the cleavage between "the family of Jesus" and those "outside." This theme is simply not introduced in 3 7-12, nor should it be regarded as the foil for it. (b) On the other hand, 3 7-12 does stand as a good summary of what has been said so far. (1) The "stronger one" (1 7) is shown to have drawn greater crowds than his herald (cf. 1 5, 25, 45d).²⁶ (2) Jesus' response to the crowd is both withdrawal from them on their terms and engagement with them on his own (1 35-39). (3) The conflict with the demons, including their (originally apotropaic?) cry, sums up Mark's understanding of the baptism, temptation, and exorcisms. In other words, in this paragraph Mark formulates what he has been saying so far.²⁷ That subsequent materials are somehow related to this — e. g., the Beelzebub controversy — is neither a surprise nor an argument against this interpretation of our paragraph's role. Mark clearly wants to make the point about the nature of Jesus' work and the basis of his power before he takes up the controversial meaning of that power. (4) Moreover, it is 3 13-19 that begins a new section, not 3 7-12; and it does so precisely as the first section began — with the "call" of the disciples."

The difference, theologically, then is that Mark interprets the "preaching to the nations" not as post-Easter but as belonging to Jesus' lifetime:

The eschatological preaching to the nations — a post-Easter development achieved not without resistance — is thereby traced to the work of the historical Jesus. Mark put this feature of the church's work back into Jesus' lifetime just as he put the divine Sonship of Jesus at the beginning of his earthly career and not at the beginning of his exalted status (as Rom 1 3 shows the earlier tradition to have done).

Kech insists that Mark insists "on the necessity of suffering for the Son of man and his disciples."

The final section picks up, once again, the picture of Jesus' mother and his brothers, and sisters standing outside calling to him, to which he responds by identifying "his family" as being those who do God's will (NISB notes): "Whoever does the will of God is my brother and sister and mother" (35).

At the end of chapter 3, then, Jesus has been identified as "proclaiming the good news of God" and the nearness of the Kingdom of God. The message has been rejected by the religious and by his family. He has been recognized partially as "the Holy One of God" (1:24) and by the sick/demons who "knew him" (1:34), and as "the Son of God" (3:11, 12). He has been accused of blasphemy, keeping purity rituals loosely, and of working on the sabbath; he has taught and healed in the synagogue, bringing scrutiny and hostility to his "good news." He has also called Twelve to a mountain (3:13) and divine revelation, a revelation, unfortunately, that they can glimpse only partially. Turton concludes concerning the model for these Twelve by pointing to Old Testament passages of Joshua 4: 1-8 and Exodus 18:

In fact an enormous number of possible models for the Twelve have been proposed, ranging from astrological and mythological, to Old Testament sets of Twelve. The vast range of possibilities makes it difficult to decide which one is right. Nor must we imagine that the writer of Mark had one particular model in mind; he was obviously capable of drawing on a number of texts. In any case, it is most likely that the names, with the exception of Peter and James and John, which may well come from Paul, are a creation of the writer.

Pasted from <<http://www.michaelturton.com/Mark/GMarko3.html>>

Concerning the historicity, Turton summarizes scholarship, then concludes with a note of doubt:

v14: Walter Schmithals (1969, p68-70) observed that it is rare in the gospels that Jesus is quoted as referring to the Twelve. Generally, references occur only in the narrative portions. He concluded that the Twelve are a post-Easter institution retrojected into the Gospels. With the exception of 14:20 (which may well be an interpolation), all uses of "the Twelve" in Mark occur in redaction created by the writer of Mark. The Gospel of Mark thus offers us no reason to suppose that the Twelve are an institution of Jesus. Schmithals also argued that this list was transferred in from Acts, though that position has not gained support in the scholarly mainstream. Note that the various manuscripts of Mark name 13 or more apostles: Levi, son of Alphaeus

James, son of Alphaeus
 Simon, renamed Peter
 James, son of Zebedee
 John, son of Zebedee
 Andrew
 Philip
 Bartholomew
 Matthew
 Thomas
 Thaddaeus/Lebbaeus/Daddaeus (manuscripts disagree on the name)
 Simon the Canaanite
 Judas Iscariot

Note that "James, son of Alphaeus" and "Levi, son of Alphaeus" may be two versions of the same person. So while there are thirteen names, perhaps only twelve people are represented.

James, son of Alphaeus
 Simon, renamed Peter
 James, son of Zebedee
 John, son of Zebedee
 Andrew
 Philip
 Bartholomew
 Matthew
 Thomas
 Thaddaeus/Lebbaeus/Daddaeus (manuscripts disagree on the name)
 Simon the Canaanite
 Judas Iscariot

Note that "James, son of Alphaeus" and "Levi, son of Alphaeus" may be two versions of the same person. So while there are thirteen names, perhaps only twelve people are represented.

v14: Burton Mack (1988) observes:

"Thus the disciples in Mark betray thematic interests. Their prominent place in Mark's story of Jesus cannot be used to argue for "discipleship" as a common concept among Jesus movements before Mark's time. It is not unthinkable that Mark was active in turning lore about the "pillars" Cephas, James, and John (Gal 2:9) into stories about "disciples" of Jesus."(p79)

16: Simon whom he surnamed Peter;

v16-19: Are the disciples historical figures? Price writes:

"It is astonishing to realize, for example, that the canonical lists of the Twelve (Mark 3:16-19, Matthew 10:2-4, Luke 6:14-16, John 21:2, Acts 1:13) do not agree in detail, nor do manuscripts of single gospels!" (2003, p186)

Pasted from <<http://www.michaelturton.com/Mark/GMarko3.html>>

Home	Introduction	Ch1	Ch2	Ch3	Ch4	Ch5
Ch6	Ch7					
Ch8	Ch9	Ch10	Ch11	Ch12	Ch13	Ch14
Ch15	Ch16					

Last revised November 2018

Mark		Matthew	Luke
<u>4:1-9</u>	The Parable of the Sower	<u>13:1-9</u>	<u>8:4-8</u>
<u>4:10-12</u>	The Purpose of the Parables	<u>13:10-17</u>	<u>8:9-10</u>
<u>4:13-20</u>	The Parable of the Sower Explained	<u>13:18-23</u>	<u>8:11-15</u>
<u>4:21-25</u>	A Light under a Bushel	-	<u>8:16-18</u>
<u>4:26-29</u>	The Parable of the Growing Seed	-	-
<u>4:30-32</u>	The Parable of the Mustard Seed	<u>13:31-32</u>	<u>13:18-19</u>
<u>4:33-34</u>	The Use of Parables	<u>13:34-35</u>	-
<u>4:35-41</u>	The Calming of a Storm	<u>8:23-27</u>	<u>8:22-25</u>

Pasted from

<<http://www.silk.net/RelEd/gospelmark4.htm>>

In the previous chapter, we have dealt in a somewhat summary way with the question of whether Jesus came from God or the Adversary. At issue is Jesus's claim for the support of the God of Israel at the same time that "he contradicted well ensconced conventional views" (the Cambridge Companion to the Bible 486); specifically, Jesus welcomed "outcasts, 'sinners,' women, and children, and approached 'lepers,' people thought to be dead, Gentiles, and the demon-possessed" (485). His "divinely mandated future, anticipated by Isaiah and Zechariah, "saw purity in terms of love of God and neighbor" (485). It may help readers to recall that Caiphias had removed the Sanhedrian from the Temple and had permitted vendors to set up shop in the Great Court (482); Jesus, on the other hand, supported offerings of one's produce. At bottom, Jesus challenges the priestly control of the Temple and worship there (482). Jesus, "hunted by Herod Antipas in Galilee, uncertain of safety within the domain of Herod Philip, repulsed by the Gentile population east of the Sea of Galilee" (502), dispatched the Twelve as "delegates on his behalf... to proclaim God's kingdom and heal."

Chapter 4 can be summarized briefly:

In chapter four of Mark, Jesus speaks in parables: the parable of the sower, the lamp under the bushel basket, the parable of the growing seed, and the parable of the mustard seed. The chapter concludes with a word about the use of parables and a demonstration of Jesus' authority over natural forces.

Pasted from <<http://crain.english.missouriwestern.edu/Mark/interpre3.htm>>

In earlier work on Mark, I provided the following commentary on this chapter:

The first parable provided is that of the sower.

3 "Listen! A sower went out to sow. 4 And as he sowed, some seed fell on the path, and the birds came and ate it up. 5 Other seed fell on rocky ground, where it did not have much soil, and it sprang up quickly, since it had no depth of soil. 6 And when the sun rose, it was scorched; and since it had no root, it withered away. 7 Other seed fell among thorns, and the thorns grew up and choked it, and it yielded no grain. 8 Other seed fell into good soil and brought forth grain, growing up and increasing and yielding thirty and sixty and a hundredfold." 9 And he said, "Let anyone with ears to hear listen!" In this case, Jesus himself interprets the parable for his disciples; we need to note that he is alone with the twelve and other believers:

13 And he said to them, "Do you not understand this parable? Then how will you understand all the parables? 14 The sower sows the word. 15 These are the ones on the path where the word is sown: when they hear, Satan immediately comes and takes away the word that is sown in them. 16 And these are the ones sown on rocky ground: when they hear the word, they immediately receive it with joy. 17 But they have no root, and endure only for a while; then, when trouble or persecution arises on account of the word, immediately they fall away. † 18 And others are those sown among the thorns: these are the ones who hear the word, 19 but the cares of the world, and the lure of wealth, and the desire for other things come in and choke the word, and it yields nothing. 20 And these are the ones sown on the good soil: they hear the word and accept it and bear fruit, thirty and sixty and a hundredfold."

Jesus instructs his followers, demonstrating a clear sense of those inside and those outside: truth is revealed but comprehended only by those initiated.

On the heels of Jesus's words about mystery and those initiated into truth revealed comes the next parable:

21 He said to them, "Is a lamp brought in to be put under the bushel basket, or under the bed, and not on the lamp stand? 22 For there is nothing hidden, except to be disclosed; nor is anything secret, except to come to light. 23 Let anyone with ears to hear listen!" 24 And he said to them, "Pay attention to what you hear; the measure you give will be the measure you get, and still more will be given you. 25 For to those who have, more will be given; and from those who have nothing, even what they have will be taken away."

If this is applied to the previous parable, it would seem to suggest that Jesus is not in the business of hiding light: what is hidden will be disclosed; what is secret will come to light. These lines suggest the mystery exists relative to timing: hidden now, will be disclosed; what is secret now, will come to light. The obstruction to understanding is, ironically, the very means of understanding: the mental structure of time. Little wonder that Jesus should say, "Pay attention." He goes on to speak even more directly: what you give, you will get; those having will get more, and those without anything will discover even that taken. If one begins with possessing truth revealed, then more will be gotten; if one begins without revealed truth, even what he has will be taken. How simple! The parable works on two levels--the invisible kingdom coming into being and the existing, but disappearing temporal kingdom.

Jesus, still speaking of the Kingdom of God, turns to the parable of the growing seed:

26 He also said, "The kingdom of God is as if someone would scatter seed on the ground, 27 and would sleep and rise night and day, and the seed would sprout and grow, he does not know how. 28 The earth produces of itself, first the stalk, then the head, then the full grain in the head. 29 But when the grain is ripe, at once he goes in with his sickle, because the harvest has come."

He's direct here in talking about the Kingdom of God and the mystery of its growth--the point is that "how it [the kingdom] grows," one does not know. Even organic life is not understood in impulse, but only in manifest result: the stalk, the head, the full grain. These parables are not unrelated: Jesus began by talking about a sower, then talked about parables as not being anything more than a "timed" disclosure, and moves now to the idea of the germinating seed or the invisible made visible in time.

The Kingdom of God, if one credits the connected argument, begins with twelve and a few followers, a very small number. This time, the figurative image is the mustard seed.

Thus, in addition to fertility, abundance, and continuity, plants are used to represent life's frailty, brevity, and transitory nature (Isaiah 40.6-8; Job 14.2; Psalm 90.6; 1 Peter 1.24). Biblical symbolism draws also on the characteristics of individual plants, such as the great height and longevity of the cedar tree (Psalm 92.12; see similarly the parable of Jotham, Judges 9.8-15, and the parable of the mustard seed, Matthew 13.31-32). The New Testament is replete with agricultural imagery; see, for example, Mark 4.3-8; Mark 4.26-29; Matthew 9.37-38; Luke 13.6-9. (Oxford Companion)

The mustard seed grows very quickly, in a matter of weeks, from the smallest of seeds into a ten to twelve foot bush. As the mustard seed becomes the greatest bush, so will the Kingdom of God become the greatest kingdom.

Having used details from nature in these parables, it's not surprising to find this argument logically culminating in a demonstration of Jesus's authority or control over the natural or temporal world:

35 On that day, when evening had come, he said to them, "Let us go across to the other side." 36 And leaving the crowd behind, they took him with them in the boat, just as he was. Other boats were with him. 37 A great windstorm arose, and the waves beat into the boat, so that the boat was already being swamped. 38 But he was in the stern, asleep on the cushion; and they woke him up and said to him, "Teacher, do you not care that we are perishing?" 39 He woke up and rebuked the wind, and said to the sea, "Peace! Be still!" Then the wind ceased, and there was a dead calm. 40 He said to them, "Why are you afraid? Have you still no faith?" 41 And they were filled with great awe and said to one another, "Who then is this, that even the wind and the sea obey him?"

I'm struck by the very human cry, "Teacher, do you not care that we are perishing?" This is the mortal cry in all days and all ages. Jesus responds, as he has throughout Mark, by acting, "He woke up and rebuked the wind, and said to the sea, 'Peace! Be still.'" What follows is dead calm. The disciples are probably even more afraid now; at first, they had been confronted only by natural and temporal powers; now, they are in the presence of the spiritual manifest, and they are afraid and filled with awe. They ask, even though Mark has answered this in the beginning and will continue to answer it through the passion and resurrection. "Who then is this, that even the wind and the sea obey him?" The answer, though not supplied here, is simple: he is the Son of God, and the Kingdom of God is even now being revealed among humankind.

Pasted from <<http://crain.english.missouriwestern.edu/Mark/interpre3.htm>>

Dominic Rudman sees in this passage what he calls the *chaoskampf* theme; chapter fifteen where the next step is taken to link the gospel of Mark with the original act of creation discusses more about *chaoskampf*:

This chaoskampf theme is far from alien to the gospels (especially in confrontations with the demonic), and features most prominently in the narrative in which Jesus demonstrates his command over the forces of chaos by ordering the winds and waves that had threatened his boat to be still (Matt 8,23-27; Mark 4,35-41; Luke 8,22-25). Several commentators see in this latter episode an allusion to Psalm 104, in which Yahweh accomplishes the same feat. Indeed, it is noticeable that Jesus, faced by the raging chaos waters, does not call on Yahweh, but, rather, acts as if he were Yahweh 6. Naturally, the synoptic writers stop short of taking the parallel to its logical conclusion (i.e. calling Jesus "God")7, but there is certainly a blurring of the distinction between Jesus as human and the Jesus as a creator figure. The act of repulsing the hostile forces of chaos is implicitly linked with creation, and the godlike power of Jesus in so doing is evidenced in the terrified exclamation of the disciples: "Who is this? Even the winds and waves obey him!" (Matt 8,27; Mark 4,41 cf. Luke 8,25).

2. Jesus' Death and Resurrection

Pasted from <<http://www.bsw.org/Biblica/Vol-84-2003/The-Crucifixion-As-Chaoskampf-A-New-Reading-Of-The-Passion-Narrative-In-The-Synoptic-Gospels/196/article-p105.html>>

Perhaps first attention, as Turton suggests, in chapter 4 should be given to why parables have been chosen as Jesus's preferred teaching method:

Parable of the Sower

Myers (1988, p172) is among a number of exegetes who argue that the writer of Mark appears to have adopted his parable (which Myers interprets as political criticism) from Ezekiel's use of the term parable (mashal) in Ezekiel 17:2:

"Son of man, set forth an allegory and tell the house of Israel a parable." (NIV)

Additional parable verses in Exekiel include 20:49:

Then I said, "Ah, Sovereign LORD ! They are saying of me, 'Isn't he just telling parables?' " (NIV)
and 24:3:

Tell this rebellious house a parable and say to them: "This is what the Sovereign LORD says: (NIV)

v3-8: this may be suggested by Isaiah 40:24, where God appears as the sower, though in a different context:

22 He sits enthroned above the circle of the earth, and its people are like grasshoppers. He stretches out the heavens like a canopy, and spreads them out like a tent to live in. 23 He brings princes to naught and reduces the rulers of this world to nothing. 24 No sooner are they planted, no sooner are they sown, no sooner do they take root in the ground, than he blows on them and they wither, and a whirlwind sweeps them away like chaff.

v3-8: May also be a reference to Isaiah 61:11, a chapter in the background to many of the healings in Mark.

11 For as the soil makes the sprout come up and a garden causes seeds to grow, so the Sovereign LORD will make righteousness and praise spring up before all nations. (NIV)

Pasted from <<http://www.michaelturton.com/Mark/GMark04.html>>

Turton explains that parables predate Jesus (Judges 9:7-15, 2 Samuel 12:1-4), that parables have a fixed pattern, similar stories are known in Jewish and Greek literature, and the use of seeds was a stock metaphor in Hellenistic culture, (Seneca, Epistles 38.2); the parable seems to have been developed to explain, etiologically, the nickname of Peter, the Rock, Peter's faithlessness also found in Galatians 2: 11-14; and "the phrase, "the eyes of those who see will no longer be closed, and the ears of those who hear will listen" may echo Psalm 135:17, Proverbs 20:12; or Isaiah 30:21 and belongs as a common motif to Old Testament literature; " The imageries of the field, sowing seeds, miscarriage, and harvest are standard metaphors for God's dealing with Israel in Jewish apocalyptic, wisdom, and prophetic literatures ("Mack 1988, 155); the teaching scene exhibit a discernible structure--public instruction, change of location, private question, sarcastic complaint from the Teacher, followed by a decisive explanation; "to you is given the secret of the kingdom of God" seems to be based on Isaiah 6:9-10; the messianic secret parallels a very public mission; "mystery" follows Hellenistic literature in emphasizing "only a few are qualified to know"; the phrase may also link to Numbers 12:6, distinguishing prophets who know through visions and dreams from those with whom God speaks mouth to mouth; Paul (1 Cor. 2:6-7) highlight wisdom as gained by the mature and as not being the wisdom of the world; and finally, what becomes clear is that the disciples just do not get it; on the inside, they misunderstand.

Pasted from <<http://www.michaelturton.com/Mark/GMark04.html>>

One may ask why Jesus used parable rather than "simple-speak." The question ultimately dovetails into another question concerning the messiahship of Jesus as well as historicity. John M. Depoe makes the case for believing in the man rather than the miracle:

I propose that there is not one solitary hermeneutical formula that needs to be invoked whenever we encounter the alleged messianic secret. Rather, I suggest that there are several corroborative reasons which can account for the motif of secrecy in Mark's gospel that do not compromise the historicity or message of the gospel.

First of all secrecy could have been implemented because Jesus did not wish to be renown for being a miracle worker.

Secondly, faith based upon miraculous exhibitions is not faith in the person and message of Jesus but rather on the miracles he performs.

Everyone who witnessed Jesus' miracles did not come to have faith in him. Instead, they usually revealed the content of faith that people already had in Jesus. David Garland correctly notes that miracles actually disclose "those who want only miracles can see nothing"

<http://www.johndepoe.com/Messianic_secret.pdf >.

R. Wesley Hurd has argued for two effects in Jesus's use of stories, sayings, and parables :

1) The indirect communication obstructs the truth from those whose hearts are not open to it, a strategy that fulfills the prophecy found in Psalm 78. When Israel looked for and needed direct signs of God's reality, presence, and provision, God gave them plenty. But direct signs did not lead Israel to faith. As a judgment, the Messiah comes speaking in puzzling parables that obscure immediate apprehension of the truth so that in seeing they do not see and in hearing they do not hear.

2) Jesus' indirect communication invites openhearted, genuine seekers to seek further. The parables provoke the hearer to engage the puzzling sayings and the profound questions they raise. This intriguing "provocation of obscurity" thus fosters an interest in knowing more. Jesus' strategy is to "puzzle" those who will hear him out of their darkness and self-deception. Jesus thus employs what has been called "a rhetoric of awakening" to stun the listener to awareness of how he, Jesus, is the truth.

Pasted from <<http://msc.gutenberg.edu/2007/10/why-the-parables-reflections-on-true-understanding/>>

In chapter three, we noted that parables have been interpreted to work allegorically; such a definition concurs with Hurd's notion that hearers/readers must seek further than the actual story itself. Michael Turton highlights the connection made by Hoskyns and Davey (1931) to messiahship and to the advent of the kingdom of God breaking forth in the words and actions of Jesus:

This Christological penetration of the parables renders them everywhere less illustrations of moral or spiritual truths that are easy of understanding than an integral element in the revelation of God that is taking place in Palestine with the advent of the messiah in his humiliation. Their understanding therefore depends upon the recognition of Jesus as the messiah and upon the recognition of the kingdom of God that is breaking forth in his words and actions. As a result of this particular historical situation, the Greek word *parabole* escapes from its Greek context, escapes also from the meaning which the Rabbis attached to its Hebrew equivalent, *mashal*, and acquires the meaning, which *mashal*, translated by *parabole*, possessed in certain important Old Testament passages. There the word was used to denote Israel as a surprise or a byword, a scandal or an enigma to the nations, because the chosen people composed the concrete sphere of God's revelation to the world. In their captivity they revealed His judgement upon disobedience:

I will even give them up to be tossed to and fro among all the kingdoms of the earth for evil; to be a reproach and a proverb (*mashal-parabole*), a taunt and a curse, in all places whither I shall drive them; (Jer.xxiv.9) in their possession of the law they displayed the righteousness which he demanded: And thou (Israel) shalt become an astonishment, a proverb (*mashal-parabole*), and a byword, among all the peoples whither the Lord shall lead thee away. (Deut.xxviii.37)

It is therefore not in the least surprising to find Mark recording that the parables of Jesus were the means by which he presented to his disciples 'the mystery of the kingdom' (Mk.iv.11), and that he expected his disciples to perceive this meaning."

Pasted from <<http://www.michaelturton.com/Mark/GMarko4.html>>

Turton further quotes Stephen More to the effect parables form a permeable boundary between insiders and outsiders:

"Parabolai in Mark are a partition, screen, or membrane designed to keep insiders on one side, outsiders on the other. Outsiders are those for whom 'everything comes in parables,' parables that they find incomprehensible (4:11-12). At the same time, parabolai are what rupture that membrane, render it permeable, infect the opposition with contradiction: those who should be on the inside find themselves repeatedly put out by Jesus' parabolic words and deeds. Appointed to allow insiders in and to keep outsiders out, parables unexpectedly begin to threaten everyone with exclusion in Mark, even disciples seeking entry. Deranged doormen, parables threaten to make outsiders of us all" (p21-2)

Pasted from <<http://www.michaelturton.com/Mark/GMarko4.html>>

Verse 33 seems to support this interpretation:

33 With many such parables he spoke the word to them, as they were able to hear it; 34 he did not speak to them except in parables, but he explained everything in private to his disciples.

Pasted from <<http://www.biblestudytools.com/nrs/mark/4.html>>

The above approaches to parable, largely in agreement, may miss two major points made by Norman Perrin: that parables are not allegories and that parables were meant to be heard in the actual history in which they are told as opposed to interpreted in light of theology, which largely has made parables into allegories:

In speaking of the parables of Jesus, I intend to speak of the parables as Jesus actually taught them, that is, of the parables of Jesus as reconstructed from the gospels by modern New Testament scholarship. This reconstruction is indeed one of the triumphs of that scholarship, and work upon the parables remains a major preoccupation of contemporary New Testament scholars.¹ As originally delivered by Jesus, they were oral texts—they were remembered rather than

written down. But they were of course eventually written down, and they were transmitted in the tradition of the church, no doubt both orally and in writing, and finally found their present place in the canonical gospels and in the Coptic gospel of Thomas, a Gnostic document from Nag Hammadi. In the canonical gospels, they have usually been reinterpreted as allegories, and this allegorization continued in the church until modern times. The question of the legitimacy of this reinterpretation will concern us later. The parables of Jesus are artistic creations of a very high order, and they embody a distinct and distinctive vision of reality. They represent probably the highest form of verbal art in the New Testament, and they are religious texts of very great importance indeed. ("Historical Criticism, Literary Criticism, and Hermeneutics: The Interpretation of the Parables of Jesus and the Gospel of Mark Today" in the Journal of Religion, Vol.52, No. 4, Oct. 1972, accessed 15/03/2012 10:59, 362)

Perrin says of parable, "The parables of Jesus are highly personal texts. By means of metaphor and of metaphor extended in narrative, they express the vision of reality of their author, Jesus."

In my earlier work on Mark, I concluded, Jesus is "the Son of God" and the Kingdom of God is being revealed. Readers will recall I introduced the argument that "son of God" may be connected to later Christology and that kingdom of God could be looked at eschatologically (end-time) or more idealistically, as utopia. I quote my conclusion:

Given what is recorded of Jesus in action and words--the Great Commandments to love God and love people, his ministry to the marginalized, Mark's presentation of Jesus as servant--Thomas's view that the "Kingdom of God" is a metaphor for just rule would seem to be justified. Interpreted in this way, Jesus begins his mission with "just rule" has come near, and it has something to do with people who need to repent and believe. The NISB Notes makes the point that "the Kingdom of God, which Jesus proclaims, precedes Jesus' own ministry; indeed, Jesus' ministry may be toward the culmination of this process," basing this explanation on the use of the perfect tense in Greek. After a brief remark on belief (*pistis* in Greek), NISB says belief "becomes a standard for those who hear Jesus' message" and "The Kingdom of God refers to the period or place in which God reigns as undisputed King over the people and the creation." Readers will further recall that I suggested an in sweeping of a vortex of creative at the baptism of Jesus; I quote that again here:

Kingdom of God is imminent (:1) and "comes with power" and Transfiguration--the latter associated with Ezekiel and Merkavah (throne chariot: analogy of the way YHWH works in the world). Note the inner circle of Peter, James, and John, who see Jesus talking with Elijah and Moses, two prophets believed not to have died but to have been taken up directly to heaven; according to Malachi (4:5-6) Elijah was to come as precursor to the Messiah. Notes to the NRSV says some have viewed the transfiguration as a "misplaced resurrection." Mark may also be read as an initiation story: the initiates must be prepared for inclusion in the mystery of the coming Kingdom of God, this touching on how one reads--whether literally or metaphorically--as well as defines who is inside or outside the mystery. The throne of God, Merkavah, represented the vortex of creative energy which determines significance of any given historical period; this tradition of thinking dates back to Mesopotamia (twenty-third century BCE) and to Babylonia (Cambridge Companion to the Bible, 520). Readers must remember that the ancient view of the world was that of multiple, hard shells that had to be rended by the divine, thus the descension of the Spirit at the baptism of Jesus (Mark 1: 9-13). The term son of god, often used to describe angels and their relationship to God, expressed, not biological relationship but revelatory relationship (Companion, 521). By this view, Jesus may be viewed as a practitioner of divine presence.

This chapter has further been summarized theologically in the following way:

In Mark chapter 4 there are two main theological implications: The kingdom of God and disciples. The kingdom refers to the rule or reign of God. The primary representative of that kingdom in Mark's gospel is Jesus, who proclaimed "the good news of God: "The time has come. The kingdom of God is near.

In the parable of the sower, Jesus referred to understanding its message as an aspect of the "secret of the kingdom of God" (4:11) which had been given to His disciples. The seed which is sown is "the word" (v. 14) which Jesus proclaimed. Those described as "good soil, hear the word, accept it, and produce a crop" (v. 20).

The parable of the growing seed Mark (4:26-29), is a reminder to those who "scatter seed" that the life-giving power of God's Word is effective even if it is to a certain extent unfathomable. This, like the parable of the mustard seed (vv. 30-32), shows that the progress of the kingdom is ultimately God's doing. However small and inauspicious it may seem, the kingdom will enjoy a grand and glorious final result. But that will be because the work of God, not only in name but also in fact, is finally His.(Zuck)

Mark tells it how it is when it comes to the disciples. Mark showed how prone they were to misunderstanding. He used various terms to describe this failing, which was characteristic of the disciples at least until Peter's confession of Jesus as the Christ (8:29). Yet even after that, Mark demonstrated that

the implications of Jesus' messiahship continued to be lost on the disciples who recoiled from the idea of a suffering and dying Messiah. As Jesus said to their spokesman, Peter, "You do not have in mind the things of God, but the things of men" (8:33).(Zuck)

The first reference to the disciples' lack of understanding occurs in the Parables' Discourse (4:1–34). Jesus cited Isaiah 6:9–10 as an explanation of why He used parables, so that "they may be ever seeing but never perceiving, and ever hearing but never understanding; otherwise they might turn and be forgiven!" (4:12). The problem, as Mark indicated, was that the disciples had problems with understanding as well! "The secret of the kingdom of God has been given" to the disciples (4:11), but apparently there was a communication breakdown (or at least a "slowdown") somewhere along the line because Jesus questioned why they did not understand the basic point of the parable: "Then Jesus said to them, 'Don't you understand this parable? How then will you understand any parable?'" (4:13).(Zuck)

It is interesting to compare the parable of the sower in Matthew and Mark in relation to this point. Matthew begins his account of the parable's explanation with these words: "When anyone hears the message about the kingdom and does not understand it, the evil one comes and snatches away what was sown in his heart" (Matt. 13:19). The parallel in Mark (4:15) is similar except that he did not include the phrase "does not understand," probably because his portrayal of the disciples shows this to be a characteristic of them as well.

Pasted from

<http://en.wikibooks.org/wiki/Biblical_Studies/New_Testament_Commentaries/The_Gospel_of_Mark/Chapter_4#Structural_Analysis_of_Mark_4>

In totality, chapter 4 consists of teachings about the Kingdom of God, not surprising since Jesus has previously been introduced as "proclaiming the good news of God" and the nearness of the Kingdom of God (1:14, 15), teaching in the synagogue (1:21, 29) and arousing objections and controversies at the same time that he heals the sick and calls disciples to act as delegates for the message (3:13-19). Matthew Henry explains these parables as speaking ultimately to the evolving nature of the kingdom of God in the world:

These declarations were intended to call the attention of the disciples to the word of Christ. By his thus instructing them, they were made able to instruct others; as candles are lighted, not to be covered, but to be placed on a candlestick, that they may give light to a room. This parable of the good seed, shows the manner in which the kingdom of God makes progress in the world. Let but the word of Christ have the place it ought to have in a soul, and it will show itself in a good conversation. It grows gradually: first the blade; then the ear; after that the full corn in the ear. When it is sprung up, it will go forward. The work of grace in the soul is, at first, but the day of small things; yet it has mighty products even now, while it is in its growth; but what will there be when it is perfected in heaven!

Pasted from <<http://www.christnotes.org/commentary.php?b=41&c=4&com=mhc>>

The NISB provides a detailed excursus linking the two long parables (4:1-20; 12:1-12) in Mark as providing guidance to listeners/readers, using agricultural images to symbolize human and divine action, providing opportunity for "insiders" to understand the story of Jesus himself. Chapter 4 ends with a nature miracle in which the disciples awaken a sleeping Jesus to calm a storm that has evoked fear and illustrates a lack of faith (40). Chapter 5 then begins with three healing miracles, all connected by Jesus's movement back and forth across the Sea--one, an exorcism in which the demons, once again, recognize Jesus as "Son of the Most High God" (reminding readers of "the Holy One of God" recognition in chapter 1.) The two final healings involve a twelve year old girl raised from death and a woman who has been suffering from hemorrhages for twelve years, the two stories intercalated (Notes NISB). Both of these two stories speak symbolically to life.

Home	Introduction	Ch1	Ch2	Ch3	Ch4	Ch5	Ch6	Ch7
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Revised December 15, 2018.

Mark Matthew Luke

~~5:1-20~~ The Healing of the Gerasene Demoniac ~~8:28-34~~ ~~8:26-39~~ 34

~~5:21-43~~ Jairus' Daughter and the Woman Who Touched Jesus' Garment ~~9:18-26~~ ~~8:40-56~~ 26

Pasted from <<http://www.silk.net/RelEd/gospelmark5.htm>>

In scanning chapter five quickly, readers will note two interesting, almost buried, facts: first, Jesus instructed the healed Gerasene demoniac to go home and tell his friends "how much the Lord has done for you" (19), but he went to the Decapolis and proclaimed "how much Jesus had done for him" (20); the second fact is that Jesus instructs those looking on to the raising of the twelve year old girl from death that they are to give her food, pointing to the fact that she has been restored to life physically and is not a ghost (5:43) since spirits do not eat (NISB Notes). Readers will recall that Jesus has himself proclaimed "the good news of God" and not himself. Michael Turton points out the parallel to Elijah 4 as well as calls attention to the motif of silence <<http://www.michaelturton.com/Mark/GMark05.html>> . The physical restoration certainly carries theological overtones. Matthew Henry makes the following interpretation:

Believe the resurrection, then fear not. He raised the dead child to life by a word of power. Such is the gospel call to those who are by nature dead in trespasses and sins. It is by the word of Christ that spiritual life is given.

Pasted from <<http://www.christnotes.org/commentary.php?com=mhc&b=41&c=5>>

Summary of Chapter Five

Jesus performs two acts in Mark five: he heals the Gerasene demoniac and raises Jairus's daughter from the dead. The Gerasene demoniac has long dwelt in tombs, restrained by shackles and chains; he immediately recognizes Jesus as "Son of the Most High God." From here, Jesus proceeds to the other side of the sea, a great crowd gathered around him, to be approached by Jairus, a leader of the synagogue. He says, "My little daughter is at the point of death. Come and lay your hands on her, so that she may be made well, and live." Jesus goes with him. Inserted into this story is the account of the woman with a hemorrhage. Having suffered from the disease for twelve years, she is desperate to touch the garments of Jesus in hopes of being healed. Jesus is immediately aware of her touch:

30 Immediately aware that power had gone forth from him, Jesus turned about in the crowd and said, "Who touched my clothes?" 31 And his disciples said to him, "You see the crowd pressing in on you; how can you say, 'Who touched me?' " 32 He looked all around to see who had done it. 33 But the woman, knowing what had happened to her, came in fear and trembling, fell down before him, and told him the whole truth. 34 He said to her, "Daughter, your faith has made you well; go in peace, and be healed of your disease."

By the time Jesus reaches Jairus's daughter, she is dead. Jesus tells the mourners the little girl is not dead but sleeping and is laughed at; stung, perhaps, by the lack of faith, Jesus proceeds alone, "Little girl, get up!" 42 And immediately the girl got up and began to walk about (she was twelve years of age). At this they were overcome with amazement. This is followed then by the admonition not to tell anyone what has been witnessed. Practical, Jesus tells them to give the little girl something to eat.

Pasted from <<http://crain.english.missouriwestern.edu/Mark/interpre4.htm>>

Mark, remarkably addresses rather complex theology: First, Mark artfully mixes history and theology--and brings attention to what may be the ultimate purpose of his work, to return listeners/readers to the original quest of knowing who Jesus is; second, Mark raises consideration to the pre-existence and post-existence nature of Jesus as Christ. Chapter five, thus, becomes

pivotal to the ongoing discussions of the historical Jesus and the divine Christ. "Who do you say I am?" requires every reader in every time and place to grapple with this essential identity of this person Jesus Christ.

It should not be surprising that Mark follows Jesus's instruction on parables and their use with three great acts: a second exorcism (of four --Mark 1:34, 4:39, 5:7, and 5:9), and the two accounts of a twelve year old girl restored to life and a woman with a hemorrhage of twelve years, both speaking to God's power and to life itself. Nor should it be surprising to find Jesus on the "other side of the sea" for his exorcism: the sea, a natural boundary symbolically suggesting Jesus crossing over from one ethnos to another--Jews to gentiles:

v14: Galilee: Except for Jesus' prediction of where he will return to after his resurrection in 14:28 and 16.7, all other instances of this word occur in verses apparently created by the writer of Mark. Since 14:28 and 16.7 are obviously Markan creation as well, and 6:21 is about Herod, not Jesus, there is no reason to assume from the evidence in Mark that Jesus and Galilee have a connection. Again, nowhere does "Galilee" occur in a place where scholars think the writer of Mark was working off of an earlier source. Here are the mentions of Galilee in Mark (all citations, RSV):

1:9 In those days Jesus came from Nazareth of Galilee and was baptized by John in the Jordan.	6:21 But an opportunity came when Herod on his birthday gave a banquet for his courtiers and officers and the leading men of Galilee.
1:14: Now after John was arrested, Jesus came into Galilee, preaching the gospel of God,	9:30 They went on from there and passed through Galilee. And he would not have any one know it;
1:28: And at once his fame spread everywhere throughout all the surrounding region of Galilee.	14:28 But after I am raised up, I will go before you to Galilee."
1:39: And he went throughout all Galilee, preaching in their synagogues and casting out demons.	15:41 who, when he was in Galilee, followed him, and ministered to him; and also many other women who came up with him to Jerusalem.
3:7 Jesus withdrew with his disciples to the sea, and a great multitude from Galilee followed; also from Judea	16:7 But go, tell his disciples and Peter that he is going before you to Galilee

Note that of these ten mentions, two are supernatural in nature and are historically meaningless, being creations of the author or his source (a few exegetes think one or both are interpolations). Of the remaining eight, one relates to Herod (6:21), and one refers back to the ministry in Galilee in a retrospective (15:41). Of the six left, four instances occur in Chapter 1. "Galilee" in Mark is essentially a feature of Mark 1.

The problem of instances of "Galilee" in verses created by the writer is sharpened by the existence of a strong basis for creation off the OT: Isa 9:1.

Isa 9:1 Nevertheless, there will be no more gloom for those who were in distress. In the past he humbled the land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali, but in the future he will honor Galilee of the Gentiles, by the way of the sea, along the Jordan- (NIV)

Note the mention of important themes in Mark, including the sea (in the gospel of Mark, the narrative function of the Sea of Galilee is to divide the Jews and the Gentiles). When Jesus crosses it, he is crossing from one ethnos to the other), gentiles, and the Jordan. The Gospel of Matthew makes this association plain in 4:15. Additionally, the rest of Isaiah 9 provides the writer of Mark with the motivation to place Jesus in Galilee:

6 For to us a child is born, to us a son is given, and the government will be on his shoulders. And he will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. Of the increase of his government and peace there will be no end. He will reign on David's throne and over his kingdom, establishing and upholding it with justice and righteousness from that time on and forever. The zeal of the LORD Almighty will accomplish this.(NIV)

Isaiah appears to predict that the Davidic Messiah will honor Galilee in the future. A minor piece of support has the writer presenting Jesus preaching in "their" synagogues, implying some degree of separation between the writer and Galilee. Synagogues are unknown in the archaeological record for this period from Galilee. Another interesting piece of support for this is the fact that Jesus is never called Jesus of Galilee in Mark, but rather, Jesus the Nazarene (Peter, however, is identified as a Galilean). The writer of Mark is vague on Galilean geography and never mentions its two major cities, Sepphoris and Tiberias. Finally, the Pauline letters are silent on Jesus's association with Galilee, as are important early writings such as Barnabas and 1 Clement. Given the key role played by the Old Testament, especially Isaiah, in the formation of the Gospel of Mark, it seems most probable that Jesus's association with Galilee is a

creation of that author using the Old Testament.

Pasted from <<http://www.michaelturton.com/Mark/GMarko1.html>>

At this point, in a work clearly addressing structure in Mark, it should be clear that a theology is emerging: the introduction of Jesus and his mission, "to proclaim the good news of God, his baptism and the incisive vortex of energy coming to rest in his person--the Spirit of God; preparation for the mission, early healings and teaching in synagogues, emerging controversies (fasting, sabbath) about the centrality of the Temple and purity rituals, clear demarcation of "insiders and outsiders" to the "good news of God," several messages about the evolving Kingdom, a widening mission in the appointment of twelve delegates, a growing isolation of the Teacher, a couple of recognitions (demons) in response to Jesus' presence as embodiment of God's message, rampant misunderstanding and a clamor for actions/signs, and a crescendo in demonstration of life-power. The question still remains relative to the artful mix of history and theology--and ultimate purpose, to return listeners/readers to the original quest of knowing who Jesus is--with knowing the identity related to gaining power over the person. This may be an appropriate point to urge the question asked of the disciples, "But who do you say I am" (8:29) followed by Peter's not fully realized recognition that he "is the Messiah." What follows, as everyone knows, is the impending suffering and death of the rejected messenger of the Kingdom of God, and there is the final and sad note emphasizing terror, amazement, and fear for "those who are looking for Jesus of Nazareth, who was crucified" (16:6-8). One may well wonder what the Church is about in interpreting Jesus as sending out through Peter and the other delegates "from east to west, the sacred and imperishable proclamation of eternal salvation" (shorter ending added in the fourth century). Can it be that the Church has, and continues, to misunderstand the "good news of God" proclaimed by a crucified, historical Jesus?

This may also be a good point to return to the nature of Jesus's self-designation as the Son of Man, the shape drawn by Michael Turton, who describes it as functioning as a reference for "human being," a designation left out of church confession:

v10: Son of Man. The first appearance of the phrase in the Gospel, where it is used in three ways: (1) as a general reference for "human being;" (2) as a solemn title suggesting Jesus is more than just a man; and (3) as a messianic title. The phrase appears in ancient Jewish literature that long predates Mark. For example, Ezekiel refers to himself that way. Psalm 8:4 uses it as a term for "human being":

4: what is man that thou art mindful of him, and the son of man that thou dost care for him?

Slater (1995) notes that in every instance of the phrase's occurrence in the canonical and extracanonical literature, the phrase refers to earthly and human beings.

In Dan 7:13 the Son of Man receives the dominion from the "Ancient of Days." A number of scholars have argued that this tradition is based on a larger Middle Eastern tradition of Primal Man (Slater 1995). In 1 Enoch, an apocryphal text popular around the time of Jesus, the Son of Man is a pre-existent heavenly figure with the power to judge both human and divine beings (Donahue and Harrington 2002, p26). Note, however, that all of these are hotly disputed and some scholars see the "Son of Man" in Daniel and 1 Enoch as a figure who stands for a human collective (see Borsch 1991 for a review).

Further, many scholars interpret the phrase "But you may know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins" as an authorial aside to the reader (Donahue and Harrington 2002, p96) since the Greek reads more smoothly that way. Note that in Mark Jesus does not say "I am the Son of Man, therefore I can forgive sins." He just states that the Son of Man can forgive sins and leaves the reader/hearer to draw their own conclusions.

Discussing the fourteen Son of Man sayings, Boring (1999) writes:

"...Even more striking: no statement continues the suffering-dying-rising schema to affirm that this same Son of Man will come on the clouds at the eschaton...There are no 'pre-existent' sayings. The Son of Man has a 'post-existent' glory, but there is no indication of a pre-existent glory; the 'chronology' begins with the story of the earthly Jesus and proceeds to heaven, not vice versa."(p454)

Fletcher-Louis (2003) argues persuasively that Mark 1-6 presents Jesus as a High Priest, based on a priestly reading of Dan 7:13, where the Danielic Son of Man is given the authority to behave as a priest. Texts such as Exodus 28:36-38 and Lev 10:17 are straightforward OT precedents for the authority of the priest to remove sins.

Whether Jesus, or anyone else, ever referred to himself as "Son of Man" in some titular, messianic sense is controversial. The phrase never occurs in Paul, nor did it ever become part of the Church's confession about Jesus.

Pasted from <<http://www.michaelturton.com/Mark/GMarko2.html#2.10>>

Theology is most at issue with the pre-existence and post-existence nature of Jesus as Christ; readers recall that the "Son of God" of Mark 1:1 is suspected of being a later interpolation and that the meanings of "Son of Man" and "Son of God" have been reversed in post-Hebrew thought to equate to human and divine rather than the original designation of divine and human.

To this point in Mark, all the controversy about Jesus has erupted from associations: the man with the unclean spirit, the sick and possessed with demons, the leper, the paralytic, tax collectors and sinners, the man with a withered hand, the Gerasene demoniac, the dead girl, and a hemorrhaging woman; he has been accused of being out of his mind and as being from

Beelzebul (3); his family has tried to restrain him, but Jesus has assembled delegated to his mission of the "good news of God." In the next chapter, he returns to his hometown and to the synagogue only to be rejected. Theologically, too, in this chapter, Jesus is identified as "the son of Mary" (3), Jewish lineage usually noted through the father; of course, Joseph has disappeared in Mark by chapter three (31); Jesus also has brothers and sisters. This gives pause to the argument that much of Mark consists of theological interpolation and redaction; why would this issue of "perpetual virginity" not have been addressed; of course, readers recognize, too, that Mark has bypassed altogether the nativity and birth of Jesus.

More than one critic has suggested the potential for Mark's being structured as Greek tragedy: Stephen Smith, for example, has said that "it is the Gospel of Mark whose structure has been found to conform more closely than any other biblical work to dramatic literature" ("A Divine Tragedy: Some Observations on the Dramatic Structure of Mark's Gospel," *Novum Testamentum*, Vol. 37, Fasc. 3 (Jul., 1995), pp. 209-231, Published by: BRILL, Stable URL: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/1561221>). The argument runs generally that Mark consists of a prologue, tripartite structure (opening, complication, and recognition), has dramatic elements (plot, denouement, epilogue). Stephen points out that people begin to recognize the distinctiveness of Jesus from the beginning of his mission (1:27-28), that the disciples are privy to "inside" teachings (4:6-12; 7:17-23; 8:14-21) and signs (1:29-31; 4:35-41; 5:35-43; 6:45-52); that opportunity is provided in each episode to recognize Jesus, but disciples fail to do so; that Jesus becomes increasingly exasperated (4:13, 40; 7:18; 8:17-21). Stephen finally lays out the following structure:

1:1-13	Prologue
1:14, 15	Transitional
1:16-3:6	Growing controversy over Jesus' mission
3:7-12	Transitional
3:13-6:6	Jesus' true family in contrast to those outside
6:7-13	Transitional
8:31-10:45	True Messianic nature: the self-sacrifice
8:27-8:26	Transitional
10:46-52	Transitional
11:1-12:44	Son of David claims city
13:1-2	Transitional
13:3-37	Apocalyptic discourse
14:1, 2	Transitional
14:3-15:47	Passion
16:1-8	Epilogue

Smith also says that Mark would have had access to "inferior Roman imitations that abounded" in his day.

Home	Introduction	Ch1	Ch2	Ch3	Ch4	Ch5	Ch6	Ch7
Ch8	Ch9	Ch10	Ch11	Ch12	Ch13	Ch14	Ch15	Ch16
Mark		Matthew	Luke					
6:1-6a		The Rejection of Jesus at Nazareth	13:53-58	4:16-30				
6:6b-13		The Mission of the Twelve	10:1-5-15	9:1-6				
6:14-29		The Death of John the Baptist	14:1-12	9:7-9				
6:30-44		The Feeding of the Five Thousand	14:13-21	9:10-17				
6:45-52		Walking on the Water	14:22-33	-				
6:53-56		The Healing of the Sick in Gennesaret	14:34-36	-				

Pasted from
<<http://www.silk.net/RelEd/gospelmark6.htm>>

In a quick overview of chapter six, Jesus, with his disciples, teaches in a synagogue; the people's reaction is the familiar one of astonishment at his wisdom; they identify him as "son of Mary" and name three of his brothers but not the sisters. Jesus directs amazement at the people's lack of belief. The chapter includes the official calling of the disciples, who are sent out on a mission to preach repentance, to heal, and to cast out demons. Herod learns of Jesus and that people have been saying he is Elijah or a prophet; the death of John is reported, and John's disciples claim the body and place it in a tomb. The disciples return from their mission and rejoin Jesus, and a first feeding occurs. Apparently not learning much from this act of needs met, the disciples become afraid of a storm at sea, which Jesus stills; the disciples here mistakenly think they are seeing a ghost in the Jesus who walks on water; the chapter ends with Jesus and his disciples traveling in villages, cities and marketplaces, and farms, the crowds struggling to get close.

Summary

Jesus is back in his hometown Nazareth, twenty miles from Capernaum, with his disciples; once again, he is in the synagogues teaching. The people's reaction is again astonishment, and they ask concerning his wisdom, recognizing Jesus as the son of Mary and brother of James, Jose, Simon, and Judas, and having sisters. For whatever reasons, these people take offense, and Jesus remarks that a prophet is without honor only in his own country, their own kin, and their own house. He is prevented from healing except for a few sick; Jesus himself is now the one who is amazed at the people's unbelief.

Jesus goes through the villages teaching, calls the twelve and sends them out two by two; they are instructed to take nothing for their journey except for staff, sandals, and two tunics--no money, no bag, and no bread. They are granted authority over unclean spirits and told to shake off the dust of their feet as a testimony against them at any place they are unwelcomed. They are to stay at the house they enter until they leave. The message proclaimed by the disciples is repentance; their work is that of healing by anointing with oil. They also cast out demons. The disciples have taken up the same mission as that of Jesus: proclaiming the kingdom.

We learn that Herod has learned of Jesus with some saying he is Elijah or a prophet. Herod is afraid he is John the Baptist whom he has beheaded returned from the dead. Herod, of course, had John beheaded as a result of John's reprimand for his having married Herodias, his brother Philip's wife. Herod recognized that John was a righteous man but relented to his wife's manipulations through his daughter who had pleased him by dancing and made the request inspired by her mother. John's head is presented to Herod's daughter on a platter who, in turn, presented it to her mother. John's disciples, upon hearing of the execution, claim the body and place it in a tomb.

The disciples returned to Jesus from their mission with stories of what they have done; like Jesus, they are beset by people's comings and goings, and Jesus recognizes they need to find a deserted place and rest. They are observed leaving by boat, but the people beat them to their destination. Coming ashore, Jesus sees the crowd and feels compassion for the bewildered and helpless people and begins to teach. At a late hour, the disciples wonder if they should send the people away; instead, they are instructed to take the five loaves and two fish they have and feed the people. They do so, and the people sitting in hundreds and fifties, eat and are full. Even after five thousand have eaten, twelve baskets of food remain.

The disciples leave before Jesus, going by boat to the other side of the lake Bethsaida. In the evening, the disciples are in a boat with a storm approaching; Jesus from the land sees them and is about to pass them, walking on the water, but gets into the boat and the winds abate. The disciples are terrified, thinking Jesus is a ghost, and are even more unsettled by the winds dying down; Jesus tells them to take heart and not be afraid.

They cross over to Gennesaret, south of Capernaum, where they are immediately recognized by the crowds. They continue rushing into the region and bringing the sick for healing. As Jesus travels in villages, cities and marketplaces, and farms, the crowds struggle to get close enough to touch his clothes, for in doing so, many are healed.

Pasted from <<http://crain.english.missouriwestern.edu/Mark/interpre5.htm>>

With respect to the above, it should be pointed out that "hometown" (6:1) may not, in fact, be Nazareth, a cue perhaps taken from a topical heading in the NISB. Turton, after discussing vagueness in the geography used by Mark, points to the use of symbolic language:

1. The writer of Mark does not live near the sea, nor does he live near the Sea of Galilee. He doesn't know anything about seas, and thus does not know that the Lake Gennesaret is really just a piddling little thing that no one would call a "sea."
2. The writer of Mark lives near a real sea, but has never been to the Sea of Galilee, and does not know that it is not a real sea. Thus he imputes sea-like behavior to the Sea of Galilee.
3. The writer of Mark just doesn't give a damn what the Sea of Galilee is like. He is writing a story in which the Sea is a body of water that plays a symbolic role and he uses it as he wills, and not as reality would have it.

Note that alternatives (1) and (2) also require the writer of Mark to be not only uninformed about the nature of seas, but also such a dullard as to never think to ask someone who did know about them. Judging from the structural and thematic complexity of Mark, however, the writer is probably not as stupid as Weeden's guidelines would make him out to be. Of the three alternatives, the last is the most likely. This is indicated by the general unreality of the Sea of Galilee scenes – they are often created from the Elijah-Elisha Cycle, and use the Sea of Galilee as the site of miracles like water walks and feedings. Additionally, the narrative function of the Sea of Galilee in the Gospel of Mark is to act as a border between the Gentiles and the Jews. The reality is that the writer of Mark simply doesn't give a damn what the reality of the Sea of Galilee is.

Pasted from <<http://www.michaelturton.com/Mark/GMark13.html#13X>>

In his commentary on chapter six, Turton notes the writer of Mark does not identify Jesus' hometown:

Although exegetes typically say this takes place in Nazareth, the writer of Mark does not even name what Jesus' home country is. While offering information on towns for which evidence is scanty or nonexistent, such as Nazareth, the author of Mark is silent on places such as Herod's new city of Tiberias or the bustling town of Sepphoris, just a few kilometers from Jesus' reputed home. Yet, the existence of these two Hellenized cities, one of which was offensively built on a cemetery, was a constant religious irritant to the local Jews (Theissen and Merz, 1998, p177-8), while both were important regional centers. Galilee is so small it can be crossed on foot in a couple of days, so their omission is difficult to explain. Exegetes have argued that Gospel silence on these two large cities can be explained by either Jesus' failure to gain adherents there, or by Jesus avoiding these cities because they were major centers of Herodian power. Yet according to the writer of Mark Jesus preached in Jerusalem, a major center of Roman power.

Pasted from <<http://www.michaelturton.com/Mark/GMark06.html>>

Perhaps the important points of chapter six is that Jesus is further rejected by the religious establishment and by his own family. Structurally, the sending out of the disciples and their return is interrupted with the death of John the Baptist, perhaps foreshadowing the death of Jesus (NISB, Notes). Historically, Herod here reflects a belief in resurrection, thinking that Jesus is the raised John that he has beheaded (16).

Structurally, the first major section of Mark has 1:14 describes Jesus' teaching "the good news of God"; this segment runs through 3:6, with the Pharisees and Herodians plotting to kill Jesus after he has healed on the sabbath; a second major section includes 3:7-6:32, ending with Jesus' gathering his disciples around him, "apostle" being noted only in 6:30 and nowhere else in Mark, perhaps suggesting a redaction; a third major section is 6:33-8:21, which contrasts "the success of Jesus' healing ministry with his growing conflict with scribes and Pharisees... and with the increasing misunderstanding of the disciples" (NISB Notes). A final section of the Galilean ministry is found in 8:22-10:52, a segment organized into teaching and eight giving of sight stories, this "sight" ironically contrasted to the lack of sight of the religious and with his own "insider" disciples.

As part of preparatory instructions for carrying out the mission of teaching repentance, healing, and casting out demons, the disciples have been told shake off the dust that is on their feet as they leave any household that has not welcomed or been willing to hear the message; this is an interesting reversal of the normal Jewish ritual of shaking off the dust before entering a house to prevent contamination with what is outside; here, it is the "outside" that is likely to be contaminated by what is inside.

Michael Turton has explored at some length the redacted nature of Mark, sorting through 6:45 through 8:26, using for the support of redaction the argument of scholars, Koester's being that this section is not reproduced in Luke; the most useful insight may be Turton's understanding of doublet and his concluding summary:

First, the Bethsaida section is characterized by doublets of material from elsewhere in the Gospel. The water walk in Mark 6:45-56 doubles the similar event in Mk 4:35-41. The second feeding miracle, Mark 8:1-13, is a manifest double of the first in Mark 6:30-44. There are two healings of a blind man in the Gospel, Mark 8:22-26 and Mk 10:46-52, and as Beavis has noted, Mk 8:22-26 is a structural double of Mk 8:27-33. Two of the healings, Mk 7:31-37 and Mk 8:22-26, are the only two in the Gospel where Jesus heals through manipulation (elsewhere he heals by word, gesture, simple touch, or taking of the hand). These two healings are missing in Matthew. Several peculiarities of the Greek may also indicate another writer's hand. For example, a Greek verb meaning "to understand" occurs four times in the Bethsaida but only once outside of it. Koester argues that Matthew knew an expanded version of Mark that had the Bethsaida section, while Luke did not.

In this essay I will use the structural features of Mark to analyze the Bethsaida section. Several important conclusions will emerge. First, the tampering in Mark is far more pervasive than is generally recognized by scholars, extending from 6:14 all the way to the end of Mark 10. Second, this section does not consist of material that is either Markan or not Markan in strictly dichotomous fashion, but in fact is a mix of genuine Mark imported whole from elsewhere, genuine Mark that has been redacted, and non-Markan pericopes inserted as a whole units. After the Bethsaida section has been analyzed, the larger structure of Mark will be explored.

Pasted from <<http://www.michaelturton.com/Mark/GMark06.html>>

Bruce N. Fisk, following reflections on the "walking on water" stories in Mark and Matthew concludes with a set of bullet points related to bringing together history and theology in interpreting stories in the Gospels; I find particularly interesting his comments that the Gospels are "interpreted histories," that they provide portraits, that the writers "were free, within reasonable limits, to summarize, expand, rephrase and even compose words for their characters, including Jesus," that "It is both legitimate and responsible for historians to attempt to harmonize divergent testimonies," and his final statement that "It serves no useful purpose to pit an evangelist's theological agenda over against his concern for historical veracity, as if writers must choose between the two. The Gospels are thoroughly historical and thoroughly theological."

The authors of the Gospels really did want to get the story right; they understood their faith to rest upon events that occurred in history (and not upon stories about those events).

- a. The substantial verbal, chronological and conceptual overlap among the gospels strongly supports their fundamentally historical agenda.
- b. The striking contrast between the gospel narratives and many apocryphal accounts confirms the evangelist's essentially historical conservatism and non-mythological orientation.
- c. One mark of historical authenticity in the gospels is the presence of potentially embarrassing, cryptic or scandalous material. For further remarks on the "criteria of authenticity," go [here](#).
- d. The Gospels are interpreted histories; they are not, nor do they pretend to be, impartial, disinterested or objective. They are portraits, not photographs.
- e. It is entirely inappropriate to demand of the ancient world the modern passion for verbatim reportage, transcripts, sound-bites and "objective" journalism. (Honest post-moderns recognize that "objective reporting" is neither possible nor desirable.) We should expect the evangelists to write their histories without transcending the historiographical values and approaches of their own day.
 - They were free, within reasonable limits, to summarize, expand, rephrase and even compose words for their characters, including Jesus. This was widely considered to be perfectly sound historiographical technique.
 - They freely rearranged the order of some events, usually without acknowledging any departure from a "historical" sequence.
 - Sometimes they collected and organized episodes according to themes, without announcing a shift away from chronological narration.
 - The border between a dominical saying and the evangelist's commentary was not always clearly marked, and may be imperceptible to us. Discourses in the Gospels (e.g., Matthew's Sermon on the Mount, John's Upper Room Discourse) may be composite compositions, conforming to no single historical "sermon" in its entirety, but drawing upon various speeches delivered on different occasions, and making use of summaries, expansions and interpretations. Such compositions may portray Jesus more faithfully than any taped transcript or home video ever could.
 - It may be the case--conclusive evidence is lacking--that post-pentecost, spirit-inspired prophetic utterances stand alongside earthly teachings of Jesus in the gospel accounts.
- f. Such creative license does not mean the gospels are unfaithful or untrustworthy; sometimes the barest facts (like the plainest photographs) distort reality, while interpretive renderings show things very clearly. Linguistic maxim: to say the same thing in a different context, it must be said differently.
- g. In the case of conflicts and tensions between two or more Gospel accounts:
 - the contradiction may be more apparent than real, since each version leaves out more than it includes. It is both legitimate and responsible for historians to attempt to harmonize divergent testimonies.
 - non-harmonizable differences may reveal how the evangelists could use the same episode to serve as a type or pattern for distinctly different theological points, no doubt related to their distinctive social settings and the needs of their communities
- h. It serves no useful purpose to pit an evangelist's theological agenda over against his concern for historical veracity, as if writers must choose between the two. The Gospels are thoroughly historical and thoroughly theological.
- i. These reflections do not begin to explain how divine inspiration took place, except to suggest that God has chosen to work through, rather than around, the historiographical and literary conventions of the ancient world.

Fisk, in yet another lecture, describes Mark as organized about a theology of glory and a theology of suffering, writing to counter an over-exalted Christology by depicting Jesus' humiliation; the theology of glory passages read like other Jewish and Greco-Roman stories of holy men and wonder-workers of the day; theology of suffering, however, may have been written to counter claims of a defeat in the crucifixion:

Pasted from <<http://www.westmont.edu/~fisk/Lecture%20Outlines/MatthewMiracle.htm>>

- Mark wrote to refute claims that the cross was a shameful defeat, by depicting Jesus' power and dignity. Mark presents Jesus, both before and on the cross, as one who is divinely empowered, always in control, innocent of all charges, and unjustly treated and condemned. For his intended audience, the cross was a scandal; for Mark, the resurrection has overcome that scandal, proving the cross stands at the center of God's redemptive plan. "We know the shamefulness of crucifixion in the Greco-Roman world . . . We know the consequent folly and scandal of early Christian preaching of the Cross" (Gundry, Mark, 14; cf. 1 Cor. 1:18, 23). "Mark wrote his gospel as an apology for the Cross. For he appeals to exactly those elements in the career of Jesus which for Greco-Roman readers would most likely suffuse the shame of crucifixion in a nimbus of glory" (Gundry, 15). "[In] the passion narrative. . . , Mark chooses and shapes his materials and comments on them in ways that glorify the Passion, not in ways that passionize the earlier glory" (Gundry, 12). "Mark does not pit the suffering and death of Jesus against his successes, but. . . pits the successes against the suffering and death, and then uses the passion predictions, writes up the passion narrative, and caps his gospel with a discovery of the empty tomb in ways that cohere with the success-stories, in ways that make the passion itself a success-story" (Gundry, 3).

Pasted from <<http://www.westmont.edu/~fisk/Lecture%20Outlines/MarkChristology.htm>>

As "interpreted history," the walking on water story should be understood in context of the previous miracle but also within the cultural context:

The feeding of the 5000 would have reminded the disciples of Moses and the Exodus. The miracle of the walking on water would have reminded them of the climax to the Exodus - Joshua and the conquest of the land of Canaan. After wandering for 40 years in the wilderness Moses led the Israelites to the eastern shores of the river Jordan to prepare for the conquest. But Moses died on Mt Nebo before he could begin the invasion. His mission was accomplished by his right man Joshua.

Jesus' miracle of the walking on water would have reminded the disciples of Joshua. Like Joshua, Jesus was crossing waters. Ahead of Joshua was the Ark of the Covenant with the Ten

Commandments carried by twelve priests. That scene was inverted and echoed on the Sea of Galilee; ahead of Jesus was a different kind of ark - the wooden boat, carrying the twelve disciples. But the biggest similarity between the two was in their names: Jesus is the Latin for the Hebrew name Joshua.

In the Jewish mindset of the time, Joshua was another role model for the Messiah - the flipside of Moses. Whereas Moses had freed the Israelites from oppression, it was Joshua who had finished the job by conquering the Promised Land for them. At the time of Jesus, the Jews were looking for a Messiah who would not only free them from foreign oppression (as Moses had done), but someone who would also reclaim Judea and Galilee and restore it to the rule of God. In both the miracles of the loaves and fishes and the walking on water, Jesus seemed to fit the bill perfectly.

But the miracle of the walking on water had many other meanings, especially in that difficult period from the middle of the first century onwards when early Christianity faced hostility and persecution from Imperial tyrants. The sea miracle functioned as a metaphor for the precarious situation in which Christian churches found themselves - especially in Rome. To many Christians the Church must have felt like the fishing boat on the sea of Galilee, buffeted by strong winds and rocked by the waves. They must also have felt that Jesus had left them alone on the boat to fend for themselves. At best he was a ghostly appearance. But the message of the miracle is that they should 'take heart' and not be 'afraid': Jesus had not abandoned them, he was with them. It was a message which helped Christians endure persecution through the centuries.

Pasted from <http://www.bbc.co.uk/religion/religions/christianity/history/jesus_1.shtml>

Theological structure suggests, perhaps, more coherency than the proposed redactions and choppy nature of this chapter and the following material; important themes include the continuing and intensifying rejection of Jesus and "the good news of God," emphasis upon the mission of the Twelve, the intercalation of the death of John the Baptist between the sending of Jesus' disciples and their return, the story of the feeding of the five thousand, perhaps emphasizing God's people as needing miraculous sustenance by God, and a walking on water episode. The editor (?) states clearly that the disciples have misunderstood the loaves (52) and that they have been more terrified in mistaking Jesus for a ghost. Ironically, in a certain kind of way, they have gotten it right in their misunderstanding of who it is that comes into their boat: it is Jesus fully embodying the "good news of God." The NISB Notes suggest the possibility of allusion to "God's veiled self-disclosure to Moses (Ex. 33.18-23) and Elijah 1 Kings 19:11-12)." NISV Notes also remark on Jesus' reply: "it is I; do not be afraid" (50) as "an expression of divine self-revelation." Not surprisingly, this self-disclosure is followed, not only by the disciples' misunderstanding, but the actual hardening of their hearts, recalling Mark 3:5 in the synagogue where Jesus grieves at the hardness of heart of the religious who use the Sabbath as an excuse not to do good. The chapter rounds out with the people of Gennesaret recognizing Jesus, here used perhaps ironically, since what they come to Jesus for is more healing. Chapter seven picks up with renewed controversy about keeping the traditions, a non-Jewish Syrophenician Woman's faith, and the curing of a deaf man followed in chapter 8 with another feeding, the demand for "a sign," a warning about the Pharisees and of Herod, the cure of a blind man, and the first in a cycle of three predictions of Jesus' oncoming suffering and death.

Home	Introduction	Ch1	Ch2	Ch3	Ch4	Ch5	Ch6	Ch7
Ch8	Ch9	Ch10	Ch11	Ch12	Ch13	Ch14	Ch15	Ch16

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Summary

Mark seven records three events or actions: a controversy about observing the tradition of the elders initiated by the Pharisees and scribes; the Syrophenician woman who asks for a demon to be cast out of her daughter; and the healing of a deaf man. The Pharisees notice that Jesus' disciples are eating without first having washed their hands, and they ask Jesus why they are not observing the tradition of the elders. Jesus calls them hypocrites, telling them that they abandon God while holding on to human tradition. He tells them that nothing outside a person going in can defile but only what is inside coming out defiles.

The Syrophenician woman is Greek and Gentile; this begins the movement of Jesus from Galilee into the north and into Gentile territory. Though recognizing herself Greek and understanding Jesus' mission to the Jews, this woman, nonetheless, asks for healing for her daughter, which Jesus performs at a distance.

Jesus is in Decapolis when he heals the deaf man; this is the area where the man indwelt by many demons had witnessed to the authority of Jesus, recognizing him as the Son of God, the place called the region of the Gerasenes. Decapolis consisted of ten cities, mostly Gentile. Jesus addresses this deaf man in Aramaic, indicating he is probably Jewish even though in a Gentile region.

Pasted from <<http://crain.english.missouriwestern.edu/mark/newpage16.htm>>

Chapter seven opens with the Pharisees accusing Jesus and the disciples of disregarding the purity rituals of washing their hands before eating; Jesus is said to answer with Scripture (Isaiah 29:13) with harsh words that suggests the Pharisees honor God with their lips while their hearts remain far away, that they worship in vain and use human precepts (6-7). What follows has led some to question whether Jesus as a Jew would have uttered these words. Historicity scholars suggest a heavy handed redaction in this chapter; Michael Turton has provided a theological emphasis with respect to purity and an inside/outside motif:

Two important motifs in Mark, bread and eating, appear together here. These two ideas wind through Mark all the way back to Mark 2, where we encounter the loaves that David ate (or didn't eat), and Jesus eating with sinners. In this pericope the disciples are eating the magic bread created by Jesus in the last feeding miracle. Another important Markan theme is highlighted by the dispute over purity: who is inside, and who is outside.

Pasted from <<http://www.michaelturton.com/Mark/GMarko7.htm>>

NISB Notes identifies this portion of Mark as laying out the second major speech of Jesus (1-23), the first being 4:1-34; here it says the "basic point is about purity coming from within"; it also identifies three diatribes:

Against Pharisees (1-13)--having the appearance of piety; preferring oral tradition over Torah

To the crowds (14-16)--nothing going in defiles but what comes out.

Privately to the Disciples (17-23)--reinterprets food as coming into the stomach and going out by bowel elimination and into the sewer; one can not but note the "physicality" of this remark.

To the disciples, Jesus then declares "all foods clean" (19). What follows next is a list of moral vices, all evil intentions from the heart (the seat of life, will, and intellect).

William Loader reads this authentic Markan material as reflecting wisdom or philosophical traditions such as found in Sirach and the Wisdom of Solomon. It focuses on universals rather than particulars; it does not call into question regulations about foods and purity but emphasizes rather purity of heart and mind; it protests obsessions with purity to excess. Jesus' emphasis is the impending reign of God. As such, such material in Mark does not exclude apocalyptic/eschatological tradition.

Loader, W., (1998), *Mark 7:1-23 and the historical Jesus*, Colloquium, 30, , pages 123 - 151.

If not focusing on redaction and form criticism, Jerome H. Neyrey, S.J. suggests yet another inroad. Bread, referred to repeatedly in Mark, is a literary motif found in classical rhetoric which suggests understanding. The issue of purity then can be examined as understood from two models. The first, taken from Mary Douglas, has to do with system, order, and classification, and suggests a clash between two systems in their definition of purity, one emphasizing holiness and the other, mercy. The second model understands body as replicating a map of the body in relation to boundaries, structures, and margins in a social system.

"A Symbolic Approach to Mark 7." *Forum* 4,3 (1988):63-91.

The story of the Syrophenician Woman and the exorcism at a distance expands the mission of Jesus to non-Jews, the woman spurring this by her response to being slurred by Jesus, who has responded to her need by saying, "Let the children be fed first , for it is not fair to take the children's food and feed it to the dogs," dogs here used for non-Jews.

Turton provides the historical background to support this:

v27: "dogs." Dogs were unclean in ancient Judaism and were ordinarily not permitted in Jewish homes, unlike Gentiles. "Since Jewish law considered both dogs and gentiles to be unclean," Joan Mitchell (2001, p110) observes, "dog made a ready name for gentiles." In virtually all theological interpretations this pericope is taken to be from the period of the expansion of Christianity out of its Judaic cradle and into the gentile world.

NISB Notes remarks that the Syrophoenician woman is the only character in Mark who wins an argument against Jesus; after all, Jesus performs a miracle in response to her request: 28 "Yes, Lord," she replied, "but even the dogs under the table eat the children's crumbs."

29 Then he told her, "For such a reply, you may go; the demon has left your daughter."

Turton also notes that in the two feeding stories, Jews were fed before Gentiles and points out an affinity between women and dogs maintained in Greek philologically:

The affinity between dogs and women in Greek is abetted philologically. The verb for carrying and being pregnant, *kyo*, is related to *kyon*, dog. Also in the group are *kyneo*, "kiss," and *proskyneo*, which means to drop down before something as if to kiss its feet. Forms of *proskyneo* appear in the LXX to indicate worship involving bodily prostration in the eastern fashion; Greeks for their part would think it unmanly to assume such a doglike foot-licking posture, even for a god.

Pasted from <<http://www.michaelturton.com/Mark/GMark07.html>>

The next healing occurs in a predominately Gentile area, not surprising since the Syrophoenician woman's counter has triggered this outward sweep to the mission. That the story occurs in Mark--and not in the other Gospels--attests to a theological interpretation.

A review of Michael F. Bird's *Jesus and the Origins of the Gentile Mission* describes Bird as contradicting scholarship that suggests Jesus has only general expectations for the saving of Gentiles by countering that Jesus' intention was "to renew and restore Israel" so that it could extend salvation to the world, this already anticipated in the following:

Bird is challenging the prominent position put forward by Joachim Jeremias, and contributing to work done by the likes of G. B. Caird, N. T. Wright, and Eckhard Schnabel. The standard view, which Bird convincingly improves upon, holds that Jesus exhibited no hope for the Gentiles beyond a general expectation that they would be saved at the eschaton. Against this, Bird argues that "Jesus' intention was to renew and restore Israel, so that a restored Israel would extend God's salvation to the world" (3). Because Jesus understood himself and his followers as replacing the temple and taking on the role of being a light to the nations, "a Gentile mission is implied in the aims and intentions of Jesus and was pursued in a transformed context by members of the early Christian movement" (3).

Bird advances his case in Chapter 2 by showing that Jesus' understanding of Jewish restoration eschatology saw the Gentiles being saved as a sequel to the restoration of Israel. Chapter 3 then explains that neither the negative remarks Jesus makes about Gentiles (calling them "dogs") nor Jesus' restriction of his ministry to Israel are in conflict with this understanding of how and when the Gentiles would be included. Chapters 4 and 5 advance the argument by presenting "sayings material" and "narrative traditions" that lead to Bird's understanding. Chapter 6 concludes the argument by contending that the disciples appropriate the role of Israel and the temple as "light to the nations." Bird thus helpfully establishes that the mission of the early church flows naturally out of Jesus' own mission prior to the resurrection.

Pasted from <<http://jimhamilton.info/2007/08/10/review-of-jesus-and-the-origins-of-the-gentile-mission-by-michael-f-bird/>>

That the work of Jesus originates with the Jews and expands to the Gentiles has already been addressed in the introduction to this work:

A Deuteronomic insistence is that God shows no partiality:

17 For the Lord your God is God of gods and Lord of lords, the great God, mighty and awesome, who is not partial and takes no bribe,

Pasted from <<http://www.biblestudytools.com/nrs/deuteronomy/10.html>>

The point is that in Deuteronomy, a people have been chosen, they have been asked to obey (chapter 8) and not to rebel (9), and they carry God's presence with them (10); the testing humbles them and prepares them for "end purposes" which are ultimately good. With this in mind, we can move to Acts and a reinterpretation of this tradition. Peter takes up the issue of partiality, extending acceptability to God's presence to all nations:

34 Then Peter began to speak to them: "I truly understand that God shows no partiality, 35 but in every nation anyone who fears him and does what is right is acceptable to him.

Pasted from <<http://www.biblestudytools.com/nrs/acts/10.html>>

Readers should not be surprised to discover that the next chapter follows Jesus into Gentile territory:

Summary In Gentile territory, in the region of Decapolis, southeast of the Sea of Galilee, Jesus imparts bread to four thousand. Although Jesus has been up to this time manifesting authority in many ways, the Pharisees demand a sign from heaven. Jesus refuses. Jesus next speaks metaphorically about leaven (yeast) bread to his disciples, who misunderstand. Jesus becomes vexed at his disciples for their worry about a lack of bread. And finally, Jesus heals a blind man at Bethsaida, not completely the first time, but only after laying his hands a second time upon him. Following this, Jesus' journey seriously turned from the north to Jerusalem. In spite of Peter's protest, Jesus now begins to teach his disciples about his true Messiahship and the cost of discipleship.

Pasted from <<http://crain.english.missouriwestern.edu/Mark/interpre6.htm>>

Concerning the "Jewishness" of Galilee, research has suggested that much of gentile presence was a phenomenon after 120CE and that even the cities of Sepphoris and Tiberias were not especially populated by gentiles, although Bethsaida yields evidence of pagan practices :

In conclusion, the available evidence suggests that Galilee in the time of Jesus was a mostly Jewish region. While gentiles were present there (as in all areas of Palestine), nothing suggests that they were especially numerous. They are practically invisible in the archaeological record, and they are not prominent in literary discussions of Galilee, either. Most of our evidence for gentiles dates not to the first century but to the second century and later, after the arrival of large numbers of Roman troops in 120 CE. If we are to understand Jesus in his Galilean context, we must always keep in mind the Jewishness of that context.

Pasted from <http://www.bibleinterp.com/articles/Myth_Gentile_Galilee.htm>

Obviously, many of the cities adjacent to Galilee were predominantly gentile, such as Scythopolis, located just to the southwest; other cities of the Decapolis, several of which were located to the east of the Sea of Galilee; Caesarea Philippi, to the northeast; Tyre and Sidon, to the northwest. On and just beyond the northern fringes of Upper Galilee, there were indisputably pagan settlements, such as the settlement at Tel Anafa and the village of Kedesh (a Tyrian community). Even further to the north, at Jebel Balat, stood a temple.

Pasted from <http://www.bibleinterp.com/articles/Myth_Gentile_Galilee.htm>

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Edited December 28, 2018

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Chapter eight in Mark invites consideration of all the discussions of the historical Jesus and the theological Christ; it compels readers to confront the resurrection and its meaning, and it directs attention to whether Mark intended "Son of God" to mean "a god" or "the God." This chapter then presents a survey of perspectives relative to the central question of Jesus's identity and the reader's response to "Who do you say that I am?"

Lewis S. Hay states that Mark's avowed purpose was to present Jesus as the "Son of God in his human words and deeds." This raises, of course, consideration of what is meant by Son of God. He cites Oscar Cullman: "Cullmann's survey of Jewish literature reveals that the term "son of God" may mean: (a) an angelic being; (b) Israel as God's chosen people; (c) the righteous or obedient within Israel; or (d) the king as the personal representative of God's elect nation." He then goes on to say "the term by no means carries the idea of physical descent from, and essential unity with, God the Father. The Hebrew idiom conveys nothing further than a simple expression of godlikeness (see [Godliness](#))." In short, interpretation pivots on the important points of history and theology. Hay argues that Mark works to show the God who reveals himself in the history of the man Jesus of Nazareth.

Hay makes the point that Mark does not write about a meta-physical God understood as the opposite of human beings, and he is, thus, not concerned about a mythical bridging of the gap between the existing and other world; rather, Mark writes genuine history.

Neil Q. Hamilton understands the resurrection not as a ground for belief but as an event marking a transition from the real history of Jesus's first career into his second. This distinguishes Mark's gospel from that of the Matthew and Luke which do, in fact, use Mark's story of the resurrection as a ground for belief, a direction consequently followed by the church.

C.H. Dowd remarks on the earthly aspects of an apocalyptic interpretation of the coming kingdom of God, immediately present, but with a hope anchored in the "beyond":

It would seem right to start from the standpoint of sayings which are both plain and central to the teaching of Jesus. Nothing in it is more clearly original or characteristic than his declaration that the kingdom of God is here. It meant that a hope has become a reality. You no longer look for the reign of God through a telescope; you open your eyes to see. But at the same time there is more than meets the eye. It is the reign of God; it is the eternal God himself, here present. There is a power at work in this world which is not of this world, something "supernatural," an invasion from time Beyond -- how, ever you may choose to express it. It gives an eternal dimension to time temporal present, and to each succeeding "present"; but it can never be exhausted in any temporal present, however deeply significant. The kingdom of God, while it is present experience, remains also a hope, but a hope directed to a consummation beyond history.

One reaches the chapter mid-point in Mark with increased expectation to discover the identity of Jesus. Common themes emerge--a second feeding and boat story "closing out the third segment of Jesus' sGalilee mission" (*NISB Notes*), a continued incomprehension and obduracy of the disciples, Jesus's exasperation in "Do you still not perceive or understand?" followed by the question, "Are your hearts hardened?" this motif already encountered, and by a final two questions, "Do you have eyes and fail to see?" "Do you have ears and fail to hear?" Jesus next asks the disciples if they do not remember the first feeding, and after recalling this provision, asks once again, "Do you not yet understand" (17-21)

Why should it be surprising that the narrative of Mark next explores a story of Jesus's healing a blind man? In fact, 8:22-10:52, the final segment of the Galilean ministry, is sandwiched by two giving sight stories (this one and the one in 10:46-52). *NISB Notes* highlights the misunderstanding of the disciples ironically contrasted to the "giving of sight to the blind." The blind can see; those who see have no insight. In this story, the blind man who has been brought to Jesus by other people requires two attempts before being healed, the first giving only partial vision and the second, restoring his sight. This blind man is then sent to his home, reminding readers of the leper who proclaimed the healing freely 1:45, Jesus's ordering the people around the raised Jairus's daughter to tell no one, and the people zealously proclaiming the cure of the deaf man in 10:36, although ordered by Jesus not to do so. The last healing story, that of Blind Bartimaeus, who comes on his own, shouting "Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me" follows a third passion-prediction section (*NISV Notes*). This is the first time Jesus is called Son of David, a claim discredited in Mark in 12:35-37, an enthymeme proving that "the Messiah, whom David calls 'lord,' cannot be his son" (*NISB Notes*).

Michael Turton suggests a possible redaction meant apologetically:

: Jesus quotes Psalm 110 (109 LXX). Some scholars see this as a later creation which admits that Jesus was not of the Davidic line and seeks to mitigate the damage. Chilton (1984) argues that this is "reasonably" an authentic saying due to the embarrassment ~~v36-7~~ criterion, since it clashes with later Christian understandings of Jesus. The Psalm appears to have been used in a coronation ritual for the kings of Israel (Donahue and Harrington 2002, p359).

. In the Gospel of [Mk 10:35-37](#) Psalm 110 is one of the most important texts of OT literature in the NT. It was widely used in early Christian circles in the NT period and is cited in Acts 2:34-5, 1 Cor 15:25, and Heb 1:13. There are numerous allusions as well (Donahue and Harrington 2002, p359). This cite of Psalm 110 may also reflect back to Mark it anchors the end of the chiasm in Mark 12, and belongs to several themes of the writer, including his presentation of Jesus as Simon Maccabaeus, as David, and as the High Priest. The Psalm in English runs:

1: The LORD says to my lord: "Sit at my right hand, till I make your enemies your footstool."

2: The LORD sends forth from Zion your mighty scepter. Rule in the midst of your foes!

3: Your people will offer themselves freely on the day you lead your host upon the holy mountains. From the womb of the morning like dew your youth will come to you.

4: The LORD has sworn and will not change his mind, "You are a priest for ever after the order of Melchiz'edek."

5: The Lord is at your right hand; he will shatter kings on the day of his wrath.

6: He will execute judgment among the nations, filling them with corpses; he will shatter chiefs over the wide earth.

Pasted from <<http://www.michaelturton.com/Mark/GMark12.html>>

The earlier verse is, of course, the one where James and John want to sit on right and left of Jesus in his "glory:

35: And James and John, the sons of Zeb'edee, came forward to him, and said to him, "Teacher, we want you to do for us whatever we ask of you." 36: And he said to them, "What do you want me to do for you?" 37: And they said to him, "Grant us to sit, one at your right hand and one at your left, in your glory.

Pasted from <<http://www.michaelturton.com/Mark/GMark10.html#10.35.37>>

v35-37: Ched Myers (1988, p279) sees an allusion to Psalm 110 in the first two verses:

1 The LORD says to my Lord: "Sit at my right hand until I make your enemies a footstool for your feet." 2 The LORD will extend your mighty scepter from Zion; you will rule in the midst of your enemies.(NIV)

In Psalm 110:6 the Lord sits in judgment on his enemies, just as James and John ask for here. In [Mk 12:35](#) this same passage becomes the basis for a discussion of Jesus' Davidic relationship.

Pasted from <<http://www.michaelturton.com/Mark/GMark10.html#10.35.37>>

It may be well, at this point, to bring to mind another passage in Mark (10:17):

"And as he was setting out on his journey, a man ran up and knelt before him, and asked him, "Good Teacher, what must I do to inherit eternal life?" And Joshua said to him, "Why do you call me good? No one is good but God alone. You know the commandments: 'Do not kill, Do not commit adultery, Do not steal, Do not bear false witness, Do not defraud, Honor your father and mother.'" Here, Jesus, self-designated "Son of Man," refuses the title of "good," pointing out that God alone is good. Actually, Jesus has been consistent in referencing himself as "Son of Man" in contrast to the "Christological 'Son of God.'" Readers do well to recall that the right and left places of distinction are given in Mark to the two criminals crucified with Jesus, bringing back the theme of rejection, suffering, and death. Hidden among all of this is, of course, some theology. We know, for example, from Luke that Elizabeth is a descendant of Aaron and Mary was her cousin (1:5, 1:36). Jesus, of course, in Matthew is the son of the Holy Ghost, and a child of a virgin mother. Paul, earlier than the Synoptic Gospels, describes Jesus as "descended from David according to the flesh" and "designated son of God in power according to the Spirit of holiness by his resurrection from the dead (Romans 1:3, 2 Timothy 2:8). Mark has not included the birth of Jesus so is not bothered by the potential controversy. Mark, however, asking the central question about identity invites all possibilities for consideration within deciding how to answer.

The three titles used in Mark for Jesus become pivotal to understanding what identity is evolving. In a 1994 article, Lewis S. Hay lays out several critical focal points, including definitions for "Son of God," "(S)son of (M)an," and Son of David and critical demarcations where Jesus potentially became Christ: resurrection, baptism, and his teaching and history. It is appropriate to begin with definitions, already discussed at some length in earlier sections. Using Oscar Cullman, Hay defines three senses of "Son of God":

Cullmann's survey of Jewish literature reveals that the term "son of God" may mean: (a) an angelic being; (b) Israel as God's chosen people; (c) the righteous or obedient within Israel; or (d) the king as the personal representative of God's elect nation.

This accords with the Hebrew understanding of the title:

Term applied to an angel or demigod, one of the mythological beings whose exploits are described in Gen. vi. 2-4, and whose ill conduct was among the causes of the

Flood; to a judge or ruler (Ps. lxxxii. 6, "children of the Most High"; in many passages "gods" and "judges" seem to be equations; comp. Ex. xxi. 6 [R. V., margin] and xxii. 8, 9); and to the real or ideal king over Israel (II Sam. vii. 14, with reference to David and his dynasty; comp. Ps. lxxxix. 27, 28). "Sons of God" and "children of God" are applied also to Israel as a people (comp. Ex. iv. 22 and Hos. xi. 1) and to all members of the human race. Yet the term by no means carries the idea of physical descent from, and essential unity with, God the Father. The Hebrew idiom conveys nothing further than a simple expression of godlikeness (see Godliness). In fact, the term "son of God" is rarely used in Jewish literature in the sense of "Messiah." Though in Sukkah 52a the words of Ps. ii. 7, 8 are put into the mouth of Messiah, son of David, he himself is not called "son of God." The more familiar epithet is "King Messiah," based partly on this psalm (Gen. R. xlv.). In the Targum the of Ps. lxxx. 16 is rendered מלכא משיחא (= "King Messiah"), while Ps. ii. 7 is paraphrased in a manner that removes the anthropomorphism of the Hebrew: "Thou art beloved unto me, like a son unto a father, pure as on the day when I created thee."

Pasted from <<http://www.jewishencyclopedia.com/articles/13912-son-of-god>>

Hay says all three have relevance to Mark, but the last one has meaning especially in light of Ps 2:7 and the messianic interpretation. Hay further points out the critical junctures at which "Son of God" can be found in Mark:

The term appears in the title line of the Gospel (1:1); it is pronounced from heaven at the baptism and transfiguration (1:11 and 9:7); it is confessed by the demons whose power the Son is breaking (3:11 and 5:7); it is claimed by the Son himself before the High Priest (14:61-62); it is uttered by the centurion at the foot of the cross (15:39). Moreover, Jesus appears as the son in the parable of the vineyard (12:1-12), and designates himself as "the Son" who does not share the Father's knowledge of the time of the end (13:32). American Academy of Religion, "The Son-of-God Christology in Mark," Source: *Journal of Bible and Religion*, Vol. 32, No. 2 (Apr., 1964), pp. 106-114 Published by: Oxford University Press
Stable URL: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/1460203>

The ESV provides the following commentary, emphasizing communication at the beginning and end of Mark, his commissioning, his reference to himself as the bridegroom, and the centurion's testimony:

) "good news" is connected with the saving intervention of God to help his people. of Jesus Christ. The gospel is proclaimed by Jesus, the Messiah, but in a secondary sense (Nah. 1:15; Isa. 40:9; 52:7). Rather than emphasizing the events leading up to Jesus' public ministry in terms of his genealogy and family roots (as do Matthew and Luke) or in terms of its theological foundation (as does John), Mark focuses on its actual beginning. The gospel is the good news of the fulfillment of God's promises. In the OT (Mark 1:1) the good news is the report about Jesus. Mark communicates both at the beginning and end of his Gospel (Mark 1:1; 15:39) that Jesus is the Son of God.

Immediately is a favorite word of Mark's (he uses Gk. Mark 1:10-11) *eutheus*, "immediately, at once," 41 times). It imparts a sense of speed and urgency and often introduces a new incident or a surprising turn of events within an incident. The Spirit of God descends upon Jesus in his baptism (see notes on Matt. 3:16; Luke 3:22). Jesus is thus commissioned for a unique service (cf. Isa. 11:2; 42:1; 61:1). Mark's allusions to the OT here involve Jesus' claim to be the Son of God (Ps. 2:7) and the servant of God (Isa. 42:1). The heavenly voice confirms the eternal, love-filled Sonship of Jesus (see note on Matt. 3:17). Note that all three persons of the Godhead—the Spirit, the Father, and the Son—are involved here.

Mark 2:8 perceiving ... that they thus questioned within themselves. Jesus' divine nature is revealed in his ability to read their thoughts. (Cf. note on Matt. 24:36 concerning the limits and extent of Jesus' knowledge in his human and divine nature as the incarnate Son of God.)

Mark 2:19-20 Jesus refers to himself as the bridegroom, who in the OT was the Lord (cf. Isa. 62:5; Hos. 2:19-20). While Jesus is present with his disciples, they are to rejoice; when he is taken away from them ... then they will fast. They will then return to the practice of fasting to seek the presence of God, but they need not do that when Jesus, the Son of God (see Mark 1:1; 15:39), is with them. "Taken away" is an indirect prediction of Jesus' death (see Isa. 53:8).

), the centurion may have had in mind Luke 23:39-43). Like the thief on the cross who expressed faith in Jesus (Luke 23:47) the centurion has observed the death of many crucified criminals; he recognizes the purity and power of Jesus (in this way) and rightly sees that he is the Son of God (cf. note on Mark 15:39) complete

understanding of Jesus' identity and mission, but Mark seems to record this testimony as an indication of the centurion's faith and the truth about Jesus' identity.

Pasted from

<http://www.esvbible.org/search/content/notes/esvsb_notes/%40%2A%20%22Son%20of%20God%22%20%26%20%40note_type%20lsb%7Csb%7Chs/Mark/>

Hay next outlines three critical positions:

1. Rudolf Bultmann, who, following W. Bousset and others, sees Mark's *Son of God as basically a Hellenistic figure* [*my italics*]. Bultmann argues that the early Palestinian community originally attributed the title "Son of God" to Jesus in a purely Jewish-messianic sense, and placed his accession to Sonship at the resurrection (cf. Rom. 1:4). It was thus that the words of Ps. 2:7 were interpreted: "Thou art my beloved son; this day have I begotten thee." But when Christianity moved on to Gentile soil the Jewish-messianic view of the Son of God was metamorphosed into the Hellenistic figure of a divinely empowered miracle worker, and it is this notion of the Son which appears in Mark. With the evangelist, more-over, the accession to Sonship was transferred to the beginning of Jesus' ministry. Thus the Gospel presents Jesus as becoming the Son of God at his baptism, for it is then that he receives the divine Spirit which subsequently enables him to perform his supernatural deeds.
2. The second point of view is represented by Oscar Cullmann. In agreement with J. Bieneck⁴— the two are mutually indebted to each other — Cullmann discovers in the second Gospel *a thoroughly Jewish concept of the Son of God* [*italics added*]. Against Bultmann he contends that the contexts in which the title "Son of God" is ascribed to Jesus are, by and large, not those which present him as a worker of miracles, but precisely those in which he appears as God's servant, chosen to bring redemption to men by his suffering and death. It is in his obedience to the Father's will, even though that will means ultimately the cross, that Jesus manifests that he is God's Son... The real motivation behind the ascription, and its full justification, Cullmann discovers in the consciousness and claims of Jesus himself. According to Cullmann, Jesus was fully aware of his unique filial relation to God and forthrightly disclosed this fact to his disciples. The Gospels' reticence about Jesus' open claims to Sonship is explained by the supposition that Jesus employed the title infrequently and in a carefully guarded manner so that his Sonship would not be associated with the other claims to divine sonship so often heard in the world of the first century.'
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1. A third point of view is defended by Walter Grundmann, who claims that the Christian use of the term "Son of God" is inexplicable either in terms of contemporary Judaism or Hellenistic thought, but could have originated only in the distinct teaching and history of Jesus.' Grundmann, however, does not recognize in the teaching of Jesus any genuinely unique notion of Son ship; on the contrary, his entire treatment of the subject subsumes the particular idea of Gottessohnschaft under the more general Gotteskindschaft, the latter to be taken "in the widest sense."" This general Gotteskindschaft is what Jesus claims for himself and shares with all his disciples. The Gospels' use of the term "Son of God" as an honorific title for Jesus Grundmann quickly dismisses as *the work of the believing community* [italics added], apparently agreeing with historical-critical scholarship that the title has taken on a primarily Hellenistic meaning."

Hay himself suggests yet another possible direction of interpretation:

We may say, then, that Mark's understanding of Jesus' Son ship is, in regard to its temporal manifestation also, parallel to the form in which the early community understood the *sonship of the believers* [italics added]: just as the sonship of believers was seen as both a present reality through their participation in the Spirit (Rom. 8:14-15; 9:26; II Cor. 6:18; Gal. 3:26; 4:5-7), and a future reality to be fully revealed at the resurrection (Rom. 8:19; cf. also the use of the future forms in Matt. 5:9, 45; Luke 6:35), so Jesus' Sonship was understood to have been realized during his earthly life by his obedience to the Father and then irrefutably revealed at his resurrection (Rom. 1:4). The distinction between the two lies in the fact that Jesus is the one Son who, by his radical obedience to the Father, guarantees the eschatological sonship which he proclaims to all who believe.

From this, Hay makes three final observations:

1. First, a genuinely historical view of Jesus as Son of God places Jesus' Sonship on a par with the sonship of all God's elect. There is no essential or metaphysical difference between his relation to the Father and that which is open to all other men.
2. Second, this historical view of Sonship is quite consistent with the conviction of the evangelist that Jesus really is the Son of God. We have seen that Mark has no intention of answering the question of when Jesus became the Son. At the same time, the historical understanding of the Sonship means that the Gospel is a presentation of Jesus' becoming the Son (in a historical or existential sense) in his words and deeds. In the historical realm being and becoming are identical. Jesus is not a person who, incidentally, has a history; Jesus is his history. Mark proclaims Jesus as the very Son of God precisely by reporting his historical words and deeds.
3. Mark's Christology is integrally bound up with the kind of literature he is writing — i. e., with the Gattung "Gospel." Given his understanding of Christology, Mark could present Jesus as the Son in no other way. What we have in his Gospel, therefore, is not myth, despite its mythical elements, but genuine history. In contrast to Mark, the stories of the Gnostic redeemer center in the philosophical problem which emerges in the metaphysical distinction posited between God and man. Hence, they are openly mythical, the proper function of the myth being to bridge the gap between the human and the divine. There is no attempt in them to write history, and for this reason the Gnostics never felt compelled as did the Christians to harmonize their stories into a rational whole. The evangelist, on the other hand, does not know God as the meta-physical opposite of man but as the God who has revealed himself in the history of the man Jesus of Nazareth. Jesus does not appear in Mark as one whose mysterious nature combines metaphysical opposites in an irrational, unfathomable paradox. *Rather, he appears as the Son of God in his human words and deeds, in his history.* [italics added]. Since Mark's avowed purpose was to present Jesus as the Son of God, we can only assume that he reports those words and deeds of Jesus which, when rightly understood, reveal him as the Son. The origin of Mark, and the rise of the Gattung "Gospel," was thus the direct result of a historical Christology and the preservation of those historical traditions which were Christologically significant.

In a similar way, Jack Dean Kingsbury ("The "Divine Man" as the Key to Mark's Christology: The End of an Era?" (1981, <http://int.sagepub.com/content/35/3/243>) has reviewed scholarship concerning the "Divine Man," identifying two directions: that of Wrede and Bultman, whom he sees (except for the idea of preexistence) understanding Jesus Christ as the Messiah (Christ), *the Son of God, fundamentally in the same way as Paul* [added italics]; a second phase understands Mark as *adopting the Hellenistic divine-man Christology* [italics added], this inferior to Paul, with others maintaining *Mark sought to combat and correct the Hellenistic* [italics added] divine-man Christology. Kingsbury then explains the work of several scholars belonging to this second direction. First, Leander Keck adopted a traditional cycle of mystery stories and restricted their significance by focusing on the cross. Hans Dieter Betz explains Mark as reinterpreting divine-man Christology through emphasizing messianic secret, the passion, and eschatology. Paul J. Achtemeier argues that Mark uses two cycles of miracle stories originally formed as liturgy celebrating an epiphanic Eucharist [italics added] (bread broken as divine-Man) and inserted into these a framework emphasizing Jesus' death. Theodore Weeden says *Mark combats "false prophets" and "false Christs"* [italics added] by insisting Christian existence finds meaning and fulfillment in the pneumatic glory of divine-Man existence. Norman Perrin contends Mark's Christological tension with his tradition was resolved by correcting the divine-Man Christology. Perrin says Mark uses Son of Man to interpret and correct Son of God; *he plays down divine-Man and emphasizes suffering* [italics added]. John Donahue says Son of Man is the title par excellence because it provides a true and accurate *meaning for the Jesus history* [italics added]. Paul Achtemeier finds Son of God ambiguous and Son of David inadequate to express *the life of Jesus of Nazareth; the only suitable title is Son of Man* [italics added].

Kingsbury continues by pointing out that recent investigations involving Divine-Man appear to be relatively rare in pertinent literature, as is also "Son of God." When used, two types of Divine-Man can be established: divine by reason of wisdom and moral virtue or divine by power to perform miracles. Kingsbury outlines various meanings for Divine-Man as "divine man," "inspired man," a "man related to God," or an "extraordinary man." Some scholarship has sought to trace "son of God" to pre-Christian Judaism with some evidence emerging in Qumran literature.

Having sorted out implications of the two titles, Son of Man and Son of God, Kingsbury concludes by explaining how different trajectories of usage can be discovered: the Son of Man is not used within circles of the Messiah, King, Son of David and evidences no aura of secrecy, used in settings of opposition and when Jesus sets himself up as a model for the disciples to emulate in "self-sacrifice"; messianic titles focus on a true perception of who Jesus is, a trajectory ending in the centurion's confession at the crucifixion that Jesus is the Son of God and that the disciples will see him again in Galilee; the Son of Man trajectory aims at the second coming when all will know who Jesus is--the Royal Son of God.

Not surprisingly, N.T. Wright (*The Resurrection of the Son of God*, 2003) commits a final chapter to "The Risen Jesus as the Son of God," where he describes two interlocking meanings of "Son of god": Israel as a whole, "and the king (or Messiah) more specifically." He also distinguishes son of a god and son of "the" God. He describes Christians as believing that Jesus was "the personal embodiment and revelation of the one true God" (731) and that "the Jewish eschatological hope has been fulfilled" (726); Jesus was son of *ho theos* (725) :

To claim the risen Jesus as 'son of God' in the sense of 'Messiah' was the most deeply Jewish thing the Christians could do, and hence the most deeply suspect in the eyes of those Jews who did not share their convictions. 724

One final observation should be made about the use of the article in the title. In *Θεοῦ υἱός, Matt. xxvii. 54, and Mark xv (1886)*, D. R. Goodwin explains that the important distinction lies in the distinction that demigods were to be understood only as the son of some god, not one God:

But, finally, even if this centurion must be presumed to have uttered his words from the polytheistic point of view, the proper English of those words would no more be "a son of God" than "the Son of God" $\Theta\epsilon\omicron\upsilon\varsigma$, no t in the $\upsilon\iota\omicron\varsigma$ nor in the article with either. The heathen demigods were not supposed to be "sons of God," but "the sons of some god." Hercules, for example, was not "a son of God," but "t/he son of a god"; and Aeneas was "the son of a goddess." Is it not high time that we should hear no more of this blundering mar-ginal reading, "a son of God"? Shall its advocacy still be con-sidered a mark of the highest and broadest scholarship? "; but, "the son of a god." The point of distinction lies in the , Nov/Dec 2012, 38:6) traces the evolution of Christianity from its Hebrew-Jewish background into the first century and followers of "the Way," into Jewish-Christian and Christian *Biblical Archaeology Review* Geza Vermes in "From Jewish to Gentile: How the Jesus Movement Became Christianity (gentiles, and finally, a full-blown Christology. Vermes points to the *Didache*, second half of first century, as never calling Jesus "Son of God"; he says this title is found only once in the *Didache*, "where it is the self-designation of the Antichrist, 'the seducer of the world' (16.4). He further says the *Didache* "uses only the lowliest Christological qualification for Jesus," with the Greek term *pais* being rendered as "God's 'Servant.'" Vermes argues that "The switch in the perception of Jesus from charismatic prophet to superhuman being coincided with a geographical and religious change, when the Christian preaching of the gospel moved from the Galilean-Judean Jewish culture to the pagan surroundings of the Greco-Roman world. He finds evidence of this in the *Epistle of Barnabas*, 120 CE, falsely attributed to Barnabas and more likely the work of a gentile Christian author. This debate has also been taken up in *Biblical Archaeology*, where the issue revolves about "pre-existence" and "enthronement":

Is the Son of Man Pre-existent and Enthroned?

Biblical Archaeology Society Staff • 04/18/2011

[Back to Scholar's Study](#)

Introduction

The January/February 2011 issue of **BAR** featured a book review, written by James C. VanderKam, of *King and Messiah as Son of God*. We then received a letter from J. Harold

Ellens, retired professor of philosophy and psychology at Calvin Seminary and Princeton Theological Seminary, wishing to clarify the terms and concepts used to describe the Son of Man in the ancient literature. Dr. Ellens's letter is below, followed by responses from the book's authors, Adela Yarbro Collins and John J. Collins.

Dr. Ellens's letter:

In your superb January/February 2011 issue, you published a welcome book review of Adela Yarbro Collins's and John J. Collins's *King and Messiah as Son of God*. The review was written by James C. VanderKam. The review is in many ways quite helpful and the book itself is genuinely useful for our field. However, there is in this review, and in the volume itself, an error that seems to surface frequently when a discussion of Second Temple Judaism is involved regarding the concept of the Son of Man. The review contends that the Son of Man in 1 Enoch, and by implication in Daniel 7, as well as 4 Ezra and other documents, is pre-existent and enthroned. More care must be taken regarding this issue. Nowhere in Second Temple Jewish literature is the Son of Man both pre-existent *and* enthroned. In Daniel 7–9 he is neither pre-existent nor enthroned. He simply appears in the presence of God in Daniel's vision sometime around 535 B.C.E. and is given authority and power, but no throne. In 1 Enoch he is enthroned but not pre-existent. Only the idea of the Son of Man and his name is pre-existent in the mind of God in 1 Enoch. Enoch is there named the Son of Man. In the Synoptic Gospels, the Son of Man seems possibly to be enthroned but is not pre-existent. He starts out as a human on earth and ends up in heaven as the Judge (enthroned?). In the final redaction of John's gospel, with its prologue and final chapters, the Son of Man is pre-existent (1:1–3), and in the end exalted, but not described as enthroned. Many scholars continue to make these mistakes, as in this review. We should let the texts, in each case, say exactly what they literally say.

Dr. J. Harold Ellens

Retired Professor of Philosophy and Psychology at Calvin Seminary and Princeton Theological Seminary
 Founding Editor, Emeritus Editor-in-Chief, *Journal of Psychology and Christianity*
 Farmington Hills, Michigan

Adela Yarbro Collins responds:

The Son of Man is quite clearly expected to be enthroned when all things are renewed (Matthew 19:28). In Mark the Son of Man is very probably expected to be enthroned at some point after Jesus' death, since he is described as "seated on the right of the Power," i.e., God (Mark 14:62). The same is true of Luke 22:69. Although it is not stated explicitly, it is likely that the Son of Man is depicted as enthroned for the future judgment in Luke 21:36. Those being judged will "stand" before the judge, the Son of Man, who is expected to be seated.

John J. Collins responds:

I have three brief comments on Hal Ellens's letter:

1. While the point is tangential to the issue at hand, no critical scholar can date Daniel's visions to "some time about 535 B.C.E." They date from the time of the Maccabean revolt in the second century B.C.E.
2. The statement "only the idea of the Son of Man and his name is pre-existent in the mind of God" fails to understand the relation of the name to the person. The naming of his name is a form of pre-existence.
3. Whether the identification of Enoch with the Son of Man is integral to the Similitudes of Enoch is perhaps the most controversial question in the study of 1 Enoch. It is found only in the last chapter of the work (chapter 71), and even there the interpretation is disputed. There are good literary reasons for regarding that chapter as a secondary addition to the Similitudes. Prior to that chapter, there is no hint that Enoch is identical with the Son of Man, or that he is seeing himself in his visions. The interpretation of chapter 71 is admittedly disputed, and this is one issue on which Professor VanderKam and I disagree.

Permalink: <http://www.biblicalarchaeology.org/scholars-study/is-the-son-of-man-pre-existent-and-enthroned/>

In the actual review itself, Vanderkam concludes the following concerning Collins' research: "He concludes that the title points to a special relationship between god and king, though the king may not have been thought to be a god <<http://www.biblicalarchaeology.org/reviews/king-and-messiah-as-son-of-god/>>."

Further, Collins does not find Jesus to be represented in the Synoptic gospels as preexistent:

In Paul's letters (Philippians 2:5–11 and possibly also in 1 Corinthians 8:6 and 2 Corinthians 4:3–4), Adela Yarbro Collins finds a reference to Jesus' preexistence. But in the Synoptic gospels, she thinks, Jesus is *not* represented as preexistent.

She recognizes that the historical Jesus may have spoken about one "like a Son of Man" as a heavenly Messiah coming soon to exercise divine rule. Moreover, after the crucifixion, Jesus' followers identified him as that Son of Man—and worshiped him, as was the case in the ruler cults of the time.

Having already pointed out the location of "Son of God" in Mark, it may be useful, also, to review structurally where the title "son of David" appears, two times declared by blind Bartimaeus, the other in a teaching of Jesus in the Temple in enthymeme:

- **Mark 10:47 NRS**

When he heard that it was Jesus **of** Nazareth, he began to shout out and say, "Jesus, **Son of David**, have mercy on me!"
[Read Mark 10](#) | [View in parallel](#) | [Compare Translations](#)

- **Mark 10:48 NRS;**



Many sternly ordered him to be quiet, but he cried out even more loudly, "**Son of David**, have mercy on me!"

[Read Mark 10](#) | [View in parallel](#) | [Compare Translations](#)

- While Jesus was teaching in the temple, he said, "How can the scribes say that the Messiah is **Mark 12:35 NRS**the

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- **son of David?**

Pasted from <<http://www.biblestudytools.com/search/?q=Son+of+David&c=mr&t=nrs&ps=10&s=Bibles>>

The ESV provides the following account of the title, identifying Bartimaeus's acclamation as messianic, the identification of the Messiah as LORD OF David, and the transcendence of this Lord over any merely political messiah:

Mark 10:47 Jesus will later identify the cry of the blind man (Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me) as expressing "faith" (v. 52; Matthew notes there were actually two blind men, but Mark and Luke [[Luke 18:35–43](#)] only tell about one of them; see note on [Matt. 20:30–31](#)). "Son of David" is a messianic acclamation (see [Mark 12:35–37](#)).

Mark 12:35–37 While in the temple, Jesus publicly raises a question that he has already discussed in private with his disciples: who is the Messiah of God—is he essentially the son of David or the Lord of David? Jesus' point is not to deny that the Messiah is a descendant of David (e.g., [Ps. 2:1–12](#); [89:1–52](#); [Isa. 9:1–7](#); [Jer. 23:5–6](#); [Ezek. 34:23–24](#)). The issue is that, in this passage (i.e., [Ps. 110:1–5](#)), there is no mention of the Messiah being the son of David; rather, the Messiah is here the "Lord of David" (see note on [Matt. 22:41–46](#)). Jesus affirms the divine inspiration of the Psalm through the Holy Spirit. The Lord (Hb. Yahweh) grants to David's Lord (Hb. 'Adonay) an exclusive place of honor at his right hand and helps David's Lord overcome his enemies. Jesus anticipates being exalted to the right hand of God, and thus he far transcends any expectation of a merely political, Davidic messiah.

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<[Readers should note that the Messiah or future deliverer of Israel took on various connotations with no fixed notion in the time of Jesus: as a future king like David, as "an authoritative priest to provide definitive instruction in God's law," and "as a comic figure sent by God to overthrow the forces of evil" \(Ehrman, *The New Testament: A Historical Introduction To The early Christian Writings* \(New York: Oxford, 1997\). N.T. Wright also agrees that in the first century, Messiah meant Israel's Messiah:](http://www.esvbible.org/search/content/notes/esvsb_notes/%40%2A+%22Son+of+David%22+%26+%40note_type+lsb%7Csb%7Chs+%40book+41/></p>
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To say that Jesus is 'the Christ' is, in first-century terms, to say first and foremost that he is Israel's Messiah, not to say that he is the incarnate Logos, the second person of the Trinity, the only-begotten son of the father. Even the phrase 'son of god', during Jesus' ministry and in very early Christianity, does not mean what it came to mean in later theology, though already by the time of Paul a widening of its meaning can be observed. http://www.christendom-awake.org/pages/resurrection/wright_resurrection.htm

Pure preponderance would suggest a preferential use of the title "Son of Man" throughout Mark:

- **Mark 2:10 NRS**

But so that you may know that the **Son of Man** has authority on earth to forgive sins"—he said to the paralytic—

[Read Mark 2](#) | [View in parallel](#) | [Compare Translations](#)

- the **of** is lord even **Man of Sons** so the

Mark 2:28 NRS sabbath."

[Read Mark 2](#) | [View in parallel](#) | [Compare Translations](#)

- **Mark 8:31 NRS**

Then he began to teach them that the **Son of Man** must undergo great suffering, and be rejected by the elders, the chief priests, and the scribes, and be killed, and after three days rise again.

[Read Mark 8](#) | [View in parallel](#) | [Compare Translations](#)

- my words in this adulterous and sinful generation, **of** me and **of** Those who are ashamed

Mark 8:38 NRS of them the **Son of Man** will also be ashamed when he comes in the glory **of** his Father with the holy angels."

[Read Mark 8](#) | [View in parallel](#) | [Compare Translations](#)

- **Mark 9:9 NRS**

As they were coming down the mountain, he ordered them to tell no one about what they had seen, until after the **Son of Man** had risen from the dead.

[Read Mark 9](#) | [View in parallel](#) | [Compare Translations](#)

- He said to them, "Elijah is indeed coming first to restore all things. How then is it written about

Mark 9:12 NRS the

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- **Son of Man**, that he is to go through many sufferings and be treated with contempt?

[Read Mark 9](#) | [View in parallel](#) | [Compare Translations](#)

- **Mark 9:31 NRS**

for he was teaching his disciples, saying to them, "The **Son of Man** is to be betrayed into human hands, and they will kill him, and three days after being killed, he will rise again."

[Read Mark 9](#) | [View in parallel](#) | [Compare Translations](#)

- **Mark 10:33 NRS**

saying, "See, we are going up to Jerusalem, and the **Son of Man** will be handed over to the chief priests and the scribes, and they will condemn him to death; then they will hand him over to the Gentiles;

[Read Mark 10](#) | [View in parallel](#) | [Compare Translations](#)

- **Mark 10:45 NRS**

For the **Son of Man** came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life a ransom for many."

[Read Mark 10](#) | [View in parallel](#) | [Compare Translations](#)

- **Mark 13:26 NRS**

Then they will see "the **Son of Man** coming in clouds' with great power and glory.

[Read Mark 13](#) | [View in parallel](#) | [Compare Translations](#)

Sort results by: [Book of the Bible](#) | [Most relevant search result](#)

- **Mark 14:21 NRS**

For the **Son of Man** goes as it is written **of** him, but woe to that one by whom the **Son of Man** is betrayed! It would have been better for that one not to have been born."

[Read Mark 14](#) | [View in parallel](#) | [Compare Translations](#)

- **Mark 14:41 NRS**

He came a third time and said to them, "Are you still sleeping and taking your rest? Enough! The hour has come; the **Son of Man** is betrayed into the hands **of** sinners.

[Read Mark 14](#) | [View in parallel](#) | [Compare Translations](#)

- **Mark 14:62 NRS**

Jesus said, "I am; and "you will see the **Son of Man** seated at the right hand **of** the Power,' and "coming with the clouds **of** heaven.' "

[Read Mark 14](#) | [View in parallel](#) | [Compare Translations](#)

Pasted from <<http://www.biblestudytools.com/search/?q=son%20of%20man%20&t=nrs&s=Bibles&c=mr&ps=10&p=2>>

Concerning "Son of Man," Dom HENRY Wansbrough notes that the term plays a key role in the three prophecies of passion (8:31, 9:31, 10:33), the passion and vindication (9:9, 12), and three times in passion without explicit mention of resurrection (10:45; 12:21,41); it is also used in relation to Jesus' authority.

1. *Of Jesus' passion, death and resurrection.* Jesus uses it several times in speaking of his approaching passion, death and resurrection. It plays a key role in the three great prophecies of the passion (8.31; 9.31; 10.33), again in another prophecy of the passion and vindication (9.9, 12), and is used three times of the passion without explicit mention of the resurrection (10.45; 14.21, 41).

2. *Of Jesus' authority.* The other way in which the Markan Jesus uses this expression of himself is to state his authority. On two occasions this is his authority on earth, authority to forgive sins (2.10) and authority over the Sabbath (2.28). On the other occasions, all the sayings are in prominent positions, and therefore all the more important for Mark's view of Jesus.

- If anyone in this sinful and adulterous generation is ashamed of me and of my words, the son of man will be ashamed of him when he comes in the glory of his Father with the holy angels (8.38).

This saying leads into the Transfiguration, when Jesus is already seen in the glory which will be his. It is a presage of the final judgement.

- And then they will see the son of man coming with great power and glory. And then he will send the angels to gather his elect from the four winds (13.26-27).

This is the climax of the 'eschatological discourse', the foretelling of the persecution of Jesus' community in the world, ending with their liberation by the son of man.

- You will see the son of man seated at the right hand of the Power and coming with the clouds of heaven (14.62).

The importance of this saying is that it forms the climax of the interrogation before the high priest. In Mark's presentation it is the claim which constitutes the point of his final rejection by the Jewish authorities, and leads immediately to the decision to have him killed. The claim is judged by the high priest and his council to be blasphemy. It is not immediately clear why this should be blasphemy. Certainly the claim to be Messiah is not blasphemous, for other messianic claimants soon before or after this were not condemned for blasphemy. Most probably the reason is the combination of 'seated at the right hand of the Power' and 'coming with the clouds of heaven'. This implies that Jesus is to be at the right hand of God on his throne. But if while 'seated' he is also 'coming', he must be actually sharing the mobile Merkabah-throne of God. This Merkabah-

throne is the chariot-throne on which God is seated in Ezekiel 1. Already at the time of Jesus this imagery bulked large in the imagination and descriptions of Jewish mysticism (called Merkabah-mysticism). Such a claim would give good grounds for the charge of blasphemy.

From these three key-sayings it is clear that for Mark the background of the expression 'son of man' is the prophecy of Daniel 7.13-14:

I was gazing into the vision of the night,
 when I saw, coming on the clouds of heaven
 as it were a son of man.
 He came to the One most venerable
 and was led into his presence.
 On him was conferred rule, honour and kingship,
 and all peoples, nations and languages became his servants.
 His rule is an everlasting rule
 which will never pass away,
 and his kingship will never come to an end.

In the prophecy preceding this vision Daniel describes four great beasts, representing the four great empires which persecuted and oppressed the Jewish nation. The son of man, in his turn, represents the nation itself, at last vindicated and triumphant, and finally to rule over the whole world with God's own authority. Mark understands the expression, well-known to have been characteristic of Jesus, to be this son of man, sharing God's power and authority. However in this final saying he goes beyond the prophecy, to represent Jesus as sharing the throne itself of God. The trial scene is, then, for Mark the climax of his presentation of the mystery and meaning of Jesus.

Pasted from <<http://users.ox.ac.uk/~sben0056/essays/marksviwofjesus.htm>>

Interestingly, the high priest in chapter fourteen asks a question relative to Jesus's being the Messiah. Michael Turton has explored the scholarship relative to interpreting the question and the answer credited to Jesus. In sorting through this, Turton points out that Jesus deflects the question in Matthew and Luke; original manuscripts made Jesus's answer less direct; the "I Am" could have been stated ironically as a question, "Am I?"; in Hebrew, "I Am" would be translated YHWH, leading to the accusation of blasphemy, although to claim to be Messiah is not in itself blasphemous; the "coming with clouds of heaven" (14:62) has associations with God's Temple (1 Kings 8); Christians have associated the Messiahship with Psalms 110:1; this section may be associated with Jehoiada's bringing out the "true king" to Queen Athaliah in 2 Kings 11:14 and her cries of "Treason" and resulting tearing of clothes. Turpin concludes, saying that scholars agree that Jesus did not commit blasphemy, and even if he had, the appropriate punishment would not have been crucifixion <<http://www.michaelturton.com/Mark/GMark14.html>> If "Son of the Blessed One" be interpreted as a circumlocution to avoid naming YHWH, then "Son of God" also is used in this same context, reopening the question already discussed of what "Son of God" means; that all three names occur in close proximity lends considerable credibility to the idea that Jesus becomes Son of God/Son of David/Son of Man through radical and model obedience to the Father, through his suffering, and eventually through his death. Certainly, Michael Turton concludes this:

Since Mark's avowed purpose was to present Jesus as the Son of God, we can only assume that he reports those words and deeds of Jesus which, when rightly understood, reveal him as the Son. The origin of Mark, and the rise of the Gattung "Gospel," was thus the direct result of a historical Christology and the preservation of those historical traditions which were Christologically significant <

<http://www.michaelturton.com/Mark/GMark10.html#10.35.37>

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Finally, Mark 13:39 has the centurion at the foot of the cross recognize Jesus as "Truly, this man was God's son!" Even here, the emphasis is upon Jesus the man as "son." Various versions render "son" as either with or without capitalization; likewise, versions inconsistently use "the" before Son:

King James Version

15:39 And when the centurion, which stood over against him, saw that he so cried out, and gave up the ghost, he said, Truly this man was the Son of God.

American Standard Version

15:39 And when the centurion, who stood by over against him, saw that he so gave up the ghost, he said, Truly this man was the Son of God.

Bible in Basic English

15:39 And when the captain, who was near, saw how he gave up his spirit, he said, Truly this man was a son of God.

Darby's English Translation

15:39 And the centurion who stood by over against him, when he saw that he had expired having thus cried out, said, Truly this man was Son of God.

Douay Rheims

15:39 And the centurion who stood over against him, seeing that crying out in this manner he had given up the ghost, said: Indeed this man was the son of God.

Noah Webster Bible

15:39 And when the centurion who stood over against him, saw that he so cried out, and expired, he said, Truly this man was the Son of God.

Weymouth New Testament

15:39 And when the Centurion who stood in front of the cross saw that He was dead, he exclaimed, 'This man was indeed God's Son.'

World English Bible

15:39 When the centurion, who stood by opposite him, saw that he cried out like this and breathed his last, he said, 'Truly this man was the Son of God!'

Young's Literal Translation

15:39 and the centurion who was standing over-against him, having seen that, having so cried out, he yielded the spirit, said, 'Truly this man was Son of God.'

Pasted from <<http://www.greeknewtestament.com/B41C015.htm>>

Paul McReynolds in *Word Study Greek-English New Testament* translates 13:39 as ""truly this the man son of God was."

Chapter one has already addressed Mark's use of Messiah, noting the possibility for several conflicting messianic claims and, certainly, the expectation for a Messiah seeming to be at the threshold of the age. In chapter eight, the section in Mark recording Peter's declaration, Peter seems to have in mind a "divinely anointed, supernaturally endowed Davidic king who would destroy the contemporary evil political power structure and gather Israel into God's kingdom (Ladd, *Theology of the New Testament*, 139). Here, Peter is rebuked and the scribes are questioned concerning their expectation of the Messiah; Jesus, of course, was mocked at the crucifixion as being anything but a Messiah. In chapter two, Ehrman (*The New Testament: A Historical Introduction to the Early Christian Writings*, 64-65) is quoted to make the point that the first two chapters of Mark bring into view a Jesus not recognized by Jewish leaders, a person who offended them with his sayings and actions, this leading to a series of conflict stories that created a crescendo in tension, the conflict continuing through ensuing chapters to the climatic point of Peter's confession, explaining that here the recognition is partial and that Peter rejects the idea of a "suffering Messiah."

Closer attention is warranted for Peter's rebuke in this chapter:

31 Then he began to teach them that the Son of Man must undergo great suffering, and be rejected by the elders, the chief priests, and the scribes, and be killed, and after three days rise again. **32** He said all this quite openly. And Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him. **33** But turning and looking at his disciples, he rebuked Peter and said, "Get behind me, Satan! For you are setting your mind not on divine things but on human things." **34** He called the crowd with his disciples, and said to them, "If any want to become my followers, let them deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me. **35** For those who want to save their life will lose it, and those who lose their life for my sake, and for the sake of the gospel, will save it. **36** For what will it profit them to gain the whole world and forfeit their life? **37** Indeed, what can they give in return for their life? **38** Those who are ashamed of me and of my words in this adulterous and sinful generation, of them the Son of Man will also be ashamed when he comes in the glory of his Father with the holy angels."

Pasted from <<http://www.biblestudytools.com/nrs/mark/8.html>>

Readers should note that Peter rebukes Jesus immediately after Jesus begins to teach that he "must undergo great suffering." Jesus then turns to the greater crowd with the disciples and says that his followers must "deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me," telling them, "those who lose their life for my sake, and for the sake of the gospel, will save it." It should be remembered that from the beginning, Jesus's message and mission has been about "good news of God."

Michael Turton spends significant time explaining that the "take up the cross" passage has echoes in in Cynic and Stoic circles as well as Jewish literature, and then he concludes, interestingly in chapter eight commentary, with the following summation concerning the historicity of all of Mark, notably omitting any historicity to this chapter itself:

In my opinion that short answer is: precious little. The events of Jesus' life in Mark are most likely drawn from the Old Testament, Jewish writings, popular philosophies of the Roman empire, and similar sources.

Pasted from <<http://www.michaelturton.com/Mark/GMarko8.html>>

Hay's earlier remark about the historicity of Mark can be restated at this point:

Jesus' Sonship was understood to have been realized during his earthly life by his obedience to the Father and then irrefutably revealed at his resurrection (Rom. 1:4). The distinction between the two lies in the fact that Jesus is the one Son who, by his radical obedience to the Father, guarantees the eschatological sonship which he proclaims to all who believe.... What we have in his Gospel, therefore, is not myth, despite its mythical elements, but genuine history. In contrast to Mark, the stories of the Gnostic redeemer center in the philosophical problem which emerges in the metaphysical distinction posited between God and man. Hence, they are openly mythical, the proper function of the myth being to bridge the gap between the human and the divine.

This is also the conclusion of George Amoss, "Introduction to the Christology of Mark's Gospel," 1979, who agrees that "Son of God" can only be understood in terms of "Son of Man":

For Mark, "Son of God" can only be understood in the light of another title, "Son of Man." Although, as Perrin and others have shown, Jesus may not actually have used the term in reference to himself, "Son of Man" appears in Mark's Gospel in the words of Jesus, who uses it as a self-designation. Furthermore, the Markan Jesus seems to employ this title specifically as a corrective to the common, erroneous understanding of "Son of God." For example, in 8:27-38, Jesus' reply to Peter's confession of him as messiah is that the Son of Man must suffer. Similarly, while Jesus' answer to the high priest's question, "Are you the messiah, the son of the Blessed One?" is "I am," he immediately qualifies that response by adding, "And you will see the Son of Man seated upon the right hand of God...."

Mark's point seems to be that we cannot understand who Jesus is, and cannot, therefore, be his disciples, until we realize the centrality of suffering in his mission -- and in ours. Jesus is not a messiah of earthly glory, but of self-emptying, suffering love of God and humankind. Mark prepares us for this realization in subtle ways in the first half of the Gospel. This section could almost be, as Weeden notes, a "divine man" story, concentrating as it does on Jesus' "mighty deeds" and his imparting of esoteric information to his disciples. Perhaps this is why there has been some confusion over Jesus' rebuke of Peter in 8:33: from the foregoing material in the Gospel, it is not difficult for the reader to assume that Peter's confession is correct. Yet Jesus finds it not only inadequate but even demonic. It appears that Mark has "set up" his readers. Up to this point in the Gospel, they have been nodding their heads, comfortable in their understanding of Jesus, feeling confirmed in that understanding by Mark. But now Mark delivers the blow: they are condemned, not by Mark, but by Jesus himself.

Yet it seems to me that Mark has not left the critical reader totally unprepared for the development in 8:33. Throughout the first section of the Gospel, we see Jesus identifying himself with those who suffer: the poor, the sick, the hungry, the sinners and outcasts. We see him bridging the gulf between Jew and Gentile. And in Chapter 4 we have a glimpse of what is to come, as the disciples, to whom "the secret of the Kingdom of God has been given," are likened to outsiders in their inability to understand Jesus' parabolic teaching. Mark is beginning, in a subtle and creative way, to expose the un-Christian errors of elitism and triumphalism. From 8:33 on, those errors will be repeatedly condemned and corrected by Jesus.

Although the climax of Mark's Gospel is often considered to be Peter's confession, the Gospel's high point for me is the confession of the Roman centurion at the foot of the cross. Here, Mark's Christology and its implications are embodied in an unforgettable scene in which Mark's narrative style of presenting theology reaches its dramatic height. Misunderstood and finally deserted by his disciples, and seemingly abandoned even by

God, Jesus dies in anguish of body and spirit. He speaks no fine words from the cross (as in later Gospels); he can only cry out his desolation to God before he dies with a loud, inarticulate cry. And it is only then that a human being -- not one of the "saved," but a hated Gentile oppressor and idolater -- can call him "Son of God."

This, then, is the essence of Mark's Christology: Son of God = Suffering Son of Man. Mark's conception of Jesus certainly includes power and authority implied in the Son of God title (the miracles and exorcisms, the setting aside of the Sabbath, the imminent judgment); but for Mark the power and authority are hidden in Jesus and will not be fully revealed until the parousia, the return of Jesus in glory. In the meantime, we must not attempt to appropriate Jesus' future glory to our present, but must follow him in the way of the cross. The gnosis which he has left us is not the esoteric, power-bestowing knowledge of the "saved" elect, but the secret of a hidden Kingdom born in weakness, a Kingdom which must grow through suffering and opposition so that the divine will may be fulfilled. It is not those who boast of their salvation, who prophesy, and who perform miracles who will be saved, but those who "endure to the end" by "doing the will of my Father," that same will which Jesus accepted at Gethsemane. Jesus, the "suffering servant of God," must be not only our savior but our model. We cannot share in his resurrection unless we have also shared in his ministry of suffering love. This was Mark's message to the Christians of his day; it is a message that Christians today still need to hear and heed.

Pasted from <<http://www.qis.net/~daruma/mark-c.html>>

Structurally, chapter eight is a pivotal chapter for understanding the identity of Jesus: the disciples' continuing incomprehension reveals itself in their questions about how the crowd can be fed and intensifies in the boat when they have forgotten to bring any bread, bringing only one loaf with which they understand they can not feed everyone in the boat; Jesus again asks a question, "Do you still not perceive or understand. Are your hearts hardened?" then moves on to the statement about having eyes and ears, but neither seeing nor hearing. They have been cautioned by Jesus to beware the yeast of the Pharisees and Herod, which the disciples take literally. Ritually prepared foods, of course, were not to contain yeast, suggesting here a connotation of "veiled evil" (NISB Notes). With the restoration of sight to one physically blind, Jesus next teaches the model of suffering Son of Man, which Peter refuses, followed by further teaching on what it means to become a follower of Jesus.

In relation to suffering, in the full context of Mark, suffering is caused by surrounding society--evil leaders, religious and political--who oppress truth and the seeking of truth; the kingdom of God realized would result in a different world order (Notes NISB). "Taking up the cross and following" Jesus has sometimes been used to suggest passivity in the presence of suffering--not the intent of Mark's total message about how the kingdom of God is to be achieved. Mark has been argued by Donald W. Riddle as belonging to the genre martyr ology :

Perhaps the key to the answer of these questions and the key to the understanding of the Second Gospel, as such, may be found by noting as a purpose of major importance what may be styled its martyr motif. The propriety of the suggestion appears in studying the problem presented by the apparently disproportionate space devoted to the passion story. From the fact that the largest interest in the work is the presentation of the story of Jesus' death and the reflection of its significance, it would seem that some special function were to be served by the content and the form of this material. Although it does not seem to have engaged the attention of scholars to any great degree, it would appear to be extremely significant in this light that the Gospel according to Mark appeared in immediate sequence to the set of calamities beginning with the so-called persecution of Nero. In view of these events, evidently so pregnant with meaning to the early Church, it may be asserted with some confidence that the function of the martyr motif in Mark assists in the understanding of the entire work as intended to guide its readers in this unfamiliar situation. To accomplish this purpose, a particular picture of Jesus was drawn, a picture whose boldest lines presented Jesus as an example of martyrdom.

Riddle goes on to say that Mark was written for the purpose of indoctrination with "incidents... recounted to prove, not that Jesus is the anointed, for this had plainly been proclaimed from the first line of the gospel, but that the way of the anointed is the way of the cross.' And, most significantly, moreover, that the way of the cross was not for Jesus only, but is for his followers. This marks the subtle purpose." Structurally, Riddle traces the following pattern: In Caesarea, Philippi, Jesus begins to teach that it necessary for the son of man to suffer, be rejected, be killed, and after three days rise. "Others must "take up his cross and follow" (8:34-38). In the next chapter, the disciples are to keep quiet about the transfiguration until after "the Son of Man had risen from the dead (9). In chapter ten, Jesus teaches the disciples that he is to be killed and to rise again after three days (32-34). Again, others are to follow, leaving homes, family, and fields to receive these again a hundredfold, with the addition of "with persecution" and "in the age to come eternal life" (28-31), this followed by the third prediction of persecution. Riddle then interprets John and James that they will meet the test of martyrdom--drink the cup, be baptized, become servants if they are to become great (10:35-45). An eschatological program is predicted (chapter 13). Jesus, crucified under the legend of being "King of the Jews" is confessed as being "Truly, ... a God's Son" (15:39).

It should be noted that Mark eight ends with an apocalyptic connotation, a "Son of Man" coming "in the glory of his Father with the holy angels" ((38) while chapter nine emphasizes the imminence of the Kingdom of God and that the experience of the Kingdom of God coming with power is to be experienced in the living. These are two completely different references--one speaking to "end time" and the other speaking to "Kingdom" near, imminent, present. A scholar who would disagree with me on this assessment is Neil Q. Hamilton, (*Journal of Biblical Literature*, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/3264868>):Dec., 1965 <

Mark expects the coming of the Son of man before the end of his generation (9 i), for the juxtaposition of the coming of the Son of man in 8 38 with the coming of the kingdom with power in 9 i is his way of showing that they will occur together. And the coming of the kingdom is the principal context for the whole of Mark. This is the reason Mark begins the account of Jesus' ministry with a summary of his message that focuses on the conviction that the

kingdom is at hand (1 15). Whatever the relation of this summary to the actual message of Jesus, it must not be overlooked that there is more here than an attempt to report Jesus to us. This nearness of the kingdom was a conviction Mark held at the time of writing and one of the main things he wished to convey to his readers. This explains why he connected "the kingdom is at hand" with "believe in the gospel."

It is, of course, important to understand Hamilton's fuller argument that Mark wrote a geography to fulfill his expectation of eschatology:

Probably he interpreted the destruction of Jerusalem as a providential sign that God had abandoned the traditional site of the eschatological drama. Instead of Judaism and its homeland, Judea, God has chosen the Son of man as the focus of the end. What location is especially appropriate to him? Jesus is from Nazareth in Galilee. The new holy place must be Galilee. So Mark created the Galilean ministry to support his conclusion that in God's rejection of the homeland of Judaism, he has chosen instead the homeland of the Son of man's first career as the new holy land and setting for his second career. Mark evidences this same kind of geographical concern in the beginning of his gospel. John appears at the Jordan because Elijah was translated near the Jordan. The geography of the first career dictates the location of the second.

If we have understood Mark correctly, it is a serious misunderstanding of Matthew and Luke to suppose they move in the same direction as Mark. Matthew and Luke use Mark's story of the empty tomb as though he offered it as the ground for belief in the resurrected Jesus. Following this false lead they write gospels that inject the historicity of Jesus into his resurrection in order to give resurrection enough rigidity to support the faith of the church. By contrast, Mark wishes to reinterpret the traditional resurrection. Rather than presenting it as quasi history he sees it as a transition from the real history of Jesus' first career to an equally historical second career. And Mark's conviction about this second career compels him to create a fitting first career. If this is correct, it explains why Mark came to be written.

Hamilton develops his understanding of Mark based on translation rather than resurrection, as the following excerpts demonstrate :

The story of the empty tomb is most probably the story of a translation. In fact it may be most accurate to call it an anti resurrection story.

Assuming that Mark ends at 16 8, the most obvious thing about the story of the empty tomb, when compared to resurrection tradition, is that it avoids displaying the resurrected Jesus.

Following the model of Elijah, Mark creates a double career for the Son of man. The first career is the ministry of Jesus: he forgives sin as the Son of man (2 10), sets aside the sabbath as the Son of man (2 28), and dies as the Son of man (9 12). The second career will be as the traditional Son of men come in power and glory (9 1; 13 26; 14 62). The appropriate transition between careers must be a translation, which is what Mark makes out of the resurrection tradition (9 9, 31; 10 33).

Mark's special contribution to the eschatological crisis after 70 is his conviction that the resurrected Lord should be replaced by a translated and returning Son of man who will have an earthly career analogous to his first career as Jesus of Nazareth, only this time with the power and glory of the kingdom of God. In contrast to the movement of the interest of the church toward heaven, Mark wishes to refocus attention to earth.

C.H. Dodd asks readers to understand that Son of Man is associated with functions of the Servant but also with the apocalyptic Last Judgment and the End of the World:

But the language about the coming of the Son of Man is another matter. "The Son of Man is to come in the glory of his Father"; "They will see the Son of Man coming in time clouds"; "Like the lightning flash that lights up the earth from end to end, will the Son of Man be when his day comes." 29 Of course it is imaginative symbolism; but what does it symbolize? It occurs in association with language about the Last Judgment and the End of the World, which apparently are conceived (at least in some passages) to coincide with the coming of the Son of Man. We cannot but recognize here traits of the "apocalyptic" hopes and speculations which, with a long ancestry behind them, revived in strength during the feverish years that preceded the fall of Jerusalem.. The question remains open, what did he mean?

It would seem right to start from the standpoint of sayings which are both plain and central to the teaching of Jesus. Nothing in it is more clearly original or characteristic than his declaration that the kingdom of God is here. It meant that a hope has become a reality. You no longer look for the reign of God through a telescope; you open your eyes to see. But at the same time there is more than meets the eye. It is the reign of God; it is the eternal God himself, here present. There is a power at work in this world which is not of this world, something "super-natural," an invasion from time Beyond -- how ever you may choose to express it. It gives an eternal dimension to time temporal present, and to each succeeding "present"; but it can never be exhausted in any temporal present, however deeply significant. The kingdom of God, while it is present experience, remains also a hope, but a hope directed to a consummation beyond history.

To express this aspect of the kingdom Jesus was content to make use of long-established symbols -- a feast with the blessed dead who are "alive to God," 30 a great assize with "all nations" standing at the bar. 31 These are not forthcoming events, to which a date might be assigned. They stand as symbols for the reality to which the spirit of man awakes when it is done with past, present and future. This is the Kingdom of God in the fullness of its meaning, and it lies beyond history. And yet it "came" in history, in that crucial episode of which Jesus was himself the active center. Its blessedness was a present possession of those who accepted it. "How blest are you who are poor! The kingdom of God is yours." 32 They were guests at a wedding feast: "How can you expect the bridegroom's friends to fast while the bridegroom is with them?" 33 And yet, it is in another world than this that they are to "eat and drink at his table in his kingdom." 34 Again, the moment of decision to which the presence of Jesus brought those who encountered him was the judgment inseparable from the coming of the kingdom. "Now," writes John, "is the hour of judgment for this world" 35 -- the Last Judgment, he means. Essentially it was a judgment which people passed on themselves by their reaction to his presence. It might be acquittal ("Your faith has saved you. Go in peace.") 36 or it might be condemnation ("Alas for you! It will be more bearable for Sodom on the Day of Judgment.") 37 It is judgment in history, but its significance reaches beyond history; and this ultra-historical significance is expressed in the dramatic picture of all nations gathered before the throne of the heavenly Judge.

In view of this, it follows that the total event of the earthly career of Jesus, as well as his action in detail, is regarded in two aspects: on the one side it had effects in an actual historical situation; on the other side it had a significance reaching out into man's eternal destiny, and to be expressed only in symbol.

Pasted from <<http://www.religion-online.org/showchapter.asp?title=2241&C=2113>>

Before doing so, though, he remarks on the problematic nature of outlining Mark from 4:35 through 8:26, calling it an "omnibus section with several minor divisions" with elements present from all preceding sections--including popularity, opposition, activity and wonder-working, amazement, change in locale, sending out of the twelve, death of John the Baptist, return and report of the twelve, a climatic statement that "He has done all things well." In fact, Faw finds chapter eight as beginning lamely and being anti-climatic; then he turns to d> <http://www.jstor.org/stable/1458876> *The Journal of Bible and Religion*< Chalmer E. Faw has identified 8:27-10:45 as "The Heart of the Gospel of Mark" (1965, discussion of the "heart of Mark:"

It seems to this writer that there are convincing evidences that 8:27-10:45 comprises a distinct section. First is the changed mood which dominates this portion of Mark. Most scholars note that at this point Jesus changes his method and no longer teaches in general terms to the populace at large but addresses himself to a narrow circle of disciples, makes predictions about his own person and discloses to them his own nature and vocation. Here he is definitely revealed to the reader as the Christ. What was something of a mystery and a secret for the general public in preceding sections is now revealed openly to the inner-group.

Faw, in addition to using the change in mood as indicating a distinct section, includes in the argument the three-fold prediction of the death and resurrection of Jesus, the inclusion of a prologue, Peter's confession, the closing sayings on rank and greatness, and the final, climatic ransom text of 10:45; he concludes the author or compiler of Mark throughout works with distinguishable sections:

These three features are the more convincing when one considers other sections of the book and studies the general pattern employed there by the author or compiler. In the several distinguishable sections, either derived from single sources or composite in nature, one may recognize distinctive moods which prevail throughout and characterize them as sections. In chapter one there is the immense popularity of Jesus which sweeps like a brush fire through all of Galilee. In 2:1-3:6 it is the note of controversy and opposition. The parables of 4:1-34 are clothed in a mood of mystery with the hiding of truth from outsiders and the corresponding revelation of it to the in-group. The rambling section or cycle of sections of 4:35-8:26 is dominated throughout by the note of wonder-working power on the part of Jesus and the resultant amazement of all who witness his deeds. Then comes our own section with its mood of suffering and cross-bearing on the one hand and resurrection and glorification on the other. One might go on and note the definite apocalyptic character of chapter 13, the stark moving story of chapters 14 and 15. One may safely conclude that regardless of sources the author has created a pattern of sizeable blocks of material, each with its fairly distinct and discernible mood.

Faw next shows that the author or compiler uses climatic statements--a well selected saying--to close sections and finds the following:

The popularity section (1:14-45) closes fittingly with this accent on widespread fame: "so that Jesus could no longer openly enter a town but was out in the country; and people came to him from every quarter."

The controversy section (2:1-3:6) is climactically rounded out by the observation that the Pharisees went out and immediately took counsel with the Herodians how to destroy Jesus (3:6).

The ending of the parable section is equally impressive: "with many such parables he spoke the word to them as they were able to hear it; he did not speak to them without a parable, but privately to his own disciples he explained everything" (4:33-34).

The apocalyptic section (Ch. 13) ends with the impressive saying, "and what I say to you I say to all: watch."

Considered in this light Mark 10:45 "for the Son of man also came not to be served but to serve and to give his life as a ransom for many," not only makes a fitting closing to the section but is another convincing example of the author's pattern. Faw next remarks that this sectional division may be missed due to the complex use of sources, the two-fold geographical division, and the tendency to emphasize suffering:

Further confusion has arisen in many of the discussions of this central section as the result of a tendency to regard its dominant mood as primarily that of suffering and death. It is interesting how scholar after scholar refers to the three predictions as "passion announcements," "predictions of the passion," or "prophecies of the passion," omitting the fact that every time the death is predicted the resurrection is also predicted. Now to be sure, there is a certain brevity of expression and even helpful alliteration in most of these titles but the interesting thing is that even the discussions included under these headings make a great deal of the suffering and the death and very little of the equally important note of resurrection and victory. In fact one might be so bold as to say that scholars here make the same error that Peter did in his rebuke of Jesus: that of seeing only the negative side of the story

Faw concludes that Jesus is the Christ of Israel and of humankind:

It is that Jesus is the Christ not only of Israel but of the very spirit of man, conquering through suffering service and death, and glorified by divine power. Furthermore, it says that the Christian is one who discovers and makes as his own this same way of the cross, with all of its accompanying virtues of self-denial, tender consideration, pure life and persevering faithfulness, becoming truly great not by authority over people but by authority with people as servants of all.

A syncretistic view of Mark sees in this gospel a bringing together of the Imperial cult with Jewish fulfillment:

In mimicking the language of the Imperial cult and in quoting Isa 40:3 Mark appears to have welded together two disparate, potentially antagonistic theologies. On the one hand, he proclaims to the Jewish people the fulfillment of their fondest hopes—the good news of the prophet Isaiah, while on the other hand he has boldly announced to the Roman world that the good news for the world began not with Julius Caesar and his descendants, but with Jesus Christ, the true son of God (Craig A. Evans,

"Mark's Incipit and the Priene Calendar Inscription: From Jewish Gospel to Greco-Roman Gospel," 1981).

Evans sees eight characteristics shared by the gospel in common with the Imperial Cult:

1. The emperor's reign or victory was announced as "gospel" or "good news."
2. Often omens and prophecies preceded the accession or death of an emperor.
3. Following a great v *The Roman Triumph*. ictory a "triumph" was held, at which time the emperor's sovereignty and divine status were reaffirmed.
4. Various inscriptions illustrate how the Roman emperor was viewed as divine.
5. It was believed that the Roman emperors could in some instances effect healing.
6. Being seated at the "right hand" of deity was another important part of the ritual and symbolism of the emperor cult.
7. Beginning with Augustus, libations were to be poured out at every banquet, public and private, in honor of the emperor.
8. The anticipated arrival of the emperor was referred to as a "new world order."

The passage appealed to in Isaiah includes important themes of Jewish fulfillment echoed in the Christian movement:

There are five passages in all (Isa 40:1-11; 41:21-29; 52:7-12; 60:1-7; 61:1-11). Three of them (Isa 40:1-11; 52:7; 61:1-2) were very important in the development of Jesus' theology and that of the early church.¹³ The first passage promises the restoration of Jerusalem, via a new exodus from bondage and a new occupation of the promised land. The second passage speaks of the coming herald who will proclaim the good news of the reign of God. In the Aramaic tradition, "Your God reigns," is paraphrased, "The kingdom of your God is revealed." It is probable that this language is what underlies Jesus' proclamation of the kingdom (cf. Mark 1:14-15). The third passage speaks of the anointed messenger who proclaims recovery of sight to the blind, relief to the oppressed, and good news for the afflicted. This passage is alluded to in Jesus' reply to John's messengers (cf. Matt 11:2-6 = Luke 7:18-23).

Evans concludes, not unlike Faw, that Jesus is the Christ of Israel and humankind, that the "good news" is for the entire world, Jews and Romans alike.

The good news of Isaiah, fulfilled in Jesus of Nazareth, had now become the good news for the entire world. As the true son of God, Jesus offers the world genuine good news, which no Roman emperor could ever hope to offer or bring to pass. It is in this context that the Markan evangelist boldly sets forth his apologetic. Despite rejection at the hands of his own people (and the most important people, as importance would have been measured at that time) and a shameful death at the hands of the most powerful people, Jesus was indeed the son of God, humanity's true Savior and Lord. Mark's purpose is to narrate the story of Jesus in such a way that such a confession will appear compelling and plausible to Jews and Romans alike.

Finally, it may be worth noting that the "messiah" references in Mark exceed all other title; an ESV search reveals at least twenty-six; these run the gamut from the gospel claimed by the messiah, John's proclamation of Lord and Messiah, his own work revealed as preparation for this messiah, a Decapolis openness about a messiah not political or military, people's astonishment at this non-political, military messiah, Jesus' expressed sadness at this misunderstanding of his mission, the overt failure on the part of many--and his own disciples--that he is to be a suffering messiah, the Messiah of God acknowledged in Peter's confession Jesus as **the Christ**, i.e., the divinely anointed leader and Messiah, the self-accepted humbling of this Messiah of God, Jesus' prediction that the Son of Man must be killed (overturning the Jewish expectation of a political and military messiah), the consequent rejection by the elders, priests, and scribes, the prediction of a specific rather than general resurrection at the end of the age, the admonition for the disciples to let go and take up the cross of obedience and dependence on the messiah, the "letting go" and glimpse of the Kingdom of God by the three disciples, a subsequent failure to grasp the nature of the Transfiguration and a desire to raise an earthly tent, the endorsement by the Father that "This is my Beloved Son," the disciples' continued misunderstanding and Jesus' instructions concerning servant hood the resolute turn to Jerusalem, the Triumphal Entry, (and celebration of a political and Davidic messiah, the rejected messianic "stone" which is "divinely vindicated and established as the cornerstone of a new building," the climactic "Lord of David" passage, and finally, the anticipated exaltation and warning about false Christs and false prophets accompanied by the protection of God's own.

- . The **beginning** Rather than emphasizing the events leading up to Jesus' public ministry in terms of his genealogy and family roots (as do Matthew and Luke) or in terms of its theological foundation (as does John), Mark focuses on its actual **Mark 1:1gospel**

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- is the good news of the fulfillment of God's promises. In the OT ([Isa. 40:9; 52:7](#); [Nah. 1:15](#)) "good news" is connected with the saving intervention of God to help his people. **of Jesus Christ**. The gospel is proclaimed *by* Jesus, the Messiah, but in a secondary sense the good news is the report *about* Jesus. Mark communicates both at the beginning and end of his Gospel ([Mark 1:1; 15:39](#)) that Jesus is **the Son of God**.
- **Mark 1:2–3** Mark identifies John the Baptist as the predicted one who prepares **the way of the Lord** (cf. [Isa. 40:3](#); [Mal. 3:1](#)). **Isaiah the prophet** is named because he was more prominent and more of the quoted material comes from him. When the text is expounded in the following verses, Mark refers only to the Isaiah citation. John will be identified by Jesus as the one who comes in the spirit of Elijah ([Mal. 4:5](#); [Matt. 11:13–14](#); [Mark 9:11–13](#); cf. also note on [Luke 3:2](#)). The path or "way" is to be readied for "the Lord," and surprisingly the one who comes after John is both the Lord and the Messiah ([Mark 8:29](#)). The following Gospel account demonstrates that Jesus, the Messiah, is also a member of the Godhead.

- **Mark 1:5 all the country of Judea and all Jerusalem.** John's ministry represents a fulfillment of the promise of a new exodus (cf. [Isa. 11:11-15; 40:3-11; 42:16; 43:2, 5-7, 16-19; 48:20-49:11; 51:10](#)) in which Israel is delivered from the wilderness, and, so to speak, enters into **the river Jordan** again (as in [Josh. 3:1-4:24](#)) to receive God's promises of end-time salvation. **confessing their sins.** God was working in people's hearts, calling them to turn back to himself, in preparation for the coming Messiah.
- **Mark 5:18-20 did not permit him.** Jesus did not allow the restored and thankful man ([v. 15](#)) to join him. It is possible that he was asking Jesus for permission to belong to the closer circle of disciples (**that he might be with him** recalls [3:14](#)). Jesus wanted the restored man to be a witness to God's power **in the Decapolis**—an example of Jesus intentionally instructing a restored person to proclaim what had happened to him, in contrast to his call for secrecy in other cases (see [1:44; 5:43; 9:9](#)). Jewish and Gentile people in the Decapolis did not yet pose the same danger of misunderstanding Jesus as a political or military messiah, as was the case in Galilee. Note that the work of the **Lord** in [5:19](#) is described as the work of **Jesus** in [v. 20](#), indicating that Jesus shares the same nature as God himself.
- **Mark 7:37** The people are **astonished** in the sense that they wonder whether Jesus is the Messiah (see [Isa. 35:5-6](#)). They are not expecting a suffering Messiah but rather a political liberator along the lines of the earlier Maccabean uprising (166–160 b.c.).
- **Mark 8:12** Jesus **sighed** on account of the attitude underlying and driving the demand of [v. 11](#). (For other examples of Jesus expressing emotions, see [1:41; 3:5; 7:34](#)). **this generation.** Cf. [Deut. 32:5, 20; Ps. 95:10; Mark 9:19](#). **no sign.** See note on [Matt. 12:39](#). An open heart, together with Jesus' demonstrations of divine authority, should be more than enough for seeing that he truly is the Messiah.
- Jesus' healing of the man in two stages may have been intended to emphasize this fact. This interpretation is supported by the fact that **like trees, walking**), just as the blind man now sees people merely [v. 29](#)), the man's answer may be analogous to their limited apprehension of Jesus. They see him vaguely (see [8:17-21](#), and especially in light of Jesus' focus on the disciples' lack of understanding ([7:31-8:26](#)? In the context of **Do you see anything**). [5:40; 6:6](#), perhaps to be away from elements of unbelief and hostility (cf. **out of the village** the blind man **led** Jesus [Mark 8:23-25](#) [vv. 22-26](#) contain no less than nine terms related to "seeing." The disciples will soon understand that Jesus is the Messiah ([vv. 27-30](#)), but they will not yet fully grasp that he is to be a suffering Messiah ([8:31-9:1](#)).
- **Mark 8:27-16:8 Testing Jesus' Authority in Suffering.** Having displayed his messianic authority and power ([1:1-8:26](#)), Jesus is now tested as the Messiah of God.
- **Mark 8:27-33 Peter's Confession.** Near the source of the Jordan River, Jesus begins to teach his disciples that the Messiah of God must die and be raised again ([v. 31](#)). Each of the major predictions of Jesus' death and resurrection (see [chart](#)) is followed by teaching on discipleship ([vv. 32-38; 9:32-50; 10:34-45](#)).
- **Mark 8:27-29a Caesarea Philippi** was some 25 miles (40 km) north of the Sea of Galilee, and had been a center of the worship of Baal, then of the Greek god Pan, and then of Caesar (see note on [Matt. 16:13](#)). **Who do people say that I am?** Jesus' questions ([Mark 8:27, 29](#)) prepare for his teaching. He must clarify that the Messiah of God is to be humbled ([v. 31; 10:45](#)) and exalted ([8:38](#)) for the sake of his people. This goes against popular expectations. On **John the Baptist** and **Elijah**, see note on [6:14b-15](#).
- **Mark 8:29b-30** Peter speaks for the Twelve (cf. [1:36; 8:32; 9:5; 10:28; 14:29](#)) and confesses Jesus as **the Christ**, i.e., the divinely anointed leader and Messiah ([2 Sam. 7:14-16; Psalm 2; Jer. 23:5-6](#)) who they expect will liberate the Jewish people from the oppressive yoke of Rome (see [John 6:15](#)). Peter's confession is God-given ([Matt. 16:17](#)) but incomplete ([Mark 8:31-33](#)), for the messianic Son of Man is both divine ([Ps. 110:1, 5; Dan. 7:13-14; Mark 8:38; 12:35-37](#)) and destined to suffer ([Isa. 53:1-12; Mark 8:31; 10:45](#)). This is why Jesus charges his disciples to **tell no one about him**.
- **Mark 8:31** Jesus corrects the disciples' messianic expectation by stressing that the **Son of Man must** (cf. [9:12; 14:21, 41](#)) **be killed** (cf. [9:9, 12, 31; 10:34, 45; 14:21, 41](#)) and **rise again** (cf. [Isa. 53:1-12](#)). Christ's death is necessary because the eternal, messianic rule of God begins with atonement for sin, i.e., the sacrifice that will bring about reconciliation between God and man. **and be rejected by the elders and the chief priests and the scribes.** The leaders, who will reject Jesus, belong to factions of the Sanhedrin, the highest Jewish court in Israel (e.g., [Mark 10:33; 11:18; 14:1; 15:1](#)). While the opponents seek to kill Jesus ([3:6](#)), God's appointed will is that the Messiah atone for sins. To "rise" again must puzzle the disciples. They expect only the general resurrection of all mankind at the end of the age, prior to judgment ([Dan. 12:2](#)).
-), Jesus instructs in discipleship all those [v. 31](#) Following the first major prediction of his death and resurrection ([Mark 8:34](#) who

•

- **would come after me.** The goal of self-denial (cf. [14:30, 31, 72](#)) and taking up one's **cross** is not pathological self-abasement or a martyr complex but being free to **follow** the Messiah ([1:18; 2:13](#)). Self-denial means letting go of self-determination (cf. [Ps. 49:6–8](#)) and replacing it with obedience to and dependence on the Messiah.
- **Mark 9:1 Some standing here who will not taste death** probably points toward the three disciples who will accompany Jesus to the Mount of Transfiguration. To **see** the coming of **the kingdom of God ... with power** refers to an anticipation of this future event in the transfiguration (see [2 Pet. 1:16–18](#)), which prefigures the overwhelming glory of Christ in his return ([Dan. 7:13–27; Matt. 16:28; Mark 8:38; 13:26–27](#)). For various interpretations of Jesus' statement, see note on [Matt. 16:28](#). Letting go of self-centered self-determination ([Mark 8:34](#)) leads to glimpses of future glory ([9:1–8](#)), just as the death ([8:31](#)) and glory ([8:38](#)) of the Messiah are to be seen together.
- **Mark 9:5** Once more, Peter and his companions do not grasp the greatness of the Messiah (cf. [4:40; 6:52; 7:18; 8:17–21, 32–33; 9:32; 14:26–42](#)). Peter sees Jesus merely as someone similar to **Moses** and **Elijah** and wishes to raise **tents** (as earthly habitations for heavenly beings) for them, perhaps because he wants to prolong the experience. Peter does not know what he is saying, for he is speaking out of fear ([9:6](#)).
- **Mark 9:7 The voice ... out of the cloud** echoes [Ex. 24:15–16](#). **This is my beloved Son; listen to him** is uttered for the benefit (cf. [Mark 9:2, 4, 7, 12–13](#)) of the three disciples (cf. [4:34; 6:31–44; 9:28; 13:3; 2 Pet. 1:16–18](#)). Jesus, with all his claims, is endorsed by the Father (see [Ps. 2:7; Isa. 42:1; Mark 1:11](#)). "Listen to him" echoes [Deut. 18:15, 18](#), where Moses is shown to be a leader-prophet. Anyone who

does not listen to the Messiah of God rejects God, who sent him. The three disciples see the glory of Jesus; they see his greatness over Moses and Elijah; and they hear the divine authentication of Jesus as the eternal Son.

- **Mark 9:32** The disciples **understand** neither the necessity of the Messiah's death (they still expect a political liberator) nor the idea of the resurrection of an individual (they expect the resurrection of mankind at the last judgment; cf. [Dan. 12:2](#); see notes on [Mark 9:9](#); [9:10](#)). Yet they understand enough of what Jesus is saying that they do not want to know more, so they are **afraid to ask him**. Perhaps they remember that Peter's earlier attempt to express disapproval of Jesus' predictions of suffering led to a harsh rebuke ([8:33](#)).
- **Mark 9:35 he sat down.** Teachers often sat in order to teach. Just as the Messiah of God leads by suffering, each disciple is to lead (**be first**) by becoming a **servant of all**. The suffering of Jesus not only marks the beginning of the messianic rule of God but characterizes patterns of conduct (such as humility, faith, and love) that are required in the kingdom ([Phil. 2:1–11](#)).
- **Mark 10:32** Jesus is aware of his impending death (cf. [8:31](#); [9:31](#); [Isa. 53:1–12](#)) but proceeds resolutely toward **Jerusalem**, like the servant of the Lord in [Isa. 50:7](#) who set his face "like a flint" (cf. [Luke 9:53](#), "his face was set"). The Twelve **were amazed** to see Jesus' solemn determination in light of what he had already told them about his forthcoming suffering and death ([Mark 8:31](#); [9:31](#)). In addition to the Twelve, others **followed** along, but Mark says that they **were afraid**. This fear might have arisen from their belief that Jesus was a political messiah; if so, they might be facing fierce battles in Jerusalem, as in the earlier Maccabean revolt. It is more likely that the larger group of followers saw Jesus' sober, deliberate progress toward Jerusalem, and had heard from the Twelve something of his predictions of suffering, and thus concluded that by following Jesus they might face a similar fate.
- **Mark 10:35–37 James and John** belonged to Jesus' "inner circle" (cf. [1:19](#), [29: 3:17](#); [5:37](#); [9:2](#)). If Jesus was going to die and be raised in Jerusalem, they may have thought this journey was their last opportunity to put in a request for future assignments. They falsely envisioned special places of honor (**one at your right hand and one at your left**) when Jesus (as a strictly political messiah) would rule in Jerusalem on the throne of David (**in your glory**; see note on [Matt. 20:20](#)).
- **Mark 11:1–11 Triumphant Entry to Jerusalem.** Jesus enters Jerusalem upon a colt and is hailed as the triumphant Messiah of Israel.
- **Mark 11:7** Jesus fulfills a prophecy about the Messiah in [Zech. 9:9](#) by riding on a donkey; see notes on [Matt. 21:4–5](#) and [John 12:15](#).
-). Here "Hosanna" points to the celebration of Jesus as a political, Davidic [Ps. 118:25](#) (Hb. "Save!" or "Please save!"; see **Hosanna Mark 11:9** messiah (cf. [2 Sam. 7:14](#); [Isa. 9:1–21](#); [11:1–16](#); [Jer. 23:1–8](#)). **Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord** is from [Ps. 118:25–26](#), a prayer of blessing for the coming messianic kingdom (but see also notes on [Matt. 23:39](#); [Luke 13:35](#)). The Triumphant Entry takes place at the beginning of Passover week, which recalls the Jewish people's liberation from Egyptian slavery (see notes on [Mark 14:17](#); [John 2:13](#)); the pilgrims now anticipate the messianic liberation from Rome's oppression. The claims of the disciples are ultimately true, but it will not be Rome that is defeated now but Satan, sin, and death. All enemies of righteousness will one day see the authority of Messiah. This is the only time in Mark where there is no evident tension between Jesus' messianic identity, the messianic expectations of his disciples, and those of the people (cf. [Mark 2:8–10](#); [8:27–31](#); [10:45](#)). Jesus tolerates this brief period of celebration in fulfillment of [Zech. 9:9](#), but with the certainty that nothing will obstruct the divinely ordained death of the Messiah.
- **Builders**). The opponents of Jesus can thus understand what he means: the "stone" refers to the Messiah. [Acts 4:11](#) was already known as a messianic psalm (cf. [Ps. 118:22–23](#) At the time of Jesus, [Mark 12:10](#) refers to the leaders of Israel. **Rejected** echoes the theme of the persecution of the prophets of God ([Neh. 9:9–35](#); [Acts 7:1–53](#)). The new Israel (or faithful Israel) will accept the Son as the rightful messenger, heir, and **cornerstone** of the messianic kingdom ([Jer. 31:26](#); [Zech. 4:7](#)). Both [Mark 12:9](#) and [12:10](#) speak of reversal: in [v. 9](#) God transfers responsibility for his people to "others," and in [v. 10](#) the rejected messianic "stone" is divinely vindicated and established as the cornerstone of a new building (see notes on [1 Pet. 2:4–8](#)).
- passage (i.e., *this*). The issue is that, in [Ezek. 34:23–24](#); [Jer. 23:5–6](#); [Isa. 9:1–7](#); [Ps. 2:1–12](#); [89:1–52](#)? Jesus' point is not to deny that the Messiah is a descendant of David (e.g., **David of Lord** of David or the **son**, Jesus publicly raises a question that he has already discussed in private with his disciples: who is the Messiah of God—is he essentially the **temple** While in the [Mark 12:35–37](#) [Ps. 110:1–5](#)), there is no mention of the Messiah being the son of David; rather, the Messiah is here the "Lord of David" (see note on [Matt. 22:41–46](#)). Jesus affirms the divine inspiration of the Psalm through the **Holy Spirit. The Lord** (Hb. *Yahweh*) grants to David's **Lord** (Hb. *Adonay*) an exclusive place of honor at his **right hand** and helps David's Lord overcome his **enemies**. Jesus anticipates being exalted to the right hand of God, and thus he far transcends any expectation of a merely political, Davidic messiah.
- **false**) is accompanied by [v. 19](#) The tribulation ([Mark 13:22](#) **Christ's and false prophets** (on testing false prophets, see notes on [Matt. 7:15–20](#); [9:34](#); [1 John 4:1](#)). They **lead astray** by performing **signs and wonders** (cf. the actions of the Antichrist in [2 Thess. 2:3](#), [7–12](#); [1 John 2:18](#)). Unlike Scripture, signs and wonders are not clear indicators of God's presence and will. Jesus' remark that even **the elect** (see note on [Matt. 22:14](#)) could be led astray emphasizes the stunning character of the false prophets' miracles. But God will protect his own, so that they will not believe in a false messiah or prophet.

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<[It should be noted, especially, that references to messiah/Messiah disappear after the apocalyptic chapter thirteen, this in contrast to Son of David \(ending at chapter twelve\), Son of Man \(fourteen\), and Son of God \(fifteen\). One may then choose to marvel that it is only in the Triumphant Entry that "there is no evident tension between Jesus' messianic identity, the messianic expectations of his disciples, and those of the people," this celebration, only shortly lived. References to Christ in Mark, however, extend this discussion in interesting ways to the :](http://www.esvbible.org/search/content/notes/esvsb_notes/%40%2A+Messiah+%26+%40note_type+lsb%7Csb%7Chs+%40book+41/></p>
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- **Mark 1:1**

The beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God.1

Footnotes

[1] 1:1 Some manuscripts omit *the Son of God*

- **Mark 8:29**
And he asked them, "But who do you say that I am?" Peter answered him, "You are the Christ."
- **Mark 9:41**
For truly, I say to you, whoever gives you a cup of water to drink because you belong to Christ will by no means lose his reward.
- **Mark 12:35**
And as Jesus taught in the temple, he said, "How can the scribes say that the Christ is the son of David?"
- **Mark 13:21**
And then if anyone says to you, 'Look, here is the Christ!' or 'Look, there he is!' do not believe it.
- **Mark 14:61**
But he remained silent and made no answer. Again the high priest asked him, "Are you the Christ, the Son of the Blessed?"
- **Mark 15:32**
Let the Christ, the King of Israel, come down now from the cross that we may see and believe." Those who were crucified with him also reviled him.

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[Jesus Before the Council]

[53] [v]And [w]they led Jesus to the high priest. And all the chief priests and the elders and the scribes came together. [54] [w]And [x]Peter had followed him at a distance, [y]right into [z]the courtyard of the high priest. And he was sitting with [a]the guards and [b]warming himself at the fire. [55] Now the chief priests and the whole council [f1] were seeking testimony against Jesus to put him to death, but they found none. [56] [c]For many bore false witness against him, but their testimony [d]did not agree. [57] And some stood up and bore false witness against him, saying, [58] [e]"We heard him say, [f]"I will destroy this temple [g]that is made with hands, and in three days I will build another, [h]not made with hands." [59] Yet even about this their testimony did not agree. [60] And the high priest stood up in the midst and asked Jesus, "Have you no answer to make? What is it that these men testify against you?" [f2] [61] But [i]he remained silent and made no answer. [j]Again the high priest asked him, "Are you [k]the Christ, the Son of [l]the Blessed?" [62] And Jesus said, "I am, and [m]you will see the Son of Man [n]seated at the right hand of Power, and [m]coming with the clouds of heaven." [63] And the high priest [o]tore his garments and said, "What further witnesses do we need? [64] You have heard [p]his blasphemy. What is your decision?" And they [q]all condemned him as [r]deserving death. [65] [s]And some began [t]to spit on him and [u]to cover his face and to strike him, saying to him, "Prophecy!" And the guards received him [v]with blows.

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Here, C.H. Dodd says Jesus allows himself to be condemned to death for claiming this term:

And now let us look at the other occasion. According to the three earlier gospels, when Jesus was brought up for examination before the High Priest, he was asked point-blank, "Are you the Messiah?" According to Mark he replied, without ambiguity, "I am." According to Matthew the reply was, "The words are yours" (literally, "You have said"; there is no sufficient evidence that this was an accepted form of affirmation, either in Greek or in Hebrew or Aramaic; we might paraphrase it, "you may have it so if you choose"). In Luke we read that Jesus refused to reply at all. "Tell us, are you the Messiah?" says the High Priest; Jesus retorts, "If I tell you, you will not believe me." John does not describe the scene before the High Priest, but there seem to be echoes of it in a passage where Jesus is publicly challenged in words similar to those of Luke: "If you are the Messiah, say so plainly." Jesus replies, "I have told you but you do not believe" (meaning, apparently, that various things he had said and done should have led them to the right answer).⁴ Here again we have the same problem: did Jesus, or did he not, when he was publicly questioned, intend to accept the title, "Messiah"?

We may perhaps get some light on the matter if we consider the sequel to this questioning. Whether it was at a formal examination in court, or earlier in a public confrontation, that Jesus was asked the crucial question, we may fairly understand it as a preliminary to his arraignment before the Roman governor. The charge which was then preferred by the priests was that of claiming to be "king of the Jews." The charge was of course framed for Roman ears. Among themselves the priests would not have used that expression. They would have said that he claimed falsely to be the "anointed" king of Israel, the Messiah. In his examination before Pilate Jesus was asked, "Are you the king of the Jews?" and he replied (as all gospels agree) with the noncommittal expression, "The words are yours" ("Have it so if you choose"). At this juncture a refusal to disown the title would have the same effect as an avowal, and it was a matter of life and death. Jesus at any rate allowed himself to be condemned to death for claiming to be (in Jewish terms) Messiah.⁵

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Dodd goes on to point out that the roles of messiah and servant (source in Isaiah) become fused, and later argues that Jesus, more than an individual, is the inclusive representative of the community:

In particular, the Servant is commissioned "to bring Jacob back to the Lord, and that Israel should be gathered to him";⁹ and so Jesus is said to have declared himself "sent to the lost sheep of the house of Israel."¹⁰ And in fact, as we shall see, this is a key to much of his activity. It explains the importance he attached to his approach to the "tax-gatherers and sinners," in whom he saw just such "lost sheep." And if the mission of the Servant defined the work to which Jesus set his hand, the fate of the Servant, whose life was made "an offering for sin,"¹¹ and who "bore the sin of many," pointed to the destiny that awaited him: "The Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give up his life as a ransom for many." There is good reason to think that Jesus himself first directed the attention of his followers to the figure of the Servant. He did so because by reflecting on it they might be led to a juster idea of what it was to be "Messiah." "You think as men think, not as God thinks," he said to Peter; we might venture to paraphrase: "Your Messiah is a conqueror; God's Messiah is a servant."

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Readers may wish to recall that Wrede, arguing for the more theological than historical or "interpreted history" version of Mark, describes the "Messianic secret" as a construction created by Mark to harmonize what the church came to understand of Jesus after the resurrection and what it had understood previously in the manner of his historical mission:

The total impression created by the Gospel of Mark is that Jesus intentionally concealed his messiahship from all except those within the inner circle of the disciples, and even they failed to understand his office and identity. Only with the resurrection did the perception of his true character begin to be grasped. This impression, Wrede argued, is a Markan construction. The "messianic secret" is a literary device which originated in the early church to account for the absence of any awareness that Jesus was the Messiah in the historical tradition. Recognition that the secrecy phenomenon is a theological construction provides a unitary explanation for the injunctions to silence in the Gospel.

Wrede located the source of the idea of a secret about the messiahship in a contrast between what the Church came to think of Jesus as a result of the resurrection and the manner in which his life had been understood during his ministry. No one considered Jesus to be the Messiah prior to the resurrection because Jesus "actually did not represent himself as Messiah.⁹ When the Church came to think of Jesus after his resurrection as Messiah they explained the absence of any explicit declaration of his messiahship by Jesus during his ministry with the proposal that Jesus had secretly revealed his messiahship. In this way the non-messianic historical

tradition of Jesus' ministry was harmonized with the theological conviction of the Church that Jesus was the Messiah. Although the idea of the messianic secret did not originate with Mark,¹⁰ the evangelist was the first to edit the tradition so thoroughly that his Gospel is impregnated with this theological construct.

Discussed by William L. Lane, "From Historian to Theologian: Milestones in Markan Scholarship," Review & Expositor 75.4 (Fall 1978): 601-617.

From Historian to Theologian:
Milestones in Markan Scholarship
William L. Lane

Lane summarizes Wrede's conclusions regarding Mark: "Mark's Gospel must be recognized as a bold attempt to give a messianic interpretation to the non-messianic character of Jesus' earthly ministry." Lane next counters this with another possibility:

The "secret" is, accordingly, a "witnessed secret" which is to be kept from others whom Jesus excluded. The accent of the narrative alternates between disclosure of the messiahship and veiling. The motivation for the injunction to silence may be found in the rank unbelief of those who had ridiculed Jesus with their scornful laughter (5:40-42).

Lane concludes that Mark, as writer, was a Christian who presented Jesus in this context: "It was necessary to recognize that Mark was a Christian thinker who reflected theologically on the event of Jesus' life, death, and resurrection, and on its significance for his own community."

N.T. Wright counters an idea of resurrection that he believes has been foisted onto the world through attempts to understand the resurrection historically:

The resurrection of Jesus is to be seen not as the proof of Jesus' uniqueness, let alone his divinity--and certainly not as the proof that there is a life after death, a heaven and a hell (as though Jesus rose again to give prospective validation to Dante or Michelangelo!--but as the launching within the world of space, time and matter of that God-in-public reality of new creation called God's kingdom, which, within 30 years, would be announced under Caesar's nose openly and unhindered. The reason those who made that announcement were persecuted is, of course, that the fact of God acting in public is deeply threatening to the rulers of the world in a way that Gnosticism in all its forms never is. The Enlightenment's rejection of the bodily resurrection has for too long been allowed to get away with its own rhetoric of historical criticism--as though nobody until Gibbon or Voltaire had realized that dead people always stay dead--when in fact its nonresurrectional narrative clearly served its own claim to power, presented as an alternative eschatology in which world history came to its climax not on Easter Day but with the storming of the Bastille and the American Declaration of Independence.

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The Kingdom of God represented by Jesus, says Wright, is that of inbreaking justice:

But the whole point of the Gospels is that the coming of God's kingdom on earth as in heaven is precisely not the imposition of an alien and dehumanizing tyranny, but rather the confrontation of alien and dehumanizing tyrannies with the news of a God--the God recognized in Jesus--who is radically different from them all, and whose inbreaking justice aims at rescuing and restoring genuine humanness.

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A recent blog by James Tabor, picked up by *Bible History Daily* (<http://www.biblicalarchaeology.org/daily/biblical-topics/bible-interpretation/the-making-of-a-messiah/>) summarizes the Messiah passages, then concludes that the culture built up this possible career identification:

Running through the various layers and strata of the New Testament gospel traditions is a complex set of Messianic titles or designations against which the careers of both John the Baptizer and Jesus of Nazareth are tagged and evaluated. In the climatic exchange at Caesarea Philippi, the Markan Jesus puts it most bluntly—"Who do people say that I am?" (Mark 8:27). The possibilities subsequently enumerated appear earlier in Mark, when Herod Antipas hears of the "powers" at work in the career of Jesus and rumor has it that he might be John the Baptizer "raised from the dead," or Elijah, or one of the prophets of old (Mark 6:14-17). Each of these possibilities are implicitly rejected by Mark as Peter makes his definitive, though at this point misguided, declaration: "You are the Messiah" (see Mark 1:1 where the reader is clued into the mystery of who Jesus is: Jesus Christ [Son of God]). On trial before the high priest, the question is put even more directly: "Are you the Messiah, the Son of the Blessed One?" Jesus answers "I am" but then couples his affirmation with the added declaration: "You will see the Son of Man seated at the right hand of Power and coming with the clouds of heaven" (presumably based on a combined reading of Dan 7:13-14, Psalm 110 and possibly Psalm 2). Earlier, when Jesus is glorified on the high mountain, just following Peter's declaration, the disciples ask, in response to their experience of the "kingdom of God coming with power"—"Why then do the scribes say that Elijah must come first?" (Mark 9:11). Jesus implies that the recently-executed John the Baptizer is indeed the Elijah to come (based on Malachi 4:5), but was rejected and killed based on what was "written of him" (Mark 9:13).

Tabor concludes:

For over a hundred years now these materials have presented scholars of the New Testament with a classic form of the proverbial "chicken or the egg" question. Do our gospel traditions import and impose these textual categories onto the figures of John and Jesus, long after their deaths, as a kind of exegetical or "scribal" enterprise to explain and justify the shocking and wholly unexpected facts of their deaths—the beheading of John and the crucifixion of Jesus? Or is it remotely possible, or even probable, that figures such as John, Jesus, and for that matter, a whole host of late Second Temple Jewish Palestinian "*messiah*" figures, *intentionally acted within an existing messianic tradition* [italics added]? The Dead Sea Scrolls give us insight into the life and times of the unnamed "Teacher of Righteousness." Josephus mentions a string of messianic figures, besides Jesus, including Judas the Galilean, Athronges, Simon the Perean, "the Samaritan," Theudas and "the Egyptian." *I would argue that these and others might well have derived their self-identity and also a self-propelled "career pattern" based on a reading of prophetic "messianic" texts.*

Given the variety and complexity of interpretations given to Mark and to chapter eight, it seems appropriate to allow Mark to come to his own conclusion:

³¹ Then he began to teach them that the Son of Man must undergo great suffering, and be rejected by the elders, the chief priests, and the scribes, and be killed, and after three days rise again. ³² He said all this quite openly. And Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him. ³³ But turning and looking at his disciples, he rebuked Peter and said, "Get behind me, Satan! For you are setting your mind not on divine things but on human things."

³⁴ He called the crowd with his disciples, and said to them, "If any want to become my followers, let them deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me. ³⁵ For those who want to save their life will lose it, and those who lose their life for my sake, and for the sake of the gospel, ³⁶ will save it. ³⁶ For what will it profit them to gain the whole world and forfeit their life? ³⁷ Indeed, what can they give in return for their life? ³⁸ Those who are ashamed of me and of my words ³⁸ in this adulterous and sinful generation, of them the Son of Man will also be ashamed when he comes in the glory of his Father with the holy angels."

Mark rebukes Peter for one essential human trait: "For you are setting your mind not on divine things but on human things." When reading Mark, then, readers must avoid this essential blindness as they clearly set their minds upon the Son of Man coming "in the glory of his Father with the holy angels."

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Edited January 1, 2019

Chapter nine reads decidedly different from the ending in chapter eight: the kingdom of God that has been described as near (1:14) is now described as imminent, with some standing present not to die until "the kingdom of God has come with power" (9:1).

Summary Jesus, instructing the disciples, says some there will not die until God's kingdom has come with power. Following this, Mark records the transfiguration, Jesus's going to the mountain accompanied by Peter, James, and John. Elijah and Moses appear and talk with Jesus. Peter wants to build three buildings--one for Moses, one for Elijah, and one for Jesus. The disciples are terrified; a voice from heaven testifies, "This is my Son, the Beloved; listen to him!" As the disciples look around, they find no one there except for Jesus.

As they come down from the mountain, Jesus orders the disciples not to tell anyone what they have seen until the Son of Man has risen from the dead. The disciples do as they're told but question what Jesus has meant by dead. Jesus asks the disciples why the scribes say that Elijah must come first, and then he tells them that Elijah has already come, and they did to him what they pleased.

Around some scribes, a crowd has gathered and is arguing with them; the disciples have been unable to cast out a spirit from a boy who apparently has had a seizure. Jesus remarks on their lack of faith, momentarily sighing, "how much longer must I put up with you?" He questions how long the boy has had this condition and is told from childhood. The man who has brought his son to Jesus asks for pity, if he is able to do anything. Jesus picks up the doubt and replies, "If you are able!—All things can be done for the one who believes." The father says he believes and asks for help for his unbelief. Jesus commands the spirit which keeps the boy from speaking and hearing to come out; when the spirit comes out, the boy is left seemingly a corpse, and the people fear he is dead. Jesus, however, takes him by the hand, lifts him up, and he is able to stand. The disciples in a private moment ask Jesus why they have been unable to exorcise the spirit, and Jesus tells them that this species can be cast out only by prayer.

Again passing through Galilee, Jesus tells the disciples not to tell anyone they're passing through; he is teaching his disciples that the Son of Man is to be betrayed, to be killed, and after three days, to rise again. The disciples do not understand but are afraid to ask Jesus to explain; instead, they argue about it among themselves. Jesus overhears the argument, and back in Capernaum, he asks them what the argument has been about. They are silent, not wanting to reveal that they have been arguing over who would be greatest in the Kingdom of God. Jesus knows, nonetheless, the content of the dispute and settles it: "36 Then he took a little child and put it among them; and taking it in his arms, he said to them, 37 'Whoever welcomes one such child in my name welcomes me, and whoever welcomes me welcomes not me but the one who sent me.'"

Jesus, by this time, has apparently inspired imitators, for John tells him of someone, not a follower, casting out devils in his name and asks if the man should be stopped. Jesus logically replies, "Whoever is not against us is for us" (40). He then says that anyone giving even a cup of water to aid in the mission will be rewarded.

Likewise, the disciples are warned of the drastic consequences to those who obstruct the mission: better to have had a weight tied to them and drowned; better to lose a limb or even two legs and go maimed in this life than to suffer in hell hereafter; it would be better to enter into the hereafter with one eye than to see with both in this world and then be condemned in the next. Mark describes hell as a place "where their worm never dies, and the fire is never quenched." Jesus concludes by telling them that they are to live in peace with each other, and for that, they will need a preservative in themselves: salt to help them love and serve each other.

Pasted from <<http://crain.english.missouriwestern.edu/Mark/interpre7.htm>>

Felix Just has identified the central section of Mark structurally as belonging to Mark 8:22—10:52, and has summarized it in the following way, a structure that emphasizes gradual, partial sight restored in the first healing and an immediate restoration in the second, these framing three passion stories, each followed by a special teaching about what it will mean to follow the Son of Man:

Jesus Journeys from Bethsaida and Caesarea Philippi to Jericho and Jerusalem (built around three Passion predictions, each of which is followed by the misunderstanding of one or more of the disciples, and further teaching by Jesus about the requirements of true discipleship):

[Transition/preface: 8:14-21 - The "blindness" of the disciples!]

8:22-26 - The Two-Stage Restoration of Sight to a [Blind Person](#) at Bethsaida, north of the Sea of Galilee

8:27-30 - Peter's Confession near Caesarea Philippi: "You are the [Christ](#)"; but Jesus orders them "not to tell anyone about him"

8:31 - First Passion Prediction (Son of Man must suffer, be rejected, be killed, and rise after three days)

8:32-33 - Peter misunderstands and "rebukes" Jesus, who "rebukes" Peter in return

8:34-9:1 - Jesus teaches: "If any want to become my followers, let them deny themselves, take up their cross and follow me. For those who want to save their life will lose it, and those who lose their life for my sake and for the sake of the gospel will save it."

9:2-30 - Transfiguration; Coming of Elijah; Exorcism of an Epileptic Spirit

9:31-32 - Second Passion Prediction (Son of Man will be betrayed, be killed, but rise after three days)

9:33-34 - All the disciples misunderstand, arguing who among them was the greatest

9:35-50 - Jesus teaches: "Whoever wants to be first must be last of all and servant of all."

10:1-31 - Teaching on Divorce; Blessing of Children; the Rich Man

10:32-34 - Third Passion Prediction (Son of Man will be handed over, condemned to death, mocked, spat upon, scourged, put to death, but will rise after three days)

10:35-40 - James and John misunderstand, asking for the seats of honor when Jesus is in "glory"

10:41-45 - Jesus teaches: "Whoever wishes to be great among you will be your servant; whoever wishes to be first among you will be the slave of all. For the Son of Man did not come to be served but to serve and to give his life as a ransom for many."

10:46-52 - The Immediate Restoration of Sight to [Blind Bartimaeus](#) outside of Jericho, on the way to Jerusalem

Pasted from <http://catholic-resources.org/Bible/Mark-Outlines.htm>

The New Interpreter's Study Bible remarks that the third Passion Prediction follows the pattern of the first: prediction, misunderstanding, teaching, and concluding healing story. The second is similar, too, in that the prediction is made, the disciples misunderstand and argue about greatness, teaching about "Whoever is not against us is for us" (40), a teaching about sin (42-49); this time, though, the teachings continue in the next chapter with teachings about divorce (10: 1-10), the true children of the kingdom of God (13-16), and the teaching involved in the story of the Rich Man (17-31). It may be noted, too, that the first prediction is preceded by Peter's declaration that Jesus is the Messiah, the second by the Transfiguration in which a voice from a cloud declares "This is my Son, the Beloved; listen to him" (9:7), and a discussion about Elijah that predicts the "Son of Man" will rise from the dead accompanied an explanation that suffering must first be endured. The third, the longest and most detailed, introduces and summarizes the actions to come--that Jesus must be handed over, condemned, mocked, spit on, flogged, and killed, but will victoriously, rise again. It is not then surprising to find that chapter ten concludes on the theme of Jesus' serving and giving his life as a ransom for many and with the healing of a blind Bartimaeus, who acknowledges Jesus of Nazareth as "Jesus, Son of David." This first use of "Son of David" is precisely and strategically placed.

It may be well, at this point, to recall and reassess the structure suggested by The New Interpreter's Study Bible in the introduction:

Interestingly, The New Interpreter's Study Bible divides Mark geographically into an introduction, Galilean ministry, and Jerusalem ministry. The Galilean is divided into four sections: first major section (1:14-2:12)--the good news of God and (2:13-3:6)--call story and four controversy stories, second major section (3:7-6:32)--designation and mission of twelve, (6:33-8:21)--two feedings, boat trip, and growing conflict with scribes and Pharisees, (8:22-10:52)--surrounded by giving of sight stories, organized around three teaching sections following major misunderstanding by the disciples, with each of the teaching sections introduced by a predictions of Jesus' upcoming arrest, trial, death, and resurrection. The last part of the Gospel (11:1-16:8) is also divided at another point (14:1-16:8).

Geographically, two main sections make up the Gospel: Galilean ministry (1:12-10) and Jerusalem (11-16:8). No reader misses the geographical turn in the story, although what happens in between may not be fully understood. Many see a further division into "insiders" and "outsiders" marked in the calling and commissioning of the disciples, who comprehend only vaguely who it is that has called them, and the rejection of Jesus by his family (who become the first clear "outsiders)," a growing conflict with the scribes and Pharisees (also becoming "outsiders,") and a movement into Gentile territory (indicating a move to make "outsiders" into "insiders"). The second feeding clearly indicates "obduracy," "incomprehension," and failure "to recognize the miraculous" on the part of the "insider" disciples.

The suggested simple structure can be reassessed. While the first section can be 1:16-3:6 "composed of two parallel units, each of which begins with a calling of disciples episode...followed by stories of similar type (healing, controversy) with each ending with a mixed healing/controversy; the second major section (3:7-6:32) containing a summary of Jesus's actions, the designation and mission of the twelve disciples, and a long teaching speech could be further divided. The summary remains just that--summary (3:7-12). This summary includes Jesus's growing popularity, a confession by unclean spirits that he is the "Son of God), and Jesus' urgent order "not to make him known."

Following the appointment of the twelve, three controversies are addressed: Beelzebul, blasphemy (calling the Holy evil), and "insiders/outsiders," the family of Jesus

being identified as those who do the will of God(3:34).

What next follows is a long parable (4:1-9), a teaching about the purpose of parables (emphasizing secrecy/mystery and "insiders" and "outsiders"), a point by point interpretation of "The Sower" (which some think to have been added at a later date) and three short parables: a lamp under a bushel basket, a growing seed, the mustard seed--all these showing the purpose of a secret is that it become revealed in time.

Next comes a short section on the use of parables (4:33-34) with the parables being used as people are able to listen and hear (4:23) and the disciples being taught in private.

This is then followed by three miracles: Jesus stills a storm (4:35-41), heals Gerasene demoniac (5:1-20)--this connected to a recognition of "Jesus, Son of the Most High God"--and a girl restored to life and a woman healed (4:21-42)--these two connected with life issues, twelve being the age of marriage and fertility and the flow of blood from the woman for twelve years being a life threat. This could also contrast successful healing to the growing failure of the disciples demonstrated in their being unable to exorcise a demon (9:18).

Next comes the rejection of Jesus' hometown, who know Jesus only as a carpenter, son of Mary and brother of James, Joses, Judas, and Simon (6:1-6), this being a second outright rejection multiplying from family to hometown. This is now followed by the mission of the twelve and the death of John the Baptist, a move logical in light of rejection by so-thought "insiders" and a move to "outsiders" that will move far beyond what John has accomplished.

The section containing the two feeding stories may also be viewed as a section. The first feeding story(6: 30-44) occurs in private while the second is public (8:1-10); notable, too, is the decrease from feeding five thousand to four thousand with a remaining twelve and seven baskets--the last still tied to a "great crowd" and Jesus's popularity perhaps somewhat diminished and those fed--the "insiders" fewer in number. Readers will note, too, that the second feeding takes place in Decapolis area and could perhaps suggest a growing response among gentiles. Painfully obvious, however, is the disciples' failure to understand that the people, whatever the number, can be fed (8:4). The first feeding is followed by the miracle of Jesus' walking on water and the terrified disciples' thinking him to be a ghost. The first feeding focuses on water in the form of the boat that take the disciples to a private spot and the walking on water that demonstrated their continued failure to understand who Jesus is or how it is that Jesus feeds the people--"for they did not understand about the loaves, but their hearts were hardened" (7:52). Even the intimate "insiders" have a difficult time understanding the mystery that is Jesus.

The New Interpreter's Study Bible describes chapter six and chapter seven as reporting "the incredible success of Jesus' healings sandwiched between his difficulty with his disciples (45-52) and his conflict with the Pharisees and scribes (7:1-13). The conflict is over ritual purity and human precepts taught as doctrine (oral law and tradition). The outwardly "religious" are contrasted to the Syrophenician woman of faith (a gentile) and the cured deaf man of the region of Decapolis--a healing effected by touch and command. The healing ends with a caution not to tell that ends in proclamation.

The second feeding ends with a demand from the Pharisees for a "sign from heaven" (8:11), a warning about the yeast of the Pharisees and Herod, the disciples' interpreting this literally and showing once again how completely they misunderstand the man they follow, to the point that Jesus asks, "Why are you talking about having no bread? Do you still not perceive or understand?" He goes on to say, "Are your hearts hardened? Do you have eyes and fail to see? Do you have ears and fail to hear?" Jesus then reminds them of the twelve and seven baskets (8:14-21). It simply should not be surprising to find that a literally blind man is healed or that Peter declares, in answer to Jesus' question of who he is, that "You are the Messiah" (8:29).

What next follows is a section that contains the three predictions about arrest, trial, death, and resurrection that culminates in the healing of yet another blind person, Blind Bartimaeus, who recognizes Jesus of Nazareth as "Jesus, Son of David," the first time Jesus is called "Son of David" and connects the entire Galilean mission to the City of David and the triumphal entry of Jesus into it (chapter 11). The first section ends then with a suggestion--proximity--of a connection between "Messiah" and "Son of David." What must inevitably follow is what Jesus does in Jerusalem.

Michael Turton in his historical analysis suggests a possible source for the story of Bartimaeus:

Timaeus is the name of a well-known dialog of Plato. In this dialog, Socrates -- who will be executed -- sits down with three of his friends, Critias, Timaeus, and Hermocrates. The dialog involves a discussion of why and how the universe was created:

"When the father creator saw the creature which he had made moving and living, the created image of the eternal gods, he rejoiced..."([Jowett translation](#))

Plato's Timaeus also contains a long discussion about the eye and vision:

"And of the organs they first contrived the eyes to give light, and the principle according to which they were inserted was as follows: So much of fire as would not burn, but gave a gentle light, they formed into a substance akin to the light of every-day life; and the pure fire which is within us and related thereto they made to flow through the eyes in a stream smooth and dense, compressing the whole eye, and especially the centre part, so that it kept out everything of a coarser nature, and allowed to pass only this pure element. When the light of day surrounds the stream of vision, then like falls upon like, and they coalesce, and one body is formed by natural affinity in the line of vision, wherever the light that falls from within meets with an external object. And the whole stream of vision, being similarly affected in virtue of similarity, diffuses the motions of what it touches or what touches it over the whole body, until they reach the soul, causing that perception which we call sight. But when night comes

on and the external and kindred fire departs, then the stream of vision is cut off; for going forth to an unlike element it is changed and extinguished, being no longer of one nature with the surrounding atmosphere which is now deprived of fire: and so the eye no longer sees, and we feel disposed to sleep." ([Jowett translation](#))

It is not difficult to see the parallel between Jesus -- about to be executed -- and Socrates, as well as Peter, James, and John, and Socrates' three friends. Socrates, like Jesus, is a tekton. Bar-Timaeus is blind, and Timaeus has a discussion of optics and the physics of the eye. Like Jesus, Socrates will enlighten his companions as to the truth. The parallel may be pushed further, but that would take us outside our task here. The name stinks of literary invention, and this would make it the only pericope in Mark with an origin in Plato or other Hellenistic literature. All in all, considering the odd structure (see below), this pericope is probably not from the hand of the original writer of Mark.

Bar-Timaeus also recalls the blind seer Tiresias, the famous Greek prophet, who sees truth though blind, just as Bar-Timaeus knows the truth that the King, the Son of David, is passing by, though he is blind. Although the text implies that Bartimaeus becomes a follower of Jesus, he disappears from the story after this incident.

Most exegetes relate this to the previous pericope, relating the blindness of Bar-Timaeus to the blindness of the disciples. Note how Jesus greets the beggar with the same words he met the disciples' request in [Mk 10:36](#): "What do you want me to do for you?" But disciples' lack of understand is met with scorn, while the faith of the beggar, the fertile ground of Tolbert's analysis, is met with healing and a will to followership.

Pasted from <http://www.michaelturton.com/Mark/GMark10.html>>

Following the general structure identified in The New Interpreter's Study Bible, this chapter belongs with the fourth segment of Jesus' Galilean mission:

(8:22-10:52)--surrounded by giving of sight stories, organized around three teaching sections following major misunderstanding by the disciples, with each of the teaching sections introduced by a predictions of Jesus' upcoming arrest, trial, death, and resurrection. The last part of the Gospel (11:1-16:8) is also divided at another point (14:1-16:8).

Chapter eight in this text has outlined possible views of *Jesus as a Hellenistic miracle worker* [italics added], *God's servant* [italics added], and a *Christological figure* [italics added], also suggesting that the point at which Jesus becomes Son of God can be traced to significant moments: birth (not in Mark), baptism, transfiguration, cross, and resurrection, and ascension (not in shorter ending of Mark). Chapter eight in Mark concludes with the first Passion prediction. Readers may wish to recall that very definite time references in Mark preclude the mistaken or misunderstood question of Jesus's identity: in Mark 4:35, "On that day when evening had come, he [Jesus] said to them [disciples] , 'Come, let us go across to the other side.'" What has preceded is teaching at the sea, some short parables, a discussion of the purpose of parables, and this nature miracle that causes the disciples to ask, "Who then is this, that even the wind and sea obey him?" Upon Peter's confession that Jesus is the Messiah (8:29), Jesus then began to teach them (first Passion prediction). Chapter 9:1, as already discussed, begins with the announcement of the imminent Kingdom of God. I there suggested that this announcement was not apocalyptic but introduces the Kingdom of God as coming with power to be experienced in the living. Not surprisingly, this announcement precludes the definite "Six days later" that introduces the transfiguration. This is clearly a divine manifestation; NISB notes remark that scholars argue that "the 'six days' refer to crucifixion and burial" and constitute a "misplaced ' resurrection appearance story."

Michael Turton finds the transfiguration as related to Exodus and Elijah and Moses as representing Prophecy and Law:

v2: McNeile (1927) sees a close relationship with Exodus 24:13-18:

13 Then Moses set out with Joshua his aide, and Moses went up on the mountain of God. 14 He said to the elders, "Wait here for us until we come back to you. Aaron and Hur are with you, and anyone involved in a dispute can go to them." 15 When Moses went up on the mountain, the cloud covered it, 16 and the glory of the LORD settled on Mount Sinai. For six days the cloud covered the mountain, and on the seventh day the LORD called to Moses from within the cloud. 17 To the Israelites the glory of the LORD looked like a consuming fire on top of the mountain. 18 Then Moses entered the cloud as he went on up the mountain. And he stayed on the mountain forty days and forty nights. (NIV)

4: And there appeared to them Eli'jah with Moses; and they were talking to Jesus.

v4: Elijah plays an important role in Mark's gospel. Heil (1999) writes:

"Whereas Matt 17,3 and Luke 9,30 mention Moses first and coordinate him with Elijah in the expression, "Moses and (kai\` Elijah", Mark 9,4 mentions Elijah first and seems to subordinate Moses to him in the expression, "Elijah with (su\`n) Moses" 1. But a close examination of all the instances where Mark uses the preposition su\`n indicates that this is not the case. On the contrary, the object of the preposition su\`n in every instance represents the more notable party."

v4: One way to interpret this is to observe that Moses and Elijah represent Law and Prophecy, respectively.

v4: It should also be pointed out that the disciples have no way to recognize Elijah or Moses. This comment is clearly aimed at the reader/hearer of the book.

5: And Peter said to Jesus, "Master, it is well that we are here; let us make three booths, one for you and one for Moses and one for Eli'jah." 6: For he did not know what to say, for they were exceedingly afraid.

v5-6: Timothy Wiarda (1999) has argued that the writer of Mark here shows Peter as an individual, explaining from the inside what his feelings were.

9: And as they were coming down the mountain, he charged them to tell no one what they had seen, until the Son of man should have risen from the dead.

v9: As Thomas Sheehan (1986, p281) observes, in Mark Jesus never tells his disciples that he is the Christ, and when God announces the fact to Peter, James, and John during the heavenly vision in v9, Jesus enjoins them to silence, as he did in Mark 8.

10: So they kept the matter to themselves, questioning what the rising from the dead meant.

Pasted from <<http://www.michaelturton.com/Mark/GMark09.html>>

He also points out that verse ten has been toned down so as not to show the disciples arguing about what the words of Jesus mean, the author poking fun at them. If, as Turton suggests, the first verse about the imminent Kingdom of God is directed to readers/hearers, then what they hear is "This is my Son, the Beloved; listen to him (7). What follows in verse nine is Jesus's command not to tell anyone about the experience until he had "risen from the dead." This connects discussion of the transfiguration to the resurrection, although decidedly, the two record different experiences--the first, miraculous in nature, a theophany; the second, equally miraculous, but Christophany bringing together the body of the man Jesus and this body restored from a time-in-death to a reappearance as material body in divine manifestation.

One may certainly pause to consider what Jesus says here to the disciples; emphasis is upon a resurrection, this an important part of all three Passion predictions. As remarked, Jesus calls himself "Son of Man," not "Son of God," just as he did after Peter's confession, "You are the Messiah" (8:29). What must be remarked is that Jesus clearly envisions rising from death. The problematic resides in the question of what it means to "rise" from the dead. In a review of N.T/ Wright's *The Resurrection of the Son of God*, Richard N. Ostling concludes concerning a material resurrection that Wright says the following:

What difference does it make whether resurrection involves material bodies?

First, Wright says, because the church should teach what the first Christians believed. Second, the physical reality of a future world after death shows "the created order matters to God and Jesus' Resurrection is the pilot project for that renewal."

Pasted from <http://www.christendom-awake.org/pages/resurrection/wright_resurrection.htm>

Ostling quotes Wright directly concerning the current dominant paradigm in addressing the matter of Jesus' resurrection:

I intend to challenge this dominant paradigm in each of its main constituent parts. In general terms, this view holds the following: (1) that the Jewish context provides only a fuzzy setting, in which 'resurrection' could mean a variety of different things; (2) that the earliest Christian writer, Paul, did not believe in bodily resurrection, but held a 'more spiritual' view; (3) that the earliest Christians believed, not in Jesus' bodily resurrection, but in his exaltation/ascension/glorification, in his 'going to heaven' in some kind of special capacity, and that they came to use 'resurrection' language initially to denote that belief and only subsequently to speak of an empty tomb or of 'seeing' the risen Jesus; (4) that the resurrection stories in the gospels are late inventions designed to bolster up this second-stage belief; (5) that such 'seeings' of Jesus as may have taken place are best understood in terms of Paul's conversion experience, which itself is to be explained as a 'religious' experience, internal to the subject rather than involving the seeing of any external reality, and that the early Christians underwent some kind of fantasy or hallucination; (6) that whatever happened to Jesus' body (opinions differ as to whether it was even buried in the first place), it was not 'resuscitated', and was certainly not 'raised from the dead' in the sense that the gospel stories, read at face value, seem to require. [1]

Concerning resurrection, Wright makes important distinctions:

Thus, when the ancients spoke of resurrection, whether denying it or affirming it, they were telling a two-step story. Resurrection itself would be preceded (and was preceded even in the case of Jesus) by an interim period of death-as-a-state. Where we find a single-step story — death-as-event being followed at once by a final state, for instance of disembodied bliss — the texts are not talking about resurrection. Resurrection involves a definite content (some sort of re-embodiment) and a definite narrative shape (a two-step story, not a single-step one). This meaning is constant throughout the ancient world, until we come to a new coinage in the second century. [74]

The meaning of 'resurrection' as 'life after "life after death"' cannot be overemphasized, not least because much modern writing continues to use 'resurrection' as a virtual synonym for 'life after death' in the popular sense. [75] It has sometimes been proposed that this usage was current even for the first century, but the evidence is simply not there.

Wright places the resurrection in its appropriate historical era, explaining that Jews, pagans, and Christians shared a common view but only Christians believed this event had already happened:

Sense (a) is not what 'resurrection' meant in the first century. Here there is no difference between pagans, Jews and Christians. They all understood the Greek word *anastasis* and its cognates, and the other related terms we shall meet, to mean (b): new life after a period of being dead. Pagans denied this possibility; some Jews affirmed it as a long-term future hope; virtually all Christians claimed that it had happened to Jesus and would happen to them in the future. All of them were speaking of a new life after 'life after death' in the popular sense, a fresh living embodiment following a period of death-as-a-state (during which one might or might not be 'alive' in some other,

non-bodily fashion). Nobody (except the Christians, in respect of Jesus) thought that this had already happened, even in isolated cases.

Thus, when the ancients spoke of resurrection, whether denying it or affirming it, they were telling a two-step story. Resurrection itself would be preceded (and was preceded even in the case of Jesus) by an interim period of death-as-a-state.":

What is obviously clear in the context of Mark is that the disciples are puzzled about what Jesus has said about "rising": " So they kept the matter to themselves, questioning what this rising from the dead could mean" (10).

Wright, of course, questions a historical approach that culminates in a denial of the resurrection as a material reemodiment. He spends much of his time working through definitions and the exactness needed in the use of terms such as death, resurrection, and history itself. He concludes concerning current historical approaches in the study of the resurrection with a wry observation that history wants its "win" to be the denial of faith:

There seems to be an implicit argument in his work (and in that of some others) according to which (a) historical-critical scholarship has thoroughly deconstructed the events of the first Easter but (b) anyone attempting to engage with this scholarship on its own terms is told that to do so is to cut the resurrection down to size, to reduce it to a merely mundane level. Historical work, it seems, is fine, necessary even, as long as it comes up with sceptical results, but dangerous and damaging — to genuine faith! — if it tries to do anything else. [6] Heads I lose; tails you win.

And ultimately, he endorses a way of using history that, in the end, will not lead, necessarily, to a denial of faith:

I described and defended my preferred historical method in Part II of *The New Testament and the People of God*, and exemplified it in Parts III and IV of that work, and in Parts II and III of *Jesus and the Victory of God*. This method recognizes that all knowledge of the past, as indeed of everything else, is mediated not only through sources but also through the perceptions, and hence also the personalities, of the knowers. There is no such thing as detached objectivity. (To say, therefore, that we can investigate other historical claims in a neutral or objective fashion, but that with the resurrection an element of subjectivity inevitably creeps in, is to ignore the fact that all historical work consists of a dialogue between the historian, in community with other historians, and the source materials; and that at every point the historians' own worldview-perspectives are inevitably involved.) But this does not mean that all knowledge collapses into mere subjectivity. There are ways of moving towards fair and true statements about the past.

Osling, in his review of Wright, rightly captures the conservative viewpoint:

In the New Testament portrayal, Jesus rose with a different, glorified body, which is promised to all believers as part of the Easter hope.

Wright's acceptance of that point runs into objections from Alan F. Segal, a Jewish historian at Barnard College who is completing a major work titled *Life After Death* covering Judaism, Christianity and Islam.

Segal and Wright agree on many basic issues, including that the Gospels teach a material, physical concept of resurrection. But Segal opposes Wright's contention that first-century Jews and Christians all meant the same thing when they spoke about resurrection.

According to Segal, they "all talk about a bodily resurrection but not all believe it is physical," and the Apostle Paul conceived of a "spiritual" body in the pivotal passage, 1 Corinthians 15, written about 20 years after the Easter events.

In this crucial and rather technical argument, Wright insists that what Paul meant by "spiritual" was that after resurrection the body is "animated by the spirit," not that it is a nonmaterial body.

Wright says Christianity has always believed that after death and an undefined period in the presence of God, each individual will receive a resurrection body like that of Jesus.

Yet another view of the transfiguration is to see in it the traditions associated with Elijah and Moses and one that would explain it in relation to Jesus in the Son of Man tradition:

This scene is both entirely supernatural, and a riff on the OT based on the ascension of Elijah:

Mark 9:4-13

Transfiguration

unearthly light

(five references to Elijah)

2 Kings 1

Elijah is carried by fire into heaven

unearthly light

fire from heaven

Another possible origin is in Josephus' description of Moses' ascension to heaven in *Antiquities of the Jews*, where Moses goes to the mountain of Abarim and is taken up to heaven in the presence of the seventy elders of Israel, Eleazar and Joshua (Joshua is the Hebrew name represented by "Jesus").

Crispin Fletcher-Louis (1997) has pointed out that the transfiguration may also represent Jesus' ascension as High Priest, a position connected to the Son of Man imagery. The "booths" would then suggest New Years holiday, three separate holidays, among which was the Day of Atonement, on which one denies oneself (Mark 8:34).

It should not be surprising that what follows the transfiguration is another significant healing miracle (14-30) effected by Jesus only after the disciples who had not been witnesses at the transfiguration have failed to cast out an unclean spirit; Jesus responds to the arguing scribes and disciples rather sharply: "You faithless generation, how much longer must I be among you? How much longer must I put up with you? Bring him to me!" (19). The father coming to Jesus reveals hesitation when he requests, if you are able to do anything, have pity on us and help us" (22), Jesus picks up on the hypothetical "if" and replies, "If you are able!—All things can be done for the one who believes" (23). The father cries out immediately that he believes and asks help for his unbelief. The unclean spirits come out at Jesus' command, and Jesus instructs the disciples that "This kind can come out only through prayer." The section ends with the teacher and disciples going from there to Galilee and with an admonition that Jesus "did not want anyone to know it [what he had accomplished], echoing the secrecy motif already noted throughout Mark.

The second Passion prediction immediately follows. Esther Ling (*The Passion Predictions in the Gospel of Mark*, *Theology Annual*, 1985-86) has given significant attention to Mark's use of the three Passion predictions as an important structural device in Mark, culminating in stressing a theological point:

1. Mainly on linguistic grounds, evidence speaks for a pre-Markan origin of the first prediction in Mk 8:31.
2. Though it has not been possible to trace the historical substratum underlying the prediction logia, it seems certain they have a historical core. In fact, it can be demonstrated convincingly that Mk 8:31 may very well have its origin from the earthly Jesus.
3. On structural and theological grounds it seems likely that the first prediction in Mk 8:31 is repeated three times by the evangelist in the present context immediately before Christ's entry into Jerusalem. The repetitions are for theological and apologetical purposes.
4. The chief concern of Mark is the passion and suffering of the Messiah, for without the cross, neither Jesus' works nor his words can be genuinely and properly understood. Indeed, the exousia of the Messiah is to be proclaimed from the cross: "Truly this man was the Son of God" (Mk 15:39). Thus the gospel of Mark is christological, and its theology is a theology of the cross, a true understanding of which includes an understanding of the cross embraced in Christian discipleship. The passion predictions are part of this theology as well as the key to this theology. Therefore it is not surprising that each prediction of passion, as discussed earlier, is followed by a unit of Jesus' teaching on discipleship (Mk 8:34ff; 9:35ff; 10:38ff). To be a disciple means readiness to take up the cross, readiness to be servant of all and smallest of all, and readiness to sacrifice oneself.

Finally, we conclude our study by proclaiming with Mark: "Whoever would save his life will lose it; and whoever loses his life for my sake and the gospel's will save it" (Mk 8:35).

Jeanie Crain at 3/29/2012 7:57 AM

Pasted from <<http://www.xhchina.org/sxnk/annaul/A009e.htm>>

A similar conclusion is reached by Jack Dean Kingsbury in *The Christology of Mark's Gospel* (Fortress Press, 1983). Kingsbury provides an analysis that is largely structural and thematic and that concludes that the titles of Son of Man and Messiah are not contradictory--that Son of Man is the public title with Messiah being a confessional title. Structurally, Kingsbury outlines three main sections in Mark:

1. Mark 1:1-13 presents John and Jesus.
2. Mark 1:14-8:26 depicts the public ministry of Jesus.
3. Mark 8:27-16:8 proceeds in stages of progressive disclosure of the identity of Jesus through specific scenes.

Kingsbury says the three passion predictions control the plot of Mark's story (8:31, 9:31, 10:33-34) and that the theme of the book is the suffering and death of the messiah. Suffering and death, he points out, runs the full length of the story. It is found in 1:14, where John as "forerunner" is "handed over," in 3:19, where Judas is identified as the

one who will betray Jesus, in 2:20, where the bridegroom will be taken away, and in 3:6, where Jewish leaders take council to destroy Jesus. Further, in 1:14-8:26, Jesus undergoes a progressive alienation from family, who thinks he is mad (3:20-21), from the crowds, who can receive the teachings of Jesus only in parables because they are blind, deaf, and without understanding (4:1-2, 10-12). The passion highlights the theme pursued throughout: 11:18 is an echo of 3:6 with a consideration of how to destroy Jesus; in chapter twelve, the priests, scribes, and elders tried to arrest him but feared the crowd. After the apocalyptic Mark 13, the writer narrates the events found in the three passion predictions. The theme of suffering and death is through intertwined with the motif of secrecy..

Kingsbury finds different patterns in the long second section (1:14-8:26) and the third section, with the first following a pattern in which characters react to the words and deeds of Jesus. Identity becomes focal for human characters, who evidence some insight, the disclosure coming in stages and through pivotal scenes: in 8:29, Peter confesses Jesus to be the messiah; in 10:47-48, Bartimaeus appeals to Jesus as Son of David; the Roman Centurion (15:39) declares Jesus to be Son of God; in 14:28 and 16:6-7, the disciples learn they will see Jesus in Galilee following his resurrection. Debate, Kingsbury remarks, has been hot about whether the point of insight into Jesus' identity is prior to the Centurion's declaration of the resurrection (14:28, 16:6-7), with some scholars denying that Peter's confession is valid or that Bartimaeus's appeal to Jesus as Son of David is positive Christological evidence.

Kingsbury stays with the idea of gradual disclosure of identity, where characters are correct but insufficient in the way they understand Jesus's identity. Kingsbury sees Mark 8: 27-30 as a first stage in the disclosure of identity followed by 8:31-9, where Jesus speaks of himself as Son of Man and foretells the passion and parousia, the transfiguration, and the disciples engage in discussion of what it is that has occurred. The confession of Peter begins the third main part of Mark (8:27-16:8), where the writer addresses Jesus's identity in and around Galilee. Here, it is revealed that Jesus is not John, Elijah, or a prophet--and rather that he is messiah. Importantly, the confession comes from "inside," not "outside" and alerts readers to evaluated Peter's admission against the backdrop of the larger part of the story (1:14-8:26). In this section, Jesus teaches, heals, preaches, and exorcises demons with authority and the approval of God; as early as the first verse, Jesus is designated as the messiah, and Jesus so designates himself in 9:41. The motif of silence (8:30) attests to the correctness of the demons' knowing Jesus and loudly proclaiming his identity--these followed by attempts to suppress the knowledge (1:34, 1:24-25; 3; 11, 12). Peter's confession, however, does not mesh with the envisaged passion. The passion sections teach a "new word"--that Jesus must suffer, die, and rise--this beyond Peter's purview. Thus, Peter's confession may be viewed as correct but insufficient--denoting a national, political king or divine man. Jesus is not, however, these and debunks them: he is the Son of Man (8:31) and the "suffering man of Mark."

Kingsbury points out, important to Christology, that Son of Man and messiah should not be assumed to be two contradictory or alternative titles; in 14:61-62, the "I am" is given to the question of messiah ship, not Son of Man, a referential title outlining destiny; Kingsbury says the titles have two functions--one to what Jesus must endure and another to identity. He says Son of Man is a public title used when Jesus teaches his disciples in the oversight of Jewish authorities (8:31), when he addresses the wider audience and his disciples (8:38), where Jesus addresses the crowd and scribes (2:10-2:28) and the Pharisees (2:24). Kingsbury concludes "messiah" is confessional.

The discussion of this chapter may be somewhat dramatically closed by anticipating some of the argument of chapter sixteen concerning the resurrection by Richard Carrier: "The belief that the soul rests three days before departing also suggests that during these three days, individuals could go to the cemetery to inspect the dead for any sign of life. Jesus's resurrection on the third day would then be evidence that death had been defeated."

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Edited January 1, 2019

The discussion in the preceding chapter has covered much of the content of this present chapter. The chapter may be summarized quickly:

Summary. Jesus leaves Capernaum and goes to region of Judea and beyond the Jordan, considerably south in the direction of Jerusalem and east of the Jordan; he continues to instruct his disciples. He teaches about divorce, talks about the example of children, tells the story of the rich man, and once again, foretells his death and resurrection, hears a request from the brothers John and James about who in the kingdom would be allowed to sit on his right side, and then ends with the healing of Bartimaeus. The Pharisees initiate the discussion about divorce, and the disciples follow-up on the discussion. Following this discussion, Jesus takes into his arms the little children brought to him by their parents, blesses them, and says that of such is the Kingdom of God made. The children are followed by a rich young man who wants to know what he should do to enter God's kingdom; Jesus tells him to keep the law but, also, to sell his possessions and give the money to the poor, a requirement that the young man finds too difficult. This leads to a discussion of the difficulty the rich may have in attaining God's kingdom.

On the road on the way to Jerusalem, he tells his disciples he will be condemned by the chief priests and scribes, handed over to the Gentiles, be killed, and rise again after three days. James and John ask to sit on the right side of Jesus in the kingdom, an indication that they still misunderstand the mission about which Jesus has been teaching. Blind Bartimaeus exclaims for joy when he encounters Jesus, whom he recognizes as the Son of David, and asks to be healed of his blindness; Bartimaeus regains his sight and follows Jesus.

Pasted from <<http://crain.english.missouriwestern.edu/Mark/interpre8.htm>>

I repeat here two of the pivotal points made in the preceding chapter, the first pertaining to this chapter, and the second identifying a section that contains the three predictions, this latter from NISB.:

10:1-31 - Teaching on Divorce; Blessing of Children; the Rich Man

10:32-34 - Third Passion Prediction (Son of Man will be handed over, condemned to death, mocked, spat upon, scourged, put to death, but will rise after three days)

10:35-40 - James and John misunderstand, asking for the seats of honor when Jesus is in "glory"

10:41-45 - Jesus teaches: "Whoever wishes to be great among you will be your servant; whoever wishes to be first among you will be the slave of all. For the Son of Man did not come to be served but to serve and to give his life as a ransom for many."

10:46-52 - The Immediate Restoration of Sight to Blind Bartimaeus outside of Jericho, on the way to Jerusalem

Pasted from <<http://catholic-resources.org/Bible/Mark-Outlines.htm>>

What next follows is a section that contains the three predictions about arrest, trial, death, and resurrection that culminates in the healing of yet another blind person, Blind Bartimaeus, who recognizes Jesus of Nazareth as "Jesus, Son of David," *the first time Jesus is called "Son of David"* [italics added] and connects the entire Galilean mission to the City of David and the triumphal entry of Jesus into it (chapter 11). The first section ends then with a suggestion--proximity--of a connection between "Messiah" and "Son of David." What must inevitably follow is what Jesus does in Jerusalem. [This important position connects Son of David to Messiah and confession.]

(8:22-10:52)--surrounded by giving of sight stories, organized around three teaching sections following major misunderstanding by the disciples, with each of the teaching sections introduced by a predictions of Jesus' upcoming arrest, trial, death, and resurrection. The last part of the Gospel (11:1-16:8) is also divided at another point (14:1-16:8).

After reiterating the connection between Son of David and Messiah, a next point of departure for understanding this final Galilean section may well be found prior to the healing of Blind Bartimaeus in verse 45: "For the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve and to give his life a ransom for many." Three groups of those marginalized by society precede this emphasis upon serving: women, children, and the poor. The teaching about divorce appears more as a prohibition against re-marriage and reflects Gentile rather than Jewish customs (NRSB); here, women can be the offended partners and can ask for divorce from their husbands, although clearly, God intended the ideal: husband and wife as "one flesh." The important point is that the prohibition is directed to both men and women; it must be remembered, however, that the Pharisees have introduced the question as a test. The disciples receive the full interpretation in a private teaching.

The next section has parallels to that in 9:42, where Jesus teaches the welcoming of "little ones" rather than putting a stumbling block before them. Here, the disciples speak sternly to those parents bringing children to Jesus to be blessed; Jesus speaks plainly, "it is to such as these that the kingdom of God belongs" (14).

Likewise, in the next story, the disciples again become perplexed about the teaching that wealth can prevent people from entering the kingdom of God. Ironically, Peter grumbles that the disciples have left everything and followed Jesus (29). The next two verses remain somewhat problematic; Michael Turton has provided a gloss to these that explains the verses as anachronistic, textual corruption, a doublet, and typology:

v28-30: yet another Markan creation. The reference to persecutions is a clear

anachronism. Some see them as later insertions. But v30 the doublet "now..in this time" is a classic Markan construction. Wilker (2004, p267-8) argues that the additional "houses and brothers and sisters and mothers and children" in v30 is an early textual corruption.

v30: Donahue and Harrington (2002, p40) argue that the word "houses" here refers to house churches of the kind common in primitive Christianity, with brothers, sisters, mothers, and children, but significantly, no "father," or centralized authority. They link this back to Paul's description of this structure in Romans 16:1-16 (although 16:1-7 is sometimes seen as an interpolation).

31: But many that are first will be last, and the last first."

v31: Some exegetes have seen this as an exhortation to service, or a prediction of who will be in the Kingdom (the least), or simply as an uncontextualized saying tacked onto the end of the pericope. Reading this against the writer's constant denigration on the disciples, I see this as a prediction of their future behavior. But many that are first on the list of the Twelve in Mark 3 will be last to fall away when the tribulation comes, culminating in Peter, the very first name on the list, and the last disciple to deny him, and the last, Judas, will be the first to betray me." Read that way, the final line is then in context with the previous several verses, especially as "the hundredfold" in v30 takes the reader back to the Parable of the Sower, and thence to the typology that identifies the role of the disciples in the Gospel of Mark.

Pasted from <<http://www.michaelturton.com/Mark/GMark10.html>>

Whatever interpretation ultimately the reader settles upon, the passage contrasts two ages: "this age" and "the age to come" (30). The pivotal point may well be that the disciples have set their eyes on the wrong age and the wrong values. It will be recalled that Jesus, in chapter eight, rebuked Peter for setting his mind on "human things" rather than the "divine" (33); true followers are to "deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me" (34). Here, losing life for the sake of the gospel means saving life; the teaching in chapter ten is that the first will be last and the last will be first (31).

Ironically, once again, James and John want to be granted their request to sit at the right and left side of Jesus in glory, a privilege Jesus reminds them that has already been prepared; readers will remember that the two criminals crucified with Jesus take the right and left hand positions. Jesus asks if they will be able to drink the cup he drinks or be baptized with the baptism with which he is baptized, and all too confidently, they reply, "We are able," and Jesus seems to reply, "So be it." Jesus reminds them that they should not seek the ways of the world, with its tyrannizing rulers, but that they must choose to serve in order to be great (44).

Chapter ten ends appropriately, as remarked by the NISB: "At the end of the Galilean ministry, the son of Timaeus exemplifies the perfect disciple or follower of Jesus, one who has faith, not fear."

This may be, perhaps, an ideal point to introduce a literary interpretation which argues the Passion does not belong to mythology [the world's way of overcoming the gap between the human and divine] but rather provides an alternative answer to mythology; two points should introduce the idea, how to understand Peter's denial, and exactly how Christianity insists upon a non-mythological interpretation:

Peter spectacularly illustrates this mimetic contagion. When surrounded by people hostile to Jesus, he imitates their hostility. He obeys the same mimetic force, ultimately, as Pilate and Herod. Even the thieves crucified with Jesus obey that force and feel compelled to join the crowd. And yet, I think, the Gospels do not seek to stigmatize Peter, or the thieves, or the crowd as a whole, or the Jews as a people, but to reveal the enormous power of mimetic contagion—a revelation valid for the entire chain of murders stretching from the Passion back to "the foundation of the world."

We hear nowadays that, behind every text and every event, there are an infinite number of interpretations, all more or less equivalent. Mimetic victimization makes the absurdity of this view manifest. Only two possible reactions to the mimetic contagion exist, and they make an enormous difference. Either we surrender and join the persecuting crowd, or we resist and stand alone. The first way is the unanimous self-deception we call mythology. The second way is the road to the truth followed by the Bible.

René Girard's article, "Are the Gospels Mythical?" (First Things 62, April 1996: 27-31), outlines a convincing distinction between mythology and Christianity, remarking largely the characteristics essential to mythology: cosmic or social crisis, suffering of a mysterious victim, triumphal return of sufferer, a kind of revealed divinity. Where Christianity departs from myth is within the innocence of the sufferer:

Beginning with the story of Cain and Abel, the Bible proclaims the innocence of mythical victims and the guilt of their victimizers. Living after the widespread promulgation of the gospel, we find this natural and never pause to think that in classical myths the opposite is true: the persecutors always seem to have a valid cause to persecute their victims. The Dionysiac myths regard even the most horrible lynchings as legitimate. Pentheus in the Bacchae is legitimately slain by his mother and sisters, for his contempt of the god Dionysus is a fault serious enough to warrant his death. Oedipus, too, deserves his fate. According to the myth, he has truly killed his father and married his mother, and is thus truly responsible for the plague that ravages Thebes. To cast him out is not merely a permissible action, but a religious duty.

Even if they are not accused of any crime, mythical victims are still supposed to die for a good cause, and their innocence makes their deaths no less legitimate. In the Vedic myth of Purusha, for instance, no wrongdoing is mentioned—but the tearing apart of the victim is nonetheless a holy deed. The pieces of Purusha's body are needed to create the three

great castes, the mainstay of Indian society. In myth, violent death is always justified.

If the violence of myths is purely mimetic—if it is like the Passion, as Jesus says—all these justifications are false. And yet, since they systematically reverse the true distribution of innocence and guilt, such myths cannot be purely fictional. They are lies, certainly, but the specific kind of lie called for by mimetic contagion—the false accusation that spreads mimetically throughout a disturbed human community at the climax when scandals polarize against the single scapegoat whose death reunites the community. The myth-making machine is the mimetic contagion that disappears behind the myth it generates.

<http://www.leaderu.com/ftissues/ft9604/girard.html>

Girard concludes:

There is nothing secret about the justifications espoused by myths; the stereotypical accusations of mob violence are always available when the search for scapegoats is on. In the Gospels, however, the scapegoating machinery is fully visible because it encounters opposition and no longer operates efficiently. The resistance to the mimetic contagion prevents the myth from taking shape. The conclusion in the light of the Gospels is inescapable: myths are the voice of communities that unanimously surrender to the mimetic contagion of victimization.

This interpretation is reinforced by the optimistic endings of myths. The conjunction of the guilty victim and the reconciled community is too frequent to be fortuitous. The only possible explanation is the distorted representation of unanimous victimization. The violent process is not effective unless it fools all witnesses, and the proof that it does, in the case of myths, is the harmonious and cathartic conclusion, rooted in a perfectly unanimous murder...

Obedying perfectly the anti-mimetic prescriptions he recommends, Jesus has not the slightest tendency toward mimetic rivalry and victimization. And he dies, paradoxically, because of this perfect innocence. He becomes a victim of the process from which he will liberate mankind. When one man alone follows the prescriptions of the kingdom of God it seems an intolerable provocation to all those who do not, and this man automatically designates himself as the victim of all men. This paradox fully reveals "the sin of the world," the inability of man to free himself from his violent ways.

Mimetic contagion means surrendering and joining the persecuting crowd; the way of Christ means resisting and standing alone.

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Summary Jesus, coming from the direction of Bethany on the east side of the Mount of Olives, prepares to enter Jerusalem; the entry is clearly staged as the accomplishment of an act and certainly the end of a journey. The disciples are sent to bring a colt upon which Jesus will ride into the city: he is proclaimed Lord in the tradition of the "coming kingdom of David." On first entering Jerusalem, he enters the temple, looks around and leaves. He is next reported as cursing a fig tree which has leaves but not fruit. This is followed by a return to and cleansing of the temple. After this cleansing, the narration returns to the fig tree and the reason for the curse, emphasizing the power of God over faith. In Jerusalem, Jesus is now confronted by Pharisees, scribes, and elders questioning his authority. Jesus deflects this question to one about whether John the Baptist had been authorized by heaven or by men.

Pasted from <<http://crain.english.missouriwestern.edu/Mark/newpage17.htm>>

The summary here is succinct; my interpretation explores largely the entry into Jerusalem, the fig tree, and the Temple cleansing. Rather than re-invent, here I will quote from my earlier work regard these events; first, the triumphal entry:

- What does one make of the triumphal entry into Jerusalem, coming in the eleventh chapter of Mark, signaling the end of the opening events and journey into the Holy City?
 - Jesus' Triumphal Entry into Jerusalem
 - 11 When they were approaching Jerusalem, at Bethphage and Bethany, near the Mount of Olives, he sent two of his disciples 2 and said to them, "Go into the village ahead of you, and immediately as you enter it, you will find tied there a colt that has never been ridden; untie it and bring it. 3 If anyone says to you, 'Why are you doing this?' just say this, 'The Lord needs it and will send it back here immediately.'" 4 They went away and found a colt tied near a door, outside in the street. As they were untying it, 5 some of the bystanders said to them, "What are you doing, untying the colt?" 6 They told them what Jesus had said; and they allowed them to take it. 7 Then they brought the colt to Jesus and threw their cloaks on it; and he sat on it. 8 Many people spread their cloaks on the road, and others spread leafy branches that they had cut in the fields. 9 Then those who went ahead and those who followed were shouting, Hosanna!
Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord!
10 Blessed is the coming kingdom of our ancestor David!
Hosanna in the highest heaven!"
 - Then he entered Jerusalem and went into the temple; and when he had looked around at everything, as it was already late, he went out to Bethany with the twelve.
 - Remember, Jesus has just been proclaimed Messiah in the tradition of David. Now, suddenly, he sends his disciples to find a colt that has never been ridden and instructs them to untie it and bring it to him. This event, of course, signals for Christians the last week in the life of Christ. For Jews, this event continues the lead-in to the celebration of Passover. What is one to expect? Advocates of tradition go back to Zechariah 9:9:
9 Rejoice greatly, O daughter Zion!
Shout aloud, O daughter Jerusalem!
Lo, your king comes to you;
triumphant and victorious is he,
humble and riding on a donkey,
on a colt, the foal of a donkey.
 - When was Zechariah written? codified? Almost everyone recognizes it as post-exile (after the Babylonian captivity). Let's look at the Oxford annotation:
 - Zechariah, whose prophecies date from 520 to 518 b.c. and are found in Zechariah 1–8, was contemporary with Haggai (Ezra 5.1; Ezra 6.14). He shared Haggai's zeal for a rebuilt temple, a purified community, and the coming of the messianic age (see "Introduction to Haggai"). Like Haggai also, Zechariah forms a link between earlier prophecy (especially Ezekiel) and mature apocalyptic thought (Daniel 7–12). But Zechariah differs from his contemporary in the form and presentation of his message, employing the literary style of night visions and dialogues between God, seer, and interpreting angel. With him, therefore, both the form and imagery of Jewish apocalyptic thought are significantly developed.
 - Zechariah 9–14, which nowhere claims to be from Zechariah, portrays nothing of the early Persian period but speaks rather of the Greeks (Zechariah 9.13). Instead of Joshua and Zerubbabel, unnamed shepherds lead the community. Instead of peace and rebuilding, there are expectations of universal warfare and the siege of Jerusalem. Style, vocabulary, and theological ideas differentiate these chapters from Zechariah's work. Although they may contain some earlier bits, they were written during the Greek period, principally in the fourth and third centuries b.c., by unknown authors. Since the eschatological and messianic themes found in the first section are here further elaborated, the authors are spiritual disciples of Zechariah. The pictures of the messianic Prince of Peace and the Good Shepherd smitten for the flock are used in the New Testament in order to describe the person and work of Jesus Christ.
 - In the Greek period, the fourth and third centuries BCE, eschatology and Messianism have intensified. Jesus is now placed in this tradition of expectation: as Prince of Peace and Good Shepherd. His own understanding and prediction of the Passion has been that he will be smitten for the flock. The Romans, by the era of Jesus, have replaced the Greeks; not being particularly religious, they have accepted hellenized religion. Multiple gods are familiar; they often seem to be humans made into gods. They symbolize forces of nature, and the ordinary mortal procedure is to sacrifice and pray to them in order to incur favorable human outcomes. The Romans in this era

are generally tolerant of the religions but suspect anything which is contrary to political allegiance. Only when religion calls attention to itself as being in opposition to current rule is there likely to be a political backlash which includes overt overriding of rebellious cults. To be proclaimed, even symbolically, as involved in any overthrow of contemporary rule in Jerusalem is judged to be in opposition to the established hegemony. So, here comes Jesus riding into Jerusalem on a colt. The outcome is expected, although it is not immediate. Jesus simply journeys into Jerusalem, ends up in the temple, and walks out.

- Pasted from <<http://crain.english.missouriwestern.edu/Mark/newpage17.htm>>

Next, the cursing of the fig tree, though seemingly bizarre, carries important meaning contextually and symbolically:

Mark next records what seems to be a bizarre event: Jesus curses a fig tree. Why? The first answer is, of course, natural: the fig tree has leaves, an indication of at least green fruit. The fig tree shows leaves in March followed by edible knobs which drop off before the true figs form. Beneath the leaves, however, nothing is found. Symbolically, Jesus has had this sad reality demonstrated in every city he has visited, and has heard it realized all too often in the religious hierarchy. Jesus has wanted to see the invisible written into the physical manifestations; what he has observed is outward piety (show) and little substance. He, thus, curses this instance of hypocrisy in the natural order. This, of course, causes one to wonder if in the natural and mortal order hypocrisy [added: mimetic] is not the thin lacquer between the absolute and real. Jesus is further saying prophetically that the Jews with their rituals have failed to produce genuine spirituality. The withering of the fruitless fig tree becomes a prophetic symbol of the doom which is coming to the Jewish nation.

Pasted from <<http://crain.english.missouriwestern.edu/Mark/newpage17.htm>>

And finally, this chapter presents the symbolic cursing of the Temple; one may well remember here N.T. Wright's understanding of Messiahship in Judaism as three pronged--with the Messiah expected to win the victory over the pagans, to cleanse the Temple, and to bring justice and peace (The Resurrection of the Son of God, 557).

Mark records Jesus as again entering into the temple and acting immediately to clean it up:

15 Then they came to Jerusalem. And he entered the temple and began to drive out those who were selling and those who were buying in the temple, and he overturned the tables of the money changers and the seats of those who sold doves; 16 and he would not allow anyone to carry anything through the temple. 17 He was teaching and saying, "Is it not written,

‘My house shall be called a house of prayer for all the nations’?
But you have made it a den of robbers."

18 And when the chief priests and the scribes heard it, they kept looking for a way to kill him; for they were afraid of him, because the whole crowd was spellbound by his teaching. 19 And when evening came, Jesus and his disciples went out of the city.

It needs to be clear here that the temple is permitting the Jewish obligatory shekel a year (from every male adult) to be used for taxes. The Greek and Roman money must be changed into Tyrian currency. Additionally, the last part of verse fifteen indicates people are carrying baggage from their pilgrimage into the temple's outer court. Jesus is, also, fulfilling scripture; the first scripture alluded to is Isaiah 56:

6 And the foreigners who join themselves to the Lord,
to minister to him, to love the name of the Lord,
and to be his servants,
all who keep the Sabbath, and do not profane it,
and hold fast my covenant—

7 these I will bring to my holy mountain,
and make them joyful in my house of prayer;
their burnt offerings and their sacrifices
will be accepted on my altar;
for my house shall be called a house of prayer
for all peoples.

8 Thus says the Lord God,
who gathers the outcasts of Israel,
I will gather others to them
besides those already gathered

This reference also indicates that Gentiles are coming to the temple and finding it to be used for business rather than prayer. The next reference is from Jeremiah, but to understand the implications clearly, one needs to recognize that Jeremiah is prophesying the destruction of the temple. The Oxford annotation makes clear the connection between the apostasy of Judah and the destruction of the temple:

7.10–12: As Shiloh (Jeremiah 7.12, eighteen miles north of Jerusalem), the earlier central shrine, was destroyed (around 1050 b.c. in the days of Samuel; compare 1 Samuel 4–6; Psalm 78.56–72), so also this house, desecrated by idolatry, will be destroyed (Jeremiah 7.10; Jeremiah 7.11; compare Matthew 21.13). Immediately following this sermon, Jeremiah was arrested (see Jeremiah 26.8).

Now, read the entire section from Jeremiah:

7 The word that came to Jeremiah from the Lord: 2 Stand in the gate of the Lord's house, and proclaim there this word, and say, Hear the word of the Lord, all you people of

Judah, you that enter these gates to worship the Lord. 3 Thus says the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel: Amend your ways and your doings, and let me dwell with you † in this place. 4 Do not trust in these deceptive words: "This is † the temple of the Lord, the temple of the Lord, the temple of the Lord."

5 For if you truly amend your ways and your doings, if you truly act justly one with another, 6 if you do not oppress the alien, the orphan, and the widow, or shed innocent blood in this place, and if you do not go after other gods to your own hurt, 7 then I will dwell with you in this place, in the land that I gave of old to your ancestors forever and ever.

8 Here you are, trusting in deceptive words to no avail. 9 Will you steal, murder, commit adultery, swear falsely, make offerings to Baal, and go after other gods that you have not known, 10 and then come and stand before me in this house, which is called by my name, and say, "We are safe!"—only to go on doing all these abominations? 11 Has this house, which is called by my name, become a den of robbers in your sight? You know, I too am watching, says the Lord. 12 Go now to my place that was in Shiloh, where I made my name dwell at first, and see what I did to it for the wickedness of my people Israel. 13 And now, because you have done all these things, says the Lord, and when I spoke to you persistently, you did not listen, and when I called you, you did not answer, 14 therefore I will do to the house that is called by my name, in which you trust, and to the place that I gave to you and to your ancestors, just what I did to Shiloh. 15 And I will cast you out of my sight, just as I cast out all your kinsfolk, all the offspring of Ephraim.

Like Jeremiah, Jesus will be arrested shortly after this cleaning of the temple. The reader should recall, too, that Jesus had entered the temple when he first came into Jerusalem but merely observed and left. His look must have been profoundly sad as his eyes swept through the Court of the Gentiles.

Pasted from <<http://crain.english.missouriwestern.edu/Mark/newpage17.htm>>

With these key events in mind, one may well ask what has been missed, or what remains to be said. Michael Turton has remarked on several important points, the first being a parallel or doublet (Robins, 1976):

Mark 11:1-6	Mark 14:13-16
1: he sent two of his disciples	13: he sent two of his disciples
2: and he said to them .	and he said to them
and...you will find...	and...will meet you...
3: Say "The Lord..."	14: Say... "The..."
4: And they went away...	16: And they went out...
and they found...	and found...
6 as Jesus had said....	as he had told them...
and...	and...

Interestingly, Turton points out the possible connection between "Bethpage" and the fig incident:

v1: Bethpage means something like "House of Green Figs" which may be a literary allusion to Jesus' coming miracle. Neither town is found in the Old Testament or in Josephus or in any other non-Christian source prior to Mark. Their ancient location is unknown. Against this, there are other possibilities for the name. On the other hand, figs are commonly grown around Jerusalem, and place names with "fig" as a component are known.

He cites, too, the Zechariah passage regarding the Mount of Olives and Messianic entrance, noting, at the same time, the motif of two mountains:

v1: OT construction is evident here in the writer's decision to begin Jesus' entry into Jerusalem from the Mount of Olives, reflecting the widespread belief in ancient Judaism that the Messiah would begin his work on the Mount of Olives (Josephus records individuals actually attempting to carry this out). This is based on the passage in Zech 14:4:

4 On that day his feet will stand on the Mount of Olives, east of Jerusalem, and the Mount of Olives will be split in two from east to west, forming a great valley, with half of the mountain moving north and half moving south. (NIV)

v1: in this section of Mark, Bethany functions as a base from which Jesus mounts forays into the heart of enemy territory, the Temple and Jerusalem. Just three narrative sites occupy the Gospel from here on in, Bethany, the Mount of Olives, and Jerusalem (Myers 1988, p349-350).

v1: Just as the Mount of Olives and the Temple Mount face off throughout the rest of the Gospel of Mark, so in the OT mountains frequently face each other in paired opposition, for example, Horeb and Carmel in 1 Kings 18 and 1 Kings 19, and Ebal and Gerizim in the Pentateuch.

Turton allows possibility for there really being no crowd attending Jesus's entry into Jerusalem or at least that any crowd there may well have been responding to the Passover celebration:

Although some have objected that the Romans would probably not have permitted a man the crowd acknowledged King to enter the city to cheering crowds, Price (2003, p 292) argues that what is really going on is a bit of Markan irony. The crowd is simply giving out the Hosanna! as part of the usual Passover wish that the Davidic messiah would come and restore the Davidic monarchy. And sure enough, in front of them, is the Davidic messiah -- but the crowd doesn't know. To them, Jesus is just one of tens of thousands of entrants to the city for the Passover festival, who happens like thousands of others, to be arriving on a donkey. In Mark's scene, the "crowd" does not acknowledge that Jesus is the messiah, whereas in Luke, they clearly do. However, the vast distance being traversed here during Jesus entrance, as well as the presence of both straw and garments, may be signals that Mark did not frame it the way Price is arguing.

Pasted from <<http://www.michaelturton.com/Mark/GMark11.html>>

Turton also points out parallels (crediting Brodie 2000, 92) in this chapter of Mark with the Elijah-Elisha cycle as well as paralleling the structure in Zechariah 14 (Duff, 1992) as well as passages in 1Samul:

Mark 11:7-10

2 Kings 9:13

The people spread branches in front of Jesus

The officers spread their cloaks for Jehu

The people acknowledge Jesus as messiah

The officers acknowledge Jehu as king

cheering

cheering

The E-E Cycle also explains some of the stranger details of this passage.

Mark 11:11

2 Kings 9:14-21

when Jesus arrives, it is too late to do anything

Jehu's triumph is delayed by peace talks

"The structure of Zechariah 14 can be outlined as follows. First, the threat against Israel is described: the nations gather against Jerusalem (vv. 1-2). Second, the conflict between YHWH and his enemies is described and YHWH's victory is implied (v. 3). This is followed by YHWH's appearance on the Mount of Olives, after which YHWH prepares a processional highway by the rending of that mountain (vv. 4-5). On this highway, he and his holy ones enter the city of Jerusalem (v. 5b). YHWH's entrance into the holy city results in a new order of creation (vv. 6-8). Next is mentioned the manifestation of YHWH's universal reign (vv. 9-11), followed by a description of how the enemies of YHWH and his people will be destroyed (vv. 12-15). The Gentiles who survive this destruction will recognize YHWH's universal sovereignty and will themselves come to Jerusalem to observe the feast of Tabernacles (vv. 16-19). Finally, the passage ends with a scene in a sanctified Jerusalem, where the distinction between the sacred and the profane has been overcome (vv. 20-21)." (p58)

1 Sam 9

3 Now the donkeys belonging to Saul's father Kish were lost, and Kish said to his son Saul, "Take one of the servants with you and go and look for the donkeys." 4 So he passed through the hill country of Ephraim and through the area around Shalisha, but they did not find them. They went on into the district of Shaalim, but the donkeys were not there. Then he passed through the territory of Benjamin, but they did not find them. 5 When they reached the district of Zuph, Saul said to the servant who was with him, "Come, let's go back, or my father will stop thinking about the donkeys and start worrying about us." 6 But the servant replied, "Look, in this town there is a man of God; he is highly respected, and everything he says comes true. Let's go there now. Perhaps he will tell us what way to take." (NIV) and 1 Sam 10:2-7:

1 Sam 10:2-7

2 When you leave me today, you will meet two men near Rachel's tomb, at Zelzah on the border of Benjamin. They will say to you, "The donkeys you set out to look for [1 Sam 9] have been found. And now your father has stopped thinking about them and is worried about you. He is asking, "What shall I do about my son?" 3 "Then you will go on from there until you reach the great tree of Tabor. Three men going up to God at Bethel will meet you there. One will be carrying three young goats, another three loaves of bread, and another a skin of wine. 4 They will greet you and offer you two loaves of bread, which you will accept from them. 5 "After that you will go to Gibeah of God, where there is a Philistine outpost. As you approach the town, you will meet a procession of prophets coming down from the high place with lyres, tambourines, flutes and harps being played before them,

and they will be prophesying. 6 The Spirit of the LORD will come upon you in power, and you will prophesy with them; and you will be changed into a different person. 7 Once these signs are fulfilled, do whatever your hand finds to do, for God is with you. (NIV)

The scene may also represent a common convention of Greek drama, the hyporcheme, as proposed by Bilezekian (1977):

"The hyporcheme was a well-known dramatic convention practiced especially by Sophocles. It consisted of a joyful scene that involves the chorus and sometimes other characters; takes the form of a dance, procession, or lyrics expressing confidence and happiness; and occurs just before the catastrophic climax of the play. The hyporcheme emphasizes, by way of contrast, the crushing impact of the tragic incident." (p127)

Duff (1992) also points out that the procession surrounding the entrance of the warrior-king into the city was originally modeled on Greek epiphany processions, in which the deity enters the city. Frequently the entering King is either greeted as a god, or performs sacrifices that "function as an act of appropriation" (p60).

This chapter concludes with a controversy about Jesus's teaching and the source of his authority; Jesus, in debate format, asks a counter-question about John's authority, whether of heaven or men [readers should note the return to the suggested motif of following the crowd in its mutiplicity of opinions or standing alone in confession of truth]. When they do not answer--fearing a crowd with whom John had been considered a prophet and sensing that divine designation would bring a retort of "Why didn't you believe him?"

Stephen H. Smith in "The Literary Structure of Mark 11:1-12:40" (Apr. 1989) demonstrates how carefully readers must look at structure in Mark. Smith says that it is possible to see the journey from the Mount of Olives to Jerusalem as the final stage of the journey from Galilee, the travel narrative beginning at 9:30, the disciples continuing to play a role, and the treatment of Bartimaeus not necessarily suggest appendage to 10:46-52. Developed is a Davidic messianism at the point that Jesus is about to enter Jerusalem (105). Smith says the passage could also be transitional. Smith further quotes V. K. Robbins to suggest this transitional episode fuses together a "suffering-rising christology" and a Son of David image, healing Bartimaeus in a "Son of David activity."

Smith next provides the following structural summary:

We have argued that Mark 11:1-12:44 consists of various sub-sections. The first of these, 11:1-12:12, contains an introduction in which Jesus is presented as the messianic king coming in triumph to his holy city and Temple. Much of the journey appears to be a re-enactment of the prophecies in Zechariah, notably Zech. 9:9; 14:4, and it is evident that this Markan presentation of Jesus as a Davidic deliverer is intended to contrast sharply with the next movement of the narrative (11:12-12:12) in which Jesus' role as judge of his people confounds the traditional Jewish notion of messiahship. The two closely related citations from Ps. 118 (Mark 11:9,10; 12:10,11) actually form a kind of inclusio, marking off these judgement pericopae from the remainder of the section.

In each of the narratives in 11:12-12:12, apart from 11:27-33, Jesus is presented as the judge who indicts his people through symbolism and parable. His condemnation of the fig tree is really a condemnation of fruitless Israel, while the so-called 'cleansing' of the Temple directs this condemnation to the cultic heart of Jewish institutionalism. Unlike the performance of similar rituals in bygone days (2 Kgs. 22:3-23:25; 2 Chr. 29:12-36; 34:3-35:19; Neh. 13:4-9; I Macc. 4:36-61; 2 Macc. 10:1-8) Jesus' act was not for resanctification, but for destruction: the cultic regime of the Jewish leaders was coming to an end. A specific reason for this judgement is suggested in the parable in 12:1-9 where, although Jesus may have been rebuking the leaders for their treatment of God's prophets, Mark clearly regards their treatment of God's own Son as the prime reason for their judgement.

Within the context of the adjacent pericopae, the question on authority (11:27-33) takes on a significance beyond that which is superficially evident. The question, [And say unto him, By what authority doest thou these things? and who gave thee this authority to do these things?] refers not only to Jesus' 'cleansing' of the Temple, nor even only to the work and words of Jesus in general, but to the role of Jesus as judge of Israel. This narrative represents the sum total of all other questions about authority because, in a sense, it transcends them all. For Jesus to act as judge of his people would be to claim the divine prerogative more openly and more boldly than ever before, and, of course, this is precisely what Mark intends to assert: for him Jesus is God, no less.

The next sub-section consists of three narratives-12:13-17, 18-27, 28-34. The first two distinguish sharply between the beliefs of the religious leaders and those of Jesus who is at this point presented as a sage deftly side-stepping the devious designs of his adversaries. In 12:13-17 he turns the question of the Pharisees and Herodians on its head, showing that the emphasis placed by the opponents on whether or not one should pay taxes to Caesar should be transferred to the matter of what is due to God. When one has made a response to the latter issue, the initial question answers itself.

In 12:18-27 Jesus appears to be siding with the Pharisees against the Sadducees on the resurrection issue, and in 12:28-34 the favourable response of a scribe indicates, as we have seen, that Jesus has finally triumphed in his long struggle with the legalists. In his offensive against the scribes (12:35-40) the note of judgement returns. Having already served as judge against cultic, Israel, Jesus now condemns legal Israel for her misconceptions of messiahship (12:35-37) and abuse of the law (12:38-40). True obedience to the law as epitomised by a scribe in 12:28-34, and particularly in the double citation from Deut. 6:4; Lev. 19:18, is sharply contrasted with the legal deception of the scribes as a group; so, too, is the example of the poor widow in 12:44.

In all this, we can appreciate that the structure of Mark 11,12 reveals an image of a Jesus who assumes the role of God as both plaintiff and judge of his people—a symbolism which is ultimately deuterio-Isaianic.²⁶ Cultic stagnation and abuses of the Law—and, of course, from Mark's own perspective, the crucifixion of Jesus-

²⁶ See, for instance, Isa. 41:1-5, 21-29; 43:8-13; 44:6-8; 45:18-25.

bring condemnation, but glimpses of the true road to God, through loving obedience and devotion, are here provided, in marked contrast, by a scribe and a widow.

Stephen S. Short remarks that Jesus' s entry into Jerusalem on a donkey indicates that Jesus was not entering the city as a warrior, royalty more properly expected to use a horse. The overtone, however, is clearly messianic with an expectation of a promised king and promised kingdom (1172). The cleansing of the temple (11: 15-19) was an action predicted of the messiah by Malachi (3:1-3). Jesus reacted to two abuses of the temple: the exchange of Tyrian currency for the Greek and Roman coinage of the Jewish pilgrims and the short cut with baggage being taken through the temple precincts. Short sees the cursing of the fig tree as prophetic symbolism (2 Chr. 18:10 and Jer. 27), the absence of edible knobs (these dropping off before figs appeared in June) would indicate the barrenness of the tree (mid-April); Short understands the ritual observances of the Jews as a show of religion without spiritual qualities (1172).

Mark, alone of the gospels, continues the quote from Isaiah 56:7 to show that in the Messianic age, the Gentiles were also to be permitted to use the Jerusalem temple. The parable of

the wicked husbandmen (12:1-12), in response to question concerning the authority of Jesus, identifies Jesus as having authority superior to that of the prophets, who were to act as servants of God, the authority of Jesus deriving from his being God's Son (1173). Thus, clearly, the one who is to be rejected and killed will subsequently be exalted to the honored position of Son, a decisive answer to messiahship.

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Edited January 1, 2019

Summary Chapter twelve continues the discussion of Jesus' s authority, beginning with a parable of a rich landlord who had rented his vineyard to some farmers in agreement for a portion of the vineyard's produce. The landlord sends servants to claim the rent, but they are abused, some wounded, and some even killed. The landlord next sends his son to claim payment; the son, also, is killed. The landlord himself, now with government backing, will come authorized to take what is his. This leads directly into the discussion of paying Caesar's poll-tax. This is a political question, and it is followed by a theological question concerning the resurrection. Jesus grounds his answer in scripture; the next question about which commandment is greatest is genuine and raised by a teacher of the law. Jesus asks the next question, directing it to the teachers of the law, asking them concerning the messianic title Son of David. The last two episodes both discuss the sincerity of the act: the scribes are condemned for outward show while the widow is commended for giving everything she has.

Pasted from <<http://crain.english.missouriwestern.edu/Mark/newpage18.htm>>

In contrast to Short's conclusion in the previous chapter about Jesus's superior authority as Son, the Jewish Encyclopedia, suggests an alternative interpretation:

The parable of the faithless husbandmen and the vineyard (Mark xii. 1 et seq.) certainly does not bear out the assumption that Jesus described himself as the "son of God" in a specific theological sense. The parable recalls the numerous "son" stories in the Midrash, in which "son" is employed just as it is here, and generally in similar contrast to servants. If these considerations create a strong presumption in favor of the view that the original gospel did not contain the title, the other Synoptics do not veil the fact that all men are destined to be God's children (Matt. v. 45; Luke vi. 35). The term is applied in Matt. v. 9 to the peacemakers. God is referred to as the "Father" of the disciples in Matt. x. 29, xxiii. 9, and Luke xii. 32. Several parables illustrate this thought (Luke xv. 11 et seq. and Matt. xxi. 28 et seq.). Much has been made of the distinction said to appear in the pronouns connected with "Father," "our" and "your" appearing when the disciples are addressed, while "my" is exclusively reserved to express the relation with Jesus, and then, too, without the further qualification "who art [or "is"] in heaven" (see Dalman, "Worte Jesu," pp. 157, 230). But in the Aramaic this distinction is certainly not pronounced enough to warrant the conclusion that a different degree or kind of sonship is conveyed by the singular pronoun from what would be expressed by the plural. In the Aramaic the pronoun would not appear at all, "Abba" indiscriminately serving for the apostrophe both in the prayer of a single individual and in the prayer of several.

Pasted from <<http://www.jewishencyclopedia.com/articles/13912-son-of-god>>

Michael Turton concludes the first twelve verses of Mark 12 have unlikely historicity, quoting scholarship to the effect that the story is drawn from Isaiah 5--and from the Septuagint rather than a targum, this important to whether the story can go back to Jesus. He quotes Alfred Loisy to the direction of an interpolation:

v1: Alfred Loisy (1962) argued that this parable was an interpolation, noting:

"Between [11:27-33] and this conclusion someone has intercalated the parable of the Wicked Husbandmen (12:1-11), a short apocalypse which turns on the fall of Jerusalem, the evangelisation of the pagans, and on the assumption of Jesus into glory; a fragment of apologetic in the style of the discourses attributed in Acts to the first Christian preachers, and even ending with the usual quotation of the apologists (Psalm 143, 22-23). This must be the work of some Christian prophet, utilized at first as the conclusion of the Jerusalem ministry (note the correspondence of 12:12a with 14:1-2) before being replaced for that purpose by the great apocalyptic discourse (Ch. 13)." (p. 109).

Turton further argues for Christian influence in the "cornerstone" and for a possible pun in the close proximity of meaning in the Hebrew for "stone" and "son":

v10-11: cites Psalm 118. The proverb was not originally intended as a messianic prediction but was read as such by early Christians. Another signal of Markan creation off the OT. The phrase "has become the cornerstone" is highly controversial, for the Greek can mean either cornerstone or capstone (bottommost or topmost stone) (Donahue and Harrington, p340).

v10: Psalm 118 was written during Maccabean period. This is the second use of this Psalm in this sequence of events; it was one of the Hallel Psalms (113-118) that celebrate the entrance, Messiah-style, of Simon Maccabaeus into the Holy City.

v10: in Hebrew the word for stone (eben) is similar to the word for son (ben). Perhaps there is a pun here.

12: And they tried to arrest him, but feared the multitude, for they perceived that he had told the parable against them; so they left him and went away.

v12: This verse, in conjunction with the beginning drawn entirely from the Septuagint Isaiah, shows that the parable was most probably created by Mark to serve his narrative purpose of painting the chief priests and scribes as the bad guys.

Concerning "son," a lexicon explains in the following way:

Huios

a **son** rarely used for the young of animals generally used of the offspring of men in a restricted sense, the male offspring (one born by a father and of a mother) in a wider sense, a descendant, one of the posterity of any one, the children of Israel sons of Abraham used to describe one who depends on another or is his follower a pupil **son** of man term describing man, carrying the connotation of weakness and mortality **son** of man, symbolically denotes the fifth kingdom in Daniel 7:13 and by this term its humanity is indicated in contrast with the barbarity and ferocity of the four preceding kingdoms (the Babylonian, the Median and the Persian, the Macedonian, and the Roman) typified by the four beasts. In the book of Enoch (2nd Century) it is used of Christ. used by Christ himself, doubtless in order that he might intimate his Messiahship and also that he might designate himself as the head of the human family, the man, the one who both furnished the pattern of the perfect man and acted on behalf of all mankind. Christ seems to have preferred this to the other Messianic titles, because by its lowliness it was least suited to foster the expectation of an earthly Messiah in royal splendour. **son** of God used to describe Adam (Lk. 3: used to describe those who are born again (Lk. 20: and of angels and of Jesus Christ of those whom God esteems as sons, whom he loves, protects and benefits above others in the OT used of the Jews in the NT of Christians those whose character God, as a loving father, shapes by chastisements (Heb. 12:5- those who revere God as their father, the pious worshippers of God, those who in character and life resemble God, those who are governed by the Spirit of God, repose the same calm and joyful trust in God which children do in their parents (Rom. 8:14, Gal. 3:26), and hereafter in the blessedness and glory of the life eternal will openly wear this dignity of the sons of God. Term used preeminently of Jesus Christ, as enjoying the supreme love of God, united to him in affectionate intimacy, privy to his saving councils, obedient to the Father's will in all his acts son(s)85, **Son** of Man+(444)&version=kjv87 {TDNT8:400,1210}, **Son** of God+(2316)49, child(ren)49, Son42, his **Son**+(848)21, **Son** of David+(1138)15 {TDNT8:478,1210}, my**beloved Son**+(27) +33507, thy **Son**+(4575)5, only begotten **Son**+(3339)3, his (David's)**son**+(846)3, firstborn **son**+(4316)2, miscellaneous14

Lexicons - New Testament Greek Lexicon - New Testament Greek Lexicon - King James Version - Huios

Pasted from <<http://www.biblestudytools.com/search/?q=%22Beloved%20Son%22%20Mark&s=References&ps=10>>

As a transition into this chapter, the discussion in chapter eight should be recalled concerning the several possible meanings for "Son of God": hellenistic figure (Bultmann), servant (Cullman), distinct to history of Jesus (Grundmann), sonship of believers present and future (Hay)--Jesus becoming the "Son of God in word and deed, Divine Man (Kingsbury) by reason of wisdom and virtue or by performing miracles with a trajectory ending at the second coming of Jesus as "Royal Son of God," and Jesus as Israel and Messiah and the Messiah of the One God.

Herbert W. Bateman, IV, in "Defining the titles 'Christ' and 'Son of God' in Mark's Narrative Presentation of Jesus" (JETS 50/3, September 2007, 537–59) describes the real issue as relating to the "divinity of Jesus" and asks whether later creeds of church cloud earlier writings such as Mark: [one notes the return the entertainment of complacency in a multiplicity of answers or choosing the difficult way of standing alone in commitment.]

"Have the church's creeds, confessional statements, and later systems of theology concerning the deity of Jesus clouded our ability to make unbiased interpretations of an earlier and not-so-developed usage of the titles 'Christ' and 'Son of God' in a NT book such as the Gospel of Mark?"

Bateman then lays out a three-fold structure in Mark related to these titles, echoing some of the scholarship discussed in chapter eight:

As Mark's rendition of the good news about Jesus unfolds, the titles "Christ" and "Son of God" serve as pivotal confessions in the narrative first spoken by a Jewish disciple (8:29) and then by a Roman soldier (15:39). Moving beyond their literary significance, however, they are also pivotal in defining Mark's explicit portrayal of Jesus. Whereas the one confession appears to rest upon the miraculous acts of Jesus (1:14–8:21),⁴ the other is grounded in Jesus' suffering and death (11:1–16:8).

After Mark's title (1:1) and introduction (1:2–13), the narrative may be divided into three major sections: (1) The Miraculous Ministry in Galilee and Beyond (1:14–8:21); (2) The Passion Predictions "On the Way" (8:22–10:52); and (3) The Temple and the Cross in Jerusalem (11:1–16:8). Whereas Mark 1:14–8:21 contains fourteen miracle stories, the third major section of Mark 11:1–16:8 has only one miracle of Jesus (the cursing of the fig tree in 11:12–14, 20–23). Jesus' miraculous ministry appears to serve as a basis for Peter's confession in 8:29.

Bateman answers his own question only after sorting through some of the scholarship on the issue: Mark presents Jesus as "'the Christ' who was empowered by God via his Spirit to teach and act with authority of God's royal 'Son'" (558). In answer to his earlier question, he says that it is not necessary "to impose an Incan definition to the title 'Son of God,'" thus, to address the deity of Jesus.

In review of scholarship, he remarks a predisposition on the part of scholars to impose some theology concerning "Son of God" (Notes 539) Neander, he says, interprets Son of God in a sense which cannot be predicated of any human being, "as a source of divine life for a humanity "estranged" from God (1851). Dorina, more recently, supposed Jesus as "self-conscious of his deity via the culmination of implicit acts within the Synoptic Gospel" (1994) He understands James R. Edwards (2002) as seeing "The divine Sonship of Jesus as the theological keystone to the Gospel of Mark," so designated at the baptism and transfiguration. He also sees Donahue and Herrington as well as James A. Brooks as in line with this interpretation (1991). Son of God, he says, also has been viewed as having a Jewish-Hellenistic origin, positively by Rudolf Bultmann (1951), and coming to have a negative interpretation, with Mark writing to counteract the divine man concept (Weeden, 1971). Other scholars, he identifies as saying the concept was not well defined (Otto Betz, 1972; Carl H. Holladay, 1977; and Jack Dean Kingsbury, 1983). In reviewing Mark's use of Christ, Bateman says "Mark consistently uses the human name 'Jesus' throughout his gospel for the historical Jesus (541), using it some 82 times; he points out, on the other hand, that Christ is used sparingly (only 7 times). He finds "Jesus Christ" as occurring only once (1:1). Because "Christ" is employed in Peter's confession, it "appears to serve as a central confessional title for Jesus" (8:29). Peter, he remarks, knows "the Christ" through miraculous ministry (542), an expectation in keeping with first-century Jewish beliefs, yet Jesus corrects Peter's misunderstanding and teaches the disciples about the "suffering Christ." The entire section (Mark 1:14 - 8:21) presents Jesus as a "superior miracle worker" (542). Bateman goes on to show that "Son of David" is used in the second major section (8:22-10:22) on the way to Jerusalem and the celebration of the Passover. Bateman makes the point that Bartimaeus is

encountered by Jesus "along the side of the road," but after the healing, follows him "on the way" to Jerusalem where Jesus would suffer and die (543). Here, as in Mark 1:1, "'the Christ' and of David' are in apposition to the name of 'Jesus'" (543), making these, perhaps, synonymous titles for Jesus. Son of David itself could be used as a "polite title" for any Jew or a "hoped-for anointed figure." Furthermore, since in Mark 12:35-37, Davidic sonship speaks of kingship, "'son of David' [would seem to be] another expression for 'the Christ,'" as one and not many (543). Bateman says the Bartimaeus story reveals a "self-denying Son of David," who takes time to extend mercy, portraying the spirit of discipleship and servanthood.

Bateman next takes up the question of whether Son of God is used as an alternate expression of Christ, invoking messianic overtones as opposed to divinity. He notes three uses of "Son of God": to refer to Adam, God's angels, and God's chosen people Israel, God's chosen leaders, and God's chosen king from the line of David (545), noting that the use of Psalms 2:7 makes the last usage most likely. He then examines the "Son of God" declarations by God, designations by demons, and the demand by the high priest for Jesus to examine himself in light of possible divinity. He interprets the baptism as "in keeping with first-century Jewish expectation" and as serving to endorse, commission, and empower Jesus for the ministry as "the Christ" (547). Strategically placed at the beginning of the second section (8:22-10:52) and Peter's confession (8:29), Bateman sees the transfiguration as providing further credence about Jesus' message concerning he cross; he says the significance is three-fold: pointing to an association with two highly exalted prophets, confirming a divine commission as "the Christ," and serving as a divine authentication of the Passion (549). The disciples are instructed to listen to the "royal son."

He next examines whether the declarations by demons also supports "the son" as Jesus and "the Christ," more explicitly, whether they know him merely as God's chosen son, "Christ," or as "the divine Son" (550). The first encounter contrasts Jesus, who bears God's holy Spirit to a man who bears a n "unclean spirit" (1:2-13). Thus, as God's Son, the baptism serves as the commissioning of Jesus to serve as "the Christ" (551). Likewise, "the Holy One of God," through extensive references also refers to Jesus as "set apart" for the messianic mission. Occasioned within a Jewish synagogue, it should not be surprising to hear a command of silence in light of expectation that "a Messiah figure would purge the land and its people of all impurity and that he would rule in righteousness" (551). In Gentile territory, the admonition to silence disappears, Jesus is recognized as "Son of the Most High God," a worker of wonders. In Mark 3:11-12, the question must be asked whether the declaration of "You are the Son of God" refer to divine Son. Bateman says the utterance closely parallels the baptism recognition of Jesus as God's chosen Son, "the Christ" (554). In summary, Bateman understands the demons' declarations of "Son of David," "Son of God," "Son of the Most High," and "Holy One of God" as speaking directly to Jesus as "the Christ" but less clearly indicating any knowledge of Jesus being "a divine Son" (554). He further concludes that the high priest's use of "Blessed One" (Mark 14:53-65) represents "merely a variation of Mark's title 'Jesus, the Christ, the Son of God'" (555). The charge of blasphemy arises from the quotation to Old Testament scripture of Psalms 110:1 and Daniel 7:13 that "you shall see the son of man sitting at the right hand of power, and coming with the clouds of heaven." Nonetheless, Bateman concludes that the declaration cannot be used to say that Jesus claimed "ontological or functional equality with God" but rather that the title is to "royal messianic figure" as typically used by first-century Jews. The charge of blasphemy possibly stems from going against or insulting the chosen leaders of Israel as opposed to using the divine name of God or showing arrogant disrespect for God (556). Further, the exaltation of the "yet living" to eschatological privilege could also have brought about the claim of blasphemy.

Bateman, in conclusion, says that Mark presents Jesus as "the Christ" though divine authentication, commissioning, and empowerment for the ministry and that the titles all are straightforward references to Jesus as "the Christ" (557). Bateman states, importantly, that "Scripture supports the Christian orthodox doctrine that Jesus, the exalted Christ, was and is God" but returns to his earlier supposition that "Son of God" as presenting Jesus to be the ontologically and functionally second personhood of God leads to a biased reading of the way Mark presents "the Christ." Bateman concludes, quoting N.T. Wright:

"Mark tells the story of Jesus as the story of a Galilean prophet, announcing the kingdom of Israel's God, summoning Israel to change her direction, that is, to repent (1:15, 6:4)." Mark, however, takes the concept a step further and extends the suffering to those who dare to follow Jesus... We follow because he calls us, appoints us, and sends us... to go obediently and to serve...

Chapter twelve next raises the question of authority, and the nature of the contest here is clearly political [Readers should think about defining political as based on or motivated by self-serving interests, especially in attempting to gain power or to please people of a higher rank].

13 Then they sent to him some Pharisees and some Herodians to trap him in what he said. 14 And they came and said to him, "Teacher, we know that you are sincere, and show deference to no one; for you do not regard people with partiality, but teach the way of God in accordance with truth. Is it lawful to pay taxes to the emperor, or not? 15 Should we pay them, or should we not?" But knowing their hypocrisy, he said to them, "Why are you putting me to the test? Bring me a denarius and let me see it." 16 And they brought one. Then he said to them, "Whose head is this, and whose title?" They answered, "The emperor's." 17 Jesus said to them, "Give to the emperor the things that are the emperor's, and to God the things that are God's." And they were utterly amazed at him.

Verse fifteen reveals that the Pharisees and Herodians in this story hypocritically ask a question to trap Jesus rather than to learn any truth, a motive Jesus perceives and turns on edge: the coin bears the image of the emperor, and clearly belongs to him, but human beings made in God's image clearly owe their allegiance to God. In his review of existing scholarship about this particular story, Michael Turton makes several insightful leads to what the story should mean in the existing context. The Herodians and the Pharisees, he observes, disappear from Mark after this reference, suggesting Markan redaction. The hypocrisy emerges from the beginning when these parties believe they are lying in identifying Jesus as a teacher of truth--only to have the truth of their statement revealed, similar to the soldiers' calling Jesus "King" and thinking this is false.

v16: As Donahue and Harrington (2002, p345) point out, the coin would likely have been a denarius of Tiberius, full of imperial titles which could imply divine power. Tolbert (1989, p251) points out that the likeness is an important key to understand the suppressed minor premise of the argument Jesus is making: just as the denarius carries the words and image of Caesar, so humans are made in the word and image of God (this argument actually originated with Tertullian). Thus, as we render unto Caesar what is Caesar's so we should render unto God what is God's. This type of argument is known as an enthymeme and was extremely common in antiquity.

Turton concludes:

v17: Jesus does not even deign to give a clear answer to the question. In the usual Markan fashion, Jesus' adversaries do not press him for an elaboration, nor, despite being experienced quibblers and wits themselves, do they take a quill from their own quiver and direct it at Jesus. The depiction of the Pharisees in Mark is historically implausible.

Home	Introduction	Ch1	Ch2	Ch3	Ch4	Ch5	Ch6	Ch7
Ch8	Ch9	Ch10	Ch11	Ch12	Ch13	Ch14	Ch15	Ch16

Edited January 2, 2019

Summary This chapter in Mark is known as the "little apocalypse." As the disciples and Jesus are coming out of the temple, one of the disciples remarks concerning the large buildings and large stones. Jesus replies by saying that all will be destroyed. Jesus and his disciples cross the Kidron Valley in order to get to the Mount of Olives. There, the disciples ask when the temple will be destroyed and ask for signs of this coming event. Jesus mentions that many will come saying "I am" and will gain followers. Wars and rumors of war will signal the end. The disciples are told that before the end, nation will rise against nation and kingdom against kingdom. Birth pangs of the day of the Lord will be signaled by earthquakes and famines.

Next, the disciples hear probably what they do not want to hear: they themselves will be brought before councils and beaten in the synagogues; they will stand before governors and kings where they will be asked to testify of their commitments. Before the end, the Gospel must be proclaimed to all nations. The disciples are told, furthermore, not to try to prepare for the trials relative to what to say in their own defense; rather, the Holy Spirit will speak on their behalf. Brothers, fathers, and children will rise against each other with children having their own parents put to death. The disciples are told they will be hated but will be saved if they endure until the end.

The end will be signaled by "desolating sacrilege" in the temple itself, and the religious will flee to the mountains. At this time of flight, people will not take time to take anything from their houses, including coats; those who are pregnant will be pitied for their condition; hopefully, they will be spared having this happen in the winter. The disciples are told the suffering will be more intense than any they've seen since the beginning of the world, and there will never be greater suffering. God himself will cut short mortal days for the sake of his elect; if, in fact, people hear others proclaiming themselves Messiah, they are not to believe them; for another sign of the day of the Lord will be false prophets and messiahs. The disciples, having been instructed, are to stay alert and not be led astray.

The suffering will be followed by a darkened sun and moon; stars will fall from the heavens, and the heavens themselves will be shaken. At this time the Son of Man will come in the clouds with great power and glory. He will send out angels and gather the elect from the four winds and the ends of earth and heaven. Christ recalls the lesson the fig tree which he has earlier cursed for bearing leaves but no fruit. Symbolically, once again, another sign, this time of summer, will be that the fig tree puts out leaves. When all these things have been seen, then the day of the Lord will be near; in fact, this generation, Jesus tells his disciples, will not pass away until these things come to pass. He continues, heaven and earth will pass away but not my words.

The disciples are told to keep alert, for they will not know when the end is to come; this end, neither the angels nor the Son knows, but only the Father. The disciples are told to keep awake: 34 It is like a man going on a journey, when he leaves home and puts his slaves in charge, each with his work, and commands the doorkeeper to be on the watch. 35 Therefore, keep awake—for you do not know when the master of the house will come, in the evening, or at midnight, or at cockcrow, or at dawn, 36 or else he may find you asleep when he comes suddenly. 37 And what I say to you I say to all: Keep awake."

Readers tend to see in this chapter of Mark a literary tradition of farewell speech and apocalypse. While the "abomination" alludes to Daniel, the timing in Mark remains problematic. In Mark, the event signals the separation between the older Jewish faith and emerging Christianity. The coming of the Son of Man follows sorrow, and the timing of the event remains hidden in the age.

Dom Henry Wansbrough provides a careful analysis of the discourse in this chapter, this then illustrated by the suggested literary division of the chapter:

After the introduction, each of the three sections is ruled by a biblical quotation, from Daniel in vv. 14, 26, from Isaiah in v. 30.

The first and third sections are each in the form of a chiasmus, that is, each is symmetrically shaped, with the climax in the centre. Thus vv. 5-6 balance vv. 21-22 (false prophets); v. 7 balances v. 14 ('when you hear', 'when you see') and the climax is the persecution of vv. 9-13. Similarly vv. 28-29 balance vv. 33-34 (parables); v. 30 balances v. 32 (solemn prophecy), and the climax is the certainty of v. 31.

The whole is wrapped by 'Be on your guard' in vv. 5 and 33, repeated in vv. 9 and 23. The conclusion is wrapped by the insistent 'Stay awake', vv. 35 and 37, linked to vv. 33 and 34.

The language is unlike the rest of Mk. Predictions and imperatives are rare in Mk, whereas here they are constant. Count the number of occurrences of 'will' and of commands! By contrast, the tedious 'And', at the beginning of almost every verse in Mk (35 times in the 45 verses of Mk 1), has almost disappeared (10 times in vv. 5-37). The question has been raised whether Mk wrote this chapter. It has been suggested that Mk built upon a previous document and made it his own.

<http://users.ox.ac.uk/~sben0056/booklets.htm>

Introduction

1As he was leaving the Temple one of his disciples said to him, 'Master, look at the size of those stones! Look at the size of those buildings!' 2And Jesus said to him, 'You see these great buildings? Not a single stone will be left on another; everything will be pulled down.' 3And while he was sitting on the Mount of Olives, facing the Temple, Peter, James, John and Andrew questioned him when they were by themselves, 4 'Tell us, when is this going to happen, and what sign will there be that it is all about to take place?'

The beginning of sorrows

5Then Jesus began to tell them, `Be on your guard that no one deceives you. 6Many will come using my name and saying, "I am he," and they will deceive many. 7When you hear of wars and rumours of wars, do not be alarmed; this is something that must happen, but the end will not be yet. 8For nation will fight against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. There will be earthquakes in various places; there will be famines. This is the beginning of the birth-pangs. 9`Be on your guard: you will be handed over to sanhedrins; you will be beaten in synagogues; and you will be brought before governors and kings for my sake, as evidence to them, 10since the gospel must first be proclaimed to all nations. 11`And when you are taken to be handed over, do not worry beforehand about what to say; no, say whatever is given to you when the time comes, because it is not you who will be speaking; it is the Holy Spirit. 12Brother will betray brother to death, and a father his child; children will come forward against their parents and have them put to death. 13You will be universally hated on account of my name; but anyone who stands firm to the end will be saved. 14`When you see the appalling abomination set up where it ought not to be (let the reader understand), then those in Judaea must escape to the mountains; 15if a man is on the housetop, he must not come down or go inside to collect anything from his house; 16if a man is in the fields, he must not turn back to fetch his cloak. 17Alas for those with child, or with babies at the breast, when those days come! 18Pray that this may not be in winter. 19For in those days there will be great distress, unparalleled since God created the world, and such as will never be again. 20And if the Lord had not shortened that time, no human being would have survived; but he did shorten the time, for the sake of the elect he chose. 21`And if anyone says to you then, "Look, here is the Christ" or, "Look, he is there," do not credit it; 22for false Christs and false prophets will arise and produce signs and portents to deceive the elect, if that were possible. 23You, therefore, must be on your guard. I have given you warning.

The coming of the Son of man

24`But in those days, after that time of distress, the sun will be darkened, the moon will not give its light, 25the stars will come falling out of the sky and the powers in the heavens will be shaken. 26 And then they will see the Son of man coming in the clouds with great power and glory. 27And then he will send the angels to gather his elect, from the ends of the world to the ends of the sky. The time of this coming 28`Take the fig tree as a parable: as soon as its twigs grow supple and its leaves come out, you know that summer is near. 29So with you when you see these things happening: know that he is near, right at the gates. 30In truth I tell you, before this generation has passed away all these things will take place. 31Sky and earth will pass away, but my words will not pass away. 32`But as for that day or hour, nobody knows it, neither the angels in heaven, nor the Son; no one but the Father. 33`Be on your guard, stay awake, because you never know when the time will come. 34It is like a man travelling abroad: he has gone from his home, and left his servants in charge, each with his own work to do; and he has told the doorkeeper to stay awake.

Conclusion

35So stay awake, because you do not know when the master of the house is coming, evening, midnight, cockcrow or dawn; 36if he comes unexpectedly, he must not find you asleep. 37And what I am saying to you I say to all: Stay awake!

Wansbrough next explains the convention of farewell speech common to literature of the era as well as help for understanding the background of the "abomination," these followed by hints for understanding the timing of the "kingship of God" as occurring in stages, the bulk pointing to the transfiguration and resurrection; but before following Wansbrough on this, it may be useful to explain the farewell speech more carefully, provided in the historical analysis by Michael Turton:

Although this is typically labeled an "apocalypse," Bruce Malina (2002) has argued that this is not, in fact, an apocalypse:

What is distinctive of final words before death in the Mediterranean (and elsewhere) is that the person about to die is believed capable of knowing what is going to happen to persons near and dear to him or her. Dying persons are prescient because they are closer to the realm of God (or gods) who knows all things than to the realm of humans whose knowledge is limited to human experience. The dying process puts a person into specific type of Altered State of Consciousness, a special way of knowing from the viewpoint of God (or gods), as it were. There is ample evidence of this type of Altered State of Consciousness in antiquity (see Pilch 1993; 1995; 1998; Malina 1999). Consider these instances, collected by Gaster (1974 vol. 1: 214; 378). Xenophon tells us: "At the advent of death, men become more divine, and hence can foresee the forthcoming" (CYROP. 7.7.21). In the ILLIAD (16.849-50) the dying Patroclus tells of the coming death of Hector at the hands of Achilles, and the dying Hector predicts the death of Achilles himself (22.325). Similarly, in Sophocles' play, "The Women of Trachis," the dying Heracles summons Alcmena so that she may learn from his last words "the things I now know by divine inspiration" (TRACHINIAE 1148 ff.). Vergil finds it normal to have the dying Orodes predict that his slayer will soon meet retribution (AENEID 10.729-41). Plato too reports that Socrates made predictions during his last moments, realizing that "on the point of death, I am now in that condition in which men are most wont to prophesy" (APOL 39c; cf. Xenophon, ANAB. APOL. 30). Cicero reports concerning Callanus of India: "As he was about to die and was ascending his funeral pyre, he said: `What a glorious death! The fate of Hercules is mine. For when this mortal frame is burned the soul will find the light.' When Alexander directed him to speak if he wished to say anything to him, he answered: `Thank you, nothing, except that I shall see you very soon.' So it turned out, for Alexander died in Babylon a few days later" (DE DIVINATIONE 1.47).

The Israelite tradition equally shared this belief, as is clear from the final words of Jacob (Gen. 49) and Moses (Deut 31-34); see also 1 Sam 12; 1 Kgs 2:1-17; Josh 23-24. The

well-known documents called "Testaments," written around the time of Jesus, offer further witness to this belief (e.g. Testament of the Twelve Patriarchs, Testament of Moses; see also Jubilees 22:10-30, 1 Macc. 2:47-70; Josephus, ANTIQUITIES 12.279-84).

In the U.S., with economics as the focal social institution, last words and testaments will deal with the disposition of goods. However in Mediterranean antiquity, with the kinship institution being focal, final words will deal with concern for the tear in the social fabric resulting from the dying person's departure. Hence the dying person will be deeply concerned about what will happen to his/her kin group. As the examples just cited indicate, toward the close of the dying process, the person soon to expire will impart significant information about what is soon to befall the group in general and individuals in the group. This includes who will hold it together (successor), and advice to kin group members on how to keep the group together. Of course, before passing on the dying person tries to assure the kin group of its well-being, offering abiding good wishes and expressing concern for the well-being of the group. It is within this cultural framework that Jesus' final words and actions need to be understood."

<http://www.michaelturton.com/Mark/GMark13.html>

Interestingly, where Turton and Malina question the genre of apocalypse, Wansbrough suggests the farewell-speech makes use of the apocalyptic convention:

3. MESSAGE: THE PERSECUTION AND RESCUE OF THE DISCIPLES

1. A farewell-speech to a great man's followers is a convention of ancient literature. One of the most famous is Socrates' farewell-speech before he commits suicide, the Apologia. Biblical examples are the Last Supper Discourses in Jn 14-17 and Paul's discourse to the elders of Ephesus (Acts 20.17-35). Such a speech normally warns of perils and dangers to come and assures the followers of help and eventual success. Mk 13 is just such a speech, warning the disciples of persecution and defections to come, and assuring them of eventual release and vindication. It makes use of the conventions of apocalyptic especially in vv. 24-27.

2. The clue to the interpretation is the 'appalling abomination' in v. 14. This quotation of Daniel is an allusion (and the apocalyptic genre works by biblical allusions) to the idolatrous altar set up in the Temple by Antiochus Epiphanes during his persecution of Jews in 167 BC. Now, however, it refers to the desecration of the Temple by the Romans in AD 70. The turmoil of wars and rumours of wars, nation fighting against nation, false Messiahs and false prophets is the upheavals leading up to the Sack of Jerusalem. The formal, prophetic and allusive language is so much a part of the idiom of apocalyptic that it is impossible to tell whether the Sack has already taken place or is simply seen as inevitable. It is, however, seen as the birth-pangs (v.8), and the Sack of Jerusalem as somehow marking a significant stage in the coming of the Kingdom. *This indeed it did, for the demise of Jerusalem marked the moment of liberation of Christianity from Judaism* [italics added].

3. The timing of the coming remained a worry and a puzzle. There are three decisive sayings of Jesus in Mark which suggest that the realisation of the kingship of God is not to be long delayed:

a. Before the Transfiguration Jesus declares,

There are some standing here who will not taste death before they see the kingship of God come with power (9.1).

This is 'one of the most discussed verses in the whole of Mk's gospel'[1]. Firstly a distinction must be made between the original meaning in Jesus' mouth and the meaning which the verse takes in Mk. In Mk the striking position surely indicates that Mk is pointing it towards the Transfiguration itself, and regards the Transfiguration as at least partly fulfilling it. Was this the original sense, or has Mk given the saying a different sense by inserting it in this context?

b. At the Last Supper Jesus says,

I shall never drink wine any more until the day I drink the new wine in the kingdom of God (14.25).

This saying is not part of the original tradition of the institution of the eucharist; it has no inherent connection with this event. The saying must be an independent saying garnered by Mk and deliberately placed here. Mk therefore placed it here with the intention that the reader should see its fulfilment in the immediately-following Passion and Resurrection account.

c. Similarly, before the high priest Jesus replies,

You will see the son of man seated at the right hand of the Power and coming with the clouds of heaven (14.62).

Here it is the 'you will see...' that is remarkable. Mk must have considered that in some sense the Coming would happen within their lifetime. This can only have been the Resurrection itself or the events foretold in Mk 13; the similarity of language points to the latter.

The fulfilment of the Kingship must therefore be seen as occurring in stages. There was no one utterly decisive moment. Included must be: (the conception of Jesus, the birth of Jesus – not in Mk), the preparatory message of the Baptist, the proclamation of Jesus, the death-&-resurrection of Jesus, the liberation from Judaism, the final coming of Christ. About the timing of this last Mk 13 gives no indication beyond the urgent and repeated 'Stay awake' and the parables of 13.28-34. If Mk was written before the imminent Sack of Jerusalem, the question must be asked whether he foresaw this event as the occasion of the final Coming. This would coincide with Paul's pressing expectation of the End in 1 Thess 4.15-5.3 and 1 Cor 7.29-31 and the early Christians prayer Maranatha (1 Cor 16.22).

[1]Morna Hooker, The Gospel of Mark, p. 211

Michael Turton follows Tate (1995) in seeing a structural parallel between this chapter and the Passion:

Mark 13

Disciples before Council	Jesus before Sanhedrin Trial
Disciples beaten in Synagogues	Jesus beaten after Sanhedrin Trial

Disciples before Governors	Jesus before Pilate	
Disciples brought to trial and "handed over"		Jesus on trial and "handed over"
Brother betrays brother	Judas betrays Jesus	
Disciples hated in Jesus' name	Reaction to Jesus' claim to be the Blessed One.	

Prefaced by an explanation of extensive allusion to the tradition of Scripture, Turton's understanding of the parallel makes even more sense; he begins by suggesting a use of the Elijah-Elisha cycle that may be, perhaps, a generic parallel of construction by tropes, then moves to other references; the argument would seem to be that Mark is structurally and intentionally settled into its surrounding context:

v2: Prophecies of Jerusalem's destruction are found in both Micah 3:13 and Jeremiah 26:18. There is no mention that the Temple will be rebuilt (Donahue and Harrington 2002, p368).

v2: Josephus conveys well the awe with which the Jews viewed the Temple:

"Now the outward face of the temple in its front wanted nothing that was likely to surprise either men's minds or their eyes; for it was covered all over with plates of gold of great weight, and, at the first rising of the sun, reflected back a very fiery splendor, and made those who forced themselves to look upon it to turn their eyes away, just as they would have done at the sun's own rays. But this temple appeared to strangers, when they were coming to it at a distance, like a mountain covered with snow; for as to those parts of it that were not gilt, they were exceeding white. On its top it had spikes with sharp points, to prevent any pollution of it by birds sitting upon it. Of its stones, some of them were forty-five cubits in length, five in height, and six in breadth. Before this temple stood the altar, fifteen cubits high, and equal both in length and breadth; each of which dimensions was fifty cubits. The figure it was built in was a square, and it had corners like horns; and the passage up to it was by an insensible acclivity. It was formed without any iron tool, nor did any such iron tool so much as touch it at any time."(War, V,v,6)

v2: By the same token, it is well to remember that in many traditions of esoteric Judaism, the First Temple was idealized, while the Second was condemned as corrupt and polluted. The Gospel of Mark, with its strong Temple focus, navigates among a complex formation of attitudes toward the Temple, not merely a monolithic, shallow, and superstitious awe. Margaret Barker offers an excellent discussion of some of the complexities of the connections between attitudes toward the Temple and early Christian history.

3: And as he sat on the Mount of Olives opposite the temple, Peter and James and John and Andrew asked him privately,

v3: The Mount of Olives is where the messiah traditionally will begin his triumph and restoration of Israel (Zech 14:4). Note how in v3 Mark has set the Mountain and the Temple in opposition to each other, and how, once again, an epiphany is delivered on a mountain. Jesus was facing the Temple Treasury; now he faces the entire Temple. This opposition of Temple to mountain recalls the similar oppositions that occur in such eschatological texts as Zechariah 14, Joel 3, and Ezekiel 38-9, where Mt. Zion is opposed to the Temple and where God sits upon it to pass judgment on his enemies (Fletcher-Louis 1997). Zech 14 plays an important role in Mark. In Daniel 2 the Kingdom of Israel is envisioned as a mountain that fills the whole earth. This complex imagery is itself simply a subset of a larger myth complex of cosmic mountains that is found all over the ancient Near East.

v3: "privately." The writer frequently uses "privately" (kat'idian) when Jesus is about to deliver a parable or explain a problem.

4: "Tell us, when will this be, and what will be the sign when these things are all to be accomplished?"

v4: "How long?" Myers (1988, p326) terms this the "apocalyptic query." It is found in Daniel 12:6.

7: And when you hear of wars and rumors of wars, do not be alarmed; this must take place, but the end is not yet.

v7: some exegetes have suggested Daniel 2:28

8: For nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom; there will be earthquakes in various places, there will be famines; this is but the beginning of the birth-pangs.

v8: from Isa 19:2 and/or 2 Chronicles 15:6:

Isa 19:2 "I will stir up Egyptian against Egyptian- brother will fight against brother, neighbor against neighbor, city against city, kingdom against kingdom.(NIV)

The passage betrays the usual Temple focus of Mark, with a prophecy that there will be an altar in Egypt where the Assyrians and Egyptians will worship the God of Israel together. It also contains the words redolent with Markan themes, such as fisherman, palm branches and reeds, and cornerstone, as well as the messianic phrase "on that day."

v8: Evans (1998, p381) identifies Zech 114:5 behind this verse:

5: And the valley of my mountains shall be stopped up, for the valley of the mountains shall touch the side of it; and you shall flee as you fled from the earthquake in the days of Uzzi'ah king of Judah. Then the LORD your God will come, and all the holy ones with him.(RSV)

12: And brother will deliver up brother to death, and the father his child, and children will rise against parents and have them put to death;

v12: from Micah 7:6, or perhaps 4 Ezra 6:24

Mic 7:6 For a son dishonors his father, a daughter rises up against her mother, a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law- a man's enemies are the members of his own household. (NIV)

Micah 7:1 has already been cited as a source of the incident of the cursing of the fig tree in Mark 11:12-14. Perhaps there is a possible interreference to that passage. 13: and you will be hated by all for my name's sake. But he who endures to the end will be saved.

v13: "my name's sake." The term "Christian" to describe Jesus' followers is a much later term, and is a true anachronism here. Note that "Christ" is not a name but a title. Paul often used "Christ" as a name.

v13: Who is "you" here? Is Jesus addressing Christians in general, or the people standing next to him?

v13: Weeden (1971, p84) pointing out that the phrase for my sake appears only here in Mk 13:9-13, 10:23-31, and 8:34-9:1, argues that there is a structural similarity between these passages.

14: "But when you see the desolating sacrilege set up where it ought not to be (let the reader understand), then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains;

v14: from Daniel 9:7 and 12:11, and Genesis 19:17. Some have argued that this verse contains a clear marker of a previous written source, which Mark has adapted (let the reader understand...). It is often used to date this passage to a time after the destruction of the Temple, although some exegetes argue that the writer is referring to the attempt by Caligula in 40 to set up a statue of himself in the Temple in Jerusalem. A. Y. Collins (2003) argues that it refers to a statue that the writer believes will be erected in the Temple once the Romans consolidate control over the area.

v14: Whitney Shiner (2003) observes:

"I see no reason to believe that the eschatological discourse ever existed as an independent entity. It is fundamentally important to the structure and meaning of the gospel. It is the longest speech in the gospel and the requirements of performance make it stand out from the surrounding narrative..."

Shiner goes on to argue that the structure and vocabulary of the long speech in Chapter 13 indicate it may have been performed.

v14: As Robert Fowler (1996) points out, the "reader" here could refer to someone reading it silently to himself, the kind of paid performer/reader used to read to groups in Hellenistic society, or someone in the audience of such a person. Fowler also points out that "readers" here would really fall into two groups, those who recognized the citation (any one of the three above) and those who did not (any one of the three above).

v14: 1 Maccabees also offers an abomination in the Temple Jerusalem, twice. In 1 Macc 1:54 it describes Antiochus IV Epiphanies, the Hellenistic King who placed a pagan image on the altar of burnt offering;

54: Now on the fifteenth day of Chislew, in the one hundred and forty-fifth year, they erected a desolating sacrilege upon the altar of burnt offering. They also built altars in the surrounding cities of Judah,(RSV)

Similarly, 1 Macc 6:7 records the destruction of that idol

1: King Antiochus was going through the upper provinces when he heard that Elymais in Persia was a city famed for its wealth in silver and gold.

2: Its temple was very rich, containing golden shields, breastplates, and weapons left there by Alexander, the son of Philip, the Macedonian king who first reigned over the Greeks.

3: So he came and tried to take the city and plunder it, but he could not, because his plan became known to the men of the city

4: and they withstood him in battle. So he fled and in great grief departed from there to return to Babylon.

5: Then some one came to him in Persia and reported that the armies which had gone into the land of Judah had been routed;

6: that Lysias had gone first with a strong force, but had turned and fled before the Jews; that the Jews had grown strong from the arms, supplies, and abundant spoils which they had taken from the armies they had cut down;

7: that they had torn down the abomination which he had erected upon the altar in Jerusalem; and that they had surrounded the sanctuary with high walls as before, and also Beth-zur, his city.

8: When the king heard this news, he was astounded and badly shaken. He took to his bed and became sick from grief, because things had not turned out for him as he had planned. (RSV)

v14: 1 Maccabees may also be the source of inspiration for the flight to the hills. 1 Macc 2:28 says:

27: Then Mattathias cried out in the city with a loud voice, saying: "Let every one who is zealous for the law and supports the covenant come out with me!"

28: And he and his sons fled to the hills and left all that they had in the city.(RSV)

16: and let him who is in the field not turn back to take his mantle.

v16: Note the conjunction here of fleeing believers and lost mantles, just as in Mk 14.

19: For in those days there will be such tribulation as has not been from the beginning of the creation which God created until now, and never will be.

v19: from Daniel 12:1

At that time Michael, the great prince who protects your people, will arise. There will be a time of distress such as has not happened from the beginning of nations until then. But at that time your people-everyone whose name is found written in the book-will be delivered. (NIV)

That passage also offers a "man in linen" (recall the Young Man of Mark 14:43-52) who explains the secret that is sealed until the end of time.

22: False Christs and false prophets will arise and show signs and wonders, to lead astray, if possible, the elect.

v22: from Deut 13:2

1 If a prophet, or one who foretells by dreams, appears among you and announces to you a miraculous sign or wonder, 2 and if the sign or wonder of which he has spoken takes place, and he says, "Let us follow other gods" (gods you have not known) "and let us worship them," 3 you must not listen to the words of that prophet or dreamer. (NIV)

24: "But in those days, after that tribulation, the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light,

v24: refers to Isa. 13:10:

The stars of heaven and their constellations will not show their light. The rising sun will be darkened and the moon will not give its light. (NIV)

May be a reference to demons in Septuagint, as demons appear in the LXX 13:21 instead of "goats leaping about" as in the modern version. Thus this may be a reference to the source of demons in the Gospel of Mark.

25: and the stars will be falling from heaven, and the powers in the heavens will be shaken.

v25: from Isaiah 34:4

4 All the stars of the heavens will be dissolved and the sky rolled up like a scroll; all the starry host will fall like withered leaves from the vine, like shriveled figs from the fig tree.

Note the shriveled figs again. Isa 34 also offers the word "demon" in the Septuagint version of Isa 34:14, and may also be a source for demons in the Gospel of Mark.

26: And then they will see the Son of man coming in clouds with great power and glory.

v26: from Daniel 7:13

27: And then he will send out the angels, and gather his elect from the four winds, from the ends of the earth to the ends of heaven.

v27: is from Zech 2:10 and Deut 30:4; also Zech 2:6

28: "From the fig tree learn its lesson: as soon as its branch becomes tender and puts forth its leaves, you know that summer is near.

v28: note the allusion to the fig tree of Mark 11. The writer has reversed the image of a leaf-dropping fig tree taken from Isaiah 34:

4 All the stars of the heavens will be dissolved and the sky rolled up like a scroll; all the starry host will fall like withered leaves from the vine, like shriveled figs from the fig tree. (NIV)

30: Truly, I say to you, this generation will not pass away before all these things take place.

v30: recalls Mark 9:1. It offers an apparent contradiction with v32, as Meier (1994, p347) points out. Thus, some exegetes conclude that one or the other must be an interpolation.

31: Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will not pass away.

v31: combines Isaiah 51:6 and 40:8. Donahue and Harrington (2002) write:

"This saying constitutes the center of a carefully constructed unit: A -- parable (13:28-29), B -- time saying (13:30), C -- saying about Jesus' authority (13:31), B' -- time saying (13:32), A' -- parable (13:33-37)(p376). Myers (1988, p331) reconstructs this as an ABCC'B'A' chiasm sandwiched between the two injunctions to Watch!

Turton further explains the literary structure and scriptural references as making dating the gospel problematic:

Ludemann has pointed out that this section may be based on a Jewish source overlaid by Christian reworking. He sees it as descending from a polemic against the erection by Emperor Caligula of statues of himself in the Jerusalem Temple (Ludemann 2001, p87-8), a position also held by Nick Taylor (2003b). Given the extensive references to the Old Testament as well as its composition in a future time where Christians suffer persecution and encounter false Christs, it is not necessary to posit an earlier source. In any case the statue was never actually erected as Caligula was assassinated in 41. The writer of Mark is referring to some later event.

This section has traditionally been used to date the Gospel to either during or just after the Roman war against the Jews and the destruction of the Temple. The extensive use of OT creation, and its literary features make dating problematical. It may refer to that war. It may also refer to the rebellion of Bar Kochba, which ended in 135. It may represent some other conflict. It could even have been written long before 70, for the details of the predictions are drawn from the OT and could have been written anytime in the first or second century. On the basis of this passage, the writer is often held to have known that the Temple in Jerusalem has been destroyed and thus, that the Gospel dates from after 70.

The numerous references to the future of persecution and false Christs (v9), as well as lavish quoting of the OT, and supernatural prophecy of Jesus own death, all indicate that nothing in this pericope can support historicity.

Turton, in an extended discussion of "community" in Mark underlines the literary and symbolic structure of the gospel:

1. The writer of Mark does not live near the sea, nor does he live near the Sea of Galilee. He doesn't know anything about seas, and thus does not know that the Lake Gennesaret is really just a piddling little thing that no one would call a "sea."
2. The writer of Mark lives near a real sea, but has never been to the Sea of Galilee, and does not know that it is not a real sea. Thus he imputes sea-like behavior to the Sea of Galilee.
3. The writer of Mark just doesn't give a damn what the Sea of Galilee is like. He is writing a story in which the Sea is a body of water that plays a symbolic role and he uses it as he wills, and not as reality would have it.

Of the three alternatives, the last is the most likely. This is indicated by the general unreality of the Sea of Galilee scenes – they are often created from the Elijah-Elisha Cycle, and use the Sea of Galilee as the site of miracles like water walks and feedings. Additionally, the narrative function of the Sea of Galilee in the Gospel of Mark is to act as a border between the Gentiles and the Jews. The reality is that the writer of Mark simply doesn't give a damn what the reality of the Sea of Galilee is.

It would seem appropriate to allow the writer of Mark to speak for himself:

²⁶ "At that time people will see the Son of Man coming in clouds with great power and glory.

³² "But about that day or hour no one knows, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father.

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Edited January 3, 2019

Summary Two days before the Passover and the Festival of Unleavened Bread, the chief priests and scribes are looking for a way in stealth to have Jesus killed; they are, however, afraid of the crowds following him, believing any incident with "their Messiah" could cause them to riot. Jesus has retreated to the house of Simon, a leper whom he has healed, and is resting; a woman comes with a costly jar of unguent and anoints his head. Because the ointment was expensive, some observing become angry at the woman. Events develop rapidly, as narrated by Mark:

10 Then Judas Iscariot, who was one of the twelve, went to the chief priests in order to betray him to them. 11 When they heard it, they were greatly pleased, and promised to give him money. So he began to look for an opportunity to betray him.

Next, we have the first day of Unleavened Bread, when the Passover Lamb is slain. The disciples ask Jesus where he would like to go to celebrate the Passover; they are instructed

, "Go into the city, and a man carrying a jar of water will meet you; follow him, 14 and wherever he enters, say to the owner of the house, 'The Teacher asks, Where is my guest room where I may eat the Passover with my disciples?' 15 He will show you a large room upstairs, furnished and ready. Make preparations for us there." 16 So the disciples set out and went to the city, and found everything as he had told them; and they prepared the Passover meal.

This day pushes on into evening, and while they are eating, Jesus predicts that one of them present will betray him. He identifies this person as one of the twelve who is to betray the Son of Man and says it would be better if that man had not been born.

The next session has come to be recognized as the institution of the Last Supper:

22 While they were eating, he took a loaf of bread, and after blessing it he broke it, gave it to them, and said, "Take; this is my body." 23 Then he took a cup, and after giving thanks he gave it to them, and all of them drank from it. 24 He said to them, "This is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many. 25 Truly I tell you, I will never again drink of the fruit of the vine until that day when I drink it new in the kingdom of God."

Jesus indicates he will next drink of the fruit of the vine only in the kingdom of God. Finishing the dinner, Jesus goes with his disciples once again to the Mount of Olives. Jesus predicts that they will all become deserters, that he himself will be struck but only to be raised up. Peter denies that he could be capable of such desertion.

Next, Jesus prays in Gethsemane. Peter, James, and John, instructed to wait, begin to be agitated and restless, sensing events about to come it would seem. Jesus himself reveals a degree of emotional upheaval:

34 And he said to them, "I am deeply grieved, even to death; remain here, and keep awake."

Jesus returns from praying three times only to find his disciples sleeping:

"Are you still sleeping and taking your rest? Enough! The hour has come; the Son of Man is betrayed into the hands of sinners. 42 Get up, let us be going. See, my betrayer is at hand."

Jesus himself seems to have a premonition of what is about to befall, for he has addressed his Father, asking if possible that the cup he is to drink be taken from him:

"Abba, Father, for you all things are possible; remove this cup from me; yet, not what I want, but what you want."

Such is not, however, to be the case; he is to drink the bitter dregs. Judas arrives with a crowd holding swords and clubs, among them, the chief priests, scribes, and elders.

Judas addresses Jesus as "Rabbi" and betrays him with a kiss. Jesus reminds this religious group that he has been with them for days in the temple teaching and that they have not arrested him. One follower has hastily donned only linen cloth and no outer cloak; in the turmoil of the moment, he loses his linen coat and runs from the scene naked.

Jesus is taken to the high priest, chief priests, elders, and scribes. The council and chief priests are looking for a reason to put Jesus to death, but among the testimonies against him, much is revealed and nothing is consistent. When Jesus is first questioned, he is quiet; next, though, he is asked outright: "Are you the Messiah, the Son of the Blessed One?" Jesus replies, "I am; and 'you will see the Son of Man seated at the right hand of the Power,' and 'coming with the clouds of heaven.'" The high priest tears his clothes at this blasphemy and turns Jesus over to the crowds, all condemning him as deserving death, blindfolding him, spitting on him, and commanding him to prophesy.

Chapter fourteen ends with the ever adamant Peter's denial. As predicted, Peter denies Jesus, denying, also, that he himself is a Galilean. On hearing the cock crow after his third denial, Peter remembers that Jesus has told him he, too, will forsake.

Pasted from <<http://crain.english.missouriwestern.edu/mark/interpre9.htm>>

The high priest or religious establishment now asks relative to Jesus' s being the Messiah. Michael Turton has explored the scholarship relative to interpreting the question and the answer credited to Jesus. In sorting through this, Turton points out that Jesus deflects the question in Matthew and Luke; original manuscripts made Jesus' answer less directly; the "I Am" could have been stated ironically as a question, "Am I?"; in Hebrew, "I Am" would be translated YHWH, leading to the accusation of blasphemy, although to claim to be Messiah is not in itself blasphemous; the "coming with clouds of heaven" has associations with God's Temple (1 Kings 8); Christians have associated the Messiahship with Psalms 110:1; this section may be associated with Jehoiada's bringing out the "true king" to Queen Athaliah in 2 Kings 11:14 and her cries of "Treason" and resulting tearing of clothes. Turpin concludes, saying that scholars agree that Jesus did not commit blasphemy, and even if he had, the appropriate punishment would not have been crucifixion <<http://www.michaelturton.com/Mark/GMark14.html>> .

Looking at the "Son of Man" titles, it is interesting to see it occur here as one seated in heaven in the same context with "Messiah"; curiously, if "Son of the Blessed One" be interpreted as a circumlocution to avoid naming YHWH, then "Son of God" also is used in this same context, only reopening the question already discussed of what "Son of God" means; considerable time

has been given to the idea that Jesus becomes [avoiding the more radical understanding of Son of God as pre-existent] Son of God/Son of David/Son of Man through radical and model obedience to the Father, through his suffering, and eventually through his death. Certainly, Michael Turton concludes this:

Since Mark's avowed purpose was to present Jesus as the Son of God, we can only assume that he reports those words and deeds of Jesus which, when rightly understood, reveal him as the Son. The origin of Mark, and the rise of the Gattung "Gospel," was thus the direct result of a historical Christology and the preservation of those historical traditions which were Christologically significant <<http://www.michaelturton.com/Mark/GMark10.html#10.35.37>> .

Felix Just, discussed earlier in this work, provides the following references to these terms:

- **Son of God** and related terms (caution: do not assume this means "fully divine" yet):
 - 1:1 – Gospel opening: The beginning of the good news of Jesus Christ, [the Son of God].
 - 1:11 – At Jesus' Baptism: And a voice came from heaven, "You are my Son, the Beloved; with you I am well pleased."
 - 1:24 – At the first Exorcism: and he cried out, "What have you to do with us, Jesus of Nazareth? Have you come to destroy us? I know who you are, the Holy One of God."
 - 3:11 – Evangelist's summary: Whenever the unclean spirits saw him, they fell down before him and shouted, "You are the Son of God!"
 - 5:7 – Gerasene demoniac: And he shouted at the top of his voice, "What have you to do with me, Jesus, Son of the Most High God? I adjure you by God, do not torment me."
 - 9:7 – At the Transfiguration: Then a cloud overshadowed them, and from the cloud there came a voice, "This is my Son, the Beloved; listen to him!"
 - 12:6 – Parable of the Wicked Tenants: "He had still one other, a beloved son. Finally he sent him to them, saying, 'They will respect my son.'"
 - 13:32 – Apocalyptic Discourse: "But about that day or hour no one knows, neither the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father."
 - 14:60-62 – At Jesus' Trial: Then the high priest stood up before them and asked Jesus, "Have you no answer? What is it that they testify against you?" / But he was silent and did not answer. Again the high priest asked him, "Are you the Messiah, the Son of the Blessed One?" / Jesus said, "I am; and 'you will see the Son of Man seated at the right hand of the Power,' and 'coming with the clouds of heaven.'"
 - 15:39 – At the Crucifixion: Now when the centurion, who stood facing him, saw that in this way he breathed his last, he said, "Truly this man was God's Son!"
- **Son of David** (directly attributed to Jesus only by Bartimaeus; is it a "royal" or "messianic" title?):
 - 10:46-48 – They came to Jericho. As he and his disciples and a large crowd were leaving Jericho, Bartimaeus son of Timaeus, a blind beggar, was sitting by the roadside. / When he heard that it was Jesus of Nazareth, he began to shout out and say, "Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!" / Many sternly ordered him to be quiet, but he cried out even more loudly, "Son of David, have mercy on me!"
 - 12:35-37 – While Jesus was teaching in the temple, he said, "How can the scribes say that the Messiah is the son of David? / David himself, by the Holy Spirit, declared, 'The Lord said to my Lord, "Sit at my right hand, until I put your enemies under your feet."' / David himself calls him Lord; so how can he be his son?" And the large crowd was listening to him with delight.
 - See also Mark 11:10 – "Blessed is the coming kingdom of our ancestor David! Hosanna in the highest heaven!"

<http://catholic-resources.org/Bible/Mark-Christology.htm>

For Son of Man, Just provides the following:

- **Son of Man** ("son of the human being"? - used only by Jesus, as quoted directly or indirectly by the Evangelist):
 - 2:10-11 – "But so that you may know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins" --he said to the paralytic-- / "I say to you, stand up, take your mat and go to your home."
 - 2:27-28 – Then he said to them [Pharisees], "The sabbath was made for humankind, and not humankind for the sabbath; so the Son of Man is lord even of the sabbath."
 - 8:31 – Then he began to teach them that the Son of Man must undergo great suffering, and be rejected by the elders, the chief priests, and the scribes, and be killed, and after three days rise again.
 - 8:38 – "Those who are ashamed of me and of my words in this adulterous and sinful generation, of them the Son of Man will also be ashamed when he comes in the glory of his Father with the holy angels."
 - 9:9 – As they were coming down the mountain, he ordered them to tell no one about what they had seen, until after the Son of Man had risen from the dead.
 - 9:12 – He said to them, "Elijah is indeed coming first to restore all things. How then is it written about the Son of Man, that he is to go through many sufferings and be treated with contempt?"
 - 9:31 – ...for he was teaching his disciples, saying to them, "The Son of Man is to be betrayed into human hands, and they will kill him, and three days after being killed, he will rise again."
 - 10:33-34 – "See, we are going up to Jerusalem, and the Son of Man will be handed over to the chief priests and the scribes, and they will condemn him to death; then they will hand him over to the Gentiles; / they will mock him, and spit upon him, and flog him, and kill him; and after three days he will rise again."
 - 10:45 – "For the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life a ransom for many."
 - 13:26 – "Then they will see 'the Son of Man coming in clouds' with great power and glory." (cf. Dan 7:13)
 - 14:21 – "For the Son of Man goes as it is written of him, but woe to that one by whom the Son of Man is betrayed! It would have been better for that one not to have been born."
 - 14:41 – He came a third time and said to them, "Are you still sleeping and taking your rest? Enough! The hour has come; the Son of Man is betrayed into the hands of sinners."
 - 14:62 – Jesus said, "I am; and 'you will see the Son of Man seated at the right hand of the Power,' and 'coming with the clouds of heaven.'" (cf. Dan :13; Ps 110:1)

Just also provides a full list and set of explanations for Christological titles that prove useful for this discussion (http://catholic-resources.org/Bible/Christological_Titles.htm). What is interesting is that most Christological titles include references both to what is strictly human as well as to God. Felix Just points out that names were tied to geographical origin, occupation,

sometimes siblings, and mothers; titles on the other hand have different origins and meanings, sometimes referring to past kings, masters, and as denoting relationship and descendency. In interpretations of Mark, it is always possible to read in meanings that may not be there. With chapter fourteen, one lingers briefly with the apocalyptic "end of time" of chapter thirteen before passing on to some of the strangeness of chapter fourteen--an unnamed woman who anoints Jesus with costly unguent, the betrayal by Judas with an expanded set of details, Jesus's palpable remark that he will next drink of the fruit of the vine only in the kingdom of God, his poignant acquiescence to the will of his father, Abba; the sleeping disciples unable to keep awake, the dramatic denials of Peter that he is from Galilee and a follower of Jesus, Jesus's reply to the council and priests "I am; and 'you will see the Son of Man seated at the right hand of the Power,' and 'coming with the clouds of heaven.'" Regarding this "Son of Man" reference, I discovered intriguing dialogue that included the following from Adela Yarbro Collins concerning whether the Son of Man was pre-existent and enthroned:

The Son of Man is quite clearly expected to be enthroned when all things are renewed (Matthew 19:28). In Mark the Son of Man is very probably expected to be enthroned at some point after Jesus' death, since he is described as "seated on the right of the Power," i.e., God (Mark 14:62). The same is true of Luke 22:69. Although it is not stated explicitly, it is likely that the Son of Man is depicted as enthroned for the future judgment in Luke 21:36. Those being judged will "stand" before the judge, the Son of Man, who is expected to be seated

And who can forget the naked young man who flees from the turmoil of the moment. Concerning the young man, perhaps no detail more clearly attests to Mark's attention to the minute as attested in this remark from Theodore C. Pease in his "Peculiarities of Form and Color in Mark's Gospel":

"If the young man before us was Mark himself, that may be a further reason why the incident finds place: but whoever he may have been, this touch of human danger and frailty amid the terrors of that eventful night has sufficient interest for writer and reader alike."

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Equally intriguing is the prepared room, ready and waiting for the Son of Man, Son of God, Messiah:

"The Teacher asks, Where is my guest room where I may eat the Passover with my disciples?" ¹⁵He will show you a large room upstairs, furnished and ready. Make preparations for us there." ¹⁶So the disciples set out and went to the city, and found everything as he had told them; and they prepared the Passover meal.

Pasted from <<http://bible.oremus.org/?q=33581269>>

And the man who brings this message is engaged in the menial task of carrying water, richly laden with connotations in the context of the Passover and the Feast of Unleavened Bread.

I have already remarked in the introduction on an intriguing possibility for connecting the authorship of Mark to the nameless woman who anoints Jesus:

Crossan (1991, p416) has noted that one could make a much better case for the woman here being the author of Mark, than for the young man in 14:51-2. Her confession of Jesus' identity opens a frame that closes with the centurion's confession in 15:39. Though her memory will last forever, her name is never given. Markan irony again? Wills (1997, p117) points out that she is an ironic counterpart to the disciples, who do not understand (as usual). It should be added that the irony is increased because we know the disciples' names, while hers is not recorded.

Pasted from <<http://www.michaelturton.com/Mark/GMark14.html>>

Turton additionally takes up the question of Judas historically, pointing out that he occurs three times, once in chapter 3 and twice in chapter 14. He states, "Some exegetes, such as Helms, see this as a creation from Zech 11, but then says the link in Mark is tenuous; he does not ask for money, nor does the reader learn why the chief priests wish to do away with Jesus. Turton then says, "Mark scholar Ted Weeden (2001) summarizes the reasons why Judas' betrayal should be considered fiction in a short essay posted to the discussion group Kata Markon." These reasons include Paul's not appearing to know of Judas' betrayal, that 1 Cor. 11:23 is vague. 1 Corinthians addresses twelve disciples, not eleven.

Weeden sees the election held for Judas' replacement in Acts to be a fiction, invented to counter the invention of the story that an insider betrayed Jesus into the hands of his enemies. Note that while almost all exegetes believe that the famous passage in 1 Cor 15 where Jesus appears to the apostles is in fact genuine, some have argued that it is an interpolation and thus, this piece of evidence for Weeden's argument would fail. In fact, in addition to the arguments of Price, the fact that the passage contains a reference to the Twelve, the only one in the entire Pauline corpus, when it should say 11. Recognizing this as an "error," numerous ancient manuscripts have been corrected by scribes from "12" to "11."

A second reason is that other traditions seem not to know about Judas, and finally, the story seems to have precedence in 2 Samuel:

The Gethsemane scene, as Weeden and many other scholars have noted, is built out of 2 Sam 15-17 and 2 Sam 20:4-10. In that sequence David is betrayed by his right-hand man, Ahithophel. Weeden argues that Mark modeled Judas after Ahithophel. In addition to the connections to the David epic, Weeden summarizes Shelby Spong's arguments for OT creation:

Weeden summarizes Shelby Spong's arguments for OT creation:

....Among the interesting parallels between the two biblical stories Spong notes are the following (267): (1) Joseph was handed over "by a group of twelve who later became known as the leaders of the twelve tribes of Israel," (2) in "both stories [the story of Joseph and the story of Jesus] the handing over or betrayal was into the hands of gentiles," (3) in "both stories money was given to the traitors- twenty pieces of silver for Joseph, thirty pieces of silver for Jesus," and (4) "one of the twelve brothers of Joseph who urged the others to seek money for their act of betrayal was named Judah or Judas (Gen. 37:26-27)." Weeden, following Spong, also points to the traditional hostility between northern and southern Palestine, writing:

Mark's choice of IOUDAS as the name of Jesus' betrayer was carefully designed, in my view, to symbolize the southern kingdom of Judah (IOUDAS) and its successor the province of Judea in Mark's day.

Pasted from <<http://www.michaelturton.com/Mark/GMark14.html>>

Mark should, perhaps, speak the last words relative to this chapter:

Again the high priest asked him, "Are you the Messiah, the Son of the Blessed One?"

⁶² "I am," said Jesus. "And you will see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of the Mighty One and coming on the clouds of heaven."

<http://www.bsw.org/Biblica/Vol-84-2003/The-Rhetoric-Of-The-Characterization-Of-Jesus-As-The-Son-Of-Man-And-Christ-In-Mark/192/article-p29.html>

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Summary The following morning, the Sanhedrin confirms its decision and takes Jesus before Pilate. He is arraigned before Pilate, Judea's fifth procurator, CE 26-36. Jesus is said to have proclaimed himself king of the Jews, which would have implicated him in a political rebellion. Pilate suspects Jesus's popularity is the real reason for his being arraigned. A Jewish nationalist, Barrabas, is released in accordance with Passover tradition, even though the people have had their choice of Jesus or Barrabas. Those who have been permitted to be present cry out for the death of Jesus, probably indicates they are associated with the Sanhedrin. Jesus is sentenced to crucifixion preceded by scourging. For the claim of king of the Jews, which Jesus has not made, he is mocked by the soldiers in a tradition of the "king" game in which he receives a crown of thorns, a scepter, and a mock robe. Simon of Cyrene carries the cross of Jesus to Golgotha, where he is crucified with two thieves. The victims are offered the opportunity to have their senses dulled by drugged wine; Jesus refuses the opiate. A written notice of the charge against the victims is written on a banner and placed on the cross: Jesus is said to be King of the Jews. He is taunted by passers-by. Jesus, in agony, cries out, "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?" He is offered wine vinegar and utters, "It is finished." At that moment, the curtain of the temple is reported to have been torn from top to bottom. A non-commissioned officer in charge confesses that Jesus was indeed the Son of God. This is the climax of the Gospel. We are told that Mary Magdalene and the mother of James the young look on the crucifixion from afar. Joseph of Armithea, a member of the Council, asks to be allowed to bury Jesus; he, no doubt, has been a sympathizer to the Kingdom of God to come. Joseph wrapped the body of Jesus in linen and laid it in a tomb, with Mary Magdalene and Mary the mother of Jesus looking on. The traditional tomb closing occurs with a huge stone rolled across the door of the cave.

Pasted from <<http://crain.english.missouriwestern.edu/Mark/newpage23.htm>>

Readers may wish to redirect to chapter eight where the various names--Son of Man, Son of God, Son of David, and Messiah--have been discussed.

Sharyn Down in a review of Telford's book on Mark says that Telford understands Mark to write from a Pauline-influenced gentile Christianity and that the author sets out to oppose an incorrect Jewish Christianity understanding of Jesus:

IN THIS CAREFULLY WRITTEN and documented volume, Telford rightly sees christology as the most prominent theological focus of the Gospel of Mark. He approaches the question of Mark's christology through a redactional study of the titles, arguing that the evangelist privileges the title "Son of God" in its Hellenistic sense of a "divine man" who is able to work miracles by virtue of his supernatural nature. But Mark adds the emphasis of the suffering Son of Man to this picture of Jesus. Thus, the "messianic secret" is really a "Son of God secret" according to Telford. The evangelist reinterprets the miracles of Jesus from signs of the in-breaking of the Kingdom to signals pointing to Jesus' divinity." The author of Mark's Gospel writes as a representative of a Pauline-influenced gentile Christianity which viewed Jesus (and, by means of the secrecy motif, invites the reader to view him) as the divine 'Son of God' who came to suffer and die on the cross" (p. 53).

By contrast, the Jewish Christianity of the primitive community (represented by the Twelve) viewed Jesus as a Son of David Messiah whose death was the prelude to his exaltation to heaven and whose supernatural status and saving work were focused on his return as the apocalyptic Son of Man. The Jewish-Christian leaders failed to grasp the universal significance of Jesus' saving activity and its corollary, the gentile mission. Mark's opposition to this misreading of christology and soteriology explains for Telford the evangelist's negative portrayal of the Twelve and his refusal (by eliminating the resurrection appearances) to confer on them the leadership of the post-Easter community.

Pasted from <<http://www.questia.com/read/1P3-52600759/the-theology-of-the-gospel-of-mark>>

The ESV makes the following observations:

Mark 8:27–16:8 Testing Jesus' Authority in Suffering. Having displayed his messianic authority and power (1:1–8:26), Jesus is now tested as the Messiah of God.

Mark 14:1–16:8 Death and Resurrection in Jerusalem. The narrative of Jesus' suffering moves quickly from the celebration of the Passover, the betrayal, Gethsemane, and the arrest of Jesus to his trials before the Sanhedrin and Pilate. It culminates in the crucifixion of Jesus and the discovery of the empty tomb, complemented by the announcement of Jesus' resurrection.

Mark 14:53–15:20 Trial. The trial before the Jewish Sanhedrin leads to the verdict of blasphemy, requiring the death penalty. But only the Roman governor Pilate has the authority to execute Jesus.

Mark 15:1 The whole council is the Sanhedrin. It did not have the right to execute a person convicted of a capital crime. That right was reserved for Roman authorities, especially when dealing with popular figures. **Pilate**, the Roman governor, was temporarily in Jerusalem "to keep the peace" during the Passover (on Pilate, see note on [Luke 23:1](#); cf. also note on [Luke 3:1](#)). The Jewish authorities did not want to be busy with the case during the festive Passover day of Nisan 15.

Mark 15:2 When they brought him to **Pilate**, the Jewish authorities did not accuse Jesus of blasphemy (a religious crime that would have made no difference to Pilate) but rather of claiming to be **King of the Jews**, thus challenging Caesar's rule (in the eyes of Rome, a capital crime).

Pasted from <<http://www.esvbible.org/search/Mark%2B15/>>

In this chapter, yet another title for Jesus emerges: King of the Jews, this title setting Jesus up as challenging current Roman rule, a title which contrasts the climactic Son of God title in the centurion's confession:

Mark 15:39 The centurion has observed the death of many crucified criminals; he recognizes the purity and power of Jesus (in this way) and rightly sees that he is the Son of God (cf. note on Luke 23:47). Like the thief on the cross who expressed faith in Jesus (Luke 23:39-43), the centurion may have had incomplete understanding of Jesus' identity and mission, but Mark seems to record this testimony as an indication of the centurion's faith and the truth about Jesus' identity.

Pasted from <<http://www.esvbible.org/search/Mark%2B15/>>

Understood as a rebel against Rome, much of the rest of the crucifixion scene can be explained:

The presence of the whole battalion (about 600 men at full strength) assumes that Jesus is a rebel against Rome. Therefore the soldiers dress, mock, and mistreat him as King of the Jews (Matt. 27:28; Mark 15:9, 12, 26), which, contrary to their view, he truly was. The sarcastichomage paid to Jesus imitates what various emperors in Rome expected of their subjects (see also note on Matt. 27:28-31).

Pasted from <<http://www.esvbible.org/search/Mark%2B15/>>

Finally, this is the inscription posted above Jesus' head:

Mark 15:26 The inscription of the charge against him (see note on John 19:19) is posted above Jesus' head, so that all can see why he was so shamefully executed. "The King of the Jews." With this inscription, Pilate justified his actions (Jesus was crucified as a political rebel) and also provoked the Jewish authorities (John 19:19-22; cf. Mark 15:10).

Pasted from <http://www.esvbible.org/search/content/notes/esvsb_notes/%40%2A+%22King+of+the+Jews%22+%26+%40note_type+lsb%7Csb%7Chs+%40book+41/>

Turton, as always, attends carefully to the events described here, remarking that King of the Jews has not been previously used and seems unwarranted as based on information given to Pilate and that the question is followed by silence:

v2: Pilate asks if Jesus is the King of the Jews, although that term has never been used in the Gospel, including during the Sanhedrin trial. Since the writer does not say that the Jewish leaders gave Pilate any information, why didn't Pilate start out with more basic questions of the "where are you from?/what is your name?" variety?

v2: As with the Sanhedrin, the accuser asks after Jesus' true identity, but in the Trial before Pilate the order is reversed; Jesus' silence follows rather than precedes the question.

v2: Historically, the first use of the title "King of the Jews" was by the Hasmonean high priests when they established an independent Jewish state in Palestine a century or so before this time. Herod the Great also styled himself "King of the Jews." (Brown 1994, p731).

v2: in a rare instance of agreement, in all four canonical gospels the Greek of this line is exactly the same.

v2: Recall that Greek had no punctuation. Hence, in Greek this exchange is marvelously ambiguous, as either figure speaking could be asking a question or making a statement. It could read as Pilate saying "You are the king of the Jews" and Jesus replying "Are you saying so?" The narrator has clarified this by defining Pilate's comment as a question, leaving the ostensible ambiguity in Jesus' answer. (Fowler 1996, p198)

5: But Jesus made no further answer, so that Pilate wondered.

Turton next, following his usual pattern, remarks on the Scriptural background:

v5: Jesus' silence recalls Isaiah 53:7:

He was oppressed and afflicted, yet he did not open his mouth; he was led like a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is silent, so he did not open his mouth. (NIV)
Note also that in the discourse in Mark 13, Jesus told his followers not to be anxious about what to say, but that the Holy Spirit would speak for them. Another fulfillment of Mark 13 as a

Passion prediction.

v5: A. Y. Collins (1994) has also identified Psalm 38 in the background here:

11: My friends and companions stand aloof from my plague, and my kinsmen stand afar off.

12: Those who seek my life lay their snares, those who seek my hurt speak of ruin, and meditate treachery all the day long.

13: But I am like a deaf man, I do not hear, like a dumb man who does not open his mouth.

14: Yea, I am like a man who does not hear, and in whose mouth are no rebukes. (RSV)

Psalm 38 has also been identified with 15:40-1, the watching women, as well.

v5: Pilate functions as an effective double of King Herod in Mark 6:14-29) in the this scene. As Mary Ann Tolbert(1989) points out, Pilate:

"...like King Herod before him, initially responds positively to the man in his custody. Pilate, indeed, as the narrator informs the audience, recognizes that the accusation against Jesus arises out of the envy of the chief priests (15:10) rather than out of any crime Jesus has committed and seeks to release him (15:9, 12, 14). However, also as with King Herod, Pilate's nobler instincts collapse under the press of expediency..."(p273)

Pasted from <<http://www.michaelturton.com/Mark/GMark15.html>>

LSB Notes summarizes the content of chapter 15 in the following way, emphasizing the trial before Pilate, a mob scene, the crucifixion, death, and burial of Jesus.

Mark 15. The day of crucifixion A temporal formula ("as soon as it was morning"—v. 1) provides the transition from the night before the crucifixion to the day of it. The tragic events happen at breakneck speed. The trial before the high priest Caiaphas is now succeeded by the more sinister trial before the Roman governor Pilate (vv. 1–5). A mob scene ensues in which a murderer and insurrectionist is exchanged for the innocent Jesus (vv. 6–15). After that the action marches grimly to its foreordained conclusion: torturing of Jesus (vv. 16–20); the procession to the place of crucifixion and then the crucifixion itself (vv. 21–32); the death of Jesus (vv. 33–41); the burial of Jesus (vv. 42–47). To read any story well, we need to be receptive to the feelings that the story evokes and awakens; this is the saddest of all stories. As we read it, we need to note that the Gospels tell us the facts of what happened, with very little theological explanation of the events. Most of the Bible's theological interpretation of the significance of what happens in the passion stories is found in the OT sacrificial system and messianic prophecies and the NT epistles' commentary on Jesus' atonement.

Pasted from <<http://www.esvbible.org/Mark+15/>>

Some discussion should probably occur relative to the tearing of the temple curtain and the centurion's confession:

Jesus, in agony, cries out, "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?" He is offered wine vinegar and utters, "It is finished." At that moment, the curtain of the temple is reported to have been torn from top to bottom. A non-commissioned officer in charge confesses that Jesus was indeed the Son of God. This is the climax of the Gospel.

Dominic Rudman has pointed out that the Synoptic Gospels' depiction of the events surrounding the crucifixion "have provoked varying responses from New Testament scholars and says the references can be explained relative to the chaoskampf typology of the Old Testament... Jesus is presented as a creator figure who confronts the powers of chaos. In this instance however, the powers of chaos emerge temporarily triumphant. The old creation is destroyed, paving the way for a renewal of creation with Jesus's resurrection."

Pasted from <<http://www.bsw.org/Biblica/Vol-84-2003/The-Crucifixion-As-Chaoskampf-A-New-Reading-Of-The-Passion-Narrative-In-The-Synoptic-Gospels/196/article-p103.html>>

To arrive at his conclusion, Rudman reviews literary approaches taken by scholars to these crucifixion events: the possibility that these equal "the visible phenomena that vindicate Jesus's status as God's son' to which the centurion (a gentile) responds, but which Jesus' own people ignore" or the view taken by Gundry:

Another view is advanced by Gundry, who argues that the darkness is a response by God to the jeering of the group witnessing Jesus' execution, an attempt to shield his son from the humiliation of the people's mockery... yet the essential point of the passion narratives seems to be to demonstrate the ultimate sacrifice made by Jesus: he suffers a painful and humiliating death and gives utterance to the idea that he has been abandoned by God (Matt 27,46; Mark 15,34).

Yet another approach makes use of a passage in Amos:

Hooker and others, who understand it as a symbol of judgement on Israel for the death of Israel's king⁴. Almost all commentators make reference to Amos 8,9-10 in their discussion of this part of the narrative. The text in question states:

On that day, declares Lord Yahweh,
I will make the sun go down at noon
and darken the earth in broad daylight.
I will turn your religious feasts into mourning
and all your singing into weeping.
I will make all of you wear sackcloth
and shave your heads.
I will make that time like mourning for an only son
and the end of it like a bitter day

Rudman makes two objections to this approach before returning to his own --the years separating Amos and this event and, he thinks, the more important objection, the likelihood of recognizing the allusion:

A new perspective on this problem may be helpful. Biblical texts strongly associate darkness or night with the forces of chaos. Darkness is synonymous with chaos in the form of non-existence (Job 3,3-6) or crime (Prov 2,13), and is therefore particularly associated with Sheol — the place where the human essence resides after death (Job 10,21; 17,11-16; Eccl 11,8). Night is a time of lawlessness, when thieves or the wicked play out their schemes (Job 24,14; Obad 5; Matt 24,43; 1 Thess 5,2). Associations of darkness with the forces of chaos led OT authors to speculate that with God's final victory over the forces of chaos, night would cease to exist (Isa 60,18-20 cf. Zech 14,7). This theme is adapted by the author of Revelation (22,5 cf. 21,25) in his vision of the new creation, one unmarred by the presence of chaos within cosmic boundaries. As well as the destruction of darkness, two other exemplars of chaos, death and the sea, are also destroyed (Rev 21,1.4).

Pasted from <<http://www.bsw.org/Biblica/Vol-84-2003/The-Crucifixion-As-Chaoskampf-A-New-Reading-Of-The-Passion-Narrative-In-The-Synoptic-Gospels/196/article-p104.html>>

From this, it is but a short step to see the darkness spreading over the earth at Jesus' crucifixion as representing the powers of chaos encroaching upon the creation. It is my contention that the crucifixion is expressed literarily as a chaoskampf, but one in which the powers of chaos are victorious.

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This chaoskampf theme is far from alien to the gospels (especially in confrontations with the demonic), and features most prominently in the narrative in which Jesus demonstrates his command over the forces of chaos by ordering the winds and waves that had threatened his boat to be still (Matt 8,23-27; Mark 4,35-41; Luke 8,22-25). Several commentators see in this latter episode an allusion to Psalm 104, in which Yahweh accomplishes the same feat. Indeed, it is noticeable that Jesus, faced by the raging chaos waters, does not call on Yahweh, but, rather, acts as if he were Yahweh 6. Naturally, the synoptic writers stop short of taking the parallel to its logical conclusion (i.e. calling Jesus "God")⁷, but there is certainly a blurring of the distinction between Jesus as human and the Jesus as a creator figure. The act of repulsing the hostile forces of chaos is implicitly linked with creation, and the godlike power of Jesus in so doing is evidenced in the terrified exclamation of the disciples: "Who is this? Even the winds and waves obey him!" (Matt 8,27; Mark 4,41 cf. Luke 8,25).

2. Jesus' Death and Resurrection

Pasted from <<http://www.bsw.org/Biblica/Vol-84-2003/The-Crucifixion-As-Chaoskampf-A-New-Reading-Of-The-Passion-Narrative-In-The-Synoptic-Gospels/196/article-p105.html>>

Rudman next links the ideas of death, chaos, and Sheol, describing the cross as "the ultimate victory of Chaos over creation." He points out that Sheol is the place where the essence of the person comes to rest, referencing Ecclesiastes 9, 10, Job 17,16; 21,26; Ps 7,6, Psalms 31,17-18; 94,17; 115,17; and Isaiah 47,5.

Both aspects contribute to the feeling that the Hebrew underworld is essentially a dry, lifeless place, rather like the description of the land in Gen 2,5 before the formation of humanity (cf. Gen 1,9-10). As with Sheol, desert and wasteland, where little or nothing grows, are viewed as chaotic in Hebrew thought precisely because they are lifeless (cf. the use of the term *wht* in Gen 1,2 and Deut 32,10; Job 6,18; 12,24; Isa 24,10; 45,18).

Sheol is further equated with chaos in its frequent association with darkness (Job 17,13 cf. Lam 3,6; Job 18,18), and, like the sea, it is fitted with gates (Isa 38,10; Pss 9,14 [Eng. 13]; 107,18; Job 38,17 cf. Wis 16,13; Matt 16,18; Rev 1,18) and bars (Jon 2,7 [Eng. 6]; Job 38,10), presumably to prevent the escape of its inhabitants (and thus to maintain the separation between the realms of creation and uncreation). Most significant of all, however, are those OT poetic texts that combine imagery of the individual being engulfed by the chaos waters and being carried down to Sheol (Jon 2,3-6; Pss 42,8; 69,2-3.15-16; 88,7-8). Death in Hebrew thought then involved a movement from the created realm to the realm of uncreation, or chaos.

Pasted from <<http://www.bsw.org/Biblica/Vol-84-2003/The-Crucifixion-As-Chaoskampf-A-New-Reading-Of-The-Passion-Narrative-In-The-Synoptic-Gospels/196/article->

[p105.html](#)>

Against this backdrop, the resurrection can be viewed as a victory over death and as the "firstfruits of the eschaton." The tearing of the temple curtain, he suggests, represents divine judgment on Israel, Jesus's death "portending the end of all temple ritual. He explains that scholar Carrington "takes the position that the rending of the curtain represents the destruction of the old barrier separating God and his people (since the curtain in the Temple's "holy of holies" where Yahweh resided could be passed only once a year, and then only by the High Priest)."

10.

Carrington's unusual argument deserves closer scrutiny. According to the Antiquities of Josephus, himself a priest (Life 1), the tabernacle was effectively understood to be microcosm of the creation. Divided into three, the outer parts represented the sea and the land, while "the third part thereof ... to which the priests were not admitted is, as it were, a heaven peculiar to God" (Ant. 3.181). This suggests that the temple curtain formed the boundary between earth and heaven: its destruction could be taken to signify the irruption of the heavenly world onto the earth (i.e. the arrival of the kingdom of heaven as Carrington suggests). However, it could equally be taken to signify the disruption of creation. As noted earlier, the establishing and maintenance of boundaries (e.g. against the sea, or death) is crucial to the process of creation and its preservation in the OT. The dissolution of such boundaries could therefore be seen as signifying a victory by the forces of chaos. It is surely significant that this action happens at the precise moment of Jesus' death, when chaos has triumphed and all is despair. At this moment, Jesus' victory remains three days in the future.

The second possibility stems from the colours of the temple curtain noted above. Both Josephus and Philo suggest that the four colours incorporated into it (blue, purple, crimson and white [2 Chr 3.14]) symbolise the four elements from which the cosmos was created — indeed, according to Josephus, a panorama of the cosmos was embroidered into the curtain (BJ 5.212-13). Thus, the temple curtain represented not only the boundary between earth and heaven, but the cosmos itself. On this basis — and this seems to me the most likely interpretation of the event — one could argue that the tearing of the temple curtain at the moment of Jesus' death signifies the rending of creation.

He then concludes the crucifixion can be understood as a chaoskampf:

Taken together, the three elements of the passion narrative, the darkness that covers the land, the death of a creator figure and the tearing of the temple curtain, point towards the conclusion that the narrator saw the crucifixion as a chaoskampf — one in which Jesus is apparently defeated by the forces of chaos. Alongside the death of this creator figure, one may also see in the tearing of the temple curtain at least a figurative destruction of creation. The crucifixion as depicted in the synoptic gospels therefore demonstrates the unravelling of the old created order prior to the its renewal or, better, replacement, heralded by Jesus' resurrection. It is this theology of death, destruction and cosmic renewal (not unlike that of the Baal-Mot legend) that informs the synoptic passion narratives.

Pasted from <<http://www.bsw.org/Biblica/Vol-84-2003/The-Crucifixion-As-Chaoskampf-A-New-Reading-Of-The-Passion-Narrative-In-The-Synoptic-Gospels/196/article-p107.html>>

Chapter sixteen discusses Jesus's burial as a temporary burial and the expectation that after three days, the face of the body would have become disfigured beyond recognition. The three days would affect what could be said of any resurrection. What is clear in the shorter ending of Mark is that the women coming to the tomb reacted with trembling, astonishment, and fear:

16 When the Sabbath was past, Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James, and Salome bought spices, so that they might go and anoint him. 2 And very early on the first day of the week, when the sun had risen, they went to the tomb. 3 And they were saying to one another, "Who will roll away the stone for us from the entrance of the tomb?" 4 And looking up, they saw that the stone had been rolled back—it was very large. 5 And entering the tomb, they saw a young man sitting on the right side, dressed in a white robe, and they were alarmed. 6 And he said to them, "Do not be alarmed. You seek Jesus of Nazareth, who was crucified. He has risen; he is not here. See the place where they laid him. 7 But go, tell his disciples and Peter that he is going before you to Galilee. There you will see him, just as he told you." 8 And they went out and fled from the tomb, for trembling and astonishment had seized them, and they said nothing to anyone, for they were afraid.

Pasted from <<http://www.esvbible.org/Mark+15/>>

Chapter sixteen also includes the several ways Mark has used "raised." What is reported in Mark is simply that Jesus "has risen" and "is not here."

Mark 16:6 He has risen; he is not here. The heavenly messenger confirms that Jesus has fulfilled his predictions that he would rise from the dead (8:31; 9:9, 31; 10:32–34; 14:25).

Pasted from <<http://www.esvbible.org/search/Mark%2B16/>>

Concerning the longer ending of Mark, ESV Notes says the following:

Mark 16:9–20 "Longer Ending of Mark." Some ancient manuscripts of Mark's Gospel contain these verses and others do not, which presents a puzzle for scholars who specialize in the history of such manuscripts. This longer ending is missing from various old and reliable Greek manuscripts (esp. Sinaiticus and Vaticanus), as well as numerous early Latin, Syriac, Armenian, and Georgian manuscripts. Early church fathers (e.g., Origen and Clement of Alexandria) did not appear to know of these verses. Eusebius and Jerome state that this section is missing in most manuscripts available at their time. And some manuscripts that contain vv. 9–20 indicate that older manuscripts lack the section. On the other hand, some early and many later manuscripts (such as the manuscripts known as A, C, and D) contain vv. 9–20, and many church fathers (such as Irenaeus) evidently

knew of these verses. As for the verses themselves, they contain various Greek words and expressions uncommon to Mark, and there are stylistic differences as well. Many think this shows vv. 9–20 to be a later addition. In summary, vv. 9–20 should be read with caution. As in many translations, the editors of the ESV have placed the section within brackets, showing their doubts as to whether it was originally part of what Mark wrote, but also recognizing its long history of acceptance by many in the church. The content of vv. 9–20 is best explained by reference to other passages in the Gospels and the rest of the NT. (Most of its content is found elsewhere, and no point of doctrine is affected by the absence or presence of vv. 9–20.) With particular reference to v. 18, there is no command to **pick up serpents** or to drink **deadly poison**; there is merely a promise of protection as found in other parts of the NT (see Acts 28:3–4; James 5:13–16). (See The Reliability of the New Testament Manuscripts.)

Pasted from <<http://www.esvbible.org/search/Mark%2B16/>>

N.T. Wright addresses the empty tomb in the following way:

When one compares the five different accounts we have of the resurrection (this, Matthew 28:1-10, Luke 24:1-11, John 20:1-10, and I Corinthians 15:3-7) there are a number of details that are impossible to harmonize. Mark may have allowed himself some imaginative freedom in depicting the scene—the story of the young man, for instance. What can hardly be called legendary or imaginative, however, is the double fact that the tomb was empty and that Jesus appeared to his followers after his death.

How can we interpret the fact of the empty tomb? If we say that the Jews or Romans stole the body, it would have been simple for them to put a stop to the preaching of the resurrection simply by producing it, but this they did not do. If we say that the disciples stole and hid the body, we have a picture of the whole origin of the Christian movement based on a piece of crude deception. Even Jewish commentators on this material find this hypothesis incredible.

Our remaining alternative is to say that God in fact did raise Jesus from the dead, changing his "physical body" into a "spiritual body," and in this latter form he appeared to his followers.

The transformation of the dispirited and cowardly disciples into forthright evangelists, the very existence of the church and the New Testament -- these facts receive an adequate explanation only when we go beyond the general statement, "Jesus conquered death," to the explicit and factual remark that God raised Jesus Christ from the dead. This is scarcely an easy statement for any of us to make, for we are all modern men. And yet -- though there is room for openness and even agnosticism on some of the details of the resurrection narrative -- it seems certain that no qualification can be accepted of the actual, historical fact of the resurrection as a decisive and mighty act of God for man's salvation and eternal life.

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C.H. Dodd explains the "rising again" as part of Jesus's sense of inevitable destiny:

Some sayings speak of "rising from the dead," some speak of "coming again," and sometimes they are in vaguer terms: "A little while and you see me no more; again a little while and you will see me." 28 It is perhaps impossible to decide which of these best represent what Jesus actually said. That forecasts may have grown more specific in the light of what happened is likely enough. It is also likely enough that what he said on various occasions was sometimes more explicit, sometimes more cryptic. But one thing we may say with reasonable certainty: quite apart from the question of time authenticity or the verbal accuracy of this or that reported saying, the idea of new life through death, of victory coming out of defeat, is an inseparable part of the thought of Jesus about his destiny.

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Dodd concludes by connecting this destiny to Son of Man on the historical plane, but with a final victory which will be beyond history, but already present in the pattern and example of Jesus' life:

It is in this light, I suggest, that we may best understand the cryptic sayings about the coming of the Son of Man. Central to the whole group of such sayings is the answer which Jesus is reported to have given to the High Priest when he was interrogated about his alleged messianic pretensions: "You will see the Son of Man seated at the right hand of God and coming with the clouds of heaven."³⁸ The language is allusive and the imagery close-packed. There are echoes of two passages in the Old Testament. In one of these the Almighty is represented as conferring the highest dignity on the king of Israel (prototype of the Messiah), in the words, "Sit at my right hand."³⁹ This is here associated with another passage, from the Book of Daniel, which describes, in bizarre imagery, a vision of timings to come. First, there is a procession of weird and ferocious beasts, and then "one like a son-of-man [a human form, as distinct from the bestial figures] came with the clouds of heaven," to be invested with everlasting dominion.⁴⁰ The prophet himself has supplied a key. The beasts stand for the brutal pagan empires by which Israel had been successively oppressed, and the human figure stands for "the people of the saints of the Most High." He is therefore a "double" of the Lord, an embodiment of the people of God, first oppressed and then vindicated in glory. It is a vision of the final victory of God's cause over all powers in the universe; it is also a vision of (expected) historical victory for Israel over its oppressors. We are probably to understand that in recalling this prophecy Jesus also was pointing to the final victory of God's cause, or in other words the consummation of his kingdom, beyond history, and was affirming his own part in it; but as in Daniel, so here, this victory has its embodiment in history, namely in the impending fate of Jesus himself, who is to pass through suffering

and sacrifice to glorious life. The human figure of Daniel's vision has acquired a new identity. It is this historical Person in whom, as its "inclusive representative," the new Israel, the people of God, is to emerge from apparently irretrievable disaster -- "raised to life with Christ," as Paul was to express it.⁴¹ This is the coming of the Son of Man on the historical plane. His ultimate "coming" lies beyond history, but the essential pattern of it is already given in the historical Person and the historical event.

Pasted from <<http://www.religion-online.org/showchapter.asp?title=2241&C=2113>>

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Any discussion of chapter sixteen of Mark has to address the variation in what is considered to be its ending; I begin here by providing my full discussion and conclusion in my earlier work on Mark, a conclusion that may need to be read in terms of discussions in this work as to the possible meanings of "Son of God."

Before looking at this summary, however, it may be good to have the first eight verses in view:

When the sabbath was over, Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James, and Salome bought spices, so that they might go and anoint him. 2 And very early on the first day of the week, when the sun had risen, they went to the tomb. 3 They had been saying to one another, "Who will roll away the stone for us from the entrance to the tomb?" 4 When they looked up, they saw that the stone, which was very large, had already been rolled back. 5 As they entered the tomb, they saw a young man, dressed in a white robe, sitting on the right side; and they were alarmed. 6 But he said to them, "Do not be alarmed; you are looking for Jesus of Nazareth, who was crucified. He has been raised; he is not here. Look, there is the place they laid him. 7 But go, tell his disciples and Peter that he is going ahead of you to Galilee; there you will see him, just as he told you." 8 So they went out and fled from the tomb, for terror and amazement had seized them; and they said nothing to anyone, for they were afraid.

The Holy Bible : New Revised Standard Version. 1996, c1989 (Mk 16:1-8). Thomas Nelson: Nashville

Summary When the Sabbath is over, Mary Magdalene and Mary the mother of James and Salome come to the tomb early in the morning to anoint the body of Jesus; on the way, they have wondered about how they will remove the huge rock that covers the front of the tomb. Arriving, they see that the stone has already been rolled away; inside, they see a young man in white, and they become alarmed. This young man hastens to reassure these women, telling them they seek Jesus who has been crucified, but he has risen. He then tells them to go to the disciples and tell them, Peter in particular, that Jesus has gone into Galilee before them. The women are seized by terror and amazement, are afraid, and they flee.

The short ending of Mark is brief:

[[And all that had been commanded them they told briefly to those around Peter. And afterward Jesus himself sent out through them, from east to west, the sacred and imperishable proclamation of eternal salvation.]

Christians are grateful for the longer ending which has Jesus appear to several and then to ascend, but the argument is made that this was added by a later editing: Jesus Appears to Mary Magdalene:

9 [[Now after he rose early on the first day of the week, he appeared first to Mary Magdalene, from whom he had cast out seven demons. 10 She went out and told those who had been with him, while they were mourning and weeping. 11 But when they heard that he was alive and had been seen by her, they would not believe it.

Jesus Appears to Two Disciples

12 After this he appeared in another form to two of them, as they were walking into the country. 13 And they went back and told the rest, but they did not believe them.

Jesus Commissions the Disciples

14 Later he appeared to the eleven themselves as they were sitting at the table; and he upbraided them for their lack of faith and stubbornness, because they had not believed those who saw him after he had risen. † 15 And he said to them, "Go into all the world and proclaim the good news † to the whole creation. 16 The one who believes and is baptized will be saved; but the one who does not believe will be condemned. 17 And these signs will accompany those who believe: by using my name they will cast out demons; they will speak in new tongues; 18 they will pick up snakes in their hands, † and if they drink any deadly thing, it will not hurt them; they will lay their hands on the sick, and they will recover."

The Ascension of Jesus

19 So then the Lord Jesus, after he had spoken to them, was taken up into heaven and sat down at the right hand of God. 20 And they went out and proclaimed the good news everywhere, while the Lord worked with them and confirmed the message by the signs that accompanied it.]

Jesus appears to Mary Magdalene, but when she goes to his disciples and reveals this appearance, they do not believe her, remembering that she is, after all, the one from whom Jesus has cast out seven demons. Jesus next appears to two disciples walking in the country; they, too, go back and tell the rest, being no more believed than Mary Magdalene. Now, Jesus appears to the eleven while they are sitting at a table and upbraids them for their lack of faith, an all too common occurrence in Mark. Nonetheless, Jesus tells them they are to carry on the mission, taking the good news to the whole creation. Interestingly, in a book which has played hard into the Jewish need for signs, the disciples are told signs will accompany them: they will cast out demons, speak in tongues, pick up snakes, and be unaffected by any poisonous drinks. They will lay their hands upon the sick who will then recover.

Now, Jesus is taken up into heaven, where he is given the preferred place on the right hand of God. While God works with the disciples, they go into the world and begin to proclaim the good news, their message confirmed by signs.

What does one finally make of the Gospel of Mark? Certainly, the last chapter gives us our traditional Easter story, tied intimately into the Jewish Passover. Jesus has become the paschal lamb. Concerning the ending of Mark, we do well to consult the Oxford Annotated Bible for a sense of the multiple possibilities for interpretation:

16.9–20: The traditional close of the Gospel of Mark.

Nothing is certainly known either about how this Gospel originally ended or about the origin of Mark 16.9–20, which, because of the textual evidence as well as stylistic differences from the rest of the Gospel, cannot have been part of the original text of Mark. Certain important witnesses to the text, including some ancient ones, end the Gospel with Mark 16.8. Though it is

possible that the compiler of the Gospel intended this abrupt ending, one can find hints that he intended to describe events after the resurrection: for example, Mark 14.28 looks forward to an account of at least one experience of the disciples with Jesus in Galilee after the resurrection, while the friendly reference to Peter (Mark 16.7) may anticipate the recounting of the otherwise unrecorded moment of reconciliation between Peter and his Lord (compare Luke 24.34; 1 Corinthians 15.5). If accounts such as these were originally part of Mark's Gospel, the loss of them took place very shortly after the Gospel was written, under circumstances beyond present knowledge. Many witnesses, some ancient, end the Gospel with Mark 16.9–20, thus showing that from early Christian times these verses have been accepted traditionally and generally as part of the canonical Gospel of Mark. A variety of other manuscripts conclude the Gospel with the shorter ending, either alone or followed by Mark 16.9–20, thus indicating that different attempts were made to provide a suitable ending for the Gospel. The longer ending may have been compiled early in the second century as a didactic summary of grounds for belief in Jesus' resurrection, being appended to the Gospel by the middle of the second century. On the Christian belief in continuing unrecorded memories about Jesus in the first century see Luke 1.1–2; John 20.30; John 21.25; Acts 20.35 n.; 1 Corinthians 15.3; also compare Matthew 28.20; John 16.12–33; Revelation 1.12–16 n.; Revelation 2.18.

16.9–18: Post-resurrection appearances of Jesus.

9–10: Mary is associated with other women in Mark 16.1, Mark 16.7–8 and parallels; she is apparently alone in John 20.1–2; John 20.11–19. Seven demons, Luke 8.2. 11: Luke 24.11; Luke 24.22–25; John 20.19–29; 1 Corinthians 15.5. Here, as in John 20.19–29, the disciples are convinced of the truth of Jesus' resurrection by their own immediate experience with him, though they should have heeded the witness of others as later generations must do (John 20.29). 12–13: Luke 24.12–35. 13: Compare Luke 24.34.

16.14–18: Matthew 28.19; Luke 24.47. 16: Acts 2.37–42; Acts 10.47–48; Romans 10.9. 17–18: The reality of faith in believers' lives as they respond to the apostolic witness is signified by events that both correspond with biblically recorded happenings in the lives of the apostles and conform to apostolic statements about the gifts of the Spirit (for example, 1 Corinthians 12.8–11; 1 Corinthians 12.28; 1 Corinthians 14.2–5; Hebrews 2.3–4): exorcism (Acts 8.6–7; Acts 16.18; Acts 19.11–20); new tongues (see Acts 2.4–11 n.; Acts 10.46; Acts 19.6; 1 Corinthians 12.10; 1 Corinthians 12.28; 1 Corinthians 14.2–33); healing (Acts 28.8; 1 Corinthians 12.9; James 5.13–16). Instances of picking up snakes and drinking poison, without injury to the believer in either case, lack New Testament parallels. However, the former resembles the harmless accidental attack upon Paul in Acts 28.3–6, and the latter appears occasionally in Christian literature from the second century onward.

16.19–20: Jesus' exaltation.

19: For the concept of Jesus' exaltation, Philippians 2.9–11; Hebrews 1.3; for the language was taken up, Acts 1.2; Acts 1.11; Acts 1.22; 1 Timothy 3.16 (seemingly a Christian hymn); for the image of the right hand of God, Psalm 110.1 n.; Acts 7.55; Hebrews 1.3. 20: Mark 16.17–18; Hebrews 2.3–4.

Taken from the above, note at least these movements:

The disciples have at least one experience after the resurrection with Jesus in Galilee. Remember, Galilee is in the north of Palestine.

Peter, in the traditional role of one who has denied Christ, seems to be reconciled.

The longer ending of Mark may have been compiled in the second century. By this time, a distinction had been made between the literal and physical Jesus and the resurrected, spiritual Christ, or pre-Easter and post-Easter interpretations.

Jesus' work with the disciples suggests immediate experience is necessary for belief; others can report, but the conviction comes from within a relationship.

Finally, the image of the right hand of God is clearly Jesus' exalted position. You may want to read all of Psalms 110. In particular, remember at least these words:

4 The Lord has sworn and will not change his mind,

"You are a priest forever according to the order of Melchizedek." †

5 The Lord is at your right hand;

The theme in Mark is clear: Jesus is the Son of God, stated both in the prologue (1.1) and in the unfolding of the Gospel (1.11; 9.7; 3.11; 5.7; 12.6; 14.61). He has been recognized by the heavenly Father, those who possess supernatural knowledge, and by himself. The climax comes when a Roman official also proclaims him as Son of God (15.39).

Against such a simple conclusion, Marcus J. Borg and John Dominic Crossan in *The Last Week* (2006) propose "The first passion of Jesus was the kingdom of God, namely to incarnate the justice of God" (viii). In looking at the story of Easter, these scholars prefer to see these events not as historical but rather, parable. They insist "parables can be true--truthful and truth-filled--independently of their factuality" (193). They also see an "archetypal pattern at the center of Christian life: death and resurrection, crucifixion and vindication" (209). Borg and Crossan accept the shorter ending of Mark and put the emphasis on what the young man in the tomb say to them: "Do not be alarmed. You are looking for Jesus of Nazareth, who was crucified. He has been raised; he is not here" (16: 5-6). Mark ends by giving the women a commission: "But go, tell his disciples and Peter that he is going ahead of you to Galilee; there you will see him just as he told you" (7). Mark ends the story abruptly with the women telling no one and being afraid (8). The other gospels "expand" this unsatisfactory ending. Mark's story, according to Borg and Crossan, presents alternative processions and journeys: one is "anti-imperial and nonviolent" leading to "a place of collaboration between religion and violence" while the other is about "journeying with the risen Jesus" in "the path of personal transformation" (216). Throughout, Borg and Crossan battle a traditional understanding of the death of Jesus as substitutionary sacrificial (137); they prefer to see Jesus's death as "an execution by the authorities because of his challenge to the domination system" (155). These scholars prefer to see Mark as historicizing Jewish prophecy in interpreting the life of Jesus as the Son of Man whose passion for the just Kingdom of God got him killed by the "central economic and political institutions of his day" (162). The crucifixion is thus interpreted as execution and the fact that Jesus is risen in Mark as vindication: God has vindicated Jesus (204).

In his Excurson, Michael Turton says the following of the ending of Mark:

Excursus: The Missing Ending of Mark

The Gospel of Mark currently ends at 16:8. This ending has always made readers uneasy, and in antiquity there were several attempts to graft an ending onto Mark. These endings are all considered spurious by the scholarly community. Basically, the current ending offers the reader the choice: did the writer mean for the Gospel to end at 16:8, or did the writer supply another one that has gone AWOL somehow?

Evidence from the Patristic fathers indicates that if the ending went AWOL, it did so quite early, for Longer Ending (Mark 16:9-20), found in some Bibles, is known from sometime early in the second half of the second century. Around that time it was incorporated into a harmony of the four Gospels known as the Diatesseron and generally attributed to Tatian, a heretic who was a student of Justin Martyr's in Rome in the middle of the second century. However, the Longer Ending was apparently unknown to Origen, and Jerome and Eusebius claimed that it was absent

from almost all the Greek manuscripts they knew (Donahue and Harrington 2002, p462).

In addition to the Longer Ending, there is also a Shorter Ending found in Greek, Latin, Syriac, and Coptic manuscripts. That ending consists of a few sentences in which the women report briefly to Peter. It is then reported that Jesus appeared to the disciples, and then sent them forth to proclaim the "sacred and incorruptible" message of eternal salvation. The style and vocabulary are decidedly unMarkan.

The so-called Freer Logion adds a number of verses to the Longer Ending. It is generally regarded as scribal gloss inserted to soften the Risen Jesus' criticism of the Eleven in 16:14. (Donahue and Harrington 2002, p463).

Against these, Evan Powell proposed in his 1994 book *The Unfinished Gospel* that the ending of John, John 21, was formerly the ending of Mark. Powell's argument was based on linguistic and stylistic affinities. David Ross has an excellent review of the idea on his Mark website, along with more evidence to bolster it.

In the chapter analysis, Turton summarizes research and provides the intriguing conclusion that the subtlety and ambiguity often results in a focus on the disciples rather than Jesus:

v8: This ending as it stands is enigmatic and to some, quite beautiful. The term "the disciples and Peter" may recall the passage in 1 Cor where "Cephas and the disciples" see the Risen Jesus.

v8: The ending of the Gospel is truncated (see Excursus below). The other known endings are all later creations.

v8: Darrell Doughty (2000) writes:

"A problem that has always exercised interpreters of Mark is the fact that the story concludes in 16:1-8 without any resurrection appearances of Jesus. All we have is an angel who tells the women that Jesus is risen and will meet them and his disciples in Galilee. We are also told that the women fled, saying nothing to anyone, which leaves only Peter and the disciples as to meet Jesus after his resurrection. I would suggest that the story is continued in chapter 1, where following his "death and resurrection" (1:9-10), Jesus enters into Galilee, meets his disciples by the Sea, and makes them "fishers of men" (1:14-21). Robert Fowler rightly observes that "the awkward gap at Mark 16:8, coupled with the ambiguous allusion to Galilee in 16:7, signals the reader to return to the beginning of the Gospel, to begin reading all over again" (*Let the Reader Understand*, 262)."

v8: Carrier (2004c) observes:

"But we have one definite proof that the resurrection motif in fiction predates the 1st century: the Latin satire of that very genre, *The Satyricon* by Petronius. This is positively dated to around 60 A.D. (Petronius was killed under the reign of Nero, and makes fun of social circumstances created by the early Caesars) and is a full-fledged travel-narrative just like Acts, with a clear religious motif. However, Petronius is making fun of that motif, and also writing in Latin, yet we know the genre began in the Greek language. Thus, in order for Petronius to move the genre into Latin and make fun of it, it must have pre-existed the time of his writing and been popular enough to draw his attention. Indeed, the satire itself may actually have existed in a Greek form before Petronius took it up: P. Parsons, "A Greek *Satyricon*?" *Bulletin of the Institute of Classical Studies* 18 (1971) pp. 53ff. It should be noted that Petronius pokes fun at the resurrection theme in section 140.frg2, where the hero compares his restoration from impotence to the "resurrected Protesilaus," and attributes it to Mercury's known role in "bringing back the dead." Similarly, Plutarch relates a spoof of the motif in popular theatre, where a performing dog acts out its death and resurrection on stage to the delight of the emperor Vespasian ("*On the Cleverness of Animals*," *Moralia* 973e-974a). In order to have something to spoof, the motif must predate the year 80."

v8: Weeden (1971) writes:

"For Mark, the fact and reality of the resurrection is attested by the story of the empty grave. To state the matter in this fashion is no glib rhetoric. Such a statement speaks to a curious and puzzling phenomenon. Before Mark there is no evidence that the early church ever sought to verify its resurrection faith through recourse to Jesus' empty tomb. Nor is there any hard evidence that the early church ever knew of Jesus' grave's being empty."(p102)

v8: David Rhoads (2004) writes:

"Perhaps it is the subtlety and ambiguity of Mark's marvelously exasperating ending that explains why so many studies of Mark focus on the disciples."(p9)

Richard Heard(<http://www.religion-online.org/showchapter.asp?title=531&C=551>) also allows for the possibility of Mark's ending without the Resurrection appearances but allows for mutilation or suppression:

The MS. evidence makes it clear that 'the longer ending' found in most Bibles (Mk. 16:9-20) is in fact an early addition to bring Mark into line with the other gospels in recording Resurrection appearances of Jesus. It is probable that both Matthew and Luke used Mark in a form which broke off at 16:8, and this ending, though abrupt and awkward, may well be original. A number of theories, however, have been advanced to account for the loss of a supposed original ending which included Resurrection appearances in Galilee (cf. 16:7). It is possible that the gospel was not finished, or that the original copy was accidentally mutilated, and it has even been suggested that an account of Jesus' appearance in Galilee has been suppressed in view of the alternative tradition (witnessed by Luke 24) that the appearances of the risen Christ were in the neighbourhood of Jerusalem.

Pasted from <<http://www.religion-online.org/showchapter.asp?title=531&C=551>>

Yet another source suggests legitimacy for the longer version in the Alexandrian version

9. Now when he had risen. The remainder of the chapter is not found in the Vatican or Siniatic Greek MSS., but is found in the Alexandrian. These are the three oldest and most reliable MSS. Some hold these verses to be a later addition, but as they are found in all the most ancient versions they must have been a part of Mark's Gospel when the first century ended. Schaff, Plumptre, Olshausen, Lochman and others regard them genuine, while other critics consider them doubtful. A circumstance in their favor is that the Vatican MS. has a vacant space for them. It seems probable that in an early copy, therefore, they were omitted for some cause by a copyist who left space for them, but did not afterwards fill it, and that the Siniatic MS. was made from the mutilated copy. It is clear that verse 8 was not designed to conclude Mark's narrative. He appeared first to Mary Magdalene. This appearance is described more fully in John 20:11-17.

Other considerations arise from an understanding of "How the Bible Came to Us" (Wansbrough) where the following should be a guidepost for not rushing into over-generalized conclusions about what is to be accepted as Scriptural:

For Christians there is also a most important question concerning the value of the Greek Bible. In the Jewish colonies of the Diaspora, scattered over the trading cities of the eastern mediterranean, there were many who no longer understood Hebrew. For them a Greek version of the Bible was produced. Legend, stemming from the Letter of Aristeas (310-311), has it that Ptolemy II in 275 BC ordered 72 scholars, working separately in 72 isolated rooms, to translate the Bible into Greek. At the end of 72 days they all emerged with an identical translation. Not surprisingly, the translation became known as the Septuaginta (Latin for 70, abbreviated LXX). The work of translation was in fact spread over two or three centuries, starting probably in Egypt in the third century and ending in the early first century before Christ. The importance of the legend is that it shows that the translation was regarded as authoritative and inspired. Besides the books translated from Hebrew, this Bible contained several books originally written in Greek. The importance of this translation is vast:

1. It became the Bible of the early Church. It is from this rather than from the Hebrew that the New Testament authors, writing, of course, in Greek, normally quote the scriptures.
2. We possess a full text of the LXX from the fourth century AD in the Codex Vaticanus, much of it in another fourth century manuscript, the Codex Sinaiticus, and from the fifth century in the Codex Alexandrinus. Until the discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls in 1946, these were half a millenium older than our oldest Hebrew witness to the biblical texts. At Qumran some quite extensive Hebrew Bible texts were discovered, including the whole Book of Isaiah. Apart from that, the earliest full copies of the Hebrew text are the Leningrad Codex of the tenth century and the partially complete Aleppo Codex of 925 AD. Both of these important Hebrew texts belong to a single 'school' of manuscript tradition, stemming from the city of Tiberias on the shore of the Lake of Galilee, so known as 'Tiberian'. The Greek text of the Bible provides access, therefore, to a version free of another five or six hundred years of copyists' mistakes. No matter how religiously careful – and there were dreadful threats against those who made mistakes - a copyist is, errors are bound to occur.
3. In certain cases a real advance in theology occurs in the LXX. The most famous case is Isaiah 7.14 where the original 'young woman' (not necessarily a virgin) is translated into Greek with the word 'virgin', a text used by Matthew 1.23 to confirm the virginal birth of Jesus: 'a virgin shall conceive and bear a son'. Another important theological advance is that there is also a whole series of passages where the hope of resurrection from the dead is far more robustly affirmed in the LXX than in the Hebrew. At Job 14.14 a tentative question in the Hebrew, 'Can the dead come back to life?' becomes a firm statement in the Greek, 'If a man dies, he shall live,' and similarly at Hosea 13.14[1]. It may be that the Greek, perhaps influenced by philosophy of the time, has been too positive in the translation, or that the Hebrew text which the Greek translator had before him was different from the Hebrew text we now possess, and that the Hebrew we now possess is less positive than the text seen by the Greek translator a thousand years earlier. In the intervening centuries the question could have been introduced into the Hebrew text by copyists.

There are plenty of other examples of differences and patterns of difference between the Hebrew text and the Septuagint, despite the care taken by the translators to keep close to the Hebrew text. Indeed, Hebrew word-forms and constructions are retained to the extent that the language is obviously translation-Greek, revealing the Hebrew thought and words beneath the Greek. One example of this is the retention of the infinitive for emphasis: the Hebrew expression clumsily translated 'listening you shall listen' really means 'you shall listen attentively'. The repeated word is used, for example, in Exodus 15.26. This very common Hebrew form often penetrates into English translations. It is hard to say which is the authentic Bible. Has the Greek progressed from the Hebrew or does it represent an older version? Which, in either case, is to be regarded as the Word of God? Should it be the older version (whichever that may be), or the version which was used by the early Greek-speaking Christian writers?

A further difficulty is that the extent of the LXX, and so of the Canon accepted at Alexandria, is unclear: different great manuscripts of the LXX have different books. Thus the oldest complete manuscript, the mid-fourth century Codex Vaticanus, altogether omits the Books of Maccabees, while the fifth-century Codex Alexandrinus has four Books of Maccabees and fourth-century Codex Sinaiticus includes 1 and 4 Maccabees. To this day the standard edition of the LXX by Alfred Rahlfs (Stuttgart, Privilegierte Württembergische Bibelanstalt) prints 151 Psalms.

[1] Hans Clemens Cavallin 1974, p. 103-4, cf. NT Wright 2003, p. 148.
users.ox.ac.uk/~sben0056/newbooklets

Jewish law is also important to how one interprets the ending of Mark and the burial of Jesus: <http://www.infidels.org/kiosk/article125.html>

Jesus was finally buried by Joseph Saturday night in the criminal's graveyard. As the sources show, no one else saw this or knew where Jesus was really buried. Joseph would then have left town (he was not from Jerusalem), and as sources like Acts show, was never heard from again. Hysterical surprise by the women at the missing body, who went expecting to complete the burial, then contributed to an eventual belief in a resurrection, probably in conjunction with interpretations of scripture, things Jesus said, and/or dreams or visions of Peter or others.

Richard Carrier comes to the above conclusion on the basis of several observations. One of these is that Jewish law was certainly active and applicable in the time of Jesus and that Romans honoured Jewish customs. Torah law is clear on the burial of executed men:

If a man has committed a sin worthy of death, and he is put to death, and you hang him on a tree, his corpse shall not hang all night on the tree, but you shall surely bury him on the same day, for he who is hanged is the curse of God, so that you do not defile your land which the Lord your God gives you as an inheritance. (Deuteronomy 21:22-23; cf. Joshua 8:29, 10:26-27).

Carrier says the "tree" used here can refer either to the living tree or to a plank. Further, the body was required to be taken down by sunset:

This law is confirmed and elaborated in the Mishnah tractate Sanhedrin: people could be executed either by stoning, burning, decapitation, or strangulation (7.1a-c), but whichever it was, when the crime was blasphemy (6.4h-i) the corpse was then hung on a pole for display, apparently like a slab of meat, which resembled a crucifixion (6.4n-p). And whether executed or not, a body had to be taken down by sunset (6.4q-r), for "whoever allows his deceased to stay unburied overnight transgresses a negative commandment" (6.5c), unless one needs that time "to honor the corpse," e.g. to get the necessary shroud and bier (6.5d; 47a). There is no doubt, then, that taking the bodies of the condemned down by sunset was a fundamental commandment that was sacrilege to disobey. Though burial could be legally postponed, for reasons like those just mentioned (as well as for holy days), a body could not remain hanging into the night.

The crucifixion of Jesus should be understood in light of these customs:

It is fairly certain that Jesus was believed from very early on to have been executed in accordance with this law. In fact, our earliest source, Paul, explicitly says so, quoting the very Torah law above: "Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law, having become a curse for us--for it is written, 'cursed is everyone who hangs on a post'" (Galatians 3:13). And in accord with the Torah law condemning blasphemers to death (Leviticus 24:16), three of the four Evangelists state unequivocally that Jesus was condemned to death for blasphemy by the Jewish high council (Mark 14:64, Matthew 26:65-66, John 19:7). Mark (10:33) and Matthew (20:18) even have Jesus predict he will be condemned to death by the Jewish council. Only Luke fails to mention this sentencing, and seems to deny it in Acts 13:27-28, yet he actually assumes it in Luke 24:20, and in Acts 4:10, and 5:30 where he has Peter accuse the Jews of putting Jesus to death by hanging him on a cross (xylon, paraphrasing the Septuagint). Thus, although Jesus is ultimately executed by the Romans in the Gospel stories (seemingly on some charge like sedition), he was clearly believed from the earliest time to have been condemned to death for blasphemy by the Jewish high council. Paul even connected Jesus' death with the burial law. Given this, and what we know the Jewish law on blasphemy was, and the fact that the Jews enjoyed the practice of their laws at the time, especially ones taken so seriously as this, and the fact that Josephus writes as if the law was both observed under the Roman peace and regarded as especially vile to break, it seems fairly certain that, if the stories about his death are at all correct, Jesus had to have been taken down before sunset and buried immediately.

Carrier then makes the point that Pilate would have acquiesced to Jewish customs:

For Pilate to have forced a corpse to remain up against one of the most sacred of Jewish laws could not have failed to result in the sort of suicidal demonstration that followed his placing of the standards within the city walls. At the very least, Jewish outrage at this crime (and it would be a crime even to the Romans, violating the Augustan law cited above) could hardly have escaped record. And as Pilate acquiesced in the case of the standards, he would just as likely acquiesce in the treatment of a condemned corpse, since he would hardly want to irk the fanatical Jews on a daily basis as the law was continually and arrogantly violated in front of them.

He goes on to explain that it would be expected that someone would see to the burial of Jesus:

It should also not be regarded as unusual that Joseph seeks the body of Jesus: Mark makes it clear that no family relations of Jesus are in the city at the time of the crucifixion, leaving it to the Sanhedrin to ensure the commandments of God were not violated. So serious was this holy duty that:

the Talmud (BK 81a) states that speedy burial of a corpse found unattended (met mitzvah) was one of the ten enactments ordained by Joshua at the conquest of Canaan and is incumbent even on the high priest who was otherwise forbidden to become unclean through contact with the dead (Nazir 7.1). Josephus records that it is forbidden to let a corpse lie unburied (Contra Apion, 2.211).[16]

It was thus the holy duty of the Jews to see to the body of Jesus, and it was sacred law that he be buried the day he died, or as soon as possible.

Following upon this point of sacred law relevant to burial, Carrier next makes the case for this burial being a temporary one and cites the Gospel stories in support of this point:

If Jesus could not be buried in a private tomb (yet was: Mt 27:60, Lk 23:53, Jn 19:41), but had to be placed in the atoning graveyard of the unrighteous criminals, what explains the Gospel stories as we have them? A clue lies in the earliest report, Mark 16:1-3, which has the women visit the tomb Sunday morning with the intention of opening it and completing the burial (ritual washing and anointing were among the required burial rites). Thus, from the earliest report, they did not regard the burial of Jesus as completed. And Mark also notes the peculiar urgency of the Sabbath. Even before Joseph so much as asks for the body, "evening had already come" (Mark 15:42, and see note below). Only one conclusion fits all the facts: Jesus was not formally buried Friday night. This is supported by a similar case in the Midrash Rabbah, where David is said to wish that he would die the eve of the Sabbath so his body would experience a final Sabbath before its burial on Sunday (Eccl. [V:12(148)]), which suggests it was common for those dead just before sundown to await a later burial.

The law requiring prompt burial could be fulfilled by placing a corpse in a temporary resting place when burial rights could not be carried out right away. One such case was the arrival of the Sabbath, on which it was forbidden to perform any labor, including burial rites, or even so much as moving a body (Talmud: Sanhedrin 35a-35b; Yevamoth 7a; Baba Bathra 100b, Shabbath 150-1). So this is almost certainly what Joseph was doing when "burying" Jesus Friday night, since the Sabbath began at sundown Friday. We can be especially certain of this because it was forbidden to bury on the first day of any festival (Talmud Beitza 6a, 22a; Sanhedrin 26b), and Jesus died on the first day of Passover (1 Cor. 5:7; Lk 22:7-15, Mk 14:12-16, Mt 26:17-19; John is ambiguous: 18:28, 19:14; but 13:1 and 18:39 are consistent with the synoptics). So the only possible explanation left for Joseph's actions is to temporarily stow the body for a later burial.

As Amos Kloner puts it:

During the Second Temple period and later, Jews often practiced temporary burial...a borrowed or temporary cave was used for a limited time, and the occupation of the cave by the corpse conferred no rights of ownership upon the family...[and] Jesus' interment was probably of this nature.[18]

This last statement is supported by the Gospel stories. Mark states that Jesus died shortly after three in the afternoon (the ninth hour, when the Temple sacrifices were typically given, cf. Josephus AJ 14.65), and Joseph asked for the body within some hours of that, right before the Sabbath began.[19] So it is conceivable that Joseph could not consecrate Jesus' body to the grave: he had no time to perform all the burial rites (especially, but not only, the ceremonial washing and anointing of the body). He needed, therefore, to place the body in holding somewhere to ride

out the Sabbath, and then he would be obligated to bury Jesus at the soonest opportunity, which meant Saturday night, when the Sabbath ended at sundown. This delay was provided for by the Mishnah not only to honor the body (Sanhedrin 6.5d) but also (if we follow later sources) to protect it from the sun during the Sabbath (Midrash Rabbah, Ruth [III:2(43)]; Talmud Eiruvin 44a; and Shabbath 43b, where it is specifically allowed to move a body into the shade; Nazir 64b, following the Mishnah, allows moving other bodies not officially buried).

Finally, Carrier addresses the third day as a reversal of what could be expected to happen with the body. He points out that the identity of a corpse could not be determined after the third day because the facial features would have become too disfigured. Further, from Job 14:22, it can be determined that Jewish belief was that the soul hovered for three days, intending to re-enter the body: "When his flesh that is on him is distorted, his soul will mourn over him." The belief that the soul rests three days before departing also suggests during these three days, individuals could go to the cemetery to inspect the dead for any sign of life. Jesus' s resurrection on the third day would then be evidence that death had been defeated:

Thus, it was considered possible for a soul to reunite with its body within three days, but no more, for sometime on the third day the soul realized the body was rotting, and then departed. Thus, a resurrection on the third day reverses the expectations of the Jews: to physicalists, instead of departing, the soul of Jesus reunites with his body and rises; to spiritualists, instead of departing, the soul of Jesus is exalted by God, raised to his right side, thence to appear in visions to the faithful. Either way, a resurrection before the third day might not be a true resurrection, but a mere revival, or the ghost of a not-yet-departed soul, but a resurrection on the third day is true evidence that death was in either sense defeated. This "third day" tradition in Jewish law may in fact be very ancient, possibly lying behind the prophecy of Hosea, "He will revive us after two days, He will raise us up on the third day, that we may live before him" (6.2), and no doubt had something to do with Paul's conviction that Jesus "was raised on the third day according to the scriptures" (1 Corinthians 15:4).

This may be the appropriate point to recall the various meanings for "raise" in Greek usage:

- to arouse, cause to rise
- to arouse from sleep, to awake
- to arouse from the sleep of death, to recall the dead to life
- to cause to rise from a seat or bed etc.
- to raise up, produce, cause to appear
- to cause to appear, bring before the public
- to raise up, stir up, against one
- to raise up i.e. cause to be born
- of buildings, to raise up, construct, erect

Pasted from <<http://www.biblestudytools.com/lexicons/greek/nas/egeiro.html>>

In the context of Mark, we have the following uses, the most dramatic being the suggestions about the young girl said to be dead about which Jesus remarks, "The child has not died, but is asleep," the belief that John had come back from the dead, and finally, Jesus' s teaching the raising of the dead: "But regarding the fact that the dead rise again, have you not read in the book of Moses, in the passage about the burning bush, how God spoke to him, saying, 'I AM THE GOD OF ABRAHAM, AND THE GOD OF ISAAC, and the God of Jacob'?"

Pasted from <<http://www.biblestudytools.com/nas/mark/passage.aspx?q=mark+5:34-43>>

Mark 1:31

31 And He came to her and raised her up, taking her by the hand, and the fever left her, and she waited on them.

Mark 2:9

9 "Which is easier, to say to the paralytic, 'Your sins are forgiven'; or to say, 'Get up, and pick up your pallet and walk'?"

Mark 2:11-12

11 "I say to you, get up, pick up your pallet and go home." 12 And he got up and immediately picked up the pallet and went out in the sight of everyone, so that they were all amazed and were glorifying God, saying, "We have never seen anything like this."

Mark 3:3

3 He said to the man with the withered hand, "Get up and come forward!"

Mark 4:27

27 and he goes to bed at night and gets up by day, and the seed sprouts and grows -how, he himself does not know.

Mark 4:38

38 Jesus Himself was in the stern, asleep on the cushion; and they woke Him and said to Him, "Teacher, do You not care that we are perishing?"

Mark 5:41

41 Taking the child by the hand, He said to her, "Talitha kum!" (which translated means, "Little girl, I say to you, get up!").

Mark 6:14

John's Fate Recalled

14 And King Herod heard of it, for His name had become well known; and people were saying, "John the Baptist has risen from the dead, and that is why these miraculous powers are at work in Him."

Mark 6:16

16 But when Herod heard of it, he kept saying, "John, whom I beheaded, has risen!"

Mark 9:27

27 But Jesus took him by the hand and raised him; and he got up.

Mark 10:49

49 And Jesus stopped and said, "Call him here." So they called the blind man, saying to him, "Take courage, stand up! He is calling for you."

Mark 12:26

26 "But regarding the fact that the dead rise again, have you not read in the book of Moses, in the passage about the burning bush, how God spoke to him, saying, 'I AM THE GOD OF ABRAHAM, AND THE GOD OF ISAAC, and the God of Jacob'?"

Mark 13:8

8 "For nation will rise up against nation, and kingdom against kingdom; there will be earthquakes in various places; there will also be famines. These things are merely the beginning of birth pangs.

Mark 13:22

22 for false Christs and false prophets will arise, and will show signs and wonders, in order to lead astray, if possible, the elect.

Mark 14:28

28 "But after I have been raised, I will go ahead of you to Galilee."

Mark 14:42

42 "Get up, let us be going; behold, the one who betrays Me is at hand!"

Mark 16:6

6 And he said to them, "Do not be amazed; you are looking for Jesus the Nazarene, who has been crucified. He has risen; He is not here; behold, here is the place where they laid Him.

Mark 16:14

The Disciples Commissioned

14 Afterward He appeared to the eleven themselves as they were reclining at the table; and He reproached them for their unbelief and hardness of heart, because they had not believed those who had seen Him after He had risen.

Pasted from <<http://www.biblestudytools.com/bible/passage.aspx?q=mr+1:31;mr+2:9;mr+2:11;mr+2:12;mr+3:3;mr+4:27;mr+4:38;mr+5:41;mr+6:14;mr+6:16;mr+9:27;mr+10:49;mr+12:26;mr+13:8;mr+13:22;mr+14:28;mr+14:42;mr+16:6;mr+16:14&t=nas>>

<http://www.bsw.org/Biblica/Vol-84-2003/The-Rhetoric-Of-The-Characterization-Of-Jesus-As-The-Son-Of-Man-And-Christ-In-Mark/192/article-p29.html>

The women learn Jesus is not at the tomb and are told in emphatic terms that he is risen (ἠγέρθη).

SB Notes confirms this as being a fulfillment of predictions:

Mark 16:6 He has risen; he is not here. The heavenly messenger confirms that Jesus has fulfilled his predictions that he would rise from the dead (8:31; 9:9, 31; 10:32–34; 14:25).

Pasted from <<http://www.esvbible.org/Mark+16/>>

SB Notes describes a latent apologetic in the longer ending of Mark:

Although the Gospel writers do not belabor the point, the story is told in such a way as to embody a latent apologetic or evidential cast, offering proof that the resurrection really occurred. Jesus' final discourse to the disciples (vv. 14–18), followed by a narrative summary of Jesus' ascension (v. 19) and the disciples' preaching (v. 20), lends an artistic sense of closure to Mark's narrative. We should note that some of the early manuscripts of Mark do not include verses 9–20.

Pasted from <<http://www.esvbible.org/Mark+16/>>

Students of the Bible realize, of course, that the book of Matthew indicates the women do eventually bring the news to the disciples: "So they departed quickly from the tomb with fear and great joy, and ran to tell his disciples" (28:8).

Pasted from <<http://www.esvbible.org/esv/passage/Matthew%2B28.8/>>

James Tabor writes in "Why It Makes All the Difference":

The faith that Mark reflects, namely that Jesus has been "raised up" or lifted up to heaven, is precisely parallel to that of Paul—who is the earliest witness to this understanding of Jesus' resurrection. Paul notably parallels his own *visionary* experience to that of Peter, James, and the rest of the apostles. What this means is that when Paul wrote, in the 50s CE, *this was the resurrection faith of the early followers of Jesus!* Since Matthew, Luke, and John come so much later, and clearly reflect the period after 70 CE when *all of the first witnesses were dead*—including Peter, Paul, and James the brother of Jesus, they are clearly 2nd generation traditions and should not be given priority.

<https://www.biblicalarchaeology.org/daily/biblical-topics/new-testament/the-strange-ending-of-the-gospel-of-mark-and-why-it-makes-all-the-difference/>

Michal Turton also concludes with an emphasis upon redaction and reliance upon the Old Testament for source material:

Ludemann (2001, p114) notes: "It is doubtful whether a complete story about the tomb existed before Mark, as the text is overlaid with Markan redaction." Similarly, Kirby (2002) and Crossan

(1998) argue that the empty Tomb story is a post-easter fiction. Kirby writes, in discussing James Dunn's idea that early Christians did not venerate the Tomb precisely because it was empty, concludes:

"I agree that it would be most reasonable to conclude that early Christians did not know that Jesus was resting in his tomb because we would then expect tomb veneration. I agree that this is evidence against knowledge of a full tomb. But I would state further that this is equally evidence against knowledge of an empty tomb. It is plain to see that the site of the tomb of Jesus would become a site of veneration and pilgrimage among early Christians regardless of whether it were full or empty. The factors of nagging doubt, pious curiosity, and liturgical significance would all contribute towards the empty tomb becoming a site of intense interest among Christians. Contrary to Dunn, and in agreement with Peter Carnley, the obvious explanation is that early Christians had no idea where Jesus was buried....For this reason, the fact that there was no tomb veneration indicates that the early Christians did not know the location of the tomb of Jesus, neither of an empty tomb nor of a full tomb" (2002, p 201-2)

OT creation may also be at work here, in two ways. Recall Mark's previous dependence on the Elijah-Elisha Cycle:

Mark 16: 6-8

The dead are raised
(young man at tomb)

the women are frightened

the tomb is Jesus'

2 Kgs 13: 20-1

The dead are raised
(the raised man on his feet)

the pallbearers are frightened

the tomb is Elisha's

In addition to this, the book of Daniel has structured the overall narrative of Jesus trial, death, and resurrection.

Mark

The chief priests and scribes try to trap Jesus with arguments over the law

Joseph of Arimathea, a leader of the nation opposed to the spokesman for the people of God secretly reveres Jesus (as Pilate becomes steadily more Christianized in Christian legend, he assumes this role)

the death of Jesus is required by law (implied in Mark)

Pilate is reluctant to execute Jesus, tries to convince crowd to let him go

Pilate, though distressed, is forced to put Jesus in a tomb

Joseph of Arimathea looks forward to the kingdom of God

At dawn, as soon as it was light, the women who cared deeply for Jesus go to his tomb

Joyful news: Jesus is raised!

A mysterious young man, perhaps an angel, announces the news

Daniel 6

The satraps and administrators trap Daniel with a law

Darius a leader of the nation opposed to the spokesman for the people of God secretly reveres Daniel

the death of Daniel is required by the law of the Medes and Persians

Darius is reluctant to put Daniel in the lion's den, Darius exerts himself until evening to save Daniel

Darius, though distressed, is forced to put Daniel into a lion's den

Darius tells Daniel his god will save him

Just after sunrise Darius who cares deeply for Daniel goes to the lion's den.

Joyful news: Daniel lives

An angel shut the lion's mouths

Adapted from Helms (1988, p135)

Carrier (2005b) observes that Matthew makes this dependence on Dan 6 very clear. Not only does Matthew retain the parallels to Daniel 6, he also notes that a seal was placed on Jesus' tomb, just as Darius placed a seal on the stone (Dan 6:17). Matthew uses the same word for seal, *sphragizo*, that the Greek of the Septuagint uses. Matthew's perception that Dan 6 underlies this scene is further evidence for the existence of the parallel.

Pasted from <<http://www.michaelturton.com/Mark/GMark16.html>>

Turton references Darrell Doughty (2000) to remark on the problem of concluding Mark without a resurrection and Robert Fowler's observation that "with the ambiguous allusion to Galilee,"

readers are invited to begin the story all over again, asking all the questions all over about Jesus' identity, or perhaps, as suggested by Neill Q. Hamilton and discussed more fully in chapter eight, by a second career.

Rather than presenting it as quasi history he sees it as a transition from the real history of Jesus' first career to an equally historical second career. And Mark's conviction about this second career compels him to create a fitting first career. If this is correct, it explains why Mark came to be written.

Carrier (2004c), Turton says Carrier (2004c) has found "definite proof that the resurrection motif in fiction predates the 1st century" in Petronius (60 A.D.). Turton then goes on to quote Weeden (1971) who says that before Mark no evidence exists of trying to verify Jesus' resurrection through the empty tomb:

"For Mark, the fact and reality of the resurrection is attested by the story of the empty grave. To state the matter in this fashion is no glib rhetoric. Such a statement speaks to a curious and puzzling phenomenon. Before Mark there is no evidence that the early church ever sought to verify its resurrection faith through recourse to Jesus' empty tomb. Nor is there any hard evidence that the early church ever knew of Jesus' grave's being empty."(p102)

Pasted from <<http://www.michaelturton.com/Mark/GMark16.html>>

He next quotes David Rhoads (2004):

"Perhaps it is the subtlety and ambiguity of Mark's marvelously exasperating ending that explains why so many studies of Mark focus on the disciples."(p9).

C.H. Dodd, as quoted in the previous chapter, addresses the significance of the account in Mark, "the victory out of defeat":

Some sayings speak of "rising from the dead," some speak of "coming again," and sometimes they are in vaguer terms: "A little while and you see me no more; again a little while and you will see me." 28 It is perhaps impossible to decide which of these best represent what Jesus actually said. That forecasts may have grown more specific in the light of what happened is likely enough. It is also likely enough that what he said on various occasions was sometimes more explicit, sometimes more cryptic. But one thing we may say with reasonable certainty: quite apart from the question of time authenticity or the verbal accuracy of this or that reported saying, the idea of new life through death, of victory coming out of defeat, is an inseparable part of the thought of Jesus about his destiny.

Pasted from <<http://www.religion-online.org/showchapter.asp?title=2241&C=2113>>

Concerning the young man in white (not necessarily an angel) at the tomb, Turton sorts through several possible explanations, including a baptismal initiate (Mark 14:51-2), a possible parallel with 2 Macc 3:26, the angel of Tobit 5:14, and perhaps a relationship to Josephus. He misses an opportunity to stress the real point to be made: Jesus has just said in 14:62 that they would see him sitting at the right hand of the Power. Matthew, Luke, and John all make clear, whether one or two, that it is angelic presence which is described.

Pasted from <<http://www.michaelturton.com/Mark/GMark16.html>>

A recent article remarks on the amazing structure (introduced in the Introduction) of Mark in relation to the paradox of authority and servanthood; this same article also provides an approach for understanding the young man in white at the tomb:

Though the motif of Jesus' authority is highlighted in various strategic passages of the Gospel (1:1-11, 12-14, 15-19, 20-25; 13:1-27; 14:17-31), the motif of His servanthood is emphasized particularly toward the end of the narrative, which records His passion and death (14:32-36; 63-65; 15:22-37).

Also of note are actions of servanthood by the disciples (14:12-16), by those who have authority (12:28-34; 15:39, 42-47; 16:1-8), and by those who lack authority (12:42-44; 14:3-9, 21; 15:40-41). Moreover, several dramatic instances of the authority/servanthood paradox surface through Mark's juxtaposition of the two motifs (11:1-11; 12:38-40, 41-44; 13:1-27; 14:22-25, 32-42, 55-65; 15:22-37, 39, 42-47; 16:5-7).

Remarkably two inclusios at the beginning and ending of Mark's Gospel frame the entire narrative. One inclusio is that of John the Baptist and Joseph of Arimathea in 1:2-8 and 15:42-47, and the other is that of the ministering angels and the young man in 1:13 and 16:1-8. These two inclusios emphasize the lesson that the true pathway of authority is the way of service.

In coming to the end of Mark, it may be well to rehearse the book's major themes:

Key Themes in Mark

- | | |
|---|--|
| 1. Jesus seeks to correct messianic expectations and misunderstandings. | <u>1:25, 34, 44; 3:12; 4:10-12; 5:18-19, 43; 8:30; 9:9</u> |
| 2. Jesus is man. | <u>3:5; 4:38; 6:6; 7:34; 8:12, 33; 10:14; 11:12; 14:33-42</u> |
| 3. Jesus is the Son of God. | <u>1:11; 3:11; 5:7; 8:38; 9:7; 12:6-8; 13:32; 14:36, 61; 15:39</u> |
| 4. Jesus is the Son of Man with all power and authority. | <u>1:16-34; 2:3-12, 23-28; 3:11; 4:35-41; 6:45-52; 7:1-23; 10:1-12</u> |
| 5. Jesus as the Son of Man must suffer. | <u>8:31; 10:45; 14:21, 36</u> |
| 6. Jesus is Lord. | <u>2:28; 12:35-37; 14:62</u> |
| 7. Jesus calls his followers to imitate him in humble service, self-denial, and suffering. | <u>8:34-38; 9:35-37; 10:35-45</u> |
| 8. Jesus teaches on the kingdom of God, and implies that God continues to call a people to himself. | <u>ch. 4; cf. 1:15; 9:1; 14:25; 15:43</u> |

Pasted from <<http://www.esvbible.org/resources/esvsb/chart-41-key-themes/?iframe>>

John Dart has provided some useful suggestions for Mark's enigmatic ending, suggesting that the young man may, in fact, be the author of the Gospel. The way Dart gets there is to point out that the women say nothing, leaving open the question of how the gospel story itself eventually gets out. This ending never mentions a "risen Jesus," although belief exists that the women would eventually have overcome their fear and told Peter of the empty tomb. Mark leaves readers wondering what became of the women, just as they wonder what because of Judas, the young man, Peter and the Twelve (this based on Donald H. Juel, author of *The ending of Mark and the Ends of God*. Another approach to explaining the ending is to say readers do not have Jesus, anymore than the disciples, at the end of having spent chapters reading about his words and acts. Dart says, Juel opted for an open-ended stance: "Jesus is out of the tomb; God is no longer safely behind the curtain (torn asunder in the Temple as Jesus breathed his last)... Jesus has promised an end; that end is not yet." Dart says narrative criticism has restored the full story of Mark, this after it has been taken apart by historical criticism. Dart further points to quick pace and oral nature of the Gospel, its pleasing literary techniques, such as the use of three and sandwiched stories:

he starts an episode and then tells another before finishing the first one -- offer ironic commentary on the interwoven episodes. Readers and listeners are "insiders" to Mark's plot; they are informed very early of the divine identity of Jesus (and even told at times what Jesus and his opponents are thinking). The audiences can alternately wonder at those who misunderstand Jesus and admire those who immediately grasp his divine mission.

Dart next turns to the women and the young man, emphasizing the failure of the women to understand what has happened:

The fear and silence of the women at the tomb is an obvious failing. A more subtle negativity is found in the language. When the young man says, "Do not be amazed, you seek Jesus of Nazareth, who was crucified," the innocuous-sounding seek (RSV) or looking for (NRSV) translates the same Greek word used when Jesus' mother and brothers, hearing rumors that Jesus had gone out of his mind, were "asking for" him. Elsewhere in the Gospel, religious authorities seek signs or seek how to destroy Jesus, and Judas seeks to betray him. In all, the last eight of nine uses of the word usually translated as seek (zeteo) in Mark have negative connotations.

Of the young man, Dart echoes Danove's rejection of the young man as telling the story, remarking on the "sitting on the right side" and white robe as suggesting a heavenly origin, but, as Dart remarks, a figure quite unlike the ones portrayed in the other three gospel accounts. Dart then says that Marvin Meyer and Herman Waetjen suggest the young man represents and exemplar or "idealized" disciple. It is possible, too, that the "sitting at the right side" is a final dig at James and John who had asked to be given this permission (10:35-37). "This young man, perhaps initiated into the faith by Jesus on an earlier occasion, appears to be the one destined for that spot in the next life." Dart next notes the "cameo appearance" as similar to Bethany woman who anointed Jesus with ointment, performing the "first complete and unequivocal act of faith in Jesus' suffering and rising destiny," according to John Dominic Crossan.

Dart next talks about the other enigmatic figures found in Mark and Brian K. Blount/s discounting of the centurion as a positive witness, this in contrast to C. Clifton Black, who sees the centurion's acclamation in the utterances at Jesus' baptism and transfiguration:

Besides the young man in the tomb, other enigmatic figures are the "young man" who barely escapes capture at the time of Jesus' arrest (14:51-52) and the awed centurion who sees Jesus die and says, "Truly, this man was God's son" (15:39). The Roman soldier's "confession," as it has been called, has been read as sarcastic by Juel and others. Because the wording is not "the" Son of God, but should be translated, "a son of God" or

"God's son," the comment has been likened to the preceding taunts by soldiers, priests and bystanders. The centurion "witnesses Jesus' miserable death and guffaws, 'Yeah, right, this guy was the Son of God,'" writes Brian K. Blount of Princeton Seminary in the book published in memory of Juel.

More specifically, Dart observes, some scholars see in the young man " a symbolic representative of the just-scattered disciples/" Dart says, though, the action should not be taken as the "defining act if character" since this young man has taken some risk in following Jesus and, in the end, literally leaves everything to follow Jesus, thus symbolizing the faithful who have learned "the secret of the kingdom of God." Dart notes that the garment worn by the young man may be indicative of the initiate to faith. "If Jesus was initiating the young man in the faith in the Garden of Gethsemane (besides prayerfully agonizing over his own fate), it would seem from the youth's burial-cloth garment that there was no opportunity to complete the rite."

Before concluding, Dart notes that narrative critics have noticed parallels in the beginning and ending of Mark, seeing a positive role in the parallel presentation of the Roman soldier and the young man:

Narrative critics have long noticed parallels in words and images between the beginning and ending of Mark. These parallels seem to enhance the positive roles of the Roman soldier and the young man in the white garment.

At Jesus' baptism, the heavens open (schizo) as the spirit (pneuma) descends on Jesus, whereupon a voice (phone) from above says, "You are my Son, the beloved." At death, Jesus gives a loud cry (phone) as he breathes (ekpneo) his last; the curtain of the Temple rips (schizo) and the centurion says, "Truly, this man was God's son.

Also, at the very start (1:2) a prophesied "messenger" is "sent before thy face" to prepare the way of the Lord -- just as at the very end, the young man in the tomb is the only human left to testify to the risen Jesus, who "went ahead" to Galilee.

In Provoking the Gospel of Mark, storyteller Richard Swanson, who teaches at Augustana College in South Dakota, says the difficulties of Mark's ending become very clear when one performs it. The story leaves "the young man onstage alone at the end with no clear notion of what to do next."

Dart, finally, makes his point relative to authorship:

Swanson does not suggest this possibility, but one can imagine the audience at a performance of Mark shouting, "Author, author!" The young man could then open his arms as if to say, "That's me."

If the evangelist John hinted that he is the unnamed beloved disciple in his Gospel, perhaps Mark did the same with the young man in the empty tomb. At the least, there is a messenger at the end of the story bearing good news, who with the others who met Jesus "on the way" can tell the story.

Pasted from <<http://www.religion-online.org/showarticle.asp?title=3395>>

George Aichele in "Fantasy and Myth in the Life of Jesus" talks about the genres of myth, fantasy, and the historical, and describes the young man at the tomb as fantasy countervailing myth; he ends up concluding Mark rejects the myth of Jesus.

The orthodox Christian story of Jesus is a myth of a supernatural being sent from a world beyond this one, who visits this world in order to restore its long-lost proper order and then returns at last to his place of origin; it is perhaps best summarized in the prologue to the Gospel of John (1:1-18, especially 11-14). This story of Jesus as the saving incarnation of God belongs to the genre of the marvelous. It is the very story of vicarious suffering which, according to Crossan, eventually required the rejection of the resurrection episode in the Gospel of Peter.

Myth contains and suppresses the reversals and uncertainties of fantasy. That fantasy continues to exist and that readers recognize it as such is due to a partial failure of myth; but at the deepest level, it is due to the fact that myth itself arose as, and in reaction against, fantasy. Fantasy deconstructs myth, revealing the desire for referential truth and existential meaning -- the desire to believe -- which lies beneath every interpretation.

Fantasy presents a radical and violent attack on the myths and beliefs which mediate our encounter with reality. These myths determine what sorts of narrative worlds we might consider "real"; readability and belief -- including the sort of belief which is necessary to realistic fiction- are only possible in relation to a mythic frame. In order for a story to function as a myth, the reader must believe it; she must accept it as a true story. The myth establishes a fundamental structure -- an ideology, a set of models or paradigms -- in terms of which other stories, as well as concepts, arguments, and theories make sense. [Literature talks about "suspension of disbelief."]

The Christian myth of Jesus as the divine savior is confronted and subverted by the elements of the fantastic in Mark's story of the death of Jesus. The narrative is fantastic because it resists mythic identity and believability, and instead it disrupts the illusions of realism. Myth and fantasy are fundamentally opposed; Mark rejects the myth of Jesus.

Pasted from <<http://www.crosscurrents.org/mark.htm>>

Aichele further understands fantasy as being the point of "indeterminability" between the narrative genres of the marvelous and uncanny:

The fantastic lies at points of indeterminability between two narrative genres, the marvelous and the uncanny.(n4) These genres represent two different worlds; each genre points to a mythic reality which grounds the meaning of its literary instances. In the world of the uncanny, very strange events occur, but no matter how strange they are, they can always be given a natural explanation. On the other hand, the world of the marvelous is a supernatural one, in which gods, angels, or demons are quite real. The fantastic occurs when the identity of a character, the explanation of an event, or some other feature of a story is suspended between the marvelous and the uncanny, having no obvious natural or supernatural explanation. The reader is then unable to determine the generic identity of the narrative, as well as the nature of the reality to which it refers. Fantasy foils belief.

Pasted from <<http://www.crosscurrents.org/mark.htm>>

Alfred Loisy says the abrupt ending of Mark may well be another injunction to keep silent; he may have better caught the point when he suggests the author had exhausted his powers of invention in

presenting a historical Jesus in the envelope of the eternal:

So ends the authentic text of the Gospel named after Mark. The discovery of the empty tomb is held to be guaranteed by the experience of these women whom fear has prevented from speaking of it. The Gospel editor, a simple and well-intentioned man, says no more, the reason being that he is conscious of stating a fact, a pretended fact, of which nobody has heard until he here discloses it. Moreover he knew well enough that, according to a tradition from which he had not the least intention of departing, the disciples' faith in the resurrection was formed in Galilee. And, further, he probably felt himself incapable of relating the later manifestations of the risen Christ, or thought he might abstain from doing so. We may well believe that his powers of invention had already been exercised to a point which made him think it advisable to call a halt. The silence he attributes to the women is to be explained in the same way as are the injunctions to say nothing imposed on all the anticipations of Jesus' Messiahship during his earthly career.

Pasted from <<http://www.earlychristianwritings.com/loisy2/chapter4.html>>

David Ulansey, quoting S. Motyer (1987) addresses the author's brilliant use of inclusio in the voice from heaven at Jesus' baptism and the tearing of the veil at his death:

Indeed, in his 1987 article, "The Rending of the Veil: A Markan Pentecost," S. Motyer points out that there is actually a whole cluster of motifs which occur in Mark at both the baptism (1:9-11) and at the death of Jesus (15:36-39). In addition to the fact that at both of these moments something is torn, Motyer notes that: (1) at both moments a voice is heard declaring Jesus to be the Son of God (at the baptism it is the voice of God, while at the death it is the voice of the centurion); (2) at both moments something is said to descend (at the baptism it is the spirit-dove, while at the death it is the tear in the temple veil, which Mark explicitly describes as moving downward), (3) at both moments the figure of Elijah is symbolically present (at the baptism Elijah is present in the form of John the Baptist, while at Jesus' death the onlookers think that Jesus is calling out to Elijah); (4) the spirit (pneuma) which descends on Jesus at his baptism is recalled at his death by Mark's repeated use of the verb *ekpneo* (expire), a cognate of *pneuma*. [3]

According to Motyer, the repetition by Mark of this cluster of motifs at both the baptism and the death of Jesus constitutes a symbolic inclusio which brackets the entire gospel, linking together the precise beginning and the precise end of the earthly career of Jesus. Seen in this context, the presence at both moments of the motif of something being torn is unlikely to be coincidental.

Pasted from <<http://www.mysterium.com/veil.html>>

Ulansey goes on to argue that the veil which is torn is the outer veil, not the inner, and that symbolically, it forms an inclusio to the tearing open of the heavens at baptism, thus marking the beginning and the ending of the historical career of Jesus:

In his 1987 article "The Death of Jesus in Mark and the Miracle from the Cross," Howard Jackson argues that the question of which veil it was that Mark was referring to can be easily answered if we acknowledge that there was a link in Mark's imagination between the tearing of the heavens at the baptism of Jesus and the tearing of the temple veil at his death. For, says Jackson, if there was a parallel in Mark's mind between the tearing of the heavens and the tearing of the temple veil, then Mark must also have intended there to be a parallel between Jesus at the baptism and the centurion at the crucifixion: just as Jesus witnessed the tearing of the heavens, so the centurion witnessed the tearing of the temple veil. But, as we have already noted, the centurion could only have witnessed the tearing of the veil if it was the outer veil, since the inner veil was hidden from view. Thus it must have been the outer veil that Mark had in mind. [6]

Jackson's argument is suggestive although certainly not conclusive. However, there exists a piece of evidence which Jackson does not mention in his discussion which, I believe, provides decisive proof that Mark had in mind the outer veil of the temple, and which also provides rather spectacular confirmation of the existence in Mark's imagination of a link between the tearing of the heavens and the tearing of the temple veil.

The evidence to which I refer consists of a passage in Josephus's Jewish War in which he describes the outer veil of the Jerusalem temple as it had appeared since the time of Herod. According to Josephus, this outer veil was a gigantic curtain 80 feet high. It was, he says, a

Babylonian tapestry, with embroidery of blue and fine linen, of scarlet also and purple, wrought with marvelous skill. Nor was this mixture of materials without its mystic meaning: it typified the universe....

Then Josephus tells us what was pictured on this curtain:

Portrayed on this tapestry was a panorama of the entire heavens.... [7] [emphasis mine]

In other words, the outer veil of the Jerusalem temple was actually one huge image of the starry sky! Thus, upon encountering Mark's statement that "the veil of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom," any of his readers who had ever seen the temple or heard it described would instantly have seen in their mind's eye an image of the heavens being torn, and would immediately have been reminded of Mark's earlier description of the heavens being torn at the baptism. This can hardly be coincidence: the symbolic parallel is so striking that Mark must have consciously intended it.

We may therefore conclude (1) that Mark did indeed have in mind the outer veil, and (2) that Mark did indeed imagine a link between the tearing of the heavens and the tearing of the temple veil-- since we can now see that in fact in both cases the heavens were torn-- and that he intentionally inserted the motif of the "tearing of the heavenly veil" at both the precise beginning and at the precise end of the earthly career of Jesus, in order to create a powerful and intriguing symbolic inclusio.

Pasted from <<http://www.mysterium.com/veil.html>>

This leaves then the question of why the author Mark used this inclusio. Norman Perrine, already quoted in the Introduction provides the following suggestion that Mark is really both apocalyptic and foundation myth

As a foundation myth, the Gospel of Mark separates this sacred time from the time of the reader, and a means now has to be provided whereby the reader can relate to the sacred time. A myth that relates the sacred time of origins has to be accompanied by a ritual by means of which it becomes possible for the hearer or reader to relate to that time. In fact, both Matthew and Luke in interpreting the Gospel of Mark as a foundation myth do provide their readers with the equivalent of a ritual, a point I shall develop in my next section...

Moreover, both provide means whereby the reader may relate to the time of Jesus—which is now no longer the reader's time—Matthew by the Great Commission (Matt. 28:16-20) and the authoritative teaching church, and Luke by the concept of a *Heilsgeschichte* wherein his readers live in an epoch parallel to and related to the time of Jesus, but not the same time as the time of Jesus.⁵

⁵ Here we are at a point of very real significance. For Mark, who is in this sense essentially an apocalypticist, the time of Jesus and the time of himself and his readers are one and the same time, whereas for Matthew and Luke the time of Jesus has become different from their time and that of their readers; it has become a sacred time to which they and their readers must relate. The apocalypse has become a foundation myth. (368-369)

As has been pointed out by Christine E. Joynes, a paradox exists in the open ending of Mark:

Mark's open ending should therefore disconcert and challenge contemporary believers seeking to comprehend the significance of resurrection hope, as it has in previous generations.

"The sound of silence" may at first glance seem paradoxical as a tide. Yet we have seen that the silence of the women who came to the tomb to anoint Jesus has generated much noise. Amidst the harmonization and discord, we should not lose sight of the promise of resolution offered in the Gospel; but this resolution lies in the future beyond Mark's narrative.

Pasted from <<http://www.questia.com/read/1P3-2236215841/the-sound-of-silence-interpreting-mark-16-1-8-through>>

Michael W. Holmes in "The Many Endings of Mark" in *Exploring the Resurrection* (© 2010

Biblical Archaeology Society www.biblicalarchaeology.org) also finds challenge in the open ending of Mark, after he has presented all possible endings and explored them textually:

Ironically, the answer to our initial question ("How did the Gospel of Mark really end?"), rather than leading us to a conclusion, has opened up more questions. In the end (if there is an end), does any of it matter?

In the words of one Marcan scholar, "No point in a story is as significant for appreciation and interpretation as its ending."

15

A gospel that ends at 16:8 is open-ended, tensive; the turmoil created by the juxtaposition of hope in 16:7 (where the angelic figure promises the women that Jesus "is going ahead of you to Galilee") and disappointment in 16:8 ("they said nothing to anyone, for they were afraid") is unresolved. The reader is provoked and challenged. The intermediate and longer endings, however—as well as modern hypotheses about a long-lost ending and contemporary translations that print multiple endings—all represent attempts to resolve this tension. As the literary scholar Frank Kermode has noted, unfinished, discordant stories are not easily tolerated.

16

And so, in the end, the endings of Mark leave us as readers with a question: How will we choose to end the matter? Will we tolerate the ambiguity, or seek to resolve it? Will we force an ending upon the gospel that accords with our expectations, or will we see the ending not as an ending at all, but as a beginning that forces us to rethink our expectations?

One other consideration should be given to Kathleen O'Bannon, CCEL Staff, prefatory remarks to John Burgon's extensive response to early textual critics:

The late 19th century marked a turning point in biblical criticism. B. F. Westcott and F. J. A. Hort compiled some of the oldest manuscripts of the New Testament. Their compilation has served as the template for almost every modern translation of the Bible. Because of this, people often forget that Westcott and Hort's critical text faced considerable controversy. John Burgon was perhaps the fiercest enemy of the movement Westcott and Hort had begun. Among other "modifications," Westcott and Hort had deleted the last twelve verses of Mark's Gospel from their text because they did not appear in certain Greek originals. Burgon responded with this treatise, in which he seeks to reestablish the legitimacy of the verses. Today, many associate Burgon and his arguments with biblical inerrancy.

<https://www.ccel.org/ccel/burgon/mark>

John William Burgon concludes his argument for inerrancy in the following way:

(II.) Let it be asked in conclusion,—(for this prolonged discussion is now happily at an end.)—Are any inconveniences likely to result from a frank and loyal admission, (in the absence of any Evidence whatever to the contrary,) that doubtless the last Twelve Verses of S. Mark's Gospel are just as worthy of acceptance as the rest? It might reasonably be supposed, from the strenuous earnestness with which the rejection of these Verses is generally advocated, that some considerations must surely be assignable why the opinion of their genuineness ought on no account to be entertained. Do any such reasons exist? Are any inconveniences whatever likely to supervene? No reasons whatever are assignable, I reply; neither are there any inconvenient consequences of any sort to be anticipated,—except indeed to the Critics: to whom, it must be confessed, the result proves damaging enough. It will only follow, (1st) That Cod. B and Cod. \square must be henceforth allowed to be in one more serious particular untrustworthy and erring witnesses. They have been convicted, in fact, of bearing false witness in respect of S. Mark xvi. 9-20, where their evidence had been hitherto reckoned upon with the most undoubting confidence. (2ndly) That the critical statements of recent Editors, and indeed

the remarks of Critics generally, in respect of S. Mark xvi. 9-20, will have to undergo serious revision: in every important particular, will have to be unconditionally withdrawn. (3rdly) That, in all future critical editions of the New Testament, these "Twelve Verses" will have to be restored to their rightful honours: never more appearing disfigured with 254 brackets, encumbered with doubts, banished from their context, or molested with notes of suspicion. On the contrary. A few words of caution against the resuscitation of what has been proved to be a "vulgar error," will have henceforth to be introduced in memoriam rei. (4thly) Lastly, men must be no longer taught to look with distrust on this precious part of the Deposit; and encouraged to dispute the Divine sayings which it contains on the plea that perhaps they may not be Divine, after all; for that probably the entire section is not genuine. *They must be assured, on the contrary, that these Twelve Verses are wholly undistinguishable in respect of genuineness from the rest of the Gospel of S. Mark* [italics added]; and it may not be amiss to remind them the Creed called the "Athanasian" speaks no other language than that employed by the Divine Author of our Religion and Object of our Faith. The Church warns her children against the peril incurred by as many as wilfully reject the Truth, in no other language but that of the Great Head of the Church. No person may presume to speak disparagingly of S. Mark xvi. 16, any more. (III.) Whether,—after the foregoing exposure of a very prevalent and highly popular, but at the same time most calamitous misapprehension,—it will not become necessary for Editors of the Text of the New Testament to reconsider their conclusions in countless other places:—whether they must not be required to review their method, and to remodel their 214 Chapter XII. General Review of the Question: Summary of the Evidence; and... text throughout, now that they have been shewn the insecurity of the foundation on which they have so confidently builded, and been forced to reverse their verdict in respect of a place of Scripture where at least they supposed themselves impregnable;—I forbear at this time to inquire. Enough to have demonstrated, as I claim to have now done, that not a particle of doubt, that not an atom of suspicion, attaches to "the last Twelve Verses of the Gospel according to S. Mark."

With Burgon in view, it should not be inappropriate to resurrect Schweitzer in relation to conclusions regarding myth and history in regard to how one reads the Gospel of Mark:

But the truth is, it is not Jesus as historically known, but Jesus as spiritually arisen within men, who is significant for our time and can help it. Not the historical Jesus, but the spirit which goes forth from Him and in the spirits of men strives for new influence and rule, is that which overcomes the world.

It is not given to history to disengage that which is abiding and eternal in the being of Jesus from the historical forms in which it worked itself out, and to introduce it into our world as a living influence. It has toiled in vain at this undertaking. As a water-plant is beautiful so long as it is growing in the water, but once torn from its roots, withers and becomes unrecognisable, so it is with the historical Jesus when He is wrenched loose from the soil of eschatology, and the attempt is made to conceive Him "historically" as a Being not subject to temporal conditions. The abiding and eternal in Jesus is absolutely independent of historical knowledge and can only be understood by contact with His spirit which is still at work in the world. In proportion as we have the Spirit of Jesus we have the true knowledge of Jesus.

Pasted from <<http://www.earlychristianwritings.com/schweitzer/chapter20.html>>