

The Divinization of Jesus in Mark

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SBL/NE (Cambridge, 21 Apr 2006)

Mark is widely agreed to be the earliest Gospel. But since some passages can be shown to be interpolated, and thus later, it follows that other passages must be earlier. Then there may be an *earliest part* of Mark, which it might be interesting to discover. On the way to that, I here attempt to isolate one type of later material

Divinization. One theme in Mark is the ascription of divine power to Jesus. I find that many passages reflecting this theme meet the criteria for interpolation. The inference is that this concept *is not original*, but secondary, and was written into Mark at one or more points during the period for which Mark is a witness.¹

Once the idea of a Jesus with divine powers is established in the tradition, any new story may include that feature. It is thus not necessary that all divinization passages belong to the same stratum, and it can easily be shown that they do not. Consider the Feeding miracles, one for 5000 persons, the other for 4000. The number symbolism, to which the Markan Jesus himself draws attention in 8:18-21, depends on the number of baskets of leftovers, respectively twelve (suggesting the twelve tribes) and seven (suggesting Gentiles, since seven and seventy imply universality in the OT). The Gentile mission certainly arose later than the mission to Israel,² so the 4000 miracle, for all its similarity to the 5000, must reflect a later stage of Christian perception.

Jesus' exorcisms require careful discrimination. Exorcism was part of the medical practice of the time; a healer might apply medicine (as Jesus does at Mk 8:22-26) or speak words to expel the inhabiting spirit (as at Mk 5:8). For present purposes, exorcisms will count as divinization only where the expelled spirits recognize Jesus as possessing godlike powers (calling him "Son of God") or where the passage implies a confrontation between Jesus and the power of Satan.

1. Mk 1:1b (The Title of the Gospel)

Mk 1:1a. The beginning of the Gospel of Jesus Christ,
[1b] the Son of God.

I take "Son of God," by which the demons address Jesus, as a mark of divinization. The name "Jesus Christ" is not similarly suspect; Peter recognizes Jesus as the Messiah (the Anointed, the one who would restore sovereignty to Israel) at Mk 6:29.

¹For the post-Markan development of this motif, see Brooks **Trajectories** 23. I here find that the divinization process is also to observed *within* Mark; it is early, but still not original. For the date at which Mark was probably completed, see Brooks **Perga**.

²For the stages in the development of the Gentile Mission concept, see Brooks **Time Depth**.

2. Mk 1:10-11 (The Voice at Jesus' Baptism)

This supernatural acknowledgement of Jesus as God's Son goes like this:

Mk 1:9. And it came to pass in those days, that Jesus came from Nazareth of Galilee, and was baptized of John in the Jordan.

[10] And straightway coming up out of the water he saw the heavens rent asunder,³ and the Spirit as a dove descending upon him, [11] and a voice came out of the heavens, Thou art my beloved Son; in thee I am well pleased.

3. Mk 1:13b and 13d (Satan and Angels at Jesus' Temptation)

Why is Jesus tempted? One possibility is that it was part of Jesus' initiation into John's movement. There being no obvious motive for its insertion, I am disposed to regard it as original. But one or two details seem to belong to the divinization stratum:

Mk 1:12. And straightway the Spirit driveth him forth into the wilderness.

[13a] And he was in the wilderness forty days

[13b] tempted of Satan,

[13c] and he was with the wild beasts,

[13d] and the angels ministered unto him.

Privations are imposed in many cultures on those aspiring to be seers or healers, so their appearance in the austere John movement need occasion no surprise. But the Adversary Satan and the ministering angels surely add a divinization element.

4. Mk 1:23-28 (The Capernaum Exorcism)

This passage interrupts an account of Jesus' first teaching at Capernaum:

Mk 1:21. And they go into Capernaum, and straightway on the Sabbath day he entered into the synagogue and taught. [22] And they were astonished at his teaching, for he taught them as having authority, and not as the scribes.

[23] And straightway there was in their synagogue a man with an unclean spirit, and he cried out, [24] saying, What have we to do with thee, Jesus thou Nazarene? Are thou come to destroy us? I know thee who thou art, the Holy One of God. [25] And Jesus rebuked him . . . [27] And they were all amazed, insomuch that they questioned among themselves, saying, What is this? A new teaching! With authority he commandeth even the unclean spirits and they obey him. [28] And the report of him went out straightway everywhere into all the region of Galilee round about.

[29] And straightway, when they were come out of the synagogue, they came into the house of Simon and Andrew, with James and John . . .

Mk 1:22 brings the teaching to an end; 1:29 follows smoothly after it. The interruptive Mk 1:23-28 shows Jesus recognized by *supernatural beings*. This is a classic instance of an interruptive, and thus interpolated, passage.

³The same word, σχιζομένους / ἐσχίσθη, is used for the rending of the Temple veil in 15:38. The framing function of this word (only here in Mark) has been noticed; see Lightfoot **Message** 56. Lightfoot has also noticed the placement of the major Sonship affirmations at the beginning, middle, and end of the Gospel (p57); see further below at #14 and #20.

In conflict with Mk 1:28 is the following more plausible scenario for Jesus' fame:

Mk 1:40-45. And there cometh to him a leper, beseeching him, and kneeling down to him, and saying unto him, If thou wilt, thou canst make me clean . . . [45] But he went out, and began to publish it much, and to spread abroad the matter, insomuch that Jesus could no more openly enter into a city, but was without in desert places; and they came to him from every quarter.

It is natural that *local* people should flock to Jesus after his Capernaum sermon, but not that he should be instantly known "in all the region of Galilee round about" (1:28). The spreading of the news by the leper (1:45) is a more plausible cause, and that passage can thus more plausibly be assigned to the original narrative of Mark.⁴

5. Mk 1:34b (The Demons are Silenced)

Mk 1:32. And at even, when the sun did set, they brought unto him all that were sick, and them that were possessed with demons. [33] And all the city was gathered together at the door. [34a] And he healed many that were sick with divers diseases, and cast out many demons,

[34b] and he suffered not the demons to speak, because they knew him.

[35] And in the morning, a great while before day . . .

For what the demons are forbidden to say, see #9 (Mk 3:11-12), below.

6. Mk 2:5b-10 (Jesus Forgives Sins)

Mk 2:3. And they come, bringing unto him a man sick of the palsy, borne of four. [4] And when they could not come nigh unto him for the crowd, they uncovered the roof where he was, and when they had broken it up, they let down the pallet whereon the sick of the palsy lay. [2:5a] And Jesus seeing their faith saith unto the sick of the palsy,

[2:5b] Son, thy sins are forgiven. But there were certain of the scribes sitting there, and reasoning in their hearts, [7] Why doth this man thus speak? he blasphemeth; who can forgive sins but one, even God? [8] And straightway Jesus, perceiving in his spirit that they so reasoned within themselves, saith unto them, Why reason ye these things in your hearts? [9] Which is easier, to say to the sick of the palsy, Thy sin are forgiven, or to say, Arise, and take up thy pallet, and walk? [10] But that ye may know that the Son of Man hath authority on earth to forgive sins (he saith to the sick of the palsy),

[2:11] I say unto thee, Arise, take up thy pallet and go unto thy house. [12] And he arose, and straightway took up the pallet and went forth before them all; insomuch that they were all amazed, and glorified God, saying, We never saw it on this fashion.

Without Mk 2:5b-10, the transition from 2:5a to 2:11 is smooth, implying that 2:5b-10, with its sudden and remarkable exercise of divine power, is intrusive.⁵

⁴Mk 1:23-28 has been recognized as interpolated by Cadoux 195 and Loisy **Origins** 79f.

⁵So Rawlinson 25, citing an earlier opinion of Loisy; compare Loisy **Origins** 81 and the long discussion in Branscomb 43f. The separation of 2:5b-10 was apparently first suggested by Wrede (Hägerland **Jesus** 2-3).

It is significant that, in the original story, the onlookers *glorify God*; that is, the divine power which is working through Jesus. Jesus himself is not regarded as divine; he is instead human, and serves as a channel for something higher.

7. Mk 3:22-30 (The Beelzebul Accusation)

The Forgiveness of Sins story featured hostile local scribes (γραμματεῖς). Here it is “scribes sent down from Jerusalem” who respond to reports of Jesus’ exorcisms. It interrupts passages where Jesus’ friends and family are concerned for his sanity:

Mk 3:21. And when his friends heard it, they went out to lay hold on him, for they said, He is beside himself.

[22] And the scribes that came down from Jerusalem said, He hath Beelzebul, and, By the Prince of the Demons casteth he out the demons. [23] And he called them unto him, and said to them in parables, How can Satan cast out Satan? . . . [28] Verily I say unto you, All their sins shall be forgiven unto the sons of men, and their blasphemies wherewith soever they shall blaspheme, [29] But whosoever shall blaspheme against the Holy Spirit hath never forgiveness, but is guilty of an eternal sin, [30] because they said, He hath an unclean spirit.

[31] And there come his mother and his brethren, and standing without, they sent unto him, calling him. [32] And a multitude was sitting about him, and they say to him, Behold, thy mother and thy brethren without seek for thee.

As at several places in Mark (including Mk 2:5b-10), the chorus of scribes simply appears and disappears.⁶ Without them, the arrival of Jesus’ family follows smoothly on his friends’ concern. Notable is Jesus’ claim that doubting the nature of his power amounts to blasphemy (an unforgivable sin). In effect, he asserts his own divine status.

8. Mk 4:37-41 (The Stilling of the Storm)

This story interrupts the introduction to the story of the Gerasene Demoniac:

Mk 4:35. And on that day, when even was come, he saith unto them, Let us go over to the other side. [36] And leaving the multitude . . .

[37] And there ariseth a great storm of wind, and the waves beat into the boat, insomuch that the boat was now filling . . . [39] And he awoke, and rebuked the wind, and said unto the sea, Peace, be still. And the wind ceased, and there was a great calm. [40] And he said unto them, Why are ye fearful? Have ye not yet faith? [41] And they feared exceedingly, and said to one another, Who then is this, that even the wind and the sea obey him?

[5:1] And they came to the other side of the sea . . .

The miraculous nature of this “nature miracle” is self-evident.

⁶Thus Weiss 165 points to the narrative unreality of the inserted passage about the scribes: “wo aber sind die γραμματεῖς 3:22? Auch zu Hause?” See also Montefiore 1/91, Guy 21f, Haenchen 139 “[3:21f, 31-35] zusammengehören,” Guelich 169, Marcus 1/285 “interrupted.”

This and other interpolations are explained by Edwards as authorial “sandwiches,” in which “the middle story nearly always provides the key to the theological purpose” of the whole (195). Since an insertion updates that which it is inserted into, it does indeed provide the last word.

9. Mk 5:1-21 (The Gerasene Demoniac)

Here is how this fits into the earlier material on both sides of it:

Mk 4:33. And with many such parables spake he the Word unto them, as they were able to hear it.

[35] And on that day, when even was come, he saith unto them . . .⁷ [5:1] And they came to the other side of the sea, into the country of the Gerasenes. [2] And when he was come out of the boat, straightway there met him out of the tombs a man with an unclean spirit, . . . [6] And when he saw Jesus from afar, he ran and worshiped him, [7] and crying out with a loud voice, he saith, What have I to do with thee, Jesus, thou Son of the most High God? I adjure thee by God, torment me not. [8] For he said unto him, Come forth, thou unclean spirit, out of the man. [9] And he asked him, What is thy name? And he saith unto him, My name is Legion, for we are many . . . [14] And they that fed [the swine into which the demons were sent] fled, and told it in the city and in the country . . . [16] And they that saw it⁸ declared unto them how it befell him that was possessed with demons, and concerning the swine. [17] And they began to beseech him to depart from their borders. [18] And as he was entering into the boat, he that had been possessed with demons besought him that he might be with him. [19] And he suffered him not . . . [21] And when Jesus had crossed over again in the boat unto the other side, a great multitude was gathered unto him . . .

[22] And there cometh one of the rulers of the synagogue, Jairus by name, and seeing him, he falleth at his feet . . .

At the end of this and the preceding Storm miracle, Jesus and company are on the same Galilee seaside as they were in 4:33.⁹ The two divinization pieces are thus not only thematically remarkable, they are geographically discontinuous.

10. Mk 6:33-46 (The Feeding of Five Thousand)

Like the preceding two, the next two miracles are linked by a boat journey:

Mk 6:32. And they went away in a boat to a desert place apart.

[33] And the people saw them going, and many knew them, and they ran together there on foot from all the cities, and outwent them. [34] And he came forth and saw a great multitude . . . [42] And they all ate, and were filled. [43] And they took up broken pieces, twelve basketfuls, and also of the fishes. [44] And they that ate the loaves were five thousand men. [45] And straightway he constrained his disciples to enter into the boat, and to go before him unto the other side to Bethsaida, while he himself sendeth the multitude away . . .

This miracle runs directly into another miracle; in fact, a second Sea Miracle. The interpolated text is continuous, from the one to the other.

⁷The inserted Miracle of the Storm was later added at this point; see above.

⁸To the suddenly appearing exorcism witnesses, compare the appearing scribes, above.

⁹The geographical zigzags in Mark have been much ridiculed; eg Parker **Posteriority** 68f. I am here suggesting that at least some are incidents of interpolation, not inanity of authorship.

11. Mk 6:47-52 (Walking on the Sea)

We thus resume the interpolated text with the next verse:

[Mk 6:46] And after he had taken leave of them, he departed into the mountains to pray. [6:47] And when even was come, the boat was in the middle of the sea, and he alone on the land. [48] And seeing them distressed in rowing, for the wind was contrary unto them, about the fourth watch of the night he cometh unto them, walking on the sea, and he would have passed by them . . . [51] And he went up unto them into the boat, and the wind ceased, and they were sore amazed . . .¹⁰

[53] And when they had crossed over, they came to the land unto Gennesaret, and moored to the shore. [54] And when they were come out of the boat, straightway [the people] knew him, [55] and ran around that whole region, and began to carry about on their pallets those that were sick . . .

The crowds of 6:55 are original, whereas those of the Feeding of Five Thousand are invented. If we juxtapose the text just before and just after this series of miracles, we get a perfectly consecutive, but nonmiraculous, account of the doings of Jesus. Thus:

Mk 6:32. And they went away in a boat to a desert place apart.

[53] And when they had crossed over, they came to the land unto Gennesaret, and moored to the shore. [54] And when they were come out of the boat, straightway [the people] knew him, [55] and ran around that whole region, and began to carry about on their pallets those that were sick . . .

We are entirely in the human realm, with the sick being brought to Jesus. Note the surprise of the disciples in 6:51; this may suggest that the stories *when added* were unfamiliar to Mark's readers. Such surprise is often a sign of new textual material.¹¹

12. Mk 8:1-10 (The Feeding of Four Thousand)

It has been widely recognized that the two Feeding miracles are related. I would represent the parallels in this way (with previously discussed passages in **bold**):

Mk 6:30-44. Feeding of 5,000	Mk 8:1-10. Feeding of 4,000
Mk 6:45-51. Walking on the Sea	
Mk 6:52. <i>Understanding the Loaves</i>	
Mk 6:53-56. Healings	
Mk 7:1-23. Dispute on Defilement	Mk 8:11-13. Dispute on Signs
	Mk 8:14-21. <i>Understanding the Loaves</i>
Mk 7:24-30. Syrophenician Woman	
Mk 7:31-37. Spit healing of deaf man	Mk 8:22-26. Spit healing of blind man

The symmetry of the feeding stories is explained in 8:14-21 (and anticipated in 6:52). The key is the number of baskets taken up afterward: twelve from the Five Thousand and seven from the Four Thousand. These symbolize the Jewish and Gentile missions.

¹⁰Mk 6:52 (Understanding the Loaves) goes with 8:14-21, in the other column, and thus belongs to a later layer of Mark; see below.

¹¹So also the earlier Miracle of the Waves. For the general situation of reader surprise or protest, and its association with interpolated and thus new material, see again Brooks **Reader**.

What Jesus asks in Mk 8:14-21 is that his disciples (that is, the readers of Mark) recognize the validity of the Gentile mission. This is a later stage of things than the Feeding of Five Thousand, which *introduces* the Gentiles.¹²

13. Mk 6:52 (The Question About Bread)

I now go back to pick up Mk 6:52, which makes no sense where it is, and is only intelligible as part of the interpretation of the loaves in 8:14-21. Its context is already recognizable as interpolated (it is part of the Walking on the Sea miracle):

Mk 6:51. And he went up unto them in the boat, and the wind ceased, and they were sore amazed in themselves,
[52] for they understood not concerning the loaves, but their heart was hardened.

It was presumably placed here in order to harmonize two different interpolation strata in the Markan narrative.

The Resurrection. At Mark 8, with the Feeding of Four Thousand, we enter the part of the Gospel where Jesus makes predictions that are fulfilled within the Gospel. The predictions of Jesus' resurrection after three days have already been dealt with.¹³ Their relation to the present group of passages will become clear as we proceed.

14. Mk 9:2-8 (The Transfiguration)

The Voice of God makes a second appearance, the first being #2 (Mk 1:10-11). The passage following this one is an interpolation,¹⁴ and the one preceding is dubious also. I thus cannot make an argument from interruption in context; the character of the passage is the only argument that it belongs with the Divinization pieces. It runs:

Mk 9:2. And after six days Jesus taketh with him Peter and Jacob and John, and bringeth them up into a high mountain apart by themselves; and he was transfigured before them, [3] and his garments became glistening, exceeding white, so as no fuller on earth can whiten them. [4] And there appeared unto them Elijah with Moses, and they were talking with Jesus. [5] And Peter answereth and saith to Jesus, Rabbi, it is good for us to be here, and let us make three tabernacles, one for thee, and one for Moses, and one for Elijah. [6] For he knew not what to answer, for they became sore afraid. [7] And there came a cloud overshadowing them, and there came a voice out of the cloud, This is my beloved son: hear ye him. [8] And suddenly, looking round about, they saw no one any more, save Jesus only with themselves . . .

Peter's awe and confusion are sufficient evidence that he is in the presence of the holy, with Jesus himself among the figures seen as if in a vision.

¹²It is probably obvious that the Syrophoenician Woman, Mk 7:24-30, represents toleration of Gentile converts, rather than (as in the Four Thousand) full acceptance of Gentile preaching. For the gradual acceptance of the Gentile Mission by Mark's readers, see Brooks **Time Depth**.

¹³See Brooks **Resurrection**. The passages are Mk 8:31-33, 9:9b-13, 9:31b-32, 10:32b-34, and the Empty Tomb material, 15:40-16:8; the conclusion of the present Gospel.

¹⁴See Brooks **Resurrection** 63, with a detailed interpretation of the passage.

15. Mk 11:12-14 and 11:20-21 (The Cursing of the Fig Tree)

This interruptive miracle occurs on Jesus' trips between Bethany and Jerusalem:

Mk 11:11 . . . it being now eventide, he went out unto Bethany with the Twelve.

[11:12]. And on the morrow, when they were come out from Bethany, he hungered. [13] And seeing a fig tree afar off having leaves, he came, if haply he might find anything thereon, and when he came to it, he found nothing but leaves, for it was not the season of figs. [14] And he answered and said unto it, No man eat fruit from thee henceforward for ever. And his disciples heard it.

[15] And they come to Jerusalem, and he entered the Temple . . . [19]. And every evening he went forth out of the city.

[20] And as they passed by in the morning, they saw the fig tree withered away from the roots. [21] And Peter calling to remembrance saith unto him, Rabbi, behold, the fig tree which thou cursedst is withered away . . .¹⁵

[27] And they come again to Jerusalem . . .

Like several other miracles, especially those in which the disciples show surprise or make objection,¹⁶ this one (which unlike all the other miracles occurs in two sections) takes place *only in the presence of the disciples*.

16. Mk 12:1-12 (The Parable of the Vineyard)

This interrupts a series of hostile questions addressed to Jesus in the Temple:

Mk 11:32 . . . [33] And they answered Jesus and say, We know not. And Jesus saith unto them, [34] Neither tell I you by what authority I do these things.

[12:1]. And he began to speak unto them in parables. A man planted a vineyard . . . [2] And at the season he sent to the husbandmen a servant, that he might receive from the husbandmen the fruits of the vineyard . . . [5] And he sent another, and him they killed . . . [6] He had yet one, a beloved Son; he sent him last unto them, saying, They will reverence my Son. [7] But those husbandmen . . . [8] took him, and killed him, and cast him forth out of the vineyard . . . [12] . . . and they left him, and went away.

[12:13]. And they send unto him certain of the Pharisees and of the Herodians, that they might catch him in talk . . .

In the inserted story, Jesus allegorically *refers to himself* as the Son of God.

17. Mk 13:3-37 (Predictions of the End Days)

This chapter-length section has been discussed previously;¹⁷ it consists of several layers of prediction, each being required by the failure of the preceding prediction. The later layers of this set remain to be coordinated with other late material; suffice it to note here that even the earliest of them (the Taylor A layer, which I redefine as 13:7-8 and 13:24-29) should be regarded as interpolations, and being predictions, also as qualifying under the Divinization rubric.

¹⁵Mk 11:22-26, a seeming attachment to this passage, also requires a separate study.

¹⁶See again Brooks **Reader** for surprise as an indication of new material in the text.

¹⁷For detail, and for Taylor's view of this passage, see Brooks **Time Depth**.

18. Mk 14:27-31 (The Prediction of Disciple Flight)

It seems to be uncontested that at Jesus' arrest, those with him fled (Mk 14:50). Jesus' foreknowledge of that event must count as one of his miracles. The passage is important as itself containing an interpolation, in the form of another prediction:

Mk 14:27. And Jesus saith unto them, All ye will be offended, for it is written, I will smite the shepherd, and the sheep shall be scattered abroad.

[28] Howbeit, after I am raised up, I will go before you into Galilee.

[29] But Peter said unto him, Although all shall be offended, yet will not I. [30] And Jesus saith unto him, Verily, I say unto thee, that thou today, this night, before the cock crow twice, shall deny me thrice. [31] But he spake exceeding vehemently, If I must die with thee, I will not deny thee. And in like manner also said they all.

Peter looks past the reassuring 14:28, and responds instead to Jesus' other prediction in 14:27. Then 14:28 is an interpolation.¹⁸ Important for our purposes is that it assumes the Resurrection, hence the Resurrection stratum is later than the Divinization stratum.

19. Mk 14:53b-72 (The Sanhedrin Trial)

The historicity of this trial has been doubted.¹⁹ For present purposes, we note that the passage is insecure and omissible in the text of Mark:

Mk 14:53a. And they led Jesus away to the High Priest.

[53b] And there come together with him all the chief priests and the elders and the scribes . . . [61] . . . Again the High Priest asked him, and saith unto him, Art thou the Christ, the Son of the Blessed? [62] And Jesus said, I am, and ye shall see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of Power, and coming with the clouds of Heaven. [63] And the High Priest rent his clothes, and saith, What further need have we of witnesses? . . . And they all condemned him to be worthy of death . . . [72] And Peter called to mind the word, how that Jesus said unto him, Before the cock crow twice . . .

[15:1] And straightway in the morning, the chief priests with the elders and scribes and the whole council, held a consultation, and bound Jesus, and carried him away, and delivered him up to Pilate.

The consultation in 15:1 ignores the trial verdict of blasphemy, reached in 14:64, echoing the Pharisees' charge in Mk 2:7; here it is Jesus himself who claims to be the Son of God. But it was for Jesus' claim to be the *King of Israel* that Pilate crucified Jesus, and 15:1, which forwards Jesus to Pilate, follows well on 14:53a, and leads to the real trial scene, the one before Pilate. The Sanhedrin trial, though theologically important for later readers, is anomalous in its present context.

The Empty Tomb, Mk 15:40-16:8, noted as interpolated by Yarbrow Collins 819, belongs to the Resurrection stratum; she identifies Mk 15:38, the Rending of the Veil, as the end of the Gospel proper. This conclusion leads to the following analysis.

¹⁸Recognized as such by Holtzmann 174, Grant 879, Evans 401, and a number of others. Mk 16:7, which refers back to it, incontestably belongs to the same stratum as 14:28.

¹⁹For the many circumstantial implausibilities, see Montefiore 1/351-366.

20. Mk 15:39 (The Witness of the Centurion)

If the end of Mark's original Gospel is at 15:38, and the material from 15:49 to the end is interpolated, what of this passage? It reads, in context:

Mk 15:38. And the veil of the Temple was rent in two from the top to the bottom.

[39] And when the centurion who stood by over against him, saw that he so gave up the ghost, he said, Truly this man was the Son of God.

[40] And there were also women beholding from afar, among whom were both Mary Magdalene and Mary the mother of James and Joses, and Salome, [41] who, when he was in Galilee, followed him . . .

Here, as in 14:28 above, but more clearly, we have the original story ending at 15:38, a Son of God confession next, and an Empty Tomb or Resurrection passage after that. The stratification is thus clear: Original > Divinization > Resurrection.

21. Mk 15:40-16:8 (The Resurrection)

The original end of the Gospel was at Mk 15:38, with the dramatic tearing of the Temple veil, effectively desacralizing the Temple, and symbolizing the affirmation, by a higher hand, of Jesus against his Temple accusers. What follows is a Son of God verse, part of the Son of God layer, and then the entire Passion narrative, whose secondarity in Mark has been argued by Yarbro Collins and others.²⁰

And there is other evidence for that conclusion. There are three places in Mark where the actual voice or hand of God appears: (1) at Jesus' Baptism, Mk 1:11; (2) at the Transfiguration, Mk 9:7, and (3) here, in the bystander's comment, Mk 15:39, which as it were gives verbal expression to the "Son of God" symbol represented, perhaps too subtly, in God's Rending of the Veil in 5:38. These three are distributed symmetrically at the beginning, the middle, and the end, of Mark. Was this not an intentional device, to formally articulate the message of the Gospel as it then was (the original human-Jesus narrative, plus only the early Son of God additions), in a consistent, and also in a dramatically effective, way?²¹ Not alone for reasons noted in an earlier study,²² Mark comes across as a great dramatist.

The Son of God passages are only one stratum of material which I am here considering together under the category of Divinization (the different message of the two Feeding miracles is obvious). As between the early Son of God miracles, and the higher-order Resurrection material, there is one more bit of evidence to be considered.

²⁰Yarbro Collins **Mark** 764 (on Mk 15:39, "This verse is probably a Markan addition to the pre-Markan passion narrative;" compare her p819. That Mark later took over a pre-Markan passion narrative, or wrote it himself to append to his previous text, would seem to be two ways of recognizing the lateness of that material in Mark. For an independent argument for the lateness of the Markan Passion Narrative, see Kirby **Case**.

²¹The device would be most effective in a formal reading of the entire Gospel. Our Mark has been performed on stage in 1977 by Alex McCowan, and by Max McLean and others since. Those performances require about 100 minutes. The original Gospel was substantially shorter, and would have taken something under an hour; quite possible, at least on special occasions.

²²See Brooks **Perga** 73f, on Mark's background music for the Crucifixion scene.

The Hymn in Philippians

This hymn, Php 2:6-11, was quoted rather than written by Paul; the half-verse he interpolated, refocusing attention on the Cross, and thus on the Resurrection, says as much. Without that addition, the hymn makes Jesus an image of God, and indeed gives him divine status anterior to his appearance on earth, but it does not imply physical resurrection after three days in the grave, a point on which Paul insists. In the original hymn, Jesus' death displays his humility, *but has no soteriological significance*:²³

Who being in God's image
Did not consider equality with God
Something to be held on to.

Nay, he poured himself out
Taking the form of a servant
Becoming in the likeness of men.

And being found in fashion as man
He humbled himself
Becoming obedient unto death

(and that a death on the cross!)²⁴

Therefore God also highly exalted him
And conferred on him the name –
The name above every name.

That at the name of Jesus
Every knee might bow
Of beings in heaven, on earth, and in the netherworld.

And every tongue confess,
'Jesus Christ is Lord'
To the glory of God the Father

The implication is that the pre-Resurrection Christianity which I call Alpha had spread as far as Macedonia before Paul ever came there. Belief in a *divine* Jesus thus clearly existed in pre-Pauline Philippi, but equally clearly, not the *Resurrection* belief. Then the Resurrection is a late element within later Christian theorizing about Jesus.

Jesus Christ is Lord. Not Lord of Israel, as the Davidic Hope of centuries would have had it, but Lord of All, and future Judge of All. Jesus is David on a higher plane, one who will judge favorably all who, in life, have followed his teachings.

How Gnostic is this? If by "Gnostic" we mean Valentinian, not very. But the key Gnostic idea is the heavenly origin of the soul, which, if properly instructed, can find its way back to achieve immortality. In this hymn we see the beginning of that belief: the claim that *Jesus* had a heavenly origin. From there to the idea that *we too* have souls, and if rightly instructed, can *also* return to our heavenly home, is no great step. The later Resurrection belief put that second step in humanly concrete terms. We may be reminded that ideas of Jesus developed after his death in more than one direction. Mark, as part of the later orthodox strand, was just one of those directions.

²³I here follow Vielhauer; see Hunter **Paul** 40-41.

²⁴Paul, in quoting the hymn, adds this half-line about the Cross; that is, the Resurrection.

Conclusion and Prospect

If Mark's appearing and disappearing crowds, his back and forth crossings of the Sea, belong to a text composed at one time by one person, then its author is every bit the incompetent stump-fingered oaf that his critics make him. This study suggests that some infelicities arise from a focus more on the importance of the new material than on its fit with old material. If so, then Mark is not only *the earliest witness to Jesus*, he is *the earliest witness to the doctrinal development of the Jesus movement*.

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