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THE MOTIF OF CONTAINMENT
IN THE GOSPEL
ACCORDING TO MARK

A Literary-Critical Study

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GEARARD Ó FLOINN

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*Dedicated to my godchildren
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CHAPTER ONE

Introduction

1.1 The qualification of miraculous activity in the Gospel according to Mark

In almost every instance in the Gospel according to Mark, where Jesus is portrayed engaging in miraculous activity, whether in the form of word (prediction) or deed (e.g. healing or other nature miracle), the action is accompanied by an additional element which serves to qualify what is being done or said. The detail which qualifies the action may take a variety of forms, the most explicit of which is a prohibition of witnesses from speaking further about what they had seen or heard (e.g. 1.44; 7.36; 8.30; 9.9). On closer inspection, the pervasiveness and ubiquity of this additional aspect, though not always recognised in scholarly literature as such, has the cumulative effect of conveying to the reader the sense that miraculous activity is not being reported as it would deserve. It could be claimed with some justification that the depiction of supernatural marvels is being deemphasised or downplayed in the narrative, and that this is happening at the behest of the Gospel's protagonist himself. In most cases, the prohibition from speaking is placed on the lips of Jesus. G. Van Oyen refers to this phenomenon as the “contradictions”

between the revelation and hiddenness of Jesus.¹ This paradoxical feature of the Gospel according to Mark on the one hand, portraying thaumaturgic activity and, on the other, appearing to attenuate it was rare in Hellenistic literature of the first century C.E., in both its Jewish and Greco-Roman realisations. This dissertation will refer to this characteristic of the Gospel according to Mark as the motif of containment.

This phenomenon is also at the heart of W. Wrede's celebrated work *The Messianic Secret* which first appeared in 1901² and which has rightly been called by C. W. Skinner "an epoch-making paradigm."³ This anomaly in the Gospel according to Mark is wonderfully and figuratively captured in the pericope dealing with the calming of the storm (Mark 4.35-41). The two verbs employed at the moment of climax, to cause the wind to abate and a calm to descend, *σώπα* and *πεφίμωσο* (4.39) belong to the semantic field of speech, like many of the verbs occurring here in the context of containment. To be more precise, they effect the absence of speech. The concept of opposing the reporting of the miraculous occurs so frequently in Mark that Wrede, perhaps more accurately, might have entitled his study *The Messianic Silence*. This study seeks to move beyond Wrede's initial insights and to take account of advances in this area of scholarship, including methodological developments, to arrive at a fuller appreciation of the presence and form of the phenomenon, within the Gospel as a whole. An initial evaluation of Wrede's pioneering work will establish a context for the investigation.

1 G. Van Oyen, "From Messianic Secret to Divine Mystery: How Narratology Makes Sense" (not yet published paper presented at the *Colloquium Biblicum Lovaniense LXVI*, Leuven, 26 July 2017), 1-23, 2, n.4.

2 W. Wrede, *The Messianic Secret* (trans. J. C. G. Greig; Cambridge/London: James Clark & Co, 1971); trans. of *Das Messiasgeheimnis in den Evangelien: Zugleich ein Beitrag zum Verständnis des Markusevangeliums* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1901, repr. 1969).

3 C. W. Skinner, "The Study of Character(s) in the Gospel of Mark: A Survey of Research from Wrede to the Performance Critics (1901-2014)," in *Character Studies and the Gospel of Mark* (LNTS 483; ed. C. W. Skinner and M. R. Hauge; London: Bloomsbury, 2014), 3-34, 5.

1.2 Wrede's The Messianic Secret

Published in 1901, Wrede's *The Messianic Secret* argued that the literary phenomenon of secrecy in the Gospel according to Mark was present in twelve texts which needed to be interpreted if this matter were to be satisfactorily addressed.⁴ His explanation for the presence in Mark of prohibitions from speaking further about miraculous activity was predicated on his calculation that Jesus was recognised as Messiah only after his death, and not before that. He postulated that the earliest disciples of Jesus were embarrassed by their failure while he was still alive to acknowledge his special status. Wrede believed that this became apparent only after the resurrection, and that the earliest traditions, before the Gospels were committed to writing, sought to alleviate this inadequacy by indicating that while they knew who he was, on his authority they remained silent about it. This is the tradition, Wrede contended, which was inherited by Mark and the other evangelists.⁵ Furthermore, he believed he could explain this reluctance of Jesus to declare his true identity before his death. For Jesus and the Gospel writers, a correct definition or description of messiah had to include the elements of suffering and death. Consequently, any attempt to speak of messianic status before Jesus had suffered and died would be deficient. Wrede postulated that the author of Mark took over this tradition and developed it further. He claimed that although Jesus' messianic identity was known to his disciples while he was still alive, it had, to use Wrede's term, to be kept a secret for the time being. By way of examples of the theme of secrecy, the following texts stand out: 8.30, 9.9, 9.30. In this regard, 9.9 was of particular significance: coming down from the mountain where he had been transfigured, he ordered the three witnesses not to tell anyone what they had seen εἰ μὴ ὅταν ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ ἀνθρώπου ἐκ νεκρῶν ἀναστῆ. His true identity could be properly spoken of only

⁴ Mark 1.25; 1.34; 1.43-45; 3.12; 5.43; 7.24; 7.36; 8.26; 8.30; 9.9; 9.30-31; 10.48.

⁵ Wrede, *The Messianic Secret*, 145. He concludes that the secrecy motif is altered and lessened in the other Synoptics and is virtually absent from John.

afterwards. In the words of D. E. Aune: “Wrede concluded that the messianic secret in Mark was a theological and apologetic device of the early Christian community which the second evangelist heightened and brought to literary expression.”⁶

Since Wrede, scholars have wrestled with the immense challenge posed by his conclusions. His lasting contribution to the discussion of this theme begins with the questions he asked, which are still central to the debate more than one hundred years after they were first published. A major problem with adopting an exclusively historical approach is that, as things stand, there simply is not sufficient evidence to determine when exactly his followers began to recognise Jesus as messiah. More specifically, the paucity of evidence makes it difficult to establish whether this began during his public life or afterwards. The position that it is only in the light of the cross that the true identity of Jesus may be revealed is all the more problematic because of the fact that the Gospel, coming from a post-resurrection perspective, is overwhelmingly and essentially infused with a post-Easter mindset. Wrede’s view that Mark reworked the existing tradition of secrecy into its current state in his Gospel is difficult to substantiate. As W. H. Kelber has argued, it is impossible, since the work of F. Neiryneck, to differentiate between tradition and redaction in Mark.⁷

A second problem is that Jesus’ identity has already been revealed before he dies, by Peter (8.29) and by Jesus himself before the High Priest (14.62). Yet, the prohibition from speaking further about his miraculous actions is found after the episode at Caesarea Philippi in 9.9. Furthermore, too many people knew what Jesus was doing to justify calling it secrecy. For example, contrary to the command of Jesus, the Gerasene demoniac proclaimed in the Decapolis what Jesus had done for him (5.20). And perhaps most tellingly, no new

6 D. E. Aune, “The Problem of the Messianic Secret,” *NT* 11 (1969): 1-11, 2.

7 W. H. Kelber, *The Passion in Mark: Studies on Mark 14-16* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1976), 42.

secret is revealed after Jesus dies.⁸ Effectively, Wrede’s approach is to isolate one form of the containment motif – an explicit prohibition from further reporting an event – and to conclude that the sum of the various occurrences of this trope indicate that secrecy is what is at issue. For example, he judges the command given by Jesus after the transfiguration in 9.9 to be “one of the most important sayings written down by Mark:⁹ Καὶ καταβαιόντων αὐτῶν ἐκ τοῦ ὄρους διεστείλατο αὐτοῖς ἵνα μηδενὶ ἄ εἶδον διηγήσωνται, εἰ μὴ ὅταν ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ ἀνθρώπου ἐκ νεκρῶν ἀναστῇ (9.9). He summarises the cumulative effect of the prohibitions from broadcasting thus:

“Our conclusion is that during his earthly life Jesus’ messiahship is absolutely a secret and is supposed to be such; no one apart from the confidants of Jesus is supposed to learn about it; with the resurrection, however, its disclosure ensues. This is in fact the crucial idea, the underlying point of Mark’s entire approach.”¹⁰

Wrede also recognised the messianic self-concealment involved in Jesus’ explanation to his disciples of the paradox of a public preaching that had a secret (*μυστήριον*) element: καὶ ἔλεγεν αὐτοῖς· ὑμῖν τὸ μυστήριον δέδοται τῆς βασιλείας τοῦ θεοῦ (4.11).¹¹ It is important to look beyond the instances of prohibition in Mark to address this literary phenomenon adequately.¹² In any event, the search for an alternative interpretation is necessary.

8 Instead, in Blackburn’s phrase there is an ‘unsuccessful search for the Resurrected One.’ See B. Blackburn, *Theios Anēr and the Markan Miracle Tradition: A Critique of the Theios Anēr Concept as an Interpretative Background of the Miracle Traditions Used by Mark* (WUNT 2.40; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck 1991), 234.

9 Wrede, *The Messianic Secret*, 67.

10 Wrede, *The Messianic Secret*, 68.

11 Wrede, *The Messianic Secret*, 56.

12 It has also been suggested that Wrede may have changed his mind about what he had written on messianic secrecy. Evidence for this claim is believed to be located in a letter, so far unpublished, which is in the possession of Gerd Lüdemann. This situation is referred to in M. Hengel, “Jesus the Messiah of Israel,” in *Studies in Early Christology* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 2004), 1-72, 17, n16. For further discussion of Wrede’s change of mind, see A. Chester, *Messiah and Exaltation: Jewish Messianic and Visionary Traditions and New Testament Christology* (WUNT 207; Tübingen:

A brief consideration of the historical context in which Wrede was working will show that his work arose as a response to nineteenth-century scholars who saw in Mark a reliable source of historical information for constructing lives of Jesus.¹³ The general acceptance of Markan priority at the time was most likely partially responsible for this assumption. His approach to Mark is historical, as his assumptions, referred to above, that Mark was not the creator of the secrecy traditions testify. He argues that the “messianic secret” is not historical in so far as it does not go back to the life of the earthly Jesus of Nazareth. It is, rather, a reshaping by Mark of earlier material with a theological purpose.¹⁴ Because the approach of this dissertation is primarily a literary one, an evaluation of Wrede’s historical assumptions are beyond its scope. Nevertheless, it is possible to identify common ground between a historical method and a literary one by recognising that Mark is the author of the work, either in the strict sense of that word, or to the extent that he has shaped earlier material decisively.

In summary, the remarkable feature of Mark under investigation here is the juxtaposition by Mark of a protagonist who is a miracle-worker and a concern to suppress publicity around miraculous events. The kernel of Wrede’s position is to claim that all of the occurrences of the device of secrecy were intended to show that the life and activity of Jesus were non-messianic. While his conclusions have largely not been accepted by the scholarly world, his influence on the debate by raising the questions he posed continues to be significant. The reception of his position will be considered in greater detail below in 1.5.

Mohr-Siebeck, 2007), 309 n370.

13 Hengel uses the plural ‘theories’ to refer to Wrede’s position on the messianic secret. He calls these ‘reduced and disparate.’ (*Studies in the Gospel of Mark*, London: SCM, 1985), 44.

14 Wrede, *The Messianic Secret*, 67.

1.3 The research question

The research question may be specified thus: what is the source, extent, role and significance of the motif of containment in the Gospel according to Mark? First of all, some words of explanation are required.

1.4 The motif of containment

The feature of the Gospel according to Mark which this dissertation seeks to investigate is found in two types of passages which are related and yet distinct. In the first category, Jesus is portrayed as performing a miraculous action. In the second he is presented as uttering miraculous speech in the form of a prediction. Miraculous action itself is of two kinds, which are not mutually exclusive, with some overlap between them. The first involves an interaction with the natural world, for example, stilling a storm (Mark 4.35-41), walking on the sea (6.45-52), and multiplying food (6.30-44; 8.1-9). In these instances, where I employ the expression 'nature miracle' I do so with some caution. That is to say, I use the term in a purely thematic and literary sense without invoking the presuppositions and categorizations of form criticism. The second kind of miraculous action examined here is that of healing (for example: 1.21-28; 5.1-20). This class too is applied in a thematic and not in a form-critical sense. The three predictions of Jesus' passion and death (8.31; 9.31; 10.32b-34) and the three eschatological predictions (8.38; 13.26-27; 14.62) together with the other predictions of Chapter 13 (*passim*), are the most prominent examples of this literary phenomenon in the Gospel.

All of the passages examined in this study, whether of miraculous speech or miraculous action, have at least one extra element in common. It is this detail which is the precise focus of this dissertation. This component occurs in a variety of configurations and its effects may be viewed from two complementary perspectives, namely, characterization and narrative. The forms which this

phenomenon assumes include an explicit prohibition of spectators from speaking further about what they had seen (5.43; 8.30; 9.9); misunderstanding on the part of the witnesses about what they had observed (8.32-33;9.33-37); fear on the part of onlookers to enquire about they had watched or heard (9.32); few witnesses (5.37; 13.3). The effects of this feature may be noted in Markan characterization and narrative structure. In relation to the former it has the effect of playing down the acclaim that would be expected to ensue from the performance of miraculous activity, to be due to the protagonist. The factor in question limits, if it does not actually deprive Jesus of the adulation he would otherwise be entitled to. I have chosen the term 'containment' to express this phenomenon.

When the Gospel is considered as a narrative whole, this phenomenon, may account for the fact that with only one or two rare exceptions (Jesus' prediction of Peter's denial in 14.30 is recalled in 14.72; the feeding of a multitude with five loaves and two fish in 6.30-44 is referred to later on in 8.19.), miraculous actions or utterances are rarely referred to outside of the pericopes in which they occur. It is abundantly clear that there is sufficient textual evidence to justify this investigation. Secondly, considering the evidence makes a significant difference to Mark's narrative and to his depiction of the character of his protagonist.

While the command to onlookers not to bruit the deed about is the most explicit instance of this modification, it is not, as I argue, the only one. The motif of containment is also advanced by the use of ambiguous epithets such as "the son of man" and, on occasion, "the kingdom of God." The research focuses on a quest for enhanced answers to questions raised by a reading of Mark and a revisiting of the resolutions reached by Wrede. It aims to make a contribution to Markan scholarship by deciphering the motif in those passages where containment is to be found. At an early stage of this research it became clear, as a secondary consideration, that this investigation would also contribute to a re-evaluation of the largely negative

reputation of the Markan disciples, a pattern which emerged as early as Matthew's redaction of Mark. The approach adopted here transfers the frequent judgemental approach of the Gospel towards the disciples from the moral to the literary sphere. While prominent disciples are given names, I shall argue that when they appear in the Gospel it is not with a view to establishing individuating characters but, rather, in order serve a purpose connected with containment. Finally, the combination of a miracle-working protagonist and an impulse to curtail reporting of this activity adds a further and new element of uniqueness to Mark's Gospel.

1.5 The Reception of Wrede

The combination of a miracle-working protagonist and a concomitant consistent tendency to play down the miraculous is extremely rare if not non-existent in the Hellenistic literary world. The latter element has been judged by R. C. Miller to be "Mark's most flagrant embellishment" of the Jesus tradition.¹⁵ Wrede's resolution of the incongruity is his concept of the "messianic secret." While his thesis and the history of its interpretation in the twentieth century needs little introduction or rehearsing, a summary of the principal trends in the reception of his work will be helpful at this point.¹⁶

The desire to go beyond Wrede's conclusions has been aptly expressed by J. D. G. Dunn who, more than forty years ago, having revisited the motif of the disciples' misunderstanding, concluded thus: "At most we can speak of a Messianic misunderstanding, but hardly a Messianic secret."¹⁷

15 R. C. Miller, "Mark's Empty Tomb and Other Translation Fables in Classical Antiquity," *JBL* 129.4 (2010): 759-776, 767.

16 For a history of the survey see Van Oyen, *De studie van de Marcusredactie in de twintigste eeuw*. (Verhandelingen van de Koninklijke Academie voor Wetenschappen, Letteren en Schone Kunsten van België, Klasse der Letteren, 147; Brussel: Paleis der Academiën, 1993), 27-46, 236-259; C. M. Tuckett, "Introduction. The Problem of the Messianic Secret," in *The Messianic Secret* (Issues in Religion and Theology 1; ed. C. M. Tuckett; London: SPCK, 1983), 1-28.

17 J. D. G. Dunn, "The Messianic Secret in Mark," *Tyndale Bulletin* 21 (1970): 107.

1.5.1 Bultmann, Dibelius, Roloff, Luz

The early form critics developed their own responses to Wrede's questions. R. Bultmann accounted for the secrecy motif by postulating a confluence of ideas of early Hellenistic Christian communities about the Son of God coming down to earth with narrative traditions about Jesus.¹⁸ M. Dibelius considered secrecy from an apologetic point of view to explain why in spite of the many proofs of his supernatural power Jesus was not recognised as Messiah during his lifetime.¹⁹ In an important contribution to the debate, J. Roloff argued that it is not possible to integrate all of the references to secrecy and ambiguity in Mark into a single schema which would explain every occurrence of the theme. He differentiated between the commands to secrecy addressed to disciples and orders to silence addressed to demons.²⁰ In an equally valuable contribution to the topic, U. Luz argued in a similar vein in favour of distinguishing between the "miracle secret" and the "messianic secret proper."²¹

1.5.2 Räisänen

H. Räisänen argues along the same lines as Roloff that the motif of secrecy in Mark cannot be explained by a single over-arching theory.²² He suggests that Wrede's solution, "the theology of the

18 R. Bultmann, *The History of the Synoptic Tradition* (trans. J. March; 2 ed. with additions from the 1962 supplement; New York: Harper and Row, 1963), 347-348; trans. of *Geschichte der synoptischen Tradition* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1931).

19 M. Dibelius, *From Tradition to Gospel* (trans. B. L. Woolf; New York: Scribner's Sons, 1935), 223; trans. of *Die Formgeschichte des Evangeliums* (2d ed.; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1933).

20 J. Roloff, "Das Markusevangelium als Geschichtsdarstellung," *Evangelische Theologie* 29 (1969): 73-93.

21 U. Luz, "The Secrecy Motif and the Markan Christology," in *The Messianic Secret* (Issues in Religion and Theology; ed. and trans. C. M. Tuckett; London: SPCK, 1983), 75-96; trans. of "Das Geheimnismotiv und die markinische Christologie," *ZNTW* 56 (1965): 9-30.

22 H. Räisänen, *The Messianic Secret in Mark's Gospel* (SNTW; trans. C. M. Tuckett; Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1990); trans. of *Das "Messiasgeheimnis" im Markusevangelium: ein redaktionskritischer Versuch* (Julkaisuja Suomen Eksegeettinen Seura 28; Helsinki: Suomen Eksegeettinen Seura, 1976).

cross” is one key which opens some doors but not all. Whether or not the secrecy motif was created by Wrede is not of primary concern to this dissertation, since it approaches the subject from a synchronic rather than from a diachronic perspective. Nevertheless, it is helpful to reflect on Räisänen’s view that to argue that the secrecy motif was not created by Mark tenable.²³ W. Schmithals had proposed that Mark was engaged in debate with the view of Jesus held by the bearers of the older Q-tradition.²⁴ Räisänen’s work relies, to some extent, on this hypothesis. He argues that the failure of the Markan disciples to understand Jesus’ actions represents the initial stance of some of Jesus’ followers who only gradually gave up misunderstandings about his death and resurrection, during his life and after Easter.²⁵ In relation to the theme of ambiguity, found in an understanding of parables as riddles whose meaning is not immediately clear, and in the elusiveness of the term “the kingdom of God,” Räisänen sees only a very loose connection with the general motif of secrecy.²⁶

1.5.3 Yarbro Collins

A. Yarbro Collins has reached the conclusion that the two primary methods employed in the scholarship on this topic are the

²³ Räisänen, *The Messianic Secret*, 248.

²⁴ W. Schmithals, *Einleitung in die drei ersten Evangelien* (Berlin/New York: de Gruyter, 1985), 424.

²⁵ The disciples’ failure to understand is a motif which Mark employs primarily in situations where Jesus performs miracles or makes predictions. For an account of a view which regards the close followers of Jesus as representative of a false christology which needs to be corrected see T. J. Weeden, “The Heresy that Necessitated Mark’s Gospel,” *ZNW* 59 (1968): 145-158; and *The Interpretation of Mark* (2d ed.; ed. W. R. Telford; Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1995), 89-104. Weeden sees the Gospel of Mark in apologetic terms, that is, as the title of his article suggests, its purpose is to correct a false vision of discipleship. Evans also discounts the notion that the purpose of Mark is to correct a false, unhealthy and triumphalist Christianity. Instead he suggests that Mark’s treatment of Jesus’ disciples is primarily a literary concern to highlight the contrast between a masterful Jesus and weaker disciples, so as to make Jesus a compelling figure to a Roman audience. See C. A. Evans, “Mark,” *Dictionary of New Testament Background* (ed. S. E. Porter and C. A. Evans; Downers Grove, Illinois: InterVarsity Press, 2000), 267-273, 272.

²⁶ Räisänen, *The Messianic Secret*, 143.

reconstruction of the history of tradition in historical context and the literary-theological interpretation of the text of Mark. Her solution to the problem of the “messianic secret” is arrived at by employing the tools of the latter, specifically, narrative criticism.²⁷ She agrees with Wrede that all of the occurrences of the motif have the same purpose. However, his hypothesis that the messianic truth about Jesus could be revealed only after his death is called into question by Jesus’ answer before the High Priest (Mark 14.62) and by the words of the Centurion at the foot of the cross (15. 39). She successfully applies a narrative-critical method to interpret the passages dealing with the secrecy motif. To illustrate her approach, she selects the first miracle of the Gospel namely, the exorcism which Jesus performs in the synagogue in Capernaum (1.23-28). In this exorcism pericope Mark employs a standard technique with a variation: the demon identifies Jesus. The readers and hearers are aware of this but, seemingly, not the other participants in the scene, since they remark upon the demon’s obeying Jesus but not on his identification of him. She argues that this line of interpretation is confirmed by the editorial summary in 1.34. The demons recognise Jesus because of their supernatural knowledge but the human beings present do not. She concludes her remarks on this topic by saying that all of the instances of secrecy, silencing, etc. are instances of literary devices used by the author to reveal and yet conceal the identity of Jesus. Her approach is an example of what may be achieved from employing a literary approach to the interpretation of Mark. This dissertation endeavours to build on a close reading and literary analysis of the texts in question to develop our understanding of the theme of containment outlined above.

1.5.4 Ahearne-Kroll

S. P. Ahearne-Kroll has made a significant contribution to the study

²⁷ A. Yarbro Collins, *Mark: A Commentary* (Hermeneia; Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 2007), 170-172.

of themes in Mark which overlap with the subject of this dissertation, in particular, an investigation of the conceptual spectrum that runs from concealing to revealing.²⁸ Before engaging with his arguments I shall give a brief summary of his position. Using a narrative-critical approach and relying on the work of W. Shiner, he examines the phenomenon of audience inclusion which “was well known in the ancient world and used in many forms of composition.”²⁹ By “audience,” the term he uses in place of modern narrative criticism’s “reader,” he means “authorial audience,” as P. J. Rabinowitz has defined it.³⁰ The authorial audience is the audience the author thinks will be reading or hearing his or her story. Shiner postulated a proportionate relationship between audience inclusion and the rhetorical or persuasive effect of the story. Ahearne-Kroll takes this idea further to examine the phenomenon of audience exclusion. He equates inclusion and exclusion with the level of information given to an audience vis-à-vis that given to the characters in the narrative. He argues that a successful rhetorical outcome may be judged by the audience’s desire to become part of the in-group, which he goes on to identify as those “who respond to Mark’s central tenet that Jesus

28 S. P. Ahearne-Kroll, “Audience Inclusion and Exclusion as Rhetorical Technique in the Gospel of Mark,” *JBL* 129 (2010): 717-735. He had already investigated the theme of audience inclusion in the early chapters of Mark. See “Mysterious Explanations: Mark 4 and the Reversal of Audience Expectation,” in *Between Author and Audience in Mark: Narration, Characterization and Interpretation* (ed. E. S. Malbon; NTM 23; Sheffield: Phoenix Press, 2009), 62-79.

29 W. Shiner, *Proclaiming the Gospel: First-Century Performance of Mark* (Harrisburg, PA: Trinity Press International, 2003), 172. Shiner’s context was that of the performance of the Gospel before an audience. He focussed on the performer’s/reader’s ability to include the audience into the action, especially where the second person singular and plural occurred in the text. By glancing at and gesticulating towards the audience a performer would have been enabled to extend the ‘you’ of the text to the ‘you’ of the audience. We may presume that gesture and glance could also be used not only in a discourse or oracle context *pace* Shiner, but also in a narrative setting which involved the third person singular and plural. For example, when describing the fear and lack of understanding of the disciples at the calming of the storm in Mark 4.41 the narrator could also draw the audience into the action by the same means.

30 P. J. Rabinowitz, “Truth in Fiction: A Reexamination of Audiences,” *Critical Inquiry* 4 (1977): 121-141, esp. 126-127.

is the Son of God and Messiah and those who seek to follow after him.”³¹ He concludes that Mark’s purpose in including and excluding the audience is to give them a sufficient experience of the former to want more of it.

Ahearne-Kroll argues that audience inclusion predominates over its opposite in Mark 1-3. Some of the passages which he employs to elucidate this theme are also important for the subject of this dissertation. He gives several examples which, he contends, provide the audience with favoured access to what is happening. The title of the Gospel as it stands, regardless of whether it is a later addition or not, names Jesus as Christ and Son of God so that in the final form of the Gospel the audience is in possession of this knowledge before any character in the narrative is (1.1).³² His baptism offers more than one illustration of their privileged route to inside information not available to any character in the Gospel (1.9-11). The audience is the sole witness to the scene so to speak. It is not clear whether the opening of the heavens and the dove-like descent of the Spirit are seen by anyone, including John. Finally, the voice from heaven addresses Jesus in the second person so that the same absence of clarity in relation to John applies here too. The audience alone knows of Jesus’ testing by Satan and of his being ministered to by angels (1.12-13). Apart from the characters involved, only the audience is present when Jesus commissions the group of twelve and confers on

31 Ahearne-Kroll, “Audience Inclusion,” 719.

32 It is more likely that the original heading was *Ἀρχὴ τοῦ εὐαγγελίου Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ* and that the appositional phrase *υἱοῦ θεοῦ* is an addition. For an account of a variety of views on the text of Mark 1.1 see A. Yarbro Collins, “Establishing the Text: Mark 1.1,” in *Texts and Contexts: The Function of Biblical Texts in their Textual and Situational Contexts* (ed. T. Fornberg and D. Hellholm; Oslo: Scandinavian University Press, 1995), 111-127; B. Ehrman, “The Text of Mark in the Hands of the Orthodox,” in *Biblical Hermeneutics in Historical Perspective* (ed. M. Burrows and P. Rorem; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1991), 143-156; B. Ehrman, *The Orthodox Corruption of Scripture: The Effect of Early Christological Controversies on the Text of the New Testament* (New York/Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993), 72-75; P. M. Head, “A Text-Critical Study of Mark 1.1: ‘The Beginning of the Gospel of Jesus Christ,’” *New Testament Studies* 37 (1991), 621-629.

them the status of apostles (3.13-19). The audience alone finds out the name of the one who will betray Jesus when none of the disciples, perhaps not even the betrayer himself, knows this (3.19).

Ahearne-Kroll observes a change in this privileged status when Jesus is portrayed teaching the crowd “with many parables,” (4.2) which at this point in Mark is a new form of teaching. He goes on to interpret this development as the setting up by Mark of an out-group and he finds confirmation for this view in Jesus’ response to the Twelve and to those who were with them: “To you has been given the mystery of the kingdom of God, but to those outside, all things are given in parables” (4.11). The parable is spoken to the people while the explanation is given to the in-group alone (4.14-20). He interprets, as further instances of audience exclusion, those locations in the Gospel where Mark portrays Jesus teaching without communicating the content of that teaching, especially 1.21-28; 1.38-39; 2.1-2 and 2.13. He argues that, as a result of audience exclusion, at its worst, the hearers are outsiders along with Jesus’ opponents.³³

Much of his approach and of the evidence he marshals in his examination of his theme is employed in this dissertation when investigating the containment motif. The baptism is one such example. Additionally, he selects the healing of Jairus’ daughter in 5.37-43, actually 5.21-24 and 37-43, for special mention as an example of audience inclusion. The event is witnessed only by the parents, Peter, James and John, and importantly, from his point of view, by the audience. From his perspective, the scene qualifies as a moment of revealing. There are many such scenes where his interpretation differs from my own, something which will be clear as the dissertation unfolds. For example, in the pericope where Jesus walks on the sea (6.47-52) he regards the accompanying words as an indication that the scene has the character of a theophany rather than a moment of concealment. Other scenes which are the

³³ Ahearne-Kroll, “Audience Inclusion,” 723.

subject of a similar divergence of interpretation include the three predictions of his passion by Jesus in 8.31; 9.31 and 10.33-34; all of the teaching of the apocalyptic discourse in Chapter 13; and the scene in Gethsemane with Peter, James and John in 14.32-35. Because nothing of the content of the conversation between Jesus, Elijah and Moses at the transfiguration in 9.2-8 is narrated by the author, Ahearne-Kroll understands this scene as an additional act of exclusion of the audience. The arguments in favour of concealment will become clear in the chapters where these passages are dealt with in some detail.

1.5.5 Watson

The work of D. F. Watson on the material which Wrede assembled under the rubric of “Messianic Secret” has been influential in terms of its own conclusion that the key to understanding this material is not in fact secrecy, but rather the concept of intentional resistance to honour.³⁴ This is a very positive step forward in the attempt to redefine Wrede’s problem and to reconfigure it. He identified the Markan Jesus’ inversion of honour and shame as the integrating principle to explain those passages which in an earlier age had fallen under the rubric of secrecy. His work is part of a wider trend of social-scientific criticism in New Testament studies which has highlighted the significance of the honour-shame culture of the ancient world and which is continuing to contribute to a fuller appreciation of the complexities of societies of this period and within the geographical region of the Ancient Near East. He argues that it is not that Jesus dismisses honour as inadequate or inappropriate *per se*, but rather that he rejects a particular kind of honour and in so doing he redefines what is honourable primarily by predicating it of those who suffer and those who are servants.³⁵ The last and lowest in

34 D. F. Watson, *Honor among Christians: The Cultural Key to the Messianic Secret* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2010).

35 Watson, *Honor among Christians*, 63-85.

society, the sick, children, the hungry, those who lack understanding and the son of man who did not come to be served but to serve, are all deserving of honour as this is re-imagined. He argues that the value of a social-scientific approach to the messianic secret lies partly in its making available to the scholarly world data for understanding the concealment behaviour of Mark's Jesus which was simply not available before 1990, when the majority of work on the messianic secret was produced.³⁶ He concludes that Mark's audience would not have heard most of the concealment passages as being concerned primarily with secrecy but with honour and shame.

Watson's particular contribution to this area is that he looks elsewhere beyond the concept of secrecy for an explanation of what the text of the Gospel says. And the question of honour (and its opposite) was clearly a topical issue at the time Mark was being committed to writing, as Watson shows convincingly. In a subsequent article he explores further the issue of Jesus' inversion of honour and shame in order to discover the motivation for this phenomenon. He sets out to answer this question by comparing the *Life of Aesop* with Mark's Gospel.³⁷ In the course of his study he identifies four passages as being particularly important for what they reveal about Jesus' attempts to conceal his healing.³⁸ He argues that the four scenes portray Jesus acting in a deeply countercultural way and that this is what informs the impulse to silence and secrecy. He points out that no self-respecting patron would intentionally *thwart* the spread of his or her honour. Yet this is what Jesus' contemporaries would

36 Theißen had applied a new method from the sociology of knowledge to this material. He argued that the secret was a move on the part of the early communities to protect themselves from sanctions which would occur in the social context in which they found themselves. G. Theißen, "Die pragmatische Bedeutung der Geheimnismotive im Markusevangelium: Ein wissenssoziologischer Versuch," in *Secrecy and Concealment: Studies in the History of Mediterranean and Near Eastern Religions* (SHR 65; ed. H. G. Kippenberg and G. G. Stroumsa; Leiden: Brill, 1995), 225-245.

37 D. F. Watson, "The *Life of Aesop* and the Gospel of Mark: Two Ancient Approaches to Elite Values," *JBL* (2010): 699-716.

38 Watson, "*Life of Aesop*," 709.

have seen and heard him do. Rather than accept the honour that was rightly his, Jesus attempted to keep people from knowing about his great deeds. He concludes that these passages contribute to the view that Mark's Gospel challenges its hearers and readers to change their attitudes and practices regarding status, class and honour just as Jesus has done in the Gospel. In other words, he explains the Markan Jesus' concern to "hide" his healings, in terms of the moral or mimetic effect this could have on the Gospel's hearers and readers, to persuade them to change their outlook and actions regarding status, class and honour.

One difficulty with this line of interpretation is that it does not take the textual evidence seriously enough. Jesus does, in fact, in many instances in the Gospel foil the conferral of honour on himself, so that it is not merely an inadequate understanding of honour which he rejects. For example, there is nothing repugnant about the honour which would have been his for having healed or restored to life the daughter of Jairus (5.21-24, 35-43), and yet he expressly forbids the five witnesses from letting anyone else know what had happened (5.43). The same could be said of almost every instance in the Gospel where Jesus limits the fame which would naturally ensue from his great deeds.

1.5.6 Winn

Watson's study is ground-breaking in itself in its impulse to look beyond secrecy. It is also important in terms of the literature which it has occasioned. I am thinking in particular of A. Winn's exploration of an explanation for the Markan Jesus' reluctance to accept honour and in this way to find a satisfactory solution to Wrede's original question.³⁹ Watson had argued that Mark had inverted standard honour/shame conventions and that this was the hermeneutical key to grasping his motif of secrecy. Winn looks

39 A. Winn, "Resisting Honor: The Markan Secrecy Motif and Roman Political Ideology," *JBL* 133 (2014): 583-601.

to Roman political ideology as a source for resistance to achieved and proscribed honour. While he recognises, as this dissertation argues, that examples of such resistance are very scarce in the Mediterranean world, he proposes that they are to be found in the lives of first-century Roman emperors, particularly those who were favourably remembered, especially Augustus, Tiberius, Claudius and Vespasian. In support of his argument he highlights three aspects of Mark's Gospel for consideration: first, Mark clearly presents Jesus as a world ruler; secondly, it is most likely that Mark's Gospel has a Roman provenance; and thirdly, many features of Mark suggest that it challenges Roman imperial power.

In the first instance, there is a fundamental problem with Winn's synthesis which does not fit with Mark's Gospel as a literary whole. Winn postulates the origin of imperial resistance to honour in the historical situation of Augustus, especially given that Augustus was an absolute autocrat ruling a society which was basically opposed to autocracy. He argues that Augustus' solution to this incongruity was to adopt the strategy of *recusatio*, that is, to preserve the reality of power while eschewing its appearance.⁴⁰ In this regard, the refusal of honour was in fact a sham. It was a clever if cynical strategy to ensure the silencing of opposition by presenting a front which was the diametric opposite to the underlying reality. It is unlikely that the author of Mark and/or Jesus himself would not have been aware that the practice of the refusal of honour in Roman political ideology was not genuine. The evidence of the Gospel of Mark indicates that there is nothing false about Mark's employment of containment in relation to Jesus. It is not a show which conceals its opposite. The veracity and authenticity of the motif may be inferred from the scene where Mark's Jesus sets out his position on the question of honour (10.35-45) in the programmatic phrase which is itself couched in containment terms by the inclusion of the expression $\acute{\omicron} \upsilon\iota\acute{\omicron}\varsigma \tau\omicron\tilde{\upsilon}$

40 Winn, "Resisting Honor," 590.

ἀνθρώπου as I shall argue below, that the son of man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many (10.45).

As an example of the strategy of *recusatio* in action, Winn considers those places in Mark where Jesus commands to silence those who were the subject of his miraculous deeds or those who witnessed them. Scenes which contain this feature include 1.21-28; 1.32-34; 1.40-45; 3.11-12; 5.1-20; 5.21-24, 35-42; 7.31-37; 8.22-27; 9.2-10; 10.46-52. These scenes are examined individually below. In support of his argument he mentions the views of B. J. Malina and J. J. Pilch who suggest that the command for silence may be understood as a means of preventing or curbing envy.⁴¹ Winn argues that the perception that honour was limited naturally led to the increase of envy (φθόνος). The virtue of love of honour (φιλοτιμία) required those who sought it to be alert to this danger and to take steps to curb it. If we apply these considerations to the three listed scenes, we arrive at conclusions which are not congruent with the rest of the Gospel. In the case of the first (1.21-28) where Jesus is teaching with authority in Capernaum (1.21-22) and in the process, heals a man with an unclean spirit (1.23-28), he rebukes (ἐπετίμησεν) the spirit who has addressed him as the Holy One of God and orders him to be silent (φιμώθητι) and to come out of the man. According to this line of argument, the command to silence is in reality a cautionary act on behalf of Jesus to curb envy in those who were in the synagogue and who witnessed the exorcism which would have conferred honour on him. That is to say, he would gladly have accepted the honour, but would have been wary of the accompanying envy. There is no doubt that this scene contains elements of containment, as we shall see in more detail below. However, there is no reason here or in another part of the Gospel to claim that the Markan Jesus' emphasis on limiting

41 See B. J. Malina, *The New Testament World: Insights from Cultural Anthropology*. (3d ed.; Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2001), 125; J. J. Pilch, "Secrecy in the Gospel of Mark," *Professional Approaches for Christian Education* 21 (1992): 150-153.

the broadcasting of the miraculous deed which he has accomplished, is anything but authentic. The same applies to the other two passages listed above, i.e. the cure of the Gerasene demoniac (5.1-20) and the healing of a deaf man in the region of the Decapolis (7.31-37).

In relation to the three supporting arguments for Winn's thesis, the following points may be made. His first contention is the Roman provenance of the Gospel according to Mark.⁴² Given that other scholars have argued for other places of origin of the Gospel, especially Galilee and Syria, when all is said and done, there is simply not enough evidence to conclude one way or the other that the Gospel was written with a Roman audience in mind.⁴³ Of course, it is also the case that wherever in the empire the gospel was actually written, its audiences could well have been familiar with Roman ideology and general literary culture.

The second contention on which his thesis depends is that Mark presents Jesus as a world ruler.⁴⁴ This is the weakest of the three pillars on which Winn bases his conclusion that the Markan Jesus refuses honour to emulate and comply with secular Roman ideology. He does not pay any attention in this regard to the very phenomenon he is trying to explain. That is to say, he argues that because Mark portrays Jesus as God's Messiah, and because the evangelist's understanding of that title is that of God's appointed ruler, Jesus is a world ruler. It does not appear important to him to deal with the fact that Mark's portrayal of Jesus as Messiah, regardless of how that title is to be understood, is not unqualified. The whole thrust of the argument raised originally by Wrede is to interpret Mark's modification of the messianic role which he assigns to Jesus. That

42 Winn, "Resisting Honor," 594.

43 A case for a Galilean provenance has been made by H. N. Roskam, *The Purpose of the Gospel of Mark in Its Historical and Social Context* (NTSupp Series 114; Leiden: Brill 2004). Alternatively, J. Marcus, *Mark 1-8: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary* (AB 27; New York: Doubleday, 2000); and G. Theißen, *The Gospels in Context: Social and Political History in the Synoptic Tradition* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1991), 236-245 have argued for a Syrian origin.

44 Winn, "Resisting Honor," 596.

is also the subject which Winn set himself to explain and also the subject of this dissertation.

The third pillar on which Winn builds his argument is that Mark contains a variety of challenges to Roman imperial claims.⁴⁵ This claim is based on the interpretation of the title of the Gospel (1.1); on Jesus' being proclaimed "Son of God" (he does not include an indefinite or a definite article in the title.); on Jesus' healings (e.g. 3.1-6; 8. 22-26); on his commanding of "Legion" (5.1-20); on his ordering and pacifying the sea (4.35-41); on his providing of food to the hungry (6.30-44; 8.1-10); and on the recognition by a Roman Centurion that he is "Son of God" (again without an article). Of course, it is possible to interpret any or all of these seven sets of passages without making any reference to Roman authority. As the text stands it is not necessary to read them in the light of imperial Roman claims, and in fact, to do so may be to read into the text something which is not there. At the same time, it has to be acknowledged that many commentators would think that such a reading does illuminate these passages.

His proposal that Mark "co-opts" Roman political ideology, by portraying Jesus as resisting honour in the way first-century emperors did, remains to be proven. He acknowledges that the textual evidence is not equivocal when he raises the question of consistency as a "notorious problem".⁴⁶ He holds that the inconsistencies are resolved in the differences between accepting appropriate and rejecting inappropriate honour. That is to say, that the practice of resisting honour was not an absolute one. Mark's motif was merely a way for Jesus to refuse excessive honour. His final argument that Jesus' resistance of honour is "occasional" i.e. therefore not pervasive, simply does not take seriously the motif of containment, which will be shown in this dissertation to apply to all of the nature miracles of Jesus, to his various predictions, to each occurrence of the term "the

45 Winn, "Resisting Honor," 598-9.

46 Winn, "Resisting Honor," 600.

son of man” and to as many of his healing miracles which it has been possible to investigate here within the constraints and limitations of space and time. It will be necessary therefore to examine the evidence in more detail and to engage further with the question which exercised Wrede and his disciples and commentators.

1.5.7 Van Oyen

In a significant contribution to the debate Van Oyen shows that the shift from a historical approach to a literary one, specifically, a narrative one, makes possible, if not inevitable, the parallel shift from a focus on the messianic secret to a concentration on what he terms the divine mystery: “In short, focusing on God means a refocusing from messianic secret to divine mystery.”⁴⁷ That is to say, it is to be expected that a narrative-critical approach to Mark would include an investigation of the characterization of God in the Gospel, which would, in turn, put the mystery of God at once revealed and concealed, centre stage.⁴⁸ For almost two centuries the primary focus of critical exegesis of Mark had been on the characters of Jesus and the disciples. He also shows that the “rediscovery” of God is not confined to the Gospel of Mark, but is, in fact, a feature of current biblical scholarship.⁴⁹

47 Van Oyen, “From Messianic Secret to Divine Mystery,” 8.

48 Van Oyen, “From Messianic Secret to Divine Mystery,” 2. While he recognizes that the new emphasis on the character of God in Mark became possible to some extent as a result of an earlier focus on the character of Jesus, he does not completely accept Skinner’s overview that the disciples were the main focus of character study in the immediate aftermath of Wrede’s work and for a long time afterwards, namely the era of form and redaction criticism. (See “The Study of Character(s) in the Gospel of Mark, 5.) Skinner suggested that with the advent of narrative criticism, Jesus’ characterisation became a primary object of investigation. To counter this view Van Oyen argues that the studies of the disciples were mostly carried out vis-à-vis the tension between concealment and revelation as it related to Jesus and secondly, that many authors focused on Jesus in this period.

49 Van Oyen, “From Messianic Secret to Divine Mystery,” 2, n.10. For example, P. Gibert and D. Marguerat, eds., *Dieu. Vingt-six portraits bibliques* (Paris: Bayard, 2002); A. A. Das and F. J. Matera, eds. *The Forgotten God* (Essays in Biblical Theology; Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2002); L. W. Hurtado, *God in New Testament Theology* (Library of Biblical Theology; Nashville: Abingdom, 2010); U. E. Eisen and

Van Oyen identifies a tension within the characterization of God in Mark which he terms the divine mystery. He believes that this tension is more fundamental than the one of revelation and hiddenness in the so-called messianic secret. He believes that “the messianic secret is embedded in the divine mystery.”⁵⁰ In a striking image he describes the situation thus:

“If one takes seriously the characterization of God in Mark, one will have to read the gospel with bifocal glasses: through one lens of the glass, one sees Jesus; through the other lens of the *same* glass, one sees God...In short, focusing on God means a refocusing from messianic secret to divine mystery. Mark’s story not only is proclamation by and about Jesus, but also by and about God.⁵¹ Through his story, Mark is telling *how* God acts in and through Jesus, while God remains invisible.”⁵²

He employs the three narrative tensions of suspense, curiosity and surprise to show how the reader constructs the presentation of God in Mark. He argues that most authors are in agreement that God never *directly and actively* intervenes in the story, except for the two moments at the baptism (1.11) and the transfiguration (9.7). While God plays a central role in the story, most of the references to God are indirect. They include θεός (48 times in Mark 1.1-16.8), κύριός (9 times), εὐλογητός (14.61), scripture quotations (e.g. 1.2-3; 4.11; 7.6-7 etc.), Jesus use of the word πατήρ (8.38; 11.25; 13.32; 14.36), the “theological passives” (e.g. 1.15; 1.42; 2.5; 2.20; etc.) δεῖ (8.31) and the use of πνεῦμα (1.8, 10). God is the one without whom the story could not have been told. On the other hand, God is invisible or hidden. Almost every author working on the characterization of

I. Mülliner, eds., *Gott als Figur. Narratologische Analysen biblischer Texte und ihrer Adaptionen* (Herder Biblische Studien 82; Freiburg, Basel, Wien: Herder, 2016).

50 Van Oyen, “From Messianic Secret to Divine Mystery,” 7.

51 One could also add that Mark’s story is also proclamation by and about Jesus’ disciples.

52 Van Oyen, “From Messianic Secret to Divine Mystery,” 8.

God in Mark recognizes this complex dual presentation. As Sweat puts it: “Paradoxical language highlights the mysterious character of God’s action.”⁵³ And according to I. B. Driggers, “Mark tells the story of an incomprehensible God.”⁵⁴

Van Oyen observes that Jesus’ activity and his interaction with others (including with God), is the place where we learn most about God. He interprets the import of the titular verse in 1.1. to say that the story the narrator tells is a continuation of God’s activity and promise in the Hebrew scriptures. What is heard and read about Jesus is heard and read about God, as R. B. Hays argues.⁵⁵ That is the sense of what it means to speak of theology as story.

The examination of the motif of containment in this dissertation investigates the rhetoric of Mark’s discourse. In other words, the exploration involves identifying the ways in which Mark’s story of Jesus is told. According to Van Oyen, the humanity of God is more important for the Gospel of Mark than the divinity of Jesus is. After the baptism, and except for his role in the transfiguration, God seems to disappear as an active character in the Gospel. The curiosity of the readers is responded to by the understanding that if they wish to know more about God, the principal thing to do is to look at and listen to the human person Jesus who came from Nazareth in Galilee. In this context, and because God as a character will always be in the background as a mystery, the focus on containment will be of significance for what it reveals to us about the character of Jesus.

1.5.8 Concluding remarks on the reception of Wrede’s work

There is a *prima facie* case for further investigation of the issues raised by Wrede on two grounds. In the first place, even a cursory reading of Mark will show that where he presents Jesus performing a miraculous

53 L. C. Sweat, *The Theological Role of Paradox in the Gospel of Mark*. (LNTS 492; London: Bloomsbury, 2013), 177.

54 I. B. Driggers, *Following God through Mark: Theological Tension in the Second Gospel* (Louisville – London: Westminster: John Knox Press, 2007), 1.

55 See R. B. Hays, *Echoes of Scripture in the Gospels* (Waco: Baylor, 2016).

act or making a prediction the text is replete with qualifiers such as prohibitions from reporting the event; misunderstanding on the part of witnesses to an action; fear, sometimes at unusual moments in the text; a strictly limited audience or number of spectators. All of these details have at least one significant aspect in common, namely, at the level of story they explain why a particular miraculous act is not employed to acclaim and bolster the fame of the one who performed it.

The questions raised by Wrede and the responses to them from a constant stream of interlocutors since the publication of his work are evidence of the central part which secrecy/silencing/containment plays in understanding the Gospel. M. Hooker recognised this when she concluded that the fundamental question of Markan genre cannot be adequately answered without reference to it.⁵⁶ The investigation carried out in this dissertation furthermore asserts the primary importance of containment, not only for a determination of the genre of Mark, but also for a more adequate interpretation of the Gospel as a whole.

It is my hope and belief that this study will make a contribution to the ongoing conversation in a number of ways. It offers a way of reading a wide variety of passage in an integrative and cogent way. While the dissertation may agree with J. P. Meier that it was most likely Jesus' miracle working which contributed most to his popularity it is clear that Mark's position requires a more nuanced approach to that question.⁵⁷ The presence of miracles in Mark is somewhat analogous to the way parables work. The detail in a parable which initially attracts the hearers' attention by its vividness is different from the core of the parable which is to cause those who hear it to think further about the question. Such an approach to the interpretation of biblical

56 M. D. Hooker, *The Gospel According to Saint Mark* (Black's New Testament Commentary 2; Peabody, Massachusetts: Hendrickson, 1991), 214.

57 J. P. Meier, *A Marginal Jew: Rethinking the Historical Jesus*, Vol 2: *Mentor: Message and Miracle* (Yale Anchor Bible Reference Library; New York/London: Doubleday, 1994), 3-4 n.4, n.14.

parables is proposed by C. H. Dodd.⁵⁸ While it may be the miracles which were responsible for attracting followers to Jesus, something else is required to retain them. What that may be, I suggest, is closely linked with the role of containment in the characterisation of Jesus. It is also hoped that the dissertation will contribute towards a rehabilitation of Mark's characterisation of Jesus' disciples by showing that in those scenes where their weaknesses appear, the focus is on their providing a form of containment rather than on making moral judgements about them. It may even be argued that the evangelist does not develop other characters in the Gospel to any great extent apart from that of Jesus. The absence of characterisation is a feature which is commented on by A. Simmonds who regards it as a signature-identifying stereotype and he acknowledges that Mark (along with Matthew) makes frequent use of stereotype. He illustrates his contention by citing the portrayal of the chief priests and elders, the Herodians, the Sadducees and the Pharisees.⁵⁹

Skinner argued that in the period of form and redaction criticism which followed Wrede, the disciples were the principal object of character study and that only when narrative criticism came into its own did Jesus come into the picture.⁶⁰ They have variously been regarded as enemies of Jesus at one extreme,⁶¹ and, so to speak, as his parishioners at the other.⁶² Van Oyen nuanced Skinner's schema by pointing out that the studies of the disciples which appeared after Wrede were connected with the narrative tension between the concealment and revelation of Jesus and secondly, that many authors focussed on Jesus even before the rise of narrative criticism.⁶³ D.

58 C. H. Dodd, *The Parables of the Kingdom* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1961), 5.

59 A. Simmonds, "Mark's and Matthew's Sub Rosa Message in the Scene of Pilate and the Crowd," *JBL* 131 (2012): 733-754, 743.

60 Skinner, "The Study of Character(s) in the Gospel of Mark, 5.

61 Weeden, "The Heresy That Necessitated Mark's Gospel," 145-158.

62 R. C. Tannehill, "The Disciples in Mark: The Function of a Narrative Role," *JR* 57 (1977): 386-405.

63 Van Oyen, "From Messianic Secret to Divine Mystery," 2.4.

Senior⁶⁴ and L. Doohan provide examples of the negative construction of Mark's disciples.⁶⁵ The views of D. Rhoads and D. Michie are less judgemental because they interpret the less than positive depiction of Jesus' disciples as a necessary strategy which allows the author to correct a false or inadequate interpretation of the Gospel.⁶⁶ R. M. Fowler's construction of the role of the disciples does most to exonerate them. He contends that, what he calls the secrecy motif is only secondarily an issue for the characters in the story, and primarily an issue for the readers and hearers.⁶⁷ E. S. Malbon's contrasting of the role of the disciples and that of the crowd deals with the former

64 D. Senior, 'The Eucharist in Mark: Mission, Reconciliation, Hope' *Biblical Theology Bulletin* 12 (1982): 67-72, 67-68. and who sees in it "a deliberate literary and theological construction of the evangelist."

65 L. Doohan, *Mark: Visionary of Early Christianity* (Santa Fe: Bear and Company, 1986) 100. It is clear to me that Doohan is correct in this assessment, although I am not convinced by his conclusion that their common purpose is to warn the members of the community for whom Mark is writing, about their own possible failures.

66 D. Rhoads and D. Michie, *Mark as Story*. (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1982), 99. According to this view, the misunderstanding of the disciples is the stimulus for a kind of apologetic in the teaching of Jesus, whereby the author communicates the high moral standards required to be a disciple. The teaching of Jesus acts as a corrective to erroneous or sub-standard positions adopted by those who would be his disciples. The failures of the disciples constitute "the primary literary device by which the narrator reveals Jesus' standards for discipleship, for much of his teaching comes in the course of correcting their behaviour and attitudes." Hawkin adopts a similar line of interpretation by viewing the benighted followers of Jesus as counter-models for discipleship. Only by understanding what they failed to understand can later candidates be admitted to the Christian community. D. J. Hawkin, "The Incomprehension of the Disciples in the Markan Redaction," *JBL* 91 (1972): 491-500.

67 For him, secrecy is primarily a puzzle for the reader, who is thereby enticed or persuaded to continue to wrestle with the text. It seems to be that van Iersel has misunderstood Fowler's basic position with regard to the motif of secrecy in Mark. See B. M. F. van Iersel, *Mark: A Reader-Response Commentary* (JSNTSS 164; Sheffield: Academic Press, 1998), 22. He contends that, for Fowler, the secret contained in the story 'exists for the characters and not for the readers.' (173). However, Fowler (*Let the Reader Understand*) concludes that the puzzlement in the narrative means that readers never seem to tire of unravelling and reknitting the threads. This he suggests, is one of Mark's great achievements, and consequently, he regards Mark's creation of the "messianic secret" as "the shrewdest of all rhetorical strategies" (174).

as a homogenous group, emphasising what they have in common over the putative existence of a hierarchical structure among them.⁶⁸

1.6 Methodological approach of the present study

Narrative rather than historical approaches to the Gospel according to Mark have gradually come to dominate Markan scholarship since the 1980s following the seminal publication of Rhoads and Michie which may rightly claim to be the first comprehensive narrative approach to the Gospel.⁶⁹ The import and impact of the book is well recognised in the scholarly world.⁷⁰ In line with these current scholarly trends, this dissertation will employ a narrative-critical approach in the broad sense to include awareness of the rhetorical framework of the discourse, the plot of the story, and the reception by the reader. This last aspect is the contribution of reader-response criticism to the project of interpreting the Gospel.⁷¹ It will also be important to make explicit that the practices of close readings have been pervasive in literary studies for more than a century, if not as one method among others, then “as virtually definitive of the field.”⁷² This dissertation is no exception to the phenomenon.

Additionally, in view of the fact that one is dealing with a work of literature from the end of the period of classical antiquity, some level of historical awareness will also be helpful. As Malbon has pointed out, basic information about the cultural context of a

68 Malbon, *In the Company of Jesus: Characters in Mark's Gospel* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2000), 70-79.

69 The third revised and elaborated edition is also the work of Dewey. See D. Rhoads, J. Dewey, and D. Michie, eds., *Mark as Story: An Introduction to the Narrative of a Gospel* (Philadelphia: Fortress), 2012.

70 See K. R. Iverson and C. W. Skinner, eds. *Mark as Story: Retrospect and Prospect* (SBL Resources for Biblical Study 65; Atlanta: SBL, 2011).

71 C. S. Lahurd, “Reader Response to Ritual Elements in Mark 5.1-20,” *Biblical Theology Bulletin* 20 (1990): 154-160; R. M. Fowler, *Let the Reader Understand: Reader-Response Criticism and the Gospel of Mark* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1991); van Iersel, *Mark: A Reader-Response Commentary*.

72 B. H. Smith, “What was ‘Close Reading’?: A Century of Method in Literary Studies,” *Minnesota Review* 87 (2016): 57-75, 58.

work is not just a concern of historical methods but it is, rather, an essential ingredient of any approach including a narrative one.⁷³ The combination of synchronic and diachronic approaches to scriptural texts is increasingly becoming a feature of contemporary biblical studies. Even scholars who think of themselves as theoretical purists on either side of the line will often use insights from the other side, when they prove illuminating.⁷⁴ D. Barr, for example, is a narrative critic who is equally at home in the area of redaction criticism of the Gospels.⁷⁵ One of the advantages of a literary approach is that, as a synchronic method, it allows the interpreter to look at the work as a whole. Such a perspective enables the reader to plot the development of a particular theme from the beginning to the end of the work. By way of example, in examining Mark's employment of the son of man imagery, I comment on the trajectory followed by the expression from an initial high starting point in the early occurrences, to its subsequent descent to suffering and death. Thereafter the phrase moves back and forth between these two extremes before reaching a final public affirmation of the identity of the referent in the most public of fora. I am using the horizontal categories of high and low in a way which is analogous to their employment when describing various Christologies.

An investigation of the rhetorical discourse will include the observation of linguistic, verbal, semantic and other literary patterns where they occur. Where otherwise unconnected scenes share containment vocabulary, it can serve to identify a link between them at a deeper level, for example, the reprimanding of an unclean spirit in Mark 1.25 and in the calming of the storm in 4.35-42. I shall elaborate on this issue when investigating the passages in question.

73 Malbon "Narrative Criticism: How Does the Story Mean?" in *Mark and Method* (eds. J. C. Anderson and S. D. Moore; Minneapolis: Fortress, 1992), 23-49, 27.

74 S. L. McKenzie and S. R. Haynes, *To Each Its Own Meaning: An Introduction to Biblical Criticisms and Their Applications* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox, 1993), 3.

75 D. Barr, *New Testament Story* (Belmont, CA: Wadsworth, 1987), 145.

Where the choice of a word is unusual, the argument for discerning a connection below the surface is strengthened.

While some forms of literary criticism are keen to gather as much information as possible about the cultural contexts of ancient literature so that they may thereby understand more fully the implied author and the implied reader of the narrative, other forms, narrative criticism for example, are suspicious of introducing elements which are extraneous to the narrative, including the quest for the author's purpose in writing, whether this is known or not. Van Oyen, for example, agrees that P. Ricoeur is correct in criticising the impossible search for the intention of the author.⁷⁶

The distinction between story and discourse highlighted by the literary critic S. Chatman is one which has been employed by narrative criticism to good effect. He distinguishes between them thus: "*Story* refers to the what of a narrative—its settings, characters, happenings and actions; *discourse* refers to the how of the narrative—how the narrative is told, employing the resources of narrative rhetoric."⁷⁷ The distinction is similar to that in a staged play where that which the audience knows (discourse) as a result of what the dramatist has communicated to them, may be differentiated from what the characters onstage know (story). In both cases the playwright controls the supply of information. As an instance of narrative criticism, it is intriguing to remember that the containment motif applies at the level of story while no such constraint is in place at the level of discourse. The reader is not enjoined to secrecy. To sum up this section, a narrative approach to Mark is appropriate

76 Van Oyen, "From Messianic Secret to Divine Mystery," 3. P. Ricoeur, "Philosophical Hermeneutics and Theological Hermeneutics," *Studies in Religion / Sciences religieuses* 5 (1975-'76): 14-33. "What the text means no longer coincides with what the author meant. [...] The text is essentially a work of art, a literary work, which transcends its own psycho-sociological conditioning and thus becomes open to an indefinite range of readers and readings within different sociocultural contexts." 19.

77 S. Chatman, *Story and Discourse: Narrative Structure in Fiction and Film* (Ithaca, NY/London: Cornell University Press, 1978), 9.

because Mark is a story, and it is this story and the way it is told, i.e. the discourse, which are the objects of research.

One of the salient elements of the study of rhetorical discourse is the identification of motifs in a text. W. Freedman has drawn up a list of five conditions for the identification of a literary motif.⁷⁸ In the first place, frequency of recurrence must show a deliberate choice at play. It must not simply be that it is necessary for the plot. Secondly, the recurrence must be employed in places in the narrative where it is avoidable. Thirdly, the locations in the literary work where the motif occurs must be compelling. Fourthly, the occurrences of the motif must be integrated towards a central purpose. Fifthly, the motif should be appropriate for achieving this purpose. In his study of the motif of wonder in Mark, T. Dwyer has applied Freedman's criteria and shown how such an approach is a useful literary tool.⁷⁹

It is clear that containment, in its many forms, meets Freedman's criteria. For example, fear is a frequent response to Jesus' actions where one might not expect it and where it is clearly not necessary for the plot and so avoidable. It is when she has already been cured of the haemorrhage that the woman's fear emerges (5.33) and it is when the storm has already passed that the witnesses are afraid (4.41). The emergence of fear when the danger no longer exists meets the criterion. In relation to the fourth, the primary purpose of investigating containment in Mark is to show how it facilitates the reading of a network of passages in a way which integrates them into what is a central aspect of the Gospel according to Mark, namely his portrayal of Jesus. Fifthly, it is the central contention of this study that containment rather than any cognate concept, such as secrecy or silence, is the motif which most appropriately describes the author's depiction of his protagonist.

The decision to investigate the set of miracles which are grouped

78 W. Freedman, "The Literary Motif: A Definition and Evaluation," *Novel* 4 (1971): 123-31.

79 T. Dwyer, "The Motif of Wonder in the Gospel of Mark," *JSNT* 57 (1995), 49-59.

here under the rubric of “nature miracles” was taken partly as a consequence of the requirement to limit the study on the basis of considerations of space. While I am aware that prominent scholars, including Meyer⁸⁰ and Theißen,⁸¹ have expressed reservation about the appropriateness of this term, I have chosen to retain it here because it permits a differentiation between healing and other miracles. As a literary phenomenon, predictions are of two main types, authentic historical conjectures about the future and *post eventum* predictions or *ex eventu* prophecies. The term prediction is preferable to prophecy, since foretelling the future is only one aspect of biblical prophecy, and though in the popular imagination it may be its most salient feature, in fact it is not intrinsic to it. *Post eventum* predictions are a common literary feature of the Hellenistic period. This has the triple effect of enhancing the status of the speaker, of the work in which it is found, and of the message which it seeks to convey.

Miraculous speech and miraculous deeds both play a significant role in Mark. A further argument for dealing with both types in this study is that traditionally they have been seen as complementary. This is attested to by an unexpected source namely, rare instances of early criticism of Jesus. G. Stanton points out that accusations of magic (actions) and false prophecy (words) are closely related to each other in ancient polemic, to such an extent that where only one of them is mentioned, the other is presumed.⁸² He examines

80 J. P. Meier, “The Present State of the ‘Third Quest’ for the Historical Jesus: Loss and Gain,” *Biblica* 80 (1999): 459-487, 482. He cautions against too much optimism in the use of a single term to describe such a wide variety of miracle types.

81 G. Theißen, *The Miracle Stories of the Early Christian Tradition*. (SNTW 99-100; Edinburgh: T&T Clark), 1983; (trans. F. McDonagh); trans. of *Urchristliche Wundergeschichten: Ein Beitrag zur formgeschichtlichen Erforschung der synoptischen Evangelien* (Gütersloh: Mohn, 1974), 99-100. Theißen rejects nature miracles as a category on the grounds that there is little justification for distinguishing between miracles in the human sphere and those in the natural world.

82 G. Stanton, *Jesus and Gospel* (Cambridge: CUP, 2004), 127-129. He adds a third concept to this pair, namely, accusations that the apparent success of the person in question is attributable to demonic possession, or agency in relation to

charges levelled against Jesus on these grounds (μάγος και πλάνος) found in Christian, Jewish and pagan circles by the middle of the second century.⁸³ He shows that earlier versions of these jibes were known to and countered by the Gospel writers. The rationale for examining predictions and nature miracles in succeeding chapters in this dissertation is based on this consideration.

1.7 Limitations of the Present Study

The first limitation of this study is that it employs, as explained above, a synchronic rather than a diachronic approach or an approach which includes both kinds. The investigation employs a narrative-critical perspective. The second limitation applies to the issue of examining Mark's literary context, specifically the subdivision of Mark's Hellenistic cultural environment into its conventional Greco-Roman and Palestinian Jewish categories. I do not believe it is necessary to provide any more than a brief survey of the former to confirm the views of M. Smith and A. Henrichs that the tendency to contain or limit in any way reporting of the miraculous is either extremely rare or non-existent.⁸⁴ This study assumes such a position. Thirdly, I have confined the investigation of Jewish literature of the period to the issue of predictions, and I have followed J. J. Collins'

demonic power.

83 Stanton, *Jesus and the Gospel*, 133. In addition to *Acts of Thomas*, and two rabbinic texts, he examines the *Testomonium Flavianum*, the paragraph about Jesus in Josephus, *Antiquities* XVIII.3, where a further example of the double accusation is found. He recognises that the authenticity of this paragraph has been questioned since the sixteenth century and suggests that it may be a later Christian interpolation, or an addition by a Christian scribe who "added a few phrases, and perhaps, altered a few words, in what was a 'neutral' or mildly hostile account of Jesus, originally by Josephus himself"

84 M. Smith, *The Aretalogy Used by Mark*. Protocol of the Sixth Colloquy of the Center for Hermeneutical Studies in Hellenistic and Modern Culture of the Graduate Theological Union and the University of California Berkeley, California, 12 April 1973 (ed. W. Wuellner; Berkeley, California: The Center for Hermeneutical Studies in Hellenistic and Modern Culture, 1975), 39. Here, Smith was self-consciously reflecting the position of Henrichs.

identification of the chief sources of this literary phenomenon.⁸⁵ Fourthly, the decision to differentiate nature miracles from other types of miracles, specifically, healing miracles was taken for reasons of time and space. As I indicated in the previous section, I am aware of the views of scholars who argue against such a hard-and-fast division. In taking this decision, I am not making any claim for a qualitative distinction between these two kinds of miracles, but rather I am basing it on thematic considerations, for the reason given. The variety and number of miracle stories designated here as 'nature miracles' are wide enough for that category to be taken as representative of Jesus' miraculous activity. Secondly, the category, though limited in number, includes one incident which could be categorised as a healing miracle, namely, the restoration to life of the daughter of Jairus (Mark 5.21-24, 35-43). Furthermore, this category of miracles has been sufficiently thoroughly dealt with in other scholarly works, such as those of Meier and Theißen, which I have already mentioned, as to enable a study such as this to refer to some of this scholarship without the need to examine all of the healing passages in Mark in detail.

1.8 Outline of the Present Study

In the Introduction, I engage with the questions raised by Wrede and his principal interlocutors over the past one hundred years. I direct the investigation of this dissertation through a different lens from that chosen by Wrede who investigated twelve passages which he identified as the primary instances of secrecy. This selection was largely based on direct prohibitions from diffusing further accounts of Jesus' remarkable deeds of speech or of action. The approach adopted here is that the phenomenon is much wider than what is contained in these twelve texts.

85 J. J. Collins, "The Apocalyptic Worldview of Daniel," in *Enoch and Qumran Origins: New Light on a Forgotten Connection* (ed. G. Boccaccini; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2005), 65.

While the issue of placing Mark in its Greco-Roman and Jewish contexts is considered below, at this stage it is helpful to bear in mind the principle enunciated by P. J. Tomson that while the broader setting of the New Testament is the Greco-Roman world, the Jewish matrix is a more immediate influence on Mark.⁸⁶ The number of references to Scripture in this Gospel would appear to support this argument.⁸⁷ Chapter Two deals with predictions in Jewish and other Greco-Roman sources.⁸⁸ It sketches briefly the situation in relation to prediction as a form of miraculous speech. It proceeds on the basis that the general scholarly consensus shows that containment is relatively unknown in the Greco-Roman world of this period. In fact, here it is the norm that miraculous speech and action are exploited to exalt the one performing these actions. Secondly, since the treatment of containment in Jewish literature of this period has been surprisingly overlooked, I examine seven locations identified in scholarly literature as the most prominent examples of this literary device, with a view towards assessing the presence of containment there. I show that the situation is similar to that which applies in the Greco-Roman world: containment of miraculous activity is relatively rare if not non-existent. Chapter Three investigates Markan predictions to see whether or to what extent, containment occurs. I set out the context of each pericope and follow this by outlining its literary unity and structure. The principal focus of the investigation will be to search for evidence of limitation in the story itself. At the level of story, this will include identifying any element which

86 P. J. Tomson, *If this be from Heaven: Jesus and the New Testament Authors in their Relationship to Judaism*, (The Biblical Seminar 76; Sheffield: Academic Press, 2001), 27.

87 See Nestle-Aland, ed. 28, pp. 836-878. See also W Krause, *Die Stellung der frühchristliche Autoren zur heidenischen Literatur* (Wien: Herder, 1958), 128.

88 Since Jesus traditions arose in a thoroughly Hellenised world, exegetes tend to consider a diversity of cultural and literary influences when analysing Gospel texts. These include their Jewish and Greco-Roman cultural contexts. See E. P. Dixon, "Descending Spirit and Descending Gods: A 'Greek' Interpretation of the Spirit's 'Descent as a Dove' in Mark 1.10," *JBL* 128 (2009): 759-780, 760.

explains why further reporting of the event does not take place. The focus in Chapter Four is to examine six nature miracles in the Gospel according to Mark for the same purpose. I have already mentioned the linking in the Gospel of the expression “the son of man” with ambiguity and misunderstanding as a feature of passages examined in Chapter Three which include a reference to the son of man. In some of these places there is a reference to the son of man which reinforces the motif of containment present in other forms. I go on to show that in most cases it comprises in itself an instance of that motif. It seems reasonable to deduce therefore that it may carry out a similar role wherever it appears in Mark. I shall test this hypothesis by investigating all fourteen Markan occurrences of the term. This will be the subject of Chapter Five.

A study of this kind could not claim to have answered any of the main questions raised by this subject unless it included consideration of those passages in Mark where the prohibition from speaking further about Jesus’ miraculous action was not adhered to. I shall survey this material in Chapter Six. Finally, the conclusions will draw together the strands which were investigated in this dissertation and propose a new way of explaining the commands to silence. These will include an investigation of its significance for Mark’s portrayal of the disciples, and for the author’s characterisation of Jesus and of God.

CHAPTER TWO

The Absence of Containment in Mark's Literary Environment

2.1 Introduction

This chapter proposes to examine the motif of containment, or perhaps more accurately, its absence in the literary environment of Mark. This context is usually considered to consist of the overlapping milieus of the Greco-Roman and Palestinian-Jewish worlds. In the former, there is sufficient evidence to claim that where the portrayal of miraculous speech and action is concerned, not only is containment unknown but in fact the opposite impulses of propagation and maximisation are the norm. The pattern is to exploit the miraculous in order to exalt the protagonist. It will be clear from what follows that the case for such a conclusion has already been well made. By way of contrast, there has been surprisingly little interest shown in assessing the principal approaches of Jewish literature to this issue. That is to say, the spectrum extending from containment to dissemination has been rather unusually neglected as a means of evaluating Jewish literary conventions dealing with the miraculous. Since this dissertation involves observing one literary work, namely, Mark's Gospel through such a lens, I shall, in the first place, summarise the arguments in support of the view that in the Greco-Roman literary

world in which Mark operated containment was conspicuous by its absence. The second half of the chapter examines predictions from Palestinian Jewish sources for evidence of the motif.

This approach is made easier by the fact that predictions are located in a limited number of Jewish works of literature of this period. It will therefore be possible to give a reasonably accurate account of the situation. The focus will be to evaluate whether these texts exhibit the same absence of containment which is a feature of the Greco-Roman world or, alternatively, whether, as in Mark, the motif of containment is also found here. Limitations of subject matter, time and space make it necessary to confine the scope of comparison and contrast at this point to the issue of predictions. The planned approach extending over the next number of chapters is, first, to assess Mark's predictions in the light of their literary background, and following that, to examine to what extent Mark's treatment of this material is mirrored in his handling of nature miracles and occurrences of the son of man. While some overlap occurs between nature miracles and healing miracles, for example, the cure of the daughter of Jairus (Mark 6.30-44), it has not been possible for the reasons identified, to examine in the same way, healing miracles as a category in themselves.¹ Given the rarity, if not the uniqueness in Jewish and Graeco-Roman literature of the Hellenistic period, of the Markan contradiction between revealing and concealing, or, in the

¹ Nevertheless, since they occupy such a prominent place in Mark's Gospel, the overlap has been an advantage since it facilitated an initial engagement with and some further exploration of the subject. While the intra-Markan comparison will involve predictions, nature miracles, including healings, and occurrences of the son of man, inter-documentary correlation will be confined to predictions. The work of G. Vermes on the rare but important examples of healing in the Jewish world of this period has made it more possible to consider Jesus in the light of parallel figures. The main examples include the rabbis' Honi the Circle-Drawer and Josephus' Onias, along with the Galilean Hanina ben Dosa. See G. Vermes, *Jesus the Jew: A Historian's reading of the Gospels* (London: Collins, 1973), 69-78. For Vermes, the facet of these figures which is most characteristic is their charismatic quality more so than any other, including their ability to perform healing actions.

terminology employed here, between exaltation and containment,² this feature of Mark's literary work needs further investigation.³

2.2 Absence of containment in Greco-Roman sources

The uniqueness in Mark's literary environment of his tendency to contain reporting of miraculous words and deeds is well attested in the secondary literature. Smith concluded that there was no evidence of any tendency in Hellenistic *Wundertexte*, to downplay miraculous activity thus:

“An injunction to observe secrecy is in direct conflict with pagan aretalogy, because there it is one of the standard ingredients that the miracle or whatever form the manifestation of the divine takes is either performed before a large crowd of witnesses or is given wide currency through publication of the record of it.”⁴

B. Blackburn's examination of the evidence reinforces this view when he states that the Markan phenomenon of witnesses' remaining silent is judged by most scholars to be the creation of the author.⁵ When it comes to Graeco-Roman portrayals of miracle-working gods or divine-human figures, he points to the paucity—or indeed the absence of prohibitions from propagating reports of miraculous speech and action. In the Hellenistic world an injunction to observe secrecy in sacred biographies where the attributes and mighty works

2 F. Schleiermacher, *Einleitung ins Neue Testament* (Berlin: G. Reimer, 1845), 313.

3 I am indebted to E. Broadhead for pointing out to me in conversation that in relation to one of the forms taken by the containment motif, namely, the reduction of witnesses as in, for example, the healing/restoring to life of the daughter of Jairus (Mark 5.21-24, 35-43) Mark may not have been creating *ex nihilo*. In I Kings 17.19 Elijah takes the dead son of the widow of Zarephath to a room alone where the Lord restores him to life. While both scenes share a similar detail, there is an important difference between them. The mother's conclusion in 17.24 indicates that containment is not at issue here, and in fact that its opposite applies.

4 Smith, *The Aretalogy Used by Mark*, 39.

5 Blackburn, *Theios Anēr*, 224.

of a deity or a divine-human person are recited is, in fact, rare – if it exists at all.⁶

An attempt to find a parallel to the Markan prohibition is made by Theißen. Employing a form of historical criticism, he seeks to show that commands to secrecy of the kind found in Mark may also be detected in other examples of the literature of this period. He refers specifically to those texts where the magician is urged to keep the spell secret. He claims that the texts where Jesus forbids witnesses from speaking about what they had seen and heard (for example, Mark 5.45 and 7.36) at some stage in their history conformed to this pattern. He argues that originally, in these instances at least, the prohibition was formulated not against disclosure *per se* but rather against divulging the *ῥήσεις βαρβαρικάί*, (foreign words) here, *ταλιθα κουμ* (little girl, stand up [5.41]), and *εφφαθα* (be opened [7.34]).

Blackburn's counterargument to this thesis is based on three objections. In the first instance, the assumption that *ταλιθα κουμ* and *Εφφαθα* were regarded as *ῥήσεις βαρβαρικάί* is questionable. They are commands which are quite particular to the scenes where they occur. Secondly, he claims that Theißen's hypothesis fails to take account of a fundamental contradiction at its core, namely, the public recounting by followers of Jesus of stories which included miracle-working commands which Jesus himself wished to keep secret. Thirdly, Theißen presumed that Jesus' followers who were responsible for the transmission of the commands to secrecy embedded in those texts understood the essence of Jesus' power to consist in pronouncing the correct verbal formula. If this were the case it would have been wise to keep the source of this power secret, lest it be turned against the one who had disclosed it. Theißen's considerations are insightful since they help to refine more closely what is at issue here. Blackburn's counter arguments are also illuminating. They make it difficult to admit that the impulse not to disclose a magic spell

6 Blackburn, *Theios Anēr*, 224-225.

is a genuine parallel to Mark's prohibition from having what they had witnessed bruited by bystanders. The argument throughout this dissertation is that the injunction in Mark against further reporting of a miraculous action is aimed at preventing an increase of the fame of his protagonist.

The rarity if not the uniqueness of Mark's convention may be illustrated by way of contrast to the prevailing pattern. The tendency in the relevant literature is to take full advantage to exalt and enhance the fame of the subject.⁷ An example from this cultural milieu of such a subject is found in the person of Asclepius, someone who was famed for healing actions and, more importantly for our study, for predictions. These mostly took the form of dreams. He belongs to Greek and Roman mythology, first as a physician and then as a god of medicine and healing. His cult was widespread and very popular mostly during the Roman period. As explained by G. G. Stroumsa, for instance, the many accounts of his miracles were widely distributed, as illustrated below.⁸ For example, a wealth of references to him from the classical and later periods which testifies to fame and honour being conferred on him by having his accomplishments recorded and diffused is provided by E. and L. Edelstein. They acknowledge that his significance in antiquity relates to his giving of oracles and that it was his dream healings which constituted his greatest claim to fame.⁹ The impulse to propagate his reputation is attested by many sources from this period. Three representative samples are given here:

“Tablets stood within the enclosure.... On these tablets are engraved the names of men and women who were healed

7 A. D. Nock, *Conversion: The Old and the New in Religion from Alexander the Great to Augustine of Hippo* (Oxford: OUP, 1933), 48, 77.

8 G. G. Stroumsa, ed., *Morton Smith and Gershom Scholem. Correspondence 1945-1982* (JSRC 9; Leiden: Brill, 2008), 81, n225.

9 E. J. Edelstein and L. Edelstein, *Asclepius: A Collection and Interpretation of the Testimonies* (Vol. 1.; Baltimore: The John Hopkins Press, 1945), 139.

by Asclepius with the disease from which each suffered and how he was cured. The inscriptions are in the Doric dialect.”

Pausanias, *Descriptio Graeciae* 11.27.3

Secondly, the broadcasting of his high stature may be inferred from the following passage: “The soothsayer is wise and the builder is wise and Apollo obviously and the physician and Asclepius clearly is equally regarded with honour.” Maximus of Tyre, *Philosophumena* VI.4.d. The fact that this excerpt is a paraphrase of Homer’s *Odyssey* (XVII.384) is merely one indication of the wide circulation to which his prominence was subjected. Finally, Aristophanes’ comic drama, *Plutus* (640), encapsulates his standing thus: “Sing we with all our might, Asclepius first and best.” This exhortation illustrates both his exalted status and the desire to make it the subject of successive song-making. Furthermore, dreams sent by Asclepius (and Serapis) would be recorded in the temple precincts for missionary purposes, for example, the inscription from the temple of Asclepius in Epidaurus contains more than fifty testimonies to healings effected by him.¹⁰ J. den Boeft relating the story of one of the better-preserved inscriptions in which one Apellas was healed by Asclepius of a combination of illnesses points out that the inscription would have been ordered by the god himself, presumably in a dream. He remarks that it would be understandable that the god would want the success to be advertised and registered so that all future visitors can read it, and hence the execution of the inscription.¹¹ By way of contrast, the significance of Mark’s practice of having only three named disciples witness some of Jesus’ miraculous deeds assumes new significance.

A second example of someone whose fame was unashamedly

¹⁰ *Inscriptiones Graecae* IV2, 1. nos. 121-22; text and translation in Edelstein and Edelstein, no 425 (1:221-37).

¹¹ J. den Boeft, “Asclepius’ Healings Made Known,” in *Wonders Never Cease: The Purpose of Narrating Miracle Stories in the New Testament and its Religious Environment* (ed. M. Labahn and B. J. L. Peerbolte; London: T&T Clark International, 2006), 20.

maximised is provided by Serapis or Sarapis, originally an Egyptian god who was the object of popular worship in Greece and Rome. He was considered to be a saviour and a healing god. His cult shares some features with that of Asclepius. His fame increased in a calculated way during the time of Ptolemy 1 Soter (367-283 BCE), most likely as an instance of establishing interreligious connections to further political unity and stability under the Ptolemies in the aftermath of the fragmentation of Alexander's empire.¹² Being a composite of several Egyptian and Hellenistic deities, he was the object of intense missionary activity in order to form a bridge between Egyptian and Greco-Roman religions.¹³ His cult was spread by traders and other travellers. Such was his fame that I. S. Moyer contends by being associated with Serapis, the Temple of Apollonios on the island of Delos achieved great renown.¹⁴ The Serapeum at Alexandria was erected in testimony to his healing powers and at the same time contributed towards the further diffusion of his cult, as the following reference from Macrobius attests: "In the city on the borders of Egypt which boasts Alexander of Macedon as its founder, Sarapis and Isis are worshiped with a reverence that is almost fanatical. Evidence that the sun, under the name of Sarapis, is the object of all this reverence..." (*Saturnalia*, 1.20.13). Both M. Churchill and W. Cotter attest not merely the renown of Serapis but also its diffusion. The migration of his fame from Egypt to the worlds of Greece and Rome is evidence in itself of this propagation. As this material makes clear, Asclepius and Serapis are two primary examples of miracle workers from antiquity whose fame was both celebrated and spread on the basis of the healings attributed to him. When it comes to acknowledging someone's repute it may be reasoned that there is an

12 See W. Cotter, *Miracles in Greco-Roman Antiquity: A Sourcebook for the study of New Testament Miracle Stories* (London: Routledge, 1999), 131.

13 See M. Churchill, "Some Gnostic and Other Fragments Influencing P. D. Ouspensky's Research," *The Bridge* 12 (1997): 101-111, esp. 101-106.

14 I. S. Moyer, *Egypt and the Limits of Hellenism* (Cambridge: University Press, 2015), 190.

intrinsic connection between acknowledgment and transmission to the extent that every measurable expression of acclamation is also an act of broadcasting. It is only in Mark that these two elements are disconnected.

In the context of his discussion of the command to secrecy Blackburn also deals with the related issue of Jesus' supernatural knowledge or perception, including his ability to perceive present realities which were hidden from other human beings. He believes that Jesus' psychic and visual perception fall well within the ambit of what was expected of a Jewish prophet. Such power is predicated of prophets in the New Testament. For example, Simon the Pharisee cannot believe that Jesus is a prophet because he does not seem to know that the woman attending to him is a sinner (Luke 7.39). Blackburn concludes that this view reflected common Jewish opinion. Where Jewish onlookers appear offended at Jesus' power portrayed in texts such as Mark 2.8, 6.48, 11.2-6, 14.13-15, it was not because they believed Jesus' followers were arrogating to him powers possessed exclusively by God, but rather because they did not believe that Jesus was a true prophet. There are two issues here. The first relates to the assumption that if Jesus had known that the woman in question was a sinner, he would have had nothing to do with her, or at least, he would have called her out as such. The alternative interpretation is more satisfactory, namely, that Jesus is redefining the image of a prophet to include the activity of consoling those who need to be consoled. Mark is reshaping the model of prophet in a second way also. If Jesus' knowledge and perception are those of a prophet, they suggest a new dimension to the model of prophet, one where a man or woman does not seek for themselves the honour and glory which usually goes with the performance of mighty deeds and words.

In summary, it may be said that in the Greco-Roman world, when it comes to the fame of performers of miraculous words and actions the norm is to acknowledge their great deeds and by doing

so to contribute to the spreading of the word about them. There is an intrinsic link between acknowledging a marvel, especially in a public manner, and broadcasting reports about it. Asclepius and Serapis are prime examples of individuals whose stature was exalted and, at the same time, diffused with every account of their mighty acts. By way of contrast, the Gospel according to Mark severs the connection between performance of a great act and circulating reports of it. It presents Jesus as a doer of miraculous deeds but this portrayal is accompanied by an impulse not to transmit further reports of what happened. This dissertation designates such an impulse as the motif of containment.

2.3 Absence of containment in Jewish sources

This section investigates the presentation of predictions in Jewish works approximately contemporaneous with the Gospel according to Mark from the perspective of containment. The purpose is to enable a comparison to be made between this material and Mark's portrayal of Jesus' predictions. The works identified by Collins as primary locations of *post eventum* predictions in early Judaism are: Daniel 7; *Apocalypse of Weeks* (1 Enoch 93.1-10, 91.12-17); *Enoch's First Dream Vision* (1 Enoch 83-84); *Enoch's Second Dream Vision/Animal Apocalypse* (1 Enoch 85-90); *Ezra's fifth Dream Vision* (4 Ezra 11-12) and *Prediction of the Eagle* (4 Ezra 14.18); Predictions from 2 (Syriac Apocalypse of) *Baruch*; and lastly *The Divine Oracle to Moses* (*Jubilees* 1.6-1).¹⁵

2.4 The works containing the predictions

The texts discussed here share some features in common. All except *Jubilees* are apocalypses. The genre has been defined by S. E. Docherty as "a collection of revelatory visions held together by a narrative framework."¹⁶ In his commentary on the *Book of Daniel*

15 J. J. Collins, "The Apocalyptic Worldview of Daniel," 65.

16 S. E. Docherty, *The Jewish Pseudepigrapha: An Introduction to the literature of the*

Collins distinguishes between “historical apocalypses” (into which the works examined here may be placed), and apocalypses which take the form of “other-worldly journeys.”¹⁷ This distinction is also found in A. Y. Reed.¹⁸

The choice of eponymous and pseudonymous protagonist which they make is not insignificant. These figures are of unusually high standing in Jewish tradition, for example, Enoch, Ezra and Baruch, as is Moses, the primary character of *Jubilees*. While *4 Ezra* and *2 Baruch* are closely related there are some notable differences between them reflecting different, but not necessarily mutually antagonistic historical circles.¹⁹ *1 Enoch* is preserved in its entirety in Ethiopic translation from the fifth or sixth century.²⁰ The various literary units which combine to make up the work deal with contemporary problems of theology, social upheaval, and the cosmos, offering solutions to their readers.²¹ The renewal of scholarly attention to this literary corpus, using a combination of methodologies to analyse individual apocalypses, has led to a significant increase in our

Second Temple Period (London: SPCK, 2014), 125.

17 J. J. Collins, *A Commentary on the Book of Daniel*. With an essay, “The Influence of Daniel on the New Testament,” by A. Yarbro Collins (*Hermeneia*; Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1993), 54.

18 A. Y. Reed, *Fallen Angels and the History of Judaism and Christianity: The Reception of Enochic Literature* (Cambridge: UCP, 2005), 61-2. She refers to “ascent apocalypses” to describe those which feature other-worldly journeys.

19 See J. J. Collins, *Daniel: with an Introduction to Apocalyptic Literature* (FOTL XX; Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans, 1984), 44. Two monographs which have filled out the background are K. M. Hogan, *Theologies in Conflict in 4 Ezra: Wisdom Debate and Apocalyptic Solution*, (SJSJ 130; Leiden: Brill, 2008), and L. I. Lied, *The Other Lands of Israel: Imaginations of the Land in 2 Baruch*, (SJSJ 129; Leiden: Brill, 2008).

20 G. Bohak, “Books of Enoch,” *The Oxford Dictionary of the Jewish Religion*, 244. A critical translation is that of E. Isaac, “1 (*Ethiopic Apocalypse of*) *Enoch*” in *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha: Apocalyptic Literature and Testaments* (vol. 1 of *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha*; ed. J. H. Charlesworth; London: Darton, Longman & Todd, 1983), 5-90. This is the translation which I employ here.

21 M. Black’s dating of the First Dream Vision, the Second Dream Vision and *Apocalypse of Weeks* to the period in which the Book of Daniel is usually placed is widely accepted. *The Book of Enoch or 1 Enoch: A New English Edition with Commentary and Textual Notes in consultation with James C. VanderKam* (SVTP 7; Leiden: Brill, 1985), 288.

knowledge of this field in the last forty years. The work of G. W. E. Nickelsburg on *1 Enoch*, M. E. Stone and K. M. Hogan on *4 Ezra*, L. Lied on *2 Baruch* and of J. C. VanderKam on *Jubilees* has increased our appreciation of these texts considerably.

The specific approach of this chapter will be to analyse these texts through the lens of containment to see whether it applies here. That is to say, the focus of this section will be to determine whether the notion of limiting or preventing the propagation of accounts of predictions plays any part in this body of literature. One of the interesting aspects of the background of these texts is the tradition that on Mount Sinai, Moses received other knowledge and information in addition to the Torah.²² When this is linked to these predictions it supplies them with an intrinsic orientation towards diffusion, by virtue of their exalted stature and divine provenance.

2.4.1 Daniel 7

The Book of Daniel is located in *Kethubhim* the final section of the Hebrew Bible, and, in the Old Greek Bible among the prophets. It is a work of two halves with Chapter 7 occupying a pivotal place in the book.²³ Although it is linked to the preceding chapters by way of structure, its genre connects it with the second half of the work. The apocalyptic vision of four beasts and a judgement scene followed by an interpretation of the vision constitute the body of Chapter 7. Collins provides the standard outline: introductory statement (7.1-2a); the vision report (7.2 -14); interpretation (7.15-18); the fourth beast (7.19-27); and conclusion (7.18).²⁴ The mainstream commentaries

22 Docherty, *The Jewish Pseudepigrapha*, 140. Pertinent texts include *Jub.* 1.4 and *2 Baruch* 59.4-11.

23 A. Lenglet, "La structure littéraire de Daniel 2-7," *Biblica* 53 (1972): 169-90. Lenglet proposes a symmetrical structure for Daniel 2-7. In the concentric arrangement of the chapters, Chapter 2 corresponds to Chapter 7, Chapter 3 to Chapter 6 and Chapter 4 to Chapter 5.

24 Collins, *A Commentary on the Book of Daniel*, ix.

on the Book of Daniel agree on the issues of languages, structure and date of the book as a whole.²⁵

The primary literary devices at work in this section are a dream vision and an interpretation of the vision, both of which function as a *post eventum* prediction.²⁶ At the centre of the vision report is the transmission of sovereignty to the one like the son of man in 7.14. Two examples of the messianic interpretation of this scene are found in *Similitudes of Enoch* (48.3; 62.8) and *4 Ezra* (13.37, 52). Rabbinic (e.g. *b. Sanh.* 98a; *Num. Rab.* 13.14) and medieval Jewish (e.g. Pseudo-Saadia, Jepheth, Rashi) interpreters tended to adhere to this interpretation as did scholars from the nineteenth century. It is the interpretation found in most of the commentaries (e.g. Porteous, Hartman and Di Lella)²⁷. An alternative line of interpretation of the vision report is to view the son of man as a symbol for a collective entity, such as the fledgling Jewish regime established after the Maccabean revolt. A. J. Ferch has shown that this explanation first appears in the twelfth century and afterwards only sporadically.²⁸

There is one detail which alludes to Daniel's lack of understanding. In 7.15 he refers to the distress caused by the vision and his need to enquire about the truth of what had just taken place. As R. G. Kratz points out the protagonist becomes a visionary whose visions are not enlightening but confusing, who does not handle enquiries but who must enquire.²⁹ However this lack of understanding is temporary

25 For a discussion of the date of Daniel see Collins, *A Commentary on the Book of Daniel*, 8-9. He dates the final redaction of (Semitic) Daniel to the 160s B. C. E.

26 For an account of *post eventum* prophecy as a literary form see Collins, *Daniel with an Introduction to Apocalyptic Literature*, 11 – 12. It appears as a constituent of several genres such as oracle, testament and apocalypse.

27 N. W. Porteous, *Daniel: A Commentary* (London: SCM, 1972), L. F. Hartman and A. A. Di Lella, *The Book of Daniel: A new Translation with Introduction and Commentary* (AB 23; New York: Doubleday, 1978).

28 A. J. Ferch, *The Son of Man in Daniel 7* (Andrews University Seminary Doctoral Dissertation Series 6; Berrien Springs, MI: Andrews University Press, 1979), 9-12.

29 R. G. Kratz, "The Visions of Daniel," in *The Book of Daniel: Composition and Reception*. Vol. 1 (SVT 83; ed. J. J. Collins and P. W. Flint; Leiden: Brill, 2001), 91-113, 97.

and is a device which prompts Daniel to ask the *angelus interpretes* to clarify the truth. In that respect it is very different from the trope of misunderstanding which is a feature of Mark's Gospel (for example, 9.30-32 and 10.39-40), and rather more like the way the motif is used in John (for example, 3.4 and 11.24), where it also becomes a vehicle for further explanation.

Thus, the whole thrust of this scene is towards revelation rather than concealment. The elements listed above which support this view are the prediction of the future in two forms: the recounting of the symbolic vision (7.1-14) and its reiteration in the form of narrative interpretation (7.15-28). The action in the vision was witnessed by ten thousand times ten thousand beings (7.10). All peoples, nations and languages are included among those who will serve the one to whom dominion was given (7.14). It is hardly possible to imagine a wider audience. So, while Daniel 7 and Mark are similar by virtue of the predictions there is a major difference between the works. In the former the protagonist is the recipient of a vision and interpretation and it is the giving of these by the *angelus interpretes* which is paralleled by Jesus' predictions in Mark. Secondly, and more importantly for the research being undertaken here, while Jesus' predictions are surrounded by containment in one form or another the opposite is the case in Daniel.

2.4.2 1 (Ethiopic) Enoch

The next three works to be examined are preserved as part of the composite work, *1 (Ethiopic) Enoch*. They are: Enoch's First Dream Vision (*1 Enoch* 83-84); Enoch's Second Dream Vision/*Animal Apocalypse* (*1 Enoch* 85-90); and the *Apocalypse of Weeks* (*1 Enoch* 93.1-10, 91.11-17). *1 Enoch* is preserved in its entirety only in Ethiopic translation dating from the beginning of the sixth century C. E. However, two centuries earlier in at least one community a Greek version of the Dream Visions together with the *Astronomical Book* which immediately precedes it in the later Ethiopic compilation

was copied.³⁰ Since its introduction to the West in the nineteenth century scholars believe that parts of the Ethiopic version derived from a Greek translation of a Semitic original which was either Hebrew or Aramaic. The discoveries of the Qumran Aramaic Enoch manuscripts and of Greek and Latin fragments of translations of an Aramaic text have not entirely settled the question of which language that was.³¹

The final editor following the model of the Torah, Psalms, and the Psalms of Solomon divided the work into five sections. The various literary works which combine to make up *1 Enoch* deal with contemporary problems of theology and the cosmos and try to provide solutions to give their readers courage to attain a life of everlasting happiness by living in accord with the commandments of the Torah.³²

2.4.2.1 Enoch's First Dream Vision (1 Enoch 83-84)

1 Enoch 83 – 84 is an account of Enoch's first dream vision. The date is still quite contested although it is generally accepted to be one of the later sections of the collection and thus contemporaneous with Mark.³³ The main elements of its structure are: an account of the vision (83.2-5); Enoch's repetition of the vision to his grandfather (83.7); Mahalalel's explanation of the dream as a destruction of the earth (83.9); Enoch's prayer and declaration of his intention to show Methuselah everything (83.10-11).

As J. T. Milik points out, it is likely that the author envisaged Enoch as a resident of paradise.³⁴ The Genesis account of the story of

30 R. D. Chesnutt, "Oxyrhynchus Papyrus 2069 and the Compositional History of *1 Enoch*," *JBL* 129.3 (2010): 485-505.

31 Bohak, "Books of Enoch," 244; Isaac, "*1 Enoch*" 5-90.

32 See Docherty, *Pseudepigrapha*, 127-136.

33 The main positions on the dates of the dream visions are those of Isaac and Milik. Isaac dates the dream visions to c. 165-161 B. C. E. ("*1 Enoch*," 6-7), while a later date has been argued for by Milik. See Milik "Problèmes de la littérature Hénochique à la lumière des fragments araméens de Qumrân," *HTR* 64 (1971): 333-378.

34 J. T. Milik, ed., *The Books of Enoch: Aramaic Fragments of Qumrân Cave 4*, with

the flood is the primary biblical allusion in the First Dream Vision.³⁵ While Genesis 7 and the Second Dream Vision (*1 Enoch* 89.2-6) describe the flooding of the earth, the First Dream Vision speaks of the destruction and collapse of the firmament. In Genesis 1.6-8 the firmament separates the waters above the earth from the waters beneath. Here the canopy is torn off and cast onto the earth. The cataclysmic result is that the earth sinks back into the abyss. The *post eventum* prediction is possible because the author is writing in the early Seleucid era (*circa* 160s B.C.E.). Basing his chronology on the genealogies of Genesis 5, his characters were chosen because they lived before the flood. His dream occurred “when he was young” that is, before the days of Noah. Enoch’s prayer will be answered in the Second Dream Vision/*Animal Apocalypse* when Noah and his family are saved. In the *Animal Apocalypse* there is a reference to a “man-like scribe” (*1 Enoch* 90.20), which recalls the ‘one like a human being’ in Daniel 7.13. D. J. Russell sees this as an allusion to Enoch’s taking part in the judgement and the reign to follow, a motif which is also found in the *Similitudes of Enoch*.³⁶ According to M. A. Knibb, the literary form is related to Daniel 2, 7, and 8, and to 4 *Ezra* 11-12, 13.³⁷

From the perspective of containment or its opposite – the diffusion of information about the dream vision and its interpretation – we may say that there is a recurrence here of elements we have identified in the example above, when arguing that the emphasis was on recounting and making known. Enoch will tell everything (83.1). This is an explicit reference to propagation. A dream containing cosmic imagery which predicts the future is recounted (83.2-5).

the collaboration of M. Black (Oxford: Clarendon Press 1976), 42.

35 J. Blenkinsopp, *The Pentateuch: An Introduction to the First Five Books of the Bible* (ABRL; New York: Doubleday, 1992), 241. He dates Genesis to the Persian period.

36 D. J. Russell, *The Method and Message of Jewish Apocalyptic* (London: SCM, 1964), 343.

37 M. A. Knibb, “The Ethiopic Book of Enoch,” in *Outside the Old Testament* (CCW)CW 200 BC to AD 200 4; ed. M. De Jonge; Cambridge: CUP, 1985), 27.

Almost by definition, a prediction deserves to be widely reported because it affects so many. Enoch will show his son everything (83.10). Furthermore, the dream is reiterated in narrative form (83.9); it is repeated a second time in the form of a final prayer made by Enoch to avert destruction (84.5-6). So within the short space of this dream vision the contents have already been heard three times – an object lesson in broadcasting. Additionally, there is the remark of the author of *Jubilees* about Enoch that “He saw and knew/understood everything. He put his witness down in writing” (4.19).³⁸ The significance of this detail may be said to be encapsulated in the Latin maxim *verbum scriptum manet*. Translating information from one medium to another, such as is involved in this action, implies a wider dissemination beyond those who have heard what was spoken to include those who will read it themselves and those who will hear it read by others.³⁹ At the same time, it points to the potential survival into an indefinite and unknown future of what was spoken by providing a longer-lasting record of it. When all of these are considered together it is legitimate to conclude that Enoch’s *First Dream Vision* is suffused with a tendency to speak, to clarify, to understand, to recount, and to relate further. It contains no element of containment. This is in sharp contrast to Mark’s portrayal of Jesus as one who delivers predictions where it may be argued that containment is as intrinsic to predictions as diffusion is in Greco-Roman and Jewish literature.

38 It is also possible perhaps even likely that *Jubilees* is referring to the *Animal Apocalypse* or to *Apocalypse of Weeks*.

39 The committing of information from an oral to a written medium, however, was not without its opponents. “The reputation of the written word in classical Greece was by no means entirely positive. Even among the educated it often seems to have generated suspicion: Greeks quite frequently perceived letters and other documents as instruments of deceit... Such views may have operated on a conscious or unconscious plane to inhibit the conversion away from oral culture.” W. V. Harris, *Ancient Literacy* (Cambridge MA/London: Harvard University Press, 1989), 324-325.

2.4.2.2 Enoch's Second Dream Vision/Animal Apocalypse (1 Enoch 85-90)

D. Bryan shows that *Enoch's First Dream Vision* and *Enoch's Second Dream Vision (Animal Apocalypse)* are thematically complementary: in the first Enoch's grandfather exhorts him to pray that God will preserve a remnant on earth.⁴⁰ In the second, the story of that remnant is recounted from creation to the eschaton. The ten stages of history of the first dream vision recur here. From the author's perspective, nine of the ten stages have already passed. The principal features of the work are the extended animal allegory; the periodisation of history; the symbolic use of colours to convey value judgements on characters;⁴¹ and the partially-fulfilled nature of the predictions. P. A. Tiller suggests that there were most likely different groups of militant scribes who supported the Maccabean revolt and it is possible that the work comes from this quarter.⁴² Such groups would most surely have been familiar with the employment and significance of literary devices of the kinds found here, and of their application to historical situations such as this one. They exhibit an impulse to propagate the information which is similar to the examples discussed above. They include a subject worthy of being broadcast because of its heavenly provenance and its exalted status as a foretelling of the future and an affirmation of Enoch's knowledge and understanding *1 Enoch* 90.39. "Then I woke up and saw everything." As Docherty points out, this dream is rather unusual because it is not followed by an interpretation.⁴³ She speculates that this is because it may have been

40 D. Bryan, *Cosmos, Chaos and the Kosher Mentality* (JSPSS 12; Sheffield: Academic Press, 1995), 37.

41 For a discussion of the symbolic value of the colours in the *Animal Apocalypse* see I. Fröhlich, "The Symbolical Language of the *Animal Apocalypse* of Enoch (1 Enoch 85-90)," in *The Texts of Qumran and the History of the Community: Proceedings of the Groningen Congress on the Dead Sea Scrolls (20-23 August 1989)* (ed. F. García Martínez); RQ 56 (1990): 629-636, 630.

42 P. A. Tiller, *A Commentary on the Animal Apocalypse of 1 Enoch* (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1993), 114-115.

43 Docherty, *Jewish Pseudepigraphy*, 136.

easily intelligible to its original audience. From the perspective of a synchronic interpretation, the absence means that a repetition of the prediction does not take place. Perhaps another explanation may be found in the triple iteration of the subject of the previous vision and a concern on the part of those responsible for joining them not to overstate the content. In no way, however, does this constitute an instance of containment. On the contrary, we have seen that the element of propagation is already abundantly present. Since the subject matter is of relevance to all of the inhabitants of the earth and to all future generations, the dream vision containing the prediction is worthy of being diffused. The contrast with Mark's portrayal of Jesus as a deliverer of predictions referred to above applies here also. A. F. J. Klijn's identification of parallels between the contents of this vision and Jewish haggadic material expands what is known about the literary environment in which Mark was operating.⁴⁴

2.4.2.3 The Apocalypse of Weeks (1 Enoch 93.1-10, 91.12-17)

The *Apocalypse of Weeks* is found in *1 Enoch* 93.1-10 and 91.12-17.⁴⁵ It is possible that it originated in the time immediately prior to the Maccabean period, that is around the year 170 B.C.E. One reason for this claim is that the author shows no awareness either of the hostility of Antiochus IV Epiphanes Theos towards the Jewish people or of the response centred on the Maccabees.⁴⁶ The work is presented

44 A. F. J. Klijn, "From creation to Noah in the second dream-vision of the Ethiopic Henoch" in *Miscellanea neotestamentica* (Vol. 1 ed. T. Baarda, A. F. J. Klijn and W. Cornelis van Unnik; Leiden: Brill: 1978), 147-158, esp. 150-151.

45 A notable feature of the apocalypse as it has been preserved in the Ethiopic version is that it suffered what Charles termed a "severe dislocation" whereby the last three weeks appear first at *1 Enoch* 91.12-17, before the first seven weeks at 93.1-10 [*The Book of Enoch or 1 Enoch: Translated from the Editor's Ethiopic Text and edited with the introduction, notes and indexes of the first edition wholly recast, enlarged and rewritten; together with a reprint from the editor's text of the Greek fragments.* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1912), 218]. The Aramaic fragments on the other hand preserve the ten weeks in their correct numerical and chronological order.

46 Most commentators, apart from Milik, accept that the work is an independent literary unit within *1 Enoch*, which is older than the book into which it has been incorporated and perhaps even older than Daniel. See for example Black, *1 Enoch*,

as a speech delivered by Enoch to his children. What he will say was revealed to him from the heavenly vision. He learned it from the words of the holy angels and understood it from the heavenly tablets (93.2). He gives an account of world history in ten weeks. Apart from the first week, in which, he recounts the fact of his birth (93.2), the other nine weeks are all in the future from his perspective and thus the subject of an extended prediction (93.3-10, 91.12-17). In the final form in the text there is a dislocated reference to Methuselah who is ordered to summon all his brothers and to gather his family to hear him (*1 Enoch* 91.1-2). K. L. Schmidt draws attention to the combination of prediction and parenthesis which is found in *1 Enoch*.⁴⁷ This suggests that their literary function is similar, namely, to exhort and encourage.

It is generally accepted that the first seven weeks rehearse the history of Israel from the birth of Enoch to the events of the Seleucid era. In the final three weeks the full consequences of a new order are clearly spelled out: even on earth the righteous will triumph over the wicked in a newly inaugurated messianic kingdom (91.12). This kingdom will last until the close of the tenth week and the righteous will enjoy peace and good days on earth until then (91.13). The end will consist of a final judgement, the destruction of the present earth and heaven and the creation of a new heaven (91.14-16).

This text and those that follow reflect the transition from a wisdom eschatology to an apocalyptic one, as Collins has differentiated them.⁴⁸ While the former envisaged the future in terms of this life only, for the latter the future, both in this life and in the next, was the time where unfulfilled predictions from the prophetic tradition

288; Charles, *The Book of Enoch*, 218-219; Milik, *The Books of Enoch*, 255-216.

47 K. L. Schmidt *The Place of the Gospels in the General History of Literature* (trans. B. R. McCane; Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 2002), 25; (trans. of "Die Stellung der Evangelien in der allgemeinen Literaturgeschichte," in *EUCARISTHRION: Studien zur Religion und Literatur des Alten und Neuen Testaments*; Forschungen zur Religion und Literatur des Alten und Neuen Testaments, 2 vols; ed. H. Schmidt; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1923).

48 Collins, "The Apocalyptic Worldview of Daniel," 60.

would come to pass with certainty.⁴⁹ It is likely that the authors of these apocalypses believed that they had been commissioned by God to make known the meaning of biblical prophecy to the people of their time. This double aspect of commissioning and broadcasting is to the fore in 4 Ezra 14.1-38. God warns Ezra to reveal only public knowledge to the people, to withhold the secrets from them and to save them for the wise (4 Ezra 14.26, cf. vv. 5-6). That would suggest a predisposition in favour of recounting and diffusing their knowledge. Thus it constitutes a fundamental difference with Mark's portrayal of Jesus' predictions.

The text contains no hint of any element of containment. In fact, as in the case of the examples discussed above, the opposite is true. Enoch is recounting a narrative which is worthy of dissemination by virtue of its provenance alone. It is the subject of a heavenly vision, revealed to him by angels, and understood by him from heavenly tablets. It is recounted before a large audience. His stated purpose is to speak so that his hearers will know those things which were revealed to him. All of these are in direct contrast with Mark's protagonist whose predictions are qualified by one form of containment or another to such an extent that I am arguing that they are oriented away from diffusion.

To summarise this brief examination of predictions located in these apocalypses of 1 Enoch: they are intrinsically geared towards dissemination. Conversely, predictions found on the lips of the Markan Jesus almost always feature explicit or implicit (sometimes both) directives advocating containment, thereby portraying an unassuming or modest protagonist. The literary phenomenon of a partially-fulfilled prediction is one important way in which the thrust to publicise is implied. The part of the prediction which has come to pass is in itself a declaration that the prediction is worthy to be made public. A further reason for having it made known appears

49 Russell, *The Method and Message of Jewish Apocalyptic*, 181.

at the end of the passage where the Most High declares: "For in them is the spring of understanding, the fountain of wisdom, and the river of knowledge" (14.48). The impetus is given further legitimacy, from a rhetorical perspective, by the location of this phrase at the end of the original Jewish work before the addition of the appendix.

There is an additional important point to be made here and in a number of instances above which involve a seer. These scenes portray God as the source of inspiration so that broadcasting the material is an activity which is sanctioned and required by the highest authority possible. The role of the seer as an agent of God in texts such as these constitutes a close parallel to the role of Jesus in Mark. The great dissimilarity may be identified by the diametrically opposite manner in which diffusion of the predictions, or its antithesis, is present. Perhaps Mark's unique stance may be explained as his wish to present these predictions not simply as demonstrations of Jesus' own power, but rather, of God's power, whose chief agent Jesus is.

2.4.3 Ezra's Fifth Dream Vision (4 Ezra 11.1-12.39)

4 Ezra, also known as the Apocalypse of Ezra or the Second Book of Esdras has not survived in its original language which, according to R. H. Charles was more likely Hebrew than Aramaic.⁵⁰ Here too we find the elements of dream visions and an explanation in the form of a prediction which we encountered in earlier apocalypses. It will not be necessary to rehearse these at any length again. What is new here is that while the material in the dream vision is post eventum, the prediction in 14.18 is partially fulfilled and is a waking vision. Recent scholarship has taken two divergent interpretative directions of the work. The first one, exemplified by Hogan, involves reading the dialogues between Ezra and Uriel as a reflection of theological debates

⁵⁰ 4 Ezra is dated by scholarly consensus to the last decade of the first century C. E. It is therefore a close contemporary of the Gospel according to Mark. There is a broad scholarly consensus that the original Semitic document dates from about the year 100 C.E.

in the author's time and the second, of which Stone is a prominent example, focuses attention on the psychological development of the protagonist.⁵¹ Hogan presents a new interpretation of the dialogues as a literary representation of a debate between covenantal and eschatological wisdom, two branches of Jewish wisdom that emerged in the late post-exilic period.⁵²

The book describes seven visions of Ezra in a historical setting located thirty years after the fall of Jerusalem in 586 B.C.E. It soon becomes clear that it refers to the situation after the fall of Jerusalem to the Romans in 70 CE. The visions contain eschatological speculation which B. M. Metzger recognises as both extensive and somewhat involved.⁵³ I have focussed on the fifth vision (4 Ezra 11.1-12.39) because it is a partially-fulfilled *post eventum* prediction. It is an elaborate allegory which illustrates the course of future events up to the early Roman Empire (11.1-12.3) and includes an explanation of the vision also in the form of a prediction (12.10-34).⁵⁴

In the course of the explanation, Ezra occupies a prominent place. His exalted status in Jewish tradition is connected with his being a priest, who returned from the Babylonian exile in 538 BCE and who is credited with reintroducing the Torah to Jerusalem (Ezra 7-10; Nehemiah 8). Here he is told the Roman Empire will be punished by the Messiah of God for persecuting the elect (12.10-34). The allegory includes an eagle rising from the sea.⁵⁵ The sweep of the vision encompasses the period from the middle of the first century

51 M. E. Stone, *Fourth Ezra: A Commentary on the Book of Fourth Ezra* (Hermeneia; Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1990). Stone shows that 4 Ezra is presented as having an overwhelming visionary experience amounting to a religious conversion.

52 K. M. Hogan, *Theologies in Conflict in 4 Ezra*.

53 B. M. Metzger, "The Fourth Book of Ezra," in Charlesworth, *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha. Volume One*, 521. Stone, *Fourth Ezra*, 10, opts for a date in the latter part of the reign of Domitian (81-96 C.E.).

54 "The eagle which you saw coming up from the sea is the fourth kingdom which appeared in a vision to your brother Daniel." (4 Ezra 12.11) This is in fact a reinterpretation of Daniel's vision. There the fourth kingdom was that of the Greeks, here it is the empire of the Romans.

55 Stone, *4 Ezra*, 345-353 divides the vision into literary units.

B.C.E. through to the end of the first century CE and to an imminent future. Like that of the *Animal Apocalypse* the vision has come to pass only incompletely. It is also worth noting the partially-fulfilled prediction in *4 Ezra* 14.18 in the concluding part of the address by God to Ezra in the seventh and final vision of the work: "For the eagle which you saw in the vision is already hastening to come." Those who read or heard these predictions being proclaimed would have credited the historical literary protagonist with the gift of accurately predicting the future.

We have seen above evidence of an impulse to recount and to propagate instances of prediction in this corpus. We have also encountered some of the literary devices whereby broadcasting is accomplished. Here we also find an explicit admonition to diffuse the subject of the dream: "Make public the twenty-four books that you wrote first and let the worthy and the unworthy read them. But keep the seventy that were written last, in order to give them to the wise among your people" (*4 Ezra* 14.45).⁵⁶ Stone makes it clear that unlike *Dan* 8.26, 12.4, *2 Apoc Bar* 20.3 and other similar references, this is not a command to seal up the apocalyptic revelation to the end but to transmit it to the wise of the people, albeit that in this particular instance, the wise referred to a confined group of people. (70 is a gematria for the Hebrew word "secret" [סוד]). The emphasis of the verse is on ensuring the material is handed on as completely as possible and not on any wish to conceal. Furthermore, we may assume that the work in which this occurs is one of the seventy and therefore that the vision of the eagle has been committed to writing to be diffused among the people, and in that way "made public" at God's explicit command.

Hogan suggests that the book was intended for the instruction

⁵⁶ Metzger, ("The Fourth Book of Ezra," 581) identifies these as twenty-four canonical books and seventy esoteric books that will remain hidden, respectively. The text emphasises that they will remain concealed until they are revealed.

and perhaps also for the reproof of the wise.⁵⁷ Her view is that the work would have acted as an instruction to the wise at a time of crisis and, because of their patent failure to implement the points of that instruction in their life, as an expression of blame or at least of disapproval too. This interpretation is a reminder that parenthesis is also linked to right teaching and therefore is not just a matter of uttering reassurances. A significant feature of this text is that while the material in the dream vision is *post eventum*, the prediction is wholly future-oriented. The final judgement of God on the Roman oppressor will come about as surely as those elements predicted in the dream vision have taken place.

It is important here to comment on the matter of God's warning Ezra in 14.1-38, while allowing him to restore the lost scriptures, to reveal only knowledge that is public to the people, and to save the secrets for the wise (vv. 5-6, 26). This is the issue of the 'public' and the 'secret' books which would appear to reflect an awareness that only a small group was reading the text and considered that it related to knowledge given to them alone. This is not the same as Mark's pattern of having Jesus' predictions heard by a limited audience. The former is based on the premise that only a handful of Ezra's people will be saved, while the impulse of the latter, is in keeping with the pattern established by Mark of containing the status of the protagonist. While Ezra and Jesus deliver predictions, those of the former are bruited publicly and those of the latter destined not to be proclaimed further.

57 Hogan, *Theologies in Conflict in 4 Ezra*, 227-231. While not dismissing the issue of comforting those who had been the victims of the losses of 70 C. E. as important for *4 Ezra*, she does not see this as the primary intention of the book. She argues that not enough emphasis has been placed on the divine command to Ezra to "Reprove your people; comfort the lowly among them and instruct those that are wise." (*4 Ezra* 14.13). The protagonist's dissatisfaction with the rational theodicy of contemporary eschatologically-oriented sages, who were less affected by the historical disasters because they were more concerned with the fate of individuals, leads him in the direction of apocalyptic solutions to the problems of his day.

2.4.4 2 (Syriac Apocalypse of) Baruch (Various predictions)

The divergence of scholarly opinion in relation to the provenance of 2 (*Syriac Apocalypse of*) *Baruch* is remarkably wide. For example, Charles found “a hidden hostility to Christianity” in the work.⁵⁸ On the other hand R. Nir identified it as having a Christian provenance,⁵⁹ a view which Docherty refutes.⁶⁰ A third group of scholars located the author within prominent rabbinic circles.⁶¹ Yet again a fourth view identified the book as the work of an unknown group.⁶² The breadth of divergent opinions is accounted for, in Lied's view, by the fact that it does not contain a uniform world view and that it includes ideologies and tendencies that were discussed in several milieus.⁶³ Like 4 *Ezra* it puts forward from a Jewish perspective an interpretation of the events about which Jews, both those who were followers of Jesus and those who were not, were concerned during the first century C.E., particularly the fall of Jerusalem in the war with the Romans in 70 CE. It is generally accepted that it was written in response to this crisis and before the Bar Kochba revolt in 132-135 C.E.⁶⁴ According to L. H. Brockington Jewish readers/hearers would

58 Charles, *The Apocalypse of Baruch* (London: Black, 1896), xvi, lxxx.

59 R. Nir, *The Destruction of Jerusalem and the Idea of Redemption in the Syriac Apocalypse of Baruch* (SBLJL 20; Atlanta: SBL Press, 2003), 5.

60 Docherty, *The Jewish Pseudepigrapha*, 147 n. 12.

61 F. Rosenthal, *Vier apokryphische Bücher aus der Zeit und Schule R. Akiba's: Assumptio Mosis, Das vierte Buch Esra, Die Apokalypse Baruch, Das Buch Tobi* (Leipzig: Otto Schulze, 1885), 72; B. Violet, *Die Apokalypsen des Esra und des Baruch in deutscher Gestalt* (GCS 32; Leipzig: J. C. Hinrichs'sche Buchhandlung, 1924), xci; P. M. Bogaert, *Apocalypse de Baruch, Introduction, Traduction du Syriaque et Commentaire* (2 vols. *Sources chrétiennes* 144-145; Paris: Les Éditions du Cerf, 1969), 1.334, 438-444.

62 G. B. Saylor *Have the Promises Failed? A Literary Analysis of 2 Baruch* (SBL Dissertation Series 72; Chico, California: Scholars Press, 1984), 117-8.

63 See L. I. Lied, *The Other Lands of Israel*, 27. She argues that 2 *Baruch* does not so much reject the land of Israel as it transforms it, in order to address the contemporary crisis of loss and destruction and to emphasise the surety of Israel's survival and ultimate redemption in the other world.

64 J. R. Davila, *The Provenance of the Pseudepigrapha: Jewish, Christian or Other?* (SJSJ 105; Leiden: Brill, 2005), 127. The general scholarly consensus dates the final redaction of the work to sometime between 70 and 132 CE, since it displays no knowledge of the Bar Kochba revolt. A date around 90 CE is posited by L. Rost.

have heard the text as a message of hope that observing the Torah would cause the times to change for the better, the dead to be raised and the consolation of Zion to be seen by all.⁶⁵ Klijn's summary of the purpose of the work is that it tries to answer the 'burning question' of why God allowed his temple to be destroyed.⁶⁶ *2 Baruch* answers this by formulating the eschatological hope that an omnipotent God will always vindicate the righteous. The primary cause for the exalted status of these predictions is that they are spoken by God. In some cases, they explain and corroborate material from dream visions, a device we have already encountered.

I shall refer to the predictive material as it occurs in the body of the work. First there is a fragmentary apocalypse (*2 Baruch* 24-30.5) and a vision dealing with the coming judgement, the twelve woes that are to come upon the earth, the Messiah and the temporary messianic kingdom (27.1-30.5). The resurrection of those who "have fallen asleep in hope of him" comes immediately after the Messiah's return in glory to heaven (30.2-4). It will include the judgement of the wicked (30.5). This section is followed by the vision of the forest, vine, fountain and cedar and its interpretation (36.1-40.4). Most scholars see this vision as referring to the history of the Jews from the time of Nebuchadnezzar to the arrival of Pompey. Baruch is told of his death and eternal consolation (Chapter 43). The nature of the resurrection and the ultimate destinies of the righteous and the wicked are foretold (Chapters 49-52). Finally, there is the Messiah apocalypse: the vision of the cloud with the black and white waters followed by its interpretation (53.1-76.5). The second and third of these visions are explained by God. It is this which ensures that they are worthy to be recounted and which justifies their propagation. The

(*Judaism outside the Hebrew Canon: An Introduction to the Documents* (trans. D. E. Green; Nashville: Abingdon, 1971), 128.

65 L. H. Brockington, "The Syrian Apocalypse of Baruch," in *The Apocryphal Old Testament*, (ed. H. F. D. Sparks; Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1984), 835-895, 836.

66 Klijn, "The Syriac Apocalypse of Baruch," in De Jonge, *Outside the Old Testament*, 193-212, 194.

link between a prediction's being worthy of dissemination because God is its source offers a helpful and interesting backdrop against which to interpret the Markan containment of Jesus' predictions. That is to say, as long as a prediction is understood as coming from God it is worthy of being broadcast. The predictions concerning the coming of the Messiah naturally belong to the realm of the future. Baruch is told to prepare himself for his assumption on the advent of the Messiah (76).

The predictions in *2 Baruch* are an important part of the book. As was the case with *4 Ezra*, there is no hint here of any impulse to contain the information which was conveyed to the protagonist. Indeed, their standing is exalted by virtue of the fact that it is God who conveys them to Baruch within the context of an extended dialogue. That aspect alone makes them worthy of propagation. The text itself commands that the material contained therein would receive a wide circulation. "When you, therefore, receive the letter, read it carefully in your assemblies. And think about it, in particular, however, on the days of your fasts" (86.1-2).

The text of this work specifically directs that the subject of the predictions is to be widely made known. Three times Baruch goes to the people and speaks to them about subjects contained in the predictions. He warns them of coming disasters (31.1-34.1). He reminds them of God's judgement (44.1-46.7). He indicates that the righteous ones who will be saved (75.1-77.26). On two of these occasions, the diffusion of the information is preceded by an appeal to the people to listen. The choice of vocabulary (*Shema Yisrael*) both exalts what is being said and, at the same time, emphasises the activity of listening in order to relate subsequently what has been heard. "Hear, O Israel," (31.3) and "Hear, O children of Israel, (77.2.) The relationship between hearing and repeating had already been established in the *Shema*:

וְשִׁנְתֶם לְבָבְיָד וּדְבַרְתֶּם בָּם בְּשִׁבְתֶּם בְּבֵיתְךָ וּבְלִכְתֶּךָ בְּדֶרֶךְ וּבְשֹׂכְבֶךָ וּבְקוּמֶךָ:
(Deut. 6.7)

The hearers are to teach them to their children and to speak about them during the course of no fewer than four designated activities. The impulse to broadcast is in this instance also emphasised by the form of prediction. As is the case with a mighty act, a mighty word also contains within itself the germ of propagation. It is not an ordinary form of speech. Its rarity confers status on it and that status impels diffusion. We may conclude that for *2 Baruch* predicted material of its very nature is noteworthy and deserves to be made known. In these works, the seer is portrayed as a prophet like Moses, a portrayal which Docherty notes, resonates with the presentation of Jesus as the new Moses in the Gospel according to Matthew.⁶⁷

2.4.5 The Divine Oracle to Moses (Jubilees 2-50)

Jubilees is generally regarded as the work of a single author.⁶⁸ His basic sources are Genesis and Exodus. Its genre is that of rewritten bible.⁶⁹ As a result of its suppression *Jubilees* was not available in Europe until the middle of the nineteenth century. It was available in the Ethiopian (Oriental) Orthodox Church, which was a relatively isolated church, and among Ethiopian Jews.⁷⁰ The significance of the narrative genre of *Jubilees* has been highlighted by H. S. Kvanvig, an attribute which it shares with the apocalypses examined here and with the Gospel according to Mark.⁷¹

Here as in *2 Baruch*, it is God who utters the prediction. God

67 Docherty, *The Jewish Pseudepigrapha*, 151.

68 A discussion of the date of *Jubilees* will necessarily include consideration of the history of its composition. The complete Book of *Jubilees* is extant in four Ethiopic manuscripts dating from the fifteenth to the nineteenth centuries on which Charles based an edition, published in 1895.

69 See Collins "The Apocalyptic Worldview of Daniel," 65. He argues that while it shares the apocalyptic worldview, it is a work of mixed genre, part revelation, part quasi-historical narrative.

70 J. T. A. G. M. Van Ruiten, *Primaeval History Interpreted: The Rewriting of Genesis 1-11 in the Book of Jubilees*. (SJS) 66; Leiden: Brill, 2000), 1. It was known in Patristic times as *Jubilees* or "The Little Genesis" and it is part of the canon of the Ethiopian Church, coming immediately after Deuteronomy. It is also considered canonical by Ethiopian Jews among whom it is known as the Book of Divisions.

71 H. S. Kvanvig, "Jubilees Read as a Narrative," in *Enoch and Qumran Origins: New*

foretells in general outline the story of Israel from the theophany on Mount Sinai to the building of the Second Temple. God then orders the Angel of the Presence to dictate the history to Moses in greater detail from creation to the post-exilic era. The angel in fact relates the story from the creation to the arrival of Moses on Mount Sinai. The work is of importance to the argument being made in this section by virtue of the fact that it is an extended revelation to Moses in the form of a prediction (Chapters 2-50), spoken, as has already been said, by God and by the angel. With many corrections, expansions and abbreviations, the angel recounts the course of history.

The motif of committing an oral prediction to writing appears in the text as a means of further dissemination of the prediction. We have encountered this motif in 4 Ezra. Moses is also commanded explicitly to do that here in *Jubilees* 1.5. The author provides us with a rare glimpse of the effect he intended the predictive material to have on the hearers/readers in the words he places on the lips of God: "And thus it will be, for when all of these things happen to them, that they will know that I have been more righteous than they, in all their judgements and deeds. And they will know that I have truly been with them" (1.6). On the basis of this statement it is possible to argue that in what God says to Moses the author provides his readers/hearers with the supreme licence and command to broadcast the subject of the prediction and offers them the ultimate reason: that God will be exalted by and in the unfolding events of history foretold here. The two extended predictions in *Jubilees* are

Light on a Forgotten Connection (ed. Boccaccini; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2005), 75-83, 75-76. He employs the distinction of reader-response criticism between narrative and story in *Jubilees* to good effect. Reading *Jubilees* as narrative involves the recognition that the narrative setting is an encounter between God and Moses on Mount Sinai. Frequently throughout *Jubilees* the readers/hearers are reminded by the angelic speeches to Moses that this is the setting and that they are there with these characters. The story line, on the other hand which takes the form of a revelation given there by the Angel of the Presence to Moses starts with creation and moves through the various stages of the history of the ancestors of Israel and ends with Moses on Mount Sinai, "with the curious effect that on the narrative level it is revealed to Moses what happened to him on the story level" (75-76).

paralleled by those of Mark's Gospel. Unlike those of the Gospel, the two delivered to Moses here contain a justification and a rationale for being widely circulated. Those spoken by Jesus in the Gospel, on the other hand, are accompanied by another element which has the effect of reversing and denying the intrinsic nature of a prediction to be widely circulated.

2.5 Conclusion

From the evidence gathered in this brief investigation we may conclude that in the presentation of predictions the impulse, in both the Greco-Roman and the Jewish milieu, is to reveal and not to conceal. The status of the predictions found in the latter is exalted by linking the material with the tradition that extra knowledge was given by God to Moses on Sinai in addition to the Torah. One could argue that it is of the very nature of a prediction that it be widely circulated. This holds *a fortiori* when those predictions form part of the knowledge passed on by God to Moses. Of the three types of predictions found here, namely, *post eventum*, partially-fulfilled and future, the first two contain within them an additional thrust towards propagation because the words have been seen to have already come to pass. These constitute the vast majority of the predictive material in this corpus. A similar claim may be made for the two extended predictions in *Jubilees*. They come from the Most High. The device of having the prediction spoken by God or by a heavenly being is one reason the various authors indicate that the prediction is worthy of diffusion. That is to say, as long as predictions and miraculous deeds are understood as instances of God's power, they rightly deserve to be widely broadcast. This is true of the predictions in Mark and for the others. It is possible to speculate therefore that one of the reasons for containing reports of such activity could be because the separate yet related roles of God as the source and the performer as the agent are not sufficiently clearly recognised or delineated. This would be a significant point especially in view of the current interest

in “divine identity Christology.” L. W. Hurtado draws attention to the clear distinction which Paul makes between the roles of God ‘the Father’ and Jesus in, for example, 1 Cor. 8.5-6, a division he refers to as “a functional subordination.”⁷² He also cites Phil. 2.5-11, which as an ancient hymn possesses extra public approbation, as a text which proclaims that Jesus’ uniquely exalted status was received by him from God. Of course, we may not argue that because the distinction appears in the authentic letters of Paul it ought necessarily to have been known by either the author of Mark or by his audiences. Nevertheless, the prospect of a not-yet-differentiated understanding of the roles of God ‘the Father’ and Jesus provides us with an additional potential insight into Mark’s impulse to limit reporting of Jesus’ mighty actions.

In short, the seers of these apocalypses are paralleled by Jesus in the Gospel according to Mark by virtue of the predictions with which each is linked. In the case of the former, they receive the predictions and the audience is privy to this information. In the case of Jesus, they are spoken by him and the audience is therefore informed in equal measure. The major difference between the two is that in the former the predictions are calling out to be publicly and widely broadcast. In the case of the latter this does not happen, or at least, rarely so. The combination of recounting and reiterating appears in a number of instances, frequently accompanied by the phrases “show all,” and “tell all.” In some cases, the predictions occur before a large audience (*1 Enoch* 91.1-2). The joining of symbolic dream and interpretation where it occurs means that the material is heard twice, and in one case, three times (*1 Enoch* 83.2-5, 83.7, 83.9). By reiterating the prediction albeit in another form, the text itself mirrors the activity of repetition. It is worth remarking that

72 L. W. Hurtado, *How on Earth Did Jesus Become a God? Historical Questions about Earliest Devotion to Jesus*. (Grand Rapids, Michigan/Cambridge, U.K.: Eerdmans Company, 2005), 49. Everything comes *from* (ἐκ) and is directed *to/for* (εἰς) “one God the Father,” and everything is *through* (δια) “the one Lord Jesus Christ.”

this insight has been surprisingly overlooked by commentators. Understanding is explicitly stated as the goal of recounting. Where it is successfully achieved, it means that the contents of the prediction have been successfully disseminated and appropriated. There is mention in two places of committing the prediction to writing (*1 Enoch*, 4.19, *Jubilees* 1.5), a motif which underlines the authoritative status of the predicted material and, at the same time, which confers on it the further distinction implied by the unchangeable nature of the written word. And, of course, copying speech to writing is reiteration of another kind.

This chapter outlined the argument that sufficient scholarly attention has already been devoted to the presentation of predictions as miraculous speech in the Greco-Roman world to accept it as a given that, like its portrayal of miracles in general, the intrinsic impulse is to propagate accounts of what had happened. It drew particular attention to the cases of Asclepius and Serapis. Secondly, it examined the treatment of predictions in Jewish writings contemporaneous with the Gospel according to Mark and concluded that like the treatment of miraculous speech and action in the Greco-Roman milieu, they shared the same impulse towards dissemination. It may be claimed therefore that the phenomenon of containment which occurs in the Gospel according to Mark does so against a background of the almost complete absence of the concept in both contemporary Greco-Roman and Jewish literature. In the next chapter, I elaborate this contrast by examining the motif as it relates to Markan predictions.

CHAPTER THREE

Containment in Markan Predictions

3.1 Introduction

In the introduction, I examined instances of prediction in Jewish literature of the period roughly contemporaneous with the Gospel according to Mark from the perspective of containment. I concluded that the evidence points to the absence of the motif and, if anything, goes in the opposite direction by exalting the various protagonists who were portrayed making predictions. Wrede considers it axiomatic that the commandment to observe silence about what has been seen also embraces that which has been heard.¹ While he is speaking specifically about the transfiguration scene, it will be clear from this dissertation that I am extending this principle to equate miraculous action and miraculous speech, especially in the form of predictions, as parallel means employed by Mark to exalt his protagonist. The strong textual evidence for the presence of containment in both types of scenes reinforces this approach. In this chapter, I investigate examples of prediction in the Gospel of Mark itself from the same perspective. In a study which focuses on foreshadowing and echoing, that is to say, looking forwards and backwards in Mark, J. F. Williams

¹ Wrede, *The Messianic Secret*, 68.

provides a table of Jesus' predictions in Mark which have come or are coming to fulfilment.²

3.2 He who is coming after me will baptise in a holy spirit (Mark 1.7-8)

Καὶ ἐκήρυσσεν λέγων· ἔρχεται ὁ ἰσχυρότερός μου ὀπίσω μου, οὗ οὐκ εἰμί ἱκανὸς κύψας λῦσαι τὸν ἱμάντα τῶν ὑποδημάτων αὐτοῦ. ἐγὼ ἐβάπτισα ὑμᾶς ὕδατι, αὐτὸς δὲ βαπτίσει ὑμᾶς ἐν πνεύματι ἁγίῳ.

The one who is stronger than I am is coming after me, whose sandals' thong I, bending down, am unworthy to loosen. I baptised you with water. He, however, will baptise you in a holy spirit.³

3.2.1 Context and literary unity of Mark 1.2-8

Mark 1.7-8 is part of the pericope 1.2-8 which deals with the appearance of John the Baptist. These two verses put forward the preaching of John in two movements. There is some debate about whether the scriptural references in 1.2-3 form part of the introduction to the Gospel as a whole, or, on the basis of similarity of theme, whether they belong to this pericope.⁴ While ἐγένετο is clearly an indication of the structure of the text, as it stands, the sentence begins in v. 2. A strong argument for including these verses is put forward by Yarbrow Collins who identifies a relationship of oracle and fulfilment between them and the following verses. Following the oracle in 1.2-3 the description of John's proclaiming in the wilderness beginning at

2 J. F. Williams, "Foresadowing, Echoes, and the Blasphemy at the Cross (Mark 15.29)," *JBL* 132.4 (2013): 913-993, 930.

3 The version of the Greek NT used throughout the dissertation is Nestle-Aland *Novum Testamentum Graece* 27. In most instances the English translation of Greek and Hebrew biblical texts is my own. Otherwise, it is that of the RSV.

4 Yarbrow Collins, *Mark*, 134; D. J. Harrington, "The Gospel according to Mark," *NJBC* 41:596-629, 598-599.

1.4 is presented as the fulfilment of the prophetic voice crying also in the wilderness of 1.2-3.⁵ The location of the desert is identified (ἐν τῇ ἐρήμῳ) in 1.4. John's effect is briefly described (1.5-8). A new section begins with a change of action in 1.9 (καὶ ἐγένετο), and the temporal indicator ἐν ἐκείναις ταῖς ἡμέραις. Although the tense of the verb in the principal clause in v. 7 is the present indicative (ἔρχεται) it could be argued that it has a future referent, in which case the verb takes on the form of a prediction. The second half of the verse declares the higher status of that one vis-à-vis the Baptist. This is followed by the unambiguous prediction in v.8. (ἐγὼ ἐβάπτισα ὑμᾶς ὕδατι, αὐτὸς δὲ βαπτίσει ὑμᾶς ἐν πνεύματι ἁγίῳ).

The broader context of this scene is provided by Mark 1.1-13 which includes the introduction to the Gospel (1.1-3); the appearance of John the Baptist (1.4-8), the baptism of Jesus (1.9-11) and his temptation in the desert (1.12-13).

3.2.2 Structure of Mark 1.2-8

<i>Transition</i>	1.2	Promissory oracle to send a messenger before someone
	1.3	Second oracle to prepare and straighten a lord's path
	1.4	Appearance and preaching of John the baptizer
	1.5	Response to John's preaching
	1.6	Description of John's clothes and diet
	1.7-8	Summary of John's preaching including two predictions
<i>Transition</i>	1.9a	A temporal indicator and the appearance of a new character

Five elements make up this brief pericope: two oracles dealing with the sending of a messenger before someone's arrival the straightening

⁵ Yarbrow Collins, *Mark*, 134.

of paths before a lord (1.2-3); an announcement of John's appearance and preaching (1.4); the response it evoked (1.5); a description of what he wore (1.6); and a summary of what he preached (1.7-8).

3.2.3 The motif of containment in Mark 1.7-8

These two predictions are exceptional in the context of this study by virtue of the fact that the speaker is John the Baptist and not Jesus. Their inclusion here is justified on the basis of what they predict about the activity of Jesus. They are the first instances of prediction in the Gospel according to Mark. The combination of two quotations, as in Mark 1.2-3 where the first comes from Malachi 3.1, and their attribution to a single author is not unknown in the biblical world. Isaiah 40.3 had already provided the inspiration for the Jewish community living in the wilderness near the Dead Sea a century earlier because they had seen in it a reference to the dawning of the end.⁶ The contrast between the baptism of John and that of Jesus is accentuated to some extent by the grammatical construction ἐγὼ ἐβάπτισα...αὐτὸς δὲ βαπτίσει with the adversative particle δὲ. Such contrast is of course relative and it is worth noting that there is no appearance here of the adversative particle *par excellence*, ἀλλά, found in 14.29.

Baptism "with the Holy Spirit" is most likely an anticipatory reference to Jesus' own baptism which follows this pericope, where, according to P. G. Bolt, the voice of God provides a reliable commentary on the significance of that action.⁷ H. C. Kee sees added significance in the desert as the location for John's utterance.⁸ It is worth noting, in keeping with the containment motif, that the location

6 1QS 8.14. See also 4QXII^a and 1QIsa^b.

7 P. G. Bolt, *Jesus' Defeat of Death: Persuading Mark's Early Readers*. (SNTSMS 125; Cambridge: University Press, 2003), 46.

8 H. C. Kee, *Community of the New Age: Studies in Mark's Gospel*, (New York: Paulist Press, 1982), 88. He suggests that for Mark, as for the Qumran community, the desert is where the beginning of the new people of God is launched, albeit that each has an understanding of how this new people is constituted, that is different from the other's.

of John's baptism, and the place where Jesus's divine sonship will soon be affirmed to him is a desert with few if any inhabitants, rather than in a densely populated place or a area inhabited by the powerful and the great. In fact, I shall argue that no one else hears the voice from heaven except Jesus. An analysis by L. E. Vaage of the three principal texts which, he contends, constitute the prologue to Mark's Gospel – the presentation of John the Baptist (Mark 1.2-8), the baptism of Jesus (1.9-11), and the testing of Jesus (1.12-13) – shows that the content of these passages has little to do with historical memory and, rather, everything to do with being a literary introduction to what follows.⁹ That is to say the instances of containment found in the literary prologue anticipate the occurrences of the motif in the body of the gospel.

The assumption adopted in this study is that predictions exalt the one making them. These two predictions are exceptional, not merely because they are the only ones to be examined here which are not placed on the lips of Jesus and so, the exaltation of Jesus is achieved not by his uttering the predictions but by his being the subject of them. Of course it is also achieved by the contrast in v.7 between John's status and that of Jesus. The basis for exaltation here is that, unlike the baptism of John, Jesus will baptise with the Holy Spirit. I am proposing that the affirmation of Jesus' high status is tempered here by the element of ambiguity concerning who is referred to by the words *ὁ ἰσχυρότερός μου*, and therefore, that this constitutes an instance of the containment motif. At the level of story, it is possible that Mark intends to suggest that Jesus' identity was unknown to John, as Matthew 11.3 implies. The ambiguity is also there at the level of discourse, since the reader does not yet know for certain who is being referred to.

Each of the elements in the presentation of this scene has something unique to contribute to the overarching theme of

9 L. E. Vaage, "Comienzo poco histórico del evangelio biográfico de Marcos (1.1-15)," *Salamanticensis* 57 (2010): 85-110, 109-110.

containment. In the first instance, there is the setting of the desert. It is true that the desert is a polyvalent image in the Hebrew Bible. It is the place of deprivation and testing endured by the Israelites during the forty years they spent there journeying from Egypt to the Promised Land. On the other hand, it is the place of intimacy with God, the place to which God lures Israel to speak to her heart, in the prophet Hosea. In both these instances it is far from the location of power and authority. Secondly, the prediction in v. 8 is capable of contrasting interpretations. The subject is esteemed because he will baptise in the Holy Spirit. At the same time, the ambiguity around the referent tempers that esteem. The announcement of divine sonship which follows in 1.11 is, arguably, heard by no one other than Jesus himself and the readers and hearers of the Gospel.¹⁰ None of the characters in the story hears the heavenly voice, and in that sense, even divine sonship is not as exalted as it might be. All these elements combine to create the distinct impression that Jesus is not a typical hero, but rather, a man who does not seek the adulation of crowds or the company of the powerful, who hides himself particularly at times where the typical hero is exalted and paraded.

3.3 The bridegroom will be taken away (Mark 2.20)

ἐλεύσονται δὲ ἡμέραι ὅταν ἀπαρθῇ ἀπ' αὐτῶν ὁ νυμφίος, καὶ τότε νηστεύσουσιν ἐν ἐκείνῃ τῇ ἡμέρᾳ.

But days will come when the bridegroom will be taken away from them and then they will fast in that day.

¹⁰ As part of a discussion about the types of realism found in narrative and specifically about the kind which best fits Mark's presentation of Jesus, Hedrick interprets elements of the baptismal scene as downplaying rather than emphasising Jesus' status. "An unidentified and bodiless voice from the Markan sky (1.9-11) claims Jesus as "my beloved son," though there is nothing unique about the claim; others in Hebrew antiquity have been called 'son of God.'" He includes here angels (Gen 6.4); the Davidic king (Ps 2.7); Israel (Hos 11.1-4); a righteous person (Wis 2.16-18; Sir 4.10). See C. W. Hedrick, "Realism in Western Narrative and the Gospel of Mark: A Prolegomenon." *JBL*126.2 (2007): 345-359, 357.

3.3.1 Context and literary unity of Mark 2.18-22

The sentence in which the prediction occurs, ἐλεύσονται δὲ ἡμέραι ὅταν ἀπαρθῇ ἀπ’ αὐτῶν ὁ νυμφίος, καὶ τότε νηστεύσουσιν ἐν ἐκείνῃ τῇ ἡμέρᾳ (2.20), is part of the pericope 2.18-22, which deals with the question of fasting. The pericope begins with the coordinating conjunction, Καὶ, and with the disciples of John and of the Pharisees as subjects of the principal verb in 1.18. A dialogue follows in which Jesus is asked a question (2.18) and then answers it (2.19-22). Another pericope dealing with a different subject begins in 2.23 with the typical introduction Καὶ ἐγένετο.

The pericope is part of the wider section from 2.1 to 3.6 to which Yarbrow Collins gives the title “Jesus in Conflict”.¹¹ It is preceded by the healing of a paralytic man (2.1-12), the calling of Levi and eating with tax-collectors and sinners (2.13-17) and is followed by a passage dealing with the related theme of plucking corn on the Sabbath (2.23-28), and the healing of a man with a withered hand on the Sabbath (3.1-6).

3.3.2 Structure of Mark 2.18-22

<i>Transition</i>	2.18a	Introduction of a new set of characters
<i>Question</i>	2.18b	Onlookers ask Jesus a question
<i>Answer 1</i>	2.19-20	First parable – containing a prediction
<i>Answer 2</i>	2.21	Second parable
<i>Answer 3</i>	2.22	Third parable
<i>Transition</i>	2.23	A new temporal indicator

This pericope may be divided into three sections: an initial statement about the religious practice of fasting by the disciples of John the Baptist and by those of the Pharisees (2.18a); a general question about fasting posed to Jesus (2.18b); and Jesus’ answer in the form of

¹¹ Yarbrow Collins, *Mark*, 181.

three short parables, namely, the bridegroom including a prediction (2.19-20); a new patch on an old cloak (2.21) and new wine in old wineskins (2.22).

3.3.3 The motif of containment in Mark 2.18-22

This prediction is made by Jesus as an answer to the people's question why his disciples did not fast while those of the Pharisees and John did. Whether it is likely that the allusion to the bridegroom would have been heard with messianic overtones or not, it enhances Jesus status and relationship to God.¹² The case is strengthened by the form of the verb ἀπαρθῆναι, where use of the divine passive would indicate that Jesus' fate was known to God or that it was permitted by God. Metaphorical language in the form of parables is a feature of Mark which is broader than the subject matter of this dissertation. Historical Jesus research agrees that it was also a feature of the teaching style of Jesus. It is likely that Mark's use of parabolic language is a continuation of Jesus' style. While this saying may provide us with some information about Jesus' (and Mark's) preference for justice, rather than being a negative judgement on fasting *per se*, the aspect of this saying which is of interest to us at this point is that it is a prediction which is couched in metaphorical language. This combination has the same effect on the participants in the story: it contributes to the limiting of reporting of the predictive powers of Jesus.

The force of this prediction consists in its ability to refer to the fate of Jesus and that of his disciples when he is taken from them. The link between him and the bridegroom and between his disciples and the wedding guests is made in the previous verse. The truth of this prediction will be confirmed when the reader/hearers who hear the gospel from beginning to end arrive at the point where Jesus is taken

12 See John 3.29; 2 Corinthians 11.2; Ephesians 5.32; Revelation 19.7. There may be an allusion in Mark 2.20 to the image in the Hebrew Bible of God as the husband of Israel. See Hosea 2.10; Isaiah 54.4-8, 62.4-5; Ezekiel 16.7-63.

and put to death. By the same token, the status of the one making the prediction will be enhanced. The containment motif, in the form of the ambiguity contained in the parabolic language, ensures that that does not happen at this stage. The occurrence of the motif in this section is interesting and informative. The crux of the pericope is a contrast between the disciples of Jesus and those of John and of the Pharisees, where the former, and by extension their teacher, appear to come off second best. In other words, it is a scenario where, for apologetic purposes alone, the reader would expect that Jesus would be shown to be superior to those with whom he is compared. Instead, it is precisely at this point that the potentially exalting image of the bridegroom, used in relation to Jesus, is limited in its effect by the employment of the containment motif. M. S. Rindge argues that the image of the bridegroom's being taken away is actually one of a number of scenes which anticipate Jesus' future rejection and divine abandonment.¹³

3.4 Two related predictions, (8.34, 9.1)

Καὶ προσκαλεσάμενος τὸν ὄχλον σὺν τοῖς μαθηταῖς αὐτοῦ
εἶπεν αὐτοῖς·
εἴ τις θέλει ὀπίσω μου ἀκολουθεῖν,
ἀπαρνησάσθω ἑαυτὸν
καὶ ἄρατω τὸν σταυρὸν αὐτοῦ
καὶ ἀκολουθείτω μοι (8.34).

13 M. S. Rindge argues for an essentially sinister interpretation of the image. "Reconfiguring the Akedah and Recasting God: Lament and Divine Abandonment in Mark," *JBL* 130.1 (2011): 755-774. The argument is that Mark is full of pointers, of which this is only one, to God's abandonment of Jesus. He also includes the arrest and execution of John the Baptizer (1.14; 6.16-19); conspiracies to arrest and destroy Jesus (3.6; 11.18; 12.12); the rejection in his hometown (6.1-6); the three passion predictions (8.31; 9.31; 10.33-34, 45); the parable of the tenants (12.1-9); Jesus' prediction at his anointing (14.7-8); his words at the Passover dinner (14.24-25); and his prayer in Gethsemane (14.34-36), 761-762. He argues that Jesus' lament from the cross in 15.34 is an appropriate response to this broader context of rejection and suffering.

And calling the crowd together with his disciples he said
to them.

“If any one wishes to follow after me,
let him deny himself
and let him take up his cross
and let him follow me.”

Καὶ ἔλεγεν αὐτοῖς·
ἀμὴν λέγω ὑμῖν
ὅτι εἰσὶν τινες ὧδε τῶν ἐστηκότων οἵτινες οὐ μὴ
γεύσωνται θανάτου
ἕως ἂν ἴδωσιν τὴν βασιλείαν τοῦ θεοῦ ἐληλυθυῖαν ἐν δυνάμει
(9.1).

And he said to them:
“Truly I say to you
that there are some of those standing here who will not
taste death
until they will have seen the kingdom of God coming
in power.”

Two related predictions (8.34 and 9.1) are located at either end of the same passage (8.34-9.1). A third prediction is located in 8.38 which I shall examine in Chapter Five, since it contains a reference to the son of man. There is some debate among scholars as to whether 9.1 is part of the unit, or a stand-alone logion.¹⁴ I shall argue that these two are thematically and structurally connected. I shall make some remarks on the context, literary unity and structure of 8.34-91 first

¹⁴ Mark 8.38 is followed directly by 9.1 and though they are separated by the current arrangement of chapters, there is an argument for not partitioning them structurally or thematically. Linguistically *ὅταν ἔλθῃ ἐν τῇ δόξῃ τοῦ πατρὸς αὐτοῦ μετὰ τῶν ἀγγέλων τῶν ἀγίων* and *ἕως ἂν ἴδωσιν τὴν βασιλείαν τοῦ θεοῦ ἐληλυθυῖαν ἐν δυνάμει* are both predictions. They share a conviction of a glorious and powerful immanent inbreaking, the former of the son of man, the latter of the Kingdom of God. In that sense, they prepare the ground for the Transfiguration which follows immediately.

and I shall argue that the motif of containment applies in the same way to all three.

3.4.1 Context and literary unity of Mark 8.34-9.1

Mark 8.34-38 describes Jesus addressing the crowd together with his disciples on the theme of becoming a follower of his. As it stands, the passage is separated from the preceding one by the identification of the crowd as the addressees, together with his disciples (8.34), whereas the preceding passage ended with an altercation between two characters, Jesus and Peter (8.32b-33). The first prediction (8.34b) appears as the first of four interconnected sayings on the theme of following Jesus (8.35-38).¹⁵ Mark 9.1 is an elaboration of the preceding verse (8.38). If the reference to the addresses in 8.34a, *καὶ προσκαλεσάμενος τὸν ὄχλον σὺν τοῖς μαθηταῖς αὐτοῦ εἶπεν αὐτοῖς*, which, as Bultmann points out, begins with a formulaic phrase indicating both that someone is about to make a speech and that something important is about to be said, is removed, the entire passage, 8.34b-9.1 may be read as being addressed to Peter, since the material contained there directly answers his theme of refusal to associate messiahship with suffering and death in 8.32.¹⁶ Specifically, the strong words chosen to convey shame, *ἐπαισχυνθῆ* and *ἐπαισχυνθήσεται* in 8.38, parallel *ἐπιτιμᾶν*, the verb used to refer to Peter's remonstrating with Jesus.¹⁷ A second argument to explain the insertion is put forward by Yarbro Collins. She believes that the summoning of the crowd shifts the emphasis from the speaker to the spoken. That is to say, it was done for the purpose of inclusiveness

15 See for example Hooker, *The Gospel According to Saint Mark*, (BNTC 2; Peabody, Massachusetts: Hendrickson, 1991), 209.

16 Bultmann, (*History*, 329-330) believes that providing an audience for a saying of Jesus is characteristic of Markan style. It is likely that 7.14 is another example of this feature.

17 N. Perrin, *The Kingdom of God in the Teaching of Jesus*, (NTL, London: SCM, 1963), 142. He suggests that such strong vocabulary may be a feature of apocalyptic writing which attempts to make reference to an eschatological age, which is otherwise difficult to speak about.

to emphasise that the demands of discipleship were for all, and not just for a single individual or a select group of disciples.¹⁸ From a thematic perspective, the material from 8.27 to 9.1 is closely connected. Furthermore, the prediction of the passion in 8.31, while specific on a number of issues, mentions that the son of man will be killed, but omits to say how. The mention of the cross occurs in 8.34, completing, as I argue above, the earlier prediction. Finally, from a linguistic perspective the term the son of man in 8.31 and 8.38 may be an example of an *inclusio* at the beginning and end of a single speech. When these factors are considered together, the evidence that it was Peter alone who was being addressed is at least as strong as the alternative view.

As I have been arguing, having a limited number of hearers or addressees to a prediction, in this case a single individual, is one of the forms which the containment motif takes. The transition to the following passage is indicated by the temporal phrase, *καὶ μετὰ ἡμέρας ἕξ* and by the introduction of Peter, James and John in 9.2. The wider literary context of 8.34-9.1 is the same as that of 8.31-33 discussed above.

3.4.2 Structure of Mark 8.34-9.1

<i>Transition</i>	8.34a	Formula indicating a new speech
<i>Phase 1</i>	8.34b	A saying concerning discipleship of Jesus
<i>Phase 2</i>	8.35	A second saying concerning discipleship of Jesus
<i>Phase 3</i>	8.36	A saying about losing one's life
	8.37	A second saying about losing one's life
<i>Phase 4</i>	8.38	A prediction concerning being ashamed of Jesus and his words

¹⁸ Yarbro Collins, *Mark*, 407.

	9.1	A prediction about the imminent coming of God's kingdom
(<i>Transition</i>	9.2a	Formula indicating a temporal change)

The formula introducing a speech in 8.34a begins this section. Jesus addresses his remarks on discipleship in four phases. In the first, second and fourth, discipleship of Jesus is specifically mentioned, while the third is framed in more general terms, without any reference to a teacher or master. The first phase speaks in terms of self-denial, taking up one's cross and following Jesus (8.34b). The second refers to the reversal involved in saving and losing one's life, in connection with Jesus and the gospel (8.35). The third phase offers a contrast between gaining the whole world and losing one's life (8.36-37). The fourth refers to the reciprocity between someone's being ashamed of Jesus and his words now and of the son of man's being ashamed of that person when he comes in his father's glory with the holy angels (8.38). If the following verse (9.1) is considered part of the same passage, it serves to reiterate 8.38 in parallel terms.

3.4.3 The motif of containment in Mark 8.34-9.1

With the first prediction of the passion in 8.31 a significant point in the Gospel is reached because, for the first time in Mark, messiahship is associated with suffering and death. It is not surprising to have this view reiterated here only three verses later. What applies to Jesus has implications for his disciples in terms of self-denial and taking up one's cross. The first phrase *ὀπίσω μου ἀκολουθεῖν* which may be understood to refer to "following after" in the sense of being a disciple reveals the ironic use of the expression by Jesus to Peter in the preceding verse. Secondly, *ἀπαρνησάσθω ἑαυτὸν* is a good description of what Jesus will do by accepting his passion. The choice of the phrase *καὶ ἀράτω τὸν σταυρὸν αὐτοῦ* presages Jesus' cross mentioned in 15.21, *ἵνα ἄρη* (Simon of Cyrene) *τὸν σταυρὸν αὐτοῦ*

(Jesus), and invests the logion with the character of a prediction which will be fulfilled in the text. If that is so Mark has invested Jesus at this point with foreknowledge of his fate.¹⁹ The triple imperative, ἀπαρνησάσθω ἑαυτὸν καὶ ἀράτω τὸν σταυρὸν αὐτοῦ καὶ ἀκολουθεῖτω, intensifies this new and challenging aspect of messiahship and of discipleship. To follow someone can have more than one nuance of meaning, for example, to do what they have done, to go where they have gone. If the disciple is to take up his cross, the teacher will have already done so. That aspect of the prediction will be fulfilled by the end of the story. The second shade of meaning of to follow is to become a disciple, taking the master's teaching and example to heart. The containment motif presents Jesus as not seeking adulation and attention because of the miraculous deeds (including prediction) which he has performed. In terms of discipleship, those who wish to follow Jesus are called to a similar humility.

In presenting the crucifixion as something about which his protagonist has foreknowledge, the author is also addressing the hearers of the narrative.²⁰ Those for whom a suffering messiah might have been a scandalous idea and who consequently might have been reluctant to follow the way of Jesus might thereby have been prompted to think again. Jesus' ultimate fate was not something for Mark's readers/hearers to be ashamed of.

19 Some commentators have seen the reference to taking up a cross as a proverbial one. "Every criminal who is executed carries his own cross." See Plutarch, *De sera numinis vindicta* 9.554b. Hooker, (*Saint Mark*, 209) sees the danger of self-incrimination in the use of the term by Jesus thus giving the impression that he saw himself as a rebel against Rome. Nevertheless, Mann points out that opposition to imperial authority could have barbaric consequences including crucifixion. He cites Josephus as evidence, noting that two thousand people were crucified under Varus in 4 B.C.E. for rebellion. See C. S. Mann, *Mark: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*, (AB 27; Garden City, New York: Doubleday, 1986), 348. Gundry understands it in the proverbial sense of being prepared to be ridiculed, be spat on, be seen and treated as a criminal and be thought guilty of shameful things, rather than in the literal sense. See R. H. Gundry, *Mark: A Commentary on His Apology for the Cross*, (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans, 1993), 435.

20 W. J. Harrington, *Mark: Realistic Theologian: The Jesus of Mark*, (2nd ed.; Dublin: Columba, 2002), 131.

It is possible that the expression ἴδωσιν τὴν βασιλείαν τοῦ θεοῦ ἐληλυθυῖαν ἐν δυνάμει is also a reference in anticipation of what will happen at the transfiguration which is about to be depicted. The corollary is articulated by N. Perrin who argues that because of where it is placed the transfiguration should be read as a partial fulfilment of the prediction.²¹ To take the argument to its logical conclusion, if 8.38 and 9.1 are synonymous, the transfiguration may also be understood as a (partial) fulfilment of the latter which speaks of the coming of the son of man in the glory of his father with the holy angels. In that way, the reference to those who will not taste death until they see God's kingdom may allude to Peter, James and John.

There are two possible forms which the containment motif takes in the passage 8.34-9.1. The first is the ambiguity surrounding the two terms "the son of man" in 8.31 and 8.38, and "the kingdom of God" in 9.1. Because there is some doubt about the precise identity of the referent of the former, Mark's choice of vocabulary may indicate that he wishes thereby to divert attention from the speaker's achievement. The same ambiguity surrounds the mysterious clause ἕως ἂν ἴδωσιν τὴν βασιλείαν τοῦ θεοῦ ἐληλυθυῖαν ἐν δυνάμει (9.1), making the occurrence of both terms an instance of the containment.

Finally, semantically and linguistically, it is possible to read the prohibition from speaking about him in 8.30 to extend to the two passages which follow (8.31-33 and 8.34-9.1) to include not speaking about what he teaches. If such an interpretation is adopted, the three predictions in question are also covered by the prohibition as a form the motif. To summarise, it may be argued that the motif of containment is found here in two forms: the ambiguity surrounding the term "the son of man" and in the expression "the kingdom of God coming in power," and secondly, the direct command in 8.30 not to speak about Jesus.

21 Perrin, *The Kingdom of God in the Teaching of Jesus*, 86.

3.5 You will find a colt on which no one has yet sat (Mark 11.2-3)

καὶ λέγει αὐτοῖς·
ὑπάγετε εἰς τὴν κώμην τὴν κατέναντι ὑμῶν,
καὶ εὐθὺς εἰσπορευόμενοι εἰς αὐτὴν εὐρήσετε πῶλον δεδεμένον
ἐφ' ὃν οὐδεὶς οὕτω ἀνθρώπων ἐκάθισεν·
λύσατε αὐτὸν καὶ φέρετε
καὶ ἐάν τις ὑμῖν εἴπῃ·
τί ποιεῖτε τοῦτο;
εἶπατε·
ὁ κύριος αὐτοῦ χρειᾶν ἔχει,
καὶ εὐθὺς αὐτὸν ἀποστέλλει πάλιν ὧδε. (11.2-3)

And he says to them.

“Go into the village which is opposite you
and immediately entering it you will find a colt tied
upon which no human has yet sat.

Loosen it and bring.”

And if anyone says to you
“Why are you doing this?”

Say:

The lord needs it

And immediately he will send it here again.

3.5.1 Context and literary unity of Mark 11.1-11

Mark's central section (8.22-10.52) with an account of the healing of blindness at either end (8.22-26 and 10.46-52) may be said to divide the Gospel into two halves (1.1-8.21 and 11.1-16.8). The beginning of a new section is indicated by a change of geographical location, Καὶ ὅτε ἐγγίξουσιν εἰς Ἱεροσόλυμα εἰς Βηθφαγὴ καὶ Βηθανίαν πρὸς τὸ ὄρος τῶν ἐλαιῶν. The unit itself consists of two preludes (11.2-6 and 11.7-10), a climax (11.11q) and a conclusion (11.b).

Mark 8.22-10.52 which portrays Jesus and his disciples travelling around towns and villages has the entry into Jerusalem as its goal.

This pericope (11.1-11) is followed by an account of the events of the next day when Jesus and the disciples left Bethany to enter Jerusalem again. These include the cursing of the fig tree (11.12-14), the cleansing of the Temple (11.15-18) and his departure from the city at the end of that day (11.19).

3.5.2 Structure of Mark 11.1-11

<i>Transition</i>	11.1	
<i>Prelude I</i>	11.2	First prediction
	11.3	Second prediction
	11.4	First fulfilment
	11.5-6	Second fulfilment
<i>Prelude II</i>	11.7a	Gesture of honour
	11.7b	Sitting on a donkey
	11.8	Gestures of honour
	11.9-10	Exclamations of honour
<i>Climax</i>	11.11a	Entry to Jerusalem
<i>Conclusion</i>	11.11b	Departure

The unit follows a straightforward structure: two preliminary scenes (2-6) and (7-10). These are followed by the climax (11a) the entry to Jerusalem and the conclusion (11b).

3.5.3 The motif of containment of Mark 11.1-11

The opening scene of the second half of Mark's Gospel deals with Jesus' first entry into Jerusalem. As befits such a significant moment, considering that Mark's middle section has been anticipating this event, the scene contains two preludes, followed by the entry briefly narrated and ending with the departure to Bethany. On the one hand, the predictions like the gestures with cloaks and branches and

accompanying exclamations contribute to an exaltation of Jesus and of this significant moment in the story. Wherever something like this happens Mark's pattern is to include one or more elements to contain the attribution of high status to Jesus. Mark's geography has been acknowledged to function as a vehicle for theology. Since E. Lohmeyer's *Galiläa und Jerusalem* this has been well recognised in relation to the north-south axis.²² The other axis, as P.-G. Klumbies has recognised, and this is an imbalance which he seeks to offset, has not received the same amount of scholarly attention.²³ In terms of the latter, the west has connotations of death and the east of salvation. He identifies this point in the Gospel as the place where the east-west axis comes into its own.

The combined effect of the predictions, the gestures of respect with cloaks and branches and the ceremonial overtones of seating on an ass is that the reader understands that the events of Jesus' final week in Jerusalem did not take him by surprise but rather that he had foreknowledge of them. Blackburn makes this point in relation to Jesus' *Fernsicht*, shown in his instructions for obtaining the colt, and later for preparing for the Passover observance (14.13-15).²⁴ The honouring of Jesus is enhanced if, according to D. J. Harrington, the author intends to present the incident as a fulfilment of Zech 9.9 understood as a prophecy wherein the Lord, in true prophetic eschatological form, would ride as a divine warrior into Jerusalem

22 E Lohmeyer, *Galiläa und Jerusalem*. Forschungen zur Religion und Literatur des Alten und Neuen Testaments. Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1936.

23 P.-G. Klumbies, "Das Konzept des 'mythischen Raumes' im Markusevangelium," in *Heiliges Land* (Jahrbuch für Biblische Theologie 23; ed. M. Ebner et al.; Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 2008), 101-121, 111-112. He shows how further study of the east-west axis, which he recommends, can open up new horizons in Mark's concept of space. This results in a cross-shaped geography, which, actually, owes its origins to Etruscans sacral spatial order, in which passion and death is complemented with universal salvation.

24 Blackburn, *Theios Anēr*, 135. The underlying motif is Jesus' ability to perceive present realities which would be hidden to other human beings. Of course, the scene could simply be the result of a prior arrangement between Jesus and the owner of the donkey, but the convergence of gestures of honour makes this unlikely.

seated on the foal of an ass.²⁵ B. Witherington supports such an exalted reading.²⁶ The immediate fulfilment of the prediction further enhances the status of the speaker. Additionally, 11.3 is the only place in the Gospel according to Mark where Jesus is called *ὁ κύριος*.²⁷ Here it may simply be a term of respect, similar to “sir.” Schweizer argues that its occurrence is not so surprising since it would have reflected the way Jesus was regarded when Mark’s Gospel achieved its final form.²⁸ When we consider all of these factors together: the fulfilled predictions, the gestures of honour, the taking of a seat on a donkey in a prophetic manner and the exclamations of the crowds there is quite an extensive exaltation of Jesus taking place. When we find such in Mark we expect that we do not have to look far for some element of limitation.

The limiting of the audience of the predictions to two is one form which the motif of containment takes in this scene. It could also be argued that the donkey itself functions as another aspect of containment. That is to say one would expect that a horse would be more appropriate for a processional scene. Thirdly, as an argument from silence, given the prominence of Jerusalem as the goal of the journey section of Mark (10.32, 33, 11.1) and in light of the gestures and acclamations of honour and respect at the approach to the city, there is a distinct anti-climactic air to Jesus’ entering Jerusalem (11.11a). The two details of his having looked around at everything and the lateness of the hour contribute to the bathos of the moment and help to create the sense of the absence of anything significant happening. Mark 14.12-16 which describes Jesus’ sending two disciples into the city to prepare the Passover with his disciples is almost a replica of this passage. In both cases the details of who

25 Harrington, “Mark,” 67.

26 B. Witherington III, *The Gospel of Mark: A Socio-Rhetorical Commentary*, (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2001), 308.

27 The salutation *κύριε* in Mark 7.28 is typical of Gentiles and is not found anywhere else in the Gospel.

28 Schweizer, *Good News according to Mark*, 228.

and what they will meet are predicted and fulfilled. Both also share the element of a confined audience as the primary form of the containment motif.

3.6 An Amalgam of Predictions (Mark 13.1-2, 3-27)

Mark 13.1-2 which contains the momentous foretelling of the destruction of the Jerusalem Temple acts as a prologue to the body of the chapter, 13.3-37, which is a long discourse containing mostly predictions made to four named disciples. It is generally agreed that the apocalyptic nature of what is perhaps the most commented upon chapter of the Synoptic Gospels has led some scholars to underline the contrasts between it and the rest of the Gospel rather than noting the similarities that exist between them. By way of contrast, the research undertaken for this dissertation shows that at least in relation to the way the motif of containment is dealt with, the patterns established in the rest of the Gospel hold good for Chapter 13 also. J. L. Lambrecht and Hooker have shown that Chapter 13 is an integral whole linked with the rest of the Gospel and not an intrusion or a confusing mixture of different eschatological oracles.²⁹ This view is supported by Mark's use of the literary device of intercalation. J. Dewey has argued that Chapter 13 be regarded as an intercalation into two stories about women, those of the widow's mite (12.41-44) and the anointing at Bethany (14.3-9) and similarly that the whole middle section of Mark (8.27-10.45) be viewed as an intercalation into the two stories where Jesus heals a blind man (8.22-26 and 10.46-52).³⁰ That would suggest based on Mark's handling of intercalation elsewhere e.g. the insertion of the healing of the woman with the haemorrhage (5.24-34) into the story of Jairus's daughter (5.21-24, 35-43), there would be many connections between the intercalated section and the material which frames it.

29 J. L. Lambrecht, "Die Logia-Quellen von Markus 13," *Biblica* 47 (1966): 321-360; Hooker, *Saint Mark*, 297-303.

30 See Dewey, "Mark as Interwoven Tapestry: Forecasts and Echoes for a Listening

Some historical awareness will be helpful to complement a literary approach such as that adopted here in order, for example, to determine whether the predictions it contains are *post eventum* or not. While most scholars today accept that Mark was composed close to the year 70 C. E., there is no consensus about which side of that date is more likely. W. Carter argues that there is no unique correspondence between the text of Mark 13 and its historical context which would enable a definite dating of the work and a determination of its provenance.³¹ Harrington's view that the material of Mark 13 would serve to calm eschatological fears and to promote endurance among readers/hearers at a time of upheaval captures the essence of the chapter without tying it to a precise historical set of circumstances.

3.6.1 Context and literary unity of Mark 13

The second half of Mark's Gospel begins in 11.1 with Jesus' entry into the vicinity of Jerusalem for the first time (11.2-11). This sets the scene for a series of proclamations on a variety of themes, some of which, such as the fate of the Temple, the question of resurrection and the allegory of the vineyard and tenants have clear resonances with the final days of Jesus' life. This links easily to the eschatological material of Chapter 13, the final segment of his preaching which takes place in Jerusalem and the penultimate section of the Gospel, followed directly by the passion narrative (14.1-16.8).

In the section immediately prior to this one Jesus sat down before the treasury and saw a poor widow making a contribution

Audience," *CBQ* 53 (1991): 221-236, 233. The significance of the framing device employed by Mark has been noticed by other scholars also. See Malbon, *In the Company of Jesus: Characters in Mark's Gospel* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2000), 53-55; T. J. Geddert, *Watchwords: Mark 13 in Markan Eschatology* (JSNTS; Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1989), 137; F. J. Moloney, *The Gospel of Mark* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2002), 281; V. K. Robbins, *Jesus the Teacher: A Socio-Rhetorical Interpretation of Mark*; (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1984), 179; K. D. Dyer, *The Prophecy on the Mount: Mark 13 and the Gathering of the New Community* (New York: Peter Lang, 1998), 270.

31 W. Carter, "Mark and Syria? An Assessment," *The Expository Times* 125 (2014): 531-537.

(12.41-44). The transition from preaching set in the Temple to preaching about the Temple itself is achieved by the indication of movement in 13.1, leading to the prediction of the destruction of the Jerusalem Temple (13.2). A further transition occurs in 13.3a with another change of location so that the rest of the section (13.3b-37) is portrayed as a speech delivered to four named disciples, Peter, James, John and Andrew. The move to the following scene (the Passion Narrative) is indicated by a new temporal indication in 14.1a.

3.6.2 Structure of Mark 13

<i>Transition</i>	13.1	From inside the Temple to outside
<i>First subject</i>	13.2	Prediction of the destruction of the Temple
<i>Transition</i>	13.3a	to a new location (the Mount of Olives)
<i>Second subject</i>	13.3b	Question of four named disciples
	3.5	Answer in form of exhortation to vigilance
	13.6-8	General predictions
<i>Third subject</i>	13.9-13	Predictions specific to the addressees
<i>Fourth subject</i>	13.14-20	Events in Judaea predicted in two parts
	13.21-23	Predictions of arrival of false messiahs
<i>Fifth subject</i>	13.24-27	Prediction of the coming of the son of man
<i>Sixth subject</i>	13.28-32	Discourse on the lesson of the fig tree
<i>Conclusion</i>	13.33	Further exhortation to vigilance
	13.34-36	Parable of the householder gone on a journey
	13.37	Final exhortation to vigilance
	14.1	Temporal indication

There are differences of opinion about the precise subdivisions of this

chapter, such as those of Schweizer, Witherington and Harrington.³² As a necessary antidote it is also helpful to bear in mind the caveat against the excesses of scholarly desire to divide and subdivide the text.

3.6.3 The motif of containment in Mark 13.1-2

E.-M. Becker makes a convincing argument in favour of regarding Mark 13.1-2 as a unit in itself, distinct from what follows.³³ An individual disciple addresses Jesus, as he was leaving the Temple precinct. His reply predicting the destruction of the Temple is in the singular *βλέπεις* (13.2), an indication that the audience consists of a single individual.³⁴ J. S. Kloppenborg argues that Mark 13.2 is a *post eventum* prediction.³⁵ It is a potentially subversive especially in view of the later accusation against Jesus (14.58). The verse which gave rise to the prediction (13.1) evinces a lack of knowledge on the part of Jesus' interlocutor which relates to the upheavals which will shortly destroy what was thought to be beautiful and secure in its indestructibility. In this instance, the usual order in Mark is reversed so that the prediction follows the misunderstanding, which it is designed to clear up. However, the prediction itself causes further misunderstanding on the part of the four named disciples who may be presumed to have overheard something not addressed to them.

32 Schweizer, *Good News according to Mark*, 261; Witherington, *Mark*, 340; Harrington, "Mark," 598.

33 E.-M. Becker, *Das Markus-Evangelium im Rahmen antiker Historiographie*, (WUNT 194; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2006), 316-318.

34 K. R. Iverson argues that having heard this prediction, Mark's audience would have understood that the testimony of the witnesses in 14.58 that Jesus claimed he would destroy the temple, was *partially true*. See Iverson, "A Centurion's 'Confession': A Performance-Critical Analysis of Mark 15.39," *JBL* 130.2 (2011): 329-350, 334.

35 J. S. Kloppenborg, "Evocatio Deorum and the Date of Mark," *JBL* 124.3 (2005): 419-450 invokes the Roman notion of *evocatio deorum*, the ritual whereby enemies were separated from their tutelary gods prior to their defeat and the destruction of the temples of their Gods. His view is that by portraying Jesus with foreknowledge of the terrible event, Mark is claiming that God knew also, and took remedial action, namely, that the divine presence had already vacated the sanctuary similar to the way Ezekiel had observed the divine presence leave the temple at the Exile.

To summarise the argument so far: in this short section the motif takes two forms: an audience of one and a failure to understand on the part of those who overheard what was said.

One further issue that needs to be commented on is the meaning of *ταῦτα πάντα* in 13.4, specifically whether its sphere of reference is primarily looking backward or forward. As the text stands it appears that it is the latter, namely the predictions in the body of the chapter. V. Taylor's view is that this is the more likely interpretation and he cites several authors in support of this conclusion.³⁶

3.6.4 The motif of containment in Mark 13.3-37

With the change of location in Mark 13.3 to the Mount of Olives opposite the Temple Mount the audience is limited as in previous instances to Peter, James and John. On this occasion, however, their number is augmented to include Andrew. Given that there is not a great difference between the predictions being delivered to three or to four people, the motif of containment may be said to consist of the form of a limited audience. This form is strengthened by the fact that they are portrayed as asking him to elaborate on his Temple prediction in private, *κατ' ἰδίαν* (13.3). That the remainder of the chapter is addressed to them is clear and is reiterated in 13.37 where an additional injunction to them is directed also "to all."

It is worth noting that the comment in 13.32 that no one knows the date and the time when all of the predictions will be fulfilled is not actually a disparagement of the Son, but rather an exaltation by the Son of the Father, who alone knows when they will take place.³⁷ In fact the Son's lack of knowledge on this question is paralleled by his inability to accede to the request of James and John in Mark 10.25-35.

36 V. Taylor, *The Gospel According to St. Mark*, (London: Macmillan, 1963), 502. Those he cites on this question include Lagrange, Klostermann, Weiss and Gould.

37 H. Anderson, *The Gospel of Mark*, (NCBC; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1976), 301; Schweizer, *Good News according to Mark*, 283.

3.7 In the house of Simon the Leper (Mark 14.8-9)

ὃ ἔσχεν ἐποίησεν.
 προέλαβεν μυρίσαι τὸ σῶμά μου εἰς τὸν ἐνταφιασμόν.
 ἀμὴν δὲ λέγω ὑμῖν,
 ὅπου ἐὰν κηρυχθῇ τὸ εὐαγγέλιον εἰς ὅλον τὸν κόσμον,
 καὶ ὃ ἐποίησεν αὕτη λαληθήσεται εἰς μνημόσυνον αὐτῆς.

“What she had she did.

She pre-took to anoint my body for the burial.

Amen, so, I say to you:

Wherever is preached the gospel in all the world

what she did will also be spoken about for a memorial
 of her.”

3.7.1 Context and literary unity of Mark 14.1-11

Mark 14.3-9 recounts the anointing of Jesus which took place at Bethany. It is framed by conspiracy (14.1-2) and betrayal (14.10-11). The transition to the house of Simon the leper to a new action, namely, reclining at table occurs in 14.3. The anointing is recounted together with the response it evokes (14.3-5). An interaction occurs between Jesus and his interlocutors (14.6-9). The transition to the following scene is provided by the character of Judas and the planning of betrayal (14.10-11).

3.7.2 Structure of Mark 14.1-11

<i>Frame</i>	1-2	Conspiracy I
<i>Transition</i>	3a	New location: Bethany; new action: reclining at table
<i>Interaction I</i>	3b	Action of unnamed woman:
	4-5a	First reaction of some in private
	5b	Second reaction of some in public
<i>Interaction II</i>	6	Jesus intervenes in her defence

	7	First prediction:
	8	Second prediction
	9	Third prediction
<i>Transition</i>	10	New characters: Judas and the chief priests.
<i>Frame</i>	11	Conspiracy II (Betrayal)

The anointing at Bethany and the reactions it provoked are the subject of this passage (14.3-11). The first interaction involves the action of an anonymous woman with an alabaster jar of costly oil who pours it on Jesus' head and provokes a negative response in two phases. In the first, some onlookers were indignant (*ἀγανακτοῦντες*). In the second they rebuke her. The second interaction involves an intervention by Jesus in which he defends what she has done and then makes three predictions: about the poor and himself; about his (imminent) burial; and about her action being remembered.

3.7.3 The motif of containment of Mark 14.1-11

Many commentators see in the anointing, especially considering that it is his head which is anointed, an allusion to Jesus' messianic status, even though the interpretation placed on his lips here relates it to his death and burial.³⁸ If that it is so, based on Mark's pattern elsewhere to minimise exaltation, we would expect to find elements of containment in this pericope. While S. P. Kealy interprets the phrase *ὅπου ἐὰν κηρυχθῆ τὸ εὐαγγέλιον εἰς ὅλον τὸν κόσμον* (14.9) as an indication of the author's concern for mission to Gentiles, it is of interest to our investigation here because it constitutes one of the few references in Mark to universal propagation of the Gospel story. In the rest of the Gospel, as the motif of containment bears out, the opposite thrust applies, namely, to minimise the protagonist's fame.³⁹

³⁸ See 2 Kings 9.6.

³⁹ S. P. Kealy, *Mark's Gospel: A History of Its Interpretation* (New York: Paulist Press, 1982), 291.

A. Grassi emphasises the prophetic nature of the gesture which, it could be argued functions as an exaltation of the one being anointed thus providing another reason for containment.⁴⁰

A limited audience could mean that some level of minimization was taking place. The determination of the audience to the prediction hinges on the identity and specifically the number intended by the anonymous τινες in 14.4. Additionally, it is most likely that the reading is elliptical and that efforts to reconstruct it have given rise to variants.⁴¹ Whoever is being referred to and however many they may be, it is to them that this prediction is addressed. The information available to us does not permit any more definitive conclusion in this instance.

There is a further detail in the text which, if this interpretation is granted, would strengthen the case for the existence of containment at this point. The response of the bystanders is described as ἀγανακτοῦντες πρὸς ἑαυτοῦς (14.4) which could suggest that their indignation was internal. Furthermore, ἐνεβριμῶντο αὐτῇ (14.5) may be translated as ‘They were infuriated at her.’⁴² The combination of these two expressions could suggest that Jesus knew what they were thinking, although they said nothing, similar to the way he knew what the scribes were thinking when he told the paralytic man his sins were forgiven (2.8). The implication is that the interaction involved only the bystanders and Jesus and that, therefore, the other people there were impervious to the interaction. If that is the case, the audience of the predictions is limited to those making the

40 A. Grassi, “The Anonymous Woman Prophet and Teacher Behind the Last Supper,” *Emmanuel* 108 (2002): 132-142.

41 Yarbrow Collins, *Mark*, 620. In Codex Bezae and some manuscripts τινες has been replaced by οἱ μαθηταί.

42 W. F. Arndt and F. W. Gingrich, “ἐμβριμάομαι,” *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature* (Chicago: UCP, 1957), 254; trans. and adapt. of 4d revs. and augm. ed. of W. Bauer’s *Griechisch-Deutsches Wörterbuch zu den Schriften des Neuen Testaments und der übrigen urchristlichen Literatur* (Berlin: Alfred Töpelmann, 1952).

complaint and the case for the presence of the containment motif is strengthened.

3.8 Three predictions during the Passover meal (Mark 14.18, 21, 25)

1. ἀμὴν λέγω ὑμῖν ὅτι εἷς ἐξ ὑμῶν παραδώσει με ὁ ἐσθίων μετ' ἐμοῦ (14.18).
Truly I say to you that one of you will betray me, one eating with me.
2. ὅτι ὁ μὲν υἱὸς τοῦ ἀνθρώπου ὑπάγει καθὼς γέγραπται περὶ αὐτοῦ (14.21),
For indeed the son of man is going as it was written about him.
3. ἀμὴν λέγω ὑμῖν ὅτι οὐκέτι οὐ μὴ πῖω ἐκ τοῦ γενήματος τῆς ἀμπέλου ἕως τῆς ἡμέρας ἐκείνης ὅταν αὐτὸ πίνω καινὸν ἐν τῇ βασιλείᾳ τοῦ θεοῦ (14.25).
Truly I say to you that no longer shall I drink of the fruit of the vine until that day when I shall drink of it newly in the kingdom of God.

These three predictions (Mark 14.18, 14.21, 14.25) are situated during the celebration of the Passover meal (14.17-26). I shall outline the context and structure of the pericope before dealing with the individual units.

3.8.1 Context and literary unity of Mark 14.17-26

Mark 14.1-31 is held together by the Passover. Mark 14.17-26 which forms the centre of the section, is preceded by the anointing at Bethany (14.3-9) and preparations for the feast (14.12-16), and followed by the prediction of Peter's denial (14.27-31). The transition at the beginning occurs in 14.17 and that at the end in 14.26.

3.8.2 Structure of Mark 14.17-26

<i>Transition</i>	17	Temporal and spatial indicators
<i>Interaction I</i>	18	Prediction of betrayal
	19	Disciples' question
	20	Partial identity given
	21	Written prediction of fate of SoM
<i>Interaction II</i>	22a	Taking, blessing and distribution of bread
	22b	Words over the bread
	23	Taking of cup, thanksgiving, distribution and drinking of cup.
	24	Words over cup
	25	Prediction of drinking wine again
<i>Transition</i>	26	Temporal and spatial indicators

Mark 14.17-26 comprising the celebration of the Passover is composed of two interactions between Jesus and the twelve. After a transition to evening time (14.17) the first scene (14.18-21) consists of a prediction of betrayal. The second (14.22-25) involves actions and words spoken over bread and a cup of wine. A transition at the end (14.26) moves the scene to the Mount of Olives. The first prediction indicates that Jesus knows that he will be betrayed and who will betray him. (14.18b). A second prediction declares that the son of man's fate is the subject of a written prediction (14.21) without identifying where it was predicted. A third (14.25) announces that Jesus will next drink wine in the kingdom of God.

3.8.3 The motif of containment of Mark 14.17-26

The prediction in this passage presents Jesus' foreknowledge that he will be betrayed by one of the twelve. U. Sommer argues that the terms in which the betrayer is not identified other than by the phrase

ὁ ἐσθίων μετ' ἐμοῦ indicates that Mark is thereby not focussing on the depravity of the perpetrator but rather on the exaltation of Jesus.⁴³ I argue in this dissertation that where that happens containment is not far away. A contrast is made between the unavoidable fate of the son of man, and the wilful decision by someone to betray him. The second prediction states that the fate of the son of man is the subject of a written prediction *καθὼς γέγραπται* (14.21). This claim gives the prediction greater standing, even though it has been composed for the occasion, since there is no evidence in the tradition of the existence of such a prediction. The exalted repercussions of the prediction especially in the context of a meal are further underlined by J.-Y. Thériault who argues that their ultimate realisation is directed towards a messianic banquet.⁴⁴ Harrington interprets the prediction as a statement that suffering and death did not catch Jesus by surprise.⁴⁵ While it is possible that Jesus' intelligence is being underlined here, it is more likely that Mark is emphasising his supernatural knowledge. Evidence for the motif of confinement is provided by the term *ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ ἀνθρώπου* (14.21) and in the confined audience of the twelve. It may be argued that the parabolic language of the prediction *ἕως τῆς ἡμέρας ἐκείνης ὅταν αὐτὸ πίνω καινὸν ἐν τῇ βασιλείᾳ τοῦ θεοῦ* (14.25) is, as we have seen in other passages, an instance of the motif of containment. That is to say, ambiguity prevents the story of Jesus' foreknowledge from being propagated.

3.9 Two predictions on the way to the Mount of Olives (Mark 14.27-28, 30)

ὅτι πάντες σκανδαλισθήσεσθε,

43 The fact that the betrayer is not named leads Sommer to remark that the emphasis is not on the depravity of the perpetrator, but on the exalted status of Jesus. See U. Sommer, *Die Passionsgeschichte des Markusevangeliums* (WUNT 2.58; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1993), 68.

44 J.-Y. Thériault, "Le dernier repas de Jésus (Mc 14. 12-25)," *Sémiotique et Bible* 115 (2004): 41-58.

45 Harrington, "Mark," 94.

ὅτι γέγραπται·
πατάξω τὸν ποιμένα,
καὶ τὰ πρόβατα διασκορπισθήσονται.
ἀλλὰ μετὰ τὸ ἐγερθῆναί με
προάξω ὑμᾶς εἰς τὴν Γαλιλαίαν. (14.27-28)

For all of you will be made to fall
For it is written:
“I shall strike the shepherd
and the sheep will be squandered.”
But after my rising,
I shall go before you into Galilee.

ἀμὴν λέγω σοι
ὅτι σὺ σήμερον ταύτη τῇ νυκτὶ πρὶν ἢ δις ἀλέκτορα φωνῆσαι
τρὶς με ἀπαρνήσῃ. (14.30)
Truly I say to you
That you today in this night before the cock has
crowed twice
You will repudiate me three times.

3.9.1 Context and literary unity of Mark 14.27-31

Mark 14.27-31 which deals with two predictions on the Mount of Olives comes immediately after the Passover celebration (14.17-26) and is followed by the events in Gethsemane (14.27-52). The transition from their preceding location occurs in 14.26. Their arrival at Gethsemane in 14.32 signals the end of the unit and the beginning of the next one.

3.9.2 Structure of Mark 14.27-31

<i>Transition</i>	26	To the Mount of Olives
<i>Interaction I</i>	27a	Prediction
	27b	Written prediction

	28	Second prediction
<i>Interaction II</i>	29	Peter's objection
	30	Prediction of Peter's denial
	30a	Peter's remonstrations
	30b-31	Remonstrations of all
<i>Transition</i>	32	Entry into Gethsemane

This unit contains a dialogue between two parties in two movements. The first contains a prediction (14.27b-28) and a response (14.29). The second, contains a counter-response in the form of another prediction (14.29-30) and the reply first of Peter (31a) and then of all (14.31b).

3.9.3 The motif of containment in Mark 14.27-31

Jesus' first prediction of this pericope (Mark 14.27-28) falls into two parts. In the first (14.27) he foretells that the disciples will fail. He presents this as the fulfilment of a written prediction which invests it with a greater authority and at the same time mitigates the disciples' responsibility for their actions if it does not actually exonerate them. The source is Zechariah 13.7 (וְהָיָה בַּיּוֹם הַהוּא יִפְּצוּן הַכֹּהֲנִים אֶת־הַיְהוָה וְיִשְׁפָּרוּ אֶת־עֵינָיו וְיִשְׁכָּחוּ אֶת־אֱלֹהֵיהֶם וְיִשְׁכָּחוּ אֶת־יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵיהֶם וְיִשְׁכָּחוּ אֶת־יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵיהֶם וְיִשְׁכָּחוּ אֶת־יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵיהֶם), πατάξατε τοὺς ποιμένας καὶ ἐκσπάσατε τὰ πρόβατα (LXX), which originally spoke of Zedekiah's desertion of his people by night through a breach in the city (cf. 2 Kings 25.4). The detail of σκανδαλισθήσεσθε will be fulfilled shortly. The second part, μετὰ τὸ ἐγερθῆναί με προάξω ὑμᾶς εἰς τὴν Γαλιλαίαν, anticipates the scene at the empty tomb where the young man will request the women to tell Peter and the disciples that the risen Jesus had gone before them to Galilee and that they would see him there as he had promised them (16.7). The linking of Galilee and resurrection occurs in both texts and the intertextual resonances are clear. The exaltation of Jesus which the use of resurrection language accentuates is picked up on by D. L. Bock who contrasts

Mark's lack of hesitancy to have Jesus speak of it here with the total absence of resurrection at the trial scene.⁴⁶ The second prediction (14.30) referring to Peter's is also addressed to him.

The forms of containment surrounding these predictions are of three kinds. First, in relation to the limiting of the number of people who heard the predictions, an argument may be made for regarding the twelve as a confined audience. Secondly, metaphorical or parabolic language, including the reference to Zechariah, by reason of its ambiguity, may also be deemed to be an instance of the motif. Thirdly the reaction of Peter and of all who spoke are clear examples of a lack of understanding that a prediction made by Jesus will come to pass.⁴⁷ The form of the motif in this instance is the same as in those parallel scenes following the three predictions of the passion, namely, Peter's rebuke of Jesus (8.32-33) following the first; the actions of all of them disputing which was the greatest (9.33-34) following the second; and the request for precedence of James and John (10.35) following the third.

In summary, the identification of the motif of containment which accompanies Mark's presentation of the predictions examined here assists the study of the Gospel in a number of ways. In the first instance, it provides a coherent explanation of a variety of heretofore unconnected and regular features of the Markan text, including direct prohibition from reporting about a prediction. Secondly, it throws new light on the phenomenon of confined audiences in the Gospel. Thirdly, it draws attention to the literary construction of prediction followed by narrative, whose primary function is the concept of misunderstanding of what has been foretold. The fact that the same tendency to minimise is to be found in other places in Mark apart from predictions is a significant identification of a prominent Markan literary motif.

46 D. L. Bock, *Blasphemy and Exaltation in Judaism and the Final Examination of Jesus*, (WUNT 2.106; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1998), 200-201.

47 Anderson, (*The Gospel of Mark*, 317) reads it in this way.

3.10 Conclusion

In this chapter, I examined the most important instances of prediction in Mark. Interpreting prediction as an instance of miraculous speech, my purpose was to see whether any pattern could be detected in Mark's handling of this literary form.

I believe there is sufficient textual evidence to conclude that there is a consistency to the way Mark deals with predictions. Each one examined here includes an element which plays down the significance of the miraculous aspect. In terms of the story line it explains why reporting of the particular event is largely curtailed if not non-existent altogether. If this is true, it sets his Gospel apart from contemporary Greco-Roman and Jewish Hellenistic literature, where the opposite tendency is the norm, namely, the practice of exalting the one making the prediction.

All of the scenes examined in this chapter include one or more of the following literary phenomena. First, those who heard the prediction are directly prohibited from speaking about it, e.g. 8.30. Secondly, the audience does not understand or misunderstand what it has heard, e.g. 8.33, 9.10, 9.35, 10.38. Thirdly, fear, or astonishment assumes a new level of significance in the text by achieving the same result as misunderstanding, for example, 10.32. In one case (9.33), fear prevents the disciples from asking Jesus to explain what is meant. Fourthly, the same effect once again is produced by the use of parabolic, metaphorical or ambiguous language, particularly the use of the expression the son of man, e.g. 8.31, 9.31-32, 10.38. 4. Other examples include 2.20, 14.25. Fifthly, the audience is few in number, making reporting of the prediction less likely or less effective, e.g. one, 13.1-2, ('one disciple'); two, 10.39-40, (James and John,); three, 9.9, (Peter, James and John); four, 13.3-37, (Peter, James, John, and Andrew). All five of these phenomena have one thing in common – they prevent or curtail further reporting of the miraculous event. That is what is meant by the motif of containment.

The investigation in this chapter sheds some light on the function

of the scenes where Peter, James and John appear. I have argued that their appearance serves as instances of the containment motif, in narrative form. That is to say, where they appear as witnesses to a miraculous action by word or deed on the part of Jesus, the presence of only three witnesses is one device employed by Mark to play down the event. In other words, where they appear, the reader may legitimately ask the question: where is the miracle? A second device employed by Mark to serve the same function also involves these three characters, albeit in once instance they are separated into two groups of one (Peter) and two (James and John) respectively, and in a third they are included with the rest of the twelve. That is, they allow the author to introduce misunderstanding as another means to play down a miraculous action of Jesus. The examples which follow illustrate these points. Peter's remonstrance after the first prediction (8.31-32a) is criticised by Jesus as incorrect thinking *οὐ φρονεῖς τὰ τοῦ θεοῦ ἀλλὰ τὰ τῶν ἀνθρώπων* (8.33). Secondly, the argument among the disciples in 9.33-34 about who was the greatest, following the second prediction is countered by Jesus in terms of a reversal of the accepted wisdom of the day: *εἴ τις θέλει πρῶτος εἶναι, ἔσται πάντων ἔσχατος καὶ πάντων διάκονος* (9.35). Thirdly, the declaring of their ambition by James and John (10.35-45) immediately after the third prediction is characterised by Jesus as a lack of understanding, *οὐκ οἶδατε τί αἰτεῖσθε* (10.38). The trope of failure to understand runs through these scenes. So, whether they are the only three witnesses to a miracle or whether they provide instances of misunderstanding the result is the same: they are employed by Mark to limit or contain the impact of a miraculous action of Jesus. The focus on the motif of containment has shown that this, rather than any interest in characterisation on the author's part, except for the character of Jesus, is the reason for their relative prominence in the Gospel. On the basis of these conclusions, the attention paid in this chapter to

Jesus' predictive activity is warranted. Fowler's identification of the prominent place of prediction in Mark supports this approach.⁴⁸

I have referred above to the main difference between Mark's treatment of the miraculous and that of his Greco-Roman and Jewish contemporaries. In making the contrast, some minor differences become apparent also.⁴⁹ All of the six Jewish apocalypses examined in Chapter Two are pseudonymous. In relation to these works the eponymous characters are also the chief protagonist. In the Gospel according to Mark, of course, that is not the case. The pseudonymous author and the protagonist are different. These are slight differences by contrast with the more significant aspects, especially the way in which Mark's treatment of miraculous speech differs from the way this phenomenon is dealt with in Jewish, and in Greco-Roman authors roughly contemporaneous with the Gospel. In the following chapter, I shall examine Mark's treatment of the so-called nature miracles with the intention of determining whether, and if so, to what extent, they conform to the pattern he established when dealing with predictions.

48 R. J. Fowler, "Reader-Response Criticism: Figuring Mark's Readers," in *Mark and Method: New Approaches in Biblical Studies* (ed. J. C. Anderson and S. D. Moore; Minneapolis: Fortress Press), 50-83, 60-61.

49 Collins points out that pseudonymity was a widespread device in the Hellenistic period and not exclusive to the apocalyptic worldview. See J. J. Collins, "Apocalyptic Literature," in *Dictionary of New Testament Background* (eds. C. A. Evans and S. E. Porter; Downers Grove, Illinois: InterVarsity Press, 2000), 40-45, 42. He cites the examples of *The Wisdom of Solomon* and *Psalms of Solomon* from the Roman period.

CHAPTER FOUR

*Containment in Markan Nature Miracles***4.1 Introduction**

In the last chapter, I examined a representative selection of predictions in Mark. I drew attention to the fact that in each case the text contained one or more elements of containment which, taken in isolation, could be considered innocuous, but when examined in conjunction with the spectrum of other instances required further investigation. What unites these elements is, that, without explicitly saying so, each conveys to the reader that further reporting of the incident was restricted and therefore the protagonist did not receive from the witnesses the acclaim which the audience might normally expect would follow from the exercise of authoritative pronouncements. I refer to this phenomenon as the motif of containment.

In this chapter I examine six so-called “nature miracles” in Mark from the perspective of this motif. They are, in the sequence of the Gospel itself: 4.35-41, (calming a storm); 5.21-43, (restoring to life/health of a synagogue official’s daughter); 6.30-44, (feeding of five thousand men); 6.47-52, (walking on water); 8.1-10, (feeding of four thousand) and 9.2-10, (transfiguration). I propose that there is sufficient textual evidence to argue that a consistency may be

observed between the occurrences of the motif in these scenes and in those passages where predictions appear.

The earlier form critics, Bultmann and Dibelius distinguished between three types of miracles. First, there are pronouncement stories where a saying accompanies a miracle where it is the saying which is the primary element. An example of this is found in the healing of the paralysed man (Mark 2.1-2), where Jesus' authority on earth to forgive sins was of more concern than the healing itself. Secondly, there are miracle stories proper, subdivided into two categories, healing miracles and nature miracles. An example of the former is found in the cure of the man with a withered hand (3.1-6), while the calming of the storm (4.35-41) is an example of the latter.¹ Thirdly, there are summaries which mention healing such as Mark 1.34, where Jesus is described as healing "many of those who were sick with all kinds of diseases." More recently, critics have expressed reservation about the usefulness of the earlier categorisation. Theißen rejects "nature miracles" as a category on the grounds that there is little justification for distinguishing between miracles in the human sphere and those in the natural world.² In the latter he includes stories about rescue from prison and links them with stories of rescue from the sea. He suggests that both depict rescue from hostile powers, those of the natural world or those of the state.

Meier considers "nature miracles" a very inadequate category for a variety of types of miracles.³ His study has been said to contain "the most thorough treatment of miracles in recent times."⁴ In choosing the miracles for inclusion in this chapter I am not thereby disregarding the conclusions of scholars such as these, whose views

1 Bultmann, *History of the Synoptic Tradition*, 215-216.

2 Theißen, *Miracle Stories*, 99-100.

3 J. P. Meier, "The Present State of the 'Third Quest' for the Historical Jesus: Loss and Gain," *Biblica* 80 (1999): 459-487, 482.

4 G. H. Twelftree, "The History of Miracles in the History of Jesus," in *The Face of New Testament Studies* (ed. S. McKnight and G. R. Osborne; Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2004), 191-208, 199.

are deserving of attention. I have selected these passages primarily as a means of limiting the scope of this study without wishing to make a case for a qualitative difference between nature miracle and healing miracle.

4.2 Jesus calms a storm (Mark 4.35-41)

4.2.1 Context and literary unit of Mark 4.35-41

This scene is preceded by a series of parables, including an allegory of seeds (4.3-9), a brief discourse on the purpose of parables (4.10-12), an explanation of the allegory (4.13-20), parabolic sayings (4.21-25), a parable of growing seed (4.26-29), a parable of mustard seed (4.30-32) and a summary (4.32-34). The description of Jesus' stilling a storm is the first of a block of three miraculous actions (4.35-5.43). It is followed by an exorcism of a demon in the country of the Gerasenes (5.1-20). Finally, the third such action is in fact a combination of two healing stories in sandwich form: the healing/restoration to life of the daughter of Jairus (5.21-24, 31-43) and the healing of the woman with the flow of blood (5.25-30). P.J. Achtemeier confirms this division when he argues that the combining of the two healing miracles into one allows the author to adhere to two different structural arrangements of the wider miracles material.⁵ In the first instance when the two healing stories are taken as one, the three miracle stories parallel the three parables. In the second, he shows that when the story of Jairus' daughter and the woman with the haemorrhage are reckoned as two, the order of miracle stories in 6.45-8.26 is remarkably similar to the order in 4.35-6.44, namely, a sea miracle followed by three healing miracles concluding with a feeding of a multitude.

There is relative agreement that the three miraculous actions belong together and that each of the units may be delineated and

⁵ P. J. Achtemeier, "Toward the Isolation of Pre-Markan Miracle Catenae," *JBL* 89 (1970): 256-291, 266-274.

differentiated from the other two by the geographical separation involved in the criss-crossing of the Sea of Galilee (4.35-36) and (5.21).⁶ The section is unified by the cognates *πίστις* and *ἀπιστία* which, as Theißen has pointed out, are typical miracle motifs.⁷ E. J. Malley presents the group of three miracles as a natural follow-on from the preceding three parables.⁸ W. J. Harrington remarks that the three miracle stories form a literary group.⁹ D. J. Harrington concurs.¹⁰ Yarbro Collins argues that the transition from discourse to narrative which occurs at this point indicates a new section of the Gospel which incorporates these three miracle stories which she combines under the heading of “epiphanies of divine power.”¹¹ For these reasons, we may say that 4.35-41 constitutes a separate unit within a catena of three such units from 4.35 to 5.43.

Mark 4.35-41 is a description of Jesus stilling a storm. A double time expression, a typical Markan feature, denotes the day and the time. This phrase together with Jesus’ directive that they move to a new location, the eastern shore of the Sea of Galilee, separates this pericope from what has preceded it. The action is presented as the result of the command of Jesus expressed by the Subjunctive “Let us go” (4.35). In a fashion that is typical of Mark, the windstorm and its effects on the sea are presented as obstacles to the fulfilment of this command (4.38). Jesus overcomes the obstacle (4.39). He addresses those who were with him concerning their lack of faith (4.40). They are filled with fear and speak to one another in terms which suggest that they do not recognise him (4.41).

6 See, for example, Yarbro Collins, *Mark*, 258, Harrington, “Mark,” 33.

7 Theißen, *Miracle Stories*, 208, 129-140.

8 E. J. Malley, “The Gospel according to Mark,” in *The Jerome Biblical Commentary* (ed. R. E. Brown, J. A. Fitzmyer and R. E. Murphy; London: Chapman, 1968): 21-61, 42.30.

9 W. J. Harrington, *Mark* (NTM 4; Dublin: Veritas, 1979), 63.

10 D. J. Harrington “Mark,” 33.

11 Yarbro Collins, *Mark*, 258.

4.2.2 Structure of Mark 4.35-41

<i>Transition</i>	35-36	Temporal and locational change
	37	Storm
<i>Interaction I</i>	38	His fellow-travellers question Jesus.
	39a	Verbal response to the elements
	39b	Storm is calmed
<i>Interaction II</i>	40	He asks them about their lack of faith
	41a	Response I: They are greatly afraid
	41b	Response II: They do not know who he is.
<i>Transition</i>	5.1	Locational change

The literary unit of Mark 4.35-41 begins with Jesus' order to those who are with him to go over to the other side (of the Sea of Galilee) and ends when they reach the shore. An argument may be made for including Mark 5.1 in the pericope and for having the next one begin with 5.2 both on semantic grounds and because 5.2 begins with the construction *καὶ...εὐθὺς* which sometimes indicates the beginning of a new section, e.g. 1.12. There are good reasons both for and against including 5.1 within this pericope, but since this point is not fundamental to the argument it will not be examined in detail here.

The temporal and geographical setting is identified in Mark 4.35. The activity takes place on the same day as the parable discourse, in the evening. They are on the western shore of the Sea of Galilee. Leaving there also means leaving the crowd. While 4.35 makes clear that the initiative to sail is Jesus', 4.36 states that it is they who take him. There is a reference to other accompanying boats but they disappear from the story at this stage. The obstacle to the carrying out of Jesus' order to travel takes a twofold form, a storm of wind (4.37a) and its effect on the sea (4.37b). The interaction between Jesus and those who were with him is described in two moments:

In the first, they wake Jesus up and ask him whether he does not care that they are perishing (4.38). He does not answer them but instead he rebukes the wind and orders the sea to be calm (4.39). In the second, intriguingly, when the wind has died down and the sea is calm he asks them why they are fearful and whether they have no faith (4.40). This time it is they who do not answer. Instead, they address one another. They are filled with fear to the point that they do not recognise who he is, and they question his identity (4.41).¹² If the transition in 5.1 where they arrive at the eastern shore is included as the conclusion of the pericope, it may be taken to correspond to the introduction.

4.2.2.1 First Antecedent from Jewish Tradition: Jonah 1.1-17

A number of features suggest that the evangelist had key aspects of the story of Jonah in mind, notably vocabulary, characterisation, dynamic conception of speech, and theme.¹³ R. A. Guelich believes

12 I am arguing that their response in the form of a question *τίς ἄρα οὗτός ἐστιν* (4.41b) ought to be read as an indication of a lack of recognition of who is with them in the boat on the part of the witnesses. The subordinating conjunction *ὅτι* which introduces the second half of the question *καὶ ὁ ἄνεμος καὶ ἡ θάλασσα ὑπακούει αὐτῷ*; is thus better translated as “because” or “since.” It is more frequently translated in English as “that,” which becomes a source of ambiguity because “that” may be understood as a relative pronoun, which is not the case in the Greek. See W. F. McInerney, “An Unresolved Question in the Gospel Called Mark: ‘Who is this whom even wind and sea obey?’ (4.41),” *Perspectives in Religious Studies* 23 (1996): 255-268. That is to say, the second half of the question explains the markedly unusual nature of the first half. It would be bizarre for Jesus’ disciples to ask who it was who was with them since he was known to them. And yet, that is exactly what they do. Their question indicates they no longer recognize him. Here then we have a classic case of containment. It reinforces the instance of the same motif present in 4.1a, where it assumes the form of fear *καὶ ἐφοβήθησαν φόβον μέγαν*. A (nature) miracle is performed and the response of the witnesses is fear and a lack of understanding. Matthew’s question on the lips of the disciples, *ποταπός ἐστιν οὗτος*; (Matthew 8.27) is what one might have expected Mark to use. However, Mark’s form of the question “who?” rather than “what kind?” fits perfectly with his employment of containment. Luke (8.25) has opted to retain Mark’s wording.

13 As a caution against an overly enthusiastic assertion of intentional literary mimesis, see K. Larsson “Intertextual Density, Quantifying Imitation,” *JBL* 133.2 (2014): 309-331. He offers a helpful presentation of four main ways in which an author may imitate another work. A potential literary model may: (a) be consciously

that these are too strong to be overlooked.¹⁴ A synoptic table will serve to present the intertextual links with the Old Greek. Although the verbal parallels are few, as Yarbrow Collins points out, a number of common elements ensure that both narratives emanate from the same semantic field.¹⁵

Jonah (Old Greek)	Mark
κλύδων μέγας (1.4)	λαῖλαιψ μεγάλη άνέμου (4.37)
τὸ πλοῖον ἐκινδύνευεν συντριβῆναι (1.4)	γεμίζεσθαι τὸ πλοῖον (4.37)
ἐκάθευδεν (1.5)	καθεύδων (4.38)
ἀπολώμεθα (1.6)	ἀπολλύμεθα (4.38)
ἐφοβήθησαν...φόβω μεγάλῳ (1.16)	καὶ ἐφοβήθησαν φόβον μέγαν (4.41)

In the book of Jonah, the Lord raises a storm. In Mark, a storm arises. Jonah is asleep below deck while the sailors are frantically trying to keep the boat afloat. Jesus is asleep on a cushion in the stern while his disciples are in a state of desperation. The sailors are seized with fear during the storm. Those who were with Jesus were overcome by fear when the wind and the sea have been calmed. The Lord calms a storm and Jesus calm a storm. In the small detail of moving “to the other side,” to the territory of the pagans Witherington identifies Jonah’s mission to the Gentiles as another moment of intertextuality.¹⁶ It is possible that the location of the action between two shores is a further employment of containment on Mark’s part, thereby limiting the number of witnesses to the event.

imitated and communicated to an audience; (b) exert direct but rather unconscious influence with no intended analogies being communicated; (c) exert indirect influence through secondary texts, that is, other “imitations,” and (d) overlap with generic and conventional patterns of storytelling, (331).

14 R. A. Guelich, *Mark 1-8.26* (Waco: Word, 1989), 266.

15 Yarbrow Collins, *Mark*, 259.

16 Witherington, *Mark*, 174.

4.2.2.2 Second Antecedent from Jewish Scriptural Tradition:

Psalm 107.23-30

Another antecedent from the Jewish scriptures associating the calming (and raising) of windstorms with the Lord is found in Psalm 107 (Psalm 106 LXX).¹⁷ The following excerpts will illustrate the comparison:

For he commanded and raised the stormy wind,
which lifted up the waves of the sea...
Then they cried to the Lord in their trouble,
and he delivered them from their distress.
He made the storm be still,
and the waves of the sea were hushed.
Then they were glad that the waters were quiet,
and he brought them to their desired haven
(RSV Psalm 107.23).

All of the main elements of the Markan pericope are found here, including some verbal connections: εἰς τὴν θάλασσαν (Psalm LXX 106.23), τῇ θαλάσῃ (Mark 4.39); ἐν πλοίοις (Psalm LXX 106.23), ἐν τῷ πλοίῳ (Mark 4.36); τὰ κύματα (Psalm LXX 106.25), τὰ κύματα (Mark 4.37). As with the story of Jonah, and unlike Mark, it is the Lord who raises the storm and also calms it. It can be argued that because of its literary reliance on these two scenes from the Hebrew scriptures, the portrayal of Jesus as calming a storm takes on a whole layer of significance that it would otherwise not have. By portraying Jesus as doing something only God can do the author of Mark is exalting Jesus in a unique way. If one were to identify locations in Mark where one would expect to find containment, this would be such a place. At the level of story, fear and uncertainty explain why the spreading of news of Jesus' miraculous action is curtailed. A text-critical study

17 R. Meye, "Psalm 107 as 'Horizon' for Interpreting the Miracle Stories of Mark 4.35-8.26," in *Unity and Diversity in New Testament Theology* (Essays in Honor of George E. Ladd; ed. R. A. Guelich; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1978), 1-13.

of Mark 4.36 leads K. F. Ulrichs to argue that an improved reading of the text would allow the story to have an even more dramatic effect by suggesting that both the disciples and the *polloi* were rescued.¹⁸ It is not implausible that if a boat were overcrowded the chances of its sinking would be greatly increased.

A striking dissimilarity between the psalm and Jonah on the one hand and Mark on the other is the response to deliverance. In the psalm, the response to being saved is described in terms of their being glad because the waters were quiet and he brought them to their desired haven (v.23). In Mark however the result is fear *καὶ ἐφοβήθησαν φόβον μέγαν*, paving the way for the question *τίς ἄρα οὗτός ἐστιν ὅτι καὶ ὁ ἄνεμος καὶ ἡ θάλασσα ὑπακούει*; The juxtaposition of the element of fear and the questioning of Jesus' identity allows each element to interpret the other. I am arguing that the motif of containment is present both in the fear of the witnesses and in the question which they pose. The force of the question is to convey the idea that the state of being afraid has led to a disconcerting lack of knowledge about who Jesus is. The most intriguing aspect of the pericope is found in the fact that the witnesses' dread occurs after the storm has been calmed. The reason for the fear is the ambiguous identity of the miracle worker, and not the peril that the storm occasioned, since by the time the question is posed, the danger has already passed. A brief comparison between the three texts makes the response of those who have been delivered all the more remarkable and makes it more likely it is an instance of containment. The fact that no reply is forthcoming in the Gospel has been taken up by W. F. McInerny who notes that the question remains unanswered.¹⁹

18 K. F. Ulrichs, "...und viele miteinander waren bei ihm." Ein textkritischer und formgeschichtlicher Vorschlag zu Mk 4.36b," ZNW 88 (1997): 187-196. He proposes that the better reading of Mark 4.36b, on the basis of textual criticism, philology and form criticism, is the version in the Freer Codex (W) *καὶ ἅμα πολλοὶ ἦσαν μετ' αὐτοῦ* instead of *καὶ ἄλλα πλοῖα ἦν μετ' αὐτοῦ*. This reading is supported by the Vetus Latina MS e.

19 W. F. McInerny, "An Unresolved Question," 255-268.

Dooan supports reading the question as an indication that Jesus is misunderstood by his friends, a conclusion which he terms an “astounding Markan claim.”²⁰ According to B. J. Malina and R. L. Rohrbaugh, the question which the witnesses pose is not one of identity as a modern reader would understand it, but one of status or honour. From their social-scientific analysis of the passage the public display of fear and the imperturbability of Jesus as a Mediterranean male in the face of danger lead them to this conclusion.²¹ That is to say, from such a perspective, the status of the protagonist is exalted and his honour enhanced by his response to the storm. I am arguing that containment is Mark’s response to such exaltation.

4.2.3 The motif of containment in Mark 4.35-41

In a nutshell I shall argue that this scene presents Jesus, the protagonist as doing something which in the Hebrew literary tradition, only God is able to do, namely, calm a storm.²² The literary methodology adopted in this study will mean that the primary focus of interpretation will be Mark’s construction of the scene. I shall argue that the motif is present in this pericope in no fewer than three forms, each of which inhibits propagation of the fame of the protagonist which the performance of such an action would deserve. The activity of calming a storm confers its own status on the protagonist.²³ It is likely that this narrative has been shaped by

20 Dooan, *Mark: Visionary of early Christianity*, 56. He draws this conclusion also from the ending of the pericope of the walking on the water in Mark 6.50-52. Thus he sees both scenes as closely connected.

21 B. J. Malina and R. L. Rohrbaugh, *Social-Science Commentary on the Synoptic Gospels* (2nd ed.; Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2003), 164.

22 Kirk and Young identify the tendency to regard Jesus’ participation in actions allegedly reserved to God as indications that an author wishes to portray him as divine, as a popular trend in New Testament studies. See J. R. D. Kirk and S. L. Young, “‘I Will Set His Hand to the Sea’: Psalm 88.26 LXX and Christology in Mark,” (*JBL* 133.2 2014): 333-340, 333. For a review of relevant scholarship on this issue, see D. Johansson, “The Identity of Jesus in the Gospel of Mark: Past and Present Proposals,” *Currents in Biblical Research* 9 (2010): 364-393.

23 According to Job 26.11-12, Ps 104.7 and Isaiah 51.9-10, commanding the sea is associated largely, if not exclusively with the LORD. In 2 Maccabees 9.8, there is

the influence of key scriptural passages. B. D. Schildgen believes that the evangelist has shaped his material in the context of the stories of Israel.²⁴ R. Strelan argues that from a Greco-Roman perspective calming a storm, as in the story depicted by Lucan, is a means for an author to exalt his protagonist.²⁵ His argument takes him in the opposite direction to any form of containment since he concludes that the evangelist wished to show how superior to Caesar Jesus was.

The choice of the verb *ἐπετίμησεν* to refer to Jesus' action over the storm is interesting. Elsewhere in the Gospel (Mark 1.25, 3.12, 7.18, 9.19) it is used in relation to demons, unclean spirits and disciples. Perhaps its selection by the author is a function of the fact that in Jewish antiquity the sea was considered to be the abode of evil spirits. Furthermore, for the Jews of the Hellenistic era the wind and sea were believed to be controlled by spirits and demons.²⁶

Yarbro Collins points out that from the point of view of the audience or readers this scene would have been understood as part of the unfolding of the portrayal of Jesus as Messiah/Christ (Mark 1.1) and as God's son (1.1; 3.11).²⁷ This view is corroborated by J. Kilgallen who points out that from this pericope Jesus was someone to whom prayer was addressed in the Markan milieu.²⁸ R. A. Burridge draws attention to the fact that since conflict is part of every good story the portrayal of Jesus' power here is to be understood within

a scornful reference to the Hellenistic king, Antiochus IV Epiphanes Theos, who attempts to command the sea as an indication of his divine power.

24 B. D. Schildgen, *Crisis and Continuity: Time in the Gospel of Mark* (JSNTSS 159; Sheffield: Academic Press, 1998), 58.

25 Strelan contrasts a storm story from a Greco-Roman source (Lucan) with that of Mark and suggests that the evangelist's intention was to show that *Dominus Iesus* was superior to *Dominus Caesar*. R. Strelan, "A Greater Than Caesar: Storm stories in Lucan and Mark," *ZNW* 91 (2000): 166-179. As I argue throughout this dissertation, the motif of containment is employed as a qualification in scenes where Jesus is exalted.

26 Malina and Rohrbaugh, *Social-Science Commentary*, 164.

27 Yarbro Collins, *Mark*, 263.

28 J. Kilgallen, "'Teacher, Do You Not Care?' (Mark 4.35-41)," *Chicago Studies* 47.1 (2008): 112-120. It is easier to see these conclusions being drawn from Matthew's redaction of the Markan pericope than from the latter as it stands.

the context of a conflict with adversarial forces.²⁹ This conflict will re-emerge shortly where the antagonist will take on the persona of Legion. Bolt, in a reader-response study of Mark suggests that the question “Do you not care if we perish?” is ultimately answered for the reader who remembers it, at Jesus’ death. He interprets that scene as a portrayal by the evangelist of Jesus who has indeed cared enough whether they perish to the degree that he is prepared to go to his death despite the consequences.³⁰ To summarise the argument thus far, the reduced number of witnesses, the displaced nature of their fear after the storm has already abated, and their questioning of Jesus’ identity are the forms that the motif of containment takes in this pericope.

4.3 Restoring to life/healing of a girl (Mark 5.21-24, 35-43)

4.3.1 Context and literary unity of Mark 5.21-24, 35-43

The story is the third of a block of three miraculous actions on the part of Jesus (4.35-5.43). It is presented as a sandwich around the story of the healing of the woman with the haemorrhage (Mark 5.25-34),³¹ and is an instance of the technique of intercalation favoured by Mark.³² The other two miracles which precede the pericope are the

29 R. A. Burridge, *Four Gospels, One Jesus? A Symbolic Reading* (London: SPCK, 1994), 45.

30 Bolt. *Jesus’ Defeat of Death*, 272-273.

31 Achtemeier’s detailed linguistic analysis has led him to the conclusion that the stories were originally separate and that the healing of the woman preceded that of the girl (Achtemeier, “Miracle Catenae,” 277-279). The different style of each story is identified by Achtemeier on the basis of verbal tenses and length of sentences. In the story of the healing of the woman the verbs are mostly in the aorist, e.g. ἤψατο; ἄψωμαι; ἐξηράνθη and imperfect, e.g. ἔλεγεν; ἔλεγον; περιεβλέπετο and there is a frequent use of participles, e.g. οὔσα; παθοῦσα; ἀκούσασα. On the other hand, the story of the healing of the girl is mostly told in short sentences and with verbs in the historic present, e.g. ἔρχονται; παραλαμβάνει; εἰσπορεύεται.

32 The six “classic” examples in Mark are usually given as: 3.20-35; 5.21-43; 6.7-32; 11.12-25; 14.1-11; and 14.53-72. See S. G. Brown, “Mark 11.1-12.12: A Triple Intercalation?” *CBQ* 64.1 (2009): 78-89. Brown points out that Mark’s use of the literary device of intercalation allows him to comment indirectly on the arranged incidents (78).

calming of the storm (4.35-41), and the exorcising of the Gerasene demons (5.1-20). It is followed by an account of Jesus' return to his hometown, Nazareth, which includes a combined reference to his teaching, wisdom and powerful deeds in terms which touch on the question of prophetic fame and honour (6.1-6a, especially 6.3-4); a description of the mission of the disciples (6.6b-13); John's death (6.14-29); the return of the disciples (6.30-34); and the feeding of five thousand (6.35-44). The three miracles (4.35-5.43) together with the account of Jesus' return to his hometown, Nazareth, are presented as a single unit (Mark 4.35-6.6a), constituting a transition from discourse to narrative. Harrington's delineation of the material corresponds with that of Yarbro Collins, and it is this arrangement which I shall rely on here.³³ I wish to argue that the reliance of the Jairus pericope on the Elijah/Elisha tradition, noted by Yarbro Collins, in which Elijah restored the son of a widow to life (1 Kings 17.17-24) and Elisha brought the son of the Shunammite woman back to life (2 Kings 4.18-37), when taken together with the reference to the honour due to a prophet at the synagogue in Nazareth in 6.1-6a, strongly suggests that it is the disclosure of Jesus' prophetic status which is the primary focus of this section of the Gospel.³⁴ Achtemeier shows that the order of the miracle stories in Mark 4.35-6.44 is quite similar to those of 6.45-8.26.³⁵ This suggests that the intercalation may have been effected so that the structure would conform to a predetermined pattern. Another explanation for the intercalation, from a literary and dramatic perspective, postulates that the healing of the woman has been brought forward in order that she may act as a role model for Jairus. That is, that she provides an example of the faith that will be necessary for him, if his daughter is to be healed.

The pericope begins with the transition from the story of the Gerasene exorcism to this one. It is marked by Jesus' crossing again

33 Harrington, "Mark," 5.

34 Yarbro Collins, *Mark*, 277.

35 Achtemeier, "Miracle Catenae," *JBL* 89 (1970): 266-274.

to the other side of the Sea of Galilee and by the phenomenon of a great crowd (5.21) which will be necessary for the story of the woman with the haemorrhage, given the important role of the crowd in the unfolding drama, but superfluous for the healing/restoration to life of the girl. The first part of the story ends with Jesus' accompanying Jairus, and being followed by a large crowd which is also pressing on him (5.24). The presence of the crowd is the point of entry of the intercalation which concludes with a dismissal motif in 5.34. The return to the story of Jairus is signalled by the phrase in the Genitive Absolute in 5.35, "Ἐπι αὐτοῦ λαλοῦντος and the arrival of news about the girl from the leader's house.³⁶ The end of the pericope occurs when Jesus orders the witnesses to keep this matter secret and to give her something to eat (5.43), after which he leaves that place for Nazareth (6.1). 6.1-6a underscores the prophetic identity of Jesus at a number of points. In particular, there is his enunciation of a summary statement that prophets are honoured in general except in their own house (6.4), which clearly applies to the current situation. The conclusion to the pericope *καὶ οὐκ ἐδύνατο ἐκεῖ ποιῆσαι οὐδεμίαν δύναμιν*, suggests that *ποιῆσαι δύναμιν* is an expression of prophetic activity, namely, that to perform works of power belongs to the role of the prophet. It may be argued that the powerful works which are done by him in the remainder of the Gospel serve to underline his identity as a prophet.

He is accompanied by a band of disciples (6.1). He explicitly links the response of the audience to the fate of prophets in their native place and among their own people (6.4). Because that identity has been filled out along the lines of the prophets Elijah and Elisha, there is a strong argument for seeing 6.1-6a as part of the three miracle stories which immediately precede it. The scene of the rejection of Jesus at Nazareth blends with the general theme of containment by portraying him as accepting his lack of honour in a humble

³⁶ In Luke *λαλέω* is frequently an indication that prophetic language is being employed. It also occurs in Mark 5.36 and 7.37.

way which, at the same time, reinforces his status as a prophet. In the response of those who heard him speak Jesus' speech and his action are presented in parallel terms: *πόθεν τούτω ταῦτα, καὶ τίς ἡ σοφία ἢ δοθεῖσα τούτω, καὶ αἱ δυνάμεις τοιαῦται διὰ τῶν χειρῶν αὐτοῦ γινόμεναι;* (6.2). The point at issue is that an equivalence is drawn between the wisdom (*ἡ σοφία*) of Jesus and the "deeds of power" (*αἱ δυνάμεις*) that are done through his hands. This statement echoes Mark's twin treatment of predictions and miracles with reference to his employment of the containment motif.

4.3.2 Structure of Mark 5.21-24, 35-43

<i>Transition</i>	21	Locational change
<i>First Phase</i>	22-24	Characters and initial action introduced
	22	Beginning
<i>Interaction</i>	23	An official (Jairus) comes towards Jesus
	24a	Jesus goes with the official in silence
<i>Transition</i>	24b	Pressing of crowd
<i>Intercalation</i>	25-34	Woman with a haemorrhage
<i>Transition</i>	35a	Arrival of new characters
<i>Second Phase</i>	35b-36	
<i>Interaction</i>	36	Jesus addresses Jairus
<i>Third Phase</i>	37-38	
	37	Limiting of witnesses among disciples to three
	38	Arrival at the house
<i>Fourth Phase</i>	39-40	
<i>Interaction</i>	39	Question to the crowd
	40	Response of laughter
		Further limiting of all potential witness to five

Approach to child		
<i>Interaction</i>	41	Acts towards and addresses daughter
	42-43	Recovery of daughter
Amazement of witnesses		
Prohibition from relating the miracle		
<i>Transition</i>	6.1	Locational change

The crossing of the Sea of Galilee back to the other side which they left in Mark 4.35 when taken together with the phrase *καὶ ἦν παρὰ τὴν θάλασσαν* (5.21) sets the stage for what is to follow, with typical Markan brevity. The scene comprises four phases, (5.21-24; 35b-36; 37-38; and 39-43) the first one of which occurs before the intercalation (5.25-34). The other three are separated by stages of location. The first phase (5.21-24) consists of a narrative section which describes the arrival of a synagogue official Jairus, who falls at Jesus' feet (5.22). This is followed by an instance of direct speech on the part of the man during which he articulates the nature of the problem and offers a resolution (5.23). Jesus replies not by word but rather by accompanying Jairus to where he is going (5.24a). The theme of containment is forcefully expressed here by this gesture. The crowd is portrayed as pressing together (against) him *συνέθλιβον αὐτόν*. However, the verb *συνθλίβειν* may also be translated as "pressing upon," in the sense of forcing someone's hand. Jesus' response indicates that he can resist such a course of action, preferring instead to bring about the kingdom of God by his actions in respect of the young girl.

The bridge between story and intercalation is achieved by the mention of a crowd a second time (5.24b). After healing the woman Jesus' valediction to her "Go in peace..." (5.34) marks the end of the intercalation and also the transition back to the story of Jairus' daughter. The second phase (35b-36) begins while he is speaking to

the woman, in terms which have been pointed out above as having prophetic overtones (*αὐτοῦ λαλοῦντος*). The problem is announced, this time to Jairus himself, and in bleaker terms: his daughter is dead. An accompanying question asks why he still troubles the teacher (5.35b). Yarbrow Collins indicates that the reference to him as teacher is an indication that even those who recognise Jesus as a gifted healer have no expectation that he could raise the dead.³⁷

The communication which is referred to in terms containing a prophetic overtone, *λόγον λαλούμενον*, is overheard by Jesus who responds by telling him not to fear but to trust (5.36). Two aspects of the use of the word *λαλούμενον* may be said to be prophetic. In the first instance, the statement may be understood as a prediction that she will die, and that, as a consequence, those concerned should not bother the teacher. Secondly, the phrase *ἡ θυγάτηρ σου ἀπέθανεν* (6.35) may be understood as a challenge, which will require the exercise of prophetic power in order to be resolved. All others, apart from Peter, James and John are forbidden to accompany him further (5.37).

The third phase (37-38) occurs inside Jairus' house where people are crying loudly (5.37). Jesus states that the child is not dead. She is merely sleeping (5.38). They laugh at him. He drives all of them out of the house and together with the parents of the child and the three disciples he moves to where the girl is laid. The fourth and final phase (39-43) takes place in the presence of the girl. It begins with an address by Jesus to those who are making a commotion and weeping (5.39-40). Jesus takes her by the hand and says to her in Aramaic *ταλιθα κουμ*, which the evangelist translates as *ὁ κοράσιον, σοὶ λέγω, ἔγειρε* (5.41). The healing takes effect immediately. She begins to walk. Jesus commands them strongly that no one should know this and orders them to give her something to eat (5.42-43). He then departs for Nazareth (6.1).

³⁷ Yarbrow Collins, *Mark*, 284.

4.3.3 The motif of containment in Mark 5.21-24, 35-43

The argument of the dissertation in this chapter is that the motif of containment is a central feature of Mark's portrayal of Jesus as a miracle-worker. That is to say, when depicting Jesus performing miracles, the author includes details at the level of story which explain why a wider reporting of the event did not occur. I am proposing that in this pericope it occurs in at least two clear instances and possibly in three others. If that is true it is strong evidence that containment is an important feature of Mark's presentation of the Jairus story. Before examining the textual evidence for the presence of containment, a preliminary issue to be dealt with is the kind of miracle which is being portrayed here, that is, whether the girl was dead and therefore restored to life or whether she was merely ill, albeit seriously, and restored to full health.³⁸ It may be argued that the very ambiguity of the text around this matter produces the same effect on the witnesses who receive contradictory information from different sources.³⁹ In that sense it may serve as a form of the motif.

In Mark 5.35 messengers come from the house of Jairus and say ἡ θυγάτηρ σου ἀπέθανεν. Later on in 5.39 Jesus himself says to the bystanders τὸ παιδίον οὐκ ἀπέθανεν ἀλλὰ καθεύδει. A decision in favour of sickness rather than death could also count as containment by virtue of the fact that healing someone is somewhat less spectacular than restoring them to life. Matthew and Luke clearly interpret the story as a death. A significant number of commentators, including Hooker, Schweizer, Witherington and Yarbrow Collins argue from the

38 S. Miller insists that the girl was dead. She argues that Mark presents Jesus in his own death as identifying with her. Miller, *Women in Mark's Gospel* (JSNTSS 259; London: T&T Clark International, 2004), 71-72.

39 C. W. Hedrick, "Miracle Stories as Literary Compositions: The Case of Jairus' Daughter," *PRSt* 20 (1993): 217-233. He argues that the deliberate ambiguity leads the reader to acknowledge that Mark is contrasting Jesus' view that the girl is sleeping with the popular view that she has died (230). For a survey of the history of interpretation of these two passages, see A. W. Zwiep, "Jairus, His Daughter and the Haemorrhaging Woman (Mark 5.21-43; Mt 9.18-26; Luke 8:40-56): Research Survey of a Gospel Story about People in Distress." *Currents in Biblical Research* 13.3 (2015): 351-387.

vocabulary employed, σωθῆ, ζήση (5.23), ἀπέθανεν, καθεύδει (5.39), and κουμ, ἔγειρε (5.41), that this is a restoration to life rather than a healing miracle.⁴⁰ Harrington agrees that an argument may be made in either direction. Although the girl seems to be dead, he allows for the possibility of Jesus' superior insight.⁴¹ Yarbrow Collins suggests that the casual ambiguity introduced by Jesus' words that the child has not died but is merely sleeping, is intended as an indication of the ease with which he will be able to awaken her.⁴²

The contrast between the crowd which is pressing upon him, and the small number of people who witness the scene is striking. Noting that the pericope began with the very public setting of the woman's healing and progressed to the very private one of the healing/restoring to life of the girl in the house, Yarbrow Collins suggests that the reduction of the audience is primarily designed to create the dramatic atmosphere of the passage.⁴³ She argues that the narrowing of the audience "...has the effect of highlighting the mysterious and miraculous character of the raising of the daughter of Jairus." In support of this claim she cites the view of point of Marshall.⁴⁴ I am suggesting that confining the audience or the number of witnesses is one of the forms that the motif of silencing takes in Mark. Peter, James and John are the sole witnesses to the transfiguration (Mark 9.2). The *post eventum* predictions of Chapter 13 are addressed to them (and to Andrew) alone. In Gethsemane they are the witnesses (14.33, 43) to the portrayal of Jesus' special knowledge of what is about to happen

40 Hooker, *Saint Mark*, 148, Schweizer, *Good News according to Mark*, 119, Witherington, *Mark*, 186, Yarbrow Collins, *Mark*, 279. Schweizer argues that normally the word "sleeping" κουμάω is used in both the LXX and the New Testament to describe death. In this case a different verb καθεύδω is clearly intended to indicate that the girl is still alive. Jesus' expression is an indication that he views the child in the same way as God views her. Namely. For him the coming resurrection is so certain that it is more real than the testimony of human eyesight.

41 Harrington, "Mark," 36.

42 Yarbrow Collins, *Mark*, 285.

43 Yarbrow Collins, *Mark*, 276.

44 C. D. Marshall, *Faith as a Theme in Mark's Narrative* (SNTSMS 64; Cambridge: University Press, 1989), 91.

(14.33,43). The words used here ἦλθεν ἡ ὥρα, ἰδοὺ παραδίδοται ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ ἀνθρώπου εἰς τὰς χεῖρας τῶν ἁμαρτωλῶν (14.41), in addition to prescience, convey the sense that Jesus understands the theological significance and momentous nature of what lies ahead. Therefore, while not denying Yarbrow Collins' conclusion, I am arguing that the reduced audience is an instance of the device of containment, consistent with Mark's handling of other occasions where Peter, James and John are the sole witnesses to a miraculous event. In this story, the total number of witnesses is five.

The first mention of the crowd occurs in 5.21. The crowd had been there when Jesus and his followers left that place in 5.36 and they are there again when he returns. The extra detail provided by 5.24 where the crowd is pressing upon him is necessary for the story of the woman with the haemorrhage but not for the healing of the girl. The verb συνθλίβειν which in the New Testament occurs only here and in 5.31 may be interpreted in both instances as a desire and an action on the part of the crowd to exalt Jesus, almost as if they were intending to thrust fame and greatness upon him. The reduction in the number of bystanders who are also potential witnesses may be understood as Jesus' response to this impulse. That is to say, he rejects it. The downsizing occurs in three places. In the first, while he is journeying with Jairus, he did not allow anyone to accompany him except for the three named disciples (5.37). On the face of it there is no reason for this prohibition. It is however, possible to interpret it as a response to the opposition and lack of faith contained in the question of those who sent word to Jairus that his daughter has died "Why do you still trouble the teacher?" Secondly, his assertion that the girl was not dead but merely sleeping gave rise to laughing mockery on the part of those who heard it, καὶ κατεγέλων αὐτοῦ (5.40). There is an extra detail here, which may be seen as a further instance of Jesus' realistic approach to himself which by no means may be thought of as proud or arrogant. He did not shrink from claiming that the girl was not dead even though it was likely to lead to ridicule. His

response introduced by the adversative particle δὲ takes the form of a further reduction of the onlookers, αὐτὸς δὲ ἐκβαλὼν πάντας (5.40a). Thirdly the number and identity of those who will witness what he is about to do are explicitly stated (5.40b). All of these elements would explain why recounting of the event was limited.

The second instance of the containment motif is provided by the direct prohibition against speaking about what has happened. This is strong evidence wherever it occurs. It is phrased in stark terms which are used in similar instances elsewhere in Mark. καὶ διεστείλατο αὐτοῖς πολλὰ (5.43). It is reinforced by the contiguous phrase ἵνα μηδεὶς γνοῖ τοῦτο which is an explicit instance of containment. Ironically, the verb is the same one which the woman used when she realised she had been healed (ἔγνω) in 5.29.

It is also possible that in the reaction of the witnesses there is a third occurrence of the motif. The hearers of Mark's narrative would have picked up on this if they heard the Gospel being read as a whole. When the girl gets up, those who were present are overcome by amazement ἐξέστησαν...ἐκστάσει μεγάλη (5.42). The only other occurrence of this word in Mark is found at 16.8. There it describes the reaction of the women to what they had heard and seen at the tomb, and explains why, as a consequence, they said nothing to anyone. It could be argued that such a response is an instance of the containment motif *par excellence*. That is to say, their reluctance to relate to anyone what they had witnessed, in this instance the greatest of all the miraculous deeds of Jesus, may be seen to comply with the motif of containment present in all of the six stories examined in this chapter. If in the story of Jairus' daughter the word ἐξέστησαν is invested with the same sense as it is in 14.8, the implication that the onlookers said nothing to anyone, and thus observed the motif of containment, is clear.

Fourthly, an argument may be made for seeing in the preservation of the Aramaic words ταλιθα κουμ, (5.41) an instance of the motif of containment, since it functions as a means of excluding those

who did not understand Aramaic from comprehending what had happened, and therefore from spreading word about it. The hearers would have assumed that the power of those words was present only in their original form.⁴⁵ Where the implied reader is Greek-speaking and possibly does not understand Aramaic, the translation functions as a direct communication between author and reader, which draws the latter into an inner circle of meaning.

Fifthly, and finally, there is the issue which I dealt with as a preliminary matter at the beginning of this section, namely, the ambiguity about whether this is a restoration to life, or a healing. If the equivocation is deliberate, and I wish to argue that it is for two reasons, it coheres with Mark's treatment of the miraculous and containment in the other scenes discussed in this chapter. There is the contrast between Mark's depiction of the scene and those of Matthew and Luke, where the inconclusive element is removed and it is clear that the girl has died. For these reasons the uncertainty may be considered a function of the author's wish to limit the spectacular aspect of the scene. If that is so, it may serve as a subtle form of the motif of containment.

The argument may be summed up thus: Mark qualifies his portrayal of the mighty deed of his protagonist here in two convincing ways: the gradual reduction of the number of potential witnesses and the direct prohibition from speaking about the matter. Additionally, the qualification is potentially present in three further details, the uncertainty about whether the girl is dead or ill, the preservation of Aramaic and the response of amazement of the five witnesses.

4.4 Feeding a multitude (Mark 6.30-44)

The Gospel according to Mark has two depictions of Jesus' feeding a multitude, Mark 6.30-44 and 8.1-21. I shall deal with them separately.

⁴⁵ Malina and Rohrbaugh, *Social-Science Commentary*, 168.

4.4.1 Context and literary unity of Mark 6.30-44

The pericope of the first feeding of five thousand men (Mark 6.30-44) occurs within a section of the Gospel which begins in 6.6b with Jesus' leaving his hometown, Nazareth, to move around the villages of Galilee and beyond, teaching the people. By the end of the section he is on a course which will ultimately lead to Jerusalem. This section is preceded by the mission of the disciples (6.6b-13); the death of John the Baptist (6.14-29); and the disciples' return (6.30-34). It is followed by Jesus' walking on water (6.45-52). Some scholars believe that 6.30-34 and 6.45-52 form a literary unity in themselves.⁴⁶ Hooker shares this view.⁴⁷ Yarbrow Collins suggests that Jesus' command at the end of the story of the daughter of Jairus to give the girl something to eat implies that that story forms part of the literary context of the feeding of the multitude.⁴⁸ The section concludes with the healing of the sick (6.53-56); a controversy about ritual purity (7.1-23); three further acts of power (7.24-8.21); and a controversy about signs (8.11-21). I agree with those who believe that the two share a common literary context. The departure of Jesus and his disciples to a lonely place at his invitation in 6.32 is motivated by practical purposes. They did not have leisure even to eat. The reappearance of the crowd in 6.33 is necessary for the feeding miracle. When that has taken place, Jesus' dismissal of them in 6.45 returns the situation to one of no external witnesses.

4.4.2 Structure of Mark 6.30-44

<i>Transition</i>	30-32	Temporal and locational
	33-34	Formation of a crowd. Jesus begins to teach them.
<i>First Phase</i>	35-42	Preparation for meal

46 Schweizer, *Good News according to Mark*, 136. He draws attention to the fact that they are combined in John 6 and argues that this is very likely independent of Mark.

47 Hooker, *Saint Mark*, 164.

48 Yarbrow Collins, *Mark*, 286.

35-36.1 Disciples address Jesus		
	37a	Jesus' answer in the form of a challenge
	37b	Disciples' response
	38	Jesus' question
	38-40	Jesus' order of seating arrangements
	41a	Fourfold action over bread
	41b	Distribution of fish
<i>Second Phase</i>	42	Eating of meal
	42	Eating and satisfaction of all
<i>Third Phase</i>	43-45	Aftermath of meal
	44	Collection of leftovers

Mark 6.30 acts as a temporal transition. 6.31-34 combines two opposite impulses concerning the crowd. First, following Jesus' command to the apostles in 6.31 to come away to a deserted place all by themselves (*κατ' ἑδραν*), a phrase that will reappear in the story of the transfiguration, he and they go by boat to such a place. Then in 6.34 he saw the great crowd that had seen them go and had assembled in the place where he would disembark before he arrived. The first phase (6.35-41) describes the preparation for eating. In the first part (6.35-38) the disciples converse with Jesus and do not understand his purpose. The description of the orderly seating arrangements of the crowds in (6.39-40) conveys the sense of a banquet, very likely with messianic overtones. The fourfold action of taking, blessing, breaking and giving the bread with its eucharistic resonance together with the distribution of the two fish in 6.41 is the centrepiece of the pericope. The second phase (6.42) describes the meal proper: the eating of food and the satisfaction of those assembled. The third phase (6.43-45) deals with the aftermath of the meal: the gathering of the leftovers and the identification of the number of those who

were fed. The transition to the walking on the water is provided by 6.45 with a threefold departure: he orders the disciples to get in to the boat to go to the other side, that is, to Bethsaida; he dismisses the crowd while he himself goes up on the mountain to pray.

4.4.3 The motif of containment in Mark 6.30-44

The story of the feeding of the five thousand which is told in all four Gospels is classified by Theißen as a “gift miracle,” that is to say, that its essential character is that it occurs as the initiative of beneficence on the part of the benefactor rather than as a response to an articulated need.⁴⁹ Those hearers among Mark’s audience who were familiar with Jewish tradition would have seen the connection between Jesus’ power portrayed here and God’s power in the story of the manna in the wilderness in Exodus 16. The author goes out of his way deliberately to depict the scene as having been played out in a lonely place, εἰς ἔρημον τόπον (6.31,32), and ἔρημός ἐστιν ὁ τόπος (6.35). This is despite the fact, as Harrington notes that the place with so many cities around it hardly qualifies as a desert.⁵⁰ The author’s decision to locate the miracle in a desert appears all the more deliberate from a social-scientific perspective, when it is considered that the areas outside of towns and villages were considered places of chaos and hence, meals did not take place there.⁵¹

Apart from the reference to Exodus there are other inter-textual connections with the Jewish scriptures. One commentator proposes that its roots are in the story in 2 Kings 4.42-44 and in Psalm 23.⁵²

49 Theißen, *Miracle Stories*, 103. Theißen adds that it is typical of gift miracles that they are never initiated by way of a request of those in need, but rather by the intention and act of the miracle worker. He terms it a miracle of material culture, since it illustrates the problem of how to have enough food, especially for subsistence farmers, farm labourers and their families.

50 Harrington, “Mark,” 44.

51 Malina and Rohrbaugh, *Social-Science Commentary*, 171.

52 E. La Verdere, “The Loaves and Fish, A Eucharistic Banquet,” *Bible Today* 40 (2002): 229-235. The Targum of Psalm 23.1 reads, “It is the Lord who fed his people in the desert. They lacked nothing.” See D. M. Stec, *The Targum of Psalms: Translated with a Critical Introduction, Apparatus and Notes* (The Aramaic Bible 16;

In the first case Elisha commands a man with twenty loaves of barley and some grain to give it to a hundred people to eat. The numbers provided in the Gospel passage make clear that this event surpasses the Elisha story. The second inter-textual link is with Psalm 23.5 where the Lord prepares a table for the psalmist.

Scholars have put forward a variety of explanations for the inclusion of this scene in the Gospel. Yarbro Collins suggests that the feeding motif has messianic overtones and is intended to evoke the eschatological banquet found, for example, in Isaiah 24-27.⁵³ Ugwejeh proposes that it has a moral purpose namely, to impel the hearers to respond in their own contexts to a portrayal of Jesus who cares for and shepherds his flock.⁵⁴

Harrington comments that the inclusion of the fish in the story has something of an afterthought about it.⁵⁵ He sees them taking the place of the quail in the Exodus story. M. Kiel explains the inclusion of fish in terms of the eucharistic practice of Mark's era, whereby its juxtaposition with bread here accords it a celebratory status, in this case a celebration of victory over all that the sea and its contents represented in the Jewish imagination.⁵⁶

We have seen in other places that failure to understand is one

Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 2004), 61. The likely late date of the Psalms Targum is not in question here. Its significance lies in its status as a repository of Jewish biblical interpretation, some of which is early.

53 Yarbro Collins, *Mark*, 325. She points out some striking similarities between this text and Qumranic literature, most notably, the *Damascus Document* which refers to the Inspector of the camp in these terms: "He shall instruct the many in the deeds of God and shall teach them his mighty marvels...He shall have pity on them like a father...and will provide drink to all (the afflicted among them) like a shepherd his flock." (D 13.7-8) Text modified from F. García Martínez and E. J. C. Tigchelaar, *The Dead Sea Scrolls Study Edition* (2 vols; Leiden: Brill, 1997-1998), 1.572-573.

54 E. I. Ugwejeh, "Mark 6.30-44: The Feeding of the Five Thousand: Interpretation, Meaning and Message for Today's Christians," *Hekima Review* 22 (1999): 20-32.

55 Harrington, "Mark," 44.

56 See M. Kiel, "The Apocalyptic Significance of Mark's First Feeding narrative (6.34-44)," *Koinonia* 18 (2006): 93-113. Kiel argues that the juxtaposing of bread and fish would have functioned for Mark's readers and hearers as an adumbration of a celebratory victory over a primordial foe. Leviathan in Job and the large fish in Jonah are examples of the motif of fish as powerful and to be feared.

form which the motif of containment takes. An early instance of a failure to understand, even before the miraculous activity takes place, may be found in the dialogue between Jesus and his disciples in 6.35-38. It is clear to the reader what Jesus' intention is, but the disciples do not understand his purpose. The reader has to wait until the conclusion of the next scene (Mark 6.52) where Jesus walks on water, for an explicit mention of the disciples' failure to understand *οὐ γὰρ συνῆκαν ἐπὶ τοῖς ἄρτοις, ἀλλ' ἦν αὐτῶν ἡ καρδία πεπωρωμένη*. The text portrays hardening of heart almost as a synonymous expression for a failure to understand. The two main Jewish scriptural sources for this motif are Pharaoh's hardening of heart in Exod 4.21 in relation to the Israelites' departure from Egypt and, in the prophetic tradition in Isaiah 6.10 where God commands Isaiah "Make the heart of this people fat, and their ears heavy and shut their eyes; lest they see with their eyes and hear with their ears and understand with their hearts." In the light of this background Yarbrow Collins comments that its occurrence here represents "a radical intensification" of the theme of the disciples' failure to understand.⁵⁷ The scene underlines Jesus' agency on behalf of God just as the episode in 2 Kings did in relation to Elisha. Yarbrow Collins comments that the phrase, *ὅτι ἦσαν ὡς πρόβατα μὴ ἔχοντα ποιμένα* (6.34) is used to anticipate the arrival of a figure with the stature of Moses.⁵⁸

The argument at this point may be summarised thus: the containment motif occurs here in two forms, first, the lack of

⁵⁷ Yarbrow Collins, *Mark*, 336.

⁵⁸ Yarbrow Collins, *Mark*, 319. She points out that in the Hebrew scriptures the expression "like sheep without a shepherd," is used of the people when they are without a king. It is also used by Moses to request God that a successor would be appointed when he dies. The association of Moses with the phrase could also recall the promise that God would raise up a prophet like Moses (Deuteronomy 18.15-18). When these strands are taken together the sense could be that Jesus is the kingly Messiah with the stature of Moses and whose messianic status is about to be revealed. From the perspective of the dramatic narrative this phrase is for the hearers of Mark as much as it is for the spectators in the story. Therefore, the import of the expression is directed towards them. It is for them to accept Jesus' status in faith or not. Faith (*πίστις*) is one of the key words of this section.

understanding articulated in dialogue form, even before the miracle takes place in 6. 35-38 and secondly, the impulse to reduce the number of potential eyewitness before the miracle takes place and again immediately afterwards. Such an interpretation of the interaction between Jesus and his disciples is explicitly corroborated at the end of the following pericope when Jesus has walked on water, in 6.52. In this verse hardening one's heart is presented as the opposite of understanding. In that sense its occurrence here is a form of the motif of containment.

4.5 Walking on the sea (Mark 6.45-52)

The portrayal of Jesus walking on water (6.47-52), as we have said, is closely connected both thematically and structurally to the feeding of the five thousand (6.30-44) which immediately precedes it in such a way that they share a literary context. It is possible to delineate the transition from one scene to the other in 6.45-46. Movement from one scene to the next is achieved by the disciples' getting into a boat and going to Bethsaida on the other side, at Jesus' instigation and by his dismissing the crowd (6.45). His separation from them, which is necessary for what is to happen, is reiterated and is more pronounced by his praying on the mountain.

4.5.1 Context and literary unit of Mark 6.45-52

The change to a new scene occurs in 6.47, with a temporal clause, *καὶ ὀψίας γενομένης*, and then with a spatial indication, *ἦν τὸ πλοῖον ἐν μέσῳ τῆς θαλάσσης, καὶ αὐτὸς μόνος ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς*. The problem is identified as an obstructing wind (4.48). Jesus' action in approaching the disciples is misunderstood and causes further terror (4.49). He reassures them by word and deed (6.50-51). The wind abates and they are astounded (6.52). Their astonishment is the result of their failure to understand the incident of the loaves, which is in turn the result of their hearts having been hardened (6.52). When they reach land, they arrive at Gennesaret (6.53).

The same context is shared by the pericope of the feeding of the five thousand, as I outlined above. Bolt, identifies three sea journeys (beginning at Mark 4.35, 6.45, and 8.10 respectively), of which this is the centre one. He argues that they provide three significant moments in the incremental unfolding of Jesus' identity.⁵⁹

4.5.2 Structure of Mark 6.45-52

<i>Transition</i>	45	Temporal change
	46	Threefold dispersal
<i>Scene One</i>	47	Physical separation of Jesus and disciples
<i>Scene Two</i>	48a	Disciples' difficulty at sea
	48b	Jesus' approach walking on the sea and intending to bypass them
	49-50a	Disciples' misunderstanding
	50b	Jesus encourages disciples verbally
	51a	Jesus encourages disciples by deed: he joins them
	51b-52	Disciples' response: amazement, failure to understand; hardness of heart
<i>Transition</i>	53	Locational change

The setting of the account is described in Mark 6.46. The separation of Jesus from the crowd and from his disciples is intensified and reinforced by his action of prayer on the mountain. The difficulty takes the form of an obstruction rather than a storm *per se* (6.48a). The wind is against them and they are prevented from advancing further. Early in the morning he approached them walking on water and intended to pass by (6.48b). They misunderstand and mistaking him for a ghost cry aloud (6.49-50a). When all of them saw him they were terrified. He responds first by commanding them not

⁵⁹ Bolt, *Jesus' Defeat of Death*, 131.

to be afraid (6.50b). Then in a parallel movement, he approaches and joins them in the boat (6.51a). The wind dies down and they are exceedingly amazed (ἐξίσταντο) (6.51b). The narrator explains that this was because they did not understand about the loaves of the previous pericope and clarifies the reason: their hearts were hardened (6.52). When an instance of amazement is connected with lack of understanding and, *a fortiori*, when the connection is made by the narrator, one can expect that the motif of containment is nearby.

4.5.3 The motif of containment in Mark 6.45-52

The dramatic tension in the form of the difficulty the disciples encounter is articulated in Mark 6.48, καὶ ἰδὼν αὐτοὺς βασιανιζομένους ἐν τῷ ἐλαύνειν, ἦν γὰρ ὁ ἄνεμος ἐναντίος αὐτοῖς. The wind is impeding their advancement. By way of response Jesus seeks to draw near to them. The choice of vocabulary, specifically, παρελθεῖν and περιπατῶν expresses connotations of divine approach or intervention, intensified by the occurrence of both in the same sentence. ἔρχεται πρὸς αὐτοὺς περιπατῶν ἐπὶ τῆς θαλάσσης καὶ ἤθελεν παρελθεῖν αὐτοῦς (Mark 6.48). The theophany to Moses in Exodus 34.6 LXX is phrased in terms of the Lord passing by (καὶ παρήλθεν κύριος). In 1 Kings 19.11 (3 Kingdoms. 19.11 LXX), the Lord's appearance to Elijah is presented in similar language (ἰδοὺ παρελεύσεται κύριος). In Job 9.11 there is the image of the Lord passing by (παρέλθῃ) and not being seen. Witherington agrees that Jesus' intention in passing them by is not just so that he can keep on going, that is to say, there is something more at stake than a mere indication of physical movement.⁶⁰

The portrayal of Jesus walking on the water, περιπατῶν ἐπὶ τῆς θαλάσσης, evokes the image of God in Job 9.8 LXX (καὶ περιπατῶν ὡς ἐπ' ἐδάφους ἐπὶ θαλάσσης), which may be translated as "and walking on the sea as on the ground." Once again the trope of misunderstanding appears. The disciples misunderstand and mistake

⁶⁰ Witherington, *Mark*, 221.

the numinous for a ghost: ἔδοξαν ὅτι φάντασμα ἐστίν. Their crying out, καὶ ἀνέκραξαν is suggestive of fear (6.49). This is corroborated in their subsequent reaction: πάντες γὰρ αὐτὸν εἶδον καὶ ἐταράχθησαν (6.50). He speaks a word of encouragement to them in terms which evoke divine reassurance: καὶ λέγει αὐτοῖς· θαρσεῖτε, ἐγὼ εἰμι· μὴ φοβεῖσθε (6.50). When he joins them in the boat the wind ceases and they are exceedingly amazed: καὶ ἀνέβη πρὸς αὐτοὺς εἰς τὸ πλοῖον καὶ ἐκόπασεν ὁ ἄνεμος, καὶ λίαν [ἐκ περισσοῦ] ἐν ἑαυτοῖς ἐξίσταντο (6.51). Intriguingly, as with the case of fear at the calming of the storm, the amazement occurs after the wind had ceased. It may be that the reading of ἐξίσταντο (6.51) is nuanced in favour of astonishment at Jesus' action and identity, rather than of fear of that from which they had just been saved. It is also very likely that that amazement is an instance of containment.

The phrase καὶ ἐκόπασεν ὁ ἄνεμος (6.51) may be a consequence of Jesus' action in joining the disciples in the boat. It is the same phrase which appears at the calming of the storm in 4.39.⁶¹ The reader will have remembered this and for once it appears as if the disciples have seen the connection because their response is similar. Here it reaches a superlative degree καὶ λίαν [ἐκ περισσοῦ] ἐν ἑαυτοῖς ἐξίσταντο (6.51). For once the readers/hearers and the characters in the drama are at one.

P. Lamarche suggests that the formative Exodus moment in Israel's self-understanding is behind the connection of the feeding of the five thousand and the walking on water.⁶² Kee believes that their combination here and in John are instances of the twin motifs

61 Nevertheless, Bultmann classified the pericope as a nature miracle and as a story with its own motif and not as a variation of the calming of the storm. Bultmann, *History of the Synoptic Tradition*, 216. He also held that the element of the storm was added subsequently.

62 "De même qu'Israël fut sauvé des eaux et nourri au désert, de même Jésus rassasia le peuple et domine la mer." P. Lamarche, *Évangélie de Marc*. Études Bibliques Nouvelle Série 33. Paris: Gabalda, 1996, 175. He also suggests that the connecting of the feeding of the 5,000 and the walking on the water, given its attestation in another (i.e. non-Synoptic) source, John 6.1-21, reflects a very early development, (177).

which occur in the Psalms, of God's command over the waters and his feeding his own in the desert.⁶³ Harrington holds that the details of the scene are evidence of the author's intention to portray Jesus in relation to the divine.⁶⁴ Yarbro Collins' nuanced view essentially concurs. She suggests that whether the story was composed to represent an event or to provide a symbolic or an allegorical narrative, some in the audience would have interpreted it literally while others would have interpreted it symbolically. At its most fundamental level she argues that it was composed to honour Jesus.⁶⁵ In an earlier work she concludes her treatment of the pericope thus: "Mark, in this context at least, wished to say something about the difficulty of perceiving the divinity of Jesus."⁶⁶

The transition from one scene to the next incorporates elements which are important for identifying the containment motif. In the first instance the number of potential eyewitnesses to the miraculous event that is about to take place is limited by Jesus' gathering them into one boat and by making them go before him to the other side, to Bethsaida (45a). Secondly, since a large number of people was necessary for the multiplication of the loaves and fish the decision to dismiss them (6.45b) rather than to have them witness the miraculous action fits with Mark's use of containment in scenes such as the one that is about to happen.

The miraculous element in this scene is provided by Jesus' walking on water. It is couched in terms which evoke the presence and activity of the divine.⁶⁷ I am arguing that the motif of containment

63 Kee, *Community of the New Age*, 112.

64 Harrington, "Mark," 44.

65 Yarbro Collins, *Mark*, 333. She adds that the expression *ἐγὼ εἶμι* (6.50) would have been understood by those who had accepted Jesus' assimilation to God that Jesus is being presented here as divine "in a functional, not necessarily in a metaphysical sense," 335.

66 A. Yarbro Collins, "Rulers, Divine Men, and the Walking on the Water (Mark 6.45-52)," in *Religious Propaganda and Missionary Competition in the New Testament World: Essays Honoring Dieter Georgi*, (ed. L. Bormann, K. Del Tredici and A. Standhartinger; Leiden: Brill, 1994): 207-227, 227.

67 Some scholars attempt to play down or indeed to deny that the scene has a

takes three forms here, forms which are by now familiar from other passages. The limiting of the number of potential eyewitnesses is achieved with unusual intensity. The only ones who will see the event are the disciples who are confined to the boat and separated from others when they go towards Bethsaida (6.45a). He dismisses the crowd in explicit terms: *αὐτὸς ἀπολύει τὸν ὄχλον* (6.45b). His removal, whether from the disciples or the crowd is reiterated: *καὶ ἀποταξάμενος αὐτοῖς* (6.46), and leaves no doubt about the absence of others. Secondly, there is the trope of terror or amazement which also receives intensified treatment here. When they saw him walking on the sea they cried out: *ἀνέκραξαν*, (6.49). That this was a negative reaction is in no doubt by the next verse: *ἐταράχθησαν*. They were troubled (6.50). Thirdly, when he got into the boat with them and the wind died down they were exceedingly astonished: *καὶ λίαν [ἐκ περισσοῦ] ἐν ἑαυτοῖς ἐξίσταντο* (6.51). The third form which the motif takes here is the disciples' failure to understand. It occurs in their mistaking a divine-like approach for a ghost: *ἔδοξαν ὅτι φάντασμα ἐστίν* (6.49). It is directly presented as the reason for their astonishment: *οὐ γὰρ συνῆκαν ἐπὶ τοῖς ἄρτοις* (6.52a). Not understanding is further identified with their hearts being hardened: *ἀλλ' ἦν αὐτῶν ἡ καρδία πεπωρωμένη* (6.52b). Yarbrow Collins' comment about a radical intensification of the theme of misunderstanding has already been noted. At the level of story, the presence of the

miraculous element. Malina and Rohrbaugh point out that it is important to note that Jesus walked "on the sea" and not "on water." They argue that the nuance of difference between the two expressions minimizes the element of the miraculous (*Social-Science Commentary*, 173). They contend that the difference between these two entities is increased by mythical assumptions which would have led to further amazement on the part of the disciples. To walk on the sea is to trample on a being. Coming from a Semitic perspective, this could be Tiamat or Tehom, while a Greco-Roman perspective might think of Poseidon/Neptune. Another example of the same tendency is identified by Twelftree in his assessment of the direction taken by some rational interpretation. As an instance he cites E. P. Sanders who contends that the story only seems to be miraculous, that Mark's intention was to portray Jesus appearing to walk on water when he actually was on land. See "The History of Miracles," 201.

containment motif in such strong terms accounts for the fact that the event is never referred to again.

J. R. Combs points out a discrepancy between the levels of story and discourse, which reader-response critics will readily recognise.⁶⁸ The plethora of Greco-Roman sources which describe divine human beings and gods walking on water would suggest that Mark's audience would have realised that ghosts cannot walk on water. The detail serves to illustrate lack of understanding and fear at the same time.

W. R. Telford's comparison of Jesus' walking on water shortly after calming a storm with Pythagoras' having done the same in Porphyry's *Life of Pythagoras* is useful from the point of view of the containment motif.⁶⁹ The presence of the motif in Mark is accentuated by the absence of any such impulse in the latter to limit the exalting of its protagonist. It may also be argued that the occurrence of the motif in the context of a miracle like this, which, as Hooker points out, is unusual because it does not seem to benefit anyone, suggests that the primary focus of the scene is to exalt Jesus and to explain why this miraculous action is not remembered elsewhere in the Gospel.⁷⁰

4.6 Feeding a second multitude (Mark 8.1-9)

The second account of Jesus' feeding a multitude portrays the number of those fed as four thousand people, ὡς τετρακισχίλιοι (8.9), from seven loaves and a few fish.

4.6.1 Context and literary unit of Mark 8.1-9

The scene is set in 8.1, in those days there was a great crowd with nothing to eat. A dialogue occurs between Jesus and his disciples in which he expressed a wish for them to be fed and learned that they

68 J. R. Combs, "A Ghost on the Water? Understanding an Absurdity in Mark 6.49-50," *JBL* 127.2 (2008): 345-358.

69 W. R. Telford, *The Theology of the Gospel of Mark* (NTT; Cambridge: CUP, 1999), 97. He includes Philostratus' *Life of Apollonius of Tyana*, in this category.

70 Hooker, *Saint Mark*, 168-69.

had only seven loaves (8.2-5). He commanded the crowd to be seated on the ground. He took the loaves, gave thanks, broke them and gave them to the disciples to distribute to the crowd (8.6). He said the blessing over the few fish they had and had them distributed (8.7). They ate and were satisfied and picked up seven baskets of leftovers (8.8). He dismissed the crowd (8.9). He got into the boat with his disciples and arrived at the region of Dalmanutha (8.10).

The general context of Mark 8.1-9 is the block of material contained in 4.35-8.26. The second half of this block, in which both feeding stories are found begins with the sending out of the twelve and the death of John the Baptist (Mark 6.6b-30). It includes the scene of Jesus walking on water. These are followed by the reference to the large-scale healing of all who touched his cloak (6.31-56), a dispute with the Pharisees (7.1-23), the healing of the Syro-Phoenician woman's daughter (7.24-30), and the cure of the deaf man (7.31-37). The feeding of the four thousand is followed by the Pharisees' asking for a sign (8.10-13) and the comment on bread and on the disciples' failure to understand (8.14-21). The section ends with the cure of the blind man of Bethsaida (Mark 8.22-26).

One proposal, based on a study of the compositional arrangement of this block, points out that the role of boats is central to Chapters 4-6 while that of bread unites Chapters 6-8.⁷¹ Yarbrow Collins divides the block into two sections, 4.35-6.6a and 6.6b-8.26.

4.6.2 Structure of Mark 8.1-9.

<i>Transition</i>	1	Temporal change
<i>First Phase</i>	2-5	Preparation for meal

71 A. Käser, "Den Juden zuerst, aber auch den Heiden: 'Mission' im Markusevangelium. Beobachtungen einer kompositionellen Lesung von Mk 4.35-8.36," *Theologische Beiträge* 35.2 (2004): 69-80. His explanation of the feeding doublet that the hearers will discover that Jesus gives bread to the Jews first, but also to the Gentiles, is in keeping with a general strand of scholarly opinion on this issue.

	2-3	Jesus' first address to disciples
	4	Disciples' first response
	5a	Jesus' second question
	5b	Disciples second response
	6a	Jesus' seating instructions
	6b	Fourfold action over bread
	7	Blessing and distribution of fish
<i>Second Phase</i>	8a	Eating
<i>Third Phase</i>	8b-10	Aftermath of meal
	8b	Collection of left over pieces
	9	Identification of the number of people and their dismissal.
<i>Transition</i>	10	Departure

The temporal change occurs with the expression Ἐν ἐκείναις ταῖς ἡμέραις (8.1). The identification of the geographical location as a wilderness (ἐπ' ἐρημίας) appears in 8.4. Yarbro Collins shows out that these more general indicators suggest that the pericope is less well integrated into its current location than the feeding of the five thousand. The temporal link with the healing, which has just been narrated is tenuous. Similarly, the crowd is mentioned here as a ready-made entity (8.1), whereas in the earlier scene the formation of the crowd is referred to. Here the disciples are more involved in the action as mediators than they were in the earlier scene. A dialogue takes place between Jesus and them in which Jesus' compassion for the hungry people is the initiative for the miracle, and the disciples' inability to imagine a solution emerges (8.2-4). The second part of the dialogue has Jesus enquire about the number of loaves they have, to which the answer given is seven (8.5). Jesus ordered the crowd to be seated on the ground and the fourfold action present in the earlier

account is repeated, with the difference that in the former he blessed (εὐλόγησεν) the loaves and in this case he gave thanks (εὐχαριστήσας) (8.6).⁷² Once again, as in the earlier account the reference to the blessing of a few small fish (ἰχθύδια ὀλίγα) appears almost as an afterthought. They ate and were filled and seven baskets of leftovers were taken up (8.8). The number of those present is given as about four thousand people (8.9). He dismissed them and got into the boat with his disciples and went to the district of Dalmanutha (8.10-11).

4.6.3 The motif of containment in Mark 8.1-9

Up to the 1950s and the beginning of redaction criticism the general tendency in dealing with Markan doublets was to ascribe them to different sources without considering them in the context of his overall schema.⁷³ In dealing with doublets, reader-response criticism

72 Harrington, "Mark," 51. The fourfold action of λαβών, εὐχαριστήσας, ἔκλασεν, and ἔδιδου (Mark 8.6) which occurs with slight variation in a number of instances causes Harrington to see a connection between eucharistic activity and this scene.

73 G. Van Oyen, *The Interpretation of the Feeding Miracles in the Gospel of Mark* (Collectanea Biblica et Religiosa Antiqua IV; Brussels: Wetenschappelijk Comité voor Godsdienstwetenschappen Koninklijke Vlaamse Academie van België voor Wetenschappen en Kunsten, 1999), 45. A notable exception was E. Wendling, whose extensive work on Markan doublets identified the most important examples in the Gospel. In his two books, *Ur-Marcus. Versuch einer Wiederherstellung der ältesten Mitteilungen über das Leben Jesu* (Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr-P. Siebach, 1905), and *Die Entstehung des Marcus-Evangeliums: Philologische Untersuchungen* (Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr-P. Siebach, 1908) he develops the hypothesis that there are two sources for Mark's Gospel, M1 and M2. The evangelist's redaction he designates as Ev. The ten major Markan doublets are categorised as follows:

Number	M1	M2	Ev
1.	1.23-28	4.35-41	
2.	1.23-28	5.1-20	
3.	1.21-28		6.1-6
4.		4.35-41	6.45-52
5.		6.35-44	8.1-10
6.			7.32-37 8.22-26
7.			11.1-7 14.12-16
8.			14.32-42 14.66-72
9.	15.1-5		14.53-56, 60-63
10.	15.31-32		15.29-30

From the table, it may be seen that Wendling believed that Mark doubled 6.35-44 (M2) in 8.1-10. The evangelist was inspired to write several doublets by the existing

does naturally what Alter advises, namely, to look at narrative analogy in the Hebrew Bible. By this he means that when an episode is followed by a parallel episode or a recurring motif, to view each individual occurrence as providing a comment on or as acting as a foil to the other occurrences.⁷⁴ That provides a literary basis for comparing and contrasting both accounts.

Here, while the original provisions are greater, seven loaves and a few small fish, the number of those fed is lower, namely, four thousand people. A crowd of this size would have been larger than all but a few urban settlements, in the social world of the audience.⁷⁵ Here, as in the earlier scene, Mark evokes the feeding of the Israelites with manna in the desert in Exodus 16. Failure to understand occurs here too.⁷⁶ Klumbies links the failure of the Pharisees to understand with that of Jesus' disciples.⁷⁷

As in the case of the earlier feeding, the motif of containment may be located in two aspects of the narrative. The first is the disciples' failure to understand. Unusually, this is recounted not during the scene itself, but at some distance, in 8.21. The last indication of geographical location occurred in 8.10 when they went towards Dalmanutha. This is followed by an altercation with Pharisees (8.11-13). When the misunderstanding is mentioned they are in the boat again and heading to the other shore. Once again the strong image of

earlier stories. Van Oyen gives Wendling credit for his focus on the evangelist as redactor, at a time when this was not a popular line to take. However, he rejects Wendling's threefold division of the Gospel on the basis of three different styles and he regards his distinction of the evangelist's use of M1 and M2 as subjective (26).

74 R. Alter, *The Art of Biblical Narrative* (New York: Basic Books, 1981), 179-180.

75 Malina and Rohrbaugh, *Social-Science Commentary*, 171.

76 J. Delorme, "'Vous ne comprenez pas encor?' (Marc 8.14-21)," *Revue de l'Université Catholique de Lyon* 11 (2007): 45-50. Delorme argues for the importance of the motif of misunderstanding as it relates to the position of the reader (and hearers).

77 Klumbies, *Der Mythos bei Markus* (BZNTW 108; Berlin: de Gruyter, 2001), 236. He interprets Mark 8.1-21 as a preparation for the healing of the blind man at Bethsaida (8.22-26). What the twofold feeding reveals about the person of Jesus will be apparent when those who have been blind to his work have their eyes opened by the recounting of the narrative.

hardening of heart is used, to intensify the sense of misunderstanding *πεπωρωμένην ἔχετε τὴν καρδίαν ὑμῶν* (8.17). Hurtado argues that the emphasis placed on misunderstanding here, as in 6.25 shows the importance of the theme for the overall plan of the Gospel.⁷⁸ That is to say, the stress which Mark places on the failure of the disciples to understand is a purposive application of the trope. And secondly, the scene takes place within the limited confines of a boat in 8.18-20, with only the disciples as witnesses.

4.7 Jesus is transfigured (Mark 9.2-10)

4.7.1 Context and literary unity of Mark 9.2-10

There is some debate about whether 9.1 is to be included with the scene of the transfiguration on the basis that what is promised in this verse may be considered to be fulfilled by the scene that follows. The temporal transition from the preceding scene is marked by the phrase *Καὶ μετὰ ἡμέρας ἕξ* (9.2a). The action is presented as the initiative of Jesus who takes Peter, James, and John up a high mountain, *καὶ ἀναφέρει αὐτοὺς εἰς ὄρος ὑψηλὸν κατ' ἰδίαν μόνους*, apart by themselves (9.2a). He is transfigured in front of them *καὶ μετεμορφώθη ἔμπροσθεν αὐτῶν* (9.2b) and speaks with Moses and Elijah (9.3). The scene is intensified with the appearance of the divine presence behind the cloud and the divine voice (9.7). The scene returns to its earlier configuration (9.8). A dialogue (9.9) and its after effect (9.10) are recounted by way of transition down the mountain.

The first half of Mark's Gospel, which presents Jesus' ministry in Galilee, is framed by the baptism (Mark 1.9-11) and the

78 L. W. Hurtado, *Mark* (A Good News Commentary; Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1989), 128. He suggests three possibilities for the interpretation of Mark 8.19-21, and opts for the third one. In the first, a literal interpretation is that the disciples never understood that Jesus at any time could provide them with food. Secondly, the number of baskets left over makes clear that Mark wants the disciples to understand the deeper meaning of the miracles that is, the revelation of Jesus' identity. Thirdly, while Jesus' identity is still the pivotal issue, nevertheless the numbers have a symbolic function given their significance in a Jewish and Gentile context.

transfiguration (9.2-8). They have the divine voice in common. In the former it is “from heaven” ἐκ τῶν οὐρανῶν (1.11), and “from the cloud” ἐκ τῆς νεφέλης in the latter (9.7). In both cases divine sonship and approval are confirmed. Following the feeding of the four thousand and the question of a sign and the comment about bread (8.1-21), Jesus and his disciples travel first to Bethsaida where he heals a blind man (8.22-26), and then to Caesarea Philippi where Peter’s confession of Jesus as the Messiah occurs (8.27-30). This in turn is followed by Jesus’ first of three predictions of his passion and by the altercation with Peter (8.31-33) and then by his discourse with the crowd and with his followers on discipleship (8.34-9.1). The transfiguration and subsequent prohibition against speaking about it are narrated in Mark 9.2-10. The terms of Jesus’ prohibition cause the disciples to question what it means. Their subsequent question to Jesus about Elijah is aimed at dispelling their confusion.

The pattern of prediction (9.31, 10.32-34), misunderstanding (9.32, 10.35-41), and teaching on discipleship (9.33-37, 10.42-45) is repeated twice more and it is this triple occurrence which gives the larger section 8.27-10.45 its literary unity. Within this unit the transfiguration has a seminal place.

4.7.2 Structure of Mark 9.2-10

<i>Transition</i>	2a	Temporal change
<i>Scene One</i>	2b	Journey up a mountain
<i>Scene Two</i>	2c-8	Events on the mountain with three witnesses
	2c-3	Jesus is transfigured
	4-6	He speaks with Elijah and Moses. Peter misunderstands. The three are terrified
	7	Appearance of the cloud and sounding of the voice
	8	The scene returns to its form configuration

Scene Three 9-10 Locational change down the mountain

This passage has three phases: a journey up a mountain (9.2a); events on the mountain narrated in four movements (9.2b-8) and a return journey down the mountain (9-10). There is no agreement among scholars about whether v. 9-10 are part of the pericope.⁷⁹ There is a correspondence between 9.2a and 9.9 (ascending and descending). The upward journey identifies the one at whose initiative they are making the journey and who the other characters are. There is no one else there. The action on top of the mountain is recounted in four movements. In the first, Jesus is transfigured (9.2b-3); he speaks with Elijah and Moses; Peter's response indicates lack of understanding and the three are afraid (9.4-6). In the second movement the climax of the scene occurs with the appearance of the divine presence behind the cloud, and the sounding of the divine voice (9.7). In the third, the scene returns to its earlier configuration of Jesus and the three disciples only (9.8). Finally, on the way down the mountain Jesus prohibits them from speaking about what happened until a given time (9.9).

4.7.3 The motif of containment in Mark 9.2-10

The central aspect of this miraculous scene consists in the transfiguration of Jesus, achieved by the author in terms of the effects on his clothing; his conversing with Elijah and Moses and the affirmation of divine sonship (οὗτός ἐστιν ὁ υἱός μου) together with the seal of approval (ὁ ἀγαπητός), accompanied by confirmation of his authoritative status (ἀκούετε αὐτοῦ) (9.7). The conclusions which scholars have come to in their interpretation of the transfiguration are wide-ranging and a comprehensive account of the spectrum is beyond the range of this dissertation. A sample of relevant

79 Bultmann, regards v. 9 as part of the transfiguration proper (*History*, 67, 124-125, 330), while Yarbrow Collins considers that 9-13 is a "didactic" scene attached to the transfiguration story (*Mark*, 429).

interpretations will suffice to justify its inclusion at this point. A. Wypadlo underlines the importance of Exodus 24 and 34 LXX for a correct understanding of the Markan scene.⁸⁰ He characterises the relationship of the latter to the former at the textual level as “innovative rather than repetitive” (442). M. Mullins summarises the general lines of interpretation to which this scene has been subjected: as a historical event, as a post-resurrection experience of disciples, and *pace* Bultmann retrojected into the period of the public ministry, and as an apocalyptic image.⁸¹

As early as 1922 Lohmeyer, who was one of the first critical commentators to deal with the transfiguration, interpreted the scene in Mark as a portrayal of a Hellenistic god-figure who had come down from heaven for a short period.⁸² R. H. Gundry argues that the elements of Hellenistic traditions behind Mark’s depiction of the scene are more markedly Jewish than Greco-Roman.⁸³ J. Marcus regards the kernel of the scene as the portrayal of Jesus as the “prophet-like-Moses” of Deuteronomy 18.⁸⁴ S. J. Gathercole’s conclusion is that Jesus is portrayed not just in Mark but in all three Synoptic Gospels as having a heavenly identity participating in the heavenly realms already before his death.⁸⁵

Rising and being raised from the dead (Mark 9.9) are two versions of the most frequently occurring motif used by early Christian communities to express what it is that God has done for Jesus after his death. The significance of this pericope for understanding Mark’s conception of the relationship between God and Jesus is addressed

80 A. Wypadlo, *Die Verklärung Jesu nach dem Markusevangelium* (WUNT 308; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2013), 293-299.

81 M. Mullins, *The Gospel of Mark: A Commentary* (Dublin: Columba, 2005), 242.

82 E. Lohmeyer, “Die Verklärung Jesu nach dem Markus-Evangelium,” *ZNW* 21 (1922): 185-215, 205.

83 R. H. Gundry, *Mark: A Commentary on His Apology for the Cross* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1993), 458.

84 J. Marcus, *The Way of the Lord: Christological Exegesis of the Old Testament in the Gospel of Mark* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1992), 81-92.

85 S. J. Gathercole, *The Pre-existent Son: Recovering the Christologies of Matthew, Mark and Luke* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2006), 54.

by K. Berger in terms of the cultural milieu from which rabbinic Judaism sprang and which was responsible for the methodology adopted in rabbinic circles of oral discussion and discourse.⁸⁶ The essential impulse which gave rise to the oral tradition concerning Jesus was the question: who is he? Part of Mark's answer is found in the voice from the cloud οὗτός ἐστιν ὁ υἱός μου ὁ ἀγαπητός (9.7), variations of which occur at significant moments in the Gospel.⁸⁷ The question was of central importance for his disciples after his death especially for the process of attempting to integrate a death of such ignominy into a divine plan.

In a culture which thought of the afterlife in terms of the resurrection of the body among other conceptions, the images of raising and rising are employed in the New Testament essentially to express Jesus' status before God as it was conceived at that time. Whether that status was considered in terms of divine agency or divine identity is still the subject of debate. Some of the other images used in the New Testament, to express the same reality are: exaltation (Philippians 2.9), glorification (John 12.23-26), and ascension (Luke 24.51). Hooker concludes that the evangelist would have had no difficulty in dealing with this scene as a historical, heavenly confirmation of Jesus' identity.⁸⁸ Harrington speculates that in his portrayal of Jesus here, Mark intends to show how he imagines him after his death.⁸⁹ C. R. Moss argues that the epiphany element of the scene is intended to appeal to Greco-Roman readers, while the inclusion of Elijah and Moses would be more appealing to Jewish hearers and that the scene in its integrity is self-consciously directed

86 K. Berger, "Die Verklärung Jesu," *Internationale Katholische Zeitschrift-Communio* 37.1 (2008): 3-9.

87 For example, in Mark 1.1, and 15.39. Even if the reading at the head of the Gospel is not attested in all of the main witnesses, its occurrence throughout the Gospel is significant.

88 Hooker, *Saint Mark*, 214. She identifies the three possible interpretations as: a corporate vision (Rawlinson); a reading back of a post-Easter phenomenon to a pre-Easter stage (Bultmann); and a piece of symbolic writing (Lohmeyer).

89 Harrington, "Mark," 58.

towards both Greco-Roman and Jewish hearers.⁹⁰ Elijah and Moses are the only figures in the Jewish scriptures portrayed as speaking with God on Mount Sinai. The presence of both with Jesus would most likely have moved readers to think of the earlier epiphanies on that mountain.⁹¹

I wish to argue here that Mark's portrayal of the transfiguration (9.2-8) shares with the five other scenes examined in this chapter the phenomenon of the motif of containment. If with Bultmann we include v. 9 as part of the transfiguration scene, a case may be made for recognising four forms of containment which will be familiar from earlier scenes. In the first instance, containment is likely when the number of witnesses to a scene is strictly limited. παραλαμβάνει ὁ Ἰησοῦς τὸν Πέτρον καὶ τὸν Ἰάκωβον καὶ τὸν Ἰωάννην καὶ ἀναφέρει αὐτοὺς εἰς ὄρος ὑψηλὸν κατ' ἰδίαν μόνους (9.2). The naming of the same three witnesses to the healing/restoring to life of Jairus' daughter suggests that something similar is at work here. The limitation is intensified by the almost tautologous expression κατ' ἰδίαν μόνους.

Secondly, containment of the event is ensured through the lack of understanding of the disciples which occurs at two moments in the scene. Peter's addressing Jesus in 9.5 is interpreted by the author in 9.6. as the result of his not knowing what to say. Jesus' reference on the way down the mountain in 9.10 to the son of man's rising from the dead causes them to question further what this means and indicates a lack of understanding. R. Pesch takes for granted that Jesus is referring to himself when he uses the expression "the son of man" in 9.9.⁹² However, the term itself invites ambiguity here and in its other occurrences in Mark. I shall argue in the next chapter that such ambiguity may be a form of the containment motif.

90 See C. R. Moss, "The Transfiguration: An Exercise in Markan Accommodation," *Biblical Interpretation* 12 (2004): 69-89.

91 D. C. Allison, Jr., "Elijah and Elisha," *Encyclopedia of the Historical Jesus* (ed. C. A. Evans; London and New York: Routledge, 2008), 178-179.

92 R. Pesch, *Das Markusevangelium. 2: Kommentar zu Kapitel 8.27-16.20* (HTKNT; Freiburg: Herder, 1977), 73-74.

A third instance of the motif is found in 9.6 in the author's explanation of why Peter did not know what to say, namely, that they became greatly afraid *ἐκφοβοὶ γὰρ ἐγένοντο*. Finally, and most importantly, there is the direct prohibition in 9.9 from speaking about what happened. It seems to me that Witherington puts the emphasis in the wrong place when he suggests that the prohibition originated as a kindness to the other disciples who do not wish to hear what the three know.⁹³ G. Bray offers an insight on the prohibition from a rhetorical critical perspective. At the level of discourse, that is, the communication between author and reader/hearers, the literary nature of the scene allows the reader to be present on the mountain with the characters in the story.⁹⁴ The injunction to secrecy has the effect of admitting them into the charmed intimate setting on the mountain with the six characters. It also excludes all others from that circle so that the act of reading brings the reader into a privileged position, from which most of the other characters in the drama are excluded. The injunction to secrecy is to last until the son of man has risen from the dead. The language in which this is phrased, *εἰ μὴ ὅταν ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ ἀνθρώπου ἐκ νεκρῶν ἀναστῆ*, favours the imagery of rising from the dead. The verb is intransitive and in the active voice where the son of man is the subject. This is the first time in the case of a direct prohibition from reporting a miraculous action that a time-limit is placed on the ban. That in itself is significant and suggests that the command to silence is not absolute and that it applies only within a limited context. At the levels of story and discourse the command to secrecy separates the characters in the narrative from the reader/hearers. The ban never applied to the communication between author and audience/readers. On the contrary, that communication occurs so that the story of Jesus may be more widely propagated.

In summary, in his depiction of the transfiguration Mark includes four different forms of the motif of containment: a limited number

93 Witherington, *Mark*, 262.

94 G. Bray, "La transfiguration," *La Revue Réformée* 2 (1999): 85-91.

of witnesses; a lack of understanding; fear; and a direct prohibition from reporting what happened. Of the six scenes examined, the one which presents Jesus in the most elevated terms is the transfiguration. It is unique among the six in that no one appears to benefit from the scene. That suggests that its significance consists in what it reveals about Jesus' exalted identity. Therefore, it is not surprising that the containment motif is represented here as strongly as it is and in such a wide variety of forms.

4.8 Conclusion

In this chapter, I examined six nature-miracles in the Gospel according to Mark. The most important conclusion to be drawn from the chapter is that in each case the motif of containment accompanies the miracle so that no scene is an unadulterated or an untrammelled glorification of Jesus. Mark's method in dealing with nature miracles is to portray Jesus doing something, which from the anthology of Jewish scriptures, is imagined largely as an activity of God alone. These are, for example, calming a storm, restoring the dead to life, feeding a multitude in a desert from next to nothing, walking on the sea and inhabiting the realm of glory. In every case where Mark does this, he includes the motif of containment which, within the narrative, has the effect of confining or prohibiting reporting of the event. The limitation may occur because of a direct command to silence, or because of a lack of understanding, or because of that compendium of emotional states comprising fear, astonishment, wonder or amazement, or because the number of witnesses is reduced.

C. A. Evans suggests that Mark's adoption of Jewish scriptural motifs as backdrops to Jesus' nature miracles reveals more sophistication than some interpreters have allowed.⁹⁵ Other scholars

95 C. A. Evans, "How Mark Writes," in *The Written Gospel* (ed. M. Bockmuehl and D. A. Hagner; Cambridge: CUP, 2005): 135-148, 147. Evans reports the position of A. Suhl's *Die Funktion der alttestamentlichen Zitate und Anspielungen im*

focus on Mark's use of Greco-Roman literary traditions for inter-textual connections. For example Yarbrow Collins points out that the image of Jesus asleep in the boat in addition to conjuring up for the readers/hearers a similar scene in Jonah, would also have reminded hearers from a Greek or Roman background of Odysseus (Homer, *Odyssey* 10.47-49) and Aeneas (Virgil, *Aeneid* 4.553).⁹⁶

Research into ancient historiography suggests that, in antiquity, historians wrote of the past primarily as it interpreted or related to the present.⁹⁷ Clearly the question of Jesus' identity was an urgent and current issue for the author of Mark, and those who preceded him. However, it is also true to say that the identity of Jesus was not just an issue of the identity of a single individual. It had implications for how God was perceived. In this regard, Weir contends that while much contemporary research on Mark has tended to focus on Jesus' identity, and this is only to be expected, the evangelist is primarily focused on the God whose prophet Jesus is and by whom he is ultimately vindicated.⁹⁸

These two chapters have shown that the containment motif is much more pervasive in Mark than one would have expected. It

Markusevangelium (Gütersloh: Mohn, 1965), who holds that the author of Mark had little interest in the Jewish scriptures. This conclusion is called into question by U. Mauser *Christ in the Wilderness: The Wilderness Theme in the Second Gospel and its Basis in the Biblical Tradition*. (SBT 39; London: SCM, 1963); J. Marcus, *The Way of the Lord* and R. E. Watts *Isaiah's New Exodus in Mark* (WUNT 2.88; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1997, repr., Biblical Studies Library; Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2000).
96 Yarbrow Collins, *Mark*, 259. In this regard she also cites Strelan, "Storm Stories," 187 n. 47.

97 On the legitimacy of treating the Gospel literature as a source for historical information, *pace* Hengel, see the study by Becker, "The Gospel of Mark in the Context of Ancient Historiography," in *The Function of Ancient Historiography in Biblical and Cognate Lands* (ed. P. G. Kirkpatrick and T. D. Goltz; Library of Hebrew Bible/Old Testament Studies 489; London: T&T Clark International, 2008), 124-134. Becker argues against this claim although she concedes that there are many historical events which are echoed in the Gospel. She cites the destruction of Jerusalem as one of these.

98 A. C. Wire, "The God of Jesus in the Gospel of Mark," in *To Break Every Yoke: Essays in Honor of Marvin L. Chaney* (The Social World of Biblical Antiquity, Second Series, 3; ed. R. B. Coote and N. K. Gottwald; Sheffield: Phoenix Press, 2007), 292-310.

occurs surprisingly in places where it is not necessary for the plot. At the same time, there is a consistency in the forms which it takes and even in the vocabulary which it employs. As we have seen from this chapter one of the forms which containment takes is a failure to understand, caused sometimes by ambiguity. In some passages the ambiguity surrounding the expression “the son of man” contributed to a failure to understand on the part of the disciples, and in that sense, expanded the employment of the motif. In the next chapter, I shall investigate all of the fourteen occurrences of the title, “the son of man” in the Gospel according to Mark from the perspective of containment.⁹⁹

⁹⁹ Kirk and Young, “I Will Set His Hand to the Sea,” 333-340.

CHAPTER FIVE

Containment and Mark's Usage of the Son of Man

5.1 Introduction

I argued in the last two chapters that where the term “the son of man” appeared in a variety of scenes portraying exaltation it functioned as a means of downplaying that exaltation. In each case it was accompanied by at least one other form of the motif. The partial ambiguity in Greek of the expression ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ ἀνθρώπου is acknowledged by B. E. Wassell and S. R. Llewelyn.¹ The hypothesis which I shall test in this chapter is that the primary impulse of the term is to conceal rather than to reveal. If that is so its ability to function as a form of containment will be more easily recognised. As we have seen, one of the uses of containment is to prevent information about something noteworthy from being diffused. Where there is uncertainty, understanding is made more difficult if it occurs at all. I have argued above that a failure to understand is one of the forms taken by the containment motif. I shall examine

1 B. E. Wassell and S. R. Llewelyn, “Fishers of Humans, the Contemporary Theory of Metaphor, and the Conceptual Blending Theory,” *Journal of Biblical Studies* 133.3 (2014): 627-646, 638. Apart from the obvious verbal correspondence, they see a semantic equivalence based on ambiguity between ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ ἀνθρώπου, Jesus’ title for himself, and the title ascribed to the fishers ἀλιεῖς ἀνθρώπων (1.17).

all fourteen occurrences of the expression “the son of man” in the Gospel of Mark and plot the trajectory of his use of the term which, according to Achtemeier, is the ‘key to the understanding of the Jesus of Mark’s Gospel.’²

The literature on the origins and meanings of the term “the son of man” on its usage in biblical and extra-biblical locations from the post-exilic period to the end of the New Testament, on the correct understanding of the expression, on its provenance and historicity, both in relation to Jesus and to Mark, is vast.³ The authors selected in this survey are merely representative of different sides of the debates associated with and flowing from these and other subsidiary topics. In Mark the expression is found exclusively on the lips of Jesus, a phenomenon which has caused some to reach a particular conclusion about the origins of its application to him. On the other hand scholars have argued that the influence of the early church on the Gospel is nowhere greater than in the use of this expression.⁴ Similarly it is impossible to say whether Mark was first to make the connection between Jesus and the second of the two superior beings in Daniel 7 or whether it was in circulation when he was writing. This is the

2 P. J. Achtemeier, *Mark* (Proclamation Commentaries; Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1986), 60.

3 See E. Adams, “The Coming of the Son of Man in Mark’s Gospel,” *Tyndale Bulletin* 56.2 (2005): 39-61; P. M. Casey, *Aramaic Sources of Mark’s Gospel* (Cambridge: CUP, 1998), 138-192; *idem*, *The Solution to the “Son of Man” Problem* (London: T&T Clark International, 2009); H. L. Chronis, “To Reveal and to Conceal: A Literary-Critical Perspective on “the Son of Man” in Mark,” *New Testament Studies* 51 (2005): 459-481; J. D. G. Dunn, “The Danielic Son of Man in the New Testament,” in *The Book of Daniel: Composition and Reception* (Volume 2; SVT 83; eds. J. J. Collins and P. W. Flint; Leiden: Brill, 2001), 528-549; M. D. 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* (London: SPCK, 1967); J. C. Naluparayil, “Question of Jesus’ Identity and the First ‘Son of Man’ Logion in Mark 2.10,” *Bible Bhashyam* 29 (2003): 251-277; J. Schröter, “The Son of Man as the Representative of God’s Kingdom: On the Interpretation of Jesus in Mark and Q” in *Jesus, Mark and Q: The Teaching of Jesus and its Earliest Record* (eds. M. Labahn and A. Schmidt; JSNTSS 214; Sheffield: Academic Press, 2001), 34-68; C. M. Tuckett, “The Present Son of Man sayings,” *JSNT* 14 (1982): 58-81.

4 See B. H. Gregg, *The Historical Jesus and the Final Judgment Sayings in Q* (WUNT 2.207; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2006), 181-182.

question of the origin of the designation of Jesus as the son of man which is *per se* a crucial issue for historical Jesus studies. Bultmann and C. F. D. Moule with different emphases, come down on the side of admitting Mark's reliance on the earlier work. On the other hand, P. Vielhauer and Perrin argue that the origin of the application of the term to Jesus may be traced to the early Christian period.⁵ In any event, while that is ultimately a question for another forum, it is also helpful to reiterate what I stated above, namely, that recent German research reveals a good deal of scepticism about the existence of an ancient Jewish son of man tradition.⁶ That conclusion will necessarily require a rebalancing of scholarship on the importance of the term in a pre-Markan context in another forum.⁷

As we noted in Chapter Two and Chapter Three, the literary

5 While the historical question is beyond the scope of this dissertation it may be helpful to recall the basic positions on both sides of the debate. On the one hand, there is Bultmann's conclusion that some sayings were spoken by the historical Jesus, namely, those that differentiated between him and the one who would play a role in the eschatological judgment (Bultmann, *History of the Synoptic Tradition*, 112, 122, 128, 151-152). See also C. F. D. Moule, "Neglected features in the problem of 'the son of man,'" in *Neues Testament und Kirche. Für Rudolph Schnackenburg* (ed. J. Gnilka; Freiburg: Herder, 1974), 413-428. On the other side see P. Vielhauer, "Gottesreich und Menschensohn in der Verkündigung Jesu," in *Festschrift für Günther Dehn zum 75. Geburtstag* (ed. W. Schneemelcher; Neukirchen: Kreis Moers, 1957), 51-79 and N. Perrin in "Mark XIV.62: The End Product of a Christian Peshet Tradition?" *New Testament Studies* 12 (1965-66): 150-155; *idem*, "The Son of Man in Ancient Judaism and Primitive Christianity: A Suggestion," *Biblical Research* 11 (1966): 17-28 *idem*, "The Creative Use of the Son of Man Traditions by Mark," *Union Seminary Quarterly Review* 23 (1967-68): 3-25. Both take the view that none of the son of man sayings may be traced back to Jesus and that the origins of the tradition lie in one of a number of attempts to integrate the death of Jesus into his life and teaching and into his identity as one sent by God.

6 See also S. Beyerle, "One Like a 'Son of Man:' Innuendoes of a Heavenly Individual," in Boccaccini, *Enoch*, 54. Beyerle cites as a prime example M. Kreplin, *Das Selbstverständnis Jesu: Hermeneutische und christologische Reflexionen, historisch-kritische Analyse* (WUNT 2.141; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2001).

7 Yarbro Collins reminds readers that $\acute{\omicron} \upsilon \delta \varsigma \tau \omicron \upsilon \acute{\alpha} \nu \theta \rho \acute{\omega} \pi \omicron \varsigma$ is not a Greek idiom. She suggests a number of Semitic antecedents for the term, including, in Hebrew, בן האדם and, in Aramaic בר אנשא בר נשא , or בר נשא . She argues that the use of the term in relation to Jesus implies that he was recognised as the chief agent of God, the Messiah, prefigured in Daniel 7. While in the narrative context of the Gospel, the use of the term is ambiguous, especially for Gentile Christians, for the informed however, it would have had the force of acclaiming Jesus as Messiah.

device of *post eventum* prediction is a noteworthy feature of Daniel 7 as it is for Mark.⁸ The latter's use of the term "the son of man" is also significant and indeed the frequency with which it occurs and prominence accorded to it support the argument that it constitutes a motif itself in the Gospel. The reliance of Mark on Daniel 7 in three of his fourteen uses of the term, the so-called eschatological predictions, is clear. A synoptic table will help as a summary of the points of comparison and contrast. The same cannot be said, however, of the other occurrences in Mark since, as I have indicated above, there is no scholarly agreement on the matter. In relation to the Markan eschatological predictions J. Jeremias views them as attributable to Jesus who, he claims, uses them as an instance of the third person to make a distinction between his powerlessness at present and his future state of exaltation.⁹ He believes that apart from these three other uses of the expression in Mark may also go back to the historical Jesus. He argues that some of these have parallels elsewhere in the gospels but with the expression "the son of man" missing. He concludes that those instances which are not paralleled elsewhere are more likely to be authentic.¹⁰ His views have been well challenged by F. H. Borsch and others.¹¹

LXT Daniel 7.13-14	Mark 8.38	Mark 13.26	Mark 14.62
ἐθεώρουν ἐν ὄραματι τῆς νυκτὸς καὶ ἰδοὺ		καὶ τότε ὄψονται	καὶ ὄψεσθε
ἐπὶ τῶν νεφελῶν τοῦ οὐρανοῦ		ἐν νεφέλαις	μετὰ τῶν νεφελῶν τοῦ οὐρανοῦ

8 For an account of *ex eventu* prophecy as a literary device, see Collins, *Daniel: with an Introduction to Apocalyptic Literature*, 11-12.

9 See J. Jeremias, *New Testament Theology: The Proclamation of Jesus* (trans. J. Bowden; London: SCM Press, 1971), 257-276.

10 J. Jeremias, "Die älteste Schicht der menschensohn-Logion," *ZNWt* 58 (1967): 159-172.

11 F. H. Borsch, *The Christian and Gnostic Son of Man (SBT 2.14)* (London: SCM Press, 1970) 5-28.

ὡς υἱὸς ἀνθρώπου	ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ ἀνθρώπου	τὸν υἱὸν τοῦ ἀνθρώπου	τὸν υἱὸν τοῦ ἀνθρώπου
ἤρχετο	ὅταν ἔλθῃ	ἐρχόμενον	ἐρχόμενον
καὶ ὡς παλαιὸς ἡμερῶν παρῆν	τοῦ πατρὸς αὐτοῦ		
καὶ οἱ παρεστηκότες παρῆσαν αὐτῷ	μετὰ τῶν ἀγγέλων τῶν ἁγίων		
καὶ ἐδόθη αὐτῷ ἐξουσία καὶ...δόξα... καὶ ἡ ἐξουσία αὐτοῦ... καὶ ἡ βασιλεία αὐτοῦ ἥτις οὐ μὴ φθαρῇ	ἐν τῇ δόξῃ	μετὰ δυνάμεως πολλῆς καὶ δόξης	ἐκ δεξιῶν καθήμενον τῆς δυνάμεως

**Synopsis of Daniel 7.13-14 and the three eschatological predictions
of the son of man.**

Other scholarly work on the expression has indicated, in the words of Kelber, that Mark “in part adopted, in part shaped and created, and above all strategically placed the son of man sayings throughout the Gospel.”¹² Such a judgement may appear a hedging of bets but it is a safe conclusion to reach as Marcus’ account of the use of the term in Mark indicates.¹³ He argues that Mark’s portrayal of the son of man is not a corrective to the Christology of miracle-working opponents.¹⁴ The employment of the term by Mark may represent a development of its usage in Daniel 7 and the *Similitudes of Enoch*. He argues further that there and in Mark the term is a designation for a heavenly apocalyptic figure who functions as revealer, redeemer, and

12 W. H. Kelber, “The Hour of the ‘Son of Man’ and the Temptation of the Disciples (Mark 14.32-42),” in *The Passion in Mark: Studies on Mark 14-16* (ed. W. H. Kelber; Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1976), 41-60, 51. Summarising the discussion on the son of man and the identity of Jesus, Donahue concludes: “The ‘Son of Man’ Christology as it is found in Mark is then in a real sense a Markan creation.” See J. R. Donahue, *Are You the Christ? The Trial Narrative in the Gospel of Mark* (SBL Dissertation Series 10; Missoula: University of Montana Press, 1973), 182.

13 Marcus, *Mark 1-8*, 528-532.

14 Marcus, *Mark 1-8*, 532.

judge.¹⁵ It is generally considered to be the case that while Mark is not an apocalypse it is heavily influenced by the apocalyptic world view.¹⁶ Yarbrow Collins' designation of Mark as an eschatological monograph supports this position, by virtue of the fact that eschatology is of central concern to apocalyptic literature.¹⁷

The eschatological impetus of Daniel 7 may be behind what J. Schröter has characterised as the subordination of the titles "Christ" and "Son of God" in Mark to the designation, the son of man.¹⁸ If this is a correct assessment, and the central thesis of containment of this dissertation would suggest that it is, it means that the expression supersedes the other exalted titles of Jesus and, by virtue of that fact alone, holds within it an articulation of the highest status of the one of whom it is predicated. For that reason, we would expect that everywhere it occurs in this Gospel it will be accompanied by containment. The following pages will attempt to vindicate this conclusion.

5.2 Authority on earth to forgive sins (Mark 2.10)

ἐξουσίαν ἔχει ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ ἀνθρώπου ἀφιέναι ἁμαρτίας ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς.

The son of man has authority to forgive sins on the earth.

5.2.1 Context and literary unity of Mark 2.1-12

In Mark 2.1-12 Jesus is portrayed healing a man who was paralysed and forgiving him his sins. The unit is separated from the preceding

¹⁵ Marcus, *Mark 1-8*, 530.

¹⁶ Collins has shown that apocalyptic eschatology as found in Daniel and in the Enochic Dream Visions and the *Apocalypse of Weeks* includes the expectation of a judgement after death of eternal reward or punishment. See Collins, "The Apocalyptic Worldview of Daniel," 62.

¹⁷ Yarbrow Collins, *Mark*, 18.

¹⁸ Schröter, "The Son of Man as the Representative of God's Kingdom," 34-68. Schröter concludes that the Christology of Mark (and of Q) is oriented to the expectation of the return of the currently absent son of man Jesus, who commands his disciples to continue his activity in the intervening time.

passage by the temporal phrase δι' ἡμερῶν (2.1) and by the change of location indicated by εἰσελθὼν πάλιν εἰς Καφαρναοῦμ. The scene comprises two parallel movements each containing the following elements: interaction, reaction and Jesus' answer. The dramatic tension is articulated and an imaginative attempt at resolving it is described (2.2-4). Jesus' action is portrayed as an immediate response to the personal quality displayed (τὴν πίστιν αὐτῶν) and a reasonable if negative reaction is recounted (2.5-7). Jesus offers an alternative interpretation and reinforces it by the action he takes (2.8-11). The effect of what he does on the paralysed man and the response of all of the bystanders conclude the episode (2.12). The trust (τὴν πίστιν) in Jesus' power to heal displayed by the Jewish individuals who brought the paralysed man to him and who overcame the physical obstacles is contrasted with the reluctance of some of the scribes when they considered the theological consequence of what Jesus has said to take him at his word. Jesus' action heals the man and at the same time answers their legitimate questions.

The general context of this passage is that it is part of the section from 2.1-3.6.¹⁹ Even though the preceding section portrayed Jesus as being almost universally positively received, Yarbrow Collins also opts to highlight the controversial aspect of the stories. She takes this line of thought one step further by pointing out that the conflict was already there in latent form almost as soon as his public activity becomes a subject to be written about.²⁰ However, it is possible and perhaps preferable to play down the disputational and polemical character of what is happening in these scenes in favour of seeing

19 The content of this section has been described variously by Bultmann as conflict stories, conflict apophthegms or conflict anecdotes (*History*, 11-12). Since my intention at this point is to assess the structure and context of the passage with the reference to the son of man in 2.10, I shall bypass the issue of evaluating Bultmann's approach and confine my remarks here to a suggestion that, as far as this particular pericope is concerned, his categories overstate the polemical nature of what is essentially a difference in Torah interpretation between Jesus and various interlocutors.

20 Yarbrow Collins, *Mark*, 182.

them as instances of halachic discussion or of internal Jewish discussions.²¹ Various dialogue partners are introduced in these stories which take the form of a public debate. They include scribes, scribes of Pharisees, disciples of John the Baptist and disciples of Pharisees, Pharisees, Pharisees and Herodians. The subjects covered vary from healing and the forgiveness of sins in the section under examination here (2.1-12); the call of a tax-collector (Levi), an issue which would have engendered unique opposition in itself (2.13-17); questions about fasting (2.18-22); work on the Sabbath (2.23-28); and healing on the Sabbath (3.1-6). Not all of the discussions deal with the same level of opposition. They range from admiration (2.12) to active hostility (3.6). In this way, while it is beneficial to honour the difference of opinion in these cases, it is also important to situate the various debates within a Jewish matrix.

5.2.2 Structure of Mark 2.1-12

<i>Beginning and Setting</i>	2.1-2	
<i>Interaction I</i>	2.3-4	The presentation of the paralysed man
	2.5	Jesus' response
<i>Interaction II</i>	2.6-7	The response of some scribes
	2.8-11	Jesus' response
<i>Conclusion</i>	2.12	

The scene is set in terms of location and time which allows the story to commence (2.1-2). The unit unfolds in two interactions (2.3-5 and 2.6-11). The first comprises the presentation of the paralysed man (2.3-4) and the response of Jesus (2.5). The second half is composed of two elements: the response of some scribes (2.6-7);

²¹ Tomson stresses that not all debates need to lead to enmity and that Jesus' discussions with the Pharisees are not infrequently open and even friendly. See Tomson, *If this be from Heaven*, 267.

and Jesus' answer to them (2.8-11). The passage concludes with the cure of the man (2.12). The placing of the healing at the end thus constitutes a dislocation of the more usual order of stories which involve a difference of opinion about Torah interpretation.²² The final sentence puts the differences between the parties into perspective by highlighting the common response of the onlookers.²³

5.2.3 The motif of containment in Mark 2.1-12

I shall argue that this scene contains a number of instances of the motif of containment. This first occurrence of the term "the son of man" in Mark elaborates on his identity in terms of the authority he exercises now.²⁴ That it is Jesus who is being referred to here is clear from the context. J. C. Naluparayil argues that if Jesus is to be identified with the son of man, theological implications are inevitable.²⁵ The rhetorical question in Mark 2.7 is a statement that God alone can forgive sins. Both ends of the spectrum of contemporary scholarship on the significance of portraying Jesus doing something allegedly reserved to God need to be mentioned briefly here. One side is represented by Dunn who denies any suggestion of pre-existence for Jesus in Mark and who portrays Mark's Christology primarily in terms of Jesus as a divinely appointed eschatological figure.²⁶ On

22 Dewey shows that the usual order of what she calls 'conflict stories' which arise as a result of Jesus' healings is 'behaviour-objection-vindication.' See Dewey, *Markan Public Debate: Literary Technique, Concentric Structure and Theology in Mark 2.1-3.6* (SBL Dissertation Series 48; Chico, CA: Scholars Press, 1980), 28-29.

23 We may note that those who had a different view from Jesus joined in giving glory to God. ἐξίστασθαι πάντας καὶ δοξάζειν τὸν θεὸν (2.12).

24 Tuckett distinguishes between those sayings which have a present frame of reference and those with a future one. See "The present 'Son of Man' sayings," in *Journal for the Study of the New Testament* 14 (1982): 58-81. He places this saying in the former category. He argues, nevertheless, that this saying and the next contain a hint of the future suffering of Jesus. He bases this claim on his assumption that most of the present Son of Man sayings in Q, as in Mark, are not so much about the present authority of Jesus as about rejection and suffering (70). For that reason, they are somewhat unusual.

25 Naluparayil, "Jesus' Identity," 251-277.

26 Dunn, *Christology in the Making: A New Testament inquiry into the Origins of the Doctrine of the Incarnation* (2nd ed.; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1989), 65-97.

the other side D. Johansson draws the conclusion from his work on Mark that “The exclusive divinity of the God of Israel is maintained, but not to the exclusion of Jesus.”²⁷

The words Mark places on Jesus’ lips are quite strong. Taylor appeals to the phrase ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς to modify an absolute sense of ἐξουσίαν ἔχει ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ ἀνθρώπου ἀφιέναι ἁμαρτίας.²⁸ The term ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ ἀνθρώπου in this logion will have been familiar to the hearers from Daniel 7.13-14. Evans points out that the combination of ἐξουσία and ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ ἀνθρώπου strengthens the case for recognising an intertextual link between them.²⁹ T. C. Gray argues that ἐξουσία and βασιλεία are largely synonymous, because it is the son of man who ushers in the kingdom of God, where authority belongs to Jesus.³⁰ One feature of the Danielic and some Enochic texts typical of apocalyptic literature is the use of animals and human beings to

27 This may appear to be coming down on both sides of the argument. However, it is a nuanced conclusion which reflects the ambiguity inherent in Mark’s use of the title ‘kyrios.’ He regards some of its occurrences (e.g. Mark 1.2-3) as referring both to God and to Jesus. He also identifies differentiation between the two (e.g. Mark’s use of the Shema and of Psalm 110.1) which, Johansson argues, provides a correct understanding of the Shema and a reinterpretation of monotheism. See D. Johansson, “Kyrios in the Gospel of Mark,” *JSNT* 33 (2010): 101-124, 121. See also *idem*, “Who Can Forgive Sins but God Alone?” Human and Angelic Agents, and Divine Forgiveness in Early Judaism,” *JSNT* 33 (2011): 351-374. Dunn’s views are shared by R. Haight, “The Case for Spirit Christology,” *TS* 53 (1992): 257-287, 276; while the position of Johansson reflects those of B. Byrne, “Christ’s Pre-Existence in Pauline Soteriology,” *TS* 58 (1997): 308-330, 313 and G. O’Collins, *Christology: A Biblical, Historical and Systematic Study of Jesus* (New York: OUP, 1995), 238.

28 Taylor, *St. Mark*, 200-201, believes that this assertion does not invade the prerogative of God. Jesus’ authority to forgive sins is *on earth*. The two primary ways in which the forgiveness of sins here has been interpreted are first of all, that it is an exercise of the divine prerogative and secondly, that it is a human assurance to penitents that God has forgiven them. In the previous chapter I argued that the nature miracles functioned rhetorically by portraying Jesus as doing what only God can do. This is another example of the same type of rhetoric.

29 C. A. Evans, *Mark 8:27-16:20* (WBC 34B; Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 2001), 202.

30 See T. C. Gray, *The Temple in the Gospel of Mark: A Study in its Narrative Role*. (WUNT 2.242; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2006), 57-58. He argues that the two terms ἐξουσία and βασιλεία are interchangeable in LXX Daniel. Guelich is not convinced that this is so, nor that Mark intends to link the two. He argues that if it were the case they would be linked in 11.27-33 where the ἐξουσία of Jesus is directly questioned, but where there is no explicit mention of the son of man. See Guelich, *Mark* 92-93.

refer symbolically to entities other than themselves. Daniel 7 is a classic example, where the inferior of two beings at the end of a line of animals is referred to as like a son of man, that is, like a human being. Yarbro Collins sums up the author's achievement in the use of the phrase thus: ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ ἀνθρώπου may be said to mean that Jesus had the authority to forgive sins, "because he is the chief agent of God, the Messiah prefigured in Daniel 7."³¹ C. C. Black agrees that the link between miraculous speech and miraculous act is reinforced in this scene.³²

The expression ἵνα δὲ εἰδῆτε (2.10) is one of the rare places in Mark where the author portrays the protagonist of his narrative providing the reason why he has done something. The healing of a man with paralysis is thus presented as an external and observable sign of the internal forgiveness of sins. The sense of this pericope seems to be that Jesus' physical healing of the paralysed man is a corroboration of the claim that the son of man has power on earth to forgive sins. For that reason, in plotting the trajectory of the term in Mark it is worth noting that its first occurrence begins from a high christological and theological starting point.

The kernel of this first occurrence of the term the son of man in Mark is that it allows Jesus to claim obliquely, 'I have power on earth to forgive sins.' This is a claim which enhances the status of the protagonist as much as the most exalted prediction or the most powerful nature miracle could do. In that respect, if one were to search for evidence of containment this is a place one would expect to find it. In the first instance, the setting of this astounding declaration is very public. Yet an argument may be made for concluding that the dialogue between Jesus and the scribes took place in private, that is, between them alone. The context takes on the aspect of a discussion between different schools of interpretation, that is to say, a point of clarification or a moment of teaching within a Jewish milieu. The

31 Yarbro Collins, *Mark*, 189.

32 C. C. Black, "Mark as Historian of God's Kingdom," *CBQ* 71 (2009): 64-83, 81.

first indication that that is what is happening here comes with the phrase *καὶ διαλογιζόμενοι ἐν ταῖς καρδίαις αὐτῶν* (Mark 2.6). The scribes are pondering the scene in their hearts. Similarly, Jesus' perception occurs within, *τῷ πνεύματι αὐτοῦ* (2.8). His question to them recognises the internal nature of the situation *ἐν ταῖς καρδίαις ὑμῶν* (2.8). R. Hicks argues that what he terms "the prophetic-like insight" of Jesus elsewhere in Mark enables him to detect things which are unseen to others.³³ Furthermore, his healing action is portrayed by him as the visible corroboration of something which, by implication, is known at an invisible or internal level *ἵνα δὲ εἰδῆτε ὅτι ἐξουσίαν ἔχει ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ ἀνθρώπου ἀφιέναι ἁμαρτίας ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς* (2.10). The ending of the episode emphasises that having got up, the man who had been paralysed lifted up his pallet and went out in the sight of all, *ἄρας τὸν κράβαττον ἐξῆλθεν ἔμπροσθεν πάντων*. It is reasonable to assume that the phrase *ἔμπροσθεν πάντων* modifies these final actions only. The scribes do not speak in this scene. This detail strengthens the argument for regarding what has taken place as an instance of instruction or teaching.

Secondly, I am arguing that even if Jesus' part of the dialogue is heard by others, the ambiguity inherent in the use of the term the son of man would imply that it was not clear who he was referring to. Lack of clarity impedes understanding and, as we shall see below, failure to understand is a form which containment frequently takes in Mark. Thirdly after the paralytic man has been healed the response of the witnesses is amazement, *ὥστε ἐξίστασθαι πάντας* (2.12). This is the same verb used by Mark in two other significant passages dealing with the containment motif. In the first it expresses the response of the witnesses to the healing of Jairus' daughter in 5.42 and, in the second, that of the disciples after Jesus had walked on the sea in 6.51. In both instances, the verb is combined with another instance of the

33 R. Hicks, "Markan Discipleship according to Malachi: The significance of *μὴ ἀποστερήσης* in the story of the Rich Young Man (Mark 10.17-22)," *JBL* 132.1 (2013): 179-199, 182.

containment motif, the former by a direct prohibition from speaking about what happened, and the latter by the comment that they did not understand, and that their hearts were hardened. Yarbrow Collins argues that some of the details in 2.2-3 echo elements found at the end of the last chapter. She emphasises in particular the assembling of many people (πολλοί); the portrayal of Jesus' speaking 'the word' (τὸν λόγον); and the depiction of a group of people bringing a paralytic man to him for healing as recalling respectively the presence of the whole city (ὅλη ἡ πόλις) of 1.33; the image of the healed leper spreading the word (διαφημίζειν τὸν λόγον) of 1.45, and the depiction of the people of Capernaum bringing all their sick to him for healing in the summary statement of 1.32. She also rightly points out the antithesis between, on the one hand, the reluctance and resistance of the unclean spirit who challenged Jesus (1.23) and the faith and trust of the representatives of the paralysed man in overcoming the obstacle posed by the crowd (διὰ τὸν ὄχλον) in 2.4.³⁴

By way of summary, the astounding claim that Jesus has power on earth to forgive sins is accompanied here by three linguistic phenomena which, I wish to argue, constitute a coherent strategy on the part of the author to explain why further reporting of the scene would be unlikely. First, the claim was made as part of a private interaction between Jesus and a third party where only Jesus speaks and where the thoughts of his interlocutors are not revealed to bystanders. Secondly, in that context, the ambiguity contained in Jesus' use of the term the son of man, would have ensured that it would not have been clear who was being referred to. Thirdly, this failure to understand would have been reinforced by the choice of the word ἐξίστασθαι, to refer to the response of the witnesses to the miraculous action, and designated above as an instance of containment in another scene.

34 Yarbrow Collins, *Mark*, 184.

5.3 Lord of the Sabbath also (Mark 2.28)

κύριός ἐστιν ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ ἀνθρώπου καὶ τοῦ σαββάτου (Mark 2.28)

The son of man is Lord of the Sabbath also.

5.3.1 Context and literary unity of Mark 2.23-28

Mark 2.23-28 deals with an incident involving the disciples of Jesus on the Sabbath. The passage immediately preceding this one dealt with differences concerning the question of fasting between the disciples of Jesus on the one hand and those of the Pharisees and John the Baptist on the other (2.18-22). The fact that John's disciples are involved clearly reduces the polemical nature of what is happening, and at the same time, emphasises the cultural and traditional nature of such discussions within a Jewish religious context. This passage is followed by the last of the stories in this collection (3.1-6) which continues the theme of differing interpretations of Torah. In this case it is the question of Sabbath observance, specifically, about whether it is lawful or not to heal a man with a withered hand on the Sabbath.

The expression καὶ ἐγένετο... ἐν τοῖς σάββασιν (2.23), indicates the start of a new section with two classical arguments for a new beginning: a change of action and a change of day. On this occasion, it also coincides with a transition from the discourse at the end of the previous section to narrative. An action of his disciples becomes an occasion for Pharisees to present a different interpretation of the Torah from his (2.23-24). He responds by giving an example from tradition (2.25-26) and by two summary statements (2.27-28). Despite the fact that J. Dochorn, following a line of interpretation consistent with Bultmann's, designates the passage 'a collection of polemical apophthegmata,' such an approach is ultimately neither helpful nor completely accurate.³⁵ It fails to recognise the

35 J. Dochorn, "Man and the Son of Man in Mark 2.27-28," in E.-M. Becker, T. Engberg-Pedersen and M. Müller eds. *Mark and Paul. Comparative Essays Part II. For and Against Pauline Influence on Mark* (BZNT 199; Berlin: de Gruyter, 2014),

fundamentally Jewish nature of the kind of discussion found in these early parts of Mark, which, as I have indicated above, may be more usefully understood as the articulation of differences of opinion around subjects of interest to more than one school of Torah-interpretation. This caveat is recognized by K. Queller who identifies and challenges what he terms “a standard exegetical assumption,” regarding Markan so-called “controversy stories.” It is that it is often claimed that substantive *argument* about what is ostensibly at issue, in this case the question of the Sabbath, is eclipsed by a sense of *conflict* concerning the ultimate authority of Jesus.³⁶ The general context of this pericope is the same as the preceding one, namely, the collection of stories which share the literary genre of different (and not necessarily hostile) apophthegms or anecdotes in relation to Torah interpretation.

5.3.2 Structure of Mark 2.23-28

This passage adheres to a rather simple structure:

2.23	Transition and disciples' action
2.24	The question posed by Pharisees
2.25-26	First part of Jesus' answer
25a	Introductory formula
25b-26	Scriptural allusion
2.26-27	Second part of Jesus' answer
27a	Introductory formula
26b-28	Two pronouncements

146-168, 148.

³⁶ K. Queller, “‘Stretch Out Your Hand!’ Echo and Metalepsis in Mark’s Sabbath Healing Controversy,” *JBL* 129.4 (2010): 737-758, 756. Queller attributes this phenomenon to Bultmann’s thesis that the Gospel originated in narrativised kerygma whereby a proclamation of Jesus’ cosmic lordship became enshrined in a series of stories.

The scene is set in terms of location and place (23a). A behaviour involving a breach of Sabbath observance, in this instance on the part of his disciples is described (23b). A question is raised as the opening round of a dialogue (24). A reply is given in two phases. In the first (25-26) a reference to a scriptural tradition is cited³⁸ where the law in question was not observed because the more important law of *piquach nefesh* was being applied. In the second phase (27-28) two summary statements dealing with the Sabbath and its laws are pronounced. The first of these, an antithetical statement refers for its authority to the account of creation in Gen 1.1-2.4a. The implication of the beginning of the antithesis (27a) may well be that if the Sabbath was created for human beings it is there to serve them and not *vice versa*. Yarbrow Collins deduces from the second part of the antithesis (27b) that if that is so, it means that it was not intended that people would observe the Sabbath in ways which harm them. She claims furthermore that this is an interpretation which very likely would have been shared by most Jews at the time of Jesus and afterwards.³⁹

5.3.3 The motif of containment in Mark 2.23-28

This is the second occurrence of the term “the son of man” in Mark. Here the sentence may be interpreted in two ways, where the son of man may be understood in an individual or collective sense. While the former sense would be interpreted to refer to a particular person, the latter would function as a synonym for the human race, that is to say, that human beings are rulers of the Sabbath. For that reason, it is first of all necessary to determine whether it is Jesus who is being

37 Dochorn “Man and the Son of Man,” 154. He points out that by mentioning Abiathar, Mark has made a factual error. According to 1 Sam 21.2, the actual priest was Ahimelech, the father of Abiathar. The ‘house of God’ was in fact a temple in Nob and not, as might be presumed, the Jerusalem temple.

38 According to this principle the preservation of human life superseded virtually any other religious consideration. When the life of a specific person was in danger, almost any of the מצוות לא תעשה (commands to not do an action of the Torah) became inapplicable in Jewish law.

39 Yarbrow Collins, *Mark*, 203-204.

referred to in this occurrence of the term, “the son of man” before continuing to search for evidence of containment. Yarbro Collins has pointed out that when the corresponding Hebrew phrase **בְּן־אָדָם** appears in poetic passages, it is frequently the literal sense that is intended. That is to say, it functions as a generic term for humanity. For example, in Job 25.6:

אֵיךְ כִּי־יֵאָנוּשׁ רִמָּה ἔα δὲ ἄνθρωπος σαπρία How much less a man (is) a maggot!

:וּבֶן־אָדָם תּוֹלַעָה καὶ υἱὸς ἀνθρώπου σκώληξ Or a son of man (is) a worm!

The question is whether it is possible to determine which of the senses, i.e. the generic (literal) or the specific (symbolic), is more likely to be intended here. A brief analysis may help. If we take Mark 2.28 in conjunction with 2.27 we find that the second verse can be understood as a reiteration of the first. That is to say, both refer primarily to the generic sense of the expression. S. W. Henderson regards this as the more likely interpretation.⁴⁰ However, such an interpretation does not rule out a specific element here. If human beings are above the Sabbath in the sense that the Sabbath is at the service of people, that includes Jesus himself, and it may be argued in this context it includes Jesus in a paramount sense.

If we take the section from Mark 2.1 to 3.6 as a unit we notice a certain progression taking place. In 2.24 Jesus is questioned about the breaking of the Sabbath by the disciples. In the following section (3.1-6) it is the action of Jesus himself which becomes the subject of a discussion. It is possible then that the first pronouncement, τὸ σάββατον διὰ τὸν ἄνθρωπον ἐγένετο καὶ οὐχ ὁ ἄνθρωπος διὰ τὸ σάββατον is a generic one while the second is a specific reference to

40 Henderson, *Christology and Discipleship*, 76-77. She holds that the sense of the expression here is that it is humanity which is lord of the Sabbath. She reads both the phrases τὸ σάββατον διὰ τὸν ἄνθρωπον ἐγένετο καὶ οὐχ ὁ ἄνθρωπος διὰ τὸ σάββατον and ὥστε κύριός ἐστιν ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ ἀνθρώπου καὶ τοῦ σαββάτου. synonymously.

Jesus. Alternatively, it is equally possible that both are intended to have a generic meaning.

Some scholars have judged that here the term applies to Jesus. In other words, it is an oblique or periphrastic reference by Jesus to himself. L. Schenke's view is that at the very least, this interpretation ought not to be ruled out.⁴¹ T. R. Hatina's examination of the word *κύριός* in Mark in relation to Jesus and to God leads him to a similar conclusion. If it is Jesus who is being referred to here, then some element of containment may be expected to occur. Of course, if it does not, then any argument in favour of the existence of containment collapses.

To sum up the discussion of this logion, this is one of the occurrences of the term "the son of man" in Mark where it is more difficult to determine whether it is being used generically or in an individual sense. My view is that if the author wanted to be more specific about his referent it would have been easy for him to have been so. However, he has left us with ambiguity. The combination of *κύριός* and *ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ ἀνθρώπου* makes it likely that it is to himself that Jesus is referring. And secondly, in light of the other uses of the term in Mark, it would be exceptional if this occurrence did not refer to Jesus. Therefore, if it does refer to Jesus, there is an astounding claim being made about him at this point. Furthermore, we have come to expect that it would be unusual for such a claim not to be accompanied by some element of containment. We may argue that that is provided here by the uncertainty surrounding the expression "the son of man" itself. If we are correct in this assertion, it is nevertheless important to add that such ambiguity is the only instance of containment in this pericope. It is also possible to argue that on this occasion the audience was limited to those of the Pharisees who engaged with Jesus in discussing this question. In fact, it is not clear whether the

41 L. Schenke, *Das Markusevangelium: Literarische Eigenart – Text und Kommentierung* (Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 2005), 96.

disciples were privy to the conversation. If that is the case, it provides a second argument for the existence of containment in this pericope.

5.4 First passion prediction (Mark 8.31)

Καὶ ἤρξατο διδάσκειν αὐτοὺς
 ὅτι δεῖ τὸν υἱὸν τοῦ ἀνθρώπου πολλὰ παθεῖν
 καὶ ἀποδοκιμασθῆναι ὑπὸ τῶν πρεσβυτέρων καὶ τῶν ἀρχιερέων
 καὶ τῶν γραμματέων
 καὶ ἀποκτανθῆναι
 καὶ μετὰ τρεῖς ἡμέρας ἀναστῆναι.

And he began to teach them
 that it is necessary the son of man to suffer many things
 and to be rejected by the elders and the chiefpriests and
 the scribes
 and to be killed
 and after three days to rise.

Because the next two occurrences of the son of man (8.31, 38) occur in the same literary unit (Mark 8.27-9.1) I shall provide a single account of the context and literary unit of the pericope. I shall also supply a delineation of the structure of the unit as a whole before giving a separate description of the structure of both sub-units.

5.4.1 Context and literary unity of Mark 8.27-9.1

Mark's central section (8.22-9.52) forms the division between the two larger sections of the Gospel (1.1-8.21 and 9.53-16.8). The motif which binds the section together is that of a journey in and out of Galilee from Bethsaida (8.22); the villages of Caesarea Philippi (8.27); (stealthily) through Galilee (9.30); Capernaum (9.33); from Galilee to Judaea and beyond the Jordan (10.1); on the road to Jerusalem (10.32); and Jericho (10.46), and ultimately to Jerusalem. It is framed by two healing stories of blindness (8.23-26 and 10.46-

52). This unit (8.27-9.1) begins the middle section. It is followed by the story of the transfiguration and its epilogue (9.2b-13) and the exorcism of the demon who resisted the disciples (9.14-29); the second passion prediction and its sequel (9.30-37); and accounts of troubling situations for Jesus' disciples (9.38-50). Teachings on a variety of topics, namely, adultery; welcoming the kingdom of God as a little child; property and family ties (10.1-31) follow. The third passion prediction with its aftermath (10.31-45) is the last act of this section. The transition to this section occurs in 8.27a with the change in geographical location. The unit itself consists of three scenes (8.27b-30, 8.31-33 and 8.34-9.1). The transition at the end of the unit is found in 9.2a with a temporal designation.

5.4.2 Structure of Mark 8.27-9.1

<i>Transition</i>	8.27a	Spatial change
<i>Scene One</i>	8.27b	Jesus' first question to his disciples
	8.28	The disciples' answer
	8.29a	Jesus' second question to his disciples
	8.29b	Peter's answer
	8.30	Jesus' rebuke and prohibition to them from speaking about this.
<i>Scene Two</i>	8.31	First passion prediction of the son of man
	8.32	Peter's misunderstanding
	8.33	Jesus' corrective response
<i>Scene Three</i>	8.34	Jesus' call to anyone wishing to be his disciple
	8.35	A saying declaring a future reversal of losing and saving life
	8.36	A saying contrasting gaining the world and losing one's life

8.37	A saying that nothing is as valuable as life
8.38a	A saying threatening that shame will be met with shame
8.38b	Eschatological prediction of the son of man
9.1	A saying about the imminent arrival of God's kingdom
(Transition 9.2a	temporal change)

The prediction occurs in the second scene (8.31-33). The start of a new pericope is signalled by the coordinating conjunction *καί* and by the modal verb *ἤρξατο* (8.31) which by definition refers to the beginning of something new.⁴² The end of the unit and the transition to the next section are indicated by *καί* and the provision of a wider audience *προσκαλεσάμενος τὸν ὄχλον σὺν τοῖς μαθηταῖς αὐτοῦ εἶπεν αὐτοῖς* (8.33) which is a formulaic phrase to indicate the beginning of a speech.⁴³ There are three movements: the prediction (8.31); Peter's misunderstanding (8.32); and Jesus' corrective response (8.33) The infinitive *διδάσκειν* establishes the character of the passage. It is followed by four subordinate noun clauses where the impersonal *δεῖ* occurs in the first and is presumed in each of the subsequent three. It refines the nature of what he was teaching. Each of the clauses details in sequence the fate of the son of man: *παθεῖν*, *ἀποδοκιμασθῆναι*, *ἀποκτανθῆναι*, and *ἀναστῆναι*. The following phrase (8.32a) amplifies the proclamatory nature of the prediction and, by the use of the verb *ἐλάλει* signals its prophetic tone. Unlike Jesus' saying, Peter's objection (8.32b) takes place in private (*προσλαβόμενος*). Jesus' correction of Peter's misunderstanding (8.33) brings the unit to an end.

5.4.3 The motif of containment of Mark 8.27-33

Two aspects of this scene, namely, the prediction itself and the final detail that the son of man will rise, effect an exaltation of Mark's

⁴² Arndt and Gingrich, "ἄρχω," *Lexicon*, 113, "be first."

⁴³ Yarbrow Collins, *Mark*, xxx.

protagonist. This impulse is further enhanced by two elements in the following sentence (8.32). They are: the amplification of the prediction by the word *παρρησία* and the choice of vocabulary, specifically, *ἐλάλει*. H. Jaschke has shown that *λαλέω* is frequently employed with prophetic overtones in Luke and also in Mark so that the choice of the word here functions as an allusion to Jesus' prophetic status.⁴⁴ We have come to expect that containment will follow these circumstances. It may be identified in several forms here. First, there is the ambiguity surrounding the referent of the expression "the son of man" in 8.31 which contributes to the minimizing of what is predicted of Jesus. Secondly, even though Peter sees through the ambiguity, he appears to resist the element of suffering and death. Jesus' admonition of him though based on this aspect has the effect of silencing any talk of resurrection. In that sense his response may be characterised as an instance of misunderstanding of the prediction. Thirdly, an argument may also be made for identifying two other instances of the motif here. The first concerns the confined audience of the prediction. It is clear from 8.27 that the antecedent of the phrase *ἤρξατο διδάσκειν αὐτοὺς* (8.31) is his disciples. That is to say, the prediction is made to a more limited group of listeners than at other times when he addresses crowds e.g. 8.1. Therefore, it is not yet public knowledge. In fact, unlike Peter's declaration of Jesus as the Christ which is made in the present tense, the resurrection of the son of man is still in the future. He and his followers will have to wait. In that sense, a further element of containment is present. The word *παρρησία* (8.32) is sometimes translated to mean 'openly' as in the case of the New American Bible, giving the impression that there is a wider audience at play. However, it may also be translated as 'outspokenness' without the implication of a wide audience.⁴⁵ I deal

44 H. Jaschke, "Prophetische Reden: der Beitrag der lukanischen Pfingsterzählung zu einer Theologie der Verkündigung" (Ph.D. diss., Freiburg im B., 1972).

45 H. Liddell and R. Scott, "*παρρησία*," *A Greek-English Lexicon* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1961), 1344.

below with the question of the audience of the third scene (8.34-9.1) of this section. And finally, the possible fourth format of the motif hinges on how one constructs the sentence containing the prohibition from speaking about him (or it?) *καὶ ἐπετίμησεν αὐτοῖς ἵνα μηδεὶν λέγωσιν περὶ αὐτοῦ* (8.30). While it is usually connected with Peter's confession, *σὺ εἶ ὁ χριστός* (8.29), it may also be connected with *καὶ ἤρξατο διδάσκειν αὐτοὺς ὅτι δεῖ τὸν υἱὸν τοῦ ἀνθρώπου πολλὰ παθεῖν* (8.31), which immediately follows. A similar linguistic situation exists in the other two passion predictions (9.30 and 10.32).

Just as Jesus' response (*ἐπετίμησεν*) (8.30) and the prohibition from speaking contain the impact of Peter's declaration in the first scene so also in the second does Peter's lack of understanding displayed in his rebuking (*ἐπιτιμᾶν*) (8.32) and in Jesus' judgement of him (*ἐπετίμησεν*) (8.33) minimize the significance of the prediction of death and resurrection. It is not entirely clear whether Peter is objecting to the idea of suffering and death in relation to Jesus at a personal level or to the combining of the concept of the son of man with suffering and death, albeit in a fusion which ends in resurrection (*ἀναστῆναι*).⁴⁶ After all, this is the first time that such a radical idea has been presented in the Gospel. The prediction itself leans more towards suffering and death in terms of vocabulary and form, even though of course its final word is resurrection. M. Proctor has argued that Mark's choice of *μετὰ τρεῖς ἡμέρας* over *τῆ ἡμέρα τῆ τρίτη* which occurs in 1 Cor. 15.4 constitutes another element of playing down the significance of the final outcome.⁴⁷

46 For examples of scholarship which reflects the former see D. J. Harrington, "Mark," 57; and *The Gospel according to St. Mark* (CGTC; ed. C. E. B. Cranfield; Cambridge: CUP, 1959), 280. The alternative position is taken by W. J. Harrington, *Mark*, 122, and E. P. Gould, *Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Gospel According to St Mark* (ICC; Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1922), 155. For Mally, "Mark," 53 it is not a matter of either/or, but rather of both/and.

47 M. Proctor argues that messianic overtones are more obvious in the wording of 1 Corinthians. "After Three Days' in Mark 8:31; 9:31; 10:34: Subordinating Jesus' Resurrection in the Second Gospel," *Perspectives in Religious Studies* 30 (2003): 399-424.

This is the third occurrence of the term “the son of man” in Mark and the first to include any notion of death. Henderson remarks that the allusion to suffering and death in relation to the son of man which occurs here prepares the reader for Mark’s subsequent presentation of Jesus.⁴⁸

5.5 First eschatological prediction of the coming of the son of man (Mark 8.38)

ὁς γὰρ ἐὰν ἐπαισχυθῆί με καὶ τοὺς ἐμοὺς λόγους
ἐν τῇ γενεᾷ ταύτῃ τῇ μοιχαλίδι καὶ ἀμαρτωλῷ,
καὶ ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ ἀνθρώπου ἐπαισχυθήσεται αὐτόν,
ὅταν ἔλθῃ ἐν τῇ δόξῃ τοῦ πατρὸς αὐτοῦ μετὰ τῶν ἀγγέλων
τῶν ἁγίων.

For whoever is ashamed of me and of my words
in this generation, the adulteress and sinner,
so also will the son of man be ashamed of him
when he comes in the glory of his father with the
holy angels.

5.5.1 Context and Literary Unity of Mark 8.27-9.1

This is provided above at 4.1.

5.5.2 Structure of Mark 8.34-9.1

An account of the combined structure of Mark 8.27-9.1 is provided above at 4.2. Mark 8.34-9.1 is the third section in the three-scene unit (Mark 8.27-9.1) outlined there. The scene is held together by the theme of discipleship. The break with the previous scene is flagged by *Καὶ προσκαλεσάμενος τὸν ὄχλον*, a formula which indicates that a teaching is to follow. It comprises an initial imperative (8.34) which is followed by five separate stand-alone sayings (8.35, 36, 37, 38, and 9.1). The fourth of these contains the first of three

⁴⁸ Henderson, *Christology and Discipleship*, 6.

predictions of the coming of the son of man. The scene ends with the temporal designation *Καὶ μετὰ ἡμέρας ἕξ* in 9.2 which introduces the transfiguration.

The literary unit of Mark 8.38 is composed of a four-line conditional sentence, comprising a two-line apodosis and a two-line protasis. The apodosis consists of a principal verb *ἐπαισχυθη* and an adverbial phrase where *ἐν τῇ γενεᾷ ταύτῃ* functions as a temporal indicator synonymous with the adverb “now”. The protasis consists of a principal verb with the same root *ἐπαισχυθησεται* and a subordinate temporal clause which constitutes the eschatological prediction.

5.5.3 The motif of containment of Mark 8.34-9.1

This is the first of three eschatological predictions of the coming of the son of man which parallel the three predictions of his passion. Yarbrow Collins is right when she points out that the content of this saying evokes the scenario and setting of Daniel 7.13.⁴⁹ The intertextual resonances between Dan 7.13 (Theod) and Mark 8.38 are clear. Witherington argues that the combination of *ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ ἀνθρώπου* and *ἔλθῃ* is the first suggestion that Mark has the Danielic passage in mind.⁵⁰ A brief synoptic table of both texts will be helpful.⁵¹

LXT Daniel 7.13

ὡς υἱὸς ἀνθρώπου

Mark 8.38

ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ ἀνθρώπου

49 Yarbrow Collins, *Mark*, 410. She argues that the earliest form of the saying spoke about the son of man which was not identical to Jesus, as Bultmann had earlier contended (*History of the Synoptic Tradition*, 112, 128). Subsequently when Jesus began to be closely connected with the son of man, Mark (and most likely Q also) conveyed the association by the context.

50 Witherington, *Mark*, 242 argues that *ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ ἀνθρώπου* was not the preferred terminology of early Christianity or of Mark himself for Jesus. If that is so, it strengthens the case for concluding that Mark has a reason for employing it here, namely, I suggest, to underline the connection with Daniel 7.13.

51 The Greek text (LXT) Theodotion more closely translates the Aramaic text of Daniel than does the Old Greek (LXX). This may explain why it superseded the latter and became the standard Greek text of Daniel.

ἐρχόμενος	ἔλθη
τοῦ παλαιοῦ τῶν ἡμερῶν	τοῦ πατρὸς αὐτοῦ
μετὰ τῶν νεφελῶν τοῦ οὐρανοῦ	μετὰ τῶν ἀγγέλων τῶν ἁγίων
ἔφθασεν καὶ ἐνώπιον αὐτοῦ προσηνέχθη	ἐν τῇ δόξῃ

Two principal characters appear in each. Where Daniel has an anarthrous form, Mark contains the article perhaps indicating he wishes to particularise that which Daniel conveyed in generic terms.⁵²

The relationship between the two beings in Daniel is paralleled by that of father and son in Mark. Dunn points out that while by far the most common use of δόξα in the New Testament concerns giving glory to God in praise and gratitude, it is also regularly used in connection with Jesus' exaltation and coming again.⁵³ The two are accompanied by angelic ministers in each case, χίλια χιλιάδες ἐλειτούργουν αὐτῷ καὶ μύρια μυριάδες παρειστήκεισαν αὐτῷ in Daniel and μετὰ τῶν ἀγγέλων τῶν ἁγίων, in Mark. Hooker suggests that in using the term "the son of man" Mark's Jesus may be referring to someone other than himself.⁵⁴ However, it is difficult to argue that the one referred to at the beginning of the pericope, in 8.34, is different from the one being referred to at its end, in 8.38. From a social analysis of the pericope Malina and Rohrbaugh help to fill out the significance of ἐπαισχυνθήσεται in an honour-shame society such as that of Greco-Roman Palestine.⁵⁵ It included the charge of not recognising a persons' claim to honour and of dissociating oneself from him/her.

52 See the discussion in Cranfield, *St Mark*, 274.

53 Dunn, *Did the first Christians worship Jesus? The New Testament Evidence* (Louisville KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2010), 23. Romans 8.18; 1Corinthians 2.8; Philippians 2.11 are examples. See also G. Kittel, "δόξα," *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* (eds. G. Kittel and G. Friedrich; trans. G. W. Bromiley; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1964-976), 2:81-93.

54 Hooker, *Saint Mark*, 88-93.

55 Malina and Rohrbaugh, *Social-Science Commentary*, 182.

The identification of Jesus with the second godlike figure in Daniel 7 is a high exaltation of his protagonist by Mark. Therefore, on the basis of what we have seen of Mark's approach, the reader could expect to find some element whereby that exaltation is minimized. Therefore, a close reading of the text will be necessary to establish whether or not that is so.

In the first instance, the use of the term, "the son of man" with its inherent ambiguity, may be said to provide the first element of containment. If the hearers are not sure who is being referred to it is unlikely that the gist of this prediction will be propagated further. Secondly, there is the confined nature of the audience, that is if we consider Bultmann's identification of the formulaic nature of the expression *προσκαλεσάμενος τὸν ὄχλον* in 8.34 to permit someone to make a speech, the implication is clear that the phrase is to be understood idiomatically rather than literally. That is to say, its function is to flag a speech rather than to identify an audience. Such an interpretation fits the pericope very well since, as I have indicated above, it consists of a series of stand-alone sayings around the theme of discipleship. In other words, the audience of this section is the same as for the first two, namely, the disciples. Thirdly, there is the argument that the explicit prohibition from speaking *καὶ ἐπετίμησεν αὐτοῖς ἵνα μηδενὶ λέγωσιν περὶ αὐτοῦ*. in 8.30 refers to what Jesus is about to say, as much as it is a response to what Peter has just said, and therefore, that it applies to 8.38 also. When these three factors are taken together their cumulative effect provides a strong case for the existence in the text of the motif of containment of the first eschatological prediction.

So far the trajectory of the occurrence of the term "the son of man" in Mark has been that beginning from a high starting point in the first two and proceeded to descend to include suffering and death in the third. In this its fourth appearance it exceeds the the heights of the first two.

**5.6 Prediction that the son of man will rise from the dead
(Mark 9.9, 9.12)**

Καὶ καταβαινόντων αὐτῶν ἐκ τοῦ ὄρους
διεστείλατο αὐτοῖς
ἵνα μηδενὶ ἅ εἶδον διηγήσωνται,
εἰ μὴ ὅταν ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ ἀνθρώπου ἐκ νεκρῶν ἀναστῆ.
καὶ τὸν λόγον ἐκράτησαν πρὸς ἑαυτοὺς
συζητοῦντες τί ἐστὶν τὸ ἐκ νεκρῶν ἀναστῆναι.

And as they were coming down from the mountain
he ordered them
that to no one the things they had seen they should relate
until the son of man from dead had arisen.
And the word they grasped to themselves
discussing what it is the rising from dead.

Since both occurrences of the son of man in 9.9 and 9.12 occur in the same literary unit I shall provide a single account of the context and literary unity of the passage. I shall also supply a delineation of the structure of the unit as a whole, before giving a separate description of the structure of both sub-units.

5.6.1 Context and literary unity of Mark 9.2-13

I examined Mark 9.2-8 in the previous chapter when dealing with nature miracles. Here, for the sake of completeness, I include a reference to the scene as part of the literary unit 9.2-13 which contains two occurrences of the term “the son of man.” The passage 9.2-13 occurs in Mark’s middle section (Mark 8.22-10.52) integrated by the journey motif which divides the rest of the Gospel into two main sections (1.1-8.21 and 11.1-16.8). I provided an account of the content of this central section in 5.1 above. Even though I set out the structure of 9.2-8 in the previous chapter, I provide it here again as part of the structure of the wider passage, 9.2-13.

5.6.2 Structure of Mark 9.2-13

<i>Transition</i>	9.2a	Temporal indicator
<i>Scene I: ascent</i>	9.2b	Spatial indicator
<i>Scene II: on the mountain</i>	9.2c-3	Transfiguration
	9.4	Appearance of Elijah and Moses who converse with Jesus
	9.5-6	Peter's response of misunderstanding
	9.7	Appearance of a cloud and sounding of a voice
	9.8	Return to earlier configuration
<i>Scene III: descent (a)</i>	9.9a	Spatial indicator
	9.9b	Prohibition from recounting about what they had seen and heard
	9.9c	Prediction that the son of man will rise from
	9.10	Lack of understanding about rising from dead
<i>Scene III: descent (b)</i>	9.11a	Thematic transition: Change of speaker
	9.11b	Disciples' question about Elijah's prior coming
	9.12a	Jesus' affirmative response
	9.12b	Prediction of the suffering of the son of man
	9.13	Jesus affirmation that Elijah has come already
<i>Transition</i>	9.14	Return to the disciples

The wider context into which Mark 9.9-10 is set is formed by 9.2c-13 which portrays the transfiguration of Jesus in three scenes: the first (9.2b) is a brief depiction of an ascent of a mountain; the second (9.2c-8) is set on the high mountain; while the third (9.9-13) takes

place during the descent from the mountain. The last one is further divided into two sections (9.9-10 and 9.11-13), each centred around a prediction dealing with the son of man. Mark 9.9-10 is the first of these segments. The beginning of the unit is signalled by the spatial transition *καταβαινόντων αὐτῶν ἐκ τοῦ ὄρους* (9.9a) and its end by the *καὶ ἐπηρώτων αὐτὸν λέγοντες* (9.11), with a change of speaker and subject.

Mark 9.9-10 possesses a binary structure. The first part consists of two clauses. The principal clause containing the verb *δισετείλατο* is followed by three subordinate clauses. The noun clause which is the direct object of the main verb makes clear that the command is a prohibition *μηδενὶ διηγῆσωνται*. The second *ἃ εἶδον* is another noun clause and the direct object of the verb *μηδενὶ διηγῆσωνται*. The third is an adverbial clause which modifies the verb *μηδενὶ διηγῆσωνται*. It indicates when the prohibition ceases. The surprising aspect of this structure is that the primary element of the unit, namely, the prediction that the son of man would rise from the dead, occurs in a subordinate clause. The second part of the unit consists of a main clause whose principal verb is *ἐκράτησαν*. This is modified by the participle *συζητοῦντες* which carries out the function of an adverbial temporal clause with the sense of ‘while discussing.’ The third clause is a subordinate noun clause containing the verb *ἔστιν* and is the direct object of *συζητοῦντες*.

5.6.3 The motif of containment of Mark 9.9-10

We may expect that such an exaltation of the protagonist which has described as an “enthronment” would give rise to several forms of containment.⁵⁶ I wish to argue that it occurs in four forms. The first is the direct prohibition from speaking about what the witnesses had seen, and indirectly about what they had heard concerning the son

56 Wypadlo, *Die Verklärung*, 41. See also P. Vielhauer, “Erwägungen zur Christologie des Markusevangeliums,” in *idem, Aufsätze zum Neuen Testament*. (München: Kaiser 1965)199-214.

of man's rising from the dead. Secondly, there is the small number of witnesses to this prediction, namely, Peter, James and John. The inclusion of these three named disciples at such moments as this in the Gospel suggests that Mark's employment of them is primarily a function of his pattern to play down miraculous actions rather than an indication of their status of belonging to an inner circle of disciples.⁵⁷ Thirdly, the fear of the witnesses arising from what they had seen on the mountain top the points to a failure to understand what was happening, as instanced by Peter's response. Fourthly, the ambiguity surrounding the terms "the son of man" and "rising from the dead" exacerbated their lack of understanding.

We may note here that some authors have interpreted the principal clause in *καὶ τὸν λόγον ἐκράτησαν πρὸς ἑαυτοὺς συζητοῦντες τί ἐστὶν τὸ ἐκ νεκρῶν ἀναστῆναι* (9.10) as "They kept the matter in mind." Clearly, this interpretation would dilute the effect of the containment motif. Bolt's arguments against this line of interpretation are persuasive.⁵⁸ M. Zerwick and M. Grosvenor agree on the ambiguity of the syntax.⁵⁹ B. J. Koet has shown that the Markan use

57 The feature of a confined audience (8.34; 8.38; 9.1; 11.2; 13.1-2; 13.3-37; 14.8-9; 14.27-28; 14.30) is such a pronounced feature of Mark that it would be difficult to argue that it was incidental to his approach wherever it occurs. As I pointed out above, the practice is in sharp contrast to general Hellenistic tradition, as the classicist Henrichs held, and as Smith argued (*The Aretalogy Used in Mark*, 39). He stressed that the tendency articulated in the secrecy injunction was in direct opposition to the conventions of pagan aretalogy. He emphasised further that in the Greco-Roman world it was one of the standard ingredients that the miracle or whatever form the manifestation of the divine took, was either performed before a large crowd of witnesses or was bruited in some other equally public manner. See also, Blackburn, *Theios Anēr*, 224-225.

58 Bolt, "Jesus' Defeat of Death," 220. As examples of instances where this is attempted through translation, Bolt cites RV, RSV, NIV, NRSV. He criticises these translations on two counts. First, they miss the force of *ἐκράτησαν* which has the sense of "to take hold of, to grasp, to seize." Secondly, they misconstrue *πρὸς ἑαυτοὺς* with *ἐκράτησαν* rather than with the following participle, *συζητοῦντες*, a construction for which there is no analogous usage. As examples of misinterpretation he cites H. B. Sweet, *The Gospel According to St Mark* (London: Macmillan, 1909), 192 and Taylor, *St. Mark*, 394.

59 M. Zerwick and M. Grosvenor agree that the syntax is ambiguous and accept that *ἐκράτησαν πρὸς ἑαυτοὺς* and *πρὸς ἑαυτοὺς συζητοῦντες* are both legitimate

of συζητέω is related to the later rabbinic use of דשר which is frequently used in the context of the interpretation of scripture, and that therefore the sense of συζητοῦντες veers more towards discussion, in a teaching and learning context than towards disputatious argumentation.⁶⁰ It is remarkable that such a moment of exaltation is referred to nowhere else in the rest of the Gospel.

While the saying concedes that the son of man will die, ἐκ νεκρῶν ἀναστῆ, the clear emphasis here is on the word ἀναστῆ. As I have noted above, because of the structure of the unit whereby the prediction occurs in a subordinate clause it is easy to miss the significance of what is happening here. It is also clear that the author intends to communicate that fulfillment is certain. The expression εἰ μὴ ὅταν indicates a temporal rather than a conditional formulation. The prohibition from speaking about the transfiguration will be removed when, not if, the son of man rises from the dead.

In summary, many different aspects of what I have been examining converge at this point: the resurrection of the son of man; a merging of the concepts of suffering and the son of man in the admission that the son of man will die; the combination of speech (prediction) and action; two nature miracles: transfiguration and resurrection; and the motif of containment in four forms, including its most direct one, the prohibition from speaking. When the evidence is weighed at this point it suggests that containment contributes to the use of the term “the son of man” and *vice versa*. It is clear therefore that since all of the Markan occurrences of the term so far are accompanied by elements of containment, usually in more than just a single form, the very use of the term in itself in relation to Jesus constitutes an exaltation.

constructions. See *A Grammatical Analysis of the Greek New Testament* (4th rev. ed.; Rome: Editrice Pontificio Istituto Biblico, 1993), 135.

60 B. J. Koet, “Übereinstimmung über das Wichtigste,” in *The Scriptures in the Gospels* (BETL, 131; ed. C. M. Tuckett; Leuven: Peeters, 1997), 513-523.

5.7 It is written that the son of man will suffer many things and be despised (Mark 9.12-13)

Καὶ ἐπηρώτων αὐτὸν λέγοντες·
 ὅτι λέγουσιν οἱ γραμματεῖς
 ὅτι Ἡλίαν δεῖ ἔλθειν πρῶτον;
 ὁ δὲ ἔφη αὐτοῖς·
 Ἡλίας μὲν ἐλθὼν πρῶτον ἀποκαθιστάνει πάντα·
 καὶ πῶς γέγραπται ἐπὶ τὸν υἱὸν τοῦ ἀνθρώπου
 ἵνα πολλὰ πάθῃ καὶ ἐξουδενηθῆ;
 ἀλλὰ λέγω ὑμῖν ὅτι καὶ Ἡλίας ἐλήλυθεν,
 καὶ ἐποίησαν αὐτῷ ὅσα ἤθελον,
 καθὼς γέγραπται ἐπ' αὐτόν.

And they asked him saying
 that the scribes say
 that Elijah has to come first;
 and he said to them:
 “Elijah is coming first to restore all things.
 Indeed, and Elijah is coming first to restore all things.
 And how is it written about the son of man
 that he will suffer many things and be despised?
 But I say to you
 That Elijah has indeed come
 And they did to him whatever they wished
 As it is written about him.”

5.7.1 Context and literary unity of Mark 9.2-13

This is provided above at 6.1.

5.7.2 Structure of Mark 9.11-13

Mark 9.11-13 is the second section of the unit (9.9-13) which is itself the second scene of the transfiguration pericope (9.2-13). The transition to a new section is indicated by the phrase *καὶ ἐπηρώτων αὐτὸν λέγοντες* (9.11), which is a formulaic introduction to a saying

or proverbial statement. The transition at the end is signalled by the change of location *καὶ ἐλθόντες πρὸς τοὺς μαθητὰς* in 9.14. Thematically, it is connected with the passage immediately preceding it by the person of Elijah. The scene falls into three brief phases. The characters are the same as those in the previous scene when the vision had receded, namely, Jesus, Peter, James and John. It is they who are described as coming to the disciples afterwards (9.14).

On the surface, the literary unit Mark 9.11-13 adheres to a simple structure: the questioning of a prediction and the answer. While the question is straightforward, the answer is complex. Hicks argues that this description of Elijah is founded on Malachi 3.22-23.⁶¹ It is given in three parts. In the first, the prediction of the original question is affirmed (9.12a). In the second, a new prediction which has been composed for the occasion, and whose standing is enhanced by the claim that it has been committed to writing, is presented (9.12b). The third part confirms that the original prediction had also been committed to writing and has now been fulfilled. By associating both predictions and by claiming written status for each, the new one, which introduces the concept that the son of man will suffer, is thereby greatly exalted. Consequently, its message is equally greatly reinforced.

5.7.3 The motif of containment of Mark 9.11-13

This short unit is recognised as problematic in detail by scholars of whom H. Anderson is a representative.⁶² Admittedly, the paralleling of the scriptural prediction of the return of Elijah with another prediction, which has been composed by the evangelist that the son of man would suffer is rather clumsy. But it serves Mark's purpose

61 Hicks, "Markan Discipleship according to Malachi, 186. In support of this argument he points out the catchwords linking the texts, especially Ἡλίας, πρὶν, and ἀποκαθιστάνει. He also postulates that, irrespective of the identity of the Elijah figure, the Markan co-texts of *καθὼς γέγραπται* here in 9.13 and in 1.2 likely share allusions to Malachi 3.

62 Anderson, *The Gospel of Mark* (NCBC; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1976), 229.

very well. The reference to the son of man is sandwiched between two allusions to Elijah's coming as precursor of another important person or of an event. The stature of Elijah in Jewish tradition has the effect of enhancing the status of the one who follows. It is noticeable in Mark's account of the transfiguration that Elijah is mentioned before Moses. The expectation of a return of Elijah is echoed in Malachi 4.5 (3.23 LXX). "I will send you Elijah, the prophet, before the great and terrible day of the Lord comes." Dunn concludes, citing references in Ben Sira and the Gospels, that the thought and hope of Elijah's return grew in attractiveness over the generations.⁶³ In the scene of the transfiguration the combination of Elijah and Moses has been considered by scholars to represent the twofold sources of authority coinciding with the two principal sections of the Jewish scriptures, the Torah and the Prophets.⁶⁴ Mark is leaving the hearers in no doubt that Elijah is a peer of Moses and consequently that a prediction which refers to Elijah is to be regarded highly. In this way, the status of the second prediction which connects the son of man with suffering is immensely enhanced.

No text from the Hebrew Bible refers directly to the suffering of the son of man or of the Messiah.⁶⁵ In making his claim the author puts a new teaching into Jesus' mouth and by using the phrase *πῶς γέγραπται*, confers on it the status of written prophecy. By this action the author deftly presents a teaching that is of importance for his Gospel. The cumulative effect of the catena of the son of man sayings addresses this issue with ingenuity.

Mark's method is first to portray Jesus' passion and death as a necessary fulfilment of scriptural predictions. That is the sense of

63 Dunn, *Did the first Christians worship Jesus?* 86-87. He attributes the origin of belief in Elijah's return, articulated and elaborated upon in Ben Sira 48.9-10, to the conviction that he had been translated to heaven, without dying. The implication is that he was keeping himself in readiness to return at a time that God would chose.

64 Tertullian *Against Marcion* 4.22; Augustine *Homilies* 232.

65 Yarbrow Collins, *Mark*, 413 observes that scholars are divided about whether *γέγραπται* is intended to refer to a specific text, and that those who concur that it does are divided about which text.

the divine necessity, communicated by the impersonal $\delta\epsilon\tilde{\iota}$ of Mark 8.31 and here too of 9.11. He thereby mitigates the sense of failure connected with it. Secondly, he juxtaposes two predictions. They are the coming of Elijah, a prediction whose basis in scripture is granted, and the suffering of the son of man, a new prediction which Mark introduces and whose status is authenticated by association.⁶⁶ Elijah has already come in the person of John the Baptist. Yarbrow Collins states that the purpose of Elijah's coming, "to restore all things," has not been realised because of the execution of John by the civil authorities.⁶⁷ The implication is that this responsibility will now fall to the person alluded to in the second prediction, namely, the son of man.

The prediction of Elijah's return and of the son of man's suffering is analogous to the three passion predictions since it deals with the same subject. The containment motif may be said to be present in the uncertainty around the reappearance of Elijah (9.13). Secondly, the ambiguity is increased by the use of the soubriquet, the son of man itself. Thirdly, the audience numbers three people. Finally, it could be argued that the prohibition in 9.9 applies to this prediction also.

The combination of two predictions concerning the son of man, the first dealing with his glorification (9.9) and the second with his suffering (9.12), mirrors closely the fusion of the previous two occurrences. It leads the reader to conclude that the integration of both aspects is a primary concern of the Gospel.

5.8 Second Passion Prediction (Mark 9.31)

$\epsilon\delta\acute{\iota}\delta\alpha\sigma\kappa\epsilon\nu\ \gamma\acute{\alpha}\rho\ \tau\omicron\upsilon\varsigma\ \mu\alpha\theta\eta\tau\acute{\alpha}\varsigma\ \alpha\upsilon\tau\omicron\upsilon$
 $\kappa\alpha\acute{\iota}\ \epsilon\lambda\epsilon\gamma\epsilon\nu\ \alpha\upsilon\tau\omicron\iota\varsigma$

66 Although she admits that there is no direct prediction in the scriptures for the suffering of the son of man, Hooker, *Saint Mark*, 220-221, is perplexed by the liberty taken in the final part of Mark 9.13, where Mark's Jesus claims that the scriptures say that Elijah will be maltreated.

67 Yarbrow Collins, *Mark*, 432.

ὅτι ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ ἀνθρώπου παραδίδοται εἰς χεῖρας ἀνθρώπων,
καὶ ἀποκτενοῦσιν αὐτόν,
καὶ ἀποκτανθεὶς μετὰ τρεῖς ἡμέρας ἀναστήσεται.

For he was teaching his disciples
and saying to them
that the son of man is being handed over into the hands
of men
and they will kill him,
and killed, after three days he will rise.

5.8.1 Context and literary unity of Mark 9.30-32

The general context of these passages from 8.22 to 10.52 is held together by the motif of journeying around the towns and villages of Galilee, in and out of Jewish territory, and with Jerusalem as the final goal. A variety of purposes is thereby served. In the first instance Mark needs to have his protagonist and close followers, who are Galilean itinerants, enter Jerusalem for the denouement of his narrative. Secondly, as Yarbro Collins points out, the three principal themes of this section are each given a threefold airing.⁶⁸ They are: prediction of the fate of the son of man (8.31; 9.31; 10.32-34); misunderstanding of the disciples (8.32-33; 9.32; 10.35-41); and teaching about discipleship (8.34-37; 9.33-37; 10.42-45).⁶⁹ There is no contradiction between Jesus' desiring to preach to as many people as possible and the presence of containment in the Gospel. One of the primary arguments of this dissertation is that the motif may be observed only in those cases where Jesus' preaching is accompanied by a miraculous element including a prediction

⁶⁸ Yarbro Collins, *Mark*, 397.

⁶⁹ It will be clear from the discussion which follows that Yarbro Collins' division of the themes and of the textual units which she employs in support of her schema will not overlap exactly with mine. For example, I argue that while 9.33-35, which recounts his followers' disagreement about which of them was the greatest, appears to be about the disciples, its primary purpose is, in fact, as an instance of misunderstanding of the second prediction of the passion in 9.30-31.

whether fulfilled or not yet, by the close of Mark's narrative. While they approach Jerusalem in 11.1 at Bethphage and Bethany, Jesus does not actually enter the city until 11.11. There is irony in the fact that while the journey motif starts at 8.22, and Jerusalem as the destination is reiterated in 10.32 and 10.33, the actual entry into Jerusalem, narrated in the third person singular is presented almost as an anticlimax – Jesus enters the city, looks around and leaves. At the very least there is a sharp contrast between this event and the triumphal procession in the outskirts, complete with cloaks and branches spread on the road before him. The passage containing the second passion prediction which we are examining here is preceded immediately by a narrative section dealing with the cure of the boy who was possessed by an evil spirit (9.14-29). In an epilogue (9.33-37) the disciples argue about who is the greatest. A new section begins in 9.30 with the co-ordinating conjunction *κακεῖθεν* and the participle *ξελθόντες* indicating a movement out from the house that they had entered in 9.28. Jesus delivers a prediction to his disciples (9.31). Their response is narrated (9.32). Their arrival in Capernaum in 9.32 flags the beginning of the sequel.

5.8.2 Structure of Mark 9.30-32

Mark 9.30-32 has a simple structure: the scene is set on the way through Galilee in 9.30a. I argue below that on thematic, linguistic and semantic grounds the phrase *καὶ οὐκ ἤθελεν ἵνα τις γνοῖ* (9.30b) ought to be construed with *ἐδίδασκεν γὰρ τοὺς μαθητὰς αὐτοῦ* (9.31a) rather than with *παρεπορεύοντο διὰ τῆς Γαλιλαίας*. Such a reading suggests that the element of secrecy pertains to what is to follow, namely, the prediction of the suffering and death of the son of man rather than to the fact that he was going through Galilee. The prediction itself is pronounced in 9.31 and the twofold response of the disciples is presented in 9.32.

5.8.3 The motif of containment of Mark 9.30-32

This is the so-called second prediction of the passion. The details from the first prediction are absent here. Instead there is the more general εἰς χεῖρας ἀνθρώπων. Witherington observes that each subsequent passion prediction develops rather than merely reiterates that which precedes it.⁷⁰ The double reference to being put to death καὶ ἀποκτενοῦσιν and καὶ ἀποκτανθεῖς ensures that it is the central emphasis of the prediction. This time the main verb ἐδίδασκεν is followed by three subordinate clauses, one fewer than in the first prediction. The new element not found in the first prediction is provided by the word παραδίδοται. C. S. Mann speculates that if the verb were in the active voice, the subject would have to be the Father. That is to say he would be the one to hand Jesus over to humanity.⁷¹ Witherington argues that the grave nature of the situation is mitigated somewhat if an allusion to Daniel 7.25 is recognised where delivery into the hand of the antagonist is mentioned and where the holy ones will be harassed temporarily only. He also suggests that the reference to resurrection is an allusion to Daniel 12.2.⁷²

There are several grounds to justify declaring the speaker worthy of acclaim. He has precise foreknowledge of his fate. That fate, as in the first passion prediction, ends in vindication. We have come to expect from this Gospel that where such elevation occurs containment will not be far away. It may be recognised in the following textual elements. First, there is the phrase ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ ἀνθρώπου with its associated ambiguity vis-à-vis who is being referred to. Secondly, failure to understand appears explicitly immediately after the prediction: οἱ δὲ ἠγνόουν τὸ ῥῆμα. The link between failure to

⁷⁰ Witherington, *Mark*, 242 makes this point.

⁷¹ Mann, *Mark*, 373. It is one thing to declare that Jesus' resurrection is his vindication by God and so part of God's plan. It is quite another to suggest, as Mann does here, that the confrontation between Jesus and the Jewish authorities took place by the will of the Father. Witherington, *Mark*, 268 and Hooker, *Saint Mark*, 226 take a similar view to Mann.

⁷² Witherington, *Mark*, 269.

understand and prediction in Mark is recognised by M. Stowasser.⁷³ Here such failure is compounded and containment ensured by a fear to ask for clarification *καὶ ἐφοβοῦντο αὐτὸν ἐπερωτῆσαι* (9.32).

Thirdly, an argument may be made for construing *καὶ οὐκ ἤθελεν ἵνα τις γνοῖ* (9.30) with *ἐδίδασκεν γὰρ τοὺς μαθητὰς αὐτοῦ*, rather than with *παρεπορεύοντο διὰ τῆς Γαλιλαίας*, on semantic, linguistic and thematic grounds. That is to say, the expression looks forward rather than backwards. When Mark is dealing with miracles, including predictions, he employs containment with consistency. Semantically, it is more in keeping with Mark's pattern of containment of Jesus' prediction to say that this is another instance of it than to interpret it as a desire to keep secret the fact that he was travelling in and out of Galilee. Since the motif of journeying is such a prominent feature of Mark's central section it would be an incongruity for the text to try to obscure this fact. From a linguistic point of view *γὰρ* is frequently used to explain or to provide continuity with what has preceded it.⁷⁴ Fourthly, an epilogue to the prediction is provided by the next scene (9.33-37) where the disciples' argument about which of them was the greatest is an instance *par excellence* of a failure to understand the subject of the prediction.

The last two occurrences of the term the son of man (9.12, 31) have referred to his suffering. In the former, Mark fused the title with suffering and contempt by combining them in a single prediction of his own making. The latter is a reference to the second passion prediction. By making the connection here again Mark is reinforcing the link between that theme and the concept the son of man.

As the second of three predictions of the passion the reader/hearers will remember it as a reiteration while there is no indication that the addressees do. Secondly, they will notice the son of man

73 M. Stowasser, "Das verheissene Heil. Narratologische und textpragmatische Überlegungen zur markinischen Motivation der Leidensnachfolge in Mk 8.22-10.52," *Studien zum Neuen Testament und seiner Umwelt* 26 (2001): 5-25.

74 Arndt and Gingrich, "γὰρ," *Lexicon*, 151.

trajectory. The connection of suffering with the climactic third and final verb of the prediction *μετὰ τρεῖς ἡμέρας ἀναστήσεται* is reinforced further here.

5.9 Third Passion Prediction (10.32b-34)

καὶ παραλαβὼν πάλιν τοὺς δώδεκα
 ἤρξατο αὐτοῖς λέγειν τὰ μέλλοντα αὐτῷ συμβαίνειν
 ὅτι ἰδοὺ ἀναβαίνομεν εἰς Ἱεροσόλυμα,
 καὶ ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ ἀνθρώπου παραδοθήσεται τοῖς ἀρχιερεῦσιν καὶ
 τοῖς γραμματεῦσιν,
 καὶ κατακρινοῦσιν αὐτὸν θανάτῳ
 καὶ παραδώσουσιν αὐτὸν τοῖς ἔθνεσιν
 καὶ ἐμπαίξουσιν αὐτῷ
 καὶ ἐμπτύσουσιν αὐτῷ
 καὶ μαστιγώσουσιν αὐτὸν
 καὶ ἀποκτενοῦσιν,
 καὶ μετὰ τρεῖς ἡμέρας ἀναστήσεται.

And taking the twelve aside again,
 he began to speak to them about the things that were about
 to happen to him,
 (that) “See we are going up to Jerusalem
 and the son of man will be handed over to the chief priests
 and to the scribes
 and they will condemn him to death
 and they will hand him over to the Gentiles
 and they will mock him
 and they will spit on him
 and they will scourge him
 and they will kill him
 and after three days he will arise.”

The following two predictions (10.32b-34 and 10.45) occur in

passages where the second (10.35-45) is the sequel to the first (10.32-34). I argue below that they need to be interpreted together.

5.9.1 Context and literary unity of Mark 10.32-34

The predictions from Mark 8.22 onward share the same literary context, namely journeying from Galilee, in and out of Jewish territory, and ascending ultimately to Jerusalem. This unit is preceded by the identification of difficult situations for disciples (10.23-31). The prediction (10.32-34) and the sequel (10.35-45) are followed by the story of the healing of Bartimaeus which brings the central section to an end, and which, as M. J. J. Menken has pointed out, is given greater significance than would be due to a synoptic healing miracle by virtue of the underlying contrast painted by Mark between Bartimaeus and other characters in the Gospel, especially Peter, James and John.⁷⁵

5.9.2 Structure of Mark 10.32-34

The short passage begins with the scene being set. Jesus and his disciples are on the way and going up to Jerusalem (10.32a). Jesus is going ahead of them. A description of their internal state is given in 10.32b, where they are described as being 'amazed' and 'afraid.' Amazement and fear are linked thematically to the prediction of the details of Jesus' passion and death (10.33-34). The following passage (10.35-45) dealing with the request of James and John is the epilogue. That is to say, the request of the sons of Zebedee for prominent places in Jesus' glory, together with the resentment of the other ten disciples, I shall argue, is an instance of misunderstanding in relation to the third passion prediction, which serves to temper the exalted denouement of that prediction.

⁷⁵ M. J. J. Menken, "The call of blind Bartimaeus (Mark 10.46-52)," *Hervormde Theologische Studies* 61.1-2; (2005), 273-290.

5.9.3 The motif of containment in Mark 10.32-34

The third prediction of the passion, in addition to being the most precise foretelling of the suffering and death of Jesus, provides another occasion for the author to combine suffering and death with resurrection and the son of man. Yarbro Collins underlines the importance of this function in Mark by identifying the prediction's role in preparing the audience for the passion narrative and alerting them about what to expect.⁷⁶ A striking difference here from the earlier predictions is that the subject of the initial verb is in the first person plural: "We are going up to Jerusalem." The confusion and fear of the followers, *καὶ ἐθαμβοῦντο ...ἐφοβοῦντο* (10.32) is sounded even before Jesus utters the prediction and, as with the second prediction, looks forwards.⁷⁷ The explicit reference to Jerusalem has been noted by Klumbies.⁷⁸ The journey south is a journey towards passion and death. The details of handing over, mocking, spitting, scourging, putting to death and rising are clearly an indication that the author is writing in the light of what he is about to relate of Jesus' death.⁷⁹ The prediction is composed of a series of seven verbs dealing with the fate of Jesus in terms of suffering and death. The climax occurs, appropriately, with the eighth and final verb *ἀναστήσεται*. R. Kinnis highlights what he considers to be the anti-Jewish and polemical character of the prediction.⁸⁰ It seems more likely that the object of the polemic is the Romans, since *ἔθνη* is a frequent translation in the LXX for *ἔθνη* "nations" to refer especially to people other than the Jewish people as in Psalm 2.1 and Psalm 117.1.

⁷⁶ Yarbro Collins, *Mark*, 486.

⁷⁷ Given the comment of Malina and Rohrbaugh on the likelihood of Mediterranean males showing fear publicly in *Social-Science Commentary*, 164, I am not convinced by Hooker's suggestion that the fear is simply a statement of the psychological status of the disciples and of Jesus on the road to Jerusalem, (*Saint Mark*, 245). A fear to enquire is one of the forms adopted by the motif of confinement in Mark.

⁷⁸ Klumbies, "Das Konzept des 'mythischen Raumes' im Markusevangelium," 111.

⁷⁹ See for example, Mann, *Mark*, 411 and Witherington, *Mark*, 285-286. Hooker, *Saint Mark*, 244 hedges her bets. She says the details "seem to" derive from a knowledge of the passion story.

⁸⁰ R. Kinnis, "An Analysis of Mark 10.32-34," *NT* 18 (1976): 81-100.

Anderson agrees.⁸¹ The three predictions of the passion would have assured the hearers that the death of Jesus could not be interpreted as God's having abandoned him. From their social-scientific perspective Malina and Rohrbaugh understand the images contained here as "status degradation rituals."⁸² This would have increased the sense of horror for the disciples and for Mark's hearers/readers. At the same time, it would exalt by way of contrast the final verb in the prediction. I am not convinced by Gray's argument that the son of man is already linked with suffering in Daniel 7.⁸³

In keeping with the pattern established in the other passion predictions, we may expect that containment will figure here also. I shall argue that it occurs in four different ways. The first instance occurs if *καὶ ἔθαμβοῦντο, οἱ δὲ ἀκολουθοῦντες ἐφοβοῦντο* in 10.32 is interpreted to refer to what follows rather than to what has just taken place. We have already seen that fear is a primary form of containment. The same vocabulary is employed here *ἐφοβοῦντο* (10.32) and in the previous prediction *ἐφοβοῦντο* (9.32).

Secondly, a reduction in the number of witnesses is achieved in two movements. The phrase *ἐν τῇ ὁδῷ ἀναβαίνοντες εἰς Ἱεροσόλυμα* (10.32a) confines the addressees to a band of travellers on the road, as opposed to a crowd that has assembled to hear Jesus speak.⁸⁴ The band is further reduced in 10.32b with the expression *καὶ παραλαβὼν πάλιν τοὺς δώδεκα*. Thirdly, the ambiguity associated with the term the son of man is present here in 10.33. Fourthly, the story of James and John requesting places of honour (10.35-45) is best interpreted

81 Anderson, *The Gospel of Mark*, 252-253. He has taken this suggestion from Schweizer, *Good News According to Mark*, 216.

82 Malina and Rohrbaugh, *Social-Science Commentary*, 192.

83 Gray, *The Temple in the Gospel of Mark*, 169-170. While there is a reference to the suffering of the saints of the Most High in Daniel 7.21,25, it is clear that the son of man is not included in their number.

84 J. R. Donahue and D. J. Harrington, *The Gospel of Mark* (Sacra Pagina 2; Collegeville: The Liturgical Press, 2002), 314 perceptively point out that the evangelist uses 10.32 to remind the hearers amid a plethora of teaching material where one could easily forget it, that the characters are on a journey.

as an epilogue where the trope of misunderstanding appears in narrative form. J. R. Donahue and D. J. Harrington confirm this interpretation implied by Jesus' answer to the incongruous request of the brothers.⁸⁵ Witherington's position is close to theirs but his analysis causes him to focus more on the pericope revealing the psychological and mental state of the brothers rather than on the narrative as explaining that Jesus' prediction was not given greater circulation. While he is correct to paraphrase the incident to mean Mark is claiming that Jesus' moment of self-disclosure was lost on them, his mistake in my view is to put the spotlight on James and John rather than on their action which serves to contain the exaltation which would otherwise accrue from Jesus' prediction.⁸⁶ Finally, in this the eighth occurrence of the term the son of man in Mark, the trajectory falls as low as possible, with the chain of verbs of suffering leading to death. However, this emphasis is balanced here as in the two earlier predictions by the final verb.

5.10 The son of man came to give his life as a ransom for many (Mark 10.45)

καὶ γὰρ ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ ἀνθρώπου οὐκ ἦλθεν διακονηθῆναι
ἀλλὰ διακονῆσαι
καὶ δοῦναι τὴν ψυχὴν αὐτοῦ λύτρον ἀντὶ πολλῶν. (Mark 10.45)

For the son of man did not come to be served
but to serve

⁸⁵ Donahue and Harrington, *The Gospel of Mark*, 314.

⁸⁶ Witherington, *Mark*, 286-287 comes close to the interpretation being advanced here by accepting that Mark 10.35-45 should be read in conjunction with the previous pericope. While he argues that the emphasis of the epilogue falls on Mark's characterisation of James and John, the research undertaken for this dissertation so far suggests otherwise. That is to say, I am arguing that in those pericopes which contain a reference to Peter, James and John, the author is not primarily, if he is at all, interested in developing the characters *per se*, or indeed, any other character apart from Jesus. Their function is primarily to provide an instance of the motif of containment.

and to give his life as a ransom for many.

5.10.1 Context and literary unity of Mark 10.41-45

The passage in which this prediction occurs (Mark 10.41-45) and the preceding one (10.35-40) together form an epilogue to the third passion prediction. They are followed by the story of the cure of Bartimaeus (10.46-52) which brings Mark's central section (8.22-10.52) to a close. The connection with the previous passage is provided by 10.41 with the names of James and John. The body of the pericope is a teaching on the part of Jesus. The transition to the next section is provided by the geographical detail of arriving at Jericho (10.46).

5.10.2 Structure of Mark 10.41-45

<i>Interaction I</i>	41	Reaction of the disciples to James and John
<i>Interaction II</i>	42a	Jesus' response
	42b	A double statement of worldly power
	43-44	A triple antithesis for discipleship
	45	Summary double statement concerning the son of man

The beginning of the unit occurs with a new action in 10.41. A double saying describes the values of worldly power and authority (10.42b). This is followed by an antithetical triple saying with the strength of an exhortation or a command about the nature of rank and order among disciples (10.43-44). The passage closes with a double statement concerning the son of man (10.45).

5.10.3 The motif of containment in Mark 10.41-45

The depiction of Jesus in this saying is similar to the portrayal of him in the three passion predictions with the gradual yet inexorable linking of the son of man with death. The fact that this association is

made in each case in the form of prediction strengthens its place in Mark's schema.⁸⁷ In a word, the reference to the son of man here could be described as the author's wish to reshape the image of the title "the son of man" for his hearers, transforming it from a primarily glorious context, such as that of Daniel 7 to one which would incorporate the fate of Jesus of Nazareth.⁸⁸ A. De Mingo Kaminouchi considers the fusion of these elements as one of Mark's major achievements.⁸⁹ The saying interprets Jesus' going to his death as an offering which he has freely given using the imagery of ransom and redemption which will be developed further by Luke.⁹⁰ The question of precisely what the many are being ransomed from is addressed by S. Dowd and Malbon who postulate that it is from "their great ones who are tyrants over them" and "those whom they recognise as their rulers who lord it over them (10.42)."⁹¹

Yarbro Collins recognises that Mark 10.45 is a statement of the purpose of the life and death of the son of man.⁹² Furthermore, the predictive nature of what is predicated of him becomes a

87 The expression δοῦναι τὴν ψυχὴν is also found in 1 Maccabees 2.50, 6.44. In a Jewish context, it usually refers to the death of martyrs and in a Greek milieu to the death of soldiers. See Taylor, *St. Mark*, 444.

88 W. J. Moulder, "The Old Testament Background and the Interpretation of Mark 10.45," *NTS* 24 (1977): 120-127 concludes that this phrase is of Palestinian origin and that it can be adequately accounted for on the basis of Isaiah 53.10-12 and also of its occurrences in Daniel and *1 Enoch*, without appeal to Pauline influence.

89 A. de Mingo Kaminouchi, *But, it is Not So Among You: Echoes of Power in Mark 10.32-45* (JSNTSS 249; London: T&T Clark International, 2003), 205-207. He comments that in reshaping the glorious image of the son of man in Daniel 7.13 and combining it with the image of the crucified Jesus who is also glorious, Mark has accomplished a considerable achievement.

90 See Luke 1.68. In classical Greek λύτρον is used generally in the plural, of the price of the redemption of captives and the manumission of slaves. In the LXX it denotes an equivalent for ἡλγ. The primary notion behind the word is that of deliverance by purchase. See Taylor, *St. Mark*, 444). Taylor further comments that πολλῶν does not exclude the meaning "all" but contrasts the offering of the one with those for whom it is made. Malina and Rohrbaugh, *Social-Science Commentary*, 193, draw attention to the fact that a ransom could only take place if the person being accepted as a ransom were of a higher honour status than those being set free.

91 S. Dowd and E. S. Malbon, "The Significance of Jesus' Death in Mark: Narrative Context and Authorial Audience," *JBL* 125 (2006): 271-297, 281.

92 Yarbro Collins, *Mark*, 500.

vindication of his death beforehand. Such a vindication at this point in the narrative is an acknowledgement that he is worthy of acclaim. Wherever Jesus has been exalted in such a way in Mark the increase in prestige has been accompanied by some element whereby it is minimised. Here the motif occurs in the details of the confined number of the audience and in the trope of misunderstanding.

The fusing of the term the son of man on the one hand with service of others and with death on the other, occurs in this passage without an explicit mention of resurrection. However, the fact that the integration of these concepts occurs here in the form of a prediction presents that death not in terms of involuntary suffering and agony but rather in expiatory and altruistic terms which give it meaning and at the same time exalts it. In that way Mark's practice of containment becomes necessary here also.

5.11 Second eschatological prediction (Mark 13.26-27)

καὶ τότε ὄψονται τὸν υἱὸν τοῦ ἀνθρώπου
 ἐρχόμενον ἐν νεφέλαις μετὰ δυνάμεως πολλῆς καὶ δόξης.
 καὶ τότε ἀποστελεῖ τοὺς ἀγγέλους
 καὶ ἐπισυναΐξει τοὺς ἐκλεκτοὺς [αὐτοῦ] ἐκ τῶν τεσσάρων ἀνέμων
 ἀπ' ἄκρου γῆς ἕως ἄκρου οὐρανοῦ.

And then they will see the son of man
 coming in the clouds with great power and glory
 and then he will send out the angels
 and he will gather the chosen from the four winds,
 from the end of the earth to the end of the sky.

5.11.1 Context and literary unity of Mark 13.26-27

The second prediction of the coming of the son of man is an integral part of the predictions of Chapter 13, Mark's apocalyptic discourse which I examined in Chapter Three. It needs to be interpreted as part of that section of the Gospel. There its occurrence articulates

the eschatological hope which is a feature of all three predictions of the coming of the son of man. The beginning of the unit is signalled by the temporal expression *ἐν ἐκείναις ταῖς ἡμέραις μετὰ τὴν θλίψιν* in 13.24, and its conclusion by the return to the parable of the fig tree in 13.28. Mark 13 is framed in terms of an apocalyptic oracle of Jesus to four named disciples. That the scene is dependent on Daniel 7 is largely agreed by scholars. For example, Key argues that Daniel 7 was an important influence on the method, structure and composition of the chapter.⁹³

5.11.2 Structure of Mark 13.26-27

<i>Transition</i>	24a	Temporal change
<i>Prelude</i>	24b-25	Four predictions of cosmic proportions
	26	The appearance of the son of man in glory
	27	The universal inclusion of those chosen
<i>Transition</i>	28	Return to the parable of the fig tree

The scene is set in Mark 13.24a. The cosmic details (13.24b-25) are presented as a prelude. The climax of the scene occurs with the coming of the son of man in glory (13.26) and with the integration of his chosen ones (13.27). Klumbies underlines the cosmic significance of the item detailing the gathering of the elect from the four directions of the heavens.⁹⁴ The expression *ἐν νεφέλαις* prepares us for the final occurrence of the term in Chapter 14 before the high priest and the assembly of the chief priests, elders and scribes.⁹⁵ In this pericope, the son of man trajectory reaches its acme. There is no

⁹³ Kee, *Community of the New Age*, 44-45.

⁹⁴ Klumbies, *Von der Hinrichtung zur Himmelfahrt: Der Schluss der Jesuserzählung nach Markus und Lukas* (BTS 114; Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Theologie, 2010), 46.

⁹⁵ A different view is taken by Gray, *The Temple in the Gospel of Mark*, 139-141. He argues that this text is not a parousia text, that the coming of the son of man refers to an imminent reality rather than an eschatological one, and that the object

mention of his suffering or death. The reader will have to remember back as far as Mark 8.38 for the last time the expression appeared in such exclusively positive terms. Mark's skill is once more evident in his gradual fusing of the son of man and suffering.

5.11.3 The motif of containment in 13.26-27

This passage was dealt with in the Chapter Three under the rubric of Markan predictions. The brief consideration given to it here is done primarily to complete the discussion of the occurrences of the son of man in Mark as they relate to containment. Wherever a prediction or a nature miracle occurs in Mark we have come to expect that the author will include one or more instances of the motif of containment. They are here. The first is the small number of addressees, remarked on above, and the second is the use of the term son of man, itself a term whose ambiguity lies in the identity of the unnamed bearer of the title.

By way of summary, it will be helpful here to recall the principal points discussed. One of the significant results of the last number of investigations of the occurrences of the term the Son of Man has been the recognition that each of the three brief narratives involving the disciples is actually an epilogue to its respective passion prediction. That is to say I have argued here that the stories of Peter's remonstrance with Jesus (8.32-33); the dispute among the disciples about which of them was the greatest (9.33-37); and the request of the sons of Zebedee (10.35-45), each of which is an immediate sequel to a passion prediction, are in fact held together by the theme of misunderstanding which is one of the main forms assumed by the containment motif.

of his coming is judgement, specifically against the temple. He substantiates this argument by referring to the anti-temple polemic running through Mark 11-12 and by proposing that the texts that lie behind the expression ἐν νεφέλαις include, in addition to Daniel 7, those of Isaiah 13 and 34 also. In these last two texts clouds connote judgement and destruction.

5.12 The destiny of the son of man the subject of a written prediction (Mark 14.21)

ὅτι ὁ μὲν υἱὸς τοῦ ἀνθρώπου ὑπάγει
καθὼς γέγραπται περὶ αὐτοῦ,
οὐαὶ δὲ τῷ ἀνθρώπῳ ἐκείνῳ
δι' οὗ ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ ἀνθρώπου παραδίδοται·
καλὸν αὐτῷ εἰ οὐκ ἐγεννήθη ὁ ἄνθρωπος ἐκεῖνος.

For indeed the son of man is going away
as it has been written of him,
but alas for that man
by whom the son of man is handed over,
good for him if that man had not been born.

The two occurrences of the term “the son of man” in Mark 14.21 have been examined in Chapter Three from the perspective of predictions. The most important thematic aspect of this pericope in which they occur (14.17-26) is that it advances the integration of the image of the son of man with suffering and death. The trajectory of the occurrence of the son of man in Mark has descended from his coming in clouds with great power and glory in 13.26-27 to the depths of betrayal by a disciple here. At this point, the fact that the reference to betrayal is presented by the evangelist in the form of a prediction, serves to underline the high status of the speaker. That stature is further emphasised by the contrast between innocence and treachery. And, as we have come to recognise, where Mark paints an exalted picture of Jesus the motif of containment will typically be close at hand. I argued in Chapter Three that in this passage the motif was present in the enigmatic term the son of man, in the confined number of the witnesses to the prediction and most probably also in the parabolic language of drinking wine in the kingdom of God (14.25).

**5.13 The son of man is being handed over to sinners
(14.41-42)**

ἦλθεν ἡ ὥρα,
 ἰδοὺ παραδίδοται ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ ἀνθρώπου εἰς τὰς χεῖρας
 τῶν ἀμαρτωλῶν.
 ἐγείρεσθε ἄγωμεν·
 ἰδοὺ ὁ παραδιδούς με ἤγγικεν. (Mark 14.41-42).

The hour has come.
 See, the son of man is to be handed over to sinners.
 Get up. Let us go.
 See, my betrayer is at hand.

5.13.1 Context and literary unity of Mark 14.32-42

Mark 14.32-42 deals with Jesus prayer in Gethsemane. The transition from the previous scene in which Peter's denial was foretold is achieved in 14.32 by the change of location to Gethsemane, καὶ ἔρχονται εἰς χωρίον οὗ τὸ ὄνομα Γεθσημανι, in 14.32. Three interactions of Jesus with his disciples and three with his Father form the kernel of this pericope. The transition to the next scene is effected by the appearance of Judas accompanied by a crowd (14.43).

5.13.2 Structure of Mark 14.32-42

<i>Transition</i>	32	Change of location to Gethsemane
	33	Reduction of audience to three named disciples
	34	Reduction of audience to zero
<i>Scene I</i>	35-36	Jesus addresses the Father
	37	Jesus addresses Simon Peter
<i>Scene II</i>	39	Jesus addresses the Father again
	40	Second interaction (silent) between Jesus and disciples

<i>Scene III</i>	41	Jesus addresses the three disciples
<i>Transition</i>	42	Arrival of Judas

The scene is set with the indication of the arrival of Jesus and his disciples at a new location (14.32). The reduction of the audience occurs in two stages, first to the familiar three named members (14.33), then to none (14.44). Three scenes containing an interaction with the Father and with the three disciples follow. Then comes the prediction of the handing over of the son of man to sinners (14.41). The scene concludes with the arrival of the betrayer (14.42)

5.13.3 The motif of containment in Mark 14.32-42

The second last occurrence of the term the son of man appears in Gethsemane. Nineham claims that a majority of scholars do not regard this occurrence as referring to the exalted son of man of Daniel 7.⁹⁶ However, we have seen in the course of the investigation in this chapter that Mark's fusing of the image of the son of man with the concepts of suffering and dying does not require the presence of both on every occasion. It is the cumulative effect of all of the occurrences of both which brings about their ultimate integration.

The prediction here establishes that Jesus was aware of what would happen to him in the near future, regardless of whether this knowledge is understood to be derived supernaturally or intuitively. It is also clear from the foreknowledge implied by the prediction that he did not seek to avoid apprehension. For that reason, the text convinces the reader/hearers that he is worthy of acclamation. The presence of containment may be identified in the forms we have become familiar with, especially, the limited number of witnesses and the enigma about who is being referred to.

I have argued that the presence of named disciples in Mark is more

96 D. E. Nineham, *The Gospel of Saint Mark* (Pelican Gospel Commentaries; London: A & C Black, 1968), 393.

likely to be an indication that the author is using them as an instance of containment, rather than of a desire to develop characterisation in the Gospel. If Peter, James and John are asleep, Jesus' prayer has the form of a soliloquy – the least number of hearers possible. Because of the presence of the containment motif here, I wish to argue that it is less fruitful to examine the Gethsemane narrative as evidence of damage done to the reputation of the disciples, as Taylor does.⁹⁷ Rather, I am suggesting rather that it is more likely that their presence there has more to do with their number than with their identity. That is not to claim that their identity is unimportant. It is to argue that containment as a consistent feature of Mark's Gospel and as a constant feature of his portrayal of Jesus is more important for the author than the development of any secondary character in the narrative.

To summarise at this stage, this occurrence of the epithet, "the son of man" may be an instance of a miraculous prediction, or it may be an example of Jesus' accurate intuition in relation to what is about to happen. In either case, what we have here is a further instance of Mark's characteristic practice of combining the son of man with suffering and death. The trajectory of Mark's use of the phrase, the son of man has once again descended to betrayal at this point from the glory of 13.26-27 and, as in earlier occurrences of the term, the only mitigating factor is that the prediction creates the circumstances whereby Jesus knows what is about to happen and is therefore not taken by surprise. For these reasons, the appearance here of the term the son of man in conjunction with the literary form of prediction to represent Jesus confirms his high status by making clear that suffering and death did not take him by surprise. Rather, because of his foreknowledge, he freely underwent what lay before him.

⁹⁷ Taylor, *St. Mark*, 551.

5.14 Third eschatological prediction (Mark 14.62)

ὁ δὲ Ἰησοῦς εἶπεν·
 ἐγώ εἰμι,
 καὶ ὄψεσθε τὸν υἱὸν τοῦ ἀνθρώπου ἐκ δεξιῶν καθήμενον
 τῆς δυνάμεως
 καὶ ἐρχόμενον μετὰ τῶν νεφελῶν τοῦ οὐρανοῦ. (Mark 14.62)

And Jesus said:

“I am.

And you will see the son of man seated from the right of
 the power

And coming with the clouds of the heaven.”

The final pericope to be examined in this chapter is that which contains the third prediction of the eschatological coming of the son of man (14.62).

5.14.1 Context and literary unity of Mark 14.53-65

The pericope Mark 14.53-65 deals with the appearance of Jesus in custody before the Sanhedrin. It is preceded by the Gethsemane scene (14.32-42) and by the arrest of Jesus (14.43-52). It is followed by Peter's denial (14.66-72); Jesus' appearance in custody before Pilate (15.1-15); mockery by the soldiers (15.16-20); the road to execution (15.21); crucifixion (15.22-32); the death of Jesus (15.33-41); his burial (15.42-47); and the event at the empty tomb (16.1-8).

The transition from the previous scene is achieved by a change in location (14.52). The prediction occurs in 14.62 within the context of an appearance before the High Priest (14.59-62). The response of his assembled enemies in word and deed precedes the transition to another location in 14.66 indicating the end of the unit.

5.14.2 Structure of Mark 14.53-65

<i>Transition</i>	53	To the High Priest
	54	Peter's situation
<i>Interaction I</i>	55	Failure of the Sanhedrin to find evidence deserving death
	56-59	Failure of false evidence
<i>Interaction II</i>	60	First question of the High Priest
	61a	Jesus' response
	61b	Second question of High Priest
	62	Jesus' answer: prediction
	63-64	Response of the High Priest and the Sanhedrin
	65	Violent action of some of the guards
<i>Transition</i>	66	To Peter's location

This passage describes Jesus' arrival before the Sanhedrin and his interaction with them in two phases. The first scene in narrative form details several failed attempts to have Jesus condemned (14.55-59). The second phase narrates the interaction between the High Priest and Jesus in dialogue form (14.60-63). The council declares that he deserves to die. The unit concludes with the account of the physically violent treatment meted out to him (14.65).

5.14.3 The motif of containment in Mark 14.62

This is the third prediction of the coming of the son of man and the third to display Mark's reliance on the Danielic text, consolidating its significance for him. I shall, first of all, indicate where the

glorification of Jesus occurs in this prediction and then point out the ways in which this elevation is toned down. The saying contains three scriptural allusions. The first part of the answer evokes more clearly in Greek the divine name revealed to Moses at the burning bush in Exodus 3.6,14.⁹⁸ Yarbrow Collins, however, argues that it ought to be read simply as Jesus' assent to the High Priest's question rather than as an acknowledgement of his divine status.⁹⁹ Secondly, there is the allusion to Daniel 7.13 mentioned already. Mark's choice of the participle *καθήμενον* indicates that when the son of man appears he will have obeyed the command in the psalm. The one issuing the command, *ὁ κύριος*, is referred to synonymously by the expression *τῆς δυνάμεως*. Thirdly, the combination of *ἐκ δεξιῶν* and *καθήμενον* is an idiomatic expression to signify the granting of honour to the one sitting at the right hand of someone of higher status and mirrors the command in Psalm 110.2 *εἶπεν ὁ κύριος τῷ κυρίῳ μου κάθου ἐκ δεξιῶν μου* (Ps 109 LXT). Each evocation of a text from the Hebrew Bible contributes to the overall exaltation in relation to the speaker. By placing this prediction on the lips of Jesus the author is exalting his protagonist. The expectation is that it will be fulfilled at the *parousia*. It comes at the end of a long line of predictions, most of which have come to pass by this stage in the narrative.

Bock interprets the scene as a vindication in earthly terms.¹⁰⁰ Elsewhere he shows that the expression, *ἐκ δεξιῶν καθήμενον τῆς δυνάμεως* is deeply rooted in Jewish usage so that the hearers would have been in no doubt that it signalled something close to apotheosis.¹⁰¹ The precise nature of the exaltation which the utterance of this prediction confers on Jesus is not agreed on by scholars. For

98 The divine overtones of this expression, which is rare in Mark, are more emphasised in John (e.g. John 8.12, 10.11, 15.1).

99 Yarbrow Collins, *Mark*, 704.

100 Bock, *Blasphemy and Exaltation in Judaism and the Final Examination of Jesus* (WUNT 2.106; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1998), 201.

101 Bock, "Jewish Expressions in Mark 14.61-62 and the Authenticity of the Jewish Examination of Jesus," *Journal for the Study of the Historical Jesus* 1 (2003): 147-159.

example, Meier comments that Mark's presentation of Jesus here is of someone who becomes an increasingly more rejected messenger in the present, yet with vindication assured in the near future.¹⁰² Perrin and W. C. Robinson argue that the exaltation in Mark 14.62 consists not in a *parousia* where Jesus will come from God in the future, but in an immediate going to God.¹⁰³ Witherington simply underlines the high status which the prediction confers on the speaker.¹⁰⁴ It is over and against such an acclamation of Jesus' exalted status that the containment motif, at this point in the form of misunderstanding, operates. As such, this conclusion is another reason to expect some element of minimisation of the exaltation contained here. The substance of the second part of the prediction unites prophetic and apocalyptic eschatological perspectives. The former expected divine intervention on earth while the latter expected divine vindication after death.¹⁰⁵ The author is not specific about which of these is primarily intended since the prediction declares only that it is imminent.

There is one argument against interpreting this prediction as an instance of the motif of containment, namely that it is pronounced by Jesus in the most public of forums, the trial in front of the Sanhedrin and the High Priest. The motif must be sought in a manifestation other than in the typical limiting of witnesses, since here they are many. Parabolic and metaphorical language in the expression ὁψεσθε τὸν υἱὸν τοῦ ἀνθρώπου in 14.62 is certainly one form that we have seen the containment motif take. Is it sufficiently ambiguous to constitute a minimising of the effect of Jesus' power of prediction? The witnesses seem to be in no doubt as to the person to whom

102 J. P. Meier, "Jesus," *New Jerome Biblical Commentary*, 78.38-41.

103 Perrin, *The Kingdom of God in the Teaching of Jesus*, 142.

104 Witherington, *Mark*, 384-85.

105 Yarbrow Collins argues that the feature which makes apocalyptic eschatology distinct is its transcendent character and the fact that it "looks for retribution beyond the bounds of history." J. J. Collins, *The Apocalyptic Imagination: An Introduction to Jewish Apocalyptic Literature* (2d ed. BRS, Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998), 11.

the prediction was referring but they did not understand or know anything about his identity. The case is strengthened if the divine overtones of Jesus' answer ἐγὼ εἰμι are accepted.¹⁰⁶ In that regard, we may interpret their determination that he was worthy of death as a prime example of misunderstanding and so a quintessential instance of containment.

Because of the setting of this prediction a number of scholars interpret this verse as the moment when the "messianic secret" is revealed.¹⁰⁷ The logic is that the secret referred to a suffering Messiah, a secret which could be disclosed only when Jesus' suffering began. While this interpretation acknowledges the very public declaration and dissemination of Jesus' identity here it overlooks the consistent ambiguity behind the use of the term the son of man, which conceals as much as it reveals and it does not deal with the failure of the assembled multitude to acknowledge that identity. Dunn puts the verdict of blasphemy in context. It illustrates the ambiguity of Jewish attitudes to heavenly intermediary figures. On the one hand, these were held to possess a semi divine status and, on the other, their existence came close to blasphemy by positing a divine power in heaven other than God.¹⁰⁸ We may conclude therefore that the motif

106 The juxtaposition of the two references lends more weight to the argument that an allusion to Exodus 3.14 is intended here, even though such a use of the expression ἐγὼ εἰμι in Mark is nowhere else attested. Alternatively, an argument could be made for the unique status of this final occurrence of the son of man, given its very public context.

107 Yarbro Collins, *Mark*, 704. Yarbro Collins agrees with Dunn. Since the identity of the son of man was linked with suffering, it could not be announced publicly in Mark 8.27-31. But at this stage, when the suffering has begun, it is time for the "messianic secret" to be disclosed. This conclusion does not take into account the fact that the declaration by Peter at Caesarea Philippi in 8.29 was also a disclosure of Jesus' identity.

108 Dunn, *Did the first Christians worship Jesus?* 100. He identifies Moses, Elijah, and Enoch as prime candidates. He recognises the anomaly from a monotheistic-religious perspective, of imagining these figures as cohabiting heaven with God. As the chasm between God and humanity was decreasing from God's side by angels, and other intermediary personifications of Wisdom and Word, so from humanity's side, it was being similarly diminished by Moses, Elijah and Enoch, and in time, by martyrs and other virtuous persons (89). See Dunn, *Jesus Remembered* (Grand

of containment in relation to Jesus' prediction is present here once again in the use of the enigmatic expression the son of man and in the lack of understanding displayed by the witnesses of the veracity of Jesus' foreknowledge of himself which the prediction portrays.

In the following chapter, I shall seek to complete the picture by investigating, in some detail, those passages in Mark where Jesus' direct prohibition against speaking further about his miraculous words and actions is not adhered to.

5.15 Conclusion

This chapter examined the fourteen occurrences of the term "the son of man" in the Gospel according to Mark from the perspective of containment. It sought to evaluate Mark's employment of the motif, and to compare this with the way the concept is handled in the other locations in Mark which were examined in earlier chapters of the dissertation. J. A. Fitzmyer, the Aramaic scholar contends that the Markan and general Gospel usage of the term the son of man is unique, that it differs from other usages that it had in first century Palestinian Judaism.¹⁰⁹ However, it is likely that he overlooked the aspect of ambiguity or containment when making that judgment. Such potential for concealment was recognised by Vielhauer in the 1960s.¹¹⁰ His comments focus only on the element of positive communication in the variety of uses of the expression and

Rapids: Eerdmans, 2003), 749-752.

109 Among the common usages of the term which do not apply in Mark are the following: (1) It is a form of address whereby someone other than the first person, singular is intended. In Mark, all of the occurrences of the term are on the lips of Jesus. (2) It is a title for an expected apocalyptic figure other than the speaker. (3) It is a synonym for "one." Fitzmyer, "The New Testament Title 'Son of Man' Philologically Considered," in *A Wandering Aramean: Collected Aramaic Essays* (ed. J. A. Fitzmyer; SBLMS 25; Missoula: Scholars Press, 1979), 143-160.

110 See Vielhauer, "Gottesreich und Menschensohn, 51," 79. Vielhauer has recognised that the son of man sayings and the kingdom of God sayings are found in separate strands of the tradition, and rarely together. He acknowledges that the metaphorical language contained in both is a common feature. He concludes his argument by asserting that since the latter are authentic, the former are not. This position is disputed by Casey in *The Solution to the "Son of Man" Problem*, 316.

not on its ability to conceal. Of course, many facets of apocalyptic literature were employed to obscure information from the general reader/hearer and to reveal it through symbol, number and colour to the initiated. Coded language is listed by P. L. Redditt as one of the characteristics of apocalypses.¹¹¹ There is universal agreement on the apocalyptic genre of Daniel 7 so it would not be surprising if the designation the son of man were to be employed with similar intent. A consideration of this nature strengthens the argument that Mark's employment of the term is deliberately ambiguous, although not necessarily in a manner identical with its use in the earlier text. Containment, as examined in this dissertation, is also a form of concealment.

Having identified the motif of containment as one element in Mark's portrayal of predictions and nature miracles I established in this chapter, a similar impulse may be found by the use of the expression the son of man in those passages where it occurs in such a way as to provide a consistent and intelligible reading of a variety of texts.

The occurrences may be divided into three categories with overlapping membership. In the first one, the exalted status of Jesus is asserted. Three occurrences of the term fall into this category: He has authority on earth to forgive sins (2.10). He has power to dispense with norms of the Torah (2.28). He is the Messiah (8.29). In each case containment is present in the expression "the son of man" itself by virtue of the ambiguity surrounding the term. In two of these pericopes the motif occurs in other forms also. In the passage dealing with the authority of the son of man to forgive sins on earth (2.1-12), the additional form of the motif is found in the confined nature of the audience – some scribes, and the secrecy surrounding their conversation—they questioned, not publicly, but in their hearts

111 P. L. Redditt, "Introduction to Prophetic Literature," in *Eerdmans Commentary on the Bible* (ed. J. D. G. Dunn and J. W. Rogerson; Cambridge: Eerdmans, 2003), 482-488, 487.

ἐν ταῖς καρδίαις αὐτῶν (2.6). Jesus perceived, not publicly, but in his spirit, τῷ πνεύματι αὐτοῦ (2.8). In 8.29 there is a direct command to silence. Mark's employment of the term serves to play down the high status of Jesus which is being proclaimed in what is predicated of him. There will be fewer people to relay what has happened where the audience is confined. Furthermore, where this situation is compounded by the enigmatic expression "the son of man" further diffusion will be less likely.

The second category applies to those instances where Jesus' high standing is expressed by his performing miraculous words or deeds, the former by means of a so-called nature miracle and the latter by miraculous predictions. Nine occurrences fit into this category. All nine are in the form of a prediction. In the case of four of these the nature miracle in question is that of rising from the dead. Three predict that the son of man will suffer and die before he rises again (8.31, 9.31, 10.33). Another three foretell his miraculous appearance in an eschatological context (8.38, 13.26 and 14.62). One is a prediction of resurrection from the dead (9.9). In eight of the nine containment is corroborated by other forms, especially failure to understand (five cases), a confined audience (five cases) and secrecy (three cases). The only example where there is no other accompanying instance of the motif is Jesus' appearance before the high priest.

The third category is where the expression is interwoven with the motifs of suffering and death. Eight of the fourteen occurrences fall into this category (Mark 8.31, 9.9, 9.12, 9.31, 10.43, 10.45, 14.21, 14.41). Six of them are in the form of a prediction. The interesting point for the study being undertaken here is that the two without the predictive element (Mark 9.12, 10.45) are not accompanied by any other corroborating instance of the motif of containment. The fact that three of the eight are clearly closely related in vocabulary and syntax to Daniel 7.13, is an indication that the author is using the expression ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ ἀνθρώπου as a symbol of victory and success, with which he intertwines motifs of suffering and death in order

to integrate these two movements. The purpose of that synthesis is to integrate the fate of Jesus of Nazareth with a recognition of him as a man of God. The integration of the failure of Jesus on a human level has frequently been put forward as a reason why some early followers refused to recognise him as Messiah. Henderson recommends widening this consideration to include the failure of his disciples also.¹¹²

The focus of this chapter has been to identify how Mark's interest in this issue has been served by his employment of the term "the son of man". I believe the answer to this question lies in containment. I have shown that in the case of each of the occurrences of the son of man it is reasonable to interpret it, on the basis of its inherent ambiguity, as an instance of the motif and that this interpretation is corroborated by the presence of other forms of the motif and cumulatively by its other occurrences in the Gospel. I shall conclude this investigation in the next chapter by examining those scenes where the movement to contain is thwarted.

112 Henderson argues that any "apparent" failure, whether it is in relation to the disciples, in terms of incomprehension, desertion, or denial or, in relation to Jesus, especially the rejection and humiliation of death on a cross, "becomes subsumed within God's triumphant claim upon the world." *Christology and Discipleship in the Gospel of Mark*, 261.

CHAPTER SIX

The Motif of Containment Not Observed

6.1 Introduction

For the most part, Jesus' prohibition of witnesses from reporting what they had seen or heard, is obeyed. In these instances, containment is adhered to. In a number of other cases, however, the command to silence is disregarded. This phenomenon appears in Mark as a secondary stream over and against the more widespread tendency to silence, conceal and contain. It is necessary to address this material in order to reflect the complexity of Mark's narrative. It will not be necessary to elaborate in any great detail on this strand since, although the instances involved are striking, it is confined to a small number of texts and, by comparison with the pervasiveness of adherence to the containment motif, it is a minority or secondary theme. For that reason, I shall briefly sketch the outlines of the phenomenon. An examination of six locations in the text will facilitate the investigation of what is at stake: 1.21-28; 1.40-45; 5.1-20; 7.24-30; 7.31-37 and 10.46-52. The clearest instances of the non-adherence to the motif are those instances where a direct prohibition from recounting miraculous activity is disobeyed. In one celebrated case, which appears as an exception to the pattern established in Mark, Jesus actually commands someone who has been healed to go home to his

people and tell them all that the Lord in his mercy has done for him (5.19). The following verse spells out just how precisely this order was obeyed. *καὶ ἀπήλθεν καὶ ἤρξατο κηρύσσειν ἐν τῇ Δεκαπόλει ὅσα ἐποίησεν αὐτῷ ὁ Ἰησοῦς, καὶ πάντες ἐθαύμαζον* (5.20). Throughout the dissertation we have seen how the prohibition from speaking further about what had been witnessed was a primary form, if not the principal one, which the motif of containment adopted. In this case not only does the exceptional nature go further than the other examples investigated in this chapter, but the bruited of the action takes place as the result of a direct command from Jesus to do so. It is all the more striking when one remembers that the direct prohibition from doing so elsewhere comes from the mouth of Jesus.

6.2 Healing of a man with an unclean spirit (Mark 1.21-28)

6.2.1 Context and literary unity of Mark 1.21-28

Mark 1.21-28 forms part of 1.16-45 which Yarbrow Collins terms “Jesus’ first mighty deeds: the nearness of the Kingdom” because it follows on from the title (1.1) and narrative introduction of the Gospel (1.2-15).¹ The section comprises portrayals of Jesus’ healings and exorcisms. The unit begins with a temporal and spatial transition in 1.21a and concludes with 1.28, as 1.29 indicates the start of a new section.

6.2.2 Structure of Mark 1.21-28

<i>Transition</i>	21a	Temporal and spatial indicators
	21b	Beginning of Jesus’ teaching
	22	Positive response of audience
	23	Introduction of a character with an unclean spirit
	24	The man’s speech: conferring a title on Jesus

¹ Yarbrow Collins, *Mark*, 156.

	25	Jesus' twofold response: (a) command to silence, (b) exorcism
	26	Threefold response of unclean spirit: (a) convulsing the man, (b) crying aloud, (c) exit
	27	Reaction of all: amazement and questioning
<i>Transition</i>	28	Result of the incident on a wider scale

6.2.3 The motif of containment in Mark 1.21-28

The healing of a man with an unclean spirit is portrayed as taking place on a Sabbath day in a synagogue in Capernaum. The declaration by the unclean spirit or by the man himself acknowledges Jesus as the holy one of God ὁ ἅγιος τοῦ θεοῦ (1.24). While not a specifically messianic title, it sets Jesus apart from those round about him.² M.-É. Boismard refines the special stature as kingly and prophetic.³ For J. C. Okoye it is that Jesus is God's unique agent.⁴ Hooker suggests that despite the source of the proclamation, it would have had the ring of truth since demons were presumed to possess supernatural knowledge.⁵ Given the exaltation of Jesus that occurs here the command to the demon to be silent *φίμωθητι* assumes the sense of not repeating the conferral of the title, "the holy one of God" on

2 The form of this expression ὁ ἅγιος τοῦ θεοῦ is close to that used of Aaron in Psalm 105.16 τὸν ἅγιον κυρίου, the LXT rendering of the MT הַקֹּדֶשׁ הַיְהוָה and to Dan 7.18 (LXT) ἅγιοι ὑψίστου (קִדְשֵׁי עֲלִיּוֹת). It also occurs in Acts 3.14. The variant τὸν ὁσιόν appears twice in Acts alluding to Psalm 15.10 LXT.

3 See M.-É. Boismard, *Jésus, un homme de Nazareth*, 43-45. He suggests that the twofold questioning of Jesus by the demon is intended to recall the twofold questioning of Elijah by the widow of Zarephath: "What have you against me, Oh man of God? You have come to me to bring my sin to remembrance, and to cause the death of my son!" (1Kings 17.18). He concludes that in this passage Mark wishes to insinuate discreetly that Jesus is like a new Elijah.

4 J. C. Okoye, "Mark 1.21-28 in African Perspective," *Bible Today* 34 (1996): 240-245. Exorcism and teaching would have been considered by the hearers to be mutually illuminating.

5 Hooker, *Saint Mark*, 64.

Jesus. As such, it may be regarded as a desire for containment on the part of the speaker.

Secondly, the vocabulary and syntax chosen by Mark connect the action with other miraculous activity. The verb *ἐπετίμησεν* (1.25) is used in the pericope of the calming of the storm (4.35-41) in 4.39. In both scenes the responses of the witnesses, amazement and confusion, *ἐθαμβήθησαν ἅπαντες* (1.27) and *ἐφοβήθησαν φόβον μέγαν* (4.41) had the effect of causing them to question one another in similar terms about what they had seen and heard: *τί ἐστιν τοῦτο;* (1.27) and *τίς ἄρα οὗτός ἐστιν;* (4.41). Confusion and lack of understanding are forms which the motif of containment takes because in order to exalt someone on the basis of what one has done it is necessary to have some grasp of what happened. Furthermore, the verb used here in 1.27 *ἐθαμβήθησαν* is the same verb employed to describe the effects of Jesus' foreknowledge in 10.32.

To summarise this section: the motif of containment is present in three forms in this passage, namely, a command to silence, confusion/disturbance and a consequent lack of understanding. Jesus' command of the unclean spirit to be silent is technically disobeyed, since the spirit cries aloud subsequently. More forcefully however, the final verse of the pericope contains an equally strong assertion that containment is not adhered to since it states that news about Jesus spread quickly throughout all the region around Galilee. Since this scene is the first miracle worked by Jesus, one could argue that containment might not yet be necessary, or at least, that its opposite – to broadcast – is specifically necessary for the narrative to work at all. It has to be borne in mind however, that a miraculous act such as this one, indeed any miraculous act, because of its very nature contains an intrinsic impulse towards propagation. So, wherever accounts of events like this are recounted, the motif of containment will always be fighting a rearguard action.

6.3. Healing of a man with leprosy (Mark 1.40-45)

6.3.1 Context and literary unity of Mark 1.40-45

As the pericope 1.21-28 forms the beginning of the larger unit 1.16-45 discussed above, so this passage 1.40-45 functions as its end scene. It is immediately preceded by the short pericope 1.35-39 where, in response to Peter's statement that everyone is looking for him, Jesus orders them to accompany him to the surrounding villages so that he can preach there also, with the explanation that it was for that reason that he came out there. I shall return to this point below. The beginning and end of the unit are signalled by indications of transition at 1.40a and 2.1.

6.3.2 Structure of Mark 1.40-45

<i>Transition</i>	40a	Introduction of a new character
	40b	Address of leper to Jesus
	41	Jesus' response in feeling, action and word
	42	Immediate result of Jesus' intervention: curing of the man
	43-44	Jesus' threefold reply (a) warning him, (b) sending him away,
		and (c) ordering him not to tell anyone but instead to make the requisite offering
	45a	Disobeying of Jesus' command
	45b	Jesus' inability to enter towns and the continued arrival of
		people to him presented as the result of the man's preaching
<i>Transition</i>	2.1	Temporal and spatial indicators of a new unit

6.3.3 The motif of containment in Mark 1.40-55

The element in this scene which contributes to an exaltation of Jesus is, of course, the action of healing itself. Secondly, the verb *γονυπετῶν* in 1.40 contributes to his high status, even if only at the level of recognising Jesus' social standing.⁶ Similarly, the primary instance of containment here is the direct prohibition of the man from telling anyone about what had happened him. The form in this instance is reinforced by the addition of two other verbs warning or rebuking (literally "snorted") the man (*ἐμβριμησάμενος αὐτῷ*)⁷ and immediately sending him away (*εὐθὺς ἐξέβαλεν αὐτόν*) in 1.43. Hooker comments that, in this case, unusually, it is not Jesus' identity which the man is charged not to speak about but rather the healing itself.⁸ Atypically in cases such as this which involve prohibitions, the command to secrecy is qualified by a second command *ἀλλὰ ὕπαγε σεαυτὸν δεῖξον τῷ ἱερεῖ καὶ προσένεγκε περὶ τοῦ καθαρισμοῦ σου ἃ προσέταξεν Μωϋσῆς, εἰς μαρτύριον αὐτοῖς*. (1.44). The triple imperative is quite emphatic. We are not told whether the man showed himself to the priest or brought the offering. He obeyed the first imperative. He left. The prohibition itself is disobeyed in the starkest terms possible. He began to proclaim aloud many things (*κηρύσσειν πολλὰ*) and to spread the story widely by word of mouth (*διαφημίζειν τὸν λόγον*). The final clauses may provide some insight into the reason for Jesus' initial command *ὥστε μηκέτι αὐτὸν δύνασθαι φανερώς εἰς πόλιν εἰσελθεῖν, ἀλλ' ἔξω ἐπ' ἐρήμοις τόποις ἦν· καὶ ἤρχοντο πρὸς αὐτὸν πάντοθεν* (1.45). The fact that they are preceded by the

6 This reading is not well attested.

7 The situation is further complicated by the variant readings of *σπλαγχισθεῖς* "was filled with pity" (1.41). As an alternative *ὀργισθεῖς* "was angry" occurs in other versions. See the critical apparatus of Nestle-Aland 27 on Mark 1.41. This may be a response, as Schweizer suggests in *Good News according to Mark*, 58, to the horror of the misery which accompanied the disease (cf. John 11.33-38). It is also possible that Mark depicts Jesus as angry because he can anticipate the reaction described at the end of the pericope, namely, that he could no longer go into a town openly, but stayed out in the country (v.45).

8 Hooker, *Saint Mark*, 81.

conjunction ὥστε underscores the fact that the end state of affairs was brought about as a result of the man's action. Jesus was forced to avoid towns and stay in isolated areas.⁹ The objective of secrecy in this scene may also be described as discretion or concealment for pragmatic purposes. While Kee is clear that secrecy is the issue, in this instance it may simply be the case that Jesus ordered his disciples and others not to broadcast instances of healing simply because, as we can see from what follows, it limited his freedom of movement.¹⁰ Whatever way it is explained, this pericope is a prime example of the motif of containment not being adhered to.

6.4 Healing of a man possessed by demons (Mark 5.1-20)

6.4.1 Context and literary unity of Mark 5.1-20

The context of this passage is formed by 4.35-6.6a which Yarbro Collins designates as "Epiphanies of Divine Power."¹¹ The wider section is composed of four narrative units, of which this is the second. The other three are the stilling of the storm (4.35-41); two healings (5.21-43); and offence and belief in Nazareth (6.1-61). The beginning of the smaller unit is indicated by the transition to the other shore in 5.1 and its end by the departure of the second principal character at the command of the first in 5.20 and by transition to another unit achieved by the symmetrical indication of crossing back to the other shore in 5.21.

6.4.2 Structure of Mark 5.1-20

The narrative which is one of the most detailed in Mark, unfolds in four scenes:

9 Hooker suggests that the healed man's action in proclaiming freely what had happened to him is perhaps an example of an authentic command of Jesus being misunderstood. See Hooker, *Saint Mark*, 81.

10 Kee, *Community of the New Age*, 35 argues that the injunction to silence is part of a complex scheme of secrecy in Mark.

11 Yarbro Collins, *Mark*, 257.

THE MOTIF OF CONTAINMENT IN THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK

<i>Scene I</i>	<i>1-10</i>	<i>The possessed man</i>
<i>Transition</i>	1	Change of location
	2	Introduction of a second principal character
	3-5	Description of the man
	6	The man's gesture of deference to Jesus
	7	The man's plea to Jesus and his imputation of a title to him
	8	Explanation of man's pleas: Jesus' earlier command to the unclean spirit to come out of the man
	9a	Jesus' question
	9b	The spirits' reply
	10	Renewed pleas to Jesus not to expel them
<i>Scene II</i>	<i>11-13</i>	<i>The herd</i>
	11	The pigs are introduced into the story
	12	The spirits' plea to be sent into the pigs
	13a	Jesus' permits their request
	13b	The spirits transfer to the pigs and are drowned
<i>Scene III</i>	<i>14-17</i>	<i>The people of the region</i>
	14a	The swineherds bruit the story
	14b	Arrival of curious people
	15a	The people witness the cured man
	15b	Their response: fear
	16	Report of witnesses
	17	Plea to Jesus to leave the region
<i>Scene IV</i>	<i>18-20</i>	<i>The possessed man</i>
	18	Request of the cured man
	19a	Jesus' refusal of his request

	19b	Jesus' command to the man to recount the story to his people
	20a	The man carries out the order
	20b	The response of the audiences: amazement
<i>Transition</i>	21	Return to the other side indicating the start of another unit

6.4.3 The motif of containment in Mark 5.1-20

Not surprisingly, this passage provides quite a lot of information and raises some questions about the employment of the containment motif in Mark, since, as I stated above, it is one of the most elaborately detailed stories in Mark prior to the passion narrative. In the first place, it provides an example of the two differentiated objects of secrecy that we have identified so far, namely, discretion as a means towards a pragmatic end—freedom of movement—and secondly, containment as a central issue in Mark's Gospel. It may seem surprising that the title predicated of Jesus here Ἰησοῦ υἱὲ τοῦ θεοῦ τοῦ ὑψίστου (5.7) occurs on the lips of a man possessed by a demon. When analysing a similar scene in Mark 1.21-28 above, I drew attention to Hooker's comment that a demon in particular would have been expected to have access to supernatural knowledge. This particular title marks a progression from the one used by the unclean spirit in 1.24, ὁ ἅγιος τοῦ θεοῦ, through the spirits' declamation of him σὺ εἶ ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ θεοῦ. in 3.11. The term is used in the LXX to translate יהוה which is sometimes employed as an alternative for the divine name on the lips of those who are addressing God in the Hebrew Bible (e.g. Ps. 79.9, Ps. 91.1). Harrington regards all three titles in this block of material as synonymous, and therefore, of equal stature.¹² Witherington suggests that the evangelist's intention may be to indicate that the demoniac is not a Jew, since the term was also

¹² Harrington, "Mark," 41.35.

used for the chief god of the pagan pantheon. The inclusion of the verb *προσεκύνησεν* in 5.6 contributes to the raising of Jesus' status, though it may be no more than an indication of social standing, similar to the case discussion in 1.40-45 above. In view of other similar scenes where exaltation takes place by the conferring of titles, the reader may anticipate some form of containment to follow. Unlike similar scenes where silencing is effected by an order to refrain from speaking, here it is achieved by an action,¹³ namely, by permitting the spirits who were speaking, albeit at their own request, to enter the pigs and thereby causing their elimination.¹⁴

The second half of the narrative raises questions about the consistency of Mark's approach to containment, in particular, the departure from Mark's established pattern around containment. Perhaps it is an indication that no single explanation covers all cases which deal with this theme? The bruited of the deed is intensified when the audience sees that the man was healed. Their response to this sight *ἐφοβήθησαν* in 5.15 is redolent of the forms which the motif of containment can take in Mark where it explains why witnesses cannot broadcast what they have seen or heard: they are prevented by fear. The reporting of the story by the witnesses is a departure from Mark's predominant emphasis throughout the Gospel to avoid such an outcome. Jesus's words to the healed man constitute further movement away from the norm in Mark. If the author's emphasis on secrecy and discretion is merely a pragmatic issue, then Jesus' command expresses the view that his own convenience is of secondary importance to the rendering of thanks to God. Exaltation is achieved, if Harrington's view that the title *ὁ κύριός* in 5.19 is a reference to God

13 Schweizer suggests that elements of a popular fairy story about a "defrauded devil" may be detected in the detail of pigs rushing down a cliff and being drowned. See *Good News according to Mark*, 111-12.

14 From a reader-response perspective Lahurd suggests that the focus of the pericope is to challenge the differentiation between the categories of clean and unclean. C. S. Lahurd, "Reader Response to Ritual Elements in Mark 5.1-20," *Biblical Theology Bulletin* 20 (1990): 154-160.

is correct. It is comparable to claiming divine agency for Jesus, which is a significant declaration of a high status.¹⁵ Hooker acknowledges that the command of Jesus has sometimes been seen as a remarkable exception to the so-called “messianic secret.” She interprets the proclamation by the healed man as an act of disobedience.¹⁶ As a resolution of the apparent anomaly she concludes “It is misleading to impose a theory of secrecy on all the Markan material.”¹⁷ She also offers another perspective on the contrast between Jesus’ command to the healed man to speak and his prohibition of another healed man in 1.44 from doing so.¹⁸

Working with first-century Palestinian Judaic material, Aus is able to shed some light on how the story might have been heard at the time of the completion of Mark.¹⁹ As a *Vorlage* to this narrative he suggests the drowning of the Egyptians at the Red Sea. If he is correct, the implication is that the role of Jesus in this story parallels the role of Moses at the Exodus. This would be a very high exaltation of Jesus, given the place of Moses in Jewish history. Aus points out that in Judaic haggadah, Pharaoh was labelled a swineherd and the Egyptian army which rushed down the cliffs to pursue the fleeing Israelites, swine. He contends that by making reference to οἱ βόσκοντες (5.14), Mark is intentionally making this allusion.²⁰ Kee

15 Harrington, “Mark,” 35. His argument is that the phrase “what Jesus did for him,” is an allusion to the expression “what the Lord has done for you,” thus indicating that the referent is Jesus.

16 Hooker, *Saint Mark*, 145.

17 Hooker, *Saint Mark*, 145.

18 In the contrast between the command to speak with the prohibition of the leper from speaking in 1.44 Hooker does not see any inconsistency. Instead she argues that a need for authentication lies behind the former which does not apply to the latter.

19 Aus, *My Name is “Legion,”* 19-69. He shows how more than a dozen elements of the story link it with that of Samson (Judges 13-16). An association with Judges would have contributed to the exaltation of Jesus even before he performed miraculous activity. Aus demonstrates how the elements of the story, when connected with Samson and associated Jewish traditions, can have a positive resonance to them, and when linked with the antagonist of this story, they can have a negative one.

20 Aus, *My Name is “Legion,”* 94-95.

regards the value of the passage to consist in the high stature which his actions achieve for Jesus.²¹ Witherington acknowledges Jesus' exalted status also.²² We have seen that Mark's pattern has been to introduce some element of containment where Jesus assumes such high standing. However, the broadcasting of the story appears to contradict containment at this point.

6.5 Jesus' entering a house not wanting anyone to know it and being unable to escape notice (Mark 7.24-30)

This pericope (7.24-30) is the second of two passages outstanding from Wrede's list of twelve which he investigated in connection with the 'messianic secret.' Like the previous passage it too deals with the presentation of the healing activity of Jesus.

6.5.1 Context and literary unity of Mark 7.24-30

The context of this scene is Mark 6.6b-8.26, termed by Yarbro Collins 'Renewed Proclamation.'²³ It contains the material between the unbelief at Nazareth (6.1-6a) and the beginning of the journey motif (8.22-10.52) which forms the centrepiece of Mark's narrative. The healing of the Syro-Phoenician woman's daughter is preceded in this section by the sending out of the Twelve and the death of John the Baptist (6.6b-30); renewed teaching and more mighty deeds (6.31-36); and dispute with Pharisees (7.1-23). It is followed by the healing of a deaf man (7.31-37); by the feeding of the four thousand (8.1-9); by the question of a sign and the comment about bread (8.10-21); and by the healing of the blind man (8.22-26) which brings the section to a close.

21 Kee, *Community of the New Age*, 115.

22 Witherington, *Mark*, 179. He adds that Jesus tacitly assumes this role even though he did not see it as his primary task.

23 Yarbro Collins, *Mark*, ix. She places the story of the healing of the blind man of Bethsaida into the former section and argues that the central section begins with 8.27.

6.5.2 Structure of Mark 7.24-30

This scene begins with an indication of Jesus' concern to remain unnoticed and of his lack of success in this regard. It is composed of a brief interaction between Jesus and the woman as a result of which her daughter is healed of an unclean spirit.

<i>Transition</i>	24a	Change of location towards the region of Tyre
<i>Scene One</i>	24b	He enters a house wishing to remain anonymous but did not succeed.
<i>Interaction 1</i>	25	A Syro-Phoenician woman whose daughter has an unclean spirit approaches him
	26	The woman's request
	27	Jesus' enigmatic response
<i>Interaction 2</i>	28	The woman's reply
	29a	Jesus' order to her to go home
	29b	Jesus' reassurance that the demon has gone out of her daughter
<i>Scene Two</i>	30	The woman discovers the child is cured.
<i>Transition</i>	8.1	Change of location through Sidon

6.5.3 The motif of containment of (Mark 7.24-30)

This passage fits very well with the containment motif and provides an insight into it which is not available from other passages. The healing of the woman's daughter is the mighty work which exalts the one who has performed it. The frequent interpretation of the scene which portrays the woman as exacting a miracle from an unwilling Jesus has been challenged by J.-N. Aletti.²⁴ The containment motif

24 J.-N. Aletti, "Analyse narrative de Mc 7,24-30. Difficultés et propositions," *Biblica* 93.3 (2012): 357-376. He argues that this scene must be interpreted in connection with the previous section (7.1-23) which deals with clean and unclean concepts and which, when taken together with it, prepare Jesus for his journey to the nearby Gentile territory (7.31). If anything, the exaction goes in the other direction. That is

is represented here by the element of location, namely, by Jesus' withdrawal to a different region, in this case, outside of the land of Israel (7.24). This detail of physical separation is increased by his entry into a house with the accompanying qualification that he did not wish anyone to know this and that what he wished for did not materialise (7.25). The two indicators of location ensure that there are no witnesses to the miraculous deed. The healing of the girl was verified when her mother went home and saw her. That is to say, it took place at a distance from the place where Jesus and she interacted and no witnesses are mentioned.

The general context of the passage is helpful in the search for the meaning of containment in this instance. In the Markan passage immediately before this one (7.1-23) Jesus was involved in disputations with Pharisees on the interpretation of the Law. The fact that he sought seclusion, even for the purpose of praying or meditating, suggests that his profile was high. It is clear that the desire for containing any publicity which would naturally ensue from a deed such as this takes on even greater prominence if he decided to cure the girl without meeting her. That is to say, the text conveys the impression that Jesus is desperate not to have his great deeds made public. It is clear that this passage and the following one belong together.

6.6 Healing of a deaf man (Mark 7.31-37)

6.6.1 Context and literary unity of Mark 7.31-37

This pericope follows the one discussed immediately above and shares the same context. The beginning of the unit is signalled by a geographical transition in 7.31 and its end by the temporal indicator of a new unit in 8.1.

to say it is Jesus who elicits a response from the woman which enables him to display God's power to pagans.

6.6.2 Structure of Mark 7.31-37

<i>Transition</i>	31	Indication of geographical transition
	32a	Introduction of a new character
	32b	Request to Jesus by helpers to touch that character
	33a	Number of witnessed reduced to zero
	33b	Jesus' actions of healing
	34	Jesus' word of healing
	35	Result of Jesus' intervention: curing of the man
	36a	Prohibition of characters by Jesus from relating event
	36b	Jesus' command extravagantly disobeyed
	37	Result of broadcasting of the action

6.6.3 The motif of containment in Mark 7.31-37

The element of secrecy is not absolute and is in fact, frequently compromised, as it is in this pericope.²⁵ The motif of containment is conveyed by two details in the text. In the first place, the number of witnesses is reduced to one, namely, the deaf man himself. This detail is forcefully expressed by the act of separation *καὶ ἀπολαβόμενος αὐτὸν ἀπὸ τοῦ ὄχλου* and by the idiom *κατ' ἰδίαν* (7.33). We have seen that this device is frequently employed by Mark, as a cue to an assertion of the elevated status of Jesus, in word or deed, and therefore also as an instance of the motif of confinement. The second instance is provided by the explicit prohibition in 7.36 from relating the action. It is also possible to argue that because he was deaf and therefore did not hear the word spoken by Jesus which effected

²⁵ Hooker, (*Saint Mark*, 185), concludes, "It is the exception rather than the rule then, for Jesus to command secrecy." As a concern for Jesus it is primarily connected with issues surrounding convenience and freedom of movement or alternatively, with preventing people from accepting his teaching from ulterior motives.

his healing that there was in fact no witness to repeat what Jesus said. That is to say the number of witnesses could not be smaller and therefore, the motif of containment in this respect could not be more complete. Furthermore, the fact that the word spoken by Jesus was in Aramaic *Εφθαθα*, and was translated into Greek ὁ ἐστιν διανοίχθητι. for Mark's readers and hearers, but not for other characters if there were any within hearing distance, means that it is possible to interpret this detail also as a form of containment. This argument is supported by the fact even though the man is on his own, the prohibition from speaking about the action is reported with a plural object *καὶ διεστειλάτο αὐτοῖς* in 7.36. The subsequent action of broadcasting the event, despite the stern ordering of Jesus to the contrary increases the effect of the failure to obey the injunction on the reader.²⁶ This effect is reinforced by the language detailing the degree to which Jesus' order was disobeyed in 7.36 which may be described as a rhetorical flourish on the part of the author which almost qualifies as hyperbole.

6.7 Bartimaeus healed of blindness (Mark 10.46-52)

6.7.1 Context and literary unity of Mark 10.46-52

Mark 10.45-52 is the final scene of Mark's central section (8.22-10.52) which portrays Jesus and his disciples travelling around towns and villages before entering Jerusalem. This middle section which divides the Gospel into two halves contains a depiction of the healing of blindness at either end (8.22-26 and 10.46-52). The unit itself begins with the arrival at Jericho in 10.46 and concludes with the approach of Jerusalem in 11.1 which signals the end of the passage itself and of the central section.

²⁶ Kee, (*Community of the New Age*, 96), points out that, by the use of this text, the author is at pains to convey the fact that this command was disobeyed, in terms, which reflect the language of Is.35.5f. with its promise of cosmic redemption.

6.7.2 Structure of Mark 10.46-52

<i>Transition</i>	46a	Arrival at a new location
	46b	Introduction of new character
	47	Bartimaeus confers a title on Jesus and asks for mercy
	48a	Bartimaeus commanded to silence by many
	48b	Bartimaeus repeats the title and the request more loudly
	49a	Jesus' twofold response in action and word
	49b	Response of Jesus' addressees directed to Bartimaeus
	50	Bartimaeus' approach to Jesus
	51a	Jesus' question to Bartimaeus
	51b	Bartimaeus' reply conferring another title on Jesus
	52a	Jesus' reply
	52b	Result of Bartimaeus' plea: restored sight and follower of Jesus

6.7.3 The motif of containment in Mark 10.46-52

The exaltation of Jesus in this pericope comes, first of all, from his action in curing Bartimaeus' blindness. Secondly the argument may be advanced that the combination of a title *υἱὲ Δαυιδ Ἰησοῦ*, which has messianic connotations,²⁷ with a plea which is frequently directed towards God *ἐλέησόν με* contributes to this high status.²⁸ An unusual aspect of this pericope is that the impulse towards containment comes from a source which is atypical for this category of story. In cases

27 C. Burger, *Jesus als Davidssohn: Eine traditionsgeschichtliche Untersuchung* (FRLANT 98, Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1970), 42-46.

28 For example, Ps. 50.3, LXT; Ps. 55.2, LXT. The imperative *ἐλέησόν με* could simply be a *crie de coeur*. However, because in the Jewish scriptures, it is a prayer frequently addressed to God in this context the cumulative effect tends towards the elevation of his status.

which are similar to this one, when Jesus is addressed by someone or by an unclean spirit, especially where a titular attribution is involved, the command to silence usually comes from Jesus (1.25, 3.12). Here it is the crowd which tries to silence the blind man, unsuccessfully. There is no parallel command from Jesus. The objective of their drive to silence him, of course, is not the playing down of the healing, since it has not yet taken place, but rather, Bartimaeus' designation of Jesus as υἱὲ Δαυὶδ Ἰησοῦ and his addressing Jesus in words from which the conclusion could be drawn that Jesus is the object of prayer. If Jesus is someone to whom prayer may be addressed, he is thereby exalted to a very high level. By extension, his disciples are also thereby raised to the status of devotees of a divine person. The failure to adhere to containment in this scene is most strikingly effected by Bartimaeus' response to the attempt to silence him: ὁ δὲ πολλῶ μᾶλλον ἔκραζεν· (10.48a) and to his repetition of his original prayer with its concomitant messianic title υἱὲ Δαυίδ, ἐλέησόν με (10.48b). It could also be argued further that Jesus' refusal to support the efforts of those who tried to silence Bartimaeus itself is a breach of containment. The argument for this interpretation is strengthened when a comparison is made with similar scenes which employ similar titular predications of Jesus, such as ὁ ἅγιος τοῦ θεοῦ (1.24) and υἱὲ τοῦ θεοῦ τοῦ ὑψίστου (5.7) and where he commands those calling out to desist from speaking.

6.8 Conclusion

From the six scenes examined here an alternative trend to that of containment has emerged. The fame of Jesus spread as word of his miraculous action is broadcast, while in the Gospel as a whole the dominant tendency is towards the prevention and containment of exaltation. It does not seem possible to harmonise these two strands of the Gospel. Perhaps it is not even desirable to do so. It is likely that Menken's insight in relation to the story of Bartimaeus, that the pericope is as much about discipleship as it is about healing, holds

a key towards a greater understanding of the phenomenon. I wish to suggest that a further step along these lines may shed more light on the situation. To think in terms of discipleship in relation to the passages discussed in this chapter is an enlightening development as, for example, in the story of the Gerasene demoniac (5.1-20). On a *prima facie* level, it appears that Jesus does not grant the desire of the healed man to be his disciple, for that is the substance of his request *ἵνα μετ' αὐτοῦ ἦ* in 5.18. In fact, the expression “to be with him” is a good definition of what it is to be a disciple. However, in what may be described as a second climactic moment at the end of the pericope, Jesus’ untypical utterance *ὑπάγε εἰς τὸν οἶκόν σου πρὸς τοὺς σοὺς καὶ ἀπάγγειλον αὐτοῖς ὅσα ὁ κύριός σοι πεποίηκεν καὶ ἠλέησέν σε* (5.19) transforms the man’s wish to be a disciple into a commission to be an apostle. Every apostle must, first of all, have been a disciple. Every teacher must first have been a student. What the man who was healed had experienced in his brief interaction with Jesus was enough for Jesus to have invested him with the authority to perform the task of an apostle. The final verse makes clear that that is exactly what the man does. Yarbrow Collins commenting on the bracketing of Mark’s middle section by two healings of blind men makes the suggestion that in the case of the former (8.22-26), a pre-Markan miracle story about the giving of physical sight, is transformed by being placed where it is. A second level of meaning is now evident. Like the man being healed, the disciples initially see, but not clearly.²⁹ In the case of the story of Bartimaeus, she argues that, unlike Bartimaeus, the disciples do not yet see clearly that suffering service is the way of Jesus. The thesis which transfers the significance of the story of Bartimaeus from the field of a healing miracle to that of discipleship and apostleship goes some way towards explaining the presence of two seemingly divergent movements in the Gospel according to Mark, the one to conceal and the other to reveal.

²⁹ Yarbrow Collins, *Mark*, 506. A parallel situation exists in the case of Peter. He confesses Jesus as the Messiah, but misunderstand that predication.

CHAPTER SEVEN

Conclusions

Containment serves both a literary and a theological purpose in the Gospel according to Mark. As a rhetorical device employed by the author, especially in the form of a prohibition from broadcasting material of a certain kind, it initially attracts the attention of readers and hearers. Such attraction is reinforced when those readers and hearers reflect on the fact that on a *prima facie* basis, it would be in the interests of the evangelist that the material in question would be widely propagated. At a most fundamental level one may ask, if the purpose of the evangelist was to prohibit the content of the Gospel from being bruited about, why the Gospel was written in the first place. Nevertheless, containment is an important contributory factor to the characterisation of various personages in the Gospel according to Mark, especially those of Jesus, God and the disciples. A brief account of the conclusions of this study as they relate to these three subjects will be in order. It will be followed by a consideration of the implications of containment for identifying Mark's rhetorical strategy. Finally, some directions for future research will be indicated.

7.1 Jesus

Containment contributes to the paradoxical portrayal of Jesus in the Gospel as a whole. For example, two of the most epiphanic moments

in the Gospel, where epiphany applies not simply to the person of God as a literary character in Mark, but where it also pertains to Jesus as God's beloved son, namely, the voice from heaven in 1.11 and the voice from inside the cloud in 9.7, as this study has argued, are moments of revealing which are shrouded in concealment. In the former, no one else sees or hears what is happening apart from the reader. In the latter, those who are witnesses fundamentally misunderstand what they have seen and will hear as their spokesman's wanting to erect dwellings on the mountain indicates. In any case, they are strictly ordered not to speak about it. The use of containment in many such scenes makes clear that hiddenness as a rhetorical strategy of Mark's discourse is also an intrinsic part of Mark's portrayal of Jesus. I make reference to scholars who have reached this conclusion, for example, the chapter on Markan hermeneutics in Hays' recent monograph, which I referred to above.¹

While the portrayal of Jesus as a miracle-worker appears on almost every page of the Gospel according to Mark, this is counterbalanced by containment. The cumulative effect of so many occurrences of the motif is an awareness on the part of the reader that Jesus is not accorded due recognition for his extraordinary words and deeds. The reader is left with the sense that Jesus has many reasons to boast. The fact that he does not do so draws attention to another aspect of Mark's characterisation of him, namely, his modesty, a quality which appears in a wide variety of locations in the Jewish scriptures. It is the attribute which is encapsulated in the adjective *πραῦς*, which according to T. Muraoka is synonymous with unassuming and humble. It is used in the LXX of Moses in Numbers 12.3 and Sir. 45.4; of David in Ps 131.1; of the remnant of Israel in Zeph. 3.12; of Onias, the high priest in 2 Macc. 15.12; of the messianic king in Zech. 9.9; and of those who are "pliable" and

1 R. B. Hays, "Hidden in order to be revealed": Mark's Scriptural Hermeneutics," Pages 97-103 in *Echoes of Scripture in the Gospels* (Waco: Baylor, 2016).

thus, obedient to God.² It is a virtue pleasing to God in Sir 1.27. On the face of it, it is a difficult task for the author of the Gospel where miraculous activity plays such a crucial role, to balance this activity with a concern to portray Jesus as a modest man. It is also possible that the paradoxical portrayal of Jesus is necessary if the evangelist wishes to draw a parallel between his characterisation of Jesus and of God.

The quality of modesty which has been identified here has resonances with the concepts of honour and shame in the ancient world, as I indicated earlier. As we saw above, Watson's work had contributed to a renewed appreciation of the honour-shame axis in antiquity.³ This dissertation seeks to make a similar contribution to Markan scholarship by revealing the connection that exists between honour and shame and Mark's employment of the containment motif. Mark's Jesus, Watson had argued, pursued a counter-cultural way of acting. Containment may be seen as one of the ways in which this happened. Some of the areas which became the target of inversion include considerations of status, class and honour. He had argued that this involved not the rejection of honour *per se*, but, more precisely, the redefining of what was honourable.

The voice from the cloud at the transfiguration (9.5), directing the three disciples to listen to Jesus, in a scene replete with containment, as acknowledged above, nevertheless indicates that what Jesus speaks and teaches is approved by God. In Van Oyen's words "In Mark, it is (mostly) through Jesus that we will be informed about that character (God)."⁴ That is a task of supreme responsibility. It means that Jesus' actions and words are the means whereby God is most clearly portrayed.

Another contribution which this dissertation makes to Markan

2 T. Muraoka, "πραῦς," *A Greek-English Lexicon of the Septuagint* (Louvain: Peeters, 2009), 581-582.

3 Watson, *Honor among Christians*, 63-85.

4 Van Oyen, "From Messianic Secret to Divine Mystery," 13.

scholarship, is the identification of containment in every occurrence of the term “the son of man” in the Gospel. Since this is a consistent pattern in Mark’s narrative we may deduce from it that where the term is linked with Jesus it constitutes in itself an instance of exaltation. Only that which is raised up needs to be contained. By definition the presence of containment implies that there is something to be contained.

7.2 God

If paradoxical is the word which best sums up the characterisation of the narrative Jesus, it is also the word which most accurately describes the narrative portrayal of God. What V. Pizzuto says about the antithesis involved in the hiddenness or unknowability of God, on the one hand, and the employment of language in order to disclose something about God, may explain the paradoxical characterisation of Jesus also.⁵ In the case of God so many aspects need to be spoken about that contradiction is inevitable. In theological terms, it is the combination of a kataphatic and an apophatic approach which contains more truth than either of these alone would do. God who is “the story’s dominant agent of activity”⁶ is also the least visible character in the story. Apart from the two scenes alluded to above in 1.9 and 9.5, God does not intervene directly in the story. While this study investigated the motif of containment, as it applied to Mark’s portrayal of Jesus, if we accept the observation made at the end of the previous section that in Mark it is mostly through Jesus that we find information about God, we must conclude that research into Jesus is, at the same time, research into God. The paradox of a concealed revelation or of a diminished exaltation is therefore a primary element of the characterisation of both. The element of hiddenness

5 “Language about God – perhaps especially that of our sacred texts – must be profuse to the point of contradiction.” V. Pizzuto, “The *Deus Absconditus* of Scripture: An Apophatic Hermeneutic for Christian Contemplatives.” *Biblical Theology Bulletin*, 44 (2014): 100-108, 108.

6 Driggers, *Following God through Mark*, 11.

should not come as much of a surprise to the readers/hearers who are familiar with the God of the Hebrew scriptures and with Isaiah's predication of the attribute of God אֱלֹהֵינוּ אֱלֹהֵי מְסֻתָּהָר (Is. 45.15). What is surprising is that that concealment appears in Mark as a qualification of revelation in relation to God in the same way as it applies to Jesus. Our study of containment in relation to the characterisation of Jesus confirms it as a pervasive quality of that portrayal. If we take Van Oyen's conclusion seriously it means that when we look at Jesus, we can also see Mark's obliquely achieved characterisation of God which reveals unexpected aspects of the narrative God such as hiddenness, vulnerability and unknowability.⁷ If *πραΰτης* is a central element of Mark's characterization of Jesus we may conclude that it is part of his characterization of God also.

7.3 Disciples

The implications of this study of the motif of containment for a re-appraisal of the Markan disciples are twofold: (a) an amelioration of the largely negative scholarly perception of them and (b) a re-evaluation of a so-called "inner circle" among them. In the introductory chapter, I referred to Skinner's observation that in the period of form and redaction criticism which followed Wrede, the disciples were the principal object of character study and that only when narrative criticism came into its own did Jesus come into the picture. I also noted the wide variety of portrayals of the disciples in this period, from enemies of Jesus on one extreme, to his pastoral constituency on the other. The conclusions reached in this dissertation are supported by Van Oyen's position referred to above, that studies of the disciples which appeared after Wrede were not so much interested in disciples *per se* but rather, focussed on the part played by disciples in the unfolding of the narrative tension between the concealment and revelation of Jesus. Van Oyen also

⁷ Van Oyen, "From Messianic Secret to Divine Mystery," 8.

noted that many authors focussed on Jesus even before the rise of narrative criticism.

Mark's negative portrayal of Jesus' disciples was noticed as early as the formation of the Gospel according to Matthew, as an elementary familiarity with redaction criticism will reveal. Matthew's actions in seeking to mitigate this rather negative and harsh portrayal of Jesus' followers indicates that there is a problem. I instanced above some examples of this negative portrayal in contemporary scholarship, including Senior, Doohan and, to a lesser extent, Rhoads and Michie.

The investigation of the motif of containment in this dissertation suggests that the judgements of Skinner and Van Oyen apply here also. I have argued in particular, that the disciples' failure to understand is a primary form which containment takes. The emphasis is not so much on the disciples' inability or unwillingness in this regard, but rather on the impulse to conceal at the very moment when something momentous is being revealed. Or, to use the terminology which I have employed more frequently throughout the dissertation, to contain at the place where there is a push to exalt. Almost every pericope examined here reflects that tension. Fowler's study, as indicated above, supports this finding, though, coming from his particular perspective, with slightly different ramifications. His conclusion exonerates the disciples of ethical culpability for their failures.

The employment of containment explains why in subsequent scenes, the disciples do not appear to remember anything from earlier events, in which they were also participants, even when those scenes may have included a single action such as calming a storm, which in another literary work could function as a remarkable denouement worthy of frequent recalling. An absence of remembering is a recipe for a failure to understand. In this way also the disciples are exonerated. To summarise this point: the author of Mark employs a lack of understanding as part of his depiction of containment rather than as a denigration of disciples or anyone else. Thus, he refines his

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portrayal of the only character in which he has any serious interest, namely, Jesus. Of course, the author is not disinterested in his hearers and readers. After all, it was for them that his message was assembled as a story in the first place and told in the way that it is. While the disciples do not display any improvement in their understanding by the end of the story, the hearers and readers are surprised that those who had been Jesus' most intimate companions arrive at the end of the narrative as they did. Behind the role of Jesus as teacher, is the person of Mark as teacher, and while in the story it is the disciples who are Jesus' students, it is the hearers and readers ultimately who are his students and Mark's too.

The second implication of the conclusions of this study for Markan discipleship stems from the first. In particular, we may point to the elucidation of the role of the disciples in those scenes in which a select or representative sample of them is involved, typically, Peter, James and John, and, in one case, Andrew also. This study concluded that while their identities may be significant, where they are named it is their number which is more significant. As the trope of misunderstanding is a means used by Mark to achieve containment, the same effect is attained by having the miraculous words or actions of Jesus witnessed by a limited number of people. Their paucity is evidence of a movement towards concealment and containment within a more obvious drive towards revelation and exaltation. When viewed in this way, discussion of the existence of an inner circle of disciples in Mark is accorded considerably less traction.

I also pointed out that Malbon had argued for a "higher positive connotation" for the disciples than for the crowd. After all it is the whole group which is called (1.16-20), "instituted" (3.13-19) and missioned (6.7-13) and not just a section of them. Her presentation of these phenomena contributes towards a more positive appraisal of their role and, to that extent, recommends the avoidance of a judgemental conclusion in relation to the disciples. Her conclusions

are supported by this study. It may be said that the disciples are truly disciples. They are learning.

The conclusions are also supported, in a slightly different way by Van Oyen's pointing to the radical and revolutionary character of the kingdom. Those who occupy a privileged position of proximity to Jesus, do not understand what he says or does. Admittedly, it might have been easier for them to have done both, if Jesus had been more forthcoming and more direct about who he was. Mark's portrayal of Jesus includes the aspect that part of his being revealed and exalted for who he is, is that he remains silent on this central question, and that the motif of containment qualifies almost every moment of the disclosure of high status in the story. One of the disciples denies Jesus, another betrays him and all of them abandon him. Van Oyen puts it thus: "The complex characterization of the disciples (positive and negative) shows that God offers his kingdom and the criteria as a gift and leaves complete freedom to each person to accept the challenge or not."⁸ If that is so, the spotlight falls on Mark's deliberately paradoxical portrayal of Jesus' disciples as another expression of the "mysterious character of God's action."⁹ This study of containment while acknowledging failure on their part has not seen those deficiencies as morally culpable, but as part of the "contradictions" between the revelation and hiddenness of Jesus.

7.4 Mark's rhetorical strategies and the paradox of revealing and concealing

To interpret Mark as a story is to assume awareness of rhetorical and narrative strategies by which communication occurs between the text and the reader, in the broadest conception of the term. In this section, I summarise the findings of this research as they relate to Mark's rhetorical strategy. This dissertation has gone beyond other literary studies by seeing the containment concept across the

8 Van Oyen, "From Messianic Secret to Divine Myster," 18.

9 Sweat, *The Theological Role of Paradox*, 177.

gospel as a whole and identifying it in both miraculous speech and miraculous action.

Investigating the motif of containment as one such strategy has focused our attention not just on what the text says, but also on the way it says it. The containment in question relates to Mark's characterisation of Jesus where, at the moment of exaltation of his protagonist, there is an accompanying impulse to limit such a movement. Essentially that is the contradiction at the heart of Mark's approach which may also be described in terms of revealing and concealing. Paradox is found in almost every passage examined here. It is achieved by juxtaposing miraculous activity and containment in a variety of forms. In the pericope dealing with the daughter of Jairus, for example, restoration to life is accompanied by a prohibition of those who had seen the action from relating what has happened. The contradiction is further accentuated by the small number of witnesses to the event over and against the greater number who had been there before they were excluded.

The uniqueness of containment as an accompaniment to exaltation in Hellenistic literature of this period sets Mark's characterisation of Jesus in bas-relief. In that respect, it functions as a form of the narrative tension of curiosity, which derives "from a felt lack of information."¹⁰ Curiosity is aroused as the readers/hearers ask themselves why the climactic moment of the stilling of the storm is diminished by the self-doubting question of the witnesses. Or again, in relation to any or all three of Jesus' predictions, accurate as the story-line confirms, of his suffering and death, the privileged audience fails to understand what he is saying. The successful stimulation of curiosity and interest is surely a primary achievement for any artist. Containment plays a crucial role in that success.

The cumulative effect of containment present in Mark to such a high degree, as this dissertation has shown, especially in relation to

10 M. Sternberg, *The Poetics of Biblical Narrative: Ideological Literature and the Drama of Reading* (Bloomington, Indiana: Indiana University Press, 1985), 283.

Jesus' hiddenness, gives rise to a second narrative tension, namely, that of surprise. If, as Van Oyen argues, the prologue of the Gospel confirms Jesus as the central carrier of God's plan, the reader is surprised at the juxtaposition of this role and concealment.¹¹ In that respect, surprise operates at the level of discourse, that is, as part of the text's communication with the readers and hearers. However, surprise does not operate only at this level. It is also part of the story itself. The central carrier of God's plan is also vulnerable and weak in terms of political power or influence, as the predictions of suffering which we examined in this study demonstrate. The central carrier of God's plan appears to have been a failure as a teacher, since his disciples misunderstood both himself and his teaching, and all of them deserted him. The motif of containment suggests that the one who has authority on earth to forgive sins does not count such a prerogative as a reason for arrogance. Instead he does not cry out in vengeance for his executioners and others who have sinned against him to be punished. Similarly, as Lord of the Sabbath, containment means that instead of glorying in the status, he uses his authority to rescue life and to heal illness. His perception of God is surprising since the reader discovers from his actions and teaching that God is not "in comfortable zones, precincts of power, among the pious; constantly we are startled that God's kingdom is already among us, its Messiah enthroned where we least expect."¹²

To conclude our discussion on the topic of containment it will be helpful to return to where we began, to Wrede's celebrated initiative dealing with this feature of Mark's Gospel. His is the credit for raising the question posed by the text in the many places examined in this dissertation – and in other places – and for presenting a systematic reading of those texts. While the reception of his principal thesis

11 Van Oyen, "From Messianic Secret to Divine Mystery," 9.

12 C. C. Black, "The Face is Familiar – I Just Can't Place It," Pages 33-49 in *The Ending of Mark and the Ends of God*. Edited by B. R. Gaventa, and P. D. Miller. Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2005, 46.

shows that scholarly opinion has moved away from the historical and temporal interpretation proposed by him, namely, that, the “messianic secret” applied only for a limited period of time, nevertheless, his questions motivated scholars in the twentieth century and beyond to take the textual evidence seriously. The shift in biblical studies in general, and in approaches to the New Testament and the Gospel according to Mark in particular, from historical-critical to literary-critical methods was perhaps the biggest catalyst for the proliferation of Markan studies which occurred in the past fifty years, and of which this dissertation is an example. This study has shown that the textual material normally examined under the rubric of the messianic secret combines to verify Mark’s portrait of Jesus as indeed a worker of miracles. The motif of containment ensures that this aspect of Jesus is balanced, in every instance examined here, by another element which tempers thaumaturgy with humility and modesty. Containment is an antidote in Mark’s portrayal of Jesus to a one-sided view of Jesus and is an essential complement to his depiction of a miracle-working protagonist. This qualification is most easily seen in the frequent prohibitions of witnesses from speaking about what they have seen and heard. This study has shown that there are other forms which Mark’s balancing-act assumes. It occurs in those instances in the text which explain why Jesus is not accorded the notoriety which would be due to him from the performance of even a single miraculous act or word depicted here. It provides a reason for the absence in the text, with very few and notable exceptions, of a later reference to a miracle or a prediction once it has taken place. In many scenes, the very presence of the motif of containment in any of its forms provides strong evidence that the protagonist is being exalted at a particular point and that exaltation is being counterbalanced if not altogether neutralised. The occurrences of the term “the son of man” are cases in point. This study shows that the fact that each of these is accompanied by containment is strong evidence that the very employment of the term by Mark in relation to Jesus points to its

function as a form of elevation and extolment. In this way, as this study has shown, from the evangelist's perspective, containment is a necessary accompaniment to a miracle-working subject.

7.5 Areas of further research

A first area of further research would be to take every explicit moment of exaltation or revelation, that is every miraculous saying and action in the Gospel according to Mark, such as Meier has done for historical criticism in relation to all of the Gospels, and to investigate each one for evidence of containment. This would give a more comprehensive picture of the prevalence and significance of the motif and, at the same time, it would allow a more thorough testing of the hypothesis that everywhere exaltation occurs in Mark it is accompanied by some element of limitation.

The rarity in Jewish and Graeco-Roman literature of the Hellenistic period, of the Markan tendency to conceal at a moment when the impulse is to reveal suggests that this aspect of Mark's style needs further investigation. The chapter in Hays' recent publication on the use of the Jewish scriptures in Mark, referred to above, is an example of what is possible when this issue is examined in detail. I have referred above to the identification of links between the pericope of the Gerasene demoniac and the stories of the Exodus and the life of Samson. Such connections can contribute to an exaltation of Mark's protagonist by associating him with Moses and Samson. At the same time, they can illustrate how such exaltation is lost on the reader/hearers who are not familiar with the earlier scriptural traditions. This consideration underlines the necessity of a thorough investigation of Mark's dependence on the Jewish scriptures. The paradoxical, even mysterious nature of Mark was already recognised by F. Schleiermacher, especially in the trope of taking the sick aside to be healed. The contrast between Mark and his contemporaries is striking. The evangelist's imagination and ingenuity in this regard needs further elaboration and analysis.

CONCLUSIONS

Another possible area of further research would be to see whether and to what extent the concept of containment is mirrored in Jewish literature which is later than the Gospel according to Mark. In particular, rabbinic literature could be fruitfully examined for indications of the motif, such as that of Hillel the elder, to whom the saying, arguably illustrative of a tendency against self-exaltation, “Do not trust yourself, until the day you die.” is attributed (m.Avot 2.4).

Although Wrede recognised that generally speaking the secrecy motif is much reduced in Matthew and Luke and practically non-existent in John, a further area of study would be to investigate in detail how the other synoptics have handled the details in Mark which function as forms of the motif of containment. This redactional activity has been briefly touched upon in the dissertation in relation to the pericope of the calming of the storm (Mark 4.35-41). In the Gospel according to John the long discourses of Jesus are crucially revelatory and tip the balance in that direction rather than towards concealment.

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