

WHERE ARE THE QUOTATIONS?  
CITATION-LESS INTRODUCTORY FORMULAE IN  
THE GOSPEL OF MARK

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In the index of the fourth edition of the United Bible Societies' *Greek New Testament*, there are references to quotations with and without introductory formulae.<sup>1</sup> The primary objective of this list is to locate the specific *content* of OT citations within the NT. Accordingly, this list omits passages that contain introductory formulae (i.e., scriptural indicators)<sup>2</sup> *without* specific quotations. It omits, then, a striking phenomenon. On several occasions, NT authors simply provide introductory formulae but omit the citation altogether!<sup>3</sup> This phenomenon is the primary focus of this paper. An example may be seen in the Gospel of Mark's arrest scene of Jesus:

Then Jesus said to them, 'Have you come out with swords and clubs to arrest me as though I were a bandit? Day after day I was with you in the temple teaching, and you did not arrest me. But let the scriptures be fulfilled.' All of them deserted him and fled (14:48-50; NRSV).

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<sup>1</sup> (New York, NY: United Bible Societies, 1993). The *Nestle-Aland* 27<sup>th</sup> edition (*Novum Testamentum Graece*, ed. Barbara Aland, et al. [Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 1993] has only a list of citations following the Old Testament order, and not one following the NT order as in the UBS edition, which is more useful in this case.

<sup>2</sup> The most common example of a scriptural indicator is the phrase "it is written."

<sup>3</sup> The phenomenon is not unique to the Gospel of Mark; it is not uncommon in narrative type texts (e.g., Luke 18:31; 21:22; John 2:22; 5:46; Acts 13:29), with exceptions in the NT only in 1 Cor 9:10; 14:34; 15:3-4 (and possibly Gal 4:22 and Rev 10:7).

Despite Jesus' reference to "the scriptures" (ai` grafai), he specifies no text. Nor does the wider literary context provide any specific scriptural passages, although some scholars usually suggest possible allusions.<sup>4</sup> In fact, it is difficult for modern interpreters to determine for which scriptural passages to search, since it is complicated by what action fulfills the scriptures. Is it Jesus' arrest and betrayal or the total desertion of Jesus? The argument of this paper is that such apparent ambiguity—that is, the omission of any precursor text—is intentional in the Gospel of Mark to highlight a broader claim that the whole of scripture, and not any one biblical text in particular, receives fulfillment in the activities of Jesus' life.

This phenomenon in the Gospel of Mark occurs on three occasions and deserves attention (see Mark 9:11-13; 14:21; 14:49).<sup>5</sup> Generally, in scholarship there is a basic assumption that such scriptural texts exist that point to the event Jesus predicts or explains.<sup>6</sup> As significant as locating such texts may be, the presence of scriptural terminology as markers (i.e., introductory formulae)—at least for a narrative-rhetorical reading—expresses that what has taken place with the coming of Jesus has its prelude in a broader scriptural framework and thereby in the plan of God. That is, simply pointing in the direction of scripture is as significant as any specific content itself. This seems to

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<sup>4</sup> For example, Craig A. Evans (*Mark 8:27-16:20* [WBC 34B; Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 2001] 427) suggests that Amos 2:16 provides the picture for Jesus' scriptural reference.

<sup>5</sup> Matthew follows Mark's lead adding emphases only. Luke, on the other hand, omits Mark 9:11-13 and 14:49, and changes 14:21 to "as it has been determined" (kata. to. wri smenon).

<sup>6</sup> See the astute study by Joel Marcus (*The Way of the Lord: Christological Exegesis of the Old Testament in the Gospel of Mark* [Louisville, KY: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1992] 94-110, 153-98) where he devotes two chapters to these verses.

be what George Kennedy has described as “radical Christian rhetoric,” that is, “a form of ‘sacred language’ characterized by assertion and absolute claims of authoritative truth without evidence or logical argument.”<sup>7</sup>

Before discussing the Markan passages where this phenomenon occurs, let me first explore briefly the function of explicit citations within the Gospel narrative. This section will provide a broader framework for understanding the important rhetorical function of citations with introductory formulae in such narrative texts as the Gospel of Mark. This will allow us to observe the significance of the introductory formula itself in its narrative placement.

### *The Function of Citations in Narrative Rhetoric*

I shall not attempt here a thorough analysis of the distinctions between explicit citations and allusions or echoes, although a few comments are in order. It is commonly assumed that all references to scripture, including allusions and citations, perform a similar function.<sup>8</sup> Authors utilize them to buttress their arguments. Certainly, to some

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<sup>7</sup> *New Testament Interpretation through Rhetorical Criticism* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 1984) 104: “The truth is immediately and intuitively apprehended because it is true. Some see it, others do not, but there is no point in trying to persuade the latter.” John Levison, in an essay honoring Kennedy (“Did the Spirit Inspire Rhetoric? An Exploration of George Kennedy’s Definition of Early Christian Rhetoric,” in *Persuasive Artistry: Studies in New Testament Rhetoric in Honor of George A. Kennedy* [ed. Duane F. Watson; JSNTSup 50; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1991] 28), adds an important nuance to Kennedy’s understanding of “radical Christian rhetoric.” Levison writes, “*Proclamation* is, to some degree at least, *persuasion* in the Gospel of Mark.”

<sup>8</sup> E.g., Elwyn E. Tilden, “The Study of Jesus’ Interpretative Methods,” *Int* 7 (1953) 45-61; this article is based on his unpublished dissertation “The Functions of the Old Testament in the Sayings of Jesus as Recorded in the Synoptic Gospels” (Ph.D. diss., Princeton Theological Seminary, 1945; available from

extent this is true. The distinction between allusions and citations, then, is mainly due to the understanding of readers or audiences of the text. But, if explicit quotations “dominate the surface” of the text, as Robert Brawley suggests in his study on Luke-Acts,<sup>9</sup> then they should be recognized and highlighted. Furthermore, explicit citations, in a world of allusions to sacred texts, are more than complementary material. As Richard Hays recognizes in his study on scriptural echoes in Pauline material, explicit quotations provide the basis upon which modern interpreters assume other allusions and echoes are attainable for audiences:

Quotation, allusion, and echo may be seen as points along a spectrum of intertextual reference, moving from the explicit to the subliminal. As we move farther away from overt citation, the source recedes into the discursive distance, the intertextual relations become less determinate, and the demand placed on the reader’s listening powers grow greater. As we near the

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University Microfilms, Ann Arbor, MI); also Robert H. Gundry (*The Use of the Old Testament in St. Matthew’s Gospel with Special Reference to the Messianic Hope* [NovTSup18; Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1967] 104, n. 2) who asserts that the ancients did not distinguish between direct and indirect quotations. This assumption is necessary for the inclusion of non-explicit citations in Gundry’s project. Unfortunately, he does not provide any evidence to support this claim; also Richard N. Longenecker, *Biblical Exegesis in the Apostolic Period* (2d ed.; Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1999) 45. For a recent discussion on Pseudo-Philo with a nuanced assessment of this assumption, see Bruce N. Fisk’s dissertation, “Retelling Israel’s Story: Scripture, Exegesis and Transformation in Pseudo-Philo’s *Liber Antiquitatum Biblicarum* 12-24” (Ph.D. diss., Duke University, 1997; available from University Microfilms, Ann Arbor, MI). Contrast Pamela M. Eisenbaum’s published dissertation (*Jewish Heroes of Christian History: Hebrews 11 in Literary Context* [SBLDS 156; Atlanta, GA: Scholars Press, 1997] 89-133), in which she argues convincingly for important distinctions between quotations and retellings.

<sup>9</sup> Robert L. Brawley, *Text to Text Pours Forth Speech: Voices of Scripture in Luke-Acts* (Indianapolis, IN: Indiana University Press, 1995) 4.

vanishing point of the echo, it inevitably becomes difficult to decide whether we are really hearing an echo at all, or whether we are only conjuring things out of the murmurings of our own imaginations.<sup>10</sup>

In some ways, allusions attract the reader to latent issues, many of which are in need of recovery. As necessary as they are to the text's discourse, only attentive readers grasp their meaning.<sup>11</sup> In comparison, explicit citations mark poignantly fundamental concerns of the narrative.<sup>12</sup> Rather than echoing the divine "voice," they summon (with their incantation-like formulae) that voice, power, and presence into the narrative discourse in order to substantiate crucial claims. As W. D. Davies reflects, the sacred writings "represent the eternal breaking into time; the unknowable disclosed; the transcendent entering history and remaining here, available to mortals to handle and to

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<sup>10</sup> *Echoes of Scripture in the Letters of Paul* (New Haven, CN: Yale University Press, 1989) 23. Cf. Ziva Ben-Porat, "The Poetics of Literary Allusion," *PTL: Journal for Descriptive Poetics and Theory of Literature* 1 (1976) 105-28.

<sup>11</sup> Although William D. Davies and Dale C. Allison's (*A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Gospel according to Saint Matthew* [vol. 3; Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1991] 577) comment that one alludes to well known texts is certainly correct, such allusions may only be deciphered by an audience after a re-reading. With regard to the historical Jesus, we may have more traditional material in exactly those areas not prominent in the text (so François Bovon, *Luke the Theologian: Thirty-three Years of Research (1950-1983)* [Allison Park, PA: Pickwick Publications, 1987] 99). Contrast Geza Vermes (*The Religion of Jesus the Jew* [Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 1993] 54), who thinks the "unannounced" citations are less traditional.

<sup>12</sup> As Richard France ("The Formula-Quotations of Matthew 2 and the Problem of Communication," *NTS* 27 [1981] 234) recognizes, they strike ordinary readers before allusions.

appropriate; the divine become apparent. To memorize the scriptures, and even to quote from them, is to enter into some sort of communion with ultimate reality.”<sup>13</sup>

In her study on the Apocrypha and the Pseudepigrapha, Devorah Dimant has shown that there may be other implications as well. She divides references to scripture into two categories: (1) the “expositional use” (i.e., explicit citations); (2) the “compositional use” (i.e., allusions, echoes, etc.). She concludes that authors tend to utilize explicit citations to “interpret” the biblical world, implying a “new teaching”; they tend to weave texts into the narrative (the “compositional use”) in order to “recreate” the biblical world, implying “acceptance” of that world.<sup>14</sup> If these distinctions are accurate, then a careful analysis of the explicit citations is necessary—if for no other reason than to understand the distinctive theological or ideological position of the new text. [In addition, the power and authority of citing a precursor text is felt as much in what is ignored as in what is cited.]<sup>15</sup> All ancient readers of these texts must acknowledge these

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<sup>13</sup> “Reflections About the Use of the Old Testament in the New in its Historical Context,” *JOR* 74 (1983) 108.

<sup>14</sup> “Use and Interpretation of *Mikra* in the Apocrypha and the Pseudepigrapha,” in *Mikra: Text, Translation, Reading and Interpretation of the Hebrew Bible in Ancient Judaism and Early Christianity* (ed. Martin J. Mulder; Assen: Van Gorcum, 1988) 379. Note that Dimant’s study does not include “Rewritten scripture.” For the application of Dimant’s categories to this genre, see Fisk’s (Duke) dissertation on Pseudo-Philo, “Retelling Israel’s Story.”

<sup>15</sup> “A discourse derives power and significance from its positive and negative relations to others, both to those it largely resembles and confirms and to those it repudiates, represses, or ignores” (Wesley A. Kort, *Bound to Differ: The Dynamics of Theological Discourses* [University Park, PA: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 1992] 134). Also see Meir Sternberg’s article, “Proteus in Quotation-Land: Mimesis and the Forms of Reported Discourse,” *Poetics Today* 3 (1982) 107-56: “The very extraction of a part from a

abrupt moments in the narrative to recognize the potency of authoritative evidence. Therefore, they become critical for understanding the narrative's rhetoric.<sup>16</sup>

In addition to Dimant's study, Christopher Stanley, in a recently published SBL conference paper, has argued forcefully for the rhetorical function of explicit quotations, with particular attention to the Pauline letters.<sup>17</sup> Drawing from both modern linguistic and reader-response analyses, Stanley argues that the rhetorical function of quotations is central to "the surface structure of the text that is deemed to merit attention and

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speech-event must, to a certain degree, modify, if not misrepresent, its role and import within the original whole, where it is qualified and supplemented, defined and substantiated, by a set of other components relating to the various parameters of context. And the resetting of the part within a different whole widens the distance still further by exposing it to the pressure of a new network of relations." (Cited by Christopher Stanley, in "The Rhetoric of Quotations: An Essay on Method," in *Early Christian Interpretation of the Scriptures of Israel: Investigations and Proposals* (JSNTSup148; Studies in Scripture in Early Judaism and Christianity 5; ed. Craig A. Evans and James A. Sanders [Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1997] 51).

<sup>16</sup> "Narrative Rhetoric" is becoming a common phrase in literary studies of the Bible. See Elizabeth Struthers Malbon's brief introduction to narrative criticism, "Narrative Criticism: How Does the Story Mean?" in *Mark and Method: New Approaches in Biblical Studies* (ed. Janice Capel Anderson and Stephen D. Moore [Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 1992] 34).

<sup>17</sup> "The Rhetoric of Quotations," 44-58. Stanley, for example, assumes that early Christian readers (both Gentile and Jew) were not so familiar with the original contexts of cited texts (52-53). If this were true, readers would be even less familiar with texts alluded to. See Stanley's most recent contribution to this discussion, in a SBL (1998) presentation, "Biblical Quotations as Rhetorical Devices in Paul's Letter to the Galatians," in *SBL Seminar Papers 1998* (ed. Mary E. Shields, John F. Kutsko, and Dexter E. Callender; Atlanta, GA: Scholars Press, 1998) 700-730. Also, Christopher M. Tuckett, "Paul, Scripture, and Ethics. Some Reflections," *NTS* 46 (2000) 403-24.

explanation.”<sup>18</sup> Whether there is more to be gained from the quotation’s precursor context is determined, according to Stanley, by the author:

(D)irect quotation. . . empowers the readers by opening up the possibility that they might hear something different in the text than what the quoting author intended. To preclude this possibility, authors of argumentative texts routinely embed their quotations in an interpretative context that predisposes the reader toward a particular response to the quoted text. . . . (T)he voice of the original is muffled (in varying degrees) by the voice of the quoting author.<sup>19</sup>

If the “original” context of a quotation is muted rhetorically, how “muffled” are even the unmarked allusions on the surface of the narrative for the author’s attempt to communicate? If a particular reader catches the allusion, how well must she know the precursor text to hear an intertextual “conversation”? We must begin, as Hays rightly recognizes, with the textual, surface indicators—that is, with the explicit quotations or references.<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>18</sup> “The Rhetoric of Quotations,” 58.

<sup>19</sup> “The Rhetoric of Quotations,” 49-50. Does Stanley overgeneralize? That is, is it possible that certain introductory formulae attract more of the OT context, or expect their readers to engage the OT context, more than others? Also, although this paper does not argue the case, we must question whether the Gospel genre offers us “argumentative texts.” Can Stanley’s assessment include narratives as well? Perhaps, they should not be classified as “argumentative texts,” but they are texts containing components that attempt to “persuade” (so Levison, “Did the Spirit Inspire Rhetoric?” 28).

<sup>20</sup> See Hays’ helpful criteria for determining possible echoes (*Echoes of Scripture*, 29-32). Of course, to develop the narrative hermeneutics of the Synoptic Gospels, one should fully appreciate allusions and echoes as well, but only after a thorough grappling with the parameters established from an analysis of the explicit citations and references. One further point should be made. Although these assessments (by Hays and Stanley) have been valuable, reasons why authors quote other sources appear limited to such conclusions, as Benjamin D. Sommer (“Leshon Limmudim: The Poetics of Allusion in Isaiah 40-66” [Ph.

Let me ask one final question more directly relevant to this particular paper. If the author intends to mute the original context of a quotation by developing a new context, then are original contexts muted more if the author only records an introductory formula with no explicit citation? In fact, they seem to be deafly silent.

Introductory Formulae with No Explicit Citations (Three Cases in Mark)

The first example of this phenomenon occurs in 9:11-13. Let me offer a rather

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D. diss., The Divinity School at the University of Chicago, 1994; available from University Microfilms, Ann Arbor, MI) has recently pointed out, as (1) support for the argument by either close association-or possibly distance-from the precursor text, and/or (2) pleasure. In a technical study on quotations within Hebrew scriptures, George Savran (*Telling and Retelling: Quotations in Biblical Narrative* [Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1988] 37-76) adds the following functions of quotations within narratives: plot organization, characterization, and/or to express point of view. Unfortunately, these are limited, due to the restricted categories (and analogies) within modern literary studies. For example, these studies omit one hypothetical possibility generated by the question, why do oppressed communities cite texts? They do so for survival and/or lament. This is not the place to argue for a widespread oppressive ethos for early Christianity, which I am not completely convinced of myself. But, there are at least two interesting examples that may lend support to this hypothesis: Paul's activity prior to "conversion" and the apparent tension between Matthew's community and the synagogue. Since both of these "events" are associated with writings representing the largest number of explicitly cited texts within the NT, then we should not ignore this possibility. It is at least worthwhile to suggest that survival is as plausible a suggestion as other possible intentions for cited texts drawn from studies of modern literary texts written in the Western world. By way of socio-historical analogy, Christianized slaves in antebellum North America frequently cited scriptural texts as a means of survival (e.g., Sojourner Truth; see Nell Irvin Painter's biography, *Sojourner Truth: A Life, A Symbol* [New York: W. W. Norton & Co., 1996], esp. 85-86) and their heirs still continue to do so (e.g., Theophus H. Smith, *Conjuring Culture: Biblical Formation of Black America* [Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994]).

detailed discussion on this passage and, then, more concise observations on 14:21 and 14:49. Following the scene of Jesus' transfiguration, a proleptic event of his heavenly status, Jesus charges the (select) disciples not to narrate (mhdeni...dihghswntai) what they had seen until the Son of Man had resurrected from the dead (9:9). The topic of the resurrection, and their inability to understand it (suzhtouhfej ti, estin to. ek nekrwh anasthhai), leads to their question: "Why do the scribes say that Elijah must come first?"<sup>21</sup> Jesus affirms scribal theology on this belief (vv.12-13),<sup>22</sup> pointing to the fulfillment of scripture (kaqwj gegraptai epl auton).<sup>23</sup> The scripture itself, however,

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<sup>21</sup> Although this is not the only time the disciples ask a question about scripture (e.g., 10:10; cf. 7:17), it is the only time that the disciples ask Jesus a question in public (see 9:2), and not privately in a house (7:17; 9:28; 10:10; 13:3).

Also, note the presence, literally and figuratively, of the "scribes" in scenes involving scripture throughout Mark (7:1-23; 9:11; 11:15-19; 12:28-34; 12:35-37).

<sup>22</sup> Marcus (*The Way of the Lord*, 99) translates all of v. 12 as a question: "Is it true, when he comes before the Messiah, Elijah will restore all things? How then has it been written of the Son of man, that he should suffer many things and be rejected . . .?"; cf. Julius Wellhausen, *Das Evangelium Marci übersetzt und erklärt* (Berlin: Reimer, 1903) 76. From this reading, Marcus suggests that Jesus questions whether Elijah will restore all things, not whether he will come. In fact, according to Marcus, Mark does not view John the Baptist/Elijah as a restorer, especially of family relationships as Malachi implies. For a nuance on this verse also taking the phrase as a question ("[If] Elijah coming first restores all things, how then is it written . . .?"), see Justin Taylor, "The Coming of Elijah, Mt 17:10-13 and Mk 9:11-13: The Development of the Texts," *RB* 98 (1991), 116.

<sup>23</sup> Cf. Mark 1:2. Marcus (*The Way of the Lord*, 96) argues that kaqwj gegraptai designates exegetical conclusions from several passages. Of his examples, only Mark 1:2-3 seems appropriate. In Gal 4:22, no kaqwj is used; even if gegraptai could carry this force alone, all of the scriptural references in Galatians

is left unspecified. By implication, it is possible that Jesus' use of the word *apokaqistanei* ("restores") may recall Mal 3:23. But a simple affirmation that scripture points in this direction and that it has already come to pass (*el h,| uqen*) is sufficient for Mark's disciples, as they ask nothing further on the matter. (We may wish they had inquired about a suffering Elijah!)<sup>24</sup>

When Jesus turns his attention from Elijah to the Son of Man, there is an apparent disjunction in the text. The repetition of 9:13 with 9:12a only emphasizes even more Jesus' belief in the coming of Elijah. One could ignore 9:12b, "and how has it been written about the Son of Man that he would suffer many things," without "skipping a beat." The connection between 9:12b and what follows is the repetition of the phrase "what has been written" (*gegraptai*). As the scripture predicts the coming of Elijah, so it promises the suffering of the Son of Man.<sup>25</sup> Finally, as Elijah has certainly come, so will the Son of Man suffer.

As mentioned above, Jesus fails to expose any specific scripture supporting his

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come from one overarching story. John 7:38 points to only one (unknown) passage.

For Hugh Anderson (*The Gospel of Mark* [London: Oliphants, 1976] 228), this formula "... means no more for Mark here than that the interconnected tragic destinies of John the Baptist and Jesus are in conformity with the will of God in Scripture."

<sup>24</sup> Traditions on the suffering Elijah are infrequent; cf. 1 Enoch 89.51-52. My colleague, Michael E. Fuller, brought this reference to my attention.

<sup>25</sup> Alfred Suhl (*Die Funktion der alttestamentlichen Zitate und Anspielungen im Markusevangelium* [Gütersloh: Gerd Mohn, 1965] 44) suggests that there is no specific passage in mind; cf. Marcus (*The Way of the Lord*, 95) who hints at the possibility of figures like the Suffering Servant (Isaiah 53) and the Righteous Sufferer (Psalms 22) behind this formula.

belief in the suffering of Elijah (9:13). More critical is the omission of scripture that might buttress the claim of a suffering Son of Man.<sup>26</sup> In three other predictions of such suffering (8:21-33; 9:31-32; 10:32-34), Jesus never mentions scripture. Although lacking a specific scriptural text with an explicit introductory formula is not uncommon in the second Gospel (see below on 14:21; 14:49), this is the first occurrence for the reader of Mark's narrative. Up until this point, the author follows every introductory marker to scripture with an explicit citation (e.g., 1:2-3; 7:6-7, 10; 10:6-8). In the flow of the narrative, then, Mark 9:11-13 surprises the reader. No specific passage guides the reader to understand Jesus' (or Mark's) intention fully. Yet, without any further questions or any internal reflection from the disciples, as in 9:10 (*kai. ton logon ekra,thsan proj eautouj suzhtouhtej*), readers should sense that these markers point to an overall sense of divine sanction on the coming events that will transpire in the passion narrative. Not only will Jesus' own predictions be fulfilled there, but also the concealed scriptural text. The disciples ask nothing further; and, (modern) readers of the Gospel of Mark may be disappointed when they discover no specific text exists for the suffering Son of Man (despite claims that Isa 53 or Ps 22 lie behind Jesus' suggestion).<sup>27</sup> But, for the second Gospel, Jesus' scriptural hermeneutic is not fully determined by his ability to disclose proof-texts from the sacred scriptures. For Mark, Jesus' authority is unlike the scribes because his authority is evident in other ways besides scriptural interpretation. He

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<sup>26</sup> As Marcus (*The Way of the Lord*, 94, 97) rightly recognizes, there are not “. . . even virtual citations of the OT texts.” Cf. Rev 11:1-13, which does not, however, mention Elijah explicitly.

<sup>27</sup> Cf. William H. Bellinger and William R. Farmer, eds., *Jesus and the Suffering Servant: Isaiah 53 and Christian Origins* (Harrisburg, PA: Trinity Press International, 1998).

expresses his authority in other areas, like exorcisms (in 1:21-27), to “convince” his disciples that he “knows the power of God” (cf. Mark 12:18-27) and thereby his interpretation shows he also “knows scripture.”<sup>28</sup> According to the narrative of the Gospel of Mark, then, sometimes he conceals what he thinks or how he reasons.

Before proceeding to the other two cases under discussion, one narrative example is in order to express the narrative rhetoric of the second Gospel; this instance demonstrates that Mark’s *arrangement* is important rhetorically as well.<sup>29</sup> Immediately after this brief dialogue between the disciples and Jesus in 9:11-13, an exorcism story occurs, in which the other disciples failed (9:18). As Jesus reaches these disciples, Mark reports that scribes are arguing with them over some unspecified issue (perhaps it is the demon-possession; 9:17). Once the crowds see Jesus, however, their interest and “amazement” (ἐξεγανθίθησαν) turns from the debate to him. So, Mark reports the crowds’ reaction to Jesus even before any act is performed. Jesus’ reputation has preceded him (e.g., v.17). Finally, Jesus exorcises the demon. As Mark portrays it, Jesus’ (extraordinary) exorcizing power (which his disciples have not yet fully emulated;

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<sup>28</sup> An excellent example is found in Mark 12:18-27, in which the theological presuppositions of Jesus and of the Sadducees predetermine their choice and interpretation of scriptural passages to prove or disprove the resurrection. See discussion below.

<sup>29</sup> See Kennedy, *New Testament Interpretation*, 23. There is rhetorical effect in Mark’s arrangement, so his narrative rhetoric is not totally “radical Christian rhetoric” as defined in Kennedy’s earlier work (*Classical Rhetoric and Its Christian and Secular Tradition from Ancient to Modern Times* [Chapel Hill, NC: The University of North Carolina Press, 1980] 127-28). Cf. Levison, “Did the Spirit Inspire Rhetoric?” 40. Perhaps, to a lesser extent and in a different genre, what Levison says of Paul may be said of Mark as well. See, also, Steve Walton, “Rhetorical Criticism: An Introduction,” *Themelios* 21 (1996) 4-9.

see 9:28-29), has consequences even for his scriptural interpretive strategy (9:11-13). As Mark 1:22 expressly states, this one teaches “as one who has authority, and not as the scribes.” This “enthymeme,”<sup>30</sup> a statement with supporting reason, is the model for the whole narrative, particularly for the narrative’s portrayal of Jesus’ teaching of scripture. In that manner, the next time he predicts the event of the suffering of the Son of Man, the disciples—who still do not understand—are too afraid to ask him (see 9:32).

**(14:21)** The second case of a citation-less introductory formula occurs in Mark 14:21. As a point of interest, it is found before the last *explicitly* cited text in 14:27. The context of 14:21 is Jesus’ prediction of Judas’ betrayal to the disciples.<sup>31</sup> Interestingly, Mark’s Jesus uses a *men...de* construction that highlights the contrast and connection between the Son of Man and the betrayer. On the one hand, the “going away” (*upagei*) of the Son of Man has already been informed and predicted by scripture (*kaqwj gegraptai*). On the other hand, Judas is still accountable for his role in the betrayal (*ouai. de. tw| anqrwpw*). Both events transpire within the narrative, in 14:43-47.<sup>32</sup> But,

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<sup>30</sup> According to Kennedy (*New Testament Interpretation*, 106), Mark 1:22 is “the enthymeme which carries the greatest rhetorical force” in the opening chapter of Mark. For a full-length discussion on enthymemes in the Gospel of Mark, see Richard B. Vinson, “A Comparative Study of the Use of Enthymemes in the Synoptic Gospels,” in *Persuasive Artistry: Studies in New Testament Rhetoric in Honor of George A. Kennedy* [ed. Duane F. Watson; JSNTSup 50; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1991] 119-141.

<sup>31</sup> Although Judas is not mentioned here by name keeping the disciples in suspense, readers already know which disciple betrays Jesus (see 14:10-11; cf. Acts 1:16-20).

<sup>32</sup> Within the Gospel of Mark, *upagw* points to the betrayal of the Son of Man, which may explain Luke’s choice of *poreuomai*. For this understanding, note the parallelism of 14:21 between “going away” and

as with the earlier prediction of the Son of Man's suffering in 9:11, no explicit text is mentioned.<sup>33</sup> What scripture Jesus (or Mark) has in mind is once again unspecified and ultimately not important to Mark. None of the disciples question him. These Markan characters simply accept Jesus' authoritative statement. A general marker to Scripture is sufficient to serve as the authoritative basis for both the Son of Man's death and Judas' betrayal of him. This constitutes once more the "radical Christian rhetoric" of the Gospel narrative.

**(14:49)** Finally, in the last case where this phenomenon occurs, it is also the last explicit introductory formula and marker to any scriptural text, be it citation-less or otherwise. The context of 14:49—as noted at the beginning of this paper—is the arrest scene, immediately following the betrayal. As Howard Kee and Joel Marcus (among others) have recognized, allusions may occur in the remainder of Mark but such allusions vary from reader to reader (and from modern interpreter to modern interpreter).<sup>34</sup> Surrounding the primary marker, the phrase "the scriptures" (*ai` grafai*) in 14:49, is the fulfillment of 14:21 (Judas's betrayal). Another narrative fulfillment occurs here as

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betrayal (*paradidotai*). Also, see this emphasis in 9:31 and 10:33. Also, Gerhard Delling ("*u`pagw*," in *TDNT*, 8.504-506), who understands the word as "goes up" to his death; and, Morna Hooker, *The Gospel according to Saint Mark* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 1991) 336-37. Cf. John 7:33; 8:14-16.

<sup>33</sup> And one is hard-pressed to find one. For the best possible choice see Ps 41:9-10 (also Marcus, *The Way of the Lord*, 188).

<sup>34</sup> Specifically on 14:49, see Howard C. Kee, "The Function of Scriptural Quotations and Allusions in Mark 11-16," in *Jesus und Paulus: Festschrift für Werner Georg Kümmel zum 70 Geburtstag* (ed. E. Earle Ellis and Erich Grässer; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1975) 171, 182-83; and Marcus, *The Way of the Lord*, 186-96; esp. 194-95, which offers a direct response to Kee.

well in 14:50-51; the “falling away” of the disciples fulfills 14:27.<sup>35</sup> Even a young, unknown disciple (neaniskoj tij sunhkolougei autw) flees from the scene perhaps representing the fulfillment of the Zechariah text.

Does the introductory formula in 14:49, iħa plhrwqwsin ai` grafai, (“so that the scriptures might be fulfilled”), point to the surrounding fulfillment of sacred texts (as mentioned above)?<sup>36</sup> Mark may want his audience to view the arrest scene, along with the betrayal and the “scattering,” as dictated by the “divine voice.” Within the narrative, Jesus recalls the fulfillment of the scriptures as a way to conclude his verbal defense in vv. 48-49. What the crowds and guards in the narrative (v. 43; and Judas) may not recognize is that they are fulfilling the sacred plan. They, like the Sadducees of chapter 12, are ignorant of the scriptures (cf. 12:24).<sup>37</sup> But, once again, the important point is that no specific quotation is directly coupled with this introductory formula.

Furthermore, it is interesting that a Gospel narrative that begins with an explicit quotation from Isaiah (and Exodus and Malachi) ends with an introductory formula without any explicit text.<sup>38</sup> Since this arrest is really the beginning of the events that lead to Jesus’ death and the narrative’s climax, it is possible to understand this introductory formula as pointing to the completion or fulfillment of *all scriptures*. This may explain

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<sup>35</sup> Robert H. Gundry (*Mark: A Commentary on His Apology for the Cross* [Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1993] 861) thinks that 14:49 recalls Mark 14:27 (citing Zech 13:7), among other passages.

<sup>36</sup> Editors of the NA27<sup>th</sup> edition suggest Isa 53:7 in the margins.

<sup>37</sup> The plural of “scripture” only occurs in Mark 12:24 and 14:49.

<sup>38</sup> As Kennedy (*New Testament Interpretation*, 105) recognizes, however, Mark offers enthymemes, but “of a very simple sort.”

the unique use of *pl hrow* (“to fulfill”).<sup>39</sup> As the final introductory formula in the Gospel of Mark, it notifies the reader to recognize (unlike the Sadducees and numerous others) that the playing out of the events of Jesus’ life have their beginning in the sacred text (according to Isaiah) and their end in the whole of the sacred text (“so that the scriptures might be fulfilled”).

*Markan Narrative Rhetoric and Jesus’ Use of Scripture*

One further question arises, a question that directly relates to the thesis of this paper. If citation-less introductory formulae do not intend to provide any specific scriptural source, as I have attempted to argue here, is such a pattern consistent with the larger narrative rhetoric of the Gospel of Mark? I think it is. Let me endeavor to show this connection by briefly discussing one passage, Mark 12:18-27, which might serve as a paradigm for the depiction of Jesus’ use of scripture within the second Gospel.

In a conflict with the Sadducees over belief in a general resurrection, Jesus begins his response with a broad condemnation that the Sadducees know neither the scriptures nor the power of God (...*mh. eido<sub>te</sub>j taj grafaj mhde. thn dunamin tou/ qeou*).<sup>40</sup>

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<sup>39</sup> This is the only occurrence of this verb in Mark, besides the later scribal addition of 15:28 based on Luke 22:37.

<sup>40</sup> This is the only time the phrase “power of God” (*dunamin tou/ qeou*) occurs in Mark. “For Mark, the scriptures and the power of God are two separate but inseparable realities. Despite the order of the terms ‘scripture’ and ‘power of God’ in 12:24, there is no doubt that in Mark’s mind knowledge of the power of God has a logical priority over knowledge of the scriptures. Knowing the scriptures without knowing the vivifying power of God causes faith to deteriorate into a moribund traditionalism that is so separated from the wellsprings of its life that it doesn’t even know it is honoring God with lips while keeping its heart far from him (see Mark 7:6-7//Isa. 29:13). But Mark would also reject a presumptuous and one-sided claim to

This phrase, “to know scriptures and the power of God,” functions as a programmatic statement in this passage and for the depiction of Jesus’ use of scripture in the second Gospel.<sup>41</sup>

Turning specifically to the scriptural text, we note that Jesus claims to know a passage more suitable to the topic at hand, the resurrection, than the Sadducees’ choice, although on first glance it is not apparent to the (un)informed reader how this text lends support to Jesus’ position.<sup>42</sup> While some scholars view this pericope as a debate positioning

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know the power of God directly without reference to the scriptures, a claim that blithely ignores the tradition that imparts, however fragmentarily and imperfectly, a sense of the shape that the grace and the judgment of God assume in human history” (Marcus, *The Way of the Lord*, 203).

“Knowing the scriptures,” J. Gerald Jansen (“Resurrection and Hermeneutics: on Exodus 3:6 in Mark 12:26,” *JSNT* 23 [1985] 50) points out, “is not only about what one reads but how one reads.” So, for example, see the following extensive quote from Jansen rereading the Sadducees’s paraphrase: “One may read that [levirate] law, in the context of the concrete context occasioning its rise, as yet another expression of the variegated resourcefulness by which the God of the ancestors makes good on the divine promises implicit in the old stories of sterility ending in generativity. Retrospectively, from the standpoint of the New Testament, one may even hazard the suggestion that the Levirate law itself contains a promissory overtone, insofar as it provides for the overcoming of the impasse of death through the action of a kin redeemer” (25). Despite Jansen’s interesting rereading of the levirate law, the “what one reads” is still highly significant in light of Jesus’ choice of a different text.

<sup>41</sup> For further discussion on the programmatic statements of the Gospel of Mark for understanding scripture see chapter 2 of the present author’s book, *Jesus Reads Scripture: The Function of Jesus’ Use of Scripture in the Synoptic Gospels* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 2003).

<sup>42</sup> According to Josef Ernst (*Das Evangelium nach Markus* [Regensburg: Pustet, 1981] 350), Exod 3:6 has played no role in Jewish discussions on the resurrection. But Mark’s more informed readers may have been familiar with a similar, independent tradition in 4 Macc (7:19; 16:25; also cf. Matt 8:11), where the

scripture against scripture,<sup>43</sup> Jesus goes out of his way to recall a text from the law (torah) that supports belief in the resurrection. A search of the torah will inform anyone of the difficulty of Jesus' task, to which later rabbis could certainly attest.<sup>44</sup> In fact, Jesus' theology assists his hermeneutics, since the passage does not directly imply Jesus' intended meaning on its own. This traditional confession – "I am the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob"—is Yahweh's name, which Yahweh reveals to Moses and to the people of Israel, in its context in Exodus 3:6 and 3:15. It serves as a reminder of the covenant Yahweh formed with Abraham and his lineage (see Exodus 2:24). Yet, as Mark portrays it, Jesus' use of this text highlights belief in the general resurrection. This interpretation has a parallel tradition in 4 Macc, where this confession is closely aligned with hope in the afterlife (4 Macc 7:19; 16:25). So, Jesus' hermeneutical interpretation of this common Exodus confession is shared by other Jews, but not by the Sadducees. Furthermore, the Sadducees' failure to comprehend the "power of God" correlates with their inability "to know [adequately] the scriptures" (12:24).

Here, there is a direct connection between proper interpretation and proper belief; that is, the choice and interpretation of texts to support claims are fundamentally related to

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patriarchs are associated with the afterlife. For the independence of 4 Macc from Christian traditions, see Hugh Anderson "4 Maccabees," in *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha* (vol. 2; ed. James Charlesworth; New York, NY: Doubleday, 1985) 539.

<sup>43</sup> E.g., Eduard Schweizer, *Good News according to Luke* (trans. David E. Green; London: SPCK, 1984) 248.

<sup>44</sup> Outside of the torah, see (only) Isa 26:19; Dan 12:2. Later Rabbis were concerned about finding scriptural texts within the torah that point to the resurrection, though *m. Sanh.* 10.1 gives no specific examples.

theology (ideology). Specifically in this case, the Sadducees do not ascribe to a resurrection after death (v. 18), although their hypothetical scenario—derived from a paraphrase of the levirate marriage laws—reflects such a belief.<sup>45</sup> For Jesus, their scenario is absurd since certain beliefs about the afterlife (e.g., “they will be as angels”) offset any such problems in interpretation. In response to the issue of resurrection, Jesus uses a passage spoken by God to prove the validity of the “power of God,” thereby correcting the Sadducees’ theological failure to recognize such power. Belief in the resurrection, indirectly supported by an accommodation of scripture, is directly connected to beliefs about God.<sup>46</sup> This passage is the third in a series of passages dealing with God’s action (see 12:9; 12:17; 12:27), and the actions of his son, in a manner reflecting Jesus’ thoughts about God’s authority, and indirectly the authority of God’s son (cf. 11:28).

As the chief protagonist in the story, Jesus—with authority as God’s son—is the primary representative of the actions of God and the primary interpreter of the sacred writings of God, displaying knowledge of the power of God and the scriptures. In the Markan narrative, his actions and his interpretations are intimately linked with his divinely derived authority. Such a narrative portrayal has implications for the passages with citation-

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<sup>45</sup> Mark makes no mention of the critical hermeneutical issue that the Sadducees ascribe highest authority to the torah, but this may account for the apparent absurdity of their chosen text. At least there is a verbal (cognate) link, *εξαναστασις*, in the paraphrase of Gen 38:8 to the theme of resurrection. That is more than can be said about Jesus’ choice of texts. Is there a subtle critique in the Sadducean text, that the only resurrection that will occur will be the kind where a brother “raises up” seed for his deceased brother?

<sup>46</sup> Ernst, *Das Evangelium nach Markus*, 351; Dieter Lührmann, *Das Markusevangelium* (HNT 3; Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr [Paul Siebeck], 1987) 204. The term “accommodation” is from Joseph A. Fitzmyer (*Essays on the Semitic Background of the New Testament* [Missoula, MN: Scholars Press, 1971]).

less introductory formulae as well. Since Jesus' authority has been established throughout the narrative, it becomes more rare—after the debates surrounding the Jerusalem temple—to question his ability to analyze the scriptural text (cf. 12:34). That is certainly the case with the final two examples discussed above (14:21; 14:49).

Summary: “Scripture and the Power of God”

In summary, let me offer a brief review of the contents of this paper. In this paper, I have highlighted a neglected feature in the discussion of scripture within scripture studies (intertextuality). That is, cases where an author/a text provides a scriptural marker, a scriptural indicator, or, more technically, an introductory formula without also supplying the following scriptural passage have been analyzed. In the Markan narrative, of the 15 occurrences of introductory formulae, a precursor text follows 12 times.<sup>47</sup> Basically 20% of these occurrences are left without any specific scriptural content. Since it is much more common in Mark to expect a scriptural reference following the indicator, most scholars offer reasonable suggestions based on the surrounding literary and historical contexts. With sensitivity to the narrative, this study suggests, however, that such educated guesses may not be necessary. Introductory formulae (e.g., “just as it is written”) serve as forceful rhetorical indicators on their own. This assessment of the phenomenon seems to fit into the larger narrative rhetoric of the Gospel of Mark as well.

In Markan studies, it is commonly recognized that one central feature of the Markan narrative is the miraculous power of Jesus, that is, the acts that represent most clearly the “power of God.” More recently, scholars have begun to explore the

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<sup>47</sup> See appendix 1 of the author's publication, *Jesus Reads Scripture*.

relationship between this central theme and the role of scripture within the second Gospel.<sup>48</sup> What I have attempted to show above is that such a connection may be most clearly, although not exclusively, seen in the scriptural conflict between Jesus and the Sadducees (Mark 12:18-27). “To know scripture” and “to know the power of God” are fundamentally interchangeable within the narrative epistemology of the Gospel of Mark. If that is an accurate assessment of the Markan narrative, then it is not far afield to conclude that no specific passage is necessary to complete the point Jesus makes in cases where no scriptural passage follows a scriptural marker. Rather, Jesus’ own voicing of those scriptural markers provides sufficient persuasiveness for the audience (and readers) to accept the intended omission. His own character, as depicted throughout the Gospel of Mark as the definitive authority on all matters pertaining to life and belief, is sufficient to call on the sacred scriptures to provide this form of “radical Christian rhetoric.”<sup>49</sup>

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<sup>48</sup> E.g., Marcus, *The Way of the Lord*; Powery, *Jesus Reads Scripture*, chapter 2.

<sup>49</sup> The persuasiveness of the account relies heavily on the rhetorical weight given to the chief character in the narrative. As Kennedy (*New Testament Interpretation*, 101) recognizes, “Their (the Evangelists’) strongest internal evidence was probably the pathos inherent in Jesus’ life . . . , in the appeal of his character (an internal ethos complementing his authority).” Jesus’ life provides the authority and logic for interpreting these passages. This, therefore, is “radical Christian rhetoric.”