Conflicting Contexts: Old Testament Reinterpretation and the Multi-ethnic Community in the Gospel of Mark
Keith Dyer

'The New Testament never quotes the Old Testament; it always interprets it!'

The running together of seemingly unconnected OT texts within the Gospel of Mark has long been cause for comment. The Gospel

1. Such arresting statements as these were typical of Athol Gill's teaching style. He was always challenging and often provocative, but with an ever-present compassion for the 'under-dog' and an irresistible sense of humour. It was customary in his crowded lectures to find an extraordinary range of students: ministerial candidates, bikies, single parents, retired bank managers, doctors, lawyers, frontier youth workers and representatives of every ethnic minority imaginable. His was a rare gift, and he exercised it powerfully and faithfully to the end. As Athol was my 'doctor-father', I speak here only of his teaching ministry at Whitley College, Melbourne. I leave it to others to comment on his contribution to Christian communities around the world, to urban and third-world mission, to the ecumenical movement, to biblical scholarship and to social justice issues within Baptist circles and beyond.

2. The starting point for this analysis is W A Gill, 'The Cleansing of the Temple', 2 vols, unpublished Dr Theol thesis (Zürich, 1971), 92-97, where the redactional nature of the composite quotations in Mk 1:2-3 and 11:17 is established and the contexts of the original quotations are taken into account. Also helpful regarding the composite quotations in Mark is Howard Clark Kee, 'The Function of Scriptural Quotations and Allusions in Mark 11-16', in E Earle Ellis and E Grässer (eds), Jesus und Paulus: Festschrift für Werner Georg Klauss (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1975), 165-88. General studies on the use of Jewish Scriptures in the Gospel of Mark include Alfred Sahl, Die Funktion der alttestamentlichen Zitate und Anspielungen im Markusevangelium (Göttingen: Göttinger Verlagshaus, 1965), where the texts examined do not include allusions or references to versions of texts no longer known; Hugh Anderson, 'The Old Testament in Mark's Gospel', in James M Efird (ed), The Use of the Old Testament in the New and Other Essays: Studies in Honor of

William Franklin Stinespring (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1972), 280-306, which examines texts relating to eschatology, parenesis and teaching; W S Vorster, 'The Function of the Use of the Old Testament in Mark', Neotestamentica 14 (1981): 62-72, which argues that Mark 'used the Old Testament quotations and allusions without direct reference to their Old Testament context(s)' (67), a conclusion vigorously opposed in this study; and Morna D Hooker, 'Mark', in D A Carson and H G M Williamson (eds), It is Written: Scripture Citing Scripture. Essays in Honour of Barnabas Lindars (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), 220-30, which focuses only on quotations from, and allusions to, the Pentateuch. More detailed studies by Joel Marcus and Rikki Watts are referred to below.

3. Kee, 'The Function of Scriptural Quotations', 176f, includes Mk 11:1-11 and 12:1-12 in his list of 'synthetic quotations', although in these two cases the 'quotations' are at each end of a story rather than running together in immediate association. This 'running together', in what shall be argued is a dialectical relationship, is what distinguishes the five composite texts noted above from Mark's other citations from Jewish Scriptures. These other citations, also usually on the lips of Jesus, are characterised by a deliberate use of specific and distinct texts, albeit in a creative and often confrontational way (as in the controversy stories of Mark 11 and 12).

4. See, for example, Fitzmyer's comments on what he calls 'accommodated texts' in Joseph A Fitzmyer, 'The Use of Explicit Old Testament Quotations in Qumran Literature and in the New Testament', NTS 7 (1961): 297-333, esp 316-25. Fitzmyer defines this type of text as one that 'is usually wrested from its original context or modified somehow to suit the new situation' (316). His examples include both the distinctive reinterpretation of specific texts and the 'running together' of diverse texts, the latter of which is of particular interest here.

5. Both Matthew and Luke omit the second half of the composite quotation in Mk 1:2-3 (and 'correct' Mark's reference to Isaiah); Mk 1:11 is left intact by both, with minor alterations by Matthew; both omit the phrase 'for all nations' from Mk 11:17; Matthew adds detail to Mk 13:24-27, whereas Luke omits 'the gathering of the elect' (Mk 13:27); and Luke also omits the 'coming with the clouds of heaven' from Mk 14:26/2Th 7:13.
filiment formulas⁶ and the grand scheme of the Lukian drama of salvation-history,⁷ Mark's attempts at intertextualising the relationship between Jesus, his followers and their Jewish heritage appear crude and even inaccurate. We are told that Mark has no clear concept of Jesus being the fulfillment of prophetic hopes,⁸ and that when he does make his only explicit attempt to cite prophecy (Mk 1:2) he gets it wrong⁹

Such negative assessments are inadequate, however, as more recent studies have argued.⁰ The Gospel of Mark may display a certain roughness of style and vocabulary, but our understanding and appreciation of the editorial processes involved in its construction should be commensurate with the extraordinary literary achievement that the earliest gospel represents. The aim of this study


7. Luke's fulfillment schema seems to be expressed on a grand scale (see the use of the OT in Lk 4:18f, Jesus' initial sermon; Lk 23:46, his final words; and Lk 24:27, 32, 44f, the risen Jesus; see also the speeches in Acts), and also by the imitation of Septuagintal language in general, rather than by the use of specific fulfillment formulae.


9. Hooker, 'Mark', 220: 'Mark includes only one explicit editorial quotation, in 1:25, and gives that a wrong attribution', because he 'attributes the quotation to Isaiah and is apparently unaware of the source of these particular words'. In The Gospel According to St Mark (London: A&C Black, 1991), Mona Hooker raises the possibility that Mark mentioned Isaiah because it was 'of special importance to him' (35), but she doesn't explore this suggestion further.

10. See Joel Marcus, The Way of the Lord: Christological Exegesis of the Old Testament in the Gospel of Mark (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press; Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1992), 18: 'the reference to Isaiah is meant as an elaboration of Mark's central theme, for it provides the proper context for understanding the gospel's beginnings'. Rikki E Watts, Isaiah's New Exodus and Mark (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1997), develops this insight further.

is to demonstrate that by paying closer attention to the original context of the 'merged texts' referred to in Mark, a discernible pattern can be found that makes good sense—and profound theology—out of these compilations.

The process of 'dialectical reinterpretation' that can be shown to lie behind the composite quotations in Mark can be partially illustrated by an example taken from more recent idioms. If in a crowded kitchen the cry goes up, 'Too many cooks...!' ('spoil the broth' may be left unsaid, but is certainly implied), the response might be, '... make light work' (with 'Many hands' left unsaid but certainly implied). This is an imperfect example, but it serves to illustrate two features:

(1) There is a positive connection between the two sayings. Both fit a situation in which 'many' are involved, and 'many cooks/hands' serves as the catchword that links the sayings together.

(2) There is also a negative relationship between the sayings. The second saying subverts the unspoken intention of the first.

It is precisely when this unspoken context of the first saying is taken into account that the dialectical nature of the composite saying is revealed, and it then becomes apparent that the meaning of the composite is greater than the sum of its two parts. What results is an affirmation of part of the first quotation (there are 'many' involved), a denial of its unspoken context (the many will not lead to 'spolling'), and an emphasis on the final synthesis of the two quotations (the 'too many' can be reinterpreted in a positive way). Something similar to this process seems to occur in the multiple quotations of the Gospel of Mark, as others have also noted to some extent.

Howard Clark Kee comes closest to the mark when he refers to these compound texts as 'synthetic quotations' because 'they are synthesized in such a way that a new claim is made for the fulfillment through Jesus, one that is clearly—at least for the modern reader—not anticipated in either of the component texts'.¹¹ Kee

¹¹ Kee, 'The Function of Scriptural Quotations', 176. Kee uses the term 'synthetic quotations' in preference to 'merged quotations', as used by B Barrie Ellis, Paul's Use of the Old Testament (Edinburgh: Oliver and Boyd, 1957), 49f, 'accommodated texts', as used by Fitzmyer, 'The Use of Explicit Old
focuses only on the texts cited or alluded to in Mark 11–16 and does not examine the original context of these texts, yet he clearly perceives the dialectical nature of their Markan arrangement:

The constant pattern of exegesis discernible in Mark is therefore, Hegel-like: the traditional pattern of Judaism (as Mark or his sources know it) is countered by an appeal to scripture; from this emerges a new position, which Mark sees as fulfilled in Jesus or in the community he has gathered.\(^\text{12}\)

This is a perceptive assessment of the underlying intention of the Markan usage of Jewish Scripture, especially since Kee discusses the implications of this dialectic for our understanding of the Markan community. He uses phrases like the ‘transethnic nature of the New People’\(^\text{13}\) to describe that early community’s self-understanding. But this aspect of Kee’s interpretation could have been strengthened further if closer attention had been paid to the original literary and social contexts of the ‘synthetic quotations’. This investigation seeks to demonstrate that the unspoken ‘ethnocentric’ assumptions of one quotation (usually the first) are repeatedly subverted by the ‘multi-ethnic’ concerns of the other quotations and their contexts. The observance of this recurring pattern seems to indicate an underlying tension between mono- and multi-cultural perspectives, and certainly strengthens Kee’s conclusion that for Mark, ‘the repudiation of nationalistic forms of redemptive hope is matched by an invitation to “the nations” to participate in the New Age’.\(^\text{14}\)

Testament Quotations’, 316f, or ‘compilations’, as used by F F Bruce, Biblical Exegesis in the Qumran Texts (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1959), 444.

12. Kee, ‘The Function of Scriptural Quotations’, 179. Kee intends this conclusion to apply not only to the ‘synthetic quotations’ but also to the use of scripture by Mark in Mark 12, for example.


14. Kee, ‘The Function of Scriptural Quotations’, 185. I am aware that the language of ‘nationalism’, ‘ethnocentrism’ and ‘universalism’ is anachronistic and in need of nuancing in the light of recent colonial and post-colonial studies. Other than when these terms occur in ‘scarf quotes’, I will speak of ‘cultural exclusivism’ and ‘cultural hybridity’. The uncritical use of ‘ethnocentrism’ and ‘universalism’ evokes the old ‘particularist/universalist’ dichotomy that used to be applied to Judaism and Christianity. Rather, the tension between ‘exclusivity/identity’ and ‘inclusivity/hybridity’ is an intra-Jewish debate that Mark buys into and applies to the new mixed communities he sees forming after the fall of Jerusalem. For an excellent exploration of the effects of this kind of tension on texts from a different era, see Mark G Brett, Genesis: Procreation and the Politics of Identity (London: Routledge, 2000), where a ‘hybrid’ Genesis is read against an ‘exclusivist’ Ezra-Nehemiah in the Persian period.

15. English translations from the Gospel of Mark and the Septuagint (LXX) are my own. In each case it is indicated (where possible) whether the OT text used in Mark agrees more with the Greek (LXX) or Hebrew (MT) text, though there is no space in this paper to present the detailed arguments.
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<td>Mk 1:2-3</td>
<td>Ex 23:20</td>
<td>‘Look, I am sending my messenger/angel before you... ... to guard you on the way so that he might bring you to the land that I have prepared for you...’ (cf Ex 23:20, the extermination of the other tribes). [Mk follows LXX, not the MT.]</td>
<td>Isaiah (the last text used) is clearly established as the hermeneutical key.</td>
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<td>Mal 3:1</td>
<td>‘Look, I shall send my messenger and he will prepare a way before me. And suddenly the Lord whom you seek will come to his temple.’ [Mk follows LXX + MT, but adds ‘you’.]</td>
<td>Affirmed: the messenger who prepares the way. Omitted: any positive role for the temple in this process.</td>
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<td>1:3 A voice of one crying in the desert: Prepare the way of the Lord; make straight the path of our God.’</td>
<td>Isa 40:3</td>
<td>‘A voice crying in the wilderness, “Prepare the way of the Lord, make straight the path of our God.”’ (Cf Isa 40:3, ... and the glory of the Lord will be seen and all flesh will see the salvation of God.’) [Mk follows LXX (adds ‘him’), not the MT.]</td>
<td>Reaffirmed: the preparation of the way in the wilderness (not the temple), for the salvation of all humanity.</td>
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17. This is strongly argued by Watts, Isaiah’s New Exodus, 53-90, together with the threat against the temple implied by the selective use of Mal 3:1, yet Watts still speaks in terms of ‘the journey of her [Israel’s] exiles to their home and their eventual arrival at Jerusalem, the place of Yahweh’s presence’ (90), rather than a gathering of all nations elsewhere.

18. For an examination of the spatial tensions underlying Mark, see Elizabeth Struthers Malbon, Narrative Space and Mythic Meaning in Mark (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1986). As for the prophet/priest tension, I would agree with the analysis of Edwin K Broadhead, ‘Christology as Polemic and Apologetic: The Priestly Portrait of Jesus in the Gospel of Mark’, JSNT 47 (1992): 21-34, that Jesus takes on priestly functions in Mk 1-3, but would stress that he does so in opposition to the priestly hierarchy, and as ‘a testimony against them’ (Mk 1:44)—an interpretation that Broadhead makes explicit in his later article, ‘Mk 1:44: The Witness of the Leper’, ZNW 83 (1992): 257-65, esp 260f. In this context it is possible to see the underlying tension in Mark’s narrative as having prophet (wilderness/Galilee) vs priestly (Jerusalem/temple) dimensions, for ultimately the Son of Man goes the way of his forerunners, John the Baptist/Eljah (Mk 9:11f), and the tragic prophet tradition triumphs over the ruling priestly class. Bruce J Malina, The New Testament World: Insights from Cultural Anthropology, 3rd ed (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2001), sheds much light on the unclean/pure dimension of the Markan text (see Mark 7) in his section on ‘Clean and Unclean: Understanding Rules of Purity’, even though he does not relate his analysis specifically to Mark’s Gospel in any great depth.

nating from the revolutionary fervour of pre-fall Jerusalem,\(^{19}\) then developed further at the level of the post-70 CE composition of the Gospel of Mark itself. The anti-temple stance of the historical Jesus (see the analysis of Mk 11:17, below) provided the basis for this further development; resurgent Jewish temple-state cultural exclusivism during the sixties provided the stimulus; and the post-fall vacuum in Jewish-Christian identity provided the opportunity and necessity to reconstruct a vision for the new ethnically diverse communities that were emerging. Thus the ‘conflicting contexts’ of the texts used to describe this new identity are analogous to the recent history of the Markan community and its battle against a mono-cultural and hierarchical expression of religious purity and national salvation. In the aftermath of the failed Jewish revolt, some other response to Roman imperialism was necessary—some other way of revisioning the people of God.

These tensions between an exclusive cult and a concern for universal salvation are probably least evident in Mk 1:11, due to the absence of any specific reference to Jerusalem or the temple. Nevertheless, as can be seen below, multi-ethnic concerns still clearly dominate the context of two of the texts alluded to by the divine voice at Jesus’ baptism.

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\(^{19}\) So Dunn, *Unity and Diversity*, 324: ‘Evidently the first Christians’ hope for eschatological renewal centred on Mount Zion and on an eschatologically renewed or rebuilt temple.’

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<td>Mk 1:11</td>
<td>Psalm 2:7</td>
<td>‘You are my son…of me and I shall give you the nations as your inheritance and the whole world as your possession.’ [Mk = LXX = MT]</td>
<td>Affirmed: the ‘only son/sacrificial son’ traditions and the universal perspective.</td>
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<td>Gen 22:2</td>
<td>‘Take your beloved (only) son, whom you love, Isaac, and go into the high country (LXX) to the land of Moriah (MT) and offer him there as a sacrifice…’ [the beloved (only one) in Mk = LXX = MT]</td>
<td>Omitted: any possible ethnocentric understandings of the Moriah/mountain (→ temple mound) location are challenged by Isa 42:1.</td>
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<td>Isa 42:1</td>
<td>‘…my soul welcomes him… I give my spirit to him; he will bring justic and judgment to the nations.’ [Mk differs from both LXX and MT.]</td>
<td>Reaffirmed: the gift of the spirit and the sacrifice of the ‘beloved son’ will be for the benefit of all humanity.</td>
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If the context of the MT of Gen 22:2 (in contrast to the Septuagintal form of all the other ‘synthetic quotations’) is understood as forming part of the background of this compilation, then it should be noted that 2 Chron 3:1 identifies Moriah (now a ‘mountain’ rather than a ‘land’) as the Jerusalem temple site,\(^{20}\) and Jewish tradition sees Isaac as the prototype of the beloved son and perfect willing sacrifice. These traditions may have been affirmed to some extent at the Markan compositional level, but any positive focus on Jerusalem and the temple site is again overridden by the wider perspective of the final text. Jesus, like Isaac, is to be taken to ‘that high place’ for

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20. See Isaac Kalimi, ‘The Land of Moriah, Mount Moriah, and the Site of Solomon’s Temple in Biblical Historiography’, *HTR* 83 (1990): 345-62. The late development of this ‘Mt Moriah/Temple’ tradition seems to indicate an attempt to bolster the prestige of the Second Temple (before Herod’s renovations) and perhaps also to strengthen the culturally exclusive claims of the Jerusalem cult over against the rival (and older) claims of the Samaritans regarding Mt Gerizim.
sacrificial purposes, but clearly with consequences for the salvation of all the nations, not just Israel.

Whereas there are no similar ‘synthetic quotations’ for the next ten chapters of Mark’s narrative, these same conflicts between an exclusive Jerusalem cult and a concern for the marginalised continue to lurk just beneath the surface of the text. They are evident in the growing tension as Jesus moves from Galilee towards Jerusalem, and in the ‘theography’ of the mysterious crossings of the sea of Galilee and the feedings on either side. They are present in the debates over what is ‘clean’ and ‘unclean’, and even present in another form in the threefold discipleship discourses of Mark 8–10. There the traditional power structures and hierarchies are overturned by the expression of God’s partiality for the little ones, for the powerless—the children, the women, the blind. But in Mk 11:17 the tension between temple cult and the fate of the nations surfaces explicitly once more in another compilation of prophetic texts. Here the specific context of both texts is affirmed as far as the overall strategy of the narrative goes, but this does not mean a change of attitude to the future of the temple itself, as the final text in the synthesis (Jer 7:11) demonstrates yet again.

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21. See Geza Vermes, Scripture and Tradition in Judaism (Leiden: Brill, 1961), 193ff, especially 222, where the links between the binding of Isaac and the early understanding of the sacrifice of Jesus are clearly established, along with the connection between Gen 22:2 and Mk 1:11.


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| Mk 11:17    | Isa 56:7     | 'My house shall be called a house of prayer for all nations.' (Ps 68, 'The Lord who gathers the calves of Laban says: "There are others I shall gather besides those already gathered.") [Mk–LXX–MT.]
|             | Jer 7:11     | '... a brigands’ hideaway.' Part of Jeremiah’s anti-temple sermon, which includes the threat of destruction. 7:14 ‘I shall treat this temple that bears my name, and upon which you trust, the place that I gave you and your ancestors, just as I treated Sodom, and I shall drive you out of my sight...’) [Mk alludes to LXX or MT.]

Affirmed: the concern of the Lord to gather all nations in prayer, but any possible ethnocentric understanding of the temple (as the gathering place for all the nations) is subverted by the Jer 7:11 text which follows.

Reaffirmed: the inevitability of the destruction of the temple.

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Here the involvement of all the nations is clearly endorsed by Mark (the only Gospel to include ‘for all nations’), but not the implication that the temple will be the scene of the gathering of the exiles and the ‘others’. This possibility is overruled by the reference to Jeremiah and the terrible fate that awaits the temple and those ‘who put their trust in it’. The case has been well argued that both in the symbolic action of cursing the fig tree and the direct action in the temple (which provide the immediate context of this text), the Markan Jesus is judging the temple cult rather than purifying it for further use. In the events that follow, it becomes even clearer that the judgment of the temple rather than its rehabilitation as an international centre of worship is what the Markan author has in mind (see Mk 13:1f and 15:38). Indeed, it becomes evident that there

is a necessary connection in the Markan scheme of salvation history between the destruction of the temple and the mission to the nations. On the three occasions when the judgment of the temple is referred to in the Gospel of Mark (11:12-25; 13:1-2; 15:38) there is a corresponding reference to the Gentile mission (11:17; 13:10; 15:39), and this theme can be seen as underlying the entire eschatological discourse in Mark 13. In this context, Timothy Geddart has put the connection even more boldly:

If the old temple was a centre to which all nations would come (Mark 11:17) and if the new temple would expand to fill the whole world (cf. Dan. 2:35; Mark 14:9) then perhaps Mark 13 is fundamentally concerned with the issue of breaking free from Jerusalem-centredness into worldwide mission. Perhaps Mark sees the faithful scattered from the old temple at 13:14 and regathered fully and finally into the new temple at 13:27.25

If it can be shown that this ‘gathering from the four winds’ in Mk 13:27 (including, it should be noted, the remnant of the Judean elect who fled when warned, Mk 13:20) is an event beginning to occur within the Markan community even as the gospel is compiled, then the rationale for the ‘synthetic quotations’ is even more clearly established.


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<td>Mk 13:24-27</td>
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<td>13:24 ‘But in those days, after that tribulation, the sun will be darkened and the moon will not give its light, 13:25 and the stars will be falling from the heaven, and the powers which are in the heavens will be shaken...</td>
<td>Isa 13:10; Ezek 32:7-8; Joel 2:10-3:6; 4:15; Isa 36:4</td>
<td>There are too many allusions to detail here, but all the texts from Isaiah, Ezekiel and Joel have ‘the Day of the Lord’ connections, specifically involving the punishment of the nations (Isa 13:10f; 34:1f; Ezek 32:15; Joel 4:10) and/or judgment of the nations from Jerusalem (Isa 34:14; Joel 4:11).</td>
<td>Affirmed: the apocalyptic signs of the passing away of the old epoch and the beginning of a new one. Omitted: the theme of judgment and punishment of the nations has been consistently avoided.</td>
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<td>13:26 And then they will see the Human One coming in clouds with great power and glory.</td>
<td>Dan 7:13-14</td>
<td>‘One like a Human One among all peoples, nations and languages became his servants.’ [Mk basically follows LXX and the MT; cf. Mk 14:62 below.]</td>
<td>Reaffirmed: the exaltation and vindication of the Human One (Son of Man) and the gathering of the multi-ethnic community.</td>
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<td>13:27 And then he will send out the messengers, and he will gather his elect from the four winds, from the ends of the earth to the ends of heaven.’</td>
<td>Zech 2:6 (10) (LXX ‘gathering') rather than Zech 2:10 (6) (MT ‘scatter’)</td>
<td>‘From the four winds of heaven I will gather you, says the Lord.’ (Zech 2:1), ‘On that day many nations will be converted to Yahweh.’ [Mk follows LXX, not the MT.26]</td>
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If the latter verses are allowed to take precedence over the former verses again, then the non-judgmental gathering and conversion of the nations in Daniel overturns the prior ‘ethnocentric’ (Jerusalem-centred) descriptions of judgment and terror for the nations, which form the unspoken but inescapably dominant context of all the cosmic signs in Mk 13:24-25. A clear understanding of Mark 13 as a

whole presents a compelling argument to view these cataclysmic events as occurring as the Gospel of Mark is being written—"after that tribulation" (Mk 13:24) of the fall of Jerusalem and before the generation who knew the historical Jesus passed away (Mk 13:30). This would suggest that the gathering of the new, multi-ethnic community from the four corners is seen by Mark as the beginning of the 'Kingdom coming with power' (Mk 9:1), which is to take place within the first generation of the followers of Jesus. In any case, whether the text is interpreted in this way or as referring to some kind of transcendent eschaton, it is clear that the vision of a multi-ethnic community is central to the Markan expression of the fulfillment of the divine revelation through the suffering and exalted Son of Man. This is again made explicit in Mark's final 'synthetic quotation' (Mk 14:62).

27. This 'earthly' interpretation of what most still regard as a reference to 'the parousia' (though Mark never uses the word) has been argued consistently by a minority of scholars. See, for example, two books by Richard T France, Jesus and the Old Testament: His Application of Old Testament Passages to Himself and His Mission (London: Tyndale Press, 1971), Appendix A: "The Reference of Mark 13:24-27", 227-39, which includes a list of earlier and more recent scholars who support this interpretation; and Divine Government: God's Kingship in the Gospel of Mark (London: SPCK, 1990). See also Keith D Dyer, "But concerning that day..." (Mk 13:32): "Prophetic" and "apocalyptic" eschatology in Mark 13", in Society of Biblical Literature 1999 Seminar Papers (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 1999), 104-122, and the recent literature cited in n6, including N T Wright and Walter Wink). For a critique of this 'earthly' interpretation, see Beasley-Murray, Jesus and the Last Days, 321, where the theophanic—and therefore, in Beasley-Murray's thinking, eschatological—nature of these texts is reassessed. But theophanies and angelophanies are part of the ongoing story of salvation history and need not always be equated with the parousia = 'second coming' = 'The End' in Christian eschatology. They must also have at least a dual relevance, if not a primary concern, for interpreting the ongoing experiences of divine intervention in human history. These 'Days of the Lord' confront us all at different times—existentially, communally, nationally and globally—and the use of cosmic signs to describe them is typical of ancient texts. See Keith D Dyer, 'When is the end not The End? The fate of Earth in Mark 13', in The Earth Bible, vol 5 (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, forthcoming).

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<td>Mk 14:62</td>
<td>Faith, and you will see the Human One seated at the right hand of power...</td>
<td>'Sit at my right hand... ruling from Zion (509:2) ... judge the nations... keeping up corporal' (109:6). [Mk alludes to LXX or MT.]</td>
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<td>and coming with the clouds of heaven.</td>
<td>Dan 7:13-14</td>
<td>'Behold, with the clouds of heaven comes one like a Human One... and all peoples, nations and languages become his servants.' [Mk follows LXX 'th ('with') or MT rather than LXX 'upon').]</td>
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Again, it is apparent that the multiculturally inclusive perspective of the Danielic Human One overrides the former exclusivist perspective of Jerusalem-based judgment and revenge on the nations. According to the Markan context, this exaltation of the Human One (and the gathering of the nations which it implies) is an event that will be witnessed by the Sanhedrin (whom Jesus is addressing in Mk 14:62). It is as if the gathering of the international community and the exaltation/vindication of the Human One (specifically paralleled in Mk 13:24-27) are two sides of one event, with each side confirming the other. Only if it is insisted that the 'coming Human One' in Mark implies a 'second coming' to earth—which is clearly not the case in Dan 7:13f—is it necessary to adopt a transcendent eschatological interpretation of these verses. Otherwise, the sending out of the messengers after the Human One is exalted before God in order to
gather his elect (Mk 13:27)\textsuperscript{28} can be seen as a process begun in the Pauline and other Apostolic missions. This process of incorporating the nations into the people of God before the resolution of Jerusalem-centred eschatology was ratified retrospectively by the collapse of any Jerusalem-based opposition when the temple-state fell in 70 CE. Such a conclusion cannot rest on an analysis of these five texts alone, but must take account of the whole of Mark’s Gospel and of the somewhat uncertain historical details surrounding the destruction of the temple and the fate of the Jerusalem church.\textsuperscript{29} There is no question, however, that the growing body of literature on the catastrophic events surrounding the Jewish war of 66–70 CE demands that further attempts be made to account for the interpretation of these happenings within the NT writings.\textsuperscript{30}

It has been demonstrated that in the compiling of these five ‘synthetic quotations’ there was a consistent theological and sociopolitical purpose at work. In each case, a position against a culturally exclusive Jewish eschatology (on the theological level) and against the revival of the Jewish Temple State (at the socio-political level) was carefully made by the dialectical arrangement of the Jewish traditions. Such polemical compilations would fit admirably the situation of a hybrid Jewish-Christian community during the sixties;\textsuperscript{31} as it

sought to counter the resurgent Jewish ‘nationalism’ of that period. The claims of those more ‘ethnocentric’ Jewish Christians, who saw in the extraordinary events of the late sixties the hope for a Jerusalem-based messianic kingdom, could have been specifically countered from the Scriptures by those who saw the gathering of all nations to form a new community as being sufficient evidence that the kingdom was already being ushered in with power.

That such underlying themes should be evident in the pre-Markan material and then taken up by the author of Mark’s Gospel is not surprising when we consider the more overt themes of the Gospel itself. It is clear that Mark was concerned with breaking barriers,\textsuperscript{32} with the Gentile mission and with dissociating the fate of the temple from any false eschatological hopes. All of the texts could then be regarded as Markan redactional compilations, especially since they are so strongly Septuagintal in nature and seem to occupy programmatic positions in the narrative.\textsuperscript{33} Yet it would seem that Mk 1:2-3, 13:24-27 and perhaps 14:62 have the strongest claim to being from the hand of the author. In contrast to Mk 1:11 and 11:17, they are distincively Septuagintal and are threaded together in a way thoroughly typical of the word order of much of Mark as a whole.\textsuperscript{34} All three statements are also decisive in the revelation of Jesus’ ministry and future identity. Whatever we conclude about the exact division between tradition and redaction, it is reasonable to suggest that in the final composition of Mark the ‘synthetic’ scripural quotations developed in the struggle against a culturally exclusive Jerusalem state were incorporated and added to, in order to provide legitimation from Scripture for the growth of multi-ethnic Jewish-Christian and Gentile-Christian communities.

\textsuperscript{28} Although textually suspect, his elect in Mk 13:27 can be seen as a redefinition of the elect of Mk 13:20, 22. The faithful remnant fleeing the horrors in Jerusalem and Judea during the late sixties join with those gathered ‘from the ends of the earth to the ends of heaven’ in the mixed communities to the North.


\textsuperscript{30} Amongst some of the helpful recent literature that tackles this period are the writings of Richard Horsley, Robert Jewett, Sean Freyne, Ched Myers and Mark Nanas.

\textsuperscript{31} There could be some continuity here with the earlier anti-temple stance of Stephen and the Hellenists (some also suggest the Samaritan Christians) in Acts 6-7, which may have led to the ‘first confessional schism’ of the early church.

\textsuperscript{32} Again, see Gill, ‘Beyond the Boundaries’.

\textsuperscript{33} It is no longer possible to conclude that compilations of Septuagintal texts must be secondary or redactional, but since not all OT texts in Mark reflect a Septuagintal origin (see the list for Mark 11-16 in Koo, ‘The Function of Scriptural Quotations’), it can at least be suggested that distinctively Septuagintal texts might indicate a different origin, and are the ones most likely to reflect Markan authorship.

\textsuperscript{34} See the detailed analysis of Markan word order in Keith D Dyer, The Prophecy on the Mount: Mark 13 and the Gathering of the New Community (Leeds: Peter Lang, 1998), 81-92 and Appendix 1.
It should be clarified in conclusion that such tensions in the text cannot be understood simply in terms of a conflict between Jewish and Christian perspectives, though ultimately they may have played a role in the eventual parting of the ways. Rather, these tensions existed already within Jewish Scripture and traditions. Opponents (typically the Hebrew prophets) of an exclusivist Jerusalem religious hierarchy intentionally aligned themselves with that Jewish heritage which spoke of justice and salvation for the nations as a way of offering an alternative symbolic universe to those alienated from, and by, the temple cult and purity system. Those who subsequently believed that the radical openness of God's grace reached its fullest expression in the ministry and death of Jesus of Nazareth were able to fuse these traditions with the teachings of Jesus in the gospel accounts as a means of consolidating continuity with scriptural tradition. These composite texts suggest that the anti-temple stance of Jesus and many of his Jewish contemporaries was built upon in the immediate pre-fall Markan community in opposition to the resurgent Jewish temple-state, then given full expression at the level of the post-fall final composition of the Gospel.

Since Athol Gill always insisted that exegesis should not stop in the first-century world but must always lead us back to our current century, I may be forgiven a few further reflections. If we hold these texts of the 'New' and 'Old' Testaments to be vehicles of God's revelation to us and in any way normative for our lives, it should be clear from the preceding analysis that any form of nationalistic salvation, or dogma of racial purity, or ethnic cleansing, or exclusive Zionism are anathema to the authentic community of the people of God. Both Christianity and the non-exclusivist Judaism that gave it birth showed their concern for cross-cultural and multi-ethnic issues from the beginning—and must continue to do so.