

Apocalyptic Opening, Eschatological 'Inclusio'

**A Study of the Rending of the Heaven
and the Temple Curtain in the Gospel of Mark
with Special Reference to the Motif of 'Seeing'**

Philip Ho-Young Ryou

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ABSTRACT

This dissertation is an intensive investigation of the rending of the heaven and Temple curtain in Mark's Gospel from a Christological point of view. The two rending events are examined for their thematic and structural functions in making up the textual and theological world of Mark's Gospel; embodied in the most critical moments of Jesus' ministry, his baptism and crucifixion, and of Mark's narrative, the beginning and end, they are seen and argued as the monumental events that epitomize Mark's apocalyptic and eschatological understanding of Jesus' life and death.

In line with the apocalyptic and eschatological nature of the Gospel, the motif of seeing, expressed especially in the verbs of seeing and εἶδον in particular, plays an integral role in Mark's depiction of the characters and events throughout his narrative. So it is that in two of the most apocalyptic and eschatological episodes in Mark, Jesus' baptism and crucifixion, Mark is very careful to note that Jesus himself and the Gentile Roman centurion *see* the two epoch-making events, the rending of the heaven and the rending of the Temple curtain. As these two events are linked by verbs of the same root (σχιζομένους/ ἐσχίσθη), the reference to spirit (πνεῦμα/ ἐξέπνευσεν), the use of an identification formula referring to Jesus' divine sonship (σὺ εἶ ὁ υἱός μου/ οὗτος... υἱὸς θεοῦ ᾤν), the occurrence of 'seeing' (εἶδεν/ ἰδὼν), the Elijah symbolism present, and other theological correlations, it is clear that the motif of 'seeing' is incorporated into them also. Mark has deliberately created various corresponding elements between these two key events in Jesus' ministry, designing these two events to be an *inclusio* which brackets the entire Gospel structurally, thematically, and contextually.

Through the structure of *inclusio*, Mark sets up one pillar of a symbolic event at the beginning of his narrative and of Jesus' ministry, the rending of the heaven, announcing the apocalyptic commencement of God's eschatological reign; and he positions another pillar of an event just as symbolic, the rending of the Temple curtain, at the end of his narrative and of Jesus' ministry, enunciating the destruction of the Temple which further symbolizes the break-down of the old age and advent of the new in which distance and mediation through sacrificial rites and all they stood for are eradicated and access to God's holy presence is offered to all.

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Abbreviations

Ancient Sources

<i>Apoc. Elijah</i>	Apocalypse of Elijah
<i>2 Apoc. Bar.</i>	Syriac Apocalypse of Baruch
<i>b. Ber.</i>	Babylonian Talmud, Berakot
<i>b. Hag.</i>	Babylonian Talmud, Hagiga
<i>b. Nid.</i>	Babylonian Talmud, Niddah
<i>b. Pesah.</i>	Babylonian Talmud, Pesahim
<i>b. Sanh.</i>	Babylonian Talmud, Sanhedrin
<i>Barn.</i>	Barnabas
<i>Bib. Ant.</i>	Pseudo-Philo, Biblical Antiquities

Dead Sea Scrolls

1QH	<i>Thanksgiving Hymns</i>
1QM	<i>War Scroll</i>
1QS	<i>Community Rule</i>
4Q500	<i>Benediction</i>
4Qflor	<i>Florilegium</i>
11QPs22	<i>Apostrophe to Zion</i>
CD	<i>Damascus Document</i>

<i>Cant. Rab.</i>	<i>Canticle of Canticles Rabbah</i>
<i>Deut. Rab.</i>	<i>Deuteronomy Rabbah</i>
<i>Eccl. Rab.</i>	<i>Ecclesiastes Rabbah</i>
<i>Exod. Rab.</i>	<i>Exodus Rabbah</i>
<i>Gos. Thom.</i>	<i>Gospel of Thomas</i>
LXX	Septuagint
<i>Midr. Psalms</i>	<i>Midrash Psalms</i>
MT	Masoretic Text
<i>Pesiq. Rab.</i> <i>Kah.</i>	<i>Pesiqta de Rab Kahana</i>
<i>Pss. Sol.</i>	<i>Psalms of Solomon</i>
<i>Ruth Rab.</i>	<i>Ruth Rabbah</i>
<i>Sib. Or.</i>	<i>Sibylline Oracles</i>
<i>T. Sol.</i>	<i>Testament of Solomon</i>
<i>Tg. Isa.</i>	<i>Targum of Isaiah</i>
<i>Tg. Psalms</i>	<i>Targum of Psalms</i>
<i>Tg. Cant.</i>	<i>Targum of Canticle of Canticles</i>

Modern Works

<i>AB</i>	Anchor Bible
<i>ACNT</i>	Augsburg Commentary on the New Testament
<i>ArBib</i>	The Aramaic Bible
<i>BAGD</i>	Bauer, W., F. W. Gingrich, and F. W. Danker, <i>A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature</i> , 2nd ed. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1976.
<i>BDB</i>	Brown, F., S. R. Driver, and C. A. Briggs, <i>A Hebrew and English Lexicon of the Old Testament</i> , Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1952.
<i>BDF</i>	Blass, F., A. Debrunner, and R. W. Funk, <i>A Greek Grammar of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature</i> , Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1961.
<i>Bib</i>	<i>Biblica</i>
<i>BR</i>	<i>Biblical Research</i>
<i>BTB</i>	<i>Biblical Theology Bulletin</i>
<i>BZ</i>	<i>Biblische Zeitschrift</i>
<i>CBQ</i>	<i>Catholic Biblical Quarterly</i>
<i>CBQMS</i>	Catholic Biblical Quarterly Monograph Series
<i>EDNT</i>	<i>Exegetical Dictionary of the New Testament</i> , ed. Horst Balz and Gerhard Schneider, Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Pub. Company.
<i>EvT</i>	<i>Evangelische Theologie</i>
<i>ExpT</i>	<i>Expository Times</i>
<i>HTKNT</i>	Herders theologischer Kommentar zum Neuen Testament
<i>HTR</i>	<i>Harvard Theological Review</i>
<i>IDB</i>	<i>Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible</i> , ed. G. A. Buttrick, Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1962.
<i>IDBSupp</i>	<i>Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible, Supplementary Volume</i> , ed. K. Crim, Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1976.
<i>Int</i>	<i>Interpretation</i>
<i>JAAR</i>	<i>Journal of the American Academy of Religion</i>
<i>JBL</i>	<i>Journal of Biblical Literature</i>
<i>JJS</i>	<i>Journal of Jewish Studies</i>
<i>JR</i>	<i>Journal of Religion</i>
<i>JSNT</i>	<i>Journal for the Study of the New Testament</i>
<i>JSNTSupp</i>	Journal for the Study of the New Testament Supplementary Series
<i>JSOT</i>	<i>Journal for the Study of the Old Testament</i>
<i>JSOTSupp</i>	Journal for the Study of the Old Testament Supplementary Series
<i>JTS</i>	<i>Journal of Theological Studies</i>
<i>NCB</i>	New Century Bible
<i>NICNT</i>	New International Commentary on the New Testament
<i>NovT</i>	<i>Novum Testamentum</i>
<i>NTS</i>	<i>New Testament Studies</i>
<i>OTL</i>	Old Testament Library
<i>OTP</i>	<i>The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha</i> , ed. J. H. Charlesworth, 2 vols, Garden City, N. Y.: Doubleday, 1983, 1985.
<i>PNTC</i>	Pelican New Testament Commentary
<i>RevBib</i>	<i>Revue biblique</i>
<i>SBLDS</i>	SBL Dissertation Series

SBLMS	SBL Monograph Series
SBLSP	SBL Seminar Papers
<i>SJTh</i>	<i>Southwestern Journal of Theology</i>
<i>StEv</i>	<i>Studia Evangelica</i>
<i>StTh</i>	<i>Studia Theologica</i>
<i>SBT</i>	<i>Studies in Biblical Theology</i>
SJLA	Studies in Judaism in Late Antiquity
<i>SJT</i>	<i>Scottish Journal of Theology</i>
SNTSMS	Society for New Testament Studies Monograph Series
<i>TDNT</i>	<i>Theological Dictionary of the New Testament</i> , ed, G. Kittel and G. Friedrich, 10 vols. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1964-1976.
<i>TheolZeit</i>	<i>Theologische Zeitschrift</i>
<i>VT</i>	<i>Vetus Testamentum</i>
VTSup	Vetus Testamentum, Supplements
WBC	Word Biblical Commentary
WUNT	Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament
<i>ZAW</i>	<i>Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft</i>
<i>ZNW</i>	<i>Zeitschrift für die neutestamentliche Wissenschaft</i>
<i>ZTK</i>	<i>Zeitschrift für Theologie und Kirche</i>

“Apocalyptic Opening, Eschatological Inclusio: A Study of the Rending of the Heaven and Temple Curtain in Mark’s Gospel, with Special Reference to the Motif¹ of Seeing”

The cross is the epistemological crisis. . . . The new way of knowing is ... life in the midst of the new-creation community, in which to know by the power of the cross is precisely to know and to serve the neighbor who is in need. In this community, the veil is taken away, the creation is new, the old has passed away, look!, the new has come.

J. Louis Martyn, “Epistemology at the Turn of the Ages”²

True seeing sees not the way things appear to be now, but the way they will be.

Joel Marcus, *The Mystery of the Kingdom of God*³

Cosmological eschatology enables writers and artists to see beyond the limitations of their present world; to see its horror without losing hope and to see values and goods which may lead them beyond.

John Riches, “Apocalyptic-Strangely Relevant”⁴

¹ For two key factors in establishing a motif (its frequency, and the avoidability and unlikelihood of the particular uses of the motif), see William Freedman, *The Literary Motif: A Definition and Evaluation*, *Novel 4*, 1971, 123-31.

² J. Louis Martyn, *Theological Issues in the Letters of Paul*, (Edinburgh: T & T Clark), 1997.

³ Joel Marcus, *The Mystery of the Kingdom of God*. SBLDS 90 (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1986), 113.

Setting the Scene

1.1 Preliminary Remarks

This is an intensive study of the rending of the heaven and Temple curtain in Mark's Gospel from a Christological point of view, examining how they thematically and structurally build up Mark's narrative and how the motif of seeing is incorporated into his distinctively Christological understanding of these events in light of Jesus' life and ministry. As will be expounded in detail later, the narrative world Mark presents through his portrayal of Jesus' life and ministry is apocalyptic and eschatological in nature. The gospel writer interweaves various events and teachings of Jesus with this thematic thread so that the messianic identity of Jesus in the descriptions of Mark concurs with the passing of the old age and coming of the new. Mark is also keenly aware of how the unfolding drama of Jesus' life and death should be presented so as to accentuate his theological outlook. Jesus' baptism opens up the heaven and announces Jesus' divine sonship through which a whole new world and order are to be established. His crucifixion thus epitomizes this nature of Mark's narrative not only in the sense that it brought a once-and-for-all end to the old age by declaring the accompanying judgment upon the old sacrificial establishment, the physical Temple, but also in that the new age is launched through it. It opens up the material Temple, an earthly representation of the heavenly court, which has been locked up for so long, and offers the whole of humanity a chance to become a new universal community of God's eschatological reign. The rending of the heaven at the beginning of Jesus' ministry and the rending of the Temple curtain at the end stand as two monumental events in Mark's narrative world, thematically and structurally, opening up and closing the narrative itself as well as the apocalyptic ministry of Jesus.

In accordance with the apocalyptic and eschatological nature of the Gospel, the motif of seeing, especially through the verbs of seeing, and εἶδον in particular, plays an integral role in Mark's depiction of the characters and events in his narrative

⁴ John Riches; "Apocalyptic-Strangely Relevant" in *Templum Amicitiae: Essays on the Second Temple presented to Ernst Bammel*. Ed. William Horbury. JSNTSupp 48 (Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1991), 262.

in accordance with his contemporary Jewish apocalyptic eschatology.⁵ Thus, in the two most apocalyptic and eschatological episodes pointed out above, Jesus' baptism and crucifixion, it is more than readily noted how Mark makes sure that Jesus himself and the Gentile Roman centurion are *eyewitnesses* to two epoch-making events, the rending of the heaven and the rending of the Temple curtain, at the most strategically crucial points of the Gospel, its beginning and end. Penetrating the usual boundary of physical sight, beyond the norms of understanding, their seeing marks a new beginning, a new order, a new world which completely undoes the old way, of living, of knowing, and is thus salvific. In this manner, the motif of seeing in Mark's Gospel is often used to highlight Mark's apocalyptic and eschatological understanding of Jesus, the Messiah who had been prophesied to come at the end of times to fulfil God's eschatological promises and to take a final shape of his reign and eschatological Kingdom on earth. It is this Messiah whom Mark admired as the one who brought an apocalyptic ending to the old age and beginning of the new; the heaven being torn open and the Temple veil being rent thus form an eschatological *inclusio* in Mark's narrative of God's great intervention into the human sphere.

⁵ While the assumption that Mark appropriated early Jewish and Christian interpretations of the Old Testament passages according to his contemporary Jewish apocalyptic eschatology has its dangers, there are ample reasons, which are later discussed in detail, to believe that Mark was much inclined toward just that. As Joel Marcus suggests, "eschatologically oriented Jewish interpretations of Old Testament texts are especially illuminative of the Markan intention in appropriating those same texts because Mark and his community seem to be in touch with the Great Revolt of Palestinian Jews against Roman rule (A.D. 66-74), which was probably strongly influenced by a form of apocalyptic eschatology" (cf. *The Way of the Lord: Christological Exegesis of the Old Testament in the Gospel of Mark* [Louisville: Westminster / John Knox Press, 1992], 10).

1.2 The Apocalyptic and Eschatological Nature of Mark's Gospel

Despite scholarly divisions and debates⁶ concerning the origin of the apocalyptic outlook in the Gospel of Mark, the general consensus is that the apocalyptic and eschatological tendency in Mark's contemporary worldview began to emerge in a social and historical context in which biblical prophecy was no longer valid or relevant to the contemporary situation, in which many were experiencing alienation from the people and society in the main line group and were marginalized in the social structure.⁷ The marginalized then began to distance themselves from their historical reality and became eager to look for God's supernatural intervention to set his kingly rule and new order in this world, judging the evil and rewarding the good.⁸ In this kind of socio-religious milieu, apocalyptic thought and worldview were often manifested in such systems of thought as the doctrine of the two ages, pessimism, esotericism, determinism, imminent expectation of the end of the world, cosmic and

⁶ Scholars are fairly clearly divided on this issue. Some have been in favour of its matrix of post-exilic prophecy (Paul Hanson, H.H. Rowley, D.S. Russell, M.A. Knibb). P. Hanson, in particular, in his *Dawn of Apocalyptic*, argues that the birth of apocalyptic (presumably in the sense of apocalyptic eschatology) should be found in the messages of the post-exilic prophets. He refers to Deutero-Isaiah in particular whose mythological description of God's eschatological-cosmic rule of the world should have its root in ancient Israelite, and ultimately Canaanite traditions (P. Hanson; cf. F.M. Cross). Others argue for the pagan origins, either Babylonian (notably in the case of Daniel and 1 Enoch at least in respect of Babylonian mantic wisdom), or Persian (especially in the case of the Qumran scrolls at least with regard to the dualism of light and darkness), or Hellenistic. Still others opt for Canaanite myth (F.M. Cross; cf. P. Hanson) and some argue for wisdom as a matrix of apocalyptic eschatology (notably, von Rad).

As we are aware of the fact that sometimes various apocalyptic thoughts with different origins are found within a piece of apocalyptic writing, the view that Jewish apocalyptic thought has a single matrix cannot be accepted. Nor should it be seen as an amalgam of the Jewish and the pagan origins because such a view tends to overlook the Jewish soil of the apocalyptic thought or eschatology and tradition, ancient Israelite religion and the Hebrew Bible. Our main interest is how the tradition influenced the apocalyptic-eschatological worldview in the Gospel of Mark, and we adopt the view that Jewish apocalyptic drew heavily on biblical tradition, especially on post-exilic prophetic tradition whose origin in turn is attributed to ancient Hebrew and Canaanite traditions, specifically the Exodus tradition, the founding moment in shaping Israel's national identity and character.

⁷ E. P. Sanders, "The Genre of Palestinian Jewish Apocalypses," 456, in *Apocalypticism in the Mediterranean World and the Near East: proceedings of the International Colloquium on Apocalypticism, Uppsala, August 12-17, 1979*, ed. David Hellholm (Tubingen: J.C.B. Mohr [Paul Siebeck], 1983).

⁸ This point is taken by some scholars as one that draws a sharp line between prophecy and apocalyptic. For example, H.H. Rowley contends that "the prophets foretold the future that should arise out of the present, while the apocalyptists foretold the future that should break into the present" (*The Relevance of Apocalyptic: a study of Jewish and Christian apocalypses from Daniel to the Revelation*, [London: Lutterworth Press, 1963], 35). Same distinction is also found in D.S Russell, *The Method and Message of Jewish Apocalyptic, 200 BC-AD 100* (London: SCM Press, 1964), 95, 97.

universal outlook.⁹ With this apocalyptic worldview as a backdrop, Mark wrote his gospel to the audience who were under the turmoils caused by confrontation between the Jewish revolutionaries and Roman intruders in Palestine, and were experiencing alienation in the midst of the confrontation, and provided an alternative reading of the contemporary reality and God's saving acts for his people.¹⁰ In this sense, Mark's appropriation of a certain kind of apocalyptic eschatology or epistemology to make sense of the discordant lives of his community under the current turmoils could be easily envisioned. As John Riches surmises, where God's transcendence is thought to reside in his future revelation of himself, it is only logical to envisage a reality which is otherworldly, which rises above the evil and injustice of the present world and will come to redeem and replace it: "that is to say, talk of God's coming with power to judge this world is one way of expressing one's profound rejection of certain values and actions and of advocating certain others." Such apocalyptic epistemology is a form of "cultural resources," Riches enumerates, "by which particular communities may make sense of and shape their experience, may interpret those experiences which seem most deeply to question their inherited beliefs and which may lead them to falter or despair."¹¹ Mark's introduction of a peculiar concept that God's intervention began to emerge very paradoxically in Jesus' life and death¹² thus complements these changes rather nicely. It is Mark's apocalyptic and eschatological understanding of Jesus' ministry that compels him to show in his narrative how God's new Creation, new covenant community, and new order began to take a shape in and through these two apocalyptic events, that God's new creation and his new community called for a new kind of epistemology, a recognition of the new order presently working in it in a hidden mode.¹³ So it is that in the first chapter of the Gospel, Mark declares the

⁹ Cf. P. Vielhauer, "Apocalyptic" in *New Testament Apocrypha* 2 ed. W. Schneemelcher (London: SCM Press, 1975), 588-594.

¹⁰ See, Marcus, "Jewish War and the Sitz im Leben of Mark?" *JBL* 111/3. Especially, for Mark's distinct appropriation of the same tradition that the Jewish revolutionaries resorted to for their belief in an apocalyptic holy war, see Marcus, *Way of the Lord*, 22-23.

¹¹ John Riches, "Apocalyptic-Strangely Relevant," in *Templum Amicitiae: Essays on the Second Temple presented to Ernst Bammel*, ed., by William Horbury, JSNTSupp 48 (Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1991), 257-258.

¹² Interestingly, this paradox is explained by Rowley as one that was at home in the thought of the apocalyptists. As he defines this present world as one that is ruled by devils and demons, he insightfully points out that "The deepest tragedy of evil is that through the very ills it brings on men it breeds itself anew" (*The Relevance*, 162, 168). If Rowley is right, Mark can be viewed as one who is more aligned with his contemporary apocalyptic thought, rather than one who makes a paradoxical appropriation of it.

¹³ With regard to this point, we have two authors in mind: J. L. Martyn, "Epistemology At the Turn of

Gospel as God's triumphant rule, identifies the agent who brings it to the fruition, and utters a warning about the conflict and personal suffering that the newly formed people of God must undergo, as God's ruling is being established in his new world.¹⁴ In the scheme of Mark's worldview,¹⁵ God's ultimate saving acts "came to be conceived of not as the fulfilment of promises within political structures and historical events, but as deliverance out of the present order into a new transformed order."¹⁶ God's intervention in this sense was "a cosmic drama of salvation,"¹⁷ announcing a new age and new order which transcends all human instrumentality. Accordingly Mark portrays Jesus as an apocalyptic figure¹⁸ through whom God intervenes into the world and sets his ruling in it so that a new world order may begin to emerge in his person and ministry. In fact, as soon as the drama of God's salvation of humanity and his creation begins to unfold, as clearly indicated by the opening of the Gospel of Mark and the following passages of prophecy of Isaiah,¹⁹ Jesus is portrayed as one who *saw* two events, the opening of the heaven and the coming down of the Spirit.²⁰ Thus as he assumed the messianic role as an agent of establishing a new world order, Jesus also became the very heart of the apocalyptic in-breaking of God's new rule: he

the Ages: 2 Corinthians 5:16" and "Apocalyptic Antinomies in Paul's Letter to the Galatians" in *Theological Issues in the Letters of Paul* (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1997); J. Marcus, "'The Time Has Been Fulfilled!' (Mark 1:15)" in *Apocalyptic And The New Testament*, eds, Joel Marcus and Marion L. Soards, JSNTSup 24 especially, 56. Thomas Boomershine tries to align this new paradoxical epistemology in Mark to a Christian unique way of appropriation of the apocalyptic epistemology which J. L. Martyn criticizes as misleading because it may overlook the importance of the cross at the juncture of the two ages ("Epistemology at the Turn of the Ages in Paul, Jesus, and Mark," *Apocalyptic and The New Testament*, ed. J. Marcus and M. Soards [Sheffield Press, 1989], 164-165.

¹⁴ See H. Kee, *Community of The New Age: Studies in Mark's Gospel*, 75 (London: SCM Press, 1977). Already in 1892 against the background of Jewish apocalypticism Johannes Weiss pointed out the centrality of Jesus' announcement of the imminent end of the age and of the cosmic conflict that would culminate in the coming of the kingdom of God. See *Jesus' Proclamation of the Kingdom of God*, Fortress Press, 1971.

¹⁵ As reflected in apocalyptic literature that covers the period from 200 BC to 100 AD. We suppose, following the scholarly consensus, that a major catalyst for apocalyptic worldview is the contemporary historical realities that contradicted hopes rooted in promises in prophetic tradition.

¹⁶ This definition is made by Paul Hanson in his attempt to make a distinction between prophetic eschatology and apocalyptic eschatology (cf. *Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible*, Supplementary Volume, ed. Keith Crim, Abingdon, 1976, 30). Thus in Hanson's scheme, one of the prominent characteristics of the latter is characterized by its cosmic level of salvation or otherworldly source of redemption, which is in contrast to the former since it concerns God's saving acts within history.

¹⁷ Ibid, 29.

¹⁸ For scholarly debates on whether Jesus and his teaching are ethical or apocalyptic, see Klaus Koch, *The rediscovery of apocalyptic: a polemical work on a neglected area of biblical studies and its damaging effects on theology and philosophy* (London: S.C.M. Press, 1972) 49-97, especially, 54-56.

¹⁹ For such understanding of the relation between 'the gospel' in the opening verse and the following two verses which are ascribed to Isaiah, see Marcus, *Way of the Lord*, 17-21.

²⁰ These events are clearly apocalyptic-eschatological in nature, as indicated by their resonance with several Isaianic passages (Is 63:11 MT; 63:19 MT; 63:14 LXX; 42:1 MT and LXX), which are replete

is the new order of the new world. Everyone, everything is to be subject to this new order and to be viewed and act as such. It is in this sense that we view Mark's eschatology and his apocalyptic epistemology.

1.3 The Scope and Context

Before we go on to our study, certain terms and concepts have to be situated and contextualized. The word 'apocalyptic,' for example, in relation to terms such as apocalypse, apocalypticism, and apocalyptic eschatology,²¹ can be at times unnecessarily confusing. These different terms are symptomatic of the fact that scholars are divided on its origin as well as its meaning, definition, and their scope of related issues. The confusion about the definition stems from debates on literary form or thought pattern as the primary criterion, and from the kinds of relationship which should be drawn between the apocalypse as a literary category and apocalyptic thought as a religious or theological perspective.²² These two categories do not always match each other: a writing that does not reflect apocalyptic thought is still called an apocalypse, and apocalyptic thought is also found in formally non-apocalyptic writings (notably the Qumran writings).²³ In this study, 'apocalyptic' is not restricted

with apocalyptic images and motifs.

²¹ For a sketch of debates about terminological clarification, see M. A. Knibb, "The Emergence of the Jewish Apocalypse," *Israel's Prophetic Tradition*, ed. Coggins, Phillips and Knibb (Cambridge Univ. Press, 1982) I, 156-165. For a recent survey of the debates, see David C. Sim, *Apocalyptic Eschatology in the Gospel of Matthew*, SNTSMS 88 (Cambridge Univ. Press, 1996), 23-31.

²² K. Koch in his book, distinguishes these two and gives several distinctive features of each: for 6 features of apocalypse, see *Rediscovery*, 23-28; for 8 features of apocalyptic, see *Rediscovery*, 28-33 (e.g. urgent expectation of the impending overthrow of all earthly conditions; the end as a cosmic catastrophe; the division of world-history which has been predetermined from creation; the intervention of heavenly figures in the affairs of this world; a new salvation beyond the catastrophe, revealed to the remnant of the chosen people and extended to the non-Israelite nations as well; a reversal from disaster to salvation as an act of God and the distinction between this age and the age to come; the presence of a mediator with royal functions; use of the catchword, 'glory' in the description of the new age).

²³ Cf. E. P. Sanders, "The Genre of Palestinian Jewish Apocalypses" in *Apocalypticism in the Mediterranean World and the Near East*, ed. David Hellholm (Tubingen: J.C.B. Mohr [Paul Siebeck], 1983), 449-450, 455f. This problem is also recognized partly by M.E. Stone when he criticizes Koch's definitions of both categories based on their characteristic features: see, "Lists of Revealed Things in the Apocalyptic Literature," in F.M. Cross, W.E. Lemke and P.D. Miller, Jr (eds.) *Magnalia Dei. The Mighty Acts of God: Essays on the Bible and Archaeology* (Garden City, NY, 1976), 440-2.

In addition, most apocalyptic writings do not specify themselves as apocalypses, unlike the case of the canonical Apocalypse of John. Even within the apocalyptic writings, we see certain themes or motifs that fit one group of literature, but are not found in other groups of writings. For example, the review of history, which by contextualizing a contemporary crisis in a larger historical framework was meant to demonstrate that the upheaval of the apocalypticist's time represented the final phase in an irrevocable chain of events, is attested in Palestinian Jewish apocalypses such Daniel, 1 Enoch, 4 Ezra, 2 Apocalypse of Baruch; yet such a motif is lacking in Hellenistic Jewish Apocalypses such as 2 Enoch,

to apocalypses as literary works; rather, it is used to embrace a broader spectrum of literatures that include non-apocalyptic writings, which still show evidence of apocalyptic thought.²⁴ And in an attempt to treat apocalyptic thought as a theological perspective, without all the usual trappings, we have adopted ‘apocalyptic eschatology’ as the representative term for Mark’s unique theological perspective.²⁵ More specifically, Martin de Boer and J. Marcus help us clarify the meaning of this term. Martin de Boer asserts that Jewish apocalyptic eschatology can be succinctly summarized in a phrase, “two ages, cosmically conceived”²⁶; J. Marcus says that the Gospel of Mark is ‘apocalyptic’ in that the Gospel of Mark is thoroughly set “within the context of the approaching end of the world.”²⁷ For our study, the two constituents of the term, ‘apocalyptic eschatology,’ are used as following: ‘apocalyptic’ is taken to be God’s revelation in his intervening act on the horizon of his creation and ‘eschatology’ refers to the final manifestation of God’s rule which effectively sets this world right by rewarding the just and punishing the evil. Taken together, ‘apocalyptic eschatology’ refers to our view that God finally revealed himself through his intervening act to his creation, to establish his reign over his creation with justice and righteousness.

In regard to ‘seeing’ as a motif that reveals Mark’s theological tenor, a few points need to be clarified. As we easily note in the works of various theological dictionaries of the NT, ‘seeing’ has been approached from the angle of etymological or semantic word studies.²⁸ These lexical studies and historical surveys of the usage of

3 Baruch, and the Testament of Abraham, or possibly the Apocalypse of Zephaniah, which are all characterized by otherworldly journeys. J. Collins, “The Genre Apocalypse in Hellenistic Judaism,” *Apocalypticism in the Dead Sea scrolls*, (London: Routledge, 1997), 532, 544-47; cf. *The Jewish Apocalyptic Heritage in Early Christianity*, eds. James C. VanderKam and William Adler (Assen: Van Gorcu; Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1996), 29, n.130.

²⁴ Cf. William Adler, “Introduction,” 5, in *Jewish Apocalyptic Heritage*, eds. James C. VanderKam and William Adler.

²⁵ For the purpose of our study on the relation between ‘seeing’ and Mark’s apocalyptic eschatology, we adopt a major view that among these characteristics of apocalyptic eschatology dualism and determinism with cosmic dimension are its two major conceptual frameworks (see Sim, *Apocalyptic Eschatology*, 35-42).

²⁶ Martin de Boer, “Paul and The Two Patterns of Jewish Apocalyptic Eschatology,” presented in a Biblical Seminar, Univ. of Glasgow, 27 Jan. 1998; cf. his article, “Paul and Jewish Apocalyptic Eschatology,” *Apocalyptic and the New Testament*, eds. J. Marcus and M. Soards (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1989).

²⁷ J. Marcus, *Mark 1-8: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*, AB 27 (New York: Doubleday, 1999), 71.

²⁸ See the following works: *Exegetical Dictionary of the New Testament*, ed. Horst Balz and Gerhard Schneider (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Pub. Company); *The New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology*, ed. Colin Brown (Exeter: Paternoster, 1978); *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, ed. G. Kittel, and G. Friedrich, (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1964-1978).

the word fail to illuminate their findings in light of the overarching theological frame of the Gospel. As John Riches poignantly puts it, “the kind of harmony which matters has to do not just with superficial linguistic or literary features, though they are by no means irrelevant, but more importantly with patterns of thought.”²⁹ More specifically, with a word like ‘seeing’ with its frequent appearances and other connections to the context of Mark’s theological interest, it is only wise that the term is explored in relation to the patterns of thought manifested in Mark’s narrative.

Even when scholars treat the motif of ‘seeing’ in the context of Markan theology, they do so under the rubric of ‘blindness’ and in the context of the disciples’ spiritual incomprehension, and not as an independent literary motif.³⁰ The need to establish ‘seeing’ as a motif with its own importance in the Gospel of Mark can be legitimized in that its frequent occurrences and more importantly its appearances at crucial points in the narrative development of the Gospel, especially in connection with Jesus’ identity, which is expressed in the formula, “This is. . .”: at the beginning (1:10-11), the middle (9:7-8), and the end (15:39) of the narrative.³¹ In our line of discussion, Jesus’ inaugural announcement that “the time has been fulfilled and that the rule of God is at hand” deftly situates the ‘seeing’ motif within the context of Mark’s apocalyptic eschatology,³² prompting us to examine the ways in which the motif enriches the Gospel’s thematic issues.³³

Only in recent Markan scholarship, has ‘seeing’ started to emerge as a self-contained motif enriching Mark’s apocalyptic epistemology. The new approach is suggested in several works of Joel Marcus on the Gospel of Mark, especially in his discussion of Markan epistemology, focusing on Mark 4:10-12.³⁴ In regard to the

²⁹ The verbs of seeing such as εἶδον, ὄρω, βλέπω and θεωρεω, occur 68 times in Mark. The verb, εἶδον appears most frequently (42 times out of 68 times in total). This observation can be confirmed through the comparisons of the Synoptic parallel passages. Also, Mathew and Luke show clear lack of interest in the verb εἶδόν. Only 2 times out of 43 in total do both Matthew and Luke follow Mark in their use of the verb; 4 times out of 43 they maintain the verb, yet still modify sentence structures.

³⁰ This might be explained by the fact that the Markan scholarship of the past decades has heavily focused on the theme of discipleship. It should not, however, justify the lack of concern with the blindness of other characters in Mark.

³¹ For the threefold, rhetorical analysis of the Markan narrative in the light of ancient Greek popular literature, see M. A. Tolbert, *Sowing the Gospel: Mark’s World in Literary-Historical Perspective* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1989), 35-79, especially, 74 ff.

³² We agree with J. Marcus’ definition of Mark as ‘apocalyptic’ in that the Gospel of Mark is thoroughly set “within the context of the approaching end of the world,” see his book, *Mark 1-8: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*, AB 27 (New York: Doubleday, 1999), 71.

³³ For a pioneering scholar with this perspective, see H. Kee, *Community of The New Age*, 64-76.

³⁴ J. Marcus, “Mark 4:10-12 and Marcan Epistemology,” *JBL* 103 (1984), 564-567; but Marcus explicitly and implicitly discusses Mark’s epistemology in his book, *The Mystery of the Kingdom of*

verbs of perception in 4:12, based on the use of the verbs in the LXX, Philo and the NT, he asserts that “ἰδῶσιν indicates true comprehension and βλέποντες βλέπωσιν all perception that falls short of it.” Viewing the outsiders’ comprehension of the parable as a superficial one, which fails to penetrate beyond the phenomenal realm,³⁵ he expands the dichotomy between true sight and sense perception to epistemological issues. For Marcus, these passages present to us clear samples of Markan irony: characters look on the level of appearance but do not perceive true reality. For Mark “‘reality’ is that which is coming, and even now invading the present [1:15],” he observes, concluding that such an epistemology is “thoroughly apocalyptic.”³⁶ It is from this starting point that the motif of ‘seeing’ is integrated into this study of Mark’s apocalyptic and eschatological perspective as a key strategy for highlighting his distinctive theological bearing. And it is in this framework that the verbs of ‘seeing,’ with their sheer quantity and O.T. links, deserve much attention in this study.

1.4 The Approach and Methodology

Recently a prominent shift in scholarly approaches, from the diachronic to the synchronic, has been made in biblical studies. The inherently speculative nature of the former approach was often a source of frustration to many and encouraged them to subscribe to the synchronic approach, allured by its claim that the current shape of the text is the final form of the text³⁷ and that this should be the main focus of biblical studies. The dissected and fragmented particles which later in the course of transmissions may or may not have been shaped to be literary artifacts no longer presented a cumbersome burden to those who opted for the new approach. At least for its fledging and inceptive years,³⁸ the synchronic approach attracted many enthusiastic

God (see especially 99-107, 113-116). His understanding of Mark’s epistemology in turn draws on Louis Martyn’s two articles, “Epistemology at the Turn of the Ages: 2 Cor 5:16,” and “Apocalyptic Antinomies in Paul’s Letter to the Galatians.”

³⁵ J. Marcus, *The Mystery*, 104-105.

³⁶ Ibid, 113. See also Marcus, “Mark 4:10-12,” 557: “Mark’s epistemology.. is linked to the fact that his Gospel .. expresses an apocalyptic viewpoint.”

³⁷ R. C. Tannehill’s “Gospel of Mark as Narrative Christology” (*Semeia* 16, 57-95 [1979]) is a classic model of this synchronic approach.

³⁸ This synchronic approach has been popular in English-speaking countries, in interaction with the ‘narrative theology’ of Hans W. Frei (cf. *The Eclipse of Biblical Narrative: A Study in Eighteenth and Nineteenth Century Hermeneutics* [New Haven: Yale University Press, 1974]), in opposition to the hegemony of the German scholarship which is characterized by diachronic attempt to separate original

supporters. What ensued, however, from this shift was that now biblical scholarship was geared toward the other extreme. The synchronic approach's focus on the literary shape of the present text often neglected the historical matrix that must have shaped the text in one way or another, along with particular theological intentions and ramifications within specific historical contexts and cultural milieus.

Now the pendulum is swinging to the other direction again, as is evident in much of current retrieving efforts to draw resources from the old school of interpretation. Our study tries to gain from both of these approaches. It is a truism to say that interpretive goals should not be superseded by interpretive method, that a better and close understanding of the text should always remain as the main focus, but that is the fundamental stance of our approach. All three constituents of the Bible, history, theology, and literature, are taken in this study as elemental factors that make up the final infallible Word of God: biblical texts should not be used as a mere channel through which one might gain access to what happened historically in the communities that handed down certain biblical traditions. Our primary concern in interpreting the texts at hand will be always with the textual and contextual meaning in their current literary shapes.

It is within this boundary that some critical and exegetical issues in this study are aided by form-critical and redaction-critical methods. Likewise, the history-of-religions approach has provided help, especially in conjunction to our understanding of the way the New Testament authors appropriate O.T. texts and themes in the context of early Jewish and Christian interpretations of the Old Testament passages.³⁹ The most valuable and dominant tool for this study has been the intertextual approach.⁴⁰ The view that the intertextuality of a literary corpus can probe and reveal the various networks of a woven text has been tried all through out the main part of this study and proven highly effective. As terms, images, and motifs of Mark's

traditions from later editorial redactions and contributions, which is epitomized by the historical-critical approach.

³⁹ For a good explanation of the methods about the interpretations of the N.T., see Stanley E. Porter & Craig A. Evans, ed., *New Testament Interpretation and Methods: a Sheffield reader* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, c1997); I. Howard Marshall, ed., *New Testament interpretation: essays on principles and methods* (Carlisle: Paternoster Press, 1985 [1992 reprinting]).

⁴⁰ Michael Fishbane's book, *Biblical interpretation in Ancient Israel* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1985), is a classic in this regard, even though it deals with the phenomenon of intertextuality within the Hebrew Scriptures. See also R. B. Hays, *Echoes of Scripture in the Letters of Paul* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1989); S. Draisma, ed., *Intertextuality in Biblical Writings: Essays in Honour of Bas van Iersel* (Kampen: Kok, 1989); D. Boyarin, *Intertextuality and the Reading of Midrash* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1990).

narrative were examined according to intertextuality, their significance, not only in the narrative world of the author but also in the minds of his readers was unveiled.

With these somewhat eclectic approaches and methods each passage of Jesus' baptism and crucifixion was analyzed, their meaning in the current form of the text accordingly explicated. In probing each, source-redaction-critical issues, traditions and history-of-religions issues, and intertextual issues were employed as needed. In the preliminary research for the actual study of the rending of the heaven and the Temple curtain, the verbs of 'seeing' were examined; the verb εἶδον was then identified as the main instrument in regard to the motif of 'seeing.' Markan passages which contain the verb εἶδον, were then compared to other synoptic parallel passages to explore Mark's peculiar keenness on the motif of 'seeing' and his use of it in imparting his apocalyptic eschatology. All the occurrences of εἶδον in Mark were then analyzed within this framework. In the exegetical parts themselves that start from Chapter 2, exegetical investigations of the apocalyptic and eschatological nature of the passages at hand were conducted, integrating the motif of 'seeing' into the theme of Mark's peculiar theological orientation.⁴¹

In conjunction with this apocalyptic and eschatological architectonic frame of Mark's Gospel, the theme of the Temple, the rending of whose curtain is being witnessed by the centurion at Jesus' crucifixion, will be probed to see how Jesus related himself to the Jerusalem Temple and how Mark relates this rending to the rending of the heaven which is witnessed by Jesus in his baptism. In Chapter 3, we deal with the episode of Jesus' healing of the paralytic, where apocalyptic and eschatological images and connotations are conspicuously prevalent, especially in connection to the motifs of our interest, of 'seeing,' 'faith' and 'the forgiveness of sins'; interestingly enough, there is a parallel between this chapter and the sayings of Jesus on faith and the forgiveness of sins in Mk 11:20-26, which will be dealt with under the heading 4.542222 JESUS' ACTION AS PROPHETIC THREAT AND PROMISE in chapter 4 of this study. The focus here in chapter 3 will be on the exposition of the motif of seeing which is enacted by Jesus' act of seeing the faith of the paralytic and his friends, in an attempt to highlight the apocalyptic and

⁴¹ Apocalyptic eschatology is a long-neglected, yet recently recognized macro-theological interest of Mark. Since we will come back to the issue of apocalyptic eschatology, it suffices to say that by that we mean a theological perspective on the end of ages which is characterized by its belief in dualism and determinism which were appropriated by Mark in his description of God's in-breaking into the

eschatological nature of Jesus' seeing. In Chapter 4, the centurion's witnessing will be probed in the context of the event of the rending of the Temple curtain and the theme of the Temple in Mark will be also considered in an effort to verify if the rending of the Temple curtain is designed by Mark to be read together with the rending of the heaven, and to demonstrate how they work together to signify the passing of the old age and beginning of the new. In Conclusion, the apocalyptic and the eschatological nature of the thematic and the theological links between the rendings of the heaven and Temple curtain will be recapitulated and the integral role of the motif of seeing in this apocalyptic event will be restated.

world through Jesus and setting in motion his new world order that involves his people in a conflict of cosmic warfare yet assures them of its ultimate victory.

Part I The Rending of the Heaven

2

The Motif of Seeing in Jesus' Baptism

2.1 Preliminary Remarks

Turning to a rather extended, larger unit, 1:10-13, we encounter in v. 10 the first occurrence of the verb εἶδον in the whole Gospel of Mark. This unit seems to consist of two distinct accounts, the baptism of Jesus (vv.9-11) and his temptation in the wilderness (vv.12-13); many commentators put them under different headings and treat them as two, unrelated episodes.⁴² In addition, the verb εἶδον is not found in the episode of Jesus' temptation.

Nonetheless, these two accounts should be read together since the episode of Jesus' temptation needs to be viewed in conjunction with Jesus' baptismal scene. The argument will be supported first by linguistic and thematic considerations, then by examining the nature of God's administration of his world since the creation, as shown especially in his dealing with his people of Israel, through either blessings and punishments, or grace and mercy.

First of all, attention should be paid to the same location of the temptation episode and its linguistic (cf. τὸ πνεῦμα in v.10 and v.12) and thematic connections, with regard to the immediately preceding Jesus' baptism, along with its apocalyptic implications, as well as its programmatic and paradigmatic significance within the whole gospel. It should be also taken into account that the Markan sequence of declaration of divine approval of Jesus as the Son of God, immediately followed by Jesus' temptation by Satan, corresponds to a traditional pattern of a heavenly voice of declaratory recognition upon someone at issue, followed by a Satanic test (cf Job1:8-12; 2:3-6; Jub.17:15-17).⁴³ All these create an unmistakable link between these two

⁴² Cf. standard commentaries such as *Mark 1-8:26* by Guelich in WBC, *Mark 1-8* by Marcus in Anchor Bible, *St. Mark* by Gould in ICC, and *Das Evangelium nach Markus* by Joachim Gnilka.

⁴³ Susan R. Garrett, *The Temptation of Jesus in Mark's Gospel* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998), 55-56.

episodes. They assume a programmatic and paradigmatic significance in developing and shaping the whole story of Mark, setting up an architectonic and macro picture of Jesus' experiences at the moment of the induction of his messianic mission and elevating the apocalyptic and eschatological dimension of the experiences. Thus, they also set the course of what follows them along the same road; Jesus' baptism and temptation are not just his personal experiences that ascribe and signify importance to his public ministry; they add a cosmic dimension to events later, which in turn are to be determined by what actually happened here during Jesus' baptism and temptation.

More importantly, the presence of fundamentally different views on the nature of God's kingly rule, either in a transcendent or immanent way, as well as on the nature of human sin, will inevitably result in different views on how human sins and predicaments will be dealt with and solved. John Riches, in partial endorsement of Johannes Weiss' view on the Kingdom of God, takes a special note of two conflicting aspects of the Kingdom of God. On the one hand, the Kingdom of God can be characterized by the immanence of its ruling in the life of the community, as implied in Mk 10:15 in which the Kingdom of God is described as an entity to be received and entered as a child does. On the other hand, God's kingdom has the distinctiveness of transcending all human limitations, exerting an all powerful and transforming effect on human destiny and all creaturely arenas, as it is shown in the prophecy of Deutero-Isaiah (cf. 52:7ff).⁴⁴ The same thing is true of human sins. On the one hand, human sins are described as something imposed by a form of angelic invasion and the corruption of the world. In this case, a resolution of human perennial predicament can be only acquired by the divine overthrow and destruction of the dark power. On the other hand, it is ascribed to a primeval human rebellion against the Creator. In this case, its atonement has to do with moral reformation of men and women and their final judgement by God.⁴⁵

In light of this essential nature of divine and human realities, God's intervening act in Jesus' baptism, especially in a theophanic endorsement of his eschatological ruling through Jesus as Messiah, would inevitably coincide with the Satanic trial of Jesus, which proleptically shows a radical subversion or an ultimate transformation of the way God's victory will be eventually accomplished, that is,

⁴⁴ John Riches and Alan Millar, "Conceptual Change in the Synoptic Tradition," in *Alternative Approaches to New Testament Study*, ed. Anthony E. Harvey (London: S.P.C.K, 1985), 44-45.

culminating in the crucifixion of the Messiah. It is a truism that this sort of conceptual change in terms of God's triumph over evil may trigger a new way of looking at things; the transformed understanding of God's ultimate ruling accordingly would have reformed Mark's and his readers' experiences of contemporary social and political developments, and eventually resulting in radically changed practical implications. In light of this, the subversive nature of Markan language and the potentials that such deliberate linguistic and conceptual change implied Mark's editorial modifications or dominical sayings themselves deserve much attention.⁴⁶

As pointed out, Jesus' wilderness temptation mainly demonstrates the nature of Jesus' earthly ministry in introducing God's eschatological rule, through a cosmic battle that underlies conflict between God and Satan. But it also brings to the surface the human predicaments that Jesus will be dealing with later; problems of humanity are deeply rooted in 'primeval Satanic rebellion' against God and its subsequent oppositions. In this light, Jesus' fundamental struggle, as John Riches discerns, involves the human will and heart, which cannot be conquered by coercive force. Not only that, this struggle asks for Jesus' unconditional sacrifice, paying the ultimate price for such force, yielding himself into the hands of men and to death. Jesus' ministry thus can be said to focus on overcoming the human heart's rebellious nature against God's will, on bringing people to repentance (1:15). And "it is this task which ultimately outstrips all others," as Riches observes, "whether it be to bind the strong man, or to overcome the forces of disease and nature." For such a task, nothing less than a total transformation of power is required, a complete subversion of what was expected in the return of the glory of the Lord to Zion, Mark implies, as he leads us through his narrative of an unlikely hero and his bands of bedraggled pilgrims making their entrance to Jerusalem, where Jesus is crucified and the veil of the Temple is rent.⁴⁷

In view of these observations, we must note how the presence of *the verb of seeing* helps us see this apocalyptic and eschatological dimensions of these two events; Jesus saw in his baptism the ripping of the heavens and the coming down of the Holy Spirit, signaling the coming of the new age and the final shaping of God's creaturely world. Similarly, the temptation of Jesus is also indicative of the cosmic

⁴⁵ John Riches, *Conflicting Mythologies: Identity Formation in the Gospels of Mark and Matthew*, Studies of the New Testament and its World (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 2000), 145ff.

⁴⁶ John Riches and A. Miller, "Conceptual," 51, 48.

dimension of the ministry that Jesus is going to do, the cosmic and decisive battle against Satan whose power imposed on God's creation in the old days now begins to fade away. Words like 'Satan,' 'wilderness,' 'wild animals,' 'angels,' and 'the Spirit' immediately elevate the episode to the cosmic realm. In Jesus' temptation, the Spirit is described as one who 'drives out' or 'casts out' Jesus into wilderness: τὸ πνεῦμα αὐτὸν ἐκβάλλει εἰς τὴν ἔρημον. As many have noted, the word 'ἐκβάλλει' is the same word that Mark applies to Jesus' own casting out of demons (cf. 1:34 ; 3:22). Used in this context, the word underscores the power of the Spirit's control over Jesus' entry into the wilderness, and seems to function to intensify the spiritual and cosmic aspect of the temptation that Jesus is undergoing.⁴⁸ Furthermore, as U. Mauser insightfully points out, Jesus was already in the wilderness for John's baptism, thus there is something absurd about him being driven out into the wilderness again; from Mauser's form-critical stance, the inconsistency indicates the baptism and the temptation being separate events originally.⁴⁹ More importantly, the inconsistency reveals that Mark's primary concern was not with geographical locality, but with the theological implications of his motifs, in this case, the wilderness, a spiritual arena in which demonic powers had been residing, afflicting and devastating God's creation and especially his people; Jesus is thus being portrayed as the Messianic figure who is commissioned to take over these powers and solve the human predicament once and for all.

This is not a neutrally reported history record, but a narrative world that is literarily formulated with theological frameworks. As J. Riches points out, a great achievement of Mark in the trajectories of Jewish and Christian biblical exegesis is his narrative itself. Writing of the life and death of Jesus itself is a powerful tool for announcing that this Jesus is the Son of God and what is written here forms a firm basis of a new epistemology on the world and life. In other words, with the writing of this narrative, Mark creates an authoritative account that anchors a certain Christian community on a firm basis of the scriptural tradition, orienting the community to that direction.⁵⁰

⁴⁷ J. Riches, *Conflicting*, 163-165.

⁴⁸ S. Garrett, *The Temptations*, 55.

⁴⁹ Ulrich W. Mauser, *Christ in the Wilderness: The Wilderness Theme in the Second Gospel and Its Basis in the Biblical Tradition* (London: SMC Press, 1963), 97 n.4.

⁵⁰ John Riches, *Matthew*, New Testament Guides (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1996), 50.

Next, though the verb of seeing does not occur in the account of Jesus' temptation, in this narrative context, and especially in light of the narrative flow of the two episodes, what Jesus saw in his baptism is closely related to our reading of Jesus' temptation; what Jesus saw in his baptism was the Spirit coming down. Here, we need to note the occurrence of the word τὸ πνεῦμα in both accounts, as it creates the key link between the two; the Holy Spirit that came down upon Jesus in his Baptism in v. 10 is the same Holy Spirit that drove Jesus to the wilderness.⁵¹ As J. Gnllka makes it clear, "Der Geist, der sich eben auf Jesus herableiß, ist Subjekt des Handelns."⁵² Jesus' optic vision of the Holy Spirit coming down upon him is closely related to his understanding of who drove him to the wilderness to be tested by Satan. The absence of the verb 'seeing' in the temptation episode poses no problem for our argument; the potency of the act of seeing in v.10 is still in effect in the scene of Jesus' temptation.⁵³

More importantly, Mk 1:9-13 plays a key programmatic and paradigmatic role in the development of the Markan narrative. "Σὺ εἶ ὁ υἱός μου" the recognition-formula with regard to Jesus' divine sonship is repeated in three strategic points in Mark's narrative: 1:10; 9:7-8; 15:38. In these passages, the recognition of Jesus' divine sonship and the occurrence of the same verb of seeing εἶδον coincide. The structure that is noted in the baptismal episode (...εἶδεν σχιζομένους τοὺς οὐρανοὺς ... Σὺ εἶ ὁ υἱός μου ὁ ἀγαπητός...) also appears in 9:7-8: Οὗτός ἐστιν ὁ υἱός μου ὁ ἀγαπητός,...οὐκέτι οὐδένα εἶδον ἀλλὰ τὸν Ἰησοῦν μόνον ἵνα μηδενὶ ἂ εἶδον διηγῆσονται, εἰ μὴ ὅταν ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ ἀνθρώπου ἐκ νεκρῶν ἀναστῇ. Also in 15:39, upon 'seeing' the moment of the expiration of Jesus' last breath on the cross, the centurion reiterates Jesus' divine sonship: Ἰδὼν δὲ ὁ κεντυρίων ... ὅτι οὕτως ἐξέπνευσεν εἶπεν, ... οὗτος ὁ ἄνθρωπος υἱὸς θεοῦ ἦν. The programmatic and paradigmatic function of the recognition-formula is critical in understanding the thrust of the whole of the Markan narrative.

One of the most important Markan motifs, the Kingdom of God, which is highlighted in the fact that Jesus' inaugural pronouncement was the dawning of the Kingdom of God, occurs in all of these three very pivotal junctures in Mark. Mark

⁵¹ Cf. Mauser, *Christ in the Wilderness*, 97. Especially for how the Spirit's activity serves to connect the baptism and the temptation, see E. Schweizer, *The Good News According to Mark* (Atlanta: John Knox Press, 1970), 42-43.

⁵² J. Gnllka, *Das Evangelium Nach Marcus* [Mk1-8,26], (Zurich: Benziger Verlag, 1979), 56.

⁵³ Cf. S. Garrett, *the Temptation*, 55-56.

places the inaugural announcement of the kingdom of God (1:14-15) right after the episode of Jesus' temptation. Jesus' transfiguration narrative, which includes the heavenly voice about his divine sonship and two acts of 'seeing,' is preceded by Jesus' promise to his disciples that some of them will see the Kingdom of God coming in power before they taste death (9:1). Likewise, immediately following the episode of the centurion's confession about Jesus' divine sonship is the story about Joseph of Arimathea. In the story, he is described as one waiting for the Kingdom of God: ὃς καὶ αὐτὸς ἦν προσδεχόμενος τὴν βασιλείαν τοῦ θεοῦ. As J. Marcus observes, this statement is ironic in that Joseph did not know that in Jesus' death, God's kingly rule will begin to emerge; yet, the juxtaposition of the centurion's recognition of Jesus' divine sonship and the occurrence of the term "the Kingdom of God" in the story is hardly a coincidence, as it is part of the pattern discussed above. What emerges from the pattern is a realization that the dawning of the kingdom of God on the horizon is coterminous with the revelation of Jesus' messianic kingship.⁵⁴

2.2 Jesus' Baptism

2.21 Preliminary Remarks

The baptismal scene in Mark consists of Jesus' experiences of heavenly vision and voice: (1) the ripping of the heavens, (2) the coming down of the Spirit, (3) the sounding force of the heavenly voice. It contains the most vivid collection of apocalyptic images in Mark. As some biblical commentators recognize, Mark's account of Jesus' baptism is preeminently resonant with several Isaianic passages (notably Is 63:11 MT; 63:19 MT [64:1 LXX]; 63:14 LXX; 42:1 MT and LXX), which are replete with apocalyptic images and motifs.⁵⁵ This exegetical investigation sets out to achieve three objectives. First, it will explore if Mark shows any peculiar concern

⁵⁴ Joel Marcus, *The Way of the Lord: Christological Exegesis of the Old Testament in the Gospel of Mark* (Louisville: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1992), 67; *The Mystery of the Kingdom of God*. SBLDS 90 (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1986), 54; A. M. Ambrozic, *The Hidden Kingdom: A Redactional-Critical Study of the References to the Kingdom of God in Mark's Gospel*. CBQMS 2 (Washington, D.C.: Catholic Biblical Association, 1972), 23.

with the verb εἶδον in his current literary shape of Jesus' baptismal episode, and how, if he does, he fulfills it, a task which will inevitably call for some amount of redaction and form-critical studies. Second, many Markan interpreters tend to explicate Jesus' act of 'seeing' in a personal and private sense so that it is actually viewed as Jesus' personal experience of God's commissioning, endowing Jesus with personal power and strength to fulfill his Messianic mission. Even such a perspective may create an impression that Jesus was experiencing an ecstatic vision, not in any visual sense, as well as a mysterious union with the Spirit. As Gnllka warns, there is a potential danger in understanding Jesus' 'seeing' in the episode from this perspective: "Über die Art und Weise der Vereinigung ist nichts Näheres gesagt und sollte auch aus εἰς αὐτόν nicht herausgelesen werden. Das Sichtbarwerden des Geistes ist nicht in sich selbst wichtig, sondern im Blick auf Jesus, der der alleinige Geistträger ist."⁵⁶ More than that, the 'seeing' in Jesus' baptismal episode is an integral part of the unfolding apocalypse of God's eschatological reign in the world. Third, the full impact of the apocalyptic images and colorings of the two visional scenes seen and the voice heard by Jesus will be examined, highlighting the apocalyptic dimension of 'seeing' in the baptismal episode. At this juncture, we will also delve into Jewish apocalyptic literature, biblical and extra-biblical, in order to maximize the apocalyptic nature of the two events situated at the inauguration of Jesus' public ministry. A brief interaction with some parts of the history of religions approaches will be also established.

2.22 Synoptic Comparison

Comparing different synoptic versions of Jesus' baptism will clarify the distinctiveness of Mark's portrayal of the event. Mark says that "καὶ εὐθὺς ἀναβαίνων ἐκ τοῦ ὕδατος εἶδεν σχιζομένους τοὺς οὐρανοὺς καὶ τὸ πνεῦμα ὡς περιστέρην καταβαῖνον εἰς αὐτόν" (Mk 1:10). Mark places the two events, the heaven being torn open and the Spirit coming down, within the scope of Jesus' optic vision. Matthew, however, says that Jesus saw only the Spirit descending; the tearing of heaven is not included in what Jesus saw:

⁵⁵ Cf. J. Gnllka, *Das Evangelium Nach Marcus* [Mk1-8,26] (Zurich: Benziger Verlag, 1979), 52; I. Buse, "The Markan Account of the Baptism of Jesus and Isaiah LXIII," *JTS* n.s. 7 (1956), 74-75; J. Marcus, *The Way*, 49.

βαπτισθεὶς δὲ ὁ Ἰησοῦς εὐθὺς ἀνέβη ἀπὸ τοῦ ὕδατος· καὶ ἰδοὺ ἠνεώχθησαν [αὐτῷ] οἱ οὐρανοί, καὶ εἶδεν [τὸ] πνεῦμα [τοῦ] θεοῦ καταβαῖνον ὥσεὶ περιστέραν [καὶ] ἐρχόμενον ἐπ’ αὐτόν... (Mt 4:16). By excluding it, one might argue, from Jesus’ visional experience that is conveyed in the verb εἶδον, Matthew has neutralized the event itself; in any case, because of the lack, Jesus’ experience during his baptism in Matthew remains less optic, and less relevant to our argument.⁵⁷

Luke, on the other hand, records both events in his account of Jesus’ baptism; but rather than using any verb of seeing or underscoring the optical nature of Jesus’ vision, he puts them in a prayer context, thereby mystifying the effect of the whole event: ..καὶ Ἰησοῦ βαπτισθέντος καὶ προσευχομένου ἀνεώχθηναί τὸν οὐρανὸν καὶ καταβῆναι τὸ πνεῦμα τὸ ἅγιον σωματικῶς εἶδει ὥς περιστέραν ἐπ’ αὐτόν (Lk 3:21b-22). Luke’s omission of εἶδον ends up suppressing the optical aspect of Jesus’ vision and his focus fits into the context of prayer, which is then connected to the presence of the Holy Spirit, a recurrent motif in Luke⁵⁸; the alteration of the construction, in fact, is well in line with his emphasis on prayer and the Holy Spirit throughout his Gospel and Acts.⁵⁹ Later, in the story of Stephen, Luke associates Stephen’s vision with the glory of God, and Jesus standing at the right hand of God with the Holy Spirit (cf. Ac. 7:55). Thus, Luke’s purpose in modifying Mark’s version of the baptism is not to downplay the extraordinary nature of the event,⁶⁰ but to align it with his thematic concern. Luke’s description of the baptism of Jesus demonstrates that Jesus experienced the presence of the Holy Spirit in him in his prayer, and the coming down of the Holy Spirit may well be described as an ecstatic vision even as the optic aspect of the event is suppressed (cf. Lk 10:18 for another example of possibly ecstatic vision of Jesus).⁶¹

Mark’s peculiar concern with ‘seeing’ in the critical events launching Jesus’ public ministry on earth is thus unmistakably clear. Even the order of sight and sound

⁵⁶ J. Gniska, *ibid*, 52.

⁵⁷ Cf. W. Michaelis, “ὁράω, κτλ,” *TDNT* V, 353.

⁵⁸ Cf. C.K. Barrett, *The Holy Spirit and Gospel Tradition* (London: Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, 1947), 34.

⁵⁹ As a term for the divine Spirit πνεῦμα is used three times as often in Lk as in Mk and it occurs 55 times altogether in Acts, which is comparatively great number of occurrences in the NT (cf. E. Schweizer, “πνεῦμα, πνευματικός,” *TDNT* VI, 404).

⁶⁰ *Ibid*.

⁶¹ In Jn 1, the coming down of the Spirit is described as a part of John the Baptist’s act of seeing, and the seeing is expressed by the verb, θεάομαι, (v.32; cf. ἵδης in v.33) and included in the Baptist’s testimony about Jesus.

within the episode of Jesus' baptism validates this; as Mark has it, the opening of the heaven comes first, then the coming down of the Spirit, then the sounding of the heavenly voice. Scholars like Marcus, fully in line with J.D. Kingsbury, contend that among these three divine actions in Jesus' baptism, the last one, the heavenly voice, is the most important and should be treated accordingly, because it is placed at the end as the culmination of the preceding events; although there is some disagreement among scholars like Marcus and F. Lentzen-Deis about whether the preceding ones should be viewed as the interpretive key in understanding the baptism itself, the general consensus is that the heavenly voice does function as the interpretive key for the two preceding events.⁶² Opting for the primacy of sound over sight, in fact, enables Marcus to observe that in the overall structure of Mark the baptismal events anticipate events that occur at the end of the Gospel: Jesus breathing out his spirit; the Temple curtain being ripped apart; the centurion's acclaiming Jesus as the son of God.⁶³ He also argues that in the Transfiguration story, also, the sound, typified by the heavenly voice that recognizes Jesus' divine sonship, plays a critical role in understanding of all preceding optical or visionary events, even resolving the ensuing dramatic tension.⁶⁴ But the heavenly voice does not resolve the bewilderment of the disciples; it only leads them to "see" Jesus alone and to Jesus' subsequent command not to reveal to others what they have 'seen' until his resurrection from the dead, causing further bewilderment in them. What we must note here is not so much the sound itself but the recurrent occurrences of the verb εἶδον. Furthermore it is certain that the opening of the heaven made it possible for the Spirit to descend as well as the heavenly voice to be heard. Gnllka also makes it clear that "Das Aufreißen der Himmel ermöglicht das Heraustreten des Geistes und das Hörbarwerden der Stimme"(cf. Rev 4:1; 2 Bar 22:1).⁶⁵

A more plausible argument would be that the heavenly optic vision which first accompanies Jesus' act of 'seeing' may be meant to privilege sight over sound. In Mark 4:12, for example, the author reverses the Isaianic order of hearing and seeing in Is 6:9. Also, in a Markan text of critical importance about the disciples' lack of understanding, often represented by their blindness and deafness, Jesus rebukes them,

⁶² J. Marcus, *Way*, 49, especially n.3 and 4, and 81.

⁶³ J. Marcus, *Mark 1-8*, 164; D. H. Juel, *Mark*. Augsburg Commentary on the New Testament (Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1990), 34-35.

⁶⁴ J. Marcus, *Way*, 81.

⁶⁵ Gnllka, *Das Evangelium*, I, 52.

asking “Having eyes do you not see, and having ears do you not hear?” (Mk 8:18). The allusion here is to Jer 5:21 and Ezek 12:2, and more significantly to Deut 29:2-4 LXX, as C. Myers points out:⁶⁶

The great trials which your eyes saw (ἐώρακασιν οἱ ὀφθαλμοί σου), the signs (σημεῖα), and those great wonders; but *to this day* (ἕως τῆς ἡμέρας ταύτης) the Lord has not given you a mind to understand, or eyes to see (ὀφθαλμοὺς βλέπειν), or ears to hear (ὠτα ἀκούειν).

The primacy of sight over sound in the Markan narrative world is also noted in Mark's narrative composition in the two episodes coming immediately after the story of Jesus' reprimanding of the disciples. In Mk 8:17-21, the scene in which Jesus is chastising the disciples is placed right before the healing of a blind man, foretelling that the disciples' defective vision may be healed as well. More interestingly, one also notes that the healing of a blind man precedes Jesus' interrogation of what the disciples have *heard* about him; the interrogation likewise discloses the inadequacy of peoples' understanding of Jesus, as well as Peter's proper, yet still incomplete, understanding. It is well recognized and established that in the Markan narrative world, the healing of a blind man is balanced with the healing of Bartimaeus (10:46-52), the two episodes forming an architectonic inclusio with an inner and outer framework.⁶⁷ Under the overall chronological framework of the Gospel, Mark arranges his material topically, in a historically artificial way; and the current shape of Mark's Gospel may owe more to his theological and perspectival conviction than to historical reality in which he was situated.⁶⁸ These accounts make it highly plausible that the motif of seeing is indeed Mark's peculiar and keen interest throughout the Gospel.

⁶⁶ C. Myers, *Binding The Strong Man: A Political Reading of Mark's Story of Jesus* (Maryknoll: Orbis Book, 1988), 225; J. Marcus, *Mark 1-8*, 513.

⁶⁷ Cf. E. Best, *Following Jesus: Discipleship in the Gospel of Mark*. JSNTSup 4 (Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1981).

⁶⁸ For a similar view, see Marcus, *Mark 1-8*, 62.

2.23 'Seeing' in The Markan Version of the Baptismal Scene

2.231 Survey of Current Studies

Although Jesus' act of seeing is Mark's focus in both events of ripping and descending, Markan scholars in general have failed to explicate the nature of this motif, treating Jesus' optic vision as a personal visionary experience; the following event, the coming down of the Spirit, likewise, has received the same treatment. Even when there is a recognition of Jesus' baptism as an apocalyptic occasion of theophany, the recognition is made *in spite of the word* εἶδον,⁶⁹ trivializing or putting aside the presence of the key verb as obstacle. These observations are made largely due to the fact that the vision is restricted to Jesus alone (cf. εἶδεν) and that the heavenly voice is directed to Jesus only (cf. οὐ ; contrast οὐτός in Mt 3:17).⁷⁰

In fact, there are some scholars who contend that the other Gospel writers were uneasy with the presence of the verb of seeing in Mark's account of Jesus' optic vision and modified it. R. Bultmann, for one, argues that the other Synoptic writers clarify what really went on in Mark's account of Jesus' baptism, by moving εἶδον to come after 'the heaven opened' (Mt) or omitting it altogether (Lk); the following heavenly voice, he contends, should be viewed in the same way as any objective happening is viewed.⁷¹ It is even suggested that the current modes in other Gospels containing a more public form of the baptismal tradition can be taken as signs of their desire to avoid any private or spiritual nuance of the baptismal events and to maximize their objective truth.⁷² As C. Rowland argues, in his reconstruction of Jesus' baptism on the basis of the accounts of the canonical Gospels, as well as in his defense of the authenticity of Jesus' baptism narrated in Mark, Jesus' baptism in Mark was a private experience and Matthew made this private experience a public proclamation of his messiahship by relocating εἶδον and changing οὐ to οὐτοι. It is, however, incorrect to imply that the verb εἶδον here is indicative of the baptism's original nature as a *personal* autobiographical account.⁷³ Such an understanding of

⁶⁹ Cf. Marcus, *Way*, 57.

⁷⁰ The Matthean parallel verse employs the phrase, οὐτός, which seems to presuppose the presence of the third part in the baptismal scene (cf. Mt 3:17).

⁷¹ R. Bultmann, *History of the Synoptic Tradition* (New York: Harper & Row, 1963), 248.

⁷² Cf. Marcus, *Mark 1-8*, 164.

⁷³ Christopher Rowland, *The Open Heaven: A Study of Apocalyptic in Judaism and early Christianity* (London: SPCK, 1982), 359-360.

εἶδον, limiting it to a personal dimension, overlooks the function of ‘seeing’ which is an integral part of the apocalyptic world and tradition that Mark was clearly situated in. This function serves a much broader point rather than just a formal function with regard to the visionary experience within the tradition.

Keeping in mind the thrust of our introduction guards against such misconceptions: Mark’s macro-theological interest is in relating an apocalyptic theophany, aimed to assure his contemporary readers that they are living under the ultimate divine protection in a world that is being formed and shaped by God’s eschatological intervening act⁷⁴; Mark also strives to remind them that this act is qualified by and reinterpreted paradoxically through Jesus’ death and resurrection, the revelation of God’s eschatological rule established through Jesus in a mysterious and hidden mode. The restriction of the vision of the two events to Jesus should be understood in this broader theological framework of Mark and of the mysterious and hidden presence of God’s rule in Jesus, the messianic secret motif.⁷⁵

2.232 ‘Seeing’ as an Integral Part of God’s Apocalyptic Theophany

More importantly, Mark’s deliberate juxtaposition of God’s apocalyptic act of intervention into human realm and the act of ‘seeing’ should emphasize, not dismiss, the presence of the verb in such a formal inaugural Messianic commissioning. This connection is already established in Is 64:4; in terms of a macro-compositional view of Isaiah, the verse as the last great lament in Isa 56-66 forms a section which is generally recognized to reflect post-exilic disappointment with the reality of the Return. More specifically, it is a part of a petition for divine help which continues from 63:15 to 64:5a, 64:1-5a being the central and most impassioned moment. Following the Exodus epiphany traditions of the ancient Divine-Warrior Hymns, it contains the prophet Isaiah’s appeal to Yahweh, called upon to hear from heaven and to repeat the saving event of Israel’s founding moment; the appeal is replete with proto-apocalyptic images.⁷⁶ Is 64:4 reads as follows: ἀπὸ τοῦ αἰῶνος οὐκ ἠκούσαμεν οὐδὲ οἱ ὀφθαλμοὶ ἡμῶν εἶδον θεὸν πλὴν σοῦ καὶ τὰ ἔργα σου ἃ ποιήσεις τοῖς ὑπομένουσιν ἔλεον. Here we see the prophet Isaiah’s petition both to hear and *see* what

⁷⁴ John Riches also makes a similar point with regard to Matthew’s religious community: cf. *Matthew*, 54-55.

⁷⁵ Marcus, *Way*, 57-58.

Yahweh will do in the formative stage in Israel, that is, a thing that no one ever expected to happen, namely, the descent of Yahweh through the rent heavens. The evangelist Mark's description of what Jesus *saw* is a long waited answer to the petition; through Jesus' seeing the heaven being rent and the Spirit descending, what Isaiah yearned so to see has become a reality, Mark implies, 'seeing' marked as an integral part of the eschatological revelation of God's new world and action.

The relation between the apocalyptic events of Jesus' baptism and 'seeing' can be further substantiated by quickly looking at some findings many scholars have established in respect to the correspondence between Mk 1:10 and Mk 15:38-39.⁷⁷ It has been noted that the verbal and other formal correlations between them include the verbs of the same root (σχιζομένους/ ἐσχίσθη), the reference to spirit (πνεῦμα/ ἐξέπνευσεν) and the use of an identification formula referring to Jesus' divine sonship (σὺ εἶ ὁ υἱός μου/ οὗτος... υἱὸς θεοῦ ἦν).⁷⁸ Moreover, there is an Elijah /Elisha symbolism in both passages; at the baptism Elijah is present in the form of John the Baptist, while at the crucifixion the onlookers think that Jesus is calling out to Elijah (15:36). A theological correlation between baptism and death is well established here as in Mark's macro-theological perspective the Spirit baptism of Jesus spoken by John the Baptist is his death on the cross: the relation between Jesus' Spirit-baptism and his death on the cross is clearly implied in Mk 10:38 where Jesus asks his disciples, "Can you drink the cup which I drink or be baptized with the baptism with which I am baptized," clearly referring to his death on the cross.

In view of this parallelism, a due recognition should be given to the occurrence of 'seeing' in both passages. Although the occurrence has been noted and included by scholars in their long list of the correspondences between two passages, no proper study has been done on it. The corresponding images and echoes and the discovery of their significance in regard to the whole of the Gospel of Mark must coincide with the apocalyptic implications and nuances of 'seeing' as a crucial corresponding element. Mk 15:32-39 will be dealt in detail later in regard to the issue at hand; suffice here to note that the apocalyptic images described in this passage indisputably lack a personal dimension. There is no implication of visionary

⁷⁶ Cf. Rikki. E. Watts, *Isaiah's New Exodus and Mark*, (Tübingen : Mohr Siebeck, 1997) 105.

⁷⁷ We will come back to this passage, Mk 15:38-39 in Chapter 4 of this dissertation for an in-depth discussion

⁷⁸ Marcus, Way, 57; Donald Senior, *The Passion of Jesus in the Gospel of Mark* (Del.: Michael Glazier, 1984), 146.

experience here, a factor which one can deduce from the episode of Jesus' baptism in Mk 1:10. In other words, the tearing down of the Temple curtain is not something that the centurion saw in vision; it is an objective and public incident.

It is with all these observations that we assert that 'seeing' in Mk 1:10 should not be reduced to a personal level of Jesus' visionary experience; it should be aligned with the apocalyptic occurrence of God's new eschatological act, inaugurating a new age and setting a new world order in it.

2.24 Jesus' 'Seeing' the Heaven Being Torn open

2.241 σκίζω in the OT Apocalyptic Theophany

Before we explore OT allusions to the heaven being torn at Jesus' baptism, it needs to be pointed out that drawing or assuming similarities between Mark's description of Jesus and Mark's contemporary Jewish messianic expectations can be rather precarious – leading us to regard any source as of primary importance for the understanding of Jesus' words and deeds in Mark, or to hold that any analogies between Mark's or Jesus' patterns of thought and any source are indicative of fundamental affinities between them. To do so would fail to take into consideration the possibility that any linguistic or conceptual changes may occur to Jesus or Mark according to their new insight or understanding of realities. This possibility should always remain open and continue to be in our view.⁷⁹ Another precaution should be also pointed out. J. Riches rightly proposes that in order to grasp a concept or its description, as it is employed by a community, one must be able to locate it in a network of concepts which for that community is constitutive of its content. In placing a concept in a network, one will often have to seek for logical connections between beliefs involving the concept and beliefs which bear upon the observable world. The distinction between linguistic expressions and their senses or contents is important since equality of expression does not guarantee sameness of sense. The kind of analogy or harmony between two texts which matters has to do not just with superficial linguistic or literary features, though there are by no means irrelevant, but more importantly with patterns of thought. For example, a group of Jesus' sayings

⁷⁹ J. Riches and A. Millar, "Conceptual," 48.

may be linguistically keyed to first-century Palestine and yet be radically distinct in respect of their content.⁸⁰

Keeping these in mind, let us move on to our topic. The argument that the baptismal events in Mark are not private or personal visionary experiences of Jesus but an apocalyptic theophany occurring in a eschatological time of fulfillment can be strengthened by several other observations. Mark's peculiar use of σκίζω, for example, makes a good case for it; ἀνοίγω, often used in apocalyptic vision stories, is used by Matthew and Luke, both in line with the O.T. text, Is 64:1 LXX,⁸¹ without any connotation of force or violence. Matthew's use of ἀνοίγω in particular seems to intensify the non-apocalyptic and non-violent dimension of the seeing in his baptismal passage. Mark uses σκίζω, a word that is characterized by its violent movement or intense force,⁸² to describe what Jesus saw. Through the use of the word σκίζω, Mark plays up the effect of an irreversible cosmic change that he perceives in the episode of the torn heavens; what is implied here is that what is torn apart cannot be put back, restored to its former state. In contrast, Matthew and Luke's word ἀνοίγω lacks such finality of the event, leaving the impression that what is opened may be closed.⁸³

The occurrence of the verb σκίζω with its connotation of violent movement and intense force, provides in many ways a defining moment in which Mark leads us to the subject of apocalyptic images. From a linguistic point of view, Mark's account of Jesus' baptism, along with the use of σκίζω, appears to be more aligned with the MT than the LXX of the Isaianic text. First of all, σκίζω is to be aligned with Hebrew word קרע in Is 63:19 MT, since Is 64:1 LXX uses ἀνοίγω and also in σκίζω the LXX is mostly used for בקע meaning 'to cleave.'⁸⁴ Furthermore, Mark's use of the expression, εἰς αὐτόν, confirms the alignment with the MT; the singular pronoun, αὐτόν, is in line with בקרבו in Is 63:11, the prepositional phrase suffixed with the third person singular pronoun, while the LXX Is 63:11 uses ἐν αὐτοῖς, the third plural form. Mark's account of Jesus' baptism, however, should be read in the light of the LXX Isaianic texts as well as the MT texts because of several reasons. First, the LXX's use

⁸⁰ Ibid, 52, 57.

⁸¹ The use of ἀνοίγω in the LXX seems to make sense in light of the fact that Philo, who was more inclined to the LXX, seldom uses σκίζω and always in the weaker sense of the verb, "to divide," or "to distribute" (C. Maurer, "σκίζω," *TDNT* 7, 960).

⁸² This word occurs 11 times in the LXX all of which are predominated by the strong meaning, "to tear apart" (cf. Gn 22:3; Ex.14:21; Eccl.10:9; Is 48:21 [the splitting of rock]; Zech 14:4 (the splitting of the Mt. of Olives)). It occurs 9 times in the Gospels and 2 times in Acts (cf. Maurer, "σκίζω," 959-60).

⁸³ Cf. J. Marcus, *Mark 1-8*, 165.

of ἀνοίγω to render עָרַב in Is 63:19 is anomalous in view of the fact that elsewhere in the LXX ἀνοίγω is usually accompanied by gate or window; in Is 64:1 LXX ἀνοίγω is not used with door or window.⁸⁵ The occurrence of ἀνοίγω in Is 64:1 LXX is an exception and as such leaves room for aid from the Greek text of Isaiah for understanding what went on in Mark's mind. Second, only in Isaiah 63:14 LXX is the verb, καταβαίνω associated with the descent of the Spirit, as is the case in our text, Mk 1:10 (τὸ πνεῦμα ... καταβαῖνον),⁸⁶ a strong indication that here Mark is alluding to Isaiah 63:14 LXX. Third, the fact that the verb σχίζω in Mark is aligned with the MT text does not necessarily mean that Mark underestimates the LXX's distinctive use of σχίζω in its other places. Rather, the connection urges one to look up other occurrences of σχίζω in Isaiah LXX.

As mentioned briefly above, the verb σχίζω in the LXX is frequently used in the context of God's supernatural intervening acts of deliverance. For example, Ex 14:21 speaks of the dividing of the water (...ἐσχίσθη τὸ ὕδωρ) which enabled the people of Israel to walk through the sea away from the Egyptian armies. Is 48:21, by recalling the wilderness tradition of Israel of the water flowing from the rock, foresees the same kind of God's saving act (...σχισθήσεται πέτρα).⁸⁷ Also, Zech 14:4 speaks of God's eschatological battles against nations in which God stands on the Mount of Olives, causing it to be split into two (...σχισθήσεται τὸ ὄρος τῶν ἐλαιῶν ...).

Let us pause here for a while to ponder about the Zecharian text. This text probably not only is alluded to in Mk 14:26 (...“they went out to the Mount of Olives”), but also is often singled out along with Zech 12:2-6 as a sort of catalytic passage that led the Jewish revolutionaries to the Jewish Revolt in the hope that through their actions God's miraculous intervention would take place. In fact Josephus himself admits that what drove the Jews to revolt more than anything else was an unspecific scriptural prophecy.⁸⁸ In the Jewish exegetical traditions, the events on the Mount of Olives prophesied in Zech 14:1-5 are connected with the general

⁸⁴ Maurer, “σχίζω,” 959.

⁸⁵ Cf. “οἱ καταρράκται τοῦ οὐρανοῦ ἠνεώχθησαν” in Gn 7:11; “θύρας οὐρανοῦ ἀνέωξεν” in Ps 77:23; “θυρίδες ἐκ τοῦ οὐρανοῦ ἠνεώχθησαν” in Is 24:18 (exceptions: Ez 1:1; Acts 7:56; 10:11 etc.). Cf. Rikki E. Watts, *New Exodus*, 103.

⁸⁶ Marcus, *Way*, 49-50; Richard Schneek, *Isaiah in the Gospel of Mark I-VIII* (Bibal Press, 1994) 45.

⁸⁷ Cf. the future tense.

⁸⁸ M. Hengel, *The Zealots: Investigations into the Jewish Freedom Movements in the Period from Herod I Until 70 A.D.* (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1989), 242.

resurrection of the dead. Specifically, Targum of Canticle of Canticles 8:5, which alludes to Zech 14:4, says that “when the dead rise, the Mount of Olives will be cleft, and all Israel’s dead will come up out of it.”⁸⁹ And some midrashim such as Ruth Rab. 2, Eccl. Rab. 1.11, Cant. Rab. 4.11 also render Yahweh’s coming with his holy ones in Zech 14: 5 as a reference to his arrival with the resurrected prophets.⁹⁰ More importantly, Josephus and rabbinic literatures show confirmation that Zech 14:4 was read as a reference to the advent of the Messiah.⁹¹ Marcus rightly supposes that the Markan placement of Jesus on the Mount of Olives may be christologically meaningful.⁹²

The verb thus stands closely in relation to God’s miraculous acts of saving interventions for Israel and her people in the context of OT tradition and, perhaps more importantly, highlights the apocalyptic nature of the interventions, as the last two passages demonstrate.⁹³

At this juncture, a brief background study in apocalyptic dualism underlying the violent movement of the episode as it is conveyed through the Markan verb *σχίζω* is needed. E. Lohmeyer makes a valuable observation regarding it:

The tearing of the heavens is rooted in the view that heaven and earth are shut up against each other, so that God can no longer associate with his people in an unmediated manner, or they with him, as once happened. It is therefore a sign of unusual grace when the heaven opens. This occurs in a miracle that embraces the entirety of the people or of the world; not accidentally, the motif is found almost solely in apocalypses.⁹⁴

2.242 *σχίσμα*, the Noun Form of *σχίζω* in Mk 2:21-22

Already yoked with these layers of implication, the verb *σχίζω* gains a new level of meaning in Markan context: a sense of newness has been figured into the word. A good illustration of this can be found in Jesus’ parabolic saying about “new wine in

⁸⁹ M.C. Black, “The Rejected and Slain Messiah Who is Coming with the Angels: The Messianic Exegesis of Zechariah 9-14 in the Passion Narratives” (Ph. D. diss., Emory University, 1990), 141-150,” quoted from Marcus, *Way*, 155.

⁹⁰ M. Black, “Rejected,” 148-149.

⁹¹ Ibid, 144-147.

⁹² Marcus, *Way*, 156. Here also Marcus extends this link to include the parallel between the phrases “Yahweh will become king” and “on that day” in Zech 14:9 and “until that day when I drink it new in the kingdom of God” in Mk 14:25.

⁹³ Cf. Maurer, “*σχίζω*,” 959-60.

the new wineskins” in Mk 2:21-22. Here, σχίσμα, the noun form of σχίζω, is used to describe what occurs when one sews a piece of patch on to an old garment.⁹⁵ This is neither a warning against a total loss of the old and nor an exhortation to preserve the old, as some would argue. James Dunn in his form-critical and tradition-critical approaches to this text contends that what we see in this text is not an antithesis between old and new but a tension between these two. He bases his contention on his observation that 2:18-19 provides the first Christians with sufficient justification for non-fasting; 2:20 implies, for Dunn, that the post-Easter communities of Jesus’ disciples maintained a practice of fasting, and 2:21-22 provides a vivid expression of the tension between old and new. Dunn concludes by noting a degree of ambiguity in the Jesus-tradition which looms between a consciousness of eschatological newness stemming from Jesus himself and an awareness of a degree of incompatibility between this eschatological new and the traditional old. He adds that the debate was still at the stage of asking how the two could be retained together without the one destroying the other, and there was a concern that the two should somehow coexist.⁹⁶

First of all, this sort of exhortation of balancing between the new and the old is implied in a parallel passage in the Gospel of Thomas 47, but certainly not here in Mark, as Gnllka suggests.⁹⁷ Second, by way of critique of Dunn’s understanding of the structure of the text, a closer examination of the structure of the text itself is needed. There is a general consensus that the passage is divided into three sections: 2:19 as a defense of non-fasting; 2:20 a prophecy of a time for fasting in the future; 2:21-22 a return to the point about not fasting. V.20, prophesying a future fasting, on which J. Dunn anchors the most weight of his argument should not be taken as commending or encouraging preservation of the old practice of fasting. In many ways the verse alludes to apocalyptic texts in the O.T which describe the Last Day, a doom day and the day of judgment or salvation (cf. Mal 3:19; Zeph 1:15; Amos 8:9). Among these Amos 8:9-10 can be singled out, as it displays important links with Mark 2:20: ‘on that day’ (ἐν ἐκείνῃ τῇ ἡμέρᾳ); ‘days are coming’; the themes of fasting (“I will turn your feast into mourning”) and of grieving for a loved one (“like

⁹⁴ E. Lohmeyer, *Das Evangelium des Markus*, MeyerK, 11th ed. (Gottingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1951), 21-22, quoted from J. Marcus, *Way*, 56.

⁹⁵ Interestingly, J. Marcus also draw a parallel between the verb βάλλει in 2:22 and the verb ἐκβάλλει in 1:12 (cf. *Mark 1-8*, 238).

⁹⁶ James Dunn, “Mark 2.1-3.6: A Bridge Between Jesus and Paul on the Question of the Law,” *NTS*. 30 (1984), 405-406.

⁹⁷ Gnllka, *Das Evangelium*, I, 116.

the mourning for an only son”).⁹⁸ Charged with these apocalyptic implications, this passage is also taken to have exerted later on a formative influence on the practice of fasting of the Post-Easter Christian church on Fridays, commemorating Good Friday, a fast that was linked with the expectation of the parousia.⁹⁹ Viewed in this eschatological context, a reference to the time of fasting in the future when the bridegroom will be taken away should be also viewed from an eschatological-messianic perspective. It clearly indicates that the messianic time already began with Jesus’ ministry, as the statement “the bridegroom being currently present with friends” repeatedly implies within the same verse (v.19). What is emphasized here is the absolute impossibility of fasting in this time of messianic banquet. Then, the time of fasting in the future should be also rendered accordingly, as indicating a messianic woe rather than an ordinary practice of fasting. Jesus’ death, which is symbolized by the taking away of the bridegroom in 2:20, must have created a new situation in which the original tradition can be preserved only by altering it radically, so to speak in a messianic woe.¹⁰⁰ In any case it should be clear that the point made here shows the incompatibility of the new and the old, and also warns not to use a new piece of material to patch an old one.¹⁰¹ What Jesus aims to get across is that the new age that he inaugurates is inherently incompatible with the old, that the new demands its own order of life and that now the termination of the old is needed. An observation of the literary compositional shape of the larger unit from 2:1-3:6 will also confirm this fact. As Joanna Dewey makes it clear in her analysis of the concentrically arranged compositional shape of 2:1-3:6, according to which the sayings on fasting and on the old and the new in 2:18-22 constitute a central part of these series of 5 controversy discourses, the central message of this pericope makes explicit the unifying theme of the entire set of discourse, the incompatibility between the old and the new.¹⁰²

⁹⁸ Marcus, *Mark 1-8*, 234.

⁹⁹ Cf. Gnllka, *Das Evangelium*, I, 116-118.

¹⁰⁰ Marcus, *Mark 1-8*, 237.

¹⁰¹ Gnllka, *Das Evangelium* I, 116; cf. R.T. France, *The Gospel of Mark*, The New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2002), 141.

¹⁰² Joanna Dewey, *Markan Public Debate: Literary Technique, Concentric Structure, and Theology in Mark 2:1-3:6*. SBLDS 48 (Chico: Scholars Press, 1980), 110.

A similar point can be made regarding Mk 15:38, in which σχίζω is used to describe the rending of the Temple veil. Regardless of the ongoing controversy over whether the veil is the inner curtain or the outer curtain of the Temple,¹⁰³ the veil being torn coincides with the theme of the death of the old and the birth of the new. With it the eschatological incorporation of the gentiles into God's new kingly rule and the abolition of the distinction between the Jews and the Gentiles, the sacred and the secular, or the clean and the unclean, in Levitical terms, are all embraced.¹⁰⁴ It is not a simple verdict of the imminent end of the OT Temple worship.¹⁰⁵ The confession of a *gentile* centurion about Jesus' identity which immediately follows the rending of the curtain makes this clear. The rending of the curtain implies then "a revelation of the divine glory confined within the Temple"¹⁰⁶ which reenacts the theme of the death of the old and the birth of the new through Jesus' death.¹⁰⁷ The centurion's confession implies, as J. Riches observes, that in the preaching of the gospel of the cross to the nations, the presence of God will be revealed.¹⁰⁸ The verb, σχίζω, seen in this context also, aids Mark to reinforce his theme of God's new and eschatological act.

¹⁰³ For a detailed discussion of what the curtain refers to, outer curtain between the temple and the forecourt, or inner curtain between the holy place and the holy of holies, see F. J. Matera, *The Kingship of Jesus: Composition and Theology in Mark 15*. SBLDS 66 (Chico: Scholars Press, 1982), 138, and especially for scholars who opt for either of these, see, 197, n.63. See also Marcus, *Mystery*, 148; V. Taylor, *The Gospel According to St. Mark* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1955). Following Matera and Juel's awareness of the shift of the term for temple from ἱερόν in 11-13 to ναός in the trial of Jesus, specifically in view of Mark's non-identification between ἱερόν (an object of God's impending destruction narrated 11-13) and ναός in the temple reference in 15:38 we are convinced that in Mark's thought world, the tearing of the curtain is indicative of more than the destruction of ἱερόν (cf. Matera, *Kingship*, 138).

¹⁰⁴ In an exposition on Mk 2:16-17, Marcus also makes a similar point: "By associating with tax collectors and sinners, Jesus acted out his conviction that the advent of God's eschatological dominion had effaced foundational social distinctions within Judaism" ("Modern and Ancient Jewish Apocalypticism," *JR* 76, 23).

¹⁰⁵ Contra Maurer (see "σχίζω," 961). But he rightly opens up another possible interpretation of the rending of the Temple curtain, namely, the new access to the Holy of holies; yet he does not apply it to the Markan text, confining it to the Book of Hebrews, especially, Hb 6:19f; 9:8; 10:19f. (Ibid).

¹⁰⁶ Marcus, *Mystery*, 148.

¹⁰⁷ Lohmeyer also observes the turning from God's old work to his new work in the death of Jesus (see his comment on 15:38), quoted from Maurer ("σχίζω," 961, n.15).

¹⁰⁸ J. Riches, *Conflicting Mythologies*, 136, n.45.

There are further specific functions that σχίζω takes on in Mark; let us go back to our text at hand—"the heaven being torn apart," a clear allusion to Is. 63:19 MT.¹⁰⁹ In its literary context, as part of the prayer petition for Israel's deliverance from its enemies, the phrase describes God tearing apart the heavens and coming down causing the mountains to tremble. The prayer seeks the reversal of Israel's fate whose enemies have taken over their sanctuary: "for a little while you people possessed your holy place, but now our enemies have trampled down your sanctuary" (Is 63:18). It implores God to tear apart the heavens and to come down so that the nations would see his presence and tremble. It is also a confession that only God's supernatural intervention into human history can launch a new age and order. The newness of God's saving-eschatological intervention into human sphere is also implied in Is 64:4 LXX; it portrays God as one who is about to do something that no eye has ever seen (οὐδὲ οἱ ὀφθαλμοὶ ἡμῶν εἶδον) or heard on behalf of those who have been anxiously waiting for him.

The newness of God's act is emphasized by another factor also. The heavenly voice in our text clearly describes God as the Father of Jesus. The Isaian texts, 63:7-64:11, which in many ways are alluded to in Mark's account of Jesus' baptism, also portray God as 'our Father' (twice in 63:16 MT and LXX and once in MT 64:7 (8 in LXX). As J. Jeremias has noted, within the O.T, God is rarely addressed as 'father'¹¹⁰; in light of this fact, MT Is 64:1, an integral part of supplication for God's intervention narrated in 63:15-64:5a,¹¹¹ can be viewed as an urgent, final petition for God's definitive intervention.¹¹²

At this juncture, the way that Mark appropriates the Isaianic oracle, Isa 64:1, can provide us with an insightful discussion. In the passage, Isaiah pleaded with God to create a new world order by his supernaturally intervening act; Mark seemed to have seen this plea accepted and finally fulfilled in Jesus. How the answer would be substantiated in Jesus' ministry, however, must not have been all that clear, though. The question in fact gives rise to further, critical ones: what does God's power or

¹⁰⁹ Cf. "the opening of the heaven" in 64:1 LXX, quoted by Mt and Lk.

¹¹⁰ J. Jeremias, *Abba* (Gottingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1996) 16n. This usage of אב occurs only 15 times in the O.T altogether.

¹¹¹ Claus Westermann, *Isaiah 40-66*, OTL (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1969) 392.

strength amount to for Jesus?; is there any difference between Jesus' understanding or preaching of the present reality of God's eschatological ruling prophesied by Isaiah and other post-biblical Jewish understandings of that ruling? For example, in the Targum to Isaiah, an eschatologically interpreted tradition of the theology of the Deutero-Isaiah, the revelation of God's Kingdom is characterized by naming the nations to be destroyed before him (40:7), or by utterly destroying them (60:12; cf. 60:1), or as Zion being satisfied with the riches of the peoples and delighting in the spoils of their kings (60:6). Among the Zealots, God's Kingdom was understood as a theocracy that can be appropriately extended by taking up arms against Rome and her agents. These notions are quite different from those found in Jesus' preaching of the Kingdom of God. For Jesus, the Kingdom became realized in his acts of healing, forgiveness and acceptance of the outcast and the enemy. This becomes clearer when his teaching on the Kingdom is considered in relation to, for example, his table fellowship with tax collectors and sinners. His fellowship with sinners, the weak, and the despised substantiates another aspect of the Kingdom, that of forgiveness and acceptance of all who are willing.¹¹³

2.245 Conclusion

Evidence shown above illustrates that Mark viewed the two apocalyptic events as the perfect answer to the long-delayed supplication of the prophet Isaiah. He accordingly portrays Jesus as the one who activates God's in-breaking on behalf of his people and as the one who sees (*εἶδεν*) a completely new thing that has never been seen and who hears no one has heard for so long. Jesus is "the Bringer of acts of God which have never been perceived from all eternity and which no eye has yet seen nor ear heard."¹¹⁴ And this newness will be further substantiated in Jesus' preaching of the Kingdom, which is manifested in healing, exorcising, and teaching.

¹¹² R. Schneck, *Isaiah in the Gospel of Mark I-VIII*, 61.

¹¹³ J. Riches and Alan Millar, "Conceptual Changes," 54, 55.

¹¹⁴ Maurer, "οὐκ ἴδω," 962.

2.25 Jesus' 'Seeing' the Spirit Descending

2.251 Preliminary Remarks

The issue of the coming down of the Holy Spirit is also related to our previous discussion about seeing the heavens torn open as an apocalyptic motif and should strengthen our point: 'seeing' is an integral part of the apocalyptic events through which God's new eschatological act is taking shape on earth, inaugurating a new age and setting a new world order. The apocalyptic nature of the descent, in particular, is crucial in showing that this event is not just about a personal endowment of Jesus with divine power to carry out his Messianic task; 'seeing' here should be placed within the apocalyptic advent of God's eschatological rule. The nature of the descent of the Spirit as an apocalyptic theophany must be explored to know more about these issues.

2.252 Survey of the Current Understandings of the Descent of the Spirit

A good starting point here is to ask whether the descending event is a private and personal experience for Jesus, endowing him with divine power as he is about to launch his public ministry. Joel Marcus strongly asserts that in the development of the baptismal tradition, the descent of the Spirit, which originally coexisted with the episode of the fall of Satan from heaven found in Luke 10:18, later came to be interpreted primarily as Jesus' personal spiritual endowment rather than as inauguration of a new age. In other words, over time, the focus shifted from Jesus' vision of an inaugurated eschaton to the church's vision of him as the one in whom the end time crystallized itself and accomplished its goal.¹¹⁵ Marcus speculates that a fragmentary report of a vision now found in Luke 10:18 originally described the vision that Jesus experienced at his baptism,¹¹⁶ and that the vision it reports played a decisive role in shaping the preaching and ministry of Jesus, who quickly inferred from seeing Satan deposed from his position of authority in heaven that the time of salvation had arrived.¹¹⁷

¹¹⁵ J. Marcus, "Jesus' Baptismal Vision," *NTS* 41 (1995), 521.

¹¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 514.

¹¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 515.

Marcus' surmise about the original form of the baptismal tradition seems to have much to commend itself, backed up by sufficient proofs of data. His conclusion, however, that the current form of the baptismal event in Mark, especially the descent of the Spirit upon Jesus, is intended to be understood only as Jesus' personal spiritual endowment is precarious.

In fact, many scholars have tried to determine the nature of the descent.¹¹⁸ Those who favor personal endowment point to the fact that the vision is restricted to Jesus alone. It is to be noted, however, that εἰς αὐτόν is equivalent to ἐπὶ αὐτόν,¹¹⁹ which means 'upon' (cf. 4:5, 8; 11:8; 12:14; 13:3). The vast majority of Greek manuscripts of Mark also change εἰς to ἐπὶ.¹²⁰ Also, we have already given an explanation about the presence of εἶδον to dispute a possible interpretation of the verb in a personal sense. One more observation about the third person singular form εἶδεν should be added here. Because of the occurrence of this form rather than the first person singular form εἶδον, many commentators are opposed to the idea that the current version of Jesus' baptismal events in Mark is reminiscent of the experience of Jesus himself. M. Dibelius in particular argues that if in fact we had a reflection of Jesus' personal experience at Jordan in these words, the event would have been passed on as a saying of Jesus rather than a story recorded in the third person.¹²¹ His argument might seem valid in view of Lk 10:18 where a report by Jesus himself of the sight of Satan falling from heaven occurs. What we need to note about the difference, however, is that the saying in Lk 10:18 is incorporated into a context consisting mainly of sayings of Jesus, whereas the account of the baptism in Mark is situated in a narrative framework. The change from the autobiographical account to the narrative form found in canonical Gospels seems logical enough. It is highly plausible, thus, as C. Rowland rightly points out, that in the course of transmission, when a baptismal story was given different frameworks, experiences which may originally have been reported in the first person were altered to fit a particular context.¹²² Moreover, it is obvious that Jesus' baptism in Mark is not the moment when Jesus reported what he had seen, hence the occurrence of εἶδεν rather than εἶδον. Treating the episode as a

¹¹⁸ Cf. Helmut Traub, "οὐρανός," *TDNT* V, 531.

¹¹⁹ In his dispute of this view, Schweizer notes that εἰς αὐτόν simply means ἐπὶ αὐτόν ("πνεῦμα, πνευματικός," *TDNT* VI, 400 and n.435; cf. Bl.Debr. 207).

¹²⁰ J. Marcus speculates that this change owes to their avoidance to distance from the Gnostic claim that at Jesus' baptism a divine being entered in to him (*Mark* 1-8, 160).

¹²¹ M. Dibelius, *From Tradition to Gospel* (Cambridge: James Clark, 1971), 274.

personal and private experience overlooks Mark's theological motif of Messianic secret, as we have already pointed out.¹²³ Thus, the restriction should not just be taken as an indication of Jesus' personal experience of the divine power, but rather as the eschatological revelation of the Spirit's advent as a sign of the new act of God.

2.253 OT Allusions

The account of the descent of the Spirit in Mark has allusions to many Isaianic texts. The first one that immediately comes to mind is Isa 63:11MT where Yahweh is described as the one who brought his people up out of the sea and put his Holy Spirit in them. There is a clear link between this passage and the Markan baptismal event in which Jesus is described as coming up out of the water and as the one upon whom the Spirit descends. Also, later on in Isa 63:14 LXX, we read specifically of a descent of the Spirit, which can be compared to the Spirit's descent upon Jesus in the baptism. These verses are part of an account of Yahweh's past acts of redemption (Is 63:7-14). By recalling this proto-apocalyptic redemptive intervention of Yahweh, the prophet Isaiah goes on make an appeal to Yahweh to rend the heavens and come down in 64:1MT. Isa 42:1 also speaks of a divine speaker promising that he will put his Spirit upon his chosen one. This verse is also important as a background passage for the heavenly voice heard in the baptism in Mark, as it includes the same kind of heavenly voice, "Here is my servant, whom I uphold, my chosen one in whom I delight."¹²⁴

More importantly, we need to draw attention to Isa 11: 2 and 4 LXX, on which scholars like H. Jackson build their argument. Jackson contends that the Spirit plays an eschatological role of judging the wicked; for support, he points to the word pun on πνεῦμα meaning both spirit and wind or breath, contending that Yahweh's use of his breath in destructive anger is only the other side of his use of it in creation.¹²⁵ Jackson's primary concern is the final breath of Jesus described in Mk 15:37 and 39; he argues that it should be interpreted as the cause of the tearing of the Temple veil in 15:38. Given the particularly close relationship established by Mark between the miraculous events at the Baptism and the Crucifixion (tearing of the heavens// tearing

¹²² C. Rowland, *The Open Heaven*, 360-361.

¹²³ Cf. 2.231 SURVEY OF CURRENT STUDIES of this study, especially footnote n. 73.

¹²⁴ Cf. R. Guelich, *Mark 1-8:26*, 32; J. Marcus, *Way*, 49-50.

¹²⁵ Howard M. Jackson, "The Death of Jesus in Mark and the Miracle from the Cross," *NTS* 33 (1987), 30.

of the Temple curtain), Jackson enumerates, one is justified in inferring that Mark's intent is to suggest identity of agency in these events at the beginning and end of Jesus' career. That is to say, Jesus' earthly ministry as son of God is initiated by the descent of God's Spirit on him, which tears the heaven in its descent, and it is brought to a close by the ascent of that spirit out of him in his dying breath, which tears the Temple curtain at its departure.¹²⁶

Let us take a closer look at the Isaianic verses:

καὶ ἐξελεύσεται ῥάβδος ἐκ τῆς ῥίζης Ιησοῦ ... καὶ ἀναπαύσεται ἐπ' αὐτὸν πνεῦμα τοῦ θεοῦ πνεῦμα ... ἐμπλήσει αὐτὸν πνεῦμα φόβου θεοῦ οὐ κατὰ τὴν δόξαν κρινεῖ οὐδὲ κατὰ τὴν λαλιὰν ἐλέγξει καὶ πατάξει γῆν τῷ λόγῳ τοῦ στόματος αὐτοῦ καὶ ἐν πνεύματι διὰ χειλέων ἀνελεῖ ἀσεβῆ (Isa 11:1-4 LXX).

These passages recall the Baptismal event in Mark in many ways. First, 'Spirit resting upon him' (ἀναπαύσεται ἐπ' αὐτὸν πνεῦμα τοῦ θεοῦ) is clearly alluded to in 'the Spirit coming down upon him' in Mk 1:10, and 'the Spirit of the fear of God will fill him' has a similar resonance as the descent of the Spirit in Mk does. Second, the sight image is implied clearly by 'οὐ κατὰ τὴν δόξαν,' rendered as *וְיִי עַל הַמֶּלֶךְ* in Isa 11:3 MT, reminiscent of Jesus' 'seeing' in the Baptismal event. Also the sound image is made clear by the word, 'κατὰ τὴν λαλιὰν,' which is rendered *וְיִי אֶעֱמָשׁ לְאֵל* in the MT text, closely related to the sound image incurred by the heavenly voice in the Baptism. Third, the iron rod image in v. 1 (ῥάβδος) is an assonance to the iron scepter or rod in Psalm 2:9. V. 7 in this Psalm, just two verses ahead from 2:9, speaks of the Heavenly King Yahweh's edict that "you are my son," which is a part of the biblical tradition that lies behind the Mark's composition of the Baptismal event. Furthermore, Jackson suggests that Isa 11:1-4 LXX is a well-known textual tradition, usually interpreted Messianically already in some pre-Christian Jewish literature (cf. *IQSb* 5.20-26).¹²⁷ Psalm 2 also has been seen to have been reinterpreted in an eschatological/messianic sense in intertestamental Judaism. Among many other passages, 4Qflor 1:18-2:3 is singled out as a good example for an eschatological interpretation of Psa 2. Psa.2 is seen also as being used in *Psalms of Solomon* 17.21-

¹²⁶ Ibid, 27.

¹²⁷ Ibid, 30.

46 which serves as a commentary on Isaiah 11 as well as Psa 2.¹²⁸ In fact, C. Evans quotes a passage from *the Psalm of Solomon* to show this link between Isa 11 and Psa 2:

May he smash the sinner's arrogance like a potter's jar, with a rod of iron
may he break in pieces all their substance; May he destroy the lawless
nations with the word of his mouth (vv.23-24).¹²⁹

In his concluding remarks about the singular role of *the Psalms of Solomon* (aside from the Dead Sea Scrolls) in the expectation of a future Davidic king and Messiah, J. J. Collins asserts that the distinct picture of the Davidic messiah draws its warrants especially from Isaiah 11 and Psalm 2, that is, of the messiah who will usher in an era of peace and reign in a kingdom marked by holiness and righteousness.¹³⁰ In fact, the following description of the 'Lord Messiah' in *the Psalms of Solomon* is highly reminiscent of the language of Isa 11:1-4:

Blessed are they who shall be in those days, seeing the good things of the
Lord which he will perform for the generation that is to come, under the
rod of discipline of the Lord's anointed in the fear of his God, in wisdom
of spirit, and of justice and of might, so as to direct every man in works of
righteousness in the fear of God (*Ps. of Sol* 18:6-8).¹³¹

Considering all these, it can be readily argued that the descent of God's spirit, described by Isaiah 11:1-4 LXX, upon the Messianic figure forms a close parallel to the same event at Jesus' baptism as described by Mark. The conclusion reinforces our argument that what is described in the Baptismal event in Mark is not a vision that Jesus received along with his personal endowment with the Spirit, but rather the eschatological occurrence of the Spirit's advent.¹³²

¹²⁸ Marcus, *Way*, 59-60.

¹²⁹ C. Evans, *The Interpretation of Scripture in Early Judaism and Christianity: Studies in Language and Tradition*. Journal for the Study of the Pseudepigrapha Suppl Series 33 (Sheffield: JSOT Press, 2000), 111.

¹³⁰ J. J. Collins, *The Scepter and the Star: The Messiahs of the Dead Sea Scrolls and Other Ancient Literature*. The Anchor Bible Reference Library (New York: Doubleday, 1995), 56.

¹³¹ Quoted from the *ibid.* 54.

¹³² Paradoxically, J. Marcus makes exactly same point as this in his book, *The Way of the Lord* that was published 3 years before he wrote the article that gave us a momentum to start this part of the paper (cf. 57).

2.254 The Descent of the Spirit in Mark 1:10

Here is the passage about the descent of the Spirit in Mark quoted verbatim: καὶ εὐθὺς ἀναβαίνων ἐκ τοῦ ὕδατος εἶδεν ... τὸ πνεῦμα ὥς περιστέραν καταβαῖνον εἰς αὐτόν. The two apocalyptic events occurring after Jesus' coming up out of the water should be discussed first. It is implied that the coming of the Spirit upon Jesus is not the result of the baptism of the John the Baptist.¹³³ This does not mean, however, that we should read the descent of the Spirit independently from John's baptism by the Jordan river in Mk 1:4-8. Bearing in mind the correspondence between Elijah and the John the Baptist in Mark's theological and narrative world, one cannot miss the unmistakable Elijah /Elisha symbolism in the Baptism. John the Baptist is clearly presented as an Elijah figure, and the descent of the Spirit upon Jesus in the Jordan is reminiscent of the gift in double of Elijah's spirit to Elisha beside the same river. Elisha is greater than Elijah as Jesus is greater than John (1:7).¹³⁴

There is a grammatical issue to be discussed in conjunction with our point. The expression 'ὥς περιστέραν' can be interpreted either adverbially or adjectivally. Adverbially rendered, it describes the way the Spirit descends; adjectivally rendered, it describes a bodily form of the Spirit. 'ὥς' gears toward the world of apocalyptic symbolism, where earthly companions approximate heavenly realities.¹³⁵ As for the word 'ὥς περιστέραν,' if it is read in a broader context, we have Jesus 'see[ing]' the heavens being torn open and the Spirit coming down. The syntactical structure might be taken to imply a visual form of the Spirit. But as we draw our attention to Luke's identifying the Spirit with the dove ("σωματικῶ εἶδει ὥς περιστέραν" in 3:22), Luke's description seems to mark a move away from the original intention of the account, which regarded the reference to the dove as a way of describing the descent of the Spirit rather than the form of the Spirit itself. Furthermore, as Gnllka warns, the simile of the Spirit as a dove has no clear parallel in Jewish literature; identifying the dove symbolically with the Spirit leads to nowhere, making any symbolic explanation of the dove's role in this pericope tenuous at best.¹³⁶ In any case, if we render 'ὥς περιστέραν' adverbially, we are immediately reminded of the creation story in

¹³³ Cf. J. Gnllka, *Das Evangelium*, I, 51: "... daß das Kommen des Geistes nicht Wirkung der Johannestaufe ist."

¹³⁴ S. Motyer, "The Rending of the Veil," *NTS*, 33 (1987), 156.

¹³⁵ Gnllka, *Das Evangelium*, I, 50; Marcus, *Mark 1-8*, 159.

¹³⁶ Gnllka, *Das Evangelium*, I, 52 ; R. Guelich, *Mark 1-8:26, 32-33*.

which the Spirit of God is being portrayed as hovering over the waters (Gen 1:2). Though there is nothing in the baptismal story to indicate the presence of any celestial waters described in the creation story, the water image is more than clear to notice. Furthermore, the apocalyptic dualism that the rent heaven implies readily reinforces the connection. The pertinent question here is then why there should be the descent of the Spirit at this particular moment, with its primeval image of the hovering of the Spirit.

Two things should be kept in mind in exploring this question. First, it should be noted that John's preaching in Mk 1:4-8 is thoroughly eschatological in nature. It indicates that Jesus at his baptism is keenly aware of a fervent eschatological expectation which was bred by John's preaching. More importantly, Jesus would have known that a new salvific act of God was about to take place soon. Second, Jewish expectation at the time of Jesus was that the last days would be marked by a return of the Spirit (e.g. Tosefta *Sotah* 13:2); the eschatological scheme in Judaism was very much shaped by the notion of the return of the universe to its primeval state at the creation. The Spirit of the end-time, thus, would be none other than that same Spirit which had hovered over the waters at the time of creation. And Jesus probably connected the Spirit spoken of by John and seen by himself with the Spirit mentioned in Genesis 1.¹³⁷ Another issue that needs to be considered regards the absolute use of 'the Spirit' without qualified expression such as 'The Spirit of wisdom' or 'The Spirit of truth.' The lack of a qualifier has scholars wonder whether it originates from Jewish or Gentile tradition. Even though the absolute use is usually found in non-Jewish texts, Num 11:26 does speak of 'The Spirit' resting on Eldad and Medad, as Marcus notes; Gnilya also confirms that the absolute use is well attested within the apocalyptic horizon and *IQS* 4:6 is a good illustration of this case.¹³⁸

In his discussion of different understandings of the Spirit between the canonical Gospels and Hellenistic Judaism, C. K. Barrett has pointed out that despite the similar belief in the power of the Spirit to make possible things which are beyond human instrumentality, the Gospels show a radical disjuncture by strictly subordinating the phenomena of the Spirit to the realization that the Messianic end-

¹³⁷ C. Rowland, *The Open Heaven*, 362-363. There are also several other extra-biblical texts provided by scholars like Marcus that draw a parallel image between a spirit hovering over the waters and a dove brooding over his young: b. Hag. 15a; 4Q521 1:6; Gen. Rab.2.4 (cf. J. Marcus, *Mark 1-8* 160).

¹³⁸ Gnilya, *Das Evangelium*, I, 50; Marcus, *Mark 1-8*, 159.

time has dawned.¹³⁹ By contrast, the Spirit in the Hellenistic world is always conceived in the sense of ecstatic experiences that are self-evoked and remain within the self-contained experience of the individual, which has nothing to do with the sign of God's new work.¹⁴⁰

2.255 Conclusion

It is clear then in our passage at hand, Mark brings Jesus' act of seeing and the two signs of God's apocalyptic theophany together, and implies that 'seeing' plays a important role in his apocalyptic eschatology. The gospel author treats 'seeing' as a recognition of God's apocalyptic-eschatological act launched in the human arena through Jesus and his death and resurrection. The relation between the eschatological salvation of God and 'seeing' is apparent in various places in the O.T prophecies (cf. Is 40:5), Jewish apocalypses and rabbinic Judaism.¹⁴¹ Although it is true that in contrast to apocalypses, the Rabbis developed the OT view with a greater emphasis on hearing, seeing is still viewed as more relevant to apocalyptic thought.¹⁴²

2.26 Heavenly Voice

2.261 Preliminary Remarks

Our interest centers here on showing how a proper understanding of the heavenly voice can contribute to our thesis that the baptismal events form an apocalyptic theophany in which 'seeing' takes its integral place. A brief look at the Synoptic parallels passages to note any peculiarity of Mark's passage is first needed:

Σὺ εἶ ὁ υἱός μου ὁ ἀγαπητός, ἐν σοὶ εὐδόκησα. (Mk1:11);

¹³⁹ C. K. Barrett, *Jesus and The Gospel Tradition* (London: SPCK. 1967), 153.

¹⁴⁰ Concerning this newness, Bultmann notes H. von Baer's contention based on Gen 8:8ff that the dove is the ambassador of the new era of grace which will follow the judgment, yet he rejects it because it has no basis in NT sayings (*History*, 250, n.3).

¹⁴¹ Cf. W. Michaelis, "εἶδον," *TDNT* V, 347 and *TDNT* I, 218 ff.

¹⁴² For example, Num.R.19.6 says "the things that are concealed from you in this world, you will see in the World to come, like a blind man who regains his sight."

οὗτός ἐστιν ὁ υἱός μου ὁ ἀγαπητός, ἐν ᾧ εὐδόκησα. (Mt 3:17);

Σὺ εἶ ὁ υἱός μου ὁ ἀγαπητός, ἐν σοὶ εὐδόκησα. (Lk 3:22).

Mark and Luke are in a total agreement with each other, while Matthew differs, as he changes Σὺ to οὗτός, and accordingly ἐν σοὶ to ἐν ᾧ. As already observed, on the one hand, Matthew's differences seem to reflect a later stage in the Gospel trajectories in which, to avoid any Gnostic influence, the later Gospels tended to emphasize the objective side of the baptismal event. On the other hand, the restriction of the heavenly voice to Jesus alone coheres with Mark's messianic secret motif, in which no human other than Peter, James and John is allowed to know of Jesus' divine Sonship until after his resurrection (cf. Mk 9:9). Thus, the personal auditory experience of Jesus at the Baptism should not be taken to indicate a personal endowment of Jesus with the supernatural power at the inchoate time of his public ministry.

2.262 OT Allusions

2.2621 Psa 2:7 or Isa 42:1?

The heavenly voice proper described in 1:11 (Σὺ εἶ ὁ υἱός μου ὁ ἀγαπητός, ἐν σοὶ εὐδόκησα) seems to draw on both Psa 2:7 and Isa 42:1, as commentators agree.¹⁴³ Specifically, "You are my Son" clearly alludes to Psa 2:7 while "In you I have been pleased" denotes Isa 42:1 (MT and LXX: "my soul has been pleased with/ accepted him"). The word 'ἀγαπητός' is lacking in both of these two OT passages. The word 'ἀγαπητός' may be an allusion to Isa 42:1 too, some argue, as the second part of the heavenly voice alludes to the same Isaianic passage. The argument is based on the following: occurrences of similar terms and sentences in passages that are parallel or related to Isa 42:1, i.e. Isa 41:8-9 and 44:2 (παῖς, ἐξελεξάμην, παῖς μου εἶ); a close linguistic relationship between 'beloved' and 'chosen' in the Markan/Matthean version of the transfiguration voice (Mk 9:7; Mt 17:5, 'beloved') and the Lukan version (Lk 9:35, 'chosen'), a closeness that includes the Johannine version of the baptismal voice 'chosen' is used (Jn 1:34)¹⁴⁴; exact citation of the version of Is 42:1 in

¹⁴³ For a detailed bibliography in opt for this, see R. Geulich, *Mark1-8:26*, WBC, 33-34.

¹⁴⁴ On 'chosen' as the original reading in John 1:34, see R.E. Brown, *The Gospel According to John*, AB (New York: Doubleday), 29, 29A, 2 vols. 1:57.

Mt 12:18 (“my beloved one”).¹⁴⁵ We can add three more points in favour of the allusion to Isa 42:1: *παῖς* can mean either ‘servant’ or ‘son’; a possibility that Jesus was being addressed by the title of ‘servant’ which was less offensive in Palestinian Jewish Christianity but was offensive to the Gentile Church because of its lowliness; the frequent occurrences of the concept of Jesus as the Servant of Yahweh, in other passages in Mark, especially in the passion narrative.¹⁴⁶

While there are ample data to support this view, there are elements that counter the claim. First of all, there is no evidence for an earlier *παῖς* Christology in the baptismal setting; nor is there sufficient evidences for an earlier pre-Markan change of *παῖς* to *υἱός* in the Hellenistic Church where *παῖς* consistently connoted ‘servants’ when used as a title. There is also a lack of textual evidence that *υἱός* replaced *παῖς* in this episode.¹⁴⁷ Furthermore, Mt 12:18 presents an indication of assimilation to the baptismal account, either to establish or to strengthen the link between the voice and Isa 42:1; the NT variations are more likely to be interpretative developments indicating that an allusion to the Isaianic servant was seen in the second half of what the voice said.¹⁴⁸

A plausible solution might be sought in the reference to Isaac as ‘beloved son’ in Gen 22:2, 12, 16. Though in these texts the word *ἀγαπητός* should be rendered ‘only,’ which is indicated by *יָחִיד* in the MT text, it is true that we can not overlook the resonance of Isaac as a beloved son of Abraham in biblical and post-biblical traditions: he was well known for his obedience to God’s will and was even associated with the sacrificial and atoning death of Jesus. In fact an exposition of the baptismal story in terms of Isaac-typology is found in the Testament of Levi 18, although the words of the heavenly voice are not cited in this passage.¹⁴⁹

¹⁴⁵ Cf. R. Watts, *Isaiah’s New Exodus and Mark*, 113; Marcus, *Way*, 51-52.

¹⁴⁶ Cf. I. Marshall, “Son of God or Servant of Yahweh? –A Reconsideration of Mark 1:11,” *NTS* 15 (1968-69),” 327.

¹⁴⁷ I. Marshall cogently insists on these views: see I. Marshall, “Son of God,” 329-332; also see R. Watts, *New Exodus*, 110; R. Guelich, *Mark 1-8:26*, 33.

¹⁴⁸ W.D Davies and D.C. Jr., Allison, *The Gospel According to Matthew*, vol 1 of 3, ICC (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1998); I. Marshall, “Son of God,” 328); K. Stendhal, *The School of St. Matthew and Its Use of the OT*. ASNU 20 (Fortress, 1968) 110; R. Gundry, *The Use of the OT in St. Matthew’s Gospel*, NovTSup 18 (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1967) 112; J.A. Fitzmyer, *The Gospel According to Luke*. AB 28/28a, 2 vols (Doubleday, 1981); R. E. Brown, *The Gospel According to John*, AB 29/29a, 2 vols (Doubleday, 1966, 70); R. Watts, *New Exodus*, 113.

¹⁴⁹ I. Marshall, “Son of God,” 334. Furthermore Marshall takes Rom 8:32 as an example of alluding to this typology.

But as Gnilka rightly points out, a recognition formula, “σὺ εἶ ...” certainly should be treated as a title formula that essentially gears to a person (Psa 109:4 LXX), and more importantly ‘υἱός’ as a title needs to be interpreted in a royal messianic sense, as we know from the fact that it alludes to Psa 2:7. Thus, it seems to be difficult to interpret this passage in light of the Isaac tradition,¹⁵⁰ though we may allow that at the very least the Isaac-typology gives us a significant clue towards the meaning of the heavenly voice.

A multiplicity of OT allusions is not something unusual and is in fact detected in many late Jewish and NT texts, especially when the clusters of ideas around such messianic titles as ‘Son of God,’ ‘Son of Man,’ ‘Messiah,’ and ‘Servant’ overlap at so many points that it is often hard to disentangle the original associations of any given title.¹⁵¹ If this is the case, it seems reasonable to conclude that Psa 2:7, Isa 42:1 and Gen 22:2 may have been altogether resonant here in the Baptismal event, and that they must be regarded as the background for the interpretation of the baptismal saying. I would agree with I. Marshall saying that “a denial of the presence of ideas from either Psa 2:7 or Isa 42:1 is to be rejected.”¹⁵²

Last yet still important element needs to be addressed before we conclude. Often the Baptism scene has been taken to indicate Mark’s espousal of adoptionist Christology that excludes any attribution of intrinsic divinity.¹⁵³ While on the whole, this proves to be untenable, it seems sufficient to take special note of a simple fact, that is, that in the heavenly voice, Mark alludes to only the first part of Psa 2:7 (“you are my Son”) yet substitutes “with you I am well pleased” for “this day I have begotten you,” the second part of Psa 2:7.¹⁵⁴

2.2622 “Σὺ εἶ ὁ υἱός μου”

“Σὺ εἶ ὁ υἱός μου” in Mk 1:11b contains allusions to 2Sam 7:12-14 and Psa 2:7. There are ongoing controversies over whether it is in pre-Christian Judaism or in the Judaism of the NT period that ‘Son of God’ became established as a messianic title.

¹⁵⁰ J. Gnilka, *Das Evangelium*, 53.

¹⁵¹ I. Marshall, “Son of God,” 328-329. Here Marshall suggests ‘Son of Man’ in I Enoch as a case in point that can be taken as a title that has attracted language to depict both Messiah and the Servant.

¹⁵² Ibid, 335.

¹⁵³ E.g. P. Vielhauer, “Erwägungen zur Christologie des Markusevangeliums,” in E. Dinkler, ed., *Zeit und Geschichte*. Bultmann FS, (Mohr, 1964), 162.

¹⁵⁴ Cf. Philip G. Davis, “Mark’s Christological Paradox,” *JSNT* 35 (1989), 12.

Gnilka singles out at least two instances as examples: *4Qflor* (which speaks of God bestowing the royal throne on whom he will be father to and whom he will regard as his son), a collection of messianic scriptural passages and an eschatological Midrash found in cave 4, applies the prophecy of Nathan in 2 Sam 7:12-14 to a royal Davidic messianic figure (10-14); *1Qsa* 2:11 connotes a birth of Messiah, which is clearly reminiscent of Psa 2:7. Joseph A. Fitzmyer, however, argues, on the basis of the findings on *4Q246*, that “the word ‘messiah’ does not occur in the text and to import it is gratuitous,” that although the king on the Davidic throne is often said to be God’s son (e.g. 2 Sam 7:14; Psa 2:7-8), the title is never used there to denote an awaited ‘messianic’ figure.¹⁵⁵ The ‘anointed’ in Psa 2:2 and ‘my son’ in Psa 2:7, Fitzmyer further argues, are not used to mean a future, ideal David who is awaited. The ‘anointed’ in Psa 2:2 simply points to an un-named historical king, one who was sitting upon the Davidic throne and who at his enthronement was ‘anointed’ and even called by God ‘my son’ in Psa 2:7. Then he concludes that neither in pre-Christian Palestinian Judaism nor in the Judaism of the Diaspora is there any clear evidence that Psalm 2 was being understood ‘messianically.’¹⁵⁶ He specifically mentions *1Qsa* 2:11-12, Gnilka’s text above, as a case that supports his position, and goes further to suppose that “messiah begotten by God” mentioned in line 11 may possibly refer to the Messiah who is to assume priesthood, hence called as the priestly Messiah, as the following lines 19-21 indicate.¹⁵⁷

This non-messianic reading of the pre-Christian Jewish texts is, in turn, challenged by J. J. Collins. First of all, Fitzmyer’s notion of a sectarian affirmation of God’s provision and guarantee of the Davidic dynasty by a king who is not a ‘messiah’ is called into question: there is no evidence that any king of Israel or Judah was not anointed, Collins points out. He supposes that a future successor to the Davidic throne in an apocalyptic or eschatological context is by definition a Davidic messiah. He singles out *4Qflor* (*4Q174*) as a case text that rather refutes Fitzmyer’s non-messianic readings of the Qumran texts.¹⁵⁸

¹⁵⁵ Joseph A. Fitzmyer, *The Dead Sea Scrolls and Christian Origins*. Studies in the Dead Sea Scrolls and Related Literature, (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2000), 59.

¹⁵⁶ Ibid, 67.

¹⁵⁷ Ibid, 84-85.

¹⁵⁸ J. J. Collins, *The Scepter and the Star*, 164. Yet ironically, Fitzmyer agrees that “Scion of David” in this text clearly has to be understood as the same expected messianic figure as in *4QpGen*(*4Q252*), which Collins draws upon for his position (see, Fitzmyer, *The Dead Sea Scrolls*, 88).

C. Evans also mounts his opposition to Fitzmyer's non-messianic reading of pre-Christian Jewish texts. On the basis of the same text (4Q266 1:1-2:9) that Fitzmyer drew on for a non-messianic reading, Evans argues that the appearance of 'Son of God' and 'Son of the Most High' of the Qumran text in Gabriel's announcement to Mary in Lk 1:32-35 indicates that the title 'Son of God' not only had a Davidic application but was also understood in a messianic sense. The title, he argues, was right at home in the first-century Palestine of Jesus' day.¹⁵⁹

Considering all these conflicting positions about texts in view and pre-Christian Palestinian Jewish texts in general, we conclude that though a messianic interpretation of 'Son of God' in those days was not firmly established, a growing tendency toward that direction in the contemporary apocalyptic world is clearly noticed.

2.2623 "ἐν σοὶ εὐδόκησα"

As for the second part of the baptismal saying in Mark, there is not a clear allusion to Psa 2. Rather, 2 Sam 22:20 (...καὶ ἐξείλατό με ὅτι εὐδόκησεν ἐν ἐμοί) is suggested as a background verse keeping us in the realm of Davidic and messianic images;¹⁶⁰ but this passage is easily dismissed because it cannot be said to have exerted any great influence upon NT thought.¹⁶¹ As agreed by most, "ἐν σοὶ εὐδόκησα" in the latter half of the heavenly voice alludes to Isa 42:1 (.. προσεδέξατο αὐτὸν ἡ ψυχὴ μου ἔδωκα τὸ πνεῦμά μου ἐπ' αὐτόν).¹⁶² Though προσεδέξατο raises some doubts about the link, εὐδόκησα is the natural and most common rendering of נָצַח in the LXX.¹⁶³ Read as it stands above, this verse also speaks of "putting his Spirit upon him," which clearly echoes the descent of the Spirit in the baptismal events. Furthermore, the Isaiah Targum 41:8-9, 42:1, 43:10 stands behind the Markan baptismal saying as a background in 2nd Isaiah. In endorsement of B.D. Chilton's findings, J. Marcus singles out three linkages of the Markan baptismal events with these Targum passages: the

¹⁵⁹ C. Evans, *Eschatology, Messianism, and the Dead Sea Scrolls*. Studies in the Dead Sea Scrolls and Related Literature (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1997), 94.

¹⁶⁰ Eduard. Schweizer, *The Good News According to Mark*, tran. Donald H. Madvig (London: S.P.C.K., 1971), 37.

¹⁶¹ Marshall, "Son of God," 334.

¹⁶² Marcus, *Way*, 53; Watts, *New Exodus*, 114.

¹⁶³ Cf. Ps 44:3 (43:2); 149:4; 146 (147):11; Jer 14:10; Watts, *New Exodus*, 114; Stendahl, *School*, 108; Gundry, *The Use*, 31.

identification of the servant as the Messiah (Tg. Isa 43:10); the use of the precise phrase, "I have been pleased" in a solemn 2nd-person address; the reference to the impartation of the Spirit.¹⁶⁴ The divine voice in the baptismal events in Mark resonates a mixture of royal Davidic king and Isaianic Servant, as a possible combination of Psa 2:7 and Isa 42:1.

One important question should be raised here about these two identities: do they concern an ontological nature of Jesus or a functional one that is related to his earthly mission? This question leads to a traditio-form critical issue: whether the baptismal saying in Mark is a part of the messianic consecration, or of the appointment as the Son of God, or the call narrative, or the historical recollection.¹⁶⁵ Also we can approach the identification issues from another point of view: is Jesus to be seen with Psalm 2 in the background and thus identified with the agent of Yahweh's eschatological victory, or is he to be understood in terms of the Exodus motif, as the representative of ideal Israel. And as for the Servant figure, a similar question can be raised: is Jesus Israel's deliverer or Israel's representative?¹⁶⁶

First of all, concerning the identification of Jesus as a royal Davidic king-messiah, which is alluded to in the reference to Psa 2, the first half of the heavenly voice has a number of assonances with call narratives in the sapiential-Apocalyptic literatures such as Lib Ant 43.3-4, Test. of Levi 18.8, and athHen 65. 4-5, as Gnllka points out. These passages show the one being called for divine revelation and recognition receiving the Spirit; the term 'beloved' is an integral part of this call narrative (grEsrApk 31.7; 32.7). Gnllka's conclusion is that the baptismal saying in Mark belongs to this arena of call narrative; in spite of the lack of any commissioning word, the act of granting of the Spirit to Jesus, as well as in the act of teaching and preaching of Jesus later on, justifies this view, he says.¹⁶⁷

However, concerning the servant image in the heavenly voice, Isa 42:1ff, as part of Isa 40-55's presentation of a servant as the agent of the New Exodus, presents an unidentified servant as the agent who inaugurates Yahweh's sovereign universal rule over the nations and who, delivering the exiles from captivity, restores sight to

¹⁶⁴ J. Marcus, *Way*, 53; B. D. Chilton, *A Galilean Rabbi and his Bible: Jesus' Use of the Interpreted Scripture of his Time* (M. Glazier, 1984), 128-130.

¹⁶⁵ Cf. Gnllka, *Das Evangelium*, 53.

¹⁶⁶ Watts, *New Exodus*, 112, 116.

¹⁶⁷ Gnllka, *Das Evangelium*, 53.

the blind Jacob-Israel (42:7).¹⁶⁸ A similar depiction of this servant as agent occurs in a number of witnesses to Tg. Isaiah 42:1 ff; in expansionist references to the return from the jail-like exile and opening the eyes of the blind (Isa 42:7), the servant is identified as the Spirit-anointed and victorious Messiah, a significant association in view of the messianic connotations of the Psalm 2 allusion occurred in the first part of the voice. To scholars like Watts, the fact that the Markan prologue is replete with New Exodus imagery and is accompanied by the baptismal setting with the coming up out of the water, the descent of the Spirit, and the subsequent forty days in the wilderness points to this kind of understanding about the servanthood.¹⁶⁹

What is clear about Jesus' identity disclosed in this initial stage of Markan narrative is that it should be taken as a functional one rather than ontological one. An ontological understanding of Jesus reflects a later stage in the trajectories of Jesus tradition in which the Christian Church of the NT period tends to be more concerned with Jesus as eternal logos.¹⁷⁰

More importantly, Jesus as a figure of either royal Davidic Messiah or the Isaianic Servant of the Lord, and a representative of ideal Israel, should not obligate us to choose one at another's expense. Multiple images of a character, almost always ambiguous, are not uncommon in the O.T; in fact, the ambiguity is inherently present in the book of Isaiah, particularly in the servant image itself within the second Isaiah, e.g. the motif of seeing yet not perceiving.¹⁷¹ Drawing on 42:1-4, for example, the servant is delineated in 42:5-9 as being appointed by Yahweh "to open the eyes that are blind, to bring out the prisoners from the dungeon, from the prison those who sit in darkness" (42:7). The image of giving sight to the blind is connected to the references in 29:18 and 35:5, to the image of the blind seeing in the future. In other words, the Servant brings about this transformation in 42:6-9. But in 42:18-20 the servant himself is being described as blind. The address to the deaf and blind there makes this point in passing. Just as the people in 6:9 hear but do not understand, see

¹⁶⁸ Watts, *New Exodus*, 115.

¹⁶⁹ Cf. *ibid.*

¹⁷⁰ Gnllka also confirms that "Die konstituierende Anrede des Sohnes Gottes und die Verleihung des Geistes seien dynamisch, nicht statisch, zu verstehen, seien mehr *communicatio* und nicht so sehr *communitas* (*Das Evangelium*, I, 55).

¹⁷¹ The so-called conflicting images and motifs of such kind within the Gospel traditions are carefully explored in J. Riches' *Conflicting Mythologies*. It is particularly relevant here, as it deals with *identity formation* of the new people of God.

but do not perceive, so the servant sees many things but does not observe them, his ears are open but unable to hear.

From a rhetorical and compositional point of view, the identification of the servant of Yahweh as blind may be due to the intertextual nature of the construction of the book of Isaiah, as it is mostly likely to have been generated by reflection on various texts constituting the emergent scroll of Isaiah.¹⁷² We can also sense that in his apocalyptic-eschatological epistemology, the author of the book of Isaiah vacillates intentionally between a singular image and plural images of the servant to reveal his theological orientation. The term עֶבֶר occurs 13 times in Ch. 40-49, always in the singular. In 43:10 and 44:26, the term is in parallel to a plural noun and in general the focus of attention throughout this section tends to move back and forth from the career of Cyrus to the Jewish community. This servant-community is called upon to witness and make sense of what is happening on the international scene (43:10; 44:21) but is also chided for being blind and deaf, that is, spiritually dull and imperceptive (42:18-20), a theme which recurs throughout 40-48. One may also surmise, treating 42:1-4 as an exception to the collective reference to servant language in 40-48, that the Servant-servants link represents an extension of the Isaianic tradition in the direction of trans-historical, eschatological, even apocalyptic outlook existent within a subgroup of the Jewish ethnos under Cyrus.¹⁷³

The identification, perhaps more significantly, should be ascribed more to a peculiar Hebrew idea of Israel as a corporate entity representing simultaneously individuals and the community in OT thought; the Servant image of Jesus in the Gospels should be interpreted in the same vein. Such a corporate understanding of the Servant is encouraged by looking at the tense of the verb εὐδόκησα. The aorist tense probably indicates that God's pleasure in Jesus is already established and does not arise as a sudden whim.¹⁷⁴ I suppose that εὐδόκησα speaking of God's past election of Jesus is contextually in line with the OT passage within Isaiah and within the

¹⁷² Robert P. Carroll notes that it poses the striking image of the blind, deaf servant seeking to open blind eyes and bring prisoners from their darkness, and supposes that here blindsight (meaning a visual capacity in a field defect in the absence of acknowledged awareness) is *le mot juste* for describing the servant and his role in relation to the community ("Blindsight and the Vision Thing," 87-88, *Writing and Reading the Scroll of Isaiah: Studies of an Interpretive Tradition*, ed. C. Broyles and C. Evans, Suppl. Vetus Testamentum vo.70,1 [Brill, 1997]).

¹⁷³ Joseph Blenkinsopp, "The Servant and the Servants in Isaiah," *Writing and Reading the Scroll of Isaiah: Studies of an Interpretive Tradition* (ed. C. Broyles and C. Evans, Suppl. Vetus Testamentum vo.70, 1 [Brill, 1997]), 173.

¹⁷⁴ Philip G. Davis, Mark's Christological Paradox, *JSNT* 35 (1989), 12.

traditions of Israel in general speaking of the election of Israel,¹⁷⁵ a past event (e.g. Isa 41:8-9, 43:10, 44:1-2, 48:1) reassured of its meaning as God is about to renew his commitment by putting his Spirit into Israel. As Marcus observes, the past election of Israel and the imminent grant of the Spirit in Isa 42:1 fit in perfectly with the past election of Jesus and the present bestowal of the Spirit in Mk 1:10-11; what is owed to Israel in the OT is transferred to Jesus in Mark. The divine election of Israel for an eschatological task becomes in Mk1:11 the divine election of the Messiah to his eschatological role.¹⁷⁶

2.263 “Σὺ εἶ ὁ υἱός μου” in Psa 2 and in Mk 1:11

“Σὺ εἶ ὁ υἱός μου” in the heavenly voice makes direct allusion to Psa 2, 2:7 in particular, and contains thus royal messianic tone. The link in turn draws our attention to both the historical-political setting of Psa 2 itself and its appropriation by the subsequent Jewish biblical traditions, taking on an apocalyptic overtone befitting the cultural and social milieu at the time of Jesus.

Psa 2 is one of the Hebrew Scriptures that provided a clear basis for the expectation of a royal messiah from the line of David, reflecting the royal ideology of ancient Israel,¹⁷⁷ 2 Sam 7 being the classic formulation of this ideology (cf. Psa 89, Psa 132, Psa 110:3, Isa 8:23-9:6, Psa 45). Also Ps 2, along with Psa 110 and Isa 9, was viewed in close relation to enthronement ceremonies in ancient Judah,¹⁷⁸ as it speaks of God who sets his anointed king on Zion, his holy mountain, and terrifies the nations. It is also painted with the vivid mythological colours of Yahweh’s primeval battle against the surging forces of chaos in order to establish his kingship, the main theme that is flowing from the beginning to the end, overseeing the structure of this passage.

As a good number of studies on pre-Christian Jewish texts clearly show by their common reference to the passage, their appropriation of Psalm 2 is mainly in apocalyptic and eschatological settings and expectations. Many Qumran texts refer to

¹⁷⁵ Marcus, *Way*, 73.

¹⁷⁶ Ibid, 72-75; B. W. Bacon, “Supplementary Note on the Aorist eudokesa, Mark 1:11,” *JBL* 20 (1901), 28-30; R. Gundry, *Use*, 31-32.

¹⁷⁷ Cf. Sigmund Mowinckel, *He That Cometh: The Messiah Concept in the Old Testament and Later Judaism* (Abingdon, 1955); T. N. D. Mettinger, *King and Messiah: The Civil and Sacral Legitimation of the Israelite Kings* (Lund: Gleerup, 1976).

¹⁷⁸ Cf. Collins, *Scepter and Star*, 23.

Psa 2 in their expectation of a future messianic figure: *4Q266* 1:1-2:9, *4Qflor* 10-14, and *1Qsa* 2:11. J. Collins observes that, for example, 4 Ezra 13, where the messianic figure takes his stand on a mountain and repulses at the attack of the nations, makes a clear reference to Psa 2.¹⁷⁹ It is interesting to further note that in this apocalyptic text, 4 Ezra 13.32, the following statement occurs: “my son will be revealed, whom you saw as a man coming up from the sea.” The proximity of the baptismal episode in Mark to this is not hard to see; these cases demonstrate that the contemporary apocalyptic movements shared their shoulders in appropriating the eschatological messianic expectation. Collins also points out that the promise of and the hope for a future Davidic king was explicit in Psa 2 and had simply lain dormant, until it was evoked by the disintegration of the Hasmonean rule.¹⁸⁰

In the Judaism of Jesus and of later times, and in early Christianity, Psa 2 is consistently taken as a prophecy of eschatological events that Yahweh’s enemies will rebel against but be defeated by him and his Messiah. It also points to an eschatological victory by God, a victory for which the power of the Messiah is sometimes instrumental.¹⁸¹

The Son of God who secures the defeat of human enemies and their supernatural masters in Psa 2 must be a figure of more than human stature, as Marcus suggests; the concept of “legal adoption is inadequate to express the meaning of his sonship,”¹⁸² however. The designation ‘Son of God’ in Psa 2 reflects the status rather than the nature of the messiah, as Collins notes, since the Son of God here is depicted as having been begotten in the same sense that the king of Israel was begotten by God, thus standing in special relationship to God. There is no hint of virgin birth and no metaphysical speculation is presupposed in Psa 2.¹⁸³

Considering the fact that Mark starts with “the beginning of the good news of Jesus Christ, the Son of God,” but offers no account of the birth of Jesus, scholars like Collins insist that the Son of God in the baptismal event can also be read in terms of Psa 2. The portrayal of Jesus as divine in a later stage of Jesus’ traditions, furthermore, treats the Son of God, which originally denoted the messianic king, in a new light, in

¹⁷⁹ Collins, *Scepter and Star*, 165.

¹⁸⁰ Ibid, 56.

¹⁸¹ Cf. Marcus, *Way*, 59-62: here a number of good examples are suggested to be found in Psalms of Solomon 17:21-46, *4QFlor1*:18-2:3, rabbinic literatures, and finally in NT texts such as Acts 4:25-26, Rev 19:19, and in allusive ways in Rev 11:15, 12:10, 17:18.

¹⁸² Ibid, 71.

¹⁸³ Cf. J. Collins, *Scepter and Star*, 167-168.

view of the presence of Gentile Christians in the Church. It comes to mean the divinity of Christ, his divine nature, by virtue of which he is differentiated from the human sphere. It is to be noted still that the notion of a messiah who was in some sense divine had its roots in Judaism, in the interpretation of such passages as Psalm 2 and Daniel 7 in an apocalyptic context.¹⁸⁴

As already pointed out, the eschatological aspects of Psa 2 are unmistakably present in the content as well as the context of the Baptismal episode in Mark. First, in Jesus' temptation by Satan in Mk1:12-13 the confrontation between Jesus and demonic opposition is quickly followed by Jesus' victory. The theme parallels closely Psalm 2 in which the anointed king is attacked by God's enemies but conquers them with God's support. Second, in Mk 1:14-15, Jesus announces that the dominion of Satan is over and that God's eschatological kingly rule has dawned, picking up another theme of Psa 2, of God's kingly power. Third, it is reasonable to note that Mark is utilizing the parallelism between the kingship of God and that of Jesus and Jesus' divine sonship in Mk 1:11-15 and other passages, based on Psa 2; he inserts the title "beloved son" drawn from Psa 2 into the baptismal episode and a few verses later a reference to the kingdom of God follows (1:15).¹⁸⁵

2.264 "ὁ ἀγαπητός, ἐν σοὶ εὐδόκησα" in Isa 42 and in Mk 1:11

The Isaianic Servant of the Lord, the one dominating the so-called Servant songs in Isaiah 40-55, is divinely elected and empowered to bring glory to God by establishing God's justice on earth. He establishes God's justice by first of all releasing Israel from bondage and re-establishing the covenant that God had made with his people, and by leading other nations to acknowledge Yahweh (Isa 49:6). The Servant also accomplishes his task not through conquest and domination, but by voluntarily passing through a vale of suffering, bearing humiliation and defeat (Isa 42:2-3; 53:3-12). As noted earlier, Isa 42:1ff describes this Servant as the one who inaugurates Yahweh's sovereign universal rule over the nations, and who delivers the exiles from their bondage and restores their blindness to sight (42:7).¹⁸⁶

¹⁸⁴ J. Collins, *Scepter and Star*, 167-169.

¹⁸⁵ Cf. Marcus, *Way*, 66-68.

¹⁸⁶ Cf. R. Watts, *New Exodus*, 115

With regard to the eschatological interpretation of the Servant songs, it is confirmed that the Qumran texts, Targum Jonathan, and certain rabbinic traditions attest this interpretive tradition, as Jeremias' classic study suggests,¹⁸⁷ J. Marcus also asserts that the Son of Man figure in the Similitudes of Enoch can be an additional support to it, because this figure is there surely described as an eschatological Messiah.¹⁸⁸

Although in our early discussions about the origin of the word ἀγαπητός, I have not concluded that it alludes to "the chosen servant" in Isa 42:1, I have clearly implied it by enumerating many supportive suggestions and more importantly I have added three more data, presenting among them as primary the frequent occurrences of the concept of Jesus as the Servant of Yahweh in other passages especially in the passion narrative. In addition, we can extend these supportive lists to include Mk 9:7 and 12:6 at this point. In 9:7 Jesus is explicitly depicted as "beloved": "Οὗτός ἐστιν ὁ υἱός μου ὁ ἀγαπητός, ἀκούετε αὐτοῦ." It is important to note that this depiction occurs in a place and time which stands in close proximity with a moment in which Jesus predicts his coming passion and death (cf. 8:31f). It clearly implies that the heavenly voice identifying Jesus as "beloved" must be associated with Jesus' passion prediction in a certain way. In this sense, the immediately following command by Jesus, "listen to him" should be accordingly interpreted. It seems to say that the disciples should listen to Jesus with reference to his passion prediction, rather than paying attention to any wrong-oriented contemporary triumphant eschatological implications that the presence of Elijah and Moses in the conversation with Jesus in the scene might have drawn to them.¹⁸⁹ In any case, we can not miss a clear contact point between the heavenly voice in 1:11 and the one in 9:7, especially in view of the simple fact that the both declare Jesus as the Son of God. In addition, Mark's

¹⁸⁷ Cf. Jeremias, "παῖς θεοῦ," *TDNT* 5, 684-700.

¹⁸⁸ J. Marcus, *Way*, 192.

¹⁸⁹ C. Evans also points out that "the heavenly voice implies that Peter's request to build the tabernacles was misguided, because he and his fellow disciples are to listen to God's Son, not the Moses and Elijah" (*Mark* 8:27-16:20, 37). My interpretation suggested above is an exactly opposite way of applying interpretations to the Markan community from what J. Marcus does. Marcus argues that Moses typology, especially his enthronement, ascension and divinization in the post-biblical Jewish interpretations of the Moses tradition is adopted in Mark so as to depict Jesus as an eschatological Moses, and that this eschatological milieu is more strengthened by the reversal of the names of Moses and Elijah in 9:4 because in many Jewish traditions Elijah but not Moses was expected to return just prior to the end in order to prepare the way for the Messiah. And he concludes that "the images of Jesus robbed in light, conversing with Moses and Elijah, and being proclaimed Son of God by a heavenly voice probably function as a counter to other, profoundly unsettling images," which

compositional placement of the heavenly voice's calling Jesus as "beloved" and Jesus' passion prediction in such a close proximity indicates further that the implication of the word ἀγαπητός is undoubtedly linked to Jesus' passion, and it leads us to assert that the word in 1:11 is also echoing the Suffering Servant of Isaiah.

The only other occurrence of ἀγαπητός in Mark is also found in Mk 12:6, a part of the Parable of the Wicked Tenants (12:1-9). In this parable, the owner's son is identified as "beloved" (ἀγαπητόν) in v.6, and subsequently is killed by the hands of the tenants of the vineyard and thrown out of the vineyard (v.8). J. Marcus even interestingly contends that "Mark has probably added the word 'beloved' to the parable in 12:6 in order to conform it to [1:11 and 9:7]."¹⁹⁰ From the microscale of its immediate literary context and the macroscale of the Markan passion narrative, certainly the beloved son killed and thrown out of the vineyard proleptically refers to Jesus' coming passion and death. This is confirmed by the following scriptural quotation from Psa 118:22-23 in Mk 12:10-12: the beloved son is metaphorically depicted as the stone that is rejected by the builders.¹⁹¹ All this clearly strengthens our point that Mark intends the beloved Son of God to be read in the light of the suffering Servant figure in Isaiah.

The link between the Isaianic Servant figure and Mark's portrayal of Jesus as a beloved Son of God can be also rightly made, as we look at the word παραδίδωμι. In Isa 53:6, 12 LXX the Lord is said to *deliver* the suffering Servant to our iniquities ("κύριος παρέδωκεν αὐτὸν ταῖς ἁμαρτίαις ἡμῶν") and to *deliver* his life into death ("παρεδόθη εἰς θάνατον ἡ ψυχὴ αὐτοῦ"). In Mark this word first occurs for the description of the arrest of John the Baptist immediately after Jesus' temptation (1:14), and later in Jesus' passion predictions (9:31; 10:33), in the prophecy of the disciples' betrayal in the eschatological discourse in Mk 13 (13:9, 11, 12), and concentrically in the passion narrative (14:18, 21, 41, 42, 44). Especially the verb παραδίδωμι occurring in the passion predictions and the passion narrative does not fail to allude to the image of the suffering servant being delivered up in Isa 53:6, 12. The passive form of the verb, παραδοθῆναι, which occurs just after Jesus' temptation in Mark, refers to God's action of delivering his chosen servant up to suffering and

Marcus believes are echoing Mark's suffering community in the current tribulations (Marcus, *Way*, 93, and for Marcus' more detailed explanations of the transfigured son of God, see *ibid*, 93).

¹⁹⁰ Marcus, *Way*, 114.

¹⁹¹ This passage will be dealt with in more detailed way under 4.542224 JESUS' ACTION: MESSIANIC FULFILMENT of this study.

death, as well envisioned in Isa 53:6, 12 (cf. Psa 27:12; 42:2). Furthermore 1:15, two verses later, speaks of the fulfillment of the divine time (cf. “The time has been fulfilled”).¹⁹² J. Marcus points out that the verb can be taken as a linkage to draw a parallel between Jesus and John the Baptist and the disciples. He says that in the Markan narrative time-table, first John is depicted as preaching and being delivered up (1:7, 14), then Jesus is described as preaching and being delivered up (1:14; 9:31; 10:33), and finally the disciples are depicted as preaching and being delivered up (13:9-13),¹⁹³ and concludes that “Jesus’ forerunner and his disciples participate in his fate of ‘being delivered up’ and this inclusion in his destiny is consistent with the corporate dimension of the Isaianic Servant, whose soul is ‘delivered up to death’ (Isa 53:12 LXX).”¹⁹⁴

2.265 Intertextual Links within Mark’s Gospel

With regard to the intertextual links of the heavenly voice to the rest of the Markan narrative, it is important to note that the recognition of Jesus’ divine sonship recurs in three strategic points: 1:10; 9:7-8; 15:38. In these passages, not only is Jesus’ divine sonship recognized, but also the same verb of seeing εἶδον occurs repeatedly: ...εἶδεν σχιζομένους...Σὺ εἶ ὁ υἱός μου in 1:10; Οὗτός ἐστιν ὁ υἱός μου, ... οὐκέτι οὐδέν· εἶδον .. τὸν Ἰησοῦν μόνον...ἵνα μηδενὶ ἄλλῳ εἶδον διηγήσωνται in 9:8-9; Ἰδὼν δὲ ὁ κεντυρίων.. οὗτος ὁ ἄνθρωπος υἱὸς θεοῦ ἦν in 15:39. We also need to recall that the redactionally constructed and used notices about the kingdom of God are found in close proximity to these three proclamations of Jesus’ divine sonship (1:15; 9:1; 15:39). A linkage between 1:9-11 and 1:14-15 is to be noticed as well: Jesus, having been declared the Son of God by the heavenly voice, goes to encounter Satan in the wilderness, compelled by the power of the Spirit; then he comes to Galilee proclaiming victory in v.15. The introductory phrase of the Transfiguration episode (9:1) is striking in many ways. First of all, there are some clear indications that it is Mark’s insertion: the use of the perfect tense in the description of the kingdom of God (compare βασιλείαν τοῦ θεοῦ ἐληλυθυῖαν in 9:1 and ἤγγικεν ἡ βασιλεία τοῦ θεοῦ in 1:15); Mark’s peculiar concern with the term δύναμις (14:62); the ensuing contrast

¹⁹² Cf. Marcus, *Mark 1-8*, 171.

¹⁹³ Marcus, *Way*, 41, 193 (cf. 109).

¹⁹⁴ Ibid, 194.

between the preceding description of the coming of the future Kingdom of God in 8:39 and the logion's indication of the current presence of the Kingdom of God in the Son of God, on his way to the cross.¹⁹⁵ Immediately after the centurion's final confession about Jesus' divine sonship in 15:39, a scene in which Joseph of Arimathea is described as one who was waiting for the Kingdom of God (15:43) follows. This current shape of the texts evidences that Mark's careful narrative composition reinforces his belief that the Kingdom of God as a present reality dawned in the ministry of Jesus; they also imply that the arrival of the kingdom of God is coterminous with the revelation of Jesus' messianic kingship, especially his status as the royal Son of God.¹⁹⁶ More significantly, they, in addition to the allusion to a Davidic Kingship in Ps 2, reveal that Mark intends the heavenly voice to be heard in its relation with the coronation of a Davidic King in the Psa passage.¹⁹⁷

2.266 Conclusion

As we have enumerated, Jesus' act of seeing in the baptismal events in Mark is not his private and personal experience of being endowed with the divine power to carry out a messianic mission. The apocalyptic and eschatological nature of the two optic and auditory events of the Baptism, the rending of the heaven and the descending of the Spirit and the motif of 'seeing' in Mark are closely interrelated to weave into the whole gospel's apocalyptic and eschatological colouring. The events can be viewed as an apocalyptic theophany, in which the eschatological manifestation of God unfolds in the revealed Messiah, Jesus. We have also explored OT backgrounds and influences on the current shape of the baptismal episode in Mark, focusing on Psa 2 and Isa 42 for an in-depth study. Some pre-Christian Jewish texts such as writings from the Qumran community and pseudepigrapha, and rabbinic literature also provide, our study shows, contemporary apocalyptic messianic interpretations of those O.T. passages, confirming that Mark's portrayal of the baptismal events as an apocalyptic theophany in the eschatological age is congruous with contemporary apocalyptic messianic appropriations of the scriptural prophecies about the Messiah and God's eschatological act through him. Our study further noted that God's final act through

¹⁹⁵ A. M. Ambrozic (*The Hidden Kingdom*, 23) takes a note the perfect tense of 'to come' and a sense of present reality of the Kingdom in the Heavenly voice in 9:8.

¹⁹⁶ Marcus, *Way*, 67.

Jesus eventually undergoes a radical change, incurring a correspondingly fundamental reinterpretation of his final victory over Satan and evildoers.

In this sense, the rending of the heaven at the time of Jesus' baptism is concordant with the rent Temple veil at the time of Jesus' death. What is even more striking about this connection is that these two events are being said to be 'seen' by Jesus and the centurion. It is thus concluded that a certain locus of 'seeing' within the apocalyptic events of the Gospel of Mark reinforces our arguments that these events are not just private experiences but apocalyptic events, and that the witnesses are not personal testimonies.

2.3 Jesus' Temptation

2.31 Preliminary Remarks

The episode of Jesus' temptation that immediately follows Jesus' baptism will further reinforce our argument for the apocalyptic-eschatological dimension of Jesus' ministry on earth. The episode is replete with many apocalyptical images and implications, foreshadowing the features of Jesus' ministry later on. Our interest here is to come to grips with these features so as to enhance our understanding of Jesus' temptation by Satan and its ramifications for Jesus' messianic task.

The nature of Jesus' temptation as well as its content has been the subject of much controversy among scholars. Those who side with J. B. Gibson even contend that there is an all but universally accepted critical consensus that the Markan story of Jesus' wilderness temptation contains no information whatsoever concerning either the nature or content of this temptation or its outcome.¹⁹⁸ The difficulty in cracking Mark's real intention in his compilation of the Baptismal event is nevertheless not insurmountable when certain biblical images and connotations which immediately come to our minds when we read the episode are taken into account. As for its nature, the controversies come down to the question whether it should be understood in the light of the motif of the restoration of paradise lost, or in the context of the cosmic battle that Jesus' ministry later on will be involved in. Explorations of apocalyptic images and symbols within the episode will reveal the true nature of Jesus' temptation.

¹⁹⁷ Cf. R. Watts, *New Exodus*, 111.

2.32 OT Allusions: Paradise Regained or Cosmic Battle Won?

Remarkably enough, 7 words out of almost 17 words in total in the pericope can be read as apocalyptic in their connotations and implications: ‘the Spirit,’ ‘casting out,’ ‘wilderness,’ ‘40 days,’ ‘Satan,’ ‘wild animals,’ ‘angels.’ The Temptation episode is also peculiar in its brevity in expressions and narrative structures. Compared to Jesus’ temptation by Satan reported in Mt 4:1-11 and Lk 4:1-13, especially, the Markan account seems hardly deserving of the title ‘the temptation of Jesus’; it is more like Jesus’ passing encounter with Satan or even more appropriately Jesus’ sojourning in the wilderness.¹⁹⁹ The passage is strategically recounted, however; Mark’s placement of the temptation episode at the outset of Jesus’ ministry, his use of strong words such as “casting out” (ἐκβάλλει) and his integration of the episode with the account of Jesus’ baptismal events are all urging us to pay special attention to this section of the story. It is worthwhile also to note that the Spirit works in both Jesus’ baptism and his temptation in the wilderness. It is more than clear then that Mark is choosing many compositional elements, wording and all, for a special purpose.

Two questions become important to ask then: Did Mark mean to say that Jesus is now undoing the effect of the Fall in the Garden of Eden and re-creating the world in which the eschatological utopian peace takes root, the whole humanity now in perfect harmony with other creatures? Or is he implying that Jesus’ mission will be really tough, in a cosmic battle with Satan to reclaim God’ original creation? These questions require a brief overview of biblical traditions gathered around the story of Jesus’ temptation.²⁰⁰

J. Gnailka suggests that “Jesus’ sojourning in the wilderness” alludes to T. Naph 8:4, as the latter speaks of wild animals being afraid of the righteous.²⁰¹ What is more interesting to note is that both Mark and the author of T. Naph mention the very

¹⁹⁸ J. B. Gibson, “Jesus’ Wilderness Temptation According to Mark,” *JSNT* 53 (1994), 3.

¹⁹⁹ The question how the two different kinds of accounts of Jesus’ Temptation in the Synoptic Gospels are related seems too hard to answer, no matter what one argues, either saying that Matthew and Luke expand Mark or saying that Mark reduces them. Interestingly Dale C. Allison, Jr. proposes an alternative that the both accounts are independent and so grew out of something not quite like either one (cf. “Behind the Temptation of Jesus: Q 4:1-13 and Mark 1:12-13,” 195-213, *Authenticating the Activities of Jesus*, ed. B. Chilton and C. Evans [Brill, 1999]). I tend to go with Allison, rather than precariously claiming that Matthew and Luke expand Mark.

²⁰⁰ The list of the biblical passages standing behind our pericope includes Moses fasting for forty days and nights in the desert (Exo 34:28); Elijah being sustained of 40 days by angels’ provisions of food (1 Kgs 19:1-8); Adam in the Eden (Gen 1); an Utopian future (Isa 11:1-9), plus a number of apocalyptic texts and pseudepigrapha.

words ‘the devil’ ‘wild animal’ and ‘angels’ in exactly the same order as they occur in the Temptation episode in Mark: “the devil will flee from you; wild animals will be afraid of you, and the angels will stand by you.”(T. Naph 8:4). A few verses down in the same chapter of T. Naph, the devil, wild animals and angels are again mentioned, this time in the context of curse (cf. 8:6), whereas the other was in the context of blessing.²⁰² The three characters in *T. Naph* thus might be taken to portray the whole creation inclusively or cosmically participating in God’s blessing and curse; we are led to see Jesus’ temptation in the same light, to explore the cosmic dimension of Jesus’ temptation in particular and his ministry in general.²⁰³

The hermeneutical principle of the so-called *Urzeit-Endzeit-Typologie*, allows scholars R. Bultmann, Leonhard Goppelt, and J. Jeremias to explicate an Adamic association in Jesus’ temptation, especially in his stay in the wilderness with wild animals. First of all, Gen 2:19-20 says that under the arrangement by God Adam named all the animals on the ground and all the birds of the air, implying their peaceful coexistence before the Fall; in the Markan wilderness, Jesus is said to be with wild animals. The motif of test links Jesus and Adam in the two episodes; Adam was tempted by Satan in Eden and Jesus is tempted by Satan in the wilderness. 40-days fasting also serves as a link: in a pseudepigraphal account of the Fall, Adam is described as fasting in penitence for 40 days (*Life of Adam and Eve*, 6); Jesus is portrayed as fasting in the parallel passages in Matthew (4:2) and Luke (4:2), though not in Mark. Being “served by angels” provides another link: *Life of Adam and Eve* 12-15 speaks of Michael commanding all the angels including Satan to worship Adam named as “Image of God,” while Jesus in the wilderness in the gospel of Mark is said to be served by the angels. Regarding this particular issue, some argue for another connection, mainly drawing upon the word *διηκόνουν*. *Sanhedrin* 59b in the Babylonian Talmud depicts a Jewish legend that “ministering angels” prepared food and drink for Adam in Eden; the word *διηκόνουν*, on its most concrete level, means a waiter’s task of supplying someone with food and drink, allowing the image of Jesus

²⁰¹ Gnllka, *Das Evangelium*, I, 57.

²⁰² *Old Testament Pseudepigrapha I, Apocalyptic Literature and Testaments*, 813, ed. J. H. Charlesworth (Longman & Todd, 1983).

²⁰³ J. Marcus draws a different yet interesting conclusion that *T. Naph*. 8:4 reinforces Jesus’ victory and the dethronement of the devil, especially drawing on the phrase “through his kingly power, God will appear...” in *T. Naph* 8:3 (*Mark 1-8*, 170). But it is not convincing enough for confirming the linkage. J. Gibson also quotes this pseudepigraphical text to read into a covenantal obedience of Jesus to God’s will at his Temptation. But it seems to impose his presupposition into the text.

in this passage to be interpreted as being served with food and drink by angels.²⁰⁴ But this interpretation is confronted by different reading of *Sanhedrin* 59b. Van Henten argues that this verb indicates that Adam was not allowed to eat the meat of earthly animals, but could eat meat from heaven.²⁰⁵

A substantial difficulty with this Adamic typological interpretation is that there is no single phrase that can work as a common denominator between Mark 1:13 and the first three chapters of Genesis. Even comparing two words used for temptation in both places (πειραζόμενος in Mk 1:13 and ἡπάτησεν in Gen 3 LXX) is not compelling enough.²⁰⁶ A stronger objection in regard to this link would be that the theme or portrayal of Jesus as a second Adam plays no real part in Mark's Christology; nor is it ever hinted at elsewhere in his Gospel. It is unlikely that Mark would adopt the theme in the beginning and never employ it again.²⁰⁷

There is, however, another important link to be found in the Isaianic oracle about a utopian world in which the enmity between wild animals and human beings will be miraculously overcome (Isa 11:1-9; Is 65:25). In particular, 2 *Apoc. Bar.* 73: 16 needs to be noted: "And it will happen that .. he has sat down in eternal peace on the throne of the kingdom.... And the wild beasts will come from the wood and serve men, and the asps and dragons will come out of their holes to subject themselves to a child."²⁰⁸

2.33 Interpretation of Jesus' Wilderness Temptation

The text of Jesus' temptation in the wilderness as it stands in Mark reads: 12 καὶ εὐθὺς τὸ πνεῦμα αὐτὸν ἐκβάλλει εἰς τὴν ἔρημον. 13a καὶ ἦν ἐν τῇ ἐρήμῳ τεσσαρὰκοντα ἡμέρας πειραζόμενος ὑπὸ τοῦ Σατανᾶ, 13b καὶ ἦν μετὰ τῶν θηρίων, 13c καὶ οἱ ἄγγελοι διηκόνουν αὐτῷ. For the convenience of our study, it can be restructured as follows:

²⁰⁴ Cf. Marcus, *Mark* 1-8, 168.

²⁰⁵ Van Henten, "The First Testing of Jesus: A Rereading of Mark 1:12-13," *NTS*. Vol. 45 (1999), 356.

²⁰⁶ *Ibid*, 355.

²⁰⁷ Gibson, "Jesus' Wilderness Temptation," 20.

²⁰⁸ J.D. Kingsbury, *The Christology of Mark's Gospel* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1983), 68.

- A 12 καὶ εὐθὺς τὸ πνεῦμα αὐτὸν ἐκβάλλει εἰς τὴν ἔρημον.
 B 13a καὶ ἦν ἐν τῇ ἐρήμῳ τεσσαράκοντα ἡμέρας πειραζόμενος ὑπὸ τοῦ Σατανᾶ,
 B' 13b καὶ ἦν μετὰ τῶν θηρίων,
 A' 13c καὶ οἱ ἄγγελοι διηκόνουν αὐτῷ.

Although the conventional division of this text is in 3 units, v. 12, v. 13a and v. 13bc,²⁰⁹ the episode should be, we propose, divided into four units, as each sentence is led by the conjunction καὶ, the passage in fact forming a chiasmic structure, A-B-B'-A': A (Jesus' being driven out to the wilderness) -B (Jesus' being in the wilderness, tempted by Satan) -B' (Jesus' being with the beasts) -A' (Jesus being served by angels).²¹⁰ The restructuring is based on three grounds. First, the episode consists of 4 sentences each of which in turn is composed of one subject and one finite verb, and each of them is led by kai. Second, in terms of sentence structure, the first and the last sentences start not with a verb but with a subject, implying a disjunctive relationship with what precedes them; the second and third start, on the other hand, with a verb, in fact, the same finite verb εἶναι, thus implying a conjunctive relationship with what precedes them. Third, A and A' correspond to each other in the sense that both the Spirit and angels are on Jesus' side, while B and B' are connected to each other in that both Satan and wild animals are in opposition to Jesus. What can be gleaned from this observation are two things. First, Jesus' being in the wilderness was initiated by the Spirit and Jesus is in the good hands of God's angels, a symbol of divine protection. More importantly, as the inner structure of B and B' indicates, Jesus is confronted and endangered by the chief enemy, Satan, and his followers. In short, the restructuring leads us to see that though Jesus was in divine protection, his wilderness temptation was real and significant, not just a formal initiation ceremony for proving that he is worthy of his Messianic vocation.

Keeping this kind of macro-structure of the episode in mind, we are able to notice some further details revealing the true nature of Jesus' wilderness temptation in Mark's scope. The episode contains syntactical factors that counter-argue our attempt to emphasize the significance of Jesus' trial in the wilderness. The first occurrence of καὶ along with εὐθὺς in v.12, should be taken as inferential from, rather than coordinate with, the preceding event, Jesus' baptism; this emphasizes a more radical

²⁰⁹ Cf. R. Guelich, *Mark 1-8:26*, 36.

²¹⁰ Interestingly, J. Marcus also came up with his own literary structure of Mk 1:12-13 (ABA'B'), yet it seems arbitrary, because his structure was made from only the last three clauses, excluding the first one only to make his case (cf. *Mark 1-8*, 169).

and relevant connection between them.²¹¹ Accordingly the expression has the effect of presenting Jesus' temptation in the wilderness as the corollary and consequence of Jesus' baptismal experiences, assuring in advance the Spirit-led triumphant outcome.²¹² Furthermore, καὶ εὐθὺς is used in the LXX to translate the common OT formula הנה (Gen 15:4, 38:29), having a biblicizing effect on the episode, and reinforcing the divine lead throughout the Temptation.²¹³ Second, the use of καὶ ἦν in v.13b as finite verb and καὶ οἱ ἄγγελοι in 1:13c and the alternative reading of ἐκεῖ in 1:13a altogether suggest that ἦν in v.13a functions as the finite verb of the sentence not a periphrastic to πειραζόμενος. The sentence thus should be read as follows: "Jesus was in the wilderness for forty days, being tempted by Satan." R. Gundry also points out the parallel nature of "καὶ ἦν" in both v.13a and v.13.b, and adds one more supporting factor: the verb ἦν and the participle πειραζόμενος are spatially too distant from each other for a periphrastic construction to be likely.²¹⁴ Thus, the focus is on the finite verb, the participle accordingly taking on a supplementary role; it follows then the focal point of the passage is on Jesus' presence in the wilderness rather than on his temptation by Satan. In other words, unlike the prominence of the temptation motif in the Matthean and Lukan parallels, the reference to the Satan's tempting Jesus in Mark functions as a corollary to Jesus' presence in the wilderness.²¹⁵

As for καὶ ἦν μετὰ τῶν θηρίων in v.13b, there is a dispute over the role of the wild animals: are they on Jesus' side or against him? At the center of this controversy is the preposition μετὰ: does it have a friendly or hostile connotation? First of all, as R. Bauckham points out, Mark's use of the term εἶναι μετὰ elsewhere generally reveals close, friendly association (cf. 3:14; 5:18; 14:67).²¹⁶ Yet it should be equally important to note that only a few cases in Mark have the construction of εἶναι μετὰ with the genitive; more importantly whether μετὰ implies a friendly or a hostile relationship depends on the context.²¹⁷ Mark's reference to Jesus' stay with the

²¹¹ A. Stock, *The Method and Message of Mark* (Michael Glazier, 1989), 55.

²¹² W. Lane, *The Gospel of Mark*. NICNT (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1974), 59; C.S. Mann, *Mark*. Anchor Bible (Doubleday, 1998), 202.

²¹³ J. Marcus, *Mark 1-8*, 159.

²¹⁴ R. Gundry, *Mark: A Commentary on His Apology for the Cross*, (Eerdmans, 1993), 54.

²¹⁵ R. Guelich, *Mark 1-8:26, 36-37*; V. Taylor, 163.

²¹⁶ R. Bauckham, "Jesus and the Wild Animals (Mark 1:13): A Christological Image for an Ecological Age", in *Jesus of Nazareth: Lord and Christ: Essays on the Historical Jesus and New Testament Christology*, ed. J.B. Green, and M. Turner (Eerdmans, 1994), 3-31.

²¹⁷ E. Best, *Temptation*, xvii n.6.

animals may be nothing more than a repetition of the acknowledgement that Jesus has left the inhabited world,²¹⁸ as Dan 4:32 LXX, μετὰ θηρίων ἄγρίων ἡ κατοικία σου would indicate, though it is still obvious that both in Mark and Daniel the animals are involved in the context of testing in the wilderness.²¹⁹

We already pointed out above that καὶ ἦν μετὰ τῶν θηρίων in v.13b corresponds to the description of Satan's trial of Jesus in v.13a (B-B'); accordingly it is reasonable to view the wild animals as hostile, even as they are subdued by him. Several factors support this interpretation. First of all, the καί, coming in the beginning of the sentence should be rendered as concessive not coordinate, without any explicit temporal reference following it (BDF, §227). It conveys then the nuance of 'and so' and forces us to render Jesus' being with the beasts and his attendance by angels as events which are not only subsequent to, but, more significantly, corollary to his temptation.²²⁰ This interpretation might shed a new light on the nature of Jesus' temptation by Satan in v.13a. Reading the Satan's temptation from the perspective of what follows it, namely, Jesus' being with the animals and being ministered to by angels in vv.13bc, which is clearly connotative of his dominance over them, we may deduce that Satan's temptation of Jesus failed, that Jesus sustained his integrity with faithfulness and obedience to God's will. In other words, by portraying Jesus in charge of himself and those around him after the first test, Mark declares the successful outcome of Jesus' wilderness temptation and discloses his own view on the event. Satan's effort to tempt Jesus away from his divinely appointed path ends in failure; Jesus remains loyal and obedient to the commission he received at his baptism.²²¹ What comes immediately after this episode is highly compatible with this interpretation; Jesus' triumphant proclamation of the coming of the kingly rule of God (1:14-15) provides a nice closure to the preceding episode. For the apocalyptic mindset presupposed throughout Mark, that proclamation would indicate that the Satanic opposition had been foiled.²²² Furthermore, shortly afterward, Jesus' powerful

²¹⁸ F. Neirynck, *Duality in Mark, Contributions to the Study of the Marcan Redaction* (Leuven, 1988), 101.

²¹⁹ Van Henten, "The First Testing of Jesus," 362.

²²⁰ J. Riches seems to make a similar point, as he says that "The role of the angels in ministering to Jesus may be in protecting him from the wild animals who are associated with the devil in *T Naph* 8:4" (J. Riches, *Conflicting Mythologies*, 132 n.38).

²²¹ Gibson, "Jesus' Wilderness," 32.

²²² L. E. Keck, "Introduction to Mark's Gospel," *NTS* 12, 361-362.

exorcism follows (1:21-28) continuing the theme of the triumphant Jesus of wilderness temptation.

The interpretation of μετὰ τῶν θηρίων as a sign of hostility to Jesus might be reinforced by *T.Naph* 8:4, “wild animals will be afraid of you”; in *Apoc. Mos.* 10:1-11:4, *Vita* 37-38 also the animals’ hostility is described as a mark of their relationship with humanity after the Fall. The OT itself also describes the enmity between human beings and wild animals as a distortion of the original harmony that existed between them in Eden and makes clear that at the eschaton this enmity will be reversed (Is 11:6-9), and God will make for humanity a new covenant with the wild animals so that people may live in peace with them once more (Hos 2:18).²²³ Mark’s description of Jesus’ wilderness temptation, then, intends to reveal that the beasts, which are supposed to be hostile to Jesus, are subjugated by Jesus and become friendly. Gibson also points out that the phrase εἶναι μετά employed in Mk 3:14, 5:18 and 14: 67 designates a type of accompaniment in which there is subordination of one to another, supporting the above interpretation.²²⁴

A final supporting factor for this interpretation of the beasts to symbolize dangers to Jesus can be deduced from the Jesus’ temptation tradition that is found in Mt 4:6 and Lk 4:10-11. These passages cite Ps 91:11f. The citation indicates that this Psalm was related to the tradition about Jesus’ testing at a very early date. Moreover, it is pointed out that Jewish peoples at the time of Mark “interpreted Psalm 91 as a prayer for angelic protection from demonic powers.”²²⁵

As for οἱ ἄγγελοι διηκόνουν αὐτῷ in 13c, our structural analysis has shown that it corresponds to τὸ πνεῦμα αὐτὸν ἐκβάλλει εἰς τὴν ἔρημον in v.12, implying that angels are on Jesus’ side. The word διηκόνουν has created a controversy of its own, whether to take it to mean ‘supplying food and drink, or ‘serving in general way.’ Some scholars view the verb and its context as suggesting that the angels were feeding Jesus during this period, and that a close analogy comes from the Jewish references to the angel’s sustenance of Adam and Even in the Garden, as implied in

²²³ J. Marcus, *Mark 1-8*, 168.

²²⁴ Gibson, “Jesus’ Wilderness,” 31.

²²⁵ S. Garrett, *Temptations*, 57-58. She assumes that Q-version of Jesus’ testing was written independently of Mark, and so provides independent evidence for the link between Jesus’ testing and Psalm 91 (Ps 90 LXX). For commentators adopting this link within Mark, see, J. Gibson, “Jesus’ Wilderness, 21-23); P. Pokorny, “The Temptation Stories and Their Intention,” *NTS* 20 (1973-74, 116-7); V. Taylor, *St. Mark*, 164.

Adam and Eve 4; *b. Sanh.* 59b.²²⁶ Guelich goes further to conclude that along with Jesus' temptation by Satan and his peaceful existence with the wild animals, Jesus being waited on by the angels forms an impressive counterpoint to Adam and bears witness to the coming of the Second Adam and the New Creation.²²⁷

As we conclude this section, then, the issue of hermeneutical principles of Adam typology and the Isaianic passages about utopian age rises to the surface. The issue is in fact linked to what our study will have to explore and come to grips with: whether or not in Mark's narrative world any image of Jesus as New Adam or someone who substantializes the idyllic future is actually employed. This in turn becomes interwoven with the crux of our whole endeavor by focusing on Jesus as the central figure through whom God's new world and new order are being established. The events like wilderness temptation, as J. Robinson points out, are closely linked to Mark's and his contemporaries' expectation of a coming messiah in whom the eschatological promises of O.T. are fulfilled and realized:

The exceptional nature for Jewish thought of such events as here portrayed and their intimate eschatological associations in the Jewish tradition make it clear that together this cluster of cosmic events signifies for Mark a decisive occurrence in the realization of the eschatological hope. The Spirit, rather than separating Jesus from historical involvement with its ambiguity and cost, takes him directly into encounter with evil in the person of its cosmic head. The cosmic language only serves to accentuate the ultimate significance of the engagement. The kingdom's Spirit embodied in Jesus plunges into the encounter. An essential part of the eschatological hope is the overthrow of the devil. Only in this sense can we understand the action of the Spirit in driving Jesus to the wilderness as depicted here, and the inclusion of the temptation narrative in Mark's introduction at all.²²⁸

2.34 Mark's Appropriation of the Motifs in the Gospel

As pointed out above and as also frequently agreed by some interpreters,²²⁹ the Adam typology appears to have held little attraction for Mark, though present in the episode of Jesus' wilderness temptation; no trace of Adam and Jesus as New Adam typology is apparent in the rest of his Gospel. Mark's portrayal of Jesus' temptation, however,

²²⁶ Best, *Temptation*, 9-10; cf. J. Jeremias, "Αδαμ," *TDNT* 1 (1964), 141.

²²⁷ R. Guelich, *Mark 1-8:26*, 39.

²²⁸ J. Robinson, *The Problem of History in Mark and Other Marcan Studies* (Fortress, 1957), 28.

²²⁹ Cf. R. Guelich, *Mark 1-8:26*, 39.

differs greatly from the Matthean and Lukan accounts that are replete with Exodus typology, including Israel's wilderness experiences. The first four chapters of Matthew, for example, as their literary and narrative structure shows, reveal Matthew portraying Jesus as New Israel; as such Jesus followed every step of Old Israel in the form of recapitulation of what she did from its beginning to end, yet succeeded in proving that by obeying he is true Israel through which all the prophecies of the OT would be fulfilled. But it is still worthwhile to interpret the Markan Jesus' wilderness temptation from the viewpoint of πειρασμός, as Jesus is clearly described as tempted, πειραζόμενος in v.13a. In Mark πειράζειν actually occurs 3 times beside in 1:13: 8:11 (..σημεῖον ἀπὸ τοῦ οὐρανοῦ, *πειράζοντες* αὐτόν..); 10:2 (... εἰ ἔξεστιν ἀνδρὶ γυναῖκα ἀπολῦσαι, *πειράζοντες* αὐτόν"); 12:15 (ἔξεστιν δοῦναι κῆνσον Καίσαρι ἢ οὐ, Τί με *πειράζετε*...). Tempters in these cases are specified as the Pharisees and the Herodians,²³⁰ and interestingly enough they are the same ones that "went out and began to plot how they might kill Jesus." (3:6)²³¹ In the passion narrative, the Jewish religious and political leaders are described as ones seeking evidence against Jesus so that they could put him to death; ἐζήτουν *κατὰ τοῦ Ἰησοῦ* μαρτυρίαν εἰς τὸ θανατῶσαι αὐτόν (14:55). This expression recalls what is used to describe the same evil intentions of the Pharisees and the Herodians in 3:6: ..συμβούλιον ἐδίδουν *κατ' αὐτοῦ* ὅπως αὐτόν ἀπολέσωσιν..." All of these clearly indicate that Jesus' ministry was full of trials and oppositions from the Jewish leaders and peoples. The clearest example of such testing is found in the episode at Gethsemane, in Jesus' own words, "everything is possible for you [Abba, Father]. Take this cup from me.."(14:36). As we take note of the word, ποτήριον, we are immediately reminded of the cup Jesus is said to drink in 10:38 (..%δύνασθε πιεῖν τὸ ποτήριον ὃ ἐγὼ πίνω.."), as Jesus responds to James and John's expectation to sit at Jesus' right and left, the cup standing for the suffering, and death, he will have to endure. In the same verse, baptism is mentioned ("..τὸ βάπτισμα ὃ ἐγὼ βαπτίζομαι βαπτισθῆναι.."), carrying however the same connotation of suffering and subsequent death. A synonymous parallel structure, A (τὸ ποτήριον ὃ ἐγὼ πίνω) / A' (τὸ βάπτισμα ὃ ἐγὼ βαπτίζομαι βαπτισθῆναι) supports this interpretation. Of course, the cup here has nothing to do with the cup of

²³⁰ See the occurrences of the same expression, οἱ Φαρισαῖοι ... τῶν Ἑρωδιανῶν in 3:6 and 12:13.

²³¹ The 5 controversies between Jesus and them occurred at the very beginning of Jesus' public ministry (cf. 2:1-3:5).

the Lord's Supper, as C. Evans rightly points out,²³² yet D. Juel finds this association tantalizing, as Mark's readers would make links with their own Christian rites.²³³ In any case, James and John's reply can be taken as crystallizing the disciples' incomprehension about Jesus' messianic passion and death, a problem that Jesus had to deal with throughout his journey to Jerusalem. Even in the passion narrative itself, Judas betrays him, Peter denies him three times, and finally with his last words on the cross, Jesus cries out that even God has left him (cf. 15:34). Taking all these into consideration, "the inclusio of Mark 1:10-11 and 15:38-39 (A-B/A'-B'), with the epithet, 'Son of God'" confirms the narrative function of the first testing, as Van Henten observes: it looks ahead to the repeated testings epitomized in the passion narrative. The testing motif is connected with Mark's Christology as Jesus is tested as Son of God (1:11), though it does not intend to signify that all subsequent temptations in Mark are Satanic.²³⁴

2.35 Conclusion

Those apocalyptic images and symbols that the temptation episode carries make it clear that Jesus' ministry is not just a personal adventure or voice to either reformulate his contemporary society or announce God's impending judgement over Israel and its religious institution. They were meant to manifest the cosmic implications of the ministry that Jesus is going to enter into. Jesus' ministry is by nature eschatological, the element that leads him to a cosmic battle with Satan; in God's mystery, it undergoes a radical reinterpretation of victory from total annihilation of Satan and his followers to the crucifixion of the Son of God, yet maintaining the apocalyptic-eschatological dimension of the victory.

The apocalyptic elements with cosmic implications may shed a further light on the place of the wilderness where Jesus underwent Satan's temptation. The settings in wilderness, as scholars like Mauser point out, and mountains and sea in Mark refer the

²³² C. Evans, *Mark 8:27-16:20*, WBC 34b (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 2001), 117.

²³³ D. Juel, *Messiah and Temple: The Trial of Jesus in the Gospel of Mark*. SBLDS 31 (Scholars Press, 1977), 146-147.

²³⁴ Van Henten, "The First Testing of Jesus," 365. It brings up ongoing debates about the nature of Jesus' temptation, especially between E. Best and J. Robinson. At the end of my studies, I became convinced by J. Riches' view that "the Evangelists, not just Mark but Matthew too, clearly saw nothing odd in drawing on ideas that formed parts of quite sharply opposed world-views" (J. Riches, *Conflicting Mythologies*, 178 and for these scholarly debates see *ibid*, 148-152, "Opposing views of evil in Mark: recent scholarly debate").

historical settings back to the cosmic struggle. That is, wilderness, mountains and sea are reminders of a deeper level of history undergirding the historically tangible events of Christ's ministry. Furthermore, the Markan exorcism and controversy stories carry the cosmic struggle into historical settings. As J. Marcus points out, Isa 40:3 in Mk 1:3 positions John and Jesus firmly within the context of Jewish apocalyptic eschatology:

[John and Jesus'] appearance on the scene fulfils the prophecies of old because it heralds eschatological events, because it is the preparation for and the beginning of the fulfilment of that end so eagerly yearned for since OT times: the triumphant march of the holy warrior, Yahweh, leading his people through the wilderness to their true homeland in a mighty demonstration of saving power."²³⁵

²³⁵ Marcus, *Way*, 29; cf. R. Guelich, "The Beginning of the Gospel': Mark 1:1-15," *BR* 27, 10-12; Kingsbury, *The Christology*, 56-57.

The Motif of Seeing in the ‘Streitgespräche’

3.1 Preliminary Remarks

We continue to pursue our effort to show the apocalyptic-eschatological nature of Mark’s use of the verb εἶδον. In this chapter, we single out among the ‘streitgespräche’ the episode of Jesus’ healing of the paralytic, for two reasons: 1) it deals with the controversies over Jesus’ blasphemy, which eventually lead to the Jewish leaders’ conspiracy to kill Jesus in 3:6; 2) it is replete with apocalyptic and eschatological images and connotations, especially in connection to the motifs of our interest, of ‘seeing,’ ‘faith’ and ‘the forgiveness of sins.’ Furthermore, the episode contains important parallels to the periscope in Mk 11:20-26, in terms of the motifs of seeing, faith, and the forgiveness of sins.²³⁶ The interpretation of the motif of seeing which is enacted by Jesus’ act of seeing the faith of the paralytic and his friends is the main focus here.

The verb εἶδον appears twice in v.5 and v. 12, respectively, within the story of the paralytic in Mk 2:1-12. The pericope bristles with form-critical and exegetical difficulties, as many interpreters agree,²³⁷ not the least important of which actually concerns the nature of the story (a miracle healing story or a controversy discourse over Jesus’ identity?²³⁸) as well as the integrity of the pericope, which is in turn directly related to our examination of the role of the verb εἶδον. This investigation is primarily concerned with the apocalyptic nature of the verb, yet we believe that this task can be more effectively done by scrutinizing related words and motifs of the verb. Thus I propose that the words and motifs that are literarily or thematically connected to the verb be expounded: ‘faith’ and the theme of Jesus’ the forgiveness of sin, for

²³⁶ Mk 11:20-26 will be explored in details in 4.542222 JESUS’ ACTION AS PROPHETIC THREAT AND PROMISE.

²³⁷ For these difficulties and rhetorical solutions to them, see J. Dewey, *Markan Public Debate: Literary Technique, Concentric Structure, and Theology in Mark 2:1-3:6*. SBLDS 48 (Chico: Scholars Press, 1980), 74-79.

²³⁸ For detailed discussion over redaction and tradition, see Guelich, *Mark 1-8:26*, 81-84.

example, are just such elements since ‘faith’ is used as an object of the verb εἶδον, and Jesus’ act of seeing of faith leads to the declaration of the forgiveness of sin.

3.2 Synoptic Comparison

Before we go further, examining the use of the verb εἶδον, in the other synoptic parallel passages, Mt 9:2, 8 and Lk 5:20, 26, may shed light on the way that Mark views the verb.²³⁹ First, as for εἶδον in Mk 2:5, all three parallel passages are identical in their wordings: “καὶ ἰδὼν ὁ Ἰησοῦς τὴν πίστιν αὐτῶν...,” except the fact that Luke does not specify the subject of the verb, ἰδὼν, while the other two do. Second, regarding εἶδον in Mk 2:12, Mk 2:12 reads, “λέγοντας ὅτι Οὕτως οὐδέποτε εἶδομεν,” while Mt 9:8 reads, “ἰδόντες δὲ οἱ ὄχλοι ἐφοβήθησαν...” and Lk 5:26 reads, “λέγοντες ὅτι εἶδομεν παράδοξα σήμερον.”

Here Mark and Luke show some similarity: both of them use the same finite verb form, εἶδομεν, and attribute the following ὅτι clause (which includes εἶδομεν) to the onlookers’ fear and glory to God, while Matthew uses a participle verb form, ἰδόντες, thus emphasizing the idea of fear, and implying that the onlookers’ act of ‘seeing’ led to their subsequent fear. Despite these agreements, however, one rather important difference remains between the Markan and the Lukan verses. The Markan verse says that the thing that the crowds saw was something that had never happened in the past, thus insinuating that something foreign to this world is beginning to emerge in Jesus’ ministry; the Lukan verse says that what happened was something extraordinary or unexpected (paradox/ παράδοξα), yet viewing it still as part of things that belong to the arena of human history. Mark also makes clear that the onlookers’ response of wonder is related to their encounter with something they have never experienced before (cf. Is 52:15, though here in the Isaianic verse the newness refers to new concept of messiah).

²³⁹ Our basic assumption concerning the synoptic traditions is that Mark is the earliest one and Matthew and Luke had a literary dependence on Mark apart from that on Q, while they did not know each other, and that the redaction-critical study in Mark should be directed to the relation between pre-Markan tradition and his redaction of it, rather than to the synoptic comparisons (for further explanation on the topic, see T. Dwyer, *The Motif of Wonder in the Gospel of Mark*, JSNT Supp 128 (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1996), 14-16). The synoptic comparison, however, still serves our purpose because through looking at the way that Matthew and Luke departed from Mark, we may infer Mark’s original intention of each parallel passage.

3.3 Form-Critical Issues

Having in mind especially the latter point stated above, it is reasonable to argue, first, that form-critical issues involved in this pericope are closely related to our task to illuminate the verb εἶδον.

R Bultmann in his classical work, *The History of Synoptic Tradition*, proposes that Mk 2:6-10 is “a miracle story from the tradition that is used as a frame for the saying about the right to forgive sins.”²⁴⁰ He argues that while 2:1-12 is a composite of apothegm and miracle story, the main frame is that of an apothegm, which was further motivated by the miracle healing into the current shape of the passage. He goes on to suggest that 2:5b-10 is a secondary insertion, enumerating the following as proofs: the absence of the theme of faith which is dominant in the rest of the passage; vv. 11f is the conclusion organic to a miracle story; no real congruence between vv.11f and 5b-10, the opponents are not part of those who glorified God in v.12. He also says that the final redactor of the passage inserted “the sayings about the forgiveness of sins into the current passage which is originally a miracle story,” and that thus finally “the miracle story came into a frame that played a role of facilitating Jesus’ statement that ‘the Son of Man has the authority to forgive sins’” (10a). Then, he concludes that 2:1-12 was introduced into the current passage in Mark not because of its nature as a miracle story, but because of Jesus’ statement in v.10a. Furthermore, Bultmann, in light of his form-critical point of view, contends that 2:1-12 as a controversy discourse does not originate from Jesus himself. The controversy is rather a by-product of the early Christian community that tried to defend its status as a community of forgiven sinners, in face of the criticisms by the Jewish scribes that the early Christians are sinners who break the law.²⁴¹ For our study, what we can glean from scholars like Bultmann is that Mk 2:1-12 contains a literary formulation that was created by Mark and his community to defend its identity as a forgiven community, without contradicting the argument that v.10a is a key factor of the entire pericope.²⁴²

²⁴⁰ R. Bultmann, *The History of the Synoptic Tradition* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1963), 331.

²⁴¹ Bultmann, *History*, 14-17; cf. Nineham, *Saint Mark*, Pelican New Testament Commentary (Middlesex: Penguin, 1963), 91; A. J. Hultgren, *Jesus and His Adversaries: The Form and Function of the Conflict Stories in the Synoptic Tradition* (Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1979), 108. See also Guelich, *Mark 1-8:26*, 82-83; Taylor, *St. Mark*, 191.

²⁴² Guelich, in his conclusion to his history and redaction studies on this pericope, similarly proposes that Mark chose a pericope that originally consisted of healing (2:1-5, 11-12) with a specific statement

Also, we note clearly in Bultmann's reconstruction of the literary history that the issue of the integrity of the pericope is not just a matter of literary unity, but of a thematic one as well, between healing and forgiveness of sin.²⁴³

Contrary to Bultmann, many interpreters accept the integrity of the pericope on the basis of the inherent unity between healing and forgiveness of sin. C. E. B. Cranfield argues that there is a real and close connection between healing of sickness and forgiveness of sins in the OT tradition (Psa 1-3:3).²⁴⁴ Guelich also acknowledges that from the same view-point of the history of the tradition: "the common association of sin and sickness (cf. Psa 103:3) as well as the prophetic hope of healing and forgiveness indicating the age of salvation, all make the combination of healing and forgiveness within a single pericope quite understandable (cf. Jn 5:14)."²⁴⁵ G. Theissen also defends the integrity of the pericope, pointing out that even form-critical studies show that the statement of forgiveness (2:5b) corresponds formally to the assurance often found in healing narratives.²⁴⁶ Watts also endorses it: based on his belief of the influence of the Isaianic New Exodus motif on Mark, and his recognition of the simultaneous presence of the two motifs, the lame and the forgiveness of sins in Isaiah 33:23-24, Watts implicitly opts for the pericope's unity.²⁴⁷

In recognition of Watts' suggestion that "Mark's presentation of Jesus' healing ministry can be understood as evidence, not of some generalized 'messianic time, but particularly as 'iconic' indicators associated with the inauguration of the Isaianic new

about God's forgiveness (2:5b), and that an independent logion depicting the Son of man's authority to forgive sins (2:10) gave rise to the later expansion (2:6-10) of the healing story (*Mark 1-8:26*, 93.)

²⁴³ From a similar, yet slightly different, form-critical approach, Martin Dibelius makes a distinction between healing and forgiveness on the one hand, and the issue of the authority to forgive sins on the other. Thus in Dibelius' understanding, the argument of the pericope moves from Jesus' act of healing/forgiving to his right to heal/forgive (cf. *From Tradition to Gospel* [Cambridge: James Clarke, 1971], 43, 66, 67). J. Dewey rightly renders Dibelius' view and states that therefore "the controversy here is like the other healing controversies in Mark (3:1-6, 22-30) in that the controversy is over some aspect of Jesus' healing, acting unlawfully on the Sabbath, or acting by the power of Bezebul not God." (*Markan Public Debate*, 77.)

²⁴⁴ C. E. B. Cranfield, *The Gospel according to Saint Mark*. CGTC (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1974), 96.

²⁴⁵ Guelich, *Mark 1-8:26*, 82.

²⁴⁶ G. Theissen, *Miracle Stories of the Early Christian Tradition*. SNTW (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1983), 58, 164-65.

²⁴⁷ The two terms, 'the forgiveness of sins' and 'the paralytic' (the lame) occur in both Mk 2:1-12 and Isa 33:23 and 24. In the Isaianic text, "the restoration of Israel's fortunes under Yahweh as rightful king is described in terms of the forgiveness of sins which is specifically linked with the absence of sickness (v.24a). This new wholeness is such that even the lame would participate in the spoils of Yahweh's victory (33:23). Keeping this background in mind, Jesus' granting of forgiveness (Isa 33:24; 43:25; 44:22f) in association with the healing of the lame man (33:23) may be intended to testify to the breaking-in of Yahweh's reign expressed in Isaianic New Exodus terms (33:22; 52:7; Mk 1:15)." (Watts, *New Exodus*, 174)]

exodus,”²⁴⁸ I propose that the controversies over the nature of the pericope, or to put it more accurately, over its genesis, are not necessarily contradictory, forcing one to view it as either a story of miracle healing or a controversy discourse.

As Guelich agrees, the main concern of this pericope is to reveal the nature of Jesus’ healing ministry. Healing the sick and forgiving the sinners both point to one single issue, the eschatological character of Jesus’ ministry that placed him in conflict with the religious authorities.²⁴⁹ This nature of the pericope becomes clearer when we see it in the context of the broad literary unit, 2:1-3:6. Many scholars correctly recognize that 2:1-3:6 consists of five stories and is marked by their common motif of ‘controversy’ between Jesus and his opponents. As 2:20 and 3:6 imply, this literary unit is designed to show how the authority of Jesus was rejected by the Jewish authorities and to foreshadow his tragic fate in Jerusalem in the end, the crucifixion.²⁵⁰

Considering the above, the use of the verb εἶδον, specifically how it contributes to our understanding of the eschatological character of Jesus’ ministry of healing and forgiving is undeniably a crucial topic. My thesis here is that while only a few Markan exegetes pay attention to the presence of the verb εἶδον in Mk 2:5, many of them focusing instead on ‘faith,’ the verb exemplifies its special use to express Mark’s essentially apocalyptic-eschatological worldview or epistemology. Jesus’ extraordinary act of seeing the invisible object, faith in 2.5, as well as its proximity to words and motifs which are undoubtedly apocalyptic-eschatological (e.g. the word ‘faith’; Jesus’ statement of forgiveness; the dawning of the new age) all serve as ample textual evidence for my thesis.

Thus, our argument below will develop from consideration of the apocalyptic-eschatological nature of faith, the Son of Man’s authority to forgive sin, and the corresponding nature of the onlookers’ chorus in v. 12 as indicators of the dawning of the new age.

²⁴⁸ Ibid, 177.

²⁴⁹ Guelich, *Mark 1-8:26*, 82.

²⁵⁰ M. D. Hooker, *A Commentary on the Gospel according to St. Mark*, Black’s New Testament Commentaries (London: A&C Black, 1991), 85; J. Dewey, *Markan Public Debate*. 105-106, especially, his explanation about the theme of life vs. death in 121-122.

3.4 'Seeing' in Mark 2:5 in the History of Interpretations

For our discussion, categorizing the interpreters' interest in the verb εἶδον according to some discernable common ground can simplify things quite a bit. Mainly, there are three types of scholarship. First, interpreters like Cranfield pay no attention to the verb at all,²⁵¹ and we take this silence about the verb as reflecting their assumption that the objects of the verb are something physical as an object of sight, or that the verb simply shows Jesus' mysterious power to see invisible things. Second, some interpreters, on the other hand, regard the verb as expressing a general meaning of perception, knowledge, and understanding on the part of the viewer.²⁵² Obviously, in accordance with the literary context in which it occurs, the verb can have a wide range of meaning such as perception, knowledge, notice, etc. Many English Bible versions and translations of commentaries render it thus: "When Jesus *noticed* their trust."²⁵³ Third, there are a small group of interpreters who take it to mean a kind of spiritual insight in contrast to sense perception.²⁵⁴ These different types of interpretation of the verb can in turn be categorized into two broader boundaries: seeing the visible and seeing the invisible. It is then understandable why the exegetes either fail to pay attention to the presence of the verb or ascribe a mysterious dimension to Jesus' act of seeing.

Yet, as already pointed out, especially in the Introduction, the conventional distinction between physical sight and spiritual insight does not draw us closer to the peculiar nature of the verb as a literary and thematic factor that would help us to better understand the apocalyptic ingress of the eschatological reign of God. Furthermore, now that we recognize that the verb εἶδον is closely related to the words and places that are strategic and pivotal to the story, e.g. its proximity to terms related to faith, the kind of faith that leads to Jesus' immediate declaration of the forgiveness of sins, and its close links with the following debates over blasphemy and the onlookers' choir-like reaction to Jesus' acts and words after having eye-witnessed all these in the end of the story, we propose that more focus should be given to the term 'faith' and its nature. Forgiveness of sin is one of Mark's primary concerns in this pericope, not only

²⁵¹ Cf. Cranfield, *The Gospel According To Saint Mark*, 97.

²⁵² Cf. *TDNT*'s various interpretations of the verb.

²⁵³ *The Gospel of Mark*, Red Letter Edition The Jesus Seminar, (Polebridge Press, 1991), 66; Daryl D. Schmidt, *The Gospel of Mark*, The Scholars Bibles (Polebridge Press, 1990), 53.

²⁵⁴ Cf. Marcus, *Mark 1-8*, 216.

because the motif is repeatedly used but also, and more importantly, because it serves as a catalyst for the debate over blasphemy.

3.5 'Faith' in the Story of the Healing of the Paralytic

3.51. Preliminary Remarks

Mk 2:5 says that Jesus saw the faith of 'αὐτῶν' and said to the paralytic that his sins were forgiven. In this verse, one is immediately faced with two vexing questions: who are 'αὐτῶν'--does it refer only to the carriers of the paralytic's bed or to the carriers and the paralytic; if it is the former case, did Mark intend the faith to be an example of vicarious faith? Even though the faith of the carriers of the bed is noted as striking, the paralytic's faith should not be figured lightly into this formulation, since at a later point in the narrative the sick man is required to make a personal venture of faith by taking up his bed and walking.²⁵⁵ More importantly, the fact that the healing is prompted not by the paralytic's repentance, but by his friends' faith, cautions us not to make a naïve or casual connection between the sin and sickness. Ezra P. Gould also help us to better understand the relation between 'their' faith and 'his' faith, when he points out that the fact that it was 'their' faith, not simply 'his' faith, would indicate that the faith in v.5 is not "the psychological explication of the healing, through the reaction of the mind to the body, in which case 'their' faith would have nothing to do with it, but the spiritual condition of the miracle."²⁵⁶ Especially what he implies by "spiritual condition of the miracle" would show that the faith in v.5 should be interpreted otherwise. In following Marcus' interpretation, I suggest that John 9:2-3, the best commentary on this issue, refocusses our attention from such a connection to the witness that the blind man's healing will bear to the advent of God's eschatological grace.²⁵⁷ It in turn reinforces our quest for the nature of the faith that led to Jesus' forgiveness of sins and points to our main concern in this pericope, the

²⁵⁵ C. D. Marshall, *Faith as a Theme in Mark's Narrative*, SNTSMS 64 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), 87. Marshall offers a good explanation of the contributory nature of faith of the wider group, saying that faith is important for all who seek the operation of divine power, whether for themselves or for others.

²⁵⁶ Ezra P. Gould, *The Gospel According to St. Mark*, ICC series (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1982), 36-37.

nature of Jesus' act of seeing in v.5a which makes it clear that faith is the object of Jesus' act of seeing.

The problem we have, however, is that the pericope itself does not explicitly say anything about the origin of the friends' faith, although we might speculate that previously narrated healing and exorcism stories of Jesus provide the context for their pursuit of Jesus' help, whose relentless effort is in turn viewed by Jesus as faith.²⁵⁸ But to understand the true nature of faith that leads to forgiveness of sins, there must be some interpretive clues that do justice both to the linguistic dimension and to the compositional and theological macro-structure of Mark's gospel. The worse conjecture would be that the term 'faith' should be interpreted strictly in a personal or in a general way, an interpretation that is rendered regardless of its contextual and thematic flow of the narrative. Taylor contends that the faith in v.5 is their confident trust in Jesus' healing power.²⁵⁹ Some interpret it as an attitude expressed in a specific action demonstrated to solicit Jesus' help.²⁶⁰ Although trying to render 'faith' in v.5 in its literary context, Sharyn E. Dowd specifically points to the fact that the four men who bring the paralytic are part of the crowd who gathered in Capernaum (2:1-3) because of Jesus' reputation as a healer and an exorcist around Capernaum and Galilee (1:21-45). Jesus as a miracle-worker²⁶¹ is the driving force behind the people's attitude and action. Thus for Dowd the faith in v.5 originates from people's awareness of Jesus' reputation as a miracle-worker. For S. Kuthirakkattel also πίστις in Mark, used invariably in the context of miracles, functions to reveal Mark's attempt to emphasize the necessity of the faith of a petitioner in bringing about a miracle; Mark portrays the bold expediency of the carriers of the bed both as a token of their strong conviction in Jesus' power to heal, as an expression of their faith.²⁶² R.A. Cole also argues that "their faith shows its reality by its very obstinacy and stubbornness in refusing to give up hope." Then, for Cole "their faith" is equivalent to their relentless effort to seek Jesus in hope of being graced by his healing power.²⁶³

²⁵⁷ Marcus, *Mark 1-8*, 221.

²⁵⁸ Cf. Guelich, *Mark 1-8:26*, 85.

²⁵⁹ Taylor, *St. Mark*, 194; cf. Pesch, *Das Markusevangelium* 1:158.

²⁶⁰ Cf. Guelich, *Mark 1-8:26*, 85.

²⁶¹ Sharyn E. Dowd, *Prayer, Power, and The Problem of Suffering*, SBLDS 105 (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1988), 108.

²⁶² Cf. Scaria Kuthirakkattel, *The Beginning of Jesus' Ministry According to Mark's Gospel (1:14-3:6): A Redaction Critical Study*, Analecta Biblica 123 (Rome, 1990), 186-87.

²⁶³ R. A. Cole, *The Gospel according to St. Mark: An Introduction and Commentary*, Tyndale NT Commentaries (Eerdmans, 1961), 65.

The term, faith, however, does not refer to any personal kind of trust in Jesus' healing power per se, and not in the least an attitude which should be interpreted psychologically. Even R. Bultmann in his form-critical analysis makes the same point that the faith in the story is intended to direct attention to the miracle works in such a way that any psychological interest in the sick man and his friends is as far removed as it is in the story of the woman with an issue of blood.²⁶⁴ Gnllka also rightly warns us that "Dies darf nicht psychologisch interpretiert werden, als sei der Wundertäter in der Wirksamkeit seines Tuns von diesem Glauben abhängig. Vielmehr haben wir hier ein durchgängiges Anliegen dieser Überlieferung vor uns."²⁶⁵ The faith here is a paradigmatic recognition and an acceptance of the fact that God's eschatological, kingly rule began to take shape in Jesus, especially in his identity and role as an eschatological Son of Man, whose authority to forgive sins has been prophesied long before and finally manifested in and through him.

3.52 'Faith' in the Literary Context of Mk 2:1-12

In order to anchor this proposal firmly, we need to take a closer look at the word 'faith' in the context of the macro compositional and theological structure of the Gospel, especially in the light of 'belief' in 1:15. In fact, the word 'faith' appears here for the first time since the verbal form of the word appeared in Jesus' programmatic announcement of the coming of the kingdom of God in 1:15. Thus it is only reasonable to assume that Mark signals a thematic relation of the word to the Jesus' proclamation of the gospel in 1:15. In addition to this connection among the word group of πίστις-πιστεύω, other factors, especially verbal and thematic connections between the pericope and the previous story in Mark 1, strengthen the argument. There are two verbal and thematic connections between them: one is ἐξουσία between 2:10 and 1:22 and 27; the other πίστις in 2:5 and 1:15. Furthermore 2:12 has some resonance with "fulfilled time" in 1:14 and the "new teaching" in 1:27.

2:1-12 centers on the ἐξουσία of Jesus to forgive sins in 2:10, as agreed among the Markan interpreters, and the word draws us back to 1:22 and 27, ἦν γὰρ διδάσ-

²⁶⁴ R. Bultmann, *The History*, 212.

²⁶⁵ Gnllka, *Das Evangelium*, I, p.99.

κων αὐτοὺς ὡς ἐξουσίαν ἔχων and διδαχὴ καινὴ κατ' ἐξουσίαν, respectively.²⁶⁶ The reaction of wonder is found in both passages. Other textual connections that should be noted are: ἰδὼν ὁ Ἰησοῦς τὴν πίστιν αὐτῶν which draws one back to the summons to repentance and faith for the advent of the kingdom in 1:15, the time element in οὕτως οὐδέποτε εἶδομεν of 2:12 which is linked to the theme of “fulfilled time” of 1:14 and of “new teaching” of 1:27, and the forgiveness of sins by Jesus in 2:5 which is reminiscent of the forgiveness preached by John in 1:4-5. Also parallel features such as τινες τῶν γραμματέων in v.6 and οὐχ ὡς οἱ γραμματεῖς in 1:22, Τί οὗτος οὕτως λαλεῖ in 2:7 and Τί ἐστὶν τοῦτο in 1:27 are also worth noting. The combination of these elements and connections to 1:21-28 make clear this pericope's revelation of the breaking-in of the kingdom of God in Jesus' authority to forgive and heal. In Mark's structural formulation, the ἐξουσία of Jesus is a sign that “Gottes Herrschaft sich durchzusetzen beginnt.”²⁶⁷ In addition, as Goppelt points out, in the light of God's forgiveness testified in the OT (2 Sam 12:13, Is 44:22), this story leads us to conclude that in the person of Jesus it was God who was becoming involved with people and now establishing the eschatological rule.²⁶⁸

Watts agrees with us, when he aptly points out that “it is noteworthy that this (2:1-12) constitutes the first occurrence of the πίστις-πιστεύω word group since Jesus' programmatic announcement of the coming of the kingdom ‘μετανοεῖτε καὶ πιστεύετε’ (1:14f).”²⁶⁹ Gnllka, in his questioning if the faith in 2:5 is described as full or adequate, answers positively, “weil sie christologischen Sinn hat und ihre Intention gerade darin liegt, den Glauben an Jesus zu wecken oder zu erklären.”²⁷⁰ His view, as well as ours, is that the faith in v.5 should be understood christologically, as being paradigmatic for true faith in the proclamation about Jesus.

Thus, the faith in v.2:5 should be viewed in connection with 1:15 and accordingly be regarded as repentant faith. To further drive the point home, the grounds for the above argument are as follows: the ‘faith’ in 2:5 is the first appearance of the term, since it is mentioned in 1:15, signalling to the reader the verbal and thematic connection between the two; the forgiveness of sins in 2:5 has

²⁶⁶ Timothy Dwyer, *The Motif of Wonder*, 128, 99; cf. Kertelge, *Die Wunder Jesu im Markusevangelium*, (Munich: Kosel, 1970, 82).

²⁶⁷ Gnllka, *Das Evangelium I*, 102.

²⁶⁸ L. Goppelt, *Theology of the NT*, I (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1981-1982) 132; W. Lane, *The Gospel of Mark*, 99; cf. Dwyer, *Wonder*, 99.

²⁶⁹ Watts, *New Exodus*, 174; cf. Dwyer, *Wonder*, 99f.

²⁷⁰ Gnllka, *Das Evangelium*, I, 99.

resonance with Jesus' proclamation of repentance to prepare for the coming of the kingdom in 1:15. Repentance and forgiveness are the two sides of the same coin.

3.53 'Faith' in the Light of the 'Forgiveness of Sins' and the 'Gospel' in Mk 1:1-3

Furthermore, the faith in 2:5 can be read in light of the forgiveness of sins as it is spoken by the prophet Isaiah in his prophetic oracles about the gospel or good news.²⁷¹ It is interesting to note that in the Hebrew text and the LXX of the Old Testament, the verbal form of εὐαγγέλιον (εὐαγγελίζω/ בשר) occurs almost twice as often in Isaianic New Exodus contexts as in the rest of the O.T.²⁷² What is important to notice here is that Isa 43, which is a continuation of the prophetic oracles about the New Exodus the Lord will bring to his people, and which is eminently compared to the old exodus that Yahweh orchestrated, speaks of something the Lord is about to spring on earth, something that is expected to be seen by many (cf. v.19). In v.25, in particular, the Lord is described as the one who blots out transgressions and remembers them no more. More importantly, our attention should be drawn to Isa 40 since Isa 40:3 is actually quoted in Mk 1:3, not to mention the facts that Isa 40:2 specifically speaks of the sins of the people having been paid for, and in Isa 40:9, the term, εὐαγγέλιον, occurs twice.

Clearly 'the gospel' in Mk 1:1 is related thematically and philologically and linguistically to the Gospel, that is, the good news about ransoming of sins that Isaiah prophesied in 40: 2. According to Stuhlmacher, Isa 40:9 is one of the source verses for the notion of εὐαγγέλιον.²⁷³ Furthermore, as its thematic and contextual flow clearly indicates, Isa 40:9 is a continuation of the section's opening oracle, "comfort my people...and speak tenderly to Jerusalem... and proclaim.... that her sin has been paid for" (vv. 1-2). The forgiveness of sins in the Isaianic context is thus described as part of the good news that 40:9 speaks of. It should be also noted that the admonition to prepare a way in v. 3, which is explicitly repeated in Mark 1:2-3, is balanced by the announcement of Yahweh's powerful presence in v. 10a, to be paralleled later by Jesus' proclamation in Mk 1:15 that the Kingdom of God, God's kingly power, in

²⁷¹ For 'the forgiveness of sins' and its analogous notions in Isaiah, see the following Isaianic passages: 33:24; 43:25; 44:22; 55:7; cf. also 40:2.

²⁷² Cf. Friedrich, "εὐαγγέλιον," *TDNT* 2, 707-10; Watts, *New Exodus*, 96.

²⁷³ P. Stuhlmacher, *Die paulinische Evangelium*, vol. 1, Vorgeschichte, FRLANT 95 (Gottingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1968), 119-120; cf. J. Marcus, *The Way*, 19.

other words, is imminent. The juxtaposition of the Markan and Isaianic texts can gain its strength when we remember the fact that the Targum on Isa 40:9 renders "Behold your God" as "the kingly power of your God has been revealed."²⁷⁴

In Mark, the gospel's inclusion of the forgiveness of sins forms a firm foundation for the intimate relation between the two texts, as the opening verses of the Gospel explicitly demonstrate. Specifically the relation between the forgiveness of sins and the gospel can be further reinforced, when we look at the way the opening verses of Mark are composed. Then it leads us to some important questions concerning these verses: whether we should place a full stop at the end of verse 1 or at the end of verse 3; does the opening verse serve as the title for the whole Gospel; what is role of the Isaianic quotations here, for showing the fulfilment of the prophecy about a voice in the wilderness, or for reminding us of the gospel mentioned in the opening? All of these questions are critical for a fuller understanding of the Gospel of Mark, especially in light of Isaianic prophecy regarding the New Exodus. Furthermore, they are also closely bound with our inquiry concerning the nature of the forgiveness of sins, declared first by John's preaching about repentance and forgiveness in Mk 1:4, then by Jesus in Mk 2:5.

A christological and theocentric reading of the gospel can lead us to a view that John preached not the repentance in baptism, but baptism of repentance, that is, a baptism as proclaimed so that this divine gift may lead to repentance. In other words, baptism here is not contingent upon an individual's act of repentance, but rather baptism as freely bestowed on someone will lead him to repentance. For scholars like Joel Marcus and Lohmeyer the baptism is "an eschatological sacrament," through which forgiveness of sins is granted.²⁷⁵ John's baptism is, then, an essential part of the eschatological blessings that Jesus bestows through the Way of the Lord as was prophesied by Isaiah and is fulfilled through Jesus' public ministry.

For John Riches, in contrast, John's baptism is more of a preparatory stage on the part of the recipients of the baptism to reorient their hearts to receive the new world that Jesus brings. The co-existence of alternative and opposed eschatologies in the Gospel (forensic and apocalyptic modes of eschatology) that Riches observes, on the one hand, views the account of Jesus' temptation and the narrative of exorcisms in the opening of the Gospel as a story of the vanquishing of the powers of darkness,

²⁷⁴ Cf. Marcus, *The Way*, 19-20.

resulting in an apocalyptic mode of eschatology. On the other hand, John's announcement of the Way of the Lord and Jesus' own echoing of John's proclamation for repentance in v.15 are unmistakably reminiscent of the Isaianic story of Israel's punishment for sin in exile, as Riches contends. Israel's return after its repentance thus forms a story of restoring of God's people back to their former glory after the harsh discipline and payment of their sins; Riches speaks of this as a forensic mode of eschatology. Both John's baptism and Jesus' proclamation accordingly, Riches argues, should be interpreted to mean to drive home the message that the essential struggle here is not about the destruction of the satanic kingdom, but about the hearts and minds of the people.²⁷⁶

Regarding John's baptism, then, the natural question is this: is it an anthropocentric act or a theocentric one? In other words, is John's baptism a simple act of call to repent for God's coming judgment or a sign of God's act of bestowing his eschatological pardoning? A crucial point surrounding the syntactical function of καθώς in v.2 can shed some light on the nature of John's baptism. As stated earlier, the opening verse of Mark is controversial for its scope of coverage as well as for its function: does it serve as the title for the whole book, or as the prologue to the first thirteen or fifteen verses of the Gospel? Among Markan scholars the fact that ἀρχή is anarthrous and the verse has no verb leads them to opt for the former. Yet the fact that Mark does have some verbless sentences [1:3, 1:11, 13:8] fails to make 1:1 unique.²⁷⁷ More importantly, our attention should be drawn to the way καθώς is used in the New Testament as well as in the Gospel itself. As Guelich shows, καθώς γέγραπται in its Jewish occurrences as well as in its abundant NT usages, is transitional in function, bridging a previously mentioned fact or event and the OT citation that follows and confirms it.²⁷⁸ It is particularly noticeable that at the very beginning of 1QS 8:14 a corresponding formula occurs to link the previous verse with a biblical quotation that immediately follows, Isa 40:3 which is cited verbatim in Mk 1:2-3. Furthermore, all the occurrences of the phrase in Mark clearly show that they are all subordinated to

²⁷⁵ J. Marcus, *The Way*, 31.

²⁷⁶ J. Riches, "Conflicting Mythologies: Mythical Narrative in the Gospel of Mark," *JSNT* 84 (2001), 40-41.

²⁷⁷ Cf. J. K. Elliott, "Mark and The Teaching of Jesus: An Examination of Logos and Euaggelion," Supplement to *Novum Testamentum*. 89, *Sayings of Jesus: Canonical and Non-Canonical. Essays in Honor of Tjitze Baarda*, eds. William L. Petersen, John S. Vos, Klenk J. De Jonge (E. J. Brill, 1997), 44.

²⁷⁸ R. Guelich, "The Beginning of the Gospel: Mark 1:1-15," *BR* 27, 6.

the preceding main clauses (cf. 4:33, 9:13, 11:6, 14:6, 21, 15:8, 16:7). These observations help us to conclude that a full stop shouldn't be placed at the end of the verse 1, preventing our reading 1:1 as a title. Rather, the full stop should be placed at the end of v.3, making vv.1-3 as a unit. J. K Elliott also opts for this reading of the first three verses of Mark 1 and paraphrases vv.1-3 as follows: "The beginning of the good news in the life of Jesus Christ is what is written in Isaiah...." In this context ἀρχή is the first of a series and the beginning of the εὐαγγέλιον was the coming of John; more importantly, the first three verses lead up to v.4 but are not part of it, as they present Mark the editor speaking in the language of the post-Easter Christian use of εὐαγγέλιον; the following verses about John reveal Mark the narrator speaking in the language of pre-Easter setting of the events.²⁷⁹

If the εὐαγγέλιον in Mk 1:1 is read in the context of the gospel related to the forgiveness of sin, it might be wiser to read John's preaching of the forgiveness of sin in light of the Isaianic Gospel. This contextual reading of the Isaian verses, an intertextuality between the verses within the Isa 40, is also supported by Snodgrass' history of religions reading of Isa 40:3 quoted in Mk 1:3. Snodgrass observes that a context for understanding the Old Testament citations in Mk 1:2-3 is desperately needed in order not to be puzzled by the lack of identities of the speaker, addressee, and the messenger; such a context should be found in the consistent tendency of Jewish interpreters to view Isa 40:1-5 as a promise of eschatological comfort that the exiled people will return at the end of days, being accompanied by a spiritual renewal on the cosmic level.²⁸⁰

3.54 'Faith' in the Light of the Isaianic Gospel

All these factors stated above prompt us to interpret the forgiveness of sin, which is certainly interwoven with John's call to baptism of repentance in Mark's first few verses, in light of the gospel the prophet Isaiah prophesied.

Watts, in his effort to make a philological and thematic connection between the gospel in Mk 1:1 and the kerygmatic nature of Jesus' statement in Mk 1:15, rightly draws our attention to *Psalms of Solomon* 11, which, according to him, consists of a collage of New Exodus imageries drawn from Isaiah 40-66. It reads:

²⁷⁹ K. Elliott, "Mark and The Teaching of Jesus: An Examination of Logos and Euaggelion," 44.

κηρύξατε ἐν Ἱερουσαλὴμ φωνήν εὐαγγελιζόμενου. The juxtaposition of κηρύξ- and εὐαγγελ- coincides with the terminology used in Mark 1:15: ..ἦλθεν ὁ Ἰησοῦς... κηρύσσων τὸ εὐαγγέλιον τοῦ θεοῦ.²⁸¹ Watts rightfully argues that Jesus' proclamation of the dawning of God's rule (Mk 1:15) appears to have been formulated in the light of מְבַשֵּׂר—tradition of Isaiah 52:7 and 61:1f, and as Jesus' words and deeds became the content of the verb εὐαγγελίζω, the substantive seems to have become similarly construed (Mk 1:1). Watts then concludes that "Mark's explicit identification of the ἀρχὴ τοῦ εὐαγγελίου Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ with Isaiah's New Exodus connects the gospel to its OT Jewish roots."²⁸²

B. Chilton also joins the group of scholars who interpret Mk 1:15 against the Isaianic background. In his study of 1:15, he indicates that Targum Isaiah offers the closest linguistic and textual background to this verse: Targum Isa. 60:22(זמן: a determined time: cf. LXX Isa 60:22: καιρόν) should serve as the background text for Mark's 'καιρός' while Targum Isa. 60:20 (מלשי: days completed; cf. the LXX text: ἀναπληρώθησονται) is a parallel text to Mark's 'πληρω.'²⁸³ As Edward P. Meadors recognizes, the proximity between these two verses and between them and Isa 61:1, which speaks of the proclamation of the gospel (εὐαγγελίσασθαι/ לְבַשֵּׂר), immediately following 60:22, is striking. As Meadors endorses what Chilton concludes from his study, the innovative usage of scriptural language in Mk 1:15 purports to proclaim God's dynamic presence in the most effective way possible.²⁸⁴

The validity of reading faith 2:5 in the light of the gospel in 1:15, and then tracing the connection of 1:15 to the perspective of the gospel in Mark's opening verse, whose tie to the Isaianic gospel has been legitimized, is not hard to accept then.

²⁸⁰ K. R. Snodgrass, "Streams of Tradition Emerging from Isaiah 40:1-5 and Their adaptation in the New Testament," *JSNT* 8 (1980), 31-35.

²⁸¹ Watts, *New Exodus*, 98. Especially in relation to Is. 60:3 as well as Is. 52:7, Watts also draws on the Qumran texts (*1QH* 18:14, *11Qmelch*) and later rabbinic texts (*Pereq ha-Shalom* 13[59b]; *Midr. Ps.* 147:1).

²⁸² Watts, *New Exodus*, 98-99.

²⁸³ B. Chilton, *God in Strength: Jesus' Announcement of the Kingdom*. Studien Zum Neuten Testament und Seiner Umwelt. Serie B, Teil 1 (Freistadt: Ploch, 1970), 85-89

²⁸⁴ Edward P. Meadors, *Jesus the Messianic Herald of Salvation*, WUNT:2; 72. (Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr [Paul Siebeck], 1995), 251; Chilton, *God in Strength*, 95.

3.55 'Faith' in the Light of the New Testament Proclamation of the 'Gospel'

Reading the 'faith' in 2:5 in light of the gospel preached by Jesus in 1:15 can be further illuminated by other NT passages, especially Pauline ones, crucial in view of the missionary context of the early Church, in which the three terms, 'πιστεύειν,' 'κηρύσσω,' and 'εὐαγγέλιον' appear side by side.²⁸⁵ Regarding πιστεύειν in the NT writings, some observations are important to note: it is accompanied with a personal object (generally used for God and Christ) in the dative case; or it is used with prepositions such as εἰς and ἐπὶ or without any object expressed at all.²⁸⁶ The πιστεύειν with ἐν followed by dative appears Jn 3:15 and Eph 1:13. BDF suggests that εἰς can be replaced with ἐν in a metaphorical sense, especially in the case where a Hebrew כִּי is translated by εἰς (see BDF, §206).²⁸⁷ In fact there are some occasions in the LXX where πιστεύειν ἐν is a literal rendering of the Hebrew כִּי יִמְנָן: Jer 12:6; Dan 6:24; Ps 77:22; 105:12. Eph 1:13 also deserves our attention for several reasons. First of all, there appears the exact same construction that we see in Mk 1:15 (πιστεύετε ἐν τῷ εὐαγγελίῳ): 'τὸ εὐαγγέλιον ..., ἐν ᾧ καὶ πιστεύσαντες' in which τὸ εὐαγγέλιον is the clear antecedent of the relative pronoun ᾧ.²⁸⁸ Secondly, most occurrences of εὐαγγέλιον in the NT out of 76 times in total, are found in the Pauline

²⁸⁵ The study on the relationship between Mark and Paul is much needed and thus demanding, yet seems to be conative with unsatisfactory results even among the NT scholars which show interests and concerns with possible influence of Paul on Mark's shape of his Gospel. For a specific concern with the crucifixion of Jesus in Paul and Mark, see C. Clifton Black, "Christ Crucified in Paul and in Mark: Reflections on an Intracanonial Conversation," *Theology & Ethics in Paul and His Interpreters. Essays in Honor of Paul Furnish*, eds. Eugene H. Lovering Jr. and Jerry L. Sumney (Abingdon Press, 1996). And for a general observation on the rapport between Paul and Mark, Joel Marcus, "Mark-Interpreter of Paul," *NTS* 46 (2000), 473-487.

²⁸⁶ Cf. BAGD, 661, especially 2. a. α, β, γ, δ and 2 b.

²⁸⁷ Of course, a better answer for the use of ἐν after πιστεύων in Jn 3:15 would be that ἐν is related not to the preceding participle πιστεύων but to the following clause ἔχη ζωὴν αἰώνιον, intending to locate the place of the eternal life, thus meaning to say, 'in Christ the ones believing may have eternal life.' This answer would satisfy the principle of the support from the better manuscripts in the textual criticism and better explicate the parallel Johannine usage which is found in Jn 5:39: "δοκεῖτε ἐν αὐταῖς ζωὴν αἰώνιον ἔχειν" (cf. Gordon D. Fee, *New Testament Exegesis: A Handbook for Students and Pastors*, [the Westminster Press, 1983], 54-58).

²⁸⁸ There is a debate as to what the antecedent of the relative pronoun ᾧ is: grammatically it can be the gospel ('in it' / cf. NEB) or Christ ('in him' / cf. RSV). A syntactical consideration could answer this question: where do you draw a parallel?; either a parallel between ἐν ᾧ καὶ ἐκληρώθημεν προορισθέντες in v. 11a and ἐν ᾧ καὶ ὑμεῖς ἀκούσαντες τὸν λόγον in v. 13a, or a parallel between ἐν ᾧ καὶ ὑμεῖς ἀκούσαντες τὸν λόγον in v. 13a and ἐν ᾧ καὶ πιστεύσαντες ἐσφραγίσθητε in v. 13b. Here we need to take a note of the shift made on the verbal subjects from 1st plural pronoun (ἐκληρώθημεν/ Jews) to 2nd plural pronoun (ὑμεῖς / you, Gentiles), which occurs between vv. 11-12 and vv. 13-14. Thus it strongly suggests that we draw a parallel between ἐν ᾧ καὶ ἐκληρώθημεν προορισθέντες in v. 11a and

epistles, and seven are in Mark (1:1, 14, 15; 8:35; 10:29; 13:10; 14:9, plus one in the longer ending of 16:15). In addition to the frequency noted above, we must take into account some striking similarity between Paul and Mark in presenting the term εὐαγγέλιον as a central aspect of their theology (e.g. Mk 1:1, 14-15; Gal 1:6-9; Rom 1:16-17).²⁸⁹ As Kuthirakkattel points out, πιστεύειν ἐν clearly corresponds to the Pauline ἐν ᾧ; Kuthirakkattel even contends that in the composition of Mk 1:14-15 the evangelist has adopted and integrated terms (κηρύσσειν and εὐαγγέλιον) and phraseology (μετανοεῖτε ... πιστεύετε) from the missionary theology of the early Church, especially by relying on the Pauline vocabulary. Paul works with a rich vocabulary to signify the proclamation of the Gospel and its concordant acceptance, and πιστεύειν and κηρύσσειν are one of the most frequently used terms to denote this correlation, and the specific purpose and the ultimate goal of preaching the Gospel is to impregnate faith. If we go along with Kuthirakkattel's conclusion, Mark adopts and integrates the correlation between κηρύσσειν τὸ εὐαγγέλιον and πιστεύειν current in Paul in his shaping of Mk 1:14-15, especially in accordance with the Pauline thinking and preaching trajectory that tends to personify τὸ εὐαγγέλιον and to make it an object of faith, the faith of the Gospel.²⁹⁰ Valuable and pertinent as Kuthirakkattel's observation is, he tends to minimize the importance of his findings into a simple proof that πιστεύετε ἐν τῷ εὐαγγελίῳ in Mk 1:15 is Jesus' call for his followers to make a personal relationship with him, urging them to adhere to him in faith. 'Faith' and 'gospel' mentioned in Mk 1:15, as demonstrated through out our study, reach much farther than these conditions. Mk 1:14-15 plays a programmatic and paradigmatic role in Mark's unfolding of the drama of God's eschatological salvation, signalling both the dawning of the new eon after the long delayed end of the old age; this is clearly implied in the previous story of Jesus' temptation by Satan (vv.12-13) as well as by the apocalyptic images in vv.14-15 themselves. The verses proclaim a gracious divine promise that Mark's readers now stand at a cosmic juncture and begin to enter God's new rule and dominion.²⁹¹

ἐν ᾧ καὶ ὑμεῖς ἀκούσαντες τὸν λόγον in v. 13a. Then the antecedent of the relative pronoun ᾧ in v.13b is the gospel.

²⁸⁹ Cf. K. Elliott, "Mark and The Teaching of Jesus," 41; J. Marcus, "Mark-Interpreter of Paul," 475.

²⁹⁰ Kuthirakkattel, *The Beginning of Jesus' Ministry*, 100-101. He enumerates as examples for the correlation Rom 10:8, 14-15; 1 Cor 15:11; 2 Cor 1:19-20, and Col 1:23, 1 Thess 2:9, 13, 1 Cor 15:1-2 as examples for a correlation between the proclamation and faith in Jesus Christ.

²⁹¹ For such an apocalyptic eschatological interpretation of the passage, see Marcus, *Mark 1-8*, 173-176.

3.56 Concluding Remarks

A brief recapitulation of the argument above should make this clear: the faith in the gospel in Mk 1:15, in its thematic connection with the forgiveness of sins, parallels the Isaianic gospel and the faith and forgiveness in Mk 2:5. Considering the gospel proclaimed in the opening verse of Mark's Gospel, first in the light of the Isaianic gospel spoken in Is 40:2 (the forgiveness of sins) and 9 (the good news) respectively, and then in the light of Mark's own presentation of Jesus' ministry in terms of faith in the gospel that Jesus began to preach, it is clear that the themes of the forgiveness of sins, the gospel, and the faith are intermingled into a thematic whole. In this thematic formulation, faith should be interpreted as an eschatological event that prompts the recognition of the gospel of forgiveness of sins in the coming of the new age.

The apocalyptic nature of the verb πιστεύειν in 1:15 becomes readily intelligible when we consider Joel Marcus' exposition of the expression, "the time has been fulfilled." Observing the parallelism between the first main clause ("the time has been fulfilled") and the second one ("the kingdom of God has drawn near"), Marcus contends that while the first imperative in v.15, the exhortation to repent, is primarily a call to turn away from what lies in the past, the 2nd imperative "looks to the future," as "the good news must be *believed* because it announces a dawning reality, one that has not yet arrived in power."²⁹² The Kingdom of God is realized in power in Jesus in the Gospel of Mark, hence is a dawning reality, but one that has yet to come to its full circle, hence the apocalyptic nature of the reality.

The apocalyptic nature of what Mk 1:15 talks about is also validated by the prominently apocalyptic resonance we hear in the previous passage, 9-13, portraying the baptism of Jesus and the temptation in the wilderness. Our earlier discussion of Mk 1:10-11 successfully showed that the heaven being torn apart and the Spirit coming down was a clear manifestation of the new age dawning through Jesus' public ministry. The temptation in the wilderness is also replete with apocalyptic images, as unanimously agreed among Markan scholars. Accordingly, as Marcus points out, without 1:9-13 as a stepping-stone for 1:15, "one might get the impression that the

²⁹² J. Marcus, "The Time Has Been Fulfilled! (Mark 1:15)," in *Apocalyptic And The New Testament*, eds., Joel Marcus and Marion L. Soards, JSNTSup. 24, 52.

filling up of the eschatological measure was an immanent process; with it, the initiative of God in accomplishing this fulfilment is emphasized.”²⁹³

More importantly, the news that the Kingdom has come in Jesus was the gospel in Mark, and believing in the gospel requires an insight on the part of the hearers that penetrates into the world order, now fundamentally reshaped by Jesus’ kingly rule over his creation and yet still awaiting its final consummation.

3.6 ‘Seeing’ in the light of the Forgiveness of Sin

3.61 Preliminary Remarks

The apocalyptic-eschatological nature of Jesus’ act of seeing in v.5 can gain strength from examining the theme of the forgiveness of sin in the same vein. In v. 5 the verb εἶδον is used to refer to Jesus’ act of seeing the faith of the friends of the paralytic. Upon “seeing” the faith, Jesus declares that the paralytic’s sins are forgiven, and it leads to the conflict with the Jewish scribes and to the debate over blasphemy. The nature of Jesus’ forgiveness of sins, as it is related to Jesus’ act of seeing the faith, is undoubtedly an important issue for our study.

The statement of the forgiveness of sins also appears in v.10 and Markan scholars have debated over the two occurrences of the statement, trying to decide whether the two occurrences should be dealt with under the same scope of interpretation. The statement in v.5b is generally taken to refer to God’s forgiveness, as might be indicated by the use of passive form of the verb, which is called divine passive. Here, then, Jesus might be understood as a figure through whom God’s forgiveness is mediated. Along this line of thought, the rationale for Jesus’ bringing up the issue of the forgiveness at this point would be that he wanted to show that the man’s physical plight is inherently related to his spiritual corruption, and that his spiritual renewal thus is a primary and indispensable condition of physical healing. Scholars like Taylor formulate from these observations a contention that Jesus’ declaratory statement was therapeutic in intention.²⁹⁴

²⁹³ Marcus, “The Time,” 65, n.46.

²⁹⁴ Taylor, *The Gospel According to St. Mark*, 195. Joel Marcus in Appendix: The Son of Man in his Anchor Bible commentary succinctly traces the trajectories of the development of the son of man idea

We would acknowledge that Jesus' statement of v.5 in the stage of the pre-Markan tradition might be meant to show an affinity between sins and sickness, and the forgiveness and healing, and also to teach that the paralytic trusted in God's power to forgive his sin and to heal him.²⁹⁵ Yet more importantly we should point out that Mark's current form of his tradition, clearly indicated by textual evidences such as the smooth connection between v.5a and v.11, and the abrupt appearance of the scribes in the scene in v.6, resists this type of interpretation. More specifically, the verb ἀφίενται is in the present indicative passive form and, functioning as an aorist present, shows a punctiliar act taking place.²⁹⁶ In other words, it may denote that the sins were forgiven at the very moment Jesus spoke the pardoning statement. Rather than being a divine passive, then, it presents a declarative statement on Jesus' own authority.²⁹⁷ These evidences reveal Mark's intention to present the forgiveness of sins in v.5b as bestowed by Jesus himself. Thus, Jesus' statement in v.5, immediately following the accusation of blasphemy by the Jewish scribes, is referring to his own forgiveness of sins. Otherwise, the following reasoning by the scribes and the blasphemy controversy would not make sense at all. Walter Riggans also points out that the scribes accuse Jesus of blasphemy in front of all those witnesses, thereby suggesting that people generally also sensed that Jesus had said something provocative in the extreme.²⁹⁸

Furthermore, there are textual evidences that show that the second occurrence of the forgiveness of Jesus in v.10 is also referring to Jesus' own forgiveness. The verse's literary context is in line with its linguistic statistics which shows that the title, the son of man, occurs almost exclusively in the Gospels, where, with one exception of a Johannine one (cf. Jn 12:34), it always appears on the lips of Jesus. Thus, though in the Synoptics the title is never expounded in any way, it is always assumed that Jesus' audience understands perfectly what he means by this title, Son of Man.²⁹⁹

in the biblical and extra-canonical texts. He correctly surmises that "if the Enochic Son of Man had not existed, it would have been necessary to invent him to explain the Son of Man sayings in the Gospels" (*Mark 1-8*, 530)

²⁹⁵ Marcus, *Mark 1-8*, 221-222.

²⁹⁶ Cf. Blass-Debrunner-Funk, *A Greek Grammar of the N T and Other Early Christian Literature*, §320 (Aoristic Present).

²⁹⁷ Cf. S. Kuthirakkattel, *the Beginning of Jesus' Ministry*, 187.

²⁹⁸ Walter Riggans, "Jesus and ----Two short notes," *Themelios* 16, No.2 Jan-Feb (1991), 15.

²⁹⁹ J. Marcus, *Mark 1-8*, 529; cf. G. Vermes, "The Use of BR NS/BR 'NS in Jewish Aramaic," in M. Black, *An Aramaic Approach to the Gospels and Acts*, 3rd ed. (Oxford: Clarendon), 310.

In addition to the fact that the forgiveness of sins stated in both v.5a and v.10 refers to Jesus' own, form-critical studies on this pericope convincingly argue that vv.5a-10 is a literary unit, composed and intercalated, presumably by Mark, into the traditional miracle healing story of the paralytic. While endorsing this nature of the verses, Gnllka goes further to highlight their role played in the current shape of the pericope: "Sie machen aus der Wundergeschichte ein Apoftegma, bei dem das Wunder zur Illustration des apoftegmatischen Menschensohnlogions wird,.."³⁰⁰ These textual evidences and expert's findings offer a consistent reading of the two occurrences of the statement; more importantly, we are able to consider Jesus' act of seeing, and the theme of faith in v.5a, specifically in the light of Jesus' authority to forgive sins on this earth, as stated in v.10.

3.62 The Son of Man's Authority to Forgive Sins in 2:10

3.621 Preliminary Remarks

V.10 begins with the *ἵνα* clause, which is a continuation of Jesus' rhetorical question of 2:9, as the context clearly shows and as largely agreed by the interpreters,³⁰¹ rather than an imperative geared to Mark's readers.³⁰² Marcus, siding with the former, points out the probability of the clause being modelled after the repeated instance of "so that you may know" (LXX *ἵνα εἰδῆς*) in the Exodus narratives about Moses' confrontation with Pharaoh (Exod 7:17; 8:10, 22; 9:14; 10:2). He singles out Exodus 9:14 and 8:22, in particular, to draw on their context of God's sovereign incommensurability, and suggests that if Mark is cognizant of these echoes of Exodus, he might have intended to transform "divine oracles against the ancient, archetypical Gentile enemy of God of Israel into a prophetic judgement against Israel's own religious leaders."³⁰³ Although Marcus' assertion cannot be proven, if it is the case, the *ἵνα* clause does fit nicely into Mark's architectonic, and deliberate, polarization of Galilee as a place of acceptance and Jerusalem as a site of rejection (cf. Mk 6:1-5). Moreover, as John Riches contends, the transforming power of God's kingdom on earth embodied in Jesus becomes more

³⁰⁰ Gnllka, *Das Evangelium*, 96.

³⁰¹ Guelich, *Mark 1:1-8:26*, 89; Marcus, *Mark 1-8*, 218; Tolbert, *Sowing the Gospel*, 136 n.18

³⁰² Ceroke supports the latter by observing that v.12 fails to allude to the annoyance of the scribes, and that the verse is reticent in regard to the audience's perception of Jesus' personal victory ("Is Mk 2:10 a Saying of Jesus?," *CBQ* 22, 382).

visible; Galilee, not confined to the opposite role of Jerusalem, serves as a metaphor for transformation of every element, from people, things, tradition, to geographical places, into a new mode of cosmology or epistemology.³⁰⁴ Galilee becomes a symbol of the place for the eschatological gatherings of the whole nations and peoples, whose receptivity Mark sees as the necessary quality for entering the eschatological kingdom of God: ὅς ἂν μὴ δέξηται τὴν βασιλείαν τοῦ θεοῦ ὡς παιδίον, οὐ μὴ εἰσέλθῃ εἰς αὐτήν (Mk 10:15).³⁰⁵

3.622 The ‘Son of Man’ Figure

With the eschatological understanding of v.10 firmly established, we can further our study by scrutinizing the verse proper, the main concern being the content of the ἵνα clause. Is it a Messianic claim made by Jesus? In what perspective on the ‘Son of Man’ does Jesus make the claim for the forgiveness of sins? Does it carry any apocalyptic import for Mark? These are some of the questions our following discussion will be dealing with.

In spite of his assumption that the ‘son of man’ is pre-Markan, Guelich contends that the term had little of apocalyptic import for Mark, in the light of its use in the present verse and in 2:28, its repeated use in the passion setting, and the recurrent theme in Mark of Jesus’ command to silence; he hastily concludes that its function here is simply that of the underlying Aramaic expression, a circumlocution for ‘I’ or the speaker.³⁰⁶ Taylor is also dubious about the possibility of any Messianic resonance here, as he thinks that Jesus is not likely to reveal his Messianic identity openly in this early period, even though he acknowledges that, as it is implied in the Book of Enoch, the term denoted Messianic significance during the Gallilean Mission.³⁰⁷ Staying within the boundary of Christological interpretation of the Gospel, Gniska argues that the figure of the son of man has its origin in the Jewish apocalyptic literature in which the authority to forgive sins is never entrusted to the son of man; thus, he reasons, it can not be handed over to Jesus either, and then concludes that “ist sie [the authority] mit dem Anspruch des irdischen Jesus und seinem Tod zu

³⁰³ Marcus, *Mark 1-8*, 218.

³⁰⁴ J. Riches, *Conflicting Mythologies*, 130.

³⁰⁵ Cf. Howard G. Kee, *Community of New Age*, 108.

³⁰⁶ Guelich, *Mark 1-8:26*, 90; cf. Vermes, *Jesus the Jew*, (Macmillan, 1973), 164-68.

³⁰⁷ Taylor, *St. Mark*, 199.

begründen.”³⁰⁸ With Gnllka, the authority to forgive sins can only be appropriated in the death of Jesus on the Cross, a fact which the early Christian community came to realize only after the Easter.

In his recent work, W. R. Telford also acknowledges the Christological thrust of 2:5b-10a, when he argues that Mark’s introduction of Jesus’ conflict with the Jewish authorities culminates in highlighting of Jesus’ authority as the Son of Man to forgive sins. Telford, however, while standing by his epiphany-Christological understanding of the miracles in Mark, is reluctant to accept that Mark saw Jesus as God’s eschatological agent, in line with the earlier Jewish-Christian tradition, whose miracle healings and workings signalled the defeat of Satan and the dawning of the Kingdom of God.³⁰⁹ In this logic and reasoning, Telford is actually seeking to refute H. C. Kee’s Jewish apocalyptic-eschatological reading of the miracles and deeds of Jesus in Mark.

From his social-cultural-historical approach to the Gospel of Mark, Kee, on the other hand, takes the son of man sayings in 2:10 and 2:28 and locates them in their *Sitz im Leben*, in the Markan Community in which issues such as the right to pronounce forgiveness of sins and the right to set aside the Sabbath law were of paramount importance for the early church and constantly under debate, he insists. Jesus as Son of man, according to Kee, is inaugurating the new age in the present and its consummation in the future; it is in this context that Mark understood Jesus’ proclamation in 1:14, “the Kingdom of God has drawn near!”³¹⁰ Kee argues.

3.623 Allusion to the Danielic Son of Man Figure

A careful examination of the textual basis of the son of man sayings in v.10 is now in order. Many Markan scholars agree that 2:10 alludes to the son of Man figure in Daniel 7, especially the one that is given the authority from the Most High. Some linguistic and thematic resonance in 2:10 clearly reminds us of ‘one like son of man’ that Dan 7:13 speaks of: μετὰ τῶν νεφελῶν τοῦ οὐρανοῦ ὡς υἱὸς ἀνθρώπου ἐρχόμενος ἦν καὶ...(LXX). In the verse immediately following, Dan 7:14, one encounters again with the term of ‘authority’: καὶ ἐδόθη αὐτῷ ἐξουσία καὶ πάντα τὰ ἔθνη τῆς

³⁰⁸ Gnllka, *Das Evangelium*, 101.

³⁰⁹ W. Telford, *Theology of the Gospel of Mark*, New Testament Theology series, (1999), 99, 101.

³¹⁰ Kee, *Community*, 138

γῆς κατὰ γένη καὶ πᾶσα δόξα αὐτῷ ...(LXX). J. Marcus examines the phrases, ‘upon the earth,’ ‘son of man,’ and ‘authority’ in both passages in Mark and Daniel and juxtaposes them, and proposes that the Markan passage is in line with Dan 7 in which God entrusts “one like a son of man” with royal power and authority to rule earthly nations at the eschaton.³¹¹ Then, he concludes that for Mark, the heavenly God remains unchanged as the ultimate forgiver, but at the culmination of history he has transferred his authority to remit to a “Son of Man” who carries out his gracious will in the earthly sphere; hence “upon earth the Son of Man has the authority to forgive sins.”³¹² It is not far-fetched at all to assume that Mark is intentionally evoking this Danielic son of Man figure in his depiction of Jesus, as his contemporary Jewish peoples were triggered in their interpretation of the figure, especially prevalent among the Jewish revolutionaries of the Great revolt.³¹³

Of course there are some controversies over what kind of son of man image might have exerted its influences on the shaping of Mark’s portrayal of Jesus as the Son of Man. In general, the son of man sayings in the Synoptic Gospels can be grouped into following three sets: eschatological sayings; sayings about present earthly status; and sayings about suffering, death and resurrection.³¹⁴ The son of Man sayings in Mk 13:26 and 14:62 seem to reflect the apocalyptic-eschatological appropriation of the term originally used in Daniel 7, as their contexts clearly show the eschatological coming of the Son of Man in power and glory with the clouds, even insinuating the judgement seat of the Lord, the Almighty. The saying in Mk 8:38 also clearly points us to its affinity with Dan 7:13 when we consider the verb of coming, the presence of angels, and the phrase “in the glory of his father,” as well as the son of man figure itself. Furthermore, the theme of eschatological glory constitutes a smooth transition to the story of the transfiguration in 9:1.³¹⁵

³¹¹ The theme of absolution does not appear in the Danielic passages, yet Marcus in his reasoning of the possible reflection of midrashic interpretation by which Dan 9:9 has been drawn to Dan 7, opts for including it in his discussion (Marcus, “Authority to Forgive Sins,” 205).

³¹² Marcus, *Mark 1-8*, 222-223; cf. Marcus, “Authority,” 202-203.

³¹³ For such influences on the contemporary Jewish peoples, see Joel Marcus’ meticulous observation of Daniel 7 and Mark in *the Way of the Lord*, 164-172.

³¹⁴ Cf. Guelich, *Mark 1-8:26*, p. 89; Hooker, *Son of Man in the Gospel of Mark*, 180-181; Marcus, *Mark 1-8*, p.531; Telford, *The Theology of the Gospel of Mark*, 111-112.

³¹⁵ Marcus, *Way of the Lord*, p.165

3.624 The Theme of Judgement in the Son of Man Sayings

Another important factor that draws a parallel between the son of man sayings in Mark and the Danielic son of man figure is the theme of judgement. The literary context of Dan 7:13 is replete with the judgement motif; it permeates the second half of the Dan 7: 7:10 (“the court was seated, and the books were opened”); 7:22 (“until the Ancient of Days came and pronounced judgement in favour of the saints of the Most High”; 7:26 (“but the court will sit..”). The corresponding Markan texts also clearly imply the judgement motif. Mk 8:38 says that the Son of Man will be ashamed of those who now denounce him. The expression, “ἐπαισχυνθήσεται” resonates with a motif of eschatological judgement³¹⁶ The literary context of Mark 13:26 also follows this line: 13:27 says that at the eschaton, the Son of Man will send his angels and gather his elect from everywhere on earth. Implied in the verse is the reprobation of the non-elect, left out by the angels gathering his elect; it thus brings into focus God’s final harvest where He separates of one group from the rest of the whole humanity, a clear sign of Mark’s apocalyptic, and dualistic understanding of God’s eschatological community³¹⁷ Then, Mk 14:62 says ὄψεσθε τὸν υἱὸν τοῦ ἀνθρώπου ἐκ δεξιῶν καθήμενον τῆς δυνάμεως καὶ ἐρχόμενον μετὰ τῶν νεφελῶν τοῦ οὐρανοῦ. The word ὄψεσθε here, seems out of place in view of the natural flow of the context of questioning and answering. The better phraseology of Jesus’ answer would be something like ‘Yes, I am. I [or the Son of Man] will sit down at the right hand of God and come with the clouds of heaven,’ as Marcus speculates. The gratuitous nature of the word, ὄψεσθε, then can serve as an interpretive cue. The word conveys a nuance of judgement, traditionally employed in the context of the vindication of martyrs, and can aid scholars like Marcus to argue that Mark 14:62 bespeaks an eschatological seeing of the Son of Man by the worldly leaders who have opposed his will.³¹⁸

³¹⁶ R. Bultmann, “ἐπαισχύνομαι,” *TDNT* 1:189-190.

³¹⁷ It is interesting to note that Marcus overlooks Mk 13:26 in his effort to show the presence of judgment motif in the two Markan versions of the Danielic son of Man sayings, Mk 8:38 and Mk 14:62. Marcus might be reluctant because of the phrase, “gathering his elect,” which might be interpreted to refer to the people of Israel, in which case it will be detrimental to his argument that God at the eschaton turns the table around to condemn the Jewish leaders and to embrace the Gentiles in his act of forgiveness of sins.

³¹⁸ Marcus, *Way*, 166-167.

The ground for combining the judgement motif in the Danielic appropriation of Mark's son of man sayings with the interpretation of 2:10 in light of Moses' confrontation of Pharaoh with Yahweh's incompatible sovereignty in Exodus narrative, is thus laid. If Mark is cognizant of the repeated occurrences of "so that you may know" (LXX ἵνα εἰδῇς) in the Exodus narratives about Moses' confrontation with Pharaoh (Exod 7:17; 8:10, 22; 9:14; 10:2), especially in the context of God's incompatible sovereignty, Mark might be trying to transform divine oracles against the ancient, archetypical Gentile enemy of God of Israel into a prophetic judgement against Israel's own religious leaders.

3.63 The Son of Man's Authority 'on Earth'

Now we turn to the Son of Man saying in 2:10. With regard to the three different categories of views on the son of man sayings (taking them as eschatological sayings, sayings about the suffering son of man, or sayings about the Son of Man's present status), there is a consensus among Markan biblical scholars regarding the saying in 2:10 that it reflects the present status of Jesus as the Son of Man.³¹⁹ As it is discussed above, the Danielic echo in the eschatological sayings is not hard to notice in the son of man sayings in the three Markan texts, 8:38, 13:26, 14:62. The Danielic reverberation of the son of man figure that we clearly note could not have been missed by Mark's own readers. When we consider Markan readers' contemporary apocalyptic expectation of the coming of the Son of Man in power and glory, it is only reasonable to assume the connection between the OT and NT texts. Likewise, the present status of sayings in Mark 2:10 falls into the same eschatological context in which 8:38, 13:26, and 14:62 were believed to be heard in the ears of Mark's audiences.³²⁰

V. 10 reads, ἐξουσίαν ἔχει ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ ἀνθρώπου ἀφιέναι ἁμαρτίας ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς. Simply put, the heart of the issue is this: is the expression "ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς" an indication of Mark's social context where the Christians' view on Jesus as the Lord was so controversial and detrimental to the Jewish monotheistic view on God, hence a polemical role challenging the mainstream belief; or does it refer to the eschatological

³¹⁹ One exception would be the case in which it is interpreted as a generic term for man or humanity. But I think it is least likely, as we consider the accusation of blasphemy made to Jesus leading to the Pharisees' final plot to kill Jesus at the end of the series of controversies with him in 2:1-3:6.

sign of God's in-breaking into the world and pardoning the sinners and establishing his Kingdom as a present reality in a radically new way?

The expression might be possibly understood to represent Mark's polemic to show that the Christian view of Jesus does not conflict with the contemporary Jewish view of the unity of God. For Marcus, the parallel between Dan 7:13 and Mk 2:10, a derived authority of the Danielic figure of son of man that can be conferred on the Markan Jesus, in particular, might be argued to ground this kind of view. He goes further to conclude that 2:5b-10, then, can indicate "*the Sitz im Leben* for Mark's emphasis on the unity of God and reflects not the ministry of the historical Jesus but the concerns of the early Church."³²¹

But it is more desirable to put Jesus' declaration of forgiveness of sins in the wider context of Mark's literary structure. Immediately after our present episode, Jesus calls Levi, a tax-collector, accused as a ruthless and oppressive agent of the Roman government' taxation and collection, and thus doubtlessly regarded as a sinner, by the Jewish peoples and leaders. In this call narrative, 2:13-14, Levi is portrayed as a good model of Jesus' true followers and disciples for the newly established Kingdom community. Immediately following this, Jesus is also located in the context of a table fellowship with sinners and tax collectors, presumably including Levi who was just called before (2:15-17). Along with the thematic connection between 2:10 and these two following episodes, we note another common factor: the same terminological root, ἀμαρτ- is present in both, further establishing the connection between them.³²² According to the Jewish law of purity and Levitical tradition of holiness, sitting with sinners is forbidden lest one should be polluted or contaminated him/herself; Mark's portrayal of Jesus who overrides the regulation, bringing it to an end by calling and having fellowship with sinners is of crucial importance for our discussion. In a way, Jesus' authority to override Mosaic cultic taboos, which scholars

³²⁰ Cf. Marcus, *Mark 1-8*, 531.

³²¹ Marcus, "Authority," 199.

³²² Following Eaton ("A Primitive Tradition," 93 n. 1) and T.W. Manson ("The Life of Jesus," 135) Michael J. Cook objects to this connections among 2:1-12, 13-14, and 15f. He argues that thematically 2:1-12 has nothing common with what follows, because the former is basically a miracle pericope and not a controversy at all, while the latter is mostly concerned with controversies over facets of ritual and calendrical observance with a special reference to the Jewish authorities, and he even contends that vv. 13-14 could have been placed here by Mark solely because of an association of Jesus with tax collectors in 2:15 f (*Mark's Treatment of the Jewish Leaders*, Supplements to Novum Testamentum Vol. LI [E. J. Brill, 1978], 44). Thus for Cook, controversy collections actually start only with v.15f.and end in 3:6.

like T.A. Burkill think Mark has in mind, in the passage of sitting with sinners in 2:15-17 presents an explicit rift between cultic and ethical requirements.³²³

We need to put the episode of Jesus' sitting in a table fellowship with sinners in a broader and more important perspective or, to put it more accurately to see it in the light of a fundamental hermeneutical principle, that is, the kingdom of God in Mark. In 1:14-15 Jesus proclaimed that the Kingdom of God has arrived. Yet the way the Kingdom of God begins to emerge in Jesus' subsequent ministry after that proclamation is certainly astonishing. According to the contemporary Jewish understanding of God's kingly rule, which is well illustrated in the theology of the Targums, especially in the Targum to Isaiah, the revelation of the kingdom of God is associated with the nations' being counted as a destruction before God (40:7; 60:1), or with Zion's being satisfied with the riches of the peoples and delighting in the spoils of their kings (60:16), and this understanding was shared by the Zealots who viewed God's kingdom as a world theocracy which can be appropriately furthered by taking up arms against Rome and her agents. But Mark's portrayal of the way the Kingdom takes shape in Jesus' public ministry is very strongly suggestive of a very different conceptualization of God's kingdom: the Kingdom is manifested in acts of healing, forgiveness, and acceptance of the outcast and the enemy. It seems more appropriate to say that Jesus radically reinterpreted the concept of the Kingdom of God and correspondingly used expressions pertaining to the Kingdom with a sense radically different from, though nevertheless related to, that which contemporary Jewish peoples had in the soils of the current Judaism. In this very connection, Jesus' sharing of meals with outcasts and collaborators is very telling of God's forgiveness and acceptance of them. Furthermore in the same connection, the meals which Jesus shared with the sinners are significant not only for the understanding of Jesus' preaching of the Kingdom, but also as indicators of his having rejected traditional notions of purity outright (cf. Mk 7:15f).³²⁴ John Riches describes succinctly Jesus'

³²³ Of course it should be pointed out that Burkill's acknowledgement was made in the context of his attempt to make a comparative study of Ben Sira's Ecclesiasticus and Mark's Gospel with regard to the presence in the both of mutually conflicting themes such as (1) predestination and freedom (2) optimism and pessimism (3) retributive justice and factual truth (4) universalism and particularism (5) ritualism and ethics (6) reason and revelation. For Burkill, these two kinds of opposing themes oscillate in even Mark and sometimes Mark seems to lose control over the themes in a way that they co-exist in his presentation of the Gospel (*New Light on the Earliest Gospel: Seven Markan Studies*, Cornell Univ. Press, 1972).

³²⁴ John Riches and A. Millar, "Conceptual Change in the Synoptic Tradition," *Alternative Approaches to New Testament Study* (SPCK, 1985), 54-57.

transformation of the contemporary understanding associated with the Kingdom of God in a summarized form:

Jesus' announcement of the coming of the Kingdom of God in the context of his spontaneous, festive meals with the poor and the outcasts suggests that a number of associations of the term 'kingdom' were being deleted. Most evidently the associations relating to the purity and holiness of God and to his avenging judgement were clearly called into question by Jesus' tolerating the presence of sinners and tax-collectors as such Kingdom meals. Jesus' understanding of Kingdom of God must be quite different from that of the Pharisees and of Qumran or of the Zealots, if the Kingdom of God is proclaimed in such context.³²⁵

The symbolic nature of Jesus' action can be further proven when we consider the episode immediately preceding our passage. 1:40-45, the healing of the leper, deals also with the nature of Jesus' earthly ministry. Leprosy, better rendered as scale disease,³²⁶ is one of the diseases which are typically dealt with in the Levitical purity laws (cf. Lev 11-15; Deut 14:3-21). Placing the healing of a leper episode at the very beginning of Jesus' public ministry is perfectly in line with Mark's intention to declare that at last the New age of the eschatological bestowal of God's holiness is at hand. The restoration of the unclean to the holy, of the sick to the healed, of the oppressed to the free, is fulfilled through Jesus. This dawning of the eschaton in the horizon of history seems to threaten to annul the Law's sharp structuring distinction between the realm of the clean and that of the unclean.³²⁷ In addition, it is interesting to note that Jesus commands: ὑπάγε σεαυτὸν δείξον τῷ ἱερεῖ καὶ προσένεγκε περὶ τοῦ καθαρισμοῦ σου ὃ προσέταξεν Μωϋσῆς, εἰς μαρτύριον αὐτοῖς (1:44). Rather than showing Jesus' acknowledgement of the priestly establishment's authority or his respect of the law (contra Marcus),³²⁸ this statement clearly indicates that the healing of leper sets itself in the context of the law of purity, and that Jesus meant to declare that the leper was completely restored and officially endorsed to return to his normal community life.³²⁹ Thus, it should be further noticed, as Chilton observes, that what is

³²⁵ J. Riches, *Jesus and the Transformation of Judaism*, (Darton, Longman & Todd, 1980), 106. For a more detailed explanation, see *ibid*, "Ch.5: Jesus' Preaching of the Kingdom," 87-111.

³²⁶ Cf. Marcus, Mark 1-8, 205. Marcus argues that "lepra," the usual rendering, is misleading, because the corresponding Hebrew term denotes various conditions in which the skin becomes scaly, not necessarily what is meant by leprosy today.

³²⁷ Marcus, "Modern and Ancient Jewish Apocalypticism," *JR* 76, 24; *Mark 1-8*, 210.

³²⁸ *Ibid*, 201.

³²⁹ Cf. James Dunn, "Jesus and Purity: An Ongoing Debate," *NTS* 48, No. 6(Oct. 2002), p. 461.

focused on in this story is not Jesus' attitudes to the purity law so much as the power of Jesus' own purity; Jesus appears to counter the contagion of impurity with the contagion of purity.³³⁰ In James D. G. Dunn's words, "holiness for Jesus was not a negative, defiling force, but a positive, healing force."³³¹ Ultimately, then, it is the power of Jesus' holiness infiltrating into the territory of impurity, in this episode.

From this perspective of Mark's literary structure, the healing of leper, the calling of Levi, and Jesus' table fellowship with sinners and tax collectors form the inner and outer frame of our passage; and it can be diagrammed, for our convenience, as A-B-A'. In this frame, B always takes the center and needs to be focused as such. More importantly, and symbolically, while eating with sinners, Jesus declares the forgiveness of their sins, regarding them pure, fully qualified to be part of the eschatological community of the New age. As Gnllka also pointed out, the earthly Jesus not only informs the people of the coming of the Kingdom of God, but also "dokumentiert in seiner Gemeinschaft mit Sündern die Vergebung Gottes."³³² Then, the phrase, "ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς" may be taken as a token of God's eschatological bestowal of forgiveness of sins as a present reality, as well as Mark's polemic to show that the Christian view on Jesus does not run counter to the Jewish view of the unity of God. As John Riches rightly reminds us, the phrase is a good reminder that Jesus' followers cannot fast so long as he is with them (Mk 2:19). It represents a powerful emphasis on the present reality of salvation, on the enjoyment of life and fulfilment now.³³³

Having established the close tie between Mark and the O.T passage in Daniel, Mark's radically different portrayal of the Danielic son of Man must be discussed before we go on. Mark makes a paradoxical appropriation of the Danielic apocalyptic-eschatological image of the Son of man to depict Jesus as the suffering Son of Man even long before the passion narrative starts. There are at least three passion predictions in 8:27-10:52 that we need to note; Mk 8:31, which is in close proximity with the Son of Man sayings in 8:37, speaks of the necessity of the Son of Man's suffering and death and resurrection; 9:31 and 10:33 also reveal the same fate of the

³³⁰ B. Chilton, *Jesus' Baptism and Jesus' Healing* (Harrisburg, PA: Trinity Press International, 1998), 58-71.

³³¹ J. Dunn, "Jesus and Purity," 461.

³³² Gnllka, *Das Evangelium*, 101.

³³³ J. Riches, *Jesus and the Transformation of Judaism*, 105.

Son of Man.³³⁴ These predictions were all made in a private, thus esoteric, teaching context. Then, it is understandable why some take them as mysterious revelation, resonating with what Jesus said in 4:11: Ὑμῖν τὸ μυστήριον δέδοται τῆς βασιλείας τοῦ θεοῦ· ἐκείνοις δὲ τοῖς ἔξω ἐν παραβολαῖς τὰ πάντα γίνεται. The revelation to the disciples alone of the suffering Son of Man as Jesus' identity runs parallel to "τὸ μυστήριον δέδοται" to them.

Seen in this context, Jesus' forgiveness of sins in 2:10 must be understood in the context of a wholly new kind of authority and power accorded by the coming of the New Age. As John Riches aptly points out, it culminates in Jesus' alternative power to power over spirits and the forces of nature hitherto unchallenged by any on earth. Rather than confusing or misleading us, the dilemma or paradox that Mark leaves behind, intentionally or unintentionally in his Gospel—e.g. does God maneuver his sovereignty, restore his rule over the world through the destruction of his enemies or through the instruction and disciplining of his people? —directs us further, rather poignantly, to the complex and complexly profound nature of the Gospel, when we consider the following comment:

These two accounts of the nature of God's restoration of his rule are repeatedly evoked by the text, but neither ever quite takes center stage. Indeed the final drama of Jesus' abandonment, by his followers and by God, and of his death on the cross radically challenges both."³³⁵

Then, Jesus' declaration of forgiveness of sins, which is followed by his act of seeing faith, rather than being treated simply as a part of a divine passive in a general sense, must be attributed to a specific eschatological act of forgiveness, specifically conferred by the eschatological Messiah. Such understanding of the forgiveness of sin statements in v.5 and that in v.10 should signal to us the apocalyptic nature of the forgiveness in 2:5. Jesus as eschatological Messiah activates on earth at the dawn of the New Age this powerful grace and authority, counter to the scribes' accusation of Jesus of blasphemy. In his debates with Jewish authority, Jesus repeatedly zooms in on the evil and hypocritical intentions of his attackers as the

³³⁴ Marcus takes this paradoxical reformulation of the Son of Man image as a polemical twist that is geared to the leaders of Israel (14:62), and goes further to point out that the reformulation can be clearly seen in the act of Jesus to forgive sins in 2:10 (*Mark 1-8*, 532).

³³⁵ J. Riches, "Conflicting Mythologies: Mythical Narrative in the Gospel of Mark," *JSNT* 84 (2001), 48. For more comprehensive explications about this nature of the Gospels, see his recent monograph, *Conflicting Mythologies*.

driving force that confuses and misleads the public from the truth inherent in historical situations. As J. M. Robinson observes, the historical reality of the eschatological era that Jesus has brought forth, as it is related to 2:1-12, serves as an important interpretive paradigm for our discussion:

When Jesus forgives sins, he is charged with ‘blasphemy,’ for ‘who is able to forgive sins except one, God?’ (2:7). This confused interpretation is answered categorically (2:10): The Son of Man has authority to forgive sins on earth. Here clarity is reached not in terms of a general principle, but rather in terms of the presence of the eschatological Son of Man in history.³³⁶

Our argument that Jesus’ act of seeing in v.5 is charged with the apocalyptic-eschatological tones and colors is now grounded.

3.64 Concluding Remarks

We have argued that viewing Jesus’ act of seeing in v.5 in the apocalyptic-eschatological tones and colors can be done first by looking at the faith in v.5 in light of the dawning faith in the gospel preached by Jesus in 1:15, then by relating the faith in the gospel further to the Isaianic gospel tradition opened up in Mk 1:1. Then now that Jesus’ act of seeing faith in v.15 leads to his declaration of the forgiveness of sins, we have tried to illuminate the eschatological meaning of the forgiveness, especially in light of the authority of the Son of Man, which certainly alludes to the Danielic son of man figure in Dan 7:13. Through the investigation of the trajectories of the image of the Danielic figure, we have come to the conclusion that the figure became charged with a Messianic-apocalyptic overtone in the Jewish religious-social tradition and history, and being aware of this, Mark also portrayed Jesus in the same vein. In addition we have brought into focus that the ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς not merely mirrors Mark’s polemical intention to disprove the fears of the Jewish peoples about the dualist view on God, but also meant to show Jesus’ authority to forgive sins as an eschatological intervention of God’s power to forgive as a present reality. Last we have mentioned that Mark transformed the Danielic allusion to Jesus as the Son of Man into the Son of Man whose suffering is vindicated through his resurrection and thus proves to be a way of paradoxical ultimate victory over the cosmic battle with the Satan and the

demons. In this line of interpretation, we strongly believe that Jesus' act of seeing is an integral part of the whole story that we have critically considered, thus that it also should be interpreted accordingly in the same light of the apocalyptic-eschatological overtone.

3.7 'Seeing' in Mk 2:12

3.71 Preliminary Remarks

Next in our agenda is the verb of seeing in 2:12; the exegesis of the verse in its literary context and discussion of related issues will show how the verb itself can serve as an interpretive tool for understanding our text in particular and Mark's Gospel in general, especially in light of the Kingdom of God as a dawning reality. Mk 2:12b reads, ὥστε ἐξίστασθαι πάντας καὶ δοξάζειν τὸν θεὸν λέγοντας ὅτι οὕτως οὐδέποτε εἶδομεν. Immediately our attention is drawn to the people's chorus-like reaction, οὕτως οὐδέποτε, and to the verb of seeing there. Two questions are important to ask here: what is the nature of the reaction?; what is the object of the verb εἶδομεν? Even if the response is merely a typical human reaction to something miraculous or extraordinary, we still might ask why Mark chooses to highlight it, thus implicitly endorsing it. Or does it imply more than a typical human reaction? In that case, rather than endorsing it, Mark reinforces it in such a way that a fuller meaning of what Jesus did in this episode is revealed.

Then, what did they see? What did they mean to say about what they saw? The issue becomes complicated when we take up the question of who "they" are. Do they include the scribes who were in conflict with Jesus in vv. 6-10a? Or do they consist of only the onlookers impressed by and attracted to Jesus? Of course the question 'what is it that the crowd has never seen?' is much more relevant to our discussion. Is it Jesus' miraculous healing of the paralytic that they just witnessed? If it is, why should this be called something absolutely new, in view of the fact that miraculous healings have been noted throughout the O.T history, as well as of what Mark's editorial comments in 1:32-34 clearly seem to mean to say (... ἔφερον πρὸς αὐτὸν πάντας

³³⁶ J. M. Robinson, *The Problem of History in Mark and other Marcan Studies* (Fortress Press, 1982),

τοὺς κακῶς ἔχοντας καὶ τοὺς δαιμονιζομένους... καὶ ἐθεράπευσεν πολλοὺς κακῶς ἔχοντας ποικίλαις νόσοις καὶ δαιμόνια πολλὰ ἐξέβαλεν...), and of the actual healings and exorcisms of Jesus mentioned and probably witnessed by the same crowd in the previous chapter? Although many scholars connect the chorus like-statement of the crowd in v.12 to Jesus' miraculous healing only, the response is more in line with the miraculous healing of Jesus aimed ultimately at the forgiveness of sins that Jesus as an eschatological Messiah conferred to the paralytic. Also, though the πάντας may not include the scribes who are Jesus' apparent opponents, Mark meant to maintain this word in such a way that Jesus may be portrayed as the eschatological Messiah in a cosmic sense who demands a fundamental decision from people, to break away from the old way of life and to turn to the new one. Through this Jesus, God's ultimate salvation is being offered and to this Jesus people responded so amazed. The verb of seeing in v.12 in this way can be also viewed as an indication of the new age.

3.72 Form-Critical Issues

Form and redaction critics argue that vv.11-12 present a suitable conclusion to the miracle story, and not to the composite narrative, on the grounds that no reference is apparent to the preceding controversy and the scribes are not mentioned. Also, they point out that the experience of forgiveness, unlike healing, cannot be 'seen' (v.12b), that it is unreasonable to include the scribes who are depicted as opponents in vv.6-10b among the exclaiming crowd, and that the doxological response in v.12 seems to refer back to the setting of 2:1-5 and the healing of 2:11.³³⁷ What needs to be noted here, though briefly, is that by arguing that the experience of forgiveness cannot be the object of the act of seeing, they limit the 'seeing' in v.12 as an act of physical sight. As we have discussed in detail, 'seeing' in Mark is a literary and thematic factor that contributes to the understanding of the apocalyptic dawning of God's eschatological reign through Jesus, the Messiah, the Son of Man and the Son of God.³³⁸

94.

³³⁷ Marshall, *Faith as a Theme*, 79; Guelich, *Mark 1-8:26*, 94.

³³⁸ John Riches, in his book, convincingly endorses what they call narrative-christology of Mark's Gospel, which is meant to see the Gospel in the light of the story of the life, death and resurrection of Jesus, which are in turn portrayed and formulated in the Son of Man in interaction with the two competing traditions of Jewish eschatology, Son of David and Son of God (see *Conflicting Mythologies*, 157-162)

R. Guelich, noting the conflict theme of the larger context (2:1-3:6) rules out the possibility of the scribes being convinced by Jesus' response to their charge (2:6-10), speculates form-critically that whereas the pericope originally centered on a healing story, Mark selected the story in light of the controversy in 2:6-10 and left the response *unaltered*.³³⁹ While Mark leaving it "unaltered" is quite plausible and also relevant to our argument, Guelich undermines Mark's ability as a writer by accusing Mark of neglecting an important detail which ends in confusion and obscurity. Robinson makes a similar case, when he identifies the chorus-like reaction from the crowd found in 2:12 as a stylistic convention of the Hellenistic world for accentuating the completeness of a cure or the greatness of a healer; as for Mark's appraisal of this, he points out that in most cases, Mark leaves it with its implicit significance without any comment.³⁴⁰

Although he acknowledges that in the preaching context of the early church, the question of forgiveness and of healing should give way to Jesus' right to forgive sins, M. Dibelius is reluctant to give full credit to Mark's editorial role played in the current shaping of the pericope. "In this case also only a change and a trimming but not a complete inversion of the actual event took place, as may be seen from the innocuous, but quite 'un-Christological' concluding chorus, 'We never saw it in this fashion,' which sounds as if the narrative dealt only with a miracle and not with the worth of the miracle-worker,"³⁴¹ he remarks rather dubiously.

But a complete inversion of the actual event is likely to have taken place in the hands of Mark's theological composition. The fact that the present text was masterminded by Mark has been proven by numerous rhetorical critics based on the literary integrity of the text, and by form critics as well who unanimously point out that v.10 (Jesus' authority to forgive sins on earth) is a matrix to which other elements like folklores have been added later till it was extended into the current shape of the pericope. As Joachim Gnllka suggests, "Dieses ist nicht so zu bestimmen, daß das Logion zur Geschichte hinzutrat, sondern umgekehrt: das Logion hat zur Bildung der Zwischenperiode geführt."³⁴²

Taylor also points to the colloquial and animated quality of the οὕτως οὐδέποτε εἶδομεν, suggesting that as they do frequently in miracle-stories, the

³³⁹ Guelich, *Mark 1-8:26*, 94. The italic is mine.

³⁴⁰ J. Robinson, *The Problem of History*, 119-120.

³⁴¹ M. Dibelius, *From Tradition To Gospel*, 66-67.

words describe the effect of the miracles on the bystanders, and that the amazement centers exclusively on the miracle, not the forgiveness of sins; so V. 11f, according to him, is more closely related to 1-5a than to 5b-10. He then adds that considering the above, the πάντας here should include the scribes.³⁴³ For Taylor, the historical validity of the pericope seems to be unduly preferred to Mark's theological intention, which is conveyed through his literary composition; the literary skill of Mark, however, cannot be compatible with the idea that v.12b concerns the miracle exclusively; neither can it be in line with the idea that the πάντας includes the scribes.

3.73 Interpretation of 2:12

3.731 The Object of εἶδομεν in V.12

Then the real question would be how οὕτως οὐδέποτε εἶδομεν should be interpreted, in light of the wider context where reports of Jesus' extensive healings and exorcising activities in Capernaum (cf. 1:27 and 33f.) have been already spread. In such cases, the cry in v.12 would seem overdone. As R.T. France rightly suggests, in terms of physical healing, the crowd would have been somewhat more informed; this time, the declaration of the forgiveness of sins and Jesus' bold defence of his right to do so are what add a new dimension to the setting.³⁴⁴ In fact, we are led to suppose that 'all' have witnessed something that goes beyond what they have seen before. In our earlier comparison of Mk 1:12 to the Lukan parallel, a similar notion was dealt with, as we noted that the response in Mk 1:12 seems to reveal that what the crowds saw was something that never happened in the past; something not belonging to this world, it seems to note, begins to emerge in Jesus' ministry.

There are two reasons for taking the healing granted through the divine forgiveness, rather than the miraculous healing alone, as the object of εἶδομεν in v.12. First, as it has been repeatedly pointed out,³⁴⁵ the literary and thematic unity of 2:1-12 (not a clumsy composite of healing and controversy) that Mark brought to the present

³⁴² J. Gnilka, *Das Evangelium*, 96-97.

³⁴³ V. Taylor, *St. Mark*, 198-199.

³⁴⁴ R. France, *The Gospel of Mark*, 120.

³⁴⁵ See especially, Hooker, *Son of Man*, 85f; Cranfield, *Gospel*, 96; J. Dewey, "The Literary Structure of the Controversy Stories of Mk 2:1-3:6," in *JBL* 92 (1973), 397-401 or in *The Interpretation of Mark*, ed. William Telford, 141-152; R. T. Mead, "The Healing of the Paralytic: A Unity?," *JBL* 80 (1961), 350-52.

shape of the passage provides a good support. Specifically, redaction-critically speaking,³⁴⁶ the ὥστε with an infinitive usually occurs in redactional verses and the adverbial use of εὐθὺς is almost always redactional.³⁴⁷ Drawing on parallels between this verse and Mk 1:27, Marshall reinforces Mark's redactional shape of the verse: verbs of wonder; ὥστε infinitive structure; the use of πάντας; λέγοντας participle are taken as textual evidences. And he goes on to say that the πάντας have witnessed namely a healing performed through the granting of eschatological forgiveness.³⁴⁸ Gnllka also regards the ὥστε ... infinitive clause as Mark's redaction, noticing the similar pattern in 1:45. More specifically, Gnllka contends that the peoples' amazement is a typical reaction from those experiencing something mysterious or extraordinary (cf. 5:42, 6:51), and that "Ihr Gotteslob bekundet, daß Jesus der eschatologische Gottesgesandte ist." More importantly, Gnllka suggests that through the second editorial redaction of the traditional material, the healing was taken to reveal the power of the Son of Man. He further concludes that "...wird auch auf der ersten Erzählstufe keine rein humanitäre Tat Jesu geschildert, sondern vom Anbruch der Heilszeit Zeugnis abgelegt."³⁴⁹ For Gnllka, Mark's redaction in v.12 aims at revealing the eschatological power of Jesus that bears witness to the dawning of the age of salvation and God's rule penetrating into His world despite the enemies' opposition.

Moreover, we need to note the occurrence of the term, οὕτως, instead of ταῦτα or τὰ τοῦ τοιοῦτου, in the verse.³⁵⁰ Though many interpreters render οὕτως to be the object of the verb, rather than as a qualifier for εἶδομεν, meaning 'anything like that' or 'such a thing.'³⁵¹ However, οὕτως occurs 10 times altogether in Mark and all of them are used adverbially, dutifully playing the role of qualifying verbs, and never as an object of verbs.³⁵² There is no reason that the phrase in 2:12 should be an exception. On this ground, a better translation would be 'we never saw the healing

³⁴⁶ It is to be recognized that according to some Markan interpreters a precise distinction between tradition and redaction in v.12 is extremely difficult.

³⁴⁷ Cf. S. Kuthirakkattel, *The Beginning of Jesus' Ministry According To Mark's Gospel (1:14-3:6): A Redaction Critical Study*, Analecta Biblica 123 (Rome, 1990), 178-80.

³⁴⁸ Marshall, *Faith as a theme*, 82.

³⁴⁹ Gnllka, *Das Evangelium*, 97, 103.

³⁵⁰ Cf. 4:33; 6:2; 9:37; 10:14; 13:19.

³⁵¹ Cf. Guelich, *Mark 1:8:26*, 81; Marcus, *Mark 1-8*, 224; modern English versions such as NIV, NASB, NRSV, Jerusalem Bible; Gnllka also renders it "solches," taking it as an object of verb sehen (*Das Evangelium*, 95).

occur in the same way that it occurred here and now in front of us.’ What the translation implies would go something like this: ‘this is the first time that the healing occurred in a way that is activated through the experience of the divine forgiveness, which is bestowed by the son of Man, a fulfilment of the Danielic figure of ‘a man like of son of man.’ Of course, this is a rendering of Mark’s authorial intention, rather than what was in the mind of the audiences listening to the historical Jesus. Also, notice the occurrence of οὕτως in the verbatim of the scribes in v.7: Τί οὗτος οὕτως λαλεῖ. Here, οὕτως is not the object of the verb λαλεῖ, but a qualifier of the verb. What is implied then is ‘why is he speaking in a way that sounds like he is usurping the solely divine prerogative of the forgiveness of sins?’

We also need to take a note of ταῦτα in Jesus’ question in the immediately following passage: Τί ταῦτα διαλογίζεσθε ἐν ταῖς καρδίαις ὑμῶν□. Here, the ταῦτα clearly is the object of διαλογίζεσθε, meaning, ‘why are you reasoning ‘*my statement*’ and wrongly taking it as a blasphemy?’

3.732 A Broad Literary and Biblical Context

In addition, the question, ‘what is it that the crowd has never seen,’ can gain a great deal when we focus on the literary and theological level of the issue at hand. A more relevant question then would be ‘what is the relation between Jesus’ two acts, the healing of the paralytic and the forgiving of his sins in the present context?’ First of all, we should consider why of all Jesus’ healings this is the only incident in which he explicitly connects sin and illness. The correlation does not seem to signify Jesus’ desire to address the inherent and organic relationship between them, nor is it reasonable to see in it Jesus’ divine knowledge of the sins of the paralytic. From a rhetorical point of view on the broader structure of 2:1-3:6, the link is in line with the radically new order of life Jesus introduces to Israel, potential to stir up debates, even conflicts, and in due course, even Jesus’ death. As Ben Witherington III correctly points out, what are being depicted in 2:1-3:6 regarding Jesus’ initial Galilean ministry, i.e. forgiveness of sins, table-fellowship with the impure and immoral, fasting, healing and working on the Sabbath, would bring on Jesus’ tragic premature death.³⁵² Such would have resulted not only in light of a Jewish social context, but in

³⁵² Cf. 2:7 (‘..talk like this’); 2:8 (‘..think like this’); 4:26 (‘..is like this’); 7:18 (‘..are ignorant like this’); 9:13 (‘..bleach like this’); 10:43 (‘..be like this’); 13:29 (‘..know like manner’); 14:59 (‘...is same

light of a milieu in which a holiness reformation was in progress, presumably led by the Pharisees.³⁵³ The unique way in which the relationship between sin and infirmity is explicitly addressed in this episode calls for the onlookers' exclamation, "we have never seen the healing in the same way that it occurred here and now!"³⁵⁴

Furthermore, as pointed out above, the present episode is not merely concerned with the link between sin and sickness, but more importantly with the inseparable connection that exists between healing and forgiveness within the works of Jesus' ministry. The unusual procedure of healing the man (first declaring God's forgiveness and then the actual healing) does not signify that Jesus' work of healing transcends physical restoration alone to include the imparting of divine acceptance and pardon. Jesus has authority to teach and heal (1:22, 27), as well as to establish 'on the earth' full eschatological salvation, the last great act of which was taken to be the forgiveness of sins. Because the particular faith Jesus recognizes is 'repentant faith' (namely, faith inherently being accompanied with repentance) in light of God's kingdom, the gift of healing is always accompanied by the gift of forgiveness.³⁵⁵

As J. Marcus points out, the verbal similarities between Mk 2:12 and Isa 35:2 are hard to miss: ὥστε ἐξίστασθαι πάντας καὶ δοξάζειν τὸν θεὸν λέγοντας ὅτι Οὕτως οὐδέποτε εἶδομεν; ὁ λαὸς μου ὄψεται τὴν δόξαν κυρίου καὶ τὸ ὕψος τοῦ θεοῦ. More importantly, Isa 64:4, οὐδὲ οἱ ὀφθαλμοὶ ἡμῶν εἶδον θεόν, read with the peoples' chorus-like reaction in Mk 2:12 in mind makes it clear that the reaction implies the "new aeon, which οὐδὲ οἱ ὀφθαλμοὶ ἡμῶν εἶδον θεόν (Isa 64:4; 1 Cor 2:9), is here breaking in."³⁵⁶ Thus, it is important here to note that Isa 64:1, which speaks of God rending the heavens and coming down, is clearly echoed by Mark's description of Jesus' baptism in 1:10 in the context of the apocalyptic-eschatological fulfilment. The peoples' reaction in v.12 drives home the point of 2:10, with its background in Daniel 7, as Marcus points out: Jesus acts on behalf of the heavenly king, fulfilling his will eschatologically on the earth, and that the eschatological nuance is reinforced by the conclusion of the narrative, which emphasizes the

like'); 15:39 ('..died like this').

³⁵³ Ben Witherington III, *The Gospel of Mark: A Social-Rhetorical Commentary* (Eerdmann, 2001), 114.

³⁵⁴ James R. Edwards, *The Gospel according to Mark*. The Pillar New Testament Commentary, (Eerdmans, 2002), 79.

³⁵⁵ Marshall, *Faith as a theme*, 89.

³⁵⁶ Marcus, *Mark 1-8*, 224.

universality of the response (“they were all amazed”) and the radical newness of the deed (“We have never seen anything like it!”).³⁵⁷

Many Markan scholars consent that v.12 reveals the effect of Jesus’ miracle on the crowd exclusively, thus taking πάντας in v.12 to leave out the hostile scribes. For them, πάντας certainly refers to the onlookers, not the scribes.³⁵⁸ The term, however, might be pre-Markan, yet maintained by Mark to highlight the universality of the response from the people, leaving us to see the eschatological dimension of Jesus’ healing ministry.

3.8 Concluding Remarks

In conclusion, the present passage, if properly labelled as a part of a long series of ‘Streitgespräche,’ portrays Jesus’ ongoing struggle with his opponents, through which comes a larger scope of the conflict the establishment of God’s kingdom on earth creates for those who are in opposition to the new order. The debate with the scribes leads to the saying of Jesus in v.10, which is not only of paradigmatic value but also indicative of the climactic nature of the conflict. The passage also confirms as truth that God’s message in Mark as least in some ways is not given as didactic exposition, but as the result of conflict, attained through effort, and as evidence of a breakthrough in the attack against evil. Furthermore, if we could endorse Robinson’s hermeneutical principle of viewing the exorcisms as a pattern for interpreting Jesus’ debates or conflicts with his opponents, we would indubitably also agree with his apt surmise: what one witnesses here is “a continuation of the cosmic struggle between God’s kingdom and Satanic one which was initiated at the baptism and temptation and carried into the narrative of Jesus’ public ministry first by the exorcisms.”³⁵⁹ The ground for Robinson’s observation is more than solid:

At the basis of the struggle between Jesus and the Jewish authorities is their rejection of the kingdom Jesus proclaimed (1:15) and of the ‘repentance’ for which that proclamation called... They must be irrevocably opposed to an eschatological understanding of history which involves basic changes as well as continuity, eschatological newness as

³⁵⁷ Marcus, *Mark 1-8*, 224.

³⁵⁸ Cf. H. Branscomb, “Mark 2:5”; Marshal, *Faith*, p.82.

³⁵⁹ Robinson, p.94; cf. also Susan R. Garrett, *the Temptations*, Eerdmans, 1998.

well as oldness. It is precisely the presence of God's reign which makes possible both the separation from frozen tradition and the deliverance from immanent relativism. God's reign is therefore the basis of Jesus' action in the Markan debates.³⁶⁰

In this context of the cosmic conflict, the verb of seeing provides us with a crucial interpretive key by being connected to faith, a faith that leads to the forgiveness of sins which began to be bestowed upon God's new people, as the eschatological salvific age is newly established through Jesus, and also by connoting the newness that is accompanied by the New Age. As Joanna Dewey makes clear in her analysis of the concentrically arranged compositional shape of 2:1-3:6, the sayings on fasting and those on the old and the new in 2:18-22 constitute a central part of the series of 5 controversy discourses; the central message of this pericope makes explicit the unifying theme of the entire discourses, the incompatibility between the old and the new.³⁶¹

³⁶⁰ J. M. Robinson, *The Problem of History in Mark*, 97.

³⁶¹ J. Dewey, *Markan Public Debate*, 110.

Part II The Rending of the Temple Curtain

4

The Motif of Seeing in the Passion Narrative of Mark

4.1 Preliminary Remarks

The Greek text of Mk 15:37-39 is as follows: 37 ὁ δὲ Ἰησοῦς ἀφείλες φωνὴν μεγάλην ἐξέπνευσεν. 38 Καὶ τὸ καταπέτασμα τοῦ ναοῦ ἐσχίσθη εἰς δύο ἀπ' ἄνωθεν ἕως κάτω. 39 Ἰδὼν δὲ ὁ κεντυρίων ὁ παρεστηκὼς ἐξ ἐναντίας αὐτοῦ ὅτι οὕτως ἐξέπνευσεν εἶπεν, Ἀληθῶς οὗτος ὁ ἄνθρωπος υἱὸς θεοῦ ἦν. Even to an ordinary reader this text presents a perplexing question: how could Jesus' final expiration accompanied by a loud cry, definitely not a sign of victory or vindication on Jesus' part on the surface level, lead the centurion to confess that Jesus is the Son of God. This perplexing question remains unsolved, however, even by critical scholarship. W. T. Shiner argues that the centurion mistakes Jesus for a divine or divinely inspired person, a Hellenistic model. According to him, Mark crafts that scene so that the centurion's mistake, like the mocking of the passersby, reinforces the crowd's inherently incomplete and defective understanding of Jesus, a misconception which is viewed as part of Mark's theological and literary motif of secrecy. Shiner goes further to suppose that if the Crucifixion is what motivated the confession, the confession is a legitimate one; but he insists that the signs and wonders surrounding Jesus' death were what motivated the confession in Mark.³⁶² Furthermore, to a critical reader, v.38 sounds like an intrusion, interfering with an otherwise natural flow of the passage: setting it aside, v.37 moves smoothly into v.39.³⁶³ The location of the verb of seeing (ἰδὼν) within the passage also seems to be out of place: were it related to the rending of the Temple veil, it would have provided a good support for making the centurion's act of seeing a motivation for his following confession. Then, the flow of the whole passage would have been much smoother: 'Jesus died with a loud cry and the curtain of the Temple

³⁶² W. T. Shiner, "The Ambiguous Pronouncement of the Centurion and the Shrouding of Meaning in Mark," *JSNT* 78 (2000), 4, 8.

was rent in two from top to bottom. Seeing this, the centurion said that truly this man was the Son of God.’ This reformulated text treats the centurion’s act of seeing the rending of the Temple veil as the rationale for the confession; as the motivation of his confession, this would make more sense since it is implied that Jesus brought down the Temple veil by his death, further implying that the Temple was condemned in Jesus’ death, indicating also the vindication of the innocence of Jesus. Why the actual Markan passage comes to us as it is and what was going on in Mark’s mind when he was working with the passion stories transmitted to him from tradition, would require a further in-depth study.

A more pressing agenda here is in regard to the motivation of the centurion’s confession; the single act of ‘seeing’ Jesus’ crying out loud doesn’t seem to justify his confession, especially in view of the apparently weighty nature of the Christological statement of the centurion. It is more likely that the confession was prompted initially by the peculiar expiration of Jesus’ breath and its surrounding environments; then that was incorporated by Mark into what was happening in the mists of the apocalyptic events surrounding Jesus’ death on the cross, especially, the tearing of the temple veil. The literary technique of adumbration and double references Mark uses here is expressed well in his favourite word, οὕτως as well as his unique structuring of the syntax of the passage. From the perspective of textual-criticism, the enigmatic and terse word οὕτως in Mark’s description of the final moment of Jesus’ death, οὕτως ἐξέπνευσεν, should be noted. As argued before, in our discussion of the chorus-like chant of the crowds after Jesus’ healing of the paralytic in Mk 2:12 (..λέγοντας ὅτι οὕτως οὐδέποτε εἶδομεν), Mark uses this word to increase a dramatic sense of ambiguity, instilling through it in his readers more theological and literary implications and connotations. This kind of exegetical investigation will highlight the apocalyptic dimensions of the death of Jesus, especially when we explore the OT allusions within the passion narrative; comparative studies of the pre-Christian Jewish writings and literatures also would support this well.

The verb of seeing (εἶδον) occurs in the centurion’s confession of Jesus’ identity as well as in the peoples’ mockeries and derisions of Jesus (Mk 15: 32 and 36). In both places, the word is used in the context of Jesus’ deliverance from the Cross: “καταβάτω νῦν ἀπὸ τοῦ σταυροῦ, ἵνα ἴδωμεν...,” Jesus coming down from the

³⁶³ Even R. Bultmann argues for this; cf. *The History of The Synoptic Tradition*, 274.

cross on his own, in v.32 and “..ἴδωμεν εἰ ἔρχεται Ἡλίας καθελεῖν αὐτόν,” Jesus being taken down, in v.36. Furthermore, the name ‘Elijah’ is mentioned in the latter, as the crowd mistake ‘Elohim’ in Jesus’ cry as ‘Elijah’ in vv.34-35. As some scholars note, the confusion between Elohim and Elijah is not plausible in view of their sound or their linguistic character: “an eine bewußte Verdrehung.”³⁶⁴ The mention of the crowd’s confusion rather reflects Mark’s keen interest in the figure of Elijah, whom Mark uses as a literary motif throughout the Gospel, from the time the OT figure was directly mentioned or implied through the John the Baptist (see 9:4; 9:12; 9:13; cf. 6:15).

Thus the two foci of our discussion in this section will be on explicating the centurion’s confession and on exploring the motif of seeing in Mark’s passion narrative. Jesus’ power to free himself from the cross, whether actively or passively, as it is mentioned in the crowd’s mockery and Mark’s use of Elijah will be also looked at. These explorations are designed to enhance our understanding of the apocalyptic implications and images and symbols occurring in Mark’s portrayal of Jesus. We will then move onto a very important feature of the whole Gospel: the subversive nature of Mark’s portrayal of Jesus as the Crucified Messiah and the Son of God, which is intricately woven with Mark’s literary devices of irony and misunderstanding. As John Riches notes, this paradoxical portrayal of Jesus is closely related to “the restorationist myth of the return to Zion along the way of the Lord which dominates Mark’s narrative”:

And this is a myth which draws strongly on the notion that Israel’s suffering and exile is a divine punishment for its disobedience, or put it more positively, that Israel’s bitter history is part of God’s leading of Israel which will ultimately culminate in the return of the Lord’s glory to Israel and in the Gentiles’ acknowledgement of that glory. But, this mythological narrative is parodied and subverted (148)... On the one hand, he is the strong man who binds Satan and launches a sustained assault on his demons. On the other hand, he is the one who announces the good news of the Gospel, who goes along the way of the Lord to bring restoration to Zion. He commissions disciples, teaches the people and leads them to Jerusalem, where however the final drama subverts the

³⁶⁴ J. Gnllka, *Das Evangelium*, II, 322. For a detailed discussion about Aramaic ’Ēlāhî (transcribed by Mark Elōi), Aramaic ’Ēīyāhû (abbreviated ’Ēlīyâ), and Ēli (traditional Hebrew designation for God), see R. Brown, *The Death of The Messiah: From Gethsemane to the Grave. A Commentary on the Passion Narratives in Four Gospels*, II. ABRL (New York: Doubleday, 1994), 1061-1062. There Brown also points out the impossibility of the confusion on the level of the Semitic, though acknowledging that the misunderstanding is possible on the level of the Greek.

Isaianic notion of the coming of the glory of the Lord to Zion (155)... In contrast to the presentation in the earlier part of the Gospel of Jesus in terms of many of the key themes of Jewish apocalyptic eschatology, in the passion narrative, the hope for the return of the people and the restoration of Zion are parodied in the narrative of Jesus' progress to Jerusalem and his rejection and crucifixion. Jesus' death outside the city and the rending of the Temple veil signals the end of hopes for the restoration of Mount Zion. Only the centurion's confession and the message at the empty tomb tentatively suggest how such hopes may be reborn and reshaped (176).³⁶⁵

4.2. Synoptic Comparisons and Intertextual Links (Mk 15:32, 36, 39)

Mark's keenness on the motif of seeing in his apocalyptic depiction of Jesus' passion and death is readily noticeable when his Gospel is compared with the other Synoptic parallels. First of all, for example, concerning Mk 15:32, a part of the mockery and ridiculing of Jesus, Luke has no mention of it, while Mark and Matthew say that the mockers sarcastically ask Jesus to come down from the cross, laughing at his incompetence to save himself, though he was claiming to save others:

Mk 15:32	ὁ Χριστὸς ὁ βασιλεὺς Ἰσραὴλ καταβάτω νῦν ἀπὸ τοῦ σταυροῦ, ἵνα ἴδωμεν καὶ πιστεύσωμεν
Mt 27:42c	βασιλεὺς Ἰσραὴλ ἐστίν, καταβάτω νῦν ἀπὸ τοῦ σταυροῦ καὶ πιστεύσομεν ἐπ' αὐτόν

Mark's use of ἴδωμεν which is apparently redundant and even intrusive demonstrates well his keenness for the verb of seeing; the Matthean version states more naturally that if Jesus would come down from the cross, they will surely believe that Jesus is the King of Israel. Obviously Jesus' power to break free from the cross would have been a miracle but in that sarcastic and mocking context, it would have meant more than that: a proleptic adumbration of Jesus' burial. It might sound far-fetched, yet there are textual bases. We note that later in the second occurrence of the verb of seeing in v.36, Elijah is mentioned as the one who can come and take Jesus down; here, Mark uses the verb *καθελεῖν*, which is actually used in the description of the body of Jesus being taken down to be buried: ..καθελὼν αὐτὸν ἐνείλησεν τῇ σινδόνι

³⁶⁵ J. Riches, *Conflicting Mythologies*.

καὶ ἔθηκεν αὐτὸν ἐν μνημείῳ ..(15:46). In Mark's narrative world, Jesus' death should be completed in burial, and in his portrayal of Jesus, Mark also makes sure the apocalyptic nature of Jesus' death is followed through, even in the mocking scene. The high priest dares Jesus to come down from the cross, as Craig Evans notes, "knowing that he will indeed be taken down later, when dead."³⁶⁶

Also, there are interesting parallels within Mark's Gospel that are of importance in regard to our discussion. First of all, in 15: 32b, the Jewish religious leaders are described as those who seek miraculous signs; in 8:11, it is the Pharisees who are said to seek a sign from heaven:

“..καταβάτω νῦν ἀπὸ τοῦ σταυροῦ, ἵνα ἴδωμεν καὶ πιστεύσωμεν..” (15:32b)

“..ζητοῦντες παρ’ αὐτοῦ σημεῖον ἀπὸ τοῦ οὐρανοῦ..” (8:11)

Although the verb of seeing is absent in 8:11, the word σημεῖον presupposes the presence of some visible elements here. In both places, the Jewish leaders are described as seekers of visible signs of the miraculous or the supernatural, also revealed in ‘coming down from the cross’ and ‘coming from heaven.’ In the Matthean parallel passage, 16:1-4, Jesus rebuked the Pharisees for their inability to discern the signs of the times—the signs of Jonah are the only miraculous ones they will see, he says.

A second parallel is found in Mk 2:5 and Mk 15:32. In the former, Jesus is said to see the faith of the carriers of the paralytic, while in the latter, the Jewish leaders are satirically depicted as ones that might see and believe:

..ἰδὼν ὁ Ἰησοῦς τὴν πίστιν αὐτῶν.. (2:5)

..ἴδωμεν καὶ πιστεύσωμεν.. (15:32)

Here the word εἶδον and the word πίστις are juxtaposed. Though it may not amount to much contextually and semantically,³⁶⁷ from the perspective of Mark's apocalyptic

³⁶⁶ C. Evans, *Mark 8:27-16:20*, 506. J. Gnllka clearly refutes the idea of contrasting Jesus' coming down from the cross with his going up to God in heaven, as argued by Schreiber, yet passively allows an idea of contrasting Jesus' coming down with God's dereliction of the hanged (*Das Evangelium*, II, 320); for Schreiber, see *Theologie des Vertrauens*, 43-45.

³⁶⁷ Taylor and Evans note similarity in thought and logic of seeing and believing between here in Mark and in Wis 2:17-18, yet both of them are dubious of the possibility that the latter underlies the former: see Taylor, *Gospel to According to St. Mark*, 592; Evans, *Mark 8:27-16:20*, 506.

epistemology, the motif of seeing is inherently related to the belief that Jesus is the eschatological Messiah of God. ‘Faith’ in both 2:5 and 15:32 is indirectly or directly on the one hand, soberly or sarcastically on the other hand, linked with Jesus’ identity as Messiah the harbinger of the new age.

The second occurrence of the verb of seeing is found in Mark 15:36 and the verb is also found in Matthew in the crucifixion scene, as speculation about Elijah coming to take Jesus down from the cross is being made:

- Mk 15:36 "Αφετε ἴδωμεν εἰ ἔρχεται Ἡλίας καθελεῖν αὐτόν.
Mt 27:49 "Αφες ἴδωμεν εἰ ἔρχεται Ἡλίας σώσων αὐτόν.

Though both Mark and Matthew use the same sentence structure and verb of seeing, a substantial difference occurs in their use of the verbs, καθελεῖν and σώσων respectively. Mark’s use of the verb καθελεῖν seems deliberate in view of the point we already made above, regarding the motif of coming down. It also reinforces our point that Jesus’ coming down from the cross foreshadows the completion of the saving work of Jesus’ death in burial.³⁶⁸

Likewise, the occurrence of the verb of seeing found in Mk 15:39 is valuable to notice:

- Mk 15:39 ἰδὼν δὲ ὁ κεντυρίων ὁ παρεστηκὼς ἐξ ἐναντίας αὐτοῦ ὅτι οὕτως ἐξέπνευσεν εἶπεν, Ἀληθῶς οὗτος ὁ ἄνθρωπος υἱὸς θεοῦ ἦν.
Mt 27:54 Ο δὲ ἐκατόνταρχος καὶ οἱ μετ’ αὐτοῦ τηροῦντες τὸν Ἰησοῦν ἰδόντες τὸν σεισμὸν καὶ τὰ γενόμενα ἐφοβήθησαν σφόδρα, λέγοντες, Ἀληθῶς θεοῦ υἱὸς ἦν οὗτος.
Lk 23 :47 ἰδὼν δὲ ὁ ἐκατοντάρχης τὸ γενόμενον ἐδόξαζεν τὸν θεὸν λέγων, Ὅντως ὁ ἄνθρωπος οὗτος δίκαιος ἦν.

The same verb εἶδον is present in all three verses, yet each takes different objects, thus identifying different motivations for the statements about Jesus’ identity that follow. Mark links the verb εἶδον with the ὅτι clause, implying that the way Jesus’ final breath/spirit expired prompts him to state the following pronouncement. Matthew relates what the centurion and other guards saw to the signs and the current

happenings, while Luke connects the ‘seeing’ to a specific incident, and relates it to the statement about Jesus. In accordance with their different understandings of the motivations for the statements that follow, the Evangelists modify or expand the descriptions to portray Jesus. For example, Matthew expands the rending of the Temple veil in Mk 15:38, adding a string of other miraculous occurrences, and bases the confession of the centurion, in unison with others guarding Jesus, upon the fear inspired in them by these happenings. Luke expresses what the centurion saw in a neutral singular form of attributive participle τὸ γινόμενον, implying a single incident, the rending of the Temple curtain, as its proximity to the participle makes it clear. Thus, to Luke, the following statement about Jesus is motivated by the centurion’s seeing the rending of the Temple curtain.³⁶⁹ In light of the link between the rending of the Temple curtain and the following statement about Jesus, Luke reveals a clear vindication of Jesus in the statement, which is further reinforced by his declaration of Jesus, unlike the ones Mark’s and Matthew’s centurion declares, not as Son of God, but being δίκαιος. Interestingly, in substituting other motivations in place of the loud cry, many commentators follow the lead Matthew and Luke have taken.

In conclusion, Mark remains keen on the motif of seeing. Even when his use of the motif of seeing shares similarities with other gospel writers, Mark still differentiates his use of it by relating it to other elements, and invites further investigation of the motif.

4.3 Literary Context and Form-Critical Issues

Our text at hand is Mk 15:32, 36, and 39; in each of these verses the verb of seeing occurs. These verses belong to an immediate literary context which starts with “Jesus being led to be crucified” in 15:20b and lasts until the description of the followers from Jerusalem in Mk 15:41; the way to the crucifixion, the crucifixion itself, and the death of Jesus are part of this context. Content-wise, it is more accurate to divide this

³⁶⁸ An empty tomb can be rightly interpreted to mean that Jesus’ death is not a final word of God, but I am still convinced that in Mark the burial functions as an important motif to complete Jesus’ saving death.

³⁶⁹ H. Jackson seems to attribute the statement of the centurion to Luke’s coordination of the rending of the veil with the darkness, both of which precede the one articulate cry with which Jesus expires

unit into the following three: vv.20b-28 (the way to the Golgotha and the crucifixion); vv. 29-32 (mockery and derisions); vv.33-41 (the death of Jesus and its circumstances). More importantly, the frequent occurrences of a certain verb in each section are to be noted. In the first, σταυρόω occurs 4 times, and in the 2nd σώζω (3 times) and καταβαίνω (2 times) in the sense of mocking and insulting (2 times) are used. The last section contains the verbs of seeing including θεωρέω (1 time) as well as εἶδον (3 times).³⁷⁰ The concentric occurrences of the verb εἶδον in the last part, especially, deserve serious consideration for their implications.

There are some form-critical controversies over our literary corpus Mk 15:20-41, which might shed some light on our exploration of the apocalyptic implications of Jesus' crucifixion and of the nature of Mark's apocalyptic epistemology, which is conveyed through the verb of seeing. R. Bultmann finds in this corpus a wholesale accretion of legend and scriptural apologetic, leaving 20b-24a as the only verses that are preserved as ancient historical narrative.³⁷¹ But discerning Bultmann's view of Mark's redactions and traditions is a matter of exercising omniscience. J. Marcus, in his interpretation of Jesus at Crucifixion and death in light of the Psalms of the Righteous Sufferer, enumerates several lament Psalms alluded to or echoed: 15:24/Ps 22:18 (division of garments); 15:29/Ps22:7 (mockery, head shaking); 15:30-31/ Ps 22:8(Save yourself!); 15:32/Ps22:6(reviling); 15:34/ Ps22:1 (cry of dereliction); 15:36/ Ps 69:21(gave him vinegar to drink); 15:40/ Ps 38:11(looking on at a distance).³⁷² Furthermore, K. Bailey proposes that Mk 15:20-41, which is inspired by and alludes to Lam 2:15-16, takes the form of a chiastic structure.³⁷³ Aside from the validity of these proposals and arguments, from these, one gathers that the Crucifixion and the death scene in Mark is neither a simple historical reminiscence nor a plainly literary and narrative structure; it contains multi-dimensional traditional layers, combined with Mark's literary and narrative style based on his theological interpretation of the events surrounding Jesus' death. As V. Taylor notes "a historical

("The Death of Jesus in Mark and The Miracle From the Cross," *NTS* 33 [1987], 19). But he seems to overlook the use of the singular form of the participle here.

³⁷⁰ J. Gnilka, *Das Evangelium*, II, 314.

³⁷¹ Bultmann, *History of Synoptic Tradition*, 273. For a detailed discussion of form-critical issues by Bultmann, see *ibid*, 272-274.

³⁷² J. Marcus, *The Way of the Lord*, 174-175.

³⁷³ K. Bailey, "The Fall of Jerusalem and Mark's Account of the Cross," *ExpTim* 102(1990-91), 102-5.

nucleus attracted to itself traditional elements in free circulation and brought them together within the range of its own orbit.”³⁷⁴

More relevant to our interest is Gnilka’s form-critical explication of the literary corpus. According to the form-critical conclusions originally proposed by Schreiber and Schenk, the corpus Mk 15:20-41 constitutes two originally independent reports of crucifixion and death, which were put together later and which take the current literary shape found in Mark. Among the two, the older report of the crucifixion (including 20b-22a, 23a, 24, 27) evolves from Psa 22:19 and Is 53:12 and develops a realistic scriptural argument, while the second report (including 25-26, 29a-32c, 33, 34a, 37-39), an interpretation of the first, portrays Jesus’ death through Jewish-apocalyptic motifs and images. Mark’s redactional touch is detected when he joins these two reports and adds the following verses: 15:22b, 23, 29b-32b, 34b-36, 39-41.³⁷⁵ Gnilka judges that the likelihood of the intrusion of the apocalyptic motifs into the basic mode of crucifixion report is pivotal to the interpretation of our literary corpus; he points to the apocalyptic materials and data as possible tools with which the basic report was modified and revised. The basic part of the crucifixion is characterized, he asserts, by its allusions to and echoes of the Psalms of Suffering, especially Psa 22; the basic report itself, then, is not a neutral report of historical crucifixion, but it provides ‘interpretierte Geschichte.’³⁷⁶

There are some important observations to be made here. When we read together the Trial narrative (14:53-65) and the Crucifixion narrative (15:20b-41), a connection is immediately noticeable: the so-called Temple charge in 14:58 and 15:29; the Christological titles coupled with accusations of blasphemy in 14:61-62 and 15:29-32a and 39. They may show an inherent link between the two narratives; both the Temple charge and the issue of Christological titles may lead eventually to the death of Jesus with the accusation of blasphemy being immediate cause for the death.³⁷⁷ Moreover, Mark uses irony and misunderstanding as literary and thematic motifs to interweave the Temple charge and the Christological titles, and combines them with the motif of seeing in each occurrence. For example, the false charge of

³⁷⁴ V. Taylor, *The Formation of the Gospel Tradition*, (Macmillan, 1935), 59.

³⁷⁵ J. Donahue, *Are You the Christ?* SBLDS 10 (Missoula: Society of Biblical Literature, 1973), 192.

³⁷⁶ Gnilka, *Das Evangelium*, II, 310-311.

³⁷⁷ J. Donahue, *Are You the Christ?* 190-191. Recently R. Brown says the same thing in his comprehensive commentary on the Passion narrative in the Gospels (*The Death of the Messiah*, II, 987-988): “we can see that there is a deliberate effort to recall the whole trial” in the Crucifixion narrative (987).

Jesus with the Temple saying in 14:58 betrays a visual element, and more rightly it even shows a word play by depicting and juxtaposing ‘the Temple made with hands’ and ‘the Temple made without hands’: it is clear that the former refers to the visible and physical Temple and the latter to the invisible, immaterial one. Furthermore, the accusers are unwittingly, and ironically, telling the truth. The second occurrence of the Temple saying in 15: 29 also contains a seeing element when at the end of the original Temple charge, “Save yourself and come down from the cross” is added. The mockers are actually asking for a visible proof that Jesus can destroy and rebuild the Temple. In fact, two verses down in v.32, the Jewish leaders reiterate the Temple saying, but specifically requesting this time to *see* Jesus come down from the Cross.

As for the issue of the Christological titles, first of all, in 14:61-62, Jesus, in reply to the high priest’s questioning about his identity as “Messiah and the Son of the Blessed,” says “you will see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of the Power and coming with the clouds of heaven.” Then in Mk 15:32, the mockers call Jesus the Messiah and Israel’s King, albeit sarcastically, and dare him to show that he is who he says he is. In 15:39, furthermore, the centurion’s confession is incurred by seeing the way Jesus breathed his final breath. These give ample support for arguing that the motif of seeing as an integral part of Mark’s literary and thematic concern is woven also into the final chapters of Jesus’ story, particularly into the passion narrative.

Valuable as source-critical studies may be in broadening our perspectives on the text at hand as well as in reducing the risk of a naïve appropriation of what is said on the surface level of the text, they never reach an agreement on what is traditional and what is redactional, and R. Brown’s frustration that “the discouraging lack of agreement among the results advocated by the various scholars makes the whole enterprise fragile”³⁷⁸ is only reasonable. Yet, it is clear that vv. 32, 36, 39, which are our current text, result from Mark’s redactional touches for following reasons. As for v. 36b and v.39, there is a general consensus that it contains Mark’s redactional touch.³⁷⁹ V.32b is taken as either traditional (Gnilka, Schweizer) or redactional (Taylor, Schreiber, and Linnemann), but as our Synoptic comparison has demonstrated, Mark is keen on the motifs of sight and faith, and often uses them

³⁷⁸ Ibid, 904.

³⁷⁹ J. Gnilka, *Das Evangelium*, II, 312, 313; J. Schreiber, *Die Theologie des Vertrauens* (Furche Verlag, 1969), 41-44 and E. Linnemann, *Studien zur Passionsgeschichte* (Vandenhoeck und Ruprecht, 1970), 158, cited from J. Donahue, *Are You the Christ*, 192; E Schweizer, *Mark*, (John Knox, 1970), 349.

together to create effects that are uniquely apocalyptic. This is what we have in the two repetitious mocking requests from onlookers and the Jewish leaders: come down from the cross (v.30 and v.32). Also the word ‘save’ occurs in both places: ‘Save yourself’ in v.30 and ‘He cannot save himself’ in v.31. The reason for linking v.32 with v.30 and considering them as part of Mark’s seeing/believing motif is that v.30 is unanimously taken as redactional, as they reiterate the Temple charge in 14:58, and another reason for the link is that the motif of ‘coming down from the cross’ seems to betray Mark’s interest. Furthermore, the motifs of seeing and believing as well as that of ‘coming down from the cross’ reverberate in v.36, which is clearly redactional. Finally we need to note that this ‘saving’ statement is made as a way of mocking and is sarcastic in nature, an important element of the Passion narrative.

4.4 The Motif of Seeing in Mk 15:32, 36

4.41 Preliminary Remarks

In this study of the motif of seeing, there are some repetitions of what has been already said in the previous study, 4.3 LITERARY CONTEXT AND FORM-CRITICAL ISSUES; the overlapping is unavoidable, and necessary since here the verbs of seeing in Mk 15:32 and 36 will be explored in regard to their contribution to Mark’s apocalyptic and eschatological epistemology.

4.42 Interpretation

First of all, “καταβάτω νῦν ἀπὸ τοῦ σταυροῦ, ἵνα ἴδωμεν καὶ πιστεύσωμεν” in Mk 15:32 and “ἴδωμεν εἰ ἔρχεται Ἡλίας καθελεῖν αὐτόν” in Mk 15:36 form a doublet, a literary device of Mark to show the importance of seeing with regard to his epistemology and Elijah’s role with regard to John the Baptist. Yet more importantly it seems designed to function as more than a simple literary technique. It shows a deeper level of Mark’s theology. First of all, the Jewish leaders’ demand to ‘come down from the cross’ in v.32 coincides with what the passers-by are requesting ‘save yourself and come down from the cross’ in v. 30. Functioning as a literary device of

doublet, they are designed to be read together, reinforcing and interpreting each other; they also indicate that everyone was mocking Jesus. In this mocking scene, how they designate Jesus is of importance to note: ὁ καταλύων τὸν ναὸν καὶ οἰκοδομῶν ἐν τρισὶν ἡμέραις, perhaps a “proverbial identifying description of Jesus,” as Brown notes.³⁸⁰ Though some interpreters treat the two participles as a substitute for a conative tense to mean “you who would destroy the temple and build it in three days,”³⁸¹ they need to be aware that the verb form here is participial, and thus that the καταλύων and the οἰκοδομῶν should be considered in regard to the kinds of action, not the times of action. The verbs thus may be rightly taken to refer to Jesus’ action in the present tense: he destroys and builds the temple. In the way they designate Jesus, the mockers unwittingly, and ironically, recognize the present reality of what Jesus is doing in his crucifixion, but even more ironically in their actual request they still insist on ‘seeing’ the immediate proof of Jesus’ ability to destroy and rebuild the Temple in three days. By placing this request on the lips of the mockers, Mark implicitly mocks back at their misconception and thus refutes their request, and finally denotes that by his death on the cross Jesus is destroying and rebuilding the Temple.

In Mark’s macro-apocalyptic and eschatological epistemology, Jesus’ crucifixion is a prelude to the parousia; in his micro-thematic and literary structure, the burial of Jesus, which is ironically alluded to in the phrase of the ‘coming down from the cross,’ as argued above, is the time of waiting for the coming destruction of the Temple. As J. Donahue suggests, the Temple saying in 15:29 reflects an incorrect eschatology which is characterized by the imminent parousia that Mark’s contemporaries expected and he himself also had to correct. The misconceived eschatology would join the coming of Jesus as savior with the destruction of the temple which is now taking place; likewise “the incorrect understanding of the Passion would obviate the necessity of Jesus to complete the way of the cross before his vindication.”³⁸²

Next, ‘save yourself and come down from the cross’ in v.32 is a request to Jesus to perform an eschatological miracle, to save himself and enable them to

³⁸⁰ R. Brown, *The Death of the Messiah*, II, 987.

³⁸¹ Cf. BDF, § 339, 3.

³⁸² J. Donahue, *Are You the Christ?*, 198.

believe.³⁸³ As pointed out above, ‘Save yourself’ echoes Psa 22:8: “He trusts in the Lord; let the Lord rescue him. Let him deliver him, since he delights in him”(NIV). The link is strengthened when the connection between Jesus’ cry of dereliction in Mk 15:34 and a righteous Sufferer’s cry in Ps 22:1 is taken into consideration. More importantly, the findings of the history of religions approach to Ps 22 point to this link as a sign of Mark’s eschatological and apocalyptic concern. By the first century, many of the Psalms of the Righteous Sufferer were being interpreted in an eschatological way, and accordingly the motif of the Righteous Sufferer was colored by this way of interpreting, as Marcus notes.³⁸⁴

Both Marcus and L. Ruppert observe that while the Righteous Sufferer in these Psalms is basically characterized by his suffering in spite of his righteousness and his calling for God’s wrath on his enemies, sources such as Wisd. Sol 2:12-20, 5:1-7, 4 Ezra, 2 Apoc. Bar, and some New Testament passages betray a transformed idea that the righteous sufferer must suffer on account of his righteousness, though he is to be glorified at the end time.³⁸⁵ Considering the link between the post-biblical texts including the New Testament and the Psalms of the Righteous Sufferer, the mockers’ request to Jesus, in our passage at hand, to save himself by coming down from the cross should be taken to be far from being Mark’s presumable understanding of his contemporary eschatological transformation of the motif of vindication. More importantly, in the midst of his eschatological appropriation of these Old Testament Psalms, Mark views Jesus’ sufferings and death as eschatological events; still Mark does not think that ‘saving himself and coming down from the cross’ before the vindication being made both in the midst of the crucifixion and in the empty tomb is in line with the original meaning of the Psalms of the Righteous Sufferer, that is, the present vindication.

Now we turn to the verb of seeing in v.36. In v.36, the image of ‘coming down from the cross’ in v.32 is rephrased, and more importantly is coupled with the Elijah motif. The Elijah theme will reinforce the interpretation of v.32 in terms of Mark’s irony and his implicit refutation of his contemporaries’ misconceived eschatology on the basis of his conceptual recognition that the eschatological fulfillment is achieved in Jesus’ crucifixion. V. 36 reads as follows: “δραμὼν δέ τις [καὶ] γεμίσας σπόγγον

³⁸³ Taylor, *St. Mark*, (Macmillan, 1966) 591.

³⁸⁴ Marcus, *The Way*, 177.

ὄξους περιθείς καλάμῳ ἐπότιζεν αὐτόν λέγων, "Ἀφετε ἴδωμεν εἰ ἔρχεται Ἡλίας καθ' ἐλεῖν αὐτόν." As for the controversies over the nature of the act of offering vinegary wine, if Ps 69: 21 is alluded to in 15:36a, the offering of the wine is part of the mockery that was going on just before Jesus died; Jesus was mocked the way the suffering just one in Ps 69:21 was. The reference to Elijah, in this context, creates an awkwardness; to scholars like R. Brown, without the element of Elijah's coming "one would have concluded that this was a discrete reference to Ps 69:22, giving biblical background for the mockery of the just one by his enemies."³⁸⁶ The awkwardness, however, can be seen as another device of Mark for reinforcing his message. Here Mark intensifies what he meant to say in the previous mockery scene in v.32 (note the recurrences of the motifs of seeing and coming down from the cross in v.32 and v.36 here) by inserting the motif of Elijah; the onlooker's misconception about eschatological deliverance is satirized and mocked back. Also, the act of offering the vinegary wine in light Psa 69:21 may be a mocking gesture, but it is equally plausible that Mark switches it to a friendly action, and combines it with the motif of Elijah. In this case, the offer is meant to either prolong Jesus' dying or revive Jesus so that the mockers would have a chance to see whether Elijah really comes to rescue Jesus.³⁸⁷

The bystanders in the crucifixion scene wished to see Elijah coming to take Jesus down from the cross. Their expectation itself is apocalyptic in nature and fits rather nicely into the Markan series of apocalyptic events surrounding Jesus' death, e.g. the loud cry, darkness over the whole earth, rending of the Temple veil. The coming of Elijah represents an eschatological event, one that would have been highly reasonable to envision in the contemporary Jewish soil. The last O.T. prediction in Malachi is very relevant here: "Behold I will send you Elijah the prophet before the day of the Lord comes, the great and terrible day" (Mal 3:23, or 4:5). Here 'the coming of Elijah' is clearly related to eschatological acts of purification and judgement for the preparation for the coming of the Lord, to cleanse God's people and

³⁸⁵ Ibid, Marcus proceeds to enumerate further proofs of post-biblical Jewish literatures such as the Qumran texts, the Targum on the Psalms, even the Septuagint translation mode (cf. *ibid*, 178-179).

³⁸⁶ R. Brown, *The Death of the Messiah*, 1060.

³⁸⁷ Cf. J. Gnllka, *Das Evangelium*, II, 323; cf. R. Brown, *The Death of the Messiah*, II, 1064. Here Brown postulates this as one possible interpretation of the action of the onlooker with the vinegary wine. Supposing that the mistaking the Aramaic 'Ēlāhî, which is transcribed by Mark Elōi for the prophet's Aramaic name 'Ēīyāhû or abbreviated form, 'Ēlīyā, is linguistically impossible, R. Brown rightly points out that the motif of Elijah coming is an important factor for making sense of the otherwise perplexing issue of the misunderstanding, since he believes that the call for the coming of Elijah did not originate on the Semitic level of the tradition from a genuine misunderstanding of the name of God (cf. *The Death*, II, 1062).

to pave the way for the coming of the Lord (cf. Mal 3:1, 3:2b-4 and 3:23-24 MT [4:5-6 LXX]). Furthermore in Mark's contemporary social milieu, Elijah was viewed as a very prominent figure with regard to the expectations of the end time; as miracle worker in times of critical need to protect the innocent and rescue the righteous, as forerunner of the God's coming, as anointer of the Messiah.³⁸⁸ In addition, the identification of the messenger mentioned in Mal 3:1 as Elijah *redivivus* catalysed lively speculation in some eschatological traditions in the early and Rabbinic Judaism (e.g. *Sir* 48:10; *1 En.* 90:31; *Sopherim* 19:9; *Tg. Pseudo-Jonathan Dt.* 30:4; *Sipre Dt.* 41).³⁸⁹

Although the connection between the coming of Elijah in Mark and the Elijah figure in the prophecy of Malachi cannot be proven,³⁹⁰ the preparatory nature of Elijah's coming is implicitly related to the ministry of John the Baptist (cf. 1:4-5) and is later confirmed by Jesus himself (9:12-13). The juxtaposition of the ministry of John the Baptist and the two immediately following apocalyptic events (the rending of the heavens and the coming down of the Spirit), in particular, highlights the eschatological nature of Elijah's coming. In this regard, S. Motyer draws an important analogy between Elijah /Elisha and John the Baptist/ Jesus and posits that the Elijah/Elisha symbolism is present in both the baptism and the crucifixion text. According to his typological interpretation, John the Baptist is portrayed as an Elijah figure, and the coming down of the Spirit upon Jesus at the Baptismal scene in the Jordan river represents the gift of double Elijah's spirit to Elisha beside the same river; Elisha is greater than Elijah as Jesus is stronger than John (1:7). Then at the crucifixion the crowd ironically mistakes Jesus' cry of dereliction for a cry to Elijah. The analogy deepens even more when we remember how Elisha tore his cloak in two after Elijah's departure (compare 2 Kings 2:12/ Mk 14:61), and how the sons of the prophets stood ἐξ ἐναντίας in 2 Kgs 2:7, 15; in Mark's description, the centurion stands ἐξ ἐναντίας Jesus in Mk 15:39.³⁹¹ In this light, the coming of Elijah is used ironically by Mark, as an ironic refutation of the misunderstood eschatology and Christology of the contemporary Jewish peoples.

³⁸⁸ Cf. J. Jeremias, "Ἠλίας," *TDNT*, 930-935; W. Lane, *The Gospel According to Mark*, NICNT, 573; R. Brown, *Death of Messiah*, II, 1062.

³⁸⁹ Cf. Watts, *New Exodus*, 74-75. Here Watts discusses the interpretation of Mal 3:1 in the history of tradition.

³⁹⁰ This was raised by J. Marcus, a former supervisor of my doctoral study, in a supervising discussion.

³⁹¹ S. Motyer, "The Rending of the veil," *NTS* 33 (1987), 156.

Keeping the apocalyptic and eschatological nature of the Elijah motif, as appropriated by Mark, ἴδωμεν in v.36 does not merely work as a foil to ἰδὼν in v.39, that is, to show a dichotomy between blindness and true perception, as most commentators interpret. Along with ‘seeing’ of the Jewish leaders as described in v.32, the ‘seeing’ of the bystanders in v.36 has been dealt with mostly in regard to their ‘blindness’ or ‘looking without seeing,’ as already foreseen in 4:12; this is of course in a sharp contrast to the ‘seeing’ of the centurion in the passage immediately following in v.39.³⁹² Observing a smaller literary unit including v.32 and v.36, and reading it in light of Ps 69:22, J. Marcus posits that the ‘seeing’ in v.36 is a form of blindness and connects it to a curse of blindness in the Psalm.³⁹³ On the other hand, H. Jackson in observing a larger unit of Jesus’ crucifixion notes that the prominent position of the participle ἰδὼν in the visual act of the centurion makes it stand in deliberate parallel and contrast to the jest of the Jewish leaders in 15:32 (“ὁ Χριστὸς ὁ βασιλεὺς Ἰσραὴλ καταβάτω νῦν ἀπὸ τοῦ σταυροῦ, ἵνα ἴδωμεν καὶ πιστεύσωμεν”) and the mockery of the bystanders in 15:36 (“ἀφετε ἴδωμεν εἰ ἔρχεται Ἡλίας καθελεῖν αὐτόν”).³⁹⁴ Yet my point is that whether from the perspective of a smaller or larger unit, the primary focus here should be placed on the accompanying apocalyptic and eschatological events; accordingly the verbs, whether they are pointing to faulty sight or not, must be viewed in relation to these events and explored in regard to their distinctive role in the events. Otherwise we might be wondering how we are able to explain why the same term is used in radically different or conflicting senses within such a small literary unit. It seems much better to see the verb in an apocalyptic and eschatological sense, if it is possible.

A brief look at the ‘seeing’ of the centurion in v.39, then, is needed here, in the same logical flow followed in exploring the ‘seeing’ in v.32 and 36. The main issue here is whether the seeing of the centurion is positively or negatively portrayed, or even sarcastically depicted, possibly linking it with the crowd’s mockery of Jesus. On the one hand, as mentioned above, because of its prominent position, it is hard to believe that Mark did not intend to have the participle ἰδὼν stand in deliberate contrast to the gibe of the Jewish leaders v.32 and the mocking suggestion of the

³⁹² Cf. Matera, *The Kingship of Jesus: Composition and Theology in Mark 15*. SBLDS 66 (Chico: Scholars Press, 1982), 129.

³⁹³ See Marcus, *Mystery*, 147; *Way of the Lord*, 184.

³⁹⁴ H. Jackson, “The Death of Jesus in Mark,” *NTS* 33 (1987), 20.

onlookers in v.36.³⁹⁵ On the other hand, Mark can be portraying the centurion with his act of seeing and confession in the light of his motif of irony and misunderstanding. This is very plausible considering that Mark transforms the centurion's pronouncement into something quite different than Jewish, that is, into an ironic and uncomprehending vindication of Jesus and his death, as found in Greek or other Christian examples. Through the use of ironic statements on the part of Jesus' enemies, Mark vindicates Jesus in the eyes of his audience while those in the narrative world such as the soldiers, passers-by, and Jewish leaders continue in their misunderstanding.³⁹⁶ Although this issue cannot be fully dealt with here, what is crucial is that 'seeing,' whether it is related to false sight or true perception, is an integral part of the apocalyptic and eschatological epistemology and its world.

This in turn means that 'seeing' can be a channel for either false sight or true perception through which the accompanying apocalyptic and eschatological events are conveyed and described. Understanding the centurion's act of seeing in its current literary context which includes Jesus' loud cry as he dies, the rending of the Temple curtain, and his confession of Jesus as the Son of God puts this topic in the proper light of the theme of Mark's irony and misunderstanding.

4.43 Conclusion

We have argued that the seeing of the centurion should not be seen just as a matter of false or true sight, but should be viewed as an integral part of apocalyptic and eschatological rendering of various events.³⁹⁷ We have also contended that understanding the centurion's act of seeing in its current literary context allows us to note that it was used as part of the theme of Mark's irony and misunderstanding; whether it was positive or negative, thus in turn true or false, is rather irrelevant. Although a more detailed discussion will follow later, some key supporting factors for rendering the centurion's sight this way should make our argument clearer and prepare us for our discussion on the nature of the centurion's seeing. The ambiguity about what the centurion saw that led the centurion to make the high Christological

³⁹⁵ Jackson, "The Death of Jesus," 20.

³⁹⁶ W. Shiner, "The Ambiguous Pronouncement," 15.

³⁹⁷ My point is here that the same verb of seeing can be a channel for both false sight and true perception.

confession should be noticed first: is it Jesus' loud cry? If it is the case, how could a cry voiced out in the moment of death, not a sign of victory but a sign of frustration and even defeat, lead to such a confession? Second, there are other ambiguous elements in the actual statement of the confession: why not 'this' but 'this man'?; what about the anarthrous use of 'son of God' term, while all other references to Jesus as the son of God in Mark always occur with the definite article ? (cf. 1:9; 9:7, 14:62 except for Son of God in 1:1 used as appositive). Finally, the occurrence of οὕτως, a favourite Markan word, seems also ambiguous, perhaps intentionally so, as indicated in its emphatic position within the sentence structure. These issues will be dealt with later as the content of his act of seeing is explored carefully; noticing them here heightens our awareness of the ambiguous nature of the centurion's 'seeing' and the subsequent confession.

4.5 The Centurion's 'Seeing' in Mk 15:39

4.51 Preliminary Remarks

Concerning the passage at hand, one of the most critical issues is what the centurion saw, or to put it more accurately, what Mark says that the centurion saw. The text, Ἰδὼν δὲ ὁ κεντυρίων ὁ παρεστηκὼς ἐξ ἐναντίας αὐτοῦ ὅτι οὕτως ἐξέπνευσεν εἶπεν, Ἀληθῶς οὗτος ὁ ἄνθρωπος υἱὸς θεοῦ ἦν, links what the centurion saw with the way Jesus finally died (cf. link between Ἰδὼν and ὅτι clause), indicating that what the centurion saw led him to pronounce the following Christological statement? The connection immediately yields to a question: how did Jesus' death with a loud cry persuade a Roman soldier to pronounce such a profound Christological statement. In addition, as already pointed out earlier, the 'rending of the Temple curtain' in v.38 clearly interferes with the otherwise natural flow from v.37 to v.39, leaving one to wonder what Mark intended to mean through the current structure. All these urge us to unravel issues that lie beneath the surface level of the text itself.

Two things are to be kept in mind concerning this topic. First, in the text (Mk 15:37-39) as it stands, there is no apparent or logical connection between Jesus' death with a loud cry and the Roman centurion's confession of Jesus as God's true Son. The text contains Mark's compositional structure that is intentional and schematic; the

occurrence of the word οὕτως and the repetition of the word ἐξέπνευσεν in v. 37 and v.39 will be explored as evidences of this intentionality. Second, what the centurion saw was not just Jesus' peculiar death, but also the rending of the Temple curtain, a metaphorical symbol that the messianic prophecy about the eschatological Temple is fulfilled in the apocalyptic event of Jesus' crucifixion, proclaiming God's eschatological rule over the whole universe and all humanity.

4.52 The Centurion's 'Seeing' Jesus' Death

37ὁ δὲ Ἰησοῦς ἀφείς φωνὴν μεγάλην ἐξέπνευσεν. 38 Καὶ τὸ καταπέτασμα τοῦ ναοῦ ἐσχίσθη εἰς δύο ἀπ' ἄνωθεν ἕως κάτω. 39 Ἰδὼν δὲ ὁ κεντυρίων ὁ παρῆσ-
τηκῶς ἐξ ἐναντίας αὐτοῦ ὅτι οὕτως ἐξέπνευσεν εἶπεν, Ἀληθῶς οὗτος ὁ ἄνθρω-
πος υἱὸς θεοῦ ἦν.

It is apparent that v.39 repeats v.37, especially in view of the recurrence of the word ἐξέπνευσεν. And in v.39 οὕτως is added so that we have an immediate impression that οὕτως refers to ἀφείς φωνὴν μεγάλην in v.37, to Jesus' releasing a loud cry or voice. Putting together these fragments, we might conclude that what the centurion saw in v.39 is Jesus' death with a loud cry, and that 'seeing' it led the centurion to confess that Jesus is truly God's son. These surface level facts are supported by Jewish and Christian apocalyptic literature, leading the majority of the most recent commentators to espouse the view that the loud cry was understood by Mark as an eschatological sign; through the earth-shaking voice of the executor of Yahweh's justice, Jesus shouted in judgement of the wicked or in triumph and exaltation over the demonic powers that opposed the advent of his reign³⁹⁸ And this link between v.37 and v.39 and their reciprocating effects as a doublet have been recognized by many interpreters, and yet there has not been any sort of general consensus regarding the nature and scope of the connection. Supposing that v.39 originally went with v.37 because ἰδὼν ... ὅτι οὕτως ἐξέπνευσεν refers to ὁ δὲ Ἰησοῦς ... ἐξέπνευσεν, R. Bultman still speculates that οὕτως is meant in all probability to refer to the τέρας in v.33 (v.38?);

³⁹⁸ J. Gnllka, *Das Evangelium*, II, 312-13, 323, 324; Theodore J. Weeden, *Mark- Traditions in Conflict* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1971), 145-7, 165-6; *ibid*, "The Cross as Power in Weakness (Mark 15:20b-41)," in *The Passion in Mark. Studies on Mark 14-16* ed. W. H. Kelber (Fortress, 1976), 120, 130-4; Martinez, *The Gospel Accounts of the Death of Jesus*, 31-32, 59; Robin Scroggs, "Reflections on the Question: Was There a Pre-Markan Passion Narrative?" SBLASP (1971) II, 557-8, 559-61.

v.39, he concludes, is also part of the legendary development, though he is not sure whether or not v.37 is an older, relatively legend-free tradition.³⁹⁹ There is no denying that v.37 and v.39 go together, yet it is not reasonable to go further back to the description of the portents that just preceded Jesus' actual death in v.33 in order to link it to what the centurion saw in v.39. J. Gnllka, generally in agreement with the direction that Bultmann is taking, supposes that the motivation for the centurion's confession includes the accompanying circumstances at the time of Jesus' death, as well as Jesus' loud cry in v.37.⁴⁰⁰ Gibson also argues that the reason for the centurion's confession of Jesus as the true Son of God is that he saw both the manner of Jesus' dying and the circumstances surrounding his death.⁴⁰¹ In fact, R. Brown validates this trend by saying that the loud cry, shouting, and letting go of the breath/spirit of Mark 15:37 constitutes an apocalyptic sign similar to the eschatological elements of darkness, rent sanctuary veil, earthquake, and risen dead that accompany the death of Jesus in other Gospels.⁴⁰² Many more examples of strenuous effort to connect what the centurion saw to either something else or something more than Jesus' loud cry at the moment of death can be cited; and they are all motivated by the fact that there is logical insufficiency in connecting Jesus' loud cry and the centurion's Christological statement. Many interpreters, in fact, find difficulty with the centurion's 'seeing' Jesus' expiration with a loud cry as a sole ground for the confession, some linking what the centurion saw with other elements than the way Jesus expires, some making a valiant attempt to make sense of what is said within the text itself (vv.37-39), by explicating words like φωνήν μεγάλην and ἐκπνέω. N. Stock refers to OT passages where a cry accompanied divine action,⁴⁰³ and surmises that Jesus' cry without words could have been revelatory.⁴⁰⁴ F.W. Danker even argues that as a sign of victory over the evil forces, an evil spirit came out of

³⁹⁹ R. Bultmann, *The History of the Synoptic Tradition*, 274.

⁴⁰⁰ J. Gnllka, *Das Evangelium*, II, 324.

⁴⁰¹ Gibson thinks that the manner of Jesus' dying is his engagement as the Christ, the king of Israel, in a resolute passiveness in the face of derision (15:29; 14:56; 15:15-20), a refusal to escape or mitigate the sufferings appointed for him (15:28), the willing endurance of desolating torments, a dedicated obedience to divine command that one should save one's life by losing it (15:29-32), and a continuing trust in an apparently absent God (15:34). In other words, the manner of Jesus Messiah's death is that of the servant of Isaiah (cf. "Jesus' Wilderness Temptation according to Mark," 28, *JSNT* 53 [1994], 28).

⁴⁰² R. Brown, *The Death of the Messiah*, 1045.

⁴⁰³ Cf. Amos 1:2; Joel 4:16 (3:16); Jer 25:30; Ps 46:7: cf. also 4 Ezra 13:12-13; 1 Thess 4:16; Rev 10:3.

⁴⁰⁴ N. Stock, "Das Bekenntnis des Centurio. Mk 15. 39 im Rahmen des Markusevangeliums," *ZKT* 100 (1978), quoted from R. Brown, *Death of Messiah*, 1144.

Jesus with a loud cry as he died, and that it was the sight of this that left a deep impression on the centurion.⁴⁰⁵

As for the word ἐκπνέω, various explanations are given in an attempt to give extraordinary or supernatural dimensions to Jesus' death or make sense of the present structure of the link between how Jesus died and the centurion's testimony, treating Jesus' expiration as an awe-evoking event. H. Jackson also pays special attention to the word ἐκπνέω, but his explanation is much more plausible; he believes that Mark has a special reason for adopting it from a classical euphemism to describe death, and for repeating it in v.37 and v.39, slipping in a word pun between 'breath' and 'spirit' as its semantic references. On the basis of these double references, and while drawing a parallel between Jesus' baptismal scene in Mk 1:9-11 and the Crucifixion scene, Jackson infers that just as Jesus' earthly ministry as son of God is initiated by the descent of God's Spirit onto him (the descent tears the heaven), so it is brought to a close by the ascent of that spirit out of him in his dying breath and tears the Temple curtain at its departure.⁴⁰⁶ The validity of Jackson's argument is to be appreciated as he focuses on explicating the word ἐκπνέω; however, it is the present textual link between the centurion's 'seeing' and the peculiarity of Jesus' death that should be focused here, as that is what will draw our attention to the two monumental Christ events, the Baptism and the Crucifixion, and pointing to the etymology πνευ- and a paronomasia.

We have pointed out that textually speaking, Mark links what the centurion saw with how Jesus died, and that this link seems not to be persuasive as a motivation that lies behind the centurion's high Christological statement, certainly not convincing enough to silence all subsequent alternatives to and substitutes for this textual link. Therefore we have also surveyed various interpretations that try to make sense of the current awkward shape of the passage, 15:37-39, mainly by focusing on the words φωνὴν μεγάλην and ἐκπνέω. All alternative explanations merely maximise the extraordinary or even revelatory dimensions of Jesus' death, failing to provide sufficient proofs of how the high Christological pronouncement was possibly followed. Now we turn to those proofs.

⁴⁰⁵ F. W. Danker, "The Demonic Secret in Mark: A Reexamination of the Cry of Dereliction (15:34)," *ZNW* 61 (1970), 69.

⁴⁰⁶ H. Jackson, "The Death of Jesus in Mark," 27.

4.53 The Centurion's Seeing the Temple Veil Being Torn Down

37ὁ δὲ Ἰησοῦς ἀφείλς φωνὴν μεγάλην ἐξέπνευσεν. 38 Καὶ τὸ καταπέτασμα τοῦ ναοῦ ἐσχίσθη εἰς δύο ἀπ' ἄνωθεν ἕως κάτω. 39 Ἰδὼν δὲ ὁ κεντυρίων ὁ παρεστηκὼς ἐξ ἐναντίας αὐτοῦ ὅτι οὕτως ἐξέπνευσεν εἶπεν, Ἀληθῶς οὗτος ὁ ἄνθρωπος υἱὸς θεοῦ ἦν.

4.531 Preliminary Remarks

What the centurion saw should be linked with the rending of the Temple curtain and this link clarifies the motivation of the centurion's confession—the rending of the Temple veil, an object of the centurion's seeing, though this is not made explicit. As a way of supporting this argument, textual and narrative issues are important to note. First, textually speaking, Mark intentionally reiterates the word ἐξέπνευσεν to depict Jesus' final death, connoting that something related to the Spirit is involved in Jesus' death. Also, his use of the word οὕτως is deliberately ambiguous, in terms of what it refers to. Second, from a narrative-world point of view, the link is a logical one for Mark's readers. As W. Shiner observes, although the Temple veil would not be actually visible from Golgotha, it is unlikely that Mark's readers knew the geography of Jerusalem well enough to know that it was invisible: their natural assumption would be that the veil is visible since the whole scene otherwise takes place on Golgotha. And, of course, the narrative geography may be different from the physical geography. Whatever the readers' knowledge of Jerusalem's geography, the rhetorical flow of the passage leads them to link the darkness, the cry and the splitting of the veil with the pronouncement.⁴⁰⁷ Third, from a historical point of view, if the place of the centurion on Golgotha was within the visibility or sight of the Temple, he could have seen the rending of the Temple veil at the moment of Jesus' death. Finally, and more significantly, from Mark's theological and compositional point of view, the link is only reasonable. In the Baptismal episode already, he has described the rending of the heavens, using the word σχίζω, its first occurrence in Mark, and the same word appears here for the second, and last, time in the Gospel, in describing the rending of the Temple veil. These evidences support our argument that the centurion saw the rending of the Temple veil at the moment of Jesus' death and witnessing it realized Jesus' divine sonship.

⁴⁰⁷ W. Shiner, "The Ambiguous Pronouncement of the Centurion," *JSNT* 78 (2000), 10.

4.532 Analysis and Interpretation of Mk 15:37-39

A Diagram of Mk 15:37-39⁴⁰⁸:

37 ὁ δὲ Ἰησοῦς ἀφείς (by releasing) φωνὴν μεγάλην
ἐξέπνευσεν (breathed out his final breath),
38 καὶ (so that) τὸ καταπέτασμα τοῦ ναοῦ ἐσχίσθη
εἰς δύο ἀπ’ ἄνωθεν ἕως κάτω.

39 Ἰδὼν (when having seen) δὲ
ὁ κεντυρίων ὁ παρεστηκὼς ἐξ ἐναντίας αὐτοῦ
ὅτι οὕτως ἐξέπνευσεν (that he breathed out his final breath like this)
εἶπεν, Ἀληθῶς οὗτος ὁ ἄνθρωπος υἱὸς θεοῦ ἦν.

A closer observation of the text itself will provide us with more hints for discerning Mark’s intention. Above is a diagram which shows the syntactical subordination of the clauses within the passage. The whole text consists of three main clauses (italicized in bold) and each clause consists of one main finite verb and its subject, and thus each one is delimited as such: the 1st (ὁ Ἰησοῦς ἐξέπνευσεν); the 2nd (τὸ καταπέτασμα ἐσχίσθη); the 3rd (ὁ κεντυρίων εἶπεν) (ἦν is taken as a part of the indirect statement led by the preceding main verb and all participles are also taken as subordinate to main clauses, respectively). Among these three main clauses, the second one is taken as subordinate to the first one, as explained in detail below, hence the two big divisions between v.38 and v.39. Then both ‘Jesus’ and ‘the centurion’ are placed at the end of the left side, revealing that they are the main subjects of the two main finite verbs ἐξέπνευσεν and εἶπεν, and further indicating that they are the main characters of the whole scene. In short, we can summarize this passage as follows: ‘Jesus did something and in reaction to it the centurion said something.’

Let us start with the subordination of the second clause to the first. Though we acknowledge that καί is Mark’s favourite device to string sentences, which might simply be a sign of his narrative style’s colloquial nature, it shouldn’t be taken lightly;

⁴⁰⁸ The immediately following full paragraph will explain this diagram, yet let me say something about it. Translations in parenthesis are my interpretations of the words. The big line space between v.38 and v.39 is a marker of an independent thought unit. Both Jesus and the centurion, which are placed on the end of the left side are main subjects of two main finite verbs ἐξέπνευσεν and εἶπεν, and thus treated as main characters of the whole scene. For more detailed information about this interpretive method, see Gordon Fee, *New Testament Exegesis: A Handbook for Students and Pastors* (the Westminster Press, 1983), 54-58.

the word offers valuable exegetical insights to Markan studies. We suggest that καί in the beginning of v.38 be taken in the consecutive sense among the uses of καί as copulative conjunction, meaning ‘and so,’ connoting purpose or result.⁴⁰⁹ As H. Jackson notes, καί may express result and is thus another example of hypotactic parataxis (syntactically subordinated parataxis) and the connection between v.37 and v.38 is strictly and fully causal.⁴¹⁰ This means that the purpose of what happened in v.37 is accomplished as a result in v.38; the way Jesus died might exert a certain impact on what happened to the Temple curtain. The value of this consecutive reading of καί can be reinforced by considering another factor δέ, which occurs in both v.37 and v.39. δέ is primarily an adversative conjunction which is designed to be correlated with μέν in classical Greek, connecting preceding and following clauses and sentences in an adversative sense. Of course, ὁ δέ at the beginning of v.37 may be a simple marker that v.37 continues what has been narrated up to v.36, which is its normal usage.⁴¹¹ Yet the word δέ is absent in v.38, an absence by which v. 38 becomes intimately related or, more importantly, subordinated to v.37. This finding strengthens the point that was made above regarding καί.

Another crucial factor that reinforces the link between what the centurion saw and the rending of the Temple curtain should be considered: ἐξ ἐναντίας αὐτοῦ in v.39. What does αὐτοῦ refer to, Jesus on the cross or the Temple? Does the centurion stand, in front of Jesus, as C. Evans argues, or opposite the Temple, as R. Gundry argues? In answering these questions, what we often have are mere speculations. R. Gundry supposes that Mark describes the centurion as standing opposite the Temple, still interpreting it to mean that “he enjoys a full view of the veil-rending.”⁴¹² C. Evans thinks that ὁ παρεστηκώς ἐξ ἐναντίας αὐτοῦ should be taken to mean that the centurion is standing before Jesus, as opposed to behind him or off to the side, still maintaining that “the centurion witnesses fully the tearing of the Temple veil.”⁴¹³ J. Gniska takes a kind of middle position but what he points to as the ground for his stance is an interesting one: there is an inconsistency in ἐξ ἐναντίας αὐτοῦ because grammatically it concerns the Temple, but in terms of content it actually refers to

⁴⁰⁹ Cf. BDF, §§ 442 (2), 458, 471.

⁴¹⁰ H. Jackson, “The Death of Jesus in Mark,” 27-28; Taylor, *St. Mark*, 49.

⁴¹¹ Cf. BDF, § 251.

⁴¹² R. Gundry, *Mark*, 950.

⁴¹³ C. Evans, *Mark 9:27-16:20*, 510.

Jesus.⁴¹⁴ Whether one approaches it from the grammatical point of view or from a contextual point of view, this issue is not an easy one to solve; nevertheless it bears a great weight in determining whether or not the rending of the Temple curtain was caused by Jesus' expulsion of his breath/spirit. One may think that as long as the centurion had a full view of the rending of the Temple curtain, it does not matter where he stood. But if the centurion stood *opposite Jesus* (ἐξ ἐναντίας αὐτοῦ), facing toward him so that he could see that Jesus exhaled his breath, it means that it is very unlikely he was able to see the rending of the Temple curtain, because he stands in the way that he faces his back toward the Temple. If the centurion stood facing toward the Temple so that he could see clearly what happen to the Temple curtain, he would have seen Jesus exhaling his last breath toward the Temple curtain; this would be possible only if the centurion was standing by Jesus, off to the side. In conclusion, ἐξ ἐναντίας αὐτοῦ must refer to the Temple; the centurion stood opposite the Temple, facing toward it and beside Jesus thus having a full view of the exhalation of Jesus' breath/spirit.

Also, the participle ἀφείς should be discussed: as a conjunctive participle (denoting an adverbial idea of manner under the larger classification of the participle, the circumstantial participle) it indicates the manner in which an action takes place.⁴¹⁵ Obviously this participle is linked with the main finite verb ἐξέπνευσεν, revealing the manner in which Jesus died. Thus, the whole sentence reads: 'by releasing a loud cry, Jesus expired or breathed out his final breath/ spirit.' This translation implicitly refutes readings of the verse as 'after or when (temporal use) he released loud cry, he died.' It leads us further to view that the release of the loud cry and Jesus' expiration are thematically in close connection, and they work together to bring out what happened to the Temple curtain. The release of the loud cry should not be treated separately from the tearing of the Temple curtain: it causes the Temple curtain to rend, as our further exploration of the words ἐξέπνευσεν and οὕτως will show.

Before we go on to study these words, a quick comment on the term φωνὴν μεγάλην⁴¹⁶ is in order, as it is the object of the participle ἀφείς. In 4.52, THE CENTURION'S 'SEEING' JESUS' DEATH, we have already pointed out that the

⁴¹⁴ Gnllka, *Das Evangelium*, II, 313.

⁴¹⁵ BDF, § 418.

⁴¹⁶ Certainly it might be possible to take this word in Mk 15:37 as a doublet coupled with the first loud cry in 15:34. For consenting interpreter see R. Gundry, *Mark*, 969, and for opposing interpreter see J. D. Kingsbury, *Christology of Mark's Gospel*, 131, n.221.

majority of the recent commentators espouse the view that the loud cry was seen by Mark as an eschatological sign; with the earth-shaking voice of the executor of Yahweh's justice, Jesus shouted in judgment of the wicked and in triumph and exaltation over the demonic powers that oppose the advent of his reign. It is very plausible that the term φωνὴν μεγάλην⁴¹⁷ should be read as an eschatological sign of God's judgment over the wicked. To continue with this issue, φωνὴν μεγάλην should be pointed out; it contains a heavy resonance of OT prophetic texts, especially of the sections that speak of the Day of the Lord. Among many possible OT background texts (cf. Amos 1:2; Isa 30:31, 33:3; Joel 3:16/4:16 LXX; Jer 25:30/32:30 LXX), Jeremiah 25:30, for example, speaks of the Lord uttering his mighty voice over and against the nations that have oppressed Israel in the 'seventy years' of captivity. Jeremiah 25 as a whole deals with God's eschatological restoration of Israel after the 'seventy years', full of judgment motifs against oppressive nations and the wicked. Yahweh's roaring voice there is depicted to be identified with not only his judgment but also actual execution of the judgment (cf. v.31), just as Jesus' loud cry is a sign of God's judgment and at the same time of its execution, the rending of the Temple curtain.

Joel 2:11LXX can be cited also to support our case here, as it contains the same term φωνὴν μεγάλην and the expression ἡ ἡμέρα τοῦ κυρίου: καὶ κύριος δώσει φωνὴν αὐτοῦ πρὸ προσώπου δυνάμεως αὐτοῦ ὅτι πολλή ἐστιν σφόδρα ἡ παρεμβολὴ αὐτοῦ ὅτι ἰσχυρὰ ἔργα λόγων αὐτοῦ διότι *μεγάλη ἡ ἡμέρα τοῦ κυρίου μεγάλη καὶ ἐπιφανὴς σφόδρα καὶ τίς ἔσται ἱκανὸς αὐτῇ*. The verse describes the Lord *uttering his voice in his judgment*, resounding the first verse of the same chapter ("the Day of the Lord is coming"), and the inauguration of the great and terrible Day of the Lord's wrath. An intriguing parallelism to note here is that Joel 2:10, one verse earlier, speaks of the darkening of the sun, reminding one of Mark's description in Mk 15:33 of the darkness covering over the whole earth just before Jesus' death in 15:37. In both Joel and Mark, the judgment theme is present, either explicitly or implicitly. As H. Jackson observes, these passages are connected to each other in terms of the dynamic view of God and his kingdom, and a demonstration of the power of Yahweh's (Jesus') Spirit/breath, which in both follows the judgment cry.⁴¹⁸

⁴¹⁷ There is a danger here as it might be taken psychologically, as an expression of great despair or frustration or even heroic victory, which might be indicated by the fact that Jesus did not die in fleshly exhaustion or did not lapse into unconsciousness.

⁴¹⁸ H. Jackson, "The Death of Jesus," 29.

Third, it is safe to assume that Mark's use of the word ἐξέπνευσεν to depict Jesus' death is deliberate, judging by how the word occurs twice within such a short passage. Moreover, the word ἐξέπνευσεν is more than a simple euphemism for expressing Jesus' death. Mark uses the word ἀποθνήσκω 6 times to depict a physical death (Mk 5:35, 39; 9:26; 12:21, 22; 15:44); it is the usual term for him to speak of death. So, why does Mark break away from the usual word and opt for the word ἐξέπνευσεν here? If Mark just intended to convey 'that Jesus died in this manner,' as H. Jackson wonders, "why did he not simply write ὅτι οὕτως ἀπέθανεν or the like?"⁴¹⁹ Taking it as an euphemism doesn't do justice. In 15:44 in the immediately following burial scene, Mark goes back to his usual term ἀποθνήσκω to refer to Jesus' death. Furthermore, it should be pointed out that ἐκπνέω is a common euphemism for dying in classical Greek idiom (with or without an object like ψυχὴν, βίον, or πνεῦμα), but not in the koine.⁴²⁰ It is only reasonable then that Mark's use of the word is deliberate and strategic for creating certain effects he has in mind. The clue for that is found in the term ἐξέπνευσεν itself, as it has πνευ- as its etymological root, under whose semantic field the term πνεῦμα referring to the Spirit belongs. Mark is trying to bring up again the issue of 'the Spirit' who came upon Jesus at his baptism in the incipient moment of his earthly ministry. Paying special attention to the double references of the term πνεῦμα, spirit and breath, we are led to suppose that Jesus' final breath brought down the Temple curtain from top to bottom. This does not necessarily have to exclude the idea that the Spirit was working in the rending of the Temple curtain, as the two views are complementary in nature, even though they are distinctive in terms of subject (the Spirit) and object (Jesus' breath).

The term οὕτως gives more support for the above view, as we have shown in chapter 3 of this study, THE MOTIF OF SEEING IN 'STREITGESPRÄCHE', especially when we interpret the clause, "οὕτως οὐδέποτε εἶδομεν" in Mk 2:12. The term οὕτως occurs 10 times altogether in Mark and all of them are used adverbially, dutifully playing the role of modifying verbs. More importantly there is a striking similarity in structure between 2:12 and 15:39: "ὅτι οὕτως οὐδέποτε εἶδομεν." // "ὅτι οὕτως ἐξέπνευσεν." Except for the negative particle οὐδέποτε in 2:12, their syntax is exactly the same, (ὅτι clause including οὕτως + finite verb). It means that they can

⁴¹⁹ Ibid, 26, . . .

⁴²⁰ Lagrange, *Evangile selon Saint Marc*, 436; Schenk, *Der Passionsbericht nach Markus*, 45, quoted from H. Jackson, "The Death of Jesus in Mark," 27 and n.27; Taylor, *St. Mark*, 596.

or should be taken as a decisive clue for interpreting Mark's use of οὕτως. As the οὕτως in 2:12 is rendered in accordance with its adverbial sense, the whole cause should read: 'we have never seen the healing of the paralytic in such a way that it occurred by the forgiveness of sins, especially through the presently forgiving authority of the Son of Man.' Likewise, the ὅτι οὕτως ἐξέπνευσεν should read: 'Jesus breathed his final breath in such a way that the curtain of the Temple was rent into two from top to bottom.' Now it becomes clear that οὕτως in v.39 modifies the verbal idea of ἐξέπνευσεν. It further reveals a very important fact: οὕτως does not refer to the loud cry of Jesus, nor to any of the other circumstances accompanying the Crucifixion; οὕτως modifies the word ἐξέπνευσεν itself. Thus, it is used to mean something like 'so intensely,' 'so forcefully,' implying the force of that which tore down the Temple curtain from top to bottom. Rather than the way that Jesus died, or any other portending circumstances attendant upon Jesus' death, the final breath Jesus breathed out brought down the Temple curtain, caught by the sight of the centurion, leaving such a profound impact on him that he confessed Jesus as God' son: "only God's Spirit in Jesus and its work are effective in the centurion's confession."⁴²¹

Our argument that what the centurion saw was the rending of the Temple curtain is thus well grounded. We have already recognized two prominent factors of our passage: the peculiar structure of the text, which is characterized by the intrusiveness of v.38; the ambiguous reference of the centurion's act of seeing. With regard to these factors, we are presently qualified to make an initial supposition that the centurion's confession is designed to play a role of vindication of Jesus' innocent death. This supposition will be elaborated in the following paragraph, as we pose before us a vexing question: why did Mark not link the act of seeing explicitly to the rending of the Temple veil, rather than to Jesus' expiration being done "οὕτως."

The motif of 'seeing' as part of Markan apocalyptic epistemology, which is characterized by its dual modes of seeing, provides Mark with a tool to design the centurion's act of seeing to work in two ways: it mediates the mundane sight of reality, that is, a reality that consists of signs and wonders surrounding Jesus' death and as well as Jesus' final cry of dereliction; and it penetrates into the phenomenon of Jesus' death and reveals a divine proclamation of the judgment of the Temple and its associated agents. Here, reality and symbol work together, delicately yet powerfully

⁴²¹ Cf. Jackson, "The Death of Jesus," 28.

fulfilling Mark's consistent stylistic choice of irony and ambiguity. The episode immediately following the passage provides a good support for this case. There, women and other followers of Jesus from Jerusalem are depicted as 'watching' the crucifixion scene from a distance: "Ἦσαν δὲ καὶ γυναῖκες ἀπὸ μακρόθεν θεωροῦσαι," (Mk 15:40). There is no clear reason for mentioning their presence in the event. C. Evans supposes that the surprising confession of the centurion finally brings the death scene to a close, but Mark had to prepare for the discovery of the empty tomb that follows, and so he appends the notice of the women who observe all that happened and will be witnesses to the empty tomb.⁴²² J. Gnilka is much more persuasive when he insists that "θεωροῦσαι ἀπὸ μακρόθεν" in Mk 15:40 may allude to Psa 38:12 ("..καὶ οἱ ἑγγιστά μου ἀπὸ μακρόθεν ἔστησαν"); reconstructing the original form of the Markan verse ("καὶ γυναῖκες ἀπὸ μακρόθεν ἐθεωρησαν."), and still taking into account the different meanings between the original Psalm and the Markan verse, Gnilka suggests that Mark transformed the negative meaning in the Psalm to a positive meaning so that the women are now being depicted as active followers Jesus even to the cross.⁴²³

Yet, a meticulous reading of the death scene in Mk 15:37-39 offers the most convincing argument. To any critical reader, comparison and contrast between the two episodes especially in their terminological and syntactical manners will yield a valuable discovery: "ἰδὼν δὲ ὁ κεντυρίων ὁ παρεστηκὼς ἐξ ἐναντίας αὐτοῦ ὅτι οὕτως ἐξέπνευσεν ..."/>

⁴²² C. Evans, *Mark 8:27-16:20*, 510.

⁴²³ Gnilka, *Das Evangelium*, II, 314 and 325-326. J. Marcus also notes this allusion and indicates that the portrayals of the women standing at a distance might be created by Mark, hence unhistorical (*The Way of the Lord*, 174).

⁴²⁴ Cf. BDF, § 353 (1).

⁴²⁵ G. Björck, "Ἦν διδάσκων. Die periphr. Konstruktionen im Griech.," 2, *Skrifter K. Hum. Vet. – samf. i Uppsala* 32 (1940), quoted from BDF, p. 180.

verse reads: “yet women were also there, only getting a glimpse of what was really going on in the crucifixion scene.” R. Gundry insists that despite the interference of “δὲ καὶ γυναῖκες ἀπὸ μακρόθεν” coming between the ἦσαν and the θεωροῦσαι, they form a periphrastic construction. From this interpretation of the syntactical function of the participle, he arrives at the same conclusion as ours above: “the women’s watching only from a distance forestalls a parallel with the surrounding of crucified men by their friends and relatives,” he says. Also being aware of the occurrence of the different verb of seeing (θεωροῦσαι in contrast to ἰδών), he concludes that the distance keeps the women from close involvement in what they observe.⁴²⁶ The implicitly contrasting roles that ἰδών and θεωροῦσαι play seem to emerge one way or another; the juxtaposed positions of ἐξ ἐναντίας and ἀπὸ μακρόθεν also strengthen our point in contrasting proximity and distance.

Furthermore, when we read closely this episode, especially from the point of view of Mark’s irony, the reference to “watching from a distance” is likely to have been designed to show their inability to participate in the centurion’s physical or mundane sight of what is going on in Jesus’ final expiration. They could not see the rending of the Temple veil, the very object that the centurion saw on the surface level. Thus they were not permitted to see or understand the incident of the rending of the Temple veil, and to see the divine judgment that was brought to the Temple through Jesus’ death.

The word ἐξέπνευσεν should be studied more closely for its meanings and implications within this scope of textual understanding. It is already pointed out that the event of the tearing down of the Temple curtain is subordinate to the event of Jesus’ breathing out his final breath/spirit. More importantly, the argument that the main concern of the sight of the centurion is not with the rending of the Temple curtain, but with the breathing out of Jesus’ final breath/spirit, has been put forth already. The current shape of the text is in line with this argument: Mark explicitly specifies the object of the centurion’s sight as not the rending of the Temple curtain, but the powerful expulsion of Jesus’ dying breath (cf. Ἰδὼν ... ὁ κεντυρίων ... ὅτι οὕτως ἐξέπνευσεν). As H. Jackson observes, it would not be enough ‘for him (the centurion) to admit Jesus Son of God simply on the observation that the curtain is ripping in two without the simultaneous realization that it was somehow caused by

⁴²⁶ R. Gundry, *Mark*, 976. R. Gundry seems to associate an idea of the lack of close involvement with

Jesus' breath.'⁴²⁷ Likewise, it is clear to see that Mark lays primary stress in respect of the ὅτι clause upon the expulsion of Jesus' dying breath, rather than on the rending of the Temple curtain. The diagram of Mk 15:37-39 above, containing the two divisions as two poles of its structure, is highly compatible with this argument: Jesus expired by releasing a loud cry; when seeing this, the centurion makes the Christological statement.

The understanding of Jesus' dying breath as a powerful expulsion of the Spirit, in conjunction with the release of the great cry as the agent that brought down the Temple curtain in judgment of the Temple, is a familiar idea in the prophetic tradition of the Old Testament. Such understanding is also quite in keeping with the conventions of inter-testamental Messianic eschatology, which is firmly grounded in the OT prophetic books. Isa 11: 3 and 4 LXX, for example, specifically speak of Yahweh destroying the wicked with his spirit/breath:

3 οὐδὲ κατὰ τὴν λαλιὰν ἐλέγξει 4 ἀλλὰ κρινεῖ ταπεινῶ κρίσιν καὶ ἐλέγξει τοὺς ταπεινοὺς τῆς γῆς καὶ πατάξει γῆν τῷ λόγῳ τοῦ στόματος αὐτοῦ καὶ ἐν πνεύματι διὰ χειλέων ἀνελεῖ ἀσεβῆ.⁴²⁸

For the issue at hand, v.4d is of a particular interest: “ἀλλὰ κρινεῖ ταπεινῶ κρίσιν καὶ ἐλέγξει τοὺς ταπεινοὺς τῆς γῆς καὶ πατάξει γῆν τῷ λόγῳ τοῦ στόματος αὐτοῦ καὶ ἐν πνεύματι διὰ χειλέων ἀνελεῖ ἀσεβῆ.” In 11:1, the messianic figure that Isaiah talks about is described as a rod (ῥάβδος/ ῥῶπ) upon whom the Spirit rests, and in 11:4 the rod, ῥῶπ, rendered as λόγος in LXX, is described as this figure's tool to smite the earth and becomes equated with and thus identified as πνεύμα/ ῥῶπ in the following clause; the synonymous parallelism of its poetic diction is quite unmistakable (cf. πατάξει γῆν τῷ λόγῳ τοῦ στόματος αὐτοῦ // ἐν πνεύματι διὰ χειλέων ἀνελεῖ ἀσεβῆ). As demonstrated earlier, the Spirit that came down and rested upon Jesus at his Baptism is the one whom the prophet Isaiah prophesized to rest upon his messianic figure; here, the same Spirit is described as the one that enables the figure to destroy the wicked with his πνεύμα/ ῥῶπ. The word πνεύμα, of course, means both breath and spirit. What is significant here is that the breath is identified as an instrument of

the verb θεωρέομαι and he enlists all the occurrences of the verb to support this idea.

⁴²⁷ H. Jackson, “The Death of Jesus,” 28.

Yahweh's righteous judgment. The Spirit plays an eschatological role of judging the wicked; the word pun on πνεῦμα meaning spirit and wind or breath indicates that Yahweh's use of His breath in destructive anger is only the other side of His use of it in creation.⁴²⁹ R. Gundry focuses on the word ἐξέπνευσεν in Mk 15:37 in light of the parallel between the two monumental events in Jesus' public ministry: "just as the force of the Spirit coming down caused the heavens to be rent,⁴³⁰ so the force of the Spirit's exhalation by Jesus causes the veil of the temple to be rent."⁴³¹

Ezek 37:5-14 is another, perhaps more important OT background passage for understanding the double references of the word πνεῦμα to spirit and wind/breath. In this passage, the πνεῦμα of the Lord God is described as a dynamic force that revives the dead and the skulls, reinstating them into a living creature. The word πνεῦμα refers to God's breath/wind and Spirit (cf. vv.5, 6, 10 for breath or spirit; see v.9 for wind; see v.14 for God's spirit). This passage has been overlooked by Markan interpreters, for its association with Jesus' act of exhalation of πνεῦμα at the moment of his death is deemed as vague at best. The word πνεῦμα carries a positive role and connotation within the literary context of Ezek 37, while the word ἐξέπνευσεν in Mk 15:37 and 39 is used in a seemingly judgemental context. Interpreters seem to prefer to highlight the judgement motif in Mark's death scene, than the motif of revival or analogous ideas. Yet, it will be discussed in conjunction to the nature of the rending of the Temple curtain later, the judgement motif is just the other side of the same coin, the other aspect of God's eschatological dealing with the Jewish people and their religion and beliefs. God's reign in an eschatological era goes hand in hand with his apocalyptic ending of the old and beginning of the new. In this spectrum, Jesus' expulsion of the spirit/breath should be seen as a sign of the dawning new age, bringing down the Temple curtain that has so long confined God's glorious presence within the Most Holy Place. Jesus' death, like Jesus' baptism, unlocks the heavens, as Marie N. Sabin observes, 'tearing open the veil covering the inmost place of God's

⁴²⁸ A larger unit of this text has been discussed in detail at 2.253 OT ALLUSIONS under 2.25 JESUS' 'SEEING' THE SPIRIT DESCENDING in THE MOTIF OF SEEING IN JESUS' BAPTISM, the 2nd Chapter of this study.

⁴²⁹ H. Jackson, "The Death of Jesus in Mark," 30.

⁴³⁰ I do not agree to this interpretation and in fact I pointed out in THE MOTIF OF SEEING IN JESUS' BAPTISM in this study that God initially rent the heavens so that the Spirit may come down. We see a radical difference between my interpretation and Gundry's. It is not simply a matter of emphasis, but a precisely exegetical one.

⁴³¹ R. Gundry, *Mark*, 949-950.

dwelling and making God's presence felt.'⁴³² In a typological interpretation which draws upon the Elijah and Elisha symbolism that is present in both of the baptism and the crucifixion, S. Motyer posits that Jesus as the dying Elisha breathes out his Spirit, a proleptical bestowal of the Spirit to the whole world, and that the rending of the Temple curtain indicates the end of the old era and the beginning of the new, in which access to the Holy Place is given to all.⁴³³

From a narrative-world point of view, linking what the centurion saw to the rending of the Temple curtain must have seemed rational to Mark's contemporary readers. It is not reasonable to assume that Mark threw into his narrative characters and elements, e.g. the centurion and his confession, that didn't make sense. If the centurion's confession is grounded in a sudden recognition of the apocalyptic and Christological significance of what was totally beyond his understanding, the centurion cannot remain an independent character; he becomes 'a simple puppet of the Christian kerygma,' as H. Jackson notes.⁴³⁴ Furthermore, although the Temple veil might have not been actually visible from Golgotha, it is unlikely that Mark's listeners knew the geography of Jerusalem well enough to know that: the listeners' natural assumption would have been that the veil was visible since the whole scene takes place on Golgotha. Even form-critical scholars like Bultmann acknowledge that vv. 33 and 38 go together, in view of the τέρατα at the death of Jesus and their impression on the Gentile onlookers.⁴³⁵ And the narrated point of view in Mark's Gospel should be given due credit: Mark is too good "a storyteller to allow the urgency of inculcating his particular Christology to blind him to the literary necessity of rooting [the centurion's] confession firmly and plausibly in the various contexts of his story."⁴³⁶ As J. Riches points out, a great achievement of Mark in the trajectories

⁴³² Marie N. Sabin, *Reopening the Word: Reading Mark as Theology in the Context of Early Judaism*, (Oxford Univ. Press, 2002), 108.

⁴³³ S. Motyer, "The Rending of the veil," *NTS*, v.33 (1987), 156. For the critique of Motyer, especially his idea of 'proleptic grant of the Spirit, see Gundry, *Mark*, 970: Gundry criticizes Motyer for imposing a later Johannine interpretation on Mk 15:37.

⁴³⁴ Cf. H. Jackson, "The Death of Jesus in Mark," 18.

⁴³⁵ Bultmann, *History of Synoptic Tradition*, 273-274. R. T. France in his recent commentary strongly refutes the connection, simply because he thinks Mark does not say that the centurion saw the tearing of the Temple curtain, and because he thinks this would be impossible since one would have to be standing east of the temple (and nearer to it than any likely location of Golgotha) in order to see the curtain. The account of the curtain is for the benefit of Mark's readers as they think about the significance of Jesus' death, he concludes, not in relation to the following mention of the centurion; the centurion's comment is evoked simply by how Jesus died (*The Gospel of Mark*, 658). However, it is obvious that we are not dealing with a purely historical report, but a narrative world in which historical events are theologically interpreted.

⁴³⁶ H. Jackson, "The Death of Jesus in Mark," 18.

of Jewish and Christian biblical exegesis is his narrative itself; his writing itself, of the life and death of Jesus, is a strong way of telling that this Jesus is the Son of God and what is written here forms a firm basis of a new epistemology on the world and life. It is the writing of this narrative, in other words, that began a process of creating an authoritative text that anchored Mark's Christian community on the scriptural tradition and to orient the community to that direction.⁴³⁷ Thus, the spatial discrepancy between the temple in v.38 and the locale for the crucifixion of Jesus where the centurion stood should not be an obstacle in the narrative world of Mark's description of Jesus in his death.

The question then is why Mark formulated a narrative structure which contains one of the most important confessions regarding Jesus' true identity in this manner. Redaction-critically speaking, the redactional feature of v.38, in its nature and origin, is noted by the majority of Markan interpreters.⁴³⁸ To scholars like Bultmann v.38 is a Christian legend with purely novelistic motifs, modelled after Jewish tradition that often spoke of miraculous happenings surrounding Rabbis' deaths and recounted prodigies which announced the destruction of the Temple.⁴³⁹ Factors like the correspondence between this event and the Baptism of Jesus, especially regarding the usage of *σχίζω* in both accounts, and the abrupt change of scenes seem to support this view. The statement in v.38 clearly interrupts the narrative flow between v.37 and v.39; if it were not for the statement in v.38, the connection between 'seeing' of the centurion and Jesus' giving up of the final breath described in v.37 could have been more natural. The juxtaposition of the 'seeing' with the description of the rent of the curtain should not be underestimated, however, as it must be specifically Mark's editorial intention and the chiasmic structure of the passage. Mark deliberately broke up the narrative flow with the insertion of 'the rending of the Temple curtain' because his apocalyptic epistemological perspective enabled him to connect 'seeing' not only with the *ὅτι* clause, but also with the description of the rending of the temple curtain, particularly in its apocalyptic implications.⁴⁴⁰

⁴³⁷ John Riches, *Matthew*, 50.

⁴³⁸ F. Matera also convincingly argues for such redactional nature of v.38 (the tearing down of the curtain) on the basis of the parallelism between the account of Jesus' baptism and the tearing of the temple curtain (cf. *The Kingship of Jesus*, 139).

⁴³⁹ Bultmann, *History of Synoptic Tradition*, 282.

⁴⁴⁰ Cf. Matera, *The Kingship*, 139. Starting with a comparison of different objects (the confession of the centurion and the rent of the curtain, rather than the 'seeing' and the rent), Matera also reaches the

From a historical point of view also, the link between what the centurion saw and the rending of the Temple curtain is more than plausible. If the place of the centurion in Golgotha was within the visibility of the Temple, the centurion could have seen the rending of the Temple veil at the moment of Jesus' death. It is suggested that the traditional site of Golgotha lies to the west end of the Temple, and only the east end was covered with the curtain.⁴⁴¹ If it is the case, it means that either tradition misplaced Golgotha or the centurion's seeing the rending of the Temple curtain lacks historical reliability. But H. Jackson suggests that Golgotha was located on the Mount of Olives, and that on the Mount the Temple is easily visible. In fact it is indicated by Mk 13:1-3 in which Jesus and the three disciples are described as sitting on the Mount facing the Temple, talking about its destiny: '...Καὶ καθημένου αὐτοῦ εἰς τὸ ὄρος τῶν Ἐλαιῶν κατέναντι τοῦ ἱεροῦ..' This information provided by Mk 13:1-3 'not only makes the Mount of Olives the focal point of opposition to the Temple, but also sets the stage for the beginning of the realization of Jesus' prophecy with regard to the temple in the event witnessed by the centurion.'⁴⁴² While arguing that Golgotha as Skull's Place is not associated with ritual uncleanness but with a place for counting heads, i.e. a polling place, R. Gundry also locates Golgotha on the Mount of Olives. What is implied in Mk 15:38-39, the centurion standing by the Cross was also standing opposite the Temple and saw the rending of its curtain, is thus that the centurion stood where it gave him a full accessibility in terms of visibility to the rending of the Temple curtain, while he was able to witness the expulsion of Jesus' breath/spirit.

Another question rising from this kind of historical perspective is whether Mark meant the inner or outer καταπέτασμα of the Temple. In terms of historical plausibility, if it was the inner curtain that Mark had in mind, the centurion probably couldn't have seen the rending of the Temple, regardless of his range of view; Mark must have meant the outer curtain then. In fact, according to Josephus, there was a curtain, some 80 feet high and hanging on the Temple wall,⁴⁴³ which could be seen from a great distance. David Ulansey describes it in detail: 'the outer veil was a Babylonian tapestry, with embroidery of blue and fine linen, of scarlet also and purple,

same conclusion: "the tearing of the temple veil grants the centurion access to the divine glory and allows him to make the first public proclamation of the gospel that Jesus is the Son of God."

⁴⁴¹ R. Gundry, *Mark*, 970.

⁴⁴² H. Jackson, "The Death of Jesus in Mark," 24.

⁴⁴³ Josephus, *Jewish War*, 5.5.4 §§ 207-209; *Jewish War*, 5.5.4 §§ 211-212.

wrought with marvellous skill... It typified the universe.' It is noted by Josephus that "portrayed on this tapestry was a panorama of the entire heavens."⁴⁴⁴ Also Mark's composition of the current literary shape of the crucifixion scene points to the outer curtain, giving weight to the centurion's sight of rending of the curtain. At the sixth hour, Mark says, the darkness began to cover the whole earth and remained until the ninth hour (15:33); at the ninth hour Jesus began to cry with a great voice (15:34), and the subsequent death events occurred. It is clearly implied that the centurion must have had enough brightness or illumination to be able to see the rending of the Temple.⁴⁴⁵

What then is the nature of the rending of the Temple curtain? It is taken to mean by some interpreters that through Jesus' death the Temple and its cult lost their significance, facing their final destruction. The rending, others argue, symbolizes that now through the rending of the Temple veil God's innermost being is finally fully revealed, open to the whole universe, and will remain so to the whole humanity including the Gentiles (in this case, the curtain may be likely the inner one.).

Identifying whether the inner or outer curtain of the Temple is meant here does not necessarily clarify the nature of the rending event, though many simply assume that the outer veil points to the destruction of the Temple, the inner veil pointing to the infiltration of God's glory into the whole world. The nature of the veil-rending does not stand or fall with the question which curtain was meant, we suppose. Rather textual issues such as the implied significance in Mark's switch in terminological use from *ἱερόν* to *ναός* in the passion narrative and compositional issues such as his portrayal of Jesus in relation to the Temple throughout the whole Gospel can direct us in the right path regarding the nature of the event.

Although the Temple motif in Mark will be scrutinized later in an independent section, Mark's use of *ναός* and *ἱερόν* is examined here. The term *ἱερόν* occurs 9 times altogether in Mark (11:11, 15[2X], 16, 27; 12:35; 13:1, 3; 14:49), while the

⁴⁴⁴ David Ulansey, "The Heavenly Veil Torn: Mark's cosmic 'Inclusio'," *JBL* 110:1 (1991), 123-124.

⁴⁴⁵ Of course, all these historical plausibilities do not necessarily mean that Mark's readers knew them, and furthermore from a narrative world point of view, those historical knowledges are not necessarily required of the reader. R. Gundry also makes a similar point: "but Mark's omitting both to specify the outer veil and to describe it as portraying the starry heavens combines with ignorance of Jewish things on the part of his audience... to keep his bit of background out of sight and concentrate attention on the rending itself as an act of power" (*Mark*, 971). I think that Gundry is right in this matter. What I have been doing in an attempt to identify the Temple curtain is just to store up more proofs for the plausibility that the centurion was able to see it, if the temple curtain was torn apart by Jesus' breath.

term *ναός* occurs three times in all of Mark (14:58; 15:29; 15:38). What is striking is that *ἱερόν* never occurs in the Passion narrative, while *ναός* occurs *only* in the Passion Narrative, starting with 14:53 (supposing that the passion narrative consists of two major parts, the Trial Narrative [14:53-65] and the Crucifixion [15:20b-41]). While the difference between these terms in the New Testament is disregarded by some (O. Michel),⁴⁴⁶ R. Brown clearly distinguishes the two, viewing the *ναός* to refer to the most sacred, inner part of the Temple buildings, the *ἱερόν* to the physical temple; the English term ‘sanctuary’ is used in reference to the *ναός*, the term ‘temple’ in reference to the *ἱερόν*.⁴⁴⁷ In either case, the presence of Mark’s switch between the two terms must be considered carefully.⁴⁴⁸ The Temple charge in the Trial and the Crucifixion narratives (14:58 and 15:29), as well as the statement of the rending of the Temple curtain, comes from Mark’s editorial hands⁴⁴⁹: the first two as a doublet and the intrusive nature of the last together clearly indicate this. The exclusive occurrences of the *ἱερόν* and the *ναός*, moreover, either in non-Passion narratives or within the Passion Narrative, suggest a clear distinction between them.⁴⁵⁰ Regarding the occurrences of the terms, first, in 11:11, 15, 16, Jesus is associated with the term *ἱερόν* in his cleansing of the Temple, and the action took place in the temple courts, in line with what was going on inside the Temple building; the absence of Jesus’ attempt to stop the sacrificial acts or equivalent cult practices should make this clear. Second, in 11:27, 12:35, 14:49, Jesus is also described in association with the term *ἱερόν*, especially in a teaching context within the Temple, and in all these occasions the *ἱερόν* as a temple site is readily accepted, referring to the temple courts again. Last, in 13:1 the term occurs, in reference to Jesus leaving the Temple, and here the plural

⁴⁴⁶ O. Michel, “*ναός*,” *TDNT* 4, 882.

⁴⁴⁷ R. Brown, *Death of the Messiah*, 438-439.

⁴⁴⁸ While acknowledging that the flow of the Temple theme in Mark might be disrupted by the switch between these terms, E. Best doesn’t see any significance in the switch, because he judges that “Mark was bound by the terms he received in the tradition and so retained them on each occasion (14:58; 15:29, 38)” and that “it is very doubtful if Mark’s hearers would have been put off by the change in the term and thus have failed to see the continuity in the theme of the Temple” (*Temptation and Passion*, xl).

⁴⁴⁹ Cf. J. Donahue, *Are You the Christ?*, 103.

⁴⁵⁰ Elizabeth S. Malbon insists that the Markan narrator, a Christian, generally employs *ἱερόν* for the temple (11:1, 15a, 15b, 16, 27; 12:35; 13:1, 3), while the Markan characters, Jews, generally employ *ναός* (14:58; 15:29) or *οἶκός* (2:26; 11:17). She goes on to single out the occurrence of *ἱερόν* in 14:49 (here Jesus refers to his previous teaching in the *ἱερόν*) and that of *ναός* in 15:38 (here the narrator refers to the splitting of the curtain of the *ναός*) as exceptional cases that confirm the distinction. (*Narrative Space and Mythic Meaning in Mark*, [Sheffield Academic Press, 1991], 109).

form of the temple buildings (οἰκοδομαί) is used, probably referring to the whole temple complex.⁴⁵¹

In 14:58, 15:29, however, the term ναός occurs in explicit reference to the destruction of the Temple (ναός). Though it isn't immediately clear whether it is the whole temple complex or the sanctuary proper, the rebuilding image in the second part of the verse in 14:58 makes the latter more acceptable. More importantly, in view of the general consensus among the interpreting community that 14:58, 15:29 and 15:38 are connected not only terminologically but also thematically, it is recommended that 14:58 and 15:29 be read in light of 15:38; the word ναός, likewise, should be taken to refer to the sanctuary proper. The ναός in 15:38 clearly refers to the temple building housing the holy of holies, so to speak, the sanctuary proper; thus the veil of the ναός, not the veil of the ἱερόν, is said to be rent, the ἱερόν referring to the whole temple complex.⁴⁵²

Then in light of these findings, one may argue that the rending of the curtain of the Temple (ναός not ἱερόν) symbolized the opening up of the Most Holy Place, rather than the destruction of the Temple, opening a window through which God's eschatological presence and reign may be universally and cosmically experienced and felt. The so-called Temple charge in 14:58 may be considered in this regard, since the ναός is consistently used there. It can be also contested that the context in which the Temple charge was brought up was the false testimony according to Mark's compositional shape of the text, and that it also disregards the link between the destruction of the Temple and the veil-rending.⁴⁵³

Interestingly enough, while criticizing some interpreters' excessive interest in the word καταπέτασμα to identify the inner or outer part of the veil by supposedly focusing on the term ναός, John Donahue contends that the rending of the Temple veil does not indicate the Holy of the Holies, that the expulsion of God's presence to the world outside was never intended there. He grounds his argument on the fact that

⁴⁵¹ Cf. D. Juel, *Messiah and Temple*, 128.

⁴⁵² Ibid.

⁴⁵³ R. Gundry also files up the reasons that run counter to the alleged intention of the veil-rending, the destruction of the Temple: 1) the rending of the Temple curtain does not match Jesus' prediction of the Temple destruction in tumbling stones in Mk13:2; 2) the rending (σχίζομαι) of the heaven in 1:10 doesn't signify destruction; 3) the portents of destruction of the temple found in Josephus J.W. 6.5.3-4 §§ 288-315 do not include the rending of the veil; 4) the eastern gate's opening itself into the inner court portended nothing but defenselessness; 5) Josephus put this portent of the opening of the eastern gate of the Temple before the Jewish war by just a bit. He makes no connection between the rending of the Temple veil and the eschatological end (*Mark*, 971).

neither in the Septuagint nor in the Hebrews is the Holy of Holies referred to as a ναός. Donahue goes on to conclude that in light of Mark's consistent portrayal of anti-Temple theme from 11:1 on, 15:38 (the rending of the Temple curtain) is used by Mark to bring this theme to culmination: "at the precise moment that Jesus dies the temple loses its significance. What has been destroyed in anticipation in the ministry of Jesus, is now destroyed in fact."⁴⁵⁴

Several more factors should be cited to show that the veil-rending is meant to signal more than just the destruction of the Temple. The fact that just the Temple curtain, and no other essential components of the Temple building, is said to be rent should be noted first. It can be that Jesus prophesized the destruction of the Temple in 13:1-3 and by the time Mark wrote his gospel, the Jewish war not having occurred and thus the destruction yet to come, he thought it was enough to mention the rending of the Temple curtain. Also, in view of Jesus' prediction, yet to be fulfilled, Mark must have been hesitant to talk explicitly about the destruction of the Temple; quickly switching his focus from that concern, he ponders about the meaning of the Temple in the broader theological and biblical tradition of the OT prophecy. Second, the exclusive use of the term ναός in the Passion Narrative should be considered. The exclusive use of the ἱερόν outside the passion narrative indicates that this is not a simple coincidence. It means that the rending of the ναός curtain intended more than just the destruction of the ἱερόν. Third, the so-called Temple charge is placed in the context of the false testimony and the doublet (cf. 14:58 and 15:29) within which it is located indicates this also. Fourth, the juxtaposition between the rending of the heaven, which is positive in nature, and the rending of the Temple curtain (negative?) may be taken as a case running counter to the destruction of the Temple.

Lastly, from Mark's theological and compositional point of view, the link between what the centurion saw and the rending of the Temple curtain is a reasonable one to establish. In the Baptismal episode in Mk 1:10, the word ἐσχίσθη is used, for the first time in the gospel, to describe the rending of the heavens; this is the *only* other occurrence in Mark in which the same word is used as in the description of the rending of the Temple veil. In the Baptism Jesus is said to *see* the incident of the heaven being torn apart and to hear the heavenly voice of pronouncing that Jesus is the Son of God, and at the Crucifixion scene, the rending of the Temple veil occurs

⁴⁵⁴ *Are You the Christ?*, 202-203.

and must have been *seen* and the centurion makes a similar Christological pronouncement that Jesus is God's son.

Mark has shown a keen interest in the Temple by placing Jesus' action in the Temple at the outset of his ministry in Jerusalem and by repeating the so-called Temple charge in both the Trial narrative (14:58) and the Crucifixion narrative (15:28). Then he includes the rending of the Temple curtain at the most critical and important moment of Jesus' story, the death on the cross. Accordingly the centurion sees the rending of the Temple veil at the moment of his death and of the final recognition of Jesus' divine sonship. In view of the close relationship between the miraculous events at the Baptism and the Crucifixion (rending of the heavens// rending of the Temple curtain), it is not hard to conceive that Mark meant to suggest the identity of agency in these events at the beginning and end of Jesus' career: 'Jesus' earthly ministry as son of God,' as Jackson notes, 'is initiated by the descent into him of God's Spirit, which tears the heaven in its descent, and it is brought to a close by the ascent of that spirit out of him in his dying breath, which tears the Temple curtain at its departure.'⁴⁵⁵ Just as in 1:10, in the presence of the Elijah figure, John the Baptist, and at the beginning of Jesus' public ministry, the heavens were rent and the Spirit came down to Jesus, so now at the end of his public ministry, and in the absence of Elijah (note Elijah did not come to deliver Jesus in Mk 15:36), Jesus' final breath is described as an expulsion of the Spirit (Jesus' spiriting out), as ἐκπνέω indicates: to borrow Gundry's words, 'Just as the force of the Spirit coming down caused the heavens to be rent in 1:10, so the force of the Spirit's exhalation by Jesus causes the veil of the temple to be rent.'⁴⁵⁶

4.533 Conclusion

What the centurion saw at the moment of Jesus' death was the Temple veil being rent. The link between the sight of the centurion and the veil-rending is established upon various grounds: results gleaned from textual analyses, consideration of a narrative-world point of view, of a historical point of view, and of Mark's theological and

⁴⁵⁵ H. Jackson, "The Death of Jesus in Mark," 27.

⁴⁵⁶ Gundry, *Mark*, 949-950. I think Gundry is cogent in illumining the parallel nature of the two monumental events in Jesus' public ministry; contrasting the Spirit coming into Jesus in the Baptismal scene against the Spirit coming out of Jesus in the Crucifixion scene, however, is not acceptable. For

compositional tendencies. Among these textual evidences were treated as most significant. Though Mark's theological and compositional inclination will be detailed more fully later, the parallel nature of the rending of the heaven at Jesus' baptism and the rending of the Temple curtain at Jesus' crucifixion is already evident and of paramount importance. Just as Jesus witnessed the epoch-making event of the heavens being torn apart in the inaugural moment of his royal Messianic mission to embrace the whole universe and the whole humanity into his newly dawning Kingdom, the Roman gentile centurion, a would-be legitimate heir to the Kingdom, witnesses the rending of the veil of the earthly Sanctuary, representing the Heavenly court.

By way of concluding this section, it seems appropriate to consider Jesus' death as an eschatological event. Mark clearly intends Jesus' death to be understood as an eschatological event. First of all, it is an eschatological event in the sense that it has brought an once and for all end to the Old Age by declaring the accompanying judgment upon the old religious and sacrificial establishment which is typified by the earthly Temple. More importantly, it is an eschatological event in the sense that through it emerges the New Age that opens up the material Temple, an earthly representation of the heavenly court, which has been locked up for so long, and offers the whole of humanity a chance to become a new universal community of God's eschatological reign. In this sense, the rending of the Temple curtain probably means that the Temple no longer mediates between humanity and God. Since Mark portrays Jesus as declaring, as E. Best points out, the coming into existence of the Temple and a new community through his death and resurrection, it is highly likely that he views 'the Passion as an eschatological event. Just as the Temptation was, so the Cross may have been regarded at some stages of the tradition as an End event.'⁴⁵⁷ Crucifixion is the miracle that responds to the high priest's question whether he is the Son of God (14:61) and to the Temple-charge (14:60-61): 'After Jesus' crucifixion/enthronement is complete, a demonstration of his newly acquired power to judge is fully appropriate, and an act of judgement against the temple is what the reader has been led to expect. The enthronement of the Son of Man, the vision promised the high priest, is for Mark the crucifixion.'⁴⁵⁸ As Best observes so aptly, whether it is the inner curtain or the outer curtain, the rending of the curtain meant to show the end of Jewish worship as it

this, see the chapter of this study, 2.254 THE DESCENT OF THE SPIRIT IN MK 1:10 under 2 THE MOTIF OF SEEING IN JESUS' BAPTISM.

⁴⁵⁷ E. Best, *Temptation and Passion*, li.

centers on the Temple; it also opens up the Temple as a place worship and prayer for all who are willing:

The idea of destruction enters since the curtain was torn and not pulled aside, and since the tearing can be seen as the Temple's profanation. The rending of the curtain has been taken either as a sign of judgement on Israel or on Israel's religion, or as a sign of the opening up of access to God for all, or less probably as an indication that God is no longer in the Temple. Much that has preceded (11:12-14, 19f; 13:1f) would suggest the idea of judgement, but what follows, the confession of the centurion, suggests access to God for those who did not previously have it. It may be well that both ideas are present as they were in 11:12-21 (judgement to Judaism and hope opened up for the Gentiles) and in 14:58; 15:29 (the old Temple is judged and a new appears).⁴⁵⁹

4.54 The Temple Theme in Mark

4.541 Preliminary Remarks

Because throughout his ministry, Jesus showed a peculiar interest in and stance on the Temple, the fact that Jesus rent the Temple curtain by the powerful expulsion of his breath/spirit on the cross has raised questions regarding what Mark is trying to say about the final sign of Jesus' attitude toward the Temple and its cult and agents. These questions center around the following one: is the destruction, and replacement, of the Temple portended by the event or is it the purification of cultic worship that Jesus had in mind? To answer these questions we must examine two important Markan episodes in which the temple theme occurs in association with Jesus' acts or sayings: The Temple scene in 11:15-19 and the Temple sayings in 14:58 and 15:29.

⁴⁵⁸ J. Jackson, "The Death of Jesus in Mark," 25.

⁴⁵⁹ E. Best, *Temptation and Passion*, xli.

4.542 Jesus’ Action in the Temple in Mk 11:15-19

4.5421 Preliminary Remarks

This section will proceed in two stages. First of all, a textual analysis of Mk 11:15-19 will be done, followed by detailed discussion on the larger literary context of the passage. Secondly, the findings of the textual analysis will be considered in view of the arguments made in the previous studies on the rending of the Temple veil.

4.5422 Interpretation of Jesus’ Action in the Temple in Mk 11:15-19

4.54221 Analysis of the Text Mk 11:15-19

A quick historical survey of the interpretations of Jesus’ action in the Temple sufficiently can show us that there are various conflicting and overlapping interpretations but no general consensus regarding the nature of Jesus’ action. A careful examination of the text itself, coupled with considerations of its literary contexts and related terms and motifs, will better equip us to come to grips with the issue at hand. A diagram of the text Mk 11:15-19⁴⁶⁰ is shown as follows:

A Καὶ ἔρχονται εἰς Ἱεροσόλυμα. (v.15a)

B καὶ εἰσελθὼν εἰς τὸ ἱερὸν
ἤρξατο ἐκβάλλειν τοὺς πωλοῦντας καὶ τοὺς ἀγοράζοντας ἐν τῷ ἱερῷ,
καὶ τὰς τραπέζας τῶν κολλυβιστῶν καὶ
τὰς καθέδρας τῶν πωλούντων τὰς περιστερὰς
κατέστρεψεν,
καὶ οὐκ ἤφιεν ἵνα τις διενέγκῃ σκεῦος διὰ τοῦ ἱεροῦ. (vv.15ab-16)

C καὶ ἐδίδασκεν καὶ ἔλεγεν αὐτοῖς,
Οὐ γέγραπται ὅτι Ὁ οἶκός μου οἶκος προσευχῆς
κληθήσεται πᾶσιν τοῖς ἔθνεσιν;
ὁμοίως δὲ πεποιήκατε αὐτὸν σπήλαιον ληστῶν. (v.17)

B’ καὶ ἤκουσαν οἱ ἀρχιερεῖς καὶ οἱ γραμματεῖς
καὶ ἐζήτουν πῶς αὐτὸν ἀπολέσωσιν. (v.18ab)

⁴⁶⁰ A similar division of the text is found in J. Ernst (*Das Evangelium nach Markus*. RNT. [Regensburg: Pustet, 1981], 331), but certainly not in this modified chiasmic structure. Though a minor form of two chiasmic patterns is claimed by R. Gundry of “(a) beginning to throw out (b) the sellers and buyers and (b’) the tables and seats (a’) overturning,” and of “My house [a] a house of prayer [b] will be called, but you [b’] have made it [a’] a den of bandits,” it is not convincing and not meaningful at all for the interpretation of the episode (cf. R. Gundry, *Mark*, 639).

ἐφοβοῦντο γὰρ αὐτόν,
πᾶς γὰρ ὁ ὄχλος ἐξεπλήσσετο ἐπὶ τῇ διδαχῇ αὐτοῦ.

A' Καὶ ὅταν ὁψὲ ἐγένετο, ἐξεπορεύοντο ἔξω τῆς πόλεως. (v.19)

The narrative flow of the text as it is revealed by this diagram constitutes a distinctive structure, A (v.15a)- B (vv.15b-16)- C (v.17)- B' (v.18ab)- A' (v.19), a typical form of chiasmus. The καί and finite verb function as a primary criterion for dividing the text into 5 independent units, the thematic flow assuming a secondary one. An objective ground for the divisions is established on several dividing and modifying principles. First of all, according to the diagram, v.15a (Jesus' going into Jerusalem) and v.19 (Jesus going out of Jerusalem) construct an inner frame and an outer frame, making an inclusio (A-A'). Second, v.15bc and v.16 (B) speak of Jesus' action in the Temple, and v.18ab (B') speaks of the Jerusalem Temple leaders' reactions, making these two units correspond to each other, and thus constituting B-B'. Finally, v. 17 (C) deals with Jesus' understanding of and teaching about the Temple, is placed as the central part of the structure. The structure itself clearly underscores the import of Jesus' teaching about the Temple in v. 17. More significantly, Jesus' action in the Temple is a symbolic action whose importance reaches beyond the action itself, owing to the fact that v. 17 contains allusions to the two OT passages, Isa 56:7 and Jer 7:11.⁴⁶¹ As D. Juel notes, "the two scriptural allusions in v.17 are decisive for interpreting the event in Mark: the references comprise half the extant account."⁴⁶² It is the determining factor that offers explanation about the animosity formed between Jesus and the high priests. If it is Jesus' action in the Temple that motivates the conflict between Jesus and his antagonists and eventually leads to his trial and crucifixion,⁴⁶³ it follows that the scriptural references in v.17 work as a catalyst in triggering the deadly plot to kill Jesus.

Another important factor in interpreting this passage is that Mark put the biblical references that Jesus quotes into a context of teaching: this passage begins with the term ἐδίδασκεν and ends with the term διδαχῇ. Thus vv. 17 and 18 altogether turn out to be a well-formed literary structure of chiasmus/ inclusio. The structure

⁴⁶¹ Lloyd Gaston, *No Stone On Another: Studies in the Significance of the Fall of Jerusalem in the Synoptic Gospels*, (E.J. Brill, 1970), 85-86.

⁴⁶² D. Juel, *Messiah and Temple*, 131.

⁴⁶³ The fact that 'the temple charges' occur as a doublet in the Passion narrative makes this highly conceivable.

starts with the term, διδαχῇ (v.17a) and ends also with the term διδαχῇ (v.18). The outer and inner frame must have been intended to function as a hermeneutical principle to interpret the biblical quotation in the middle:

A καὶ ἐδίδασκεν καὶ ἔλεγεν αὐτοῖς (v.17a)

B Οὐ γέγραπται ὅτι Ὁ οἶκός μου οἶκος προσευχῆς κληθήσεται πᾶσιν τοῖς ἔθνεσιν; ὑμεῖς δὲ πεποιθήκατε αὐτὸν σπήλαιον ληστῶν. (v.17bc)

A' καὶ ἤκουσαν οἱ ἀρχιερεῖς καὶ οἱ γραμματεῖς
καὶ ἐζήτουν πῶς αὐτὸν ἀπολέσωσιν·
ἐφοβοῦντο γὰρ αὐτόν,
πᾶς γὰρ ὁ ὄχλος ἐξεπλήσσετο ἐπὶ τῇ διδαχῇ αὐτοῦ. (v.18)

First, a rationale for reading v.17 and v.18 together is needed here. In the very beginning of v.18, the reason for the Jewish leaders to do away with Jesus is specified by the word ἤκουσαν, indicating that their intrigue was initiated by their awareness of Jesus' teaching about the Temple; it is further implied that their ill intention was not motivated by Jesus' cleansing action in the Temple. The leaders' indignation and subsequent plan to kill Jesus result from Jesus' teaching about the Temple based on the OT passages, and not so much from Jesus' interference with what was going on in the Temple precincts. The key role of the two biblical allusions for understanding of the nature of Jesus' action is thus reinforced.⁴⁶⁴

Second, the awkwardness results from the fact that in v.17bc, where the harshest and most direct criticism of the priesthood is displayed,⁴⁶⁵ Jesus' prophetic accusation through the scriptural references is put into a teaching context, a form of didacticism. As D. Juel posits, the episode of Jesus' action in the Temple plays a didactic function in the Gospel,⁴⁶⁶ v.17 in particular having been credited with enough authenticity to carry the weight of his teaching.⁴⁶⁷ In fact this peculiar parenetic nature of the verse has led many form-critics to speculate that the whole narrative itself grew

⁴⁶⁴ From the viewpoint of form-critical speculation to dispute scepticism about the historicity of the episode, C. Evans makes an interesting point, by supposing that "at the earliest stage of the tradition, the emphasis probably fell as much on the words as on the deeds. Jesus' allusions to Isaiah and Jeremiah would have been as provocative and offensive in the minds of the ruling priests as the actions themselves" (*Mark 8:27-16:20*, 166).

⁴⁶⁵ C. Evans, "Jesus' Action in the Temple," 408.

⁴⁶⁶ D. Juel, *Messiah and Temple*, 130; cf. Lohmeyer, *Das Evangelium des Markus*, 237; Bultmann, *History*, 36.

⁴⁶⁷ Cf. E. Sanders, *Jesus and Judaism* (SCM; Fortress, 1985), 89.

out of the saying in v.17.⁴⁶⁸ The awkwardness of the teaching context serves to highlight Jesus' didactic authority; 4:2, 9:31, 12:35, and 12:38 are proof texts for this argument.⁴⁶⁹ More tellingly so, Markan verses that speak of Jesus' new teaching with authority, namely, 1:22, 27, tie this verse into the larger thematic concern of the coming of eschatological and apocalyptic era in the Gospel of Mark.

Third, not long after this incident in the Temple, Jesus is put into a situation in which his authority is put into question by the Jewish leaders who must have been present in the Temple scene (cf. Mk 11:27-28). In light of Jesus' action in the Temple, such a question from the Temple authorities is quite natural, and certain connections between the two passages are confirmed. In fact, John's version of Jesus' action in the Temple, which is generally agreed to be independent from the Markan Gospel, combines these two incidents (cf. Jn 2:13ff and 18ff). It follows then that the question about Jesus' authority is connected with something earlier, especially since the ταῦτα in v.28 looks back at a specific situation.⁴⁷⁰ Even if the authenticity of the sayings here is questioned, 11:17 excluded, the question still comes immediately after the Temple action.⁴⁷¹ In accordance with these observations, Jesus' action in the Temple must be dealt with in the light of Mark's macro-thematic point of view, of Jesus' new teaching with authority.

The same motifs of teaching and authority occurring in Mk 1:22, 27, associated with a new way of teaching and new kind of authority, are of keen interest here: καὶ ἐξεπλήσσαντο ἐπὶ τῇ διδασκῇ αὐτοῦ· ἦν γὰρ διδάσκων αὐτοὺς ὡς ἐξουσίαν ἔχων (1:22); “διδασκῇ καινῇ κατ’ ἐξουσίαν”(1:27). Note how similar are the expressions occurring in these verses: “ἐξεπλήσσαντο ἐπὶ τῇ διδασκῇ αὐτοῦ” in 1:22 and “ἐξεπλήσσετο ἐπὶ τῇ διδασκῇ αὐτοῦ” in 11:19. In both, a motif of wonder is used, ascribed to their encounter with something new, something they had not seen or experienced before. The recurrent motif of newness, namely, the apocalyptical and

⁴⁶⁸ Cf. E. Lohmeyer, *Das Evangelium des Markus*, 235-37; W. Grundmann, *Das Evangelium nach Markus*, 308; E. Haenchen, *Der Weg Jesu: Eine Erklärung des Markus-Evangeliums und der kanonischen Parallelen*, 384-86.

⁴⁶⁹ Cf. R. Gundry, *Mark*, 640. In fact later on in an other part, Gundry mentions these two verses, yet strangely enough interprets them as a revelation of the awe-inspiring power of Jesus' teaching, which is backed up by his strong actions in the Temple, which Gundry thinks is Mark's main point in the whole episode of Jesus' action in the Temple (cf. 641).

⁴⁷⁰ Lloyd Gaston, *No Stone On Another*, 83.

⁴⁷¹ R. Bultmann, *The History of the Synoptic Tradition*, 36. In his argument for the authenticity of the Temple episode in Mk 11:15-17, C. Evans also implicitly acknowledges this link, and in his interpretation of Mk 11:27-33, he actually interprets this passage as an evidence of animosity between

eschatological newness that God begins to unveil through Jesus is not far from this motif at all. Furthermore, the motifs of authority and newness in turn lead us to recall the authority and newness in Mk 2:10 and 12 that were discussed in the units Ch. 3 of this study, THE MOTIF OF SEEING IN ‘STREITGESPRÄCHE’.

It is only reasonable then that the same hermeneutical principle of Mark (of the newness that Jesus brings into God’s administration) be used to aid our understanding of Jesus’ action in the Temple. Regardless of the various possible conclusions drawn in reference to the early Jewish interpretations of the two biblical texts, the fact that Mark has them in such a way that they are congruent with his motif of Jesus’ new teaching with authority urges us to re-interpret them in light of Mark’s apocalyptic and eschatological epistemology. In addition, the word *καίρως* in 11:13, in Mark’s scheme of things, refers to an eschatological time—there the tree is cursed because it should always bear fruit in the new age.⁴⁷² Likewise, the teaching as a metaphorical reference to the new age may be strengthened further. More to the point in our study, the coming of the new age calls a new understanding of the Temple as well, demands a new form of the Temple that can be compatible with the new age.

4.54222 A First Reading of Jesus’ Action in Light of Its Literary Context

4.542221 Preliminary Remarks

Here Jesus’ action will be examined in light of its immediate and broader literary contexts, especially in conjunction with the scriptural references made in 11:16 and 17. First, Jesus’ action in the Temple should be interpreted on two levels. On one level, the action is apparently in line with the prophetic tradition in the OT which not only declares God’s imminent judgement on the people of Israel, but also envisions in God’s judgements themselves a divine promise of restoration, which always exceeds what was originally promised. In this respect, Jesus’ action is a symbolic and prophetic one that pronounces both God’s judgement over the Temple and his subsequent restoration of it, to the one that is everlasting and cosmic in nature, in

Jesus and the Temple authority (“Jesus’ Action in the Temple,” *Jesus in Context: Temple, Purity, and Restoration* [Brill, 1997], 403).

fulfilment of the Temple that was prophesized later to David in 2 Sam 7:12-14 and was alluded to in a primeval prophecy in Exod 15:17. On another level, Jesus' action is more than a prophetic symbol: it is an actual messianic fulfilment of the eschatological Temple that had been prophesized and anticipated in the midst of and after the destruction of the First Jerusalem Temple, one that is repeatedly longed for in Israelites' disappointment and frustration with the Second Temple. The proper understanding of Jesus' action in the Temple can only come from utilizing both of these levels of interpretation: consideration of the literary setting of the action will reveal its prophetic and messianic nature, and the explications of the scriptural references in vv. 16 and 17 will offer reinforcements.

4.542222 Jesus' Action as Prophetic Threat and Promise

First, there is a form of intensification or progression, developed as Mark's story of Jesus proceeds, that can yield a clear picture of how the two motifs of prophetic threat and promise work when properly examined. It is immediately clear how indignant Jesus is toward the Temple rulers as well as the money-changers and traders⁴⁷³; the scriptural references or allusions in 11:16-17, such as Jer 7:11 and Zech 14:21 indicate that the anger is prophetic in nature. The indignation, however, is not unexpected; it is anticipated by Mark who says that Jesus "looked around at everything, but since it was already late, he went out to Bethany with the Twelve." (v.11).

This ending of the entrance story is an awkward one and has produced numerous speculations and redaction-critical explanations. C. Evans says, for example, that if Ps 118, which is alluded to in 11:9, provides us with any interpretive clue, "then Jesus may very well have anticipated a priestly greeting," and concludes that Jesus is being portrayed as an unwelcome prophet from Galilee, and that is why he was forced to look over the precincts and went out.⁴⁷⁴ But from Mark's narrative point of view, the seemingly anti-climactic ending of Jesus' entry dramatizes the intensifying movements or progressions in terms of Jesus' judgmental view on the

⁴⁷² H. W. Bartsch, "Die Verfluchung des Feigenbaums," *ZNW* 53 (1962), 257, quoted from D. Krause, "Narrated Prophecy in Mark 11:21-21: The Divine Authorization of Judgment," 244, in *The Gospels and the Scriptures of Israel*, ed. C. Evans and W. Richard Stegner. JSNTSupp 104 (Sheffield, 1994).

⁴⁷³ Note the Temple authorities challenging about Jesus' authority in 11:28f.

⁴⁷⁴ C. Evans, *Mark 8:27-16:20*, 146-147.

Jerusalem Temple. Jesus visited the Temple precincts and inspected them, and then he is described to “go out with the disciples, as it was late” (“ὥσπερ ἡδὴ οὕσης τῆς ὥρας, ἐξῆλθεν ... μετὰ τῶν δώδεκα.”) (11:11). Upon returning to the Temple precincts the next day, he began (ἤρξατο) to drive away the money-changers and vending traders from it (11:15-17). The verb ἤρξατο should be rendered as a constative (not inceptive) aorist, describing Jesus’ action as a whole.⁴⁷⁵ In line with this, the clause εἰσελθὼν εἰς τὸ ἱερόν may imply that, as R. Gundry notes, “what [Jesus] is about to do arises from what he saw when he looked around after ‘he entered ... into the temple’ late on the previous day.”⁴⁷⁶ After the Temple authorities started plotting to destroy Jesus (11:18), Jesus and the disciples are also said to “go out .., as it was late” (“ὅταν ὥσπερ ἐγένετο, ἐξεπορεύοντο ἔξω τῆς πόλεως”) (v.19). The occurrence of the same expression at the beginning and end of the Temple scene is part of a carefully designed literary scheme to show that every stage of Jesus and the Temple episode is has its own purpose and significance.

Also important to note is the thematic parallel between Jesus’ initial inspection of things around the Temple in 11:11 and the fig-tree scene immediately following it in 11:13. In the former, Jesus a Messianic king looks for fruits of righteousness, only to fail, and leaves intending to go back next day and carry out his judgments regarding the Temple on the basis of what he found the previous day. In the latter, he looks for a fruit from the fig tree, only to fail, and carries out his judgment, his curse. The parallelism here functions to carry on the weight of the proleptical announcement of the end of the Temple era, as Scott Brown makes it clear:

Jesus’ inspection of the leafy tree for fruit provides symbolic commentary on his inspection of the Temple in 11:11. As mutually interpretive incidents, the messianic procession and Jesus’ approach to a leafy tree in search of fruit combine to symbolize the coming of the Messiah to Jerusalem and the Temple seeking a ‘harvest’ of righteousness from God’s people.⁴⁷⁷

Immediately after Jesus’ departure, the fig tree is found withered (11:21). When faced with the incurable obduracy of the Jewish leaders, after long and persistent confrontations with them, he says, as he is leaving the Temple, that “Not one stone

⁴⁷⁵ Cf. BDF, § 318 (1) and § 332.

⁴⁷⁶ R. Gundry, *Mark*, 639.

here will be left on another; every one will be thrown down”(13:2). The cumulative nature of Jesus’ disenchantment with the Temple and the drama and intensifying progression of Mark’s compositional scheme seem to go hand in hand. More importantly, as R. Brown observes, Mark does not forget that O.T. prophets who sought to purify the Temple could predict destruction if the decried abuses were not corrected: Mark “saw no contradiction between an action intended to purify the Temple and an apocalyptic threat of destroying the sanctuary.”⁴⁷⁸

There is a thematic link between the episode of Jesus’ action in the Temple and the scene immediately following it where Jesus’ teaching about faith, prayer and forgiveness is reported in 11:22-26.⁴⁷⁹ Of course, the motif of prayer occurs within the Temple cleansing episode in v.17, “My house shall be called a house of prayer for all nations,” which in fact starts a chain of connection. Critically speaking, the teaching section creates many interpretive problems and difficulties. For example, on the surface level, faith in regard to prayer seems to fit well with the story of the fig tree withered in fulfilment of Jesus’ curse; but then its intrusive nature is still obvious. And the theme of forgiveness even on the surface level is not compatible with the motif of faith, again creating an awkward interruption. Thus, for scholars like C. Evans, this section is taken as an interlude, a parenthesis in the narrative flow of the story, supposing that ‘[Mark’s] faithful rendering of the tradition and the oblique, rather than primary, relationship of prayer in 11:17 to 11:23-25 deterred the evangelist from excising the teaching on faith and prayer and possibly relocating it elsewhere.’⁴⁸⁰ On the other hand, scholars like W. Telford try to connect the pericope of prayer, faith, and forgiveness with the story of Jesus’ action in the Temple as well as with the fig-tree episode. After a long investigation of redaction-critical issues, Telford contends that “The disciples... are summoned to believe that ‘this mountain’ can and will be uprooted and cast into the sea,” and that “this saying may have been intended, along with the curious positioning of the story,” to be read as a comment on the specific action of Jesus in the Temple. “‘This mountain’ in other words, was to be

⁴⁷⁷ Scott G. Brown, “Mark 11:1-12:12: A Triple Intercalation,” *CBQ* Vol. 64 No.1 (Jan. 2002), 83.

⁴⁷⁸ R. Brown, *The Death of the Messiah*, I, 455, 457.

⁴⁷⁹ As a major work on the sayings in this pericope, Sharyn E. Dowd’s work can be referred to: *Prayer, Power, And the Problem of Suffering: Mark 11:22-25 in the Context of Markan Theology*, (Scholars Press, 1988).

⁴⁸⁰ C. Evans, *Mark 8:27-16:20*, 186. And for more detailed discussions about form and redaction-critical questions, see *ibid*, 185-186; W. Telford, *The Barren Temple and The Withered Tree: A*

seen (and could quite naturally be taken) as the temple mount, whose removal is even more explicitly promised in 13:2,” he argues.⁴⁸¹ He goes on further to conclude that in this pericope, Jesus’ power or his faith in God, which has been shown to work in his judgment of the fig-tree, is now vindicated to the surprise of the disciples, encouraging the disciples to know that the removal of the temple mount can and will be fulfilled just as easily in response to such faith.⁴⁸²

It is logical in view of the narrative flow, to have ‘this mountain’ in 11: 23 to refer to the temple mount, the Mount of Olives (cf. 13:3), and “the sea” in the same verse to the Dead Sea, which could be seen from the Mount.⁴⁸³ The identification of these places exposes the connections between Jesus’ action in the Temple, the pericope of 11:22-26, Jesus’ prediction of the destruction of the Temple in 13:1-2, and 14:58 and 15:29. Telford even supposes that 11:22b-23 may be considered as ‘destruction of the temple’ prophecies along with the other Markan passages.⁴⁸⁴ More than any redaction-critical issues, however, and more than the actual place and time, our focus should be on the symbolic meaning of the pericope, bound neither to any historical time nor place.⁴⁸⁵ Likewise, the central issue here is how this pericope and Jesus’ action in the Temple can be related and in what way the former contribute to the understanding of the latter.

The narrative world of Mark’s Gospel thus becomes a critical issue to deal with at this point. At the outset, it is to acknowledge that prayer is a connecting motif; the link between this pericope and Jesus’ action in the Temple, however, should not be restricted to the theme of prayer. Rather, based on the critical importance of v. 17, the motif of community, which the scriptural references in the verse play up, should be considered also: ‘my house should be called a house of prayer for all nations, but you robbed their right of praying in it by exclusively appropriating it.’ Taking the community image as the key and central point here, one sees Mark skilfully

Redaction-Critical Analysis of the Cursing of the Fig-Tree pericope in Mark’s Gospel and its Relation to the Cleansing of the Temple tradition, (JSOT Press, 1980), 49-59.

⁴⁸¹ W. Telford, *The Barren Temple*, 58-59.

⁴⁸² Ibid, 59.

⁴⁸³ Cf. J. Gnllka, *Das Evangelium II*, 134.

⁴⁸⁴ W. Telford, *The Barren Temple*, 59. Cf. C. Evans, “Jesus and Zechariah’s Messianic Hope” in *Authenticating the Activities of Jesus*, 384: here, he interprets about Zech 14:4 (“On that day, The Mount of Olives shall be split in two from east to west”) that the phrase “from east to west” in Hebrew also literally means “from east to the sea”, and he suggests that Jesus’ saying in 11:22-23 is an eschatological assurance that if his followers have faith, they will participate in the fulfillment of Zechariah’s prophecy.

coordinating distinctive themes of prayer and forgiveness. And Mark's community, as we have noted numerous times, is an eschatological community of the new age, characterized by God's eschatological pardoning grace through which the whole humanity would be embraced into his kingly reign and community.

There is a significant factor with regard to a thematic link in 11:22-26, previously unnoticed by any scholars. Thematic links such as motifs of seeing, faith, and forgiveness were explored in detail in the discussion of the pericope of the healing of the paralytic in 2:1-12 ("When Jesus *saw* their *faith*, he said...your sins are *forgiven*," in 2:5) at 3.5 FAITH IN THE STORY OF THE HEALING OF THE PARALYTIC and 3.6 'SEEING' IN THE LIGHT OF THE FORGIVENESS OF SINS under the chapter 3 of this study, The Motif of Seeing in the 'Streitgespräche. It was shown that in Mark's apocalyptic and eschatological epistemology, 'seeing,' 'faith,' and 'forgiveness' are all interrelated, especially in reference to the dawning of the new age which is characterized by God's pardoning grace and embrace of all sinners and the outcast. In the text at hand, Peter is described as "seeing" the fig tree withered ("They *saw* the fig tree withered," in 11:20) and his sight is immediately connected to the motif of faith in Jesus' teaching ("Have *faith* in God" in 11:22), and later on, Mark makes sure 'forgiveness' is connected to prayer (cf. vv.24f.).

There are two other motifs that reinforce the thematic tie between the two pericopes: the context of teaching and the motif of wonder. 2:1-12 does not specify the setting of Jesus' healing as a teaching context, yet the implication is clear, as it says "he was speaking the word to them" in v.2. As the usage of 'the word' points to no specific subject, it can be safely assumed that a general reference to the teaching of Jesus has been made here. The motif of wonder, explicitly expressed in v.12, eventually leads the onlookers of Jesus' healing to the monumentally symbolic acclamation that the new age has arrived. 11:22-26, likewise, clearly implies that Jesus offers the sayings on faith, prayer and forgiveness in a teaching context, as its narrative flow and literary context show; and the word ἰδε in Peter's acclamation in 11:21 clearly denotes a motif of wonder. Rather than having the current shape of the text explained away from the form-critical point of view, the link between the two pericopes must be seen as Mark's narrative and literary design. The structure of the text itself is intended to communicate the theological significance of the pericopes to

⁴⁸⁵ J. Gnllka: " Es handelt sich aber um eine bildhafte Aussage, die an keinen Ort und keine Zeit

his eschatological community. The saying on faith opens the way to the saying of forgiveness ('when you stand praying, *forgive..*' in 11:25f), thus, another clear example of the link.

Two significant differences between the two pericopes should be noted here. One is that in the former, the object of faith was Jesus as the Son of Man, an eschatological messiah, while in the latter God is described to be the object of faith. The other is that in the former, forgiveness was described as an eschatological gift bestowed by the Messiah, the eschatological agent of God, the Son of Man, while in the latter, God is depicted as the agent granting the forgiveness.

While endorsing M. Albertz's view that Mark 11-12 contains a collection of controversy stories, and comparing them with the so-called conflict discourses in 2:1-3:6, Lloyd Gaston supposes that tradition-critically speaking, the former is a vehement comment by Jesus on various critical issues of his own day, whereas the latter is a matter of the polemics of the early church.⁴⁸⁶ Though Gaston does not include our pericope, 11:22-26, in this collection of controversy stories, presumably hard-pressed in making it fit, Gaston's implied categorization of 11:22-26 in the classification of the whole chapters 11-12 can serve as a backdrop against which the difference between 2:1-12 and 11:22-26 can be explained. Furthermore, Gaston's view is also congruent with the findings of redaction critical studies in that form and redaction critics largely agree on non-Markan characteristics of the literary styles and languages of 11:22-26; they contend that the pericope contains scribal embellishments or is under the influence of a developing hermeneutical process.⁴⁸⁷

Considering Mark's narrative world again, the correspondence between 2:1-12 and 11:22-26 that is pointed out is not marred by the differences noted above. These differences are then likely from the different stages or phases in the narrative developments of Mark's gospel. On the one hand, at the very beginning of the unfolding drama of Jesus' public ministry in which Jesus' identity and status as a messianic figure has to be attested, Mark's ascription of these divine prerogatives and authorities to Jesus is quite understandable. Furthermore, the ascription makes even more sense in the apologetic context of the early church that Mark's community belongs to. On the other hand, Mark has painstakingly distinguished Jesus from God

gebunden ist (*Das Evangelium*, II 134).

⁴⁸⁶ L. Gaston, *No Stone On Another*, 82.

⁴⁸⁷ Cf. W. Telford, *The Barren Temple*, 50, 58.

throughout the Gospel. See the following verses in which Jesus distinguishes himself from God and recognizes God's exclusive prerogatives: 8:33 (things of God); 10:9; 10:18; 10:27; 12:17; Shema in 12:24, 26-27, 29-31; cf. 2:7, plus a great number of references to the Kingdom of God and numerous uses of God in the genitive cases. S. Dowd accordingly asserts that Mark means to say that the power manifested in Jesus' cursing the fig tree was the power of God, and the same power is available to the community through believing prayer.⁴⁸⁸

Even more crucial to note in both pericopes is the motif of a new community as a new mode of profane / sacred place that can replace the current Temple. The setting of the healing of the paralytic in 2:1-12 is of special interest here. 2:1 specifies ἐν οἴκῳ as a setting of Jesus' teaching, a context in which the healing subsequently takes places. J. Marcus argues that although the word ἐν οἴκῳ could simply mean 'in house,' it is a fixed idiom for 'at home,' relying on BAGD's suggestion (cf. 3rd edition, 698, 1@ α).⁴⁸⁹ But it is readily noted, even from a cursory glance, that οἶκος in Mark is used much more inclusive by Mark. Mk 11:17, for example, can refer to a house or any large building (cf. BAGD, 698, 1@ β), linking itself verbally to v. 2:1 by using οἶκος in reference to this larger setting. As BAGD enumerates, the semantic field of the word οἶκος covers a vast range: from a king's palace (Josephus, *Ant.* 9, 102), to gods' houses (Herodas 1, 26; IkosPh 8,4), and more importantly to temples including God's House (Eur., *Phoen.* 1372; Hdt. 8, 143; Mk 2:26; 3 Km 7:31; Just., D. 86, 6 al.). Even a tower, used at times as a symbol of the Christian community, is called the house of God⁴⁹⁰ and the Christian community as the spiritual temple of God is expressed through this term (1 Pt 2:5; 1 Pt 4:17; 1 Ti 3:15).

Elizabeth S. Malbon offers considerable help in this matter. In commenting on 14:58, she claims that 'the metaphor of the temple as the house of God is on [Jesus'] lip truly, both early and late (2:26; 11:17).'⁴⁹¹ In her later publication, dealing more comprehensively with the issue of architectural space, she says that 'the sequence of the architectural suborder [from synagogue through houses to temple] is not a static tableau of stage settings but a dynamic pattern of movement within narrative space. The buildings of the Gospel of Mark enclose more than space; they capture the varied

⁴⁸⁸ S. Dowd, *Prayer, Power, and the Problem of Suffering*, 53.

⁴⁸⁹ R. Marcus, *Mark 1-8*, 215.

⁴⁹⁰ Cf. how in Mk 12:12, the tower, though meant to be a watchtower and thus rendered by a different term, is also mentioned.

⁴⁹¹ E. Malbon, "τῇ οἰκίᾳ αὐτοῦ: Mark 2:15 in Context," *NTS* 31 (1985), 288.

responses made to Jesus by those around him, those he healed, taught, challenged.⁴⁹² More importantly, the principal architectural marker in Mark is ‘house,’ rather than the synagogue, the former as a residential thus profane space, as opposed to the latter as a religious thus sacred space:⁴⁹³ “the Markan Jesus and the Markan narrative seem to move toward the opposite goal of depreciating the sacred / profane distinction,”⁴⁹⁴ she further notes.⁴⁹⁵ In other words, the house as the chief architectural center for teaching replaces the synagogue in Mark. The manifestation of the sacred realm through the metaphor of house is emphasized in the narrative movement from the synagogue to the Temple. The historical event in which the Temple was destroyed in A.D. 70 gives weight to this observation; as the synagogue took over the role of the Temple, after it was destroyed, as the focal point of the Jewish community, the whole event became the background for Mark linking synagogue and Temple. Malbon observes that the contemporary situation, coupled with the expulsion of the Christians from the synagogues, forms the backdrop against which Mark portrays house in opposition to synagogue; accordingly, house, a manifestation of the profane realm, is also in opposition to Temple in Mark. Thus in the passion narrative in which the temple is depicted as the dominant architectural mode, “even at the metaphorical level of Mark’s Gospel, temple is rejected, house affirmed.”⁴⁹⁶

What is especially relevant to our study is Malbon’s proposition, on the basis of a specific passage, 2:15 (“...γίνεται κατακεῖσθαι αὐτὸν ἐν τῇ οἰκίᾳ αὐτοῦ”), the phrase τῇ οἰκίᾳ αὐτοῦ in particular, that αὐτοῦ here refers to Jesus’ house, which is indicated by its immediate literary and narrative flow as well as the accompanying motif of the call to discipleship.⁴⁹⁷ This house, she argues, as the most fundamental and prominent marker of architectural space is in opposition to synagogue and temple in Mark⁴⁹⁸: ‘In his ministry the Markan Jesus tears down traditional social and religious distinctions by entertaining tax collectors and sinners in ‘his house’ (2:15).

⁴⁹² E. Malbon, *Narrative Space*, 117.

⁴⁹³ E. Malbon, *Narrative Space*, 131.

⁴⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, 133.

⁴⁹⁵ This is in contrast with the contemporary Pharisees’ opposition between the sacred made effective by the Torah observance and all other profane objects.

⁴⁹⁶ E. Malbon, *Narrative Space*, 134.

⁴⁹⁷ E. Malbon, “τῇ οἰκίᾳ αὐτοῦ : Mark 2:15 in Context,” 283.

⁴⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, 285 and 287.

At Jesus' death, according to Mark, God tears down similar distinctions by causing the curtain to split (15:39) in God's 'house' (11:17), the house of the Lord.⁴⁹⁹

Even if her suggestion that 'the house' in 2:15 refers to Jesus' house is not accepted (as some would argue it is Levi's), the house described in 2:1, '..ἡκούσθη ὅτι ἐν οἴκῳ ἐστίν,' is very much in line with Malbon's discussion of the theme of house, Temple, and synagogue in Mark. In fact, rather than using 2:15 as an exclusive case in point, limiting the scope of the theme of house to the theme of Jesus' table fellowship with sinners and outcasts, it should be viewed in connection to 2:1-12, the entire literary corpus of 2:1, where various other motifs with eschatological implications, e.g. faith, the Son of Man's authority, forgiveness and seeing are contained. The house as a new mode of community in opposition to and in replacement of the Temple sets up the connection between these various motifs. Now forgiveness, conventionally mediated only by the sacrificial rites through the Temple, is granted by the eschatological Messiah, the Son of Man, upon seeing the faith of an individual, without any mediating role of the Temple and its cult. In short, the thematic and lexical connections between the two pericopes (2:1-12 and 11:22-26) serves as a key point in showing that the community that Mark idealizes in his Gospel is an eschatological community of faith and forgiveness.

This understanding sheds much light on the issue of the juxtaposition of Jesus' action in the Temple and the sayings on faith, prayer and forgiveness. In light of the gloomy contemporary situations in Mark's days, especially when the Messiah of Israel had been rejected by Israel, the Jerusalem Church suffered from discouraging results from its mission to the circumcised Jews, and the hopeless war movements of the Zealots against Rome rose, Mark's intention to imply a symbolic meaning through the fig-tree episode is highly understandable. As L. Gaston says, the fig-tree is a parabolic description of the actual situation of Israel, the withered fig-tree like Israel being rejected because of its barrenness. Taking this symbolic meaning into account, the reason for the apparently isolated sayings on faith, prayer, and forgiveness being added at just this juncture becomes visible.⁵⁰⁰ For Gaston, the reference to 'seeing' in 11:20 and Jesus' command to 'have faith in God' in 11:22 symbolically represent Peter's actual experience of hopeless situation of his mission field in Jerusalem.

⁴⁹⁹ Ibid, 289.

⁵⁰⁰ L. Gaston, *No Stone On Another*, 83.

While the historicity of the contemporary situation is helpful in some ways to the passages 11:22-26, Jesus' action in the Temple and his sayings on prayer, faith and forgiveness do not find the needed thread that weaves them together unless the motif of community is explored in conjunction with them. From Mark's viewpoint, the Temple had been rejected, but the rejection itself carries an eschatological weight. As Dowd points out, 'because of its traditional role as the guarantor of the efficacy of prayer, the rejection of the temple requires a reassurance of the importance of community prayer and the power available to it.' Mark has juxtaposed the episode of Jesus' action in the Temple, which proleptically portends the destruction of the temple, with the sayings on prayer in faith so that his readers are offered the necessary assurances regarding the efficacy of prayer as replacement of the rites of the Temple; in this sense, "the fig tree pericope is used as a metaphorical clamp to hold the two ideas together."⁵⁰¹

Therefore if the sayings on faith, prayer, and forgiveness can be seen to symbolically prefigure a new community replacing the Jerusalem Temple, it follows that Jesus' action in the Temple does not only serve as a prophetic judgment over the Temple, but also as a prophetic promise for further graces through the Temple. The power with which Jesus cursed the fig tree was the power of God and it is the same power that the Christian community through believing prayer have access to.⁵⁰² The Markan community, portrayed in what the disciples say, is 'the house of prayer for all nations' that the Temple was not.⁵⁰³

As D. Juel observes, the phrase 'the house of prayer' probably means more than a mere biblical quotation for Mark. By having the saying of prayer side by side with an episode whose implication is that the Temple, with its agents and cults, is destroyed and replaced precisely because of the fact that it failed to become a house of prayer for all nations, Mark clearly takes this paradigm and applies to his Church:

Perhaps Mark wishes to characterize the community of the faithful as a community typified by prayer and forgiveness. The contrast between the praying community and the house of prayer that became a den of robbers suggests that the distinction between temple made with hands and a

⁵⁰¹ S. Dowd, *Prayer, Power, And the Problem of Suffering*, 53.

⁵⁰² Ibid, 53.

⁵⁰³ S. Dowd, *Prayer, Power*, 54. J. Gnllka also believes that the two sayings of Jesus on faith and forgiveness is contrasted in juxtaposition with the pericopes of the fig-tree and Jesus' action in the Temple: "Er benützt die kleine Spruchsammlung als Kontrast zur Feigenbaum- und Tempelperikope, die beide mit dem über Israel hereinbrechenden Gericht zu tun haben" (*Das Evangelium*, II, 135)

temple not made with hands in 14:58 may reflect Mark's view of the Christian community as a replacement of the rejected temple establishment.⁵⁰⁴

Mark's very careful and intriguing composition of the eschatological discourse in 13 gains thus even more weight in this light. As Malbon insightfully points out, 'Jesus' eschatological discourse opens with the prediction of the destruction of the 'Temple' (13:2) and closes with the parable of the doorkeeper of the 'house.'⁵⁰⁵

4.542223 A First Reading of Jesus' Action in the Temple

Regarding the nature of Jesus' action in the Temple as a portent for the coming destruction of the Temple, there are three main points to pursue. First of all, the current form of intercalation of the story of the fig tree with that of Jesus' action in the Temple makes it reasonable to assume that the fruitless and cursed fig tree stands for a fruitless and doomed Temple, and that just as the fig tree would never bear fruit, so the Temple would never be restored to its original, ordained purpose. In his tradition-critical considerations, C. Evans points out that Mark is interested in linking Jesus' action in the Temple with its destruction, but chooses to do so by placing the Temple scene between the two Fig Tree episodes.⁵⁰⁶ The current shape of Jesus' action inserted between the two fig-tree episodes symbolically reveals the people of Israel standing now under God's judgment, as the fig tree serves as a symbolic convention standing for the people of Israel in the OT prophetic texts such as Hos 9:10, Jer 24, Jer 29:27, and Mic 7:16 MT.⁵⁰⁷ As W. Telford notes after examining five OT passages (containing the term fig-tree and related motifs), Jer 8:13, Is 28:3-4, Hos 9:10, 16, Mi 7:1, and Jl 1:7, 12 :

The contexts of all five passages exhibit a number of common and interrelated themes and motifs which link them not only with each other but also with the features and surrounding context of the Markan story:

⁵⁰⁴ D. Juel, *Messiah and Temple*, 135-36.

⁵⁰⁵ E. Malbon, *Narrative Space*, 134.

⁵⁰⁶ C. Evans, "Jesus' Action in the Temple," *Jesus in Context: Temple, Purity and Restoration*, ed. B. Chilton and C. Evans, (Brill, 1997), 397-398. But Evans believes that in reality Mark did "not depict Jesus' action as portending the Temple's destruction; rather he depicts his action as motivated out of indignation toward the activities going on within the Temple precincts" (ibid, 401).

⁵⁰⁷ W. D. Davies, *The Gospel and the Land: Early Christianity and Jewish Territorial Doctrine* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1974), 352, n.46.

the judgment against Israel, the corruption and consequent condemnation of the nation, her leaders, her temple and its cultus, the appearance of Yahweh in wrath to curse the land and blast the trees, the moving of the mountains, the destruction of Jerusalem and its Temple.⁵⁰⁸

Second, the narrative flow shows that Jesus' action in the Temple was not simply aimed at purifying the Temple by expelling the sitting vendors and traders but at signalling the termination of the material Temple institute. After he does this, the Jewish religious leaders immediately question Jesus' authority for carrying out the deed (11:28). The question, as V. Eppstein suggests, might have been about which group, the Sanhedrin or the Pharisees, Jesus represented through his action, and not so much about his heavenly or human authority.⁵⁰⁹ Understood in this sense, the question fits in well with the historical context surveyed above. In any case, what is important to remember is that by 'ταῦτα' in 11:28, they are referring to Jesus' action in the Temple. In reply, Jesus poses the question about the origin of John's Baptism to them, whether it comes from heaven or men. While the main concern here is with Jesus' authority in association with his actions in the Temple, Jesus dodges the question and turns it around to tell them that if John's baptism came from heaven, he himself, who is stronger than John the Baptist ("ὁ ἰσχυρότερός μου ὀπίσω μου" in 1:7), surely should assume much bigger authority. The fulcrum on which Jesus' comparison of John and himself is laid is not readily clear but is of much importance. The only linkage between Jesus' authority and John's authority that could be envisioned in the current Temple context is the theme of forgiveness of sins.

If we follow this line, Jesus' answer in question concerns the efficacy of John's Baptism as a replacement of the cultic purity or sacrificial institute as a means of expiation of sins. At the outset of the Gospel, John the Baptist is depicted as an apocalyptic forerunner to prepare in the wilderness the way for the Lord's eschatological coming in Mk 1:2-3. More importantly, he is described as the one who proclaims a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins. In 1:7-8, John the Baptist compares himself to Jesus in terms of strength or power (v.7), more specifically in terms of the power of his Baptism with water and Jesus' baptism with the Holy Spirit. Mark seems to indicate that, by completely bypassing the cultic rites of the Jerusalem Temple, John the Baptist through his baptism with water was doing

⁵⁰⁸ W. Telford, *The Barren Temple*, 142-155, especially, 155.

what the sacrificial offerings within the Temple in the OT could do, namely, the expiation of sins. Jesus' baptism with the Spirit, likewise, the ultimate means of expiating sins, brings a once and for all end to the role of the cultic rites of the Temple. Purging of sins through fire, as Gaston points out 'would result not from the fire of sacrifice but with the fiery baptism of him who is to come, and for the present John's baptism with water supplants all temple sacrifice.'⁵¹⁰ The Jerusalem Temple authorities appear to have noticed very clearly the anti-cultic implications of Jesus' actions in and around the Temple and their connection to the baptism of John the Baptist.⁵¹¹

Then Jesus moves on directly to a parable about the vineyard, which ends with the biblical quotation from Ps 118:22-23. In the early Jewish literatures, the Vineyard Song of Isaiah, which is the basis of the parable, eventually came to be rendered specifically as prediction of the First Temple destruction (cf. Tg. Isa5:2, 5; Tosefta Me'ila 1:16; Tosefta Sukk. 3:15). Tosefta Sukk. 3:15, in particular, identifies the tower of the Isaiah's Vineyard song with the Temple, and the wine vat with the altar. Since the tower and the wine vat in Isaiah's Song are threatened with destruction, the prophet's utterance can be said to be fulfilled in the destruction of the Temple in 586 BCE.⁵¹² Furthermore, the citation at the end of the parable itself is also full of building images and a clear adumbration of a new building whose cornerstone will be a rejected stone. Foreshadowing Jesus' death, the citation also implies that the current Temple will be replaced by the new Temple Jesus will found by playing the role of its cornerstone. The threat of destruction in the Markan parable parallels the citation of Ps 118:22-23 where a new base is laid, of a new Temple over the old one foundation.⁵¹³

Third, although they will be explored extensively later, the two biblical references (Is 56:7 and Jer 7:11) in Mk 11:17 are closely tied to the issue at hand; they should be read in regard to the portent of the destruction of the Temple and the replacement of the current Temple with the new one that will become the house of prayer for all nations. The post-biblical Jewish interpretations of the O.T prophecies including these two passages foresee the rebuilding of a new sanctuary in a Messianic

⁵⁰⁹ V. Eppstein, "The Historicity of the Cleansing," 57.

⁵¹⁰ L. Gaston, *No Stone On Another*, 88.

⁵¹¹ Ibid. 89.

⁵¹² C. Evans, "Jesus' Action in the Temple," 398-399.

⁵¹³ Ibid, 399.

age as the Messianic fulfilment about the Temple: note 1 Enoch 90: 28-30; Jub. 1:17; 11Qtemple 29:8-18; *Sib. Or.* 5:425; Tg. Isa 53:5.⁵¹⁴

Lastly, the use of the word ἱερόν in the episode of Jesus' action should be taken as an indication that the Jerusalem Temple (ἱερόν) was superseded, now to be grouped with other pagan shrines, as what has become outdated. It is, indeed, possible that an intentional depreciation of the Temple (ἱερόν) is involved in the use of that term.⁵¹⁵

4.542224 Jesus' Action as Messianic fulfilment

As set out in the 4.542221 PRELIMINARY REMARKS above, so far Jesus' action in the Temple has been explored in terms of prophetic judgment over the Temple and of proleptic prophetic envisioning of its divinely ordained restoration, opening the door to the Gentiles to be included in the eschatological new community. Jesus' action as a messianic fulfilment is the next issue at hand. To avoid any overlapping discussion or repetition, two passages in particular will be explored here: the scriptural allusion in the episode of Jesus' entry into the Jerusalem (11:8-10) and the biblical citation in 12:10-11. Before considering these passages, Jesus' ministry must be put into a broader perspective.

More than a prophet announcing judgement, Jesus was the prophesied Messiah through whom the age of fulfilment was beginning. Not only would the temple be destroyed, it would be replaced by Jesus and his ministry. His entire public ministry is in fact a fulfilment of what the temple symbolized. He forgives sins personally, without sin offerings, guilt offerings, and the ritual of the Day of Atonement. He touches the unclean, lepers, and corpses and brings them to health; he is touched by the unclean woman with haemorrhage, and uncleanness becomes clean. Jesus identifies with sinners who are called to repentance and forgiveness. Cleanness, forgiveness, and healing formerly received through the symbolism of ritual law and temple sacrifice are now gifts of Jesus' words and healing touch. The temple had not yet reached its appointed end during Jesus' ministry, but surely something greater

⁵¹⁴ E. P. Sanders, *Jesus and Judaism*, 87; as for the Targum Isaianic verse, see C. Evans, "Jesus' Action in the Temple," 410, n.47.

⁵¹⁵ W. D. Davies, *The Gospel and the Land*, 350, n.46.

than the temple had entered the human history, and the end of the temple could not be long delayed.⁵¹⁶

The general tenor of the messianic fulfilment through Jesus' ministry can be strengthened with the exploration of the two passages pointed out above. First of all, as Jesus enters the Jerusalem, he is acclaimed as the son of the David (cf. 11:10), then immediately he is said to go into the temple to inspect it (11:10b-11). These two descriptions would have reminded Mark's reader of 2 Sam 7:12-13: "...I will raise up your offspring to succeed you.. and I will establish his kingdom. He is the one who will build a house for my name.." Various thematic and lexical links and resonances exist between Mk 11:9b-11a and 2 Sam 7:12-13; their impact on Mark's description of Jesus as messianic king and on his reader cannot be denied. As Hans D. Betz notes, Jesus might have intended his intervention to be a symbolic reminder of the old prophetic objections against the corruption of Temple worship by kingship.⁵¹⁷ Jesus may have acted in the role of the Davidic descendant and so may have assumed the prerogative to criticize the Temple establishment, in step with what is portrayed in *Psalms of Solomon* 17-18.

And even though there is no hint that Jesus' criticism is specifically directed against features of corruption perhaps brought on by royal abuses or romanizing or paganizing influences,⁵¹⁸ C. Evans argues, there is a hint of a royal motif in Mark's description of Jesus' action in the Temple. Upon entering Jerusalem, Jesus had been acclaimed as the Son of David, the messianic figure commissioned to build the house for God. Take a special note of some thematic and linguistic similarities between Mk 11:9-11 and 2 Sam 7:13: ὁ ἐρχόμενος ἐν ὀνόματι κυρίου... ἡ ἐρχομένη βασιλεία τοῦ πατρὸς ἡμῶν Δαβίδ... εἰς Ἱεροσόλυμα εἰς τὸ ἱερόν // ὃς ἔσται (ΝΣ" meaning 'to come') καὶ ἐτοιμάσω τὴν βασιλείαν αὐτοῦ αὐτὸς οἰκοδομήσει μοι οἶκον τῷ ὀνόματί μου" The similar usage of 'coming,' 'David,' 'name,' 'house/ temple,' and 'kingdom' in both passages implies that Mark meant to depict Jesus as an eschatological Davidic messiah that would fulfil the promise made to David in 2 Sam 7:12-14; this is the one who would build the house for God, which is symbolically equivalent to his everlasting kingdom, as it is made without human hands. Jesus is being described as

⁵¹⁶ David Holwerda, *Jesus and Israel* (Eerdmans, 1995), 68-69.

⁵¹⁷ Hans D. Betz, "Jesus and the Purity of the Temple (Mk 11:15-18): A Comparative Religion Study," *JBL* 116 (1997), 469.

⁵¹⁸ C. Evans, "Jesus' Action in the Temple," *Jesus in Context*, 437-438..

the messianic figure commissioned to build the house for God. Thus the following action in the Temple by Jesus puts him at the center of the dawning of the new age, and against the backdrop of the contemporary Jewish expectations of a renewal of the temple as a preparation for the messianic era. As R. E. Dowd asserts in a general way, then, ‘the temple reform and renewal were associated with the inauguration of a new era, at least in some of the literature, as preparatory to the beginning of the messianic age.’⁵¹⁹

Secondly, the whole corpus of 11:1-12:12 dealing with Jesus’ actions in and around the Temple precincts starts with his triumphal entry where clear allusions to Psa 118: 26 and 27 are contained (εὐλογημένος ὁ ἐρχόμενος ἐν ὀνόματι κυρίου in Psa 118:26 at Mk 11:9; συστήσαθε ἑορτὴν ἐν τοῖς πυκάζουσιν in Psa 118:27 LXX at Mk 11:8, “ἄλλοι δὲ στιβάδας κόψαντες ἐκ τῶν ἄγρων”), and ends with Jesus’ parable of the Wicked Tenants, which is, in turn, a verbatim citation of Psa 118:22-23 from the Septuagint: λίθον ὃν ἀπεδοκίμασαν οἱ οἰκοδομοῦντες οὗτος ἐγενήθη εἰς κεφαλὴν γωνίας παρὰ κυρίου ἐγένετο αὕτη καὶ ἔστιν θαυμαστὴ ἐν ὀφθαλμοῖς ἡμῶν. The current shape of the whole corpus constitutes another inclusio, opening with an inner frame and closing with an outer frame, making a related section a complete literary unit and unifying it under a single thematic concern. From the moment of Jesus’ entry to the end of Jesus’ confrontation with the leaders, Mark’s compositional intention and the message conveyed through the structure of the passage, thus, should not be undermined. Jesus’ action in the temple and subsequent incidents are designed by Mark to be interpreted in view of his appropriation of Psa 118, especially in light of the contemporary soil of Jewish interpretations. The original and contemporary understandings of Psa 118 and how they affected Mark’s portrayal of Jesus’ action in the Temple accordingly will be examined as Jesus’ parable of the Wicked Tenants is discussed in detail here.

From all the evidences noted above to show the link between the episode of Jesus’ action in the Temple in 11:15-19 and the pericope of the Jewish leaders’ challenging Jesus’ authority in 11:27-33,⁵²⁰ it is only reasonable to assume that through this parable Jesus is identifying the wicked tenants with the Jewish religious

⁵¹⁹ R. E. Dowd, *The Cleansing of the Temple in the Synoptic Gospels* (Dissertation, Duke University, 1972), 239.

⁵²⁰ Note one of these proofs is that the word αὐτοῖς, the addressees of the parable in 12:1 undoubtedly refers to the chief priest, the scribes, and the elders in 11:27.

leaders. Jesus' action in the Temple is thus carried on and emerges with the message of the parable: both the Temple authorities in 11:15-19 and the wicked tenants failed to produce the proper fruits that Jesus and the owner of the vineyard expect from them.⁵²¹ As Evans asserts, since Israel is sometimes equated with a vine or vineyard (Psa 80:8-13; Isa 27:2; Jer 2:21; Ezk 19:10-14; Hos 10:1), the tenant farmers would be readily identified with the religious leaders; it is very likely that Jesus' opponents would have easily taken this parable as a prophetic attack on them.⁵²² It follows then that what is symbolically meant by Jesus' action in the Temple is being violently clarified⁵²³ and is being pinned on the Jewish leaders: they will forfeit their special rights and privileges in regard to their long honoured and cherished inheritance, the Jerusalem Temple.

Regarding the mood of the parable, an important element should be noted here. Up to this point, the fate of the vineyard and the workers has been described in a very gloomy and pessimistic atmosphere. With the scriptural quotation suffixed at the end of the parable, however, a very hopeful and optimistic mood sets in, especially in terms of the fate of the rejected stone. As J. Marcus notes, "the parable in a pessimistic tone is primarily a tale of rejection, while the scripture citation in a optimistic tone is primarily a description of vindication."⁵²⁴ Once the biblical quotation is considered in connection with the Parable, another discovery is made: the wicked tenants are the rejecters of the stone; the stone itself is the son, the 'lord of the vineyard' is God.⁵²⁵ In the parable itself, the owner's son is identified as "beloved" (ἀγαπητόν), which clearly recalls the heavenly voiced heard resoundingly in 1:11 and 9:7, and is killed by the hands of the tenants of the vineyard. Then in the quotation, this son is metaphorically depicted as the stone that is rejected by the builders and yet is picked up and used by God as the cornerstone. Thus, the beloved son who is killed in the parable is now vindicated as the scriptural quotation concludes the parable.

The vindication aspect of the quotation makes a nice segue into the original meaning of the Ps 118:22-23. The entire Psalm 118 is replete with motifs and themes

⁵²¹ Note my point below of the thematic correspondence between Jesus' seeking for a fruit from a fig-tree in 11:13 and the owners' sending for some harvests from the vineyard in 12:2.

⁵²² C. Evans, "Jesus' Action in the Temple," 404-405.

⁵²³ Note the progressive intensification of the tenants' treatments of messengers from the owner, from beating, wounding in head, murdering of servants, and finally killing the beloved son; the owner's violent retaliation and destruction, and giving the vineyard to other.

⁵²⁴ J. Marcus, *Way of the Lord*, 112.

⁵²⁵ Ibid, 111.

of God's battles over enemies, victories and salvation that come from the Lord's intervening help, and thanksgiving in response, put into the context of the vindication on behalf of the Psalmist. The psalm is a typical portrayal of Yahweh as a divine warrior fighting against enemies for his people. In fact it is pointed out that in the comments of Ps. 118:10-12 in the Midrash on Psalms, the speaker's persecution by 'the nations' in vv.10-11 is interpreted to refer to the eschatological wars between God and Magog against Israel, from which Israel is delivered by God.⁵²⁶ The point made by the author of Ps 118 is very clear: God's vindication of the palmist with his righteousness (cf. vv.19-21);⁵²⁷ all the battle imageries are used for the vindication of the speaker's righteousness and justice. In the Parable of the Tenants in the Gospel, rather than the theme of the ultimate victory of God, this theme of vindication is carried on to bear even more weight. As J. Marcus contends, on the basis of the parallel between the stone image and son figure in terms of rejection, that the stone rejected stands for Jesus executed:⁵²⁸ "the raising of the stone to the head of the corner, then must correspond to the resurrection of Jesus, since the resurrection is presented in the three passion predictions as the reversal of the humiliation of the crucifixion (8:31; 9:31; 10:33-34)." In Mark 12:10-11, therefore, Mark portrays Jesus using Ps. 118:22-23 to predict his death, and resurrection, which to him are undoubtedly eschatological events.⁵²⁹

From the viewpoint of Mark's Gospel, however, the supposed replacement of the old Temple with a new one must be given the same interpretive weight that the vindication of Jesus' death deserves. On the micro-scale of Jesus' action in the Temple and subsequent questions about his authority, the scripture citation is a further, if implicit, clarification of the meaning of Jesus' action in the Temple, that is, the termination of the physical Temple and the replacement with the new by Jesus himself. In fact, since it is the theme of the Temple that runs through the incidents surrounding the Temple from Jesus' entry into the Jerusalem Temple to the end of the

⁵²⁶ K. Snodgrass, *The Parable of the Wicked Tenants: An Inquiry into Parable Interpretation*. WUNT 27 (Paul Siebeck, 1983), 99, quoted from J. Marcus, *Way of the Lord*, 115.

⁵²⁷ Note these verses come right before the verses that are cited in Mk 12:10-11.

⁵²⁸ J. Marcus, *Way of the Lord*, 114. Here Marcus points out the fact that the verb ἀπεδοκίμασαν in 12:10 occurs in only one other place in Mark, in 8:31, where Jesus is depicted as one that will be rejected by the Jewish leaders (ἀποδοκιμασθῆναι ὑπὸ τῶν πρεσβυτέρων καὶ τῶν ἀρχιερέων καὶ τῶν γραμματέων; furthermore note the precisely same reference to these characters in 11:27.

⁵²⁹ J. Marcus, *Way of the Lord*, 114.

eschatological discourse in Mk 13,⁵³⁰ containing the smaller theme of the vindication of Jesus rejected by the Jewish leaders, the parable and the following stone imagery in the quotation of Ps 118 should be rendered in this light. Only then do other literary skills that Mark employs, such as that in 13:1-2 references to stone and themes of building and seeing emerge concentrically, receive proper attention. As J. Marcus asserts, the links between the theme of the Temple and the stone imagery suggest that 'the OT context of the psalm quotation, with its references to the Temple liturgy, is in view in Mk 12:10-11 and that Jesus is being portrayed as the cornerstone of a new Temple.' As the old Temple is destroyed, Mark reveals, a new, more permanent (not made with hands) eschatological Temple will replace it.⁵³¹

Another important thematic tie between the Parable of the Wicked Tenants and the theme of the Temple as initiated by Jesus' action in the Temple should be noted here. As readily recognized, the parable is based on Isa 5:1-7, the Song of the Vineyard, which mainly speaks of God's expectation of choice fruits from his vineyard, Israel and her people, and his disappointments with unfruitfulness and bad fruits (cf. vv. 2 and 4). The text identifies the vineyard as the house of Israel and the fruit that Yahweh was looking for from Israel is specified as justice and righteousness in v.7. Likewise, what Jesus sought from the Jewish religious leaders as a representative of the people of Israel was the same kind of justice and righteousness. And once he failed to find them, he finally declares his judgment on them and their replacement with a new people of Israel. The perception of the chief priest, the scribes, and the elders in 12:12 'ὅτι πρὸς αὐτοὺς τὴν παραβολὴν εἶπεν' should be regarded in this vein, especially in light of the narrative flow of the Gospel itself.

Even so, there is still a missing link between the theme of the Temple and these religious leaders dubbed as the wicked tenants, which is found when certain passages from the Isaiah Targum are considered in connection to the Markan passage.⁵³² Bruce Chilton has observed that Isa 5:1-7 in the Targum reveals a

⁵³⁰ Note my point above that the eschatological discourse in Mk13 ends with the command to the *doorkeeper* to be watchful.

⁵³¹ J. Marcus, *Way of the Lord*, 121.

⁵³² Taking the Targum of Isaiah into consideration in connection to Mark's gospel is a risky one, because of the relatively late dating of the written Targum tradition (around 2nd or 3rd century A.D), as well as the Semitic orientation of the Isaiah Targum, especially its excessive focus on the messianic vindication and restoration of Israel which includes a return of the exiled Israel to the promised land, the rebuilding of the Temple by a Messiah who removes the yoke of the Gentiles, and the descent of the Shekhinah (B. Chilton, "The Temple in the Isaiah Targum," *Jesus in Context: Temple, Purity, and Restoration*, ed. B. Chilton and C. Evans [E.J. Brill, 1997], 254-255; cf. B. Chilton, *The Glory of*

distinctively anti-Temple nature by identifying 'the tower' as the 'sanctuary' and the 'wine vat' as the 'altar,' as his translation of the Aramaic paraphrase of the Isaiah passage quoted here demonstrates:

And I sanctified them and I glorified them and I established them as the plant of a choice vine; and I built my *sanctuary* in their midst, and I even gave my *altar to atone for their sins*; I thought that they would do good deeds, but they made their deeds evil (v.2.)

And now I will tell you what I am about to do to my people. I will take up my Shekhinah from them, and they shall be for plundering; I will break down the place of their *sanctuaries*, and they will be for trampling. (v.5).⁵³³

Lastly, Mk 12:1-12 should also be read together with Jesus' Last Supper in 14:24-25, where the Messianic replacement of the Temple made with hands by the new one is clearly indicated (Mk 14:22-25). Here in a covenantal solemnity, Jesus offers bread as his body, to be shared, and wine as his blood, poured out for many. Then Jesus says that he will not drink the fruit of the vine till the day when he drinks it new in the Kingdom of God. Through the implied theme of atonement, it is indicated that his coming death will replace the blood of the sacrificial animals. More readily noticeable is the presence of 'fruit of the vineyard' in 12:2 and 'the fruit of the vine' in 14:25.⁵³⁴ Although the terms are slightly different, the imagery of vine is unmistakable in both, and when this imagery is coupled with the theme of covenant which is clearly echoed in both pericopes the connection between the two becomes obvious. The connection is further reinforced by the imagery of death that runs through the Parable of the Vineyard and Jesus' Last Supper. In 12:6 the son of the owner of the vineyard is depicted as a beloved son (υἱὸν ἀγαπητόν), reminiscent of Jesus being called the beloved Son of God in 1:11 and 9:7 by a heavenly voice. This

Israel: The Theology and Provenience of the Isaiah Targum. JSOTSup 23 [JSOT Press, 1982], 97-102). But the misgivings about the late dating of the written Targum, as C. Evans argues, can be cleared when it is recognized that the Qumran text, 4Q500 indicates well that Isa 5:1-7 was interpreted in the same cultic sense as shown in the Isa 5 in the Targum at the time of Jesus (*Eschatology, Messianism, and the Dead Sea Scrolls*, 98-99). As for the Semitic nature of the Isaiah Targum, we do not have to assume that Mark's presumable awareness of the Targumic cultic interpretation of Isa 5:1-7 led him to subscribe to its theology of the Temple. More likely, the cultic interpretation occasioned Mark to apply the Isaianic passage to Jesus in the context of the temple and its cult.

⁵³³ *The Isaiah Targum* (ArBib 11; Glazier, 1987), 10-11, quoted from C. Evans, *Eschatology, Messianism, and the Dead Sea Scrolls. Studies in the Dead Sea Scrolls and Related Literature*, ed. C. Evans and Peter W. Flint (Eerdmans, 1997), 98.

son is said to be killed by the wicked tenants within the Parable (12:8) and in the episode of the Last Supper, Jesus says that “this is my blood of the covenant which is poured out for many.”(14:24). From these correlatives, what Jesus meant to say seems to be that his coming death is going to build a new community that completely replaces the old community at the center of which the Temple stands.

The association of the Parable with the Last Supper with regard to Jesus’ death as a covenantal renewal of God’s pledge toward the ancient Israel brings us back to the link between the Parable and Jesus’ action in the Temple. As already noted, the Parable of Vineyard allegorizes the chief priests, the scribes, and the elders, who took initiatives in challenging Jesus’ authority regarding his actions in the Temple, as the wicked tenants.⁵³⁵ What Jesus did in the Temple is thus related in some ways to what the owner of the vineyard did at the end of his sad experiences of loss of his property and of his beloved son: in both the privileges previously enjoyed are forfeited. It can be further deduced that if the privileges were to be specified, they were the ones associated with the Temple and its establishment in the former case and with the vineyard in the latter.

There is another important thematic connection that can reinforce the link between Jesus’ action in the Temple and the Parable of Vineyard. In the episode of the Fig-tree, Jesus is said to *look for a fruit* from the tree even in *the out-of-season* (ὁ ... καὶρὸς οὐκ...) and to curse it so that it may never bear any fruit (cf. 11:13-14). In the Parable, the owner is described as sending a servant to *get some fruits* from the vineyard, supposedly during the in-season (τῷ καίρῳ) and eventually destroying the original tenants and giving the vineyard to others (cf. 12:2, 9). There is a clear intensification here of Jesus’ act and intention toward the Jewish religious leaders who are in charge of the Temple and its establishment: his symbolic announcement of the end of the Temple era turns into his symbolic act of the execution of the pronouncement. The end of the Jerusalem Temple era is thus pronounced by Jesus and described by Mark in many thematic links and literary motifs, along with the promise of its replacement with a new one that will be created by Jesus’ covenantal, Messianic death.

⁵³⁴ Cf. also Scott G. Brown, “Mark 11:1-12:12: A Triple Intercalation,” *CBQ* Vol. 64 No.1 (Jan. 2002), 85.

4.54223 A Second Reading of Jesus' Action in the Light of the Scriptural Allusions in V.16 and V.17

Since the nature of Jesus' action in the Temple has been clarified above from various perspectives, our study on the scriptural references will focus exclusively on interpreting the O.T passages that are alluded to in vv.16-17. The scriptural references consist of three distinctive O.T passages: an allusion to Zech 14:21 in Mk 11:16; a citation from Isa 56:7 in Mk 11:17b (cf. citation formula, "γέγραπται ὅτι"); an allusion to Jer 7:11 in Mk 11:17c. First, Zech 14:21, Isa 56:7 and Jer 7:11 will be looked at in their original contexts, and explored in regard to their possible uses in the post-biblical Jewish traditions. Second, the Markan context for these O.T passages and how Mark appropriates them according to the contemporary context will be examined. The immediate and broader literary context for the Temple scene will also be investigated; of particular interest here is "all nations" in v.17 and its relation to the motif of Israel's forfeited privilege, picked up later in the Parable of the Wicked Tenants, and to the phrase "to others" in 12:9.

First, in 11:16 Jesus forbids anyone to carry merchandise through the Temple courts, an allusion to Zech 14:21c ("...וְלֹא-יְהִיָּה כְנַעֲנִי עוֹד בְּבֵית-יְהוָה"). The critical issue lies with how the word כְּנַעֲנִי is interpreted. Lexically, it literally means 'Canaanite,' but can also mean 'trader' or 'merchant.'⁵³⁶ The word had two alternative interpretive ramifications at the time of Jesus: that in Messianic days no trafficker would be seen in the Temple; that no 'Canaanite' or alien would be admitted to it.⁵³⁷ If the word is rendered as 'Canaanite,' Jesus' action denotes expelling of the Gentiles and pagan traits from the Temple, corresponding to the contemporary Jewish movement of purification to restore the Temple by driving out the pagans. This might account for the fact that Jesus' action was neither hindered nor stopped.⁵³⁸ Yet, it is unlikely that Jesus acted on behalf of the revolutionary Jews to 'cleanses' the Temple

⁵³⁵ Compare the reference to these characters in 11:27 and the word αὐτοῖς as addressees of the parable in 12:1.

⁵³⁶ The LXX translates it as Canaanite: καὶ οὐκ ἔσται Χαναανῖος οὐκέτι ἐν τῷ οἴκῳ κυρίου.

⁵³⁷ Cf. Cecil Roth, "The Cleansing of the Temple," *NT* vol.4 (E.J. Brill, 1960), 180.

⁵³⁸ Also this line of interpretation goes well with a view that 'the den of robbers' in Jer 7:11 in Jesus' words is reminiscent of the Markan contemporaries, the Zealots' occupation of the Temple during the Jewish war with Rome (cf. L. Gaston, *No Stone*, 85; J. Marcus, *Way of the Lord*, 160).

from what they thought to be impurities of pagan cultures.⁵³⁹ That leaves ‘trader’ as the only alternative meaning, through which Jesus’ prohibition comes to mean his awareness or recognition that the Zechariah’s prophecy is to be fulfilled in his ministry: as the prophet foretold, everywhere is now sacred and clean so that all cultic rites including the Temple itself lose their ground and viability. Later rabbinic interpretive traditions also insist on taking the word as ‘trader’, and this rendering coheres with Jesus’ action of expelling the traders from the Temple in 11:15, as C. Roth contends.⁵⁴⁰

On the macro-scale of the Book of Zechariah, 14:21f is a part of a long eschatological section which spans from Chapter 9 to the end of Chapter 14, speaking of Yahweh’s eschatological judgments and deliverances on the Day of the Lord. On the micro-scale, it bespeaks the coming of Yahweh for his eschatological war against Israel, and then all nations. Setting aside a distinctive place for and role of Israel, the whole corpus of Chapter 14, nevertheless, focuses on God’s universal sovereignty over the whole earth; the survivors of God’s eschatological war from all nations are prophesized to come to Jerusalem to worship Yahweh, the newly inaugurated universal King on the Mount of Zion. Viewed specifically in this context, Zech 14:21 highlights the universal holiness of the entire world, and not so much the eschatological purification of the Jewish Temple.

As for the postbiblical use of Zech 14 in the eschatological context, it is well pointed out that among many Qumran texts, CD B 19:7-9 reveals an eschatological orientation by referring to the eschatological aspect of visitation time, and by equating “the poor of the flock” as receivers of the Zecharian promise of restoration with the faithful members of the elect community.⁵⁴¹ Furthermore, the revolutionary Zealots understood Zech 14, and v.21f in particular, according to their nationalistic views, taking it to mean literally forbidding any Gentile presence in the Temple, to encourage them to purge Gentiles from the temple and set it up as a stronghold for ultimate war against Rome.⁵⁴²

⁵³⁹ Even if this is the case, Jesus would have sharply distinguished himself from these revolutionary sects who understood these scriptures as words prompting them to go to the war against Rome. The den of robbers in v.17 can be understood then to be Jesus’ indirect critique of them (cf. Cecil Roth, “The Cleansing of the Temple,” 178f).

⁵⁴⁰ Cecil Roth, “The Cleansing of the Temple,” 179-180.

⁵⁴¹ Cf. J. Marcus, *Way of the Lord*, 158.

⁵⁴² Ibid. 160.

Jesus, in his firm conviction of the fulfillment of the Zechariah promise in Zech 14:21f through his ministry, intended to expel the traders and to forbid any vessels to be carried through the Temple; his action symbolically challenged the Temple and its whole cultic system, without necessarily interfering with what was going on in the inner court of the Temple. Also we need to remember that Jesus' action occurs only in the Court of the Gentiles, an area not considered especially holy, which should mean that Jesus' action also symbolized an extension of the sacred place in accordance with the eschatological expectations associated with the future Temple (Zech 14). Mark's peculiar understanding of Jesus' action in the Temple in the light of Zechariah's prophecy is also reinforced by the fact that Matthew and Luke omit the record of Jesus' prohibition in Mk 11:16.⁵⁴³

The subversive nature of Jesus' consciousness of the messianic fulfillment in regard to his allusion to Zech 14 in Mk 11:16 should then be of great interest to us, since Mark and his contemporary Jewish revolutionaries drew a completely different understanding of the Temple from the OT passage. The conceptual continuity between Jesus and his contemporaries with regard to Temple, B. Chilton contends, is clearly embodied in that Jesus' prohibition in Mk 11:16 is consistent with his concerns for purity and with his contemporary Jewish understandings of the cultic purity.⁵⁴⁴ Jesus' action in the Temple likewise should be taken as a means of asserting the sanctity of the Temple, since it is compatible with the actions of other Jewish teachers of his period, especially those of Hillel.⁵⁴⁵ In this light, Jesus' 'occupation' of the Temple can be best seen as a stern instruction that a cultic worshipper should offer sacrificial animals of his own, since this ownership so integral to the value of sacrifice itself. This line of understanding of cultic offerings is highly compatible with the early

⁵⁴³ Cf. Mt 21:12-13; Lk 19:45-46.

⁵⁴⁴ B. Chilton, *The Temple of Jesus: His Sacrificial Program Within a Cultural History of Sacrifice* (Penn State Press, 1992), 100-110. See also B. Chilton, "The Trial of Jesus Reconsidered," *Jesus in Context: Temple, Purity, and Restoration*, ed. B. Chilton & C. Evans, 486. Here Chilton even complains that "as is often the case, the conventional picture of Jesus may only be sustained by ignoring the social realities of early Judaism," and concludes that the portrayal of Jesus in the Gospels was distorted; clearly Jesus could not have stopped the collection of the half shekel by overturning some tables in the Temple. He goes on further to speculate that the cultural context of the portrayal of Jesus throwing money-changers out of the Temple is that of the predominantly non-Jewish audience of the Gospels, who regarded Judaism as a thing of the past, and its worship as corrupt (ibid. 487).

⁵⁴⁵ B. Chilton, "The Trial of Jesus Reconsidered," 489. Chilton quotes the following texts: (cf. Josephus, *Ant.* 13.13.5 § 372-373; *J.W.* 1.33.2-4 § 648-655; *Ant.* 17.6.2-4 § 149-167; b. Šabb. 31a where Hillel is reported to have taught that offerings brought to the Temple, should have hands laid on them by their owners, as a proof of the statement of ownership that they came directly from their owners' property.

Jewish concept of the sacrificial purity law, especially with the one that is endorsed by Hillel who viewed the question of purity as matter of actual ownership, Chilton argues.⁵⁴⁶ For Chilton, this means that Jesus' concern was always with the issue of the action of Israel in regard to the sacrifice, as Hillel was, and that Jesus shared Hillel's concern that what was offered by Israel in the Temple should be truly Israel's, accepting that Israel was pure and should offer what is its own. Jesus' occupation of Temple, for Chilton, entails such commitment: "only those after 70 CE who no longer treasured the Temple in Jerusalem as God's house could (mis)take Jesus' position to be a simple prophecy of doom or an objection to sacrifice,"⁵⁴⁷ he asserts.

Chilton further tries to reinforce this conceptual continuity between Jesus and Hillel by drawing on the contemporary situation that he reconstructs. On the basis of V. Eppstein's discoveries of actual history that stood behind the episode of Jesus' action in the Temple, he contends that the market for the sale of sacrificial animals was not located in the Temple at all, but in the place called Hanuth (meaning 'market' in Aramaic) on the mountain of Olives, across the Kidron Valley. Drawing on Jewish texts such as 'Abod. Zar. 86, Šabb.15a, and Sanh. 41a in B. Talmud, and b. Beša 20a-b, m.1:7, b. Yoma 39b, he argues that some years before the destruction of the Temple, the principal council of Jerusalem relocated, from the place in the Temple called the Chamber of Hewn Stone to Hanuth. Then around 30 CE, Caiaphas cast out the Sanhedrin and brought the traders into the Temple, as ways of centralizing power in his own hands.⁵⁴⁸ Chilton's goal is to show that Jesus and Hillel both recognized that what was actually being doing in the Temple at Jesus' time was against the cultic purity law that regulates the actual ownership of the sacrificial animals; the common ground then would have made Jesus' action more understandable to the anti-cultic milieu of Hillel and his contemporaries.⁵⁴⁹

Chilton's fundamental hermeneutical principle that presupposes conceptual continuity between Jesus and contemporary Jewish thought, specifically with regard

⁵⁴⁶ B. Chilton, "The Trial of Jesus Reconsidered," 489.

⁵⁴⁷ Ibid, 492-493.

⁵⁴⁸ B. Chilton, "The Trial of Jesus Reconsidered," 492.

⁵⁴⁹ In his other publication, resorting to Josephus B. Chilton enlists another two incidents of protests in reference to the Jerusalem Temple to strengthen his argument: one is directed against Alexander Jannaeus because he was unfit to hold a sacrificial office and to sacrifice (*Ant.* 13.13.5 §§372-73); the other relates two sages who persuades young men to cut down the golden eagle affixed to the gate of the Temple (*J.W.* 1.33.2-4 §§ 648-55; *Ant.* 17.6.2-4 §§ 149-67). Chilton also draws an analogous incident from rabbinic literature: in one Simeon ben Gamaliel sat on the Temple steps protesting a

to the understanding of the Temple and its cultic purity law, however, can turn very risky. Although the presumable corruption of the contemporary cultic establishment especially in the purity matter that Chilton points to is of value in explicating the text at hand,⁵⁵⁰ his point that the conventional picture of Jesus may be sustained only by ignoring the social realities of early Judaism shows an important hermeneutical flaw. Such understanding overlooks Jesus' radical re-formation and transformation of the contemporary concept of the Temple. Jesus and the Jewish teachers may have shared their concern for the Temple and its implications in the life of God's people, but so many subsequent happenings and Mark's thematic concerns prove that the conceptual difference of their views regarding the Temple could not be emphasized enough. As Jesus' radically new use of the Kingdom of God and his apparent rejection of the cultic purity in the Gospel traditions decisively indicate,⁵⁵¹ biblical themes and motifs that Jesus and the Gospel writers often appropriate are the channels through which various practical and conceptual conventions are transformed; the focus of Jesus' action in the Temple, especially in light of his consciousness of the present fulfilment of the messianic era, would not have been on eschewing conflict with the Jewish authorities, even if there is a common thread in the way they view the Temple. Any similarities or common values detected in Jesus and the religious leaders of his time may be used as interpretive tools with which his words and biblical texts can be better understood but they may not be used to arrive at textual readings in which the commonalities become the focus of any Jesus' actions or sayings, since the whole point of Jesus' ministry in one sense lies in the fundamental difference between his value system and that of the Jewish religious leaders.⁵⁵²

policy of overcharging for doves (*m. Ker.* 1:7) (cf. *The Temple of Jesus: His Sacrificial Program within a Cultural History of Sacrifice*, [Pennsylvania Univ. Press, 1992], 73, 100-103, 183).

⁵⁵⁰ In fact there are many extant Jewish literatures, especially the Qumran texts that are very critical and poignant of the Jewish high priesthood and its corruption. Examples found in the Dead Sea Scrolls and postbiblical Jewish writings are as follows: 1QpHab 1:13, 8:9, 9:9, 11:4 (the high priest dubbed as the Wicked Priest); 1 QpHab 8:12, 9:5, 10:1, 12:10 (robbing the poor); 1 QpHab 8:8-12, 9:4-5 (amassing wealth); 1 QpHab 12:8-9 (defiling the Sanctuary of God); *Testament of Moses* 7:6-10; Josephus' *Ant.* 20.9.4 §213, *Life* 39 §§ 195-196; *Ant.* 20.8.8 §§ 179-81, 20.9.2§207; 2 *Baruch* 10:18, quoted from C. Evans, *Mark* 8:28-16:20, 168.

⁵⁵¹ For an extensive treatment of these radical conceptual changes in Jesus, see John Riches, *Jesus and the Transformation of Judaism* (DLT, 1980), "5. Jesus' Preaching of the Kingdom," (87-111) and "6. Jesus and the Law of Purity" (112-144); cf. also John Riches, *The World of Jesus: First-Century Judaism in Crisis. Understanding Jesus Today* series, (Cambridge Univ. Press, 1990), especially, "6. Jesus and His Kingdom," (108-125).

⁵⁵² Of course, we know that there were cases in which Hillel and his pupils, Pharisees, had certain views that were highly compatible to the one of Jesus, e.g. their emphasis on community rather than political organization. In fact Hillel was a revolutionary himself in that he rejected Herod's state, dreaming to build a community of people dedicated to the Torah and to peace, as W.D. Davies notes.

According to John Riches whose insights are borrowed extensively in this section, the conceptual transformation and the subversive nature of Jesus' ministry and preaching are elemental in understanding the nature of Jesus' action in the Temple. Prayer as an alternative true worship to the sacrifices, for example, not only revolutionizes the traditional concept of the Temple and its function but also demonstrates Jesus' and Mark's subversion of the conventional terms and belief systems into new understanding and transformed views. The Pharisees, the Qumran Community, the Sadducees, and the Zealots who are preoccupied with the national renewal of the whole nation by observing the Law,⁵⁵³ stand in sharp contrast to Jesus and his radically different appropriations of the related OT concepts and themes. As Riches points out, Jesus intentionally gives attention to various aspects of Jewish tradition, only to radicalize the norms and put them in a completely new light, by re-interpreting the conventional concepts of God, and world and humanity.⁵⁵⁴

Jesus' action in the Temple demonstrates in this sense his initiation of a national renewal of prayer and dedication. A parallel concept in Qumran where prayer is identified with the Temple worship, a *commercium* with the divine on the behalf of the land, is noted by Riches⁵⁵⁵ who also points out the contrast between Jesus and Qumran: the nature of God is not such that he can be worshipped only within the appointed limits of the sacrificial system; he communicates to human beings his love for the 'enemies' and the fallen.⁵⁵⁶

In fact, while the Essenes and Pharisees were mainly concerned with reinforcing and intensifying existing norms, many of Jesus' teachings deliberately focus on radicalizing the norms, as stated in God's loving and forgiving power and in the summary of the Law, and especially in the command to love one's enemies. Jesus' proclamation of God's eschatological new reality which is gracious and forgiving to all men lays down a firm basis for his rejection and radicalization of the contemporary norms,⁵⁵⁷ while Jesus' command to love one's enemies represents a radical change in

Even then, "this community of the Pharisees differed radically from that gathered by Jesus. The Pharisaic community was centered on the Torah and on the present, and lacked the eschatological dimensions of that of Jesus" (W.D. Davies, *The Gospel and the Land: Early Christianity and Jewish Territorial Doctrine*, [Univ. of California Press, 1974], 354).

⁵⁵³ The purity regulations are intensified, for example, in order to put strong barriers between them and foreign forces (see J. Riches, *Jesus and the Transformation*, 118).

⁵⁵⁴ J. Riches, *Jesus and the Transformation*, 143f.

⁵⁵⁵ J. Riches, *Jesus and the Transformation*, 218, n.84.

⁵⁵⁶ J. Riches, *Jesus and the Transformation*, 141-142.

⁵⁵⁷ *Ibid*, 142.

the fundamental assumption about God, the world and man. The notion of purity in Israel, in the same vein, which is conventionally linked to the maintenance of tight boundaries and to certain theological notions about God's power and salvation, is transformed by Jesus whose teachings pay more attention to love and forgiveness and care than to defending barriers or conventional orders, proclaiming God openly to the world and discarding any notion of purity regulations.⁵⁵⁸

In this light, it is highly unlikely that Jesus attempted in any manner to maintain the Jewish exclusive and nationalistic concept of a sacrificial purity; on the contrary, his intention was to place the concept of the Temple and its worship under such a radically different perspective that in the transformed view God's pardoning grace and accompanying purity and holiness is extended to the whole of humanity. Jesus' objections to the contemporary Jewish Temple can be summed up in three ways: its inherent limit in nature and scope; the Jewish political and religious leaders' arrogation of the Temple and its privileges by preying upon this limit; and Jesus' envisioning of its replacement by the new cosmic Temple. As discussed above in detail,⁵⁵⁹ Jesus' action in the Temple is focused on the prophetic oracle from Isaiah, envisioning just such a cosmic Temple with the whole of humanity as its eschatological community members.

The conceptual transformation and subversive nature of Jesus' ministry are in fact ingrained in an important attribute of his action: a violent intervention into or disruption of what is considered as normality. As confrontation and provocation, Jesus' action becomes paradigmatic in pointing beyond itself to a larger context of meaning. As Hans Dieter Betz rightly points out, Jesus' action introduces an alternative reality by confronting what is taken to be 'business as usual':

All religious life manifests itself in the constant struggle between what is taken to be "religion as usual" and sudden eruptions of powerful resources buried under layers of accepted tradition.... As a charismatic figure, the prophet makes present the divine realities in a way different from rituals performed by priests... In Israelite religion there is a place for both functions because both represents in complementary as well as competitive ways the powers of the divine.... To the extent that practiced

⁵⁵⁸ Ibid, 143.

⁵⁵⁹ Cf. 4.54221 ANALYSIS OF THE TEXT MK 11:15-19 under 4.5422 INTERPRETATION OF JESUS' ACTION IN THE TEMPLE.

religion participates in the powers of the divine, both functions will be present and play their roles.⁵⁶⁰

This quality is perfectly in line with what the prophets of the biblical prophetic tradition are portrayed as doing: confrontation and transformation of old modes of life and tradition into the new ones. Jesus' action in the Temple then can be understood under the aegis of prophetic traditions where current social and political realities are confronted and a transformed world of new reality in the coming future is envisaged.⁵⁶¹ Accordingly Jesus' action deliberately exemplifies how the physical Temple should be ultimately replaced by the new One, neither made with hands, hence spiritual, nor spatially or temporally conditioned or limited, thus cosmic.

Now we turn to the biblical allusions in v.17. After expelling the traffickers from the temple and forbidding anyone to carry anything in, Jesus is said to teach the people on the spot about the nature of the Temple by quoting Isa 56:7 ("my house will be called a house of prayer for all nations") and by alluding to Jer 7:11 ("Has this house, which bears my Name, becomes a den of robbers to you?"). Isa 56:7 is part of a larger unit of Isa 56:1-8 which exhorts the people of Israel to maintain justice and righteousness, as God's salvation is nearing (cf. v.1); in this context of exhortation, the foreigners and eunuchs are singled out as those whom Israelites should treat justly and righteously, as long as they act in accord with the same requirements of justice and righteousness by Yahweh (cf. vv.3-6). The just and righteous treatment of the foreigners in the arena of the worship of Yahweh translates into the equal opportunity of worshipping given to them in the house of prayer of God. The rationale for this equality is Jesus' quotation of the OT verse in the Temple scene: "for my house will be called a house of prayer for all nations" (v.7). The main thrust of the original Isa 56:7 is that God's house of prayer is a universal inheritance that is supposed to be shared by all people of God, regardless of their ethnic and social backgrounds.

On the other hand, Jer 7:11 is part of Jeremiah's poignant attack on the false religion represented by the misconceptions and even distorted understandings of the Jerusalem Temple by his contemporary Jewish people: the misconception mainly has to do with their complacency, preoccupation with their well-being, having convinced themselves that their security is warranted by the presence of the Temple among them,

⁵⁶⁰ H. D. Betz, "Jesus and the Purity of the Temple," 460.

⁵⁶¹ Cf. Mt 21:11, the Matthean parallel which puts the episode of Jesus' action in the Temple in the context of the prophetic tradition by identifying Jesus as the prophet from Nazareth in Mt 21:11.

in spite, and regardless, of their wicked lives in reality. The hypocritical nature of the temple faith of his Jewish contemporaries is vehemently attacked by the prophet Jeremiah, speaking on behalf of the Lord and lamenting that Yahweh's house has become a den of robbers by them (v.11); the prophet so clearly sees that impious and wicked peoples gathered to worship in the Temple, thinking it as an unconditional warrant and stronghold of their well-being despite their wicked lives. This lament is followed by the Lord's imprecation of the destruction of the Temple in the same pattern acted upon to Shiloh, God's first dwelling place among Israel (v.14). Later on in vv.21-23, God who prefers his peoples' obedience to their sacrificial offerings is presented; He won't accept these cultic rites, thus very likely betraying anti-cult sentiment.

In the light of the original context of Jer. 7:11 as part of Jesus' words in Mk 11:17, one assumes that the present Markan verse has to do with the contrast between 'house of prayer' (not 'house of prayer for all nations') and 'den of robber,' since they are put into sharp contrast in terms of peace and violence. These two expressions then might be interpreted as mutually supportive because the "den of robbers" in its original context, clearly implies anti-cult sentiments and because though the phrase "the house of prayer" does not imply an opposition to the sacrificial cult in the text of Isaiah, Mark uses the very 'house of prayer' within the context of Jesus' 'cleansing' the temple (cf. 12:33).⁵⁶²

In fact Matthew and Luke omit 'for all nations' (cf. Mt 21:13; Lk 19:46), perhaps thinking that it is superfluous and even obstructs the intended contrast.⁵⁶³ Scholars of history of religions approaches confirm this contrast by pointing out that in view of the contemporary nationalistic appropriation of Zech 14 and the use of the word ληστής rather than κλεπτής, a term that apparently fits better in the Markan context, the phrase 'den of robbers' refers to the historical event when the Zealots occupied the Temple and used it their stronghold for the subsequent war against Rome. According to Josephus, in A.D. 66, a group of revolutionary brigands refused pagan worshipers in the Temple and in the winter of A.D. 67-68, they stormed into the Temple under the leadership of Eleazar son of Simon, took charge of it, and

⁵⁶² Cf. D. Juel, *Messiah and Temple*, 134.

⁵⁶³ Cf. L. Gaston, *No Stone*, 84.

stationed themselves within the inner court until the fall of the city in A.D 70.⁵⁶⁴ L. Gaston thus insists that the phrase be rendered as “Zealot stronghold.”⁵⁶⁵

But, Mark’s verbatim is “my house will be called a house of prayer *for all nations*.” On the surface level, v.17 plainly reads ‘my house should be a house of prayer for all nations, but you [the Jewish leaders] made it your own stronghold by expelling the Gentiles from it and thus robbing them of their rights to come and pray in the Temple.’ This reading can be strengthened by the interpretation of Jesus’ prohibition in v.16 that was suggested above: no more use of the traders in the Temple in the time of the eschatological fulfillment. Zech 14:16ff clearly envisions an end-time pilgrimage of the pious Gentiles to the eschatological new Temple of God that is set in Zion. Then the contrast should be drawn not between ‘the house of prayer’ and ‘den of robbers,’ but between eschatological prophecy and present conditions. Thus Jesus is referring to the eschatological coming of the Gentiles to the eschatological Temple, under a transformed condition: “it can be no other than house of prayer for the nations / house of sacrifice for Israel,” as L. Gaston insightfully renders.⁵⁶⁶ There may be a hint of coming destruction in the “den of robbers” citation from Jer 7:11; at least there is the prophetic warning that if the temple does not manifest the characteristics of the eschatological temple, it will be destroyed. It may be that, as D. Juel speculates, the interpretive clue for the phrase “den of robbers” should be found in Jer 7:1-15, which is part of an oracle prophesying the destruction of the temple and the rejection of those who have misused their rights as God’s chosen. The “den of robbers” and Mk 11:17 become quite important in the interpretation of 14:58, then, because Jesus’ act in the Temple is important not as an isolated event, but as part of a theme that concludes with the tearing of the veil in 15:38. For Juel, the allusion to Jeremiah in 11:17 characterizes Jesus’ action as a prophetic anticipation of what is to come.⁵⁶⁷ As pointed out already, however, a more definite symbolic sign, of the coming of the destruction of the Temple, is detected in Jesus’ curse of the fig tree. In any case, what comes out clearly is that in Jesus’ action the eschatological participation of the Gentiles in the eschatological Temple is envisioned here under radically transformed conditions.

⁵⁶⁴ *Jewish War* 2.409; *Jewish War* 4.151- 157: 55, quoted from J. Marcus, *Way of the Lord*, 117.

⁵⁶⁵ L. Gaston, *No Stone*, 85.

⁵⁶⁶ L. Gaston, *No Stone*, 87.

⁵⁶⁷ D. Juel, *Messiah and Temple*, 133.

Before concluding this part, the relation between “all nations” in 11:17 and “others” in 12:9, needs to be considered, because it is closely related to Mark’s understanding of Jesus’ action in the Temple and its cultic establishments. J. Marcus argues that 12:9, a bridge between the Parable of the wicked Tenants and the citation from Ps 118:22-23 in 12:10-11, is a Christian apologetic⁵⁶⁸ for their replacement of the Old Israel which is being depicted in an eschatological war. This description, he argues, is commensurate with Jewish exegetical conventions viewing the psalm as an oracle of eschatological victory; Mark inverted the traditional holy war pattern associated with the Psalm to turn God’s war not on behalf of Israel but against it, because in that war God does not destroy the Gentiles but rather brings them into his people.⁵⁶⁹ These Gentiles (identified as “others” in 12:9) refer to the Church, according to Marcus, and this church is the new Temple of which Jesus is the cornerstone in 12:10-11; this view explains how the scriptural citation can be seen as confirming the point of the parable.⁵⁷⁰

In contrast, S. Brown contends that the “others” in 12:9 are most likely Jesus’ followers. His rationale at a surface level is that whatever the vineyard represents, the loss of the vineyard is a consequence of Jesus’ rejection, and its reestablishment a consequence of his vindication; “the others” thus refers to neither the Romans nor by extension, the nations (i.e., the Gentiles). For Brown, the vineyard is the covenant relation between God and Israel. His rationale lies more deeply in the covenantal understanding of the Parable itself and a thematic tie of covenant that he makes between the Parable and Jesus’ Last Supper.⁵⁷¹ Brown also stands in contrast to C. Evans who asserts that “giving the vineyard to others means only that Israel will be governed by people other than the ruling priests,” suggesting that in the light of Mk 10:35-45 Jesus clearly expects God to appoint righteous people, probably from his disciples to govern Israel.⁵⁷²

Evaluating these conflicting views requires examination of various exegetical and hermeneutical issues involved. Among them, the most crucial question concerns

⁵⁶⁸ A majority of critical commentators tend to view the parable of Wicked Tenants as ecclesiastical allegorization (cf. Jülicher, Kümmel, Schweizer, etc.), but some major biblical interpreters such as Dodd and Jeremias recognize authenticity of the parable. Among recent interpreters, C. Evans can be singled out as one who following in the steps of Dodd and Jeremias, defends its authenticity and Semitic and Aramaic nature (cf. C. Evans, *Mark 8:27-16:20*, 215-231).

⁵⁶⁹ J. Marcus, *Way of the Lord*, 115-116.

⁵⁷⁰ J. Marcus, *Way of the Lord*, 123.

⁵⁷¹ S. Brown, “Mark 11:1-12:12: A Triple Intercalation?,” 85.

the degree of literal or symbolic meaning that should be allowed to the interpretation of the phrase “giving the vineyard to others”: does it literally mean that something will be completely forfeited from the Jewish people to be given to those other than Jewish people or is it meant to say symbolically that the cultic privileges of the Jewish people about the Temple are taken away in view of the coming of the eschatological Messiah, Jesus? Another important question to ask is: how does the idea of a complete exclusion of the Jews from the new community do justice to Mark’s portrayal of the Jews in general and how does the view of the new community that consists of exclusively the gentiles stand in line with Mark’s own community?

Although these questions cannot be answered here, as they require a comprehensive and independent study, what is clear is that a decisive interpretive clue has to be found in the immediate context of the passage, especially in the relation of the Parable in 12:1-9 to the scripture quotation in 12:10-11. The vindication of the rejected stone or son is not the only concern of 12:10-11; building a new community of which the stone will be the head, is just as important to be explicated from it. In other words, the new building and its headship are an essential part of this passage. The corollary to this view would be that the “others” in v.9 refer to Jesus and his followers, that is, his disciples. Furthermore, the comparison that is being drawn here is between Jewish cultic leaders and tenant farmers, underscoring a leadership image in the citation also, which means that “others” cannot represent Gentile Christians.⁵⁷³ In his historical speculation, John Riches, interestingly drawing on analogies with the radical Reformation and the Peasants’ Revolt, (which might be taken to suggest that Jesus should have been the spokesperson for such deep-rooted rural dissatisfaction), rightly supposes that “Jesus’ threat/ prediction of the destruction of the Temple was motivated by a deep rejection of its leadership, and that what he expected thereafter would have included the assumption of leadership positions by his followers.”⁵⁷⁴ The contemporary cultic leadership is symbolically judged, both Isa 56:7 and Jer 7:11 in 11:17 seem to point out, to be replaced by a new leadership whose community will consist of all nations, including Jews and Gentiles.

⁵⁷² C. Evans, *Mark 8:27-16:20*, 237.

⁵⁷³ Cf. R. Gundry, *Mark*, 663 and 688-689.

⁵⁷⁴ John Riches, “Apocalyptic-Strangely Relevant,” in *Templum Amicitiae: Essays on the Second Temple presented to Ernst Bammel*, ed., William Horbury, JSNTSupp 48 (Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1991), 252.

4.54224 Conclusion

Jesus' action in the Temple is meant to be a prophetic threat to the Jerusalem Temple and at the same time a prophetic promise about a whole new Temple. Jesus' action in the Temple symbolically represents a messianic fulfillment of the O.T prophecies about the eschatological Temple. Jesus' action itself clearly presents a portent of the imminent destruction of the Temple, and not, as many scholars note, a pronouncement of the Temple destruction. The pronouncement of the Temple destruction comes later as the symbolic reference to the rending of the Temple curtain in 15:38 makes explicit. Since Jesus' action in the Temple itself cannot serve as a sufficient datum for our argument, its immediate and broader literary context were explored and proved highly valuable in understanding of the nature of Jesus' action. Through the examination of these textual and contextual issues, it is concluded that Mark clearly portrays a Jesus who understands and presents the Temple to be God's eschatological house for all nations; in the same vein Mark depicts Jesus as the messiah who is faithful in fulfilling this eschatological prophecies of the O.T, in line with the contemporary Jewish expectations of the messianic fulfillment of the eschatological Temple.

4.543 The Temple Statement in Mk 14:58, 15:29

4.5431 Preliminary Remarks

Two factors with regard to the Temple statement in Mk 14:58, "Εγὼ καταλύσω τὸν ναὸν τοῦτον τὸν χειροποίητον καὶ διὰ τριῶν ἡμερῶν ἄλλον ἄχειροποίητον οἰκοδομήσω," are important here. One is that the context of the Temple statement is a false testimony given by Jesus' accusers; Mark implies that he does not take this statement seriously himself, by stating that "yet even then their testimony did not agree" (14:59) and by actually specifying the testimony as "false." The other is that the Temple statement which is designed to falsely accuse Jesus of blasphemy includes two peculiar words that undermine its falsity; the theologically meaningful and significant words "χειροποίητον" and "ἄχειροποίητον" feel out of context and

overtly awkward in this setting.⁵⁷⁵ In comparison to 15:28 (“ὁ καταλύων τὸν ναὸν καὶ οἰκοδομῶν ἐν τρισὶν ἡμέραις”),⁵⁷⁶ for example, the latter fits much better into the accusatory context.⁵⁷⁷ The occurrence of the terms thus might be hinting that the Temple statement in 14:58 is a carefully formulated one.

These two seemingly conflicting factors would, in turn, cause serious problems especially to those who, relying on these terms, interpret Jesus as a builder of the new community. There are at least two obstacles that make it impossible for them to draw on the terms and interpret Mark’s view on Jesus’ coming death to be a destruction and replacement of the old material Temple. The first is that the previously set up allegation does not incur unanimous agreement on the part of the planted witnesses (v.59), and the second is that Mark specifies this charge as a false evidence (v.57). Really the question whether Mark intended the charge to be true or false is on their burden of proof.⁵⁷⁸

In fact, these interpreters represent a major interpreting trend with regard to the understanding of the nature of the Temple statements in 14:58 and 15:29. As C. Evans observes, “because Jesus predicted the Temple’s destruction and because the Johannine Jesus says something similar (cf. John 2:19), most scholars today believe Mark 14:58 represents something that Jesus actually said or at least something close to something that he said.”⁵⁷⁹ Acknowledging the current literary contexts of the Temple statements in 14:58 and 15:29, that is, false testimony and mockery respectively, these interpreters still argue that the occurrence of the two terms (“χειροποίητον” and “ἄχειροποίητον”) is to be taken more seriously than these

⁵⁷⁵ D. Juel argues that the Temple statement without these adjectives was false and Mark has supplied them to tell the readers how to interpret the statement correctly. Thus for Juel, these two adjectives become the neutralizers of falsity (cf. *Messiah and Temple*, 146-51).

⁵⁷⁶ R. Brown, in view of his evaluation that any temple statement made historically by Jesus did not contain these two symmetrical pair of adjectives, apparently referring to the statement in Mk 15:29 as well as the Synoptic parallels and Acts, argues that these adjectives are interpretations that arose among Greek-speaking Christians, and thus are important keys to what Mark wants his readers to understand (cf. *Death of the Messiah* I, 439-440).

⁵⁷⁷ One might argue that the very use of these words, especially labeling the Jerusalem Temple as a man-made one, is blasphemous, because the Temple in Israel’s temple traditions is always considered as made by God and divinely ordained: the term ἄχειροποίητον never occurs in the LXX and χειροποίητον in the LXX translates the Hebrew contempt for idols (G. Biguzzi, “MC. 14:58: un tempio ἄχειροποίητον,” *RivB* 26 (1978), 226-29, quoted from R. Brown, *Death of the Messiah*, 439). But it is least likely that in the present context, such a highly theological implication is intended or assumed, especially in the view of Mark’s gentile Christian readers.

⁵⁷⁸ Cf. D. Juel, *Messiah and Temple*, 118-125.

⁵⁷⁹ C. Evans, *Mark 8:27-16:20*, 445. C. Evans willingly includes himself into the main line interpreters and assigns many pages to the explanations of the Jewish texts that speak of an eschatological temple that will be built by the eschatological Messiah (cf. *ibid*, 445f).

contextual peculiarities; and they tend to assume that the Temple statements in both verses are ironically telling the truth about Jesus' messianic fulfilment with respect to the Temple, arguing in the same vein that the phrase "the Temple made without hands" should be taken as a clear reference to a new Christian community that is supposed to emerge with Jesus' death and resurrection.

While the Temple statement in 14:58 may not be a total fabrication by the vicious witnesses, it does represent Mark's implied critique of the *incorrect understanding* of Jesus' messianic fulfilment of God's eschatological plan for his House, the Temple. It should be clarified, however, that this is not to say that the Temple statements in 14:58 and 15:29 were meant by Mark to polemicize against Mark's contemporaries who had been greatly immersed with a divine man Christology conjoined with a realized eschatology which depict Jesus as the destroyer of the old Temple and builder of the new.⁵⁸⁰ Mark's critique of misunderstanding of Jesus' messianic replacement of the old Temple is of great importance at this moment in the trial narrative. Its function here is to show that the messianic replacement of the old Temple is only fulfilled by Jesus' death on the cross. Jesus' messianic task with regard to the physical Temple, which was foreshadowed in his action in the Temple in Mk 11 and his prediction of the destruction of the Temple in Mk 13, reaches its climax in the event of the tearing down of the Temple curtain in Mk 15:38, executed by the expulsion of Jesus' final breath/spirit at the moment of his death. This does not mean that there is no formative role at all in the Temple statement itself in understanding the destiny of the physical Temple and the hope of a new Temple. Since what Mark is objecting to is not Jesus' messianic replacement of the old Temple, but an *incorrect understanding* of it, the phrase "the Temple made without hands" still needs to be explored in regard to the Markan theme of misunderstanding. Without 'over-interpreting' the intended meaning of the phrase, its textual and immediate literary context will be examined to see how and in what ways the Temple statement is adopted and viewed by Mark. Thus the primary texts themselves, 14:58 and 15:29, will be discussed first, followed by their immediate literary contexts, then the post-biblical Jewish traditions and texts which address the theme of a new Temple will be looked at.

⁵⁸⁰ Among some, especially see T. J. Weeden, Sr. "The Cross as Power in Weakness (Mark 15:20b-41)," 115-134, in *The Passion in Mark*, ed. W. Kelber (Fortress, 1976).

Before going into a textual analysis, a short yet lucid survey of the interpretations of the verse, as well as critiques of each interpretive tradition, by J. Donahue, is mentioned here to present a somewhat comprehensive view of the scholarship behind this issue. Donahue classifies the interpreters into two groups: one group viewing the Temple saying as a reference to the resurrection of Jesus (as might be indicated by “in three days”); the other taking it as an allusion to the expectation that the Messiah would destroy the old temple and build a new one.⁵⁸¹ The latter, it should be noted, has been widely accepted, in spite of the fact that many fail to support it with relevant evidence.⁵⁸²

4.5432 Analysis of the Text for Mark’s Negative View of the Temple Statement

The whole corpus of the text, in the form of a diagram, is as follows:

55 οἱ δὲ ἀρχιερεῖς καὶ ὅλον τὸ συνέδριον
 ἐζήτουν κατὰ τοῦ Ἰησοῦ μαρτυρίαν εἰς τὸ θανατώσαι αὐτόν,
 καὶ οὐχ ἠύρισκον·
 56 πολλοὶ γὰρ ἐψευδομαρτύρουν κατ’ αὐτοῦ,
 καὶ ἴσαι αἱ μαρτυρίαι οὐκ ἦσαν.
 57 καὶ τινες ἀναστάντες
 ἐψευδομαρτύρουν κατ’ αὐτοῦ λέγοντες
 58 ὅτι
 Ἡμεῖς ἠκούσαμεν αὐτοῦ λέγοντος
 ὅτι
 Ἐγὼ καταλύσω τὸν ναὸν τοῦτον τὸν χειροποίητον καὶ
 διὰ τριῶν ἡμερῶν ἄλλον ἀχειροποίητον οἰκοδομήσω.
 59 καὶ οὐδὲ οὕτως ἴση ἦν ἡ μαρτυρία αὐτῶν.

As the diagram indicates, the so-called temple charge in v.58 is clearly a part of the false testimony against Jesus in his trial and accordingly reveals Mark’s negative view on the Temple saying. First of all, the narrative flow shows that it is framed with the narrator’s own implicit comment on the saying, occurring before and after: “ἴσαι αἱ μαρτυρίαι οὐκ ἦσαν” in v.56b and “οὐδὲ οὕτως ἴση ἦν ἡ μαρτυρία αὐτῶν”

⁵⁸¹ J. Donahue, *Are You the Christ?* 109-112. Here he asserts that the first view is problematic because Mark’s resurrection formula is “μετὰ τρεῖς ἡμέρας ἀναστῆναι”, as shown in 8:31, 9:31, 10:33, and οἰκοδομεῖ is never used of the resurrection in the N.T. and that the second has problems because it rests more on the interpretive traditions than on the text itself.

in v.59. These comments should be taken as decisive clues to interpret what lies in-between. One might argue that ἴσος means ‘consistent,’ taking it to reveal the falsity of the testimonies, thus rendering their testimonies useless to the Sanhedrin.⁵⁸³ The argument can be also in the same way used to confirm the falsity of the testimony about the Temple statement itself in v.58. But, we need to be reminded of the simple fact that even ‘inconsistent’ testimonies still lie under Mark’s clear categorization of the testimonies as ‘false.’ Second, Mark himself specifies the context of the saying as false testimony (ἐψευδομαρτύρουν), twice in such a short time (cf. v.56a and v.57). Third, from the viewpoint of the narrative structure, the Temple saying is not introduced as an independent statement about Jesus’ view and role with regard to the Temple, but is clearly used as an illustration of how even the various false testimonies of the opponents of Jesus do not agree with each other, as evinced by the word οὕτως in v.59. The whole corpus of vv.55-59 can stand without the Temple saying; the excised version of the corpus as matter of fact would make the story flow better, less confusing.

On the other hand, two important points regarding the Temple saying appear to run counter to such a negative evaluation it. First of all, the occurrence of the two expressions “χειροποίητον” and “ἄχειροποίητον,” which are awkward and out of context, warns one against simply disregarding the Temple saying as a false accusation. The intrusive nature of these terms is confirmed by the redaction-critics who regard them as a final Markan redaction.⁵⁸⁴ As pointed out at the outset above, these words on the surface undermine the force of Mark’s categorization of it as falsity; in contrast, the other Temple saying in 15:29 better carries Mark’s intended purpose. Second, in terms of the narrative development, if it were not for the Temple charge in 14:58, the following interrogation of the high priest (vv. 60-64) would not make sense at all, and his questioning about Jesus’ Christological identity in v.61 just as unaccounted for. This means that the current placement of the Temple saying must be an integral part of the whole corpus, organically interrelated to what precedes and follows; it also means that the episode in 14:55-59 including the Temple saying is closely interlinked with the trial episode before the Sanhedrin in 14:61-64.

⁵⁸² Cf. D. Juel, *Messiah and Temple*, 145.

⁵⁸³ Cf. R. Brown, *Death of the Messiah* I, 445. See also C. Evans, *Mark 8:27-16:20*, 444: here Evans also argues that “here lies the explanation of why the ruling priests were not finding any incriminating evidence against Jesus.”

⁵⁸⁴ See C. Evans, *Mark 8:27-16:20*, 440 for these critics.

The motif of the Temple, then, must be related to the motif of Christology in the present passages. In fact, these two motifs are often presented in juxtaposition or in close proximity in Mark, working together to present Mark's peculiar understanding of the Temple and Jesus' identity. In 15:29-32, for example, the mockery about destroying the Temple (cf. v.29) is followed by insults aimed at Jesus' Christological identities (cf. v.32). And in 15:38-39, the rending of the temple veil is followed by the centurion's Christological confession. We can go further to note a presence of the same kind of link between the Temple motif and the Christological issues in the broader context of Jesus' action in the Temple. In our text, the false accusation against Jesus as destroyer of the Temple in 14:58 is followed by an inquiry about his Christological identity in 14:60-61.⁵⁸⁵ In Mk 12:35-37, Jesus sarcastically asks why or how the teachers of the Law think that the Messiah, referring to himself, is the son of David; in fact Jesus rejects the Davidic line of his Messiahship, locating its origin instead in the divine line of God's kingship. More importantly, the context in which this Christological question is located, that is, "teaching in the Temple" (cf. διδάσκων ἐν τῷ ἱερῷ in 12:35), should be noted. The terms 'teaching' and 'the Temple' clearly confirm a lexical and thematic link between the episode of Jesus' action in the Temple and the Christological question in 12:35-37. From a contextual point of view, also, 12:35-37 is related to the episode of Jesus' action in the Temple. As noted already, the Jewish Temple leaders' challenging question about Jesus' authority in Mk 11:27-33 refers in particular to Jesus' action in the Temple in 11:15-17, and the question was made in the very Jerusalem Temple that Jesus had "cleansed" earlier. A subsequent narrative development clearly indicates that the expression διδάσκων ἐν τῷ ἱερῷ in 12:35 is linked to "ἐν τῷ ἱερῷ περιπατοῦντος αὐτοῦ" in 11:27, speaking of Jesus in the Temple being questioned about his authority in regard to his cleansing action in the Temple. In addition, "the Messiah as the Son of David" in 12:36 is clearly reminiscent of the crowds' chants in 11:10 about Jesus in his entry to the Jerusalem and its Temple, hailing him as the coming one from the royal line of David, the one to restore the old glory of the Jerusalem Temple. The link is further confirmed by that fact that 1 Sam 7:12f serves as the backdrop of these two Christological pericopes.⁵⁸⁶

⁵⁸⁵ See also, T. J. Weeden, Sr. "The Cross as Power in Weakness," 122.

⁵⁸⁶ For the view of the Messiah as a descendant of David, see also Isa 11:1, Jer 23:5, Ezek 34:23, 37:24, Psa 89: 20ff, and *IQFlor* 1:11 and *IQPB* 3f, and *Psalms of Solomon* 17:21. J. Gnllka also asserts

The motif of the destruction of the Temple in Mark is thus invariably accompanied by the Christological motif, and the Temple sayings in 14:58, 15:29, and 15:38 duly illustrate Mark's deliberate interweaving of these motifs. It can be safely inferred, then, that in 14:58 and 15:29, the occurrence of the destruction and a replacement of the Old Temple with a new one is a legitimate part of Mark's compositional scheme, and not a fabrication by the witnesses or mockers, and thus meant to be true, even though Mark's usage of it can be confusing as he switches its context from false testimony (14:58) to mockery (15:29) and to metaphor or symbol (15:38).

Considering all these issues, in addition to what is noted earlier in regard to 15:29 in endorsement of Donahue's view,⁵⁸⁷ it should be observed that the Temple saying in 14:58 contains an incorrect eschatology and Christology; it is wrongly implied that the death of the Jesus will bring an immediate end to the material temple and bring into existence, just as immediately, the eschatological temple, rather than at the eschaton as it was prophesied. It is to be also posited that in this regard, Jesus' own saying in 14:62 should be taken as an indirect answer to the high priest's inquiry in v.60 and as a critique of the Temple saying in 14:58.⁵⁸⁸

From a contextual point of view, "the Temple boast," to borrow T. Weeden's term, of 14:58, is being deliberately undermined "as false eschatology for the benefit of the reader just as the same boast is discredited as false eschatology in 15:29. According to Weeden, "the logion 14:58 evinces an inherent instrumental and eschatological continuity: instrumental continuity in the sense that Jesus himself is the agent of destruction and rebuilding; eschatological in the sense that the destruction of the old and building of the new are conceived as tandem acts accomplished within the imminent eschatological time-frame of three days."⁵⁸⁹ Weeden's interpretation is primarily based on his history of religions conviction that there was a conflict in the Marakn community in regard to fundamental Christological issues: the heretical view of a divine man Christology and of a false old/new Temple eschatology, which is

that the whole corpus from 11:27 to 13:1 relates Jesus' acts and words, performed and said while he was staying in the Temple (cf. *Das Evangelium*, II, 169); and for the link between the Messianic portrayal of Jesus' entry into the Jerusalem and its Temple in 11:10 and the Christological argument in 12:36, see *ibid.*, 171 ("..beim Betreten der Stadt preist das Volk die kommende Königsherrschaft Davids [11:10]. Im Tempel greift Jesus die Frage auf.")

⁵⁸⁷ Cf. Donahue, *Are You the Christ*, 197-198.

⁵⁸⁸ This is where Donahue's view takes a different direction; he takes the temple charge in 14:58 as a positive eschatological metaphor for the new community.

represented by the Jerusalem Church and its leaders, Jesus' chief disciples according to Weeden in opposition to the view of suffering Son of Man Christology, which is represented and adopted by Mark in his polemic against his opponents within his community.⁵⁹⁰

Although Weeden's historical reconstruction of Mark's community shows too many loopholes to be acceptable, his critique of the faulty continuity in the Temple saying in 14:58 is a valuable one. As long as the textual and contextual factors remain intact, inquiries like the ones Weeden conducts can better equip those who are looking into the nature of the Temple statement. The falsity of the Temple statement gains legitimacy from various evidences. First of all, the term διὰ τριῶν ἡμερῶν, taken to refer to Jesus rising from the death, does not comply with Mark's usual terminology for the description of the time span between Jesus' death and resurrection; his typical words for it are μετὰ τρεῖς ἡμέρας (cf. three passion predictions in 8:31, 9:31, 10:33). In the same vein, the term οἰκοδομήσω is not the usual word for Mark's reference to Jesus' resurrection, his favorite being ἀνιστήμι (cf. the above passages).⁵⁹¹ Second, although there is an independent Johannine tradition about the Temple statement, it does not point to Jesus as the actual agent of the Temple destruction: for example, Jn 2:19 says "Λύσατε τὸν ναὸν τοῦτον καὶ ἐν τρισὶν ἡμέραις ἐγερῶ αὐτόν." Furthermore within his Gospel, Mark never says that Jesus will destroy the Temple, even though Jesus himself implies clearly the portent of the destruction of the Temple and expresses his intention to let it happen from the moment of entering Jerusalem to the moment of dying on the cross. As C. Evans points out, "the evangelist scarcely prepares his readers for this accusation."⁵⁹² More importantly, the Temple statement is faulty, as Weeden observes, because it claims that Jesus himself is the agent of destruction and rebuilding, while what has been actually said in Mark clearly says otherwise.⁵⁹³ Third, it should be noted that the present form of the Temple statement reveals a chronological sequence between the destruction of the old Temple and the rebuilding of an eschatological Temple. Many interpreters have proposed that the

⁵⁸⁹ Weeden, "The Cross as Power in Weakness," 126.

⁵⁹⁰ Cf. Weeden's in this regard, *Mark-traditions in conflict*, and see also "The Cross as Power in Weakness," 116-121.

⁵⁹¹ Cf. J. Donahue, *Are You the Christ?* 109-112.

⁵⁹² C. Evans, *Mark 8:27-16:20*, 445.

⁵⁹³ T. Weeden, "The Cross as Power in Weakness," 126.

term διὰ τριῶν ἡμερῶν be rendered as ‘in a short time.’⁵⁹⁴ This would mean that in Mark’s eschatological scheme, the immediate succession doesn’t fit in well; Mark makes a deliberate distinction, for example, in Mk 13, between apocalyptic events that precede and surround the destruction of the Jerusalem Temple and the penultimate events preceding the eschaton. While Mk 13:1-5 deals with the destruction of the Temple in an eschatological context, thus viewing it as part of the portents of the parousia, Mk 13 distinguishes these portents from the end-time events that are accompanied with the Son of Man coming with great power and glory and *sending his angels to gather his elect from the whole world* (vv.26-27), emphatically reminding his readers that “the end is still to come” (v.7; cf. vv. 8, 10) and consistently exhorting them to “watch and pray” (v.33) because “no one knows about that day or hour, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father (v.32).”⁵⁹⁵ Here in 13:27 if the portrayal of the eschatological Son of Man gathering his elect is taken as a reference to the eschatological community at the eschaton and thus can be distinguished from the messianic interim new community which is found immediately after Easter,⁵⁹⁶ the Temple statement in 14:58 clearly contradicts what Mark conveys through such portrayals. Interestingly enough, D. Juel, while clearly refuting the interpretation of διὰ τριῶν ἡμερῶν as ‘in a short time,’ argues that “the use of διὰ τριῶν ἡμερῶν in 14:58 would fit well with Mark’s use of irony. Jesus’ opponents take the reference to ‘three days’ to mean ‘in a short time.’”⁵⁹⁷ Furthermore, the present form of the Temple statement implies that the destruction and rebuilding of the Temple are accomplished through a miraculous work of the messiah. Though it cannot be taken as a representation of so-called divine man Christology, as argued by Weeden, the Temple statement implies a miraculous power involved in both events.⁵⁹⁸ 13:21 (“..Look, here is the Christ! or Look, there he is!..”), especially, is resonant in the Temple statements, because in both verses, a Christological view of the Messiah as miracle worker is readily envisioned. Finally, the Temple saying must be viewed in

⁵⁹⁴ Compare ‘<τῇ ἡμέρᾳ τῇ τρίτῃ’ in Hos 6:2LXX with ‘τῇ τρίτῃ ἡμέρᾳ’ in the passion predictions in Mt 16:21, 17:23, 20:19 and Lk 9:12, 18:33, 24:7, 24:46. Cf. R. Brown, *Death of the Messiah*, 443-444: here Brown succinctly summarizes issues into two interpretations (‘within’ or ‘after’) and reasonably opts for the meaning of ‘shortly’ or ‘a short time.’ See also V. Taylor, *St. Mark*, 556; D. Catchpole, *The Trail of Jesus*, (Brill, 1971), 130.

⁵⁹⁵ Cf. R. Brown, *Death of the Messiah* I, 452-453: here Brown also draws on Mk 13 for supporting his argument that is very similar to mine.

⁵⁹⁶ Cf. Michel, “οἰκοδομέω,” *TDNT* V, 139.

⁵⁹⁷ D. Juel, *Messiah and Temple*, 144.

the context of the actual expectations of Jesus' contemporaries for the replacement of the Temple as found in Jewish apocalyptic (cf. Enoch 90:28-29).⁵⁹⁹ As was pointed out when the word 'the den of robbers' in 11:17 was treated as an implicit critique of the Zealots' revolutionary way of purifying and restoring the Temple, the Temple motif in Mark often hinges on the apocalyptic expectations that many of his contemporaries harbored. Mark's deliberate revelation of the faultiness of the saying thus can serve him as a powerful way of refuting or criticizing the wrongly oriented views about the eschatological temple. In this regard, John Riches points out that the subversive nature of Jesus' proclamation, that is, his conceptual changes of the contemporary understandings of the biblical themes and metaphors, is fully in line with Mark's authorial intention.⁶⁰⁰

The current location of the Temple statements itself, between Mk 13 (eschatological discourse) and the crucifixion narrative, thus reinforces the temporal distinction stated in Mk 13; it also wards off any association of the Temple destruction with an imminent parousia which would bring an eschatological Temple. In the same vein, the timeliness of Mark's implied critique on people's incorrect understanding of Jesus' messianic role in the destruction and replacement of the old Temple, coming at the particular moment in the trial narrative, is to be noted. As suggested above, in Mark's scheme of things, the critique was instrumental in showing that the messianic replacement of the old Temple would be fulfilled only by Jesus' death on the cross. As the misunderstanding would have it, Jesus was expected to miraculously destroy the temple and rebuild it, immediately and just as miraculously; the rebuilt one, moreover, would not be made by hand. Mark is very careful to note how such misunderstanding portrays Jesus as an apocalyptic fanatic, as some hero thus bypassing the cross, which in Mark's epistemology is the apocalyptic event to bring an end to the old and to bring in the new. As R. Brown explains, siding with Vögtle, the power of Jesus 'to destroy the Temple and build a new sanctuary' resides in his power to die on the cross:

⁵⁹⁸ Cf. The Matthean parallel passage, 26:61 seems to draw attention to the power by using the verb, to be able: "Δύναμαι καταλῦσαι τὸν ναὸν τοῦ θεοῦ καὶ διὰ τριῶν ἡμερῶν οἰκοδομῆσαι"

⁵⁹⁹ Eta Linnemann, *Studien zur Passionsgeschichte* (Vandenhoeck und Ruprecht, 1970), 122, quoted from D. Juel, *Messiah and Temple*, 146.

⁶⁰⁰ Cf. John Riches, *Jesus and the Transformation*, 104ff and 141ff and *Conflicting Mythologies*, 170ff.

His is not the power of a false messiah who shows signs and wonders (13:22) but the power of the cross. Having drunk the cup and gone through the hour, the crucified Christ shares in God's power to reject unbelief and beget belief. What replaces the empty sanctuary of the Jerusalem Temple as the holy place of God is a community of believers such as the centurion, whose true confession of Jesus as the Son of God comes from having comprehended his death on the cross – a community willing to take up the cross and follow Jesus. All those who think that the kingdom will come and the sanctuary be established simply because the Jerusalem Temple has been destroyed have not understood that they too must suffer before all these things come to pass, that they too must go through tribulations (13:24). God's action is not automatic in any way that removes having to drink the cup that Jesus drank, a cup drunk to its dregs on the cross.⁶⁰¹

4.5433 Analysis of the Text for τὸν χειροποίητον and ἄλλον ἀχειροποίητον and Jewish Temple Beliefs

“Ἐγὼ καταλύσω τὸν ναὸν τοῦτον τὸν χειροποίητον καὶ
διὰ τριῶν ἡμερῶν ἄλλον ἀχειροποίητον οἰκοδομήσω.” (Mk 14:58)

The two peculiar terms (τὸν χειροποίητον and ἄλλον ἀχειροποίητον) within the Temple statement must be examined with these issues and implications in mind. The terms cannot be dismissed as part of false testimony, because from the start, as noted above, they undermine the intended falsity. In 14:58, Mark himself brings into sharp contrast ‘τὸν ναὸν τὸν χειροποίητον’ and ‘ἄλλον ἀχειροποίητον’ while in 15:29 Jesus is simply stated as “ὁ καταλύων τὸν ναὸν καὶ οἰκοδομῶν ἐν τρισὶν ἡμέραις.” Without the presence of the two peculiar terms, the latter fits much better into the context of accusation and mockery.

Although in Paul the phrase ἄλλον ἀχειροποίητον contrasts the spiritual with the fleshly or physical order (cf. 2 Cor 5:1) and in Hebrews the heavenly with the earthly order (cf. Heb 9:11), in Mark the phrase contrasts what God builds with what human beings build.⁶⁰² As in Jewish messianic belief, it refers to the Temple that God

⁶⁰¹ R. Brown, *Death of the Messiah*, 453.

⁶⁰² For detailed explanations of this understanding, E. Lohse, “χειροποίητος, ἀχειροποίητος” *TDNT* 9, 436. Here Lohse enumerates other N.T passages such as Acts 7:48, 17:24, Heb 9:11, 24 and says that they are all equivalent to the usage in Mk 14:58. D. Juel refutes this statement and rightly points out that, without implying that God would dwell in the Temple made without hands, Acts 7:48 and 17:24 simply suggest that God does not dwell in buildings of any sort (cf. *Messiah and Temple*, 148-150).

would build with his hands.⁶⁰³ The phrase ἄλλον ἀχειροποίητον is deeply rooted in O.T prophetic traditions, as its resonances with various O.T. demonstrate. First of all, it echoes an ancient prophecy of God's dwelling place that is made with his hands, which was spoken in the narration of God's primeval exodus deliverance of his people in Exod 15:17. The dominant belief during the period of the second temple period was that God himself would be the builder of this new house. Only a temple erected by God himself would fulfil the promises and last forever, unlike temples built by human hands. After the destruction of the first temple and the disappointment with the second temple, there developed a fascination with the words from Exod 15:17: "the sanctuary, oh, Lord, that your hands have established." (cf. *Melkita of R. Ishmael* on Exod 15:17-21).⁶⁰⁴ Second, it is very plausible that the phrase reminded Mark's readers of 2 Sam 7:12-14; the Qumran community, a near-contemporary of Mark's community, in its quoting of Exod. 15:17, takes 2 Sam 7:10 to refer to the final eschatological sanctuary, rather than to the Solomonic temple. In fact, 2 Sam 7:14, along with Ps.2:7, is interpreted messianically in the Qumran literatures (cf. IQSa 2:1ff; 4QFlor 1:6-7,10f),⁶⁰⁵ it is very likely that Mark's readers understood the expression, "the Temple made without hands," to be also referring to the messianic Temple that the eschatological Messiah would build in his restoration of God's peoples. There are also many post-biblical Jewish writings that reflect Jewish expectations that when the eschatological Messiah comes, he will rebuild an eschatological Temple as a substitute for the Jerusalem one; the expectations, however, do not seem to have supposed that the Second temple would be the final temple, but an interim one until the Lord will build a "new house greater and loftier than the first one" (cf. 1 Enoch 90:28f). The messianic promises in O.T passages like 2 Sam 7:10-14, and Zech 6:12, continued to influence Jewish expectations.⁶⁰⁶

Thus, if we take the terms τὸν χειροποίητον and ἄλλον ἀχειροποίητον aside from their current context, they can be mistaken as a fascinating indicator or assurance that Jesus would destroy the material Temple and build an everlasting new one. In light of the contemporary Jewish misguided expectations of the eschatological Messiah, especially, the misconception of the terms becomes increasingly attractive to

⁶⁰³ David Holwerda, *Jesus and Israel* (Eerdmann, 1996), 72.

⁶⁰⁴ David Holwerd, *Jesus and Israel*, 66; cf. C. Evans, *Mark 8:27-16:20*, 446.

⁶⁰⁵ Cf. G. J. Brooke, *Exegesis at Qumran: 4QFlor. In its Jewish Context* (JSOT, 1985), 134ff.

⁶⁰⁶ For Zech 6:12, see C. Evans, *Mark 8:27-16:20*, 445. Here Evans argues that the expectation of the eschatological Messiah to rebuild the Jerusalem Temple may be rooted in this prophetic verse.

the fanatical Jews in Mark's time. The very nature of this expectation, however, is what Mark found so objectionable since he saw that it could create on the part of his community a complete misunderstanding of Jesus' fulfillment, taking it in a purely apocalyptic sense without seeing the need for them to partake in their Master's suffering and death before the Messianic era is launched. The current literary shape of the text in which the terms occur clearly specifies the Temple statement as a false testimony, and thus indirectly polemicizes against such misconceived notions about Jesus' messianic fulfillment in regard to the Temple.

61 πάλιν ὁ ἀρχιερεὺς
ἐπηρώτα αὐτὸν καὶ λέγει αὐτῷ,
Σὺ εἶ ὁ Χριστὸς ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ εὐλογητοῦ.
62 ὁ δὲ Ἰησοῦς εἶπεν,
Ἐγὼ εἰμι, καὶ ὄψεσθε τὸν υἱὸν τοῦ ἀνθρώπου
ἐκ δεξιῶν καθήμενον τῆς δυνάμεως καὶ
ἐρχόμενον μετὰ τῶν νεφελῶν τοῦ οὐρανοῦ.

After taking pains to conclude the episode of the Temple charge with the comment, “οὐδὲ οὕτως ἴση ἦν ἡ μαρτυρία αὐτῶν,” Mark immediately depicts the high priest taking up the Temple charge and putting it into a different context, that is, of a Christological charge. Yet these two episodes are intimately related and thus should be read together, as pointed out at the outset of this study. And, as it was pointed out above, 2 Sam 7 was an important background passage to the two episodes, especially in light of the Jewish apocalyptic interpretations of the passage in Jesus’ time. Mark further ensures through various moves that his readers are reminded of 2 Sam 7. Immediately after the charge is made about building a temple without hands in 14:58, the high priest asks whether Jesus is the Messiah, who is the Son of God (14:61), paralleling 2 Sam 7 which describes the Son of David, the Messiah who will build God’s house, as “God’s son.” On the surface level of the narrative flow, thus, Mark seems to assume that the high priest is taking ‘the temple built without hands’ to be the promised house that God and the son of David will build, a house that will include the re-gathering of the scattered Israel under the Davidic Shepherd-Prince (2 Sam 7:8-11).⁶⁰⁷ The identity question raised by the high priest, however, also represents his awareness of contemporary messianism, looking ahead to the theme of blasphemy.

Certain things should be pointed out in regard to the high priest’s identity question and the following blasphemy charge against Jesus. First, in Jewish traditions about messianism in the postbiblical period, a messianic claim itself is not deemed blasphemous, unless the one who makes that claim fails to produce authenticating signs.⁶⁰⁸ The priest in his interrogation, then, must have meant to ascertain whether or not Jesus can produce authenticating signs that might qualify his messianic claim in

⁶⁰⁷ D. Holwerda, *Jesus and Israel*, 73.

relation to the Temple statement. In this sense, the high priest is thematically tied with the accusers of Jesus, bringing the Temple charge against him, in the previous episode.

In view of Jewish traditions regarding messianism in the postbiblical period, a question concerning the specific identity of the messianic figure must be asked: whose son is the Messiah?; is he the Messiah Son of David or the Messiah Son of God?⁶⁰⁹ Here 'Son of X' is not a simple appositive of the Messiah in the first position, but an important qualifier of the former. For example, in Mk 12:35-37, Jesus sarcastically asks why the teachers of the Law think that the Messiah (referring to Jesus himself), is the son of David; and in fact here Jesus refutes aligning his Messiahship with Davidic origin, thus emphasizing its divine origin.⁶¹⁰ The expectation of a Davidic Messiah in first century Judaism and Christianity in turn has raised questions concerning whether the anticipated Messiah was a restorative or utopian one. A restorative Messiah would improve the contemporary world and restore it to the Davidic empire; a utopian Messiah, on the other hand, remains as part of a discontinuous, apocalyptic messianic hope that God will destroy the old world and create a new one.⁶¹¹ It can be inferred from Jesus' sarcastic inquiry in Mk 12:35-37 and more importantly its subsequent quotation from Psa 110:1 (depicting the Son of God sitting at right hand of God displaying his might by an apocalyptic destruction of evil cosmic powers) that in Mark Jesus is not depicted as the Messiah, the Son of David, who would restore Israel to its old glory; throughout the Gospel, he is portrayed as an apocalyptic and eschatological Messiah, through whom God's eschatological rule and cosmic victory will be established, inaugurating a new world and new age.

Although some scholars dismiss the value of such distinction, either as unimportant or irrelevant,⁶¹² the narrative flow indicates a clear continuity between the contemporary Jewish expectation of the messianic restoration of the Temple implied in the previous Temple charge episode and the line of understanding in regard to the messianic identity the high priest's interrogation implies. The continuity in turn

⁶⁰⁸ The episode of Simon Bar Kozeba provides a good example. He made a messianic claim but later when he failed to produce such a sign, he was executed by the rabbis (cf. *b. Sanhedrin* 93b) (cf. J. Marcus, "Mark 14:61: 'Are You the Messiah-Son-of-God?'," *NovT* XXXI 2 (1989), 128-129).

⁶⁰⁹ J. Marcus, "Mark 14:61," 135, 130.

⁶¹⁰ J. Marcus, "Mark 14:61," 135-136.

⁶¹¹ *Ibid.*, 136.

⁶¹² C. Evans disagrees with what has been said above. The distinction between the Messiah as the Son of David and the Messiah as the Son of God may have been important to Jesus, he speculates, but the high priest probably was not aware of this distinction; for him to be the Messiah, son of David, was

distinguishes the high priest (a narrative character whose main feature is his suspicion, as indicated by his dubious questions v.61c)⁶¹³ and Jesus (the reliable narrative character whose main feature is his unwavering certitude, as indicated by his answers in v.62a), particularly in terms of their understanding of the messianic claims.

Jesus' answer to the high priest in 14:62 in this sense is highly indicative of what is being argued here: "you will see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of the Almighty One and coming on the clouds of heaven." Alluding to Psa 110:1 again and also Dan 7:13, it describes, as was the case in Mk 12:36 when the same psalm was quoted, the Son of God sitting at the right hand of God of might and cosmic victory over evil powers. Thus Jesus as the Son of God in one way or another is involved in God's apocalyptic battle against cosmic evils; likewise, Jesus is an apocalyptic and eschatological messiah to judge the wicked and vindicate the righteous and just.

Some controversies over the nature of Jesus' self-identification in 14:62 are to be noted here. Among them, two are most representative: whether it is a reference to the exaltation or enthronement as immediate vindication or a reference to the parousia as an eschatological judgment.⁶¹⁴ The issue is actually about how to deal with the peculiar occurrence of the word ὁψέσθαι at the outset of Jesus' self-designation. In our study of the Son of Man sayings under 3.624 THE THEME OF JUDGEMENT IN THE SON OF MAN SAYINGS, the gratuitous nature of the word has been discussed in detail, along with the themes of vindication and judgement in Mk 14:61 with reference to the Danielic Son of Man figure in Dan 7:13. The word, ὁψέσθαι, in v.61 conveys a judgement motif, traditionally employed in the context of the vindication of martyrs, and Mark 14:62 bespeaks an eschatological witnessing of the Son of Man by the worldly leaders who have opposed his will. Whether the original meaning of the Son of Man sitting and coming in pre-Markan stages is taken to be in reference to the original settings in the Ps 110 and Dan 7 or to the post-biblical Jewish interpretive

to be in some sense, the Son of God (as in 2 Sam 7:12-14; Psa 2:2, 7), he says (*Mark 8:27-16:20*, 449-450).

⁶¹³ V. Taylor asserts that 'Σὺ' in the high priest's question is contemptuous (cf. *St. Mark*, 567).

⁶¹⁴ Cf. Jane Schaberg, "Mark 14:62: Early Christian Merkabah Imagery?" *Apocalyptic and the New Testament: Essays in Honor of J. Louis Martyn*, ed., J. Marcus & Marion L. Soards, (JSOT Press, 1989), 70-74. This controversy also includes issues of the sequence of the sitting and coming and of the incongruity of static image (sitting) and dynamic image (coming), and there are all related one or the other to the nature of Jesus' identity that has to do with the self-designation of Jesus as the Messiah and the Son of Man. For detailed explanations, see J. Schaberg "Mark 14:62"; D. Juel, *Messiah and Temple*, 95; C. Evans, *Mark 8:27-16:20*, 452.

traditions of these passages, the present shape of the text, with the word ὁψεσθε inserted by Mark, should provide us with a primary interpretive clue.

The eschatological dimension of the word ὁψεσθε, as well as the whole spectrum of the Son of Man sayings in Mark, is thus brought into play with the Son of God title that the high priest unwittingly brings up. As John Riches points out, the Son of Man title and saying in Jesus' own answer are formulated to qualify other Messianic claims to the Son of God, especially the implied restorative Messianic tone in the high priest's question. Jesus, in his allusion to Danielic Son of Man figure, "anchors the title the Messiah Son of God back into an eschatological tradition which looks forward to a dramatic reversal of Israel's fortunes, culminating in the vindication of the Son of Man."⁶¹⁵ More importantly, the allusion to the vindication of the Son of Man enables Jesus to sabotage the Jewish religious leaders' judging roles, subjecting them to their own judgment by the Son of Man at the eschaton. Identifying himself as the Son of Man, Jesus thus makes his true identity as the Son of Man indelible on the narrative and textual world of the Gospel, where the title Son of Man has been incorporated into the distinctively messianic features of Jesus' ministry: 'his authority to forgive sins (2:10); his lordship over the Sabbath (2:28); the necessity of his suffering and his resurrection (8:31, 9:31, 10:33-34), and his giving life as a ransom (10:45).'⁶¹⁶

An additional comment on the word ὁψεσθε: in light of Mark's architectonic understanding of the motif of seeing, it is not just the eschatological 'seeing' that is envisioned by this word; the heaven being torn open at the time of Jesus' baptism is also to be presupposed by it, since the torn heaven is what would make "you [see] the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of the Mighty One and coming on the clouds of heaven."⁶¹⁷ If this means that the heaven from then on will remain open, ensuring that the Messianic rule by Christ Jesus is maintained and executed, it further implies that there should exist no distinction between the enthronement interpretation and parousia interpretation.

⁶¹⁵ J. Riches, *Conflicting Mythologies*, 161.

⁶¹⁶ J. Riches, *Conflicting Mythologies*, 161.

⁶¹⁷ Cf. P. M. Casey (*Son of Man. The Interpretation and Influence of Daniel 7* (SPCK, 1979), 180) interestingly supposes that in view of the word ὁψεσθε, "it may reasonably be assumed that the heavens will open for this purpose." By this, Casey must mean that the opening of the heaven will be an event at the eschaton, which is different from my view.

4.5435 Conclusion of the Temple Statement in 14:58

The Temple saying in 14:58 contains Mark's negative and positive assessment of its nature, especially in regard to what is being said about the messianic identity. The negative views are indicated by: Mark's own definition of it as a false testimony, the literary frame of the saying with the twice repeated statement of no agreement among Jesus' accusations, its nature as an illustration of false testimonies levelled against Jesus, and finally the following Christological identity question raised by the high priest that intends to fit the Temple saying into the messianic understanding of the Jewish apocalyptic-messianic milieu. The positive views are signalled by the peculiar inclusion of the two important terms "χειροποίητον" and "ἀχειροποίητον" within the saying, at the risk of undermining the very falsity that Mark intends to highlight. The inclusion of the terms serves as a decisive factor that distinguishes the temple saying in 14:58 from the one in 15:29, on account that they are absent from the latter which otherwise carries the same message that the former does. These terms were shown to be in extensive use in the Jewish apocalyptic-messianic milieu at the time of Jesus, especially in the context of the messianic expectations: it was commonly believed that at the time of the messianic fulfilment, a Messianic king would come and restore the Jerusalem temple, in accordance with God's promise that the temple would regain the full glory and honour at the end. In light of the contemporary social and theological contexts, Mark's decision to contextualize the messianic expectation conveyed through the Temple saying as part of false testimony is nothing short of extraordinary. Also, Jesus' self-designation as the Son of Man sitting at God's right side and coming on the clouds, especially aided by the word ὅψεσθε, denotes that the ultimate fulfilment of the messianic claims and expectations is still to come at the eschaton.

Is there any indication in Mark, then, of the immediate fulfilment of the messianic claims and expectations that Jesus would accomplish for the contemporary setting? The conventional understanding of Jesus' attitude toward the Temple and its cults, specifically the anti-Jerusalem and anti-Temple polemic which runs through the Gospel, is to be appreciated to an extent that the new world envisioned by Mark through his own understanding of the messianic identity is not compromised by it; the conclusion that Mark 'brings to a culmination this polemic by attributing 14:58 to

Jesus as a true statement in reference to the new community,⁶¹⁸ is not an acceptable one. Indeed, the new community is opposed to the old community in Mark; and, indeed, the old community is signalled metaphorically by the Temple. The Temple passages in Mark, as examined above, show, however, more than signs of Mark's compositional strategy to choreograph his thematic and literary concerns. As E. Malbon observes, for example, the Temple not made with hands 'as a metaphor of the new community' originates not from Mark's authorial intention, per se, but from the New Testament letters and Qumran papers:

It seems likely that the Markan gospel does suggest a theological response of the Christian community to the crisis of the destruction of the Temple, but it seems unlikely that Mark does so by creating a Christian exegesis of Temple expectations and by imaging the Christian community as a new temple not made with hands.⁶¹⁹

4.544 Concluding Remarks on the Theme of the Temple in Mark

The whole section of the Theme of the Temple is thus brought to its conclusion and some key points should be briefly reiterated here. Jesus' action in the Temple clearly portends the coming destruction of the current Temple of Jerusalem; more importantly it serves primarily as a symbolic action that proleptically fulfils prophetic promises and messianic expectations concerning the eschatological Temple. In the light of Zech 14:21f. and Isa 56:7, Jesus' action in the Temple is a metaphorical lesson to his contemporaries that the Temple should be God's eschatological house for all nations; and in the light of Jer 7:11 (a den of robbers) in its original context and of a parallel situation between the OT and NT time, the eschatological temple entails the destruction of the current form of the Temple. In view of the immediate and broader literary contexts, with special regard to the Parable of the Wicked Tenants in 12:1-12 and Jesus' Last Supper in 14:22-25, Jesus' death is recounted by Mark as the single event that can open up a new age in which the eschatological temple will establish its cosmic presence in the human sphere.

⁶¹⁸ J. Donahue, *Are You the Christ*, 108-109; "Temple, Trial, and Royal Christology (Mark 14:53-65)" in *The Passion in Mark*, 68-69; D. Juel, *Messiah and Temple*, 57-58.

⁶¹⁹ Elizabeth S. Malbon, *Narrative Space*, 135.

With regard to the Temple statements in 14:58 and 15:29, they themselves are presented by Mark in the context of false accusations against Jesus in his trial and of his mocking at his crucifixion; they should be accordingly taken as false, not as demonstrations of Jesus' own understanding of the current material and future Temple. Also the literary context of the Temple statement, especially in 14:58, functions to reinforce the falsity of the Temple statement; it should be taken as false, not only because Mark says so and the contexts indicate so, but also because it represents the common but misconceived eschatology and Christology of Mark's time, which views Jesus as an apocalyptic fanatic who would bring an immediate end to the Old Temple, replacing it with a new one just as immediately. The occurrence of the two terms τὸν χειροποίητον and ἄλλον ἀχειροποίητον in the Temple statement, in the mean time, became crucial to note; the terms were shown to resonate not only with many O.T prophetic passages about a new future Temple but also with contemporary messianic expectations of the eschatological fulfilment of the Temple. The very fact that these terms reflect the contemporary Messianic expectations of the eschatological Temple may have prompted Mark to re-interpret Jesus' messianic fulfilment of the eschatological Temple, by pointing out that this temple is still to appear at the eschaton; his consequent point in this re-interpretation, more importantly, is that nothing but Jesus' death would replace the Jerusalem Temple and usher in a Messianic age in which the community of his followers is not only a present form of the messianic fulfilment but also a foretaste of the eschatological temple. Thus, although the Temple statement itself cannot be viewed as wrong, per se, but the possibility of a misguided understanding on the part of Mark's reader must be pointed out. Finally, a link between the Temple sayings in 14:58 and 15:29 and the episode of the Temple curtain in 15:38 was taken into consideration; a basic element of the Temple, that is, destruction and replacement of the Old Temple with a new one, brings these sayings together, adumbrating Mark's variously efficient use of it, according to the context of false testimony (14:58) or mockery (15:29) or metaphor of symbol (15:38). More importantly, the link was shown to further reinforce the notion that these Temple sayings are almost always eclipsed by Christological questions.

The Temple motif overshadowed by the Christological motif directs our attention to Jesus' messianic identity and mission with regard to the Temple in general and broader biblical and theological perspectives. 'The temple made with hands' is looked at in this context. Characterized by its particularism, it signals that it

has been long mistaken to concern only God's presence among the people of Israel as a guarantee for their well-being and prosperity. One of the important characteristics of the apocalyptic eschatology is the cosmic ruling of God at the eschaton, which includes the cosmic worship of God by the universal people of God's whole creation. It doubtlessly entails the necessity of the Temple made without hands, which is universal and cosmic in scope and nature, as the quotation from Isaiah proclaims. Solomon's prayer of Dedication in 1 Kgs 8, especially v.27, is also not far from this context. The inherent limitation of the Temple made with hands, now burdened with Israel's exclusive appropriation of the Temple and malpractice through cultic establishment, becomes a focal point of the OT prophetic voices of divine judgement. So it is with the following words that Jeremiah so poignantly come to grip with the problem at hand: 'Do not trust in deceptive words, saying 'this is the Temple of the Lord, the Temple of the Lord, the Temple of the Lord... (v.4). Will you ... burn incense to Baal, and follow after other gods you have not known, then come and stand before me in this house, which bears my name, and say, 'we are safe to do all these abominations? Has this house, which bears my name, become a den of robbers in your eyes?' (v.9) (cf. Jer 7).⁶²⁰ Against this backdrop, Jesus' ministry has ushered in a new age, proclaims the Gospel of Mark; the new ruling of God should be called both apocalyptic and eschatological in that in Jesus, God finally intervened into humanity, taking the ultimate step for the end of time. One of the characteristics of this apocalyptic and eschatological rule of God is its cosmic dimension in both temporal and spatial scope. Now the worship of God should be a universal and cosmic act, embracing all nations of God in the praise of his new, ultimate act of love in Christ. Thus, "the Temple made with hands" also should be replaced with the new one that is in nature atemporal and aspatial and thus cosmic. This is what Jesus intended by his action in the Temple and eventually in his crucifixion, which is again implied in the rending of the Temple veil at the time of his death.

⁶²⁰ B. Chilton recognizes this by saying that 'prophecies against the Temple were traditional from the time of Jeremiah,' and quotes *J.W.* 6.5.3 §300-309 for Jesus son of Ananias' case of being scourged for his prophecy (cf. "Trial of Jesus Reconsidered," 496).

4.55 The Centurion's Confession of Jesus as Son of God

“ Ἀληθῶς οὗτος ὁ ἄνθρωπος υἱὸς θεοῦ ἦν.”

4.551 Preliminary Remarks

The question regarding the nature of the centurion's confession is a perplexing and even daunting one, as the range of its interpretations varies from two extremely conflicting views to a moderate one. At the one extreme, some interpreters argue that the confession is a part of the mockery of Jesus,⁶²¹ and that it is indicated by the fact that it was pronounced upon Jesus' death. On the other side, a majority of interpreters suppose that it is a confirmation on the part of the human aspect of the heavenly pronouncement at the Baptismal event that Jesus is the Son of God.⁶²² In the middle is the moderate view that contends that the centurion's confession is a clear vindication of Jesus' innocent death, pointing to the fact that the centurion saw the accompanying and surrounding events of Jesus' death in the crucifixion scene and regarded them as signs of Jesus' innocence.⁶²³ In spite of their differences, all of these interpreters are in agreement, even those who take the confession positively, while not viewing it as an orthodox Christian confession.⁶²⁴

There are three issues to be kept in mind as we deal with the topic at hand. First, speculating about how the Roman centurion's response would have been received by Mark's readers is a fruitless attempt since it will not shed any light on reasons for the centurion's response as it stands in the present form of the narration in Mark. Second, it is improbable that Mark would fabricate a saying as important as the confession of 15:39, while crediting it to a figure so insignificant and unlikely as a nameless Roman centurion.⁶²⁵ Finally, understanding the confessed nature of Jesus' identity takes more than tackling textual matters such as the tense of the verb ἦν, the issue of the anarthrous predicate nominative υἱὸς θεοῦ, and the meaning of Ἀληθῶς;

⁶²¹ Cf. D. Juel, *A Master of Surprise: Mark interpreted* (Fortress, 1994), 74 n.7; R. Fowler, *Let the Reader Understand: Reader-Response Criticism and the Gospel of Mark* (Fortress, 1991), 204-208; E. S. Johnson, Jr. "Is Mk 15:39 the Key to Mark's Christology?" *JSNT* 31 (1987), 3-22.

⁶²² Cf. Taylor, *St. Mark*, 597.

⁶²³ Cf. W. Shiner, "The Ambiguous Pronouncement," *passim*.

⁶²⁴ Cf. C. Evans, *Mark 8:27-16:20*, 510.

⁶²⁵ Tae Hun Kim, "The Anarthrous υἱὸς θεοῦ in Mark 15:39," *Biblica* 79 (1998), 240.

these have to be combined with macro- and micro-level explorations of the immediate and broader contexts of Mark's Gospel.

The centurion's confession of Jesus as the Son of God is designed to function bilaterally. On the one hand, from a historical point of view, the confession of the centurion as a narrative character should be taken as a vindication of Jesus' innocent death, as the centurion saw the Temple veil being torn apart at the moment of Jesus' expiration and regarded it as a signal that Jesus died innocent. On the other hand, from a literary and theological point of view, the confession is meant to be a vindication for Mark's readers in the sense that Jesus' death brought an end to the physical Temple of Jerusalem. Mark's use of an anarthrous predicate nominative of ambiguity, υἱὸς θεοῦ, rather than a definite one, is deliberate and even part of his literary technique of irony aiming at eliciting two levels of meaning: vindicating Jesus in his innocent death and in his rending of the Temple curtain, which stands in juxtaposition with God's rending of the heavens at Jesus' baptism. To gain support for this proposition a textual study as well as a contextual one, in which both immediate and broader literary contexts are examined, will be conducted; what emerges from these studies will be in turn evaluated in view of the macro-picture of the Son of God in Mark to see how it fits in with Mark's architectonic portrayal of Jesus as the Son of God.

4.552 Textual Considerations

Mk 15:39: ... Ἀληθῶς οὗτος ὁ ἄνθρωπος υἱὸς θεοῦ ἦν.

Textual issues regarding the topic at hand can be narrowed down to the imperfect tense of the verb ἦν, the anarthrous predicate nominative υἱὸς θεοῦ, and the meaning of Ἀληθῶς. Although the nature of the confession cannot be clarified solely on the basis of textual matters, they provide us with a good starting point.

In regard to the verb ἦν, it is argued that the imperfect tense in the indicative usually refers to a linear action in the past, a basic usage of the imperfect to express relative time; here the verb form ἦν implies that the Roman centurion meant to say that Jesus truly was or had been recognized as God's son during his life time before the crucifixion. E. Johnson points out that it would be quite extraordinary 'if Mark transmitted a Christological statement in the imperfect, since he consistently places

confessional statements in the present tense.’⁶²⁶ However, the fact that the imperfect after verbs of perception or belief is not in itself temporally relative, as suggested by BDF,⁶²⁷ should not be overlooked; BDF’s suggestion is not to be taken as a warrant for rendering the imperfect as being used to express relative time. In §330 of BDF, the imperfect after verbs of perception and belief is used as an exceptional case that cannot be classified as part of the uses in which the imperfect is used to express relative time.⁶²⁸ More importantly, BDF in § 324 clearly suggests that in the N.T. the use of the past tense to express relative time is not common, despite the noted use of the present in that context. In light of the BDF suggestions, then, the verb ἦν in the confession of the centurion especially after he *saw* the rending of the Temple curtain, is not necessarily time-bound; the verb doesn’t limit the confession to mean that Jesus was or had been God’s son, undermining the immediacy of the centurion’s words. Furthermore, it should be noted that a historic present is frequently taken as the imperfect in Mark’s gospel.⁶²⁹ Second, even if the verb ἦν is taken to be temporally relative (“truly Jesus was God’s son”), endorsing Johnson’s view, there is not that much difference in regard to the reliability of the confession: the truthfulness of the statement would remain unaffected, though its effect on the centurion’s faith and salvation would be considerable. And since the focus here is Mark’s viewpoint of the confession in light of his theological and Christological concerns, narrative issues such as the fact that the centurion speaks at a point when Jesus is dead but not yet risen carry more significance.⁶³⁰ Likewise, even if the verb ἦν is to render the confession ‘Jesus proved *to have been* God’s son’ at the moment of the crucifixion, it ends up reiterating what has been said of Jesus’ divine sonship throughout the whole Gospel. The word Ἀληθῶς, as matter of fact, is used in this way: it confirms everything that is said of Jesus’ divine sonship as true. The different uses of the

⁶²⁶ Earl S. Johnson, Jr, “Is Mark 15:39 the Key to Mark’s Christology?,” *JSNT* 31 (1987), 7.

⁶²⁷ Cf. BDF §330.

⁶²⁸ I know that BDF §330 goes on to suggest that “since the present expresses time contemporary with that of the verb of perception (§ 324), the imperfect was virtually limited to those cases where a time previous to the time of perception was to be indicated,” yet more importantly BDF at § 324 suggests that in the N.T. the use of the past tense to express relative time is not popular, though that of the present prevails.

⁶²⁹ Cf. Taylor, *St. Mark*, 46-48.

⁶³⁰ In this sense, “the use of any other tense at this juncture would sound odd in the extreme” (Cf. Davis, “Mark’s Christological Paradox,” *JSNT* 35 [1989], 14). Here Davis adds that there are cases in classical Greek of the use of imperfect of εἶναι, generally accompanied by ἄρα, “to denote that a present fact or truth has just been recognized, although true before. Despite the absence of ἄρα, which might be put down to Mark’s generally inelegant Greek style, we may have here a clue to the intended significance of the evangelist’s phraseology.”

predicate verbal form of εἶμι in the recognition statements of Jesus' divine sonship in 1:11, 9:7 and in 15:39 are of course to be recognized, namely: the present indicative form of εἶμι in the former and the imperfect in the latter. The difference may be accounted for when we note that the occasion in 15:39 is the first time in the Gospel of Mark in which Jesus' divine sonship is being recognized by a human being. As John Riches rightly points out, here at the crucifixion of the final moment of the narrative development, Jesus' identity is fully revealed through the centurion, *a human being*.⁶³¹ So it is that when the heavens were rent at Jesus' baptism, a heavenly voice proclaimed 'You are my beloved Son!' and that with the rending of the Temple curtain, a human voice, in complete agreement, declares Jesus as 'Son of God.'⁶³² In consideration of these elements, the imperfect verb form poses no obstacle or irregularity in understanding the centurion's confession in the light of Mark's consistent Christological point of view that Jesus is God's son.

The indefinite use of the term, υἱὸς θεοῦ, also has caused a wide range of disagreement as it might be taken to imply that Jesus is confessed as merely *a* son of God. Having surveyed N.T. data, E.C. Colwell, for example, pointed out that "a definite predicate nominative has the article when it follows the verb; it does not have the article when it precedes the verb,"⁶³³ (cf. "...οὗτος ὁ ἄνθρωπος υἱὸς θεοῦ ἦν" in 15:39). In this sense, the designation of Jesus as υἱὸς θεοῦ should not be taken as different from the usual expression that is accompanied with the definite article, ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ θεοῦ. But E. Johnson recently mounted a strong challenge to Colwell's view, arguing that the possibility that Mark intended the centurion's reference to Jesus' divine sonship to be indefinite cannot be eliminated, that a son of God (not the Son of God) may have been intended by Mark.⁶³⁴ It seems very improbable, however, that Mark's intended readers searched out other anarthrous nouns which precede the

⁶³¹ Cf. John Riches, *Conflicting Mythologies*, 83, n.36.

⁶³² C. Evans, *Mark 8:27-16:20*, 510.

⁶³³ E. C. Colwell, "A Definite Rule of the Use of the Article in the Greek New Testament," *JBL* 52 (1933), 13, and 17 for survey and statistics.

⁶³⁴ E. Johnson, "Is Mark 15:39, 6-7. Here E. Johnson lists several occasions which can substantially undermine Colwell's proposition: 1) there are pericopes in Mark's Gospel where the so-called Colwell's rule ('a definite predicative nominative has the article when it follows the verb') appears to be followed and it is not clear whether or not a definite meaning is intended (cf. 6:3 [ὁ υἱὸς τῆς Μαρίας]; 4:3 [ὁ σπείρων]); 2) there are exceptions to the rule, as Colwell points out, where interpretation becomes especially crucial (cf. 15:18 [βασιλεὺς τῶν Ἰουδαίων]; 3) there are passages where it is clear that Mark can use titles or names without articles before verbs and that he intends them to be used indefinitely (cf. 3:30 [Πνεῦμα ἀκάθαρτον]; 6:49 [φάντασμα ἐστίν]; 11:32[προφήτης ἦν] (see *Ibid*, 5-6).

verbs in order to make sure that indefinite meaning was intended.⁶³⁵ More likely, he would have rendered the centurion's confession as consistent with the rest of the Gospel which clearly and uniformly proclaims the title in the definite sense with the proper article. An interesting point to note here is that the epithet υἱὸς θεοῦ in Mark 15:39 may have its origin in the Latin name *divi filius* (or θεοῦ υἱὸς in Greek). As Tae Hun Kim points out in his comparative study of Mark's Gospel, the epithet *divi filius* (an exact Greek translation of or equivalence to the anarthrous θεοῦ υἱὸς) was exclusively ascribed to Augustus in his self-designation as the son and the legitimate heir of Gaius Julius to promulgate his filial relationship to the Caesar, which was vital to establish his imperial authority.⁶³⁶ This would mean that the centurion, being a subject of the government to which Augustus and the Caesar belonged, made the sudden proclamation of Jesus' divine sonship, to mean that 'not Caesar, but Jesus is the Son of God!'⁶³⁷

Finally, the peculiar expression οὗτος ὁ ἄνθρωπος should be looked at briefly. The Synoptic parallels of the expression are as follows:

- Mk 15:39 “Ἀληθῶς οὗτος ὁ ἄνθρωπος υἱὸς θεοῦ ἦν.”
Mt 27:54 “Ἀληθῶς θεοῦ υἱὸς ἦν οὗτος”
Lk 23:47 “Ὅντως ὁ ἄνθρωπος οὗτος δίκαιος ἦν”

While Lk 23:47 differs so much from the other two as to be irrelevant here, Mark differs from Matthew in one crucial respect only: the subject of the sentence is not, 'οὗτος,' but 'οὗτος ὁ ἄνθρωπος.' The expression “this man” bears Mark's own mark, designed to function in his peculiar ways, especially in regard to the designation of Jesus as “God's son.” Just as the anarthrous θεοῦ υἱὸς is Mark's deliberate literary and thematic device of irony, eliciting two levels of meaning,⁶³⁸ the expression οὗτος ὁ ἄνθρωπος is designed to be juxtaposed with God's Son title once again to qualify it and to reinforce the double meanings that the title meant to convey. The centurion's confession of Jesus as God's Son, as John Riches argues, is far from being

⁶³⁵ P. Davis, “Mark's Christological Paradox,” 11.

⁶³⁶ T. H. Kim, “The Anarthrous,” 240.

⁶³⁷ T. H. Kim, “The Anarthrous,” 240; C. Evans, *Mark 8:27-16:20*, 510.

⁶³⁸ Vindicating Jesus in his innocent death on the one hand and in his rending the Temple curtain on the other hand, in juxtaposition with God's rending the heavens at Jesus' baptism.

a recognition of a Jewish Messiah.⁶³⁹ Earlier we have noted how the Son of God title in the high priest's question in 14:61 was reinterpreted and qualified by the Son of Man saying in Jesus' answer in 14:62. Here, the meaning of 'Son of God' is once again reinterpreted: 'Jesus as Son of God is not going to engage in heavenly warfare,' Riches observes.⁶⁴⁰ And the centurion, unwittingly in Mark's scheme of things, reveals this reinterpreted nature of the Son of God title. The expression οὗτος ὁ ἄνθρωπος thus brings into play all the ascriptions that have been made to the Son of Man title throughout the Gospel. Whatever implications were imparted in each of the Son of Man sayings in Mark, all the Jewish Messianic expectations were conditioned by them in one way or another; even the royal Messianic connotations that the Son of David and the Son of God titles carry have been qualified by the Son of Man title and sayings. As Riches expounds, as a mediating title for Jesus between two contrasted titles, Son of David and Son of God, "Mark brings into play the somewhat mysterious Son of Man title, which is the title by which Jesus qualifies others' ascriptions of Messiahship to him (8:38; 14:62), but which also runs through the narrative."⁶⁴¹ Thus, Mark's narrative develops in dialogue with two competing traditions of Jewish eschatology—in what can be termed as 'forensic-restorative eschatology' (Jesus' calling people to repent of their past sins and to believe the good news that God restores his people and ends their time of trial and punishment) and 'cosmological- revolutionist eschatology' (because the roots of sin lie in the demonic invasion of the world and the possession of men and women, Jesus comes to destroy Satan and to rescue his people).⁶⁴²

By referring to Jesus' humanity at this juncture, Mark attempts to bring many of his themes and motifs together. Mark's worldview, as P. Davis observes, is based on the notion of 'divine-human dichotomy,' rather than a God-Satan dichotomy, which has been the accepted view for too long, in spite of the groundlessness of such view. It is true that a dualistic worldview has frequently been attributed to Mark, almost always in terms of an opposition between God and Satan, while in fact Satan's role in the Gospel is kept at minimum.⁶⁴³ The main antagonists in Mark's narrative are not God and Satan but God and man, whose relationship is Mark's paramount

⁶³⁹ J. Riches, *Conflicting Mythologies*, 160.

⁶⁴⁰ J. Riches, *Conflicting Mythologies*, 160-161.

⁶⁴¹ J. Riches, *Conflicting Mythologies*, 161.

⁶⁴² J. Riches, *Conflicting Mythologies*, 156, 157, 162.

⁶⁴³ P. Davis, "Mark's Christological Paradox," 6.

concern. Accordingly the real issue is the divine-human dichotomy, and in this sense Jesus' humanity becomes significant at precisely this critical moment. The expression οὗτος ὁ ἄνθρωπος in 15:39, thus presents a paradox: 'Mk 15:39 pointedly applies to Jesus a word which, elsewhere in the Gospel, represents opposition to God,' and affirms Jesus' humanity against a thematic background which sets humanity against God.⁶⁴⁴ Although such a view radicalizes the dichotomy between the divine and the human, it rightly highlights one of Mark's most crucial concerns, human responsibility/ predicament in the midst of Jesus' eschatological proclamation of God's pardoning grace and good news. The fundamental struggle that Jesus must go through and bear witness to is 'for the human will and heart,' to borrow Riches' words, which cannot be won by any power or force:

Jesus' task is to overcome the opposition to God's will in the human heart: to bring people to repentance [1:15] and it is this task which ultimately outstrips all others, all other understandings of his mission, whether it be to bind the strong man, or to overcome the forces of disease and nature and for this a peculiar kind of power is required.⁶⁴⁵

4.553 Considerations of the Literary Context

What has been argued above can be grounded in analysis of the literary contexts of the confession. First, Mark's favourite literary context of misunderstanding and irony, in which this saying is set should be examined briefly. The centurion's designation of Jesus' as son of God (not the Son of God) is ironic in that his confession at the foot of the cross about who Jesus is is juxtaposed with other mocking statements about Jesus' identity, coming close to the truth, yet failing to grasp it fully so as to make it a true confession of faith.⁶⁴⁶ The centurion misconceives Jesus as a divine or divinely inspired person on a Hellenistic pattern, as W. Shiner remarks, but Mark crafts the scene so that the centurion's misconception, like the mockery of the onlookers (Mk15:29-32) reinforces his audience's understanding of Jesus. Thus for Shiner, the

⁶⁴⁴ Davis, "Mark's Christological Paradox," 7.

⁶⁴⁵ J. Riches, *Conflicting Mythologies*, 164-165.

⁶⁴⁶ E. Johnson, "Is Mark 15:39," 16-17.

centurion's statement reinforces the misunderstandings about Jesus and the secret of Jesus' identity remains veiled to the end of the Gospel.⁶⁴⁷

Although conducive to detecting many subtleties and layers of meaning that Mark crafts his narrative with, such literary discussion of the Gospel cannot be relied on to explore the core of Mark's theology and message. Mark's use of irony, however, offers some valuable points regarding the larger themes; it is one of Mark's favourite literary techniques throughout the Gospel, especially in the passion narrative, and 15:39 in particular. The mockers and jeerers hurl insults at Jesus with names and terms that are true, thus unwittingly, and ironically, acknowledging Jesus' messianic identities (cf. 15:29, 32). In the same vein, the centurion's statement can be taken as part of Mark's irony that is meant to work with the passion narrative. Coupled with the expression οὗτος ὁ ἄνθρωπος and the anarthrous θεοῦ υἱός title, the statement functions to elicit a vindication of Jesus in his innocent death on the one hand, and in his rending of the Temple curtain on the other, which is also designed to be juxtaposed with God's rending of the heavens at Jesus' baptism.

As already studied and pointed out in 4.532 TEXTUAL ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION of Chapter 4 of this study, the description of women and other followers of Jesus from Jerusalem immediately following the centurion's confession is presented in sharp contrast. The implicit contrasting roles of ἰδών and θεωροῦσαι and the positions of ἐξ ἐναντίας and ἀπὸ μακρόθεν, as well as the apparently intrusive placement within the current form of Mark's narrative, highlight the contrasting features between the two. As noted earlier, the centurion, no matter how his confession is to be interpreted, makes a vindication of Jesus' innocence, while the women are standing afar and just watching; the reference to "watching from a distance" indicates that they were unable even to participate in the centurion's mundane sight of what is going on in Jesus' final expiration, namely the rending of the Temple veil. Even though in Galilee these women had followed Jesus and cared for his needs, they are completely prevented from knowing anything about the incident of the rending of the Temple veil, let alone seeing the divine judgment that was brought to the Temple through Jesus' death. In regard to Jesus' identity as God's Son in his confession, the centurion's understanding of Jesus as God's Son who with his spirit/breath was able to rend the Temple curtain was not shared by the women

⁶⁴⁷ W. Shiner, "The Ambiguous Pronouncement," 3-4.

and it is clearly implied by their subsequent failure to obey the command to spread the news about the risen Lord (cf. 16:9: "...καὶ οὐδενὶ οὐδὲν εἶπαν· ἐφοβοῦντο γάρ").

From a broader thematic and literary perspective, the statement of the centurion and the following episode of Joseph of Arimathea can be brought together, especially when they are viewed in terms of Psa 22. Psalm 22 is one of the OT background scriptures that play formative roles in Mark's composition of the passion narrative. In fact, there are many points of contact between Psalm 22 and the crucifixion scene: 15:24//Psa 22:18 (division of garments); 15:29//Psa 22:7 (mockery, head shaking); 15:30-31//Psa 22:8 (Save himself!); 15:32//Psa 22:6 (reviling); 15:34//Psa 22:1 (cry of dereliction),⁶⁴⁸ denoting the kind of influence Ps. 22 must have exerted on the current shape of Mark's passion narrative. The connection becomes even more visible when the contemporary Jewish eschatological interpretations of the Psalm 22 are taken into account: *IQH* 5:31 (Psa 22:15); *4QPsf* (Psa 22:14-17); the Targum on Psa 22:31. In these Jewish texts, the suffering described in the original Psalm is reinterpreted as the prelude to the eschatological consummation at the end time.⁶⁴⁹ What is important to note in this Psalm is that there are two references to two important biblical and theological motifs that clearly Mark picks up in the episodes of the Roman centurion and Joseph of Arimathea. First, the Psalm (v.27) describes all the families of the nations bowing down before the Lord; Mark has the Gentile centurion pronounce Jesus as a Son of God. Second, the Psalm (v.28) talks about God's dominion and rule; Mark describes Joseph of Arimathea as one who waits for the Kingdom of God (15:43). Mark seems to be using this insertion to make a characteristically ironical point, as Marcus observes: Joseph should no longer be waiting, since the Kingdom of God has now been revealed with the revelation of the kingship of the crucified Jesus.⁶⁵⁰ Taking all these points into consideration, the centurion's confession of Jesus as God's Son should be viewed as an acknowledgement that God's eschatological kingship and his dominion over the all nations, which has been foreseen in Psa 22 and reinterpreted eschatologically in Mark's contemporary Jewish texts, has dawned through the eschatological event of Jesus' crucifixion.

⁶⁴⁸ J. Marcus, *Way of The Lord*, 175.

⁶⁴⁹ J. Marcus, *Way of The Lord*, 177-179. Here J. Marcus examines those Jewish texts in the eschatological trajectory in the interpretation of the Psalms of the Righteous Sufferer.

With the above understanding of the nature of the centurion's confession in mind, we can now draw a fuller picture of how the term 'Son of God' fits into larger issues of the Gospel. A good place to start in regard to this task is where the term first appears in the early part of the Gospel. Some interpreters prefer to draw a parallel between 1:1 and 15:39 in the identification of Jesus as God's Son.⁶⁵¹ This parallel might be appealing in light of their use of the anarthrous form of the phrase, υἱὸς θεοῦ. But in view of the textual-critical issues with regard to 1:1, its appositive position and titular role, linking and reading the identifications in 1:11 and 15:39 together makes more sense. Certainly literary aspects in 1:9-11 and 15:37-39, as well as the actual contents, correspond to each other. More importantly, the clarity and certainty with which the dawn of the new age of God's apocalyptic and eschatological rule through Jesus' life and death is announced are unmistakably similar. From the beginning of Mark, especially, from the Baptismal event on, Jesus is described as the beloved Son of God in a royal sense; this divine sonship is retained implicitly in the suffering motif in Jesus' baptism, explicitly in the Transfiguration episode and in the conflict between Jesus and the Jerusalem Temple authorities, and metaphorically in the Parable of the Wicked Tenants (12:6). This divine truth about Jesus' identity is declared only by God at first, in Mark, then acknowledged by the demons and finally Jesus himself, but not by any human being until the very end. Themes and motifs associated with this identity of Jesus as well as the identity itself are all communicated only in symbols such as the rending of the heavens and the rending of the Temple veil, parables, parabolic discourses, and ambiguity and misunderstanding on the part of the narrative characters.

At the end of the unfolding drama of Jesus as the Son of God, through the lips of a human character, the centurion, the divine sonship of Jesus is finally recognized, accompanied by the corresponding event of the rending of the Temple curtain. The recurrent theme and motifs of rending, of the heavens at the Baptismal event in the beginning of Jesus' ministry and of the Temple veil at the end of Jesus' earthly

⁶⁵⁰ J. Marcus, *Way of The Lord*, 182.

⁶⁵¹ R. Gundry, *Mark*, 4 ("The identification of Jesus as Christ and Son of God in 1:1 and 15:39 transformed the crucifixion from the shameful death of a common criminal into the awe-inspiring death of a divine being who is God's appointed agent."); Tae Hun Kim, "The Anarthrous," 222 ("1:1 and

ministry, help Mark to bring his narrative to a dramatic full circle. Both incidents symbolize that the new age of God's eschatological rule has dawned on the horizon of the universe and humanity. The reality of God's new rule inevitably necessitates the end of the physical Temple and its agents and the opening of the age of the Temple made without hands, enlarging the spiritual reality of one that is made by God himself and its cosmic and eschatological dimension.

4.555 Conclusion of the Centurion's Confession

At the outset of 4.55 THE CENTURION'S CONFESSION OF JESUS AS SON OF GOD, we have posited that the confession is designed to function bilaterally: from a historical point of view, it serves to vindicate Jesus of his innocent death; from a literary and theological point of view, it is meant to be a vindication of Jesus' death in the sense that his death brought an end to the physical Temple of Jerusalem. Mark's use of the anarthrous predicate nominative of ambiguity, υἱὸς θεοῦ rather than a definite one, is thus deliberate and is a part of his literary technique of irony aiming at eliciting two levels of meaning: vindicating Jesus in terms of his innocent death, on the one hand, and of his rending the Temple curtain on the other, picking up the theme of God's rending of the heavens at Jesus' baptism. Having considered textual and contextual issues, it was noted that the anarthrous form of son of God in Mk 15:39 is associated with the contemporary Roman cult; the epithet, *divi filius* (or θεοῦ υἱὸς in Greek), which was conferred to the Roman emperor Octavianus Augustus, may have been used in designating Jesus as son of God, as Tae Hun Kim suggests. More significantly, from a theological and narrative point of view, the identification should be taken as a vindication of Jesus in the sense that the death of Jesus brought an end to the Temple and opened a new age in God's eschatological rule. The expression οὗτος ὁ ἄνθρωπος in 15:39 is a clear example of Mark's deliberate choice to highlight his ultimate concern that in the midst of God's eschatological intervening act, there still remains human responsibility to respond, to Jesus' apocalyptic fulfillment of God's eschatological rule which is characterized by the proclamation of his pardoning grace, embracing the whole humanity.

15:39 are quintessential statements of Mark's Christology that must have challenged Markan readers to

4.56 Concluding Remarks on the Centurion's 'Seeing' in Mk 15:39

After a preliminary study of Mk 15:37-39, it was noted that on the surface Mark links what the centurion saw with how Jesus died; this link, however, was deemed insufficient to account for the centurion's high Christological statement, and the words φωνὴν μεγάλην and ἐκπνέω and all other elements surrounding Jesus' death, which are certainly of apocalyptic tenor, still fell short of providing sufficient rationale for it, even as they succeeded in maximizing the extraordinary or even revelatory dimensions of Jesus' death.

The current shape of the text is a product of Mark's deliberate literary attempt, as the occurrence of the word οὕτως and the repetition of the word ἐξέπνευσεν in v. 37 and v.39 clearly indicate; more importantly, what the centurion saw was not just Jesus' peculiar death, but also the rending of the Temple curtain, a metaphorical event symbolizing the messianic prophecy about the eschatological Temple being fulfilled in an apocalyptic event of Jesus' crucifixion, unveiling a new age of God's eschatological rule over the whole universe and all humanity. The reasons that Mark does not link the act of seeing explicitly to the rending of the Temple veil, but vaguely to Jesus' expiration being done "οὕτως" have also been enumerated: first, to elicit the Spirit that descended upon Jesus through the heaven rent at the moment of his Baptism, and to connect his confession to Jesus himself, to the expulsion of Jesus' spirit/breath, and to embrace the larger scheme of the motif of 'seeing' in Mark which is part of Markan apocalyptic epistemology. Characterized by its dual modes of seeing, and under Mark's epistemological scheme, the centurion's act of seeing is designed to work on two levels: it mediates the mundane sight of reality, that is, a reality that mainly consists of signs and wonders surrounding Jesus' death, including Jesus' final cry of dereliction; and it penetrates into the phenomena of Jesus' death, revealing thereby a divine proclamation of the judgment of the Temple and its associated agents. The argument was reinforced by contrasting what the centurion 'saw' with how the women and other followers of Jesus from Jerusalem 'watched' the crucifixion scene from a distance.

reconsider who the real 'Son of God' was to them").

4.6 Concluding Remarks on the Motif of Seeing in the Passion Narrative in Mark

Jesus' sight of the rending of the heavens represents a true sight, penetrating the symbolic incident to realize that he is standing at the threshold of God's apocalyptic and eschatological intervention in humanity, about to fulfil God's promise that he will rule in justice and mercy, judging the wicked and pardoning the righteous. The centurion's sight of the rending of the Temple veil beckons two levels of understanding: he saw a vindication of Jesus' innocent death, but he failed to have the insight with which he could understand the symbolic significance of the event and envision God's eschatological judgment of the Temple.

The seeing of the Roman centurion, however, should not be viewed in terms of the dichotomy between a true spiritual sight and false material sight; rather, it should be regarded as an integral part of the apocalyptic and eschatological world of Mark's concept of Jesus as the eschatological Messiah. The other occurrences of the motif of seeing in the Passion narrative, especially in 15:32 and 35 were thus explored, lending aid in showing that the mockers' ironic 'seeing, ' as conveyed by the verb of seeing, εἶδον, fell under the aegis of Mark's favorite literary technique of irony and the theological motif of misunderstanding and incomprehension, while being contextualized by his understanding of Jesus and his ministry.

Conclusion: Apocalyptic Opening, Eschatological Inclusio⁶⁵²: The Rending of the Heaven and Temple Veil

5.1 Preliminary Remarks

Two monumental events in Mark, the heaven rent at Jesus' Baptism and the Temple curtain rent at Jesus' crucifixion are intimately inter-related in various ways, entailing both lexical and thematic links. A close observation of this relationship, especially from an architectonic point of view of Mark's Gospel, provides a nice segue into some closing remarks on the issue at hand, since the connections between them were readily apparent even in our individual study of each event.

The architectonic reading of the two events will be achieved in two stages. First of all, a quick survey of scholarly endeavours, mainly focusing on the three key interpretations of R. Brown, W. T. Shiner, and H. Jackson,⁶⁵³ is included. Second, the points that have been made throughout the interpretations of each event will be re-considered in light of larger themes and the context of the Gospel and, third, be combined with discussions of further implications of these observations. Finally, the whole of these attempts will be considered in view of the architectonic structure of Mark's Gospel, which can be described as a form of 'eschatological inclusio,' that arches over the narrative with the Heaven veil torn at the beginning and with the Temple veil torn at the end.

The link between the two events forms a thematic thread through which Mark reveals the recurrent motif of Jesus' messianic identity, as R. Brown recognizes:

On the macro-scale of the whole gospel the rending of the heavens in 1:10-11 marked the beginning of God's gracious intervention as the Spirit descended on Jesus and the heavenly voice declared, "You are my

⁶⁵² This expression resonates with David Ulansey who uses the term, "Mark's Cosmic 'Inclusio'" in his article on the motif of rending in Mark (cf. "The Heavenly Veil Torn: Mark's cosmic 'Inclusio,'" *JBL* 110:1 [1991], 123-125).

⁶⁵³ Rationales for the selection are as follows: 1) R. Brown is singled out as a representative of a major theological view of the relation between the two events; 2) W. T. Shiner is selected for his new literary and thematic approaches to the events; 3) H. Jackson is chosen because he can be rendered as a major proponent of the thematic link between the two events, especially on the basis of the word pun, πνεῦμα referring to both spirit and breath.

beloved Son”; and the rending of the sanctuary veil at the end of the Gospel marks God’s wrath at the Jerusalem authorities who, having mocked that identification, crucified this same Son. (1134) The next verse will show that God will now turn to outsiders to recognize what the leaders of Jesus’ people could not: “Truly this man was God’s Son.”⁶⁵⁴

What is more, the structure bears a crucial part of the weight of Mark’s theological narrative. The obvious lexical and thematic ties that Brown observes assume greater significance when the two events are put into the context of Mark’s apocalyptic and eschatological epistemology.

The title ‘Son of God’ in Mark’s Gospel is thus a critical strand in Mark’s scheme of things, as W. T. Shiner elaborates, as it brings together various smaller themes and motifs in the conclusion of Jesus’ ministry:

Given the importance of the title the Son of God in the Gospel, the listener may well be expected to draw a connection between the pronouncement of the centurion and the voice from heaven [at the Baptism] (19-20). There is a symmetrical switch between symbol and reality in the two scenes. In the first, Baptism, the symbol of Jesus’ death (10:39), is followed by a splitting of the heavens. In the second, Jesus’ actual death is followed by the splitting of the veil, opening the symbolic heaven of the Temple (20). In the human realm, communication of divine reality is mediated by symbol such as parables and miracles. In this scene as well, the divine reality is mediated by symbol (the rending of the veil) and ambiguity (the pronouncement of the centurion) (20). Afterwards the centurion disappears from the narrative, leaving the major character groups without even the benefit of his ironic identification. In this way, the centurion’s near miss can function within the Gospel in much the same way as the voice from heaven. In both cases, Mark can insert the identification into the Gospel to reinforce the listeners’ understanding while still leaving the principal characters befuddled. Just as nobody other than Jesus appears to hear the voice from heaven at the Baptism, so also nobody appears to hear the pronouncement of the centurion. Since only the centurion’s remark is recorded, the listener must assume that only the centurion came even this close to identifying Jesus from the portents surrounding his death (21).⁶⁵⁵

Scrutinizing the link between the two events from a literary perspective, focusing especially on the literary device of irony in Mark’s narrative, we come to the

⁶⁵⁴ R. Brown, *The Death of Messiah*, 1134-1135.

⁶⁵⁵ W. Shiner, “The Ambiguous Pronouncement.”

conclusion, in agreement with Shiner, that the pronouncement of the centurion is ironic not only in the sense that Mark's readers can understand a deeper meaning of the pronouncement, more than the character himself does, but also in the sense that the readers are still made to wonder what is meant by the confession.⁶⁵⁶ The findings of this kind of literary study on Mark's irony interact also with Mark's apocalyptic and eschatological concerns, providing the architectonic framework for portraying what is hidden, revealed, understood, and misunderstood about the identity of Jesus and the nature of his ministry.

The intertextuality of the two events layers many diverse connotations and associated issues onto the textual meaning of Mark's Gospel and as H. Jackson contends, the accumulated layers of meaning contained in words such as the expulsion of πνεύμα thus reveal much more than what is normally expected from a single word:

Given the particularly close relationship established by Mark between the miraculous events at the Baptism and the Crucifixion (tearing of the heavens// tearing of the Temple curtain), one is justified in inferring that Mark's intent is to suggest identity of agency in these events at the beginning and end of Jesus' career. That is to say, Jesus' earthly ministry as son of God is initiated by the descent into him of God's Spirit, which tears the heaven in its descent, and it is brought to a close by the ascent of that spirit out of him in his dying breath, which tears the Temple curtain at its departure.⁶⁵⁷

The double reference of the word πνεύμα (spirit/breath), built into Mark's account of both events, and embracing all it gleans from O.T. prophecies, provides a good example of how Mark relies on intertextual elements of these two events to present to his readers the apocalyptic and eschatological ministry that God put Jesus in charge of, according to his particular understanding and in his distinctive style.

⁶⁵⁶ W. Shiner, "The Ambiguous Pronouncement," 19.

⁶⁵⁷ H. Jackson, "The Death of Jesus," 27.

5.2 Intertextual and Intratextual⁶⁵⁸ Readings of the Rending of the Heaven at the Baptismal Scene

5.21 Preliminary Remarks

In the first reading of the event of Jesus' seeing the Heaven rent, we have argued that just as the seeing should not be simply taken as his private visionary experience but as an integral part of the apocalyptic dawning of the New Age, so the rending of the heaven is also to be rendered as an apocalyptic theophany through which God makes an ultimate intervention into the human arena to establish his eschatological Kingdom. We have added that *οὐρίζω*, with its apocalyptic and eschatological tenors, is chosen by Mark to depict this theophanic nature of the rending. Drawing on the context of the original text, Isa 64:1-4 and on the contemporary Jewish apocalyptic expectations of the fulfilment of the prophecy, we have also argued that Mark conceived the rending of the heaven at Jesus' Baptismal event as the perfect answer to the long-delayed supplication of the prophet Isaiah. Jesus is thus portrayed by Mark as the one who activates God's in-breaking on behalf of his people and as the one who sees (*εἶδεν*) a completely new thing that has never been seen and who hears what no one has heard for so long.

In regard to Jesus' act of seeing the Spirit descending, it was argued that the coming down of the Spirit upon Jesus is not just a private event that serves to empower him with necessary spiritual strength and power for his following earthly messianic ministry, but an apocalyptic event that signals the dawn of the New Age. In support of this argument, several Isaianic texts that foresee the Spirit and his coming in an eschatological context, as well as post-biblical Jewish writings which envision the eschatological occurrence of the advent of the Spirit, were explored. Jesus' seeing the advent of the Spirit in his Baptismal event is an integral part of the apocalyptic events through which God's new eschatological act is taking shape on earth, inaugurating a new age and setting a new world order. And Mark's juxtaposition of Jesus' act of seeing with the two signs of God's apocalyptic theophany clearly indicates that 'seeing' plays an important role in his apocalyptic eschatology; 'seeing'

⁶⁵⁸ We use these terms in this sense: intratextual reading is the one that reads "a Markan text in the light of other Markan texts"; intertextual reading is the one that concerns "the relationship of Mark to

in this way is identified with recognition of God's apocalyptic-eschatological intervention into humanity through Jesus and his death and resurrection.

In Jesus' Baptism, the heavenly voice alludes to Psa 2:7 and Isa 42:1, as well as other Isaianic passages about the Suffering Servant figure, and has many inter-textual links, especially to strategic points in the Gospel, 1:10, 9:7-8, 15:38. The divine son-ship in the Davidic royal line mentioned in Psa 2:7 and the eschatological elements in the cosmic battles between the two conflicting kingdoms are reflected in Mark's description of Jesus in the heavenly voice and the two pericopes immediately following, Jesus' temptation and proclamation of the coming Kingdom; the Suffering Servant figure in Isaianic oracles also plays a formative role in Mark's portrayal of the heavenly voice, deeply resonant in Mark's Gospel, especially in 9:7, 12:6, and the passion predictions passages, as well as in the Passion Narrative of Mark. Our discussion in this section highlighted the eschatological nature of the confirmation of the heavenly voice that Jesus is the beloved Son of God in accordance with Psa 2:7 and its eschatological adaptations and expectations in the contemporary Jewish apocalyptic milieu, as well as with Isa 42:1 and its eschatological interpretation in the same kind of apocalyptic soil.

In Jesus' Baptism, likewise, the apocalyptic and eschatological nature of the two optic and auditory events of the Baptism, the rending of the heaven and the descending of the Spirit and the motif of 'seeing' in Mark, are closely interrelated and have been woven into the whole gospel. The events are thus viewed as apocalyptic theophanies, in which the eschatological manifestation of God unfolds in the revealed Messiah, Jesus. God's final triumph through Jesus eventually undergoes a radical change, incurring a correspondingly fundamental reinterpretation of the way He conquers Satan and its followers. The rending of the Heaven at the time of Jesus' baptism becomes in the same vein concordant with the rent Temple veil at the time of Jesus' death; and, it is important to note, these two events are being said to be 'seen' by Jesus and the centurion.

These are the specific findings and basic grounds on which peculiar features of the baptismal event, and the rending of the heaven, can be seen as Mark's ways of building up a distinctively apocalyptic and eschatological portrayal of Jesus and his ministry, as architectonic elements infused with the power of God's new ruling,

the Old Testament and other pertinent ancient texts" (cf. John R. Donahue & Daniel J. Harrington, *The*

conveying a conceptual transformation of the way that the ruling takes a final shape on earth through Jesus' death and resurrection.

5.22 An Intratextual Reading of the Rending of the Heaven at the Baptismal Scene

Focusing on the word σχίζω and its noun form, σχίσμα in Mark, it was pointed out that these words are characterized by infiltrating newness; the rending of the heaven hence is a symbolic incident that stands for the apocalyptic dawning of the New age. In the same vein, the rending of the Heaven leads to the descending of the Spirit, confirming the imminent arrival of the New Age. The two symbolic incidents are followed by a moment of reality in which the heavenly voice is heard confirming that Jesus is the Son of God; this is the messiah who would fulfil a long-delayed supplication of the prophet Isaiah and its Jewish messianic expectations that in the age to come, God will establish his eschatological Kingdom of justice and holiness.

In the two apocalyptic events, an interplay between symbol and reality is noted,⁶⁵⁹ which eventually leads to an eclipse of symbol by reality. The pattern of the interplay between symbol and reality in fact plays an integral role in shaping and developing the narrative world of Mark's Gospel and thus it can be called paradigmatic. Throughout the Gospel, the symbolic and parabolic nature of Jesus' identity and his ministry is expressed in various ways, sometimes through healings and miracles, through parables and enigmatic sayings, deeds, and teachings at other times. And often these various forms of symbols are overshadowed by realities in which what the symbols mean is confirmed in revelation by God or spiritual figures or human beings.

Jesus' encounter with demons and unclean spirits at the outset of his ministry is a case in point; it presents a symbolic incident which is thematically interrelated to the incident of Jesus' encounter with Satan in his Temptation and more importantly includes the revelation of the divine reality about Jesus' identity and his messianic mission (cf. 1:24, also see 3:11-12). In the episode of the healing of the paralytic also, the symbolic act of healing through the bestowal of the forgiveness of sins is

Gospel of Mark, Sacra Pagina Series 2 (Collegeville: The Liturgical Press, 2002), 2.

overshadowed by Jesus' revelation of his true messianic identity as the eschatological Son of Man and by the intensifying conflict between Jesus and the Jewish leaders (Mk 2:5-10). Likewise, in the episode of the cornfields, Jesus' symbolic allowance of the freedom to glean on the Sabbath is also eclipsed by a moment of reality in which Jesus declares that "the Son of Man is Lord even of the Sabbath" (2:23-27). The episode of the first passion prediction also follows the same pattern: Jesus enigmatic teaching about his coming suffering and death is immediately followed by the Transfiguration scene in which the disciples are allowed access to the divine reality of 'This is my Son, whom I love. Listen to him,' revealed through a heavenly voice (9:7). And in the last moment of Jesus' earthly ministry, the symbolic incident of the rending of the Temple curtain occurs and it is followed by a human recognition of the divine reality that Jesus is truly God's Son (15:37-39). Thus, the paradigmatic pattern of interplay between symbol and reality is working in our key passages and is used to bring about, as a conclusion to a symbolic action or event, a moment of truth and reality, as typified by the rending of the Heaven, in which God's new reign through Jesus the messiah is announced.

Second, focusing on the nature and implications of Jesus' Baptism from the macro-scale of the whole Gospel (cf. 10:38 and 14:23f), as well as on the implications of Jesus' Temptation, it was shown that Jesus' way of fulfilling God's promises is characterized by their conceptual change and transformation, culminating in his death on the cross. Jesus' temptation, especially, an event which is full of apocalyptic images and symbols, reveals thus that Jesus' ministry is not just a personal adventure of reforming his society or announcing God's impending judgment of the old Israel and establishing the new one; rather, it bears the cosmic implications of Jesus' ministry, that is, his eschatological battle with Satan. The nature of eschatological battle assumes a radical reinterpretation of victory, from total annihilation of Satan and his followers to the crucifixion of the Son of God, while maintaining the apocalyptic-eschatological dimension of the victory.

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⁶⁵⁹ I owe this conceptual pattern to W. Shiner's assertion that there is a symmetrical switch between symbol and reality in the two incidents, the Heaven rent and the Temple curtain rent (cf. "The Ambiguous," 20).

5.23 Conclusion

The rending of the Heaven is in nature apocalyptic in that God's eschatological rule and the New Age through Jesus are proclaimed at the beginning of the ministry of the messiah. The heavenly voice's confirmation of this divine reality, announcing the imminent arrival of the New Age also commissions Jesus to fulfil the Messianic prophecies and expectations as the Son of God. Jesus' messianic fulfilment itself is a radical transformation of the messianic tasks that were expected by his contemporaries, for it is by his bearing the cross to death that things are brought to completion, that the Old which is typified by the Jerusalem Temple is brought down and the New is established, which is characterized by the inclusion of the Gentiles into God's eschatological community.

5.3 Intertextual and Intratextual Readings of the Rending of the Temple Curtain

5.31 Preliminary Remarks

Regarding the Centurion's 'seeing' in Mk 15, it was concluded that what the centurion saw in the crucifixion scene was the Temple curtain being rent, and that the link between these two factors was established on various grounds, textual and otherwise. The link immediately and inevitably urges us to see a clear juxtaposition between the episode of Jesus' baptism at the beginning of Mark's narrative and that of Jesus' crucifixion at the end of the narrative. Just as Jesus *witnessed* the epoch-making event of the heaven being torn apart in the inaugural moment of his royal Messianic mission to embrace the whole universe and the whole humanity into his newly dawning Kingdom, the Roman gentile centurion, a would-be legitimate heir to the Kingdom *witnesses* the rending of the veil of the earthly Sanctuary, representing the Heavenly court. From this we can infer that the rending of the Temple curtain should not be taken just to portend the coming destruction of the material Jerusalem Temple,¹ but as an epoch-making event that signals the coming of the New Age, the apocalyptic and eschatological fulfilment in the Messianic age.

Jesus' action in the Temple must be viewed in the same vein. It reveals that Jesus comes and acts in fulfilment of O.T prophecies and Messianic expectations of the eschatological Temple by metaphorically disclosing the true meaning of the Temple as God's house of prayer for all nations; he thus identifies himself as the messianic figure through whom Zechariah's oracle of the eschatological gathering of all nations to the city of Jerusalem would be fulfilled.

Furthermore, at the conclusion of the Temple Statement in 14:58, it was pointed out that the temple statement itself, rather than being erroneous as it is sometimes argued, reflects a contemporary Messianic expectation of the eschatological temple, as the two theologically important terms τὸν χειροποίητον and ἄλλον ἀχειροποίητον clearly denote; more importantly, Mark puts the statement within the context of a false testimony, criticizing implicitly the mockers' misconception of Jesus as an apocalyptic fanatic.

As a way of concluding the whole section of the Temple Theme in Mark, it was pointed out that the motif of the Temple in Mark is always accompanied by the motif of Christology, an element which urges us to focus on Jesus' messianic fulfilment of the O.T prophecies and Jewish messianic expectations about the eschatological Temple. 'The Temple made with hands' stands, in this regard, for a Temple which is characterized by its particular concern with God's presence with the people of Israel and by its exclusion of non-Israelites from the experience of God's universal presence; 'the Temple made without hands' represents an apocalyptic and eschatological Temple which is characterized by its cosmic and universal nature and scope. Jesus' messianic task was to bring an end to this particular Old Temple and to bring in this cosmic and universal New Temple of God; it follows then that the destruction of the material Temple of Jerusalem in Jesus' and Mark's time would not have meant just a divine judgement on a particular establishment of the Old Temple; it would have been an inevitable corollary to the New Age that Jesus ushered in.

5.32 An Intratextual Reading of the Rending of the Temple Curtain

It was contended that ἐξέπνευσεν in Mk 15:37 and 39 shows Mark's deliberate use of the word, aiming at a pun for its double reference to 'breath' and 'spirit'; Mark is able to make his readers see that by the expulsion of his breath/spirit, Jesus brought down the Temple curtain and all that it stood for, opening the way for the new. As noted in

our discussion of Isa 11: 4 LXX, which specifically speaks of Yahweh destroying the wicked with his spirit/breath (“... ἐν πνεύματι διὰ χειλέων ἀνελεῖ ἀσεβῆ.”), the ‘breath’ is identified as an instrument of Yahweh’s righteous judgment, that the ‘spirit’ plays the eschatological role of judging the wicked; Yahweh’s use of his breath in destructive anger is only the other side of his use of it in creation. Ezek 37:5-14, which describes the πνεῦμα of the Lord God as a dynamic force that revives the dead and the skulls and reinstates them into a living creature, clearly implies that the word refers to either God’s breath/wind or Spirit. Although this text is not often examined in connection with Jesus’ expulsion of the final breath/spirit, the judgement motif in the Isaianic text above and the restoration motif here are actually two sides of the same coin, God’s eschatological dealing with the Jewish people and their religion and beliefs, which is characterized by his apocalyptic ending of the old and the start of the new. Jesus’ expulsion of his breath/spirit is viewed as a sign of the beginning of the new age revealed through the torn Temple curtain that has so long locked up God’s glorious presence within the Most Holy Place.

As the motif of ‘seeing’ was an important part of this study, the centurion’s seeing of the Temple curtain being torn was explored in detail. His sight, in particular, was contrasted with the sight of the other followers of Jesus in Mk 15:40; his confession made upon seeing Jesus’ death and the subsequent incident of the rending of the Temple curtain are designed to vindicate Jesus’ innocent death. It was also argued that ‘seeing’ in Mark is part of Markan apocalyptic epistemology which is characterized by its dual mode of seeing; in this light, the centurion’s sight, especially as coupled with the word οὕτως, has to do with mediating the mundane sight of reality, on the one hand, a reality that basically consists of signs and wonders surrounding Jesus’ death and Jesus’ final cry of dereliction and penetrating the phenomena surrounding Jesus’ death, on the other, pronouncing a divine judgment over the Old Temple, and announcing the coming of the New Age.

The etymological association of the ἐξέπνευσεν with the πνεῦμα and the motif of seeing led us to the Baptismal episode in Mk 1:9-11 at the beginning of Mark’s Gospel, where the same lexical and thematic elements play a similar role in the description of the apocalyptic dawning of God’s eschatological rule. We will recapitulate this link later; here, the rending of the Temple curtain is re-considered in light of Mark’s portrayal of the Temple, which was explicated in regard to Jesus’ Action in the Temple and The Temple statement in 14:59 and 15:28. First, some

parallels between the episode of Jesus' action in the Temple and its surrounding stories and the episode of the Temple curtain rent are to be noted. Both episodes contain the Christological eclipse of the Temple theme, which evinces the Jewish leaders' plot to kill Jesus on account of Jesus' blasphemous claims of the divine prerogatives and the Roman centurion's immediate recognition of Jesus' divine sonship. In the former in 12:6, Jesus is metaphorically depicted as God's beloved son who is killed and thrown out of the vineyard, and in 12:12 the religious leaders are said to seek to seize Jesus to destroy him, whereas in the latter in 15:39, Jesus is confessed as God's Son by the Roman centurion. And both of them subsume symbolic incidents that have to do with the Temple. In the episode of Jesus' action in the Temple, Jesus 'cleanses' the Temple as a symbolic action that not only portends, in allusion to Jer 7:11, the coming destruction of the Jerusalem Temple, but also foresees, in allusion to and fulfilment of Isa 56:7 and Zech 14:21f, the dawn of the messianic age in which God's eschatological Temple would be established for the cosmic worship of God by all nations; in the latter, by the expulsion of Jesus' final breath/spirit, the Temple curtain is rent, metaphorically signalling the death of the Old Age and the birth of the New Age. Furthermore, in both of them, a motif of replacement of the old by the new is present. In the former, especially in 12:9, the vineyard is described as being given over to others who can be anyone other than the Jewish ruling groups; it metaphorically indicates their forfeit of the inheritance in the Old Age and the relinquishment of the privilege to the new people in the New Age. In the latter, a Gentile centurion is depicted as the first human character in Mark's Gospel who recognizes the divine sonship of Jesus, symbolically announcing the coming of the Messiah as the Son of God and the dawn of the New Age which is characterized by its inclusion of the Gentiles into God's eschatological ruling.

Similar parallels between the Temple statements in 14:58 and 15:29 and the episode of the Temple curtain rent are also noted: Christological references in 14:61 and 15:39; the motif of the destruction of the Old Temple and the replacement by the new in 14:58 and 15:39. These clearly signal an intimate connection between the incident of the Temple curtain rent and the other episodes surrounding the Jerusalem Temple.

The connection between the Baptismal event in Mk 1:9-11 and the episode of the rending of the Temple curtain in 15:37-39 gathers much more power in this regard. As discussed in detail, the incident of the Heaven rent is an apocalyptic event that

alludes to the prophet Isaiah's prophetic petition of God's supernatural and salvific intervention for help; the prophesy is now taking an ultimate shape in Jesus' Messianic fulfilment of the eschatological New Age. The event of the Spirit coming down is another apocalyptic event that signals the arrival of the New Age, while empowering Jesus at the outset of his earthly ministry. Here, 'seeing' in Jesus' encounters with these events is an integral part of the apocalyptic events that envisions also the coming of God's eschatological ruling through Jesus.

In our investigations of the Temple curtain rent, it was pointed out that the rending of the Temple curtain was accomplished by the expulsion of Jesus' final breath/spirit, alluding to the O.T. prophecies that speak of God's breath/spirit not only judging the unrighteous but also reviving and restoring the dead and opening up the new birth of God's faithful community (cf. Isa 11:4 and Ezek 37:5ff). The incident thus means more than a divine verdict of pronouncing the judgement over the Jerusalem Temple, that is, its destruction; it is also a metaphorical incident that testifies to the beginning of the New Age initiated by the apocalyptic event of Jesus' death; now in the New Age, the Gentiles may become an integral part of the worshipping body of God's eschatological community. Here, the Roman centurion's 'seeing' of the Temple curtain being torn by the expulsion of Jesus' breath/spirit plays an important role in that it also envisions Jesus' fulfilment of the O.T. prophecies about the establishment of God's divinely inspired eschatological community in Mark's apocalyptic community.

The parallel nature of the two pericopes, in consideration of the lexical and thematic links between Jesus' Baptismal event and the Temple curtain rent, was accordingly discussed. It was observed that the corresponding elements include the verbs of same root (σχιζομένους/ ἐσχίσθη), the reference to spirit (πνεῦμα/ ἐξέπνευσεν) and use of an identification formula referring to Jesus' divine sonship (σὺ εἶ ὁ υἱός μου/ οὗτος... υἱὸς θεοῦ ἦν), and the occurrence of 'seeing' (εἶδεν/ ἰδών). The correspondence was confirmed also by the Elijah /Elisha symbolism present in both passages (at the baptism Elijah being present in the form of John the Baptist and at the crucifixion the onlookers misunderstanding that Jesus is calling out to Elijah [15:36]); a theological correlation between Jesus' baptism and death is established between the two pericopes, as, in Mark's macro-theological perspective, the Spirit baptism of Jesus spoken by John the Baptist is his death on the cross.

The motif of seeing present in the apocalyptic events within the both pericopes is crucial to note. In the Baptismal scene, Jesus is said to “ἰδεῖν σχιζομένους τοὺς οὐρανοὺς καὶ τὸ πνεῦμα ὡς περιστερὰν καταβαῖνον ... and to hear that “Σὺ εἶ ὁ υἱός μου ὁ ἀγαπητός, ἐν σοὶ εὐδόκησα.”; in the episode of the rending of the Temple curtain, the centurion is said to “ἰδεῖν ...” and pronounces that “Ἀληθῶς οὗτος ὁ ἄνθρωπος υἱὸς θεοῦ ἦν.” This corresponding nature of the motif of seeing can be further strengthened by noting that at the four strategically crucial points in the development of Mark’s narrative in which the title, the Son of God is mentioned directly or in a similar form, there always appears the verb of seeing, εἶδον. Aside from in the present location of the Baptism of Jesus, first in the Transfiguration story, the heavenly voice of “this is my Son” is immediately followed by the disciples’ act of seeing Jesus alone (“..οὐδένα εἶδον ἀλλὰ τὸν Ἰησοῦν” in 9:8), and further followed by the injunction of not telling anyone what they *saw*: “μηδενὶ ἃ εἶδον διηγήσονται” (9:9). Jesus’ transfiguration, especially coupled with Moses and Elijah who is depicted not only as an eschatological forerunner in the biblical and post-biblical periods but also is often paired with Moses in the post-biblical Jewish writings which depict their appearance at the end of age (cf. *Deut. Rab.* 3.17[on Deut 10:1]; *Pesiq. Rab.* 4.2 ⁶⁶⁰), certainly evinces apocalyptic implications. In regard to the motif of the eschatological fulfilment in the episode of Jesus’ transfiguration, especially, it is well pointed out that “since Joshua in the LXX is frequently rendered as Ἰησοῦς, the early church may have seen in Exod 24:13 a veiled prophecy, or typology, that came to fulfillment in the transfiguration where once again Moses and Jesus are together.”⁶⁶¹ At the Trial before the Jewish religious leaders, Jesus’ acknowledgement of his divine sonship, as he was interrogated by the high priest, is followed by Jesus’ prediction that he will “see” the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of the power and coming with clouds (14:62). Finally, at the moment of Jesus’ death, we are told that the centurion ‘saw’ the apocalyptic and eschatological event, the Temple curtain rent, and confessed Jesus as God’s Son (15:39). As H. Jackson points out well, a distinctive nature in all four episodes is readily noticed: the verb εἶδον almost regularly occurs in conjunction with the title, the Son of God:

⁶⁶⁰ Cf. William G. Braude, *Pesikta Rabbati*, 2 Vols., YJS 18 (Yale Univ. Press, 1968), 2:84-85.

⁶⁶¹ C. Evans, *Mark 8:27-16:20*, 34.

If what the centurion saw was the tearing of the curtain, then the miraculous event seen by the soliloquizing audience of 'Son of God' at the final revelation of this title is neatly balanced by the event witnessed by the audience of it (Jesus) at the initial one. It seems that Mark invited the readers to make the tearing of the curtain what the centurion saw when it was the tearing of the heavens that Jesus witnessed at the Baptism.⁶⁶²

5.33 Conclusion

In the first reading of the incident of the Temple curtain rent, it was observed that the rending of the Temple curtain, the object of the sight of the Roman centurion, occurred through the expulsion of Jesus' final breath/ spirit, and that it portends not just the imminent destruction of the Jerusalem Temple, but more importantly the end of the Old Age and the coming of the New age, characterized by God's cosmic and universal reign over the eschatological community of his redeemed peoples. In the second reading of the incident, it was re-read in light of the observations that we have gleaned from the explorations of Jesus' action in the Temple and its surrounding texts, the Temple statements in 14:58 and 15:29; it was concluded that the rending of the Temple curtain is caused by the eschatological event, Jesus' death on the cross, and is further signified as a symbolic event heralding that the O.T prophecies and the Jewish Messianic expectations of the eschatological temple would now be fulfilled. The end of Jesus' ministry being concluded with this pattern of rending and seeing motifs brings the whole Gospel to a closure according to Mark's architectonic and narrative scheme.

5.4 Apocalyptic Opening, Eschatological Inclusio:

Concluding Remarks

First of all, it needs to be repeated that the links between the two monumental events include the verbs of same root (σχιζομένους/ ἐσχίσθη), the reference to spirit (πνεῦμα/ ἐξέπνευσεν), the use of an identification formula referring to Jesus' divine sonship (οὐ εἶ ὁ υἱός μου/ οὗτος... υἱὸς θεοῦ ἦν), the occurrence of 'seeing' (εἶδεν/ ἰδών), the

⁶⁶² H. Jackson, "The Death of Jesus in Mark," 23.

Elijah symbolism present, and a theological correlation between Jesus' baptism and his death. The link likewise became unmistakable as each element was explored and discussed in detail and it is clear that Mark has deliberately created various corresponding elements between these two key events in Jesus' ministry. These two events in fact form an *inclusio* which brackets the entire Gospel structurally, thematically, and contextually.⁶⁶³

As a literary structure in which the beginning and the end of a literary piece form a constituting framework, connected by various elements such as words and phrases or images, *inclusio* often holds up a narrative's structure while giving support to all that comes in between. Especially it serves to make a literary corpus in question a self-contained unit, by starting and concluding it, and is an interpretive key in rendering what is in-between in light of what is claimed and stated by the frames themselves. David Ulansey succinctly defines this literary term as "the narrative device common in biblical texts in which a detail is repeated at the beginning and the end of a narrative unit in order to 'bracket off' the unit and give it a sense of closure and structural integrity."⁶⁶⁴ Combined with the thematic and lexical ties stated above, the two events, the Heaven rent and the Temple curtain rent, constitute a clear *inclusio*, opening the Gospel narrative and closing it, while providing a decisive clue to interpret what is being narrated in-between.

Through the structure of *inclusio*, Mark sets up one pillar of a symbolic event at the beginning of his narrative and of Jesus' ministry, the rending of the heaven, announcing the apocalyptic commencement of God's eschatological reign; and another pillar of an event just as symbolic, the rending of the Temple curtain, is positioned at the end of his narrative and of Jesus' ministry, enunciating the destruction of the Temple which further symbolizes the break-down of the old age and advent of the new in which distance and mediation through sacrificial rites and all they stood for are eradicated and access to God's holy presence is offered to all.⁶⁶⁵

These two events also represent Mark's own apocalyptic and eschatological understanding of Jesus and his ministry, and thus are meant in nature and scope to be apocalyptic events that serve to signal the eschatological era being ushered in as God initiates his ultimate intervention into humanity in his saving grace; his eschatological

⁶⁶³ S. Motyer, "The Rending of the Veil, 155; D. Ulansey, "The Heavenly Veil Torn," 123.

⁶⁶⁴ D. Ulansey, "The Heavenly Veil Torn," 123.

⁶⁶⁵ S. Motyer, "The Rending of the Veil," 155.

justice and holiness were typified in his salvific plan and execution of Jesus' atoning death on the cross, and in his cosmic and universal reigning. The rending of the heaven and the rending of the Temple curtain, serve as a formal demarcation of demise of the old Age and induction of the new age in which God's eschatological reign takes an ultimate shape in Jesus' death and resurrection.

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