

Corinthians a different "Paul" that they had seen through Paul's poor self-presentations during his visit. Paul's emissary, as the icon of "Paul-in-the-letter," was able to put the audience in the presence of the holy in a way Paul's opponents did in their performances and thus placed the Pauline apostolate on equal ground with their rivals. The embodiment of "Paul-in-the-letter" was the basis for transforming the social structure at Corinth by collapsing the distance between performer and audience; the act of incarnation of the letter's persona transforms the Corinthian audience and establishes a new relationship between the church and Paul:

Performance as icon . . . alters the very perception of being. One cannot look deeply into the eyes of an icon and ever see the world in exactly the same way again. The icon changes one by bestowing the vision of another world . . . to enter the world of the icon is to take on that world by spontaneous and largely unconscious response to it.<sup>43</sup>

The Corinthian audience changes by "seeing" the Apostle Paul in a new way. Titus "shows" the persona of the letter, a fool who is speaking with enormous power (2 Corinthians 11:1ff). This embodied voice lampoons the social order that the Corinthians have set up under the leadership of the rival apostolate. By looking at the "world" through Paul's eyes, the Corinthians perception of Paul's ministry changes. Paul's "legitimacy" as a Christian apostle is accepted and leads the Corinthians' reinstatement of Paul's apostolic authority.<sup>44</sup>

#### Conclusions

Alla Bozarth-Campbell's incarnational metaphor for the performance of literature grants us access to the process by which the Pauline apostolate successfully re-established an authoritative *parousia* in the Corinthian church. Paul created the word for the church; his "interpreter" (a sympathetic emissary) gave that word its "body" in the performance of Paul's letter. The creation of this "new body" can be viewed as a counter-performance to the effective recitations offered by Paul's rivals which implicitly demeaned Paul's presentations. What emerges in performance is the presence of "Paul-in-the-letter," a potent and powerful voice which disrupted and subverted the social structure imposed by Paul's "oral" opponents.

<sup>43</sup> Bozarth-Campbell 118.

<sup>44</sup> I agree with those who say that 2 Corinthians 1-9 was written *after* the Four Chapter Letter. Paul refers to a letter in 2 Corinthians 7:8ff that led to the Corinthians' repentance. I take 2 Corinthians 10-13 to be the letter he is alluding to.

## Jesus and the Temple, Mark and the War<sup>1</sup>

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*Mark* is an odd story. The hero's message is unclear, he evidently wants it that way (e.g., 4:10-12), and almost no one—including and especially chosen insiders—seems to understand him in any case. The author develops the malice and menace of the scribes and Pharisees almost from the opening of his gospel, but never capitalizes on this: when the denouement comes, it comes through the chief priests and Temple aristocracy.<sup>2</sup> Jesus apparently without ambiguity predicts the destruction of the Temple (13:2), but when this prediction resurfaces at the Sanhedrin trial, it is curiously recast and in some sense disowned (those who repeat it are *pseudo-martyr*, 14:58). The reasons for Jesus' execution have nothing to do with the Jewish court's charges.<sup>3</sup> And, finally, the ending is oddest of all: an empty tomb, an enigmatic young man, and women too frightened to speak (16:8).<sup>4</sup>

I want to argue in this paper that these—and other—odd aspects of *Mark* can be explained by an appeal to traditions that the evangelist inherited from and about Jesus of Nazareth. I will argue, further, that these traditions, most especially those concerning the incident in the Temple around Passover (Mk 11:15-18), contain historically reliable information about Jesus that helps us to reconstruct his mission, his message, and the circumstances surrounding his execution. And I will argue, finally, that these historical traditions, taken together with events in the Jewish War of 66-73, can help us to understand when 'Mark' wrote *Mark*, and why.

<sup>1</sup> This essay consolidates and slightly recasts an argument that appears, scattered, in *From Jesus to Christ, The Origins of the New Testament Images of Jesus* (New Haven, 1988) 44-52, 77-86, 96-125, 133-37, 171-89.

<sup>2</sup> See the chart in E. P. Sanders, *Jesus and Judaism* (Philadelphia, 1985), 310-11: Mark allows for "scribes" and "elders," but the chief movers are the priests, and the Pharisees have dropped from view.

<sup>3</sup> "The [Sanhedrin] trial has no causal relationship to the trial before Pilate. . . . The trial itself leads nowhere in the story. The charge of blasphemy does not result in stoning; nothing is even said about making formal charges to Pilate based on what was decided at the trial," D. Juel, *Messiah and Temple* SBLDS 31 (Missoula 1977) 67.

<sup>4</sup> "The conclusion is either intolerably clumsy; or it is incredibly subtle," F. Kermode, *The Genesis of Secrecy* (Cambridge 1979) 68. On the integrity of the shorter ending, W. G. Kuemmel, *Introduction to the New Testament* (Nashville 1975) 98-101.

### Mark and the Son of Man

The issue of Jesus' identity seems crucially important both to Mark and to Mark's Jesus. The heavens themselves tear open when, baptized by John, Jesus emerges to the *vox caeli* announcing his divine sonship (1:10f.); the Temple's curtain tears at Jesus' death as the centurion confesses "truly, this man was the Son of God" (14:39).<sup>5</sup> The story that unfolds between these brackets is liberally studded with Christological titles: Jesus is "the Holy One of God" (1:24), God's Son (3:11 demonic recognition; cf. 9:7, the voice from heaven again; 14:61 Son of the Blessed), and the messiah (8:29; 10:47 [though the Davidic connection seems repudiated somewhat in 12:35-37]; cf. 11:9-10, where Jesus' entry into Jerusalem is associated with the coming messianic age; 14:61). And Mark places *the* Christological question—"Who do you say I am?"—at the structural and dramatic midpoint of his gospel, the Confession at Caesarea Philippi (8:29).

Mark's audience knows that these titles are apt, but they have an advantage that the characters in the story do not. Jesus nowhere overtly preaches who he is, and he routinely censures confessions of his identity. When Peter responds correctly to Jesus' solicitation ("You are the Christ"—a response unprepared by the narrative), Jesus does not acknowledge his answer but charges him to remain silent, as he had earlier commanded demons. And Mark himself is scarcely more helpful. While he and his community clearly held Jesus to be the Christ and the Son of God, Mark neither defines nor develops either concept. Is Jesus the Christ because, whether in life or death, his deeds conformed to certain messianic prophecies (cf. Mk 11:1ff.// Mt 21:1ff.)? Is he the Son of God because before his earthly life he existed together with God (cf. 2 Cor 8:9), or assisted in creation (cf. Jn 1:3), or reconciled God and man through his death (Rom 5:10)? Mark never says.

This reticence, the so-called "messianic secret," whatever strategic benefit it might have had for Mark in his historical situation, serves in the narrative to highlight the only designation that evangelist and protagonist straightforwardly embrace: Jesus is the Son of Man. Even here, Mark does little to clarify the obscurity of this term, which most likely originated in older Aramaic tradition. Beyond identifying the Son of Man with Jesus, Mark defines it not so much in terms of content as function: not what the Son of Man is, but what he does. Thus the Son of Man exercises authority in defiance of the norms of Jewish piety (2:2-23). He has authority on earth to forgive sins (2:10), and is lord even over the Sabbath (2:28). But the Son of Man is also an example of humility; he is not served, but serves, ultimately giving his life as a ransom for many (10:46). Suffering ignominy, and death are his lot: rejected by the Jewish authorities, he is handed over to Gentiles, mocked, scourged, and killed (8:31ff.; 9:12,31; 10:32), even as the scriptures had foretold. But the Son of Man fulfills his own predictions: he rises on the third day, and will come again in glory to redeem his elect and usher in God's kingdom (8:38-9:1; 13:26; 14:42). Jesus' experiences as Son of Man, in brief, define both the narrative structure of Mark's gospel and the content of its message.

<sup>5</sup> 1:10 *schizomenos*; 14:38 *eschisthē*. The second event mirrors the first, especially in light of the fact that the Temple's outer curtain "portrayed a panorama of the heavens," Josephus, *BJ* 5.212,214; see David Ulansky, "The Heavenly Veil Torn: Mark's Cosmic *Inclusio*," forthcoming in *BAR*.

They also establish the pattern to which Jesus' "future" followers, Mark knew, would conform. The Son of Man will be delivered up (9:31); so will they (13:9,11). He will be brought before authorities and scourged (8:31; 10:33-34); so will they (13:9). Hatred and contempt is his lot (9:12) and theirs (13:13). He will be put to death (8:31; 9:31; 10:34), and whoever would follow him must be prepared likewise to take up his cross (8:35). Mark's gospel thus identifies the life of his church, through the replication of this experience of suffering, with the life of Jesus as Son of Man.

Not only the suffering, but also the glory; for Mark interprets the life of the Son of Man in terms of a traditional apocalyptic pattern, the suffering and vindication of the righteous. The Jesus who endured rejection, hostility, and persecution—that is, the earthly Jesus—was triumphantly vindicated (as he had predicted) at his resurrection. As with the Son of Man, so with his church: they too will be vindicated, provided they hold fast to their faith (8:38; 13:13; faith in or that what remains to be discussed), when the Son of Man returns in glory, an event that will mark the end of the age (9:1).

The hour of this final vindication, Mark and his Jesus assert—clearly in three places; more subtly, as we shall see, in his treatment of the resurrection—has dawned. Mark places the first such statement exactly between Jesus' first prediction of his own and his later disciples' passion (8:31-38) and the Transfiguration, when Jesus' glorious post-resurrection status as Son of God is manifest to Peter, James, and John (9:2-9): "Truly, I say to you, there are some standing here who will not taste death before they see that the Kingdom of God has come with power" (9:1). Later, in Jerusalem, Jesus similarly concludes the "Markan apocalypse": "So also, when you see these things take place [i.e., the woes listed in 13:2-25, and the mission to the Gentiles, v. 10], you will know that he [the glorious Son of Man, 13:26] is near, at the very gates. Truly, I say to you, this generation will not pass away before all these things take place" (13:29-30). And at the climax of his trial before the Sanhedrin (the consequence of which is proleptically mourned and connected with yet another reference to the Gentile mission, 14:6-9), Jesus tells the High Priest, "You will see the Son of Man seated at the right hand of Power and coming with the clouds of heaven" (14:62).

Thus the End will follow upon certain events, specifically the resurrection, wars fought by messianic pretenders, the mission to the Gentiles, and the Parousia. All these things, asserts Mark, will come to pass within the lifetime of those who first followed, or rejected, Jesus. Why, given the relatively late date at which he writes, would Mark make such a claim? And what makes him so certain? To answer these questions, we must first consider the ways that the motif of the Temple figures into Mark's story and, before that, into the mission, some forty years earlier, of Jesus of Nazareth.

### Jesus and the Temple

The four gospels present Jesus beginning his public career after coming into contact with John the Baptist, and ending it crucified around Passover by Pontius Pilate.<sup>6</sup> John was an apocalyptic figure, and Pilate evidently perceived Jesus as

<sup>6</sup> John the Baptist: Mk 1:9-11//Mt 3:13-17//Lk 3:21-22, cf. Jn 1:29-34; Pilate: Mk 15:1-15, 43-45 and parr. These pass the first half of the criterion of dissimilarity: nothing in early first-century Judaism speaks of a baptized or crucified messiah. And,

in some way connected with messianic agitations.<sup>7</sup> The movement that formed after Jesus' death, in his name, was likewise apocalyptic, that is, it conceived of itself and its mission in terms of the imminent realization of God's redemptive promise to Israel.<sup>8</sup> Whatever we make of the various traditions about Jesus preserved in the gospels, they must make sense within this basic framework of Jewish apocalyptic hope.

*faute de mieux*, reports of the two events survive in early Christian tradition, despite their being obvious embarrassments. The church, as evinced by all the various evangelical efforts to mitigate the awkwardness (e.g., John did not really want to baptize Jesus, but Jesus insisted; Pilate did not really want to execute Jesus, but the Jews and finally even Jesus himself insisted) was stuck with these two facts; they stood too firmly in the tradition to be dropped. Hence a corollary to the criterion: anything embarrassing (snide remarks about Gentiles, clear pronouncements of the imminent End, awkward encounters with the Roman imperium) is probably earlier.

<sup>7</sup> On John's orientation, Josephus, *AJ* 18.116-19, cf. Mt 3:2; I discuss these in *FJTC* 97f. See also Sanders' remarks, *JJ* 91ff. and literature cited.

<sup>8</sup> This would seem uncontested, even by those authors who see Jesus himself as non-eschatological (e.g., M. Borg, *Jesus: A New Vision* (San Francisco 1987): Jesus died because he sought to transform culture, and thus took a stance against 'conventional wisdom,' thereby offending those (Jews) in power, who manipulated Rome into disposing of him, pp. 150-204, esp 176ff., 182: "It was the conventional wisdom of the time—the 'dominant consciousness' of the day—that was responsible for the death of Jesus." Early Christians, on the other hand, did think of the Kingdom as imminent (p. 14), but they apparently reached this conclusion as a result of meditation on Jesus' resurrection, not from anything he himself may have said or done. See too the author's essay, "A Temperate Case for a Non-eschatological Jesus," *Forum* 2 (1986) 81-102: even the language of the Kingdom as it appears in the church's products is essentially a *façon de parler*, and implies no time-table (pp. 94-97).

I am in fundamental disagreement with such a construal, but will argue against it here only obliquely, inasmuch as I present my own reconstruction. The first generation's mission to the Gentiles, as we see it reflected in Paul's letters, seems to me unambiguous evidence of the immediacy of the ekklesia's expectations: the belief that Gentiles would be redeemed and participate in God's kingdom *without* conversion to Judaism (i.e., for males, circumcision) is a major motif of Jewish restoration theology that stretched from the classical prophets through the pseudepigrapha, various synagogue prayers, and later rabbinic literature. Paul holds it in common with James, Peter, John, and Barnabas—with everyone involved in the earliest mission, evidently, except the "circumcisers" whom he inveighs against in Galatians. See *FJTC* 145-56, 166f.; and "Judaism, the Circumcision of Gentiles, and Apocalyptic Hope: Another Look at Galatians 1 and 2," forthcoming in *JTS* (1991). I am committed in principle to the proposition that some direct relation informs the message of Jesus, the reasons for his execution, and the movement that formed subsequent to his death (on this historiographical point, *JJ* *passim*). As for Jesus himself, as James D. G. Dunn succinctly observed, "To set a non-apocalyptic Jesus between an apocalyptic John the Baptist on the one hand and an apocalyptic primitive Christian community on the other, is to strain the 'criterion of dissimilarity' beyond the breaking point," *Jesus and the Spirit* (Philadelphia 1975) 42.

Both the synoptic tradition and John depict Jesus in the final stage of his mission as going up to Jerusalem around Passover.<sup>9</sup> While there, he provoked some kind of incident at the Temple that earned him the mortal enmity of the chief priests. John places the Temple incident early in Jesus' ministry, where its significance is mostly symbolic: it sets the tone for Jesus' relations with 'official' Judaism and prefigures the Passion (Jn 2:13-22). In the synoptics, however, this is one of the dramatic events at the end of Jesus' career that leads to his crucifixion. Luke's abbreviated account says only that Jesus drove out "those who sold" (19:45-46). Mark and, following him, Matthew also speak of his overturning the tables of those who changed money and sold pigeons (Mk 11:15//Mt 21:12; so too Jn 2:15). How should we interpret this report?

Some historians argue that this incident never occurred, that it is a fabrication of Mark's.<sup>10</sup> Burton Mack, for example, points to the polemical mileage Mark reaps from the scene, observes (correctly) that no anti-Temple attitude can be imputed to Jesus or primitive tradition prior to Mark, and sees the episode as only flaccidly connected with ensuing events in the narrative.<sup>11</sup> Mark does use this scene to fuel his polemic against the Temple—indeed, against Judaism—but this fact does not mean of necessity that Jesus, had he actually overturned tables, would have similar intentions.

The synoptists, followed by many historians, provide one interpretation: Jesus' action was a protest against such commerce (money-changing and the sale of unblemished sacrificial animals) within the Temple precincts (Mk 11:17 and *parr.*; cf. Jn 2:15-17, an elaboration on this theme). Jesus was against religious externalities such as sacrifices, and so sought to reform or purify ("cleanse") the Temple cult. I consider this view to have been sufficiently and exhaustively refuted by Sanders, and will prescind from repeating his arguments here.<sup>12</sup> Against the lingering appeal of this interpretation, however, I will point to the counter-evidence of primitive Christian practice: apparently Jesus' own disciples continued to worship in the Temple after his death.<sup>13</sup> And Paul in Romans explicitly praises God for having granted to Israel the great privilege of the *latreia*, the cult of the animal sacrifices mandated by Torah and observed in Jerusalem.<sup>14</sup> True, the disciples do not appear as models of mental agility in the gospels; and Paul never knew Jesus at all. But it is surely incredible, had Jesus at such a dramatic moment and in such a dramatic way condemned so

<sup>9</sup> The Synoptics present this as Jesus' unique trip during his public career; Jn, more probably, depicts Jesus as making several trips for various holidays (2:13 Passover; 5:1 a feast; 7:1-10 Sukkot; cf. 11:55 other Jews expect Jesus in Jerusalem at Passover).

<sup>10</sup> Most recently B. Mack, *A Myth of Innocence* (Philadelphia 1988) 291-92.

<sup>11</sup> "The lack of any evidence for an anti-temple attitude in the Jesus and Christ traditions [sic] prior to Mark fits with the incredible lack of incidence in the story itself. Nothing happens. Even the chief priests overhear the 'instruction' and do nothing. The conclusion must be that the temple act is a Markan fabrication," *Myth* 292.

<sup>12</sup> See *JJ* 62-76, and the literature cited 363-69.

<sup>13</sup> Acts 2:46; 3:1; 5:12,42; cf. 21:23-36; Lk 24:53, at the finale of his gospel; Mt 5:23-24, where Jesus gives explicit teaching on how a Christian should sacrifice at the altar.

<sup>14</sup> Cf. the RSV's much weakened "worship," Rom 9:4.

central an aspect of Jewish worship as perverse or impure, that the disciples would have registered nothing.

Others conjecture that, by this gesture (the citations to Isa and Jer are all but universally attributed to Mark's editorial activity), Jesus was actually protesting the "nationalism" of which the Temple was a symbol (Borg) or, *à l'inverse*, that he instigated this demonstration at the Temple precisely as a call to national liberation (Brandon).<sup>15</sup> But given the size of the Temple compound and the lack of evidence for any significant disruption (the non-intervention of Rome at this point in particular), scholars increasingly tend to see Jesus' action as symbolic rather than practical, thus raising the question, "Symbolic of what?"

I concur with that stream of opinion that sees Jesus' action in the Temple as a prophetic gesture symbolizing its impending destruction. Mark's intercalation of this incident with Jesus' cursing the fig tree (11:11-20) certainly implies as much. The synoptic tradition further depicts Jesus as continuing to preach in the Temple compound as Passover approached, speaking *inter alia* of the Temple's destruction and the coming End of the Age (Mk 13 *passim*, esp. vv. 1-3 and *parr.*). Later, during the Sanhedrin trial, he is accused by "false witnesses" of having threatened to destroy the Temple and to rebuild it—Mark adds "not with hands"—in three days,<sup>16</sup> an accusation jeeringly repeated by hostile passers-by at the crucifixion (Mk 15:29//Mt 27:40). The phrase "in three days" resonates obviously with the Passion Predictions; and in Jn 2:21, the connection between Jesus' gesture, the interpretation of its symbolizing the Temple's destruction, and his own death is made explicit ("but he spoke of the temple of his body").

That the evangelists combined these traditions of Jesus' death (and resurrection), the incident at the Temple, and his predictions of the Temple's destruction is irrefutable.<sup>17</sup> I want to argue that an actual prophecy of Jesus of Nazareth concerning the Temple's impending destruction stands behind these traditions and actually

<sup>15</sup> Borg, *Jesus 173-204*; before that, his study *Conflict, Holiness and Politics in the Teachings of Jesus* (Lewiston/Queenston 1984): Jesus' action in the Temple was intended as "an indictment of the ideology which came to expression in militant separation from and resistance to the Gentiles," p. 177. I find this difficult. It requires a perspective on Jewish peoplehood in general and on the Temple (as the biblically-mandated center for worship and atonement) in particular that would be virtually unique in Jesus' period and culture; and it makes much more elaborate any connection between Jesus' action, the response of the priests, and Roman fiat. (The priests, if we can rely on Josephus, would and should have welcomed a prophet agitating *against* "national liberation.") The refutations of Brandon's particular reconstruction are familiar and generally accepted; what remains valuable is his perception of the natural liaison in Judaism between God's redemptive, eschatological activity and the integrity of Israel's identity vis-à-vis "the nations"—to which Torah, the prophets, many of the writings and pseudepigrapha (not to mention Paul's closing arguments in Romans), much less the Temple *per se*, are monument. If seeing ritual as "external" and thus somehow inauthentic and "bad" requires the development of modern sensibilities and existentialist philosophy (cf. Sanders, *JJ*, 62ff.), seeing "nationalism" in this sense probably requires at least Bismarck.

<sup>16</sup> Mk 14:57-60; cf. Mt 26:60-62. Lk suppresses this accusation at the trial and displaces it to Stephen, Acts 6:14.

<sup>17</sup> See esp. Juell's analysis of these traditions in Mark, *Messiah and Temple*.

affects the ways that the evangelists shape them. While the evangelists provide their own interpretations of Jesus' action, his meaning in its contemporary context would have been sufficiently clear. By overturning these tables, Jesus symbolically enacted the impending *apocalyptic* destruction of the Temple.

But in the context of his ministry, and more broadly in the context of Jewish restoration theology, such destruction is not 'negative': it necessarily implies no condemnation of, e.g., the Temple cult, the Torah, Judaism, or anything else. In the idiom of Jewish apocalyptic, destruction implies rebuilding; and a new or renewed Temple—especially one not made by the hand of man—would imply, more directly, that the Kingdom of God was at hand. In sum: Jesus' gesture (overturning the tables) near the archetypal festival of "national" liberation (Passover) in the context of his mission ("The Kingdom of God is at hand!") would probably have been readily understood *by any Jew watching* as a statement that the current Temple was about to be destroyed (by God, not human armies, and certainly not literally or personally by Jesus himself) and accordingly that the present order was about to cede to the Kingdom of God.<sup>18</sup>

The gesture was more than eloquent: it was clever, its meaning clearer and more widely available than any spoken pronouncement could have been. The tens, perhaps hundreds of thousands of Jews, together with interested Gentiles, gathered at Jerusalem for the feast would have come from everywhere, and spoken everywhere's dialects—"Parthians, Medes, Elamites," says Luke of Shavuot, "residents of Mesopotamia, Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia, Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt, Lybia, and Rome" (Acts 2:5-12). In the confusion at the Temple-mount immediately preceding the holiday—visitors, tourists, worshipers, throngs of animals, overworked priests, and, ringed round them all, Temple police and Roman soldiers—chances are slight that many would have noticed a disruption in some corner of the outer court. But those who did would have received a message that pierced the language barrier of Aramaic. In a stroke, Jesus increased the circle of his audience from local Palestinian followers to international.

This interpretation of the "cleansing" also explains why the chief priests, so prominent in the Passion narratives, enter the story here. Mark and Luke foreshadow the priest' role in Jesus' death with this episode (Mk 11:17-18//Lk 19:46-47). Mark and Matthew, depicting Jesus before the Sanhedrin, suggest that the High Priest regarded his threat against the Temple as religiously offensive (Mk 14:57-60//Mt 26:60-62); modern scholars conjecture similarly.<sup>19</sup> Offense explains the priests' involvement and supplies their motivation. I do not find this explanation very persuasive. For one

<sup>18</sup> So too, e.g., R. J. McKelvey, *The New Temple* (New York 1969) 65-71; Dunn, *Unity and Diversity in the New Testament* (Philadelphia 1977); Sanders, *JJ* 66-90, N.B. 77ff., where he reviews other Jewish literature for evidence of a belief that the New Age would have its new Temple.

<sup>19</sup> E.g., Sanders, *JJ* 70: Jesus' action would have been perceived as attacking the Temple, so that "not just priests would have been offended, but all those who believed that the Temple was the place at which Israel . . . had been commanded to offer sacrifice"; 71: traditions about the action preserve "an accurate memory of the principle point on which Jesus offended many of his contemporaries"; 76 even if the meaning of his gesture (namely, that God was about to intervene definitively) was understood, "the action and saying [rebuilding after three days] were still highly offensive." I do not agree.

thing, such warnings were traditional in classical prophecy. For another, the case of Jesus ben Hanan offers counter-evidence. This latter Jesus, according to Josephus, just before and subsequently throughout the siege of Jerusalem in 66-70, continuously bewailed the Temple's coming destruction. Both Jewish and Roman authorities flogged him for his disruptive and disturbing behavior; but during the siege, when Jewish authorities were completely autonomous, they took no steps against him (*BJ* 6.5,3). Were such prophecies intrinsically offensive, they would have; and considering the circumstances, their restraint is impressive.

So why would the priests have acted against Jesus if he publicly predicted the Temple's coming eschatological destruction? I think we are on surer ground if we take their involvement as the unobtrusive measure of the degree to which Jesus' gesture was comprehensible to—and comprehended by—his contemporaries.<sup>20</sup> To so openly, even flamboyantly, signal to a crowd, during such a holiday, after such a ministry, when an official such as Pilate was in Jerusalem,<sup>21</sup> that their liberation was at hand and that God's kingdom approached, *no matter how apolitically or non-militarily that Kingdom was conceived*,<sup>22</sup> was tantamount to shouting "Fire!" in a crowded theatre. The priests, ever the intermediaries between the populace and the Romans, were peculiarly responsible for maintaining public order. And if, as the synoptic gospels claim, Jesus continued to preach in the Temple area during the period before Passover (Mk 11:27-13:37 and parr.; cf. 14:49), and particularly about the signs of the End (Mk 13 passim), the priests' fears about his potential effect on the crowds—or, more likely, through imperial spies, on Pilate (cf. Lk 20:20)—would not have diminished as the holiday approached.

Did the total initiative come from the priests? Not impossible, but I would consider this unlikely. If anything like Jesus' entry into Jerusalem as depicted in the gospels occurred, Pilate would have been alerted already. Again, we must weigh evangelical presentation against known historical results: Rome did not immediately arrest Jesus and his followers, as surely it would have had a demonstration of overt messianic enthusiasm, with any significant number of participants, taken place. On the other hand, the simple fact that Jesus was executed by Rome as a messianic pretender strongly suggests that Pilate had a clear enough fix on Jesus' message. This is *not* to say that Jesus was actually an insurgent, like Judah the Galilean. *Nor* is it to say that Rome mistakenly thought he was: otherwise, Pilate would have arrested and crucified Jesus' followers too. But Jesus was an apocalyptic preacher, and the nature of

<sup>20</sup> Sanders is more cautious about the public comprehensibility of Jesus' prophetic gesture, *JJ* 76, though cf. his much greater certainty about Jesus' pronouncements: "It is plausible that a threat of destruction would have been understood by many of Jesus' contemporaries as meaning that the end was at hand and thus that redemption was near"; and even if Jesus had only threatened destruction, "the emphasis would be odd but the statement would nevertheless be comprehensible. . . . The connection between disaster, God's chastisement, and the subsequent redemption of a remnant was so firmly fixed in Judaism that we should assume that even a bare statement of destruction would not be altogether misunderstood," p. 88.

<sup>21</sup> On Pilate's character, *BJ* 2.9,2-3; *AJ* 18.3, 1; Philo *ad Gaium* 38.302; also the discussion in Schürer-Vermes 1.383ff. Any of the pilgrimage festivals, and especially Passover, were potential trouble for Rome, which routinely garrisoned troops there during the holidays on special alert, *BJ* 2.12,1).

<sup>22</sup> On the nonmilitary nature of Jesus' movement, Sanders, *JJ* 74-75, 231-32.

apocalyptic is political. Its message of an impending new order at least implies a condemnation of the current one; it is in religious idiom the expression of a political critique. The distinction between Jesus or John the Baptist, on the one hand, and Judah and his sons, on the other, is thus not that the former are religious while the latter are political. The one is pacifist, expecting a miracle, the other, military; but both are political, and both are religious.

Both are also nationalist. Jewish restoration theology focuses on the redemption of a particular people, Israel; brought back from exile to a particular land, *ba-Aretz, the Land*. If other peoples participate in the Kingdom, they too come to Jerusalem, specifically to worship at the "house of the God of Jacob" (*Isa* 2:2-4). The gospels, despite their distance from and antipathy toward such views, preserve traces of Jesus' commitment to them: his calling twelve disciples to represent the twelve tribes of eschatological Israel; his intensification of the ethical norms embodied in Torah; his journey to Jerusalem at Passover to greet the coming Kingdom; his prophetic gesture at the Temple, in anticipation of the Temple not made by hand; his prophecies of the imminent fulfillment of God's promises to Israel. Thus, though Jesus may have proclaimed that this Kingdom would be established not by armed rebellion but divine fiat, Jesus' Jewish audience would have known—as would Pilate—that such a kingdom exalted Israel and precluded imperial dominion. In the tinderbox of early first-century Palestine, crucifixion of such a prophet would be a prudent Roman response.

The further fact that Jesus' followers, the shock of his death notwithstanding, soon after perceived, and then proclaimed, that Jesus had been raised tells us the degree to which he had forged his followers into a committed community and prepared them for an eschatological miracle. The one they all expected when they went up to Jerusalem was, most likely, the arrival of the Kingdom, the fulfillment of Jesus' message. Instead they got an unexpected miracle: their experience of Jesus' resurrection. This returns us to the matrix of these beliefs in the resurrection of the dead and vindication of the righteous, namely, the eschatological hopes of first-century Judaism.

The first time that the priests encountered Jesus, at the Temple court, he was actively broadcasting this message under the very noses of the Romans. Had Pilate been different, they might have felt less obliged to facilitate Jesus' arrest. As things stood, they did oblige, perhaps thereby avoiding the sort of large-scale punitive action for which Pilate was to have a reputation. The most prominent aspects of Jesus' story—his apocalyptic message, his "messianic" entry into Jerusalem at Passover, his sufficient (and perhaps growing) following, his subsequent death on the cross—do not require the hypothesis of priestly involvement, much less initiative, to cohere. But the prominence that the evangelists give to the priests, obvious apologetic intent aside, makes some sort of priestly involvement hard to discount. I incline, as do others, toward suspecting that John's scenario probably does least violence to the facts: Jesus was arrested by a mixed posse of Roman soldiers and Temple police (18:3,12); the priests had been concerned lest his message lead to wholesale Roman reprisals (11:48-51); on his way to Pilate, Jesus was short-stopped at the house of the chief priest, who questioned him "about his disciples and his teaching" (18:19). The first and most prominent time that this combination of factors (apocalyptic message, popular reception, priestly awareness, potential Roman involvement) comes together is the incident at the Temple. This event and this

prophecy, I would argue, stand at the beginning of the chain of events that leads ultimately to Jesus' execution.

If this is so, then one last thing follows: we should stop speaking and thinking of Jesus' final trip to Jerusalem as his deliberate confrontation with Judaism, the priests, the Temple-cult, or whatever else ends by placing him over-against his own people and religion. He went to confront no one—not Judean Jews, not the priests, and certainly not Rome. He went, perhaps, simply to be in the right place at the right time. He went up to Jerusalem that Passover because he expected the Kingdom to come that Passover, at or as the climax of his own mission.

How does this historical reconstruction help us to further penetrate *Mark*?

### The Son of Man, the Temple, and the End of the Age

We cannot know how long Jesus' followers continued to have experiences of him as raised. The evidence of Paul (1 Cor 15:4-7) and of Acts (1:3; 13:31) suggests that they extended over some period of time. This caesura between the disciples' perception of Jesus' resurrection and their proclamation of it is yet one more crucial "lost period" in the history of Christian origins, for which we have no direct sources. Mark's gospel simply stops just shy of this point, while the others conflate the resurrection Christophanies with the charge to evangelize the nations. Only in the opening chapters of Acts do we glimpse, behind Luke's mannered presentation, the community's agitation and excitement in this interregnum between Easter and the mission. The disciples and brethren gather together, experiencing the Risen Christ who for weeks speaks to them of the Kingdom (1:3); they pray together daily (1:14; 2:1), communalize all property, share meals, and worship together in the Temple (2:44-46). They were expecting not a world mission, but the Kingdom of God.

At some point, however, the community must have begun to reinterpret the eschatological significance of the resurrection. Clearly it could not in and of itself have signalled the approach of the Kingdom, because still the Kingdom did not come. What thus might have been a second, and equally fatal, disconfirmation of the faith of Jesus' followers (his execution being the first) instead became the occasion for a further reinterpretation that allowed the community to continue. If Jesus' resurrection were not his eschatological Parousia, then surely it could not be far away. And in this interim between Jesus' resurrection—a sort of Parousia *manquée*—and his definitive vindication with the coming of the Kingdom, the disciples evidently felt called to continue Jesus' mission, preparing Israel for the End that they knew, on the evidence of his resurrection, was fast approaching.

This kerygma of a crucified and risen messiah whose imminent *second* coming would immediately precede the Kingdom did not persuade many Jews. Already by mid-century, few accepted this message (Rom 9:27 only a remnant so far; 11:7 only the elect, but the rest God has hardened); as time went on, ever fewer. Long before Mark wrote, if we can trust the evidence of Paul, the demographic balance of the movement definitively lay with the Gentiles.

These first Jewish missionaries to the diaspora met with worse than skepticism or indifference. As Jews going to Jews, they also encountered the active opposition of synagogue courts and diaspora communities (e.g., Paul's own experience on both sides of this opposition, Gal 1:13; 2 Cor 11:24). Mark's own community, a generation later, lay outside the jurisdiction, and very possibly the concern, of these courts. But the traditions Mark preserved retained the memory of this earlier experience,

when (Jewish) Christians had been "delivered up to councils and beaten in synagogues" for preaching the Gospel (13:9a,10).<sup>23</sup> And the continued existence of contemporary synagogue communities further evinced the Jews' persistent refusal to receive the Christian kerygma, now proclaimed to them for the most part by Gentiles.

When Mark undertook to portray the public career of Jesus, he projected these divergent responses to post-resurrection Christian claims back onto Jesus' own lifetime. The centurion's instantaneous confession at the moment of Jesus' death—"Truly this man was the Son of God!" (15:39)—climaxes an extended series of episodes whereby Mark, despite preserving a tradition that Jesus had restricted himself to Israel (7:26-29), nonetheless carefully integrated sympathetic Gentile responses into Jesus' public ministry. His Jesus reaches out to Gentiles usually after some confrontation with Jews, be they his enemies or his own disciples. Thus, though the Pharisees plot to murder Jesus, multitudes stream out from pagan cities to hear him (3:1-8). His disciples' faith falters as they bear him to Gentile territory, but once there, Jesus preaches with great success (4:35-40; cf. 5:1-20, in the country of the Gerasenes). Jesus disputes with the Pharisees over the essentials of Jewish observance, and then quits their company for Gentile audiences (7:1-31). Most strikingly, it is to a Gentile that Jesus reverses his usual policy of demanding silence after a cure: "Go home to your friends and tell them how much the Lord has done for you, and how he has had mercy on you" (5:19). In such ways Mark argued that the Gospel had always presupposed a Gentile church—Mark's church—from the beginning.

So also with Jewish unbelief, which Mark situates as well in Jesus' lifetime. Christian frustration with Jewish hostility or indifference to post-resurrection claims about Jesus, Mark thereby explained, only recapitulated Jesus' own experience during his mission. Things had always been as they were now; the Jews had always resisted the Gospel.

But in proclaiming this Gospel through a construction of Jesus' past—a past Mark wove in part from strands of historical tradition going back ultimately, despite the vagaries of transmission, to the earliest followers of Jesus—Mark created an awkward problem. Was the Gospel rejected by Jesus' contemporaries the same as the Gospel rejected by Mark's? Did Jesus before his death and resurrection, in other words, proclaim as Mark's community did the post-resurrection Christ?

Mark's treatment of the post-resurrection titles *messiah* and *son of God* bespeaks both the historical tenor of the tradition that he had inherited and his own sensitivity to it. He seems implicitly aware that Jesus had not been so designated during his own lifetime, but after. Hence he associates Peter's confession of Jesus' messiahship immediately with the Passion (8:29-31) and thence the Parousia (8:38-9:1). And he follows Bartimaeus' proclamation ("Son of David!") with Jesus' departure for Jerusalem, the long-foreshadowed site of his sufferings (10:46-11:1). So also with the Transfiguration (9:2-8). Jesus "charged them to tell no one what they had seen [i.e., his glorious revelation as divine Son] until the Son of Man should have arisen from the dead" (9:9; cf. Rom 1:4). Only supernatural entities—God (1:11 and here, 9:7) or demons (e.g., 1:32; 5:7)—had so identified Jesus in the course of his ministry. The

<sup>23</sup> On the anachronistic quality of such passages, which recall an era already passed by the time the gospels are composed, see Douglas R. A. Hare, *The Theme of Jewish Persecution in the Gospel according to St. Matthew* (Cambridge 1967) 104-05.

two humans to call him "Son of God," the High Priest (14:61) and the centurion (15:39), do so only within the context of his Passion.

Mark's Jews, then—at least up to Jesus' confrontation with the High Priest (14:60-64)—do not reject Jesus on account of his Christology. On the contrary, so reticent is Mark's Jesus on this topic, usually demanding silence when someone or something divines his true identity (true, that is, in light of post-resurrection faith) as Christ or Son, that Jesus scarcely seems to pronounce a Christology in Mark. Then why did Jesus' Jewish contemporaries reject him? Having serendipitously avoided Christological anachronism, Mark at this point introduces a social one. For Mark imputes to the pre-resurrection Jesus, the earthly, "historical" Jesus, a critique of Jewish institutions and practices that undermines the Jewish understanding of Torah.

The true origins of this critique, certainly evident in Paul as well as in Mark, must be sought in the post-resurrection context of the mission to the Gentiles initially within the diaspora synagogues, and the debate thereby engendered among the first generation of apostles (e.g., Gal 2:11-21). But through Mark's narrative, Jesus *in his lifetime* becomes the authoritative source of the Gentile rejection of Torah. He criticizes Sabbath observance, fasts, and Temple sacrifice; he dismisses Jewish practice as "the traditions of men" (7:1-23; 11:27-33, etc.). Why, then did the Jews reject Jesus? Because, Mark answers, Jesus had already rejected them together with their religion, preaching with deliberate obscurity "lest they should turn again and be forgiven" (4:12).

This theme of mutual hostility and rejection builds to a climax during Jesus' final days in Jerusalem. Mark begins the story of Jesus' stay in the capital by intercalating two episodes that symbolically repudiate Judaism and foretell its coming demise: Jesus curses the fruitless fig tree ("May no one ever eat from you again"; 11:14; cf. vv. 20-21) and disrupts the operation of the Temple (11:15-17). Shortly thereafter, he confounds in debate all the representatives of Jewish learning—the chief priests, scribes, elders, and Pharisees (11:27-33; 12:13-17, 18-27). Worse than mere opponents, these men (as Mark has hinted at or asserted practically from the beginning of his gospel) will bring about Jesus' death (3:6; 8:31, cf. 9:31; 10:33; 11:18; 14:1, 10-11, 43, 55; 15:1-15, 31). Thus, while the simple fact of crucifixion might implicate Rome, Mark's Passion narrative makes clear where the true responsibility for Jesus' death lay.

But for Mark, Jesus' crucifixion represents more than just Judaism's rejection of the Gospel. It also points ahead to the destruction of the Temple. Where his Jesus speaks directly of the Temple's destruction ("There will not be one stone that will not be thrown down"; 13:2), Mark only indirectly establishes its connection with Jesus' death. In this passage, Jesus states that the destruction will mark the approach of the End and thus the glorious *return* of the Son of Man (13:2-4, 14, 26-29). By implication, Jesus must have 'gone away' at some earlier point.

However, when Jesus stands before the Sanhedrin, Mark links this prophecy about the Temple directly to Jesus' death. He reports it in the more belligerent form of a threat, and attributes it to "false witnesses": "We heard him say, 'I will destroy this temple that is made with hands, and in three days I will build another, not made with hands'" (14:58; cf. 15:29). The formula "destroy/in three days rebuilt" immediately recalls Mark's Passion predictions ("The Son of Man must be killed . . . and after three days rise again"). Perhaps Mark's Christological interpretation of the prophecy explains his distancing Jesus from this form of it by assigning it to a perjuring third party. Since Jesus' death corresponds to the Temple's destruction, and since

Jesus cannot be the agent in his own death, neither can he directly be the agent in the Temple's downfall—an implication that Mark likewise suppressed when interpreting Jesus' action in the Temple courtyard as protest rather than prophecy.<sup>24</sup> Mark thereby enriches the irony of this scene because the resurrected Jesus, the temple not made by hand, his eschatological body, is 'built' in three days.<sup>25</sup> The Sanhedrin, thinking that they can destroy Jesus, only work to bring about the symbolic fulfillment of this prophecy, his own death and resurrection (cf. Jn 2:18-22).

This association of Jesus' death as Son of Man with the Temple's destruction broadened the theological implications of the crucifixion. By laying the blame for Jesus' death on the leaders of Judaism—indeed, by so shaping the dialogue between the High Priest and Jesus that the trial turns on *the* Christian confession of Jesus as messiah and Son of God—Mark argued that the Jewish rejection of the Gospel foretold and indeed resulted in God's definitive, historical rejection of the Jews: the destruction of their nation, their city and their Temple, all come about in Mark's own day. Thus, into his description of Jesus' final breath (15:37) and the centurion's confession (15:39), Mark intrudes the curious report: "The curtain of the Temple was torn in two"—another prophecy of its coming destruction.<sup>26</sup> By destroying Jesus, Mark argues, the Jews thus became the agents of their own destruction, and by that same action effected the transfer of the Gospel to the Gentiles (15:39).

But suffering is only one half of this cycle. Vindication follows. Jesus' suffering and death—his role as Son of Man—had led to his resurrection. Accordingly, Mark argued, the suffering of Jesus' true followers during that period marked by wars, false messiahs, persecutions, and the mission to the Gentiles—a period whose close would be signaled by the destruction of the Temple—would lead to their own vindication as the Son of Man returned, sent out angels, and gathered his elect (13:2-27). Thus for Mark and his community the downfall of the Temple meant more than the end of Judaism, more even than the vindication of the Gospel. Mark's story does make these polemical points, but its main message is both broader and more urgent. Mark writes, I think, in the near aftermath of the Jewish War. And he writes to use his inherited "historical" traditions about Jesus to assert, through his story about Jesus, the authority of the prophecy originally pronounced by Jesus and preserved in that tradition: "The time is fulfilled, and the Kingdom of God is at hand."

Behind this message stand expectation and prophecy unfulfilled. For Jesus of Nazareth had expected to see the Temple destroyed, the Kingdom come, and the New Temple established in c. 30, at or as the climax of his own mission. Mark's community preserved the memory of Jesus' proclamation of these beliefs. But Mark also knew that Jesus' mission had ended in his death, albeit followed by his resurrection. And Mark knew that neither Jesus nor Jesus' generation had lived to see the Temple destroyed. *Worse: Mark's bad. And still the Kingdom had not come.*

Mark thus writes his gospel to exhort his church to remain strong in their faith, despite this seeming disconfirmation of familiar and fundamental Christian prophecy. Hence he emphasizes the authority of Jesus' teaching, the importance of faith in Jesus specifically as the suffering and vindicated/to be vindicated Son of Man, and the need

<sup>24</sup> Jn 2:19 similarly transposes this tradition into the second person.

<sup>25</sup> Cf. Juel's argument, that the referent is the Christian community, *Messiah and Temple* 143-47.

<sup>26</sup> Whence the well-known comment in the *Clementine Recognitions* 1.41 that the Temple's curtains tore "as though mourning the impending destruction of that place."

to endure to the End. Mark ingeniously protects the authority of the threatened tradition precisely by deploying it, creating a story—the first one we have—about the public career of Jesus that establishes a prophetic synonymity between events circa 30 and events circa 70, between the fate of the Son of Man and the fate of the Temple. He demonstrates through his Passion narrative that this prophecy of the Temple's destruction and succession by another not made by hand on the third day had *already* been fulfilled, and exactly when Jesus had said it would be: at the end of his ministry, in Jerusalem, at Passover. The community knew what none of Jesus' contemporaries had known: the prophecy was fulfilled through Jesus' death and resurrection.

But Mark also preserved, thanks to recent events, the original apocalyptic content of Jesus' prophecy. For if "destruction/rebuilding" symbolically corresponded to the crucifixion and resurrection of the suffering Son of Man, then clearly the Temple's actual, historical destruction signaled the imminent fulfillment of Jesus' prophecy, the advent of the Kingdom. The Kingdom, then, had never been delayed. It was coming exactly when Jesus had said it would: following the destruction of the Temple. Its utter destruction—no stone upon another—indicated how close the glorious Son of Man was—indeed, already at the very gates (13:2-8, 14, 29).

This linkage of Jesus' death, resurrection, and Parousia with both the experience of the church and Titus' victory over Jerusalem also helps to account for the gravitational pull that the Passion exerts over Mark's entire story. Throughout his gospel, Mark trains his audience's attention on Jesus' inexorably approaching death. By so affirming the authority of his tradition by integrating, through the Passion, the fate of the Temple with the kerygma of Jesus the Son of Man, Mark also bequeathed to the future generations he never envisioned an enduring image of the past; an image, conveyed particularly through the Passion narrative, that fixed his depiction of Jewish perfidy and malice—and thus his hostility toward Jews and Judaism—at the heart of his gospel. For Jewish perfidy "explained" both the death of Jesus and the destruction of the Temple. It reinforced Mark's historicizing Christology, whereby Jesus became the founder of Mark's Gentile church. And this reinforced in turn his Christologizing of Jerusalem's defeat, which thereby became a major assurance that the church's eschatological vindication was, after all, at hand.

If my hypothesis be accepted—that Jesus actually prophesized that the Temple would be destroyed and the Kingdom come during his final Passover in Jerusalem; that Mark knew this tradition; and that the recent defeat of Jerusalem in combination with this prophecy had stimulated Mark to write—then we can account for several other characteristic oddities of his gospel. Because of the pressure of his circumstances, Mark operates on a two-generational model, that of Jesus' lifetime, c. 30, and that of his own, c. 70. His whole story about Jesus dramatically oscillates between these two generations and, thus, between Jesus' concealment and revelation: concealment during his ministry; revelation (though attenuated) c. 30 and most especially c. 70, with the expected Parousia. Hence the almost inexplicable dim-wittedness if not hostility of virtually every Jew that Jesus comes into contact with during his ministry—the crowds who follow him, his own family, even his disciples. Even those who followed him, Mark says, had by and large failed to grasp his meaning, embrace its message of suffering as a necessary preliminary to redemption, or endure with constancy.<sup>27</sup> Jesus' generation had been a faithless generation (9:19). To

such a generation Jesus would grant no sign (cf. 8:12).

Rather, the sign of the impending apocalypse and redemption foretold by Jesus to his contemporaries had been granted only to those of Mark's generation. Only they had endured persecution for Christ's sake and brought the Gospel to all the nations (13:9-13). Only they had witnessed the false messiahs (Theudas? The Egyptian? The leaders of the revolt in 66?), the wars, and the abomination of desolation set up where it ought not be (Titus' military standard on the Temple mount? 13:26-37; cf. 15:32).<sup>28</sup> Accordingly, only they had seen the fulfillment of Jesus' great prophecy, the destruction of the Temple (13:2, 14). Therefore it was they who would live to see the Kingdom of God come with power (9:1; 13:26-37; cf. 15:32).

Hence, finally, Mark's ending, the oddest part of all. By so emphasizing the proximity and clarity of Jesus' imminent glorious revelation, Mark inadvertently imputes to the period between the resurrection and the Parousia—a period he firmly believed was drawing rapidly to a close (13:20)—a kind of lingering obscurity. His parallel presentations of the Transfiguration and the scene at the tomb ambiguously evoke both the resurrection and the Parousia. And both scenes (despite the angel's explicit injunction to speak in the latter case, 16:7) present three witnesses who respond with fear, silence, and lack of understanding (9:6, 9//16:8). How then, and when, would Jesus' identity as Christ and Son of God be broadly and publicly proclaimed? Only when he returned as the glorious Son of Man (8:29-9:1; 14:61-62).<sup>29</sup>

Hence the absence in Mark's gospel of post-resurrection appearances, and his emphasis on the empty tomb: Jesus' resurrection, following his crucifixion (the destroyed temple/the temple not made by hand) merges with his Parousia, following the Roman destruction of Jerusalem's Temple. And where those of Jesus' generation had failed and fled, those of the first and final Christian generation, Mark's

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Peter's dull performance, 8:31-33; 9:6; 14:37, 66-72. In Mark's gospel the disciples are last seen abandoning Jesus, and Peter denying him. They flee, witnessing neither the crucifixion nor the resurrection.

<sup>28</sup> Commentators more usually take this as a reference to Caligula's attempt c. 40 to place his own statue in the Temple, e.g. Denis Nineham, *Mark* 353. For the abomination as Titus' standard, Brandon, *The Fall of Jerusalem and the Christian Church* (London 1957) 174, 231-32.

<sup>29</sup> The later synoptics, which necessarily alter this two-generational model, alter as well this eschatological identification of resurrection and Parousia that Mk had so carefully constructed. They, and John most extremely of all, depict a Jesus who does make known his Christological identity during his own lifetime, and who founds a church, again during his own lifetime, to continue his work of proclaiming the Christian Christ. For them, the resurrection serves chiefly to confirm Jesus' prior and public claims, while the Parousia recedes into the future. The period of intermediate obscurity between private and public revelations thus shifts back in time from that period between the resurrection and the Parousia (Mk), to that period between imputed biblical witnesses and Jesus' appearance on earth (Mt *passim*; Lk most especially in his birth narrative). The publicly revelatory event thus shifts from Jesus' resurrection/Parousia to his ministry. The Jesus of the later evangelists, in other words, obviates the Christological function of the Markan Second Coming. That function for them passes to the church, whose continued existence for an indefinite period they presuppose.

<sup>27</sup> E.g., 4:13-14, 39-40; 6:49-52; 7:18; 8:17-21; 9:6-10, 19, 32; 14:4-7, 10, 50; esp.



generation, stood faithfully: enduring till the End, awaiting salvation, keeping watch for the return in glory of the Son of Man.

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I like several things about this proposal. I like taking Jesus' prophecy of the eschatological destruction and replacement of the Temple as historical. It helps make sense of the incident in the Temple court at Passover non-anachronistically, and plausibly situates him within his culture and what we can reconstruct of his message. And it makes sense of the priestly involvement in his arrest, while allowing Pilate to remain the prominent—indeed dominant—factor that he must have been.

I like, further, how it can explain several perennially awkward issues in Markan exegesis, and not least of all the fundamental historical question: *Ma pi tōm?* What, all of a sudden? Why the historical "gospel genre"? Why the evangelist's interest—no matter how subsumed by theological concerns—in the "historical Jesus"? And why sometime around the year 70? This proposal cannot connect up all the dots—we still see through a glass, darkly—but it does hit quite a few of them.

But there are two things about the proposal that I really do not like. The first is that it activates my (almost aesthetic) aversion to theories of literary composition that are so much more complicated than the text they seek to explicate. True, we've all seen worse and more complicated (usually about the Gospel of John—but that's a more complicated gospel); and at least this proposal does not require, on our part or our author's, a thorough fluency in structuralism, deconstructionism, social anthropology, or psycho-sexual theory. It relies on Josephus more than Foucault, and its argument is historical rather than formally theoretical: Did Jesus say and so such? What would it have meant? What if Mark had known? etc. But it does require of Mark a compositional complexity and subtlety that his tone, to my ear, belies. This problem is not fatal, but it does make me nervous.

What bothers me a lot is that, if I am right, I should probably have to hypothesize a lost letter of Paul's. How could Jesus have made such a spectacular prophecy, which Peter, James *et alii* must have known; how could Paul have known them and thus it, written as much as he did about the impending end of the age and the Returning Lord, and never have mentioned it at all? Nothing in 1 Thes 4, nothing in 1 Cor 15, nothing in Romans 8, or from Romans 11 on (after 15:25 would have been a good place).

Since I cannot offer answers, let me proceed to observations and speculation. First, the phrase "Son of Man" could only have originated in the Aramaic-speaking matrix of the earliest movement, and has a reasonably strong claim to having been introduced (with whatever meaning) into the primitive kerygma through the teaching of Jesus himself. Paul never uses it. Perhaps this is because his use of *Jesus Christ* replicates the functional definition of Son of Man (one who suffered, was vindicated, will be vindicated and come in glory, and so on); perhaps he simply did not want to burden his Greek-speaking Gentile communities with an unnecessary neologism. But why not keep the phrase in Aramaic? He does not hesitate with "abba" (Gal 4:6; Rom 8:15) or "marana tha" (1 Cor 16:22). My point, chiefly, is that scholars accept as ancient, and even authentic, other material originating in the Palestinian phase of the movement that is not attested in Paul.

Paul in fact scarcely speaks of the Temple at all. Where he does, it is with unreserved esteem and classic Jewish piety. God's Spirit dwells therein; it is holy; God

will destroy its destroyers (1 Cor 3:16-18).<sup>30</sup> Its rites (*latreia*) are one of the glories and privileges of Israel (Rom 9:4). So holy and Spirit-filled is the Temple that Paul invokes it as an appropriate metaphor for his Gentile converts, whose bodies through baptism have become members of the body of Christ (1 Cor 6:13-20). And Paul conceives of his own work as a "priestly service," bearing the "acceptable offering" of the Gentiles to Jerusalem (Rom 15:15-16, 26-27, 31).

I will note, further, that Paul in general strips away many of the traditional elements of Jewish restoration theology even as he presents to his Gentile audience many of its central ideas: God's justice, steadfastness and mercy; how he works redemption in human history; that he is about to bring time to a close. Jewish history and the Jewish commitment to God's moral nature as revealed in Torah had created the dynamics, and many of the details, of Judaism's apocalyptic eschatology. We see these reflected in the material on Jesus preserved in the gospels—whether there would be marriage and divorce in the Kingdom, drinking and eating, hierarchical power, physical bodies, the twelve tribes, a new Temple. Paul retains the dynamics of Jewish eschatology but avoids its historical particularity. His Lord fights not Babylon, but the cosmic archons of this evil aeon; bodies will be saved, but they are not physical; the Kingdom comes not in the land of Israel, centered around a glorious Jerusalem and a new Temple—imagery born of the old Babylonian idiom of redemption as return from exile. For Paul, the kingdom will be "in the air" (1 Thes 4:17). No temple there.

Finally, even though Paul orients his gospel toward the coming final redemption at Christ's Parousia, he argues that the turning of the age, through Christ's resurrection, has *already* occurred. Thus neither Christ's coming in the flesh, nor his death on the cross, nor his imminent return, but rather the great fact of his resurrection to which Paul himself is witness, redeems believers from sin (1 Cor 15:17) and ensures the ultimate transformation of their bodies (1 Cor 15:42-48; Phil 3:10). No need, then, for the Temple's destruction to signal the dawning of redemption: that signal, for Paul, had already been granted in the resurrection of Christ.<sup>31</sup>

Was the Temple, then, of little account in Paul's eschatological perspective? Did the resurrection so divide him from the views of Jesus of Nazareth? I wonder. I wonder especially about the historical value of another Temple episode, reported but somewhat disowned by Luke: that Paul on his final trip to Jerusalem brought Gentiles past their boundary-point on into the Temple (Acts 21:28). A trajectory that we could draw from Paul's own statements in the closing chapters of Romans might confirm Luke's report. From ch. 9 on, Paul revises biblical history so that it conforms to the facts of the Christian mission mid-century. Jews actually were not supposed to receive the Gospel: God was hardening their hearts, in order to facilitate the Gentile mission. The Gentiles, not Israel, were to serve as the trip-switch of the eschaton (11:25-36). What would be more like him then—confident in God's promises, confirmed in his interpretation of events by the very success of his mission—than to attempt to inaugurate the Endtime by enacting a paradigmatic moment from the traditional scenario (E.g., Isa 2:2-4)? Though the resurrection had changed the expected order of events, the prophetic script remained.

<sup>30</sup> In this passage Paul refers to the believer's body, but the point is that he imputes this degree of importance and holiness both to the Temple and to the person 'in Christ.'

<sup>31</sup> For a more detailed discussion, see *FJTC* 170-76.

I see Paul coming up to Jerusalem with the collection and, following through the logic of his own convictions, walking with his Gentile brother-in-Christ into the Temple. He knew that he lived in the very last days. And in those days, according to his tradition—that is, Judaism—God would redeem the nations from their idolatry graciously, without the works of the Law; in those days Jew and Gentile together would go up to the mountain of the Lord, to worship together at the house of the God of Jacob.

## Jesus, the Kingdom, and Theopolitics

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The present paper seeks to advance our understanding of the public, historical Jesus in several ways. First of all, it offers a procedure for getting us out of the present impasse concerning Jesus' understanding of his 'kingdom' language. The procedure gets us out not completely, but to a limited extent, though less limited than may appear at first sight. It does so by an examination of the constraints inherent in occasional communication, such as occurred between Jesus and the larger public who, unlike the inner circle of disciples, heard him only from time to time with limited, if any, possibilities for extended two-way exchanges.

It then argues that, if we ask the right questions and make careful distinctions, we can make significant advances in our understanding of Jesus' aims. Cautious scholars are understandably wary of claims made in this area. Ever since B. F. Meyer focused our attention on the question of Jesus' aims<sup>1</sup> it has been clear that, being more comprehensive, this, rather than the question of his teaching, is the better question to ask. But, given the nature of the historical documentation available to us, it is legitimately feared that all efforts to gain access to Jesus' intentionality will be little more than unverifiable flights of imagination. The procedure offered here can make a claim to objectivity because it starts from, and remains close to, public facts, and advances by making controllable inferences from them.

In a brief final section the paper sketches an initial enlargement of the scope of the hypothesis concerning Jesus' aims in order to suggest its potential as a resource for further discovery and insight. The apparent 'optimism' of the hypothesis, its surface suggestion that what Jesus was engaged in should have been easily welcomed by his hearers, soon turns out to cover a much more ambiguous reality. If Jesus' aims and means were what the hypothesis proposes, then, to the extent that he was initially successful, he must have generated a powerful and complex dynamic that could go in very different directions and only with considerable difficulty be coaxed towards the goals he desired.

### Bridging the Synoptic Quagmire

While it is generally agreed that Jesus did not merely use 'kingdom/rule of God' language on occasion, but made it the focus of his message, it is also widely

<sup>1</sup> B. F. Meyer, *The Aims of Jesus* (London, 1977).