

Sowing the Passion at Olivet: Mark 13–15 in a Narrative Frame¹

Danny Yencich

PhD Student in New Testament and Christian Origins
The University of Denver and Iliff School of Theology
dyencich@gmail.com

Against a longstanding tendency to read Mark 13:1-37 as a prophetic discourse concerning a future eschaton beyond Mark's story, this essay argues that the so-called "Apocalyptic Discourse" functions narratively in Mark to foreshadow particular events in the Markan passion. Building on the exegetical insights of Mary Ann Tolbert and the narratological theory of Mieke Bal, four parallels between chapter 13 and the Markan passion are explored: Mark's use of paradidōmi; darkness; named hours; and Jesus' imperative to "keep awake."

INTRODUCTION

This essay offers a theory for the place of Mark 13 within the wider Markan narrative. While the vast majority of interpreters of Mark, even the narrative critics, have tended to read the so-called Olivet (or "apocalyptic") discourse as a prophecy of events beyond the Markan narrative, good reasons exist to read the chapter as an integral part of Mark's story of Jesus. A few interpreters have noticed particular parallels between Mark 13 and the Markan passion, but no one has offered a unified theory for its function *within the Markan narrative*. Attempting to fill this gap, this study argues that Mark has structured the so-called "apocalyptic discourse" in part to forecast, anticipate, or otherwise signal events in the passion narrative.² Events that Jesus predicts as accompanying the fall of the Temple or a coming persecution

¹ I wish to thank Profs. Rollin Ramsaran, Mark Matson, and Mark George, as well as my peer reviewers, for their close readings of my argument and their invaluable feedback. A version of this essay was presented at the 2015 Rocky Mountain/Great Plains Regional SBL meeting.

² Despite the use of "passion narrative" and "Markan passion" throughout this essay, titles such as these (and "Olivet" or "apocalyptic discourse") are totally alien to the text itself. They are used here as a matter of convenient shorthand. It is important to remember the composer(s) of Mark did not embed within the text any sort of demarcation to signal particular portions of the narrative as discrete passages and so, while making use of particular, fictive titles for selected sections (comprised by chapters and verses, which are equally fictive), they are adopted as a matter of convenience—not because Mark is best understood as a collection of self-contained *pericopae* that were edited together and should be read in isolation.

are strikingly paralleled by events in Mark's passion. Following a discussion of theory, method, and a definition of terms, this study establishes a series of strong narrative parallels that firmly tether Olivet and Golgotha together and suggest that at key points, the former represents a narrative anticipation of the latter.

Toward these ends, this study reads Mark with a particular cadre of interpreters. Some are Markan scholars, while others are narratologists who do not write exclusively, or at all, about Mark and other biblical narratives. Despite the vast differences among the main conversation partners—Mary Ann Tolbert, a Markan scholar, and Mieke Bal, a narratologist—a broad agreement exists among these interpreters of narrative that brings Mark 13 into a new light. What Tolbert sees as the proemium, the short plot synopsis in Greco-Roman popular literature, can be profitably redescribed as Bal's narrative anticipation.³

As Tolbert and others have shown, Mark's Gospel is replete with various foreshadowing techniques.⁴ Using the narrative theories of Bal, I argue the Markan composer embeds particular parallels to the passion in ch. 13 as narrative anticipations of events to come later in the story. Sowing seed on the good soil turned by Tolbert, I argue that Mark 13, like the parables of the Sower and the Vineyard (4:1-20 and 12:1-12 respectively), can also be understood as a proemium device in Mark's story of Jesus.⁵

THEORY, TERMS, AND METHOD

Theory: Narratology and Markan Narrative Criticism

The contribution of this essay is placed within the wider stream of NT “narrative criticism,” a methodology that arose from the cross-pollination of structuralist narratology and traditional biblical criticism in the Markan Seminar of the SBL in the 1970s.⁶ This approach is widespread in Mark studies; its popularity is exem-

³ On the proemium in Mark, see Mary Ann Tolbert, *Sowing the Gospel: Mark's World in Literary-Historical Perspective* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1996) 105, 112, 125-128.

⁴ Tolbert, *Sowing the Gospel*; Joanna Dewey, “Mark as Interwoven Tapestry: Forecasts and Echoes for a Listening Audience,” in *The Oral Ethos of the Early Church: Speaking, Writing, and the Gospel of Mark* (Eugene: Cascade, 2013) 63-78; Elizabeth Struthers Malbon, “Echoes and Foreshadowings in Mark 4-8: Reading and Rereading,” *JBL* 112 (1993) 211-230.

⁵ Tolbert's main exegetical insight into Mark is that these two parables act as narrative proemia, short plot synopses, that foreshadow events to come within the Markan narrative. Tolbert sees the parable of the Sower (4:1-20) as a proemium of the first division of the Gospel (1:14-10:51) and the parable of the Vineyard (12:1-12) as a proemium for the second division (11:1-16:8). I affirm her reading of these parables as proemia and suggest the Olivet Discourse (13:1-37) functions similarly within the narrative. See Tolbert, *Sowing the Gospel*, 113-121; 311.

⁶ The Bible and Culture Collective, *The Postmodern Bible* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1995) 85.

plified in the monograph, *Mark as Story: An Introduction to the Narrative of a Gospel*, now in its third edition.⁷ As a contextualized form of narratology, the narrative approach to Mark should be seen in part as an intervention into form-critical approaches. Such approaches variously saw the Gospels generally as “vehicle[s] of tradition,” collections of discrete materials, both oral and written, that, even when stitched together to create a gospel, do not form a narrative whole.⁸ David Rhoads, et al., answer the form-critical critique and characterize Mark’s Gospel as totally coherent, unified, and “of remarkably whole cloth.”⁹ Thus, while form critic Karl Ludwig Schmidt is right to note the “internal chronological gaps” in Mark, a narrative critic of Mark comes to the Gospel assuming the possibility of a narrative structure that would make sense of such gaps.¹⁰

Terms: Narrative Text, Story, Fabula

For the narrative critic, Mark is understood not as a string of episodes loosely linked by an editor or editorial community but rather as a unified whole, carefully composed by a gifted storyteller.¹¹ This essay adopts a similar understanding of “narrative” with regard to Mark. Although I remain agnostic about the particularities of how, precisely when, and by whom the Gospel was composed, I stake a strong claim that Mark indeed ought to be considered an intentionally crafted “narrative text” that tells a particular story about a crucified Galilean.

⁷ David Rhoads, Joanna Dewey, and Donald Michie, *Mark as Story: An Introduction to the Narrative of a Gospel* (3rd ed.; Minneapolis: Fortress, 2012).

⁸ Martin Dibelius, *From Tradition to Gospel* (trans. Bertram Lee Woolf; Cambridge: James Clark, 1971) 2-3. Cf. Karl Ludwig Schmidt, *The Place of the Gospels in the General History of Literature* (trans. Byron R. McCane; Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 2002) xii; and Rudolf Bultmann, *The History of the Synoptic Tradition* (trans. John Marsh; rev. ed.; Peabody: Hendrickson, 1963) 11.

⁹ Rhoads, Dewey, and Michie, *Mark as Story*, 3. Similarly: “The main objective of [this commentary] is to make the dynamic of the text appear as a whole.” Camille Focant, *The Gospel according to Mark: A Commentary* (trans. Leslie Robert Keylock; Eugene: Wipf and Stock, 2012) 20. Tolbert puts it most bluntly: “The gospel of Mark is a narrative.” Tolbert, *Sowing the Gospel*, 1. Richard Horsley, too, affirms Mark as narrative but still recognizes the ambiguities and incongruities in Mark’s story. See Richard A. Horsley, *Hearing the Whole Story: The Politics of Plot in Mark’s Gospel* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox, 2001) 17-21.

¹⁰ Schmidt characterized the Gospels as documents that “typically [move] back and forth between narration and dialogue, so that the order of the material lacks both internal and external connections. Anecdotes, episodes, dialogues, and individual sayings are all loosely linked up into a narrative framework.” Schmidt, *The Place of the Gospels*, 5.

¹¹ “The unity of this Gospel is apparent in the integrity of the story it tells, which gives a powerful overall rhetorical impact.” Rhoads, Dewey, and Michie, *Mark as Story*, 3. Cf. Tolbert, *Sowing the Gospel*, 1. Horsley, *Hearing the Whole Story*, ix, xii. Ched Myers, *Binding the Strong Man: A Political Reading of Mark’s Story of Jesus* (anniv. ed.; Maryknoll: Orbis, 2008) 21; Focant, *The Gospel according to Mark*, 20.

To describe Mark's particular story of Jesus, this essay adopts Bal's definitions of the relevant terms: narrative text, story, and fabula.¹² "A narrative text," writes Bal, "is a text in which an agent relates ('tells') a story in a particular medium, such as language, imagery, sound, buildings, or a combination thereof."¹³ Narrative texts are themselves comprised of two constitutive and closely linked elements: a fabula and story. The fabula is "a series of logically and chronologically related events that are caused or experienced by actors," while "story" refers to the particular way and order in which the fabula is told.¹⁴ The fabula may be envisioned linearly as a timeline: Event A is followed by events B, C, and D. The story is the arrangement of these events: the order in which they are related, which may or may not be strictly linear or chronological. In the case of Mark, the order of events as they are narrated in the story differs markedly from the linear fabula.

An example will illustrate the use of these terms. Grossly oversimplified, Mark's *narrative text*, from 1:1–16:8, tells of the ministry, death, and implied resurrection of Jesus of Nazareth.¹⁵ Mark's *fabula* is the linear order of these events within that story. Jesus begins his ministry in Galilee (1:14–15), journeys to Jerusalem (11:1–11), threatens the Temple structure (11:15–19), is summarily executed for it (15:1–41), and, by implication of the short ending, is raised to life (16:1–8). Mark's *story* is distinct from this fabula, however. Although the events of Jesus' death and resurrection do not take place until 15:1–16:8, the narrator tells the *story* in such a way that these events are foreshadowed at the midpoint of the narrative in three so-called "passion predictions" at 8:31, 9:31, and 10:33–34. While Jesus' passion happens much later in the fabula, it is narrated, at least in part, much earlier in the story.

By telling the story in such a way, the Markan narrator ruptures the fabula. The fabulatory breaks created by these storytelling techniques are called "anachronies," which Bal defines as "[d]ifferences between the arrangement in the story and the chronology of the fabula."¹⁶ Anachronies may be further split into two cate-

¹² Mieke Bal, *Narratology: Introduction to the Theory of Narrative* (2nd ed.; Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1997) 5. See Gérard Genette, *Narrative Discourse: An Essay in Method* (trans. Jane E. Lewin; Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1980) 25–32.

¹³ *Ibid.*, 5.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁵ Lee Magness has made a very strong literary case for the short ending of Mark's narrative text. See J. Lee Magness, *Marking the End: Sense and Absence in the Gospel of Mark* (Eugene: Wipf & Stock, 2002). The shorter and longer endings can variously be explained as scribal additions to harmonize Mark to the other Synoptics and compensate for the ambiguity of its ending. See David C. Parker, *The Living Text of the Gospels* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997) 124–147.

¹⁶ Bal, *Narratology*, 83.

gories: retroversion and anticipation.¹⁷ Such techniques are common in narrative texts, both ancient and modern, and the latter serves as a favorite storytelling technique in the Gospel of Mark.¹⁸

Method

The methodology is fairly straightforward. Through a close reading of Mark's narrative text, this study highlights the predictions in Mark 13 that are paralleled by events in Mark 14–15. Adopting insights from modern narrative theory, it redescribes these parallels as anachronies: narrative anticipations of the passion. What counts as a parallel or narrative anticipation in its reading of Mark 13–15 is *any event predicted by Jesus in Mark 13 that is either experienced directly by Jesus or accompanies events experienced by Jesus in the Markan passion*. Thematic parallels—that is, any parallel not grounded in direct, lexical data—will be noted but only as secondary evidence.

NARRATIVE ANTICIPATION AND FULFILLMENT IN MARK 13–15

With the exception of the opening verses situating the chapter at Olivet (13:1–4), the entirety of Mark 13 consists of direct discourse from the mouth of Jesus (13:5–37). Note here Bal typically does not count narrative anticipations within direct discourse as “real anachrony,” since “[t]he moment of speech is simply part of the (chronological) story.”¹⁹ While direct discourse is not typically anachronic, this does not mean that it *cannot* be.²⁰

Here Tolbert's insights into the three degrees of narrative are particularly helpful to avoid analytical simplicity in this reading of Mark 13–15. First-degree narrative comprises the lion's share of Mark and is where much anachrony takes place in Mark's narrative text. A third-person, omniscient narrator tells a story of Jesus and, at certain points, creates anachrony by foreshadowing his eventual fate.²¹

¹⁷ Retroversion refers to a narrative “flash-back,” while anticipation, as might be surmised, refers to a narrative “flash-forward.” See Bal, *Narratology*, 84. Bal is in conversation with Genette, who uses the terms “prolepsis” and “analepsis” to describe the same narrative phenomena. See Genette, *Narrative Discourse*, 40.

¹⁸ Joanna Dewey has written extensively on Mark's storytelling techniques, which she characterizes as the use of “forecasts and echoes.” See Dewey, “Mark as Interwoven Tapestry,” 67. Cf. Malbon, “Echoes and Foreshadowings in Mark 4–8.”

¹⁹ Bal, *Narratology*, 87.

²⁰ Bal suggests that direct discourse can function anachronically but that one must “be precise” in their analysis of it. Bal, *Narratology*, 89. Such is the aim here.

²¹ For example, 3:6, in which the narrator relates that “the Pharisees went out and immediately conspired with the Herodians against him, how to destroy him.” Or 3:19, in which Judas Iscariot is identified as the one “who betrayed Jesus.” These verses anticipate the passion and signal to the audience

Second-degree narrative is created when one character speaks to another in his or her own voice and only rarely creates anachrony in Mark.²² Third-degree narrative, which is rare in the Gospel, consists of stories told by Jesus *within* the narrative text of Mark. Third-degree narrative, in the form of extended discourse, dream, or vision, is often the vehicle for proemia, short plot synopses, in ancient narrative and “is usually set apart in some way,” like a parable, “to draw the audience’s special attention.”²³ For Tolbert, the parables of the Sower (4:1-8) and the Vineyard (12:1-11) are examples of third-degree narrative in Mark because they are stories with characters and actions told by Jesus, a character in Mark.²⁴

This essay reads the extended discourse in 13:5-37 as third-degree narrative whose own characters and events anticipate future events within the Markan fabula. Jesus’ prophecy at Olivet is thus approached as a story within Mark’s story. The prophecy has characters and events: the collective ὑμᾶς (*hymas*, “you all”) addressed throughout, and the councils, kings, and governors before whom they will be brought (13:9,11); the υἱὸς τοῦ ἀνθρώπου (*huios tou anthrōpou*, “son of man”) whose arrival in power and glory is preceded by darkness (13:24-27); and the master and his doorkeeper who keeps watch (13:34-37). These characters and events, like those in the parables of the Sower and Vineyard, are deployed in third-degree narrative as anticipations of fabulatory events to come.

“*They will hand you over...*” (13:9,11)

The passion is anticipated for the first time in Mark 13 at 13:9,11, as Jesus predicts his auditors will be “handed over” and made to stand trial before councils and governors. The verb παραδίδωμι (*paradidōmi*, “I hand over”) and its object, ὑμᾶς, in 13:9,11 narrates actions that will later explicitly befall Jesus. Typically translated as “I hand over” or “I betray,” παραδίδωμι is a freighted term throughout Mark’s Gospel. First, John the Baptist is “handed over” in 1:14 (παραδοθῆναι; “arrested,” NRSV). Likewise, Jesus is characterized throughout the Gospel as one who is (or will be) handed over to the governing authorities.²⁵ In his Olivet prophecy, Jesus

that even the selection of a disciple or an early conflict between Jesus and the Judean power-brokers ripples outward to Golgotha.

²² The “passion predictions” of 8:31,9:31, and 10:33-34 are both direct discourse and moments of genuine anachrony, as the character Jesus relates later fabulatory events at about the midpoint of the story.

²³ Tolbert, *Sowing the Gospel*, 105.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, 92-93.

²⁵ Mark 3:19; 9:31; 10:33; 14:10,11b,18,21,41b,42,44; 15:1b,10,15. R.H. Lightfoot is the first modern exegete to notice this parallel. See R. H. Lightfoot, *The Gospel Message of St. Mark* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1950; repr., Eugene: Wipf & Stock, 2004), 48-59. See Joel Marcus, *Mark 8–16: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2009) 885; Eugene M. Boring, *Mark: A Commentary* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox, 2006) 364; Adela Yarbro Collins, *Mark: A Commentary* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2007) 607.

predicts his audience—who are characters in his predictive story—will follow in this fate.²⁶ The anticipation is rendered more explicit still, as Jesus predicts his audience will be “handed over to councils (συνέδρια, *synedria*)” and made to “stand before governors (ἡγεμόνων, *hēgemonōn*)...as a witness against them (εἰς μαρτύριον αὐτοῖς, *eis martyrion autois*)” (13:9, author’s translation). This anticipates Jesus’ own arrest (14:41b) and trials before “the chief priests and the whole council (τὸ συνέδριον)” (14:55) and Pilate, the Roman ἡγεμὼν of Judea in 15:1-15.²⁷

Eschatological Darkness: 13:24

A particularly striking, if scarcely discussed, anticipation of the passion is deployed in 13:24, when Jesus predicts an unnatural darkness will accompany the coming of the υἱὸς τοῦ ἀνθρώπου: “But in those days, after that suffering, the sun will be darkened (σκοτισθήσεται, *skotisthēsetai*).” This introduces another character into the third-degree narrative of Mark 13, the “Son of Man,” whose arrival will be accompanied by cosmological cataclysms, including a darkening of the sun. In the final hours of Jesus’ crucifixion, a great darkness (σκότος, *skotos*) covers “the whole land” until his death (15:33).

Dale Allison, a rare modern exegete who identifies the connection between the darkensses of 13:24 and 15:33, not only notes the parallel but counts it as part of a wider network of parallels throughout Mark 13–15.²⁸ Other interpreters rightly note that 13:33 probably also evokes the LXX version of Amos 8:9.²⁹ Thus 13:24

²⁶ Although the narrative setting of chapter 13 suggests that only Peter, James, John, and Andrew were with him on the Mount of Olives (13:3), we may assume Mark has crafted the discourse such that the audience is expanded to include the auditors of any public reading of Mark’s Gospel. Indeed, what Jesus says to this gathered few, he says “to all” (13:37).

²⁷ While ἡγεμὼν does not appear again in Mark’s narrative, it may be inferred whenever Pilate, the governor of Judea, is mentioned. Matthew only slightly retouches the Markan prediction, as the Matthean Jesus warns his followers that they will be “dragged” (ἀρχθήσθε, *achthēsethe*) before “governors (ἡγεμόνων) and kings” (10:18). Matthew makes the parallels between paraenesis and passion more explicit in his narration of Jesus’ trial before Pilate as he, unlike Mark, repeatedly refers to Pilate as ἡγεμὼν throughout the scene (Matt. 27:2,14-15,21,27; 28:14). While the connection is clearer in Matthew because of the repetition of ἡγεμὼν, it is nonetheless true that the Markan Jesus both predicts his followers will stand before ἡγεμόνων and stands before a ἡγεμὼν himself. It is Luke, however, who makes the clearest connection between Jesus’ predictions and his passion. In the Lukan retelling, as in Mark and Matthew, Jesus predicts that his followers will be handed over to synagogues and made to stand before kings and governors (21:12). Luke stands alone in placing Jesus before all three of these Judean power-brokers: the Sanhedrin: Luke 22:66-71; King Herod: 23:6-12; Governor Pilate: 23:1-5,13-25.

²⁸ Dale Allison, *The End of the Ages Has Come: An Early Interpretation of the Passion and Resurrection of Jesus* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1985; repr., Eugene: Wipf & Stock, 2013) 28; 36-37.

²⁹ “On that day, says the Lord God, I will make the sun go down at noon, and darken (συσκοτάσει, *suskotasei*) the earth in broad daylight,” (Amos 8:9, NRSV). Because it appears to be the biblical text from which Mark has drawn, the Greek of the LXX is given. See Collins, *Mark*, 751-752; Ben

may be evocative of two referential horizons, functioning as a narrative anticipation of the darkness accompanying Jesus' death and as an allusion to eschatological texts from the OT. Mark is quite fond, after all, of recasting inherited traditions from the OT to tell his story of Jesus.³⁰

Evening, Cockcrow, Midnight, and Morning: 13:35

A third cluster of narrative anticipations emerges in 13:35. In the short parable of the Doorkeeper (13:32-37), the Markan Jesus names the hours of evening (ὄψε, *opse*), midnight (μεσονύκτιον, *mesonyktion*), cockcrow (ἀλεκτοροφωνίας, *alektorophōnias*), or morning (πρωί, *prōi*) as potential moments of the master's return. Within the context of ch. 13, this third-degree narration appears to signal the coming of the υἱὸς τοῦ ἀνθρώπου with power and glory (13:24-27). But the moment of arrival and the moment of the crucifixion of the Son of Man overlap.³¹

Strikingly, the potential moments of the master's return in the parable of the Doorkeeper (13:35) occur at three-hour intervals and correspond to the hours of the Roman watches.³² These provide structure to the Markan narrative and give audiences familiar with Mark's story clear anticipatory "echoes of the passion narrative."³³ The echoes create a surprising overlap between the hour of the cross and the hour of the Son of Man in Mark 13–15.

The master may return in the evening (ὄψε), the hour in the Markan Passion that Jesus and the Twelve take the Last Supper (14:17). Or perhaps the master will arrive at midnight (μεσονύκτιον), when Jesus prays alone in the Garden of Gethsemane (14:32-42).³⁴ The crowing of the rooster (ἀλεκτοροφωνίας) may well

Witherington, *The Gospel of Mark: A Socio-Rhetorical Commentary* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2001) 347; C. Clifton Black, *Mark* (Nashville: Abingdon, 2011) 269.

³⁰ Cf. Mark 1:2,3; 4:12; 7:6-7; 7:10; 9:48; 11:9; 11:17; 12:10-11,36; 13:14; 14:27,62; 15:34. For an illuminating and up-to-date discussion of Mark's evocative use of the Old Testament, see Richard B. Hays, *Echoes of Scripture in the Gospels* (Waco: Baylor University Press, 2016) 15-103.

³¹ Lightfoot, *The Gospel Message of St. Mark*, 53. Timothy Geddert laments that "[f]ew Markan interpreters have attempted to draw implications from Lightfoot's suggestion that Mark deliberately correlated the Doorkeeper parable (13:32-37) with the passion night by measuring out the events of the last night in accordance with the four watches listed in Mark 13:35." Timothy J. Geddert, *Watchwords: Mark 13 in Markan Eschatology* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 1989) 94-95.

³² Ched Myers, *Binding the Strong Man*, 347. Although focused on intertextuality in the Gospels, Hays, *Echoes of Scripture in the Gospels*, 1-14, offers a useful and portable reading strategy for discerning intratextual echoes within the Gospel narratives themselves. See also Richard B. Hays, *Echoes of Scripture in the Letters of Paul* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1989) 14-21.

³³ Myers, *Binding the Strong Man*, 347.

³⁴ Although "midnight" (μεσονύκτιον) is not mentioned again in Mark's narrative text, it may be inferred that Jesus was arrested in Gethsemane at midnight. See Mark Goodacre, "When Prophecy Became Passion" (presented at the Swan Lecture, Nebraska Wesleyan University, 2006) 19. Since mid-

herald his return, or perhaps it will be the sign of Peter's failure (14:30,68,72).³⁵ Or the master may come back to his servants at morning (πρωϊ), only to stand before a hostile council and be handed over to Pilate to die (15:1). Although Mark's parallelism between the hours of the return of the master and the hours of Jesus' passion is quite clear, this striking parallelism has often gone unnoticed in the secondary literature.³⁶

"Keep Awake!": 13:33-37

The final major anticipation of the passion in Mark 13 is an intratextual repetition of the imperative to "keep awake." This imperative appears four times within the third-degree narration of the parable of the Doorkeeper (13:33-37) and twice in the Markan Gethsemane scene (14:32-42):

Beware, keep awake (ἀγρυπνεῖτε, *agrypneite*);³⁷ for you do not know when the time will come. It is like a man going on a journey, when he leaves home and puts his slaves in charge, each with his work, and commands the doorkeeper to keep awake (ἵνα γρηγορή, *hina grēgorē*). Therefore, keep awake (γρηγορεῖτε, *grēgoreite*)—for you do not know when the master of the house will come, in the evening, or at midnight, or at cockcrow, or at dawn, or else he may find you asleep when he comes suddenly. And what I say to you I say to all: Keep awake (γρηγορεῖτε)! (13:33-37)³⁸

And he said to them, 'I am deeply grieved, even to death; remain here, and keep awake! (γρηγορεῖτε)' (14:34)

Keep awake (γρηγορεῖτε) and pray that you may not come into the time of trial; the spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak.' (14:38)

night is only implied in the Gethsemane scene, it is best understood as secondary evidence when compared to ὄψε and ἀλεκτοροφονίας, which are both echoed explicitly in and lend temporal structure to the Markan passion. The text of Goodacre's lecture is available online at <http://markgoodacre.org/swan.pdf> (Accessed: January 9, 2017).

³⁵ ἀλέκτορα φωνῆσαι (*alektoira phōnēsai*) (14:30); ἀλεκτορ ἐφώνησεν (*alektor ephōnēsen*) (14:68,72).

³⁶ For example, Witherington, *The Gospel of Mark*, 349; R. T. France, *The Gospel of Mark* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2002) 545-546; Craig A. Evans, *Mark 8:27-16:20* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 2001) 341; Mary Ann Beavis, *Mark* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2011) 202.

³⁷ This anticipation is rendered more explicitly across a wide swath of MSS in which καὶ προσεύχεσθε (*kai proseuchesthe*, "and pray") is inserted at the end of 13:33, creating a striking parallel to Jesus' exhortation to the disciples at Gethsemane in 14:38. The addition is witnessed by Ⲡ A C K L W Γ Δ Θ Ψ ^f13 28. 565. 579. 700. 892. 1241. 1424. 2542 ℞ lat sy co. This variant is clearly secondary, but nonetheless strengthens an already-present parallel in the Markan story. Compare Bruce M. Metzger, *A Textual Commentary on the Greek New Testament* (2nd ed.; Peabody: Hendrickson, 2006) 95.

³⁸ The verbs γρηγορέω and ἀγρυπνέω, though distinct, are synonymous terms. BDAG glosses both as "to be awake, wakeful." See the entries in BDAG (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), BibleWorks. v. 9. See Marcus, *Mark 8-16*, 919.

Not only has Mark created “a deliberate correlation between the time references in the Doorkeeper parable and those in the Passion account,”³⁹ as detailed above, he has done so in such a way as to create a cluster of correlations that hinge also on the command to keep awake and not be found sleeping (13:36).⁴⁰

SOWING THE PASSION AT OLIVET: THEORIZING THE MARKAN NARRATIVE

Thus Mark 13:5–37, as third-degree narrative, anticipates particular events of the Markan passion. Just as the audience will be “handed over” to councils and governors, so, too, will Jesus. Darkness will accompany the arrival of the Son of Man and hangs like a shroud over Jesus’ last hours of suffering. The parable of the Doorkeeper offers up potential hours for the master’s return and temporally structures the events of the Markan passion. Finally, Jesus exhorts both his audience and his disciples to “keep awake,” at Olivet and in Gethsemane.

Each of these anticipations in Mark 13 creates an anachronic rupture by relating in third-degree narrative events that will come to pass at the end of Mark’s fabula. The Markan audience—the “all” to whom Jesus speaks in 13:37—are thus folded into Mark’s story. Their fate is inextricably bound up with Jesus: what he forecasts for them, he himself will soon undergo. Thus, the prophecy at Olivet, so often read only as pointing far beyond Mark’s narrative text, may be understood as third-degree narrative, an anticipation of the arrest and crucifixion of Jesus.

With the data surveyed, readers are left with the choice of what to do with it all. One option is simply to note the curiosity of particular parallels then carry on with business as usual, treating Mark 13 as a “self-contained” prophecy, with little or no connection to the wider Markan story.⁴¹ The other option is to stand on the shoulders of interpreters who have read Mark 13 primarily as an “apocalyptic” or “eschatological” discourse and attempt to look further.

Ched Myers opts for the latter. He offers the most provocative interpretation of the data when he argues that the prediction of the coming of the υἱὸς τοῦ ἀνθρώπου in 13:26 is fulfilled in Jesus’ crucifixion in Mark 15.⁴² For Myers, the death of Jesus—and not some future, eschatological arrival of a heavenly ‘Son of Man’—is “the advent of the human one [υἱὸς τοῦ ἀνθρώπου].” As such, it is the third and

³⁹ Geddert, *Watchwords*, 90.

⁴⁰ Lightfoot, *The Gospel Message*, 52–53. Cf. Myers, *Binding the Strong Man*, 346–347; John R. Donahue, *The Gospel of Mark* (Collegeville: Liturgical, 2005) 377; Marcus, *Mark 8–16*, 923.

⁴¹ Cf. Marcus, who comments on many of the anticipations of the passion in Mark 13 but still refers to the chapter as “remarkably self-contained.” Marcus, *Mark 8–16*, 865.

⁴² Myers, *Binding the Strong Man*, 249.

final “apocalyptic moment” in Mark’s narrative and the primary referent of the eschatological predictions in Mark 13.⁴³

Not all readers of Mark have been convinced by Myers’s reading. Vicky Balabanski, for example, agrees there are “motifs which link Mark 13 to the passion narrative.”⁴⁴ But she insists Myers goes too far: Despite recognizing a constellation of connections between these two sections of Mark’s story, she does not believe the composer of Mark intended the predictions in ch. 13 to be fulfilled in the passion. She observes, “the discourse projects beyond the plotted time of the narrative, and there is no indication that the evangelist means [13:24-27] to be understood” as anything but eschatological prediction beyond the bounds of the narrative.⁴⁵ Although few commentaries directly interact with Myers’s thesis, the dominant trend is to read Mark 13 as a collection of prophecies of the fall of the Temple and a future eschatological event.⁴⁶

To be sure, elements of Mark 13 signal events beyond the narrative (the fall of the temple [13:2], coming persecutions [13:9-13], and the gathering of the elect [13:27]).⁴⁷ Yet based on the preceding analysis of the data, the case that some of Jesus’ predictions at Olivet are third-degree narrativel anticipations fulfilled in the Markan passion must be regarded *at least* as a possibility.

CONCLUSION

If taken seriously, this study’s reading bears implications for (1) how Mark 13–15 is understood; (2) how Mark is understood as a Gospel composer; and (3) how the death of Jesus is understood in Mark. By way of conclusion, each of these implications will briefly be explored.

The most obvious implication has already been sketched. The weight of the evidence surveyed above suggests a series of parallels between Mark 13 and the Markan passion. If Mark has intentionally crafted 13:5-37 to anticipate the events of the passion then, if nothing else, readers ought to heed Richard Horsley’s suggestion and “take the story whole.”⁴⁸ Critical scholarship and the church’s lec-

⁴³ *Ibid.*, 390.

⁴⁴ Vicky Balabanski, *Eschatology in the Making: Mark, Matthew and the Didache* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997) 67.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*

⁴⁶ Boring, *Mark*, 356-377; Collins, *Mark*, 591-619; Morna D. Hooker, *The Gospel according to Saint Mark* (Peabody: Hendrickson, 1991) 303-324; Witherington, *The Gospel of Mark*, 336-350.

⁴⁷ Eugene Boring describes this phenomenon as the work of early Christian prophets modifying the words of Jesus “to express the present voice of the risen Lord” and recast it as prophecy for the nascent Christian community. M. Eugene Boring, *The Continuing Voice of Jesus: Christian Prophecy and the Gospel Tradition* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox, 1991) 16.

⁴⁸ Horsley, *Hearing the Whole Story*, 1-25.

tionary have trained readers of biblical materials to be atomistic, taking the texts pericope by pericope.⁴⁹ The connective tissue of Mark 13–15, at the very least, presses that Mark be read as an explicitly *narrative* text.

Thus, readers may profitably read Mark's narrative text through the critical lens afforded by modern narrative theory. Whereas the typical reading of Mark 13 as extra-narrative prophecy draws the reader's imagination toward the future, the narratological insights of Tolbert and Bal, when applied to Mark 13–15, keep attention on the narrative text itself. Mark 13, then, becomes evocative not only of future events beyond the story (so Collins, Witherington, et al.) but also of events within the fabula the audience already expects. Perhaps Martin Kähler was right, and the Gospel of Mark really is just a passion narrative with an extended introduction.⁵⁰ If this is the case, then Mark 13 serves beautifully as prolepsis, anticipation, or proemium of the passion to come.

The second implication for Markan studies flows directly out of the first. If Mark has composed his Gospel to be a continuous narrative in which earlier material anticipates later events, then the form-critical reading of Mark as a collection of loosely connected traditions must be left behind.⁵¹ From the veritable cottage industry of Markan narrative studies, one may surmise this is the direction the field has moved already. If that is true, then this study's reading may be taken as confirmation of the fruit of this scholarly development.

Finally, this reading of Mark implies Ched Myers is at least partially right about the Markan death of Jesus: It *should* be considered, in some way, as “the advent of the human one.”⁵² As noted above, though, portions of Mark 13 certainly do signal beyond the narrative text. For example, the angelic gathering of the elect prophesied in 13:37 is not fulfilled in Mark. The narrative text does at times point beyond itself. Be that as it may, the many anticipations of the passion in Mark 13 lend the death of Jesus a particularly *eschatological* character. In this Gospel, the death of Jesus marks the end of an age.

The narrative anticipations and fulfillments that bind Mark 13–15 together fold the destruction of the Temple and the Jerusalem crisis (13:1-2,5-23,28-31), the final culmination of the age (13:24-27,32-36), and the death of the messiah (13:9,24-27,32-37) into one another. The text spills over and creates an estuary out of a narrative tradition that has long been divided into discrete bodies. The borders of these bodies converge, urging the audience to see history, power, politics, and salvation as similarly coalescent. The death of the messiah, at the hour of the cross, is the advent of the υἱὸς τοῦ ἀνθρώπου, who has come with great power and glory (13:26).^{Scj}

⁴⁹ Ibid., 2.

⁵⁰ Martin Kähler, *The So-Called Historical Jesus and the Historic Biblical Christ* (trans. Carl E. Braaten; Philadelphia: Fortress, 1964) 80.

⁵¹ For example, Dibelius, *From Tradition to Gospel*, 2-3.

⁵² Myers, *Binding the Strong Man*, 391.