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Jesus, The New Temple Mark 11:20–25 in its Narrative Context

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Te Deum laudamus.

καὶ ἀποκριθεὶς ὁ Ἰησοῦς λέγει αὐτοῖς ἔχετε πίστιν θεοῦ.

Mark 11:22

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PREFACE

After completing a degree in Classical and Near Eastern Archaeology at the University of Minnesota in 2005, I came to assume that "Bible Study" involved learning more about the historical world the Biblical text was actually written in. If only I could crawl back into the mind of an ancient person, then I would truly understand the Biblical text.

As I worked through the MDiv program at Lutheran Brethren Seminary, I found myself spending more time in the text itself, rather than historical background studies. The study of Koine Greek captured my attention and thrust me into a more focused relationship with the actual words on the page. Greek study also opened up a world of new conversations to me, as I was now able to engage with many gifted Greek scholars through their commentaries. This engagement led to many new epiphanies in reading the text. I still remember being confronted by Dr. Gibbs's explanation of Matthew 2:15, "Out of Egypt I called my Son." Dr. Gibbs offered me a lens to read this OT quotation that seemed much more in line with Matthew's intentions than my earlier historical obsessions. Through such insights, a deep interest in the NT's use of the OT was sparked.

As I began PhD studies at Concordia Seminary, a new light dawned on my Biblical reading. Serving as a TA for Dr. Voelz in his Synoptic Gospels class, he drove home the point that each Gospel needs to be read on its own terms. We have four gospels, and we are given them to read as they uniquely are; not just as windows to get back to another story of 'what actually happened,' but as God's word. Through many influences such as this, I began to find a new thirst to dive into each individual gospel, reading them for their own particular themes, thoughts, and developments.

Finally, a critical understanding of the progression I had personally made since my undergrad was given to me through Dr. Voelz's Advanced Hermeneutics seminar. Hans Frei's

work is often marked as the seminal work which drove scholarship toward narrative focused readings, and it served as one of the base texts for this seminar as well. As we worked through this seminar I came to understand the much larger academic and philosophical streams that influence how people have read and still read (or avoid reading) the actual text of the Bible. The present work is the result of this progression, and I write recognizing that I am gratefully situated in a conversation with many gifted scholars; some I have met personally, others only by reading their texts.

Concerning the present work, I might add a bit about how the topic came to my attention. Dr. Voelz had first put me on the scent of this theme, remarking that he wasn't exactly sure how he was going to handle this section in his upcoming commentary work. My initial conversation partners (after Mark himself and Dr. Voelz) were Timothy Gray and Sharon Dowd (engaged with me through their respective major works concerning this section of Mark). As their ideas were all ruminating in my mind, I remember sitting in Timothy Lutheran Church in St. Louis, MO, when the lectionary reading one Sunday morning included an extended passage from 1 Kgs 8. As I sat there listening, I was struck by the many similarities to my passage from Mark 11. I remember thinking, "this is my dissertation right here!" Perhaps I should've been entertaining holier thoughts during that service, but the experience of hearing those "echoes" has driven much focused study, which has further confirmed the many connections between Mark 11:20–25 and 1 Kgs 8.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

As the preface has acknowledged many who have shaped my thinking, I would like to offer further thanks to those who have contributed in further ways. Academically, I would like to thank Mark Erickson and Brad Soenksen, who were my first professors of the Greek language at Lutheran Brethren Seminary in Fergus Falls, MN, as well as Brad Pribbenow who walked alongside me as I worked through my first introductory grammar, and provided much guidance on advancing through grad school at Concordia Seminary. I would further like to thank Drs. Mathiesen, Veum, and Boe of LBS in guiding my formation in the MDiv program there, and providing me with mentorship and models that extend beyond the classroom. Further thanks to the presidential scholarship committee of LBS in financially supporting my education at CSL. Thanks also to the many professors at CSL whom I studied under, Drs. Adams, Gibbs, Maxwell, Oschwald, Raabe, Rosin, Schuchard, Seifrid, and Voelz; as well as the many who have taught and blessed me though I never sat in their classes, notably Drs. Arand, Biermann, Kolb, and (coach) Saleska. My thanks need to also extend to all of my many classmates throughout these studies, both at LBS and CSL. Special mention should be made of Brian Taylor, Jean-Baptiste Mberebe, and the entire Zeigler family, who have all offered special support, encouragement, and friendship outside of the classroom.

Further thanks needs to be extended to those who have made this possible through their unique support. My parents, Walter and Candis Berge, have modelled God's giving heart to me throughout my life, and have made the present work possible through their support, enabling much more than can be enumerated here. Thanks also to Immanuel Lutheran Church in Eugene, OR, where I have been serving as I finish this work. Immanuel has made this dual-commitment to academia and the parish possible both time-wise and financially.

There is no way that I can make it through these acknowledgments without recognizing the

unbelievable support and joy that my wife and kids continue to bring to me. When we began my PhD work in 2012, I thought it was crazy to attempt such work with 5 kids at home; how much crazier it has become, as I now submit my finished work with 7! If this speaks to anything, it speaks to the incalculable blessing my wife, Meghan, is to me (and many others). She has consistently supported this endeavor, and patiently listened to my droning on and on about fig trees and temples. I am further amazed at the 7 gifts the Lord has given me to steward, Brooklyn, Preston, Sean, Emersyn, Boston, Trace, and Evangeline (whose quick arrival made me a "doctor" before I was ever awarded a PhD!). May you all continue to find the meeting place between God and us in Jesus Christ.

ABSTRACT

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The cursing of the fig tree in Mark has led to myriad readings, and wide-ranging discussions from botany to textual criticism. This work argues that reading Mark 11:20–25 in its narrative context shows that the cursing of the fig tree in Mark should be seen in the light of the previous temple-cleansing scene, signaling the condemnation of the present temple order. However, in 11:20–25, the Marcan Jesus provides his followers with encouragement to have faith that God is still with them despite the condemnation of the present temple order. The very activities that one would have seen as dependent on the old temple order will still continue beyond its condemnation. This reading arises out of narrative-based observations, but is also strengthened by recognizing the subtle allusion to Solomon's dedicatory prayer at the "founding moment" of the first temple in 1 Kgs 8. For those disciples who were concerned by the condemnation and loss of the visible temple in Jerusalem, Mark gives them encouragement that the benefits which the temple once offered may now be sought in Jesus's faithful and enduring words, *just as he told you.*

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

Mark's narrative of the "cleansing of the temple" stands as one of the most controversial passages in Mark. A mountain of literature has been put forth on this subject, often focusing on the relation of the "cleansing" episode to the "cursing of the fig tree" episode which surrounds it.[1] Hidden in the shadows behind this discussion lies an oft-neglected small group of verses, Mark 11:20–25. While it is nearly impossible to ignore the fact that these verses are connected to the previous narrative, satisfying descriptions of how these verses are connected are often lacking.[2] It seems more often than not that the connection is so loose, that they are deemed to hardly "fit" at all.

The Thesis

This dissertation will demonstrate that Mark 11:20–25 does indeed "fit" within its narrative context. That is, Mark 11:20–25 carries on the thought of the previous section, most specifically Mark 11:12–19, and develops this train of thought further. The focus of 11:12–19 is centered on the condemnation of the present temple order, and 11:20–25 develops this train of thought by asserting that, despite the condemnation of this temple order, Jesus is founding a new temple

[1] "Die Episode von der sogen. 'Verfluchung des Feigenbaumes' ist bis heute Gegenstand kontroverser Diskussionen. Doch wie etwa der ausführliche Kommentar von R. Pesch oder die umfangreiche Monographie von W.R. Telford zeigen, hat dies bislang noch zu keiner befriedigenden Erklärung geführt. Die meisten Deutungen versuchen den Geniestreich eines neuen, originallen Ansatze—oder enden mit dem Eingeständnis weitgehender Ratlosigkeit." Christfried Böttrich, "Jesus und der Feigenbaum: Mk 11:12–13, 20–25 in der Diskussion," *NovT* 39 (1997): 328.

[2] Cf. Böttrich's observation that 11:12–25 is an intentional unity; however he also acknowledges that he will leave the verses beyond 11:22 "unberücksichtigt." Böttrich, "Feigenbaum," 328, n. 1.

order in himself and his lasting words. Furthermore, this new temple order is signaled by allusions to the foundational moment of the old temple order, Solomon's dedicatory prayer (1 Kgs 8).

The Current Status of the Question

To turn now to the status of the question, it must be observed that the contents of the "question" change based on one's methodological approach. Basically, two questions need to be dealt with: (1) Does 11:20–25 fit within its Marcan context? (2) How does it fit within its Marcan context? For many coming from an historically-oriented approach, the "question" is entirely limited to the former, and the answer is typically a resounding "no." For those who come from a narrative-critical approach, who often assume a "yes" to question 1,[3] the latter question remains to be dealt with. Yet frequently, it seems the end result has been a general neglect of these verses.[4]

If one is to adopt an approach that assumes a contextual "fit," as this dissertation will, the

[3] It can be noted here that the assumption that 11:20–25 "fits" in its Marcan context is born out of the general assumptions of narrative-critical methodologies that begin by assuming a fit for any and all passages of a given text. As is suggested here, the assumption that any given passage fits the narrative flow still begs further explication as to "how" the passage fits into the thought flow of the narrative. For more on the narrative methods/assumptions of the present dissertation, see the below section on methodology.

[4] This phenomenon can be observed in any of the major commentaries. As an example, Hooker scarcely devotes more than one page to 11:20–25, after devoting over eight pages to 11:12–19. Out of this small unit she spends as much, if not more, time discussing the genitive relationship of "have faith in God" than she does to verses 24 and 25 combined! Morna D. Hooker, *The Gospel according to Saint Mark*, BNTC 2 (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1991): 260–70. See also the many articles and monographs that focus on the cleansing and/or the fig tree. For a sampling of the major treatments in articles see: Hans Dieter Betz, "Jesus and the Purity of the Temple (Mark 11:15–18): A Comparative Religion Approach," *JBL* 116 (1997): 455–72; Böttrich, "Feigenbaum"; J. Bradley Chance, "The Cursing of the Temple and the Tearing of the Veil in the Gospel of Mark," *BibInt* 15 (2007): 268–91; Philip F. Esler, "The Incident of the Withered Fig Tree in Mark 11: A New Source and Redactional Explanation," *JSNT* 28 (2005): 41–67; John Paul Heil, "The Narrative Strategy and Pragmatics of the Temple Theme in Mark," *CBQ* 59 (1997): 76–100; J.R. Daniel Kirk, "Time for Figs, Temple Destruction, and Houses of Prayer in Mark 11:12–25," *CBQ* 74 (2012): 509–27. For major monographs focused on this section see: Giancarlo Biguzzi, *«Yo Destruire Este Templo»: El Templo y el Judaísmo en el Evangelio de Marcos* (Córdoba: El Almendro, 1992); Sharyn Echols Dowd, *Prayer, Power, and the Problem of Suffering: Mark 11:22–25 in the Context of Markan Theology*, SBLDS 105 (Atlanta: Scholars, 1988); Emilio G. Chávez, *The Theological Significance of Jesus' Temple Action in Mark's Gospel*, TST 87 (Lewiston, NY: Mellen, 2002); Timothy C. Gray, *The Temple in the Gospel of Mark: A Study in its Narrative Role*, WUNT 2 Reihe 242 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2008); William R.

difficult task then lies before the interpreter to explicate what Mark is saying in the preceding episode, 11:12–19.[5] One can only describe how a piece "fits" if one understands the "puzzle" it is to be placed in. Thus, it is not only necessary to examine the status of how 11:20–25 has been understood, it is also necessary to examine how 11:12–19 has been understood as well.[6]

The basic shifts in scholarship from historically-oriented investigations that attempt to get behind the text, to a growing appreciation of the author/redactor in redaction criticism, to the subsequent focus of narrative criticism on the text as a unified object of study in itself, have resulted in a great diversity of interpretations of 11:12–25. While descriptions and categorizations of these shifts are typically overly rigid and simple, they can still serve as heuristic devices to provide a general understanding of where scholarship has been, and where it might be going.[7] Thus, this section will now proceed to give a brief overview of how these verses have been approached in recent scholarship according to typical examples of these three general shifts in New Testament scholarship (Historically-Oriented Approaches, Redaction Criticism, and Narrative Criticism).[8]

Before proceeding, it is important to make two further disclaimers about the following review of scholarship: (1) The development of new methods has not caused an end to the use of earlier approaches. Therefore, although this section will present these shifts diachronically,

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Telford, *The Barren Temple and the Withered Tree*, JSNTSup 1 (Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1980).

[5] For a similar statement made while examining the "cleansing" side of this unit, cf. "Any attempt, therefore, to elucidate the Markan significance of the temple 'cleansing' will prove abortive, unless the whole complex, fig tree 'cleansing' is taken into consideration." Werner H. Kelber, *The Kingdom in Mark: A New Place and a New Time* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1974), 99.

[6] For two different approaches to the history of this scholarship, see: Böttrich, "Feigenbaum," 328–36, and Telford, *Barren Temple*, 1–38. For a more recent summary of general Marcan scholarship from Telford, see also, William R. Telford, "Introduction: The Interpretation of Mark: A History and Developments and Issues," 1–61 in *The Interpretation of Mark*, ed. William R. Telford, 2nd ed. (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1995).

[7] Cf. N.T. Wright, *Jesus and the Victory of God* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1996), 25.

[8] While redaction criticism could be placed under the historically-oriented approaches, it will be used in this overview as a transitional cog. The examination of its results will be brief, and its transitional character between historically-oriented approaches and narrative-oriented approaches will be highlighted.

noting the manner in which subsequent shifts in methodology built off of previous approaches, it will attempt to highlight the typical results of the various methods synchronically, highlighting significant advances made using these approaches in recent scholarship. (2) Along these lines several scholars blur the distinctions between approaches, or even use multiple methodologies in their work. Most notable for this study are those who have used the assumptions of narrative criticism, although they are more typically recognized as historically-oriented or redaction critics.[9] These scholars will be discussed in the narrative criticism section but labelled as "narrative sympathetic," in order to recognize that much of what they conclude arises out of assumptions shared with narrative criticism. The goal is to attempt to classify a scholar's conclusions on Mark 11:20–25 based on the methods that led said scholar to such conclusions.

Historically-Oriented Approaches

To begin, the status of the question according to "historically-oriented approaches" will be examined. This "historically-oriented approaches" label is meant to be rather broad. Under the general heading of "historically-oriented approaches" I am including both methods that pursue the actual history behind the events of a text (e.g., historical Jesus research), as well as those that focus on the origination of the gospels in the early church (e.g., form criticism and source criticism).

Common to most historically-oriented approaches is a general neglect of 11:20–25.[10] Thus, this subsection will focus more on how these approaches have dealt with the fig tree episode as well as the temple cleansing. It will explain how investigations concerning the fig tree have

[9] The most striking example of this might be N.T. Wright's work, *Jesus and the Victory of God*. Although he has clearly designated his study as a work on the historical Jesus, he uses narrative-based methods, and respects each evangelist's work for its unique contributions. Thus, although he could easily be classed in with historically-oriented approaches, I have reserved a discussion of his results on Mark 11:20–25 until the "narrative criticism" subsection below.

[10] See n. 3 above.

either focused on the specific details of Mark's record, or else fled from reading it as actual history and attempted to uncover how this story originated. It will then proceed to examine how historical approaches have understood the significance of the temple cleansing scene. While the event itself has been highly valued, Mark's unique narrative has not received appropriate attention. Since the "cleansing" is one of the few events which occurs in all four gospels, it has drawn considerable attention outside of its specifically Marcan use, resulting in a neglect of 11:20–25. As will be mentioned below, perhaps the most interesting aspect for the present study is that its occurrence in all four gospels is somehow connected to the destruction of the temple. This subsection will conclude by highlighting how form and source criticism have not been able to contribute much to an examination of how 11:20–25 connects with its narrative context because they devalue the evangelists as creative authors/redactors and use any apparent disunity as a "jumping off point" for source divisions. This will also serve to transition into the next subsection, a discussion of redaction criticism.

Historical Jesus research has tended to examine this section of Mark in two ways: (1) The quest for the historical fig tree, and (2) The quest for the historical action in the temple. First, scholars have spent considerable energy wrestling with the cursing of the fig tree. While many have attempted to boil down Mark's report to the historically-accurate original event, others have sought to explain away the cursing as unhistorical because it does not seem appropriate for the high moral character they assume of Jesus.[11]

[11] "Die rationalistische Exegese des *18./19.* Jhs. stieß sich daran, daß Jesus mit einem Baum am Wegesrand gesprochen haben und daß dieser auf die Anrede hin verdorrt sein sollte. Die liberalen Exegeten des *19./20.* Jhs., die in Jesus vor allem das hohe sittliche Vorbild sahen, empfanden als das Ärgerliche die Tatsache des Fluches selbst. Ihnen ging es darum, 'das Bild des Heilandes von diesem Flecken zu reinigen.'" Böttrich, "Feigenbaum," 329. Similar to what I have noted here, Böttrich attempts to divide the different approaches to this text into two categories: (1) Fictive History, (2) Real Events (Ibid., 330–31), although it should be noted that Böttrich would probably be rather critical of my overall history of interpretations. Cf. Ibid., 330, n. 11. See also C.F.D. Moule's repeated concern that Jesus should do a destructive miracle and his rather dismissive conclusion on the passage, "It is very odd that Jesus should condemn a fig-tree for having no fruit when it was not even the season for fruit. . . But on any showing it is very odd that Jesus should be described as blasting a tree. . . Still more difficult is the use of this

The "quest for the historical fig tree" which attempts to recover the historically-accurate event behind Mark's account often gets bogged down in various details. It is often noted how odd that Jesus should be hungry even though it was supposedly early in the morning; didn't he eat a proper breakfast?[12] Great concern is also expressed about whether Jesus could have reasonably expected "figs" in the spring.[13] The Marcan text does seem to present this action as happening near Passover;[14] support is summoned for this view from verse 11:13, ὁ γὰρ καιρὸς οὐκ ἦν σύκων. As historically-oriented works typically take this to refer to the spring, scholars are divided on whether or not "early figs" actually can be found some years, and whether or not these early figs are favored.[15] After a thorough examination of the botanical background of fig trees in Israel, Böttrich concludes that Jesus was probably looking for some of these early figs, and when he didn't find any he made an instructive comment about how the fig tree will no longer bear fruit in the age to come. This was not originally much of a curse, but a rather terse word offered to the tree in order to teach his disciples about the urgent nearness of the kingdom

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destructive miracle as an example of splendid faith. . . Perhaps we may guess that the evangelist, or the tradition on which he drew, has here put together bits and pieces of scattered incidents and sayings into a shape which does not correspond either with the mind of Jesus or with the actual facts." C.F.D. Moule, *The Gospel according to Mark* (London: Cambridge University Press, 1965), 89–91.

[12] See especially, Böttrich, "Feigenbaum," 342, for a discussion of scholars who have queried this.

[13] For an overview of various positions on this issue, see Telford, *Barren Temple*, 3–5.

[14] Cf. "The fact that the tree 'had nothing but leaves, for it was not the season for fruit' (Mk 11.13) fits in well with the circumstance that these events were regarded as occurring around the time of the Passover feast." Esler, "Withered Fig Tree," 64. See also Antoinette Collins, "Jesus' Cleansing of the Temple and the Relationship to Passover or Festival Cleansing," in *Feasts and Fasts: A Festschrift in Honour of Alan David Crown*, ed. Marianne Dacy, et al. (Sydney: Mandelbaum, 2005), 155–66. However, there are some indications that a setting nearer to the Festival of Booths is at hand. Thus, it might have occurred in the fall rather than in spring. This possibility will be developed/explored later in this dissertation.

[15] Concerning these *Frühfeigen* Böttrich claims, "Sie gelten als besonders wohlschmeckend und sind rar, da ihre Zahl wesentlich vom Klima des Winters und vom Umfang der vorjährigen Sommerernte bestimmt wird." Böttrich, "Jesus und der Feigenbaum," 338. Though Vincent Taylor (citing Lagrange, 293) mentions that these figs "are disagreeable and not normally eaten." Vincent Taylor, *The Gospel according to St. Mark* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1981), 459. Disagreements such as these make it tempting to dismiss the whole discussion. Cf. "II est vain de calculer la saison des bonnes figues, et celle des figues précoces." Paul Lamarche, *Evangile De Marc*, Etudes Bibliques Nouvelle Serie 33 (Paris: Gabalda, 1996), 274.

of God; so if the tree didn't have fruit on it now, it never would.[16] Despite their horticultural interests, discussions like this rarely proceed to bear fruit concerning the narrative "fit" of Jesus's words in 11:22–25.[17]

One of the more common approaches that dismiss the historicity of the event as described in Mark has been the "aetiological" approach. Though the approach appears to be over one hundred years old, it has been taken up afresh recently by Philip Esler.[18] "According to Schwartz, as people who lived at Bethany were walking from there to Jerusalem in the mornings and back again in the evenings they passed an old withered fig tree, a solitary emblem visible from afar. 'Why was it withered?', they asked. Because the Lord had cursed it while himself making such a journey."[19] While Esler uses this historical explanation to describe the provenance of the account, he also argues that Mark did try to "fit" the account into his narrative, notably attaching the *logia* of 11:22–25 to the story: ". . . Mark found the admittedly enigmatic story of Jesus cursing a fig tree in a source and felt compelled to make use of it as best he could. To do so he adapted independent *logia* relating to faith and the power and nature of prayer proper to disciples (Mk 11.22–25) that almost certainly went back to the historical Jesus."[20]

Esler attempts to argue that his position is more observant of Mark's narrative flow than

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[16] "Was sich ereignet, geschieht zunächst eher zufällig beim Anblick eines grünenden Feigenbaumes, der Frühfeigen erwarten laßt. Der kleine Abstecher vom Weg verläuft jedoch erfolglos. Aber für Jesus bietet er einen Anknüpfungspunkt, seinen Jüngern die drängende Nähe der Gottesherrschaft plastisch vor Augen zu stellen. Er faßt diesen Gedanken in ein lapidares Wort an den Baum: 'Nun—so wird niemand mehr von dir Frucht essen konnen!'" Böttrich, "Jesus und der Feigenbaum," 349.

[17] It is important to note here that the "limits" of this pericope vary based on one's approach. Most historical investigations are uninterested in the sayings of 11:22–25, but are interested in the fig tree episode of the previous verses. As will be seen below, Telford's redaction-critical approach attempts to include 11:23, but excludes 11:24–25 from the discussion. While various limits have been set forth, this dissertation will attempt to analyze 11:20–25 as an intentionally arranged scene in Mark's gospel.

[18] "In a brief article that appeared one hundred years ago Eduard Schwartz made an interesting suggestion. For the first time in scholarship, Schwartz proposed that underlying Mark's account was an aetiological legend of a withered fig tree that actually stood on the road from Bethany to Jerusalem in the time of the early community." Esler, "Withered Fig Tree," 62. Esler cites: Eduard Schwartz, "Der verfluchte Feigenbaum," *ZNW* 5 (1904): 80–84.

[19] Esler, "Withered Fig Tree," 64.

the many "redactional" approaches that explain the fig-tree incident as a "Marcan sandwich," which interprets the temple cleansing incident as a symbolic act of judgment.[21] In his critique of previous works he states,

> There is an obvious and powerful objection to the proposal of Telford, Hooker and others that Mark has included the fig-tree story as a way of symbolically describing a coming judgment upon Israel—it is apparently not the one that Mark himself gives! His interpretation is found in 11.22–25 and consists, as noted above, of three originally independent logia that speak, at least at *a prima facie* level, not of the coming judgment on Israel, but of the power of faith (v. 22–23) and of prayer (v. 24), and of the right way to pray (v. 25).[22]

While Esler does attempt to pay attention to Mark's narrative, he is (self-admittedly) rather in the minority with his viewpoint. Furthermore, one has to ask whether or not his favoring of 11:22–25 as the primary interpretive context of the fig tree episode provides a more coherent reading of Mark than the more common approach that reads the fig tree episode in the light of Jesus's temple act. As this dissertation will attempt to lay out, Esler has improperly divided Mark's narrative where he need not.[23]

Second, this section has been important for examinations into Jesus's "historical action in the temple."[24] Often times such investigations are not as interested in understanding Mark's

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[20] Ibid., 62.

[21] While I could have placed Esler in the "narrative sympathetic" classification below, it seems that his narrative-based observations pay rather minimal respect to Mark's narrative. Cf. Ibid., 49. More will be said below about the "Marcan sandwich" view mentioned here.

[22] Ibid., 49–50.

[23] Bottrich offers the further criticism that it is unlikely that this episode could have been completely made-up, especially since it contrasts so much with other Jesus traditions, and is so widespread: "…eine so deutlich aus dem Rahmen der sonstigen Jesusüberlieferung herausfallende Geschichte wird kaum bewußt 'erfunden' worden sein." Böttrich, "Jesus und der Feigenbaum," 336.

[24] ". . . [D]espite surpassingly different, indeed incommensurate, portraits of Jesus, his mission, and his message, many scholars agree: Jesus' action in the Temple Court before Passover moved him into the crosshairs of Jerusalem's priests and sealed his fate. At this point, the quest for the historical Jesus segues into the quest for the historical action in the temple." Paula Fredriksen, "Gospel Chronologies, the Scene at the Temple, and the Crucifixion of Jesus," in *Redefining First-Century Jewish and Christian Identities: Essays in Honor of Ed Parish Sanders*, ed. Fabian E. Udoh et al., CJAS 16 (Notre Dame: Notre Dame, 2008), 251–52. See also Timothy Wardle, *The Jerusalem Temple and Early Christianity*, WUNT 2 Reihe 291 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2010), 172–81; Craig A. Evans, "Jesus' Action in the Temple: Cleansing or Portent of Destruction?" *CBQ* 151 (1989): 237–70; Betz, "A

unique narrative development, but are more interested in stripping away the uniquely Marcan features in order to get down to the real events of the historical Jesus.[25] Recently, following E.P. Sanders, the main focus of the present discussion has often been on how Jesus's temple cleansing precipitated his conviction and crucifixion.[26] In agreement with much of what will be argued in this dissertation, the "temple cleansing" is often understood as a symbolic act done by Jesus to signal the condemnation of the temple.[27] However, with a heavy focus on the historical events behind these accounts, approaches of this kind have often been unconcerned to even consider how verses 11:22–25 could fit with the earlier context of the fig tree and "cleansing" episodes. Thus, the relevant scholarly works usually touch more on Jesus's temple action and his attitude to the temple, while scarcely noticing the words that follow that event.[28]

It can be noted here that the cleansing episode itself draws so much attention from these investigations because it is present in all four gospels.[29] Few of the details of Jesus's life actually occur in all four gospels so this particular event is all the more remarkable for it. While it is often

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Comparative Religion Approach;" et al.

[25] E.g., Betz concludes, "Therefore, when Jesus drove out the merchants and the bankers from the Temple area, his reason does not seem to have been a priestly concern for the ritual purity of the Temple. In his judgment, we can conclude, the proper worship of God was compromised by Herod's subjection of the Temple to the political purpose of glorifying his kingship and by the intrusion of commercialism." Betz, "A Comparative Religion Approach," 472. See also, Adela Yarboro Collins, "Jesus Actions in Herod's Temple," in *Antiquity and Humanity: Essays on Ancient Religion and Philosophy: Presented to Hans Dieter Betz on His 70th Birthday*, ed. Adela Yarboro Collins and Margaret M. Mitchell (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2001), 45–61; Alexander J. Wedderburn, "Jesus' Action in the Temple: a Key or a Puzzle?" *ZNW* 97 (2006): 1–22.

[26] E.P. Sanders, *Jesus and Judaism* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1985), 75; 293. Cf. "Sanders's analysis moved academic discussion from what Jesus (supposedly) said to what he did, namely, overturning the moneychangers' tables." Fredriksen, "Gospel Chronologies," 253. Cf. Wardle, *The Jerusalem Temple*, 191.

[27] "Almost all New Testament scholars concur that Jesus of Nazareth overturned the tables of the moneychangers in the Temple Court, around Passover, during the final week of his life. In so doing, he symbolically announced the temple's impending destruction, and this action triggered the events that led directly to his death." Fredriksen, "Gospel Chronologies," 246.

[28] The above cited works of Betz, A.Y. Collins, and Antoinette Collins all attempt to nuance how Jesus's attitude to the temple should be understood. Beyond these works, the most significant recent work on Jesus's attitude to the temple appears to be: Jostein Ådna, *Jesu Stellung zum Tempel: die Tempelaktion und das Tempelwort als Ausdruck seiner messianischen Sendung* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2000).

[29] "Die Tempelaktion gehört zu den wenigen Erzählungen über das Wirken Jesu, die in allen vier neutestamentlichen Evangelien vorkommen." Ådna, *Jesu Stellung zum Tempel*, 5.

considered interesting that the evangelists seemed to have interpreted the significance of this "shared" event in different ways,[30] it is especially interesting that the context of all four accounts usually involves some mention of the temple's impending destruction. Matthew is the closest to Mark, though the fig tree episode no longer "sandwiches" the cleansing, and seems to take place all at one time.[31] Luke's account is radically shorter,[32] though preceded by a rather clear prediction of the temple's downfall.[33] John places the event at the beginning of his gospel, though Jesus similarly does make an apparent threat against the temple in 2:19, λύσατε τὸν ναὸν τοῦτον καὶ ἐν τρισὶν ἡμέραις ἐγερῶ αὐτόν.[34] While it is easy to recognize that the cleansing accounts are all different, it is interesting how they all seem to refer to the destruction of the temple in one way or another.[35]

As the scholarly examinations of the early 20th century tended to move away from historical quests after the original events of the text, they often moved toward the pursuits of form criticism in seeking out the origins of various traditional pericopae according to their

[30] "Angesichts dieses auffälligen Befundes stellte der französische Neutestamentler ETIENNE TROCME vor gut 30 Jahren die Frage, ob die Erzählung von Jesu Aktion im Jerusalemer Tempel ohne eine richtungsweisende Sinndeutung auf die Evangelisten zukam und ob ihnen aus diesem Grund große Freiheit in der redaktionellen Gestaltung und Interpretation gegeben war, und zwar ohne daß irgendeine bestimmte Deutung einen Absolutheitsanspruch erheben konnte oder *wollte*." Ådna, *Jesu Stellung zum Tempel*, 5. Cf. "When we see these very different interpretations, we can conclude that the Gospel writers had difficulties in understanding the event." Betz, "A Comparative Religion Approach," 459.

[31] Matt 21:12–22.

[32] Luke 19:45–48.

[33] καὶ οὐκ ἀφήσουσιν λίθον ἐπὶ λίθον ἐν σοί, ἀνθ' ὧν οὐκ ἔγνως τὸν καιρὸν τῆς ἐπισκοπῆς σου. Luke 19:44.

[34] John 2:13–17. Note the similar, yet different, question of authority between Mark 11:28, Matt 21:23 and John 2:18.

[35] While Luke and John's accounts are clearly the most explicit about the temple's fate, this dissertation will follow the many scholars who argue that Mark clearly points this way by means of various literary measures. Matthew's account will remain outside of the scope of this dissertation. Let it simply be acknowledged that some scholars interpret Jesus's act in Matthew as predicting the temple's destruction. E.g., "Matthew, therefore, adds that Jesus had come to Jerusalem as a prophet and that his act was a symbolic demonstration typical of prophets (21:10–11)." Betz, "A Comparative Religion Approach," 458. Cf. Ibid., 460. Interestingly Telford dissents from this view: "All other indications serve to show that Matthew has removed, either deliberately or unintentionally, those features of Mark's version which have symbolic undertones." Telford, *Barren Temple*, 78. Cf. Ibid., 80.

function in the early church. In many ways form and source criticism are just as focused on history as historical Jesus research. However, the goal of these investigations turned away from the actual historical events of the text, and towards the historical events surrounding the use and compilation of the text. Generally speaking, these approaches did not value the evangelists as creative authors/redactors in their own right, but rather as "scissors-and-paste" men, who simply gathered whatever traditions they could find and haphazardly compiled them together.[36] As might be expected, verses 22–25 were generally seen as a collection of *logia* that the rather uncreative compiler of Mark just happened to place in this spot.[37] If Mark had any reason for placing these *logia* here, it was simply because of the appearance of similar words in his sources.[38] The apparent disunity of a text like 11:22–25 typically served as a jumping-off point for the investigation into its originally separate sources, rather than as an opportunity to penetrate deeper into the logic of the text.[39]

Redaction Criticism

By the middle of the twentieth century certain scholars began to turn their attention more

[36] Thus, "If the story does not seem to cohere, one simply attributes the problems to artless juxtaposition of independent traditions rather than attempting to penetrate deeper into the logic of the story." Donald Juel, *Messiah and Temple: The Trial of Jesus in the Gospel of Mark*, SBLDS 31 (Missoula: Scholars, 1977), 24.

[37] Cf. Telford's summary of Bultmann's view: "Taken in isolation from its context, the fig-tree story was for Bultmann a miracle story (with a Jewish provenance), whose original significance was uncertain, and which had been employed as a setting for an apophthegm (11:20–25)." Telford, *Barren Temple*, 17.

[38] ". . . a series of stray *logia* which originally circulated independently, but were attached loosely by Mark by a process of catchword association (so Bacon, Bultmann, Montefiore, Klostermann, Hatch, Lohmeyer, Blunt, Rawlinson, Knox, Johnson, Nineham, Dowda)." Telford, *Barren Temple*, 15.

[39] Cf. "This preoccupation of form criticism with the individual pre-Gospel units has tended to blind it to what the editorial framework and activity manifest in the text itself might tell us about Gospel's overall purpose and theological motivation." Telford, "The Interpretation of Mark," 7. Cf. also, "[Bultmann's] view of literary investigation is extremely narrow; he is really interested in source analysis. His principal concern with Mark's text is to explain one glaring feature; its uneveness. By viewing the account as a collection of originally separate sources, he argues that he can account for some of the peculiarities of the literature." Juel, *Messiah and Temple*, 23. However, it should be noted that Juel gives a more favorable appraisal of Dibellius's work (and Bertram's) than Bultmann's. Ibid., 20–21. Cf. Pages 107–8 in Karl Kertelge, "The Epiphany of Jesus in the Gospel (Mark)," in *The Interpretation of Mark* ed. William R. Telford, trans. R. Morgan, 2nd ed. (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1995; Repr. from pages 153–72 in *Gestalt und Anspruch des Neuen Testaments*, ed. J. Schreiner [Würzburg: Echter-Verlag, 1969]),

deliberately to the text as an intentionally arranged unity. Redaction criticism was defined and developed as a specific method starting in the 1950's.[40] While there were some early precedents for speaking about the unique perspectives of authors, redaction criticism turned its focus on this issue in a more focused manner than before. Redaction critics were generally unsatisfied with the results of form criticism, and often took up the role of apologists for the creative ingenuity of the biblical authors.[41]

The most significant redaction-critical work on 11:12–23 is the 1980 work of William Telford, *The Barren Temple and the Withered Tree*.[42] Telford argued forcefully that the sandwiching of the "cleansing" episode by the fig tree episode needs to be read as an artistic device used by Mark in order to serve a mutually interpretive function.[43] According to his work, the cursing of the fig tree serves to point out that the "cleansing" of the temple is more of a portent of destruction than an actual "cleansing."[44] Telford built upon this idea moving into 11:23 as well. He claimed that the "this mountain" of 11:23 was not any generic, proverbial mountain,

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105–23.

[40] The most famous pioneer of this approach as it pertains to Mark is Willi Marxsen, who first coined the method as *Redaktionsgeschichte* in his *Der Evangelist Mark*, published in 1956, but first offered in 1954 in his *Habilitationsschrift*, now published in English: *Mark the Evangelist: Studies on the Redaction History of the Gospel*, trans. J. Boyce et al. (Nashville: Abingdon, 1969).

[41] Cf. ". . . [T]he Evangelists were not merely 'scissors-and-paste men' but authors.Whereas the form critics perceived that the individual pericopes were separate gospel 'jewels,' they lost sight of the fact that these jewels were arranged and given a particular theological setting by each of the authors." Robert H. Stein, *Gospels and Tradition: Studies on Redaction Criticism of the Synoptic Gospels* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1991), 238. See also the more confrontational approach from Juel: "We may reasonably assume that Mark was capable of a bit more sophistication and that a bit more sophistication may be expected of his interpreters." Juel, *Messiah and Temple*, 24. As will be mentioned below, perhaps Juel should be seen as a narrative critic instead of a redaction critic.

[42] I say that Telford's work covers 11:12–23 in deference to his opinion that 11:24–25 were post-Marcan additions. "Since we have expressed ourselves in favour of the view that the redactor of Mark is responsible for the fig-tree story's curious position, and hence its symbolic function, then we are pressed *ipso facto* towards the view that the sequel to the story has been to some extent subject to a developing hermeneutical process conducted subsequently upon the Markan text." Telford, *Barren Temple*, 50.

[43] Telford, *Barren Temple*, 49. This much discussed sandwich technique is occasionally referred to as dovetailing, or more technically "intercalation." Intercalation will be discussed more thoroughly below.

[44] "By sandwiching his story on either side of the Cleansing account, Mark indicates that he wishes the fate of the unfruitful tree to be seen as a proleptic sign prefiguring the destruction of the Temple cultus." Telford, *Barren Temple*, 238.

but rather the temple mount itself, thus reinforcing the condemnation theme.[45] While Telford argued for a far greater level of coherency in this section than most his predecessors, he still did not extend this coherency to 11:24–25, which he largely dismissed as later additions to the Marcan text.[46]

Telford's position is the benchmark for redaction-critical views that grant the text its greatest level of literary coherence. Other less generous views abound as well.[47] Although Telford uproots 11:24–25 from its context and attempts to throw it out of his discussion, his argument that the "this mountain" of 11:23 was used by Mark to reinforce the concept of the impending destruction of the Jerusalem temple has not consistently been accepted by redaction critics. Some continue to suggest that there is not even that much continuity.[48] Along those lines,

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[45] Telford, *Barren Temple*, 59. N.B. Although Telford developed this idea further than any of his predecessors he was not the first to suggest that "this mountain" referred to the temple mount. In his footnote he cites Dodd, Lightfoot, Bird, Gaston, Dowda, and Carrington. Dodd himself cites this view as predating him, citing E.A. Abbott and J.R. Coates. C.H. Dodd, *The Parables of the Kingdom*, Rev ed. (New York, Scribner's: 1961), 45, n. 2.

It can be added here that others have recognized the demonstrative, but have taken it as pointing to the Mount of Olives instead of the Temple mount. Watts cites "Manson, *Messiah*, 29f, 39f; Grant, 'Coming,' 300; Evans, 'Galilee,' 7; Smith, 'Figs,' 322; Cf. Hurtado, 184. A number of scholars, not listed here, also see Jesus as indicating the Mount of Olives but without any eschatological implications." He goes on to provide a brief summary of some of these major figures. Watts, *Isaiah's New Exodus*, 332, n. 225; Cf. Dowd, *Prayer, Power and the Problem of Suffering*, 73–4, who mainly focuses on Grant's work.

[46] Telford's redaction-critical approach can be seen in his source-based observation on 11:23, "What Mark may have done, on his part, is to have removed the mountain-moving saying from its location here in the exorcism story, and transferred it to what was for him a more pregnant context, viz, that of the Cleansing of the Temple." Telford, *Barren Temple*, 108.

[47]Donahue makes the suggestion that a significant difference in redactional-critical approaches can be noticed between German and American scholars. "In Germany it was primarily a historical discipline where the focus was on origin and settings of traditions, on the conditions of their development and on the historical circumstances that best explained their final editing. Using terminology that became current only later, we can say that in Germany redaction criticism concentrated on 'the world behind the text'. In the United States, redaction criticism developed primarily as an exercise in literary criticism, where the emphasis was on the final product as a unitary composition with concern for the overarching themes and motifs and for the structure of the whole and of the individual parts." Donahue, "Redaction Criticism," 34. While his suggestion has some truth to it, there seems to be enough exceptions that such a view needs to be held somewhat loosely.

[48] Biguzzi, *Yo Destruire Este Templo*, 47; "Das eigentliche Logion vom bergeversetzenden Glauben ist nicht auf das vorausgehende Fluchwunder, sondern auf die glaubensschwachen Jünger zu beziehen." Josef Ernst, *Das Evangelium nach Markus* (Regensburg: Friedrich Pustet, 1981), 332; "The final verse (11:25) is associated with 11:22–24 not by the term "believe/faith" (πίστις) but by the term "pray" (προσευχῆς). It is even further removed from the main theme of 11:11–21." Robert Stein, *Mark*, BECNT (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2008), 520. Esler, "Withered Fig Tree," 59–60. It seems clear that Esler comes to this conclusion based on typical redaction-critical thinking.

many assume that the group of verses at 11:23–25 is a pre-Marcan appendage that happened to get pulled into the narrative.[49] As was noted above when discussing source criticism, a *Stichwort* idea is typically offered as the most likely reason Mark placed 11:22–25 where he did.[50] Telford follows this source-critical path[51] in arguing that the non-Marcan expression "likely arises out of the language of the early church as they remembered the wording of the Lord's prayer."[52] As can be seen in this diversity, typical redaction studies have often been limited in reading too great of a level of coherence within this text as long as they have the "safety-net" of source criticism to fall back on.[53]

In summary, historically-oriented approaches have devoted their attention to the fig tree episode and the cleansing episode, thus scarcely shedding any interpretive light on how 11:20–25 might fit in its narrative context. Although redaction-critical approaches made significant strides beyond most historically-oriented approaches towards valuing the evangelists as creative redactors, much of its results seem to remain shackled to certain historically-oriented arguments

[49] Eduard Schweizer, "Mark's Theological Achievement," in *The Interpretation of Mark*, ed. William R. Telford, trans. R. Morgan, 2nd ed. (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1995; Repr. from *EvT* 25 [1964]), 85, n. 44;See also his commentary, *The Good News according to Mark*, trans. D. H. Madvig (Richmond: Knox, 1970), 232; Cf. Ernst, *Mark*, 331; Böttrich, "Jesus und der Feigenbaum," 335.

[50] See n. 38; Cf. Hooker, *The Gospel according to Saint Mark*, 269. Gnilka is close to a *Stichwort* idea, but offers a slightly different approach. He believes Mark "hat die Exposition der Perikope 20-22a geschaffen . . .um einen Anschluß für eine Jüngerbelehrung zu gewinnen, die er durch eine Petrusfrage eingeleitet sein läßt." He believes the *logia* of 22c–25 came to Mark through a preexisting source, and he suggests that the link between the *logia* and the preceding material turns on the idea of *Glaube*: "Eine Belehrung über den Glauben lenkt zwar auf ein anderes Thema, knüpft aber insofern an, als der verweigerte Glaube die Ursache für den Zustand Israels ist." Joachim Gnilka, *Das Evangelium nach Markus*, EKKNT II/2. 2 vols. (Zürich: Benziger, 1978–1979), 133–35.

[51] In his footnote supporting his view Telford says, "This possibility is in fact entertained by Bultmann (*History*, pp. 25, 61). Cf. also Lagrange, *Évangile selon Saint Matthieu*, p.407; Montefiore, *Synoptic Gospels*, I, p.270; Bartlet, *Mark*, p.323; Nineham, *Mark*, p.305; Kuhn, *Sammlungen*, p.149, n. 21. More certain are Klostermann, *Markusevangelium*, p.119; Strecker, *Weg*, p.18, n. 2. More recently, M.É. Boismard has argued that Matthean influences upon the final redaction of Mark can be traced not only here but elsewhere in the gospel. See 'Influences matthéennes sur l'ultime rédaction de l'évangile de Marc' in *L'Évangile selon Marc*, ed. M. Sabbe, 93–101." Telford, *Barren Temple*, 66, n. 88.

[52] Telford, *Barren Temple*, 52.

[53] "Although redactional studies have continued to play a significant role in scholars' perceptions of the tensions in the text, devoting attention to redactional seams has hindered the articulation of a compelling, integrated reading of the product that the compiler (or compilers) has produced." Kirk, "Time for Figs," 509.

that break-up Mark's narrative. While Telford assumed more coherence in the organization of Mark's narrative than most of his predecessors, he was not generous enough to assume narrative coherence in verses 24 and 25 as well.

Narrative Criticism

A greater level of generosity has been given to the unity and coherency of the text as it now stands by the introduction of the methods of narrative criticism.[54] While redaction criticism typically saw itself in some level of continuation with the other areas of historical criticism, which see the text as a compilation of discrete units, narrative criticism broke from that way of thinking to receive and examine the text as an assumed "intricately interconnected unity."[55] While different methods abound within a general grouping of narrative approaches, an assumed detailed coherence is a basic feature that drives any narrative-critical approach to search for the logic of the narrative where redaction-critical approaches often throw up their hands and escape onto the source-critical path of least resistance.

This subsection will focus on the two main ways narrative critics have read this difficult part of Mark's narrative coherently. Before an explanation of these two main views, it will give a brief overview of the results of certain scholars from other approaches who have aligned themselves with narrative-critical assumptions in their work on this passage. After that it will

[54] For a basic overview of narrative criticism see: Mark Allan Powell, *What is Narrative Criticism.*? (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1990). While narrative criticism is here being used in a rather general sense as a rather recent development, Juel's earlier work (1977) attempted to place himself in this stream by clinging onto Haenchen's term, "composition criticism": "But the methods by which this is accomplished include not only source criticism, the separation of tradition and redaction, but also 'composition criticism,' and the analysis of themes and motifs in a particular work. . . . Separation of tradition and redaction can only provide a 'limited entree to the total theological enterprise of Mark.' It must be supplemented by study of Mark's compositional activity . . ." Juel, *Messiah and Temple*, 30. Cf. Juel's hesitancy to use source-based arguments as an escape: "Only when every attempt to determine the place of a text within the whole has failed to account for its presence or to provide a reasonable account of its function within the story are we justified in seeking explanations for the text based on Mark's unthinking use of prior tradition." Juel, *Messiah and Temple*, 6. Accordingly, Juel would be classed with the "narrative sympathetic" group below.

[55] Robert Alter, *The Art of Biblical Narrative*, 2nd ed. (New York: Basic Books, 2011), 11.

describe the general consensus that has formed in narrative-critical works on how to understand the fig tree and "cleansing" episodes as pointing to the condemnation of the temple. Then it will turn to Dowd's view, which focuses on the theme of prayer. Although she recognizes that the preceding context focuses on the destruction of the temple, she argues that the "mountain" of verse 23 should not be read as the temple mount, but rather as a proverbial *adunaton*, or impossible feat. Finally, Timothy Gray's view will be examined as an exposition of how the temple theme can be considered to run through 11:20–25 more pointedly.

Before examining scholars who position themselves as narrative critics, it is important to recognize that certain historically-oriented and redaction-critical scholars have aligned themselves more closely with narrative-critical assumptions when analyzing this passage. Though their works are diverse in scope and method, they will be grouped together here as "narrative sympathetic." Though many could fit into this category, the present overview will focus on N.T. Wright as an historically-oriented critic who uses narrative-critical methodology, and Philip Carrington as a redaction critic whose assumptions seem to share as much in common with a narrative-critical approach as a redactional-critical approach.

Wright's appropriation of narrative-critical methodologies will further be touched on below in the section on methodology. It will be sufficient here to simply highlight his narrative-based assumption that one should ". . . treat the gospels with full seriousness as they stand, that is, as *stories*. . ."[56] In doing so, Wright reads the fig tree sandwich as pointing to the destruction of the temple and goes so far as to claim that Mark, "clearly intended his readers to get the point (though countless readers have missed it anyway, and some, despite it, have enlisted him as an advocate of 'cleansing' rather than 'destruction')."[57] Turning to verse 11:23, Wright is very direct

[56] Wright, *Victory*, 15.

[57] Ibid., 421.

in sharing his understanding that "the word about the mountain being cast into the sea also belongs exactly here." As he continues he avers, "'this mountain', spoken in Jerusalem, would naturally refer to the Temple mount."[58] Wright is further explicit in stressing, "[t]he saying is not simply a miscellaneous comment on how prayer and faith can do such things as curse trees. It is a very specific word of judgment."[59] Wright shows the eclectic nature of his study in these observations. His stated objective is to get back to the historical Jesus, but these observations give Mark's narrative considerable credit as a unified literary achievement. Unfortunately, Wright has not extended his observations much into 11:24–25. As with Telford, the temple theme seems easiest to connect to in verse 11:23, but 24–25 still remain obscure in Wright's work.

Amongst other things, Philip Carrington's 1960 commentary *According to Mark* assumed quite a number of the presuppositions of a narrative critic. His introduction praises Mark's creative genius as the "Story-teller,"[60] and, despite his source-based observations, he is rather generous to Mark's narrative in assuming a thoughtful and coherent organization. As is common to many who value Mark's creativity, Carrington reads the "this mountain" of verse 23 as referring to the temple mount.[61] What is even more interesting in Carrington's work is his observation of a continued high level of thoughtful coherence that carries into verses 24 and 25.[62]

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[58] Ibid., 422.

[59] Ibid.

[60] Carrington, *According to Mark*, 2. However, despite Carrington's stress on Mark as a creative "story-teller" it is worth considering how much his lectionary theory might draw one away from reading Mark as a coherent narrative. Regardless, he was rather on the cutting edge to be doing "redaction criticism" in 1960, as it had only been recently distinguished itself by Marxsen in 1954.

[61] "The temple is the mountainous obstacle which is to vanish before the faith of the gospel movement." Carrington, *According to Mark*, 243. Cf. n. 45. See also, Kelber, *The Kingdom in Mark*, 104; Étienne Trocmé, *La Formation de l'Évangile Selon Marc* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1963), 84–85;Heil, "Narrative Strategy," 79; Gray, *The Temple in Mark*, 44–45; et al.

[62] In some interesting ways Carrington's observations on 24–25 presage much of Dowd's work on this section. Especially interesting is his comment that the promised effectiveness of faithful prayer in this section is to be read in tandem with Mark's Garden of Gethsemane scene. Ibid., 244. However, it needs to be stressed that Dowd

He points out, "The teaching on prayer runs right through the sequence we have been considering. The train of thought originates in the cleansing of the temple, when Jesus said, 'my house shall be called a house of prayer.'"[63] Similarly he says "[t]he thought of the temple-mountain and the house of prayer is never absent in this sequence . . . and are arranged to illuminate one another."[64]

Though insightful, Carrington's work on this section is rather brief. More focused narrative-critical work has advanced beyond the work of eclectic scholars such as him. By more deliberately focusing on exposing the "intricately interconnected unity" in Mark, narrative criticism has spurred on more developed readings of how Mark 11:20–25 "fits" with its previous context. Like many redaction-critical works, it seems to be largely consistent that narrative critics have read the surrounding context of the fig tree as an interpretive aid for reading the "cleansing" episode as a condemnation of the temple. Furthermore the following words of 11:23–25 are usually related, in one way or another, to the replacement of the now-condemned temple. However, unlike Telford *et alia*, narrative critics have not been so quick to excise 24 and 25 from their discussions. Perhaps the biggest point of difference amongst narrative-critical approaches is the way the logic flows from the condemnation of the temple into the *logia* of 23–25.

One of the most common approaches has been put forward by Sharon Dowd in her focused work, *Prayer, Power, and the Problem of Suffering*. Her work highlights the strong narrative link between Jesus's affirmation of the temple's intended purpose of being a "house of prayer" and

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does much more to stress her disagreements with Carrington than their agreements. Cf. Dowd, *Power and the Problem of Suffering*, 5; 61–62.

[63] Carrington, *According to Mark*, 244.

[64] Ibid., 245

the consistency of the theme of prayer in 11:20–25.[65] She suggests that "The pericope of the withered fig tree functions in Mark 11 *both* to foreshadow the destruction of the temple *and* to illustrate the power of God, which was manifested in Jesus' miracles and promised to the community which replaced the rejected temple as 'house of prayer.'"[66] According to Dowd's logic, the fig tree seems to foreshadow the destruction of the temple when it is related to the cleansing episode. However, when she turns to the following section, 11:20–25, the "symbolic message" of the fig tree is no longer a portent of destruction; rather it serves as an example of an *adunaton*, or an impossible feat that Jesus was able to achieve through faith and prayer. Dowd does not follow Telford's example in connecting the temple mount to the "this mountain" of verse 23, instead she suggests that the logic of this pericope is focused on achieving the impossible through prayer.[67]

In contrast to Dowd's approach, which does not connect 20–25 too closely to the previous temple theme,[68] Timothy Gray has recently offered an examination of this passage from the vantage point of the temple theme in Mark. Unlike Dowd, Gray follows Telford's suggestion that the "this mountain" refers specifically to the temple mount.[69] He argues that these words are to show, "the way forward to a future without the temple mount."[70] However, as might be expected from his temple-centered focus, he interprets this passage entirely from its connection to his

[65] Cf. "If there is a narrative link between the closing verses appended to the pericope of the fig tree and the temple-clearing episode, it is to be found in the theme of prayer." Kirk, "Time for Figs," 525.

[66] Dowd, *Prayer, Power and the Problem of Suffering*, 55.

[67] N.B. Dowd's conclusion to her chapter on the exegesis of this passage even says, ". . . [T]hat God will move mountains . . ." She thus changes the singular demonstrative to a generic plural! Dowd, *Prayer, Power and the Problem of Suffering*, 66.

[68] Dowd does connect this to this theme, but not very strongly. Her work is very focused on the theme of prayer, so much so that she interprets 11:25's reference to forgiveness as a necessary aspect of a healthy community prayer life, instead of making any connections to the replacement of the Temple's sacrificial system. Dowd, *Prayer, Power and the Problem of Suffering*, 65.

[69] Gray, *The Temple in Mark*, 52.

[70] Ibid, 53.

temple theme. He scarcely devotes three pages to the passage, and doesn't offer more than passing comments concerning why faith, prayer, and forgiveness should be major themes in this section.[71]

To sum up, narrative-critical work has produced more unified and coherent readings of Mark than previous methodologies ever achieved. The assumptions of narrative criticism have been shared by some scholars from other approaches, such as N.T. Wright and Philip Carrington; yet more focused narrative-critical work has gone farther than these eclectic scholars ever did in their work. While narrative-based approaches have moved towards a general consensus on 11:12–25, the train-of-thought that connects 11:20–25 to its previous context is anything but settled at this time. Although other approaches have been suggested that nuance the thought-flow slightly differently than Dowd and Gray, these two serve as the prime examples of the main narrative approaches to this narrative connection: either focused on prayer for the impossible, or focused on the temple.[72]

The Dissertation in the Context of Current Scholarship

It seems appropriate, therefore, to offer up a full dissertation focused on this unsettled feature of the text, namely, how 11:20–25 fits in its narrative context. This section will explain more specifically how this dissertation will position itself within current scholarship. To begin, it will suggest that this dissertation will fill a void in scholarship as it will be the only full length monograph to analyze these verses outside of one specific thematic perspective. The present

[71] "The motifs of faith, prayer, and forgiveness that follow the episode of the rejected tree are intended to show the disciples (and the reader) the way forward to a future without the temple mount." Gray, *The Temple in Mark*, 53.

[72] For others who offer similar, but nuanced conclusions see: Christopher D. Marshall, *Faith as a Theme in Mark's Narrative* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), 168–69; Chance, "Cursing of the Temple," 272; Heil, "Narrative Strategy," 79; Kirk, "Time for Figs," 525; Trocmé, *La Formation de Marc*, 85, n. 55. Trocmé, even suggests in this footnote that this passage serves to instruct the disciples that they will be able to bring about the destruction of the temple through their prayers!

work will fit between Dowd's prayer-focused examination and Gray's temple-focused work. Both approaches offer some unique contributions, but neither is comprehensive enough in their treatment of 11:20–25. Next it will discuss how it will offer a corrective in discussions about the temple's replacement.[73] As stated above, the thesis is that these verses respond to the condemnation of the old temple order—as signaled by the fig tree and "cleansing" episodes—by asserting that Jesus is founding a new temple order. While the condemnation and replacing theme has been common in several narrative-critical works on this passage, this dissertation will offer a corrective in the understanding of *how* the temple is to be replaced. While the present work will suggest that the temple is to be replaced by Jesus, the majority suggest that the temple's replacement will be the "community."[74] It will be beneficial to return to Dowd and Gray for examples of how this argument is typically made, often without much clear evidence from Mark's narrative. Finally, this section will conclude by describing a new direction it will offer in its study of this passage. To date, nobody has read this passage as an allusion to Solomon's dedicatory prayer at the founding of the temple in 1 Kgs 8. As this dissertation will show, there are striking reasons to consider 1 Kgs 8 as an allusion behind Mark 11:20–25. This allusion reinforces the narrative-based conclusion that this passage is speaking of the founding of a new temple order.

To date, Dowd's work is the only full-length monograph to deal with this "sequel" to the fig tree episode, but her work is so focused on the theme of prayer in Mark that it does not

[73] Perhaps it would be more theologically appropriate to choose a word such as "fulfillment" instead of "replacement." While that might be the case, it seems more neutral to use a word such as "replacement." Using "fulfillment" here might draw the discussion too far into a theological discussion. This word choice should not be taken as to exclude an idea of fulfillment, but rather it should be seen as a broader word choice that leaves a further discussion on the continuity and discontinuity between the two Testaments of the Christian Bible outside of its view.

[74] Cf. Juel, *Messiah and Temple*, 135; Donahue, *Are You the Christ?: The Trial Narrative in the Gospel of Mark*, SBLDS 10 (Missoula: SBL for the Seminar on Mark, 1973), 132; Willard M. Swartley, *Israel's Scripture Traditions and the Synoptic Gospels: Story Shaping Story* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1994), 163; Ernst, *Mark*, 329; Kirk, "Time for Figs," 523; Heil, "Narrative Strategy," 76–77; Chávez, *Jesus' Temple Action in Mark*, 3; et al.

necessarily devote as much attention to how these verses function in their immediate context as it could. Dowd's main contribution lies in her development of a Marcan theology of prayer.[75] She makes a very interesting connection between theodicy and prayer, by linking the "promise" of praying for the impossible in 11:23, to Jesus's "unanswered" prayer at Gethsemane: "Take this cup away from me," 14:36.[76] However, Dowd's heavy prayer focus skews some of her observations and tends to commandeer various other Marcan themes under her major theme of prayer. For example when she deals with the theme of forgiveness (which arises in 11:24), forgiveness is only important insofar as it relates to community prayer life.[77] While many of her insights are helpful and valuable, Mark's major theme is not prayer. Similarly, other major works that deal with this passage generally only touch on this section in passing, as far as it relates to the theme they are attempting to develop.[78] This dissertation will, therefore, fill a void in scholarship by offering a corrective to certain views that are too heavily influenced by their thematic approach, as well as supplementing other views that have only been able to deal with this text in passing.

Most specifically, this dissertation will fit between Gray's temple-focused exegesis of this text, and Dowd's prayer-focused approach. It will serve to supplement Gray's work that does not

[75] "The purpose of this study is the investigation of the theological function of prayer in the Gospel of Mark. . . . There is a sharp contrast between what the Markan Jesus teaches about prayer (11:22–25), and what happens when he puts his own teaching into practice (14:32–42)." Dowd, *Prayer, Power and the Problem of Suffering*, 1.

[76] N.B. Although Dowd distances herself from Carrington, he made a similar observation much earlier, "The subject [effective prayer] is continued in the Garden of Gethsemane, and these sayings must be taken into consideration with those in order to sound their depths." Carrington, *According to Mark*, 244.

[77] Dowd, Prayer, Power and the Problem of Suffering, 65–66.

[78] Cf. Marshall, *Faith as a Theme*; Gray, *The Temple in Mark*; Rikki Watts, *Isaiah's New Exodus and Mark*, WUNT 2 Reihe 88 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1997); Joel Marcus, *The Way of the Lord: Christological Exegesis of the Old Testament in the Gospel of Mark* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1992); et al. Cf. Juel's similar critique about various scholars' "community replacement" view of the statement in Mark 14:58: "If this interpretation of the phrase in Mark is widespread, it is also imprecise and unsupported with relevant evidence in most commentaries." Juel, *Messiah and Temple*, 145.

devote enough pages to deal adequately with how these verses fully interact with their narrative context outside of the temple theme. It will also serve to supplement, but also correct, Dowd's approach, which neglects the full import of the temple theme by focusing too heavily on Mark's theology of prayer. Both of these authors have made valuable contributions to the study of this text; aspects of their work will significantly contribute to the present study. However, both leave something to be desired in their treatments of this section.

Secondly, this dissertation will offer a corrective in discussions about the temple's replacement. One of the oft-mentioned but underdeveloped interpretations of this passage is that Jesus is speaking about the replacement of the temple in verses 22–25. Both Dowd and Gray understand this to be the case, although both get there through different means. The underdeveloped aspect of this is exactly *how* this replacement is signaled in the narrative, and *what* this replacement entails. Based on an assumption that the gospel is written for community formation, Dowd's approach suggests that the replacement of the temple is the praying community. Dowd focuses on prayer as the link between the condemned temple and the praying community. Gray's scope gets wider as he considers the condemnation of the temple to signal the need for a replacement bigger than just a "house of prayer," but a replacement of the divine presence of God.[79] However, Gray still seems to end up in the same place, "for there will be a new place for prayer and forgiveness—the Christian Community."[80] As this dissertation hopes to bring clarity to this issue, it will be helpful to examine these two positions a little closer before moving on.

Is the replacement of the old temple order signaled by the idea of prayer? Jesus condemns

[79] Gray, *The Temple in Mark*, 53.

[80] Ibid., 54.

the old temple order because it was not a "house of prayer for all people."[81] Dowd understands this in a more limited fashion than Gray. While Gray describes the temple as the "place of God's presence,"[82] Dowd makes rather generalizing claims about the temple's traditional role as the "guarantor of the efficacy of prayer,"[83] and has a contextual examination of "Communities as Replacements for Temples in Late Antiquity."[84] Her argument here takes the tone of a *Religionsgeschicte* approach as she concludes, "[t]he devaluation of temples was accompanied by an emphasis on religious community, not only in diaspora Judaism, in Christianity and at Qumran, but in other Hellenistic religions as well."[85] Dowd argues that the mention of prayer in 11:23 is therefore the link that signals the "community of prayer" as the replacement of the old temple order.[86] Exactly why Dowd assumes that the community of prayer is to be the replacement of the temple is based off of larger assumptions she brings to the text than the narrative actually provides. Perhaps more influential than her *Religionsgeschicte* observations, she explains in her introduction, the "form and content of an ancient didactic biography was shaped in such a way as to provide for the formation of the community . . ."[87] It seems as though this idea of community formation through Mark's gospel is the most significant reason for her understanding that the prayer function of the temple is replaced by the praying community.

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[81] Mark 11:17

[82] Ibid., 53.

[83] Dowd, *Prayer, Power and the Problem of Suffering*, 53. She does deal with the "Shekinah" idea, but not as it specifically concerns Mark's narrative. She describes it as it relates to the replacement of the temple in Judaism, as one example of the understanding of the connection between prayer and temples in antiquity. Ibid., 45–52.

[84] Ibid., 51–52.

[85] Ibid., 52.

[86] ". . . the temple had been rejected as a failure . . . but because of its traditional role as the guarantor of the efficacy of prayer, the rejection of the temple required a reassertion of the importance of community prayer and the power available to it." Ibid., 53. Cf. "The pericope of the withered fig tree functions in Mark 11 *both* to foreshadow the destruction of the temple *and* to illustrate the power of God, which was manifested in Jesus' miracles and promised to the community which replaced the rejected temple as 'house of prayer.'" Ibid., 55.

[87] Ibid., 27.

In contrast to Dowd's generalized understanding of temples in late antiquity, Gray's work focuses more on the Jerusalem temple as the unique place of the located presence of the God of Israel. Gray stresses that the condemnation of this temple would shake the disciples' faith, not only because of the temple's relation to prayer, but to forgiveness too. Gray proceeds to anchor these themes in the narrative context, "The motifs of faith, prayer, and forgiveness that follow the episode of the rejected tree are intended to show the disciples (and the reader) the way forward to a future without the temple mount."[88] Gray quickly moves from there to assert that the Christian community will take over as the new place for prayer and forgiveness.[89] Gray gets to this claim by suggesting an implicit play on the word "house,"[90] and noticing the use of 2nd person plurals in verses 22, 24 and 25.[91] However, these subtle clues do not make a convincing argument that the "community" is necessarily the replacement of the temple.

While these two are typical of most approaches to how one might understand the replacement of the temple in Mark's narrative, [92] they have failed to make conclusive, clear arguments *from the text itself* for why the temple's replacement should be the community itself. More often than not it seems as though they assume it is somewhat self-evident. No clear indications from the text strongly support their assertions. It seems as though the community-as-replacement idea is usually assumed by logical deduction: (A) If the temple is condemned but (B) the community still has access to its functions/benefits, (=) then the community must replace

[88] Gray, *The Temple in Mark*, 53.

[89] Ibid., 54.

[90] He points out a thematic development of "house" throughout the Gospel of Mark, especially as it relates to the disciples and the kingdom of God. This is contrasted with the temple's intended function, spoken of in 11:17, as a "house of prayer for all people." Ibid. He is admittedly dependent on Marshall for this connection. See: Marshall, *Faith as a Theme*, 163.

[91] "This communal thrust of the address suggests that it is the community gathered around Jesus that is to be the new locus of prayer and forgiveness, not the rejected temple." Gray, *The Temple in Mark*, 54.

[92] See n. 72.

the temple. The main problem with such approaches is that they confuse the functions of the temple with the temple itself. The "community" always had access to the functions (prayer, forgiveness, etc.) of the temple as long as the temple existed. Now that the temple is condemned, are the benefits of the located divine presence simply passed on to the community without any further mediation? Or does Jesus take over that mediation, and the community now seeks those benefits through his name? This dissertation will build off of Gray's observation that the temple was the location of the divine presence, but point more towards Jesus as the replacement of that presence, rather than the community itself.

It should be recognized that this bifurcation might be too clean.[93] Certainly the early Christian church could talk of both Jesus,[94] the community,[95] and individual believers[96] as the temple of God. However, the focus of this project is understanding the Gospel of Mark and not all of early Christianity. It will therefore examine Mark's narrative for more explicit indications of what the replacement of the temple might entail than the community-based assertions brought forth by Dowd and Gray.

Most specifically, it will argue *Mark's narrative* points towards Jesus as the replacement of the divine presence, rather than the community. The most explicit comment in Mark that points toward any temple replacement idea closely follows the fig tree episode; it is Jesus's OT allusion in 12:10, where the "rejected stone" becomes the "cornerstone." The "rejected stone" in Mark's narrative is to be understood as the rejected Jesus.[97] Here in the near context of the temple's

[93] Cf. Wright, *Victory*, 426; Wardle, *Temple and Identity*, 2–3; Kee, *Community of the New Age*, 113; Ådna, *Jesu Stellung zum Tempel*, 124; Rikki Watts, "The Lord's House and David's Lord: The Psalms and Mark's Perspective on Jesus and the Temple," *BibInt* 15 (2007): 317; et al.

[94] E.g., John 2:21

[95] E.g., 1 Pet 2:5

[96] E.g., 1 Cor 6:19

[97] This allusion in 12:10 flows out of the parable of the vineyard and the tenants. In that parable the owner of the vineyard finally sends "his beloved son" who is rejected and killed by the tenants. In Mark's narrative the

condemnation, Jesus himself is explicitly linked to the replacement of the temple. There is no similarly strong link that suggests the community replaces the temple. However, there are further clues that support the understanding that Jesus is replacing the temple. In chapter 13, where Jesus clearly speaks of the coming destruction of the temple,[98] he goes on to focus on himself in his further explication. He speaks of deceivers who will claim, "I am he";[99] he speaks of the Son of Man's coming in clouds;[100] he speaks of the faithfulness of his words;[101] but he does not speak of the faithful community. In response to the upcoming destruction of the temple, the focus is on himself. In a somewhat related move, at the Passover meal, he claims the cup is "my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many."[102] While this does not necessarily refer to the temple, it does support the notion that Mark depicts Jesus as replacing Old Testament institutions in himself (not the community). Furthermore, the replacement of the temple by one "not made by hands" is signaled in 14:58;[103] and then, when Jesus dies, the temple curtain is torn in two and the nearby centurion says "surely this man was the son of God,"[104] thereby recalling the parable of the tenants (who rejected God's son, Jesus). When Jesus told this parable of the tenants in chapter 12, he closed by saying "the stone the builders rejected has become the cornerstone." At the apex of the narrative, where Jesus himself breathes his last and the now-condemned temple curtain is torn in two, the narrative recalls the only place in the narrative where any temple

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"beloved son" is Jesus (cf. 1:11; 9:7; 15:39).

[98] 13:2

[99] 13:6, 22

[100] 13:26

[101] 13:31

[102] 14:24

[103] This speaks of the condemnation and replacement of the temple, but the replacement is not explicitly spoken of here. For the importance of this passage in signaling Jesus as the replacement of the temple, see Harry L. Chronis, "The Torn Veil: Cultus and Christology in Mark 15:37–39" *JBL* 101 (1982): 111.

[104] 15:39

replacement has been clearly and explicitly signaled. If the narrative gives any indication of a replacement for the temple, it is Jesus himself.

Finally, this section will conclude by describing a new direction it will offer in its study of this passage. To date, nobody has read this passage as an allusion to Solomon's dedicatory prayer at the founding of the temple in 1 Kgs 8. The closest one has come to this recognition comes from Dowd's work on prayer. She brings up 1 Kgs 8 in her discussion explicitly. However, she makes no claim that 1 Kgs 8 influenced Mark 11:20–25, instead she uses it as an example of the general relationship between prayer and temples in antiquity.[105] As this dissertation will show, there are striking reasons to consider that Mark 11:20–25 alludes to 1 Kgs 8,[106] which reinforce the narrative-based conclusion that this passage is speaking of the founding of a new temple order. It is important to stress that the connection to 1 Kgs 8 serves to reinforce the narrative-based conclusions concerning temple themes, rather than create those conclusions. As will be described below in the methodology section, narrative observations should have operational priority over observations arising out of another text (1 Kgs 8).

The Methodological Procedure to Be Employed

This dissertation will proceed by employing a narrative-based methodology. Although that might be a sufficient description for some, it will be helpful here to expose some major assumptions behind the specific methods to be used here. Therefore, this section on methodology will proceed by explaining how this dissertation will position itself methodologically towards three different fields of study: (1) historical inquiries, (2) narrative criticism, and (3) the New Testament's use of the Old Testament. For the most part historical inquiries that attempt to "get

[105] Dowd, *Prayer, Power and the Problem of Suffering*, 45–52.

[106] For more on the relation between this passage from Mark and 1 Kgs 8, see pages 52–53 below, and 151–59.

behind the text" will be bracketed out. Historical inquiries will only be used to argue that the understanding of the text offered here is consistent with what can be known of the 1st century world the text came from. Beyond such historical inquiries, it will then proceed to examine in greater depth how it will position itself in the diverse field of narrative criticism. While some narrative methodologies structure their works according to the literary categories used in analyzing "stories," this dissertation will not proceed in such a manner.[107] Rather, the main "narrative-based" component of its methodology will be the assumption that the text should be read as a unified whole, with special attention to the interaction and development of major themes. Finally, it will explain how this narrative methodology will interact with an understanding of Mark's use of the Old Testament.[108] The study of the New Testament's use of the Old Testament is typically done in diverse ways using diverse terms. It will be of service to make clear the manner in which this work will understand some significant terms, methods, and goals from this field of study. The narrative reading offered in this dissertation will be accented by observations of how Mark employed the Old Testament in his gospel as a whole, and most specifically how Mark's Old Testament usage supports the narrative-based reading of Mark 11:20–25.

Relation to Historical Investigations

On a very basic level most historical questions that deal with "what really happened" are simply unaddressed in the present work. This is not to say that such historical inquiries are unworthy, uninteresting, or impossible. Rather this dissertation simply stops short of asking most

[107] The various literary categories (plot, character, setting, etc.) will certainly be highlighted when appropriate. This is merely to say that the present work will not be *structured* according to such categories.

[108] While it can be debated how appropriate it is to use the term "Old Testament" when dealing with a first century text, or also when working in the widely diverse realm of academics, this dissertation will attempt to consistently use the term "Old Testament" to refer to the Hebrew scriptures. This is because it is one of the most well-recognized and convenient labels for what is typically assumed to be the venerated literature of first-century

of them due to its rather limited narrative focus.[109] That being said, it will employ some historical support for its main argument from first century Jewish contextual studies.

However, it can be noted here that there are many different investigations that can be labelled "historical." In fact, one might even go so far as to say that a "literary" approach like this *is* historical. As a brief perusal of recent historically-oriented works will show, the influence of "literary criticism" is making itself known.[110] Although some scholars might deliver a slight jab at purely literary investigations,[111] their work often remains highly influenced by literary methods.[112] The basic reason for this lies in the fact that historical investigations typically begin in one place: *ancient texts*. Thus, the "art" of reading texts is an indispensable part of historical investigations. The results of literary investigations (like this dissertation) are not, therefore, irrelevant to and completely disconnected from historical inquiries; rather, the results of literary investigations are the cornerstone upon which historical investigations are built. For those historically-minded folks who might too easily dismiss works that are strictly literary in focus,

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Judaism and Christianity.

[109] "Despite the potential importance of background information, narrative criticism is not concerned with validating the historicity of the Gospels or the authenticity of individual sayings and deeds. . . . While these are important issues which have significance for people of faith, they are not the questions posed by narrative critics." Hatina, *In Search of a Context: The Function of Scripture in Mark's Narrative* (London: Sheffield Academic, 2002), 70–71.

[110] I use "literary criticism" here in a slightly broader sense than I would use the label "narrative criticism." This is justifiable here because I am contrasting methods which focus on the text itself (literary) with methods that attempt to get behind the text (historical) in order to identify some historical event/person/community that gave rise to the text. It's true that what I presently group as "historical" was at one time labelled "literary" (e.g., form criticism), and what I presently group as "literary" was at one time labelled "new literary" (amongst other labels). However, most scholars seem to have moved away from referring to techniques like form criticism as "literary" and are comfortable understanding "literary" in a broader sense to encapsulate a wide range of more recent methodologies. Cf. Stephen D. Moore, *Literary Criticism and the Gospels: The Theoretical Challenge* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1989).

[111] Perhaps I am too sensitive, but I see a "jab" in Wright's comments: ". . . if we keep to the high road of historical enquiry and refuse to be sidetracked into the superficially more attractive country lanes of much modern gospel study . . ." Wright, *Victory*, xiv.

[112] Cf. Wright's understanding of the gospels as "stories" in *Victory*, 15, and his actantial model used throughout chapter 7. See also, Esler's attempt at arguing (unconvincingly, cited above in n. 21) for a better narrative fit in his article, Esler, "Withered Fig Tree," 49.

one might aptly say, "the stone which the builders rejected has become the cornerstone."[113]

Nevertheless, concerning "actual historicity,"[114] this dissertation will assume that a potentially-anonymous document, which appears to have come into existence at some time in the first century, which has subsequently been venerated in some manner or another for the past two-thousand years or so, appears to have been composed in a unified and coherent manner. These items might be debatable, but they will not be debated here. For the sake of brevity and focus this dissertation will simply refer to said document and its author as "Mark."

One area that this dissertation will decidedly bring in broader historical questions is to answer some contextual questions.[115] Is there any evidence that one might have read "Mark" in the manner I am prescribing here *in the first century*? Is there any evidence that the connections which are suggested in this dissertation might have been considered by those in the first century?[116] Though this might seem like a rather small step to the side from a "text" focused examination, anyone who has ventured to make this foray into the vast forest of first century literature can attest to the fact that it is often found to be a dense wood, and the paths one might take are not clearly marked.[117] Should one follow the classical trails trod by those immersed in the Hellenistic world, or attempt to catch up with those who have been cutting a new path

[113] "Anyone interested in the history behind the text needs to first study carefully the story in the text: in a few words, textual analysis has operational priority over historical reconstruction." Jesper Svartvik, "The Markan Interpretation of the Pentateuchal Food Laws," in *Biblical Interpretation in Early Christian Gospels: Volume 1: The Gospel of Mark*, ed. Thomas R. Hatina, LNTS 304 (New York: T&T Clark, 2006), 170.

[114] Whatever that claim may be understood to *mean* is outside the scope of this work. It is to be understood here in a rather broad sense.

[115] Cf. "Historical enquiry is thus limited to a role which illuminates and clarifies our understanding of the narrative." Hatina, *In Search of a Context*, 69.

[116] "An interpreter must at least attempt to demonstrate, by appeal to the conceptual background of the New Testament, that a particular idea or the development of a particular tradition would have been conceivable." Juel, *Messiah and Temple*, 39. Note the guarded phrasing of Juel's quote. It is important to recognize that the present work will only do a minimum concerning first century contextual questions, only in order to support that the reading proposed in this dissertation would be conceivable for the first century. It will not offer a thorough examination of first century composition and/or hermeneutics.

[117] This is known also to those who, being cognizant of the complexities involved, have intentionally decided

through the thickets of the ancient Jewish world? Surely these paths overlap from time-to-time.

As a result of the complexities involved, this dissertation will attempt to make rather basic suggestions from the diverse field of first century contextual studies. The suggestions made will remain focused on supporting the main argument of how Mark should appropriately be understood. Since a major part of this dissertation will highlight the use and influence of the Old Testament in the Gospel of Mark, it will be more concerned with the ancient Jewish context that venerated the Old Testament than the broader Hellenistic world.[118] When possible it will rely on the work of other scholars who have spent significant energy in that field of research, rather than attempting to cut a new path for itself.

However, it should be noted up front that support for this argument will be suggested from the rather non-traditional (and partially controversial) realm of ancient Jewish lectionaries. While some more recent work on early lectionaries and their potential influence on the NT has received a less than warm reception,[119] the research done for this dissertation pulls mainly from work done on early Jewish festival lectionaries, which seem to have received some form of general acceptance in recent scholarly work.[120] The main use of this material will be to support the claim that 1 Kgs 8 would likely have been a well-known text at the time of Mark's composition.

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not to make this step.

[118] For an interesting perspective on how a focus on the NT's use of the OT can involve an examination of the greater Hellenistic context see Dennis L. Stamps, "The Use of the Old Testament in the New Testament as a Rhetorical Device: A Methodological Proposal." in *Hearing the Old Testament in the New Testament*, ed. Stanley E. Porter (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2006), 9–37. "In the study of the NT use of the OT, the Jewish background and context have been the dominant place where scholars have looked for understanding a NT writer's perspective and practice. This is understandable, and there is more work to be done to understand the important role of the Jewish context for informing this issue. However, the exploration of the Hellenistic context for considering the NT use of the OT has not been as fully explored." Ibid., 24.

[119] For a more thorough exploration of various "lectionary theories" and how they relate to the study of the Gospels, see Mark S. Goodacre, *Goulder and the Gospels: An Examination of a New Paradigm*, JSNTSup 133 (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 1996), 294–369. For a brief history of their reception in scholarship see especially 304–18.

[120] "It is more reasonable to speak of some kind of festal lectionary cycle as early as the first century." Goodacre, *Goulder and the Gospels*, 339.

Thus, although the results of this dissertation may be important to how one might understand the historical events behind Mark, most historical issues will remain outside the scope of this dissertation. The historical inquiries that will be valuable here are those that support the main argument. This will mainly consist of contextual studies that show how terms, themes, and ideas could be understood in first-century Jewish culture, and an examination of Jewish lectionaries that establishes the familiarity of that culture with specific Old Testament texts.

Narrative Method

The thrust of this dissertation's argumentation will come from narrative-based observations. This subsection will begin by describing the major streams of influences that have led up to its understanding of a narrative methodology. In doing so it will distinguish between which aspects of narrative criticism will not be prominent (typical story categories will not get a full treatment) and which aspects of narrative criticism will be prominent, most significantly reading the text as a unified and thoughtful whole.[121] This dissertation's conception of the Marcan whole will revolve around its understanding of Mark as a complicated network of themes that play off each other, and develop throughout the narrative. After establishing these points, this subsection will lay out the structure of the argument to be employed in the examination of Mark 11:20–25 in its narrative context. It will conclude by highlighting the importance of giving the Marcan narrative itself operational priority[122] over both historical reconstructions as well as studies that focus on Mark's use of the Old Testament. This will serve to transition into the next subsection which deals with how this dissertation will use observations on Mark's use of the Old Testament in its argumentation.

[121] "Narrative criticism, like many other approaches, is a multi-faceted method. Not all the questions which are relevant to the method are always posed." Hatina, *In Search of a Context*, 51.

[122] I borrow the term "operational priority" from Svartvik, "The Pentateuchal Food Laws," 170.

Narrative-based methods have become somewhat common in New Testament studies over the last thirty years. While there is a wide range of influences that led to the present state-of-affairs, Hans Frei's 1974 work, *The Eclipse of the Biblical Narrative*, is often cited as one of the most influential works in this field.[123] In Frei's seminal work, he argues that the hermeneutic investigations of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries tended to err in one of two ways: (1) they either occupied themselves with what may be construed to be the actual history (ostensive referent) behind the biblical narratives, or (2) they focused on some timeless ideological truths that the biblical narratives are said to convey. In Frei's discussion, both options failed to take the biblical narratives seriously as *narratives*. While Frei argues that those who erred in either direction acknowledged the "realistic or history-like" element in the biblical narratives, it "finally came to be ignored, or—even more fascinating—its presence or distinctiveness came to be denied for lack of a 'method' to isolate it."[124] This dissertation will follow in the stream of those who, after Frei, have been attempting to pay attention to and analyze this realistic history-like element of biblical narratives, "even if it may be difficult to describe the procedure."[125]

Narrative approaches have been applied specifically to Marcan studies most notably since the first publication of *Mark as Story* in 1982.[126] *Mark as Story* followed Frei's standard by attempting to analyze Mark's narrative according to "what we have rather than what we do not

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[123] Hans Frei, *The Eclipse of the Biblical Narrative: A Study in Eighteenth and Nineteenth Century Hermeneutics* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1974).

[124] Frei, *The Eclipse*, 10.

[125] Ibid.

[126] "*Mark as Story* formally introduced narrative criticism to a world of New Testament scholarship that was dominated by the monolithic historical-critical method." Christopher W Skinner, "Telling the Story: The Appearance and Impact of *Mark as Story*," in *Mark as Story: Retrospect and Prospect*, ed. Kelly Iverson and Christopher Skinner, SBLRBS 65 (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2011), 1. Certainly there were predecessors to *Mark as Story* in Old Testament, New Testament, and even specifically Marcan studies (e.g., Werner Kelber, *Mark's Story of Jesus* [Philadelphia: Fortress, 1979]). However, if reprints can in some way help measure the impact of a book, *Mark as Story*, now in its 3rd edition, seems to have had more of an impact than many of its predecessors. Rhoads, David, et al., *Mark as Story: An Introduction to the Narrative of a Gospel*, 3rd ed. (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2012).

have."[127] In this case, it meant bracketing-out historical reconstructions about such things as "Who wrote Mark? Where was Mark written? What were Mark's sources? How reliable is Mark?", and focusing on how the text of Mark works as a story. In the most recent edition of *Mark as Story* this involves less than a page devoted to "The Historical Context of the Gospel of Mark," but whole chapters on "The Narrator," "The Settings," "The Plot," and two chapters on "The Characters" (one devoted to Jesus, the other to "The Authorities, the Disciples and the Minor Characters").[128]

The present work will not follow *Mark as Story*'s methodology by structuring itself according to the literary categories used in analyzing stories (e.g., plot, settings, characters, etc.).[129] Although an explanation of how a critic understands these categories in Mark makes clear many of one's assumptions, and is therefore beneficial to understand an author's critical engagement, a full treatment of these categories will not be found here. When helpful to the argument these categories will be highlighted,[130] but for the most part the present work will rely on others' observations for a more developed treatment of all these categories instead of offering up its own full presentation according to these specific categories.[131]

A further criticism can be offered against approaches that are too heavily focused on these categories. These may not be the most appropriate categories with which to examine an ancient work. These terms and categories are drawn more from recent literary investigations rather than

[127] Skinner, "Telling the Story," 3.

[128] There is also a further chapter on "The Audience." It can be noted here that there are many helpful items discussed in receptor-oriented studies, but this dissertation will typically "bracket-out" such discussions.

[129] See also Jack Dean Kingsbury, *Conflict in Mark: Jesus, Authorities, Disciples* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1989), as well as many other studies that focus on one of these categories specifically.

[130] Such as how the consistent *setting* of scenes in and around the temple in Mark 11–13 further strengthens his development of a temple theme in this section, how Jesus's action at the fig tree and at the temple "fit" and further the *plot* of Mark, and how Jesus's words in this section need to be understood within the fuller development of his *character* in Mark.

[131] For a helpful summary view of these relevant categories, see James W. Voelz, *Mark 1:1–8:26* (St. Louis:

ancient investigations. It might be too cavalier to assume that Mark's understanding of "plot" fits very cleanly into a modern literary understanding of "plot." While there surely is something universal to these categories, it might be too bold to arrange our analyses of ancient works according to them as *Mark as Story* has. While the present work will certainly interact with these categories, it will generally not do so by abstracting them from Mark's story. Instead, it will attempt to deal with them as they occur in their specific narrative contexts, and as they are relevant to the present discussion.

The most important feature of narrative criticism that will be employed here will be the assumption that the narrative pieces all fit together as a whole.[132] Consequently it will be assumed that there is a certain, discernable logic to their arrangement. This assumption was certainly not the prevailing perspective leading up to the last thirty–forty years. In Kelber's 1979 work, *Mark's Story of Jesus*, he levied the critique "Both in study and in worship the Gospel of Mark has generally been treated as a collection of short stories."[133] In other places this "classical" approach to Mark described the author (Mark) as one who simply put pearls (the stories) on a string (the narrative as a whole).[134] This picture is supposed to imply that the author of Mark was rather artless, and the connection from one "pearl" to another was rather arbitrary. This analogy has perhaps been salvaged by Morna Hooker's refreshing response:

> It will not, I hope, be regarded as a sexist remark if I suggest that only a man could have used the phrase 'like pearls on a string' to suggest a haphazard arrangement of material. Any woman would have spotted at once the flaw in the analogy: pearls need to be carefully selected and graded. And gradually it has dawned on New Testament

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Concordia, 2013), 40–61.

[132] "The first premise is that Mark is a unified literary work. . . .narrative critics begin with the view that the narrative is a literary whole." Hatina, *In Search of a Context*, 51. Perhaps the most important recent commentary that stresses Mark's skillful literary capabilities is that of James Voelz. See especially Voelz, *Mark*, 62–67.

[133] Kelber, *Mark's Story of Jesus*, 11.

[134] Telford credits K.L. Schmidt with this idea. Telford, "The Interpretation of Mark," 5.

> scholars that this is precisely what the evangelists have done with their material. Their arrangements are anything but haphazard.[135]

This is not to say that every word, thought, or pericope must be understood as directly flowing out of what preceded it and into what follows. There are some apparent logical breaks in Mark.[136] However, this dissertation will assume that the more "connected" any passage (11:22–25) seems to be to its surrounding narrative section (11:12–21), the more likely that the logic should flow from that surrounding narrative section into and through that passage. This is important because interpretations such as Dowd's recognize the fig tree connection through 11:12–21, but suggest that the logic completely changes course in 22–25. Furthermore, the understanding of that narrative section should "fit" within the logic of the entire book of Mark as a whole as well. As could be inferred from this, structural observations will therefore be part of the narrative-based method employed in this argument. The basic assumption behind this is that Mark was a skilled author who intentionally structured his work in a way that should influence its interpretation.[137]

One of the most important structural aspects of Mark's gospel that will be discussed in the present work is often referred to as "intercalation." An intercalation is a place where a story is interrupted by another story, and then resumed again. It has been likened to a sandwich, where the two outer halves are the same story, and a different "inner story" is inserted in the middle. Though it has been recognized as a feature of Mark's gospel for some time, and been labeled in many different ways, Tom Shepherd recognized a rather large amount of uncertainty in understanding this phenomenon which led to the 1993 publication of his *Markan Sandwich*

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[135] Morna Hooker, *The Message of Mark* (London: Epworth, 1983).

[136] Cf. for example the "break" between 3:6 and 3:7.

[137] Cf. Voelz, *Mark*, 62.

Stories.[138] While some have minimized the importance of "intercalation" as an interpretive device, Shepherd concludes, "[i]ntercalation is a reader-elevating storytelling method. It places the reader with the narrator above the ironic situations of the story characters."[139] As he explains what this means, Shepherd often describes the mutual interplay that exists between the two stories of an intercalation.[140] This mutual interplay will be important as the present work will examine the entire sandwich of the fig tree and cleansing episodes in order to best understand the narrative context of Mark 11:20–25.

Despite these structural observations, this is not to say that Mark's gospel is composed in as linear of a fashion as this dissertation will be. Works such as Joanna Dewey's article, "Mark as Interwoven Tapestry," have been influential for how the present author views Mark's structural arrangement.[141] As Dewey says, "Mark does not have a single structure made up of discrete sequential units but rather is an interwoven tapestry or fugue made up of multiple overlapping structures and sequences, forecasts of what is to come and echoes of what has already been said."[142] The impact that such an approach to Mark makes on one's methodology is further summed up by Dewey, "we may gain a better understanding of the Gospel and its individual pericopes by focusing on the interconnections, on the repetitions, and the variations in

[138] For a list of major works that have dealt with this issue see Tom Shepherd, *Markan Sandwich Stories* (Berrien Springs, MI: Andrews University Press, 1993), 1–2, especially n. 2.

[139] Ibid., 386.

[140] For his discussion on the fig tree episode and the temple cleansing scene, see Ibid., 209–41. It can be noted here that Shepherd's work is fully structured by modern "story" categories. While some of his analysis does relate to the present work, the methods will not appear very similar.

[141] Joanna Dewey, "Mark as Interwoven Tapestry: Forecasts and Echoes for a Listening Audience," *CBQ* 53 (1991): 221–36. See also Kee's discussion in Howard Clark Kee, *Community of the New Age: Studies in Mark's Gospel* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1977), 62–76.

[142] Dewey, "Interwoven Tapestry," 224. Dewey takes the fugue metaphor from Kee. She cites: Kee, *Community of the New Age*, 64, 75. I am particularly drawn to Kee's fugue metaphor as a helpful way to understand the interplay of various recurrent themes throughout Mark.

the repetition, than by analyzing divisions."[143] Thus, in order to do justice to how any given passage should be understood in Mark it must be examined according to both its place in the logical train of thought of its near narrative context, but it also must be examined according to the various overlapping themes that converge and interact with the passage at hand.

In order to accomplish this task, the present examination of Mark 11:20–25 will be structured like a funnel. After an initial description of the difficulties and ambiguities in understanding the Greek text of our passage, it will begin rather wide in focus, attempting to describe Mark as a whole, most notably focusing on the major themes that Mark interweaves and develops throughout his narrative. It will then proceed to examine more closely the near narrative context around 11:20–25, again highlighting specific themes that are sounded in this section. After moving through these narrative themes, this dissertation will examine more specifically how Mark uses Old Testament texts within this narrative, focusing most specifically on the themes of various Old Testament texts that are in-play at 11:20–25. At this point the "funnel" will be quite narrow so that a reexamination and resolution of the difficulties and ambiguities of our passage can be more effectively accomplished in the light of the previous examination. At the conclusion of the work the funnel will open up again, much like an hourglass, in order to read-back the developments of 11:20–25 into the various themes that it interacts with.

Therefore, the present work will proceed under the assumption that any satisfying reading of an individual pericope must first arise out of the narrative itself. While this statement might seem rather obvious, it is important to note that it is not altogether uncommon to see this basic principle violated in scholarly works. Two different areas of research are often the culprits which displace the operational priority of a narrative-based textual analysis: (1) historical

[143] Dewey, "Interwoven Tapestry," 235.

reconstructions, and (2) observations on Mark's use of the Old Testament. No further description needs to be given here about historical reconstructions as that has been dealt with adequately above. Much needs to be said, however, about Mark's use of the Old Testament. While a major part of the argument of this dissertation will build upon how Mark used the Old Testament in his narrative, such observations need to be built upon the more solid foundation of a close narrative reading.

Perhaps no scholar has issued a more comprehensive assessment of how observations of Old Testament allusions[144] have too often taken operational priority over narrative observations than Thomas Hatina.[145] Hatina criticizes works that begin with an Old Testament event, theme, or passage and read Mark in the light of that Old Testament idea.[146] However, Hatina is not all-together opposed to observations of how Mark uses the Old Testament within his narrative. For Hatina, the problem arises when the Old Testament event, theme, or passage dictates the reading of Mark's gospel. Instead, ". . . Mark's story—must be appreciated in its own right. It is here where we find a coherent function of the quotations and allusions, for they are read primarily as texts that participate in and contribute to the narrative and not the reverse. In other words, the interpretive paradigm within which they are read is the context of the story itself."[147] It is in respect to the concern raised by Hatina that this dissertation will first establish its reading through the narrative context alone, before proceeding to supplement that reading with any

[144] Many would use the term "intertextual" where I have used "Old Testament allusions" and the more cumbersome "Mark's use of the Old Testament." A discussion on such terms will follow in the next subsection below.

[145] Hatina, *In Search of a Context*.

[146] Such as Watts's Isianic New Exodus theme. ". . . Watts has not given enough space for Mark's story world or to the function of other quotations in that story world." Hatina, *In Search of a Context*, 23.

[147] Hatina, *In Search of a Context*, 375. Cf. "Before every intertextual or extratextual question, the text should be perceived as an individual text so that results or presuppositions from other lines of questioning should not be transported into the text-immanent interpretation." Stefan Alkier, "New Testament Studies on the Basis of Categorical Semiotics," in *Reading the Bible Intertextually*, ed. Richard Hays, et al. (Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, 2009), 240.

observations from Mark's use of the Old Testament.

Mark's Use of the Old Testament

It is important to turn here and describe in a more focused manner how this dissertation will understand Mark's use of the Old Testament in the following argumentation. The following section will begin by dealing with the inconsistent terminology found in New Testament studies to describe the New Testament's use of the Old Testament.[148] Most notably this section will explain how it will understand the terms "intertextuality" and "allusion." As will be shown below, the generally preferred stance in this dissertation is to use terms in a wide sense, and allow more specific nuances of that wide sense to be further limited by any given specific contextualized usage. A similar position will be taken below as the discussion turns towards methodologies for identifying allusions. While it might be desirable to have a clearly defined and limited methodology, any specific allusion needs to ultimately be judged on its own terms. This is justifiable as it needs to be recognized that the New Testament authors may not have held to the same consistent methodology we might try to impose on their texts. This subsection will then proceed to put forth its understanding of how any given quote or allusion should be considered in light of its own original wider context (though not necessarily every allusion does this). Finally, it will briefly highlight various ways New Testament authors might potentially use an Old Testament allusion in their work, noting that any suggested "use" needs to be rooted in the surrounding narrative.

[148] "Without attempting to be comprehensive, at least the following terms have been used with some regularity or in important works on the topic: citation, direct quotation, formal quotation, indirect quotation, allusive quotation, allusion (whether conscious or unconscious), paraphrase, exegesis (such as inner-biblical exegesis), midrash, typology, reminiscence, echo (whether conscious or unconscious), intertextuality, influence (either direct or indirect), and even tradition, among other terms." Stanley E. Porter, "The Use of the Old Testament in the New Testament: A Brief Comment on Method and Terminology," in *Earlv Christian Interpretation of the Scriptures of Israel: Investigations and Proposals*, ed. Craig A. Evans and James A. Sanders, JSNTSup 148 (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 1997), 80.

To begin, it is important to give some attention to the definition and use of terms. Up to this point the present work has employed "Old Testament allusions" and the more cumbersome "Mark's use of the Old Testament," where many others would use the more succinct term "intertextuality." The problem that lies behind many appropriations of the term "intertextuality" in New Testament studies is that its present appropriations are often quite in contrast with its origins. It was originally coined in a post-structuralist context by Julia Kristeva.[149] In Kristeva's theory the concept of "intertextuality" was used to describe how any given text is not a stable object of meaning, but opens up into a network of relations with other texts.[150] It is important to note that a "text" in Kristeva's usage was not limited to a written document, but included any sort of a sign system, even "culture" itself.[151] This contrasts greatly with the common appropriation in New Testament studies, in which "intertextuality" typically refers to the way an author (e.g., Mark) used Old Testament sources to give his written "text" a stable meaning. Interestingly Kristeva saw this same misappropriation of the term from the other side and renamed her use of intertextuality "transposition."[152]

Should the term "intertextuality" be used in New Testament studies to refer to the way an author (e.g., Mark) appropriated the Old Testament in his work? It seems as though New Testament scholars are divided on the issue. Out of those who use it, some do so without much explicit consideration[153] while others try to define it more precisely.[154] Of those who avoid it,

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[149] For a helpful overview of the origins and appropriations of this term see Stefan Alkier, "Intertexuality and the Semiotics of Biblical Texts," in *Reading the Bible Intertextually*, ed. Richard Hays, et al. (Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, 2009), 4–7.

[150] Ibid., 4.

[151] Ibid.

[152] Ibid., 7.

[153] E.g., Gray, *The Temple in Mark*, 4.

[154] Cf. Alkier's concepts of "limited intertextuality" and "unlimited intertextuality" from page 242 of his article "Categorical Semiotics." The approach of this dissertation would fall in his "limited" range of intertextuality.

some see it as unnecessary,[155] while others reject it because of its origins.[156] Up to this point the present author has avoided using it in this work. However, due to the cumbersome nature of the phrase "Mark's use of the Old Testament," the terms "intertextual" and "intertextuality" will be used out of convenience throughout the rest of the work. These terms will not be understood according to their post-structuralist origins, but according to the more general way one text might refer to another text to "fill out" its meaning. In the present work, this will refer to the way Mark might be using references to the Old Testament to supplement, or "fill out" his text. Thus, an Old Testament reference in Mark may be referred to as an intertextual reference, while the greater patterns in which he may (or may not) be using the Old Testament in his work may be referred to as Mark's intertextuality.[157]

Similar to this inconsistency in New Testament scholarship over the term "intertextuality" there is no unified understanding of what is meant by the use of the term "allusion." This word (and many others) is commonly found in New Testament works that deal with intertextuality, but no consistent meaning is commonly found alongside its ubiquitous usage.[158] The present work

[155] "In other words, intertextuality appears to be the same as echo, which closely resembles allusion." Porter, "The Use of the Old Testament in the New Testament," 85.

[156] "Since 'intertextuality,' as it is commonly understood in the post-structuralist context, is inimical to current historical-critical and even narrative-critical enquiry, I refrain from its use. Elsewhere I have recently presented three major characteristics of ''intertextuality' which many biblical scholars have often failed to consider when they appropriate the term: (1) the ideological context wherein the term was coined, (2) the inherently related concept of text, and (3) the distinction between influence and intertextuality." Hatina, *In Search of a Context*, 5. Cf. Thomas Hatina, "Intertextuality and Historical Criticism in New Testament Studies: Is There a Relationship?" *BibInt* 7 (1999): 29.

[157] E.g., Gray, *The Temple in Mark*, 4.

[158] Porter, "The Use of the Old Testament in the New Testament," 80. Another oft-used term, "typology," will not be employed in this work. The reason for avoiding it is twofold: (1) because of the different levels of assumptions behind many scholars' understanding of "typology" and (2) because it is unnecessary for this investigation. For many who use the term "typology" it seems to have an intimate connection with actual historical occurrences, often assuming some form of providential design within those occurrences. Seeing as this dissertation will limit itself to a literary investigation it is not necessarily appropriate to use a term so heavily freighted with "historical" assumptions. A criticism could here by offered of inconsistency in rejecting "typology" while accepting the equally freighted term "intertextuality." The further reason for avoiding the term "typology" in this study is that it is largely unnecessary. While "intertextuality" serves the purpose of a shorthand way of referring to the more clumsy "Mark's use of the Old Testament," there is no real need to employ the word "typology" in the present work.

will not set itself out to resolve this issue, so at best it will simply describe how it will use (or not use) this term. The term "allusion" will be used to refer to intertextual references found in Mark's gospel.[159] These intertextual references may be as explicit as a direct quote, or as subtle as a thematic parallel. Where an intertextual reference seems to be clearly intended as a direct quote of a certain Old Testament passage, it will typically be referred to as a quote rather than an allusion. Nevertheless, this dissertation will reserve the right to refer to a supposed quote as an allusion, understanding that the term "allusion" is being used here one step up the taxonomic scale from the term "quote." Based on this understanding a quote is one kind of an allusion, but not all allusions are quotes.

While it might appear desirable to more clearly delineate different levels of intertextuality, starting from explicit quotes with an introductory formula, and ending with the subtlest of thematic references, it should be recognized that modern rubrics are often more consistent than the New Testament authors themselves.[160] However desirable such classifications might appear to be, it is highly unlikely that every Old Testament reference in the New Testament will cleanly fit into one category as opposed to another. In this case hyperactive obsession over categories could do as much to obfuscate what one is hoping to make clear. The approach here will be to do the least amount of categorizations as possible in order to let each individual instance define itself.

Now that some matters of definition have been dealt with, it will be useful to deal with

[159] O'Brien further distinguishes between "reference" and "allusion." "Allusion, however, must have interpretive value, that is, affect the meaning of the referring text. Thus, allusion is a sub-category of reference." Kelli S. O'Brien, *The Use of Scripture in the Markan Passion Narrative*, LNTS 384 (New York: T&T Clark, 2010), 22. While this dissertation will generally use the terms in congruence with her distinction, it will not attempt to be so exhaustively precise.

[160] "New Testament authors do not play by historical-critical rules. What is perhaps more disturbing, is that they often seem to play by no rules at all." O'Brien, *The Use of Scripture*, 50. Cf. "In seeking to reconstruct that history of exegesis, we must recognize that the rules of the game were different in the first century." Juel, *Messianic Exegesis*, 13.

some of the problems inherent in identifying places where a New Testament author is alluding to an Old Testament text.

Different attempts have been put forward to lay out a methodology to identify whether or not an allusion actually exists or not. Most commonly scholars return to and build off of Hays's categories from *Echoes of Scripture in the Letters of Paul*.[161] While his seven "tests" have come under criticism,[162] they are at least descriptive of what a modern scholar might look for and consider when attempting to identify a potential allusion. Caution must be taken though, for however clear our "rules for the game" might be, there is no guarantee that Mark actually played by them.[163] Any attempt to lay out rules must recognize that it is entering into a circular argument. The rules are only valid insofar as they are sourced in what the New Testament authors actually *did*. They need to be descriptive of the already existing source; they cannot be prescriptive for material that has already been composed. However, if one is not able to identify what the New Testament authors actually *did* without criteria to evaluate *whether or not they actually did it*, one cannot begin to derive "rules" from what they actually *did*. How is one to know whether they are actually *doing* it or not?

While some have seized onto Hays's "tests" and tried to make them into hard and fast criteria that can be approved of or rejected, Hays himself seems to have a more cautious understanding of his enterprise.

> Although the foregoing tests are serviceable rules of thumb to guide our interpretive work, we must acknowledge that there will be exceptional occasions when the tests fail to account for the spontaneous power of particular intertextual conjunctions. Despite all the careful hedges that we plant around texts, meaning has a way of

[161] His categories are availability, volume, recurrence, thematic coherence, historical plausibility, history of interpretation, and satisfaction. Richard B. Hays, *Echoes of Scripture in the Letters of Paul* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1989), 29–32. Cf. G. K. Beale, *Handbook on the New Testament Use of the Old Testament: Exegesis and Interpretation* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2012), 33; O'Brien, *The Use of Scripture*, 29.

[162] For a brief excursus and assessment of Porter's criticism of Hays, see Beale, *Handbook*, 34–35.

[163] See n. 160.

> leaping over, like sparks. Texts are not inert; they burn and throw fragments of flame on their rising heat. Often we succeed in containing the energy, but sometimes the sparks escape and kindle new blazes, reprises of the original fire.[164]

The present work will generally follow Hays's guidance on this matter. As he further relates, "[t]o run explicitly through this series of criteria for each of the texts that I treat would be wearisome. I trust the reader's competence to employ these criteria and to apply appropriate discounts to the interpretive proposals that I offer throughout."[165]

Specific to this dissertation, an allusion to Solomon's dedicatory prayer in 1 Kgs 8 will be considered as lying behind Mark 11:22–25. The main "tests" that will be examined in the argumentation below will be *availability* (Jewish festival lectionaries will be appealed to), *volume* (various words appear in both contexts), and *thematic coherence* (the supposed allusion potentially strengthens the narrative reading). This is not to say that the other tests are all inapplicable. Rather, these three tests contribute the most to the persuasiveness of the argument of this dissertation. Ultimately the validity of this argument will boil down to Hays's seventh category, "satisfaction." While Hays recognizes that it is easy to reject this criteria as falling into the "affective fallacy," in actual practice the recognition of this category is perhaps one of the most significant contributions Hays makes.[166] Therefore, as would be the case with or without the employment of specific criteria, the ultimate criteria for judging a suggested allusion will rely on how persuaded the reader is by the argumentation that suggests the allusion.

Furthermore, there has been a long-standing discussion in New Testament studies concerning the scope of allusions. How much of the Old Testament context should one read into a New Testament allusion? This is a much discussed issue which usually ends up, in one way or

[164] Hays, *Echoes of Scripture*, 32–33.

[165] Ibid., 32.

[166] Ibid., 31–32.

another, pointing back to C.H. Dodd. In 1953 Dodd published his influential *According to the Scriptures*.[167] In this much cited and often misrepresented book, Dodd wrestled with Rendel Harris's hypothesis of a *testimonia* collection which the early church compiled consisting of messianic proof-texts which the evangelists used when they wrote their gospels.[168] What Dodd is really after in this work is to take a step towards understanding better how the early church understood "fulfillment" by examining how the New Testament authors used the Old Testament.[169] While this book is still a valuable contribution in many different ways, it is usually cited in order to make an argument that Dodd himself didn't make. According to many who cite Dodd, he argued in this book that the New Testament authors *always* had the wider context of an Old Testament passage in mind whenever they cited any part of an Old Testament passage.[170] However, Dodd himself does not push his own argument that far. While Dodd argues that this can be and often is the case he goes on to say, "[a]t the same time, detached sentences from other parts of the Old Testament could be adduced to illustrate or elucidate the meaning of the main section under consideration."[171] Regardless of whether Dodd has been understood properly, the

[167] C.H. Dodd, *According to the Scriptures: The Sub-Structure of New Testament Theology* (New York: Scribner's, 1953).

[168] Dodd, *According to the Scriptures*, 23–27.

[169] Ibid., 27.

[170] Most blatantly: "Some disagree with Dodd, and indeed many scholars in this field generally affirm that the NT writers often employ a noncontextual exegetical method. Nevertheless, others have confirmed *Dodd's thesis about the NT's unique and consistent respect for the OT context.*" Beale, *Handbook*, 5 (italics mine). Cf. also Marcus, *The Way of the Lord*, 21; Hatina, *In Search of a Context*, 157. For a more accurate description of Dodd's view on this matter, "Dodd does not claim that all references to Scripture take into account the larger context." O'Brien, *The Use of Scripture*, 54.

Perhaps a lot of this misunderstanding comes via an oft-unrecognized step. In excursus 7 of James Voelz's commentary, he notes that Dodd's student, C.F.D. Moule, contended "that all quotations or allusions provide entrées or "hooks," as it were, into a larger context, with the larger context providing critically important information relative to, if not commentary upon, the specific quotation or allusion given." Voelz, *Mark*, 141. In support of this, Voelz cites Moule's work in lecturing at the Divinity School of Cambridge University in the early 1970's. Perhaps certain strains of scholars have received Dodd's work through Moule's teaching (or even Moule's students' teaching), and passed on Moule's stronger procedure as Dodd's procedure. I'm not sure what form of criticism would examine this possibility, but it is certainly outside the scope of this dissertation.

[171] Dodd, *According to the Scriptures*, 126. Cf. "We must no doubt allow for the possibility that in some

important point for the argumentation of this dissertation is that it has been well recognized that a New Testament author at least *may* have had a larger context in mind than the specific Old Testament word, passage, or theme that is identified. This is more in harmony with Dodd's argument than the absolutizing claims of some. While this is not necessarily the case in every instance, one should at least explore the Old Testament context of any given allusion to see how well the greater context does, or does not "fit."[172] This dissertation will proceed accordingly.

A further word should be said about the specificity of an allusion. For the most part this dissertation will consider an allusion to be an intentional reference made by a New Testament author to a specific Old Testament passage, and potentially its greater context. However, it should be recognized that different categorizations of the influence of the Old Testament on the New have been offered which go beyond the simple matching of one New Testament passage to one Old Testament passage. It has been noted that allusions can happen within a work at a subconscious level.[173] Perhaps something that might appear to be an intentional allusion to a specific Old Testament text might simply be the subconscious result of Mark's ideological framework, which is deeply influenced by the Old Testament. The Old Testament might simply be informant of Mark's point-of-view, so that he might not necessarily have had in mind, or "intended," to refer to any specific text when it appears to be related to an Old Testament theme.

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places we have before us nothing more than the rhetorical device of literary allusion, still common enough, and even more common in the period when the New Testament was produced." Dodd, "The Old Testament in the New," in *The Right Doctrine from the Wrong Texts?: Essays on the Use of the Old Testament in the New*, ed. G.K. Beale; (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1994; Repr. from *The Old Testament in the New* [Philadelphia: Fortress, 1963]), 167.

[172] "It is regularly useful as one explores micro-level intertexts . . . to pay attention to the larger context of the specific intertext." Chance, "Cursing of the Temple," 274.

[173] "These traditions functioned at both conscious and subconscious levels to provide a pattern by which the early church grasped, interpreted, and presented the synoptic story of Jesus." Swartley, *Israel's Scripture Traditions*, 1; "Some words and phrases may not represent conscious references to scripture on the part of Mark or of the tradition on which he is drawing, but rather are commonplaces of the specific religious thought world in which he is operating." Kee, "The Function of Scriptural Quotations and Allusions in Mark 11–16," in *Jesus und Paulus: Festschrift für Werner Georg Kümmel zum 70. Geburtstag*, ed. E. Earle Ellis und Erich Gräßer (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1975), 166.

A close but slightly different category might be the conflation of multiple Old Testament ideas in one New Testament location. Instead of a New Testament passage referring to a specific Old Testament passage, the author might intentionally be drawing on multiple Old Testament ideas in order to have them converge in one place. There is certainly evidence for Mark doing this even from the beginning of his narrative, where he conflates three different Old Testament passages into one quote attributed to Isaiah![174] It is important, therefore, when considering a potential Old Testament allusion, to examine both the context around a specific text, but furthermore the particularity of the supposed Old Testament allusion. Is this the only place in the Old Testament where these words or themes occur? Is Mark conflating a suggested Old Testament reference with any other Old Testament references?

Intimately connected with these questions, is the discussion of how a New Testament author might use an Old Testament allusion in his narrative. Even if it can be shown that Mark is alluding to an Old Testament source, how does he use it? What does the allusion convey? O'Brien has come up with a helpful list of different "types of interplay" that can be recognized in allusions.[175] Her wide-ranging list includes: straight reading, extensions or transcendence, shift, analogy/typology, dissimile and reversal, irony, linking texts, and reading through tradition.[176] It

[174] Mark's superscription will be treated further below in chapter 5. For a further treatment of Mark's "synthesis" of Old Testament quotations see Kee, *Community of the New Age*, 46–47.

[175] O'Brien, *The Use of Scripture*, 52–55. It can be noted here that an oft-neglected, but often used "type of interplay" is a simple playful quote. I have done this above when I critiqued "historically-minded folks who might too easily dismiss works that are strictly literary in focus," and said "the stone which the builders rejected has become the cornerstone." While my choice of this quote has its Marcan occurrence in mind (which further depends on Psalm 118), I am not really trying to say that there's much correlation between Jesus and narrative criticism, or the Jerusalem leaders and historical approaches. In my appropriation I have stripped the quote of its specific Marcan use and treated it like a proverbial phrase, but done so in the context of a study on Mark where it might serve as a playful wink to those who recognize it as Marcan. This is often done in Marcan studies when an author adds the words "let the reader understand" somewhere in their work. I must admit that I typically appreciate the "wink" of such a quote, but am usually dumbfounded as to what purpose the author uses it for in their work. Its occurrence in Mark is not exactly well-understood, so its appearance as an allusion in a modern work gives me no great insight into what the author is attempting to say with it.

[176] While these categories focus more on *how* an allusion might interact with its new context, it is still another matter to discuss *why* an author decides to use an allusion in one of these ways. Some have suggested that New

should be kept in mind that her list "is not meant to be exhaustive or systematic but heuristic."[177] Therefore, similar to what has been said above, the approach of this dissertation will be to judge any given allusion's function according to its narrative context. Thus, an important aspect of the methodology employed in this work will be to examine the function of a suggested Old Testament allusion insofar as it can be determined by its narrative context.

Therefore, this dissertation will proceed to examine how Mark 11:20–25 fits in its narrative context. Following the assumption that Mark's work is a thoughtful, coherent, literary work, the present work will focus on understanding Mark's overall narrative, and the specific context around 20–25 in order to establish a foundation for conclusions on how this specific passage fits into the coherent thought-flow of Mark's narrative. These foundational insights will have to remain in place and guide the further examinations into intertextual allusions. Furthermore, the examination of allusions will proceed by examining the greater "original" context of potential allusions, and how that greater context might influence the interpretation of Mark. Ultimately, this work will also consider how these allusions might function in their new Marcan context.

The Argument

As described above in the section on how this dissertation fits in current scholarship, this dissertation will contribute to scholarship by offering a more detailed and clear understanding of how Mark 11:20–25 fits in its narrative context. These verses have been a challenge to

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Testament authors have used Old Testament texts for their polemical value against outsiders (specifically Jews). Another option is that the use of Old Testament texts was not directed as much at outsiders, but insiders, as a matter of self-definition. It should be noted that the closer one attempts to intuit the reasoning of an author, the more speculative one's suggestions become. Therefore, this dissertation will, for the most part, content itself with *how* an allusion appears to be used in the narrative, rather than proceeding to larger questions of *why*. Cf. Wardle, *Temple and Identity*, 205 where he identifies both uses, against outsiders and for insiders, in the early Christian use of the Ps 118 stone passage. Concerning a more theoretical understanding of the role of "the" foundational event of the Old Testament (the Exodus) and the importance of redefining it in the New Testament for the purpose of self-definition, see Watts, *Isaiah's New Exodus*, chapter 2.

[177] Ibid., 52.

understand for many interpreters in the past, and remain challenging for many in the present. This dissertation will show, in a way that has not been done previously, how fitting Jesus's words in 11:23–25 are in their narrative context, and how meaningful they remain for modern theological reflection. By means of his narrative development and an allusion to the founding moment of the first temple (Solomon's dedicatory prayer), Mark signals to the reader that Jesus is founding a new temple order. Despite the loss of God's "physical" temple, the benefits of his "located presence" are still to be sought and found in Jesus, and more specifically in his enduring and faithful words.

Chapter 2 will begin this investigation by unveiling various ambiguities in the Greek text of this section. Too often this text is studied without paying due attention to how many ambiguities and difficulties are actually in the Greek. Thus, chapter 2 will examine the most pointed textual, grammatical-syntactical, and "narrative logic" issues involved in the interpretation of this passage in order to place the major interpretive issues on the table for the subsequent discussion.

Chapter 3 will proceed to examine major themes of Mark's gospel. Beyond the fact that Mark's narrative focuses on Jesus and how his "new" teachings lead to conflict with the "old," one—and potentially *the*—major theme of Mark's gospel is the theme of seeing and believing. It is important to notice that in Mark's gospel, one will not necessarily get visual evidence as proof to believe, but simply is given Jesus's words, which are faithful and true.[178] Generally speaking, the idea that Mark is responding to the loss of the "visual" temple with Jesus's promise of founding a new temple "not made with his hands" fits this theme.[179] Here, Jesus delivers the promise that the functions of the temple (faith, prayer, forgiveness) will carry on in himself even

[178] Cf. Voelz, *Mark*, 55: "This, then, is what Mark's Gospel is about: the ambiguity of the evidence, the necessity of believing in the face of such evidence, and the reliability of Jesus' Word."

[179] Mark 14:58.

after the temple is condemned.[180] Although they may no longer "see" the temple, they are told to have faith in God, and to believe in Jesus's words.

Beyond this "fit" within Mark's overall theme, the idea that Jesus is re-founding the temple in himself fits with the narrative-flow of the text's near context. Thus, chapter 4 will turn more pointedly to examine the near narrative context of these verses. Throughout Jesus's time in Jerusalem, Mark repeatedly brings up the temple, to the extent that it appears to be a major theme of this section.[181] Coupled with this greater temple theme are also the dual themes of condemnation of the old temple order, and promise of a new temple order.[182] As will be argued here, the fig tree episode is best understood as pointing out the condemnation of the old temple order. According to this near narrative context, verses 11:22–25 respond to the previous condemnation of the temple, enacted by the cursing of the fig tree and cleansing episodes in an appropriate manner.

The appropriateness of this response is best seen when read along with Mark's use of the Old Testament. Therefore, chapter 5 will be devoted to unpacking Mark's intertextuality. After examining some significant Old Testament allusions in Mark, the discussion will turn towards 1 Kgs 8. As this dissertation will show, the major themes of 11:23–25 are all present in Solomon's dedicatory prayer at the founding of the first temple in 1 Kgs 8. Note Solomon's stress of the faithfulness of God's words (8:15, 20, 24–26 [cf. Mark 11:23]);[183] the stress on God hearing prayer in the temple (8:28–30, 34–36, 38–39, 44–45, 47–49, 52 [cf. Mark 11:17; 23, 24]); the remarks concerning sins against neighbors (8:31–32 [cf. Mark 11:25]); the focus on forgiveness

[180] See pages 23–28 above for an introduction to the discussion of Jesus or the community as the replacement of the temple.

[181] Cf. 11:11, 15, 17, 27; 12:10, 35, 41; 13:1ff; 14:49, 58; 15:38, et al.

[182] Cf. Mark 11:12–25, 12:1–10, 13:1–3ff, 14:58.

[183] Note the similarity of the relative clause in the LXX text of 1 Kgs 8:20 (ὃ ἐλάλησεν) and Mark 11:23 (ὃ λαλεῖ γίνεται).

(8:34, 36, 39, 50 [cf. Mark 11:25]); the concern for the foreigner's ability to petition God (8:41–43 [cf. Mark 11:17]); as well as the mention that God dwells in heaven (8:43, 49 [cf. Mark 11:25]).[184] Beyond the stress on these various themes, one must also remember that the greater theme of the establishment (or re-establishment) of the temple is the major theme governing all of these other themes. If Mark intends to signal that Jesus is founding a new temple, the themes spoken of in this section are entirely appropriate and not as disjointed as often suggested. While some scholars have noted a loose connection to 1 Kgs 8, nobody has yet suggested a strong allusion that fits the idea that Jesus is speaking of founding a new temple in himself.[185]

Finally, chapter 6 will proceed to revisit the ambiguities of the Greek text in order to bring the light of the preceding discussion to bear on these issues. It will also summarize the results of the present work and highlight significant implications of the present study for the interpretation of this passage of Mark. It will also carry these implications back into the discussion of major themes from Mark in order to better understand how this narrative "fits" in the Marcan whole. In closing it will offer some further ruminations on the "fit" of this Marcan theme within the greater context of New testament theology, highlighting that this section of Mark ultimately serves to drive Jesus's followers to seek the former benefits of the temple in Jesus and his abiding words.

[184] This is the only place Mark refers to God as "your Father in heaven."

[185] Cf. Betz, "A Comparative Religion Approach," 467; Dowd, *Prayer, Power and the Problem of Suffering*, 45–47. Note that Dowd does not develop any straight connection between Mark's text and 1 Kgs 8. She simply uses 1 Kgs 8 as an example of the general connection between prayer and temple's in the biblical tradition.

CHAPTER TWO

PRELIMINARY EXEGESIS

This opening chapter will lay down the ground work for a proper examination of Mark 11:20–25. The goal of this chapter is not to present full arguments and conclusions about the interpretation of this passage, but to lay bare the ambiguities and issues from the Greek text that bear on the interpretation of this passage, in order to set the stage for later discussion. A number of the issues to be examined below often appear settled in the minds of many scholars; others remain consistently contested; yet still other issues to be raised here rarely receive comment at all. While some of these interpretive difficulties can be resolved here without sustained arguments, many others will best be resolved after further observations and discussions from the greater narrative context outside of 20–25. Thus, although the present discussion will keep the conclusions of this dissertation in view, this chapter will not attempt to explain fully its conclusions on all these ambiguities, rather, it will only pursue a smaller goal: to attempt to place the major interpretive issues on the table, raising questions more than giving answers.

The present chapter will examine the most pointed textual, grammatical-syntactical, and "narrative logic" issues involved in the interpretation of this passage. These three categories should serve as helpful aids to organize the main interpretive issues of this text. "Textual issues" is the cleanest category, as textual issues are mainly judged separate from other considerations. Classification of grammatical issues generally seems rather intuitive.[1] For example, when one

[1] Though, as will be explained below, it can be somewhat complicated.

considers the nature of the genitive in the πίστιν θεοῦ[2] construction, it seems fitting to discuss that as a grammatical issue. The category of "narrative logic" issues will highlight certain contextual questions, trying to explain the logic, or thought flow between the various parts, such as how 20–21 fits with the earlier fig tree cursing, or how verses 22–25 can be considered a response to verse 21 (καὶ ἀποκριθεὶς ὁ Ἰησοῦς λέγει).

Textual Issues

This textual discussion will be brief, but is important nonetheless. One cannot make arguments from the text without first establishing what one assumes the actual text is. Beyond that, a text-critical investigation can also add insight concerning interpretive difficulties. Scribes often had a tendency to smooth things out, or make rough spots in the Greek appear smoother. Thus, when one sees textual variants of this kind, they can recognize that the text under discussion has some form of ambiguity in it. Since the stated goal of this chapter is to highlight the ambiguities in the text, such observations will be of assistance here.

There are four main textual issues to discuss.[3] First, the particle εἴ appears in some manuscripts in verse 22 immediately before the phrase ἔχετε πίστιν θεοῦ. This draws the imperatival phrase into the following verse 23 making a conditional construction out of the two verses, instead of letting it stand alone. The εἴ is widely rejected, and it is typically suggested that the variant likely comes from Matthew and Luke.[4] Not only is it rejected because it is only

[2] 11:22

[3] Smaller variants, such as the potential addition of γὰρ in verse 23 do not have a strong enough impact on the interpretation of this verse to be discussed here.

[4] Bruce Metzger, *A Textual Commentary on the Greek New Testament, Second Edition a Companion Volume to the United Bible Societies' Greek New Testament*, 4th ed. (London; New York: United Bible Societies, 1994), 92. Cf. Philip Comfort, *New Testament Text and Translation Commentary* (Carol Stream, IL: Tyndale , 2008), 142; C.E.B. Cranfield, *The Gospel according to Saint Mark* (London: Cambridge University Press, 1959), 361; et al.

appears in weaker manuscripts,[5] Metzger also notes the potentially problematic grammar: "Inasmuch as elsewhere the solemn expression ἀμὴν λέγω ὑμῖν is always introductory and is never preceded by a protasis, it appears that the original reading is the exhortation Ἔχετε πίστιν θεοῦ, and that the reading introduced by εἰ (א D Θ *f* 28 *al*) arose by assimilation to the saying in Lk 17:6 (cf. also Mt 21:21)."[6]

Second, a small textual variant is also recorded in verse 23 which typically does not receive attention because the manuscript tradition is so strong against it. At 11:23 manuscript D and some of the old Latin[7] preserve the variant reading πιτευση το μελλον ο αν ειπη γενησεται. Although this reading is rather weakly witnessed to, it should be mentioned here as it serves to highlight a certain level of ambiguity in the text. As will be discussed below, the phrase πιστεύῃ ὅτι ὃ λαλεῖ γίνεται, ἔσται αὐτῷ isn't as clear as many seem to think. It is regularly assumed that the subject of ὃ λαλεῖ is clearly the "indefinite" subject who speaks to the mountain. This variant attempts to make the grammar more explicit, which displays a recognition that there is some ambiguity in the text as it is normally understood.

Third, there is a good deal of variety in the manuscripts for the tense form of λαμβάνω in verse 24. It appears as ἐλάβετε,[8] λαμβάνετε,[9] as well as λή(μ)ψεσθε.[10] The strongest Marcan

[5] NA 28 lists: א D Θ f^{13} 28. 33^{c}. 565.700 it sy^{s} as manuscripts that add the εἴ. Voelz has a good overview explaining which manuscripts are to be favored in Marcan textual criticism, settling on Vaticanus (B) and its "allies," א L Δ Ψ 565 579 et al. Voelz, *Mark*, 24–26.

[6] Metzger, *A Textual Commentary on the Greek New Testament*, 92.

[7] Apparently with further variants: (it)

[8] For this reading NA 28 lists: א B C L W Δ Ψ 892 sa^{mss} bo^{mss}

[9] For this reading NA 28 lists: A K N Γ f^{13} 28. 33. 579. 1241. 1424. 2542 𝔐

[10] For this reading NA 28 lists: D Θ f^{1} 565.700 latt; Cyp

manuscripts[11] witness to the aorist tense form, which is also the *lectio difficilima*. Scholars have followed this reading as well, deciding that it is easier to attempt an explanation for the awkward tense form, than to attempt to explain how the aorist form could have slipped into the strongest manuscripts.[12]

Fourth and finally, a further verse (11:26) is often added on after 11:25.[13] Although verse 26 appears with some additional variants of its own, it generally appears as ει δε υμεις ουκ αφιετε ουδε ο πατηρ υμων ο εν τοις ουρανοις αφησει τα παραπτωματα υμων. This line directly builds off of verse 25, which speaks about forgiveness. Once again, appeal can be made to the favored Marcan manuscripts which reject this reading. "Though it could be argued that verse 26 dropped out by scribal mistake,"[14] it is "almost universally regarded as a scribal gloss based on Matt 6:14. . ."[15] Furthermore, this line calls to mind the Lord's Prayer more directly than verse 25 would on its own. As will be seen below, such a potential connection to the Lord's Prayer has often led commentators to analyze verse 25 as an unconnected verse itself, as if Mark was subtly sneaking the Lord's Prayer into his gospel.[16] Before resorting to such external theories, it will be helpful to see how 11:25 makes sense in its own narrative context.

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[11] See n. 190 above.

[12] See section below under Grammar/Syntax issues for more on the difficulties with ἐλάβετε.

[13] Lamarche, *Évangile de Mark*, 276; Telford, *The Barren Temple*, 50. For the different versions of 11:26 NA 28 lists: A C D K Γ Θ $f^{1.13}$ 28. 1241 m lat $sy^{p.h.}$ bo^{pt}; Cyp, for one version (which includes further small variants), and: N 33. 579. 1424. 2542 for another version. For the texts that do not witness to verse 26 it lists: ℵ B L W Δ Ψ 565. 700. 892 k l sy^{s} sa bo^{pt}.

[14] Comfort, *New Testament Text*, 142.

[15] Marshall, *Faith as a Theme*, 172.

[16] While some commentators suggest that 11:25 was placed here for that reason (see below for discussion), Telford has gone further and excised not only verse 26, but also verses 25 and 24(!) from the Marcan text. Unfortunately for his argument, there is no manuscript evidence to back-up such a claim. Telford, *Barren Temple*, 50–56.

Grammar/Syntax Issues

Although many issues can clearly be classed as grammar/syntax issues, at times it is difficult to decide what should be considered a grammatical-syntactical issue and what should be considered a narrative logic issue. For example, when Jesus responds to Peter with a 2nd person plural, should that be discussed as a logic issue or a grammatical issue? Or when Jesus refers to τῷ ὄρει τούτῳ,[17] instead of any generic ὄρει, should that be considered a grammatical-syntactical issue or a narrative logic issue? Certainly there is a grammatical component to these last two questions. However, much of the discussion actually revolves around contextual concerns more than understanding the grammar. Thus, when Jesus says τῷ ὄρει τούτῳ, we aren't concerned with how the τούτῳ functions grammatically, but rather which mountain might actually be τῷ ὄρει τούτῳ (if any particular mountain at all). Nevertheless, this section will discuss such issues as grammatical-syntactical issues, and discuss bigger thought flow questions under the narrative logic subsection. Although the distinctions between these categories aren't completely clean, these divisions can still be helpful for organizing the following discussion.

To begin, in verse 21, Peter alone addresses Jesus. However, in verse 22, Jesus responds αὐτοῖς and uses 2nd person plural verbs instead of singulars in his response. What significance should be made of this?

A number of commentators have suggested that this response in the second person plural points to an early catechetical usage.[18] It is suggested that the 2nd person plural is not simply directed at those present (i.e. in the text), but rather makes this a somewhat gnomic statement for

[17] 11:23

[18] Dowd, *Prayer, Power, and the Problem of Suffering*, 58; Gray, *The Temple in Mark*, 54; Schweizer, *The Good News according to Mark,* 234–35; Standaert cites not just the plural, but the whole introductory address as signaling this: "En outre, Jésus s'adresse à tous et pas seulement à Pierre qui posait la question; la suite, avec l'apostrophe chargée «en vérité je vous le dis», (v. 23), confirme que, par-delà les: disciples du récit, les paroles qui suivent concernent directement le lecteur/destinataire." Standaert, *Évangile selon Marc,* 828.

the church as a whole (i.e. readers not in the text). This understanding has not found full acceptance. Gundry offers the rather firm critique of this approach, "Unless we see a church catechism lying behind every set of Jesus' sayings addressed to the disciples with the plural 'you,' this pronoun does not prove that a church catechism lies behind vv.22–25."[19] It seems as though he has hit the nail on the head with this critique. The assumptions behind one's reading do certainly drive one's interpretation here beyond what the mere grammar suggests.[20] However, Gundry's criticism should not be over-read. Jesus's words in Mark's gospel should not be limited to only the characters on the page. There are reasons to believe that Mark intended his work to apply to and teach its readers.

Mark calls his gospel the "good news" or even "preaching" of Jesus Christ.[21] This kind of an introduction begs for some kind of relevance to its readers beyond the simple reporting of events and words that happened among the text's characters. Thus, when Jesus offers a teaching directed at all his present disciples (e.g., the switch to plurals under discussion here), the reader could very well expect some level of applicability to the later followers who are reading Mark's gospel.

Nevertheless, to agree with Gundry, one cannot argue that the move to plurals *in itself* indicates a higher degree of relevance to the readers. A similar switch occurs in 8:29, where Peter answers Jesus's question (to the *plural* disciples!) ὑμεῖς δὲ τίνα με λέγετε εἶναι? Peter alone answers, but Jesus then ἐπετίμησεν αὐτοῖς ἵνα μηδενὶ λέγωσιν περὶ αὐτοῦ. It seems doubtful that

[19] Robert H. Gundry, *Mark: A Commentary on His Apology for the Cross* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1992), 654.

[20] Dowd, for one, makes her stance on this reading assumption entirely clear in her introduction where she claims the "form and content of an ancient didactic biography was shaped in such a way as to provide for the formation of the community . . ." Dowd, *Prayer, Power, and the Problem of Suffering*, 27.

[21] Mark 1:1. For more on understanding Mark's Ἀρχὴ τοῦ εὐαγγελίου Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ as "'the *beginning of the preaching of the Gospel/Good News* of Jesus Christ,'" see Voelz, *Mark*, 93–96.

this switch to the plural (αὐτοῖς) is supposed to cause the reader to understand that they, the readers/hearers, are not supposed to talk to anyone about Jesus![22] The switch to plurals on its own cannot carry such freight. An argument about general applicability must come from the context, not the grammar.

Beyond the rather simple suggestion that this move to plurals indicates applicability to Mark's audience outside of the narrative, others have taken it so far as to suggest that the plurals signal something about the new standing of the Christian "community which replaced the rejected temple as 'house of prayer.'"[23] That is, the rejected temple—which was proverbially signaled as rejected by the cursing of the fig tree—is now to be replaced by the praying community. Understanding that these words are intended to apply to the community outside of the narrative is one thing, but this suggestion is another. This suggestion surpasses the grammar, surpasses general reading assumptions, and makes a claim for how this passage functions in its narrative context. That in itself does not make it problematic. As stated in this dissertation's first chapter, "The most important feature of narrative criticism that will be employed here will be the assumption that the narrative pieces all fit together as a whole."[24] The present work agrees with the observations of Dowd and others that *the context suggests some sort of replacement for the rejected temple*.[25] However, it is not entirely clear that the "praying community" is the actual

[22] Cf. 13:10

[23] Dowd, *Prayer, Power, and the Problem of Suffering*, 55. Cf. "It is worth nothing that it is assumed that prayer is offered by a community." Ibid., 65. See also: R.T. France, *The Gospel of Mark: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, NIGTC (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2002), 448; Gray, *The Temple in Mark*, 54; Marshall, *Faith as a Theme*, 165 (I read his italicized *they* as subtly making this point); et al.

[24] See page 33 of chapter l.

[25] "Si le Temple avait comme fonction d'être de fait maison de prière et de pardon par la foi dans l'Alliance et dans le Dieu qui habite ce Lieu, désormais l'évangile pointe vers un autre lieu où se vit, dans la foi, la prière comme le pardon. Ces paroles, regroupées ici par Marc, ont donc toute leur pertinence dans le contexte immédiat, après Mc 11, 12 à 18." Standaert, *Évangile selon Marc*, 834.

replacement, nor is it convincing that the 2nd person plurals make that connection.[26] As mentioned above, the switch to plurals cannot carry the freight these commentators put on it. Any suggestion that the "praying community" replaces the rejected temple must be built off of contextual assumptions beyond the grammar. Thus, further discussion on the replacement of the temple will be found in later chapters where the narrative context will be more closely examined. Thus, an ambiguity is laid bare: how does this plural address (in the context of the rejected temple) relate to both Jesus's disciples in the text, and the readers of the gospel?

It has become rather commonplace to discuss the genitive construction from verse 22, πίστιν θεοῦ. While this issue is oft discussed, it appears a consensus has formed on this issue. The scholarly consensus explains this as an objective genitive, often noting this is the only occurrence in the NT of πίστις plus θεός as an objective genitive.[27]

Although it is generally agreed that the objective genitive is the best reading to understand here, one should not consider faith in God as an object too simply. Lamarche has rightly observed that, "La foi étant un lien relationnel entre deux personnes, il ne faut pas s'étonner de rencontrer des difficultés pour traduire et comprendre en français des expressions particulièrement synthétiques."[28] The same can be said of translating this into English. Jesus may be summoning his disciples to have faith in God as an object, but in the world of Mark's

[26] Contra Gray: "The use of the plural (ὑμῖν, twice in v. 24) in the imperative for prayer shows that this address is directed to the community. . .This communal thrust of the address suggests that it is the community gathered around Jesus that is to be the new locus of prayer and forgiveness, not the rejected temple." Gray, *The Temple in Mark*, 54; Dowd, *Prayer, Power, and the Problem of Suffering*, 54; France, *The Gospel of Mark*, 448, et al.

[27] Dowd's work reviews a select few who have tried (rather unsuccessfully) to argue for a different understanding. Dowd, *Prayer, Power, and the Problem of Suffering*, 60–62; Cranfield confidently claims, "The suggestion that the genitive is subjective—'have the sort of faith God has'—is surely a monstrosity of exegesis." Cranfield, *St. Mark*, 361. See also: Craig Evans, *Mark 8:27–16:20*, WBC 34B (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 2001), 186; France, *The Gospel of Mark*, 448; Gnilka, *Das Evangelium nach Markus*, 134; Lamarche, *Évangile De Marc*, 272; Stein, *Mark*, 519; Telford, *Barren Temple* ,57. Discussions of this construction also generally compare this passage to John 14:1;Rom 3:3; 1 Thess 1:8; Heb 6:1.

[28] Lamarche, *Évangile De Marc*, 272

narrative, God has indeed proven himself to be faithful as a subject/actor as well.[29] It is best not to utterly negate that active side of faith's object when one claims this as an objective genitive. As will be discussed below, other indications in this section may be speaking towards the side of the relationship where God proves himself to be faithful, thus creating faith.

Perhaps the most hotly debated and divisive issue in this passage is why Jesus uses the near demonstrative when he mentions the mountain, τῷ ὄρει τούτῳ. Of course the discussion doesn't concern the meaning or syntactical placement of τούτῳ, but rather the referent; which mountain is "this mountain?" Some tend to ignore the significance of the demonstrative and simply read this as a proverbial mountain, or an *adunaton*.[30] While there may be decent reasons to consider this to be a statement about a proverbial generic mountain, the grammar certainly points in a different direction.[31] Those who make this into a proverbial mountain are often led to subtly change the grammar by not translating the demonstrative properly when they explain this passage.[32] For those who hold on to the significance of the demonstrative, a number of different "mountains" have been suggested: the Mount of Olives,[33] the temple or "Temple Mount,"[34] or

[29] "Mark is asking his audience to place ultimate trust in the character of a God who makes promises and fulfills them." James Hanson, *The Endangered Promises: Conflict in Mark* (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2000), 251.

[30] The chief example is Dowd, *Prayer, Power, and the Problem of Suffering*, see especially 69–94. See also: Collins, *Mark*, 534 –35; Gnilka, *Das Evangelium nach Markus*, 134; Kee, *Community of the New Age*, 162. Malbon, *Narrative Space*, 58–59; Francis J. Moloney, *The Gospel of Mark: A Commentary* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2002), 227.

[31] Cf. BDAG's entry for the adjectival use of οὗτος: "as adj., **pert. to an entity perceived as present or near in the discourse, *this.*"** *BDAG*, 741.

[32] Dowd even goes so far as to title her fourth chapter "Prayer to the God Who Moves Mountains," thus changing the demonstrative "this mountain" to the more generic "mountains." Dowd, *Prayer, Power, and the Problem of Suffering*, 69. Note how Kee simply translates this as "a mountain": "The instruction, however, is to be bold in faith, having full confidence that what is requested of God in prayer will indeed take place, here expressed in hyperbolic form as throwing a mountain into the sea (11.23)." Kee, *Community of the New Age*, 162. Cf. Malbon, *Narrative Space*, 58.

[33] Watts cites "Manson, *Messiah*, 29f, 39f; Grant, 'Coming,' 300; Evans, 'Galilee,' 7; Smith, 'Figs,' 322; Cf. Hurtado, 184. A number of scholars, not listed here, also see Jesus as indicating the Mount of Olives but without any eschatological implications." He goes on to provide a brief summary of some of these major figures. Watts, *Isaiah's New Exodus*, 332 n. 225;Cf. Dowd, *Prayer, Power, and the Problem of Suffering*, 73–74, who mainly focuses on

even the fortress of Herodion.[35]

If any specific mountain should be considered the appropriate referent for τῷ ὄρει τούτῳ, it will have to be decided from the narrative context. Some commentators have focused on what is or is not visible from the specific location where this statement was believed to have occurred, that is the actual geographic context in the world outside the text.[36] Such an argument usually drives the supposed Mount of Olives suggestion. However, the text does not state that the fig tree actually was on the Mount of Olives. According to 11:12–13, the fig tree was simply somewhere visible from the route they took from Bethany on their way to the temple. No distinct location is given in the narrative. While potential ostensive referents can have some value for interpreting this text, it is more valuable to consider what mountains are in view of the text's own narrative context. This is especially important to note as Mark's geographical language often seems more related to his narrative interests than simply describing actual times and places.[37] Thus, the

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Grant's work. See also Ernst, *Das Evangelium nach Markus*, 332–33; Gundry, *Mark*, 653–54; Bas Van Iersel, *Reading Mark* (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 1988), 359.

[34] Often the temple and its "mount" are not distinguished in the literature. However, see Gundry, *Mark*, 677. Watts considers this attention to detail by Gundry too pedantic. Watts, *Isaiah's New Exodus*, 336. For others who hold the temple view, see: Gray, *The Temple in Mark*, 53–54; Kelber, *The Kingdom in Mark*, 104; Kirk, "Time for Figs," 523; Ched Myers, *Binding the Strong Man: A Political Reading of Mark's Story of Jesus* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1988), 305. Swartley, *Israel's Scripture Traditions,* 160; Telford, *Barren Temple*, 59; Wright, *Victory*, 422.

[35] James Edwards, *The Gospel according to Mark* (Grand Rapids, Eerdmans: 2002), 347. Though, it should be noted that Edwards ends up moving closer to Dowd's *adunaton* perspective. Such a move is actually quite common. Though one may accept that Mark's Jesus was pointing to the temple (τῷ ὄρει τούτῳ), the following teaching (11:24) often leads one to suggest that the statement about the temple (τῷ ὄρει τούτῳ) was being used somewhat proverbially. Cf. Dale Miller and Patricia J. Miller, *The Gospel of Mark as Midrash* (Lewiston, NY: Mellen, 1990), 277; Watts, *Isaiah's New Exodus*, 332–37. See also Carrington's work where he seems to support the temple at one place, the Mount of Olives in another (when considering the relation of these events to Zechariah), and then concludes "The temple is the mountainous obstacle which is to vanish before the faith of the gospel movement." Carrington, *According to Mark*, 242–43.

[36] Cranfield, *St. Mark*, 361; Edwards, *The Gospel according to Mark*, 347; Gundry, *Mark*, 653–54; et al.

[37] Perhaps the strongest example of this is Mark's usage of Galilee. While John records the temple cleansing scene in his second chapter, and seems comfortable with multiple trips between Galilee and Jerusalem by Jesus, the Marcan Jesus doesn't arrive in Jerusalem until (what appears to be) the final week of his life. Yet Jesus promises that he will rise from the dead and meet his disciples in Galilee after his resurrection, the same message related by the angel who announces the resurrection at the end of the narrative. For more on the Galilee focus, see also: Marxsen, *Mark the Evangelist*, 54–95. For an example of another geographically significant theme in Mark's

context of the narrative world holds higher interpretive value than the context of the world outside of the text.

The ὃς ἂν clause of verse 23 is also worthy of observation. This construction is not without precedent in Mark's gospel. Such clauses, where ὃς ἂν is the subject, occur at 3:29, 35; 6:11; 8:35, 38; 9:37, 41, 42; 10:11, 15, 43, 44, and here at 11:23. Five times these clauses promise a positive result to the "indefinite" subject (3:35; 8:35b; 9:37, 41; 11:23), seven times they threaten a worse result (3:29; 6:11; 8:35a, 38; 9:42; 10:11, 15), and in two cases one is left to decide whether a positive result is promised or not (10:43, 44).[38] Most would agree that the introduction of the particle ἂν makes the potential subject of the verb indefinite.[39] However, that indefiniteness can be questioned. As Burton says, "A large part of the conditional relative clauses referring to the future found in the New Testament are apparently general . . . Yet in many cases it is possible to suppose that a particular imagined instance was before the mind of the writer as an illustration of the general class of cases."[40]

The indefinite nature of the ὃς ἂν clause becomes rather relevant in a discussion of 11:23, because many have observed that this clause may not be altogether indefinite. The definite side of this clause arises from Mark's usage of the demonstrative in his reference to the mountain (discussed above). Some, such as the present work, argue that τῷ ὄρει τούτῳ must be a specific

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narrative cf. Ulrich Mauser, *Christ in the Wilderness: The Wilderness Theme in the Second Gospel and Its Basis in the Biblical Tradition* (Naperville, IL: A.R. Allenson, 1963).

[38] There are at least two cases where ἐὰν appears instead of ἂν (8:35a; 8:38; cf. 7:11). These are considered here as the same construction because, "ἐὰν is also used in Koine Greek as a substitute for ἄν to generalize." This interchangeableness is most clearly seen in 8:35. For more on this see: Voelz, *Mark*, 9, n. 30.

[39] "In most instances in the N.T., therefore, the use of ἄν is clearly in indefinite relative clauses whether with the indicative or subjunctive." A. T. Robertson, *A Grammar of the Greek New Testament in the Light of Historical Research* (Logos Bible Software, 1919), 958. Cf. Voelz, *Mark*, 9.

[40] Ernest De Witt Burton, *Syntax of the Moods and Tenses in New Testament Greek*, 3rd ed. (Edinburg: T&T Clark, 1898), 123.

mountain or Mark wouldn't have used the demonstrative. Thus, if the indirect object is a definite mountain (e.g., the temple), should the subject of the ὃς ἂν clause also be definite?

For those who do not interpret "this mountain" as particularly definite, this question poses no great difficulty. But for those who propose that "this mountain" has a definite referent (e.g., the temple), one must query, who then is saying to this mountain, "be up and be throw into the sea"? The main three options would be Jesus himself, the disciples, or the reading/hearing community. Because of how closely verses 11:23 and 11:24 mirror each other,[41] and because the subject of the verbs in 11:24 is 2nd person plural, Jesus is not considered a strong candidate.[42] However, some thought provoking similar constructions occur in Mark 8:34–38.[43]

In this section indefinite subjects are introduced in a variety of ways (εἴ τις, ὃς γὰρ ἐὰν, ὃς δ' ἂν, ἄνθρωπον). However, these statements by Jesus here must be considered not just in their abstract indefiniteness, but also in their full narrative context. In 8:34 Jesus speaks of denying oneself and taking up one's cross. In 8:35 he speaks of losing one's life on account of him and the gospel (ἕνεκεν ἐμοῦ καὶ τοῦ εὐαγγελίου) in order to save it. And in 8:38 he says that whoever is ashamed of him, he will, in turn, be ashamed of as well. These words are spoken to Peter and the disciples, those who became the early leaders of the church. And how did they fare in Mark's narrative? Did they deny themselves and take up their crosses? Jesus himself predicted that they would πάντες σκανδαλισθήσεσθε (14:26). Furthermore, when Jesus is arrested ἀφέντες αὐτὸν ἔφυγον πάντες (14:50). Mark even dramatically records Peter's three-fold denial. According to

[41] This relationship will be discussed below.

[42] Dowd simply suggests that the ὃς ἂν clause is "overshadowed by the plurals in the other sayings." Dowd, *Prayer, Power, and the Problem of Suffering*, 65.

[43] Mark 3:27 also provides a thought provoking example to consider. Is the subject οὐδεὶς, indefinite? It has become rather common to see that the role of this indefinite οὐδεὶς is actually taken up by Jesus himself. Thus the grammatically indefinite subject has a definite referent in Mark's narrative world. Cf. Ernst, *Das Evangelium nach Markus*, 119; Voelz, *Mark*, 261–62, et al.

the standards of 8:34–38, Jesus will therefore deny them. Yet there is one who does actually deny himself, take up his cross and lose his life (in order to save it, cf. 8:35): Jesus himself. It seems that the indefinite subjects of 8:34–38 are only truly accomplished in Mark's narrative by Jesus himself.[44] It may be that a similar connection can be observed between 11:23 and 13:2. If this mountain is the temple, the only one who really says anything about the temple's destruction is Jesus himself (13:2)![45] If nothing else, these comparisons at least lay down a precedent by which we could consider some level of complexity in definiteness for the subject of the apparently indefinite ὃς ἂν clause of 11:23.[46] It is important that this ambiguity is not overlooked. According to the grammar alone, one would consider this to be a general statement about any indefinite person. But when considered in its context, the issue becomes tightly tied to how one understands the narrative thought flow around this section, as well as Mark's narrative as a whole. Thus a firm conclusion on this ambiguous issue will best be addressed again after a more exhaustive consideration of its greater context is completed.

Further ambiguity also exists concerning the subject of the small relative clause ὃ λαλεῖ γίνεται from verse 23. This verse is usually linked to verse 24, and rightfully so. The main features coordinate quite well:[47]

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[44] It can be pointed out that Simon the Cyrene takes up Jesus cross, 15:11. However, it doesn't necessarily seem that he was denying himself in this situation as much as he was compelled (ἀγγαρεύουσιν).

[45] Cf. the (ironic?) accusation of 14:58 as well.

[46] Kee suggests some level of complexity here as well when he says, "As initiating agent and paradigm for the community, Jesus is clearly unique: You are the Christ (8.29). But the ὃς ἂν pronouncements show that to become identified with his name demands the assumption of a wide range of responsibilities. . ." Kee tends to push this more towards demands on the Marcan audience, though his observation that Jesus is "the initiating agent and paradigm" is rather intriguing. See Kee, *Community of the New Age*, 140–44. Cf. ". . . Jesus invites his disciples to participate also in the creative power of God to replace the temple." Heil, "Narrative Strategy," 79. Marshall weakly points in a similar direction: "Jesus does not respond with an explanation of the miracle, but with a summons to participate in the activity of God." Marshall, *Faith as a Theme*, 164; Trocmé even suggests in a footnote that this passage serves to instruct the disciples that they will be able to bring about the destruction of the temple through their prayers! Trocmé, *La Formation de Marc*, 85, n. 55.

[47] Note also διὰ τοῦτο, which signals a connection.

ὃς ἂν εἴπῃ	τῷ ὄρει τούτῳ	ἄρθητι καὶ βλήθητι εἰς τὴν θάλασσαν[48]	πιστεύῃ	ὅτι	ὃ λαλεῖ	γίνεται	ἔσται αὐτῷ
3rd person singular verb of speaking	Indirect object	Direct discourse as object of speaking verb	3rd person singular	ὅτι recitative introducing content clause	relative clause as object of γίνεται	3rd singular verb (present)	3rd person singular future + 3rd singular dative pronoun
προσεύχεσθε καὶ αἰτεῖσθε		πάντα ὅσα	πιστεύετε	ὅτι		ἐλάβετε	ἔσται ὑμῖν
2nd person plural verbs of praying/asking		Indefinite direct object of praying/asking verbs	2nd person plural	ὅτι recitative introducing content clause		2nd person plural verb (aorist!)	3rd person singular future + 2nd plural dative pronoun

While the symmetry between these two verses begs for a somewhat coordinated reading, this symmetry is rather ambiguous when coordinating the object clauses (both introduced by ὅτι) following the πιστεύω verbs. While the πιστεύῃ ὅτι of verse 23 coordinates quite symmetrically with the πιστεύετε ὅτι of verse 24, how clearly are the contents of the ὅτι clauses related? Can ὃ λαλεῖ γίνεται be easily coordinated with ἐλάβετε? Most seem to think so.[49] In verse 24, the 2nd person plural subject of ἐλάβετε coordinates with the 2nd person plural subjects of the main

[48] It should be noted that εἰς τὴν θάλασσαν, καὶ μὴ διακριθῇ ἐν τῇ καρδίᾳ does not appear in the above comparison, but is part of the text of 11:23 as well.

[49] "Jesus assures his disciples: '... if you do not doubt in your heart, but believe that *what you say* will come to pass, it will be done for you' (11:23)." Italics added. Maxey, "Power of Words in Mark: Their Potential and Their Limits," *CurTM* 37 (2010): 301–2.

verb(s), προσεύχεσθε καὶ αἰτεῖσθε (and πιστεύετε). Thus, commentators typically assume that the 3rd person singular subject of λαλεῖ must coordinate with the 3rd person singular subject of εἴπῃ (and πιστεύῃ). However, the verb λαλεῖ occurs in a relative clause that verse 24 doesn't mirror. Outside of the relative clause, the main verbs of the ὅτι clauses are hardly symmetrical at all. Verse 23 uses a 3rd person, present, passive verb, "it happens" while 24 uses a 2nd person past active verb, "you received."

The ambiguity lies in the subject of λαλεῖ. While the subject of ἐλάβετε is clearly the 2nd person plural (i.e. the same "you" who were praying and asking at the start of the sentence), the third person singular subject of λαλεῖ can be more widely understood. Perhaps it's possible to not only coordinate verses 23 and 24, but also 22.

			ἔχετε πίστιν	θεοῦ			
ὃς ἂν εἴπῃ	τῷ ὄρει τούτῳ	ἄρθητι καὶ βλήθητι εἰς τὴν θάλασσαν	πιστεύῃ	ὅτι	ὃ λαλεῖ	γίνεται	ἔσται αὐτῷ
προσεύχεσθε καὶ αἰτεῖσθε		πάντα ὅσα	πιστεύετε	ὅτι		ἐλάβετε	ἔσται ὑμῖν

While the coordination is very limited, it can provoke one to consider that God[50] could be the subject of λαλεῖ.[51] According to this possibility, the command to have faith in God (11:22), is expanded into have faith that what God says happens (11:23). The relation to the content clause of verse 24 would need further interpretation to follow this line; perhaps an understood "believe

[50] It can be noted that the idea of the "divine passive" is typically put forth when considering the verbs, ἄρθητι καὶ βλήθητι, γίνεται, and ἔσται. Thus, God-as-actor is certainly in the context.

[51] Chapter 5 will argue for a literary dependency of these Marcan verses on 1 Kgs 8. Note the similarity of the relative clause in the LXX text of 1 Kgs 8:20 (ὃ ἐλάλησεν) and Mark 11:23 (ὃ λαλεῖ γίνεται). Note also the use of

that you received[52] [what God says he will give]".

One more translation issue might pull the interpretation of 11:23 in this direction. The verb διακριθῇ is commonly translated and understood as "doubt." However, Peter Spitaler has recently argued that such a translation is unwarranted.[53] In his article Spitaler argues that this translation of διακρίνομαι as "doubt" arose later than the period of the NT, and in fact after the Patristic period.[54] According to his argument, this misunderstanding only arose through subsequent mistranslations out of the Greek into other languages. Instead of translating διακρίνομαι as "doubt," Spitaler suggests we should translate it according to its classic/Hellenistic usage; *discern, dispute, decide, separate* and the like. If this is the case, it would readily impact the understanding of 11:23. If the verb is not "doubt, but "dispute" or "discern," it makes more sense that the subject of λαλεῖ is not the subject of διακριθῇ. One might "doubt" the efficacy of one's own words, but one is less likely to "dispute" against them or "discern" something concerning them. One is more likely to dispute that someone else (God?) is actually right about something controversial ("cursed" the temple?), than dispute that their own words will come to pass. If nothing else, the potential of these ambiguities should cause one to proceed with caution in the interpretation of these verses.

A further ambiguity arises when one parses the verbs of verse 24: διὰ τοῦτο λέγω ὑμῖν,

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λαλέω here, not λέγω (cf. εἴπῃ at the start of the ὃς ἂν clause).

[52] Further discussion on the difficulties with interpreting/translating ἐλάβετε will follow below.

[53] Peter Spitaler, "Διακρίνεσθαι in Mt. 21:21, Mk. 11:23, Acts 10:20, Rom. 4:20, 14:23, Jas. 1:6 and Jude 22—the 'Semantic Shift' That Went Unnoticed by Patristic Authors" *NovT* 49 (2007): 1–39.

[54] N.B. BDAG asserts the meaning "to be uncertain, be at odds w. oneself, doubt, waver," but then follows that with the statement: "this mng. appears first in NT; with no dependence on the NT." BDAG, 231. Spitaler observes that, outside of the NT (which Bauer claims this meaning is not dependent on) Bauer only cites Cyril of Scythopolis in support. He responds to Bauer's doubtful assertion, "because Cyril is a 6th century author, his writings cannot be said to have influenced a shift in meaning that is posited to have taken place centuries earlier. Above all, Bauer's attempt to show that Cyril intends for διακρίνομαι to mean 'doubt' is, at best, a matter of conjecture." Ibid., 8.

πάντα ὅσα προσεύχεσθε καὶ αἰτεῖσθε, πιστεύετε ὅτι ἐλάβετε, καὶ ἔσται ὑμῖν. The "historical present," λέγω, should not be seen as strange at all in Mark's gospel.[55] The other "gnomic presents" or even the future ἔσται doesn't seem troublesome either. However the aorist ἐλάβετε demands some form of explanation. The most natural reading of the text might suggest a future or at least a present (see the textual variants where both of these occur). However, as discussed above, it appears that Mark employed an aorist here. How is the aorist to be understood?

Different ideas have been offered. Some have suggested that this is a Semitic "prophetic perfect."[56] That is, a future event determined by God is spoken of as if it is in the past, because it is so certain that it will happen. Taylor simply states, "ἐλάβετε points back to something that has already happened."[57] Unfortunately Taylor doesn't go beyond that comment to explain how it should be understood in this context. After discussing the variants, Dowd simply points toward her translation: "Keep on believing that you received everything that you are praying and asking for, and it will be done for you."[58] Somewhat similarly, Schweizer suggests the past tense is used here to help describe the faith summoned in this context: the "kind of faith which knows God gives even before man asks."[59]

The aorist tense form isn't the only ambiguity with this verb. It should be noted that no object is explicitly stated with this verb. However, in almost all English translations an object is

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[55] Cf. Voelz, *Mark*, 15–16.

[56] "The aorist tense, representing the Semitic usage of the prophetic perfect (which expresses the certainty of a future action) . . ." Metzger, *A Textual Commentary on the Greek New Testament*, 93. Cf. Edwards, *The Gospel according to Mark*, 347, n. 36; Joel Marcus, *Mark 8–16: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2000), 787 (citing Fanning, *Verbal Aspect*, 273).

[57] Taylor, *The Gospel according to St. Mark*, 467.

[58] Dowd, *Prayer, Power, and the Problem of Suffering*, 65. Cranfield seems to think along these same lines: "What is here indicated by means of hyperbole is that one is to be absolutely confident in God's readiness to respond to faith." Cranfield, *St. Mark*, 361. Cf. Marshall, *Faith as a Theme*, 170–71.

[59] Schweizer, *The Good News according to Mark*, 235. Cf. Gnilka, *Das Evangelium nach Markus*,135.

added,[60] typically a pronoun whose antecedent is assumed to be the thing prayed for.[61] The Greek text leaves this much more open than the English translations. Perhaps the object is left out in Mark's text to make the point that you don't always receive what you ask for, you just "receive." Perhaps the object is more generically a "hearing": "believe you received a hearing," that is "believe that you have been heard,"[62] or, as offered above, "believe you have received [what God says he will give]."

Not only does the tense form and lack of object make this somewhat ambiguous, the very verb used itself adds ambiguity. The translations unanimously understand this use of λαμβάνω to mean "to receive." However, it should be recognized that λαμβάνω could be translated a variety of other ways, including: "to take," "to comprehend," or even "to take away, remove."[63] If one attempts to coordinate 24 even more closely with 23, another contextual reading could be "believe that you removed [this mountain]." Or perhaps one could read it more aggressively, "believe that you took [whatever you wanted.]" Such an aggressive reading might seem theologically offensive to some, but keep in mind Jesus's cursing of the fig tree inaugurated this whole discussion. Regardless of how many options there may be, the point here is to recognize that this extremely ambiguous verb form is often resolved rather quickly without making mention of these interpretive decisions.

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[60] The Duoay-Rheims Bible doesn't add an object. However, it also reads a future for the verb: "Therefore I say unto you, all things, whatsoever you ask when ye pray, believe that you shall receive; and they shall come unto you."

[61] The translations switch back and forth between the singular "it" or the plural "them" depending on how they rendered πάντα ὅσα.

[62] Cf. "Wer sich selbst im gläubigen Vertrauen Gott überläßt, bekommt die Zusicherung, daß seine Bitte in jedem Fall Erhörung findet." Ernst, *Das Evangelium nach Markus*, 334.

[63] BDAG, 583–85; LSJ, 1026–27.

Narrative Logic Issues

Of course the overarching goal of this dissertation is to explain if and how verses 11:20–25 fit within their narrative context. It is no great stretch to see the connection between verses 11:12–14 and 11:20–21. In 12–14 Jesus has some harsh words for a fruitless fig tree, and in 20–21 Peter informs us that those words were an effective curse that has withered the tree to its roots. Nobody doubts that this much goes together. However, much discussion has taken place over how these two halves might relate to the "temple cleansing" scene between them.[64] Thus some level of ambiguity already appears in the interpretation of this passage. One must decide if and how the cursing of the fig tree relates (or doesn't relate) to the cleansing of the temple.

While a certain level of ambiguity is apparent in the narrative logic connecting the temple and the fig tree, a much greater level of ambiguity appears when one tries to relate Jesus's words in 11:22–25 to Peter's observation in 11:21. The narrative seems to connect 21 and 22 by explaining Jesus's words as a response (ἀποκριθεὶς). However, the exact relationship of this response is quite ambiguous. Not only has discussion revolved around possible referents for τῷ ὄρει τούτῳ, as discussed above, but even the sense of the whole thing. Why should any teaching related to prayer follow the cursing of a fig tree?

The logic of the narrative is worked in two main ways. In the first way, the cursing of the fig tree is seen as an example of what faith and prayer can accomplish.[65] Jesus just performed a type of miracle, and he uses Peter's amazement at this miracle as an opportunity to teach the disciples about miraculous prayer.[66] While Mark's depiction of Jesus is rather unpredictable at

[64] As has been mentioned before, and will be explained further in chapter 4, this dissertation will argue that these two occurrences have a mutually interpretive relationship. The way the fig tree story sandwiches the cleansing scene helps the reader understand that the temple is not just being "cleansed" but "cursed."

[65] It's interesting to note that this view is often held whether one sees the mountain moving saying as pointing to the temple or not. See discussion below.

[66] "Weil sich das Wort an ein von Jesus gewirktes Wunder anschließt, wird Jesus wiederum als der

times,[67] one must recognize that the narrative logic needs to be stretched to adapt to this interpretation. Jesus just performed a rather negative type of miracle (cursing a tree so that it withers to its roots!). To move from there to a teaching about how you too can accomplish miracles by having faith in God when you pray, seems a bit cavalier. This was a very negative "miracle." Is Jesus teaching his disciples how to curse things? Beyond that, Jesus didn't actually pray for the cursing of the fig tree, he just cursed it. How is it that his curse becomes an example for prayer? The logic seems to break down further when Jesus introduces a teaching on forgiveness, which is somehow related to prayer (ὅταν στήκετε προσευχόμενοι, ἀφίετε). How can Jesus claim forgiveness is an essential component of prayer built on the example of his cursing a fig tree for not bearing fruit out of season?[68] If this position is to be adopted, the thought flow is not necessarily clear.

The second way the narrative logic is understood focuses more directly on the relationship of the fig tree and the temple. In this approach Jesus does not respond to Peter's amazement that the fig tree had withered from Jesus's curse, rather he responds to the idea that the withered-to-the-roots fig tree symbolizes the cursing and negation of the temple. Thus the logic does not focus on how the disciples can bring about such a "miracle" through forgiving, faithful prayer; instead it focuses on how the disciples can still engage in the functions related to the temple after its negation (faith in God, prayer, forgiveness) and the authority of Jesus over and against the

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Glaubende faßbar (vgl. 9,23)." Gnilka, *Das Evangelium nach Markus*, 134; Collins, *Mark*, 534.

[67] Voelz, *Mark*, 42.

[68] The potential for this ethical contradiction is noticed by Marshall, but simply dismissed as non-problematic. "The power of praying faith, however, is not for thaumaturgical display but, as always in Mark, is ethically conditioned. Only those who pray in a forgiving spirit are heard; only to them is divine power released." Marshall, *Faith as a Theme*, 172. Gnilka doesn't seem to make the potential connection. As he explains 11:25 command to forgive he concludes, "darf das Gebet nicht im Zorn mißbraucht werden." Such a teaching does not logically follow from a curse uttered against a fruitless tree and Jesus's previous display in the temple! Gnilka, *Das Evangelium nach Markus*, 135. Remember too Moule's aporia with the logic here, quoted above in n.11.

temple.[69] This understanding still creates its own ambiguities. For one, the logic of including verses 24 and 25 has been called into question.[70] For another, if the temple is condemned is there anything that replaces it? This leads into the discussion of whether the community, Jesus, or some combination of both replaces the temple.

Building off of this connection, the rejection of the temple for not being οἶκος προσευχῆς is often recognized as a further narrative thread through this section. Apparently the temple was condemned for not being a proper "house" for prayer (11:17). Commentators often latch on to the "house" idea and suggest that the Christian community must therefore be the new "house of prayer."[71] Unfortunately most commentators do not make it clear why the idea of a "house" should point to the Christian community.[72] For most it seems like the idea of a community seems so commensurate with the idea of a house that it warrants no further explanation.[73] However, it must be noted that the connection between a "house" and a community is not as direct and

[69] Cf. 11:27–33. "What Mark is concerned with is only the fact that this teaching was done with authority (1:22, 27), and that is shown by paralleling it with Jesus' deeds of power and by the world's astonishment at his teaching (6:2; 11:18)." Schweizer, "Mark's Theological Achievement," 67.

[70] Contra Telford, see Dowd, *Prayer, Power, and the Problem of Suffering*, 72.

[71] "There is little evidence for the idea that Jesus expected a new building . . . the Gospels depict the community Jesus was forming around himself as playing the role of Isaiah's eschatological temple. It is this last possibility that does greatest justice to the larger unit of text, as it contains not only the temple-clearing pericope but also the instructions on faithful prayer." Kirk, "Time for Figs," 524–25. See also Chávez, *Jesus' Temple Action in Mark*, 3; Donahue, *Are You the Christ?*, 132; Ernst, *Mark*, 329; Kirk, "Time for Figs," 523; Myers, *Binding*, 306; Heil, "Narrative Strategy," 80; et al.

[72] Juel makes the most sustained argument for the community as a house replacing the temple, though he does not make any strong arguments from Mark's text itself, instead he focuses most directly on the Qumran literature. Interwoven through his argument is also the idea that Jesus is pictured in mark as the Messianic temple builder. Juel, *Messiah and Temple*, 159–209.

Marshall attempts to make an argument for seeing the "house" being replaced by the disciples from Mark's text itself, ultimately claiming "the house is a regular setting for the instruction of the disciples." Marshall, *Faith as a Theme*, 163. However, I'm not sure why instructing the disciples in house settings means that the disciples now become a house themselves, albeit in a figurative way. However, this logic seems to be persuasive to Gray. Cf. Gray, *The Temple in Mark*, 54.

[73] One feels Marshall's logic moves to quickly as he reaches this conclusion: "If faith is the *Modus operandi* of the eschatological community, prayer is the vehicle and expression of this faith; the community of faith is therefore a 'house of prayer.'" Marshall, *Faith as a Theme*, 170.

obvious as often is assumed.[74]

The subtle move that sustains this position is the confusion of the functions/benefits of the temple with the temple's ultimate significance. If one conflates the things done in relation to the temple (e.g., prayer, forgiveness) with the temple itself, one could possibly suggest that 'since the community is now expected to pray and forgive each other they become the new temple.'[75] However, this move happens too quickly. Just because the community now does the things normally done in the temple—albeit without the temple—does not mean that they then *become the temple*. The earlier community was always supposed to pray and find forgiveness in relation to the temple, yet they were always distinct from the temple; they were just supposed to do those things at the temple. This is because the temple was ultimately the *locus of God's presence*.[76] The temple was the link between God, in heaven, and man on earth. Therefore, if one is going to make an argument concerning a replacement of the temple, one needs to do more than simply answer the question 'who does the things normally done in relation to the temple?' Instead, one needs to answer 'how does God make himself accessible to people for prayer and forgiveness?'

While I have attempted to delineate two different approaches to the thought flow in this section, it is interesting how many times commentators understand this small section to be a double entendre of sorts. Plenty of commentators feel extremely comfortable noting how the

[74] Other support is summoned as well. Some also gather further support from the 2nd person plurals to build this argument, as mentioned above. Ernst brings out the "for all peoples" side of Jesus's condemnation (11:17), and notes how this was to be fulfilled in the early church. "Die weltweite Perspektive, die in der Öffnung >>für all Völker<< zum Ausdruck kommt, darf als das Kennzeichen des neuen geistigen Tempels der christlichen Gemeinde verstanden werden." Ernst, *Mark*, 329. Chávez appears to gather support from even the cleansing of the leper scene: Chávez, *Jesus' Temple Action in Mark*, 38. He gets there based off of the "eschatological gathering of the elect" which the Son of Man is supposed to accomplish according to 13:26–27. Ibid., 3. Donahue also comes to this conclusion through Mark 13. Donahue, *Are You the Christ?*, 132.

[75] "The lesson of the fig tree is that the disciples must be prepared to become, themselves, the new temple which will replace the old, doomed, temple through faith, prayer, and forgiveness." Robert L. Humphrey, *Narrative Structure and Message in Mark: A Rhetorical Analysis* (Lewiston, NY: Mellen, 2003), 250.

[76] "One could not simply repudiate the temple without provoking the most fundamental crisis regarding Yahweh's presence in the world." Myers, *Binding*, 301.

withered fig tree symbolizes the condemnation of the temple, but then go on to say that the fig tree also serves as an example of an *adunaton*.[77] When they analyze the narrative leading through 11:21, the fig tree means one thing, but when they proceed to discuss the rest of the section, the fig tree means another. While such a reading could be a possibility, the goal of this dissertation is to explain this ambiguity without resorting to such schizophrenic logic.

Finally, the last issue to be brought up here is the apparently loose connection between 11:25 and everything else. Whether by way of the "cursed" fig tree/temple/mountain, or by the prayer connection with 11:17's "house of prayer," or simply by considering the withered fig tree to be an example of faithful miracle-working prayer, 11:23 and 11:24 have been explained somewhat satisfactorily as connected to the previous context.[78] While some still view those connections as doubtful, acceptance of a continuing thought flow into 11:25 is even harder to come-by.[79]

The most common thought process is that Mark was recording some thoughts on prayer, and this little phrase from the Lord's Prayer just snuck its way in by word/theme association.[80] One of the specific "problems" that is often highlighted is that Mark nowhere else refers to God as "Father in Heaven." While most bring up that argument to disconnect 11:25 from its narrative context even further, there is also good reason to consider that title as appropriate to Mark's

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[77] "This strange story about the barren fig tree that Jesus withered with a word serves two purposes in the Markan narrative. As scholars have long recognized, it prefigures the destruction of the temple by framing the 'cleansing' account in which Jesus effectively cancels the temple cult. . . But the fig tree story is not merely a threat, but also a promise. As we will see, the evangelist takes pains throughout the gospel to make it clear that the power manifested in Jesus' ministry—the power that withered the tree—was the power of God. That same power, the evangelist insists, is available to the community through believing prayer." Dowd, *Prayer, Power, and the Problem of Suffering*, 53. See also, Cranfield, *St. Mark*, 354–57, 361; Heil, "Narrative Strategy," 79–80; Evans, *Mark*, 188–94; Marcus, *Mark*, 785–87, 795;Marshall, *Faith as a Theme*, 164–69; Molony, *Mark*, 226–27; Watts, *Isaiah's New Exodus*, 337, 368, et al.

[78] See fuller discussion in the previous section.

[79] Telford strengthened his argument by simply excising 24 and 25 from Mark's original text; a quick solution, but without any warrant from the manuscripts. Telford, *Barren Temple*, 51–53.

[80] Edwards, *The Gospel according to Mark*, 348; Ernst, *Das Evangelium nach Markus*, 334; France, *The*

narrative context. As Heil observes,

> The reference to God as 'your Father who is in heaven' contributes to Mark's anti-temple theme. Although the temple was the special place of God's presence on earth, his true dwelling place is in heaven, from where he hears prayers and grants forgiveness of sins. See the several references to God's hearing prayers and forgiving from heaven in the account of Solomon's dedication of the temple (1 Kgs 8:27–51).[81]

If Mark has composed this section to be rather focused on the rejection of the temple, and if 11:22–25 is read as a response to concerns over the temple's utter abnegation, isn't it appropriate that Jesus also reminds his concerned disciples (and Mark's readers) that God never really dwelt in the temple, but has always dwelt in heaven? A further discussion in chapter 5 on the 1 Kgs 8 passage will help elucidate this understanding.

Thus, ambiguities abound in this small section of Mark. Textual issues, grammatical-syntactical issues, and narrative logic issues all weave together to make the interpretation of this passage more difficult. If one is to settle these ambiguities, it is best to do so by paying careful attention to their context. This context must not only be limited to the narrower context of chapter 11, but also the greater context of Mark's entire gospel. Any offered interpretation should "fit" not only with the themes in the immediate context, but the context of the Marcan whole. Thus, the following chapter will examine Mark's gospel as a whole, in order to highlight certain themes and ideas that might be in-play in Mark 11:20–25. Chapter 3 will be the chapter with the "widest angle," as following chapters will proceed to narrow down our examination back to the ambiguities discussed in the present chapter.

Gospel of Mark, 450; Marcus, *Mark*, 787–88.

[81] Heil, "Narrative Strategy," 80, n. 10. Gnilka also does not make the connection to the Lord's Prayer, but he doesn't point to the temple either. Instead he highlights the Marcan identification of Jesus as the Son of God. "Im Gebet soll die Jüngerschaft Gott als Vater erfahren. Da der Evangelist das Sohnesprädikat favorisiert, darf die Eröffnung des Vatergedankens als Einbeziehung in das Sohnesverhältnis Jesu gesehen werden" Gnilka, *Das Evangelium nach Markus*, 135.

CHAPTER THREE

MARK AS A WHOLE

Attempting to briefly describe Mark as a whole in one chapter is a rather unattainable goal. Entire monographs are regularly written concerning one particular aspect of the gospel, how could one chapter ever do justice to the work as a whole? The goal of this chapter must, therefore, be limited in some manner, otherwise the present discussion would quickly get lost in a hopelessly endless sea of scholarly debate. Thus, the present chapter will attempt to focus the discussion on the aspects of Mark's whole deemed most relevant to the present study: reading Mark as a literary whole and interpreting 11:20–25 in the light of various major themes. After a brief discussion of what interpretation of Mark as a literary whole looks like, this chapter will proceed to explain its understanding of the importance of studying themes in Mark's gospel. Following this, select major themes will be examined, keeping in mind both their importance to the Marcan whole, and their relevance to the present study.

Mark as a Literary Whole

Perhaps the most important point to make at the head of this chapter is that Mark is indeed a literary whole. Mark is a unified story, written cohesively and creatively. This dissertation's argument will seem like a rather fanciful exercise if one does not agree with this assumption. While it is becoming rather normal to share this thought, that has not always been the case. As Voelz explains the importance of this assumption he aptly notes, "[g]enerally speaking, modern interpreters before the last quarter of the twentieth century would be hard pressed to agree with

it."[1] If one is keen on reading Mark in order to compare the "accuracy" of his work to other accounts of Jesus's life in order to get behind the text into the world of "what really happened," they will likely interpret Mark's gospel differently than this approach. Instead of comparing how Mark might be skillfully using language thematically within his own text, such investigations are more likely to suggest carelessness and unreliability on the part of Mark in unfaithfully recording "what really happened." However, when one assumes that Mark is indeed a singular, cohesive, literary work, the very problems of Mark's unreliability as a historical source don't appear as "problems" but as artful interpretations in his unique telling of the story of Jesus.

A good example of this is the stilling of the storm scene. If one carefully compares Mark's account to Matthew's, one notices a few discrepancies. In Matthew Jesus asks the disciples, ὀλιγόπιστε, εἰς τί ἐδίστασας;[2] *before* he calms the winds and the waves, yet in Mark he asks them τί δειλοί ἐστε; οὔπω ἔχετε πίστιν;[3] *after* he calms them. In Matthew the disciples seem rather impressed at the power of Jesus οἱ δὲ ἐν τῷ πλοίῳ προσεκύνησαν αὐτῷ λέγοντες· ἀληθῶς θεοῦ υἱὸς εἶ,[4] yet in Mark they seem deathly afraid of what just happened, ἐφοβήθησαν φόβον μέγαν[5] and—in contrast—they don't know what this means about his identity, καὶ ἔλεγον πρὸς ἀλλήλους· τίς ἄρα οὗτός ἐστιν ὅτι καὶ ὁ ἄνεμος καὶ ἡ θάλασσα ὑπακούει αὐτῷ;[6] Do such discrepancies serve to show us that one of these writers is a less reliable source?[7] Or do they record the events in the

[1] Voelz, *Mark*, 62. Cf. The developments in biblical interpretation in the last hundred years or so reviewed in chapter 1 of the present work.

[2] Matt 14:31

[3] Mark 4:40

[4] Matt 14:33

[5] Mark 4:41

[6] Ibid.

[7] This very text comparison was employed in the New Testament class in the fall of 2003 at the University of Minnesota by Calvin Roetzel apparently to discredit the historical reliability of the Gospel writers. Explaining the difference in terms of things outside the text (sources) still seems to be a concern for some. Cf. Kevin W. Larsen,

way they do in order to fit them into their unique way of telling the story?

If one pays attention to Mark as a literary whole one sees that this fits into Mark's thematic presentation of the disciples.[8] By chapter 4 of Mark's gospel the disciples begin to be seen as a less than ideal group. Although the first few chapters of Mark say nothing negative about the disciples, by 4:13 they receive their first rebuke. When they ask Jesus for a further interpretation of his parable he asks, οὐκ οἴδατε τὴν παραβολὴν ταύτην, καὶ πῶς πάσας τὰς παραβολὰς γνώσεσθε; The great fear described in 4:41 plays into this theme of the disciples ineptitude, as they don't really understand who Jesus is and what he's all about in Mark's presentation. In the other famous boat scene, where Jesus walks on water, Mark ends the story by adding, οὐ γὰρ συνῆκαν ἐπὶ τοῖς ἄρτοις, ἀλλ' ἦν αὐτῶν ἡ καρδία πεπωρωμένη.[9] The disciples' failures become especially pronounced through chapter 8–10, eventually culminating in their fleeing and denying Jesus at his arrest and trial. While the struggles of the disciples in understanding Jesus is a noticeable theme in Mark, Matthew paints a more positive (or at least neutral) picture of the disciples.[10] This isn't necessarily because Mark wrote an historically unreliable account, but rather he chose to emphasize in a unique manner that the real and only hero of the story is Jesus.[11]

It can also be noted that although Mark appears to be a single artfully arranged whole, Mark's cohesive whole does not appear to be structured quite as concretely as we might like. As described in the opening chapter, Mark doesn't appear to have a single linear structure. His work

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"Matthew 8:27 and Mark 4:36: Relics of a Prior Source," *ResQ* 54 (2012): 186–90.

[8] This also fits into the "messianic secret" theme, to be discussed further below.

[9] 6:52

[10] As can be seen in the above example where they immediately intuit that Jesus is the son of God.

[11] More discussion on how this plays into Mark's overall theme will follow below.

has been described as an interwoven tapestry or a fugue.[12] Mark is written so that themes weave into and out of each other, and are returned to and interwoven throughout his narrative. In order to do justice to the interpretation of any passage in Mark, it must be examined according to the various overlapping themes that converge and interact with the passage at hand, as well as how those themes fit with the major themes of Mark's narrative as a whole. The goal of this chapter will thus be to examine several of these greater overarching themes of the gospel of Mark.

Before proceeding to examine some of these major themes of the Marcan whole, one more thing can be foreshadowed here. Chapter 5 will deal with the use of the Old Testament in Mark. However, it should be noted that Mark's intertextuality is also appropriate to address in this chapter. Mark dresses his narrative *as a whole* with the Old Testament. Major Old Testament people, places, and events are alluded to, and concomitantly so are many Old Testament texts. He begins his narrative with an Old Testament citation, and describes the events of his narrative as intimately connected to the revelation of the God of the Old Testament. This is an important aspect of the Marcan whole that needs to be remembered; Mark's understanding of the Old Testament is integral to any coherent reading of his whole. The lack of a fuller treatment on Mark's intertextuality in this chapter should not be misunderstood. It is not neglected here because it is a minor topic isolated from the major literary themes of his narrative. In fact, it is so important that it demands a chapter of its own.

Major Themes

Various themes have been offered as *the* proper interpretive key for Mark's gospel. As that discussion has become increasingly complex, it appears too cavalier for this dissertation to

[12] Cf. Dewey, "Interwoven Tapestry," 224; Kee, *Community of the New Age*, 64, 75.

make too bold of a claim concerning *the* major theme of Mark's gospel.[13] Whether or not one is inclined to see any particular theme as *the* major theme depends as much on one's definition of theme as anything. Defining a theme is furthermore, a rather inexact science. Citing Northrop Frye, Richard Hays has recently offered, "[the] theme is what, as we say, the story has been all about, the point of telling it."[14] While such a definition is generally helpful, it still leaves quite a bit of gray area. Concerning Mark, one could say the story is all about Jesus. Is Jesus, therefore, the major theme? One could also say the story is all about the conflict Jesus entered into that led him to his death (and announced resurrection). Is conflict the major theme? Or perhaps, since there are other gospels that include these basic themes, perhaps *the* major theme of Mark should be found in his unique emphases. Thus, since Mark emphasizes the difficulty in understanding Jesus and the question of his identity more than others, perhaps that should be considered *the* major theme. Different themes can and have been offered as *the* major theme, but the difficulty in specifying what *the* major theme *is* seems to be matched by the difficulty in defining exactly what a singular major theme *is* in the first place.

The present work will understand a theme as a particular idea or concept that recurs throughout Mark's narrative. A major theme, will therefore be one of these concepts that is especially important to Mark's gospel, specifically in that it explicitly recurs throughout his narrative, and shapes the way the story is told so that different minor episodes are often told in the light of such a major theme.[15]

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[13] For a brief overview of recent major works which study Mark from the vantage point of different "topics," see Cilliers Breytenbach, "Current Research on the Gospel according to Mark: A Report on Monographs Published from 2000–2009," 13–32 in *Mark and Matthew I: Comparative Readings: Understanding the Earliest Gospels in their First-Century Settings*, ed. Eve-Marie Becker and Anders Runesson, WUNT 2 Reihe 271 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2011), 25–30.

[14] Hays, *The Faith of Jesus Christ*, 23.

[15] E.g., the above example of Mark's negative picture of the disciples in the storm scene, whereas Matthew's retelling of the same story isn't shaped by that theme.

It can be noted here that not every theme that has been suggested as *the* proper interpretive key for Mark's gospel fits this definition of a major theme. Studies that focus on one specific Old Testament lens through which to view the gospel are too subtle for this definition.[16] Likewise so are studies that focus on an aspect that occurs in a focused part of Mark's narrative, but not clearly throughout the whole.[17] Furthermore, studies that focus on one particular title used to refer to Jesus can be considered as participating in the greater theme of Jesus's identity, and a more general focus on Jesus. All of these and more have been presented as major themes that one must understand in order to properly interpret Mark's gospel.

Regardless of what *the* actual theme is, or how one wants to define a *major* theme, such discussions have served well to highlight various themes of Mark's gospel that can be helpful to bear in mind. However, for the sake of brevity and focus, the following section will highlight a number of major themes of Mark that recur throughout his narrative, appear to shape the way the narrative is told, and are particularly relevant to the interpretation of Mark 11:20–25. It will first describe how *Jesus himself is indeed the focus* of Mark's narrative, briefly explaining how Mark's presentation of Jesus's identity fits with Mark's presentation of his story as εὐαγγέλιον. It will then describe how important the theme of *Jesus's conflict with authorities* is within Mark's narrative. Flowing out of that discussion the theme of *new over old* will be examined as a major theme that shapes much of Mark's gospel. Finally, Mark's special emphasis on *Jesus's words* will be described. Again it needs to be stressed that these themes are not the only significant themes in Mark's gospel, nor are they always cleanly and completely separate from each other. However, they are readily identifiable, recurring themes within Mark's gospel which all play a

[16] E.g., Wolfgang Roth, *Hebrew Gospel: Cracking the Code of Mark* (Oak Park, IL: Meyer-Stone Books, 1988); Watts, *Isaiah's New Exodus*; Adam Winn, *Mark and the Elijah–Elisha Narrative: Considering the Practice of Greco-Roman Imitation in the Search for Markan Source Material* (Eugene: Pickwick, 2010).

[17] Such as Mark's temple theme, which occurs most pointedly in chapters 11–15. E.g., Gray, *The Temple in*

role in the interpretation of Mark 11:20–25. Thus, the following discussion will attempt to establish the prevalence and importance of these themes in their own right first, and then also proceed to signal how they connect to the overall focus of the present dissertation as well.

Jesus Is the Focus

Perhaps it seems rather too obvious to point out, but Jesus is the focus of Mark's narrative. The book is describing important parts of Jesus's life, but this description is not merely biographic; Mark isn't concerned to simply hand down the facts about Jesus's life and death. He calls his work εὐαγγέλιον, good news, a relevant story told in such a way that the reader/hearer might understand why this story of Jesus might be considered good news to them.[18]

Some have pushed this relevance so far that Jesus becomes an example and the gospel is really about discipleship.[19] However this seems to neglect the fact that the disciples in Mark's narrative are rather hopeless failures themselves.[20] Not only is it odd to teach discipleship by portraying actual disciples who were all failures, Mark seems to suggest that his "good news" is much greater than some idea of discipleship. While some commentators have attempted to say little about how Jesus's suffering and death relate to Mark's εὐαγγέλιον,[21] others have noted that

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Mark; Juel, *Messiah and Temple*.

[18] Cf. Dowd, *Prayer, Power and the Problem of Suffering*, 25; Hatina, *In Search of a Context*, 81; Kertelge, "Epiphany of Jesus," 106–7; Schweizer, "Mark's Theological Achievement," 68; Telford, "The Interpretation of Mark," 26; Voelz, *Mark*, 108.

[19] E.g., Kelber, *The Kingdom in Mark*, 71; Rhoads et al, *Mark as Story*, 142. For a specific look at how scholars employing the methods of redaction criticism have come to different views on the disciples, see C. Clifton Black, *The Disciples according to Mark: Markan Redaction in Current Debate* (Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1989). Although his work is more focused on the failures of redaction criticism as a method, he gets there by comparing three different, but typical views of the disciples by redaction critics.

[20] "Because of this portrayal, it is impossible to see the disciples in general, and the Twelve in particular, as models of discipleship in Mark." Voelz, *Mark*, 43. Kelber suggests this negative view of the disciples was polemically aimed against the Jerusalem church, Kelber, *The Kingdom in Mark*, 82. Contrast this with Malbon who sees this theme as encouragement for the implied reader. Elizabeth Malbon, "The Major Importance of Minor Characters in Mark," in *The New Literary Criticism and the New Testament*, ed. Elizabeth Struthers Malbon and Edgar V. McKnight, JSNTSup 109 (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 1994), 63.

[21] E.g., "The closest that Mark comes to a rationale for this apocalyptic dogma of suffering is to demonstrate

Jesus's suffering, death, and resurrection is the good news itself.[22] This is most clearly indicated in Mark's narrative at the Passover meal. Heil explains this well:

> The bread and wine Jesus gives his disciples (14:22–24) constitute a new sacrificial meal surpassing the sacrificial system (11:15–17; 12:33) of the damned temple. In contrast to the dead bodies of animals sacrificed in the temple and later eaten in meals of communion with God, and especially in contrast to the body of the sacrificed lamb eaten in the Passover meal (14:12), the bread Jesus designates as "my body" (το σώμα μου), already anointed for burial (14:22; cf. 14:8), becomes a sacrificial victim to be eaten by his disciples, that it may unite them with his salvific death. By designating the cup of wine as "my blood of the covenant" (το αίμα μου της διαθήκης, 14:24), Jesus relates the blood to be shed at his death to the sacrificial blood of the covenant (το αίμα της διαθήκης, Exod 24:8) and to the meal that united the people of Israel to God in a covenantal relationship (Exod 24:3–11). That Jesus' blood will be poured out for many (14:24) emphasizes the nature of his death as a covenantal sacrifice for the atonement of sins. As the priest was to pour out (*ἐκχεεῖ*) the blood of sacrificed animals on the altar to atone for the sins of the people (Lev 4:7, 18, 25, 30, 34), so the blood which will be poured out (*ἐκχυννόμενον*) by the death of Jesus represents a sacrifice for the atonement of sins.[23]

Through this Passover meal, the Marcan Jesus signals that he is the good news, the atonement for sins through whom sinners might have communion with God.

Although one might recognize Mark's high focus on Jesus, different views abound concerning what Mark actually says about Jesus's identity. This is likely because of the enigmatic way Mark portrays Jesus's "messianic secret." William Wrede is often cited as the one who first brought to light the "messianic secret" of Mark. Although the term is widely used, it is

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that through it the scriptures are being fulfilled." Kee, "The Function of Scriptural Quotations and Allusions in Mark 11–16," 175.

[22] E.g., "'Gospel' in the original sense meant, as we saw, the message of Jesus' saving act which found its proper expression in his death and resurrection. We can assume that this was Mark's view too." Kertelge, "Epiphany of Jesus," 107.

[23] Heil, "Narrative Strategy," 94–95. Cf. Jostein Ådna, "Jesus' Symbolic Act in the Temple (Mark 11:15–17): The Replacement of the Sacrificial Cult by his Atoning Death," in *Gemeinde ohne Tempel: Community without Temple: Zur Substituierung und Transformation des Jerusalemer Tempels und seines Kults im Alten Testament, antiken Judentum und frühen Christentum*, ed. Beate Ego, et al., WUNT 118 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1999), 471; Gray, *The Temple in Mark*, 159–62; Larry Perkins, "Kingdom, Messianic Authority and the Re-constituting of God's People: Tracing the Function of Exodus Material in Mark's Narrative." in *Biblical Interpretation in Early Christian Gospels: Volume 1: The Gospel of Mark*, ed. Thomas R. Hatina, LNTS 304 (New York: T&T Clark, 2006), 107; Watts, *Isaiah's New Exodus*, 355.

not widely used in the same way Wrede first used it. For Wrede, the secret of Jesus's messiahship was also a secret to Jesus himself![24] However, today it is normally used to speak of the secret of Jesus's messiahship as subtly revealed to others in Mark's gospel.[25]

The question of Jesus's identity is certainly a prevalent theme in Mark's gospel; as is Jesus's concern to keep it a secret.[26] Already from the start of chapter 1, Jesus begins silencing demons because they attempt to disclose who he is.[27] The same idea of silencing demons to keep his identity a secret is brought up again in 3:11–12.[28] The command to silence is further extended to those who he heals, as well as his disciples in various places as well.[29] Corresponding with the command to silence is a marked curiosity over the question of Jesus's identity. This question is put on the lips of various people in various places as well. At the first exorcism people are left wondering τί ἐστιν τοῦτο;[30] Such questions begin to move away from the τί and towards the τίς, even amongst his disciples. When Jesus calms the storm in chapter 4, even the disciples are left wondering τίς ἄρα οὗτός ἐστιν.[31] In chapter 6, the people of Jesus's hometown are similarly

[24] For an overview of Wrede's work and influence see, Kingsbury, *Christology in Mark*, 1–23.

[25] Moule takes up Wrede's argumentation and suggests that he has done a disservice to Mark, "by lumping all the terms and all the different circumstances together into a monochrome secret about a single function or title." C.F. Moule, "On Defining the Messianic Secret in Mark," in *Jesus und Paulus: Festschrift für Werner Georg Kümmel zum 70. Geburtstag*, ed. E. Earle Ellis und Erich Gräßer (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1975), 251. Kingsbury wants to push past the simply messianic understand of Jesus to a fuller understanding of how that messianic identity combines with the revelation of Jesus as the son of God. "The secret of Jesus' identity in Mark is not, characteristically, a 'messianic' secret but the secret that Jesus is the Son of God." Kingsbury, *Christology of Mark*, 21

[26] "One might argue that neither of these is as prominent as is Mark's unfolding Christology linked to his messianic secret. Certainly this is a prominent feature, but it does not provide the distinctive structure of a given section; it provides rather the main theme of the overall plot." Swartley, *Israel's Scripture Traditions*,157, n. 7. Cf. Matera, "Prologue as Key," 296.

[27] οὐκ ἤφιεν λαλεῖν τὰ δαιμόνια, ὅτι ᾔδεισαν αὐτόν. 1:34. Cf. 1:24–25.

[28] καὶ πολλὰ ἐπετίμα αὐτοῖς ἵνα μὴ αὐτὸν φανερὸν ποιήσωσιν. 3:12.

[29] E.g., 1:44; 7:36–37; 8:26, 30.

[30] 1:27 N.B. It can be observed that at this point the question is τί not τίς. However, that distinction should not be pressed too far considering the immediate concern over *who* Jesus is in the same context as well (cf. 1:24–25, 34).

[31] 4:41 Cf. 2:7

struck by his teaching and wonder, πόθεν τούτῳ ταῦτα, καὶ τίς ἡ σοφία ἡ δοθεῖσα τούτῳ, καὶ αἱ δυνάμεις τοιαῦται διὰ τῶν χειρῶν αὐτοῦ γινόμεναι; οὐχ οὗτός ἐστιν ὁ τέκτων, ὁ υἱὸς τῆς Μαρίας καὶ ἀδελφὸς Ἰακώβου καὶ Ἰωσῆτος καὶ Ἰούδα καὶ Σίμωνος;[32] While the people in his hometown are confused because they thought they knew Jesus, others are at a loss trying to explain what they hear about him. Shortly after this scene, in 6:14–16, Mark records different opinions on *who* Jesus is. This same list is returned to in 8:28 when Jesus himself quizzes his disciples, τίνα με λέγουσιν οἱ ἄνθρωποι εἶναι;[33]

However, despite all the secrecy and apparent confusion, it needs to be noted that this question of Jesus's identity is not a secret to the reader/hearer.[34] From the beginning of his gospel, Mark has informed his readers/hearers that Jesus is the one whose coming fulfills various Old Testament prophecies,[35] the one whom John the Baptist signals as ὁ ἰσχυρότερός μου,[36] and the one whom the divine voice calls, ὁ υἱός μου ὁ ἀγαπητός, ἐν σοὶ εὐδόκησα.[37] Jesus's identity may be a secret to various characters in the narrative, but Mark has made it clear to those outside the narrative; this is the son of God.[38]

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[32] 6:2–3

[33] 8:27

[34] "All of this information, vital for understanding the person of Jesus, is communicated *only* to the reader; none of the human characters within the narrative (Jesus excepted) is privy to it." Matera, "Prologue as Key," 291. Cf. "In a word, all of these misunderstandings result from ignorance of information found in the prologue: the proper relationship between John and Jesus; the declaration of Jesus' sonship; the conflict between Jesus and Satan in the wilderness." Ibid, 298.

[35] "Technically, the quotation from the OT (1:2–3) introduces Mark's brief account of the ministry of John the Baptist. More broadly, however, it also conveys in capsule form the content of Mark's story. Since the quotation itself attests to the fulfillment of divine prophecy, it indicates that the events comprising Mark's story will all belong to the fullness of time, which is the time of the gospel." Kingsbury, *Conflict*, 32.

[36] 1:7

[37] 1:11 Cf. 9:7, 15:39

[38] This doesn't mean that there is still no confusion about Jesus for the interpreter. As Voelz summarizes six different ways in which Jesus is portrayed in Mark, his sixth way describes Jesus as "*Someone who is odd.*" After describing some of the idiosyncrasies of Mark's presentation of Jesus, Voelz aptly concludes, "No wonder his relatives and family come to take him away (3:21, 31)!" Voelz, *Mark*, 42.

So how does a focus on Jesus's identity fit with a story that calls itself εὐαγγέλιον? In keeping with what was said above concerning Jesus's redefinition of the Passover meal, ultimately Jesus is the εὐαγγέλιον of Mark's gospel, the good news himself. Kertelge sums this up saying, "This is the key to Mark's secrecy motif. Mark intends it to support the proclamation of Jesus who is already the Christ during his ministry on earth, but as such before Easter is still misjudged and understood. As the risen Christ, however, Jesus is now present and public in the proclaimed gospel."[39]

Such a focus on Jesus needs to be kept in mind for the interpretation of 11:20–25. This becomes especially important when one attempts to discuss the replacement of the temple. As has been mentioned in previous chapters, many scholars quickly suggest that "the community" replaces the now-condemned temple, without showing much from Mark's narrative to suggest that connection.[40] However, considering the major emphasis Mark's gospel has on who Jesus was, *and is as the present εὐαγγέλιον,* it seems more likely that any replacement for the central institution of religious identity (i.e. the temple)[41] would be more focused on Jesus than the community (which is apparently full of notoriously hard-hearted failures).[42]

Conflict with Authorities

Another major aspect of Mark's story of Jesus revolves around the conflict Jesus enters into with the authorities.[43] Early on in the narrative Jesus's own authority is highlighted as

[39] Kertelge, "Epiphany of Jesus," 121.

[40] Cf. chapter 2, 74–75.

[41] Cf. the above observations concerning Jesus replacing the sacrificial system and Passover meal as well. Gray has suggested that this last supper scene should actually be seen as the first sacrifice of the new temple. Gray, *Temple in Mark*, 157–62.

[42] Concerning the disciples, observe Voelz's introductory remark, "Mark's depiction of the disciples, especially the Twelve, is disturbing." Voelz, *Mark*, 42.

[43] The "authorities" are the antagonists of Mark's story. It has been recognized that this is a rather diverse

remarkable, and as this is highlighted, Jesus's authority is already placed in contrast to the present authorities.[44] It is no surprise then, that this obscure son of a carpenter who teaches with authority comes into conflict with these reigning authorities.

Already by the second chapter Jesus enters into an ominous disagreement with some scribes who were present at the healing of the paralytic. When Jesus saw the paralytic lowered down he responded to their faith by saying τέκνον, ἀφίενταί σου αἱ ἁμαρτίαι.[45] Perhaps it would have been alright if Jesus had simply healed the man, but this claim to have authority to forgive sins disturbs the scribes who were present. They think to themselves, βλασφημεῖ τίς δύναται ἀφιέναι ἁμαρτίας εἰ μὴ εἷς ὁ θεός;[46] Interestingly, Mark describes Jesus here as not only having the authority to forgive sins in this manner (which was something reserved for God!) and heal the paralytic, but also having the authority to read the thoughts of the scribes. These all involve supernatural abilities. The scribes are right to consider that Jesus is taking on God's authority in these events, and might very well be committing blasphemy. Yet, while the narrative explains that Jesus is no blasphemer,[47] this foreshadows how the Jewish authorities will eventually condemn him for that very charge.[48]

As the conflict with the authorities continues to build, Jesus's own authority is further stressed. This interwoven theme of Jesus's conflict with authorities quickly appears again in 2:16 when the scribes of the Pharisees begin to question why Jesus eats with tax collectors and

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group in Mark. "The antagonists of Jesus in Mark's story are the religious authorities, whether scribes, Pharisees, Herodians, Sadducees, chief priests, or elders. They are the rulers in Israel, entrusted by God with the care of Israel." Kingsbury, *Conflict*, 14.

[44] Mark 1:27. According to Kingsbury, this initial scene "anticipate(s) the conflict between Jesus and them." Kingsbury, *Conflict*, 66.

[45] 2:5

[46] 2:7

[47] Jesus receives God's stamp of approval explicitly at his baptism (1:11) and at his transfiguration (9:7).

[48] 14:64

sinners. This scene leads into a series of encounters with different authority-types who have a hard time understanding and accepting Jesus. He goes about boldly breaking their norms, not only eating with "sinners" but avoiding the normal fasts and Sabbath regulations. Yet he doesn't simply wantonly break these norms, he boldly does it claiming to have authority over the old ways. His disciples don't fast because they have the bridegroom (Jesus) with them.[49] His disciples can pluck heads of grain on the Sabbath because they have the Lord of the Sabbath (Jesus) with them.[50] The conflict with authorities is truly the conflict between the authorities of that age, and the authority of Jesus.

As these conflicts continue Mark further foreshadows where all this is headed. After another Sabbath-related conflict at the start of chapter 3, in 3:6 he adds, καὶ ἐξελθόντες οἱ Φαρισαῖοι εὐθὺς μετὰ τῶν Ἡρῳδιανῶν συμβούλιον ἐδίδουν κατ' αὐτοῦ ὅπως αὐτὸν ἀπολέσωσιν. The end of Mark's gospel is therefore already explicitly in view by the start of the third chapter. This kind of foreshadowing becomes all the more explicit when it later appears on Jesus's own lips. He predicts his own death at the hand of these authorities for the first time in the middle of Mark's gospel in 8:31. He repeats the prediction as they are coming down from the mount of transfiguration in 9:12, and again in 9:31 as well as 10:33–34. The reader/hearer of Mark's gospel should in no way be surprised by the capture, condemnation, and execution of Jesus that occurs in chapter 15, as that theme has been woven throughout Mark beginning in the third chapter.

It can be added that this conflict is not just a this-world political conflict that leads to Jesus's death. The essence of the conflict with authorities is brought to a new level with the significant verbal attack of chapter 3. While the leaders had previously been upset with Jesus for

[49] 2:19

[50] 2:28

brazenly breaking the norms, in 3:22 they now attempt to discredit Jesus's authority by saying ὅτι Βεελζεβοὺλ ἔχει καὶ ὅτι ἐν τῷ ἄρχοντι τῶν δαιμονίων ἐκβάλλει τὰ δαιμόνια. Jesus does not let this accusation stand, but enters into a leading set of parable-like questions intended to reduce their accusation to absurdity.[51] It makes no sense at all that Jesus would be driving out demons through demonic authority. What is perhaps most interesting out of this specific conflict is that Jesus further turns the tables on his accusers and suggests that they are actually the ones who "ally themselves with the evil one and with him stand condemned."[52] Through this scene the essence of this conflict with authorities moves from a conflict over this-world authority, to a conflict over spiritual-world authority.[53]

When Jesus finally arrives in Jerusalem in chapter 11, this conflict begins to boil over. While the people receive him warmly, Jesus receives no such reception from the Jerusalem authorities.[54] The following day Jesus does not wait for these authorities to stir up any conflict with him, but actually goes on the offensive against them. As he enters the temple and begins driving out the buyers and sellers, Mark doesn't depict these events as a generic conflict between Jesus and the buyers and sellers, nor the general crowd at the temple. Mark depicts these events as escalating the conflict between Jesus and the authorities. Καὶ ἤκουσαν οἱ ἀρχιερεῖς καὶ οἱ γραμματεῖς καὶ ἐζήτουν πῶς αὐτὸν ἀπολέσωσιν· ἐφοβοῦντο γὰρ αὐτόν, πᾶς γὰρ ὁ ὄχλος ἐξεπλήσσετο ἐπὶ τῇ διδαχῇ αὐτοῦ.[55]

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[51] Kingsbury makes this connection by observing various other appearances of this thematic thread in Mark. "They [religious authorities] are 'without authority' (1:22). To be without authority is to be without divine authority and therefore to 'think the things of humans' instead of 'the things of God' (8:33). It is, in fact, to be on the side of Satan (8:33)." Kingsbury, *Conflict*, 14.

[52] Voelz, *Mark*, 263.

[53] This of course fits in with Kingsbury's observation: "One impulse that gave rise to this story is the conviction that human history is the site of a cosmic struggle between God and Satan." Kingsbury, *Conflict*, 1.

[54] Notice the ominous silence as Jesus first enters the temple in 11:11.

[55] 11:18

After the fig tree episode closes out this cleansing scene,[56] the conflict between the leading authorities and Jesus's own authority immediately comes to the surface. The confrontation no longer dances around different issues, but the confrontation concerns the actual basis behind Jesus's authoritative words and actions.[57] When Jesus is asked about his authority he is hesitant to directly answer, but interestingly he appeals to the authority behind John's baptism. In one way this is a sly way to get out of the confrontation. The authorities can't answer as they're placed in a catch-22. However, this is all the more significant for the reader/hearer of Mark's gospel who was privy to the revelation that accompanied John's baptism. καὶ φωνὴ ἐγένετο ἐκ τῶν οὐρανῶν· σὺ εἶ ὁ υἱός μου ὁ ἀγαπητός, ἐν σοὶ εὐδόκησα.[58] John's baptism is all the more significant in this context because that is the foundational place in Mark's gospel where the divine authority behind Jesus's ministry was first explicitly given.[59]

As Mark describes the heightened conflict in Jerusalem, his descriptions become highly relevant to the present discussion. Throughout the final chapters of Mark, interestingly, Mark notes that much of this conflict happens ἐν τῷ ἱερῷ.[60] In fact, the relationship of Jesus to the temple becomes a major focal point in the conflict with the authorities through the latter part of Mark's gospel.[61] Note only can this be seen here in chapter 11, but the temple is always hovering in the background of chapter 12 as well. Likewise, the discourse of chapter 13 begins with the

[56] This will be dealt with more specifically in the following chapter.

[57] "Der Text 11,27–12,12 berichtet im wesentlichen, daß die offizielle Konfrontation zwischen Jesus und der obersten Behörde der jüdischen Autorität hinsichtlich des Vollmachtsanspruchs Jesu im Tempel stattfindet, wobei sich Jesus mit den Fragestellern auseinandersetzt. " Marius Young-Heon Lee, *Jesus und die jüdische Autorität: eine exegetische Untersuchung zu Mk 11, 27–12, 12* (Würzburg: Echter, 1986), 71.

[58] 1:11

[59] And similarly in 9:7.

[60] 11:27, 12:35. Cf. 12:41, 13:1. Chapter 4 will deal with this theme more exhaustively.

[61] "In the long end section of Mark's story (8:27–16:8), Jesus' conflict with the religious authorities prior to his passion takes place principally in the temple (11:27–12:34). If the conflict in the middle of the story is intense, the conflict in the temple is still more intense." Kingsbury, *Conflict*, 87.

prediction of the temple's destruction. Furthermore, Kingsbury explains, "[a]s Jesus stands trial, the main charge on which the authorities successfully attempt to sentence him to death is that he said he would destroy the temple (14:57–58). Moreover, as Jesus hangs on the cross, the passers-by also pick up on this false charge, taunting Jesus: 'Aha! You who destroy the temple and build it in three days . . .'"[62] This near narrative context will be described more fully in chapter 4 of the present work, however, it is important to note here how this major theme of Jesus's conflict with the authorities develops in Jerusalem. The conflict often centers in and around the temple, often pointing to its complete abnegation. It should come as no surprise, then, that Mark might be signaling the utter condemnation of the temple through a cursed fig tree that has withered to the roots; And it should come as no surprise, then, that the idea of casting "this" mountain into the sea also should be read in the light of this major emphasis of conflict between Jesus and the reigning authorities as synecdochically represented by the temple itself.

New over Old

Although this theme is intimately related to the previous theme it can and should be distinguished. Jesus's conflict with authorities often revolves around the "new" teachings that he is issuing in, and the "new" authority he is claiming. However, his "new" things are not limited to his conflict with the authorities, and In a recent article Christian Grappe suggests, "L'évangile selon Marc peut aussi être lu de manière globale comme un écrit faisant valoir de façon cohérente comment la venue de Jésus inaugure une ère nouvelle en même temps qu'un rapport nouveau à la sainteté et à l'impureté, aux lieux et aux temps, aux hommes et à Dieu."[63] The "new" that Jesus brings in, therefore, moves beyond the conflict that centered around it and

[62] Kingsbury, *Conflict*, 78–79.

[63] Christian Grappe, "Jésus, le Temp et *les Temps*: À la Lumière de son Intervention au Temple." in *Le Temps et les Temps:dans les littératures juives et chrétiennes au tournant de notre ère*, ed. Christian Grappe and Jean-Claude Ingelaere, SJSJ 112 (Boston: Brill, 2006), 181.

entails a new age, with new rules, and new institutions, all of them initiated through Jesus, and often in some form of relationship to the "old."

That is to say the "new" that Jesus brings in is not entirely *ex nihilo* "new," it is often connected with something "old."[64] For example, in 1:22 when the people in the synagogue comment about Jesus's teaching[65] they quickly contrast it with the "old" teaching of the scribes. This new versus old dichotomy is seen most explicitly when Jesus responds to the question of why his disciples don't fast. In his response of 2:21–22 Jesus figuratively speaks of sewing new cloth on an old garment and pouring new wine into old wineskins. Again, the "new" things of these parables are seen in relation to something similar but "old." Furthermore, according to these examples, the "new" of Jesus's teaching isn't simply a supplement or complement of the "old," it is an incompatible replacement. The new and old don't mix.[66] What Jesus issues in is different from the old, and the old is done away with by his new. Again, this issues in a conflict with the leading authorities, those who are of the old ways. But Jesus is in no way going to make his teaching more palatable to the old in order to avoid conflict. The new replaces the old and they cannot both be retained.

The overturning of the "old" ways is not only seen in the conflict over fasting, as mentioned above, Mark's narrative also discusses other teachings and attitudes. Following the fasting question, Mark quickly moves the discussion toward the Sabbath and Jesus's new teaching concerning the Sabbath.[67] Furthermore, this new versus old theme is extended into other apparently diverse subjects such as cleanliness laws, as well as the inclusion of the gentiles in God's kingdom. As Jesus begins to move back and forth across the Sea of Galilee, the question

[64] Cf. Voelz, *Mark*, 440.

[65] Which is referred to explicitly as "new," καινὴ, in 1:27.

[66] Cf. LaMarche, *Evangile de Marc*, 88–89; Voelz, *Mark*, 221.

of the proper extension of his benefits to the gentiles rises to the surface. It begins with the healing of the Gergesene Demoniac in 5:1–20. By chapter 7 the theme becomes much more explicit. Directly after the discussion of what truly makes a person unclean,[68] Jesus has a brief, but rather significant encounter with a gentile woman.[69] A Syrophoenician woman asks that Jesus might cast a demon out of her daughter. After a parabolic tête-à-tête concerning the appropriateness of Jesus extending his healing powers to a non-Jew, he concedes that in response to her confession of faith the demon has indeed left her daughter.[70] Such an extension of Jesus's power to the gentiles is furthered going into chapter 8. While the woman had simply asked for scraps from the children's table, Jesus appears to feed four-thousand men abundantly. This feeding of four-thousand carries on this theme as it has been recognized as a specifically gentile-related feeding. Not only does that fit the thought flow of the narrative here, but it is further signaled by the word for baskets used. In contrast to the feeding of the five-thousand, where the disciples filled up twelve Jewish baskets, κοφίνων,[71] with scraps, in 8:8 they fill up seven Roman baskets, σπυρίδας, with leftovers.[72] Jesus teaches new ways to think about things and new attitudes to have toward fasting, the Sabbath, cleanliness, and gentiles.

It further appears that the "new" of Jesus isn't simply limited to teachings and attitudes such as these. Jesus is compared in various ways to different Old Testament personages, but also seems to surpass them in various ways. In the first discussion concerning the Sabbath, Jesus himself appeals to an example of "law-breaking" by David. The argument essentially boils down

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[67] 2:23–3:6

[68] 7:1–23

[69] 7:24–30

[70] 7:29

[71] 6:43

[72] Cf. Voelz, *Mark*, 429, 500.

to Jesus having authority to do this because he is both greater than David and greater than the Sabbath laws. The transfiguration scene suggests that Jesus is greater than both Moses and Elijah.[73] Indeed, Jesus's later teaching suggests that his teaching surpasses the old teaching of Moses as well.[74] As Jesus rides into Jerusalem on a donkey, his triumphal entry as the "son of David"[75] subtly presents him as surpassing Solomon as well.

Beyond these specific personages, Jesus also seems to be replacing other "old" concepts with something "new." Commentators have suggested that the 12 disciples signal a new Israel that Jesus is forming in contrast to the old.[76] As described above, Jesus replaces the Passover meal and even the entire sacrificial system with his own sacrificial death.[77] Likewise Jesus is repeatedly referred to as the king of the Jews throughout his trial and crucifixion. In Mark, this is more than an insult, this is an ironic accusation that speaks to the "new" reality of things that the authorities are too blind to see.[78] Jesus is indeed the new king of Israel, but both his rule and Israel itself are redefined in a "new" way over and against the "old" way.

As the focus of this discussion turns back to the argument of the present dissertation, it should come as no surprise that Mark's gospel also signals the rejection and replacement of the

[73] When Peter suggests three tents should be built, Moses and Elijah quickly disappear from the scene and all attention is focused on Jesus, (9:1–13). Watts makes the interesting conclusion that this echoes to the original Sinai event, and stresses Jesus's words over and against the Sinaitic revelation: "Thus on this new Sinai, Ps. 2:7 undergirds the summons to accept not Torah per se (Mal. 4:4) but Jesus' words, and in particular the immediately preceding passion prediction and the call to cross-bearing discipleship (8:34–9:1)." Watts, "The Psalms and Mark," 312.

[74] Consider the teaching on divorce in 10:1–12 and the later discussion on the resurrection at 12:18–27. Lamarche seems to make a similar connection in 1:44 when Jesus tells the healed leper to follow Moses' command in response to his cleansing. Lamarche, *Evangile de Marc*, 92.

[75] Cf. 10:48, 11:10

[76] E.g., Ernst, *Das Evangelium nach Markus*,113–15; Voelz, *Mark*, 247. Cf. "One of the most important aspects in Mark's presentation of the kingdom for his eschatology is the gathering of disciples who form a new community wherein God rules." Hatina, *In Search of a Context*, 117. The above discussion concerning the inclusion of the gentiles plays into this redefinition of Israel as well.

[77] See n. 23 above.

[78] Cf. Juel, *Messiah and Temple*, 56–58.

"old" temple with the establishment of a "new" temple. Thus, when Jesus acts against the temple, it is entirely appropriate in Mark's gospel to understand this as one more place where the old is being done away with. Concomitantly, Mark's narrative typically describes the overturn of an old thing with its new replacement. The old wineskin doesn't burst on its own, it bursts because something new is here. Therefore, when the temple is done away with, we should expect that something new has come that replaces it. As verses 11:20–25 flow out of the very pointed conflict in the temple, one can expect that this section is addressing the replacement of the old-and-cursed temple with something new.[79] As will be shown in chapter 5 below, the themes of 22–25 are entirely appropriate, therefore, in this context because they contain the same themes Solomon spoke of in his dedicatory prayer of the first temple. Once again in Mark's gospel, the new has come, and the old is done away with.

This, of course, leads back to the discussion of what the "new" entails. Is it Jesus or the new community? Although the 12 disciples seem to be the new Israel,[80] Mark typically signals the replacement of an "old" thing by Jesus himself. Jesus replaces the old teachings with his new teachings, Jesus replaces major Old Testament figures with himself, Jesus replaces the old idea of the king of Israel with himself and a redefined kingship, Jesus replaces the sacrificial system with his own sacrificial death. It appears likely, therefore, that Jesus himself would be the replacement of the temple. However, such a claim will be better discussed through the further narrative observations of chapter 4. For now, it is enough to suggest that the pattern of Mark's gospel suggests that Jesus is the new replacing the old temple.

[79] For more on the near narrative context see chapter 4 below.

[80] However, it should be noted that Mark also signals that Jesus is the new Israel as well. This will be discussed further below in chapter 5 when analyzing Mark's opening citation from the Old Testament. Cf. "Who is Jesus? He is the *people of God . . .*" Voelz, *Mark*, 109.

Jesus's Words

In Voelz's recent commentary on the gospel of Mark, he boils down the gospel of Mark to one complex theme, saying, "This, then, is what Mark's Gospel is about: *the ambiguity of the evidence, the necessity of believing in the face of such evidence, and the reliability of Jesus' words*."[81] While the present study, as mentioned above, is hesitant to claim any distinct theme as *the* major theme of Mark's work, Voelz makes a compelling case that this theme should be at the top of the list. Furthermore, Voelz is not the only commentator to notice the importance of Jesus's words in Mark.[82] In fact, the importance of Jesus's words has begun to be stressed at a higher level as orality studies have increased.

The idea that Mark was written for oral performance has gained traction in recent years, and it has the potential to shed light on many aspects of Mark's gospel.[83] It can readily be observed that Mark uses certain thematic words and phrases in his gospel.[84] However, much of that thematic usage has remained unobserved by modern readers who often read Mark in isolated units.[85] If one understands Mark from an oral performance perspective, such repetition becomes all the more significant as these echoes would serve as guides for one listening to a continuous presentation of Mark. Mark's unique vocabulary for a possessed person as ἐν πνεύματι ἀκαθάρτῳ doesn't seem that significant on its own. But when heard in combination with John's words that the stronger one coming after him βαπτίσει ὑμᾶς ἐν πνεύματι ἁγίῳ and the later discussion of

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[81] Voelz, *Mark*, 55.

[82] E.g., Heil, "Narrative Strategy," 78; Kee, *Community of the New Age*,117; Kirk, "Time for Figs," 526; Andrew T. Lincoln, "The Promise and the Failure: Mark 16:7, 8," *JBL* 108 (1989): 297; Rhoads, et al., *Mark as Story*, 143; Schweizer, "Mark's Theological Achievement," 75.

[83] Cf. Dewey, "Interwoven Tapestry"; Richard Horsely, *Hearing the Whole Story: The Politics of Plot in Mark's Gospel* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2001); Maxey, "Power of Words"; Voelz, *Mark*, 72–73.

[84] Horsley calls the similar introductions to Peter's confession in 8:27–30 and John's execution by Herod in 6:14–29 as "one of the most striking cases of echo and repetition. Horsely, *Hearing the Whole Story*, 70.

[85] English translations also tend to remove some of Mark's distinct vocabulary. Cf. the NIV's rendering of ἐν

what clean and unclean really means in chapter 7, further thematic connections can be made.[86]

Horsley has pushed this further. "Sometimes the repetition of (sequences of) words and sounds not only aids the communication between performer and audience, but also emphasizes the power of Jesus's speech and confirms the trust that petitioners have in his power."[87] Orality studies help the interpreter observe both the thematic use of words and phrases, and help the interpreter consider how important the presentation of Jesus's effective words would have been in an oral culture. In a recent article that looks at Mark "[t]hrough the methods of performance criticism and speech-act theory,"[88] James Maxey argues, "[t]he people who do things with words are recognized by society as being given the authority to do these things. This authority is derived from Jesus's identity in Mark's Gospel."[89] Such an insight opens up the dual impact of orality studies on the gospel of Mark. On the one hand, the theme of Jesus's ἐξουσία is repeated so often that it is established as a major point of emphasis in Mark—especially for hearers.[90] On the other hand, that very ἐξουσία is established at a higher level in an oral culture where the effectiveness of one's spoken words is valued at a higher level.

But one doesn't need to rely on a study of orality to observe Mark's focus on Jesus's words. Indeed, Mark's gospel emphasizes the importance of Jesus's words in several ways. First, as briefly mentioned above, the *authority* and *power* of Jesus's words is regularly stressed. This

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πνεύματι ἀκαθάρτῳ as "possessed by an evil spirit" in Mark 1:23. Cf. 1:26, 27; 3:11, 30; 5:2, 8, 13; 6:7; 7:25; 9:25.

[86] This is not to say that these connections cannot be made by contemporary interpreters who are simply reading Mark's gospel. They can, and indeed are (Cf. Voelz, *Mark*, 115, 163, 351). However, much modern reading does not read through the text all in one setting, making it more difficult for the mind to recall significant thematic words and phrases. Such connections would have been more readily made as one listened to an oral performance of the entire gospel.

[87] Horsely, *Hearing the Whole Story*, 69. He cites Mark 1:41–45 as an example: "'If you will (it), you can make me clean.' 'I do will (it). Be made clean.' . . . the leprosy left, and he was made clean."

[88] Maxey, "Power of Words," 296.

[89] Ibid, 298.

[90] This major theme is discussed above in the section on Jesus's conflict with authorities.

is explicitly highlighted in chapter 1, the first time he enters a synagogue in Mark. As he begins teaching the people, ἐξεπλήσσοντο ἐπὶ τῇ διδαχῇ αὐτοῦ· ἦν γὰρ διδάσκων αὐτοὺς ὡς ἐξουσίαν ἔχων καὶ οὐχ ὡς οἱ γραμματεῖς.[91] It is interesting to note that this authority is attributed to Jesus's teaching at the start of this pericope. As Mark continues, this authority is further highlighted when Jesus exhibits the power to drive out an unclean spirit after commanding it to be quiet, φιμώθητι καὶ ἔξελθε ἐξ αὐτοῦ.[92] He exhibits his authority by both driving out the spirit, but also in removing its right to speak. This is certainly an authoritative use of words, yet the people had already attributed authority to Jesus before he showed the power behind his words. According to this section, then, the *authority* of Jesus's words is established by what he says, and their *power* is proven by what he can accomplish by speaking. Both are held up as simultaneously testifying to the ultimate divine authority behind Jesus's words.[93]

The authority and power of Jesus's words is not only stressed at the start of Mark's narrative, it is continually returned to and heightened throughout Mark. Perhaps the most remarkable exhibition of the power of his words is his command of the wind and waves to obey him. In many ways echoing the earlier scene in the synagogue, Jesus commands the wind and sea, σιώπα, πεφίμωσο.[94] He doesn't just calm them by looking at them, nor by making a motion with his hands. He calms them *by his words*. On top of that, his command to the wind and sea personifies them in a way that subtly makes this a conflict over speaking. He doesn't simply say

[91] 1:22

[92] 1:25

[93] 1:27 καὶ ἐθαμβήθησαν ἅπαντες ὥστε συζητεῖν πρὸς ἑαυτοὺς λέγοντας· τί ἐστιν τοῦτο; διδαχὴ καινὴ κατ' ἐξουσίαν· καὶ τοῖς πνεύμασιν τοῖς ἀκαθάρτοις ἐπιτάσσει, καὶ ὑπακούουσιν αὐτῷ. Cf. "Parole et action sont-elles juxtaposées, ou bien plutôt unifiées de manière à suggérer que la parole de Jésus est efficace? " LaMarche, *Evangile de Marc*, 87.

[94] 4:39

stop, he uses the same command to silence given to the unclean spirit![95] Jesus's words are so authoritative that no other person or power is allowed to speak against them.

These exhibitions of his powerful words prove that they are backed by the divine power from above. Yet, this divine authority behind Jesus is rather explicitly communicated in other places as well. At the baptism of Jesus the voice ἐκ τῶν οὐρανῶν says σὺ εἶ ὁ υἱός μου ὁ ἀγαπητός, ἐν σοὶ εὐδόκησα.[96] At this instance it appears that the reader/hearer is the only one privy to this identification. However, when a similar revelation occurs at the transfiguration scene the voice says οὗτός ἐστιν ὁ υἱός μου ὁ ἀγαπητός, but also adds ἀκούετε αὐτοῦ.[97] Of all the things the voice could have told the disciples, it stresses Jesus's words. Jesus's powerful and authoritative words are backed with authority from above.[98]

Moving beyond their *authority* and *power*, Mark also stresses the *faithfulness* of Jesus's words in their predictive ability. Though certainly connected to their power and authority, this is slightly different. As the narrative moves closer to its end, Jesus begins to predict more and more things. A number of these things are actually fulfilled within Mark's narrative. In 8:31 Jesus predicts his rejection, death, and resurrection for the first time. As mentioned above, this prediction is repeated numerous times. In 11:2 he sends two of his disciples to get a colt for him, telling them rather precise details about how their search will unfold. A similar scene occurs at 14:13 where Jesus sends two of his disciples to prepare a room for their celebration of the Passover meal. Both of these predictions are followed by the disciples finding things καθὼς εἶπεν

[95] Though now in a perfect passive form.

[96] 1:11

[97] 9:7

[98] Watts notes the connection of the "divine son" language to Psalm 2, and adds that the stress on Jesus's words now trumps the Torah. "Thus on this new Sinai, Ps. 2:7 undergirds the summons to accept not Torah *per se* (Mal. 4:4) but Jesus' words, and in particular the immediately preceding passion prediction and the call to cross-bearing discipleship (8:34–9:1)." Watts, "The Psalms and Mark," 312.

αὐτοῖς.[99] Similarly, at 14:26–30, Jesus makes a series of predictions that nearly all find their fulfillment in the narrative. He predicts that his disciples will desert him, and they do. He predicts that Peter will specifically deny him three times before the rooster crows, and he does. And finally he predicts that he will rise again and will go before them into Galilee.

The prediction that he will rise again and go before them into Galilee is perhaps the most important part of this series for Mark's narrative. In one sense, it never occurs in Mark's narrative.[100] The narrative ends in Jerusalem and we never see if the disciples meet Jesus in Galilee or not. However, these words are returned to at the close of the narrative. They are on the lips of the messenger who announces that Jesus has indeed risen from the dead, as he says, ὑπάγετε εἴπατε τοῖς μαθηταῖς αὐτοῦ καὶ τῷ Πέτρῳ ὅτι προάγει ὑμᾶς εἰς τὴν Γαλιλαίαν· ἐκεῖ αὐτὸν ὄψεσθε, καθὼς εἶπεν ὑμῖν.[101] What is most interesting to observe at this point is that one never really *sees* the risen Jesus in Mark's gospel. Matthew, Luke, and John all record episodes where the risen Jesus interacts with various people, but Mark never lets the reader "see" the risen Jesus. However, considering the high stress on Jesus's words that has just been explained above, one can rest assured that Jesus has risen indeed. But instead of visibly seeing the risen Jesus, the reader/hearer of Mark's gospel is pointed to something else: Jesus's words. "There you will see him, *just as he told you*."[102]

The faithfulness of Jesus's predictive words becomes especially relevant to the present dissertation when it is considered in connection with the temple. In Mark 13:2 Jesus says,

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[99] 14:16 includes these exact words as a summary explanation, while the fulfillment in chapter 11 details out the fulfillment of Jesus's words.

[100] This assumes that Mark's gospel does indeed properly end at 16:8. Cf. Voelz, *Mark*, 59–60.

[101] 16:7

[102] 16:7. I am indebted to James Voelz for helping me "see" this connection during his *Mark* class during the winter quarter of 2013 at Concordia Seminary. Cf. Voelz, *Mark*, 54–55; 61. See also Anderson,"The Old Testament in Mark's Gospel," 282; Kingsbury, *Conflict*, 113; Lincoln, "Promise and the Failure," 289, 297; Malbon, "Minor

βλέπεις ταύτας τὰς μεγάλας οἰκοδομάς; οὐ μὴ ἀφεθῇ ὧδε λίθος ἐπὶ λίθον ὃς οὐ μὴ καταλυθῇ. The destruction of the temple—even the removal of stone from stone—is one of the specific predictions of Jesus. According to what has just been observed, this will, therefore, certainly happen. Because we do not know exactly when Mark was written, it is impossible to know for sure whether the temple had already been destroyed or not when Mark recorded this line.[103] However, in Mark's narrative world we do not need to actually "see" the temple destroyed; since Jesus has said that the temple will be destroyed, it will indeed happen. Thus, when one looks back to 11:23, it becomes all the more intriguing that Jesus talks about someone *saying* something to a "mountain" and believing that what someone *says* happens.[104] In Mark's gospel there is one person who speaks authoritatively and all others are to be quiet before him, whether spirits, leaders, wind or sea. That one is Jesus.[105]

It seems appropriate also to suggest that the "unseen" resurrected Jesus, who is still present and known according to his faithful words ("There you will see him, *just as he told you*."), might therefore be replacing the "seen" temple with his faithful words. Chapter 5 will further discuss the significance of the temple for the Jews of that time, explaining how it was a totalizing institution signaling the visible presence of God among them. In response to the loss of this visible temple, Jesus's words of 11:22–25 promise that the benefits of that now-condemned temple will continue. Even though the *seen* temple will be utterly torn down,[106] God will still be

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Characters in Mark," 74.

[103] The temple was destroyed by the Roman army at the command if Titus in 70 AD. Cf. Josephus, *J.W.*, VII, 1.1

[104] ὃς ἂν εἴπῃ τῷ ὄρει τούτῳ· ἄρθητι καὶ βλήθητι εἰς τὴν θάλασσαν, καὶ μὴ διακριθῇ ἐν τῇ καρδίᾳ αὐτοῦ ἀλλὰ πιστεύῃ ὅτι ὃ λαλεῖ γίνεται, ἔσται αὐτῷ.

[105] The following chapter will devote more pages to describing such narrative connections through Mark 11–13.

[106] 13:2

present with his people through Jesus's faithful words.[107]

In conclusion, Mark should be read as a literary whole, keeping in mind various major themes as they resurface in specific pericopes. This is extremely important in the interpretation of 11:20–25. As will be shown more thoroughly in the following chapter, this episode is intimately related to the cursing of the temple. Such an observation fits into Mark's overall thematic presentation of Jesus entering into conflict with the authorities and replacing the "old" with an incompatible "new." The old temple is done away with, and the new has come to replace it. Keeping with Mark's focus on Jesus, it is entirely likely that this "new" should be understood as Jesus himself, who is known and present according to his faithful words. As the "seen" temple is done away with (much like the physical appearance of Jesus in Mark's gospel), it is replaced by Jesus's faithful words.

[107] Note the similar, but larger conclusion in Malbon's structuralist examination of Mark's topography: ". . . in an eschatological sense, so the Markan Gospel projects, the opposition between heaven and earth is not so much to be mediated as surpassed-by the power of Jesus' words: 'Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will not pass away' (13:31). At that point the oppositions of the topographical suborder will be more than mediated; all spatial opposition will be invalidated by the disestablishment of its very foundation. But until that final transformation, and within the Gospel of Mark, the fundamental opposition PROMISE vs. THREAT, initially given narrative expression in the opposition HEAVEN VS. EARTH, continues to move toward mediation. The Markan spatial order affords no other instance in which movement toward the mediation of an opposition is tripled as here: (l) HEAVEN VS. EARTH is mediated by MOUNTAIN; (2) HEAVEN vs. EARTH is surpassed by Jesus' 'words' (3) HEAVEN vs. EARTH is replaced by LAND vs. SEA." Malbon, "Narrative Space," 99.

CHAPTER FOUR

THE NEAR NARRATIVE CONTEXT

While the previous chapter looked at Mark as a whole, this chapter will examine the near narrative context surrounding Mark 11:20–25. The first step of such a process is, of course, deciding what qualifies as the "near narrative context." Continuing with the assumptions of narrative criticism, and the recurring theme-based structure of Mark's gospel discussed earlier, it needs to be pointed out that this examination of the near narrative context can never fully be separated from an examination of the Marcan whole; Mark wrote his gospel as a unified whole and the pieces are only properly examined in relation to that whole. However, it is well recognized that the latter part of Mark's narrative takes a specific turn at Mark 11:1, as Jesus enters Jerusalem for the first time. Because of the specific ways that different themes are stressed from chapter 11 through the end of Mark, it is appropriate to examine these chapters as they work together (though keeping the whole in mind as well).

After a brief overview of chapters 11–16 this chapter will spend some time analyzing the temple theme as it occurs in these chapters. The temple is stressed in a unique way through this section of Mark, and it will be helpful to examine his presentation of the temple theme throughout the end of his gospel in order to better understand how it might impact the interpretation of 11:20–25. It will be explained below that Mark stresses the rejection of the old temple (and its leaders) and its replacement with a new temple (and a new "community"). It will be shown that Mark presents Jesus himself as this new temple. After due attention has been paid to this larger work, the latter part of this chapter will examine in more detail the relation of the fig tree episode to the temple cleansing scene. Mark sandwiches this temple cleansing scene with

a couple brief scenes around a cursed fig tree. This sandwiching is a well-known technique used in Mark suggesting some level of interplay between these two scenes. In keeping with Mark's greater picture of the temple in this context, the cursing of the fig tree helps the reader/hearer to understand that Jesus does not hope to cleanse the temple for reform; his intention is to close down the temple in judgment against its leaders. Finally, all of this discussion will lead to 11:20–25, where it appears that this scene should be indicating some level of response to the now-condemned temple. Indeed, the themes of those verses are appropriate themes in response to the condemnation of the temple, and also "fit" in with other themes of Mark's narrative.

Overview of Mark 11–16

In Rikki Watts's examination of the Isaianic New Exodus theme in Mark, he offers this brief overview of Mark 11–16:

> Although the Isaianic NE reaches its culmination in the joyful reception and enthronement of Yahweh in a gloriously restored Jerusalem, Mark's story concludes somewhat differently. Jesus' cursory visit to the Temple and his refusal to stay in the city overnight is unsettling enough, but the next day sees the tension which has been building throughout the previous sections finally erupt as, in his first major action on reaching the city, Jesus 'cleanses' the Temple (11:15–19). This act, accompanied by the disturbing cursing of the fig-tree (11:12–14), his probing question about John (11:20–33), and the provocative parable of the tenants (12:1–12), sets the tone for an increasingly acrimonious and ultimately deadly conflict with the Jewish authorities. After emerging victorious from a series of confrontations (12:13–40 [41–44]), Jesus announces the Temple's destruction (13:1–37), interprets his death as initiating a covenant (14:24), and is tried, sentenced, and executed (15:1–47). Finally, in a remarkably brief passage, Mark subsequently informs us that Jesus was raised from the dead, apparently concluding with the unusual statement that the first witnesses told nobody for they were seized with fear and amazement (16:8).[1]

Watts succinctly reports the final events of Mark's gospel. In his description one gets a feel for the confrontational nature of these final chapters. Indeed, this confrontation ends up where it had been heading all along. Already in the second chapter the scribes had decided Jesus was a

blasphemer; when he finally stands trial in chapter 14 he is convicted of this very charge (14:68). Yet as Mark describes this final conflict, he colors it with a theme that didn't appear in the previous ten chapters of his narrative, namely the temple.

The Temple Theme

Although the temple is never specifically referred to in the first ten chapters of Mark, it becomes a rather prominent theme after chapter 11.[2] Through the final chapters the temple is explicitly referred to twelve times,[3] and is implicitly referred to a handful of other times as well.[4] No other geographic location receives such attention. Jerusalem and Bethany are both specifically mentioned only four times,[5] while the Mount of Olives and Galilee are only referenced three times each.

Furthermore a number of these temple references are completely extraneous to the story, where Mark describes certain scenes as happening ἐν τῷ ἱερῷ even when there is no need to mention that these scenes happened ἐν τῷ ἱερῷ. Certainly it is relevant to describe the temple

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[1] Watts, *Isaiah's New Exodus*, 295.

[2] "From chapter 11 to 15:38, Mark seems occupied with the Temple." Juel, *Messiah and Temple*, 57, cf. ibid, 127; Donahue, *Are You the Christ?*, 136–38; Gray, *The Temple in Mark*; 6–10; Heil, "Narrative Strategy," 77; Evans, "Cleansing or Portent of Destruction," 240; Perkins, "The Function of Exodus Material in Mark's Narrative," 111; Shepherd, *Markan Sandwich Stories*, 345–46; Swartley, *Israel's Scripture Traditions*, 158–159. Others are more focused on the temple theme in chapters 11–13 or 11–12 only. See Kelber, *The Kingdom in Mark*, 11; Malbon, *Narrative Space*, 120 (though Cf. ibid, 124); Marcus, *The Way of the Lord*, 120; Telford, *Barren Temple*, 39; Cf. Watts, *Isaiah's New Exodus*, 346; Hatina, *In Search of a Context*, 346.

[3] Counting both ἱερόν and ναός. For more on the distinction between these terms see Juel, *Messiah and Temple*, 127–28; Biguzzi, *Yo Destruire Este Templo*, 121–25.

[4] Counting implicit references becomes more debatable. Does Mark refer to the temple in the parable of the tenants? Many commentators suggest that the framework of the parable echoes Isa 5 so strongly that one should consider the "tower" of the vineyard to be parallel to the "tower" of Isa 5, both of which are figurative references to the temple. E.g., Heil,"Narrative Strategy," 81; Winn, *Mark and Elijah-Elisha*, 103, n. 4 (in this footnote Winn gives a brief overview of scholarly positions on the temple in this parable). Furthermore, Jesus ends the parable with pretty clear temple language "the stone the builders rejected has become the cornerstone." Other implicit references would include the "house of prayer" reference of 11:17, the "this mountain" of 11:23, the reference to burnt offerings and sacrifices in 12:33, and the mention of the γαζοφυλάκιον in 12:41 and 43.

[5] The city is apparently referred to another 3 times, without specifically naming Jerusalem.

cleansing episode as happening ἐν τῷ ἱερῷ,[6] but Mark also continues to reference this location as Jesus disputes with various Jewish authorities. There is nothing about the discussions with these authorities that demands that Mark locates them in the temple, however he does just that in 11:27 and again in 12:35.[7] The superfluous nature of these references can be seen when contrasted with Jesus's trial in Mark. In 14:53–54 Jesus is simply led away "to the high priest,"[8] and likewise in 15:1 he is simply led away "to Pilate."[9] In contrast to the earlier scenes that were specifically located in the temple, no specific place is mentioned for either of these scenes. For Mark to consistently stress the temple in such unnecessary places helps the interpreter of Mark's gospel to pay special attention to the temple and what Mark is saying about it in this section.

Judgment against the Temple

So what is Mark saying about the temple in these chapters? Interestingly, the temple is consistently either the general place of conflict, or, more controversially, the object of Jesus's threats. Only one time is the temple mentioned in a somewhat neutral setting, and that is in the ominous verse 11:11, the brief visit of Jesus the day before the "cleansing."[10] When it is next mentioned in 11:15–16 Jesus is driving people out of the temple and overturning tables.[11] Here the temple is both the place of conflict, and the object of Jesus's threatening actions. As mentioned above, the temple serves as the unnecessary setting in 11:27 and 12:35 as Jesus enters into a series of verbal confrontations with the various authoritative groups of that time. It is also

[6] 11:15

[7] Cf. 14:49

[8] πρὸς τὸν ἀρχιερέα

[9] Πιλάτῳ

[10] "Mark's account of Jesus' visiting the Temple and looking around seems intended to set the stage for his actions on the next day." Watts, *Isaiah's New Exodus*, 310. Cf. Gnilka, *Das Evangelium nach Markus*, 119; Kelber, *Mark's Story of Jesus*, 59; Standaert, *Évangile selon Marc*, 809.

[11] More on the relation of the fig tree episode to this cleansing scene will be said below.

placed in the background at Jesus's arrest when he asks, καθ' ἡμέραν ἤμην πρὸς ὑμᾶς ἐν τῷ ἱερῷ διδάσκων καὶ οὐκ ἐκρατήσατέ με.[12] But despite this gentle protest, and with this reference in the background, arrest him they do.

Moving beyond the places where Mark uses the temple as a general setting of conflict, the other occurrences note specific threats against it. The temple "cleansing" scene is of course the most obvious threat against the temple; however, one might suggest that Jesus's action was to bring about reform instead of condemnation.[13] Yet when read along with the rest of Mark, the idea of condemnation makes more sense because of the various places the condemnation and destruction of the temple is mentioned. The clearest reference to the temple's destruction comes in Jesus's words of 13:2. While the disciples are impressed with the beauty and grandeur of the temple's edifice,[14] Jesus announces the temple's impending destruction, βλέπεις ταύτας τὰς μεγάλας οἰκοδομάς; οὐ μὴ ἀφεθῇ ὧδε λίθος ἐπὶ λίθον ὃς οὐ μὴ καταλυθῇ. There is no suggestion of reform here, but complete destruction.[15] As one continues through Mark it becomes even more clear that this isn't just a solemn prophecy from Jesus, but even a combative stance he assumes against the temple. At the trial scene Jesus's accusers specifically say, ἡμεῖς ἠκούσαμεν αὐτοῦ

[12] 14:49

[13] For an overview of the potential Jewish precedents for temple cleansings and how they might relate to Jesus's actions, see Antoinette Collins, "Jesus' Cleansing of the Temple," 155–66.

[14] Kelber makes such a wonderful observation on this verse that it must be quoted at length: "Having disqualified the temple and its custodians, having compared the temple to the dead fig tree, having made the point that it was not the 'right time' for the Kingdom in the temple, having formulated the new article of faith, having detached his identity from Davidic expectations, and having explicated his own authority in opposition to the temple, Jesus now exits the temple for the last time, never again to return to it (13:1). No sooner has he made his exit than one of the disciples exults over the might and glory of the temple complex: 'Teacher, look, what stones and what buildings!' (13:1). In view of the fact that Jesus has just manifestly dissociated himself from the temple and pronounced judgment on it, this statement on the lips of one disciple must be considered a case of misplaced admiration, in fact of gross misunderstanding. The disciple has eyes only for the temple stones, and not for Jesus, the cornerstone of the new temple." Kelber, *Mark's Story of Jesus*, 66.

[15] "This prediction of the physical destruction of the temple marks the logical culmination of Jesus' entire temple activity. Now it should be clear to the disciple what has long been obvious to the reader: the temple, like the fig tree, will be brought to ruin. . . The disciple has eyes only for the temple stones, and not for Jesus, the

λέγοντος ὅτι ἐγὼ καταλύσω τὸν ναὸν τοῦτον τὸν χειροποίητον καὶ διὰ τριῶν ἡμερῶν ἄλλον ἀχειροποίητον οἰκοδομήσω.[16] Though Mark notes καὶ οὐδὲ οὕτως ἴση ἦν ἡ μαρτυρία αὐτῶν,[17] it seems entirely likely that this should be understood as a generally valid accusation brought against Jesus.[18] The general idea of the charge is brought up again as Jesus hangs on the cross, people tauntingly shout out, οὐὰ ὁ καταλύων τὸν ναὸν καὶ οἰκοδομῶν ἐν τρισὶν ἡμέραις, σῶσον σεαυτὸν καταβὰς ἀπὸ τοῦ σταυροῦ.[19]

To make it entirely clear that all of these conflicts involving the temple are pointing at its rejection, Mark notes that at Jesus's death, τὸ καταπέτασμα τοῦ ναοῦ ἐσχίσθη εἰς δύο ἀπ' ἄνωθεν ἕως κάτω.[20] This enigmatic little line might be easily missed, but its importance can hardly be overstated. Malbon summarizes, "When the curtain of the ναός (15:38), is destroyed the separation of the Holy of Holies is destroyed. The separation of the sacred and the profane is thus destroyed; consequently, *the foundation of the temple system is destroyed*."[21] If there was any earlier confusion about how Mark presents the temple in his narrative, it is settled here. Based off

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cornerstone of the new temple." Kelber, *Mark's Story of Jesus*, 66.

[16] 14:58

[17] 14:59

[18] Ådna argues that Jesus actually said these words, but their falseness hangs on the word ἴσος. "Die sich auf das Tempelwort beziehenden Zeugenaussagen waren vermutlich in dem Sinne nicht gleich, daß sie im Wortlaut nicht vollends übereinstimmten." Ådna, *Jesu Stellung zum Tempel*, 115. Wedderburn suggests the falseness hangs on the idea of rebuilding. Wedderburn, "Puzzle or Key," 17. Wedderburn's conclusion might make sense in this isolated verse, but in the greater context or Mark's narrative there is much to suggest the rebuilding idea should be attributed to the Marcan Jesus as well. See below for further discussion. Juel has a rather comprehensive discussion concerning the irony of this accusation. Juel, *Messiah and Temple*, 118–25.

[19] 15:29–30

[20] 15:38

[21] Malbon, *Narrative Space*, 126 (italics mine). See also, Chávez, *Jesus' Temple Action in Mark*, 119; Chronis, "The Torn Veil," 109; Daniel M. Gurtner, "The Rending of the Veil and Markan Christology: 'Unveiling' the 'ΥΙΟΣ ΘΕΟΥ' (Mark 15:38–39)," *BibInt* 15 (2007): 303; Christian Grappe, "Prolongements et Subversion de la Pensée du Temple dans le *Nouveau Testament* au Miroir de l'Action et de la Prédication de Jésus dans *l'Evangile selon Marc*," in *Manières de penser dans l'Antiquité méditerranéenne et orientale: Mélanges offerts à Francis Schmidt par ses élèves, ses collègues et ses amis*, ed. Christophe Batsch and Madalina Vârtejanu-Joubert (Boston: Brill, 2009), 180; Gray, *The Temple in Mark*,186; Kelber, *Mark's Story of Jesus*, 82; Kingsbury, *Conflict*, 54.

a superficial reading, this line has nothing to do with the plot of Mark's gospel; on the surface it appears unrelated to Jesus's life, death, or resurrection. However, when Mark's theological concerns and fuller narrative are kept in mind, this line has huge significance. At Jesus's death the temple is negated. Perhaps here as much as anywhere it is appropriate to apply the grammatical label "divine passive" to the verb ἐσχίσθη.[22] Just as the heavens were described as σχιζομένους at Jesus's baptism and the divine voice claimed Jesus as his son, here the temple veil ἐσχίσθη and the centurion confesses that truly Jesus was the son of God.[23] Just as Mark revealed to his readers/hearers at the start that God has put his stamp of approval on Jesus, claimed him as his son, and is the true authority by which Jesus acts, the reader/hearer should now be fully cognizant that this same divine behind-the-scenes authority is the one that has torn the temple curtain from top to bottom. Through the mouths of his accusers we hear that Jesus has indeed predicted the destruction of the ναός, and at his death that destruction is enacted by God himself.[24]

When all these different references are held together, it becomes increasingly clear that the temple, as it then stood, receives no positive evaluation in Mark's gospel and is rejected by Jesus (and therefore God). The temple is consistently highlighted as the location of conflict throughout the end of Mark's gospel. Furthermore, Jesus even goes on the offensive against the temple in the "cleansing" scene and the prophecy of its destruction in 13:2, which is further witnessed to in the accusation of 14:58, and the taunt of 15:29. Mark further explains that at the time of Jesus's death the temple veil was torn from top to bottom, a divine act that could only have been

[22] Chance, "Cursing of the Temple," 286; Chronis, "The Torn Veil," 109; Heil, "Narrative Strategy," 98; Wedderburn, as is typical in his article, is too cautious to make this connection. Wedderburn, "Puzzle or Key," 17.

[23] For more on the relation of the temple veil to the heavens see Gurtner, "The Rending of the Veil," 299–303 and Gray, *The Temple in Mark*, 190–94.

[24] For more on the juxtaposition of Jesus and the temple through the end of Mark's gospel see Gray, *The*

accomplished by the "hands" of God.

Through all this, the temple has entered into Mark's greater overall theme of the conflict between authorities, namely Jesus's divine authority versus all other authorities.[25] The leaders had been contesting Jesus's authority from the start of the narrative. Their rejection of Jesus's authority was subtly linked to Satan's authority in chapter 3. As Jesus comes into the temple in chapter 11 this conflict theme strikes out against the temple as the den of these rebellious authorities.[26] Ultimately, just like the other authorities,[27] the temple itself is rejected. Although the temple doesn't appear until chapter 11, this rejection of the temple is intimately tied to the overarching themes of conflict that have been running through the entire narrative.

Replacement of the Old Temple with the New Temple

As the major Marcan theme of conflict ties into this discussion of the temple, so too does the theme of new over old. The old temple isn't just abolished in Mark's narrative, its new replacement is also signaled. As the groundwork for such an understanding was already laid in chapter 2 of Mark ("no one puts new wine into old wineskins"), it comes to fruition through Jesus's interaction with the temple. The clearest narrative signals of this replacement theme come from the parable of the tenants, the accusation of 14:58, and the rending of the veil at the time of Jesus's death.

The parable of the tenants falls between two of Jesus's most explicit threats against the temple, the cleansing scene of 11:15–18,[28] and the prophecy of its destruction from 13:2.

Temple in Mark, 7–10, 186–88, and in chapter 5 of the present dissertation.

[25] Note also that immediately after the cleansing/fig tree sandwich the following discussion is about Jesus's authority (11:27–33).

[26] Cf. 11:17, 12:1–12

[27] 12:8

[28] This scene, and its relation to the fig tree episode surrounding it will be discussed further below.

Furthermore it falls between Mark's superfluous references to the temple in 11:27 and 12:35. Judging by this context and setting, Aus rightfully concluded "[t]he parable of the Wicked Tenants is thus set squarely in the middle of Jesus's Temple activity."[29]

In this parable Jesus describes a vineyard leased out to wicked tenants. When the vineyard owner sends representatives to collect from the fruit of the vineyard, his representatives are rejected, mocked and/or killed. This parable has often been compared to Isaiah 5, and for good reason.[30] Through this connection it becomes easier to decipher that the vineyard, in some way or another, should be understood as Israel,[31] and the tower should be understood as the temple.[32] The tenants, therefore, are the authorities of Israel and her temple.[33] Such an interpretation was obvious enough that the authorities in Mark's gospel were able to recognize that πρὸς αὐτοὺς τὴν παραβολὴν εἶπεν.[34]

The themes of rejection and replacement and new over old are major themes of this parable. On the one hand, the wicked tenants (i.e. Jewish authorities) reject the owner's representatives (i.e. prophets and son)[35] and attempt to replace the rightful owner's claim on the vineyard with their own claim, δεῦτε ἀποκτείνωμεν αὐτόν, καὶ ἡμῶν ἔσται ἡ κληρονομία.[36] However, the parable describes that these plans cannot overturn the desires of the true vineyard

[29] Roger David Aus, *The Wicked Tenants and Gethsemane: Isaiah in the Wicked Tenants' Vineyard, and Moses and the High Priest in Gethsemane: Judaic Traditions in Mark 12:1–9 and 14:32–42* (Atlanta: Scholars, 1996), 3. See also, Hatina, *In Search of a Context*, 345; Johansson, "Kyrios in Mark," 110; Juel, *Messiah and Temple*, 131; Kingsbury, *Conflict*, 48.

[30] E.g., Watts, *Isaiah's New Exodus*, 368

[31] Aus, *The Wicked Tenants*, 14; Chávez, *Jesus' Temple Action in Mark*, 156

[32] Cf. Isaiah 5:2 See also, Heil,"Narrative Strategy," 81; Watts, *Isaiah's New Exodus*, 342–43;Winn, *Mark and Elijah-Elisha*, 103, n. 4.

[33] Aus, *The Wicked Tenants*, 62.

[34] 12:12 It is fascinating to consider that even in telling this parable Jesus once again predicts his own death in Mark's gospel.

[35] On Jesus's role as a prophet in Mark 11–12 see, Hatina, *In Search of a Context*, 345.

owner (i.e. God), and these tenants are, in turn, rejected themselves. The rejection of these "old" tenants leads into their replacement by "new" tenants as δώσει τὸν ἀμπελῶνα ἄλλοις.[37]

Perhaps even more interesting is Jesus's summary of verse 10, λίθον ὃν ἀπεδοκίμασαν οἱ οἰκοδομοῦντες, οὗτος ἐγενήθη εἰς κεφαλὴν γωνίας.[38] He himself is certainly the rejected stone of this quote.[39] But why bring in "construction:" language at all (i.e. stone and builders)? Remembering how this parable is situated in the middle of this temple-focused section of Mark is important. The temple is the setting for the conflict between Jesus and the old authorities. Indeed, it is living up to the accusation that it has become a "den of thieves."[40] The disciples will shortly begin to marvel at the impressive "stones" of the temple, and Jesus will, in turn, predict that all these impressive "stones" will be torn down themselves (i.e. rejected). By using "stone" language to refer to himself in 12:10 Jesus clearly signals that he himself will replace the rejected "stones" of the old temple. Instead of producing fruit for the owner (God), the "builders" try to reject God's stone (Jesus). Instead they themselves, and even their "den" of impressive stones, are rejected by God. The old is done away with, and the new comes into view. Old tenants are replaced by new tenants,[41] and the impressive stones of the old temple are replaced by the stone of the new temple, Jesus.[42]

This rejection and replacement theme is also seen at the trial where the charge is brought against Jesus that he claimed, ὅτι ἐγὼ καταλύσω τὸν ναὸν τοῦτον τὸν χειροποίητον καὶ διὰ τριῶν

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[36] 12:7

[37] 12:9

[38] 12:20

[39] Cf. Watts, *Isaiah's New Exodus*, 344. The relation of this quote to its source, Psalm 118, will be examined further in chapter 5.

[40] Heil, "Narrative Strategy," 81.

[41] Johansson suggests the 12 are in view here as the new tenants; Johansson, "Kyrios in Mark," 110. Chávez focuses more on the gentiles; Chávez, *Jesus' Temple Action in Mark*, 158.

ἡμερῶν ἄλλον ἀχειροποίητον οἰκοδομήσω.[43] The same movement from destruction of the old temple to its replacement by a new temple is explicitly spelled out in this charge.[44] The fact that this points to the temple's destruction is obvious enough and has been noted above. What needs to be stressed here is the idea of building another temple, one that is ἀχειροποίητος. While Jesus's words of 12:10 pointed out that he, himself, will be the cornerstone of the new temple, here his words—as quoted by these witnesses—suggest that he, himself, will also build it (οἰκοδομήσω), and that it will be not-hand-made. Concerning the temple's replacement, it is especially important to realize that this contrast between χειροποίητος and ἀχειροποίητος suggests that this new temple will be different in nature from the old temple. The stones of the old temple were visible, impressive, and put together by the hands of skilled workers. However, if Jesus is supposed to be the "cornerstone" of the new temple, it must mean that the new temple is something different in nature; a "spiritual" temple.[45]

Through the rest of Mark's narrative, Mark signals that this new, spiritual, ἀχειροποίητος temple is intimately related to Jesus's own death and resurrection. When the accusation of 14:58 is read alongside its companion, the taunt of 15:29, it becomes even clearer that Jesus has indeed predicted the destroying (καταλύων) of the old temple and the building (οἰκοδομῶν) of a new one, and that this new temple is of a different order than the old. The taunt reveals that Jesus would build the new temple ἐν τρισὶν ἡμέραις! This is either a ridiculous claim—for no one could build

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[42] Aus, *The Wicked Tenants*, 62; Donahue, *Are You the Christ?*, 127;Watts, *Isaiah's New Exodus*, 346.

[43] 14:58

[44] Concerning the "falsity" of this claim, see n. 391 above.

[45] Juel wrestles with the appropriateness of using the work "spiritualize" in this context to refer to this new, different temple order. He eventually suggests, "The term would suggest that the new 'temple' is really not a temple; it is a reality of a different order—corresponding to the new character of reality subsequent to Jesus' resurrection." Juel, *Messiah and Temple*, 155. Compare Ådna's use of the term *geistliche* to describe this distinction. Ådna, *Jesu Stellung zum Tempel*, 124.

a new temple building in three days—or a further signal that the new temple is, (A) not a "building," and (B) happens at the resurrection. As described above, the abnegation of the old temple is indeed enacted at Jesus's death by the tearing of the veil. The event that happens three days after this destruction is nothing other than the resurrection of Jesus himself.[46]

Despite the fact that Jesus himself claims to be the cornerstone of the new temple, the builder of the new temple, and the fact that new temple is "built" at his resurrection, some commentators continue to pass through this evidence and suggest that the Christian community itself is the new temple.[47] While the parable of the tenants has indeed signaled a new community in 12:9, Mark has not signaled that anything other than Jesus will actually be the new ἀχειροποίητος temple, "built" by Jesus three days after his death. The new community will worship at a new temple, but just as the old community was not synonymous with the old temple, neither is the new temple synonymous with the new temple. Mark's narrative signals that the new temple is Jesus.

Focus on Mark 11:12–25

With that basic overview in mind, it is appropriate to turn in a more focused manner towards the much discussed fig tree episode, and cleansing scene. While some of the difficulties and ambiguities mentioned in chapter 2 will be addressed here, a more focused synthesis will still be deferred until chapter 6. This section will explain how some of these difficulties should be interpreted, but only with a focus on their relationship to the near narrative context. The

[46] The three days are specifically mentioned in the predictions of 8:31; 9:3, and 10:34 as μετὰ τρεῖς ἡμέρας.

[47] E.g., Juel specifically devotes a brief chapter to this idea, arguing against an opposite position held by Linneman. However Juel gets there by looking at community-temple ideas from the Qumran literature. Perhaps if he had been more focused on *what Mark's gospel actually has to say on the matter*, instead of resorting to external evidence, he may have limited his conclusion to Jesus as the temple instead of the community. However, with his focus on the royal-messianic themes in Mark, he focuses more on the role of Jesus as temple-builder. Perhaps his focus on Jesus as the temple-builder blinded him to the idea that *Jesus might also be the temple himself*. Juel,

following chapter will unpack some of these same understandings in a fuller manner by explaining the contribution Mark's use of the Old Testament makes to this discussion. However, as will be shown here, much can be said by simply making observations from Mark's narrative alone.

The first question that must be addressed is what significance should be acknowledged for the intercalation. While it has become rather common to suggest that the fig tree story is sandwiched around the temple cleansing by Mark in order to make these two scenes somewhat interpretive of each other, this is not the only position. As described in chapter 1, many historically oriented studies have failed to make the connection, rather focusing on the historicity of the actual fig tree, or simply focusing on what actually happened in the temple.[48] Philip Esler's recent work suggests that Mark's interpretation of the fig tree cursing is unrelated to any judgment themes, but simply explained by the words on 11:22–25.[49] Collins suggests that this framing was simply an oral technique in storytelling, not necessarily done for its interpretive value.[50] Gundry devotes a lengthy section to this discussion in order to argue against the majority mutually interpretive position.[51] However, such views can truly be described as dissenting views as the overwhelming majority of interpreters are convinced that the fig tree cursing sandwiches

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Messiah and Temple, 159–68.

[48] See chapter one, 4–14.

[49] "There is an obvious and powerful objection to the proposal of Telford, Hooker and others that Mark has included the fig-tree story as a way of symbolically describing a coming judgment upon Israel—it is apparently not the one that Mark himself gives! His interpretation is found in 11.22–25 and consists, as noted above, of three originally independent logia that speak, at least at *a prima facie* level, not of the coming judgment on Israel, but of the power of faith (v. 22–23) and of prayer (v. 24), and of the right way to pray (v. 25)." Esler, "Withered Fig Tree," 64.

[50] Collins, *Mark*, 524–25. Kirk believes Collins's conclusion is the exact opposite of the study she cites (Achtemeier's *Omne Verbum Sonat*) to make her case. Cf. Kirk, "Time for Figs," 511.

[51] Gundry, *Mark*, 671–82. For a rather thorough critique of Gundry's view see Watts, *Isaiah's New Exodus*, 311–15.

the cleansing scene to stress that Jesus's action in the temple was truly an act of judgment.[52]

As has been mentioned elsewhere, this is not the only place Mark sandwiches one story with another. This Marcan phenomenon, or better yet "technique," has been studied thoroughly in Tom Shepherd's *Markan Sandwich Stories*. Shepherd studies six different intercalations in Mark, selecting these six because they are the most popularly identified intercalations in the book of Mark.[53] Through his study of these intercalations, Shepherd concludes, "[i]ntercalation is a reader-elevating storytelling method. It places the reader with the narrator above the ironic situations of the story characters."[54] Shepherd devotes a lot of attention to irony as he comes to this conclusion.[55] He observes that these six intercalations are not just stories that structurally sandwich each other, they are also stories that have a somewhat ironic relationship to each other, often observed in striking parallels and contrasts.[56] In Mark 3, there is ironic interplay between Jesus's family's accusation "he is crazy," and the scribes' accusation "he has Beelzebul."[57] In Mark 5, the woman had been hemorrhaging for twelve years; ironically the girl of the sandwich

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[52] Ådna, *Jesu Stellung zum Tempel*, 114; Anderson, "The Old Testament in Mark's Gospel," 289; Charles Barrett, "The House of Prayer and the Den of Thieves," in *Jesus und Paulus: Festschrift für Werner Georg Kümmel zum 70. Geburtstag*, ed E. Earle Ellis et al. (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1975), 14; Biguzzi, *Yo Destruire Este Templo*, 65; Chance, "Cursing of the Temple," 272; Chávez, *Jesus' Temple Action in Mark*, 161; Dowd, *Prayer, Power and the Problem of Suffering*, 55; Ernst, *Das Evangelium nach Markus*, 326; Evans, "The Beginning of the Good News," 97; Gnilka, *Das Evangelium nach Markus*, 128; Gray, *The Temple in Mark*, 41–43; Juel, *Messiah and Temple*, 198; Kelber, *The Kingdom in Mark*, 99; Kingsbury, *Conflict*, 77; Krause, "The One who Comes Unbinding," 151; Malbon, *Narrative Space*, 31; Marshall, *Faith as a Theme*, 161; Shepherd, *Markan Sandwich Stories*, 209–41; Standaert, *Évangile selon Marc*, 811; Stein, *Gospels and Tradition*, 62; Telford, *Barren Temple*, 49; Watts, *Isaiah's New Exodus*, 311; et al

[53] "They arise from a summarization of the lists of intercalations of various scholars. . . Where there is agreement by at least fourteen of the nineteen scholars on a passage, this passage is included in the list of passages to be studied." Shepherd, *Markan Sandwich Stories*, 106–7. He goes on to identify the following passages: Mark 3:20–35; 5:21–43; 6:7–32; 11:12–25; 14:1–11; 14:53–72.

[54] Shepherd, *Markan Sandwich Stories*, 386.

[55] Mark's irony also receives a lot of attention in Juel, *Messiah and Temple*, 55–56.

[56] Shepherd, *Markan Sandwich Stories*, 333

[57] Shepherd also notes the interplay between the themes of Jesus's family, the divided house, and his "real family." Ibid, 333.

story is twelve years old as well.[58] In Mark 6, the disciples are "sent out" with rather scanty fare, while Herod "sends" to have John killed, all the while lavishly celebrating. In Mark 14:1–11, the giving woman serves as an ironic contrast to the greedy Judas. In Mark 14:53–72, Jesus confesses the truth while Peter (fulfilling Jesus's prediction) denies to confess the truth about Jesus.

Concerning the passage under discussion here, Shepherd summarizes, "The fig tree has the appearance of life but has no fruit, the temple is supposed to be the house of prayer but has been made into a den of thieves. The tree is cursed and withers, the temple is 'cleansed' but (as illustrated by the death plot and its final outcome) it is doomed."[59] The dramatic irony of this sandwich exists in the parallel relationship between the fig tree and the temple. Jesus sees both, and comes to examine them both more closely before acting against them. The fig tree has leaves, but no fruit is found (11:13). In 11:11 Jesus ominously comes to look at the temple; based on the actions of the following day one cannot assume he found any "fruit."[60] When disappointed by the lack of fruit on the fig tree, Jesus pronounces a word of judgment against it (described by Peter as a "curse"[61] later in 11:20). When disappointed by what he sees in the temple, Jesus likewise pronounces a word of judgment against it, describing the dissonance between what it should be and what "you"[62] have made it. The sandwiching of these two stories together links both the fruitlessness of the fig tree to the figurative "fruitlessness" of the temple as well as the

[58] Shepherd also notes the interplay between the themes of secrecy and wealth in these two stories. Ibid, 334.

[59] Shepherd, *Markan Sandwich Stories*, 334.

[60] If one includes 11:11 in the interpretation like this, it could be suggested that the sandwich is a bit larger than three pieces. Indeed, in keeping with the idea of Mark as an interwoven tapestry it is not surprising to find themes woven into and out of each other like this. However, the "sandwiches" do seem to be an identifiable structure within this larger interwoven tapestry, thus it is still valid to discuss select passages as identifiable intercalations.

[61] ἡ συκῆ ἣν κατηράσω

[62] The 2nd person plural is stressed rather emphatically: ὑμεῖς δὲ πεποιήκατε αὐτὸν σπήλαιον λῃστῶ

word of judgment against the fig tree to the word of judgment against the temple. Through this juxtaposition one realizes that Jesus's word of judgment against the fig tree resounds in his temple words and actions; the temple had no "fruit" and Jesus's "cleansing" is actually a closing down εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα.[63]

That much could actually be said from the simple juxtaposition of the fig tree cursing of 11:12–14 and the temple cleansing of 11:15–19. One would not actually need the whole sandwich to make this connection. Careful observation of Mark's narrative points this direction with or without the sandwiching. If one reads on into chapter 12, the metaphorical search for "fruit" is brought up again in the parable of the tenants. The owner of the vineyard (God) sends his representatives ἵνα παρὰ τῶν γεωργῶν λάβῃ ἀπὸ τῶν καρπῶν τοῦ ἀμπελῶνος.[64] The final representative is his υἱὸν ἀγαπητόν,[65] clearly Jesus in Mark's narrative, and he too comes to look for fruit. However when the tenants see the son, instead of providing "fruit," they plot to kill him.[66] This parable describes the very same storyline as the intercalation of Mark 11.[67] After Jesus "cleanses" the temple the narrative immediately describes the authorities' plot to kill him.[68] So much can be said without the full sandwich.

Nevertheless, the other half of the sandwich indeed comes in verses 11:20–25. On the one hand, by completing the sandwich of the fig tree episode around the temple scene it reinforces what might have already been inferred; the temple is cursed just like the fig tree. This structural technique draws these stories together so that they cannot be read in isolation of each other.

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[63] Cf. 11:14

[64] 12:2

[65] 12:6

[66] 12:7

[67] Except that Mark 11 also includes the son's judgment pronouncement.

[68] 11:18: Καὶ ἤκουσαν οἱ ἀρχιερεῖς καὶ οἱ γραμματεῖς καὶ ἐζήτουν πῶς αὐτὸν ἀπολέσωσιν.

Furthermore they continue to explain what has just happened. In 11:14 Jesus had pronounced some solemn words against the fig tree, but perhaps they were just a meaningless expression or some kind of prophecy, μηκέτι εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα ἐκ σοῦ μηδεὶς καρπὸν φάγοι. καὶ ἤκουον οἱ μαθηταὶ αὐτοῦ. However, note the imperfect tense form of ἀκούω at the end of 11:14. This superfluous line serves to foreshadow the other half of this fig tree episode As the fig tree reappears in the narrative the ἤκουον οἱ μαθηταὶ αὐτοῦ gives way to Peter ἀναμνησθεὶς what Jesus said, and he describes what he see as ἡ συκῆ ἣν κατηράσω. There is now no doubt about Jesus's words from 11:14. They were not said haphazardly, in jest, or as a simple prophecy. They were a curse, and, as is appropriate to Mark's narrative, Jesus's words have actually brought about what they said; Jesus's words are once again powerful and effective words.

On the other hand, this second half of the fig tree episode moves on from the idea of condemnation and cursing, and begins to speak of other things as well. While it appears that the condemnation of the temple is likely in view again in the enigmatic line of 11:23,[69] the other things Jesus says are often considered unrelated to these themes of conflict, condemnation, and the temple. However, while many have been at a loss for how to explain the connection between these words and their surrounding context, some scholars have begun to see the connection. Though Peter is not always a picture-perfect disciple in Mark's narrative, it appears that he may actually be perceiving what is going on here. As he marvels at the cursed fig tree, it is entirely possible that he is expressing his amazement not only that Jesus's words could curse a fig tree, but that, in connection with the temple cleansing, Jesus has signaled the cursing of the temple.[70]

Jesus's response, therefore, is properly considered an "answer" to that concern (ἀποκριθεὶς

[69] A fuller argument concerning the proper interpretation of these words will be found in chapter 6.

[70] If Peter cannot be given this much credit, perhaps this is another double-level ironic move done by Mark. At least the reader should understand what is going on, whether or not Peter actually does is really beside the point.

ὁ Ἰησοῦς λέγει αὐτοῖ . . .).[71] Even though God's temple now stands condemned, Jesus exhorts those concerned to ἔχετε πίστιν θεοῦ. Although the temple had been the single place where they would seek the located presence of God, Jesus encourages his disciples to have faith in God even if there is no temple. This esoteric concept of having "faith" in the unseen God—even when there is no visible temple—is explained in a different way later at Jesus's trial. As mentioned above, at the trial Jesus is quoted as having proclaimed the destruction of the "old temple" and the rebuilding of a new one that is ἀχειροποίητος. The condemnation of the "old" temple is, of course, explicitly promised in 13:2, but also here we see it signaled through the cursing of the fig tree as well. Its replacement, this new ἀχειροποίητος temple, might not be one they could visibly visit, but it is one that these disciples might yet have faith in. Based on the promise of Jesus's words here, they can truly believe that despite the loss of the temple, they still have access to God and the benefits which the old, now-condemned temple once provided.

The other themes of these verses develop this faith based relationship to God further. Especially considering the fact that Jesus just said the proper role of the temple was to be a "house of prayer,"[72] it should come as no surprise that his response involves the idea of prayer.[73] If the "house of prayer" now stands condemned, what should Peter and the other disciples—let alone the reader/hearers of Mark—think about prayer?[74] Will God still hear their prayers without the "house of prayer" itself? Indeed, Jesus promises that they are to keep praying and asking, and

[71] 11:22

[72] 11:17

[73] This connection has been made by a number of scholars. E.g., Kirk, "Time for Figs," 524–25; Chávez, *Jesus' Temple Action in Mark,* 3; Donahue, *Are You the Christ?,* 132; Ernst, *Mark*, 329; Kirk, "Time for Figs," 523; Myers, *Binding*, 306; Heil, "Narrative Strategy," 80; et al.

[74] A further discussion on the connection between the temple and prayer will be more fully addressed in the following chapter, as will other themes related to the temple and mentioned in this section, such as faith and forgiveness.

they are to believe that they indeed "have received."[75] As mentioned in chapter 2, exactly what they "receive" is not defined, and the tense form of this "receiving" can be considered an issue: πιστεύετε ὅτι ἐλάβετε. However, if these words of Jesus are indeed a response (ἀποκριθεὶς)[76] to Peter's concern that the house of prayer/temple has just been "cursed" by Jesus,[77] then it makes sense that Jesus is promising them that they still receive a hearing from God. Despite the loss of the visible house of prayer/temple and the "old" system involved with it, they can still have faith in God that he will still hear their prayers.

After Jesus promises that they can still have faith that God hears their prayers, he goes on to promise that they can still expect forgiveness of sins as well. Although the concept of forgiveness only receives minimal attention in the immediate context, it is entirely appropriate to mention when the disciples are faced with the loss of the old temple. The activity that Jesus disrupted in the temple was the activity of buying and selling sacrificial περιστεράι.[78] Such sacrifices, and the greater sacrifice of the Passover lamb (in view specifically at 14:1ff), were offered at the temple for the forgiveness of sins. If the place for these sacrifices, the temple, was now condemned, could the disciples still hope to receive forgiveness of sins from God? Thus in 11:25 Jesus also promises that they can have faith that forgiveness of sins is still available.

Perhaps the mention of disputes between people seems to be the most unexpected part of these verses. As the following chapter will show, it appears that the themes of faith, prayer, forgiveness, and even inter-personal disputes were all mentioned here because those themes were

[75] 11:24

[76] 11:22

[77] And through the relationship to the fig tree one would recognize that it is now ἐξηραμμένην ἐκ ῥιζῶν (11:20).

[78] 11:15. Perhaps the mention of σκεῦος in 11:16 also subtly refers to the sacrificial/cultic system of the old temple. It has been suggested by a handful of scholars. E.g., Heil, "Narrative Strategy," 78, n. 5; Kelber, *Mark's Story of Jesus*, 60. Cf. Wardle, *Temple and Identity*, 25, 91.

the major themes of Solomon's dedicatory prayer at the founding of the "old" temple. Thus, it too is an appropriate theme to touch on when talking about a replacement for the old temple. However, it can be further added that this theme of one's relationship to one's neighbor also fits into the near narrative context of Mark as well.

In 12:28 Jesus is asked ποία ἐστὶν ἐντολὴ πρώτη πάντων. His response is that one should love both the Lord your God, and your neighbor as yourself.[79] The question was for one commandment, but Jesus answers with two. Yet both he and the scribe seem to agree that this two-fold response is the correct answer to a one commandment question. Jesus says μείζων τούτων ἄλλη ἐντολὴ οὐκ ἔστιν,[80] while the scribe says περισσότερόν ἐστιν πάντων τῶν ὁλοκαυτωμάτων καὶ θυσιῶν.[81] Here, only one chapter later, we see the same blending together of one's relationship with God and one's relationship with their neighbor that was seen in 11:25. Perhaps the most striking part about this scribe's response is his claim that this God-and-neighbor love surpasses πάντων τῶν ὁλοκαυτωμάτων καὶ θυσιῶν. Once again it appears that the old temple and its system is being denigrated, while faith in God is upheld in contrast to it.

Thus it seems that Jesus's response in verses 11:20–25 is not disconnected from its near narrative context at all. While many commentators have struggled to understand how these verses "fit" within their context, they are a very appropriate response to Jesus's "cleansing" of the temple, and to Peter's recognition (through the withered fig tree) that this "cleansing" was an actual "cursing" by Jesus, the one whose words bring about what they say. In response to the

[79] 12:29–31: ἀπεκρίθη ὁ Ἰησοῦς ὅτι πρώτη ἐστίν· ἄκουε, Ἰσραήλ, κύριος ὁ θεὸς ἡμῶν κύριος εἷς ἐστιν,καὶ ἀγαπήσεις κύριον τὸν θεόν σου ἐξ ὅλης τῆς καρδίας σου καὶ ἐξ ὅλης τῆς ψυχῆς σου καὶ ἐξ ὅλης τῆς διανοίας σου καὶ ἐξ ὅλης τῆς ἰσχύος σου. δευτέρα αὕτη· ἀγαπήσεις τὸν πλησίον σου ὡς σεαυτόν. μείζων τούτων ἄλλη ἐντολὴ οὐκ ἔστιν.

[80] 12:31

[81] 12:33

condemnation of the old temple, Jesus promises that they can still have faith in God that the benefits that were once sought in and through the temple will still be available.

Through the continued development of the rest of the narrative, Mark explains that the condemnation of the old temple doesn't simply mean that these benefits are now available willy-nilly. Neither does he suggest that the community somehow becomes the temple itself. Mark points out that Jesus himself is the "cornerstone" of the new temple—the ἀχειροποίητος temple that will be built in three days. At Jesus's death, the full abnegation of the old temple is enacted (by God) with the rending of the veil from top to bottom. At his resurrection, on the third day, he once again proves his words are faithful and true. He who had said he would build a new temple in three days has risen again to now exist as the new meeting place between God and man, through whom Peter, the disciples, and the new tenants of the vineyard[82] might seek the same benefits once sought through the temple, and promised by Jesus in 11:22–25.

[82] Mark 12:9

CHAPTER FIVE

THE OLD TESTAMENT AND MARK

Mark's gospel is thoroughly influenced by the Old Testament. This can be seen in explicit citations, subtle allusions, and general metaphorical language all drawn from the Old Testament. In the beginning of his gospel, he sets the stage for such an understanding by prefacing his entire narrative with a complicated Old Testament citation. Focusing more on the context of the present dissertation, the Old Testament further saturates Mark chapter 11, which is full of themes, subtle allusions, and direct quotes. As this chapter will show, a better understanding of which Old Testament passages Mark alludes to in chapter 11 will only strengthen the proposed interpretation of this section of Mark's narrative. Ultimately, as will be shown below, the Marcan Jesus responds to the condemnation of the temple (Mark 11:12–21) by alluding to the "founding moment" of Solomon's temple found in 1 Kgs 8 (Mark 11:22–25). This would have been an especially significant passage to allude to because of the ideological importance of attending to a specific "founding moment" (the temple's dedication) during a time of crises (the temple's condemnation).

This chapter will begin by making some general observations about Mark's use of the Old Testament, and then proceed to briefly study select quotes and subtle allusions from Mark that contribute the most to the discussion at hand. It will then proceed to take a rather thorough look at the verbal and thematic connections between 1 Kgs 8 and Mark 11:22–25, also explaining how ideologically significant it would have been for the Marcan Jesus to allude to this passage at this juncture of his narrative. It will then show that 1 Kgs 8 would likely have been a well-known passage at that time, based off a study of ancient Jewish lectionaries. It will conclude with further

observations from the Old Testament and early Jewish literature that support the metaphorical understanding of "this mountain" and the fig tree as representative of the temple, Israel, and the Lord's judgment.

Mark's Use of the Old Testament

Mark's use of the Old Testament has been understood in various different ways.[1] Many have stressed the importance of reading Mark in the light of his Old Testament usage.[2] Some have therefore written whole works on reading Mark in the light of one particular section of the Old Testament,[3] while others have warned that due attention must be paid to the narrative first.[4]

This dissertation will not offer a new paradigm or complete vision for how to understand Mark's intertextuality. While some try to construct analytical rubrics that can exhaustively describe the New Testament's use of the Old Testament, the present work considers such a practice too paralyzing.[5] Although such studies may start with good intentions, they too often demand more than can be assumed. While they demand that proper rubrics should be delineated before making observations from a text, they seem to neglect the fact that analytical rubrics can only properly be born out of observations from the text itself. Therefore, the present study is not

[1] For a recent survey of scholarship, see Watts, *Isaiah's New Exodus*, 9–28.

[2] Hays, "Can the Gospels Teach Us," 408; Kingsbury, *Christology of Mark*, 48; Kirk, "Time for Figs," 514; Swartley, *Israel's Scripture Traditions*, 1; Telford, *Barren Temple*, 128; et al.

[3] Roth, *Cracking the Code of Mark*; Watts, *Isaiah's New Exodus*; Winn, *Mark and the Elijah–Elisha Narrative*.

[4] Darrell Bock, "The Function of Scripture in Mark 15.1–39" in *Biblical Interpretation in Early Christian Gospels: Volume 1: The Gospel of Mark*, ed. Thomas R. Hatina, LNTS 304 (New York: T&T Clark, 2006), 10; Hatina, *In Search of a Context*, 375; Ibid., "Embedded Scripture Texts and the Plurality of Meaning," 82; Lindars, "The Place of the Old Testament in the Formation of New Testament Theology," 144.

[5] Porter criticizes Hays seven tests (and Thompsons's eleven), but it seems as though Porter misrepresents Hays by summarizing them as tests the way he does. Porter attempts to lay out strict categories and "apply them rigorously" while Hays saw his "tests" as helpful categories to consider, not a methodological checklist. Porter's demand for perfect rubrics makes the study of the New Testament's use of the Old Testament nearly impossible to ever carry out. Porter, "The Use of the Old Testament in the New Testament," 94–96. Cf Hays, *Echoes of Scripture*, 32–33.

a full study observing every New Testament text, nor even all of Mark's intertextuality, so it is in no position to make such sweeping claims about exhaustive rubrics.[6] However, as proper rubrics are born out of observations from the text, the observations involved in the present study might point toward potential guidelines for the study of Mark's intertextuality at some level. However, we must also keep it in mind that New Testament authors, such as Mark, may not have written according to the consistent rules modern scholars would like to asses them with.[7]

Instead this chapter will focus on the way Mark's intertextuality contributes to the understanding of the major Marcan themes highlighted in the previous chapters, and how this further study of Mark's intertextuality contributes to the understanding of our passage. The goal of this chapter is to fill-in and fill-out much of what has been said about Mark's narrative in the previous chapters with observations from Mark's use of the Old Testament; not to present a completely different reading of Mark's narrative based on a subtle Old Testament allusion. That being said, one of the main arguments of this chapter is that Mark is signaling the replacement of the old temple order with a new temple order by a subtle allusion to 1 Kgs 8 in 11:22–25. However, it should be duly noted that these basic points of emphasis have already been observed from Mark's narrative. Therefore, the suggested allusion does not radically alter the interpretation of Mark 11:20–25, but rather strengthens what has already been observed from the narrative itself.

Before proceeding to examine specific explicit quotes and subtle allusions, it will nevertheless be helpful to make a few general observations on Mark's usage of the Old

[6] "[O]ne cannot claim to provide an accurate study of a given New Testament author's use of the Old Testament unless all of the types of usage and influence are discussed." Porter, "The Use of the Old Testament in the New Testament, 96.

[7] "New Testament authors do not play by historical-critical rules. What is perhaps more disturbing, is that they often seem to play by no rules at all." O'Brien, *The Use of Scripture,* 50. Cf. "In seeking to reconstruct that history of exegesis, we must recognize that the rules of the game were different in the first century." Juel, *Messianic Exegesis,* 13.

Testament.

First of all, as mentioned above, Mark's narrative is full of Old Testament references. Mark sets his narrative in the context of the Old Testament from the beginning of his gospel. By the introductory line Καθὼς γέγραπται ἐν τῷ Ἡσαΐᾳ τῷ προφήτῃ (and the following quotation itself), Mark establishes that the story he is about to relate is intimately connected to the Old Testament.[8] This Old Testament backdrop is furthered in various ways. Major Old Testament personages are specifically mentioned;[9] much of the conflict that Jesus enters into with Jewish leaders often centers around Old Testament texts;[10] specific quotes are drawn from Old Testament texts.[11] This saturation of Mark with Old Testament references demands that an interpreter of Mark pay careful attention to Old Testament quotes and allusions that may lie behind Mark's composition.[12]

Second, Mark does not employ the same level of fulfillment language as the other evangelists. While Matthew characteristically inserts remarks pointing out how certain events in Jesus's story fulfill certain Old Testament texts,[13] Mark rarely does so. Mark's only clear

[8] Cf. Craig Evans, "Zechariah in the Markan Passion Narrative," in *Biblical Interpretation in Early Christian Gospels: Volume 1: The Gospel of Mark*, ed. Thomas R. Hatina, LNTS 304 (New York: T&T Clark, 2006), 80; Kingsbury, *Christology of Mark*, 57; Dirk Monshouwer, *The Gospels and Jewish Worship: Bible and Synagogal Liturgy in the First Century C.E.*, Trans. M. van Strien et al. (Vught: Skandalon, 2010), 20; Schweizer, "Mark's Theological Achievement," 65; Watts, *Isaiah's New Exodus*, 370; Voelz, *Mark*, 109. For a more hesitant view on how much of the OT context to import along with this quote, see Hatina, *In Search of a Context*, 138–83. More discussion on how this quote relates to various Marcan themes will follow below.

[9] Moses: 1:44; 7:10; 9:4, 5; 10:3, 4; 12:19, 26; Elijah: 6:15; 8:28; 9:4, 5, 11–13; 15:35, 36; David: 2:25; 10:47, 48; 11:10; 12:35–37.

[10] 2:23–28; 3:1–6; 7:1–5; 10:2–9, 19; 12:24, 28–31.

[11] 4:12; 7:6, 7, 10; 8:18 ; 10:6, 19; 11:9, 10, 17; 12:10, 11, 19, 26, 29–33, 36; 13:24, 25; 14:27; 15:33 et al.

[12] "The scriptures are indeed an indispensable presupposition of all that Mark wrote, and a necessary link with the biblical tradition that Mark sees redefined and comprehended through Jesus." Kee, "The Function of Scriptural Quotations and Allusions in Mark 11–16," 179. Cf. Voelz, *Mark*, 141–43.

[13] E.g., Matt 1:2; 2:15, 17, 23; 4:14; 8:17; 12:17; 13:14, 35; 21:4; 27:9, et al. Cf. John 12:38; 18:9, 32; 19:24, et al.

editorial insertion of an Old Testament text occurs at the beginning of his gospel.[14] Thus, while other evangelists often describe an event in Jesus's life as the fulfillment of a particular Old Testament text, Mark often does not explicitly include the same Old Testament reference when he narrates the same event.[15] However this does not mean that Mark does not see these events as fulfilling certain Old Testament events. Again, by the introductory words of his gospel, Mark establishes that what he is writing is indeed the fulfillment of certain aspects of the Old Testament.[16] Keeping Mark's fulfillment framework in mind, and noting that he does not explicitly reference Old Testament texts as regularly as others, should cause the interpreter of Mark to pay special heed to implicit allusions to the Old Testament in Mark's Gospel that are not highlighted by explicit editorial comment.

Third, when Mark does cite Old Testament passages, he often conflates or combines them.[17] This too can be seen in the opening quote ἐν τῷ Ἡσαΐᾳ τῷ προφήτῃ which doesn't just quote Isaiah, but also includes a combined quote from Exod 23:20 and Mal 3:1.[18] Kee suggests that such "merged or synthetic quotations and divinatory interpretations. . . occur at some of the crucial points [of Mark's gospel]."[19] If Kee's suggestion is correct, any confluence of Old

[14] Watts, *Isaiah's New Exodus*, 24. In 14:27 Mark includes Jesus's introductory words "it has been written." That is not entirely editorial as it is on the mouth of Jesus instead of the editor/author. Cf. Marcus, *The Way of the Lord*, 153.

[15] The triumphal entry's relation to Zech 9 is an example of this, which will be discussed below.

[16] Contra Suhl, "Dabei ging es zunächst noch gar nicht um 'Weissagung und Erfüllung,' sondern um Auslegung des Jesusgeschehens mit Hilfe des AT: Indem man das Neue in den 'Farben' des Alten erzählte, machte man deutlich, daß es auch im Neuen um dasselbe wie im Alten, nämlich um Gottes Heilshandeln ging." Suhl, *Die Funktion*, 47. O'Brien suggests Suhl's conclusions are rather accurate, O'Brien, *The Use of Scripture*, 12. Note Anderson's critique: "One cannot easily follow Suhl when he denies to Mark any interest whatever in promise-fulfillment." Anderson, "The Old Testament in Mark's Gospel," 286. However, Anderson nuances Suhl with a "divine will" scheme that has also come into question. See Anderson, "The Old Testament in Mark's Gospel, 299; Watts, *Isaiah's New Exodus*, 28. Cf. Hooker, *Mark*, 220; Voelz, *Mark*, 109, et al.

[17] While most scholars observe the combining of two texts, Marcus even suggests a four-fold allusion in the Marcan passion narrative. See Marcus, *The Way of the Lord*, 196.

[18] Note some only see this as conflating two OT passages (e.g., Kee *Community of the New Age*, 47). However, it appears to actually conflate three; see Voelz, *Mark*, 109, and below for further discussion.

[19] He lists 1:1 (Mal 3:1 + Is 40:3); 11:1–11 (Zech 9–10 + Ps 118); 12:1–12 (Is 5 + Ps 118); 13:24 (Is 13:10;

Testament quotations or allusions might be an indicator of emphasis in Mark's narrative, and the interpreter should pay due attention. At the least, this observation raises one's awareness to potential multiplicity in any given use of the Old Testament in Mark.

Fourth and finally, when Mark cites an Old Testament passage, it often appears that he has the greater context of that passage in mind as well. "When we read the citations in dialogue with their sources, we discover that they fit Mark's context like a glove and provide a lens for making sense of the whole."[20] As mentioned in the first chapter of the present work, C.H. Dodd is often given credit for this observation. While it may not always be the case,[21] it is rather striking how often the themes in the original context of an Old Testament quotation or allusion "fit" in the context of Mark's text. Thus, an interpreter should also examine the Old Testament context of a quote or an allusion to see what light it might shed on the interpretation of Mark's gospel. This will be further explored below in reference to certain texts.

Examination of Specific Quotes

This section will examine a small selection of Mark's quotes from the Old Testament. The exact number of Old Testament quotes in Mark's gospel is a rather disputed number. Moyise estimates about 25 in the narrative as a whole,[22] while Kee claims there are more than 57 in chapter 11–16 alone![23] Instead of entering further into that conversation, the following discussion will limit itself to focus on several direct quotes that contribute the most to the observed narrative

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34:4; Ezek 32:7f; Joel 2:10 + Dan 7:13); 14:62 (Dan 7 + Ps 110). Kee *Community of the New Age*, 47. Kingsbury adds the Baptism quote and suggests Ps 2:7, Is 42:1, and Gen 22:2 all lie behind it. Kingsbury, *Conflict*, 34. Cf. Marcus, *The Way of the Lord*, 1; Watts, *Isaiah's New Exodus*, 381.

[20] Kirk, "Time for Figs," 514. Cf. Chance, "Cursing of the Temple," 274.

[21] See chapter 1, 46–48.

[22] Steve Moyise, *Jesus and Scripture: Studying the New Testament Use of the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2010), 13.

[23] Kee *Community of the New Age*, 45.

themes, especially focusing on the temple theme.

To return now to the opening verses of Mark's gospel: Verses 2–3 serve as the only explicit editorial scripture reference in Mark.[24] It seems all the more important, therefore, to pay careful attention to how Mark uses the Old Testament in this instance. Such attention pays off as this "superscription" really sets the tone for what Mark is about to present. As mentioned above, these verses establish that the story he is about to relate is intimately connected to the Old Testament. But this isn't just a simple "coloring" in Old Testament language as some have suggested.[25] Careful attention to these verses shows a much more nuanced appropriation.

The first issue with these verses is recognizing their source(s).[26] Isaiah is given as the source at the head of 1:2, but a direct quote from Isaiah doesn't occur until the following verse. The rest of 1:2 involves a quote that does not really derive from one text. While one may be tempted to say Mark must have quoted Malachi with plenty of artistic freedom,[27] Voelz has observed, "[i]t is key to understand the delicious ambiguity of the quotation in 1:2."[28] The ambiguity of this quotation resides in the way it pulls language from both Exod 23:20 and Mal 3:1.[29] The Marcan text includes the line πρὸ προσώπου σου, which only occurs in the Exod 23:20 text. However, this messenger κατασκευάσει the way,[30] which does not correspond very well to

[24] Watts, *Isaiah's New Exodus*, 24. See n. 469 above.

[25] See n. 471 above.

[26] One must also wrestle with which text Mark used. Most seem to recognize a higher level of dependence on the LXX (e.g., O'Brien, *The Use of Scripture*, 34–41). However, it does not seem like this is exhaustively the case (Ibid., 41). Due to the undecided nature of this question, the following discussion will attempt to include the Masoretic Text and the LXX for key words and phrases. Longer Old Testament quotes will be given in English for simplicity's sake.

[27] This often seems to be the case. E.g., Kee, *Community of the New Age*, 47.

[28] Voelz, *Mark*, 109.

[29] Others have also noticed that this citation pulls from Exodus and Malachi. Cf. Ernst, *Das Evangelium nach Markus*, 32; Taylor, *The Gospel according to St. Mark*, 153; Watts, *Isaiah's New Exodus*, 61ff; et al.

[30] N.B., Mark use τὴν ὁδόν σου, which corresponds to neither the Exodus text, nor the Malachi text. For more on this, See Voelz, *Mark*, 109, and the following discussion.

the Exodus text, which reads לִשְׁמָרְךָ.[31] It is however closer (though not an exact match) to the Malachi text's פְּנֵה,[32] which HALOT suggests should be translated "to clear a track."[33] Before going further, it will be helpful to examine the greater context of these quotes to better understand what other themes might be in play.

In Exod 23:20 the announcement that God will send "my messenger[34] before you[35]" comes after the giving of various laws from the Lord. According to this verse, the role of this messenger is to (1) guard Israel along the way, and to (2) bring Israel to the place the Lord has prepared. They are to "pay attention to him and listen to what he says.[36]" This same messenger is mentioned later in 32:34, but Moses isn't certain who it is. Moses queries in 33:12 "you haven't told me who you will send with me"[37] to which the Lord responds, "my presence will go with you and I will give you rest."[38] Thus, in the context of Exodus, the messenger is the Lord himself going before his people, Israel, as they journey towards their promised place of rest.

In Mal 3:1 much of the same language is found, however with some small changes and a different context. The most significant change in language is the 1st person pronoun added to the

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[31] LXX: ἵνα φυλάξῃ σε

[32] ἐπιβλέψεται

[33] Note, this is the same verb used in Isaiah 40:3, which the LXX (and Mark) translates there with Ἑτοιμάσατε.

[34] מַלְאָךְ; τὸν ἄγγελόν μου

[35] Although the "you" is the singular pronominal suffix, the context suggests that this "you" is greater than Moses, more generally referring to the people, Israel.

[36] Exod 23:21. Note especially: וּשְׁמַע בְּקֹלוֹ; εἰσάκουε αὐτοῦ Cf. Mark 9:7, ἀκούετε αὐτοῦ.

[37] לֹא הוֹדַעְתַּנִי אֵת אֲשֶׁר־תִּשְׁלַח עִמִּי; σὺ δὲ οὐκ ἐδήλωσάς μοι ὃν συναποστελεῖς μετ' ἐμοῦ

[38] פָּנַי יֵלֵכוּ וְהַנְחֹתִי לָךְ; Αὐτὸς προπορεύσομαί σου καὶ καταπαύσω σε.

"way."[39] In Exodus it was the Lord preparing the way of Moses and Israel (your way).[40] In Malachi, it is the Lord's messenger preparing the way for himself![41] And the context continues, "And the Lord whom you seek will suddenly come to his temple; and the messenger[42] of the covenant in whom you delight, behold, he is coming." As Malachi[43] continues, the identity of this messenger appears to be nearly synonymous with the Lord himself:[44] "Who can endure the day of his coming?"[45] "Then I will draw near to you for judgment."[46] Thus in Malachi, the identity of the messenger is ambiguously related to the Lord himself (remember in Exodus it was the Lord's presence who was the messenger), and the messenger is preparing the way of the Lord himself (while in Exodus it was the way of Israel).

How does this "delicious ambiguity"[47] relate to Mark's appropriation of these texts? While many simply understand that the "messenger" is to be understood as John the Baptist,[48] Voelz has suggested a much more nuanced approach to this text:

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[39] For some reason it appears that Marcus has missed this change in his translation chart. When he compares these passages he translates both the MT and the LXX of Malachi 3:1 with "your way." Marcus, *The Way of the Lord*, 14.

[40] לְפָנֶיךָ; πρὸ προσώπου σου

[41] לְפָנָי; πρὸ προσώπου μου

[42] מַלְאָכִי; ἄγγελος(!)

[43] It is interesting (though perhaps puzzling) to note that Malachi is technically a transliteration of מַלְאָכִי.

[44] ". . . our Lord is also a messenger for the new covenant that he does, in fact, bring." Voelz, *Mark*, 109.

[45] 3:2

[46] 3:5

[47] Voelz, *Mark*, 109.

[48] Cf. Barrett, "The House of Prayer and the Den of Thieves," 20; Chávez, *Jesus' Temple Action in Mark*, 8; Ernst, *Das Evangelium nach Markus*, 36; Kingsbury, *Christology of Mark*, 59; Ibid., *Conflict*, 32; Wedderburn, "Puzzle or Key," 21; Winn, *Mark and Elijah-Elisha*, 69–70. Much more can be said about how John the Baptist relates to this quote, as the narrative so quickly moves on to describe him. It seems most likely that he should be connected to "the voice crying in the wilderness," which does not have to be seen as synonymous with "my messenger." For more on the relation of the Elijah of Malachi 4:5 and John the Baptist, see n. 510 below.

> Who is Jesus? He is the *people of God*, whom the messenger will precede (Ex 23:20). Who is Jesus? He is the *Lord Himself*, who is coming to his temple (Mal 3:1). Here we see the foundational principle for understanding the Jesus of Mark's Gospel. *He is portrayed in this book as—he is characterized with the features of—the central "players" or entities of the history of the OT people and their God.* Now the OT story is coming to fulfillment . . .[49]

This observation contributes much to understanding the themes discussed above in chapter 3. Jesus is truly the focus of Mark's narrative, and he truly is bringing in the new which surpasses the old. Furthermore, as he does so, he himself is the "new": the new people, the new prophet, the new revelation of the Lord, and the new temple as well.

Another fascinating part of this Malachi context is that it describes the Lord suddenly appearing in his temple. If we are to understand that in Mark's gospel, Jesus is presented as the Lord (in one way or another),[50] the plot of this Malachi allusion shares quite a bit with Mark's narrative, and more specifically the text under consideration in this dissertation. Jesus, the Lord himself, suddenly comes to his temple in chapter 11 of Mark's gospel. Furthermore, keeping with the judgment theme of Malachi, he comes in judgment against the temple and its corrupt leaders.[51] This opening citation, therefore, appears to help define Mark's thematic usage of "the way." It is not simply a way of discipleship or a generic usage of the way that Mark is driving at, but rather the way of the Lord going to his temple in judgment.[52]

When these observations are made, it seems entirely apropos that Mark begins his narrative with this quote. The "delicious ambiguity" of the conflated quotation, which reaches its pinnacle in the complex identity of the messenger, is extremely fitting with Mark's complex presentation

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[49] Voelz, *Mark*, 109.

[50] Cf. Daniel Johansson, "*Kyrios* in the Gospel of Mark," *JSNT* 33 (2010): 101–24.

[51] Chapter 4 dealt with how these themes can be observed in this section of Mark's narrative.

[52] See also: Chávez, *Jesus' Temple Action in Mark*, 8; Dodd, *According to the Scriptures*, 71; Gray, *The Temple in Mark*, 13–23; Lamarche, *Évangile De Marc*, 39; Standaert, *Évangile selon Marc*, 808–9; Telford, *Barren Temple*, 163; Watts, *Isaiah's New Exodus*, 134; Ibid., "The Psalms and Mark," 307–8, et al. Barrett finds this connection attractive, but too easily assumes that the opening quotation applies this Malachi passage to John the

of Jesus's identity. As observed in chapter 3, Jesus's identity in Mark's gospel is especially (and apparently intentionally) complex and ambiguous.[53] Furthermore, this quote foreshadows the coming judgment of the temple in chapter 11.[54] Therefore, this introductory citation complements the narrative themes already observed in previous chapters.[55]

In the near narrative context of our verses, a number of Old Testament quotes and allusions appear as well which are quite relevant to the present discussion. Ps 118 is quoted two different times surrounding 11:20–25: first during the triumphal entry,[56] and second at the close of the parable of the tenants.[57] Watts notes that this dual use of a psalm actually occurs with four different psalms in Mark's gospel, Pss 2, 22, 110, and 118. While studying the use of these psalms, Watts proposes,

> . . . that Mark's careful arrangement of all his psalms, when read from the dual perspective of their original larger contexts and of their contemporary interpretations, not only speak to Jesus' identity as Israel's Davidic messiah but are particularly concerned with his relationship to the temple, and especially his unique role in its eschatological purification and restoration.[58]

Ps 118 is quoted during the triumphal entry, suggesting that Jesus is "the one who comes in the name of the Lord," bringing "salvation" in some way.[59] Directly following this quote of Psalm 118, Jesus proceeds to enter the temple.[60] The silence at this first arrival to the temple is

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Baptist. Barrett, "The House of Prayer and the Den of Thieves," 20.

[53] Cf. Voelz, *Mark*, 54–55.

[54] And extending beyond chapter 11 as indicated in the previous chapter (e.g., 13:2; 15:38).

[55] It is also interesting to note the further connection to the "Elijah who is to come" in Mal 4:5 and Mark's interest in Elijah. Elijah is explicitly mentioned in Mark 6:15; 8:28; 9:4, 5, 11–13; 15:35, 36. Unlike the other gospel writers, Mark even lists Elijah ahead of Moses at the transfiguration (9:4). Note also the further discussion about Elijah in 9:11–13, which appears to link this Elijah with John the Baptist.

[56] 11:9–10.

[57] 12:10–11.

[58] Watts, "The Psalms and Mark," 308–9.

[59] Cf. Ps 118:25 and Mark 11:10, *ὡσαννὰ* being the transliteration of הוֹשִׁיעָה נָּא, "please save!"

[60] Note again the appropriateness of this in connection with the context of Malachi 3.

deafening.[61] Returning to the context of Ps 118, the quote from 118:26, "Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord," is followed by "We bless you from the house of the Lord."[62] However, in Mark's narrative nobody from the temple—the house of the Lord—comes out to say anything positive about this one who has come in the name of the Lord. It seems like this silence can be read as a rejection of Jesus, which further serves as grounds for the rejection of the temple.[63] This, of course, is all immediately followed in Mark's narrative by the cursing of the fig tree and the "cleansing" of the temple. Once again, it seems as though the context of Mark's Old Testament quotes further supports the narrative's theme of the temple's rejection.

However, it is not just the rejection of the temple that is signaled by Ps 118. As mentioned above Ps 118 reappears after the parable of the tenants to speak of the rejection of Jesus. Throughout these chapters the rejection of the temple by Jesus[64] is coupled with the rejection of Jesus by the Jewish authorities.[65] This dual rejection is seen in the silence/rejection of Jesus at his first temple visit (11:11), Jesus's cleansing/rejection of the temple (11:15ff), and in the plotting to kill Jesus (11:18), amongst other places. It comes to an explicit verbal confrontation in chapter 12 when Jesus tells the parable of the tenants, which climaxes in the rejection of the vineyard owner's (God's) son (Jesus). Immediately after this climax Mark's narrative returns to Ps 118, quoting verses 22 and 23, "the stone the builders rejected has become the cornerstone. This is the Lord's doing; it is marvelous in our eyes."

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[61] Telford doesn't know what to do with this short scene, and "wonders why such a tradition persisted if so little is predicated of it." Telford, *Barren Temple*, 44.

[62] 118:27 For more on this observation in Mark see: Hultgren, "The Incident at the Temple," 287; Lamarche, *Évangile de Marc*, 267; Standaert, *Évangile selon Marc*, 804.

[63] "To reject Jesus and to seek to destroy him results in the destruction of the Temple." Watts, *Isaiah's New Exodus*, 346.

[64] (And, therefore, the Lord)

[65] Humphrey artfully observes, "The final episode . . . brings the themes . . . to a head, although ironically, in terms of the destruction of the temple, which through his own destruction, Jesus will replace." Humphrey, *Narrative Structure*, 248. Cf. Chronis, "The Torn Veil," 111–12; Gray, *The Temple in Mark*, 8–10.

In the context of this dual rejection of both the temple and Jesus, this quote subtly blends the two into one. The rejection of Jesus and the rejection of the temple were previously implicitly linked by the fact that they were both being rejected by different parties.[66] But when Jesus uses the language of "the stone" becoming "the cornerstone" in reference to himself, he links himself to the physical aspects of the temple in an unprecedented manner.[67] The significance of this linkage should not be underestimated. Especially considering the fact that the temple has just been rejected (even its *stones* will be "rejected" according to 13:2), it is all the more significant that Jesus refers to himself with *stone* and building language. In essence, by quoting this psalm in this context, Jesus is signaling that he himself will serve as the replacement of the rejected temple. The rejected *stones* of the temple will be replaced by the *stone* the builders rejected.[68]

The next significant quotes come from the "cleansing" of the temple scene (which is surrounded by the fig tree cursing scene). As Jesus "cleanses" the temple, he quotes two Old Testament passages to explain his actions. In Mark 11:17 he cites Isa 56:7 and Jer 7:11.[69] These

[66] "The setting for our passage is the Temple itself (11:27), and the Temple theme is prominent in the preceding chapter of Mark (11:9–11, 15–18, 27–33). In the very next chapter, moreover, the eschatological discourse is introduced by a short passage in which stone imagery and the Temple theme are interwoven in a manner strikingly reminiscent of our passage." Marcus, *The Way of the Lord*, 120.

[67] "In the psalm itself, the stone is, quite literally, a stone, one initially rejected by the builders of the Jerusalem Temple but subsequently made the cornerstone of the Temple." Marcus, *The Way of the Lord*, 119. Cf. "The 'rejected stone' thus echoes the first passion prediction (cf. ἀποδοκιμασθήναι, only here and in 8:31 which prediction as we saw was confirmed by Psalm 2 in the transfiguration) . . ." Watts, "The Psalms and Mark," 316. For a brief discussion of the "stone" theme as it appears in other early Christian works, especially as used polemically, see Wardle, *Temple and Identity*, 202–6. See also, Donahue, *Are You the Christ*, 122–27; Gray, *The Temple in Mark*, 68–77; Heil, "Narrative Strategy," 90.

[68] Although elsewhere Gray mentions the community as the replacement of the temple, he captures this best as he summarizes, "Mark's purpose of paralleling Jesus and the temple is to highlight their shared identity. Two women give to a temple. The widow gives to the old temple, barren and soon to be cast down (Mark 13:2). The other woman anoints Jesus' body for burial but as the reader knows—this death will not be the end, for the 'stone rejected by the builders will become the cornerstone (12:10)'. In other words, both the temple and Jesus share the fate of destruction. Both Jesus and the temple will go through the eschatological tribulation, but only one will come out the other side—Jesus, the new temple that will be the source and center of the eschatological restoration." Gray, *The Temple in Mark*, 151.

[69] As was mentioned above, this conflated Old Testament citation is not strange to Mark.

are introduced by the words καὶ ἐδίδασκεν καὶ ἔλεγεν αὐτοῖς. As the context also bears out,[70] Jesus's authority is one of the main issues at hand; as it should be. Who has the right to do such disruptive actions in the temple? These introductory words help set the stage for an authoritative teaching to explain these actions.[71] In this instance, Jesus appeals to the prophets Isaiah and Jeremiah to back up his authority in "cleansing" the temple. It appears that the Isaiah quote refers to what the temple should be, while the Jeremiah quote refers to what the temple had become.[72]

If one is to suggest that this section is pointing to the condemnation of the temple (as this dissertation does), one should also attempt to explain why the temple is being condemned.[73] The clearest reasoning given in Mark's narrative is this conflated quotation in 11:17. Therefore, these texts will be examined according to how they function within Mark's narrative, and also how their own greater contexts might help in understanding this section of Mark's gospel.

As just mentioned, the Isaiah quote seems to suggest the proper purpose of the temple. However, it is not entirely clear which aspect is being stressed in this quote. The discussion of this typically revolves around the issues of (1) prayer and (2) the inclusion of the gentiles. Is the temple being "cleansed" because it failed to be a *house of prayer*? Or is the temple being "cleansed" because it failed to be so *for all peoples*?

When the focus of the discussion is on the failure of the temple to be a house of prayer, it is sometimes suggested that prayer is being stressed here over and against the sacrificial system.[74]

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[70] See chapter 4 for more on the context.

[71] For some significant passages on Jesus's authority in Mark, see: 1:22, 27; 2:10; 3:15; 11:28–33, et al.

[72] Kirk, "Time for Figs," 519; Watts, *Isaiah's New Exodus*, 330.

[73] ". . .it is incumbent on all those interpreting this action as symbolizing the destruction of the temple to spell this out further and to be more specific as to why it would or should be destroyed." Wedderburn, "Key or Puzzle," 5.

[74] "The change in emphasis from sacrifice to prayer and the focus on the synagogues and the houses of study as replacements for the destroyed temple represent the success of rabbinic Judaism in coping with the loss of temple and cult." Dowd, *Power and the Problem of Suffering*, 50. As mentioned in the previous chapter, there is some precedent in Mark for a negative view of the temple, especially as it relates to "burnt offerings and sacrifices." See especially 12:33.

The assumption seems to be that the temple was the place for sacrifice, but Jesus found a verse that happened to mention the temple as a "house of prayer." This appears in Mark because the early Christians were replacing the Jewish cultic system with some type of personal religious faith.[75] Sanders even claims, "The notion that the temple should serve some function other than sacrifice would seem to be extremely remote from the thinking of a first-century Jew."[76] However, Sanders' claim seems a bit overstated. Perrin levies a sharp polemic against this simplistic thinking.

> When it comes to how New Testament scholars view the temple, I suggest that there is a widespread tendency to construe the temple, as one might expect, in very western—one might even say Protestant—terms. In other words, there is an instinctive propensity to see the temple's *raison d'etre* as having exclusively to do with the religious impulse, in particular, the need to be forgiven. 'What was Israel's temple for? Why, blood sacrifices and being restored into fellowship with God of course - little if nothing more.' . . . But such narrow and anachronistically modern views of the temple will no longer suffice. True, the temple was the locus for atonement, but, as has now been sufficiently demonstrated, it was more than that. For the first-century Jew, by contrast, all these realities were wrapped into one. There was no separation of church and state, pontifex and imperator, divine will and common weal. Religious realities were intrinsically political in nature, as well as social, as well as economic. So while it remains true that the temple was the heart of Jewish worship, it was also the hand of economic aid to the poor, the eye of social recognition, and the mouth of politico-religious confession. The Jewish temple was not just a 'religious center,' nor simply the seat of atonement: it was a totalizing institution. But unlike many modern-day institutions which are made to serve the needs of a given society, the temple at Jerusalem was the one and only created reality which was greater than Israel itself. Since the temple was created for worshipping the Creator God, it did not ultimately exist for the sake of the people; rather, the people existed for the sake of Yahweh and Yahweh's temple. This was the theory anyway.[77]

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[75] "Jesus' powerful prediction of the temple's destruction calls the Marcan audience away from a preoccupation with the externals of worship and toward a concentration upon the internal essence of relating to God and worshiping him." Heil, "Narrative Strategy," 90. Cf. Kelber, *Mark's Story of Jesus*, 66; Trocmé, *La Formation de Marc*, 85.

[76] Sanders, *Jesus and Judaism*, 64. Cf. Wardle, *Temple and Identity*, 193. See also, "Hence, by his act Jesus symbolically interfered with the most central function of the Temple, namely, the atoning cult." Ådna, "Jesus' Symbolic Act in the Temple (Mark 11:15-17)," 469.

[77] Perrin, *Jesus and the Temple*, 7. In support he cites "Levenson 1985; Schmidt 2001; Han 2002; Stevens 2006" in n. 14 on the same page. Cf. Wardle, "the temple came to be symbolic of God's election of a specific people, the giving of the law, and the establishment of the covenant, for the Jerusalem temple was the locus of God's

These observations guard against any oversimplification of the temple as simply a place for sacrifices in our interpretation of Mark 11:17. However, they do not yet make clear how the "house of prayer" idea relates to the temple. While often neglected in discussions of the temple's functions, prayer was, in fact one of the major functions/benefits of the temple.[78] Solomon's dedicatory prayer at the foundation of the first temple will be discussed further below, however it is worth noting that in 1 Kgs 8 Solomon stresses the temple's prayer function at least six different times.[79] Is this neglect in current scholarship commensurate with the reason the temple was rejected in Mark's gospel? Did Jesus "cleanse" the temple because people had been neglecting its prayer function? As further observations will show, such a simple answer does not seem to do full justice to this text.[80]

While the "house of prayer" has warranted some examination, Mark's inclusion of the words "for all peoples" has typically generated more discussion. It is interesting to note that these words only occur in Mark's narration of this event.[81] Although the "for all peoples" does not necessarily mean "gentiles,"[82] discussion has tended to sway that direction. It has been suggested that Jesus's anger here is directed against the ethnocentric exclusivity being practiced

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presence on earth." Wardle, *Temple and Identity*, 30. To be fair, Sanders elsewhere gets closer to such an understanding. "The temple was the visible, functioning symbol of God's presence with his people, and it was also the basic rallying point of Jewish loyalties." E.P. Sanders, *Judaism: Practice and Belief 63 BCE–66 CE* (Philadelphia: Trinity International, 1992), 144.

[78] For example in Sanders's reconstruction of 1st century Judaism he only mentions things like prayer in passing, rather focusing his reconstruction on the sacrifices and how they were administered in the temple. Sanders, *Judaism: Practice and Belief*, 77–118. Though see Betz, "A Comparative Religion Approach," 467; Dowd, *Power and the Problem of Suffering*, 45–52.

[79] 1 Kgs 8:28–30, 34–36, 38–39, 44–45, 47–49, 52. Not to mention that all of this appears in a prayer itself.

[80] The temple as "house of prayer" is also discussed in modern scholarship because of the prayer themes that follow in 11:22–25. For some, this seems to be the only link in Mark's narrative between 22–25 and what has gone come before it. Cf. Molony, *Mark*, 227; Schweizer, *The Good News according to Mark*, 235; Stein, *Mark*, 520, et al.

[81] Cf. Matt 21:13; Luke 19:46

[82] "The temple has ceased to be what it is supposed to be; rather, it has become an instrument of exclusion of both the people of God and non-Jews." Chance, "Cursing of the Temple," 269.

at the temple.[83] Following on the heels of that connection, this has occasionally led to discussions of *where* Jesus did and said these things. Were these words uttered in the actual Court of the Gentiles?[84] Such historical investigations may be interesting, but they quickly outrun the evidence of Mark's gospel.[85] Some have further suggested that this apparent concern for the gentiles is rather anachronistic.[86] However, Mark's narrative does seem to address such concerns in other places as well.[87] It is not altogether improbable that this issue is in play here at some level, but it may not be wise to claim it as the main focus of the temple's rejection. Further reason for the temple's "cleansing" is filled-out by the accusation from Jeremiah as well.

Discussion of the Jeremiah quote typically revolves around the translation of λῃστῶν. The main options in translation are either "robbers"[88] or "insurrectionists."[89] The difference might seem subtle at first, but can be rather significant. If the main connotation is "robbers" it would suggest that the temple is being judged for extorting people. This idea finds support in the narrative from the overturning of the money changers' tables,[90] as well as the later accusation

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[83] Chance, "Cursing of the Temple," 268; Marcus, *The Way of the Lord*, 123; Suhl, *Die Funktion*, 143; Swartley, *Israel's Scripture Traditions*,193.

[84] Anderson discusses such a point while citing an article of Trocme's: "L'Expulsion des Marchands du Temple," *NTS* 15 (1968): 12–15. Anderson, "The Old Testament in Mark's Gospel," 289; Cf. Kingsbury, *Conflict*, 78; Sanders, *Judaism: Practice and Belief*, 76.

[85] Cf. Kirk, "Time for Figs," 518.

[86] Cf. Collins, *Mark*, 526; Sanders, *Jesus and Judaism*, 68.

[87] Kee, "The Function of Scriptural Quotations and Allusions in Mark 11–16," 185–86; Kelber, *Mark's Story of Jesus*, 41; Suhl, *Die Funktion*, 143; Voelz, *Mark*, 482, et al.

[88] "Here I note, instead, that the saying does not accuse priests of being robbers, but rather says that the temple was a den of robbers. The reference is to the bird-sellers and money-changers." Sanders, *Judaism: Practice and Belief*, 185. Cf. "Clearly, the story in Mark names as the major reason the kind of commercialism associated with the system of sacrifices . . .The problem that apparently irritated Jesus was that the merchants and the bankers had moved inside the sacred precinct to conduct their business. This situation brought about a conflict between business and worship. . ." Betz, "A Comparative Religion Approach," 461.

[89] For more on this understanding see Chance, "Cursing of the Temple," 275; Heil, "Narrative Strategy," 81; Juel, *Messiah and Temple*, 132–34; Watts, *Isaiah's New Exodus*, 329, 339.

[90] 11:15

that the leaders are "devouring the houses of widows."[91] However, if the meaning is closer to "insurrectionist," then the theme isn't quite as focused on the extortion of others, it is rather focused on insubordination and rebellion against the rightful ruler: God.[92] If one focuses on the "robbing," the critique is against commercialism and profiteering. However, if one focuses on the "insurrection," it may well include "robbing," but is much greater than simply that. Insurrection against God's proper rule can take many forms including improper exclusionary practices, extortion, and all kinds of other evils. This idea of usurpation receives further support from Mark's narrative when the near narrative of the parable of the vineyard is considered as well. The plan of the wicked tenants is to claim the vineyard for their own; insurrection indeed.[93]

Whatever understanding lies behind the word λῃστῶν, either of those connotations would be different from failing to live up to being a house of prayer, or failing to include "all peoples." So much can be said from narrative observations that do not proceed further into the Old Testament background of these citations. But are these just isolated phrases on Jesus's lips that happen to be useful in the context of 11:17? Or do the greater contexts of these verses also have a contribution to make to the interpretation of Mark's gospel? Apparently, they do. "In fact, the verse cited is not an isolated verse about the temple but sits within some of the most important biblical material from which Israel's eschatological expectations developed."[94]

When one examines the context of Isa 56:7 one finds that it is in many ways quite

[91] 12:40. Note the interesting contrast in this verse between the robbing of widows and the ostentatious prayers of the leaders.

[92] Cf. the "owner" of the vineyard in 12:1–11.

[93] Cf. Aus, *The Wicked Tenants*, 18; Heil, "Narrative Strategy," 81; Watts, *Isaiah's New Exodus*, 329.

[94] Kirk, "Time for Figs," 516; Cf. Juel *Messiah and Temple*, 133–34. Note the much more hesitant view of Suhl: "Nichts spricht dafür, daß der ursprüngliche Zusammenhang des Jes-Zitates hier mitgehört werden soll." Suhl, *Die Funktion*, 143.

appropriate to the narrative interpretation understood here.[95] Chapter 56 follows a series of hope-filled promises of restoration from the Lord. It specifically focuses on extending this hope to the "foreigner who has joined himself to the Lord."[96] Interestingly, 56:7 does not just speak of the "prayer" function of the temple, but also includes the promise, "their burnt offerings and their sacrifices will be accepted on my altar." However, this is not just a section on hope, it quickly moves toward judgment as well. Already in 56:10 Israel's leaders are called blind watchmen, in 56:11 they are called "shepherds who have no understanding," and in verse 56:12 they are mocked as careless drunkards. Chapter 57 carries on with accusations, exhorting the wicked to let their idols deliver them.[97] Furthermore, chapter 58 goes on to explain that their apparently proper worship had become false worship: "Why have we fasted, and you see it not? Why have we humbled ourselves, and you take no knowledge of it?' Behold, in the day of your fast you seek your own pleasure, and oppress all your workers. Behold, you fast only to quarrel and to fight and to hit with a wicked fist. Fasting like yours this day will not make your voice to be heard on high."[98] Judging by the greater context of Isaiah, their condemnation is not based on just one issue, but rather a conflation of vices: oppression, false worship, idolatry, etc.

The condemnation and judgment themes of Isa 56 are even further outdone by the greater context of Jer 7.[99] In Jer 7, the judgment is levied not just at Israel's "false shepherds," but this is done specifically in the context of the temple itself. Jeremiah sounds the warning "Do not trust in these deceptive words: 'This is the temple of the Lord, the temple of the Lord, the temple of the

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[95] Watts has a very helpful overview of 56:7's original context. See Watts, *Isaiah's New Exodus*, 319–22.

[96] Isa 56:3; 6: בֶּן־הַנֵּכָר הַנִּלְוֶה אֶל־יְהוָה; ὁ ἀλλογενὴς ὁ προσκείμενος πρὸς κύριον

[97] 57:13

[98] 58:3–4

[99] "There is a striking correspondence between the context of Jeremiah's speech and Jesus' demonstration in the temple." Gray, *The Temple in Mark*, 34.

Lord.'" Like Isaiah he goes on to accuse the leaders of false worship, "Will you steal, murder, commit adultery, swear falsely, make offerings to Baal, and go after other gods that you have not known, and then come and stand before me in this house, which is called by my name, and say, 'We are delivered!'—only to go on doing all these abominations?"[100] With striking congruence to Mark's temple condemnation theme, the Lord warns "therefore I will do to the house that is called by my name, and in which you trust, and to the place that I gave to you and to your fathers, as I did to Shiloh. And I will cast you out of my sight . . ."[101] The greater context also fits in well as it speaks to the issue of prayer: "As for you, do not pray for this people, or lift up a cry or prayer for them, and do not intercede with me, for I will not hear you."[102] Also similar to Isaiah, their condemnation is not based on one simple trespass, but on a whole list of evils including oppressing the sojourner, the widow, stealing, murder, idolatry, etc.[103]

After further examination it can be well recognized that the greater context of these brief Old Testament citations reinforces the narrative's major themes, and sheds further interpretive light on this passage. For one, the OT context of these two passages reinforces the above observations on Mark's quote of Malachi at the start of his book. Malachi's greater context involved the Lord suddenly coming to his temple in judgment. These same themes appear also in the context of the Isaiah and Jeremiah quotes. Second, the greater context of the Jeremiah passage reinforces the narrative interpretation that this is not simply a "cleansing" of the temple, but an effectual rejection. Jesus's action seems to be a fulfillment of Jeremiah's prophecy that even this temple will become like Shiloh.[104] Third, the contexts of the Isaiah and Jeremiah quotes

[100] Jer 7:9–10

[101] 7:14–15

[102] 7:16

[103] 7:6, 9

[104] Cf. Standaert, *Évangile selon Marc*, 820.

suggest that we should not just look for one single reason for the condemnation of the temple, but rather recognize the multi-faceted levels of corruption.[105] It is not simply exclusivity, extortion, or idolatry that is leading to this rejection; it is the confluence of all these things. Moreover, the sum of all these things isn't just a laundry list of vices, but ultimately the rejection of God.[106] As was noted in the above discussion of Ps 118, the temple is rejected because it (and its authorities) has rejected God, his prophets, and his ultimate agent: Jesus. This is further elucidated in the parable of the tenants, as well as by the language used here. This narrative connection between the rejection of Jesus and the rejection of the temple is further highlighted at the arrest of Jesus where he declares ὡς ἐπὶ λῃστὴν ἐξήλθατε μετὰ μαχαιρῶν καὶ ξύλων συλλαβεῖν με; καθ' ἡμέραν ἤμην πρὸς ὑμᾶς ἐν τῷ ἱερῷ διδάσκων καὶ οὐκ ἐκρατήσατέ με· ἀλλ' ἵνα πληρωθῶσιν αἱ γραφαί.[107] The temple is condemned for being a σπήλαιον λῃστῶν, Jesus, in turn, is arrested as a λῃστὴν. But the stone the builders rejected will become the cornerstone.

It is also interesting to note here that in the greater context of each of these quotes an agricultural metaphor appears that might influence one's interpretation of the fig tree episode in Mark's narrative.[108] In Isa 56:3, while speaking of the inclusion of foreigners and eunuchs in the worship of the Lord, Isaiah writes, "and let not the eunuch say, 'behold, I am a dry tree.'"[109] It does not seem like Mark is clearly alluding to this short line with his fig tree, but at the least it

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[105] A number of historical investigations have suggested that various groups of Jewish leaders were seen in such a light outside of the New Testament as well. See, Evans, "Cleansing or Portent of Destruction," 263; Wardle, *Temple and Identity*, 83, 88, 95.

[106] "Vous avez donc fait de ce lieu un repaire pour des gens qui ne vivent plus en communion avec Dieu. Ce lieu n'offre plus de médiation avec le Dieu vivant et saint." Standaert, *Évangile selon Marc*, 820.

[107] 14:48–49. Note the specific appearance of the temple in this context as well. Standaert, *Évangile selon Marc*, 821.

[108] For more on such metaphorical understandings, see the section near the end of this chapter. These passages are dealt with here as they are found in the context of Isa 56:7 and Jer 7:11.

[109] וְאַל־יֹאמַר הַסָּרִיס הֵן אֲנִי עֵץ יָבֵשׁ; μὴ λεγέτω ὁ εὐνοῦχος ὅτι Ἐγώ εἰμι ξύλον ξηρόν.

does encourage the metaphorical understanding of a dry tree for people who are "cut off"[110] from the Lord. Similarly, Jer 7:20 suggests that the cursing of trees was one aspect of God's judgment against his people. In response to the people's sins God says, "Behold, my anger and my wrath will be poured out on this place, upon man and beast, upon the trees of the field and the fruit of the ground."[111] Again, it is not likely that the cursing of the fig tree is intended to call to mind this short passage, but it does give the modern interpreter a frame of reference to understand why Jesus might curse a fig tree in judgment against people.

Even more interesting than these brief lines is the description of Jer 8:13. While explaining the reason the Lord is punishing his people it reads, "When I would gather them, declares the Lord, there are no grapes on the vine, nor figs on the fig tree; even the leaves are withered, and what I gave them has passed away from them."[112] At the least this passage makes it entirely clear that the metaphor of searching for figs on a fig tree was used in Jeremiah to speak of the Lord's disappointment and subsequent judgment against Israel, thus establishing a precedent for understanding the Marcan Jesus's (i.e., the Lord's) search for figs parabolically.[113] But while the other passages simply contribute to the potential of such metaphorical understanding, this passage might suggest more than that. Seeing that Mark puts a quote from Jer 7 on the lips of Jesus in 11:17, could it be that this passage from Jer 8 is being alluded to in 11:12–14? The

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[110] 56:5. יִכָּרֵת; ἐκλείψει

[111] לָכֵן כֹּה־אָמַר | אֲדֹנָי יְהוִה הִנֵּה אַפִּי וַחֲמָתִי נִתָּכֶת אֶל־הַמָּקוֹם הַזֶּה עַל־הָאָדָם וְעַל־הַבְּהֵמָה וְעַל־עֵץ הַשָּׂדֶה וְעַל־פְּרִי הָאֲדָמָה וּבָעֲרָה וְלֹא תִכְבֶּה; διὰ τοῦτο τάδε λέγει κύριος Ἰδοὺ ὀργὴ καὶ θυμός μου χεῖται ἐπὶ τὸν τόπον τοῦτον καὶ ἐπὶ τοὺς ἀνθρώπους καὶ ἐπὶ τὰ κτήνη καὶ ἐπὶ πᾶν ξύλον τοῦ ἀγροῦ αὐτῶν καὶ ἐπὶ πάντα τὰ γενήματα τῆς γῆς, καὶ καυθήσεται καὶ οὐ σβεσθήσεται.

[112] אָסֹף אֲסִיפֵם נְאֻם־יְהוָה אֵין עֲנָבִים בַּגֶּפֶן וְאֵין תְּאֵנִים בַּתְּאֵנָה וְהֶעָלֶה נָבֵל וָאֶתֵּן לָהֶם יַעַבְרוּם: καὶ συνάξουσιν τὰ γενήματα αὐτῶν, λέγει κύριος, οὐκ ἔστιν σταφυλὴ ἐν ταῖς ἀμπέλοις, καὶ οὐκ ἔστιν σῦκα ἐν ταῖς συκαῖς, καὶ τὰ φύλλα κατερρύηκεν.

[113] Cf. Gnilka, *Das Evangelium nach Markus*, 123–24; Kirk, "Time for Figs," 522.

connection is intriguing and should not be discounted too easily.[114]

Subtle Allusions

The subtle allusion to Jer 8:13 is not alone, there also appears to be other subtle Old Testament allusions in and around Mark 11. As this discussion will show, it appears that Mark is content to include Old Testament allusions without necessarily including an explicit quote.

Perhaps the easiest to recognize subtle allusion comes during the triumphal entry scene. Jesus comes riding into Jerusalem on a πῶλον, heralded with shouts of rejoicing as the one bringing in the kingdom of "our father David!"[115] Zech 9:9 comes to mind: "Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion! Shout aloud, O daughter of Jerusalem! Behold, your king is coming to you; righteous and having salvation is he, humble and mounted on a donkey, on a colt, the foal of a donkey."[116] Matthew[117] and John[118] are quick to explicitly cite Zechariah in their descriptions of this entry scene, while Mark leaves the connection as a subtle allusion. There is no fulfillment language, nor any explicit citation in Mark.

This is not the only potential allusion to Zechariah that has been observed in Mark's narrative.[119] Considerable correlations have been observed between Mark's transfiguration

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[114] "While the meaning of this parable might be self-evident even without an OT precursor, the story of the withered fig tree explicitly echoes the judgment oracle of Jer 8:13." Hays, "Can the Gospels teach us," 408. Cf. Gray, *The Temple in Mark*, 35–36; Hooker, *The Gospel according to Saint Mark*, 261; Standaert, *Évangile selon Marc*, 814; Watts, *Isaiah's New Exodus*, 317–18. Telford considers the connection, but considers the lack of clear verbal links makes it unlikely. Telford, *Barren Temple*, 142–45. See also the rejection of this connection by Esler, "Withered Fig Tree," 50.

[115] Mark 11:10

[116] גִּילִי מְאֹד בַּת־צִיּוֹן הָרִיעִי בַּת יְרוּשָׁלָ͏ִם הִנֵּה מַלְכֵּךְ יָבוֹא לָךְ צַדִּיק וְנוֹשָׁע הוּא עָנִי וְרֹכֵב עַל־חֲמוֹר וְעַל־עַיִר בֶּן־אֲתֹנוֹת׃; Χαῖρε σφόδρα, θύγατερ Σιων, κήρυσσε, θύγατερ Ιερουσαλημ, ἰδοὺ ὁ βασιλεύς σου ἔρχεταί σοι, δίκαιος καὶ σῴζων αὐτός, πραῢς καὶ ἐπιβεβηκὼς ἐπὶ ὑποζύγιον καὶ πῶλον νέον.

[117] Matthew 21:5

[118] John 12:15

[119] It can be added here that much discussion has focused on Mark's subtle use of Zechariah throughout his gospel. For a recent general overview of Zechariah allusions in Mark's gospel, see Evans, "Zechariah in the Markan

account and Zechariah's third and fourth chapters. Jesus's temple cleansing has been linked to Zech 14:20–21.[120] The Mount of Olives is highlighted in Mark 11:1, 13:3, and 14:26, which might call to mind the significance of the Mount of Olives in Zech 14:4:[121] "On that day his feet shall stand on the Mount of Olives that lies before Jerusalem on the east." Jesus calls the wine of his final meal τὸ αἷμά μου τῆς διαθήκης τὸ ἐκχυννόμενον ὑπὲρ πολλῶν, which is rather similar to Zech 9:11, "As for you also, because of the blood of my covenant with you, I will set your prisoners free from the waterless pit."[122] The various subtle links become all the more intriguing when Jesus explicitly cites Zechariah in Mark 14:27. The abandonment of Jesus by the disciples might not have seemed like a strong allusion to Zech 13:7, however it is explicitly cited in Mark to make that connection. While it is a difficult task to decide which of these potential connections to Zechariah actually were intended by Mark, the explicit quote of Mark 14:27 and the citation from other gospel writers during the entry scene make it more than likely that Mark subtly alluded to Zechariah at some level elsewhere in this section.

Another section of Old Testament scripture also subtly lay behind much of Mark 11 and its context, namely Solomon's rise to kingship from First Kings.[123] It is rather striking that the first time the appellation "son of David" is used in Mark's narrative (10:48) comes immediately before Jesus rides into Jerusalem on a donkey, proclaimed as the inaugurator of the Davidic kingdom. While this entry was noted above for its connection to Zechariah's prophecy, it is

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Passion Narrative." See also Marcus, *The Way of the Lord*, 154–64; Christian Grappe, "Jésus, le Temp et *les Temps*."

[120] E.g., Grappe, "Jésus, le Temp et *les Temps*," 173.

[121] E.g., Carrington, *Primitive Christian Calendar*, 111.

[122] גַּם־אַתְּ בְּדַם־בְּרִיתֵךְ שִׁלַּחְתִּי אֲסִירַיִךְ מִבּוֹר אֵין מַיִם בּוֹ; καὶ σὺ ἐν αἵματι διαθήκης ἐξαπέστειλας δεσμίους σου ἐκ λάκκου οὐκ ἔχοντος ὕδωρ.

[123] Cf. Gray, *The Temple in Mark*, 79–84; Elizabeth Malbon, "The Jesus of Mark and the 'Son of David.'" in *Between Author and Audience in Mark: Narration, Characterization, Interpretation*, ed. Elizabeth Struthers Malbon NTM 23 (Sheffield: Sheffield Phoenix, 2009), 179, n. 50; Wright, *Victory*, 535.

important to note that Zechariah's prophecy itself echoes back to Solomon's original inauguration.[124] He indeed was the son of David, he took over his kingdom in succession, and he even rode on the king's mule[125] when he was publically proclaimed king in Jerusalem. Some further indications suggest an even closer connection than that. After Solomon is enthroned as king, the First Kings narrative continues by describing Solomon's wisdom, a theme that has a correlation to Jesus's wise responses to the Jewish leaders in 11:27–12:40. The First Kings narrative also describes the founding of the temple. As explained in the previous chapter, this section of Mark's gospel is very interested in the temple.[126] Gray has even suggested that Jesus's riddle in 12:37 has an answer from the First Kings narrative. When considering Ps 110, Jesus asks, "David himself calls him Lord. So how is he his son?" The answer according to Gray: Solomon. "David recognizes the superiority of his newly enthroned son by doing obeisance on his bed. . . This is the only instance in the history of Israel that a son ascends the throne and is crowned king while his father is still alive."[127]

Whether or not one is persuaded to see every potential connection between Mark's Jesus and Solomon as intended allusions, it must be recognized that Mark's narrative contains some subtle allusions to Solomon's narrative from First Kings. Perhaps the dissonance between Solomon's wisdom and Jesus's witty responses is so great that these should not be considered intentional allusions. However, the appellation "son of David" immediately preceding Jesus's triumphal entry certainly suggests some level of intended connection.

Such subtle allusions are not limited to the above observations from Zechariah and First

[124] It should not be surprising to see some level of conflation in Mark's more subtle allusions considering his propensity for conflating his explicit quotes. Cf. Kee, *Community of the New Age*, 127–28.

[125] פִּרְדָּת; *ἡμίονον*

[126] The possibility that Mark 11:22–25 is actually alluding to Solomon's dedicatory prayer from 1 Kgs 8 will be explored further below.

Kings, but others have been suggested as well. Connections to Isa 53[128] have generated a lot of attention, as well as connections to Dan 7,[129] Ps 22,[130] and other Old Testament texts. While the specifics of every scholarly conjecture need to be considered on their own terms, at the least, one should be able to recognize that certain Old Testament themes are flowing together at this point in Mark's narrative without explicit citations to back them up.[131]

First Kings 8

With all this established, it is all the more striking to examine Jesus's response in Mark 11:22–25 in the light of 1 Kgs 8. Could it be that Mark is suggesting something significant by alluding to the "founding moment" of the old temple at this point in his narrative? Mark's narrative points strongly to the superiority of Jesus and his words over against the "old," which he has come into conflict with. In the near narrative context, the cursing of the fig tree strongly signals the condemnation of the temple, a reading that is further strengthened by other narrative indications as well as Mark's thoughtful use of the Old Testament. Furthermore, as the narrative links the rejection of the temple to the rejection of Jesus, it further suggests that the temple itself will be replaced by the "rejected stone," a new temple "not made with hands." Thus, if the old temple order is condemned and a new temple order is being founded, it seems entirely

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[127] Ibid., 83.

[128] Donahue, *Are You the Christ?*, 99–100; Marcus, *The Way of the Lord*, 186–96; O'Brien, *The Use of Scripture*, 75–87; Watts, *Isaiah's New Exodus*, 257–87, 349; Ibid., "The Psalms and Mark," 319–20, et al.

[129] Donahue, *Are You the Christ?*, 142–71; Gray, *The Temple in Mark*, 141–45; Marcus, *The Way of the Lord*, 164–71; O'Brien, *The Use of Scripture*, 172–90; Watts, "The Psalms and Mark," 319–20, et al.

[130] Marcus, *The Way of the Lord*, 172–86; O'Brien, *The Use of Scripture*, 147–54; Watts, "The Psalms and Mark," 321–22, et al.

[131] "The determination of a spectrum of clearer to less clear allusions is made harder to determine at times by the fact that a NT writer may sometimes be alluding to an OT theme found in several OT texts, without being more precise about which single text in the OT is the definitive source for his use. In such cases, one must be content that merely an OT theme found in multiple OT texts is being alluded to." Cf. "Any exhaustive study of the use of the OT in the NT must at some point reckon with the way OT themes, characters, stories, and the like are utilized without any direct citation or verbal allusions." Stamps, "Rhetorical Device," 12. Cf. Beale, *Handbook*, 31, n. 7; O'Brien,

appropriate to hearken back to the founding of the first temple, and Solomon's dedicatory prayer given at that foundational moment in 1 Kgs 8.

"Founding Moments"

Before considering the verbal and thematic connections between Solomon's prayer and our passage, it will be helpful to consider why this allusion might be so important in this Marcan context. In his exposition, *Isaiah's New Exodus and Mark*, Rikki Watts has suggested that the Exodus was so important in the prophetic, Rabbinic, and New Testament traditions because it was the "founding moment" of Israel.[132] He cites the work of Paul Ricoeur claiming, "Ricoeur, relying heavily on Ellul, draws attention to the formative influence of the community's founding moment upon its self-perception."[133] As Watts continues, he explains that this need of a group to understand itself in relation to its founding moment is heightened when it experiences some form of crises that challenges its identity.[134]

Such a crises is precisely what we have in Mark's narrative. Jesus had just condemned the temple. As Sanders succinctly puts it, "The temple was the visible, functioning symbol of God's presence with his people, and it was also the basic rallying point of Jewish loyalties."[135] If there was going to be any way forward, Jesus needed to respond to this crisis. The loss of the temple was not just of political and sociological importance (though it was all that), this loss meant the loss of a location for God's presence. This was a crisis indeed. Following Watts' observations, it is completely appropriate to respond to such a crisis with a redefinition of the founding moment.

The Use of Scripture, 16.

[132] Watts, *Isaiah's New Exodus*, 37–40.

[133] Ibid., 37.

[134] Ibid., 45–47. Cf. Stamps, "Rhetorical Device," 29–32.

[135] Sanders, *Judaism: Practice and Belief*, 144. Cf . Ådna, *Jesu Stellung zum Tempel*, 26; Kelber, *The Kingdom in Mark*, 1; Perrin, *Jesus the Temple*, 7, 183; Wardle, *Temple and Identity*, 29.

This condemnation of the central identity marker of God's presence amongst his chosen people demands that Jesus must address how God's past revelation relates to Jesus's present claims and actions. If the major issue here is the question of how will God relate to his people without the temple, then it is not surprising that the Marcan Jesus should appeal to the temple's founding moment to make his case.[136]

Verbal and Thematic Links

Other than the ideological appropriateness of appealing to this passage, there are many verbal and thematic links between 1 Kgs 8 and Jesus's words in 11:22–25 that link these passages together. Notice first of all Jesus's opening comment in 22, ἔχετε πίστιν θεοῦ. Faith in God was exactly what the temple was to visibly supply. Solomon reiterated again and again how God was to be sought in this temple, petitioning God in 8:29, "that your eyes may be open night and day toward this house." God himself had filled the temple with the cloud of his glory in 1 Kgs 8:11. The loss of the temple would certainly have triggered thoughts about the loss of access to God's presence. However, Jesus prefaces all his other words with this statement to have faith in God, assuring the disciples that the condemnation of the old temple does not entail the loss of a God who they can have faith in.

Somewhat similarly, it has been observed that there is some ambiguity in 11:23 concerning who the subject of λαλεῖ is.[137] If this is seen as governed somewhat by the opening statement, "have faith in God," it is entirely possible to understand that the subject of λαλεῖ is the God

[136] This is recognizably a commandeering of Watts's thoughts and even words, though with a different focus. One could very well consider this an intentional allusion. He worked with the Exodus and the past founding moment of the people of Israel. Here, I am suggesting that the temple served a similar function, yet it was different because it was a present and visible marker of that identity. Cf. "If a major issue in the NT is the question of who is the true Israel, then it is not surprising that NT writers should appeal to Israel's founding moment to make their case." Watts, *Isaiah's New Exodus*, 46–47.

[137] See chapter 2, 66–69.

whom they are to have faith in, the God whose words are faithful and true. In 1 Kgs 8 Solomon stresses the faithfulness of God's words a number of times as well. In 8:15 he says that God has spoken[138] and fulfilled what he said.[139] Essentially what he says happens.[140] Again in 8:20 Solomon stresses the same thing, the LXX getting very close to Mark's Greek: 1 Kgs 8:20 (ὃ ἐλάλησεν) and Mark 11:23 (ὃ λαλεῖ).[141] The same themes are again returned to in 8:24–26 as well. It could very well be that in Mark, Jesus is reminding his disciples that they can have faith in God because whatever he proclaims happens according to his plan. If the temple is condemned by God's agent, Jesus, it is only happening according to his plan and his promised word.[142]

While the previous connections might seem too subtle to suggest a direct allusion, the major themes of prayer, forgiveness, and interpersonal relations heighten the potential connection.

In Mark 11:24 much ink has been spilled over the unexpected thematic switch to prayer.[143] However, if Mark is including these words to allude back to the founding moment of the just-condemned temple it is entirely appropriate to speak of prayer. Solomon's dedicatory prayer is not only a prayer itself, but it consists of a series of petitions that cycle back to the theme of prayer as well. Solomon prays that the Lord would hear his prayer in 8:28; he prays that the Lord

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[138] דִּבֶּר; ἐλάλησεν

[139] מִלֵּא; ἐπλήρωσεν

[140] ὃ λαλεῖ γίνεται

[141] N.B. The LXX seems to regularly use λαλέω to translate דבר in the piel. In the piel, דבר still can be translated "speak," but it seems here that the other common piel translation of "promise" is better. Perhaps this suggests something about how λέγω might be better understood as distinct from λαλέω.

[142] Thus, the greater context of the quotes from Malachi, Jeremiah and Isaiah would be all the more important.

[143] Biguzzi, *Yo Destruire Este Templo*, 44–47; Böttrich, "Jesus und der Feigenbaum," 335; Ernst, *Das Evangelium nach Markus*, 332; Esler, "Withered Fig Tree," 59–60; Hooker, *The Gospel according to Saint Mark*, 269; Stein, *Mark*, 520 Telford, *Barren Temple*, 108, et al.

would hear his prayer and all of Israel's prayers that are offered "to this place"[144] in verse 8:30; in 8:31–32, when Solomon brings up strife between neighbors, he asks, "if a man sins against his neighbor and is made to take an oath and comes and swears his oath before your altar in this house,[145] then hear in heaven and act and judge your servants." Likewise when Israel is defeated by an enemy they are to pray to "this house";[146] when here is no rain they are to pray to "this place."[147] The list echoes the threats of Deuteronomy as it swells:

> If there is famine in the land, if there is pestilence or blight or mildew or locust or caterpillar, if their enemy besieges them in the land at their gates, whatever plague, whatever sickness there is, whatever prayer, whatever plea is made by any man or by all your people Israel, each knowing the affliction of his own heart and stretching out his hands toward this house, then hear in heaven your dwelling place and forgive and act.[148]

In verses 41–43 provision is even made for the "foreigner, who is not of your people Israel,"[149] who might come and pray "towards this house."[150] Again, if the people are to go out to battle (8:44–45) they are to pray to the "house" of the temple. Again, if they are deported (8:46–50), they are to pray towards the "house" of the temple. Solomon summarizes all of this in verse 52, by asking that the Lord may keep his eyes and ears open to the prayers of Israel "whenever they call to you." While some have failed to make such a strong connection between prayer and the temple, Solomon would say otherwise. In this dedicatory prayer, it seems as though prayer is *the* major function of the temple.

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[144] אֶל־הַמָּקוֹם הַזֶּה; εἰς τὸν τόπον τοῦτον

[145] בַּבַּיִת הַזֶּה; ἐν τῷ οἴκῳ τούτῳ

[146] 8:33–34. בַּבַּיִת הַזֶּה; ἐν τῷ οἴκῳ τούτῳ

[147] 8:35–36. אֶל־הַמָּקוֹם הַזֶּה; εἰς τὸν τόπον τοῦτον

[148] 8:37–39

[149] הַנָּכְרִי אֲשֶׁר לֹא־מֵעַמְּךָ יִשְׂרָאֵל; ᾧ ἀλλοτρίῳ, ὃς οὐκ ἔστιν ἀπὸ λαοῦ σου οὗτος

But prayer is not the only stand-alone function of the temple in Solomon's prayer, nor is it the only major theme of Jesus's words in Mark 11:22–25. Forgiveness is another major theme of both passages. In Mark 11:25 Jesus seems to unexpectedly turn from the theme of prayer toward the theme of forgiveness, though note that the start of the verse links the two themes together quite closely: Καὶ ὅταν στήκετε προσευχόμενοι, ἀφίετε εἴ τι ἔχετε κατά τινος, ἵνα καὶ ὁ πατὴρ ὑμῶν ὁ ἐν τοῖς οὐρανοῖς ἀφῇ ὑμῖν τὰ παραπτώματα ὑμῶν. In First Kings, Solomon repeatedly drives at the hoped-for result of most of these prayers: forgiveness. In verse 8:30, as he carries into the body of the prayer he asks not only that the Lord would hear, but he continues, "and when you hear, forgive."[151] This same refrain is repeated in almost every petition (8:30, 34, 36, 39, 50), and the need for this constant forgiveness is explicitly highlighted in verse 46: "for there is no one who does not sin."[152] According to Solomon's prayer, the temple stands as the one place towards which the people can petition God in their prayers, repenting of their sins, in order to receive forgiveness.

Mixed in with these major themes are also a couple of minor themes that appear in both texts as well. When Jesus turns to speak of forgiveness, he immediately speaks of the need for people to be reconciled in their own relationships as well (Mark 11:25). As Solomon enters into his cycle of prayers that seek forgiveness, he too quickly begins to speak of needed reconciliation between neighbors (1 Kgs 8:31–32). While it can further be noted that Solomon does not implore others to extend mutual forgiveness as Jesus does, this should be no great hindrance to recognizing the connection at hand. Both texts speak of prayer, forgiveness, and interpersonal

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[150] אֶל־הַבַּיִת הַזֶּה; εἰς τὸν τόπον τοῦτον

[151] וְסָלָחְתָּ; ἵλεως ἔσῃ

[152] כִּי אֵין אָדָם אֲשֶׁר לֹא־יֶחֱטָא; ὅτι οὐκ ἔστιν ἄνθρωπος, ὃς οὐχ ἁμαρτήσεται

relationships. Solomon, however, is praying to God, while Jesus is teaching his disciples. It is only appropriate that Jesus instruct his disciples according to the human side of the equation, while Solomon speaks to the divine side of the equation. Jesus appeals to his followers to forgive each other; Solomon appeals to God to judge according to righteousness.

A further connection exists in that both texts display a concern for "all peoples." In Mark 11 the link to "all peoples" comes earlier than 22–25, actually occurring in 11:17. In 1 Kgs 8 Solomon extends the focus of his prayer and the role of the temple to include foreigners as well. In 8:41–43 Solomon carries on,

> Likewise, when a foreigner, who is not of your people Israel, comes from a far country for your name's sake (for they shall hear of your great name and your mighty hand, and of your outstretched arm), when he comes and prays toward this house, hear in heaven your dwelling place and do according to all for which the foreigner calls to you, in order that all the peoples of the earth may know your name and fear you, as do your people Israel, and that they may know that this house that I have built is called by your name.

This passage fits extremely well with Jesus's accusation of 11:17, that the temple was intended to be a "house of prayer for all peoples." A "house" for "foreigners" is exactly what Solomon prays for here.

Furthermore, this connection to 1 Kgs 8 also explains another apparent conundrum from Mark 11:25. Many commentators have noted how strange it is that Mark refers to God as ὁ πατὴρ ὑμῶν ὁ ἐν τοῖς οὐρανοῖς.[153] This seems puzzling because it is the only place in Mark's gospel where he refers to God in this manner. However, Solomon's dedicatory prayer is saturated with this language as well. As Solomon moves into his requests he queries, "But will God indeed dwell on the earth? Behold, heaven and the highest heaven cannot contain you; how

[153] As mentioned in chapter 2, many tend to assume a connection to the Lord's Prayer must lay behind this language. Cf. Edwards, *The Gospel according to Mark*, 348; Ernst, *Das Evangelium nach Markus*, 334; France, *The Gospel of Mark*, 450; Marcus, *Mark*, 787–88.

much less this house that I have built!" While the mention that "heaven cannot contain you" might make it appear that Solomon means that God does not dwell in heaven, the rest of his prayer displays the opposite. He repeatedly petitions that when the people pray towards the temple, God would hear "in heaven your dwelling place."[154] He specifically makes such a statement 8 times; in 8:30, 32, 34, 36, 39, 43, 45, and in 49! Perhaps this is not such an oddity of nomenclature in Mark's gospel, but perhaps a verbal allusion to Solomon's prayer.

Finally, one further element strengthens the connection between these two passages. The element is found in the greater context of both passages, and it deals with the rejection of the temple. As has been explained above, the cursed fig tree, the mountain cast into the sea, and other indications, point toward the rejection of the temple. Such a potential rejection was not entirely novel, but actually mentioned in the Lord's response to Solomon's prayer. In 1 Kgs 9:6–9, the Lord warns,

> But if you turn aside from following me, you or your children, and do not keep my commandments and my statutes that I have set before you, but go and serve other gods and worship them, then I will cut off[155] Israel from the land that I have given them, and the house[156] that I have consecrated for my name I will cast out[157] of my sight, and Israel will become a proverb[158] and a byword among all peoples. And this house will become a heap of ruins.[159] Everyone passing by it will be astonished and

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[154] אֶל־מְקוֹם שִׁבְתְּךָ אֶל־הַשָּׁמָיִם; *ἐν τῷ τόπῳ τῆς κατοικήσεώς σου ἐν οὐρανῷ*

[155] הִכְרַתִּי; *ἐξαρῶ*. This becomes even more interesting if one examines the word choices of the similar account in 2 Chr 7:20: "I will pluck (וְנִתַּשְׁתִּים; *ἐξαρῶ*) you up from my land that I have given you, and this house that I have consecrated for my name, I will cast out (אַשְׁלִיךְ; *ἀποστρέψω*) of my sight, and I will make it a proverb (לְמָשָׁל; *εἰς παραβολὴν* (!)) and a byword among all peoples." While the language of 1 Kgs 8 is certainly strong and clearly speaks to the rejection of the temple, the Hebrew וְנִתַּשְׁתִּים and the Greek *παραβολὴν* from 2 Chr 7 make for some even more compelling comparisons to Mark 11.

[156] אֶת־הַבַּיִת; *τὸν οἶκον τοῦτον*

[157] אֲשַׁלַּח; *ἀπορρίψω*

[158] לְמָשָׁל; *εἰς ἀφανισμὸν*

[159] וְהַבַּיִת הַזֶּה יִהְיֶה עֶלְיוֹן; *ὁ οἶκος οὗτος ὁ ὑψηλός* N.B. The Hebrew is rather unclear how to understand עֶלְיוֹן, while the LXX seems to place it in apposition. The Vulgate attempts to solve this ambiguity by translating the start of verse 8, *Et domus hæc erit in exemplum*, which seems to be the line of thought behind the ESV translation

> will hiss, and they will say, 'Why has the LORD done thus to this land and to this house?' Then they will say, 'Because they abandoned the LORD their God who brought their fathers out of the land of Egypt and laid hold on other gods and worshiped them and served them. Therefore the LORD has brought all this disaster[160] on them.

This abandonment of the Lord seen here is commensurate with the reason the temple was rejected in Mark, as described above. The temple (and its leaders) had rejected God, therefore God rejected the temple (and its leaders). Not only are there striking parallels in thematic and verbal links between Jesus words in 11:22–25 and Solomon's dedicatory prayer in 1 Kgs 8, but the greater context of these passages reinforces the connections and narrative thought flow as well. All of this is on top of the ideological basis for alluding to the "founding moment" of the temple at this crises event. Once again, Mark's use of the Old Testament has strengthened the narrative's themes.

Further Support from Early Jewish Literature

While the main methodology of this dissertation focuses on Mark's narrative (including Mark's intertextuality), further support for the proposed reading can be garnered from a brief study of the world of ancient Judaism. Two questions will be approached here: (1) would Solomon's prayer from 1 Kgs 8 have been a familiar text in the first century? And (2) do the proposed metaphorical understandings of mountain and fig tree as relating to judgment and the temple have any precedent outside of Mark's narrative? The first question will be answered by

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used above, though some additional privileges seem to have been taken as well in the ESV translation. The temple stood on the top of a mountain, and its desolation makes it no longer a high place of glory, but a high place that is an example of God's rejection. The NIV, NASB, ISV and others translate with the ESV. The ASV, KJV, ERV and others seem to read it as an appositional statement, typically converting it into a relative clause in English: 'which is high.' Interestingly, 2 Chr 7:21 inserts the relative pronoun אֲשֶׁר, making the translation much more clear:

> וְהַבַּיִת הַזֶּה אֲשֶׁר הָיָה עֶלְיוֹן.

[160] אֶת כָּל־הָרָעָה הַזֹּאת; *τὴν κακίαν ταύτην*.

examining ancient Jewish lectionaries. As will be explained below, there is good reason to believe that 1 Kgs 8 would have been a well-known text at that time, due to its usage during the Feast of Tabernacles. The second question will be answered mainly from the Old Testament, though some additional extra-Biblical material will be drawn on as well.

Ancient Jewish Lectionaries

Would Solomon's prayer from 1 Kgs 8 have been a familiar text?[161] And if so, how would a modern scholar know? Certainly if the text was regularly quoted in extra-Marcan sources, one could conjecture a high level of awareness of the text. As mentioned above, the significance of 1 Kgs 8 as the founding moment of the temple would likely have added to its popularity. Such was the case that at least Herod considered Solomon's temple when designing his own.[162] However, further support can be found in the rather non-traditional (and partially controversial) realm of ancient Jewish lectionaries.

Jewish lectionary theories have received a fair amount of scholarly attention, but have met with a rather sparse amount of general acceptance.[163] It seems to be readily accepted that the Jewish synagogues of the first century regularly read from the law and the prophets, however, it is unclear whether or not there was any standardized reading pattern.[164] Some have suggested an annual cycle,[165] while others have suggested a triennial cycle.[166] The difficulties with such

[161] One could also ask another question, are the King's narratives ever alluded to in Mark. While most would agree that they are in some level (e.g., Malbon, *Narrative Space*, 69, 73, 120), some have gone so far as to propose that parts of the King's narratives actually lay behind Mark's composition. Cf. Roth, *Cracking the Code*; Winn, *Mark and the Elijah–Elisha Narrative*.

[162] Josephus, *Ant.*, 15.385

[163] For a brief overview of some major figures who have offered theories on Jewish lectionary practices, see Monshouwer, *The Gospels and Jewish Worship*, 59–65.

[164] Cf. Goodacre, *Goulder and the Gospels*, 339; Levine, *The Ancient Synagogue*, 142; Monshouwer, *The Gospels and Jewish Worship*, 15; Sanders, *Judaism: Practice and Belief*, 207.

[165] E.g., M.D. Goulder, *The Evangelists' Calendar: A Lectionary Explanation of the Development of Scripture* (Edinburgh: R&R Clark, 1978). Cf. Monshouwer, who specifically argues against Goulder's annual cycle theory. Monshouwer, *The Gospels and Jewish Worship*, 62.

suggestions are that the hard evidence for such cycles is usually rather late, and the evidence never clearly confirms how broadly any suggested lectionary was actually used.[167]

However difficult it may be to agree on a theory of weekly lectionaries, some form of agreement has occurred in regard to festal readings.[168] The clearest evidence comes from the Talmud. References in the Talmud prescribe certain readings at certain feasts; tract Megilla and tract Soferim both discuss readings associated with festivals.[169] Though the dating of Talmudic evidence is always complicated, such evidence is typically considered reliable even for the time of the first century, potentially even for some Christian churches.[170] Due to the central focus on Jerusalem and the temple during these festivals, it is all the more likely that the readings for the festivals should be uniform. While weekly synagogue worship would have been less centralized, the festivals had their center in Jerusalem at the temple, so the priests could have established readings for the festivals that would have remained consistent. When the Talmud describes the readings at various festivals, it probably describes them accurately, even dating to the first century when the temple was still standing.[171]

Discussions of Jewish lectionaries have further penetrated into studies on the Christian

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[166] E.g., R.G. Finch, *The Synagogue Lectionary and the New Testament: A Study of the Three-Year Cycle of Readings from the Law and the Prophets as a Contribution to New Testament Chronology* (London: Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, 1939).

[167] "The oldest records of the TC [triennial cycle] may never be completely understood. However, it was documented that there were synagogues in the fourth century which complete the reading of the Torah in three years: The general expression 'sons of the West' indicates that this was not the custom of a marginal group, but normal practice for a fairly large number of Jews." Monshouwer, *The Gospels and Jewish Worship*, 42.

[168] Goodacre, *Goulder and the Gospels*, 339; Levine, *The Ancient Synagogue*, 138, n. 77.

[169] Most pertinent to this discussion are Megilla, 87, and Soferim, 19–20.

[170] "It is more reasonable to speak of some kind of festal lectionary cycle as early as the first century." Goodacre, *Goulder and the Gospels*, 339. Cf. "First, the evidence for the existence and main themes of the feasts is there in the Old Testament, and the evidence for the scriptures read at them is often from the Mishnah, or other early Jewish tradition. Second, we have sufficient evidence that the Church celebrated much of the old Jewish festal year in the early centuries, both from the patristic writings and from the New Testament itself." Goulder, *Luke*, 147.

[171] There is some evidence for the prescribed readings actually occurring while the temple was standing. For examples, see Perrot, "Reading of the Bible," 149–50.

gospels as some have suggested that Jewish lectionaries have served as the basis for the composition of the gospels.[172] Figures like Goulder and Carrington have laid out theories suggesting that the gospels were composed based on lectionary needs; that is, the gospels were composed, pericope-by-pericope to align with the pericopes of the already-in-use "Jewish" lectionary.[173] According to these theories, the Old Testament readings provide the "key" for the interpretation of the New Testament. However attractive such theories may sound, the lack of solid evidence has made the pursuit rather speculative, with no unified results.[174]

While such discussion have found little consensus, they have highlighted some interesting connections.[175] Perhaps the most interesting for our purposes involves the readings for the Feast of Booths.[176] According to the Talmud the first festival day of Tabernacles would have included readings from Zech 14, 1 Kgs 8, and Deut 33.[177] Furthermore, a major feast such as this would have included reading the Hallel, which ends with Ps 118.[178] Thackery expounds on the Mishnah, and explains that Ps 118 had special prominence during the Feast of Booths as it describes how "a procession with palm-branches . . . was made round the alter each day of the feast and

[172] For a more thorough exploration of "lectionary theories" and how they relate to the study of the Gospels, see Goodacre, *Goulder and the Gospels*, 294–369. For a brief history of their reception in scholarship see especially pp. 304–18. For a further overview of those who have proposed a lectionary basis for Mark (based on the Jewish calendar) see Monshouwer, *The Gospels and Jewish Worship*, 172–85.

[173] E.g., Carrington, *The Primitive Christian Calendar*; Goulder, *The Evangelists' Calendar*.

[174] Similar to the presuppositions of form-criticism, those who work on lectionary theories assume that the hermeneutical key to understanding a passage is its liturgical usage. In Thackery's early and influential study he went so far as to claim, "My aim is to show that these passages cannot be fully understood without regard to their employment in public worship. The liturgical use is, I venture to think, a factor in exegesis which has been unduly neglected." H. St. John Thackery, *The Septuagint and Jewish Worship: A Study in Origins*, 2nd ed. (London: Oxford University Press, 1923), 40.

[175] J D. M. Derrett, *The Making of Mark: The Scriptural Bases of the Earliest Gospel* (Shipston-on-Stour: Drinkwater, 1985), 22.

[176] Also known as the Feast of Tabernacles.

[177] Tract Megilla, 87.

[178] Cf. Tract Soferim, 19–20.

repeated seven times on the last day, with cries of 'We beseech thee, JHWH, save now,'"[179] essentially quoting from Ps 118. The branches too were a major part of the celebration of Booths, not only involving people waving branches, but also building their own temporary "booths" out of branches.[180] This feast was also full of Messianic connotations.[181] Considering all this, it may come as no surprise that Carrington suggests that Mark 11 was composed to coincide with the readings of the Feast of Tabernacles.[182] In Mark 11 Jesus enters into Jerusalem to quotes of Ps 118, while people spread leafy branches before him on the way. This becomes all the more interesting as one considers that Zech 14 and 1 Kgs 8 were some of the other prescribed readings for this festival;[183] both of these passages were already brought into the discussion of Mark 11 above. The possible connection to 1 Kgs 8 and Mark 11 outside of the above proposal would certainly help one see the allusion in 11:22–25.

However, Carrington's theory, like other lectionary theories, is based on uncomfortably dubious evidence. Carrington makes rather strong claims using marginal markings observed in the New Testament manuscripts.[184] However, such markings are not as well-understood as he suggests, and neither are they as consistent as his theory demands. Stanley Porter has spent a significant amount of time studying these markings, and is rather skeptical about how much can

[179] Thackery, *The Septuagint and Jewish Worship*, 75.

[180] Sandmel, *Judaism and Christian Beginnings*, 215; Thackery, *The Septuagint and Jewish Worship*, 61.

[181] Cf. Chávez, *Jesus' Temple Action in Mark*, 66, n. 14; Thackery, *The Septuagint and Jewish Worship*, 61–3.

[182] Carrington, *According to Mark*, 231; Cf. His explanation of the structure of Mark in his *Primitive Christian Calendar*, 31–37. Carrington isn't the only one to have noted a connection to Tabernacles in Mark 11. See: Chávez, *Jesus' Temple Action in Mark*, 66, n. 14. Cf. Antoinette Collins, "Jesus' Cleansing of the Temple," 158–59; Grappe, "Jesus le Temps et *les Temps*," 180–81; Sandmel, *Judaism and Christian Beginnings*, 215, n. 25.

[183] It is further interesting how similar the Greek word for "figs" and the Hebrew word for "booths" are: σῦκον and סֻכָּה. If more solid evidence for a connection between Tabernacles and Mark 11 existed, it would be tempting to interpret the short line from Mark 11:13 as a wordplay indicating that these events didn't really happen during Sukkoth.

[184] Cf. Carrington, *The Primitive Christian Calendar*, 29.

be said about them. Even a casual examination of manuscripts D and B shows that the lectionary markings are not consistently applied between the various manuscript traditions.[185] According to Porter, "the instances of pericope marking are apparently haphazard in the earliest manuscripts. . . It is not even possible, on the basis of the limited evidence, to say that a given manuscript is internally consistent with its own system of unit delimitation."[186] Elsewhere Porter further observes, "the earliest lectionaries do not seem to follow any consistent system of pericopes."[187] While the potential connections are interesting, the evidence does not seem to bear out such conclusions.

Although the more fanciful theories do not seem plausible enough to support Carrington's direct connection of 1 Kgs 8 to Mark 11, this brief study on lectionaries contributes a number of things to this discussion. First of all, it establishes that 1 Kgs 8 would likely have been a familiar passage. Whether or not there is any further connection between Mark 11 and the Feast of Booths is likely unknowable. Regardless, the fact that Solomon's dedicatory prayer from 1 Kgs 8 was apparently read at one of the major Jewish festivals shows that this is not an obscure text that people would hardly be aware of. This would have been one of the chief passages in people's awareness, especially when they considered the temple. It is altogether likely that Mark could assume some level of familiarity with this passage so that he could allude to it without explicitly citing it. However, this study does more than just that. It also establishes that 1 Kgs 8 was read alongside select passages from Zechariah, as well as Ps 118. Again, it may not be the

[185] Carrington bases his theory off a non-B manuscript tradition. This raises further questions considering Voelz's conclusion that B and its allies are to be the favored manuscripts of Mark. Cf. Carrington, *The Primitive Christian Calendar*, 29; Voelz, *Mark*, 24–26.

[186] Stanley Porter, "Pericope Markers in Some Early Greek Manuscripts" in *Layout Markers in Biblical Manuscripts and Ugaritic Tablets*, eds. Marjo C.A. Korpel and Josef M. Oesch, Vol. 5 of *Pericope: Scripture as Written and Read in Antiquity*, ed. Marjo C.A. Korpel. (Assen, The Netherlands: Royal Van Gorcum, 2005), 172.

[187] Ibid., "The Influence of Unit Delimitation on Reading and Use of Greek Manuscripts" in *Method in Unit Delimitation*, eds. Marjo C.A. Korpel, et al.,. Vol. 6 of *Pericope: Scripture as Written and Read in Antiquity*, ed. Marjo C.A. Korpel (Leiden: Brill, 2007), 45.

case that these passages were ever formally read at the same time as Mark 11. Still, they were apparently read together (before Mark) during the Feast of Booths; they were seen at that time as connected to each other. This makes it all the more likely that the series of allusions described above, including Ps 118, Zech 14, and 1 Kgs 8, would have been noticed by those who were already prepared to see these passages together. The likely familiarity of first century Jews with these connected passages would have allowed Mark to allude to them more subtly than if they were unfamiliar.

Metaphorical Language

With that established we can turn to the second contextual question: Do the proposed metaphorical understandings of mountain and fig tree, as relating to judgment and the temple, have any precedent outside of Mark's narrative? The purpose of this section is not to find an exact parallel from the Old Testament (or other sources) that brings together all these themes in one place. Instead this section will explore the Old Testament (and other sources) to examine if the proposed metaphorical meanings might have had some form of precedent in sources familiar to or related to Mark. Thus, the sort of questions that will be answered below are 'Is the temple ever referred to as a mountain?' and "Is the search for fruit on a fig tree ever associated with judgment?" This is more basic than the query, "Is the moving of a mountain ever associated with the destruction of the temple?"[188] If one discovers such a specific association it would certainly be helpful to the present argument. However, there is also value in simply building a repertoire of metaphorical meanings for these words that would have been familiar to Mark. Others have done a rather significant amount of study on the background of such terms, even while studying passages such as Mark 11:23. Thus, this section will not present much original research, but rely

[188] Cf. Dowd, *Prayer, Power and the Problem of Suffering*, 72. Dowd limits what she qualifies as supporting evidence in her critique of Telford. For more on this, see n. 648 below.

more on what has already been observed attempting to bring what has been said to focus on the present discussion.

Before getting too far away from the discussion of lectionaries, it should be observed that there is evidence for some of this metaphorical language even in the further lectionary readings for the Feast of Booths. According to Megilla 87, on a Sabbath of the intermediate festival days of the Feast of Booths the section from Ezek 38 on Gog and Magog was to be read.[189] In this section, specifically in Ezek 38:20, it reads: "and all the people who are on the face of the earth, shall quake at my presence. And the mountains shall be thrown down, and the cliffs shall fall, and every wall shall tumble to the ground." When the Lord arrives in judgment (even in relation to the rule of his servant David)[190] "the mountains shall be thrown down." Interestingly, this occurs in a rather eschatological and messianic context. While it does not here refer to the temple as a mountain, nor judgment against Israel, it does at least establish the metaphorical usage of the casting down of a mountain as an act of judgment by the Lord.[191] Such an understanding is not limited to Ezekiel either. To go beyond that one passage, Kirk has observed, "the moving of mountains is part of Israel's stock of metaphors for the coming judgment of God and/or destruction of mighty fortresses (Isa 5:25; 40:4; 41:15; 64:3; Jer 4:24; Ezek 38:20; Hos 10:8; Mic 1:4; Nah 1:5; Hab 3:6–10; Zech 4:7)."[192] While Mark does not likely allude to any single one of these passages in 11:23, they at least establish a precedent for reading the moving of a mountain

[189] It also prescribes Exod 33:12 and Ezek 37, on the valley of the dry bones.

[190] Cf. Ezek 37:24

[191] Considering the focus of this dissertation, it is interesting to note that Ezek 40ff goes on to describe the eschatological temple of God. Standaert has further proposed a connection between trees, fruit, and temple from Ezek 47:12 and Mark 11:13: Standaert, *Évangile selon Marc*, 814.

[192] Kirk, "Time for Figs," 523. An interesting passage that Kirk does not mention comes from Job 9: This passage is all the more interesting as it has been noted that Mark might allude to the end of this passage from Job. See Voelz, *Mark*, 438–41.

in verse 23 as an act of judgment, instead of the removal of an *adunaton*.[193]

While it was noted above that those passages do not all suggest that the mountain of God's judgment should be understood as the temple, there are plenty of places where the temple is spoken of as a mountain as well (though not necessarily in a judgment context).[194] Not only is Mount Zion a common reference for the temple,[195] plenty of other passages refer to the temple as "this mountain,"[196] his "holy mountain,"[197] or even "the mountain of the house of the Lord."[198] Mountain language is further used to describe the temple in other Jewish Literature such as Maccabees[199] as well as in the targums.[200] It seems like Dowd quickly discounts such evidence because it does not establish the complete connection that "the moving of the mountains is associated with the *destruction* of the temple."[201] However, the lack of that explicit connection

[193] Contra Dowd, *Prayer, Power and the Problem of Suffering*, 72–3, where she quickly dismisses Telford's observations from Telford, *Barren Temple*, 110–19. Dowd goes on to garner support for her position from the Hellenistic understanding of divine omnipotence in pages.78–102. Why she believes the Epicurean, Academic, Peripatetic, Stoic, and Neopythagorean views of divine omnipotence should seem so connected to Mark's text, but quickly dismisses the many times mountain language is used to refer to the temple in Jewish traditions (including the Old Testament) is methodologically problematic.

[194] Dowd levies the criticism against Telford that "He has not demonstrated that 'this mountain' would have been understood as a reference to the temple as early as the time of Mark." Dowd, *Prayer, Power and the Problem of Suffering* , 72.

[195] Isa 24:23: בְּהַר צִיּוֹן; ἐν Σιων; 2 Kgs 19:31: מֵהַר צִיּוֹן; ἐξ ὄρους Σιων; Ps 48:2, 11: הַר־צִיּוֹן; ὄρη Σιων; τὸ ὄρος Σιων (11); Cf. Ps 74:2; 78:68; 125:1; Isa 4:5; 8:18; 10:12; 18:7; 29:8; 31:4; 37:32; Lam 5:18; Joel 2:32; Obad 17, 21; Mic 4:7.

[196]Isa 25:6, 7, 10: בָּהָר הַזֶּה; ἐπὶ τὸ ὄρος τοῦτο (6, 10); ἐν τῷ ὄρει τούτῳ (7); Ps 78:51: הַר־זֶה קָנְתָה יְמִינוֹ; ὄρος τοῦτο, ὃ ἐκτήσατο ἡ δεξιὰ αὐτοῦ.

[197] Ps 48:1: הַר־קָדְשׁוֹ; ὄρει ἁγίῳ αὐτοῦ; Isa 56:7: הַר קָדְשִׁי; τὸ ὄρος τὸ ἅγιόν μου. Cf. Ps 99:9; Isa 11:9; 27:13; 57:13; 65:11, 25; 66:20; Ezek 20:40; 28:14; Dan 11:45; Joel 2:1; 3:17; Obad 16; Zeph 3:11; Zech 8:3.

[198] Isa 2:2: הַר בֵּית־יְהוָה; τὸ ὄρος κυρίου καὶ ὁ οἶκος τοῦ θεοῦ; Mic 4:1: הַר בֵּית־יְהוָה; τὸ ὄρος τοῦ κυρίου; 2 Chr 33:15: בְּהַר בֵּית־יְהוָה; ἐν ὄρει οἴκου κυρίου.

[199] E.g., 1 Macc 4:46: τῷ ὄρει τοῦ οἴκου

[200] "Targum Isaiah, for example, understands Isaiah's Song of the Vineyard as a parable . . . and reads Jerusalem and the temple into the opening lines of Isaiah 5.79 In addition, a 'lofty mountain' (i.e., the Temple Mount) is introduced as the inheritance . . . given to Israel." Wardle, *Temple and Identity*, 187.

[201] Dowd, *Prayer, Power and the Problem of Suffering*, 72.

shouldn't limit one's observations. Indeed, the temple was often referred to as a "mountain," so it is no stretch of the evidence to suggest that the mountain of Mark 11:23 might be understood as the temple.

Is there similar precedent for understanding that the search for fruit on a fig tree might lead to judgment? Or that a fig tree might represent the temple? While the judgment theme is certainly connected to fig trees and fruitfulness in Old Testament literature, the direct connection to the temple is not prevalent.[202] However, while the fig tree does not necessarily stand-in directly for the temple, it is often representative of the nation as a whole.[203] This should not be seen as too much of a problem for interpreting the fig tree of Mark's narrative as relating to the temple cleansing. It is no stretch to consider that the temple might serve in a synecdoche as representative for the whole of the nation and its leaders; using the fig tree metaphor, the temple wouldn't produce fruit, the people who were centered around it would.[204] Thus, one should not be too concerned that the fig tree often represents Israel and not the temple itself.

Telford has the most thorough examination of fig tree language as it is employed in the Old Testament, late Jewish writings, and the New Testament. Indeed, it is the bulk of his book.[205] In his work, he examines five specific Old Testament passages that use fig tree language symbolically: Jer 8:13;[206] Isa 28:3–4; Hos 9:10, 16; Mic 7:1; and Joel 1:7, 12. At the end of his

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[202] However, Telford does note a connection through the mountain theme. "Linked with this idea of '*Israel*' as *God's 'tree'* or of *God's 'planting'*, and hence sacred to himself, is the correlative notion of the *Temple* as the mountain of mountains, the *high place par excellence*, Mount Zion, the only legitimate sanctuary." Telford, *Barren Temple*, 140.

[203] Cf. Barrett, "The House of Prayer and the Den of Thieves," 14; Gnilka, *Das Evangelium nach Markus*, 123.

[204] It is often assumed that one can lump in the vineyard language with the fig tree language for a more thorough investigation. Mark seems to do a similar thing as he moves to the parable of the tenants in chapter 12. Fruit bearing in general seems to be the common theme Cf. Böttrich, "Jesus und der Feigenbaum," 343; Evans, "Cleansing or Portent of Destruction," 240; Heil, "Narrative Strategy," 77; Kirk, "Time for Figs," 522; Perrin, *Jesus the Temple*, 40;Telford, *Barren Temple*, 132–33; Wardle, *Temple and Identity*, 187.

[205] See Telford, *Barren Temple*, 132–239.

[206] It is interesting to note that Jeremiah 8:13 was a prescribed reading in the Talmud as well. According to

examination he concludes with six general observations:

> (1) "All five 'fig' passages occur in contexts that were 'mined' regularly by the early church for her theological self-understanding, mission and eschatology: the rejection of the Jews, the destruction of Jerusalem and the Temple, the new Israel, the outpouring of the Spirit, the arrival of the End-time, eschatological judgement and deliverance.
>
> (2) "The contexts of all five passages . . . exhibit a number of common and interrelated themes and motifs which link them not only with each other but also with the features and surrounding context of the Markan story: the judgement against Israel, the corruption and consequent condemnation of the nation, her leaders, her Temple and its cultus, the appearance of Yahweh in wrath to curse the land and blast the trees, the moving of the mountains, the destruction of Jerusalem and its Temple; the blossoming of Israel, God's tree, in the New Age, the abundant fertility of this period, the elevation of the Temple Mount and its future exalted status.
>
> (3) "The five 'fig' passages themselves all without exception employ the language of figurative imagery and symbolism. The image of the fig or fig-tree, whether used in allegory, metaphor or simile, is intimately associated with the nation and the judgement upon it and in particular with the above-mentioned themes.
>
> (4) "Certain of these fig passages are also found employed in Rabbinic circles in connection with the theme of lament, mourning or catastrophe for the nation, and especially for its Temple (cf. Jer. 8.l3 Mi. 7.l ff.).
>
> (5) "Mark himself shows acquaintance with the contexts in which the 'fig' passages are found, and in certain cases has drawn on these chapters in connection with the same themes as were enumerated in 1.
>
> (6) "While the essential elements of these 'fig' passages (esp. Jer. 8.13 Hos. 9.10, 16 Mi. 7.1l) show a correspondence with Jesus' search for figs, the verbal links observed in each individual case have not in the main been particularly striking (though cf. Hos. 9.10,15,16).[207]

Telford's study shows that the Old Testament prophets, whom the gospel writers such as Mark were rather familiar with, often used fig tree imagery symbolically, especially in judgment contexts. This is all the more striking as one considers the confluence of themes in Mark's narrative when Jesus approaches the fig tree in Mark 11. Jesus's ministry inaugurated the

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Meg., 87, on the "9th of the month of Ab, Abayi said: read Deut 4:24 and Jer 8:13."

[207] Telford, *Barren Temple*, 155.

eschaton,[208] upon his arrival in Jerusalem he quickly brought judgment against the temple and its leaders, even prophesying the destruction of the temple,[209] yet his message also includes the promise of a final victory.[210] As Telford explains in his fifth general observation, Mark's context and the context of these fig tree passages show numerous connections.

These observations serve to support the reading of Mark 11:12–25 described in the previous chapter. From Mark's narrative, the cursing of the fig tree seems to be related to the "cleansing" of the temple and the conflict with its authorities. The use of a barren fig tree to represent such a conflict would have been understandable to those who were well versed in the Old Testament prophetic tradition (e.g., Mark). Furthermore, from Mark's narrative it seems as though Jesus's proclamation concerning "this mountain" being cast into the sea is a reference to judgment against the temple. Indeed, the Old Testament literary world that Mark was familiar with supports such a reading. The temple was regularly referred to as a mountain, and the overthrowing of mountains was familiar language used to represent God's judgment.

In conclusion, Mark's gospel is thoroughly saturated by the Old Testament, in citations, subtle allusions, and general metaphorical language. Mark 11 specifically brings together many Old Testament themes that strengthen the proposed narrative interpretation of this section. Beginning with Mark's opening citation of Mal 3, he has set the stage for Jesus (i.e. the Lord) to come to the temple in judgment; judgment which is described in Mark's narrative using the familiar Old Testament language of a disappointing search for figs, and the casting down of a mountain (temple) in judgment. Moreover, as Mark describes Jesus's entry into Jerusalem, he has pointed out several connections to Solomon's narrative from First Kings. Recognizing that

[208] E.g., 1:15

[209] E.g., 13:2

[210] E.g., 12:10–11

the temple, which had been established by Solomon in First Kings, has been condemned by Jesus in Mark 11:12–21, it is extremely fitting that Mark has alluded to that "founding moment" of the temple in Jesus's response of Mark 11:22–25. Just as Solomon's temple served as the central place to direct prayers and seek forgiveness from "your heavenly Father," Mark has indicated through Jesus's words that these temple-functions will still continue, as he is dedicating/founding a new temple. Although the details of this new temple aren't explicitly spelled out in Mark 11, the parable of the tenants in chapter 12 continues this theme. Through Jesus's application of Ps 118 to himself, it becomes clear that the new temple "not made with hands"[211] is somehow synonymous with Jesus himself, the "rejected stone." This interpretation, which was first recognized from within the narrative itself has been strengthened by a more thorough understanding of Mark's use of the Old Testament.

[211] 14:58

CHAPTER SIX

SUBSEQUENT EXEGESIS

This final chapter will resume the discussion started in chapter 2 concerning the various difficulties and issues from the Greek text that bear on the interpretation of Mark 11:20–25. Not all the issues raised there will be returned to here (e.g., textual issues), but many of the difficulties will be further addressed in the light of the work done in chapters 3–5 of this dissertation. This chapter will begin by discussing various grammar/syntax issues, and then proceed to discuss the issues involved in the narrative logic of this passage and its context. The narrative logic section will walk through the text, explaining how the thought flow of the previous context carries through verses 11:20–25, especially highlighting how observations from Solomon's dedicatory prayer from 1 Kgs 8 aid in the interpretation of these verses. It should be stressed again that the interpretation offered here does not depend solely on this allusion to 1 Kgs 8, as the same themes have generally been observed strictly from the narrative context as well. However, the 1 Kgs 8 passage reinforces this interpretation, and enhances certain aspects that may be seen as difficulties. Finally, this chapter will conclude with a brief discussion of further implications of this study. It will especially focus on the relationship between Jesus, the community, and the temple. Mark will be the main focus of this discussion, but various other early Christian authors will be considered as well, in order to see how well Mark's presentation coheres with other early Christian authors. It will also reflect on the way Mark may have conceived of the kingship and the temple of ancient Israel as manmade ideas, conceded to by God, but ultimately fulfilled in Christ.

Grammar/Syntax Issues

This section will return to various grammatical issues raised in chapter 2, yet it will resolve these issues further than was previously accomplished. The resolutions offered here are built off of not only the grammar and syntax of these verses, but also the fuller narrative observations made in chapters 3–5. The most important consideration for the interpretation of these verses is how 11:22–25 can properly be seen as a response to the condemnation of the temple that just occurred through both the cursing of the fig tree and the cleansing of the temple (Mark 11:12–21). As has been explained in previous chapters, such a focus is appropriate to Mark's overall context, the near narrative context, as well as Mark's use of the Old Testament.

To begin, what significance should be made of the use of the near demonstrative when combined with the mention of the word mountain, τῷ ὄρει τούτῳ? As mentioned earlier, this "mountain" is typically understood as either a generic mountainous obstacle that needs to be moved by prayer, or a specific mountain somehow in "view" of the Marcan Jesus. If this were considered a strictly grammatical issue, the discussion would end rather quickly; those who suggest a specific mountain certainly have the grammar on their side: "this mountain" not "a mountain." However, what understanding "fits" best with this location in Mark's gospel? One needs to not only consider the grammar, but also the cohesiveness of the narrative. More on the narrative logic will be said below to show that praying for the impossible does not "fit" well with the thought flow of this section. But if the demonstrative points toward a certain mountain, is there a specific mountain in the narrative context that makes sense here?

As has been shown from this study, the temple is the most prominent mountain in this section of Mark, and should be held "in view" in Mark 11:23. While other mountains have been suggested as referents that might have been historically and geographically "in view," nothing else that might be called a mountain appears so strongly in this narrative context as the temple.

The most significant other suggestion has been the Mount of Olives, but that mountain is only mentioned in 11:1, 13:3, and 14:26. Some suggest that it could be seen from where Jesus uttered these words, however *Mark gives no indication of where the cursing of the fig tree actually happened*, except that it was probably on the route from Bethany to the temple.[1] Mark never mentions the Mount of Olives on this journey, but the whole point of the journey is a trip to a different "mountain."[2] The temple, is the destination of this trip, and is specifically mentioned throughout this section of the narrative. While other mountains may actually be in view as one travels from Bethany to the temple, Mark continually places the temple in front of his reader/hearer's eyes. Not only does it explicitly occur a striking twelve times throughout chapters 11–15,[3] it is explicitly mentioned in every significant scene of Mark 11.[4] The temple is the most significant geographic place in this section of Mark. If any mountain can be shorthand referenced as "this mountain" at this point in Mark's narrative it is the temple.

Furthermore, it should come as no surprise that Mark refers to the temple as "this mountain" since the idea of referring to the temple as a mountain has a long history throughout the Old Testament. Wardle rightly notes, "[a]longside the description of the temple as a 'house,' many psalms and a significant number of prophetic passages utilize mountain imagery when speaking of the temple."[5] The temple is referred to as the "mountain of the Lord,"[6] "his holy

[1] Cf. 11:12

[2] Cf. "Yeung (*Faith in Jesus and Paul*, p. 26) reasonably notes that 'this' in relation to 'this mountain' in Mk 11.23 strongly suggests that a literal mountain is in view and the only two contenders are the Temple mount and the Mount of Olives. We might add to this that, since the point about the mountain being uplifted and carried to the sea is more impressive if the Temple mount is in contemplation, that is probably the mountain Mark has in mind. In addition, Judeans usually referred to the Mount of Olives by name." Esler, "Withered Fig Tree," 45, n. 12.

[3] Often in superfluous places. See pages 107–8 in chapter 4 above.

[4] 11:11, 11:15 (twice), 11:16, 11:27

[5] Wardle, *Temple and Identity*, 16.

[6] Isa 2:2: הַר בֵּית־יְהוָה; τὸ ὄρος κυρίου καὶ ὁ οἶκος τοῦ θεοῦ; Mic 4:1: הַר בֵּית־יְהוָה; τὸ ὄρος τοῦ κυρίου; 2 Chr 33:15: בְּהַר בֵּית־יְהוָה; ἐν ὄρει οἴκου κυρίου.

mountain,"[7] and even simply "this mountain"[8] throughout Old Testament literature. Mountain language is further used to describe the temple in other Jewish Literature such as Maccabees[9] as well as in the targums.[10] By all means, the grammar and similar wording from Old Testament and Jewish sources points to the interpretation of τῷ ὄρει τούτῳ as the temple. When this is combined with the support of the narrative context, the appropriateness of this interpretation becomes even clearer.

This reference to the temple is especially fitting in the context of this fig tree/temple cleansing sandwich. As has been explained in earlier chapters, the fig tree of Mark 11:12–25 figuratively stands for the temple. This of course adds a number of implicit/figurative references to the already mentioned tally of explicit references to the temple in this section of Mark. As the Marcan Jesus has just signaled the temple's abnegation through the cursing of a fig tree, he here too speaks of threatening words uttered against the "mountain of the Lord." This mountain (i.e. temple) is threatened with being lifted up and thrown into the sea; essentially eliminated. The fig tree was cursed, the temple was cleansed, and now too "this mountain" is removed. All three of these events should be read as suggesting the same thing: this hand-made temple is abolished.

As was noted in previous chapters, this rejection of the temple is not a unique theme that happens to occur only at this point of Mark 11. This theme appears throughout chapters 11–15, and really fits in with some of the greater overall themes of Mark's gospel as well. Jesus, the

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[7] Ps 48:1: הַר־קָדְשׁוֹ; ὄρει ἁγίῳ αὐτοῦ; Isa 56:7: הַר קָדְשִׁי; τὸ ὄρος τὸ ἅγιόν μου. Cf. Ps 99:9; Isa 11:9; 27:13; 57:13; 65:11, 25; 66:20; Ezek 20:40; 28:14; Dan 11:45; Joel 2:1; 3:17; Obad 16; Zeph 3:11; Zech 8:3.

[8] Isa 25:6, 7, 10: בָּהָר הַזֶּה; ἐπὶ τὸ ὄρος τοῦτο (6, 10); ἐν τῷ ὄρει τούτῳ (7); Ps 78:51: הַר־זֶה קָנְתָה יְמִינוֹ; ὄρος τοῦτο, ὃ ἐκτήσατο ἡ δεξιὰ αὐτοῦ.

[9] E.g., 1 Macc 4:46: τῷ ὄρει τοῦ οἴκου

[10] "Targum Isaiah, for example, understands Isaiah's Song of the Vineyard as a parable . . . and reads Jerusalem and the temple into the opening lines of Isaiah 5.79 In addition, a 'lofty mountain' (i.e., the Temple Mount) is introduced as the inheritance . . . given to Israel." Wardle, *Temple and Identity*, 187.

new, has come and in doing so he comes into conflict with the old, and often replaces the old as he surpasses it.[11] Throughout these final chapters of Mark the destruction of the temple is referred to time and again. When Jesus dies the temple veil is torn in two.[12] As Jesus hangs on the cross he is mocked as the one who was going to destroy the temple.[13] When he is on trial he is accused of proclaiming the destruction (and replacement) of the temple.[14] In 13:2 he explicitly announces the coming destruction of the temple. In 12:10 he quotes Psalm 118, and suggests that he himself will replace the temple. All these carry-on the thought of 11:12–25, where the cursed fig tree is tightly tied to the "cleansed" temple to signal the temple's condemnation. When the consistency of this theme is observed, it becomes strikingly clear that the removing of "this mountain" in 11:23 is yet another reference to the abolition of this hand-made temple by Jesus.

While that reading makes sense of the demonstrative and "fits" into the narrative context extremely well, there still is a bit of a problem understanding the subject of the ὃς ἂν clause. If τῷ ὄρει τούτῳ is a reference to the temple, who is saying this threat against the temple? In every other threat levied against the temple, Jesus himself is the one who speaks against it. Why then does he now speak of "whoever?"

As mentioned above in chapter 2, there are plenty of reasons to see some level of complexity in the subject of the ὃς ἂν clause based on other such statements made by Jesus in Mark. The discussion in chapter 2 mentioned Jesus's words in Mark 8:34–38. There are more than a few helpful correlations between that passage and 11:20–25. There, Jesus appears to use indefinite clauses to make demands on his disciples and Peter, yet it is important to again stress

[11] ". . . it is not unlikely that in typical fashion Mark's Jesus draws several distinct hopes into himself." Watts, "The Psalms and Mark," 317.

[12] 15:38

[13] 15:29

[14] 14:58

that in both contexts these proverbial statements with indefinite subjects are only fulfilled in Mark's narrative by Jesus himself. From Mark 8, Jesus is the only one who denies himself and takes up his cross (8:34). Jesus is the only one who loses his life (in order to save it; cf. 8:35). Likewise, turning to 11:23, Jesus is the only one who speaks condemning words against "this mountain," (i.e. the temple). This helps the interpreter consider some level of complexity in understanding the subject of these statements. They are uttered in a way that "whoever" might accomplish them, yet in Mark's narrative there is no indefinite subject who does these things. Jesus himself is the only one who actually does them.

It is further interesting to note the similar progression in both the encounter of 11:20–25 and the encounter in Mark 8; especially the move from a one on one conversation to a wider discussion. This correlation involves the move to 2nd person plurals in Jesus's response to one person, an issue brought up in chapter 2 of the present work. In both contexts Peter alone dialogues with Jesus, yet Jesus makes these encounters opportunities to address a wider audience. In 8:31–33 Peter and Jesus had just shared a series of rebukes, and Jesus seizes the opportunity in 34–38 to teach a wider crowd with some apparently proverbial statements concerning indefinite subjects. Likewise, in 11:21, Peter remembers what Jesus said to the fig tree, and—in his astonishment (ἴδε)—calls Jesus's attention to it. Jesus again responds to an encounter with Peter by addressing a wider audience with a series of apparently proverbial statements concerning indefinite subjects. It seems that this move from a conversation between Peter and Jesus to plural addressees is not without precedent in Mark. Perhaps this move can also further help explain how these indefinite general demands function in Mark's narrative.

This tension between the general demands of Mark 8:34–38 and Jesus's fulfillment of them

is important to reflect on. Perhaps this is also connected to why Mark calls his work εὐαγγέλιον.[15] Despite the demands Jesus places on others, he himself is the only one who fulfills those demands. Despite the failures of those who have been called, Jesus still fulfills his words and wants others to hear that as good news (εὐαγγέλιον) for them. The disciples had been abject failures when measured against the exhortation to deny themselves in 8:34. They had denied Jesus! But when the post-resurrection announcement is made to the women,[16] they are to tell those who denied Jesus (Peter too is specifically singled out) that Jesus has risen and that it is good news. It's so important to see how this εὐαγγέλιον contrasts with the statements of Mark 8. The message the women are to convey is not "Jesus has risen, you have denied him, *therefore he now denies you*." The message is "there you will see him just as he told you."[17] Through the resurrection of Jesus the disciples are now able to hear the words of Mark 8 in a new light; not just as a warning, but even a prediction of what Jesus went through for them. Jesus has fulfilled the demands he placed on his disciples and risen again to tell them about it.[18] Such news can properly be called εὐαγγέλιον. And as he rises again, his disciples are invited to return to his words and understand them in a new light; in the light of Jesus, God's chosen servant, fulfilling the demands he placed on other people. Perhaps now through the faithfulness of Jesus, who has overcome death itself, the disciples too might participate in those words themselves.

Likewise, in Mark 11:20–25 Jesus responds to Peter and the disciples (2nd plurals) with words that he himself actually does. The disciples may not yet be prepared for the loss of the

[15] Mark 1:1

[16] It appears that the women's failure to report the message also plays into this theme of human failure.

[17] 16:7

[18] This plays into a much bigger discussion concerning the significance of Jesus's death in Mark. Through Mark's greater narrative we learn that the suffering of Jesus is a pouring out of his own blood ὑπὲρ πολλῶν (14:24). Cf. 10:45.

temple, and they may not be prepared to have faith in God without it;[19] yet through Jesus's death and resurrection the old temple has actually been abolished (e.g., torn veil) and the new temple actually has been built (i.e. his resurrection after three days). In Mark's narrative, before the resurrection those words were only accomplished by Jesus. On this side of the resurrection Peter, the disciples, and Mark's readers/hearers might now remember the words of 11:23 and take a new approach to faith in God without the temple. Just like the words of 8:34–38, the indefinite clause of 11:23 is first fulfilled by Jesus himself, so that now those who follow him might participate in those words themselves.

Thus, these words of 11:22–25 are recorded to encourage Mark's readers/hearers to give up the "old" way of knowing and meeting God through the old temple, so that they might grasp onto the "new" way of knowing and meeting God through the new temple, Jesus himself. Jesus himself had indeed uttered condemning words signaling the "removal" of "this mountain of the house of the Lord." Peter, the disciples, and Mark's readers/hearers are invited to now participate in these words by seeking God through Jesus, and not through the old, now condemned temple.

This leads into a better understanding of the rest of 11:23. Further difficulties were mentioned in chapter 2 concerning this verse, namely translating the verb διακριθῇ and understanding the subject of the clause, ὃ λαλεῖ γίνεται. As the disciples begin to participate in faith in God without the temple, they are exhorted in 11:23 to truly believe that ὃ λαλεῖ γίνεται. The subject of λαλεῖ is none other than the God they are to have faith in (as Jesus just said in 11:22, ἔχετε πίστιν θεοῦ). They are to believe that the loss of this visible temple is truly what God has ordained, and what Jesus, his ultimate agent, has just proclaimed.[20] Jesus exhorts them not to

[19] 11:22

[20] Not simply λέγω, but λαλέω. It has been suggested to me by James Voelz that λαλέω should be seen as a more specific proclamatory kind of speaking than λέγω, which would be the more general of the two words. Both

try to discern or decide for themselves whether or not the temple is truly done away with, but to really believe that what Jesus has just said about the temple *is*.[21] The "new" that Jesus brings in is not compatible with the old temple order, and this indeed is God's plan.[22] As Jesus again is the first one to actually fulfill the role of the indefinite subject in agreeing with God in the abnegation of the temple, so too are the disciples encouraged to participate in the "new" order Jesus is bringing about, believing that ὃ λαλεῖ γίνεται.

Once again, Mark 8 can prove to be a helpful comparison for this issue. An opposite example of this can be seen back in Mark 8:31–33, in the encounter between Jesus and Peter that led up to Jesus's gnomic/indefinite statements of 8:34–38. Jesus had just announced to his disciples for the first time that he was going to be rejected, killed, but rise again. Mark records that Jesus παρρησίᾳ τὸν λόγον ἐλάλει.[23] Yet, Peter did not want to receive Jesus's words concerning his rejection, death, and resurrection. Peter takes him aside and disagrees with this plan. Instead of receiving ὃ λαλεῖ, Peter judges for himself what is right and rebukes Jesus. In a striking response Jesus in turn rebukes Peter as "Satan!"[24] Essentially such a rebuke is intended to shake Peter from believing what he thinks is right (τὰ τῶν ἀνθρώπων) so that he believes the words that Jesus says (τὰ τοῦ θεοῦ). Likewise, in 11:23, Jesus calls on Peter and the disciples to actually receive the word he proclaims,[25] which God has ordained, and not to try to judge

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the Marcan context as well as the 1 Kgs passage support that suggestion. Cf. n. 596 above. See also Lee, *Jesus und die jüdische Autorität*, 159–60; *Did*. 4.1.

[21] The stress on Jesus's words is, of course, one of Mark's major themes throughout his narrative. E.g., The word from the cloud in Mark 9:7, ἀκούετε αὐτοῦ.

[22] Standaert makes a rather interesting connection between Jesus being named the "holy one of God" (Mark 1:24) near the start of Mark's narrative, and his incompatibility with the "old" center of holiness in Jerusalem and her temple. As the new holy one comes, the old wineskin bursts. Standaert, *Évangile selon Marc*, 808–9.

[23] Note again the use of λαλέω instead of λέγω.

[24] Mark 8:33

[25] λαλεῖ

(διακριθῇ) for themselves what is right or wrong about it. What Jesus says *is*. Despite Peter's rebuke, Jesus indeed fulfilled ὃ λαλεῖ in 8:31; he was rejected, killed, and rose again. Now in 11:23, Jesus again exhorts them to believe that what he says against the temple *is*. The old temple is abolished, have faith that the new has come.

The final grammar issue to be looked at here is the aorist tense form ἐλάβετε. After the exhortation of 11:23 to believe that the abolition of the old temple is truly what God has ordained, Jesus proceeds in 11:24–25 to explain further what this means. The first theme spoken of in 11:24 is the theme of prayer. As has been shown throughout this dissertation, prayer is one of the major functions/benefits of the temple. As has been seen from an examination of Solomon's dedicatory prayer at the founding of the first temple, the temple was to be a "house of prayer for all people." If God has now done away with that old system, is prayer done away with too? With this context in mind one can more readily understand the aorist tense of ἐλάβετε. Just as Solomon had prayed over and over that God would hear the prayers of his people at the temple, Jesus now assures the disciples that their prayers are still "heard" without the old temple. They are to have faith that when they pray, they have received (ἐλάβετε). According to verse 24, the prayer benefits of the temple still continue despite the condemnation of the old one.

Narrative Logic Issues

It should be clear now how these verses relate to the fig tree episode. They are not simply an abrupt turn to give a select series of sayings on prayer, but an appropriate response to what the fig tree actually means. The fig tree means the temple is now condemned. The exhortations of 11:22–25 all address concerns appropriate to the loss of the temple. By bringing up the very same themes of Solomon's dedicatory prayer at the founding moment of the first temple, Jesus intimates that a new temple will indeed be "founded" to replace the old, now condemned temple.

The narrative logic completely breaks down if one reads these verses as a teaching on prayers for the impossible. It is typically offered that Jesus's cursing of the fig tree is an example of how one should trust that God will answer prayers for the impossible (i.e. generic proverbial mountains). However, Jesus did not pray to God that the fig tree would wither and die, he just cursed it.[26] The only mention of prayer in the near context is focused on the prayer function of the temple.[27] Mark's presentation repeatedly holds up the theme of the temple throughout the narrative context of these verses, especially stressing the condemnation of the old and the founding of the new. Effective prayer for the impossible can hardly be considered a theme at all.

Furthermore, as Dowd's work has shown, the idea of praying for the impossible would need to be balanced with Jesus's prayer at the Garden of Gethsemane. Dowd explains, "There is a sharp contrast between what the Markan Jesus teaches about prayer (11:22–25), and what happens when he puts his own teaching into practice (14:32–42)."[28] It seems as though Mark includes Jesus's words at the garden, οὐ τί ἐγὼ θέλω ἀλλὰ τί σύ[29] so that we might understand that our will needs to be subject to God's will. Dowd wrestles with the tension inherent in the apparent contradiction between these two prayer teachings. However, the contradiction simply does not exist and does not need to be explained away if one stays within the thought flow of the narrative and keeps the temple condemnation theme, as just expressed in the fig tree cursing, in mind.

Moreover, as was expressed in chapter 2, the logic of using the cursing of a fig tree to

[26] "Hence the story, which nowhere speaks of Jesus either exercising faith in his cursing of the tree nor of praying for its withering, is taken as a paradigm for the power of supplicating faith, a power available to the disciples, and thereby to Christian believers in general." Telford, *Barren Temple*, 79. Though this is written about Matthew, these words are applicable to Mark as well.

[27] 11:17

[28] Dowd, *Prayer, Power and the Problem of Suffering*, 1. Cf. Carrington, *According to Mark*, 244.

[29] 14:36

speak about prayer for the impossible breaks down further when 11:25 is considered. Commentators typically offer something like, "The power of praying faith, however, is not for thaumaturgical display but, as always in Mark, is ethically conditioned. Only those who pray in a forgiving spirit are heard; only to them is divine power released."[30] However, the preceding narrative gives the exact opposite as the context. Jesus just cursed a fig tree for not bearing fruit out of season, and he just stormed through the temple driving out the buyers and sellers! According to the interpretation that focuses on miraculous prayer, since Jesus did not seek out forgiveness and reconciliation in the temple, the fig tree should not have withered at all; his "prayer" should not have been carried out (although it should again be noted that Jesus doesn't "pray" that the fig tree withers at all, he just curses it). Telford summarizes, "If the fig-tree had, in fact, produced fruit for Jesus, it would have suited the lessons of the sequel far better. The fact that *it did not* emphasizes that in Markan intention the *cursing* of the tree and the judgement upon it was the central point of the story, and not any object lessons on the efficacy of faith and prayer that might be drawn from it."[31]

In reality prayer is not really the major theme of these verses; the temple is. Prayer is just one important aspect of this temple theme (cf. 11:17). Both 11:22 and 11:23 aren't speaking about having faith so that God hears your prayers, but are actually speaking about having faith that one can still believe in and relate to God without the temple. Through verses 22 and 23, nothing about prayer is really being said. 11:24 specifically speaks about praying, but it is more directed at encouraging the disciples to believe their prayers are heard than teaching them how to pray. Verse 25 begins to shift away from prayer to speak more about forgiveness amongst people and between people and God. Kirk keeps this temple focus in mind as he summarizes this verse,

[30] Marshall, *Faith as a Theme*, 172.

[31] Telford, *Barren Temple*, 188.

"Jesus' instructions are not merely about prayer but about the one thing for which the temple was absolutely vital: the forgiveness of sins."[32]A prayer-focused interpretation does not cohere well with the thought flow leading up to and through these verses.

The Narrative Thought Flow of 11:20–25

However, if one keeps the temple theme and Solomon's dedicatory prayer in mind, the thought flow of the previous context continues to flow completely through 11:20–25. Just as the themes stressed in Solomon's prayer were appropriate at the founding moment of the "old" temple,[33] so too Jesus stresses many of those same themes in Mark at this precise point. The old temple is condemned, yet Jesus reassures his disciples that the temple benefits will still continue by speaking of these same themes. By this move he subtly suggests that a new temple is being founded in place the old. As Mark continues his narrative, that new temple is the resurrected Jesus himself, present and known to his disciples in his faithful and enduring words.

In verses 20–21 the disciples see the fig tree withered from the roots (ἐκ ῥιζῶν), which signals that the temple is not only "cleansed" or "cursed" but even effectually condemned. Peter then expresses his concern over this situation in 11:21, which should be interpreted as a concern that the cursed and withered fig tree stands for the cursed and condemned temple. 'How can one relate to God if the temple is actually condemned like this fig tree?' Jesus begins his response to potential concerns over the loss of the old temple by stressing the faithfulness of God, exhorting the disciples in 11:22, ἔχετε πίστιν θεοῦ. Although this is often recognized as an objective genitive, in Mark one is summoned to have faith in God's words and Jesus's words only because these words have been proven faithful. Everything Jesus says happens, "*just as he told you*."

[32] Kirk, "Time for Figs," 525.

[33] It should be recognized that the continuity between Solomon's temple and Herod's temple is somewhat tenuous. However, it seems as though the Jews of that time generally considered Herod's temple to serve as *the* one

Those are the final words given to the women at the resurrection of Jesus.[34]

This stress on God's faithfulness introduced in verse 22 carries on into verse 23 as Jesus acknowledges and again stresses the abnegation of the old temple through the "mountain moving" line, but goes on to stress that this is really ὃ λαλεῖ, i.e. what Jesus—God's agent—proclaims. This condemnation of the temple isn't a willy-nilly thing that just happened, but part of God's overall plan that he is now declaring. Just as he called on his disciples to ἔχετε πίστιν θεοῦ in 11:22, he reminds them to πιστεύῃ ὅτι ὃ λαλεῖ γίνεται in 11:23. What God—and his agent, Jesus—proclaims *happens*.

This seems all the more appropriate in such a temple context as the same stress on the efficacy of God's words is how Solomon begins his prayer. After blessing God he says, ὃς ἐλάλησεν ἐν τῷ στόματι αὐτοῦ περὶ Δαυιδ τοῦ πατρός μου καὶ ἐν ταῖς χερσὶν αὐτοῦ ἐπλήρωσεν.[35] Likewise he continues, καὶ ἀνέστησεν κύριος τὸ ῥῆμα αὐτοῦ, ὃ ἐλάλησεν.[36] What God λαλεῖ[37] is accomplished, it happens (γίνεται). Both passages stress the faithfulness and importance of God's words as foundational; what God proclaims is more important than even the temple itself. God can proclaim that a temple will be built for his name, God can proclaim the condemnation of that temple, and God can proclaim a new ἀχειροποίητος temple to replace it.[38] Verses 11:22–23 stress that God has indeed spoken condemnation against the old temple, but also encourages the

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temple to their God, built in the same place as Solomon's temple.

[34] 16:7

[35] אֲשֶׁר֙ דִּבֶּ֣ר בְּפִ֔יו אֶת דָּוִ֖ד אָבִ֑י וּבְיָדָ֣ו מִלֵּ֔א 1 Kgs 8:15

[36] וַיָּ֤קֶם יְהוָה֙ אֶת־דְּבָר֔וֹ אֲשֶׁ֥ר דִּבֶּ֖ר 1 Kgs 8:20

[37] Note again the use of λαλέω instead of λέγω.

[38] This of course is fully congruent not only with these two passages, but Mark's overall focus on Jesus's words as well.

disciples to believe this is God's word, and they should continue having faith in this God who proclaims such things.

Moving into verse 24, Jesus next turns to prayer. This also makes sense when one keeps the founding moment of the old temple in mind. Prayer is perhaps the major theme of Solomon's dedicatory prayer. Solomon mentions prayer at least six different times, presenting all kinds of different scenarios in which he asks that God would hear the prayers offered at this temple.[39] In Mark, Jesus summarizes all these different scenarios with the succinct line πάντα ὅσα προσεύχεσθε καὶ αἰτεῖσθε, πιστεύετε ὅτι ἐλάβετε, καὶ ἔσται ὑμῖν.[40] Just as Solomon petitioned through diverse scenarios that people might receive a hearing from God at his temple, Jesus proclaims that those who pray are to simply believe that they have indeed received a hearing from God.

Turning to 11:25, Jesus begins to move from prayer toward forgiveness in disputes between people. Likewise, similar themes can be found in Solomon's prayer. The idea that God would hear prayers at the temple always included consideration of inter-personal disputes. In 1 Kgs 8:31–32, Solomon prays that God would even hear imprecatory prayers uttered against neighbors and judge between them, settling disputes between people. As Jesus teaches his disciples on these themes in Mark, he also speaks to such inter-personal disputes, ὅταν στήκετε προσευχόμενοι, ἀφίετε εἴ τι ἔχετε κατά τινος.[41] However, in typical Jesus fashion, Jesus nuances how one thinks about such disputes to stress the importance of forgiveness amongst people and before God.[42] While Solomon asked God to judge between the people, Jesus tells his disciples to

[39] This temple which he made with his own hands. Cf. 1 Kgs 8:27

[40] Mark 11:24

[41] 11:25

[42] Cf. Mark 7:9–13; 10:41–45; 12:32–33

forgive each other.

Finally, 11:25 ends with the phrase ἵνα καὶ ὁ πατὴρ ὑμῶν ὁ ἐν τοῖς οὐρανοῖς ἀφῇ ὑμῖν τὰ παραπτώματα ὑμῶν. He here continues to stress that the most important ways of relating to God that were thought to be sourced in the temple still continue despite its condemnation. Just as one can still have faith in God and pray to God without the old temple, one can also still seek forgiveness from God. Two final connections can be made between Jesus's words and Solomon's prayer.

First, as was also the case in Solomon's prayer, forgiveness is a central focus of the temple. Almost all of Solomon's scenarios end with the petition that God might forgive those who pray through this temple (1 Kgs 8:30, 34, 36, 39, 50). The need for this constant forgiveness is explicitly highlighted in verse 46: "for there is no one who does not sin."[43] This is a foundational aspect of one's relationship with God in Solomon's prayer, and appears to be a foundational theme in Mark as well. Not only has the importance of forgiveness been highlighted earlier in Mark's narrative,[44] but also Mark ends this section with reference to the forgiveness of sins one might seek from ὁ πατὴρ ὑμῶν ὁ ἐν τοῖς οὐρανοῖς. The disciples might rightly have been concerned that the loss of the temple meant the loss of the sacrificial system and thus the loss of the forgiveness of sins before God. However, Jesus here encourages them that forgiveness from God still continues.[45]

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[43] כִּי אֵין אָדָם אֲשֶׁר לֹא־יֶחֱטָא; ὅτι οὐκ ἔστιν ἄνθρωπος, ὃς οὐχ ἁμαρτήσεται

[44] E.g., when Jesus heals a paralytic in Mark 2:1–12, he first says to him ἀφίενταί σου αἱ ἁμαρτίαι. It seems as though Jesus would have been content to simply σῴζω the paralytic in this way, yet ἵνα δὲ εἰδῆτε ὅτι ἐξουσίαν ἔχει ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ ἀνθρώπου ἀφιέναι ἁμαρτίας ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς he also healed the paralytic so he could walk (2:10–11).

[45] As Mark's narrative continues the sacrificial system will receive another low mark in 12:33. However, it seems that Jesus doesn't just speak against that system, but also replaces the old sacrificial system with his own sacrifice, as he refers to his own blood with covenantal/sacrificial language, τὸ αἷμά μου τῆς διαθήκης τὸ ἐκχυννόμενον ὑπὲρ πολλῶν (14:24). Cf. Kingsbury, *Christology of Mark*, 132.

Finally, the very title, ὁ πατὴρ ὑμῶν ὁ ἐν τοῖς οὐρανοῖς is the last connection to be made here. Despite the stress Solomon makes on the temple he made with his own hands, he still acknowledges that God does not really dwell in such a place; his true dwelling is in heaven. Solomon specifically makes such a statement 8 times; in 8:30, 32, 34, 36, 39, 43, 45, and in 49! As has been mentioned before, this is the only place in Mark where God is referred to with such a title. This has led certain commentators to suggest some subtle source dependence on the Lord's Prayer from Mathew (or an independent source). However, this is entirely fitting to speak of in the context of the temple because it is the same language Solomon used time and time again throughout his own dedicatory prayer. Just as Solomon stressed that God really dwells in heaven over and above the temple, Jesus adopts the same language as he speaks about life without the old temple. The loss of the temple doesn't mean the loss of God, he truly is in heaven, not in a χειροποίητος temple.

These connections are all the more interesting when one remembers the Solomonic undertones throughout this section of Mark. Jesus had just been referred to as the Son of David for the first time in 10:47.[46] Immediately after that, Jesus rides into Jerusalem on a donkey (11:1–11), approximating Solomon's own triumphal entry in 1 Kgs 1:38–40. As Mark continues to stress the "new temple" themes through his final chapters in 12:10, 14:58, and 15:29, it should come as no surprise that he also alludes to Solomon's prayer in 11:22–25 at the head of these other references to set the stage for his fuller development of Jesus's replacement of the old temple with himself.[47] Just as one of Solomon's first activities was to build a temple for the Lord, Jesus, the Son of David, too proceeds to do such a thing after riding into Jerusalem proclaimed as

[46] Cf. 11:10; 12:35–37

[47] "To claim that Jesus is greater than him [Solomon] is to claim that he is the true Messiah; that he will build the eschatological Temple; that through him the Davidic kingdom will be restored." Wright, *Victory*, 535.

her king.[48]

Essentially, these verses speak to the concerns that would arise at the loss of the old temple. By highlighting these very same themes that appeared in Solomon's prayer at the founding moment of the first temple, Mark begins to suggest its replacement with a new temple. These verses, therefore, foreshadow what will be more extensively considered later in the narrative. Jesus himself will be the "rejected stone"[49] that replaces the "impressive stones"[50] of the now-rejected old temple.[51] Jesus himself will build a new ἀχειροποίητος[52] temple, three days after destroying the old temple.[53] At his death the temple veil is torn in two,[54] but three days later Jesus indeed rises again to serve as the new temple of God.[55] He is now to be known and sought through his faithful and enduring words; just as he told you.[56]

Further Implications

This dissertation's main purpose has been to explain that Mark 11:20–25 does indeed "fit" within its narrative context, and that its fit is best understood by following the temple rejection and replacement themes of the final chapters of Mark, as well as reading 11:20–25 in the light of Solomon's dedicatory prayer from 1 Kgs 8. In doing so it has presented that Jesus himself replaces the temple in Mark's gospel, in contrast to "the community." This has often been

[48] 11:9–10

[49] 12:10

[50] 13:1

[51] 11:12–25

[52] 14:58

[53] 15:29

[54] 15:38

[55] "In the Gospels it is primarily Christ's body that is the temple; and the repeated reference to the Lord's claim to build the temple in three days evidences the significance of the idea for the Gospel writers." E. Earle Ellis, *Paul's Use of the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1957), 91.

[56] 16:7

discussed in contrast to "the community" replacing the temple. What significance should be made of this distinction?

Many in the early church certainly spoke of their community or their people as a temple of God. Paul does this in 1 Cor 3:9–17, again in 1 Cor 6:15–20, as well as in Eph 2:11–22; a similar thing is also seen in 1 Pet 2:4–8. The community-as-temple-replacement idea should not be pushed too far on its own, as these other authors also stress the foundational significance of the community's relationship to Jesus Christ in these *loci*. In 1 Cor 3:11 Paul says, θεμέλιον γὰρ ἄλλον οὐδεὶς δύναται θεῖναι παρὰ τὸν κείμενον, ὅς ἐστιν Ἰησοῦς Χριστός. Similar to Mark 12:10, construction language is used to speak about Jesus as the θεμέλιον of God's temple. Similarly in 1 Cor 6:15 he says, οὐκ οἴδατε ὅτι τὰ σώματα ὑμῶν μέλη Χριστοῦ ἐστιν. The foundational element of the Corinthians' "templeness" is that they are united with Christ. Paul again uses construction language in Eph 2:20–21, οἰκοδομηθέντες ἐπὶ τῷ θεμελίῳ τῶν ἀποστόλων καὶ προφητῶν, ὄντος ἀκρογωνιαίου αὐτοῦ Χριστοῦ Ἰησοῦ, ἐν ᾧ πᾶσα οἰκοδομὴ συναρμολογουμένη αὔξει εἰς ναὸν ἅγιον ἐν κυρίῳ. He again explains that Jesus Christ is the ἀκρογωνιαῖος, and in so far as it is united with Jesus Christ (ἐν κυρίῳ), the community too is built into ναὸν ἅγιον. 1 Pet 2 cites a number of different Old Testament passages to again stress that Jesus Christ is the ἀκρογωνιαῖος[57] through whom they too are being built into a temple. It appears the community can be spoken of as a temple, but only in so far as they are ἐν κυρίῳ. Perhaps Mark would have agreed with the many other early church leaders who spoke of the community as a temple, however he just never seemed to move past Jesus to make that application.

The problem with the way many commentators stress the community as a replacement for

[57] 1 Pet 2:6–8; Cf. Is 28:16; Ps 118:22; Is 8:14

the temple in Mark is that it (1) isn't spoken of that way in Mark's gospel, (2) disagrees with the estimation of the community members in Mark's gospel (failures) (3) confuses the use of the "temple's" benefits with the temple itself; they miss the mediatory function of the temple through which it provided access to those benefits for the community. The first two items do not need much further explanation here, however it is beneficial to develop the third point further.

Ultimately the temple was the place where God lowered himself to meet with man.[58] God indeed dwelt in heaven, and man could not go to heaven, so God himself came down and made himself present in the temple. The temple was the identifying place where the people could know God was with them.[59] As can be seen from Solomon's prayer, it was the place that guaranteed that their prayers would be heard. It was also the place where the sacrificial system that promised the forgiveness of sins was carried out.[60] Although it may have served larger political purposes as well,[61] theologically, it was ultimately the place where these benefits were sought and guaranteed. The community was always distinct from that place and guarantee, yet still had access to its benefits.

According to Mark's presentation of Jesus as the temple, the extension of those benefits is to be sought and guaranteed in Jesus. If one stresses the community as temple before stressing Jesus as temple, one quickly bypasses the foundational significance of Jesus's mediatorial role between God and man, as expressed in Mark as well as other early church writings.[62] God does

[58] ". . . the Jerusalem temple was the locus of God's presence on earth." Wardle, *Temple and Identity*, 30.

[59] "The temple was the visible, functioning symbol of God's presence with his people. . ." Sanders, *Judaism*, 144. Cf. Perrin's observation from Matthew, "The culminating note, 'I will be with you always' (28.20), marks the climax of God's temple purposes, which have always been to establish an intimate point of contact between the one God and the one God's people," Perrin, *Jesus the Temple*, 60–61.

[60] "Jesus' instructions are not merely about prayer but about the one thing for which the temple was absolutely vital: the forgiveness of sins." Kirk, "Time for Figs," 525.

[61] "From what we have seen, it is clear that Jewish religious, economic, and socio-political life revolved around the Jerusalem temple." Wardle, *Temple and Identity*, 29.

[62] "The temple of the early Christians was in fact the body of Jesus—and in some sense their bodies as well."

not simply dwell within the community, he dwells within the community through the word of Jesus Christ.[63] In a work that examines Mark's thematic usage of topography, Malbon gives expression to this through the means of a structuralist analysis:

> Thus it is clear that in a broader sense, in the sense in which heaven and earth represent the divine and the human realms, the Markan mediation between heaven and earth is not limited to the spatial term MOUNTAIN, but is linked with the character Jesus. This is not so surprising, of course, since the topographical suborder—and, indeed, the spatial order—is but one aspect of the Markan Gospel and the character Jesus is its narrative and theological center. In Jesus, communication between heaven and earth is reestablished; God in heaven speaks to Jesus on earth (1:11; cf. 9:7); Jesus on earth speaks to God in heaven (6:41; 7:34). Furthermore, Jesus is narratively identified not only as the Son of man who has both present authority on earth (2:10) and future authority in heaven (13:26, 27; 14:62), and who thus mediates the two spheres, but also as the Son of God (1:1; 3:11; 15:39; cf. 1:11; 5:7; 9:7; 14:61). But in an eschatological sense, so the Markan Gospel projects, the opposition between heaven and earth is not so much to be mediated as surpassed-by the power of Jesus' words: 'Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will not pass away' (13:31). At that point the oppositions of the topographical suborder will be more than mediated; all spatial opposition will be invalidated by the disestablishment of its very foundation. But until that final transformation, and within the Gospel of Mark, the fundamental opposition PROMISE vs. THREAT, initially given narrative expression in the opposition HEAVEN VS. EARTH, continues to move toward mediation. The Markan spatial order affords no other instance in which movement toward the mediation of an opposition is tripled as here: (l) HEAVEN VS. EARTH is mediated by MOUNTAIN; (2) HEAVEN vs. EARTH is surpassed by Jesus' 'words'; (3) HEAVEN vs. EARTH is replaced by LAND vs. SEA.[64]

With the idea that the temple and Jesus provided mediation between God in heaven and people on earth in mind, one can reconsider the significance of other parts of Mark's gospel for this "temple" theme. At the baptism and transfiguration scenes God actually comes down and is

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Nicholas Perrin, *Jesus the Temple*, 186. Cf. Eph 2:18 δι' αὐτοῦ ἔχομεν τὴν προσαγωγὴν οἱ ἀμφότεροι ἐν ἑνὶ πνεύματι πρὸς τὸν πατέρα.

[63] "In the Gospel, and that means also in the proclaimed word of Jesus' ministry on earth, he himself is present as the risen Christ. In this verbal form he is now bringing salvation to the world through the proclamation received in faith." Kertelge, "Epiphany of Jesus," 121. Cf. Voelz, *Mark*, 60–61.

[64] Malbon, *Narrative Space*, 98–99.

present with, and even *in* Jesus.[65] At the baptism the Spirit descends εἰς αὐτόν.[66] In the transfiguration scene God, ἐπισκιάζουσα the three disciples, directs them away from his presence in the cloud and to Jesus words, ἀκούετε αὐτοῦ.[67] Likewise the conflated Old Testament citation of Mark 1:1 fits into this theme of the divine presence in Jesus. The context of the Exodus passage goes on to explain that the "messenger" is "God's presence."[68] The Malachi passage similarly suggests that the "messenger" (of the covenant) is the Lord himself.[69] Other narrative links continue to make this connection. Mark raises this connection in the minds of the scribes in 2:7 as they wonder, τίς δύναται ἀφιέναι ἁμαρτίας εἰ μὴ εἷς ὁ θεός.[70] "Furthermore, the Beelzebul controversy, the storm-stilling, and water-walking all seem to suggest that Mark's Jesus is very closely identified with the personal presence of Yahweh."[71]

Only when God's presence in Jesus is first established and upheld as foundational can it

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[65] These observations challenge the views presented in *Mark as Story*, which tends to neglect the way Jesus is in some ways presented as divine. "In Mark, Jesus is neither God nor a divine being, but a human, a son of humanity, who has been given great authority by God." Rhoads, et al, *Mark as Story*, 105. Cf. "The only triumph Mark depicts in Jesus' death is his human faithfulness to God . . ." Ibid, *Mark as Story*, 113.

[66] 1:12

[67] 9:7

[68] Cf. Ex 23:20 and 33:12–14. ". . . Yahweh himself and the angel of the covenant. The latter one is probably to be identified with the angel who led the people of Israel during the wilderness wandering and who is indwelt by Gods name (Exod. 23.20–21)." Johansson, "Kyrios in Mark," 115.

A further Exodus connection can be made from Ex 15:17, where it speaks of God building his sanctuary. Juel interestingly makes this connection between Mark's presentation and this line from Exodus, but doesn't like the implication. In one spot he recognizes, "The decisive difference is the identity of the builder of the temple: in all of the traditions using Exod 15:17, it is God; in Mark, the builder is Jesus." Juel, *Messiah and Temple*, 153. Yet later he claims, "Jesus is either being described as God, which seems highly improbable, or he is being described as Messiah." Juel, *Messiah and Temple*, 208. The present study's observations might begin to blur the distinction Juel so confidently makes here. For another perspective on how Jesus-as-temple relates to Exodus 15, see, Perrin, *Jesus and Temple*, 10–11.

[69] Mal 3:1

[70] "But in Mark's gospel, the paralytic—contra the scribes—acknowledges the presence of God in Jesus' ministry, an act which results in his healing." Winn, *Mark and Elijah-Elisha*, 81. Cf. Standaert, *Évangile selon Marc*, 808–9.

[71] Watts, *Isaiah's New Exodus*, 180.

rightly be suggested that the community is the temple of God.[72] Mark never goes so far as to assert that the community replaces the temple. As seen in the above observations from Paul's and Peter's letters, the community can only be described as the temple of God in so far as that community is united with Christ the cornerstone. The community receives access to the benefits of God's presence (dwelling place/temple) in so far as it seeks them in Christ. Mediation between God and man formerly occurred through the temple, but according to Mark (and apparently other early church authors) that mediation now occurs through Jesus Christ, the new temple, in whom God's presence dwells.

A further implication might be suggested considering Mark's thematic usage of royal themes throughout the end of his gospel. Along with Mark's thematic usage of the temple throughout the end of his gospel, he also dances around the theme of kingship, especially as it relates to Jesus. This should not be seen as a competing theme with the temple theme, but as has been observed in connection with the Solomonic undertones, these themes are rather complementary.[73]

What is interesting to observe about these two themes is that they are both major concepts in Old Testament theology and hope, yet they were—in part—only human ideas. They were only human ideas in so far as they were to be physically instantiated on the earth. When the people ask for a king in 1 Sam 8, it becomes an issue for Samuel,[74] which God resolves by explaining,

[72] "It can be said, therefore, both that Jesus is the place where God is present and that his presence with his people constitutes them as the place of God's presence. Jesus both is the new temple in himself and constitutes his people as the new temple." I. Howard Marshall, "Church and Temple in the New Testament," *TynBul* 40.2 (1989): 218.

[73] Juel's work, *Messiah and Temple* focuses on the relationship of these two themes. Chronis makes further connections between the kingship theme and the title son of God that supports the identification of Jesus as a "divine being." Chronis, "The Torn Veil," 105–6. Cf. Wright, *Victory*, 535.

[74] 1 Sam 8:6

"they have not rejected you, but they have rejected me from being king over them."[75] Likewise in 2 Sam 7:5–16, after David asks to build a temple for the Lord, the idea does not begin with God, and is only begrudgingly allowed to David's heir (Solomon, or Jesus?). God does indeed concede to give Israel both a king and a temple, but it seems that neither idea in its earthly conception received full approval from God.

It seems that Mark may be picking up on this notion that God had in some ways made concessions to human desires, but now he presents Jesus as setting things "right." The people never really had their proper king according to God's plan, but now in Jesus they do. The people never had the proper "temple" or dwelling place of God amongst them, but now in Jesus they do.[76] Such ideas can also be seen in the way Jesus navigates the discussion on divorce in Mark. He claims that God allowed Moses to write certificates of divorce because of their stubbornness, yet suggests that it is still not right.[77] He there returns to a bigger plan God had intended for males and females, over and against the concession he made through Moses. Perhaps this same way of thinking applies to Mark's presentation of Jesus as the true king of Israel, and the true temple of God; the return to God's bigger plan that had temporarily conceded to man's wishes.[78]

Ultimately, reading 11:20–25 in its narrative context allows us to see that the Marcan Jesus provides his followers with encouragement to have faith that God is still with them despite the

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[75] 1 Sam 8:7: כִּי לֹא אֹתְךָ מָאָסוּ כִּי־אֹתִי מָאֲסוּ מִמְּלֹךְ עֲלֵיהֶם; *οὐ σὲ ἐξουθενήκασιν, ἀλλ' ἢ ἐμὲ ἐξουδενώκασιν τοῦ μὴ βασιλεύειν ἐπ' αὐτῶν*

[76] Cf. Watts's conclusion, "As with the announcement of comfort, so too the goal of the NE is centered on the presence of Yahweh, that is, his enthronement in a restored Jerusalem." Watts, *Isaiah's New Exodus*, 79.

[77] Mark 10:1–12

[78] "True, temple and kingship continue, but specifically in relation to the reign of Jesus, Jerusalem's rejected Messiah, and from the locale of 'Galilee of the Gentiles.'" Swartley, *Israel's Scripture Traditions*, 274. Cf. David L. Baker, "Typology and the Christian Use of the Old Testament" in *The Right Doctrine from the Wrong Texts?: Essays on the Use of the Old Testament in the New*, ed. G.K. Beale (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1994; Repr. from *SJT* 29 [1976]: 137–57), 316; Nicholas Perrin, *Jesus the Temple*, 11; Snodgrass, "The Use of the Old Testament,"

condemnation of the present temple order. The very activities that one would have seen as dependent on the old temple order will still continue beyond its condemnation. This reading arises out of narrative-based observations, but is also strengthened by recognizing the subtle allusion to Solomon's dedicatory prayer at the "founding moment" of the first temple in 1 Kgs 8. For those disciples who were concerned by the condemnation and loss of the visible temple in Jerusalem, Mark gives them encouragement that the benefits which the temple once offered may now be sought in Jesus's faithful and enduring words, *just as he told you.*

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