

Promoting proclamation: A study of the prominence, content, and rhetorical impact of the motif of proclamation in the Gospel of Mark

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Abstract

The motif of proclamation has attracted relatively little attention in Markan studies to date. In response to this scholarly lacuna, this study offers a detailed exploration of the motif of proclamation in the Gospel of Mark, arguing for its prominence, detailing its content and considering its potential rhetorical impact on the reader. This exploration in turn contributes more broadly to an understanding of the message and purpose of Mark's Gospel.

The starting point for the study is William Freedman's two key criteria for establishing a motif in a literary work - frequency and avoidability. These are applied to demonstrate the existence of the motif of proclamation in Mark. The study then utilises six indicators of prominence to determine the prominence of the motif of proclamation in Mark.

The approach taken throughout the study consists of a detailed synchronic motif analysis. Passages in Mark's Gospel that contribute to the motif of proclamation are identified through a process based on qualitative content analysis. These passages are then examined through a close reading utilising the tools of narrative criticism, historical-grammatical exegesis, and rhetorical criticism. The focus of this close reading is to determine the contribution that these passages make to the prominence and content of the motif of proclamation, and to consider the potential rhetorical impact of this material on Mark's readers.

The study also considers possible reasons for the relative neglect of the motif to date, and engages with the work of William Wrede on the contrasting motif of secrecy.

The result of this analysis is that the motif of proclamation is shown to be a prominent motif in Mark. References to proclamation pervade Mark's Gospel from the Markan prologue (1:1–15) through to the conclusion (16:7–8), occurring at pivotal points in the narrative. The motif is shown to be associated with both major and minor characters in Mark's narrative (1:4, 14, 3:14; cf. 1:45; 5:20; 7:36) and to be developed through both the words of the narrator and the dialogue of characters (1:38–39; 6:12; cf. 13:10; 14:9). The motif of proclamation is also shown to be developed through interaction with other significant Markan themes.

The analysis also demonstrates the rich content of the motif. The passages considered highlight the importance of proclamation in God's plan, expand the task of proclamation beyond the Twelve to other followers of Jesus, and present this task as a continuation of Jesus's ministry of proclamation. The content of the motif also includes an anticipation of an ongoing worldwide proclamation of the gospel after the completion of the narrative and communicates both the urgency and potential cost of involvement in this task.

Finally, the analysis proposes that the motif of proclamation in Mark serves a significant rhetorical purpose. As Mark develops the motif of proclamation, the reader is exhorted in various ways to take up the task of proclaiming the gospel. While the Gospel of Mark lacks an explicit commissioning statement (such as is found in Matthew and Luke), the call to involvement in the task of proclaiming the gospel throughout the world permeates the book.

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Live for Christ forever

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Chapter 1 - Introduction

Significant scholarly attention has been given to many motifs in Mark's Gospel, including the motifs of secrecy, discipleship, martyrdom, the house, seeing, the way, incomprehension, faith, the temple, and wonder.¹ A motif that has attracted comparatively little attention in Markan studies is the motif of proclamation. The purpose of this thesis is to address this scholarly lacuna by offering a detailed exploration of the motif of proclamation in Mark, demonstrating its prominence, examining its content, and analysing its potential rhetorical impact on the reader. This exploration of such a prominent but hitherto neglected motif will contribute more broadly to the scholarly understanding of Mark's message and purpose.

The aim of this introductory chapter is threefold. First, to introduce some initial evidence that strongly suggests that proclamation is a prominent motif in the Gospel of Mark. Second, to survey the relevant secondary literature and show that the motif of proclamation is neglected in Markan scholarship. Third, to outline possible reasons why this motif may have been neglected in Markan scholarship.

This introductory chapter will set the scene for the remainder of the thesis, which will seek to remedy this scholarly neglect by exploring the Markan motif of proclamation in detail.

1. Establishing proclamation as a prominent motif in the Gospel of Mark

1.1 *An introduction to identifying motifs*

Since the term *motif* is used in various ways in fields ranging from music to chemistry, it is necessary to clarify its meaning here. The term motif is used in this thesis to refer to a recurring element in a text.² A motif is a conspicuous and "salient feature" of a literary work (Dwyer 1996, 17) that carries rhetorical force and so "conveys a message" (Fields 1997, 24).³

Regarding its development, a motif arises not merely from the "verbatim reoccurrence of words" (Iverson 2011b, 189) but from "the repeated use of related types, allusions, terms, or phrases in various combinations" (Bubbers 2013, 30). A motif draws the reader's attention to what is meaningful and has a cumulative rhetorical impact on the reader.⁴

In biblical studies, the word *motif* is often used interchangeably with *theme*.⁵ While recognising the significant overlap between the terms theme and motif, this study adopts the term motif for its emphasis on rhetorical function (Estelle 2018, 8).

¹ See e.g., Dwyer (1996); Watts (2000); Beggs (2005); Best (1986); Perry (1997); Riddle (1924); Boobyer (1960); Ryou (2004); S. Henderson (2006); Heil (1997); Marshall (1989); Dinkler (2016).

² Freedman (1971, 124); S. McKnight (1988, 109); Bubbers (2013, 30).

³ See, similarly J. Morgan (2015, 194).

⁴ Freedman (1971, 127, 131); J. Morgan (2013, 4).

⁵ See e.g., C. Black (1988, 31); Marshall (1989, 227); Rochester (2011, 203–4); Jost (1988, xvii).

This study will utilise and build on the work of William Freedman on the nature and function of literary motifs. Freedman is a scholar of English literature whose work has been employed in a number of New Testament studies.⁶

In his influential discussion of literary motifs, Freedman identifies two key criteria for establishing a motif in a literary work: frequency and avoidability (1971, 127–28). Regarding frequency, Freedman argues that references to the motif should occur often enough to indicate that “purposiveness rather than merely coincidence or necessity is at least occasionally responsible for their presence” (127–28). Regarding avoidability, Freedman proposes that references to the motif should appear in contexts that are unlikely and do not demand references from the field of the motif (127–28).

As will be demonstrated, proclamation in Mark’s Gospel satisfies both of these criteria, supporting its identification as a motif.

1.2 *Freedman’s criteria and the motif of proclamation in Mark’s Gospel*

1.2.1 Criterion 1: The frequency of references to proclamation in Mark’s Gospel

The frequency of references to proclamation in Mark’s Gospel is evident in two ways.

First, κηρύσσω terminology occurs with relative frequency in Mark’s Gospel. Although statistics should be used with caution, verbal repetition “is an important device for underlining points of emphasis” (Marshall 1989, 1). Mark uses the κηρύσσω word group 12 times in his Gospel (Mark 1:4; 1:7; 1:14; 1:38; 1:39; 1:45; 3:14; 5:20; 6:12; 7:36; 13:10; 14:9).⁷ This is more frequent than the other Gospel writers (Matthew (9); Luke (9); John (0)), particularly when taking into account the relatively shorter length of Mark.

This frequency is also comparable with the occurrence of key terminology associated with other recognised motifs in Mark. So, for example, in his study on the motif of faith in Mark, Marshall notes 16 occurrences of πίστις and its cognates (and one in a textual variant). This, he argues, “compares favourably with other topics widely held to be of particular importance in Mark” (1989, 1).

Perhaps most striking is the comparison with the motif of secrecy which has been given considerable attention in Markan studies. Mark’s Gospel contains only a single use of the term μυστήριον and five occurrences of the word σιωπάω (3:4; 4:39; 9:34; 10:48; 14:61).⁸ William Wrede (whose work on secrecy will be considered in chapter 8) identifies 11 instances of “injunctions to keep the Messianic secret” (with one other in a textual variant) (1971, 34–36).⁹

⁶ See, inter alia, Dwyer (1996, 17–19); Iverson (2011b, 189–96); Webster (2003); De Long (2009, 13); Horton (2009, 2); J. Morgan (2013, 21–22).

⁷ There are also occurrences in both the so-called short ending and longer ending of Mark (16:15; 16:20).

⁸ David Watson surveys the broad Greek vocabulary related to secrecy and concludes that this “rich vocabulary ... rarely shows up in the Gospel of Mark” (2010, 23).

⁹ Wrede also includes Jesus’s parabolic speech and the disciples’ failure to understand as evidence for the messianic secret, but his conflation of such variegated material has been strongly critiqued (see further discussion in chapter 8).

Second, terminology related to κηρύσσω is found throughout Mark's Gospel. Motif analysis is necessarily broader in its approach than word-studies since it is a semantic fallacy to assume a one-to-one correspondence between words and concepts (Silva 1994, 27). Freedman argues that a motif is developed not just through verbatim re-use of a particular word but through the employment of an "associational cluster" or conceptual domain (1971, 202). As will be seen in the detailed analysis throughout this thesis, Mark often makes use of related words to develop the motif of proclamation (see, for example, the discussion in chapters 3 and 7 on Mark's use of εὐαγγέλιον in Mark 1:1, 8:35, and 10:29).

In summary, references to proclamation are frequent enough in Mark to indicate "purposiveness rather than merely coincidence or necessity" (Freedman 1971, 127–28).

1.2.2 Criterion 2: The avoidability of references to proclamation in Mark's Gospel:

Several references to proclamation in Mark's Gospel meet Freedman's *criterion of avoidability*. In standalone literary works avoidability can be a difficult criterion to establish, however synoptic comparison provides a clear means of demonstrating avoidability. Two brief examples serve to illustrate this. Mark's account of the demon-possessed man in Mark 5 concludes with the man proclaiming what Jesus had done for him (5:20).¹⁰ But Matthew's parallel account (Matt 8:28–34) omits any reference to this proclamation. This demonstrates that Mark's reference to the man's proclamation is avoidable. Importantly the validity of this argument does not depend on a particular solution to the Synoptic problem. It is not necessary to show that Matthew used Mark as a source to observe that Matthew could tell the story of the demoniac without reference to proclamation.

A second example of avoidability comes in Mark's account of the Olivet Discourse (Mark 13). In Mark 13:10, Mark includes a reference to the proclamation of the gospel.¹¹ Luke's parallel account of the Olivet Discourse omits this reference (Luke 21:5–36). Again, this omission demonstrates that a reference to proclamation at this point of Mark's narrative is avoidable.

Further instances where this criterion is satisfied are discussed in the course of this study.

1.2.3 Summary

This preliminary analysis suggests that the references to proclamation in Mark's Gospel meet Freedman's two key criteria for establishing a motif in a literary work. It is therefore highly plausible that proclamation is a motif in the Gospel of Mark. This preliminary inference, which will be taken as a given for the remainder of this chapter, will be tested and considered in greater detail in the remainder of this thesis.

¹⁰ The proclamation of the demoniac will be considered in more detail in chapter 5 below.

¹¹ For further discussion of Mark 13:10, see chapter 6.

1.3 The prominence of the motif of proclamation in Mark's Gospel

1.3.1 An introduction to the prominence of the motif of proclamation

As demonstrated above, the motif of proclamation in Mark's Gospel meets Freedman's two key criteria for establishing a motif. However, this study goes further and proposes that proclamation is not simply a motif but a *prominent* motif in Mark.

By prominent, this study means that the motif of proclamation is not a minor motif or background feature of Mark's Gospel but a pervasive motif with a significant rhetorical effect.

1.3.2 Six indicators of prominence

Building on the work of Freedman (1971) and Horton (2009), this study utilises six indicators to determine the prominence of a motif.

(i) Frequency

The first indicator of prominence is a reapplication of Freedman's first criterion – the criterion of frequency. Frequency establishes the motif – greater frequency supports its prominence. As Freedman notes, “the greater the frequency with which instances of a motif recur the deeper the impression it is likely to make on the reader” (1971, 126).

As detailed above, references to proclamation in Mark's Gospel occur with significant frequency throughout the narrative. This study will focus on 16 direct references to proclamation in their context and consider a number of other passages that contribute to the motif of proclamation indirectly.¹² As will be seen, the motif of proclamation permeates Mark's Gospel. This frequency of occurrence indicates the prominence of the proclamation motif in Mark.

(ii) Avoidability

The second indicator of prominence is likewise a reapplication of Freedman's second criterion – the criterion of avoidability. “The more uncommon a reference is in a given context, the more likely it is to strike the reader ... and the greater will be its effect” (Freedman 1971, 126).

In the case of proclamation in Mark, five of the 16 references that will form the focus of this study demonstrably meet Freedman's criteria of avoidability (Mark 3:14, 5:20, 8:35, 10:29, 13:10). This degree of avoidability contributes to the prominence of the motif of proclamation in Mark.

(iii) Location and spread

The third indicator of prominence is the *location* and *spread* of references to the motif. If references to a motif occur at significant locations in the narrative this underlines the motif for the reader and so contributes to the prominence of that

¹² See chapter 2 below for a discussion of the methodology for identifying these verses.

motif. As Freedman persuasively demonstrates, the potency or efficacy of a motif is impacted by its placement in the narrative (1971, 126–27).¹³ Such potency, in turn, contributes to the prominence of a motif.

A factor related to the location of references to a motif is the *spread* of those occurrences. For a motif to be prominent in a work as a whole, references to the motif must pervade the work rather than being limited to one particular section.

This study will show that references to proclamation occur at pivotal points in Mark's Gospel. For example, there are several references to proclamation in the Markan prologue (1:1–15). Since the Markan prologue functions to introduce a number of the Gospel's key motifs,¹⁴ the presence of these references to proclamation in the prologue leads the reader to anticipate the prominence of proclamation in the remainder of Mark's Gospel. This example will be considered in detail in chapter 3. Other examples of proclamation being located at significant points in the Markan narrative and so underlined for the reader will be offered throughout this thesis (see, for example, the discussion of Mark 5:20 in chapter 5, the discussion of Mark 13:10 in chapter 6, and the discussion of Mark's ending in chapter 8).

Regarding the spread of occurrences, passages contributing to the development of the motif of proclamation are found throughout Mark's Gospel from beginning to end. This study will examine passages that contribute to the motif of proclamation from all but two of Mark's chapters (see the summary in chapter 9).

The location and spread of references to proclamation in Mark's Gospel indicate the prominence of the motif in Mark.

(iv) Association with major and minor characters

The fourth indicator of prominence is the breadth of characters that are associated with the motif. As Horton argues, the involvement of both major and minor characters in the development of a motif contributes to the pervasiveness (and therefore prominence) of that motif (2009, 77).

The motif of proclamation is associated in Mark's Gospel with both major and minor characters. The protagonist of Mark's Gospel, Jesus, is presented as proclaiming (Mark 1:15) – indeed, the first words spoken by Jesus in Mark are explicitly identified as words of proclamation (1:14–15). Other major recurring characters, such as John the Baptist (see chapter 3 below) and the disciples (see chapter 4 below) are likewise depicted as proclaiming. Minor characters, such as the Gerasene demoniac (who will be considered in chapter 5), are also shown

¹³ Similarly, James Morgan argues, “In narratological terms, the cumulative force of the motif is enhanced in moments when narrative tension is particularly felt, either increasing or decreasing” (2015, 199).

¹⁴ On the importance of the Markan prologue for introducing Mark's motifs and themes, see LaVerdiere (1999, 19–25); Matera (1988, 3–20); Boring (1990, 43–81).

proclaiming (Mark 5:20 cf. Mark 1:45; 7:36). This association with major and minor characters is a further indicator of the prominence of the motif in Mark.

(v) *Development through dialogue and narration*

The fifth indicator of prominence is development of the motif through both the dialogue of characters and the words of the narrator. This diversity in the development of a motif augments the pervasiveness (and so prominence) of a motif.

In the Gospel of Mark, the motif of proclamation is developed through both the dialogue of characters (e.g., 13:10; 14:9 – see discussion in chapter 6) and the words of the narrator (e.g., 3:14; 5:20 – see discussion in chapters 4 and 5).

(vi) *Contrast with other significant motifs*

The sixth indicator of prominence is contrast with other significant motifs in the work. As Horton argues, motifs are intensified by contrast with a secondary motif (2009, 79–102).

In the case of proclamation in Mark, there is a clear contrast with the motif of secrecy.¹⁵ The implications of this contrast will be explored in detail in chapter 8. There are also significant points of overlap between the motif of proclamation and other prominent themes and motifs in Mark, including discipleship (see discussion in chapter 4) and the temple (see discussion in chapter 6). These interactions serve to develop the motif of proclamation and contribute to its prominence.

In summary, the application of these six indicators to the motif of proclamation in Mark suggests that this is a prominent motif in Mark's Gospel. There are 16 direct references to the motif (and a number of other passages that contribute to the motif indirectly). At least five of these references meet the criterion of avoidability. These references are spread throughout Mark's Gospel and located at pivotal points in the narrative including Mark's opening and conclusion. The motif is associated with the protagonist and with other, both major and minor characters, and is developed through dialogue and narration. It is also developed through contrast with the motif of secrecy and intersection with other prominent themes and motifs in Mark.

1.3.3 Exploring the utility and validity of these indicators

The utility and validity of these six indicators of prominence is illustrated by briefly considering three other motifs in Mark's Gospel with respect to these indicators.

(i) *The boat motif*

A number of scholars identify a "boat motif" in Mark's Gospel.¹⁶ In a detailed study of this boat motif, Mark Wheller (2003) focuses on three key passages (Mark 4:35–5:2; 6:45–54; and 8:10–22) but identifies a number of other

¹⁵ Cf. Sweat 2013.

¹⁶ See, e.g., Fowler (1981b, 63); N. Petersen (1980, 194); Guelich (1998, 191); Wheller (2003).

references that develop the motif (1:19–20; 3:7–11; 4:1–2; 5:18; 5:21; 6:32–44). Six of these passages meet the criterion of avoidability (applying the method of synoptic comparison outlined above – Mark 3:7–11 cf. Matt 12:15–16; Mark 4:1–2 cf. Luke 6:17–19; Mark 5:21 cf. Luke 8:26–37; Mark 6:32–44 cf. Luke 9:10–17; Mark 6:54 cf. Matt 14:34–36; Mark 8:10–22 cf. Matt 16:1–12). Regarding the location and spread of the passages, there are no references to the boat motif in the Markan prologue or conclusion. Indeed, apart from the references in Mark 1:19–20 the remainder are limited to Mark 3–8, after which the “boat motif disappears” (Williams 1994, 45). Regarding the association with characters, all of the references involve Jesus and/or his disciples, and there is no association of the motif with minor characters. All of the references to the boat motif are found in narrative (with no references in dialogue or direct discourse). There is also no obvious contrast with another significant motif that might contribute to the prominence of the boat motif.

In conclusion, while the boat motif has some prominence in Mark 3–8, the application of the indicators outlined above suggests that it is a less prominent motif in Mark’s Gospel as a whole than the motif of proclamation. In comparison with the motif of proclamation, the boat motif is found in fewer significant locations and is less spread throughout the Gospel; it is associated exclusively with Jesus and his disciples and found only in narrative description; and, it is not developed by a contrasting motif.

(ii) *The motif of healing by touching*

Harrington (2002, 240) identifies “healing by touching” as a “common motif in Markan miracle stories.”¹⁷ In drawing this conclusion, Harrington lists Mark 1:31, 41; 5:23, 41; 7:32–33; 8:22; 9:27 as relevant passages. To this list might be added the summary statement in Mark 6:5; as well as Mark 3:10; 5:27–31; and 6:56 which refer to people touching Jesus for healing. Three of these passages meet the criterion of avoidability (applying the method of synoptic comparison outlined above – Mark 5:23 cf. Luke 8:41–56; Mark 6:5 cf. Matt 13:54–58; Mark 9:27 cf. Matt 17:14–19 // Luke 9:37–43). Regarding the location and spread of the passages, there is no reference to healing by touch in the Markan prologue or the conclusion, furthermore there are no references to the motif after Mark 9. Regarding the involvement of characters, all the incidents involve Jesus touching (or being touched) (cf. Mark 16:18). The majority of the references are found in narrative description, but there are two instances where the reference occurs in dialogue. There is no obvious contrast with another motif that might contribute to the prominence of the motif of healing by touching. While Mark records one healing at a distance (7:24–30) this does not constitute a motif in Mark (cf. Matt 8:13; John 4:50).

In conclusion, while healing by touching might be identified as a motif in Mark’s Gospel, the application of the six indicators outlined above suggests that it is a

¹⁷ See, similarly, Guelich (1998, 355); Hägg (2017, 26); Dvořáček (2016, 184) and compare also, Gundry (1993, 295–96).

less prominent motif in Mark's Gospel as a whole than the motif of proclamation. It occurs less frequently, is found in fewer significant locations and is less spread throughout the Gospel. Furthermore, the activity of healing by touching is limited to the protagonist of the story (though other, minor characters, are involved as supplicants) and the motif of healing by touching is not developed by a contrasting motif.

(iii) The motif of flight

Both Lane (1974, 472) and France (2002, 596) identify a motif of "flight" or "running away" in Mark's Gospel. There are five verses in Mark that contribute to this motif (5:14; 13:14; 14:50; 14:52; 16:8). Two of these references satisfy the criterion of avoidability (applying the method of synoptic comparison outlined above – Mark 14:50 cf. Luke 22:47–50; Mark 16:8 cf. Luke 24:1–10). Regarding the location and spread of these references, the account of the women's flight in Mark 16:8 is located at the conclusion of the narrative, and so in a significant location. There is, however, no introduction to the motif in the Markan prologue and apart from an isolated reference in Mark 5:14, the remaining references occur in the final four chapters of Mark. Both major characters (e.g., the disciples, Mark 14:50) and minor characters (e.g., the herdsmen, Mark 5:14) are associated with the motif, although it should be noted that the protagonist is not portrayed as fleeing at any point in the narrative. Four of the references to flight occur in narrative with one found in direct discourse. The prominence of the motif of flight is bolstered by contrast with the motif of following or drawing near Jesus that is found throughout Mark.

In conclusion, while flight might be identified as a motif in Mark's Gospel, the application of the six indicators of prominence outlined above suggests that it is a less prominent motif in Mark's Gospel as a whole than the motif of proclamation as it occurs less regularly, is found in fewer significant locations, is less spread throughout the Gospel, is not an activity associated with the protagonist of the story, and is largely limited to narrative passages.

1.3.4 Conclusion: The prominence of the motif of proclamation in Mark

This initial analysis and the application of the six indicators outlined above suggests that proclamation is not only a motif in Mark's Gospel, but a prominent motif. This conclusion will be examined more thoroughly in the subsequent chapters of this study. Before that, it is necessary to consider the treatment of this motif in Markan studies to date.

2. Literature review

2.1 Introduction

Although proclamation appears to be a prominent motif in Mark (see previous section), the motif of proclamation has attracted comparatively little attention in Markan studies. While

some scholars have recognised the existence of the motif, and there are many scattered statements regarding the importance of proclamation in Mark's Gospel, the Markan motif of proclamation has not been explored in detail.

This literature review surveys scholarly treatment of proclamation in Mark. In the absence of any full-length monograph on the motif of proclamation in Mark with which to engage, this literature review will necessarily survey a broader range of scholarship on Mark and proclamation.

First, a range of commentaries on Mark will be examined with attention given to their treatment of proclamation. Second, scholarship outside of commentaries will be reviewed in the following categories:

- (i) *Notable omissions*: This includes instances of scholarship on either the Gospel of Mark or on proclamation in the New Testament which are noteworthy for their omission of any discussion of proclamation in Mark.
- (ii) *Discussion of proclamation in Mark but not as a motif*: This includes literature that considers proclamation in Mark but does not treat it as a theme or motif in the Gospel.
- (iii) *Limited engagement with proclamation as a motif in Mark*: Scholarship in this category identifies proclamation as a motif or theme in Mark but only examines it in a particular section of Mark's Gospel or in a limited way.

Finally, a study that gives more detailed attention to proclamation in Mark, in the course of exploring a related but distinct theme (the continuation of Jesus's mission), will be considered.

2.2 Commentaries on Mark and the motif of proclamation

The prevalence of κηρύσσω language in Mark's Gospel means that commentaries on Mark commonly refer to proclamation. However, they tend not to engage in any extended analysis of proclamation as a motif or theme. While space precludes an analysis of every commentary on Mark, the following survey is offered as a representative sample.

The commentaries reviewed below fall broadly into two groups: first, those that recognise something of the significance of proclamation in Mark but do not address it in detail or identify it as a motif or theme. Second, a smaller group that identifies proclamation as a theme or motif but generally without any extended discussion.

2.2.1 Commentaries referring to proclamation but not as a theme or motif

Pesch (1977; 1991)

In his two-volume commentary on Mark, Pesch includes a short excursus on "‘Verkündigen’ im Markusevangelium," in which he briefly discusses the proclamation of Jesus, John the Baptist, and Jesus's disciples (1977, 105). Pesch's emphasis in this discussion is on the content of the message proclaimed. He observes a connection between the proclamation of Jesus, John, and the disciples but argues that their proclamation differs in content (105).

Pesch also notes Mark's anticipation of "die Verkündigung des Evangeliums in aller Welt" and contends that "Die Verkündigung des Evangeliums ist ein Akt der Nachfolge Jesu ..." (105) but does not explore the potential rhetorical impact of this material.

In the commentary proper, Pesch makes only minimal comment on proclamation. For example, in discussing the mission of the Twelve (3:13–19), Pesch argues that the Twelve "teilen Jesu Verkündigungsauftrag" but then gives little attention to their proclamation (205). Similarly, in his comments on Mark 6:6–13, Pesch notes "der Umkehrpredigt" of the Twelve but gives significantly more attention to Jesus's instructions to the Twelve than to their proclamation (330–31).

Likewise, in his commentary on Mark 13:10, Pesch notes the necessity of the "universalen Evangeliumsverkündigung" but gives greater emphasis to the pre-history of the passage than its contribution to the broader Markan motif of proclamation (1991, 285).

Gnilka (1978; 1979)

In the introduction to his two-volume commentary on Mark, Gnilka offers a summary of Markan theology, which includes an extended reflection on the theme of discipleship ("die Jüngerthematik") (1978, 25–28). As a part of this discussion, Gnilka refers to the proclamation of the disciples and notes that "Echte Jüngerschaft umfaßt das Bekenntnis zum Gekreuzigten ..." (27). However, he includes no significant engagement with the motif of proclamation.

In commenting on Mark 1:14–15, Gnilka observes "'Das Evangelium Gottes verkünden' entspricht der hellenistischen Missionssprache ..." and concludes that "Jesus eröffnet die Verkündigung, die die christliche Gemeinde jetzt weiterführt" (65). However, Gnilka draws no connection between this reference to proclamation and a broader Markan motif of proclamation.

Similarly, in his discussion of Mark 5:1–20, Gnilka notes the proclamation of the demoniac and argues "Er wird somit zum echten Vorläufer christlicher Verkündigung und damit zum Jünger" (207). However, again Gnilka does not connect this passage with a broader Markan motif of proclamation, nor consider the potential rhetorical impact of this material.¹⁸

In his analysis of Mark 13:10 and 14:9, Gnilka notes Mark's anticipation of a "weltweite Evangeliumsverkündigung," but does not consider these references as part of a broader Markan theme (1979, 191, 225).

At various other points in his commentary, Gnilka passes over Mark's references to proclamation without any significant comment. For example, in his discussion of Mark 3:13–16, Gnilka draws attention to the sending of the Twelve "der sie als die ersten Missionare hervortreten läßt" but includes no significant comment on their proclamation (1978, 140).

¹⁸ Gnilka does briefly note that for Mark the focus of this pericope is on "die Heidenmission kam seinen Intentionen entgegen" but he does not develop this idea in any detail (1978, 207).

Ernst (1981)

Ernst notes Jesus's "proclamation of salvation" (Heilsverkündigung) in Mark 1:14–15 and identifies this as a programmatic summary of Jesus's preaching (1981, 48–49). He does not, however, connect this reference to a broader proclamation motif in Mark's Gospel.

At other points in his commentary, Ernst's comments on proclamation are largely limited to passing references. For example, in his discussion of Mark 3:13–19, Ernst observes that the vocation of the Twelve includes the mission to preach ("... Sendung zum Predigen" ...) (113) but gives little further attention to their proclamation.

Similarly, in his discussion of Mark 5:1–20, Ernst identifies the healed demoniac as "der Heidenmissionar" and finds in this account a justification of the gentile mission and "einen Missionsoptimismus" but attends only briefly to the proclamation of the demoniac (158). See, likewise, Ernst's treatment of Mark 13:10 and 14:9 (401–2).

Garland (1996)

Garland observes the importance of proclamation in the opening of Mark's Gospel and how all Jesus does "is tied to the proclamation of the Kingdom of God" (1996, 223). He also highlights the proclamation of John the Baptist, the disciples, and the church. According to Garland, "If the church prepares the way for anything, it is for [Jesus's] return by following in the path he has laid out and in the worldwide proclamation of the gospel (13:10)" (57).

Garland does not, however, identify proclamation as a theme or motif in Mark's Gospel. This omission is made more striking by the number of other themes and motifs that Garland finds in Mark.¹⁹

Particularly noteworthy for this survey is Garland's treatment of Mark 13. Drawing on the work of Gundry, Garland notes that Mark 13 "contains all the same themes" as John 14–16. He then lists the themes these passages have in common but (like Gundry) omits the theme of proclamation or witness (cf. Mark 13:10 and John 15:8; 15:16; 15:26–27) (504).²⁰

Guelich (1998)

Guelich observes the "proclamation context" of Mark 1 and argues that the plot of Mark "has to do with Jesus's effective proclamation [of the gospel] through his words and actions ..." (1998, xxiv). Guelich notes the proclamation of John the Baptist, Jesus, the Twelve, and "other messengers" (1:45; 5:20; 13:10; 14:9) (18) but says little about proclamation in his introductory discussion of the theology and purpose of Mark's Gospel.²¹ He also offers only minimal comment about the proclamation of the disciples in his discussion of Mark 3:13–19

¹⁹ Garland (1996) identifies no shortage of themes and motifs in Mark, including: the "way" (56); the "coming of the kingdom of God" (59); Jesus's authority (87); Jesus's "extraordinary magnetism" (126); Jesus's power to heal (126); the demons' "nervous recognition of him" (126); the motif of death (189); sleep (192); hearing (250); "suffering and sacrifice" (332); discipleship (421); watching (489); secrecy (127); and the wilderness (254).

²⁰ Cf. Gundry (1993, 750).

²¹ Guelich identifies three central themes in Mark's Gospel – eschatology, Christology and discipleship (1998, xl).

and 6:7–13 (159, 323) and the proclamation of the demoniac in his discussion of Mark 5:18–20 (296–97).

Evans (2001)

Evans notes the use of κηρύσσειν throughout Mark's Gospel in reference to John's preaching (1:4, 7); Jesus's preaching (1:14, 38–39); the disciples' preaching (3:14; 6:12); and the general mission of the church (13:10; 14:9) (Evans 2001, 311). However, Evans does not identify proclamation as a theme or motif in Mark or engage in any detailed discussion of proclamation in Mark.

James Edwards (2002)

Edwards (2002) is among those who give greater attention to proclamation. Commenting on Mark 1, Edwards argues that the "proclamation of the gospel" is so essential to Jesus's purpose "that Mark can subsume his entire ministry in the phrase, 'he preached the word to them'" (75). Edwards also highlights Jesus's empowering of the disciples to "undertake his own ministry of proclamation" and the necessity of the gospel being proclaimed to all nations (16). According to Edwards, "proclamation" is a "favorite Markan term" (182).

Significantly, however, in his introductory discussion of "distinctive themes" in Mark, Edwards does not identify proclamation as a theme and makes only passing reference to proclamation within his discussion of the theme of discipleship (16).²²

France (2002)

Similar to Edwards, France identifies "proclamation" as an "essential element" in Jesus's ministry and "in the disciples' commission (3:14)" (2002, 250). Jesus's disciples are the "task force which will take up his proclamation of the kingdom of God (Mark 16:1–8)" (676). Their proclamation is a continuation of John the Baptist's, and this proclamation is to be made εἰς ὅλον τὸν κόσμον (250, 555).

France also argues that the disciples, in their "sharing in Jesus's work of proclamation ..." are "exemplary models to be imitated" by Mark's readers (28).

However, while France gives attention to the proclamation of John the Baptist (75, 90, 250), Jesus (90–91, 112), and the disciples (250, 676), and the Markan expectation of an ongoing proclamation of the gospel to the world (516, 555), he does not identify or treat proclamation as a theme or motif in Mark.²³

²² See, similarly, Adela Collins who gives brief attention to Jesus's proclamation in her introductory discussion of "Jesus as prophet" but does not explore proclamation as a theme or motif in Mark (2007, 44–52).

²³ France identifies Christology, discipleship, the kingdom of God, secrecy, eschatology, and geography as the central areas of Mark's message (2002, 20–35).

Stein (2008)

Stein notes the proclamation of Jesus, John the Baptist, the early church, the Gerasene demoniac, and the importance of proclamation in the parables of Mark 4, but does not identify proclamation as a motif or theme in Mark's Gospel (2008a, 308, 228, 259, 201–2).²⁴

Hurtado (2011)

Hurtado states that “proclamation” was central to Jesus's mission in Mark and that the disciples were chosen to “participate in the proclamation and advance of the Kingdom of God” (2011, 39, 73). Additionally, Hurtado argues that Mark's Gospel justifies “a proclamation of the gospel beyond Jewish borders,” to which Mark calls his readers (122). Despite this, Hurtado gives no attention to proclamation in his introductory discussion of the “Major Themes and Emphases” of Mark (8–11).²⁵

2.2.2 Commentaries that identify proclamation as a theme or motif

In comparison with the commentaries above, the following commentaries identify proclamation as a motif or theme in Mark. However, despite this, they do not engage in a detailed discussion of this motif or its rhetorical function.

Broadhead (2001)

In his comments on Mark 14:9, Broadhead refers to “the theme of the gospel and missionary proclamation” (2001, 105). While Broadhead includes some brief statements throughout his commentary on “the worldwide mission for the gospel” (101) and the need for the followers of Jesus to “preach the gospel to all the nations” (100) he includes no detailed discussion of proclamation as a theme or motif. Furthermore, in his analysis of Mark 5:1–20 (50–52), a passage identified in chapter 5 of this thesis as developing the motif of proclamation in Mark, Broadhead draws no connections to his theme of missionary proclamation.

Thurston (2002)

Similarly, Thurston, in commenting on Mark 13:10, refers to the “Markan motif ... of the need to proclaim that Gospel to Gentiles” (2002, 146). While at various other points in her commentary Thurston makes passing reference to proclamation (see, for example: 17, 29, 52), she includes no further explicit reference to proclamation as a motif in Mark nor any detailed discussion of the development and rhetorical function of this motif.

²⁴ Stein uses the terms *theme* and *motif* interchangeably (246, 265). According to Stein the central theme of Mark is “the identity of Jesus” (398) but Stein identifies a number of other themes or motifs in Mark as well, including: the arrival of the kingdom (134); the disciples lack of understanding (246); the messianic secret (263); the rejection of Jesus (285); food; (288); Jesus's power and authority (298); discipleship (405); entrance into eternal life / the kingdom of God (461); amazement and fear (478); salvation (502); God's judgment upon the temple and Israel (509); and, the divine necessity of Jesus's death and resurrection (656).

²⁵ See, similarly, Marcus (2000a, 2009) who makes incidental comments on proclamation at various points in his commentary but includes no discussion of proclamation as a theme or motif in his lengthy introduction.

Donahue and Harrington (2002)

Likewise, Donahue, in his comments on Mark 1, refers to the “theme of proclamation” (2002, 72) but does not engage in any depth with the development or function of this theme throughout the commentary.

2.2.3 Commentaries on Mark and the motif of proclamation – a conclusion

In summary, the frequent reference to proclamation in the commentaries surveyed above is indicative of the prominence of proclamation in Mark’s Gospel and its potential significance for understanding Mark’s message and purpose. The lack of any detailed engagement with proclamation as a motif, however, points to the need for such a focused study.

2.3 Other scholarship on the motif of proclamation in Mark’s Gospel

2.3.1 Notable omissions

There are many examples in the secondary literature of works that might be expected to engage with proclamation in Mark’s Gospel but do not. For instance, Martin Goldsmith (2002), writing on mission and the proclamation of the good news in the New Testament, includes chapters on Matthew, Luke, and John but no chapter on Mark.

Similarly, in *The Message of Mission*, Howard Peskett and Vinoth Ramachandra offer a “book of Bible expositions” on the topic of mission (Peskett and Ramachandra 2003, 13). Among the passages they select for extended treatment are passages from Matthew, Luke, and John, each of which touches on gospel proclamation (166, 187, 205). Noticeably absent is an exposition of any passage from Mark’s Gospel (13).²⁶

In his book, *The Metaphor of Shepherd in the Gospel of Mark*, Jogy George examines the Markan theme of the shepherd and its connection with other motifs in the narrative. While George includes a brief discussion of “The metaphor of Shepherd as a paradigm for mission,” he does not include proclamation as a motif in Mark’s Gospel (2015, 16, 29).

2.3.2 Discussion of proclamation in Mark but not as a motif

There are a number of other scholars who give some attention to proclamation in Mark’s Gospel but do not identify or treat it as a motif or theme or examine it throughout Mark as a whole.

Boomershine (1981)

In an article on Mark 16:8 and the apostolic commission, Boomershine argues that Mark 16:8 is the intended ending of Mark and serves to emphasise “in Mark’s

²⁶ See similarly: Flemming (2015).

characteristic style, the same theme as the endings of the other gospels, namely, the apostolic commission to proclaim the gospel” (1981, 225).

Boomershine identifies Mark 16:7 as the *terminus ad quem* for the preservation of the messianic secret that was anticipated in Mark 9:9 (234). Commenting on Mark’s ending, Boomershine concludes, “The ending is designed to be an experience of conflict between the scandal of silence and the fear of proclamation. In response to the shock of realisation that the response of silence is utterly wrong, the story appeals for the proclamation of the resurrection regardless of fear” (237). According to Boomershine, Mark’s conclusion “provokes his listeners to reflect on the future response of Jesus’ followers, including themselves, to the commission to proclaim the gospel” (239).

Boomershine’s work highlights the contribution of the end of Mark’s Gospel to the motif of proclamation, but the length of his study and his focus on the ending of Mark necessarily limits the extent of his analysis.

Klemens Stock (1982)

In a chapter for *Mission im Neuen Testament*, Stock (1982) explores the theology of mission in Mark, focusing on the training of the Twelve to become fishers of people (Menschenfischern). For Stock, one of the main themes of Mark is the “Darstellung der Ausbildung von Missionaren” (132).

Building on the references to the gospel in Mark’s opening, Stock underlines that “Dieses ‘Evangelium’ ist für die Verkündigung bestimmt (1,14; 13,10; 14,9)” (131). Stock notes how from the beginning, Jesus enlists others in this work of proclamation (1,17; 3:14f; 6,7–13) (131) and argues that “ist es eine Hauptaufgabe der Berufenen, zu verkündigen” (132).

The task given to the Twelve has the same components as the work of Jesus himself: “Verkündigen und Dämonenaustreiben” (Mark 3,14f; 12f; cf. 1,39) (137). In this way, the Twelve multiply the ministry of Jesus (137).

Stock argues that Jesus’s intention to make the Twelve fishers of people (1:17) and his appointment of them as those who are to be sent out (3:14–15) are not satisfied by the one-time sending of 6:7–13. Instead, this sending is a “Generalprobe” that anticipates an ongoing work of fishing for people (139).

Stock also argues that, “Das unbegrenzte, universelle Ziel der Verkündigung des Evangeliums wird in 13,10 und 14,9 ausgesprochen” (131).

Stock offers some significant insights on the work of the Twelve in continuing Jesus’s mission. However, the length of his chapter limits the depth of his engagement with the topic. Stock also gives little attention to the impact of this material on the reader or the involvement of others beyond the Twelve in the task of proclamation.

Breytenbach (1984)

Breytenbach explores the Markan discipleship material and in particular the link between Mark's portrayal of discipleship and future expectation (Zukunftserwartung). According to Breytenbach, "Die Nachfolge ist von Anfang an mit dem Missionsgedanken verbunden ..." (1984, 273).

Mark's Gospel anticipates the involvement of Mark's church in the task of proclamation, and in particular, "die Weiterverkündigung der Botschaft Jesu ... an die Heiden" (336). As they confidently await the return of the Son of Man, Mark's community is to continue preaching the gospel.

Although Breytenbach's study recognises the importance of proclamation in Mark's portrayal of the disciples and discipleship, his focus on Markan discipleship in relation to the concepts of Nachfolge und Zukunftserwartung necessarily limits his engagement with the motif of proclamation.

Kato (1986)

Kato acknowledges the significance of Christology in Mark but proposes that alongside this Markan focus there is another theme "das für das Ganze des Markusevangeliums eine massgebende Bedeutung hat: die Heidenmission" (1986, 2). This theme, Kato observes, has been frequently overlooked in Markan studies. According to Kato, "das Thema "Heidenmission" in der Markusliteratur nur am Rand, gleichsam als Seitenaspekt anderer Fragen vorkommt " (3–4). Despite this Kato argues "Der Zielpunkt der Markuserzählung ist ... universale Evangeliumsverkündigung unter den Völkern" (3).

In his analysis of Mark, Kato notes the proclamation of Jesus in Galilee (Mark 1:14–15, 38–39) (21–25), the demoniac in Mark 5 (44–63), the Twelve in Mark 6 (66), and the worldwide proclamation anticipated in Mark 13:10 (193). Throughout much of this discussion, however, Kato's focus remains on the salvific-historical relationship between Israel and the gentiles rather than the motif of proclamation itself.²⁷ Thus, in drawing a conclusion, Kato notes, "Das Thema, das mit dem Stichwort "Heiden" verbunden ist, spielt über den Rahmen der einzelnen Perikopen hinaus eine massgebliche Rolle für den gesamten Entwurf des Markusevangeliums" (194).

The focus of Kato's study also leads him to give minimal attention to several other relevant passages in Mark that will be considered in this thesis. For example, by beginning his analysis from Mark 1:14, Kato overlooks much of the prologue, which contributes significantly to the motif of proclamation. Similarly, while he connects the appointment of the Twelve in Mark 3:13–19 with their sending out in Mark 6:7–13, his discussion of Mark 3:13–19 gives little attention to the anticipation of their proclamation (33). Likewise, Kato gives no significant attention to the time-limited command to secrecy in Mark 9:9. Finally, Kato's methodological approach means that the impact of this material on the reader is not explored in any detail.

²⁷ See, for example, pages 11–16, 49, 59, 66, 190–91.

Rhoads (1995)

In an article on mission in the Gospel of Mark, Rhoads argues for the centrality of mission in Mark (1995, 340–55). According to Rhoads, “No other New Testament document is so thoroughly orientated to mission” as Mark (340). Rhoads notes the proclamation of Jesus and the disciples and labels those involved in the “boundary-crossing” “Jesus movement” as proclaimers (342, 345, 346). According to Rhoads, “Mark believed that the followers of Jesus had to reach the ends of the earth with the message of the kingdom before Jesus’ very imminent return” (340) and suggests that the concern in Mark is “to elicit a committed response to the proclamation of the realm of God” (351). Rhoads concludes that Mark’s story is “ultimately addressed to us hearers” and that “at the end, when all others have failed, we hearers are the only ones left to tell this story” (353).

Whether or not one agrees with Rhoads’s view of Markan eschatology, his paper serves to highlight the centrality of mission in Mark’s Gospel and the place of gospel proclamation in this mission. However, the length of his study limits the depth of his engagement with proclamation in Mark.

Tolbert (1996)

In *Sowing the Gospel*, Mary Ann Tolbert (1996) offers a literary analysis of the entire Gospel of Mark. Appealing to the structural significance of the Parable of the Sower, Tolbert speaks of Jesus’s mission to “sow the Gospel” and his call to the disciples to do likewise (304). Tolbert also draws attention to Mark’s appeal to his audience to sow the gospel (283). According to Tolbert, the purpose of Mark’s Gospel is “... to persuade its hearers to have faith in the gospel of Jesus Christ, to follow the way he forged ... and to become themselves sowers of the good news of God’s coming kingdom” (302). According to Tolbert, Mark makes clear that “the pressing task for all followers of Jesus is to sow the word as far and wide as Jesus himself had been doing ... enduring the persecutions which that proclamation will inevitably provoke” (265, 269).

In this way, Tolbert refers to proclamation in the mission of Jesus and the disciples and highlights the rhetorical function of Mark’s Gospel in encouraging gospel proclamation by its readers. Despite this, there is no sustained examination of proclamation as a theme or motif, and some key passages that contribute to the motif of proclamation remain unexamined.²⁸

Marcus (1997)

In an article on Mark 4, Joel Marcus explores “the identity of the proclaimer of God’s word” and the significance of this identification for the reader’s own proclamation (1997, 260). Building on the work of Sternberg, Marcus explores blanks and gaps in the Markan parable of the sower. Of particular interest for Marcus is the lack of identification of the sower. Marcus surveys three possible readings – the sower is God, Jesus, or the “post-Easter” Christian. He identifies the ambiguity in the identity

²⁸ See, for example, Tolbert’s limited treatment of Mark 8:35; 10:29 and cf. discussion in chapter 7 below.

of the sower as “a gap that serves a theological purpose for Mark” and allows the reader to conclude that the sower is “meant to be *all three* of the figures” (259, 260, emphasis original). Marcus argues that this ambiguous “identity of the sower points towards a matter of central importance for the parable and for the Markan Gospel as a whole” and addresses the reader in the “often frustrating reality of the varying responses to their own proclamation of the word” (261).

While Marcus notes the significance of proclamation throughout Mark’s Gospel, the length of his study and its focus on Mark 4 limits his engagement with this material.

Danove (1998)

Danove’s article examines the “ambiguous characterization of the Markan disciples” and the rhetorical function of this characterization (1998, 21). As part of this analysis, Danove highlights the repetition of proclamation language within Mark and notes that “proclaiming constitutes the first specific action predicated of John (1.4) and Jesus (1.14) and the first narrated action of the twelve on mission (6.12 cf. 3.14)” (27). For Danove, this connection between John, Jesus, and the Twelve contributes to the positive characterisation of the disciples (28).

Danove also highlights the fear of the women in Mark 16:8 and their “failure to speak” which “makes them the brunt of irony and results in their negative valuation” (32). The women’s failure to speak impacts “the presentation of the disciples” and has an effect on the reader (32). As Danove notes, “the narrative withholds from the disciples the message that should lead to proclamation even as it reveals that message to the real audience. The disciples are narratively constrained from undertaking the required action, but the real audience is not” (37). According to Danove, the rhetorical impact of this is to transform “a story about Jesus into an invitation for a response of understanding, fearlessness and proclamation of the gospel” (37).

While Danove’s study highlights the prominence of proclamation in Mark, the focus of his work on the rhetorical function of the characterisation of the Markan disciples limits the depth and breadth of his engagement with the subject of proclamation.

Vena (2001)

In his monograph on New Testament re-readings of the Parousia, Oswald Vena includes an excursus on Mark 13, in which he argues that Mark 13:4–23 is chiasmic with Mark 13:10 at the centre (2001, 203). According to Vena, this central position of 13:10 is “an emphatic one,” which highlights “the proclamation of the gospel ... to the gentiles as the inevitable and unavoidable task of Mark’s community” (203). Vena concludes that “Already by Mark’s time the consciousness of an imminent return of Christ from heaven had been attenuated by a sense of mission. This was continued by Matthew and Luke ...” (211).

While it is beyond the scope of this research to examine Vena’s eschatological conclusions, his discussion of the literary structure of Mark 13 serves to highlight the significance of Mark 13:10 with its reference to gospel proclamation. However, the

focus of Vena's study means the prominence of proclamation throughout the rest of Mark's Gospel is given no substantial attention.

Burdon (2004)

In 'To the Other Side', Christopher Burdon (2004) offers an anti-imperial reading of Mark 5 in which he appears to downplay any idea of gentile mission in Mark. Burdon explicitly challenges the notion that the demoniac represents a "Christian proclaimer" (164). Instead, he is a gentile, proclaiming "from within the colonized Decapolis" a "new and liberating εὐαγγέλιον, of which Jesus is in a sense the author but not explicitly the subject" (164). While Burdon helpfully raises the question of imperial influence on Mark, his conclusion seems to overlook Mark's summary of the demoniac's proclamation as about "how much Jesus had done for him" (5:20). As Gnllka rightly argues, "Im Mittelpunkt seines Verkündens steht Jesus" (1978, 207).

Miller (2004)

Miller's article reflects on the fear and silence of the women in Mark 16 and the woman with the flow of blood in Mark 5. Miller notes that the disciples are chosen to be with Jesus in order to be sent out and proclaim the gospel (2004a, 83). "In contrast to The Twelve, the women are not sent out by Jesus as missionaries ... At the tomb, however, they are entrusted with the task of continuing the proclamation of the gospel" (83).

More broadly, Miller describes the purpose of the Markan community to be "to continue the proclamation of the gospel throughout the world (13:10)" (85). The story of the bleeding woman "serves to encourage Mark's community to continue their proclamation even in the face of death" (86).

While Miller refers to proclamation in the narrative of Mark's Gospel and ongoing proclamation by the readers of Mark's Gospel, she ultimately subsumes this material under the discussion of the messianic secret. Miller argues that the "commands to silence and to speech may be better examined in the context of the theology of the messianic secret" (82). As will be argued in chapter 8, this approach may overstate the significance of secrecy in Mark's Gospel and understate the significance of proclamation.

Ao (2006)

In another study on Mark 13, Ao (2006) adopts a redaction critical approach, and proposes that Mark 13 is Mark's reinterpretation of Jesus's eschatological teaching stimulated by the traumatic events of the Jewish war and argues that Mark reinterprets this discourse of Jesus to "motivate proclamation and service" (164). According to Ao, "Mark 13 is fundamentally concerned with the issue of breaking free from Jerusalem-centeredness into world mission" (167).²⁹

²⁹ Ao is here citing Geddert (1989, 138).

While Ao's study highlights Mark's intention to "motivate proclamation," his focus on Mark 13 limits his engagement with the topic.

Iverson (2007)

In *Gentiles in the Gospel of Mark*, Iverson (2007) examines the portrayal and theological function of gentile characters in Mark's Gospel. Iverson argues for the significance of the gentile mission in Mark's Gospel, highlighting its presentation as a "divine necessity" (173).³⁰ He notes the proclamation of Jesus and the commissioning of the disciples "to be sent out ... for the proclamation of the Gospel" (92). Iverson also highlights the disciples' failure to embrace the gentile mission (40).

According to Iverson, the gentile mission is inaugurated in 5:1–20 but prefigured before that in "Jesus' compassion for Gentiles, his propensity to cross boundaries, and the nature of the kingdom" (37). This gentile mission "is to be the missiological priority of the followers of Jesus" (173). The period between Jesus's death and return is to be "characterized by the proclamation of the Gospel to 'all the nations'" (173).

While Iverson's study incorporates more Markan material than some of the other works surveyed here, his focus on gentile characters again limits the extent and depth of his analysis of proclamation in Mark.

Iverson (2011)

In a volume written to celebrate the impact and legacy of *Mark as Story*, Iverson contributes a chapter examining the functional relationship between secrecy and proclamation in Mark's Gospel (2011b, 181–209). Acknowledging the lack of scholarly consensus on the *messianic secret* since the publication of Wrede's *Das Messiasgeheimnis in den Evangelien*, Iverson argues that "narrative criticism – in concert with performance criticism" provides a way forward (182). Iverson challenges Wrede's view that Mark's "secrecy related texts convey a 'messianic secret'" and argues instead for a broader secrecy theme (186). Iverson then turns to the focus of his essay – the rhetorical function of secrecy in Mark. He begins this examination by critiquing the work of Francis Watson ("one of the few scholars to have explored the issue in detail") (196). According to Iverson, a fundamental weakness of Watson's thesis is his neglect of the theme of mission (199–200). Iverson notes that mission is "an equally important and pervasive theme in Mark's Gospel" and provides the context for identifying the function of Markan secrecy (199).

Building on the work of Collins and Miller on "Disclosure and Liking," Iverson argues that the secrecy theme in Mark functions as an audience-elevating device which "establishes the audience as insiders to whom the revelation of Mark's story is disclosed and simultaneously fosters ... positive rapport between performer and audience..." (205). Thus, the element of secrecy in Mark's Gospel is "an affective tool

³⁰ Similarly, Cole identifies Mark's interest in gentile mission as a "chief motif" of the Gospel. However, in his summary of this motif, Cole makes only incidental comments on proclamation (1989, 92–96). Compare likewise, Hahn (1965, 111–20). Sewakpo examines mission in Mark's Gospel but his interaction with the text of Mark is limited and focused mostly on Mark 16:15–20 (2020, 272–74).

... that facilitates the very reception of Mark's message" (208) and something a "skilled performer might use ... to paradoxically advance a theology of mission" (201). Iverson's discussion of the secrecy theme as an audience elevating device will be considered in greater detail in chapter 8 below.

Iverson's chapter highlights the importance of mission as a theme in Mark and the significant connection between the themes of secrecy and gospel proclamation. However, the focus and length constraints of his chapter limit detailed engagement with these ideas across Mark's Gospel.

Sweat (2013)

Sweat explores the theological role of paradox in Mark's Gospel – including the paradox of God's activity as "concealing and revealing at the same time" (2013, 177). Sweat focuses her analysis on Mark 4 and the Passion Narrative. On Mark 4, Sweat notes, "God's hiddenness ultimately leads to revelation (4.22)" (62). On the Passion Narrative, Sweat argues that paradoxical language is needed even after the resurrection to account for God's actions and that the end of Mark "is not the end" for "God can make silence yield proclamation" (176).

Although at times enigmatic, Sweat makes a valuable contribution to the discussion of the tension between silence and proclamation in Mark's Gospel. This will be considered in further detail in chapter 8 below. The focus of Sweat's study, however, necessarily limits her engagement with the motif of proclamation across Mark's Gospel as a whole.

Williams (2019)

In an essay entitled "Christ's Mission for His Followers according to Mark 13:10", Williams identifies Mark's Gospel as a "missionary book" (2019, 179). Focusing on Mark 13:10 as "perhaps the most crucial verse for understanding the mission theme in Mark's Gospel" (180), Williams notes the central and significant place held by proclamation as the "method of mission" (182). Williams argues that Mark's emphasis on proclamation as the task that "must be done" ... "is beneficial for an overall biblical theology of mission in that it shows the centrality of the proclamation of the gospel among the nations for the fulfilment of the church's mission" (184). Williams also notes the priority that Jesus placed on proclamation (183–84) and the Markan expectation of a worldwide proclamation "in the context of a hostile world" (185, 191). Williams essay points to the significance of proclamation in Mark and raises a number of important observations that will inform this study. However, the length of the essay and the focus on Mark 13:10, necessarily limits his engagement with proclamation as a motif throughout Mark as a whole.

2.3.3 Limited treatments of proclamation as a motif (or theme) in Mark

In addition to the secondary literature surveyed above, some scholars identify proclamation as a motif or theme in Mark's Gospel but only examine this motif in one

section of Mark's Gospel or otherwise offer only a limited engagement with the motif.

Williams (1998)

In a chapter on "Mission in Mark", Williams identifies "*proclamation and gospel ... as prominent themes in Mark*" (1998, 142). Williams offers a brief survey of some of the references to proclamation in Mark and provides a succinct and insightful discussion of the "content of the Christian proclamation," "the scope of the mission," and the "timeframe for the worldwide proclamation of the gospel" (143–44). Williams also deals more broadly with the theme of mission in Mark.

As with Williams's essay considered above, this chapter from Williams offers a number of significant insights that will be engaged with in the course of this thesis. However, Williams's discussion of proclamation is again limited by the length and scope of his chapter.

Rochester (2011)

In his monograph, *Transformative Discourse in Mark's Gospel with Special Reference to Mark 5:1–20*, Rochester (2011) identifies discipleship / proclamation as a motif in Mark's Gospel.³¹ He notes that the "twin themes of discipleship and proclamation are announced very early in the Gospel. Jesus makes his appearance with a proclamation (1:14–15) that is in line not only with that of John the Baptist (1:4) but also with that of 'Isaiah the prophet' (1:2)" (204). This "programmatically proclamation" is followed by Jesus's call to the first disciples to become "fishers of men" (204). Just as proclamation is a central feature of Jesus's activity, so Jesus's disciples are commissioned to go and proclaim the good news - "proclamation is part of their given task as disciples" (204). Even apart from the disciples, Rochester notes, proclamation "is echoed throughout Mark's story, as many of the beneficiaries of Jesus' ministry announce publicly and widely what Jesus has done" (204). "The leper (1:45), the Gerasene demoniac (5:20), and the crowd that has witnessed Jesus healing a deaf man (7:36) all play their part in the proclamation" (204).

The focus of Rochester's thesis, however, is on Mark's Gospel as a "source of an early Christian theological anthropology" (223) and "an example of transformative discourse" (11). He gives significant attention to Mark 5:1–20 and argues that this pericope "most closely typifies the dynamics of Mark's theological anthropology" (47). Rochester examines the contribution Mark 5:1–20 makes to "Mark's treatment of discipleship and proclamation" (174) and concludes, "the demoniac, having experienced a significant aspect of salvation, becomes a model of discipleship and proclamation of the 'good news'" (214). His proclamation, which "precedes Jesus' sending out the disciples to preach ... exemplifies and expands the theme of proclamation of the 'good news' throughout the Gospel" (162).

³¹ Rochester uses the terms *motif* and *theme* interchangeably and applies both to proclamation (2011, 203–4).

Rochester argues that “at the story level, there is a tension between proclamation and hiddenness, and the audience must work out for themselves what is appropriate for their own response” (90).

While Rochester’s thesis makes an important contribution to the discussion of the motif of proclamation in Mark’s Gospel, his focus on theological anthropology and Mark 5 necessarily limits the extent of his engagement with the motif throughout Mark’s Gospel as a whole.

Abhilash (2012)

In his monograph *Mission as God’s Project in the Synoptics*, Varghese Abhilash engages in an exegetical and comparative analysis of the endings of the Synoptic Gospels. In the course of this study, he identifies the “proclamation of good news” as a theme “running throughout Mark’s Gospel” (2012, 19). He also refers to a “Marcan theology of the proclamation of the good news” (16). However, the focus of Abhilash’s study on the endings of the Synoptic Gospels means that Abhilash gives little attention to the motif of proclamation outside Mark 16.

Commenting on the ending of Mark, Abhilash highlights the reference to Galilee in Mark 16:7 and argues that Galilee is to be the place from which the mission is to go forth – since Galilee was the place where Jesus began his mission and first called the disciples (47). For Abhilash, the silence of the women (Mark 16:8) is at once an invitation to the hearers of the Gospel to proclaim the good news of the resurrection, and an assurance that gospel proclamation is ultimately God’s mission – since the story of Jesus’s resurrection went out despite the women’s failure (67–68). Abhilash’s reading of Mark 16:7–8 supports his view of mission in the Synoptics as *Missio Dei* (68).

Söding (2013)

In his chapter for *The Rise and Expansion of Christianity in the First Three Centuries of the Common Era*, Söding observes the absence of an explicit missionary commission in Mark’s Gospel and the more indirect way Mark communicates that the proclamation of the gospel does not end after Jesus’s death (2013, 111, 120). According to Söding, “Die Indirektheit des markinischen Zeugnisses führt dazu, dass es in den klassischen Darstellungen der urchristlichen Missionsgeschichte weit weniger Beachtung findet als die anderen Evangelien, von der paulinischen Literatur ganz zu schweigen” (111).³²

Söding underlines Mark’s presentation of Jesus as a herald (123) and Jesus’s introduction of the disciples to the task of proclamation (129), arguing that for Jesus, the Twelve remain the most important, “wenngleich nicht die einzigen Partner in seinem Missionsprojekt” (129).

³² Söding notes one exception to this lack of attention in the work of Iwuamadi which will be considered in greater detail below.

For Söding, "... die Einsetzung der Zwölf ist programmatisch und konstitutiv, auch für die Lesergemeinde des Markus" (130). In this way Mark's readers are included in the task of sowing the gospel (139). Söding concludes, "Der originäre Auftrag an die zuerst Berufenen, „Menschenfischer" zu werden (Mk 1,17), kann nur erfüllt werden, wenn die Kirche im vollen Umfang an der Vollmacht partizipiert, die Jesus (nicht exklusiv, sondern positiv) den Zwölf übertragen hat" (141–42).

Söding raises several significant observations regarding proclamation in Mark's Gospel that will be explored further in this thesis, however the length and nature of his chapter necessarily limits the extent and depth of his discussion.

Bennema (2014)

In his contribution to a volume on Markan character studies, Cornelis Bennema refers to the Markan "motif of proclamation" but limits his analysis to the contribution of gentile characters to this motif – specifically "whether they actively partake in and advance the Gentile mission" (2014, 219). Bennema notes the centrality of proclamation to Jesus's mission and that the disciples' mission "is patterned on that of Jesus" as they are sent out to "proclaim" (217). According to Bennema, "Inherent in Mark's understanding of authentic discipleship is partaking in Jesus' mission of proclaiming the good news to the whole world (1:17; 3:14–15; 13:10)" (215). Bennema also persuasively argues that Mark "provides several clues that the mission of Jesus and the disciples is not limited to Israel" (217). In support of this contention, Bennema appeals to Jesus's non-discriminatory contact with Gentiles in his Galilean ministry (Mark 3:7–10); Jesus's journeys into Gentile territory (4:35–5:20; 7:24–37; 8:22–9:29); Jesus's reference to Isa 56:7 in connection with the temple (Mark 11:17); and Jesus's statements regarding proclamation of the gospel to all nations in Mark 13:10 and 14:9 (217–18).

Bennema then focuses on a number of gentile characters in Mark: the Gerasene demoniac (5:1–20), the Syrophenician woman (7:24–30), the deaf man and the surrounding crowd (7:31–37); the father with a demon-possessed son (9:14–29); Pilate and the Roman soldiers (15:1–47); and the centurion at the cross (15:39, 44–45). Bennema notes that each of these characters "publicly proclaims aspects of Jesus' identity" (230), and so each "produces some kind of proclamation about Jesus, which actualizes, illustrates, or advances the Gentile mission" (229).

While Bennema's study makes an important contribution to the discussion of the Markan motif of proclamation, his focus on specific gentile characters necessarily limits the extent of his analysis.

2.3.4 Other literature with only tangential relevance to this thesis

In addition to the literature already surveyed, there is also scholarship that relates more tangentially to the motif of proclamation in Mark.

For example, there is considerable discussion of the content of the preaching of Jesus in Mark. To cite one case, von Eduard Lohse, in his article "Christuskerygma und Verkündigung Jesu im Markusevangelium," notes the importance of Jesus's preaching

in the Gospel of Mark and explores the significance of Jesus's preaching for the gospel message of the early church (2010, 212).

Also tangentially related is the scholarly discussion of the Markan Jesus as teacher. So, for example, Robbins (1984) explores the teacher-disciple relationship in Mark. He contends that "the portrayal of a cycle of relationships between teacher and disciple ... is a conventional form in Mediterranean literature" (11) and examines Mark against this rhetorical form of "biographical accounts of disciple-gathering teachers" (75). He notes the response of Jesus's disciples in Mark as a key point of variance with this conventional form and argues that "the lack of fulfilment of true discipleship by anyone in the narrative" challenges the reader of Mark to carry out Jesus's program (208–209). In a more recent study, Hershman, building on the work of Robbins, argues that Mark deploys Jesus's teaching as a catalyst for plot development, to characterize Jesus as authoritative, and to address the Gospel audience (2020, 131, 165–166).

Where relevant, such scholarship will be engaged with throughout this thesis.

2.3.5 More detailed engagement with proclamation as a motif in Mark

Of all the literature surveyed here, the study that gives the most extensive attention to proclamation across Mark as a whole is the monograph of Lawrence Iwuamadi (2008). For this reason, Iwuamadi's work will be reviewed in closer detail.

Iwuamadi (2008)

In his 2008 monograph, Lawrence Iwuamadi notes the prominence of proclamation in Mark's Gospel but focuses on the related theme of "the continuation of Jesus' mission" (2008, 64, 196, 249). Iwuamadi argues that the continuation of Jesus's mission occupies a "prominent position in the theology of Mark's Gospel" (272) and is of "primary interest in Mark" (12). In support of this conclusion, Iwuamadi offers a detailed historico-critical exegesis of several passages identified as "mission texts."

Chapter 1 examines Mark 1:16–20; 2:14 and the call of the first disciples. Jesus's promise to make the disciples fishers of men signals that the continuation of Jesus's mission is central to discipleship (30–31).

Chapter 2 focuses on Mark 3:13–19 and the designation of the Twelve. In the opening section of the chapter, Iwuamadi offers a synoptic comparison of Mark 3:13–19 with Matt 10:2–4 and Luke 6:14–16. While identifying some key differences between these parallel passages, Iwuamadi overlooks that Mark alone includes a reference to the proclamation of the Twelve (Mark 3:14) (see discussion in chapter 4 below).

Among the fundamental duties of the Twelve is being sent out to preach and cast out demons (Mark 3:14). Iwuamadi highlights this reference to proclamation as evidence for his thesis that the Twelve are to continue Jesus's mission but does not otherwise reflect on the proclamation of the disciples.

In chapter 3, Iwuamadi turns to Mark 6:7–13 and the narration of the mission of the Twelve. Here the Twelve are portrayed continuing “the same mission and action of Jesus” (112). Importantly, Iwuamadi observes that the mission of Mark 6 does not exhaust the commission of Mark 3:14. Instead, it serves as the “*beginning* of the actualisation of 3:14” and “of the continuation of Jesus’ mission” (86, emphasis added). Indeed Mark’s presentation of their mission “without a determined locus and time” and without an identified audience may be intended to anticipate the post-resurrection mission” (88).

Chapter 4 explores Mark 8:34–9:1 and Jesus’s sayings concerning the “conditions necessary for following him” (148). Central to following Jesus is denying oneself and not being ashamed of Jesus and his words. This “requires the active and continued proclamation” of the good news (139).

Chapter 5 examines Mark 10:28–31 and the commitment, cost, and reward involved in continuing Jesus’s mission. Jesus’s followers are to leave behind relatives and property and to expect persecution for the sake of continuing Jesus’s mission (158, 163). Once again Iwuamadi makes passing reference to the role of Jesus’s followers in proclaiming the gospel but treats this primarily as evidence that they are involved in “the continuation of the mission of Jesus” (167 cf. 170).

Chapter 6 focuses on Mark 13:9–13 and the divine priority of the continuation of Jesus’s mission of proclamation. After noting the prominence of Mark 13:10 in the structure of the pericope, Iwuamadi describes the verse as “an imperative for the continuation of Jesus’ mission” (200–1). Iwuamadi highlights the application of this verse to a broader audience, arguing that the use of the passive κηρυχθῆναι without the explicit mention of the agents of preaching “indicates that the imperative to proclaim the gospel to all nations goes beyond the presently persecuted disciples” (201).

In a final exegetical chapter Iwuamadi examines the beginning of the Gospel (1:1) and the last days of Jesus’s ministry and concludes that Mark “consciously develops and carries along the theme of the continuation of Jesus’ mission, from the inception of the gospel narrative until the end” (205). He argues that the “seed of the continuation of Jesus’s mission is already embedded in Mark 1:1” since ἀρχή looks forward to a continuation (214). The significance of Mark 1:1 as a title for the narrative as a whole supports “the importance of proclamation and the continuation of Jesus’ mission in the project of Mark” (220).

In his examination of the last days of Jesus’s ministry, Iwuamadi gives some attention to Mark 14:9, which “confirms the imperative of a world-wide proclamation of the gospel” (224). Further evidence of Mark’s interest in the continuation of Jesus’s mission is found in the promise of a post-resurrection reunion in Galilee. As the place where Jesus began his ministry, Galilee is a fitting place for the beginning of the continuation of Jesus’s mission (243–44).

Iwuamadi highlights the prominence of proclamation in Mark and examines several passages that contribute to the motif of proclamation. However, his focus on the

theme of the continuation of Jesus's mission means that the implications of these passages for the motif of proclamation more generally are not explored in any detail.

There are also other key passages in Mark that develop the motif of proclamation that are not addressed. So, for example, Iwuamadi does not address Mark 5:17–20 (see discussion in chapter 5 below). Similarly, apart from brief comments on Mark 1:1 and Mark 1:14–15, he gives no sustained attention to the Markan prologue and, in particular, the references to proclamation in the Old Testament quotation (Mark 1:2–3) and the account of John's ministry (Mark 1:4–8) (see discussion in chapter 3 below).

Iwuamadi's approach is largely limited to historico-critical exegesis with the occasional insight from discourse analysis. As a result, he gives minimal attention to the contribution of narrative criticism and does not consider the potential impact of the text on the reader.

In contrast, this thesis offers a focused and detailed exploration of the motif of proclamation in Mark and its potential rhetorical function. It will examine the many passages in Mark that contribute to the motif of proclamation, utilising the tools of narrative criticism and rhetorical criticism, together with grammatical-historical exegesis, to determine the prominence of the Markan motif of proclamation; to explore what Mark's Gospel communicates about proclamation; and to identify the potential rhetorical impact of the motif of proclamation on the reader.³³

Notwithstanding the different approach and focus of Iwuamadi, and the limitations of his analysis outlined above, his work will form an important conversation partner for this study.

2.4 Literature review: conclusion

The frequent reference to proclamation throughout Markan scholarship suggests the prominence of proclamation in Mark's Gospel. Despite this apparent prominence, there is little detailed engagement with proclamation as a motif in Mark's Gospel as a whole. This thesis aims to address this neglect.

3. Possible reasons for the neglect of the motif of proclamation

The evidence introduced above strongly suggests that proclamation is a prominent motif in Mark's Gospel. This raises the question: why has this motif been so neglected in Markan studies? The following brief analysis of Markan scholarship identifies four potential explanations for this neglect. The first three explanations relate to the neglect of the Gospel of Mark itself or Markan motifs in general. The fourth relates to the neglect of the motif of proclamation in particular.

³³ See chapter 2 below for a detailed discussion of the methodological approach to be taken in this thesis.

3.1 *The relative neglect of Mark's Gospel in church history*

The history of Markan studies is widely recognised to be “one of long-standing neglect and recent rediscovery” (William R. Telford 1997, 26).³⁴ As Moloney notes, “No commentary of Mark appeared until the sixth century, and from 650 to 1000 C.E. thirteen major commentaries were written on Matthew, but only four on Mark” (2004, 19). For this reason, Mark has been described as “the most neglected [Gospel] in the early church” (Strauss 2014, 20).

Mark's Gospel received more attention in the medieval and Reformation periods, but usually as part of a commentary on a harmony of the Gospels, with comment on Mark limited to those passages not found in Matthew (Bolt 2004, 392).

This history of relative neglect relates to Mark as a whole but includes the Markan motif of proclamation.

3.2 *The nature of the 'quest for the historical Jesus'*

Increased interest in Mark's Gospel was prompted by the nineteenth-century identification of Mark as the first Gospel to be written. This acceptance of Markan priority frequently led to the conclusion that Mark's Gospel “contained the earliest and least embellished narrative of the life of Jesus” (Strauss 2014, 20). In turn, this provoked much detailed study of Mark's Gospel in the quest for the historical Jesus. As Ralph Martin notes, “with the ‘Life-of-Jesus’ movement Mark's Gospel came into its own, after centuries of neglect” (1972, 37).

Although the quest for the historical Jesus produced increased study of Mark's Gospel, the focus of this quest on reconstructing the historical Jesus who stands behind the Gospel accounts using critical historical methods meant that little attention continued to be given to the motifs of Mark, including the motif of proclamation.

3.3 *The dominance of atomizing methods in Gospel studies*

In the 19th and early 20th centuries, Markan studies was dominated by source and then form criticism.³⁵ Both of these methods involved not only a focus on the pre-history of Mark, but also an atomizing approach to the text of Mark. As Knigge notes, “after ... the appearance of form criticism, an orientation to the individual pericope prevailed” (Knigge 1968, 53). Such disjunctive approaches to Mark's Gospel, with their tendency to fragment the text, were not suited to the identification or analysis of broader motifs across the Gospel, including the motif of proclamation.

3.4 *The influence of William Wrede*

While the three factors identified above have impacted the study of Mark and Markan motifs in general, a fourth factor has contributed to the neglect of the Markan motif of proclamation more specifically. This is the influence of William Wrede and his book *Das Messiasgeheimnis*

³⁴ See, similarly, R. Martin (1972, 29–31); Kealy (1982, 7–57); Bolt (2004, 391–92).

³⁵ Stein (2001, 173); William R. Telford (1995, 3–8).

in den Evangelien (1901). This factor will be considered briefly here and then returned to in greater detail in chapter 8.

Writing in 1901, Wrede argued that the “idea of the secret messiahship” dominates “the entire course of the [Markan] narrative as a whole” (114).³⁶ According to Wrede, this motif of secrecy in Mark was a dogmatic construct that sought to resolve a tension that had arisen between the early church’s belief in Jesus as messianic and the non-messianic conception of Jesus that existed during his life (131, 209). Jesus’s commands to secrecy were not historical but contrived to explain why people had not acknowledged or recognised Jesus as the Messiah during his life (145–146, 215–223).

The influence of Wrede’s thesis on Markan studies can hardly be overstated. As Kingsbury notes, “whether strongly supported or vigorously opposed, Wrede has had more influence on the way in which the Gospel according to Mark has been interpreted than perhaps any other scholar” (1983, 1).³⁷

One impact of Wrede’s work is that consideration of proclamation in Mark’s Gospel is often subsumed under the discussion of the ‘messianic secret’, and so the motif of proclamation is overlooked or minimised.

So, for example, Wrede, commenting on Jesus’s stated desire to go and *preach* elsewhere (Mark 1:38), writes: this “is in my view meant only to be to the disciples a plausible reason for Jesus’ failure to accede to their request, but leaves open the idea that *his real motivation lies in going where he is unknown*” (137–38, emphasis added). In this way, Wrede subsumes a passage that highlights the priority of proclamation under the motif of secrecy.

Likewise, in discussing Jesus’s instruction to the demoniac in Mark 5:18 and the man’s subsequent proclamation throughout the Decapolis, Wrede concludes, “might we not suppose the seeming deviation from the other prohibitions to be in reality a parallel? ... [that does not exclude] the idea of secrecy” (140–41).

A similar focus on secrecy over proclamation can be observed in the work of others following after Wrede.

So, for example, Boobyer (1960) appeals to Wrede’s argument that in Mark, a house is “a place of concealment” and concludes that Jesus’s command in Mark 5:19, to “Go home to your friends and tell them how much the Lord has done for you,” “is virtually another demand for secrecy” (230).³⁸

Likewise, in an article on Mark 16, Miller (2004a) considers some of the proclamation references in Mark’s Gospel but ultimately subsumes this material under discussion of the messianic secret. Miller argues that the “commands to silence and to speech may be better examined in the context of the theology of the messianic secret” (82). Similarly, Boomershine

³⁶ In keeping with convention, this thesis uses the term “messianic secret” to render Wrede’s *Messiasgeheimnis*. Cf. Boring (2012, 264).

³⁷ James Edwards describes Wrede’s influence more colourfully, arguing that Wrede’s theory “has bewitched a century of scholarship on the Gospel of Mark” (2002, 64).

³⁸ This argument overlooks the occasions in Mark where the house is a place of publicity rather than secrecy (1:29–34; 2:1–2, 15; 3:20) – see further discussion in chapter 5. Cf. Marcus (2000a, 346); Painter (1999, 498–500, 512–13).

commenting on the ending of Mark suggests that it functions as an “appeal for repentance from silence in response to the commission to announce Jesus’ Messiahship after his resurrection” (1981, 238). However, he views this not as contributing to a motif of proclamation but as a “climactic reversal of expectations in the central Marcan motif of the messianic secret” (238).

Similar treatment of proclamation material in Mark is seen in Boring’s commentary on the Gospel. Boring identifies a “tension between proclamation and silence” that “runs throughout Mark” but expands on this tension in an excursus on the messianic secret that gives little attention to proclamation (2012, 72, 264–70).³⁹

In this way, the influence of Wrede and the dominance of the messianic secret in Marcan studies have tended to subsume references to proclamation and thus contribute to the scholarly neglect of the Marcan motif of proclamation.⁴⁰ In contrast to this approach, this thesis will propose that increased attention should be given to the motif of proclamation.

The relationship between Wrede’s work and influence and the motif of proclamation will be given more detailed attention in chapter 8.

4. Conclusion

This introductory chapter has provided some preliminary evidence that proclamation is a motif in Mark’s Gospel as it satisfies Freedman’s twin criteria of frequency and avoidability. Further, this chapter proposes that the motif of proclamation is a *prominent* motif in Mark’s Gospel, demonstrated by its frequency and avoidability, by its placement at points of prominence in the narrative, its association with both major and minor characters, its development through both dialogue and narratorial comment, and by its relationship with other significant motifs. These contentions will be further examined in the remainder of this thesis.

This chapter has also surveyed the treatment of proclamation in Marcan scholarship, an exercise which demonstrates that while the motif of proclamation has been recognised, it has not been explored in any detail. Possible reasons for this neglect have been outlined, including the relative neglect of Mark’s Gospel in church history, the nature of approaches to Gospel texts in the 19th and 20th centuries, and in particular, the dominance of the work of William Wrede on the motif of secrecy.

This thesis seeks to address this scholarly lacuna by offering a detailed exploration of the motif of proclamation in Mark, focusing on its prominence, content, and potential rhetorical impact on the reader.

The next chapter will outline the methodological approach to be taken in this study.

³⁹ See also the discussion of Mark 5:17–20 in Wrede (1971, 140–41); Theissen (1983, 146–47).

⁴⁰ The uniqueness of Mark’s apparent emphasis on secrecy relative to the other Synoptic Gospels may also have contributed to a focus on this theme in Marcan redaction studies since redaction criticism tends to concentrate on the unique elements or differences between the Synoptics. On this characteristic of redaction criticism, see Stein (2001, 240); David Wenham, ed. (2011, 78).

Chapter 2: Methodology

1. Introduction

The previous chapter introduced some initial evidence that strongly suggests that proclamation is a prominent motif in Mark's Gospel. Although often overlooked in Markan studies, proclamation in Mark appears to meet Freedman's criteria for establishing a motif in a literary work. Furthermore, the motif of proclamation is developed at key points in Mark's narrative, is associated with both major and minor characters, is found in both the dialogue of characters and the words of the narrator, and stands in contrast to other significant motifs in Mark's Gospel.

The remainder of this study will explore the Markan motif of proclamation in detail. This examination will provide a more extensive analysis of the evidence for the prominence of proclamation in Mark, explore what Mark's Gospel intended to communicate about proclamation, and investigate the potential rhetorical impact of the motif on the reader.

This chapter will outline the methodological approach to be used in this study and the presuppositions that lie behind it. Key terms will be defined, and the shape of the study previewed. This explicit hermeneutical reflection will serve as an orientation for what is to follow.

2. An introduction to motif analysis and the approach to be used in this study

The motif analysis to be adopted in this study is synchronic in approach. It will focus on the motif in Mark, rather than the potential background to the motif or the occurrence of the motif in contemporaneous literature.¹ Nevertheless, while focusing on Mark's Gospel, a variety of contemporaneous literature will be considered to provide historical grounding and the necessary background for the analysis of the motif in Mark.

As noted in the introductory chapter, Freedman offers two key criteria for *establishing* a motif in a literary work: frequency and avoidability. The *prominence* of a motif is determined by the reapplication of these criteria and by four additional indicators – the location and spread of references to the motif, the breadth of characters associated with the motif, the development of the motif through narration and dialogue, and contrast with other prominent themes or motifs.

The chapters that follow will carefully examine the references to proclamation in Mark in light of these indicators to test whether proclamation is a prominent motif in Mark. At the same time, this study will consider what Mark's Gospel intends to communicate about proclamation (the content of the motif) and explore the potential rhetorical effect of the motif of proclamation on Mark's readers (the impact of the motif).

¹ Cf. J. Morgan (2013, 17).

To achieve this, a detailed synchronic motif analysis is required. Scot McKnight describes a basic approach to motif analysis in the Gospels. According to McKnight, motif analysis involves identifying and analysing relevant passages to determine their contribution to the motif (1988, 109–17). Building on McKnight’s approach, this study will employ the following methodology:

- (i) First, passages in Mark’s Gospel that contribute to the motif of proclamation will be identified by a process based on qualitative content analysis. This process is described in more detail below.
- (ii) Second, each of the identified passages will be examined through a close reading utilising the tools of narrative criticism, historical-grammatical exegesis, and rhetorical criticism. This examination will focus on the contribution of these passages to the motif of proclamation and the potential rhetorical impact of this motif on the reader. Further explanation of this approach and the presuppositions which lie behind it is included below.
- (iii) Third, the findings of this analysis will be synthesised, and conclusions regarding the motif of proclamation in Mark’s Gospel will be presented.

This approach will allow further testing of the proposal made in chapter 1 and provide a framework to consider the prominence, content, and impact of the motif of proclamation in Mark.

3. Identifying relevant passages

3.1 *An introduction to qualitative content analysis*

Passages in Mark’s Gospel that contribute to the motif of proclamation will now be identified through a recursive process based on qualitative content analysis. This approach contributes a level of objectivity to the identification of relevant passages and expands the task beyond a mere word study.²

Content analysis has been defined as “a detailed and systematic examination of the contents of a particular body of material for the purpose of identifying patterns, themes, or biases” (Leedy and Ormrod 2010, 144).

In broadest terms, content analysis can be either quantitative or qualitative. Quantitative content analysis focuses on manifest content and often involves counting particular words or other textual data. Qualitative content analysis examines both manifest and latent content. Schreier highlights the utility of qualitative content analysis for examining “meaning that is not immediately obvious” (2012, 13).

The use of content analysis in biblical studies is not new. For example, Marriner (2016) employs qualitative content analysis to examine the theme of discipleship in the book of Revelation.³

² In biblical studies, the selection of passages for motif analysis is commonly tied to certain vocabulary or semantic fields. See, e.g., Hershman (2020); Baxter (2012); Thomas (2010).

³ See also Lioy (2004); Bazar (2007); Ray (2010); Hudgins (2014); Griffin (1997).

Although there is some variety in content analysis methodology, a common component is the use of a coding frame. A coding frame serves as a filter for sifting the material being analysed (Schreier 2012, 13–15). The development of this coding frame is often a recursive process.

The process of developing a coding frame begins with a lexeme(s) related to the theme or motif being explored. These words are the initial coding frame. The text is then searched for occurrences of these words. Passages containing these words are identified and compared. Any additional words found in multiple of these passages may be added to the coding frame, and the process is repeated.

3.2 *The application of qualitative content analysis to the motif of proclamation in Mark*

3.2.1 Developing a coding frame

The terminological core for the motif of proclamation in Mark is the lexeme κηρύσσω. This lexeme will form the foundation of the coding frame for this study.

The lexeme κηρύσσω occurs 12 times in Mark's Gospel: 1:4; 1:7; 1:14; 1:38; 1:39; 1:45; 3:14; 5:20; 6:12; 7:36; 13:10; 14:9.⁴

Examining these 12 verses reveals one further lexeme that occurs in at least three of them: εὐαγγέλιον (1:14; 13:10; 14:9).⁵ Adding εὐαγγέλιον to the coding frame identifies an additional four verses: 1:1; 1:15; 8:35; 10:29.

Examining these 16 verses reveals another lexeme that occurs in at least three of them: μετανοέω (1:4; 1:15; 6:12). Adding μετανοέω to the coding frame identifies no additional verses.

3.2.2 Identifying the passages to be examined

The coding frame to be used for this study, therefore, consists of three lexemes: κηρύσσω; εὐαγγέλιον; and, μετανοέω. While it might be possible to add additional items to this coding frame by including lexemes that occur in only one or two of the identified passages, confining the frame in this way will ensure this study errs on the side of under-representing the number of passages relevant to the motif of proclamation. Any passages that are overlooked in this process would only further strengthen the case presented in this thesis that proclamation is a prominent motif in Mark.

Searching Mark for these three lexemes identifies 16 verses that contain at least one of them: 1:1; 1:4; 1:7; 1:14; 1:15; 1:38; 1:39; 1:45; 3:14; 5:20; 6:12; 7:36; 8:35; 10:29; 13:10; 14:9. A number of these verses occur in close proximity to others and might be

⁴ Mark's Gospel is limited here to 1:1–16:8 (see discussion in chapter 8). There is also an occurrence of κηρύσσω in the shorter ending of Mark and two occurrences of κηρύσσω in the long ending of Mark (16:15; 16:20).

⁵ This process deliberately excludes conjunctions, articles, and prepositions.

combined into one passage. In light of these results, the following passages will be the focus of this study:

- 1:1–15
- 1:38–45
- 3:14
- 5:20
- 6:12
- 7:36
- 8:35
- 10:29
- 13:10
- 14:9

In order to minimise repetition and add clarity to the discussion, some of these passages will be examined together. The analysis will begin by examining Mark's opening (1:1–15) in chapter 3. Mark 3:14 and 6:12 both relate to the disciples and will be considered together in chapter 4. Mark 5:20 will be examined in chapter 5. Mark 13:10 and 14:9 both contain an apparent reference to *worldwide* proclamation and will be considered together in chapter 6. Mark 8:35 and 10:29 both contain the word εὐαγγέλιον (rather than κηρύσσω) and suggest that the task of proclamation is not limited to the Twelve, and so will be considered together in chapter 7. Mark 1:38–45 and 7:36 are both connected to commands to silence or secrecy and so will be examined as part of the discussion of Wrede and the contrasting motif of secrecy in chapter 8.

While the passages have been grouped as a heuristic device, each passage will be examined in its literary context (see further discussion below).

Other passages that contribute to the context of these key passages, or that serve to develop the motif of proclamation through contributing to the contrasting motif of secrecy will be considered where appropriate.

4. Analysing the relevant passages

Each of the relevant passages identified above will be examined through a close reading utilising the tools of narrative criticism, historical-grammatical exegesis, and rhetorical criticism.⁶ The focus of this close reading will be to establish any contribution the passage makes to the prominence and content of the motif of proclamation and to explore the potential impact of the motif of proclamation on the reader.

The combination of narrative criticism, historical-grammatical exegesis, and rhetorical criticism has been selected to serve the focus of this study on the prominence, content, and rhetorical impact of the Markan motif of proclamation and is shaped by certain presuppositions about the nature and function of Mark's Gospel. It is therefore appropriate to briefly outline these presuppositions and how they inform the methodology adopted here.

⁶ Each of these methodologies has been widely used in Markan studies.

4.1 *Presuppositions regarding the nature and function of Mark*

The presuppositions that inform the approach taken in this study are that Mark is narrative, that it is written for persuasion, that it is a historical act of communication, and that it communicates both subtly and skilfully. Each of these will be considered in turn.

4.1.1 **Mark as narrative**

The first presupposition underlying this study is that Mark is narrative. While the specific genre of Mark's Gospel continues to be debated, there is widespread consensus that it is a narrative text.⁷ Narrative criticism is, therefore, a valid method of analysis for this study of the Gospel of Mark.

The identification of Mark as narrative also validates the attention this thesis gives to a motif since motifs are a typical feature of narrative and contribute significantly to the way a narrative functions.⁸ As Fields notes, a motif often carries an "essential message" of a narrative (1997, 19–20). Similarly, C. Black has observed that themes and motifs are central "to the interpretation of Mark" since Mark is a narrative (1988, 31–32).

This study will utilise the tools of narrative criticism to examine how Mark uses plot, characterisation, point of view, dialogue, setting, and other narrative features to develop and deploy the motif of proclamation.⁹ This employment of narrative criticism will help determine the prominence of proclamation as a motif in Mark and identify what Mark communicates about proclamation and how this motif might impact the reader. So, for example, the analysis of Mark 5:1–20 will consider how Mark's characterisation and point-of-view crafting present the Gerasene demoniac as an exemplar of proclamation.

In line with narrative criticism's focus on the text in its final form, this study will not seek to differentiate between tradition and Markan redaction or give attention to the text's compositional pre-history. Instead, a synchronic approach will be adopted to the text as it stands.

This study tentatively assumes Markan priority, and that Matthew and Luke used Mark as a source and are therefore early readers of Mark.¹⁰ However, little depends on this assumption since the focus of this thesis remains on the final form of the text.

The synchronic approach adopted in this study extends to treating Mark's Gospel as a unified and integrated whole, with careful attention given to the literary context of

⁷ There has been a recent shift in the discussion of genre in Gospel studies away from rigid classification towards more dynamic genre resemblances. See, for example, the discussion in Kupp (2005, 9). On Mark as narrative, see *inter alia*, Schnelle (1998, 217); Ahearne-Kroll (2010, 717).

⁸ So Dwyer (1996, 17); Ahearne-Kroll (2010, 717); C. Black (1988, 31–32).

⁹ On the utility of narrative criticism for the analysis of motifs, see Dwyer (1996, 16); Kim (1998, 35).

¹⁰ This assumption, while not uncontested, is widely supported. See, for example, J. Edwards (2002, 2); Witherington III (2001, 19); S. McKnight (1988, 37–40); Focant (2012, 10). See also the sources listed by Blomberg (2009, 99).

For a detailed discussion of Matthew and Luke as early readers of Mark, see Carey (2009, 176–87); Malbon (2019, 277–82); Salzmänn (2009, 129–30).

the passages to be examined. This attention to literary context will aid in examining the motif of proclamation since, as noted above, the development, efficacy, and prominence of a motif is impacted by its placement in the narrative.¹¹ So, for example, as will be explored in chapter 3, the references to proclamation in the opening of Mark's Gospel are underlined by their location in the Markan prologue. Because of the function of the prologue, these references also build anticipation in the reader for further development of the motif of proclamation.

4.1.2 Mark as written for persuasion

The second presupposition underlying this study is that Mark's Gospel was written to persuade. Mark's Gospel does not just convey a story nor merely provide a disinterested record of events; instead, it is a rhetorically persuasive text written to influence its readers.¹² Indeed Fowler argues that Mark is most concerned "to employ his rhetoric skilfully in order to have his way with his reader" (1985, 49) and that Mark's Gospel functions "primarily along the rhetorical axis" (1992, 61). This conclusion is consistent with the common understanding in the ancient world that the primary function of language is "pragmatic or rhetorical and intended to persuade and somehow affect the hearer" (Fowler 1985, 23).¹³

In view of this communicative intent, interpreters of Mark should consider the narrative rhetoric and illocutionary force of the text and its potential impact on an audience.¹⁴ This includes giving attention to motifs since motifs can serve as a rhetorical device used to impact the reader.¹⁵ Indeed, the persuasive intent of Mark's Gospel justifies the attention this study gives to the potential rhetorical impact of the motif of proclamation.

Narrative criticism can contribute to this examination of Markan rhetoric through its attention to both story and discourse. Following Seymour Chatman's widely referenced narrative model, the story is the content of the narrative – the "what" of the narrative; the discourse is the means by which the story is told – the form or "how" of the narrative (2019, 19–22). Narrative criticism gives attention to both. The

¹¹ On the importance of attending to literary context in the analysis of a motif, see Williams (1994, 80); Freedman (1971, 126–27); J. Morgan (2015, 199).

¹² So Fowler (2001, 10, 57); Bundy (1942, 70–94); Whinton (2016, 276–77); Juel (1977, 178–79, 182–86); Kupp (2005, 4); Malbon (2000, 18); Tolbert (1996, 90, 288); Rhoads, Dewey, and Michie (2012, 1); Witherington III (2001, 9); I. Henderson (2019, 536). Tolbert notes the particular effectiveness of narrative in engaging (and persuading) an audience (1996, 302–4).

¹³ Abrams underlines this ancient focus on rhetorical intent in his survey of critical theories, noting that pragmatic or rhetorical criticism which focused on the impact of a work on its audience "was by far the greatest part of criticism from the time of Horace through the eighteenth century" (1971, 21). Cf. E. McKnight (1999, 128). For illustrations of the significance of rhetoric and persuasion in the ancient world, see: Aristotle, *Rhetoric*; Cicero, *De oratore*.

¹⁴ For an influential study on the importance of considering how a text seeks to evoke a response from its audience, see: Iser (1980).

¹⁵ See, e.g., Iser (1980, 51, 53–54, 62–63, 67–68); Grabner (2015, 35–37). The persuasive effect of a motif is amplified by its repetition. As David Watson notes, repetition reinforces important ideas and serves persuasion (2010, 125).

analysis of discourse includes examining the rhetorical devices employed by the author to connect with and impact the reader.

Mark's reader-oriented nature also validates the use of rhetorical criticism in this study since rhetorical criticism focuses on the rhetorical strategies by which a text guides or persuades its reader.¹⁶ The tools of rhetorical criticism are particularly apt for investigating the rhetorical impact of the motif of proclamation.

The label *rhetorical criticism* is used very broadly in this thesis to refer to the analysis of any means by which a text achieves an effect on the reader (rather than to the more specific approach of classifying elements of Mark against a species of ancient rhetoric).¹⁷ By focusing on those elements in the text that are oriented towards impacting the reader, this approach is reader conscious while granting control of the reading experience to the text.¹⁸

This discussion of the potential impact of Mark's Gospel on the reader necessitates two further points of clarification regarding the vexed issue of Mark's "readers."

(i) Readers vs. Hearers

The first point of clarification concerns the distinction between "readers" and "hearers" of Mark.

It has become common in Markan scholarship to emphasise the level of illiteracy in the Greco-Roman world of the first century and to assume that "most people with knowledge of the Gospel of Mark gained this knowledge aurally."¹⁹ This has given rise to the study of orality, memory, and performance in connection with Mark's Gospel and to a distinction between hearers of Mark and readers of Mark (the few who read the Gospel aloud to others).

More recently, some scholars have argued that the level of illiteracy and the importance of orality among Mark's early audience may have been exaggerated and that the Gospels were also written for "a sophisticated reading public" (Neufeld 2014, 32).²⁰

Without pretending to resolve this complex debate, this study refers to the recipients of Mark's Gospel (including those who may have heard the Gospel read or performed) as readers. This identification is adopted for two reasons. First, it is consistent with the emphasis in narrative criticism on

¹⁶ On the reader orientated nature of Mark, see: Mark 13:14 and Moloney's comments on this verse (2004, 79). See also Fowler (2001, 10, 57); Bundy (1942, 70–94); Whitenton (2016, 276–77); Juel (1977, 178–79, 182–86); Malbon (2000, 18); I. Henderson (2019, 536).

¹⁷ A similarly broad definition of rhetorical criticism has been adopted by others. See, e.g., Santos (2003, 51–59).

¹⁸ Cf. the similar approach of Bolt (2003, 3).

¹⁹ Hartvigsen (2012, 7); Carey (2009, 24).

²⁰ Andrews cites the publishing and distribution of a regular papyrus newspaper in Rome from 59 B.C.E. to 222 C.E. and the discovery of the Vindolanda Writing Tablets, as evidence that basic literacy levels were higher than has long been held (2016, 50–56). See similarly, Schnelle (2015, 113–45); B. Wright (2017); Gilliard (1993).

Mark as a written text. Second, even those who heard Mark read aloud received the text mediated through a reader. As Shiner notes, in the ancient world, a “reader” included those listening to others read aloud (2003, 177).²¹

(ii) Implied, ideal, and real readers

The second point of clarification concerns the relationship between the various constructed readers of narrative criticism and Mark’s real or actual readers.

Narrative criticism offers an array of readers that are distinguished (in varying degrees) from real or flesh-and-blood readers. Alongside the implied reader, exponents of narrative criticism refer to the ideal reader, the informed reader, the hearing-reader, the resisting reader, and many others. Since these terms are not always used consistently, it is necessary to clarify how the term *reader* will be used in this thesis.

Building on the work of Peter Rabinowitz, this study uses the term *reader* to refer to the authorial reader.²² The authorial reader is not a purely textual construct but rather a contextualised ideal reader based on both the text and the context in which it was produced. As an *ideal* reader, the authorial reader possesses the required competence to understand the author’s message, is influenced by the author’s rhetorical strategies, and responds as the author intended. As a *contextualised* ideal reader, the authorial reader shares at least some of the social, cultural, and literary contexts of the actual readers that the author was addressing.²³

This approach to the reader of Mark facilitates the examination of the rhetorical effect of Mark’s Gospel. By considering the hypothetical response of this hypothetical authorial reader, the student of Mark can identify some of the potential effects of Mark’s Gospel on an actual reader. This study will, therefore, examine the potential impact of the Markan motif of proclamation on real readers through the heuristic device of the authorial reader.

²¹ One important implication of this discussion concerns reader competence. To effectively receive the message of a text, a reader requires a certain level of literary competence. If a distinction is drawn between the reader of Mark and the audience of Mark, and if these readers not only read the text but provided explanatory commentary for the audience as well, then the highest level of competence required to detect and comprehend Mark’s message need only be located in this reader, since they would pass on their understanding of the passage to the larger Markan audience. For a defence of this role for the reader of Mark and the implications for literary competence, see Carey (2009, 24–25).

²² Cf. Rabinowitz (1977, 126–27).

²³ Carey uses “implied reader” in a similar way, arguing that the implied reader “corresponds in some sense to a historical community of readers and hearers” (2009, 24). Similarly, Santos argues that the “idealized” reader is “related to the real readers of Mark’s time in the sense that the implied readers reflect the circumstances of the existing church at the time of Mark’s composition of his Gospel” (2003, 43–44). Compare also Kroll’s discussion of the authorial audience (2010, 718).

Since Mark's Gospel was written for persuasion, historical questions cannot be summarily dismissed as sometimes happens in narrative critical readings of Mark. This is the focus of the next presupposition.

4.1.3 Mark as a historical act of communication

The third presupposition underlying this study is that Mark's Gospel is a historical act of communication and not an autonomous timeless aesthetic object.²⁴ The context of this communication, therefore, matters.

Though some narrative critics have sought to sever text from author and historical context, Meir Sternberg has shown that this is neither possible nor desirable (1985, 1–23). As Sternberg notes, a narrative is “a means to a communicative end” (1). To dehistoricise Mark's Gospel by seeking to examine it as an ahistorical literary product “overlooks just how much of the text has been crafted as a discourse meant for a specific time and place” (Hershman 2020, 18).²⁵

Scot McKnight similarly warns against deprecating the “importance of the real author's intent, historical reference, and background information for understanding texts” (1988, 127).²⁶ He notes that the notion of an autonomous text, which is not anchored in a real author and real audience, “is no longer accepted by literary critics at large and should be abandoned by biblical literary theorists as well” (128–29).

Mark's Gospel arises from history and is intended to impact history. It is, therefore, appropriate to consider the historical context of Mark.²⁷

The consideration of historical context does not require the student of Mark to engage in elaborate, detailed historical reconstructions that can be highly speculative. However, some attention must be given to the broad social and historical context in which Mark was written.

This study will, therefore, give attention to the real author's intent. This will not involve speculating over the author's inner mind and psychological desires but rather identifying those intentions expressed in the text.²⁸ Thus, the approach to Mark adopted here is both reader conscious and author aware, while remaining text controlled.²⁹

²⁴ On Mark as an historical act of communication, see: Williams (1994, 67); Van Eck (1995); George (2015, 21–22); Heil (1990, 308); I. Henderson (2019, 536). Cf. J. Anderson (1994, 26, 34); Sternberg (1985, 1); Chatman (2019, 6, 151).

More precisely, the Gospel of Mark represents a linear model of communication (since the reader no longer influences the author). Cf. J. Anderson (1994, 34–35).

²⁵ On the importance of historical inquiry for reading the Gospels, see: Howell (2015, 27–29); Shively (2019, 365).

²⁶ See, similarly Howell (2015, 50).

²⁷ Such attention to historical context also helps prevent anachronistic readings and aids the reader in understanding the text on its own terms. Cf. Howell (2015, 29).

²⁸ See, the similar approach of Howell (2015, 48).

²⁹ This focus on the text avoids both the intentional fallacy (seeking the meaning in the author behind the text) and the affective fallacy (seeking the meaning in the response of the audience). Cf. Gundry 1993, 16.

While the primary focus of this study remains on the text of Mark, as noted above, this text is not treated as an autonomous story that can be read in isolation from its socio-historical context. Instead, appropriate attention will be given to the likely context for which Mark was written, and the tools of historical-grammatical exegesis will be used to examine the grammar, syntax, and lexical semantics of the text in its ancient historical setting. Historical-grammatical exegesis is an appropriate methodology to employ since it aims to elucidate the meaning and function of words in their socio-historical context with sensitivity to the relevant contemporaneous conventions of language.³⁰

The task of identifying Mark's socio-historical context is complicated by the level of uncertainty surrounding several critical introductory matters. It is, therefore, necessary to posit the context of Mark with relatively broad brushstrokes. Fortunately, such broad conclusions are sufficient for the approach taken in this thesis.

The following section of the thesis briefly addresses some of the foundational questions regarding the socio-historical context of Mark's Gospel and the approach to be taken by this study to these issues.

(i) The socio-historical context of Mark: An Outline

- a. Author: There is much scholarly debate over the identity of the author of the Gospel of Mark. Since the author's precise identity does not impact this thesis, this debate will not be examined. Instead, for expediency and in line with common practice, this study will simply refer to the author of the Second Gospel as Mark (without commenting on his historical identity).
- b. Date: Although the precise date of Mark's Gospel remains contentious, a wide variety of scholars of different ideological persuasions accept a date between 60 and 80 CE.³¹ This study assumes that Mark was written around this time.
- c. Provenance: There is similarly no firm consensus on the provenance of Mark's Gospel. Rome, Galilee, Syria, and Palestine all have scholarly support.³² As with the question of authorship, the precise provenance of Mark's Gospel does not significantly impact this thesis. As Jensen argues, determining provenance is an unnecessary step in efforts to determine Mark's purpose (2021, 20).³³
- d. Historical Audience: Of much greater import to this study, because of its interest in the rhetorical impact of the motif of proclamation, are questions of Mark's historical audience. There is considerable debate over the geographical location of Mark's original readers and whether Mark was writing for one

³⁰ A similar approach to Mark has been used widely by others, see, for example: Iverson (2007, 4); Hershman (2020, 18). Cf. Dodson (2009, 9); B. Cooper (2014, 11); Howell (2015, 27, 50); E. McKnight (1992, 477).

³¹ See, for example, the surveys in Crossley (2004, 1–5); Stein (2008a, 12–15); Boring (2012, 14–15).

³² For Rome, see Incigneri (2003); for Galilee, see Marxsen (1959); for locations in Syria/Palestine, see Theissen (1992, 236–49).

³³ See, similarly D. N. Peterson (2000, 4, 202).

particular community or for wider circulation.³⁴ More broadly accepted, and most significant for this thesis, is the view that Mark's audience included followers of Jesus.

This view is widely held and supported by at least five observations.³⁵

First, Mark's Gospel assumes familiarity with crucial details of Jesus's story and teaching. For example, the various titles used for Jesus (Christ, Son of God, Lord, Son of David) are not clarified or explicated. Similarly, expressions such as "the word" (1:45; 2:2; 4:33; 8:32) and John's reference to Jesus baptising with the Holy Spirit are not explained.³⁶ The level and nature of pre-knowledge anticipated of Mark's readers may suggest that at least some are already followers of Jesus.³⁷

Second, Mark's Gospel expects some knowledge of (and respect for) the Hebrew Scriptures.³⁸ In addition to the way Mark cites and alludes to the Hebrew Scriptures, there are numerous references to characters from the Hebrew Scriptures without further explanation (Isaiah, 1:2; 7:6–7; Moses, 1:44; 7:10; Elijah, 6:15; 8:28; etc.). If some of Mark's readers were gentile (see discussion below), this familiarity with the Hebrew Scriptures is plausibly explained by their being followers of Jesus.

Third, Mark's Gospel contains material that provides comfort, encouragement, and teaching to followers of Jesus. For example, the reassurance offered to those facing persecution in Mark 13:9–13, while possibly instructive to those considering following Jesus, was particularly relevant to those who already were. This argument is strengthened if the content of Mark's Gospel reflects the experiences of those it is written for.³⁹ While there is danger in unrestrained mirror-reading, it appears reasonable, given the nature of Mark as a historical act of communication, to assume that Mark's Gospel reflects to some degree the situation of its readers (Rochester 2011, 26).⁴⁰

Fourth, Mark 15:21 identifies the passer-by who carried Jesus's cross as the father of Alexander and Rufus – suggesting that these men were known to Mark's readers. Since Alexander and Rufus do not appear to be well known public figures, they may have been known as members of the believing community. Similarly, the reference to James and Joses in Mark 15:40. While

³⁴ See, for example: Moeser (2002, 192–94); van Iersel (2004, 36–37). With many Markan scholars, this study assumes that Mark wrote for a particular community, without requiring that his audience was limited to that community exclusively. See, similarly Carey (2009, 28).

³⁵ So: J. Edwards (2002, 10); Guelich (1998, xliii); Lane (1974, 12); Brooks (1991, 29–30); Dowd (2000, 2–3); van Iersel (2004, 51); Hurtado (2011, 6); Witherington III (2001, 26); Winn (2008, 173–78); Juel (1990, 20); Stein (2008a, 9–10); A. Collins (2007, 97–98); Marcus (2000a, 25); Williams (1998, 140); Shiner (1995, 185); Richard Bauckham, ed. (1998, 10); Roskam (2004, 16–17); Bond (2020, 90); Rochester (2011, 25–27).

³⁶ Stein (2008a, 9–10); Bond (2020, 90).

³⁷ Cf. Söding (1995, 27); Heil (2001, 3–11).

³⁸ Van Iersel (2004, 55–67); Watts (2000, 94, 379).

³⁹ Cf. Kee (1977).

⁴⁰ In line with this, Shiner argues that the rhetoric of Mark "presupposes Christian belief" (1995, 185).

these details on their own are not persuasive, they are consistent with the other observations listed here.

Fifth, there is external testimony that the Gospels (presumably including Mark) were read at church gatherings.⁴¹ While this evidence dates from after the first century, the reading of the Gospels is “considered so self-evident in the second century that the custom may go back to the practice of some communities in the late first century” (Alikin 2010, 166). As Bond notes, “it is overwhelmingly likely that Mark expected his work to be read out at Christian gatherings” (2020, 94).

These five observations support the widespread consensus that Mark’s audience included followers of Jesus. The alternative - that Mark was written exclusively for those not following Jesus - seems difficult to sustain.

It might also be supposed, given Mark’s explanations of Jewish customs and beliefs (7:3–4,11; 12:18; 14:12; 15:42), that at least some of his readers were gentile (Whitenton 2016, 276).

Furthermore, the various references in Mark’s Gospel to opposition and persecution may indicate that some portion of Mark’s readers were also facing such circumstances (Mark 8:34–38; 13:9–13).⁴² This assumption of persecution is consistent with the likely historical context of Mark if it was written in 60–80 CE.⁴³

(ii) Mark’s socio-historical context: A summary

While the interpretation of Mark proposed in this study is not dependent on a precise historical reconstruction, some attention will be given to the likely socio-historical context in which Mark was written. The approach to Mark adopted here presumes that Mark was written for a particular historical situation and that something can be usefully known about this historical situation. More specifically, this study assumes that Mark’s Gospel was written in the second half of the first century CE, for an audience living in the Roman Empire that included followers of Jesus (both Jew and gentile).

4.1.4 Mark as skilful and subtle narrative

The fourth presupposition underlying this study is that Mark’s Gospel is a skilful and subtle narrative.

⁴¹ Justin, *Apologia i* 67.3 cf. 66.3; Tertullian, *Apologeticus* 39.3; *Praescr.* 36; *De anima* 9; Muratorian Canon, lines 1–9 cf. lines 66 and 72. See also Achtemeier (1990, 16); Alikin (2010, 155–57, 166); Verheyden (2019, 404).

⁴² So: van Iersel (2004, 39–40); Hengel (1984, 22–36). See comments above on Mark’s Gospel reflecting to some degree the situation of its readers.

⁴³ The presence of persecution at this time is indicated by other New Testament books (Rom 12:14; 2 Cor 12:10; Gal 5:11; Phil 1:29; 2 Tim 3:12; 1 Pet 4:12–14; Rev 1:9; 6:9–11) and by external sources (e.g., Tacitus, *Annales* 15.44.2–5; Suetonius, *Nero* 16.2).

Mark's Gospel has sometimes been regarded as clumsy or artless.⁴⁴ However, more recently, there has been a growing appreciation of Mark's artistry.⁴⁵

In line with this scholarly shift, this study treats the Gospel of Mark as an intentional and skilful narrative. For example, rather than assuming that narrative gaps or repetition are evidence of clumsy redaction or authorial deficiency, they are considered to be potentially deliberate rhetorical devices.

This study also recognises the deft subtlety of Mark's Gospel and the rhetorical power of this subtlety. Mark does not always make his message explicit nor draw out connections for the reader as the other Synoptists do (K. O'Brien 2010, 2).⁴⁶ Instead, Mark is a "master of implication over clarification" (Sweat 2013, 33); and is comfortable with ambiguity.⁴⁷ So, for example, while Matthew explicitly identifies John the Baptist as the Elijah who was to come (Matt 11:14; cf. Luke 1:17; 7:24–28), Mark merely implies it (Mark 1:2–4, 6).

It is proposed that this subtlety, rather than detracting from the communication of Mark's message, serves it. Mark's narrative is more potent because of its restraint (Fowler 1981a, 33–34).⁴⁸ As Fowler notes, Mark uses indirect means to keep issues in front of the reader "without being ... shrill" (Fowler 1981a, 33).

The skill and subtlety of Mark's narrative require the reader of Mark to give careful, detailed attention to the text of Mark's Gospel. The eclectic nature of the close reading adopted in this study facilitates such attention.

4.1.5 Presuppositions and method of analysis: a conclusion

In summary, this thesis treats the Gospel of Mark as skilful and subtle narrative and as a historical act of communication intended to influence its readers. This appraisal of Mark's Gospel justifies the *focus* in this study on a motif since motifs are so central to the interpretation of narrative and can serve as a rhetorical device to impact readers.

This understanding of Mark also validates the *approach* taken in this study to analysing those passages that contribute to the motif of proclamation. Each passage will be analysed through a close reading utilising the relevant tools of narrative criticism, rhetorical criticism, and grammatical-historical exegesis. The tools of narrative criticism will be used because Mark's Gospel is a narrative. The tools of rhetorical criticism will be used because Mark's Gospel was written to persuade. The tools of historical-grammatical exegesis will be used because Mark's Gospel is a historical act of written communication.

⁴⁴ See, e.g., Meagher (1979, 67–74); Boring (2012, 23–24); M. Edwards (2006, 56).

⁴⁵ See, e.g., Webb (2008, 13); Elder (2019, 1); Iverson (2007, 4); Dwyer (1996, 11); Senior and Stuhlmüller (1985, 212); Fowler (1981a, 33); K. O'Brien (2010, 2–3); Rhoads, Dewey, and Michie (2012, 1); Gedert (1989, 175); Marshall (1989, ix). For a recent and detailed defense of Mark's literary and linguistic sophistication, see Voelz (2020, 344, 359–60) and Bolt (2021).

⁴⁶ See, similarly Fowler (1981a, 33); Neufeld (2014, 1).

⁴⁷ Fowler (2001, 17); Sankey (1995, 5).

⁴⁸ Cf. Garland (1996, 623); S. Wright (2000, 223).

Utilising these tools together leverages their complementary nature and minimises the potential shortcomings of using any of them in isolation. Employed together, they offer richer insights into Mark's Gospel in general and the motif of proclamation in particular.

This analysis aims to determine the prominence of proclamation in Mark; to explore what Mark's Gospel communicates about proclamation; and to identify the potential rhetorical impact of the motif on the reader.

4.2 Other presuppositions

4.2.1 Text

The text of NA²⁸ will form the basis of the close reading to be conducted in this study. Text critical issues that significantly impact the discussion will be examined using a reasoned eclectic approach that considers both the textual witnesses and internal criteria.⁴⁹

The text of Mark is limited in this study to Mark 1:1–16:8 (see discussion in chapter 8 below).

References to the English text are drawn from the ESV unless otherwise indicated.

5. The cumulative nature of the argument

A major aspect of what this study attempts to do is to establish the prominence of the motif of proclamation in Mark's Gospel by examining Markan references to proclamation in light of Freedman's criteria and the indicators of prominence identified above. The argument for the prominence of proclamation in Mark will, therefore, be necessarily cumulative, with many different examples of the motif in Mark being explored. While it might be possible to question the validity or significance of particular individual instances of the motif that are proposed in this thesis, the case is a cumulative one built on the overall collective weight of the evidence presented.

The coherence and explanatory scope and power of the motif of proclamation in Mark provides additional evidence for the import of the motif. As will be observed below, at several contentious points of Markan studies, consideration of the motif of proclamation offers fruitful ground for further discussion. Such explanatory power underlines the significance of the motif of proclamation in Mark's Gospel.

⁴⁹ This approach to textual criticism is used by the editors of NA²⁸ and endorsed by scholars such as Epp and Fee. See Nestle and Nestle (2012, 54); Epp and Fee (1993, 15, 35).

6. Proposed outline of the study

This thesis will explore the Markan motif of proclamation in detail, examining its prominence, analysing its content, and investigating its potential rhetorical impact on the reader. The thesis is divided into nine chapters.

Chapters 1 and 2 have served as an introduction to the thesis, outlining the need for the study and the approach to be taken.

Chapters 3–8 will examine those passages in Mark that contribute to the motif of proclamation.

Chapter 3 treats the references to proclamation in Mark's opening (1:1–15).

Chapter 4 considers those passages in Mark that associate the disciples of Jesus with the task of proclamation (3:13–19; 6:7–13, 30).

Chapter 5 examines Mark 5:1–20 and the possibility that the Gerasene demoniac serves as an exemplar of proclamation.

Chapter 6 focuses on Mark 13:10 and 14:9 and the anticipation of a *worldwide* proclamation in Mark.

Chapter 7 explores the involvement of Jesus's followers beyond the Twelve in the task of proclamation (Mark 8:34–38; 10:28–31).

Chapter 8 engages with Wrede and the theme of Markan secrecy and its intersection with the motif of proclamation. This is a necessary element in the discussion in view of the influence of Wrede and the messianic secret over Markan studies.

Chapter 9 concludes the study by synthesising the material examined up to that point, drawing some conclusions regarding the motif of proclamation in Mark, and proposing some possible avenues for further research.

Chapter 3: The opening of Mark (1:1–15)

1. An introduction to Mark 1:1–15

The opening verses of Mark's Gospel place the motif of proclamation squarely before the reader. Mark 1:1–15 includes explicit references to the proclamation of John the Baptist (1:4, 7) and Jesus (1:14), which are identified by the qualitative content analysis in chapter 2. In addition to these explicit references, this passage also contains implicit references to proclamation in the first verse (1:1) and the Old Testament quotation (1:2–3).

As is often acknowledged, these opening verses of Mark serve to introduce the book's major motifs and themes.¹ Like other ancient narrative beginnings, they also offer the reader “an interpretive grid through which to understand the story that followed” (Whitenton 2017, 104).² As Alexander notes, the beginning of a text, “... has a special place in the orientation process which forms an inevitable part of any reader's approach to a new book. In the ancient world ... the opening of a book, whether or not it constituted a formal preface, was particularly important. It was frequently used to identify the subject of the text which followed ...” (1996, 73).³

The prominence of proclamation in the opening verses of Mark, therefore, anticipates the significance of the motif in Mark as a whole and could be expected to have a considerable impact on the reader.

This chapter will consider Mark's opening in four sections: the first verse (1:1); the Old Testament quotation (1:2–3); the account of John the Baptist (1:4–8); and the appearance of Jesus (1:9–15).⁴ Each of these sections will be examined through a close reading utilising the tools of narrative criticism, historical-grammatical exegesis, and rhetorical criticism. The focus of this examination will be to determine the contribution this passage makes to the prominence of proclamation in Mark's Gospel, to explore what this passage communicates about proclamation, and to consider the potential rhetorical impact of the motif of proclamation in Mark's opening.

2. Mark 1:1

The first possible reference to proclamation in Mark's Gospel is an implicit one in the opening verse which reads: “The beginning (Ἀρχή) of the gospel (εὐαγγελίου) of Jesus Christ, the Son of

¹ So Watts (2000, 54–56); Whitenton (2017, 106–8); Matera (1988, 3, 12); Boring (1990, 43, 66); Rochester (2011, 173).

² See, similarly Keck (1966, 367); Matera (1988, 15); Alexander (1996, 73). See also: Aristotle, *Rhetorica* 3.14.6.

³ Commenting on Luke's Gospel, and contemporaneous literary practices, Keener notes a “conventional expectation” that a “good introduction should summarize what is to follow” (2019, 225). In support of this conclusion, Keener cites a number of ancient sources, including, inter alia, Quintilian, *Institutio oratoria* 4.1.34; Polybius, *Histories* 3.1.3–3.5.9; 11.1.1–5; Dionysius of Halicarnassus, *De Lysias* 24; Cicero, *Orator ad M. Brutum* 40.137; Virgil, *Aeneid* 1.1–6; Aulus Gellius, *Noctus atticae* pref.25; Philostratus, *Life of Apollonius* 7.1; 8.1.

⁴ There is significant debate in Markan scholarship regarding the extent of Mark's opening. Here Mark's opening is identified as Mark 1:1–15 (see further discussion below).

God” (1:1). The following analysis of Mark’s opening verse is structured around three main issues: first, the nature and meaning of εὐαγγέλιον; second, the contribution of the word ἀρχή; and third, the identification of Mark 1:1 as a title to the Gospel of Mark and the implication of this for the motif of proclamation.

2.1 εὐαγγέλιον in Mark 1:1

Scholarly discussion of εὐαγγελίου in Mark 1:1 is frequently dominated by questions of background – specifically, whether Mark’s use of the word arises from pagan references associated with the imperial cult or the prophetic tradition of the Old Testament.⁵ Although a detailed discussion of this question is beyond the scope of this thesis, the position adopted here, in light of the significance of Isaiah for Mark (see discussion below), is that Mark’s use of εὐαγγέλιον is drawn from the Old Testament, even if its occurrence in Roman Imperial propaganda may have impacted how it was perceived. As Stanton argues, “the imperial cult was not *the source* of early Christian use of the word group, but it was *the background* against which distinctively Christian usage was forged and first heard” (2004, 2).

Scholarly attention is also given to the relationship between Mark’s use of εὐαγγέλιον and the employment of this term as a genre label. While it is generally recognised that the word εὐαγγέλιον was not used as a genre label until the second century, it is increasingly argued that Mark in some way “initiated that usage” (France 2002, 52).⁶

On the question of meaning, εὐαγγέλιον in Mark 1:1 is most commonly understood to denote the *content* of the good news or message concerning Jesus. So, for example, Garland, commenting on Mark 1:1, writes, “εὐαγγέλιον refers to *what* is preached about God or about Jesus as the Christ, the Son of God” (1996, 19, emphasis added). Similarly, Guelich argues, “the εὐαγγέλιον is the message of ‘good news concerning Jesus Messiah’ ...” (1998, 9).⁷

What is frequently overlooked in these discussions is the possibility that εὐαγγέλιον in Mark 1:1 implicitly includes the *activity* of gospel proclamation. The potential of εὐαγγέλιον to

⁵ See, e.g., Bock (2015, 108); Moloney (2012, 31); C. Black (2011, 46); Boring (2012, 30); Cranfield (1963, 35–37). For a more detailed discussion, see: Winn (2008, 95–99); Evans (2000, 67–81); Koester (1990b, 1–4); Frankemölle (1988, 253–54).

⁶ Cf. Stein (2008a, 20). For a sample of this discussion, see: Dunn (2013, 297); Hengel (2000, 90–92); BurrIDGE (2004, 186–89); Keck (1966, 357–60); Guelich (1991, 173–208); Kittel, Friedrich, and Bromiley (1985, 270–71).

⁷ See also: Juel (1990, 27); Lenski (1961, 21); Gould (1922, 3); Cole (1989, 103); J. Edwards (2002, 24); A. Black (1995, Mark 1:1); Hurtado (2011, 23); Schnabel (2017, 36–37); Bratcher and Nida (1961, 2); V. Taylor (1972, 152); Boring (2012, 31); Hooker (1991, 33). Taking εὐαγγέλιον as a reference to the message about Jesus, some of these scholars understand the reference in Mark 1:1 to include “the content of the literary work that follows.” See, e.g., Guelich (1998, 9).

function in this way is widely recognised in Pauline studies⁸ and some key dictionaries and lexicons⁹ but is less frequently discussed in Markan scholarship.

Though commonly overlooked, this possibility has been recognised by some. So, for example, Dillon argues that εὐαγγέλιον in Mark 1:1 refers to “the *proclamation* of the story rather than the story itself” (emphasis original) (2014, 12). Similarly, Bieringer concludes that εὐαγγέλιον in Mark 1:1 likely refers to the proclamation of the gospel (2018, 83). Likewise, Meier argues that in Mark 1:1, “Mark is referring to the content of the good news and its proclamation ...” (2001b, 138).¹⁰

Four observations support the conclusion that εὐαγγέλιον in Mark 1:1 implicitly includes the activity of gospel proclamation.

2.1.1 New Testament usage

First, the noun εὐαγγέλιον appears to be used elsewhere in the New Testament to refer implicitly to the *act of proclaiming* the good news (Rom 1:1, 9; 1 Cor 9:14; 2 Cor 2:12; 8:18; Phil 1:5; 2:22; 4:3, 15; cf. 1 Clem 47:2).¹¹ This usage raises the possibility that Mark is employing εὐαγγέλιον in a similar way in Mark 1:1.¹²

As Meier helpfully warns, “We must not become so absorbed with the one meaning of *euaggelion* in the New Testament (the content of the good news) that we forget the other meaning, deeply rooted in the Old Testament: the living, live, and lively act of proclaiming the good news” (2001a, 135).

⁸ In Pauline studies it is widely acknowledged that the noun εὐαγγέλιον can be used in a static sense to refer to the *content* of proclamation or in a dynamic sense to refer to the *act* of proclamation. As Peter O’Brien notes, “It is a well-known fact that εὐαγγέλιον within the Pauline corpus is often used as a *nomen actionis*” (1974, 153). See also inter alia: R. Plummer (2006, 51); U. Becker (1986, 2:111); R. Martin (1998, 40); Hellerman (2016, 6); Strecker (2012, 339); Bieringer (2018, 77); Koester (1990a, 5); Schütz (2007, 53); D. G. Peterson (2020, 84, 97). Smith, in her detailed exegetical study of the vocabulary of teaching in 1 Corinthians, 1 and 2 Timothy and Titus identifies six occasions in this literature where εὐαγγέλιον occurs as a “verbal noun, referring to the activity of proclamation (1 Cor 4:15; 9:12; 9:14b; 9:23; 2 Tim 1:8; 1:10)” (Claire S. Smith 2012, 183–89). Meier argues that Paul’s use of εὐαγγέλιον to refer to the act of proclaiming the good news, “conditions the other meaning of εὐαγγέλιον,” so that “even when εὐαγγέλιον is used to signify the content of the good news, the understood context is always the oral proclamation of the herald as he delivers the news” (2001a, 133).

⁹ See, e.g., Danker et al. (2000, 402); Friedrich (1964, 2:726, 729–34).

¹⁰ See, likewise Dautzenberg (1977, 228); Gundry (1993, 33); Focant (2012, 30); A. Collins (2007, 130); de Tillesse (1968, 400–1). See also the incidental translation of Turner (1925, 146). Decker refers to the “verbal nature” of εὐαγγέλιον in Mark 1:1 (2014, 2).

¹¹ So Danker et al. (2000, 402); P. O’Brien (1974, 153); R. Plummer (2006, 51); U. Becker (1986, 111); R. Martin (1998, 40); Hellerman (2016, 23); Strecker (2012, 339); Friedrich (1964, 726, 729–34); Meier (2001a, 135); Fitzmyer (1979, 341).

¹² The relationship between the theology and vocabulary of Paul and Mark is beyond the scope of this discussion. If, however, there is a relationship, as argued, for example, by Marcus and Bird, then this strengthens the case that Mark may be using εὐαγγέλιον as Paul sometimes did to include the act of proclaiming the gospel (Marcus 2000b; Bird 2011). For further defence of the relationship between Paul and Mark, see Dunn (2013, 308); Pokorný (2013, 118–21); Aernie (2016, 779–82, 796–97); U. Becker (1986, 111–12).

2.1.2 Contextual indicators

Second, the immediate context of the verse suggests that εὐαγγέλιον in Mark 1:1 refers to the activity of proclaiming the gospel.

Since εὐαγγέλιον is used elsewhere in the New Testament to refer to both the *content* of the good news and the *act of proclaiming* the good news, it is necessary to consider contextual indicators to determine how the word is used in a particular instance.¹³ In the case of Mark 1:1, the immediate context contains several explicit references to the act of proclamation. In Mark 1:2–3, there is a reference to an ἄγγελόν, and a φωνή βοῶντος ἐν τῇ ἐρήμῳ. In Mark 1:4, when John appears in the narrative, he comes κηρύσσων (cf. 1:7); similarly, in Mark 1:14 Jesus is described as κηρύσσων. The occurrence of all these references to proclamation in the immediate context of Mark 1:1 support the conclusion that εὐαγγέλιον in Mark 1:1 refers to the *act* of proclamation.

It should be noted that in Mark 1:14–15 the noun εὐαγγέλιον refers to the message proclaimed and not the act of proclamation. There are, however, reasons to read εὐαγγέλιον in Mark 1:1 differently since it occurs there without a verb of communication or reception. As will be argued below, where εὐαγγέλιον is used in Mark with a verb of communication or reception it appears to denote the content or message of the gospel (see: 1:14; 1:15; 13:10; 14:9). However, where it is used without a verb of communication or reception it appears to include an implicit reference to the act of proclaiming the gospel (see: 8:35; 10:29; and the discussion in chapter 7 below).

2.1.3 Grammatical indicators

Further support for reading εὐαγγέλιον in Mark 1:1 as a reference to the proclamation of the gospel comes indirectly from a significant grammatical argument. The phrase τοῦ εὐαγγελίου Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ in Mark 1:1 is widely recognised as a subjective/objective genitive conundrum.¹⁴ Significantly, Stevens argues, “[a] subjective or objective conundrum requires that the noun modified be a noun of action” (2009, 49–50) – that is, a noun that expresses action or “contains a verbal idea” (Brooks and Winbery 1978, 15). The presence of a subjective/objective genitive conundrum in Mark 1:1 thereby suggests that the use of the genitive εὐαγγελίου in this verse is referring to the activity of proclaiming the gospel.

2.1.4 Parallel phrases in Paul and 1 Clement

A fourth indicator that εὐαγγέλιον in Mark 1:1 includes the act of proclamation is the parallel usage in Philippians and 1 Clement.

¹³ As Klein, Blomberg and Hubbard note, “The use of a word in a specific context constitutes the single most crucial criterion for the meaning of a word” (2004, 257).

¹⁴ See, inter alia, D. Wallace (1996, 121); Marcus (2000a, 146–47); Boring (2012, 30); France (2002, 53); Guelich (1998, 9).

The closest New Testament parallel to the phrase ἀρχὴ τοῦ εὐαγγελίου (Mark 1:1) is found in Philippians 4:15 where the phrase ἐν ἀρχῇ τοῦ εὐαγγελίου appears to refer to the activity of proclaiming the gospel.¹⁵ A parallel phrase is also found in 1 Clement 47:2, where again the phrase ἐν ἀρχῇ τοῦ εὐαγγελίου appears to refer implicitly to the proclamation of the gospel.¹⁶

2.1.5 Conclusion

These four observations, taken together, provide considerable support for reading εὐαγγέλιον in Mark 1:1 as implicitly including the act of proclaiming the gospel.¹⁷ If this is the case, Mark's Gospel opens with a reference to proclamation.

While this reading of εὐαγγέλιον in Mark 1:1 has been recognised by some,¹⁸ the implications for the motif of proclamation have not been explored in any detail. Since the prominence of a motif is heightened by its occurrence at climactic moments in a narrative, a reference to proclamation in the opening verse of Mark provides considerable support to the suggestion that proclamation is a prominent motif in Mark.

2.2 Ἀρχὴ τοῦ εὐαγγελίου

The second element to consider in Mark's opening verse is the word ἀρχή. Ἀρχή in Mark 1:1 is understood by some to refer to the source, foundation or fundamental principle of εὐαγγέλιον.¹⁹ Although ἀρχή is used this way in other places in the New Testament (cf. Rev 3:14), elsewhere in Mark's Gospel it is always used with a temporal meaning - in the sense of "beginning" (Mark 10:6; 13:8; 13:19). It is, therefore, consistent with Markan usage to render ἀρχή in Mark 1:1 as "beginning."

If ἀρχή refers to a beginning, and εὐαγγέλιον includes the act of proclamation, then Mark's Gospel opens with a reference to the *beginning* of the proclamation of the gospel.²⁰ Importantly, this notion of "beginning" implies a continuation.²¹ The reader is thereby prompted to consider the continuation (and completion) of this task.

Whether the completion of this task is contained within Mark's narrative or extends beyond the end of Mark will be discussed further below.²²

¹⁵ οἴδατε δὲ καὶ ὑμεῖς, Φιλιππηῖοι, ὅτι ἐν ἀρχῇ τοῦ εὐαγγελίου, ὅτε ἐξῆλθον ἀπὸ Μακεδονίας, οὐδεμία μοι ἐκκλησία ἐκοινωνήσεν εἰς λόγον δόσεως καὶ λήψεως εἰ μὴ ὑμεῖς μόνοι, (Phil 4:15). So Hellerman (2016, 263); P. O'Brien (1991, 62); Witherington III (2011, 277).

¹⁶ τί πρῶτον ὑμῖν ἐν ἀρχῇ τοῦ εὐαγγελίου ἔγραψεν; (1 Clem 47:2). See Brannan (2011).

¹⁷ Further evidence for this understanding of εὐαγγέλιον will be considered below in the discussion of Mark 8:35 and 10:29.

¹⁸ See 2.1 above.

¹⁹ See, e.g., Donahue (1988, 986); Feuillet (1978, 167).

²⁰ Some subtle support for this reading may come from Luke 16:16 which locates the beginning of the proclamation of the good news at the time of John the Baptist.

²¹ Cf. Wikgren (1942, 13).

²² In arguing that Mark 1:1 is a gloss, Croy raises the objection: "If, for Mark, the gospel has a beginning, why is there no mention of a continuation?" (2001, 117). In a demonstration of the explanatory power of the

2.3 *Mark 1:1 as a title to Mark's Gospel*

The final issue to address in this analysis of Mark's first verse is the identification of Mark 1:1 as a title.

The opening of Mark's Gospel is abrupt and enigmatic, and there is significant scholarly debate over the relationship between the first verse and what follows.²³ Here it will be argued that Mark 1:1 functions as a title to the book of Mark as a whole.²⁴

The reference to proclamation in Mark's opening verse already carries considerable weight given its placement in the narrative. However, the significance of this reference is further increased if this opening verse is a title.

Though sometimes contested, the identification of Mark 1:1 as a title to Mark's Gospel is supported by five observations.

2.3.1 **Titular style (and comparable titles in related literature)**

First, the construction of Mark 1:1 is consistent with "ancient titular style" (Boring 2012, 30). Both the lack of a verb and the absence of the article before the first word ἀρχή are consistent with ancient titles.²⁵ As France notes, "Similarly anarthrous headings, also without [a] main verb, open the Gospel of Matthew (Βίβλος γενέσεως ...) and the Book of Revelation (Ἀποκάλυψις Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ ...), and are common in the OT (see Pr. 1:1; Ec. 1:1; Ct. 1:1) ..." (2002, 51).²⁶ In addition to these examples from the New Testament and the Hebrew Scriptures, there are comparable titles in contemporaneous Greek and Latin writings and other Jewish works.²⁷ As Davies and Allison write, "it was a custom in the prophetic, didactic, and apocalyptic writings of Judaism to open with an independent titular sentence announcing the content of the work. Illustrations include ... Tobit, Baruch, The Community Rule, the War Rule, the Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs, Jubilees, 1 Enoch, 2 Enoch (in some mss.), The Testament of Job, and the Apocalypse of Abraham" (1988, 151–52). Van Iersel identifies a number of other parallels, including the openings of the Gospel of Thomas; Apocryphon of John; 2 Esdras; Josephus's *Jewish War*; Philo's *On the Life of Moses* and *On the Decalogue*; and, Appian's *Historica romana* (2004, 88–89).²⁸

Markan motif of proclamation this thesis will offer a cogent answer to that question. See the discussion in chapter 8 below.

²³ Cranfield identifies ten explanations of the syntactic relationship between Mark 1:1 and the verses that follow (1963, 34).

²⁴ This view is held by a number of scholars. See, inter alia, Pesch (1977, 1:74–75); Kazmierski (1979, 13); van Iersel (2004, 88–89); Garland (2015, 101); Giblin (1992, 975); Marcus (2000a, 143); Boring (1990, 50); Donahue and Harrington (2002, 60); Lenski (1961, 21); V. Taylor (1972, 152); Zahn (1909, 457–59). Similarly, Brooks (while resisting the label *title*) argues that Mark 1:1 is a summary of the contents of the book (1991, 38). See similarly Whinterton (2017, 108); Guelich (1982, 5).

²⁵ Moulton, Howard, and Turner (1976, 22); LaVerdiere (1999, 4); Boring (1990, 8).

²⁶ See also Robertson (1919, 781, 793). See also Lange (2008, 15); W. Davies and Allison (1988, 153); Boring (1990, 50–51).

²⁷ So van Iersel (2004, 88–89).

²⁸ These many examples appear to have been overlooked by Barber who states, "Designating 1:1 a title would constitute an anachronistic projection of a modern narrative device onto the text" (1988, 228).

2.3.2 The syntactic independence of Mark 1:1

Second, Mark 1:1 can be read as syntactically independent from 1:2.

A common objection to identifying Mark 1:1 as a title is the claim that καθώς γέγραπται (Mark 1:2) must be continuing a sentence begun in verse 1. So, for example, Guelich argues that it is “syntactically impossible” for Mark 1:1 to function as an independent title because “καθώς never introduces a sentence in either Mark or the rest of the NT documents except in the unrelated καθώς/οὕτω combination ... [and] when καθώς occurs in a formula with γέγραπται, it always refers to the preceding rather than to the succeeding material” (1998, 7).

This objection can be challenged at several points. First, as Bradley Johnson notes, nowhere in the Synoptic Gospels is καθώς (or even a synonymous subordinating conjunction) used with γέγραπται to point to a verb-less clause. While this does not rule out the possibility that Mark 1:1–3 is an exception, it does suggest “the improbability of Mark 1:1 being syntactically connected to 1:2.” As Johnson argues, καθώς in Mark 1:2 is “far more likely to relate grammatically to the verb ἐγένετο in 1:4 than it is to the verb-less text string in 1:1” (2017, 33).²⁹

Second, there are a number of examples in Koine Greek outside the New Testament of sentences (and even works) beginning with καθώς (not in conjunction with οὕτω).³⁰ The absence of such examples in the New Testament does not, therefore, render such a construction “syntactically impossible.”

Third, there are examples elsewhere in the New Testament where synonymous citation formulae are used to point to a fulfilment or resolution in a “subsequent rather than a preceding passage” (see, for example, John 6:45) (B. Johnson 2017, 40).³¹ Furthermore, such a construction at this point in Mark’s Gospel allows Mark to group together all the information concerning John’s activity (vv. 4–8) and to create “an historical trajectory that begins with the prophet Isaiah, transitions through John, and culminates with Jesus” (B. Johnson 2017, 42).

In support of reading Mark 1:2–3 with Mark 1:4 (rather than Mark 1:1), Voelz notes the occurrence of a variant reading found in 579, D, W, A, and f¹³ that includes ὡς rather than καθώς, and argues that this indicates “some copyists understood the conjunction at this point to convey a prospective rather than a retrospective meaning” (2005, 10). Voelz also suggests that the semantic development of καθώς towards a prospective meaning (as it commonly has in modern Greek) had already begun in the early centuries CE as demonstrated by Luke’s usage (6:31; 11:30; 17:26; 17:28 cf. Acts 7:17; 11:29) (2005, 10).

Additional support for reading Mark 1:2–3 with Mark 1:4 may be found in the parallel accounts in the other Gospels that more explicitly tie the Isaiah prophesy to John the

²⁹ See also Boring (1990, 50).

³⁰ In an unpublished paper, Bolt (2018) highlights numerous examples in papyrus letters dating from 2nd century BCE to 7th century CE, where καθώς γέγραπται (not in conjunction with οὕτω) begins a new sentence (and even a new work). See also Blass, Debrunner, and Funk (1986, 236).

³¹ “One may perhaps regard Mark’s formulation here as analogous to John’s use of καθώς to express a situation or action which “grounds” or serves as a “model” for what follows (cp. Jn 6,57)” (Giblin 1992, 983).

Baptist's arrival and ministry (Matt 3:1; 11:10; Luke 3:3–4; 7:27; John 1:19) (B. Johnson 2017, 43).

Reading Mark 1:1 as syntactically independent of Mark 1:2 is, therefore, both “attested and coherent” (B. Johnson 2017, 42).³²

2.3.3 Mark 1:1 anticipates the book as a whole

Third, Mark 1:1 anticipates the Gospel of Mark as a whole.

Some who recognise Mark 1:1 as a title argue that it is a title for the opening section of the Gospel only (1:1–13 or 1:1–15).³³ There are, however, good reasons for identifying Mark 1:1 as a title for the book as a whole.³⁴ First, no later section of Mark's Gospel has a comparable title. If Mark 1:1 is a section heading, it is difficult to account for the lack of other similar headings elsewhere in Mark. Second, a number of key terms in Mark 1:1 point beyond the opening passage to the narrative as a whole. As Donahue and Harrington note, “The density of key terms in 1:1 prepares the reader for the dramatic unfolding of the whole work ...” (2002, 60).³⁵ So, for example, the references to Jesus as *χριστός* and *υἱὸς θεοῦ*³⁶ introduce important themes in Mark's Gospel as a whole.³⁷

Significantly, even among those who identify Mark 1:1 as a section heading, it is commonly acknowledged that this opening section introduces the book of Mark as a whole. So, for example, Adela Collins argues that Mark 1:1 introduces the first unit of text (1:2–15), which introduces the entire work (2007, 131).³⁸

2.3.4 A very complex opening sentence is unlikely

Fourth, the identification of Mark 1:1 as a title is more consistent with Mark's style than various alternative suggestions.

Attempts to construe Mark 1:1 as something other than a title invariably involve very complex sentence constructions. For example, Turner reads Mark 1:2–3 as a parenthesis and connects verse 1 with verse 4 (1925, 146).³⁹ While comments on the

³² Bradley Johnson also cites a significant parallel with the first line of Plutarch's *Theseus* (2017, 42).

³³ So, e.g., Guelich (1998, 7); Cranfield (1963, 34–35); Lane (1974, 42); Gould (1922, 2).

³⁴ It is also possible to read Mark 1:1 telescopically, as a heading to both the opening section and the book as a whole. William Davies and Allison argue that Matthew intends his opening words to be read telescopically – referring to both the genealogy that opens Matthew's Gospel and to the whole story of Jesus (1988, 154).

³⁵ France similarly notes, “[Verse 1] sets forth themes which the whole book will explore” (2002, 51). See also V. Taylor (1972, 152).

³⁶ A significant text critical debate surrounds *υἱοῦ θεοῦ* in Mark 1:1. For a detailed and persuasive defence of its inclusion, see Wasserman (2011). See also Whittington (2017, 109–11); Metzger (1994, 62).

³⁷ For Jesus as the Christ in Mark, cf. Mark 8:29; 12:35; 14:61; 15:32; for Jesus as the Son of God in Mark, cf. 3:11; 5:7; 14:61–62; 15:39. Bradley Johnson recognises the significance of Son of God language in Mark's Gospel, describing it as “programmatically of the entire Gospel” (2017, 119). Despite this, Johnson does not see Mark 1:1 as a title for the Gospel as a whole but for the opening section only. This conclusion appears to be driven by Johnson's reading of *εὐαγγέλιον* as a reference to the content of the narrative (2017, 120).

³⁸ See, similarly Bock (2015, 107).

³⁹ See also Feneberg (1974, 186–87); Lagrange (1947, 1–2).

simplicity of Mark's style are often overstated, it seems unlikely that he would begin with such a complex sentence.⁴⁰ There are complex sentences in Mark, but they are unusual.⁴¹

2.3.5 Mark 1:1 as a title explains the ending

Fifth, reading Mark 1:1 as a title for the book as a whole “sheds light on the perplexing ending” of the Gospel (Garland 1996, 18). Mark 16:8 has been described as an open and unsatisfying conclusion to the book. However, this open ending can be more easily explained if Mark 1:1 is the title to Mark as a whole since then the entirety of Mark is only the *beginning* of the proclamation of the gospel, and the open ending in Mark 16:8 is only the end of the beginning. This open ending may then anticipate the continued proclamation of the gospel “through the life of the church” (Marcus 2000a, 145–46). In this case, “the end [of Mark's Gospel] fittingly corresponds with its title,” (Giblin 1992, 976)⁴² and reading Mark 1:1 as a title for the book as a whole carries significant explanatory power. The question of Mark's ending will be explored in more detail in chapter 8.

2.3.6 The implications of Mark 1:1 as a title

Together these five observations constitute a strong case for reading Mark 1:1 as a title for Mark's Gospel as a whole.

If Mark 1:1 is the title of the book, and εὐαγγέλιον includes the act of proclaiming the gospel, then the title of Mark's Gospel contains a reference to proclamation. Indeed, Mark's Gospel as a whole could be summarised as the “beginning of the proclamation of the gospel.”⁴³

As noted above, the presence of a reference to proclamation in the opening verse of the book provides considerable support to the prominence of the motif of proclamation in the Gospel of Mark. This argument is only amplified if Mark 1:1 is the title.⁴⁴

A reference to proclamation in Mark's title would also have a notable rhetorical impact on the reader and what they would expect to find in Mark's Gospel.

⁴⁰ See, similarly Zahn (1909, 457).

⁴¹ As Decker (n.d.) notes, Mark “*can* write a complex sentence, though he doesn't usually do so.” See similarly A. Plummer (1914, 51).

⁴² Cf. Garland (1996, 17–19); LaVerdiere (1999, 9, 16–17).

⁴³ As Boring writes, “If 1:1 is a title for the whole document, then the whole document ought to be considered the ἀρχή” (1990, 53). Similarly, Adella Collins notes, Mark 1:1 “summarizes and introduces the rest of the work” (2007, 130). So also Pesch (1977); Musopole (2010, 52, 54).

⁴⁴ For a general discussion of the importance and function of titles in signalling themes and motifs, see Hellwig (1984, 5–6, 19).

Titles were used in ancient texts to allow readers to identify them and to indicate the subject matter of what was to follow.⁴⁵ Ancient readers could therefore be expected to give close attention to the title.⁴⁶

While the rhetorical significance of Mark 1:1 is widely recognised in Markan scholarship, this discussion tends to focus on the reader's conception of Jesus.⁴⁷ Mark 1:1 would also inform the reader of what to expect in the remainder of the Gospel more broadly. As Fowler notes, Mark's first verse would have an "unmistakable influence ... over the reader's perception of the entire Gospel" (2001, 19). The reference to the beginning of the proclamation of Jesus Christ would arouse anticipation in the reader for the completion of that proclamation.

If Mark's Gospel is the beginning of the proclamation of the good news, then the reader is invited to consider the continuation (and end) of this task. Indeed, Mark's Gospel may be inviting the reader to participate in this ongoing task. This possibility will be considered in more detail in chapters 7 and 8.

A possible confirmation of this reading of Mark 1:1 is found in Luke-Acts. In Acts 1:1–2, Luke describes his former book as an account of all ὧν ἤρξατο ὁ Ἰησοῦς ποιεῖν τε καὶ διδάσκειν. Assuming Markan priority, Luke may have drawn the idea of Jesus's ministry as the beginning of the proclamation of the gospel from Mark. Furthermore, in Luke 16:16, Luke identifies the coming of John the Baptist with the beginning of the proclamation of the good news of the kingdom. Again, this parallels Mark's presentation of John the Baptist as the beginning of the beginning of gospel proclamation.

3. Mark 1:2–3

After the title (1:1), Mark's opening continues with a composite quotation from the Old Testament (1:2–3). This quotation serves an important introductory function in Mark's Gospel and contributes to the development of the motif of proclamation.

The quotation includes reference to a messenger (ἄγγελον, 1:2) and a voice crying in the wilderness (φωνὴ βοῶντος ἐν τῇ ἐρήμῳ, 1:3). God will send this messenger to prepare the way for the one addressed by crying out in the wilderness.

The verb βοάω refers to a loud cry or shout and is sometimes used of a solemn proclamation.⁴⁸ This description of a voice crying (φωνὴ βοῶντος) in 1:2 depicts the proclaiming work of a herald

⁴⁵ "The earliest historians, like early writers in other fields, use the opening words of the first sentence to indicate the subject of their work, whether generally, as in Herodotus ('the results of his researches') or more precisely, as in Thucydides ('the history of the war between the Peloponnesians and the Athenians')" (Alexander 1993, 29).

⁴⁶ Kingsbury notes that whether Mark 1:1 is a title or not "it does alert the reader to the content of his story" (1983, 56).

⁴⁷ See, for example Kingsbury (1983, 56); France (2002, 59). See also the discussion of dramatic irony in chapter 8 below.

⁴⁸ Danker et al. (2000, 180); Louw and Nida (1996, 397).

(cf. Dan 3:4 LXX). In the context of Mark's opening, this quotation serves to introduce John as that herald (cf. Mark 1:4) and begins to point to the place of proclamation in God's purposes.⁴⁹

In addition, this quotation also provides more subtle connections to the motif of proclamation arising out of the contexts from which it is taken.

In order to explore these connections, several steps are required. First, the source and tradition history of the quotation will be explored. This is a necessary preliminary step that will serve as a foundation for the subsequent discussion. Second, the original context of the material included in the quotation will be considered. Significantly for this study, this original context includes direct references to proclamation. Third, the function of the composite quotation in Mark's Gospel will be reviewed. As will be shown, the broader function of this quotation includes a contribution to the motif of proclamation. Fourth, the question of the attribution of the quotation to Isaiah will be discussed. Finally, the contribution of the quotation to the motif of proclamation will be summarised.

3.1 *The source of the quotation*

The first step in examining Mark's opening quotation is to identify the source of that quotation. This, however, is a complex task.

The first part of the quotation (ἰδοὺ ἀποστέλλω τὸν ἄγγελόν μου πρὸ προσώπου σου, Mark 1:2b) agrees almost verbatim with Exod 23:20a LXX (Καὶ ἰδοὺ ἐγὼ ἀποστέλλω τὸν ἄγγελόν μου πρὸ προσώπου σου) but is also similar to Mal 3:1 LXX (ἰδοὺ ἐγὼ ἐξαποστέλλω τὸν ἄγγελόν μου, καὶ ἐπιβλέψεται ὁδὸν πρὸ προσώπου μου).

The degree of agreement between Mark 1:2b and Exod 23:20a LXX suggests the influence of this verse. However, given the similarities between Exod 23:20 and Mal 3:1, it is difficult to decide if Mark is drawing directly from Exod 23:20a or paraphrasing Mal 3:1 in a manner influenced by the Exodus verse.⁵⁰ Adding to the difficulty is the likelihood that Malachi is echoing Exodus at this point.⁵¹

The second part of the quotation (ὃς κατασκευάσει τὴν ὁδὸν σου, Mark 1:2c) diverges from both Exod 23:20a LXX and Mal 3:1 LXX and appears to be closest to the MT of Mal 3:1 (הַנְּבִיאַתְּ אֵלֶיךָ וְיִבְרָא אֶת הַדֶּרֶךְ לְפָנָי וְיִפְנֶה דְרָךְ לְפָנָי וְיִפְתָּח בָּרֵאשִׁית אֶת הַדֶּרֶךְ לְפָנָי אֲשֶׁר אֶתְּמַר.)⁵² Mark's presentation of John the Baptist as Elijah *redivivus* (see discussion below) also suggests a reference to Malachi.

The origin of the third part of the quotation (Mark 1:3) is more straightforward. The wording of Mark 1:3 (φωνὴ βοῶντος ἐν τῇ ἐρήμῳ· ἐτοιμάσατε τὴν ὁδὸν κυρίου, εὐθείας ποιεῖτε τὰς

⁴⁹ In this way John is introduced with respect to Jesus.

⁵⁰ These verses were explicitly connected in later Jewish tradition (cf. Exod Rabba 23:20). So Watts (2000, 74, 85); Marcus (2000a, 143–45); Lane (1974, 45). Though late this practice may reflect earlier traditions.

⁵¹ Glazier-McDonald (1987, 130); D. L. Petersen (1977, 43ff); Watts (2000, 71).

⁵² One further observation that appears to support this conclusion concerns Mark's employment of κατασκευάσει (rather than φυλάξη (Exod 23:20 LXX) or ἐπιβλέψεται (Mal 3:1 LXX)). Mark's use of κατασκευάσει appears to read פנה as a *pi'el* (the Septuagint appears to read פנה as a *qal*, and so renders it ἐπιβλέπεσθαι) (Marcus 2004, 13).

τρίβους αὐτοῦ) reproduces Isa 40:3 LXX almost verbatim (φωνὴ βοῶντος ἐν τῇ ἐρήμῳ Ἐτοιμάσατε τὴν ὁδὸν κυρίου, εὐθείας ποιεῖτε τὰς τρίβους τοῦ θεοῦ ἡμῶν).⁵³

In summary, Mark 1:2–3 is most likely a composite quotation corresponding to the LXX text of Exod 23:20a, the MT text of Mal 3:1, and the LXX text of Isa 40:3.⁵⁴

3.2 *The original contexts of the material*

Having identified the likely sources of the composite quotation, it is possible to consider the original context of these sources. Significantly for this study, the context of Mal 3:1 and Isa 40:3 contain direct references to proclamation and so will be the focus of the following discussion.⁵⁵

3.2.1 **Malachi 3:1 in context**

The book of Malachi features a series of disputes between Yahweh and the people. Malachi 3:1 belongs to the fourth of these disputes. The people have questioned, “Where is the God of justice?” In response, God warns that he is coming to judge and purify. In Mal 3:1, God promises to send a messenger (ἄγγελον, LXX) who will prepare the way for him to come to his temple in judgment. The identification of this forerunner as a messenger anticipates his work of proclamation.

Malachi 4:5 identifies this messenger with the prophet Elijah. Since Elijah did not die but was taken directly to heaven (2 Kgs 2:11), there was widespread expectation within Judaism that he would return as “a forerunner of God’s eschatological kingdom in the final day” (J. Edwards 2002, 27).⁵⁶ The identification of the forerunner as the *prophet* Elijah further anticipates a work of proclamation. This forerunner will prepare the way by proclaiming.

3.2.2 **Isaiah 40:3 in context**

Isaiah 40 is the beginning of a major section in Isaiah (Isa 40–55). Drawing heavily from the language and imagery of Israel’s first exodus, Isa 40–55 looks forward to the

⁵³ In addition to the degree of correspondence, the conclusion that Mark 1:3 is drawn from Isa 40:3 LXX rather than the Hebrew text is supported by three further observations. First, both Mark and the LXX use an identical periphrastic construction (εὐθείας ποιεῖτε) in place of the single Hebrew verb יָרַשׁ. Second, neither the LXX nor Mark render the Hebrew בְּעֶרְבָּךְ. Third, both Mark and the LXX have the plural articular τὰς τρίβους in place of the anarthrous singular מְסִלָּה. Cf. Marcus (2004, 13–15); Guelich (1998, 11).

⁵⁴ This conclusion is adopted by a number of scholars. See, e.g., Guelich (1998, 7–8); France (2002, 63); J. Edwards (2002, 26–27); Schnabel (2017, 39); Stein (2008a, 42); and more tentatively Brooks (1991, 39–40).

⁵⁵ The following discussion assumes that Mark’s use of the Hebrew Scriptures tends to be contextual rather than atomistic, so that the wider context of the Old Testament allusion or reference should be considered. For a defence of this approach to Mark’s use of the Old Testament, see Gray (2010, 5); Marcus (2004, 21); Watts (2000, 111); Carey (2009, 94, 111); Hicks (2013, 183); K. O’Brien (2019, 312–13).

⁵⁶ To illustrate this expectation, Edwards cites, inter alia, Mal 3:1; Sirach 48:10; Pseudo-Philo, *Biblical Antiquities* 48:1; 4 Ezra 6:26; *Sibylline Oracles* 2:187–89; 4Q558. As Edwards (drawing on Öhler) notes, “It is often assumed that Elijah ... would be the forerunner of the Messiah. But in pre-Christian Jewish texts preserved in the OT and intertestamental literature Elijah prefigures not the Messiah but the appearance of God himself” (2002, 27–28). Cf. Öhler (1999, 641–76).

coming of Yahweh to lead his people out of exile in Babylon and through the wilderness into the Promised Land.

Isaiah 40:3 is a critical verse in this section, for “without Yahweh’s presence (cf. Isa. 40:5, 9, 10, 11) there can be no salvation” (Watts 2007, 114). Isaiah 40:3 describes a voice calling for the way of the LORD to be prepared in anticipation of his coming to rescue his people.

The original context of Isa 40:3 contains significant reference to proclamation. As Oswalt observes, throughout Isa 40:1–11, “speech is the prominent element. Eleven words relating to speaking appear ... This good news must be spoken, announced, proclaimed. God has spoken, and who can keep silent?” (1998, 47–48). Similarly, Patston argues that the structure of Isa 40:1–11 is built around speech. “The passage moves between commands to speak and short descriptions of voices that do speak” (2010, 200). Indeed Patston goes further and suggests that the message of Isa 40:1–11 may include an invitation to the reader to become “proclaimers of the news of comfort and forgiveness like the voices we hear in Isaiah” (206). This emphasis on proclamation then continues throughout the rest of Isaiah. As Oswalt notes, “the verb *qr*, ‘call, proclaim,’ occurs more than 30 times in chs. 40–66” (1998, 47).

3.2.3 The original contexts of the material - conclusion

In summary, both Mal 3:1 and Isa 40:3 refer (in context) to a messenger or forerunner who will prepare the way *through proclamation* for God himself to come. As a result, both the content of the composite quotation, with its reference to a messenger (ἄγγελον, 1:2) and a voice crying in the wilderness (φωνὴ βοῶντος ἐν τῇ ἐρήμῳ, 1:3); and the context of the passages from which this quotation is drawn, provide a rich introduction to the motif of proclamation in Mark (see further discussion below).

3.3 The function of the quotation in Mark

Having examined the sources of the quotation in their original contexts, the next step is to consider the function of this quotation in Mark’s Gospel.

As Marcus notes, this quotation is clearly important to Mark since he has chosen to include it at the very opening of his Gospel, right after the title (2000a, 145).⁵⁷ It is also the only time in Mark’s Gospel that a specific prophecy is quoted in an editorial comment (other Old Testament quotations are included in dialogue).⁵⁸

Like the title (1:1), this quotation fulfils a vital introductory purpose and is programmatic for the narrative as a whole (Boring 2012, 35).⁵⁹ It serves several functions.

⁵⁷ See similarly Hicks (2013, 185).

⁵⁸ Mark 15:28 also contains an Old Testament reference in the voice of the narrator but this verse is widely acknowledged to be a scribal gloss drawn from Luke 22:37. See, e.g., Metzger (1994, 99); Evans (2001, 497).

⁵⁹ Schweizer argues that Mark 1:2–3 functions as “a preface to the whole book” that introduces “everything that follows ...” (1971, 29). See also Cole (1989, 106).

First, it introduces two key characters in the narrative - John the Baptist and Jesus.

Mark 1:2–3 does not directly address the audience. Instead, the audience overhears God speaking to another “offstage figure” addressed as “you” in v. 2 and identified as “the Lord” in v. 3 (Boring 2012, 34–35).⁶⁰ The voice of God also announces a third figure, the messenger or voice calling in the wilderness who will prepare the way for the one addressed (Boring 2012, 34–35).

The verses immediately following the quotation clarify who these figures are. John the Baptist is presented as the messenger or voice calling in the wilderness (see discussion below). John’s ministry activity, in particular his call to repent, is thereby understood in light of the composite quotation as preparing the way “for the Lord” to come in judgment and salvation. The one who comes after John is Jesus. In this way, Jesus is introduced as “the Lord” who was to come.⁶¹

Second, the composite quotation underlines that the ministries of John and Jesus are in fulfilment of Scripture and so in accordance with God’s plan. The inclusion of the quotation at the beginning of the narrative makes clear that “this is not just another story” (van Iersel 2004, 95) but rather God had planned things out “long before the time of John” (Gundry 1993, 34).

This theme of the fulfilment of God’s plan is reinforced throughout Mark’s Gospel by the use of δεĩ to indicate divine necessity (8:31; 9:11; 13:7; 13:10) and by other references to Scripture (9:12; 14:21) (Boring 2012, 407). For Mark, the story of Jesus stands in continuity with the Old Testament.

Third, by being located at the beginning of the narrative, the composite quotation serves a programmatic function for the reader of the Gospel activating “the reader’s sensitivity to intertextual effects” and alerting them to other possible references and allusions to the Old Testament in the book (van Iersel 2004, 58).

Fourth, the composite quotation introduces other themes that are important in Mark’s Gospel.

For example, the word “way” or “path” occurs three times in Mark 1:2–3. In the second half of Mark’s Gospel, the “way” will become a central theme in the narrative.⁶² Similarly, as argued here, the composite quotation also introduces the motif of proclamation by anticipating a messenger whose proclamation will prepare the way for the Lord.

⁶⁰ Strikingly, Mark’s opening is similar to the prologue of Isa 40–55 in that both begin with “voices from a heavenly scene” (Boring 2012, 34).

⁶¹ “The Lord” in Isa 40:3 is Yahweh, but in Mark’s application of this quotation, it is Jesus.

⁶² J. Edwards (2002, 28–29); Marcus (2004).

3.4 The citation - why Isaiah?

One final element of this quotation must be examined before summing up its contribution to the motif of proclamation. If Mark 1:2 echoes Exod 23:20a and Mal 3:1, why is the quotation attributed to Isaiah (Mark 1:2a)?⁶³

This attribution has been explained in a number of ways.

3.4.1 A mistake

Some argue that Mark was simply mistaken – that he wrongly attributed the words to Isaiah or was drawing from a pre-existing collection that did so unaware of the reference to Malachi / Exodus.⁶⁴

There are significant problems with this proposal. First, if Mark had made this mistake, “any number of his first readers would at once have pointed it out to him, and he would have made a correction” (Lenski 1961, 24). Second, Mark elsewhere shows a considerable facility with the Old Testament Scriptures. It seems implausible that he would make such a basic error in handling the Old Testament. Finally, Mark’s presentation of John the Baptist clearly builds on the hope of the Elijah *revivendus*. In light of this, it seems unlikely that he is not aware of Mal 3:1.

3.4.2 A gloss

Others suggest that the opening verses of Mark’s Gospel are not original to Mark but a later addition supplied in various stages and that it was in this process of later editorial additions that the error was introduced.⁶⁵ Though creative, this suggestion lacks any supporting textual evidence, as even Elliott, a proponent of this explanation, acknowledges (2000, 586).

3.4.3 A Jewish practice

A third proposal is that Mark was following a Jewish practice of naming only the most prominent prophet from the sources being quoted.⁶⁶ Though possible, it must be noted that the evidence for such Rabbinic practices appears to post-date Mark.⁶⁷

3.4.4 The importance of Isaiah

Perhaps most persuasive is the suggestion that Mark cites Isaiah because of its importance to his narrative as a whole. As Boring notes, it appears that Mark intentionally refers to Isaiah “in order to designate the whole story that is about to

⁶³ Some manuscripts attribute the quotation to τοῖς προφήταις rather than Isaiah specifically but the weight of evidence strongly supports the reading “in Isaiah the prophet.” The reference to “the prophets” is almost certainly a scribal substitution intended to fit the composite quotation from Malachi / Exodus and Isaiah. See Metzger (1994, 73); Guelich (1998, 6).

⁶⁴ See, e.g., Broadhead (2001, 22); Meagher (1979, 36).

⁶⁵ V. Taylor (1972, 153); Croy (2001, 105–27); Elliott (2000, 584–88).

⁶⁶ See, e.g., J. Edwards (2002, 27); Stein (2008a, 42–43); Bock (2015, 110); Gundry (1993, 35).

⁶⁷ B. Johnson (2017, 126); Gundry (1975, 125).

unfold as corresponding to ... Isaiah” (2012, 36). Mark’s reference to Isaiah is not merely an identification of his source but also an indication that his Gospel is to be understood against the “backdrop of Isaian themes” (Marcus 2004, 20).

Certainly, Isaiah is of great import for Mark.⁶⁸ Mark quotes Isaiah more than all other Old Testament books combined,⁶⁹ and Isaiah is the only prophetic book named in Mark (1:2; 7:6).

In addition to quotations, Mark contains numerous allusions to Isaiah and appears to echo a number of significant Isaianic motifs. These include: the desert setting (Mark 1:4; 1:12–13; 1:35; 1:45; 6:31–35; cf. Isa 32:15–16; 35:1; 40:3; 41:18–19; etc.); the tearing of the heavens (Mark 1:10; cf. Isa 64:1); the message of the heavenly voice (Mark 1:11; cf. Isa 42:1); reference to a spirit-filled messenger from God (Mark 1:10–12; cf. Isa 11:1–3; 42:1; 61:1); healing for the blind, deaf, mute and lame (Mark 2:3–12; 7:32,37; 8:22; 10:46; cf. Isa 35:5–6); critique of religious leaders (Mark 7:6–13; 12:24–27; 12:38–40; cf. Isa 1:10–17; 28:7–8, 14–22; 57:1); the use of blindness as a metaphor for lack of understanding (Mark 8:17–18 cf. Isa 44:9; 56:10); the motif of “the way” (Mark 1:2; 8:27; 9:33–34; 10:17; 10:32; 10:46,52 cf. Isa 30:21; 35:8; 40:3; 42:16; 43:19); and Mark’s use of εὐαγγέλιον which appears to have its biblical roots in Isaiah (cf. Isa 40:9; 52:7; 60:6; 61:1).⁷⁰

The extent and nature of Mark’s use of Isaiah suggest that Isaiah was particularly influential for Mark and that the Gospel of Mark should be read and understood against the backdrop of Isaiah.⁷¹ Significantly, as already noted, a major theme of Isaiah is the theme of proclamation. If Mark is drawing heavily from Isaiah, then this provides further support for the significance of proclamation in Mark.

3.5 The contribution of the quotation to the motif of proclamation

In summary, Mark’s composite quotation contributes to the motif of proclamation in at least five important ways.

First, the quotation itself includes references to a messenger (1:2) and a voice crying in the wilderness (1:3). This description of a voice crying depicts the proclaiming work of a herald.

Second, the original contexts of Mal 3:1 and Isa 40:3 (which are among the source texts for the quotation) contain significant references to proclamation. This is particularly evident in Isa

⁶⁸ So Beavis (1989, 110); Schneck (1994, 247–48); Marcus (2004, 17–18); Hooker (2005, 35). Similarly, Watts argues that Isaianic motifs contribute to the “fundamental literary and theological structure” of Mark (2000, 4,27).

⁶⁹ See: Mark 1:2–3 (Isa 40:3); Mark 4:12 (Isa 6:9–10); Mark 7:6–7 (Isa 29:13); Mark 9:48 (Isa 66:24); Mark 11:17; (Isa 56:17); Mark 13:24–25 (Isa 13:10; 34:4).

⁷⁰ On Mark’s use of εὐαγγέλιον, see Hengel (2000, 160–61); Law (2013, 95–96). For surveys of possible Isaianic allusions in Mark, see Dowd (1995, 133–44); Hooker (2005, 35–49); Schneck (1994, 252–53). As has been often noted, the identification of Old Testament allusions and echoes is controversial. For a recent review of the state of the field, see Porter (2016, 3–48). While the identification of isolated allusions or echoes in Mark may be disputed, the influence of Isaiah on Mark’s Gospel remains clear.

⁷¹ As Schneck states, “Isaiah appears to have a privileged position in the mind of the author” (1994, 3). Cf. Dowd (2000, 3); Marcus (2004, 21). On the importance of Isaiah in Second Temple Judaism, see Beers (2015, 49).

40:1–11, which emphasises that the good news must be proclaimed. References to proclamation then continue throughout the rest of Isaiah. If, as noted above, Mark leans heavily on Isaiah, then the prominence of proclamation in Isaiah lends further support for the importance of proclamation as a motif for Mark.

Third, these prophetic references to proclamation at the beginning of the narrative build the reader's anticipation for the arrival of the messenger who will proclaim a message. In this way, proclamation is brought into the foreground of the narrative.

Fourth, given the location and functional significance of this composite quotation in Mark, these references to proclamation contribute to the prominence of proclamation in Mark's Gospel.

Fifth, these references begin to signal the place of proclamation in God's purposes. This element of the motif of proclamation in Mark will become more apparent in the following sections of Mark's opening.

4. Mark 1:4–8

The third section in Mark's opening is an account of John the Baptist (1:4–8). Mark's portrayal of John continues to introduce the motif of proclamation. Mark omits reference to John's parents, birth, and background, and with striking brevity focuses on John's primary ministry as the one who "prepares the way for the Lord" *through proclamation* (cf. Mark 1:3). Mark presents John as the ἄγγελος and the φωνή anticipated in Mark 1:2–3.

The following analysis of Mark 1:4–8 will first examine the verses in order and then conclude with a summary of how this passage contributes to the motif of proclamation.

4.1 Analysis of Mark 1:4–8

Mark locates John's ministry ἐν τῇ ἐρήμῳ (1:4). This connects John to the quotation in Mark 1:2–3 and supports the identification of John as the promised φωνή of Isaiah 40:3, βοῶντος ἐν τῇ ἐρήμῳ (Marxsen 1969, 37).⁷² The ἔρημος locale may also be intended to echo Elijah's ministry (see 1 Kgs 17:2–3; 19:4 and further discussion below) and introduce John as a prophet.⁷³

In the desert, John was κηρύσσων βάπτισμα μετανοίας εἰς ἄφεσιν ἁμαρτιῶν. The verb κηρύσσω refers to the making of an "official announcement" or "public declaration" (Danker et al. 2000, 543). It was to do the work of a herald (κῆρυξ). The role of the herald was an important and familiar one in the ancient world, but κηρύσσω also had crucial Old Testament

⁷² Gundry insightfully notes that this correspondence likely determines Mark's "use of ἐρημός as a feminine substantive in vv. 3, 4, 12, 13." Elsewhere Mark "uses it as a masculine adjective modifying τόπος for "a deserted place" (1:35, 45; 6:31, 32, 35) (1993, 43).

⁷³ Lenski notes that it was "In this very wilderness Elijah made his last appearance" (1961, 38). Similarly, Joan Taylor highlights that the location of John's ministry was the place Elijah had ascended to heaven (2 Kgs 2:4–12) and so perhaps the place he might be expected to appear again (1997, 213–14).

It is important to note however that Mark gives much less detail on the specific geographical location of John's ministry and so such connection with the geography of Elijah's ministry is less explicit in Mark (cf. Matt 3:1–6).

background. In the LXX, κηρύσσω was used in connection with a call to repentance (e.g., Jonah 1:2; 3:2, 4) and the announcement of forgiveness (Isa 61:1). Elsewhere in the New Testament, κηρύσσω “often appears within the context of the early Christian mission of communicating the gospel to those who have not yet heard about Jesus (e.g., Acts 9:20; 10:42; Rom 10:14–15; 1 Cor 1:23; 15:11; 2 Cor 1:19; Col 1:23)” (Williams 2019, 182–83). Legrand argues that the activity of proclaiming involves “minimal personal interference on the part of the herald” (Legrand 1990, 64). The herald is to pass on the message they are given.

In Mark 1:4, John’s message was a call for people to repent and to be baptised as a sign of their repentance. This repentance served to prepare τὴν ὁδὸν κυρίου (cf. Mark 1:3). Thus, John’s proclamation was a central part of his preparatory ministry.

Despite John’s isolated location, πᾶσα ἡ Ἰουδαία χώρα καὶ οἱ Ἱεροσολυμίται πάντες went out to him (v. 5). Although πᾶσα ... πάντες is likely rhetorical hyperbole, it indicates John’s popularity and the impact of his ministry (Gundry 1993, 36). The people’s response also suggests that John was recognised as a true prophet proclaiming a word from the Lord.⁷⁴

In verse 6, Mark describes John’s clothing. The inclusion of these details in such a brief account suggests their significance. John’s clothing is typical of his wilderness location but may also be intended to recall Elijah, who is similarly clothed in 2 Kgs 1:8.⁷⁵ This parallel between Elijah and John’s clothing strengthens the identification of John as the Elijah-messenger of Malachi 3–4 (cf. Mark 1:2–3).⁷⁶ That John was dressed like a prophet draws further attention to his prophetic work of proclamation.

In verses 7–8, Mark again focuses on John’s work of proclamation.⁷⁷ This time John’s message is recounted in direct speech. Both John’s call to a baptism of repentance and his announcement of the greatness of the one to come serve to prepare the way for the Lord.

The subsequent passage in Mark (1:9–15) makes clear to the reader that Jesus was the one to whom John was referring. However, Mark does not record Jesus baptising with the Holy Spirit as John anticipated (Mark 1:8 cf. Mark 13:11). Instead, the reader is left to understand that the fulfilment of this promise will take place after the close of Mark’s narrative.⁷⁸ This may provide further implicit support for the idea that Mark’s Gospel represents only a beginning.

⁷⁴ So Cole (1989, 107).

⁷⁵ Contra. Guelich, who argues against “any direct allusion to Elijah” on the basis that leather belts “belonged to the dress of the wilderness nomad” (1998, 21). While John’s clothing may have corresponded to common nomadic attire, this does not explain why Mark includes a reference to his clothes in such a concise account. A deliberate echo of Elijah seems likely given the verbal correspondence with 2 Kgs 1:8 (LXX), the allusion to Mal 3:1 in Mark 1:2, and the comments of Jesus in Mark 9:11–13.

⁷⁶ Juel notes that the verses from Malachi 3 about the messenger who is to prepare the way, quoted in Mark 1:2, “were customarily taken by Jewish interpreters as a reference to Elijah, whose return is promised in Malachi 4” (1990, 32). See also France (2002, 69).

⁷⁷ The use of the imperfect may indicate that such proclamation was “John’s habitual activity” (Bratcher and Nida 1961, 21). See also Porter (1999, 21–22).

⁷⁸ As Brooks notes, “at various places Mark’s account points beyond itself by leaving promises unfulfilled” (1991, 41).

“Luke describes the fulfilment of John’s prophecy as having happened on the Day of Pentecost (Acts 2) and in the ongoing experience of Jesus’s followers (cf. Acts 4:8, 31; 9:17; 13:9, 52; Eph. 5:18)” (Schnabel 2017, 43–44). See also A. Stock (1989, 50); Marcus (2000a, 158).

4.2 *The contribution of the presentation of John the Baptist to the motif of proclamation*

Mark places proclamation at the centre of his presentation of John the Baptist. As Guelich notes, “the Baptist’s proclamation dominates this brief vignette in keeping with his role as herald” (1998, 26).⁷⁹ Indeed, it might be argued that proclamation was John’s primary task.⁸⁰

The importance of proclamation in John’s role is evident in numerous ways:

- (i) First, κηρύσσω is used twice to describe John’s ministry activity (Mark 1:4, 7). The focus on this aspect of John’s ministry is heightened if βαπτίζων in Mark 1:4 is intended as a title rather than a statement of activity (as this would leave κηρύσσω as John’s sole activity in the verse).⁸¹
- (ii) Second, John’s first reported words in the narrative are words of proclamation (1:7–8). The significance of dialogue is widely recognised in narrative criticism, and a character’s opening words often carry particular import.⁸² As Alter notes, the point at which dialogue first emerges is “worthy of special attention, and in most instances, the initial words spoken by a personage will be revelatory” (Alter 2011, 93). That John’s first words are words of proclamation heightens the reader’s focus on the motif and so contributes to the prominence of proclamation in Mark.
- (iii) Third, John is pictured as a prophet. The description of John’s clothing, location, and actions “reinforce his prophetic image” (France 2002, 69). The fundamental role of the prophet was proclamation.
- (iv) Fourth, more specifically, John is identified as the φωνή and Elijah-messenger of Mark 1:2–3. The task of this φωνή and ἄγγελος was proclamation to prepare the way for the Lord. It was “by proclaiming ... [that] John fulfills the promise of Isa 40:3 and accomplishes the task of the ‘voice ... crying in the wilderness to prepare the way of the Lord’” (Guelich 1998, 27).

⁷⁹ See, similarly Lenski (1961, 28).

⁸⁰ So Erdman (1918, 22).

⁸¹ The issue is a textual one. Some manuscripts include the article before βαπτίζων making this a substantival participle that functions as a title (John the Baptist came) [κ B L 33 282 pc bo]. Other manuscripts omit the article rendering the participle adverbial (John came baptizing) [A K P W 036 Θ 29 pc lat sy^p]. (H. Milton Haggard Centre for New Testament Textual Studies 2010, Mark 1:4). Two arguments support the inclusion of the article. First, in Mark 6:24, Mark uses the same phrase as a title for John. Second, it is reasonable to assume that a scribe might omit the article since it is unusual to use the participle in a title (elsewhere John is referred to as Ἰωάννου τοῦ βαπτιστοῦ cf. Mark 6:25). As Guelich notes, the reading ὁ βαπτίζων ... κηρύσσω “serves as the basis for the change to the alternative readings” (1998, 16). If this reading is correct, then κηρύσσω is highlighted as John’s only activity in Mark 1:4.

This reading is adopted by, inter alia, Guelich (1998, 16); France (2002, 65); Marxsen (1969, 31–34); Turner (1925, 145–56); Hooker (1991, 36–37); Focant (2012, 32); Gould (1922, 6); A. Black (1995, Mark 1:4–5); Jacobus (1915, 38); Mann (1986, 193, 195–96); Cranfield (1963, 40–41).

Importantly whichever text is preferred, Mark describes John’s baptismal activity in the context of his proclamation. The baptism John offers is a response to his call for repentance (van Iersel 2004, 96).

⁸² See, eg., Alter (2011, 81–82); Chris Paris and Everett Gossard, eds. (2020).

- (v) Fifth, John's proclamation serves as the beginning of the beginning of (the proclamation of) the gospel (cf. Mark 1:1). As Lane notes, "John was the first preacher of the good news concerning Jesus" (1974, 53).⁸³
- (vi) Sixth, the crowds' response to John suggests their recognition of him as a true prophet proclaiming the word of the Lord.

In these ways, Mark's presentation of John the Baptist contributes to the prominence of proclamation in the Gospel. The first human character in the narrative is introduced as a proclaimer, and his first words are words of proclamation.

By connecting John's proclamation with the composite quotation of Mark 1:2–3, Mark underlines the importance of proclamation in God's purposes.

For the reader, John's ministry of proclamation also foreshadows Jesus's ministry of proclamation and the proclamation of Jesus's followers. One indication of this connection between John, Jesus, and those who follow is a linguistic pattern in Mark's use of the Greek verbs κηρύσσω and παραδίδωμι. John proclaimed (1:4,7), was handed over (1:14), and killed (6:27). Likewise, Jesus proclaimed (1:14–15), was handed over (15:15), and was killed (15:25, 37). Similarly, it is anticipated that those who follow Jesus will proclaim (13:9–10), be handed over (13:9), and even be killed (13:12).⁸⁴ The implications of this for Mark's readers will be explored in more detail below.

In these ways, Mark's presentation of John contributes to the development of the motif of proclamation in Mark's Gospel and creates anticipation for the continuing development of the motif.

5. Mark 1:9–15

The fourth and final section of Mark's opening describes the appearance of Jesus (1:9–15). This brief introduction to the protagonist of the narrative also contributes to the motif of proclamation.

This section begins with a succinct account of Jesus's baptism (1:9–11) and temptation (1:12–13), which identifies Jesus as the one who was to come (cf. Mark 1:7) and installs him as the protagonist of the story.

In Mark 1:14–15, Mark begins to describe the ministry of Jesus. This description centres on Jesus's proclamation and so will be the focus of the following discussion.

Before engaging in a close reading of Mark 1:14–15, two crucial introductory issues will be addressed: the nature of Mark 1:14–15 as a summary statement; and the link between Mark 1:14–15 and Isaiah. Verses 14–15 will then be examined to identify their contribution to the motif of proclamation. Finally, the narrative function and rhetorical impact of Mark 1:14–15 will be considered.

⁸³ The same perspective appears in Luke-Acts where John's proclamation is viewed as the beginning of the proclamation of the gospel (Luke 16:16; Acts 10:37; 13:24–26).

⁸⁴ Cf. Thurston (2002, 10).

5.1 Mark 1:14–15 – Introductory issues

5.1.1 Mark 1:14–15 as a summary statement

Mark 1:14–15 has the form of a summary statement, summarising Jesus’s mission and message.⁸⁵ This is the first summary statement in the Gospel, and a number of scholars identify it as “the most important summary statement in the book” (Brooks 1991, 46).⁸⁶ Significantly, this opening summary statement focuses on Jesus’s proclamation. As LaVerdiere notes, “the opening summary describes Jesus’ entire mission and ministry as ‘proclaiming (*kerysson*) the gospel of God’ (1:14)” (1999, 60). Thus, while Mark’s Gospel contains frequent reference to Jesus’s miracles, this opening summary statement makes clear that the focus of Jesus’s ministry was proclamation (cf. Mark 1:38).⁸⁷

The reference to proclamation in this first summary statement, and the characterisation of the protagonist’s ministry as one of proclaiming, adds to the prominence of proclamation in Mark’s Gospel. That these verses contain the first direct speech of Jesus further indicates their significance.

Furthermore, C. Black argues that one of the reasons Mark uses summary statements is to “point up important theological issues or topics” (e.g., 1:21–22; 32–34; 3:11–12) (2011, 64). If this is the case, the emphasis on proclamation in this opening summary statement suggests that proclamation may be an important topic for Mark.

These verses also provide an outline of Jesus’s message in his own words. This outline plays a programmatic role in Mark’s narrative. In time Mark will identify κηρύσσων as Jesus’s characteristic activity (1:38–39), and as central to the mission of the disciples (3:14), however, none of these passages specify the content of this proclamation.⁸⁸ Instead, the reader is assumed to know the content from this opening programmatic outline. As Thurston notes, “Hereafter in Mark when the teaching or preaching of Jesus is mentioned without specified content, we are to ‘fill in the blank’ with 1:14–15” (2002, 18).⁸⁹

5.1.2 Mark 1:14–15 and Isaiah

As with other sections of Mark’s introduction, Mark 1:14–15 also contains significant echoes of Isaiah. Indeed Jesus’s message in 1:15 is “much like Isaiah’s message to the exiles in Babylon” (Guelich 1998, 46). Isaiah announces that the time of humiliation is filled up (ἐπλήσθη, Isa 40:2), the time of God’s favor has arrived (καὶ ῥῶ δεκτῶ, Isa 49:8), and God reigns (Βασιλεύσει σου ὁ θεός, Isa 52:7). Furthermore, in Isaiah, the one announcing God’s reign is described as εὐαγγελιζόμενος (Isa 52:7) (Dowd 2000,

⁸⁵ On the form of these verses as a summary statement, see Guelich (1998, 41).

⁸⁶ See, similarly Moloney (2004, 63); Marshall (1989, 36).

⁸⁷ Broadhead (2001, 24); LaVerdiere (1999, 61); Hicks (2013, 179).

⁸⁸ Indeed, as Marshall notes, 1:14–15 is “the only instance in Mark where the precise content of the ‘gospel’ is expressly spelled out” (1989, 38).

⁸⁹ See, similarly France (2002, 89–90).

13). Mark 1:14–15, therefore, presents Jesus as the Messiah-Herald of Isaiah (Isa 61:1 cf. Isa 40:9; 52:7) proclaiming the good news of God's reign (France 2002, 90–91).⁹⁰

5.2 A close reading of Mark 1:14

Mark 1:14 locates Jesus's ministry in space and time and serves as an introduction for Jesus's message in 1:15.⁹¹

With striking brevity, Mark notes that John was arrested (παραδοθῆναι).⁹² This signals the completion of the forerunner's work and marks the transition from John's ministry to Jesus. The proclamation of John is to be replaced by the proclamation of the one mightier than him.⁹³

The word παραδίδωμι is used later in Mark in connection with Jesus's arrest and death (3:19; 9:31; 10:33; 14:10–11; 14:18, 21, 41–42, 44; 15:1, 10, 15). In this way, John serves as a forerunner to Jesus not only in his ministry and message but also in his fate. παραδίδωμι is also used in connection with the anticipated fate of Jesus's followers (13:9, 11–12), suggesting that John serves as a prototype for all those who faithfully proclaim Christ.

After John παραδοθῆναι, ἦλθεν ὁ Ἰησοῦς εἰς τὴν Γαλιλαίαν. Mark's use of ἦλθεν picks up the language of John's promise of the "coming one" (1:7) and serves to reinforce Jesus's identity as the mightier one to come. The geographical reference establishes Galilee as the setting of Jesus's ministry (Strauss 2014, 79). In Isaiah 9, Galilee is linked with the hope of the coming King (Isa 9:1–7). In light of the references to Isaiah throughout Mark's introduction, such background is plausibly in view (although Mark, unlike Matthew, does not explicitly highlight this link (cf. Matt 4:12–17)).⁹⁴

Jesus came into Galilee κηρύσσων τὸ εὐαγγέλιον τοῦ θεοῦ. As in Mark 1:4 and 7, κηρύσσων here has "an official, authoritative sense; it is not simply a shouting ... but the public announcement or proclamation by an authorized herald" (A. Stock 1989, 61).⁹⁵ The first activity that Mark reports in Jesus's public ministry is, therefore, proclamation. The location of this reference to proclamation at such a crucial moment in the narrative contributes significantly to the prominence of the motif of proclamation in Mark's opening.

⁹⁰ For the relationship between the Messiah-Herald of Isa 61 and the Isaianic Servant of Isa 42–53, see: Kruger (2002, 1569–72); Strauss (1995, 325); Pao (2002, 76–77).

Clearly, within the context of Mark as a whole, Jesus is presented as more than just a herald of God's rule. He is the one who effects God's rule in history. As the King, Jesus brings the kingdom with him. The significance for the motif of proclamation of Jesus's identification as the Messiah-Herald-Servant of Isaiah will be considered in chapter 4 below.

⁹¹ Guelich (1998, 41); A. Black (1995, Mark 1:14–15).

⁹² In chapter 6 Mark provides more detail on John's arrest and execution (6:14–29).

⁹³ As France notes, this shift of focus may explain the absence of details regarding John's fate. To delay the narrative with details of John's handing over would "distract attention from his successor" (2002, 90).

⁹⁴ The significance of Galilee in Mark's Gospel has been the subject of extensive scholarly debate. See, e.g., Pickett (2005); Freyne (1988); Van Eck (1995).

⁹⁵ See also Mann (1986, 205).

Since κηρύσσω was also used of John the Baptist in 1:4, its repetition here suggests an element of continuity between the ministry of John and that of Jesus (J. Edwards 2002, 45). However, as will be seen in 1:15, Jesus's message goes beyond that of John.

Jesus's message is summarised in v.14 as τὸ εὐαγγέλιον τοῦ θεοῦ.⁹⁶ The genitive τοῦ θεοῦ may be plenary as Jesus's message is both *from* God and *about* his kingdom-rule (Bock 2005, 410).⁹⁷ The nature of this gospel is explicated further in 1:15.

5.3 A close reading of Mark 1:15

Mark 1:15 summarises Jesus's message in his own words.⁹⁸ Like John, Jesus's first words in the narrative are words of proclamation. Since Jesus is the protagonist in the story, this contributes significantly to the prominence of the motif of proclamation in Mark.

As noted above, the summary of Jesus's message in Mark 1:15 fulfils a programmatic function in Mark's Gospel and so will be given particular attention at this point of the analysis.

The message consists of two pairs of statements, "each constructed in synthetic parallelism" (Guelich 1998, 41). The first pair are declarative announcements in the perfect indicative; the second pair are present imperatives calling for a response. Together, these four statements comprise the heart of Jesus's message (van Iersel 2004, 106).

Jesus's first declarative statement is πεπλήρωται ὁ καιρός. Καιρός refers here not merely to the passing of chronological time (χρόνος) but to the arrival of a "fixed time" - a definitive moment in history (Danker et al. 2000, 498). It is often used in connection with the end-times (Danker et al. 2000, 498).

The use of πεπλήρωται suggests that this καιρός is the fulfilment of prophetic hope. The "time appointed by God for the fulfillment of his promises" has come (Brooks 1991, 47).⁹⁹ The passive voice implies that it is God at work bringing this about,¹⁰⁰ and the use of the perfect tense "indicates that this is not an announcement of something future, even imminent; the state of fulfilment already exists" (France 2002, 91).

Jesus's second declaration is ἤγγικεν ἡ βασιλεία τοῦ θεοῦ.¹⁰¹

The brevity of this statement (and the use of the article) suggests that the idea of a kingdom of God may have already been familiar to Mark's audience. Although the exact phrase βασιλεία τοῦ θεοῦ rarely occurs before the New Testament (cf. Dan 7:22), the idea of God's

⁹⁶ For the distinction between Mark's use of εὐαγγέλιον in 1:14–15 and 1:1, see 2.1.2 above.

⁹⁷ So also Bock (2015, 119); Boring (2012, 49). Marcus argues, on the basis of v. 15, that the "primary nuance" of the genitive here is objective. However, he acknowledges "a subjective nuance may also be present" (2000a, 172). More commonly the genitive is identified as subjective. See, for example J. Edwards (2002, 45); LaVerdiere (1999, 61); Hooker (1991, 54); Mann (1986, 205).

⁹⁸ That verse 15 is direct discourse is indicated by the epexegetic καὶ λέγων and the recitative ὅτι (Guelich 1998, 43; France 2002, 91; Focant 2012, 51; Turner 1925, 9–15).

⁹⁹ This reference to fulfilment also builds on the fulfilment of Scripture signaled earlier in Mark's prologue.

¹⁰⁰ For a discussion of the passive of divine activity as a circumlocution to avoid the direct mention of the activity of God – see Jeremias (1972, 12); A. Stock (1989, 61).

¹⁰¹ "Mark uses 'kingdom' (c. 15x) considerably less than Matthew (c. 50x) or Luke (c. 40x)," but the reference to the kingdom of God in this programmatic summary statement indicates its importance for Mark's portrait of Jesus's ministry (Guelich 1998, 43).

reign was common. The Old Testament regularly presents God as King (Exod 15:18; 1 Sam 12:12; Ps 5:2; 29:10; 47:7; 103:19; 97:1; 99:1; Isa 43:15) but also makes clear that all people did not acknowledge his rule.¹⁰² “There arose, therefore, the hope of a time when God would assert his authority in such a way that rebellion against him would be defeated, and all men would henceforth be obedient to his will (e.g., Isa 24:23)” (Hooker 2005, 55). In this way, God’s Kingship was both a present reality and a future hope. “When Jesus declares that the Kingdom of God has drawn near, therefore, he is speaking within the context of this expectation” (Hooker 2005, 55).

Jesus’s description of the kingdom of God as “at hand” (ἤγγικεν) has generated extensive scholarly debate over the past 100 years. A central issue in this debate is whether Jesus means that the kingdom has arrived or only drawn near. Linguistic studies, surveys of Jesus’s ministry and teaching on the kingdom, and the nature of the Old Testament background have led many to conclude that the phrase ἤγγικεν ἡ βασιλεία τοῦ θεοῦ is intentionally ambiguous and includes both the present and future dimensions of the kingdom.¹⁰³ As Guelich notes, “the ἤγγικεν of 1:15 maintains both the present but ‘hidden’ fulfillment of the Kingdom in Jesus’ ministry ... and the future consummation of the Kingdom in power” (1998, 44).

Jesus’s announcement that πεπλήρωται ὁ καιρὸς and ἤγγικεν ἡ βασιλεία τοῦ θεοῦ requires a response. This response is summarised by the twin imperatives μετανοεῖτε και πιστεύετε ἐν τῷ εὐαγγελίῳ. Both imperatives are durative presents calling for ongoing repentance and faith (rather than momentary acts).¹⁰⁴

The first response is μετανοεῖτε, which refers to a decisive change of heart, a radical turning away from evil and toward God and a new way of life (cf. Hos 6:1; Isa 1:10–12; Joel 2:12–13).¹⁰⁵

A call to repentance is also found in the summary of John’s proclamation (1:4) and that of the disciples (6:12). Here again is evidence of continuity in the proclamation of John, Jesus, and the disciples.

The second response that Jesus calls for is πιστεύετε ἐν τῷ εὐαγγελίῳ. The necessity of faith is an important theme in Mark.¹⁰⁶ Here Jesus calls for faith ἐν τῷ εὐαγγελίῳ. What this entails will be expanded on in subsequent chapters of Mark’s Gospel.¹⁰⁷

Since repenting and believing in the gospel is the path into the kingdom, there is a great need to proclaim repentance and the gospel. This leads naturally to Jesus’s calling of the disciples who will aid him in the spread of this message (1:16–20, see the discussion of the disciples’ role in chapter 4).

¹⁰² Particularly significant, given the Isaianic background of Mark’s opening, are the references in Isaiah to God’s rule as King. See, for example: Isa 6:5; 24:23; 33:17; 33:22; 41:21; 43:15; 44:6; 52:7.

¹⁰³ See, e.g., Beasley-Murray (1986, 73); Guelich (1998, 43–44); Strauss (2014, 82); Schnackenburg (1963, 141–42); Berkey (1963, 177–87); Ambrozic (1972, 23).

¹⁰⁴ Lenski (1961, 66–67); J. Edwards (2002, 47).

¹⁰⁵ Louw and Nida (1996, 509); Donahue (1988, 987); Moloney (2012, 50).

¹⁰⁶ See 1:15; 2:5; 4:10; 5:34; 5:36; 6:6; 9:19; 9:23; 10:52; 11:22–24 and the discussion in Marshall (1989).

¹⁰⁷ Stein (2008a, 74); Boring (2012, 51).

5.4 *The narrative function of Mark 1:14–15*

There is significant scholarly debate over the extent of Mark's opening and the function of Mark 1:14–15 in relation to that opening. Some argue that Mark 1:14–15 is the conclusion to Mark's prologue;¹⁰⁸ others that Mark 1:14–15 is the introduction to the next section of Mark and the public ministry of Jesus;¹⁰⁹ and others that Mark 1:14–15 is transitional and so serves to both conclude the prologue and introduce the next section of Mark.¹¹⁰ The view taken here is that Mark 1:14–15 concludes the prologue and that, together with the rest of the prologue, it introduces the remainder of Mark's Gospel.¹¹¹

Importantly, whichever view is adopted, Mark 1:14–15 plays a significant role in Mark's narrative. The reference to proclamation in Mark 1:14–15, therefore, takes on additional import and bolsters the case that proclamation is a prominent motif in Mark's Gospel.

Marshall argues that Jesus's proclamation in Mark 1:14–15 functions paradigmatically. Noting the "conspicuous location" of these verses at the beginning of Mark's Gospel, the way they are echoed in descriptions of the disciples' ministry, and the absence of a specific audience for Jesus's words, Marshall argues that the proclamation of Jesus in Mark 1:14–15 "provides a precedent or pattern which others in the story world, and beyond, are to emulate" (1989, 39). This potential paradigmatic function will be explored in greater detail below.

Achtemeier contends that the reference to Jesus's κηρύσσω in Mark 1:14 is programmatic and intended to subsume everything Jesus subsequently says and does under the rubric of proclamation (1975, 51–54).

5.5 *Mark 1:14–15 – a conclusion*

In his comments on Mark 1:14–15, Bock writes, "These final verses (vv.14–15) of Mark's introduction present several key terms: *Gospel, the time, the kingdom of God, repent, and believe*" (2015, 118). The evidence presented in this chapter suggests that this list should also include the term *proclamation*.

Mark 1:14–15 is a summary statement of Jesus's ministry and message that highlights the significance of proclamation for Jesus. The first activity that Mark reports in Jesus's public ministry is proclamation. Indeed, as LaVerdiere notes, Jesus's ministry is subsumed under the activity of proclamation (1999, 60). As with John, Jesus's first words in the narrative are words of proclamation. In this way, Mark portrays the protagonist of his narrative as a proclaimer.

Each of these observations contributes significantly to the prominence of the motif of proclamation in the Gospel.¹¹² This prominence is amplified by the location of these

¹⁰⁸ E.g., Keck (1966, 358–62); B. Johnson (2017, 30–65); Boring (1990, 55–59); A. Collins (2007, 134–35); Gnilka (1978, 39–40, 64–66).

¹⁰⁹ E.g., Marshall argues that vv.14–15 "provide an introduction to the entire ministry of Jesus, at least up until his final departure from Galilee in the last weeks of his life" (1989, 37). See also D. Nightingale (2012, 107–8); J. Cook (1995, 157); Moloney (2012, 27–28); France (2002, 60); Stein (2008a, 69); Matera 1988, (3–20).

¹¹⁰ Robbins (1982, 224–25); Dewey (1991, 225–26); C. Black (2011, 64); van Iersel (2004, 104–5).

¹¹¹ For a persuasive defence of this position, see Keck (1966, 358–62); B. Johnson (2017, 30–65).

¹¹² As Alicia Myers notes, the way in which a character is introduced plays a significant role in the rest of their characterisation (2012, 60).

references to proclamation at such a significant moment in the narrative and by the inclusion of a reference to proclamation in the opening summary statement of the book.

Mark's account of Jesus's proclamation also introduces the content of that proclamation in Jesus's own words. This summary of Jesus's message will serve a critical programmatic function in the book as a whole.

For the reader, Jesus's proclamation underlines the importance of proclamation in God's plan. It may also provide something of a paradigm for the reader to emulate.

6. Mark 1:1–15 and the motif of proclamation

The opening of Mark's Gospel contains several references to proclamation that serve to introduce the motif of proclamation to the reader. The significance of these references is amplified by their location at the beginning of the narrative.

6.1 Mark 1:1-15 and the prominence of the motif of proclamation

These opening references to proclamation contribute to the prominence of the motif of proclamation in three ways.

First, as noted, Mark's prologue introduces the major themes of the Gospel and provides "an interpretive grid" through which to interpret the story that follows (Whitenton 2017, 104). The concentration of references to proclamation in the Markan prologue, therefore, anticipates the prominence of proclamation in Mark as a whole.

Second, Mark's opening introduces both Jesus, the protagonist of the narrative, and John the Baptist, a significant secondary character, as proclaimers. Furthermore, the opening words of both these characters are words of proclamation. The presentation of these two characters as proclaimers contributes to the prominence of the Markan motif of proclamation.

Third, the location of these references to proclamation in the opening title, programmatic Old Testament quotation, initial summary statement, and throughout the prologue focus the reader's attention on the motif, thereby contributing to its prominence.

6.2 Mark 1:1-15 and the content of the motif of proclamation

The opening of Mark's Gospel also provides some significant content to the motif of proclamation. The reference to proclamation in the programmatic Old Testament quotation and the depiction of John's proclamation as a fulfilment of Old Testament prophecy suggests the importance of proclamation in God's plan. The importance of proclamation is reinforced by the emphasis on proclamation in the description of Jesus's ministry. Mark's account of Jesus's proclamation also introduces the content of that proclamation.

6.3 Mark 1:1-15 and the rhetorical impact of the motif of proclamation

These references to proclamation in Mark's opening would also have a significant rhetorical impact on Mark's readers. As Fowler notes, Mark 1:1–15 is "designed to function primarily for the reader" (2001, 19). The reader was also likely to give Mark's opening special attention.

After surveying ancient pedagogy and reading strategy, Hock notes that ancient readers would have paid particular attention to the beginning of Mark's narrative (2017, 304).

From the opening title (Mark 1:1), the reader is alerted to the motif of proclamation and prompted to look for its development as the narrative unfolds. In particular, the reader is invited to consider how the proclamation that *begins* in Mark might continue.

The allusions to proclamation in both the content and original context of the opening Old Testament quotation (1:2–3) build anticipation in the reader for the arrival of a messenger whose proclamation will prepare the way for the Lord. In this way, proclamation is brought to the foreground of the narrative and identified as a crucial part of God's plan.

Mark's portrayal of John, with its focus on his proclamation in fulfillment of the quotation in Mark 1:2–3, reinforces for the reader the importance of proclamation in God's plan. John's proclamation also serves as the beginning of the beginning of the proclamation of the gospel (cf. Mark 1:1) and anticipates the proclamation of Jesus and Jesus's followers – including Mark's readers.

Finally, Mark's introduction of Jesus, and in particular the opening summary statement on Jesus's ministry, also focuses on proclamation (1:14–15). Once again, this highlights for the reader the importance of proclamation in God's plan. Jesus's proclamation also "provides a precedent or pattern which others in the story world, and beyond, are to emulate" (Marshall 1989, 39).

7. Mark 1:1–15: a conclusion

Mark 1:1–15 provides a clear introduction to the motif of proclamation and signals the importance of the motif in the Gospel of Mark. The remaining chapters of this thesis will consider the development of this motif throughout the rest of Mark's Gospel. The following chapter now turns to those passages that associate the disciples of Jesus with the task of proclamation.

Chapter 4: The Disciples, Discipleship, and Proclamation

1. Introduction

The previous chapter has shown how Mark's opening (1:1–15) introduces the motif of proclamation. This study now turns to consider further passages in Mark, beyond the prologue, that contribute to the prominence, content, and rhetorical impact of this motif.

Two of the passages identified by the qualitative content analysis in chapter 2 as contributing to the motif of proclamation centre on Jesus's disciples (Mark 3:13–19; 6:7–13). These passages will be considered together in this chapter.

The disciples of Jesus have long been recognised as central figures in Mark's Gospel.¹ As LaVerdiere notes, "Mark's Gospel is not just a story about Jesus. It is a story about Jesus and his disciples" (1999, 50).

The importance of the disciples in Mark is evident from the first chapter. After the opening of the Gospel (1:1–15), Mark begins his account of Jesus's public ministry with the call of the first disciples (1:16–20). The disciples of Jesus are thus introduced earlier in Mark's Gospel than in the other Synoptics (cf. Matt 4:18–22; Luke 5:2–11). From this point, the disciples appear in almost every scene in the narrative and are the most frequently referenced characters after Jesus.²

One notable feature of Mark's portrayal of the disciples is their association with the task of proclamation. The prominence of the disciples in the narrative means that this association contributes significantly to the development of the motif of proclamation in Mark's Gospel.

This chapter will explore how Mark's presentation of the disciples contributes to the motif of proclamation. Two key passages will be examined – Mark 3:13–19 and 6:7–30. Both of these passages contain explicit references to proclamation.

These passages will be analysed with a close reading utilising the tools of narrative criticism, historical-grammatical exegesis, and rhetorical criticism. The focus of this analysis will be to determine the contribution of these passages to the prominence and content of the motif of proclamation in Mark. The chapter will close with a consideration of the potential rhetorical impact of this material on Mark's readers.

¹ See, e.g., Trocmé (1975, 142); Donahue (1983, 2); Meye (1968); Hengel (2005); Beavis (1989); Best (1981); Garland (2015, 388–454); S. Henderson (2006); C. Black (2012); K. Stock (1975); Breytenbach (1984).

² Danove (2005, 90); A. Black (1995, Mark 1:16–20).

2. A close reading of Mark 3:13–19

2.1 *An introduction to Mark 3:13–19*

Mark 3:13–19 describes Jesus’s appointment of the Twelve. In 3:14 this appointment is explicitly linked to the task of proclamation.

Significantly, it is Mark alone among the Synoptists who includes a reference to proclamation in his account of the appointment of the Twelve (cf. Matt 10:2–4; Luke 6:13–16). This reference to proclamation, therefore, satisfies Freedman’s criteria of avoidability (see chapter 1) since Matthew and Luke’s parallel accounts demonstrate that this story can be narrated without reference to proclamation. In this way, Mark 3:13–19 provides further evidence that proclamation is a motif in Mark.

2.2 *The mountain setting (Mark 3:13)*

The appointment of the Twelve occurs “on the mountain” (3:13). As is often the case in Mark’s Gospel, such a topographical note indicates the beginning of a new pericope (cf. 2:23; 3:1; 3:7), but it may serve an additional purpose as well (Gundry 1993, 163). Mark does not explicitly identify the mountain, which could suggest that its importance is primarily theological rather than geographical (Hooker 1991, 111). As Focant notes, “the lack of topographical precision invites us to seek the symbolic significance of the mountain” (2012, 131).³

The phrase καὶ ἀναβαίνει εἰς τὸ ὄρος (3:13a) resembles Exod 19:3 where Moses went up Mount Sinai.⁴ If this echo is deliberate, Mark’s use of this phrase in connection with the appointment of the Twelve may be intended to evoke Israel’s presence at Mount Sinai when God formed the twelve tribes of Israel into a nation to serve him as a kingdom of priests.⁵ The implications of this for the motif of proclamation in Mark will be considered below.

2.3 *Jesus’s call (Mark 3:13)*

In Mark 3:13, Jesus calls to himself “those whom he desired,” and they came to him. Suzanne Henderson argues, on the basis of LXX usage, that the verb προσκαλεῖται indicates the authority of the one who calls and suggests the importance of the task to which the person is summoned – which, in this case, includes proclamation (3:14) (2006, 146).⁶

³ See likewise A. Collins (2007, 215). The potential significance of this mountain may also be indicated by its designation as τὸ ὄρος when no previous mountain has been mentioned (Hurtado 2011, 61).

⁴ In the LXX, Exod 19:3a reads: καὶ Μωϋσῆς ἀνέβη εἰς τὸ ὄρος τοῦ θεοῦ ...

⁵ Boring (2012, 100); Marcus (2000a, 266); Le Peau (2017, 77); Malbon (1991a, 84). Representative of those who contest such a reading of Mark 3, Schnabel notes that “Moses does not select disciples on Sinai, and Jesus does not receive divine revelation on the mountain” (2017, 85). But such arguments overlook other significant parallels between Mark 3 and Exodus 19 – in particular, the language of calling and the potential parallel between the appointment of the Twelve and the vocation of Israel as a kingdom of priests (Exod 19:6) (see further discussion below).

⁶ Cf. Dowd (2000, 31); Iwuamadi (2008, 54); J. Edwards (2002, 111); Marcus (2000a, 266); Donahue and Harrington (2002, 146).

2.4 The appointment of twelve (Mark 3:14)

Having called those whom he desired, in Mark 3:14 Jesus “appointed Twelve.” That Jesus specifically appoints *twelve* is emphasised in three ways. First, the number twelve is repeated twice in this brief pericope (3:14; 3:16).⁷ Second, twelve men are listed by name. Since a number of those named are not mentioned again in Mark, their naming at this point may be to highlight the number appointed.⁸ Third, beginning here, the title “the Twelve” is used by Mark to designate the group (e.g., 3:16; 4:10; 6:7; 9:35; 10:32; 11:11).

While Mark gives no explicit explanation for the number appointed, twelve clearly corresponds with the number of tribes of Israel.

At the time of Jesus, there was an expectation of the eschatological restoration of Israel (cf. Isa 49:6; Ezek 45:8; Sir. 36:10–11; 48:10; *Pss. Sol.* 17:26–32; *Sib. Or.* 2.170–76; *T. Jos.* 19:1–7; Josephus, *Ant.* 11.133; Matt 19:28; Luke 22:28–30). Jesus’s appointment of the Twelve may therefore be associated with the fulfilment of this hope. Ed Sanders argues, “the expectation of the reassembly of Israel was so widespread, and the memory of the Twelve tribes remained so acute, that ‘twelve’ would necessarily mean ‘restoration’” (1985, 98). Similarly, Guelich contends that by appointing twelve, Jesus sets his ministry “within the context of God’s promise to restore all Israel” (1998, 165) and offers a “sign of the expected eschatological restoration of *all* God’s People” (158).⁹

If the appointment of the Twelve is associated with Israel, then their call to proclaim may suggest that they are to take up the vocation of renewed Israel.¹⁰ As noted above, in Exodus 19, Israel was called at Mount Sinai to be a kingdom of priests representing God to the nations (Exod 19:6) (Stuart 2006, 423). The book of Isaiah reflects on Israel’s unfaithfulness in this role (Isa 48:1–2; 52:5) (Childs 2001, 385), but also looks forward to their restoration and to the priestly work of renewed Israel (Isa 61:6 cf. 61:10; 66:21).¹¹ Indeed a restored and renewed Israel is to serve as a light to the nations (Isa 42:6; 49:3–6; 60:3) and reveal God’s glory and

⁷ Although the phrase, καὶ ἐποίησεν τοὺς δώδεκα (v. 16), is missing from some manuscripts, and regarded as a dittography of 3:14 by some scholars (e.g., Clark (1914, 108)) there are good reasons for its inclusion. First, there is some strong external evidence for its inclusion – see: κ B C* Δ 565. 579 sa^{ms}. Second, the clause resumes the thought of 3:14a after the long double ἵνα clause regarding the function of the Twelve (Guelich 1998, 154; France 2002, 157). This kind of repetition is a “common Markan device for resuming a narrative after an editorial insertion” (cf. 2:10; 3:8; 4:32) (Marcus 2000a, 265). Third, this phrase (or a similar one) is needed to introduce the accusative form of the names in the list which follows (Guelich 1998, 154; France 2002, 160). Fourth, the apparent repetitiveness of the phrase after 3:14 may have led to scribal excision of the phrase in some manuscripts (Bock 2005, 164).

⁸ So, for example, Philip, Bartholomew, Thomas and Thaddaeus are mentioned in Mark’s Gospel only in Mark 3:18.

⁹ See likewise Gundry (1993, 167–68); K. Stock (1975, 35–41); Gnilka (1978, 139); Strauss (2014, 159); Grundmann (1977, 101); Cranfield (1963, 127); Schweizer (1971, 81); Rengstorf (1964, 325–28).

¹⁰ There are examples in the Old Testament (Num 1:1–19, 44; 13:1–16; Deut 1:19–28) where twelve men are chosen as symbolic representatives for Israel as a whole. The Twelve may therefore be understood as representatives of a “new or renewed Israel” (Le Peau 2017, 77). Cf. Keener (1993, Mark 3:14–15). An interesting parallel is found among the eschatologically-orientated Qumran community who were led by a council of Twelve (1QS 8.1) (Marcus 2000a, 266–67).

¹¹ For other potential priestly allusions in Isaiah, see J. Davies (2004, 212–15).

salvation throughout the world (Isa 25:6–9; 43:10–12; 45:22–23; 49:22; 54:5; 56:3, 6–7; 60:3–7; 66:18–21).¹²

The significance of Isaiah for Mark's Gospel (see chapter 3 above) suggests that this Isaianic hope for renewed Israel may lie in the background of Mark's presentation of both Jesus's ministry and the work of the disciples in carrying on Jesus's ministry.

A similar picture of the fulfilment of the vocation of Israel may be seen in the letters of Paul. In his monograph on Paul and the vocation of Israel, Windsor demonstrates how Paul presents his own "apostolic gospel-preaching ministry" and the gospel-preaching ministry of others as "the fulfilment of certain positive scripturally-based eschatological expectations concerning Israel's divine vocation with respect to the nations" (2014, 137, 199). That is, the apostolic proclamation of Paul *and others* fulfils the eschatological global proclamatory vocation of Israel (2014, 98, 106).¹³

The possibility of this connection and its potential rhetorical impact on Mark's readers will be considered at the conclusion of this chapter.

2.5 *Whom he also named apostles (Mark 3:14)*

The note that Jesus named the Twelve "apostles" (3:14) underlines their role. Apostles are those who are sent to "speak and act with the authority of the one who sent them" (Bratcher 1981, 34). The Twelve are named apostles because they will be sent out as agents or representatives of Jesus, carrying out the tasks that he had come to do – including the task of proclamation (cf. Mark 1:14–15, 38–39).¹⁴

Some regard this note as a scribal assimilation to Luke 6:13.¹⁵ There are, however, good reasons for including it as original.¹⁶

First, there is significant external evidence for its inclusion.¹⁷ Second, the reference to "apostles" in Mark 6:30 appears to assume the Twelve have already been introduced as the apostles (Lührmann 1987, 70).¹⁸ Third, the inclusion of the phrase may represent the more difficult reading, given that it somewhat complicates the grammar of the sentence. Fourth, there is a possibility that an error of sight, caused by the repetition of two similar terms for "send" in 3:14, led to the accidental omission of the phrase in some manuscripts (Bock 2005,

¹² As Bird notes, this reading of Isaiah, with its understanding of Israel's positive role among the nations, is supported by the reception history of Isa 42:6 and 49:6 in both Jewish and Christian texts. See, for example: Tobit 13.11; Wisdom of Solomon 18.4; War Scroll 1.8; Testament of Levi 4.4; Luke 2:32; Acts 13:47; 26:23 (Bird 2020, 502). Wellhausen describes Israel in Isaiah as God's prophet (1958, 152).

¹³ In Sirach 36, a call for the gathering of all the tribes of Jacob (Sirach 36.13) is linked to the ultimate hope that "all who are on the earth will know that you are the Lord, the God of the ages" (Sirach 36.22, NRSV). See also 4Q164 and Sibylline Oracles 2.170–76 (S. Henderson 2006, 85–86).

¹⁴ Witherington III (2001, 424); Dowd (2000, 31).

¹⁵ See, e.g., Culpepper (2007, 107); Boring (2012, 99–100); Marcus (2000a, 263); Lane (1974, 131); A. Collins (2007, 214); Cranfield (1963, 127); and more tentatively France (2002, 157); Brooks (1991, 71).

¹⁶ So, *inter alia*, Guelich (1998, 154); Gundry (1993, 164); J. Edwards (2002, 113); and more tentatively Dowd (2000, 31); Schnabel (2017, 86).

¹⁷ Inclusion is supported by: \times B C* W 037 Θ 28 1005 f¹³ it^b e^f ff² q sy^{hmg} co. The clause is omitted by A, C², 07 09 L 0133 f¹ Majority text. See also the discussion in Gundry (1993, 168); Metzger (1994, 69).

¹⁸ Cf. Gundry (1993, 168).

428). Finally, while the inclusion of this phrase is sometimes identified as scribal assimilation to Luke 6:13, it might also be argued that Luke's inclusion of a parallel phrase is dependent on Mark.

If, as argued here, the phrase is original, it heightens the emphasis in this pericope on the vocation of the Twelve and their being sent out to proclaim and have authority over demons.

2.6 The reason for their appointment (Mark 3:14–15)

In Mark 3:14b–15, Mark outlines the purpose of the appointment of the Twelve with two subordinate ἵνα clauses. First, the Twelve are appointed to “be with” Jesus. Second, they are appointed to be sent out by Jesus to proclaim and have authority over demons.

2.6.1 That they might be with him

The first purpose for the appointment of the Twelve is to *be with* Jesus (ἔσθιν μετ' αὐτοῦ, 3:14). In Mark, this phrase always includes “physical presence” (K. Stock 1975, 17–18). The Twelve will leave their homes and vocations and journey with Jesus as he engages in his itinerant ministry. In this way, they are distinguished from the crowds who come and go from Jesus's presence (France 2002, 159).

However, in Mark's Gospel, the Twelve “being with” Jesus involved more than just travelling with him. It also entailed involvement in Jesus's work (cf. Mark 6:41). The Twelve would participate in his ministry and eventually continue it (Guelich 1998, 53, 164).¹⁹

2.6.2 That they might be sent out

The second reason for Jesus's appointment of the Twelve is that he might send them out. Their appointment is not for their benefit alone - Jesus intends to send them out to others.

The purpose of this sending out is outlined with two parallel infinitives (3:14b–15).

- (i) First, they are sent out to proclaim (κηρύσσειν) – that is, act as heralds, “accurately and authoritatively proclaiming the message committed to them” (Hiebert 1994, 93).

As noted above, it is Mark alone among the Synoptists who includes a reference to proclamation with the appointment of the Twelve (cf. Matt 10:2–4; Luke 6:13–16). Given the importance of the Twelve throughout Mark's narrative, the fact that they are appointed to proclaim contributes significantly to the prominence of the motif of proclamation in Mark's Gospel. Jesus, the protagonist of Mark's Gospel, has already been introduced as a proclaimer. Now the Twelve, who after Jesus are the primary continuing characters in the Gospel, are called to proclaim. The involvement of these central Markan characters in the task of proclamation

¹⁹ Cf. Moloney (1981, 514).

supports the contention that proclamation is a prominent motif in Mark's Gospel.

The content of the proclamation of the Twelve is not stated, but since they are sent to proclaim by Jesus (as his apostles), and their ministry of preaching and exorcism parallels his (cf. 1:39), it may be assumed that they were to preach his message, outlined in summary form in 1:14–15 (see also Matt 10:7 and Luke 9:2, and the discussion of Mark 6:12 below).

- (ii) The second purpose for their sending out is that they might have authority to drive out demons (ἐκβάλλειν τὰ δαιμόνια, Mark 3:15). In addition to *proclaiming* the message, the Twelve are to be given authority to *demonstrate* the message by casting out demons.²⁰

Jesus's authority and power over demons feature prominently in Mark's summaries of Jesus's ministry (1:21–28; 1:34; 2:10; 3:11). Now Jesus confers this authority on the Twelve, enabling them to continue and extend his mission (J. Edwards 2002, 179).

In summary, the two tasks anticipated for the Twelve - preaching and casting out demons – parallel Jesus's own ministry (cf. 1:39).²¹ In this way, the Twelve are portrayed as those who will “participate in and continue the very ministry of Jesus” (Iwuamadi 2008, 66).²²

2.7 Mark 3:13–19: the prominence and content of the motif of proclamation – a summary

Mark's account of the appointment of the Twelve in Mark 3:13–19 includes an explicit reference to proclamation. One reason the Twelve are appointed is that they might be sent out to proclaim. That they are named *apostles* underlines the significance of this role.

If the mountain setting of this pericope and the appointment of *twelve* apostles is intended to associate the Twelve with Israel, then their appointment to proclaim may suggest they are to take up the vocation of renewed Israel. Just as renewed Israel was meant to be a light of revelation to the nations, now the Twelve are to fulfil that role (Strauss 2014, 163).²³

²⁰ The popular Judaism of Jesus's day “believed that the subduing of demons would characterize the messianic age” (J. Edwards 2002, 114).

²¹ A. Collins (2007, 217); S. Henderson (2001, 8–11).

²² Cf. Strauss (2014, 159); Boring (2012, 102).

²³ A further possible parallel between the vocation of renewed Israel and the role of Jesus's disciples in Mark may be found in Mark 4. In Mark 4:11 Jesus assures the disciples that they have been given “the secret of the Kingdom of God.” That is, they have been entrusted with divine revelation (see also: 4:34; 7:17–23; 8:31; 9:2–13; 9:31; 10:10–12; 10:32–34; 13:3–27). In the case of Israel, possession of divine revelation was connected to their vocation – and in particular their role among the nations. Israel had been entrusted with divine revelation (Ezek 20:11; Neh 9:13–14 cf. Rom 3:2) and they were to serve as a kingdom of priests bringing God's revelation to the nations (Exod 19:5–6; Deut 32:43 LXX; Isa 60–61; Ps 96:3; 1 Chr 16:24; cf. 1 Enoch 105.1; Josephus, *Against Apion* 2.123; 2.261; 2.282; *Jewish War* 7.45). See the discussion in Windsor (2014, 67–68, 78–81, 95). Significantly for this discussion, the immediate context of Mark 4:11 is a series of

Whether or not Mark intends this allusion to the proclamatory vocation of renewed Israel, the Twelve are explicitly appointed to proclaim. This underlines the importance of the task of proclamation. Furthermore, Mark describes the task of the Twelve in language that echoes Jesus's own ministry, portraying the Twelve as called to continue Jesus's mission.

The significance of the Twelve in the narrative as a whole adds weight to this reference to proclamation and ensures that it contributes considerably to the prominence of the motif of proclamation in Mark's Gospel.

That the Twelve are appointed to be sent out to proclaim also builds anticipation for the reader, who now awaits the fulfilment of this plan. The potential rhetorical impact of this material on the reader will be considered at the conclusion of the chapter.

3. A close reading of Mark 6:7–13, 30

The second passage to be considered in this chapter is Mark 6:7–13 (together with 6:30) – another passage that explicitly links Jesus's disciples with the task of proclamation.

3.1 An introduction to Mark 6:7–13

Mark 6:7–13 describes a sending out of the Twelve that is anticipated in Mark 3:13–16. The Twelve had been *with* Jesus, and now they are *sent out* to proclaim and exercise authority over unclean spirits (cf. Mark 3:14–15). In Mark 6:30, the apostles return to Jesus and report “all they had done and taught.” Between these passages, Mark includes an account of the execution of John the Baptist. The following close reading will focus on the contribution of these passages to the prominence and content of the motif of proclamation in Mark's Gospel.

3.2 The structure of Mark 6:7–13

Mark 6:7–13 may be divided into three sections: (i) Jesus's commissioning of the Twelve (v. 7); (ii) Jesus's instructions to the Twelve (vv. 8–11); and (iii) a summary of the mission activities of the Twelve (vv. 12–13). The following close reading will consider each of these sections in turn.

3.3 Mark 6:7

3.3.1 Preliminary observations

In Mark 6:7, Jesus calls the twelve to him and begins to send them out. As in 3:13, the verb προσκαλεῖται denotes an authoritative act and may suggest the importance of the task which follows the summons (S. Henderson 2006, 146).²⁴

parables which can be understood as referring to the task of proclamation (see further discussion in chapter 6 below).

Notably, the reader of Mark is also given this revelation which may place on them the same obligation to bring God's revelation to others. This possibility will be considered in more detail below.

²⁴ In Acts 13:2 and 16:10 προσκαλέω is used in connection with being set apart for mission (Boring 2012, 174).

Jesus's authority is also implied in the word ἀποστέλλειν, which can have the technical sense of sending an authorised representative to act in one's place. Although Mark uses ἀποστέλλω in a general sense elsewhere (3:31; 4:29; 5:10; 6:17), the reference to Jesus giving the Twelve authority (6:7), the parallels between the ministry of the Twelve and that of Jesus (6:12–13), and the Twelve reporting back to Jesus (6:30), suggest that the Twelve are sent out here as “authorised representatives of Jesus” to continue and extend his mission – including his proclamation.²⁵

Jesus's sending out of the Twelve *two by two* may reflect a pragmatic concern for companionship, support, and safety, but it could also relate to the Jewish law requiring a minimum of two witnesses (Num 35:30; Deut 17:5; 19:15). That they were divided up at all enabled them to cover a wider area and possibly implies something of the breadth and urgency of the proclamation task.²⁶

Jesus giving the Twelve ἐξουσίαν over evil spirits further links this passage with Jesus's appointment of the Twelve in Mark 3:13–16. In this way, the sending out of the Twelve in Mark 6 is portrayed as the initial fulfilment of Jesus's plan in Mark 3:13–16.

3.3.2 The absence of a reference to proclamation?

There is no explicit reference to proclamation in Mark 6:7. Commenting on this, Hahn suggests that the absence of any such reference to proclamation indicates that “the preaching of God's Kingdom turns out no longer to have been of dominating importance for the Marcan church” (1965, 44).

There are, however, good reasons to conclude that proclamation was assumed in the commission of Mark 6:7.

First, Mark 6:7 echoes Mark 3:13–15, suggesting that the sending described in Mark 6:7 is for the purpose outlined in Mark 3:14–15. Both passages concern the Twelve, and there are significant lexical parallels between them - both contain the words προσκαλεῖται (3:13; 6:7);²⁷ ἀποστέλλω (3:14; 6:7); and ἐξουσίαν (3:15; 6:7) - and both refer to ἐξουσίαν in relation to demons or unclean spirits.²⁸ These lexical and thematic parallels suggest that in Mark 6:7, the Twelve are sent out to proclaim and have authority over demons, as anticipated in Mark 3:13–15.

Second, as noted above, Jesus appears to send the Twelve as his authorised representatives to continue and extend his mission. Their ministry could, therefore, be expected to be patterned after his and involve the activities that characterised his ministry (Strauss 2014, 247).²⁹ To this point in Mark, proclamation has been a notable

²⁵ Boring (2012, 174); Culpepper (2007, 194); Guelich (1998, 321); Lane (1974, 206–7).

²⁶ The urgency of Jesus's mission may already have been signalled in Mark by the relentless movement of Jesus (cf. 1:38) (Moloney 1981, 498) and by the “pace” and style of Mark's narrative (Carey 2019, 432).

²⁷ While Mark often uses the participial form of προσκαλέομαι (e.g., 3:23; 7:14; 8:1, 34; 10:42; 12:43); the present indicative form occurs only in 3:13 and 6:7. Cf. Guelich (1998, 321).

²⁸ Cf. also κηρύσσω in 3:14 and 6:12.

²⁹ Cf. Dowd (2000, 63).

component of Jesus's mission (1:14–15; 1:38–39) and so should be expected from the Twelve.

Third, the instruction in v. 11 of what to do if any place “does not listen” implies they were announcing a message.

Fourth, as noted above, the sending out two by two may have been for the purpose of validating their testimony – which would imply they were bringing a testimony.

Finally, and most significantly, the summary description of their activity in v. 12 explicitly includes proclamation. According to Mark, the Twelve went out and “proclaimed that people should repent” (6:12).

It is, therefore, reasonable to conclude that Jesus's commission of the Twelve in Mark 6:7 implicitly includes a call to proclaim. Indeed, as S. Henderson notes, “Mark's omission of the preaching task in 6:7 may simply reflect an underlying assumption that missionary work automatically entails verbal proclamation ...” (2006, 165).³⁰

3.3.3 Jesus ἤρξατο αὐτοὺς ἀποστέλλειν

In describing the sending out of the Twelve, Mark writes that Jesus ἤρξατο αὐτοὺς ἀποστέλλειν. The construction ἄρχομαι + infinitive occurs frequently in Mark.³¹ Some argue that Mark's use of ἄρχομαι is a Semitic idiom (e.g., Dalman 1909, 26–28). Others contend that it is a common form of narrative transition (e.g., Hunkin 1924, 395–402). But these observations do not necessarily rule out a particular significance for the phrase in Mark 6:7.³²

In Mark 3:14, the Twelve were appointed to be with Jesus and to be sent out. Having been with Jesus from that point, they are now to be sent out for the first time. This, then, is the *beginning* of them being sent out.

If Mark's use of ἤρξατο in Mark 6:7 highlights this beginning, this has at least two important implications for the present discussion.

First, it may imply that there were other occasions when Jesus sent out the Twelve to proclaim.³³ The possibility of ongoing or further proclamation is also suggested by the warning regarding rejection in v. 11 since it refers to something outside of the narrative (see discussion below).³⁴

Second, this reference to Jesus *beginning* to send them out to proclaim echoes the title of Mark (1:1), which uses the cognate noun ἀρχή to refer to the beginning of the proclamation of Jesus Christ (see discussion in chapter 3 above). The proclamation of

³⁰ Cf. Culpepper (2007, 197); France (2002, 250).

³¹ E.g., Mark 1:45; 2:23; 4:1; 5:17, 20; 6:2, 7, 34; etc. See Culpepper (2007, 194) cf. Marcus (2000a, 382).

³² Cf. Marcus (2000a, 382–83).

³³ Schnabel (2017, 137); Lyttelton (1895, 57).

³⁴ Ongoing proclamation may also be suggested by the use of imperfect verbs ἐδίδου and παρήγγειλεν in 6:7–8. So, tentatively France (2002, 246). Mark 13 also anticipates continued proclamation beyond the narrative (see discussion in chapter 6 below).

the Twelve might thus be understood as part of the beginning of the proclamation of the gospel of Jesus Christ.

3.4 Mark 6:8–11

Mark 6:8–11 records Jesus’s instructions to the Twelve. They are to take only the bare minimum for travelling (6:8–9).³⁵ While this would serve to encourage and demonstrate dependence on God alone,³⁶ it may also imply the urgency of their proclamation task.

If they are welcomed into a house, they are to accept that hospitality rather than seeking out more comfortable or preferable accommodation (6:10).³⁷ Conversely, if any place will not welcome them or listen to them, they are to “shake the dust” off their feet when they leave as a testimony against them (6:11). Shaking off dust is patently a symbolic or prophetic action, but its precise meaning is debated.³⁸ However the action is understood, it communicates the seriousness of rejecting the Twelve and their message.

The instruction in Mark 6:11 foreshadows the warnings given in Mark 13:9–13. It also transcends the story's narrative frame as there is no indication in the summary of the Twelve’s mission that they faced such opposition (cf. 3:12–13, 30).³⁹ This instruction may therefore anticipate further missionary activity.

3.5 Mark 6:12–13

Mark 6:7–13 closes with a brief summary of the mission activities of the Twelve (6:12–13). It is a positive report, and in many ways constitutes the high point for the disciples in Mark’s Gospel (Culpepper 2007, 197).

In obedience to Jesus’s commission, the Twelve “went out” and “proclaimed that people should repent” (6:12). Where proclamation was just implied in Mark 6:7, here, in the report of the Twelve’s activity, it is made explicit.⁴⁰

The Twelve’s message of repentance parallels the message of John the Baptist and Jesus himself. Hooker argues that the message of the Twelve is closer to the message of John than Jesus (Hooker 1991, 157). However, in light of the other parallels drawn to Jesus’s ministry, it seems likely that Mark 6:12 is Mark’s “shorthand way of summarizing Jesus’ full proclamation

³⁵ Heil (2001, 135); Rogers (2004, 177–78).

³⁶ So Cole (1989, 173); Cranfield (1963, 200).

³⁷ Boring (2012, 176); Pesch (1977, 329).

³⁸ Some compare it to the Jewish practice of shaking off dust upon returning from gentile territory (cf. Str-B 1:511). Others suggest it serves as a curse or pronouncement of judgment. So A. Collins (2007, 301–2). Still others, that it represents a warning that the Twelve have fulfilled their responsibility and that “those who had rejected the mission would have to answer to God” (Lane 1974, 208–9).

³⁹ Iwuamadi (2008, 100); Marcus (2000a, 390–91).

⁴⁰ ἵνα is best understood here to signal the content of their proclamation rather than the goal of the proclamation since Mark often uses an epexegetic ἵνα after verbs of speaking (see, for example: 3:9; 5:10; 5:18; 6:8; 6:25; 14:35) (Gundry 1993, 310; Iwuamadi 2008, 93).

– the time is fulfilled, the kingdom of God is at hand, so repent and believe” (Strauss 2014, 253).⁴¹

In addition to their proclamation, the Twelve also exorcised demons and healed people (6:13) – actions that demonstrated the nearness of God’s kingdom. The ministry of the Twelve, involving proclamation, exorcism, and healing, clearly parallels the ministry of Jesus (cf. Mark 1:32–34, 39; 3:10–12; 6:2, 6b).⁴² In this way, Mark portrays the Twelve as extending the mission of Jesus in his absence (cf. Mark 13:33–37 and discussion in chapter 6).⁴³

Notably, in summarising the mission of the Twelve, Mark uses an aorist verb for proclamation (ἐκήρυξαν; 6:12) but imperfect verbs for their other activities (ἐξέβαλλον, ἤλειφον, ἐθεράπευον; 6:13). This difference may suggest a distinction in prominence.

Although the discussion of verbal aspect in Koine Greek continues to arouse significant scholarly dispute, there is general agreement that “verbal aspect ... plays a role in ... indicating discourse prominence” (Mathewson 2010, 40).⁴⁴

Among those who hold that verbal aspect functions to indicate prominence, the predominant position (regarding narrative) is that the aorist tense-form *generally* carries the “mainline” of narrative proper, while the imperfect tense-form most commonly carries “offline,” supplementary, or background information.⁴⁵ Decker’s study of the imperfect tense in Mark 1–8 offers significant support for this position as it applies to Mark’s Gospel (2013b, 360).

If this proposal is valid, Mark’s use of the aorist ἐκήρυξαν with the imperfects ἐξέβαλλον and ἤλειφον and ἐθεράπευον may suggest he intends to give the activity of proclamation some

⁴¹ Gundry tentatively suggests that Mark may limit the preaching of the Twelve to repentance, because that is the only theme common to the preaching of Jesus and John the Baptist (1:4) (1993, 310).

⁴² Strauss (2014, 253); Schnabel (2017, 139).

⁴³ The disciples’ role in extending the ministry of Jesus may also be implicitly represented in the feeding miracles as Jesus involves the disciples in his ministry of feeding the crowds (Mark 6:37, 41; 8:6).

⁴⁴ See, e.g., Fanning (1990, 74–75); S. Wallace (1982, 208–9, 216); Porter (2009, 55–57); J. Reed (1995, 84–85); Naizer (2009, 43, 53–54); du Toit (2017, 209–10); C. Campbell (2007, 92–93, 98); Cirafesi (2013, 59, 163). See also additional references below. Contra Barnard (2006).

Mathewson proposes that aspect indicates prominence because “aspect is concerned with the author’s perspective on happenings within the discourse” (2010, 42).

⁴⁵ Fanning (2011, 173, 179–81); Fanning (1990, 191, 247–248); C. Campbell (2007, 92–98, 108, 115, 125–26); Graham (2018, 84); Emden (1954, 124); Decker (2001, 107); Longacre (1999, 177, 196); Levinsohn (2016, 179–80); Levinsohn (2000, 174–75); du Toit (2017, 209–10); Runge (2010, 129–30).

Importantly, this does not require that each “tense-form is part of an unchanging cline of prominence” (Runge 2010, 7) or that prominence is “a part of the semantics of verbal aspect” (Barnard 2006, 16 cf.; Fanning 1990, 85).

element of prominence over healing and casting our demons.⁴⁶ The mention of proclamation first offers further support for this conclusion.⁴⁷

3.6 *Mark 6:14–29: an intercalation – the death of John the Baptist*

Mark’s account of the mission of the Twelve concludes in 6:30, when the Twelve, identified as “the apostles,” “returned to Jesus and told him all that they had done and taught.”⁴⁸ Before this, however, Mark intercalates the story of John the Baptist’s execution (6:14–29).

From a narrative perspective, this account of John’s death creates a “passage of time” for the mission of the Twelve.⁴⁹ But intercalations in Mark generally serve more than a narrative purpose. Mark tends to intercalate stories that “interpret each other.”⁵⁰

Consistent with this practice, the story of John’s execution provides “meaning to the flanking passages” (Moloney 2001b, 657).⁵¹

First, the placement of John’s execution at this point in the Markan narrative underlines that John’s death did not silence his message of repentance (Grassmick 1983, 127). John’s message continues to be proclaimed by the Twelve.⁵²

Second, John’s death not only anticipates the death of Jesus, it also foreshadows the potential fate of the Twelve. Just as John proclaimed, was handed over and killed – so Jesus’s followers are to proclaim and may be handed over and killed (cf. Mark 8:34–38; 13:9, 11–12) (Hurtado 2011, 94). In this way, Mark uses the story of John’s death to illustrate the “potential cost of participating” in the work of proclamation (Le Peau 2017, 118).⁵³

3.7 *Mark 6:7–30: the prominence and content of the motif of proclamation – a summary*

Mark 6:7–30 describes a sending out of the Twelve that is anticipated in Mark 3:13–19. The Twelve went out and “proclaimed that people should repent.” Though other ministry activities are also reported, it appears that Mark gives some emphasis to the task of proclamation.

⁴⁶ Cirafesi seeks to nuance the discussion of the discourse function of verbal aspect by suggesting a distinction between prominence and markedness. For Cirafesi, prominence is “markedness that is motivated” (2013, 61). So, for example, Cirafesi contends that while the perfect tense form is marked, it is “only prominent when an adequate explanation is given of its contribution to a text’s overall meaning” (66). See similarly Halliday (1977, 112). If such a distinction is valid, it should be noted that Mark’s use of the aorist ἐκήρυξαν is consistent with his interest in the motif of proclamation elsewhere in the Gospel, and so might plausibly be identified as an intentional marker of prominence.

⁴⁷ Attention to such prominence marking devices plays a critical role in establishing an author’s intent (Runge 2010, 62). In this case, they suggest Mark’s interest in emphasising proclamation.

⁴⁸ The identification of the Twelve as ἀπόστολοι links v. 30 with vv. 7–13 (Moloney 2001b, 648–49).

⁴⁹ Broadhead (2001, 62); Deppe (2015, 52).

⁵⁰ See, e.g., Mark 3:20–35; 5:21–43; 11:12–25; 14:1–11. Cf. Broadhead (2001, 62); Strauss (2014, 149); Hurtado (2011, 94); France (2002, 19); Deppe (2015, 30–36).

⁵¹ Contra Hooker (1991, 158).

⁵² This observation is underlined by the similarity in the proclamation of John and the Twelve (1:4 cf. 6:12).

⁵³ Cf. J. Edwards (2002, 183); Iwuamadi (2008, 114); Strauss (2014, 249–50); Wright Jr. (1985, 239).

The Twelve are central characters in the Markan narrative. Their involvement in the task of proclamation therefore contributes significantly to the prominence of the motif of proclamation in Mark's Gospel.

Mark 6:7–30 also provides some important content to the motif.

The instructions that Jesus gives to the Twelve (Mark 6:8–11) suggest something of the urgency of this proclamation task and the seriousness of not listening to the proclaimed message.

The intercalation of John's death illustrates the potential cost of participating in the work of proclamation.

Mark's use of ἡρξατο (6:7) connects this pericope to the title of the Gospel and may suggest that the proclamation of the Twelve is part of the beginning of the proclamation of Jesus Christ (cf. Mark 1:1).

Indeed, Mark portrays the activity of the Twelve in a way that parallels the ministry of Jesus and so continues and extends his mission in his absence. This again highlights the importance of proclamation.

The potential rhetorical impact of this material on the reader will be considered at the conclusion of the chapter.

4. The contribution of Mark 3:13–19 and 6:7–13 to the prominence and content of the motif of proclamation: a conclusion

Proclamation features prominently in Mark's portrayal of the disciples of Jesus. The disciples are appointed (3:13–19) and sent (6:7–13) to proclaim.

Mark alone among the Synoptists includes a reference to proclamation in his account of the appointment of the Twelve (3:14) satisfying Freedman's criteria of avoidability and supporting the identification of proclamation as a motif in Mark's Gospel.

The disciples' involvement in the task of proclamation also contributes to the prominence of the Markan motif of proclamation in two significant ways. First, the disciples' proclamation in Mark is presented alongside the proclamation of Jesus and John the Baptist. The involvement of all these key Markan characters in the task of proclamation contributes to the prominence of the motif of proclamation in Mark. Second, the proclamation of the disciples relates the significant Markan theme of discipleship with the motif of proclamation. This interaction heightens the prominence of the motif of proclamation since motifs are intensified by association with other major themes or motifs.

Mark's portrayal of the disciples and their involvement in the task of proclamation also provides some valuable content regarding the motif of proclamation. Jesus's appointment of the Twelve to be sent out to proclaim implies the importance of proclamation in God's purposes. Jesus's instructions to the Twelve as he sends them out underline this importance and suggest the urgency of this task. These instructions also encourage dependence on God in the carrying out of the task. The intercalation of John's death and Jesus's instructions in 6:11 anticipate the potential cost of participating in the work of proclamation. Finally, Mark's portrayal of the

disciples' proclamation presents it as a continuation of Jesus's own mission and as part of the *beginning* of the proclamation of Jesus Christ.

The rhetorical effect of this material on Mark's readers is tied to the rhetorical role of the disciples in Mark more broadly. This chapter concludes with an extended reflection on this potential rhetorical impact.

5. The rhetorical impact of the disciples and their proclamation in Mark

5.1 *The rhetorical role of the disciples*

The rhetorical role of the disciples in Mark has attracted considerable scholarly attention. Indeed, C. Black identifies the role of the disciples in Mark as a "storm center" in Markan studies (2012, 34).⁵⁴ This scholarly interest is a product of both the prominence of the disciples in the narrative and Mark's complex and ambiguous portrayal of them.⁵⁵

As France insightfully notes, the disciples in Mark are "far too prominent" to be merely a matter of historical reminiscence (2002, 28). Instead, Mark's portrait of the disciples, including their connection to the task of proclamation, also serves a rhetorical purpose.⁵⁶

In his discussion of the rhetorical role of the disciples in Mark, Danove argues persuasively that the "initial evocation and cultivation of positive beliefs about the disciples in 1:16–3:13" encourages the authorial audience, "to identify with the disciples" (2005, 125).⁵⁷ This identification is maintained even as "negative content" encourages the audience to "assume a very negative and critical stance toward the disciples' erroneous thinking and improper actions" (125).

Tannehill draws a similar conclusion, arguing that the "initial positive evaluation" of the disciples of Jesus in Mark "encourages the natural tendency of Christian readers to identify with Jesus' followers in the story" (1979, 70).⁵⁸ Those readers of Mark who were already followers of Jesus would relate most easily and immediately to characters in the narrative who respond appropriately to Jesus (Tannehill 1977, 392). This tendency remains even as

⁵⁴ See also Hanson (1998, 131).

⁵⁵ There is a general consensus that Mark offers a more negative portrayal of the disciples than the other Gospels. See, e.g., Evans (1990, 155); Hurtado (1996, 12).

⁵⁶ Incigneri identifies the portrayal of the disciples as one of Mark's "key means of persuasion" (2003, 320). Shiner (1995) offers an exploration of the function of the disciples in Markan rhetoric but focuses almost exclusively on their role in "the portrayal of Jesus" (30). While the disciples do appear to serve as foils for Mark's presentation of Jesus, the observations outlined in this chapter suggest that their rhetorical function extends beyond this.

⁵⁷ Mark 13:14 may provide an implicit indication that Mark's readers were expected to identify with the disciples, since the phrase "let the reader understand" appears to assume that Mark's readers are to hear words originally spoken to the disciples as directed to them (see further discussion in chapter 6 below).

⁵⁸ The positive evaluation of the disciples is influenced by their initial response to Jesus, their close association with Jesus, their being entrusted with the secret of the kingdom (4:11), Jesus's defense of their actions (Mark 2:15–17; 2:23–28; 7:1–16), the success of their first mission (6:12–13), and through contrast with those who oppose and reject Jesus (Moloney 1981, 488).

Mark highlights the disciples' fear, self-concern, slowness to understand, and lack of faith (Tannehill 1979, 70).⁵⁹

The identification of the reader with the disciples facilitates Mark's presentation of the disciples as a "paradigm for discipleship that he intends his readers to emulate" (Winn 2008, 140).⁶⁰ That the disciples in Mark serve as a "pedagogical tool for teaching [Mark's] readers how to live as disciples themselves" is a "commonly recognised position" in Markan studies (Winn 2008, 140).⁶¹

Mark's portrayal of the disciples as "fallible followers" with strengths and weaknesses ensures their model of discipleship is realistic (Malbon 1986, 71).⁶² As Malbon argues, the composite picture of the disciples serves to discredit "not the disciples, but the view of discipleship as either exclusive or easy" (1993b, 119).⁶³

5.2 *The rhetorical impact of Mark 3:13–19 and 6:7–13, 30*

If, as suggested here, the disciples serve as a model for Mark's readers of what it means to follow Jesus, the passages examined in this chapter highlight that following Jesus includes involvement in the task of proclamation. In this way, Mark's readers are implicitly called to participate in the task of proclamation as part of following Jesus.

This potential rhetorical impact is amplified in several ways.

First, while the appointment of the Twelve to the task of proclamation in Mark 3:13–19 underlines the importance of the task, the list of those appointed suggests that the Twelve were a "very diverse group of very common people" (3:16–19) (Bock 2005, 166). Rhetorically, the ordinariness of those chosen encourages the reader's identification with the disciples as models to emulate (on the assumption that the reader is not necessarily special or elite but themselves largely ordinary).

Second, in his account of Jesus's sending out the Twelve, Mark does not indicate to whom they are sent (6:7–11). The omission of this information may facilitate the broader application of Jesus's instructions beyond the Twelve to Mark's readers.⁶⁴ This is repeated in Mark 6:12, which summarises the activity of the Twelve but again does not refer to any specific destination.

⁵⁹ Many other scholars argue for a similar conclusion. See, inter alia, Dewey (1982); Malbon (1986); Malbon (1993a, 229–30); France (2002, 28); Donahue and Harrington (2002, 29); Hurtado (1996, 24); Kaminouchi (2003, 34–35); Best (1986, 130).

Importantly, this proposal accounts for both the positive and negative elements in Mark's portrait of the disciples. By contrast, the suggestion of Weeden and others that the disciples embody Mark's theological opponents has difficulty accounting for those passages which portray the disciples positively. See, for example Weeden (1968); Weeden (1971, 50–51); Tyson (1961).

⁶⁰ For a detailed discussion of Mark's use of characters as exemplars see chapter 5 below.

⁶¹ Cf. Reploh (1969); Donahue (1983); Best (1981, 136–37); Tannehill (1977).

⁶² Winn notes that Mark's negative portrayal of the disciples may also function to "comfort and encourage those readers who have failed to live up to" the rigorous standards of discipleship presented in Mark by assuring them that such failure is not the end (2008, 146).

⁶³ Cf. Shively (2018a).

⁶⁴ Cf. Best (1986, 158).

Third, the activity of the Twelve in Mark 6:7–12, 30 is portrayed in a way that parallels the ministry of Jesus and so continues and extends his mission in his absence. For the reader, this may hint at the need for ongoing proclamation after Jesus’s ascension (see further discussion in chapters 6 and 7).

This expectation of ongoing proclamation is reinforced by two further observations. Mark’s use of ἤρξατο in Mark 6:7, may indicate that the proclamation of the Twelve is part of the *beginning* of the proclamation of the gospel of Jesus Christ (cf. Mark 1:1), and so raise questions for the reader regarding the ongoing nature and completion of the task. Further, Jesus’s instruction in Mark 6:11 concerning how to respond to opposition transcends the story’s narrative frame as there is no indication in the summary of the Twelve’s mission that they faced such opposition (cf. 3:12–13, 30).⁶⁵ This instruction may therefore anticipate, and signal for the reader, further missionary activity, which meets opposition.

Fourth, these passages also invite the reader to consider the cost of involvement in the task of proclamation. The intercalation of John’s death in Mark 6 foreshadows the potential fate of the Twelve and any who would participate in the task of proclamation (see further discussion in chapter 7).

In these various ways, Mark’s readers are exhorted and encouraged to participate in the task of proclamation as part of following Jesus. This call to Mark’s readers will be made more explicit later in Mark’s Gospel (see chapter 7 below).

A fifth way that the rhetorical impact of the disciples’ proclamation is amplified, is the possible depiction of the Twelve as a fulfilment of the Isaianic hope for renewed Israel referred to briefly earlier. The following section will give further consideration to this possibility.

5.3 *The disciples, Israel, and the servants of the Servant*

In highlighting the disciples’ proclamation, Mark may also intend to present them as taking up the vocation of renewed Israel. Such a presentation would ground the disciples’ proclamation in the global, eschatological plan of God – a plan that is not exhausted within the narrative of Mark’s Gospel but continues in the time of Mark’s readers.

More specifically, Mark may be characterising the disciples of Jesus as the “servants” of the “Isaianic Servant.”⁶⁶ Such an association could have a significant rhetorical impact on Mark’s readers.

The Servant of the Lord has long been recognised as a significant figure in the book of Isaiah (Isa 41:8–9; 42:1; 42:19; 43:10; 44:1–2; 44:21; 45:4; 48:20; 49:3, 56–57; 50:10; 52:13; 53:11). However, from Isaiah 54 there is a shift in focus from the Servant (singular) to the servants (plural) (54:17; 56:6; 63:17; 65:8–9, 13–15; 66:14). The significance of the *servants* as a major theme in Isa 54–66 has been persuasively argued by Gignilliat, Beuken, and others.⁶⁷

⁶⁵ Iwuamadi (2008, 100); Marcus (2000a, 390–91).

⁶⁶ The Dead Sea Scrolls “... exhibit the tendency (known elsewhere in Second Temple Judaism) to see the servant vocation as open. They claim to fulfil it, to embody it, and in doing so transfer important servant motifs to their own community” (Beers 2015, 74). How Isaiah, and the Servant material, was understood in the Second Temple period is relevant because this was part of Mark’s context. Cf. Beers (2015, 49).

⁶⁷ See, e.g., Gignilliat (2007, 112–13); Beuken (1990); Blenkinsopp (1995); Jeppesen (1990).

The servants of the Servant are the beneficiaries of the Servant's activity (54:17) who will minister to Yahweh (56:6) (Watts 2000, 303). They are the "promised offspring of the Servant" (cf. Isa 53:10) – those who continue the mission and work of the Servant "by announcing the good news of his activity on behalf of God's people" and proclaiming a message that is parallel to his (Isa 61:1–2 cf. 49:8–9; Isa 49:6 cf. 60:1–3, 43:10–12, 55:1–5) (Gignilliat 2007, 120, 130).⁶⁸ Isaiah, therefore, contains not only the eschatological expectation of a single servant-preacher (Isa 40:1–5; 41:27; 42:19; 48:16; 61:1–11) but the anticipation of a "plurality of faithful servant-preachers sent by God to preach his message to not only Israel but the nations" (Isa 43:21; 44:26; 49:8–9; 52:7; 55:5; 59:21; 66:18–21) (Chan 2016, 97).

After Isaiah 53, the singular *servant* no longer occurs in Isaiah, and only the plural *servants* is used. As Berges argues, this "strengthens the idea that the servants took over the duty and vocation" of the Servant (2000, 2).⁶⁹

The obedience of the servants and their involvement in the mission of the Servant leads to their own suffering in righteousness – suffering that echoes that of the Servant (Isa 57:1–4 cf. 53:5, 8) (Gignilliat 2007, 131).⁷⁰

The possibility that Mark is characterising the disciples of Jesus as the Isaianic servants of the Servant is suggested by the following five observations.

First, as noted above, the extent and nature of Mark's use of Isaiah suggest that Isaiah was particularly influential for Mark and that Mark's Gospel should be read and understood against the backdrop of Isaiah (see discussion in chapter 3).

Second, Jesus is portrayed in Mark as the Isaianic Servant,⁷¹ and the opponents of Jesus are portrayed as the enemies of the Servant.⁷² This presentation of Jesus and his opponents is consistent with the characterisation of Jesus's disciples as the servants of the Isaianic Servant.

⁶⁸ Cf. Fisher (1974, 117–32); Abernethy (2016, 182–83); Berges (2000, 2).

⁶⁹ See also Harmon (2010, 74, 120); Abernethy (2016, 156). Blenkinsopp (1997, 173) proposes that it is through the Servant's offspring (Isa 53:10), "his disciples," "and the message they perpetuate, that [the Servant] will prolong his days, see the fruit of his travail, and bring about righteousness ..." (Isa 53:11). Cf. Seitz (2001, 115).

⁷⁰ Beers, in her study of Luke–Acts, notes "the continuance of the mission and experience of the [Isaianic] servant by the servants" in Isa 54–66 but argues that the singular-plural distinction (between the Servant and the servants) "is not critical" since "both carry out the same mission" (2015, 42, 44–45). Beers concludes that Luke portrays Jesus as "embodying or fulfilling the servant vocation, after which his followers take it up" (42). Notably, Beers acknowledges that Luke omits reference to the atoning work of the Servant found in Mark 10:45. This omission by Luke facilitates Beers's identification of the disciples with the Servant (115). Mark's allusion to the atoning work of the Servant in his description of Jesus's ministry complicates the direct identification of the disciples with the Servant (Mark 10:45).

⁷¹ Although Mark's portrayal of Jesus as the Isaianic Servant is disputed by some, the evidence, which extends beyond lexical resonance, remains persuasive for the majority of biblical scholars. See, e.g., Porter (2016, 96–103); Watts (2000, 270–287); Marcus (2004, 186–90); Evans (2001, 120–24); Pesch (1991, 163–64); Hengel (1981, 49–65); A. Collins (2007, 500–1); J. Edwards (2002, 327); D. Campbell (2013, 54–58); Lane (1974, 383–85); Gnllka (1978, 104); Grundmann (1977, 219–20); Strauss (2014, 459–60). Among those who contest this reading, the most influential are Hooker and Barrett. See, e.g., Hooker (2010, 76–77); C. Barrett (1959, 5–7).

⁷² So, for example, Judas Iscariot is identified as one who betrays (παραδίδωμι) Jesus using language that echoes Isaiah (Mark 3:19; cf. Isa 53:6; 53:12 – see also: Mark 9:31; 10:3; 14:10–11, 18, 41, 42, 44). Likewise, the religious leaders hand Jesus over (παρέδωκαν) to Pilate (Mark 15:1) who in turn hands Jesus over

Third, the disciples are portrayed as continuing and extending the ministry of Jesus in a way that parallels the role of the servants in Isaiah who continue and extend the mission of the Isaianic servant (Isa 61:2; cf. 49:8; Isa 60:1–3 cf. 49:6, 52:15; Isa 55:1–5 cf. 43:10–12; 44:18). So, for example, the disciples are appointed to proclaim and have authority over demons (Mark 3:14–15; cf. 6:12–13) – two activities that are central to Jesus’s own mission (Mark 1:14–15; 1:21–28; 1:34; 1:38–39). Similarly, in Mark 10:43–45, the disciples are called to serve as Jesus himself served.⁷³

Fourth, servant language that echoes Isaiah is used of the disciples in Mark (10:44; 13:34). In a discussion of discipleship, Jesus calls his disciples to be “slave of all” (πάντων δοῦλος, Mark 10:44). Similarly, in Mark 13:34, Jesus’s followers are compared to servants (δοῦλος) left with a task to do by their master. The same word, δοῦλος, is used in the LXX to refer to the servants of the Servant (Isa 56:6; 63:17; 65:9).

Fifth, there are other significant lexical and thematic parallels between the description of the servants in Isaiah and Mark’s presentation of the disciples. So, for example, in describing the “heritage” of the servants in Isa 54, there are references to many descendants (54:1–3; cf. Mark 10:29–30); to the absence of fear and shame (54:4; cf. Mark 4:35–5:42); to their ability to “refute” every tongue (54:17b; cf. Mark 13:11); and to the compassion of the Lord (54:7–8, 10; cf. Mark 1:41; 6:34; 8:2). There is also the overall theme of “eschatological reversal” in Isa 54, 61, and 65, where the servants are vindicated through eschatological reversal. This theme of reversal may be in view in Jesus’s response to Peter in Mark 10:29–30 (Beers 2015, 100, 105).⁷⁴

On their own, each of these allusions might be regarded as incidental or insignificant but taken together they are suggestive of a connection between the disciples in Mark and the Isaianic ‘servants’. The cumulative weight of these five observations suggests that Mark may

(παρέδωκεν) to be crucified (Mark 15:15). At his trial, the soldiers spit on (ἐμπτύω) and beat (κολαφίζω) Jesus (Mark 14:65; 15:19) – actions taken by the enemies of the Servant in Isaiah (Isa 50:6; 50:65). In Mark 7:6–7, Jesus applies a prophesy of Isaiah to the hypocrisy of the Pharisees and scribes (cf. Isa 29:13). Jesus also appeals to Isaiah in his rebuke of those selling in the temple (Mark 11:17 cf. Isa 56:7) and uses traditional Jewish metaphors found in Isa 5 in his parable about the religious leaders in Mark 12. Each of these echoes of Isaiah serves to associate the opponents of Jesus with the enemies of the Servant (D. Campbell 2013, 61–62). Cf. Moyise (2000, 24). A stimulating parallel is found among the Dead Sea Scrolls. CD 5.13 “labels the sect’s opponents with language used of the Servant’s opponents in Isa 50:11” (Beers 2015, 74).

⁷³ The likely allusion to Jesus as the Isaianic Servant in Mark 10:45 supports the suggestion that the reference to the disciples as servants in Mark 10:44 associates them with the servants of the Isaianic servant. Cf. Blenkinsopp (2006, 134).

⁷⁴ Blenkinsopp notes the parallel between the eschatological reversal enjoyed by the servants of the Isaianic Servant and that reflected in the beatitudes in Matt 5 and Luke 6 but appears to overlook the eschatological reversal anticipated in Mark 10:29–30 (2006, 134). One other potential parallel is the somewhat ambiguous portrayal of the disciples in Mark which corresponds to the similarly complex presentation of the servants in Isaiah.

be characterising Jesus's disciples as the servants of the Isaianic Servant.⁷⁵ If so, this could have a significant rhetorical impact on Mark's audience by evoking the message of Isaiah.⁷⁶

Kirk Patston argues that the book of Isaiah does more than just inform its readers of Yahweh's plans - it is "an impressive piece of rhetoric that invites its readers to participate in Yahweh's plans" (2004, 119). "Through artful use of plural pronouns and imperatival forms the implied readers are drawn into the text as participants" (Patston 2004, 119). An example of this rhetoric is found in Isa 63:17 where the implied reader is identified with the servants. Patston suggests that Isaiah functions as a commissioning document for the implied reader – although their mission must wait. "The implied readers of [Isaiah] are not ready to be missionaries. They need their sin forgiven, they need the Servant, they need Yahweh, they need the Spirit. But when those things have come, *Isaiah* will already be in place as their missionary manifesto – persuading them to go" (2004, 17).⁷⁷

If Patston is correct, by presenting Jesus as the Servant and the disciples as the servants of the Servant, Mark may be reminding his readers of Isaiah's commission to proclaim the good news of the Servant and signalling that the time for fulfilling Isaiah's commission has come.

6. The disciples, discipleship, and proclamation – a conclusion

The importance of the disciples and the theme of discipleship in Mark is evident throughout the Gospel. Mark's interlacing of this major theme and these major characters with the motif of proclamation in Mark 3:13-19 and 6:7-13, 30, contributes to the prominence of the motif of proclamation in the Gospel.

These passages also develop the content of the motif, underlining the importance and urgency of proclamation in God's purposes, encouraging dependence on God in the execution of the task, and warning of the potential cost of participating in the work of proclamation.

For the reader, these passages also offer a significant rhetorical impact. By presenting the disciples as a model of what it means to follow Jesus and highlighting that following Jesus

⁷⁵ Egan draws a somewhat similar conclusion from 1 Peter, arguing that in 1 Peter "Christ is depicted as the singular servant who bears the sins of his people (1 Peter 2:22-25)," while the church is "cast as the disciple servants of the Servant" from Isa 54-66 (cf. 1 Peter 2:16) (2017, 54). Likewise Lyons (2015, 655) argues that "the early Christian community drew on the Book of Isaiah to identify themselves as the servants of the Servant, the ones who were called to suffer like Jesus (Acts 9:16; Phil 1:29; Col 1:24; 1 Peter 2:19-25; 4:12-14) and carry out his mission (Acts 1:8; 13:47; Rom 10:14-15; 2 Cor 5:18-6:2)."

⁷⁶ This proposal assumes that Mark's readers were familiar with Isaiah. Such an assumption appears reasonable in light of two observations. First, as argued in chapter 2 above, Mark's Gospel expects some knowledge of (and respect for) the Hebrew Scriptures. Mark cites and alludes to the Hebrew Scriptures (particularly Isaiah), and makes numerous references to characters from the Hebrew Scriptures without further explanation, including: Isaiah (Mark 1:2; 7:6-7); Moses (Mark 1:44; 7:10) and Elijah (Mark 6:15; 8:28). Second, the significance and influence of the book of Isaiah on Second Temple Judaism and early Christianity have been widely recognised. So, for example, Mallen notes the crucial place Isaiah played in the early church and argues that it impacted the "church's understanding of Christology, ecclesiology and mission" (2008, 2). See, also Steve Moyise and Maarten J. J. Menken, eds. (2005, 1); Evans (1997, 651); J. Sanders (1982, 145); Sawyer (1996, 1-64).

⁷⁷ Cf. Beyer (2007, 263-75). There is an intriguing parallel between the timing of this mission in the eschatological outline of Isaiah and the timing of the proclamation anticipated in Mark's Gospel (see esp. Mark 9:9 and the discussion in chapter 8 below).

includes involvement in the task of proclamation, they implicitly call Mark's readers to participate in the task of proclamation as part of following Jesus. The intriguing possible portrayal of the disciples as the Isaianic servants of the Servant may further amplify this rhetorical impact by evoking Isaiah's commission to announce the good news of the Servant and signalling that the time for fulfilling this commission has come.

The previous two chapters have examined the proclamation of the major characters in Mark's Gospel – Jesus, John the Baptist, and the disciples. By contrast, the following chapter turns to consider an instance of proclamation by a minor character in Mark.

Chapter 5: An exemplar of proclamation (Mark 5:1–20)

1. Introduction

Mark 5:1–20 refers explicitly to the proclamation of the Gerasene demoniac. After his interaction with Jesus, the former demoniac “went away and began to proclaim in the Decapolis (κηρύσσειν ἐν τῇ Δεκαπόλει) how much Jesus had done for him ...” (Mark 5:20). As will be argued in this chapter, this reference to the Gerasene demoniac’s proclamation makes a vital contribution to the motif of proclamation in Mark’s Gospel.

The bulk of this chapter will consist of a close reading of Mark 5:1–20 to determine the contribution this passage makes to the prominence and content of the motif of proclamation in Mark, and to identify the potential rhetorical impact of this material on Mark’s readers. Since the subject of the proclamation here is a minor character, the analysis will include a careful consideration of the narrative function and rhetorical impact of Mark’s portrayal of this character, in light of the use of other characters in ancient literature.

The growing interest in literary approaches in Markan studies has generated a significant amount of scholarship on the characters in Mark’s Gospel. While much of this scholarship has focused on the disciples, the minor characters in Mark’s Gospel have also received some attention.¹ Following Malbon, a minor character is here defined as one who “lacks a continuing or recurrent presence in the story as narrated” (2000, 192).

Central to the discussion of the minor characters in Mark is their function with respect to the reader (Bolt 2003, 2–10). A number of scholars have argued that at least some of the minor characters in Mark function as exemplars of discipleship, modelling a right response to Jesus. For example, Williams argues that Mark “uses his presentation of minor characters to move the reader toward a proper response to Jesus” (1994, 89). Similarly, Malbon writes, “... the minor characters are *most often* presented as exemplars” (2000, 98, emphasis original).²

These views are quite plausible. The Gospel of Mark was neither written nor read in a literary vacuum. One significant feature of contemporary literary practice was the use of exemplars for moral instruction. Thus, the possibility that the Gerasene demoniac in Mark 5 serves as an

¹ In 1994, Williams noted that “little scholarly work” had “been done on Mark’s portrayal of minor characters” (1994, 13). Since this, greater attention has been given to the minor characters, including by Williams himself. See, inter alia, Miller (2004b); Swartley (1997); Iverson (2007); Christopher W. Skinner, ed. (2014); Malbon (1994).

² See also Rhoads, Dewey, and Michie (2012, 130–34); Bennema (2014, 215). A contrary view is offered by Bolt. In a discussion of “identification” in which he rejects the exemplar approach, Bolt highlights the importance of not overlooking the rhetorical features and power of the text itself (2003, 12–15). While Bolt’s comments offer a useful caution against simplistic approaches to exemplars in the Gospels, he offers only a limited consideration of the use of exemplars in contemporaneous literature (see the survey below) and the possibility that Mark may intend to present exemplars. He also appears to draw too hard a distinction between the characters as “reflections” of the reader to the exclusion of the characters as exemplars of what readers “ought to be” (2003, 15).

exemplar for the reader invites a careful consideration of the use of exemplars in ancient literature.³

This chapter will therefore examine the significance of the demoniac's proclamation in two stages. First, the use of exemplars in ancient literature will be considered. This discussion will aim to demonstrate the ubiquity of exemplars in the literary milieu of Mark's Gospel and so the likelihood that early readers of Mark would have attended to characters in Mark as potential models for emulation. Second, a close reading of Mark 5:1–20 will be performed, utilising the tools of narrative criticism, historical-grammatical exegesis, and rhetorical criticism with attention given to the textual indicators that Mark is presenting the Gerasene demoniac as an exemplar of proclamation.

2. Mark 5:1–20 and exemplars in ancient literature

2.1 *An introduction*

This section of the thesis will examine the prevalence of the contemporary literary practice of using exemplars for moral instruction and its potential relevance to the reading of Mark 5:1–20 and the proclamation of the demoniac. First, the occurrence of exemplars in ancient literature prior to and contemporaneous with the Gospel of Mark will be briefly considered, and the possible effect of this material on early readers of Mark's Gospel explored. Second, the literature on minor Markan characters as exemplars will be discussed, focusing on the treatment of the Gerasene demoniac.

2.2 *The occurrence of exemplars in ancient literature*

The use of exemplars for moral instruction was ubiquitous in the literary milieu of Mark's Gospel.⁴ Historical and literary figures were presented as models to be imitated in Jewish, Greek, and Roman texts as well as in the New Testament and other early Christian literature. The following brief survey illustrates something of the scope of this practice.⁵

Some of the exemplars noted below are historically famous people or the protagonists of literary works. Others are ordinary figures or more minor characters.⁶ Some are explicitly labelled as exemplars or directly applied to the reader, and others are not. While all these examples reveal the widespread use of exemplars for moral instruction, those involving minor characters who are not explicitly labelled as exemplars provide a closer parallel to the Gerasene demoniac in Mark 5:1–20.

³ The reservations of Bolt (see footnote above) and others who may hold a similar concern necessitates a more detailed analysis of the use of exemplars in contemporaneous literature than might otherwise be deemed necessary.

⁴ See, e.g., Turpin (2008, 363); Kroner (2014, 31); La Bua (2019, 300–1); Mayer (2005, 148); A. Reed (2009, 187); Shively (2018b, 287); A. Nightingale (2001, 138). See also the evidence cited below.

⁵ The following survey will focus on Greek, Roman, Jewish, and early Christian literature from c. 400 BCE to c. CE 150.

⁶ That the majority of exemplars in ancient literature are famous figures is unsurprising given the focus on such people in this literature.

2.2.1 Exemplars in Greek literature

Turpin notes that exemplars appeared in Greek literature as early as Homer and that the use of exemplars was advocated in rhetorical textbooks “from Aristotle on” (2008, 363). In this way, exemplars were “firmly established as a rhetorical tool in Greek literature” (Kroner 2014, 31).

For example, the Greek writer Plutarch presents the lives of various figures as role models for his readers, that they might admire the works and strive “to emulate those who wrought them” (*Pericles* 2.2 [Perrin, LCL]). One such exemplar is Cleomenes, whom Plutarch describes as “a pattern of self-restraint for all” (*Cleomenes* 13.1 [Perrin, LCL]).⁷

Similarly, Lucian presents Demonax as a model for emulation, “... that young men of good instincts who aspire to philosophy may not have to shape themselves by ancient precedents alone, but may be able to set themselves a pattern from our modern world and to copy that man ...” (*Demonax*, 1–2 [Harmon, LCL]).

Likewise, Xenophon recommends the virtue of King Agesilaus of Sparta as a “noble example” to imitate (*Agesilaus* 10.1 [Marchant and Bowersock, LCL]). Xenophon also presents the figure of Socrates “that his deeds and words might serve as a model for other men” (Talbert 1977, 94).⁸

These few examples are representative of a wider practice in Greek literature.

2.2.2 Exemplars in Roman literature

The use of exemplars was similarly common in Roman literature.⁹ As Alicia Myers notes, the Romans thought of history as “full of *exempla* to imitate or exploit in their own lives” (2012, 56). Indeed, Roman historians such as Livy and Tacitus argue that the provision of exemplar is a major benefit of recording history (Livy, *Ab Urbe Condita* 1.pr.10.1; Tacitus, *Historiae* 1.3.1).¹⁰

So, for example, in *Res Gestae*, Augustus declares, “... I myself set precedents in many things for posterity to imitate” (*Res Gestae Divi Augusti*, 8 [Shipley, LCL]).

Likewise, the Roman educator Quintilian writes: “Could there be any better teachers of courage, justice, loyalty ... than men like Fabricius, Curius, Regulus, Decius, Mucius, and countless others? Rome is as strong in examples as Greece is in precepts; and examples are more important” (*Quint. Inst.* 12.2.29 cf. 10.1.1 [Russell, LCL]).

⁷ See also: Plutarch’s references to Pericles and Epaminondas in *Moralia* 539–47.

⁸ See similarly, Theophrastus’s comments about the reasons for writing his *Characteres* (Theophrastus, *Characteres*, Proem).

⁹ Roman employment of exemplars in moral education corresponds well to the Roman concepts of *mos maiorum* and *auctoritas maiorum*. See La Bua (2019, 300–1); Mayer (2005, 148).

¹⁰ Livy and Tacitus “could describe themselves as educating their readers through examples of a wide range of Romans of the past, as if it were an uncontroversial element of historiography” (T. Morgan 2007, 123–24). See: Titus Livius, *The History of Rome* Book 1 pr.10; 58.10; Tacitus, *Historiae* 1.3, 2.38, 3.51; Tacitus, *Annales* 3.55, 4.33.

Seneca is similarly explicit about the value of exemplars, urging Lucilius to imitate Rutilius Rufus, Metellus Nucidicus, Mucius Scaevola, and Cato (*Seneca, Epistulae morales* 24.4–8) and arguing that the most important thing about poetry was that it offered exemplars such as Ulysses (*Epistulae morales* 88.7).¹¹ Seneca also provides clear examples of more minor characters serving as exemplars. So, for example, in his discussion of dying well, Seneca appeals not just to Cato but to his friends Aufidius Bassus (*Epistulae morales* 30.1) and Tullius Marcellinus (*Epistulae morales* 77.7–10), and even to two nameless gladiators (*Epistulae morales* 70.19–23).

Likewise, Juvenal presents the little known Creticus as a negative exemplar (Juvenal, *Satirae*, 2.69–70 cf. 8.38);¹² and Musonius Rufus offers farmers as an exemplary group worth of imitation (11.82.20–21) (Barbarick 2011, 26).

Tacitus also employs ordinary figures as exemplars appealing to the relatively unknown figures of Vitellius’s wife (*Historiae* 2.64.2), a Ligurian woman (*Historiae* 2.13.2), and the freedwoman Epicharis (*Annales* 15.68.1) as models to emulate.

2.2.3 Exemplars in Jewish literature

A similar approach to exemplars is found in Jewish literature from the Hellenistic age, where the patriarchs and others serve as paradigms of behaviour, and there is an “assumption of exemplarity” (A. Reed 2009, 187).

So, for example, Philo argues that the accounts of Israel’s ancestors “stand permanently recorded in the most holy scriptures, not merely to sound their praises, but for the instruction of the reader and as an inducement to him to aspire to the same ...” (*De Abrahamo* 4 [Colson, LCL]). Indeed, for Philo, emulating virtuous characters is akin to following Mosaic Law (Niehoff 2012, 372).¹³

Philo clearly intended that his readers would imitate Moses (*De vita Mosis* 1.158; 2.3–7) and Joseph (*De Iosepho* 3–5, 40–57); and in *De somniis* 1.52–58, he appeals to Terah, a much more minor character in the Scriptures, as an exemplar.

Josephus presents Abraham (*Jewish Antiquities* 2.212–16; *Jewish War* 5.375) and the witch of Endor (*Jewish Antiquities* 6.14.4) as models for imitation and figures such as Ahab and Antipater as explicit negative exemplars (*Jewish Antiquities* 8.15.6; 17.3.3).¹⁴ Since the witch of Endor appears only briefly in 1 Samuel and remains unnamed (1 Sam 28:7–25), Josephus’s appeal to her is a clear example of a minor character being presented as an exemplar.

The *Testament of Benjamin* offers Joseph as an exemplar (*T. Benj.* 3.1.2; 4.1–3). Likewise, 4 Maccabees refers to many Old Testament figures as exemplars. Some are significant figures such as Eleazar, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and Daniel. Others are

¹¹ See also, inter alia: Juvenal’s appeal to exemplar in his discussions of ambition (*Satirae* 10.147–67; 10.168–87; 10.283–86); and Terrence’s *Adelphoe* 412–19.

¹² On the difficulty of identifying the Creticus in question, see Courtney (2013, 110).

¹³ Cf. A. Reed (2009, 192).

¹⁴ “Josephus appears to retell the story of Abraham’s life in *Ant.* 1.148–256 so as to enhance those elements most apt for emulation by his fellow Jews” (A. Reed 2009, 196).

more minor characters such as Hananiah, Azariah, and Mishael (4 *Macc.* 16.16–25; see also 9.19–25; 13.8–10). Similarly, Ben Sira’s poetic celebration of Israelite heroes (*Sirach* 44–50) presents several biblical characters as exemplary figures, including Enoch, who is offered as a model of repentance (*Sirach* 44.16). Ben Sira also includes the more contemporary Simon son of Onias (*Sirach* 50) (Nasuti 2018, 81).

Significantly for the argument of this chapter, many of these Jewish writers appeal to figures from the Old Testament as exemplars despite these figures not being explicitly labelled as such. See, for example, Josephus’s appeal to Ahab, Antipater, and the witch of Endor; or the references in 4 Maccabees to Eleazar, Hananiah, Azariah, and Mishael.

2.2.4 Exemplars in the New Testament and other early Christian literature

Appeals to exemplars are also found throughout the New Testament and other early Christian literature.

At several points, the New Testament appeals to Old Testament characters and others as exemplars to imitate or reject (Heb 3:7–4:11; 11:1–40; 13:7; Jas 2:12–26; 5:10–11, 16–18). The exemplars of faith in Hebrews 11 include a number of minor (even unnamed) characters.¹⁵

Similarly, Jesus called on his listeners to imitate his own example (John 13:15; 13:34; 15:12; 15:17) and characters in his stories (Luke 10:25–37).¹⁶

Jesus is also treated as an exemplar in 1 John 2:6; 3:16; 1 Pet 2:21; and in Ignatius’s letter to the Ephesians (Ig. Eph 10:1–3) and Polycarp’s letter to the Philippians (8:2).

The apostle Paul frequently appeals to his own personal example as a standard of conduct (1 Thess 1:5–6; 1 Cor 4:6; 7:7; 11:1; Gal 4:12; Phil 3:17; 4:9; 2 Thess 3:7–9). He also calls the Thessalonians to imitate the perseverance of the Judean churches in the face of persecution (1 Thess 2:14), and in Philippians, he may be presenting Timothy and Epaphroditus as exemplars (Phil 2:19–30).

First Clement 17–19 likewise urges the imitation of many people, including Elijah, Elisha, Ezekiel, Abraham, Job, Moses, and David (Nasuti 2018, 81).¹⁷ Athanasius also refers to the emulation of biblical characters in his *Epistula ad Marcellinum de interpretatione Psalmorum*.

2.2.5 Exemplars and Greco-Roman education

This brief survey demonstrates something of the prevalence of exemplars across Jewish, Greek, Roman, and Christian literature contemporaneous with Mark. The significance of literary exemplars in the Markan context is further indicated by Greco-Roman approaches to pedagogy.

¹⁵ See the discussion in B. Dyer (2017, 151–58); Moberly (2009).

¹⁶ The Gospels are regarded by many to resemble ancient *Bíoi* presenting Jesus as a model to be imitated. See, e.g., Hays (2010, 73–74); BurrIDGE (2007, 25–31, 361–364); A. Myers (2012, 37–38).

¹⁷ See also 1 Clem 16:17.

In Greco-Roman education, students were taught to derive moral lessons from the characters depicted in their literature (Best 1986, 123). So, for example, according to Weeden, education in the centuries around Mark's Gospel focused on "the pedantic study of the great literary works of the past ... including a meticulous investigation of characters ..." (1971, 12–13).¹⁸ "The final step in a Greek student's investigation of a literary work was 'judgment'. This involved extrapolating some moral principle from the thoughts and behaviour of the characters" (14). This practice was built on the assumption that the characters of ancient works "served as models of human virtue and vice" (14).

This approach was also found in Roman education where "the methodology for elucidating a text was a mimicry of the Greek procedure. In fact, the Roman grammarians appear to have been even more interested in an erudite study of characters ... than were the Greeks" (Weeden 1971, 14).¹⁹

Looking beyond formal education, Alicia Myers observes, "... all children were formed by the narratives passed down to them through myths, histories and legends told to them by those around them on a daily basis, with the goal of offering them virtuous models to imitate" (2012, 57).

2.2.6 Mark 5:1–20 and exemplars in ancient literature – a conclusion

The material outlined above highlights the ubiquity of exemplars in the literary context of Mark's Gospel and the attention that ancient readers could be expected to give these exemplars. The examination of literary characters and the moral models they provide was commonplace in the Hellenistic world.²⁰

In addition to the prevalence of exemplars, three other significant observations from this survey can be highlighted:

- (i) First, the occurrence of exemplars spans multiple genres and literary forms, including biographies,²¹ letters,²² historiography,²³ poetry,²⁴ novel,²⁵ and funeral speeches.²⁶ This observation is consistent with Aristotle's identification of exemplar as a "rhetorical device suitable for all rhetorical genres" (Smit 2015, 17–18).

¹⁸ Cf. Marrou (1956, 160–70, 277–81).

¹⁹ See also A. Reed (2009, 190). In a letter to Lucilius on the fear of death, Seneca anticipates Lucilius's response to the exemplar he presents: "'Oh,' say you 'those stories have been droned to death in all the schools ...'" (*Epistulae morales* 24.6 [Gummere, LCL]). This complaint, though only imagined, supports the conclusion that exemplar were widely used in Roman education.

²⁰ Holmås (2011, 55); David Edward Aune (1987, 60–63).

²¹ E.g., Plutarch's *Parallel Lives*.

²² E.g., 1 Clement 17–18.

²³ E.g., Josephus *Jewish Antiquities* 2.212–16; *Jewish War* 5.375.

²⁴ E.g., *Sirach* 44.1–50.21 and Seneca's comment on the value of poetry in *Epistulae morales* 88.7.

²⁵ E.g., *Tobit* 1.16–20. Cf. Hock (1988, 127–46).

²⁶ E.g., Polybius, *Histories* 6.53–55.

- (ii) Second, the exemplars appealed to are not limited to famous people or the protagonists of literary works but include ordinary figures and minor characters. Any person, provided they behaved in an exemplary fashion, could serve as an exemplar.²⁷

Indeed, Seneca suggests that less famous exemplars can be more effective than those the reader might “regard as beyond the sphere of imitation” (*Epistulae morales* 70.22 [Gummere, LCL]).²⁸

- (iii) Third, exemplars are not always explicitly labelled or applied. In the *Annals* (outside the Neronian books), Tacitus seldom identifies moral exemplars explicitly (Turpin 2008, 395). So, for example, Agricola “is one of Tacitus’ most important *exempla*,” though he is never called one (Turpin 2008, 396). “Tacitus seems simply to assume that *exempla* would be something his readers expected to find in his work” (394).²⁹

Regarding the application of exemplar, Livy rarely makes direct comment on the lives he narrates (Weeden 1971, 18). Likewise, Valerius Maximus “does not attach a clear moralistic judgment ... onto every story, or even every section” (Kroner 2014, 28).³⁰ Instead, these writers include examples that they expect their readers to reflect on and understand as either positive examples to be emulated or negative examples to be avoided.³¹

2.3 Ancient literary exemplars and the early readers of Mark

In light of the ubiquity of exemplars in ancient literature and the attention given to these exemplars in ancient education, it is reasonable to assume that the early readers of Mark’s Gospel would have instinctively attended to the characters in Mark as potential narrative models for emulation.³² As with contemporaneous literature, these models could have included both the protagonist Jesus and other characters, even minor characters. Such characters could serve as exemplars even when not explicitly labelled as exemplars. Importantly, this conclusion may be drawn despite the ongoing debate over Mark’s genre, since, as noted above, exemplars were employed across a wide range of genres in the Markan milieu.

Therefore, as Williams argues, an approach to Mark’s Gospel “which pays close attention to the characters and the use of characterisation to influence the reader is a historically relevant procedure” (1994, 88).³³ In line with this conclusion, this chapter seeks to pay close attention

²⁷ Niehoff (2012, 386); Keane (2012, 413–15).

²⁸ See similarly Plutarch, *Moralia* 457. As Turpin notes, the Stoics recognised that people “did not have to be perfect, or even generally admirable, to offer inspiration; barbarians, people of low social standing, and people who had not always behaved well could be even more inspiring than the more obvious role models” (2008, 365).

²⁹ See: Tacitus, *Historiae* 1.3.1.

³⁰ Cf. Skidmore (1996, 59).

³¹ See, likewise, Shively (2018b, 286–87) and Turpin’s comments on Seneca (2008, 371).

³² Cf. Holmås (2011, 55); Kurz (1990, 184). For a potential allusion to this approach to the Gospels by the early church, see Justin, *1 Apol.* 67.

³³ Cf. Parry (2004, 30); Shively (2018b, 287).

to how Mark employs the Gerasene demoniac and his proclamation in the Decapolis to impact his readers.

Before turning to a close reading of Mark 5:1–20, it is instructive to consider how the Gerasene demoniac has been viewed in the scholarship on minor Markan characters.

2.4 *The Gerasene demoniac as an exemplar in Markan Studies*

As noted in the introduction to this chapter, growing interest in literary approaches to Mark's Gospel has generated a significant amount of scholarship on the characters in Mark's Gospel. A number of scholars have identified at least some of the minor characters in Mark as exemplars of discipleship. However, the Gerasene demoniac is often excluded from their number. The reasons for such exclusion are, however, not compelling.

Williams excludes the Gerasene demoniac from the role of exemplar because of apparent disobedience to Jesus (1994, 111–12, 126, 167–68). He argues that "Jesus' command to the demoniac is an indirect injunction to secrecy" that the demoniac disobeys (111). However, as will be shown below, the demoniac's response to Jesus's command is better understood, not as disobedience but as "an abundance of obedience" (Bolt 2003, 146).³⁴ The demoniac does what Jesus commands and more.

Malbon argues that "in the first half of Mark minor characters appear primarily as suppliants ... [but from the story of Bartimaeus (Mark 10:46–52)] for the remainder of the Markan narrative the minor characters are ... exemplars who model service, sacrifice and recognition of Jesus' identity ..." (2000, 198–202). Malbon identifies the Gerasene demoniac as a minor character who, as a suppliant, reveals "Jesus' mighty power" (199).³⁵ However, this categorisation of minor characters before and after Bartimaeus appears to over-simplify Mark's characterisation. So, for example, Peter's mother-in-law is a minor character before Bartimaeus who exemplifies a key aspect of following Jesus – service (cf. Mark 9:35; 10:42–45).³⁶

Iverson, in his monograph on gentiles in Mark's Gospel, concludes that the "healing of the Gerasene demoniac represents the revelation of God's kingdom in gentile territory," but he does not discuss the demoniac as an exemplar of discipleship nor the potential rhetorical impact of this account on the reader (2007, 39).

Kingsbury, in his discussion on minor characters in Mark, argues that many minor characters "stand out because they exhibit 'faith,' or 'trust,' in Jesus" or "convey ... what it means to 'serve'" (1989, 25). The Gerasene demoniac is a notable omission in Kingsbury's discussion of minor Markan characters.

³⁴ See, similarly Lane (1974, 188); Cole (1989, 162); Gundry (1993, 265); Marcus (2000a, 346); France (2002, 233); Iverson (2007, 32); Schnabel (2017, 121–122).

³⁵ Williams similarly notes that "prior to the Bartimaeus story, minor characters [in Mark] serve primarily as suppliants, while after the Bartimaeus story minor characters function as exemplars" (1994, 167). Williams, however, nuances this characterisation by acknowledging the paralytic, Jairus and the haemorrhaging woman as exemplars of genuine faith, and the Syrophenician woman as an exemplar of true understanding (167–68). Cf. Bond (2020, 211–20).

³⁶ Cf. Lane (1974, 78); Dewey (2006, 22–23); Kuruvilla (2012, 38–39); Malick (2017).

From the literature on minor characters in Mark's Gospel, Bennema comes closest to the position argued here, acknowledging that by the demoniac's proclamation, he "actualizes this aspect of discipleship ahead of the chosen disciples" (2014, 220).

The remainder of this chapter will examine Mark 5:1–20 and the textual indications that Mark presents the Gerasene demoniac as an exemplar of proclamation.

3. A close reading of Mark 5:1–20

3.1 Introduction

Mark 5:1–20 is the longest and most vivid exorcism account in Mark's Gospel.³⁷ It is also more detailed than the parallel accounts in Matthew and Luke (cf. Matt 8:28–34 and Luke 8:26–39). The amount of detail slows the narrative and garners the reader's attention, suggesting that this episode serves an important function in Mark's Gospel (Witherington III 2001, 178).³⁸

3.2 The structure of Mark 5:1–20

The narrative of the Gerasene demoniac may be divided into five sections:

- (i) Introduction (5:1);
- (ii) Jesus's encounter with the demoniac (5:2–10);
- (iii) Jesus's victory over the demons (5:11–13);
- (iv) The response of the herdsmen and townspeople (5:14–17);
- (v) The proclamation of the (now former) demoniac (5:18–20).

The analysis that follows will briefly consider the first four of these sections and then give greater attention to the final section (vv. 18–20), which contributes most significantly to the motif of proclamation in Mark.

3.3 Mark 5:1 and the location of the incident

In Mark 5:1, Jesus and the disciples arrive on τὸ πέραν τῆς θαλάσσης. Identifying their exact location is complicated by textual, semantic, and geographical issues.³⁹ What is clear is that Jesus has entered a predominantly gentile area. This is indicated in three ways.

³⁷ For other exorcism accounts and reports in Mark's Gospel, see: 1:21–28; 1:32–34; 3:11–12; 3:15; 3:22–30; 6:7; 7:24–30; 9:14–29.

³⁸ Cf. Hurtado (2011, 83).

³⁹ Donahue and Harrington identify this as "one of the most disputed phrases in Mark's Gospel" (2002, 163).

The textual evidence is divided on the precise location of the incident. The variant readings include: Γερασηνῶν, Γαδαρηνῶν, and Γεργεσηνῶν. Each possibility presents difficulties, and the issue is further complicated by differences between the Synoptics (cf. Matt 8:28–34; Luke 8:26–39).

The position tentatively adopted here is that Mark wrote Γερασηνῶν (which has the strongest external support) referring to a town by Lake Galilee in the region of Gadara (hence Matthew's reference). Some early scribes mistook Mark's location for a reference to the better-known Gerasa and, conscious of the geographical problems, introduced the variant readings to apparently correct a presumed error. So: Cranfield (1963, 176); Blomberg (1987, 149–50); Annen (1976, 202–6).

First, the reference to the Decapolis (Mark 5:20), a group of ten predominantly gentile cities, suggests a gentile location.⁴⁰

Second, the presence of a herd of pigs (5:11–13), considered to be unclean by Jews (cf. Lev 11:26), is more likely to be found in a gentile area.⁴¹

Third, the way the demoniac addresses Jesus may imply a gentile location. The phrase Ἰησοῦ υἱὲ τοῦ θεοῦ τοῦ ὑψίστου uses a title for God that is used most often in the Old Testament by gentiles speaking of God (e.g., Gen 14:17–24; Num 24:16) or when Yahweh is spoken of in a gentile context (e.g., Isa 14:14; Dan 4:17; 7:18, 22, 25, 27).⁴²

The significance of this gentile setting for the development of the motif of proclamation will be considered below.

3.4 *Mark 5:2–17*

After arriving on the other side of the lake, Jesus disembarks from the boat and is met by a man who lived among the tombs (Mark 5:3). Although the disciples arrive in the boat with Jesus, they play no part in the story.⁴³ This lack of reference to the disciples is unusual in Mark and serves to focus the reader's attention on Jesus and the man ἐν πνεύματι ἀκαθάρτῳ. As will be discussed in detail below, this focus on the demoniac facilitates his presentation as an exemplar.

The man's desperate situation is described in great detail in verses 2–5. He lived among the tombs, an outcast from society (5:3a). No one had been able to help him or even bind him with a chain (5:3b–4). Night and day, he was always crying out and injuring himself with stones (5:5). Possessed by a legion of demons (5:15), this man's suffering is severe.

For any readers of Mark familiar with the Old Testament, he is also manifestly unclean. His uncleanness is underlined by the references to the unclean spirits (πνεύματι ἀκαθάρτῳ), his dwelling among the tombs, and the presence of the pigs.

The severity of the man's condition and the inability of others to subdue him heightens the display of Jesus's power and authority over unclean spirits.

In the dialogue in Mark 5:7–12 the references to Jesus's conversation partner vacillate between singular (vv. 7, 8a, 9a, 9b, 9c, 10a) and plural (vv. 9c, 10b, 12, 13), and between masculine (vv. 9a, 9b) and neuter (vv. 8a, 8b, 10a, 10b, 13) gender.⁴⁴ This variation reflects not only the grammatical difficulty of referring to a man possessed by multiple unclean spirits but

⁴⁰ Riesner (2013, 52); Cranfield (1963, 182). The Decapolis "was a loose geographical term for a number of cities east of the Jordan River (with the exception of Beth Shan, which lay west of the Jordan)" (J. Edwards 2002, 155). There is variation between different extant lists of the ten cities (Strauss 2014, 221).

⁴¹ That pigs were viewed as unclean by Jews was well known even in non-Jewish circles (Marcus 2000a, 342). Cf. Whittaker (1984, 73–80).

⁴² Cf. also: 1 Esdras 2:3; 6:31; 8:19, 21; 2 Macc 3:31; 3 Macc 7:9; Acts 16:17. The title "Most High God" was not unknown among Jews, see e.g., Deut 32:8 and 1 QapGen 21:2 (A. Collins 2007, 268).

⁴³ Moloney suggests that the disciples are referred to in 5:16a, as the witnesses who had seen what happened (2012, 206). But this is unlikely given their complete absence from the narrative before and after this point. See Gnilka (1978, 1:206); Ernst (1981, 157).

⁴⁴ Stein (2008a, 255); Schnabel (2017, 118–19).

also the conflict within the man himself and the degree to which the unclean spirits have consumed his identity.⁴⁵

As a result of this grammatical ambiguity, it is not always possible to determine the degree to which the man speaks for himself or the unclean spirits are speaking through him. Indeed, as Brooks argues, given that he is possessed, perhaps no such distinction should be made (1991, 90).

After this brief exchange, Jesus drives the spirits out of the man (5:13). They enter some nearby pigs, which then rush into the lake and are drowned (5:13b).

The destruction of the pigs is evidence of the destructive intent of the unclean spirits and illustrates the effective (and permanent) removal of the spirits from the man. It may also indicate not just the cleansing of the man, but the cleansing of the whole χώρα.⁴⁶

In Mark 5:14, those who had been tending the pigs run off and report what had happened. In response, people went out to see for themselves and found the man who had been possessed “sitting there, clothed and in his right mind” – totally transformed (5:15). They were afraid and asked Jesus to leave the area (5:15, 17). As is often the case in Mark, fear is presented as the opposite of faith (cf. Mark 4:40; 5:36).

Mark 5:1–20 contains many of the elements expected in an exorcism story.⁴⁷ “This ... recognizable story form encourages the reader to notice variations, developments and nuances in the expected pattern ...” (Broadhead 2001, 50). One of the unusual features of this exorcism account is the amount of space given to the description of its result. As Boring observes, “the story’s repercussions and the conclusions drawn from it seem to be as important as the exorcism itself” (2012, 153).⁴⁸ Mark could have ended the story at verse 17 (as Matthew does, cf. Matt 8:28–34) but instead continues with an account of the man’s proclamation in the Decapolis. This, then, is a further example of a reference to proclamation in Mark that meets Freedman’s criteria of avoidability. The inclusion of these details at the end of the pericope also serves to direct the reader’s attention to them.

The following discussion will consider the response and proclamation of the demoniac in more detail.

3.5 Mark 5:18–20

3.5.1 The man’s request

In stark contrast to the crowd who began παρακαλεῖν Jesus to leave (5:17), the former demoniac παρεκάλει αὐτὸν ἵνα ἦ μετ’ αὐτοῦ (5:18). The wording of the demoniac’s request echoes the language of Mark 3:14 where Jesus appointed the

⁴⁵ Hooker (1991, 143); Marcus (2000a, 348).

⁴⁶ Moloney (2012, 104); Hooker (1991, 141); Kelber (1979, 32).

⁴⁷ For a detailed discussion of the form of Mark 5:1–20, see Guelich (1998, 272–73).

⁴⁸ LaVerdiere notes that until this point in the Gospel, “Mark’s stories have not focused on the reaction or response of those who were healed, but on those who witnessed the event” (1999, 128).

Twelve ἵνα ᾧσιν μετ' αὐτοῦ ... This echo may suggest to Mark's readers that the former demoniac desires to be a disciple of Jesus.⁴⁹

In verse 19, Jesus refuses the man's request to accompany him. While no explanation for Jesus's refusal is explicitly given, Jesus's subsequent instruction to the man may imply the reason. Rather than coming with Jesus, Jesus has a task for him to complete.⁵⁰

3.5.2 Jesus's instruction

Jesus instructs the man, ὕπαγε εἰς τὸν οἶκόν σου πρὸς τοὺς σοὺς καὶ ἀπάγγειλον αὐτοῖς ὅσα ὁ κύριός σοι πεποίηκεν καὶ ἠλέησεν σε (5:19).

The verb ἀπαγγέλλω (5:19) is used elsewhere in the general sense of giving a report or proclaiming something publicly (Matt 2:8; 14:12; 28:11; Mark 5:14; Acts 28:21), but it is also "part of the mission vocabulary of the early church" and is associated with the preaching of the good news (see Acts 26:20; cf. Matt 12:18; Heb 2:12; 1 John 1:2–3) (Danker et al. 2000, 95).⁵¹ Silva argues that at points ἀπαγγέλλω "can scarcely be distinguished in meaning from ... εὐαγγελίζω" (2014, 118).⁵² Similarly, Smith notes that in "secular classical use" ἀπαγγέλλω "appears to be a synonym with εὐαγγελ- vocabulary" and is used in the LXX for the proclamation of God's word by God himself (Isa 44:8; Ps 147:8) and by prophets (1 Sam 9:6; 9:8; 9:19; 12:7; Mic 3:8; Sir 44:3) (Claire S. Smith 2012, 190). Mark may have used ἀπαγγέλλω in Mark 5:19 to develop an explicit contrast with the activity of the herdsmen (5:14) (see comments below on Mark's use of synkrisis).

The expression εἰς τὸν οἶκόν σου πρὸς τοὺς σοὺς (5:19) has been variously understood. Some argue that it is an example of a Markan dual expression with both phrases referring to the man's family.⁵³ Others contend that the phrase πρὸς τοὺς σοὺς refers to a wider group than his family, such as his friends.⁵⁴ A third group argue for a still broader meaning and understand the phrase πρὸς τοὺς σοὺς as a reference to "the people of your area."⁵⁵ Mark's description of the demoniac's response in 5:20 (see further discussion below) and the possibility that πρὸς τοὺς σοὺς refers to "your people" in contradistinction from Jesus's people (that is the people of Israel) appears to support the third reading.

Wrede argues that Jesus's instruction to the demoniac in 5:19 is a command to maintain the messianic secret, on the assumption that the house in Mark is an "Ort der Heimlichkeit" (1901, 140). Wrede writes, "Im Hause, in der Familie ist die Kunde von der Wohlthat gut aufgehoben" (140). For Wrede, the demoniac's public

⁴⁹ So Donahue and Harrington (2002, 167).

⁵⁰ For a list of other suggested reasons for Jesus's refusal see Strauss (2014, 221).

⁵¹ See also Gnilka (1978, 1:206–7).

⁵² Silva highlights the synonymous use of ἀναγγέλλω and εὐαγγελίζω in 1 Pet 1:12 (2014, 118). Cf. Moloney (2012, 105).

⁵³ Gundry (1993, 254); Wrede (1901, 140); Gnilka (1978, 1:206)

⁵⁴ Mann (1986, 280); Stein (2008a, 259); Cranfield (1963, 181); Lane (1974, 188). See also the translation of the ESV.

⁵⁵ Guelich (1998, 285); Lohmeyer (1951, 97); Pesch (1977, 1:294); Ernst (1981, 157). Cf. V. Taylor (1972, 284).

proclamation is disobedience similar to that of “der Aussätzige und der Stumme (1:45, 7:36 vgl. 7:24)” (140). As elsewhere, Wrede interprets Mark 5:18–20 with the assumption that secrecy is this key, and so subsumes a passage about proclamation under the *Messiasgeheimnis*. Indeed, in commenting on Jesus’s instruction to the demoniac, Wrede concludes: “Solte die scheinbare Abweichung von den anderen Verboten nicht in Wahrheit eine Parallele sein?”⁵⁶ Wrede’s focus on secrecy in his analysis of Mark 5:18–20 leads invariably to the neglect of the motif of proclamation (see further discussion in chapter 8).

Significantly, Wrede’s understanding of Mark 5:18–20 has been adopted by others. So, for example, Williams interprets Jesus’s command to the healed demoniac as “an indirect injunction to secrecy” (1994, 111–12). Likewise, Thiessen describes 5:19 as an “indirect command to silence” and identifies the Markan secret in this passage, though he concedes that it is “weakly drawn” (1983, 147–48).⁵⁷ Similarly, Gnilka (1978), commenting on Jesus’s instruction to the healed demoniac, argues, “Man wird darum in diesem Auftrag keinen Verkündigungsbefehl sehen dürfen” (206) and concludes that the man “bricht somit das Schweigegebot” (207).

However, Wrede’s reading of Mark 5:19–20 falters at several points. First, it overstates the difference between the verbs ἀπάγγειλον and κηρύσσειν by suggesting that κηρύσσειν represents a markedly different or even contradictory action. As noted above, ἀπάγγειλον is used elsewhere for the preaching of the good news (Acts 26:20; cf. Matt 12:18; Heb 2:12; 1 John 1:2–3) and semantically overlaps εὐαγγελίζω. As Moloney concludes, “the verb ἀπαγγέλλειν is closely associated with the idea of preaching the good news” (2012, 105). A synoptic comparison of Luke 4:43 with Mark 1:38; and Luke 9:6 with Mark 6:12 suggests a similar semantic overlap between εὐαγγελίζω and κηρύσσειν (see also: Luke 4:18–19; Rom 10:15; Gal 1:8 cf. 2:2; 1 Cor 15:1–2 cf. 15:11). The meanings of ἀπάγγειλον and κηρύσσειν are, therefore, too similar for “the second to be seen as a betrayal of the first.”⁵⁸ The man interprets Jesus’ command expansively but not wrongly” (Marcus 2000a, 346).⁵⁹

Second, it downplays the significance of the phrase πρὸς τοὺς σοὺς by assuming it is a redundant repetition of εἰς τὸν οἶκόν σου. If, as suggested above, πρὸς τοὺς σοὺς is intended to broaden the scope of the man’s reporting, this significantly undermines the suggestion that Jesus’s instruction to him is a command to maintain the secret.

⁵⁶ See similarly, Wrede’s explanation of why Jesus refuses the man’s request to join him (Mark 5:18–19a). Wrede, argues that Jesus does not want the demoniac to accompany him out of fear that he will not keep the secret. “Er will ihn nicht mitnehmen aus Besorgnis, von ihm verraten zu werden” (1901, 141).

⁵⁷ See also Boring (2012, 154); Klostermann (1950, 50); Dibelius (1934, 74); Luz (1965, 18).

⁵⁸ Smith, who examines “teaching” vocabulary in 1 Corinthians, 1 and 2 Timothy and Titus, groups κηρύσσω, εὐαγγελίζομαι and ἀπαγγέλλω together as “semantically related” terms associated with “the activity of ‘announcing’” (2012, 34, 201). Likewise, D. Barrett identifies ἀπαγγέλλω and κηρύσσω as words which overlap in meaning with εὐαγγελίζω (1987, 15–17). Similarly, The New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology, which groups words in semantically related categories, locates ἀπαγγέλλω and κηρύσσω together under the category “Proclamation, Preach, Kerygma” (C. Brown 1986, 44–48).

⁵⁹ Contra Gnilka (1978, 1:206).

Third, it overlooks those occasions when the house is presented in Mark as a place of public teaching or meeting (2:1–2, 15; 3:20).⁶⁰

Fourth, a number of the passages in Mark appealed to in support of the idea that “home” connotes secrecy explicitly refer to privacy or concealment (7:17, 24; 9:28), suggesting that secrecy is “not necessarily implicit in the location itself” (Guelich 1998, 285–86).

Jesus’s instruction to the healed demoniac (5:19) is, therefore, best understood not as an injunction to secrecy but as a straightforward call to make known what has happened. This call stands in stark contrast to the commands to silence elsewhere in Mark (cf. 1:25, 44; 3:12; 5:43; 7:36). This difference is commonly explained by appealing to the gentile location of this incident.⁶¹ But in Mark 7:31–37, Jesus commands silence after healing a deaf man in the mostly gentile Decapolis. Perhaps a better explanation for the difference in Mark 5:18 lies not in the location alone but also in the fact that Jesus himself is not remaining in the area. Jesus’s pending absence is underlined by the opening phrase of Mark 5:18, “As he was getting into the boat.” Jesus’s instruction to the man, therefore, occurs in the context of Jesus’s imminent departure. In contrast, elsewhere in Mark, when Jesus commands silence, he himself is often present proclaiming (cf. 1:21–25; 1:38–45). With Jesus preparing to depart in Mark 5:18, there is a need for another to proclaim. Jesus’s instruction to the man thus prepares for his absence.⁶²

3.5.3 The man’s response

In response to Jesus’s command, the man went away καὶ ἤρξατο κηρύσσειν ἐν τῇ Δεκαπόλει ὅσα ἐποίησεν αὐτῷ ὁ Ἰησοῦς (5:20a).

The verb κηρύσσω is the same word used for the proclamation of the disciples (cf. Mark 3:14). Just as the former demoniac’s request to go with Jesus echoed the language of Jesus’s appointment of the Twelve (3:14a cf. Mark 5:18), so his subsequent activity echoes Jesus’s intention to send the Twelve out to preach (cf. 3:14b). While the former demoniac cannot be with Jesus, he does go out and proclaim.⁶³

The verb κηρύσσω is also used for the proclamation of John the Baptist (1:4, 7) and Jesus (1:14; 1:38–39). The former demoniac’s actions may, therefore, be understood as a participation in the proclaiming work of Jesus and his disciples.⁶⁴ Indeed, Mark’s statement that the man “*began to proclaim*” (ἤρξατο κηρύσσειν) may echo the title of Mark (1:1), which uses the cognate noun ἀρχή, and as argued in chapter 3, refers to the beginning of the proclamation of the gospel (ἀρχὴ τοῦ εὐαγγελίου). If so, the

⁶⁰ Wrede concedes that the “house” in Mark need not always have a sense of secrecy but still concludes that in Mark 5:18–20 it does (1901, 141).

⁶¹ See, e.g., Keener (1993, Mark 5:19–20); Strauss (2014, 221); Mann (1986, 280).

⁶² In a similar way the Twelve are sent out to proclaim in locations where Jesus is not present (Mark 3:14; 6:7–13).

⁶³ Ó Floinn argues that Jesus “transforms the man’s wish to be a disciple into a commission to be an apostle” (2018, 255).

⁶⁴ Compare Gnilka who describes him as “zum echten Vorläufer christlicher Verkündigung” (1978, 1:207).

former demoniac's actions in the Decapolis form part of the beginning of the proclamation of Jesus Christ - in this case, among the gentiles (cf. Isa 12:3) (Broadhead 2001, 52).

The location of the man's proclamation ἐν τῇ Δεκαπόλει indicates he went beyond his own home. As noted above, this is not disobedience but abundant obedience because Jesus's command was not restrictive.

Instructed to tell what ὁ κύριος has done (5:19), the former demoniac proclaims what ὁ Ἰησοῦς has done (5:20).⁶⁵ In this way, the demoniac associates Jesus with the Lord. This echoes Mark's opening where Old Testament prophecies regarding the coming of the LORD are applied to the coming of Jesus (Mark 1:1–8 cf. 12:36–37).

In response to the man's proclamation, "everyone marvelled" (5:20). Amazement is a characteristic response to Jesus's ministry in Mark's Gospel (1:22; 1:27; 2:12; 5:15; 5:42; 6:51; 12:17). The similar response generated by the demoniac may suggest that this man, by his proclamation, in some sense parallels the activity of Jesus.

3.6 A close reading of Mark 5:1-20 – a preliminary conclusion

Mark 5:1–20 demonstrates Jesus's kingly power and authority over the demonic. It also contributes significantly to the motif of proclamation.

First, Mark's account of the demoniac's proclamation adds to the frequency and pervasiveness of proclamation references throughout Mark's Gospel.

Second, it provides another example of a reference to proclamation in Mark that meets Freedman's criteria of avoidability. The absence of any reference to the demoniac's proclamation in Matthew's parallel account (Matt 8:28–34) demonstrates that the story of the Gerasene demoniac can be told without referring to proclamation. The avoidability of this reference to proclamation provides further support for the conclusion that proclamation is a motif in Mark's Gospel.

Third, this pericope contributes to the prominence of the motif of proclamation in Mark. As noted above, motifs are amplified by the involvement of both major and minor characters. The previous two chapters of this study have drawn attention to the proclamation of the major characters in Mark - Jesus and his disciples. By contrast, the Gerasene demoniac is a minor character in Mark as he appears only once and has no ongoing role in the narrative.⁶⁶ His proclamation in Mark 5:20 means that Mark's Gospel involves both major and minor characters in the motif of proclamation, which contributes to its prominence.

The demoniac's proclamation also comes at the conclusion of the pericope and so a climactic moment in the narrative and represents an unusual element in an exorcism story. These features direct the reader's attention to the demoniac's proclamation and so contribute to the prominence of proclamation in Mark.

⁶⁵ This discussion of the demoniac's proclamation is not to suggest that he understood Jesus's mission and message in detail. Instead, he simply proclaimed what Jesus had done for him.

⁶⁶ Cf. Malbon (2000, 192).

Finally, as will be argued in detail below, the Gerasene demoniac is presented as an exemplar of proclamation for Mark's readers to emulate. His proclamation is not an act of disobedience, but rather extravagant obedience, which Mark describes using the same language used earlier for the proclamation of John the Baptist, the Twelve, and Jesus himself. The provision of such a model is a powerful rhetorical strategy to impact the reader.

The remainder of this chapter will examine the evidence that the demoniac serves as an exemplar of proclamation for Mark's readers.

3.7 Evidence for identifying the Gerasene demoniac as an exemplar

As noted earlier, the Gerasene demoniac has been often dismissed or overlooked as an exemplar in Markan studies. So, for example, Gundry argues that Mark 5:1–20 makes a Christological point regarding "Jesus' greatness" rather than a point about "exemplary evangelism" (1993, 255). But Gundry appears to present a false dichotomy since it is surely plausible that Mark could be making both points. Indeed, if Mark only intended to highlight Jesus's power over the demonic, this could be done without including the account of the former demoniac's proclamation (cf. Matt 8:28–34).

As argued above, it is reasonable to assume that the early readers of Mark's Gospel would have instinctively attended to the characters in Mark as potential narrative models for emulation. Consistent with this (and contrary to Gundry's conclusion), there are a number of textual indicators in Mark 5:1–20 that suggest the Gerasene demoniac is being presented as an exemplar of proclamation to be emulated. These will now be outlined.

3.7.1 Point-of-view crafting

As a starting point, the demoniac is established as a character with whom the reader is to identify through point-of-view crafting. The following discussion of point-of-view draws on the approach of Gary Yamasaki. Building on the work of Uspensky and Sternberg, Yamasaki describes six distinct "planes" on which point-of-view dynamics operate – spatial, psychological, informational, temporal, phraseological, and ideological (Yamasaki 2012, 17–18, 35, 54, 69, 91, 98).⁶⁷ Each of these planes feature in the analysis below.

In verse 2, the narrative is focalised through the demoniac as he is the grammatical subject of the verb ὑπήντησεν while Jesus is referred to with a personal pronoun (Bolt 2003, 143).

The detailed description of the demoniac's plight in verses 3–5 continues to focus attention on the demoniac.⁶⁸ As has often been noted, Mark's description of the demoniac's plight is unusually detailed. On the temporal plane, this description

⁶⁷ See, also Yamasaki (1998, 58–63).

⁶⁸ This focus is not absolute since οὐδεὶς occurs as the grammatical subject of verbs in verses 3 and 4 encouraging the reader to consider the point-of-view of those who were trying to restrain him.

represents a “pause” as the passing of story time is temporarily suspended. This interrupts the action and directs attention onto the demoniac.⁶⁹

On the informational plane, this description creates a convergence between the reader's knowledge and the knowledge of the demoniac, leading the reader to identify with the demoniac.⁷⁰ This identification is strengthened by the nature of the description, which arouses the reader's sympathy and so helps close the distance between the reader and the character.⁷¹

The action re-starts in verse 6, where again the narrative is focalised through the demoniac. The description of the demoniac “seeing” Jesus represents an inside view on the psychological plane. As Shimon Bar-Efrat rightly comments, “An outside observer can see that a person is looking, but is unable to tell what the person is seeing; in contrast to the verb ‘look,’ the verb ‘see’ relates to internal occurrences” (1989, 21). Such an inside view suggests the reader is being drawn into a position of proximity to the demoniac.⁷² This proximity is heightened on the spatial plane as the reader moves with the demoniac “from afar” towards Jesus (5:6) (Bolt 2003, 144).

The cry of the demoniac in verse 7 is the first direct discourse in the passage. This maintains the reader's focus on the demoniac.⁷³

As noted in the close reading earlier, the references to Jesus's conversation partner in this narrative vacillate between singular and plural, and between masculine and neuter, and it is not always possible to determine the degree to which the demoniac speaks for himself or the unclean spirits are speaking through him. In verse 7, however, the repeated use of the singular throughout focuses attention on the demoniac himself. It is his voice and words, even if the knowledge is that of the unclean spirits. As Schnabel notes, when “the man is in the forefront of the narrative, Mark uses the singular” ... “when the demons are in the forefront, he uses the plural” (2017, 119).⁷⁴

In his cry, the demoniac identifies Jesus as the “Son of God Most High” (Mark 5:7). This identification resonates with the description of Jesus given by the reliable narrator in 1:1 and the voice of God in 1:11. The slight difference in the title used by the demoniac is consistent, as noted above, with his gentile context. The affinity between the words of the demoniac and previous reliable commentary may function on the phraseological and ideological plane to help establish the demoniac as the point-of-view character in this narrative with whom the reader is to identify.

⁶⁹ Since Mark's Gospel generally exhibits a relatively swift narrative tempo, even minor slowing of this tempo has the potential to impact the reader, whether or not it is consciously perceived. Cf. Licht (1986, 103).

⁷⁰ Cf. Yamasaki (2012, 58, 68).

⁷¹ On identification through the arousal of emotions such as pity and compassion, see Kurle (2013, 246); Bolt (2003, 21, 143); Nünning (2014, 201).

⁷² Although this inside view of the demoniac is an isolated instance in the narrative, in conjunction with the strategies operating on the other planes it is sufficient to contribute to the development of the demoniac as a point-of-view character.

⁷³ A desire to focus on the demoniac by recording his speech first may explain the use of the unusual “flashback” in verse 8.

⁷⁴ See also Stein (2008a, 255).

A similar resonance is found in verse 20, where the demoniac (who is now unambiguously the one speaking) appears to implicitly identify Jesus as “the Lord,” an identification previously implied through the narrator’s use of the composite quotation in Mark 1:2–3. In this way, the demoniac is portrayed as knowing something that the reader also knows, but that many other characters in Mark overlook or misunderstand – that Jesus is the Lord. This further decreases the gap between the reader and the demoniac.

As Powell notes, the implied reader of the Gospels will tend to empathise with those characters who express God’s point-of-view or the point-of-view of the narrator (1990, 24–25, 54).⁷⁵ Because the demoniac’s speech utilises speech characteristics of God and the narrator, his point-of-view is aligned with theirs (Yamasaki 2012, 58). Importantly, such identification is not an end in itself but a strategy by which the author stimulates attitudes in the reader (Iser 1980, 65).

The positioning of the demoniac as a point-of-view character continues in vv. 18–20, where the description of the demoniac’s response, in particular, his desire to follow Jesus and his proclamation of Jesus, echoes the language of Mark 3:14.⁷⁶ In this way, his proclamation is portrayed as an activity of discipleship and even as an extension of Jesus’s ministry.⁷⁷

Finally, the demoniac’s response also corresponds with the ideology of the narrator and the ideal response to Jesus presented throughout Mark’s Gospel.⁷⁸ As argued above, the title of Mark’s Gospel refers to the “beginning of the proclamation of Jesus Christ” (ἀρχὴ τοῦ εὐαγγελίου Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ, Mark 1:1). In Mark 5:20, the demoniac is described as *beginning* to proclaim in the Decapolis about Jesus. In this way, the demoniac’s activity is a sample of what Mark’s Gospel is all about.

This alignment between the actions of the demoniac and the ideology and message of the narrator is a rhetorical strategy that helps further establish the demoniac as an exemplar (Bennema 2013, 51–55).⁷⁹ His response to Jesus is the ideal response that the reader is to emulate.

⁷⁵ So, also Rhoads, Dewey, and Michie (2012, 135).

⁷⁶ The demoniac’s desire to “go with Jesus” may also represent his willingness to leave behind everything to follow Jesus (cf. Peter’s statement in Mark 10:28).

⁷⁷ In contrast to those who assert that Jesus rejects the man as a disciple, Bennema compellingly argues that “Jesus grants the Gentile man’s request to be his disciple, not by allowing the man to stay with him but by sending him to proclaim the message” (2014, 220). See also Harrington (2013, 17).

The possibility that the demoniac is to be understood as extending Jesus’s ministry is supported by the response to his proclamation which Mark describes with the phrase, πάντες ἐθαύμαζον (5:20). This reaction parallels the common response to Jesus’s ministry in Mark (1:22; 1:27; 2:12; 6:2; 7:37; etc.).

⁷⁸ So, for example, in Mark’s Gospel the proper response to healing or to hearing the word is to “follow” Jesus and become a disciple (Thurston 2002, 63).

⁷⁹ This may be a way that Mark uses characterisation to “persuade his readers to share his own ideological program” (Lehtipuu 1999, 74).

3.7.2 Synkrisis

The demoniac's exemplary response to Jesus is also underlined through *synkrisis* with the response of the townspeople who beg Jesus to leave the area (5:17). *Synkrisis* is a rhetorical technique involving the juxtaposition of things or people. The first-century educator Theon described *synkrisis* as "language setting the better or the worse side by side" (Theon, *Progymnasmata* 112 [Kennedy]). The use of *synkrisis* was common in many genres of Greek and Roman literature (McGing 1982, 15) and was taught in intermediate education (Gorman 2015, 60).⁸⁰

Greco-Roman readers of Mark 5:1–20, familiar with the literary convention of *synkrisis*, would compare the response of the demoniac and that of the townspeople. This *synkrisis* is amplified by the repetition of παρακαλέω in the response of the townspeople (5:17) and the response of the demoniac (5:18).

Since Jesus is clearly portrayed as the protagonist of Mark's Gospel and explicitly identified to the reader as the Christ and the Son of God by the omniscient narrator (Mark 1:1), the main criterion for evaluating each character in the Markan narrative is their response to Jesus.⁸¹ As noted above, in verse 17, the townspeople beg (παρακαλεῖν) Jesus to leave their area. They are afraid and desire to be distanced from Jesus. In striking contrast to their rejection of Jesus, the demoniac begs (παρακάλει) to go with Jesus (v. 18).

This *synkrisis* serves to accentuate the demoniac's ideal response and so mark him as an exemplar to be emulated.

3.7.3 The absence of other potential exemplars

The exemplary function of the demoniac is also heightened by the absence of other potential exemplars. After the opening plural verb ἦλθον (5:1), the disciples are out of view and therefore unable to serve as exemplars.

While Jesus is clearly key to the narrative, he is addressed as the "Son of the Most High God" (Mark 5:7) and portrayed as exercising supernatural power and authority beyond human imitation.

Finally, the townspeople are an undifferentiated group whose response to Jesus is obviously inappropriate and so to be avoided.

This absence of other characters to identify with and emulate draws the reader to identify with the demoniac and contributes to the presentation of the demoniac as an exemplar.

3.7.4 The anonymity of the demoniac

The anonymity of the demoniac also facilitates his presentation as an exemplar. While anonymity can fulfil different functions in narrative, combined with positive portrayal and the point-of-view crafting outlined above, it reinforces identification by

⁸⁰ Gamel discusses the occurrence of *synkrisis* throughout Mark's passion account (2017, 101).

⁸¹ Cf. Bennema (2016, 96).

helping to close the distance between reader and character, since the reader is able to inhabit the locus of the nameless character (Resseguie 2005, 130). As literary theorist Thomas Docherty argues, the naming of characters maintains a distinction between the reader and that named character (1983, 43). Anonymity removes that distinction, and facilitates the reader's identification with the unnamed character (Beck 1993, 142).⁸² "The indeterminacy presented by anonymity can intensify reader potential for identification with that character ..." (Beck 1997, 9 cf. 12–13, 33).⁸³

This identification encourages the reader to take on the character's goals and behaviour (Mar et al. 2011, 824).⁸⁴

3.7.5 Shared characteristics between the demoniac and the early reader

The demoniac has several characteristics in common with at least some of the early readers of Mark's Gospel. These shared characteristics would help further close the distance between reader and character, facilitating the reader's identification with the demoniac and so the function of the demoniac as an exemplar.⁸⁵

First, the demoniac is a gentile. The explanations of Jewish customs (Mark 7:1–4; 15:42) and the translation of Aramaic words (3:17; 5:41; 7:11, 34; 15:22, 34) in Mark's Gospel suggest that Mark might include gentiles among his implied readers.

Second, the demoniac desires to be physically present with Jesus but cannot be and so instead serves Jesus while physically separated from him. Those of Mark's early readers who were followers of Jesus likewise serve Jesus in his physical absence.

Third, the demonic is portrayed in a liminal situation – radically transformed by Jesus and on the cusp of a new life. Again, assuming some of Mark's early readers are followers of Jesus, they too may be living in a similar kind of liminality (Rochester 2011, 164).⁸⁶

Fourth, like those readers of Mark who were followers of Jesus, the demoniac is a follower of Jesus from outside the Twelve.

⁸² For a brief survey of some key studies done on reader identification with anonymous characters, see Beck (1993, 148–49).

⁸³ See also Resseguie (2005, 130); Beck (1993, 143–58); Reinhartz (1998, 186); Docherty (1983, 83); Moloney 2004, (186–91).

Strikingly, Beck asserts that unlike in *John* "Synoptic anonymous characters ... lack significance" (1997, 9) Beck draws this conclusion, even though the Gerasene demoniac would meet the criteria of significance that he uses in his analysis of Johannine characters.

⁸⁴ The research of Mar et al. (like that of Nunning above) is based on contemporary fiction. The validity of applying conclusions from the study of contemporary fiction to biblical texts may be questioned but the judicious use of such an approach has been defended by Bennema and Tannehill inter alia. See Bennema (2009, 375–421); Tannehill (1977, 387–88). It must also be noted that at least some modern literary discussion and analysis may be traced back to the ancient study of Greek literature and that "much is owed in particular to Aristotle's work on poetics" (Ball 1996, 18–19).

⁸⁵ As Rochester notes, "readers are drawn to characters with whom they have something in common ..." (2011, 70). A study by Jose and Brewer supports this conclusion, demonstrating that perceived similarities to characters caused readers to experience "significantly greater identification" (1984, 911).

⁸⁶ See also McVann (1984, 147–53, 193, 231).

3.7.6 The demoniac's proclamation as the conclusion of the pericope

Finally, the proclamation of the former demoniac constitutes the conclusion of the pericope, which gives the demoniac and his actions greater prominence.

The significance of the end of a narrative was recognised at least as early as Aristotle, who argued that a well-constructed plot should not end “at an arbitrary point” (Aristotle, *Poetics* 1450b 22–38 [Halliwell et al., LCL]). Endings are significant because “what comes after often illuminates what comes before” (Prince 1982, 156); and because the end of a narrative is the final contact point for the reader.

Marianna Torgovnick observes that when an author continues a story beyond the resolution of the main conflict, that extended ending is where “an author most pressingly desires to make his points” (1981, 19). Similarly, David Richter contends that in rhetorically orientated fiction, the author's message or purpose is often realised at the end of the narrative (1974, 181).

A similar phenomenon may be observed in biblical literature. As Zeelander notes, many short biblical narratives include conclusions that continue “past the resolution of the main conflict” and “exhibit the author's didactic intent” (2012, 13). See, for example: Gen 21:20–21; Exod 12:40–42; 14:30–31; 1 Sam 15:35; Mark 4:40–41; Luke 2:52; John 2:11; Acts 28:30–31.

In discussions of biblical literature, recognition of the importance of narrative endings has given rise to the rule of end stress. The rule of end stress requires that particular attention be given to the end of a story on the assumption that this is where the primary message of a story appears.⁸⁷

Mark 5:1–20 closes with the demoniac and his proclamation. In fact, after Mark 5:19, Jesus is absent from the narrative, and the focus shifts entirely to the former demoniac. This conclusion continues the narrative “past the resolution of the main conflict,” which may indicate its significance in communicating Mark's message.

The end of Mark 5:1–20 also involves a subtle “drift into the future.”⁸⁸ By concluding with a summary statement of extensive, ongoing activity, the story time of Mark 5:1–20 implicitly extends towards the time of the audience.⁸⁹ This further facilitates the reader's identification with the demoniac and the development of the demoniac as an exemplar.

3.7.7 The Gerasene demoniac as an exemplar: conclusion and implications

A close reading of Mark 5:1–20 reveals numerous rhetorical strategies that prompt the reader to identify with the demoniac and treat him as an exemplar to be emulated. While no single indicator is sufficient on its own to identify the demoniac as an exemplar, the cumulative weight of these observations supports this conclusion. First, the demoniac is established as a point-of-view character through

⁸⁷ Snodgrass (2018, 19–20); Boomershine (1981, 221); Bultmann (1968, 191). Cf. Tannehill (1977, 186).

⁸⁸ Cf. W. Martin (1986, 84).

⁸⁹ Berlin (1999, 107–10); W. Martin (1986, 84).

point-of-view crafting. Second, the demoniac's exemplary response to Jesus is highlighted through synkrisis with the response of the townspeople. Third, the absence of other suitable exemplars heightens the focus on the demoniac. Fourth, the anonymity of the demoniac facilitates reader identification. Fifth, potentially shared characteristics help close the distance between the early reader and the demoniac. Sixth, the demoniac's exemplary proclamation forms the conclusion to the narrative.

The presence of these rhetorical features suggests that the presentation of the demoniac as an exemplar of proclamation is part of Mark's communicative interest.⁹⁰ Mark desires that his readers imitate the demoniac by proclaiming what Jesus has done for them. In particular, the demoniac is a model for the reader of one outside the Twelve, indeed a gentile, who is saved by Jesus, and in Jesus's absence, proclaims the good news of what Jesus has done (Donahue 1988, 991).⁹¹ In this way, he serves as a prompt and prototype for the reader's own proclamation to the gentiles (Mark 13:10) (Donahue and Harrington 2002, 170).

4. A final note

The proclamation of the Gerasene demoniac raises two issues that have only been touched on in this chapter and which require more detailed consideration. First, the identity of the demoniac as one outside the Twelve may signal the involvement of others in the task of proclamation. This issue will be explored in chapter 7 below. Second, the location of the demoniac's proclamation in the predominantly gentile territory of the Decapolis may anticipate the spread of proclamation throughout the world in a broader gentile mission. It is this possibility which the next chapter will explore.

⁹⁰ Cf. Kurlle (2013, 247). The presentation of the demoniac as an exemplar is consistent with Mark's broader practice. As Shively argues, Mark depicts both good characters for emulation and weak characters for avoidance with the intention that his audience should learn from his portrayal of these characters "how to live their lives, through imitation ..." (2018b, 287).

⁹¹ Rhoads et al. argue that the original hearers of Mark would have been assured by the exemplary minor characters that they "did not have to be among the twelve in order to serve the rule of God" (2012, 135).

Chapter 6: Worldwide Proclamation

1. Introduction

In the opening chapter of Mark's Gospel, Jesus's proclamation is limited to Galilee (1:14–15; 1:38–39). However, in Mark 5, the proclamation of the Gerasene demoniac extends to the predominantly gentile region of the Decapolis and may proleptically anticipate a broadening of gospel proclamation beyond Galilee into all the world.

In his commentary on the Synoptic Gospels and Acts, Dumbrell writes, "Mark ... portrays no interest in a later Gentile mission" (2008, ix). A similar conclusion is drawn by others. Mann contends that "no obvious interest in any Gentile mission can be found in Mark's gospel" (1986, 517 cf. 559). Likewise, Kilpatrick argues, "universalism is absent from Mark. There is no preaching the Gospel to Gentiles in this world ..." (1957, 157).¹

However, while Mark's Gospel may lack an explicit, direct commissioning of the disciples to world evangelisation (cf. Matt 28:16–20; Luke 24:44–49), there are two verses in Mark, identified by the qualitative content analysis in chapter 2, that appear to refer explicitly to *worldwide* proclamation (13:10 and 14:9). This suggests that the proclamation that Mark anticipates may, in fact, be a worldwide proclamation to Jews and gentiles. Such interest in worldwide proclamation might be expected given the likely location and apparently mixed nature of Mark's audience (see discussion in chapter 2) (Garland 2015, 458).

The bulk of this chapter will consist of an examination of these two verses (Mark 13:10 and 14:9) using the tools of narrative criticism, grammatical-historical exegesis, and rhetorical criticism. The focus of this analysis will be to determine any contribution these passages make to the prominence and content of the motif of proclamation in Mark, and to identify the potential rhetorical impact of this material on Mark's readers.

Before turning to these verses, however, it will be helpful to first consider the broader context in which they are found. Such an exploration of context is part of the narrative approach adopted in this study, and a lengthier excursus is necessitated by those who contest the presence of any material regarding worldwide proclamation in Mark. The chapter will therefore begin with a survey of the many passages in Mark (outside of Mark 13:10 and 14:9) that appear to imply or foreshadow a worldwide proclamation. While some of these passages lack explicit proclamation language, they will be briefly considered here as part of the context in which Mark 13:10 and 14:9 are read. Together, these preliminary, contextually relevant passages suggest that any reference to worldwide proclamation in Mark 13:10 and 14:9 is not an isolated anomaly but is consistent with the broader message of Mark. Some of the references to be considered in this initial survey also help lay the theological foundation for the inclusion of the gentiles in God's purposes. This theological foundation undergirds the proclamation of the gospel to Jews and gentiles that, it will be argued, is anticipated in Mark 13:10 and 14:9.

¹ See similarly Harnack and Moffatt (1904, 44); van Maaren (2019, 252–54).

2. The broader context of Mark 13:10 and 14:9 – a survey of the other passages in Mark that imply or anticipate a worldwide proclamation

2.1 Introduction

The contextually relevant passages to be considered at this point of the study will be surveyed in three groups – first, accounts of Jesus’s ministry to or among gentiles, beginning with Mark 5:1-20; second, elements of Jesus’s teaching which appear to reference worldwide proclamation; and third, other incidental references or allusions related to worldwide proclamation in Mark.

2.2 *Jesus’s ministry to or among gentiles*

2.2.1 Introduction

While Mark presents Jesus’s ministry as focused on Israel, he also describes several occasions when Jesus journeys into gentile territory and ministers to gentiles. This ministry of Jesus among gentiles may proleptically foreshadow the proclamation of the gospel to gentiles that appears to be in view in Mark 13:10 and 14:9.

2.2.2 Mark 5:1–20

As discussed in chapter 5, Mark 5:1–20 presents the Gerasene demoniac as an exemplar of proclamation. This passage also describes Jesus’s first journey into gentile territory. The significance of this journey is underlined by the extended and vivid account of Jesus crossing the sea in Mark 4:35–41. Notably, the journey is initiated by Jesus himself (4:35), and Jesus’s actions towards the demoniac demonstrate his compassion for this gentile man.²

Jesus’s journey to the Gerasenes may prefigure the crossing of boundaries and legitimise the travel required for the worldwide proclamation that appears to be anticipated in Mark 13:10 and 14:9. The demoniac’s proclamation also takes place in a gentile region (5:18–20) and could represent a prototype of gentile mission.³

2.2.3 Jesus’s parallel ministry in Jewish and gentile territory

The account of the Gerasene demoniac also appears to contribute to an important narrative pattern whereby Mark parallels Jesus’s ministry in Jewish and gentile territory (Iverson 2012, 330). Just as Jesus’s first miracle in *Jewish* territory is an exorcism (1:23–26), so his first miracle in *gentile* territory is also an exorcism (5:1–

² Cf. Iverson (2012, 330). Garland contends that Isaiah 65:1–5b provides a “backdrop” for understanding the missional thrust of Mark 5:1–20 (2015, 459–60). Cf. Annen (1976, 182–84). The significance of Isaiah for Mark’s Gospel adds weight to this argument.

³ So Donahue and Harrington (2002, 170); Strauss (2014, 221–22).

20). The parallel between these exorcisms is underlined by significant similarities between the two narratives.⁴

Similarly, just as Jewish crowds in Galilee brought their sick to Jesus (1:32–33; 8:22; 9:20) so a gentile crowd brings to him a man “who was deaf and could hardly speak” (7:31–32).⁵

Particularly suggestive are the parallel feeding miracles in Mark 6:30–44 and 8:1–10. While some argue that these stories represent a clumsy doublet,⁶ there is good evidence for reading the feeding in Mark 8 as a distinct event involving a mixed crowd that complements Jesus’s feeding of a Jewish crowd in Mark 6.

Five observations support the identification of the crowd in Mark 8 as mixed. The subtlety of some of these indicators is typical of Mark. As Iverson notes, “explicit ethnic identification is the exception rather than the rule in Mark’s Gospel ... Instead of overtly classifying every character in the narrative as Jew or Gentile, Mark uses geography, architecture, vocation ...” and other implicit details “as ethnic identifiers” (Iverson 2007, 104–5).

First, although no location is explicitly identified, the introductory phrase “during those days” (8:1) connects this episode temporally with the preceding passages and may imply that Mark 8:1–10 describes the continuation of Jesus’s ministry in the predominantly gentile region of the Decapolis (cf. Mark 7:31) (Guelich 1998, 403).

Throughout this section of the narrative, Mark carefully notes the geographical movements of Jesus (6:45; 6:53; 6:56; 7:24; 7:31; 8:10) (Iverson 2007, 68). In light of this, the absence of a geographic indicator in 8:1 suggests that the location from the preceding passage continues.⁷ The mention of a geographical indicator in 8:1 “is unnecessary because the scene does not depict a change of location” (Iverson 2007, 68).

The description of the crowd as being with Jesus for three days (8:2) may also serve to connect this feeding account with the preceding episodes in gentile territory (Moloney 2012, 153).

Second, in Mark 8:3, Jesus describes some of the crowd as having come μακρόθεν, a term used in the LXX, and elsewhere in the New Testament, to designate gentiles

⁴ In both accounts the possessed man appears suddenly (εὐθύς, 1:23,5:2); is described as ἄνθρωπος ἐν πνεύματι ἀκαθάρτῳ (1:23, 5:2); cries out (κράζω) to Jesus (1:23,5:7); and refers to Jesus with a title that includes θεοῦ (1:24; 5:7). Likewise, in both accounts the first words of the possessed man to Jesus are an almost identical question: τί ἡμῖν καὶ σοί (1:24) / τί ἐμοὶ καὶ σοί (5:7) (Focant 2012, 197; Marcus 2000a, 349; D. Schmidt 1991, 72). These parallels lead Broadhead to describe Mark 5:1–20 “as a second reading of the exorcism in 1:21–28” (2001, 50).

⁵ Pesch identifies Mark 7:31–35 as an allegory of gentiles who have their ears opened by Jesus to understand the gospel and their tongues loosed in readiness to preach it (1977, 399). Iverson also identifies parallels between the healing of Jairus’s daughter (Mark 5:21–24a, 35–43) and the healing of the daughter of the Syrophenician woman (Mark 7:24–30) (2007, 78–79).

⁶ See, for example: Quesnell (1969, 36–38); Donfried (1980, 95–103); Légasse (1997, 463); Van Cangh (1974, 337–41).

⁷ So: S. Cook (2018, 81); Strauss (2014, 330); Guelich (1998, 402); Iverson (2007, 68); Cranfield (1963, 255); Focant (2012, 312); Marcus (2000a, 492).

(Deut 28:49; 29:21; Josh 9:6,9; 12; 2 Chr 6:32; Hab 1:8; Jer 4:16; cf. Baruch 4:15; Acts 2:39; 22:21; Eph 2:13,17). That Jesus describes only some (τινες) of the crowd as coming μακρόθεν suggests he is referring to more than just their travel with him to the “remote place” where the feeding takes place (8:4), since if this were the only travel in view, the description would apply to all the crowd and not just some. This description thereby plausibly identifies at least some in the crowd as gentiles.⁸

Third, a gentile setting and mixed crowd for this second feeding miracle (compared to a Jewish crowd in the first feeding miracle) provides a plausible explanation for why Mark would include two nearly identical miracles in such a compressed narrative.

Fourth, the two feeding stories utilise different words for basket (κόφινος, 6:43; σφυρί, 8:8). That this distinction is more than stylistic is suggested by Jesus’s recounting of these episodes where the same distinct words are used (Mark 8:19–20).

The word κόφινος (6:43), used in the feeding of the five thousand, was commonly associated with Jews (cf. Juvenal, *Satirae* 3:14; 6.542); while the word σφυρί (8:8), used in the feeding of the four thousand is a more general term and “fits a broader Gentile audience” (Strauss 2014, 331). Mark’s employment of these different terms may indicate a Jewish context for the first feeding miracle and a gentile context for the second.⁹

Fifth, if Matthew’s account of the feeding of the four thousand represents an early (and accurate) reading of Mark 8:1–10, it also provides evidence for a gentile setting for the episode.¹⁰ In Matt 15:31, the crowd whom Jesus will feed is described as praising “the God of Israel.” As France notes, this title “makes most sense as a reference to Gentiles praising Yahweh” (1985, 251).¹¹

While some of the individual arguments outlined above may not be compelling on their own, the cumulative case for identifying the crowd in Mark 8:1–10 as mixed is strong.¹² If this crowd was mixed, the feeding of the four thousand in Mark 8 represents a gentile parallel to the feeding of the five thousand in Mark 6. What Jesus did for Israel in Mark 6, he now does for gentiles as well.

These parallel feeding miracles, along with the parallel exorcisms (Mark 1:23–26 cf. 5:1–20), and the accounts of both Jewish and gentile crowds bringing a supplicant to

⁸ So Strauss (2014, 330, 332); Grundmann (1977, 205); Pesch (1977, 402–3); Hurtado (2011, 122); Donahue and Harrington (2002, 244); Schweizer (1971, 156).

⁹ So Focant (2012, 315); Wefald (1996, 22–23); Svartvik (2000, 299–300). Against this argument, it is sometimes noted that Josephus uses κόφινος to describe Roman infantry equipment (*Jewish War* 3.5.5 S95). See, e.g., Fowler (1981b, 211).

Some also appeal to the different numbers of loaves and leftovers in the two feeding miracles as symbolically evoking a Jewish setting in chapter 6 and a gentile setting in chapter 8. So Hurtado (2011, 124); Wefald (1996, 22–23); and more tentatively Marcus (2000a, 488); Moloney (2012, 155); Strauss (2014, 331); Alonso (2011, 321); Hofrichter (1992, 145–48); Garland 2015, (465–66).

¹⁰ Alonso describes Matthew as the “first interpretation of Mark to which we have access” (2011, 237).

¹¹ So also Carson (1984, 357); Mounce (2011, 154).

¹² So Boring (2012, 219); Alonso (2011, 320–23); Chance (2007); Van Cangh (1974, 130–31); Marcus (2000a, 469); Iverson (2007, 70).

be healed (Mark 1:32–33; 8:22; 9:20 cf. 7:31–32) suggest that Mark deliberately parallels Jesus’s ministry in Jewish and gentile territory.¹³ This parallel presentation of Jesus’s ministry to Jews and gentiles may be “Mark’s way of depicting the church’s mission as inclusive of both Jew and Gentile” and so foreshadow a proclamation of the gospel to both Jews and gentiles throughout the world (Senior and Stuhlmuehler 1985, 218–19).

2.2.4 The Syrophenician woman

Between the two feeding miracles, Mark records another of Jesus’s interactions with gentiles in a passage that has become something of a *crux interpretum* in the discussion of gentile mission in Mark.

In Mark 7:24, Jesus journeys into the “vicinity of Tyre.” There he encounters a gentile woman who begs him to drive the demon out of her daughter. Mark’s description of the woman as “a Greek, born in Syrian Phoenicia” (7:26) emphasises her identity as a gentile.

Some have understood Jesus’s reply to the woman as demonstrating Jesus’s resistance to gentile mission.¹⁴ Three observations militate against such a reading. First, Mark has already shown Jesus’s readiness to minister to gentiles (5:1–20 cf. 3:7–10 and 7:31–37). Interpreting Jesus’s words in 7:27 as a blunt rejection of the woman’s request is inconsistent with this earlier willingness.¹⁵

Second, Jesus’s use of the word *πρῶτον* (7:27) infers that he foresees a future gentile mission. As Köstenberger and O’Brien observe, the “first” implies a “second” (2001, 77).¹⁶ Jesus’s primary focus on Israel to this point in his mission does not indicate the permanent exclusion of the gentiles but a temporal priority.¹⁷ Jesus’s response to the Syrophenician woman, therefore, anticipates the later inclusion of the gentiles rather than their permanent exclusion (Bennema 2014, 221). Notably, Matthew’s parallel account (Matt 15:21–28) does not include the word *πρῶτον*.¹⁸

Third, the broader context in which this passage is found suggests an openness to gentile mission. Immediately prior to Jesus’s interaction with the Syrophenician woman, Mark includes Jesus’s teaching by which he “declared all foods clean” (7:19). The distinction between clean and unclean food contributed to the social boundary that existed between gentiles and Jews.¹⁹ By abolishing this distinction, Jesus removed an obstacle to worldwide proclamation (cf. Acts 10:9–43). Immediately following Jesus’s interaction with the Syrophenician woman Mark includes further

¹³ See, the detailed discussion of this “geographical mirroring” in Deppe (2015, 370–87).

¹⁴ See, e.g., Loader (1997, 49–51); Alonso (2011, 328, 342). Cf. Harnack and Moffatt (1904, 38–41); Kilpatrick (1957, 158); V. Taylor (1972, 350).

¹⁵ Jesus’s response is therefore better understood not as a refusal, but as a provocative test of faith. So, inter alia, Stein (2008a, 353); Marcus (2000a, 468–69); Pokorný (1995, 328–29).

¹⁶ Cf. Hahn (1965, 74–75, 113); Jeremias (1958, 29); R. Martin (1972, 222).

¹⁷ Cf. J. Edwards (2002, 220).

¹⁸ In her study of Matthean salvation history, Levine argues that Mark’s account of the Syrophenician woman places greater emphasis on gentile mission than the parallel account in Matt 15:21–28 (1988, 145).

¹⁹ Guelich (1998, 403); C. Wright (2006, 508–9). Contra: Svartvik (2000).

examples of Jesus's own gentile ministry that serve to foreshadow a future mission to the gentiles. This literary context suggests that Jesus's response to the Syrophenician woman should not be read as resistance to gentile mission but rather as a subtle anticipation of it.

In these ways, Jesus's interaction with the Syrophenician woman does not signal the permanent exclusion of gentiles but rather implicitly anticipates their inclusion and so foreshadows the proclamation of the gospel to gentiles as well as Jews.

2.2.5 The narrative sweep of Mark 6–8

Drawing together the feeding miracles and the episode with the Syrophenician woman reveals an evocative narrative sequence in Mark 6–8. In response to the Syrophenician woman's request, Jesus states that the children must eat first (7:27). The woman concurs and then notes that the dogs can eat the leftovers (7:28). The reader of Mark recognises that in the feeding of the five thousand, the "children" have already eaten, and there was plenty left over (6:42–44). Then in Mark 8, Jesus feeds the gentiles and demonstrates that there is still plenty remaining for others. The legitimacy of connecting these three passages in this way is suggested not only by the narrative flow of Mark but also by the repetition of the words ἄρτος (6:41; 7:27; 8:5) and χορτάζω (6:42; 7:27; 8:8) in all three stories (Garland 2015, 463).

Furthermore, between the two feeding miracles is Jesus's teaching in which he declares all foods clean and thereby removes a barrier between Jew and gentile (7:18–19). Again, Mark is the only Synoptist to include the statement that "Jesus declared all foods 'clean'" (cf. Matt 15:1–20).

Significantly this section of Mark begins with Jesus sending out the Twelve to proclaim (6:7). Building on this, the narrative sweep of Mark 6:7–8:10 may subtly anticipate an expansion of this proclamation ministry to include Jews and gentiles throughout the world – as appears to be anticipated in Mark 13:10 and 14:9 (Garland 2015, 463).²⁰

2.2.6 Conclusion

Mark describes several occasions when Jesus journeys into gentile territory and ministers to gentiles. Notably, these journeys into gentile territory arise from the initiative of Jesus himself (4:35; 7:24; 8:13); and with each journey, Mark "devotes increasing narrative space" to the ministry of Jesus in gentile territory and decreasing space to the intervals between them.²¹ In this way, the structure of Mark's Gospel

²⁰ Persson identifies the "Gentile mission" as the "overruling theme" in Mark 7:1–8:26 (1980, 46). However, Persson's focus on Mark 7:1–8:26 as a Markan interpolation means he does not consider the possible connection with Mark 6:7–13 and the broader narrative sweep of Mark 6–8.

²¹ Jesus's "first Gentile journey [5:1–20] consists of a single episode, while the second (7:24–8:9) and third journeys (8:22–9:29) into Gentile territory entail multiple scenes ... [and] with each subsequent journey ... the intervals between the journeys progressively decreases, such that the second and third excursions are separated by a mere three verses (8:10–12)" (Iverson 2012, 332). Cf. Freyne (1988, 54–55); Levine (1988, 146).

serves as implicit commentary, underlining the importance of Jesus's gentile ministry (Iverson 2012, 332).

Jesus's interaction with the Gerasene demoniac and the Syrophenician woman, the parallels between Jesus's ministry in Jewish and gentile territory, and the narrative structure of the Gospel itself, all combine to foreshadow and validate the inclusion of gentiles in God's purposes. This undergirds the proclamation of the gospel to gentiles that, it will be argued, is explicitly anticipated in Mark 13:10 and 14:9.²²

2.3 Elements of Jesus's teaching that anticipate a worldwide proclamation

2.3.1 Introduction

In addition to Jesus's ministry among gentiles, there are also elements of Jesus's teaching in Mark that anticipate a proclamation of the gospel to both Jews and gentiles throughout the world. These elements are considered briefly below.

2.3.2 Mark 11:17

In Mark 11:17, Jesus forcefully interrupts the activity that was taking place in the temple and then quotes from Isa 56:7 highlighting the intended purpose of the temple as a "house of prayer for all the nations" (πᾶσιν τοῖς ἔθνεσιν). Significantly, it is Mark alone among the Synoptists who includes this reference to the nations (cf. Matt 21:12–13; Luke 19:45–46).

The immediate context of Isa 56:7 looks forward to God's eschatological gathering of gentiles to himself (Isa 56:3–8).²³ Jesus's reference to this passage underlines his universal perspective – a perspective that endorses the worldwide proclamation of the gospel to both Jews and gentiles.

2.3.3 Jesus's parables in Mark 4

The proclamation of the gospel to Jews and gentiles throughout the world also appears to be foreshadowed in Jesus's parables in Mark 4.

Mark 4 begins with the parable of the sower (4:1–20) which explicitly refers to the broadcast sowing of the word (4:14). That the sower is not identified in the interpretation of the parable (4:13–20) may be an intentional narrative gap that allows the reader to see themselves (in addition to Jesus) in that role (Marcus 1997, 254, 259–61). If so, the parable functions to encourage the reader to persevere in sowing the word as they meet varied responses.

It is in the context of this parable on proclamation that the parables of the lamp, the growing seed, and the mustard seed appear.

²² Consistent with this conclusion, Wilkinson describes Jesus's ministry in gentile territory as a "precursor" to the gentile mission of the community for whom Mark is writing (2012, 103, 145, 236).

²³ Köstenberger (1998, 136); Garland (2015, 469); Awabdy and Long (2014).

The parable of the lamp on a stand (4:21–23) may echo the idea of God’s people as a light to the nations (cf. Isa 60:1–3; 62:1) (D. Robinson 2008, 41).

The parables of the growing seed (4:26–29) and the mustard seed (4:30–34) lucidly depict the expanding nature of the kingdom. This expansion may implicitly presuppose a broad proclamation of the gospel. The collocation of these parables with the parable of the sower (4:1–20) supports this connection with proclamation.

The parable of the mustard seed contains a further potential reference to the inclusion of the gentiles in God’s kingdom with its image of the “birds of the air” perching on the branches of the mustard tree. These birds are not “strictly necessary” to the parable and may be intended to recall the imagery of Ezekiel’s cedar tree parables and Nebuchadnezzar’s dream, where birds represent the nations (see esp. Ezek 31:6 LXX and Theodoton’s Greek translation of Dan 4:18 cf. Dan 4:11–12, 21–22) (France 2002, 216–17).²⁴ This possibility is bolstered by the explicit identification of birds as representing gentiles in later Jewish texts (1 En. 90:2, 30, 33, 37; Midr. Ps 104:10) and by the collocation of the verb κατασκηνώω (Mark 4:32), which is used in Zech 2:15 LXX and some manuscripts of Jos. Asen. 15:6 to speak of the eschatological gathering of gentiles to the God of Israel (Marcus 2000a, 324).²⁵

In summary, the parables in Mark 4 depict the widespread proclamation of the word, significant growth of God’s kingdom, and the inclusion of the gentiles with God’s people. The collocation of these parables suggests that this growth of the kingdom and inclusion of gentiles will occur through the widespread proclamation of the word to Jews and gentiles throughout the world.

2.3.4 Mark 12:9

A further possibility, which is admittedly suggestive rather than conclusive, is that the inclusion of the gentiles in God’s purposes may also be in view in the parable of the tenants when Jesus speaks of the “vineyard” being given to “others” (Mark 12:9). While the identity of the “others” is disputed, there is some evidence for identifying them as inclusive of the gentiles.²⁶ Certainly, for Mark’s gentile readers, it would be natural to understand the “others” in Mark 12:9 as a reference that included gentiles.²⁷

This reading appears to be buttressed by the parallel passage in Matt 21:33–45, which refers to the vineyard being “taken away from you and given to a people [ἔθνει ...], that produces the fruits of the kingdom” (Matt 21:43). This use of ἔθνει envisages

²⁴ Cf. Guelich (1998, 251); Hurtado (2011, 80); Bird (2006, 74–75).

²⁵ Jeremias appears to overstate the case by suggesting that κατασκηνώω is a “technical term for the incorporation of the Gentiles into the people of God” (1972, 147). The limited number of references that Jeremias appeals to seems insufficient to establish such a terminus technicus. Nevertheless, the identification of the birds as representing gentiles remains plausible and has some support. So, inter alia, Bird (2006, 76); Hooker (1991, 136); Marcus (2000a, 324, 330–31); Dodd (1935, 142–43); Hultgren (2000, 396–99); J. Edwards (2002, 145); Iverson (2007, 39); D. Robinson (2008, 42).

²⁶ So Gnilka (1979, 147); Marcus (2004, 128–29); Jeremias (1972, 70); Painter (1997, 162); Hooker (1991, 276); Schweizer (1971, 241); Best (2005, 180); Iverson (2012, 334).

²⁷ So J. Edwards (2002, 359–60); Hooker (1991, 276); R. Cooper (2000, 201).

a new community consisting of Jews and gentiles who will serve God and produce the fruits of the kingdom.²⁸

2.3.5 Conclusion

At the various points discussed above, Jesus's teaching indicates his universal perspective, anticipates the inclusion of the gentiles in God's purposes, and lays the foundation for the worldwide proclamation of the gospel to Jews and gentiles. In this way, Jesus's teaching complements his ministry to and among gentiles described in Mark and undergirds the proclamation of the gospel to all nations that, it will be argued, is anticipated in Mark 13:10 and 14:9.

2.4 *Incidental references and allusions to worldwide proclamation*

2.4.1 Introduction

In addition to those passages which recount Jesus's ministry to gentiles, and Jesus's teaching that anticipates worldwide proclamation, there are also passages in Mark that appear to contain incidental references or allusions that relate to worldwide proclamation. While these passages do not refer explicitly to proclamation, they form part of the context of those passages that do and so contribute indirectly to the motif of proclamation.

2.4.2 Breaking down of barriers

At numerous points, Mark depicts Jesus's willingness to cross socio-religious boundaries (Hanson 2000, 177–89). In the opening chapters of Mark, Jesus touches a man with leprosy (1:41), eats with tax collectors and sinners (2:15–16), heals on the Sabbath (3:4–5), journeys into the Gerasenes and interacts with a gentile demon-possessed man who lived among the tombs (5:1–17), stops to interact with a bleeding woman who has touched him (5:30–34), and touches a dead child (5:41).

Similarly, Jesus moves freely back and forth across the Sea of Galilee (4:35–41; 5:21; 6:47–49; 8:13). Chance describes the Sea of Galilee as “the ‘boundary’ in Mark's narrative world that separates the Jewish from the non-Jewish world” (2007, 280).²⁹ If this description is accurate, then Jesus's frequent journeys across the Sea (and, in particular, his calming of the Sea in Mark 4:35–41) may illustrate the removal of this barrier and so function to encourage proclamation to both Jews and gentiles. Likewise, Jesus's abolition of the distinction between clean and unclean food in Mark 7:18–19 represents the removal of a barrier to proclaiming the gospel to gentiles (Kelber 1974, 62–63).

Jesus's boundary breaching ministry undergirds and models the crossing of such boundaries to proclaim the gospel.

²⁸ Stein (2008a, 537); Blomberg (1992, 325); Hagner (1998, 623); France (1985, 313).

²⁹ See similarly Malbon (1984); Iverson (2007, 18); Kelber (1974, 62–63); Wefald (1996, 6–7).

2.4.3 Parallels with Jonah

Mark's description of Jesus's first journey across the sea and his calming of the storm (4:35–41) is somewhat reminiscent of the story of Jonah.³⁰ Both stories involve a group travelling by boat (πλοῖον, Mark 4:36; Jonah 1:3 LXX, etc.) on the sea (θάλασσα, Mark 4:39; Jonah 1:40 LXX) and being threatened by waves (κύμα, Mark 4:37; Jonah 1:4 LXX).³¹ Like Jonah, Jesus is asleep during the storm (καθεύδω, Mark 4:38; Jonah 1:5 LXX) and is woken with a question (Mark 4:38; Jonah 1:6 LXX) by people fearful that they will perish (ἀπόλλυμι, Mark 4:38; Jonah 1:6 LXX). After Jesus calms the storm, his disciples are “filled with great fear” (ἐφοβήθησαν μέγαν φόβον, 4:41), just as the sailors with Jonah were after the sea “ceased from its raging” (Jonah 1:16 LXX).³²

While there is debate over the extent and intent of this connection between Mark 4 and the book of Jonah, the nature of the verbal parallels and the location of this incident immediately prior to Jesus's visit to gentile territory are suggestive.³³ If Mark is deliberately echoing the Jonah account, he may be presenting Jesus as one “greater than Jonah” (cf. Matt 12:41; Luke 11:32) – a prophet on a boat pursuing his God-given mission rather than fleeing from it. Indeed, Jesus is portrayed in Mark as one, who like God himself, is concerned for the nations (5:1–13; 12:15–17; cf. Jonah 4:11) (Marcus 2000a, 338).³⁴ This depiction of Jesus's concern for the nations may also provide context for the worldwide proclamation of the gospel that appears to be anticipated in Mark 13:10 and 14:9.³⁵

2.4.4 Mark 13:27

In Mark 13:27, Jesus describes the gathering of the elect “from the four winds, from the ends of the earth to the ends of the heavens.” This phrase, echoing Deut 13:8; 30:4 and Zech 2:10, emphasises the universal distribution of the elect.³⁶ Such a distribution implies that the gospel will be proclaimed throughout the world and that

³⁰ Malbon suggests intersections between Jonah and all three Markan sea voyages (2019, 257–76).

³¹ The Gospel of Mark “seems to be the first text to apply the name Sea (θάλασσα) of Galilee to what Luke ... identifies as the Lake (λίμνη) of Gennesaret (Luke 5:1 etc.)” (Malbon 2019, 268). Mark's consistent use of the title θάλασσα may be intended to echo Old Testament texts, including Jonah.

³² Cf. also the occurrence of κοπάζω in Mark 4:39 and Jonah 1:11.

³³ Parallels between Jesus's calming of the storm and the story of Jonah have been widely recognised in Markan scholarship. See, inter alia, Moloney (2012, 99); Marcus (2000a, 337–38); A. Collins (2007, 259–60); Aus (2000, 3–55); Malbon (2019); J. Edwards (2002, 151); van Iersel and Linmans (1978); Goppelt (1939, 84); Cotter (2010, 220–24). Cf. Klauck (1978, 345–46); Cope (1976, 97).

³⁴ Cf. Malbon (2019, 288–90). The parallels between Jesus and the God of Jonah are seen most clearly in his power over the sea (cf. Job 26:11–12; Ps 18:15; 104:7; 106:9; Isa 50:2). For other potential parallels, see Marcus (2000a, 338–39). The subtlety of this message is consistent with Mark's method. As Malbon notes, the teaching of Demetrius on subtlety “seems to have come naturally to the author of Mark's Gospel” (2019, 278). Cf. Demetrius, *De elocutio* 222.

³⁵ Matthew and Luke's accounts of Jesus calming the storm demonstrate the possibility of describing this episode without all of these verbal parallels to Jonah (cf. Matt 8:23–27; Luke 8:22–25) and raise the possibility that Matthew and Luke sought to develop this Jonah theme in a different way (cf. Matt 12:39–41; Luke 11:29–32).

³⁶ Lane (1974, 477); J. Edwards (2002, 404); Gundry (1993, 786).

people from everywhere, perhaps including gentiles, will respond to it (Garland 2015, 470).

2.4.5 The temple in Mark

The expectation of a worldwide proclamation of the gospel may also be indirectly developed by the Markan theme of judgment on the temple.³⁷ This theme is first introduced in the Markan prologue when Mark cites Mal 3:1 with its expectation that the Lord would come to his temple in judgment (Mark 1:2). In Mark 11:15–16, Jesus enters the temple and forcefully interrupts the activity that was taking place. Jesus’s disruptive actions are an “enacted parable” of judgment, a prophetic condemnation of the temple for its failure to function as a “house of prayer for all the nations.”³⁸ Then in Mark 13:1–2, Jesus explicitly announces the destruction of the temple.

The theme of judgment on the temple reaches its climax in Mark 15, where the tearing of the curtain represents a proleptic fulfilment of this judgment (15:38). As Heil writes, the “destruction of the sanctuary veil indicates the termination of the handmade sanctuary as the holy place of God’s presence and of authentic worship” (1997, 98).³⁹

With the destruction of the temple, the worship of the LORD would no longer be bound to one people group or place. As Ralph Martin notes, Jesus’s rejection of the temple signals that “the particularism of Jewish worship was at an end” (1972, 225). Jesus’s announcement of the destruction of the temple (13:1–2) thereby anticipates a decentralisation and opening of worship, which would complement and facilitate the worldwide proclamation of the gospel that appears to be in view in Mark 13:10 and 14:9.⁴⁰

Tacit support for this reading is found in the event recorded immediately after the tearing of the curtain - the declaration of the Centurion (15:39). This declaration

³⁷ For the temple theme in Mark, see: Gray (2010); Juel (1977); Heil (1997).

³⁸ So Iverson (2012, 327); Chance (2007, 271–72); Dowd (2000, 119); N. T. Wright (1996, 413–19); Witherington III (2001, 315–16). The identification of Jesus’s actions as an enacted parable of judgement against the temple is buttressed by Jesus’s quotation of Jeremiah 7:11, since Jeremiah 7:12–15 refers explicitly to the destruction of Solomon’s Temple; and by the account of the fig tree which functions as an interpretive frame around Jesus’s actions in the temple (Mark 11:12–14, 20–25).

³⁹ Cf. Senior and Stuhlmueller (1985, 225); Guijarro (2019, 160). Chance notes parallels in Jewish tradition “where the opening of barriers that separated the temple from the ‘outside world’ served as images or portents of the temple’s eventual destruction” (2007, 285). Cf. Juel (1977, 140–42); R. Brown (1994, 1114–16).

Bennema argues that the tearing of the temple curtain also indicates that the “Gentile mission has now begun for God has left his sacred space and gone into the world” (2014, 229).

⁴⁰ Cf. Chance (2007, 290–91); Iverson (2007, 174); Painter (1997, 207). This decentralisation was already evident to some extent in Jesus’s ministry in Mark as Jesus travelled around, teaching by the lake (4:1), offering forgiveness in a house (2:5), ministering to crowds in remote places (6:32; 8:4), and offering a sacrifice at Golgotha (15:22 cf. 10:45).

serves to exemplify the end of the exclusionary practice of the old temple (see further discussion following) (Chance 2007, 268, 286–91).⁴¹

In this way, the Markan theme of judgment on the temple develops the motif of proclamation.

2.4.6 The confession by a Roman centurion that Jesus is the Son of God (Mark 15:39)

As raised above, in Mark 15, a gentile soldier standing at the cross of Jesus states, “Truly this man was the Son of God” (15:39). Although there is significant scholarly debate over the illocutionary force of this statement and the depth of the centurion’s understanding, there is little doubt how Mark intended these words to be understood by his readers (Strauss 2014, 706). The title “Son of God” echoes Mark’s opening title (1:1) and affirms Jesus’s identity in a manner consistent with God’s own testimony (1:11; 9:7) and the Markan narrative more broadly (3:11; 5:7; 12:6; 12:37; 14:61).⁴² The centurion’s statement is, therefore, “the climax of the Markan theme of Jesus as the Son of God” (A. Collins 2007, 764).⁴³

That a gentile makes this climactic statement illustrates the potential receptiveness of gentiles to Jesus and so encourages a proclamation of the gospel to gentiles as well as Jews. As Senior and Stuhlmüller note, “at this denouement of his story, Mark dramatically signals the direction that the community itself must go” (1985, 225).⁴⁴

2.5 Other passages that imply or anticipate worldwide proclamation – a conclusion

This section of the study has explored a number of passages in Mark’s Gospel, outside of Mark 13:10 and 14:9, that appear to imply or anticipate a proclamation of the gospel to Jews and gentiles throughout the world. These passages provide the context in which Mark 13:10 and 14:9 are read. Together they demonstrate that any reference to worldwide proclamation in Mark 13:10 and 14:9 is not an isolated reference disconnected from Markan concerns, but rather a vital thread consistent with the broader tapestry of Mark.

In summary, these passages contribute to the idea of worldwide proclamation in Mark in four ways. First, they reveal Jesus’s universal perspective and concern for the gentiles. This

⁴¹ The Centurion at the cross “becomes the first member of the new temple ...” (cf. Mark 14:58) (Senior and Stuhlmüller 1985, 225).

⁴² The centurion’s acknowledgment of Jesus’s identity also stands in stark contrast to the mocking derision of others at the cross. Iverson perceptively observes that the three verbal taunts in the trial and crucifixion scenes are indicated by descriptive commentary or metalinguistic terminology. So, for example, although the soldiers “hail” Jesus as the “King of the Jews” (Mark 15:18), the mocking intent of their words is clearly indicated by their accompanying actions (Mark 15:19) and the narratorial description of their mockery (Mark 15:20). The absence of such indicators around the words of the Roman centurion suggest a sincere affirmation (Iverson 2011a, 334–35). For a succinct defence of reading the Centurion’s confession as a recognition of Jesus as *the* Son of God, see: Bennema (2014, 227–28); Stein (2008a, 718–19); Davis (1989, 11–12).

⁴³ See, similarly Boring (2012, 434).

⁴⁴ Cf. K. Stock (1982, 142). Bennema identifies the Centurion as the final example of a gentile character in Mark who *participates* in the proclamation of the gospel. For Bennema, the gentiles in Mark are not merely recipients of gospel proclamation but participants in that proclamation (2014, 229). Bennema concludes that “All of this foreshadows the proclamation of the good news to all nations in 13:10” (231). Cf. Isa 66:18–19.

prefigures and validates the inclusion of the gentiles in God's purposes and kingdom, which, in turn, undergirds the proclamation of the gospel to Jews and gentiles throughout the world. Second, they depict the removal of barriers to such worldwide proclamation of the gospel. Third, they provide a foretaste of the responsiveness of gentiles to the message of Jesus, which serves to encourage this worldwide proclamation. Finally, they anticipate the growth of the kingdom through the broadening of the proclamation of Jesus's followers to include Jews and gentiles throughout the world.

Having explored this broader context, the remainder of this chapter will present a detailed examination of the two verses in Mark that appear to refer explicitly to worldwide proclamation – Mark 13:10 and 14:9.⁴⁵

3. Mark 13:10

3.1 *Mark 13:10 – an introduction*

The first statement in Mark that appears to explicitly anticipate the worldwide proclamation of the gospel is found in Mark 13:10, where Jesus states: "And the gospel must first be proclaimed to all nations." The following discussion will examine this verse and its contribution to the motif of proclamation in Mark. The discussion begins with a brief reflection on two foundational issues - the prominence of Mark 13 in Mark's Gospel and the focus on discipleship in Mark 13.

3.1.1 The prominence of Mark 13 in Mark's Gospel

Mark 13 plays a prominent role in Mark's Gospel.⁴⁶ Structurally, it functions as the climax and conclusion of the temple material in Mark 11–12 and as a transition between the account of Jesus's ministry (1:14–12:44) and the account of his arrest, death, and resurrection (14:1–16:8) (Moloney 2012, 251). It contains the longest uninterrupted block of Jesus's teaching in Mark, which slows the pace of the narrative leading into Jesus's passion (Vorster 1995, 278). Thematically, it contributes to the development of several key themes in Mark, including Mark's Christology (13:26) and Mark's presentation of the disciples as slow to understand Jesus's teaching and perspective (13:1–2).⁴⁷ Rhetorically, Mark 13 projects beyond the plotted time of the narrative to the time of the reader (13:9–13) and includes the one occasion in Mark where the reader is explicitly addressed (13:14).⁴⁸

⁴⁵ Explicit statements regarding worldwide proclamation are also found in the shorter and long ending of Mark (16:15) but will not be considered in this study.

⁴⁶ Mark 13 has been the subject of an enormous amount of scholarly debate. This analysis will not seek to address all of the interpretive questions that surround Mark 13 but will instead focus on the present form of the text and those elements that are pertinent to the discussion of the motif of proclamation in Mark.

⁴⁷ The disciples' obtuseness is evident in the contrast between the anonymous disciple's superficial admiration of the temple's magnificence (13:1) and Jesus's statement predicting its destruction (13:2). Cf. France (2002, 494).

⁴⁸ Cf. K. Dyer (1998, 257); Juel (1990, 174); Balabanski (1997, 62–63).

The prominence of Mark 13 within Mark's Gospel adds weight to any reference in the chapter to proclamation, since, as Freedman persuasively demonstrates, the efficacy of a motif is impacted by its placement in the narrative (1971, 127–28).⁴⁹

3.1.2 Discipleship as a focus of Mark 13

A key focus of Mark 13 is discipleship, and in particular, what Jesus's followers should expect to experience. As James Edwards notes, the purpose of Mark 13 "is not primarily to provide a timetable ... for the future so much as to exhort readers to faithful discipleship in the present" (2002, 384).⁵⁰ This focus on discipleship provides essential context for Mark 13:10 and will contribute to the discussion of the agency of the proclamation anticipated in this verse.

The focus on discipleship in Mark 13, although easily overlooked amidst the various hermeneutical debates that surround the chapter, is indicated in at least four ways:

- (i) First, Mark 13 is located within an interpretive frame that emphasises discipleship. Immediately before and after Mark 13 are stories of anonymous women who are commended by Jesus for demonstrating exemplary sacrificial devotion in stark contrast to faithless, evil men (12:41–44; 14:1–9).⁵¹ Such framing is a common feature of Mark and serves as a "perspective giving device" (Deppe 2015, 95). In this case, the frame of exemplary discipleship around Mark 13 suggests that Mark 13 aims to teach about discipleship.⁵²
- (ii) Second, there are frequent warnings and imperatives found throughout Mark 13 (see, for example: vv. 5, 7, 9, 11, 12, 14, 15, 16, 18, 21, 23, etc.). In each instance, Jesus is preparing his followers for what is to come and teaching them how they are to live.⁵³ These many paraenetic elements suggest an emphasis on discipleship.⁵⁴
- (iii) Third, Mark 13 is ostensibly addressed to Peter, James, John, and Andrew (13:3–5). The reference to these four resonates with Mark 1:16–20, where the same men are called to follow Jesus.⁵⁵ This resonance may serve to connect Mark 13 with the theme of discipleship.

⁴⁹ Cf. J. Morgan (2015, 199).

⁵⁰ Cf. Lane (1974, 446–47); Witherington III (2001, 340); Stein (2008a, 593).

⁵¹ Dewey asserts that "the parallelism of the two stories is beyond question" (1979, 154). See also Barton (1991, 231); Geddert (1989, 134); Hooker (1991, 327); Moloney (2012, 281).

Scholars who argue that Mark 12:41–44 is only a condemnation of the exploitative Jewish leaders rather than also a commendation of the widow commonly overlook this parallel with Mark 14:1–9. See, for example Evans (2001, 282–85); A. Wright (1982); Sugirtharajah (1991); C. Myers (1988, 320–22).

⁵² Moloney (2012, 273); Deppe (2006, 98).

⁵³ Cf. Witherington III (2001, 356).

⁵⁴ Cf. Vorster (1995, 285).

⁵⁵ Mark 1:16–20 is the only other place where these four disciples alone are mentioned by name – elsewhere, Mark mentions three of them (5:37; 9:2; 14:33) or all twelve disciples (3:16–19).

Jesus's words in Mark 13 also parallel other moments in Mark's Gospel where Jesus teaches his followers about discipleship (cf. 4:10–34; 8:31–38; 9:30–50; 10:30; 10:32–45).⁵⁶

- (iv) Fourth, as has been often recognised, Mark 13:5–23 appears to be formulated around a five-fold chiasm (see discussion below). This chiasmic structure places emphasis on Mark 13:9–13 - a passage with a clear focus on discipleship.

It is, therefore, reasonable to conclude that discipleship is a focus of Mark 13. A key element in this teaching on discipleship is Jesus's statement in Mark 13:10 concerning the worldwide proclamation of the gospel.

The discussion that follows will firstly consider the literary context of Mark 13:10, then examine this verse in more detail, and finally contemplate the potential rhetorical impact of this verse on Mark's readers.

3.2 Mark 13:10 in context

Mark 13 begins with Jesus leaving the temple and predicting its destruction (13:1–2). Later, on the Mount of Olives, Peter, James, John, and Andrew ask Jesus privately about this startling prediction (13:3–4). Jesus's response to their questions forms the bulk of Mark 13 (13:5–37).

The opening section of Jesus's response (13:5–23) is marked off by an "elegant inclusion" that begins and ends with the command to watch (βλέπετε) and a warning about being deceived by imposters (πλάνησι / ἀποπλανᾶν) (13:5–6 and 13:22–23) (Moloney 2012, 249).⁵⁷ This section appears to be arranged in the form of a five-part chiasm.⁵⁸ At the centre of this chiasm is Mark 13:9–13, which Pesch describes as the "Herz- und Mittelstück" of Mark 13 (1968, 125).

In Mark 13:9–13, the focus shifts from the general troubles of war, earthquakes, and famine that affect all of humanity (13:7–8) to the specific difficulties faced by followers of Jesus (A. Collins 2007, 606).⁵⁹

Mark 13:9 warns of persecution. The disciples will be handed over to councils, beaten in synagogues, and brought to stand before governors and kings.⁶⁰ The reference to "synagogues" and "governors and kings" likely anticipates persecution in both Jewish ("synagogues") and gentile ("governors and kings") settings. Gundry argues that the plural "governors and kings" implies activity outside of Palestine since "Jesus does not seem to be speaking of successive governors and kings, but of governors and kings ruling at the same

⁵⁶ Busch argues that Mark 13 is an exposition of Mark 8:34 (1938, 48).

⁵⁷ Cf. Focant (2012, 523); Gundry (1993, 733). The strong adversative ἄλλὰ at the beginning of verse 24 offers further support to the suggestion that v. 24 marks the start of a new section.

⁵⁸ The outside of the chiasm consists of Mark 13:5–6 and 13:21–23 which both contain exhortations to watch out (βλέπετε) for false Christs. The second and fourth panels refer to signs that will be heard about (13:7–8) and seen (13:14–20) and are introduced with the parallel phrases ὅταν δὲ ἀκούσητε (13:7a) and Ὅταν δὲ ἴδητε (13:14a). So, inter alia, Lambrecht (1967, 173); Grayston (1974, 374); Focant (2012, 523); van Iersel (1989, 159); Moloney (2012, 249, 251); Deppe (2006, 93–94).

⁵⁹ Cf. Hurtado (2011, 214).

⁶⁰ As noted in chapter 4, this anticipated persecution contributes to Mark's portrayal of Jesus's disciples as the servants of the Isaianic Servant.

time in various territories” (1993, 769). While such an argument is not conclusive, it is consistent with the reference in Mark 13:10 to “all nations” and the warning in Mark 13:13 that “you will be hated by all.”

The trials anticipated in Mark 13:9 will enable Jesus’s followers to “bear witness.” This could mean either witnessing to (cf. Mark 1:44) or witnessing against those listening (cf. Mark 6:11). While certainty is not possible, many scholars conclude that the phrase has a positive meaning in light of the reference in Mark 13:10 to gospel proclamation (cf. Acts 26:22).⁶¹

In verse 11, amid the warnings, there is a reassurance that the Holy Spirit will facilitate their witness in the face of this opposition.

In verses 12–13, the disciples are warned about opposition from their own family and “by all” and exhorted to “stand firm to the end.”⁶²

The persecution in view throughout Mark 13:9–13 is explicitly connected to the disciples’ following of Jesus by the phrases “on account of me” (13:9) and “for my name’s sake” (13:13). It is also implicitly related to the suffering of John the Baptist and Jesus himself. Three times the passage refers to the disciples being handed over (παραδίδωμι) (13:9, 11, 12). This same word is used to describe the fate of John the Baptist (Mark 1:14) and Jesus (3:19; 9:31; 10:3; 14:10, 11, 18, 21, 41–44, 15:1, 10, 15). As noted above, just as the disciples share in the mission of Jesus, so may they share in Jesus’s fate.

In summary, Mark 13:10 occurs in the context of a discussion of discipleship and persecution. The implications of this for the message of Mark 13:10 will be considered below.

3.3 Mark 13:10: a close reading

3.3.1 εἰς πάντα τὰ ἔθνη

Mark 13:10 begins with the phrase καὶ εἰς πάντα τὰ ἔθνη.

There are some who take the view that this is not related to gospel proclamation. For example, following Burkitt, Kilpatrick argues that this phrase connects to verse 9 and not to the proclamation of the gospel (v. 10) (1957, 145, 149–51).⁶³ Appealing to the work of Turner, Kilpatrick also contends that the εἰς is locative and should be translated “among the nations” (145–51). As a result, Kilpatrick concludes that there is, in Mark 13, “no mention of preaching the Gospel to all nations” (149).

In contending for a locative rendering of εἰς, Kilpatrick follows Turner’s conclusion that Mark “frequently” uses “εἰς with the accusative” in place of “ἐν with the dative” (146). Kilpatrick also argues that there are “no clear examples of κηρύσσειν with εἰς and the accusative meaning ‘preach to’” in the New Testament and Apostolic Fathers

⁶¹ See, e.g., France (2002, 515); Hooker (1991, 310); Gundry (1993, 766); Iwuamadi (2008, 186–87).

⁶² The endurance referred to in Mark 13:13 can connote an active sense of maintaining a course of action in the face of opposition (Danker et al. 2000, 1039). It may, therefore, refer here to perseverance in the task of proclaiming the gospel amid persecution. Cf. Iwuamadi (2008, 195); Beasley-Murray (1957, 52).

⁶³ See also Elliott (1996) and Trocme (1975, 211) who adopt Kilpatrick’s proposed punctuation. While these scholars follow Kilpatrick, they offer no additional supporting evidence, and so this discussion will focus on Kilpatrick’s argument.

(148). From this, Kilpatrick concludes that εἰς πάντα τὰ ἔθνη should be translated “among the nations” and that therefore, there is “strictly speaking, no mention of preaching the Gospel to all nations” in Mark 13:10, since if the gospel “were preached in all the synagogues of the Diaspora the hearers would probably regard the prophecy as adequately fulfilled” (149).

In support of connecting εἰς πάντα τὰ ἔθνη to the preceding verse, Kilpatrick appeals to Markan grammatical structure. He examines the position of the verbs in Mark 13 and (not counting introductory particles, adverbs, and negatives which come before the verb) identifies “forty-eight initial, sixteen medial and nineteen final positions.” From this, he concludes that for Mark 13, “the normal position for the verb is the initial one” (150). Kilpatrick takes this, along with “the evidence of Matthew [10:18] and some ancient manuscripts and versions” as indicating that the phrase εἰς πάντα τὰ ἔθνη should be taken with the preceding sentence rather than that which follows (151). With this, Kilpatrick claims, “The text, which, in an English version, appears the clearest evidence for a Gentile mission is an illusion” (155).

Kilpatrick’s argument, however, falters at several points.

First, while Mark frequently locates verbs at the beginning of a clause, Kilpatrick’s own statistics indicate a significant number of exceptions. These exceptions are sufficient to undermine the strength of any argument based on word order.⁶⁴

Second, the external evidence offered by Kilpatrick is unpersuasive.⁶⁵ In support of his proposed punctuation, Kilpatrick appeals to *it*^b *it*^c *it*^d *it*^{ff2} *it*^l *it*^k *it*^{r1} and *Syr. Sin* (1957, 146).⁶⁶ However, Kilpatrick acknowledges that *it*^a *it*^l *it*ⁿ *it*^q *it*^{aur} and the Vulgate connect εἰς πάντα τὰ ἔθνη with what follows. Furthermore, Kilpatrick notes that *it*^d and *it*^{ff2} add “in omnibus gentibus” after *prædicari Evangelium* (146). Further undermining Kilpatrick’s appeal to external evidence is the observation that those manuscripts which connect εἰς πάντα τὰ ἔθνη with verse 9 may reflect scribal assimilation to Matt 10:18 (Wilson 1973, 24).

Third, Kilpatrick fails to give sufficient attention to Mark 14:9 and instead (it is suggested) allows his proposed interpretation of Mark 13:10 to dictate his reading of Mark 14:9 (1957, 155).⁶⁷

Fourth, in Kilpatrick’s proposed punctuation, there is a full stop after ἔθνη (149). This, however, leads to a somewhat unnatural asyndeton. Conversely, the conventional punctuation involves a straightforward succession of clauses connected by καί, which is more consistent with Markan idiolect. Indeed Decker identifies Mark’s use of καί to

⁶⁴ Cf. Beasley-Murray (1957, 43); Cranfield (1963, 398).

⁶⁵ Bird offers a more critical assessment arguing that the majority of textual witnesses are against Kilpatrick’s proposal (2004, 130).

⁶⁶ Burkitt (1924, 145), whom Kilpatrick references on this point, argues that this reading is also supported by the Greek MSS which insert δέ between πρῶτον and δεῖ and lists W, θ, 124, 565. Again, however, these manuscripts are significantly outweighed by those that do not insert δέ (01 02 03 018 019 044 28 1071 inter alia).

⁶⁷ On Mark 14:9, see discussion below.

connect sentences as “perhaps the most distinctive feature of Mark’s idiolect” (Decker 2013a, 47).⁶⁸

Fifth, as Gundry notes, Kilpatrick’s proposal “creates an extremely awkward shift from a telic εἰς with μαρτύριον ... to a locative εἰς with πάντα τὰ ἔθνη” (Gundry 1993, 768). Gundry also notes “a similarly awkward parallel between the dative pronoun αὐτοῖς ... and the prepositional phrase εἰς πάντα τὰ ἔθνη” in Kilpatrick’s reconstruction (768).⁶⁹ This awkward grammar contributes to the difficulty of Kilpatrick’s reading.

Sixth, even if εἰς is used locatively in Mark 13:10 (as Kilpatrick proposes), this does not necessarily exclude preaching to gentiles as Kilpatrick assumes. Kilpatrick, following Turner, suggests that εἰς πάντα τὰ ἔθνη is “equivalent to ἐν πᾶσι τοῖς ἔθνεσιν.”⁷⁰ However, Kilpatrick fails to examine the occurrences of this equivalent phrase in the LXX (1957, 146). The phrase ἐν τοῖς ἔθνεσιν occurs frequently in the LXX in connection with a proclamation or message that is directed to the nations or intended for their hearing (see, for example: LXX Ps 9:12; 78:10; 95:3,10; 104:1; Joel 3:9; Isa 5:26; 12:4; Jer 27:2). Likewise, the similar phrases ἐν ἔθνεσιν (LXX Ps 56:10; 107:4; Jer 18:13) and ἐν πᾶσιν ἔθνεσιν (LXX Ps 66:3). In LXX Ps 125:2 and Joel 2:17, the phrase ἐν τοῖς ἔθνεσιν is used in relation to gentiles themselves speaking of God in the hearing of other gentiles (cf. Isa 66:19). These references suggest that even if εἰς πάντα τὰ ἔθνη should be read as equivalent to ἐν πᾶσι τοῖς ἔθνεσιν, this does not rule out a proclamation of the gospel to gentiles as Kilpatrick assumes.

Seventh, Kilpatrick appeals to Matt 10:18 as a parallel to Mark 13:10 that supports his rendering. But as Bird notes, “Matthew’s fuller paraphrase of Mark 13:10 in Matt 24:14 ... shows that the First Evangelist understood the verse in the sense that the gospel is preached to the inhabited world ...” (2006, 168).⁷¹

In conclusion, Kilpatrick’s arguments are insufficient to overturn the conventional punctuation of Mark 13:9–10 and the understanding of Mark 13:10 as a reference to the proclamation of the gospel to Jews and gentiles in all nations.

The location of the phrase εἰς πάντα τὰ ἔθνη at the beginning of Mark 13:10 provides emphasis, highlighting the global extent of the proclamation anticipated in 13:10.

3.3.2 κηρυχθῆναι

As noted above, the verb κηρύσσω refers to the making of an “official announcement” or “public declaration” (Danker et al. 2000, 543). In Mark 13:10, it occurs in the passive voice with no clear subject, and so the agent(s) of the proclamation is not explicitly identified.

⁶⁸ According to Decker, 64% of sentences in Mark begin with καί. Based on Kilpatrick’s statistics this makes sentences starting with καί more common in Mark than verbs in the initial position!

⁶⁹ Cf. Focant (2012, 539).

⁷⁰ The phrase ἐν πᾶσι τοῖς ἔθνεσιν is found in some manuscripts, see: D, it^{ff2}, and sa^{mss}.

⁷¹ Cf. Farrer 1956, 76–78.

There are, however, good reasons for identifying Jesus's followers as those responsible for the proclamation anticipated in Mark 13:10.

First, as noted in chapter 4 above, Jesus's disciples have already been appointed (3:13–19) and sent (6:7–13) to proclaim. For Mark, proclamation is part of following Jesus. It is therefore natural for the reader to assume that the proclamation anticipated in Mark 13:10 is to be carried out by Jesus's followers.

Second, Mark 13:10 occurs in a passage that is addressed to Jesus's followers and is marked by a clear focus on discipleship. The verses around Mark 13:10 warn Jesus's followers of what awaits them and exhort them to faithful discipleship. The conclusion that Mark 13:10 refers to proclamation by Jesus's followers is consistent with this context. Furthermore, the specific expectation of persecution may lend further support to this conclusion since elsewhere it is the proclamation of Jesus's followers that leads to their persecution (see Mark 6:11; 8:35–38; 10:29–30 and discussion below; cf. Matt 10:16–25).⁷²

Third, while it might be argued that the passive form of the verb suggests the disciples of Jesus are not the agents of the proclamation, this is not necessarily the case. Indeed, the passive verb, rather than excluding the disciples, may be intended to extend the task beyond them to include the readers.⁷³ As will be argued in detail below, Mark 13 intentionally and directly addresses the readers of Mark. The proclamation anticipated in Mark 13:10 is not a task for the disciples alone, but for Mark's readers as well. This may account for the use of the passive verb. Jesus's disciples are not explicitly identified as the agents of this proclamation since the task extends beyond them.

There are, therefore, good reasons for understanding κηρυχθῆναι in Mark 13:10 as a reference to proclamation by the followers of Jesus.

Despite this, Jeremias proposes an alternate interpretation. Jeremias asserts (based on his reading of Mark 14:9) that the reference to proclamation in Mark 13:10 is “not to human proclamation, but to an apocalyptic event, namely, the angelic proclamation of God's final act (cf. Rev 14:6f.)” (1958, 23).⁷⁴

Jeremias's argument is, however, difficult to sustain. The use of κηρύσσω elsewhere in Mark suggests non-angelic proclamation. Of the 12 occurrences of κηρύσσω in Mark, ten refer to the proclamation of John the Baptist, Jesus, the Apostles or people Jesus healed. It seems probable, therefore, that the two remaining occurrences (Mark 13:10; 14:9) share this typical sense. Furthermore, in contrast to Rev 14:6, which Jeremias appeals to, neither Mark 13:10 nor its immediate context introduces an angel to make a proclamation (Gundry 1993, 768). Finally, as just argued, the

⁷² Cf. Williams (2019, 182, 190–91).

⁷³ So Pudussery (1987, 181); Iwuamadi (2008, 201).

⁷⁴ Cf. Lohmeyer (1951, 272–73, 295–96).

context of Mark 13:10, which Jeremias pays insufficient attention to, suggests an application to Jesus's followers.⁷⁵

The potential rhetorical impact of Mark's use of the passive κηρυχθῆναι will be considered below.

3.3.3 τὸ εὐαγγέλιον

What is to be proclaimed is τὸ εὐαγγέλιον. As discussed above, εὐαγγέλιον is a key term in Mark (see 1:1, 14, 15; 8:35; 10:29; 14:9 [and 16:15]). When used, as here, without qualification, εὐαγγέλιον is a shorthand term for what is described elsewhere in Mark as τοῦ εὐαγγελίου Ἰησοῦ χριστοῦ (1:1) and τὸ εὐαγγέλιον τοῦ θεοῦ (1:14) (Evans 2001, 310). The geographical scope and future timing of the proclamation envisaged in Mark 13:10, and the likely involvement of Jesus's followers, suggests that τὸ εὐαγγέλιον here is not a message proclaimed *by* Jesus (cf. Mark 1:14–15), but a message *about* Jesus proclaimed by his followers.⁷⁶

3.3.4 δεῖ

The use of δεῖ in Mark 13:10 underlines the divine necessity of this proclamation (cf. Mark 8:31; 9:11; 13:7,14) and so the importance of the task. It also stresses the inevitability of its occurrence as part of God's eschatological plan.⁷⁷ As argued in chapter 3, the place of proclamation in God's eschatological plan is introduced in the Markan prologue and reinforced throughout Mark's Gospel. The persecution, deception, and opposition that Mark 13 warns of will not prevent the proclamation of the gospel because it is the sovereign work of God (Strauss 2014, 575). Mark 13:10 thereby functions as an encouragement to persevere in the task of proclamation.

δεῖ here may also carry an imperatival note, functioning as an implicit command to engage in the task of proclamation.⁷⁸ As Boring notes, Mark 13:10 is "both theological argument and missionary assignment" (2012, 365).⁷⁹ This is consistent with the emphasis on discipleship in Mark 13.

3.3.5 πρῶτον

A major exegetical question in Mark 13:10 concerns the interpretation of the word πρῶτον. Iwuamadi proposes reading πρῶτον with a "minimized accent on the temporal," as serving to indicate "the priority Jesus places on the proclamation of the gospel" (2008, 199).⁸⁰ However, such usage of πρῶτον is found nowhere else in the Synoptics.⁸¹ Furthermore, a temporal reading is suggested by the disciples' question

⁷⁵ See further discussion on Jeremias's reading of Mark 14:9 below. In time Jeremias came to modify his position on Mark 14:9, acknowledging that εὐαγγέλιον in Mark 14:9 refers to the "christliche Missionsverkündigung" (1966, 119).

⁷⁶ Schnabel (2017, 347–48); France (2002, 555).

⁷⁷ Gundry (1993, 739); Hurtado (1996, 16).

⁷⁸ Danker et al. (2000, 213); Louw and Nida (1996, 669–70). Cf. Cousar (1970, 328).

⁷⁹ Cf. Iwuamadi (2008, 201).

⁸⁰ Cf. Michaelis (1968, 865–82).

⁸¹ Cf. Kümmel (1953, 77).

in verse 4 and the frequent chronological references throughout Mark 13 (see, for example: Mark 13:7, 8, 11, 13, 14, 18, 19, 20, 23, 28, 32, 33, 35).

Understood temporally, the word *πρῶτον* implies that the global proclamation of the gospel is to take place before something else which will follow. The identification of this event to follow has been the subject of intense scholarly debate. Some argue that the reference is to the destruction of the temple – that is, the temple will not be destroyed until the gospel has been proclaimed to all nations.⁸² Others contend that the event in view is Jesus’s Parousia and the end of history.⁸³

On the basis of Mark 13:7, and the parallel passage in Matt 24:14, the view adopted here is that Mark 13:10 refers to the proclamation of the gospel before the end of history.⁸⁴ Significantly, however, regardless of which of these interpretations is favoured, the implications for the motif of proclamation are largely unchanged – Mark 13:10 anticipates a worldwide proclamation of the gospel and associates this proclamation with discipleship.

3.3.6 Close reading of Mark 13:10: a conclusion

In summary, Mark 13:10 contains an explicit anticipation of the worldwide proclamation of the gospel to Jews and gentiles by the followers of Jesus. This anticipation functions as both an implicit command and an encouragement to persevere in the urgent task of proclamation (Boring 2012, 365).⁸⁵

3.4 *The rhetorical impact of Mark 13:10*

The material in Mark 13:5–37, including the statement regarding global proclamation in 13:10, is ostensibly addressed to Peter, James, John, and Andrew (Mark 13:3–5). There are, however, several indicators that a wider audience is in view.

First, Jesus’s statement in 13:37 explicitly broadens his exhortation beyond Peter, James, John, and Andrew to everyone (*πᾶσιν*). The location of this statement at the conclusion of the discourse suggests it applies to all that Jesus has said in Mark 13, including the anticipation of worldwide proclamation in 13:10 (van Iersel 1989, 162).⁸⁶ Although *πᾶσιν* here could refer to all the disciples in the narrative, the other indicators considered below suggest a broader reference to all the followers of Jesus – both those in the story and those reading the story.⁸⁷ Consistent with this conclusion, Ian Henderson argues that it is “text-linguistically necessary

⁸² So, e.g., Schnabel (2017, 321); France (2002, 516); Stein (2008a, 600).

⁸³ See, e.g., Hurtado (2011, 218–19); Hooker (1991, 311); Gundry (1993, 769); Focant (2012, 533–34); Beasley-Murray (1957, 42); Cranfield (1963, 399); Evans (2001, 310).

⁸⁴ Cf. Gundry (1993, 769). Although Matthew 24:14 could be referring to the destruction of Jerusalem, the reference to enduring to the end in Matt 24:13 makes this unlikely.

⁸⁵ Cf. Iwuamadi 2008, 200–1.

⁸⁶ Cf. Klauck 1978, 327.

There are two other indicators that 13:37 may refer to the discourse as a whole. First, the word *γρηγορεῖτε* forms something of an *inclusio* with the synonymous *βλέπετε* in 13:5; and repeats an idea found throughout the discourse (13:9, 23, 33–35). Second, the phrase “what I say to you I say to all” evokes the disciples’ request “tell us” in 13:4 and then expands this answer to “all.”

⁸⁷ A. Collins (2007, 619); H. Anderson (1976, 301).

that ‘all’ in Mark 13,37 should refer to an extra-textual group, heavily overlapping with the intended audience of Mark’s Gospel” and describes Mark 13:37 as the moment of “maximum audience transparency” (2019, 544, 548).

Second, the phrase “let the reader understand” (13:14) speaks directly to whoever reads (or listens to) the book.⁸⁸ The presence of this statement in Mark 13 “heightens the immediacy of the discourse in an unprecedented way” (Balabanski 1997, 62–63).⁸⁹

Third, the extended narrated speech and the consistent second person plural address “tends to blur the distinction between the addressees at the story level and the audience of the Gospel as a whole ... and reaches out to include listeners in any subsequent time” (Dowd 2000, 135).⁹⁰ The prolonged absence of the implied author and narrator reinforces this effect. It is as if Jesus is speaking directly to Mark’s audience.

Fourth, in Mark 13, Jesus uses 26 future tense verbs in 37 verses. This is a significantly higher concentration of future tense verbs than any other chapter in Mark.⁹¹ This prevalence of the future tense contributes to the immediacy of the discourse for Mark’s readers.⁹² As van Iersel argues, one way for a narrator to bring a story into the time of his readers is to have a character speak about the future (1989, 159).⁹³ Similarly, Hurtado notes that the discourse of Mark 13 is “predictive prophecy, a form of speech that invites subsequent readers to seek application to their own situations” (1996, 15).

Fifth, Mark includes nothing of the disciples’ reaction to Jesus’s exhortations in Mark 13. This absence of a response may suggest that the disciples are functioning here more as literary foils than the primary audience of Jesus’s teaching in this chapter.⁹⁴

Sixth, while the personal pronouns ὑμεῖς and ὑμᾶς in v. 9 ostensibly refer to the four, the events expected in verses 9–13 imply a broader audience, since what is anticipated is more than could be experienced or achieved by four men alone.

⁸⁸ As Shiner notes, the word “reader” was sometimes used to refer to someone listening to a text being read (2003, 15–16). See chapter 2 above.

⁸⁹ Cf. van Iersel (1989, 162).

The origin and significance of the phrase “let the reader understand” has been variously understood. Some regard it as a statement from Jesus to read the book of Daniel with care. So, for example Evans (2001, 320). Others understand it as an instruction to the lector. So Boring (2012, 366); Garland (1996, 496). Perhaps most likely is the suggestion that it is a Markan editorial insertion (cf. 2:10; 3:30; 7:11, 19) intended to encourage careful consideration of what is said. So, inter alia, Strauss (2014, 580); Moloney (2012, 258–590; France (2002, 523); Hooker (1991, 314); Stein (2008a, 602). Whatever the origin and explanation of the phrase its rhetorical impact in the text as it now stands is to “heighten the immediacy of the discourse” (Balabanski 1997, 62–63).

⁹⁰ Cf. Tannehill (1980, 142); van Iersel (2004, 392).

⁹¹ Only two other chapters contain more than 10 future tense verbs – chapter 10 with 18 in 52 verses; and chapter 14 with 16 in 71 verses.

⁹² Cf. Vorster (1995, 282).

⁹³ Cf. Balabanski (1997, 62–63); Guijarro (2019, 158–59). As Guuarrro and Firtzen note, Jesus’s predictions and warnings in Mark 13 refer to the time of the implied reader (Guijarro 2019, 155; Fritzen 2008, 135–38).

⁹⁴ Cf. Boring (2012, 378).

Seventh, the absence of any explicit reference to the agents of the proclamation in Mark 13:10 may suggest this proclamation will be carried out by followers of Jesus beyond those addressed in the narrative.⁹⁵

Eighth, the fulfilment of some of Jesus's predictions in Mark 13 are not emplotted within the narrative (e.g., 13:5–8, 9, 12). Since Jesus is shown throughout Mark to be a reliable foreteller of the future (8:31; 9:31; 10:32–34; 11:2–4; 14:13–16, 18, 20–21, 27–28, 30, 43–45, 66–72), this lack of fulfilment produces an expectation that these predictions will be fulfilled in a time (and perhaps by people) outside the narrative frame.⁹⁶

In conclusion, Mark 13 intentionally and directly addresses the readers of Mark.⁹⁷ Peter, James, John, and Andrew function as representatives for this audience, which extends beyond the narrative frame.⁹⁸ Mark's readers are to hear the warnings and encouragement of Mark 13 and persevere in the task of proclaiming the gospel to all nations (Shively 2015, 390). This is the work that the master has left for them to do (Mark 13:34–36).⁹⁹

3.5 Mark 13:10 and the motif of proclamation: a summary

Mark 13:10 anticipates the proclamation of the gospel throughout the world. This adds another explicit reference to the growing list of references to proclamation in Mark's Gospel and so contributes to the frequency of the motif in Mark.

The reference to proclamation in Mark 13:10 also meets Freedman's criteria of avoidability. Luke's parallel account of the Olivet Discourse (Luke 21:5–36) does not include this anticipation of worldwide proclamation which demonstrates that a reference to proclamation at this point of Mark's narrative is avoidable.

Mark 13:10 thereby affords further evidence of the frequency and avoidability of references to proclamation in Mark, and so supports the conclusion that proclamation is a motif in Mark.

The anticipation of worldwide proclamation in Mark 13:10 also contributes to the prominence of the motif of proclamation in Mark in two ways. First, the reference to proclamation in Mark 13:10 is presented as part of Jesus's direct discourse. Previous references to proclamation that have been considered in this study occur in narratorial comment. As noted in chapter 1,

⁹⁵ Cf. Iwuamadi (2008, 201); Hershman (2020, 155).

⁹⁶ Cf. Vorster (1995, 277).

⁹⁷ The verses in Mark 13 of least apparent relevance for a wider readership are the warnings to flee Judea (13:14–16). It may therefore be significant that these instructions are in the third person, in distinction from the second person imperatives that dominate the remainder of Mark 13. This change from second to third person may signal that the warnings in verses 14–16 are for those in Judea at the time rather than the followers of Jesus more generally and so provide further indirect evidence that the remainder of Mark 13 is addressing all of Jesus's followers – those in the narrative and those reading it. Cf. van Iersel (2004, 392–93); Schnabel (2017, 325); France (2002, 580).

⁹⁸ Broadhead (2001, 101); Beavis (2011, 195); Best (1986, 130). See also Schenk who identifies eight postpositive elements in Mark 13:5–37 that serve as direct forms of address to the reader (1999, 207).

⁹⁹ Notably, the word ἔργον (Mark 13:34) is used elsewhere in the New Testament to refer to the task of gospel proclamation (Acts 13:2; 14:26; 15:38; Phil 1:22; 2 Tim 4:5 cf. 1 Cor 16:10; 1 Clem 43:1). See Danker et al. (2000, 391).

the involvement of both discourse and narrative in the development of a motif contributes to its prominence.

Second, the importance of Jesus's statement concerning worldwide proclamation in Mark 13:10 is underlined by its location structurally and thematically at the heart of the pericope (Iwuamadi 2008, 196).¹⁰⁰ Indeed, Schmithals identifies Mark 13:10 as central to understanding the message of chapter 13 (1986, 574).¹⁰¹ Similarly Moloney argues that Mark 13:10 contains the "central theme" of Mark 13:5–23 (2012, 257). Given the significance of Mark 13 in Mark's Gospel, Mark 13:10, therefore, occurs at a pivotal point of a critical chapter in Mark's narrative. This draws the reader's attention to the verse and its reference to proclamation. Since, as Freedman persuasively demonstrates, the efficacy of a motif is impacted by its placement in the narrative (1971, 127–28),¹⁰² this reference to proclamation at such a significant moment in the Markan narrative contributes to the prominence of the motif of proclamation in Mark's Gospel.

Mark 13:10 also contributes some important content to the motif of proclamation in Mark's Gospel. First, it makes clear that the proclamation anticipated in Mark's Gospel is proclamation to Jews and gentiles throughout the world. Second, the fact that this worldwide proclamation is part of God's purposes highlights its importance. Third, the context of Mark 13:10, in a discussion on discipleship and persecution, suggests that the task of proclamation is part of being a follower of Jesus and that it may involve considerable cost.

Finally, Mark 13:10 also carries a significant potential rhetorical impact. The rhetorical immediacy of Mark 13 ensures that the expectation of worldwide proclamation in Mark 13:10 is directly communicated to Mark's readers in a way that anticipates their involvement. The urgency of this task is underlined for the reader by the apocalyptic nature of the discourse with its anticipation of a climactic end of history. Mark's readers are to hear the warnings and encouragement of Mark 13 and persevere in the urgent task of proclaiming the gospel to all nations. In this way, Mark 13:10 is akin to Mark's version of the great commission (cf. Matt 28:16–20; Luke 24:44–49).

The reader's involvement in the task of proclamation will be considered in more detail in the next chapter.

4. Mark 14:9

4.1 *Mark 14:9 – an introduction*

The second statement in Mark that appears to explicitly anticipate the worldwide proclamation of the gospel is found in 14:9. Speaking in defence of the woman who anoints him at Bethany, Jesus says "... wherever the gospel is proclaimed in the whole world, what she

¹⁰⁰ Cf. Moloney (2012, 257); Geddert (1989, 217). As noted above, Mark 13:5–23 appears to be arranged in a chiasm with 13:9–13 at the centre.

¹⁰¹ According to Schmithals, Mark 13:10 "ein Schlüssel zum Verständnis der Intentionen ist, die der Evangelist mit Kapitel 13 verbindet" since it not only underlines the need for active missionary witness but reinforces that the delay of the end is part of the divine plan itself and that persecution is a comforting sign of the coming end of the evil world (1986, 574).

¹⁰² Cf. J. Morgan (2015, 199).

has done will be told in memory of her.” The following discussion will examine the contribution of Mark 14:9 to the prominence and content of the motif of proclamation in Mark and its potential rhetorical impact on the early reader. The discussion begins with a brief analysis of the literary context of Mark 14:9.

4.2 Mark 14:1–11 in context

As with Mark 13:10, Mark 14:9 comes at a crucial juncture in the Markan narrative (Broadhead 2001, 106).

Mark 14:1–11 introduces the Markan passion narrative, anticipating the death of Jesus and setting the scene for the remainder of Mark’s Gospel. The hostility towards Jesus which has been evident throughout Mark (2:6–7, 16, 18–20, 24; 3:6; 8:31; 9:31; 10:33–34; 11:18; 12:12) culminates in this plot of the religious leaders and Judas (14:1–2, 10–11). From this point, the Markan story will move inexorably towards Jesus’s death and resurrection.

Significantly for this thesis, if Mark 14:9 refers to proclamation, this means that both the conclusion to Jesus’s public ministry in Mark 13 and the introduction to the passion of Jesus in Mark 14 contain explicit references to the worldwide proclamation of the gospel.¹⁰³

Mark 14:1–11 also serves to frame the passages before and after it. With the story of the widow’s offering (12:41–44), it forms a frame around the apocalyptic discourse in Mark 13; and with the story of the women who go to the tomb to anoint Jesus’s body (16:1–8), it forms a frame around the Markan passion narrative.¹⁰⁴

The implications of the narrational significance of Mark 14:1–11 for the development of the motif of proclamation in Mark will be considered further below.

4.3 The structure of Mark 14:1–11

Mark 14:1–11 presents a stark contrast between the extravagant devotion of an anonymous woman and the calculated hostility and treachery of the chief priests, scribes, and Judas. This contrast is underlined by a typically Markan intercalation with the story of the woman’s devotion (14:3–9) bracketed by references to the plot of the chief priests and scribes (14:1–2) and Judas conspiring with them (14:10–11).¹⁰⁵

The story of the woman’s devotion is connected to this outer frame through reference to Jesus’s death (14:1; cf. 14:7b–8) and allusion to money (14:3, 5; cf. 14:11). The woman “gives up money for Jesus,” while Judas consents to “give up Jesus for money” (Malbon 1991b, 599).

By way of this intercalation, the woman’s beautiful act in preparation for Jesus’s death (14:6) is starkly juxtaposed with the enmity of Judas and the religious leaders who are seeking to bring about this death.

¹⁰³ Despite the lack of consensus over the structure of Mark as a whole, there is widespread agreement that Mark 14:1 begins a new section in the narrative. See, e.g., Strauss (2014, 605); J. Edwards (2002, 411).

¹⁰⁴ Dowd (2000, 139–40); Boring (2012, 379).

¹⁰⁵ For a discussion of intercalation in Mark, see J. Edwards (1989); Deppe (2015, 30–93). On the relationship between Mark 14:1–2 and Mark 14:10–11, see Broadhead (2001, 104).

The remainder of this discussion will focus on the central panel of this intercalation (14:3–9), and, in particular, v. 9 since this contains Jesus’s statement regarding the worldwide proclamation of the gospel.

4.4 Mark 14:3–9

4.4.1 The structure of Mark 14:3–9

Mark 14:3–9 can be divided into four main sections: (i) the setting of the scene in the house of Simon the leper (v. 3a); (ii) the action of the woman in anointing Jesus (v. 3b); (iii) the criticism of the woman by “some” (vv. 4–5); and (iv) Jesus’s defence of the woman’s actions (vv. 6–9) (Strauss 2014, 603).¹⁰⁶

The relative space Mark gives to the fourth section (vv. 6–9), the form of the passage, and the rule of end stress, all suggest that Jesus’s pronouncements at the conclusion of this account are the focus of the passage.

4.4.2 A brief survey of Mark 14:3–9

Mark 14:3–9 begins with Jesus reclining at a table in Simon the leper’s house (14:3a). As he was reclining, a woman entered with a flask of costly nard, broke the flask, and poured it over Jesus’s head (14:3b).

While anointing guests at a meal was a customary practice in Jesus’s day, the woman’s actions go far beyond ordinary courtesy.¹⁰⁷ Mark describes the nard as “very costly” (14:3), and later in the story, it is said to be valued at more than three hundred denarii (14:5). That she broke the flask was a dramatic gesture demonstrating her desire to hold nothing back.¹⁰⁸ This was an extravagant act of devotion. The breaking of the flask may also connect the woman’s action with Jesus’s death, since, as Hooker notes, “the ointment jars used in anointing the dead were often broken and left in the tomb” (1991, 329).

Some suggest that the woman’s anointing of Jesus’s head has a messianic significance.¹⁰⁹ Such a reading is consistent with Bartimaeus’s public recognition of Jesus as the “Son of David” (10:47); with Jesus’s entrance into Jerusalem as a king (11:1–10); and with the ironic identification of Jesus as the king in the passion narrative (15:26, 32, 39).¹¹⁰ Jesus himself explains the significance of the act as a preparation for his burial (14:8). This need not imply that the woman has any

¹⁰⁶ Cf. Gundry (1993, 801); Evans (2001, 358).

¹⁰⁷ Keener (1993, Mark 14:4–5); Garland (1996, 516); Hurtado (2011, 229). Cf. Luke 7:46. Jesus also appears to be the only guest who was anointed.

¹⁰⁸ Gnifka (1979, 223); Schnabel (2017, 345); Witherington III (2001, 367).

¹⁰⁹ See, e.g., Cranfield (1963, 415); Elliott (1974, 105–7); Hooker (1991, 328, 330); Garland (1996, 516); Evans (2001, 359–60).

¹¹⁰ Cf. Matera (1982, 67–91). Against a messianic reading, it must be noted that the language Mark uses here for anointing (κατέχεεν (14:3) and μυρίσαι (14:8)) is different to that used elsewhere for the anointing of the Christ. So J. Edwards (2002, 416). Cf. Strauss (2014, 607); Stein (2008a, 635). Mark, however, may use κατέχεεν to indicate the abundance of nard used; and μυρίσαι to connect this anointing with preparation for burial (Bock 2015, 335–36). Cf. Danker et al. (2000, 661).

foreknowledge of his fate, but her act of devotion serves to prepare Jesus for his death. This connection to Jesus's death does not necessarily rule out a messianic significance since earlier in Mark, Jesus explicitly linked his identity as the Christ with his death (8:29, 31) (Schnabel 2017, 345).

Some of those present were indignant at the woman's extravagance, viewing it as waste and suggesting that the perfume could have been sold to benefit the poor. Jesus's response, however, is markedly different. He defends and commends the woman for doing a beautiful thing (14:6–9).

In his response, Jesus promises that "wherever the gospel is proclaimed in the whole world, what she has done will be told in memory of her" (14:9). As Dowd notes, "of all the minor characters whom the Markan Jesus praises, this woman receives the most dramatic accolade" (2000, 142).¹¹¹ The following discussion will examine this statement of Jesus, and its potential contribution to the motif of proclamation, in more detail.

4.5 Mark 14:9 – a close reading

4.5.1 Addressing Jeremias

In defending and commending the woman who anoints him, Jesus makes a statement that appears to assume the future worldwide proclamation of the gospel (14:9).

As noted in the earlier discussion of Mark 13:10, Jeremias, following Lohmeyer, argues that Mark 14:9 does not refer to the worldwide proclamation of the gospel by Jesus's followers but to the single eschatological proclamation of God's angel (1952, 106–7). Several observations militate against Jeremias's reading.

First, Jeremias attributes a temporal sense to ὅπου ἐάν, appealing to Mark 9:18 in support (1952, 106). However, as Gundry highlights, the more usual meaning of ὅπου ἐάν is "wherever," and such a sense is entirely plausible at Mark 9:18 (cf. Mark 6:55–56; 14:14) (1993, 817). In Mark 14:9, the "spatial meaning of 'in the whole world'" (εἰς ὅλον τὸν κόσμον) favours rendering ὅπου ἐάν *wherever* (817).

Second, Jeremias argues that ὅλον indicates a one-off event (*einen einmaligen Vorgang*) (1952, 106). It is difficult to see why Jeremias argues this. Jeremias's argument ignores the possibility that κηρυχθῆ functions in 14:9 as a constative aorist – a possibility that is strengthened if ὅπου ἐάν bears an iterative sense.¹¹²

Third, as discussed above, the use of κηρύσσω elsewhere in Mark refers to non-angelic proclamation.

¹¹¹ The reason why this woman receives such extraordinary commendation is not explained. Perhaps it is because her anointing of Jesus evokes his messianic identity and foreshadows his death and, in this way, is a summary of the gospel. Her lavish devotion to Jesus also offers a paradigm of the right response to the gospel.

¹¹² So Gundry (1993, 817); Schnabel (2004, 347); Gnllka (1979, 225–26).

Fourth, there is no reference to any angel in Mark 14 (or its immediate context).

Fifth, a reference to the proclamation of the gospel by the followers of Jesus is consistent with Mark 13:10 (which has some significant parallels with Mark 14:9).

In summary, Jeremias's proposal cannot be sustained, and there are good reasons to understand Mark 14:9 as referring to the proclamation of the gospel by the followers of Jesus. Significantly, Jeremias himself subsequently revised his interpretation of εὐαγγέλιον in Mark 14:9, acknowledging it as a reference to "die christliche Missionsverkündigung" (1966, 119).

4.5.2 ἀμήν ... λέγω ὑμῖν

Mark 14:9 begins with the phrase ἀμήν ... λέγω ὑμῖν. Elsewhere in Mark, Jesus uses this expression to confirm the truth and emphasise the importance of what he is about to say (3:28; 8:12; 9:1; 10:15; etc.) (Iwuamadi 2008, 224). The occurrence of this phrase in Mark 14:9, therefore, reinforces the significance of what follows. As Iwuamadi argues, this solemn introductory formula appears to identify "the declaration that follows as the point of arrival of the entire anointing story" (2008, 224).

The use of the plural ὑμῖν indicates that Jesus is addressing not the woman herself, but all those in attendance. The rhetorical impact of this address will be considered below.

4.5.3 ὅπου ἐάν

As discussed above, ὅπου ἐάν can be rendered "whenever"; however, the spatial meaning of εἰς ὅλον τὸν κόσμον suggests that here it means "wherever" (cf. Mark 6:10, 6:56) (Gundry 1993, 817).¹¹³

4.5.4 The gospel will be proclaimed

As in Mark 13:10, the verb κηρύσσω occurs here in the passive voice with no clear subject, and so the agent(s) of the proclamation is not explicitly identified. The parallels between Mark 13:10 and Mark 14:9 suggest that κηρυχθῆ may be employed in a similar way in both verses. That is, as argued above, to expand the task of proclamation beyond the followers of Jesus in the narrative to include those who are reading the Gospel.

The substantive εὐαγγέλιον is again paired with the verb κηρύσσω, reinforcing the idea that "the gospel is always something to be proclaimed" (cf. 1:14 and 13:10) (Iwuamadi 2008, 224). The geographical scope and future timing of the proclamation referenced in 14:9 suggests that, as in Mark 13:10, εὐαγγέλιον refers here to the message *about* Jesus.¹¹⁴

¹¹³ Cf. Danker et al. (2000, 717).

¹¹⁴ So France (2002, 555); Schnabel (2017, 347–48).

4.5.5 εἰς ὅλον τὸν κόσμον

This message about Jesus will be proclaimed εἰς ὅλον τὸν κόσμον – that is throughout the humanly inhabited world (cf. Col 1:6).¹¹⁵ The proclamation that Jesus envisions is not limited to Galilee or Judea but extends to the whole world (Schnabel 2017, 348).

While it might be argued that this gospel proclamation will be directed to the Jewish diaspora *in the whole world*, the parallels with Mark 13:10, the occurrence of similar language elsewhere to speak of gentiles (cf. Mark 16:15; Rom 1:8; 5:12; Herm. Sim. 9.25.1–2 (102.1–2)), and the other references to gentiles in Mark (see discussion below) suggest that Jews and gentiles are in view.¹¹⁶

4.5.6 What she has done will be told in memory of her

Jesus promises that wherever the gospel is proclaimed, what this woman has done will be told in memory of her (Mark 14:9). Notably, it is not the woman’s name that will be remembered, but her act of devotion (and its symbolism) (Strauss 2014, 609).¹¹⁷

As noted above, the woman’s actions are tied by Jesus to his death (Mark 14:8). The memorialisation of her actions wherever the gospel is proclaimed thereby underlines the importance of Jesus’s death to the gospel message. She becomes, as Schnackenburg recognises, a “Verkündigerin seines Todes” (1973, 316). This pericope, therefore, highlights that “the gospel of Christ is inextricably bound up with the passion of Christ” (Meier 2001b, 141).

4.5.7 Mark 14:9 and the expectation of worldwide proclamation

Mark 14:9 clearly assumes a future worldwide proclamation of the gospel. In this way, the story of Jesus being anointed at Bethany not only anticipates Jesus’s death and resurrection but looks beyond this to the time when Jesus’s followers will proclaim the gospel throughout the world.

This expectation of worldwide proclamation in Mark 14:9 has been overlooked by several influential studies of mission in Mark’s Gospel. So, for example, van Maaren, who follows Kilpatrick regarding Mark 13:10, concludes, “If Mark 13:10 does not foresee a mission to the nations, neither does the rest of Mark” (2019, 252–54). Van Maaren’s discussion overlooks Mark 14:9, which he cites only once (in a footnote discussion of εὐαγγέλιον).¹¹⁸

¹¹⁵ The identification of what constitutes ὅλον τὸν κόσμον has changed over time making it difficult to determine the precise referent of this phrase. It is, however, reasonable to assume that Jesus is referring to “whatever can be imagined as the ends of the world” (Iwuamadi 2008, 225).

¹¹⁶ The clarity with which this verse refers to a worldwide proclamation of the gospel leads some to argue that this statement should not be attributed to Jesus. See, e.g., Bultmann (1968, 36–37); Hooker (1991, 330); Klostermann (1950, 158); Schweizer (1971, 290). For a succinct defense of the authenticity of this statement, see Lane (1974, 494–95); Cranfield (1963, 417–18).

¹¹⁷ Cf. France (2002, 555).

¹¹⁸ See, similarly Moule (1956, 281).

4.6 The significance and rhetorical impact of Mark 14:9

Jesus's statement in Mark 14:9, anticipating the worldwide proclamation of the gospel, occupies a place of prominence in the Markan narrative. This prominence is signalled in four ways.

First, Mark 14:9 occurs in a pericope that functions as a key turning point in Mark's narrative. As noted above, Mark 14:1–11 serves to introduce the remaining chapters of Mark and forms part of the literary frame around Mark's account of Jesus's death and resurrection.

Second, Jesus's statement in Mark 14:9 occurs at a climactic point of this pivotal pericope. If Mark 14:3–9 is a pronouncement story (as some suggest),¹¹⁹ the form of the passage places emphasis on Jesus's pronouncements at the conclusion of the account (and perhaps particularly his final pronouncement in 14:9).¹²⁰ However the story is classified, the rule of end stress suggests particular emphasis should be placed on Jesus's statement in verse 9, which forms the conclusion to the story.

Third, Jesus's statement in Mark 14:9 is introduced with the formula ἀμὴν ... λέγω ὑμῖν which "signals a pronouncement to be noted" (France 2002, 555).

Fourth, Mark 14:9 is direct discourse which can function as a marker of significance in narrative (Hearon 2014, 68).

The significance of Mark 14:9 in the Markan narrative heightens its contribution to the motif of proclamation. Once again, in Freedman's terms, the efficacy of the motif is impacted by its placement in the narrative (1971, 126–27).¹²¹

Rhetorically, Jesus's statement in Mark 14:9 regarding the future worldwide proclamation of the gospel also has the effect of drawing the story into the time of the reader. As noted above, this is one way for a narrative to engage the implied reader directly. Similarly, while ὑμῖν in 14:9 refers ostensibly to those who are critiquing the woman, the use of second-person plural address can function to include subsequent listeners (Dowd 2000, 135).¹²² Likewise, the presence of Jesus's formulaic introduction may imply a broader audience and so address the readers of Mark directly.

That Jesus assumes a future worldwide proclamation of the gospel places a significant impetus on his followers to ensure such proclamation occurs.

4.7 Mark 14:9 and the motif of proclamation: a summary

Jesus's commendation of the woman who anoints him assumes a future worldwide proclamation of the gospel to Jews and gentiles. This explicit anticipation of worldwide proclamation adds another reference to proclamation in Mark's Gospel, contributing to the frequency of the motif throughout Mark.

¹¹⁹ See, e.g., Brooks (1991, 221); V. Taylor (1933, 74); Bellinzoni (2016, 137).

¹²⁰ Cf. Witherington III (2001, 368–69).

¹²¹ See also J. Morgan (2015, 199).

¹²² Cf. Tannehill (1980, 142); van Iersel (2004, 392).

Mark 14:9 also contributes to the prominence of this motif in Mark. As with Mark 13:10, this reference to proclamation occurs in direct discourse, complementing the earlier references to proclamation in narratorial comment. It also appears at a climactic point in Mark's narrative and is introduced by the formula ἀμὴν λέγω ὑμῖν which draws attention to this reference and so contributes to the prominence of the motif of proclamation in the Gospel of Mark.

Jesus's reference to worldwide proclamation in Mark 14:9 also offers important content to Mark's teaching on proclamation. Like Mark 13:10, it highlights that the proclamation anticipated in Mark is a proclamation of the gospel to Jews and gentiles throughout the world. Jesus's promise regarding the memorialisation of the woman's actions in preparing him for death wherever the gospel is proclaimed also underlines the importance of Jesus's death to the gospel message to be proclaimed.

Rhetorically, Jesus's statement regarding the future worldwide proclamation of the gospel draws the story into the reader's time. This engagement of the reader is amplified by Jesus's address in Mark 14:9 (ἀμὴν λέγω ὑμῖν). By these rhetorical devices, and Jesus's assumption of a future worldwide proclamation, the reader is invited to engage in this proclamation.

5. Worldwide proclamation: a conclusion

Mark 13:10 and 14:9 both contain an explicit anticipation of the worldwide proclamation of the gospel. These verses contribute to the frequency of references to proclamation in Mark's Gospel. Mark 13:10 also provides a reference to proclamation that meets Freedman's criteria of avoidability. These verses, therefore, provide significant evidence that proclamation is a motif in the Gospel of Mark.

The references to worldwide proclamation in Mark 13:10 and 14:9 also contribute to the motif's prominence in Mark's Gospel. Both are presented as part of Jesus's direct discourse. Previous references to proclamation that have been considered in this study occurred in narratorial comment. As noted in chapter 1, the involvement of both discourse and narrative in the development of a motif contributes to its prominence.

Both of these explicit references to worldwide proclamation also occur at pivotal moments of Mark's narrative. Again, the placement of these references reinforces the prominence of the motif of proclamation in Mark.

In addition to these explicit references, the proclamation of the gospel to Jews and gentiles throughout the world is also assumed or foreshadowed at numerous other points in Mark's Gospel. These appear in narrative descriptions of Jesus's own ministry, in the teaching of Jesus, in Old Testament citation (Mark 11:17),¹²³ and in incidental allusions. The variety and pervasiveness of this material add further weight to the claim that proclamation is a prominent motif in Mark. Although Mark lacks a so-called great commission verse (cf. Matt 28:16–20; Luke 24:44–49), the flavour of the great commission permeates Mark's Gospel. The worldwide proclamation of the gospel is of primary importance to Mark.¹²⁴

¹²³ Mark's interest in worldwide proclamation echoes a similar focus in Isa 40–66. Cf. Köstenberger and O'Brien (2001, 82).

¹²⁴ Schweizer (1971, 270); Nel (2014, 296). Cf. Söding (2013, 111, 120).

The verses and passages considered in this chapter also contribute to the content of Mark's teaching about proclamation. First, they clarify that the proclamation anticipated in Mark's Gospel is a worldwide proclamation to Jews and gentiles. Second, they reinforce that this worldwide proclamation is part of God's purposes, which highlights its importance. Third, the context of Mark 13:10 underlines that the task of global proclamation is part of discipleship and that it may involve considerable cost. Fourth, the association of the woman's actions in Mark 14:9 with the proclamation of the gospel highlights the centrality of Jesus's death in the message to be proclaimed.

This material also carries a significant potential rhetorical impact. The rhetorical immediacy of Mark 13 ensures that the expectation of worldwide proclamation in Mark 13:10 is directly communicated to Mark's readers in a way that anticipates their involvement. They are to hear the warnings and encouragement of Mark 13 and persevere in the urgent task of proclaiming the gospel to all nations.

Similarly, the assumption of worldwide proclamation in Mark 14:9 engages the reader, placing a significant impetus on them to engage in such proclamation.

Furthermore, the scope and extent of the worldwide proclamation anticipated in these passages imply that the task involves more than just the Twelve. Indeed, many of the passages considered in this chapter place the worldwide proclamation of the gospel in the future (Mark 13:10; 14:9; cf. 4:30–32; 7:27; 11:17). This brings this proclamation of the gospel into the time of Mark's readers and exhorts them to participate in it. For Mark's readers, the time until Jesus's return is not to be one of passive waiting but of urgent proclamation of the gospel to all nations. In this way, these passages are akin to Mark's version of the great commission (cf. Matt 28:16–20; Luke 24:44–49).

The involvement of Mark's readers in this task of proclamation will be the central focus of the next chapter.

Chapter 7: Proclamation – Beyond the Twelve

1. Introduction

As discussed in chapter 4, in Mark, the task of proclaiming the gospel is explicitly entrusted to the Twelve (3:14; 6:7–12). There are also, however, a number of indications in Mark that the task of gospel proclamation is not limited to the Twelve but extends more generally to followers of Jesus.

Several of these indications have been noted already in this study.

First, as outlined in chapter 4, the Twelve themselves serve as a model for the reader of what it means to follow Jesus. Their proclamation of the gospel exemplifies an important aspect of discipleship and suggests that following Jesus involves participation in the task of proclamation.

Second, as observed in chapter 5, the Gerasene demoniac is presented as an exemplar of proclamation external to the Twelve. The reader is encouraged to emulate him and assured by his example that they do not have to be among the Twelve to participate in the task of proclamation.

Finally, as explored in chapter 6, the scope and future timing of the worldwide proclamation anticipated in Mark's Gospel suggests involvement from more than just the Twelve. This broader involvement is reinforced by the rhetoric of Mark 13, which intentionally and directly addresses Mark's readers, engaging them with the expectation of worldwide proclamation in a way that anticipates their participation.

These indications are bolstered by two passages, identified by the qualitative content analysis in chapter 2, that appear to explicitly extend the task of proclaiming the gospel beyond the Twelve to other followers of Jesus (Mark 8:34–38; 10:28–31).

The remainder of this chapter will analyse these two passages using the tools of narrative criticism, historical-grammatical exegesis, and rhetorical criticism. The focus of this analysis will be to determine any contribution these passages make to the prominence and content of the motif of proclamation in Mark, and to consider the potential rhetorical impact of this material.

2. Mark 8:34–38

The first passage in Mark that appears to explicitly extend the task of gospel proclamation beyond the Twelve is Mark 8:34–38. The following analysis of Mark 8:34–38 will begin by examining the context and structure of the passage before turning to a close reading of the passage.

2.1 *Mark 8:34–38 in context*

In Mark 8:34–38, Jesus issues an invitation to follow him and provides instruction on what it means to do so. This brief discourse on discipleship, and in particular Jesus’s emphasis on the cost involved, is intimately connected with Jesus’s interaction with Peter in the preceding passage (8:27–33). Before looking in detail at Mark 8:34–38, it is therefore essential to consider the context in which these verses are found.

The immediate context of Mark 8:34–38 is provided by 8:27–33. Mark 8:27–33 begins with Jesus questioning his disciples about his identity, and Peter confessing Jesus to be the Christ (8:27–29). In response, Jesus warns them not to tell anyone about him (8:30).

Jesus’s command to concealment in Mark 8:30 is a central plank in the discussion of the so-called messianic secret. As noted in the opening chapter of this study, the focus on secrecy in Markan scholarship has contributed to the neglect of proclamation as a Markan motif. The relationship between Jesus’s commands to silence and the motif of proclamation in Mark will be examined in detail in the next chapter.

In Mark 8:31, Jesus begins to explain to his disciples that he must suffer and be killed. Peter is resistant to this idea and takes Jesus aside to rebuke him (8:32). Jesus, in turn, rebukes Peter for failing to have in mind the things of God (8:33).

Peter’s failure to understand Jesus’s teaching about his own suffering and the altercation between Peter and Jesus that results, provides the context for Jesus’s teaching on discipleship in Mark 8:34–38. Indeed, Jesus’s portrayal of the cost of discipleship in 8:34–38 corresponds to the cost of his own ministry as outlined in 8:31 (Driggers 2014, 100). It is not only Jesus who will face suffering and death, but also those who follow him.¹ This parallel between Jesus’s fate and the fate of those who follow him is consistent with Mark’s presentation of Jesus’s followers as those who will continue Jesus’s mission (3:14–15, see chapter 4 above).

2.2 *The structure of Mark 8:34–38*

Mark 8:34–38 begins with a brief narrative introduction (8:34a) that identifies the recipients of the teaching that follows. The remainder of the passage consists of direct discourse from Jesus (8:34b–38).

In Mark 8:34b, Jesus extends a call to discipleship in the form of a conditional clause (Stein 2008a, 405). This invitation is followed by four explanatory clauses, each beginning with the conjunction γάρ (vv. 35, 36, 37, 38). These clauses each provide a rationale for accepting Jesus’s call and serve to explicate its meaning.

The four γάρ clauses in verses 35–38 are arranged chiastically.² Verses 35 and 38 both begin with the words ὁς γὰρ ἐάν. Verse 35 includes the phrase “for my sake and the gospel’s” while verse 38 contains the potentially parallel phrase “of me and of my words.” Verses 36 and 37 both begin with the words τί γάρ, contain rhetorical questions that expect negative answers,

¹ Cf. Brooks (1991, 137); Lane (1974, 306); Hooker (1991, 204); Focant (2012, 345); Evans (2001, 24).

² So Stein (2008a, 405).

and use commercial language (Santos 2000, 18–19). Recognition of this carefully crafted structure aids the reader in understanding the content of Jesus’s teaching.

2.3 Mark 8:34–38 – a close reading

2.3.1 The recipients of Jesus’s teaching (Mark 8:34a)

Mark 8:34–38 begins with Jesus calling “to him the crowd with his disciples.” The explicit inclusion of the crowd in this call is unique to Mark (cf. Matt 16:24; Luke 9:23) and indicates that what Jesus is about to say applies not just to the Twelve but to a broader group.³

This broadening of the application of Jesus’s words is further underlined by Jesus’s use of *τις* and *ὁς ... ἕάν* (8:34; 8:35; 8:38),⁴ and by the repetition of the generic *ἄνθρωπος* in verses 36 and 37 (Boring 2012, 243). The invitation and expectations of Mark 8:34–38 are not limited to the Twelve or any group identified in the narrative to this point as Jesus’s disciples; they are for everyone who would follow Jesus.⁵

There is even the possibility, given the setting of this pericope among the villages of Caesarea Philippi (8:27), that the crowd in view are ethnically mixed. If so, Jesus’s call to follow him at this point could include a call to gentiles.⁶

2.3.2 Jesus’s invitation and the requirements of discipleship (Mark 8:34b)

Jesus’s discourse begins with the conditional invitation *εἴ τις θέλει ὀπίσω μου ἀκολουθεῖν ...*

At this point in Mark, both *ἀκολουθεῖν* and *ἐλθεῖν* have significant external support.⁷ Although both readings are well attested, three observations suggest that *ἀκολουθεῖν* is original. First, *ἀκολουθεῖν* represents the *lectio difficilior* since the verb *ἀκολουθέω* is repeated later in the verse creating an apparent tautology and the

³ J. Edwards (2002, 256); Grundmann (1977, 225); Brooks (1991, 137); A. Collins (2007, 407); Moloney (2012, 175). Boring refers to the crowd in Mark as an element of Mark’s literary technique that serves to “universalize” Jesus’s demands (2012, 243). Malbon argues that the “Markan extension of both the invitation and the demand of followership from the disciples to the crowd sets up its further extension – to the headers/readers” (1986, 124).

Jesus calling the crowd may also serve to underline the gravity of his teaching at this point (J. Edwards 2002, 256).

⁴ In Mark 8:34 the reading *εἴ τις* is supported by κ B C* D L W Δ 0214 $f^{1,13}$ 28. 33. 565. 579. 700. 892. 2542 latt; Or.; the alternate reading *ὅστις* has significantly less external support (A C² K Γ Θ 1241. 1424 m sy^h) (Nestle and Nestle 2012, 137). Notably, both readings widen the application of Jesus’s words beyond the Twelve.

⁵ There is some debate about whether Jesus is here calling non-disciples to begin following him or encouraging disciples to continue following him. In light of the reference to the crowd and Jesus’s disciples, perhaps Jesus is addressing both groups (Iwuamadi 2008, 125; Stein 2008a, 412).

⁶ So Iverson (2007, 164); Focant (2012, 345); Schnabel (2004, 348).

⁷ *Ἐλθεῖν* is found in κ A B C² K^e L Γ Π f^{13} 33. 579. 892. 1005. 1071. 1241. 2542 aur c (k) l bo, and is accepted by UBSGNT². *Ἀκολουθεῖν* is found in \mathfrak{B}^{45} C* D E^e F^e G^e H^e M S U W Y Θ Ω 0214 f^1 2. 28. 35. 157. 565. 700. 788. 1424. 2358. m lat sa^{mss}; Or, and is accepted by UBSGNT⁴ and NA²⁸ (Nestle and Nestle 2012, 137; H. Milton Haggard Centre for New Testament Textual Studies 2010, 8:34).

phrase ὀπίσω μου ἀκολουθεῖν appears less common in Greek (Roskam 2004, 40). Second, the reading ἐλθεῖν is plausibly explained as a harmonisation with Matt 16:24.⁸ Third, the use of ἀκολουθεῖν in connection with discipleship is consistent with Markan idiolect. The phrase ὀπίσω μου ἀκολουθεῖν is frequently employed in Mark for being a disciple of Jesus (and particularly in Mark 8:22–10:52) (cf. Mark 1:18; 2:14; 8:34; 9:38; 10:21, 28, 52) (Stein 2008a, 406).

Jesus's use of ὀπίσω μου ἀκολουθεῖν in the context of a discussion on discipleship, is reminiscent of Jesus's invitation to Peter and Andrew in Mark 1:17–18 (ὀπίσω μου ... ἠκολούθησαν) (cf. 1:20) (van Iersel 2004, 288).⁹ Here, however, Jesus's call is addressed not to a select few but to "anyone" (τις) among the crowd who desires to follow him.

Jesus then goes on to outline the requirements of discipleship with three imperatives.

First, one must deny oneself (ἀπαρνησάσθω ἑαυτόν).

The reflexive ἀπαρνησάσθω ἑαυτόν and the identification of the person as the direct object of the verb (rather than the indirect) suggest that what is referred to here is not denying something to oneself but more radically denying "the self as the determiner of one's goals, aspirations, and desires."¹⁰

The verb ἀπαρνέομαι occurs at only one other point in Mark's Gospel, where it is used to describe Peter's actions when, out of fear for self, he denies Jesus (Mark 14:30–31). This counter-example from Peter suggests that to deny self could be characterised as the opposite of denying Jesus.¹¹

Second, those who wish to follow Jesus must take up their cross (ἀράτω τὸν σταυρόν).

The practice of carrying one's cross to the place of execution was well known at the time of Jesus (even prior to Jesus's crucifixion).¹²

Some argue that the metaphor of taking up one's cross refers broadly to a willingness to endure hardship or experience shame or ridicule.¹³ However, in light of the reference to losing one's life in Mark 8:35, and given Mark's probable historical context, it is perhaps more likely that the metaphor refers more specifically to a readiness to face martyrdom.¹⁴ Such readiness would undoubtedly encompass a willingness to endure hardship and shame.

The reference to Jesus's followers taking up a cross highlights what Focant calls a "community of destiny" between Jesus and his followers (2012, 346). Those who

⁸ Kotansky (2020, 251); Elliott (2010, 84).

⁹ The response and commitment of Peter and Andrew dramatise Jesus's expectation in Mark 8:34 (A. Collins 2007, 408).

¹⁰ Stein (2008a, 406–7); Gould (1922, 156). Cf. Cranfield (1963, 282); France (2002, 340); Brooks (1991, 137).

¹¹ A. Collins (2007, 408); Garland (1996, 169); van Iersel (2004, 288).

¹² Stein (2008a, 407); Hengel (1977, 62). Cf. Plutarch, *De sera numinis vindicta* §554b.

¹³ So, inter alia, Gundry (1993, 435–36); Schnabel (2017, 203); Stein (2008a, 407).

¹⁴ So, inter alia, Cranfield (1963, 282); Witherington III (2001, 244); Brooks (1991, 137); France (2002, 340).

follow Jesus must be ready to experience his fate. This “community of destiny” is consistent with the expectation that Jesus’s followers are to follow him in his mission.

The function of the third imperative ἀκολουθεῖτω μοι has been variously understood. Some read it as a repetition of the protasis and a conclusion to the preceding conditions. That is, self-denial and cross-bearing are the way to follow Jesus.¹⁵ Others identify this third imperative as a third requirement for discipleship added to self-denial and cross-bearing.¹⁶

Since it is possible to distinguish between *wishing* to follow Jesus (θέλει ... ἀκολουθεῖν) and following him, the third imperative ἀκολουθεῖτω μοι is understood here as a third requirement for discipleship, even if the three requirements contain significant practical overlap (Gundry 1993, 435).

As noted above, to follow (ἀκολουθέω) Jesus is not limited to walking behind him but has the sense of following as a disciple and promoting his cause.¹⁷ Following Jesus in Mark’s Gospel includes joining him in his mission (1:17; 3:13–15; 6:12–13) (see discussion in chapter 4).¹⁸ Since Jesus’s mission involves proclaiming the gospel (1:14–15; 1:38–39), the call in Mark 8:34 to follow Jesus implies a call to involvement in this mission of proclaiming the gospel. That this call is extended to “anyone” suggests that the task of proclaiming the gospel is not limited to the Twelve but extends more generally to followers of Jesus.¹⁹ As Stein argues, for Mark’s readers, following Jesus would have included “proclaiming the gospel to all nations” (2008a, 408).

Jesus’s statement in Mark 8:35 reinforces this conclusion. However, before considering this verse, two critical points of clarification are needed.

First, following Jesus in his mission cannot mean doing everything that he does, since Jesus is uniquely the Christ who has come to give his life as a ransom for many (Mark 10:45). However, in Mark’s Gospel, following Jesus in his mission includes following him in his task of proclamation (1:17; 3:13–15; 6:12–13).

Second, the broadening of involvement in the task of proclamation beyond the Twelve does not eliminate all distinction between the Twelve and other followers of Jesus. The fact that the Twelve are named in Mark (3:16–19) and explicitly appointed as apostles by Jesus (3:14–15) preserves their uniqueness.²⁰

¹⁵ Gould (1922, 157); Cranfield (1963, 282); Lane (1974, 308); Wessel (1995).

¹⁶ So Mann (1986, 348); Stein (2008a, 407); Hooker (1991, 209); Gundry (1993, 435); V. Taylor (1972, 381).

¹⁷ Danker et al. (2000, 36–37); Louw and Nida (1996, 469). Cf. Schnabel (2017, 54).

¹⁸ Moloney notes the link between 1:14–15 and 1:16–20 and argues that Jesus’s disciples are called not just to “be with” Jesus but to be “closely associated” with what he came to do (2001a, 83–84).

¹⁹ Cf. Stein (2008a, 407–8). The link between the Twelve and Jesus has already been established (see chapter 4), but now Jesus explicitly broadens this link to anyone who follows him.

²⁰ Commenting on this distinction, Stott speaks of the primary witness of the Twelve and the secondary or subordinate witness of later believers (1975, 48).

2.3.3 A paradoxical promise and warning (Mark 8:35)

After the conditional invitation of verse 34, Jesus's discourse continues with four explanatory statements that clarify its meaning and provide a rationale for accepting it.

The first of these statements is in verse 35 and is presented in the form of two antithetical clauses arranged chiasmatically.²¹ This presentation contributes to the forcefulness of the saying (Pudussery 1980, 106).

The opening γάρ confirms that the statement supplies a rationale for accepting Jesus's call to discipleship in 8:34 (Stein 2008a, 408). The double reference to ὅς ... ἐάν underlines the applicability of this statement to anyone who would follow Jesus.

The statement itself presents a warning followed by a promise, both in the form of a paradox. The paradox is built on the multivalence of the noun ψυχή.²² Ψυχή can refer to "physical life" or to transcendent or real life that includes eternal life beyond death.²³ Jesus's warning is that anyone who seeks to save their earthly, physical life will lose their real, eternal life. In the context of verse 34, seeking to save one's physical life may refer to refusing to deny oneself, take up one's cross, and follow Jesus even to death (Stein 2008a, 408). Such a refusal to follow Jesus will result in the loss of real, eternal life.²⁴

The promise which follows is also a paradox. The one who loses their life for Jesus and the gospel will save it. That is, those willing to lose their physical life for Jesus and the gospel will enjoy real, eternal life. Again, in the context of verse 34, the willingness to lose one's life may refer to the readiness to deny oneself, take up one's cross, and follow Jesus even to death.

2.3.4 An important qualification (Mark 8:35b)

The paradoxical promise in Mark 8:35b contains a vital qualification. Jesus refers to those who lose their life ἕνεκεν ἐμοῦ καὶ τοῦ εὐαγγελίου.

The phrase ἐμοῦ καὶ is omitted in some witnesses²⁵ but otherwise has strong external support.²⁶ Furthermore, although the inclusion of ἐμοῦ καὶ could be a harmonising addition, it is less plausible that such a "partial harmonisation" would have such broad support.²⁷

²¹ On the chiasmatic structure of verse 35, see Tannehill (2003, 88–92); Stein (1994, 30–31).

²² Cf. van Iersel (2004, 289).

²³ Danker et al. (2000, 1099); Louw and Nida (1996, 321). Cf. France (2002, 340); Hooker (1991, 209); Dowd (2000, 88).

²⁴ A similar wordplay on ψυχή is found in *Sentences of the Syriac Menander* 65 and Epictetus, *Diatribai (Dissertationes)* 4.1.165. Cf. Dowd (2000, 88).

²⁵ ⲡ⁴⁵ D 28. 700 it(a, b, d, i, k, n) (sy⁵), arm Or. (Willker 2015, TVU 185; H. Milton Haggard Centre for New Testament Textual Studies 2010, 8:35).

²⁶ 01 02 03 B^c 04 07 09 011 013 017 019 021 028 030 032 034 Γ 038 041 045 1 2 13 35 69 118 124 157 346 565 788 1005 1071 1346 1424 1582 2358 2372 f1 f13 MT SBL TR c f q. (H. Milton Haggard Centre for New Testament Textual Studies 2010, 8:35; Swanson 1995, 132).

²⁷ Willker (2015, TVU 185); Metzger (1994, 99–100).

Jesus's reference to disciples losing their life for him (ἕνεκεν ἑμοῦ) highlights the personal allegiance to him that Jesus deems to be appropriate (Cranfield 1963, 282).

More significant for this thesis is the reference to losing one's life ἕνεκεν ... τοῦ εὐαγγελίου – a phrase that only Mark includes (cf. Matt 16:25; Luke 9:24). As will be argued here, the inclusion of this qualification contributes significantly to the motif of proclamation in Mark.

Some scholars understand losing one's life ἕνεκεν ... τοῦ εὐαγγελίου as a reference to accepting and believing the gospel even if this results in death.²⁸ There are, however, good reasons for understanding this phrase as a reference to losing one's life in the task of proclaiming the gospel. This reading is adopted by many scholars. So, for example, Dillon argues that εὐαγγέλιον in Mark 8:35 refers to the “*preaching of the gospel*” – the “*proclamation of the story rather than the story itself*” (2014, 12–13, emphasis original). Similarly, Hurtado notes that the term εὐαγγέλιον “means not only the message but also the activity of circulating it” and that in Mark 8:35, it refers to “preaching the Christian message” (2011, 142).²⁹

Although this reading is widely adopted, it is generally assumed rather than demonstrated, and so it is necessary to consider the evidence for this reading in more detail.

2.3.5 Evidence for τοῦ εὐαγγελίου (8:35) as proclamation

Three observations support the conclusion that ἕνεκεν ... τοῦ εὐαγγελίου in Mark 8:35 refers implicitly to the activity of gospel proclamation.

First, as discussed in chapter 3, the noun εὐαγγέλιον appears to be used elsewhere in the New Testament to refer implicitly to the *act of proclaiming* the good news (Rom 1:1, 9; 1 Cor 9:14; 2 Cor 2:12; 8:18; Phil 1:5; 2:22; 4:3, 15; cf. 1 Clem 47:2).³⁰ This raises the possibility that Mark is using εὐαγγέλιον in a similar way in Mark 8:35.

Second, it is in the work of proclaiming the gospel that Jesus's followers are most likely to meet with the persecution and death anticipated in Mark 8:34–35 (France 2002, 341).

So, for example, in Mark 13:9–13, the proclamation of the gospel is mentioned in the context of a discussion on persecution (see discussion in chapter 6).³¹ As Williams notes, “Jesus indicates that the proclamation of the gospel will take place for his followers in the context of persecution and suffering” (2019, 186).

²⁸ Evans (2001, 25–26); Strauss (2014, 373); Roskam (2004, 36).

²⁹ See also Boring (2012, 245); France (2002, 341); Iwuamadi (2008, 135); Cole (1989, 211–12); Schnabel (2017, 204); Tolbert (1996, 265); Lenski (1961, 350–51); Pudussery (1987, 113). Bieringer argues that in Mark 8:35 εὐαγγέλιον refers to both the message and its proclamation (2018, 83).

³⁰ So Danker et al. (2000, 402); P. O'Brien (1974, 153); R. Plummer (2006, 51); U. Becker (1986, 111); R. Martin (1998, 40); Hellerman (2016, 23); Strecker (2012, 339); Friedrich (1964, 726, 729–734); Meier (2001a, 135); Fitzmyer (1979, 341).

³¹ Cf. Williams (1998, 142–43). Danove demonstrates a significant link between Mark 8:34–38 and Mark 13:9–13 based on “contextual repetition” (2005, 116). Similarly Bird (2006, 170).

A link between proclamation and persecution is also suggested by the “community of destiny” shared by Jesus and those who follow him in his mission and by the intercalation of John the Baptist’s death in the account of the sending out of the Twelve to proclaim the gospel (Mark 6:7–30 cf. Mark 4:17; 9:49; 10:30) (see discussion in chapter 4).³²

This Markan connection between persecution and proclamation suggests that losing one’s life for the sake of the gospel (8:35) refers to paying the ultimate cost for proclaiming the gospel (as experienced later in the lives of Jesus’s followers, see: Acts 4:29; 5:17–21; 7:52).³³

Third, Jesus’s original call to Peter and Andrew included personal attachment or relationship with him (implied in the call to “follow me”) linked with a role (“I will make you fishers of men”) (1:17).³⁴ This two-fold depiction of discipleship involving relationship and role is found throughout Mark (e.g., 3:13–16; 10:29) and may be paralleled in the expression “for me and for the gospel.” If so, the phrase τοῦ εὐαγγελίου appears to denote the *role* of gospel proclamation.³⁵

In summary, there are good reasons for reading εὐαγγέλιον in Mark 8:35 as referring implicitly to the activity of gospel proclamation.

If this is the case, then Jesus here teaches that “anyone” (τις) who wants to follow him must be ready to lay down their lives for the sake of proclaiming the gospel. The task of gospel proclamation is therefore not limited to the Twelve but entrusted more generally to followers of Jesus

2.3.6 Mark 8:36–37

Mark 8:36–37 contains two further statements that explicate the logic of Jesus’ teaching in verse 35 and offer further support for Jesus’s call in 8:34. These two statements are closely linked and will, therefore, be considered together.³⁶

Both statements consist of rhetorical questions that expect negative answers. The question in verse 36 implies that true, eternal life is worth more than “the whole

³² As Williams notes, “Persecution and suffering are characteristic themes that run throughout Mark’s Gospel and his teaching on mission” (1998, 137).

³³ Cf. France (2002, 341); Rhoads (1993, 363).

³⁴ Cf. Hooker (1991, 207).

³⁵ Some contend that the expression ἕνεκεν ἐμοῦ καὶ τοῦ εὐαγγελίου is an example of Markan redundancy where the two phrases ἐμοῦ and τοῦ εὐαγγελίου, are essentially indistinguishable. See, e.g., Allen (1915, 12, 121); Owen (1864, 461).

There are two significant weaknesses with this view. First, other examples of so-called Markan redundancy do not necessarily prove that ἕνεκεν ἐμοῦ καὶ τοῦ εὐαγγελίου is redundant. Second, this view overlooks the potential distinction between the phrases identified here and appears to assume redundancy rather than first considering meaning and intention. Redundancy need not be posited where a plausible distinction can be found. As Titrud writes: “In the light of recent studies in linguistics ... we can assume that the choices an author makes concerning the shape of his text are meaningful choices” (1992, 242). Runge nuances this discussion further by reference to “intentional yet unconscious decisions that speakers of a language are constantly making ... based on their communication objectives” (2010).

³⁶ See discussion above on the structure of Mark 8:34–38.

world.” The question in verse 37 implies that there is nothing valuable enough to be given in exchange for true, eternal life. Together, these statements provide further justification for the decision to lay down one’s earthly, physical life for Jesus and the proclamation of the gospel by highlighting the infinite value of the life that is gained by doing so.

2.3.7 Mark 8:38

The fourth and final explanatory statement comes in Mark 8:38 and utilises the language of shame. The opening γάρ once again identifies this statement as explaining and providing a rationale for Jesus’s call in 8:34. The use of ὅς ... ἐάν underlines the breadth of application intended.³⁷

In Mark 8:38, Jesus warns that anyone who would follow him must not be ashamed of με καὶ τοὺς ἐμούς λόγους.

It should be noted that two significant manuscripts (p45^{vid} and W) omit λόγους from verse 38 (so also: it^k cop^{sa}) (Nestle and Nestle 2012, 138).³⁸ There are, however, two strong reasons for retaining λόγους as original. First, the weight of manuscript evidence supports the inclusion of λόγους.³⁹ Second, homoioteleuton or haplography caused by the repetition of the ending -ους in ἐμούς and λόγους provide a plausible explanation for how the word λόγους could have been accidentally omitted.⁴⁰

Mark 8:38 is parallel in structure and “complementary in intention” to Mark 8:35 (Lane 1974, 310). The antithesis of losing one’s life for Jesus and the gospel (8:35) is to be ashamed (ἐπαισχύνομαι) of Jesus and his words (8:38) (A. Black 1995, v. 8:38).⁴¹

2.3.8 Evidence for τοὺς ἐμούς λόγους (8:38) as a reference to proclamation

Lenski argues that to be ashamed of Jesus’s words means “not to believe and accept them” (1961, 353). There are, however, at least four significant reasons for understanding this phrase as a reference to being ashamed to *proclaim* Jesus’s words.

³⁷ Contra Stein, who finds here a change of audience from the crowd to “those who are already disciples” (2008a, 409).

³⁸ Ross adopts this reading, arguing on stylistic grounds for the omission of λόγους (1983, 62–63). However, as Gundry demonstrates, Ross’s argument cannot be sustained (1993, 456).

³⁹ See 01 02 03 04 05 07 09 011 013 017 019 021 028 030 034 037 038 041 045 1 2 13 28 33 35 69 118 124 157 346 565 579 700 788 1005 1071 1424 1582 2358 2372 f1 f13 MT SBL TR a b c f ff2 i q. (H. Milton Haggard Centre for New Testament Textual Studies 2010, 8:38; Metzger 1994, 84). In the Lukan parallel (Luke 9:26) λόγους is omitted by D 1. it^a it^e sy^c (Nestle and Nestle 2012, 220). Though some take this as evidence in favour of omission in Mark (see, e.g., Cranfield (1963, 284)), this omission in Luke by a small and different group of manuscripts may instead illustrate the potential for homoioteleuton. So France (2002, 332).

⁴⁰ Stein (2008a, 412); Metzger (1994, 84).

⁴¹ Cf. Focant (2012, 347). The eschatology of Mark 8:38 offers further parallels with Mark 8:35. Those who are ashamed of Jesus in this life will experience the consequences in the life to come (8:38), just as those who seek to save their life in this age will lose real, eternal life in the age to come (8:35).

First, in the ancient Mediterranean milieu of Mark's Gospel, honour and shame were construed socially. That is, honour and shame were more public than personal and centered on the perception of others and their recognition or rejection.⁴²

In this context, the shame referenced in Mark 8:38 is unlikely to arise from merely personal or private belief, but rather from the public behaviour that such belief prompted – including gospel proclamation.⁴³

Second, the term *ἐπαισχύνομαι* is used elsewhere in the New Testament in connection with proclamation. Five of the other nine occurrences of *ἐπαισχύνομαι* in the New Testament are collocated with references to proclaiming the gospel (Luke 9:26; Rom 1:16; 2 Tim 1:8,12).⁴⁴ So, for example, in Rom 1:16, Paul declares that he is not *ἐπαισχύνομαι τὸ εὐαγγέλιον*. In the context of Rom 1:15, Paul's lack of shame relates to his readiness to proclaim the gospel (A. Collins 2007, 410–11).⁴⁵ These examples support the suggestion that *ἐπαισχύνομαι ... τοὺς ἑμοὺς λόγους* in Mark 8:38 may refer to willingness or reluctance to proclaim the gospel.

Third, in the chiasmic structure of Mark 8:35–38 (see 2.2 above), Mark 8:38 is structurally parallel to Mark 8:35. As argued above, Mark 8:35 contains a reference to the proclamation of the gospel. A reference to the proclamation of the gospel in Mark 8:38 would therefore be consistent with the broader structure of the passage and the other parallels between Mark 8:38 and 8:35.

Fourth, the two-fold depiction of discipleship as relationship and role found throughout Mark may be paralleled in the expression “ashamed of me and of my words.” If so, “ashamed ... of my words” may relate to the *role* of gospel proclamation (see discussion in relation to 8:35 above).⁴⁶

There are, therefore, good reasons for understanding Mark 8:38 as a warning against being ashamed of proclaiming Jesus's words. This reading has been adopted by some Markan scholars,⁴⁷ but the implications of this reading for the motif of proclamation have not been explored.

This warning is not limited to the Twelve but is broadened to anyone who would follow Jesus. Once again, therefore, this passage implies that the task of

⁴² D. Watson (2010, 14); Malina (2001, 48–53); Dietmar Neufeld and Richard E. DeMaris, eds. (2010, 109–24); Neyrey (1994, 121, 133)

⁴³ On the connection between honour and shame and public behaviour, see: Aristotle, *Rhetorica* 2.6.26.

⁴⁴ Dickson (2003, 199); Boring (2012, 246).

⁴⁵ Cf. Moo (1996, 63–65); Dunn (1998, 38–39). Indeed, in Rom 1:16 *εὐαγγέλιον* may refer implicitly to the act of proclaiming the gospel, in which case Rom 1:16 refers to not being ashamed to proclaim the gospel. For a detailed discussion of the link between Mark 8:34–38 and Romans 1:15–16, see C. Barrett (1972, 117–20).

⁴⁶ Further support for this conclusion might also be found in the related and possibly parallel saying in Matt 10:32–33 which uses the language of acknowledgment rather than shame. In the context of Matthew 10, and the sending out of the Twelve to proclaim (Matt 10:7), the reference to acknowledging Jesus before men (Matt 10:32) appears related to proclaiming him from the rooftops (Matt 10:27). So France (1985, 405). If Matt 10:32–33 is parallel to Mark 8:38 (as identified by, inter alia, Hooker (1991, 207–8); William R. Telford (1997, 55); Bock (2015, 473); Thurston (2002, 101); Marcus (2004, 165)) it adds weight to the claim that to be ashamed of Jesus's words in Mark 8:38 includes being ashamed to proclaim them.

⁴⁷ See, e.g., Lane (1974, 310); A. Collins (2007, 411).

proclamation is not limited to the Twelve but extended more generally to Jesus's followers.

2.4 *Mark 8:34–38 and the involvement of Jesus's followers in the task of proclamation: a summary*

Jesus's discourse on discipleship in Mark 8:34–38 anticipates the involvement of followers beyond the Twelve in the proclamation of the gospel. This is evident in three ways.

First, in Mark, "following Jesus" (8:34) includes following him in his mission of proclaiming the gospel. Jesus's followers share a community of destiny and mission with Jesus, as underlined by the language of cross-bearing (Mark 8:34) and the resonance between Jesus's discourse on discipleship (Mark 8:34–38) and Jesus's discussion of his own mission and suffering (Mark 8:31). Since the invitation to follow Jesus in Mark 8:34 is extended beyond the Twelve to anyone, this expectation of involvement in his mission is also thereby extended beyond the Twelve to Jesus's followers more generally.

Second, Jesus calls those who would follow him to be ready to lose their life for the sake of proclaiming the gospel (Mark 8:35). Again, this call is not limited to the Twelve but extended to other followers of Jesus.

Third, in Mark 8:38, Jesus appears to warn those who would follow him about being ashamed to proclaim the gospel. Once again, this warning is extended beyond the Twelve to Jesus's followers.

Taken together, these references underline that involvement in the task of gospel proclamation is not limited to the Twelve but is for whoever would follow Jesus.

2.5 *The rhetorical impact of Mark 8:34–38*

Rhetorically, the future tense verbs in Mark 8:35 and the fact that the events anticipated in Mark 8:35–38 are not emplotted within the narrative facilitate the application of Jesus's words to future followers of Jesus, including Mark's readers (Iwuamadi 2008, 140).⁴⁸ They, too, if they are following Jesus, must not be ashamed of proclaiming the gospel but must be willing to lay down their life for him and for the task of gospel proclamation. In this way, Jesus's instructions in Mark 8:34–38 are "programmatic for members of the book's historically intended audience" (I. Henderson 2019, 548).⁴⁹

The rhetorical impact of this passage on Mark's readers would be further strengthened by the absence of any response to Jesus's call in the narrative. This lack of any narrated response leaves it open for the reader to consider their own response.⁵⁰

⁴⁸ Cf. Vorster 1995, 277.

⁴⁹ Cf. Moloney (2012, 175); Lane (1974, 306); Iwuamadi (2008, 126); Grassmick (1983, 140).

⁵⁰ Tannehill argues, in view of this lack of response, that this passage functions as "direct teaching to the reader" (1977, 401).

Finally, the reference to persecution in this passage would likely have resonated with any among Mark's readers who were experiencing such persecution, thereby increasing their engagement with the passage (Donahue and Harrington 2002, 266).

2.6 Mark 8:34–38: a conclusion

As Freedman notes, a motif is developed not just through verbatim re-use of a particular word but through the employment of an “associational cluster” or conceptual domain (1971, 202). If, as argued here, Mark 8:34–38 contains an implicit reference to the proclamation of the gospel, then this passage contributes to the frequency of the motif of proclamation in Mark's Gospel. Since Mark's inclusion of the phrase τοῦ εὐαγγελίου in Mark 8:35 is unique in the Synoptic Gospels (cf. Matt 16:25; Luke 9:24), this reference also meets Freedman's criteria of avoidability.

Mark 8:34–38 also contributes to Mark's teaching on proclamation by underscoring that the task of proclamation is extended beyond the Twelve and may involve considerable cost.

Rhetorically, Mark 8:34–38 contains a clear invitation to Mark's readers to follow Jesus in his mission, and not be ashamed of proclaiming the gospel but instead be willing to lay down their lives for this task.

3. Mark 10:28–31

3.1 Introduction

The second passage in Mark that appears to explicitly extend the task of gospel proclamation beyond the Twelve is Mark 10:28–31. The following analysis of Mark 10:28–31 will begin by briefly examining its context before turning to a close reading of the passage.

3.2 Mark 10:28–31 in context

In Mark 10:17, Jesus is approached by a man who asks him, “what must I do to inherit eternal life?” After a brief exchange about the commandments, Jesus says to the man, “go, sell all that you have and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, follow me” (10:21b). On hearing this, the man “went away sorrowful, for he had great possessions” (10:22).

In the broader context of Mark, Jesus's invitation to the man to follow him (καὶ δεῦρο ἀκολούθει μοι) (10:21) echoes Jesus's call to Peter, Andrew, James, John and Levi (1:16–20; 2:14). It also resonates with Jesus's challenge in Mark 8:34 to “anyone” who would follow him. In this way, the language of following connects the story of the rich man with the theme of discipleship, a theme that features prominently in this section of Mark's Gospel.⁵¹

⁵¹ There is a broad consensus in Markan scholarship that discipleship is a major theme in Mark 8:22–10:52. See, e.g., Christal (2011, 7); Donahue (1983, 393); Hurtado (1996, 14–15); Thurston (2002, 112). The story of the rich man and Jesus may also be linked to the theme of discipleship by the call to self-denial (10:21 cf. Mark 8:34–38; 9:35; 12:44) and the setting of the story “on the way” (Mark 10:17) (Broadhead

By refusing Jesus's call, the rich man functions as a negative exemplar and contrast to the disciples' response (cf. Mark 4:19).

After a vivid description of the rich man's response, Mark records a brief discourse in which Jesus underlines for his disciples how difficult it is for a rich person to enter the kingdom of God (10:23–27). The disciples are “exceedingly astonished” by this (10:26), perhaps because Jesus's words challenge the conventional Jewish wisdom that wealth with piety was a sign of God's favour.⁵²

Jesus's encounter with the rich man and his subsequent teaching on wealth and entering the kingdom provides the immediate context for Peter's statement in verse 28 and Jesus's response in verses 29–31. The remainder of this section will examine Peter's statement and Jesus's response in more detail and consider the contribution of this passage to the motif of proclamation in Mark.

3.3 Mark 10:28–31 – a close reading

3.3.1 Peter's statement (Mark 10:28)

Mark 10:28 introduces Peter's statement with the phrase ἤρξατο λέγειν ὁ Πέτρος αὐτῷ. ἤρξατο plus the infinitive is a characteristic Markan construction occurring 26 times in the Gospel. While some identify Mark's use of ἤρξατο as pleonastic (Gundry 1993, 567) or label it a “quasi-auxiliary verb” (Hunkin 1924, 394), an argument can be made that it serves both semantic and rhetorical functions.⁵³

First, ἤρξατο plus the infinitive is used frequently throughout Mark to denote the initiation of new activity (e.g., 1:45; 2:23; 4:1; 6:2).⁵⁴ In Mark 10:28, it introduces Peter as a new speaker in the narrative.

Second, ἤρξατο plus the infinitive in Mark 10:28 may function to anticipate interruption or draw attention to the activity that follows.⁵⁵ Throughout Mark's Gospel ἤρξατο plus the infinitive is often used to introduce activity which is interrupted or from which the focus of the narrative shifts without attention to the end of that activity – in other words, the activity itself or the narrative of the activity is interrupted (see, for example: 1:45; 4:1; 6:2; 8:32; 10:47; 14:69, 71; and possibly also: 5:20; 6:34; 10:32; 14:33; 15:8). If such usage is intended in Mark 10:28, then the introductory phrase ἤρξατο λέγειν serves to focus attention on Jesus's reply in verses 29–31.

The inclusion of the pronoun ἡμεῖς in Peter's statement is emphatic and suggests that Peter is drawing a tacit contrast between the disciples who have “left everything

2001, 86). “The way” is a significant theological term in Mark related to the theme of discipleship (Boring 2012, 37–38; Marcus 2004, 29–47; Strauss 2014, 439; Geddert 1989, 151–54).

⁵² Gundry (1993, 566–67); Evans (2001, 91); Juel (1990, 142); Hengel (1974, 19–22); C. Myers (1988, 275).

⁵³ Even Gundry, who contends that Mark's ἤρξατο plus infinitive is an “Aramaism or a feature of κοινή Greek ... in which the notion of beginning has no independent significance” acknowledges that the construction makes “some ado about the new thought of the following infinitive” (1993, 104).

⁵⁴ Cf. Louw and Nida (1996, 654); Kmetko (2018, 145).

⁵⁵ Lenski (1961, 444); Lange (2008, 101).

and followed Jesus” and the rich man who rejected Jesus’s invitation to follow him. The disciples have done what Jesus called the rich man to do (Evans 2001, 102).⁵⁶

Once again, in Mark, the verb ἀκολουθέω denotes not just physically coming behind but adhering to the teachings and promoting the cause of a leader (Louw and Nida 1996, 469).

The καί connecting ἀφήκαμεν πάντα and ἠκολουθήκαμεν is telic in force and indicates that the leaving was for the purpose of following (Gundry 1993, 567).⁵⁷ In this way, renunciation is tied to discipleship (Focant 2012, 416).

Peter’s statement, and in particular the collocation of *leaving* and *following* language, echoes the call stories of Peter and Andrew (1:16–18) and James and John (1:19–20), each of whom is depicted as leaving something to follow Jesus.⁵⁸

3.3.2 The prominence of Jesus’s response (Mark 10:29)

Jesus responds to Peter’s statement from verse 29, and there are several ways in which Jesus’s words appear to be given prominence.

First, the absence of a recitative ὅτι, which might be expected to precede Jesus’s words, may add force to Jesus’s comment.⁵⁹

Over 80% of direct discourse in Mark is introduced with a recitative ὅτι, a dative of address, verbal melding,⁶⁰ or an interrogative. Mark 10:29 includes none of these. This atypical introduction may mark what is said as prominent.

Second, Jesus’s opening ἀμήν functions as an attention focusing device and affirms the truthfulness and significance of what follows (Runge 2010, 117).

Third, the position of Jesus’s words at the conclusion of the pericope adds to their prominence by the rule of end stress.

Fourth, as noted above, the introduction of Peter’s comment in Mark 10:28 with the construction ἤρξατο plus the infinitive may function to anticipate interruption or draw attention to the activity that follows – that is, Jesus’s reply in verses 29–31.

⁵⁶ Cf. Gundry (1993, 557); Gould (1922, 195); Lenski (1961, 444).

⁵⁷ Cf. Reiser (1984, 130–31); Zerwick (1963, § 455); Titrud (1992, 250); Danker et al. (2000, 495).

⁵⁸ On the accuracy of Peter’s statement, see Stein (2008a, 473); France (2002, 400). Throughout Mark, those called by Jesus are frequently depicted as leaving something in order to follow him (cf. 1:18, 20; 2:14; 10:50–52) (Garland 2015, 403; Williams 1994, 157).

⁵⁹ Gundry (1993, 557); Reiser (1984, 148). Cf. Levinsohn (2000, 261); Blass, Debrunner, and Funk (1986, § 470); Porter (1999, 268).

Sim suggests that “in dialogue, the first utterance is regularly introduced by this particle, while the second and following are not” (2010, 154). Mark’s Gospel however offers sufficient counter-examples to challenge Sim’s conclusion (see, 2:17; 6:4; 8:4, 28; 12:29; and 14:71).

⁶⁰ Verbal melding here refers to the use of two or more verbs of communication to introduce the same object complement (or communicative content). See, for example, Mark 1:7. Cf. Danove (2014, 67–72, 90–94; 2016).

Together, these markers of prominence direct the reader's attention to Jesus's comments in Mark 10:29–31.

3.3.3 The application of Jesus's words to all followers

Although Jesus is responding to a statement by Peter, the plural λέγω ὑμῖν (10:29a) addresses his response to the disciples more broadly.⁶¹ The phrase οὐδεὶς ἐστὶν further extends the application of Jesus's statement to *anyone* who “has left house or brothers ...” for Jesus and for the gospel. Jesus's assurance in Mark 10:29, therefore, anticipates and includes followers outside of the Twelve and even beyond the narrative (Lane 1974, 372).⁶²

Notably, the parallel passage in Matthew (Matt 19:28–30) includes a promise to the Twelve that they will “sit on twelve thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel” (Matt 19:28). In comparison, Mark's text maintains the focus on Jesus's assurance to *all* followers.

3.3.4 Jesus's list of what might be renounced

In verse 29, Jesus lists what might be renounced by those who are following him. The final element in the list is ἄγρους. Some have argued that ἄγρους here is a reference to regions and that Jesus is referring to people leaving their area in service of him (T. Schmidt 1992, 619–20). While such a reading is consistent with the anticipation of worldwide proclamation, the content and structure of the list suggest that ἄγρους here denotes a family's farming land.⁶³

Best argues that the reference to leaving fields (rather than boats) is evidence of Mark's clumsy redactional activity (Best 1986, 171). This argument appears to overlook Jesus's generalising reference οὐδεὶς ἐστὶν (10:29) and the possibility that Jesus's inclusion of fields, rather than boats, may be to provide a list applicable to more than just the Twelve. As Gundry notes, there are more farmers than fishers (1993, 567).

3.3.5 ἕνεκεν ἑμοῦ καὶ ἕνεκεν τοῦ εὐαγγελίου

Notably, Jesus's statement in Mark 10:29–30 is not a commendation of renunciation for its own sake, but of renunciation ἕνεκεν ἑμοῦ καὶ ἕνεκεν τοῦ εὐαγγελίου.⁶⁴

The verb ἀφῆκεν (10:29) links Jesus's response to Peter's comment (cf. 10:28). However, while Peter spoke of leaving “everything,” Jesus lists concrete examples (Iwuamadi 2008, 154); and while Peter referred to renunciation to “follow” Jesus,

⁶¹ Peter's statement employs the plural ἡμεῖς implying that he is again acting as the spokesman for Jesus's disciples (cf. 8:29, 32; 9:5; 11:21; 14:29).

⁶² Cf. Iwuamadi (2008, 154).

⁶³ Danker et al. (2000, 16); Louw and Nida (1996, 17); Gundry (1993, 567).

⁶⁴ Cf. France (2002, 407). The second ἕνεκεν is omitted in A B* 700. 1424 aur c k; Bas (Nestle and Nestle 2012, 146) but is otherwise strongly supported, see: 01c 03c 04 07 09 011 013 017 021 022 028c 030 032 034 037 038 041 044 045 1 13 28 35 69 118 124 157 346 565 579 788 1005 1071 1582 2358 2372 f1 f13 MT SBL a b f ff2 q. (H. Milton Haggard Centre for New Testament Textual Studies 2010, Mark 10:29).

Jesus speaks of renunciation ἕνεκεν ἑμοῦ καὶ ἕνεκεν τοῦ εὐαγγελίου. Jesus’s reframing of Peter’s comment, therefore, equates following him with acting for his sake and the sake of the gospel.

Mark alone among the Synoptists includes the phrase ἕνεκεν τοῦ εὐαγγελίου at this point (cf. Matt 19:29; Luke 18:29).

Some argue that ἕνεκεν τοῦ εὐαγγελίου denotes belief in the gospel. That is, Jesus refers to those who have left home or family because they “believed the gospel.”⁶⁵ Many others read εὐαγγέλιον as denoting the task of proclamation.⁶⁶ The suggestion that Jesus is referring to the proclamation of the gospel in Mark 10:29 is, therefore, not a novel interpretation. However, this reading is, once again, often assumed rather than argued. Furthermore, the implications of this conclusion for the message of Mark more broadly have not been adequately explored.

The following discussion will first consider the evidence to support this reading before returning to consider the rest of the passage. The implications of this reading will be discussed later in the chapter.

3.3.6 Support for a reference to the act of proclaiming the gospel

Although it is often simply assumed that Mark 10:29 refers to the act of proclaiming the gospel, there is some significant evidence to support this conclusion.

- (i) First, as discussed in chapter 3, εὐαγγέλιον is used elsewhere in the New Testament to refer implicitly to the task of proclaiming the gospel. This opens the possibility that Mark is using εὐαγγέλιον in a similar way in Mark 10:29.
- (ii) Second, in Mark 10:30, Jesus refers to the persecution that awaits those in view. As argued earlier, Mark 8:34–38 and Mark 13:9–11 associate persecution with the proclamation of the gospel.⁶⁷ The persecution anticipated in Mark 10:30 may, therefore, be the result of proclaiming the gospel.
- (iii) Third, Mark 10:29 anticipates followers of Jesus leaving their home and family and fields ... ἕνεκεν τοῦ εὐαγγελίου. Such renunciation may imply the willingness to travel that is required for the worldwide proclamation anticipated in Mark. Likewise, the provision that they will experience from the hospitality of the Christian community (Mark 10:30, see discussion below) resonates with Jesus’s instructions in Mark 6:8–11 when he sent out the Twelve reliant on the hospitality of others (Juel 1990, 134) and the expectation on the early church to provide for those who travel in order to

⁶⁵ See, e.g., K. Stock (1981, 581); Gruenler (1989, 786).

⁶⁶ See, e.g., Donahue and Harrington (2002, 307–8); Cole (1989, 243); Hurtado (1996, 165, 169); Gundry (1993, 558); Lenski (1961, 446); Iwuamadi (2008, 158–59); Dillon (2014, 12–13).

⁶⁷ Danove highlights the contextual repetition that links Mark 8:34–9:1, 10:26–30, and 13:3–13 (2005, 116–18).

proclaim the gospel (see, for example, Matt 10:40–42; 3 John 7–8 cf. 2 John 2:10–11).⁶⁸

- (iv) Fourth, as has been seen a number of times in this study, throughout Mark's Gospel, discipleship involves the twin elements of relationship and role (1:17; 3:13–16; 8:35). If Mark 10:29 is consistent with this presentation, and "for my sake" refers to one's personal devotion to Jesus (relationship), then ἔνεκεν τοῦ εὐαγγελίου may refer to the *role* of proclaiming the gospel.⁶⁹

The plausibility of this link is bolstered by the observation that Mark 10:28–31 echoes the call stories of Peter, Andrew, James, and John (1:16–20), and Jesus's teaching in Mark 8:35, where these twin elements of relationship and role are in view.

- (v) Finally, the phrase ἔνεκεν ἐμοῦ καὶ ἔνεκεν τοῦ εὐαγγελίου closely parallels the phrase ἔνεκεν ἐμοῦ καὶ τοῦ εὐαγγελίου in Mark 8:35.⁷⁰ As argued above, ἔνεκεν ἐμοῦ καὶ τοῦ εὐαγγελίου in Mark 8:35 appears to refer implicitly to the proclamation of the gospel. If so, and if Mark 10:29 parallels Mark 8:35, this supports the conclusion that Mark 10:29 refers to the act of gospel proclamation.

There is, therefore, good evidence that Mark 10:29 includes an implicit reference to the proclamation of the gospel. In this case, Jesus is referring to those who leave home, family, and fields for the sake of proclaiming the gospel.

The generalising reference οὐδεὶς ἐστὶν in Mark 10:29 suggests that such renunciation for the task of gospel proclamation is anticipated not only of the Twelve but of Jesus's followers more generally (cf. 8:34–35).⁷¹ Once again, therefore, the task of proclamation extends beyond the Twelve.

Since Jesus appears to equate acting ἔνεκεν ἐμοῦ καὶ ἔνεκεν τοῦ εὐαγγελίου with "following" him, this verse also provides further support for the view that in Mark, involvement in the task of proclaiming the gospel is a vital part of following Jesus.⁷²

A note on εὐαγγέλιον in Mark

The noun εὐαγγέλιον occurs seven times in Mark's Gospel (1:1, 14, 15; 8:35; 10:29; 13:10; 14:9). Of these seven occurrences, four occur with a verb of communication or reception and appear to denote the content or message of the gospel (1:14, 15;

⁶⁸ Cf. A. Collins (2007, 482); Hurtado (2011, 166).

⁶⁹ Some suggest that for "my sake and for the gospel" is an instance of Markan redundancy. See, e.g., Boring (2012, 297); V. Taylor (1972, 434). Cf. A. Collins (2007, 482). This conclusion overlooks the point of distinction highlighted here. See also the discussion above on the apparent redundancy in Mark 8:35.

⁷⁰ The parallels between these passages go beyond verbal echoes. So, for example, the rich man provides a negative exemplar of Jesus's teaching in Mark 8:34–38. His wealth and response to Jesus resonate with the warning of Mark 8:36–37. See also Danove's identification of the contextual repetition that links Mark 8:34–9:1 and Mark 10:26–30 (2005, 116–18).

⁷¹ Iwuamadi notes that the "Twelve are linked to Jesus in his destiny" but appears to overlook that this community of destiny is extended beyond the Twelve (2008, 168).

⁷² Cf. Hurtado (2011, 165).

13:10; 14:9).⁷³ The remaining three occur in the genitive and without a verb of communication or reception (1:1; 8:35; 10:29). Each of these three occurrences, it has been argued in this study, appears to include an implicit reference to the act of proclaiming the gospel (see discussion in chapter 3).⁷⁴

These three separate examples suggest that such usage of εὐαγγέλιον is an element of Markan idiolect. The coherence of these examples provides further support to the view argued at each point that 1:1; 8:35, and 10:29 contain an implicit reference to the proclamation of the gospel.

3.3.7 A promise of recompense (Mark 10:30)

In Mark 10:30, Jesus promises recompense “now” and “in the age to come” for those who have left houses, family, and fields for him and for the (proclamation of the) gospel. This promised recompense serves to further link this passage with the task of proclaiming the gospel.

Jesus’s reference to his follower’s “brothers or sisters or mother” (10:29 cf. 10:30) echoes Mark 3:35.⁷⁵ In Mark 3:20–21, Jesus’s family appears to oppose his mission. In Mark 3:31–35, Jesus identifies his new spiritual family (“Here are my mother and my brothers” (3:34)). This experience of Jesus – separated from his earthly family (Mark 3:21, 31) but enjoying fellowship with his new spiritual family (3:34) - parallels what he anticipates in Mark 10:29–30 for his followers who share in his mission.⁷⁶

This parallel further underlines the community of destiny shared by Jesus and his followers. It also suggests that the hundredfold recompense promised in Mark 10:30 arises from membership in the new extended family of Christ and the partnership, hospitality, and intracommunal sharing of resources that was to mark this family as they participated in Jesus’s mission (cf. Acts 2:44; 4:32–37; 1 Cor 4:15; Rom 16:23; 3 John 8).⁷⁷ The extent of this new family, intimated in the reference to a “hundredfold,” resonates with the worldwide proclamation and growth of the kingdom anticipated elsewhere in Mark (see 4:8, 20, 26–34; 13:10; 14:9).

3.3.8 ...with persecution (Mark 10:30b)

Jesus also makes clear that renunciation for him and for the (proclamation of the) gospel will result in persecution (Mark 10:30). Mark is the only Synoptist to include a reference to persecution at this point (cf. Matt 19:29; Luke 18:30).

Warning about persecution is a consistent part of Jesus’s message (cf. 8:34–38; 10:38–39; 13:9–13) and underlines again that Jesus’s followers share a community of

⁷³ For New Testament verbs of communication, see Danove (2014). For New Testament verbs of response, see Morrison (2017, 96–104).

⁷⁴ Εὐαγγέλιον might be described in these verses as a noun of action or an example of synecdoche.

⁷⁵ Note, for example, the omission of “father” in both passages.

⁷⁶ Cf. Dowd (2000, 108); Barton (1994, 85).

⁷⁷ A. Collins (2007, 482); Gnilka (1979, 93); Evans (2001, 103); Focant (2012, 417). At many points throughout the New Testament, familial language is used of the Christian community (Phlm 10; 1 Thess 2:7–12; Rom 16:13–14) (Donahue and Harrington 2002, 307).

destiny with Jesus himself. Just as Jesus faced opposition and persecution (e.g., 2:6–7; 3:2–6, 21–22; 5:40a; 6:3; 8:31), so will his followers.

This community of destiny shared by Jesus and his followers is consistent with the expectation that Jesus’s followers will continue his mission of gospel proclamation.⁷⁸

The generalising reference οὐδεὶς ἐστὶν in Mark 10:29 makes clear that this shared destiny and continuation of Jesus’s mission is not limited to the Twelve but is a reality for Jesus’s followers more broadly (cf. Mark 8:34–35).

3.3.9 In the age to come (Mark 10:30b–31)

In addition to the recompense to be received “in this time,” Jesus also promises “eternal life” in the age to come (10:30). This is the climax of Jesus’s assurance.⁷⁹

The final verse in this section, Mark 10:31, anticipates an eschatological reversal (cf. Mark 8:35–38; 12:9–11). This eschatological reversal recalls Mark 8:35–38, which promises true life for those who lose their life for Jesus and the proclamation of the gospel.

3.4 Mark 10:28–31 and the involvement of Jesus’s followers in the task of proclamation: a summary

Jesus’s interaction with Peter in Mark 10:28–31 foreshadows the involvement of followers beyond the Twelve in the task of proclaiming the gospel. This is evident in three ways.

First, Jesus’s reframing of Peter’s comment in Mark 10:29 equates following him with acting for his sake and the sake of the proclamation of the gospel. In this way, Jesus’s response to Peter implies that following him involves engaging in his mission of gospel proclamation.

Second, Jesus’s statement in Mark 10:29–30 anticipates that others (“anyone”, 10:29) might leave house or family or fields for the sake of proclaiming the gospel.

Third, Mark 10:30 underlines the community of destiny and mission that followers of Jesus share with Jesus himself. Importantly, the generalising reference to “anyone” in Mark 10:29 underlines that this is shared not just by the Twelve but by any follower of Jesus who leaves house or family or fields for Jesus and for the gospel.

In these ways, Mark 10:28–31 reinforces that the task of gospel proclamation is not limited to the Twelve but extends to other followers of Jesus.

3.5 The rhetorical impact of Mark 10:28–31

Peter’s comment in Mark 10:28 not only contrasts the disciples with the rich man but may also describe the experience of Mark’s early audience (Beavis 2011, 154).⁸⁰ Mark’s readers

⁷⁸ The continuation of Jesus’s mission by his followers is also underlined by the depiction of discipleship as following Jesus on his way.

⁷⁹ Eternal life is precisely what the rich man was seeking when he came to Jesus (Mark 10:17). In this way, Mark 10:30 forms something of an *inclusio* with Mark 10:17.

⁸⁰ Cf. A. Collins (2007, 475); Hooker (1991, 243).

may recognise in Peter and his question their own concerns. In this way, these readers are included in Peter's ἡμεῖς.

Jesus's response also appears to include Mark's readers. In his word of assurance, Jesus promises compensation not just for the Twelve but for anyone – including those among Mark's audience - who has left house or family or fields for him and for the gospel.⁸¹ Some early readers of Mark could also likely relate to the anticipation of persecution in Mark 10:30.

In these ways, Mark 10:28–31 engages the reader of Mark, drawing them into the story and exhorting them to willing renunciation for the sake of Jesus and the proclamation of the gospel.⁸² Jesus's assurance of the blessing that awaits (Mark 10:30–31) would serve as a powerful encouragement to proclaim the gospel regardless of the cost.⁸³

3.6 Mark 10:28–31: a conclusion

If, as argued here, εὐαγγέλιον in Mark 10:29 refers implicitly to the act of proclaiming the gospel, then this verse provides another reference to proclamation and so contributes to the frequency of the motif of proclamation in Mark. This reference also satisfies Freedman's criteria of avoidability since the parallel passages in Matthew and Luke do not include the phrase ἔνεκεν τοῦ εὐαγγελίου (Matt 19:29; Luke 18:29).

Furthermore, the prominence of Jesus's words in Mark 10:29–30 directs the reader's attention to this reference to proclamation and so contributes to the prominence of the motif in Mark.

Mark 10:28–31 also contributes to the content of Mark's teaching on proclamation. It reinforces that the task of proclamation extends beyond the Twelve to other followers of Jesus. It underlines that involvement in this task may require renunciation and lead to persecution but will also result in the blessing and partnership of a new spiritual family. It affirms that following Jesus involves engaging in Jesus's mission of gospel proclamation.

Rhetorically, Mark 10:28–31 engages the reader of Mark, exhorting them to willing renunciation for the sake of Jesus and the proclamation of the gospel and assuring them of the blessing that awaits.

4. Proclamation – beyond the Twelve: a conclusion

In Mark's Gospel, the responsibility for gospel proclamation is not limited to the Twelve but extends to other followers of Jesus. This is implied in the example of the demoniac in Mark 5, in the timing and scope of the worldwide proclamation anticipated throughout Mark, and by the narrative role of the Twelve as models of discipleship for the reader. It is made explicit in Mark 8:34–38 and 10:28–31.

⁸¹ Garland (2015, 144); Williams (1994, 137); Malbon (1986, 109–10, 124–26).

⁸² Cf. Moloney (2012, 202). Best notes that the story of the rich man in Mark 10 also serves as a "comfort or reassurance to those who engage in proclamation and meet resistance", since even Jesus's invitation was not always accepted (cf. Mark 4:13–20) (1986, 11).

⁸³ The blessing anticipated in Mark 10:29–31 for those who share in the task of gospel proclamation, stands in stark contrast to the warning given to those who are ashamed to do so in Mark 8:38.

Jesus's discourse on discipleship in Mark 8:34–38 anticipates the involvement of followers beyond the Twelve in the task of proclaiming the gospel. Jesus extends the invitation to follow him in his mission of proclamation to “anyone” and then calls any who would follow him to be ready to lose their life for the sake of proclaiming the gospel and not to be ashamed to proclaim the gospel. The rhetoric of Mark 8:34–38 facilitates the application of this invitation to future followers of Jesus, including Mark's reader.

Jesus's dialogue with Peter in Mark 10:28–31 likewise assumes that the task of proclamation is not limited to the Twelve but extends to other followers of Jesus. Jesus's assurance in Mark 10:29–30 anticipates that others outside the Twelve will leave house or family or lands for the sake of proclaiming the gospel. Rhetorically, Jesus's response to Peter is addressed to Mark's readers as well and functions as an exhortation to willing renunciation for the sake of Jesus and the proclamation of the gospel.

Together, these two passages reinforce that the task of gospel proclamation is not limited to the Twelve but extends to other followers of Jesus – including those among Mark's readers. In this way, the reader of Mark is exhorted to take up the mantle of proclamation regardless of the cost.

Chapter 8: Secrecy, Wrede, and the motif of proclamation in Mark

1. Introduction

While the task of drawing together the results of the analysis above still remains, the discussion to this point has illustrated the prominence of the motif of proclamation in the Gospel of Mark. Explicit and implicit references to proclamation occur frequently throughout Mark, and five of these meet Freedman's criteria of avoidability. The motif is introduced in the Markan prologue and developed at several key points of the narrative. It involves both major and minor characters and is found in both narration and dialogue. Each of these observations points to the prominence of the motif of proclamation in Mark.

If, however, the motif of proclamation is so prominent in Mark, why has this motif been so frequently neglected in Markan studies?

As proposed in the introduction to this study, one potential explanation for this neglect is the impact of William Wrede and his influential work on the secrecy material in Mark.

Throughout Mark there are a number of references to secrecy or concealment. Although some similar material is found in the other Synoptic Gospels, this theme of secrecy or concealment appears more pronounced in Mark.¹ On several occasions in Mark, Jesus silences demons who apparently know who he is (1:23–25, 34b; 3:11–12). At other times, Jesus commands people who experienced or witnessed his healing “not to tell anyone” (7:36 cf. 1:44; 5:43; 8:26). After Peter identifies Jesus as the Christ, Jesus instructs the disciples “not to tell anyone about him” (8:30). Similarly, after the transfiguration, Jesus orders Peter, James, and John “not to tell anyone what they had seen until the Son of Man had risen from the dead” (9:9). In addition to these explicit commands, there are other points in the narrative where Jesus appears to seclude himself from the public (1:35; 4:35–36; 6:32; 7:24) or provides private teaching to his disciples (4:10–12, 34; 7:17–23; 9:28–29; 10:10–12; 13:3–37).

Wrede's *Das Messiasgeheimnis in den Evangelien* focuses on this secrecy material and identifies the so-called *Messiasgeheimnis* (Wrede 1901). Published at the beginning of the twentieth century, it launched a Copernican revolution in Markan studies.² As Kingsbury notes, “Whether strongly supported or vigorously opposed, Wrede has had more influence on the way in which the Gospel according to Mark has been interpreted than perhaps any other scholar” (1983, 1).

One ongoing consequence of Wrede's work is that the Markan motif of proclamation is frequently overlooked. While Wrede himself, and some who have come after him, acknowledge a tension in Mark between secrecy and revelation, their discussion of this tension invariably emphasises secrecy at the expense of revelation.

¹ Matthew and/or Luke omit any reference to secrecy or hiddenness in their parallels to Mark 1:34; 3:1–12; 5:43; 7:17, 24, 36; 9:28–31; 13:3 (Marcus 2000a, 525).

² On the impact of Wrede's thesis, see: D. Watson (2010, 3); Garland (2015, 368–69); Chester (2007, 307).

This chapter will briefly consider Wrede's thesis, some of the scholarship that has arisen out of it, and the concealment material in Mark. This discussion is relevant to a study of proclamation in Mark for five reasons.

First, superficially, the Markan material on secrecy and concealment may appear contrary to the thesis advanced here that Mark is seeking to promote the proclamation of the gospel. It is, therefore, necessary to consider the phenomena of secrecy and concealment in Mark and how this material relates to the motif of proclamation.

Second, a couple of passages in Mark related to secrecy also contain the language of proclamation and were identified by the qualitative content analysis in chapter 2 (e.g., Mark 1:45; 7:36). Others, as will be seen below, while lacking explicit reference to proclamation, still serve to develop the motif of proclamation. These passages will be addressed in this chapter.

Third, as Horton argues, motifs are intensified by contrast with a secondary motif (2009, 79–102). In the case of proclamation in Mark, there is a clear contrast with the 'motif of secrecy'. An examination of the secrecy material in Mark may, therefore, productively inform the study of the motif of proclamation.

Fourth, as stated, Wrede's thesis and the secrecy material in Mark have garnered an enormous amount of attention in Markan scholarship over the past 100 years. This focus on secrecy may help to explain the relative neglect of the motif of proclamation. The discussion that follows will examine the validity of this focus on secrecy at the expense of scholarly attention to proclamation.

Fifth, the discussion of this material will illustrate something of the explanatory power of the motif of proclamation by noting its contribution to the vexed issue of secrecy in Mark.

This chapter will begin with a brief analysis of Wrede's pioneering work on Markan secrecy. This analysis will lay the foundation for the discussion that follows. The chapter will then survey a sample of other approaches to the Markan secrecy material suggested since Wrede. This survey will illustrate the lack of consensus that marks the discussion and the relative lack of attention given to the motif of proclamation. Finally, the chapter will examine seven points of intersection between secrecy or concealment and the motif of proclamation in Mark's Gospel to demonstrate how the secrecy and concealment material in Mark contributes to the development of the motif of proclamation.

2. Wrede and Das Messiasgeheimnis

2.1 A summary of Wrede's thesis

Wrede argues that the "idea of the secret messiahship" dominates "the entire course of the [Markan] narrative as a whole" (Wrede 1971, 114).³ In his analysis, Wrede includes a variety of Markan material under the *Messiasgeheimnis*, including "prohibitions addressed to the demons" (1:25; 1:34; 3:12); "prohibitions following (other) miracles" (1:43–45; 5:43; 7:36; 8:26); "prohibitions after Peter's confession" (8:30; 9:9); "intentional preservation of [Jesus's]

³ In keeping with convention, this thesis uses the term "messianic secret" to render Wrede's *Messiasgeheimnis*. Cf. Boring (2012, 264).

incognito” (7:24; 9:30f); “a prohibition to speak which did not originate with Jesus” (10:47f) (34–36); “cryptic speech” and “Jesus’ parabolic mode of teaching” (53–65); and, the disciples’ “failure to understand” (101–14). Wrede links these phenomena together, arguing that the *Messiasgeheimnis* was a unified theme that requires a single comprehensive explanation. Indeed, Wrede explicitly rejects explanations which “illuminate only individual passages” (39).

Central to Wrede’s conclusion is the presupposition that the secrecy material in Mark is unhistorical. Wrede claims that Jesus’s commands to silence “are unhistorical, each and every one of them” (49). Likewise, Wrede asserts, that the disciples, as presented by Mark as slow to understand, “are not real figures” (103). For Wrede, the origin of this secrecy material is not, therefore, to be found in the life of Jesus. Instead, it is a later addition to the tradition.⁴

Wrede argues that the motif of secrecy in Mark was a dogmatic construct that sought to resolve a tension that had arisen between the early church’s belief in Jesus as messianic and the non-messianic conception of Jesus that existed during his life (131, 209). Jesus’s commands to secrecy were not historical but contrived later to explain why people had not acknowledged or recognised Jesus as the Messiah during his life (145–46, 215–23).

Wrede’s thesis regarding the messianic secret had two important corollaries. First, the assertion that “Jesus actually did not give himself out as messiah” (230). Wrede himself drew this conclusion somewhat tentatively, but it was embraced and amplified by others who followed him.⁵ Second, the contention that Mark’s Gospel is not a historically reliable source from which one might draw a life of Jesus but offers only “pale residues” of the “real life of Jesus” (131). This conclusion significantly impacted the 19th century’s quest of the historical Jesus.⁶

2.2 *Response to Wrede*

As is now widely recognised, there are some significant weaknesses in Wrede’s thesis that undermine his conclusions and raise questions regarding his influence over the discussion of proclamation. The following critique will be limited to four main issues.⁷

- (i) First, Wrede’s relegation of the Markan secrecy material as wholly unhistorical is difficult to sustain and has been strongly challenged.

Wilkins identifies the “primary deficiency” of Wrede’s thesis as his polarization of Mark’s purposes regarding history and theology (2009, 333). As is now commonly recognised, having a theological intent does not necessarily equate to unhistorical reporting. The Gospel writer “preaches by narrating; he writes history and in so doing proclaims” (Hengel 1985, 41). Consistent with this, many scholars today, in contrast to Wrede, are more open to accepting that Mark writes with both theological conviction and historical sensitivities (Wilkins 2009, 333–34).

⁴ Contrary to what is sometimes suggested in the secondary literature, Wrede did not conclude that the messianic secret originated with Mark. For Wrede, the secrecy theme in Mark was too variegated to be “the work of an individual” (145). Instead, Wrede argued that it arose from Mark’s tradition.

⁵ See, e.g., Bultmann (1919, 167).

⁶ For a brief summary of Wrede’s impact on the quest for the historical Jesus, see: W. Robinson (1983, 98).

⁷ For a more detailed critique of Wrede, see: de Tillesse (1968, 9–34); Räisänen (2003, 38–75).

On the details of Wrede's case, Dunn argues, Wrede "does not give sufficient weight to the element of historicity which is firmly attached to the motif of the messianic secret" (1983, 122). For example, Dunn examines the pericope containing Jesus's command to the disciples not to tell anyone about him in Mark 8:30 (which Wrede dismisses as unhistorical) (1971, 49) and identifies several features that support the "authenticity of the pericope" (1983, 123). These include "the specification and location" of the setting of the pericope, "the unique appearance of the title Χριστός addressed to Jesus by a disciple," and the "total improbability of the primitive church calling Peter 'Satan'" (123–24).⁸ Based on such observations, Dunn concludes, "contrary to Wrede the so-called 'messianic secret' motif had a historical rather than a theological origin" (126).

If the origin of Mark's secrecy material is traced back to Jesus, a fundamental pillar of Wrede's thesis is removed.

- (ii) Second, it is unclear how faith in Jesus as Messiah could arise if Jesus never made such claims for himself.

In *Das Messiasgeheimnis*, Wrede proposes that during Jesus's life, no-one (including Jesus himself) regarded him as the Messiah, and that recognition of Jesus as Messiah arose later from belief in Jesus's resurrection (1971, 236). It is doubtful, however, whether the resurrection alone would provide sufficient impetus for such belief. There is, for example, no evidence that the raising of Lazarus (or the assumed resurrection of John the Baptist) made or proved that these men were the Messiah.⁹ Indeed, there is no indication within Second Temple Judaism that resurrection would give rise to messianic status (Chester 2007, 308–9). As Juel notes, "the resurrection would have been understood as proof of [Jesus's] messiahship only if a messianic claim were already an issue" (1977, 25).¹⁰

Furthermore, scholars have questioned the idea of a pre-Easter non-messianic tradition about Jesus, arguing that such an "unmessianic Jesus tradition does not exist at all" (Hengel and Schwemer 2019, 556).¹¹ "The Gospel of Mark furnishes us no evidence for the existence of a non-christological tradition onto which Mark might have wanted to impose a Christology" (W. Robinson 1983, 110). Instead, the Gospel of Mark itself suggests that Jesus was recognised as making messianic claims. For example, the *titulus* on the cross presents Jesus as a King, and the accusation that Jesus made messianic claims fits the criterion of execution.¹² Likewise, the very early and widespread use of Χριστός (without explanation) as a moniker for Jesus by Paul (and throughout the New Testament) suggests that Χριστός was a characteristic designation of Jesus from a very early stage (Chester 2007, 311).¹³

⁸ Cf. Hengel and Schwemer (2019, 550–51).

⁹ Cf. Schweitzer (1954, 343).

¹⁰ Cf. J. Edwards (2002, 64); Sanday (1907, 75–76).

¹¹ Cf. Kingsbury (1983, 6).

¹² Cf. Mann (1986, 216).

¹³ Cf. Hengel (2004, 10). The significance of this argument is heightened by the observation that Χριστός is often used in the New Testament as a name and not simply a title. If its use as a title must precede its use as a name, this locates such use even earlier in Christian history (Chester 2007, 309–11).

Significantly, it appears that Wrede himself may have come to realise something of the weakness of his case at this point. In a little known letter to Adolf Harnack, written just two years before his death, Wrede tempered his own conclusions regarding Jesus's messianic self-consciousness, writing, "Ich bin geneigter als früher zu glauben, daß Jesus selbst sich als zum Messias ausersehen betrachtet hat" (Rollmann and Zager 2001, 317).

Crucially, in the absence of a non-messianic Jesus tradition, a critical basis for Wrede's argument is removed since there would be no tension between earlier, non-messianic views of Jesus and the later belief of the early church that required resolving.

- (iii) Third, Wrede conflates a wide variety of material under his *Messiasgeheimnis* and treats this material as a unity. This approach lacks nuance, and his attempt to find a single, overarching explanation for the origin and function of this varied material is unpersuasive and unnecessary.

Numerous scholars have questioned Wrede's grouping together of such variegated material under a unified *Messiasgeheimnis* motif and challenged his premise that the various Markan secrecy texts are to be explained in the same way (1971, 37). As Moloney notes, such a "blanket solution" obscures the complexity of the material (2001a, 56).

So, for example, Räisänen argues that the material linked by Wrede "cannot be explained as an unbroken whole" (1983, 135). Räisänen separates out the "parable theory," the disciples' obtuseness, and the theme of secret healing and limits the "messianic secret proper" to the silence commands addressed to demons and the disciples (132–33). Likewise, Luz distinguishes the "miracle secret" from the "messianic secret" (1983, 86–87).

Similarly, Hengel and Schwemer argue that "Wrede summarized under the key phrase 'messianic secret' very different things which can only be brought under the same heading in a relatively forced manner" and are not "to be explained from a single root" (2019, 541).¹⁴

The disparate nature of the material that Wrede subsumes under his *Messiasgeheimnis* brings into question his contention that all of this material must be explained together. As Dunn notes, "it is highly probable that in different situations there were a variety of motives operative" (1983, 118).

Wrede frequently dismisses other explanations of Mark's secrecy material as inadequate or "nonsensical" because they do not explain all instances of secrecy.¹⁵ He then concludes that the lack of alternate explanations supports his conclusions regarding the *Messiasgeheimnis*. If, however, different explanations might be validly offered for different instances of secrecy or concealment in Mark, a significant impetus for Wrede's thesis evaporates.

¹⁴ See, likewise: Dunn (1983, 117); Dibelius (1934, 93–94); Tyson (1961, 261–62); Trocmé (1973, 9–10).

¹⁵ See, e.g., Wrede (1971, 39).

(iv) Fourth, Wrede does not give adequate attention to the counterbalancing theme of revelation or proclamation in Mark.¹⁶

As Dunn notes, a theory of the messianic secret that does not take account of other prominent themes in Mark “will inevitably give a distorted picture both of the Markan Jesus and of the Markan theology” (1983, 122).

While Wrede acknowledges the tension between secrecy and disclosure at various points, he does not give sufficient consideration to the fact that the failure of people to keep the secret jeopardises the assumption that no one at the time recognised Jesus as Messiah. Consistent with this critique, Ralph Martin notes, “There can be no reason why Mark allowed the text to retain traits of messianic publicity if he was determined to insist that the messianic secret was observed throughout [Jesus’s] ministry and only made public at the resurrection” (1972, 95).

More broadly, it might be argued that Wrede does not give sufficient weight to the text of Mark itself, but rather superimposes his thesis on the text from his reconstruction of earliest Christianity.¹⁷

2.3 Wrede and *Das Messiasgeheimnis*: a conclusion

As a result of these (and other) observations, Wrede’s thesis faces significant critique in current Markan scholarship. Räisänen’s conclusion that “all Wrede’s basic tenets have been shown to need correction” is representative (1983, 135).¹⁸

While few scholars today accept Wrede’s conclusions in their entirety, his work continues to exert a pervasive influence in Markan studies. Indeed, the impact of Wrede’s thesis is disproportionate to the cogency of his argument. One ongoing consequence of Wrede’s work is that the Markan motif of proclamation is frequently overlooked. This issue will be considered in more detail below.

For over a century, Wrede’s thesis has “dominated and vexed Markan scholarship” as it has been “variously accepted, rejected, supplemented, revised, extended, rearranged, and restricted” (Garland 2015, 368–69, 371). The next section of this chapter will briefly outline some of this voluminous scholarship.

3. Other explanations of the secrecy material in Mark

Since Wrede, numerous other explanations have been offered for the origin, significance, and function of the secrecy material in Mark. While a detailed survey of this scholarship is beyond the scope of this thesis, the following summary will demonstrate the lack of consensus that marks the debate and the relative lack of attention given to the motif of proclamation in this discussion.¹⁹

¹⁶ Cf. Dunn (1983, 120–21).

¹⁷ W. Robinson (1983, 98, 100); Stein (2008a, 423).

¹⁸ See, similarly James H. Charlesworth, ed. (1992, 34).

¹⁹ The following survey is arranged broadly chronologically.

3.1 Weiss

Weiss identifies some of Jesus's commands to silence as historical (while conceding that other Markan secrecy material was likely secondary) (1903, 53–54, 146–48). According to Weiss, those commands to silence that were historical were attempts by Jesus to avoid popular political misconceptions regarding the Messiah or reflected futurist conceptions of Jesus's messiahship (45–47, 236–37).

3.2 Albert Schweitzer

In contradistinction to Wrede, Schweitzer identifies the origin of the secrecy material in the life of Jesus. Building on the conclusions of Johannes Weiss, Schweitzer attributes the messianic secret to Jesus's eschatological view of the kingdom of God and conception of himself as the "Messias designates." According to Schweitzer, "Jesus' messianic consciousness is futuristic" (1985, 116). During his earthly ministry, Jesus could not yet reveal himself to his people "for the season of his hidden labour was not yet over" (117). Jesus's messiahship would only be realised when the kingdom of God came (114).

3.3 Dibelius

Dibelius argues that the Gospel of Mark was written as a "book of secret epiphanies" and that Mark deployed the messianic secret (which Dibelius traced to Mark's redaction) to explain why Jesus was not recognised as Messiah but rather "opposed, despised and finally sent to the cross" (1934, 230).²⁰

3.4 Ebeling

Ebeling gives particular attention to the way Jesus's commands to silence were frequently disobeyed and identifies this as a literary device intended to underline to the reader Jesus's overwhelming glory (1939, 115–17).²¹

The slowness of the disciples, the theory of the parables, and Jesus's commands in 8:30 and 9:9 are also read by Ebeling with a focus on their impact on the reader and, in particular, their privileged position as recipients of revelation with its concomitant obligation (146, 168, 187).²²

For Ebeling, secrecy is a motif by which Mark communicates "die Epiphanie des Gottessohnes, nicht seine einstweilige Verhüllung" (145).

²⁰ See, similarly Burkill (1983).

²¹ In developing his argument, Ebeling appears, at points, to contrive instances of disobedience that are not evident in the narrative. See, for example, his treatment of Mark 5:43 (1939, 133–34).

²² Ebeling refers to the feeling of mysterious obligation ("das Gefühl der unheimliche Verpflichtung") encountered by Mark's readers (187).

3.5 Bultmann

Bultmann locates the secrecy material in Mark's editorial contributions, and on this basis, concludes, contrary to Wrede, that the secrecy motif was the product of Mark himself (2007, 32).

With Wrede, Bultmann holds that the historical Jesus was not messianic but that he first became Messiah "in the faith of the community" (1962, 71). According to Bultmann, Mark used the messianic secret to harmonise the kerygma of the church and the traditional material (1968, 347–48).

3.6 Sjoberg

Sjoberg traces the messianic secret in Mark to Jesus's self-understanding of his messiahship in relation to the apocalyptic Son of Man. Sjoberg appeals to Jewish apocalyptic belief in a concealed Messiah and notes, "Auf der Erde musste Jesus vor der endzeitlichen Offenbarung gemäss den jüdischen Voraussetzungen der verborgene Menschensohn sein" (1955, 219. See also, pages 40–42, 99).

3.7 Schreiber

Schreiber, building on Bultmann, identifies apparent similarities between the secrecy elements in Mark and the gnostic redeemer myth (1961, 156–57). From these proposed parallels, Schreiber argues that Mark presents Jesus as the redeemer figure of the gnostic redeemer myth.

3.8 Luz

Luz distinguishes the messianic secret proper from what he labels the miracle secret (*Wundergeheimnis*) (1983, 87). Although not wholly unrelated, these two motifs indicate two different things theologically. The miracle secret "points to the power of Jesus' miracles which cannot remain hidden because it is the sign of the messianic age" while the "messianic secret qualifies the nature of Jesus' messiahship which must be understood kerygmatically, i.e., from the perspective of the cross and resurrection ..." (87). The messianic secret thus serves Mark's redefinition of messiahship.

3.9 Conzelmann

Conzelmann identifies the secrecy material in Mark as "the personal work of the earliest evangelist" (1968, 42); and contends that "the secret is the application of the *theologia crucis* to the whole work of Jesus" (1970, 182). It is thus a means by which Mark underlines the significance of the cross.

Conzelmann also argues that the mystery remains hidden in the present. Faithful readers of Mark "are shown the mystery in such a way that it remains veiled from the world even after

Easter. It can only be grasped by faith ... To those without [faith] it remains hidden” (1969, 139).²³

3.10 Fowler

Fowler argues that the messianic secret “is not to be found in the text of Mark but in the experience of reading the text of Mark” (1981a, 26). For Fowler, the messianic secret is the reader’s experience of irony as they simultaneously recognise that Jesus is the Messiah and that this messiahship is “virtually always hidden or misunderstood” from the characters in Mark (27).

3.11 Francis Watson

Francis Watson argues that Mark’s secrecy theme is connected to a “doctrine of predestination,” specifically that “God gives saving knowledge to some but conceals it from others” (1985, 59). By highlighting this distinction between disciples and outsiders, Mark’s secrecy material served a social function “to strengthen the barrier between the community and the world” and “increase the confidence, cohesion, and self-esteem of the group in the face of society’s hostility” (63).

3.12 Räisänen

As noted above, Räisänen contends that the material assembled by Wrede “does *not* present the homogenous unity that he and most later exegetes have thought” (2003, 242). He differentiates “the *real* ‘messianic secret’” – which consists of Jesus’s commands to silence addressed to the demons and disciples – from the motif of the secret healings and the parable theory (242–43). This “real messianic secret” concerns the nature or identity of Jesus (242).

Räisänen tentatively understands the Markan messianic secret as a polemic against the Christology of the Q tradition or others who held a similar Christology and appealed, in support, to the authority of the historical Jesus (2003, 250–51, 254). Those who promote such “defective Christology” are “re-presenting the obsolete viewpoint of the disciples at the time of their failure to understand” (254). The Markan messianic secret thus explains how people might hold such views while simultaneously correcting them.²⁴

3.13 Boring

Boring characterises the messianic secret as a “rhetorical means” of holding together two opposing Christologies that were current in Mark’s community – Jesus as the “powerful, truly divine Son of God” and Jesus as “truly human, fully identified with human weakness and victimization” (2012, 258). More provocatively, Boring argues that the messianic secret is not a motif or theme in Mark, but “the *framework within which* Mark includes stories expressing both types of early Christian Christology ...” (270).

²³ Consistent with this, Conzelmann labels the “secrecy theory” “the hermeneutical presupposition of the genre ‘gospel’” (1968, 43).

²⁴ Räisänen acknowledges the development and modification of his own views in the 2003 English version of “The ‘Messianic Secret’ in Mark’s Gospel,” (2003, xiii).

3.14 Iverson

Iverson argues that while the *messianic* secret “does not constitute a distinct theme” the broader theme of secrecy “pervades the narrative” and functions as an audience-elevating device (2011b, 195–96). By providing the audience with “insider” knowledge, Mark cultivates a favourable relationship between the audience and the performer, which “encourages the audience to embrace the message communicated through Mark’s story of Jesus” (209). Iverson’s contribution will be engaged with in more detail below.

3.15 Hultin

Hultin proposes an apologetic motive behind the secrecy material. Appealing to the “politically precarious situation of Jews in the first-century Mediterranean world” and the potential Roman response to anything that disturbed the *pax Romana*, Hultin argues that presenting Jesus as one who “drew crowds by his miraculous activity” would have made him look “either shamefully naïve about, or callously indifferent to, the risks such activities posed to Judeans everywhere” (2012, 70, 82, 90). Against this background, the secrecy motif in Mark presents Jesus as concerned “for how his activity might have endangered *others*” (82) and provides a way to tell the stories of Jesus’s miracles without depicting him as “irresponsible or even reckless” (92).

3.16 David F. Watson

David F. Watson argues that Mark’s early readers would have understood the Markan concealment passages as primarily related to the ancient Mediterranean conventions of honour and shame (2010, 139, 151). In Mark’s social world, Jesus’s efforts at concealment represent a profoundly counter-cultural resistance to honour that served to subvert existing understandings of honour and shame and contributed to Jesus’s reshaping of “common standards for deciding who is honourable and who is shameful” (62, 151).²⁵

3.17 Neufeld

Neufeld seeks to develop and nuance David Watson's work (2014, 9). He argues that Mark’s emphasis is not “secrecy per se” but “secretism” – that is, “speech about secrets” (144), discussion of “what to tell and what not to tell” (119) and the “promotion of a reputation of holding restricted, limited or specialized information” (114). Neufeld concludes that Mark deploys secretism, in a social context marked by mockery, shame, and honour, to achieve various goals. First, secretism aids Mark in teasing out the “multifaceted character of Jesus” (183). It serves to demonstrate Jesus’s integrity and confirms Jesus’s status, legitimacy, and power for an audience that may have otherwise known little about him (104, 183). Second, it establishes Mark’s credibility by demonstrating his possession of authentic, secret knowledge (viii). Third, it creates interest and intrigue for his readers in the “competitive literary environment of Rome” (88), whetting their appetite for more information and promoting interaction between author and audience (104, 114, 183).

²⁵ For a brief survey of other scholarship that utilises a social-science model to explore the secrecy material in Mark’s Gospel, see Morris Jr. (2007).

3.18 Ó Floinn

Gearard Ó Floinn focuses on the motif of containment in Mark, arguing that “containment rather than ... secrecy or silence, is the motif that most appropriately describes the author’s depiction” of Jesus (2018, 50). For Ó Floinn, the motif of containment functions rhetorically to capture the attention of Mark’s audience and contributes to the characterisation of various figures in the Gospel, especially Jesus, God, and the disciples (55). So, for example, in the case of Jesus, containment counterbalances his presentation as a miracle worker and underlines his modesty by suggesting to the reader that Jesus is “not accorded due recognition for his extraordinary words and deeds” (258).

3.19 Other explanations of the secrecy material in Mark: a conclusion

This brief survey of scholarship on Markan secrecy and containment, while far from exhaustive, illustrates both the breadth of scholarly attention that this material has garnered and the lack of consensus that has been reached. Numerous scholars, utilising a variety of different methodologies and building on an array of presuppositions, have arrived at a broad range of conclusions. As a result, the discussion of secrecy in Markan scholarship remains at something of an impasse.

This survey also underlines the relative lack of attention given to the motif of proclamation in this discussion. The remainder of this chapter will firstly examine this relative scholarly neglect before exploring how the secrecy or containment material in Mark develops the motif of proclamation and how the motif of proclamation may fruitfully contribute to the discussion of secrecy in Mark.

4. Scholarly neglect of the motif of proclamation

A by-product of the scholarly discussion of the messianic secret has been that insufficient attention has been given to the motif of proclamation. While Wrede himself, and some who have come after him, acknowledge a tension in Mark between secrecy and revelation, the emphasis in their discussion of this tension is invariably on secrecy. Secrecy becomes the interpretive lens through which Mark is read.

So, for example, Wrede, commenting on Jesus’s stated desire to go and *preach* elsewhere (Mark 1:38), writes: this “is in my view meant only to be to the disciples a plausible reason for Jesus’ failure to accede to their request, but leaves open the idea that *his real motivation lies in going where he is unknown*” (Wrede 1971, 137-38, emphasis added). In this way, Wrede subsumes a passage that highlights the priority of proclamation under the motif of secrecy.

Similarly, in discussing Jesus’s instruction to the demoniac in Mark 5:18 and the man’s subsequent proclamation throughout the Decapolis, Wrede concludes, “might we not suppose the seeming deviation from the other prohibitions to be in reality a parallel? ... [that does not exclude] the idea of secrecy” (140–41).

More recently, Boobyer appeals to Wrede’s argument that in Mark, a house is “a place of concealment” and concludes that Jesus’s command in Mark 5:19, to “Go home to your friends

and tell them how much the Lord has done for you,” “is virtually another demand for secrecy” (1960, 230).²⁶

At the points where Wrede addresses the tension between secrecy and proclamation more directly, he explains it as a consequence of Mark’s inconsistent redactional approach, where Mark “has taken over traditional materials in which the idea of the secret messiahship was not present” (1971, 125). Wrede also argues that the idea of the messianic secret was bound to introduce contradictions since if the Markan Jesus “had really kept himself strictly concealed then Jesus’ life would hardly have been worth relating for Mark” (125–26). Furthermore, Jesus’s glory is revealed “from the fact that he wanted to remain hidden yet is at once confessed” (128). However, in all this discussion, Wrede does not give sufficient consideration to the observation that a failure by people to keep the secret undermines his conclusion that no one at the time recognised Jesus as Messiah.

The same tendency to emphasise secrecy at the expense of proclamation is also seen in the work of others. Miller argues that the “commands to silence and to speech may be better examined in the context of the theology of the messianic secret” (2004a, 82). Similarly, Boomershine identifies “the tension between disclosure and concealment” as “part of the messianic secret” (1981, 233).²⁷

Strecker notes that the “essence of the messianic secrecy motif is the paradoxical unity of hiddenness and revelation” but goes on to argue that “even though the hiddenness is not infrequently ruptured ... the stress at the level of Mark’s redaction still lies on the motif of hiddenness” (1983, 54). The remainder of his discussion then centres on secrecy.

Writing more recently, Ó Floinn highlights the tension in Mark between concealment and revelation but focuses heavily on concealment, arguing that “in the Gospel as a whole the dominant tendency is towards the prevention and containment of exaltation” and asserting the “primary importance of containment ... for a more adequate interpretation of the Gospel as a whole” (2018, 254, 44). Ó Floinn emphasises the “existence of containment” in passages such as Mark 13:3–37 and 14:9 but fails to acknowledge the significance of these passages for the motif of proclamation. It is telling that in his discussion of potential further research, Ó Floinn proposes examining “every explicit moment of exaltation or revelation ... to investigate each one for evidence of containment” (268).²⁸

Laura Sweat Holmes gives greater attention to proclamation, arguing that Mark’s Gospel is “saying something about the interplay between silence and speech,” but notes that “secrecy continues to be the primary framework for the Gospel’s scholarly discussion” (2020, 24).

Strikingly, even where Wrede’s conclusions are rejected, the discussion of secrecy and revelation in Mark is still often framed in response to Wrede’s *Messiasgeheimnis* and with a focus on secrecy. As Neufeld observes, “the notion of secrecy continues to dominate the studies of Mark” (2014, 88).

²⁶ Cf. also Theissen (1983, 146, 148). This argument overlooks the occasions in Mark where the house is a place of publicity rather than secrecy (1:29–34; 2:1–2, 15; 3:20). Cf. Marcus (2000a, 346); Painter (1999). For a more detailed response to this view, see chapter 5 above.

²⁷ Cf. Boring (2012, 72).

²⁸ This chapter attempts something approximating the inverse of this by considering various passages related to containment and considering how they might contribute to the motif of proclamation.

The significance of the motif of proclamation in Mark will invariably be diminished or even overlooked if the passages referring to proclamation are treated primarily as violations of a dominant theme of secrecy.²⁹ The remainder of this chapter seeks to address this imbalance by examining the Markan concealment material in terms of its contribution to the motif of proclamation.

5. The intersection between Markan secrecy and the motif of proclamation

The following discussion will consider the intersection between the concealment material in Mark and the motif of proclamation. Seven observations will be discussed. This discussion will demonstrate how the concealment material in Mark serves to develop the motif of proclamation (and how the motif of proclamation contributes to the discussion of secrecy in Mark).

5.1 *Facilitating Jesus's proclamation (Mark 1:38–45)*

First, at points, Jesus's commands to silence appear intended to facilitate his proclamation. An example of this is found in Jesus's interaction with the leper in Mark 1:40–45.

5.1.1 **Jesus's ministry of proclamation (Mark 1:38–39)**

Jesus's warning to the leper "Ὅρα μηδενὶ μηδὲν εἶπης (1:44) occurs in the context of Jesus's proclamation ministry (1:38–39). This passage underlines the priority of proclamation in Jesus's ministry.

In Mark 1:38, Jesus expresses his intention to go "to the next towns" to widen the sphere of his ministry beyond Capernaum. The purpose clause ἵνα καὶ ἐκεῖ κηρύξω (1:38) identifies proclamation as the central reason for Jesus's itinerant ministry.³⁰

Jesus's statement, εἰς τοῦτο γὰρ ἐξῆλθον further underlines the significance of proclamation for Jesus. This phrase has been variously understood. Some read it as referring to Jesus's departure from Capernaum or Nazareth.³¹ Others, as a reference to Jesus coming from God.³² It may be that this phrase is deliberately ambiguous and refers to both Jesus's geographical movement about Galilee and, more profoundly, to his earthly mission.³³ Significantly, whichever of these readings is adopted, this statement underlines the centrality of proclamation in Jesus's mission.

Mark follows Jesus's pronouncement with a summary statement describing Jesus's ministry throughout Galilee (1:39). This summary depicts Jesus carrying out the

²⁹ Cf. D. Watson (2010, 114).

³⁰ Jesus's refusal to limit his ministry to one place may also anticipate the wider proclamation of his followers. So Hooker (1991, 76).

³¹ For Capernaum, see, e.g., Focant (2012, 77); Gould (1922, 29). For Nazareth, see, e.g., Hooker (1991, 77).

³² So Lenski (1961, 87); A. Black (1995, 1:35–39). Cf. Luke 4:43.

³³ France (2002, 113); Boring (2012, 69); Cranfield (1963, 89–90).

proclamation he anticipates in 1:38 and again emphasises the centrality of proclamation in Jesus's ministry.

5.1.2 A threat to Jesus's ministry of proclamation (Mark 1:40–45)

In Mark 1:40–45, Jesus heals a man with leprosy. Having cleansed the man, Jesus then warns him, "Ὁρα μηδενὶ μηδὲν εἶπης (1:44).

The force of Jesus's warning is indicated by the verb ἐμβριμησάμενος (1:43); the redundant and so emphatic ὄρα (1:44); the double negative μηδενὶ μηδὲν; and, the location of this double negative before the verb εἶπης.³⁴ Despite the strength of Jesus's prohibition, the man disobeys Jesus's command, and instead "went out and began to talk freely, spreading the news" (1:45a).

Some argue that the phrase ὁ δὲ ἐξελθὼν refers to Jesus rather than the leper.³⁵ This reading is both difficult in the context and syntactically unlikely. As Gundry notes, "everywhere else in Mark, the definite article (or a pronoun) plus δέ ... indicates a change in subject" (1993, 97).

Mark does not disclose whether the man obeyed Jesus's instruction to show himself to the priest; instead, the focus is placed on the leper's proclamation and its consequences.

As a result of the leper's proclamation, "Jesus could no longer enter a town openly but stayed outside in lonely places" (1:45b). Jesus's proclamation ministry in the synagogues of Galilee (cf. 1:39) is thus hindered by the actions of the leper, perhaps because the leper's report attracted crowds of miracle seekers, which prevented Jesus from moving freely and proclaiming the gospel (cf. Mark 3:9–10).

Whatever the reason, the leper's disobedience appears to interfere with the continuation of Jesus's proclamation ministry (1:38–39). Given this context, it is plausible that Jesus's command to the leper "not to tell anyone" (1:44) was based on Jesus's anticipation of such an outcome.³⁶ In other words, Jesus's command to silence at this point was intended to facilitate his proclamation. If so, this strong injunction to silence underlines the significance of proclamation in Jesus's ministry – nothing must be allowed to interfere with his proclamation.

Allen Black argues that this same explanation might be applied to several other occasions where Jesus instructed those who experienced his healing not to tell others (5:43; 7:36; 8:26) (1995, 1:43–45). Notably, in Mark 7:36–37, Mark again highlights the violating of Jesus's command to silence and this is followed in the narrative by an account of a "great crowd" gathering around Jesus (8:1).

³⁴ Gundry (1993, 96–97); Stein (2008a, 107). Cf. France (2002, 119); Bock (2015, 137); Lenski (1961, 94); Witherington III (2001, 104); Cranfield (1963, 94).

³⁵ See, e.g., Elliott (1971); Allen (1915, 64); Klostermann (1950, 24–25).

³⁶ So Lane (1974, 87); Bock (2015, 138); Moloney (2012, 58–59); Gould (1922, 32–33); Focant (2012, 81); France (2002, 119); Ó Floinn (2018, 242–43); Schnabel (2017, 63). Cf. Garland (1996, 77). The paradigmatic location of Jesus's interaction with the leper in the opening chapter of Mark supports this conclusion.

Paradoxically, the disobedience of the healed leper in Mark 1, which interferes with Jesus's proclamation, also results in proclamation. The vocabulary used to describe the man's actions (κηρύσσειν; διαφημίξειν τὸν λόγον, 1:45) reflects the language of early Christian mission in Acts (Acts 8:4–5, 9:20; 10:42 cf. 2 Tim 4:2) as well as the proclamation ministry of Jesus, John the Baptist, and Jesus's disciples (Mark 1:4, 14, 38–39; 6:12).³⁷ This has led some to identify the healed leper as a “prototypical missionary” and to suggest that the description of him *beginning* to proclaim (ἤρξατο κηρύσσειν) foreshadows “the preaching of the post-Easter church” (Marcus 2000a, 210).³⁸

The proclamation of the healed man after Jesus's command to silence may also illustrate the inevitability of proclamation and serve to heighten the irony of Mark 16:8 (see further comments on the ending below).

5.1.3 Summary: Mark 1:38–45 and Jesus's proclamation

Jesus's command to silence in Mark 1:43–44 appears intended to facilitate his own proclamation (cf. 1:38–39). In this way, Jesus's command to secrecy underlines the priority of proclamation in Jesus's ministry and so serves to develop the motif of proclamation.

5.2 *An implicit call to proclamation after the resurrection (Mark 9:9)*

Second, one key command to secrecy appears to function as an implicit call to proclamation.

After the transfiguration, Jesus orders Peter, James, and John “not to tell anyone what they had seen until the Son of Man had risen from the dead” (Mark 9:9). This command to secrecy is explicitly time-limited and appears to imply that after the Son of Man has risen, they are to tell others what they had seen. In this way, the command in Mark 9:9 would function as an implicit call to proclamation after the resurrection. The following discussion examines this possibility in more detail.

5.2.1 Mark 9:9 in context

The setting of Mark 9:9 on the journey “down the mountain” and the reference to “what they had seen” links Jesus's command to the preceding narrative.

Mark 9:2–8 describes Jesus's journey up a “high mountain” with Peter, James, and John. While on the mountain, Jesus was “transfigured before them” (9:2) and a voice from heaven attested to Jesus's divine sonship (9:7; cf. 1:1, 11, 34; 3:11).

In various ways, these events dramatically reveal Jesus's true nature; anticipate Jesus's future glorious vindication (8:38–9:1; 14:62); and confirm that Jesus's

³⁷ Lane (1974, 88); Guelich (1998, 77).

³⁸ Cf. Stein (2008a, 107); Boring (2012, 72); Lane (1974, 88). This is not to suggest that the healed leper understands Jesus's message in detail.

suffering and death (8:31) is no accident or sign of God's disfavour, but the divinely approved plan.³⁹

Notably, the entire transfiguration episode is narrated from the point of view of Peter, James, and John (France 2002, 346).

5.2.2 Jesus's command in Mark 9:9

On the way down the mountain, Jesus instructs (διαστείλατο) Peter, James, and John: μηδενὶ ἃ εἶδον διηγήσωνται, εἰ μὴ ὅταν ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ ἀνθρώπου ἐκ νεκρῶν ἀναστῆ (9:9). This is the final command to silence in Mark.⁴⁰

The verb διαστέλλω refers to a stern injunction and is used elsewhere by Mark in connection with commands to secrecy (cf. 5:43; 7:36; 8:15) (Danker et al. 2000, 236).

Peter, James, and John (αὐτοῖς) are prohibited from telling others (διηγήσωνται) "what they saw" (ἃ εἶδον). The verb διηγέομαι refers to giving a clear and detailed account of something in words.⁴¹ The term εἶδον can refer to more than just visual perception (Danker et al. 2000, 279) and is used elsewhere in Mark to denote that which is heard, experienced, or noted (cf. 12:28, 34).

As noted above, what is unique about this command to secrecy is the inclusion of a time-limit. Peter, James, and John are not to tell anyone what they had seen εἰ μὴ ὅταν ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ ἀνθρώπου ἐκ νεκρῶν ἀναστῆ. The phrase εἰ μὴ ὅταν is "semantically equivalent to 'until'" (Louw and Nida 1996, 644). The phrase ἐκ νεκρῶν ἀναστῆ, while focusing on Jesus's resurrection, also references his death and is therefore likely an abbreviation for 'death and resurrection'.⁴² The disciples are not to tell anyone what they had witnessed until Jesus's death and resurrection.⁴³

In Markan scholarship, the time-limit in Mark 9:9 is most often considered as an avenue for identifying the rationale behind Jesus's commands to secrecy.⁴⁴

For example, Brooks argues that the command to secrecy in Mark 9:9 arises from the disciples' lack of comprehension (1991, 143). Since the disciples would not fully understand the significance of the transfiguration until after Jesus's death and resurrection, they were commanded to silence until then.⁴⁵

Likewise, Schnabel contends a premature report of the transfiguration prior to Jesus's death and resurrection might spark misplaced triumphalistic hopes and

³⁹ Stein (2008a, 420); Witherington III (2001, 261); J. Edwards (2002, 261).

⁴⁰ Marcus argues that the "climactic position" of this command suggests that it has "programmatic significance" and "that the earlier injunctions fall under the same limit" (2009, 647–48).

⁴¹ Danker et al. (2000, 245); Louw and Nida (1996, 410). Louw and Nida place διηγέομαι in the same semantic field as κηρύσσω.

⁴² Stein (2008a, 428); Moloney (2012, 181).

⁴³ That Jesus is referring to himself as the Son of Man in this verse is supported by the use of the phrase throughout the Gospel (cf. 2:10, 28; 8:31, 38; 9:31; 10:33; 10:45; etc.).

⁴⁴ So, for example, Wrede described Mark 9:9 as "one of the most important sayings written down by Mark" and saw in it the "key" to explaining all the commands to secrecy in Mark (1971, 67–68).

⁴⁵ See, also Broadhead (2001, 82); Stein (2008a, 423–24); Bock (2015, 252); Witherington III (2001, 264); Hurtado (2011, 146).

messianic enthusiasm (2017, 211). After Jesus's death and resurrection, that danger will have passed.⁴⁶

What is given significantly less scholarly attention is the implication of this time-limited command for the Markan motif of proclamation. Jesus's command in Mark 9:9 anticipates a time of open proclamation after the period of secrecy (cf. Mark 13:10; 14:19). Indeed, Jesus's call to silence in Mark 9:9 might be understood as an implicit command to announce what happened after the Son of Man has risen from the dead.

In Mark 4:22, Jesus teaches that "whatever is hidden is meant to be disclosed, and whatever is concealed is meant to be brought out into the open." Mark 9:9 may provide the timeframe for such disclosure.⁴⁷ While full disclosure may not come until Jesus's return, Mark's Gospel anticipates a more immediate revelation through the proclamation of the gospel.

For Mark's readers, the time limit in Mark 9:9 has already passed. This is evident, not only from the announcement of Jesus's resurrection by the young man at Jesus's tomb (16:6) but from Mark's account of the transfiguration told from the perspective of Peter, James, and John, who now no longer must remain silent about what they saw. Mark's readers are therefore living in the time of proclamation (cf. Mark 13:10; 14:9).⁴⁸

5.3 *The nature or content of the message to be proclaimed*

Third, some of the commands to silence in Mark may relate to the nature or content of the message to be proclaimed.

It has been argued that Jesus's silencing of the disciples (Mark 8:30), and in particular the delay of the disciples' proclamation until after Jesus's death and resurrection (Mark 9:9), is prompted by the centrality of Jesus's death and resurrection to a proper understanding of Jesus's messianic nature and role. So, for example, Hurtado writes, "any intelligent talk of the glory of Jesus cannot be done apart from emphasis upon his death and resurrection, and ... any Christian preaching and devotion that is not centered on the meaning of these events is shallow and confused" (Hurtado 2011, 147).⁴⁹

While impossible to establish with certainty, if Jesus's time-limited command to silence is prompted by the impossibility of rightly understanding his nature and mission apart from his death and resurrection, then this command implies the importance of Jesus's death and

⁴⁶ Cf. Farley (2004, 141); Lenski (1961, 368); Gundry (1993, 462); J. Edwards (2002, 273); France (2002, 356).

⁴⁷ Juel (1990, 129); Steele (2012, 177).

⁴⁸ Cf. France (2002, 356). More broadly, there is a stark contrast between the proclamation of Mark's Gospel itself and the injunctions to concealment found in the narrative. Mark is not being silent and so the very existence of his Gospel helps underline for the reader that they are in the age of proclamation.

⁴⁹ See, likewise Stein (2008a, 423–24); Strecker (1983, 63); Witherington III (2001, 264); Schnabel (2017, 211); Garland (1996, 349–50); Morris Jr. (2007, np); J. Edwards (2002, 273); France (2002, 356).

resurrection in any future proclamation. In other words, this command to silence subtly shapes the reader's understanding of what must be proclaimed.⁵⁰

The suggestion that Jesus commanded silence until the disciples had witnessed his death and resurrection to influence how they spoke about him is a plausible reconstruction of Jesus's motivation, but does not address why Mark includes or underlines these commands.⁵¹ The possibility raised here - that these commands function at the rhetorical level to subtly inform Mark's readers of the content of future proclamation - does address this question.

The commands to secrecy given to those who experienced Jesus's healing may also relate to the nature or content of the message to be proclaimed. These commands may be intended to minimise the inadequate representation of Jesus as nothing more than a miracle worker.⁵² Inappropriately publicising Jesus's miracles would not only impact Jesus's ability to move about freely to proclaim (see discussion regarding Mark 1:38–45 above) but also risks mischaracterising Jesus. As Moloney argues, "To understand Jesus *only* as a miracle worker is to misunderstand him" (2012, 59).⁵³

Taken together, these various commands to secrecy might be viewed as intended to prevent errant proclamation or proclamation that was liable to be misunderstood. In this way, they function to inform the content of what is to be proclaimed and affirm the importance of faithful proclamation.

5.4 The question of who is to proclaim Jesus

Fourth, some of the commands to silence in Mark may relate to *who* is to proclaim Jesus.

Among the injunctions to silence in Mark are passages in which Jesus silences demons (1:25, 34; 3:12). Various explanations for these injunctions have been proposed.

Some argue that Jesus's silencing of the demons was part of the exorcism ritual – preventing the demon from using its knowledge "as an apotropaic force" (Boring 2012, 64).⁵⁴ This explanation is most plausible at 1:25 but appears insufficient in 1:34 and 3:12.⁵⁵

Others argue that Jesus silences the evil spirits because, being evil spirits, they are, by nature, inappropriate witnesses.⁵⁶ Just as Jesus sought to prevent appropriate witnesses from broadcasting inaccurate information, so he did not welcome inappropriate witnesses spreading even accurate information (Morris Jr. 2007).

⁵⁰ The importance of Jesus's death and resurrection for the proclamation of the early church is evident in Acts and Paul's descriptions of his ministry (see, e.g., Acts 2:36; 4:2; 10:39–41; 14:33; 17:3, 18, 31; 1 Cor 1:23; 2:1–2; 15:1–5).

⁵¹ Cf. Morris Jr. (2007).

⁵² So Schnelle (1998, 211).

⁵³ Cf. R. Cooper (2000, 16); Garland (1996, 76–77); Deppe (2015, 117).

⁵⁴ See, similarly Pesch (1977, 123); Luz (1965, 19); Burkill (1963, 73); van der Loos (1968, 380). Contra. Kee (1968).

⁵⁵ Guelich (1998, 58, 66); Steele (2012, 171).

⁵⁶ So, e.g., France (2002, 110). Cf. Lane (1974, 130–31); V. Taylor (1972, 228); Grundmann (1977, 100); Wessel (1995, 641); Witherington III (2001, 91, 101); Schnabel (2017, 84); Garland (1996, 71).

Similarly, some contend that Jesus silenced the demons because “even true testimony from satanic beings could only discredit Jesus in the eyes of most” (cf. Acts 16:16–18) (Brooks 1991, 51);⁵⁷ or that the proclamation of demons would “expose Jesus to charges of Satan collusion and blasphemy (cf. 3:22–30; 14:61–64)” (Marcus 2000a, 201).⁵⁸

Still others argue that Jesus will not accept compulsory or non-voluntary witness and that the cries of the evil spirits represent merely an “unwilling recognition by the powers of darkness of an empirical fact” (Cole 1989, 117).⁵⁹

Whichever of these explanations is adopted, Mark appears to emphasise that “it is not the demons who are to make known the true identity of Jesus” (Moloney 2012, 76). This, in turn, prompts the reader to ask – who then is to proclaim?

The arrangement of Mark’s narrative in Mark 3:7–19 implicitly addresses this question. Immediately after the summary statement that Jesus “strictly ordered” the unclean spirits “not to make him known” (Mark 3:12), Mark continues with Jesus’s commissioning of the Twelve, noting that Jesus appointed them “that they might be with him and he might send them out to preach ...” (Mark 3:14). In this way, Mark signals that the task of proclamation is not for evil spirits but followers of Jesus, beginning with the Twelve (Marcus 2000a, 262).

5.5 *The inevitability of proclamation (Mark 1:43–45; 7:36)*

Fifth, on occasion in Mark, Jesus’s commands to silence are disobeyed (1:43–45; 7:36), which may serve to illustrate the inevitability of proclamation. As Stein notes, commenting on the leper’s disobedience (1:43–45), such is the greatness of Jesus that “the leper simply cannot help but preach the word concerning Jesus” (2008a, 110).⁶⁰ In this way, the leper’s violation of Jesus’s command to silence reassures Mark’s readers that the good news of Jesus will inevitably spread throughout the earth (Garland 1996, 77).

The inevitability of proclamation appears particularly in view in Mark 7:36–37. After healing a man who was “deaf and had a speech impediment” (7:32), Jesus issued a command “to tell no one” (7:36). “But the more he charged them, the more zealously they proclaimed it” (7:37). The imperfect verbs *διεστέλλετο* and *ἐκήρυσσον* (7:36) may imply a “protracted appeal for silence, and equally protracted disobedience” (France 2002, 304) or even suggest that Jesus “repeatedly commanded silence” and that the command was “repeatedly disobeyed” (Williams 1994, 123). As Stein notes, it is as if those who experience the good news are so overwhelmed by it, that they cannot keep it a secret (2008a, 323). Such persistent failure to maintain silence may instantiate the inevitability of proclamation.

Similarly, Boring argues that the violations of Jesus’s commands to secrecy are “proleptic” scenes, which point forward to the time of revelation post-Easter (2012, 267). Such anticipation of open proclamation serves to encourage Mark’s readers, particularly in the face of opposition to such proclamation.

⁵⁷ Cf. Garland (1996, 71).

⁵⁸ Cf. Hiebert (1994, 51); Morris Jr. (2007, § Chapter 1: Thesis).

⁵⁹ Cf. Witherington III (2001, 144); Hiebert (1994, 55).

⁶⁰ See, similarly: Luz (1983, 78–79); A. Collins (2007, 374); Schmithals (1986, 1:138).

5.6 *Secrecy and concealment as an audience elevating device*

Sixth, the themes of secrecy and concealment in Mark also contribute to the rhetoric of the motif of proclamation by functioning as an audience-elevating device that inclines the audience to the rhetoric of Mark, and in particular, the call to proclaim the gospel. This material also reinforces the audience's sense of being an insider with the responsibility to make known what they know.

5.6.1 **The reader and the secret**

For the reader of Mark, the secret is not a secret. As Iverson notes, "while secrecy is embedded within the narrative, there are no secrets for the audience of Mark's Gospel" (2011b, 201).⁶¹

In the opening verse, Mark introduces the reader to Jesus as the Christ and the Son of God (1:1).⁶² This disclosure of Jesus's identity gives the reader a privileged position "that is not shared by those within the story world" (Iverson 2011b, 201).⁶³

The reader's privileged position continues throughout the narrative and is heightened by the secrecy material. Building on the disclosure of the first verse, Mark's opening prologue is addressed to the reader, who is presented with the opening Old Testament citation (1:2–3), introduced to John and his message (1:4–8), witnesses the events of Jesus's baptism and overhears the voice from heaven declaring Jesus's divine sonship (1:11).

The reader also overhears the declaration of the demoniacs (1:24; 5:7) and is alerted to who will betray Jesus ahead of time (3:19). When the disciples ask, "Who is this?" (4:41) or Jesus asks, "Who touched me?" (5:30) – the reader already knows. In Mark 8:29, Peter climactically identifies Jesus as the Christ, but the reader has known this about Jesus from the very beginning. Similarly, in Mark 15:39, when the centurion is the first human character to recognise Jesus as the "Son of God" (cf. 1:1). All of this underlines that the secrecy and confusion about Jesus's identity exists primarily at the story level (Fowler 2001, 19).⁶⁴

Sternberg describes such a discrepancy in knowledge between the audience and the characters as a "reader-elevating" strategy that grants the reader "omniscient-like superiority" (1985, 163–65). The remainder of this section will consider the possible impact of this strategy on the reader.

5.6.2 **The impact of this reader-elevation strategy**

The first potential effect of this reader-elevating strategy involves the reader's response to Mark's rhetoric, including the call to proclaim the gospel.

⁶¹ Cf. Fowler (1981b, 98); Ó Floinn (2018, 49–50). This phenomenon of the reader having knowledge beyond the characters is widely recognised in Markan studies, though labelled in a variety of ways.

⁶² This assumes that $\nu\iota\omicron\upsilon\ \theta\epsilon\omicron\upsilon$ (Mark 1:1) is original – see comments in chapter 3 (and cf. 1:11).

⁶³ Cf. Fowler (2001, 19); Focant (2012, 24).

⁶⁴ This is not to suggest that all readers of Mark will necessarily recognise Jesus as Christ and Son of God. Nor that the reader is left without questions (Iverson 2011b, 201; Donahue and Harrington 2002, 29).

Iverson, drawing on research from the social sciences and performance criticism, considers how the Markan reader's privileged position, and in particular the revelation of perceived secrets by Mark, might impact the reader.

Appealing to the work of Collins and Miller on the "disclosure-liking" relationship, Iverson observes that "as long as an act of disclosure does not violate normative, social expectations ...[it] has a notable and defining impact upon the development of relationships ... Typically, people like others who disclose to them ..." (2011b, 203–4).⁶⁵

Iverson then applies this research to Mark's use of the secrecy theme and concludes that the deliberate disclosure of information to the reader and the "repetitive use of secrecy ... fosters ... positive rapport between performer and audience" and so "encourages the audience to embrace the message communicated through Mark's story of Jesus" (2011b, 205, 209).⁶⁶

Iverson focuses on the impact of this strategy on those who were "'outsiders' to the faith" (2011b, 206). However, if, as argued above, part of Mark's rhetorical purpose is to challenge his Christian readers to engage in the proclamation of the gospel, it follows that this disclosure-liking dynamic may serve to incline the reader to such a response.

Tolbert analyses the rhetoric of Mark and concludes that one of the Gospel's purposes is "to persuade its hearers to have faith in the gospel of Jesus Christ ... and to become themselves sowers of the good news of God's coming Kingdom" (1996, 302). Mark's use of the secrecy material as an audience-elevating strategy may be one way Mark seeks to lower reader resistance to this rhetorical challenge.

The second potential effect of this reader-elevating strategy centres on the responsibility associated with the possession of knowledge.

As explored in chapter 4 above, Israel's possession of divine revelation was connected to their vocation and, in particular, their revelatory role among the nations. Israel had been entrusted with divine revelation (Ezek 20:11; Neh 9:13–14 cf. Rom 3:2), and they were to serve as a kingdom of priests bringing God's revelation to the nations (Exod 19:5–6; Deut 32:43 LXX; Isa 60–61; Ps 96:3; 1 Chr 16:24; cf. 1 Enoch 105.1; Josephus, *Against Apion* 2.123; 2.261; 2.282; *Jewish War* 7.45; Sib. Or. 3:194–95; Wisdom of Solomon 18:4; 1QS 3.13; 8.11–12; 9.12–21; 1QH 2.13; 4.27–29; 1QpHab 7.4–5) (Windsor 2014, 601).

A parallel conclusion was suggested in chapter 4 for Jesus's disciples in Mark – since, as Jesus makes clear, they have been given "the secret of the Kingdom of God" (4:11; cf. 4:34; 7:17–23; 8:31; 9:2–13, 31; 10:10–12, 32–34; 13:3–27). As with Israel, the

⁶⁵ Cf. N. Collins and Miller (1994); Whittington (2017, 313). Gundry notes "As in apocalyptic, prior secrecy makes the present telling more delightful to the literary audience (cf. Dan 8:26; 12:4)" (1993, 462).

⁶⁶ Iverson acknowledges the care required when applying modern social scientific research to the ancient world but observes "just because Mark was not familiar with the data does not mean the Evangelist was ignorant of the dynamics behind the theory" (2011b, 204).

possession of such divine revelation may oblige the disciples to make it known (cf. Mark 4:21–23; 13:10; 14:9).

The disclosure of divine revelation to the reader of Mark places them in a similar situation. Ahearne-Kroll argues that at many points, the authorial reader of Mark is granted insider status through access to revelation that even the disciples do not have (2010, 720).⁶⁷ This discrepancy of knowledge between the readers of Mark and Mark's human characters establishes the reader's status as an insider.⁶⁸ The secrecy material found throughout Mark helps further accentuate this status, marking the reader also as one "to whom God has given the secret of the Kingdom" (cf. Mark 4:11) (Steele 2012, 185).

If the possession of divine revelation obliges the holder to make known what they know, then the knowledge revealed to the reader of Mark may underline their responsibility to tell others.

5.6.3 Concealment and the rhetoric of proclamation: a conclusion

At no point in Mark's Gospel is the reader exhorted to silence. Indeed, this study contends that the references to secrecy and silence in Mark serve Mark's rhetorical call to proclamation.

The concealment material in Mark functions as an audience-elevating device that inclines the audience to the rhetoric of Mark, including the call to proclaim the gospel. It also reinforces the audience's sense of being an insider who has been given "the secret of the Kingdom of God" and so is obliged to share their knowledge with others. Here, then, is another way that the concealment material in Mark contributes to the development and deployment of the motif of proclamation.

5.7 Amplifying the irony of Mark 16:8

Finally, Jesus's commands to silence and, in particular, the instances where those commands are disobeyed, amplify the irony of Mark 16:8 with its rhetorical challenge to the reader to engage in proclamation.

5.7.1 Mark 16:7–8: a brief analysis

Mark's Gospel concludes with a scene at the empty tomb in which a "young man ... in a white robe" (16:5) announces to the women who had come to the tomb that Jesus

⁶⁷ For Ahearne-Kroll, "inclusion" and "exclusion" describe the level of information given to the audience relative to the characters in the story. If Mark gives the audience the same or more information than the characters in the story receive, then the audience should be considered "included" and thus part of Mark's in-group (2010, 719).

⁶⁸ Shiner notes such audience inclusion "was well known in the ancient world and was used in many forms of composition" (2003, 172). According to Shiner, this audience inclusion could be strengthened by the performance of the text. The analysis here focuses on the ways that the text of Mark itself, in distinction to its performance, might include the reader.

has risen. The young man then instructs them to “go, tell his disciples and Peter that he is going before you to Galilee”(16:7).

The announcement to the women declares Jesus’s resurrection from the dead and may also function to indicate that the time of secrecy has come to an end, and the time of proclamation has arrived (cf. Mark 9:9).⁶⁹

The reference to Galilee (16:7) has attracted significant scholarly attention. It may signal a new beginning for the disciples and their mission since it was in Galilee that Jesus first called them to follow him and become fishers of men (Mark 1:16–20).⁷⁰ If so, this reference to Galilee anticipates the disciples ongoing engagement in the mission of Jesus.

Mark 16:8 then describes the response of the women. While some argue that the women’s trembling, astonishment, and fear are appropriate reverential awe,⁷¹ their actions suggest against such a reading. Elsewhere in Mark, the verb φεύγω is used negatively to describe the desertion of the disciples (14:50) and the flight of the herdsman in the Gerasenes (5:14) (Ferda 2019, 38).⁷² Similarly, the women’s silence is the exact opposite of what was commanded (cf. 16:7). Furthermore, φοβέω is commonly used in Mark as the opposite of faith (Sweat 2013, 166). These factors suggest that Mark is portraying the women as acting in disobedience.⁷³

The double negative οὐδενὶ οὐδέν (16:8) underlines the women’s silence.⁷⁴ Some contend that Mark implies only a temporary or selective silence - that the women said nothing to anyone until they reached the disciples⁷⁵ - but even if such a reading is valid, it is surely significant that Mark does not record their speech but their silence.

⁶⁹ That Mark includes a resurrection announcement and not a resurrection appearance may subtly communicate that the risen Jesus cannot be depicted but rather must be proclaimed.

⁷⁰ This does not require a symbolic or theological reading of Galilee, but simply an echo of earlier references to Galilee in Mark. For a discussion on the broader significance of the references to Galilee in Mark 14:28 and 16:7, see Geddert (1989, 163–69).

⁷¹ See, e.g., O’Collins (1988); Lightfoot (1950, 88–91); Minear (1963, 136); Dwyer (1996, 193); Pesch (1977, 2:535–36); Aernie (2016, 781).

⁷² Aernie, in proposing a positive assessment of the women’s actions, argues that the “women’s flight is *toward* the disciples” and so in contrast to the disciples’ flight “*away* from Jesus” (2016, 789, emphasis original). Such a conclusion, however, goes beyond the text.

⁷³ So Danove (2005, 96); Tolbert (1996, 297–99). Gundry argues that if Mark intended on portraying the women as disobeying “we would expect an adversative δέ” as elsewhere in Mark (1993, 1010). But Gundry’s argument falters at two points, First, as Runge contends, neither καί nor δέ mark the presence or absence of “semantic discontinuity.” Instead, such discontinuity or contrast depends on the semantics of the context (2010, 23–29). Second, the sentence begins not with their silence but their leaving the tomb, an action which does not represent disobedience to the command just given.

⁷⁴ Evans (2001, 538); Donahue and Harrington (2002, 459). The surprising nature of the women’s silence, in light of their positive portrayal in Mark 15:47–16:3, serves to draw the reader’s attention to their actions.

⁷⁵ Magness (1986, 100); Dwyer (1996, 191–92); Lenski (1961, 749); Malbon (1983, 45); Beavis (2011, 246); Farley (2004, 270); Hurtado (1996, 23–24). Hurtado acknowledges changing his view since his 1989 commentary in which he concluded that the women temporarily disobeyed the command they were given (1989, 283).

5.7.2 The irony of Mark 16:8

The women's silence in Mark 16:8 contains a powerful irony arising out of Jesus's previous commands to silence.⁷⁶ Earlier in Mark, people are commanded to remain silent but they disobey and tell others what they have seen (1:44–45; 7:36). Now, finally, when the women are commanded to tell others, they disobey and remain silent. As Camery-Hoggart establishes, such irony is a favourite device of Mark (1992, 11–12, 176–77).⁷⁷

The contrast between the women's silence (16:8) and the proclamation of the healed leper (1:44–45) is underlined by the verbal resonance between Mark 1:44 and Mark 16:8. In Mark 1:44, the leper is commanded to silence with a similar double negative to that found in 16:8 (οὐδενὶ οὐδὲν εἶπαν, 16:8; μηδενὶ μηδὲν εἶπης, 1:44). This parallel invites a comparison between the actions of the leper and those of the women.

The irony of this contrast is heightened if, as discussed above, the violation of Jesus's commands to silence earlier in Mark illustrates the inevitability of proclamation. If Jesus's words and actions led to proclamation when he forbade it, how much more should they produce such proclamation when it is no longer forbidden?

The irony of Mark 16:8 is further heightened by the anticipation of Mark 9:9 that the resurrection should bring an end to the secrecy.

5.7.3 The message and rhetoric of Mark 16:8

The irony of Mark 16:8 may serve a rhetorical purpose - provoking the reader to act contrary to the women and tell others what they know of Jesus, despite fear.⁷⁸ This would be a particularly relevant message if Mark's early readers faced a situation in which the proclamation of the gospel of Jesus carried with it the risk of danger (cf. Mark 10:29–30; 13:9–13).⁷⁹

This rhetorical strategy would be facilitated by the inside view the reader is given of the women, and Mark's sympathetic characterisation of them (despite their disobedience), which invite the reader to place themselves in the position of the women and consider their own response to the message of the young man to "go, tell."⁸⁰

⁷⁶ So, *inter alia*, Juel (1990, 45); J. Edwards (2002, 272); Boring (2012, 267–68); Pickett (2005).

⁷⁷ Cf. Tolbert (1996, 98–103).

⁷⁸ Incigneri (2003, 231); Garland (1996, 618); Dowd (2000, 170). On the rhetorical power of irony in narrative, see Wayne C. Booth (2007); Fowler (1981a).

⁷⁹ Boomershine (1981, 238); Mann (1986, 670); Marcus (2009, 1087).

⁸⁰ Cf. Thurston (2002, 184). On the sympathetic characterisation of the women, see Boomershine (1981, 239). On the reader's identification with the women more generally, see Whitenton (2016, 285).

A stimulating parallel is found in the writings of Aristotle who proposes that when confronted with fear the audience is led to consider what they would do in a similar position, often drawing the conclusion that they would succeed where the character(s) failed (Whitenton 2016, 282). Cf. Aristotle *Rhetorica* 2.5.14–16.

This rhetorical impact would be further magnified if Mark 16:8 represents the end of Mark. Though contested, the view that Mark 16:8 is the intended end of Mark has significant support.⁸¹

Some scholars have challenged this conclusion, arguing that the suggestion of such an open ending for Mark is anachronistic and owes more to “modern literary theory” rather than the “nature of ancient texts” (J. Edwards 2002, 501).⁸² Such arguments may, however, overstate the case. Lee Magness (1986, 25–85) identifies numerous open, inconclusive, or suspended endings in ancient Greco-Roman, Hebrew, and Christian literature.⁸³ These examples, while not proving that Mark intended to end his Gospel at 16:8, demonstrate that such an ending is not as anachronistic as is sometimes claimed. As Shively observes, “the idea that Mark ends abruptly to invite a response is against neither the practice of ancient writers nor the expectations of their audiences” (2018b, 286).⁸⁴

While certainty on this question is not currently possible (and beyond the scope of this thesis), there is a broader consensus that Mark 16:8 represents the end of Mark *as it stands*.⁸⁵ It is, therefore, appropriate to examine this ending and at least consider how it might function as the conclusion to Mark’s Gospel.⁸⁶ The remainder of this section considers the potential implications for the Markan motif of proclamation if Mark 16:8 is the intended end of Mark.

5.7.4 Mark 16:8 as the ending of Mark

As it stands, Mark 16:8 offers an abrupt and open ending to Mark, which may signal that the story was not complete and rhetorically invite the reader to “envision their own sequel to the story, a sequel in which they take part” (Beavis 2011, 249).⁸⁷ As

⁸¹ So Mann (1986, 670); Garland (1996, 618); Schnabel (2017, 22); William R. Telford (1999, 147); Sweat (2013, 159); Boomershine and Bartholomew (1981); Lincoln (1989); Wellhausen (1909, 137); Sandmel (1963); Lohmeyer (1951, 356–60); Crossan (1976); Lane (1974, 591–92); Shively (2018b, 274–75); Hooker (1991, 391–94).

⁸² See, similarly Croy (2003); France (2002, 673); Stein (2008a, 88, 92).

⁸³ See also Pokorný (2013, 116–17).

⁸⁴ See also Marcus (2009, 1088–96); Ferda (2019, 40); Marguerat (2002, 211, 216).

Garland identifies a parallel within Mark itself, noting the absence of closure in Mark’s account of Jesus’s temptation (Mark 1:12–13) (1996, 620–21). Similarly, Boomershine and Bartholomew identify several other points where Mark uses inside views to end stories (cf. 6:45–52; 9:30–32; 12:3–17) and note a significant parallel between Mark 16:8 and the ambiguous narrative comment that ends Mark’s account of Jesus walking on water (6:52) (1981, 219, 215–16). These observations suggest that the ending at Mark 16:8 is consistent with Mark’s style.

⁸⁵ France describes this conclusion as “the virtually unanimous verdict of modern textual scholarship” (2002, 685). See, similarly: Schnabel (2017, 20–21); Stein (2008b, 85); Marcus (2009, 1088); Shively (2018b, 273); Juel (1990, 230); Metzger (1994, 105). For a rare dissenting voice, see Farmer (2005) who defends the authenticity of Mark 16:9–20.

⁸⁶ Marcus (2009, 1096); Witherington III (2001, 411). Even Croy, who argues strongly that the ending of Mark has been lost, acknowledges the appropriateness of considering the ending “as we have it” (2003, 169–70). Consistent with this approach, Pesch acknowledges the peculiar character of Mark’s ending but argues this “ist Anstoß zur Interpretation, nicht zu konjekturaler Rekonstruktion oder Vermutung” (1977, 47).

⁸⁷ Cf. Brooks (1991, 275); Shively (2018b, 288); Garland (1996, 618); Hooker (1991, 393–94); Broadhead (2001, 138); Baarlink (1977, 292–95); Marcus (2009, 1096); Blount (2005, 30); Hartvigsen (2012, 524).

Whiteton notes, “Mark’s inherently open-ended Gospel practically begs audience members to finish the story” (2016, 277).⁸⁸ Consistent with this, Focant observes the function of narrative blanks, which “challenge the reader” and “play an important role in communication” (2012, 660–61). “To end on a blank is particularly stimulating” and serves to prompt the reader to “end the narrative” (661).⁸⁹

In line with this reading, the rhetorical function of Mark’s ending might be described as a “tender trap” that confronts the reader with the question “who will proclaim the message?” and functions as an invitation to become a proclaimer of the gospel (Danove 1993, 222).

Mark’s ending, therefore, has significant perlocutionary force.⁹⁰ As Boomershine notes, “the intended meaning of [Mark’s] ending is, therefore, the total effect of the ending. The ending is designed to be an experience of conflict between the scandal of silence and the fear of proclamation” (1981, 237). By highlighting the inappropriateness of silence, Mark’s conclusion challenges the reader to engage in proclamation regardless of fear (237).⁹¹ The readers are those who are to proclaim the gospel to the nations (13:10; 14:9).

In this way, the epilogue of Mark’s Gospel “constitutes a prologue to the work of the reader” (Focant 2012, 661).⁹²

If this reading of Mark 16 is valid, then Mark achieves in a very subtle manner what the other Gospels communicate more explicitly through the inclusion of Jesus’s commissioning statements (Matt 28:18–20; Luke 24:45–49).⁹³ Indeed, as Williams notes, the omission of a great commission in Mark “not only underlines the significance of the earlier commissions to the disciples but also highlights the demands that Jesus places on “anyone” or “whoever” (1998, 148).

While Witherington argues that such a reading of Mark’s ending is too subtle (2001, 45–46), such subtlety is consistent with Mark’s approach elsewhere.⁹⁴ Mark truly is a “master of implication over clarification” (Sweet 2013, 33).

⁸⁸ Similarly, Hester labels Mark’s ending as “the most effective example of rhetorical irony imaginable,” noting that it “functions to create in a reader the disposition to action” (1995, 84).

⁸⁹ Cf. Kermode (1979, 66–67).

⁹⁰ So Gilfillan Upton (2006, 151); Magness (1986, 123–24).

⁹¹ Tolbert (1996) highlights the rhetorical power and performative challenge of the ending of Mark’s Gospel arguing it “is intended to move its hearers to respond” (295–96). “... The unfulfilled expectations raised by the named women ... leaves each reader or hearer with the urgent ... question ... *Will I go and tell?*” (299, italics original).

That the reader might assume or know that the women did eventually alert the disciples need not detract from the rhetorical impact of the ending. Though transparent the rhetoric remains powerful.

⁹² Cf. Thurston (2002, 184); Hooker (1991, 393–94); van Iersel (2004, 500–1).

⁹³ Fuller (1972, 67); Boomershine (1981). Boomershine argues that the parallel between this reading of Mark 16 and the endings of the other Gospels “increases the probability that 16:8 was the intended ending” of Mark (1981, 238–39). It might also be argued that such an ending is fitting given the emphasis on proclamation in Mark identified in this thesis.

⁹⁴ Cf. Garland (1996, 622–23); Fowler (1981a, 33).

The reading outlined above is not a novel interpretation of Mark 16:8.⁹⁵ However, what has often been overlooked is the contribution this reading makes to the motif of proclamation in Mark. If the end of Mark features a rhetorical challenge to the reader to tell others about Jesus, then this provides a fitting and powerful climax to the Markan motif of proclamation.

6. Summary: secrecy, Wrede, and the motif of proclamation in Mark

William Wrede is often acknowledged for calling attention to the secrecy material in Mark.⁹⁶ However, Wrede's approach and focus on the *Messiasgeheimnis* led him (and some who followed him) to overlook other important elements of Mark's message – in particular, the motif of proclamation.

While Wrede himself, and some who have come after him, acknowledge a tension in Mark between secrecy and revelation, the emphasis in their discussion of this tension is invariably on secrecy.

The significance of the motif of proclamation in Mark will invariably be diminished or even overlooked if the passages referring to proclamation are treated primarily as violations of a dominant theme of concealment.⁹⁷ This is a significant oversight given the prevalence of proclamation material in Mark, as identified and discussed in this thesis.⁹⁸ This chapter has sought to address the relative neglect of proclamation by examining the Markan secrecy material in light of its contribution to the motif of proclamation.

As discussed at various points in this thesis, Horton has posited that motifs are intensified by contrast with a secondary motif (2009, 79–102).⁹⁹ In the case of the motif of proclamation in Mark, there is a clear contrast with the so-called 'motif of secrecy'.¹⁰⁰ Markan studies have traditionally focused on only one side of this contrast – secrecy. However, treating proclamation as the primary motif and secrecy as its complement (or a secondary motif) is a productive exercise. Indeed, many elements of the secrecy material in Mark's Gospel appear to serve the promotion of *faithful* proclamation – both at the level of the narrative and on the rhetorical axis. As Kelber observes, Mark's Gospel, though traditionally associated with secrecy and mystery, "is more interested in disclosure than in secrecy" (1988, 14).¹⁰¹

Drawing together the points of intersection outlined above, the following conclusions might be drawn regarding how the concealment material in Mark serves to develop the motif of proclamation.

⁹⁵ See, e.g., Heil (1997, 99); Tolbert (1996, 297–99); Spencer (2007); Rhoads, Dewey, and Michie (2012, 61–62, 140–41); Lindemann (1980); Boomershine (1981, 239); Hester (1995); Rhoads (1995, 353); Carey (2019, 441); Kuruvilla (2012, 358–59). Cf. Robbins (1984, 209).

⁹⁶ See, e.g., R. Martin (1972, 93); Cranfield (1963, 78–79); Perrin (2013, 537).

⁹⁷ Cf. D. Watson (2010, 114).

⁹⁸ Morris (2007, n.p.) describes the oscillation between secrecy and revelation in Mark as the "Achilles heel of most messianic secret explanations." Cf. Juel (1990, 45).

⁹⁹ See also Kingsbury (1983, 11); Steele (2012, 184).

¹⁰⁰ Cf. Sweat (2013).

¹⁰¹ See also E. Becker (2017, 74).

- (i) Some of Jesus's commands to silence appear intended to practically facilitate Jesus's itinerant proclamation (e.g., 1:44 cf. 1:38–39). For the reader, this underlines the priority of proclamation.
- (ii) Jesus's command to secrecy in Mark 9:9 is explicitly time-limited, and so functions as an implicit call to proclamation after the resurrection. For the reader, the time limit in Mark 9:9 has already passed. They are, therefore, living in the time of proclamation (cf. Mark 13:10; 14:9).
- (iii) At points, Jesus's commands to secrecy may be intended to prevent inadequate proclamation that presents Jesus as merely a miracle worker and ensure proclamation that faithfully represents Jesus's true messianic nature and mission in light of the cross and resurrection (e.g., Mark 8:31; 9:9). For the reader, this reinforces the centrality of Jesus's death and resurrection in their proclamation of Jesus.
- (iv) The silencing of demons may be designed to ensure that testimony is not provided by inappropriate witnesses (e.g., Mark 3:11–12). For the reader, the silencing of the demons underlines that proclamation is entrusted, not to unclean spirits, but to Jesus's followers, beginning with the Twelve.
- (v) The violation of Jesus's commands to silence may signal the inevitability of proclamation (e.g., Mark 1:40–45; 7:36). This inevitability serves as an encouragement to those involved in proclaiming the gospel.
- (vi) More broadly, at the level of discourse, the secrecy material in Mark (and in particular the disclosure of secrets to the reader) functions as an audience-elevating device, which inclines the audience to the rhetoric of Mark, in particular, the call to proclaim the gospel. The Markan secrecy material may also reinforce the audience's sense of being insiders to whom the mystery has been revealed and so underline the audience's responsibility to make known what they know.
- (vii) Finally, the secrecy material in Mark, and in particular the instances of disobedience to Jesus's commands to silence, amplify the irony of Mark 16:8 with its implied rhetorical challenge to the reader to engage in proclamation.

In summary, the secrecy and concealment material in Mark advances the promotion of *faithful* proclamation and so contributes significantly to the motif of proclamation. In this way, the Markan motif of proclamation also offers a coherent explanation for the function of the secrecy material in Mark.

7. Secrecy, Wrede, and the motif of proclamation: a conclusion

The Markan concealment material examined in this chapter serves to develop the motif of proclamation in Mark. Some of the passages considered above contain explicit references to proclamation. Other passages contribute to the motif of proclamation implicitly - for example, the time-limited command to secrecy in Mark 9:9, which functions as an implicit command to proclamation after the resurrection. All of these references add to the frequency of the motif of proclamation in Mark, providing further evidence that proclamation is a Markan motif.

This material also contributes to the prominence of the motif of proclamation in three main ways. First, the motif of proclamation in Mark is intensified by contrast with the motif of secrecy. Second, the material examined in this chapter places proclamation at key moments in the narrative – in particular, at the conclusion of Mark. The ironic silence of the women, with its implied rhetorical challenge to the reader to tell others about Jesus, provides a fitting and powerful climax to the Markan motif of proclamation. Since the impact of a motif is heightened by its location at climactic moments of the narrative, this conclusion to Mark contributes significantly to the prominence of the motif of proclamation in Mark. Third, the explanatory power of the motif of proclamation is demonstrated by its contribution to the vexing debate over Markan secrecy. As argued in this chapter, one function of the commands to secrecy or concealment in Mark appears to be the advancement of *faithful* proclamation (and the prevention of proclamation that is unfaithful or liable to be misunderstood). Such a coherent explanation of the secrecy material in Mark illustrates the explanatory power of the motif of proclamation, which in turn supports its prominence in the Gospel.

The secrecy and concealment material in Mark also contributes to the content of Mark's teaching on proclamation. The commands to silence that appear aimed at facilitating Jesus's proclamation underline the priority of proclamation in Jesus's ministry. The commands to silence which appear intended to prevent inadequate proclamation, reinforce the centrality of Jesus's death and resurrection in the message to be proclaimed. The violation of Jesus's commands to silence serves to illustrate the inevitability of proclamation.

Finally, the secrecy and concealment material contributes significantly to the rhetorical impact of the motif of proclamation. The silencing of the demons emphasises that proclamation is a task for Jesus's followers, not unclean spirits. The commands to silence also heighten the irony of Mark's ending and augment its rhetorical challenge to the reader to engage in proclamation. More broadly, the secrecy material in Mark functions as an audience-elevating device that inclines Mark's readers to the rhetoric of the Gospel, including the call to proclaim.

Chapter 9: Synthesis

1. Introduction

The motif of proclamation has attracted comparatively little attention in Markan studies. In response to this scholarly lacuna, this thesis has explored the prominence and content of the motif of proclamation in Mark's Gospel and its potential rhetorical impact on the reader.

Chapter 1 introduced some initial evidence that strongly suggests that proclamation is a prominent motif in Mark's Gospel. It also surveyed the relevant secondary literature to demonstrate that proclamation is a neglected motif in Markan scholarship and proposed some possible reasons why this motif may have been so neglected.

Chapter 2 outlined the methodological approach to be taken in this study and the presuppositions that lie behind it.

Chapter 3 examined how Mark's opening (1:1–15) introduces the motif of proclamation, anticipating its prominence in the remainder of Mark's Gospel and contributing to the content and rhetorical impact of the motif.

Chapter 4 considered those passages in Mark that associate the disciples of Jesus with the task of proclamation (3:13–19; 6:7–13, 30) and explored how Mark's presentation of the disciples serves the development of the motif of proclamation.

Chapter 5 examined Mark 5:1–20 and Mark's presentation of the Gerasene demoniac as an exemplar of proclamation.

Chapter 6 focused on the anticipation of worldwide proclamation in Mark, giving detailed attention to Mark 13:10 and 14:9.

Chapter 7 explored Mark 8:34–38 and 10:28–31, and the indications in Mark that the task of gospel proclamation is not limited to the Twelve but extends more generally to followers of Jesus – including those among Mark's readers.

Chapter 8 engaged with Wrede and the theme of Markan secrecy and explored how the Markan secrecy material contributes to the prominence, content, and rhetorical impact of the motif of proclamation.

This final chapter presents a synthesis of the conclusions drawn in the previous chapters and offers some suggestions for further research.

2. Proclamation as a motif in Mark's Gospel

William Freedman identifies two key criteria for establishing a motif in a literary work: frequency and avoidability (1971, 127–28). This study has demonstrated that in the Gospel of Mark, references to proclamation satisfy both these criteria.

2.1 Frequency

References to proclamation occur frequently throughout the Gospel of Mark, beginning in the opening chapter.

The motif of proclamation is introduced in the Markan prologue (1:1–15). The title of Mark (1:1), the opening Old Testament citation (1:2–3), and the introductions to both John the Baptist (1:4–8) and Jesus (1:8–15) all contain references to proclamation.

Proclamation then continues to feature throughout the remainder of Mark 1. In Mark 1:38–39, Jesus identifies proclamation as central to his mission. The first chapter of Mark closes with a reference to the proclamation of the healed leper (1:45).

In Mark 3, Jesus appoints twelve apostles with the express purpose of sending them out to proclaim (3:14). Mark 6 describes the opening mission of the Twelve, noting that they “went out and proclaimed that people should repent” (6:12).

Mark 5 records the proclamation of the healed demoniac in the Decapolis (5:1–20). His proclamation anticipates the involvement of others outside of the Twelve in a work of proclamation that extends beyond Judea.

Mark 8:34–35 and 10:29 expressly expand the task of proclamation beyond the Twelve to other followers of Jesus.

Mark 13:10 and 14:9 explicitly anticipate a future worldwide proclamation of the gospel to Jews and gentiles. Numerous other passages in Mark contribute to this expectation of a worldwide proclamation of the gospel. Together these passages reveal Jesus’s universal perspective and concern for the gentiles; underline the removal of barriers to worldwide proclamation; provide a foretaste of the responsiveness of gentiles to the message of Jesus; and anticipate the growth of the kingdom throughout the world through the proclamation of Jesus’s followers.

For example, Mark 4 refers to the scattering of the word and to a growth of God’s kingdom consistent with the worldwide proclamation anticipated in Mark 13 and 14. In Mark 7, Jesus anticipates a future gentile mission (7:27) and removes an obstacle to worldwide proclamation by declaring all foods clean (7:19).

Mark 9 contains an implicit call to proclamation after Jesus’s resurrection in the time-limited command to secrecy given to Peter, James, and John (9:9).

Other concealment material in Mark also contributes to the motif of proclamation. So, for example, the silence of the women at the end of Mark contains an irony that serves to challenge the reader to engage in the task of proclamation (16:8).

While not all of these references are explicit or contain the specific language of proclamation, a motif is developed not just through verbatim re-use of a particular word but also through the employment of an “associational cluster,” conceptual domain, or thematic reiteration (Freedman 1971, 202).

Although it may be possible to dispute individual examples offered in this study, the total collective weight of the evidence presented confirms the pervasive presence of proclamation in Mark.

Proclamation permeates Mark's Gospel. Virtually every chapter in the Gospel contains a passage that contributes to the motif of proclamation either directly or indirectly.¹ The prevalence of these references to proclamation satisfies Freedman's first criterion for establishing a motif, the criterion of frequency.

2.2 Avoidability

Several of these references to proclamation also meet Freedman's second criterion of avoidability. While avoidability can be a problematic criterion to establish, synoptic comparison provides a means of demonstrating avoidability.

So, for example, only Mark includes a reference to proclamation in his account of the appointment of the Twelve (Mark 3:13–19 cf. Matt 10:2–4; Luke 6:13–16). The absence of any such reference in Matthew or Luke demonstrates its avoidability.

Likewise, Mark's account of the demon-possessed man in Mark 5 concludes with the man proclaiming what Jesus had done for him (Mark 5:20), while Matthew's parallel account (Matt 8:28–34) omits any reference to this proclamation.

Similarly, the anticipation of worldwide proclamation in Mark 13:10 is not found in Luke's parallel account of the Olivet Discourse (Luke 21:5–36).

The implicit references to proclamation in Mark 8:35 and 10:29 also meet Freedman's criterion of avoidability. Mark alone includes the phrase καὶ τοῦ εὐαγγελίου (8:35) in his account of Jesus's call to the crowd (cf. Matt 16:21–28; Luke 9:22–27). Likewise, only Mark includes καὶ ἕνεκεν τοῦ εὐαγγελίου in Jesus's dialogue with Peter regarding the disciples' renunciation (10:29 cf. Matt 19:16–30; Luke 18:18–30).

2.3 Proclamation as a motif in Mark's Gospel: a conclusion

The references to proclamation in Mark's Gospel therefore satisfy Freedman's two key criteria for establishing a motif in a literary work. They occur *frequently* throughout the Gospel, and several references are demonstrably *avoidable*. Proclamation is, therefore, shown to be a motif in Mark's Gospel.

3. The prominence of the motif of proclamation in Mark's Gospel

This study has further demonstrated that proclamation is not just a minor motif in Mark but a prominent one. This has been shown using the six indicators of prominence outlined in chapter 1.

¹ This study has examined passages from Mark 1, 3–14, and 16 which contribute to the motif of proclamation.

3.1 Frequency

Repetition underlines points of emphasis (Marshall 1989, 1),² and as Freedman notes, “the greater the frequency with which instances of a motif recur the deeper the impression it is likely to make on the reader” (1971, 126).

As outlined above, proclamation permeates Mark’s Gospel. This study has examined 16 references that refer directly to proclamation in Mark and many other passages that contribute indirectly to the motif of proclamation. The frequency with which this material recurs in Mark contributes to the prominence of the motif.

3.2 Avoidability

Five of the 16 direct references to proclamation in Mark meet Freedman’s criteria of avoidability. This degree of avoidability contributes to the prominence of the motif of proclamation in Mark.

3.3 Location and spread of references to the motif

The motif of proclamation is developed at several pivotal points in the Markan narrative. This is significant, for as Freedman persuasively demonstrates, the efficacy of a motif is impacted by its placement in the narrative (1971, 126–27).³

So, for example, both the title and prologue of Mark’s Gospel contain reference to proclamation. Given the function of titles and prologues in literature contemporaneous with Mark, these references anticipate the prominence of the motif of proclamation in Mark as a whole.

The opening words of John the Baptist and Jesus are identified as words of proclamation (1:7, 14–15). The first summary statement in the Gospel likewise contains a reference to proclamation (1:14–15).

The account of the former demoniac’s proclamation occurs at the conclusion of Jesus’s first journey into gentile territory – a significant moment in Mark’s narrative. The demoniac’s proclamation is also located at the end of the pericope, after the story’s denouement, and represents an unusual element in an exorcism story (5:20), which further bolsters its prominence.

Similarly, the expectation of worldwide proclamation in Mark 13:10 occurs at the structural and thematic heart of a pericope that forms part of the narrative transition between Jesus’s public ministry and the passion narrative.

Again, Jesus’s reference to worldwide proclamation in his defence of the woman who anointed him (14:9) is found in the introduction to the remaining chapters of Mark, in a passage that forms part of the literary frame around Mark’s account of Jesus’s death and resurrection.

² See also D. Watson (2010, 125).

³ Similarly, James Morgan argues: “In narratological terms, the cumulative force of the motif is enhanced in moments when narrative tension is particularly felt, either increasing or decreasing” (2015, 199).

Finally, the conclusion to Mark's Gospel, clearly a climactic moment in the narrative, develops the motif of proclamation through the irony of the women's silence (16:7–8).

The motif of proclamation is, therefore, developed in both the opening and closing of Mark's Gospel, as well as at several other pivotal junctures in the narrative. The location of these references to proclamation contributes to the prominence of the motif of proclamation in Mark.

The prominence of other references to proclamation in Mark is highlighted by various textual markers of significance which serve to direct the reader's attention to this motif. So, for example, Mark's summary of the first mission of the Twelve lists proclamation first among their activities and uses an aorist verb for proclamation (ἐκήρυξαν; 6:12) but imperfect verbs for their other activities (ἐξέβαλλον, ἤλειφον, ἐθεράπευον; 6:13). Jesus's statement regarding renunciation for the sake of gospel proclamation in Mark 10:29–30 occurs at the end of the pericope, lacks a typical introduction, and is marked by Jesus's opening ἀμὴν λέγω ὑμῖν.

References to proclamation are also spread throughout the Gospel (rather than being limited to one particular section). This study has examined passages from Mark 1, 3–14, and 16 which contribute to the motif of proclamation. This spread adds to the prominence of the motif of proclamation in Mark.

3.4 Association with major and minor characters

A fourth indicator of the prominence of the motif of proclamation in Mark is the involvement of both major and minor characters in the development of the motif. As Horton argues, the involvement of both major and minor characters in a motif contributes to the significance of that motif (2009, 77).

The protagonist of Mark's Gospel is unmistakably Jesus. Significantly, Jesus is introduced in the narrative as a proclaimer (1:14–15), and his opening words are identified as words of proclamation. Furthermore, in Mark 1:38–39, Jesus describes proclamation as central to his mission.

The disciples of Jesus are the next most frequently mentioned characters in Mark's Gospel, appearing in almost every scene in the narrative. In Mark 3:14, they are explicitly commissioned to proclaim, and then in Mark 6:12 they are portrayed as going out and proclaiming that people should repent.

John the Baptist is another significant character in Mark's Gospel. He is the first human character to appear in the narrative and is referenced in four further passages throughout the Gospel (2:18; 6:14–29; 8:28; 11:30–32). Like Jesus, John is introduced as a proclaimer (1:4–8).

Each of these major characters is associated with the motif of proclamation. But Mark's Gospel also involves minor characters in the development of the motif of proclamation. The demoniac in Mark 5 has no ongoing presence in the narrative and so is identified as a minor character. In Mark 5:20, the demoniac proclaims in the Decapolis how much Jesus had done for him and is presented as an exemplar of proclamation. Similarly, the healed leper in Mark 1:40–45 and those commanded to silence in Mark 7:36 are minor or background characters who are portrayed by Mark as proclaiming.

This involvement of both major and minor characters augments the prominence of the motif of proclamation in Mark's Gospel.

3.5 *Development through dialogue and narration*

The motif of proclamation is also developed in Mark through both the direct discourse of characters and the words of the narrator. So, for example, the references to proclamation in the prologue of Mark (1:1–15), the commissioning of the Twelve (3:13–15), and the account of the demoniac (5:20) are all found in narratorial comment. The references to proclamation in Mark 8:35 and 10:29, the Olivet discourse (13:10), and the story of the woman anointing Jesus (14:9) all occur in dialogue or direct discourse. The location of references to proclamation across both dialogue and narratorial comment contributes further to the prominence of the motif of proclamation.

3.6 *Contrast with other significant motifs*

The prominence of the motif of proclamation in Mark is further heightened by interaction with other significant Markan themes – including discipleship and the temple, but most notably the theme of secrecy or concealment. As Horton notes, motifs are intensified by contrast with a secondary motif (2009, 79–102). As discussed in chapter 8, the Markan concealment material serves to develop the motif of proclamation in Mark in a variety of ways.

3.7 *The prominence of the motif of proclamation in Mark: a summary*

In summary, the application of these six indicators of prominence supports the conclusion that proclamation is a prominent motif in Mark's Gospel.

In addition to these six indicators, one other observation further supports the conclusion that proclamation is a prominent motif in Mark. As noted throughout this thesis, Mark's Gospel draws heavily from the book of Isaiah. Isaiah is the only prophetic book named in Mark (1:2; 7:6) and is quoted more than all other Old Testament books combined. The extent and programmatic location of this intertextuality suggest that Mark's whole story is to be understood against the "backdrop of Isaian themes" (Marcus 2004, 20). Significantly, a major theme of Isaiah is the theme of proclamation. Mark's dependence on Isaiah, therefore, provides further support for the prominence of proclamation in the Gospel.

4. The content of the Markan motif of proclamation

In addition to establishing that proclamation is a prominent motif in Mark, this study has explored the content of the motif in Mark. Synthesising the conclusions drawn throughout this study reveals the following concerning proclamation in Mark.

4.1 *The importance of proclamation in God's plan*

First, Mark's Gospel highlights the importance of proclamation in God's plan. This is evident in the priority given to proclamation by Jesus (1:14–15, 38–39, 43–45), the portrayal of John's

proclamation as a fulfilment of Old Testament Scripture (1:2–8), the appointment of the Twelve that they might be sent out to proclaim (3:14–15), and the statement in Mark 13:10 that proclamation “must” (δεῖ) take place. It may also be implied in Mark’s portrayal of the Twelve as taking up the vocation of renewed Israel.

4.2 *A task extending beyond the Twelve*

Second, Mark’s Gospel expands the task of proclamation beyond the Twelve to other followers of Jesus and draws a connection between following Jesus and involvement in the work of proclamation.

This is implied in the example of the demoniac in Mark 5, in the timing and scope of the worldwide proclamation anticipated throughout Mark, and by the narrative role of the Twelve as models of discipleship. It is made explicit in Mark 8:34–38 and Mark 10:28–31.

4.3 *The task of proclamation as a continuation of Jesus’s ministry of proclamation*

Third, Mark presents the proclamation of Jesus’s followers as a continuation of Jesus’s ministry of proclamation. This is evident in the parallel description of the ministry of Jesus and the Twelve (3:13–19; 6:7–13) and the community of destiny and mission shared by Jesus and his followers (8:34–38; 10:28–31).

4.4 *The urgency of the task*

Fourth, Jesus’s approach to proclamation (1:38–45) and the instructions that Jesus gives to the Twelve (6:8–11) convey the urgency of the task of proclamation. This urgency is further underlined in Mark 13, when Jesus refers to the task of worldwide proclamation (13:10) in an apocalyptic discourse that anticipates a climactic end of history.

4.5 *The anticipation of worldwide proclamation*

Fifth, Mark’s Gospel anticipates a proclamation of the gospel to Jews and gentiles throughout the world. This anticipation is explicit in Mark 13:10 and 14:9 and is assumed or implied at many other points in Mark’s Gospel.

4.6 *The risks, cost, and blessings involved in participating in the task of proclamation*

Sixth, Mark’s Gospel warns that involvement in the task of proclamation may be costly. This is indicated through the explicit warnings of Mark 8:34–38, the reference to renunciation and persecution in Mark 10:29–30 and 13:9–13, and the community of destiny shared by John the Baptist, Jesus, and Jesus’s followers. It is also illustrated by the intercalation of John the Baptist’s death in Mark’s account of the Twelve’s proclamation (6:14–29).

Mark’s Gospel also contains a reassurance of the blessings and partnership enjoyed by those who pay a cost for participating in this task (10:29–30).

4.7 The centrality of Jesus's death and resurrection in the content of the proclamation

Seventh, Mark's Gospel underlines the centrality of Jesus's death and resurrection in the message to be proclaimed. Some of Jesus's commands to secrecy appear intended to prevent inadequate proclamation that presents Jesus as merely a miracle worker or otherwise lacks appreciation of Jesus's death and resurrection (1:44a; 8:31; 9:9). Likewise, Mark's account of the woman anointing Jesus associates her actions in preparing him for death with the proclamation of the gospel (14:1–11, esp. 14:9). The proclamation anticipated in Mark is to include Jesus's death and resurrection.

4.8 The ongoing work of proclamation

Eighth, Mark's Gospel implies an ongoing work of proclamation after the completion of the narrative. The title of the Gospel introduces the book as the *beginning* of the proclamation of the Gospel (1:1). This notion of the beginning of the proclamation is echoed throughout the narrative (1:45; 5:20; 6:7) and climaxes in the ironic conclusion to the book, where the reader is invited to consider how the proclamation that *begins* in Mark is to be continued.

In Mark's Gospel, the task of proclamation is a work that the master has left his followers to do (13:34–36). Such anticipation of proclamation in the absence of Jesus may also be foreshadowed in the activity of the former demoniac (5:20) and the spread of Jesus's reputation into areas where Jesus himself had not been (3:8).⁴

5. The rhetoric of the motif of proclamation

Finally, this study has considered the rhetorical impact of the motif of proclamation in Mark. As Mark develops the motif of proclamation, the reader is exhorted at many points to take up the task of proclaiming the gospel.

The frequency of references to proclamation in Mark serves this rhetorical purpose as the repetition of a motif has a persuasive effect and serves to awaken a response within the reader (D. Watson 2010, 125).

The generation of this rhetorical impact begins from the very start of Mark's Gospel and recurs throughout. Mark's title addresses the reader, introducing the Gospel as "the beginning (of the proclamation) of the gospel of Jesus Christ." This prompts the reader to anticipate how the proclamation that *begins* in Mark might continue.

Mark's prologue also provides the reader with an interpretative grid through which to read and understand the remainder of the story. The concentration of references to proclamation in the prologue alerts the reader to its prominence in the Gospel. The prologue also underlines for the reader the importance of proclamation in God's plan, inclining them to consider their own involvement in the task of proclamation.

Mark's presentation of the disciples also contributes to the rhetorical impact of the motif of proclamation. Mark presents the disciples as a paradigm for discipleship, highlighting that

⁴ For a brief discussion of Mark's focus on Jesus's absence, see Williams (1998, 148–149).

following Jesus involves participation in the task of proclamation. Mark's characterisation of the disciples as the servants of the Isaianic Servant evokes the message of Isaiah, reminding his readers of Isaiah's commission and signalling that the time for fulfilling Isaiah's commission has come for the reader. In these ways, Mark's portrayal of Jesus's disciples functions as an implicit call to Mark's readers to involvement in the task of gospel proclamation.

A close reading of Mark 5:1–20 reveals many rhetorical strategies that prompt the reader to identify with the demoniac and treat him as an exemplar of proclamation to be emulated. The demoniac's proclamation becomes a prototype for Mark's readers and an encouragement that one does not need to be part of the Twelve to be involved in the task of proclamation.

The call to the reader to take up the task of proclamation is made explicit in Mark 8:34–38 when Jesus overtly addresses "anyone" (8:34) who wishes to follow him – urging them not to be ashamed of proclaiming the gospel but instead be willing to lay down their life for this task. This reference to "anyone" extends beyond the narrative to include Mark's readers. Similarly, in Mark 10:29–30, Jesus's assurance to those who have suffered loss for the sake of proclaiming the gospel is inclusive of all his followers, including those reading Mark.

Jesus's time-limited command to secrecy in Mark 9:9 also implicitly addresses the reader of Mark since, for the reader, this time limit has passed. Mark's readers are, therefore, living in the time of proclamation.

Jesus's anticipation of worldwide proclamation in Mark 13:10 further contributes to the rhetorical impact of the motif of proclamation. The rhetorical immediacy of Mark 13 ensures that the expectation of worldwide proclamation in Mark 13:10 is directly communicated to Mark's readers in a way that anticipates their involvement. They are to hear the warnings and encouragement of Mark 13 and persevere in the urgent task of proclaiming the gospel to all nations. This is the work that the master has left for them to do (13:34–36).

Similarly, Jesus's statement in Mark 14:9 regarding the future worldwide proclamation of the gospel draws the story beyond the narrative frame into the time of the reader, placing a significant impetus on those who are followers to ensure such proclamation occurs.

Indeed, many of the passages considered in this study place the worldwide proclamation of the gospel in the future (13:10; 14:9; cf. 4:30–32; 7:27; 11:17). This brings this proclamation of the gospel into the time of Mark's readers and serves to exhort them to participate in it. For Mark's readers, the time until Jesus's return is not to be one of passive waiting but of urgent proclamation of the gospel to all nations. In this way, these passages are akin to Mark's version of the great commission (cf. Matt 28:16–20; Luke 24:44–49).

Mark's readers are warned of the cost of involvement in the task of proclamation but encouraged to take it on by its importance, urgency, and inevitability, and the partnership and blessings that await.

The rhetorical impact of the Markan motif of proclamation is augmented by the silence and concealment material in Mark. This material functions as an audience-elevating device, which inclines the audience to the rhetoric of Mark, in particular, the call to proclaim the gospel. The Markan secrecy material may also reinforce the audience's sense of being an insider to whom the mystery has been revealed and so underline their responsibility to make known what they know.

Finally, the secrecy material in Mark, and in particular the instances of disobedience to Jesus's commands to silence, amplify the irony of Mark 16:8 with its rhetorical challenge to the reader to engage in the task of proclamation.

In summary, while Mark's Gospel lacks an explicit commissioning statement, the call to involvement in the task of proclaiming the gospel throughout the world permeates the book. Mark's Gospel records the beginning of the proclamation of Jesus Christ and works to persuade its readers to continue that task until its completion.⁵

6. Further research

In addition to the conclusions reached above, this study has also raised some questions that could not be addressed within the limits of this thesis and may prove to be fruitful avenues of further research.

First, this study intentionally excluded the so-called longer and shorter endings of Mark. These endings contain references to proclamation. It may be useful to consider the significance of these references from the perspective of reception history. If these endings are understood as the work of early interpreters of Mark, then an examination of these references to proclamation may contribute to a richer understanding of the Markan motif of proclamation.⁶

Second, and considering the reception history of Mark more broadly, the widespread proclamation and growth of the early church could be explored to determine if it provides any evidence of how Mark was received.

Third, some scholars have proposed that the disciple's obduracy relates to their resistance to the idea of a gentile mission.⁷ If valid, the implications of this proposal for the Markan motif of proclamation could be examined.

Fourth, this study adopted a synchronic approach to the motif of proclamation. A diachronic approach could also be considered, with attention given to the possibility of a motif of proclamation in the literary milieu of Mark's Gospel and how this might impact the early reader's understanding of the Markan motif of proclamation.

Further research, informed by the methodology and conclusions of this study, could also be directed to other themes or motifs in Mark that are related to or complementary with the motif

⁵ It is noted that a similar conclusion regarding the purpose of Mark as a prompt to proclamation has been reached by other scholars utilising different approaches and methodologies. So, for example, Ralph Martin utilises redaction critical methods to examine the theology and purpose of Mark's Gospel and argues that Mark "felt urged to press home upon his readers' minds and consciences the duty of promoting the evangelization of the Gentiles" (1972, 219). Similarly, Mary Tolbert, after exploring Mark's rhetoric, argues that the purpose of Mark's Gospel is "to persuade its hearers to have faith in the gospel of Jesus Christ ... and to become themselves sowers of the good news of God's coming kingdom" (1996, 302). See also Rhoads (1995, 354). The conclusion of this thesis regarding the rhetorical impact of the motif of proclamation adds additional weight to this broader conclusion by showing how the Markan motif of proclamation functions to promote proclamation. This connection between the motif of proclamation and an overarching purpose of Mark lends further support to the conclusion that proclamation is a prominent motif in Mark.

⁶ For the longer and shorter endings of Mark as the work of early interpreters of Mark, see Yang (2003, 57–58); S. Henderson (2012, 108, 111–15).

⁷ See, e.g., A. Johnson (2011, 153); William R. Telford (1999, 150–51).

of proclamation. For example, the theme of *hearing*, and in particular, the references in Mark to those who heard about Jesus (3:8, 21; 5:27; 6:14, 55; 7:25; 10:47).

7. Conclusion

Although the motif of proclamation has attracted relatively little attention in Markan studies, it is a prominent motif in Mark's Gospel. The exploration of this motif, therefore, contributes more broadly to the general understanding of Mark's message and purpose.

Mark develops and deploys the motif of proclamation throughout his Gospel to move his audience to involvement in the crucial and urgent task of proclamation. The work of proclamation that begins in Mark's Gospel is to continue in the lives of Mark's readers.

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