

"TRULY THIS MAN WAS THE SON OF GOD":  
THE CHRISTOLOGICAL FOCUS  
OF THE MARKAN REDACTION

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## ABSTRACT

Since the rise of redaction criticism in the early 1950's, the attempt to reconstruct the theological visions which motivated the decisive redactors of the Synoptic Gospels has commanded a good deal of scholarly attention and effort. After a quarter-century of work, however, the Gospel of Mark remains an enigma; no particular trend in the interpretation of this book has been able to win the agreement of a substantial majority of commentators. This dissertation has been undertaken with the intention of making a fresh start towards the establishment of a solid understanding of the message of the Second Gospel.

With respect to method, we join with a small, but growing, group of scholars who object to the dominant practice of redaction criticism, which is to make source analysis the first step in interpretation. Instead, we hold to the view that the theology of the redactor is most likely to be accessible not through the isolation of those words and phrases which appear to have originated from redactional activity, but through the study of the entire Gospel as the final product by means of which the evangelist intended his message to be heard. We have taken this abstention from considerations of the history of the Synoptic tradition a step further by declining to allow the widely-held view of

Mark's priority to serve as a methodological presupposition.

Many recent efforts in Markan studies have argued that the redaction took shape in Syria or Palestine in a community with strong Jewish Christian characteristics. We find that this growing trend is of doubtful value, and ought to be reversed. The Second Gospel was produced by and for Gentile Christians; consequently, judgments of plausibility must be founded upon the recognition that our nearest access to the Markan environment is to be found not through Palestinian Jewish sources, but through the early literature of the mission to the Gentiles: the Pauline correspondence.

Building our analysis upon the foregoing considerations, we come to the comparatively novel conclusion that the issue which most engaged Mark's attention was the opposition which he saw to exist between the divine and the human. This we have termed "the God/man polarity"; we find that it pervades the Gospel, almost to the exclusion of the motif of a cosmic conflict between God and Satan. The God/man polarity is held to be overcome in and through Jesus the God-man, as is revealed in Mark 15:39.

This interpretation arises in part from a new understanding of the Markan use of the titles "Son of Man" and "Son of God". "Son of Man", for Mark, means a human being; paradoxically, he has Jesus take up the title at precisely

those junctures where he claims more-than-human significance, and thus links the title to the theme of blasphemy. This theme represents Jesus' claim to an authority which transcends the divine/human distinction. "Son of God" clarifies the paradox by ascribing to the man Jesus intrinsic divinity.

Despite its resemblance to traditional Christian teaching, this interpretation of Mark has few precedents in current critical scholarship. Commonly, Mark's portrayal of Jesus has been set into a context of "low", typically Jewish-Christian Christology or into a positive or negative relationship to the alleged Hellenistic type known as the "Divine Man". The major contribution of this thesis is, then, to establish as critically viable the view that Mark originated as a product of the mainstream of Western Christianity and that a God-man Christology, which is well attested both before and after Mark, exercised a decisive influence over the final redaction of this Gospel.

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## ABBREVIATIONS

<u>Bib Theol Bull.</u>	<u>Biblical Theology Bulletin</u>
BHTH	Beiträge zur historischen Theologie
<u>CBQ</u>	<u>Catholic Biblical Quarterly</u>
ET	English Translation
<u>Expt</u>	<u>Expository Times</u>
FRLANT	Forschungen zur Religion und Literatur des Alten und Neuen Testaments
<u>HTR</u>	<u>Harvard Theological Review</u>
<u>JBL</u>	<u>Journal of Biblical Studies</u>
<u>JBR</u>	<u>Journal of Bible and Religion</u>
<u>JR</u>	<u>Journal of Religion</u>
<u>JournStudJud</u>	<u>Journal of Studies in Judaism</u>
<u>NovTest</u>	<u>Novum Testamentum</u>
<u>NRT</u>	<u>Nouvelle Revue Théologique</u>
<u>NTS</u>	<u>New Testament Studies</u>
<u>RB</u>	<u>Revue Biblique</u>
<u>SELDSS</u>	Society of Biblical Literature Dissertation Series
<u>TDNT</u>	G. Kittel, ed. <u>Theological Dictionary of the New Testament</u> . Trans. G. W. Bromiley Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1964.
<u>USQR</u>	<u>Union Seminary Quarterly Review</u>
<u>VT</u>	<u>Vetus Testamentum</u>
<u>ZNW</u>	<u>Zeitschrift für die Neutestamentliche Wissenschaft</u>
<u>ZTK</u>	<u>Zeitschrift für Theologie und Kirche</u>

PART I

PROLEGOMENA

## 1. THE STATE OF MARKAN STUDIES

### a. The Progress of Markan Scholarship

The Gospel of Mark has long been at the centre of interest in New Testament research. It first rose to prominence among critical scholars in connection with the nineteenth-century study of the historical Jesus. This work had often proceeded on the assumption that the Gospel narratives were historically correct in all but a few details (such as the omission of the raft which Jesus used when he was thought to be walking on the sea<sup>1</sup>). Then, in the 1830's, David Friedrich Strauss rocked the scholarly world with his contention that much of the material in the Gospels had its source in the creative mythologizing of the early church. At the same time, literary arguments for Markan priority began to make their appearance. The practitioners of life-of-Jesus research utilized the latter theory as a counter measure against Strauss, and erected the Markan hypothesis. This hypothesis had two components: first, that Mark was the earliest Gospel to be written; and, secondly, that it was therefore the most accurate of the Gospels in presenting

<sup>1</sup> K. F. Bahrdt, Briefe Über die Bibel im Volkston, cited in A. Schweitzer, The Quest of the Historical Jesus, trans. W. Montgomery (New York: MacMillan, 1961), p. 41.

the facts of Jesus' life.<sup>2</sup>

The former element has continued in general acceptance up to the present day. Although every conceivable arrangement has been suggested to account for the literary relationships among the three Synoptic Gospels<sup>3</sup>, a majority of scholars hold to some form of the Two-Document Hypothesis<sup>4</sup>: Mark and a lost collection "Q" served as major sources for both Matthew and Luke. The arguments for Markan priority over the other Synoptics were given classic form by B. H. Streeter<sup>5</sup>, and are continually presented anew.<sup>6</sup>

The belief that Mark, as the earliest Gospel, also contained the most reliable information about the historical

) <sup>2</sup>. The history of scholarly approaches to the Gospels can be found in short form in J. Rohde, Rediscovering the Teaching of the Evangelists, trans. D. Barton (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1968), pp. 1-14, and N. Perrin, What is Redaction Criticism? (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1969), pp. 4-39.

<sup>3</sup>. Léon-Dufour's Table of Diagrams in A. Robert, Introduction to the New Testament, trans. P. Skehan and others (New York: Desclée, 1956), p. 283, is impressive but not exhaustive.

<sup>4</sup>. The term Two-Document Hypothesis originally (i.e., in the nineteenth century) signified the view that "Q" was a single written source. Since the First World War, it has lost some of this precision, and is used conventionally to describe any theory which holds that Matthew and Luke, independently of each other, drew upon Mark and upon another common body of traditional material in the formation of their Gospels, whatever the form in which the latter source may have existed. We are following this conventional usage.

<sup>5</sup>. B. H. Streeter, The Four Gospels (London: MacMillan, 1924), pp. 151-191.

<sup>6</sup>. Most recently in H. C. Kee, Community of the New Age (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1977), pp. 14-16.

Jesus has long since been abandoned in Germany, although its passing dragged on somewhat among English-speaking scholars. The telling blow was struck by William Wrede's Das Messiasgeheimnis in den Evangelien (1901). Uniting such themes and phenomena as the commands to silence, the misunderstanding of the disciples, and Jesus' seeking of privacy under the general rubric of "the Messianic Secret", he demonstrated beyond doubt that mythic and doctrinal elements are as intrinsic to Mark as they are to the other Gospels. This finding, along with Albert Schweitzer's celebrated critique of current life-of-Jesus work in Von Reimarus zu Wrede (1906; ET The Quest of the Historical Jesus), brought an end to an entire phase of New Testament study among German scholars.

With the rise of form criticism after the First World War, scholarly attention turned to the consideration of individual pericopes and their development and transmission in the oral tradition. Effective study of the Gospels as wholes was minimal; the evangelists were regarded as collectors of tradition, rather than as authors in their own right. Here Mark is, in a sense, the classic case. Some concession was made to the creative activity of Matthew and Luke as they wove narratives from the material of Mark, Q, and their private sources. Mark, apart from the fact that he apparently created the genre of "Gospel", was envisioned as a rather artless purveyor of tradition--dogmatically motivated to be sure, but

yet "...not...master of his material..."?

After the Second World War, attention turned once again to the Gospels as wholes. Using the principles and results of form criticism, scholars such as Bornkamm (on Matthew)<sup>8</sup>, Conzelmann (on Luke)<sup>9</sup>, and Marxsen (on Mark)<sup>10</sup> attempted to take full account of the creativity of the evangelists, and to discover the particular interests and dogmatic concerns of each. Mark, its priority still assumed on most fronts, became a subject of special interest, and the new discipline of redaction criticism has produced an ever-increasing volume of work dedicated to the task of elucidating the theological currents which activate its story.

In his 1969 introduction to the redaction-critical method, N. Perrin maintained that it was too soon to enumerate the concrete gains of redaction criticism:

<sup>7</sup>. R. Bultmann, The History of the Synoptic Tradition, trans. J. Marsh (New York: Harper & Row, 1963), p. 350.

<sup>8</sup>. Bornkamm initiated the modern phenomenon of redaction criticism with his article "Die Sturmstillung im Matthäusevangelium", Wort und Dienst, Jahrbuch der Theologischen Schule Bethel NF, I (1948), 49-54, ET in G. Bornkamm, G. Barth, and H. J. Held, Tradition and Interpretation in Matthew, trans. P. Scott (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1963), pp. 52-57.

<sup>9</sup>. Conzelmann's definitive work is Die Mitte der Zeit-Studien zur Theologie des Lukas, BHTh, 17 (Tübingen: Mohr, 1954); ET The Theology of St. Luke, trans. G. Buswell (New York: Harper & Row, 1960).

<sup>10</sup>. W. Marxsen, Der Evangelist Markus--Studien zur Rédactionsgeschichte des Evangeliums, FRLANT NF, 49 (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1956); ET Mark the Evangelist, trans. J. Boyce and others (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1969).

It will be a decade or so at the very least before the work will have progressed far enough for there to be sufficient agreement among the scholars concerned to provide the basis for a summary of achieved results.<sup>11</sup>

Nevertheless, he viewed the immediate future with considerable optimism:

...we may confidently expect that in the course of the next few years we are going to develop major understandings of the theology of the synoptic evangelists in a way that we could never have hoped to do before the rise of this discipline.<sup>12</sup>

It is now 1979, and it must be recorded that Perrin's hopes for rapid, solid progress in redaction criticism have not come to fruition with respect to Mark. There has been a considerable scholarly output, more than we can review here, but there seems to be no sign of a developing consensus among the scholars who have concerned themselves with this Gospel. H. C. Kee lamented this situation in an article in 1971<sup>13</sup>, and recently issued his attempt to correct it.<sup>14</sup> Meanwhile, L. Goppelt was so dissatisfied with the state of affairs in Markan studies that he declined to discuss the Gospel at all in his 1976 Theologie des Neuen Testaments.<sup>15</sup> We may justly

<sup>11.</sup> Perrin, Criticism, p. 64.

<sup>12.</sup> Ibid., p. 67.

<sup>13.</sup> Kee, "Mark as Redactor and Theologian". JBL, 90 (1971), 333-336.

<sup>14.</sup> Kee, Community.

<sup>15.</sup>

See Roloff's foreword to Goppelt, Theologie des Neuen Testaments, 2 (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1976), p. 317.

7

conclude that what Kee called "one of the most enigmatic books in the New Testament"<sup>16</sup> has remained precisely that.

#### b. The Two Roadblocks

The impasse which currently exists in the study of Mark has causes as varied as are the attempts to surmount it. We cannot here pursue and evaluate all of these attempts; we must, rather, confine ourselves to a general discussion of the situation, using occasional salient examples, as a preface to joining the fray ourselves. Basically, the failure to move towards a firm consensus of views on Markan theology stems from problems in two realms: the selection of an appropriate methodology and the selection of the proper subject matter to serve as the "key" to interpretation. We shall consider each of these in turn.

In the consideration of method, we begin with the fact that "redaction criticism" is not a tightly-defined discipline. Just as literary criticism and source criticism became almost indistinguishable early in this century<sup>17</sup>, so now redaction criticism includes both of these, building on the foundations of form criticism as well. In J. Donahue's words, it is an "umbrella concept which involves many different approaches to

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<sup>16</sup>. Kee, Community, p. ix.

<sup>17</sup>. Rohde, in Rediscovering, pp. 1-3, discusses them together.

a gospel..."<sup>18</sup> Perrin also uses and advocates such a synthetic approach.<sup>19</sup>

Redaction criticism does, however, have a particular focus. Using the tools and the results of form criticism, the redaction critic seeks, above all, to isolate those elements which reflect the activity of the redactor from the material which was furnished by the oral tradition. In Perrin's words, "...redaction criticism proper is dependent upon the ability to write a history of the tradition."<sup>20</sup> Widespread acceptance of the Two-Document Hypothesis has made this relatively easy with regard to Matthew and Luke, since we would then be in possession of one of their sources--Mark--and could reconstruct the second, Q, with a fair degree of accuracy. The whole process is more difficult with Mark, involving as it does the sifting out of traditional and redactional elements within the text itself. Despite this drawback, the task has been attempted by scholars such as Achtemeier, Linnemann, Donahue, and Räisänen.<sup>21</sup>

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<sup>18</sup>. J. Donahue, Are You the Christ?, SBLDS 10 (Missoula: SBL, 1973), p. 31.

<sup>19</sup>. N. Perrin, "The Christology of Mark", in his A Modern Pilgrimage in New Testament Christology (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1974), pp. 105-107.

<sup>20</sup>. Perrin, Criticism, p. 13.

<sup>21</sup>. P. Achtemeier, "Toward the Isolation of Pre-Markan Miracle Catenae", JBL, 89 (1970), 265-291, and "The Origin and Function of the Pre-Markan Miracle Catenae", JBL, 91 (1972), 198-221; E. Linnemann, Studien zur Passionsgeschichte (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1970); Donahue, Christ; H. Räisänen, Das "Messiasgeheimnis" im Markusevangelium (Helsinki: Oy Länsi-Suomi, Rauma, 1976).

Precisely this aspect of the redaction criticism of Mark--the heart of the discipline, as it were--has now come under fire. D. Juel argues that the work of Linnemann and Donahue fails to portray Markan thought accurately because, as they hypothetically ascribe large portions of the narrative to the tradition, they minimize both Mark's active contribution to the Gospel and much of the evidence which would substantiate it.<sup>22</sup> Instead, Juel calls for interpretation of the Gospel as it stands, "literary study in the proper sense"<sup>23</sup>, which would "...account for the difficulties in the text by studying Markan style elsewhere in the Gospel without resorting to source analysis..."<sup>24</sup>

A new variation in method was introduced by Kee in his Community of the New Age (1977). Accepting the usual practices of form and redaction criticism, he goes on to add a further technique: the determination of the cultural and historical setting of the Markan community as a guide and control for exegesis:

...it is not sufficient to analyse a propagandistic work like [Mark's] solely as a literary form, or merely as a literary expression of a

22.

D. Juel, Messiah and Temple, SBLDS 31 (Missoula: SBL, 1977), pp. 24-36.

23.

Ibid., p. 36.

24.

Ibid., p. 29.

certain theological position. What is required is that the socio-cultural factors be taken fully into account, both as they are known from paradigms derivable from religious communities contemporary with Mark, and as the features may be inferred from the text of Mark itself.<sup>25</sup>

While other scholars, such as Juel<sup>26</sup>, have argued the necessity of establishing Mark's history-of-religions setting as a key to interpretation, only Kee has extended this principle to include a thorough sociological analysis of the Markan community. The works of Räisänen, Juel, and Kee were all published within the last three years; we seem to be as far from a methodological consensus in Markan studies as ever.

A similar state of affairs prevails in the search for the "key" to Mark; the selection of particular passages and themes as representative of the Gospel's basic theological viewpoint has been characterized by great variety. Wrede's work on the "Messianic Secret" was the paradigmatic effort in this direction.<sup>27</sup> To summarize Wrede's contention to the point of caricature, he argued that the variegated motif of secrecy was used to reconcile the non-messianic facts of Jesus' life with the church's belief in him as Messiah.

25. Kee, Community, p. 12.

26. Juel, Messiah, pp. 38f.

27. ET The Messianic Secret, trans. J. Greig (Greenwood, S.C.: Attic Press, 1971).

Thus, Mark 9:9, in which Jesus forbids the three disciples to report the transfiguration until after the resurrection, serves to interpret the entire Gospel.

Studies with similar procedures have been frequent in recent years. Q. Quesnell<sup>28</sup> used as his entrée Mark 6:52: "For they did not understand about the loaves, but their hearts were hardened." Viewing this verse in terms of successively widening contexts, he concluded that the verse and the feeding stories were part of the eucharistic motif which animated the Gospel, and which expressed Mark's fundamental theological perspective.

T. J. Weeden<sup>29</sup>, in what is perhaps the most famous such attempt since Wrede, argued that the Caesarea Philippi narrative was the thematic fulcrum of the Gospel. Prior to this, Jesus is presented as possessing the characteristics of a Hellenistic theios anēr or "Divine Man"; he heals the sick and works miracles and, in so doing, displays the supernatural power which he possesses. This is, to Mark, a false Christology. Beginning with 8:27, the redactor shows that, for Jesus and for the Church, the path to glory lies not through the exercise of power but through suffering. Mark, then,

28.

Q. Quesnell, The Mind of Mark (Rome: Pontifical Biblical Institute, 1969).

29.

T. J. Weeden, "The Heresy that Necessitated Mark's Gospel", ZNW, 59 (1968), 145-158, and Mark--Traditions in Conflict (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1971).

posita a theologia crucis over against a heretical theologia gloriae.

Finally, there has been a good deal of redaction criticism directed at the passion narrative in Mark.

Naturally, this part of the Gospel is of vital importance to Weeden's theory, so it is not surprising that he and some colleagues have published a collection of studies dealing with the last chapters of Mark.<sup>30</sup> Donahue, another contributor to this collection, had previously centred his own dissertation on the High Priest's question to Jesus in Mark 14:61.<sup>31</sup> The works of Linnemann and Juel already cited are also concerned with interpreting Mark via his account of the passion.

Given this great variety of methods and topics, it is little wonder that we have no commonly held view as to what the Markan redaction is all about. In offering yet another study of this cryptic Gospel, we hope to contribute to a rectification of this situation. We seek to do this by overcoming both of the roadblocks described above. First, following Juel's lead, we shall argue on both practical and theoretical grounds that source criticism is an unsatisfactory foundation upon which to establish a solid understanding of Mark's message.

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30.

W. H. Kelber, ed., The Passion in Mark (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1976).

31.

Donahue, Christ.

Secondly, we shall devote the bulk of the study to the theme which, we believe, has the greatest claim to self-evident significance in the Gospel. We locate this theme in the climactic event of the centurion's confession in Mark 15:39: "Truly, this man was God's son." It shall be our contention that Mark's Christology is most intelligible when viewed in terms of the twin motifs of humanity and divinity which are juxtaposed in this verse. Further, this polarity of the divine and the human is the framework within which Mark understands man's religious predicament, and within which the salvation provided by Jesus must operate.

In the next two chapters, we shall elaborate upon and defend these selections of methodology and of subject matter. Then, an examination of our chosen themes as they appear in pre-Markan Christian sources will set the stage for our interpretation of the redaction itself.

## 2. THE METHOD OF THE PRESENT STUDY

### a. The Basic Approach

In entering upon research into the theological perspective of the Gospel of Mark, the first decision to be made involves the choice of critical techniques. Few scholars, if any, would reject literary criticism outright in an endeavour of this kind; thus, the question that remains is this: do we limit ourselves to this discipline, or do we also engage in redaction criticism in the narrower sense? What is the role of the effort to distinguish the redactional elements of the Gospel from the traditional in a study such as this?

James M. Robinson, in his A New Quest of the Historical Jesus, argued that the "Old Quest"--the effort to establish a body of solid, factual information about the life of Jesus--was both impossible and illegitimate.<sup>1</sup> It is our contention that redaction criticism, understood as the attempt to uncover the evangelists' teachings by concentrating upon those words and phrases which issued from redactional activity, is subject to criticism on the same grounds, though not perhaps to the same degree.

1.

J. M. Robinson, A New Quest of the Historical Jesus (London: SCM, 1959), pp. 26-47.

Redaction criticism is not, in principle, impossible. Building on the successes of form criticism, one can indeed isolate some portions of the Gospels as traditional, and others as redactional. Viewed thus, it is part of the study of the history of the tradition, and is therefore valuable in its own right. However, any individual attempt to carry out a thorough-going separation between traditional and redactional elements in a Gospel will ultimately rest upon conjecture; this is clear from the great variety of results that have been produced by redaction critics in their studies of Mark. Juel attacks Linnemann on the grounds that "[h]er interpretation of Mark is based almost solely on an extremely hypothetical reconstruction of sources".<sup>2</sup> To differing degrees, such a criticism applies to all redaction critics. As C. L. Mitton has pointed out, the effort to distinguish tradition from redaction in Mark results all too often in circular argumentation; moreover, our ignorance of what Mark may have chosen to omit from his Gospel handicaps the entire proceeding.<sup>3</sup>

The point is this. The study of the history of the synoptic tradition is a necessary task in and of itself, but the results are always "hypothetical" in the proper sense of the word. If we wish to study the theology of an evangelist,

2.

Juel, Messiah, p. 27.

3.

C. L. Mitton, "Some Further Studies in St. Mark's Gospel", Expt, 87 (1975-76), p. 300.

offering an hypothesis on that subject, are we not better to erect our hypotheses on a foundation which is solid--the Gospel as it stands--rather than on an already hypothetical collection of redactional fragments?

Again, redaction criticism is not itself illegitimate; it is the validity of its approach to reconstructing the theology of a Gospel which is in question. Redaction criticism arose with the expressed purpose of putting the evangelists themselves back into the spotlight. Yet Juel's comment that "...the shift in scholarship [from form to redaction criticism] has done little to alter the approach to the trial in Mark"<sup>4</sup> can be applied to many themes and facets of the Gospel. The reason seems to be that many redaction critics, despite their good intentions, are still influenced by the form critics' belief that the role of the evangelists was a strictly limited one. The concern to separate traditional from redactional elements implies the supposition that the evangelist exerted personal influence primarily, or only, in those precise words which he himself added to his sources.<sup>5</sup> R.C. Tannehill has expressed the matter succinctly: "The question of what is emphasized in a writing is logically separate from the question of the origin of material within

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4.

Juel, Messiah, p. 24.

5.

Räisänen, Messiasgeheimnis, p. 113, provides a clear example of this; he argues that Wrede's selection of Mark 9:9 as the key to the Gospel must be erroneous, since this verse is traditional rather than redactional in origin.

it."<sup>6</sup> We cannot assume a priori that Mark's central message was revolutionary or unique, and that it is therefore visible above all in material which was composed by the redactor. If he understood himself to be furthering the proclamation of his community, he may well have expressed that proclamation most clearly in the traditional forms in which he himself received it (compare I Cor. 15:3a). We do more justice to the evangelist by supposing that he included in his Gospel whatever seemed appropriate to his message--or, perhaps, whatever did not seem inappropriate. If he modified his material but little, this is most likely because he agreed with it as it stood. Therefore, a difficult exegesis can be solved only as a last resort, if at all, with the argument that "he simply took it over from the tradition"; and there remains the task of explaining why he did so. On the other hand, we must reserve the right to evaluate how well (or how poorly) Mark has assimilated any particular idea to the thrust of his work as a whole.

In our study, then, we shall pursue the evangelist's message not by seeking to identify the origin of particular words or phrases, but by studying the thrust and shape of the whole redaction, since the whole is what Mark saw fit to

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R. C. Tannehill, "The Disciples in Mark", JR., 57 (1977), 386.

publish. It is noteworthy that even Perrin eventually adopted this view.<sup>7</sup> On the other hand, J.R. Michaels has suggested that this approach may perhaps be "...more aptly described as pre-critical..."<sup>8</sup> Such a remark seems well off target. To earn the epithet "pre-critical", we would have to hold that Mark described the events of Jesus' life as he did because they happened that way. Instead, we have determined that, out of a number of available critical techniques, there is one which is not appropriate to our task.

There are two further methodological issues which require some attention. The first is the problem of Markan priority; the second, the question of the history-of-religions setting of the Gospel and related issues of background.

#### b. Markan Priority

As we noted above, that aspect of the old Markan hypothesis which asserted the priority of Mark over both Matthew and Luke has survived and flourished to the present day. The Two-Document Hypothesis has been a basic assumption for almost all research which involves the Synoptic Gospels. The last fifteen years, however, have witnessed a growing challenge to this theory, a challenge which has not always received the attention which it warrants. We

<sup>7</sup> N. Perrin, "The High Priest's Question and Jesus' Answer", in Kelber, Passion, p. 90.

<sup>8</sup> J.R. Michaels, review of F. J. Moloney, The Johannine Son of Man, in JBL, 97 (1978), 149.

cannot, of course, pursue the problem in any detail here. Instead, we shall confine ourselves to the very useful essay of D. L. Dungan, in which he attempts to revive the Griesbach hypothesis.<sup>9</sup> In so doing, he has marshalled much of the available argumentation against Markan priority. Of this, we shall briefly review four major points.

Hawkins, Streeter, and others argued that Markan priority is indicated by the fact that agreements between Matthew and Luke against Mark were few and insignificant. Dungan draws on W. Farmer in his reply, contending that this conclusion was the result of a biased method. By considering these agreements in terms of a priori categories, the earlier scholars omitted some and veiled the impact of the rest in an apparent "divide and conquer" strategy. Thus, Markan deviations from both Matthew and Luke are more numerous and more significant than many scholars have realized.<sup>10</sup>

Secondly, it has been argued that Mark's priority is evident in the primitive, vivid character of the narrative itself, and that Matthew and Luke each polished it. Here, Dungan rests his case upon E. P. Sanders' findings. Sanders concluded that the usual criteria for identifying "primitive"

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D. L. Dungan, "Mark--The Abridgement of Matthew and Luke", Jesus and Man's Hope, I (Pittsburgh: Pittsburgh Theological Seminary, 1970), pp. 51-97.

10.

Ibid., pp. 56-60. See W. R. Farmer, The Synoptic Problem (New York: MacMillan, 1964), pp. 118f.

characteristics are essentially worthless: "On all counts the tradition developed in opposite directions. It became both longer and shorter, both more and less detailed, and both more and less Semitic."<sup>11</sup> Dungan also cites Farmer's evidence to the effect that apocryphal Christian works often corrupted the Greek of the Gospels which they used as sources.<sup>12</sup> Thus, the "primitive" character of Mark as a piece of literature is not a datum that can be postulated with ease and assurance.

The so-called "argument from shared matter" is held to demonstrate that the large amount of material which Mark shares with the other Synoptics indicates Markan priority. Streeter's statement of this contention appears in his book as follows:

Five reasons for accepting the priority of Mark.  
 (1) Matthew reproduces 90% of the subject matter of Mark in language very largely identical with that of Mark; Luke does the same for rather more than half of Mark.<sup>13</sup>

Kee presents the same argument by citing statistics from Morgenthaler: "...of the 11,078 words in Mark, 8,555 have been taken over by Matthew and 6,737 by Luke."<sup>14</sup> As Dungan points out, the actual statistics of shared material are true

<sup>11</sup>. E. P. Sanders, The Tendencies of the Synoptic Tradition (Cambridge: University Press, 1969), p. 272; see Dungan, "Mark", pp. 69-71.

<sup>12</sup>. Dungan, "Mark", p. 67. See Farmer, Problem, pp. 122f.

<sup>13</sup>. Streeter, Gospels, p. 151.

<sup>14</sup>. Kee, Community, p. 16.

enough<sup>15</sup>; the problem is that neither Streeter nor Kee explains how the mere fact of shared matter can possibly indicate priority. Matthew and Luke also share material, but no one argues that this, in and of itself, demonstrates the relative priority of one or the other.

In actuality, it appears that this argument is ultimately founded not upon the shared matter, but upon the fact that much of the content of Matthew and Luke--notably the nativity stories, the Sermon on the Mount (or Plain), and the appearances of the Risen Lord--is not shared by Mark. The real point is that no one who possessed the full Matthew and/or Luke would go to the considerable effort of producing a "truncated" Gospel like Mark. Dungan, however, points out that the existence of Tatian's Diatessaron proves that such a task was possible even on a grander scale<sup>16</sup>; in addition, there is good evidence that

during the second century, it was not at all uncommon to turn away from canonical Matthew and Luke, either by rejecting them completely, or combining parts of them into new Gospels which then superseded them...<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>15</sup>. Dungan, "Mark", p. 55.

<sup>16</sup>. Ibid., p. 91.

<sup>17</sup>. Ibid., p. 94. Indeed, a recent dissertation has argued that the Gospel of Mark itself bears the marks of such a procedure in at least six pericopae: T: Longstaff, Evidence of Conflation in Mark?, SBLDS 28 (Missoula: SBL, 1977).

This defence of Markan priority, then, rests essentially upon modern judgments as to what would make a Gospel worthwhile.

Finally, there is what is perhaps Streeter's most influential argument: the fact that Mark embodies whatever agreements of sequence exist among the Synoptics. This, like the fact of shared matter, does not directly indicate priority. Following Farmer, Dungan suggests that this phenomenon is explained at least as well by Griesbach as by the Two-Document Hypothesis: Mark, in conflating the other two Gospels, was bound to agree with at least one of them at any given point.<sup>18</sup> Certainly, there is here no unequivocal support for Markan priority.

We have not done justice to Dungan's presentation, and still less to his sources. Nevertheless, it should be clear that the priority of Mark cannot be made a matter of assumption. Even if Dungan exaggerates when he claims that "...every argument that Streeter advanced for the priority of Mark has been blown out of the water,"<sup>19</sup> great damage has been done.

In this connection, it is disappointing to read Kee's recent defence of the priority of Mark. Although he cites the recent literature on the problem, he has no new arguments to offer, and falls back on Streeter's classics. "Why are

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<sup>18</sup>. Ibid., p. 63. See Farmer, Problem, p. 213.

<sup>19</sup>. Ibid., p. 528.

Mark's versions of the narratives longer than Matthew's...?"<sup>20</sup> This is not always the case, and proves nothing anyway. "Why [would] Mark reduce the more explicit theological affirmations of Matthew to vaguer statements?"<sup>21</sup> The *ego eimi* of Mark 14:62 seems much less vague than *sy eipas* (Mt. 26:64) or *hymeis legete hoti ego eimi* (Lk. 22:70). "Why does he break off the narrative with the empty tomb...?"<sup>22</sup> This is a problem which is completely unrelated to the question of priority; in the light of I Cor. 15:5-8, no one would be likely to argue that all the stories of Jesus' post-Easter appearances originated after Mark was written and were therefore unavailable to him. "The list could be extended almost indefinitely."<sup>23</sup> This is pointless unless the individual arguments are strengthened.

It would, therefore, be irresponsible to allow our study of Mark to rest on a foundation as problematic as the conventional theory of Markan priority now appears to be. The Synoptic problem still awaits solution, but it is not our task to solve it here; we must simply adopt an agnostic posture on this question. This, indeed, is entirely consistent with our stated policy of avoiding questions related to the history of the Synoptic tradition, for Markan priority

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21. Ibid., p. 45.

22. Loc. cit.

23. Loc. cit.

is currently the first presupposition of Synoptic redaction criticism.

We may sum up our approach to these two related issues as follows. The redactor of Mark produced and published a Gospel; we are safe in presuming that his overriding interest was in the whole, the final product. If we are to recover his theological perspective, we must meet him first on his own grounds, by considering the entire product through which he expected his message to be intelligible. Unless we presuppose his utter incompetence as a writer, we must conclude that a satisfactory picture of his theology will be accessible through a study of the Gospel independent of all questions of source criticism, since he obviously intended his views to be accessible in that way. This is the methodological frame of reference for our dissertation.

Source criticism, including both redaction criticism and work on the Synoptic problem, should follow, rather than precede, the purely literary effort. Having achieved a general grasp of a redactor's theology, we have a standard by which to evaluate the various proposals of source criticism. We would then be able to rule out any reconstruction which presents a pattern of redactional activity that clearly works against the thrust of the Gospel as a whole. On this basis, a satisfactory history of the Synoptic tradition might be achieved; this is not, however, part of our present task.

c. Background Studies

A further methodological issue which has been debated of late is the relevance of history-of-religions background studies to the sort of task which we are about to undertake. Burkhill, in his Mysterious Revelation, ignores this question altogether and thus implicitly takes the stand that background is of minimal value in understanding the theology of Mark.<sup>24</sup> Donahue adopts this stance explicitly, arguing that redaction criticism, broadly understood, should as much as possible confine its efforts to the text itself, without allowing extrinsic data to determine its interpretation of that text.<sup>25</sup>

Linnemann, on the other hand, contends that background studies are vital. No interpretation, she maintains, has any claim to validity unless its plausibility can be established; that is, the meaning of the text must be compatible with the religious setting in which the text itself arose.<sup>26</sup> Juel agrees, and goes on to point out that even Donahue does, in actual fact, allow his knowledge of Jewish beliefs in the first century to exercise a significant influence on elements of his presentation of Markan thought.<sup>27</sup>

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<sup>24</sup>. T. A. Burkhill, Mysterious Revelation (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1963).

<sup>25</sup>. Donahue, Christ?, p. 34.

<sup>26</sup>. Linnemann, Studien, p. 109.

<sup>27</sup>. Juel, Messiah, pp. 38f.

In this case, the difference is more apparent than actual. Burkill and Donahue evidently wish to preserve for the evangelist some freedom for originality, which might be compromised by a heavy emphasis upon background studies. This, in itself, is entirely appropriate for practitioners of a discipline which seeks to deal with the Gospel writers as creative thinkers. However, it is equally axiomatic that ideas do not arise ex nihilo, and therefore cannot be understood adequately without some grasp of their historical and cultural context. Thus, Donahue may wish to avoid a full-scale investigation of the Markan background, but he cannot help using his assumptions about it here and there; the same could probably be said of Burkill. Conversely, it can hardly be maintained that an appreciation of the history-of-religions setting of Mark has decisively influenced Juel's work, to the detriment of his evaluation of the evangelist's creativity. As he himself admits, his major endeavour in this area--the attempt to demonstrate a Jewish belief that the Messiah would build the eschatological Temple--does not come to a satisfying conclusion.<sup>28</sup> This, however, does not stop him from attributing that belief to Mark.

Thus, despite the appearance of a methodological disagreement here, the difference in practice between the

28. Ibid., p. 199.

two sides is limited. One uses background information explicitly, the other only implicitly, while both give due credit to the freedom and originality of the redactor. In both cases, history-of-religions information is useful in setting the general boundaries of interpretation, but it does not possess a decisive influence over the process of understanding Mark. This shall be our approach as well.

One preliminary step remains: we must try to identify, in a reasonably precise way, the setting in which the Gospel was created. Only in this way can be decided which sort of background information is more relevant and which less. Let us recall Juel's statement to the effect that the Temple charge must be intelligible in terms of first-century Palestinian Judaism.<sup>29</sup> We have just agreed that Mark's ideas should make sense vis-à-vis his background; but, is Palestinian Judaism that background?

Traditionally, the answer has been "No". According to Kümmel, "the great majority of modern scholars agree" with the Patristic belief that the second Gospel was written in Rome, though he himself opts for a Gentile Christian community in the East.<sup>30</sup> Recently, however, there has been a growing trend towards the assertion (or assumption) that Mark

<sup>29</sup>. Ibid., p. 38.

<sup>30</sup>. W. G. Kümmel, Introduction to the New Testament, trans. A. J. Mattill, Jr. (New York: Abingdon Press, 1966), p. 70.

originated in a Jewish Christian setting. This, if true, would have a significant impact on a good deal of New Testament work. Two of the scholars whom we have already mentioned are current proponents of this view, and we shall consider each of their presentations in turn.

Donahue does not make this issue a crucial part of his thesis, but his argument is interesting. On the basis of detected redactional activity, he concludes that the trial scene owes much of its present form to Mark himself.<sup>31</sup> Why, then, did the evangelist use the format of a trial before Jewish authorities to deal decisively with such vital themes as his Christology (14:61f)? In order, says Donahue, to reflect and to speak to the situation of his own community, which was at that time undergoing Jewish persecutions.<sup>32</sup> Messiahship and the Temple are significant in the trial, just as they were key issues during the Jewish War<sup>33</sup>; in addition, the apocalypse of ch. 13 has some affinities to Josephus' description of conditions in Palestine during the Revolt.<sup>34</sup> These traits indicate that Mark's Gospel came into being in a Palestinian Jewish Christian

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<sup>31</sup>. Donahue, Christ, pp. 99-101.

<sup>32</sup>. Ibid., p. 211.

<sup>33</sup>. Ibid., p. 223.

<sup>34</sup>. Ibid., p. 221.

setting, close to 70 C.E.<sup>35</sup>

As we have seen, Kee considers the discovery of the socio-cultural characteristics of the Markan community to be the cornerstone of his method. His conclusion that this was a Jewish Christian group located in rural Syria is based on three lines of reasoning. First, he says, Mark displays first-hand knowledge of life at the eastern end of the Mediterranean. The Parable of the Sower depicts precisely the manner in which seeding was done in the Near East; the unique way in which Mark describes the opening of the roof in 2:4 shows his familiarity with Palestinian housing; and the Parable of the Vineyard is an accurate portrayal of the absentee landlord system.<sup>36</sup> These clues, along with a general bias against cities<sup>37</sup>, point to a rural setting in Syria or Palestine.

Secondly, Kee argues that the Markan community, though Greek-speaking, was strongly influenced by Semitic--or, more precisely, Aramaic--patterns of speech and thought. His evidence consists primarily of the presence of transliterated Aramaic terms in Mark which are absent in Matthew and Luke, and especially of Mark's predilection for the use of amen.<sup>38</sup>

<sup>35</sup>. Ibid., p. 224.

<sup>36</sup>. Kee, Community, p. 102.

<sup>37</sup>. Ibid., pp. 90f.

<sup>38</sup>. Ibid., pp. 101f.

Kee's most important contention in this vein is sociological in nature. Utilizing Weber's concepts, he attempts to establish the basic characteristics of the communities which produced Jewish apocalyptic literature. Then, an analysis of Mark is seen to reveal many of the same traits as present in the setting of the Gospel, leading Kee to conclude that "Mark speaks to and from a community which is influenced...by the Jewish-Hasidic-Essene-apocalyptic tradition."<sup>39</sup> There are four primary clues which point in this direction.

First, the community saw itself as called to a "prophetic-charismatic ministry" which had been initiated by their founder and teacher. This is indicated in part by the significant role assigned to Elijah, and bears some resemblance to the relationship of the Qumran group to the authoritative Teacher of Righteousness, and to the movement of John the Baptist.<sup>40</sup> Secondly, Mark's understanding of discipleship called for a radical break with family ties, worldly possessions, and social conventions<sup>41</sup>, factors reminiscent of the isolated Essene community.<sup>42</sup> These groups also shared a cosmic, rather than political, eschatology in which the decisive act was the prerogative of God alone.<sup>43</sup>

<sup>39</sup>. Ibid., p. 105.

<sup>40</sup>. Ibid., pp. 87f.

<sup>41</sup>. Ibid., pp. 89-92.

<sup>42</sup>. Ibid., pp. 81-86.

<sup>43</sup>. Ibid., pp. 93, 105.

A fourth parallel involves the notion of secret revelation; both the Essenes and the Markan Christians felt that they alone possessed accurate knowledge of God's will and intentions. In the case of the latter group, this exclusivism was mitigated by the universality of their invitation to membership.<sup>44</sup>

Kee's isolation of these affinities between sectarian Judaism and Markan Christianity is interesting and instructive, but we must ask whether his case is really solid. Is there another way of accounting for his evidence which matches or exceeds his scheme in plausibility? Let us see.

To begin with, we must raise the question of whether the details furnished by Mark are sufficiently copious and precise as to permit any reasonably exact determination of the Gospel's geographical setting. Is it only in the relatively small area of Syria and Galilee that one sowed before ploughing, or lived as the tenant of an absentee landlord? At first blush, this seems unlikely, as does the suggestion that Mark 2:4 is so technically exact as to limit us to this locale. In addition, it is interesting to note that Kee cites Dodd and Jeremias for support on the first two points: each of these scholars would, in actual fact, ascribe these details, and the familiarity with Palestinian life which they may indicate, to Jesus rather than to Mark! This is

<sup>44</sup>. Ibid., pp. 93-97.

an example of the sort of question in which redaction criticism proper becomes vital. For Kee's argument to hold water, he needs to prove that these hints are not merely the baggage of the tradition, but reflect the redactor's first-hand knowledge. This he does not do.

The argument that Mark wrote for a community in which Semitic linguistic influence was discernible has more obvious difficulties. First of all, the fact that Mark contains some transliterated Aramaic words which are absent in the other Synoptics (talitha koum, 5:41; abba, 14:36) loses some of its evidential value, in that these terms are accompanied by translations into Greek. Mark, that is, had to assume that these terms were unfamiliar to his readers, whereas Matthew was under no such constraint (rhaka, 5:22, and korbanan, 27:6, remain untranslated). Kee's other support for this contention, involving the use of amen, is still weaker. The presence of this word throughout the New Testament shows the futility of any attempt to use it as evidence for a particular setting.

This question of Mark's linguistic characteristics actually deserves a fuller treatment than Kee gives it. A number of studies have dealt with this problem from different angles, and we can summarize their results briefly. J.C. Doudna investigated Semitisms in Mark's Greek in an effort to evaluate the hypothesis of an Aramaic original to the Gospel. His results, though indecisive, tended to negate

that hypothesis. For our purposes, we may note that "there is no decisive indication that suspect usages [i.e. Semitisms, of the sort which would indicate either composition in Aramaic or composition in Greek by a speaker of Aramaic] are found in passages which may be regarded as the composition of the author of the second gospel."<sup>45</sup> In terms of redaction criticism, Doudna would ascribe the major Semitisms to tradition, and not to Mark himself.

Klaus Beyer conducted a statistical study of the linguistic characteristics of each book in the New Testament, and tabulated his results according to the number of Semitisms for each 100 Graecisms.<sup>46</sup> By far, the "most Semitic" NT books were Matthew, with 329.0 Semitisms per 100 Graecisms, and Luke, with a score of 308.0. Mark came fifth at 185.2, although Acts' figure of 238.7 was due almost entirely to the frequent use of kai egeneto<sup>47</sup>, and Ephesians' 200.0 is perhaps unreliable due to the comparative brevity of the Epistle. Clearly, the Synoptics' high scores can be attributed in part to their reliance on a heavily Semitic tradition. Beyer's findings, however, are a serious challenge to any contention that Mark is a specially Semitic Gospel, as Kee suggests that it is.

<sup>45</sup>. J. Doudna, The Greek of the Gospel of Mark, JBL Monograph Series, 12 (Philadelphia: SBL, 1961), p. 135.

<sup>46</sup>. K. Beyer, Semitische Syntax im Neuen Testament (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1962), p. 298.

<sup>47</sup>. Ibid., p. 297.

Sanders' discussion of Semitisms in the Synoptics causes still further problems. His major interest was to demonstrate that the presence or absence of Semitisms is not a useful criterion for establishing the age or the priority of one of the Gospels. In so doing, he actually undermined part of the process of identifying Semitisms in the first place. For example, the use of the parataxis construction has been a favorite index for Semitic influence. Sanders points out that this phenomenon is actually even more common in the Protevangelium Jacobi than it is in Mark<sup>48</sup>; the internal evidence, however, appears to indicate an Egyptian origin for this book. "[T]he numerous Semitisms in the Protev. Jms. ...are derived from the knowledge of the Greek Bible...formal Semitisms need not reflect a Palestinian or Syrian provenance."<sup>49</sup> In other words, these Semitisms are Semitic in terms of form, but not in terms of direct linguistic influence.

The case is even stronger with asyndeton. This construction is typical not only of Aramaic, but also of Latin. Thus, "[i]n the Act. Pil. 5.2 and 14.2...a higher degree of asyndeton is to be found than occurs anywhere in Mark," and it is also evident in the Shepherd of Hermas.<sup>50</sup> Given the

<sup>48</sup> Sanders, Tendencies, p. 250.

<sup>49</sup> Ibid., p. 300.

<sup>50</sup> Ibid., p. 251.

other Latinisms in Mark which have been noted by Taylor<sup>51</sup>, a case can be made for a Latin, rather than an Aramaic, influence on the Second Gospel.

SIn conclusion, then, the linguistic characteristics of Mark's Gospel are not such as would invite the hypothesis that the Markan community existed in a Semitic setting. The techniques by which we detect Semitisms may be faulty; even if they are correct, Mark has less claim to strong Semitic influence from his environment than either Matthew or Luke.

Finally, we come to the consideration of Kee's partly sociological argument concerning the similarities between Jewish apocalypticism and Markan Christianity. These similarities do exist; but do they require the hypothesis that Mark was under the direct influence of sectarian Judaism, or can we account for these characteristics otherwise? Over forty years ago, Dibelius remarked that "...it is not hard to see the inner unity between Mark and Paul..."<sup>52</sup> As the sole certain predecessor to Mark in the field of early Christian literature, the Apostle to the Gentiles occupies a position of prime importance for this question. In actual fact, each of Kee's four points of contact between Mark and Jewish

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<sup>51</sup>V. Taylor, The Gospel According to St. Mark (London: MacMillan, 1952), p. 45; see also Sanders, Tendencies, p. 252.

<sup>52</sup>M. Dibelius, Gospel Criticism and Christology (London: Nicholson & Watson, 1935), p. 21.

apocalyptic is attested in Paul's letters to his non-Palestinian churches.

The "prophetic charismatic ministry" in Mark consists of two components: the preaching of the gospel and the working of wonders, particularly healings and exorcisms.<sup>53</sup>

Both of these figure significantly in Paul. He can sum up his entire approach in the words: "my speech and my message [kerygma] were not in plausible words of wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power..." (I Cor. 2:4). As in Mark, preaching is the call to salvation (I Cor. 1:21-24; see Mark 1:14-15). Similarly, "teaching" is as vital an activity to Paul as it is to Mark's Jesus (I Cor. 4:17; see Kee, pp. 87f.). Again, just as in Mark, the spreading of the message is accompanied by "signs and wonders and mighty works" (II Cor. 12:12; see Mark 6:12f.).

The transcendence of normal social behaviour is also to be seen in Paul, even though he did remain a social conservative in some respects. Evidently, "characteristic Near Eastern hospitality"<sup>54</sup> was the norm in the Gentile mission as well (I Cor. 9:3-18); indeed, Paul's failure to avail himself of it was a source of trouble (II Cor. 11:7-11, 12:13). Mark's call to abandon existing family ties (10:29f.) is not found in Paul, but the latter's negative

<sup>53</sup> Kee, Community, p. 88.

<sup>54</sup> Ibid., p. 89.

attitude towards the furtherance of family life (I Cor. 7:1-40, especially 32-35) carries a similar weight. As the disciples in Mark are called to do (6:8f.), Paul gives up everything, including creature comforts, for the gospel (II Cor. 11:23-27), and he expects similar sacrifices from his converts (II Cor. 9:6-12). Each writer portrays women as respected but subordinate members of the Christian community (I Cor. 11:2-16; see Kee, p. 91). We need not even comment on the inclusion of the Gentiles.

Neither Paul nor Mark regards the kingdom of God as a political entity, and thus neither advocates political involvement of any kind. "[T]he coming of the kingdom solely by divine grace"<sup>55</sup> is a theme entirely consonant with I Cor. 15, where human beings play no active role whatsoever in the eschaton.

Finally, the simultaneously inclusive and exclusive/esoteric character of Mark's church is plainly visible in Paul. The invitation is universal (I Cor. 1:24), but, at the same time, it represents the only possible way of salvation (II Cor. 5:17-6:2). Thus, the bearers of the message are those who have been entrusted with the "secret and hidden wisdom of God" (I Cor. 2:7).

Clearly, then, all those characteristics which supposedly demonstrate close contact between Mark and Palestinian Jewish sects can be found in Paul's letters to

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<sup>55</sup> Ibid., p. 93.

his Gentile congregations--and this at a time prior to the writing of the second Gospel. In the above discussion, we deliberately confined ourselves to Paul's Corinthian correspondence in order to prove just this point, for the church of Corinth appears to have been relatively devoid of Jewish influence; none of Paul's arguments has to do with problems arising from "Judaizers" or the like.<sup>56</sup> The Markan redaction, therefore, may have arisen in a non-Palestinian Gentile community in which the teachings and admonitions of Paul, or someone like him, had taken effect.

We have concrete evidence that such teachings could and did take effect among non-Jewish Christians in the first century, for the thoroughly Gentile books of Luke and Acts also display these socio-cultural characteristics. Kee's phrase "prophetic-charismatic ministry", for instance, described perfectly the portrayal of the Church in Acts. Powerful preaching guided by the Spirit is apparently the norm (2:4-21; 4:31; etc.), while miraculous events occur almost constantly, either through human agency (3:6-10; 8:39; 9:1-9; etc.). Generally, the "supernatural" element in the Church's activity is at least as prominent in Acts as in Mark.

Similarly, distinctive modes of social behaviour are readily apparent in Luke/Acts. Women receive more favourable attention here than in Mark (the stories of Elizabeth and Mary in Luke 1-2; cf. Luke 7:37-50; 8:1-3; 24:22; Acts 1:14). The sharing of property reported in Acts (2:44-47; 4:32-37) is a

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<sup>56</sup>. Kümmel, Introduction, p. 202.

more radical departure from normal patterns of living than anything to be found in Mark. Finally, the striking commandment, "Leave the dead to bury their own dead" (Luke 9:60, par. Matt. 8:22), has no Markan parallel.

There is no hint in Luke/Acts of a political eschatology to be achieved through human effort; indeed, such a belief is utterly ruled out (Luke 17:26-30; 21:28; Acts 1:6-8).

Lastly, the Lukan Church is also simultaneously inclusive and exclusivistic. The community is open to all (Acts 2:39, 10:34-48), even to a Gentile eunuch (Acts 8:26-39). In actual fact, there are hints that the Gentiles are admitted at the expense of the Jews (Luke 4:16-30; Acts 13:46; 28:28). On the other hand, there is no possible salvation except through Christ (Acts 4:12, 13:38-41); the gospel is that of "the unknown god" who becomes known only through the Christian kerygma (Acts 17:23).

In contrast to the foregoing, Mark's affinities with sectarian Judaism are of a much more superficial nature. The essential character of the Markan "prophetic-charismatic ministry"--the preaching of salvation to all the world, accompanied and attested by miracles--figures not at all in the Dead Sea Scrolls, while the stationary John the Baptist preached to Israel alone, working no wonders. Christianity's new social vision did not significantly incorporate wilderness asceticism like that of the Baptist and Qumran until the appearance of the "Desert Fathers" in the fourth century.

Thirdly, Kee's observation regarding a shared passive, non-political eschatology takes too little account of the War Scroll, which seems to indicate that the Essenes did indeed anticipate active participation in God's war against the Kittim. Finally, an interest in esoterica was not limited to Jewish sects, but pervaded the religious thought of the first century; on the other hand, there is no Jewish sectarian precedent whatsoever for Markan Christianity's inclusiveness, its openness to Gentiles as such in the present age.

We find, then, that Kee's socio-cultural arguments are self-defeating. His own categories, when correlated with the appropriate evidence, show Mark to be far closer to Gentile Christianity than to the "Jewish-Hasidic-Essene-apocalyptic tradition". Since none of Kee's attempts to demonstrate a Jewish-Christian provenance survives scrutiny, we must ask whether such a provenance can be maintained in any other way. To be precise, does this Gospel exhibit any clear signs of first-hand familiarity with Palestinian Judaism? The obvious place to look is in chapter 7.

There are two points to be made. First, in describing Pharisaic practice, Mark finds it necessary to explain these customs in some detail to his readers, who are apparently unfamiliar, not only with some of the precise requirements of the "tradition of the elders", but perhaps with the very existence of that tradition. Again Matthew has no need to do this in his account of the same incident (15:1-9, compare

Mark 7:1-8). Mark evidently cannot assume that his readership is conversant with particular Jewish procedures.

More important, however, is the fact that, when Mark does engage in an explanation of this sort, the accuracy of his own knowledge is questionable. Early in this century, Rabbi A. Büchler uncovered several details in Mark 7:1-4 which fail to correlate with what we know of first-century Judaism. Mark asserts that "all the Jews" wash before eating, purify themselves upon returning from the market, and ritually wash various vessels (7:3f.). Büchler showed that all of these requirements applied originally to priests alone.

First, according to Tos. Tohar. 1:6, not all food became impure if eaten with unwashed hands, but only the priestly dues; in other words, laymen were exempt from the rule.<sup>57</sup> Thus Mark's equation of "defiled" (koinais) and "unwashed" (aniptois) in 7:2 is false if applied to the pre-70 period.<sup>58</sup> In the second case, there are problems involving both the time and the manner of purification. On the one hand, it was normally on the third and seventh days after the incurring of defilement--not immediately thereafter, as Mark suggests--that one could receive purification.<sup>59</sup> On the other hand, if the original reading of 7:4 is rhanisontai ("sprinkle"),

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<sup>57</sup>. A. Büchler, "The Law of Purification in Mark vii, 1-23", Expt., 21 (1909-10), p. 40.

<sup>58</sup>. Loc. cit.

<sup>59</sup>. Ibid., p. 38.

the reference is to a rite which lay Jews performed only as part of a pilgrimage to Jerusalem, not as a regular purification; if baptisontai ("immerse") is preferred, Mark is citing a practice which is attested only for priests involved with the sin-offering (M. Hagiga 2:5).<sup>60</sup> Finally, the regular purification of vessels appears to have been confined to priests of a particularly strict persuasion.<sup>61</sup>

These individual points derive their cogency in part from the basic premise that levitical purity laws did not become binding upon all Jews until the triumph of Pharisaism became effective and the Jamnia council was able to exert its authority over Palestinian Jewry. This view has been espoused by major Rabbinic scholars from Büchler<sup>62</sup> to Neusner<sup>63</sup>, apparently with little opposition. A possible argument to the contrary could be developed from the work of J. N. Epstein, who has argued that M. Hagiga 2:5, which calls for the rinsing of hands before eating even ordinary food, dates at least in part from before 70 C.E.<sup>64</sup> Even if one

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60. Ibid. pp. 38f.

61. Ibid., pp. 37f.

62. A. Büchler, Types of Jewish-Palestinian Piety from 70 B.C.E. to 70 C.E. (New York: Ktav Publishing House Inc., 1968), p. 76.

63. J. Neusner, From Politics to Piety (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice Hall Inc., 1973), pp. 80, 83.

64. Cited in B. M. Bokser, "Jacob M. Epstein on the Formation of the Mishnah", in J. Neusner, ed., The Modern Study of the Mishnah (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1973), p. 47. I owe this suggestion to Dr. A. Baumgarten.

accepts his position--and not all Rabbinic scholars do<sup>65</sup>--one would still have to demonstrate that these rules were followed by Jews other than the priests and the Pharisees. The existing evidence does not seem to permit such a demonstration; indeed, M. Hagiga 2:7, which portrays Yohanan b. Gudgada as exceptionally pious precisely because he always immersed his hands before eating, appears to settle the argument.

How does this affect our reading of Mark? It leaves us with two alternatives in our assessment of the cultural milieu in which the redaction took shape. Either Mark is truly ignorant of Jewish practice or his Gospel reflects a post-Jamnia situation. The former option refutes a Palestinian Jewish origin for the Gospel, while the latter assigns the final redaction to an era in which direct Jewish influence on Christianity was minimal.

The same point can be made by considering the entire discussion of Mark 7:1-23, especially in comparison with the parallel in Matthew 15:1-20. In Matthew, the controversy remains centred on ritual purity as practised by the Pharisees and scribes; in particular, it is the issue of defilement through eating with unwashed hands which opens and closes the passage. Mark, however, turns the latter part of the dialogue into a rejection by Jesus of those dietary laws which had always applied to all Jews (7:19b), as if this naturally followed from the preceding section. Again we face the same

<sup>65</sup> Bokser's view cited in the above note is negative on this point, see pp. 46f.

two alternatives: either Mark wrote at a time in which the levitical purity laws and the general dietary laws were both universally binding upon Jews--that is, after Jamnia--or he simply did not know the difference.<sup>66</sup>

With the evidence of the above discussion in hand, we can now complete our chiasm by reconsidering Donahue's point. He is certainly correct in pointing out that the trial scene is, at least partially, an instruction on how Christians are to react to persecution. This, however, is not enough to indicate provenance. Jewish pressure on Christians was not limited to Palestine, as we see from Paul's letter to Galatia, and perhaps from the "Chrestus" riots in Rome described by Suetonius.<sup>67</sup> Moreover, the value of Mark's lesson here would not be reduced if his community were undergoing persecution from a non-Jewish source. Finally, the old argument that the emphasis on Jewish guilt for the death of Jesus reflects the failure of the Jewish mission, which was evident even in Paul's time (Rom. 9-11), is not without merit. These points are admittedly founded upon supposition, but so, in the final analysis, is that of Donahue.

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<sup>66</sup>. I am indebted to Prof. E. P. Sanders for making the point to me in precisely this way.

<sup>67</sup>. Suetonius, Lives of the Caesars V, Divus Claudius, xxv.4. Jewish persecution of Christians in the Diaspora is discussed by D. Hare, The Theme of Jewish Persecution of Christians in the Gospel According to St. Matthew (Cambridge: University Press, 1967), pp. 62-64.

We must conclude, therefore, that there are no adequate grounds for the contention that the second Gospel as produced in a Jewish Christian setting, whether in Palestine or elsewhere. Instead, we are dealing with the product of a Gentile Christian community which probably had its roots in the mission carried out by "Hellenist" Jewish Christians, who had themselves already abandoned the observance of typically Jewish laws and practices.<sup>68</sup> Mark's "Jewish" characteristics, such as the apocalyptic world-view, were mediated ultimately through Christian, not Jewish, tradition.

Can we say more? Papias, who provides us with the earliest surviving external references to any of the Gospels, specifically assigns Mark to Rome (Eusebius, H.E. 2:15). In light of this, we may recall certain linguistic evidence: the list of Latin words and idioms provided by Taylor (including the striking phrase to hikanon poiesai in 15:15, reflecting the Latin satis facere) and the possibility that the frequent asyndeton reflects Latin usage. Dix offers two further hints: first, the Roman Anti-Marcionite prologue to Mark, which describes him as colobodactylus or "stump-fingered", may preserve an authentic communal memory of the evangelist<sup>69</sup>; and, secondly, the possibility of a woman initiating divorce

<sup>68</sup>. An interesting and cogent discussion of the variant strains within the World Mission is presented by E. E. Ellis in "The Circumcision Party and the Early Christian Mission", in his Prophecy and Hermeneutic in Early Christianity (Tübingen: Mohr, 1978), pp. 116-128.

<sup>69</sup>. G. Dix, Jew and Greek, (Westminster: Dacre Press, 1953), pp. 73, 75.

proceedings (Mark 10:12) existed only under Roman law, and not in either Hebrew or Greek jurisprudence.<sup>70</sup> None of this is decisive; taken together, however, these indications are enough to make the case for Roman provenance much stronger than any other.<sup>71</sup>

The point of this extended discussion was to determine what sort of background study is relevant for an interpretation of Mark. We may now conclude that, since Mark's community very probably originated as part of the Mission to the Gentiles, the most useful background information will come from the pre-Markan literature of that Mission: the Pauline epistles, and the pre-Pauline fragments which they contain. Jewish precedents for the concepts under discussion will be surveyed in excursions removed from the main argument; in that setting, they will serve either to confirm, or to cast doubt upon, the conclusions we have just reached.

<sup>70</sup> Ibid., p. 73.

<sup>71</sup> The theory of a Syro-Palestinian origin is currently the only real rival to Roman provenance. Kümmel suggests a Gentile community in that area, Introduction, p. 70.

### 3. THE SUBJECT OF THE PRESENT STUDY

#### a. The Choice of the Subject

We suggested in Chapter 1 that the effort to shift Markan studies onto firmer ground requires thoughtful selection in terms of both method and subject. The choice of the latter is crucial, since the chosen topic then governs the entire process of locating and organizing the data. Kee, citing examples of the great variations among thematic studies of Mark, notes that "[i]n every case, the writer has seized on a theme which he considers to be central, and in terms of which the whole gospel is to be understood."<sup>1</sup> The resulting chaos of interpretations is evidently one factor which prompted Kee to develop his socio-historical method, and one can readily commend such an effort to find a new and more productive approach. However, we have already made clear our dissatisfaction with his results. We must next ask, can the "thematic" study be made to work?

The immediate response is that it ought to work. We are dealing with narrative literature of a religious type, and the dramatic working-out of vital themes is the stock-in-trade of such material. The theological interest which

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<sup>1</sup> Kee, Community, p. 9.

motivated the selection, arrangement, and even the creation of various elements in the Gospel must surely be reflected in the final product. The problem, simply stated, is to identify that theme or complex of themes which serves as a guiding principle for the Gospel as a whole. Since we are attempting to undertake a new departure in the study of Mark, rather than to build upon an established interpretative framework, it is all the more important that our chosen theme be one of unmistakeable importance in the redaction.<sup>2</sup>

The effort to identify such a theme often begins with an analysis of the structure of the work in question. This is done in the reasonable expectation that, whatever the author may conceive his central message to be, the organization of his literary product will be oriented towards a clear and compelling presentation of that message. One thinks, for example, of the supposed fivefold or "pentateuchal" structure of Matthew and its relation to "new Moses" Christology. It turns out, however, that this approach is unsuccessful with respect to Mark for at least two reasons. First, as Kee has noted<sup>3</sup>, the effort to outline the structure of Mark does not reveal a single dominant theme such as we seek. Different

<sup>2</sup>. Thus, while conceding that Mark 6:52 is in need of interpretation, we would not seize upon this obscure verse as does Quesnell in The Mind of Mark.

<sup>3</sup>. Kee, Community, p. 64.

themes--miraculous power, conflict, secrecy, the call to suffering--come to the fore in succession without their unity of purpose becoming readily evident. The most comprehensive attempt to elucidate a thematic unity in the structure of Mark is that of Weeden, but he accomplished his task by having Mark disown the message of the first seven chapters by polemicizing against it in the remainder.<sup>4</sup>

Beyond this lies the fact that Mark is unusually difficult to outline. There is, to be sure, an approximate consensus concerning the identification of topical sections in Mark, which divides the Gospel as follows: from 1:1 to 3:6; from 3:7 to somewhere early in chapter 6; from there to 8:22 or 27; from 8:22 to 10:52, or from 8:27 to 10:45; from 10:46 or 11:1 to 13:37; and from 14:1 to 16:8.<sup>5</sup> The crucial section is often taken to be the fourth, roughly chapters 8 through 10; here the focus is on Jesus' private instruction to the disciples, which, according to many recent commentators, embodies the essential features of Markan thought. Yet it is precisely here that the creation of an outline becomes particularly difficult, for numerous passages resemble "transitions" from one section to another.

Narrative breaks are, for example, comparatively clear

<sup>4</sup>. The details of Weeden's view will be discussed in chapter 11.

<sup>5</sup>. Perrin is one who espouses this scheme; his discussion of 8:22-10:52 is particularly interesting, in The New Testament: an Introduction (New York: Harper Brace Jovanovich, 1974), pp. 155-158.

at 3:6 and 6:6a.<sup>6</sup> Both are followed by general summaries which interrupt the flow of particular events, and the story then resumes in a new setting, with a change in subject matter. The next such break actually occurs at 7:37.<sup>7</sup> This verse is clearly a climax of sorts. The outpouring of awe and praise from the crowd is described in most generous terms, and such acclamation, while frequent in the first half of the Gospel, is almost nonexistent after 7:37. Moreover, it is prompted not only by a single miracle, but, evidently, by Jesus' career as a whole: kalōs panta pepoiēken.

The next verse, 8:1, begins with the phrase en ekeinais tais hēmerais. It seems probable that these words, which literally indicate temporal continuity, in fact serve to signify the opposite. Mark uses the phrase elsewhere only in 1:9 where, lacking a precise temporal referent, it serves to introduce something new: the activity of Jesus. The use of en ekeinais tais hēmerais to denote a narrative break is attested elsewhere; most notable are Exodus 2:11 LXX and Matthew 3:1, where the words cover the growth from infancy to manhood of Moses and Jesus respectively. When we take into account also the unexplained appearance of a new crowd

6. The idea of a break at 3:6 is challenged by L. E. Keck, "Mark 3:7-12 and Mark's Christology", JBL, 84 (1965), 341-358, and by R. Scroggs, "Mark: Theologian of the Incarnation", unpublished.

7. To our knowledge, only C. E. Faw has noted this, and he was unsure what to make of it. Cf his "The Outline of Mark", JBR, 25 (1957), 21, 23:

(palin pollou ochlou ontos), the break in narrative continuity between 7:37 and 8:1 is clear. By contrast, both the healing of the blind man in Bethsaida (8:22-26) and the confession of Peter (8:27-30) crop up as sequential occurrences in Jesus' travels, and not as the initiatory events of a new section in the Gospel.

One could also claim that Mark 8:31 represents the inauguration of a new section. The words kai ērxato didaskein autous set the tone for the great body of teaching material which follows. The parallel in Matt. 16:21 appears to function in this way. The incident at Caesarea Philippi would then become the conclusion of the preceding section--and appropriately enough, since Peter's confession is presumably prompted by the works of wonder which dominate much of the first half of the Gospel.<sup>8</sup>

Similarly, a break occurs at 9:50. The following verse, 10:1, is another summary like 3:7-12 and 6:6, and the instruction of the disciples from here onwards is decidedly less private, given the renewed presence of the crowds and Pharisees. The entry to Jerusalem is not set off as something new, but is rather the next noteworthy event after the departure from Jericho.

With this brief survey of the central part of the Gospel, the difficulties in establishing an outline of Mark

<sup>8</sup>. I owe this suggestion to Dr. B. F. Meyer.

which would serve our purposes should be clear. The structure of the redaction does not appear to reflect a single key theme such as we seek. There is, however, an alternative to this approach: to begin the interpretation of Mark by directing attention and effort to one vital passage. Thus, for example, Robinson began his study with a programmatic analysis of the introduction to the Gospel<sup>9</sup>, while Weeden seized upon the pivotal Caesarea pericope.<sup>10</sup> One cannot quarrel with these choices, although we shall argue later that the results of these inquiries were not, by and large, fruitful. There is, however, another important passage which, despite the volume of recent published work on Mark, has not received comparable attention. This is Mark 15:39.

Kähler's overstated description of Mark as a passion narrative with an extended introduction has often been repudiated, but there can be little doubt that the crucifixion of Jesus is the goal towards which the whole Gospel moves. As early as 2:6ff., Jesus is in conflict with the religious authorities, and his death is mentioned already in 3:6; from 8:31 on, Mark rarely departs from this or related themes for any extended time. Even the muted dénouement, devoid not

<sup>9</sup>. J. M. Robinson, The Problem of History in Mark (London: SCM, 1957).

<sup>10</sup>. Weeden, "Heresy" and Mark.

only of resurrection appearances by Jesus but of any tone of celebration whatsoever, throws the emphasis back upon the passion itself.

Just as the passion is the climactic element of the Gospel as a whole, so too the passion narrative has a climax of its own. This, clearly, comes in 15:39 with the centurion's confession: "alēthōs houtos ho anthrōpos huios theou ēn." Dramatic tension builds throughout chapter 15 as we pass from the trial before Pilate to the crowd's rejection of Jesus, then through the preliminaries to the crucifixion itself. The taunts of the scribes, the supernatural darkness, and the cry of dereliction successively compound the horror of the scene until Jesus finally expires. Simultaneously with his death, the Temple veil is torn and the centurion makes his confession. As Juel has shown, 15:38f. form a double climax, bringing to culmination the twin themes of Temple and Christology which run through the Passion story (14:58, 61f.; 15:29-32).<sup>11</sup> Of these, the accent is clearly on the latter.

Immediately after these events, attention is abruptly turned away from the cross. Indeed, 15:40f. are almost a digression, with their painstaking identification of the women and their respective origins. Thereafter we find only the burial of Jesus and the joyless discovery of the empty tomb.

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11. Juel, Messiah, p. 137f.

Thus, just as the drama continually builds towards 15:39, so also nothing that follows this verse detracts from its singular impact upon the reader.

The importance of 15:39 is, then, virtually self-evident; Perrin, for example, states that it "...is clearly for Mark a climactic moment."<sup>12</sup> It is the more surprising, then, that few, if any, interpreters of Mark have taken this fact at face value. For Mark, 15:39 is the climactic moment; consequently, a study of Markan theology will do well to take its bearings from the contents of this critically important  
12a. verse. The purpose of this dissertation will be to do precisely that.

b. The thematic content of Mark 15:39

There are two components to this verse: the setting of the confession, and the confession itself. The setting contains two features which will require analysis. The first is that the confession is ascribed not to one of the disciples, all of whom have long since fled the scene, nor to one of the women, who do witness the last events (15:40), but to a Gentile who has had no previous, explicit role in the story. Secondly, it is by witnessing the death of Jesus that he is prompted to make his proclamation. These are important elements with which we shall necessarily concern ourselves

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12. Perrin, "Christology", p. 115.

12a.

When referring to Mark 15:39 as a "key" to Mark, we mean no more than this.

later in the thesis.

Immediately, however, we must come to grips with the confession itself. Initially, the most striking feature is that the centurion describes Jesus as huios theou. Much of the recent literature devoted to Mark 15:39 has centred on the question of whether this phrase, lacking the definite article, should really be considered a christological title. In 1968, P. H. Bligh<sup>13</sup> came out in favour of a titular reading. The following year, in the same issue of Expository Times, R. G. Bratcher<sup>14</sup> and T. F. Glasson<sup>15</sup> added their support; the former suggested an origin for the title in the imperial cult, while the latter called attention to an earlier article by E. C. Colwell<sup>16</sup>, to the effect that determinate predicate nouns which precede the verb do not require the article.

In 1973 P. B. Harner<sup>17</sup> countered this trend. Locating seven other anarthrous predicate nouns in Mark, he found that they usually bear a qualitative or figurative sense. If Mark had really intended the phrase to be understood as a title,

<sup>13</sup> P. H. Bligh, "A Note on Huios Theou in Mark 15:39", Expt, 80 (1968), 51-53.

<sup>14</sup> R. G. Bratcher, "Mark xv. 39: The Son of God", Expt, 80 (1969), 286.

<sup>15</sup> T. F. Glasson, "Mark 15:39: The Son of God", Expt, 80 (1969), 286.

<sup>16</sup> E. C. Colwell, "A Definite Rule for the Use of the Article in the Greek New Testament", JBL, 52 (1933), 12-21. M. Zerwick will not confer upon Colwell's observation the status of a "rule", but concedes that it fits the evidence, citing Matt. 13:37-39; 23:8-10; John 1:49; 19:21, Biblical Greek (Rome: Pontifical Biblical Institute, 1963), #175.

Harner suggested, he would not have employed the ambiguous construction which meets us in 15:39.

Harner's well-researched argument is impressive at first glance, but fails under closer scrutiny. The intended reader of Mark's Gospel, if puzzled by the form of 15:39, would not search out other anarthrous predicate nouns which precede the verb in order to clarify the problem; rather, he would read 15:39 consistently with previous references to Jesus' sonship to God. If we confine ourselves to other instances in which this sonship is predicated to Jesus (omitting the vocative in 5:7 and the questionably original reference in 1:1), we find that they do possess the definite article: ho huios mou in 1:11 and 9:7, ho huios tou theou in 3:11, and ho huios tou eulogētou in 14:61. Mark's readers, therefore, would very likely understand huios theou in 15:39 as titular, in conformity with these earlier examples.

This supposition is bolstered by Zerwick's findings that, throughout the NT, the predicate use of the title "Son of God" virtually always conforms to Colwell's observation. The phrase occurs in the predicate twenty-three times: "...thirteen times with the article, always after the verb, ten times without the article, of which nine cases before the verb."<sup>18</sup> We may therefore conclude that the absence of the article in Mark 15:39 is a matter of syntax which does not detract from the

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<sup>18</sup>. Zerwick, Greek, #175.

titular import of the phrase.

Our second preliminary observation in the confession is not entirely unrelated to the foregoing problem. Luke's form of the confession in 23:47 is, as is well known, very different from what we read in the other Synoptics. The versions of Matthew (27:54) and Mark are identical, with one exception: Mark's inclusion of ho anthrōpos. Alone of the three evangelists, Mark has chosen to emphasize that sonship to God is being predicated of a human being. It is noteworthy that in 1:11, 3:11, 9:7, and 14:61 the ascription of sonship follows the verb; here, Mark places it before the verb allowing it to stand in close and unmistakeable juxtaposition to ho anthrōpos. The reader thus has his attention drawn to the polarity of the divine and the human, and sees, with the centurion, that dichotomy somehow overcome in Jesus and/or through his death. This, as much as anything else, forces us to regard huios theou as fully titular; Harner's suggestion would not allow the phrase to bear the theological weight which is evidently being placed upon it.

Mark, then, offers as the climactic and definitive statement of his Gospel a confession which ascribes some sort of divinity or divine significance to Jesus the man. The task of the dissertation will be to investigate the meaning of this statement in terms of the Gospel as a whole.

It may be appropriate, however, to digress here in order to meet one objection which may immediately present

itself. It is this: is not a Christology which is built upon the twin themes of Jesus' humanity and divinity an anachronism when applied to Mark? Does it not smack of the fourth-century and later Christianity? Does it perhaps reflect twentieth-century theological concerns?

Obviously, only the completed thesis can fully answer these questions. At this point we may call attention to the fact that a central element in Mark's view of existence is expressed in terms of a God/man polarity. "God" and "man", that is, represent two contrasting extremities within the whole of reality, each of which exerts a mode of attraction or a focal point of orientation in opposition to that of the other. Though the briefest of the Synoptics, Mark contains the greatest number of pointed contrasts between God's majesty and man's weakness and moral inferiority. Such references occur six times prior to 15:39 (7:8; 8:33; 10:9, 27; 11:30; 12:14). Matthew has proper parallels to four of these, while the polarity is somewhat weaker in 22:16 (Mark 12:14), and altogether absent from 15:3 (Mark 7:8). Luke, on the other hand, has proper parallels only to Mark 10:27 (Luke 18:27) and 11:30 (Luke 20:4); and of his three unique combinations of "God" and "man", only one is used to express the kind of contrast we are discussing (16:15; contrast 2:52, 18:4). Since, then, the God/man polarity is evidently of particular concern to Mark, it should not be surprising that 15:39 presents Jesus explicitly in terms of a resolution to this theme.

Thus, while Mark certainly did not think about the humanity and divinity of Jesus in the same way as did the Fathers of Chalcedon, it remains true that later periods in Christian thought hold no monopoly on these motifs, and that they present themselves as elements of unavoidable significance in Markan Christology.

PART II  
PRE-MARKAN CHRISTOLOGY

#### 4. INTRODUCTION

In Chapter 2, we argued that Mark's inner characteristics lead us to the conclusion that the motivating ideas of his Gospel find their setting and immediate source in the prior Christian tradition, and not in an ongoing Jewish influence. Consequently, a background study appropriate to an elucidation of Markan Christology must concern itself with the evidence concerning christological thought in pre-Markan Christianity. That will be the purpose of this section of the thesis.

Considerable scholarly effort has been devoted to illuminating the origin and development of Christology. By and large, the subject matter of such studies has been the use of certain titles with reference to Jesus. This has been the format of the "classics" in the field, from Cullmann's Christology of the New Testament to Hahn's Christologische Hoheitstitel to Fuller's Foundations of New Testament Christology. Despite the risk of oversimplification, it seems fair to suggest that these and other such works share some common methodological presuppositions. They assume that the christological titles themselves originated in non-Christian milieux where each possessed a definite and distinct content or set of associations; that the earliest Christians (or Jesus himself) took up those titles because they understood Jesus to be conformed to those pre-existent abstract models;

and that, as Christianity evolved away from these original milieux, the titles lost some of their original associations and were transformed or discarded, particularly in the sub-apostolic era.

A pertinent example of this approach is the apparent consensus on the origin and meaning of the title "Son of God". Hahn speaks for the majority of critical scholars when he contends that the earliest Christian use of this phrase corresponded to the Jewish view of the Davidic Messiah as an honorary or "adopted" son of Yahweh.<sup>1</sup> It is only in Hellenistic Gentile Christianity, a comparatively late development, that it becomes proper to speak of the divinity of Jesus.<sup>2</sup>

There is at least one inherent problem in this approach. It is questionable whether all these clearly distinct, yet abstract, ideas existed as such even in Judaism; the New Testament evidence as a whole, however, indicates a widespread lack of precision in the use of these titles. Let us consider four pertinent examples: kyrios, Christos, huios theou, and ho huios tou anthrōpou. Cullmann suggests that in the NT "Messiah" (Christ) and "Son of Man" generally pertain to Jesus' eschatological function; "Lord" to his exalted interim state; and "Son of God" to his pre-existence. Even a brief survey

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<sup>1</sup>. F. Hahn, Christologische Hoheitstitel (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1963), pp. 281-4.

<sup>2</sup>. Ibid., p. 306.

indicates the inherent error in such a procedure. Jesus died and rose as Christ (I Cor. 15:3-5), as Lord (I Cor. 11:26, Acts 4:33), as Son of God (Rom. 5:10), and as Son of Man (Mark 8:33). He is exalted as Lord and Christ (Acts 2:36), as Son of God (Heb. 1:1-4; Rev. 2:18), and as Son of Man (Acts. 7:56). He will effect the eschaton as Christ (I Cor. 15:23), as Lord (I Thessalonians 4:16), as Son of God (I Cor. 15:28), and as Son of Man (Matt. 26:64). In other words, all the major titles are capable of embracing all the major "roles" of Jesus in New Testament Christology.

As Cullmann himself suggests "[w]e must take into account the fact that early Christianity by no means always distinguished so sharply between the titles."<sup>3</sup> Perhaps no one has taken this advice as seriously as need be. Early Christian literature exhibits a variety of usages and connotations for each major title. There is no simple correspondence between particular titles and precise christological themes. This would suggest that the interpreter, while not remaining ignorant of the Jewish background of the titles, must give priority to the fact that all the titles have undergone what Dahl calls an interpretatio christiana.<sup>4</sup> The content of any given title in a Christian source depends less

<sup>3</sup>O. Cullmann, The Christology of the New Testament, trans. S. Guthrie, C. Hall (London: SCM, 1963), p. 9.

<sup>4</sup>N. A. Dahl, "The Messiahship of Jesus in Paul", The Crucified Messiah and other essays (Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing House, 1974); p. 40.

upon a prior Jewish or Hellenistic concept than upon the fact that it refers to Jesus. Its precise meaning in a particular text is determined by the author's larger christological vision. It is this larger vision which is the ultimate goal of christological study, and the manner in which an author uses christological titles is a truer indication of his Christology than is any supposedly fixed or "objective" content which is ascribed to them by modern scholars.

Therefore the task at hand is as follows. Having located Mark in the setting of the World Mission, we now seek to characterize the christological visions which animate the early literature of the Mission, with the limited purpose of locating precedents and parallels for the Markan divine/human polarity. Thus we must clarify in advance two factors: the sort of christological material which is eligible for consideration and our working definition of divinity.

The obvious sources with which we must deal are those passages which attempt to discuss the person of Jesus, or what later generations would describe by the technical term "nature". Here, if anywhere, we shall find explicit references to the relationship between Jesus and God which was evidently of importance to Mark. An understanding of how other, earlier Christians handled this theme should be useful in setting the parameters for our discussion of Mark.

However, such sources are not as numerous as we might like, and some form of corroboration of our findings thus

becomes necessary. We shall accomplish this by taking up Cullmann's insight that early Christology was, to a large degree, "functional."<sup>5</sup> We must, nevertheless, define "function" in a more precise way than he did. Cullmann's study is laid out according to those "functions" which, he believes, were ascribed to Jesus in each temporal phase of his being: his pre-existence, his earthly life, his present role, and his eschatological activity. Though he distinguishes this idea of "function" from "nature", the scheme still seems overly speculative in character, so much so as to spoil his insight. We shall take a more controlled view of what constitutes "function". Since we ought to expect a meaningful connection between Christology and soteriology in any given source, we shall use "function" to define that relationship; or, more precisely, to identify the role which is attributed to Christ in a particular scheme of salvation. Passages dealing with this role will therefore be used to complement our study of the more speculative christological material.

The problem of establishing a working definition of divinity for a study such as this is great, and could easily form the subject matter of a lengthy dissertation by itself. Within the scope of the present thesis, we cannot attempt to create a thoroughgoing hypothesis on the meaning of divinity in the Greco-Roman era--not least because any

<sup>5</sup> Cullmann, Christology, pp. 3f.

refined theory would run the risk of failing to reflect what may be a relatively undifferentiated or loosely-defined idea on the part of the early Christians. Instead, we must concentrate upon that which will be directly relevant to our study of Mark.

We have already noted (in Chapter 3) that Mark depicts a state of opposition between God and man, which is reconciled in Jesus at the climactic moment of the Gospel, wherein he is described as belonging to both realms. This, we shall argue in the main body of the thesis, is the heart of Mark's Christology. What we wish to do here is to locate in other early Christian sources any sign that this or similar ideas could be and were held in the context of the World Mission of the first century. What, then, shall we accept as positive evidence?

There is little need to argue on behalf of the idea that Jesus belongs to human kind in the thought of most early Christians, including Mark. Indeed, we have a right to assume that this view underlies any text which does not display overt evidence of docetic thinking. The problem arises in the attempt to determine what it means to say that Jesus belongs to the category of the divine. C. F. D. Moule has made a creditable attempt in his most recent book. He maintains that "Paul thought of the risen Christ in much the same way as a theist thinks of God--as personal but supra-

individual.<sup>6</sup> The latter term is his characterization of Paul's corporate or participatory language. He goes on to assert that this view is universal in the New Testament, that the other writings contain "certain assumptions [such as the universal effect of Christ's death and the concept of Christ as the fulfilment of Scripture]...which, by implication, point to precisely that supra-individual aspect of Christ which the non-Pauline writers do not make explicit."<sup>7</sup> Finally, he traces this belief to Jesus' own impact on the earliest Christians.<sup>8</sup>

Moule has left himself open to the charge that, by using Paul's idea of the corporate Christ as the key to NT Christology, he has, in effect, turned all the early Christians into latent Paulinists. Is the notion of Christ as corporate, or supra-individual, really the sine qua non of the belief that Jesus is divine? If so, why do non-Pauline writers affirm the divinity of Christ while displaying only the most tenuous of evidence concerning a corporate Christology? This is where Moule's "Paul-first" method can become misleading; it may give rise to the assumption that the rest of the NT literature makes sense only when read along with Paul. This

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6. C. F. D. Moule, The Origin of Christology (Cambridge: University Press, 1977), p. 107.

7. Loc. cit.

8. Ibid., pp. 135f.

would do scant justice to the theological capacity of the other writers.

Our preference is to find a more appropriate common denominator to expressions which identify Jesus as divine. In terms of speculative Christology, we shall accept, as evidence of belief in the divinity of Christ, formulations which ascribe to his person an intrinsic transcendence. That is, the notion of Jesus as risen, ascended, and expected to return is not necessarily enough. According to Jewish legend, Enoch too was assumed into heaven, continued in a personal existence there, and was awaited as decisive witness at the last judgment--all without becoming intrinsically more than human.<sup>9</sup> Divinity requires more than this; a transcendent dimension must be seen as proper to Jesus, and not as merely conferred upon him.

The attempt to use soteriological material to answer our question requires similar strictures. What we seek is evidence of a soteriology which would naturally correlate

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<sup>9</sup>. There is no suggestion in I Enoch, Jubilees ch. 4, or any other witness to the Enoch legend prior to 200 CE that Enoch's exaltation made him more than human. I share the opinion of Casey that, in the Similitudes, "Son of Man" is not the title of a heavenly being; rather, Enoch is the virtuous human being--the son of man who has righteousness--who is appointed by God as the Elect One. See M. Casey, "The Use of the Term 'Son of Man' in the Similitudes", Journ Stud Jud., 7 (1976), 11-29.

with a belief in the divinity of Jesus. In his Jew and Greek,<sup>10</sup> Dix argued that the Christology of early Jewish Christianity was "low" only from a non-Jewish perspective conditioned by ontological thinking.<sup>10</sup> Jewish thinking about Messiahship was functional, and, within its own categories, Jewish-Christian Christology was "high":

The function of the Messiah is a Divine function; His bringing in the "Kingdom of the Heavens" is God's own bringing in of his own Kingdom; the Messiah's action in history is starkly identified again and again with God's own action in history, even when (e.g. in the Psalms of Solomon) the Messiah is described as a human Davidic King...

Once Jesus was accepted as "Messiah" by Jews (even by Himself as a Jew) this identification of His own action in history with the action of God himself was inescapable (regardless of questions of "humanity" and "deity") simply because that was what "Messiahship" meant to Jews.<sup>11</sup>

Though we do not wish to defend here the whole of Dix's approach to the history of Christology, he appears to have identified the sort of functional supposition which would correspond to belief in ontological divinity: the idea that Christ's role in salvation is not confined to a limited, continuity with God's saving intention, but that it is coextensive and coterminous with that intention.

With these methodological considerations in hand, we now proceed to examine the use of humanity and divinity as christological motifs in the pre-Markan literature of the Mission to the Gentiles.

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<sup>10</sup>. Dix., Jew, p. 79.

<sup>11</sup>. Ibid., p. 80.

## 5. FRAGMENTS OF PRE-PAULINE TRADITION

Many sorts of problems attend the effort to recover theological perspectives from the small passages in which Paul appears to be quoting earlier, crystallized expressions of Christian faith. Difficulties range from the very process of identifying such nuggets of tradition to the attempt to determine the chronological and linguistic origin of each. The latter is a pertinent issue, inasmuch as the hymns and formulae are unlikely to be the product of a homogeneous pre-Pauline Christianity; though we cannot attempt to solve such a dilemma here, we must nevertheless resist the temptation to allow one such fragment to determine the interpretation of another, as if both were composed by the same anonymous Christian. As for the former problem, we shall confine ourselves to four widely-acknowledged pre-Pauline elements which are contained in the seven authentic Pauline letters. Of these, two are directly christological and two soteriological.

### a. Romans 1:3-4

In a 1972 article, H. Schlier presented an interesting three-step account of the development of this small creed. He argued that the earliest form of the confession portrayed Jesus, the descendant of David, installed as Son of God through his resurrection.<sup>1</sup> The second version<sup>2</sup> that received

<sup>1</sup> H. Schlier, "Zu Röm 1,3f", in H. Balthensweiler, B. Reicke, eds., Neues Testament und Geschichte [Cullmann Festschrift] (Zürich: Theologisches Verlag, 1972), pp. 213f.

by Paul, contained the additional elements kata sarka and kata pneuma hagiosynēs, the latter of which appears nowhere else in Paul.<sup>2</sup> Finally, Paul himself added the phrase en dynamei.<sup>3</sup> Schlier's arguments are plausible; even if his historical reconstruction is not correct, his scheme provides a useful framework for exegeting the elements of the passage.

The shortest form of the creed is clearly adoptionistic. Jesus is described as born "of the seed of David", presumably through his father's line. Upon, and by means of, his being resurrected from the dead, he is designated--becomes--Son of God. This is as neat a picture of adoptionistic Christology as one could hope to find. The relationship between "seed of David" and "Son of God" is exactly what one would expect from a messianic exegesis of II Samuel 7 or Psalm 2. That is, David's fully human descendant is named as honorary Son of God by virtue of his royal office; that office was assumed only at Easter. Regarded from another perspective, this formulation suggests no intrinsic difference between the risen Jesus and the exalted Enoch. The reasons and methods of exaltation differ, but both figures finish as human beings miraculously transported to spend the duration of history in

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<sup>2</sup>. Ibid., pp. 211f.

<sup>3</sup>. Ibid., p. 210. W. Kramer seems inclined to agree, in Christ, Lord, Son of God, trans. B. F. Hardy (London: SCM, 1966), 24a.

God's presence.<sup>4</sup>

The presence of kata sarka and kata pneuma hagiosynēs complicates the picture. As Schlier notes, these phrases do not simply reinforce the two-stage adoptionistic Christology. He maintains that they constitute an antithetical parallelism.<sup>5</sup> If true, this may mean that Jesus' descent from David has been relegated to the realm of the superficial, if not of the false. The "truth" about Jesus is what he is according to the Spirit: the Son of God, designated--revealed?--as such by the resurrection. At the very least, the fact that Jesus' sonship to God is set in tension with his human descent opens the door to the idea that Jesus intrinsically belongs to a realm other than that of humanity.

On the other hand, the two elements in the parallelism

<sup>4</sup>. This is what the text explicitly says. As Prof. B.F. Meyer has suggested to me, however, there remains the question of whether the early adoptionistic formulations were "closed" or "open". That is, are these statements conscious rejections of a higher Christology or stages in the development towards such a Christology? Put another way, what is denied here: Jesus' divinity or the non-Christian view of Jesus? In each case, the latter alternative seems more plausible, especially in the light of Dix's argument that the transition of Christology from Jewish to Greek frames of reference was not a transfer from a "low" to a "high" Christology, but from a high "functional" Christology to a high "ontological" Christology (Jew, pp. 79f.). Also relevant is M. Hengel's observation that "Son of God" is actually the title which most "...connects the figure of Jesus with God", The Son of God, trans. J. Bowden (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1976), p. 63. However plausible such views may appear, we must nevertheless seek to rest our case upon explicit evidence of belief in Jesus' divinity.

<sup>5</sup>. Schlier, "Zu Röm. 1,3f", pp. 209, 213.

are probably not related so antagonistically. In this case, the creed would be postulating a balance of two dimensions in Jesus: the human and the divine. Both are affirmed, but the latter is emphasized.<sup>6</sup> Jesus is a man; as the Davidic Messiah, he is perhaps regarded as the foremost among men. The resurrection, however, is held to demonstrate that there is, simultaneously, a second side to the reality of Jesus, one which is as intrinsically divine as the first is human.<sup>7</sup> Consequently, this reading of the creed would be strong evidence of a pre-Pauline belief in the divinity of Jesus. Indeed, however we interpret the parallelism of the kata phrases, the fact that humanity and divinity are set on equal structural footing makes it exceedingly difficult to maintain that the latter is to be regarded as less literally "real" than the former.

Whether or not it was Paul himself who added the phrase en dynamei to the creed, Schlier's analysis of its function seems to be accurate. It serves to take the wind from the sails of the adoptionistic elements of the formula by suggesting that the resurrection constituted the occasion of Jesus' assumption of the role of Son of God, which had always been his prerogative by right and by nature.<sup>8</sup> In other words, his

<sup>6</sup> Kramer, Christ, 24a.

<sup>7</sup> Schlier, "Zu Röm 1,3f", p. 213.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid., p. 210.

intrinsic divinity passed from concealment to manifestation.

Thus, the creed of Romans 1:3-4 presents us with convincing evidence that some pre-Pauline Christians regarded Jesus as embodying both human and divine dimensions.

b. Philippians 2:6-11<sup>9</sup>

This hymn exhibits in plain fashion the motifs which we have just uncovered. The divine/human theme, in its application to Jesus, appears openly in the contrasting phrases en morphē theou and en homoiōmati anthrōpōn/schemati ... hōs anthrōpos. The contents of the passage are, however, notoriously problematical; we must therefore make a brief effort to elucidate how the ideas of divinity and humanity are related.

There can be no doubt that Jesus is here presented as intrinsically divine. The notion of personal pre-existence itself is virtually enough to establish this, according to our broad working definition of divinity. Moreover, the weight of the evidence appears to favour those who understand the mode of Christ's pre-existence to be characterized as to einai isa theō; equality was already his<sup>10</sup>, and was that which he gave up.<sup>11</sup> The conceptual rhythm of the hymn suggests

<sup>9</sup> The Pauline authorship of the hymn has been defended by, for example, R.P. Martin, An Early Christian Confession (London: Tyndale Press, 1960), pp. 14-16.

<sup>10</sup> W. Foerster, "πρὸς τοὺς ἄγιους", TDNT, I, p. 474. Contrast Martin, Confession, pp. 21f.; D. Georgi, "Der vorpaulinische Hymnus Phil 2:6-11", in E. Dinkler, ed., Zeit und Geschichte. [Bultmann Festschrift] (Tübingen: Mohr, 1964), p. 276.

<sup>11</sup> A. Oepke, "κενός . . .", TDNT, III, p. 661.

that his exaltation as Lord of the three-tiered universe constituted a return to his former position: "from eternity to eternity", as it were, his place is alongside God. Whatever difference exists between the states of pre-existence and exaltation seems to have less to do with a "lower" and a "higher" spiritual position than with a transition from a passive to an active cosmic role, or from hiddenness to manifestation.

The greater problems arise, paradoxically, in interpreting the words of the hymn on the subject of Jesus' humanity. In fact, two extreme views are possible. An emphasis on the use of kenoun and the apparent exchange of the morphe theou for the morphe doulou could lead to what Knox calls "kenoticism": the view that when Christ became man, he gave up his divinity.<sup>12</sup> On the other hand, the fact that his humanity is described in terms of homoiōma and schēma could lead to a docetic interpretation.<sup>13</sup> This clearly requires some elucidation. We may begin with the observation that Christ's becoming man is discussed on two different levels: the kenosis from the morphe theou to the morphe doulou is one thought, while the description of Jesus as én homoiōmati anthrōpōn and schemati...hōs anthrōpos is another. We shall do well to treat each separately.

12. J. Knox, The Humanity and Divinity of Christ (Cambridge: University Press, 1967), p. 12.

13. Ibid., p. 32.

Knox's interpretation goes awry when he suggests that morphe "...can better be translated 'nature' than 'form'."<sup>14</sup> In actual fact, morphe almost always refers to external appearance, and not to inward "essence".<sup>15</sup> This point is amplified by the fact that the only real antithesis to morphe theou is morphe doulou. There is no trace of a belief that Jesus was literally a slave during his life on earth; rather, he took on the outward appearance of a slave in the sense of "...a being which is wholly dependent on the will of another, which has to bow to and obey this other."<sup>16</sup> The change from morphe theou to morphe doulou is a change of external circumstances only: "There is a strong sense of the unity of this person. The essence remains, the mode of being changes..."<sup>17</sup> The two "forms" are metaphorical representations of the framework within which the downward movement of "emptying" takes place: Christ gave up his divine potency and became powerless. Since these phrases do not deal with Christ's "essence" or "nature", they cannot provide of themselves a direct solution to our problem.

The description of Christ as "in the likeness of men" and "in appearance...as a man" is clearly intended to be taken

<sup>14.</sup> Loc. cit.

<sup>15.</sup> W. Bauer, A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature, trans. and adapted W. F. Arndt, F.W. Gingrich (Chicago: University Press, 1957), p. 530.

<sup>16.</sup> J. Behm, "μορφή...", TDNT, IV, p. 750.

<sup>17.</sup> Oepke, "κενός", p. 661.

literally, in contrast to the metaphorical "form of a slave". It is difficult for a modern scholar to read these phrases without being struck by their docetic possibilities. However, Behm has correctly noted that "...there is no trace of a Hellenistic philosophical understanding of morphe in this passage..."<sup>18</sup> The same is true of homoioma and schemá; their mere presence cannot conclusively establish the validity of a docetic interpretation. On the contrary, both words can bear a meaning which implies the truth, not the falsity, of outward appearance.<sup>19</sup> At least two considerations lead us towards the conclusion that this possibility is to be preferred here.

First, we should recall our objection to the emphasis on precision in early Christology. In the immediate case, it should be evident that the early Christians who produced and used the hymn did not likely possess the erudition and interest in (not to mention the leisure for) the sort of philosophical speculation which produced the Christology of Chalcedon. The sophisticated formula of one person with two natures was simply not available. Consequently, it seems reasonable to suggest that homoioma and schemá may have been chosen precisely in order to express Jesus' humanity

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18. Behm, "μορφή", p. 752.

19. Bauer, Lexicon, pp. 570, 804f. Similarly, J. Schneider can state that "The δυοτύπια thus indicates two things, first the likeness in appearance, and secondly the distinction in essence", "ὅμοιος...", TDNT V, p. 196, without meaning that the real humanity of Jesus is denied, pp. 195f.

without simultaneously denying his divinity, a risk which would accompany the use of a less equivocal formulation such as "he became a man".

Secondly, we must note that the hymn presents the death of Jesus as the culmination of his humble obedience and as the immediate reason for his exaltation. As is well known, the inner logic of docetism militates against the ascription of supreme significance to the crucifixion; indeed, it can produce a denial that Jesus suffered at all.<sup>20</sup> The centrality of Jesus' death in the hymn, therefore, would seem to preclude the influence of a conscious, articulate docetic belief here. If, at this early stage, a docetic belief is not conscious, it is probably not present.

Thus we reach the conclusion that the Philippians hymn affirms simultaneously the eternal divinity and the real humanity of Jesus. At a point in history, the pre-existent Christ gave up the external trappings of divine authority, and became dependent upon and obedient to the will of God; assuming the reality of mortal existence, he died in obedience; God responded by exalting him to manifest Lordship of creation. This passage provides a strong indication that the early Christians found the divine/human motif to be an appropriate major tool in their Christology.<sup>20a.</sup>

20: See e.g. Ignatius of Antioch, Trallians, 9f.

20a F.W. Beare reaches similar conclusions in A Commentary on the Epistle to the Philippians (London: Adam & Charles Black, 1959), pp. 78-88.

accepted his death as being for them.<sup>21</sup>

This is certainly the view of I Cor. 15:3-5.

Also worthy of notice is the insistence that the atoning death and resurrection of Christ were "according to the Scriptures". The fact of the appeal to Scripture is more pertinent to our inquiry than is the question of the identity of the passages to which the appeal is made, for it reveals part of the logic at work here. Christians, no less than Jews, regarded the Hebrew Scriptures as revelation from God and as integrally related to the central saving act. Because each had a different idea of what the saving act is, each had also a different understanding of this relationship.

Sanders finds in most of Palestinian Judaism (IV Ezra excepted) a religious pattern he calls "covenantal nomism".

This is

the view that one's place in God's plan is established on the basis of the covenant and that the covenant requires as the proper response of man his obedience to its commandments, while providing means of atonement for transgression.<sup>22</sup>

The role of "Scripture" in such a scheme would presumably be twofold: to explicate God's gracious, saving act of establishing the covenant, which is a past event, and to present those commandments which must be obeyed in order to mark and maintain one's status in the covenant. Knowledge

<sup>21</sup>. E. P. Sanders, Paul and Palestinian Judaism (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1977), p. 463; emphasis his.

<sup>22</sup>. Ibid., p. 75.

of Scripture is thus essential to remaining in the covenant. The pattern of transgression and atonement, by and large, takes place within the bounds of covenant status.

The picture which emerges from I Cor. 15:3-5 is quite different. Here, the saving act is a single, comprehensive act of atonement. The essential role of "Scripture" is merely predictive: the Christian is to see there the signs that God's eternal intention was at work in the death and resurrection of Christ. In covenantal nomism, Scripture is logically consequent to the saving act: it witnesses to that act in the past, and conveys to the present the obligations which result from that act. In this creed, Scripture constitutes advance notice of a saving act which is future as regards the writers of Scripture, but which has been accomplished within the lifespan of the Christians who produced the formula. The evident notion that the atoning death of Christ is God's sole provision for salvation, and that the primary purpose of revealed Scripture is to point to that event, appears to fit well our category of a belief that Christ's role is coextensive and coterminous with God's intention in the plan of salvation. This implies that Christ is seen as more than another of God's human agents. His all-sufficient role indicates an intrinsic difference from anything ascribed to Moses, the prophets, and even the

exalted Enoch.<sup>23</sup>

d. Romans 10:9

This short confessional formula may also be quoted in full:

(hoti) ean homologēsēs en tō stomati sou  
 kyrion Iēsoun  
 kai pisteusēs en tē kardia sou hoti ho  
 theos auton egeiren ek nekrōn  
 sōthēse

This formulation makes salvation dependent upon public confession of the Lordship of Jesus, and belief in the resurrection of Jesus as a factual event. The requirements are presented in a linguistically parallel manner: each consists of the verb, an en phrase referring to a part of the body, and the direct object which provides the content of the act required by the verb. This close correspondence in form does not represent an antithetical parallelism such as we found in Romans 1:3f., but resembles more closely the phenomenon of repetitive couplets in Hebrew poetry. It seems likely that we have here not two different requirements, but a twofold presentation of what it means to become a Christian. Public confession is the outward manifestation, and sincere belief the inward, of that act which qualifies the individual for salvation.

If this is correct, it would follow that Jesus' Lordship is inseparably related to the resurrection. This con-

<sup>23</sup>. Though it suffers from the general weaknesses described above, Moule's discussion of the universal availability of the effects of Christ's death, as reflecting a belief in his divinity, is not without interest: Origin, pp. 107-126.

sideration leads us back into the realm of speculative Christology: do we here have to do with adoptionism pure and simple, or with an underlying view of the resurrection as restoration to a temporarily-forfeited divine status (Phil. 2:8-9) or as the manifestation of previously-obscured divinity (Romans 1:3f.)? The brevity of the formula does not provide sufficient data for a firm conclusion. Let us simply note that the apparently widespread usage of homologein kyrion Iēsoun was, at least sometimes, employed as an acclamation of Jesus' divinity (Phil. 2:11).<sup>24</sup>

From a purely soteriological point of view, it is clear that nothing beyond Christ's saving act, and belief in it, is necessary for salvation. Again, the brevity of the formula prevents us from pushing our conclusion very far--there is no reference to any of God's other acts of deliverance or revelation, which would clarify matters in the way in which it was possible to do for I Cor. 15:3-5. Nevertheless, we may say with some confidence that, at the very least, there is nothing here which contradicts belief in the divinity of Jesus, or which would prevent the use of this statement by one who so believed.

#### e. Summary

We have analyzed four fragments of pre-Pauline tradition, with the intention of ascertaining whether the motifs of

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<sup>24.</sup> Kramer's much-qualified statement that "...in a certain sense the Lord thus takes to himself the absolute status of God..." says enough to serve our purposes. Christ, 18e.

humanity and divinity were used to provide a framework for Christological thought at this early stage. We found that the two sources which deal with "speculative" Christology (Rom. 1:3f., Phil. 2:6-11) did employ this thematic polarity, and employed it in such a way as to manifest a belief that Jesus himself was truly divine as well as human. In the soteriological passages, we discovered that notion of the all-sufficiency of Jesus' saving act which, we hold, would be the soteriological counterpart to a speculative assertion of his divintiy. This is clear in I Cor. 15:3-5, and probable in Rom. 10:9. Thus, in the world of Hellenistic Christianity through which Paul moved and from which he derived these statements, it would appear that belief in the divinity of Jesus was common, was important, and was quite possibly a fundamental element of the faith.

## 6. PAUL

Paul's belief in the divinity of Jesus is universally recognized. Though the time is long past when he could be credited (or blamed) for originating this idea, there can be no doubt whatsoever concerning his espousal of it. Our task in this chapter, then, is to review Paul's Christology according to the scheme used above, in order to ascertain more exactly what the divinity and the humanity of Christ actually mean to Paul and to his overall vision.

### a. The God/Man Polarity

For our purposes, one of the most interesting observations to be made in the Pauline literature is the fact that the God/man polarity, which we noted in Mark, is significant here as well. The distinction between God and (unchristian) man is absolute: "For the foolishness of God is wiser than man, and the weakness of God is stronger than man" (I Cor. 1:25); "Let God be true, though every man be false" (Rom. 3:4). Consequently, salvation must be sought from God and not from man (I Cor. 2:5), and Christian life is to be conducted according to just that orientation (Rom. 2:29, Gal. 1:10).

In Chapter 7, we shall argue in some detail that the God/man polarity is the cornerstone of Mark's worldview. This is not, however, the case in Paul. Paul's vision of existence does involve a duality of sorts, but the God/man theme is a minor expression of this, or a corollary of it; other

formulations come closer to the heart of Paul's thinking. One example is the opposition between pneuma and sark. "Flesh" is more than the aggregate of humankind, it is the realm of sin, an active power which both opposes God and enslaves men (Rom. 6:6, II Cor. 4:4, etc.). Thus, the real antithesis to God, for Paul, is not "man" himself, but man in bondage, and, more particularly, the "spiritual" power which effects bondage. Man is not essentially one pole in the polarity; he can move from one pole to the other, "from the lordship of sin to the lordship of Christ"<sup>1</sup>, without ending the polarity. God's real enemy is the dimension of sin, death, the demonic powers, and so forth, which must be destroyed in its own right (I Cor. 15:25f.).

Nevertheless, Paul does know and use the God/man duality, and this fact is relevant for our study of his Christology. Its relevance is nowhere clearer than in Gal. 1:1, where Paul insists that he received his apostleship "not from men nor through man, but through Jesus Christ and God the father ..." The God/man polarity is also a Christ/man polarity:

#### b. Pauline Christology

As Gal. 1:1 shows unequivocally, Paul, when he is using humanity and divinity as antithetical categories, un-

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<sup>1</sup> Sanders, Paul, p. 500.

hesitatingly puts Jesus on the side of the divine. It is equally unmistakeable that Paul understands this element of divinity to be intrinsic to Jesus, and not as a metaphor of adoption. He is at home with the notion that Christ existed with God prior to his appearance on earth; not only does he take up this idea in the hymn of Phil. 2:6-11, he himself makes spontaneous reference to it (II Cor. 8:9, Gal. 4:4, Rom. 8:3). Christ is uniquely the Lord of Glory (I Cor. 2:8) and the likeness of God (II Cor. 4:4). Indeed, as the most straightforward reading has it, Paul may actually call Jesus theos in Rom. 9:5.<sup>2</sup> Apart from this last datum, there is little about which to contend.<sup>3</sup>

More problematic is Paul's view of Jesus' humanity. In some passages there is an indivisible bond between the motifs of humanity<sup>4</sup> and divinity: Gal. 4:4 portrays the pre-existent Son "sent forth...born of a woman, born under the law"; in Romans 9:5, the problematic theos appears immediately after a reference to Christ's Jewish descent kata sarka. On the other hand, Knox has pointed out some verses which are open to docetic interpretation: in Phil. 2:7f., homoiōma

<sup>2</sup> This reference is unique in Paul, and it has been denied by Kümmel, among others, that Paul intended theos to be read as applying to Christ, Theology of the New Testament (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1973), p. 164. R. E. Brown, Jesus: God and Man (New York: MacMillan, 1967), pp. 20-22, leans towards an affirmative view.

<sup>3</sup> See also the discussion of Hengel, Son, pp. 7-15.

<sup>4</sup> Knox takes the Philippians hymn to be Pauline; even if we opt otherwise, we must be able to account for Paul's use of such a hymn.

and schema are applied to Jesus' earthly appearance, while Rom. 8:3 states that Christ was sent en homoiōmati sarkos hamartias.<sup>5</sup> Knox ascribes this ambiguity to Paul's unwillingness to bring Jesus into real contact with sin:

Sin for him [Paul] belongs so inseparably to actual humanity, to "the flesh", that he cannot conceive of Jesus as being at the same time both sinless and human--that is, he cannot make both points simultaneously and with the same emphasis...he sees no way of saying "Christ came in the flesh" without saying, in effect, "sinful flesh". And this he shrinks from saying. And so he finds himself speaking of its "likeness".

This analysis, while not without value, seems somewhat superficial. In order to push the inquiry further, in the hope of gaining a clearer picture of Paul's Christology as a whole, we must now turn to data of a soteriological nature.

#### c. Paul's Soteriology.

As E. P. Sanders has demonstrated, two expressions of soteriology harmoniously coexist in the Pauline literature. One presents the death of Christ as an atonement for transgressions; the atonement becomes effective for any given individual when he accepts it in faith. The other holds that the believer participates in the death of Christ, and is thereby freed from the power of sin. Though we can distinguish the two schemes fairly readily, "...they did not present themselves to Paul as conceptually different."<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> Knox, Humanity, pp. 32f.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid., p. 51.

<sup>7</sup> Sanders, Paul, p. 502.

Nevertheless, it is the latter pattern which dominates: Paul's discussions of non-soteriological matters are guided by the participation motif, while themes of the atonement view are sometimes conformed to it, with the result that some of these themes are truncated or virtually dropped.<sup>8</sup>

What, then, can Paul's participatory soteriology contribute to our grasp of his Christology? In the first place, we find more evidence of Paul's belief in Christ's divinity. As we might expect, Christ is God's sole and all-sufficient provision for salvation. Jews and Gentiles alike must be saved through faith in Christ (Rom. 3:30) or not at all (I Cor. 1:18-25). This perspective enables Paul to reduce, in effect, the comprehensive Jewish concept of "covenant" to "promise" in Gal. 3:17ff., 4:21 ff.; here we are not far removed from I Cor. 15:3-5, where the primary--if not the only--purpose of past revelation is to point forward to Christ. Only in Christ does the true meaning of the Hebrew Scriptures become available (II Cor. 3:14).

Our primary problem, however, is the question of docetic tendencies in Paul. The divinity of Christ for Paul is abundantly evident; his humanity is the issue. We may begin by noting the fact that participation in the death of Christ is not merely metaphorical; it is, in some sense, "real". Union with Christ is not an analogy abstracted from experience.

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<sup>8</sup>. Ibid., pp. 502f.

or from another doctrine; it is itself the "given", which requires no proof, and from which Paul can proceed to argue other points.<sup>9</sup> In Rom. 6:1-11, for example, participation in the death of Christ is neither questioned nor defended; rather, it is the foundation upon which Paul rests both his call to moral living and his hope of personal salvation.

This is significant for our question because Paul's notion of real union with Christ is not entirely "spiritual" in the docetic sense of the word; it includes a degree of contact with "physical" reality as well. It is in baptism, not at the eschaton, that "the sinful body" is destroyed (Rom. 6:6-8). Christians are incorporated into the body of Christ (I Cor. 12:12f., 27) in a sense which allows Paul to ask his Corinthian church: "Do you not know that your bodies are members of Christ?" (I Cor. 6:15). Paul does say that Christians will spend eternity in a "spiritual body" rather than a "physical" one (I Cor. 15:44), but there are signs of a measure of continuity between the one and the other (II Cor. 5:4); moreover, part of the transformation from the one to the other takes place in this life (II Cor. 4:16). Finally, what the body does in this life has an effect upon the believer's union with Christ (I Cor. 6:15-17). A soteriology which can present itself in these terms would be ill-suited to a docetic Christology.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid., p. 456.

In addition to this, we must recall that union with Christ is not simply the result of the saving event; it is the means of salvation, the saving act itself. Consequently, Romans 6:5-8 presupposes that sinful man unites with Christ in order to die with him and thereby to enter "newness of life". Being "in Christ" does not follow liberation from sin; it precedes it and effects it. This is possible because, according to Paul, Christ's bondage during his human life was real: he was "...born under the law, to redeem those who were under the law..." (Gal. 4:46-5a). His death was as real as the death of anyone else; only so can his resurrection be the guarantee of the resurrection of believers (I Cor. 15:12-20). In summary, union is possible only because the two uniting parties share a common dimension. Sin-ruled man can unite with Christ in his death because Christ, too, in his own death, was subject to "the rulers of this age" (I Cor. 2:8).

Let us now return to the problematic Rom. 8:3. This verse is part of a passage which includes participationist language: en Christō Iēsou appears in each of the preceding two verses. After describing the sending of Christ en homoiomati sarkos hamartias kai peri hamartias, Paul goes on to say that God condemned sin en tē sarki. That this latter is the flesh of Christ, the homoioma sarkos hamartias, goes without saying.

As we suggested in connection with Phil. 2:7, the mere presence of homoioma does not establish the presence of docetic thinking. In view of Paul's concept of a real, "physical" union

with Christ as the means of salvation, we must conclude that "the likeness of sinful flesh" in which Christ came was a true likeness; otherwise, the condemnation of sin in Christ's flesh becomes meaningless within the Pauline frame of reference. Docetism is excluded; Paul's scheme will not work unless Christ came in real bondage to sin.

It should, perhaps, be pointed out that such a teaching need not have offended Paul's piety as it apparently did that of Knox. As we have seen, Paul conceived of sin primarily as a spiritual power, opposed to God, which held men and all creation in bondage: Christ had to enter into that bondage so that the captives could share his escape. On the other hand, as Sanders notes, "...Paul did not characteristically think in terms of sin as transgression which incurs guilt..."<sup>10</sup> Thus, when Paul has Jesus submit to the demonic powers of sin (I Cor. 2:8), he is not saying that he transgressed and became guilty. Rather, he temporarily submitted to that Power in order to break its hold on mankind.

In conclusion, we see that Pauline Christology, despite its peculiar features, shares with certain earlier sources an understanding of Jesus which incorporates both authentic humanity and true divinity. Paul shows little hesitation in applying some attributes of godhood directly to Jesus, while nevertheless affirming in numerous ways the fully human characteristics of Jesus' life. This theoretical Christology

<sup>10</sup>. Ibid., p. 503.

is supported, and perhaps even required, by Paul's distinct soteriology. One could hardly ask for a clearer demonstration of Christ's saving all-sufficiency than we see in Paul's scheme of the two opposing lordships. His teaching of a real participatory union with Christ would be almost unintelligible apart from belief in Christ's divinity. Yet, as we have just seen, it is precisely this idea which precludes Paul's espousal of docetism; the kind of Saviour which Paul preached had to be human as well as divine, divine as well as human.

Both Paul and some of his predecessors held this view, even though they played it out differently, in some respects. That Mark too knew a divine/human Christological motif is clear from the centurion's confession. Our task, then, is to explore in depth the precise Markan understanding of this basic early Christian theme.

PART III

"HOUTOS HO ANTHRÓPOS": JESUS THE SON OF MAN

## 7. JESUS' HUMANITY AFFIRMED

As we saw in Chapter 3, Mark's form of the centurion's confession is unique. In this climactic moment, Mark alone emphasizes that sonship to God is predicated of the man, Jesus. We are now able to say that this christological conjunction of humanity and divinity appears to have been characteristic of a significant portion of the doctrinal output of the World Mission, and its reappearance in Mark should, therefore, occasion no surprise. The central task of this thesis is to explore Mark's particular use of that theme, since its appearance in 15:39 indicates that it was of paramount concern to the evangelist. We shall begin by considering how the idea of Jesus' humanity functions in the Gospel.

A quick reading of Mark will suggest that Jesus' humanity, as a theme, is no more than implicit. Apart from 15:39, Jesus is designated as ho anthrōpos only once (14:71), and the relevance of that verse to our inquiry is not immediately self-evident. It is clear that Mark is no docetist. Morphe, homoiōma, and schēma do not appear in the Gospel, while references to the blood relatives of Jesus do occur (3:31ff.; 6:3). In addition, Mark's vivid writing sometimes leads him to speak of Jesus less reverently than do the other evangelists: the Spirit "drives" (ekballei) Jesus into the desert, 1:12; he becomes angry with his antagonists, 3:5, and with his disciples, 10:14; some members of the crowd doubt his

sanity, 3:21; unbelief in his home town renders him unable to perform many miracles there, 6:5. Such hints possibly indicate a deeper appreciation on Mark's part of the humanity of Jesus. At the very least, Jesus' humanity is sufficiently well established to serve as a backdrop for other christological themes.

This, however, is not all; the humanity of Jesus is a significant thematic element in Mark's scheme. We have already shown (Chapter 3) that the divine/human thematic polarity is of major significance in this Gospel. Now we must push that observation further: this dual motif is the cornerstone of Mark's picture of reality. Its frequent occurrence suggests that, for Mark, the religious problem par excellence is the tension and opposition which exists between the divine way and the human. Ultimately, as we shall see in later chapters, it is to this problem that Jesus must provide the solution, and within this context that his own humanity becomes significant. Before developing this argument, however, we must take the time to bolster our claim that the God/man polarity lies at the heart of Mark's worldview.

In point of fact, the motif of a conflict between two "poles" has frequently been attributed to Mark. In his The Problem of History in Mark (1957), J. M. Robinson argued that the motivating vision of the Gospel is the struggle between God and Satan. He based his argument on the idea that the temptation scene (1:12f.) represents the initiation of the

final eschatological conflict<sup>1</sup>, which is continued explicitly in the exorcism stories, according to 3:22-27<sup>2</sup>, and implicitly in contexts such as the debates with the Jewish authorities.<sup>3</sup> This approach has been taken up by a number of other commentators. Kelber, for example, postulates a conflict

which erupts at successive junctures between Jesus and Satan, the Son of God and the demons, and the Son of Man and his earthly opponents. This conflict had been initiated by Jesus himself in the wilderness confrontation (1:12-13). The spirit-filled Son of God had searched out and challenged Satan on his own ground. As he emerged from the contest, the time was ripe for the announcement of the advent of the Kingdom. Born out of a demonic power struggle, the Kingdom will henceforth assert its presence wherever the initial conflict is continued.<sup>4</sup>

Thus we have a worldview not unlike that of Paul: a cosmic conflict between God and the spiritual forces of this world, with men caught in the middle--or, more precisely, trapped by evil powers until they, through God's intervention in Jesus, manage to escape.

We contend that this is a fundamentally inaccurate representation of the dynamics which animate the Markan redaction. In actual fact, Mark displays much less interest in the affairs of spiritual powers than do most NT authors (e.g. the other evangelists, Paul, or John of Patmos). He is

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<sup>1</sup>. J. M. Robinson, The Problem of History in Mark (London: SCM, 1957), p. 28.

<sup>2</sup>. Ibid., pp. 35-8.

<sup>3</sup>. Ibid., pp. 43-6.

<sup>4</sup>. W. Kelber, The Kingdom in Mark (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1974), p. 15.

interested not in cosmology, but in the salvation of men; for this reason, the story which Mark narrates is one which occurs on a single plane only--that of the world of men. Mark almost never takes us "behind the scenes".

As our first case in point, angels are truly active only in Mark 1:13. In 8:38 and 13:27, reference is made to their presence at the eschaton, while 12:25 and 13:32 are essentially theoretical: in the former, they serve as analogy for Christians' mode of existence after the End, while the latter simply asserts their ignorance of the time of Jesus' return. This contrasts strongly with the comparatively frequent involvement of angels in Matthew (1:20; 2:13, 19; 28:2 in addition to 4:11) and Luke/Acts (Luke 1:11ff., 26ff.; 2:9ff.; Acts 5:19; 7:30ff.; 8:26; etc.).

Even God is not really an active character in the story. Theos appears most often in the genitive (28 times); three times it is part of a quotation from the Old Testament (12:29, 30; 15:34); six times it is used in the fashion we have called theoretical, or divorced from involvement in particular events in the story (2:7; 10:9, 18, 27; 11:22; 12:17); twice it is used with reference to long-past events (12:26; 13:19); and three times God is addressed (2:12; 5:7; 14:36ff.). God participates only twice in the narrative, and then only to confer his blessing upon Jesus (1:11; 9:7). There are no assurances of God's Providence to compare with Luke 6:35 etc., or statements of God's involvement with the

disciples as in Mt. 16:17. Mark's story is told almost exclusively on the level of human activity; heaven and earth do not interpenetrate.

The one seeming exception to this characteristic is the presence of the demons. Exorcism is one of the major activities of Jesus in his public ministry, and the "supernatural" element which they represent cannot be denied.

However, it can be overemphasized. Exorcisms were a common part of the healing arts in the ancient world<sup>5</sup>; it is not therefore likely that the unclean spirits were regarded as "ontologically" on a par with God, Satan, or even the angels, who apparently did not take possession of individuals.

Thus, it should not be surprising to find that Satan himself has a minimal role in the Gospel. He is mentioned by name or title only five times in Mark (compared to nine in Matthew and ten in Luke). More importantly, the redactor never clearly postulates a significant God/Satan polarity in the manner of the God/man polarity, and never refers to a final destruction of the devil (contrast Mt. 25:41). With these data in mind, let us examine the passages in which Satan does appear, in order to ascertain his place in the Markan frame of reference.

Robinson and his followers, as we have seen, lay great stress on Mark's account of the temptation as being programmatic

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<sup>5</sup> W. Foerster, "δαίμων...", TDNT, II, p. 7; M. Smith, Jesus the Magician (New York: Harper & Row, 1978), pp. 107, 130, 143.

for the entire ministry. It seems unlikely, however, that this scene is intended to bear the theological weight which is thus put upon it; the passage is simply too vague and too short. Indeed, the motifs of conflict and victory are entirely absent. Jesus, it would appear from the text, withstood temptation, but even this is not stated. Surely, then, it is illegitimate to read into these verses a struggle of the sort portrayed by Matthew and, especially, Luke (see 4:14).<sup>6</sup>

The most extended discussion of Satan occurs in 3:22-27. Verses 23-26 are a purely theoretical discussion of Satan's role in Jesus' exorcisms--indeed, the theory itself is to be rejected. The important verse is 27, wherein Jesus ascribes his ability to exorcize to his previous binding of the "strong man" (presumably, but not explicitly, in the temptation scene). This narrow meaning pf the verse is indisputable; the question is whether, as Robinson would have us believe, exorcism, as the continued struggle against Satan's kingdom, is the cornerstone of the ministry of Mark's Jesus. If that were so, it would seem to require, on the Pauline analogy, that all non-Christians are automatically on Satan's side or under his control. Such a view is, however, incompatible with Mark 9:38-40. Keck takes a more nuanced position with the assertion that "Mark does not say that the Pharisees were possessed by demons, or that Satan was at work in their hostility, but it is not a long step to such a conclusion."<sup>6</sup>

<sup>6</sup> Keck, "Mark 3:7-12", p. 353.

Nevertheless, it is a step which Mark does not take, even implicitly. It is not Jesus' enemies but members of the "crowd" who suffer from possession.<sup>7</sup>

In actual fact, the exorcisms serve rather poorly as paradigms of Jesus' mission. Demonic possession is occasional rather than universal; only three of the many wonders described in detail by Mark are exorcisms (1:21-28; 5:1-13; 9:14-29). Jesus' ministry, on the other hand, was to offer salvation to all (1:38; cf. 10:45, 14:24). Thus, Robinson's contention that exorcisms formed a standard to which some of Jesus' other activities conformed<sup>8</sup> is unacceptable, and has been adequately refuted by Achtemeier, who has shown that the exorcisms themselves belong within the category of "teaching".<sup>9</sup>

Mark 4:15 theoretically ascribes to Satan the failure of some hearers of the message to become Christians. This motif is not developed anywhere in the Gospel; moreover, Satan is here only one of several threats to new or would-be believers (4:16-19). Again, there is no sign that he occupies a central role in Mark's scheme.

Finally, we come to Mark 8:33, wherein Jesus addresses Peter as Satana. Two points are pertinent here. First, when Jesus goes on to spell out his dissatisfaction with Peter, he makes no further reference to Satan; he phrases his critique

<sup>7</sup> The roles of the various groups in the Gospel--the enemies, the crowd, etc.--will be discussed in detail in ch. 12.

<sup>8</sup> Robinson, Problem, pp. 43-6.

<sup>9</sup> P. Achtemeier, Mark (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1975), pp. 63f.

in terms of the God/man polarity with which we are already familiar. Secondly, the reference does not cite Satan as a supernatural, active personage; Jesus addresses Peter as "Satan". The implication is that the God/man polarity remains paramount; Peter is identified with Satan as the theoretical paradigm of evil and/or as temptor, not aligned with him as a present and active being.

We conclude, then, that the God/Satan struggle is not of vital concern to Mark. This being so, it is difficult to assess the real significance of Satan in the redaction. E. Best provides the most plausible interpretation: the struggle with Satan ended with the temptation and the exorcisms are merely "mopping up" operations which gradually fade from the scene; the antagonism between God and man is a different problem and is Mark's major concern.<sup>10</sup> This explains the data reasonably well, apart from building so heavily upon the cryptic temptation scene. Nevertheless, no better explanation is forthcoming, and it may be that Satan simply is not well integrated into Markan theology.

The point of this discussion can be put quite briefly. The humanity of Jesus is not simply implied by Mark on the basis of his non-adherence to docetism. It is thematically grounded in the essential character of the narrative. Mark's interest centres upon the God/man polarity; moreover, his

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<sup>10</sup>. E. Best, The Temptation and the Passion (Cambridge: University Press, 1965), p. 22.

story is recounted almost entirely from a human perspective. The humanity of Mark's Jesus derives thematic significance from both of these facts, for it was through his life, mission, and death in the realm of everyday human activity that he overcame the gulf between man and God.

## 8. JESUS' HUMANITY TRANSCENDED

Mark, as we have just seen, never calls into question the humanity of Jesus. Unlike Matthew and Luke, he does not bring into focus a parallel, supernatural realm in which Jesus acts and to which he belongs; rather, Jesus' solidarity with mankind is ~~unmistakeable~~ by virtue of the one-dimensional character of the narrative. Yet, from the very beginning of the active ministry, Jesus transcends the limitations of the purely human. Indeed, the absence of revelatory dreams and the minimal narrative roles ascribed to God, the angels, Satan, and the Spirit (for which contrast Luke/Acts) allow Jesus' own feats to stand out all the more. Thus, one purpose of the one-dimensional quality of the Gospel and of the attendant affirmation of Jesus' humanity seems to be to serve as a backdrop against which the uniqueness of Jesus can become visible in all possible clarity.

Mark's use of the accounts of Jesus' wonder-working has been a controversial problem in scholarship. Perhaps the most radical position is that taken by Weeden. In a nutshell, he argued that the many miracles included in the story prior to 8:27 constituted a portrayal of Jesus as a Hellenistic Divine Man (theios anér) a Christology which Mark regarded as false.<sup>1</sup> From 8:31 onwards, Mark endeavours to

<sup>1</sup> Weeden, Mark, p. 55.

correct this "error" by emphasizing the necessity of suffering, both for Jesus as Messiah<sup>2</sup> and for his true followers in the time prior to the parousia.<sup>3</sup> The reason Mark included the miracle stories was to coopt them from his opponents and, in so doing, to sabotage their message by subordinating the wonders to the necessity of suffering.<sup>4</sup> Other scholars have suggested that Mark himself promoted a theios aner Christology<sup>5</sup>, while still others have denied any relevance whatever to this Hellenistic idea.<sup>6</sup>

The theios aner question is one which we shall leave aside until Chapter 11. The search for non-Christian parallels must begin only when we have a firm grasp on the basic message of the Gospel itself, and the latter alone is the purpose of this Chapter. Our present task is to interpret Mark on its own terms, within its immediate context: Roman Gentile Christianity. We shall, then, attempt to establish the significance of the miracles on the basis of internal evidence only. To do so, however, we must take account not only of the wonders themselves, but of their context within the entirety of Jesus' ministry. This is where we shall begin.

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<sup>2</sup> Ibid., p. 52..

<sup>3</sup> Ibid., p. 99.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid., p. 148.

<sup>5</sup> E. Käsemann, Essays on New Testament Themes, trans. W. J. Montague (London: SCM, 1964), p. 96.

<sup>6</sup> O. Betz, "The Concept of the so-called 'Divine Man' in Mark's Christology", Festschrift Allen P. Wikgren (Suppl. NT 33, 1972), pp. 229-240..

A survey of the summaries of Jesus' activity among the people is useful for our purpose. There are four components to this aspect of his career: preaching (1:14, 39); teaching (2:13; 10:1); healing (1:34; 3:10-12; 6:5, 53-56); and exorcism (1:34, 39; 3:10-12). Preaching does not play a large role in the Gospel; it evidently consists of the announcement that the Kingdom of God has approached, and that men must therefore repent (1:14, see also 6:12f.). Once this point has been made, Mark evidently sees little need to repeat it. The other three elements are more vital to our concern.

In the preceding chapter, we alluded briefly to Achtemeier's work on Mark's Jesus as teacher; here we may elaborate. Achtemeier has pointed out that teaching is one of the dominant roles which Mark ascribes to Jesus<sup>7</sup>, a fact sometimes obscured by the absence of much of the didactic material which appears in Matthew and Luke. Very illuminating is his insight that "...Mark identifies Jesus as teacher where one would not have expected it. For example, Mark regularly uses the title, or the verb, in connection with the miracles of Jesus (1:21-22; 4:38; 5:35; 6:34; 9:17; 9:38; 11:21)." <sup>8</sup> Jesus' role as teacher is not exhausted by verbal instruction; it includes his characteristic activity of healing and exorcizing as well. In other words, Mark has a

<sup>7</sup> Achtemeier, Mark, pp. 60f.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid., p. 62.

holistic understanding of Jesus' public ministry which unites its various elements under the rubric of "teaching". The fact that it is teaching (and not, for example, exorcism) which provides the unitive norm for Jesus' ministry will be discussed in the Chapter on soteriology. Our interest here is in the significance of his public activity for the divine/human christological motif.

As we have already suggested, what is at stake is the uniqueness of Jesus. All his public activities serve to show that he is more than what he appears to be, and that he can break the boundaries of the purely human. He preaches of the approach of God's Kingdom, which is originally known to him alone of all mankind; John knew of Jesus' coming, but not of that of the Kingdom (1:7f.). Jesus' teaching is unique, not like that of the professional instructors (1:22). He can heal diseases which have resisted all attempts at cure (5:26), and cast out demons which defeat even his own disciples (9:17f.). He is even capable of working his will upon the natural order (4:41). All of this, for Mark, sets Jesus apart from the rest of mankind.

The crowds who witness these events recognize the uniqueness of the man who performs them. Repeatedly, in the first half of the Gospel, where most of these occurrences are described, Jesus' actions provoke an outpouring of awe and wonder. It is interesting to note that every major element of Jesus' ministry is capable of eliciting this response:

teaching (1:22,27; 6:2; 11:18); healing (2:12; 7:37); exorcism (1:27); power over nature (4:41). His entire public career is a cause of astonishment (6:2; 7:37). Further, as Räisänen has shown, Jesus' commands that certain miracles be kept secret are usually broken; this inability to contain Jesus' fame serves to emphasize the unique, awe-inspiring character of these events.<sup>9</sup> Against the one-dimensional background of Mark, Jesus' activities stand out starkly in their unparalleled power.

This virtually constant litany of wonder from the crowd is further evidence of Mark's holistic approach to the ministry of Jesus. All the components of his "teaching" make plainly evident, in terms of normal human perception, the presence of a more-than-human element at work; indeed, this is clearly one of the purposes behind Mark's presentation. Therefore, our next task is to delineate this dimension which makes the man Jesus such an uncommon man in the Second Gospel.

Mark does not leave us wondering. At Jesus' first public appearance, he immediately elicits awe from observers, and we are told why: ēn gar didaskōn autous hōs exousian echōn kai ouch hōs hoi grammateis (1:22). A few verses later, Jesus' first exorcism is attributed to his didachē kainē kat' exousian (1:27). Jesus' "teaching"--his entire ministry--is unique by virtue of the authority inherent in it.

<sup>9.</sup> Räisänen, Messiasgeheimnis, p. 71.

As is well known, the Greek word exousia incorporates the motifs of "power" and "right"<sup>10</sup>; both elements are present in Mark's presentation of Jesus' authority. The connection between exousia and the power or ability to perform the wonders which characterize Jesus' ministry is made clear in 1:28, and this pericope is obviously programmatic for all the other miracles which follow. His possession of potent authority is the presupposition which undergirds Jesus' teaching activity as well; the hint in 1:22 becomes manifest when Jesus, in effect, sets his own instruction above that of the Law (10:2-9; see also 7:19b). The theme of power is also to be detected in the disciples' unquestioning response to his call (1:18, 20; 2:14), and in the widely-noted "sovereign freedom" with which Jesus goes forward to his death.

The portrayal of Jesus' authority as "right" occurs primarily when that right is denied by his opponents. The first cycle of controversy stories begins and ends on the note of authority. It starts with the healing of the paralytic, wherein Jesus explicitly claims for himself the authority to forgive sins (2:10), though the scribes protest that this is the prerogative of God alone (2:7). Similarly, the final two incidents in this section involve violation of Jewish sabbath practice. Jesus assumes this to be his right, and extends it to his disciples, on the ground of being kyrios tou sabbatou (2:28). The opponents reject this claim, and

<sup>10</sup> W. Foerster, "Exousia", TDNT, II, 562.

therefore plot his death (3:6).

Thus between 1:21 and 3:6, Jesus' authority has been linked thematically to every major strand of the Gospel story: teaching, healing, exorcism, the call of disciples, rejection, and death. It is unquestionably central to Mark's Christology.

What is the nature of this authority? This is precisely the question which Mark has the religious leaders put to Jesus in 11:28.<sup>11</sup> Despite the overtly inconclusive ending of this pericope, it is noteworthy that the God/man polarity plays a central role. It is true that the polarity is explicitly connected with the question of the origin of John's baptism (11:30); on the other hand, the fact that this question is analogous to that of 11:28 appears certain, especially in view of the phrasing "ἐ τις σοι εδόθη τὴν εξουσίαν ταῦτην". Jesus' authority "came from" somewhere, and the only alternatives available are "heaven" and "men". In the Markan frame of reference, this is tantamount to a question of truth and falsity, of good and evil, of legitimacy and illegitimacy. The authority claimed by Mark's Jesus is therefore unequivocally grounded in the divine dimension of reality.

The reactions of Jesus' enemies substantiate this: they recognize that claim for what it is. Their very first

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<sup>11</sup>. The question is provoked not by the events in the Temple alone, but by Jesus' entire career: G. S. Shae, "The Question on the Authority of Jesus", NovTest, 16 (1974), 26.

expression of resistance to him appears in 2:7: "Ti houtos houtōs lalei? BlaspHEMEI; tis dynatai aphienai hamartias ei mē heis ho theos?" Jesus is accused of blasphemy, in a way which makes Mark's concept of blasphemy evident. It is not the Jewish understanding, which specifies pronunciation of the divine Name; it is, rather, the ascription of divine status or function to that which is not God (compare 3:28f.). The accusation is made because Jesus, a man, assumes the divine right of forgiving sins.<sup>12</sup>

Significantly, it is from the selfsame charge of blasphemy that Jesus' condemnation by the Sanhedrin arises: "'ekousate tēs blasphēmias; ti hymin phainetai?' hoi de pantes katekrinan auton enochon einai thanaton" (14:64). The words which elicit this charge, Jesus' reply to the high priest in 14:62, are notoriously problematic in terms of their oral history, and each part of the verse will require detailed discussion in subsequent chapters. Here it is sufficient to point out that, from beginning to end, the conflict between Jesus and the authorities is centred upon the Markan understanding of what is involved in "blasphemy": the claim to transcend the radical distinction between the divine and the human.

Let us summarize the results of this chapter. Mark

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<sup>12</sup> Cf. O Linton, "The Trial of Jesus and the Interpretation of Psalm CX", NTS, 7 (1961), 259; H. Beyer, "Βλασφημία", TDNT, I, 622.

portrays the career of Jesus as one in which he repeatedly --almost continually--transcends the limits of normal human knowledge and power. He does this by virtue of his exousia, a word denoting both "right" and "power". This authority is the common thread which links all the modes of his activity. The essence of his authority is that it comes from God, and confers upon him the right and the power to assume divine prerogatives. This, in turn, calls forth the charge of blasphemy from his opponents, and leads inevitably to his death. Thus we are directed towards a consideration of the theme of Jesus' divinity. First, however, we shall use the findings of this chapter in an attempt to answer a related question: the meaning of the title "Son of Man" in Mark.

## 9. THE SON OF MAN IN MARK

### a. Introduction

The meaning of the title "Son of Man" as it appears in Mark has been a live issue in scholarship for many years. While numerous commentators have added their insights to the project of clarifying this issue, their findings can be reduced to two basic orientations, along with some exceptions.

The reigning champion in the field is the view associated with the names of Tödt<sup>1</sup> and Higgins<sup>2</sup>. This approach is based upon the evolutionary view of Christology typified in the work of scholars such as Hahn<sup>3</sup> and Fuller<sup>4</sup>. In outline, these commentators agree that the notion of the Son of Man came to Christianity from apocalyptic Judaism, signifying a transcendent deliverer.<sup>5</sup> Jesus' only authentic Son of Man sayings are those which refer to this being as someone other than himself.<sup>6</sup> The church made the identification between Jesus and the heavenly Son of Man, and added the title to

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1. H. E. Tödt, The Son of Man in the Synoptic Tradition, trans. D. N. Barton (London: SCM, 1965).

2. A. J. B. Higgins, Jesus and the Son of Man (London: SCM, 1964).

3. Hahn, Hoheitstitel.

4. R. H. Fuller, The Foundations of New Testament Christology (London: Lutterworth Press, 1965).

5. Tödt, Son of Man, p. 22.

6. Ibid., pp. 224-226.

sayings concerning Jesus' earthly career, and then to references to his passion.<sup>7</sup> All this happened prior to Mark; his contribution was to emphasize the role of Jesus' sufferings.<sup>8</sup> According to Tödt, the common denominator of the Son of Man motif in both Judaism and Christianity is sovereignty.<sup>9</sup>

The contentions of these German and British scholars have been strongly challenged in North America by Norman Perrin and his students. Perrin is persuaded that modern reconstructions of the Jewish Son of Man idea are fictions, and that originally there was no such thing.<sup>10</sup> "The Son of Man", as a title, is a purely Christian phenomenon. Mark's contribution was to use this phrase as the keynote of his theologia crucis, which emphasizes the necessity of suffering for both Jesus and his followers.<sup>11</sup> "Son of Man" Christology is where Mark really lives; it provides the content for the general, traditional titles "Christ" and "Son of God".<sup>12</sup> This interpretation has been developed further by Weeden<sup>13</sup>, Donahue<sup>14</sup>,

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<sup>7</sup>. Ibid., pp. 217f.

<sup>8</sup>. Ibid., pp. 278-280.

<sup>9</sup>. Ibid., pp. 22-31, 219-221.

<sup>10</sup>. N. Perrin, Rediscovering the Teaching of Jesus (New York: Harper & Row, 1967), p. 172. This issue will be taken up in Excursus A.

<sup>11</sup>. Perrin, "The Creative Use of the Son of Man Traditions by Mark", in A Modern Pilgrimage, pp. 92f.

<sup>12</sup>. Perrin, "Christology", p. 113.

<sup>13</sup>. Weeden, Mark.

<sup>14</sup>. Donahue, Christ.

and Kelber.<sup>15</sup>

Among divergent voices, that of Morna Hooker stands out. She argues that "Son of Man" was part of a larger Jewish motif which identified (true) Israel with Man as the Image of God (Gen. 1:26), while relegating the rest of humanity to the level of the beasts.<sup>16</sup> In Christian use, including Mark, there are two governing motifs: the Son of Man possesses the Godlike authority promised in Genesis, while there is also a certain solidarity with his followers, who thereby share his fate.<sup>17</sup> The passion results from the Jewish leaders' repudiation of Jesus' authority as Son of Man.<sup>18</sup>

Each of these and other presentations contains valid and pertinent insights. However, none of these commentators appears to have recognized that the God/man polarity is the framework within which Mark's message takes shape. Since this is the case, we must see what light can now be shed upon the particular problem of the Son of Man in Mark.

It may be appropriate, however, to begin by restating our stand on two methodological issues. First, we are not attempting to locate each Son of Man saying at a given "stage" of the tradition, or to trace the development of the concept through early Christian history. Our interest is solely in

<sup>15</sup>. Kelber, Kingdom.

<sup>16</sup>. M. Hooker, The Son of Man in Mark (Montreal: McGill University Press, 1967), pp. 11-74.

<sup>17</sup>. Ibid., pp. 178-182.

<sup>18</sup>. Ibid., pp. 179f.

the contribution of each of these verses to Mark as a whole. Secondly, given Mark's Gentile Christian character, we shall not allow our investigation to be programmed by Jewish data, the examination of which will be confined to Excursus A. Even if the phrase did originate as a title in Judaism, we have no a priori reason to assume that Mark's understanding of it is closer to Judaism (or to Jesus) than to Ignatius of Antioch.<sup>19</sup>

Our first point is that Mark seems to have understood "Son of Man" in a fairly literal way, as designating someone on the human side of the God/man polarity. It is rarely noted that Mark alone of the New Testament writers can refer to mankind as hoi huioi tōn anthrōpōn (3:28). It is therefore eminently possible that part of the content of "son of man" in Mark is "human being"--perhaps because he knew that the Aramaic bar ('e)nāš(ā) bore that meaning, or perhaps because, under the influence of the LXX, this was one way of making some sense out of a phrase which is quite unnatural in Greek, but which was part of Christian usage. Though its sense is not as broad as that of the Hebrew bēn, huios does incorporate meanings which go beyond the parent/child relationship.<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>19.</sup> Ignatius' use of "Son of God" and "Son of Man" to designate the divine and the human dimensions of Christ respectively appears in Ephesians 20.

<sup>20.</sup> P. Wulffing von Martitz, "υἱός", TDNT, VIII, 335-340.

Tödt and Hooker are both correct in seeing authority as an important element in the use of Son of Man, at least with respect to Mark. As we have seen, the motif of Jesus' authority permeates the Gospel. The essential nature of this authority is revealed when it is challenged or denied: it is such as to elicit a charge of blasphemy (2:7; 14:64). Mark defines blasphemy as the ascription of divine status or power to that which is not God (2:7; 3:29). In terms of the Markan polarity, that which is not of God is of man. Given this, can it be of no significance that both charges of blasphemy are coupled with sayings of Jesus concerning the authority of the Son of Man (2:8; 14:62)?

When Mark uses ho huios tou anthrōpou, he clearly has Jesus in mind; mankind does not effect judgment (8:38) or die and rise again after three days (9:31).<sup>21</sup> Thus the link between this title and the charges of blasphemy suggests strongly that it is intended to convey a twofold message. First, Jesus uses it in his claim to unique Godlike authority; but, secondly, he is claiming that authority as a man. The lack of either of these two dimensions renders the blasphemy charges meaningless within the Markan frame of reference. Hooker has it backwards when she states: "It is because he is Son of man that Jesus acts with the authority which characterizes his ministry..."<sup>22</sup> Quite the contrary: Jesus possesses

<sup>21</sup>. The corporate aspect of the Son of Man title will be discussed in Chapter 12.

<sup>22</sup>. Hooker, Son of Man, p. 179.

this divine authority despite being a son of man; he breaches the boundary between the divine and the human. This is not to suggest that "Son of Man" is not a title of dignity for Mark. The definite article establishes the uniqueness of Jesus vis-à-vis other mortals, a uniqueness which clearly rests in his authority. Rather, the phrase is a deliberate paradox. It is in virtue of the fact that Jesus has this authority, though being a son of man, that he is the Son of Man. Through the use of this title, Mark asserts simultaneously Jesus' solidarity with mankind and his distinction from other human beings. This being our frame of reference, we shall now examine more closely the individual Son of Man sayings in Mark.

#### b. The Son of Man on Earth

The common practice in analyses of the Son of Man sayings has been to divide them into three categories: those concerning the earthly activity of Jesus; those involving the passion; and those referring to the eschaton. Hooker objected to this technique, arguing that it implanted too many presuppositions into the subsequent interpretation.<sup>23</sup> However, even she found that the three groups correspond to "...three aspects of the Son of man's authority--an authority which is in turn proclaimed, denied, and vindicated."<sup>24</sup> Thus, the

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<sup>23</sup>. Ibid., p. 181.

<sup>24</sup>. Ibid., p. 80.

basic validity of the threefold classification (apart from the problem of where to put 10:45) appears to be well established, and we shall follow it here.

In Mark, the first category is limited to 2:10 and 28. We have already, in effect, discussed the former; this first Markan appearance of the term coincides with the first charge of blasphemy. Jesus, Son of Man, claims the right to forgive sins, a right which is known to belong to God alone (2:7). Jesus the man exercises a divine function; hence the charge.

The pericope of 2:23-28 is an extension of the same theme; moreover, it belongs together with 3:1-6, which also concerns the sabbath, and which forms the climax to this cycle of controversy stories. Jesus, Son of Man, asserts his lordship over the divine institution of the Sabbath. The resemblance of these scenes to 2:1-10 is sufficiently clear that the word "blasphemy" need not be spoken; it is enough that the plotting against Jesus' life, which will culminate in a formal charge of blasphemy, begins.

Mark's presentation of Jesus' claim here is particularly interesting, for it is made consequent upon the preceding verse, which is unique to Mark: "To sabbaton dia tōn anthrōpōn egeneto kai ouch ho anthrōpos dia to sabbaton; hōste kyrios estin ho huios tou anthrōpou kai tou sabbatou." The force of dia is clarified by 3:4: the sabbath is to benefit man, not to hinder or hurt him. It is, apparently, because of this that the Son of Man is Lord of the sabbath. How does this follow?

First, it should be noted that Jesus appeals in 2:27 beyond the Mosaic Law to the creation, just as he does in 10:6. Man and woman were created for permanent union; the Sabbath was created to benefit man. In both cases, the ground of Jesus' proclamation is God's original intention. Since Mark obviously had knowledge of the Old Testament, including Genesis 1-4, it seems likely that this appeal to the time of creation is a reference to an ideal past, prior to the inauguration of the antagonism between God and man; this is especially probable in view of 10:5, where the Mosaic Law represents a later concession to human perversity. Mark 2:27, then, recalls an original harmony between God and man as the basis for Jesus' authority over the Sabbath.

This harmony has been reestablished in the person of Jesus. He is the man completely in tune with God; his authority comes from, and is consistent with, God's intention. It is, therefore, both his right and his task to restore the proper function of the Sabbath (and of marriage). This is precisely what he does in 2:23-3:5; he does not overthrow it, but he does subordinate it to the welfare of men, just as God intended from the beginning. "Immediately" the Jewish leaders perpetuate the polarity, resisting God's intention, which is expressed through Jesus' authority, by plotting the latter's destruction (3:6):

Mark, then, accomplishes two purposes with this pair of Son of Man sayings. He presents Jesus as the man who uni-

ambiguously exercises God's authority; and he introduces the enmity and murderous conspiracy of the Jewish leaders.

### c. The Coming Son of Man

Next we shall consider the three occasions on which Mark has Jesus refer to his eschatological role by "Son of Man." According to Tödt<sup>25</sup> and others, it is sayings of this sort which have the greatest likelihood of having originated with Jesus, and what they would have meant on his lips is very much contested. However, we are concerned only with the Markan use of the sayings, and this simplifies matters considerably.

Of these three passages, 8:38 and 13:26 are very much alike. In each case, the coming of the Son of Man in glory and with the angels brings about the final separation between the elect and the reprobate. Mark 14:62 is slightly different: the Son of Man will be seen seated at God's right hand and coming on the clouds; no mention is made of judgment or deliverance. Since we are dealing with these sayings from the point of view of the redactor, who chose to use these three and no other such sayings, it is more appropriate to allow them to complement each other in a thematic discussion than to interpret each one separately.

The common element of the three sayings is that the Son of Man "comes". This coming coincides with the end of

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<sup>25</sup> Tödt, Son of Man, p. 32.

the eschatological tribulations (13:24ff.) and the establishment of the Kingdom of God (9:1). In the Second Gospel, this is clearly a coming to earth: it is not only the heavenly powers who witness the event (13:25), but, as 9:1 and 14:62 show, it will be visible to men as well. The precise phrasing of Mark 14:62 leaves no doubt that Jesus' "coming" to God has already (from the standpoint of the eschaton) taken place. The effect of his coming is to save the elect (12:26f.) at the expense of the adulterous and sinful (8:38). Tödt argues, on the basis of 13:26f., that this event constitutes a rescue and not a judgment.<sup>26</sup> This, however, appears to be too fine a distinction. Mark 8:38 deals explicitly with the withholding of salvation from a portion of mankind, and 14:62 is in no small measure a threat to the enemies of Jesus. It is true that "the depiction of the negative side of judgement is omitted."<sup>27</sup> Nevertheless, the lack of a discussion of hell does nothing to diminish the element of selectivity in salvation, which is the essence of a judgment.

The manner of the Son of Man's "coming" is as important to us as its effects. Twice it is said that he is accompanied by angels, and 13:27 makes it clear that the angels are subordinate to him: a striking indication of transcendent majesty. This impression is reinforced by the fact that he

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26. Ibid., p. 47.

27. Loc. cit.

comes en nephelais (13:26) and meta tōn nephelōn tou ouranou (14:62). Most importantly, he comes meta...doxēs (13:26), or, more specifically, en tē doxē tou patros autou (8:38). As Kittel has shown, the New Testament use of doxa can be explained only from the Septuagint, where it normally refers to "the divine mode of being."<sup>28</sup> Regardless of its original connotations, the session of the Son of Man at God's right hand in Mark 14:62 should probably be regarded in the same light. The Son of Man comes in a God-like state of glory, and exercises the God-like functions of judging mankind and ending history.

This brings us back to the issue of blasphemy. The Son of Man comes endowed with doxa, a divine quality. Moreover, in effecting the universal judgment which ends history, he assumes a divine function. In the OT, the idea of the Day of Yahweh as an event in which God "comes" to "judge" Israel and/or the nations is well attested (Ps. 96:13; Isa. 30:27<sup>29</sup>), and this appears to be the context in which Mark conceives of Jesus' claim. Though later Jewish literature sometimes displays a belief that God would delegate the task of judgment (Ps. Sol. 17:26ff.; IV Ezra 12:33f.; etc.<sup>30</sup>), Mark appears to be unaware of such ideas. He clearly understands Jesus'

<sup>28</sup> G. Kittel, "δόξα", TDNT, II, pp. 247f.

<sup>29</sup> Cf. H. Ringgren, Israelite Religion, trans. D. Green (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1963), pp. 75-79; D.S. Russell, The Method and Message of Jewish Apocalyptic (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1964), pp. 92f.

<sup>30</sup> Russell, Method, p. 393.

assumption of the authority to judge as a claim to divine potency such as would offend monotheistic Jews, for 14:63 is otherwise virtually unintelligible.

The crucial point to be made here is also the simplest: for Mark, it is Jesus whose coming is described. In these sayings, Jesus claims that he himself, partaking of the glory of God, will come with subordinate angels to carry out the final judgment. There can be no doubt whatever that this is Mark's intention. James and John explicitly refer to Jesus' state of eschatological sovereignty as doxa (10:37); while their particular request is denied, that premise on which it is based is affirmed (10:40). The angels' sole active part in the narrative is to serve Jesus (1:13). Finally, one's reaction to Jesus determines one's eschatological fate (8:38).

The significance of these sayings for our discussion is now clear. Mark's Jesus, though a man, claims that he himself will act as surrogate for God at the climactic moment of history. We have seen that the first Son of Man saying, in 2:7, coincided with the first accusation of blasphemy. The last Son of Man saying, the eschatological claim of 14:62, directly provokes the charge of and conviction for blasphemy which lead to Jesus' final repudiation, and send him to his death. Again, the title Son of Man stands as the paradoxical claim of Jesus the man to divine authority.

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d. The Suffering and Rising Son of Man

In this group of sayings we encounter another area in NT scholarship wherein the sheer volume of learned but conflicting opinions bodes ill for any further attempt at a definitive treatment. Once again, our exclusive interest in the final redactor means that many nagging problems are irrelevant to our task; it is to be hoped that this will make possible some substantial progress on those which remain. As before, we shall take a thematic approach, rather than discuss each verse singly.

Our question is, how does the major theme of Jesus' authority contribute to our understanding of these sayings? Hooker attempted to deal with precisely this issue. Her conclusion was that Jesus' suffering is to be seen as a product of the fact that his authority was denied by the Jewish leaders, just as the Son of Man/Saints of the Most High suffered under the temporary, "beastly" dominion of the Gentiles in Daniel.<sup>31</sup> Despite her overriding interest in the historical Jesus, there is some truth to her interpretation. As we have seen, it is Jesus' authority which leads to the accusation of blasphemy. This charge is intended by Mark to show that the Jewish leaders recognized Jesus' claim to divine significance--and rejected it. However, this is not the whole story; Hooker has underestimated the fact that Jesus' suffering has a positive dimension in Mark.

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<sup>31</sup> Hooker, Son of Man, p. 108.

This aspect becomes apparent in several ways. Firstly, as Tödt argued, Jesus did not forfeit his authority and submit passively to his fate. Rather, his path was one of sovereign acceptance.<sup>32</sup> This is clear simply from the fact that, foreknowing his suffering well enough to predict it repeatedly (8:31; 9:12,31; 10:33f.; 14:21), he nevertheless went forward to meet it directly. As Tödt notes, this idea is "...joined by the reference to the necessity according to the Scriptures (Mark 14:21; 8:31)."<sup>33</sup> Like his authority, Jesus' suffering is in line with God's will. This, however, appears to be the only real significance which Tödt ascribes to the element of suffering in these sayings. Jesus' death is still "disaster".<sup>34</sup> His suffering has of itself no benefits to offer; it is the necessary prelude to the vindication of Jesus through his resurrection.<sup>35</sup>

Tödt is a redaction critic, and reaches this conclusion by splitting Mark 10:45: the first part then refers to Jesus' life of service, while the latter is a subsequent elaboration.<sup>36</sup> However, as Perrin has shown, this verse appears to mark the climax of Jesus' teaching concerning his own suffering, as Mark presents it.<sup>37</sup> In its present form, it clearly shows the soteriological significance of Jesus' death. Both here

32. Tödt, Son of Man, p. 221.

33. Loc. cit.

34. Loc. cit.

35. Ibid., pp. 275f.

36. Ibid., pp. 202-211. Contrast J. Jeremias, New Testament Theology, I: The Proclamation of Jesus, trans. J. Bowden (London: SCM, 1971), p. 292.

37. Perrin, "Creative Use", pp. 91f.

and in 14:24, salvation is made available by Jesus in and through his death. Only thus does the necessity of his suffering become meaningful in a way that allows Jesus' sovereignty in his suffering to display any real idea of purpose.

The resurrection is also to be regarded as soteriological. Juel has argued at length that the Temple charge in 14:58 is to be taken as true, and is to be understood as referring to the institution of the Christian community as superseding the Jewish cult.<sup>38</sup> That this saving event coincides with, and is accomplished through, the resurrection of Jesus, is made highly probable by the three-day interim mentioned in the charge.

It thus appears that Mark understood the death and resurrection to be indivisible, and perhaps indistinguishable. Before the passion events get under way, he almost never mentions one without the other (8:31; 9:9, 12, 31; 10:33f.). The lone exception is 10:45, where saving efficacy is ascribed to the death itself. This close connection between the two events, along with the fact that the effect of each is to make salvation available to the "many" who make up the Christian community, argues for a strong sense of their equivalence or identity.<sup>39</sup>

From this general picture of the passion sayings, we now move on to our central interest. So far, we have not

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<sup>38</sup>. Juel, Messiah, pp. 138f.

<sup>39</sup>. So Perrin, "Question", pp. 91-94.

actually encountered the God/man polarity or the theme of blasphemy. Both, however, underlie the workings of the scheme of suffering and resurrection. We have already contended at length that Mark has Jesus use the title Son of Man when, despite his humanity, he forthrightly claims divine authority. This receives further confirmation from the fact that several passion sayings set up a polarity between the Son of Man and "men". This is clearest in 9:31, the prediction that "the Son of Man will be delivered into the hands of men." A related case is 14:21, where the Son of Man is set in tension with "that man" who betrays him, and who would have been better unborn. Finally, in 14:41 the Son of Man is betrayed into the hands of "sinners". The verbal resemblance to 9:31 is immediately evident. Moreover, the thematic equivalence of "men" and "sinners" is inherent in the God/man polarity; it is out of the heart of man (and not, be it noted, from Satan!) that all evil comes (7:20-23).

Thus we see that a major element in Mark's understanding of the passion is expressed in terms of the polarity between Jesus, the man who is on God's side, and "men". Once again, Jesus the Son of Man appears as surrogate for God.

There is still a more important point to be made. As is well known, all the Passion predictions are formulated in terms of the Son of Man; indeed, this is why the Perrin school has been able to use this title as the keystone of the theologia crucis. However, all these references point

ahead of themselves to the one event which comprises the death and resurrection of Jesus. When the event finally takes place, the Son of Man title is superseded: "alēthōs houtos ho anthrōpos huios theou ēn" (15:39). In undertaking his unique role as the one who must suffer, die, and rise again in order to bring salvation to mankind, Jesus does more than vindicate his authority in a general sense: he proves that his "blasphemy" is true. ]

#### EXCURSUS A: "THE SON OF MAN" IN JUDAISM

In the previous chapter, we considered the manner in which the title "Son of Man" functions in the Gospel of Mark, primarily by noting and elaborating upon its relationship to the major themes of our study. This was consistent with our stated procedure of regarding Mark as representative of a developed form of Christianity existing in a Gentile setting, without direct dependence upon Palestinian Judaism. Thus, as we turn to a consideration of the Son of Man in Judaism, we do not do so with an eye to "proving" or "disproving" the contentions stated above. Rather, we shall take the opposite tack, asking whether there are affinities, in the Jewish uses of the phrase, with what we have already discovered in Mark. Since this is merely an excursus, the discussion will largely be confined to a selective survey of previous scholarly work on the question.

It is common knowledge among scholars that the various Hebrew and Aramaic phrases which are susceptible to the translation "son of man" can be employed in several different ways. Well-documented and beyond dispute are the generic usage, referring to one or more members of the human race, and the function of the term as an indefinite pronoun.<sup>1</sup> More contro-

<sup>1</sup> G. Vermes, "The Use of  $\text{וָיִל}$ / $\text{אֵל}$  in Jewish Aramaic", in M. Black, An Aramaic Approach to the Gospels and Acts (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1967), pp. 316-319.

versial is the contention of Vermes that the Aramic bar ('e)naš(ā) occasionally served as a circumlocution for the first person singular in certain situations.<sup>2</sup> His position has been attacked by, among others, Borsch and Jeremias<sup>3</sup>, and the question cannot be regarded as settled. This particular problem pertains primarily to historical Jesus research, however; there is no possibility that Mark intended ho huios tou anthrópou to be understood in this way.

What is relevant to our concern is what is possibly a fourth usage of the phrase, as a designation for (or title of) an eschatological figure. As in the case of the circumlocution, the very existence of this usage has been denied, and those who affirm it vary greatly on the details. Our cursory survey, then, will take the following form: we shall consider the major theories concerning the source of the concepts of the eschatological Son of Man, its point of entry into the Jewish tradition, and its actual characteristics. Next, we shall entertain some arguments against the presence of such an idea in Judaism. Finally, we shall consider briefly the possible correspondences between these theories on the one hand, and our findings in Mark on the other.

The points of view concerning the origin of the Son of Man figure are immensely varied, but can be reduced to a

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., pp. 320-328.

<sup>3</sup> F. Borsch, The Son of Man in Myth and History (London: SCM, 1967), p. 23n; Jeremias, Theology, p. 261n.

few different types. Perhaps the simplest idea is that the Son of Man is the product of Jewish messianic speculation in the intertestamental period. Fuller, for example, argues that the heavenly redeemer evolved from the concept of the ideal future king, just as apocalyptic itself was a development of the phenomenon of prophecy.<sup>4</sup> Despite its origin, the Son of Man figure became a rival to the more earthbound Davidic expectation.<sup>5</sup> Feuillet and others have also been open to the notion that the Son of Man is the product of Jewish creativity, pure and simple.<sup>6</sup>

Most commentators, however, have sought the genesis of the Son of Man in non-Jewish mythology or ritual. A group of Scandinavian scholars has presented the thought and practice of sacral kingship in the ancient Near East as the original milieu from which both the Messiah and the Son of Man developed. Crucial in the case of the latter is the contention that the king, in Israel as elsewhere, underwent a yearly ritual of abasement followed by glorious enthronement, during which he was addressed as "son of man" (Ps. 8:4). After the monarchy ended, this pattern remained an active element in Jewish religious thought, carrying with it the phrase "son of man" as applied to the central character of the story.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>4</sup>. Fuller, Foundations, pp. 36f.

<sup>5</sup>. Ibid., p. 37.

<sup>6</sup>. A. Feuillet, "Le Fils de l'Homme de Daniel et la tradition Biblique", RB, 60 (1953), 170-202, 321-346.

<sup>7</sup>. E. g. A. Bentzen, King and Messiah (London: Lutterworth Press, 1956).

Another such approach singles out myths concerning the Primal Man which were current in the Hellenistic period. In general, these myths effectively divinized the progenitor of the human race, sometimes including his immediate offspring. Thus the Son of Man might be the Son of the divine Anthropos. Such myths have been traced to pre-Zoroastrian Iran, and clearly did exist among the Gnostics and other Hellenistic groups. In Judaism, perhaps because of the sinfulness attributed to the biblical first man, the Son of Man became a figure associated with the end-time.<sup>8</sup>

Borsch has developed a synthesis of these two theories. Essentially, he maintains that the Primal Man was regarded as a king; conversely, the ritual of sacral kingship derived some of its significance from the fact that the human monarch, in his humiliation and enthronement, was participating in the myth of the Primal Man, who was also abased and revived. The overthrow of the Israelite throne led to the fragmentation of this unified vision, with the Son of Man figure being one result.<sup>9</sup>

Colpe disputes the connection between these myths and rituals and the Jewish Son of Man. As an alternative extra-

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<sup>8</sup>. E. g. C. Kraeling, Anthropos and Son of Man (New York: Columbia University Press, 1927). B. Vawter agrees in This Man Jesus (Garden City, N.Y.: Image Books, 1975), pp. 123-127, and also links the Heavenly Man with the "Divine Man" or theios aner (for which see Ch. Ila.).

<sup>9</sup>. Borsch, Son of Man.

biblical source, he suggest Canaanite thought, arguing that the descriptions of Baal in the Ugaritic corpus bear a greater similarity to the Danielic Son of Man than do the portrayals of the Primal Man or sacral king. Failing this, the Son of Man is likely an original creation of Jewish apocalyptic.<sup>10</sup>

These, then, are the major options which are available to account for the emergence of the Son of Man as an eschatological figure in Judaism. The next question is, when might this have occurred? The answers depend entirely on scholars' varying appraisals of the three alleged witnesses to the Jewish phenomenon itself: Daniel 7, I Enoch 37-71, and IV Ezra 13.

The majority of commentators agree that in Daniel 7 as it stands, the kēbar 'ěnaš is presented as a symbolic entity. The contention is supported by the similarly symbolic nature of the four preceding "beasts", and by the explanation in 7:27 which identifies the humanoid figure as "the people of the saints of the Most High". On the other hand, Coppens and Collins have recently argued that the "saints" or "holy ones" are the angels, and that the "one like a Son of man" is probably the archangel Michael (cf. 11:1).<sup>11</sup>

<sup>10</sup> C. Colpe, "ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ ἀνθρώπου", TDNT, VIII, pp. 406-420.

<sup>11</sup> J. Coppens, "La vision danielique du Fils de l'Homme", VT, 19 (1969), 171-182; J. J. Collins, "The Son of Man and the Saints of the Most High in the Book of Daniel", JBL, 93 (1974), 50-66.

Poythress and Di Lella have published negative responses to this view.<sup>12</sup>

By and large, those who defend an ancient origin for the Son of Man idea do so by suggesting that Daniel 7:15-28, in whole or in part, is a secondary interpretation, and that the k<sup>e</sup>bar 'ěnāš was originally understood as an individual heavenly being. The discussions of Hahn, Fuller, and Tödt are typical of this point of view.<sup>13</sup> Basically, they regard the present Dan. 7 as an aberration in Jewish Son of Man thought.

Others, however, regard the corporate interpretation as primary, and hold that the individualization of the Son of Man came later. How much later? This depends entirely upon the dating and the interpretation of the Similitudes of Enoch. There is considerable debate over the meaning of the term "Son of Man" in these chapters: Fuller and Vielhauer, for example, hold that the phrase is fully titular<sup>14</sup>, while Colpe, Hooker, Casey, and others maintain that it is merely descriptive.<sup>15</sup>

<sup>12.</sup> A.A. di Lella, "The One in Human Likeness and the Holy Ones of the Most High in Daniel 7", CBQ, 39 (1977) 1-19; V. Poythress, "The holy ones of the Most High in Daniel VII", VT, 26 (1976), 208-213.

<sup>13.</sup> Hahn, Hoheitstitel, p. 24. Fuller, Foundations, p. 36; Tödt, Son of Man, p. 24.

<sup>14.</sup> Fuller, Foundations, p. 37; P. Vielhauer, "Gottesreich and Menschensohn in der Verkündigung Jesu", in W. Schneemelcher, ed., Festschrift für Günther Dehn (Neukirchen, 1957), p. 74.

<sup>15.</sup> Colpe, "ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ ἀνθρώπου"; p. 423; Hooker, Son of Man, pp. 43-47; Casey, "Use", pp. 11-29.

All agree, nevertheless, that the "Son of Man" in I Enoch refers to an individual being who will be active at the eschaton.

The crucial question is that of date. Hooker has neatly summarized the four basic options, noting the major exponents of each.<sup>16</sup> However, the problem pertaining to the Son of Man research is simpler in conception. If the Similitudes were composed after 70 C.E., as Milik<sup>17</sup> has argued, then their value as evidence for a Jewish Son of Man concept is compromised; they may have been influenced by the Christian use of the phrase. The ramifications of this contention are profound, for it would mean that the problematic Dan. 7:13 is the only available pre-Christian evidence for the existence of a Jewish Son of Man. Most scholars, however, have opted for an earlier date to the Similitudes.<sup>18</sup>

IV Ezra 13 is less openly controversial. The quasi similitudinem hominis of 13:3 is clearly a supernatural, individual redeemer described in terms of Daniel 7 (but lacking the precise phrase "son of man" itself!). Equally clearly, IV Ezra as a whole is post-70 work. The question is whether

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<sup>16</sup>. Hooker, Son of Man, pp. 47f.

<sup>17</sup>. J. T. Milik, "Problèmes de la Littérature Hénochique", HTR, 64 (1971), 333-378. A major factor in the argument is that, while fragments from every other part of I Enoch have been found at Qumran, the Similitudes are conspicuously absent.

<sup>18</sup>. E. g. Jeremias, Theology, p. 269n.; Casey, "Use", p. 11.

chapter 13 bears witness to the existence of speculation in the Son of Man vein in pre-70 Judaism. By and large, those who assert a pre-70 date for the Similitudes of Enoch answer in the affirmative, since they thus have a precedent for such speculation. On the other hand, Borsch and others have pointed out that the figure in question is evidently a "divinized" Davidic Messiah<sup>19</sup>, even though a radical distinction between Messiah and Son of Man is basic to most exponents of theories concerning the latter.

In summary, then, those scholars who assert the existence of the Son of Man concept in Judaism fall generally into two categories: those who maintain an early entry of the idea into Jewish thought, with Daniel 7 possibly representing a deviation; and those who regard the Son of Man figure as a later, but pre-Christian, development of Daniel 7:13 itself.

How is this concept to be understood? The classic view has been that the Jewish Son of Man was a heavenly being who would appear on the last day to deliver Israel, and to defeat and judge the enemies of God's people.<sup>20</sup> In some respects at least, he was a transcendentalized Messiah (or, as Klausner would prefer, he was the Davidic Messiah described in transcendent terms<sup>21</sup>). Tödt has dissented to this general

<sup>19</sup>. Borsch, Son of Man, pp. 156f.

<sup>20</sup>. A concise and fully typical example is Jeremias, Theology, p. 270.

<sup>21</sup>. J. Klausner, The Messianic Idea in Israel, trans. W. F. Stinespring (New York: Macmillan, 1955), p. 230.

approach, which synthesizes Son of Man data from Daniel, the Similitudes, and IV Ezra; he points out the Daniel's Son of Man is a ruler, that of the Similitudes a heavenly judge, and the Man of IV Ezra an active warrior.<sup>22</sup> Nevertheless, the tendency to generalize has remained among the majority of scholars.

A rival view has been postulated, in very different ways, by Borsch and Jeremias. Borsch, as we saw above, argued that the pattern of humiliation and suffering followed by exaltation was intrinsic to the original mythic milieu of the Son of Man. This pattern survived, albeit obscurely, long enough to become available to Jesus, who revivified the element of suffering.<sup>23</sup> Jeremias suggests that the apocalyptic Son of Man became identified with the Servant of Yahweh, permitting Jesus to go one step further by adding to the Son of Man idea the characteristics of the Suffering Servant in Isaiah 53.<sup>24</sup>

These are the major variations among those scholars who believe that pre-Christian Judaism possessed the idea of an individual eschatological agent known as the Son of Man, who has power and glory far beyond that ascribed to the traditional Davidic Messiah. There are, however, still more views of which we must take account.

The first of these is the contention that the Son of

<sup>22</sup>. Tödt, Son of Man, pp. 156f.

<sup>23</sup>. Borsch, Son of Man, pp. 229f.

<sup>24</sup>. Jeremias, Theology, p. 272.

Man, while it is a definite concept, is something other than a personal apocalyptic figure. E. Schweizer and M. Black have argued that the theme of suffering and exaltation was applied to righteous men or to Israel as a holy nation (Daniel 7; Jubilees 4:23; 10:17; II Baruch 13:3; Wisdom 2:16-20; 5:1-5). The basic idea was that the righteous, persecuted in this age, would be raised up by God and act as witnesses at the final judgment. This is the true provenance of the Son of Man idea, which Jesus took up and refashioned.<sup>25</sup>

Finally, we must consider the views of researchers who deny that the phrase "Son of Man" had any special religious overtones. The broad outline of the argument goes as follows. First, the k<sup>e</sup>bar 'enāš of Daniel 7 is corporate in its original state; Dan. 7:13 is later used messianically, but this arises from the theme of heavenly enthronement, not from the phrase "son of man".<sup>26</sup> The Similitudes may be too late to be relevant; even if they are early, the term "Son of Man" never stands alone there as a selfsufficient designation--it is accompanied by a qualifying phrase or by a demonstrative.<sup>27</sup> IV Ezra does not even use the phrase "Son of Man"; the Man from the Sea is an

<sup>25</sup> E. Schweizer, "The Son of Man", JBL, 79 (1960), 119-129; "The Son of Man Again", NTS, 9 (1963), 256-261; M. Black, "The Son of Man Problem in Recent Research and Debate", John-Rylands Library Bulletin, 45 (1963), 305-318.

<sup>26</sup> G. Vermes, Jesus the Jew (London: Wm. Collins Sons & Co. Ltd., 1973), p. 172.

<sup>27</sup> See above, note 14.

extravagant portrayal of the Davidic Messiah.<sup>28</sup> Lastly, Vermes makes the interesting observation that, when the Christian Gospels were translated from Greek into Aramaic, the translators did not render ho huios tou anthrōpou as bar 'ěnaš, but "...opted for unusual and tautologous formations..."<sup>29</sup>

In summary, there are three fundamental options:

(a) The Son of Man in Judaism was understood as a transcendent judge and deliverer; (b) the Son of Man represented the suffering righteous; (c) the Aramaic phrase "son of man" had no religious significance at all. We have already argued that the Gentile Christian characteristics of the second Gospel indicate a minimal Jewish influence on its teachings. Here we have a test case: does the solution of the Jewish Son of Man problem --i.e., the adoption of one of the above alternatives--contribute materially to our understanding of the Son of Man in Mark?

It does not seem so. Mark 8:38, 13:26, and 14:62 have affinities with the first view, while the many sayings of suffering and vindication resemble the second. However, none of these accounts for the authority of the Son of Man on earth (2:10, 28). Moreover, as we have seen, this motif of authority comes to the heart of Mark's use of "the Son of Man": it represents that claim to divine significance on Jesus' part

<sup>28</sup> Vermes, Jesus, p. 172.

<sup>29</sup> Ibid., p. 177. See also R. Leivestad, "Exit the Apocalyptic Son of Man", NTS, 18 (1972), 243-267. For critiques of this view, see B. Lindars, "Re-Enter the Apocalyptic Son of Man", NTS, 22 (1975), 52-72, and Moule, Origin, pp. 12-17.

which elicits the charges of blasphemy. This central element which makes sense of all the Markan "Son of Man" passages, and thus of the specifically Markan use of the phrase itself, is not explained by any of the theories about Jewish backgrounds. This is inevitable, for the idea is rooted in Mark's understanding of the Christ event, an understanding which is not significantly influenced (and probably not informed) by Jewish speculation.

Obviously, a solution to the Son of Man problem is vital to historical Jesus research, and to the history of earliest Christianity and of the Synoptic tradition. However, the findings of this chapter appear to confirm our earlier stand that Mark both can and ought to be understood in the context of Gentile Christianity, without particular reference to Palestinian Judaism. Leivestad claimed that "the meaning of the term Son of man can only be defined from the New Testament."<sup>30</sup> This is certainly true with respect to the Markan redaction.

<sup>30</sup> Leivestad, "Exit", p. 265.

PART IV

"ALĒTHOS...HUIOS THEOU": JESUS THE SON OF GOD

## 10. JESUS' DIVINITY AFFIRMED

In this final section of the thesis, we are attempting to come to grips with the very heart of Mark's Christology. With respect to this endeavour, it is a significant trait of the Second Gospel that Mark characteristically presents the relationship between God and Jesus in terms of that between Father and Son. Indeed, all the passages which we shall examine in this part of our argument contain this terminology. This fact requires us to clarify two presuppositions which will be operative in the analysis to follow.

First, we must deal with a very particular matter concerning background studies. It has been claimed, on various fronts, that the idea of "the Son of God" is part and parcel of the conception of the theios anér<sup>1</sup> or, alternatively, of Jewish royal messianism.<sup>2</sup> In keeping with our conviction that Mark's immediate background is the Church of the World Mission, we wish to recall and emphasize the findings of Part II. Belief in the divinity of Jesus was a basic tenet of the Mission, both pre-Pauline (Phil. 2:6-11) and Pauline (II Cor. 4:4, etc.). In both cases, Jesus' sonship to God was a recognized means of expressing this idea

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<sup>1</sup>. See below, Chapter 11 a.

<sup>2</sup>. See below, Chapter 11 b.

(Rom. 1:3f.; Gal. 4:4). There is, therefore, a strong inherent plausibility in the expectation that Mark will have used sonship language in a similar way.

Secondly, we have seen that Mark conceives the religious problem par excellence to be the state of antagonism between God and man. This is the problem which must be resolved if Christ is to bring salvation. Further, Mark's Christology not only assumes the real humanity of Jesus, but highlights a more-than-human dimension in him which allows Jesus to be placed on the divine side of the God/man polarity. Jesus, Son of Man, claims divine prerogatives both during his earthly career and at the eschaton, and performs the decisive act of deliverance and reconciliation on the cross. The character of his claim is manifested by the fact that those who deny its validity are led to accuse him of blasphemy (2:7; 14:63). The problem is the division between God and man; the solution Mark presents is Jesus, who unites in himself the divine and the human. Our task now is to explore the character of this union.

We shall commence with our key verse, Mark 15:39. As we noted earlier, the point of the confession is that sonship to God is predicated of the man, Jesus. Houtos ho anthrōpos and huios theou are tightly juxtaposed, a feature reminiscent of both the kata phrases in Rom. 1:3-4 and the hymn in Phil. 2:6-11, as well as Gal. 4:4. All these precedents indicate that pre-Markan Gentile Christianity knew and used Christolog-

ical formulae which combined Jesus' humanity with intrinsic divinity. Such an audience would readily understand Mark 15:39 in the same way.

More importantly, it must be recalled<sup>3</sup> that the moment of Jesus' death serves for Mark as the entirety of the saving event. Here the God/man polarity is overcome on behalf of all men (cf. 10:45); at precisely that moment, the presence of both "poles" in Jesus himself becomes recognizable to the centurion.<sup>4</sup> Moreover, this bridging of the gulf between God and mankind, which is effected by Jesus, is clearly stated by Mark to be impossible for mere men (8:37). When we add to the pre-Markan precedents these internal data, and recall the high profile assigned to this verse by virtue of its climactic position, we are justified in choosing as most plausible that interpretation which sees the centurion's confession as an ascription of full, intrinsic divinity to Jesus. We must now ask whether such an interpretation makes sense of the other Markan sonship references.

If we leave aside the uncertain reading of 1:1<sup>5</sup>, we encounter the sonship motif first of all at Jesus' baptism

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<sup>3</sup>. See above, Chapter 9, and below, Chapter 12.

<sup>4</sup>. The significance of the centurion will be discussed in chapter 11 b.

<sup>5</sup>. Most scholars accept the longer reading of 1:1 as better attested, but see the arguments to the contrary in J. Slomp, "Are the Words 'Son of God' in Mark 1:1 Original?", Bible Translator, 28 (1977), 143-150.

(1:9-11). The absence of any account of Jesus' birth (let alone of a pre-existence), along with the fact that the heavenly voice, which proclaims Jesus' sonship upon his receipt of the Holy Spirit, is apparently addressed to him alone, has led many scholars to conclude that Mark is setting forth a "low", adoptionistic Christology.<sup>6</sup> This we must investigate.

There are two significant events recounted here. First, the Spirit descends upon Jesus. A survey of references to the Spirit in Mark demonstrates that it constitutes the guiding force of Christian living, both for Jesus and for believers. It is conferred through baptism in both cases (1:9f., 1:8); it has an implicit role in the miracles of Jesus (3:29f.) and, presumably, in the disciples' performance of those same wonders (3:15); it guides Christians through those sufferings in which they emulate the passion (13:11). In short, then, the descent of the Spirit appears to be Jesus' commission to embark upon his active ministry. It does not speak directly to the christological question which we are posing.

The second event here is the sounding of the heavenly voice: "Sy ei ho huios mou ho agapētos, en soi eudokēsa" (1:11b). The case for understanding this verse as describing

<sup>6</sup>. E. g. P. Vielhauer, "Erwägungen zur Christologie des Markusevangeliums", in E. Dinkler, ed., Zeit und Geschichte [Bultmann Festschrift] (Tübingen: Mohr, 1964), p. 162.

the moment of God's adoption of Jesus into (honorary) sonship is simple and, on first reading, strong. The first part of the statement is based on Psalm 2:7, part of a hymn which proclaims God's appointment of the king as his own "son" at the moment of enthronement; it is, then, the archetypal reference for adoptionistic royal messianism. Since we are told nothing of Jesus' previous activity, but are informed explicitly that the "gospel" begins with John's mission of baptism (1:1-4), the adoptionist solution--that Jesus' sonship commences at this point--presents itself forcefully.

Paradoxically, this position seems even stronger when one considers the conventional arguments to the contrary. Frequently, their frailty is so evident as to merit their dismissal without further ado. The apparent inability of scholars to progress towards the solid establishment of an alternative view can be illustrated from several of the major commentaries to be produced on Mark in this century. M.- J. Lagrange (Evangile selon Saint Marc, 1929) concentrated upon the gift of the Spirit; the possibility of reading 1:11 as an adoption formula is simply discounted: "Rien n'indique que cette parole ait créé en Jésus un sentiment nouveau de sa personnalité."<sup>7</sup> There is another consideration, as well: "Cette manière de comprendre le baptême est évidemment contraire au dogme catholique en ce qu'elle nie la divinité de Jésus."<sup>8</sup> On the other side of the confessional divide, V.

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<sup>7</sup> M.-J. Lagrange, Evangile selon Saint Marc (Paris: Librairie Lecoffre, 1966), p. cxlvii.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid., p. 11.

Taylor (The Gospel According to St. Mark, 1950) took much the same tack:

The claim that, according to Mark, Jesus becomes the Son of God by adoption has often been made, but it probably rests upon a superficial reading of the Gospel. The Evangelist's idea is rather that Jesus is by nature the Son of God, and that the Voice at the Baptism declares Him to be such.<sup>9</sup>

Like Lagrange, he offers no evidence to support his claim; indeed, his concern seems to be to prevent a docetic reading of the Gospel!

E. Häenchen (Der Weg Jesu, 1966) does somewhat better.

He begins the discussion with his conclusion: "Die Gottes-stimme beschreibt einen schon bestehenden Zustand und nicht ein Ereignis, das durch sie jetzt eintritt..."<sup>10</sup> He does, however, go on to argue that the same sonship phrase occurs in 9:7, where it clearly does not indicate the moment of adoption, and that the truly adoptive element in Ps. 2:7 ("this day have I begotten thee") does not appear.<sup>11</sup> E. Schweizer (The Good News According to Mark, 1970), on the other hand, is largely content to assert that "...what is important to Mark is the beginning of Jesus' sonship in the world, i.e., the point in time when he began to exercise his sonship."<sup>12</sup> "There is no indication that Jesus was any other than the Son of God in the fullest sense from the very

<sup>9</sup>. V. Taylor, Mark, p. 121.

<sup>10</sup>. E. Häenchen, Der Weg Jesu (Berlin: Verlog Alfred Töpelmann, 1966), p. 52.

<sup>11</sup>. Ibid., p. 54.

<sup>12</sup>. E. Schweizer, The Good News According to Mark, trans. D. Madvig (Richmond: John Knox Press, 1970), p. 41.

beginning.<sup>13</sup> Here we have, in microcosm, the state of the question: each side points to an absence of evidence on the other.

What evidence do we actually have? Haenchen's first argument has little weight. He does not demonstrate any weakness in Vielhauer's suggestion that the Baptism constitutes the adoption of Jesus by God, while the Transfiguration is the proclamation of what is by then an accomplished fact.<sup>14</sup> Haenchen's second point, however, deserves more forceful presentation. We have seen that a non-adoptionist understanding of Jesus as divine is well attested for the World Mission in pre-Markan sources. If Mark had wanted to espouse adoptionism, surely his espousal would need to be rather pointed in order to counteract that alternative view. The full reading of Psalm 2:7 would serve this purpose admirably, as it does in Acts 13:33 (its implications in Heb. 1:5, 5:5, and the variant reading of Luke 3:22 are less clear, but its presence there demonstrates its availability and utility in Christian exegesis). The fact that Mark has omitted precisely that element of the verse which speaks of adoption must surely be significant.

What we find in its place is "en soi ευδοκεσα." There

<sup>13</sup> Ibid., p. 358.

<sup>14</sup> Vielhauer, "Erwägungen", p. 163.

is a strong tendency among translators and commentators to regard the aorist eudokēsa as reflecting a Semitic stative perfect, to be rendered in present tense in English: "I am well pleased."<sup>15</sup> This may or may not be valid in terms of tradition history; it is certainly irrelevant in understanding the thought of the redactor. Mark wrote for a readership which needed to be told that "Bartimaeus" means "son of Timaeus" (10:46). Could such a readership possibly have been expected to grasp such a subtle linguistic nuance in 1:11? On the contrary, eudokēsa was surely understood in conformity with the normal usage of the Greek aorist indicative. To the extent that one can build any argument upon the tense of this verb, that argument would likely lead to the conclusion that God's favour for Jesus is not new, but is somehow grounded in the past--a past which does not come within the purview of Mark's book, but which may be an operative presupposition in his thought.<sup>16</sup>

Why, then, does the book begin where it does? Two reasons present themselves. First, we have already seen that Mark does not wish to take us "behind the scenes." His Gospel takes the form of a narrative of Jesus' active career;

15. E. g. Taylor, Mark, pp. 64, 162; M. Zerwick and M. Grosvenor, A Grammatical Analysis of the New Testament, I (Rome: Biblical Institute Press, 1974), p. 101.

16. The argument that Mark 1:11 reflects Isa. 42:1 may hold for an Aramaic-speaking community, but it is not pertinent here. Mark's Gentile readership would be unlikely to notice the connection, given the fact that there is no verbal similarity between Mark 1:11 and Isa. 43:1 LXX.

anything else is given short shrift. On the one hand, major "spiritual" forces such as God, Satan, and the angels, are given minimal roles in the story; on the other, Mark refuses to portray events which occur outside the temporal boundaries of Jesus' earthly life. We see neither the pre-existent Christ nor the Risen Lord.

The second point amplifies the first, in that the characteristics just noted must be explicable in terms of Mark 1:1 where the Gospel begins (and ends) is a reflection of Mark's understanding of "euaggelion". W. Marxsen argued that Mark put a unique meaning into the term: it "re-presented" the risen Lord in such a way that he was actually present in and through the proclamation of the "good news."<sup>17</sup> His view has rightly been criticized as overly subtle.<sup>18</sup> Better is K. G. Reploh, when he argues that Mark understood "gospel" as "...die Botschaft vom Heil, die Jesus Christus durch Kreuz und Auferstehung gebracht hat."<sup>19</sup> He goes on to point out: "Auch die irdische Wirksamkeit und Verkündigung Jesu ist Evangelium, also für die Gemeinde Heil bewirkende Botschaft."<sup>20</sup>

This is the heart of the matter. For Mark, as for Paul, the "good news" is basically the message about how to get in on salvation. Unlike Paul, Mark believes that the

<sup>17</sup>. Marxsen, Mark, p. 130.

<sup>18</sup>. Rohde, Rediscovering, pp. 137f.

<sup>19</sup>. K. G. Reploh, "'Evangelium' bei Markus", Bibel und Kirche, 27 (1972), 111.

<sup>20</sup>. Loc. cit.

essential content of the message includes not just the death and resurrection of Jesus but a portrayal of his ministry as well. As we shall see in Chapter 12, Mark, to a great extent, conceives of Jesus' role in the salvation of men as that of an exemplar; Christians are to reproduce in their own lives those attitudes and actions which characterized Jesus' earthly activity. Mark's "gospel", therefore, has to include those words and deeds of Jesus the emulation of which assures salvation. Mark's "Life of Jesus" thus serves as proto-type of the Christian life; it "begins" at baptism, proceeds with the spreading of the message and with works of mercy, and endures to the end under persecution, awaiting the as-yet unrealized promise of final vindication.

Mark, then, does not begin with Jesus' baptism because he espouses an adoptionist Christology; he does so in order to call attention exclusively to those events in the life of Jesus which, he believes, Christians must emulate in order to be saved. Neither a statement concerning a personal pre-existence of Jesus nor an account of Resurrection appearances serves this purpose, and so neither appears.

There is one further remark to be made concerning Mark 1:11. Can we identify that "past" to which the aorist eudokēsa may refer? If it points exclusively to Jesus' previous earthly life, we would again be led towards the adoptionist solution: God approved of Jesus' behaviour and therefore appointed him to sonship. There is, however, a case to be made against this option. If this were Mark's intention, how could he have re-

frained from describing that life which merited God's approval. Surely such a description would have been deemed valuable, both doctrinally and paraenetically. This was evidently not the case, and understandably so: Mark was an exclusivist, and had no wish to show that an unbaptized human being could find favour with God. As we see in 8:37f., the God/man polarity cannot be bridged through human effort; it is only by conversion to Christianity that salvation is attained. Thus, Jesus' adoption into sonship on the basis of his human merit would destroy the fabric of Mark's soteriology. The only explanation which is both historically plausible and consistent with the internal evidence is that Mark believed Jesus to be the Son of God, intrinsically divine. In the baptism scene, the descent of the Spirit and God's approving recognition of Jesus mark the inauguration of his saving activity, which is the subject matter of the Second Gospel.

Further references to the sonship of Jesus serve to support and clarify this picture of Mark's Christology. The demons address Jesus as "Holy One of God" (1:24), "Son of God" (3:11), and "Son of the Most High God" (5:7). These terms are clearly interchangeable for Mark, and duplicate the understanding of sonship expressed at the baptism. Jesus, in addition to being human, is a heavenly being; the demons, with their supernatural knowledge, recognize this before it becomes evident to men. It has been argued that Jesus' silencing of the demons (1:25, 34; 3:12) constitutes a rejection of their

confessions.<sup>21</sup> This cannot be taken to mean that the demons' statements are untrue, for we are told explicitly that Jesus silenced them "hoti ἐδεισαν αὐτὸν" (1:34). Rather, Mark uses the demons to ensure that Jesus' true identity is known to the reader despite the ignorance of the characters in the narrative. This, indeed, seems to be the demons' major role in the story.

Mark's account of the Transfiguration (9:2-8) has been the subject of considerable scholarly controversy. F. Hahn again speaks for the majority when he asserts that Mark uses this scene as an epiphany, in which Jesus' supernatural nature is revealed.<sup>22</sup> Vielhauer also regards it as a revelation event, but the content of the revelation is Jesus' parity in "nature" with the heaven-dwelling Moses and Elijah; in other words, it is the fact of Jesus' adoption into sonship which is revealed.<sup>23</sup> M. Horstmann argues that the dominant characteristics of the passage betray an affinity with Jewish apocalyptic.<sup>24</sup>

Within the scheme of Markan Christology as we have uncovered it so far, the Transfiguration has a major role to

<sup>21</sup>. E. g. Donahue, Christ?, p. 179.

<sup>22</sup>. Hahn, Hoheitstitel, p. 225.

<sup>23</sup>. Vielhauer, "Erwägungen", p. 163.

<sup>24</sup>. M. Horstmann, Studien zur Markinischen Christologie (Münster: Verlag Aschendorff, 1969), pp. 92-94.

play. This is evident from its position; not only is it near the midpoint of the Gospel, it is the last of the "supernatural" attestations of Jesus' sonship. Verbally, 9:7 recalls the first such attestation in 1:11, and these two, issuing from God himself, "frame" the revelations by the demons. In a sense, then, the Transfiguration concludes the portion of the Gospel where Jesus' divinity is disclosed to the reader by spiritual beings whose veracity on the point is unquestioned. Here, for the first time, disclosure is made to characters in the narrative as well. Clearly, then, we have a transition of sorts (which further complicates the attempt to establish a coherent "outline" of the Gospel).

The Transfiguration is the climax of the preceding series of revelations. As they do, it calls attention, through superhuman sources, to the superhuman dimension of Jesus himself. The unique aspect of the Transfiguration, for Mark, is its pictorial way of presenting this message. This is the closest Mark ever comes to drawing back the veil, to taking the reader "behind the scenes" to witness the supernatural side of things. God himself still does not appear, but Jesus' outward appearance is transformed (or, perhaps, made transparent to his doxa) and he is joined by the ancient, almost archetypal figures of Elijah and Moses.

Regardless of what may be said about the original purpose of the scene, its role in the final narrative is quite clear. Peter's offer to build three booths, which Mark emphatically ascribes to his confusion and fear, serves as a

foil to the message of the divine Voice. Jesus, Elijah, and Moses are not equals; Jesus alone is the Son of God, and it is he to whom men must listen. Beside him, the great figures of the past fade into insignificance (though it is surely too trite to point out that they actually disappear when the Voice sounds). The Transfiguration is indeed an epiphany, and acts as a graphic demonstration of what Jesus' sonship to God, expressed several times previously, really means: Mark's Jesus is fully divine.

A unique case of sonship language occurs in the parable of the Vineyard, Mark 12:1-12. In some respects, the teaching of the parable comes as something of a surprise. We see a succession of servants sent to obtain the fruit of the vineyard; when they fail, the landlord's son is sent on precisely the same errand. His death is clearly the climactic moment, provoking the vengeful wrath of his father. Yet on this level, the parable does not support a Christology of divinity; the son's uniqueness is peripheral rather than central, and a favorable response by the tenants to any of the servants would have made the son's coming unnecessary. This perspective, translated into soteriology, would fall far short of making Jesus coextensive and coterminous with God's saving purpose.

Given the setting of the parable in the Markan redaction, however, these features are overridden by others. The signs of allegorization are quite evident; in particular, the huius agapeton of 12:6 so closely resembles 1:11 and 9:7 that

the reader is compelled to identify the landlord and his son explicitly with God and Jesus the Son of God. The emphasis is not on soteriology, but upon the guilt incurred by those who murder the Son (cf. 12:12); the rejected stone (12:11) is Christ alone. Mark's readership, then, would likely perceive no contradiction between this parable and the high Christology of the rest of the Gospel.

One further point requires consideration. J. Schreiber argued that, in view of the allegorization of the parable, 12:6 should be read as a clear indication that Mark did indeed know and accept the idea of the pre-existence of Jesus.<sup>25</sup> His suggestion has been poorly received, but it seems that this is due not so much to any flaw in the idea itself as to his insistence that it stems from a Gnostic source.<sup>26</sup> If we consider instead the Pauline statements concerning the sending of the pre-existent Son (Gal. 4:4 etc.), as well as Mark's otherwise high Christology, this reading of 12:6 becomes plausible and convincing.

The next two occurrences of the sonship motif are substantially different from the foregoing in form and content. Here, and nowhere else, Jesus himself uses the father/son terminology in an overtly christological sense. According to 13:32 no one knows the precise time of the eschaton, "not even

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<sup>25</sup>. J. Schreiber, "Die Christologie des Markusevangeliums", ZTK, 58 (1961), p. 167.

<sup>26</sup>. Loc. cit.

the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father." The close affinities between this and the apocalyptic Son of Man saying in 8:38 are striking: in both Jesus is pictured as higher than the angels (see also 13:26f.) but as subordinate to or dependent upon the Father (it is interesting to note that God is Father to the Son of Man in 8:38!). This is the closest we shall find in Mark to a heavenly "chain of being". Clearly, the "God" side of the God/man polarity includes more than the Father alone. In Mark, the angels are always on God's side; there is no counterpart to Matthew's reference to "the Devil and his angels" (25:41). Jesus, the Son of God, is an intrinsic part of this divine hierarchy; superior to the angels, he is yet inferior to the Father. This is the only picture that Mark gives us of the "kind" of divinity which Jesus possesses, and it indicates, if anything, a belief in Jesus as an independent heavenly being, neither angel nor "God" in the narrowest sense of the word. In the vocabulary of later Christendom, what we have here is not consubstantiality, much less trinitarianism, but subordinationism. Thus, we must speak of Jesus' "divinity" in Mark in the broad sense of a heavenly nature with a status above all but God the Father (so also Paul in I Cor. 15:28).

This element of subordinationism recurs in the prayer at Gethsemane (14:32-42). Three times, it is implied, Jesus prays that God will remove the necessity of the passion, but simultaneously submits in complete obedience to the will

of the Father. As Kelber correctly notes, one function of this scene is to present Jesus as exemplar for Markan Christians undergoing persecution.<sup>27</sup> It also, nevertheless, presents an accurate reflection of Mark's distinct Christology. Once again there are affinities with a Son of Man saying, for 10:45 speaks of Jesus' saving role as one of submission to the point of death. This apparent idea that Jesus' own obedience to and dependence upon God is indissoluble from the provision of salvation will be pursued in chapter 12 below.

We now move on to the trial before the Sanhedrin. In 14:61, Jesus is asked, "Sy ei ho christos ho huios tou eulogētou?" His answer--"Egō eimi; kai opsesthe ton huion tou anthrōpou ek dexiōn kathēmenon tēs dynameōs kai erchomenon meta tōn nephelōn tou ouranou"--elicits his condemnation for blasphemy.

This too has been a highly problematic passage. One interpretation which stands out is that of N. Perrin; for him, Mark 14:62 is the crux of his larger theory that Mark uses "Son of Man" to give a particular content (i.e. suffering Messiahship) to the traditional titles "Christ" and "Son of

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<sup>27</sup> W. Kelber, "The Hour of the Son of Man and the Temptation of the Disciples", in Passion, p. 59. His interpretation is, however, overly bound up with the view that Mark is a polemicist. As we shall see below, Mark's Jesus functions as exemplar precisely because Mark conceives of discipleship as an imitatio Christi.

God."<sup>28</sup> Our analysis of Markan Christology leads to a different conclusion. Perrin and his followers apparently have not taken sufficient account of the fact that Jesus' statement is considered blasphemous by his opponents in Mark's account. As we know, this redactor understood blasphemy to be the ascription of divine status or privilege to that which is not divine. In what way does the trial narrative reflect this?

We have already suggested that the "Son of Man" portion of Jesus' reply constitutes a statement which could elicit this charge (chapter 9). Jesus claims that he, though a (son of) man, will execute divine judgment upon the world. By itself, however, such a statement could conceivably have been applied to the exalted Enoch without suggesting an intrinsic divinity on his part. On the other hand, Jesus prefaces this assertion with the words ego eimi: he accepts the designation "Christ, Son of the Blessed". The latter phrase is clearly a surrogate for "Son of God"; equally clearly, when the Markan Jesus responds positively to the High Priest's question, he is issuing an unambiguous claim to divinity. The subsequent Son of Man saying serves to clarify, not to reinterpret, what has just gone on. Jesus explicitly and simultaneously affirms his divinity and his humanity. The man Jesus claims godhood, and restates the same claim by asserting that "the Son of Man" will serve at

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<sup>28</sup>. N. Perrin, "Christology", p. 121.

2 God's right hand at the judgment. Against Perrin et al., we would suggest that "Son of God" and "Son of Man" are the two titles which define and give content to the more general word "Christ".

We have now completed our survey of passages related to the Son of God theme in Mark, and have seen that our hypothesis of a high Markan Christology--Jesus as fully divine--provides the framework for a fruitful interpretation of this motif. It remains for us now to discuss briefly the relationship between the two key titles "Son of God" and "Son of Man".

While we might expect to find something akin to Ignatius' idea that the two terms refer to Jesus' divinity and humanity respectively, the actual situation is not that simple. "Son of Man" means more than human, for it points precisely to certain activities wherein Jesus breaks the bounds of the merely human. It is as Son of Man that he incurs the blasphemy charges.

The key, then, lies elsewhere--namely, in the fact that the two terms are normally used in quite distinct syntactical fashion. "Son of Man" is virtually always the subject of a clause or sentence. The sole apparent exceptions are superficial: in 9:12 it is the antecedent for the subject of the following clause, while in 14:62 it is simultaneously the object of opsethe and the effective "subject" of kathēmenon. "Son of God" and analogous phrases, on the other hand, are

almost always predicates apart from 5:7, where huie tou theou is a vocative in apposition to Iesou; and 13:32, in which huios is the subject of (ouk) oiden.

These remarkably consistent patterns correlate well with what we now know of the thematic content of the titles. "Son of Man" identifies the saving activity of Jesus: his authoritative ministry, his necessary death<sup>29</sup>, and his return as judge. It is, then, a term of functional Christology. Conversely, the "Son of God" never does anything; he is. The point of this title is not to enunciate Jesus' accomplishment of salvation but to account for it, by grounding his accomplishment in his identity as the divine Son of God. If this title has any "functional" significance, it is to signify that it is God's own saving initiative which was present in Jesus.

29. Tödt points out that Jesus, as Son of Man, goes to his death not submissively but with sovereign freedom. Son of Man, p. 221.

## 11. THE INFLUENCE OF NON-CHRISTIAN "MODELS" ON MARKAN CHRISTOLOGY

Up to this point, our investigation of Mark's Christology has been rigidly confined in terms of source material. The Gospel has been set in the context of Roman Gentile Christianity, and earlier sources from the World Mission have provided the only admissible evidence concerning Mark's immediate background. On this basis we have uncovered what we believe to be the basic character of Mark's portrayal of Jesus. It is now incumbent upon us to clarify this picture by considering the possibility that Mark conformed the Jesus of his story to a particular model or type imported from Jewish or Greek thought. A great many such models have been reconstructed by modern scholarship, and obviously we cannot consider all of them with the detailed study which they may deserve. Instead, we shall inquire into only those two ideas which have had heavy impact upon recent studies in Mark: the Hellenistic "Divine Man" and the Jewish Davidic Messiah.

### a. The Divine Man

This concept is generally understood as part of a broader phenomenon in Hellenistic religion: that of the aretalogy. M. Hadas describes an aretalogy as "a formal account of the remarkable career of an impressive teacher that was

used as a basis of moral instruction.<sup>1</sup> Though the roots of the aretalogy extend back as far as the pre-Socratic accounts of heroes like Achilles<sup>2</sup>, it is Plato's "image" of Socrates that truly epitomized the genre. Plato's Socrates has been thoroughly idealized; he is without vice or flaw of any kind<sup>3</sup>, and this nobility of character is the basis of his teaching authority.<sup>4</sup> Though never set down in a biographical style, Plato's portrayal of Socrates served for centuries as "the prime model for the spiritual hero."<sup>5</sup>

Owing to the comparatively loose distinction between the divine and the human in Greek thought, the idealization of heroes eventually resulted in divine status being conferred upon them. The continuing influence of Plato surfaced among the Stoics and the Cynics, with their belief that a "spark" of the divine nature could (or always did) reside within the human being.<sup>6</sup> As a result, popular accounts of heroic wonder-workers characteristically cast them in the light of a special mingling of the divine and the human. It was possible to honour a man hos theon, which can mean either "as if he were

<sup>1</sup>. M. Hadas & M. Smith, Heroes and Gods (New York: Harper & Row, 1965), p. 3.

<sup>2</sup>. Loc. cit.

<sup>3</sup>. Ibid., pp. 49f.

<sup>4</sup>. Ibid., pp. 53f.

<sup>5</sup>. Ibid., p. 56.

<sup>6</sup>. M. Smith, "Prolegomena to a Discussion of Aretalogies, Divine Men, The Gospels, and Jesus", JBL, 90 (1971), 182.

a god", or "as being a god".<sup>7</sup> Conversely, in the words of Morton Smith, "[a]lmost any god was likely to appear in human form, and consequently a number of historical persons had been supposed to have been deities or daimones in disguise."<sup>8</sup> Essentially, then, the Divine Man was a type, according to which it was postulated that sometimes an individual would incorporate within himself, to an unusual degree, the nature of divinity as Hellenism understood it; this would become manifest in his supernatural wisdom and power.

The opinion that Mark presented Jesus, at least to some degree, as a theios anér dates at least from Bultmann's Geschichte der Synoptischen Tradition. In general, those who subscribe to this belief argue that Mark's evident interest in Jesus' power and authority, especially as expressed in miracles of healing, foreknowledge, and so forth, demonstrates the truth of their contention. In addition, it is maintained that "Son of God" was an equivalent title for the Divine Man in Hellenism, and the indisputable importance of this phrase in the Gospel would therefore strengthen their case. Even Jesus' heroic demeanour during the passion events can be taken as evidence of a theios anér Christology.<sup>9</sup> Among some circles, the influence of the Hellenistic "Divine Man" motif thus came to be regarded as established fact.<sup>10</sup>

<sup>7</sup>. Loc. cit.

<sup>8</sup>. Ibid., p. 181. See also Magician, pp. 74f.

<sup>9</sup>. Räisänen, Messiasgeheimnis, p. 42.

<sup>10</sup>. Käsemann does not feel obliged to do more than assert this interpretation in Essays, p. 96.

On the other hand, few scholars would contend that this is all there is to Markan Christology. J. Schreiber saw in the Gospel a combination of the heavenly Redeemer of Gnostic speculation and the theios anér.<sup>11</sup> The former conception becomes in Mark's hands an assertion of Jesus' transcendent nature; building upon Phil. 2:6-11 and I Cor. 2:8,<sup>12</sup> the evangelist presents the coming to earth of Jesus the preexistent Lord<sup>13</sup> in order to redeem mankind through his simultaneous death and exaltation.<sup>14</sup> Jesus'"humbling" of himself in Phil. 2:7f. is thus the root of the Messianic Secret: he seeks to conceal his transcendent Being.<sup>15</sup> However, because of the theios anér element of manifest power on earth, Jesus' "göttliche Wesen" shines through.<sup>16</sup>

L. E. Keck is typical of many Markan scholars in his assertion that the "Divine Man" element in the Gospel is to be ascribed to traditional material rather than to redactional activity. His research uncovered two cycles of miracle stories, one of which is linked by a "boat" motif (4:35-41; 6:31-56), and the other by a "touch" theme (5:21-43).

<sup>11</sup>. Schreiber, "Christologie", pp. 158, 163.

<sup>12</sup>. Ibid., p. 156.

<sup>13</sup>. Ibid., p. 167.

<sup>14</sup>. Ibid., pp. 159f.

<sup>15</sup>. Ibid., p. 156.

<sup>16</sup>. Ibid., p. 157.

6:53-56).<sup>17</sup> Both emphasize the supernatural power of Jesus, and are thus characterized as theios anér material.<sup>18</sup> However, Keck suggests that this Christological viewpoint is modified or weakened by other characteristics of the Gospel, such as the centrality of Jesus' suffering. He concludes that "the texture of Markan theology is uneven because divergent materials have been taken up into it."<sup>19</sup>

T. J. Weeden developed the theory that Mark's Christology is more than simply "uneven"; rather, the Gospel reflects a bitter theological dispute in the Markan community. Prior to 8:27, Jesus is presented as a Divine Man of power and glory. The title "Son of God", which is more frequent early in the Gospel than later, is a title of the theios anér,<sup>20</sup> and Peter at Caesarea Philippi confesses to precisely this understanding of Jesus.<sup>21</sup> Following this pivotal incident, Jesus begins to teach what Mark regards as the true Christology, that of the suffering Son of Man<sup>22</sup>; the disciples, however, cling to the theologia gloriae instead of the theologia crucis.

<sup>17</sup>. Keck, "Mark 3:7-12", pp. 348f.

<sup>18</sup>. Ibid., pp. 349f.

<sup>19</sup>. Ibid., p. 358.

<sup>20</sup>. T. J. Weeden, "The Cross as Power in Weakness", in Kelber, Passion, p. 120.

<sup>21</sup>. Weeden, Mark, pp. 57f.

<sup>22</sup>. Ibid., p. 52.

ensuring their eventual and final rejection.<sup>23</sup> The passion of Jesus represents the victory of the latter theology over the former; in 15:39, the theios anér title "Son of God" is co-opted and made to serve the Son of Man Christology.<sup>24</sup> Mark, then, wrote his Gospel in order to combat a heretical theios anér Christology in his own community by using its traditions (miracle stories, etc.) in a way which made them subservient to his own vision. His opponents claimed apostolic authority, so he discredited the disciples and appealed directly to Jesus.<sup>25</sup> This has been one of the most influential views in North American scholarship; Weeden is allied with the Perrin school, which currently reigns over Markan studies, and several of his colleagues have come out in support of his interpretation.<sup>26</sup>

In contrast to all of the foregoing, Otto Betz, among others, has denied any connection between the Gospel of Mark and the theios anér model, on the grounds that the latter did not exist in the first century at all. He points out that the phrase itself occurs only rarely in the literature of the time,

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<sup>23</sup>. Ibid., pp. 44, 50f.

<sup>24</sup>. Weeden, "Cross", p. 120.

<sup>25</sup>. Weeden, "Heresy", p. 155.

<sup>26</sup>. Notably Perrin himself in "Christology", pp. 110, 110n.; also Kelber, "Hour", p. 57. In disagreement is J. Donahue, "Temple, Trial, Royal Christology", in Kelber, Passion, p. 73..

and not in such a way as to suggest that it possessed any titular function.<sup>27</sup> Nor does the title "Son of God" play any role whatsoever in the legends of so-called Divine Men.<sup>28</sup> Further, the theios anér lacks not only a fixed title, but a fixed set of characteristics as well; the foremost advocates of this theory differ widely on such vital issues as the role of faith as trust in the Divine Man's power, and the relationship or balance between power and humility in the theios anér himself.<sup>29</sup> Finally, Betz argues that those features in Mark which supposedly originated from the influence of the Divine Man myth are more plausibly explained as developments from Jewish religious literature.<sup>30</sup> In short, he regards the theios anér as a fictional answer to a nonexistent problem.

From this survey of the pertinent literature, it appears to us that the entire question has been somewhat misconstrued on both sides. The evidence appears to favour Betz in the sense that the Divine Man cannot be demonstrated as a clearly defined and consistent type in the NT period or earlier; even Smith concedes that the theios anér was subject

27. O. Betz, "Concept", p. 232.

28. Ibid., p. 231.

29. Ibid., p. 233.

30. Ibid., pp. 234-240.

to constant flux in its connotations.<sup>31</sup> Contrary to the wishes of some scholars<sup>32</sup>, however, this does not put an end to the matter, for it is even more evident that the Gospels are not isolated phenomena, but resemble in very many details other Hellenistic stories.<sup>33</sup> Betz<sup>34</sup> and Kee<sup>35</sup> attempt to counter this by insisting that the Markan miracles indicate an origin in a milieu which was (exclusively, it seems) Judaeo-Christian. This is perilously close to hair-splitting, for the apocalyptic element in Christianity has survived through more than one change of cultural setting; "Hellenization" was only the first. The most that can be concluded is that the Markan miracles serve the Markan purpose, a purpose informed by a Christian apocalyptic view of existence.

Writing about quite another topic--the mystery religions--Hengel argues as follows:

...we must distinguish between the real cults and a widespread "mystery language." The latter certainly derives from the religious terminology of the specifically Greek mysteries of Eleusis and Dionysus, but had long since gained complete independence.<sup>36</sup>

The truth of the theios anér situation is probably analogous

<sup>31</sup>. Smith, "Prolegomena", p. 184.

<sup>32</sup>. E.g. Hengel, Son, pp. 31f.

<sup>33</sup>. Smith, Magician, especially pp. 94-139.

<sup>34</sup>. O. Betz, "Concept", pp. 239f.

<sup>35</sup>. Kee, Community, pp. 25-29.

<sup>36</sup>. Hengel, Son, p. 28 (emphasis his).

to this, and we must therefore turn our attention from the "Divine Man" himself to the aretalogy. It appears that the aretalogy was not a precise form or genre, but a technique of religious instruction and propaganda which was based upon the glorification of the life and deeds of a particular individual. This could be accomplished in any of several specific ways.<sup>37</sup>

In this sense, Mark is indeed an aretalogy. As we shall see when we discuss discipleship, part of Mark's purpose in recounting the life of Jesus is didactic: his readers are to imitate Christ. Moreover, as in other aretalogies, Jesus' wondrous deeds are presented as proofs--or, at least, indications--of his divinity.

Since, however, we are dealing with a propagandistic technique, and not with either a fixed mythological type or a precise genre, we cannot proceed from the recognition that Mark is an aretalogy to label his thought as "Divine Man Christology"--not because it is not true, but because it says nothing of importance. The aretalogy technique evidently permeated the Hellenistic world<sup>38</sup>; thus, anyone who used stories about Jesus didactically could be said to have a "Divine Man Christology". This tells us next to nothing about the character of that Christology. As D. Tiede puts it,

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<sup>37</sup> D. L. Tiede, The Charismatic Figure as Miracle Worker, SBLDS 1 (Missoula: SBL, 1972), pp. 1-13.

<sup>38</sup> Even Rabbinic stories were influenced by it. See Vermes, Jesus, pp. 206f.

one must avoid "...treating the 'divine man' theology as an established norm which can be appealed to as an explanation of a particular outlook..."<sup>39</sup> In other words, the Divine Man was not something so precise that one could be for or against it.<sup>40</sup>

As a case in point, we may consider Mark's view of the divinity of Jesus. If the Divine Man were a fixed type based on a Hellenistic understanding of godhood, Jesus' miracles would put him into that category--along with a host of others, from Pythagoras to Apollonius and Alexander. This, however, is clearly not the case. Mark's notion of divinity derives ultimately from Biblical monotheism. Moreover, his entire God/man polarity is founded on the premise that, prior to Jesus, no one had bridged that gulf. The divine Jesus is as unique as the God of the Bible, and this uniqueness is crucial to Mark's scheme.

We conclude, then, that while Mark's life of Jesus does act as an aretalogy, there is no specific Divine Man Christology which he either supports or combats.

#### b. Royal Messianism

Here we encounter a point of view which runs in quite the opposite direction to the one just considered. Whereas the entire theios anēr question presupposes that Mark's

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<sup>39</sup> Tiede, Charismatic Figure, p. 255.

<sup>40</sup> This, clearly, removes the foundation from the theories of Weeden and his followers..

christological agenda was set by Hellenistic ideas, those who reject the validity of that question tend to see Mark as representative of a brand of Christianity which was subject to strong Jewish influence from within (i.e. from Jewish Christians) and, perhaps, from without. A necessary corollary to this view is that ~~Mark's~~ Christology must have been controlled by the belief that Jesus was ~~the awaited~~ fulfiller of Jewish expectations. It therefore becomes important to investigate how Mark interprets Jesus' fulfilment of that most basic of Jewish eschatological hopes: the emergence of a Davidic king.

In actual fact, the investigation of royal messianism in Mark did not begin according to the logic just described. P. Vielhauer, characteristically going his own way, did not commence with considerations of provenance. Taking 14:6ff. as the key to Markan Christology, he argued that the equation of "Messiah" with "Son of God" and (the apocalyptic) "Son of Man" was the product of Christian reflection.<sup>41</sup> The combination of Messianic kingship with the transcendent authority of the Son of Man resulted in a Christology of which the central characteristic was rulership--and, therefore, royalty.<sup>42</sup> Accordingly, the three major appearances of the title "Son of God" (1:11; 9:7; 15:39<sup>43</sup>) are to be interpreted neither as

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<sup>41</sup>. P. Vielhauer, "Erwägungen", pp. 159f.

<sup>42</sup>. Ibid., p. 60.

<sup>43</sup>. Vielhauer argues that Jesus rejects the demons' confessions, Ibid., p. 166.

epiphanic nor as belonging to a theios anēr tradition, but as royal and adoptionistic along the lines of Psalm 2:7.<sup>44</sup> Vielhauer then suggested that this royal Christology indicates a stronger Jewish strain in Mark's thinking than was generally recognized at the time.<sup>45</sup> He concluded by speculating that the Gospel was modelled on an enthronement ritual similar to those of ancient Egypt: 1:11 represents Jesus' apotheosis or installation; 9:7 his presentation, i.e. to the Jewish people; and 15:39 his enthronement and revelation to the Gentiles.<sup>46</sup>

This last idea of a ritual pattern used as a plan for the Gospel has found little favour among other scholars, but the more fundamental point concerning Mark's espousal of royal messianism has been taken up, repeatedly. Those students of Perrin who reject the theios anēr interpretation have been particularly in evidence on this issue. In his dissertation, as we saw earlier, J. Donahue undertook a redaction critical investigation of the trial narrative. Among other things, he concluded that Mark's creation of a trial by Jewish authorities reflected the situation of the evangelist's community; it included Jewish Christians who were being persecuted by Jewish authorities during the revolt of 66-70 CE.<sup>47</sup>

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44. Ibid., pp. 162-4.

45. Ibid., p. 165.

46. Ibid., pp. 166f.

47. Donahue, Christ, pp. 211-224.

This done, he proceeds in a later essay to argue, in effect, that royal messianism is the dominant element of Markan Christology. He begins by asserting that the Qumran fragment 4Q243 proves "Son of God" and analogous titles to have been applied to royal figures in apocalyptic contexts in pre-Christian Judaism<sup>48</sup>; he also cites Berger's<sup>49</sup> argument that exorcism was linked in Jewish thought with Solomon, concluding that the demons' "confessions" in Mark are ascriptions of royal status.<sup>50</sup> Further royal motifs are not confined to such obvious instances as the Messianic Entry and the trials. Jesus models himself on David (2:23-28 and the Gethsemane scene in all its details); the shepherd motif from Zechariah 13 is royal (6:34; 14:27); and the passion is closely tied to the supposedly Davidic Psalm 22.<sup>51</sup>

W. Kelber presents a similar argument. His dissertation was an attempt to demonstrate that the Second Gospel originated during the seventies as an attempt by Jewish Christians from Jerusalem to make sense of the destruction of the city.<sup>52</sup> The theological centre of gravity in the Gospel is the coming of the Kingdom.<sup>53</sup> He maintains in a later essay that Mark's Christology is informed by a strong connection between the

<sup>48</sup>. Donahue, "Temple", pp. 72f.

<sup>49</sup>. K. Berger, "Die Königlichen Messiastraditionen des Neuen Testaments", NTS, 20 (1973), 1-44; on this point, p. 9.

<sup>50</sup>. Donahue, "Temple", pp. 73f.

<sup>51</sup>. Ibid., pp. 75f.

<sup>52</sup>. Kelber, Kingdom, p. 9.

<sup>53</sup>. Ibid., p. 11.

passion and the eschaton; this accounts for the abrupt introduction of "king" language in ch. 15.<sup>54</sup> In essence, "the cross confirms the coming of the Kingdom and legitimizes Jesus as King."<sup>55</sup> Thus the theologia crucis is harmonized with royal messianism.

A survey of the secondary literature as a whole indicates that this positive view of royal messianism in Mark is developing into a consensus of sorts, apart from these scholars who remain committed to the theios anēr; at the moment, tertium non datur. Recent books such as those of Juel<sup>56</sup> and Kee<sup>57</sup> feature arguments not greatly dissimilar to those of Donahue and Kelber in order to establish that royal messianism, even if somewhat transformed from its original, purely Jewish appearance, is a (or the) central ingredient in Mark's Christology. On the other hand, in 1961, before the current trend took hold, J. B. Tyson contended that Mark's apparent polemic against the disciples was actually an attack on Jewish Christianity, which awaited Jesus' return in glory as royal Messiah without taking seriously his passion and death.<sup>58</sup> S. E. Johnson raised a dissenting voice in 1968; he argued that Mark actually deleted kingly features from

<sup>54</sup> Kelber, "Hour", p. 45.

<sup>55</sup> Ibid., p. 46.

<sup>56</sup> Juel, Messiah, pp. 50-52.

<sup>57</sup> Kee, Community, pp. 124-129.

<sup>58</sup> J. B. Tyson, "The Blindness of the Disciples in Mark", JBL, 80 (1961), 261-286.

stories such as the miraculous feedings, and that in 8:27-29, 12:25-27, and 14:62, Davidic messianism is explicitly rejected.<sup>59</sup> Since then, no comparable objection has been raised. It would appear that the understanding of Mark's Christology as an all-inclusive royal messianism constitutes the emerging majority position, which may dominate studies in the Second Gospel for years to come.

Therefore, since we have denied any strong Jewish or Jewish-Christian influence in the Gospel, the question of royal messianism in Mark requires of us extended treatment. Whereas the theios aner debate revolves, to a great extent, around the general character of the Gospel, the presence or absence of Davidic kingship depends upon the interpretation of a number of key passages. While it is true that some scholars appear able to subsume almost every element in the Gospel under the royal motif, the fact is that many of these elements are peripheral to the issue, and could contribute equally well to other christological conceptions. Consequently, our discussions shall focus upon six passages in which kingship language appears to be most plainly evident.

It is interesting that we do not encounter such a pericope before the healing of Bartimaeus (10:46-52). Here, for the first and last time, Jesus is addressed as "Son of David". We have unambiguous evidence in Ps. Sol. 17:21 that

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<sup>59</sup>. S.E. Johnson, "The Davidic-Royal Motif in the Gospels", JBL, 87 (1968), 136-150.

this phrase could be used in pre-Christian Judaism to designate the king-Messiah; such a usage would be inevitable, given a messianic reading of II Sam. 7:14. That Mark himself understood the term this way is clear from 12:35-37.<sup>60</sup> The question is whether he intended this passage to promote an understanding of Jesus as royal Messiah.

The answer is not clear. It is true that Jesus, as requested, gives Bartimaeus his sight. However, the relevance of the Son of David title to the healing is questionable on two grounds. First, a comparison with Mt. 20:29-34 and Lk. 18:35-43 is instructive. In the latter two Gospels, Jesus responds directly to the call; his first quoted words are to Bartimaeus. Mark, on the other hand, inserts Jesus' words to the crowd, the crowd's report to the beggar, and a detailed description of the latter's approach to Jesus. The net effect is that Jesus does not respond directly to the Son of David title; 10:51 marks the start of what is virtually a new conversation. This may indicate a wish on the part of the evangelist to separate the Davidic address from the healing event.

More significantly, Jesus links the success of the

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<sup>60</sup>. There is no clear sign that Mark understood "Son of David" in the Solomonic sense described by K. Berger, "Messiastraditionen". Given Mark's cultural provenance, and the meager attestation for the idea which Berger offers, it is unlikely that this was the case.

healing to Bartimaeus' faith. It might be suggested that this is an indication that Bartimaeus, though blind, has truly perceived who Jesus is. Such a reading cannot be sustained, however, as consideration of the Markan idea of "faith" shows. Pistis appears five times in the gospel, and pisteuō ten times. Of these fifteen occasions, fully eight have to do with the efficacy of miracles (2:5; 5:34, 36; 9:23, 24; 11:22, 23; as well as 10:52); three more are set in the context of wonder-working (whether actual or potential), though in a less precise way (4:40; 11:24; 15:32); the remaining four uses of pisteuō are more general, pertaining to one's basic attitude towards religious messages (1:15; 9:42; 11:31; 13:21). Mark never uses pistis or pisteuō to designate a correct understanding of the person of Jesus, as does the Fourth Evangelist in John 20:31. Bartimaeus' faith, like that of Jairus and others, is simply his receptivity toward the healing power of Jesus; so also the lack of this receptivity is called apistia in 6:6 and 9:24. Thus there seems to be no clear verdict in this pericope on the suitability of the title "Son of David" as applied to Jesus. Rather, the question of the validity of royal messianism remains open.<sup>61</sup>

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61. In his dissertation, Kelber also denied that this passage reflects a positive view of royal messianism. He argued that Bartimaeus consistently uses titles of which Mark disapproves (rabbi, Son of David) while it is someone else who uses the acceptable term "Nazarene"; Bartimaeus' blindness is evidently more than physical. Kingdom, p. 95. Vermes describes this occurrence of the Davidic title as a mere "captatio benevolentiae", Jesus, p. 157.

The healing of Bartimaeus is followed immediately by the entry to Jerusalem. On an historical level, the messianic overtones of this event are clear. Our question, however, is whether these overtones persist and are validated in the Markan use of the story.

One can hardly contend that Mark was unaware of the royal connotations of the story which he is presenting. Nevertheless, it is far from certain that he approves of them. Let us consider three points. First: what is the stated rationale for Jesus' entry and the acclamation it provokes? Matthew explicitly ties the manner of Jesus' entry to the messianic prophecy of Zech. 9:9 (Mt. 21:5). Luke does not deal with this particular issue, but he does attribute the acclamation to the disciples, who rejoice "for all the mighty works that they had seen" (Lk. 19:37). Mark alone gives no explanation whatsoever for these events; in other words, he imputes no particular significance to the entry in his account. Could it be that he sees none?

Secondly: a positive attitude towards royal messianism would necessarily make this a prime christological passage, particularly by virtue of the crowd's cries. One would expect the throng to recognize such an overt claim to Davidic messiahship. This is indeed the case in Mt. 21:9 ("Hosanna to the Son of David"), and in Luke 19:38 ("Blessed is the King who comes in the name of the Lord"). Mark has it otherwise. Jesus is met with the greeting appropriate to pilgrims

("Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord", Ps. 118:26). The unique form of the reference to Davidic messiahship, "Blessed is the kingdom of our father David that is coming", expresses the ideal of royal messianism without clearly connecting it to the person of Jesus! At the very least, some ambiguity is introduced, much as in the Bartimaeus episode.<sup>62</sup>

Thirdly: the "messianic" entry, potentially so dramatic, sputters to a conclusion with the notice that, since the hour was late, Jesus simply looked around and retired to Bethany. Both Matthew and Luke portray Jesus as proceeding directly to the cleansing of the Temple, an act which in such a context could be construed as further evidence of Messiahship. Mark has been accused of being artless and clumsy in some respects, but drama and vividness are among his strengths as a writer. The situation almost begs for a Markan euthys. Why then such an unsatisfying conclusion, reminiscent of a sneeze that will not come? The wish to use the cursing of the fig tree to frame the cleansing of the Temple<sup>63</sup> is not a sufficient explanation, for this could be done without sending Jesus back to Bethany for the night... It seems, rather, that Mark has recounted this entire story in

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62. See also Kelber, Kingdom, pp. 96f.; Vawter, This Man Jesus, p. 105.

63. This is suggested by C. K. Barrett, "The House of Prayer and the Den of Thieves", Jesus und Paulus [Kümmel Festschrift] (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1975), pp. 13-20.

such a fashion as to diminish its dramatic impact and, along with that, its christological significance.

So far, the results of our inquiry have been of a negative variety. We have seen the evangelist presented with opportunities to adopt a clearly affirmative posture vis-à-vis royal messianism; he has refrained from doing so. With the exegesis of Psalm 110:1, we begin to get concrete evidence concerning Mark's perspective on this form of Christology. Mark has presented this incident in a manner which, if taken at face value, plainly indicates a rejection of the belief that the Christ is to be David's son. The scribes are wrong; the Messiah is David's Lord, not his son. The argument, advanced most recently by Kee, that this passage represents a "transmutation" of Davidic sonship rather than a rejection of it<sup>64</sup>, is inadequate. The passage suggests that a doctrine of Davidic sonship impinges on the Lordship of the Messiah. Moreover, Kee's contention would seriously undermine the clearly polemical thrust of Jesus' remarks, since he would be partially affirming, and then reinterpreting, the scribes' teaching. The argumentative tone of the saying ("How can the scribes say that the Christ is the son of David?...so how is he his son?") strongly suggests a total rejection of messianic sonship to David.<sup>65</sup>

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<sup>64</sup>. Kee, Community, p. 128.

<sup>65</sup>. See also Kelber, Kingdom, pp. 95f.

It is perhaps pertinent to remember at this point that Mark, alone among the Synoptists, feels no need to provide Jesus with a genealogy demonstrating his descent from David. This is not to be explained by the absence of a nativity story, since Luke, who has one, inserts his genealogy elsewhere: between the baptism and the temptation by Satan (Luke 3:28-38). Nor does the explanation have to do with a supposed "unavailability" of genealogical information to Mark; the differences between the Matthean and the Lukian genealogies indicate that the theologically-motivated fabrication of such lists was entirely possible. Mark simply is not interested in Jesus' ancestry, whether Davidic or otherwise; it is not integral to his Christology.

Mark 12:37 is the last time that the name of David appears in the gospel, and its significance should now be manifest. Sonship to David is one of the central elements in royal messianism. The question of its applicability to Jesus, which was raised in the Bartimaeus episode and left open in the account of the entry to Jerusalem, has now been answered --in the negative.

The next passage to be considered is probably the most important: the trial before the Sanhedrin. As we have seen, it is maintained by Donahue, Juel, and others that the entire passion story, including the trial, is permeated by allusions to royal messianism. We shall not attempt to deal with all of these allusions, as some of them are clearly

peripheral; that is, whether or not they contribute to a royal definition of messiahship depends entirely upon whether the main thrust of the passage presents such a conception to which they may contribute. Instead, our enquiry must come to the heart of the matter: what are the grounds of the trial, and of Jesus' condemnation?

Two charges are presented: one concerning the destruction and replacement of the Temple (14:58), and one pertaining to Christology (14:61f.). The latter is, of course, our primary interest; and, as presented by Mark, it is devoid of royal themes. This is true of the appellation "Christ", in that we cannot simply assume that it means to Mark what mašiah may have meant to a first-century Jew. His use of the term is necessarily dependent upon several preceding decades of Christian usage. Mark is long past the point where Jesus could be understood as "Christ", the latter being a title with a relatively fixed (and probably royal) content. Already in the pre-Pauline formulae, "Christ" is being used as a personal name (I Cor. 15:3; by the same token, the phrase "Jesus Christ is Lord" [Phil. 2:11] is virtually a tautology unless "Christ" is taken as a personal name). The same is true of Paul himself (I Cor. 1:12 et al.); indeed, though he uses the word christos well over 200 times, Paul never seriously avails himself of the themes of royal messianism.

Consequently, by the time of the writing of Mark, it

is "Christ" which is being defined by its application to Jesus, rather than Jesus who is defined as Christ.<sup>66</sup> Mark, however, almost always uses christos as a title, rather than as a name, and evidently assumes that it does have a meaningful content. That the word refers generally to God's eschatological agent is clear from 13:21f. Our only more specific information comes in the present passage, from the High Priest's question: the "Christ" is equivalent to the "Son of the Blessed", a title bespeaking divinity; it is to this coupling of terms alone that Jesus responds with a definite "ego eimi" (contrast 8:27f.). The fact that Jesus is then condemned for blasphemy confirms this interpretation. There is no evidence, in Mark or elsewhere, that the claim to be the Davidic messiah could be understood as blasphemous. However, Mark himself defines blasphemy as the attribution of divine status or power to something other than God (2:7; 3:28f.). Thus, in his acceptance of the combined title "Christ, Son of the Blessed", the Sanhedrin hears, and rejects, Jesus' claim to divinity.

If the above interpretation is an accurate rendering of the significance of the trial's climactic scene, it should also shed some light upon the Temple charge of 14:58. In the main, Juel's treatment of this part of the gospel is persuasive.

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<sup>66</sup>. See N. A. Dahl, "The Crucified Messiah", in Messiah, pp. 25f. "Christ" does remain available as a title, but its content is thoroughly Christianized.

He has demonstrated that Mark intends the charge to be understood as true: Jesus' final authority over the Temple is foreshadowed in the "cleansing" scene (11:15-19); his claim is recalled in 15:29b and receives proleptic fulfilment in 15:38. The new Temple, not made with hands, is the post-Easter Christian community.<sup>67</sup>

Juel's argument is weakest when he attempts to demonstrate that the building of the eschatological Temple could be understood as a duty of the Davidic Messiah. He himself finally admits that "[w]here we do have clear evidence of beliefs about the eschatological temple prior to 70 (Qumran), it is God who is expected to build the temple..."<sup>68</sup> Similarly, he notes that the sole extant reference to the destruction of the second Temple as an eschatological act also ascribes it to God (En. 90:28f.). Because of his belief that Mark affirms royal messianism, Juel nevertheless maintains that the evangelist does indeed regard the Temple charge as reflecting a claim to Davidic Messiahship; he cites the possible scriptural source of II Samuel 7, and later Jewish traditions which hold such an interpretation (Targum Jonathan to Isaiah and Zechariah; Leviticus Rabbah 9:60 and parallels).<sup>69</sup>

In our discussion, however, we have uncovered in

<sup>67</sup>. Juel, Messiah, pp. 154-157.

<sup>68</sup>. Ibid., p. 199.

<sup>69</sup>. Ibid., pp. 169-197.

Mark, if anything, a negative attitude towards royal messianism and a correspondingly "high" Christology: Mark regards Jesus as divine, even though this "...seems highly improbable..." to Juel.<sup>70</sup> On this basis, we may suggest that Mark viewed the building of the eschatological "Temple" as a prerogative of God which is claimed by Jesus, just as is the authority to forgive sins (2:7-10). In short, the Temple charge is tantamount to another charge of blasphemy.

We have argued previously that the Jewish background of an idea cannot be decisive for the interpretation of the same motif when it appears in Mark. Even so, it is interesting to note that our sources from pre-70 Judaism cohere with this interpretation rather than with Juel's.

Thus we see that the central issue of the trial before the Sanhedrin has nothing to do with royal messianism. This is a blasphemy trial; both charges relate to Jesus' claim of divine identity and authority. It is for blasphemy that Jesus is condemned as worthy of death.

On the following morning, Jesus is taken before Pilate and, "accused of many things" by the Jewish authorities. Pilate's sole question to Jesus in connection with a specific charge revives the theme of Davidic messiahship: "Are you the King of the Jews?" This is the first time in the Gospel that the word King is applied to Jesus; the phrase "King of the Jews" recurs in 15:9,12 on Pilate's lips, in 15:18 from

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<sup>70</sup> Ibid., p. 208.

the soldiers, and in 15:26 in the inscription on the cross.

The question is this: does Mark intend his reader to treat this title as a valid designation of Jesus?

The indications are that he does not. Jesus' response to Pilate is the cryptic phrase "sy legeis". By itself, the phrase provides almost no clue to its interpretation. It could encompass meanings ranging from "You yourself recognize me as such", to "I have said no such thing". In context, however, it comes hard on the heels of the Sanhedrin trial, and virtually begs comparison with 14:62. The stark contrast between egō eimi and sy legeis in form scarcely permits any agreement in content.

This contrast does not appear in the other Synoptics, which lack or weaken the egō eimi in the Sanhedrin scene (sy eipas, Mt. 26:64; hymeis legete hoti egō eimi, Lk. 22:70). As we saw in connection with the entry to Jerusalem, Matthew and Luke tend to be more open to royal messianic imagery than does Mark; thus, their portrayal of a certain continuity between Jesus' responses to the Sanhedrin and to Pilate's "King of the Jews" question is not surprising. Those responses are probably intended to be ironically affirmative. With Mark, it is otherwise.

In addition, the title "King of the Jews" is itself problematic. Have we the right to assume that all Christians everywhere in the first century after Jesus' death would recognize in this phrase an appropriate designation of God's

eschatological agent? Almost all NT scholars hold that we do frequently; they are content to suggest that it represents a "translation" into Gentile terminology of the authentic messianic appellation "King of Israel". This assumption, however, requires reconsideration.

The question is whether "King of the Jews" naturally or necessarily brings to expression the same complex of ideas and hopes as does "King of Israel". Outside the NT, the two phrases are quite distinct in what they signify.

There can be little doubt that "King of Israel" was a title capable of expressing the eschatological hope of many Jews. It appeals directly to the OT promise of the restoration of the Davidic monarchy (e.g. Amos 9:11). Moreover, the word "Israel" itself was, in the post-exilic period, a term charged with religious significance. Thus it is that literature of the time shows concern for such themes as the final gathering of Israel and the identification and establishment of "true" Israel.

"King of the Jews", on the other hand, evidently had been part of everyday political parlance for over a century. Once Aristobulus I had assumed the royal title in 105/4 BCE<sup>71</sup>, the Maccabean and Herodian rulers of Judea were known as kings to their contemporaries, and it is therefore important to recall that the ancient languages did not distinguish between "Jew" and "Judean". Basileus tōn Ioudaiōn meant "King of the

<sup>71</sup>. M. Zucker, Studien zur jüdischen Selbstverwaltung im Altertum (Berlin: Schacken Verlag, 1936), p. 43.

Judeans". Further, none of these "Kings of the Jews" were of Davidic lineage. There is, then, a probability that "King of the Jews" would prompt Mark's contemporaries to think of the most recent indigenous rulers of Judea, rather than of David; this might be especially true of inhabitants of imperial Rome.

Josephus is a case in point. He applied the exact title "King of the Jews" to individuals such as Alexander Jannaeus (War 7:17, Antiquities 14:36) and Antipater (War 1:282), but most often to Herod the Great of evil memory (Antiquities 14:9; 15:373, 409; 16:291, 311; War 1:388 var.; "King of Judea", War 1:225); what Jew, even when writing for Gentiles, would willingly confer upon Herod a title belonging to God's eschatological agent? It is much more likely that, unlike "King of Israel", "King of the Jews" was normally a political term devoid of eschatological significance. The objection might be raised that Josephus calls even David, prototype of the Messiah, "King of the Jews" (Antiquities 6:439; 7:72; David is also "King of the Israelites" 7:76, "King of Judea" 7:101, and "King of the Hebrews" 7:105). On the other hand, Josephus wrote as an opponent of Davidic messianism<sup>72</sup>, and never uses "King of Israel"; consequently, one cannot argue that the application of "King of the Jews" to David indicates any potentially messianic character.

<sup>72</sup>. A. Jaubert, La notion d'alliance dans le Judaïsme aux abords de l'ère chrétienne (Paris: Editions du Seuil, 1963), pp. 346f.

Josephus' David is not a messianic prototype.

Therefore, we would argue that "King of the Jews" was not, outside some Christian circles, a self-evident messianic title. That it could be made over into a designation of the Messiah is clear from the other Gospels. There is, however, no compelling evidence to suggest that such a transmutation was part of Mark's intention.

Finally, there is a fairly direct indication that Mark intends this charge to be viewed as false by the reader: in 15:10, Pilate himself perceives that the chief priests have handed Jesus over to him for reasons that pertain to their own interest (dia phthonon), rather than to Jesus' guilt. Pilate voices his doubt as to the priests' sincerity in 15:14, and drops the subject solely in order to pacify the crowd (15:15). Interestingly, Pilate's perception is expressed by the verb ginōskō; Mark invariably uses this word to indicate the grasping of a truth, and often of a hidden truth (4:13; 5:29,43; 6:33,38; 7:24; 8:17; 9:30; 12:12; 13:28,29; 15:45).

We conclude, therefore, that Mark uses the title "King of the Jews" to indicate a false charge against Jesus. This is pertinent to one of Juel's notable insights: the trial before the Sanhedrin constitutes the Jewish rejection of Jesus, but does not contribute in a direct, causal way to his death.<sup>73</sup> In other words, Mark makes a thematic distinction

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<sup>73</sup>. Juel, Messiah, pp. 66f.

between rejection and execution. We have seen that the Sanhedrin recognized a claim to divinity on the part of Jesus--they rejected it as blasphemy. Now, Jesus is condemned to death by the Romans--on the false charge of claiming to be King of the Jews. On the one hand, we have the culmination of the theme of rejection which has run throughout the gospel. On the other, we see the execution of an innocent man. The guilt of the Jews is clear, for they reject the authentic claim of Jesus. The Romans, however, are less culpable, for they have been ignorant of the essentials.

The final passage to be considered in this discussion is the scene involving the mockers at Golgotha (15:29-32). They call upon Jesus to perform a miracle by escaping from the cross, and taunt him with his alleged boasts which seem equally incapable of fulfilment: that of destroying and rebuilding the temple in three days, and that of being "ho christos ho basileus Israēl". This coupling of "Christ" and "King of Israel" is the last appearance in the gospel of any hint of overt royal messianism.

Again we may begin by citing some useful suggestions from Juel. He points out that the two specific elements in the mocking at Golgotha parallel the two charges at the trial.<sup>74</sup> Further, these taunts comprise an occasion for typical Markan irony. Mark's irony arises from the fact that the story is told in two levels: that of the narrative itself, and that

<sup>74</sup>. Ibid., p. 56.

which deals with the readers' own knowledge and belief.<sup>75</sup> On this basis, Juel maintains that:

[b]oth at the trial and in the mockery in chapter 15, it is Jesus' opponents who consistently appear as witnesses to the truth about Jesus at a level of reality beyond their comprehension and contrary to their intentions.<sup>76</sup>

As a result, the events of 15:38f. represent the proleptic fulfilment of the two charges.<sup>77</sup>

There is, however, a problem here. Juel points out that the taunt in 15:29, while in some sense affirming a truth about Jesus, also betrays a misunderstanding of the actual nature of the Temple charge of 14:58.<sup>78</sup> The taunt is clearly a reference to the destruction and rebuilding of a physical temple. On the other hand, Juel believes that Mark is affirming royal messianism from the trial onwards, through Pilate's interrogation, to the death scene itself<sup>79</sup>; he must therefore maintain that the taunt of 15:32, unlike its partner in verse 29, represents a proper apprehension of Jesus' claim.

A key portion of Juel's argument reads as follows:

If Mark expects the reader to appreciate the ironic truth of the mockery of Jesus as "the Christ, the King of Israel", it is possible that he also intends the same ironic truth to be recognized in the statement about the temple in 15:29.<sup>80</sup>

<sup>75</sup>. Ibid., p. 55.

<sup>76</sup>. Ibid., p. 84.

<sup>77</sup>. Ibid., pp. 137f.

<sup>78</sup>. Ibid., pp. 124, 207f.

<sup>79</sup>. Ibid., p. 82.

<sup>80</sup>. Ibid., p. 57.

We would ask in response: if Mark expects the reader to perceive that the misstated taunt of 15:29 nevertheless contains an ironic element of truth, is it not probable that 15:32 is also intended to demonstrate a misapprehension of the truth on the level of the narrative? If the taunts are parallel, and if both are to be taken as true in some sense, then it seems to be imperative that both express the truth in the same manner.

This leads to a reappraisal of the function of Markan irony in these scenes. The trial, we would suggest, contains no irony at all in Juel's sense. The chief priests and their witnesses are not unconsciously expressing a truth about Jesus which is recognizable to the reader but not to themselves. As we have seen, they reflect with perfect accuracy the actual claim of Jesus to be God's son. They are not unwitting in this; rather, they are unbelieving. To deny that they fully understood the claim is to weaken greatly the culmination of the theme of rejection. The Sanhedrin's guilt then becomes as circumstantial as that of the Romans.

On the other hand, irony is decidedly operative at Golgotha. How, then, does it operate? Jesus is taunted about destroying and rebuilding the physical Temple in three days. In fact, he will raise a temple "not made with hands" --the Christian community. The taunt, taken literally, is false. The truth is that something far greater will take the Temple's place in God's scheme of things. Mark's irony,

thus, does not say: "This claim, which the mockers believe to be false, is true." It says: "The mockers taunt Jesus with a boast which, they believe, he cannot fulfil. The truth is that his fulfilment is far grander than the content of that boast, let alone the mockers' actual expectation." The fulfilment corresponds to 14:58, but not to 15:29.

So it is with the taunt concerning messiahship. The mockers ascribe to Jesus the claim to be the Davidic Messiah: ho christos ho basileus Israēl. The truth is that he is something greater: Christ, the divine Son of God. The taunt, as it stands, is false.

We have completed our survey of passages which shed light on Mark's attitude towards royal messianism. In summary, the specific question of sonship to David was raised in the healing of Bartimaeus; it received a negative answer in Jesus' discussion of Psalm 110:1, an answer reinforced by the absence of a genealogy in this gospel. The messianic entry occurs, but only in such a fashion as to diminish its dramatic impact and is christological significance. The Sanhedrin tries and condemns Jesus for blasphemy: the assumption of divine status. Pilate sends Jesus to his death as King of the Jews, a charge which even Pilate knows to be false. Finally, the mockers at Golgotha address Jesus as rebuilder of the physical Temple and as King of Israel, betraying their ignorance of his true claim and identity. If we can say anything about Mark's attitude towards a Christian

appropriation of royal messianism, it is that he is firmly opposed to it.

Why would this be so? It is, of course, impossible to say with absolute certainty why Mark, believing Jesus to be the One whose coming was foretold in the Jewish scriptures (9:12), would reject such fundamental elements in Jewish expectation as the Davidic ancestry and royal function of the Christ. Nevertheless, we do have several clues.

First, we have already suggested that a motive behind Mark's presentation of the discussion of Psalm 110:1 may have been a concern to defend his "high" Christology. Jesus appears to reject the Davidic sonship of the Messiah precisely because it would infringe upon his Lordship. The Christ, in other words, is Son of God in a way that excludes simultaneous sonship to David.

Secondly, we may perhaps indulge in some speculation concerning ancient exegesis, as does Juel when he attempts to establish "Son of God" as a royal title in pre-70 Judaism.<sup>81</sup> Mark's sole positive use of royal terminology in a religious sense is to refer to the kingdom of God (1:15; 4:11,26,30; 9:1,47; 10:14,15,23,24,25; 12:34; 14:25; 15:43). As we have seen, he does not regard the David kingship as a valid Christological motif; he also appears to have little respect for the kingship of Herod (6:14-29) or for human kingdoms in general (13:8). In this light, it is interesting to read the OT

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<sup>81</sup>. Ibid., pp. 108-114.

account of the origin of the Israelite monarchy in I Samuel 8. Here, the establishment of the kingship which is later turned over to David is described pejoratively, as a rejection of the kingship of God (I Sam. 8:7): It is tempting to think that Mark may have perceived a similar antagonism between the kingdom of God on the one hand, and Davidic messianism on the other. However, we have absolutely no concrete evidence that this was the case.

The most probable explanation has to do with Mark's demonstrable interest in the universality of the gospel. Specifically, Mark is concerned to show that the gospel was always intended to go beyond the borders of the Jewish nation. This is directly expressed in 13:10. We also see Jesus including Gentiles in his ministry (3:7f.; 5:1; 7:24-31). In 13:27 we are told that the "elect" will come from all corners of the earth. Significantly, Mark alone includes the phrase "for all nations" in the quotation from Is. 56:7 during the cleansing of the temple (11:17).

As a counterpart to this emphasis on the inclusion of the Gentiles in salvation, there is the fact that the theme of rejection, as Juel has uncovered it, always presents Jewish authorities in the role of Jesus' antagonists. This motif dominates the controversy stories in 2:1-3:6 and the scenes of the arrest and the trial, as well as occurring sporadically between these two sections of the Gospel. Some of the mockers at Golgotha are specifically identified with

this group. Moreover, this enmity is reciprocal. Jesus, in effect, takes a stand against Judaism (as Mark understood it) in the Sabbath debates (2:23-3:6), the discussion of purity (7:1-23), the argument over divorce (10:5f.), and perhaps most important, in the threat he poses to the Temple (14:58; 15:38). In addition, we have already seen how Jesus could invalidate the Mosaic (i.e. Jewish) Law by appeal to God's original (i.e. universal) intention.

This is another theme which is brought to culmination in Mark 15:39. The fact that it is an unnamed Roman centurion who finally makes the first real confession of faith has often been noted. Frequently it is regarded as a foil to the cowardice of the disciples, but we would suggest a different correlation of themes. As we shall argue in the next chapter, the actual counterpart to the weakness of the disciples is twofold: the good example of Jesus himself (note that the story of Peter's denial frames Jesus' exemplary behaviour at the trial, 14:53-72), and the greatness to which they themselves are called (3:14f.; 6:7-13).

The centurion is part of a different thematic complex: the contrast between Jewish and Gentile reactions to Jesus. This contrast is presented starkly in ch. 7, where Jesus' lengthy condemnation of Pharisaic and scribal practices is followed immediately by the story of the unshakeable faith of the Syrophoenician woman. In the passion narrative, this motif surfaces again. The Sanhedrin knowingly and wilfully rejects

Jesus' authentic claim; the misinformed Pilate is coerced by the (Jewish) crowd into permitting the execution. By the same token, the chief priests and scribes at Golgotha mock Jesus in his suffering, confirming their rejection of him; the centurion, on the other hand, comes to faith at this decisive moment of revelation.<sup>82</sup>

The significance of this scheme is clear. The failure of the Christian movement among the Jews was even more an established fact in the time of Mark than in that of Paul, who professed to be agonized over it (Rom. 9:1-5; he is less lachrymose in I Thess. 2:14-16 and Phil. 3:2f.). Just as Jesus and the disciples are, in some ways, models for Mark's church, so the Jewish and Gentile authorities in the Gospel represent those two "worlds" of Mark's time. Mark's portrayal of these two groups in his book reflects the fact that the success of Christianity had to be measured almost exclusively by its appeal to Gentiles. As the example of the centurion shows, Gentiles could be won to the crucified Christ. Jews, as far as Mark was concerned, were unyielding opponents to the gospel.

This clarifies Mark's attitude towards royal messianism. Any attentive reader of the OT would be aware that royal

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82. D. J. Hawkin, "The Incomprehension of the Disciples in the Markan Redaction", JBL 91 (1972), p. 500.

messianism was basically a hope for the vindication of the Jewish nation.. As such, it could hardly be acceptable in its original form to a church made up, for the most part, of Gentiles. While some Christians were able to "transmute" this idea into something more universal, Mark apparently took the theologically simpler course of rejecting it outright. The concept of an ideal Jewish king had nothing to add to Mark's portrait of a divine Christ; he accordingly dispensed with it.

## 12. CHRISTOLOGY, SOTERIOLOGY, AND DISCIPLESHIP

### a. Christology and Soteriology

In Chapter 4 we suggested that Christology could be considered "functional" in the sense that there will often be a discernible correlation in a text between Jesus' person and his role in the provision of salvation. We went on to suggest that, if a given source postulates the divinity of Jesus, that source is likely to ascribe to him a unique all-sufficiency in its soteriology. This proved to be a fruitful perspective for the study of non-Markan literature; it is now time to investigate the correlation between Christology and soteriology in Mark. We shall begin as we did in the consideration of non-Markan soteriology, with the following question: is / Mark's scheme of soteriology of such a character as to confirm our contention that he presented Jesus as properly divine?

An extended discussion of this point is not required, since much of the relevant evidence has already been presented. Mark 8:38 clearly states that one is saved solely by committing oneself openly to Jesus. Nothing else is required, because nothing else can contribute. Thus it is that Mark's Jesus can, in principle, repudiate the legacy of Moses (9:5-7; the Mosaic Law, 7:1-23; 10:5f.; the Sinai covenant, 14:24). The norm is God's will (7:8f., 13; 10:6), and man

knows God in Jesus the Son of God, or not at all.

Such an interpretation might be challenged on two grounds. In 9:38-40, Jesus speaks favourably of an exorcist who was criticized by the disciples for not joining them. Does this suggest that Mark understood salvation to be available outside the Christian community? This is unlikely. The exorcist casts out demons in Jesus' name; the problem is not that he failed to follow Jesus, but that he failed to follow "us"--the disciples. If anything, this passage has to do with divisions inside the Church. It is not a conferring of favour upon a non-Christian.

Secondly, as we saw, the Parable of the Vineyard (12:1-12) might seem to present Jesus as successor to the prophets, and, therefore, as less than uniquely all-sufficient. Such, indeed, may have been the message of the story at some earlier stage in its history. In Mark's hands, however, this is not the case. The contrast between the huios and the preceding douloi is plainly evident; the hostility of the tenants takes on a new tone and purpose when the son appears. In addition, we can hardly suggest that Mark's readership understood the son of the parable, who so obviously represents Jesus, in a manner divorced from the use of sonship terminology in the rest of the Gospel. Here too there is no threat to our contention that Mark believed Jesus to be intrinsically divine, and to provide the sole and sufficient path to salvation.

It is in Jesus alone that the God/man polarity is reconciled; this is graphically portrayed in the christological view which sees divinity and humanity commingled in his very person. How, then, does Markan Christology "function"? In other words, what is the character of Markan soteriology?

b. Markan Soteriology

There are two aspects to this problem which require separate attention. The first with which we shall deal is "soteriology" in the narrow sense: how, according to Mark, Jesus made salvation possible. Then, we shall go on to discuss how man was expected to appropriate the results of Jesus' accomplishment--the issue of discipleship.

Mark's clearest statement on the economy of salvation is 10:45b: the Son of Man came "...to give his life as a ransom for many." In so doing, he accomplished that which man himself is unable to do (8:37). E. Best presents a reasonable interpretation of the soteriology presented here. Following Barrett, Best sees here an affinity with the idea of expiatory suffering expressed in Isaiah 53, II Maccabees 7:37f., and IV Maccabees 6:27ff., 17:22, and 18:4.<sup>1</sup> Consequently, the problem at issue is human sin; Jesus' death is an expiatory sacrifice, a ransom paid to God.<sup>2</sup> This is entirely in line with I Cor. 15:3-5, Rom. 3:23-25, and

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<sup>1</sup>. Best, Temptation, p. 143.

<sup>2</sup>. Ibid., p. 144.

Mt. 26:28, and therefore with a major component of first-century Christian thought.<sup>3</sup>

Best locates this theme of atonement for sin in other Markan passages. He suggests that in 2:10 "the use of the title 'Son of Man' in relationship to the forgiveness of sins may imply a link with the Passion."<sup>4</sup> Presumably, Jesus' authority to forgive sins is to be seen as dependent upon his atoning death. In 14:24, the fact that Jesus' blood is shed hyper pollon implies the expiatory role of his death.<sup>5</sup> The "cup" of 10:38 is drawn from OT imagery concerning the wrath of God's judgment, which Jesus feared (14:36) and experienced (15:34).<sup>6</sup> In the same verse, the reference to baptism would evoke in Christian readers associations involving both the death of Jesus (Rom. 6:3) and the forgiveness of sins.<sup>7</sup> Finally, Mark 14:27 draws on a passage from Zechariah wherein God's judgment is the dominant concern. Taken as a whole, 14:27f. present the following picture:

In Mark...the shepherd bears the whole judgment meted out by God...the quotation from Zechariah is followed by the promise that Jesus goes ahead of the community into Galilee; whatever this may mean,

<sup>3</sup>. See also F. Büchsel, "λόγον", TDNT, IV, 342-344. P. Lamarche, on the other hand, argues that Jesus' death is not sacrificial but revelatory, "La mort du Christ et la voile du Temple selon Marc", NRT, 96 (1974), 583-599.

<sup>4</sup>. Best, Temptation, p. 137.

<sup>5</sup>. Ibid., p. 147.

<sup>6</sup>. Ibid., p. 153.

<sup>7</sup>. Ibid., pp. 154-156.

it means at least the recreation of the community, the remnant saved because the Shepherd has been struck by God. Thus again the Cross means judgment borne by Jesus for men.<sup>8</sup>

Some of Best's points can be challenged; for example, the early Christians' inclination towards atomistic exegesis of the OT threatens an argument like the one just cited, which relies heavily on the original context of a citation. Nevertheless, his major contention is valid: Mark knew and used the common Christian idea that Jesus' death atoned for the sins of mankind. The cross is the sine qua non of salvation.

However, this does not exhaust our information. In his discussion of Mark 14:27f., Best alludes to the creation of a new community; this too is part and parcel of the provision of salvation. Best notes that, in 14:22, "the bread refers to the fellowship of believers with Christ."<sup>9</sup> He interprets this fellowship as a union with or a participation in Christ, much in the Pauline style.<sup>10</sup> This interpretation cannot be sustained, for Mark nowhere evinces a belief in an actual union with Christ. The fellowship in which he is interested is not mystical; it is the community of those called "to be with" Jesus (3:14), not "in" him.

Juel's discussion of the Temple charge is important here as well. The charge, which is true, points to the

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8. Ibid., p. 158.

9. Ibid., p. 147.

10. Ibid., pp. 145f.

establishment of the Christian community in place of the Temple cult, as the medium of access to God.<sup>11</sup> The founding of the community is also an outcome of the Passion. This is clearest from the reports that the new "temple" would be built "in three days" (14:58; 15:29), an obvious reference to the resurrection (8:31; 9:31; 10:34).<sup>12</sup> On the other hand, Jesus' death is also associated with this event: the (new) covenant of 14:24 surely implies this, and the claim against the Temple receives proleptic fulfilment at the final moment of Jesus' life (15:38).

There is no real discrepancy here, for we have already seen that Mark tends to regard Jesus' death and resurrection as a single event. Thus, the establishment of the Church can be associated with either one. Moreover, this gives us an indication that the provision of atonement for sins and the foundation of the Christian community are also, in a sense, indistinguishable. Both result from the unitary saving act. More importantly, the atonement is effective only for members of the community; the equation between being Christian and having one's sins forgiven is invariable. Viewed in this light, the Eucharistic words concerning the bread--as fellowship with Jesus--and the wine--the sacrificial institution of the new covenant--are more intimately related than Best would

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<sup>11.</sup> Juel, Messiah, pp. 154-157.

<sup>12.</sup> See also R. H. Stein, "A Short Note on Mark XIV. 28 and XVI 7", NTS, 20 (1974), 448.

have us believe.<sup>13</sup>

This understanding of the soteriological importance of Jesus' death and resurrection for Mark serves to set the "Messianic Secret" into perspective, so let us digress in order to consider this theme, which has played such a vital role in the twentieth-century study of Mark.

### c. The Messianic Secret

As we noted in Chapter 1, William Wrede's Das Messiasgeheimnis in den Evangelien is the first great milestone in the critical study of Markan theology. Throughout the twentieth century, it has been well nigh impossible to engage in a serious study of the Second Gospel without coming to grips with Wrede's theory of the Messianic Secret. So established has his work become that Biblical commentaries now sometimes treat the Secret as a datum to be interpreted, rather than as itself a product of interpretation.<sup>14</sup> Indeed, in 1969 D. E. Aune suggested that research into the Messianic Secret still operated within the parameters set by Wrede and his first major opponent, Albert Schweitzer.<sup>15</sup>

The ongoing impact of Wrede's achievement revolves around two basic insights. The more influential of these is, simply, the establishment of the Messianic Secret as the basic

<sup>13</sup>. Best, Temptation, p. 147.

<sup>14</sup>. See "Introduction to the Synoptic Gospels", The Jerusalem Bible (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday & Co. Inc., 1966), p. 11.

<sup>15</sup>. D. E. Aune, "The Problem of the Messianic Secret", NovTest, 11 (1969), 7f.

theological motif which governs the Gospel of Mark. He argued that the various commands to secrecy which Jesus makes in the narrative, his propensity for esoteric and parabolic teaching, his periodic inclination to seek seclusion, and the disciples' failure to understand the teaching and the events to which they are exposed, comprise different aspects of a thematic whole. Mark wished the reader to see that, though Jesus was truly the Messiah even during his earthly life, this was not common knowledge among his contemporaries because Jesus himself wished to conceal his identity.

Wrede's second and more controversial contention involved Mark's motive for allowing this particular theme to dominate his Gospel. Mark, he suggested, faced the problem of reconciling his church's belief in the Messiahship of Jesus with the orally-transmitted stories concerning Jesus' lifetime, which lacked Messianic characteristics. The evangelist accomplished this by presenting a story in which Jesus chose not to reveal his Messiahship fully until after the resurrection (with Mark 9:9 providing the crucial evidence).

It is this latter point which has more frequently become a subject of debate in the past eight decades. Albert Schweitzer countered with the view that the Messianic Secret was Jesus' own device, stemming from his peculiar view of his own Messiahship.<sup>16</sup> This basic argument has been presented in various forms from that day to this (whence Aune's remark, cited above), and is a significant issue in some aspects of

<sup>16</sup>. Schweitzer, Quest, p. 395.

historical Jesus scholarship. Serious efforts at elucidating Mark's own use of and contribution to the theory of the Secret, however, by and large had to await the rise of redaction criticism.

T. A. Burkill's ongoing studies of Mark show a decided concern to deal with this topic. Like the majority of modern scholars, Burkill does not consider seriously Wrede's contention that the oral traditions about Jesus were ever sufficiently "unmessianic" to constitute a problem to later Christians such as Mark. Rather, he holds, the Messianic Secret was Mark's attempt to explain the failure of the Jews to flock to Jesus during his lifetime, a failure which the evangelist ascribed to the divine will.<sup>17</sup> This, however, is not the sole element involved in Mark's presentation. Because of Jesus' own revelatory actions and of Mark's own committed belief, there arises the phenomenon of "strain on the secret": in the course of events from 11:1 onwards, Jesus' identity, as it were, forces itself into the open.<sup>18</sup> Thus, Burkill understands the Secret to be a theme somewhat less uniform and monolithic than does Wrede, but still as central to Mark's intention. It is over Mark's motive for utilizing the secrecy idea that he truly parts from Wrede.

G. Strecker presents a formally similar contention. He accepts the Messianic Secret as "die grundlegende

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<sup>17</sup>. Burkill, Revelation, pp. 2f.; New Light on the Earliest Gospel (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1972), pp. 2f.

<sup>18</sup>. Burkill, Revelation, pp. 182-209, 242f.; New Light, p. 12.

Bedeutung...für die Interpretation des Gesamtevangeliums..."<sup>19</sup> His account of the origin and role of the Secret is, on the other hand, quite different. On the whole, he maintains, this theme is of redactional origin; Mark introduced it into a body of tradition which did indeed understand Jesus to have exercised messianic functions during his lifetime.<sup>20</sup> The result is, in a sense, a dialectic between secrecy and revelation in the Gospel. Strecker argues that the relationship between these two elements is a sequential one. Mark 9:9, 4:21, and the passion predictions all point to the death and resurrection of Jesus as the point at which secrecy is to be abandoned, and the Christian message proclaimed.<sup>21</sup> This scheme is rooted in a sort of historical consciousness which is distinctively Markan, and which understood Christian preaching to be possible and effective only in the light of--and therefore subsequently to--the final events of Jesus' life.<sup>22</sup> In other words, Mark held that Jesus' Messiahship was fully intelligible solely in connection with the cross. Prior to the crucifixion, therefore, Jesus attempts to conceal his identity; on those occasions when it is prematurely revealed, it is misunderstood.

Edward Schweizer offers a similar interpretation. Like Strecker, he holds that the secrecy motif is, for Mark, a way

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<sup>19</sup>. G. Strecker, "Zur Messiasgeheimnistheorie im Markusevangelium", Texte und Untersuchungen, 88 (1964), 92.

<sup>20</sup>. Ibid., p. 93.

<sup>21</sup>. Ibid., pp. 97-101.

<sup>22</sup>. Ibid., pp. 103f.

of pointing to the all-important event of the crucifixion.

It serves to deflect the reader's attention from speculative issues towards the need to follow Jesus on his path through suffering to glory, and thus serves to buttress the call to discipleship which is Mark's major interest.<sup>23</sup>

This trend in interpretation reaches a peak of sorts in Norman Perrin. He too regards the Messianic Secret as involving what is essentially a postponement of revelation; but he views this postponement as intimately related to the requirements of teaching.

...the Messianic Secret is a literary device of the Evangelist, designed to emphasize the importance of a correct understanding of christological confession and christological testimony--the confession and testimony are to be kept secret until they can be properly understood--and to create the narrative opportunity for the teaching of that correct understanding.<sup>24</sup>

The christological conception which Mark seeks to convey is expressed in his use of the title "Son of Man" which incorporates Jesus' authority, both on earth and at the eschaton, with his necessary, soteriological suffering.<sup>25</sup> This teaching carries with it the corollary that willingness to suffer

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<sup>23</sup>. E. Schweizer, "Zur Frage des Messiasgeheimnisses bei Markus", ZNW, 56 (1965), 7f.

<sup>24</sup>. Perrin, "Question", p. 89.

<sup>25</sup>. Ibid., p. 90.

is also the basic requisite of discipleship, and thus of salvation.<sup>26</sup>

In general, then, there has been a strong trend in recent scholarship which continues to accept Wrede's contention that the Messianic Secret is a comprehensive and dominant element in Mark's Gospel. However, current interpretations reject Wrede's account of the purpose underlying Mark's procedure. Instead, the Secret is understood as a technique used by the evangelist to focus attention upon his central interests in Christology and/or discipleship.

In contrast to these expositions, a few scholars have begun to take issue with the dimensions of the Messianic Secret itself, as Wrede and others have presented it. In a 1965 article,<sup>27</sup> U. Luz argued that the conventional approach had erroneously linked together, under the rubric of the Secret, essentially dissimilar motifs. He singled out the commands to silence which accompany some of Jesus' miracles as a distinct phenomenon, inasmuch as they are not directly concerned with Jesus' identity as Messiah.<sup>27</sup> The miracles themselves, he contends, are intended for manifestation rather than for concealment. The commands to silence, which are almost always explicitly reported to be broken, serve to emphasize the impossibility of hiding the power of Jesus.<sup>28</sup>

<sup>26</sup>. N. Perrin, "Creative Use", p. 93.

<sup>27</sup>. U. Luz, "Das Geheimnismotiv und die Markinischen Christologien", ZNW, 56 (1965), 17.

<sup>28</sup>. Loc. cit.

Only those commands to silence which are directed at christological statements are to be dubbed the Messianic Secret. Jesus silences the testimony of the demons because he will not accept it from evil spirits, or because the time for proclamation has not yet come.<sup>29</sup> Here Luz joins with many contemporaries, suggesting that the time will be ripe for christological confession only with the crucifixion of Jesus.<sup>30</sup>

H. Räisänen's Das "Messiasgeheimnis" im Markusevangelium is in many respects a furthering of the work of Luz. The purpose of the book is to reexamine, from top to bottom, the complex of themes which make up the Secret according to Wrede; it is, perhaps, the most penetrating and thorough of such attempts to date. Räisänen concludes that most of the motifs in question serve distinct purposes, and that it is futile to try to graft them together into a whole. For example, the theme of esoteric teaching is used by Mark to speak to problems in his own community: the ideas he wished to propagate are validated by being presented as the special instructions of Jesus to his closest followers.<sup>31</sup> Like Luz, Räisänen argues that Jesus' miracles are media of revelation. Many are accompanied by futile commands for secrecy, which simply highlight the inability of Jesus to remain concealed.<sup>32</sup>

<sup>29.</sup> Ibid., pp. 18-22.

<sup>30.</sup> Ibid., p. 26.

<sup>31.</sup> Räisänen, Messiasgeheimnis, pp. 55f.

<sup>32.</sup> Ibid., p. 71.

Others, moreover, are described as being performed in emphatically public situations, and even serve as open challenges to Jesus' enemies.<sup>33</sup>

Those commands to secrecy which are directed to the demons and the disciples are quite different. Here the content of the secret is clearly Jesus' identity, and the commands are invariably obeyed.<sup>34</sup> According to Räisänen, Mark gives no clear indication of why explicit Christology is made a matter of concealment.<sup>35</sup> The blindness of the disciples is not intrinsically related to the Messianic Secret, but serves as an opportunity for paraenesis<sup>36</sup>; this theme seems to contradict that fact that the Twelve are the privileged recipients of esoteric teaching, but the disciples actually play more than one role in the story.<sup>37</sup> Finally, there are many situations in which a concern for the theme of secrecy plays no part.<sup>38</sup>

We are persuaded by most of Räisänen's arguments to the effect that Wrede's scheme constitutes a superficial harmonization of a number of separate motifs which serve different purposes. As a result, there are three bodies of evidence which must be treated separately. First, the notion

<sup>33.</sup> Ibid., p. 78.

<sup>34.</sup> Ibid., pp. 93-95.

<sup>35.</sup> Ibid., p. 118.

<sup>36.</sup> Ibid., p. 160.

<sup>37.</sup> Ibid., p. 56.

<sup>38.</sup> Ibid., pp. 144-157.

that the crowd accurately perceives Jesus' Messiahship is unacceptable; all the passages cited in support of this contention involve ascriptions of royal messianism, which, as we have seen, was not a contributory element in Mark Christology. In addition, we shall argue below that the crowd is among the hoi exō, those on the outside (4:11), and is therefore an unlikely candidate to be the source of Christological revelation to the reader.

On the other hand, Räisänen is quite correct in suggesting that Jesus' claim to Messiahship (in the Markan, not the royal, sense) is made evident to the Jewish authorities so as to emphasize their guilt in rejecting him.<sup>39</sup> This is a component of the Jew/Gentile theme discussed above, and does not really bear on the secrecy motif.

Finally, is it possible to discover why Jesus enjoined secrecy upon the demons and disciples? Our key verse, Mark 15:39, is of some aid. At the moment of his death, the point towards which the whole Gospel has been moving, Jesus is spontaneously recognized by the centurion as Son of God. It is precisely Jesus' sonship to God which usually constitutes the content of the Messianic Secret (1:24; 3:11; 9:7). This sonship does not change at 15:39; as we have seen, Jesus was the intrinsically divine Son of God from the beginning. The newness of the situation is the fact that the decisive saving act has now been performed. Christology has become "functional"

<sup>39</sup>. Ibid., p. 148.

in the sense that Jesus has now made salvation possible, providing for the expiation of sins and for the foundation of the community of the elect. Consequently, this is the point at which Mark first records the sort of confession which, in his community, would mark entry into salvation.

It is this motif of final and definitive revelation, in all likelihood, which caused Mark to include the preceding commands to secrecy. As we have already suggested, the attestation of Jesus' sonship by the demons is meant to inform the reader alone; the silencing of these spirits, it appears, prevents their confessions from reaching the ears of the other characters in the story, with the result that these revelations exert no influence whatsoever on the narrative itself. When Jesus forbids the disciples to publicize the content of Peter's confession (8:30)--a confession which Mark undoubtedly regarded as true (1:1; 9:41; 14:61f.)--we see, in essence, a continuation of the theme of esoteric teaching (4:11), for the central mysteries of the kingdom in Mark's eyes are almost certainly christological, given the thrust of his Gospel as a whole. This theme is explicitly combined with the postponement of revelation, until the occurrence of the saving event, by the command in 9:9. Jesus' sonship cannot be proclaimed effectively until it has become "functional"; indeed, it apparently cannot be grasped until then, even if revealed (8:31-33; 9:6,10).

According to Mark, Jesus' soteriological purpose was

to establish, through his death and resurrection, the community in which atonement for sins could be available. The question which remains to be answered is this: how does one enter the community so as to achieve salvation?

#### d. Discipleship in Mark

For a narrative like his, Mark had two ways of conveying to his readership his understanding of discipleship. One way would be to present this message as instruction from Jesus; the other would involve using characters in the story as models. In actual fact, the two are not totally distinct, for Jesus' teaching is usually directed to a particular audience. Therefore, we must begin this discussion by considering the respective roles of the various groups who encounter Jesus, most especially those identified as "disciples".

On more than one occasion, Mark's frequently disparaging portrayal of the disciples has led scholars to the conclusion that the evangelist is polemicizing against the original disciples and/or a Christian faction of his own time.

In 1961 J. B. Tyson argued that the disciples were, for Mark, the founders and representatives of a later Jewish Christianity based in Jerusalem.<sup>40</sup> This group apparently preached the resurrection while ignoring the Passion<sup>41</sup>, and awaited Jesus' return as royal Messiah.<sup>42</sup> Holding to a "mildly modified

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<sup>40</sup>. J. B. Tyson, "The Blindness of the Disciples in Mark, JBL, 80 (1961), 266.

<sup>41</sup>. Ibid., pp. 262f.

<sup>42</sup>. Ibid., p. 265.

Judaism", they upheld the Torah and refrained from evangelising Gentiles.<sup>43</sup> In contrast, Mark argues for the redemptive significance of the passion<sup>44</sup> and the universality of Jesus' accomplishment.<sup>45</sup>

A more influential reconstruction in the same vein is that of Weeden. He too sees the disciples as representatives of a Christian group oriented towards power and glory, while Mark responds by emphasizing the necessity of suffering; he identifies the heretical group as proponents of a Hellenistic "Divine Man" Christology, as we have seen. Mark chose the disciples for this role because the heretics claimed apostolic authority.<sup>46</sup>

P. Minear takes a different tack. He argues that Mark intended the "crowd" to be understood as a body of committed Christians who followed Jesus and constituted his true "family".<sup>47</sup> In 4:10f., the ochlos is to be identified not with hoi exō, but with hoi peri auton.<sup>48</sup> They are excluded only from the Messianic Secret, to which the Twelve alone are admitted.<sup>49</sup> Thus, the disciples and the crowd together

<sup>43</sup>. Ibid., pp. 265f.

<sup>44</sup>. Ibid., p. 266.

<sup>45</sup>. Ibid., pp. 267f.

<sup>46</sup>. Weeden, Mark, pp. 148f.

<sup>47</sup>. P. Minear, "Audience Criticism and Markan Ecclesiology", in H. Balthensweiler, B. Reicke, ed., Neues Testament und Geschichte [Cullmann Festschrift] (Zürich: Theologisches Verlag, 1972), pp. 81f.

<sup>48</sup>. Ibid., p. 83.

<sup>49</sup>. Ibid., p. 85.

represent the church; the former are the "shepherds", the latter "sheep".<sup>50</sup> The crowd which calls for Jesus' death (14:43; 15:8,11,15) is a separate group, the "puppets of the scribes and rulers."<sup>51</sup>

E. Best, in a recent article, has persuasively repudiated both of the above orientations. In opposition to Minear, he points out that there is a fluid distinction between "the Twelve" and the "disciples"; while both have the same duties, the Twelve can succeed at tasks where "disciples" fail (6:13; 9:18).<sup>52</sup> The tasks assigned to the disciples are not those of officials, but those of missionaries<sup>53</sup>; consequently, they are best seen as representatives of the entire community.<sup>54</sup> Failing to see grounds for a distinction between the hostile Jerusalem crowd and the preceding group, Best suggests that the main role of the ochlos is to serve as the object of evangelisation.<sup>55</sup>

The theme of the disciples' weakness is not an example of polemic, according to Best. Their failures are too diverse in nature to permit identification with one particular faction<sup>56</sup>;

<sup>50.</sup> Ibid., p. 89.

<sup>51.</sup> Ibid., p. 87.

<sup>52.</sup> E. Best, "The Role of the Disciples in Mark", NTS, 23 (1977), 300f.

<sup>53.</sup> Ibid., p. 397.

<sup>54.</sup> Ibid., p. 399.

<sup>55.</sup> Ibid., p. 392.

<sup>56.</sup> Ibid., p. 394.

for example, they misunderstand both Jesus' power and his need to suffer.<sup>57</sup> In addition, there are too many signs in the narrative of Jesus' approval of his disciples. As do many scholars, Best sees in 14:28 and 16:7 an indication of the eventual restoration of the disciples to fellowship with Jesus; Mark, he notes, often omits the fulfilment of a reported prophecy, even though he obviously assumes it.<sup>58</sup>

The validity of Best's reconstruction becomes more apparent when we bring into consideration the third major group in the Gospel: the Jewish authorities. As Jesus' enemies, they are distinct from both the disciples and the crowd. The basic relationships among these three entities are clear: Jesus and the disciples are locked in competition with the authorities; the allegiance of the crowd is at stake. The crowd is the object of "evangelisation" from both sides, and, in chs. 14 and 15, we see a victory in the struggle by the enemies of Jesus forming part of the fabric of the passion. While Jesus and his followers represent God's side, the authorities are chief among those "men" (9:31) who, as "sinners" (14:41), constitute the other side of the polarity.

What, then, constitutes discipleship? Best, posing the analogous question of what constitutes membership in the community, replies: "The answer is surely faith."<sup>59</sup> This,

<sup>57</sup> Ibid., p. 388.

<sup>58</sup> Ibid., p. 400. See also Stein, "Note".

<sup>59</sup> Best, Temptation, p. 180.

we hold, is insufficient. As we have seen, Mark usually presents faith as receptivity to Jesus' healing power; as such, it is normally associated not with the disciples but with the crowd (2:5; 5:34,36; 9:23f.; 10:52). Even Jesus' enemies are theoretically capable of it (15:32). When Jesus berates his disciples for lack of faith in 4:40, he adds insult to injury by suggesting that they show themselves to be even weaker than the crowd.

Faith, clearly, is not enough to save (though it is enough to heal). The response to Jesus which Mark wishes to elicit calls for more than this. We have suggested that Mark viewed Jesus' career holistically, under the rubric of "teaching". Interestingly, it has been pointed out that the task of the disciple is not simply "to learn", but "to follow".<sup>60</sup> Thus, two ideas are incorporated in the Markan view of discipleship: the need to "understand", and the need to "follow" in the sense of sharing Jesus' ministry. Thus, Best was not far wrong when he alluded to a motif of participatory unity with Christ in Mark; there is indeed a very strong sense of solidarity between Jesus and the disciple, but it is closer to imitation than to any idea of real union.

This theme of solidarity is closely associated with Mark's use of the title Son of Man, as M. Hooker noted.<sup>61</sup> We saw that, as Son of Man, Jesus exercised his divine authority

<sup>60</sup>. K. H. Rengstorf, "μανθανω", TDNT, IV, 406.

<sup>61</sup>. Hooker, Son of Man, pp. 181f.

in three modes: by performing works of mercy during his career; by standing firm through adversity, up to the point of dying on behalf of mankind; and by returning as eschatological judge. Understanding and following, which make up the "theory" and "practice" of discipleship, each correspond to these three aspects of Jesus' authority.

Understanding, as it pertains to discipleship, can be expressed by the verbs syniēmi and ginōskō, though the latter especially has other applications as well. Basically, that which is to be understood is the "secret of the kingdom" (4:11); this, like Mark's message as a whole, is closely connected to Christology, in view of the Messianic Secret. Unlike the crowd, the disciples are expected to do more than receive in faith the benefits of Jesus' works of mercy; they are to grasp the significance of those events (6:52; 8:17ff.) as manifestations of Jesus' authority. This is why their lack of faith in 4:40 is so doubly incriminating. Similarly, it is their task to understand the meaning and necessity of Jesus' suffering (8:31; 9:31; 10:33,45), while this knowledge is withheld from the masses. Finally, they alone among mankind are adequately forewarned about Jesus' return as judge (13:28f.). This "esoteric" knowledge is, in Mark's view, the property of the Church alone, and is part of what distinguishes the Christian from the crowd.

The opposite to understanding is portrayed as "hardness of heart." The heart is the source of sin (7:6,19,21), and

therefore of opposition to Jesus as well (2:6,8; 3:5). One is to love God with a whole heart (12:30,33), and not to let doubt dwell there (11:23). It is important to note that Mark never ascribes hardness of heart to members of the crowd. Just as they are capable of nothing more than "faith" in the Markan sense, so their basic misperception is described only as apistia (6:6). On the other hand, the disciples and the authorities both recognize the claim of Jesus sufficiently so as to put themselves beyond the alternatives of faith and unbelief. They may choose either to understand, to accept the truth of that claim and commit their lives on that basis, or to harden their hearts and brand themselves as enemies of Jesus. Significantly, the disciples' failures in understanding do not result in the threat of "demotion" to membership in the crowd; rather, it is with the essential sin of the authorities--hardness of heart--that they are charged (6:52; 8:17). Once Jesus' claim is recognized, there is no middle ground.

Understanding does not appear to be of particular interest to Mark in and of itself; hence our somewhat sketchy treatment of it. Instead, he regards understanding as nothing more nor less than the essential prerequisite for following Jesus, in the sense of full discipleship.<sup>62</sup> Here is where the

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<sup>62</sup> Naturally, not every occurrence of akoloutheō in Mark bears this meaning; see the discussion by J. Donaldson, "Called to Follow - A Twofold Experience of Discipleship in Mark", Bib Theol Bull, 5 (1975), 75f.

motif of the solidarity between the Son of Man and his followers comes to the fore: to follow the Son of Man means to take his activities upon oneself.<sup>63</sup> As Jesus preached to the masses and performed works of mercy among them, so too must the disciples (1:17; 3:14f.; 6:12f.). As he suffered, passive but not defeated, at the hands of the authorities, so must they (8:34ff; 13:11). They even participate proleptically in the judgment, giving testimony against those who reject the message (6:11). The common denominator of the tasks of discipleship obedience, is also portrayed as Jesus' attitude (14:36), in keeping with Mark's subordinationist Christology.

This is the heart of Mark's view of discipleship. Jesus' ministry, as "teaching", embraced everything he said and did. As teaching, it was meant to be both understood and imitated by his followers. His blend of divine authority and service to humanity was to characterize their lives as well. We have seen that Mark's Christology is essentially twofold: Jesus' identity as Son of God means that he possesses sovereign authority in the world; that authority is exercised in the various ways which are highlighted by their association with the title Son of Man, with its distinct Markan connotation. Analogously, Mark has a twofold view of Jesus' career as "gospel": on the one hand, it is the unique passage of the Son of God as man through the world of men, making salvation possible; on the other, it is the model to which all seekers

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<sup>63</sup> Cf. Schweizer, "Frage", p. 7; Horstmann, Studien, p. 28.

after salvation must conform, or, which they themselves must reenact.. Thus, to insist that Mark's ecclesiology is "kenotic" by virtue of the repeated message of humility and service<sup>64</sup> is to underestimate the fact that Mark calls his readership to follow in the footsteps of the Son of God in his authority.

Given this exalted view of what the Church is called to be, why does Mark so often portray the disciples as dull-witted cowards, giving rise to the argument that he was polemicizing against them? Räisänen states that the disciples have a number of different roles in the Gospel<sup>65</sup>, but this might easily be pushed too far; they are always the disciples, representative and prototypical of the Church, and there must be an inner coherence in Mark's treatment of them. This being so, the most likely interpretation is that presented by D. J. Hawkin, among many others: the disciples sometimes provide a typology per contrarium.<sup>66</sup> As Best puts it, they provide a foil to Jesus, their bad example serving to highlight his role as exemplar.<sup>67</sup> At the same time, the promise of their restoration provides comfort to those who find obedience to the gospel difficult.<sup>68</sup>

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<sup>64</sup>. P. H. Reardon, "Kenotic Ecclesiology in Mark", Bible Today, 70 (1977), 1477.

<sup>65</sup>. Räisänen, Messiasgeheimnis, pp. 56, 136.

<sup>66</sup>. Hawkin, "Incomprehension", p. 500.

<sup>67</sup>. Best, "Role", p. 399.

<sup>68</sup>. Loc. cit.

## EXCURSUS B: SONSHIP TO GOD IN JUDAISM

This discussion will be considerably shorter than Excursus A, owing to the fact that there is a basic scholarly consensus on this topic such as is not to be found in the case of the Son of Man.

The situation in the Hebrew Bible is clear. Literally, the "sons of God" are the angels (Gen. 6:2). "Son of God" can be used figuratively with reference to Israel; indeed, this is the most common usage in the OT. Finally, in II Sam. 7:14 and Ps. 2:7, sonship to God is ascribed to the Israelite king. A majority of scholars regard this as "adoption": upon enthronement, the king is installed into honorary sonship, particularly in view of his status as the representative or embodiment of Israel as a whole. Fohrer regards this not as adoption, but as acknowledgment and legitimization, in keeping with the <sup>1</sup>sacral kingship practices of the Ancient Near East. Hengel, on the other hand, sees a motif of discontinuity at work: the enthronement is the "birth" or "creation" of a new king, more than a simple change of status for a human being.<sup>2</sup>

The idea of sonship to God in later Judaism is more obscure. The application of the term to Israel continues, but, just as the extent of "true" Israel becomes a religious

<sup>1</sup>G. Fohrer, "υἱος", TDNT, VIII, 350.

<sup>2</sup>Hengel, Son., p. 23.

issue, so sonship to God can be ascribed to people on a basis other than their Jewish nationality. Therefore the righteous (B. Sira 4:10; Jub. 1:24f.; Ps. Sol. 17:26f.), or the wise (Wisd. 2:18), are sometimes characterized as sons of God in an honorary sense. The same appears to be true of charismatic wonderworkers in Palestine.<sup>3</sup> In all likelihood, however, the phrase "son of God" was associated more readily with the angels than with any other conception.<sup>4</sup>

The issue which has aroused the greatest contention is the problem of whether "son of God" was a recognized Messianic title in pre-Christian Judaism. At the centre of the argument is the Qumran fragment known as 4QFlorilegium, which provides concrete evidence that II Sam. 7:14 was interpreted as a messianic prophecy. Lohse has pointed out that, even here, the sonship motif is found only in a quotation; at the time he wrote, there was no available evidence that "Son of God" could function independently as a recognized title.<sup>5</sup> A more recently published fragment, 4Q243, refers to someone as "Son of God" and "Son of the Most High". Though Fitzmyer asserts the figure to be a Jewish ruler, the fact that this individual and his people "...shall rule upon the earth and shall trample everything...until there arises the people of God..." evidently leads Milik (the current custodian of the fragment) to conclude that this is an enemy of Israel.<sup>6</sup> Nevertheless,

<sup>3.</sup> Ibid., pp. 42-45.

<sup>4.</sup> Vermes, Jesus, p. 200.

<sup>5.</sup> Lohse, "υἱος", TDNT, VIII, 362.

<sup>6.</sup> Hengel, Son., pp. 44f.

a majority of scholars appear to support the contention that the title "Son of God" probably was operative as a royal-messianic designation in Judaism.<sup>7</sup>

As in the case of the "Son of Man", we find that nothing in Jewish tradition appears to have exerted a discernible influence on Mark's use of this title. He employed it as a designation of divinity, which actually contradicted royal messianism rather than building upon it (e.g., 15:39 refutes 15:32). Mark's Jesus, further, was not an angel; they were subordinate to him. All other uses of the phrase in Jewish sources are merely honorary, whereas the whole point in the Markan usage is its literal truth. Once again, the assignment of Mark to a setting which incorporates a strong Jewish influence appears to be unfounded.

<sup>7</sup> Hahn, Hoheitstitel, pp. 284-287; Hengel, Son, pp. 43-45; Donahue, "Temple", pp. 73f.; Juel, Messiah, p. 114.

PART V  
CONCLUSION

### 13. SUMMARY

This dissertation was undertaken in the belief that the present situation in Markan studies is sufficiently unsatisfactory that a fresh effort at interpreting this redaction would constitute a needed contribution to the field. In the hope of establishing an understanding of the Gospel which would overcome some of the weaknesses of its predecessors, we confined ourselves to a stable methodology of literary study independent of source criticism, and selected as our entrée to Markan theology the climactic verse of the story: the centurion's confession. It remains now to summarize our findings.

Led by the content of Mark 15:39, we uncovered in the redaction a strong tendency--unparalleled among the other Gospels--to define the essential issue in religion as an antagonism between the divine and the human dimensions of existence, or as what we called the God/man polarity. Notions of a conflict between God and Satan take a back seat to this problem of the relationship between God and man; and it is the latter which Mark's Jesus is intended to rectify above all else.

Thus it is that Mark's Christology also operates within the perimeters of the God/man polarity. Jesus not only provides for reconciliation between God and man (though he does

indeed do this through his atoning death), but embodies that reconciliation in his very self. The reality of his human nature is never in doubt. Nevertheless, the man Jesus acts as God upon earth, claiming authority that belongs by right to no mortal; from this, his condemnation for blasphemy follows naturally.

Yet, from the beginning, Mark maintains that this divine authority is Jesus' rightful prerogative. Other supernatural beings attest to the divine nature of Jesus, and he himself both affirms it and acts upon it. It is his identity as Son of God that gives meaning--indeed, that makes possible--his authoritative saving action as Son of Man, for it is as God-man that he overcomes the God/man polarity.

We found such a Christology to be fully plausible in terms of Mark's religious setting. Vital internal data join with such external evidence as we possess to make a conclusive case for a Gentile Christian provenance; that is, the redaction took shape in a community which ultimately owed its existence to the mission to the Gentiles set in motion by the "Hellenist" party of early Jewish Christians. Therefore, our nearest access to Mark's background is constituted by the Pauline correspondence. Here, both pre-Pauline and Pauline data indicate that a Christology involving a conjunction of divine and human elements in Jesus was current in the teaching of the mission. Thus, the basic thrust of Markan Christology is no radical departure from the tradition which pre-

ceded the formation of the redaction.

This analysis found confirmation of sorts in the fact that no such close relationship was found to exist between Markan thought and more "distant", non-Christian background material. Mark's use of the titles "Son of God" and "Son of Man" is fully intelligible in terms of his elaboration of an essentially traditional God-man Christology; it is, however, clarified but little--if at all--through a consideration of Jewish precedents. Similarly, Mark's use of Jewish royal Messianism as a model for his Christology is, if anything, negative. On the other hand, we concluded that, while the Markan redaction does share a number of general characteristics with other Hellenistic religious literature, this fact does not account for the content of Markan Christology. It would seem, then, that Mark wrote at a time when Gentile Christianity was, to no small degree, already a tertium quid, irreducible to purely Jewish or Hellenistic religious categories.

Apart from the question of plausibility, our interpretation of Mark's Christology was supported by the character of his soteriology. Jesus, as Son of Man, did what no mere man can do: he exercised divine authority on earth, suffered and died for the salvation of men, and served notice of his future role as eschatological judge. Yet, the duties of the disciple--the one who is to be saved--correspond to precisely these activities of Jesus. Paradoxically, that which man must do is that which man, by definition, cannot do. Jesus, the

God-man, calls his followers to share his work in the power of the Spirit. As God, he summons; as man, he gives to men the opportunity to share in the work of salvation.



#### 14. THE TRANSLATION OF MARK 15:39

In Chapter 3, we reviewed the arguments concerning the significance of the fact that, in Mark 15:39, the crucial words huios theou appear without the definite article. An attempt to reconcile the two sides, for the purpose of achieving an accurate translation of the verse, was published by H. A. Guy; he suggested that the rendering of the phrase as "God's son" was preferable, inasmuch as it would retain the ambiguity of the Greek.<sup>1</sup>

In that chapter of the thesis, we argued that the fully titular sense of these words was both grammatically feasible and, given Mark's use of the title elsewhere, almost certainly intended in that context. Now, having reviewed the fruitful manner in which this reading of Mark 15:39 has served as an interpretative key to the Gospel, we may conclude that there need not be the slightest hesitation in translating the centurion's confession as "Truly this man was the Son of God."

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<sup>1</sup>. H. A. Guy, "Son of God in Mk. 15:39", Expt, 81 (1970), 151.

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