ABSTRACT

A Postcolonial Analysis of the Markan Discourse of Power:
An Argument for the Narrative Cohesion of Mark 10:1–45

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This project offers a postcolonial narrative analysis of Mark 10:1–45. It is argued that Mark 10 serves, not only as a teaching discourse on discipleship, but also as a pivotal chapter in the creation of the Markan Jesus's discourse of power. This discourse takes aim directly at the hegemonic Roman discourse of power as well as the essentialist resistance narrative of the disciples. Responding to the disciples' continued resistance to the Gentile mission and their desire for positions of power in the coming kingdom of God, the Markan Jesus seeks to reform the disciples' vision of power. He constructs a catachrestic vision of power to teach the disciples the meaning of power in the kingdom of God, a meaning that stands in contrast to the Roman vision of power. The Roman vision and application of power, while not equal to the activities of Satan in this world, are squarely situated as a visible and active expression of Satan's reign, the outworking of which has infiltrated even the disciples, necessitating Jesus's response. The stories of Mark 10 focus on the inclusion of the marginalized and "other" and advocate an alternative political practice that allows for both Gentile inclusion and Roman resistance.

Each story in Mark 10:1–45 responds to Roman colonial practices and the nativist traditions of the colonized community. Jesus calls for an alternative means of resistance to Roman colonial authority through an alternative discourse of power that rewrites communal boundary lines and offers an alternative empire to that of Rome. Mark’s Jesus, critiques Roman imperial practices as visible expressions of the powers of evil in the world and advocates for an alternative empire, the empire of God.

A Postcolonial Analysis of the Markan Discourse of Power:
An Argument for the Narrative Cohesion of Mark 10:1–45

by

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A Dissertation

Approved by the Department of Religion

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Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of
Baylor University in Partial Fulfillment of the
Requirements for the Degree
of

Doctor of Philosophy

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May 2022

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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I would like to express my thanks to the many people who made this project possible. First, I would like to thank Philip Peek, Dr. Duane Smith, and Denise Smith, for their patience, encouragement, and love. They have been a constant source of support throughout my life and that dedication was made even clearer throughout this project. I would also like to acknowledge the work of my excellent mentor, Dr. Kelly Iverson, who has made me a better writer and scholar. There are not thanks enough for the hours he spent reflecting on the Markan text with me and helping me find my own scholarly voice. I would also like to acknowledge Dr. Bruce Longenecker and Dr. David Garland for their thoughts, feedback, challenges, and willingness to serve on my dissertation committee. Dr. Jessica Spafford, Dr. Amanda Brobst-Renaud, and Dr. Nicholas Werse also served as challenging conversation partners, provided thoughtful guidance, and offered helpful edits throughout the process.

In addition, I would like to thank the Religious Studies students of Judson College, 2017–2021. These wonderful women made me a better professor and provided endless encouragement throughout the writing process. While I may have had the pleasure to teach them over these past few years, they taught me a great deal and challenged me daily to think deeper and teach the scriptures more thoughtfully.

To my husband, Philip Peek,
who daily demonstrates the power of the kingdom of God,
reminding me my work is not merely theoretical

CHAPTER ONE

Introduction

The Puzzle of Mark 10 and a Proposed Solution

Literary criticism began to make significant inroads in Markan studies in the late 1980s. Scholars in the years since have born witness to an explosion of scholarship related to characterization, setting, plot, and thematic development.[1] Literary analysis has forever changed the way scholars view the shortest, and once thought to be most unsophisticated and inartistically crafted, of gospels. It is now widely accepted that Mark's Gospel is a carefully constructed narrative. Yet despite this widespread agreement concerning the text, many still disregard chapter ten as a cohesive whole, seeing no unifying theme or narrative. Donahue and Harrington note that the teachings in chapter ten, "cover many topics and take various forms, to the point that it is possible to lose

[1] See for example, Hans-Josef Klauck, "Die Erzählerische Rolle Der Jünger Im Markusevangelium : Eine Narrative Analyse," *NovT* 24.1 (1982): 1–26; Jeffrey B. Gibson, "The Rebuke of the Disciples in Mark 8:14-21," *JSNT* 27 (1986): 31–47; Elizabeth Struthers Malbon, *Narrative Space and Mythic Meaning in Mark* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1991); Joel Williams, *Other Followers of Jesus: Minor Characters as Major Figures in Gospel*, JSNTSup 102 (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1994); David Rhoads, Joanna Dewey, and Donald Michie, *Mark as Story: An Introduction to the Narrative of a Gospel*, 2nd ed. (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1999); Sharyn Echols Dowd, *Reading Mark: A Literary and Theological Commentary on the Second Gospel* (Macon: Smyth & Helwys, 2000); Elizabeth Struthers Malbon, *In the Company of Jesus: Characters in Mark's Gospel*, 1st ed. (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2000); Paul Danove, *The Rhetoric of the Characterization of God, Jesus, and Jesus' Disciples in the Gospel of Mark*, JSNTSup 290 (New York: T&T Clark International, 2005); Sharyn Echols Dowd and Elizabeth Struthers Malbon, "The Significance of Jesus' Death in Mark: Narrative Context and Authorial Audience," *JBL* 125.2 (2006): 271–97; Kelly Iverson, *Gentiles in the Gospel of Mark: "Even the Dogs Under the Table Eat the Children's Crumbs'*, LNTS 339 (New York: T&T Clark, 2007); J. Ted Blakley, "Incomprehension or Resistance? The Markan Disciples and the Narrative Logic of Mark 4:1-8:30" (University of St. Andrews, 2008); Kelly Iverson and Christopher Skinner, eds., *Mark as Story: Retrospect and Prospect* (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2011); Martin Willebrand, "Markus Min Narratologischer Brille Gelesen: Beobachtungen Und Deutungsperspektiven Zur Erzählerinstanz in Mk 7:31-37 Und 8:22-26," *BN* 173 (2017): 105–38; Andre Araujo, "La Syrophenicienne et L'espace Narratif Entre-Deux," *Fronteiras* 1.1 (2018): 159–77.

sight" of the larger story.[2] Evans claims the first two pericopes of Mark 10 are independent stories while the second two stories are connected by the theme of riches and reward, but he sees no overarching connection thematically or narratively between all the stories beyond a loose conception of discipleship.[3] Collins argues Mark 10:1–31 is likely a pre-Markan document or catechetical collection and that the "related" material in 10:1–31 supports such a source. The term "related," however, is used quite loosely, as she claims that the stories are about family and household. Further she does not offer a concrete connection between 10:1–31 and 10:32ff beyond the notion of a continuing journey. Her view further demonstrates the lack of perceived cohesiveness with the broader narrative.[4] Most commentators, wishing to articulate some kind of cohesiveness, conclude that chapter ten provides a general collection of stories about the nature of discipleship.[5] Unfortunately, these interpretations do little to explain the concrete

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[2] John R. Donahue and Daniel J. Harrington, *The Gospel of Mark*, Sacra Pagina v. 2 (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2002), 313.

[3] Craig Evans, *Mark*, WBC 34b (Waco: Word, 2001), 76.

[4] Adela Yarbro Collins, *Mark: A Commentary*, Hermeneia (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2007), 458.

[5] To offer a few other examples: Mary Ann Beavis, *Mark* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2011), claims the section is loosely formed around the concept of discipleship; Peter Bolt, *Jesus' Defeat of Death: Persuading Mark's Early Readers*, SNTSMS 125 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 235, claims the first three stories in Mark 10 are about the difficulty of entering the kingdom and what follows thereafter is the way that God makes it possible to follow. Ernest Best, *Following Jesus: Discipleship in the Gospel of Mark*, JSNTSup 4 (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1981), p.15, notes that "it is now generally accepted that 8.27–10.45 forms the centre of Mark's instruction to his readers on the meaning for them of Christ and their own discipleship." Ched Myers, *Binding the Strong Man: A Political Reading of Mark's Story of Jesus* (New York: Orbis Books, 1988), 258–80, sees this section as framing the discussion of the first/last pairing and is focused on the forward motion toward Jerusalem, though he does admit to seeing elements of social, economic, and political power throughout chapter 10. He does not, however, consider it the binding theme, nor does he connect this with the previous chapters or the characterization/function of the disciples. Whitney Taylor Shiner, *Follow Me!: Disciples in Markan Rhetoric*, SBLDS 145 (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1995), 278–284, considers this section to be concerned with correcting the disciples' misconceptions through targeted teaching; Theodore J. Weeden, *Mark: Traditions in Conflict* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1979), p.32–38 and Werner Kelber, *Mark's Story of Jesus* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1979), 43–56 both consider chapters 8–10 to be a demonstration of the misunderstanding that continues to plague the disciples. Some scholars have focused more on the disciples'

connections between the episodes in chapter ten and offer even less in terms of connections to the broader narrative of the Gospel. Despite common agreement concerning the cohesiveness of Mark's narrative as a whole, little has been done to demonstrate the ways in which chapter 10 coheres with the broader narrative.

The present investigation focuses on the contribution of Mark 10 to the broader narrative and the internal cohesiveness of the episodes within Mark 10. I will demonstrate that Mark 10:1–45 is not merely a collection of discipleship material, nor is it largely disconnected from its narrative location. Rather, this portion of text is fundamental to the development of an understudied theme in the Gospel: power. In Mark 10:1–45, power is the primary thematic element under consideration where "power" refers both to an element inherent in social dynamics and to broader discourses of power operative in the narrative.[6] While a number of scholars have examined the nature of cosmic power in the narrative, and specifically the relation between the human and divine, few have turned their attention to the theme of social power and the discourse of power constructed in the narrative more broadly.[7] When one examines the development of the discourse of power

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misunderstanding while others have focused on the teaching to correct said misunderstandings, but collectively, scholars have considered the stories of chapter 10 to be loosely connected in content but related in function (i.e. discipleship).

[6] Bruce Malina, *The New Testament World: Insights from Cultural Anthropology* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2001), 1–25; Bruce Malina, Gerd Theissen, and Wolfgang Steggemann, eds., *The Social Setting of Jesus and the Gospels* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2002). Here "social dynamics" are defined as the various personal and political interactions between persons and/or institutions. Discourses of power will be extensively discussed in chapter 3.

[7] For a few significant examples of those who have interacted with the aspects of comic power and relational theology see, Donald Juel, *A Master of Surprise: Mark Interpreted* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1994); Suzanne Watts Henderson, *Christology and Discipleship in the Gospel of Mark*, SNTSMS 135 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006); Ira Brent Driggers, *Following God Through Mark: Theological Tension in the Second Gospel* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2007); Ira Brent Driggers, "The Politics of Divine Presence: Temple as Locus of Conflict in the Gospel of Mark," *BibInt* 15.3 (2007): 227–47.

offered by Jesus in Mark's narrative, the stories of Mark 10 begin to connect in new and enlightening ways. The purpose of the current study is to engage in a socially informed, narrative reading of Mark, utilizing postcolonial theory, to identify and evaluate the discourses of power operative in Mark 10.[8] I will argue that Mark 10 serves as a pivotal section of text in relation to the discourse of power operative in the kingdom of God over and against that of the Roman Empire and the complicated Markan disciples.

While it would be preferable to evaluate the discourses of power operative in the entirety of the narrative, given the depth of the Gospel's engagement with discourses of power throughout, a full exposition of each would be too great an undertaking for the current endeavor. In order to make a thoughtful contribution to the discussion, I evaluate the discourses of power operative in the text through a brief analysis of Mark 1:1–8:26 with a more extensive analysis of the central portion of the narrative (Mark 8:27–10:45), that focuses on Mark 10:1–45.[9] I argue with reference to this middle portion of text, Mark

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[8] Chapter two will focus exclusively on the methodological orientation of the project and define technical terms related to the methodology including "discourse of power," "ideology," and "hybridity."

[9] Mark's Gospel, given the complications of its genre, has proven itself impervious to a definitive outline. Scholars have long disagreed about where the turning point of Mark's Gospel should be placed and thus what comprises the central section. The two most common options claim Mark's Gospel shifts or indicates a breaking point with a new section beginning at 8:22 (see Myers, *Binding the Strong Man: A Political Reading of Mark's Story of Jesus*; Lamar Williamson, *Mark* (Louisville: John Knox Press, 1983); Eugene LaVerdiere, *The Beginning of the Gospel: Introducing the Gospel according to Mark*, 2 vols. (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 1999); Joel Marcus, *Mark 1-8: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*, 1st ed., vol. 1 of *The Anchor Bible* v. 27a (New York: Doubleday, 2000) or 8:27 (Marie-Joseph Lagrange, *Évangile Selon Saint Marc* (Paris: Librairie Lecoffre, 1947); C.E.B. Cranfield, *The Gospel According to St. Mark* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1959); Dieter Lührmann, *Das Markuevangelium*, HNT 3 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1987); Morna Dorothy Hooker, *A Commentary on the Gospel According to St. Mark* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 1993); Ben Witherington, *The Gospel of Mark: A Socio-Rhetorical Commentary* (Grand Rapids: W.B. Eerdmans Pub, 2001); Donahue and Harrington, *The Gospel of Mark*; R. T. France, *The Gospel of Mark: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, NIGTC (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2002); Collins, *Mark*). The primary contention is whether or not the healing miracle narrated in Mark 8:22–26 should be considered part of the first section comprised of many of Jesus's miracles and signs of Jesus's power or should be considered part of the central section comprised of mostly Jesus's teaching. While the healing miracle is of great concern to the central section, more scholars argue a new section begins at 8:27. This is where the disciples are first declared to be on the "way" with Jesus. This is where Jesus begins to teach the disciples about what it means to follow the Messiah and

8:27–10:45, that Jesus offers his disciples a new discourse of power that stands in contrast to the disciples' own expectations which are derived both from the their local Jewish context as well as their place in relation to imperial Rome.

History of Research on the Topic of Power in the Gospel of Mark

Questions surrounding the theme of power in the Gospel of Mark have begun to attract the attention of scholars in recent years, but there is still significant work to be done. Those scholars taking interest in the theme of Markan power largely fall into two

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what it means for Jesus to be the Messiah. (For a fuller discussion of this turning point, see Gregg S. Morrison, *The Turning Point in the Gospel of Mark: A Study in Markan Christology* (Cambridge: James Clarke & Co, 2014). Similar questions arise in relation to the healing narrative of Mark 10:46–52. For the purposes of this study, I see the healing narratives as hinges rather than components of either section. The healing narratives form hinges that connect the central section to the story preceding and following it.

To see a hard break between the preceding material in 1:1–8:21 and what follows, is to miss the literary connections between the healing narrative in 8:22–26 and what comes before. In Mark 7:31–37 Jesus heals a deaf and mute man. In 8:14–21, Jesus rebukes the disciples for their inability to hear and see. Then in 8:22–26, Jesus heals a blind man with a second touch. Further, the healing with spittle in Mark 7:33 is echoed in 8:23. The whole episode looks back to the preceding narrative. The narrative also, however, looks ahead to the disciples' own lack of hearing and seeing. As the disciples have failed to understand Jesus's metaphorical first touch in Mark 1–8:21 so now they need a second touch which they will receive through direct instruction in Mark 8:26–10:45. Further the story of Mark 8:22–26 looks forward to the healing episodes in chapters 9 and 10. Thus in many ways, 8:22–26 is part of both the first section of Mark as well as the central section of Mark. It is not jut a frame but rather a hinge holding 1:1–8:21 together with 8:27ff. This narrative structure leads the reader to make thematic connections across the whole text rather than making a sharp break between "section 1" and the "central section." It is a hinge connecting the disciples' religious, social, and political issues in Mark 1:1–8:21 to their continued problems in 8:27–10:45. The connections between 8:22–26 and 8:27–30 have been demonstrated by numerous scholars, including R.H. Lightfoot, *History and Interpretation in the Gospels* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1935), 90–91; W. Grundmann, *Das Evangelium Nach Markus*, Theologischer Handkommentar Zum Neuen Testament 2 (Berlin: Evangelische Verlagsanstalt, 1973), 164–65; William L. Lane, *The Gospel according to Mark*, The New International Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1974), 286–87; R. Pesch, *Das Markusevangelium*, 2 vols. (Freiburg: Herder, 1976), 1:420–421; Frank J. Matera, "The Incomprehension of the Disciples and Peter's Confession (Mark 6:14–8:30)," *Biblica* 70 (1989): 153–72; Francis Maloney, *The Gospel of Mark: A Commentary* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2002), 165. The same is true for Mark 10:46–52. The healing narrative of chapter 10 looks back to Mark 8:22. So also, it is but a step on the journey begun in 10:1 that extends all the way into Jerusalem in 11:1ff.

When it comes to articulating a particular structure for Mark, perhaps it is best to call to mind Dewey's assertion, "of making outlines of the Gospel of Mark there is no end, nor do scholars seem to be wearying of it" but perhaps we would do better to focus "on the interconnections, on the repetitions, and the variations in the repetition," than "analyzing its divisions." (Joanna Dewey, "Mark as an Interwoven Tapestry: Forecasts and Echoes for a Listening Audience," *CBQ* 53 (1991): 221, 235.) Throughout this project, I will refer to the "central section" of Mark as the designation for Mark 8:27–10:45 for ease of reference. This is not to claim an independent section with little connection to what comes before or after, but rather to designate the portion of text that stands between the hinges of 8:22–8:26 and 10:46–52.

categories. First are those scholars who engage the text in order to speak to modern issues of sexism, violence, and oppression.[10] While attempts to read the Markan narrative in the midst of modern situations is an admirable goal, it is well beyond the scope of this dissertation. The second group of scholars seeks to address issues of power in the text from within the first century context, both historically and narratively.[11] They are less concerned with the issues of modern oppression and imperialism and are more focused on the political and social power structures of the first century author and audience or the power dynamics active at the story level of the text itself. The focus of these scholars is of greater concern to the present study, as they share a similar focus and intention.

One scholar concerned with the power dynamics present in the historical situation of the Markan audience is Richard Horsley.[12] Horsley has offered a political reading of the text in *Hearing the Whole Story*. He argues that the text offers a critique of the failure of the Jerusalem leaders of the early Christian movement in the aftermath of Jesus's

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[10] See for example: Mary Ann Tolbert, "When Resistance Becomes Repression: Mark 13:9-27 and the Poetics of Location," in *Reading From This Place: Social Location and Biblical Interpretation in Global Perspective*, ed. Mary Ann Tolbert and Fernando Segovia (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1995), 331–46; Musa Dube, *Postcolonial Feminist Interpretation of the Bible* (St. Louis: Chalice Press, 2000); Hans Leander, *Discourses of Empire: The Gospel of Mark from a Postcolonial Perspective*, Semeia Studies 71 (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2013).

[11] See for example: Myers, *Binding the Strong Man: A Political Reading of Mark's Story of Jesus*; Juel, *A Master of Surprise: Mark Interpreted*; Richard Horsley, "Submerged Biblical Histories and Imperial Biblical Studies," in *The Postcolonial Bible*, ed. R.S. Sugirtharajah (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 1998), 152–75; Anne Dawson, *Freedom as Liberating Power: A Socio-Political Reading of the Exousia Texts in the Gospel of Mark*, NTOA 44 (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2000); Alberto de Mingo Kaminouchi, *"But It Is Not so Among You": Echoes of Power in Mark 10.32-45*, JSNTSup 249 (New York: T&T Clark International, 2003); Henderson, *Christology and Discipleship in the Gospel of Mark*; Suzanne Watts Henderson, "The 'Good News' of God's Coming Reign: Occupation at a Crossroads," *Int* 70.2 (2016): 145–58.

[12] Richard Horsley, *Hearing the Whole Story: The Politics of Plot in Mark's Gospel* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2001); For similar methodological approaches to Horsley with reference to the disciples' function see: Weeden, *Mark: Traditions in Conflict*; Theodore J. Weeden, "The Heresy That Necessitated Mark's Gospel," *ZNW* 59.3 (1968); Werner Kelber, *The Kingdom in Mark: A New Place and a New Time* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1974); Kelber, *Mark's Story of Jesus*.

death. The Markan disciples, as representatives of the Jerusalem Christian leaders, serve as a foil to Jesus's ministry, dramatizing the political struggle in the early church. The movement promoted by Jesus was to embody egalitarian socio-economic relations and disciplined commitment in the face of possible political repression, but the church leaders after Jesus's death resorted to grasping for power and prestige. Horsley's reading moves beyond the narrative itself, viewing the story as a critique of the life situation of Mark's audience.[13] Horsley does, however, come closer than most interpreters to offering a cohesive reading of Mark 10. He claims, "these sayings are, in effect, statements of (renewed) covenantal principles designed to govern social relations in the communities of the movement" comparable to the *Community Rule* in Qumran.[14] He finds covenant to be the guiding theme holding the various pericopes together rather than the theme of power. His reading does, however, require the acceptance of a particular historical situation for the Gospel's readers, namely a political fight for power within the early church.

Among those scholars more concerned with the power dynamics at the story level rather than those of concern to the first audience, the majority are focused on the theme of cosmic or apocalyptic powers in the narrative.[15] Henderson, for example, has argued that Jesus called the disciples to wield the power of God's apocalyptic reign.[16] The disciples are to embrace the apocalyptic power of Jesus's Christological mission, but they

[13] Horsley, *Hearing the Whole Story*, 187.

[14] Horsley, *Hearing the Whole Story*, 187.

[15] See for example: Mary E. Mills, *Human Agents of Cosmic Power in Hellenistic Judaism and the Synoptic Tradition*, JSNTSup 41 (Sheffield, Eng: JSOT Press, 1990); Juel, *A Master of Surprise: Mark Interpreted*; Henderson, *Christology and Discipleship in the Gospel of Mark*; Driggers, "The Politics of Divine Presence"; Driggers, *Following God Through Mark: Theological Tension in the Second Gospel*; Henderson, "The 'Good News' of God's Coming Reign: Occupation at a Crossroads."

[16] Henderson, *Christology and Discipleship in the Gospel of Mark*.

continually fail to understand the apocalyptic nature of Jesus's power and the implications for those entrusted with that power. Juel shares a similar train of thought throughout his work on cosmic power dynamics in the text. He argues God has invaded the present time, and Jesus speaks on God's behalf. The disciples, however, are held under the sway of the demonic, and like those possessed by the unclean spirits in the text, the disciples need Satan exorcised from their imaginations.[17] These authors have pointed out an important aspect of power in the narrative, but they do not analyze the political and social dynamics of power, especially those unique to colonial contexts, that are also present and influential in the text.

There are, however, scholars who have attempted to take the elements of political and social power more seriously. Some have strongly emphasized the political nature of the Gospel. Myers's *Binding the Strong Man* is a highly political reading in which Myers argues that the Gospel is an anti-imperial text aimed at addressing the problems of empire.[18] He argues that Jesus advocated non-violent resistance against the political power structures that in turn validated social power structures. Myers's methodology, however, does not allow him to differentiate between different ideologies of power at work in the text. For Myers, there are essentially two ideologies at play: violent oppressive imperial power and the nonviolent power of Jesus that resists it. A more nuanced view of the competing and occasionally overlapping ideologies is necessary. Further, given the emphasis on critiquing political domination throughout the entire

[17] Juel, *A Master of Surprise: Mark Interpreted*; Donald Juel, *The Gospel of Mark* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1999).

[18] Ched Myers, *Binding the Strong Man: A Political Reading of Mark's Story of Jesus* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1988).

Gospel, Myers often misses the more nuanced dynamics at play in the story and connections between the earlier power struggles in the Gospel and the discussions of power in Mark 8:27–10:45.

In the years since the publication of Myers's highly influential work, a number of scholars have offered treatments of isolated passages focusing on power in the Gospel. Schüssler-Fiorenza has emphasized the importance of the social power dynamics present in Mark 10:1–12 arguing that the author seeks to undermine the social power of patriarchy.[19] Anne Dawson has proffered a socio-political reading of the *exousia* texts in Mark.[20] Most significantly, perhaps, is a revised dissertation by de Mingo Kaminouchi on Mark 10:32–45.[21] Realizing that there was a significant lacuna in Markan scholarship with reference to the theme of power in the Markan narrative, his dissertation, working from a sociologically informed literary methodology, specifically engaged with the concept of echoes in the text. He argued that Mark 10:32–45 is central to the plot and theology of the Gospel of Mark. He suggests that Jesus's teaching in Mark 10:32–45 constitutes a teaching on power that is a radical departure from the available teachings on power in the ancient world.[22] While his work made a significant contribution toward filling this gap in scholarship, his work was narrowly focused on the content and role of Mark 10:32–45 and its echoes within the text. He also does not offer a significant

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[19] Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza, *In Memory of Her: A Feminist Theological Reconstruction of Christian Origins*, (New York: Crossroad, 1994), 143.

[20] Anne Dawson, *Freedom as Liberating Power: A Socio-Political Reading of the Exousia Texts in the Gospel of Mark*, NTOA 44 (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2000).

[21] de Mingo Kaminouchi, *But It Is Not so Among You*.

[22] de Mingo Kaminouchi, *But It Is Not so among You*, 5.

discussion of the meaning of power itself, nor does he address the importance of the colonial context to the Gospel at the story level of the discourse.

Since de Mingo Kaminouchi's work in 2003, a number of scholars have recognized the importance of the colonial context and have added to the discourse about the theme of power through the application of postcolonial theory. Simon Samuel, C. I. David Joy, and Hans Leander have each evaluated portions of the text through this methodological lens.[23] Each, however, dealt with selected passages of the text, refraining from offering a comprehensive evaluation of Mark 8:27–10:45. Samuel nearly avoids chapter ten altogether, addressing only the suffering motif in chapters 8–10.[24] Leander addresses one short pericope in the entirety of Mark 8–10.[25] Joy offers only a brief overview of Mark 10:17–31.[26] This dissertation will seek to fill this void through the application of similar methodological considerations to a neglected block of text.

While there are clearly a number of studies that have dealt with the theme of power from numerous vantage points, there is still to my knowledge not a study focused on the theme of power in Mark 8:27–10:45. Postcolonial critics have made progress in this endeavor but have not offered a systematic treatment of what I will argue is a pivotal portion of the text for understanding the discourse of power constructed by Jesus and advocated by the Gospel. This project seeks to go beyond the treatment of isolated passages concerning the theme of power in hopes of demonstrating a coherent discourse

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[23] Simon Samuel, *A Postcolonial Reading of Mark's Story of Jesus*, LNTS 340 (London: T&T Clark, 2007); David Joy, *Mark and Its Subalterns: A Hermeneutical Paradigm for a Postcolonial Context* (London: Equinox, 2008); Leander, *Discourses of Empire*. Each shall be discussed in further detail in chapter two during a discussion of the methodology for this project.

[24] Samuel, *A Postcolonial Reading of Mark's Story of Jesus*, 128–134.

[25] Leander, *Discourses of Empire*, 239–254 addresses Mark 8:31–9:1 only.

[26] Joy, *Mark and Its Subalterns: A Hermeneutical Paradigm for a Postcolonial Context*, 130–141.

of power developing across 8:27–10:45. It will also address those passages that have largely been neglected in previous discussions and demonstrate that chapter 10 is a clear and coherent argument for a new understanding of and application of power in the kingdom of God.

Methodology

The theoretical work of postcolonial critics has been foundational for many studies in the New Testament in recent years[27] and has also provided the theoretical underpinnings for a number of influential studies that have not utilized postcolonial discourse explicitly.[28] Postcolonial critics, while varying in method and even goal to

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[27] See for example: Musa Dube, "Go Therefore and Make Disciples of All Nations (Mt 28:19A): A Postcolonial Perspective on Biblical Criticism and Pedagogy," in *Teaching the Bible: The Discourses and Politics of Biblical Pedagogy* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 1998), 224–46; R. S. Sugirtharajah, "Biblical Studies after the Empire: From a Colonial to a Postcolonial Mode of Interpretation," in *The Postcolonial Bible*, ed. R. S. Sugirtharajah (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1998), 12–23; Horsley, "Submerged Biblical Histories"; Tat-siong Benny Liew, "Tyranny, Boundary and Might: Colonial Mimicry in Mark's Gospel," *JSNT* 73 (1999): 7–31; Fernando Segovia, *Decolonizing Biblical Studies: A View from the Margins* (New York: Orbis Books, 2000); Dube, *Postcolonial Feminist Interpretation of the Bible*; Fernando Segovia, ed., *Interpreting Beyond Borders* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 2000); Simon Samuel, "The Beginning of Mark: A Colonial/Postcolonial Conundrum," *BibInt* 10 (2002): 405–19; R. S. Sugirtharajah, *Postcolonial Reconfigurations: An Alternative Way of Reading the Bible and Doing Theology* (London: SCM Press, 2003); John Riches, "Matthew's Missionary Strategy in Colonial Perspective," in *The Gospel of Matthew in Its Roman Imperial Context*, ed. John Riches and David Sims (London: T&T Clark International, 2005), 128–42; Stephen Moore, *Empire and Apocalypse: Postcolonialism and the New Testament* (Sheffield: Sheffield Phoenix Press, 2006); Stephen Moore, "Mark and Empire: 'Zealot' and 'Postcolonial Readings,'" in *The Postcolonial Biblical Reader*, ed. R. S. Sugirtharajah (Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2006), 193–205; Samuel, *A Postcolonial Reading of Mark's Story of Jesus*; Hans Leander, "With Homi Bhabha at the Jerusalem City Gates: A Postcolonial Reading of the 'Triumphant' Entry (Mark 11:1-11)," *JSNT* 32.3 (2010): 309–35; Leander, *Discourses of Empire*; Sebastien Doane, "Resister Aux Injustices Imperiales En Citant Isaie: Analyse Interrtextuelle de Mt 1:23 et Is 7:14," *Theologiques* 24.1 (2016): 51–72.

[28] For example: Myers, *Binding the Strong Man: A Political Reading of Mark's Story of Jesus*; A. Yarbro Collins, "Mark and His Readers : The Son of God among Greeks and Romans," *HTR* 93.2 (2000): 85–100; Justin Meggitt, "Taking the Emperor's Clothes Seriously: The New Testament and the Roman Emperor," in *The Quest for Wisdom: Essays in Honour of Philip Budd* (Cambridge: Cambridge Orchard Academic, 2002), 143–69; Abraham Smith, "Tyranny Exposed: Mark's Typological Characterization of Herod Antipas (Mark 6:14-29)," *BibInt* 14.3 (2006): 259–93; Allan Georgia, "Translating the Triumph: Reading Mark's Crucifixion Narrative against a Roman Ritual of Power," *JSNT* 36.1 (2013): 17–38; Cheryl Pero, *Liberation from Empire: Demonic Possession and Exorcism in the Gospel of Mark* (Frankfurt: Peter Lang, 2013); Adam Winn, "Tyrant or Servant?: Political Ideology and Mark 10.42-45," *JSNT* 36.4 (2014):

some extent, agree that texts produced within a context of a colonizing empire must be analyzed for the underlying ideology of both empire and resistance. Since Mark's Gospel was composed in a colonial context and tells the story of a group of people living in a colonial context, we should not be surprised to find that it reflects the tensions inherent in the process of colonization and resistance.

There are a number of ways to employ this methodology in biblical studies, and thus further clarification is necessary. Many modern interpreters utilizing this methodology are seeking to critique colonizing tendencies in the text or the way the text has historically been used to legitimate both internal and external colonial power structures.[29] This study will, however, engage in a more historically oriented application of the methodology drawing heavily, though not exclusively, from the theoretical work of postcolonial theorists such as Said, Spivak, and Bhabha, utilizing a transcultural hybridity model of postcolonial studies. The goal of this project is to interact exclusively with the historical setting of the narrative at the story level and not the later potentialities for colonial appropriation and oppression.

A number of Markan interpreters have utilized this methodology in recent years with differing results. Some have advocated that Mark is essentialist postcolonial

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325–52; Adam Winn, *Reading Mark's Christology Under Caesar: Jesus the Messiah and Roman Imperial Ideology* (Downers Grove: IVP Academic, 2018).

[29] A few significant examples: Tolbert, "When Resistance Becomes Repression: Mark 13:9-27 and the Poetics of Location"; Sugirtharajah, "Biblical Studies after the Empire: From a Colonial to a Postcolonial Mode of Interpretation"; Segovia, *Decolonizing Biblical Studies: A View from the Margins*; Fernando Segovia and Stephen Moore, *Postcolonial Biblical Criticism: Interdisciplinary Intersections* (London: T&T Clark, 2007); Joy, *Mark and Its Subalterns: A Hermeneutical Paradigm for a Postcolonial Context*.

resistance literature,[30] while others have advocated that Mark is a colonizing discourse.[31] The most coherent applications of the methodology, however, reflect some combination of both resistance and colonizing tendencies through the lens of hybridity models.[32] This study will resonate with those studies that acknowledge that colonial discourse rarely fits into binary categories of resistance or accommodation/approximation, but rather, is located at the intersection of conflicting identities and ideologies.

Since Mark's socio-historical location is up for debate, as is the socio-historical location of the Gospel's hearers, this project seeks to focus on the story level of the discourse, evaluating the disciples' colonial conundrum as they stand between Roman imperial discourse (via their essentialist responses based on the ideologies of imperial discourse) and Jesus's ideology of power for a new empire—the kingdom of God. While the first-century audience would have no doubt been influenced by this discourse, as they themselves were living under the powerful sway of Rome's colonizing power, this present work is a precursor to discussions of reception. We begin with an evaluation of the disciples' perceptions concerning the application of power as influenced by Roman discourses of power and then turn to Jesus's response to their colonizing aspirations.

The methodological orientation of postcolonial theory aids in identifying and analyzing these discourses of power in relation to the literary context of Mark. In this construal, Mark 10 serves as a significant part of Jesus's development of a discourse of power to rival the Roman discourse of power propagated throughout the empire via

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[30] See for example, Horsley, "Submerged Biblical Histories."

[31] Liew, "Tyranny, Boundary and Might: Colonial Mimicry in Mark's Gospel."

[32] For example, see: Tolbert, "When Resistance Becomes Repression: Mark 13:9-27 and the Poetics of Location"; Samuel, *A Postcolonial Reading of Mark's Story of Jesus*. While they each approach the text differently, they agree that within the text one can find elements of both resistance and appropriation, whether actualized or existing in the realm of possibility.

linguistic and extralinguistic means. Further, the methodology offers a language to identify and discuss the character and function of the disciples in light of their own hybridized identities in relation to Rome and their essentialist responses to Roman authority. When Mark 10 is viewed within the context of an ongoing development of a discourse of power, one that reacts to the Roman discourse of power and the disciples' appropriation of that discourse, the literary structure and cohesiveness of the chapter finds greater clarity as each of the individual pericopes strengthens the discourse of power constructed by Jesus in relation to imperial Rome's and the disciples' vision of power.

Significance of Contribution

The significance of this project to the field of Markan studies is three-fold. First, the theme of power, specifically discourses of power and the social and political ideologies by which they are disseminated, needs more sustained attention in Markan scholarship. This project will address the theme in Mark 8:27–10:45, drawing on excellent work that has been offered on many of the individual pericopes while also addressing previously neglected episodes on this topic. Second, this dissertation seeks to offer a fuller understanding of the structure and function of Mark 10 in the narrative by reading the chapter as a crucial and coherent component of a larger literary agenda. It is not merely a loosely connected collection of Jesus's teachings on discipleship, but rather a development of a discourse of power for the coming kingdom of God in relation to the Roman imperial discourse of power and local colonized responses to it. Third, reading chapters 8:27–10:45 through the lens of postcolonial theory will allow for significant connections to be made between earlier portions of the Gospel and the later chapters.

Readers of the Gospel have long noted a significant shift between Mark 1:1–8:26 and 8:27–10:45, but an evaluation of the development of a discourse of power in Mark 8:27–10:45 will offer the opportunity to reevaluate and strengthen the connections between these major sections in the narrative, specifically issues surrounding the characterization of the disciples and the Gentile mission.

Narrative Outline

When reading Mark 10 through the lens of postcolonial theory, there emerges a common theme among the stories. The development of a discourse of power in relation to the Roman imperial discourse of power, I will argue, holds the disparate stories of chapter 10 together, developing the theme of power from previous chapters within Mark.

In chapter two, I outline the methodology employed by the project. The chapter introduces readers to the significant theorists in the field of postcolonial studies, their contributions, and the technical terms utilized throughout the remaining chapters. Chapter two explains and defends the application of a postcolonial approach within biblical studies. Finally, chapter two catalogues and evaluates the scholars who have utilized postcolonial theory in Markan studies, comparing and contrasting the various approaches and applications of the method to my own.

In chapter three, I explore the meaning of the word "power." As power stands at the basis of my argument, the word requires a full discussion. Next, I articulate the connections between power, discourse, and ideology, offering a working conception of each term and explaining the concept of "discourses of power." Chapter three continues with an overview of the discourse of power propagated through Roman imperial ideology by both linguistic and extralinguistic means. It is to this imperial ideology of power—this

discourse of power—propagated by the colonizing elite that the disciples of Mark's Gospel and Mark's Jesus respond as they develop counter-narratives to the imperial discourse of power. Finally, the significance and prevalence of resistance to colonial discourses is discussed in theoretical terms and discussed in relation to first-century resistance movements.

In chapter four, the theoretical concerns related to imperial ideology and discourses of power and resistance to these discourses are applied specifically to the Gospel of Mark. Through a postcolonial narrative reading of Mark 1–9, I discuss the issues of hybridity and cultural accommodation affecting the disciples' view of the appropriate application of power evident in the text through the representation of the disciples. As the disciples function in colonial space, their responses are conditioned by the discourse of power propagated by the Roman colonizer. It is argued the disciples co-opt the language and intent of the Roman discourse of power for their own resistance against Rome's colonial discourse of power. The disciples opt for an inversion of position built on the colonial ideology of violence and exclusion for their own ends. This appropriation of colonial discourse prompts the disciples to reject Jesus's mission to the Gentiles and enlightens scholarly discussion on the characterization and function of the disciples in the narrative. In the final portion of the chapter, I analyze Jesus's preliminary response in Mark 8–9 to his disciples' appropriation of imperial discourse to aid in their own essentialist strategies of resistance. Mark's Jesus depicts Rome as a visible extension of the powers of evil at work in the world, the effects of which have infiltrated even his closest followers. Specifically this section focuses on Jesus's first two passion predictions as the introduction of a new discourse of power for a new empire—the kingdom of God.

In chapter five I argue that Jesus continues the formation of a counter discourse of power through the entirety of the so-called "discipleship section" of Mark 10. While many have failed to find a coherent theme uniting the various elements of chapter ten, I argue that the chapter focuses on the proper application of power in the kingdom of God. The various teaching elements throughout the chapter respond to both the imperial discourse of power as well as the disciples' form of resistance. It is through the development of a new discourse of power that Jesus performs his most clear act of resistance to Roman applications of power. Jesus undertakes an act of catachresis in relation to power in which he proposes an entirely different understanding of the appropriate application of power.[33] It is through this reappraisal of power that Jesus addresses, somewhat ironically, the disciples' own deep-seated desire for power. Jesus will offer them power in the kingdom of God, but this version of power articulated by Jesus will not be what the disciples envisioned when they thought to turn their eyes against their Roman overlords.

Finally chapter six offers a brief overview of the affiliative/disruptive nature of Jesus's message with an eye to the implications of this reading to the broader narrative. While by no means exhaustive, this chapter offers a few brief insights into the future possibilities opened up by a postcolonial reading of Mark's Gospel focusing on the discourses of power operative at the narrative level of the text.

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[33] The meaning and function of catachresis in a postcolonial context will be discussed at length in chapter two.

CHAPTER TWO

Method of Textual Engagement

The concern for the analysis of power structures inherent in postcolonial reading strategies and the focus on the impact of colonial rule on the process of literary creation offers a useful lens through which to view the Gospel of Mark. This chapter first provides a brief overview of the development of postcolonial theory and important contributions within the field of study relevant to the current project. Secondly, it offers an outline of the ways in which postcolonial theory has been utilized in biblical studies and examines the ways in which postcolonial reading strategies have been specifically applied to the Gospel of Mark. Third, and finally, the chapter concludes with an explanation of the application of postcolonial reading strategies in the current study.

The Development of a Theory

What is Postcolonial Criticism?

Defining postcolonial theory is a notoriously difficult task. So elusive is a definition that Susan Gallagher notes, "Most literary critics would admit to recognizing postcolonial theory when they saw it, but few are the brave souls who attempt to define or explain it."[1] McLeod argues, in fact, this difficulty emerges from the fact there is no singular postcolonialism, but rather a wide diversity of approaches that broadly conceived comprise a "reading strategy that engages with questions of empire, power, and

[1] Susan Gallagher, "Mapping the Hybrid World: Three Postcolonial Motifs," *Semeia* 75 (1996): 229.

colonialism."[2] This reading strategy, in many ways, began long before postcolonial criticism emerged as a distinct sub-field of study within the halls of the academy. Any time and place where colonizers brandished the pen to immortalize their ideology and propagate it among the masses and dissenters wielded the pen in response, postcolonial reading strategies—postcolonial criticisms—have been in play.[3]

Formally, postcolonial reading strategies find their origin in the political and social issues surrounding the era of European imperial expansion around the globe and the subsequent retreat of many of the same from areas of colonial control, leading to a development in the fields of literary and social theory that would come to be known as postcolonial studies. As European powers colonized other countries, they brought with them new forms of government, new languages, and new social customs. They turned countries upside down by enforcing new social norms and establishing a new social elite largely comprised of Europeans and a few locals who supported their claims to power. These actions changed the landscape of the colonized countries, forever altering the local culture and community. When the empires were forced to leave, countries were forced to reevaluate what it meant no longer to be a colony but an independent country. The literature that developed in the context of this period of decolonization became known as postcolonial literature. Further, the literature produced in the context of colonization by both colonial powers and their dissenters came under the same umbrella of study: Postcolonial Studies.

[2] McLeod, *Beginning Postcolonialism*, 4.

[3] R. S. Sugirtharajah, "A Brief Memorandum on Postcolonialism and Biblical Studies," *JSNT* 73 (1999): 3.

Postcolonial studies, as a distinct field of study, emerged from the field of literary criticism and largely focuses on the analysis of discourse that emerges from colonial/postcolonial contexts, with specific attention paid to the power dynamics at play between the empire and her subjects. In its earliest conceptions, postcolonialism was largely a response to European expansion, decolonization, and the aftermath of decolonization. Postcolonial analysis, however, is not constrained to the time period after colonization ceases; rather, the term applies to the study of the ways in which colonizers imposed means of control over the people, the means by which people have responded to colonial discourse, and the ways in which they have mounted resistance to it. Postcolonialism has, at its core, a concern for all the power structures that undergird the colonial system and the resistance levied by those experiencing such systems. This includes a concern for imperialism, empire, slavery, economic inequality, religious oppression, mimicry, mockery, resistance, hybridity, and the very use of language itself through discourse analysis during and after the time period of official colonization.[4]

The Problem of "Post" in Postcolonial/post-colonial Criticism

As with any emerging field of academic inquiry, there are often concerns about the scope of the fledgling field and the meaning of newly emerging vocabulary used to describe these limitations. Among critics within the field of postcolonial criticism, a debate concerning the proper object of study for the discipline and the very name of the discipline continues: "post-colonial" or "postcolonial theory."[5] The term "post-colonial"

[4] Stephen Moore, *Empire and Apocalypse: Postcolonialism and the New Testament* (Sheffield: Sheffield Phoenix Press, 2006), 9.

[5] See, Anne McClintock, "The Angel of Progress: Pitfalls of the Term 'Post-Colonialism,'" *Social Text* 31 (1992): 84–98; Aijaz Ahmad, "Postcolonialism: What's in a Name?," in *Late Imperial Culture*, ed.

has long been used in political discussions to refer to the time period after colonial rule, a chronological term used to denote the end of an era and the beginning of another.[6] The term largely referenced a state of affairs, rather than a descriptive term given to a series of ideas reflecting upon colonial rule.

When the term made inroads into literary criticism from the political sphere in the 1970's and 1980's, the object of study was no longer limited to the evaluation of countries after the period of colonization, but rather came to include the "critical inquiry into the nature of colonial and imperial domination" more generally.[7] This inquiry included the evaluation of material culture and literature crafted during the context of imperial domination long before the end of direct colonial rule. The endeavor also recognized the lasting affect of colonial rule, even after the departure of the colonial power. Literary critics, therefore, struggled with the idea of any real sense of a chronological "post" in postcolonialism.[8] Ideological affects continued regardless of the official political changes.

This complex and continuing relationship between colonized and colonizer significantly called into question the meaning and nature of the term "post-colonialism." What force was the hyphen asked to bear? For many critics the hyphen implied a break

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Michael Sprinker, Ann Kaplan, and Roman De la Campa (London: Verso, 1995), 11–32; Bill Ashcroft, Gareth Griffiths, and Helen Tiffin, *The Empire Writes Back: Theory and Practice in Post-Colonial Literatures* (London: Routledge, 1989), 24f; Bill Ashcroft, "On the Hyphen in Post-Colonial," *New Literatures Review* 32 (1996): 23–31.

[6] Moore, *Empire and Apocalypse*, 4; Hans Leander, *Discourses of Empire: The Gospel of Mark from a Postcolonial Perspective*, SemeiaSt 71 (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2013), 30; Bill Ashcroft, Griffiths Gareth, and Helen Tiffin, *Post-Colonial Studies: The Key Concepts*, 2nd ed. (London: Routledge, 2001), 186.

[7] Leander, *Discourses of Empire*, 31.

[8] John McLeod, *Beginning Postcolonialism*, 2nd ed. (New York: Manchester University Press, 2010), 4–6. All analysis must remain "firmly hinged to historical experiences."

with what came before which works well with the simple fact of a change in governing structure but fails to account for the lingering affect of the colonial relationship and the importance of the study of literature, art, and artifacts reflecting the ideology of empire and resistance to it.[9] Most critics now prefer "postcolonial" unhyphenated so as to place less emphasis on the idea of chronological and ideological supersession.[10] Likewise in this work, the term "postcolonial" refers not to a time period in which colonial rule has ceased but rather the field of inquiry concerned with the lasting affects of colonial rule both during and after the time of colonization, specifically the impact such rule has on the literary creations reflecting on these situations.

Important Voices and Theoretical Concerns

Formally postcolonial theory entered onto the scene of literary criticism in the 1970s. A brief summary of three early and important theorists will offer a clearer picture of the focus and significance of postcolonial theory as well as introduce a number of important theoretical ideas used throughout this work.

While numerous publications concerning colonization and its effects predate Edward Said, the publication of his work, *Orientalism*, is largely regarded in retrospect as the origin of postcolonial theory.[11] He, alongside Gayatri Spivak and Homi Bhabha—the

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[9] McClintock, "The Angel of Progress," 85–86. If "post-colonial" denotes a specified time period, it centers all of human history on the act of colonization, relegating other cultures to a "chronological, prepositional relationship" to colonial history. The culture of colonized subjects are merely "pre" or "post" colonial, labeled only in relation to colonization.

[10] Moore, *Empire and Apocalypse*, 5.

[11] Some notable early commentators include, Frantz Fanon, *Studies in a Dying Colonialism*, trans. Haakon Chevalier (New York: Grove, 1965); Frantz Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth*, trans. Constance Farrington (New York: Grove, 1963); Frantz Fanon, *Black Skin, White Masks*, trans. Richard Philcox (New York: Grove, 1967); Sol Plaatje, *Sol Plaatje: Selected Writings*, ed. Brian Willan (Athens, OH: Ohio University Press, 1997); Ngugi wa Thiong'o, *Decolonizing the Mind: The Politics of Language in African Literature* (London: J. Currey, 1986); C. L. R. James, *Beyond a Boundary* (London: Stanley Paul, 1963);

so-called holy trinity of early theorists—provided a basis upon which future scholars would build and expand postcolonial theory. Though their influence extends far beyond the material contained herein, a brief survey should suffice to elucidate the primary concerns of the field of study, various strategies, and the significance given to certain topics that reaches beyond a particular interpreter.

Edward Said

Largely grounded in poststructuralist theory and heavily influenced by the writings of French philosopher Michel Foucault on discourse analysis, Said's *Orientalism*, and later *Culture and Imperialism*, was a watershed document for postcolonial theory in which Said reflected on Western perceptions of the Orient.[12] He argued that the Western perceptions of the Orient inscribed in journals, travelogues, and books created a lens through which the Orient would be viewed and controlled. These documents did not, however, reflect some objective "truth" about the Orient, rather "[a]t most, the 'real' Orient provoked a writer to his vision; it very rarely guided it."[13] He claims,

> I believe it needs to be made clear about cultural discourse and exchange within a culture that what is commonly circulated by it is not "truth" but representations…The value, efficacy, strength, apparent veracity of a written statement about the Orient therefore relies very little, and cannot instrumentally depend, on the Orient as such. On the contrary, the written statement is a presence

Cheikh Anta Diop, *Precolonial Black Africa: A Comparative Study of the Political and Social Systems of Europe and Black Africa, from Antiquity to the Formation of Modern States* (Westport, CT: L. Hill, 1987); Aimé Césaire, *Discourse on Colonialism*, trans. Joan Pinkham (New York: Monthly Review Press, 2000). Many of these wrote in response to their own experience within contexts of colonial oppression and the aftermath of colonization.

[12] Edward Said, *Orientalism: Western Representations of the Orient* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1978); Edward Said, *Culture and Imperialism* (New York: Vintage Books, 1993).

[13] Said, *Orientalism*, 22.

to the reader by virtue of its having excluded, displaced, made supererogatory any such real thing as "the Orient."[14]

The authors created knowledge about this unfamiliar culture that reflected their own understanding of the world—creating knowledge about the "other" within a system of values that made sense to the Western writer/reader. The creation of this "knowledge" led to the ability to exert power over the Orient and in turn created a dichotomy between Western power ("us") and the Oriental "other."[15] As Said recounts, "Orientalism was ultimately a political vision of reality whose structure promoted the difference between the familiar (Europe, the West, "us") and the strange (the Orient, the East, "them")."[16] The power to create knowledge about the other went hand in hand with the power to control the other. As knowledge is created, particular ideologies solidify and that ideology is disseminated through the actions, literature, and culture of the colonizer.[17]

In a broader sense, Said argues that discourses that evolve from within a context of colonialism are never objective discourses about the "other." Those creating "knowledge" about the other choose what is kept and what is discarded, what is "self" and what is "other." "Self" is placed at the center and the "other" is pushed to the periphery "paving the way for cultural domination and economic exploitation" of the "other."[18] Thus postcolonial criticism should engage with the discourses and art forms

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[14] Said, *Orientalism*, 21.

[15] Said, *Orientalism*, 3, 20; Ania Loomba, *The New Critical Idiom: Colonialism/Postcolonialism*, 3rd ed. (New York: Routledge, 2015), 61.

[16] Said, *Orientalism*, 43.

[17] Said, *Orientalism*, 1–28.

[18] Simon Samuel, *A Postcolonial Reading of Mark's Story of Jesus*, LNTS 340 (London: T&T Clark, 2007), 11.

emanating from colonial situations, determining and challenging the perceptions of the colonists and colonized as encoded in these ideological discourses. Following Said, many theorists suggest that by examining the different readings or "discrepant experiences" in the colonial discourse, comparing the "hidden transcripts"—discourses outside of earshot of the colonizing power—and the "public transcripts"—discourses declared to or by the colonizing power—and exploring the divergence between them, theorists are able to identify the ideologies at play.[19] The difference between these discourses gives insight into the "impact of domination on public discourse."[20] These discrepant experiences co-exist and interact with each other reflecting their own internal coherence as well as overlapping and interconnected experiences.[21] It is, therefore, possible for the ideology of the colonizer to be discerned within the literary creations and material culture of the colonizing authority and the colonized subjects.

Said's work opened the door for the development of postcolonial theory, but his work has not been without its critics. He has been accused of neglecting the voice of the "other" by neglecting the possibility of the self-representation of the "other" in *Orientalism*. While Said attempted to answer for this shortcoming in his much later work, *Culture and Imperialism*, it would be Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak who would address this neglected aspect of Said's work in her work on the voice of the oppressed "other" or the subaltern.

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[19] D. J. Mattingly. "Introduction" in *Dialogues in Roman Imperialism: Power, Discourse, and Discrepant Experience in the Roman Empire*. ed. D.J. Mattingly. JRArS 23 (Portsmouth, RI: Journal of Roman Archaeology, 1997), 12–13.

[20] J.C. Scott. *Domination and the Arts of Resistance: Hidden Transcripts*. (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1990), 4–5.

[21] Said, *Culture and Imperialism*, 36.

Gayatri Spivak

As Said argued, in the context of colonial expansion, essentialist reduction of groups created space for the application of boundary markers between self and "other." In the process of essentialist reduction, every group was easily identifiable and categorized by virtue of defining, unchanging features exclusive to members of a given group of people. Most often, positive qualities were applied to self and negative qualities were assigned to "other" by the dominant power, and these expectations were reinforced by the dominant ideology of the empire. Spivak, concerned with issues surrounding the representation of the subaltern, questioned the extent to which the subaltern could assert self-representation or if that voice could be accessed at all by Western scholars. Reacting, at least in part, against the problems inherent in the essentialist claims of difference that created space for the binary opposition models in which the subaltern is made "other," in her initial groundbreaking study of postcolonialism she argued that the subaltern was unable to speak on his/her own behalf on his/her own terms in any kind of essentialist way free from the dominant ideology of the oppressor. Furthermore, she argues that there is no essentialist, pure subaltern;[22] the subaltern is "irretrievably heterogeneous."[23] Should the subaltern embrace the cultural solidarity imposed by the dominant power, the subaltern merely reinforces the subaltern status given to it by the dominant power, as do the representations offered of it by the dominant power. While Spivak embraces a more nuanced sense of essentialism, or strategic essentialism, as useful to subaltern resistance,

[22] Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, "Can the Subaltern Speak," in *Colonial Discourse and Post-colonial Theory: A Reader*, eds. Patrick Williams and Laura Chrisman (New York: Harvester: 1994), 81.

[23] Spivak, "Can the Subaltern Speak," 79.

she eschews the desire to insist that colonial resistance must embrace a return to some pure, essentialist state.

Like Said, Spivak recognizes that the "knowledge" created by the Western imperial writers about the "other" was not objective but rather politically, economically, and culturally motivated, with the goal of justifying the domination of the "other" and the expansion of the Western colonial enterprise. This "knowledge" of the other begat power over the other. Bearing this in mind, Spivak questions whether the western scholar can ever truly give voice to the subaltern without repeating the domineering and essentialist projects of earlier colonizers. Even should a person wish to make space or give voice to the subaltern, this voice would still only be able to speak in the context of the paradigm of colonial discourse. While often misinterpreted by theorists as advocating an inability of the subaltern to speak at all, in her later work Spivak clarifies that she does not believe the subaltern is unable to speak but rather is unable to be heard without accessing the dominant framework in which he/she became a subaltern.[24] "In fact, Spivak's essay is not an assertion of the inability of the subaltern voice to be accessed or given agency, but only a warning to avoid the idea that the subaltern can ever be isolated in some absolute, essentialist way from the play of discourses and institutional practices that give it its voice."[25] To summarize, the subaltern cannot be defined in an essentialist way as if one

[24] In "Can the Subaltern Speak," 104, Spivak claimed "the subaltern cannot speak," but in her later work, *A Critique of Postcolonial Reason: Toward a History of the Vanishing Present* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1999), 308, Spivak claimed, "I wrote in the accents of passionate lament: the subaltern cannot speak! It was an inadvisable remark." Her own frustration with the accessibility, or rather inaccessibility of the subaltern voice in the instance of her example of a female freedom fighter, Bhuvaneswari Bhaduri, in India, even by those sharing her status (even her own family) led her to proclaim the voice was inaccessible. This sheer pessimism seems to have abated some by the publication of her later work.

[25] Ashcroft, Griffiths, and Tiffin, *Post-Colonial Studies*, 74.

can return to the days prior to colonization and the colonizer's influence nor can their voice be heard outside of the paradigm of the dominant discourse.

Catachresis. As Spivak challenges Western scholars to recognize their own complicity in the enterprise of imperialism and acknowledges the inability of the subaltern to speak, or rather be heard in any kind of essentialist way, she also further articulates the ways in which the subaltern is able effectively to challenge imperialist claims. While any direct assault on the hegemonic discourse is likely to be dismissed or reappropriated by the dominant discourse, thus neutralizing the challenge of the alternative discourse, Spivak argues that a more effective strategy of engagement is a kind of guerilla attack that can "unsettle the dominant discourse from within."[26] One such method of engagement is through the use of catachresis.

In literature, catachresis is the "abuse or perversion of a trope or metaphor"[27] or a "grammatical misuse of a term."[28] As Spivak applies the word in postcolonial studies, catachresis is "a concept-metaphor without an adequate referent."[29] They are concepts "reclaimed, indeed claimed, as concept-metaphors for which no historically adequate referent may be advanced from postcolonial space."[30] As Leander explains,

> Spivak therefore sees catachresis as a local, tactical maneuver that involves wrenching particular images, ideas, or rhetorical practices out of their place within a particular discourse and using them to open up new arenas of meaning,

[26] Leander, *Discourses of Empire*, 41.

[27] Spivak, *A Critique of Postcolonial Reason*, 14.

[28] Ashcroft, Griffiths, and Tiffin, *Post-Colonial Studies*, 30.

[29] Gayatri Spivak, "Poststructuralism, Marginality, Post-colonialism, and Value," in *Literary Theory Today*, ed. Peter Collier and Helga Geyer-Ryan (Cambridge: Polity, 1990), 225.

[30] Gayatri Spivak, "Poststructuralism, Marginality, Post-colonialism, and Value," 225.

> often in direct contrast to their conventionally understood meanings and functions. Catachresis is an admission of a reality that is inevitable and yet unfair.[31]

For example, in discussions of womanhood, what it means to be normative and female generally must conform to the western ideals of femininity. Catachresis would be the use of the term "womanhood" to assert an alternative normative femininity that stands in direct contrast to the traditional expectations of the western ideal. The same language is used, but it is used in a way that distances the signifier (femininity) from its original referent (western ideal), abusing the metaphor in order to subvert it (offer an alternative norm).[32] In the biblical narrative, one may see catachresis at work in the use of the metaphor of the cross. While in the imperial discourse the cross stood as a sign of oppression, humility, and death to be avoided at all costs, in the discourse of Mark, the cross is to be actively embraced by those who follow Jesus as the liberative act that frees humanity from the powers of darkness and oppression; it is a metaphor for joining Jesus on the way. In this usage, the "catachresis thus implies resistance against the stranglehold of the cross" in imperial discourse and offers a "profoundly subversive" revision of the traditional Roman symbol.[33] Essentially, catachresis is a subversive use of a word in a situation in which "no other word will do, and yet it does not really give you the literal meaning in the history of the language, upon which a correct rather than a catachrestic

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[31] Leander, *Discourses of Empire*, 40.

[32] Hawthorne, "Religion, Gender, and the Catachrestic Demands of Postcoloniality," *Gender and Religion* 3 no. 2 (2013), 183–184.

[33] Leander, *Discourses of Empire*, 247.

metaphoric use would be based."[34] This particular aspect of Spivak's work will prove quite helpful in future discussions of power in this project.

Homi Bhabha

In similar fashion to Spivak, Homi Bhabha would continue Spivak's concern for rejecting the essentialism that results in the binary opposition of colonizer and colonized. Bhabha argued that the lines between colonized and colonizer are actually far more fluid and dynamic than a simple binary opposition between self and "other" would suggest. As Spivak argued that the subaltern could not be heard outside of the ideological discourse that created their status because they had been altered by that discourse, so also according to Bhabha the colonizer cannot go unchanged by the interaction between colonized and colonizer. The two cultures interact in the liminal space between cultures in which cultural change can be effected. This is called hybridity and is based on the related concept of colonial ambivalence that works hand in hand with the process of colonial mimicry/mockery to be discussed below.

Colonial ambivalence. Colonial ambivalence concerns the relationship between the colonial authority and the colonial subjects. As the colonial subjects encounter the colonizing authority, how does one describe their relationship to that authority? Rather than labeling colonized subjects as "complicit" or "resistant," Bhabha recognizes that

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[34] Spivak, "Translation as Culture," *Paralax*, 6:1 (2000), 14. It is also important to point out the slight but significant difference between catachresis and appropriation. While one can appropriate terms from the dominant discourse and utilize and even change them within the counterhegemonic discourse, catachresis goes a step beyond appropriation (where the signifier and referent remain intact in their correlation) to offer a "conscious displacement that is not *merely* a reorganisation (*sic*) or appropriation of the purported normative system; it moves the site of articulation and refuses to cooperate with or to acknowledge the propriety of normative enunciations. It appropriates the metaphors of the oppressor and yet 'abuses' them through interventions that exceed the order of the oppressor." See Hawthorne, "Religion, Gender, and the Catachrestic Demands of Postcoloniality," 185.

each subject is actually some mixture of both; they are in some sense complicit and resistant to the imperial power.[35] Drawing on the term's usage from psychoanalysis in which "ambivalence" is used to describe the "continual fluctuation between wanting one thing and wanting its opposite," Bhabha offers the term "colonial ambivalence" to describe the simultaneous draw to and repulsion from the culture, institutions, and ideology of the empire experienced by the colonial subjects.[36]

Colonial ambivalence on the part of the colonized subjects poses a problem for the colonizer. Rather than colonial discourse creating subjects that seek to mimic the cultural assumptions and actions of the colonizing authority in total (completely complicit subjects), colonized subjects are ambivalent (both complicit and resistant) about their mimicry and thus their actions are never far from mockery that can challenge the dominance of the colonial authority's ideology. For Bhabha, then, though not uncontested by other postcolonial critics, colonial discourse always sows the seeds of its own destruction.[37] While colonial authorities desire the mimicry of the colonial subjects, colonial authorities do not want the colonial subjects to be perfect replicas of the original; that would be far too threatening. Colonial authorities seek to "civilize" the "other" while simultaneously relegating them to perpetual otherness.[38] Thus contained in the very process of colonial discourse, the colonizing authority creates an ambivalent situation that

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[35] Homi Bhabha, *Location of Culture*, (London: Routledge, 1994), 2.

[36] Ashcroft, Griffiths, and Tiffin, *Post-colonial Studies*, 10

[37] Ashcroft, Griffiths, and Tiffin, *Post-colonial Studies*, 11.

[38] Loomba, *The New Critical Idiom*, 171.

undermines its own singular authority.[39] This concept is intimately related to the processes of colonial hybridity and colonial mimicry.

Hybridity and the colonial process. Bhabha's notion of cultural hybridity is built on the premise of Bakhtin's model of linguistic hybridity. According to Bakhtin, it is possible for language to be "double-voiced." Language, even a single sentence, can bear the weight of two ideological systems, two belief systems, two social systems.

> What is a hybridization? It is a mixture of two social languages within the limits of a single utterance, an encounter, within the arena of an utterance, between two different linguistic consciousnesses, separated from one another by an epoch, by social differentiation or by some other factor.[40]

Essentially, language can simultaneously be the same and different. It can sound the same and mean something entirely different.

> It frequently happens that even one and the same word will belong simultaneously to two languages, two belief systems that intersect in a hybrid construction—and consequently, the word has two contradictory meanings, two accents.[41]

This hybridization of language can be a result of organic hybridization such as situations in which new languages develop (i.e. Creole), but it can also result from intentional hybridization in which multiple meanings coexist in a contestatory kind of way. In intentional hybridization, the two points of view, the two meanings are not mixed but are rather "set against one another dialogically."[42] For example, when Bahktin speaks of the use of hybridity in novels, he explains that the voice of an author and the voice of a

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[39] Ashcroft, Griffiths, and Tiffin, *Post-Colonial Studies: The Key Concepts*, 11.

[40] Mikhail Bakhtin, *The Dialogic Imagination: Four Essays*, ed. Michael Holquist, trans. Michael Holquist and Caryl Emerson (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1981), 358.

[41] Bakhtin, *The Dialogic Imagination*, 305.

[42] Bakhtin, *The Dialogic Imagination*, 360.

character in the novel often overlap in a hybrid nature. The character and the author may disagree greatly about the meaning of the speech, but both the intended meaning of the speaker and the challenge of the author are preserved in the text. The two voices "come together and consciously fight it out on the territory of the utterance."[43] In this way, the development of a hybrid discourse creates space in which to challenge the dominant meaning of the language. As Young articulates, "For Bahktin himself, the crucial effect of hybridization comes with the latter, political category, the moment where, within a single discourse, one voice is able to be unmasked the other. This is the point where authoritative discourse is undone."[44] The moment at which discourse becomes double-voiced, it looses the single-voiced authority of the original.

Bhabha appropriates the linguistic model of hybridization as a means of social analysis of colonial situations.[45] The contact between colonial authorities and colonial subjects during colonization results in a liminal space in which colonized and colonizers meet in a dialogical exchange in which the colonized subject can actively challenge the dominant discourse of the colonizers. During this exchange the culture and language of the colonizer is appropriated by the colonized but in very different ways with very different meanings calling into question the hegemony of the dominant discourse and the ideology it propagates.

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[43] Bakhtin, *The Dialogic Imagination*, 360.

[44] Robert Young, *Colonial Desire: Hybridity in Theory, Culture and Race* (New York: Routledge, 1995), 22.

[45] Young, *Colonial Desire*, 22, argues that for Bakhtin, the undoing of the singular authority of language always involves a concrete social dimension. Bhabha, therefore, is making a small leap to transfer the notion of hybridity from the written word to the social location itself.

In other words, cultural hybridity is the result of two cultures, in this case an imperial power and the colonized people, interacting in the liminal space between cultures and thereby affecting and changing one another. As the colonized embrace the language of the colonizer, they immediately begin to alter the meaning of words and the symbolic universe of the colonizer. Once the colonial authority looses the power over the univocal discourse, it "enables a form of subversion" of the dominant discourse "that turns the discursive conditions of dominance into the grounds of intervention."[46] The breaking of the hegemony of the dominant ideology allows for the resistance, however subtle, of oppressed people. Hybridization "terrorizes authority with the *ruse* of recognition;" the colonial voice sounds familiar and yet very different.[47] The same words and same symbols embody a very different ideology—challenging the very authority of the dominant discourse that offered the language by which the counter-discourse was established. In early Christianity the use of the phrase "son of God" becomes one example of such a process. While the term in Roman ideology reflects the unique position of the divine authority of the emperor, the term in early Christianity reflects the unique authority of Jesus. In both contexts the term connects the leader of a kingdom to divine authority, but in Christian discourse it also clearly undermines the imperial discourse of the unique, divine nature of the emperor. By breaking the stranglehold of the Roman discourse over the language of divine sonship, Christians were able to assert a

[46] Bhabha, *The Location of Culture*, 112.

[47] Bhabha, *The Location of Culture*, 115.

counter narrative of salvation from oppression that still sounds very similar to the language of the empire.[48] The same words embody two very different ideologies.

The process of hybridization is a highly contested theory within postcolonial studies. Some have suggested that the theory neglects the power dynamic at play between colonized and colonizer. By asserting that the colonizer is affected by the colonized, does it in fact deny the power differential between the two? While one can imagine a scenario in which that may be argued, it is not necessary to deny the power differential between the two to assert that a less powerful entity can in fact affect the more dominant power. This power over the dominant force does not deny the power differential but rather embodies the very nature of discourse in which a give and take affects both parties even if unequally.

This process of hybridization calls into question the ability of the imperial culture to remain 'pure' while simultaneously altering native culture in such a way that native essentialism can no longer be maintained.[49] In this context the ideology of the colonizing force can be undermined through mimicry and mockery.

Colonial mimicry/mockery. Mimicry is the process by which the colonized subjects repeat the defining qualities and character of the imperial power as embodied in the colonial discourse, the discourse that seeks to "civilize" the "other." As the colonizing authority encourages the replication of their culture, the colonized subjects mimic the

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[48] One can see here the similarities between catachresis and hybridity. Catachresis is, however, a more direct form of subversion. Hybridity often does not simply serve as subversion but creates a third space in which essentialist claims are challenged and an alternative space/ideology emerges in place of both native and colonial ideology. Mimicry becomes one mechanism of hybridity in which the colonized embraces the language of the colonizer and utilizes it in ways both recognizable and unrecognizable to the colonizer. Catachresis moves beyond mimicry, removing the signifier from the signified altogether, rendering a term or metaphor unrecognizable in colonial space.

[49] Young, *Colonial Desire*, 27.

actions, cultural habits, language, etc. of the imperial power. The colonized subjects, however, are unable to replicate the original in its purity and perfection. Every action is merely a copy, a "blurred copy," of the original.[50] The colonized subject looks "almost the same, but not quite."[51] This copy is just far enough from the original to pose a significant threat to colonial dominance. The colonizing authority can no longer be sure of their control of the actions of the colonized subjects nor can they categorize them as wholly "other." Further, colonial mimicry is never far from colonial mockery; the "blurred copies" can easily be seen as a parody of the actions and ideology of the empire. The parody of the colonial subjects threatens the dominance of the imperial ideology and its control of the colonial subjects.

Mimicry, therefore, functions in two ways. First, it functions as a means of social control by the colonizing force. The imperial power imposes a language, a form of governance, and social customs on a group of people, who in order to survive, mimic the systems of the imperial power. This alters the "purity" or the essence of the native culture and renders the colonial others as "recognizable" to the colonial authority.[52] It gives the colonial authorities power over the colonial subjects. Simultaneously, however, as the subjects mimic the colonial authority, they undermine the dominant discourse of the colonial authority and their own "otherness" and call into question the power of the colonizing authority to control the actions of the colonial subjects. It is not that the colonial subjects offer outright resistance, but they continually assert an identity that is not quite that of the colonizer; they experience "double vision which in disclosing the

[50] Samuel, *A Postcolonial Reading of Mark's Story of Jesus*, 27.

[51] Bhabha, *The Location of Culture*, 86.

[52] Bhabha, *The Location of Culture*, 86.

ambivalence of colonial discourse also disrupts its authority."[53] Thus Bhabha concludes, "mimicry is at once resemblance and menace…the ambivalence of colonial authority repeatedly turns from mimicry—a difference that is almost nothing but not quite—to menace—a difference that is almost total but not quite."[54]

Summary

These theorists are quite distinct from one another with reference to their context and those who influenced their work. At many points they even disagree with one another about the goals and methods of postcolonial criticism. Said, Spivak, Bhabha and those who have developed and critiqued their work, however, find rather broad agreement on the primary concerns of postcolonial theory. First, postcolonial theorists emphasize the critical engagement with texts that speak to the ideology of empire. Second, they seek to address the resistance to such ideology by means of counter ideologies, whether through outright resistance or more subtly through catachresis, ambivalence, mimicry, and mockery. Finally, theorists emphasize the need for the analysis of power relations that undergird ideologies of empire and resistance and determine their efficacy.

Expansion of a Theory

In the years since the rise of postcolonial criticism, many literary theorists have come to recognize that the discussions taking place in the context of postcolonial studies were relevant not only to the topic of European expansion and decolonization but also to

[53] Bhabha, *The Location of Culture*, 88.

[54] Bhabha, *The Location of Culture*, 86, 91.

the study of earlier empires.[55] Long before England, France, and Spain became powerful empires with dreams of expansion, Rome spread her wings across the Mediterranean world into Asia, Africa, and even northward into Europe. They colonized territories and spread their language, their government, their gods and mythology, and their ideology to regions far and wide. They controlled far-reaching lands and people through the power of the sword and the power of ideology. Studies on colonization and Roman imperial expansion have yielded fruitful results concerning the means by which communities were changed under colonizing forces, the ways in which locals responded to colonization through accommodation and resistance, and the ways in which imperial ideology took root in colonized communities.[56]

In recent years, a number of biblical scholars have also recognized the relevance of concerns such as imperialism, colonization, and power relations for the biblical text and the relevance of the language of postcolonial theory as a means to engage these topics of discussion. Those analyzing the biblical text through the lens of postcolonial

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[55] Bart Moore-Gilbert, *Postcolonial Theory: Contexts, Practices, Politics* (London: Verso, 1997), 12.

[56] See for example, Stephen Dyson, "Native Revolt Patterns in the Roman Empire," in *Principate*, vol. II3, Aufstieg und Niedergang der Romischen Welt (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1975), 138–75; Greg Woolf, "The Formation of Roman Provencial Cultures," in *Integration in the Early Roman West: The Role of Culture and Ideology*, ed. Jeannot Metzler et al., Dossiers d'Archéologie du Musee National d'Histoire et d'Art IV (Luxembourg: Musee National d'Histoire et d'Art, 1995), 9–18; Dick Whittaker, "Integration of the Early Roman West: The Example of Africa," in *Integration in the Early Roman West: The Role of Culture and Ideology*, ed. Jeannot Metzler et al., Dossiers d'Archéologie du Musee National d'Histoire et d'Art IV (Luxembourg: Musee National d'Histoire et d'Art, 1995), 19–32; Simon Keay, "The Role of Religion and Ideology in the Romanization of the South-Eastern Tarraconensis," in *Integration in the Early Roman West: The Role of Culture and Ideology*, ed. Jeannot Metzler et al., Dossiers d'Archéologie du Musee National d'Histoire et d'Art IV (Luxembourg: Musee National d'Histoire et d'Art, 1995), 33–44; Nicholas J. Cooper and Jane Webster, *Roman Imperialism: Post-Colonial Perspectives: Proceedings of a Symposium Held at Leicester University in November 1994*, Leicester Archaeology Monographs 3 (Leicester: School of Archaeological Studies, University of Leicester, 1996); D. J. Mattingly and Susan E. Alcock, eds., *Dialogues in Roman Imperialism: Power, Discourse, and Discrepant Experience in the Roman Empire*, JRArS 23 (Portsmouth, RI: Journal of Roman Archaeology, 1997); Mattingly David J., *Imperialism, Power, and Identity: Experiencing the Roman Empire*, Miriam S. Balmuth Lectures in Ancient History and Archaeology (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2011).

theory, usually approach the text, broadly speaking, in one of two ways. First, some scholars approach the text from the perspective of the modern era, attempting to speak to the ways in which the text addresses concerns of modern colonialism and decolonization and the related issues of sexism, violence, and the struggle for liberation. Among these excellent projects are the works of R. Sugirtharajah who has significantly influenced the field of biblical studies in his work on postcolonial theory and the biblical text.[57] He defends the contrapuntal reading strategy of Said in order to interrogate interpretations of the biblical text and the biblical text itself and thereby identify the colonial ideology embedded in the biblical texts. He further places the text in conversation with eastern religious texts in order to challenge the totalitarian claims of the biblical narrative.[58] Postcolonial readings, for Sugirtharajah, are resistant discourses that work against the assumptions and ideologies of colonizers.[59] Among those scholars with similar aims for the postcolonial analysis of the biblical texts is Musa Dube who argues that postcolonial feminist analysis must include a direct confrontation with domination and colonization as it strives for liberation.[60] While the text of the New Testament was written by those under the imperial domination of Rome, the text has been used by countless colonizers to

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[57] See for example, R. S. Sugirtharajah, "Biblical Studies after the Empire: From a Colonial to a Postcolonial Mode of Interpretation," in *The Postcolonial Bible*, ed. R. S. Sugirtharajah (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1998), 12–23; R. S. Sugirtharajah, *Exploring Postcolonial Biblical Criticism: History, Method, Practice* (Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell, 2012); R. S. Sugirtharajah, "Textual Cleansing: A Move from the Colonial to the Postcolonial Version," *Semeia* 76 (1997): 7–19.

[58] Sugirtharajah, *Exploring Postcolonial Biblical Criticism*, 123–175.

[59] Sugirtharajah, "Biblical Studies after the Empire," 16.

[60] See for example, Musa Dube, *Postcolonial Feminist Interpretation of the Bible* (St. Louis: Chalice Press, 2000); Musa Dube, "Scripture, Feminism and Colonial Contexts," *Concilium* 3.3 (1998): 45–55.

subjugate colonized peoples.[61] For Dube, the goal of postcolonial biblical criticism is the reclamation of the liberative power of the text by and for those who have been oppressed by it.[62] With similar concerns, Mary Ann Tolbert's essay "*When Resistance becomes Repression*" takes a similar stance with reference to the Markan Gospel claiming, Mark's Gospel "would have functioned as resistance literature against the colonial powers who controlled their economic, religious, and political destiny" and "this historical construction can empower me to resist the oppression, hatred, and violence used today."[63]

This particular project, however, falls more in line with a second group of scholars employing postcolonial theory who have sought to address the concerns of Roman imperialism as they relate to the historical circumstances of the New Testament era and its textual settings with less concern for the effects on modern imperialism. These scholars have pointed out the importance of addressing imperial ideology and colonial situations when interpreting the text. The biblical text and the stories within it are a product of colonial pressures and perhaps also resistance to those pressures. The authors of the New Testament wrote from within a context of imperial colonization. The gospels are stories about a time and place of imperial colonization, and the stories of the text are colored by these experiences. This fact results in the need for the evaluation of social pressures like that of colonization in order to understand fully the meaning and function of the text. A handful of scholars have addressed these concerns within the Gospel of

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[61] Musa Dube, "Go Therefore and Make Disciples of All Nations (Mt 28:19A): A Postcolonial Perspective on Biblical Criticism and Pedagogy," in *Teaching the Bible: The Discourses and Politics of Biblical Pedagogy* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 1998), 230.

[62] Dube, "Go Therefore and Make Disciples of All Nations," 232.

[63] Mary Ann Tolbert, "When Resistance Becomes Repression: Mark 13:9–27 and the Poetics of Location," in *Reading From This Place: Social Location and Biblical Interpretation in Global Perspective*, ed. Mary Ann Tolbert and Fernando Segovia (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1995), 336.

Mark, some even from the perspective of postcolonial criticism, with varying—often conflicting—results. Those evaluating the Gospel of Mark in relation to imperialism and colonialism largely fall into three categories.

Mark as an Anti-Imperial Text of Resistance

Among those works engaging with the Markan narrative from a first-century perspective of colonialism are the works of Richard Horsley. He argues that in a field where theological and spiritual concerns have often won the day, the significance of the colonial situation and the colonial relationship in which the New Testament texts emerged are often neglected and overlooked by interpreters.[64] In his analysis of colonial relations and the impact of empire on the text of the First Gospel, Horsley concludes that Mark is a document of liberation in which Jesus pushes against the Roman occupation in an attempt to recover the true voice of the Jewish community. The story calls for people in all times to embrace an alternative social order that has always been the goal or the fulfillment of Israel's history.[65] As the subjected people embrace their indigenous traditions, rather than the exploitative politics of local ruling elite and western empire, they engage in a revitalization of Israelite society.[66] Horsley's evaluation of the Markan Gospel offers a helpful insight into the political nature of Jesus's message and actions among the people. As Jesus worked and moved among the people, he issued a challenge to both the local ruling elite and the imperial powers. In this way the document functions

[64] Richard Horsley, "Submerged Biblical Histories and Imperial Biblical Studies," in *The Postcolonial Bible*, ed. R.S. Sugirtharajah (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 1998), 154–55.

[65] Horsley, "Submerged Biblical Histories," 157.

[66] Horsley, "Submerged Biblical Histories," 158, 162.

in a liberative capacity for the hearers encouraging a return to essentialist cultural traditions (essentialist claims) that stand in direct contrast to imperial ideology.[67]

Horsley's work offers an important critique of work carried out by Markan scholars who have too often neglected the political aspects of the Gospel's narrative. He also recognizes the affiliation of Jesus with the poor and oppressed in the context of colonization. He does not, however, leave room within his analyses for any real notion of hybridity or the possibility that Mark's Jesus did, in fact, appropriate portions of imperial ideology as he gathered followers and preached a message of egalitarianism. Further, Horsley depends on the social location of the author of Mark and his readers, often failing to engage fully with the textual setting of imperialism in the Gospel and how that setting affects—and even defines—the parameters of the available actions of characters in the text.

Mark as an Imperial Text Confirming Imperial Ideology

At the other end of the spectrum from Horsley's work is the work of Adam Winn. Where Horsley argues that the Gospel of Mark is an anti-imperial text, resisting the imperial ideology of Rome, Winn argues that the Gospel is an imperializing text that, in some ways, confirms the imperial ideology of Rome, at least in its ideal form. In his

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[67] Richard Horsley further expounds this thesis in, *Hearing the Whole Story: The Politics of Plot in Mark's Gospel* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2001). While he does not explicitly claim a postcolonial methodology for this work, the influence of postcolonial reading strategies is clear throughout as he speaks of the imperial situation's effect on the Markan story and the resistance movement found within the text. A number of other scholars have drawn similar conclusions about the anti-imperial nature of the Gospel without the direct aid of postcolonial theory. Ched Myers, for example, was an early voice in this discussion and offered a highly political reading of the Gospel in which the text advocates non-violent resistance to the power structures of the empire that undergird social power structures exploiting the people. While not all scholars advocating the anti-imperial nature of the Gospel have used postcolonial methodologies explicitly, the influence of postcolonial reading strategies' underlying concern for identifying imperial ideologies and the text's means of resistance to that ideology is clear. See, for example, Ched Myers, *Binding the Strong Man: A Political Reading of Mark's Story of Jesus* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1988); Herman Waetjen, *A Reordering of Power: A Sociopolitical Reading of Mark's Gospel* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1989).

dissertation, *The Purpose of Mark's Gospel*, Winn evaluates the setting of Mark's author and audience in order to determine the primary purpose or purposes of Mark's Gospel. He concludes that in light of Vespasian's propaganda concerning a claim to be the fulfillment of Jewish prophecy concerning the Messiah, the author of Mark responds to the Christological crisis by demonstrating that Jesus is, in fact, the legitimate world ruler and Messiah, superior to Vespasian, by countering the imperial claim to authority.[68] He continues this line of inquiry in "Tyrant or Servant?" in which he argues that Jesus upholds many of Rome's ideals of proper leadership in order, "to subvert the power and propaganda of Rome's emperors."[69] In his later work, *Reading Mark's Christology under Caesar*, Winn incorporates the crucifixion into his overall schema more thoroughly. He argues that through the crucifixion, Jesus is

> ironically honored in a traditional Roman way for living out, granted in a radical and extreme way, cherished Roman political ideology… The death of Jesus, likely perceived by some of Mark's readers as a weakness on Jesus' résumé (particularly in comparison to that of Vespasian), is transformed into a strength. Jesus' death is an act of extreme benefaction for his people and embodies the political ideals that were deeply ingrained in Mark's readers.[70]

Thus Roman political ideology (triumph and benefaction) is embodied in and confirmed by Jesus's actions though, admittedly, only in its ideal form. Winn concludes that critique of Vespasian is also a critique of "any world ruler who presumed to hold such power" as

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[68] Adam Winn, *The Purpose of Mark's Gospel* (Tubingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2008), 200.

[69] Adam Winn, "Tyrant or Servant? Roman Political Ideology and Mark 10:42–45," *JSNT* 36 (2014): 349.

[70] Adam Winn, *Reading Mark's Christology Under Caesar: Jesus the Messiah and Roman Imperial Ideology* (Downers Grove: IVP Academic, 2018), 162; cf. Adam Winn, "The Gospel of Mark: A Response to Imperial Propaganda," in *An Introduction to Empire in the New Testament*, ed. Adam Winn (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2016), 104.

only Jesus is pictured as one capable of both living up to and exceeding the audience's political ideals.[71]

While Winn claims it would be a misreading of his argument to say that he claims Jesus *imitates* the Roman emperors and thereby reinscribes imperial authority, Winn openly claims that Jesus does adopt "a positive aspect of Roman political ideology—that is the ideal of a servant and sacrificial leader—to contextualize Jesus' life and death for a Roman audience."[72] He even claims, contra Horsley, "Mark is not anti-imperial, but he is advancing the imperialism of both God's kingdom and the one who bears it, Jesus."[73] Jesus becomes a thoroughly imperializing figure (of God's kingdom) that upholds (and exceeds) the best of Roman ideology while sternly critiquing emperors that fall short of that ideal; in Winn's words: Jesus is "shown to out-Caesar the Caesar."[74] He argues that this subverts the power and propaganda of Rome, but he fails to recognize that he still endorses the imperial ideals thus making Mark an imperializing text of not only the kingdom of God but also, to some extent, of Roman imperial ideology in its most ideal form. Essentially, for Winn, Jesus does not reject imperial ideology whole stock; Jesus critiques for his Roman readers those leaders who do not live up to nor are capable of living up to its fullness.

Mark as Both Resistance and Imperializing Literature

While many authors have argued that Mark is anti-imperial literature concerned with undermining the Roman imperial project—though few utilize postcolonial reading

[71] Winn, "A Response to Imperial Propaganda," 105.

[72] Winn, "Tyrant or Servant?," 349.

[73] Winn, *The Purpose of Mark's Gospel*, 40.

[74] Winn, "A Response to Imperial Propaganda," 102.

strategies in that endeavor—a number of scholars have recognized that there does exist within the Gospel text imperializing claims that bear close resemblance to Roman imperial ideology. The third and final group of scholars recognizes that it is possible to see the text as occupying a middle ground between these two extreme readings, preferring to see the text as one that does mimic a number of the colonizer's imperial tendencies while simultaneously re-envisioning a number of the social and economic premises on which the colonizer's ideology rests. This group tends to be the most thoroughgoing in their application of postcolonial reading strategies and the application of postcolonial categories such as hybridity, ambivalence, mimicry/mockery, and catachresis.

Stephen Moore, one such scholar, has engaged the Markan Gospel in his discussions of colonialism and its importance for the understanding of the New Testament. While his book *Empire and Apocalypse* is not solely focused on the Markan narrative, he does offer a significant contribution to the discussion of Mark in a chapter entitled, "My name is Legion, for we are many: Representing Empire in Mark." Examining Mark 5 and the demoniac Legion, he argues that Mark is an example of Bhabha's theoretical concept of ambivalence. In Mark, there are clear moments of anti-imperial critique as well as moments in which the imperial status quo is maintained. Moore claims, "Mark's attitude toward Rome is imbued with that simultaneous attraction and repulsion—in a word, ambivalence."[75] While Jesus drives "legion" from a man oppressed and Jesus challenges the power of the local elite in his symbolic temple destruction, simultaneously, Mark's Jesus preaches of his own *parousia*—his own

[75] Moore, *Empire and Apocalypse*, 33.

coming with power.[76] "In the end, then, Mark's Gospel refuses to relinquish its dreams of empire, even while deftly deconstructing the models of economic exchange that enable empires, even eschatological ones, to function."[77]

Mark Moore further addresses Jesus's relation to empire in *Kenotic Politics*.[78] Here M. Moore argues that Jesus advocated a political praxis he names "Kenotic Politics'—namely "if he humbled himself through service and suffering, God would exalt him to the highest position."[79] Though many have argued that the "kingdom of God" is a strictly spiritual concept, M. Moore argues that the language of the "kingdom of God" would have necessarily been understood in political terms in the first-century Jewish historical milieu. Jesus advocates another empire—another kingdom—with new rules concerning the means of exaltation but resulting in imperial exultation nonetheless. In this context Jesus challenges the Roman conception of power but ultimately embraces a similar exaltation: kingship and God's empire.

In similar vein to the works of Moore and Moore, Tat-siong Benny Liew offers a straightforwardly postcolonial critique in his article, "Tyranny, Boundary, and Might: Colonial Mimicry in Mark's Gospel" and an expansion of the thesis in *The Politics of Parousia*.[80] Liew argues that Mark's Gospel is an example of colonial mimicry not simply a document of liberation though there are clear examples in the text of such

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[76] Moore, *Empire and Apocalypse*, 29.

[77] Moore, *Empire and Apocalypse,* 44.

[78] Mark Moore, *Kenotic Politics: The Reconfiguration of Power in Jesus' Political Praxis* (London: T&T Clark, 2013).

[79] Moore, *Kenotic Politics*, 63.

[80] Tat-siong Benny Liew, "Tyranny, Boundary and Might: Colonial Mimicry in Mark's Gospel," *JSNT* 73 (1999); Tat-siong Benny Liew, *The Politics of Parousia: Reading Mark Inter(con)textually* (Boston: Brill, 1999).

liberative intensions. While Horsley and Myers argue that Jesus's message calls for the abandonment of coercive strategies for maintaining power, Liew argues that Jesus essentially replicates the binary exclusion model of Rome. Insiders will survive and outsiders will be punished even to the extent of the deprivation of life. Even though Mark's Jesus calls for the inclusion of those who are traditionally outsiders and removes the ethnic boundary between Jew and Gentile as a determinative line for inclusion, Jesus requires absolute faithfulness to his message to be an insider. Those who chose not to follow will be summarily dealt with in the *Parousia*. "Presenting an all-authoritative Jesus who will eventually annihilate all opponents and all other authorities, Mark's utopian, or dystopian vision, in effect, duplicates the colonial (non)choice of 'serve-or-be-destroyed.'"[81] Ultimately, Mark's Jesus replicates the "might is right" philosophy of the Romans by retaining the hierarchical oppression of his kingdom, the attribution of absolute authority to Jesus, and realigning—rather than alleviating—the boundaries of the insider-outsider binary.

S. Moore, M. Moore, and Liew offer a useful corrective to many of the naively positive analyses of Mark's Gospel of liberation and are acutely attune to the function of colonial ambivalence. As people both desire and detest the ideology of the colonizer, it is not too far of a leap from there for the colonized subjects to internalize the ideology of the colonizer and replicate that ideology in their own counter imperial movements. Where Liew fails to convince is what to do with the direct proclamations from Jesus that declare that his kingdom is not like that kingdom in which they live; "it shall not be so among you" (Mk 10:43) was the declaration given by Jesus to those who followed him. When the disciples wished to stand against the Roman forces, Jesus revealed his way to

[81] Tat-siong Benny Liew, "Tyranny, Boundary and Might," 23, 27.

victory through death. Admittedly, the *Parousia* poses significant questions for the nonviolent movement of Jesus and his followers, as S. Moore has also noted, but the second coming should not eclipse the liberative notions of Jesus's message to his followers. Further, while S. Moore and M. Moore offer no clear definition of power, Liew ascribes to a very narrow definition of the meaning of "power." For Liew, "power" is "authority" or "the ability to have one's commands obeyed and followed, or the power to wipe out those who do not," and further "[a]uthority is (over)power(ing); and it demands the submission of everybody, and thus also the annihilation of those who do not submit."[82] There is no conception of power as a means of empowerment, an action devoid of violence, or at least an action not necessitating violence. Within the context of the Markan narrative, one should acknowledge that both are present.

Simon Samuel offers the most comprehensive postcolonial analysis of Mark's Gospel. He attempts to offer a reading of the whole Gospel narrative through the lens of postcolonial reading strategies. Samuel argues that Mark's Gospel is neither an anti-colonial nationalistic discourse nor pro-colonial discourse aimed at imitating Roman imperial discourse. Rather, Mark's Gospel is a discourse that can best "be decoded as a colonial/postcolonial conundrum affiliative and disruptive to both the native and the colonial discourses of power."[83] Jesus attempts to create space for an oppressed, minority group between Roman colonial ideology and Jewish nationalistic discourses.[84] Samuel finds the binary options of pro- and anti-imperial discourse to be inadequate for the

[82] Liew: "Tyranny, Boundary, and Might," 26.

[83] Samuel, *A Postcolonial Reading of Mark's Story of Jesus*, 5.

[84] Samuel, *A Postcolonial Reading of Mark's Story of Jesus*, 4.

analysis of the Gospel when Jesus appears to appropriate portions of each linguistic and cultural system while challenging other portions.

Samuel is unique in his evaluation of the Markan narrative as he claims that the narrative not only eschews portions of the imperial project while embracing others (pro- and anti-imperial), but that the document also resists and accommodates the nationalistic discourse circulating that challenged Roman authority (pro- and anti-essentialism).[85] Samuel sees this most clearly in the opening verse of Mark's Gospel. The notion of "son of God" both plays on the Roman discourse of divine leadership while simultaneously undermining the unique claim to divinity espoused by the emperors. Likewise, the idea of Jesus as Messiah simultaneously invokes the weighted imagery of the Messianic hope while simultaneously creating space for an alternative interpretation of the Messiah.[86]

While Samuel offers the most convincing reading of the colonial situation in relation to Jesus's actions and mission, Samuel fails to address many aspects of the power dynamics at play in the narrative including the impact of Roman ideology on the beliefs of the disciples, the relationship between Jesus and his disciples, and the ways in which Mark 8–10, including the so-called discipleship section in Mark 10, reflect the affiliative/disruptive discourse encoded in the text.

One other voice should be mentioned, though his work pushes at points beyond the bounds of the current study. Hans Leander approaches the Gospel of Mark from the perspective of European colonialism as well as the Gospel in relation to imperial Rome. In *Discourses of Empire*, Leander argues that the interpretation of Mark throughout the

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[85] See also Simon Samuel, "The Beginning of Mark: A Colonial/Postcolonial Conundrum," *BibInt* 10:4 (2002), 405–419.

[86] Samuel, "The Beginning of Mark," 415–417.

nineteenth century was heavily influenced by the colonial situation of its interpreters, whether they be part of the colonial authority or the colonial subject. He, therefore, seeks to demonstrate the colonial perspective at work in the interpretation of these texts. In the final portion of the book, of greatest interest for this project, Leander turns his attention to the influence of empire on the writing of the text itself. While sympathetic to the concerns for the ways the text of Mark may have imperializing tendencies, he finds that it was the text's interpretation, usage, and relation to European colonialism that accounts for much of the so-called imperializing tendencies in the text. Unlike Liew, Leander is less convinced of the imperializing nature of the Gospel itself, seeing it rather as a document that seeks to form the identity of a community on the fringes of imperial society.[87]

There have certainly been a number of other scholars who have engaged in the evaluation of the text of Mark from the perspective of colonialism and postcolonial reading strategies, but their interactions with the text were more limited, often to a single pericope or chapter in the text, rather than a more comprehensive evaluation of the text.[88] Interestingly, analyses of Mark 8:27–10:45 as a whole are largely absent from the

[87] Leander, *Discourses of Empire*, 6–9.

[88] See for example, Tolbert, "When Resistance Becomes Repression," 334–337, in which Tolbert examines Mark 13 through the lens of postcolonial reading strategies concluding Mark "13:9–27 would have functioned as resistance literature against the colonial powers who controlled their economic, religious, and political destiny. And their resistance would end in victory when those councils, governors, and kings who now persecuted them were in their turn destroyed by an even more powerful ruler, God." (336) Mark becomes a document of resistance to the powers that be but simultaneously embraces an empire, the empire of God. David Joy, *Mark and Its Subalterns: A Hermeneutical Paradigm for a Postcolonial Context* (London: Equinox, 2008), offers a treatment of selected texts from the Markan narrative in order to evaluate the voice of the subalterns present in the text. See also Jim Perkinson, "A Canaanitic Word in the Logos of Christ; or the Difference the Syro-Phoenician Woman Makes to Jesus," *Semeia* 75 (1996), 61–85, who evaluates the story of the Syro-Phoenician woman in the Markan narrative, claiming that a woman "from without" speaks a word to Jesus that must be embraced as a "christic word" forcing readers to consider her place in relation to the dominant discourse, a place that is clearly hybrid in nature.

evaluations of these scholars.[89] While many have spent a great deal of time addressing the passion predictions individually and the discussion of power in Mark 10:32–45, a comprehensive reading of Mark 8:27–10:45 and an analysis of the ways in which these chapters connect with those preceding them is lacking. In particular, Mark 10, especially the early verses, suffers from a lack of attention by those engaging with these interpretive questions of power, colonial influence, and empire. Horsley stands as an exception to this evaluation, arguing that Mark 10 is a collection of teachings that sought to instruct the community concerning the expectations for community living under the egalitarian, essentialist claims of Jesus. While his thesis concerning the composition and content of Mark 10 is cogent within his overall project, he fails to see any sense of imperial influence in the teaching of Mark 10.

An Anachronistic Application of Theory?

Criticism has been levied against postcolonial approaches under the charge that they are historically anachronistic. Since the evaluation of colonial discourses largely developed in the context of the evaluation of literary texts emerging from European colonialism, some worry that the results of the application of theories developed through the study of post-industrial revolution, capitalist societies can bear little relevance to the

[89] Samuel, *A Postcolonial Reading of Mark's Story of Jesus*, 128–134, nearly avoids chapter ten altogether, addressing only the suffering motif in chapters 8–10. Leander, *Discourses of Empire*, 239–254, only addresses one short pericope in the entirety of Mark 8–10: Mark 8:31–9:1. Joy, *Mark and Its Subalterns*, 130–141, offers only a brief overview of Mark 10:17–31. Moore deals significantly with Mark 10:32–45. Liew address portions of Mark 8–10 in passing but does not evaluate this section in total. Winn addresses 8:22-10:52 in chapter 4 of *Reading Mark's Christology Under Caesar*, 89-117, but focuses on the Christological claims made in the text concerning Jesus with a focus on the reception of the first hearers and the ways in which Jesus "out-Caesars Caesar," namely Vespasian (116).

ancient world.[90] While critics are right to assert that industrialist and capitalist assumptions affecting colonial discourse do not have a one for one correlation in the ancient world, the underlying concern for the effects of a colonial empire on conquered people groups has a direct correlation to the ancient world.[91] Rome sought to expand her empire through the use of force, and when colonies and conquered people resisted, they were met with the swift and mighty hand of Rome. Rome dismantled local governance, infiltrated local religious institutions, and shifted the economic climate of the colonized lands. Roman imperial colonialism was "no less politically, economically, and culturally motivated than modern European colonialism."[92] The concerns of modern postcolonial theorists evaluating the effect of European colonialism are, at their base, the same concerns of biblical scholars with reference to Roman colonialism and imperialism. How did the arrival of the colonizer affect local communities? How did the colonized react to the actions of the colonizer? In what ways did they integrate the colonial ideology into their own ideology? To what extent did they resist and in what ways? How do texts reflect these concerns in literary form? To what extent does the historical setting of a text affect the reading of the story (the story the author wants to tell)?

In New Testament studies, critics have long entertained discussions of empire even if they were reticent to explicitly claim the moniker of postcolonial criticism.[93]

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[90] See, for example, David Jobling's critique of *The Postcolonial Bible* in which he challenges the premise of a correlation between the ancient and modern postcolonial programs especially as it relates to the importance of modes of production for modern postcolonial analysis. "The Postcolonial Bible: Four Reviews," *JSNT* 74 (1999), 117–119.

[91] Moore-Gilbert, *Postcolonial Theory*, 12.

[92] Samuel, *A Postcolonial Reading of Mark's Story of Jesus*, 14.

[93] For just a few examples among many excellent volumes, see Richard Horsley, *Jesus and the Spiral of Violence: Popular Jewish Resistance in Roman Palestine* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1993); On

These discussions are at their heart not unrelated—and perhaps not even really distinct from—the concerns of postcolonial theorists. The theoretical work of postcolonial critics provides a vocabulary from which to speak more clearly about the impact of colonization on the writing of and setting of the biblical narratives. Their research can aid biblical scholars in their pursuits to articulate more clearly the historical situation lying at the heart of the biblical narratives and the social implications of that reality.

Certainly there are models of postcolonial criticism that directly reflect the concerns of the modern audience or author, critiquing modern colonialism by means of an appeal to the writings of the New Testament. While there is most certainly a place for this kind of criticism, it is not the primary concern of this project. The concern of this project is to articulate the historical power structures operative in the narrative of the Gospel of Mark in order to speak about the disciples' conceptions of power and the response of Jesus to their understanding. Since the characters in the narrative are placed in the literary setting of Roman colonial rule, the terminology and focus of postcolonial reading strategies, taken in tandem with literary theory, offer a language by which we can articulate the historical influences operative on the characters in the narrative and thereby evaluate the ideology of power presented in the narrative.

Distinctiveness of This Study

This study recognizes both imperializing tendencies as well as clear moments of resistance within the Gospel text. I will argue that Jesus, is neither anti-imperial in his

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Mark, Mary Ann Tolbert, *Sowing the Gospel: Mark's World in Literary-Historical Perspective* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1996); Much of Warren Carter's work including, *The Roman Empire and the New Testament: An Essential Guide* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2006); *Matthew and Empire: Initial Explorations* (Harrisburg, PA: Trinity Press International, 2001); *Matthew and the Margins* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 2000).

message nor pro-imperial with reference to Rome. Perhaps it is most helpful to distinguish between the concepts of anti-Roman and anti-imperial. Anti-imperial critique is critical of the concept of empire. Anti-Roman critique is critical of the Roman Empire in particular but not necessarily the concept of empire itself. I will argue herein that Mark's Gospel is anti-Roman in many ways. Jesus responds to Rome's discourse of power by offering a rival discourse of power. This does not, technically speaking, make the Gospel of Mark an anti-imperial text. Jesus advocates throughout the Gospel for the arrival of and challenge of another empire. God's kingdom is pictured as greater than Rome and divinely appointed. The kingdom of God does not deny the concept of empire but rather offers an alternative to worldly empires. The catachrestic vision of power articulated by Jesus stands against the Roman methods of empire, but it does not negate the concept of empire altogether. Since Mark's Jesus is the advocate of a rival empire and rival discourse of power, it would be right to call the Gospel of Mark an imperializing kind of text or, perhaps better, a counter imperial text.

Jesus advocates for an empire that bears some resemblance to the Roman Empire; simultaneously, however, Mark's Jesus calls into question the ideology of power that served as the basis of Roman imperial expansion and domination as well as his disciples' ideology of resistance and inversion. He challenges the dominant discourse of Rome and the local elite, as well as the counter-discourses of local resistance movements. Bearing some similarity to the project of Samuel, this project extends the analysis to include the ideological orientation of the disciples and their role in the narrative, a more thorough analysis of Jesus's explanation and use of power in Mark 8:27–10:45, and the function of Mark 10 in Jesus's overall project of reframing the function and meaning of power. The

next chapter will look exclusively at the idea of power—its function and scope—and chapters 4–5 will examine the ways in which Jesus offers an alternative means of resistance to colonial forces through the emergence of a new empire that holds a very different ideology of power.

This study also focuses exclusively on the narrative of Mark's Gospel rather than the social location of the author and audience. While the author's and audience's experience of colonialism most certainly affected the composition of the narrative and its meaning, this project seeks to evaluate the ways in which power is used and conceptualized at the story level of the narrative where Jesus and his disciples themselves live under the yoke of imperial Rome and in relationship to resistance movements of the people. Postcolonial theory offers a language by which to describe Jesus and his disciples' relationship to and understanding of power. Unlike the previous studies, focusing on specific topics or varied passages, this project seeks to offer a detailed reading of Mark 8:27–10:45 focusing on the issue of power in a colonial context throughout, paying specific attention to the importance of and content of Mark 10.

Conclusion

Within the context of postcolonial criticism, questions of power occupy pride of place throughout. The colonizer exerts power over the colonized in order to secure governance through the creation of knowledge about the "other." The colonized subjects, standing in a position of ambivalence in relation to their colonizer, embrace portions of the imperial ideology while resisting imperial ideology through a number of mechanisms including mockery and catachresis. For this study, the postcolonial reading strategy, taken in tandem with literary criticism, provides the theoretical framework in which to

discuss the views of the disciples, the process of resistance in the narrative, and the means by which Jesus counters the ideological basis of power of both Rome and his followers.

In the next chapter, we turn our attention to questions concerning power. What is power? What ideology of power is the Roman Empire propagating and how does she do so? Next, how does the colonial ideology of power affect the characterization of the disciples in the narrative, specifically with relation to the issues of resistance to colonial authority? In relation to this evaluation of power in the colonial context, the subsequent argument will seek to demonstrate that Mark's Jesus offers an alternative ideology of power to that which undergirds his disciples' resistance and the colonial enterprise of the Roman Empire, shedding light on the connection between Mark 1:1–8:26 and Mark 8:27–10:45.

CHAPTER THREE

Power in Theory and Practice

At the heart of postcolonial reading strategies is the concept of power. Power over others initiated the colonial enterprise, and power to resist the colonial enterprise spurred on colonial critique. The methodological orientation of the project, postcolonial theory, requires a clear understanding of the term power. Throughout the first two chapters, the word "power" is used repeatedly, and while this word is often used in casual conversation without explanation, it is not as simple as it appears at first blush. What is actually under discussion when the word "power" is utilized? Even within the field of biblical studies, authors utilize this term with little to no explanation, making the assumption that readers share their unstated presuppositions about the application of the term. Confusion concerning these assumptions, the very meaning of the word, and the function of power in social relations can make communication cumbersome at best and incoherent at worst. Since postcolonial studies has, at its core, a concern for the use and misuse of power and the ways in which power is accessed and opposed, it is necessary to offer a functional conception of power that is capable of encompassing a wide range of power relations including oppression and resistance. This chapter begins with a look at various definitions theorists have offered for the word "power" in scholarly discourse and from this discussion outlines a set of characteristics that describe power to help readers understand the usage of this term in the current project. The chapter then turns toward the ways in which power is utilized and communicated through cultural discourses of power

and ideology, specifically addressing the discourse of power in the imperial ideology of the Roman Empire. This chapter ends with an eye to the concept of resistance to imperial discourses of power and a sketch of various forms of resistance to Roman imperialism in Palestine in the first century. This chapter lays the theoretical foundation for the narrative evaluation of the disciples' understanding of the appropriate application of power as influenced by the colonizing power of Rome and an evaluation of the message of Mark's Jesus in light of the same.

Conceptualizing Power

Vagueness of Power and Difficulty of Defining the Word

Defining the concept of power is a particularly arduous task that has demanded the attention of scholars. Roscigno once commented, "There is perhaps no construct in sociology as theoretically ambiguous yet simultaneously appealing as power."[1] This appeal has led to a vast collection of literature in which social and political theorists have struggled to articulate a theory of power to which most theorists can offer their assent. They debate what it means to say that an individual or institution "has power" or "exerts power" over another. What does it mean to say that one "has the power" to resist other claims to power? What are the various aspects of power? To this day, there is no commonly accepted definition of power in the fields of social and political theory. As Steven Lukes commented, "among those who have reflected on the matter, there is no agreement about how to define it, how to conceive it, how to study it…These are endless debates about such questions, which show no sign of imminent resolution, and there is

[1] Vincent Roscigno, "Power, Revisited," *SocFor* 90.2 (2011): 349.

not even agreement about whether all this disagreement matters."[2] There are, however, a few points of agreement among the vast number of commentators. The following points of commonality serve as a base line for a conception of power that can illuminate the power structures of the Greco-Roman world and the biblical narrative.

An Important Caveat: Bias of Power Studies

Among those attempting to define power, there is general agreement that personal interests and social location drive much of the work on power. One's questions and concerns often determine one's definition and focus. If one desires to speak of the effects of domination, one's definition of power tends to reflect the negative conceptions of power characterized as domination. If one seeks to speak of the power of resistance, definitions must account for the ability of social actors to empower one another and assert the importance of collective action, often separating "power" from other topics like "authority," "legitimation," and "domination." Definitions and studies are driven by motive. Edward Said once commented, "it is sensible to begin by asking the beginning questions, why imagine power in the first place, and what is the relationship between one's motive for imagining power and the image one ends up with."[3] Essentially each person who comments on power has a reason for doing so. In keeping with Said's focus in his work on the effects of colonialism, this study seeks a broad conception of power that applies to both the effects of domination as well as the collective action of resistance and empowerment. In light of the debate concerning the definition of power, this project does not seek to offer an all encompassing definition applicable in all cases, but rather

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[2] Steven Lukes, *Power: A Radical View*, 2nd ed. (London: Macmillan Education, 2005), 61.

[3] Edward Said, "Foucault and the Imagination of Power," in *Foucault: A Critical Reader*, ed. David Couzens (Oxford: Blackwell, 1986), 151.

seeks to conceptualize power in a way that draws on the most common points of agreement among theorists that allows for a discussion of colonial power structures and the response of colonized subjects to these structures.[4]

Power is Relational

The first major point of commonality is that power is highly relational. Power exists and functions in the context of human relationships.[5] Kathy Ehrensperger writes, "there is one aspect on which most participants in the debate seem to be more or less in agreement; it is barely contested that to speak of power implies a reference to social relations and to social interaction. Power is perceived as relational in that it significantly influences or emerges out of, interactions among agents."[6] Power only exists in the context of a relationship, one person or institution acting or having the capacity to act in such a way as to affect a change in something else regardless of the basis on which that power rests.

While most commentators agree that power is relational, they do not yet agree as to the nature of the relational action. The primary question is whether social power acts upon actors or upon the field of action available to those actors. In the language of social theory, these two ideas are often spoken about in relation to, though not identical to, the two conceptual terms "power over" and "power to." Morriss helpfully articulates this

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[4] Steven Lukes, "Introduction," in *Power*, ed. Steven Lukes (New York: New York University Press, 1986), 4–5.

[5] It should be made clear that while the term "power" can refer to a wide variety of experiences—natural phenomenon, for example—in this project the concern is only with the social phenomenon of power. Only theorists addressing this specific aspect of power are addressed herein and even then only representatively as a comprehensive address of theorists and theories of power would require a volume (or volumes) of its own.

[6] Kathy Ehrensperger, *Paul and the Dynamics of Power: Communication and Interaction in the Early Christ-Movement*, LNTS 325 (New York: T&T Clark, 2007), 18–19.

distinction, claiming that "power to" is the power to do things, namely the capacity to affect outcomes, and "power over" is to have power over others, namely to act to affect others.[7]

Early commentators on the subject of power generally fall into the category of "power-over." They talk about power as synonymous with words like "influence" or "control."[8] The emphasis rests on the ability of an actor to make decisions that affect another actor; thus positive power differentials are determined by who prevails in the process of decision-making. Dahl and Polsby argue that power is essentially the ability to win in conflict situations, hence the idea of power as "power-over."[9] These early models of power tended to equate power with the rule of law and thus the state—the ones who have the ability to impose their will upon their subjects.[10] These early theorists, however, failed to realize that a primary function of power is the ability not only to win in conflict, but also to erect barriers that prevent others from exerting their influence. Among the most influential commentators to recognize this difficulty concerning the subject of power was Max Weber. Weber defined power as, "the probability that one actor within a social relationship will be in a position to carry out his own will despite resistance, regardless of the basis on which the probability rests."[11] Weber assumed that power

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[7] Peter Morriss, "Steven Lukes on the Concept of Power," *Political Studies Review* 4.2 (2006): 127.

[8] Robert Dahl, "The Concept of Power," *Behavioral Science* 2.3 (1957): 202; Richard Emerson, "Power-Dependence Relations," *ASR* 27.1 (1962): 32; Bertrand Russell, "The Forms of Power," in *Power*, ed. Steven Lukes (New York: New York University Press, 1986), 19; N.W. Polsby, *Community Power and Political Theory* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1963); R.E. Wolfinger, "Nondecisions and the Study of Local Politics," *American Political Science Review* 65 (1971): 1063–80.

[9] Dahl, "The Concept of Power," 207; Polsby, *Community Power and Political Theory*, 3–4.

[10] Amy Allen, "Power, Subjectivity, and Agency: Between Arendt and Foucault," *IJPS* 10.2 (2002): 132.

existed in the context of relationships and generally was expressed in the context of conflict—as the earlier commentators—but he also recognized the fact that power must attempt to ensure that resistance is rendered futile. Barriers must be put in place to ensure that compliance is guaranteed; this can take the form of established authority, coercion, force, or manipulation.

Lukes carries this idea one step farther, pointing out that the greatest exercise of power is that situation in which one can shape the desires of others so profoundly that people want what another wants them to want. In other words, A influences B so significantly through discourses of power that B actually wants that which A has determined to accomplish, thus ultimately removing resistance altogether.[12] Lukes questions, "is it not the supreme exercise of power to get another or others to have the desires you want them to have—that is, to secure their compliance by controlling their thoughts and desires?"[13] While these definitions rightly point out the relational quality of power, they fail to account for the possibility of positive power relations in which A might exercise power over B in the best interest of B in which B has no desire to resist A. For example, a parent exercises power over a child but does so in the child's best interest, and therefore, the child has no need to resist. These theorists also fail to acknowledge resistance as power. Even though it is possible for a resistance movement to fail in accomplishing its task, does that mean that the resistance was "powerless"? While Lukes originally claimed that power is essentially when A can affect B in a manner contrary to

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[11] Max Weber, *Economy and Society: An Outline of Interpretive Sociology*, ed. Guenther Roth and Claus Wittich (New York: Bedminster Press, 1968), 53.

[12] Lukes, *Power: A Radical View*, 21–22.

[13] Lukes, *Power: A Radical View*, 27.

B's interests, he would later argue that perhaps this statement had gone too far; power could be exercised in such a way that it need not run counter to the interests of B.[14] For A to exert power in such a way that the effects run counter to B's interests—working rather to B's disadvantage—should instead be called domination. Domination is a particular expression of "power-over" but by no means the only expression.[15] Feminist scholars have pointed out, just because one does not win out in decision making by affecting another actor in a predetermined way, it does not mean that power is altogether absent.[16]

This assertion led a number of theorists to reformulate what power is, if it is not simply the ability to ensure that one's will is carried out over the will of another. An alternative proposal spoken in various voices is that power should be understood as "power-to" rather than "power-over." One has power when one has the capacity to act to achieve one's own ends, to achieve what one sets out to do without necessarily acting upon other actors directly. Among the primary advocates of this idea is Hannah Arendt. Arendt argues that power is simply the ability to act, especially in concert.[17] She considers domination by violence not to be power at all but rather one end of a spectrum on which power stands in contrast at the other end.[18] Her theory advocates for the importance of collective action, as power only remains in existence as long as the group

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[14] Lukes, *Power: A Radical View*, 30.

[15] Allen, "Power, Subjectivity, and Agency," 125.

[16] Amy Allen, *The Power of Feminist Theory: Domination, Resistance, Solidarity* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1999); Iris Marion Young, *Justice and the Politics of Difference* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1990); Anna Yeatman, "Feminism and Power," in *Reconstructing Political Theory: Feminist Perspectives*, ed. Mary Lyndon Shanley and Narayan (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1997), 144–57.

[17] Hannah Arendt, *On Violence* (New York: Harcourt, Brace, & World, 1969), 44.

[18] Arendt, *On Violence*, 53–56.

remains a collective entity.[19] The point at which the collective action ceases, power ceases as well.

Arendt's theory certainly provides a helpful corrective to "power-over" models in that it acknowledges the power of collective action that can act as a form of resistance in the face of domination. In contrast, while she rightly notes the need for a definition of power to be able to account for the power of collective action to achieve a purpose, she fails to convince that domination is not a form of power but rather something altogether different from it. As Ehrensperger points out, Arendt limits the scope of power to the public political sphere and thereby disallows a discussion of domination, violence, coercion, or even family and workplace issues as interpersonal power dynamics.[20]

Another very prominent theorist who advocates for a "power to" model, Michel Foucault, like Arendt, argues that power is not simply "who wins out in decision making." Unlike Arendt, however, Foucault argues that power far exceeds the limits of collective action and is far more pervasive than Arendt allows. For Foucault, power is, "the way in which certain actions may structure the field of other possible actions."[21] Foucault continues, "What defines a relationship of power is that it is a mode of action that does not act directly and immediately on others. Instead it acts upon their actions: as action upon an action, on possible or actual future or present actions."[22] Power relations

[19] Arendt is not alone in her approach to power as a function of collective action. For many, however, the collective action relies on class-consciousness, a factor absent in the ancient world. For example, a similar approach focused more specifically on the collective action of a social class, see Nicos Poulantzas, "Class Power," in *Power*, ed. Steven Lukes (New York: New York University Press, 1986), 144–55.

[20] Ehrensperger, *Paul and the Dynamics of Power*, 24–25.

[21] Michel Foucault, *Power*, ed. James Faubion, trans. Robert Hurley (New York: The New Press, 1994), 343.

[22] Foucault, *Power*, 340.

do not force subjects to act in a certain, predictable manner; rather, they act in such a way as to alter the scope of available future actions. The active agent in a power dynamic does not force the hand of another; rather, he/she limits the field of possible choices so as to offer a limited set of alternatives to the subject/s.

In a similar vein, Giddens conceptualizes power simply as the "transformative capacity of human action."[23] Power is, at its core, a capacity within a social relationship that may or may not be utilized in a given instance but always has the ability to influence the actions of actors. Power does not guarantee the desired outcome of the actor nor does it act directly upon another actor. For Giddens and Foucault, power acts upon possible actions and enacts limitations upon the available actions of another.

Where Giddens—and to some extent, Foucault—is most helpful, is that his definition, "the transformative capacity of human action," describes "power" as a *capacity* to act. It does not commit what social theorists call the "exercise fallacy" of power in which power only exists when it is utilized.[24] It is conceivable that one could have the ability to act upon the actions of others but refuse to do it; a capacity does not necessitate that one will act. For example, should a government desire to suppress anti-government protests, the government has the capacity to act by deploying troops or providing other incentives to discourage protests, but it is conceivable that the government might believe their capacity to act to end the protests would only further disrupt an already fragile social situation. They have the capacity to act, but they need not necessarily utilize that capacity in every situation. Further, the very knowledge that one

[23] Anthony Giddens, *New Rules of Sociological Method: A Positive Critique of Interpretative Sociologies* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1993), 117.

[24] Giddens, *New Rules of Sociological Method*, 118.

has the capacity to act may be enough to shape the field of action of another. Continuing the previous example, the protesters are aware of the power of the government and vice versa. Protesters know what government officials are capable of doing, and therefore, the protesters refrain from excessively violent action despite the inaction of the government agents. Just because one can act does not mean one will. The mere ability to act may be powerful enough to encourage a certain degree of compliance.

In summary, power exists in the context of human relations. While power is a capacity to affect the actions of others, the only way to express this capacity is in the context of human relations. One cannot act without affecting the available field of action of another. As Giddens argues, power "is a property of interaction, and may be defined as the capability to secure outcomes where the realization of these outcomes depends upon the agency of others."[25]

Power, however, cannot be reduced to a singular aspect of interaction between two entities; it is, rather, defined by a variety of factors that result from an imbalance of economic position, personal benefit, personal attributes, social position, or other intangible aspects of human interaction. Power belongs not only to the one who wins in decision making, but also to the one who can alter the actions of the one who wins in decision making. This view of power highlights the "reciprocal, asymmetrical character and more precisely, the relative power of actors in relation to and in interaction with, one another."[26] The basis of power is multifaceted but is grounded in social interaction between related parties.

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[25] Giddens, *New Rules of Sociological Method*, 118.

[26] Roscigno, "Power, Revisited," 353.

In many ways, the idea of power-over and power-to are interrelated. If one can have power over another individual, he/she has the power to see a set of ends realized. In social relationships, if one has the ability to achieve a desired end, he/she has power over the available field of action of another person. While it is certainly possible to have the power to achieve some end without power over another person or their actions, in the context of social power, this does not seem to be the case. To the extent that power is relational, to have power to (the capability to act) is to have power over in some form (the ability to limit the available actions of others), even if in a limited way.[27]

The All-Pervasive Nature of Power

The second major point of agreement concerning power to be considered herein is that power exists in all human interactions. Power is not limited to the political sphere; it is present whenever two or more agents encounter one another. Essentially, power is unavoidable. Every human relationship has some dynamic of power at play. According to Giddens, "Even a transient conversation between two persons is a relation of power, to which the participants may bring unequal resources."[28] Foucault claims, "Power relations are rooted deep in the social nexus, not a supplementary structure over and above 'society' whose radical effacement one could perhaps dream of. To live in society is, in any event, to live in such a way that some can act on the actions of others. A society without power relations can only be an abstraction."[29] In essence, for every action there is a reaction. Power is the ability to craft actions so as to influence the reactions of others.

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[27] Allen, *The Power of Feminist Theory*, 8; Ehrensperger, *Paul and the Dynamics of Power*, 30.

[28] Giddens, *New Rules of Sociological Method*, 59.

[29] Foucault, *Power,* 343.

People craft words to elicit particular responses from recipients. Information is offered at particular moments in a conversation to determine, hopefully, how it will be received. These methods apply to everything from law enforcement officers defending lethal action before a review committee to a child explaining why he/she missed curfew. Foucault states this most succinctly, "Power relations are rooted in the whole network of the social."[30] As far as an action is a social event taking place in the construct of a social relationship, as defined by Weber as a "behavior of a plurality of actors in so far as, in its meaningful content, the action of each takes account of that of the others and is oriented in these terms," there is a dynamic of power that is inherent to the situation.[31] Power is deeply rooted in all human interactions.

Further, it should be noted that power relationships are not static relationships. Rather, power relationships are limited by the context of the situation in which they are active. As Pfeffer comments, "A person is not 'powerful' or 'powerless' in general, but only with respect to other social actors in a specific social relationship."[32] To clarify, power is not an object to be acquired but rather a state of affairs in which one person or group possesses a positive power differential due to some advantage of knowledge, resource, or other form of persuasion. A person powerful by virtue of excessive resources in the political sphere may not be powerful in her home. A person with power based on the advantage of knowledge is no longer powerful when expected to work in a field with which he lacks familiarity.

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[30] Foucault, *Power*, 345.

[31] Max Weber, *On Charisma and Institution Building* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1968), 7.

[32] Jeffrey Pfeffer, *Power in Organizations* (Marshfield: Pitman Publishing, 1981), 3.

Moral Neutrality of Power

The third major point of agreement among theorists concerns the moral neutrality of power. While the aforementioned limitation of power based on context may seem simple and straightforward, the connection between power and the relationships in which power operates is far more complicated and dynamic. Due to the possible range of conclusions to which power can bring a person or institution, it is often feared. Oppression and domination have too often been the results of ill-placed trust in institutions and persons of power. Power, however, need not always be characterized as negative.[33] The concepts of power and power relations are value neutral in and of themselves but are seldom if ever neutral in their actual implementation. Power cannot be oppressive and divisive in its very nature or no institution could ever remain a stable entity; nor can power be a solely positive endeavor by definition as evidenced by the clear abuses of power around the globe. In fact, the very use of such a phrase as, "the abuse of power" suggests that people recognize power is neither always abused nor always properly adjudicated. Foucault writes,

> If power were never anything but repressive, if it never did anything but to say no, do you really think one would be brought to obey it? What makes power hold good, what makes it accepted, is simply the fact that it doesn't only weigh on us as a force that says no; it also transverses and produces things, it induces pleasure, forms knowledge, produces discourse. It needs to be considered as a productive network that runs through the whole social body, much more than as a negative instance whose function is repression.[34]

[33] Allen, "Power, Subjectivity, and Agency," 132–33, notes that Arendt and Foucault here agree on the subject of power. While they disagree adamantly on the definition of power, they both argue that as long as power is considered in terms of the powerful versus the powerless, power will always be repressive and always say, "no."

[34] Foucault, *Power*, 120.

Power is part of a dynamic discourse in which all actors are formed and participate, some for good, some for naught. Power then operates productively rather than exclusively as repression, working "'through' individuals rather than against them and helps constitute the individual who is at the same time its vehicle."[35] Garland and Foucault both agree that subjects are formed in and by their relations of power.

Further, it is not necessary to assume that the relational connection presupposed by power must be conflictual. Some commentators have assumed that this is what Weber had in mind when he articulated his highly influential definition of power as the, "probability that one actor within a social relationship will be in a position to carry out his own will despite resistance, regardless of the basis on which this probability rests."[36] Weber's definition does not, however, assume conflict in power relations; Weber simply acknowledges that should conflict arise—"*despite resistance*"—powerful entities have the capacity to have their will realized. Power, by its nature, does pertain to human interests, and therefore, may result in a conflict of interest leading to a conflictual relationship, but *division* of interest is not always present. To quote Giddens, "power is a feature of every form of human interaction, division of interest is not."[37] Power is relational by nature but not necessarily conflictual.

The most helpful conceptions of power are those that are able to account for what Thomas Wartenberg calls the "fundamental duality of 'power.'"[38] One must "resist the

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[35] David Garland, *Punishment and Modern Society: A Study in Social Theory* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1990), 138.

[36] Weber, *Economy and Society*, 53.

[37] Giddens, *New Rules of Sociological Method*, 118.

[38] Thomas Wartenberg, *The Forms of Power: From Domination to Transformation* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1990), 17.

impulse to collapse power into either domination or empowerment but, instead, [highlight] the complicated interplay between these two modalities of power."[39] Power is, at the same time, capable of being oppressive and liberative, capable of causing both division and solidarity, capable of resulting in positive or negative forms of transformation. By acknowledging the duality of "power," one can identify power in both an instance in which one resists but fails to accomplish a goal—as every action affects others' actions—as well as an instance in which one asserts a kind of power that is foreign to or unrecognizable as "power" in a particular social context—consider the "power" of self sacrifice as an alternative to violence. Therefore it could be said, there is no such thing as absolute powerlessness. So long as one has the capacity to act in a way that transforms the actions of another by opening or closing metaphorical doors of action, one has and uses power.

Hack Polaski and Leander further develop the idea of the neutrality of power in their discussions of power relations as a discourse. A discourse is "a system for determining what gets said, a system for the production of knowledge and the transmission of that knowledge in language"[40] or a "system of statements and social practices within which the world becomes known and subjects are formed...that includes linguistic as well as extralinguistic acts."[41] Hack Polaski claims that discourse, in this case a discourse of power,

[39] Allen, *The Power of Feminist Theory*, 8.

[40] Sandra Hack-Polaski, *Paul and the Discourse of Power* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1999), 37.

[41] Hans Leander, *Discourses of Empire: The Gospel of Mark from a Postcolonial Perspective*, SemeiaSt 71 (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2013), 10; See also Ernesto Laclau, *New Reflections on the Revolution of Our Time* (London: Verso, 1990), 100.

> is less what is said than control over what may be said; control, it should be noted, that sometimes operates by repression or exclusion (such as censorship) but much more often operates in a positive mode, by making certain questions possible and their answers sensible, by encouraging the disciplines and institutions which in turn sustain the discourse, and by failing to generate the questions for which the discourse has no answers.[42]

Thus a discourse of power, which for Polaski is sheer redundancy as every discourse is in some sense a discourse of power, can be oppressive or productive, a quality not determined by the presence of the discourse but by the actions and methods of that discourse.

Summary

In light of these three points of commonality among most theorists, a working conception of power to aid in this discussion of power structures and relations in the biblical narrative of Mark should account for the relational character of power, the pervasive nature of power, and the moral neutrality of power. Giddens' discussion of power offers a helpful description of power that may serve as a helpful shorthand conception of power for this study. Giddens calls power "the transformative capacity of human action." Humans in relation to one another act in ways that limit the available field of action of others. This capacity to transform the actions of others does not mean that the outcome is always predictable or as desired. While power may be more than the transformative capacity of human action, it is certainly not less. This shorthand phrase, the transformative capacity of human action, will be used to refer to the concept of power throughout this project.

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[42] Hack-Polaski, *Paul and the Discourse of Power*, 37.

Discourse, Ideology, and Power

Relationship Between Discourse, Ideology, and Power

One final aspect of power that requires attention is the relationship between power, discourse, and ideology. Ideology is another term, like power, that is difficult to define but is intimately related to the ideas of power and discourse (discourse, defined previously as "a system for determining what gets said," comprised of linguistic and extralinguistic acts.)[43] Those who participate in the discourse rarely recognize the boundaries of the discourse; they simply acknowledge some questions as natural, possessing clear answers, and they render unanswerable questions within the discourse as nonsensical and without value.[44] Relatedly, ideology can be loosely defined as "the capacity for some social actors to make their own interests appear to be universal interests, to be 'natural' or the only way imaginable."[45] In other words, ideology is "a system of ideas, values and norms which structure human behavior and thought" that "underlies and defines the whole socio-cosmic order…a set of cultural ideas the function of which is to idealise [sic] or mystify social and economic relations…ideology is thus not only connected with culture, but equally with social power relations."[46] The capacity to shape ideology and ensure the hegemony of the discourse in which that ideology is propagated is based on relations of power and assumed inequities of power. The person

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[43] Hack-Polaski, *Paul and the Discourse of Power*, 37.

[44] Hack-Polaski, *Paul and the Discourse of Power*, 38.

[45] Hack-Polaski, *Paul and the Discourse of Power*, 38; built on Anthony Giddens, *Central Problems in Social Theory* (London: Macmillan, 1979), 6.

[46] Martin Millett, Nico Roymans, and Jan Slofstra, "Integration, Culture, and Ideology in the Early Roman West," in *Integration in the Early Roman West: The Role of Culture and Ideology* (Luxembourg: Musee National d'Histoire et d'Art, 1997), 2.

or persons in positions of authority attempt to ensure that the discourse renders unanswerable and nonsensical, queries that might call into question the universal character and universal appropriateness of the interests upheld by the ideology that is propagated by that discourse of power.

Ideology is not, at its base, however, an attempt to defraud a group of people or coerce people into believing in some imaginary world. The more powerful do not merely impose a system of thought onto the less powerful; rather, subjects are "born into" ideology.[47] People embrace an ideology because it offers a sense of identity and provides a sense of security through the creation of social norms. "In other words, the crucial question about ideology is not whether it is 'real' or 'false' but how it comes to be believed in, and to be lived out."[48] Ideology shapes subjects through their experiences of discourses of power through a process called interpellation in which subjects internalize the dominant values of their society.[49] Althusser argues that ideology represents and reflects the human relationship to the conditions of existence; it is a representation of one's relationship to the world that formed one as subject.[50] A subject does not always recognize the ways in which it was formed by the ideology present in the discourse of power; ideology "hides its own tracks, so to speak, making it impossible for subjects

[47] Bill Ashcroft, Griffiths Gareth, and Helen Tiffin, *Post-Colonial Studies: The Key Concepts*, 2nd ed. (London: Routledge, 2001), 203.

[48] Ania Loomba, *Colonialism/postcolonialism*, 2nd ed., The New Critical Idiom (London ; New York: Routledge, 2005), 30.

[49] John McLeod, *Beginning Postcolonialism*, 2nd ed. (New York: Manchester University Press, 2010), 44.

[50] Louis Althusser, "Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses," in *Lenin and Philosophy and Other Essays*, trans. Ben Brewster (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1971), 162–165.

constituted by it to think outside its categories."[51] Thus, ideology is a powerful force. It shapes human belief and behavior, sometimes so subtly the subject does not recognize its effects.

Power, Discourse, and Ideology in Postcolonial Theory

Postcolonial theorists have explored the connection between power, discourse, ideology, and postcolonial theory in great detail.[52] In the context of the colonial enterprise, colonizers seek to ensure that the colonial values, traditions, and cultural expectations are taken as normative values by the colonized community. The process of normalization of colonial values takes place in the context of the discourse of power that directly benefits the colonial elite. Questions that challenge the normative status of colonial values and expectations that are incapable of being answered by the discourse alienate the colonized and push the colonized to the periphery of power. Ideology attempts to ensure that people see few ways to counter the power of the "other," and they instead begin to embrace the "truth" of the "other" as their own. While violence often finds a place in the colonization effort, it need not be the only means of controlling a

[51] Hack-Polaski, *Paul and the Discourse of Power*, 40.

[52] See for example, McLeod, *Beginning Postcolonialism*, 44–63; Ashcroft, Gareth, and Tiffin, *Post-Colonial Studies: The Key Concepts*; Loomba, *Colonialism/postcolonialism*, 44–71; Homi K. Bhabha, *The Location of Culture* (London: Routledge, 1994); Roberto Rivera, *A Study of Liberation Discourse: The Semantics of Opposition in Freire and Gutierrez* (New York: Peter Lang, 2004); Teun Van Dijk, "Ideology and Discourse Analysis," *Journal of Political Ideologies* 11.2 (2006): 115–40; Carl Olsen, "Politics, Power, Discourse and Representation: A Critical Look at Said and Some of His Children," *MTSR* 17.4 (2005): 317–36; Althusser, "Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses"; Antonio Gramsci, *Selections from the Prison Notebooks* (London: Lawrence and Wishart, 1971); David Mattingly, *Imperialism, Power, and Identity: Experiencing the Roman Empire* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2011); Stephen Dyson, "Native Revolt Patterns in the Roman Empire," in *Principate*, vol. II3 of *Aufstieg Und Niedergang Der Romischen Welt* (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1975), 138–75; D. J. Mattingly and Susan E. Alcock, eds., *Dialogues in Roman Imperialism: Power, Discourse, and Discrepant Experience in the Roman Empire*, JRArS no. 23 (Portsmouth, RI: Journal of Roman Archaeology, 1997); Millett, Roymans, and Slofstra, "Integration, Culture, and Ideology in the Early Roman West"; Tim Whitmarsh, *Greek Literature and the Roman Empire: The Politics of Imitation* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001).

conquered people. Ideology is meant to create "consent" of the masses by, "creating subjects who 'willingly' submit to being ruled."[53] One can exercise power—in keeping with the conception provided earlier—through violence but one can also, and perhaps with greater long term efficacy, limit the actions and thereby the resistance of others through ideological suppression. The colonizer offers an ideological system that renders their ways normative and simultaneously attempts to dismiss and downplay the incompatible aspects of the "other."

Despite the great force of ideology propagated through discourse, it does not mean that resistance is nonexistent. The powerful do seek to render resistance futile through their relationships of power, but it does not always mean they are wholly successful at accomplishing this task. As noted above, power is not a commodity but rather a capacity to limit the available field of action of another; thus the response of others is not predetermined or guaranteed. The response is limited not determined. Historically, resistance continues to be levied against the powerful, challenging the normative status of ideological claims and offering answers for questions that are usually deemed nonsensical by the discourse in which they participate. This, however, is no easy task. Colonized people are expected to embrace the social norms and beliefs of the colonizing power, becoming subjects in the process of the discourse—the point of ideology in the first place. The problem is that the colonizing power wants the subject to be simultaneously recognizable and distinctly "other." Hybridization requires that the colonial power seek to impose their beliefs and social norms as just that—normative. The colonized people, however, are acutely aware that while these beliefs may be

[53] Loomba, *Colonialism/postcolonialism*, 30; Loomba is discussing the work of Antonio Gramsci, *Selections from the Prison Notebooks*.

“normative” to the colonizer, they—the “other”—are not. Since “social realities, including social conflicts, are grasped by human beings via their ideologies, then ideologies are also the site of social struggles.”[54] Therefore, it is in the fertile space between “recognizable” and “other” that the seeds of resistance can grow into live possibilities.

It is in this fertile space between “recognizable” and “other” that the Jesus of Mark’s Gospel speaks to a group of followers. He calls them to think beyond the normative values of Roman society propagated through the ideological apparatuses of the Romans and the local elite. Despite all attempts to normalize the Roman claim to power and the means by which she secures power, the disciples are called to resist Roman applications of power, opting for an altogether different application of power for a very different empire—the kingdom of God.

Power, Discourse, and the Roman World

If Rome seeks to normalize her beliefs about power and to whom it belongs and benefits through ideological propagation, and it is to be argued that Mark’s Jesus responds to these applications of power especially in Mark 8–10, a discussion of the ways in which power is understood and expressed ideologically by the colonial power of imperial Rome proves necessary. In the context of the Roman Empire, the demonstrations of power are varied and far-reaching. As noted previously, a discourse of power is comprised of both linguistic and extralinguistic acts. Rome’s application of power is no exception. There were both linguistic and extralinguistic aspects to Rome’s ideological assertion of power and the right to power. In what follows, a selective examination of

[54] Loomba, *Colonialism/postcolonialism*, 29–30.

both linguistic aspects of power—texts and other written sources and their interpretations—and extralinguistic aspects of power—building projects, institutional structures, archaeological data, and social expectations—is offered as a starting place for understanding power in the Roman conception. By examining the imperial claims to power and the imperial ideological apparatuses of power, it will become clearer the ways in which Rome sought to silence, or at least marginalize, other voices that attempted to offer a competing discourse. Further, a discussion of the ways Rome understood power and disseminated her ideology in a discourse of power through linguistic and extralinguistic means offers a starting point from which to evaluate the message of Mark's Jesus concerning the meaning and application of power in the Gospel.

Expressions of Power in the Roman Empire

To begin, we examine the linguistic aspects of Roman power in which Roman insiders declared thoughts and beliefs about Roman power and its embodiment in Roman mythology and history. This section will address the umbrella concept of rhetoric as a starting place for a discussion of linguistic aspects of power before turning attention to specific textual conceptions of power in Roman written discourse. While certainly not a comprehensive treatment of written sources, this section means to offer a conceptual overview of the function of rhetoric in the process of ideological formation as well as the function of the foundational mythology in the Roman discourse of power.

Linguistic Aspects of Power

Rhetoric as a Means of Power. To understand any aspect of Roman writing, an understanding of Roman rhetoric and its origins proves beneficial. The rhetoric of Rome finds its origins in Greece. Early on, many Romans saw Greek rhetoric as a threat to Roman values and a Roman way of life.[55] Pliny the Elder claims Marcus Cato, in speaking of Greeks and their literature, declared, "they are a quite worthless people, and an intractable one, and you must consider my words prophetic. When that race gives us its literature it will corrupt all things."[56] This initial resistance to Greek literature and rhetorical techniques is understandable. Literary writing, especially in this period, was deeply connected to the process of identity formation.[57] That which is written is that which forms social, cultural, and political identity.

Due to the connection between Greek rhetorical efforts and Greek identity, many efforts were made at first to limit the power and influence of Greek rhetoric, even going so far as to ban Greek rhetorical practices in Rome.[58] When the attempt to censor failed and the influence of rhetoric grew, a new political entity began to realize the possibilities

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[55] Joy Connolly, "The New World Order: Greek Rhetoric in Rome," in *A Companion to Greek Rhetoric*, ed. Ian Worthington (Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2007), 141–146; cf. George Kennedy, *The Art of Rhetoric in the Roman World, 300 BC-300 AD* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1972), 40. See Suetonius, *Rhet*. 1.

[56] Pliny the Elder, *Nat*. 29.14, (Jones, LCL)

[57] Whitmarsh, *Greek Literature and the Roman Empire*, 2, 19. Whitmarsh even goes so far as to claim that literary creations were a central component to the affirmation of Greekness for Greeks under Rome, and the rise of the Second Sophistic is a response to Roman power in which the cultural activity of writing becomes a way to contest power.

[58] Richard Enos, *Roman Rhetoric: Revolution and the Greek Influence* (Prospect Heights: Waveland Press, 1995), 14; cf. M. L. Clarke, *Rhetoric at Rome: A Historical Survey* (London: Routledge, 1996), 10–13.

for political and social power inherent in rhetoric.[59] While the Greeks utilized rhetoric to reinforce their political structure and aims, Rome would transform the purpose of rhetoric from its use as an affirmation of political structure to its use an educational tool. While this may appear to be a turn away from political power, education can be a powerful political tool. If one desires to control the populous and set limits on the political imagination, one begins with the minds of the young. Education is a prime tool for political and social control. Teach people how to speak and one simultaneously teaches them what can be said within the limits of the political and social discourse. Pedagogical training attempts to ensure the discourse remains limited and univocal. In Rome, a well spoken, well-trained man could find a source of power in rhetorical skill.[60] Practically speaking, rhetorical skill resulted in social reputations that led to political careers.[61] Thus rhetoric functioned only indirectly as a source of political power in Rome but directly as a source of cultural power, enshrining the ideology of the burgeoning empire in the educational system.[62]

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[59] Connolly, "The New World Order," 141, 161. Connolly notes specifically, "one sign of Rome is the desire to impose limits on a world that defies them, and not only through armed resistance. Greek rhetoric at, in and through imperial Rome offered a universal language of limits."

[60] See for example Janet Huskinson, "Elite Culture and Identity of Empire," in *Experiencing Rome: Culture, Identity, and Power in the Roman Empire*, ed. Janet Huskinson (London: Routledge, 2000), 95–124.

[61] Enos, *Roman Rhetoric*, 25–32. Cicero is a prime example of one who gained social power through rhetorical skill that resulted in his own election to he consulship in 63 BCE. Cicero utilized the power of the spoken word to make inroads into the political sphere. Others would follow suit, using the power of rhetorical skill to overcome inferior birth, lack of military prowess, and financial disadvantage. See also Suetonius, *Rhet*. 1.

[62] Enos, *Roman Rhetoric*, 37; Clarke, *Rhetoric at Rome*, 19 even notes that even during the republic, "the divorce between school teaching and the practice of the courts, which later became notorious, was already showing itself."

By the time of Augustus, "fluency in Greek prose was valued by many prominent Romans as a sign of cultural refinement."[63] Patronage in Greek and Latin rhetoric ensured that epideictic praise rained down upon those in positions of authority and ensured that those with rhetorical skill served the aims of the empire.[64] As far as the empire was concerned, rhetoric was no longer about defending or prosecuting a crime or injustice; it was rather speech and writing about culture and history, defending Rome as the bringer of peace and culture.[65] As Kennedy notes, "[Roman rhetoric] united and stabilized the Roman world and created ideals and symbols which were long influential…the result was a golden age of literature which combined traditional rhetorical techniques and the new persuasive symbols of Augustus into a permanent expression of Roman ideals."[66] Rhetoric became the means by which the Roman poets and historians communicated the ideology of empire.[67]

Language of Power. The ideology of empire and the empire's conception of power are communicated in various ways in the Roman writings. The language surrounding the concept of power is the most obvious means of broaching this topic. In the Roman writings, two terms are commonly used to speak of the power of an

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[63] Enos, *Roman Rhetoric*, 66.

[64] Enos, *Roman Rhetoric*, 70–75.

[65] Enos, *Roman Rhetoric*, 117; This is not to say that legal advocacy was no longer a feature in the imperial period, (see J.A. Crook, *Legal Advocacy in the Roman World* (London: Duckworth, 1995)) but rather the practice of rhetoric by the empire was aimed toward establishing imperial discourse.

[66] Kennedy, *The Art of Rhetoric in the Roman World, 300 BC-300 AD*, 384.

[67] This is not to claim that rhetoric was not used as a means of resistance. The Greeks, Jews, and eventually, the Christians, would use rhetorical techniques as a means of resisting empire. In the context of the imperial elite, however, rhetoric was used a means of enshrining imperial ideology. Among those living on the periphery of power, rhetoric would be utilized to propagate an entirely different ideology utilizing the methods of empire. In other words, rhetoric itself would be appropriated by those resisting imperial power.

individual. The first is *potestas*. *Potestas* carries the connotation of a "right to power." This form of power rests on an institution for its legitimation such as holding a political office or other governmental position. It does not rely on personal prestige for its basis or continuation. The second term, *auctoritas*, however, relies to a great extent on the prestige of an individual. *Auctoritas* carries the connotation of "weight" or "clout." This aspect of power speaks to the "weight" of one's influence. This form of power increased or decreased based on the perception of others. It cannot be mandated; it requires voluntary allegiance of those on whom it was exerted. Merits must be demonstrated or *auctoritas* is lost.[68]

While political position may endow one with the right to power, it is far less likely to engender good will or a desire to follow than power based on demonstrated merit. In *Res gestae divi Augusti*, Augustus is said to have grown in *auctoritas* to a point that *potestas* was no longer needed (34).[69] Augustus refused new titles and honors, essentially refused claims to *potestas*, resulting in an increase in *auctoritas* for his humility and virtue.[70] Augustus, however, does not abandon all titles and does not grant to the people at home and abroad the right to determine his right to rule. Ultimately, even titles he resisted at first were placed upon him later. *Potestas* and *auctoritas* go hand in

[68] Timothy Brookins, "'I Rather Appeal to Auctoritas': Roman Conceptualizations of Power and Paul's Appeal to Philemon," *CBQ* 77 (2015): 306–307; Karl Galinsky, *Augustan Culture: An Interpretive Introduction* (Princeton, N.J: Princeton University Press, 1996), 14.

[69] In recent years there has been some resistance to this reading. See for example, Gregory Rowe, "Reconsidering the Auctoritas of Augustus," *JRS* 103 (2013): 1–15. Rowe argues that *Res gest. divi Aug.* 34 should be read as lamenting Augustus's lack of *potestas* as opposed to lauding his wealth of *auctoritas*. He essentially reads the text with a different emphasis. Rowe's approach to *Res gest. divi Aug. 34*, however, remains a minority opinion.

[70] Brookins, "I Rather Appeal to Auctoritas," 313–314.

hand.[71] *Auctoritas* increased the legitimacy of one's claim to *potestas*; *potestas*, meanwhile, created the pressing need to demonstrate one's virtue.[72]

In truth, the language used to speak of power is far reaching and extends well beyond the terminology of words traditionally translated as "power." *Auctoritas* and *potestas* certainly shed light on the discussion concerning various aspects of the perception of power terminology in the eyes of the Greco-Roman people. Power, however, is neither communicated nor displayed exclusively through vocabulary. The way authors portray those in power through their actions, their honors, and even their shortcomings as well as the way authors connect those in power to events in history, mythology, and current social situations tell the careful reader as much as, perhaps more, how they understood the "transformative capacity" of those in power. In the discussion of mythology, for example, the poets rarely utilize the terminology of power; the stories they recount, however, most certainly communicate power claims concerning those in positions granting *potestas* and reinforce claims to *auctoritas* made by the ruling elite. The poets and historians further reinforce the conceptual overlap between *auctoritas* and *potestas* through their discussions of history, culture, and current events.

Writers of and for the Empire. During the era of the empire, imperial writers were expected to utilize their skills for the enhancement of the reputation of Rome and for the

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[71] While Galinsky may go too far in claiming *auctoritas* is central to the foundation of the principate, the meaning of *auctoritas* in the Roman world holds true and would have been understood in the broader Greco-Roman world. Even in his critique of Galinsky, Syme, and others, Rowe concedes to the general meaning of the concept of *auctoritas* advocated by these scholars. He simply argues *auctoritas* does not serve as the sole or primary basis of authority for the emperor. *Auctoritas* and *potestas* were complimentary features of Augustan rule rather than conflictual elements. See Rowe, "Reconsidering the Auctoritas of Augustus"; J.A. Crook, "Review: Augustan Culture. An Interpretive Introduction," *JRS* 87 (1997): 287–88.

[72] Brookins, "I Rather Appeal to Auctoritas," 307.

propagation of the imperial discourse.[73] While the poets were not mere puppets of the empire, slavishly repeating the imperial propaganda for the masses, they did offer ideological support for the discourse of power operative in the empire. Writers for the empire did not simply react to culture, but rather actively shaped it through their work.[74] A significant facet of the imperial discourse of power created by the imperial writers was the act of myth making, and a great deal of what the Roman writers said about power came in the form of myth making.[75] Lincoln, speaking of myth making, claims myth, "misrepresents the ranking it offers as the product of nature and necessity rather than as a contingent set of human preferences advanced by interested actors…this misrepresentation of culture as nature is an ideological move characteristic of myth" and it, "purportedly establishes how things are and must be."[76] The writers for the empire contributed to a discourse of power that argued for a Roman supremacy that emerged as a result of the natural order of the cosmos.

The poet, Virgil, for example, utilized his immense skill in the Aeneid to develop the mythological basis for Augustus's rule and by extension those after him. The Aeneid recounts the great tale of Rome's origins. Aeneas escapes Troy to embark on his family's imperial destiny, the foundation of the eternal city. This text became foundational to Augustan ideology ensuring hearers would connect Augustus to Virgil's sympathetic

[73] By "imperial writers," I mean those writers who wrote from the perspective of or for the benefit of the colonizing agent rather than those who wrote from the perspective of or for the benefit of those living on the periphery of power, namely the colonized.

[74] Galinsky, *Augustan Culture*, 246.

[75] W.V. Harris, *Roman Power: A Thousand Years of Empire* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2016), 9.

[76] Bruce Lincoln, *Theorizing Myth: Narrative, Ideology, and Scholarship* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1999), 149.

rendering of Aeneas. Virgil transformed Aeneas's primary trait from prowess to a warrior defined by his piety, evoking images of Augustus's own moral renewal project.[77] Similarly, the text foreshadowed Augustus by employing images of Aeneas as the builder of a great race (*Aen*. 1.33), the great coming ruler (*Aen*. 4.229), and the unifier of Italy (*Aen*. 12.190). While not an allegory, the hearers of the text would be unlikely to miss the allusions to their emperor. The work ultimately established Augustus's rule as fated since the days of the Trojan War, a rule standing peacefully within the line of the Caesar.[78]

> From this noble line shall be born the Trojan Caesar, who shall extend his empire to the ocean, his glory to the stars, a Julius, name descended from great Iulus! Him, in days to come, shall you, anxious no more, welcome to heaven, laden with Eastern spoils; he, too, shall be invoked in vows. Then wars shall cease and savage ages soften; hoary Faith and Vesta, Quirinus with his brother Remus, shall give laws. The gates of war, grim with iron and close-fitting bars, shall be closed; within, impious Rage, sitting on savage arms, his hands fast bound behind with a hundred brazen knots, shall roar in the ghastliness of blood-stained lips.[79]

Further, Virgil declared Rome's empire would extend beyond its current bounds to the ends of the earth. Augustus, the son of god, and his heirs would enlarge this empire and establish a golden age of Rome.

> Lo, under his auspices, my son, shall that glorious Rome extend her empire to earth's ends, her ambitions to the skies, and shall embrace seven hills with a single city's wall, blessed in a brood of heroes; even as the Berecyntian mother, turret-crowned, rides in her chariot through Phrygian towns, happy in a progeny of gods, clasping a hundred grandsons, all denizens of heaven, all tenants of celestial heights. Turn hither now your two-eyed gaze, and behold this nation, the Romans that are yours. Here is Caesar and all the seed of Iulus destined to pass under heaven's spacious sphere. And this in truth is he whom you so often hear promised you, Augustus Caesar, son of a god, who will again establish a golden age in Latium amid fields once ruled by Saturn; he will advance his empire beyond the Garamants and Indians to a land which lies beyond our stars, beyond the path of

[77] Kathleen Lamp, *A City of Marble: The Rhetoric of Augustan Rome* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 2013), 14; Gail Armstrong, "Sacrificial Iconography: Creating History, Making Myth, and Negotiating Ideology on the Ara Pacis Augustae," *R&T* 15 (2008): 344.

[78] Lamp, *A City of Marble*, 15.

[79] Virgil, *Aen*. 1.285–96 (Fairclough, revised by Goold, LCL).

> year and sun, where sky-bearing Atlas wheels on his shoulders the blazing star-studded sphere. Against his coming both Caspian realms and the Maeotic land even now shudder at the oracles of their gods, and the mouths of sevenfold Nile quiver in alarm. Not even Hercules traversed so much of earth's extent.[80]

Virgil further declared Rome's responsibility to rule her empire well: "you, Roman, be sure to rule the world (be these your arts), to crown peace with justice, to spare the vanquished and to crush the proud."[81] Virgil's act of myth making established Augustus as the powerful and logical end of centuries of waiting for a leader to arise and bring stability, power, and peace.

Through Aeneas, Virgil also created for Augustus a lineage reaching back to the mythical founders of Rome. From Aeneas's descendants came forth Rhea Silvia, the mother of Rome's founder. Rhea gave birth to Mars's children, Romulus and Remus. Romulus would ultimately found Rome and kill his brother, taking sole leadership of Rome. Playing on this connection, Dio suggests Augustus actually preferred the title "Romulus" to "Augustus," but by and large the Senate disagreed.[82] The Aeneid established the divine connection between Aeneas, Romulus, and the Julian line and thus validated the worldwide rule of Augustus's descendants.[83] The poem grew in popularity as the imperial elite promoted it so that, "The great poem was soon as well known in Egypt as in Rome, and its famous lines were appearing as much in graffiti as in the

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[80] Virgil, *Aen*. 6.780-803 (Fairclough, revised by Goold, LCL).

[81] Virgil, *Aen*. 6.851-853 (Fairclough, revised by Goold, LCL).

[82] Armstrong, "Sacrificial Iconography," 342–43. Armstrong argues that even Augustus knew the title to be too obvious and hubristic. Augustus needed to avoid the pitfalls of his predecessor, specifically the suggestion that he was either a tyrant or monarch. See Dio, *Roman History*, 53.16.

[83] H.P. Stahl, "The Death of Turnus: Augustan Vergil and the Political Rival," in *Between Republic and Empire: Interpretations of Augustus and His Principate*, ed. Kurt Raaflaub and Mark Toher (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1990), 174–175.

schoolrooms."[84] Virgil's work quickly entered into the realm of political discourse, providing a basis for imperial claims to power. The discourse of power now had a mythological foundation anchored in the cosmic divine order.[85] The gods had established the Roman imperial destiny (*Aen*. 1.278).[86] The gods had chosen Augustus and his heirs to rule. The new age had begun (*Aen*. 6.791).[87]

Horace, the lyric poet of the Augustan era, continued the grand tradition of writing for the empire. In *Odes*, Horace lists the heroes of old ending with Augustus. He connects the work of Augustus with the work of the divine Jupiter. As Jupiter brings justice, so Augustus is pictured as the bringer of justice upon the earth and the renewer of the ancient arts (*Carm*. 4.15). Horace lauds the victories of Augustus and speaks of the wounded pride of the conquered foreign nations (*Carm*. 2.9.16-24). Horace further speaks with adoration on the Augustan policies of social regeneration (*Carm*. 3.24.25-64). In *Carmen saeculare*, Horace speaks of the new age dawning with Augustus. This new age is characterized by morality rather than excessive luxury (*Saec*. 3.3.1-17). Augustus signaled a return to ancient ideals (*Saec*. 17-24). Horace calls upon the gods to

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[84] N.T. Wright, *Paul and the Faithfulness of God* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2013), 1:307; Bruce Longenecker, "Peace, Prosperity, and Propaganda: Advertisement and Reality in the Early Roman Empire," in *An Introduction to Empire in the New Testament*, ed. Adam Winn (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2016), 21–22, notes that there are 36 citations of the Aeneid in graffiti in Pompeii alone. This outnumbers Homer. While the number of references might have to do with school children scribbling their writing exercises on the walls, it still shows the influence of the text in bolstering imperial ideology. As noted above, that which is used in education forms students.

[85] For a more in depth discussion see, Paul Zanker, *The Power of Images in the Age of Augustus*, Jerome Lectures 16 (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1988), 237.

[86] Longenecker, "Peace, Prosperity, and Propaganda," 21, calls this the pre-story of Rome, and that while it is a painful story, Rome's rule is the guaranteed outcome.

[87] Note also Virgil Eclogue 4.11-17. Here Virgil writes of the coming of a new age and the connection between the leader of that age and the gods. See Bruce Winter, *Divine Honours for the Caesars: The First Christians Responses* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2015), 44–46; Karl Galinsky, *Augustus: Introduction to the Life of an Emperor* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 92–93.

grant the young taintless morals, the old men peace, and the race of Romulus glory and riches. Augustus represents the gods' justice and good will and attempts to ensure the empire follows suit with proper *pietas*. When *pietas* is maintained, the empire remains intact as well. As the gods' representative, Augustus sought to ensure compliance. Like Virgil before him, Horace establishes the connection between Aeneas and Augustus, his rightful heir (*Saec*. 37-60).

The poets were not alone in their adulation of the imperial authority and Rome's great empire. The historians of Rome, while less straightforward and heavy handed in their adulation, tell the story of Rome's foundation, particularly the empire. Velleius Paterculus declared the *Pax Augusta* had spread to the east, west, north, and south, overtaking the world. This great peace kept the world safe (*Roman History*, 2.126.1-4). Livy's history, while slightly less overt in its praise of the empire, also takes on a patriotic and moral tone.[88] He recounts the examples of men of renown and virtue that made Rome great. His emphasis rests on the significance of moral virtue for resulting greatness. He laments the people of his own generation had failed with reference to virtue and "can bear neither its vices nor their remedies."[89] This downfall cries out for a deliverer, a new age. While Livy was a friend of Augustus, he did not declare Augustus to be the remedy to Rome's moral failing. Portions of Livy might be described as "for Augustus" but other portions are simply shared assumptions about the world that explain why Augustus was so readily accepted by the people.[90] Nevertheless, Livy's work leaves

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[88] Ronald Syme, *The Roman Revolution* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1939), 463.

[89] Kennedy, *The Art of Rhetoric in the Roman World, 300 BC-300 AD*, 422.

[90] Galinsky, *Augustan Culture*, 285; Gunther Gottlieb, "Religion in the Politics of Augustus: Aeneid 1.278–91, 8.714–23, 12.791–842," in *Vergil's Aeneid: Augustan Epic and Political Context*, ed.

open the story of a new era, articulating the need for Augustus's program of moral renewal.[91] In addition to these great writers of Roman mythology and history, many others upheld Roman values as universal values, Roman culture as universal good.

It should be noted, while many writers participated in the Roman discourse of power through their work—and profited greatly from it—not every author upheld the Roman party line.[92] While the poets who found favor in imperial Rome wrote to encourage virtue, piety, and valor, Ovid, for example, wrote of illicit love and even poked fun at the Roman military complex (*Am*. 1.9.1).[93] Augustus did not appreciate his work, and because of an unnamed error on Ovid's part and Augustus's desire to divert attention away from the scandal of the moral failings of his own family, Augustus turned his ire toward Ovid. Ovid ran counter to the expectations of a Roman poet in the empire and as a result was exiled. There was no room for voices undermining the univocal discourse of Roman patriotism, morality, and supremacy of the Roman emperor. Since the creation and maintenance of political power relies on the ability to control the content and means of communication in society, Rome would not tolerate one of her own writing out of sync with the empire.[94] As seen with Ovid, the empire took stern measures to repress and

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Hans-Peter Stahl (Swansea: Classical Press of Wales, 2009), 21–22 notes this is especially true with reference to the issue of *pietas* and the related idea, *religio*.

[91] Wright, *Paul and the Faithfulness of God*, 1:302.

[92] For an interesting discussion of another such detractor from the imperial discourse, see Andrew Gallia, "Potentes and Potentia in Tacitus's Dialogus de Oratoribus," *TAPA* 139.1 (2009): 169–206. Herein Gallia argues Maternus's transition from orator to poet, narrated by Tacitus, is largely to enable Maternus to speak against the *potentes* of the Roman elite. He further concludes that Maternus came under the ire of Rome and perhaps was even prosecuted for his written drama. Futher, he concludes that this episode demonstrates the *potentes* had a repressive influence over the arts.

[93] Syme, *The Roman Revolution*, 367.

[94] Richard Miles, "Communicating Culture, Identity, and Power," in *Experiencing Rome: Culture, Identity, and Power in the Roman Empire*, ed. Janet Huskinson (London: Routledge, 2000), 35–38. Miles

destroy "noxious literature."[95] While some imperial era writers rejected the discourse of power, "As long as those who in some sense 'opted-out' were relatively few, the power-system was unaffected."[96]

Linguistic aspects of power contributed to the creation of a discourse of power through ideological creation. These writers developed a mythology that projected the Roman way as the divine way. Challenges to the Roman right to power were a challenge to the gods and nature itself. These written texts are by no means a comprehensive exploration of the textual aspects of Roman power (there are many more), but they do demonstrate the ways in which written discourse contributed to the ideology of power propagated in Rome and on the periphery of the empire. The focus herein on Augustus is intentional. Augustus, as the true founder of the imperial office of emperor, established the expectations of those in office and the respect required of those living beneath him. While the inheritors of Augustus's throne may not have lived up to the ideal of Roman sentiments of power, they nonetheless profited from the discourse these documents established. The writers of the empire, while not without elements of dissent in their work, established a normative discourse in which even major acts of resistance would have little ideological meaning and weight to the ruling elite who ruled over the peripheral colonized territories.

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argues that to a great extent, imperial power rested almost entirely on the ability to control and use successfully the written word.

[95] Syme, *The Roman Revolution*, 486. See also Dio, *Roman History* 56.27.1.

[96] Harris, *Roman Power*, 214. Dio, *Roman History* 67.4.

Extralinguistic Aspects of Power

The extralinguistic aspects of the power of Rome were on full display through intentionally crafted monuments, artistic displays, and other visual messages of Roman superiority spread abroad. "The empire's spectacular self-presentation both in the performance of power in Rome, and in the circulation of images throughout the Empire, is the defining and extreme paradigm of this dynamic of display and authority."[97] The subjects of Roman power both at home and abroad encountered images on a daily basis as they walked through the streets, as they exchanged currency, and as they encountered Roman officials. The goal of such visual images was to reinforce the ubiquitous nature of Roman authority and give the illusion of Roman culture as univocal and the discourse of power as unbreakable and impenetrable.[98] To give a full account of the extralinguistic aspects of power in Rome is beyond the scope of this project. A few significant examples should suffice to demonstrate the vastness of Rome's visual propaganda and outline the goals and effects of Rome's ideological project.[99]

Visual Representations of Piety. The writers of the empire established a written mythology that provided the Roman Empire a connection to the divine. The visual aspects of Roman power further reinforced the mythological writings of the imperial

[97] Simon Goldhill, "The Erotic Eye: Visual Stimulation and Cultural Conflict," in *Being Greek Under Rome: Cultural Identity, the Second Sophistic, and the Development of Empire*, ed. Simon Goldhill (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 159.

[98] While art and architecture may not always be constructed for ideological purposes, it does not exist apart from ideology either. See Clifford Ando, *Imperial Ideology and Provincial Loyalty in the Roman Empire* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000), 210–214. Ando claims artifacts of material culture are the "static props of ceremonial dramas through which Romans—broadly construed—endlessly reenacted their roles in the cultural script." These artifacts ensured their "roles" remained clear and the drama (so to speak) continued as scripted.

[99] Further examples will be offered throughout coming chapters as they become particularly relevant in relation to the Markan narrative.

authors. The mythology of Rome's foundation spoke to the desire and willingness of the gods to prosper Rome. The prosperity of Rome, however, depended on the continual *pietas* of the Roman people.[100] *Pietas* gave Rome a world-empire, and "only *pietas* could maintain it."[101] Upon taking office, Augustus instituted a vigorous program of moral renewal to reinforce and ensure the power and authority of Rome.[102] To neglect the gods was to invite destruction. Defeat in war meant a religious infraction had been committed and needed to be repaired, while victory demonstrated divine presence and divine favor on the Roman people and her leader. Therefore Augustus restored the temples, renewed and expanded the priesthoods, and built statues honoring the gods.[103] He revived the *Augurium Salutis* and closed the doors of Janus.[104] He completed the temple of Apollo—the great "deliver" at Actium. Even in his own image, Augustus preferred statues that displayed his piety, him at sacrifice, or him in prayer.[105] This image of piety further

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[100] *Pietas* is defined as a person's obligations within the cultural system that included a dutiful devotion to family, to the gods, and the empire. This obligation required care for those in positions above and below. For example, the emperor was to care for the empire as its *pater patriae* and give proper deference to the gods on behalf of the people as well. Beth Severy, *Augustus and the Family at the Birth of the Roman Empire* (New York: Routledge, 2003), 98–99; cf. Carlos Noreña, "The Communication of the Emperor's Virtues," *JRS* 91 (2001): 158.

[101] Syme, *The Roman Revolution*, 448. See Horace, *Carm*. 1.12.

[102] Scheid argues Augustus's emphasis on piety was not only to reinforce the power and authority of Rome but also of himself. Given the cultural emphasis upon maintaining piety, "piety was legitimacy." By claiming to restore what his enemies neglected and violated during the civil wars (i.e. ritual duties and temples) Augustus legitimated the power of the office and character of the one who occupied the office. See John Scheid, "Augustus and Roman Religion: Continuity, Conservatism, and Innovation," in *The Cambridge Companion to the Age of Augustus*, ed. Karl Galinsky (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 177, 192.

[103] Gottlieb, "Religion in the Politics of Augustus," 23–24; cf. Zanker, *The Power of Images in the Age of Augustus*, 103. *Res Gest.* 20 claims Augustus restored 82 temples; more likely, however, Augustus restored in grandeur only those temples to the gods with a personal connection to his own leadership or legacy (i.e. Mars, Apollo, Venus, and Jupiter).

[104] Dio, *Roman History* 37.24.

[105] Zanker, *The Power of Images in the Age of Augustus*, 127.

reinforced the emperor's connection with the divine.[106] Military victory demonstrated the divine presence with the emperor and the gods' approval of the "morally reborn 'republic,'" and cultivated a "close connection between *pietas* and victory."[107] Challengers should beware. The gods sided with Rome and would act on her behalf provided she maintained proper and dignified worship.

The Emperor as a Symbol. As the empire expanded, the role of the emperor expanded with it. Zanker argues that the glorification of the empire went hand in hand with the self-glorification of the emperor.[108] Augustus would set a precedent for imperial leadership for those who would follow after him through a targeted campaign in which he propagated images of peace and religious and moral renewal. As the power of empire was not to be associated with an individual, Augustus became more than an individual man; he became a symbol of the empire.[109] Given the Roman resistance to monarchs and tyrants, the Princeps needed to convince the people that he was neither. In *Res gestae divi Augusti*, Octavian is said to have renounced power before the Senate all the while

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[106] Gottlieb, "Religion in the Politics of Augustus," 27–31. Gottlieb refers to piety as one of the primary "condensation symbols" of the empire (in addition to peace and consenus). Condensation symbols are those acts or concepts that "condense" all the emotions and experiences related to an event or concept into a single act, concept, or image. Thus the symbol invokes a range of emotions (usually including patriotism and memories of past glories or failures) meant to draw in those who experience the symbol to participation. In other words, condensation symbols are particularly poised to be significant elements of political propaganda.

[107] Zanker, *The Power of Images in the Age of Augustus*, 185; See also Carlin Barton, *Roman Honor: The Fire in the Bones* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001), 103. Barton notes that Augustus stressed the cult of Victoria. This emphasis led to the emperor being known as the "perpetual conqueror" and victory personalized in individual charismatic dynasts.

[108] Zanker, *The Power of Images in the Age of Augustus*, 79; Adrian Goldsworthy, *Augustus: First Emperor of Rome* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2014), 256 interestingly notes that there is not a single image of a middle-aged or elderly Augustus. Augustus was always pictured as handsome, authoritative, and tall, a picture of virility and vitality to those at home and in the provinces.

[109] Galinsky, *Augustan Culture*, 248. Galinsky notes that characters, such as the emperor, are symbols. "'Reality' is subordinated to the guiding ideas behind it." In other words, who the emperor "is," is less important than who the emperor appears to be in written works and visual representations.

growing in authority (34:2–6; 14–16). The Senate, in turn, protested such renunciations and granted Octavian the title, Augustus. Augustus from this point forward attempted to walk the thin line between legitimating his own position and connection to Caesar while avoiding the pitfalls of his predecessor.[110] He was, rather than tyrant or king, the great purveyor of Roman prosperity, peace, *pietas*, and imperial expansion.

In order to reinforce such claims, Augustus filled the sanctuary on Palatine Hill with images of peace and religious devotion. Within the temple, Apollo was pictured no longer as, "the avenging archer, but as the singer and bringer of peace."[111] Further, Augustus adorned his own residence's entrance with laurel trees, a visual sign of victory, and he accepted the award of an oak wreath, traditionally given to one who saved a comrade in battle.[112] Augustus was pictured as the victor of Rome for, "rescuing all his fellow citizens" from battle.[113] The emperor was pictured as the great savior of the world, the figurehead of an eternal empire.[114]

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[110] Armstrong, "Sacrificial Iconography," 342.

[111] Zanker, *The Power of Images in the Age of Augustus*, 93; See also Richard Beacham, "The Emperor as Impresario: Producing the Pageantry of Power," in *The Cambridge Companion to the Age of Augustus*, ed. Karl Galinsky (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 157–158. Beacham argues Augustus in attempting to avoid the pitfalls of others, especially Antony, stylized himself in the figure of Apollo over and against the connection between Antony and Dionysus. Apollo possessed a gravitas that spoke of peace that stood in stark contrast to the debauchery of Dionysus.

[112] This imagery continues on the coinage. Laurel wreaths and oak wreaths adorn the coinage of the era to speak to the achievements of the emperors. See Reinhard Wolters, "The Julio-Claudians," in *The Oxford Handbook of Greek and Roman Coinage*, ed. William Metcalf (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), 340.

[113] Zanker, *The Power of Images in the Age of Augustus*, 93; cf. Winter, *Divine Honours for the Caesars*, 71–74.

[114] Winter, *Divine Honours for the Caesars*, 40, notes specifically an inscription in Halicarnassus (*IBM* 4.1 no 894). Therein, Augustus is called the "savior of the common race of men" who was sent by the gods, specifically Zeus and Roma.

It is no surprise that over time the image of the emperor transformed from a mere man into a divine figure.[115] As the empire grew, the cultic activity surrounding the emperor and his family grew as well.[116] In the east, there was a long tradition of divine kingship that paved the way for the concept of a divine man.[117] In the west, however, the tradition seemingly took longer to develop, though Horace and Virgil gave a mythological foundation for the imperial divinity quite early.[118]

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[115] The research surrounding the imperial cult is vast. A number of recent publications of note include the following: S. J. Friesen, *Imperial Cults and the Apocalypse of John: Reading Revelation in the Ruins* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001); Ittai Gradel, *Emperor Worship and Roman Religion*, Oxford Classical Monographs (New York: Clarendon Press, 2002); James McLaren, "Jews and the Imperial Cult: From Augustus to Domition," *JSNT* 27.3 (2005): 257–78; J. B. Rives, *Religion in the Roman Empire* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2007); J. Naylor, "The Roman Imperial Cult and Revelation," *CurBR* 8.2 (2010): 207–39; R. Gordon, "Ritual and Hierarchy in the Mysteries of Mithras," in *The Religious History of the Roman Empire*, ed. J.A. North and S. R. F. Price (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 325–65; Jeffrey Brodd and Jonathan Reed, eds., *Rome and Religion: A Cross-Disciplinary Dialogue on the Imperial Cult* (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2011); Barbette Stanley Spaeth, "Imperial Cult in Roman Corinth: A Response to Karl Galinsky's 'The Cult of the Roman Emperor: Uniter or Divider?,'" in *Rome and Religion: A Cross Disciplinary Dialogue on the Imperial Cult*, ed. Jeffrey Brodd and Jonathan Reed (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2011), 61–81; J. S. Richardson, *Augustan Rome 44 BC to AD 14: The Restoration of the Republic and the Establishment of the Empire* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2012); Winter, *Divine Honours for the Caesars*; Gwynaeth McIntyre, "Imperial Cult," *Brill Research Perspectives in Ancient History* 1 (2019): 1–88.

[116] It is important to remember that there is no such thing as *the* imperial cut. The embodiment of the imperial cult is as diverse as the communities in which practices are enacted. Galinsky, *Augustus: Introduction to the Life of an Emperor*, 169; Spaeth, "Imperial Cult in Roman Corinth," 75.

[117] Wright, *Paul and the Faithfulness of God*, 1:325; For a variety of discussions concerning the various embodiments of divine kingship in the east, see Jane Hill, Philip Jones, and Antonio Morales, eds., *Experiencing Power, Generating Authority: Cosmos, Politics, and the Ideology of Kingship in Ancient Egypt and Mesopotamia* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2013); Beacham, "The Emperor as Impresario," 153–155, notes specifically some ways in which the Roman rulers embraced this tradition by casting themselves in the guise of dieties (e.g. Dionysus, Neptune, and Apollo); James Constantine Hanges, "To Complicate Encounters: A Response to Karl Galinsky's 'The Cult of the Roman Emperor: Uniter or Divider?,'" in *Rome and Religion: A Cross Disciplinary Dialogue on the Imperial Cult*, ed. Jeffrey Brodd and Jonathan Reed (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2011), 42–47. Hanges claims that embracing the cult, especially in the east, is at least in part, an attempt "to transform the world—ways of comprehending and reinscribing a seemingly immovable power as someone who cares about their concerns, as a power that 'one of us.'" The colonized are shaped by the encounter with the colonizer and thus there is a lot of complex local variation in the embrace of the cult, but in each case Hanges sees the embrace as a way to humanize the conqueror for their own ends.

[118] See Virgil, *Aen*. 1.289; *Georg*. 4.562; Horace, *Carm*. 1.2.25-44.

In the west there was need for a more careful approach to the imperial cult. Long leery of those who act as monarchs and tyrants, propaganda and imperial approval of practices needed to demonstrate a sense of humility and deference in any approach to the cult.[119] Most likely, in Rome and surrounding environs the living emperor's genius was the object of worship rather than the living emperor himself.[120] As was common practice, the genius of the householder in a family was placed in the domestic shrines and offered due deference and homage for the protection and care of the family unit. As the emperor was coined the *pater patriae*, the father of the entire Roman empire, it seems only natural that the emperor's genius be celebrated for the protection and care of the empire.[121] As Severy notes, "individuals and groups worked out their relationship to Augustus by honoring him spiritually as *pater*," thus acknowledging their "community as part of a household under the spiritual protection of its *pater*, Augustus."[122] In Rome it is possible

[119] Ando, *Imperial Ideology and Provincial Loyalty in the Roman Empire*, 32. For Augustus's rule it mattered, especially to the upper classes, that he was conciliatory and even deferential in tone in the ways in which he demonstrated his power.

[120] See Bruce Longenecker, *In Stone and Story: Early Christianity in the Roman World* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2020), 86–87. The genius of an individual, while intimately associated with the embodied individual, was the generative power and spiritual life force of an individual; they were representations of a person's true essence and identity. The emperor, like everyone else, had a genius. This genius was the "force that was the conduit of the will of Rome's deities" (87). Severy (Augustus and the Family at the Birth of the Roman Empire, 120-131) calls this genius the "divine twin" of the embodied individual whose worship emphasizes the relationship of the emperor with the divine father rather than emphasizing a divine man (118-119).

[121] Jörg Rüpke, "Addressing the Emperor as a Religious Strategy at the Edge and in the Center of the Empire," in *Pervading Empire: Relationality and Diversity in the Roman Provinces* (Münster: Verlag, 2020), 267–268.

[122] Severy, *Augustus and the Family at the Birth of the Roman Empire*, 113. For further discussion of the connection between the worship of the imperial genius and the *pater patriae* see pp. 120-131.

this connection was made in the *Lares compitales* in which the genius of the emperor was honored publically at crossroad shrines, eventually taking on the names *Lares augusti*.[123]

The imperial cult became a significant vessel of imperial ideology and held an important role in towns throughout the empire. The organizations known as the *Augustales*, well attested in inscriptions between 12 BCE and the third century CE, reflect the importance of the imperial cult activities in the empire.[124] These organizations provided for social advancement among freedmen to whom other advancement opportunities were not available. While it is unclear if those people identified as *Augustales* were religious or political figures, it is likely that they were involved in aspects of imperial worship throughout Italy.[125] Longenecker also points to the repair of the temples in Pompeii after the earthquake of 62/63 as further evidence of the

[123] See Gwynaeth McIntyre, *Imperial Cult*, Brill Research Perspectives: Ancient History (Leiden: Brill, 2019), 27; Severy, *Augustus and the Family at the Birth of the Roman Empire*, 125; Alison Cooley, "From the Augustan Principate to the Invention of the Age of Augustus," *JRS* 109 (2019): 81; John Scheid, "Honorer Le Prince et Vénérer Les Dieux: Culte Public, Culte Des Quartiers et Culte Impérial Dans La Rome Augustéenne," in *Rome, Les Césars et La Ville: Aux Deus Premiers Siècles de Notre ère*, ed. N. Belayche (Rennes: Presses Universitaires de Rennes, 2001), 102; I. Gradel, "Roman Apotheosis," in *Thesaurus Cultus et Rituum Antiquorum* (Los Angeles: J. Paul Getty Museum, 2004), 191; There is some contention as to whether or not the genius of Augustus was worshiped at these shrines. See H. Flower, *The Dancing Lares and the Serpent in the Garden: Religion at the Roman Street Corner* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2017), 255–347 who argues the genius of Augustus was not worshiped at the shrines during Augustus's lifetime; cf. Claire McGraw, "The Imperial Cult and the Individual: The Negotiation of Augustus' Private Worship during His Lifetime at Rome" (Dissertation, University of Missouri, 2019), 122–133. Whether the worship of his genius took place at the shrines at the behest of the emperor or private citizens or not at all, the connection to Augustus in name and imagery is significant and reflects the impact of the Augustan ideology among the people. The overlapping imagery of the *compitales* and the public monuments (especially oak wreathes and laurels) erected in Rome demonstrates the pervasiveness of the ideology underpinning the imperial cult. See McGraw, 134–142, who argues the "privately commissioned monuments take part in the narrative of the public counterparts." McGraw is also very skeptical of the worship of the genius of Augustus in Rome, suggesting perhaps worship of the emperor during his lifetime (145).

[124] McIntyre, *Imperial Cult*, 27–28.

[125] See Bert Lott, "The Earliest Augustan Gods Outside of Rome," *The Classical Journal* 110.2 (2015): 130. Lott argues that the use of the word Augustus is directly related to the emperor's cognomen and not to the adjective *augustus*. Cf. *Res Gestae* 11. While the use of the emperor's name was common, it is important to remember that he did not have a monopoly on the usage of his name. Rather, the usage of the name likely signifies loyalty above all else.

importance and prevalence of the imperial cult in the west. While the temples to the traditional deities were never fully restored before the eruption in 79, the temples associated with the imperial cult were rebuilt and operational despite the heavy cost of repairs.[126] The imperial cult played a significant role throughout the west, where the living emperor's genius was worshiped alongside the divinized rulers.

The worship of the emperor's genius, especially in the west, mitigated the concerns of those worried about imperial tyranny and the place of the emperor in public life. With the worship of the emperor's genius, the emperor could be celebrated in household and community shrines without having to approve of the whole of the living emperor's actions. This is complicated, however, by the obvious and intimate connection between the genius and the man himself. Given the provinces' and Italian cities' desire to honor the living emperor and his family, the communities understood that there was ultimately no division between the religious and the political. To honor the genius of the emperor was to give honor to the office of the emperor and thus to the one holding that office at least to some extent. As Gradel notes, while divinity may not have been granted to emperors during their lives, they were always on "the very brink of divinity."[127] They were connected through the mythology to the Roman gods in ways ordinary Romans were not. They were pictured as son of god at home and abroad. While the difference between son of god and a god is significant, there was an expectation that the emperor would likely be hailed a god after his death, when the distinction between body and

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[126] Longenecker, *In Stone and Story*, 87; See also Alison Cooley and M. G. L. Cooley, *Pompeii and Herculaneum: A Sourcebook* (Milton Park: Taylor & Francis, 2013), 137–138. Specifically, on the east side of the forum in Pompeii there is a temple for the imperial cult that likely dates to the reign of Augustus and in that forum stands an altar from the same time period with a sacrificial bull, oak leaf crown, and laurel trees, all images associated with the emperor.

[127] Gradel, *Emperor Worship and Roman Religion*, 264.

genius would be irrelevant.[128] Thus it is certainly possible that at times the distinction between genius and the embodied emperor was lost.[129]

In any case, to worship the genius of the emperor or the emperor himself (former or current) elevates the emperor as a person from a first-among-equals to the father of all with privileges and responsibilities that accompany that designation. The *divi filius* was was generally considered the agent of the divine will and the mediator between this world and the other.[130] This connection to the divine world elevated the image of the emperor in the empire. This is not to claim that all agreed with the imperial claims of divine son-ship or divine origins, but the claims of divinity or divine connection were nonetheless powerful ideological claims when taken as a part of a larger ideological project.[131] If *pietas* with reference to the gods ensured victory and longevity, and the emperor now ranked among divine, or at the very least their representative, a tight connection was made ideologically between honoring the emperor and the fate of the empire itself. The emperor was now pictured as more than a man; due deference to the emperor who "saved

[128] Gradel, *Emperor Worship and Roman Religion*, 264–266 notes that the death of the emperor was necessary for divination in most cases. He also argues that emperors expressed resistance to state offers of divinity, not only for the perception of modesty and to avoid the charge of tyranny, but also because of the ominous link between death and state divinity, an warning taken from the life of Julius Caesar (144).

[129] Longenecker, *In Stone and Story*, 87; See also Jesper Madsen, "Joining the Empire: The Imperial Cult as a Marker of Shared Imperial Identity," in *Imperial Identities in the Roman World* (Milton Park: Taylor & Francis, 2017), 93–104 who argues specifically for the worship of the living emperor directly by those outside of Rome. Gradel, *Emperor Worship in Roman Religion*, 110-111, 141-142 goes so far as to suggest the possibility existed within Rome itself. Gradel argues that one issue with the worship of the genius of the emperor in Rome and by Romans could be that slaves and clients worshipped the genius of their patron as the paterfamilias. Gradel suggests that association might have caused citizens to wonder what it says of the Roman citizenry: are they considered slaves or freed slaves? While Gradel agrees there was no state sponsored temple to the living emperor as divine, he does think the idea of direct worship might have been more appealing to the Romans than some have previously suggested.

[130] Wright, *Paul and the Faithfulness of God*, 1:342.

[131] The Jewish community obviously had serious concerns about a divine man, but these concerns were not limited to monotheistic traditions. Even within Rome itself, if an emperor did not live up to the standards expected of an emperor, the collective populace could deny his divinity. Nero would be a fine example.

the people in battle" was now necessary to ensure that salvation. Ultimately, "for the emperor, the representation of his power was as important in the maintenance of his rule as passing laws and commanding armies."[132]

The Image of Peace. A significant part of the imperial discourse of power was Rome's declaration they brought peace to the world—the *Pax Romana*.[133] This message of peace was dramatically claimed at home in 29 BCE when the doors of the Temple of Janus were symbolically closed, proclaiming peace to the people. No place in Rome is this message more dramatically presented than on the *Ara Pacis*.[134] The monument features the goddess Pax in the composite image of Tellus, the earth goddess, and Venus, the goddess of fertility. Lacking a mythology of her own as a personified/defied virtue, Pax adopts the aspects of various deities' mythology most useful to the imperial message of imperial power and the new theme of a peace-loving era.[135] Pax is pictured with two small children in her arms and fruit in her lap with water flowing from her throne. The additional use of vines and budding plants on the monuments throughout the forum further reinforce visually the claim to a new era of prosperity and peace, a paradise on

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[132] Miles Richard, "Community, Culture, Identity, and Power," in *Experiencing Rome: Culture, Identity, and Power in the Roman Empire*, ed. Jan Huskinson (New York: Routledge, 2000), 37.

[133] The Pax Romana was heralded because it served the interests of those in power in safeguarding their rulership and enhanced their own glory, staving off challengers. See Winter, *Divine Honours for the Caesars*, 34; cf. Benjamin Isaac, *The Limits of Empire: The Roman Army in the East* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1990), 416.

[134] For a fuller discussion of the identity and function of the figures represented on the altar, see Hannah Cornwell, *Pax and the Politics of Peace: Republic to Principate* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017), 159–183.

[135] Zanker, *The Power of Images in the Age of Augustus*, 174–175; Severy, *Augustus and the Family at the Birth of the Roman Empire*, 104–112 also notes the connections to the family of Augustus. The divine images were meant to reinforce his divine connections while the human images reinforced the role Augustus's family played in maintaining the peace and security that Augustus secured.

earth.[136] Similarly in Naples there stood a relief of vines growing about a conquered people sitting on the ground. As one views the relief, "one was inescapably reminded of the slogan 'through just war to the blessings of peace.'"[137] This theme continues outside of Rome, reflected in the architectural changes of towns as well. Longenecker argues Herculaneum's seaside architecture bears witness to the age of peace instituted by the reign of Augustus. Where once a military garrison stood along the shore, the imperial era brought about a transformation of the shoreline into elite homes. The "insecurity and chaos had given way to the age of peace and prosperity."[138]

This paradise is maintained by showing proper *pietas* to the gods. On the north and south sides of the *Ara Pacis*, the sacrificial processions pictured promoted the imperial connection between piety and peace. The leader, in this case Augustus, was to safeguard the laws and morals of Rome.[139] The priests and the elite citizens of Rome were to participate in devotion to the gods to secure the peace of Rome.[140] The peace of Rome is hard won. See again the *Ara Pacis*: the goddess Roma is enthroned on a trophy of armor. As one views the monument one sees the image of a victorious Roma paired with the peace of the goddess Pax. The two images, Pax with her children and Roma with her armor, are to be read together.[141] Rome, and particularly the emperor, brought her

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[136] Zanker, *The Power of Images in the Age of Augustus*, 182.

[137] Zanker, *The Power of Images in the Age of Augustus*, 182.

[138] Longenecker, *In Stone and Story*, 69.

[139] *Res gest. divi Aug*. 6.

[140] For a fuller discussion of the connection between sacrifice and the message of peace and piety on the Ara Pacis, see Armstrong, "Sacrificial Iconography."

[141] Jeffrey Weima, "'Peace and Security' (1 Thess 5:3): Prophetic Warning or Political Propaganda?," *NTS* 58 (2012): 345. These images also appear on other monuments throughout the empire. Those on the periphery of imperial power saw the images as well in different forms.

subjects peace.[142] These subjects are represented in the small figures adorning the altar, offering an inventory of the conquered nations.[143] The images crafted on the altar were replicated throughout the empire in various contexts ensuring even those on the periphery of power bore witness to the visual representations of peace.[144] These visual reminders served to reinforce continually the Roman ideology of supremacy over enemies and in turn, the futility of resistance.

The Roman Military. This great peace came from the actions of the Roman military. Tacitus declared, "there had been undoubtedly peace, but peace with bloodshed."[145] The Roman military secured and maintained the peace of Rome with the sword. To do so required a sizeable army. The Roman army numbered more than 300,000 during the early imperial period.[146] Loyalty was ensured through land grants,

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[142] Cornwell further points to the presence of Mars and Aeneas offering sacrifice. These figures brought to mind the role of war in the establishment of peace. Peace relies on military victory, and sacrifice guarantees the support of the gods in that endeavor. Further there is a connection made between Aeneas and Augustus. Both secured Rome through sacrifice: Aeneas, the establishment of Rome and Augustus, the peace and stability of Rome. Cornwell, *Pax and the Politics of Peace*, 162–163, 173-177.

[143] Gary Gilbert, "The List of Nations in Acts 2: Roman Propaganda and the Lukan Response," *JBL* 121.3 (2002): 515; See Claude Nicolet, *L'Inventaire Du Monde: Géographie et Politique Aux Origines de L'Empire Romain* (Paris: Librairie Artheme Fayard, 1988) for a fuller discussion of the relationship between geographical lists and politics in the Early Roman Empire. In addition to the nations represented on the *Ara Pacis*, the themes of political geography can be seen in Pompey's commissioning of fourteen statues on the nations that he brought under Roman rule. It is also seen in Herod's theater in Jerusalem where trophies of peoples conquered by Augustus were displayed. See also Pliny, *Nat*. 36.41, 5.132-33; Suetonius, *Nero* 46.1; Virgil, *Aen*. 6.780-82; Horace, *Carm* 4:14, and Dio, *Roman History* 40.4.

[144] Syme, *The Roman Revolution*, 473.

[145] Tacitus, *Ann*. 1.10 (Moore and Jackson, LCL).

[146] Richard Cassidy, *Christians and Roman Rule in the New Testament: New Perspectives* (New York: Crossroad, 2001), 8; See Simon Elliot, *Empire State: How the Roman Military Built an Empire* (Havertown: Oxbow, 2017) for a fuller description of the size and function of various military personnel. The number reflected herein includes legionaries, auxiliary personnel often comprised of non-citizen provincials, and regional fleets. Their numbers were clearly higher during times of warfare or open conflict than during times of peace, but the standing army was substantial even during times of peace.

citizenship, salary, and fear.[147] Loyal soldiers were given rewards for their service and afforded the possibility of upward social mobility through citizenship, financial gain, or both. The consequences of disloyalty, however, were severe. Should an army turn away from battle or retreat, they faced the possibility of enduring decimation or trial for treason.[148] The army maintained its size and force through the acquisition of slave labor through continuous warfare during the late republic.[149] As slaves took up the work previously done by citizens, citizens were able to go to war. With the ever-present threat of the full power of the Roman military, it was hoped the provinces "could see no prospect of a successful war for liberty against the legions and colonies of Rome."[150] To reinforce such perceptions, at the first sign of resistance it was common for the Roman army to respond with a vicious counter attack even when the army's numbers were limited in a region.[151] Swift action ensured those who were uncommitted to the revolutionary cause were deterred from joining and convinced all who bore witness to the brutality of the Roman response that Rome was invincible. Should the resistance continue despite these actions, the full force of the Roman military was never too far away.

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[147] Goldsworthy, *Augustus*, 247. In the aftermath of Actium, more than 120,000 soldiers were settled in the colonies of the empire.

[148] Harris, *Roman Power*, 43; cf. Johannes Hahn, "Rituals of Killing: Public Punishment, Munera and the Dissemination of Roman Values and Ideology in the Imperium Romanum," in *Imperial Identities in the Roman World* (Milton Park: Taylor & Francis, 2017), 37–39. Hahn offers a brief history of the practice and the perceptions of military action in Rome.

[149] Harris, *Roman Power*, 67.

[150] Syme, *The Roman Revolution*, 477.

[151] Keith Goldworthy, *Pax Romana: War, Peace, and Conquest in the Roman World* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2016), 204. As Germany would demonstrate during the revolt of 9 CE, winning a revolution was not, in fact, impossible, but the German rebellion took advantage of a weakened army from years of fighting the Pannonians. Their victory, while perhaps inspiring others to follow suit, also gave a clear warning. Rome would not go down without a fight, and it would take a perfect storm of events to give a province even a fighting chance.

At the death of Augustus, the total imperial population was likely more than fifty million.[152] A population of that size was the result of a massive colonial enterprise undertaken by Rome's ruling elite through the capable hands of the military. Reasons for such expansion included the need for a broadened tax base to provide for the senatorial/equestrian classes, the need to provide various incentives for military participation including land grants from conquered territory, and not least of all the glory of Rome and her emperor.[153] Romans crafted a system of pillage and subjugation following outright war that did not end with the enslavement of the conquered. Rome apportioned land to its citizens, especially retired military personnel, in a clear colonial enterprise and further extracted payments on a regular basis from territories outside of Italy.[154] While the tax burden placed upon provincials is unknown, it must have been significant as Romans ceased paying taxes in 167 BCE.[155] While local elites may have retained their land or a modicum of authority in a province, they did so only at the behest of Rome. The effort to cultivate collaborators among the local elite was to ensure Roman

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[152] Cassidy, *Christians and Roman Rule in the New Testament*, 6.

[153] Cassidy, *Christians and Roman Rule in the New Testament*, 8–9.

[154] Harris, *Roman Power*, 22, 30; This process of centuriation began no later than 273 BCE. Myles Lavan, "'Father of the Whole Human Race:' Ecumenical Language and the Limits of Elite Integration in the Early Roman Empire," in *Cosmopolitanism and Empire: Universal Rulers, Local Elites, and Cultural Integration in the Ancient Near East and Mediterranean*, ed. Myles Lavan, Richard Payne, and John Weisweiler (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016), 157–160, also notes that among the provinces there were those who considered the liability to tribute a mark of enslavement. See, for example, Tertullian's Apology 13.6. The Romans also considered themselves the master people (populous dominus), and a "master people" presupposes a subject population. Though, interestingly, in letters to the provinces, the language for the provinces is more ecumenical (i.e. whole human race, all the cities, the inhabited world) (161–163).

[155] Harris, *Roman Power*, 48; For a fuller discussion of Roman taxes during the imperial era, see L. Neeson, *Untersuchungen Zu Den Direkten Staatsabgaben in Der Römischen Kaiserzeit (27 v.Chr.—284 N. Chr.)* (Bonn: Habelt, 1980); P.A. Brunt, "The Revenues of Rome," *JRS* 71 (1981): 161–72; Clifford Ando, "The Administration of the Provinces," in *A Companion to the Roman Empire*, ed. David Stone Potter (Malden, Mass: Blackwell, 2010), 177–92; For a discussion of taxes in relation to the Gospel of Mark see, Leander, *Discourses of Empire*, 275–281.

dominion even in the absence of the whole Roman army. Retired soldiers as colonists, a small contingent of Roman soldiers, and the collaboration of elite locals established imperial control in the outlying territories.[156] Military personnel, even in limited number, were a constant sign of the power of Rome, ensuring physical resistance to the imperial discourse of power remained minimal.

In addition to the threat of military action and the presence of military personnel, the achievements of the military were also reflected in other visual representations throughout the empire. Triumphal processions honored the army and those who led the army. While the "script" of this event is largely a mystery, the basic elements are well known. The victorious general was raised in esteem before the people, and the conquered foreigners were humiliated.[157] The processions often included the execution of a defeated foe and a sacrifice made on Capitoline Hill. Violence was thus transformed into and paraded as religious devotion.[158] The favor of the gods leads to victory. Continual *pietas* ensured continued victory. Further, architectural monuments visually enshrined the successes of the army in stone. Inscriptions and coinage reflected the victories of military campaigns. At home and abroad, the message was clear: it was better to stand with Rome than against her.

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[156] Longenecker, "Peace, Prosperity, and Propaganda," 26–31. Rome relied on the compliance of the elite in the provinces to maintain control.

[157] Hahn, "Rituals of Killing," 38–39. Hahn notes the necessity of significant death of the enemy to secure a Roman Triumph (more than 5000). In such events, Roman superiority and their triumph over barbarism were stressed.

[158] S.C. Stroup, "Making Memory: Ritual, Rhetoric, and Violence in the Roman Triumph," in *Belief and Bloodshed*, ed. J.K. Wellman (Lanham: Rowan and Littlefield, 2007), 39; See further M. Beard, *The Roman Triumph* (Boston: Harvard University Press, 2007). Beard outlines the details of the ritual context of the triumph and the ways in which the participants' observation of the event dictated the function and effect of the triumph.

Coinage. In addition to the monumental and military displays of imperial power, the imperial discourse found another mode of expression more easily distributed throughout the empire in the form of coinage.[159] While obviously serving an economic function, the pictures upon their faces reinforced the imperial claims to power in a number of ways. First, coinage brought to the masses the image of a newly empowered emperor. It was a tangible, practical means of disseminating important information while simultaneously connecting the image of the emperor to the idea of wealth and prosperity.[160] The coins, "functioned like portable billboards whose messages were seen over and over again as these monies changed hands and were transported to locations throughout the Roman empire."[161]

Second, the images placed on the reverse sides of coinage sought to reinforce the authority of the emperor pictured on the front.[162] Overwhelmingly, images on the reverse

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[159] Ando, *Imperial Ideology and Provincial Loyalty in the Roman Empire*, 215–228; Carlos Noreña, "The Communication of the Emperor's Virtues," 146–68; Corey Ellithorpe, "Circulating Imperial Ideology: Coins as Propaganda in the Roman World" (Dissertation, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, 2017), 193 through an evaluation of the Roman Imperial coinage discusses the power of propaganda disseminated through coinage. He argues the success of this kind of project comes from the power of cumulative propaganda. Coins are minted and reminted with variations to continually reinforce the primary ideology of empire. Reinhard Wolters, "The Julio-Claudians," in *The Oxford Handbook of Greek and Roman Coinage*, ed. William Metcalf (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), 342 also notes the significance of coinage cannot be taken on the basis of coinage alone but from the "atmosphere created by all media, in which the ideas, values, and mentalities of every epoch are expressed."

[160] Lamp, *A City of Marble*, 81; Harold Mattingly, *Roman Coins: From the Earliest Times to the Fall of the Western Empire* (London: Methuen and Co., 1967), 140–144.

[161] Weima, "'Peace and Security,'" 334.

[162] See for example, Reinhard Wolters, "Die Geschwindigkeit Der Zeit Und Die Gefahr Der Bilder: Münzbilder Und Münzpropaganda in Der Römischen Kaiserzeit," in *Propaganda—Selbstdarstellung—Repräsentation Im Römischen Kaiserreich Des 1. Jhs. n.Chr.*, ed. G Weber and M. Zimmermann (Stuttgart: Franz Steiner Verlag, 2003), 175–204. While the volume as a whole is critical of the concept of "propaganda," Wolters does argue for the significance of representation and the expectation of power that accompanied those representations found on coinage. He further notes the importance of deviation from the normal coin types. Where the images/representations deviate from the norm, people would have noticed.

side of coins from the imperial era revolve around the themes of peace and victory.[163] For example, there are denarii in the imperial period picturing a kneeling Parthian handing over his standards, "even as Horace described Phraates on his knees accepting the right and rule of Caesar."[164] Another example of the kneeling barbarian is seen in the image of a kneeling German king offering his child to the emperor as a hostage. This kind of sacrifice initiated a deferent relationship from the provinces toward Rome but also opened new possibilities for native rulers and princes.[165] One who bowed before Rome was also given the opportunity to experience the benefits of her peaceful rule. Those who stood against her would feel her wrath.

The reverse of coins also reflected the personal deities of the emperor, many of which reinforced the themes of victory and peace. The gods were, after all, those who guaranteed victory. Apollo and the goddesses of abstract values such as peace, stability, and even Roma herself appear commonly on the reverse of coinage.[166] A coin type from the early days of the principate carries the face of Octavian on one side and a visage of Pax standing on the reverse. Pax holds a cornucopia in one hand and an olive branch in the other, and the coin bears the inscription, "Caesar Divi Filius."[167] The coin connects the victory of the emperor to the peace of the empire. During Tiberius's reign, Pax also

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[163] Andrew Wallace-Hadrill, "Image and Authority in the Coinage of Augustus," *JRS* 76 (1986): 69; See also Carlos Noreña, *Imperial Ideals in the Roman West: Representation, Circulation, Power* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011).

[164] Zanker, *The Power of Images in the Age of Augustus*, 187. The Denarius of M. Durmius, Rome, 19 BCE.

[165] Mattingly, *Imperialism, Power, and Identity*, 79.

[166] Wallace-Hadrill, "Image and Authority in the Coinage of Augustus," 76–77; Valerie Hope, "The City of Rome: Capital and Symbol," in *Experiencing Rome: Culture, Identity, and Power in the Roman Empire*, ed. Jan Huskinson (London: Routledge, 2000), 81.

[167] BMCRE 612; Weima, "'Peace and Security,'" 334.

adorns the reverse of coins as a seated woman holding a tall scepter and an olive branch, connecting military might in the scepter with its inevitable end, peace.[168] Victory was fundamental for the authority and power of the emperor. Since, ideally, the emperor's rule is based, at least in some sense on the consent of the people, even if only in pretext, the peace and victory imagery, "specifies one of the reasons for which he is respected: the 'good' deserves respect."[169]

Finally, the imperial head on the coinage ensures the remotest parts of the empire were exposed to the emperor's visage and exploits. Coins, "guaranteed that the emperor's military glory also has some resonance in the provinces."[170] Among the provinces of the empire, the representation of the emperor's power and victory were all the more important. As Wallace-Hadrill points out, "the sharper the dissent within Roman society, the more stridently assertive became the symbols deployed on the coinage."[171] The diversity of context on coinage during the first centuries BCE and CE demonstrates the "political instability" of the period. As Wallace-Hadrill concludes concerning coinage, "The coin seeks to achieve maximum economic validity by drawing on images of the

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[168] Harold Mattingly and Edward Allen Sydenham, *The Roman Imperial Coinage: Augustus to Vitellius*, ed. C. H. V. Sutherland and R. A. G. Carson (London: Spink, 1923), 1:99; For further examples of the connection between peace and victory on the coinage and specifically the presence of Pax on the imperial coinage see: M. Grant, *Roman Imperial Money* (London: Thomas Nelson, 1954); M. Grant, *Roman History from Coins* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1958); C.H.V Sutherland, *Roman Imperial Policy* (London: Methun, 1951); For an discussion of coins in relation to the New Testament world specifically, see L.J. Kreitzer, *Striking New Images: Roman Imperial Coinage and the New Testament World*, JSNTSup 134 (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1996).

[169] Wallace-Hadrill, "Image and Authority in the Coinage of Augustus," 69.

[170] Harris, *Roman Power*, 128.

[171] Wallace-Hadrill, "Image and Authority in the Coinage of Augustus," 70; cf. Wolters, "The Coinage of the Roman Provinces through Hadrian," 342.

maximum ideological potency."[172] The discourse of power was reinforced through the coinage and it was easily disseminated to the population leading to a population that literally has the emperor in their pocket. Even as the coinage of the imperial era could have been made more simply and at less cost, those minting the coins saw a greater value in ever changing and expensive coinage because ultimately, coins were first-rate propaganda.[173]

Some have suggested that coins were meant to appeal to Augustus and the ruling elite rather than the public since Augustus and his successors did not control the minting process.[174] Thus those minting coins used coins to get into the rulers' good graces.[175] While it is true the emperor did not control or oversee the minting or distribution of coins, it does not mean coins did not serve the discourse of power. In fact, that local and senatorial elites felt the need/urge to mint coins with such symbols as Pax, hostages, the gods, and faces of the emperors upon them is evidence that these images were ubiquitous enough to be understood by the masses both in Rome and abroad. Even in an attempt to appeal to persons in power, the creators of imperial coinage further reinforced the symbolic imagery of the empire.[176] Foulkes points out that the power of propaganda lies

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[172] Wallace-Hadrill, "Image and Authority in the Coinage of Augustus," 70.

[173] Grant, *Roman History from Coins*, 12.

[174] For those who argue against a strictly propagandist view, see Galinsky, *Augustan Culture*, 30–41; Barbara Levick, "Propaganda and the Imperial Coinage," *Antichthon* 16 (1982): 104–16.

[175] Michel Amandry, "The Coinage of the Roman Provinces through Hadrian," in *The Oxford Handbook of Greek and Roman Coinage*, ed. William Metcalf (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), 399, claims it is most likely that cities realized that the emperor and his court were sensitive to this kind of flattery and thus adopted the portraits of the emperor for their coinage.

[176] Ando, *Imperial Ideology and Provincial Loyalty in the Roman Empire*, 135 notes the significance of consent and its relation to material culture. Ideally the people would consent to Roman rule, even if begrudgingly. The presence of coins made to appeal to the rulers was a kind of consensus. Ando claims, "If the active consensus of the ruled empowered the ruler, so the regular affirmation of that

in “its capacity to conceal itself” and “to appeal natural, to coalesce completely and invisibly with the values and accepted power symbols of a given society.”[177] The discourse of power was already in effect and was further reinforced by the coinage.

Resistance to Imperial Practices: Responding to Discourses of Power

Whenever and wherever imperial domination lifts its hand, those who are the recipients of its harsh actions and powerful discourse, respond with acts of resistance. While one might be tempted to interpret resistance as violent responses to imperial actors, resistance is much more diverse and often far more subtle than open armed conflict. Resistance should rather be defined more broadly “as those behaviors and cultural practices by subordinate groups that contest hegemonic social formations that threaten to unravel the strategies of domination.”[178] More often, “most forms of this struggle,” Scott notes, “stop well short of outright collective defiance.” The “ordinary weapons” Scott has in mind include, “foot dragging, dissimulation, desertion, false compliance, pilfering, feigned ignorance, slander, arson, sabotage, and so on…[Scott postulates] that just such kinds of resistance are often the most significant and the most effective over the long

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consensus sustained their subjugation.” By participating the Roman game of images and ideology, the subjugated reinforced their own status as those under Roman authority by appealing to the good graces of that authority.

[177] A. P. Foulkes, *Literature and Propaganda* (London: Routledge, 2003), 2.

[178] Gyan Prakash and Douglas Haynes, “Introduction: The Entanglement of Power and Resistance,” in *Contesting Power: Resistance and Everyday Social Relations in South Asia*, ed. Douglas Haynes and Gyan Prakash (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1991), 3.

run."[179] Even daily common activities that are seemingly benign in isolation, can have "unintended yet profound consequences" on the hegemonic discourse of power.[180]

This is not to say that armed conflict is uncommon. Freire adeptly noted, "because [oppression] is a distortion of being more fully human, sooner or later being less human leads the oppressed to struggle against those who made them so."[181] He argues that at some point in the process of the struggle, "the oppressed, instead of striving for liberation, tend themselves to become oppressors."[182] This is one of the many complicating factors of colonial activity. As colonizers assert their authority through violence and oppression, many colonized, "adopt an attitude of 'adhesion' to the oppressor."[183] They essentially replicate the attitudes and methods of the colonizer for their own purposes. As the colonizer used violence to oppress, many among the colonized counter with the native tongue of empire: violence. As Crossan once noted in his discussions of the emergence of Christianity, when people are exploited, resistance rises, and ultimately, "brutality brutalizes."[184] While it is not the entirety of resistance, armed conflict should not be discounted.

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[179] James Scott, *Weapons of the Weak: Everyday Forms of Resistance* (New Haven: Yale, 1985), xvi.

[180] Prakash and Haynes, "Introduction: The Entanglement of Power and Resistance," 3; Barbalet, "Power and Resistance," 532, even goes so far as to claim that one cannot have any true "understanding of power and power relations without the concept of resistance." They are so entangled, that one can hardly separate them into two distinct conversations.

[181] Paulo Freire, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, trans. Myra Bergman Ramos (New York: Herder and Herder, 1970), 28.

[182] Freire, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, 30.

[183] Freire, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, 30.

[184] John Dominic Crossan, *The Birth of Christianity: Discovering What Happened in the Years Immediately After the Execution of Jesus* (Harper Collins, 1998), 166–68.

Where imperial discourses of power are at play, resistance of varying kinds is inevitably at work. This does not mean that all acts of resistance achieve their desired ends. Rather, "many acts of resistance fail to achieve their intended result—so we focus on intension rather than consequences."[185] The intension of these acts is ultimately to impose limits on power.[186] And the fact of resistance demonstrates that all actors in a social relationship, even as politically and socially charged as that of the relationship between colonized and colonizer, have some power—some capacity to cause transformation of the other by virtue of their actions. Giddens argues that, "however subordinate an actor may be in social relationship, the very fact of involvement in that relationship gives him or her a certain amount of power over the other."[187] This power may not lead to victory for the colonized, resulting in their political and social independence, but it asserts the unwillingness of the colonized to be consumed by the discourse of power.

The topic of resistance is further complicated by the nature of colonization itself. As colonized people come under the authority of the colonizer, some choose to conform to imperial expectations.[188] The conformity may be based on fear or hope of preferential treatment or even perceived advantage. Huskinson notes, however, that, "conformity does not necessarily mean that there were no objections to the ideal, or not resistance;

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[185] Scott, *Weapons of the Weak: Everyday Forms of Resistance*, 289.

[186] Barbalet, "Power and Resistance," 531.

[187] Giddens, *Central Problems in Social Theory*, 542.

[188] Making a similar argument from the perspective of Rome and her subjects and the need to recognize the multi-directional nature of power, see Hanges, "To Complicate Encounters," 42. Hanges argues that scholars must recognize the element of "negation" in the process of resistance. There is no such thing as "simple subversive resistance."

…dissent from the empire could be couched in 'insider terms.'"[189] So while the colonizer expected and enforced compliance with imperial policies and cultural norms, the local elite often colluded with imperial power overtly while simultaneously resisting those in power through more subtle forms of resistance such as foot dragging, mockery, and mimicry.

Rome considered the people they conquered "other" while simultaneously attempting to make them recognizable within their own cultural system. The problem that emerges is that people cannot be both *wholly* "other" and also *recognizably* "us." They will always be a combination of the two identities, a liminal existence between two opposing binaries—"us" and "other." This is hybridity in action. Bhabha argues that through the process of creating hybrid identities, the empire sows the seeds of resistance into the colonial enterprise from the beginning.[190] The contact between colonial authorities and colonial subjects during colonization results in a liminal space in which colonized and colonizers meet in a dialogical exchange. In this context the colonized subject can actively challenge the dominant discourse of the colonizers. During this exchange the culture and language of the colonizer is appropriated by the colonized but in very different ways with very different meanings calling into question the hegemony of the dominant discourse and the ideology it propagates. Once the colonial authority looses the power over the univocal discourse, it "enables a form of subversion" of the dominant

[189] Janet Huskinson, "Looking for Culture, Identity, and Power," in *Experiencing Rome: Culture, Identity, and Power in the Roman Empire* (London: Routledge, 2000), 19.

[190] Bhabha, *The Location of Culture*, 86, 112.

discourse, "that turns the discursive conditions of dominance into the grounds of intervention."[191]

The breaking of the hegemony of the dominant ideology allows for the resistance, however subtle, of oppressed people. Hybridization "terrorizes authority with the *ruse* of recognition;" the colonial voice sounds familiar and yet very different.[192] Hybridity models emphasize that the colonizing power affects the colonized, but the colonized also affect the colonizer. The seeds of dissention are built into the process itself. So despite the appearance of conformity by some, resistance is an ever-present part of the colonial experience. As Toner points out, "No simple dichotomy between the people who resisted and those who collaborated can be drawn."[193] In light of the variety of possibilities to which overlapping desires to benefit from and conform to colonial expectations as well as to resist colonial power can lead, the methods of resistance can vary greatly.[194]

Resistance to Rome. While the Roman Empire sought to ensure the futility of resistance through militaristic might and encouraged compliance instead of revolt by means of the propagation and subsequent acceptance of the discourse of power, conquered people continued to revolt. Despite Roman attempts to portray the empire as one large international family living in peace and prosperity, revolts were not an uncommon occurrence. Mattingly suggests that while Rome was not as, "racist and

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[191] Bhabha, *The Location of Culture*, 112.

[192] Bhabha, *The Location of Culture*, 115.

[193] Jerry Toner, *Popular Culture in Ancient Rome* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2009), 187.

[194] Portions of this section appeared originally in my work entitled, "The Kingdom of God: A Dangerously Powerful Challenge to Oppression," presented at the International Baptist Scholars Roundtable, Regents Park, Oxford, England in 2019. The published form is forthcoming in an edited volume with Baylor Press.

exclusive as more recent colonial power, the impact of Roman conquest on subject peoples cannot be assumed to have been negligible."[195] As extreme external forces were placed on native societies in the process of rapid acculturation, revolt became a natural outgrowth of colonization efforts.[196] Said claimed that the non-consensual nature of imposed rule predetermines resistance to the imposed power.[197] Sometimes it did take the form of armed resistance. There were more than sixty armed disturbances initiated by provincials between 16-192 CE.[198] One of the more successful revolts dates to 9 CE in Germany. The success of the revolt suggested that Rome was not actually invincible. Despite this test to Roman resolve and power, however, fear of the Roman army still spread far and wide.[199] Reputation mattered, and one significant defeat does not a reputation shatter. Every small force of soldiers represented an army that conquered the world and was known to be ruthless. As Rome had the tendency to see any resistance as rebellion, "only the truly desperate and thoroughly disaffected would risk open resistance and the inevitable retribution of Rome."[200]

Many within Jewish communities, however, did find themselves in desperate situations leading to a multiplicity of resistance responses. The Jewish communities of ancient Palestine found themselves under harsh taxation, marginalized by virtue of

[195] Mattingly, *Imperialism, Power, and Identity*, 94.

[196] Toner, *Popular Culture in Ancient Rome*, 173; Dyson, "Native Revolt Patterns in the Roman Empire," 139–140.

[197] Edward Said, *After the Last Sky: Palestinian Lives* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1986), 151.

[198] For a full list of revolts during the period between Augustus and Commodus see: Thomas Pekary, "'Seditio'. Unhuhen Und Revolten Im Römischen Reich von Augustus Bis Commodus," *AncSoc* 18 (1987): 133–50.

[199] Goldworthy, *Pax Romana*, 198–99.

[200] Goldworthy, *Pax Romana*, 203–204.

language and religion, and subject to Roman imperial authorities ruling over their native lands.[201] The Jews resisted Roman acculturation, and their "rituals made it harder for them to be absorbed into the Roman system."[202] Their history spoke of deliverance from oppression from Egypt by their God, and again deliverance in the Maccabean era proved they could conquer a conqueror.[203] While Rome was generally tolerant of the religious traditions of conquered people, tolerance was extended only to a point—to the point at which private practice interfered with public affairs or until private groups began to gain social power.[204] These religious traditions, as in other colonial contexts, were a symbolic battleground in which identity and relations of power were configured.[205] As Dyson perceptively points out, "religion is often the native sustaining force," that allows native societies to continue their resistance efforts.[206] Thus for the Jewish communities of Palestine, it should come as no surprise that resistance is almost always clothed in the trappings of religious zeal or expectation.

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[201] Dennis Duling, "Empires: Theories, Methods, Models," in *The Gospel of Matthew in Its Roman Imperial Context*, ed. John Riches and David Sim (London: T&T Clark International, 2005), 67; Duling notes that as outsiders took over not just the product of the land but the land itself, former owners became tenant farmers and ultimately day laborers that were more subject to the whims of economic change. In economic distress this led to day laborers becoming beggars and ultimately opened the door to banditry. Concerning the tax burden see, David Joy, *Mark and Its Subalterns: A Hermeneutical Paradigm for a Postcolonial Context* (London: Equinox, 2008), 76–78. He notes the taxes were as high as 50% on fruits and 33% on grains. These taxation levels would have had disastrous economic ramification for many of those living in Palestine.

[202] Goldworthy, *Pax Romana*, 213.

[203] Nadav Sharon, *Judea under Roman Domination: The First Generation of Statelessness and Its Legacy* (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2017), 235, claims the Judeans possessed in the Hasmonean dynasty a "mythologized model of a native kingdom," that, while flawed, was preferable to foreign domination.

[204] James Rives, "Religion in the Roman Empire," in *Experiencing Rome: Culture, Identity, and Power in the Roman Empire*, ed. Janet Huskinson (London: Routledge, 2000), 258.

[205] For a fuller discussion of this topic, see: Douglas Edwards, "Surviving the Web of Roman Power: Religion and Politics in the Acts of the Apostles, Josephus, and Chariton's Chaereas and Callirhoe," in *Images of Empire*, ed. Loveday Alexander (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 1991), 179–201.

[206] Dyson, "Native Revolt Patterns in the Roman Empire," 172.

Imperial Resistance in Ancient Palestine. Jewish communities responded to Roman imperialism in the first century in a variety of ways varying from collaboration with Roman authorities to open, armed resistance. The local elites collaborated with Roman rule and were utilized by the Romans to serve as representatives of Roman power to the conquered people.[207] Those who occupied these middling positions lived in an uncomfortable and precarious situation. It was stressful and often expensive to maintain a relationship with Rome, and it was equally stressful to maintain the peace with the local communities who were resentful of foreign rule.[208] Those who were successful at maintaining local compliance with imperial policies were rewarded for their efforts, occasionally even with Roman citizenship.[209] Those who were unsuccessful, however, found themselves recipients of both Roman rage and local suspicions.

In truth, even those who collaborated with the Romans were well aware that they were "not Roman" and would never be an equal to their Roman overlords.[210] The local elite collaborators, while profiting from their connections with the colonizers, were nonetheless "outsiders." Furthermore, some of the common people also chose to yeild to or collaborate with Rome. Their willingness to comply with Roman imperial policies does not necessitate their approval of Roman authority or their acceptance of Roman imperial propaganda; it does, however, demonstrate the affects of the Roman discourse of

[207] Longenecker, "Peace, Prosperity, and Propaganda," 26–28, offers a case study on the desire of local elite to collaborate with Roman authorities for personal advancement; cf. Richard Horsley, "The Zealots: Their Origin, Relationships and Importance in the Jewish Revolt," *NT* 28.2 (1986): 175–176.

[208] Harris, *Roman Power*, 195; Joy, *Mark and Its Subalterns*, 78–79.

[209] Cassidy, *Christians and Roman Rule in the New Testament*, 10.

[210] Lavan, "Father of the Whole Human Race," 159–160. The names given to those on the periphery show the clear demarcation lines between insiders and outsiders (*provinciae, peregrini, socii*), and Roman people insisted upon superiority to the provincials.

power and the hegemony of that discourse on those conquered by Rome.[211] Thus Toner's assertion proves true in ancient Rome as well as modern colonial situations: "no simple dichotomy between the people who resisted and those who collaborated can be drawn."[212]

While some were willing to collaborate with Rome for personal and political gain or out of fear, others believed that the only way to counter the power of the Romans was by speaking their native tongue: violence to ensure peace. The Zealots stoked the fire of religious zeal against the Romans and advocated the use of violence to remove foreign rulers from God's promised land. As the colonized community lost control over their land, governance, and economic security, religious symbols took on greater meaning.[213] Those who held fast to these symbols were increasingly sensitive to their violation, and the Romans were not well known for their cultural sensitivity. As they often violated Jewish religious standards, whether through images on or in the temple, those who held their religious tradition as sacrosanct saw little recourse but to resist.

The Zealots, while one of many religiously motivated resistance groups, were relatively few in number. They were, however, considered by Josephus to be the great villain in his narrative (*J.W. 7.268-70*). While very little is known about the particulars of

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[211] As Ando perceptively points out, to take part in the "game" Rome had created, even through acceptance of some imperial policies or a willingness to abide by them, may not have demonstrated a whole stock acceptance of imperial ideology, but it did make outright rejection more difficult; "by playing their respective games according to the rules of imperial ideology each group shifted the topic of public discourse from the legitimacy of the empire to the legitimacy of specific emperors and magistrates." Or as Althusser, *Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses*, 172-173, reminds, "the critics of ideology are always already subjects, and as such constantly practice the rituals of ideological recognition." To be under empire was to be a part of empire. Thus resistance is always a complicated affair. Ando, *Imperial Ideology and Provincial Loyalty in the Roman Empire*, 20–29.

[212] Toner, *Popular Culture in Ancient Rome*, 187; cf. Bhabha, *The Location of Culture*, 2.

[213] Richard Horsley, *Jesus and the Spiral of Violence: Popular Jewish Resistance in Roman Palestine* (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1987), 128. Religious symbols often took on greater meaning because these symbols are nearly "the only dimension of their life that remains under their own control."

this group outside of strongly biased sources, it does appear that the zealots, as an armed resistance group, originated from peasants driven out by Roman forces in the era of the Jewish War. These peasants joined together, perhaps with the urban poor, to form bands of brigands that would ultimately descend on Jerusalem.[214] They were likely motivated, at least in part, by economic instability, and their religious symbols provided the theological rational for violent action.[215] Further, scholars have noted the connection between the Zealot movement and messianic fervor. They had high expectations for the removal of foreign rulers through violent and divine action.[216]

Another violent faction, the sicarii, likely emerged in the 50s in response to the continued alienation and oppression by the imperial elite and their local collaborators.[217] Rome ruled, not by direct oversight, but often through local mediators. The local elite performed important daily maintenance of Roman rule. The sicarii targeted these local

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[214] Richard Horsley and John Hanson, *Bandits, Prophets, and Messiahs: Popular Movements in the Time of Jesus* (Harrisburg, PA: Trinity Press International, 1985), 218–223; Horsley, "The Zealots: Their Origin, Relationships and Importance in the Jewish Revolt," 163; T.L. Donaldson, "Rural Bandits, City Mobs and the Zealots," *JSJ* 21.1 (1990): 19–40.

[215] Mattingly, *Imperialism, Power, and Identity*, 164 addresses the issues of economic instability in conquered regions. He notes speaking of the general practice in the empire, "The Roman Empire was not run on altruistic lines; it developed mechanisms for the exploitation of land and people." Occasionally, economic vitality for a region resulted, but that usually benefited Rome first, collaborators second.

[216] See for example, Martin Hengel, *The Zealots: Investigations into the Jewish Freedom Movement in the Period from Herod I unitl 70 AD. Translated by David Smith* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1989), esp, 301-311; J.H. Yoder, *The Politics of Jesus* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1972); Joy, *Mark and Its Subalterns*, 111–113; Peter Tomson, "Sources on the Politics of Judaea in the 50s CE: A Response to Martin Goodman," *JJS* 68.2 (2017): 254.

[217] The scholarly debate continues as to the connection between the Zealots and Sicarii. Some scholars have suggested that they are merely two strands of the same movement. See for example: Hengel, *The Zealots, 24-72*; Others have suggested they are actually independent groups with no historical connection in their origins or activities. See for example: Morton Smith, "Zealots and Sicarii, Their Origins and Relation," *HTR* 64.1 (1971): 1–19; Horsley, "The Zealots: Their Origin, Relationships and Importance in the Jewish Revolt." In either case, both represent a strand of resistance in Palestine willing to engage in violent actions. For our purposes here, their connection or lack thereof is of little significance. See Tomson, "Sources on the Politics of Judaea in the 50s," 254–255.

collaborators who made the system work.[218] Josephus claims they stabbed their targets in broad daylight (*J.W. 2.254-56*), leading Rome to identify them as terrorists of the highest order. As is common with liberation movements, those striving for liberation are forced to choose among violent means because non-violent recourse has been denied to them.[219]

The zealots and the sicarii, while known for their resistance in the mid first century and perhaps not existing in their clearest and most organized form until the mid first century, did not appear from within a vacuum. A bloody conflict does not erupt without a "background of hostility."[220] Jewish groups resisted foreign rule for generations prior to the Jewish War. Tensions were simmering long before revolutionaries brandished the sword. The Maccabean Revolt demonstrated a Jewish willingness to fight foreign rulers for one's God and ancestral lands. Rome was just another foreign ruler in a long line of colonizers.

One final word about armed resistance should be said concerning the group Josephus identifies as the Fourth Philosophy. While not a strictly violent resistance group, its primary leader, if Josephus is to be believed, did urge his fellow countrymen to open, if not violent, resistance.[221] According to Josephus, Judas the Galilean claimed the Jewish people should be unwilling to tolerate human masters after serving God alone

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[218] Horsley and Hanson, *Bandits, Prophets, and Messiahs*, 205.

[219] Horsley and Hanson, *Bandits, Prophets, and Messiahs*, 203.

[220] Sharon, *Judea under Roman Domination*, 245.

[221] Fernando Bermejo-Rubio, "Are Judas the Galilean and the 'Fourth Philosophy' Mere Concoctions? The Limits of Josephus' Inventiveness," *SEÅ* 81 (2016): 91–111, has made a thoughtful argument for the plausibility of the account offered in Josephus. He is responding, however, to those who have deemed that the account in Josephus concerning the sects, particularly the Fourth Philosophy, is unhistorical. See for example, James McLaren, "Constructing Judean History in the Diaspora: Josephus's Accounts of Judas," in *Negotiating Diaspora: Jewish Strategies in the Roman Empire*, ed. John Barclay (London: T&T Clark, 2004), 90–108; Israel Ben-Shalom, *The School of Shammai and the Zealots' Struggle Against Rome* (Jerusalem: Ben-Gurion University of the Negev Press, 1993), esp. 126-171.

(*J.W. 2.118*).[222] Under Mosaic Law the people were called to submit to God, and to submit to foreign rule was to betray the covenant (*J.W. 2.433*). Indeed, Josephus leaves open the door to violent resistance when he claims that the Jewish people should not be blamed for the revolt but rather that blame should fall at the feet of a governor who abused his power (*Ant. 18.23-25*). This admonition against blame presumes their participation, or the participation of their intellectual inheritors, in the revolt. Further Josephus claims they filled the nation with unrest (*Ant. 18.4*) perhaps because of their refusal to take part in the census tax registration and their encouragement of others to do the same (*J.W. 7.253*).

Eventually these groups and their intellectual offspring would engage in open warfare with the Romans in the Jewish War when resistance bubbled over into all out revolt.[223] This action is at its core a play for power. The resistance movement spoke against tyranny but as with any revolutionary movement, the goal was not simply to overthrow the tyrant but to install a replacement to such power. As the political

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[222] Myles Lavan, *Slaves to Rome: Paradigms of Empire in Roman Culture* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 80–82, demonstrates that slavery was a common trope used to describe the conquered people's relationship with Rome. He offers one particularly striking example concerning the Jewish people specifically. Cicero, in an attempt to justify the actions of a former governor of Asia in relation to his Jewish subjects, claims that the defeat of the Jewish people proves that the immortal gods showed them no concern, and thus they were "made a slave" (Flac. 69).

[223] The reason for the outbreak of the Jewish War is a point of contention. M. Goodman, *The Ruling Class of Judaea: The Origins of the Jewish Revolt Against Rome A.D. 66-70* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987) esp. 93–108, 198–227, argued the ruling elite actually agreed with the views of the various sects and eventually offered outright support. Monika Bernett, *Der Kaiserkult in Judäa Unter Den Herodianern and Römern*, WUNT 203 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2007), 310–351, argued the primary issue was the imperial cult. The people could not perform this sign of loyalty and this led to tensions. Steve Mason, "Why Did Judaeans Go to War with Rome in 66–67CE? Realist-Regional Perspectives," in *Jews and Christians in the First and Second Centuries: How to Write Their History*, ed. Peter Tomson and Joshua Schwartz (Leiden: Brill, 2014), 126–206, argued the war actually resulted from long-simmering inter-ethnic rivalries with those in the surrounding regions. Tomson, "Sources on the Politics of Judaea in the 50s CE," demonstrates the rising tensions between Jews and Gentiles more broadly. Collectively these scholars demonstrate the confluence of factors that led to the revolt. Likely each contributes a helpful perspective to that which led to the outbreak of war.

philosopher Bertrand de Juvenal once argued, "Revolutions rend the air with denunciations of tyrants. Yet in truth they encounter none in their beginnings and raise up their own at their ends."[224] One is not overthrown because he is a tyrant; he is overthrown because he is weak. Revolution is not the attempt to destroy power but rather the attempt to install it. The Jews of ancient Palestine who did engage in open, armed resistance had every intention of dispelling the foreign rule and replacing it, most likely, with something equally brutal. The beneficiaries may have changed, but the kind of governance would have been quite similar, turning their vengeance toward those who had once held power over them.

While violence was a feature of the resistance movements of the first century, open and armed resistance was dangerous business for rebels, and many chose a more discrete and subtle approach, hidden in the written word but clear to those with ears to hear.[225] The ideologies of resistance espoused by various groups can be determined by evaluating these documents written from colonial space, especially those documents that adopted the cultural tools provided by Rome, "but subverted them for its own purposes."[226] Most of these acts of textual resistance concerned religious motifs of God's deliverance and millennial movements focused on God's coming judgment of the

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[224] Bertrand de Jouvenel, *On Power: The Natural History of Its Growth* (Indianapolis: Liberty Press, 1945), 241.

[225] John Riches, "Matthew's Missionary Strategy in Colonial Perspective," in *The Gospel of Matthew in Its Roman Imperial Context*, ed. John Riches and David Sim (London: T & T Clark International, 2005), 130; To use the words of Edward Said, *Culture and Imperialism* (New York: Vintage Books, 1993), 36, these are hidden transcripts. Hidden transcripts are those words uttered out of earshot, literally or metaphorically, of the colonizer. The discrepancy between hidden and public transcripts helps us discern the ideologies at play in a narrative/text.

[226] Toner, *Popular Culture in Ancient Rome*, 178.

oppressors.[227] The cult imagery served as a "weapon of cultural resistance to the official religion," and by extension the empire that was upheld by that official religion.[228]

The Jewish people have a long history of textual resistance against foreign rulers. Even before the Roman eagle landed in Palestine, the Greeks had ruled with equal brutality. As Antiochus began his reign of terror over the people and violated their religious convictions, the colonized people wrote back. The book of Daniel serves as an excellent example of this type of resistance literature. The book offers an alternative version of reality in which divine initiative would bring the end of an empire.[229] The use of symbolic language throughout the text provided a means of countering the symbol-laden narrative of the oppressors. Fewell even argues that the stories of Daniel and his friends are an example of assimilation and resistance coexisting in these communities who were enduring persecution. As Daniel and his friends profited from the connections made with the empire, they also resisted full-scale assimilation with their captors.[230] While Daniel leaves open the possibility of collaboration within the resistance movements, the book is equally clear: when conflict arises between the Law of God and the Empire, God must always win.[231]

The Enochic texts function similarly. The Enochic tradition, however, reaches further back into Israel's narrative history to the antediluvian era. As God locks away

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[227] Duling, "Empires: Theories, Methods, Models," 68.

[228] Toner, *Popular Culture in Ancient Rome*, 173.

[229] Anathea Portier-Young, *Apocalypse Against Empire: Theologies of Resistance in Early Judaism* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 2011), 277–278; cf. Wright, *Paul and the Faithfulness of God*, 1:283; See Longenecker, "Peace, Prosperity, and Propaganda," 40, for a brief overview of Josephus's own interpretation of Daniel which is critical despite his general appeasing tone toward Rome.

[230] Danna Nolan Fewell, *The Children of Israel: Reading the Bible for the Sake of Our Children* (Nashville: Abingdon, 2003), 117.

[231] Portier-Young, *Apocalypse Against Empire*, 227.

those responsible for evil by flooding the earth, a picture of God's cosmic power and justice emerges. All efforts of empire are subordinate to God's cosmic authority.[232] In the Book of Watchers this is made abundantly clear. In Enoch's heavenly journey he is freed of geographic boundaries, and one day God will grant freedom to God's people collectively from imperial control. Further, as God confines the watchers to their prison, so also the imperial powers "will forfeit the freedoms they have stolen."[233]

The tradition of resisting empire through written discourse carried over into the Roman era in texts such as 4 Ezra and 2 Baruch. The foreign power was different than that which oppressed their predecessors, but the ideology of empire pressing on the people, while differing in detail, was far too familiar. Each of these texts responded to the discourse of power propagated by Rome by standing in a long tradition of textual resistance against foreign powers. 4 Ezra interprets Daniel's fourth beast as an eagle representing the Roman Empire (12:10-35). The Messiah would bring judgment to the eagle and conquer the eagle and the empire it represents.[234] The author adapts Daniel's images for use in a new context, even coopting the geographical reference of Babylon for the oppressive empire at hand. Additionally, 2 Baruch and the Apocalypse of Abraham both share a hope of Israel's restoration in the context of their own narratives of

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[232] Portier-Young, *Apocalypse Against Empire*, 289.

[233] Portier-Young, *Apocalypse Against Empire*, 290.

[234] For a fuller discussion, see N.T. Wright, *The New Testament and the People of God* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1992), 316; Michael Stone, "The Question of the Messiah in 4 Ezra," in *Judaisms and Their Messiahs at the Turn of the Christian Era*, ed. Jacob Neusner, William Green, and Ernest Frerichs (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987), 212; Longenecker, "Peace, Prosperity, and Propaganda," 39.

resistance.[235] Messianic expectations, while varied, were a part of those hopes of restoration. Ultimately, Rome's triumph will become God's triumph, and the Roman ideology of "subdue the arrogant" will be imposed upon Rome itself.[236]

Literary creations were an important way in which communities resisted the colonizer's attempts to assail native/essentialist culture.[237] They could express their discontent through veiled language that sounded suspiciously like the oppressor's propaganda but cloaked in alternative rationales, gods, and social customs. In these writings, readers do not encounter a "univocal discourse where identity is simply asserted but rather the location where conflict forms identity."[238] As writers countered the demands of and subjugation by the empire, they struggled to articulate an alternative identity brought to life by their resistance. While the evidence is limited due to the difficulty of writing and preserving subaltern voices in a colonial context, the evidence available from the first century points to a very active resistance movement.[239]

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[235] Philip Esler, "Political Oppression in Jewish Apocalyptic Literature: A Social-Scientific Approach," *JRC* 28 (1993): 185.

[236] Philip Esler, "Rome in Apocalyptic and Rabbinic Literature," in *The Gospel of Matthew in Its Roman Imperial Context*, ed. John Riches and David Sim (London: T & T Clark International, 2005), 27.

[237] The list presented here is by no means exhaustive but rather illustrative of the kind of textual resistance circulating and the long history such resistance has in the tradition. Other examples include Qumran's 1QpHap and War Scroll, the Sibylline Oracles as taken up by some Jewish commentators, and the Assumption of Moses. See Edwards, "Surviving the Web of Roman Power: Religion and Politics in the Acts of the Apostles, Josephus, and Chariton's Chaereas and Callirhoe"; Joel Marcus, "Modern and Ancient Jewish Apocalypticism," *JR* 76.1 (1996): 1–27; David Aune, "The Apocalypse of John and Palestinian Jewish Apocalyptic," *Neot* 40.1 (2006): 1–33; Simon Samuel, *A Postcolonial Reading of Mark's Story of Jesus*, Library of New Testament Studies 340 (London: T&T Clark, 2007), 69–74; Portier-Young, *Apocalypse Against Empire*; Longenecker, "Peace, Prosperity, and Propaganda," 39–41; Vered Noam, "Will This One Never Be Brought Down? Jewish Hopes for the Downfall of the Roman Empire," in *The Future of Rome: Roman, Greek, Jewish, and Christian Visions* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2020), 169–88.

[238] Whitmarsh, *Greek Literature and the Roman Empire: The Politics of Imitation*, 295.

[239] Esler, "Rome in Apocalyptic and Rabbinic Literature," 11.

The various resistance strategies employed by Jewish revolutionaries and writers share similar ideological underpinnings. The deep and abiding belief that God delivers from oppression led to a theocratic ideology in which God was expected to fight for the people and rule over them. The pairing of theocratic ideology with the traditional concept of zeal for the law led to an ideology of resistance to foreign, and specifically Roman, rule and oppression.[240] While it took various forms, the primary goal was shared among those resisting imperial domination: foreign rule was unacceptable.[241] Even as many in the pubic eye could sing the Roman song, in private they sang the song of their subjugation and asserted their own religious and cultural superiority.[242]

Conclusion

Questions of power stand at the base of any discussion of colonial activity or resistance to such activity. Power, while not easily defined by theorists, is an all-pervasive, relational, and morally neutral force that can be characterized as the "transformative capacity of human action" or the capacity to limit the available field of action of another person or group. This capacity can be used to oppress or liberate, as it cannot be merely a repressive force. In this construal, there is really no such concept as "powerlessness." There is simply more or less powerful. Any action has the ability to limit the field of action of other actors. It is an actor's ability to limit effectively the field of action of another that determines whether or not they "win" or "lose" in the process of

[240] David Goodblatt, "Priestly Ideologies of the Jewish Resistance," *JSQ* 3.3 (1996): 226; Tomson, "Sources on the Politics of Judaea in the 50s CE," 256–258, makes an argument specifically for the issue of rising tensions with the Gentiles as the reason for the revolt. He utilizes the example of circumcision as form of power to make distinctions clear between Jews and "others." Rome was a significant theological and social problem but so were the Gentiles more broadly conceived.

[241] Sharon, *Judea under Roman Domination*, 235.

[242] Riches, "Matthew's Missionary Strategy in Colonial Perspective," 131.

decision making. Win or lose, however, all actors exert some power on others, even if limited by virtue of an inequality of tangible or conceptual resources.

Those with the advantage of resources in a colonial situation utilize their economic, social, and political net worth to craft a discourse of power that renders the questions of outsiders (the colonized) nonsensical, thus reinforcing the ideology of empire operative in the discourse of power. As a colonizing power, Rome sought to render her values and worldview normative by means of ideological propagation through a discourse of power that marginalized conquered peoples. Rome was quite skilled in the art of discourse propagation and protection by means of linguistic and extralinguistic acts.

The extralinguistic aspects of Roman power and ideology were an unavoidable part of Roman life. Even if one did not intend to pause and reflect on the imagery, one could not avoid the impact of the visual representations. It would affect Roman and provincial alike, though in very different ways. For the Romans, this imagery was meant to reinforce their sense of nationalism and loyalty to the empire, to cultivate a sense of pride and awe. To those living among the conquered territories of the empire, the imagery reminded them of their conquered status and the futility of resistance. The might of Rome had conquered and would conquer. "These new politics of icons, images, coinage, and praise created an ideology more powerful than a pure military force ever could."[243] The visual arts and military presence in connection with the mythology and praise of the poets and historians, "contributed measurably to the remarkable stability of the sociopolitical system" and by extension the stability of the discourse of power running underneath the

[243] Toner, *Popular Culture in Ancient Rome*, 182–183.

system as whole.[244] The written and visual elements of Roman power were an ever-present force in the lives of those living in the Roman Empire and established the discourse of power to which the colonized people living under Roman power responded in various ways including the Jewish elite, the disciples, and even Jesus himself.

Despite the power of the discourse and Rome's attempts to create a univocal voice of dominance, resistance movements were a reality of first-century life. These resistance movements, while not necessarily achieving their desired ends (i.e. liberation), provided a challenge to the univocal voice of Rome, allowing for the hegemony of the discourse to be called into question. Since, as Ando notes, "all domination was local" in the Roman Empire, so also all resistance bore distinct markers of the community speaking back to empire.[245] For many of the Jewish communities of the first century, this resistance took the form of religious zeal, expectations divine deliverance, and, on occasion, violence.

In the following chapters, the responses to Roman imperialism and the Roman discourse of power, both as accommodation and resistance, will be discussed in relation to the Gospel of Mark. Specifically, this project seeks to address the ways in which Mark's Jesus responds to the Roman imperial discourse of power and the first-century resistance movements (i.e. nativist essentialist responses) outlined above and creates a discourse of power unique to the kingdom of God. I will examine the ways Jesus speaks about the "transformative capacity of human action" in relation to an emerging discourse of power crafted specifically to respond to the nativist essentialist and colonial discourses

[244] Zanker, *The Power of Images in the Age of Augustus*, 338.

[245] Clifford Ando, "The Ambitions of Government: Sovereignty and Control in the Ancient Countryside," in *Empire and Religion in the Roman World*, ed. Harriet Flower (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2021), 88.

of power. By addressing the function of the crucifixion prediction cycles in Mark 8:27–10:45 (prediction/resistance/teaching) as well as the narrative development and coherence of Mark 10 as a response to the Roman discourse of power and nativist essentialist rejoinders to that discourse, Jesus's counter discourse of power for a new empire is revealed.

CHAPTER FOUR

Resistance from Colonial Space: Challenging the Hegemonic Discourse in Mark 1–9

Despite the power and pervasiveness of Roman imperial discourse, Rome was never able to suppress completely the resistance of those she conquered. While many local elites were persuaded to collaborate with Rome for wealth, prestige, or perceived personal and social gain, many among the conquered communities were resistant to imperial pressures to align with Roman authority. Since local communities retained elements of their own culture and practice, the seeds of resistance continued to grow within many quarters of the conquered communities. Those engaged in the resistance responded to colonial discourse by forming counter narratives of power informed by their unique social, political, and religious customs and cultures. While their resistance did not always achieve its desired end—independence, revolution, or justice, for example—it provided conquered people with "an efficacious influence" on the colonizer.[1] The narratives written within these contexts reflect the difficulties of life under the sway of empire.

The text of Mark's Gospel tells a story of resistance to Roman imperial ideology. Mark's disciples reflect the difficulties of navigating imperial discourse and resisting the colonizer through reduplication of the colonizer's ideology. Mark's Jesus, however, offers an alternative discourse of power to rival the Roman discourse that does not rely solely on the reduplication of Roman methods. Mark's Jesus offers a vision of power and

[1] J.M. Barbalet, "Power and Resistance," *BJS* 36.4 (1985): 542.

inclusion that demands those who follow abandon the ways of Rome's empire for the advancement of the kingdom of God.

In this chapter, I turn my attention to the Gospel of Mark, wherein I argue Mark's disciples have reduplicated the ideology of the empire through boundary making and exclusion in their attempt to resist Roman ideology. As the Romans considered the conquered people "other," so also the disciples consider those who are not among them "other." This necessitates their resistance to Gentile inclusion in Jesus's mission. As Rome exerted authority over those ruled, so also, I will demonstrate, the disciples are keen to acquire power and prestige through an inversion of the colonial structure. As the disciples impose boundary lines that Mark's Jesus refuses to acknowledge, Jesus must teach the disciples what it means to embrace a rival kingdom, the kingdom of God. This chapter reads Mark 1–9 through the lens of imperial resistance, examining two resistance ideologies at work in the text: that of the disciples and that of Mark's Jesus. I focus on the ways in which the disciples practice imperial resistance in ways that are inconsistent with the ideology of God's empire and the ways in which Jesus crafts a rival discourse of power meant to reshape the disciples' views of inclusion, power, and God's kingdom.

Mark 1:1–8:26: Ideologies of Resistance

Between the resistance narratives of Daniel and his contemporaries and those of the later first century Roman critics discussed in the previous chapter, lay the storied events of Mark's Gospel. Mark's Gospel represents two unique resistance ideologies within a single text. The first is reflected in the character of the disciples, as Mark's disciples attempt to resist the Roman Empire and foreign domination more broadly. In the

text, Jesus's disciples are characters formed by the social circumstances of colonization, and the Gospel reflects through the disciples one conception of foreign rule and an essentialist attempt to resist it. The second ideology of resistance in the text, the one for which the text advocates, is the discourse of power offered by Mark's Jesus. While not entirely absent of elements of Roman appropriation, the discourse of power proffered by Mark's Jesus stands in stark contrast to both the Roman understanding and that of Jesus's disciples in the narrative.[2]

In what follows, we begin with a discussion of the two competing counter narratives of resistance against the Roman hegemonic discourse of power in Mark. It will be demonstrated that the disciples in the narrative represent the political, social, and religious assumptions concerning foreign rule of many of their real-life, first-century contemporaries. This is seen especially in Mark 1:1–8:26. The Gospel reflects through the disciples an attitude toward foreign domination and "proper" methods of resistance to foreign rule in which foreigners should be expelled from God's land and God's coming kingdom. The methods of expulsion and the establishment of a new kingdom look suspiciously like those of their Roman overlords. It will be argued that the disciples of the narrative sought political, social, and religious independence from Roman imperial authority in ways that replicated the brutality and exclusionary practices of that authority. They resist the Roman Empire and foreign domination even to the point of resisting the

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[2] This is not to say that Jesus is a completely unique voice in his context. There are certainly Jewish sources that speak to the significance of suffering in the process of resistance. These sources, however, do not attempt to invoke the divine imagery for the martyrs or speak of the inauguration of a new kingdom on the basis of said martyrdom. Nevertheless, the martyrdom stories do provide some context for the resistance narrative of Jesus. See for example: Tessa Rajak, "Reflections on Jewish Resistance and the Discourse of Martyrdom in Josephus," in *Judaea-Palaestina, Babylon and Rome: Jews in Antiquity*, ed. Benjamin Isaac and Yuval Shahar (Tubingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2012), 165–80.

mission of Jesus to the Gentiles in Mark.[3] When confronted with the opportunity to distinguish between the Roman authorities and the Gentile mission, they fail to do so. Embodying essentialist resistance strategies in which the cultural solidarity imposed by the colonial power is turned against the colonizer, the disciples of Mark's Gospel expected the Messiah to offer liberation from their foreign rulers by inverting the social binary of "insiders" and "outsiders" to the benefit of the disciples. When Jesus appears as the Messiah, the disciples do not merely misunderstand Jesus's alternative discourse of power, they actively resist it. This is seen, at least in part, in their resistance to the Gentile mission. Throughout the narrative, but especially in Mark 8:27–9:50, Mark's Jesus attempts to alter the disciples' views of messianic authority and Roman resistance. While the disciples replicate the Roman discourse of power for their own ends, Jesus offers a counter discourse of power to strategies espoused by his closest followers.

Mark 1:1: Situating Mark's Story in an Imperial Context

The Gospel's interaction with the issues of empire and discourses of power begins in the very first chapter. It has been thoroughly demonstrated that even the opening lines of Mark's Gospel are a declaration of the Gospel's imperial critique.[4] The first line lays down the initial challenge to the Roman discourse of power. As Bhabha reminds, the

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[3] This resistance to the Gentiles is discussed extensively below. The disciples resist Jesus's mission to the Gentiles and their inclusion in the kingdom of God throughout the first eight chapters of Mark and continue to resist Jesus's kingdom inclusion throughout the central section of Mark.

[4] Mary Ann Tolbert, "When Resistance Becomes Repression: Mark 13:9-27 and the Poetics of Location," in *Reading From This Place: Social Location and Biblical Interpretation in Global Perspective*, ed. Mary Ann Tolbert and Fernando Segovia (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1995), 331–46; Richard Horsley, "Submerged Biblical Histories and Imperial Biblical Studies," in *The Postcolonial Bible*, ed. R.S. Sugirtharajah (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 1998), 152–75; Adam Winn, "The Gospel of Mark: A Response to Imperial Propaganda," in *An Introduction to Empire in the New Testament*, ed. Adam Winn (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2016), 92–94; For a more affiliative/disruptive critique see Simon Samuel, "The Beginning of Mark: A Colonial/Postcolonial Conundrum," *BibInt* 10 (2002): 405–19.

colonized, and by extension every resistance movement, mimics the colonial authority in some ways but also turns the hegemonic discourse on its head because it is incapable of complete replication.[5] The colonized embrace the language of the colonizer but define it differently or apply it in a new and unique way. The "ruse of recognition" begins for Mark's Gospel with the opening statement: "The beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ, Son of God" (Ἀρχὴ τοῦ εὐαγγελίου Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ υἱοῦ θεοῦ, 1:1).[6] The title Son of God was commonly attached to the imperial ruler.[7] A number of the emperors made the claim

[5] Homi K. Bhabha, *The Location of Culture* (London: Routledge, 1994), 115.

[6] Some ancient manuscripts omit "son of God"(א* θ 28^{c} 255 1555* sy^{pal} geo^{1} arm^{9mss} $Iren^{pt}$ Or). The theological concerns of the text, however, favor its inclusion. The idea of Jesus as the Son of God permeates the narrative. The designation of Jesus as "Son of God" is used in 1:11, 3:11, 9:7, and 15:39 (perhaps also 12:6 as metaphorical referent). William L. Lane, *The Gospel according to Mark*, NICNT (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1974), 41 claims it is most likely that given the textual evidence and theological connections in the text that "Son of God" was omitted unintentionally in the tradition (contra Marcus, *Mark 1-8: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*, 1st ed., AB v. 27a (New York: Doubleday, 2000), 141 who claims it must be scribal addition because it was far too important to ever be omitted.); Craig A. Evans, "Mark's Incipit and the Priene Calendar Inscription: From Jewish Gospel to Greco-Roman Gospel," *Journal of Greco-Roman Christianity and Judaism*, *Mark's Incipit and the Priene Calendar Inscription* 1 (2000): 67–81 argues the phrase is original as it establishes the theme of the "Son of God" across the narrative. So also Francis J. Moloney, *The Gospel of Mark: A Commentary* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 2002), 29 and John R. Donahue and Daniel J. Harrington, *The Gospel of Mark*, SP v. 2 (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2002), 60, who further note the fondness of Mark's author to employ foreshadowing thus connecting 1:1 to 15:39; Peter Bolt, *Jesus's Defeat of Death: Persuading Mark's Early Readers*, SNTSMS 125 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 44 fn. 5 specifically notes that while the title may not be original, the title is exceedingly important in the narrative of Mark; For a short discussion of the topic and further reading on the topic see David Garland, *A Theology of Mark's Gospel* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2015), 195–197; Alexander Globe, "The Caesarean Omission of the Phrase 'Son of God' in Mark 1:1," *HTR* 75.2 (1982): 209–18; Tommy Wasserman, "The 'Son of God' Was in the Beginning (Mark 1:1)," *JTS* 62.1 (2011): 20–50.

[7] The title was quite common among the Julio-Claudian emperors, Augustus, Tiberius, Caligula (indirectly), and Nero. Augustus was stylized as the son of the divine Caesar. So also those who came after him embraced the moniker. The title is found on coins and inscriptions throughout the empire. The Flavian emperors likewise were called "son of god," though less so with Vespasian. Since he stands in chronological rather than biological (or adoptive) succession, the title was more difficult to connect to his reign. While it is not altogether absent in Vespasian's reign, once Vespasian was deified after his death, his sons could more easily claim or be given the title. Titus minted a collection of coins that specifically cast himself as "son of god" after Vespasian's supposed apotheosis (Gallia, 337; cf. RIC II^{2} 219–21 nos. 356–384). For a general overview, see Bruce Winter, *Divine Honours for the Caesars: The First Christians Responses* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2015), 66–73. Concerning Titus and the claim to divine sonship, see Andrew Gallia, "Vespasian's Apotheosis," *CQ* 69.1 (2019): 337; Michael Peppard, "The Eagle and the Dove: Roman Imperial Sonship and the Baptism of Jesus (Mark 1.9–11)," *NTS* 56 (2010): 436 notes specifically the use of "son of god" to refer to Vespasian (cf. IG II^{2} 3281; RIC 2.1217 n. 93). Jacob Latham, *Performance, Memory, and Processions in Ancient Rome: The Pompa Circensis from the Late Republic to*

to be "Son of God" and had the benefits of authority, honor, and possible apotheosis to guarantee it in the Roman context.[8] As shown in the previous chapter, the emperor Augustus's image alongside the claim "Caesar Divi Filius" was placed on coinage that spread the empire over.[9] Tiberius's, Caligula's (indirectly), Nero's, Titus's, and Domitian's coinage also extensively reflect the practice of reference to the emperor's status as the son of a divine father.[10] The author counters this claim to divine authority concerning the emperor with a claim of Jesus's own connection to divine authority, establishing Jesus as a challenger to the Roman rulers.[11]

Equally as important, the phrase ἀρχὴ τοῦ εὐαγγελἰου is loaded with imperial overtones. The word ἀρχή can be translated as "beginning," but it is also equally

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Late Antiquity (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2016), 109–128, offers a helpful overview of the divine honors and titles for both the Julio-Claudians and the Flavians.

[8] This is easier to see in the Julio-Claudian Dynasty and in the Flavian emperors, Titus and Domitian. The year of four emperors, a chaotic time in Roman imperial history, offers less toward this generalization. Further, it is unclear whether the title was initiated by imperial authorities or given to them. In any case, the language of sonship in relation to the divine was utilized quite widely in imperial propaganda.

[9] BMCRE 612; Jeffrey Weima, "'Peace and Security' (1 Thess 5:3): Prophetic Warning or Political Propaganda?," *NTS* 58 (2012): 334; So also in Tiberius's reign, the image of the divine Augustus was quite common. While Tiberius is not always mentioned as a "son of god," the reference to the divine Augustus by his son, is certainly telling of Tiberius's own status. Cf. Reinhard Wolters, "The Julio-Claudians," in *The Oxford Handbook of Greek and Roman Coinage*, ed. William Metcalf (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), 343.

[10] Olivier Hekster, *Emperors and Ancestors: Roman Rulers and the Constraints of Tradition* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015), 46–58. This practice was more difficult for Caligula. As the grandson of an emperor (not the adopted son of an emperor), Caligula was unable to make the direct claim to sonship. He did, however, make claims to be the great-grandson of Augustus, effectively making a similar, if more indirect connection to the deified ancestor. Caligula's assassination complicated the claims to divine sonship for his successor. Claudius does not refer to himself as a son of the divine, but after his consecration, his adoptive son, Nero, returns to the practice of Tiberius's claim to divine sonship.

[11] Samuel, "The Beginning of Mark," 410; As both Garland, *A Theology of Mark's Gospel*, 198 and Otfried Hofius, "Ist Jesus Der Messias? Thesen," in *Neutestamentliche Studien*, WUNT 132 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2000), 122–123, note the title "Son of God" designates Jesus as one who is the son of God in life rather than posthumously, and the Son of God did not find his origins here, "from the world," but rather entered into the world. While the fullness of the meaning of this term is debated, the use of a term that correlates so closely with the language of empire invites the comparison between Jesus and the emperors.

plausible to translate the word as "power," "authority," or even as Samuel suggests, "empire."[12] The usage of the term is quite diverse in the literature. It can refer to an individual's or group's rule,[13] the occupation of an office,[14] a geographical referent,[15] and in some cases, a boundary marker that extends beyond geography.[16] In Greek, the phrase ἀρχὴ Ῥωμαίων was a common term used to speak of the bounds of the Roman Empire.[17] While this phrase denotes the geographical bounds of the empire, physical boundaries are not a benign concept. Geographical boundaries articulated by a political entity communicate the ability to control and maintain order (or the expectation to do so) and the extent of that entity's power in the world.[18] The use of the word ἀρχή in Mark 1:1, therefore, draws upon the interconnected web of related meanings. The Gospel opens with a declaration of the beginning/power of the gospel of the Son of God and intimates the extent of this empire's reach into this world, perhaps even into the space supposedly

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[12] Simon Samuel, *A Postcolonial Reading of Mark's Story of Jesus*, LNTS 340 (London: T&T Clark, 2007), 51, 90; Samuel, "The Beginning of Mark," 409; cf. David Joy, *Mark and Its Subalterns: A Hermeneutical Paradigm for a Postcolonial Context* (London: Equinox, 2008), 70.

[13] Diod S. 3.53.1; 17.24.2; Josephus *Ant*. 19.274; Herodotus *Hist.* 1.91; Appian *Bell. civ*. 1.99.462

[14] Josephus *Ant*. 19.273

[15] Polybius *Hist*. 1.3.10; 3.2.6; Appian *Bell civ*. 1.5.22; *Hist. rom*. Preface 4.16

[16] Herodotus 1.91; Appian *Hist. rom*. Preface 9.32. Appian's usage here is most interesting. In speaking of "Asia's ἀρχή," he claims "as regards the achievements and courage of Asia's empire, so feeble and cowardly are their peoples" they should not even be compared with Europe's nations. While deprecatory in nature, the usage points beyond geographical bounds to qualities of a people within those boundaries. An empire is a geographical entity, but it is more than land; it is a geo-political space that can be described in living terms such as courage (or lack thereof). In other words, land alone does not an empire make.

[17] Hans Leander, *Discourses of Empire: The Gospel of Mark from a Postcolonial Perspective*, SemeiaSt 71 (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2013), 186. For the specific usage, see for example, Josephus *Ant*. 15.361, 16.60; *J.W.* 4.657, 5.322.

[18] See for example in Polybius's Histories 1.3.10. While the use of ἀρχή communicates a geographical boundary that is the empire, it makes clear that the Romans had become rulers over land and sea and their intention of a world empire was an ambition they could achieve. The concept here of empire as land carries a greater ideological thrust than simple geography. It is a realm over which one *rules*.

belonging to Rome. Thus the term ἀρχή is not only a temporal marker (the beginning of a new time or event), but it is also a marker declaring the bounds of a new empire and suggests a new discourse of power is under construction; the power and authority of the εὐαγγελίον proclaimed by the narrative stands over and against the supposed authority/power (ἀρχή) of the Roman Empire or any ruler of that Empire.

Further, the term used for the good news (εὐαγγελίου) of Jesus's arrival was a word as polyvalent as ἀρχή. First, the term εὐαγγελίον was associated with the birth and accession to rulership of the emperor.[19] Our author appropriates the language of the empire to the service of a new kingdom. Jesus is given a similar title (appropriation) but for another kingdom, a rival kingdom (resistance). The term is also connected with the concept of Roman victory in battle. The theology of victory provided "the essential political myth" to the emperors.[20] Victory in battle ultimately led to peace and salvation. The good news in Mark 1:1 is no longer the promise of Rome's peace and salvation but is rather that of another Son of God.[21] This (mis)use of a term from colonial space unsettles the dominant discourse from within its frame of reference and provides theoretical space for resistance.

The term was also associated with Jewish apocalyptic imagery. The use of εὐαγγελίον, "echoes the Deutero-Isaian proclamations (Isa 40:9; 52:7; 60:6; 61:1) to

[19] Note specifically the Priene Inscription in which time itself was reckoned from the birth of Augustus. Bruce Longenecker, "Peace, Prosperity, and Propaganda: Advertisement and Reality in the Early Roman Empire," in *An Introduction to Empire in the New Testament*, ed. Adam Winn (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2016), 17–18; Leander, *Discourses of Empire*, 189; Evans, "Mark's Incipit and the Priene Calendar Inscription: From Jewish Gospel to Greco-Roman Gospel"; Lane, *The Gospel according to Mark*, 42–43.

[20] Samuel, "The Beginning of Mark," 411.

[21] Samuel, *A Postcolonial Reading of Mark's Story of Jesus*, 90–91.

preach the good news (εὐαγγελίζω) of the coming of God's rule."[22] Marcus argues the good news of God's coming reign is connected to the apocalyptic end of a previous age and the birth of a new one.[23] The correlation with the language of Genesis 1:1 (ἀρχῇ) furthers this connection between εὐαγγελίον and the idea of the beginning of a new age. Since the apocalyptic worldview was embraced by those resisting Roman imperialism, both militarily and textually, it is likely this term communicates some anti-Roman sentiment.[24] While Mark's Gospel will not advocate for the kind of armed rebellion embraced by those who would eventually take part in the Jewish War, the ideology of Roman resistance is present in the opening line of the Gospel. In this case, Jesus is disrupting both the Roman imperial language as well as unsettling the nativist/essentialist expectations of many in the Jewish community.

The use of εὐαγγελίον continues in 1:15 as Jesus declares, "the time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God has come near; repent and believe in the good news." The good news here appears to be the coming near of the kingdom and the ruler himself. The language of kingdom, no doubt in the first century, was heard with political overtones.[25]

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[22] Leander, *Discourses of Empire*, 188; Samuel, *A Postcolonial Reading of Mark's Story of Jesus*, 93.

[23] Joel Marcus, *Mark 1-8*, 140.

[24] There is likely a Roman sense operative in the idea of new creation as well, in the sense of a new political order. Augustus had begun a new political order that was proclaimed as good news. See Samuel, "The Beginning of Mark," 411–412.

[25] See Ched Myers, *Binding the Strong Man: A Political Reading of Mark's Story of Jesus* (New York: Orbis Books, 1988), 131; Burton Mack, *Myth of Innocence: Mark and Christian Origins* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1988), p.73 notes the infrequent usage of the term kingdom of God in Jewish literature of the period; Stephen Moore, *Empire and Apocalypse: Postcolonialism and the New Testament* (Sheffield: Sheffield Phoenix Press, 2006), 38 argues for a catachrestic understanding of *basileia*; Richard Horsley, *Hearing the Whole Story: The Politics of Plot in Mark's Gospel* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2001), 28 (implied throughout the work); Stephen Moore, "Mark and Empire: 'Zealot' and 'Postcolonial Readings,'" in *The Postcolonial Biblical Reader*, ed. R. S. Sugirtharajah (Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2006), 200; Suzanne Watts Henderson, "The 'Good News' of God's Coming Reign: Occupation

To claim the “kingdom has come” was to claim that the current rulers were merely a facade to be done away with by the new ruler, the arrival of whom was “good news.”[26] While Rome declares that the rightful kingdom already rules in the land, the Gospel issues an alternative claim: the rightful ruler and his kingdom are rising.

The Gentile Mission and the Disciples' Resistance

In the chapters that follow this powerful introduction, Jesus acquires a group of followers who are meant to be with him, preach the coming of God’s kingdom, and posses the authority to cast out demons alongside their leader (3:13–19). Despite Jesus’s invitation to believe in the good news and to participate in the coming kingdom, the disciples continue to fall short of success. The disciples’ actions in the narrative demonstrate an essentialist response to Roman imperialism reflecting the disciples’ own imperial ambivalence. They embrace the methods of Roman imperialism—exclusion and rejection of the perceived “other”—for their own ends—an inversion of Roman binaries in favor of their own ascension to positions of power. Mark’s Jesus asks his disciples to participate in the declaration of the coming kingdom of God, and yet they seem bent on defining the boundaries of that kingdom contrary to their leader’s intensions. In what follows, the texts relating to the Gentile mission and the disciples’ growing resistance to Jesus’s mission are evaluated to demonstrate the significance of the Gentile mission to

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at a Crossroads,” *Int* 70.2 (2016): 145–58, sees the term as functioning with political overtones for a new empire set against evil and those who perpetrate it.

[26] Malina, *The Social Gospel of Jesus*, 71.

Jesus's overall imperial program and to establish the Gentile mission as the source of the disciples' misunderstanding and resistance.[27]

Crossing the Sea: A Metaphor for Gentile Inclusion

Shortly after Jesus appoints the twelve as apostles (3:13–19), the disciples and Jesus board a boat bound for "the other side" of the sea (4:35). On the journey, a storm arises and the crew believes they are in peril. They cry out to Jesus, "Teacher, do you not care that we are perishing?" (4:38). Jesus then silences the storm and inquires of the disciples' fear and lack of faith. The disciples are afraid and question the identity of the man with them who stilled a storm (4:41). They chose to follow him, and yet seem unsure of his identity. This sea crossing is the first of the sea crossings in Mark 1–8 aimed at Gentile territory. Each time the disciples cross over to "the other side" of the sea and land in Gentile territory, there is conflict (4:35–41, 6:45–52 [head to Gentile territory but do not make it], 8:14–21). When the disciples make the return trip across the sea, smooth sailing ensues (5:21, 6:32, 8:10). Apparently, there is something about "the other side" that provokes the struggle on the sea.

[27] In what follows, I devote a significant amount of space to the evaluation of Mark 8:14–21. The reason for this is two-fold. First, the language of the leaven of the Pharisees and Herod speaks to both the Jewish context and the imperial context. In this story, I will argue Jesus responds to both the discourse of power of the Roman Empire and the nativist essentialist response to that discourse as Jesus attempts to explain the contamination brought on by these two leavens. Second, the repeated reference to bread throughout the first section of Mark (introduced with the allusion to bread in 2:16, not eating in 2:18–19, Sabbath breaking in 2:26, 6:30–44, 6:52, 7:27–28, and 8:1–8) culminates in this story. Since the disciples lack understanding about the bread, this story provides insight into the meaning of a repeated theme in the Gospel (one to which Mark returns in chapter 14). The disciples' response to Jesus's instruction in this story demonstrates the disciples' need for further instruction provided in Mark 8:26–10:45. In many ways it serves as the impetus for the second section of Mark, tying together the issue of Gentile inclusion with the teaching discourse that follows. For some excellent work on the Gentile mission in Mark and the disciples' relation to that mission from a postcolonial perspective, see Leander, *Discourses of Empire*; Tat-siong Benny Liew, "Tyranny, Boundary and Might: Colonial Mimicry in Mark's Gospel," *JSNT* 73 (1999): 7–31; Horsley, "Submerged Biblical Histories"; Joy, *Mark and Its Subalterns*; Moore, "Mark and Empire: 'Zealot' and 'Postcolonial Readings.'"

Malbon, evaluating this episode and the sea crossings more generally, notes the importance of the sea in understanding the disciples and the Gentile mission. Malbon, through Lévi-Straussian analysis of mythic reconciliation of opposing binaries, evaluates the geopolitical, topographical, and architectural relationships between spaces in Mark's Gospel.[28] She argues the sea and river mark the theological and geopolitical boundaries of the Gospel separating Jewish homeland from "foreign" lands.[29] Jesus is able to cross boundaries that others struggle to cross and is thus able to cross the boundary between Jewish exclusiveness and Gentile inclusiveness by crossing the sea. Those regions on either side of the sea, where the sea serves as a boundary marker, are connected through Jesus's ministry.[30] Those places that were supposed to serve as boundary markers (i.e. the sea and Galilee more broadly) ultimately serve as bridges for Jesus's inclusive mission. The disciples, however, struggle with what comes naturally to Jesus, hence the stormy seas ensue. While Jesus draws together Jew and Gentile by crossing the sea, the stormy seas become a metaphor for the disciples' difficulty participating in Jesus's boundary breaking mission, and as will become clearer in future sea crossing episodes, for their resistance to this reconciling mission. Jesus, however, has inaugurated the Gentile mission in full force by crossing the sea, a mission already hinted at in his willingness to heal Gentiles in Jewish territory in 3:7–8.[31]

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[28] Elizabeth Struthers Malbon, *Narrative Space and Mythic Meaning in Mark* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1991), 2.

[29] Malbon, *Narrative Space and Mythic Meaning in Mark*, 8.

[30] Malbon, *Narrative Space and Mythic Meaning in Mark*, 99–101.

[31] A growing contingent of scholars have argued persuasively for the prevalence and importance of Gentile territory and a Gentile mission in Mark from a variety of methodologies and perspectives. In addition to those discussed specifically below, because of their significant influence on my conceptions of the Gentile mission, see also, E. K. Wefald, "The Separate Gentile Mission in Mark: A Narrative

Mark 5:1–20: Absent from the Mission

After a difficult journey on the first sea crossing, the boat arrives "on the other side of the sea" in the region of the Gerasenes (5:1). The text claimed "they" arrived, but only Jesus is said to have "stepped out of the boat" (5:2). No mention is made of the disciples. After such an active role in 4:35–41, the disciples' absence is profoundly felt by the reader.

Jesus, meanwhile, encounters a man with an unclean spirit by the name of Legion (5:9). The name calls to mind the Roman military legions that occupied the periphery of the empire ensuring Roman control over their colonized lands.[32] The anti-Roman overtones are audible as Jesus proceeds with the exorcism and casts out the demon into a herd of pigs that then drown themselves in the sea (5:13). The unclean spirit by the name of Legion links the demonic activity to the imperial authorities.[33] Jesus dispels a demon named after a portion of the Roman army from a man who represents the land itself. Note

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Explanation of Markan Geography, the Two Feeding Accounts and Exorcisms," *JSNT* 60 (1995): 3–26; Jeffrey B. Gibson, "The Rebuke of the Disciples in Mark 8:14-21," *JSNT* 27 (1986): 31–47.

[32] For an overview of the history of this interpretation, see Leander, *Discourses of Empire*, 201–207. The first reading of Legion as a Roman referent dates to 1830 (202) and since has become commonplace in biblical scholarship. While not all scholars agree that the whole of Mark's narrative is political, most see this pericope as having an imperial focus. A notable exception is Garland, *A Theology of Mark's Gospel*, 275. Garland claims, "For Mark, the evil that the people of God face is far more serious than the colonial Roman powers and Jesus is far more than a political emancipator. The clash is between God and Satan, not simply God and Rome, and this battle has cosmic and soteriological consequences." While his point is well taken, I argue that it is possible to claim that Jesus is far more than a liberator from Roman imperial oppression and still hear the imperial overtones in the narrative. If Rome and Satan have been aligned by Mark's narrator through the mention of Legion, then to cast out Legion is evidence of Jesus casting out Satan. The Roman Empire and her oppression of the people is not the fullness of Satan's reign, but it is an extension of it.

[33] Those seeing the connection in Mark 5 between the demonic and the political are far too many to recount. To name only a few who have seen this connection from varying viewpoints and methods see: among the earliest, Mary Baird, "The Gadarene Demoniac," *ExpTim* 31 (1920): 189; Duncan Derrett, "Contributions to the Study of the Gerasene Demoniaic," *JSNT* 3 (1979): 2–17; Myers, *Binding the Strong Man*, 190–194; Herman C. Waetjen, *A Reordering of Power: A Sociopolitical Reading of Mark's Gospel* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1989), 115–118; Marcus, *Mark 1-8*, 341–353; Horsley, *Hearing the Whole Story*, 140–141; Moore, *Empire and Apocalypse*, 24–44; Leander, *Discourses of Empire*, 201–219; Joy, *Mark and Its Subalterns*, 166–178.

that the demon begs not to be expelled from the country rather than pleading for a reprieve from expulsion from a man (5:10)![34] Interestingly, the demon also uses exorcistic language in his address to Jesus: "ὁρκίζω σε τὸν θεόν" (5:7).[35] While it is certainly strange to hear the language of exorcism on the lips of the demon, the language further indicates the colonial connection. The demon, while recognizing the power of Jesus, still attempts to exert its authority and right to the territory it occupies. Ironically, despite the torture Legion is inflicting on the people, the demon pleads with Jesus not to torture him!

In 3:22–27, Jesus declared he had come to plunder Satan's house by destroying Satan's empire. To do so, Jesus said that one must first "bind/δήσῃ" the strong man (3:27). In 5:3 it is said that no one had the power to "bind/δῆσαι" the man among the tombs. Jesus, however, will bind the strong man by expelling the demon and setting the man free. Connecting the demon bearing a moniker of the Roman military to the exorcism story is to connect the plundering of Satan's house to the defeat of Rome. This is not to say that the strong man is synonymous with Rome, but that Rome is a clear and present threat to the people and offers a concrete referent for the activity of Satan in this world. The oppression and exploitation of Rome is a symptom of the strong man's activities in the world. So also Moore argues that by casting out a Roman Legion, Rome

[34] Marcus notes the similarity in the request of the demon to the parable of the strong man in 3:27 and the parable of the vineyard in 12:7 where Jesus's enemies desire to maintain control of the territory they possess. See Marcus, *Mark 1-8*, 345; See also Markus Lau, "Die Legio X Fretensis Und Der Besessene von Gerasa: Anmerkungen Zur Zahlenangabe Ingefahr Zweitausend (Mark 5:13)," *Bib* 88 (2007): 352–353. He notes the significance of the reference to the territory rather than a person. The Legion desires to stay in the conquered territory rather than be expelled, carrying both political and cosmic significance.

[35] For a discussion of the term, see Howard Kee, "The Terminology of Mark's Exorcism Stories," *NTS* 14 (1968): 241; so also Marcus, *Mark 1-8*, 344. The term ὁρκίζω, while used only here in the synoptics, is quite common in the Hellenistic mircale stories. Interestingly, the foreign demon utilizes this term, while Mark's Jesus prefers ἐπιτιμάω. Kee argues this term has its roots in the Hebrew גער, in which the meaning is something closer to "a word of command that brought the hostile powers under control."

is shown to be merely an "instrumental extension" of Satan's reign.[36] Horsley, building on the work of Frantz Fanon, further argues the man possessed by Legion is both a colonial symptom and cure.[37] The relocation of Legion (the Roman military) to the realm of the demonic (the demon Legion) allows the people to divert attention from the actual social and economic causes of their oppression (Rome) and simultaneously to refrain from blaming their God for their misfortune. The demons became the oppressors who invaded their lives and kept people from taking actions individually and communally, against the real, political forces that had invaded their lands. For this reason, Horsley argues that the people begged Jesus to leave the land.[38] To dispel the demon was at once to remove their political and social distraction and also remind the community of their oppressed state over which they could exert no control. Jesus's exorcism of the demon Legion, however, demonstrates Jesus's attempt to confront the discourse of power on which domination is based. While the people fear the demon for "they are many/πολλοί," Jesus overpowers the demon with ease, reducing the demons to begging "πολλά."[39] The people fear the Legion; Jesus confronts it and expels it.

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[36] Moore, "Mark and Empire: 'Zealot' and 'Postcolonial Readings,'" 194; see also Moore, *Empire and Apocalypse*, 24–44. Moore goes so far as to suggest a connection between Roman expulsion and all the exorcism stories. To cast out Satan is to cast out imperial authorities from the land and the people's imaginations.

[37] Horsley, *Hearing the Whole Story*, 144.

[38] Horsley, *Hearing the Whole Story*, 141–148; For a fuller discussion of the issue of demonic possession and its ideological power in modern colonial situations on which Horsley's work is based, see Frantz Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth*, trans. Constance Farrington (New York: Grove, 1963), 38–56. Leander, Discourses of Empire, 209, does offer a notable critique of Fanon and by extension, offers a warning to those utilizing Fanon's approach. Fanon can at points in his work blur the line between "telling stories" of demonic possession as a way to avoid direct confrontation with the colonial powers and the cultic and religious methods of struggling against the political powers to end colonialism.

[39] Marcus, *Mark 1-8*, 351.

The man freed desires to follow Jesus, but rather than allow this man to join him and his disciples, Jesus demands the man go and tell his friends what the Lord did for him (5:19). God's kingdom is challenging the oppressive power of the demonic forces and the imperial oppression that is an extension of them. The man departs and becomes the first follower "on the other side," being possessed, so to speak, by a new kingdom. Iverson notes that the man, much like John, will be the forerunner of Jesus's message to the Gentiles.[40] As Jesus's first miracle on the Jewish side of the sea is an exorcism, so also the first Gentile miracle is appropriately an exorcism. Here is the beginning of the Gentile mission that will parallel Jesus's mission to the Jews.[41]

Jesus is said to have returned to the boat in 5:18. The disciples were never said to have disembarked the boat and thus neither does the text need mention their return to the boat. While it is not made explicit in the text, the careful reader is left to wonder about their conspicuous absence after such a harrowing journey to get them to the narrative location. The disciples' resistance to the Gentile mission is implied by the difficult sea crossing, the disciples' failure to understand their travel companion (4:41), and the seeming refusal of the disciples to step foot on Gentile territory to take part in the exorcism—one of the explicit reasons given in 3:15 for their appointment as apostles.

Ironically, in the boat on the way to "the other side," the disciples asked Jesus if he even cared they were perishing in the storm (4:38). Jesus cared the people were perishing, including the Gentiles on the other side, many of whom also found themselves

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[40] Kelly Iverson, *Gentiles in the Gospel of Mark: "Even the Dogs Under the Table Eat the Children's Crumbs'*, LNTS 339 (New York: T&T Clark, 2007), 37; Wefald, "The Separate Gentile Mission in Mark," 14.

[41] Iverson, *Gentiles in the Gospel of Mark*, 36; Iverson specifically addresses this as the beginning of the Gentile Mission. He points out, contra Ben Witherington, *The Gospel of Mark: A Socio-Rhetorical Commentary* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2001), 179, that while the ministry among the Gentiles may be limited, "it is nonetheless a mission" which parallels the Jewish mission.

the subject of demonic forces and Roman brutality. If the disciples remained in the boat due to their hesitancy to join in the Gentile mission, one is enticed to wonder: if Jesus cares for all the people who are perishing and has mercy on them (5:19), will the disciples learn to do the same?

Mark 6:45–52: Failed Sea Crossing

In Mark 6:45 Jesus sends his disciples to cross "to the other side" without him. On the sea, however, the wind is against them, and they are only painfully making headway (6:48). Much like the first sea crossing to Gentile territory in 4:35–41, the sea is proving a difficult barrier to the disciples. Jesus walks on the water and intends to pass them by in the pattern of an OT theophany.[42] The disciples respond with fear, thinking Jesus a ghost. Jesus ends up in the boat with his fearful disciples, and the wind ceases. The reader is told the disciples are hard hearted and do not understand the loaves (6:52). At this point, the disciples should recognize Jesus but apparently their lack of understanding about the loaves has prevented them from identifying Jesus accurately. Thus, according to Bolt, the loaves themselves hold some theophanic significance.[43]

The misunderstood loaves under discussion in 6:52 are those of the great feeding miracle of 6:30–44. As Jesus and the disciples attempt to find a place to rest, the crowd manages to outflank them and gathers around Jesus. Jesus takes compassion on the crowd and teaches them (6:34). As the hour grew late, the disciples request Jesus send the crowd away to acquire food. Jesus instead tells the disciples to feed the crowd. As the disciples

[42] Elizabeth Struthers Malbon, "The Jesus of Mark and the Sea of Galilee," *JBL* 103.3 (1984): 367. Malbon notes specifically the literary connection of 6:50 to Ex. 3:14 LXX. The "I am" stills the storm. The "I am" further has power over bread and sea as God has had power over manna and the Red Sea.

[43] Bolt, *Jesus' Defeat of Death*, 195.

ask if they should go buy bread, Jesus takes 5 loaves and 2 fish, blesses them, and breaks them.[44] He then instructs the disciples to disperse the food among the crowd. When all the Jewish people gathered are fed, twelve baskets remain. The number twelve bears symbolic significance as the number of the tribes of Israel and the number of the disciples, but more meaningfully, the baskets of excess invoke the imagery of the eschatological banquet in which there will be food aplenty.[45] If the disciples come to understand the loaves, they will also understand the inclusion of the Gentiles in the kingdom of God and their own role in relation to the Gentile mission.[46]

As the disciples board the boat in 6:45, sent to "the other side" alone, they should now understand Jesus's inclusive mission. Jesus has demonstrated the inclusive nature of God's kingdom in 5:1–20 and even prior in 3:8.[47] It is the disciples' turn to participate in that mission. Unfortunately, their hearts are hardened and they fail to understand the loaves and by extension the kingdom character they represent. Israel's God is not concerned for Israel alone. The people of Israel will be fed, but there is still bread to share. As the disciples misidentify Jesus as a ghost, so also they continue to misidentify

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[44] Marcus, *Mark 1-8*, 407, is probably right to note the question is likely sarcastic. The idea of buying that much bread for that much money would have been preposterous. They nevertheless engage with Jesus about the problem, even if sarcastically. They do not attempt to deny the people food; they just do not have the theological creativity to think outside the box of traditional provision.

[45] c.f. Is. 25:6–9; so also the likely allusion to the fulfillment of Deut. 8:10 ("And you shall eat and be full") in Mark 6:42 ("And they all ate and were satisfied").

[46] Suzanne Watts Henderson, "'Concerning the Loaves' Comprehending Incomprehension in Mark 6:45-52," *JSNT* 83 (2001): 15, 23 agrees that the disciples have failed to embrace their role as agents of God's inbreaking kingdom. She does not, however, make the connection specifically to the Gentile mission nor does she see their lack of participation as purposeful resistance. She sees the disciples living in the tension between their high calling and their human limits.

[47] Malbon, "The Jesus of Mark and the Sea of Galilee," 372. Jesus has already demonstrated the boundaries of the kingdom. The disciples are then expected to transgress the boundaries of Israel and their religious traditions as well.

Jesus's mission as solely for the people of Israel. This misunderstanding, however, may be better characterized as a growing resistance. Even with Jesus in the boat, the disciples fail to make it to their intended Gentile destination (6:53). They begin in Jewish territory and end in Jewish territory despite the presence of Jesus in the boat. At this point it is at least plausible that the disciples see the intended purpose of the loaves but have not understood why Jesus would choose to share them thusly with the Gentiles of the land. The leftover loaves reveal Jesus's identity as one who breaks traditional boundaries erected between Jew and Gentile. The disciples, however, fail to accept such a mission and by extension continue to fail to identify Jesus rightly. At this point, the disciples with their hard hearts appear more like Jesus's opponents (the hard-hearted witnesses of 3:5 and the hard-hearted Pharisees of 10:5) than his closest followers.[48]

If the disciples have failed to understand the loaves, namely the inclusive nature of God's kingdom, then their failure further corroborates the reading of the end of the first sea crossing in 5:1–20 suggested above. The disciples saw Jesus healing a Gentile in 5:1–20 and perhaps stayed in the boat. The disciples were sent across the sea to participate in the announcement of the arrival of God's kingdom to the Gentiles, and when all was said and done, they turned the boat around.

Mark 7:24–30: The Inclusion of a Syrophoenician Woman

Of those pericopes of great significance to the Gentile mission, the healing of the Syrophoenician woman's daughter is among the most difficult to decipher due to the

[48] Lane, *The Gospel according to Mark*, 238.

difficult nature of the conversation between Jesus and a woman in search of his help.[49] A Gentile woman approaches Jesus in a house as he seeks to remain hidden. The social location of "inside" the house further highlights the "outsider" nature of the inquirer.[50] When the woman requests Jesus heal her spirit-oppressed daughter, Jesus responds with the harsh declaration, "Let the children be fed first, for it is not right to take the children's bread and throw it to the dogs" (7:27). The severe response offered by Jesus appears at first blush to be a rejection of the woman's request, equating her and Gentiles more generally with dogs begging for scraps. The woman, undeterred, responds to Jesus with an equally blunt response: "Yes, Lord; yet even the dogs under the table eat the children's crumbs" (7:28).[51]

Jesus's initial response to the woman seems strange in light of the preceding narrative. Jesus has already dispelled a demon from a Gentile in chapter 5; Jesus has already "thrown the children's bread to the dogs." The woman is not asking for anything that Jesus has not already offered to others.[52] The question then arises: why does Jesus

[49] There have been a number of thoughtful studies on this text from a postcolonial perspective. See for example: R. S. Sugirtharajah, "The Syrophoenician Woman," *ExpTim* 98 (1986): 13–15; J. Perkinson, "A Canaanitic Word in the Logos of Christ; or the Difference the Syro-Phoenician Woman Makes to Jesus," *Semeia* 75 (1996): 61–85; David Joy, "Grace for All: A Postcolonial Feminist Reading of Mark 7:24-30," in *The God of All Grace* (Bangalore: Asian Trading Corporation United Theological College, 2005), 73–84.

[50] Bolt, *Jesus's Defeat of Death*, 196; Robert M. Fowler, *Let the Reader Understand: Reader-Response Criticism and the Gospel of Mark* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1991), 211.

[51] Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza, *In Memory of Her: A Feminist Theological Reconstruction of Christian Origins* (New York: Crossroad, 1994), 138, points out a significant lexical link in this story to the feeding narratives. Jesus tells the woman the children should be satisfied (χορτασθῆναι) first. The only other usages of this word in Mark are in the feeding miracles (6:42; 8:4, 8). Lexically, a connection is made between the miraculous feeding narratives, in which Jew *and* Gentile eat from the foretaste of the eschatological banquet, and the woman here who is presumably rejected. The woman, however, draws attention to the abundance that was evident in the feeding narratives by claiming all who are gathered, even the dogs, have access to the banquet table.

[52] Bolt, *Jesus's Defeat of Death*, 197–198. Bolt argues Jesus's response is worded in this way to shock readers and draw attention specifically to the issue of ethnicity.

speak so harshly to her? Surely given Jesus's previous actions with reference to Gentiles, Jesus is not rejecting her straightaway. Jesus's response seems like something the disciples would be more inclined to say. They are the ones who seem resistant to the Gentiles' inclusion in the kingdom. They are the characters more likely to reject the woman on the basis of her ethnic status. Perhaps here, Jesus speaks as the disciples would in the same situation just to provide the woman with a puzzle to solve.[53] How does one bypass the traditional boundary markers associated with Jew/Gentile relations? The woman responds with great insight, and Jesus provides the miracle she seeks.[54]

The narrative flips the focus from those with privilege (Israel) to those who are on the margins with no traditional claim to access. Dowd argues the text makes it clear to those gathered at the table[55] that the kingdom belongs to those at the table *and* the dogs beneath it. Invoking a Roman context in which the dogs lay beneath the table, she removes "the problem of priority by replacing the image of sequence and implied

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[53] Jesus responds as the disciples presumably would have if the request had been directed to them. The woman has no place with the children. The goal is to hear her proper response, but her proper response should enlighten the disciples, too. It is also interesting to note that no mention is made of the woman's faith. Jesus says that for her statement, not her faith, the woman's daughter has been healed (7:29).

[54] David Rhoads, "Jesus and the Syrophoenician Woman in Mark: A Narrative-Critical Study," *CurTM* 47.4 (2020): 45-46, argues that Jesus actually changes his mind. The woman issued forth an argument that forced a change in Jesus's own decision making. The problem with this approach is that Jesus has already reached out to the Gentiles throughout the narrative. If Jesus changed his mind in this narrative, it is predicated on a prior change of mind from the actions previously undertaken in the narrative for Gentile recipients. He does, however, argue that Jesus is crossing the Gentile boundary in this story and calls his disciples to do the same after his death in 13:10. For a similar argument against Jesus changing his mind, see Matthew Malcolm, "Did the Syrophoenician Woman Change Jesus's Mission?," *BBR* 29.2 (2019): 174–86. He argues the woman has understood the loaves when the disciples have failed to do so, and this alone is the content of her "test of faith."

[55] This use of "table" is metaphorical, referring to those with a traditional claim to kingdom inclusion, but given the context of the story and the use of the metaphor that Jesus employs, Jesus and perhaps the disciples are literally at table. The visual is appealing even if left to the reader's imagination. In Matthew 15:23, the disciples' disdain for the woman is far more apparent. They demand Jesus to send her away; only then does Jesus tell the woman that he was sent to the lost sheep of Israel.

scarcity…with an image of simultaneity and abundance."[56] The loaves are plentiful and meant to be shared. The woman simply asks for what Jesus has already offered to and made clear is for the "other." By asserting her claim to the leftovers from the table, she demonstrates an understanding of the kingdom that exceeds that of Jesus's closest followers. God's kingdom will have different boundary lines; insider and outsider, "us" and "other," are being recast. The children and the dogs shall eat alongside one another in this new empire.[57] Demonstrating superior understanding, she essentially becomes more of an "insider" than the disciples who are presumably abiding under the same roof.[58]

Mark 8:1–10: Feeding the Gentiles

In Mark 8:1–10, Jesus performs a second mass feeding miracle, this time in Gentile space.[59] The story, however, progresses much differently than the first feeding miracle. In Mark 6:35, the disciples were the first to suggest intervening for the people's

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[56] Sharyn Echols Dowd, *Reading Mark: A Literary and Theological Commentary on the Second Gospel* (Macon: Smyth & Helwys, 2000), 77. Dowd sees Mark 6:14–8:30 as the inclusion of the Gentiles into Jesus's mission following Jesus's first foray into Gentile territory in Mark 5:1–20 (64–82).

[57] Lane, *The Gospel according to Mark*, 262–263, claims the Gentiles are simply eating what was always meant for them. The dogs under the table were always meant to eat the crumbs that dropped from the table, and this is meant to happen simultaneously with the children eating. Marcus, *Mark 1-8*, 464-465, continues this line of thought claiming it is possible that the image of the dog at the banquet "was a fixed image for the participation of righteous Gentiles in the eschatological blessings of Israel." See Midr. Ps. 4.11. While on the surface, the woman is delivered an insult seemingly to scold her for demanding something that does not belong to her, she turns the image of a dog on its head, claiming the crumbs were actually meant for her. Marcus goes even farther to claim that unlike Matthew's version of this story in which it is clear the crumbs fall from the table (15:27), Mark's version leaves it open that the leftovers are purposefully offered to the dogs by the children.

[58] In Matthew's version of this story (15:21–28) the disciples are both present and hostile toward the woman.

[59] Like the Jewish feeding pericope earlier in the narrative, there is no mention of the specific location for this episode. Given the textual markers, however, most scholars agree they are gathered in Gentile space. The immediately preceding episode is in Gentile space and thus the location clarification is unnecessary because there was no change in social/geopolitical location from the previous setting. See for example: Marcus, *Mark 1-8*, 492; Werner Kelber, *The Kingdom in Mark: A New Place and a New Time* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1974), 59–62; Moloney, *The Gospel of Mark*, 152–153; Iverson, *Gentiles in the Gospel of Mark*, 68.

good, even going so far as to ask if they should find a way to purchase a vast amount of food. In 8:2, it is Jesus who must remind the disciples to be compassionate toward the Gentile crowd. In 6:37 the disciples offer the suggestion of purchasing food even if that is unrealistic. In 8:4 the disciples question Jesus about how it would be possible to feed these people, as if they have not already born witness to the miraculous feeding event in Mark 6. Or perhaps, it is because they have born witness to the feeding in Mark 6. In Mark 6, the audience was Jewish. In Mark 8, the recipients of Jesus's pending feeding miracle are Gentiles. The subtle differences between the narratives point to the disciples' reluctance to participate in Jesus's miracle, but like in 6:41, the disciples are directed to disperse the bread among the people. Even after feeding the Gentile crowd, there are seven baskets leftover—one for each loaf with which they began (8:5, 8); there is plenty to spare once all, even the Gentiles, are fed.[60]

Following the conclusions reached from the disciples' previous encounters with the Gentiles, the disciples seem to understand that Jesus desires to include the Gentiles in his empire; what they fail to understand is why. The Gentile mission serves as the narrative catalyst for the disciples' continued resistance to Jesus's counter discourse of power in the coming chapters. To embrace the Gentiles would mean abdicating their appropriation of the Roman discourse of power. The two are ultimately incompatible. To overthrow the perceived "outsiders" means they must, in fact, remain "outsiders." Simply to invert the power dynamic of Roman imperialism requires the oppressed to become

[60] While my focus herein is on the issue of Gentile inclusion and the disciples, Winn argues that the Roman critique is evident even in these two feeding narratives. The emperor is expected to provide for the people, and out of his abundance he provides for scarcity. Jesus, however, creates abundance out of scarcity. Winn considers this another form of mimicry within the narrative in which Jesus out-performs the Caesars (a topic to which this work will return in the next chapter). See Winn, "A Response to Imperial Propaganda," 102.

oppressors in turn. The disciples are ambivalent subjects desiring Rome's power and simultaneously despising Rome in power.

Mark 8:14–21: An Act of Resistance

On the heels of the stories in which the disciples were reluctant to engage with the Gentile mission to which Jesus called them, is a peculiar and difficult to interpret pericope in which Jesus and the disciples are boarding yet another boat aimed toward Gentile territory. The careful reader has come to expect difficulties in the journey to Gentile territory. This time, however, there is an added layer to the complexity of the story. The disciples are said to have forgotten bread right after Jesus has multiplied bread for the Gentile masses (8:1–10). On the journey, Jesus will address the disciples' puzzling action of forgetting bread through the command to "beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and the leaven of Herod" (8:15). Given the complexity of this story and its importance to understanding the disciples' unwillingness to engage in the Gentile mission, the depths of the disciples' appropriation of Rome's discourse of power, and Jesus's counter discourse of power, a detailed analysis of this narrative is both beneficial and necessary before turning attention to the central portion of Mark's narrative.

Despite Jesus's continued inclusion of the Gentiles in his ministry, thereby extending the boundaries of the kingdom of God beyond the boundaries of the Jewish people, when the disciples arrive at the boat in 8:14, they have apparently ἐπελάθοντο to bring bread and only have one loaf with them. Gibson argues that "ἐπελάθοντο," a Septuagintal hapax legomena that like all of the approximately 50 Septuagintal hapax legomena, is employed in its most basic Septuagintal sense, namely as a word denoting a

person's willful neglect or conscious overlook.[61] The disciples then have purposefully neglected to bring extra bread with them on their journey. The reason for this neglect seems in the narrative context to be their knowledge of their destination: Gentile territory. The last time Jesus entered Gentile territory, he provided for the Gentiles through a feeding miracle using their extra loaves (8:5). The disciples had no intention of providing the raw materials for yet another feeding.

Gibson argues that the problem lying beneath Jesus's rebuke of their "forgetfulness" is not the disciples' lack of faith and comprehension, but rather their blatant resistance to Jesus's mission to alter the boundaries of the kingdom of God, to provide for them and everybody else.[62] Jesus declares an alternative kingdom where Jew and Gentile stand as equal recipients of God's salvation. The disciples purposely bring one loaf into the boat in order to ensure that Jesus will not set out blessing the Gentiles with another one of his feeding miracles as he has already done in 8:1–10. Jesus's rebuke then is not for the disciples' lack of faith, but because they are hard-hearted and refuse to embrace the Gentile mission.

In keeping with the previous sea faring narratives, this venture into Gentile space further confirms the resistance of the disciples. In the context of colonial discourse, as the disciples continue to appropriate the boundaries of Rome's colonial enterprise, though inverting the qualitative evaluation of those markers, the Gentiles were to be expelled from God's coming kingdom. The Romans, and by extension all outsiders, were to

[61] Gibson, "The Rebuke of the Disciples in Mark 8," 35. He further notes that the word is used 122 times in the Septuagint, and more than 100 times it means willful neglect.

[62] Gibson, "The Rebuke of the Disciples in Mark 8," 32.

receive the just reward of their oppression and brutality. The Messiah should be protecting and preserving the essentialist claims to Jewish superiority and power.

In response to the disciples' unwillingness to embrace the Gentile mission, Jesus tells the disciples to be wary of the leaven of the Pharisees and Herod. Scholars have found the "leaven of the Pharisees" to be fertile ground for discussion, but the "leaven of Herod" in Mark 8:15 has long puzzled interpreters.[63] It has often been suggested that Jesus's warning issued to the disciples in 8:15 is an authorial addition of a traditional saying that bears little import to the story of 8:14–21 and by implication the story as a whole. The author, perhaps, utilized the saying because of the language of leaven in the traditional saying in order to transition into the discussion on bread in 8:16f.[64] While this theory continues to find currency among some current scholars, more recent studies have tried to work out how this phrase actually fits into the story and what role it plays in the continuing narrative of the gospel.[65] Noting that "leaven" is usually used in a negative sense to denote defilement, many have tried to define what defilement Jesus fears from the Pharisees and Herod.[66] Hoehner reads both designations politically. He suggests that

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[63] A number of ancient manuscripts (including P^{75} W Θ f^{1} f^{13}) read "the Herodians" (των Ηρωδιανων). As Boring points out, Herod is the more difficult reading and is to be preferred. It seems likely that because of the difficulty of the phrase, copyists altered "Herod" to "the Herodians," in conjunction with the appearance of the Herodians with the Pharisees in Mark 3:6 and 12:13. On this issue see: M. Eugene Boring, *Mark: A Commentary* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2006), 224; Morna Dorothy Hooker, *A Commentary on the Gospel According to St. Mark* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 1993), 194.

[64] R. T. France, *The Gospel of Mark: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, NIGCT (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2002), 316, argues that neither the leaven or the warning issued in 8:15 have any bearing on the story that follows. The reference to the Pharisees and Herod is merely the acknowledgement of Jesus's enemies and has little to do with the effect of the leaven.

[65] See for example, Boring, *Mark*, 225. While he does attempt to fit the phrase into the immediate narrative, he claims the warning is an old tradition, perhaps from Q, that Mark uses parabolically and provocatively, but never explains.

[66] Marcus J. Borg, *Conflict, Holiness, and Politics in the Teachings of Jesus* (Harrisburg, PA: Trinity Press International, 1998), 126, comments that leaven can function neutrally as a metaphor for the

the Pharisees were expecting a political Messiah and Herod maintained his position as sovereign through political means.[67] Therefore, by invoking these images Jesus speaks against understanding his messiahship in a political sense. Myers has also read this phrase politically, understanding these to be the principle groups standing in the way of the coming kingdom of God.[68]

Others, arguing for a lack of political discourse throughout the Markan Gospel, have suggested that the leaven of the Pharisees and Herod is the collective misunderstanding of Jesus's mission by both groups.[69] As Herod misunderstands who Jesus is (Mark 6:14–16), so also the disciples continue to misunderstand who Jesus is in their interactions with him. They do not understand what Jesus is repeatedly trying to teach them through the loaves. While this suggestion does offer the reader a connection with the mention of the disciples' misunderstanding in 8:21, it is rather vague and offers the reader very little in terms of interpretive payoff, especially with reference to the presence of Herod. Perhaps it is best to say with reference to this suggestion that it is not so much wrong as thin.

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permeation of the whole by a small amount. The effect can be positive or negative, however, in the context of the warning of Mark 8:15, the conclusion must be negative whether as the result of the leaven metaphor itself or the qualities of the genitive nouns describing the leaven.

[67] Harold W. Hoehner, *Herod Antipas* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1980), 204–208.

[68] Myers, *Binding the Strong Man*, 224. In his estimation, the ideology of the coming kingdom of God must have earthly ramifications and therefore, should impact the world's social and political structures.

[69] Christopher D. Marshall, *Faith as a Theme in Mark's Narrative*, Society for New Testament Studies Monograph Series (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), 212; Jerry Camery-Hoggatt, *Irony in Mark's Gospel: Text and Subtext*, SNTSMS 72 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 154; Adela Yarbro Collins, *Mark: A Commentary*, Hermeneia (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2007), 387; Witherington, *The Gospel of Mark*, 237.

Lane suggests, given the context of the Pharisaical demand for a sign in Mark 8:11–13, the leaven of the Pharisees is the desire to receive a sign.[70] While this accounts for the connection to the immediately preceding text (Mark 8:11–13), it does not explain why Herod is invoked at all. Further, it is uncertain how this connects to the disciples. They have not asked for a sign and do not do so in the context of this pericope so as to lead Jesus to rebuke them.

What if, however, we approached the question from a new angle of vision, considering the possibility that the leaven of the Pharisees and the leaven of Herod are actually two different concepts that should be treated independently of one another before being placed in dialogue with one another in the context of the pericope? Given the prevalence of the Pharisees in the narrative, the leaven of the Pharisees is presumably an easier place to begin. The Pharisees make repeated appearances throughout the narrative and offer the careful reader a multiplicity of opportunities to understand their goals and motivations and thereby deduce the reason for Jesus's fear they may contaminate (or have already contaminated) the disciples.

The first explicit encounter between Jesus and the Pharisees in the Markan narrative occurs in 2:16. Jesus is dining with the disciples and many tax collectors and sinners. While reclining at table with this rather diverse group of people, the Pharisees inquire of Jesus's disciples why he eats with tax collectors and sinners (2:16). Jesus, upon hearing the Pharisees, declares: "Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick. I came not to call the righteous but sinners" (2:17). The Pharisees have declared that there are boundaries that should be respected in the religious

[70] Lane, *The Gospel according to Mark*, 281; Ludger Schenke, *Die Wundererzählungen Des Markusevangeliums* (Stuttgart: Verlag Katholisches Bibelwerk, 1974), 302.

community. The law delineates such boundary markers, but the colonial discourse emphasizes the need to enforce and abide by them. The colonial discourse "others" the colonized community as a means of exerting control. When the colonized community responds to such othering by enforcing the boundaries of their own communities through religious and social practices unique to the native culture, they are resisting the colonial attempt to define and shape them. Sinners and tax collectors are outside of the native culture's religious boundary markers. Jesus responds, however, declaring that he is far less concerned with the supposed "righteous" (i.e. religious insiders) and far more concerned to reach the sinner (i.e. religious outsiders). Jesus is transgressing the accepted boundaries of his native culture's religious practice.

In the following three encounters, Jesus responds to various accusations by the Pharisees that he and his disciples violate the law, one of the primary religious symbols of the colonized community. In the first encounter in 2:18–22, the Pharisees question why Jesus and his disciples are not fasting. Jesus responds calling himself the bridegroom who is with them for a short time. When the wedding feast is over, the disciples can fast. The great eschatological banquet has begun. The discourse continues in which Jesus declares that something new is taking place. Unshrunk cloth does not belong on old garments; new wine cannot go in old wine skins. The question is what "new" has come? The eschatological inbreaking of God necessitates a new relationship between former insiders and outsides. Those laws "which had formed a dividing wall of hostility between Jews and Gentiles, have now been eschatologically breached, and as a consequence all God's children are able to enjoy the bread of life together."[71]

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[71] Joel Marcus, "Scripture and Tradition in Mark 7," in *The Scriptures in the Gospels* (Louvain: Leuven University Press, 1997), 195.

In 2:23–28, the subject under debate is the Sabbath. The disciples were plucking grain heads on the Sabbath, and the Pharisees inquired of Jesus why he allowed such behavior (2:24). Jesus responds by declaring the Son of Man's lordship over the Sabbath. The Sabbath controversy continues in 3:1–6 when Jesus heals a man on the Sabbath. The Pharisees seem unwilling to assent to his healing on the Sabbath. In their attempt to preserve their interpretation of the law, they violate the call to basic human decency. Their attempt to protect the religious markers of the community, ultimately undermine the purpose of the law itself.[72] The Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath (2:27). Jesus is said to be angered and grieved with their hardness of heart and then heals the man. This action situates Jesus in opposition to the Pharisees' interpretation of the law, and thus the Pharisees held counsel with the Herodians concerning how to destroy him (3:6), ironically on the very Sabbath they accuse Jesus of violating.[73]

The Pharisees are absent from the narrative until Mark 7:1–13, when they question Jesus and his disciples for eating with "defiled hands" (7:5) rather than washing according to the tradition of the elders. Interestingly, the Pharisees question Jesus about "how 'loaves' are to be eaten" on the heels of the disciples misunderstanding the meaning of the leftover loaves (6:52).[74] Jesus calls them hypocrites who have "abandoned the commandment of God and hold to human tradition."[75] Jesus invokes Isaiah and Moses in

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[72] Bolt, *Jesus's Defeat of Death*, 196.

[73] Tat-siong Benny Liew, *Politics of Parousia: Reading Mark Inter(con)textually*, BibInt 42 (Boston: Brill, 1999), 66.

[74] Donahue and Harrington, *The Gospel of Mark*, 226.

[75] Henderson, "The 'Good News' of God's Coming Reign," 156 notes that Jesus registers, "a scathing critique of toxic religious practice" in his work to establish a new world order. While Henderson does not arrive at this conclusion through the use of postcolonial methods, she comes close to my

his response to the Pharisees, appealing to a higher authority than the Pharisees in their appeal to the elders.[76] In much the same way that Peter and the disciples will be told in 8:33 they are focused on the human things rather than the things of God, the Pharisees are said to have left the commandment of God and have held to the tradition of humans by focusing on that which enters the body rather than that which comes forth from the heart of humanity (7:8).[77]

Concerning this episode in particular (7:1–13), Marcus argues that the Pharisees as characters reflect the first century Jewish belief in the necessity of ritual purity laws that correlated with the holy war theology that would ultimately give birth to the Jewish Revolt.[78] Even as early as the writing of the Psalms of Solomon (circa 60s BCE), a version of this theology can be seen in the writings of the community.[79] In Psalms of

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conclusion herein from another angle of vision. Religious practice that does not contribute to God's reign is ultimately "human tradition."

[76] Elizabeth Struthers Malbon, *In the Company of Jesus: Characters in Mark's Gospel*, 1st ed. (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2000), 150–151.

[77] Furstenberg offers a unique interpretation of this encounter between Jesus and the Pharisees claiming that the origin of the Pharisees' requirement is not simply an exaggeration of standard purity laws but an interpretation of the law affected by the Greco-Roman practice of hand washing entering into Jewish Pharisaical culture. Jesus is reasserting the Levitical interpretation that focuses on that which comes forth from the body rather than that which enters into the body via defiled hands. See Yair Furstenberg, "Defilement Penetrating the Body: A New Understanding of Contamination in Mark 7:15," *NTS* 54 (2008): 200. If correct about the origins of the practice, this is an interesting way in which the Pharisees established group identity by means of accepting a practice of the colonizing culture but turned it against that culture by using it to reinforce a religious ingroup status.

[78] Marcus, "Scripture and Tradition in Mark 7," 185–186; H. Schwier, *Temple Und Tempelzerstörung: Untersuchungen Zu Den Theologischen und Ideologischen Faktoren Im Ersten Jüdisch-Römischen Krieg (66-74 n.Chrx)*, NTOA 11 (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1989), 55–74, 90–101.

[79] Gordley offers a thoughtful overview of the ways in which the Psalms of Solomon should be understood as "poetry of resistance" as it records a history of an oppressed people whose recounting of history conflicts with the official imperial record. Matthew Gordley, "Psalms of Solomon as Resistance Poetry," *JAJ* 9 (2018): 366–85; He builds on the work of Forché, who claims that resistance poetry, when read, becomes a living archive for those who have been oppressed. The text serves as a witness to their suffering and prompts others to witness to their suffering through the preserved text. Harlow's work on resistance literature also informs Gordley's work on poetry as resistance literature. Harlow argues that such poetry arises from an experience of and resistance to trauma. See Carolyn Forché, *Against Forgetting:*

Solomon 17 the author requests the son of David have strength to "destroy the unrighteous rulers, to purge Jerusalem from gentiles who trample her to destruction; in wisdom and in righteousness to drive out the sinners from the inheritance" (17:22) and "destroy the unlawful nations with the word of his mouth" (17:24). The Psalm continues: "The alien and the foreigner will no longer live near them (17:28)…May God dispatch his mercy to Israel; may he deliver us from the pollution of profane enemies" (17:45).[80] The equation of the Gentiles with the enemies of Israel necessitates the continued ritual distance between the two. As Marcus notes, "here [Psalm 17] the purity of the holy land and the holy people form a unity, and both are violated by the presence of unclean Gentiles in their midst."[81] Success in any revolution against the political overlords occupying the land necessitated ritual purity. Ultimately then, when Jesus argues against strict interpretations of ritual purity laws, he was arguing against interpretations of ritual purity laws that served to continue the separation of Jew and Gentile.[82]

Jesus then shifts the conversation from the tradition of the elders to an indictment of a Pharisaical practice in which some refuse to care for aging parents in the name of their tradition. The Mosaic Law structured community regulations for the people of Israel and commanded one to honor one's parents (Ex. 20:12; Lev. 19:3; Deut. 5:16). For all their protests against Jesus and his disciples' actions, the Pharisees were engaging in

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Twentieth-Century Poetry of Witness (New York: W.W. Norton, 1993); B. Harlow, *Resistance Literature* (New York: Methuen, 1987).

[80] Translation by Robert Wright, *The Psalms of Solomon: A Critical Edition of the Greek Text* (New York: T&T Clark, 2007). See also the Book of Jubilees 22:16–19 in which the Gentiles are said to have no heart by which to perceive and no eyes to see what their deeds are.

[81] Marcus, "Scripture and Tradition in Mark 7," 186. Marcus further sees Isaiah 29, especially 29:13, as an indication that those advocating for a full-scale return to all the commands of God believed it necessary to see God's deliverance from their enemies (186-187).

[82] Malbon, "The Jesus of Mark and the Sea of Galilee," 372.

practices such as Corban that destabilized families by devoting lands and/or goods to God, thereby denying their usage for the care of ailing parents. If they were in fact encouraging people to offer needed resources to God instead of their families/communities, Jesus may also be critiquing their selfish practices of exploiting the people.[83] Jesus ultimately transforms a rather simple conversation about ritual purity into a conversation condemning exploitative Pharisaical practices.

The final encounter with the Pharisees prior to the sea crossing narrative of 8:14–21 occurs in 8:11–13. The Pharisees are arguing with Jesus and seeking a sign from heaven to test him. Jesus informs the Pharisees that they will receive no such sign from him. Jesus will not allow the Pharisees to "define and categorize" him by virtue of their interpretation of a sign.[84] Jesus, by refusing to offer a sign, refuses to condone their claim to determine the boundaries of "us" and "them."[85] Jesus is the one sent from God who ultimately crafts the boundaries of the new kingdom. The Pharisees are the true outsiders despite their privilege as Israel.

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[83] Horsley, *Hearing the Whole Story*, 168–171 offers a detailed argument claiming the issue for Jesus in this narrative is the exploitation of the people under the guise of "the tradition of the elders." As long as people feel compelled by the Pharisees to devote goods and resources to God (read: temple) rather than caring for their families, the exploitation by the Jewish elite continued, and they can be accused of abandoning the commands of God. See also Mark 12:38–44 in which a widow offers all she has to the temple. While she may be held up as a model of piety, those who encourage her actions are exploitative. Similarly see, Joy, *Mark and Its Subalterns*, 110. Joy addresses the ways in which the Pharisees collaborated with the local religious elite to exploit the people through temple taxation, a temple run by those who were collaborators with Rome whether by choice or necessity.

[84] Dowd, *Reading Mark*, 40.

[85] Dowd, *Reading Mark*, 80; see also Waetjen, *A Reordering of Power*, 140. One can see here an indication of essentialist resistance to Rome that reflects the ambivalence of the conquered subjects. They wish to expel the Roman—making Rome "other" instead of "us." They also, however, have embraced the demarcation lines between "other" and "us" that Rome has dictated, demonstrating a desire to replicate Rome's methods.

In the eyes of the Pharisees, Jesus continues to transgress against the Law. In theoretical terms, Jesus is violating the nativist responses to colonial authority by violating one of the primary religious symbols of the community, one given by God. This disruption is also a risky maneuver for the subaltern community. Should Rome see the violation of the prescribed boundaries as a challenge to Roman authority, violence could ensue. The Pharisees and the religious elite were collaborators with Rome on some level.[86] Local leaders were only allowed to continue as political and social leaders if they benefited Roman rule in the provinces. While these collaborators were not wholeheartedly Roman, and did resist in subtle ways through religious practice, religious symbols, and mimicry/mockery, for example, they were ultimately required to walk a fine line with Rome.[87] Public transcripts needed to match the Roman expectations even as private transcripts may diverge sharply.[88] The Pharisees' emphasis on the keeping of law and the preservation of boundary markers prescribed by that law are low-risk forms of resistance asserting cultural and religious superiority but are simultaneously a concession to the Roman imperial determination that the colonized community is "other." Jesus's

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[86] Concerning the religious elite as collaborators, see Samuel, *A Postcolonial Reading of Mark's Story of Jesus*, 46; Philip Esler, "Rome in Apocalyptic and Rabbinic Literature," in *The Gospel of Matthew in Its Roman Imperial Context*, ed. John Riches and David Sims (London: T&T Clark International, 2005), 12–13; Richard Cassidy, *Christians and Roman Rule in the New Testament: New Perspectives* (New York: Crossroad, 2001), 10; W.V. Harris, *Roman Power: A Thousand Years of Empire* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2016), 30, 195; Longenecker, "Peace, Prosperity, and Propaganda," 26.

[87] Concerning subtle resistance even of collaborators, see Janet Huskinson, "Looking for Culture, Identity, and Power," in *Experiencing Rome: Culture, Identity, and Power in the Roman Empire* (London: Routledge, 2000), 19; Samuel, *A Postcolonial Reading of Mark's Story of Jesus*, 11, 85; Jerry Toner, *Popular Culture in Ancient Rome* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2009), 187; David Mattingly, *Imperialism, Power, and Identity: Experiencing the Roman Empire* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2011), 29–30; James Constantine Hanges, "To Complicate Encounters: A Response to Karl Galinsky's 'The Cult of the Roman Emperor: Uniter or Divider?,'" in *Rome and Religion: A Cross Disciplinary Dialogue on the Imperial Cult*, ed. Jeffrey Brodd and Jonathan Reed (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2011), 44.

[88] Concerning public versus private transcripts and their usage, see Leander, *Discourses of Empire*, 250; Mattingly, *Imperialism, Power, and Identity*, 29–30; Dennis Duling, "Empires: Theories, Methods, Models," in *The Gospel of Matthew in Its Roman Imperial Context*, ed. John Riches and David Sims (London: T&T Clark International, 2005), 72.

breaking of those boundary markers and the violation of primary religious symbology are much more direct confrontations with imperial power and possibly even pose a threat to the community, risking Roman retaliation.

Throughout the narrative, the Pharisees have stood against the ministry of Jesus as he challenged their understanding of the law. They, like the disciples, embrace the essentialist claims of cultural and religious superiority as a means of resistance. As discussed previously, in the context of colonization, religious symbols are one of the few ways that native cultures can maintain some control in the process of rapid acculturation. As the colonizers press for accommodation of the conquered people, the religious symbols (in this case the law) become a way to maintain their cultural distinctiveness even when they have lost economic, social, and geographic control. The law is one religious symbol that ensures the Jewish people remain obstinately "other" in the face of empire. Any blurring between "us" and "other" becomes a violation of social survival mechanisms as well as a violation of God's law.[89] Thus the Pharisees must critique Jesus for his perceived lapses in religious practice. Religion here functions as more than an appropriate relation to God. It also functions as an appropriate relation to empire, namely in this case, imperial critique.

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[89] Marcus, "Scripture and Tradition in Mark 7," 194; see also Mary Douglas, *Purity and Danger: An Analysis of the Concepts of Pollution and Taboo* (London: Ark Paperback, 1984). Marcus notes, "As Mary Douglas has shown, distinctions between pure and impure things, such as are mandated in the Torah, necessarily imply divisions between pure and impure people and have far-reaching social consequences. The Law separates Israel from the nations, and the Pharisaic tradition further subdivides Israel into observers and non-observers of that tradition. True the purpose of both Law and tradition is not first and foremost to ostracize outsiders but to sanctify Israel, but that which is sanctified is necessarily separated from something else. The Kosher laws and other purity regulations of the Old Testament made meaningful social intercourse between Jews and Gentiles difficult…" His point is well taken. The Law was not written to discriminate against the Gentiles, but the result of the Law's emphasis on ritual purity was the sharp divide between Jew and Gentile. When the Gentiles are in the land and ruling ruthlessly over the Jewish people, what was once incidental to the Law's application (separation of Jew and Gentile) can become interpreted as part of the purpose of that Law (separation to ensure God's divine intervention).

The leaven of the Pharisees then appears to be rigid attachment to a particular application of the law in colonial space, namely the preservation of the law to preserve the insider-outsider binary that protects the final vestiges of essentialist/nativist culture. Jesus does not want his disciples to embrace the Pharisaical tendency to reinforce the boundaries that Jesus's ministry was meant to break down.[90] It seems, however, the disciples have done just that. The disciples have refused to prepare for the Gentile mission and have hardened hearts just as the Pharisees of 3:5–6. The disciples really do fail to hear and fail to see, and even while they do technically remember what Jesus has done, they refuse to embrace the mission before them.[91] It seems their misunderstanding is not about *what* Jesus is doing, but *why* he would extend salvation beyond the borders of Israel.[92] In other words, the disciples have embraced a native/essentialist response to the colonial power similar to the Pharisees. In their conception, the Jewish messianic program should be for the Jewish people, and it should liberate the people from their imperial overlords.

Unlike the leaven of the Pharisees, the leaven of Herod is harder to discern from the context of the gospel. While the Pharisees make a number of appearances throughout

[90] Myers, *Binding the Strong Man*, 224, similarly argues that the leaven of the Pharisees is the hostility toward the "kingdom project of reconciliation between Jew and Gentile." Unfortunately, he does not fully explore the possibility that the leaven of Herod may be something other than "integration" of Jew and Gentile.

[91] In Mark 8:17–18 the disciples are said to lack perception, have hardened hearts, and have eyes that do not see. The correlation to the description of the Gentiles in Book of Jubilees 22:18 is intriguing. The Gentiles are said to have no eyes to see and no heart to perceive. Perhaps the disciples have more in common with this description of Gentiles than they care to admit.

[92] Iverson, *Gentiles in the Gospel of Mark*, 97, claims that by resisting the mission to the Gentiles and refusing to bring more than the single loaf on the boat, the disciples, like the Pharisees, are attempting to manipulate Jesus for their own self-interest–one in which Israel is the only rightful recipient of the kingdom of God. He does not, nor does Gibson, define what the leaven of Herod is beyond the acknowledgement that Herod represents one of the opponents of Jesus ministry.

the text, Herod Antipas makes only one appearance (6:14–29) and his followers/supporters make an appearance twice more in 3:6 and 12:13 where they are in collusion with the Pharisees on both occasions. What then does the leaven of Herod add to our discussion of the hardness of heart of the disciples and their own reluctance to embrace Jesus's new imperial enterprise where boundary lines have been redrawn?

Since the information concerning Herod Antipas is so limited in the Gospel narrative, a more expansive investigation of the representation of this historical figure in other literature proves beneficial. From what we know of Herod Antipas in the Gospel and from outside sources, Herod served as an intermediary ruler on behalf of Rome.[93] He was the quintessential collaborator. He mediated Roman policies to the local population. For many, the Herodians were as disliked as the Romans themselves. Herod Antipas's father, Herod the Great, had achieved levels of power through bribery and murder. Even before the official end of Hasmonean rule, Herod the Great and his father were accused of "girding themselves with royal power," (*Ant.* 14.165) and the people feared he would become a dictator.[94] Even as he came before the Sanhedrin to account for his actions, he came adorned in purple and surrounded by soldiers (*Ant.* 14.173). As the Romans more fully exerted their power in Palestine, Herod the Great bribed Antony to ensure Jewish envoys bent on revolution could not challenge his claim to power as tetrarch (*Ant.*

[93] This is not to claim literary dependence upon Josephus by the Markan author. This is to demonstrate one way Herod and his family were understood by people during this time period. Josephus demonstrates that negative appraisals of Herod were alive and well, and the critique he levied finds support in the Markan narrative.

[94] Kasher suggests that from infancy Herod had been raised with a burning desire to rule. Since his family lived and worked within the highest echelons of the Hasmonaean kingdom, it is likely that they had long held hopes of acquiring the crown. Aryeh Kasher, *King Herod: A Persecuted Persecutor* (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2007), 24. All references and translations of Josephus's *J.W.* are those of H. St. J. Thackeray from the LOEB Classical Library and references/translations of *Ant.* are those of Ralph Marcus and Allen Wikgren from the LOEB Classical Library.

14.327, cf. *J.W.* 1.242). He bribed Antony for the right to kingship, and when Antigonus posed a threat to his position, he bribed Antony to ensure Antigonus's death was handled swiftly.[95] The priesthood, too, became a target for Herod the Great's political self-interest even to the point of killing a high priest because he gained the heart of the people (*Ant.* 15.52-56).[96] His family would suffer similar fates as he ordered his wife's, mother-in-law's, and Hyrcanus's deaths.

Even in Herod the Great's most pious actions, Josephus found fault. The building of the temple was done, "to assure his eternal remembrance" (*Ant.* 15.380-381).[97] He far outspent his means to achieve such remembrance and glory, however, resulting in his harsh treatment of his subjects from whom he extracted the funds (*Ant.* 16.153-155). Herod's driving motives were the acquisition of power like that of his Roman allies and Roman support for his pursuit of personal glory. Herod the Great's sons would inherit their father's thirst for power. The sons each received a portion of their father's kingdom.

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[95] Kasher, *King Herod: A Persecuted Persecutor*, 47 notes that this is not the first bribe that Herod offers for a position; it seems that Herod has quickly become the Jugurtha king of Numidia of his day, "who acted upon his belief that 'in Rome, anything can be bought.'" Herod was anxious for power and would circumvent anyone and anything that stood in his way; Further in Aryeh Kasher, "Josephus on Herod's Springing From the Shadows of the Parthian Invasion," in *Flavius Josephus Interpretation and History*, eds. Jack Pastor, Pnina Stern, and Menahem Mor (Leiden: Brill, 2011), 239–240, claims that Herod's claim that he visited Rome with the intention of acquiring the throne for his brother in law was nothing more than an attempt to justify his appointment as king to his Jewish subjects by "blaming the Romans for the decision." Thus Herod never had any intention of acquiring the throne for his brother in law; this was mere pretext for his visit to Rome. Kasher, in agreement with my own claim herein states, "Every act of Herod's throughout his life was for his benefit alone."

[96] James C. VanderKam, *From Joshua to Caiaphas: High Priests after the Exile* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2004), 394 rightly points out that from a very early age, Herod would have been acutely aware of the power wielded by the high priest. Thus he sought to remove from the office anyone with ties to the former king. In his assumption of the throne, he guaranteed the high priesthood position would be separated from the throne, and he denigrated the position to "insure that the incumbent would not be a rival to him." For a similar argument see also, Abraham Schalit, *König Herodes; Der Mann Und Sein Werk*, 2nd ed., SJ 4 (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2001), 101–102.

[97] See also *Ant.* 17.162-163: Herod declared that he had constructed and adorned the temple in ways that no one else had been able to do, and therefore the temple would "leave behind a memorial of himself and an illustrious name." In *J.W.* Josephus does seem to attribute some of the motivation for the building projects to piety (1.400).

Archelaus ruled in Jerusalem, but his rule was cut short because leaders among the Jews and Samaritans accused him of tyranny and cruelty before Caesar. Ultimately, Archelaus was exiled (*Ant*. 17.342–344, *J.W.* 2.111). Philip also joined the bid for power, but the people felt for him what they felt for all the Herodian brothers: they spoke against the Herodians and the tyranny of their father before them (*Ant*. 17.304–314, *J.W.* 2.80–92).

Finally, we arrive at the rule of Herod Antipas. This history of the Herodians described above was his history, his legacy. Like those before him, he sought power before Caesar and challenged his brother for such power (*Ant*. 17.224-227, *J.W.* 2.20-22). In the pattern of his father, Antipas set out on a building project. He fortified the city of Sepphoris to make it the highlight of Galilee and built a city in honor of Caesar's wife, procuring the honor and attention of Rome as his father did before him (*Ant*. 18.27-38).[98] Antipas, as with his father, caused great political drama because of his desire for a woman, Herodias; his own self-interest led him to war and his own eventual ruin.

With reference to the singular recorded Markan incident with Herod Antipas, Josephus claims Herod Antipas had John executed because he feared an uprising against him from the crowds that gathered around John (*Ant*. 18.118-119). Again, the desire to maintain power led the ruler to commit great atrocities. Finally, at the persistent prompting of his wife, Herod sought to obtain the title of king, but when his plan backfired he was exiled to Gaul like his brother before him. His desire for power and prestige led to his own downfall (*Ant*. 18.240-255, *J.W.* 2.180).[99] Even in the relatively

[98] *J.W.* 2.168 also notes that Herod Antipas established Tiberias in Galilee.

[99] Interestingly, while the account in *J.W.* is shorter than *Ant.,* Josephus notes that Herod's envy and ambition were aroused because of Agrippa's rise to kingship. Both accounts place a fair share of the blame on Herodias, but in *J.W.*, Josephus directly accuses Herod of envy and ambition.

short account of Herod Antipas's rule, we find the picture painted of his rule is one consistent with that of his brothers and father before him. The Herodians were concerned with acquiring and preserving their own power, protecting their own interests, and accumulating glory for themselves. Herod was the middleman of Roman authority in Palestine; he cooperated with Roman authorities, not because he was loyal to Rome, but because he knew how to the play the colonial game. The discourse of Roman power was clear: participate in the discourse according to imperial rules or be consumed by it.

In the Markan narrative, the references to Herod Antipas and the Herodians are limited. The Herodians are mentioned in Mark 3:6 as colluding with the Pharisees and are implied by the text of 12:13 to be working together yet again. The actual person of Herod Antipas is only mentioned in Mark 6:14–29. Here Herod is said to have heard about Jesus because of his growing popularity, and when he heard of him, Herod assumed that Jesus was John raised from the dead. Herod had put John to death, a man whom he believed to be righteous and holy, when in the midst of revelries where the courtiers, officers, and leaders of Galilee were in attendance, Herod, in order to save face before his guests was forced to honor a promise made to his wife's daughter.[100] According to the text, Herod believed John was a righteous man, even if highly perplexing (6:20), but had him put to death because of his own interests, namely the preservation of his honor and power before the gathered company.[101]

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[100] Collins notes that the courtiers are likely the heads of the ten toparchies of his realm. Their presence, in addition to the presence of the military leaders and other prominent people, would add further emphasis to Herod's need to acquiesce to the girl's request for John's head in order to preserve his honor before his guests. She further notes that Herod likely feared the possibility of calling a curse down upon himself should he break his promise and deny the girl. Collins, *Mark*, 308, 314.

[101] Myers, *Binding the Strong Man*, 216, remarks that the role of Herodias by no means excuses Herod of his actions. He is as culpable for the death of John as Pilate is for Jesus's death even if Pilate did offer Barabbas as an alternative. "The dilemma created by the oath is a parody on the shameless methods of

The image offered in this portion of text demonstrates a complex interworking of multiple factors leading to John's death, but these factors encourage the suggestion that at least one major characteristic of Herod held by the author of Mark is that Herod is a man bent on power and his own self-interest. This is shown both by his willingness to imprison a man he thought righteous for the sake of domestic tranquility and the willingness to kill John in order to preserve his authority and the power of his word.

The connection and divergence between the narratives of Mark and Josephus concerning the reason behind John's death is intriguing. While Josephus blames the fear of uprising for Herod's execution of John, Mark blames Herod's actions on his desire to maintain his image and power before a gathered crowd of dignitaries. It is important to recognize that neither text is seeking to offer an unbiased account of history but rather has a didactic end toward which their respective narratives march. Josephus seeks to ingratiate himself and his people to Rome (at least on some level) and therefore has Herod, a leader of the Jewish people, kill John to protect the peace and stability of the ruling elite, which plays better to his overall narrative. For Mark, however, the goal is to establish Jesus as the harbinger of a new kingdom that rivals the kingdoms of earth. Herod is therefore pictured as a weak leader whose politically problematic wife and stepdaughter manipulate him into killing a social and religious dissenter.[102] The two

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decision-making among the elite, a world in which human life is bartered to save royal face: Herod trades the "head" (symbolizing his honor) of the prophet to rescue the integrity of his own drunken oath."

[102] The picture presented of Herod by Mark's Gospel bears striking parallel with Mark's characterization of Pilate in Mark 15. Both leaders share a resistance to kill their prisoner, but both are forced by the circumstances of their rule to execute their prisoner. Herod falls prey to the expectations of his guests while Pilate feels the need to satisfy the crowd. For an excellent analysis of this parallel from the perspective of narrative echoes in the text, see Alberto de Mingo Kaminouchi, *"But It Is Not so Among You": Echoes of Power in Mark 10.32-45*, JSNTSup 249 (New York: T&T Clark International, 2003), 157–204. Kaminouchi comments, "Mark portrays Herod and Pilate as rulers who are entrapped by the very webs of power over which they reign. The community of Jesus's disciples stands before them as signs of

accounts, though different, agree on the driving force behind Herod's action: a desire to pursue one's self interest and maintain one's power. While the details diverge, it appears that the basic assertions made by Josephus about Herod resonate with the picture painted by Mark's Gospel.[103]

From the evidence within Mark fleshed out more fully by Josephus's narrative, the leaven of Herod comes into focus. The leaven of Herod is not a mere afterthought in the text or identical to the leaven of the Pharisees. The leaven of Herod is better understood as a desire for power and blatant pursuit of self-interest as defined by the Roman discourse of power operative in the colonial context. Jesus does not want his disciples to be contaminated by a vision of power that is self-referential, self-serving, and prone to acts of violence against perceived outsiders.

If Herod's leaven is a self-interested pursuit of power, his presence in this text becomes clearer. The disciples have resisted Jesus's imperial program of inclusion and boundary breaking like the Pharisees, and they continue to seek the kingdom of the God of Israel on their own terms. Like the picture of a self-interested, power-seeking Herod presented in Josephus and Mark 6, the disciples are concerned with their own place in this coming kingdom. Jesus's actions toward the masses in the first eight chapters characterized Jesus as a wonder worker and his mission as one set on breaking down

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the power of God that manifests itself not through domination, but service, disfranchising the legitimacy of imperial power" (204). This parallel between Herod and Pilate further confirms the reading of the leaven of Herod as a concern for the preservation of one's power and social authority. The irony for the disciples is that while they desire power like that of their rulers, those leaders, in their desire to protect their positions of power, are ultimately shown to be impotent.

[103] Collins suggests that the emphasis on Herodias in this story is meant to draw the parallel between Herodias and Jezebel and between John and Elijah. Lane concurs on this point and further notes that the seeming dissonance between the account of Josephus and Mark are merely a difference of emphasis. The accusation of an improper marriage is as politically problematic for Herod as a large crowd gathering around John. See: Collins, *Mark*, 307; Lane, *The Gospel according to Mark*, 216–217.

boundaries. Jesus's proclivities to serve the masses will become even clearer in the coming chapters as Jesus transforms from wonder worker to suffering servant before the eyes of the disciples.[104] The discourse of power being formed by Jesus reimagines power in the imperial context. Power lay in serving and suffering not in domination and self-serving acquisition of power like Herod.[105] Jesus's statement to beware of the leaven of Herod is to inform his disciples that not only is the kingdom more inclusive than they expected (Gentile inclusion//contra the leaven of the Pharisees), but it is also not coming in the way they expected (a new vision of power//contra the leaven of Herod).

In this pericope, Jesus commands the disciples to avoid the contamination of the essentialist responses of the Pharisees through the enforcement of boundary markers and the contamination of the appropriation of the discourse of power like those who continued to collaborate with the Romans (i.e. Herod) for their own ends. It is meant to push the disciples to embrace the Gentile mission and to reject the imperial vision of power that necessitated their resistance to the Gentile mission in the first place. The disciples have yet to embrace such a calling; in the context of colonial space, the leaven has already had its work in them.

It is perhaps also significant to note that while the leaven of the Pharisees and the leaven of Herod are distinct from one another, the leaven does connect the two groups narratively. This pairing happens repeatedly throughout the narrative, previously in 3:6 and again in 12:13. While these two groups relate to Rome quite differently (nativist

[104] This particular episode foreshadows the passion predictions that are made in the text in the following chapters. What is insinuated in this episode is made explicit in the following episodes.

[105] Boring insightfully notes with reference to Mark's mislabeling of Herod as "king," "Whether intentional or not, Mark's inaccuracy allows him to portray the contrast of Herod's "kingship" with that of Jesus, representing the kingdom of God." See Boring, *Mark*, 177.

essentialist resistance and outright collaboration), their visions both rely upon the Roman discourse of power. The discourse of power that has infiltrated the disciples' thinking throughout Mark 1–8 is at work in the Pharisees and the Herodians as well.

The discourse of power propagated by the Roman Empire is a "human thing" (as described in 8:33), a vivid and dangerous expression of the evil spiritual forces at work in the world. Jesus offers a view of power from what might be called "cosmic space" while the disciples, the Pharisees, and the Herodians continue to be held captive to views apparent from colonial space. Jesus's alternative vision of power and kingdom, however, is a danger to those living in the grip of the "strong man" (3:27). Thus two groups who would more naturally be enemies, Pharisees and Herodians, find common ground in their attempt to destroy Jesus.[106] While they may disagree about who should be in charge, they all seem to be deluded by the same (mis)conception concerning what power should look like. The challenge Jesus poses to the dominant discourse is so intense and the level of the leaven's contamination is so deep, even his closest followers resist.

The disciples immediately respond to Jesus's warning against the contamination of essentialism and full-scale appropriation with further talk of bread (8:16). The disciples left bread behind to ensure Jesus could not replicate the feeding miracle on the Gentile side of the sea. Their focus remains on exclusion and their own right to determine the boundaries of God's kingdom as followers of God's Messiah. Jesus summarily responds with a series of questions (8:17–18). When Jesus responds to the disciples' discussion about having only one loaf in the boat and neglecting to bring more, he asks if they οὐ μνημονεύετε what has happened with the loaves previously. This word,

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[106] cf. Hooker, *Mark*, 108; Myers, *Binding the Strong Man*, 162; Lane, *The Gospel according to Mark*, 125.

according to Gibson, is drawn from language of the OT concerning "exhortations against unfaithfulness," and to fail to remember was tantamount to disobedience.[107] The disciples are able to answer Jesus's follow up questions about the number of baskets of loaves leftover after Jesus's feeding miracles. They answer that they do remember the 12 baskets and the 7 baskets of leftovers (8:19–20), but despite their seemingly correct answer Jesus nevertheless asks them "do you not yet understand?" in 8:21. In response to Jesus's question, the disciples say nothing. So what is it that the disciples do not remember? The number of baskets is less significant than the meaning of those baskets of leftovers. What they fail to remember is not the details of the feedings but what the feedings were meant to teach them. The reader is left to conclude that while the disciples offered the correct answer to the question about the baskets, they fail to acknowledge the meaning of the loaves. They willfully neglect to bring bread because they would not actively obey the lesson of the loaves. They still seem unwilling to concede that despite bread aplenty, the ideology driving their boundary markers should be refined. As they embraced their status as "us" over and against the Roman "other," they were unable to imagine an alternative.

Ironically, these very markers of "us" and "other" proved how deeply they had been affected by imperial discourse. They embraced the cultural solidarity imposed by the dominant power and thereby reinforced the discourse of power that made them subalterns in the first place.[108] Rome had set the boundaries; the disciples merely inverted the power dynamic associated with them. Oppressed desiring to become oppressors. The

[107] Gibson, "The Rebuke of the Disciples in Mark 8," 33, 44. It is important to note that the question about remembering comes right after 8:18 in which Jesus alludes to Jeremiah 5:21 and Ezekiel 12:2. The Old Testament allusions provide the background for understanding the usage of remembrance language.

[108] Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, "Translation as Culture," *Paralax* 6.1 (2000): 79–81.

disciples unable to think beyond these labels, think they have now thwarted Jesus's ability to expand the kingdom of God across the boundary markers of their own resistance narrative by "forgetting bread;" they are unable to imagine a Messiah powerful enough to provide without their assistance. They seem to believe they may convince Jesus yet.

Summary

Thus far in the narrative, Jesus has announced a rival kingdom that calls into question the claims of the Roman imperial discourse and the essentialist responses to such discourse. Jesus expands the boundaries of God's kingdom to include Jew and Gentile, removing boundary markers highlighted by the imperial discourse of power and those advocated by the disciples as well. Jesus invites his new kingdom citizens to join his mission to include Gentiles, but they continue to resist. They appear to understand what Jesus wants but are unwilling to join him. They misunderstand not what Jesus expects of his followers but why Jesus would expect it. Ultimately in the sea crossing narrative of 8:14–21, Jesus ties together this boundary breaking mission with the root of the disciples' issue: power. The disciples are envisioning a messianic movement that fits their own political aspirations. The disciples have been contaminated by the essentialist resistance narrative of the Pharisees, and they seek power and their own self-interest, having been thoroughly contaminated by the leaven of Herod, a representation of the Roman discourse of power in action. They desire resistance through the inversion of the discourse of power; Jesus desires to challenge the hegemonic discourse with a rival discourse of power that represents a cosmic kingdom. Mark 8:22–26 offers the narrative of the blind man who needed a second touch to receive the miracle of sight. It turns out

the disciples will need one, too. Their vision from colonial space is clouded. In the central portion of Mark's narrative, Jesus offers a second touch—an articulation of a rival discourse of power that reframes the Messiah's mission for the disciples and casts a very different vision of God's empire.

A New Discourse of Power Articulated: Mark 8:27–9:50

The disciples have resisted the Gentile mission of Jesus thus far in the narrative because of their colonial aspirations. They live in a state of colonial ambivalence in which they experience a simultaneous draw to and repulsion from the ideology of empire.[109] While attempting to assert or revive the native purity of Israelite culture through the overthrow of the colonial authority, the disciples have appropriated the Roman discourse of power to do so. As Samuel helpfully points out, as is often,

> the case of most nativist anti-colonial practice today, they fell into the trap of approximation (replacement despite displacement), i.e. using an 'imperial' means to replace a existing imperial system…Nativism and exclusive essentialism can breed nationalist and exclusive racist orthodoxies, which potentially repeat an imperial system that it tries to dispel in the first place.[110]

The disciples have turned their ire on those who are outsiders to demonstrate the perceived superiority of "God's people." To them, the kingdom of God functions by the same mechanisms as Rome's empire only with alternative leaders. They need a second touch from Jesus (cf. 8:22–26). Throughout the first eight chapters of Mark, Jesus sought to teach the disciples about the nature of the kingdom. This teaching emphasized the need to be freed from the powers of Satan and the inclusive nature of the coming kingdom. Jesus's teaching, with its emphasis on Gentile inclusion, fell on blind eyes and deaf ears

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[109] Bill Ashcroft, Griffiths Gareth, and Helen Tiffin, *Post-Colonial Studies: The Key Concepts*, 2nd ed. (London: Routledge, 2001), 10.

[110] Samuel, *A Postcolonial Reading of Mark's Story of Jesus*, 16–17.

(8:18). The disciples continue to resist. Jesus must turn from demonstrating the new boundaries of the kingdom of God to clarifying the discourse of power that undergirds the Gentile mission. This is a new discourse that runs counter to their colonial aspirations and explains the conundrum of Gentile inclusion to his disciples. Connecting the sea crossing to the central section of Mark's Gospel (8:27-10:45) is the short pericope concerning the blind man in Bethsaida. Jesus first spits on the man's eyes and touches him, and the man sees people walking about like trees. With a second touch, the man's sight is restored and he sees all things clearly. For the past eight chapters Jesus has touched the disciples' eyes and they see only in part, as will be demonstrated in the passage immediately following the healing (8:27–33). Now Jesus must offer the disciples a second touch in hopes that the disciples might come to see things more clearly.

Mark 8:27–9:50 outlines the contours of this "second touch"—this new imperial discourse. It takes aim at both Rome and the adhesion of the disciples to the colonizing discourse of power both of which are extensions of the powers of the "strong man" at work in the world (3:27). In what follows I offer a brief examination of the foundation of Jesus's new imperial program and the discourse of power upon which it is based. This portion of the central section of Mark's narrative sets the stage for a more expansive explanation of the alternative discourse of power espoused by the kingdom of God offered in Mark 10.

The Disciples Are Questioned: Mark 8:27–33

After Jesus's demand that the disciples should be wary of the leaven of the Pharisees and Herod, and immediately following the healing of the blind man at Bethsaida, Jesus gathers with his disciples in Caesarea Philippi and issues *the* question:

Who do you say that I am (8:29)? This question has been a long time in the making. The disciples have asked themselves this question before (4:41 and a case of questioned identity in 6:49–50), but here it is Jesus who finally forces the disciples to offer an answer to the question. Peter responds for the group by declaring, "You are the Christ/Messiah" (8:29). Jesus immediately commands his silence (8:30). The question then becomes, why should Peter remain silent? Is it the content of his claim or what one is to do with this claim? Blakley claims Jesus does not rebuke the content of Peter's claim—Jesus is the Messiah—but rather issues a "strong word about what not to do with Peter's revelation," namely sharing that claim publically.[111] For Blakley, the confession is the high point of a narrative that has been pointing to this conclusion since the first verse of Mark. Finally, Peter and the disciples have understood! He claims that the second scene (Mark 8:31–33) of this episode (Mark 8:27–8:33) in which Jesus rebukes Peter's evaluation of the messianic vocation demonstrates a deficiency in their understanding of the divine program but not in the identification itself.[112] Blakley is responding directly to Horsley who claims that Jesus's command to silence should cause the reader to understand Peter's words not as a confession but rather as a confrontation with Jesus especially in light of the usage of the verb ἐπιτιμάω (8:32), used to rebuke the demons in previous pericopes (1:25; 3:12; 9:25). This confrontation with Jesus necessitates Jesus's reaction in 8:31–33 in which Jesus needs, "not just to qualify but to correct or even to reject Peter's 'confession.'"[113] Blakley is right to point out that Horsley's argument

[111] J. Ted Blakley, "Incomprehension or Resistance? The Markan Disciples and the Narrative Logic of Mark 4:1-8:30" (PhD diss., University of St. Andrews, 2008), 310.

[112] Blakley, "Incomprehension or Resistance?," 311–312.

[113] Horsley, *Hearing the Whole Story*, 92.

works against itself. He argues that the usage of the verb ἐπιτιμάω in both the rebuke of Peter (8:33) and the rebukes of demons demonstrates that Peter's identification is accurate, just as it was in the case of the demons. The demons correctly identified Jesus, which is *why* they were not allowed to speak. The verb rather calls to mind narratives wherein those characters who recognize Jesus are commanded to remain quiet.[114]

Where Blakley misses the mark, however, is to claim that because Peter's confession is accurate, it must mean that the disciples also embrace the Gentile mission they have resisted to this point in the narrative. He claims that the disciples, up until the proclamation of Jesus's messiahship in 8:29, reject the "vocational aims and praxis" of Jesus's mission, namely the Gentile mission.[115] Blakley argues that recognition of Jesus as Messiah demonstrates that the disciples now understand the issue of the loaves and are willing to embrace the Gentile mission thus separating the problem of messianic vocation from that of the messianic fate revealed in 8:30ff. It is only after Peter's declaration that he discovers the "messianic fate" to suffer and die. Thus in Blakley's configuration, Peter's declaration is an example of "full sight," to play on the metaphor introduced in 8:22–26. Only after Jesus's declaration in 8:31, does Peter demonstrate "partial sight." In Blakley's words,

> If, according to Mark's narrative logic, the disciples' inability to recognize who Jesus is stems from their not having understood the meaning and significance of the leftover loaves due to their hardened resistance to Gentile mission, it follows from their recognition of Jesus's messianic identity in 8:29 that they have finally abandoned their willful opposition to Gentile mission and so have come to understand about the loaves.[116]

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[114] Blakley, "Incomprehension or Resistance?," 311; See also Boring, *Mark*, 239.

[115] Blakley, "Incomprehension or Resistance?," 108.

[116] Blakley, "Incomprehension or Resistance?," 315.

There are a number of concerns with Blakley's conclusions. First, narratively, there is nothing to suggest the disciples have come to understand the loaves since their sea crossing in 8:14–21 in which they failed to understand. Just because they finally arrived in Bethsaida after a previously failed sea crossing does not necessitate the disciples have fully understood the loaves.[117] The disciples have successfully crossed the sea before when Jesus was in the boat even when they did not understand the significance of the loaves. Second, Mark 8:22–26 suggests that as the blind man needed a second touch, so also would the disciples need a second touch if they were to have any hope of understanding the loaves, and thus the Gentile mission. No such second touch has yet occurred.

Third, and perhaps most importantly, Blakley's narrative logic does not necessitate his conclusion. He claims the Syrophoenician woman of Mark 7:24–30 understands the loaves and is thus able to recognize Jesus. Building on this narrative logic he claims that Peter's declaration of Jesus as Messiah must then necessitate the conclusion that the disciples understand the loaves, for it is the only way to recognize Jesus.[118] The logic, however, does not necessarily hold for this story. Blakley assumes that the declaration is adequate, and thus the disciples must understand the loaves. It could just as easily be argued that the declaration is inadequate—accurate only ironically—and thus the disciples must still misunderstand the loaves. The narrative logic, if anything, favors the second option. Nowhere in the narrative are the disciples

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[117] Blakley, "Incomprehension or Resistance?," 318. Blakely argues that the completed crossing in 8:22 is likely a verification of the disciples' change of heart, the first "indication that they have come to understand about the loaves."

[118] Blakley, "Incomprehension or Resistance?," 308.

said to understand nor is there an event that would prompt such understanding since their previous failure.[119] Thus since the disciples do not understand the loaves, they must misunderstand the title as well. The narrative logic works as well against Blakley's argument as it does in his favor.

Ultimately, to fail to accept Jesus's vocation as an inclusive *and* suffering Messiah is to misunderstand what it means to claim Jesus is the Messiah. While the disciples may have partial sight in that they recognize Jesus's identity as the Messiah, there is no way to disconnect Jesus's messianic aims and praxis from his messianic fate. To miss one, is to have partial sight at best; at worst, it positions the disciples among the opponents of Jesus. In Mark's narrative the messianic "aims and praxis" are intimately and indistinguishably connected to the "messianic fate."[120] One cannot follow the Messiah well without embracing the message of suffering and death.

From a postcolonial perspective, the disciples reject the Gentile mission because of their understanding of and expectations for the messianic program as a whole. Jesus is forming an alternative discourse of power in which Gentile inclusion and suffering and death are two parts of a singular discourse of power. They are two sides of the same coin. They cannot be separated. The Roman discourse of power stands at the basis of both

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[119] Blakley, "Incomprehension or Resistance?," 317–318. Blakley argues that the disciples have embraced the significance of the loaves and had a change of heart regarding the Gentile mission but does admit that the reason for the change of heart is difficult to pinpoint. He does speculate, however, that the most likely reason for their change of heart is the prolonged discussion of the loaves in 8:19–20. Their change of heart is then verified by their arrival at Bethsaida in 8:22. There is nothing in the story of the sea crossing to suggest, however, that the disciples have understood anything. In fact, the last question Jesus asks in the pericope is if the disciples still fail to understand (8:21), and the disciples say nothing. The two stage healing that follows suggests the disciples still need a second touch.

[120] Adam Winn, *Reading Mark's Christology Under Caesar: Jesus the Messiah and Roman Imperial Ideology* (Downers Grove: IVP Academic, 2018), 91, draws a similar conclusion. He claims it is quite clear from context, "that what Peter does not see clearly is Jesus's messianic mandate to suffer and die, a mandate that is inseparable from his identity."

rejections. One cannot accept the Gentiles and desire the inversion of the colonial power dynamic; one cannot advocate for the inversion of colonial power dynamics and submit to suffering and death.

To claim that Peter embraces the Gentile mission fails to explain fully Jesus's response to Peter in 8:30. I wholeheartedly confirm that Jesus does not rebuke Peter's claim. Peter, however, has brought his own conceptions of the messianic program into his declaration. Peter does not yet accept Gentile inclusion nor understand the suffering associated with Jesus's messianic program, and thus Jesus must rebuke Peter. Here perhaps Horsley offers a stronger conclusion when he contends that the confession is actually the "low point in the story." [121] Peter, who should understand the content of his own claim, speaks the claim, at best, ironically. The disciples continue to be resistant followers.[122]

If Peter and the disciples understood what his declaration meant, they should embrace the fullness of Jesus's mission, and yet they fail to do so only moments after their declaration. In 8:31 Jesus delivers the first of three passion predictions. Each of the three predictions follows a similar structure: Jesus explains that he must be arrested, killed, and rise from the dead (8:31; 9:30–32; 10:32–34); the disciples demonstrate their resistance to the mission of Jesus (8:32–33; 9:33–34; 10:35–37); Jesus takes the

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[121] Horsley, *Hearing the Whole Story*, 93.

[122] So also similarly, Elizabeth Struthers Malbon, "Echoes and Foreshadowing in Mark 4–8: Reading and Rereading," *JBL* 112.2 (1993): 227–229; The disciples do not understand and will not even by the narrative's end. Ira Brent Driggers, *Following God Through Mark: Theological Tension in the Second Gospel* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2007), 66, further claims the tension in the narrative holds. Peter spoke the right words, but he makes the assertion from a human perspective, "implying he does not understand Jesus's identity at all."

opportunity to teach the disciples about the truth of the Messianic mission and their place in that mission (8:34–9:1; 9:35–37; 10:38–45).

In 8:31 Jesus begins to teach the disciples what the son of man must suffer. Jesus declares that he must suffer, be killed, and rise. Peter rebukes Jesus concerning the messianic program only moments after he declared that Jesus was the Messiah, demonstrating Peter's unwillingness to embrace the messianic vision of Jesus.[123] Peter rebukes Jesus in Mark 8:32 in front of all the disciples, hoping to adjust Jesus's view of the messianic kingdom to better fit their colonial aspirations. Peter continues to embrace the colonial vision of power; he wishes to see the inversion of such power for those who follow Israel's Messiah. Jesus rebukes Peter, declaring, "get behind me, Satan," and further claims that Peter thinks only of τὰ τῶν ἀνθρώπων and not τὰ τοῦ θεου (8:33).

Here Jesus draws an important connection between the powers of evil and the disciples' resistance to Jesus's mission. Dowd has convincingly argued for the importance of this passage to understanding the cosmic nature of Mark's Gospel. The disciples are oppressed by the demonic. Jesus rebukes (ἐπιτιμάω, 8:33) Peter as he rebuked the demonic in previous pericopes (1:25; 3:12; 4:39; 9:25). The disciples' inability to embrace God's mission is not merely their own shortcoming but the, "result

[123] While ancient Judaism does not offer a normative messianic vision, a crucified Messiah was disallowed. Peter and the disciples seem to follow the view that the Messiah would be characterized by traditional understandings of power and glory. See Driggers, *Following God Through Mark: Theological Tension in the Second Gospel*, 65; James Charlesworth, "From Messianology to Christology: Problems and Prospects," in *The Messiah: Developments in Earliest Judaism and Christianity*, ed. James Charlesworth (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1992), 33; Winn, *Reading Mark's Christology Under Caesar*, 92; Moloney, *The Gospel of Mark*, 166; Donahue and Harrington, *The Gospel of Mark*, 262–266; Mark Moore, *Kenotic Politics: The Reconfiguration of Power in Jesus' Political Praxis*, LNTS 482 (London: Bloomsbury T&T Clark, 2013), 128–136.

of bondage to the demonic."[124] This connection, however, can be pushed farther and be read as making a connection between the disciples' desire for appropriation of Roman methods for their imperial resistance and the powers of darkness.[125] In the expulsion of the demon Legion in 5:1–20, there is already a connection made between the unclean spirit and Rome itself. When Jesus casts out the demon, he casts Legion out of their land, a spirit so powerful no one was able to bind him or remove him.[126] Roman legions, too, were unable to be restrained or removed from the land. Legion's presence in Mark 5 is connected directly to the demonic. The demonic powers are operative in the imperial activities of the empire, and so also are they active in those who wish to replicate them.[127] While the activities of Satan are not equal to the activities of the Roman Empire and its discourse of power, the actions and methods of Rome's Empire are squarely situated as a visible and active expression of Satan's reign, the outworking of which has infiltrated even the disciples. Mark's narrative thus connects Rome and the disciples' desire to imitate Roman methods to τὰ τῶν ἀνθρώπων, namely the powers of evil operative in the world.

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[124] Dowd, *Reading Mark*, 86–87; So also, Donald Juel, *A Master of Surprise: Mark Interpreted* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1994); Henderson, "The 'Good News' of God's Coming Reign," 151.

[125] Henderson also notes that the story of Mark is filled with conflict between the power of God and the power of Satan. Further, "in Mark's apocalyptic worldview, Herod's "kingdom" (and Rome's "occupation") belongs to the sphere of Satan's rule. Just as Jesus appears as an agent of divine power, so too the earthly rulers appear as agents of power associated with the present evil age." See Henderson, "The 'Good News' of God's Coming Reign," 152.

[126] Bolt, *Jesus's Defeat of Death*, 149, notes the significance of the name to the power of the demon itself. There was no exorcist with hope of restraining him.

[127] Mark 3:27 supports this interpretation. The house cannot be plundered until the strong man has been bound. No one else was able to bind "Legion" in Mark 5. Jesus, however, was able to bind the demon Legion. Jesus is binding the strong man, namely the demonic powers and the Roman Empire that serves as a visible extension of those powers at work in the world. Now Jesus can plunder the house and establish the kingdom of God—the rival empire to Rome and the powers of darkness as a whole.

The Roman discourse of power that has infected the disciples' own perceptions of power is aligned with the evil forces at play in world. In this way τὰ τῶν ἀνθρώπων (8:33) are those things that run contrary to Jesus's imperial vision for the world; they are those things that are embraced by those who are under the power of Satan.[128] The imperial discourse of power appropriated and adapted for the disciples' resistance to imperial power stands as nothing more than τὰ τῶν ἀνθρώπων. Thus, when Jesus dismisses Peter's vision of power as the work of Satan, he also rebukes the Roman discourse of power that undergirds Peter's vision of power as nothing more than an expression of τὰ τῶν ἀνθρώπων. The disciples are under the power of Satan, and that power finds unique and formidable expression in Roman rule. The disciples need Satan exorcised from their imaginations in order that they might be freed from the Roman discourse of power now associated with those evil forces.[129] For Jesus, the disciples desperately need a lesson in τὰ τοῦ θεου (8:33). A new empire requires a new discourse of power. It will further require the disciples to understand the concept of power in a new way.

In Mark 8:34–38, Jesus outlines what τὰ τοῦ θεου (8:33) means. If anyone wishes to follow after Jesus, that one must be willing to deny himself and to take up a cross. The wording here is significant. The disciples are not told that they must be prepared to die upon a cross in the event of failure; they are told actively to deny themselves (ἀπαρνησάθω), to take up their cross (ἀράτω), and follow Jesus (ἀκολουθείτω). For Jesus, the cross is the symbol of a successful mission, not a failed one.

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[128] Liew, "Tyranny, Boundary and Might," 21, comes to a similar conclusion from another angle of vision. His argument will be dealt with in more detail in chapter 5 concerning Mark 10.

[129] Juel, *A Master of Surprise: Mark Interpreted*, 75.

For the disciples, the cross was another aspect of Roman imperial propaganda. It demonstrated the power of Rome to overwhelm the resistance of outsiders. It was what resulted when the resistance failed. By embracing the cross as a vision of God's imperial power, Jesus is performing an act of catachresis.[130] The cross will no longer be understood as a method used by empire to torture others. It will now be a tool embraced by the rival empire upon which to die willingly and sacrificially to decry the powers of the demonic and the empire as an expression of those demonic powers. By Jesus dying on a cross and beckoning those with him to follow, Jesus declares the powers defeated. In a significant narrative turn of events in Mark 15:39, a Gentile soldier will declare at Jesus's crucifixion that he is "υἱὸς θεοῦ."[131] Bringing the story full circle from 1:1, Jesus is declared "υἱὸς θεοῦ" by a human character in the narrative and thus challenges the hegemony of the Roman discourse of power and its divine mythological basis.[132] As Kaminouchi articulates so beautifully, "If Jesus is the Son of God, the power that has killed him cannot be divinely appointed. The death of the Son of God disenfranchises the

[130] For a fuller explanation of the catachresis of the cross, see Leander, *Discourses of Empire*, 247. He offers a full explanation of this ideological maneuver. More will be said below of another act of catachresis where I outline the function more fully.

[131] The meaning of this declaration is contested among scholars. Suggestions include the statement is a genuine declaration, an ambiguous declaration this is true but unclear with reference to the centurion's belief, and sarcastic declaration. As a genuine statement see David Rhoads, Joanna Dewey, and Donald Michie, *Mark as Story: An Introduction to the Narrative of a Gospel*, 2nd ed. (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1999), 114–115; Craig Evans, *Mark*, WBC 34b (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 2001), 510; Collins, *Mark*; Samuel, *A Postcolonial Reading of Mark's Story of Jesus*, 130; as an ambivalent declaration, see Hooker, *Mark*, 378; as an example postcolonial ambivalence, see Leander, *Discourses of Empire*, 295–305; as a sarcastic declaration, see Fowler, *Let the Reader Understand*, 204–208; Moore, *Empire and Apocalypse*, 32–33. In light of the reading offered herein, I suggest that Mark intends the declaration to be genuine, offering the declaration from a human voice that had previously only come from heaven and the narrator. It further reinforces the foil between the disciples and the Gentiles. The Gentile Roman centurion is the only human character to make this declaration.

[132] Samuel, *A Postcolonial Reading of Mark's Story of Jesus*, 130. He notes specifically that by the soldier switching sides from Rome's Empire to God's Empire the power dynamic is disrupted.

power of the empire by denying its divine legitimacy."[133] Thus the invitation to take up a cross is not merely a risk of following Jesus;[134] it is an invitation to "share the consequences facing those who dared challenge the ultimate hegemony of imperial Rome."[135]

In 8:35, Jesus tells his disciples that to save their lives is to lose them, to lose them is to save them. One may gain the world, but that one will lose his/her soul (8:36–37). The disciples are told willingly to take up their crosses because, paradoxically, to lose their lives is to save them. Given the disciples' preoccupation with power and the desire to set the limits of God's kingdom, Jesus takes aim specifically at the disciples' desire for gaining the world. Santos points out, "the desire to save oneself is related to the desire to gain authority and power in this world. Saving oneself is a manifestation of the world's standard of striving for authority…Saving oneself can be linked with setting one's mind on one's own interests, not God's."[136] Striving after power, as the disciples understood it, would result in losing one's soul to eternal ruin, again demonstrating the connection between the evil forces at work and Rome's discourse of power.

Jesus warns his disciples and those gathered, if they are ashamed of Jesus and his words—namely the methods and expectations of the new kingdom which include death

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[133] de Mingo Kaminouchi, *But It Is Not so Among You*, 203.

[134] Bolt, *Jesus's Defeat of Death*, 218, notes something similar. "If anyone wants to follow him, they can do so, but, given the nature of his cause, they had better reckon with their own death. Presumably this is what Peter has failed to do." The significance of death to Jesus's discourse looms large in the narrative. Those who follow must accept the fact that an actual cross may await them, too.

[135] Myers, *Binding the Strong Man*, 246. Further, Myers, 247, declares, "Those who wish to "come after him" will have to identify themselves with his subversive program." They will have to engage in the "political confrontation" with Rome, not the "rehabilitation of, the imperial state."

[136] Narry Santos, "Jesus's Paradoxical Teaching in Mark 8:35; 9:35; 10:43-44," *BSac* 157 (2000): 19.

on a cross—the Son of Man will be ashamed of them when he comes into his glory (8:38). The emphasis on the language of honor and shame in this verse demonstrates another difficulty of following Jesus. To be crucified was a shameful death. To follow after a crucified individual is a shameful act. Jesus, however, declares that one who is ashamed of his words, which included the acknowledgment of his crucifixion and a call to embrace the same, would find themselves shamed when Jesus comes in power.[137] Jesus alters the rules of honor for the disciples—the very rules reinforced by the imperial discourse. Jesus establishes new criteria for determining greatness in the kingdom. The markers of kingdom insiders run afoul of the cultural norm.[138]

Jesus's words in Mark 8:38 are evidence that the kingdom of God does have boundary markers. These markers, however, are not predicated on religious or ethnic background, but are rather determined by those who are willing to claim proudly Jesus *and his words*.[139] Insiders are those who are willing to embrace the discourse of power cultivated by Jesus in his teaching. Unlike the circumstances of birth which determined one's ethnic origin, social status, and geopolitical location, entrance into God's kingdom is determined by choice and willingness to embrace Jesus's alternative kingdom

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[137] David Watson, *Honor Among Christians: The Cultural Key to the Messianic Secret* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2010), 70–71.

[138] Watson, *Honor Among Christians*, 64.

[139] Liew, "Tyranny, Boundary and Might." makes this claim, arguing that Jesus is appropriating the Roman sentiment of "join or be killed." While this will be dealt with in more detail in chapter 5 below, I do agree that Jesus does inscribe boundary markers, but one need not read this as a simple appropriation of Roman ideology. The basis upon which the boundary markers are established is different, though he is right to point out that the result at the *parousia* is ultimately very similar.

discourse of power. With each passing story, one worries if there is any hope for the disciples to become insiders at all.[140]

Mark 9:1: Catachresis of Power

Jesus proclaims if the disciples wish to follow, they must deny themselves and take up their crosses (8:34). Further they must claim Jesus and his words to be considered "insiders" or else they will be rejected when the Son of Man comes in glory (8:38). Those who are present with Jesus are told that some of them will "see the kingdom of God when it has come with δυνάμει" (9:1). The word δυνάμει can mean power, might, or strength, and when paired with the language of the kingdom of God, it is no wonder that the disciples understood Jesus to be invoking the image of a powerful political entity.[141] The disciples in their desire to replicate the oppressive power of their colonizers have visions of grandeur in their hearts, but Jesus's vision differs dramatically.

The identification of this event in which the kingdom of God comes in power is debated among scholars and conclusions have varied widely.[142] Among the most common suggestions is that the event in which the kingdom of God comes in power is the

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[140] Henderson, "'Concerning the Loaves' Comprehending Incomprehension in Mark 6:45-52," 24. Henderson claims the disciples are essentially cast as outsiders since chapter 6 and are no different than Jesus's opponents. Henderson, however, argues the disciples are not aware of their own power and authority rather than, in my estimation, too reliant upon it.

[141] BDAG s.v. "δυνάμει." On occasion the word can even be used to signify "something that serves as an adjunct to power" (i.e. a resource such as wealth, forces, or armies).

[142] The options are varied. For the event in 9:1 as a realized eschatology, see C.H. Dodd, *The Parables of the Kingdom*, Rev. Ed. (London: Scribners, 1961), 53–54; Craig Evans, 29; as Pentecost and the growth of the early church: F.F. Bruce, *New Testament History* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1971), 208; Vincent Taylor, *The Gospel According to St. Mark* (London: Macmillan, 1953), 385; D.G. Dunn, *The Christ and the Spirit: Pneumatology* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1998), 2:141; W. Hendriksen, *Mark* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1975), 333; as the transfiguration: C.E.B. Cranfield, *The Gospel According to St. Mark* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1959), 287–288; Witherington, *The Gospel of Mark*, 259–262; Lane, *The Gospel according to Mark*, 312–312; as the teachings of Jesus: Tolbert, *Sowing the Gospel*, 206–207.

parousia.[143] Those who argue for the *parousia* as the fulfillment of Jesus's prophetic word, argue that the kingdom will come it its fullness only at the return of Jesus. In 8:38 Jesus claims that he will shame those who have been ashamed of him and his words "when he comes in the glory of his Father with the holy angels." Immediately thereafter, Jesus speaks of the kingdom of God coming in power, leading many to connect the final judgment with the coming of the kingdom in power in 9:1. In Mark, however, Jesus declares, "but concerning that day or that hour, no one knows, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father" (13:32). Apparently not even Jesus knows the hour, and thus for Jesus to claim to know those standing by will see the *parousia* seems disingenuous. Garland also notes that Jesus points out that the woman who anointed his head in preparation for his burial will have her story told everywhere the gospel is preached throughout the world, asserting a time period lasting beyond the lives of the disciples (14:8–9).[144] Since the *parousia* did not occur during the lives of those gathered, Mark's Jesus was mistaken or the referent is to be located elsewhere.

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[143] Dennis Nineham, *Saint Mark* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1983), 231–232; Liew, *The Politics of Parousia*, 103–104; Thomas Hatina, "Who Will See 'The Kingdom of God Coming with Power' in Mark 9:1-Protagonists or Antagonists?," *Bib* 86.1 (2005): 20–34; Elizabeth E Shively, "What Type of Resistance?: How Apocalyptic Discourse Functions as Social Discourse in Mark's Gospel," *JSNT* 37.4 (2015): 398; Hooker, *Mark*, 212, argues the resurrection is part of the fulfillment that is completed only in the *parousia*; For those who argue the event points to both the transfiguration as a partial fulfillment where the *parousia* is the final fulfillment see: Enrique Nardoni, "A Redactional Interpretation of Mark 9:1," *CBQ* 43 (1981): 365–84; David Wenham and A.D.A. Moses, "'There Are Some Standing Here...': Did They Become the 'Reputed Pillars' of the Jerusalem Church? Some Reflections on Mark 9:1, Galatians 2:9 and the Transfiguration," *NovT* 36.2 (1994): 149; Dowd, *Reading Mark*, 91; Donahue and Harrington, *The Gospel of Mark*, 273; Leander argues 9:1 is fulfilled in the *parousia* but argues the *parousia* is most likely the events of 11:1–11. Leander, *Discourses of Empire*, 249, 252ff.

[144] Garland, *A Theology of Mark's Gospel*, 362.

Another intriguing option for the event in question is that the kingdom comes in power at the resurrection[145] Note the significance of Jesus's words in 8:31. Jesus claimed he would be rejected, killed, and rise again. The threefold progression leads directly to the resurrection. Further, the resurrection is the event that vindicates the dying Jesus as the risen and ruling Christ. Moloney claims, "There are some standing there hearing Jesus's words who will experience the apparent failure of the crucifixion, overcome by God's power in the resurrection."[146] This view has the benefit of taking place while most of those who are standing with Jesus at his announcement are still alive. Further, in the story of the transfiguration that follows the pronouncement of 9:1, Jesus declares that the three disciples with him should refrain from speaking of the event until his resurrection from the dead (9:9), perhaps suggesting that the transfiguration points to the coming reality of his resurrection, the event referenced in 9:1.

The question is, however, if the resurrection or the *parousia* is the most logical event to reference when speaking of the kingdom of God coming in power? The answer to this question lies in the meaning of the word power in this context. Thus far, Jesus has shown power to be located in the denial of oneself and the taking up of one's cross unto death (8:34). Further, those who seek to save their lives lose them, but those who lose their lives for the sake of the gospel and Jesus, save them (8:35). Again the focus is on the giving of one's life, on death. Even in Mark 1–8:26, Jesus's acts of healing, exorcism, and inclusion pointed toward the denial of one's self. As the disciples seem intent to

[145] Hendriksen, *Mark*, 333; Myers, *Binding the Strong Man*, 248; Waetjen, *A Reordering of Power*, 148; Moloney, *The Gospel of Mark*, 177; Garland, *A Theology of Mark's Gospel*, 363; France, *The Gospel of Mark*, 345 leaves open this possibility as well, claiming the transfiguration is a partial fulfillment that is completed in either the resurrection or the *parousia*.

[146] Moloney, *The Gospel of Mark*, 177.

parcel out the power of the kingdom to those they deem worthy, Jesus throws the seed of the kingdom about liberally (cf. 4:2–9 in which the seed lands upon all grounds). The disciples do not have the authority to determine the boundary markers of the kingdom. Rich, poor, adult, child, male, female, Jew or Gentile—the miracles blessed them all. In the coming chapters Jesus fleshes out the meaning of power in the kingdom for his disciples, especially in the following two passion predictions and their explanations (9:30–40; 10:32–45) and the stories of Mark 10:1–31.[147]

In postcolonial terms, Jesus undertakes an act of catachresis. As discussed in chapter 2, catachresis occurs when one takes a word/concept from colonial space and dissociates it from its concrete referent. In this case, the concept of power, which in the hegemonic discourse belongs solely to Rome and her subsidiaries as defined in the discourse of power, is reformulated with a new meaning and new function. As Spivak articulates, catachresis is a

> conscious displacement that is not *merely* a reorganisation or appropriation of the purported normative system; it moves the site of articulation and refuses to cooperate with or to acknowledge the propriety of normative enunciations. It appropriates the metaphors of the oppressor and yet 'abuses' them through interventions that exceed the order of the oppressor.[148]

Jesus advances a catachrestic understanding of power in an attempt to create a counter discourse of power that runs at cross-purposes to Roman imperial authority. While Rome operates by fixed exclusion, coercion, and violence, the kingdom of God operates by means of rewriting boundary markers, self-sacrifice, and service.[149] In 9:1 Jesus asserts

[147] I will argue in chapter 5 that defining power and teaching the disciples the true nature of power is the point of 10:1–45.

[148] Spivak, "Translation as Culture," 14.

[149] The kingdom of God does admittedly continue a kind of exclusion. This exclusion, however, is more fluid than the exclusionary practices of the Roman Empire. The Empire's practices are determined by

that the kingdom he represents comes in *power*, but this word in action will not look the same as it does in Rome's discourse. This is the fact that the disciples have failed to accept. They seek power, but have too limited a conception of the term. They have merely appropriated and reapplied the term. Jesus denies the "normative enunciation" of power made by the Roman discourse, and "exceeds the order of the oppressor" altogether for his resistance movement—one that sees the demonic powers at work in the world in both the Roman imperial activities and his own disciples.

One may ask why Mark's Jesus does not offer an alternative word for this phenomena rather than attempting to apply this word differently in God's empire. The answer is in the very nature of catachresis. A catachrestic usage of the term turns the discourse of power on its head. In Bhabha's terms, "it terrorizes the authority with the ruse of recognition," or in Leander's terms, "it unsettles the dominant discourse from within."[150] It sounds the same but is, in fact, very different. It is still the transformative capacity of human action, but the human actions expected to transform other actors are now very different. Furthermore, there is no word that will do to replace it. To call Jesus's version of power, "powerlessness," as some interpreters have done, is to miss the point of Jesus's claim.[151] He is recovering a word from colonial space and using it in a way that subverts the hegemonic discourse of power. No other word will do to describe

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the circumstances of wealth, birth, status, and gender. The kingdom of God invites all to participate, hence Jesus's continued inclusion of Gentiles. The exclusionary practices of the kingdom of God, therefore, are qualitatively different than those of the Roman Empire. This is further discussed in chapter 5.

[150] Leander, *Discourses of Empire*, 41.

[151] For example, D. A. Lee-Pollard, "Powerlessness as Power: A Key Emphasis in the Gospel of Mark," *SJT* 40.2 (1987): 173–88. While she does suggest that the actions Jesus promotes are "power," she calls the actions themselves "powerlessness." This is to miss the point of the actions themselves. The transformative capacity of human action (i.e. power) assumes all actions have power. Some may be more powerful than others, but none are strictly speaking, "powerless."

the coming of God's kingdom, but Rome's use of this word will not do either. In the mission of Jesus in Mark 1–8 and the first passion prediction in particular, Jesus has revealed what "power" means in the catachrestic sense: power is service above self (8:33–34), sacrifice (6:14–29, to follow is to be in danger), and radical inclusion of those previously perceived as outsiders—even Gentiles (5:1–20; 7:24–30; 8:1–10). The leaven of the Pharisees (essentialist resistance through the adherence to boundary markers) and the leaven of Herod (quest for authoritarian and self-interested power) must be discarded (8:15). It is in this way those of the kingdom will transform others. Mark 8:33 indicates the disciples have yet to embrace Jesus's usage of the term "power." In chapters 9 and 10, Jesus further explicates his vision of the concept of power. His expression of power aligns with τὰ τοῦ θεου, while the disciples continue to cling to the Roman imperial expression of the term simply reapplied to their resistance, in other words, τὰ τῶν ἀνθρώπων (8:33).

In light of this understanding of power, there appears to be an alternative event to that of the resurrection and the *parousia* that makes sense of Mark's narrative: the crucifixion itself.[152] The crucifixion is the embodiment of Jesus's vision of power. It is the ultimate act of self-sacrifice. It is undertaken willingly for the sake of humanity. In the final moment of Jesus's death, just as all hope seems lost and it seems the powers of darkness have prevailed, which would send Mark's narrative logic in a downward spiral,

[152] For a similar conclusion see Kent Brower, "Mark 9:1–Seeing the Kingdom in Power," *JSNT* 6 (1980): 17–41; Myers, *Binding the Strong Man*, 248; Michael F. Bird, "The Crucifixion of Jesus as the Fulfillment of Mark 9:1," *TJ* 24 (2003): 23–36. While I greatly appreciated Bird's work and agree with his assessment of 9:1, I do object to his language of "powerlessness" as he speaks of the character of Jesus's power in Mark. If power is the transformative capacity of human action, any action can be deemed powerful in some sense, to a greater or lesser degree. Further, if Jesus is undertaking an act of catachresis in his use of the word "power," then the "site of articulation" has been relocated (to use Spivak's words) and the normative enunciation concerning Roman power has been denied. Jesus's crucifixion is not "powerlessness as power;" it simply *is* power as defined by Jesus in colonial space. The difference may be subtle, but it is significant.

darkness falls over the land. This darkness calls to mind the imagery of the Day of the Lord when God's righteous judgment comes upon the people.[153] Then the temple veil is torn and God's presence breaks into the world in a new way. As Myers claims:

> Jesus's death has unmasked the fact that the "tear" (schisman) in the old garment is irreparable (2:21); the symbolic order as it is centrally embedded in the sanctuary has been overthrown. Here then is the second great symbol of the "end of the world." The strong man has *not* prevailed, his "house" *has* been ransacked.[154]

Further, the declaration by the Gentile soldier of Jesus as "son of God" (15:39) gives further credence to this identification. From Mark 1:1 when the Gospel of the Son of God is introduced, to the heavenly declarations of Jesus's divine sonship in 1:11 and 9:7, the entire narrative of Mark's Gospel has pointed to this moment when the Son of God is publically crowned.[155] The sign above his head ironically declares what the readers have known from the start: Jesus is the true ruler. Jesus further emphasizes the significance of his crucifixion in his discourse with his disciples in 10:45.[156] The Son of Man came to give his life as a ransom for many. To ask for a share in his glory as James and John have done (10:35–37), is unwittingly to have asked for the crosses on either side of Jesus (15:27). Jesus does not give them those crosses, but he does promise them the cup he will drink and the baptism in which he will be submerged (10:39–40).[157] Even in 9:1 Jesus

[153] Bird, "The Crucifixion of Jesus as the Fulfillment of Mark 9:1," 30.

[154] Myers, *Binding the Strong Man*, 389–390. The first symbol was darkness falling at the crucifixion.

[155] Bird, "The Crucifixion of Jesus as the Fulfillment of Mark 9:1," 29–30.

[156] This passage is addressed at length in chapter 5.

[157] Bird, "The Crucifixion of Jesus as the Fulfillment of Mark 9:1," 28. Bird perceptively notes, "the brothers are ignorant of what they truly want, for to share in Jesus's glory means to embrace the same menacing destiny. There is no hint here of suffering as the antecedent to glory, but simply the equating of the two together."

declares that some gathered will not taste death *before* they see the kingdom of God come in power. The idea of tasting death, according to Bird, does seem to indicate a violent and bloody death rather than living out one's mortal life in peace.[158] This assertion is further indicated by 8:34–38 in which Jesus declares that those who follow should take up a cross and lose their lives for the sake of the gospel. No guarantee is given that those gathered will not taste death on account of the kingdom, only that they will see the kingdom of God come with power before their violent end. Also, it is significant to note that 9:1 is addressed not just to the disciples but to the crowd (8:34) that perhaps includes the very women who actually witnessed the crucifixion (15:40–41).

Taken together, the crucifixion seems a solid candidate for the event referenced in 9:1 in which the kingdom of God comes in power. The action of giving one's life is the power of the kingdom. The resurrection vindicates Jesus and the kingdom he proclaims and the transfiguration even points to such vindication, but it is in the crucifixion that the power of the kingdom is seen in all its catachrestic glory. The disciples are to take up their crosses and follow Jesus to his. This is the power of the kingdom: losing one's life to save it (8:35), dying to overthrow the powers of Satan and by extension the political powers that act as an extension of those demonic powers.

The entire central section takes place "on the way." Jesus and his followers are on the way to Jerusalem. They are on their way to the cross. Since the cross in Jerusalem is their stated destination, the following story of the transfiguration is all the more shocking for readers. The disciples should know where Jesus is going. He has spoken to them plainly (8:32), not in parables. Yet when the disciples and Jesus arrive at the mountaintop

[158] Bird, "The Crucifixion of Jesus as the Fulfillment of Mark 9:1," 34.

in 9:2, the disciples are as reluctant as ever to embrace the call of the cross. Jesus takes the opportunity to explain further the catachrestical articulation of power.

Mark 9:2–8: A Transfiguration of Power

In Mark 9:2–8, Jesus takes a few of the most resistant disciples to witness τὰ τοῦ θεου rising above τὰ τῶν ἀνθρώπων. In one of the most noteworthy examples of mimicry and mockery of Roman imperialism in a single text, Jesus leads Peter, James, and John onto a mountain where he is transfigured before them and his clothes become dazzling white (9:3, στίλβοντα λευκὰ λίαν). "Elijah with Moses" appear with Jesus (9:4). Out of fear, Peter offers to build dwellings on the mountain for all three. No sooner had Peter spoken on behalf of the disciples than a voice booms from the cloud that has overshadowed them declaring, "This is my Son, my beloved; listen to him!" (9:7). The divine voice, which appeared in 1:11, speaks again affirming Jesus's divine connection to the witnesses. As quickly as it had begun, however, the event passed and in 9:8 the disciples looked around and "saw no one" (περιβλεψάμενοι οὐκέτι οὐδένα εἶδον) except Jesus (ἀλλὰ τὸν Ἰησοῦν μόνον).

Most of the discussion in the literature surrounding the transfiguration scene in Mark revolves around the Jewish background of the story.[159] While this trend is understandable given the presence of both Elijah and Moses and the subsequent discussion about Elijah, the emphasis on power present in the narrative—and especially the direct reference to the kingdom of God coming in power in 9:1—demands we

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[159] Even Joel Marcus, while providing an extended excurses on possible historical backgrounds of the Transfiguration, defaults to an interpretation dependent on Jewish history and sources alone. Admittedly, since he locates the Gospel's audience in Syria, this is consistent. See Joel Marcus, *Mark 8-16: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*, 1st ed., vol. 2 of *AB* v. 27b (New York: Doubleday, 2000), 636–642.

consider the relation of the transfiguration to the discourse of power Jesus is formulating for his disciples, especially if the transfiguration is a proleptic fulfillment of 9:1.[160] The stories of ancient Rome and her imperial propaganda provide a compelling interpretive lens through which to read the transfiguration scene in relation to Jesus's formation of a counter discourse of power. The stories of apotheosis and translation embedded in the mythology of a number of Roman divinities give a clear connection to Rome's discourse of power and the way Jesus is responding to it.

The scene in Mark 9 bears interesting parallels to the stories of apotheosis and translation utilized by Roman rulers to establish their authority. Romulus, the mythical founder of Rome, is pictured as a deified figure by the time of Ennius and a translated figure as early as Cicero.[161] At least in the mythology, it was known that Romulus was translated to the realm of the divine, and he became the pattern to be imitated by future imperial rulers.[162] The mythology of Rome's founder was later applied to the leaders of the Roman Empire.[163] Beginning with the deification of Julius Caesar, the act of deifying

[160] This is especially true if the transfiguration narrative stands as a proleptic fulfillment of 9:1 that points to the *parousia* or, as I would argue, the crucifixion. For those who hold this view see Nardoni, "A Redactional Interpretation of Mark 9:1"; Wenham and Moses, "'There Are Some Standing Here...'"; Eugene LaVerdiere, *The Beginning of the Gospel: Introducing the Gospel according to Mark*, vol. 2 (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 1999), 42–44; France, *The Gospel of Mark*, 345; Dowd, *Reading Mark*, 91; Donahue and Harrington, *The Gospel of Mark*, 273.

[161] Arthur Stanley Pease, "Some Aspects of Invisibility," *HSCP* 53 (1942): 15. cf. Ennuis *Ann*. 65-66, 111-13 and Cic. *Rep*. 1.25.

[162] The mythology surrounding his earthly departure is varied in the literature. Plutarch comments that while some claimed that Romulus became the victim of a senatorial conspiracy leading to his death (Plut. *Num*. 2,3), others promoted the idea that Romulus had been translated to the realm of the divine (Plut. *Rom.* 27-28). Livy continues claiming that while some suggested conspiracy, the story of his translation obtained far greater currency (Livy 1.16). One man was even willing to swear that he had seen Romulus leave the earth (Plut. *Rom.* 28.1).

[163] For a fuller discussion see Stefan Weinstock, *Divus Julius* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1971), 175–198.

the emperor became common practice for those who followed.[164] Dio Cassius (56.46.1-2) further employs the Romulus narrative in the attribution of apotheosis to Augustus claiming that Augustus was immortalized and that someone had seen Augustus ascend to heaven in similar manner to Romulus. The mythology surrounding the founder of Rome was applied to subsequent rulers of Rome to legitimize their rule and glorify them.[165]

In addition to the mythology of Rome's founder, the story of Hercules's apotheosis is enshrined in the College of the Augustales in Herculaneum.[166] Apollodorus recounts the story of Hercules's apotheosis. Hercules ascends a mountain and upon reaching the top, assembles a funeral pyre. Once the pyre is lit, "it is said that a cloud passed under Hercules and with a peal of thunder wafted him up to heaven" (Apollodorus *Library* 2.7.7 [Frazer LCL]). Diodorus Siculus relates a slightly less mystical account of the event, claiming that as the pyre was lit, a violent storm broke forth dispersing the friends of the hero. When they returned to collect the bones, they found none and concluded he had been translated to the gods (Diod. *Bib.hist.* 4.38.4). Hercules, in the

[164] Adela Yarbro Collins, "Ancient Notions of Transferal and Apotheosis in Relation to the Empty Tomb Story in Mark," in *Metamorphoses: Resurrection, Body, and Transformative Practices in Early Christianity*, ed. Turid Seim and Jorunn Okland (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2009), 45.

[165] Bolt, *Jesus's Defeat of Death*, 222; Lily Ross Taylor, *The Divinity of the Roman Emperor* (Chico, CA: Scholars Press, 1981), 164–65. While the deification of future emperors was not without some objectors (this brings to mind the objectors to the deification of Claudius. cf. Pliny *Pan.*11.1; Sen *Apol.)*, the imperial cult did become well know and well practiced in the regions of Italy surrounding Rome and beyond. In coordination with the deification of the emperor arose stories of his apotheosis. At the death of Julius Caesar, whose death was presented in similar fashion to that of Romulus (App. *Bell.Civ.* 2.114), a comet appeared and gave credence to the idea of his apotheosis.

[166] Stefano De Caro, "The First Sanctuaries," in *The World of Pompeii*, ed. John Dobbins and Pedar Foss (London: Routledge, 2007), 75, also informs us that there was a sanctuary to Hercules in Pompeii as well as early as the fourth century BCE. For an excellent overview of the prevalence and significance of Hercules in Pompeii and Herculaneum see Antonella Coralini, *Hercules Domesticus : Immagini Di Ercole Nelle Case Della Regione Vesuviana : I Secolo a.C.-79. d.C* (Naples: Electa, 2001).

context of the imperial cult, is invoked as a kind of prototype for the emperor.[167] As Small notes, "The hero had a double relevance as the mythical founder of the city, and as the ideal prototype of the emperors whose statues once occupied the shrine."[168]

In these stories, the event often occurs on a mountain (Diod. 4.82.5-6 [Aristaeus on Mount Haemus]; Apollod. 2.7.7 [Hercules on Mount Oeta]) and often under strange weather conditions. At the departure of Romulus, Livy (1.16) and Plutarch (*Rom.* 27.6) both report a storm coming upon the site moments before Romulus's departure. In more direct parallel, a cloud was said to have descended to gather up Hercules to the gods (Apollod 2.7.7). So too, Livy recounts a cloud appearing at the translation of Romulus (Livy 1.16). The scene in Mark 9 bears some resemblance to these stories, stories ingrained in the public consciousness, enshrined in Rome's propaganda. They each contributed to Rome's claim to power, and they each were part of the hegemonic discourse of power upholding the imperial aims of Rome.

Burkett makes a similar argument concerning the transfiguration in his work on Markan Christology.[169] He claims the transfiguration, as apocalyptic story, is a proleptic fulfillment of Jesus's ascension and transformation, namely his apotheosis. Seeing the similarities between Mark 9 and the apotheosis narratives of ancient Greece and Rome,

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[167] Taylor, *The Divinity of the Roman Emperor*, 228–229, 235; Brian Bosworth, "Augustus, The Res Gestae and Hellenistic Theories of Apotheosis," *JRS* 89 (1999): 6–11, draws forth a number of parallels between Augustus and Hercules.

[168] Alastair Small, "Urban, Suburban, and Rural Religion in the Roman Period," in *The World of Pompeii*, ed. John Dobbins and Pedar Foss (London: Routledge, 2007), 199.

[169] Delbert Burkett, "The Transfiguration of Jesus (Mark 9:2–8): Epiphany or Apotheosis?," *JBL* 138.2 (2019): 413–32; Burkett argues that the transfiguration narrative should be understood as an apotheosis narrative that demonstrates Jesus's future divine status rather than an epiphany revealing who Jesus already was. Contra those seeing the story as an epiphany; cf A. Yarbro Collins, "Mark and His Readers: The Son of God among Greeks and Romans," *HTR* 93.2 (2000): 85–100; Candida Moss, "The Transfiguration: An Exercise in Markan Accommodation," *BibInt* 12.1 (2004): 69–89; David Litwa, *Iesus Deus: The Early Christian Depiction of Jesus as a Mediterranean God* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2014).

Burkett concludes the story demonstrates Jesus's eventual transformation from a man to his glorification as a divine being.[170] Helpfully, Burkett also argues the apotheosis theory makes sense in the Jewish context as well. While the Sinai narrative of Moses may have had nothing to do with deification in its original context, by the time Mark is penned, Philo had considered Moses's transformation a kind of Hellenistic divinization.[171] The later Jewish traditions further described Moses's earthly departure "in terms reminiscent of apotheosis" and saw those who ascended to the heavens as undergoing "angelification."[172] The Jewish tradition saw something similar in the accounts of Enoch (Gen 5:24, 1 En. 71) and Elijah (2 Kings 2:1–12).[173]

Burkett further claims that the genre of the story as an apocalypse explains the reason for the proleptic apotheosis. In an apocalypse, "a human recipient receives revelation from an other-worldly being."[174] On the mountain the disciples receive a

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[170] Burkett, "The Transfiguration of Jesus," 428.

[171] Burkett, "The Transfiguration of Jesus," 425.

[172] Burkett, "The Transfiguration of Jesus," 425.

[173] This perhaps explains the presence of Moses and Elijah in Mark 9. Both figures were celebrated as having experienced a translation of their own.[173] In 2 Kings 2:9-12, Elijah was taken up to heaven by God. This theme is continued in later Jewish literature as seen in *A.J.* 9.27-28, Sir 48:9, and 1 Macc 2:58. Also, while Moses is said to have died in the biblical text, his burial place is unknown (Deut 34:5-8), and in the broader Jewish literature, Moses is closely connected with notions of translation to the divine realm (*Ant*. 4:326 in which Moses ascended a mountain, was covered by a cloud, and disappeared into a ravine; *As. Mos*. 11:5-8; Philo, *Mos*. 2.288, 291-92, *QG* 1.86)). The hearers of the narrative likely called to mind the apotheosis and translation narratives from their own cultural milieu and these connections were likely further encouraged if they were familiar with the stories of Elijah's and Moses' translations as well. Heil, *The Transfiguration of Jesus*, 158, argues that the hearers of this narrative who were familiar with the stories of Elijah and Moses likely wondered if Jesus, too, would escape death. He claims, "Does the appearance of the heavenly Moses and Elijah in close associations with the transfigured Jesus mean that he also will attain heavenly glory like them, without dying the death of a rejected prophet?...Further, does it annul Jesus's previous appeal for the crowd, the disciples, and the audience who want to follow him to deny themselves, take up their cross, and lose their lives in order to save them?" Obviously, he concludes that with the finale of the transfiguration scene, these questions are answered with a resounding "no." Jesus must be put to death before attaining heavenly glory (167).

[174] Burkett, "The Transfiguration of Jesus," 429.

vision from God concerning Jesus, namely his future apotheosis. No one would witness Jesus's transformation that would take place after his ascension. Thus the disciples receive a preview of coming events in the transfiguration.[175] Only after the resurrection are the disciples to speak of what they saw. While Burkett's focus on the similarities between the apotheosis narratives and the transfiguration are helpful, Burkett does not address the startling difference between the apotheosis narratives of the Greco-Roman world and the story of Mark 9. This difference sheds further light on the reason to include a story in Mark 9 that seems so similar to the apotheosis narratives.

In the context of Roman translation stories the main character suddenly disappears. Thus Romulus disappears within the cloud and when the cloud clears Romulus is missing as his witnesses stand looking for him. Hercules, too, disappears from the pyre. Yet in Mark 9, a white-robe clad Son of God stands in the cloud as a voice from heaven declares his status along with instructions to the onlookers, and when the cloud clears, the disciples look around and see no one—except Jesus! Even the phrasing of verse 8 bears out a bit of the tension in the story.[176] The disciples look around, as did the witnesses of translations before them, and they see "οὐκέτι οὐδένα," only to add "ἀλλὰ τὸν Ἰησοῦν μόνον μεθ᾽ ἑαυτῶν!" (9:8). In light of the translation narratives, one might reasonably expect Jesus to have returned to the realm of the divine with his visitors, and yet, Jesus remains firmly upon the ground.[177] In light of these stories, the disciples found their expectations countered in the transfiguration. As Peter Bolt notes,

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[175] Burkett, "The Transfiguration of Jesus," 431.

[176] Bolt, *Jesus's Defeat of Death*, 222. Bolt claims that the phrase follows the traditional story line claiming they saw no one, but alters the story line at the by adding "but only Jesus."

[177] Bolt, *Jesus's Defeat of Death*, 224. Moloney, *The Gospel of Mark*, 179. Moloney claims that this scene is an anticipation of the resurrection that will come by means of suffering and death but fails to acknowledge the possibility that it is simultaneously a rejection of immediate departure.

the very person the disciples should expect to disappear "is the only one still left behind; the heavenly visitors have left without him!"[178] The transfiguration, then, is not just a proleptic vision of a future apotheosis as Burkett has argued but is also a rejected apotheosis, at least for the time being. The disciples are not only being given a glimpse of Jesus's future glory but also a glimpse at Jesus's coming suffering.

What are the disciples to make of this rejected translation? Bearing semblance to the claims of the emperor, Jesus was the Son of God. At this point in the narrative, this fact has been declared once by the narrator (1:1) and twice by a voice from heaven (1:11, 9:7). At least to the audience, his status is clear, yet when given the opportunity to embrace translation and reject the forthcoming suffering he predicted, as a powerful, god-ordained ruler should, the cloud departs and Jesus remains. He comes down from the mountain intent to embrace the suffering that lay before him. Jesus rejected the honor of departure and commanded his witnesses to remain quiet. This command to secrecy is another interesting reversal to the traditional witnesses of translations who swore oaths on what they saw.[179]

Adam Winn argues that the command to remain quiet may also indicate that Jesus is actually appropriating another aspect of Roman imperial ideology. Roman rulers occasionally rejected honor claims that conflicted with standard imperial ideology, "honors such as monarchical and divine titles, direct worship, temples, and priesthoods,"

[178] Bolt, *Jesus's Defeat of Death*, 222.

[179] cf. Plut. *Rom.* 28.1 in which one person swears that he saw Romulus caught up to the gods; Dio Cassius 56.46 1-2 in which a man is offered monetary gifts when he swears that he saw Augustus ascend as Romulus.

all of which could be associated with tyrants of the East.[180] In his opinion, through both acceptance and rejection of honor throughout the narrative, Jesus is presented as the ideal ruler who embodies, "what is truly good and virtuous from Roman political ideology, namely, the rejection of tyrannical behavior—rejection that is symbolized by resistance to public honor."[181]

While Winn offers a helpful insight into the tension in the narrative presented by the presence of both the Messianic secret motif and the "publicity motif,"[182] his argument is not incompatible with the view that Jesus seeks to form an alternative discourse of power that runs counter to Roman expectations. Hybrid conceptions of colonized communities allow for both the appropriation of some elements of colonial discourse, even as one seeks to resist the claims of that discourse. Even if the Markan Jesus does reject and accept honors as the Roman rulers did, he also makes claims throughout the gospel that run counter to Roman notions of honor and by extension, power. Jesus has already called his disciples to lose their lives to save them and to deny themselves (8:34–38). In the coming chapters, he calls his followers to be slaves of all and last of all (Mk 9:35, 10:43-44). He pushes back against every request by the disciples to traditional positions of power (Mk 9:33-35, 10:35-40). Most significantly, Jesus refuses his apotheosis on the mountain and dies on a Roman cross. Perhaps here, Winn does not go far enough in his evaluation of Jesus's rejection of honor. Jesus is not simply the ideal

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[180] Adam Winn, "Resisting Honor: The Markan Secrecy Motif and Roman Political Ideology," *JBL* 133.3 (2014): 592.

[181] Winn, "Resisting Honor," 600.

[182] Watson, *Honor Among Christians*, 114.

ruler embodying the best of Roman political ideology; he is the challenge to Roman imperial ideology even at its best.

In this story, the challenge is levied through mimicry and mockery. Jesus does mimic the Roman rulers when he calls the disciples together to see his supposed apotheosis. His mimicry of the Roman rulers, however, stops short of full replication and moves from the category of mimicry to mockery. At first, Jesus appears to bear striking similarity to the Roman ruler, but at the last moment his translation narrative becomes a "blurred copy" of the original.[183] It is one that appears to be so close that the difference is "almost nothing," but ultimately, at the end of the story, it is a "difference that is almost total but not quite."[184] Jesus rejects both the translation event itself and the public honor associated with the message of the event. Despite how close the narrative seems to those of Rome's men of renown, Jesus's transfiguration is, at best, a failed apotheosis that declares Jesus is not like the men of Rome's stories. The kingdom Jesus is announcing will not be another version of Roman imperialism. Jesus's kingdom rejects the trappings of honor associated with the imperial office, opting instead for service and sacrifice. Jesus is presented with an opportunity to save himself and does not. Ironically, by rejecting a translation to the realm of the divine, he provides the example for his disciples of what it means to fix one's eyes on "τὰ τοῦ θεου" (Mk 8:33). Jesus rejects "τὰ τῶν ἀνθρώπων" for "τὰ τοῦ θεου." By remaining with his disciples, Jesus declares that the kingdom of God is characterized differently. The discourse of power Jesus initiates is one

[183] Samuel, *A Postcolonial Reading of Mark's Story of Jesus*, 27.

[184] Bhabha, *The Location of Culture*, 86, 91.

where accepting suffering, pain, and sacrifice become the markers of empire. Through mimicry and ultimate mockery, Jesus undermines the ideology of Rome's Empire.

Mark 9:30–37: The Second Passion Prediction and Another Failure

On the heels of the transfiguration narrative and a failed exorcism by the disciples that Jesus must remedy for them (9:14–29),[185] Jesus offers the second of three announcements concerning his death and resurrection. He tells his disciples that he will be handed over (παραδίδοται) into the hands of men, be killed, and rise three days later. The use of παραδίδωμι, while possibly an allusion to Judus's act of betrayal, it is most likely suggesting the God ordained nature of the "handing over."[186] The word suggests that the death of Jesus is part of the divine plan unfolding. What is coming upon Jesus in the narrative is not only what *will* happen but what *must* happen (8:31) to bring about God's kingdom. The disciples do not understand why their Messiah must die and are afraid to ask what Jesus means by this. The misunderstood "saying/ῥῆμα" of 9:32

[185] In Mark 9:14–29 the disciples who have been left behind as Jesus and the three ventured to the mountain attempt to cast out a demon from a Gentile at the Gentile's request. One might argue that this shows some willingness of the disciples to include the Gentiles. Their willingness to cast out demons, however, does not necessitate that they have therefore chosen inclusiveness over exclusiveness. First, the Gentile must ask for their assistance; they did not offer it. This was also true in the feeding narrative of the Gentiles (8:1–10); Jesus requested their assistance. Admittedly this is a thin argument on its own since many times Jesus is petitioned for help before offering assistance (1:40; 5:23; 7:32; 8:22; 10:47). Second, and more significantly, the disciples failed. Whatever their reason for attempting to help the Gentile (perhaps the eyes of the people and scribes upon them [9:14] incited them to attempt to show off their newly received powers), they are unable, prompting yet another rebuke from Jesus (9:18–19). Third, and finally, the disciples were able to cast out other demons (6:13); however, the recipients of those miracles appear to be Jews. The Gentiles still fail to receive anything from the disciples. The disciples' faith is still lacking, and their inability to do that for which they were called (3:15) demonstrates such. See also Iverson, *Gentiles in the Gospel of Mark*, 120, who sees this narrative as an example of the partial sight of the disciples. He too, however, notes that the progress of the disciples is minimal since Jesus must complete the exorcism.

[186] Hooker, *Mark*, 226; Donahue and Harrington, *The Gospel of Mark*, 283; Garland, *A Theology of Mark's Gospel*, 421. Garland notes specifically the usage of the term as Judas (14:10–11 18, 21, 41–42, 44), the high priests (10:33, 15:1, 10), and Pilate (15:15) "hand over" Jesus, but claims that the death of Jesus is not placed at the feet of any one of these in particular but rather at the feet of all humanity as Jesus was handed over into the "hands of men" (9:31).

foreshadows the "saying/ῥῆμα" Peter remembers in 14:72 in which Peter remembers the prediction of his denial of Jesus. Myers comments on this correlation that "Mark is thus fixing the relationship between the failure to comprehend and accept the political destiny of Jesus and its consequence: betrayal."[187] If the disciples fail to accept Jesus's mission (a new kind of kingdom built on an alternative discourse of power that requires the inclusion of the Gentiles), the disciples will ultimately be betraying their Messiah. Given the disciples' reluctance to ask Jesus what he means, the disciples seem to "understand enough to be afraid to ask to understand more."[188]

Following the pattern of the first passion prediction, the disciples hear the words of Jesus concerning his coming suffering and immediately display their own lack of acceptance of Jesus's message. In Mark 9:33–37, after Jesus's second announcement of coming suffering, the disciples are arguing about who is the greatest among them, more evidence of Herod's leaven permeating the disciples (8:15). When Jesus inquires about their discussion "on the way" (9:33) they remain silent because of the content of their discussion about who is the greatest among them. The addition of "on the way" (both in 9:33 and 9:34) appears purposeful; Jesus has told the disciples he is on the way to his death and has invited them to be with him. The "way" includes suffering and death (8:34–37) as a means of victory. The disciples, however, still view the "way" as the way to traditional ends of glory and power, thus the argument about greatness among them.

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[187] Myers, *Binding the Strong Man*, 260.

[188] Ernest Best, *Following Jesus: Discipleship in the Gospel of Mark*, JSNTSS 4 (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1981), 73; Garland, *A Theology of Mark's Gospel*, 421. Garland responds to Best claiming, "perhaps, they are in a state of denial and vainly hope that ignoring what Jesus has said will make it go away." The disciples do seem to understand what Jesus declares but are afraid of the implications of that knowledge. Hence in the next verses (9:33–34) the disciples disregard Jesus's message about death and focus on greatness.

Rather than correct Jesus as Peter attempted in 8:32, the disciples remain quiet. Perhaps their silence is further evidence that the disciples understood their conversation to be inappropriate, hence they refuse to speak with Jesus about their quarrel. They argue about greatness but are unwilling to embrace the greatness of the kingdom of God. Like the Gentile mission they were supposed to embrace in chapters 4–8 but rather pushed against, here too they are pushing back against Jesus's way of bringing the new kingdom, one of which they are well aware. They wish to hear no more about suffering and do not wish to suffer themselves.[189]

Despite or perhaps because of the disciples' silence and refusal to answer Jesus's question, Jesus instructs the disciples that the one who wants to be first must be last of all, a servant of all (9:35). The disciples are called to service of the other, and there is only one way to serve: to relinquish dominance over the other.[190] The disciples are not meant to be seeking after their own self-interest and personal glory. The imperial power to which they are called will look nothing like the empire that has oppressed them. It must look altogether different. This new application of power should now be evident to them. It sounds nothing like Roman power, but it has the ability to transform profoundly the course of human and cosmic events. The way of attaining precedence must be vastly different.[191] Insiders in the kingdom of God will not be those who seem like rulers of this world; they will be those willing to embrace servanthood and death for the kingdom.

In Mark 9:37 Jesus offers the visual representation of what it means to be servant to all. He takes a child and places it among the disciples. The disciples are told those who

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[189] Collins, *Mark*, 444.

[190] Garland, *A Theology of Mark's Gospel*, 422.

[191] Santos, "Jesus's Paradoxical Teaching in Mark 8:35; 9:35; 10:43-44," 20.

receive the child, receive Jesus and the one who sent him. The most powerful in the kingdom will welcome the child who was among the lowly, insignificant, and perhaps even orphaned, thereby vicariously identifying with the children. Further to become "servant of all" was to serve the lowest of society, not just identifying with the child but becoming its servant.[192] By receiving and thereby serving the child, the disciples should see that the greatest among them will look more like the child in their midst than an emperor and his administrators. Dowd thoughtfully notes, "the community in which the non-persons of society find no welcome is a community without the presence of God."[193] Should the disciples want to see the kingdom, they must embrace those who have nothing to offer them in return.

Mark 9:38–41: Continued Exclusion

The disciples have now been given two declarations of Jesus's catachrestic understanding of power (8:31; 9:30–32) and explications of the same (8:32–38; 9:35–37). They have also born witness to Jesus's transfiguration—an abdication of apotheosis—and Jesus's example of the child whose reception signals the reception of God and a place of power in the kingdom of God. These episodes have given the disciples an indication of what kind of power characterizes the kingdom. On the heels of Jesus's instruction that the first should be last and servant of all, another disciple speaks. John claims they have silenced one who was casting out demons because that one was "not following us" (9:38). Their reasoning is quite specific. They do not speak against the one casting out demons because he did not follow Jesus. They attempt to silence him because he is not

[192] Santos, "Jesus's Paradoxical Teaching in Mark 8:35; 9:35; 10:43-44," 22.

[193] Dowd, *Reading Mark*, 97.

following *them*. The irony here is rich; the disciples have just been given a lesson in receiving (9:37) and then they attempt to exclude one who speaks in the name of Jesus. Again the disciples demonstrate their own expectation for positions of authority in the kingdom of God that cohere with their own evaluation of power in their colonial context. They not only desire those places of authority, but actively claim they already possess them! They think they have the right to expect followers. They believe themselves already in places of authority to inscribe group boundaries based on the hierarchy they believe they sit atop. The disciples fail, however, to reckon with the fact that while they were unable to cast out a demon (9:18), the one they are excluding has been successful (9:38). Myers points out the ludicrous nature of John's declaration:

> He equates exorcism with the accrual of status and power, and wishes to maintain a monopoly over it. This is especially ludicrous in light of the disciples' lack of exorcism power, which we have just witnessed (9:14–29). But more importantly, it cuts directly against the grain of "receiving" in 9:37, an exhortation to *inclusion*, not exclusivity. On top of all this, John's censure is based on the fact that the stranger "was not following us." The disciples want to be followed, not followers. Never was a "royal we" less appropriate![194]

Jesus tells John not to speak against those who work in Jesus's name, "For one who is not against us, is for us" (9:40). The disciples continue to assert their conceptions of "follow-ship," which, it turns out, is not about following at all. They still have visions of grandeur—visions of ruling where once they were oppressed. They continue to reject Jesus's call to embrace the catachrestic understanding of power advocated by the rival discourse of power undergirding God's kingdom. To conclude this teaching, Jesus reminds that service is rewarded in the kingdom. Whoever offers a cup of water because you belong to Christ will not lose his/her reward (9:41). This is greatness: to serve one another in the kingdom.

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[194] Myers, *Binding the Strong Man*, 261.

The Gentile Mission and the Characterization of the Disciples

As demonstrated above, Jesus does not simply include the Gentiles in his Jewish mission; rather the mission of the kingdom includes both Jew and Gentile. Importantly, Kelber argues the mission to the Gentiles is not secondary to the Jewish mission but rather concurrent with it.[195] Jesus alternates between the Jewish and the Gentile geopolitical space, to use Malbon's terminology, to demonstrate that the boundary markers are being redrawn; specifically Kelber points to the linguistic markers such as "to cross over" and "the other side" to demonstrate the interplay between these two missions.[196] As boundaries are redrawn, no longer predicated on the basis of ethnic origin, Jesus is freeing everyone from the powers of evil—Jew and Gentile alike.

Iverson further develops the argument in favor of the Gentile mission through his evaluation of the multiplicity of Gentile characters throughout the narrative, the significant role they play in the narrative development of the Gospel, and the parallelism he demonstrates between the Jewish and Gentile missions.[197] Jesus's first miracle in Jewish territory is an exorcism. So also the first miracle performed for a Gentile character is also an exorcism.[198] Similarly, there are those who prepare for both missions (John and the demoniac),[199] feeding narratives for both a Jewish crowd and a Gentile crowd, and

[195] Werner Kelber, *Mark's Story of Jesus* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1979).

[196] Kelber, *The Kingdom in Mark: A New Place and a New Time*, 58; Significantly, Malbon and Wefald disagree with Kelber about which sea crossings land in Gentile space. The markers articulated by Kelber do indicate a sea crossing, but they are not necessary to determine a sea crossing. See Wefald, "The Separate Gentile Mission in Mark," 8–9; Malbon, "The Jesus of Mark and the Sea of Galilee," 371–373.

[197] Iverson, *Gentiles in the Gospel of Mark.*

[198] Iverson, *Gentiles in the Gospel of Mark*, 36.

[199] Iverson, *Gentiles in the Gospel of Mark*, 37; So also Wefald, "The Separate Gentile Mission in Mark," 14.

even the healing of a daughter for both (Jairus and the Syrophoenician woman).[200] He notes while the missions may be different in scale, corresponding metaphorically to the bread and crumbs of the Syrophoenician woman's story, the mission is nevertheless significant to the story.[201] The Gentiles repeatedly are juxtaposed with the disciples who are repeatedly portrayed in an unsympathetic light despite their supposed insider status, while the Gentiles are frequently figured as those who respond as insiders should.

The presence of the Gentile mission and the radical nature of their inclusion by Jesus provide insight into another debate that has raged on in Markan scholarship for decades and is of particular significance to this study: the character and function of the disciples in the narrative. Often Mark's disciples have been understood as a collection of followers who fail to understand what Jesus teaches them.[202] Specifically, it has been argued that the disciples are dim-witted or uncomprehending of what Jesus wants from them. Some have gone even farther to claim that the uncomprehending disciples are deserters or the epitome of rocky ground.[203] As Jesus invites them to participate in the kingdom, they continually fail or fall short of what Jesus demands.[204] For many interpreters, this failure is not intentional but rather reflects the difficulties of following

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[200] Iverson, *Gentiles in the Gospel of Mark*, 47–48.

[201] Iverson, *Gentiles in the Gospel of Mark*, 78.

[202] Rhoads, Dewey, and Michie, *Mark as Story*, 122–129, offer the groundbreaking narrative evaluation of the disciples. They argue the disciples are called to follow Jesus, but fear inhibits their ability to understand, be faithful, and to trust the rule of God.

[203] Mary Ann Tolbert, *Sowing the Gospel: Mark's World in Literary-Historical Perspective* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1989), 154–156; similarly, Robert M. Fowler, *Let the Reader Understand: Reader-Response Criticism and the Gospel of Mark* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1991), claims the reader is meant to sympathize with the disciples but must ultimately abandon them, leaving the reader to do what the disciples did not; Theodore Weeden, *Mark- Traditions in Conflict* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1971), goes even farther than Tolbert and understands the disciples as foils to Jesus.

[204] See for example, Jack Dean Kingsbury, *Conflict in Mark: Jesus, Authorities, Disciples* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1989), 89–103.

Jesus.[205] The disciples simply do not understand what Jesus wants from them nor do they understand the nature of the kingdom.

In light of this postcolonial appraisal of the first half of Mark's Gospel, however, there appears to be another interpretive option. Rather than seeing the disciples as dull or uncomprehending, it is possible to view the disciples as fully aware of Jesus's mission and simultaneously intent upon resisting that mission. The disciples are continually invited to participate in Jesus's mission to the Gentiles, and Jesus repeatedly explains the far-reaching nature of the kingdom of God. The disciples, however, appear to represent a common response to imperial rule as similarly reflected in the narratives of Jewish resistance to imperial domination dating as far back as the reign of Antiochus. The disciples appear as the embodiment of essentialist colonial resistance, embracing the Roman hegemonic discourse in their attempts to resist Rome and Jesus's vision of the kingdom of God.

The disciples, storied as colonial subjects, stand against imperial rule and desire its removal, and thus because of their chosen resistance strategy, are opposed to Jesus's Gentile mission. Mark's narrative bears out this conclusion. The disciples stand alongside Jesus as he teaches, though they do seem to struggle with the mysteries of the kingdom and the meaning of his parables (Mark 4:1–34). In the narrative the disciples seem willing to embrace Jesus's mission when he ministers to the Jewish people, even going so far as to take part in his ministerial activity among the Jewish people in 6:7–13.[206] When

[205] Malbon, *In the Company of Jesus*, 42; Best, *Following Jesus: Discipleship in the Gospel of Mark*; Robert C. Tannehill, "The Disciples in Mark: The Function of a Narrative Role," *JR* 57.4 (1977): 386–405; Paul Danove, *The Rhetoric of the Characterization of God, Jesus, and Jesus' Disciples in the Gospel of Mark*, JSNTSup 290 (New York: T&T Clark International, 2005), 90–126.

[206] Here I agree with Iverson, *Gentiles in the Gospel of Mark*, 92, who claims that the disciples, while willing to take part in the Jewish mission, were still not wholly successful in their mission. When

their Jewish brothers and sisters are without food, they actively participate in the miracle to provide food to them. In 6:36–37, it is the disciples who come to Jesus to inform him of the needs of the people gathered—they are without food.[207] Jesus multiplied the loaves and fish, and there is an abundance of pieces filling twelve baskets once all are fed.

When, however, Jesus invites the disciples to participate in the Gentile mission, the disciples are reluctant, absent, or fail to arrive at all. As Jesus casts out Legion in 5:1–20, the disciples do not participate. After the feeding of the 5000 in chapter 6, Jesus sends the disciples to the boat to cross over to Bethsaida. The disciples, however, were struggling to cross the sea. While Jesus walks on the water and intends to pass them by, Jesus ends up in the boat with them, and the sea crossing narrative fails entirely. Mark 6:52 connects the failure of the disciples in the sea crossing to the disciples' hard hearts (presumably toward the Gentiles) and their lack of understanding concerning the loaves. Bread, or the lack thereof, reappears in 8:14–21 as the primary catalyst for a warning by Jesus relating to Gentile inclusion and proper relation to power.

The disciples fail to see that they have been so affected by Rome's discourse of power, itself a symptom of dark forces at work in the world, they have actually embraced Rome's discourse as their own, contorting it as they have for their own gain. They seek the power of the colonizer through the messianic mission, mimicking the Roman methods through their own religious tradition. To be free of Rome meant to subdue them. To embrace the kingdom of God was to flip the narrative of Roman imperialism. Jesus's

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they returned from their mission, they reported all "they" had done and taught. This focus on their own authority is in keeping with the need to be enlightened to Jesus's counter discourse of power.

[207] While the Jewish location of the audience is not explicitly stated, based on the desert location, the allusion to Psalm 23, and the symbolic significance of the twelve baskets, it is generally agreed that this narrative location is in fact in Jewish space, and those gathered are Jewish recipients of Jesus's divine provision. See for example: Iverson, *Gentiles in the Gospel of Mark*, 46; Marcus, *Mark 1-8*, 492; Moloney, *The Gospel of Mark*, 152–153; Hooker, *Mark*, 188.

vision, however, is a new kingdom built on a new ideology, a new discourse of power. The resistance would not look like a mere appropriation of Roman sentiment turned against the colonizer but rather a new vision of empire that crossed traditional essentialist boundaries and offered a counter discourse of power in which power itself would be understood very differently.

Conclusion

From the earliest moments of the Gospel, the literary tension between the disciples' expectations of the Messiah and who Mark's Jesus claims to be, is palpable. The idea of a political revolutionary would have been a common expectation among some people awaiting the arrival of the Messiah. Jesus, however, is not going to fulfill the dreams of the revolutionaries, at least not in the way they would prefer. Running contrary to essentialist resistance narratives, Mark's Jesus embraces new boundary markers in his ministry to the Gentiles. This also set him at odds with the Roman imperial discourse as it defined the boundaries of "us" and "them" which essentialist resistance narratives embraced and inverted. This is seen in the disciples' attempts to resist Gentile inclusion and define the boundaries of God's kingdom.

Jesus further decries the concept of power advocated by Roman imperial discourse through the pronouncements of his future death and resurrection as well as teaching aimed at correcting the disciples. Jesus advocates for an ideology that defines power in terms of service, more fluid boundary lines, and sacrifice. While the disciples are meant to understand what is taking place, they have instead been captivated by τὰ τῶν ἀνθρώπων (8:33), in this case, the colonial experience of power and essentialist boundary markers, both of which are symptoms of the activity of evil in the world.

The disciples continue to resist the messianic program of their leader. The power in Jesus's actions and words—the power of the kingdom—should change the actions of those who participate in it. By Mark 8:21, the disciples should be prepared to participate in Jesus's form of resistance to the powers of darkness, and by extension the empire. They continue, however, to resist Jesus's mission and the kingdom of God itself, infected as they are by the leaven of which Jesus warned. The first two passion predictions and the events and teachings accompanying them have outlined the catachrestic understanding of power expressed in Mark 9:1. The disciples, however, seem too taken with their own resistance program and desire for power to embrace Jesus's discourse over the Roman imperial discourse of power.

In the next chapter, we will focus on Mark 10 exclusively, looking at the ways in which Jesus develops his discourse of power for his resistant disciples through a series of teaching narratives followed by one final passion prediction before arriving in Jerusalem. These stories bring to a head the development of Jesus's counter discourse of power. They flesh out the catachrestic understanding of "power" for a resistant set of followers.

CHAPTER FIVE

Mark 10:1–45: The Kingdom of God and a Counter Discourse of Power

In chapter four I explored the ways in which Mark's Jesus articulated a counter discourse of power to rival Rome's hegemonic discourse of power. While the disciples stood resistant to Jesus's mission to the Gentiles in Mark 5:1–8:26, Jesus continued to work among the Gentile populations of Palestine. Even as Jesus invited the disciples to take part in his boundary-altering mission, the disciples are markedly absent from Mark 5:1–20, fail to cross the sea in Mark 6:45–52, and continually misunderstand the loaves of 6:30–44, 8:1–10, and 8:14–21. Jesus repeatedly calls for Gentile inclusion while the disciples repeatedly resist their inclusion, the failed attempt to exorcise a demon from a Gentile supplicant notwithstanding (9:14–29). As argued in chapter four, the Markan disciples continue to embody the methods of power propagated by Rome. The disciples continue to reflect a nativist essentialist view of their Messiah in which the Jewish Messiah would expel the foreigner from the land and restore Israel to glory as God's chosen people. This particular messianic understanding necessitates the exclusion of the Gentiles. One cannot simultaneously hope to defeat the perceived enemy and include them in the new kingdom.

The disciples have embraced the Roman imperial discourse of power and are using it for their own ends. The issue of Gentile inclusion and the disciples' resistance to Jesus's passion are two sides of the same coin. To refuse Jesus's understanding of true power, embracing instead the Roman imperial discourse of power, necessitates Gentile

exclusion. Turning the Roman discourse of power against the colonizer through full-scale appropriation and replication necessitates the exclusion of perceived outsiders as defined by that discourse. Thus, the Romans, and by extension all Gentiles in the land, become the "other" to be expelled in the coming kingdom of God.

In light of their resistance to accept the new boundary markers of God's inclusive kingdom, Jesus began to teach the details of a new discourse of power that, if embraced by his disciples, would result in a new way of existing and resisting in light of the arrival of a new empire. Jesus directly addresses the hegemonic discourse of power on which the disciples' resistance is based. This is reflected in the first two passion predictions and Jesus's teaching on power (8:31; 8:34–38; 9:30–32; 9:35–37). The disciples' continued resistance is seen in their responses to the first two passion predictions (8:32–33; 9:33–34). They continue to seek the trappings associated with power in their cultural context even as Jesus seeks to alter their perception of power itself.

In this chapter I will demonstrate the literary coherence of chapter ten as a further development of Jesus's rival discourse of power. The various stories, while differing greatly in content, actually bear striking thematic similarities to one another when read through the lens of power. Each story offers an additional facet to Jesus's discourse of power in relation to the imperial ideological claims to religious and cultural superiority and right to governance as well as the nativist/essentialist responses to the same. The stories progress in expanding circles of interaction and influence from interpersonal relations within the family (10:1–12) to social issues within society at large (10:13–16; 10:17–31), and finally to political structures of governance (10:35–45). With each story the sphere widens and the call to embrace the rival discourse of power takes on additional

urgency. Each step beckons the disciples to rethink their relationship to the imperial discourse of power to which they adhere in hopes they might embrace the fullness of Jesus's boundary breaking mission characterized by service, sacrifice, and inclusion of the marginalized.

Taken together, the stories in Mark 10 fill out the rival discourse of power begun in Mark 1:1 and articulated more explicitly in Mark 8:27–9:50. This rival discourse responds to the broader issues at play in the disciples' resistance to Jesus's mission and the complicated relationship between Jesus, his followers, and imperial discourse. In this chapter, each episode within Mark 10 is addressed individually, evaluating each story for its contribution to Jesus's discourse of power and addressing the way it calls into question Rome's hegemonic discourse. Next, the collection as a unified whole is addressed. Finally, the chapter concludes with a brief comprehensive overview of Jesus's discourse of power in its cultural context, asserting the affiliative/disruptive nature of Jesus's discourse in relation to the colonial power of Rome.

A Rebuttal of Conceptions Concerning Mark 10

Narrative critics of Mark have long attempted to articulate the narrative flow, interconnectedness of stories, character development, and themes of the Gospel of Mark; their work has led to the general consensus among scholars that Mark is in fact a carefully crafted narrative.[1] As outlined in chapter 1, Mark 10:1–45 as a unit, however,

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[1] While not an exhaustive list given the vast number of narrative critics, for some influential studies, see Hans-Josef Klauck, "Die Erzählerische Rolle Der Jünger Im Markusevangelium: Eine Narrative Analyse," *NovT* 24.1 (1982): 1–26; Elizabeth Struthers Malbon, "The Jesus of Mark and the Sea of Galilee," *JBL* 103.3 (1984): 363–77; Jeffrey B. Gibson, "The Rebuke of the Disciples in Mark 8:14-21," *JSNT*.27 (1986): 31–47; Mary Ann Tolbert, *Sowing the Gospel: Mark's World in Literary-Historical Perspective* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1989); Jerry Camery-Hoggatt, *Irony in Mark's Gospel: Text and Subtext*, SNTSMS 72 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992); Elizabeth Struthers Malbon, "Echoes and Foreshadowings in Mark 4-8 Reading and Rereading," *JBL* 112.2 (1993): 211–30; Kelly

has long been neglected in these narrative treatments of the Gospel. The stories of Mark 10:1–45 are largely considered to be a collection stories about the nature of discipleship that lack a specific unifying theme. Narrative critics argue that while the stories fit into the broader discussion of discipleship under consideration in Mark 8:27–10:45,[2] the stories do not, of themselves, form a coherent thematic unit.[3] Few narrative critics have

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Iverson, *Gentiles in the Gospel of Mark: "Even the Dogs Under the Table Eat the Children"s Crumbs'*, LNTS 339 (New York: T&T Clark, 2007); David Rhoads, Joanna Dewey, and Donald Michie, *Mark as Story: An Introduction to the Narrative of a Gospel*, 2nd ed. (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1999); Elizabeth Struthers Malbon, *In the Company of Jesus: Characters in Mark's Gospel*, 1st ed. (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2000); Narry Santos, "Jesus' Paradoxical Teaching in Mark 8:35; 9:35; 10:43-44," *BSac* 157 (2000): 15–25; Sharyn Echols Dowd, *Reading Mark: A Literary and Theological Commentary on the Second Gospel* (Macon: Smyth & Helwys, 2000); Suzanne Watts Henderson, "'Concerning the Loaves' Comprehending Incomprehension in Mark 6:45-52," *JSNT* 83 (2001): 3–26; John R. Donahue and Daniel J. Harrington, *The Gospel of Mark*, SP v. 2 (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2002); Paul Danove, "A Rhetorical Analysis of Mark's Construction of Discipleship," in *Rhetorical Criticism and the Bible*, ed. Stanley Porter and Dennis Stamps, JSNTSup 195 (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 2002), 280–96; Francis Maloney, *The Gospel of Mark: A Commentary* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2002); Alberto de Mingo Kaminouchi, *"But It Is Not so Among You": Echoes of Power in Mark 10.32-45*, JSNTSup 249 (New York: T&T Clark International, 2003); Paul Danove, *The Rhetoric of the Characterization of God, Jesus, and Jesus' Disciples in the Gospel of Mark*, JSNTSup 290 (New York: T&T Clark International, 2005); R. Alan Culpepper, *Mark*, The Smyth & Helwys Bible Commentary. (Macon, GA: Smyth & Helwys, 2007); J. Ted Blakley, "Incomprehension or Resistance? The Markan Disciples and the Narrative Logic of Mark 4:1-8:30" (University of St. Andrews, 2008); Peter Spitaler, "Welcoming a Child as a Metaphor for Welcoming God's kingdom: A Close Reading of Mark 10:13-16," *JSNT* 31.4 (2009): 423–46; Kelly Iverson and Skinner, eds., *Mark as Story: Retrospect and Prospect* (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2011); Peter Spitaler, "Biblical Concern for the Marginalized: Mark's Stories about Welcoming Little Ones," *ETL* 87.1 (2011): 89–126; David Rhoads, "Jesus and the Syrophoenician Woman in Mark: A Narrative-Critical Study," *CThMi* 47.4 (2020): 36–48.

[2] Ernest Best, *Following Jesus: Discipleship in the Gospel of Mark*, JSNTSS 4 (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1981), 15. Even as early as the publication of Ernst Best's, *Following Jesus: Discipleship in Mark*, it could be said, "It is now generally accepted that 8:27–10:45 form the centre of Mark's instruction to his readers on the meaning for them of Christ and their own discipleship." The stories of Mark 10 serve the purpose of discipleship discourse but do not have a unifying theme beyond their function in the narrative.

[3] See for example: Mary Ann Beavis, *Mark* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2011); Adela Yarbro Collins, *Mark: A Commentary*, Hermeneia (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2007), 458 argues chapter ten is catechetical document discussing related issues on the continuing journey. She sees 10:1–31 as reflecting some similar thematic elements through the discussion of family and household but the connections do not include 10:32–45; Peter Bolt, *Jesus' Defeat of Death: Persuading Mark's Early Readers*, SNTSMS 125 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 235 sees the stories as reflecting the difficulty of entering the kingdom; Donahue and Harrington, *The Gospel of Mark*, 313; Craig Evans, *Mark*, WBC 34b (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 2001), 76, claim the stories are so diverse as to make it possible to loose sight of the broader narrative flow; Whitney Taylor Shiner, *Follow Me!: Disciples in Markan Rhetoric*, SBLDS 145 (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1995), 278–284 argues the stories of chapter ten serve to correct the disciples' misunderstanding of Jesus's message; Ched Myers, *Binding the Strong Man: A Political Reading of Mark's Story of Jesus* (New York: Orbis Books, 1988), 258–280; Werner Kelber, *Mark's Story of Jesus*

attempted to offer arguments explaining the connections between these stories, opting instead to view them as loosely connected teaching stories that share a common function rather than a very clear theme.

This is not to claim that there have not been proposals attempting to articulate a greater coherence to the disparate stories of Mark 10. There are two notable attempts that have pushed beyond the concept of discipleship. First, Horsley argues that Mark 10:1–45 is a community charter calling for covenantal renewal like that of the Qumran community.[4] The stories of Mark 10 address the social relationships expected in the renewed community that has returned to the faith of Israel. Each story adds a facet to a kind of "community rule" that is "designed to govern social relations in the communities of the movement."[5] His construal, however, prompts one significant question. If the goal is simply the "renewal of Israel," why does Gentile inclusion figure so prominently in the early portions of the Gospel?[6] In the text Jesus is responding to both the Roman imperial context and the Jewish nativist essentialist resistance embodied by the disciples, especially in their resistance to Gentile inclusion. Further, Jesus is navigating a new way between Jewish nativist essentialist claims and Roman imperial discourse. Horsley neglects the significance of hybridity in the colonial enterprise. One cannot return to the

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(Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1979), 43–56; Theodore Weeden, *Mark: Traditions in Conflict* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1971), 32–38. Kelber and Weeden both share a similar approach to Shiner. The stories serve the purpose of correcting misunderstandings, but they do not see a thematic connection between the stories themselves.

[4] Richard Horsley, *Hearing the Whole Story: The Politics of Plot in Mark's Gospel* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2001), 178–201.

[5] Horsley, *Hearing the Whole Story*, 187.

[6] Contra Horsley, *Hearing the Whole Story*, 180, who claims there is no reason to read the sea crossings as Gentile inclusion. Horsley denies the ability of interpreters to delineate between the audiences and sees the real conflict in the text to be between Jesus and the Jewish rulers. This, however, underplays the disciples' resistance to Jesus in the early portions of the narrative. To what are the disciples resistant if Jesus is merely calling for "covenant renewal" of a community to which they already belong?

pure essentialist culture of the era prior to colonization. The kingdom movement must move beyond the "either/or" of Jewish essentialist responses or Roman imperialism. The kingdom resists both conceptions of "us" and "other," opting for an altogether different vision of God's kingdom that, while incorporating aspects of Jewish resistance and Roman discourse, denies the conclusions of both.

Spitaler also offers an alternative vision of chapter ten. Spitaler argues that the stories of Mark 10 are all elements of a teaching discourse spanning 9:33–11:11 in which the disciples are told to embrace and become the marginalized community.[7] The episode concerning divorce is about the marginalization incurred by a woman who is divorced by a man. The story of the children coming to Jesus speaks to the marginalized status of children in the ancient world. The rich man is one who marginalizes others for his own gain. The disciples refuse to be among those marginalized and prompt Jesus's narration concerning the rulers of the Gentiles. While this interpretation does hold together the stories of chapter ten, it struggles to connect to the broader narrative of the central section, specifically the connection to the transfiguration and the meaning of 9:1 in which the kingdom would come in power. Also, it does not take into account the fullness of the colonial situation in which the disciples are portrayed. The marginalization of the other is a hallmark move of the colonial power. To understand the concept of marginalization fully, one must pay attention to the aspects of imperial rule that institutionalized such marginalization and the responses to imperial rule that continued to uphold such. Further, he fails to connect the teaching of the central section to Mark 1:1–8:26.

If, however, we view the central section of Mark as the development of a discourse of power unique to the kingdom of God, the connection between the sections

[7] Spitaler, "Biblical Concern for the Marginalized."

becomes clearer. In Mark 8:27–10:45 Jesus offers a discourse of power that stands in contrast to the Roman discourse of power and essentialist discourses that prompted the disciples to reject the Gentile mission and Jesus's boundary realignment in Mark 1:1–8:26. Thus there is logical connection between the larger sections. Chapter ten then becomes, not just a collection of discipleship stories or a call to marginalization or covenant renewal, but a pivotal movement in the development of a discourse of power that spans the narrative of Mark.

The Counter Discourse of Power: Five Stories to Shape a Catachrestic Vision of Power to Rival the Hegemonic Discourse

The conflict demonstrated in the narrative between Jesus and his disciples in chapters 1–9 continues in Mark 10 with a series of episodes addressing common situations in the lives of the people. The colonial assertions concerning status, religious claims, moral superiority, and the right to rule affect all aspects of daily life, hence stories about everyday issues populate chapter ten. Jesus responds to the colonial discourse in an attempt to undermine colonial claims to moral superiority, to counter status claims, to reject exploitation, and to challenge Roman rule directly. So also, Jesus challenges traditional nativist essentialist claims to authority and resistance made on the basis of religious expectations and traditions. The five stories (10:1–12; 10:13–16; 10:17–31; 10:32–34; 10:35–45) presented in Mark 10 outline the contours of various aspects of the rival discourse of power and culminate in the most influential of the stories, a direct assertion of the difference between imperial rule (and nativist essentialist resistance) and the rule of the new kingdom, the difference between Roman rulers and the rulers of the

kingdom. The five stories flesh out the catachrestic vision of power of the kingdom of God.

Mark 10:1–12: The Moral Superiority of the Kingdom of God

In Mark 10:1–12, as the crowds gathered around Jesus in Judea, Jesus responds to the Pharisees' question concerning marriage and divorce. They ask if it is lawful for a man to divorce his wife. Jesus asks the religious leaders about the command of Moses. He claims that while Moses allowed a man to offer a certificate of divorce, this was only because of their hardness of heart, reiterating the previous reference to the Pharisees' hardness of heart in 3:5. Jesus invokes the creation narrative to claim that ideally two are joined together in marriage and no one should separate what God has bound together. Jesus further instructs his disciples that one who divorces his/her spouse and marries another commits adultery.

Jesus's Response to the Nativist Essentialist Claims of the Pharisees

Since a group of Jewish religious leaders pose the question and Jesus appeals to Moses and the creation narrative, most commentators focus on the Jewish context of marriage in their interpretation of this passage.[8] In a Jewish context, it seems likely that there was general agreement that one could divorce one's spouse according to

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[8] Francis J. Moloney, "Marriage and Wealth: A Study of Mark 10:1-31," in *The Bible and Catholic Theological Ethics*, ed. Yiu Sing Lucas Chan, James Keenan, and Ronaldo Zacharias (New York: Orbis Books, 2017), 152–154; Morna Dorothy Hooker, *A Commentary on the Gospel According to St. Mark* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 1993), 235; William L. Lane, *The Gospel according to Mark*, NICNT (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1974), 352–358; N.T. Wright, *Jesus and the Victory of God* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1996), 284–285, notes the connection to the marriage of Herod and the divorce of his new wife from Herod's brother; Donahue and Harrington, *The Gospel of Mark*, 292–298; Horsley, *Hearing the Whole Story*, 187–188, focuses on the Jewish background but does so with an eye to Qumran's community rule; even Myers, *Binding the Strong Man*, 264–266, with his focus on political and imperial issues still focuses on the Jewish background of the text.

interpretations of Deuteronomy 24:1–4.[9] While divorce was forbidden in certain circumstances, divorce was not altogether prohibited.[10] In the first century, it does appear that interpretations of Deuteronomy 24:1–4 required only men to offer a certificate of divorce. Cotton and Yardeni have argued, however, that some women did provide a certificate of divorce for a divorce they initiated.[11] The evidence demonstrates that at least some Jewish women could initiate a divorce in the first century despite Josephus's claim that only men could legally do so.[12] While it is questionable if Jewish women in Palestine could initiate a divorce in the first century, Jewish groups of the first century did not forbid divorce out of hand.[13]

When the Pharisees ask Jesus about the issue of divorce, they ask if it is lawful (10:2). Jesus asks the inquirers what Moses *commanded* (10:3). The Pharisees respond

[9] See for example Lane, *The Gospel according to Mark*, 353; Hooker, *Mark*, 235 who both document the debate between the parties of Shammai and Hillel. Shammai argued that a man could divorce his wife for shameful acts such as adultery, while Hillel argued that a man could divorce his wife for a wide variety of reasons including annoyance and embarrassment; so also, Dowd, *Reading Mark*, 101.

[10] Collins, *Mark*, 459, 465; For a discussion of the Jewish context of adultery and divorce, see William Loader, *Making Sense of Sex: Attitudes Toward Sexuality in Early Jewish and Christian Literature* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2012), 68–74.

[11] Hannah Cotton and Ada Yardeni, *Aramaic, Hebrew, and Greek Documentary Texts from Nahal Hever and Other Sites* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1997), 65–70.

[12] Susan Hylen, *Women in the New Testament World* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018), 81; cf. Collins, *Mark*, 463. See *Ant*. 15.7.10 in which Josephus, commenting on Salome, claims her actions were not in keeping with the law and only men could initiate a divorce.

[13] Cotton, Yardeni, D'Angelo, and Collins insist that the issue in most Jewish texts is remarriage rather than if one can divorce, and the issue of a woman's ability to initiate a divorce is a nonissue. Contra Myers and others who note the lack of reciprocity for women in Jewish family law that would lead to the Pharisee's question being phrased in this way. Cf. Ched Myers, *Binding the Strong Man: A Political Reading of Mark's Story of Jesus* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1988), 264; Eduard Schweizer, *The Good News According to Mark*, trans. Donald Madvig (London: SPCK, 1970), 203; Morna Dorothy Hooker, *A Commentary on the Gospel according to St. Mark* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 1993), 235. Perhaps a middle ground can be reached to say that women were less likely to initiate a divorce though it was theoretically possible for some, and thus the practical issue is whether a man can divorce his wife legally.

that Moses *allowed* for a certificate of divorce to be issued (10:4).[14] Jesus responds that Moses only did so because of their hardness of heart (10:5), implying that "divorce is not the will of God but was allowed by Moses only because of the people's stubbornness."[15] There has been a long debate concerning the precise nature of Moses's role as an intermediary in the giving of the law.[16] According to Fraade, the text implies that "the law of divorce was Moses' own invention and not indicative of the divine will, and hence only a temporally bound concession to human weakness."[17] Jesus invokes Genesis as the true intention of God in creation. Creation theology here trumps all concessions made to human frailty and the curses of the fall. Schüssler Fiorenza, evaluating the patriarchal overtones of the passage, further comments, "as long as patriarchy is operative," where patriarchy is considered a result of the fall, "divorce is *commanded* out of necessity. One is not allowed to abolish it within the structures of patriarchy. Jesus, however, insists, God did not create or intend patriarchy but created persons as male and female human beings."[18] God created humans as male and female, and God's intension was for them to become one and thereby to become equal.[19] Since God made a singular unit of man and

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[14] Eugene Boring, *Mark: A Commentary* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2006), 286. Boring argues that offering a certificate of divorce was an attempt to shield a woman from a man's arbitrary choice to dismiss her. With the certificate she was free to remarry. Interestingly in Mark, unlike Matthew, the question is not about the reasons a man can divorce his wife, but rather the question of divorce itself.

[15] Collins, *Mark*, 467.

[16] Collins, *Mark*, 466–467.

[17] Steven Fraade, "Moses and the Commandments: Can Hermeneutics, History, and Rhetoric Be Disentangled?," in *The Idea of Biblical Interpretation: Essays in Honor of James Kugel*, ed. Hindy Najman and Judith Newman, JSJSup 83 (Leiden: Brill, 2004), 417.

[18] Elisabeth Schussler Fiorenza, *A Feminist Theological Reconstruction of Christian Origins: In Memory of Her*, Tenth Anniversary ed. (New York: Crossroad, 1994), 143.

[19] Boring, *Mark: A Commentary*, 287; Clifton Black, *Mark*, ANTC (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2011), 220–222; Ben Witherington, *The Gospel of Mark: A Socio-Rhetorical Commentary* (Grand Rapids,

woman, no human should attempt to separate that union,[20] especially in a context where women were unequally disadvantaged by the cruel and greedy behavior of being "sent away."[21] Moses gave a concession. The arrival of the Messiah meant undoing the fall, and thus the laws that offer concession no longer apply in the kingdom of God.[22] Jesus ultimately exceeds the order of the law. Jesus is pushing the boundaries of tradition and thus pushing back against the essentialist conceptions of religious tradition that fuel nativist essentialist resistance models.

The Pharisees are silenced in the story and Jesus and the disciples continue the discussion in the house (10:10). Jesus further enhances the tension between the Jewish tradition and the expectations of the kingdom of God. Not only can a wife commit adultery by marrying another man after her divorce, but so also a man can commit adultery against his wife by marrying another after his divorce. Since adultery is defined in this context as having sex with another man's wife, this is a radical departure.[23] Man is now responsible to his wife not just other men. Instone-Brewer suggests the charge of

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Mich.: W.B. Eerdmans, 2001), 275–278; Hooker, *A Commentary on the Gospel according to St. Mark*, 236; these commentators clearly articulate the unity of the couple as superior to the allowance for divorce, but none of them speak directly to the need to abolish the system that sets up patriarchy as the ruling power structure. It is therefore implied that protecting a woman in marriage is sufficient in the kingdom of God, and there is no further reason to press the issue. Beavis, *Mark*, 151 comes closest to Fiorenza. Beavis claims the text clearly advocates egalitarianism in the kingdom and demonstrates a level of egalitarianism in the Markan community.

[20] Lutz Doering, "Marriage and Creation in Mark 10 and CD 4-5," in *Echoes from the Caves: Qumran and the New Testament*, ed. Florentino Garcia Martinez, Studies on the Texts of the Desert of Judah 85 (Leiden: Brill, 2009), 142–143 notes the possible significance of ἄνθρωπος in this text. It could appeal to the husband as the inciter of divorce or, if Fraade, "Moses and the Commandments" 417, is correct, to Moses as the giver of a concession. In either case, the critique remains intact. No man or person should separate.

[21] Horsley, *Hearing the Whole Story*, 188.

[22] For a similar claim, see Hartmut Stegemann, "Der Lehrende Jesus: Der Sogenannte Biblische Christus Und Die Geschichtliche Botschaft Jesu von Der Gottesherrschaft," *NZSTh* 24 (1982): 3–20. Stegemann claims this is the restoration of the conditions of paradise, an Urzeit-Endzeit correlation.

[23] Boring, *Mark: A Commentary*, 287.

adultery resulting from marrying another is based on the premise that divorce is invalid and thus the second marriage is equivalent to adultery.[24] Jesus goes beyond the traditional expectations of providing a certificate of divorce *when* couples divorce, to declaring there is no exception to be made. Further, his pronouncement clearly states the equality between the sexes with reference to divorce. While the Pharisees asked only if a man could divorce his wife, implying a woman was not capable of making such a choice, Jesus's further explanation to the disciples claims that neither husband nor wife is to divorce the other. In the kingdom of God, women are considered a man's equal both in the context of protection and judgment.[25] Divorce is not allowed as a system of oppression in the coming kingdom. The two people are joined together forever, as was intended in creation. The kingdom of God is an attempt to return to the perfection of creation where the balance of power was equitably distributed.

Jesus challenges the nativist essentialist Jewish assumptions about marriage, divorce, and gender roles. In so doing, Jesus challenges their reading of their own texts. No longer does the Law of Moses offer the Pharisees a viable means to justify divorce and by extension the oppressive situations that can result from it; Genesis, rather, holds them to a higher standard. Jesus pushes the bounds of Jewish propriety by not only upholding the law but also by strengthening it. Jesus pushes against the nativist essentialist conceptions of the colonized community.

[24] David Instone-Brewer, *Divorce and Remarriage in the Bible: The Social and Literary Context* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2002), 147–152.

[25] Jennifer Knust, "Marriage, Adultery, and Divorce," in *The Oxford Handbook of New Testament, Gender, and Sexulaity*, ed. Benjamin Dunning (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2019), 523.

Jesus's Response to the Roman Discourse of Power

While many have pointed out the Jewish context of Jesus's response to the Pharisees, most have neglected to address the other social context of Jesus's saying, namely the Roman context. Even those who focus on the Roman imperial context of the Gospel and issues of marginalization, have ignored this passage in their conversations about imperialism and the Markan response to such.[26] The Roman context of these sayings about divorce, however, is significant as we discuss the colonial discourse of power operative throughout the empire and Jesus's attempt to resist such domination through his counter discourse.

During the reign of Augustus, the emperor established a program of moral renewal. The era of civil war and widespread warfare abroad had taken their toll on Roman morale. In Augustus's estimation, the cause of Roman warfare and the state's ills could be traced to a lack of *pietas* and moral degradation.[27] He instituted a series of laws touted to encourage fidelity, to encourage the return to traditional family values, and to reinforce the stratification of society by making it more visible.[28] While the laws were enforced sporadically, often providing the emperor grounds for showing favor to political supporters or punishing political opponents, the laws concerning sexual and marital

[26] See for example Myers, *Binding the Strong Man*, 187–188; Horsley, *Hearing the Whole Story*, 187–188; Spitaler, "Biblical Concern for the Marginalized."

[27] Karl Galinsky, *Augustan Culture: An Interpretive Introduction* (Princeton, N.J: Princeton University Press, 1996), 135.

[28] Susan Elliot, *Family Empires, Roman and Christian: Roman Family Empires, Household, Empire, and Resistance* (Salem: Polebridge, 2018), 1:125.

correctness became a "measure of civic and political probity and a central topic of political discourse."[29]

The laws on marriage, divorce, and childbearing were a focal point of this legal and social program. Under these laws adultery was defined as sex with a married woman. A married woman could be accused of adultery for having sex with any man. A man could be accused of adultery only for having sex with another man's wife. The law further required a man to divorce his adulterous wife.[30] A husband who refused to divorce his adulterous wife could be tried for the charge of pimping.[31] The wife of an adulterous husband, could initiate a divorce for her husband's infidelity,[32] however, she had little to "no legal recourse under the laws of the Augustan era."[33] Further, a woman who was able to divorce her husband was in a vulnerable position. "If she divorced to marry another or be single, she may lay herself open to charges of adultery in the first marriage. This made it more dangerous for a woman to divorce and form a new marriage."[34] Where once these matters were handled in the home, now these issues

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[29] Mary Rose D'Angelo, "Roman Imperial Family Values and the Gospel of Mark: The Divorce Sayings (Mark 10:2-12)," in *Women and Gender in Ancient Religions: Interdisciplinary Approaches* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2010), 67.

[30] Loader, *Making Sense of Sex*, 64.

[31] Kristina Milnor, *Gender, Domesticity, and the Age of Augustus: Inventing Private Life*, Oxford Studies in Classical Literature and Gender Theory (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), 152; cf. Amy Richlin, "Approaches to the Sources on Adultery at Rome," *Women's Studies* 8 (1981): 227.

[32] Elliot, *Family Empires*, 1:103.

[33] Richlin, "Approaches to the Sources on Adultery at Rome," 228; D'Angelo, "Roman Imperial Family Values," 128.

[34] Susan Treggiari, *Roman Marriage: Iusti Coniuges from the Time of Cicero to the Time of Ulpon* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1991), 293–294.

became a matter for the state.[35] "Augustus and his successors were promoting an imperial ideology that stressed marriage and child-bearing as the foundation of the state."[36] The goal of these laws was essentially to make the ruling class of Rome morally superior people and thus entitled to rule.[37]

Despite the significant importance of the moral renewal project to Augustan rule and to the rule of his successors, and the directly related content of Mark 10, the majority of commentators have neglected the significance of the Roman context to the interpretation of Mark 10. According to D'Angelo, the rational for such neglect of the Roman context is two-fold.[38] First, some have suggested that since the Roman adultery laws (*Iulia de adulteriis coercendis*) applied only to Roman citizens, they excluded most Jews and Christians. This, however, neglects the impact these laws had on the freedmen, slaves, and those desiring to become Roman citizens.[39] Second, some deem the moral renewal program of Augustus to be irrelevant to Mark 10:1–12 because the laws were ultimately failures.[40] They did not produce the stated outcome of actual moral change

[35] Alicia Myers, *Blessed Among Women? Mothers and Motherhood in the New Testament* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017), 118.

[36] Evans Grubbs, *Women and the Law in the Roman Empire: A Sourcebook on Marriage, Divorce, and Widowhood* (London: Routledge, 2002), 87; cf. Bruce Longenecker, *In Stone and Story: Early Christianity in the Roman World* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2020), 198.

[37] Galinsky, *Augustan Culture*, 133.

[38] D'Angelo, "Roman Imperial Family Values," 62.

[39] D'Angelo, "Roman Imperial Family Values," 62. The laws did have an impact on slave manumission, as slaves could be required to bear witness concerning an adultery charge against a master. Manumission was disallowed until the case was closed or a set time period had lapsed in which the husband could lay charges. The laws were also applied to freedpersons and free persons though in different ways, again reinforcing the social structure of society.

[40] Cf. Suzanne Dixon, *The Roman Family* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1992), 79–80; Longenecker, *In Stone and Story*, 198 notes Augustus's own family did uphold the moral expectations of Augustus's program. His daughter Julia engaged in a variety of illicit relationships that resulted in her exile. Myers, *Blessed Among Women?*, 121–122 further notes that the rules concerning women and the

(i.e., no adultery) or the creation of a greater citizen army.[41] If these were the only goals of such a program, then, yes, the program failed. This is, however, not the primary purpose of the program of moral renewal. Augustus instigated the program in order to claim Roman moral superiority. Moral superiority was one way to reinforce the claim to political authority, thereby confirming Rome's discourse of power.[42] The morally superior has the right to rule, and the gods honor the moral superiority and *pietas* of those who live and worship well.

The marriage laws of the Augustan era also built upon a much older mythological tradition. Dionysius recounts the much older myth of Romulus's marriage laws in which citizens ideally only married once.[43] The Julian marriage laws draw upon this nostalgia and exploit such mythology in an attempt to reinforce the significance of marriage for the population. Thus, indivisible marriage was a goal of Romulus's laws as well. Interestingly, the Julian laws on marriage did make concessions and even requirements for divorce. They did, however, similarly focus on fidelity. The Julian laws further required widowed or divorced men and women to marry within six months or a year,

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expectations of childbearing actually gave women a kind of power not previously possessed that could challenge the hegemony of male control.

[41] Milnor, *Gender, Domesticity, and the Age of Augustus*, 143. Childlessness persisted, and Tacitus even notes that things were worse than before (*Ann*. 3.25)

[42] Paul Zanker, *The Power of Images in the Age of Augustus*, Jerome Lectures 16 (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1988), 167–179; Galinsky, *Augustan Culture*, 128–140; D'Angelo, "Roman Imperial Family Values," 62.

[43] D'Angelo, "Roman Imperial Family Values," 73; Milnor, *Gender, Domesticity, and the Age of Augustus*, 147–148. See Dionysius, *Ant. rom*. 2.25.2–7. In Plut. *Rom*. 22, the Romulan era regulations did offers three exceptions to the rule forbidding divorce: a woman poisoning her children, counterfeiting a man's keys, and adultery.

respectively.[44] The single marriage ideal of Romulus is reconfigured for a new era with new ideological concerns. Thus, the true goal of the program of renewal was ideological, and this ideology spread beyond the citizenry to all those under the power of Rome. While not everyone fell under the authority of the letter of the law, all fell under the sway of Roman ideology upheld and propagated by such laws.[45]

The legislation of morality, especially that of marriage, stood at the center of Augustus's restoration project and proclaimed the inauguration of the new "Golden Age" that was thought to have begun with his rule.[46] The defense of the traditional family values and high moral fiber, erected "boundaries against corrupting influences" in the empire and thus, theoretically, ensured the survival of the Roman Empire.[47] The fact, however, that Augustus had to resort to laws to bring about his "Golden Age" was a strike against his program. True "Golden Ages" arose of their own accord, not through legislative means.[48] There was already a subtle critique to be levied against Augustus's program even by insiders.

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[44] Hylen, *Women in the New Testament World*, 81–84 notes that many did not remarry despite this requirement. It was not technically illegal to remain unmarried, but one lost the considerable financial benefits of being married, especially significant if they were of the elite classes.

[45] Cf. Beth Severy, *Augustus and the Family at the Birth of the Roman Empire* (New York: Routledge, 2003), 34–69. Severy notes the usage of the familial image to represent Roman authority in monuments and imperial propaganda.

[46] Elliot, *Family Empires*, 1:122; See also Longenecker, *In Stone and Story*, 198–199. Longenecker demonstrates the ways in which paterfamilias and the wifely expectations were enshrined in the artwork of the era (e.g., the two frescos in Pompeii's macellum depicting Penelope and her husband, Odysseus and one depicting Io under isolation by Argus). Each speaks to the proper expectations of the "good wife" versus the "weak woman."

[47] Elliot, *Family Empires*, 1:120; Douglas Edwards, "Surviving the Web of Roman Power: Religion and Politics in the Acts of the Apostles, Josephus, and Chariton's Chaereas and Callirhoe," in *Images of Empire*, ed. Loveday Alexander (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 1991), 197.

[48] Milnor, *Gender, Domesticity, and the Age of Augustus*, 144; cf. Galinsky, *Augustan Culture*, 129.

In Mark 10:2–9, Jesus recounts the indivisible nature of marriage based on the Jewish scripture of Genesis. Just as the Romulan ideal underwent a significant revision in the Julian laws of the Augustan era, so also the Jewish ideal had undergone a significant revision in Moses's allowance of divorce. As Jesus has critiqued the Jewish concession, he also offers a critique of the Augustan era laws as well. The Roman laws required divorce if one was thought to have committed adultery; the dissolution of marriage was a legal requirement. In the kingdom of God, marriage was to be binding within one's lifetime. In some ways, Jesus has upheld the ideal of the Roman mythology in ways the Julian laws could not. The Romulan ideal upheld the idea of a single marriage where the Julian laws required remarriage.[49] Further, the kingdom of God built the entire model of marriage on the purpose of creation—nature itself. It did not need a legal pronouncement to enforce morality, unlike Augustus's and Romulus's moral programs. In this way, Jesus utilizes Genesis to exceed the nostalgia of Dionysius's version of an "original, indissolvable Roman form of marriage."[50] God, since creation, expected fidelity and lasting marriage to be part of the natural order.

Further in Mark 10:11–12, Jesus speaks to his disciples about adultery—the primary focus of many of the marital laws of the Augustan program. Roman law technically required those of a certain age to remarry after a divorce. The kingdom of God will not allow an exception for divorce and therefore any remarriage will be

[49] Men were required to remarry within six months of divorce or widowhood. Women were required to remarry within one year. For a fuller discussion of these laws and their prescription of remarriage, see Galinsky, *Augustan Culture*, 130; Katrina York, "Feminine Resistance to Moral Legislation in the Early Empire," *Studies in Mediterranean Antiquity and Classics* 1 (2006): 1–14; Elliot, *Family Empires*, 1:129.

[50] D'Angelo, "Roman Imperial Family Values," 77.

considered adultery.[51] Additionally, Jesus claims that a man who remarries after a divorce commits adultery, not against another man but against his first wife. Since adultery was defined in the Roman legal system as having sex with another man's wife, technically one could not violate his own wife through an extramarital affair. In the kingdom of God, the women were considered equal with reference to the adultery regulations.[52]

Jesus resists the Roman discourse of power that attempts to define the family structure in terms of the needs and ideology of the Roman Empire, opting instead for a family structure that meets the needs of God's empire. The true nature of family arises from the creation of God, though, like in Rome, the stability of the empire necessitates the stability of the family. While Jesus accommodates the Roman significance of the family to imperial health and security, Jesus resists the Roman application of such sentiment, turning the Roman laws on their head. Divorce is disallowed, not prescribed. Remarriage after divorce is actually adultery, the very act the Roman laws were attempting to abolish. The family in the kingdom of God would look morally superior to the family system of the Roman Empire.

Mark 10:13–16: The Rebuke of Status Claims

The following episode in Mark 10 continues the emphasis on family and status in the kingdom of God. No sooner has Jesus articulated a return to the intention of creation, a standard that stands in contrast to the Roman imperial discourse concerning marriage,

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[51] This is very different from Matthew's version (19:3–9) where the Pharisees ask about the reason for divorce, and Jesus makes an allowance for divorce in the case of adultery. In Matthew, Jesus comes much closer to the Roman legal requirement than the Jesus of Mark. The requirement of the Roman law is softened to an allowance, but there is a much clearer appropriation of Roman sentiment in the Matthean account.

[52] D'Angelo, "Roman Imperial Family Values," 76.

than the disciples rebuke those who are bringing little children to Jesus. The story brings to mind two previous episodes in the Gospel. When Jesus offered the first passion prediction (8:31), Peter rebuked (ἐπιτιμᾶν; 8:32) Jesus for his words, prompting Jesus's own rebuke (ἐπετίμησεν) of Peter (8:33).[53] Then the disciples were asked in Mark 9:18 to cast out a demon from a child, and Jesus had been forced to rebuke (ἐπετίμησεν) the spirit (9:25) because they could not successfully dispel it. In Mark 10:13, the disciples should be welcoming a child and instead they attempt to rebuke (ἐπετίμησαν) those bringing the children, thus ultimately rebuking the presence of the children themselves. They continually fail to use their kingdom power properly. They rebuke Jesus rather than welcoming Jesus's understanding of power in 8:32. They fail to rebuke a demon because of their apparent lack of prayer (9:28–29; cf. 14:32–42). This forces Jesus to intervene. When they should welcome a child, they choose, instead, to stand as gatekeepers keeping out the perceived undesirables.

The disciples have already been told they are to welcome the children, and those who receive the children also receive Jesus and the one who sent him (9:37). The dismissal of Jesus's teaching leads the reader to hear an implicit rebuke of the disciples. They have not received the children, and following the narrative logic of Mark 9:37 this means they have not truly received Jesus and his message.

Countering the Roman Discourse of Power and Nativist Essentialist Discourse

As far as the disciples are concerned, the children had nothing to offer Jesus or the disciples. They stood at the bottom of the social ladder in the ancient world. The same

[53] Moloney, "Marriage and Wealth: A Study of Mark 10:1-31," 155. The disciples rebuke the children like Peter rebuked Jesus. They continue to use the authority given to them to rebuke the unclean spirits to rebuke those who should be welcomed.

program of moral renewal that led to the variety of laws concerning adultery and divorce were also intended to reinforce social boundaries as another act of appropriate *pietas*.[54] These social boundaries were to be respected to ensure the proper continuation of the empire. Each person was to pay proper deference to those in positions above them, as the emperor paid to the gods. Children were to be deferent to those in positions above them; they were to bring honor to their *paterfamilias*. They were not agents of any kind of authority. They, like women, were nonentities religiously and politically, generally speaking.[55] While the *paterfamilias* rarely utilized the full extent of his powers, he had complete control over life and death of every child and had the choice to provide or not to provide for them.[56] They were wholly dependent upon the family for their survival.[57] As they had little to offer the family at such a young age, they were considered weak,

[54] Elliot, *Family Empires*, 1:116, 125.

[55] There are certainly exceptions to this generality. Wealthy women did have more political and social freedom. Eumachia and Mamia of Pompeii are two excellent examples. By virtue of their wealth and status as public priestesses, they were able to function as benefactors in Pompeii and were buried with high honors. So also, the women of the imperial family were venerated alongside their male counterparts. On coinage and within locations devoted to the imperial cult, one finds the image of Livia alongside her imperial family. See Alison Cooley and M. G. L. Cooley, *Pompeii and Herculaneum: A Sourcebook* (Milton Park: Taylor & Francis, 2013), 138–141; Severy, *Augustus and the Family at the Birth of the Roman Empire*, 113–114. For a more complete view of children in the Roman Empire see Christian Laes, *Children in the Roman Empire: Outsiders Within* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011); cf. Longenecker, *In Stone and Story*, 135–136. Longenecker recounts the strange tale of the six-year-old Celsinus who became a councilor. While the child's position was no doubt granted on the basis of his father's money, the child still technically occupied a political position. While sex and age generally prescribed the boundaries of one's existence, political connections and money could alter the status quo.

[56] Dixon, *The Roman Family*, 117; Margaret MacDonald, *The Power of Children: The Construction of Christian Families in the Greco-Roman World* (Waco: Baylor University Press, 2014), 9–13. MacDonald notes that the domination of children in families was considered an indication of piety and piety could even overrule justice in family matters.

[57] O.M. Bakke, *When Children Became People: The Birth of Childhood in Early Christianity*, trans. Brian McNeil (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2005), 51–52.

helpless, and even irrational.[58] There was no reason, in the disciples' mind, to let them pass unhindered.

So also in the Jewish context, there was a running debate concerning a child's share in the kingdom to come.[59] The rabbis debated whether children would be raised and included in the age to come or not. There was disagreement about if they would be included but also if included, which children would be included.[60] Some rabbis thought only children of a certain age would be included. Others thought only Jewish children would be raised. The simple fact of this question makes clear the status of children. They fit precariously in society, at best, until reaching adulthood. Sending them away was to conform to social norms.[61]

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[58] Bakke, *When Children Became People: The Birth of Childhood in Early Christianity*, 18; Judith Gundry-Volf, "Children in the Gospel of Mark with Special Attention to Jesus' Blessing of the Children," in *The Child in the Bible* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2008), 163. Gundry-Volf points out specifically the irrationality of children in the Greco-Roman mindset. The irony is stunning. Children are irrational creatures to whom the kingdom belongs; the disciples should be rational, understanding creatures, and they continue to reject Jesus's discourse of power despite Jesus's teachings.

[59] Collins, *Mark*, 472.

[60] As noted in Collins, *Mark*, 472: *Bar. Sanh*. 110b: Rabbi Akiva declares the children of impious Jews will not share in the kingdom to come. Everyone agrees that children of the nations will not be included. There is a dispute between Rabbi Ḥiyya and Rabbi Shimon bar Rabbi Yehuda HaNasi in which one of them says children are included from the moment they are born, and the other one says they are included from the moment they begin to talk. Rabbi Naḥman bar Yitzḥak claims the child will be included after circumcision. Rabbi Ravina claims the child is included after conception. Rabbi Meir claims inclusion from the time the child can say "Amen."

[61] Another possible contextual claim is made by Beavis, *Mark*, 152, Beavis points out the possibility that Jesus is reversing the narrative of Elijah cursing the children who mocked him outside of Jericho. Jesus exceeds even the most renown of Jewish figures. Jesus will bless them despite their status; Duncan Derrett, "Why Jesus Blessed the Children (Mark 10:13-16)," *NovT* 25.1 (1983): 1–18. Derrett adds another dimension to the text, claiming that the blessing should be read through the lens of Genesis 48 in which the Jacob blesses the children as his heirs before death, essentially adopting them to secure an heir to bless. This would mean Jesus essentially adopts the children brought to him and blesses them as his heirs before his death; thus, the kingdom belongs to them. While a bit obscure and likely that the significance of such a parallel would be lost on the audience when there are far simpler domains of meaning available, the interpretation would not undermine the argument made herein. If anything, it would strengthen the argument. The children are literally heirs while the disciples continue to keep their distance from Jesus, a distance seen in 10:32 when they resume their journey to Jerusalem.

It is significant to note that the Pharisees in the previous episode and the rich man in the following episode have no difficulty making it to Jesus.[62] The disciples seem unconcerned to intervene in their cases, but they do keep those of perceived lesser social status from engaging with Jesus.[63] The disciples have failed to understand the previous episode with Jesus and the children in Mark 9:36–37. In Mark 9:37 the disciples were told that to embrace a child was to embrace Jesus, the one who sent him, and thus the kingdom of God. In 10:13 the disciples are given the opportunity to embrace a child (and by extension God and the kingdom) and instead rebuke it like an unclean spirit. Jesus informs them the kingdom actually belongs to those they have rebuked, and those who do not accept the kingdom of God like the children, as the socially and politically marginalized, will not enter it at all. Not only have the disciples now rejected the child, the child whose acceptance represents the acceptance of God and God's kingdom, the disciples now find themselves—the self-appointed gatekeepers of Jesus—to be on the outside of the kingdom. They cannot imagine coming to Jesus as one purposefully on the periphery of traditional power.

Schüssler Fiorenza points out that this is not merely an, "invitation to childlike innocence and naiveté but a challenge to relinquish all claims of power and domination

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[62] Ironically, unlike the Pharisees of the previous episode and the rich man of the following episode who come questioning Jesus, essentially questioning Jesus's status, those with the children come seeking a touch from Jesus. They implicitly acknowledge Jesus's authority and status. The disciples, however, bar the children from their Messiah.

[63] In a similar vein, see Gundry-Volf, "Children in the Gospel of Mark," 167. Gundry-Volf argues that the disciples expected the imminent arrival of the kingdom as they ventured toward Jerusalem. To stop for an interruption from someone so insignificant (i.e., children) was to waste time. She does, however, go too far in her argument to claim that the author ultimately tries to make Jesus's interactions with the children appealing to hearers of the Gospel so as to "counteract whatever negative reactions his narrative elicited" (175). This is to miss the point; the discourse of power Jesus is constructing is offensive to those adhering to the fullness of the Roman discourse of power. It was meant to be such.

over others."[64] While I agree with Schüssler Fiorenza's basic sentiment, I would clarify, that Jesus does not call the disciples to abandon power, but rather they are to relinquish a particular incarnation of power as domination over another, especially those deemed "other," as informed by the Roman discourse of power and their religious sentiments. A child can make no claim to traditional claims of power; to become like a child is to become dependent on others, to become last.[65] In other words, this text does not call for the listeners simply to take care of the small children, but it is a call to abandon previous conceptions of oppression and domination and realize the kingdom's call to service and sacrifice. One must be willing to abandon the cultural absolutes in the kingdom of God.[66] Power relations are inevitable and neutral by nature, but the structures of domination and oppression are interpretations of power that must be abandoned.

Jesus is forced to admonish the disciples to allow the children to pass. The disciples act as gatekeepers, controlling access to the master. They are reinforcing their perceived expectations of social status in the kingdom that reflect the hierarchically ordered social system of the Roman world.[67] Contrasting the disciples' emphasis on

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[64] Schussler Fiorenza, *In Memory of Her*, 148; Ernest Best, *Disciples and Discipleship: Studies in the Gospel According to Mark* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1986), 80; James Francis, "Children and Childhood in the New Testament," in *The Family in Theological Perspective* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1996), 76; Ben Witherington, *The Gospel of Mark: A Socio-Rhetorical Commentary* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2001), 280; John Painter, *Mark's Gospel: Worlds in Conflict*, New Testament Readings (London: Routledge, 1997), 143; Bolt, *Jesus' Defeat of Death*, 234; Francis J. Moloney, *The Gospel of Mark: A Commentary* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 2002), 188. All the above, save Fiorenza, claims the subjective nature of the children's response is in view.

[65] Concerning their absolute dependence and need being a focal point of the episode, see Gundry-Volf, "Children in the Gospel of Mark," 152. Gundry-Volf considers the reason the children possess the kingdom is simply because they need it, not because they believe or seek it.

[66] Moloney, "Marriage and Wealth: A Study of Mark 10:1-31," 155.

[67] Spitaler, "Biblical Concern for the Marginalized," 98.

status, Jesus blesses those who are among the marginalized of the Roman world. Spitaler summarizes the sentiment well,

> The Kingdom of which Jesus speaks is not a kingdom of the lawyers concerned with legal precedent (10:2–9) or the rich who do not share their wealth with the poor (10:21–22). It is also not a kingdom of disciples who leave everything for Jesus (10:28) but imitate the powerful (10:41–42) in theory (9:32; 10:37) and practice (10:13).[68]

Jesus invites all to the kingdom—the children, the religious rulers, the rich, the disciples—but so few manage to embrace the kingdom. The message of the first will be last and the last, first is hard to accept. The disciples fail to accept the message of the inclusiveness of the kingdom. After yet another explanation of the facets of the discourse of power operative in God's kingdom, the disciples still push away "the [perceived] other." The disciples must welcome the kingdom of God before they can enter it.[69] They fail to welcome the children; they remain obstinate outsiders.

Mark 10:17–31: Unmasking Colonial Exploitation and Local Collaboration

Mark 10:17–22

In the third episode of Mark 10, a man runs up to Jesus and kneels before him asking, "Good teacher, what must I do to inherit eternal life?" Jesus first reframes the man's question by declaring that only God is good, and further, that the man knows the commandments (10:18–19). In the list of commandments, Jesus refers to many of the commands of the Decalogue, but adds to the list, "do not defraud" (ἀποστερέω), a command not included among the commands of the Decalogue (10:19). The man claims

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[68] Spitaler, "Biblical Concern for the Marginalized," 111; so also, Rhoads, Dewey, and Michie, *Mark as Story: An Introduction to the Narrative of a Gospel*, 92 for a similar conclusion.

[69] Spitaler, "Biblical Concern for the Marginalized," 118; so also, Spitaler, "Welcoming a Child as a Metaphor for Welcoming God's Kingdom," 440–441.

that he has kept all these commands. Jesus then adds one further command to the list: sell all you have and give it to the poor, promising treasure in heaven as the reward (10:21). The man, however, walks away sorrowfully. It is here, the reader learns the man was very rich; the author withholds the fact of the man's wealth until the climax of the short story (v. 22). The man's wealth appears to be the primary issue at play in the narrative. Wealth plays a significant role in the Roman discourse of power as well as in nativist essentialist expectations concerning the kingdom of God.

Countering the Nativist Essentialist Discourse

In the list of commands to the rich man, Jesus adds a command to the Decalogue. In an attempt to reconcile the discrepancy between the Decalogue and the list Jesus offers the man, some have suggested "do not defraud" is actually an interpretation or alteration of the eighth command (do not steal), ninth command (do not lie), or the tenth command (do not covet).[70] A more convincing alternative given the literary context is that Jesus is actually appealing to another Jewish religious text: Malachi. Richard Hicks has persuasively argued that "do not defraud" (v. 19, ἀποστερήσῃς) is actually an allusion to Malachi 3:5 (ἐπὶ τοὺς ἀποστεροῦντας μισθὸν μισθωτοῦ; LXX).[71] Building on Hays's work concerning textual echoes, Hicks outlines the various ways in which Mark's

[70] Eighth and/or ninth commandment: Lane, *The Gospel according to Mark*, 366; R. T. France, *The Gospel of Mark: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, NIGCT (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2002), 401; Evans, *Mark*, 96; Joel Marcus, *Mark 8-16: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*, 1st ed., AB 27b (New York: Doubleday, 2000), 722; Horsley, *Hearing the Whole Story*, 191.

[71] Richard Hicks, "Markan Discipleship according to Malachi: The Significance of μὴ ἀποστερήσῃς in the Story of the Rich Man (Mark 10:17-22)," *JBL* 132.1 (2013): 179–99.

narrative appeals to Malachi throughout the narrative thus creating a much "larger intertextual web" one must understand to grasp the fullness of the text.[72]

In Hick's estimation, the text of Malachi calls readers to covenant faithfulness and implies that those who are faithful will be able to stand before the Lord (Mal. 3:2).[73] God's justice comes upon the people and calls the people to repentance (Mal. 3:8–10). According to Hicks, Jesus's allusion to Malachi 3:5 in his addition of "do not defraud" appeals to this larger narrative in Malachi. The man in Mark 10:17 comes to Jesus and is unable to stand in front of Jesus, instead falling before him like the unfaithful, implying his guilt rather than innocence. Jesus presents the violation of the law (defrauding another), giving the man an opportunity to repent. The man counters, claiming that he has kept the law from his youth. While many interpreters have claimed that the author depicts the rich man as truthful in his claim, nowhere does the text assent to this assertion.[74] The text could as easily be read as depicting a deceitful character, and given Jesus's ability to see the hearts of people in the narrative (e.g., 2:8; 9:33–34), Jesus would know his untruthfulness. Thus, when Jesus tells the man he lacks one thing, namely, to sell all he has, Jesus is offering the man an opportunity to repent of his fraud—to complete the one

[72] Richard Hays, *Echoes of Scripture in the Letters of Paul* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1989), 14; Hicks, "Markan Discipleship according to Malachi," 182.

[73] Hicks, "Markan Discipleship according to Malachi," 189, 194.

[74] C.f. Moloney, *The Gospel of Mark*, 199, claims the man is truthful but believes Jesus has something more to offer; Lane, *The Gospel according to Mark*, 366–67, argues he speaks truthfully but lacks security in his eternal security; Hooker, *Mark*, 242, clearly thinks the man has kept the commands but believes more is necessary, namely he must *do* more; Collins, *Mark*, 479, speaks positively of the rich man from Jesus's perspective. While he may have been lacking, Jesus does not seem to be accusing him directly of fraud.

thing he lacks, namely repentance.[75] The man, who turns out to be exceedingly wealthy, is unwilling to sell all he has and give to the poor, rejecting Jesus's offering of repentance.

As in Mark 10:1–12, Jesus appeals to another tradition (creation//prophet) beyond what is claimed by the Pharisees and the rich man (the legal material) to make his point to his hearer. Appealing to Malachi, Jesus is undermining the tradition that associates wealth with God's blessing.[76] Many Jews did connect wealth and property with God's blessing, appealing to the scriptures for justification.[77] The allusion to Malachi lends further support to the claim that God's blessing is not always guaranteed by the presence of wealth.[78] Wealth unjustly acquired is the basis for the judgment of God. The kingdom of God Jesus is proclaiming will not accept those who profit off the poor. The law is not kept through a façade of piety; it must be kept through "concrete acts of justice."[79] No amount of wealth can buy the kingdom or demand inheritance from a family to which they ultimately do not belong, unlike the children of Mark 10:13–16 who are said to possess the kingdom already. The disciples listening to the conversation with the rich man must have been somewhat disheartened. If they desired the end of Rome and the inversion of colonial practices, wealth would have been both necessary and a significant

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[75] Hicks, "Markan Discipleship according to Malachi," 190–192; So also, Myers, *Binding the Strong Man*, 273 who claims the man has clearly missed the point of the response of Jesus. "No one is good," including, and perhaps especially for Myers, the rich man.

[76] Joseph H. Hellerman, "Wealth and Sacrifice in Early Christianity: Revisiting Mark's Presentation of Jesus' Encounter with the Rich Young Ruler," *TJ* 21 (2000): 154.

[77] Beavis, *Mark*, 153. See the following texts for example: Deut. 8:18; 28:1–14; Job 1:10; 42:10; Ps. 112:3; Prov. 10:115–16, 22; 13:18; Is. 3:10; Tob. 12:9; Sir. 3:1, 6; Bar. 4:1).

[78] Beavis, *Mark*, 153, demonstrates this assertion is not limited to the prophetic discourse of the Old Testament. "The notion that wealth is an impediment to salvation is a Jewish apocalyptic motif: see 1QS 11.1–2; Pss. Sol 5.16; 1 En. 96.4; 103.5–8."

[79] Myers, *Binding the Strong Man*, 274.

sign of success in their endeavor and the guarantee that God was with them in their enterprise. If wealth cannot guarantee the entrance to the kingdom, or perhaps in the disciples' conception, if the kingdom is not accompanied by wealth, what kind of kingdom is this?

Countering the Roman Discourse of Power

In the Roman imperial context, the imperial elite had taxed the colonized communities and interrupted the traditional economic system built upon reciprocity, replacing it with a profit-driven model for the Roman elite and cooperating local leaders.[80] This resulted in local farmers losing their land as their debts spiraled out of control and they could no longer afford the land. In a year of bad harvest, a landowner would borrow from the wealthy. Unfortunately, there were times when poor harvests persisted for a number of years, and debt would lead to foreclosure for the landowner.[81] The former landowners became tenant farmers and eventually many became day laborers. Throughout the Roman era, tension between propertied elite and the landless expanded.[82] The primary means of acquiring smaller farmers' lands was through fraud and exploitation. Even in a more general sense, in a world where goods were perceived as limited in supply, to have more than you needed was to leave someone with less.[83]

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[80] Wolfgang Stegemann and Ekkehard Stegemann, *Jesus Movement: A Social History of Its First Century*, trans. O.C. Dean (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1999), 112; Richard Cassidy, *Christians and Roman Rule in the New Testament: New Perspectives* (New York: Crossroad, 2001), 10.

[81] Hellerman, "Wealth and Sacrifice in Early Christianity," 154.

[82] Stegemann and Stegemann, *Jesus Movement: A Social History of Its First Century*, 112; Richard Horsley, *Jesus and the Spiral of Violence: Popular Jewish Resistance in Roman Palestine* (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1987), 249; Bruce Malina, *The New Testament World: Insights from Cultural Anthropology* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2001), 71–93.

[83] Bruce Malina, *The Social Gospel of Jesus: The Kingdom of God in Mediterranean Perspective* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2001), 106–107.

In light of this, Jesus adds “do not defraud” to the list of commands. As Marcus argues, Jesus tailors the command to the rich man, as defrauding another “frequently characterized the landed aristocracy…and the Markan Jesus may mean to suggest that the man himself is guilty of such oppression.”[84] The word used to describe the man’s wealth in v. 22, κτήματα, should, in Marcus’s opinion, be translated “estates” instead of great possessions.[85] Thus the man’s wealth, comprised of property, is likely the result of fraud. Jesus calls the rich man, who has profited off of the marginalized in colonial society, to set right what he has done wrong. Thus, the command against defrauding the people is not the man’s temptation as a rich man but is rather the means by which he became rich already.[86] He should give the property away, thus embracing the marginalized and by extension the kingdom of God.

The language of inheritance heightens the tension in the story. The rich man asks Jesus what he must do to inherit eternal life. Those in the story listening might be quick to claim, “you have already inherited so much, and now you ask for more?”[87] Even if the man in the narrative did not inherit his wealth through fraud, to inherit was still to hold wealth belonging to others.[88] The sin of defrauding another is not limited to the one who stole the property. It extends to the one who continues to hold the property. Jesus offers

[84] Marcus, *Mark 8-16*, 721.

[85] Marcus, *Mark 8-16*, 723. In later usage, the word comes to be restricted to this meaning of property.

[86] Contra, Collins, *Mark*, 478; Hooker, *Mark*, 241; Beavis, *Mark*, 153; Moloney, *The Gospel of Mark*, 199; so also Myers, *Binding the Strong Man*, 272–273; Horsley, *Hearing the Whole Story*, 191; Marcus, *Mark 8-16*, 721–723.

[87] Michael Peppard, “Torah for the Man Who Has Everything: ‘Do Not Defraud’ in Mark 10:19,” *JBL* 134.3 (2015): 603; So also, Horsley, *Hearing the Whole Story*, 190–191, who comments that only the wealthy, without daily concerns of survival, would have time to come and inquire about eternal life.

[88] Peppard, “Torah for the Man Who Has Everything” 601; Malina, *The Social Gospel of Jesus*, 106–111.

the man an alternative. Sell what you have and give it to those to whom it belongs. In so doing, the rich man will be able to have "treasure in heaven" (v. 21). The heavenly inheritance is not enough for this man. He desires both, but the emphasis rests on the things of man (another example of τὰ τῶν ἀνθρώπων, 8:33).

The colonial policies of Rome made exploitation common practice. To acquire wealth, and specifically land, was to acquire influence and coercive, exploitative power over others. Jesus responds to such practices with an alternative discourse of power. Those who wish to inherit eternal life must reject the claims to wealth that exploit the marginalized. The connection to the previous episode is made clear. The kingdom belongs to the children who are possession-less, not the propertied landowners who acquire their wealth through defrauding others.[89] To enter the kingdom of God and to inherit eternal life, one must embrace the least and thereby become them. Power in the kingdom looks different than imperial Rome. Traditional status markers are not reflections of one's status in the kingdom of God. The discourse of power Jesus is crafting is redrawing boundary lines and redefining imperial expectations.

Mark 10:23–27

The rich man walks away, and Jesus declares how difficult it is to enter the kingdom with wealth (10:23). If the basis of wealth acquisition in the first century is primarily through oppression, extortion, and fraud, it is no wonder that entering the kingdom with wealth is difficult. Praxis matters. The disciples, however, are astounded at his words. Money makes the world work. Money guarantees one has influence and status in the world. How could it be that God's kingdom does not expect money to serve as a

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[89] So also Collins, *Mark*, 480.

status marker? If money is not the evidence of the blessing of God, then what hope does anyone have of entering the kingdom? Jesus continues, as if knowing their thoughts, to comment that entering the kingdom is actually difficult regardless of wealth (v.24).[90] In fact, taking the analogy seriously in v. 25, rather than hyperbolically, it is impossible for those with wealth to enter, as impossible as it is for a camel to pass through the eye of a needle.[91] If the wealthy cannot be saved, then what hope is there for anyone? The disciples have missed the point yet again. Wealth is not the marker of God's favor. They continue to embrace the socio-economic and political expectations of both their Jewish context and the Roman discourse of power. Accepting the discourse of power that Jesus has crafted still seems so far beyond the disciples' reach. Jesus reminds the disciples, however, that with God, what is impossible can be done (v. 27).

Mark 10:28–31

Peter responds to Jesus's declaration about wealth and the kingdom of God by proclaiming on behalf of the disciples that they have left everything to follow Jesus, apparently proud that they have done what the rich man could not (10:28). Jesus responds that there is no one who has left "house or brothers or sisters or mother or father or

[90] Interestingly, Jesus addresses the disciples as "children" (τέκνα). Children have been the focus of multiple narratives thus far in Mark. They are always considered the first in the kingdom by virtue of being last in this life. Jesus hopes the disciples will embrace not only the child of the previous story but also the designation of "child" for themselves. Admittedly, the word used for children in these other instances is different (παιδίον), but the sentiment holds. The disciples are spiritual children, who have yet to recognize their own place in relation to the Father.

[91] Some commentators read this verse hyperbolically rather than literally or default to lexical changes (κάμιλος v. κάμηλος). This is, however, to miss the point of the narrative altogether. Myers and Hooker argue that the word should be read as "camel" in keeping with the Talmudic reference to an elephant passing through the same. Hooker claims the humor was meant to provoke thought but not necessarily undermine the strength of the comment, while Myers argues the humor is meant to bring home the fact that the rich must redistribute their wealth to have any chance at the kingdom. Moloney goes farther: "The statement means what it says: it is impossible." Hooker, *Mark*, 243; Moloney, *The Gospel of Mark*, 201; Collins, *Mark*, 480–481; Myers, *Binding the Strong Man*, 274–275.

children or fields, for my sake and for the sake of the gospel, who will not receive a hundredfold now in this age—houses, brothers and sisters, mothers and children, and fields, with persecutions—and in the age to come eternal life" (10:29–30). The disciples, thus far in the narrative, seem focused on greatness and positions of power and perhaps also the trappings of greatness in their context. Those in positions of power usually had the financial means to secure and maintain such positions. While the text does not directly claim the disciples are in search of wealth, the close connection here to the story of the rich man suggests the disciples' continued focus on positions of power may also intimate a desire for wealth. Jesus informs them that they will, in fact, receive compensation for their sacrifices provided they are for the sake of the gospel and not for themselves (10:29),[92] but the lists of what has been lost and what will be gained are significantly different in three ways.

First, Jesus recognizes that many have left fathers to join him. While all other persons listed in the first clause are repeated in the second clause, the "father" is markedly absent.[93] The Roman context provides a helpful interpretive lens for this omission. The father is a significant figure in the Roman family; he is the *paterfamilias*. The *paterfamilias,* as the "head of the household, was at its center, and the other roles

[92] Hooker makes this distinction clear. The purpose of the sacrifice cannot be for personal gain and status elevation. The sacrifice must be "for the sake of the gospel." Hooker, *Mark*, 243.

[93] Despite Horsley's insistence that this story is about "restored households" in the covenant renewal program rather than a "new community," he fails to address why fathers would be excluded. If the point is simply to restore the "traditional peasant household and village life in this age" there is no reason to exclude the father; in fact, that figure becomes all the more necessary. Horsley, *Hearing the Whole Story*, 191–193, 219; And curiously, so also Myers, *Binding the Strong Man*, 276 ignores the deletion. Unlike Horsley, Myers does think Jesus is crafting an alternative community in the here and now rather than a "restored household" but he, too, for all his political rhetoric fails to draw a conclusion from the absence.

were defined in relation to him."[94] As the father, his role was to provide for the family, serve as patron and household priest, and rule the household virtuously and thereby confirm his authority over the household.[95] In the Roman Empire, Augustus and his successors assumed the role of *pater patriae*, essentially the *paterfamilias* of the Roman Empire.[96] The emperor was to rule by virtue rather than might, and his own virtue (*virtus*, *justitia*, and *pietas*) made him worthy to rule.[97] *Pietas* was understood as deference to one's betters.[98] As the emperor deferred to the gods, so the people were to defer to the *pater patriae*. While Romans were uncomfortable with the concept of a king, they could accept a father figure where the empire represented the family.[99] Ultimately this household metaphor allowed one-man rule to work in Rome.[100] In the kingdom of God, the father figure is fulfilled by God, and the emperor as *pater patriae* is rejected. God the

[94] Elliot, *Family Empires*, 1:63.

[95] Elliot, *Family Empires*, 1:63–72.

[96] See Elliot, *Family Empires*, 1:109–118; Walter Eder, "Augustus and the Power of Tradition," in *The Cambridge Companion to the Age of Augustus*, ed. Karl Galinsky (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 27–32; Severy, *Augustus and the Family at the Birth of the Roman Empire*, 119–128; Ittai Gradel, *Emperor Worship and Roman Religion*, Oxford Classical Monographs (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2002), 142; Malina, *The Social Gospel of Jesus*, 80–81.

[97] Elliot, *Family Empires*, 1:115–116; Alison Cooley, "From the Augustan Principate to the Invention of the Age of Augustus," *JRS* 109 (2019): 78–79, 85; Carlos Noreña, "The Communication of the Emperor's Virtues," *JRS* 91 (2001): 152–160; Carlin Barton, *Roman Honor: The Fire in the Bones* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001), 103; A. Wallace-Hadrill, "The Emperor and His Virtures," *Historia* 30 (1981): 298–323.

[98] Longenecker, *In Stone and Story*, 168; John Scheid, "Augustus and Roman Religion: Continuity, Conservatism, and Innovation," in *The Cambridge Companion to the Age of Augustus*, ed. Karl Galinsky (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 192; Severy, *Augustus and the Family at the Birth of the Roman Empire*, 98.

[99] Elliot, *Family Empires*, 1:96–118; W.V. Harris, *Roman Power: A Thousand Years of Empire* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2016), 108; Severy, *Augustus and the Family at the Birth of the Roman Empire*, 96–113, 119.

[100] Galinsky, *Augustan Culture*, 18, 395; Severy, *Augustus and the Family at the Birth of the Roman Empire*, 113, 122ff; Elliot, *Family Empires*, 1:63–72, 109–11; Gwynaeth McIntyre, *Imperial Cult*, Brill Research Perspectives: Ancient History (Leiden: Brill, 2019), 25.

father fulfills this role for the community.[101] Further, if all in the house are defined in relation to the father, then the members of God's kingdom will now be defined in relation to the father above rather than their terrestrial fathers or their so-called political father. Those who follow Jesus must be prepared to accept a new community, a new kingdom, and a new *pater patriae* whose own virtue is clearly demonstrated in Jesus.

The second alteration is the addition of "persecutions" (v. 30) to the first clause. Within the household of the empire, the emperor was the *paterfamilias*, and the household was managed by the bureaucracy of slaves and former slaves—the *familia caesaris*—who oversaw the daily administration of empire including many public and civic institutions.[102] The *familia caesaris* held positions of authority to work on behalf of the *pater patriae* in the empire. Perhaps also this analogy offers a helpful interpretive lens for the disciples' expectations concerning the kingdom of God. As part of the inner circle of the *paterfamilias* of the kingdom of God, they expected positions of power to adjudicate matters in the kingdom. When Jesus tells the disciples what they shall receive as compensation in the kingdom of God for their sacrifices, however, Jesus does not list positions of authority. He adds "persecutions" to the list. While the *familia caesaris* received power in the Roman sense, the disciples received power in the catachrestic sense advocated by Jesus. Jesus reminds the disciples of this meaning of power in verse 31: Many who are first will be last and the last will be first. The *pater patriae* of this new

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[101] Collins notes that it is possible to read this phrase as a reference to egalitarian politics of the early church, but she does think this is an overreach as the ancient household within the Christian communities was not egalitarian in practice. She suggests, rather, those who follow Jesus should not seek the status of a superior position like "father." This, however, misses the point of God as father and the associations brought to mind by the term in the Roman discourse. Collins, *Mark*, 482.

[102] Elliot, *Family Empires*, 1:121; Severy, *Augustus and the Family at the Birth of the Roman Empire*, 144–145; P. R. C. Weaver, "Vicarius and Vicarianus in the Familia Caesaris," *JRS* 54.1 (1964): 117–28.

kingdom will offer his family positions of power, but that power is something very different than the Roman context. It will look like persecution and martyrdom; it will look like sharing in fulfillment of the passion predictions of Jesus.

Third and finally, Jesus adds "and in the age to come eternal life" to the list of compensations for sacrifice. The eternal life sought by the rich man will be given to those who participate in the kingdom family and embrace the discourse of power articulated by Jesus.[103] While the rich man may have the upper hand socially, economically, and politically, in the age to come, eternal life does not belong to him; it belongs to the last who will be first. Hooker suggests the comment concerning the first and last is out of place in the narrative.[104] I suggest, however, it is the summation of the entire encounter with the rich man. The rich man failed to enter God's kingdom because he would not become the last, the marginalized. The disciples continue to balk at Jesus's requirement that the disciples must understand power differently. They continue to chase status and are surprised when Jesus informs them of the radical nature of kingdom compensation. While they may receive a hundredfold houses, brothers, sisters, mothers, and lands, these are all accompanied by persecution and initial loss. More importantly, all aspects of compensation are associated with the motivation for such acquisition—their preceding loss must be for the sake of Jesus and the gospel, not their own political or social ends.

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[103] Horsley rejects this saying as "a throwaway line" referring back to the unreal question of the rich man claiming Mark has no interest in "eternal life" elsewhere in the narrative. He focuses instead on "in this age" dismissing out of hand the possible implications of the "throwaway line" on the discourse Jesus is constructing. A future element does not deny the significance of the here and now, and he refuses to acknowledge that those experiencing oppression may have eternal expectations. Horsley, *Hearing the Whole Story*, 192.

[104] Hooker, *Mark*, 243. She also sees "persecutions" and "in the age to come eternal life" to be additions made later in the life of the church when the rewards promised were slow in fulfillment.

They must yet again be reminded: the first (socially, politically, and economically) will be last. The last will be first.

Mark 10:32–34: The Third Declaration of Power

On the heels of the revelation that the disciples as members of the new imperial family will receive rewards, including persecution, for their sacrifices for the sake of the gospel, they continue on the road to Jerusalem. The disciples are following Jesus at a distance. Collins suggests viewing the disciples following at a distance as a picture of discipleship.[105] Jesus leads; others follow. I suggest, however, given the reluctance of the disciples thus far in the narrative, the visual picture of the disciples keeping their distance as they follow Jesus suggests they have yet to buy into Jesus's new discourse fully.[106] They continue to follow, but they refuse to embrace the fullness of his mission. They are said to be amazed and afraid.[107] Apparently the assertion that persecution was imminent

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[105] Collins, *Mark*, 484.

[106] While the language here is different, the image calls to mind Peter following at a distance in 14:54 and the woman standing at a distance from the cross in 15:40 (both read ἀπο μακρόθεν). Peter and the women both demonstrate an unwillingness to identify fully with Jesus. Their physical distance becomes a metaphor for their ideological and spiritual distance. In 10:32, Jesus walks ahead of them (προάγων αὐτους) giving readers the same visual distance that becomes explicitly stated in the later stories.

[107] The text here is difficult to decipher. To whom does the text refer when it says "they were amazed" and "those who followed were afraid"? Hooker, *Mark*, 245, notes that some commentators assume the "they" is the disciples and a second group followed who were afraid. Per Hooker, however, the disciples are often described as those who follow. Further why should one group be amazed while another is afraid? Hooker's solution is to say that Jesus and the disciples were amazed and the disciples alone were fearful; So also, Ernst Lohmeyer, *Das Evangelium Des Markus*, (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1967), 219; Some have suggested that the disciples are actually to be identified with those who are afraid over and against the larger group who is amazed. See C.E.B. Cranfield, *The Gospel According to St. Mark* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1959), 335; Painter, *Mark's Gospel*, 147; Seemingly Collins, *Mark*, 484 as well, though she is unclear; Moloney and Lane claim the disciples are those who are amazed and afraid. Moloney, *The Gospel of Mark*, 204; Lane, *The Gospel according to Mark*, 373. I think both terms refer to the disciples but "those who are amazed" likely incorporates others as well given the remark that Jesus took the twelve aside to talk to them about what was to come. Regardless of the extent of the group with Jesus, the disciples are certainly the ones following who are fearful.

inspired fear in the disciples even before the passion prediction is made yet again.[108] Rhoads et. al. argue that fear is the motivator of those who wish to protect their status in Mark's gospel, specifically Herod and Pilate. As Herod and Pilate both respond in fear (fear of losing face, fear of inciting revolt, respectively), so also here the disciples who fear the persecutions that are imminent, are ultimately concerned about their own status preservation. Jesus, however, takes the opportunity to demonstrate his own acceptance of persecution for the kingdom. He turns to his disciples on the same journey begun in Mark 10:1 and informs them again of what is to happen shortly.

This is the third time that Jesus has tried to explain where the true power of the kingdom lies. The third prediction is unique in a number of ways. First, the third passion prediction is the first mention of the group's final destination: Jerusalem. They are following Jesus southward to the very city where God's presence dwells in the Temple. The city would have been an ideal place to announce a great revolutionary or liberation movement, but Jesus informs them that the city is where he will be mocked, spat upon, flogged, and killed.[109] He will also rise, as was told in the previous predictions, but the extreme nature of the death is hard to move past in order to see the resurrection.

Second, the third prediction is the first to connect the Jewish authorities and the Roman authorities as direct participants in the coming passion narrative.[110] The issue of collaboration between colonized local elite and the colonial authority is now directly

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[108] Rhoads, Dewey, and Michie, *Mark as Story*, 121.

[109] Marcus, *Mark 8-16*, 744, claims readers would have been reminded of those "warrior Messiahs and their holy war against Rome" when they marched up to Jerusalem. While the war to which he is referring postdates the narrative time, the sentiment remains. Those messianic figures marched on Jerusalem because of its significance.

[110] Tat-siong Benny Liew, *Politics of Parousia: Reading Mark Inter(con)textually*, Biblical Interpretation 42 (Boston: Brill, 1999), 82–84.

related to the pivotal moment of the narrative, the crucifixion. Jesus has been critical of the Roman discourse of power, and in the third prediction Jesus declares the danger of countering that discourse: the local collaborators and the colonizing power will not allow a challenge to go unanswered.

Third, the third prediction closely mirrors the full progression of the passion narrated in Mark 15.[111] The detail added to the final prediction, according to Kaminouchi, puts the entire episode of Mark 10:35–45 "under the shadow of the cross."[112] The final verse of the section, 10:45, will offer the reason why Jesus will give his life as described in this prediction. Everything in 10:35–45 must be read through the passion narrative to understand the challenge of Jesus's discourse of power to the Roman discourse.

Jesus's explanation of the way to overcome the powers of the world through death and resurrection should be intelligible to the disciples by this point in the narrative. Jesus rejected the honor of apotheosis. The moral superiority of the new empire (Jesus's own program of moral renewal, if you will) has been demonstrated. Jesus has articulated the status of those who follow him in his new imperial family; they are those who suffer. Expressions of power in the kingdom look different than the Roman Empire's expressions of power. Nothing is as it seems. Jesus is not the Messiah they had envisioned; he was not about to overthrow governments and seize a throne, at least not with a sword. He is the first who will put himself last, and the passion prediction is actually the picture of power in the kingdom. The disciples should be prepared to follow suit and understand: the sword cannot compare to death and resurrection.

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[111] This is a common assertion, but significant for the plot. Cf. Dowd, *Reading Mark*, 110; Donahue and Harrington, *The Gospel of Mark*, 314.

[112] de Mingo Kaminouchi, *But It Is Not so Among You*, 90.

Mark 10:35–45: Colonial Aspirations and a Ransom of Colonial Subjects

Mark 10:35-41 Setting the Stage for a Discussion of Politics

Mark 10:35–37. In Mark 10:35 James and John come to Jesus and declare, "Teacher, we want you to do for us whatever we ask of you" (διδάσκαλε, θέλομεν ἵνα ὅ ἐὰν αἰτήσωμέν σε ποιήσῃς ἡμῖν).[113] The two members of Jesus's inner circle who make such a claim are among the three who witnessed the Transfiguration in Mark 9. Peter, the third, has already failed to recognize Jesus's messianic mission in 8:32, and now the other two who joined Jesus on the mountain have shown their lack of acceptance as well. Perhaps they were not taken to the mountain because of their special status as the inner circle but because they were the most hard-hearted of them all![114]

Jesus does not immediately consent to the disciples' request. Rather, Jesus responds with a question of his own: "What do you want me to do for you?" On the heels of the third passion prediction, the request of the brothers is almost laughable. Myers comments, "The episode that follows [the passion prediction] demonstrates that they have not [understood the prediction], and does so in a manner so caustic in its caricature that it stretches the credibility of the narrative."[115] They really have failed to grasp the meaning of Jesus's teaching. They ask to sit at Jesus's right and left hand in his glory after hearing

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[113] Kaminouchi points out the repetition of "sons of Zebedee" in the narrative. He argues the identification shows their semi-privileged status as members of a family with more means than most. As they were part of a family who had hired hands and some superior status among their fellow poor, their petition for places of authority in the kingdom makes logical sense. de Mingo Kaminouchi, *But It Is Not so Among You*, 92–94.

[114] Dowd does not go quite so far as to say "the most hard-hearted," but she does consider them to be representations of the disciples' opacity. Dowd, *Reading Mark*, 110.

[115] Myers, *Binding the Strong Man*, 277.

of the torture Jesus is to endure. The question here is what exactly are the brothers asking for when they request these positions?

Given the colonial context and the disciples' collective resistance to Jesus's counter discourse of power thus far, it would seem most plausible the brothers are requesting positions of political power for the goal of self-aggrandizement in the kingdom of God.[116] Their entire political history and cultural context tell the disciples to seek positions of rank. From their own history, David's mighty men, the Maccabean rules, and even Herod's rise to power, were reminders of what can be achieved when the political winds turn in one's favor.[117] Further the verbal and conceptual connections between the disciples' request and Herod's short story in Mark 6 corroborate this conclusion.

In Mark 6:22–23 Herod declares to his stepdaughter, "Ask me for whatever you wish, and I will give it to you…whatever you ask me, I will give you, up to half my kingdom" (αἴτησίν με ὅ ἐὰν θέλῃς, καὶ δώσω σοι…ὅ τι ἐάν με αἰτήσῃς δώσω σοι ἕως ἡμίσους τῆς βασιλείας μου). The verbal similarities and conceptual overlap between Herod's offer to his stepdaughter and the disciples' request of Jesus is intriguing: θέλομεν ἵνα ὅ ἐὰν αἰτήσωμέν σε ποιήσῃς ἡμῖν (10:35). Herod's foolish offer and vow require him to hand over an innocent man for the sake of preserving his power before the gathered crowd. He thinks himself powerful, but he is forced to concede his will to a girl. The disciples attempt to trap Jesus as Herod trapped himself. Jesus, however, does not take

[116] Cf. Dowd, *Reading Mark*, 111; Moloney, *The Gospel of Mark*, 205; Lohmeyer, *Das Evangelium Des Markus*, 222; Myers, *Binding the Strong Man*, 278; Hooker, *Mark*, 246; Collins, *Mark*, 495.

[117] Mark Moore, *Kenotic Politics: The Reconfiguration of Power in Jesus' Political Praxis*, LNTS 482 (London: Bloomsbury T&T Clark, 2013), 65.

the bait. Jesus responds with a question. He will accomplish his will where Herod was forced to concede his will.[118] The echo between these passages is deliberate and serves to demonstrate the polar opposite nature of Herod's and Jesus's political methods.

Herod represents power as self-aggrandizement and self-promotion. As demonstrated in chapter 4, Jesus directly appeals to this characterization of Herod in Mark 8:14–21 by referencing the danger of the leaven of Herod to the disciples. This episode demonstrates the depth of the leaven's contamination. Despite Jesus's catachrestic usage of the concept of power, the disciples continue to reject Jesus's catachrestic sense in favor of the colonial discourse which applies power as power-over others.

Mark 10:38. Jesus responds to James and John's request: "You do not know what you are asking. Are you able to drink the cup that I drink, or to be baptized with the baptism with which I am baptized?" The claim that the two men do not know (οὐκ οἴδατε) parallels the language of Mark 4:13 in which Jesus asks the disciples if they do not know (οὐκ οἴδατε) the meaning of the parable Jesus has just told. The disciples do not know the meaning, and Jesus is forced to offer a full explanation of the parable of the sower. The repetition of the phrase here suggests the disciples have learned nothing since the beginning. To follow Tolbert, the disciples prove themselves rocky ground yet again.[119] The repetition of baptism language in the text is unnecessary to communicate the meaning of the question. The repetition, however, does enhance the solemnity of the question. Unlike in chapter 4, there will be no explanation given in response to their lack

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[118] See de Mingo Kaminouchi, *But It Is Not so Among You*, 95; Moore, *Kenotic Politics*, 64.

[119] Tolbert, *Sowing the Gospel*, 195–211.

of knowledge. Rather Jesus asks the men two questions. Can you drink the cup? Can you accept the baptism?

The cup. The meaning of the cup in the Old Testament is rather straightforward. While the cup can represent blessing poured out on the recipients, it most often represents a negative destiny, a fate of destruction (Is. 51:17; Jer. 25:15; Ps. 75:8; Jer. 51:7, 49:12; Lam. 4:21; Hab. 2:16).[120] To partake of the cup is to partake of Jesus's destiny as defined in the passion prediction preceding the episode. Further the use of the metaphor of the cup in the rest of Mark's narrative corroborates the negative connotation of the image. In Mark 14:23–24, Jesus takes the cup and offers it to his disciples as the representation of the blood of the covenant poured out for many. This cup is one that leads to bloodshed, not of warriors in battle against a colonizer but of servants/slaves on a colonial cross. In 14:36 Jesus asks for the cup to pass from him, but the will of God will be done. The cup will not pass from him; it will be consumed by him. Dowd notes the allusion to the practice of those alongside the ruler drinking of the ruler's cup.[121] If it is poisoned, they share in his death. The disciples with Jesus will be expected to drink deeply from the cup of suffering with their ruler.

The baptism. While baptism carries a spiritual connotation in the Jewish and Christian traditions, the non-cultic sense of the term is far more enlightening in this text. Legasse notes a series of common non-cultic meanings of the term including "to sink,"

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[120] de Mingo Kaminouchi, *But It Is Not so Among You*, 104.

[121] Dowd, *Reading Mark*, 111. She notes specifically: Gen 40:1–13; 41:9–13; Neh 1:11–2:1; Xenophon, *Cyr*. 1.3.9; Suetonius, *Claud*. 44.2)

“to drown,” or “to engulf.”[122] It can also mean metaphorically “to make perish” (cf. *J.W.* 4.137). The negative connotation of the cup necessitates the negative connotation of the baptismal language as well; to be baptized as Jesus is baptized is to be submerged in suffering. Lagrange captures this meaning well; for Jesus and those who follow, it was “comme s'il devait être plongé dans un abîme de souffrance” (as if he had to be plunged into an abyss of suffering).[123] As Jesus’s identity was made known by God’s declaration at his baptism at the beginning of the story, when Jesus is “drowned in the troubled waters of the passion” his identity is made fully known by the centurion’s declaration of the same (15:39).[124] The disciples have yet to grasp the powerful imagery of losing one’s life to save it, to “be drowned” to be resurrected.[125]

Mark 10:39–40. James and John respond to Jesus’s questions with a simple reply: We are able (δυνάμεθα). Their simple answer is for one of two reasons. First, the two fail to understand what Jesus is saying.[126] They are expecting to drink the cup of blessing and be submerged in whatever glory awaits their Messiah in Jerusalem. This is certainly a plausible reading. The disciples have failed to see a great deal throughout the narrative.

[122] Simon Légasse, *Naissance Du Baptême*, LeDiv.C 5 (Paris: Cerf, 1993), 16.

[123] Marie-Joseph Lagrange, *Évangile Selon Saint Marc* (Paris: Librairie Lecoffre, 1947), 278. Translation mine.

[124] de Mingo Kaminouchi, *But It Is Not so Among You*, 105–107.

[125] Cf. Collins, *Mark*, 497. Collins argues the disciples are expected to share in the act itself as well as the meaning, though in a limited way. They, however, have yet to realize what that means.

[126] See for example these who speak specifically of the misunderstanding motif: Myers, *Binding the Strong Man*, 277–278; Hooker, *Mark*, 247; Dowd, *Reading Mark*, 110–111; Horsley, *Hearing the Whole Story*, 193–194; Donahue and Harrington, *The Gospel of Mark*, 311, 314; Moloney, *The Gospel of Mark*, 205–206; David Watson, *Honor Among Christians: The Cultural Key to the Messianic Secret* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2010), 80. Some are not as clear as others about what is misunderstood specifically, but all those listed here see the disciples misunderstanding the mission of Jesus. Many also connect this story to the future martyrdom of James and John seeing this passage as either a prediction or reflection of their future faithful deaths.

They continue to miss what is obvious to the reader. Here the disciples may be so excited not to have been rebuked or dismissed that they assume the content of Jesus's question is about devotion rather than suffering.

Another possibility, however, presents itself. Perhaps the disciples actually accepted the negative connotations of the language of verse 38 but misapplied the context of the suffering Jesus anticipated. The disciples are well aware that any regime change entails suffering, and for many, death.[127] No resistance movement goes unmet; no challenge to Rome's power goes without swift response. Perhaps James and John recognize the suffering motif but have misapplied it to militant force in revolution rather than the vocation of suffering. In order to come to this conclusion, the disciples have ignored the previous teaching on suffering and death and continue to hear Jesus's teaching through the filter of their own ideology of resistance. If correct, this is further evidence that the disciples continue to resist Jesus's call to understand power differently. Suffering *is* necessary in any regime change, but the disciples continue to neglect the substance of Jesus's teaching on power that explains how power is applied in the kingdom of God. They continue to appropriate Rome's discourse of power for their own ends.

Jesus does not attempt to correct the disciples at this point. Jesus simply offers the disciples that for which they have asked, at least in part. The disciples will in fact drink his cup and be baptized with his baptism. James's and John's attempt to manipulate Jesus is turned back on them, and Jesus manages to gain their consent to suffer alongside him,

[127] Moore makes a very similar argument, claiming the reader should not be surprised at James's and John's reply. Sacrifice is a necessary part of any transfer of power. Moore, *Kenotic Politics*, 65.

even if they are unaware of what that entails. Unlike the "powerful" Herod who is undone by his own word, Jesus has the power to see God's will put into motion.[128]

In the narrative, the Roman discourse of power is unraveling even as Jesus weaves together the final elements of his discourse of power in chapter 10. Even those who represent colonial conceptions of power are unable actually to use that power to its fullest. Herod is bested by a young girl, and if we continue the story through Mark 15, Pilate, the clearest example of Roman authority, finds himself unable to carry out his will either. Pilate at last relents and has Jesus crucified despite his own reservations (15:6–15).[129] Both rulers, the Roman ruler and the local collaborator, are incapable of having their own will fully realized and ultimately succumb to those in positions beneath them (i.e., a young girl, 6:26–27, and the Jewish leaders/mob, 15:11) out of fear of losing their power. The very thing they wish to keep they ultimately lose trying to hold on to it. They are caught in webs of power of which they are supposed to be in control.[130] The disciples (and the reader) should expect this, for those who save their lives lose them in the end (8:35).

While Jesus does grant James and John to drink of his cup and partake in his baptism, Jesus does deny them their original request. Jesus cannot grant to them positions on the right and left when he enters his glory (εἷς σου ἐκ δεξιῶν καὶ εἷς σου ἐξ ἀριστερῶν; 10:40). The positions on the right and left are not for Jesus to grant; they have been prepared for others. In the episode, the recipients for whom those seats have been

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[128] de Mingo Kaminouchi, *But It Is Not so Among You*, 109–110.

[129] For a fuller development of this significant connection, see de Mingo Kaminouchi, *But It Is Not so Among You*, 188–197; Liew, *The Politics of Parousia*, 82.

[130] de Mingo Kaminouchi, *But It Is Not so Among You*, 197.

prepared remain ambiguous. Some have suggested the seats are for no one in particular as special seats of glory are disallowed in the kingdom of God.[131] This, however, is to neglect the verbal parallel in the text. In Mark 15:27, Jesus is said to be crucified with two robbers, "one on his right and one on his left" (ἕνα ἐκ δεξιῶν καὶ ἕνα ἐξ εὐωνύμων αὐτοῦ). This is the only place where these words, even if not quite identical, are used in Mark's narrative. The places of honor are reserved for two criminals who experience death with Jesus.[132] They suffered on crosses next to him as the disciples, James and John included, fled. The places of honor are reserved for those who do not meet the qualifications for greatness in the Roman imperial system. In fact, they could not be further from ideal candidates.

The disciples, however, miss the negative connotations of Jesus's response to James and John. They become angry with the brothers (10:41), not for their request itself, but presumably because the brothers have received something the rest of the band of disciples have not—places of prominence.[133] The ten apparently think the brothers received some special privilege they were all denied. The ten miss the fact that they were already invited to partake in that which was promised to the brothers. The power of the kingdom of God is suffering, and those who follow are asked to become servants of all and lay down their lives for the sake of the gospel. The disciples, however, continue to resist this application of power in favor of their appropriation of the methods espoused by

[131] Best, *Following Jesus: Discipleship in the Gospel of Mark*, 124; Joachim Gnilka, *Das Evangelium Nach Markus* (Zürich: Neukirchener Verlag, 1978), 103.

[132] de Mingo Kaminouchi, *But It Is Not so Among You*, 114; Myers, *Binding the Strong Man*, 278.

[133] de Mingo Kaminouchi, *But It Is Not so Among You*, 116.

the colonial discourse. To embrace any other way would be to shatter their illusions about who belongs in the kingdom and who deserves to benefit from it.

Mark 10:42–45 Engaging the Political Discourse

When the disciples have all fallen short of Jesus's call to envision power differently in light of the coming kingdom of God, Jesus gathers the disciples together for one last teaching episode in the central portion of the Gospel. Jesus takes aim at the heart of the disciples' misunderstanding: the application of power in colonial space.[134] This section of text, while only four verses, is the most complicated and theologically freighted portion of text in Mark's central section. Countless books and articles have been written concerning its content, especially its use of "Son of Man" language, the lexical/translation issues concerning many of the terms, the appropriate context from which to draw for interpretation, and the language of ransom in the closing line of the episode.[135] There is not space herein to recount every significant study or insightful

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[134] Remember from chapter 4, the disciples are resistant to the Gentile mission and their misunderstanding is not about the Gentiles' inclusion in the kingdom of God but rather why they are included. The disciples' misunderstanding about power is the answer to the "why" question. Since power is understood differently, the Gentiles can be included. One need not turn the rage of the oppressor onto the oppressor. There is another way for God to intervene in the world. The disciples, however, have failed to understand how this "other power" is to be understood and implemented.

[135] On these various issues, see for example Morna Dorothy Hooker, *The Son of Man in Mark: A Study of the Background of the Term "Son of Man" and Its Use in St. Mark's Gospel* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1967); A.J.B. Higgins, "Is the Son of Man Problem Insoluble?," in *Neotestamentica et Semitics Studies in Honour of Matthew Black*, ed. E.E. Willis and Max Wilcox (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1969); Geza Vermes, "The 'Son of Man' Debate," *JSNT* 1 (1978): 19–32; Carolyn Osiek, "The Ransom of Captives: Evolution of a Tradition," *HTR* 74.4 (1981): 365–86; Adela Yarbro Collins, "The Origin of the Designation of Jesus as 'Son of Man,'" *HTR* 80.4 (1987): 391–407; David Seeley, "Rulership and Service in Mark 10:41-45," *NovT* 35.3 (1993): 234–50; Max Wilcox, "On the Ransom-Saying in Mark 10:45c, Matt 20:28c," in *Geschichte-Tradition-Reflexion: Festschrift Fur Martin Hengel*, ed. Hubert Cancik, Hermann Lichtenberger, and Peter Schafer (Tubingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1996), 173–86; Hans-Josef Klauck, "Die Kleinasiatischen Beichtinschriften Und Das Neue Testament," in *Geschichte-Tradition-Reflexion: Festschrift Für Martin Hengel*, ed. Hubert Cancik, Hermann Lichtenberger, and Peter Schafer (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1996), 63–87; Adela Yarbro Collins, "The Significance of Mark 10:45 among Gentile Christians," *HTR* 90.4 (1997): 371–82; Rikki Watts, "Jesus' Death, Isaiah 53, and Mark 10:45: A Crux Revisited," in *Jesus and the Suffering Servant: Isaiah 53 and*

contribution to this passage. In what follows, I will focus on those elements that are of particular importance to a study of power as I seek to demonstrate the ways in which Jesus is responding to the nativist essentialist resistance movement as well as the colonial discourse of power embodied in Roman imperial political structures.[136]

Roman Political Expectations and Realities

The behavior of Roman political leaders is well documented in the literature. As outlined in chapter 3, the Roman leaders saw their expansion of empire and the *Pax Romana* to be the work of the gods. The colonial activity of the empire, however, was most certainly brutal. While the Roman elite couch the imperial expansion in terms of divine will, moral superiority, and the right to rule, the Roman military marched across the provincial lands acquiring new land and installing new leaders.[137] They struck down all those in their path and installed new systems of leadership that were congenial to

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Christian Origins, ed. William Bellinger and William Farmer (Harrisburg, PA: Trinity Press International, 1998), 125–51; Delbert Burkett, *The Son of Man Debate: A History and Evaluation* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999); Joel Marcus, "Son of Man as Son of Adam," *RevB* 110.1 (2003): 38–61; Harry Chronis, "To Reveal and to Conceal: A Literary-Critical Perspective on 'the Son of Man' in Mark," *NTS* 51.4 (2005): 459–81; Sharyn Echols Dowd and Elizabeth Struthers Malbon, "The Significance of Jesus' Death in Mark: Narrative Context and Authorial Audience," *JBL* 125.2 (2006): 271–97; Adela Yarbro Collins, "Mark's Interpretation of the Death of Jesus," *JBL* 128.3 (2009): 545–54; Adam Winn, "Tyrant or Servant?: Political Ideology and Mark 10.42-45," *JSNT* 36.4 (2014): 325–52; Matthew Thiessen, "The Many for One or One for the Many? Reading Mark 10:45 in the Roman Empire," *HTR* 109.3 (2016): 447–66; Peter-Ben Smit, "Servant Leadership Revisited: διακονία, Masculinity and Martydom in Mark 10:42–45," *Ecclesiology* 14 (2018): 284–305.

[136] I will interact for the most part with studies that have specifically looked at the ways in which the theme of power has been addressed in the episode and those who have examined the Roman imperial context in relation to the text. This is not to deny the significance of other nuances that may be useful in interpretation; it is simply to say that reading from within a postcolonial methodology aimed at interpreting the story level of the text, some questions are less relevant than others in that discussion.

[137] Johannes Hahn, "Rituals of Killing: Public Punishment, Munera and the Dissemination of Roman Values and Ideology in the Imperium Romanum," in *Imperial Identities in the Roman World*, ed. Wouter Vanacker and Arjan Zuiderhoek (Milton Park: Taylor & Francis, 2017), 36–60; Harris, *Roman Power*, 55; Leo Perdue and Warren Carter, *Israel and Empire: A Postcolonial History of Israel and Early Judaism* (London: Bloomsbury, 2015), 223–227; Philip De Souza, "'They Are the Enemy of All Mankind': Justifying Roman Imperialism in the Late Republic," in *Roman Imperialism: Postcolonial Perspectives*, Leicester Archaeology Monographs 3 (Leicester: Leicester University Press, 1996), 125–131.

Roman rule and to collaboration with Roman leaders.[138] As in most colonial enterprises, the ideology propagated by the empire makes the rule of the colonizer look beneficent and "right," as if it were the only way.[139] The true means of colonization, however, reveals its true nature. The empire is concerned with self-aggrandizement and the advancement of spheres of influence for political, social, and economic gain. Much of this has already been outlined in chapter three and in previous portions of this chapter in relation to Mark 10:1–31. There are, however, a few additions to be made before turning to the clearest discussion of political power in Mark.

Within the Roman imperial discourse there were clear expectations of the Roman rulers. Above all, Romans abhorred tyrants. Absolute power in the hands of a single individual was a difficult concept for the Romans.[140] While the emperor was most certainly an individual with absolute power, there were ways to mitigate tyrannical perceptions. One of the simplest ways to avoid claims of tyranny was through the resistance of honors and titles that represented absolute and tyrannical authority.[141]

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[138] On the collaboration of locals with Roman imperial policies see: Perdue and Carter, *Israel and Empire: A Postcolonial History of Israel and Early Judaism*, 241–251; Simon Samuel, *A Postcolonial Reading of Mark's Story of Jesus*, Library of New Testament Studies 340 (London: T&T Clark, 2007), 46; Philip Esler, "Rome in Apocalyptic and Rabbinic Literature," in *The Gospel of Matthew in Its Roman Imperial Context*, ed. John Riches and David Sim (London: T&T Clark International, 2005), 12–13; Cassidy, *Christians and Roman Rule in the New Testament*, 10; Malina, *The Social Gospel of Jesus*, 35; Janet Huskinson, "Elite Culture and Identity of Empire," in *Experiencing Rome: Culture, Identity, and Power in the Roman Empire*, ed. Janet Huskinson (London: Routledge, 2000), 113.

[139] Bill Ashcroft, Gareth Griffiths, and Helen Tiffin, *Post-Colonial Studies: The Key Concepts*, 2nd ed. (New York: Routledge, 2007), 106. The goal of colonial ideology is always to make the interests of the colonizer appear to be the interests of all.

[140] Adam Winn, *Reading Mark's Christology Under Caesar: Jesus the Messiah and Roman Imperial Ideology* (Downers Grove: IVP Academic, 2018), 96; cf. Winn, "Tyrant or Servant?," 330.

[141] Winn, *Reading Mark's Christology Under Caesar*, 96–104; Bruce Winter, *Divine Honours for the Caesars: The First Christians Responses* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2015), 92; Clifford Ando, *Imperial Ideology and Provincial Loyalty in the Roman Empire* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000), 146.

Augustus, for example, resisted titles that conveyed the possession of absolute authority such as the title of dictator for life or permanent consul. He even resisted the title *pater patriae* though eventually conceded to this designation.[142] By resisting these public honors (*recusatio*), the ruler protected himself from claims of absolute power and appeared to uphold the Roman republican ideals and values. Winn points out that Julius Caesar forgot these Roman ideals and values, wielded his singular power, and accepted the title of "dictator for life," and it is likely what led to his assassination.[143]

The emperor, however, regularly accepted some titles. The title of princeps was quite common. The title of princeps speaks of the emperor as the first citizen of Rome.[144] As first citizen it is assumed that he remains under Roman law. When rulers considered themselves above the law, such as Caligula and Nero, they were summarily critiqued for tyranny.[145] Those who remained (or who claimed to remain) under the law placed greater ideological distance between themselves and the appearance of absolute power or tyranny.[146]

Further Winn reminds readers that the emperor was expected to show deference to the Roman people. One embodiment of such deference is in the emperor's willingness to kneel before the people.[147] This kneeling was an especially powerful symbolic action before the Roman Senate in an era not far removed from senatorial rule. Wallace-Hadrill

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[142] Ando, *Imperial Ideology*, 146, reminds that while Augustus initially refuses the title, his refusal prompts greater consensus. cf. Suetonius, *Aug*. 58

[143] Winn, *Reading Mark's Christology Under Caesar*, 97.

[144] Winn, *Reading Mark's Christology Under Caesar*, 109.

[145] Suet., *Cal*. 23–26, 38, *Nero* 32–35.

[146] Adam Winn, "Resisting Honor: The Markan Secrecy Motif and Roman Political Ideology," *JBL* 133.3 (2014): 336.

[147] Winn, *Reading Mark's Christology Under Caesar*, 100. Cf. Suet. *Aug.* 68; *Tib.* 45; *Galb*. 13.

comments, "Only an emperor could regard self-degradation as magnificent."[148] He also embraced an outward appearance of modesty, as extravagance was a sign of tyranny. The best among the leaders of Rome would be willing to sacrifice himself for the state and provide great benefaction to the people.[149] Each of these actions ensured the outward, visible presentation of the emperor was one that reinforced deference to the people and guarded against the charge of tyrannical behavior. Emperors that did not abide by such expectations embodied in the Roman political ideology were chastised, rejected, and denied honors typically given to living and dead emperors.[150]

Reading Mark 10:42–45 through the Lens of Imperial and Nativist Essentialist Discourse

Mark 10:42

Immediately after the disciples requested positions of power, Jesus gathers the disciples together and declares, "οἴδατε ὅτι οἱ δοκοῦντες ἄρχειν τῶν ἐθνῶν κατακυριεύουσιν αὐτῶν καὶ οἱ μεγάλοι αὐτῶν κατεξουσιάζουσιν αὐτῶν." For the first time, Jesus declares the disciples know ("οἴδατε"), an acknowledgment that contrasts significantly with v. 38 in which James and John do not know ("οὐκ οἴδατε"). When it comes to the discussion of the ideology and application of power in the Roman world, they are well versed in imperial politics. Jesus knows they know because they have been applying the methods of colonial politics throughout the central section and have based

[148] Andrew Wallace-Hadrill, "Civilis Princeps: Between Citizen and King," *JRS* 72 (1982): 38.

[149] Reading from a Roman perspective: Winn, *Reading Mark's Christology Under Caesar*, 105; From a Greek kingship perspective: Dowd, *Reading Mark*, 113. Cf. Seneca, *Ben*. 4.31.2–4.32.4; Dio. *1 Regn*. 1.22–23

[150] Winn, *Reading Mark's Christology Under Caesar*, 99. For examples of emperors failing to do so, see Suet. *Cal*. 26, 37, 45, 48–49, *Nero*, 30–31, 37; Cassius Dio, *Roman History*, 59.16.1, 25.5, 59.26.3

their rejection of the Gentiles on the same. While they are not fans of Rome, the Roman discourse of power has structured their thinking.

Translating the Discourse

"οἱ δοκοῦντες ἄρχειν τῶν ἐθνῶν." This phrase is the subject of a minor translational debate. How should one translate οἱ δοκοῦντες? Manson sees a parallel between οἱ δοκοῦντες and θέλῃ in verse 43.[151] Given the aspirational nature of θέλῃ, he suggests οἱ δοκοῦντες should take on similar aspirational overtones—those aspiring to rule. Problematically, however, those who rule over the Gentiles are not aspiring to do so; they actually are ruling over the people. While the disciples may have aspirational goals, colonial rulers most assuredly have seen their wills realized already. Collins suggests a rhetorical shift in the opposite direction. She claims the word "is a term of honor and contains no hint of depreciation" and translates the phrase simply as, "those who are recognized as ruling the nations."[152] Given the context, however, this seems unlikely. Jesus is offering a critique of the Roman system of ruling over others, denying the same kind of rulership in God's kingdom. It makes little sense then, to see in the term hints of honor. Further, with reference to her translation, one can recognize that one entity rules over an empire or territory and have great contempt and displeasure for such an acknowledgement. In the colonial context, just because one is "recognized," it does not follow that one is respected.

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[151] While dated, Manson's suggestion is interesting as it rightly notes the significant parallelism between verses 42 and 43–44 but comes to a rather strained interpretation of δοκοῦντες. Thomas Manson, *The Teaching of Jesus: Studies of Its Form and Content*, 2nd ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1955), 313–314.

[152] Collins, *Mark*, 499.

More commonly, scholars have suggested the expression is used ironically: “those who seem to govern” or those who give the impression of their right to rule.[153] In political rhetoric δοκεω + verb is frequently used in a derogatory or ironic way.[154] This usage “recognizes the factuality of the action expressed by the verb, while also casting a shadow of suspicion on the real performance of that action.”[155] Further, given the negative appraisal of the ruling authorities thus far in the narrative, the deprecatory meaning is likely.[156] In Mark’s Gospel the powers of darkness have been connected to the political realm repeatedly (3:26–27, 5:1–20, and 8:33); those who govern only seem to have power to do so. In Jesus’s teaching on power, true power lies beyond the political sphere of Roman imperialism. Those who rule the Gentiles are not the true rulers and only seem to be in charge of the world.[157] True power to rule, as understood in the catachrestic sense, belongs to God alone. In light of the Roman belief that the gods had guaranteed their great colonial expansion and right to rule, Jesus’s assertion that their rulers only “seem to rule” calls into question the power of their gods as well.

κατακυριεύουσιν and κατεξουσιάζουσιν. The two terms utilized by the author to describe the behavior of those who seem to rule are also debated. The translational concern rests with the addition of κατα to the verbs. Does this addition exaggerate the

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[153] de Mingo Kaminouchi, *But It Is Not so Among You*, 119–122; Gnilka, *Das Evangelium Nach Markus*, 103; Lagrange, *Évangile Selon Saint Marc*, 281; Moore, *Kenotic Politics*, 66; Moloney, *The Gospel of Mark*, 206; Cranfield, *The Gospel According to St. Mark*, 340; Myers, *Binding the Strong Man*, 278.

[154] de Mingo Kaminouchi, *But It Is Not so Among You*, 120.

[155] de Mingo Kaminouchi, *But It Is Not so Among You*, 121.

[156] Winn, *Reading Mark’s Christology Under Caesar*, 106.

[157] Marcus, *Mark 8-16*, 755.

traditional meaning of "general authority" conveyed by the terms κυριεύω and εξουσιάζω to mean "an abuse or tyrannical use of power"?[158] Winn argues the prefix should be understood to exaggerate the general meaning of authority to call to mind tyrannical abuses, and that given the Roman detestation to tyrannical behavior, the assertion that the Roman rulers were tyrants would have struck a chord with hearers familiar with Roman political discourse.[159] So also, Marcus notes that in the LXX the uses of κατακυριεύω do have to do with violent conquest or aggressive usurpation.[160] Further, per Gundry, when Luke attempts to tone down the meaning of the passage, he removes the prefix.[161]

While their assertion is plausible given the addition of the prefix can result in exaggeration of a verbal stem, in this case such a reading seems plausible but unnecessary. First are the lexical concerns given the usage of the terms in the New Testament and the LXX. According to Clark, in the Septuagint the intensification of κυριεύω by κατα is not apparent.[162] In fact, contra Marcus, not every instance in the LXX indicates some sense of violent conquest or aggressive usurpation. See for example Genesis 1:28 and 9:1 in which God tells the first humans and Noah respectively to

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[158] Winn, *Reading Mark's Christology Under Caesar*, 107–108; Horsley, *Jesus and the Spiral of Violence: Popular Jewish Resistance in Roman Palestine*, 244; Myers, *Binding the Strong Man*, 278–279. Myers goes so far as to claim, with reference to κατεξουσιάζουσιν, the author "may well have invented this intensive verbal form." Horsley, *Hearing the Whole Story*, 194; For those who agree κατεξουσιάζουσιν denotes some sense of tryanny, see France, *The Gospel of Mark*, 418–419; W. Grundmann, *Das Evangelium Nach Markus*, THKNT 2 (Berlin: Evangelische Verlagsanstalt, 1973), 219; Lane, *The Gospel according to Mark*, 383; Moloney, *The Gospel of Mark*, 207.

[159] Winn, *Reading Mark's Christology Under Caesar*, 106.

[160] Marcus, *Mark 8-16*, 748. As cited by Marcus, see e.g., Num 21:24; 32:22, 29; Pss 10:5, 110:2, and 1 Macc 15:30, Ps 19:13, 119:133

[161] R. H. Gundry, *Mark: A Commentary on His Apology for the Cross* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1993), 579; contra Winn, Marcus, and Gundry, cf. K.W. Clark, "The Meaning of [Kata]kyrieyein," in *The Gentile Bias and Other Essays*, NovTSup 54 (Leiden: Brill, 1980), 207–12.

[162] Clark, "The Meaning of [Kata]kyrieyein," 101.

exercise dominion over the earth (κατακυριεύσατε).[163] There is no universal negative connotation to the term κατακυριεύω in the LXX.[164] The same is true of the term in Barnabus in which the two uses of the term κατακυριεύω (6:13; 6:17) show no significant difference in meaning from the usage of κυριεύω without the prefix (6:18; 7:11; 21:5).[165] Clark argues the same is true of the Shepherd of Hermas in which the term with the prefix is used thirteen times and without the prefix twice with no distinguishable difference between the two.[166] In the New Testament as a whole, the usage of κυριεύω without the prefix does not seem to carry more positive or less exaggerated connotations of power or authority. See, for example, the usage in Romans 6:9 and 14 in which death is said no longer to have dominion over (κυριεύει) Jesus and thus sin will no longer have dominion over (κυριεύσει) humans. The dominion in mind in Romans is oppressive (executed by death and sin). So also, in 2 Corinthians 1:24 in which the author states, "we do not lord it over (κυριεύομεν) your faith." The contrast noted here is between those who would express dominion over those under their care versus those who work as coworkers. Thus, when Luke employs the term κυριεύω instead of κατακυριεύω, it does not necessarily denote the softening of the language of Mark and Matthew, but rather the

[163] See LXX usage: Gen 1:28, 9:1; Num 21:24; 32:22, 29; Jer. 3:14; Dan 11:39; Ps 9:26, 31; 18:14; 48:15; 71:8; 109:2; 118:133. The Genesis passages seem to express the sense of exercising rightful authority over that which has been entrusted. The other instances are utilized in the context of warfare or divine authority over the people, but even there the idea of tyranny or inappropriate authority is not necessarily indicated. In Ps 48:15 the upright ones have dominion and in Ps 109:2, God gives to "my Lord" the imperative to rule in the midst of his enemies. The word does not carry a universal negative sense in the LXX.

[164] Note also the usage of the term without the prefix in Genesis 3:16 in which domination seems to be in view and Judges 14:4 in which Samson seeks vengeance with reference to those exercising dominion over them. The prefix does not necessitate an exaggerated reading, nor does its absence preclude one. The argument must be driven by context rather than the definitive nature of the lexical meaning.

[165] Clark, "The Meaning of [Kata]kyrieyein," 102.

[166] Clark, "The Meaning of [Kata]kyrieyein," 209.

usage of an interchangeable term whose meaning is driven by context not by the presence or absence of the prefix.

The term κατεξουσιάζω is even more difficult to translate due to the limited usage of the term. In the New Testament, it is used only here in 10:42 and rarely throughout Greek literature. While *BDAG* does suggest is it possible the word could mean something like "tyrannize,"[167] that interpretation would apply only if necessitated by context, a context not necessitated by 10:42, especially if κατακυριεύω need not carry tyrannical overtones. Further Winn's argument that κατα intensifies the verb stem ἐξουσιάζω is based largely on the comparison of the verb with δυναστεύω.[168] This verb, however, does not appear in the New Testament at all. The compound version of δυναστεύω with κατα does appear in the New Testament and the LXX and appears to carry the connotation of oppressive forces exercising power (Acts 10:38; Jas 2:6; Ex 1:13; 1 Sam 12:4; 2 Macc 1:28), but without a point of reference within the text to the verbal stem absent the prefix, it does make comparison more difficult. If the meaning of the terms with the prefix cannot be definitively argued in one direction or the other, then the meaning must be driven by context rather than grammar.

Thus, without lexical certainty, the meaning of the terms should be based upon context. In Mark 10, the point of Jesus's teaching is not that he is responding only to abuses committed by the Roman imperial rulers that appear as tyranny but the whole means of ruling over the people, the colonial system as a whole. The "general authority" by which the Romans rule and the means by which they "have mastery over" the people is the problem. The "normal" way as defined by the colonial discourse is the "wrong"

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[167] BDAG s.v. "κατεξουσιάζω,"

[168] Winn, *Reading Mark's Christology Under Caesar*, 107.

way. Admittedly, this "normal" means of ruling might be considered tyrannical, especially to modern eyes, but Winn's point is not that Roman rule is tyrannical by nature but that the Romans are not living up to their own ideal of rule. In Winn's estimation, Jesus manages to live up to the best of Roman imperial ideology thus calling into question the right of Roman rulers who are tyrants to rule at all.[169] I argue, however, that Jesus goes a step farther. Jesus does not simply get right what Rome gets wrong with her own imperial claim but supersedes Roman rule altogether, calling into question the ideal of Roman rule and the basis upon which that rule rests. Concerning κατακυριεύουσιν, an alternative translation of "those who seem to be rulers of the Gentiles *gain dominion over them*," makes the colonial implications much clearer. The rulers of the Gentiles gained dominion over the people and now exercise their perceived authority over the people, despite no true basis for that administration of authority. Jesus, however, has true divine authority as the actual Son of God.

Mark 10:43–44

Jesus argues that the Roman means of political administration are unacceptable. First, they do not have divine approval and support for their rule; they *seem* to rule. Second, they gained dominion over the people through violent and unjust means. Colonial violence secured the provinces and peripheral lands of the empire. These are not acceptable means to build an empire. Third, they now rule over the people through exploitation and reinforcement of boundaries that limit access to positions of authority

[169] Winn, *Reading Mark's Christology Under Caesar*, 108–109. He argues some hearers would have heard Jesus advocating for the Roman ideal over and against present Roman rulers (Augustus, Tiberius, and Vespasian) who are "tyrants in sheep's clothing." Others would have held Augustus in high esteem and thus hear Jesus contrasting good rulers with bad rulers as opposed to a contrast between Jesus and all Roman rulers. In either case, the ultimate end is a Jesus who looks like the best of Roman ideology (even if a contrast to the present rulers) not the advocate of an alternative ideology.

and resources. This is not how it is among those who choose to be a part of God's kingdom. Those who embrace Jesus's discourse of power must relinquish these practices whether they stand as a part of the Roman Empire or in resistance to it. The verb tense in 10:43a is significant. The verb is in the present tense (ἐστιν). It *is* not this way among those who follow Jesus. While some manuscripts amend the verb to reflect the future tense, this is to miss the point of Jesus's discourse.[170] This action is expected *now* among the disciples.[171]

Mark 10:43b–44 amplifies the ideas presented in the previous teaching sections in 8:34–37 and 9:35, though with verbal parallels to 9:35. If the disciples wish to be μέγας or πρῶτος they must become διάκονος and δοῦλος. The words chosen here are significant for understanding the ways in which Jesus is responding to the Roman discourse of power. Those who wish to be great (μέγας) are the disciples. The disciples seem to have been preoccupied with greatness since the early moments of the narrative, especially since Mark 8. They have turned away those who are in no way great (i.e., children). Concerning the significance of πρῶτος, Winn points out, the title princeps is often translated as ἡγεμών, but this word does not capture the ideological significance of the term.[172] The term πρῶτος would, in his estimation, come much closer to capturing the ideological underpinnings of the term princeps.[173] For those familiar with the concept of

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[170] de Mingo Kaminouchi, *But It Is Not so Among You*, 128. In favor of εσται: A C[3] f [1.13] 𝔐 q bo[ms]. In favor of ἐστιν: א B C* D L W Δ Θ Ψ 700 2427 *pc* lat co.

[171] de Mingo Kaminouchi, *But It Is Not so Among You*, 128–129; Similarly Myers, *Binding the Strong Man*, 279 but Myers goes a step farther claiming that the phrase is meant sarcastically. Surely and obviously, this is not what is happening among you!

[172] Winn, *Reading Mark's Christology Under Caesar*, 109.

[173] Winn, *Reading Mark's Christology Under Caesar*, 109.

the *first citizen* in Roman imperial ideology, πρῶτος would likely call to mind the imperial title. While the allusion to the princeps might be weak on its own, in the context of a discourse full of blatant political terminology and direct reference to those who "rule over the Gentiles," the allusion becomes, not only possible, but probable.

If anyone desires to be great or first, that one must become διάκονος and δοῦλος. The term διάκονος signifies a broad range of meanings including those who serve as messengers, intermediaries, servants in deed or waiting tables, or even diplomats such as ambassadors.[174] This term, when taken together with the following term (δοῦλος), seems to point to positions of service. I would suggest, however, given the political overtones, the concept of a kind of ambassador is also appealing. The disciples should represent and advocate for the kingdom of which they are now a part and the political and social discourse of power that undergirds it.

The term δοῦλος is much easier to translate. The word means slave.[175] The question surrounding this term is how the word should be understood in context. Winn suggests the term is a hyperbolic image meant to heighten the social distance between the πρῶτος and the δοῦλος. The combination of these terms then must have been jarring.[176] It is possible, however, to view the term in the context of the broader political discourse rather than as a metaphor for an individual slave. Lavan has convincingly demonstrated that the empire and her subjects utilized the image of slavery to denote those subjected to Roman imperialism.[177] According to Lavan, Roman writers conceived of those they

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[174] BDAG s.v. "διάκονος"

[175] BDAG s.v. "δοῦλος," This word applies to slaves both in a socioeconomic context as well as those duty bound or offering total allegiance to another.

[176] Winn, *Reading Mark's Christology Under Caesar*, 110.

conquered not only as "other" but as "slave." When "slaves" (i.e. the colonized peoples) rebelled the "Roman texts regularly identify the rebels with troublesome slaves who need to be crushed into submission."[178] After Cicero, writers make no effort to distinguish between different groups, classes, and nations conquered but rather "conflate all Rome's non-citizen subjects within a single generic category," all of whom were considered to be in a servile position in relation to the empire.[179] The Jewish people are specifically addressed by Cicero, who denigrates the Jews as a barbaric and hostile people whose loss to Roman forces proves how little the gods cared for them: "Just how dear [that race] is to the immortal gods was shown by the fact that it was defeated, farmed out, made a slave" (Cic. *Flac*. 69).[180] Tacitus and Pliny also describe Roman conquest and rule as slavery of those who are conquered.[181] This language of slavery further confirms the Roman right to rule over the conquered territories: slaves need a master.

In light of the designation of the colonized as slaves, the use of the term here by Jesus becomes all the more significant. The disciples who seek to throw off the yoke of Roman slavery are here instructed to become slaves willingly. The Roman discourse of power asserts that those in slavery are subject in all things to the empire. Jesus's discourse of power declares that those who become slaves for the kingdom of God will actually be the first (princeps allusion?). The image of slavery used here was not for the individual alone. The colonial echoes within the words issued to Mark's disciples seems

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[177] Myles Lavan, *Slaves to Rome: Paradigms of Empire in Roman Culture* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013).

[178] Lavan, *Slaves to Rome*, 15, 80.

[179] Lavan, *Slaves to Rome*, 52.

[180] Lavan, *Slaves to Rome*, 81–82. Translation by Lavan

[181] Lavan, *Slaves to Rome*, 91–96. Pliny, *Pan*. 32.2; Tacitus, *Ann*. 14.31.2

intentional. While they wish to overthrow their colonial overlords through Roman means, speaking violence to violence, Jesus advocates for the paradoxical embrace of the term forced upon them by Rome.

Mark 10:45

Jesus concludes the development of his discourse of power in chapter ten with a final evaluation of his own coming passion and its significance: καὶ γὰρ ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ ἀνθρώπου οὐκ ἦλθεν διακονηθῆναι, ἀλλὰ διακονῆσαι καὶ δοῦναι τὴν ψυχὴν αὐτοῦ λύτρον ἀντὶ πολλῶν. This final verse plays on the verbiage of the previous verse. Jesus declares that he has come not to be served but to serve. In keeping with the suggestion made above, Jesus serves as the representative of God, announcing the coming kingdom of God. He did not come to claim a position of authority by Rome's standards but rather announces the coming of an alternative kingdom and a rival discourse of power. There are, however, two major interpretive concerns in verse 45: the meaning and usage of the Son of Man and the usage of λύτρον.

Son of Man. The term Son of Man originates from within the Jewish context rather than the Roman context.[182] There is, however, a point of contact between the Son of Man language and Jewish resistance to imperial applications of power. The image of the Son of Man in Daniel 7 is of one who is a "glorious and eschatological figure who will finally overcome the brutal forces of the world empires and give the victory to the

[182] Collins does argue that if Jesus alluded to Daniel 7 and those sayings are original to Jesus, it is clear why the early church equated the two figures. This reading is concerned with reading narratively the text as it stands without concern for the history of the connection between Jesus and the Son of Man. For an overview of the scholarly discourse (esp. Vermes, Bultmann, Perrin, Vielhauer, and Mack) on the origin of the identification of Jesus with the Son of Man, see Collins, "The Origin of the Designation of Jesus as 'Son of Man.'"

holy people."[183] The disciples have embraced the Danielic vision of the Son of Man.[184] Kaminouchi argues the central portion of the narrative is an attempt by Jesus to redefine the concept of the Son of Man for the disciples on their way to Jerusalem.[185] Through the invocation of the fourth servant song in Isaiah 53, the image of the Son of Man whose glory is lost and then recovered supplements the victorious image of Daniel 7. Suffering is considered a crucial component of glory.[186] The disciples, however, continue to embrace glory alone. Mark 10:45 is another attempt by Jesus to communicate the necessity of suffering to the Son of Man's mission, previously communicated in 8:31, 9:12, 9:30, and 10:33. Ultimately, Jesus appropriates the image of Daniel 7 and subverts the disciples' expectation of a glorious Son of Man for his own discourse of power. The nativist essentialist response to Roman colonization was built on the foundation of God's deliverance through (likely) violent means, and the disciples expected to share in the glory of the Son of Man in the kingdom of God.[187] The paradox of the suffering and glorified one was a powerful challenge to nativist essentialist discourse.[188] Peter has

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[183] de Mingo Kaminouchi, *But It Is Not so Among You*, 146.

[184] Moore notes the preference Jesus has for this title in Mark over any other. While the term may have been used in a more generic sense prior to Jesus, Jesus seems to use it individually and personally in Mark's Gospel. Dunn also argues that Jesus clearly understood himself as the Son of Man as did the early church. Moore, *Kenotic Politics*, 70–73; James Dunn, *Christology in the Making: A New Testament Inquiry into the Origins of the Doctrine of the Incarnation*, 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1996), 87.

[185] de Mingo Kaminouchi, *But It Is Not so Among You*, 146.

[186] Moore, *Kenotic Politics*, 72; Marcus, *Mark 8-16*, 756.

[187] Moore offers a helpful overview of the Messianic expectation associated with the Son of Man. Note specifically the connection in 1 Enoch 46.1 and 2 Esdras 13.3, as well as Rev 1.13–14. For a far more in depth evaluation see Burkett (esp. 112). Moore, *Kenotic Politics*, 70–73; Burkett, *The Son of Man Debate: A History and Evaluation*.

[188] Samuel specifically evaluates the concept of the Son of Man from a postcolonial perspective and comes to a similar conclusion to my own. He claims, Jesus disrupts the "hegemonic mind-frame" of disciples and the native Jewish perceptions of Son of Humanity, where the Son of Humanity is a "nativist

already rejected such a concept of Messiah (8:32), but this is the only Messiah Mark's Jesus proclaims.[189]

The meaning and function of λύτρον. The term λύτρον, like the Son of Man, does have significance in the Jewish tradition.[190] For those familiar with the Jewish scriptures, Collins argues they would have perceived an allusion to Isaiah 53:11–12.[191] In Isaiah 53, a righteous one serves many well (δίκαιον εὖ δουλεύοντα πολλοῖς, LXX). In verse 12, this one pours out his soul to death and bears the sins of many (παρεδόθη εἰς θάνατον ἡ ψυχὴ αὐτοῦ... καὶ αὐτὸς ἁμαρτίας πολλῶν ἀνήνεγκε, LXX). By affiliating Jesus with this figure in Isaiah 53, Jesus is fulfilling the servant role who is pictured as a scapegoat but clearly supersedes the scapegoat as a willing participant.[192] Samuel notes the significance of Jesus's action in relation to the nativist essentialist understanding of the world, specifically its vision of continual sacrifice. Jesus's sacrificial death, as an act of God, upsets the sacrificial system of the Jewish people and their religious institutions. The

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essentialist figure who delivers the elect and pure of Israel by militant means." Samuel, *A Postcolonial Reading of Mark's Story of Jesus*, 133; Beavis, *Mark*, 158 from an alternative methodology.

[189] Myers, *Binding the Strong Man*, 279.

[190] For a helpful study on the reception history of this term and the implications for interpretation, see J. Christopher Edwards, *The Ransom Logion In Mark and Matthew: Its Reception and Its Significance for the Study of the Gospels* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2012).

[191] Collins, "The Significance of Mark 10:45 among Gentile Christians," 372; cf. David Garland, *A Theology of Mark's Gospel* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2015), 475–476.

[192] Hooker, *Mark*, 248–249; Horsley, *Hearing the Whole Story*, 194. Hooker claims the theology of Is. 40–55 is significant for Mark's Gospel, but asserts that given the lack of verbal parallels, especially to λύτρον, the text cannot function as the basis of interpretation. She argues the primary basis of interpretation should be the slavery metaphor applied to freedom from slavery in Egypt. Her critique of the language is apt, but the conceptual parallels of Is. 53 are nonetheless enlightening. Direct parallels are not the only way to allude to Old Testament citations. Horsley also suggests debt slavery is a better Old Testament referent than Is. 53. He argues for a background found in Leviticus 25, 47–55. The referent is to the covenantal mechanism by which those who ended up in debt-slavery could be ransomed.

sacrificial system is now redundant in light of Jesus's death and subsequent resurrection.[193]

The idea of being ransomed carries political overtones for the nativist essentialist discourse as well. National bondage, whether to colonial powers in their homeland or exile, was the result of sin. To deal with sin meant to free the nation from national bondage as well.[194] Jesus provides this freedom through the ransom, but the means and result are different than expected. Jesus is the righteous one who provides the ransom contrary to texts such as Is. 43:3 and Prov. 21:18 where the wicked were given to ransom the righteous. Jesus's resistance to traditional conceptions of power does not make him apolitical in nature; they make him differently political.[195]

Given the context of the narrative, however, it seems only prudent to explore the meaning and function of the term in the Roman context as well. The term is first and foremost a term taken from the language of slavery. To provide a ransom was to manumit a slave or a prisoner of war.[196] Given the context offered above concerning the usage of slave to describe those who follow after Jesus as well as those who have been conquered by Rome, perhaps the same conceptual field applies here as well.[197] If the people

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[193] Samuel, *A Postcolonial Reading of Mark's Story of Jesus*, 134.

[194] Moore, *Kenotic Politics*, 75–78.

[195] For a helpful overview of the interpretive options, see Collins, *Mark*, 499–504.

[196] Wilcox, "On the Ransom-Saying in Mark 10:45c, Matt 20:28c," 178. Wilcox argues the language of "ransom" should be understood in relation to payment for hostages/slaves and appeals to the usage in Josephus.

[197] See specifically Down and Malbon who argue that the ransom language signifies that the primary problem addressed here is not guilt but rather captivity or slavery: "the death of the Markan Jesus perform[s] 'for many' the service of liberation from bondage to oppression for membership in the covenant community that constitutes a 'house of prayer for all the nations' (11:17)." (271) Dowd and Struthers Malbon, "The Significance of Jesus' Death in Mark."

conquered by the Romans were slaves of Rome and Jesus is providing the ransom for many, perhaps the colonial authorities are also in view. Jesus is ransoming the people from the colonial powers just as prisoners of war are ransomed from the enemy. They will no longer be slaves to Rome; they may choose to be slaves for the kingdom of God.[198] This is not, however, to deny the spiritual implications of Jesus's sacrifice.[199] As noted earlier in chapter 4, the colonial powers have been narratively connected to the powers of Satan. The Roman imperial discourse had infiltrated the disciples and Peter rebukes Jesus's prediction of suffering on that basis. Jesus, however, calls it the work of Satan (8:33). So also in Mark 5:1–20 the unclean spirit, Legion, is both an allusion to Rome and a manifestation of dark forces. So also in Mark 10:45, the ransom provided frees the many from the powers of Satan but also from the Roman discourse of power and its sway over the people.[200] Ironically, since the sacrifice is redemptive for the people, it is ultimately an act of God not the Jewish or Roman leaders, and thus Jesus shows the

[198] Moore argues the point of the passage is missed if one focuses on the concept of personal sin over and against the political nature of ransom language. The sacrifice is atoning in nature but is also central to the political agenda of establishing the kingdom of God. Moore, *Kenotic Politics*, 68.

[199] Collins explores the significance of the "ransom" in the epigraphical evidence of the Greco-Roman world. She notes that many saw this word as applying in circumstances in which an individual would make amends for themselves or their family members for actions that offended the gods. Their ritual acts resulted in a sacral manumission. The connection between the need for divine intervention and freedom from slavery (literal and metaphorical) is already well established in the Greco-Roman literature. While the act of Jesus was not a "ritual act" like those in the confessional inscriptions Collins surveyed, the level of similarity likely led hearers, in her estimation, to perceive the same layers of meaning. Collins, "The Significance of Mark 10:45 among Gentile Christians," 373–380.

[200] Similarly, though without reference to the discourse of power in the narrative, Dowd and Malbon argue that the enemies in Mark are both human and spiritual. The "many" need to be freed from "the great ones" who rule over them who are themselves agents of the powers of evil. The spiritual enemies victimize individuals to whom Jesus offers his assistance as the great exorcist. To free the "many," however, Jesus would have to offer a significant payment. In their interpretation, the payment is offered to the enemy, resulting in freedom for the many. See Dowd and Struthers Malbon, "The Significance of Jesus' Death in Mark," 284, 297; Contra Collins, "Mark's Interpretation of the Death of Jesus," who argues for the death of Jesus as a sacrifice for sin.

magnitude of God's power.[201] Through sacrifice and service, Jesus has forced the Roman Empire to do the bidding of a new empire through his death and invalidates the colonial purpose for his death.

Kaminouchi comes close to this conclusion claiming λύτρον can be "interpreted as a liberation from the ideologies and relations of power in which the world, including its rulers, is entrapped."[202] While he does not make the colonial and political application obvious, it does seem implied by his statement. The slaves of Rome need liberation from their colonial overlords. Since the colonial overlords are connected to the dark forces of Satan, to ransom from one, is to ransom from both. As Dowd and Malbon note so beautifully, Mark's narrative context suggests about the death of Jesus the following:

> That Jesus' death is part of the larger—and ongoing—story of God and the covenanted people of God, who have been ransomed from captivity and set free to follow Jesus in his march toward the reign of God. That the reign of God really is breaking into history—thus the power of evil is being overthrown. That those who follow Jesus are, like him, called to serve rather than be served, and especially to free the many from the tyranny of the few…God is present in the world, even in the face of evil, for God is stronger than evil…and God remains present in whatever results from such service—both in life and death.[203]

Jesus offers the disciples the freedom from their colonial overlords, but not in the way they expected. The Roman application of power is unable to ransom the slaves. The sacrifice of Jesus, the kind of sacrifice to which the disciples are called as well, is capable of freeing the many who accept it.

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[201] Samuel, *A Postcolonial Reading of Mark's Story of Jesus*, 134.

[202] de Mingo Kaminouchi, *But It Is Not so Among You*, 154.

[203] Dowd and Struthers Malbon, "The Significance of Jesus' Death in Mark," 297.

Countering Alternative Proposals Relating to Roman Discourses of Power

Before offering a brief comprehensive overview of the discourse of power crafted by the Markan Jesus and the way in which that discourse holds together the stories of chapter ten, it is necessary to respond to two competing interpretations of Jesus's relation to Roman imperial discourse. Adam Winn and Benny Tat-siong Liew have each read Mark 10:42–45 with an eye to colonial discourse and come to conclusions that markedly differ from my own.

Winn argues that Mark 10:42–45 should be read through the lens of the Roman imperial political ideology. He claims Jesus was imitating Roman colonial practices by instructing others throughout the Gospel to remain silent when they recognized his identity, thereby appropriating the practice of *recusatio*.[204] In Mark 10:42–45 in particular, Jesus is offering a critique of tyranny in which Jesus becomes the embodiment of the ideal Roman ruler—a leader who avoids tyranny.[205] Thus, in Winn's estimation Jesus resists the Roman empire by fulfilling the ideal of Roman ideology—he out Caesars the Caesars. While Winn's critique of interpretations that marginalize the Roman imperial political ideology in favor of Greek kingship models is welcomed, to claim that Jesus does not stand in tension with Roman political ideology but is rather the ideal of or radicalization of imperial values falls short on three counts.

First, Winn relies too heavily on the social location of his hearers as believers in Rome. The emphasis on countering the claims of Vespasian require the audience to be familiar with the very specific claims of Vespasian's reign, hence the necessity for Winn

[204] Winn, "Tyrant or Servant?," 330–331; Winn, *Reading Mark's Christology Under Caesar*, 96–97.

[205] Winn, "Tyrant or Servant?," 349.

to locate the provenance in Rome. Here we do well to remember Peterson's critique of the ever growing specificity concerning the provenance of Mark's Gospel: to give the historical issue of provenance the role of a hermeneutical key to interpretation is to "expect the impossible" of any historical reconstruction.[206] Given that there is no consensus among interpreters concerning the provenance of Mark's Gospel, we should not make the social location the interpretive key to reading the Gospel.[207] Jensen further notes that the two primary purposes advanced for Mark's Gospel on the basis on provenance—"Mark as a political script directed against the Roman Empire or Mark as a Jewish, sectarian script directed against other Jewish factions —were longstanding issues within Judaism at the time of Mark, and thus [do] not require a particular place and time of writing to be issues of intense interest."[208] I would argue that whether this text is received first by readers in Rome or Syria or elsewhere, as long as it is received within the boundaries of the Roman Empire, the reading advocated by this project is plausible, if not probable.

Second, there are numerous places throughout the central section of Mark in which Jesus does not simply reflect Rome's political ideology nor a radicalized version of it, but he instead offers an open critique of it. In Mark 10:1–31, Jesus takes aim at the social structures upheld as necessary by the Roman Empire for the continuation of colonial rule and the moral program instituted by Augustus and his successors. Jesus does not merely imitate the best practices of Roman rule; he seeks to undo many of them.

[206] Dwight Peterson, *The Origins of Mark: The Markan Community in Current Debate*, BibInt 48 (Leiden: Brill, 2000), 4.

[207] Peterson, *The Origins of Mark*, 202.

[208] Morten Jensen, "Provenance and the Holy Grail of Purpose in Recent Markan Research," *NovT* 763 (2021): 3. See also his critique of Winn's focus on the historical location: 12-13.

Another example is the use of slavery to describe Jesus and those who follow him (10:44). Winn claims the word is simply hyperbolic, and used to stretch the boundaries of the reader's political ideology.[209] The use of the term, however, does not merely stretch the bounds of Rome's political ideology; it breaks it.

Third, Winn neglects the story level of the text and thus fails to realize the full significance of colonial rule. To argue that Mark's disciples would see in Jesus a leader who reflects the best of Roman ideology over and against a poor Roman leader (i.e., Vespasian) is to deny the full effect of the colonial situation. The disciples, reflecting the attitudes and desires of those living under colonial authority, wish independence from the Roman Empire, not freedom from a "bad emperor." While the Roman leaders avoided the pretense of tyranny, they did not avoid the reality of absolute tyrannical power, especially in the provinces. They may have gone to great lengths to appear to be "good" by Roman standards, but the point of Jesus's critique of imperial discourse is that the best of Roman emperors falls short, as does a political ideology that allows for mere pretense to humility to thrive. Winn does admit that Mark's Jesus advocates for the inability of any human ruler to live up to the ideal.[210] This, however, is still not a critique of Roman ideology; it is critique of the Roman embodiment of that ideology.[211]

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[209] Winn, *Reading Mark's Christology Under Caesar*, 110.

[210] Adam Winn, "The Gospel of Mark: A Response to Imperial Propaganda," in *An Introduction to Empire in the New Testament*, ed. Adam Winn (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2016), 105.

[211] In postcolonial terms, Winn argues that Jesus mimics the Roman ideology and therefore unsettles the discourse through mockery. I argue, however, that by giving credence to the Roman ideology in order to out-Caesar the Caesars, Winn's Jesus mocks only those rulers who cannot live up to the ideal, not the ideology itself. The ideology of the Roman Empire stands as the basis for Jesus's actions in Winn's interpretation. It is not the object of full-scale critique. Winn even acknowledges that while some would see the practice of *recusatio* as merely an attempt to mask tyrannical ambition, he thinks many hearers would understand the contrast to exist between "good" and "bad" rulers, not between Jesus and Roman rulers (*Reading Mark's Christology Under Caesar*, 108). This admission seems to undermine any claim that Mark's Jesus is fully anti-Roman.

Mark's story reflects the colonial tensions of living under colonial rule. In light of this fact, Jesus is not simply adopting the Roman discourse as his own (in ideal or radicalized form) as he advocates for a new empire. He is crafting a new discourse of power that while appropriating certain aspects of imperial rule, rejects others. Given hybridity models of colonial experience, this should come as no surprise. Jesus may adopt some aspects of Roman rule (e.g., *recusatio*) while adamantly rejecting the basis on which their power rests (i.e., violence, fear, coercion, and actual tyranny).[212]

Benny Tat-Siong Liew, like Winn, argues for Jesus's accommodation of the Roman imperial discourse, but Liew arrives at an altogether different conclusion. Liew claims that Jesus adopts the discourse of power operative in Roman imperial politics, but rather than living up to some ideal enshrined in Roman ideology (cf. Winn), Jesus fully replicates the Roman imperial practice that is ultimately tyrannical in its embodiment. In other words, Jesus's discourse of power *is* Rome's discourse of power.[213] They are not competing ideologies at their base; the competition stems only from which empire will win out in their application. His thesis, at points, sounds more like two emperors vying for the same kingdom rather than rival kingdoms.

Despite Liew's clear understanding of colonial discourse generally and the colonial situation of Mark's Gospel specifically, Liew fails to apply the concept of mimicry well throughout his work. Liew claims that mimicry is essentially just the

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[212] Winn and I do agree on one very important point to which I will return in chapter 6: Mark is not an anti-imperial text. There is a rival claimant to the throne, but there is still a throne in view. I think Winn does not sufficiently argue for a *counter*-discourse of power. He opts, rather, for an application of power that resonates with his Roman hearers who are thoroughly affected by the Roman imperial discourse of power. In other words, to play on a common anti-imperial turn of phrase, where many argue that if Jesus is Lord then Caesar is not, I argue Winn's interpretation might more rightly read, if Jesus is Caesar, then Caesar is not.

[213] Liew, *The Politics of Parousia*, 94–107; Tat-siong Benny Liew, "Tyranny, Boundary and Might: Colonial Mimicry in Mark's Gospel," *JSNT* 73 (1999): 7–31.

reinscription or reduplication of colonial ideology.[214] Bhabha, however, asserts that mimicry is not mere appropriation of colonial thought and practice. In Bhabha's terms, mimicry is always a menace. It looks like the colonial practice, expectation, or application, but not quite in total. There is always at least a hint of difference that provides the space for intervention and resistance.[215] For Liew, Jesus offers no resistance to imperial ideology; he merely adopts it for another empire.

Liew suggests that Jesus has mimicked Roman ideology in three ways. First, Jesus claims absolute authority over and against Rome's claims of absolute authority.[216] While Rome makes such claims on the basis of their moral superiority and the favor of the gods, Jesus appeals to scripture and claims to exceed Moses and Elijah. Liew argues this claim of singularity is an ideological weapon leading to absolutism, allowing for no comparison or competition.[217] Jesus reigns at the top of the political hierarchy as Roman rulers reign over theirs. In response, however, I argue Jesus does not replicate the totality of Roman absolutism. While Jesus's place beside God may be unique, Jesus invites others to participate in this new kingdom. Further, Jesus's ascent to authority does differ greatly from the Roman overlords. While the emperors function as the absolute authority in matters of empire, Jesus never ascends to absolute authority. Jesus, instead, continually points to the Father as the head of the hierarchy (e.g., 1:14 [the gospel of God], 3:35, 9:37, 14:36). While the end result may be similar, the means of acquisition and the invitation to participate do change the tenor of the result.

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[214] Liew, *The Politics of Parousia*, 94.

[215] For a full explanation of Bhabha's conception of mimicry and its menacing effects, see Homi K. Bhabha, *The Location of Culture* (London: Routledge, 1994), 85–92.

[216] Liew, *The Politics of Parousia*, 94–100.

[217] Liew, "Tyranny, Boundary and Might," 16.

Second, Liew argues that despite Jesus's appeal to the marginalized and the least of these, Jesus ultimately preserves the insider-outsider binary established by the Roman discourse of power.[218] Jesus defines insiders as those who respond favorably to Jesus. Those who do not respond favorably are regularly associated with the demonic. The boundaries are thereby redrawn rather than eliminated. The new boundaries duplicate the colonial (non)choice of "serve-or-be-destroyed."[219] Accordingly, some are too far gone, barbaric, or evil to be given life or autonomy. Admittedly, Liew is right on one front: Jesus does not eliminate the insider-outsider binary. There are those who follow and those who do not. Those who do not are considered outsiders. Jesus's erection and application of those boundaries, however, is very different. First, Jesus invites all who desire to be insiders to, in fact, be insiders (see especially 3:33–34, 9:35–37).[220] This is never an option from Roman colonial space. At best, those conquered by Rome will resemble insiders in many ways but they are still outsiders.[221] Those in power do not want the "other" ever to be "unrecognizably other." Colonization activity undertaken by

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[218] Liew, *The Politics of Parousia*, 103–104.

[219] Liew, "Tyranny, Boundary and Might," 23.

[220] Jesus's healing and exorcism ministry could be seen as invitations to be insiders, so also the invitation of tax collectors like Levi to follow him (2:14).

[221] Dennis Duling, "Empires: Theories, Methods, Models," in *The Gospel of Matthew in Its Roman Imperial Context*, ed. John Riches and David Sim (London: T&T Clark International, 2005), 74, argues the empire justified continued conquest and the empire itself on the basis of persistent difference between colonized and colonizer; John McLeod, *Beginning Postcolonialism*, 2nd ed. (New York: Manchester University Press, 2010), 45, 61 notes the colonized are always beyond/other. cf. Myles Lavan, "'Father of the Whole Human Race:' Ecumenical Language and the Limits of Elite Integration in the Early Roman Empire," in *Cosmopolitanism and Empire: Universal Rulers, Local Elites, and Cultural Integration in the Ancient Near East and Mediterranean*, ed. Myles Lavan, Richard Payne, and John Weisweiler (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016), 153–68; Harris, *Roman Power*, 45–48, 113; Longenecker, *In Stone and Story*, 131, offers an interesting example of this phenomena in Pompeii in relation to the Samnite population. They were minimized with reference to socio-political status and language. They may be part of the empire, but they were not considered equal with the conqueror.

Rome does not redraw boundaries; it clarifies them.[222] Jesus, however, counters traditional boundaries like "colonizer" and "colonized" within the Roman imperial system, including those who fall on both sides of the Roman binary. Further, Jesus challenges the binary of nativist essentialist resistance by including Gentiles in his kingdom mission in Mark 1–8. These new boundaries are not placed upon individuals as in the Roman system. Individuals choose their place in the binary. No accident of birth or status determines the boundaries. The boundaries are porous and God's kingdom is more fluid than the Roman version.

Finally, Liew claims that Jesus understands the nature of "legitimate" authority in the same way as the Roman overlords.[223] For Liew, power equals authority, namely the ability to have one's command obeyed.[224] People without authority have no real power, where "authority is (over)power(ing), and it demands submission of everybody, and thus all annihilation of those who do not submit."[225] Jesus replaced tyrannical authorities, but the tyranny goes on. Liew bases this claim on the function of the *parousia*. Since at Jesus's return the wicked outsiders will be destroyed, the Roman discourse has not been interrupted; it has been fully replicated in Liew's conception. This point struggles on two counts. First Jesus's message concerning power cannot be described as "overpowering."

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[222] Local positions were precarious and always involved a balancing act of local needs and Roman desires. See Harris, *Roman Power*, 154, 195. The vocabulary of the empire reflected the clear demarcation lines between colonized and colonizer. Lavan, "Father of the Whole Human Race." The difference in tax rate, land acquisition, and governing structure ensured perpetual difference between Rome and her subjects. See Duling, "Empires: Theories, Methods, Models," 69; the administration of empire required clear boundaries between colonized and colonizer. See Maud Gleason, "Mutilated Messengers: Body Language in Josephus," in *Being Greek Under Rome: Cultural Identity, the Second Sophistic, and the Development of Empire*, ed. Simon Goldhill (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 53.

[223] Liew, *The Politics of Parousia*, 104–107.

[224] Liew, "Tyranny, Boundary and Might," 24.

[225] Liew, *The Politics of Parousia*, 107.

Power is described by Jesus in terms of self-giving, service, and sacrifice. One may object that while the application of power expected by Jesus may not be overpowering authority, this does not exclude the possibility that Jesus, as the head of this new community, sees his position in this light. Jesus, however, repeatedly dismisses this interpretation by his passion predictions, teachings, miracles, and his own passion. The establishment of authority is not through overpowering human opponents directly, but by overthrowing the powers of Satan. This shift of enemy language from human to nonhuman opponents in Jesus's discourse is a significant distinction from Roman imperial ideology.

Second, Liew places far too much emphasis on the *parousia* in Mark's Gospel, relying heavily on his interpretation of Mark 9:1 as the foreshadowing of the *parousia*.[226] While a common interpretation, I suggest that the referent of Mark 9:1 is not the *parousia* at all.[227] As outlined in chapter four, Mark has paid significant attention to the issue of power in the narrative and has offered a consistent view of the appropriate application of "power." Contra Liew, power is not authority but rather a catachrestic vision of the term in postcolonial space. Jesus's vision of the transformative capacity of human action is seen in sacrifice, service, and the dismissal of claims to positions of status. In this light, experiencing the *parousia* does not sound like the kingdom of God come with "power." Seeing the kingdom of God come in "power" is better understood in terms of the

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[226] Esp. Liew, *The Politics of Parousia*, 103–104. The entirety of the book, however, is largely based on this reading of Mark 9:1 and the significance of the *parousia*. For Liew, the *parousia* forms the basis of the entirety of Jesus's political system.

[227] I understand the general consensus of this interpretation, and given the emphasis on the *parousia* in the early church and the expectation of the immanent return of Jesus, the interpretation does make sense. It does, however, require the reader to assume Jesus was wrong. I assert that given the reading defended in this work, a more plausible explanation of the verse, is to look for the place where Jesus reflects most fully the understanding of power advocated by Jesus to his disciples.

crucifixion.[228] At the crucifixion, Jesus displays the clearest example of self-giving, sacrifice, and the abandonment of traditional claims to status and authority. This interpretation also makes greater sense of the transfiguration episode following the claim. Jesus could have claimed the authority of the great ones of Rome by disappearing from the mountain; Jesus, however, remains among the disciples, renouncing this claim to status and traditional authority markers.

Further with reference to the *parousia*, Liew violates his own methodology in his conclusion. Liew argues the Gospel should be understood as *pharmakon*, a text that is ambiguous, able to mean both medicine and poison.[229] Yet Liew focuses solely on the poisonous result of the *parousia*, namely the reduplication of Roman methods.[230] Leander helpfully suggests that the ambiguous nature of the *parousia* as *pharmakon* should remind readers to see the *parousia* not only as the poison of Roman might but also the medicine for such Roman methods that contain in them a warning of possible poison.[231] While this does not fully alleviate the tension of the destruction of outsiders that continues by means of the *parousia*, it does mitigate such a reading. The boundaries erected by Jesus are porous and more beneficent than Rome's, though admittedly, they are boundaries that will be enforced.

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[228] Moloney, *The Gospel of Mark*, 177; Marcus, *Mark 8-16*, 630. Moloney argues that the moment referenced in 9:1 is the resurrection rather than the *parousia*. I greatly appreciate the relocation of the event away from the *parousia*, however, the resurrection is simply the confirmation of what Jesus has done on the cross. The resurrection does not reflect the full picture of Jesus's conception of power. It verifies the claims of Jesus. Marcus's solution is also tempting. He attempts to reconcile the lacking *parousia* with the truth of Jesus's statement. He argues that the kingdom had already begun and therefore, while the fullness of God's power has yet to be seen and felt, it has already begun to work in the world through the death and resurrection of Jesus.

[229] Liew, *The Politics of Parousia*, 150, 167–168.

[230] Liew, *The Politics of Parousia*, 107.

[231] Hans Leander, *Discourses of Empire: The Gospel of Mark from a Postcolonial Perspective*, SemeiaSt 71 (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2013), 251–253.

Jesus does not simply mimic the tyranny of Rome. Nor does Jesus embody the fullness of Roman ideology at its best, eschewing Roman tyranny. Jesus is an affiliative/disruptive character in the story who while mimicking certain aspects of imperial power (e.g., *recusatio*), ultimately mocks the imperial result through alternative understandings of key terms within the discourse.

A Brief Postscript: Mark 10:46–52

Mark 10:45 marks the end of the central section, with the exception of the second half of the inclusio formed by the healing narrative in 10:46–52. This healing narrative provides the final interpretive note for the central section. While not part of Jesus's teaching on the kingdom's discourse of power per se, the story answers the question of the disciples' response to Jesus's teaching in Mark 10:42–45. In Mark 10:46–52, Jesus meets a blind beggar. This is the moment; the moment for the disciples to prove they have learned from Jesus's teaching about the acceptance of the other. Yet as the beggar approaches Jesus, many rebuke him as the disciples did those who brought the children in Mark 10:13. After his persistent cries, Jesus calls the man to him and asks the same question he asked the disciples in Mark 10:36: "what do you want me to do for you?" (τί σοι θέλεις ποιήσω;). Rather than requesting a position of power from Jesus, Bartimaeus asks for only one thing: his sight. Unlike the disciples who are told they do not know for what they are asking, Jesus informs Bartimaeus that his faith has made him well.[232] Ironically, it is the blind man who sees what the kingdom is about. The rich man walks away sad with his possessions, and the disciples request positions of power. The once

[232] Paul J. Achtemeier, "And he followed him: Miracles and Discipleship in Mark 10:46–52," *Semeia*, 11 (1978): 115–45. He notes that it is important to see this story as a call narrative and not a healing story. While Bartimaeus was in fact healed, the focus is upon Bartimaeus willingness to follow. Faith leads the man to follow Jesus to Jerusalem.

blind man throws off the one possession he has and asks for nothing but his sight.[233] He seems to see the kingdom of God clearly from his singular encounter with Jesus. The disciples have ventured with Jesus across Jewish and Gentile territory, heard the voice of God from the mountaintop, seen the miracles of Jesus first hand, and been taught by Jesus for nearly three chapters. They fail, however, to grasp the vision of power in this kingdom. One must relinquish all that came before for a new life in God's kingdom. Mark 8:22–26 gave the reader hope that Jesus's disciples simply needed a second touch. They had partial sight recognizing God's Messiah but failed to understand the kingdom that Messiah represented. Jesus offered the metaphorical second touch in 8:27–10:45. The disciples should now see clearly.

Chapter ten, however, ends with a note of sadness. The second touch has failed to have its desired effect; the disciples continue to resist Jesus's discourse of power as the definitive interpretation of God's imperial politics. The disciples remain faithless. The one note of hope, if it can be called that, is in verse 48. The many (πολλοί) tell the man not to bother Jesus, but Jesus has promised that he came to give his life as a ransom for the many (πολλῶν). While a thin connection, it is the best hope the faithless disciples have.

Mark 10 as a Development of the Kingdom's Discourse of Power

The five episodes in Mark 10:1–45 collectively comprise a major portion of Jesus's teaching concerning the discourse of power operative in the kingdom of God.

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[233] In nearly univocal expression, scholars acknowledge the implications of the Bartimaeus story. He is the paradigmatic disciple. Myers goes even farther, however, to note that this man understood what the disciples have missed concerning the structures of power in the kingdom. While the rich man will not relinquish his riches, the poor man throws off his cloak, the one possession he calls his own. Witherington, *The Gospel of Mark*, 292; Hooker, *A Commentary on the Gospel according to St. Mark*, 253; Black, *Mark*, 235; Culpepper, *Mark*, 355; Myers, *Binding the Strong Man*, 282.

Jesus's teaching offers forth a vision of power radically different from what is asserted by the colonial discourse. Power, understood catachrestically within colonial space, resists the application of power by violent or exploitative means. Further, Jesus's discourse of power also responds to the nativist essentialist attempts to resist Roman imperialism as well. While Jesus appropriates a number of aspects of the Roman discourse, his (mis)use of those aspects disrupts the hegemonic discourse as a whole. Jesus has, therefore, affiliated "with this new community with a view to constantly challenging and disturbing it."[234]

The Roman Empire's claim to superiority and the right to rule were based on the Roman perception of moral superiority. Jesus's discourse of power counters the narrative of Roman moral superiority with an alternative evaluation of morality in the kingdom of God. There are elements of Roman appropriation in the discourse of power crafted by Jesus for his disciples. First, Jesus does embrace an ancient Roman emphasis on the significance of a single marriage. Jesus, however, exceeds the order of the empire by rejecting the emendations made by Augustus's moral program and centering the sanctity of marriage in the creation narrative of the Jewish people.

Second, Jesus recognizes the significance of addressing the full spectrum of socio-economic statuses in the ancient world as the Romans did and offers an evaluation of those status markers. Unlike the Roman discourse of power that requires the honor of and deference to the elite, Jesus advocates for the inversion of status markers. Children are possessors of the kingdom and the rich who are unwilling to rectify their wrongdoing are turned away. While not eschewing binary boundary markers, the boundary markers

[234] Samuel, *A Postcolonial Reading of Mark's Story of Jesus*, 133.

are significantly redrawn and admittance is not limited on the basis of Roman status markers like citizenship or wealth. All those who are willing are welcome.

Third, Jesus directly critiques the Roman political system in the final episode of Mark 10. Countering common Jewish expectations and subverting Roman political assertions, Jesus advocates for an imperial praxis built on service, sacrifice, and even slavery to one another for one another. The suffering motif runs counter to many Jewish expectations concerning the Son of Man and even the best incarnations of Roman rule. Jesus thus becomes an affiliative/disruptive character that bears some similarity to the colonial powers in his advocation of an empire that will rule the world but disrupts the ideology upon which Rome's claims are based.

As a collection of stories, Mark 10:1–45 progresses in expanding spheres of influence. The story concerning marriage addresses the issues of power within the family. The story of the children serves as pivot between familial issues and social issues, expanding the circle of influence outward. The teachings of Jesus concerning the welcoming of children would have implications for both familial life and social interactions. The stories of the rich man and Jesus's teaching to the disciples address issues related to social standing and economics. The teaching section that follows the third passion prediction shifts the dialogue from familial and social issues to the issues related to political power. The new discourse of power affects each and every aspect of the lives of Jesus's followers.

When the disciples failed to grasp the concept from Jesus's demonstrations of inclusiveness in Mark 1:1–8:26, Jesus responds by addressing the discourse of power undergirding their rejection more comprehensively. He redefines power for the those

seeking the kingdom of God and offers examples of the practical outworking of that definition throughout the central section but most pointedly in 10:1–45. Each story demonstrates the ways in which those in the kingdom of God should think and behave counter to the expectations of both the colonial discourse and common nativist essentialist responses to the colonial discourse. While Jesus does not address Gentile inclusion specifically in 10:1–45, the stories' focus on the inclusion of the "other" and the marginalized, invites the disciples to recognize that the broader issue is their understanding of power not the Gentiles themselves. In 10:42–45, Jesus comes the closest to the outright statement of Gentile inclusion. Those in "power" rule over others and demonstrate their authority over the other through marginalization and exploitation. That is the standard operating procedure of the Roman Empire. Those who align with this new empire must learn to advocate for a new way of ruling: one that does not marginalize, exploit, or exclude the "other"—what Jesus has been advocating since the start of the Gentile mission in Mark 5. This new discourse of power presented in expanding spheres of interaction, addresses the root of the disciples' problem with Jesus's mission, an exclusivism based on the colonial discourse of power that fails to meet the standards and expectations of the new empire.

If the disciples embrace the discourse of power presented by Jesus in his passion predictions and more fully in 10:1–45, the disciples will also understand the "why" of Gentile inclusion. I have argued that the disciples have understood Jesus's mission to be inclusive; what they have failed to understand is why. Jesus's alternative discourse of power answers this lingering question. The Gentiles should be included because the

discourse of power upon which their exclusion is based has been replaced by a new discourse and a new empire.

Reading Mark 10:1–45 as a development of a rival discourse of power, the chapter becomes, not simply a collection of stories about discipleship, but a revelation of the kind of power that characterizes the kingdom and requires the inclusion of the "other." This further allows for a stronger connection to be made between Mark 1:1–8:26 and Mark 8:27–10:45. Many have suggested the first section is about the disciples coming to acknowledge the identity of the Messiah and the second portion relates to the call to discipleship, what it means to follow the Messiah when the mission of the Messiah is understood rightly.[235] This, however, assumes that while there is a sequential connection between parts one and two (identifying Jesus as Messiah leads to following the Messiah), there is a distinct shift in emphasis from one section to the next. The first half introduces a Jesus the disciples come to recognize while the second half teaches those disciples what it means to follow Jesus. I argue, however, that the issue remains the same from one section to the next. Those who follow after Jesus must understand what it means to embrace the Messiah of God's new empire. Recognizing Jesus as the Messiah is not sufficient. One must understand the mission of that Messiah, namely as one who

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[235] See for example Rhoads, Dewey, and Michie, *Mark as Story*, 90–92, 125 who see the structure of the text as moving from the lack of understanding being addressed in the first section to the second section focusing on the misunderstanding of discipleship; Lane, *The Gospel according to Mark*, 293–296 sees the text moving from the disciples confession in the first section to what it means to confess Jesus as Messiah and follow him in the second section; Hooker, *Mark*, 201, 204 argues for the movement from identification to the meaning and role of discipleship; Moloney, *The Gospel of Mark*, 17, 21, 168 is a bit more vague but does see Jesus's identity as the focus of the first section and the disciples accepting the answer (i.e. suffering servant) as the focus of section two. Dowd, *Reading Mark*, 82–83 implies such but is not adamant. France, *The Gospel of Mark*, 320–321 notes specifically a shift from miracles to teaching corresponding to the revelation of Jesus to the disciples and clarification of that revelation to the disciples; Collins, *Mark* notes specifically that 6:30–8:26 is about a revelation of Jesus's divine power (297) while 8:27–10:45 is about the disciples being called to suffer as their Messiah (397).

stands as the harbinger of a new kingdom built on a new discourse of power that, while bearing similarities to the Roman world, looks altogether other-worldly at points.

This interpretation further speaks to the issue of Christology in Mark as well. Jesus is often figured as a powerful wonderworker who is later pictured as a suffering servant. In those constructions Jesus seems nearly to lose all sense of power in the second major section of the Gospel.[236] If, however, Jesus is forming a discourse of power in which power is understood and applied differently, the actions of a miracle worker are only one facet of a powerful Jesus. The self-sacrifice and suffering elements introduced in the second section are part of the catachrestic understanding of power advanced by Jesus. The disciples have failed to accept this power as it is presented in Mark 1:1–8:22 and thus are in need of a second touch (8:23–26). Mark 8:27–10:45 offer the ideological underpinnings that should reshape the disciples' views of outsiders. Sex, age, and wealth are not valid indicators of one's status in God's empire, and neither is one's ethnic origin. Jew or Gentile, there is room at the table.

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[236] Redaction critics usually see this shift as evidence of competing Christologies in the Markan community. See for example: Norman Perrin, "The Christology of Mark: A Study in Methodology," in *Modern Pilgrimage in New Testament Christology* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1974), 104–21; Weeden, *Mark: Traditions in Conflict*; Ludger Schenke, *Die Wundererzählungen Des Markusevangeliums* (Stuttgart: Verlag Katholisches Bibelwerk, 1974), 393–395; Quentin Quesnell, *The Mind of Mark: Interpretation and Method through the Exegesis of Mark 6:52* (Rome: Pontifical Biblical Institute, 1969); Jack Dean Kingsbury, *Conflict in Mark: Jesus, Authorities, Disciples* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1989), 105–111; Narrative critics attempted to resolve this issue by refusing to give precedence to one picture or the other choosing to leave the two in tension, but they clearly still perceive the distinction within the narrative. Some (Lee-Pollard, Tannehill, Rhoads et. al) still give precedence to the suffering servant image over the wonder-worker Jesus of the narrative. As a group, narrative critics have made progress in this issue by focusing on the story itself rather than the Markan community. See for example: Tannehill, Robert C., "The Gospel of Mark as Narrative Christology," *Semeia* 16 (1979): 57–95; D. A. Lee-Pollard, "Powerlessness as Power : A Key Emphasis in the Gospel of Mark," *SJT* 40.2 (1987): 173–88; N.F. Santos, "The Paradox of Authority and Servanthood in the Gospel of Mark" (Dallas Theological Seminary, 1994); Rhoads, Dewey, and Michie, *Mark as Story: An Introduction to the Narrative of a Gospel*, 103–115; Ira Brent Driggers, *Following God Through Mark: Theological Tension in the Second Gospel* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2007), 61; Gundry, *Mark: A Commentary on His Apology for the Cross*, 1–26; Donahue and Harrington, *The Gospel of Mark*, p.47–48, 258, 265.

Jesus ultimately embraces some aspects of the Roman system in order to supersede them, while adamantly undoing other aspects. The result is a system of moral discourse that undergirds the Messiah's right to rule on behalf of his father, God, much as the Roman moral discourse was meant to give validity to the Roman right to rule. Where Roman morality, however, falls short, the moral discourse crafted by Jesus succeeds, providing support to his overall discourse of power on which the authority of the kingdom of God is based.

Conclusion

In this chapter I have demonstrated ways in which Mark 10:1–45 functions in Jesus's developing discourse of power. The Markan Jesus crafts and defends a discourse of power that stands in tension with the Roman discourse of power and responds to the nativist essentialist resistance discourse. In this argument, chapter ten functions as a coherent and pivotal movement in the development of the discourse begun in 8:27. Taken together, the cycle presented in Mark 8:27–10:45 (the three-fold repetition of a passion prediction, the disciples' resistance to the discourse of power, and an explanation of the discourse of power), offers the basis for understanding the discourse of power operative in the kingdom of God. This interpretation of the narrative offers concrete connections between Mark 1:1–8:26 and the following narrative. While many have failed to see a tight connection between these two sections, the central section responds to the need of the disciples to be open to the inclusion of the Gentiles. Their resistance to the inclusion of the Gentiles arises from their own understanding of power and desire to replicate the Roman expectations concerning power in their own resistance movement. Jesus, in act of

catachresis, reforms the conception of power in colonial space, offering the disciples an alternative path to resistance that allows for Gentile inclusion and Roman resistance.

CHAPTER SIX

Conclusion

Scholars have long struggled to offer a coherent reading of the stories of Mark 10 that does not rely on the vague concept of discipleship. This study has offered an argument concerning the coherence of these stories through a postcolonial narrative reading of the Gospel in which the theme of power connects the stories of Mark 10 to each other and to the larger narrative. It was argued the stories of Mark 10:1–45 serve as a crucial part of the Markan Jesus's counter discourse of power that undermines the Roman colonial discourse of power. This counter discourse of power further serves to correct the disciples' nativist essentialist resistance methods that closely mirror the colonial methods of empire. In this chapter I will offer an overview of the argumentation presented herein, summarize the primary contributions of the study, and offer a brief evaluation of the continuing implications of this reading for interpreters of the Gospel of Mark.

Overview of Argumentation

As discussed in chapter three, as Rome set out on a colonial enterprise to establish provinces throughout the world, they subjugated those they conquered through military might, economic disruption, political transformation, and most importantly, through the propagation of imperial ideology that reinforced their actions.[1] The discourse of power in

[1] On the issue of ideological propagation, see Bruce Longenecker, "Peace, Prosperity, and Propaganda: Advertisement and Reality in the Early Roman Empire," in *An Introduction to Empire in the New Testament*, ed. Adam Winn (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2016), 20.

which this ideology was operative, attempted to ensure that the claims of the empire were universal in scope and appeared as the only natural option for those at home and abroad.[2] They attempted to silence dissent through the ideology of empire. For some, this led to collaboration with the empire; for others, it spurred on their resistance.

The provinces often rebelled, sometimes in open revolt, but more often in subtle ways. Among the methods available to the resistance was the written word, writings that were part of what Bhabha calls a "theater of war."[3] Mark's Gospel is among those texts that reflect the tensions of empire and the competing ideologies of resistance extant in the first century. In chapter four, I demonstrated that at the narrative level the disciples embodied a nativist essentialist resistance strategy in which the exclusivist nature of the social boundaries reinforced by the empire was accepted and inverted for the purpose of resistance.[4] Freire described this colonial situation well from his contemporary perspective:

> But almost always, during the initial stage of the struggle, the oppressed, instead of striving for liberation, tend themselves to become oppressors, or "sub-oppressors." The very structure of their thought has been conditioned by the contradictions of the concrete, existential situation by which they were shaped. Their ideal is to be men; but for them, to be men is to be oppressors. This is their model humanity. This phenomenon derives from the fact that the oppressed, at a certain moment of their existential experience, adopt an attitude of "adhesion" to the oppressor…at a certain point in their existential experience the oppressed feel

[2] John McLeod, *Beginning Postcolonialism*, 2nd ed. (New York: Manchester University Press, 2010), 46; Richard Beacham, "The Emperor as Impresario: Producing the Pageantry of Power," in *The Cambridge Companion to the Age of Augustus*, ed. Karl Galinsky (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 151–74; Clifford Ando, *Imperial Ideology and Provincial Loyalty in the Roman Empire* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000), 20. McLeod claims, "Discourses do not reflect a pre-give reality: they *constitute and produce* our sense of reality…" discourses are "agents of creation." These discourses shaped perceptions and created subjects of empire. Since discourses created realities, it made it very difficult to see past those so-called realities.

[3] Homi K. Bhabha, *The Location of Culture* (London: Routledge, 1994), 90.

[4] For further discussion of the significance of binaries in imperial movements as they relate to NT interpretation, see Jeremy Punt, "Empire and the New Testament Texts: Theorising the Imperial in Subversion and Attraction," *HvTSt* 68.1 (2012): 5.

> an irresistible attraction towards the oppressor and his way of life. Sharing this way of life becomes an overpowering aspiration. In their alienation, the oppressed want at any cost to resemble the oppressor, to imitate him, to follow him.[5]

I argued the end goal of Mark's disciples appeared to be the inversion of colonial authority brought about by a political/militant Messiah. This resulted in the disciples' resistance to the Gentile mission. The Gentiles were outsiders in the nativist discourse and therefore must be excluded and marginalized in their resistance movement.

As seen in chapters four and five, Mark's disciples, infected as they are by the Roman discourse of power through which Rome's ideology is propagated, resist the counter discourse of power proposed by Mark's Jesus. Mark's Jesus announces a rival empire and advocates for the inclusion of the Gentiles, the significance of suffering and service, and a new catachrestic vision of power. In Mark 1:1–8:26, Jesus demonstrates the inclusive nature of God's kingdom to his disciples. When the disciples fail to accept the Gentiles as part of this rival empire, Jesus shifts his focus in the narrative from demonstrations of Gentile inclusion to an open critique of the discourse of power on which the disciples' exclusion rests. The rival discourse of power crafted by Jesus in Mark 8:27–10:45 offers a new means of resistance to the disciples. It stands against the Roman imperial discourse while simultaneously undermining the nativist essentialist strategy of inversion of colonial power structures through the assertion of nativist superiority. Mark's Jesus offers the oppressed a way to be freed from the powers of darkness operative in the world, especially Roman imperial oppression as a manifestation of that darkness, while simultaneously inviting all, oppressed and oppressor, to join the rival empire. The disciples are called to think outside the box of inversion and imagine a

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[5] Paulo Freire, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, trans. Myra Bergman Ramos (New York: Herder and Herder, 1970), 30, 49.

new way of imperial resistance. Jesus's catachrestic vision of power should enliven the disciples' theological creativity allowing them to envision a path to liberation for all humankind, oppressor and oppressed. Again, Freire's words from his modern context are insightful:

> It is only the oppressed who, by freeing themselves, can free their oppressors. The latter, as an oppressive class, can free neither others nor themselves. It is therefore essential that the oppressed wage the struggle to resolve the contradiction in which they are caught; and the contradiction will be resolved by the appearance of the new man: neither oppressor nor oppressed, but man in the process of liberation. If the goal of the oppressed is to become fully human, they will not achieve their goal by merely reversing the terms of the contradiction, by simply changing poles.[6]

Freire rightly notes, the simple inversion of status from oppressed to oppressor cannot lead to liberation. Liberation results from the oppressed opting for a third way, a way that results not only in their own change of fortune but that of their oppressors as well. Mark's Jesus offers a third way. They shall not remain the oppressed nor become oppressors. Those who follow Jesus's way save their lives by losing them and in so doing invite all who are willing to join in the liberation of all.

The catachrestic vision of power proffered by Mark's Jesus declares that power, rightly understood, is defined by service, sacrifice, and inclusion of the other, a power reflected in the self-giving act of Jesus on a cross. The cross, an act of catachresis in itself, offers a climactic confirmation of the discourse of power Mark's Jesus has constructed throughout the Gospel.[7] As Jesus gives his life as a ransom for many (the slaves of empire), the efficacious nature of Jesus's catachrestic vision of power is put on display. Not only does the veil tear (15:38) and the sky darken (15:33), but also a

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[6] Freire, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, 42.

[7] Hans Leander, *Discourses of Empire: The Gospel of Mark from a Postcolonial Perspective*, Semeia Studies 71 (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2013), 247.

centurion offers the final confirmation of that which was declared in Mark 1:1: this is a Son of God (15:39). If the centurion's declaration at the foot of the cross is a genuine confession, then Mark's Gospel, at its end, demonstrates the enactment of this alternative means of resistance and catachrestic meaning of power. The embodiment of the colonizer, an oppressor of the highest order as a Roman soldier and executioner, declares his defection from the side of the oppressor.[8] The transformative capacity of human action is displayed; Jesus's death on a Roman cross results in the recognition of the kingdom by a Roman soldier. It does not look like Roman imperialism. Nor does it look like armed resistance to empire. In an act of sacrifice and self-giving, however, the possibility of transformation is realized, and a Roman soldier reflects the power of the kingdom at work. The third way has been offered. Mark's Jesus offers a discourse of power that unsettles Rome's claim to power and simultaneously undermines all essentialist claims to inversion.[9]

In postcolonial terms, Mark's Jesus is an affiliative/disruptive character in relation to Rome.[10] There are portions of Jesus's discourse of power that mimic the Roman ideology, but more often, Jesus's discourse of power mocks the oppressor through difference. In Mark 9:2–13, Jesus ascends to a mountaintop amidst strange weather conditions and mimics the apotheosis narratives of Rome's rulers. When the clouds clear, however, Jesus is still present. He mimics the stories of Rome's mighty heroes but upends the narrative through a rejected apotheosis. Jesus mocks Roman rulers and the

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[8] See also Tat-siong Benny Liew, *Politics of Parousia: Reading Mark Inter(con)textually*, Biblical Interpretation 42 (Boston: Brill, 1999), 88. Liew argues that the confession is the "most authoritative form of ideological legitimation available…[that is] to be sincerely validated by former opponents."

[9] cf. Simon Samuel, *A Postcolonial Reading of Mark's Story of Jesus*, LNTS 340 (London: T&T Clark, 2007), 108.

[10] cf. Samuel, *A Postcolonial Reading of Mark's Story of Jesus*, 130.

ideology that supports them. Rome's ruler may abscond from the people into the clouds, but Jesus will walk with his disciples unto a violent and voluntary death. In Mark 10:1–12, Jesus, like the Roman emperors, emphasizes the importance of the family for the stability of the empire. Jesus, however, mocks the Roman rulers through significant challenges to imperial values. Marriage is sacred and no human ruler should have a right to dictate the bounds of that bond. In Mark 10:13–31, Jesus further upsets the Roman hierarchy by declaring children to be blessed and watching a rich man walk away without his request. In Mark 10:42–45, Jesus offers the clearest critique of Roman practices through a straightforward assault on Roman methods of rulership. The empire for which Jesus advocates will be based on service, sacrifice, and inclusion as opposed to violence, exclusion, and ideologies that allow mere pretense to humility to thrive. Jesus's mimicry ultimately mocks the imperial ideology of Rome, not through mere supersession, but through practical difference.

Jesus further unsettles Jewish nativist essentialist resistance narratives as well. Jesus repeatedly undermines the disciples' belief in cultural superiority and desire for inversion of the power dynamics of the Roman Empire. In Mark 10:1–11, Jesus pushes back against contemporary Jewish beliefs about marriage, claiming that divorce was merely an allowance for hard hearts. The social boundaries that defined daily life were irrelevant in the kingdom, seen in the stories of the children (10:13–16) and the rich man (10:17–31). As the disciples become more brazen in their requests for authority and seats of prominence (10:35–37), Jesus denies them the glory they seek, offering instead persecution and a baptism and a cup of suffering (10:38–40). Finally, the inversion narrative that drives the disciples' resistance movement is targeted in 10:42–45 in which

Jesus tells them directly, despite Roman methods of ruling “it is not so among you.” Jesus thus dismisses the Roman discourse of power and the resistance strategies that replicate that discourse in total.

In the end, God’s kingdom is not against Rome alone; it stands against any empire that seeks to challenge God’s reign in the world. The Roman discourse of power is not the root of all evil in Mark; it is the product of that evil that has infected the local and imperial rulers, the religious leaders, and the disciples themselves. Mark’s narrative speaks against this discourse because it stands in contradiction to God’s coming kingdom.

Contributions of This Study

Reading Mark 10 in this way allows three primary conclusions to be drawn. First, the stories of Mark 10:1–45 have a much tighter thematic connection than has been previously demonstrated. The stories are not about discipleship alone. The stories each address a facet of power dynamics in the ancient world and demonstrate the ways in which the kingdom of God is demonstrably different from the Roman imperial ideology and the nativist essentialist resistance movement that relies on Roman imperial methods. Jesus addresses expanding spheres of social influence beginning with issues within the family unit, turning to issues of status in the community, and finally addressing the issue of proper governance. The disciples fail to see how deeply they have been affected by the dominant discourse. Jesus must, one story at a time, dismantle their nativist religious assumptions and their desire for traditional expressions of power.

Second, there is a tight connection between the first section of Mark (1:1–8:26) and the second (8:27–10:45). The theoretical concerns that drove the disciples to resist

the Gentile mission in Mark 1:1–8:26 are addressed in Mark 8:27–10:45. This offers an option for resolution concerning the supposed shift in emphasis from wonder worker to suffering servant that is apparent in the narrative. Jesus demonstrates an inclusive kingdom in section one through his miracles, exorcisms, and feeding narratives. The inclusion of the Gentiles results in the disciples' resistance to Jesus's imperial project. In section two, Jesus responds to the disciples' resistance and attempts to teach the disciples a new vision of power on which inclusion is based. This new vision of power that allows for the inclusion of perceived outsiders in the kingdom claims suffering and service are integral parts of the proclamation of God's rival empire. All those who join should expect to follow in the steps of a suffering Messiah.

Finally, this reading offers a fresh examination of the characterization of the disciples. In Mark, the disciples resist to the end. As Liew humorously comments, "the disciples are locked between a rock and their hard heads."[11] They fail to see beyond their vision from colonial space. Therefore, they resist the Gentile mission; they continue to embrace essentialist claims to cultural superiority and violent resistance. They continually ask for positions of authority and prestige in keeping with the Roman vision of power rather than the new vision of power demonstrated and taught by Jesus. After chapter 10, Judas will betray Jesus (14:10–11), Peter will deny him (14:66–72), and the disciples will abandon him (only the women look on from a distance, 15:40). The resurrection does, however, hold out a glimmer of hope for the disciples' rehabilitation. As the young man's (νεανίσκος) devotion was laid bare in the garden (14:51–52), a young man (νεανίσκον) sits within an empty tomb on resurrection morning (16:5). While the first man followed Jesus but fled as authorities attempted to seize him, the second

[11] Liew, *The Politics of Parousia*, 91.

man is adorned in white (λευκήν; cf. 9:3) announcing the risen Jesus. Assuming the original ending of the Gospel was 16:8, it is but a glimmer of hope in a narrative in which the disciples have repeatedly shown themselves to be those of little faith, embracing "τὰ τῶν ἀνθρώπων" (8:33), who at the pivotal moment when the kingdom came in power at the crucifixion were found to be faithless. In Mark 13:9–13, Jesus claims the disciples will one day testify on his behalf and the Spirit in them will give them the words to speak, but by chapter 16, the reader wonders if Jesus's words will be fulfilled. Perhaps the readers are to see in the young man hope for the fulfillment of Jesus's words and a faithful future for the disciples.

Continuing Implications of Postcolonial Readings

While some may be skeptical of postcolonial readings, claiming the theoretical concerns of the methodology are derived from an era long after Roman imperialism, we do well to remember that ideological constructs of empire are largely the same from one generation to the next.[12] Each empire seeks to establish her rule as the natural outgrowth of human development and relates that outgrowth to the cultural expectations of its own time period. The Roman Empire was no exception. As Mattingly reminds us, lest we be quick to dismiss theoretical approaches that challenge our assumptions about the Roman world, "We must beware of the short-term academic fads and socio-political baggage that come with some theoretical approaches, but we run an even more serious risk if we fail to explore the underlying assumptions and biases of our conventional wisdom about the

[12] For a defense and explanation of the connection between modern and ancient colonization, see Leander, *Discourses of Empire*, 6–11; McLeod, *Beginning Postcolonialism*, 40; Philip Esler, "Rome in Apocalyptic and Rabbinic Literature," in *The Gospel of Matthew in Its Roman Imperial Context*, ed. John Riches and David Sims (London: T & T Clark International, 2005), 9–11; Bart Moore-Gilbert, *Postcolonial Theory: Contexts, Practices, Politics* (New York: Verso, 1997), 12.

Roman world."[13] Through the evaluation of Roman history, Roman writings, and writings preserved from colonized people in the Roman Empire through the lens of postcolonial concerns, a new array of questions concerning domination, power, status, and resistance find new answers. These questions are of particular importance to both the ancient context and the modern one.

Also important to note, postcolonial theory's focus on the political discourse of a text in interpretation does not negate the theological significance or aspects of the text. Mark's text was not written only to combat Roman imperialism, nor was Jesus's storied mission the dissolution of the Roman Empire. Jesus proclaimed the kingdom of God was near and all should repent and believe in the gospel (1:15). The text of Mark claims that there are forces at work in the world that are counter to God's kingdom.[14] When God's kingdom arrives, one must choose which empire will receive one's loyalty (8:38). Shively is right to argue that Mark's Gospel upends the worldview of those reading the text and by embracing a certain view of the world one will be set at odds with other conceptions of the world.[15] Thus to embrace Jesus's gospel of God's kingdom will

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[13] D. J. Mattingly and Susan E. Alcock, eds., *Dialogues in Roman Imperialism: Power, Discourse, and Discrepant Experience in the Roman Empire*, Journal of Roman Archaeology Supplementary Series no. 23 (Portsmouth, RI: Journal of Roman Archaeology, 1997), 15.

[14] See for example, the possession narratives (1:21–28; 5:1–20; 7:24–30; 9:14–29), those things the come forth from the heart (7:20–23), as well as the implicit claim that Jesus must bind the "strong man" (3:27).

[15] Elizabeth E Shively, "What Type of Resistance?: How Apocalyptic Discourse Functions as Social Discourse in Mark's Gospel," *JSNT* 37.4 (2015): 381–406. Shively argues specifically that the text of Mark was not written to "combat alienation from the dominant cultural community, but from Jesus' community as a result of misunderstanding and unbelief" (381). The apocalyptic inversion of social and political expectations invites hearers to "inhabit a paradoxical world" in which the only reasonable choice is to follow Jesus (402). This inversion, however, rightly leads one to question the social and political expectations of the Roman Empire. Thus in terms of this project, the goal of the text was to counter the "human things" and exchange them for "the things of God," but the Roman discourse of power is one such "human thing" that holds a great deal of sway over the characters of the narrative. It thus represents, not the fullness of Satan's reign, but a very visible and problematic outworking of it, one that cannot help but be

require one to abdicate other conceptions of empire. Politics and theology are intimately intertwined. Rome is not the fullness of Satan's reign, but it is a bold and brazen reflection of it found throughout the pages of Mark's Gospel.

Postcolonial biblical critics further remind interpreters that postcolonial evaluation of the text in its original context should not be the end result of scholarly evaluation. The studies undertaken at the historical level should also affect modern interpretation. As we describe the ancient world, the words we use should be carefully chosen. As Mary Ann Tolbert noted in an essay on the conversion of narratives of resistance into narratives of repression, "any interpretation of a text, especially a text as traditionally powerful as the Bible, must be assessed not only on whatever its literary or historical merits may be but also on its theological and ethical impact on the integrity and dignity of God's creation."[16] Further Leander argues, postcolonial criticism is a helpful corrective as, "Historical-critical approaches are good at seeing biblical texts as products of social contexts, but are not as good at seeing biblical scholarship as a product of social contexts."[17] The conclusion to which an interpreter arrives with reference to the text should be evaluated for its long-term effects on the readers, and the interpreter should also evaluate his/her own relationship to the text. Even in academic circles, the draw to power is significant as scholars attempt to control the discourse of a field, sometimes despite the implications of their conclusions.[18] This study sought to offer a first step in

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challenged by Jesus's message. Postcolonial theory, then, offers the tools for articulating this challenge by Jesus to Rome's imperial discourse.

[16] Mary Ann Tolbert, "When Resistance Becomes Repression: Mark 13:9-27 and the Poetics of Location," in *Reading From This Place: Social Location and Biblical Interpretation in Global Perspective*, ed. Mary Ann Tolbert and Fernando Segovia (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1995), 333.

[17] Leander, *Discourses of Empire*, 308.

the process of interpretation. This project makes no claim to having completed this process but rather has offered an evaluation of the text in a historical context that necessitates further reading and interpretative evaluation in modern interpretation.

I, further, admit the dangers inherent in this reading. I have advocated for an anti-Roman, counter imperial reading of the Markan narrative. While a counter imperial reading is supported by the argument offered herein, danger lies close at hand.
As Punt reminds, "If dealing with empire means its replacement with another, even if metaphysical, the same imperial rhetoric is bound to surface, complete with potentially (world-)devastating consequences."[19] While the Markan narrative is not offering a defense of or acquiescence to the Roman Empire, it does offer a defense of an alternative empire. The imperial rhetoric therefore must be carefully evaluated in our interpretations and applications of such a reading. God's empire need not bear the oppressive monikers of Roman imperialism (or modern imperialism) but the danger is always present. The counter discourse must be carefully articulated and more carefully applied. In this way, the theoretical concerns and terminological specificity of postcolonial critics can be of great help.

The audience of Mark's Gospel, whether in Rome, Syria, Egypt, or Palestine, in large part was living among the oppressed either by virtue of ethnicity, status, or religious conviction. Most were colonized people. Today, however, the readers and scholars of the Gospel, especially in the West, are far more likely to read the Gospel from the position of

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[18] J.K. Roth, "Response: Constructing and Deconstructing Empires," *JAAR* 71.1 (2003): 125; Punt, "Empire and the New Testament Texts," 8–9.

[19] Punt, "Empire and the New Testament Texts," 7.

the colonizer.[20] When read from the position of the colonized people, the echoes of resistance to the imperial activity of marginalization, victimization, and "othering" are audible. For many of us, however, especially in the United States, we share little in common with the first hearers of the gospel. We, collectively, share far more in common with the guarantors of the Roman Empire than the marginalization of the earliest Christian communities. Reading the Gospel of Mark from the perspective of the colonizer rather than the colonized quickly proffers a much different view of the kingdom of God.

As Mark's Jesus created boundaries between insiders and outsiders, as Rome did before him, so we too often do the same. In the context of the first century, this ensured a plausible identity marker for the oppressed, marginalized, and outcast. In the 21st century, when read by those who hold positions of power and authority in nations where those in charge claim some affiliation with Christendom, the boundary markers no longer serve the function of creating and preserving identity among hostile forces. Boundary markers, instead, relegate the ones perceived as enemy to the condition of "other," othering them with little to no recourse for a change of status. Christians in the West are no longer the persecuted people of Mark 13, falling prey to governors and kings. They are now paranoid oppressors who determine the boundary markers of the community in their attempts to define the kingdom of God and the concomitant orthodoxy. They are no longer hated by rulers and leaders, because they are the rulers and leaders.[21] It is important, therefore, to see this project as but a first step to reading this text from a new social location, a location that takes the effects of domination and resistance seriously.

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[20] For a fuller discussion of this topic see the author's forthcoming work in an edited volume with Baylor Press, "The Kingdom of God: A Dangerously Powerful Challenge to Oppression," 2022.

[21] Tolbert, "When Resistance Becomes Repression: Mark 13:9-27 and the Poetics of Location," 337.

Summary

Mark's narrative is a carefully constructed story in which Mark's Jesus promotes a vision of power that stands in stark contrast to the Roman imperial ideology. Through demonstrations of inclusiveness and care for the other and through targeted teaching in which Jesus confronts the Roman discourse of power, Mark's Jesus crafts a counter discourse of power to rival Rome's ideological claims. While the disciples fail to embrace the Gentile mission and continually embrace essentialist resistance strategies that rely on the Roman discourse of power, Mark's Jesus offers the disciples a third way beyond acceptance of or reduplication of Roman methods and exclusivistic resistance strategies. In Mark 1–10, but especially in Mark's central section, Jesus offers the disciples and all others who follow a rival discourse in which the rules of rulership, status, and power are altered to the service of a new empire.

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