

Salvation as Discipleship in the Gospel of Mark

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Scholars have often said that the Gospel of Mark has no real soteriology.¹ They commonly identify Christology as Mark's central concern.² Although the Evangelist certainly does focus on Christology, as befits his heading in 1:1 ("the good news of Jesus Christ, the Son of God"), he presents Christology as inseparable from soteriology. In Mark's Gospel, understanding who Jesus is and why he came entails acknowledging his claim upon one's life. Mark's characteristic model of salvation is discipleship.

Ernest Best, who has written a great deal about discipleship in the Gospel of Mark, notes that everything in the central section of the Gospel (8:22-10:52) relates either to the meaning of Christ or to discipleship. He declares, "Understanding of discipleship and understanding of the death of Jesus go hand in hand. . . . [All] understanding of discipleship begins with the cross and it never moves to any other point of orientation."³ As Robert A. Guelich has observed, by placing discipleship pericopes at pivotal points in Jesus' ministry, "the evangelist . . . indicates the integral relationship for him of Christology and discipleship. This interplay of Christology and discipleship offers one of the central themes in Mark's Gospel."⁴ Thus, while the Gospel contains very little direct teaching about salvation, it shows salvation in action as Jesus calls human beings into a relationship of discipleship to him. In what follows, after discussing the coming of salvation, I will focus on what that salvation means for human beings.⁵

Much in the Gospel of Mark is preparatory to salvation in its full theological sense. Through most of the Gospel, salvation has not yet been accomplished; it awaits Jesus' death on the cross and his vindication through the resurrection. The Gospel concerns itself more with the coming of the day of salvation and the presence of the bearer of salvation than with how individuals participate in that salvation. Nevertheless, it has significant soteriological content.

The Greek word group for salvation (*sozo*) is not the main term used by the Evangelist to express salvation. The noun form, *soteria*, is absent from both Mark and Matthew. It is rare in Luke and John, occurring in passages that have an OT context, such as the song of Zechariah in Luke 1. In its noun form, salvation is largely a Pauline term. In Mark's Gospel, literally and figuratively,

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salvation is a verb.

The word *sozo* as used in the Gospel does not usually have a fully theological meaning.⁶ Sometimes it means to preserve life or rescue from physical danger (3:4; 15:30). In three passages, the word seems to be used in a soteriological sense: 8:35 ("Those who lose their life for my sake, and for the sake of the gospel, will save it"); 10:26 ("Then who can be saved?"); and 13:13 ("the one who endures to the end will be saved"). In these verses (and possibly 13:20), it seems to refer to eschatological salvation. *Sozo* is most often used in the healing stories in the sense of "restored to health" (for example, 5:34; 6:56; 10:52). Its use here is somewhat ambiguous, however. Its frequent connection with faith leaves open the possibility that the reference is to more than physical life.⁷ More central in the Gospel's presentation of salvation are such concepts as the kingdom of God (1:15), eternal life (10:17) or the life of the age to come (10:30), and discipleship (8:34).

Mark presents the coming of salvation in the context of the two ages, this age (4:19) and the age to come (10:30). Jesus' distinctive message is that the age to come has been inaugurated: "The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God has come near" (1:15).⁸ This is the content of his "good news" or gospel (1:1, 14). In the background of this use of "gospel" (*euangelion*) are numerous passages in the LXX which use *euangelizo* in the sense of bringing good news about "the in-breaking of God's kingly rule, the advent of his salvation, vengeance, vindication."⁹

With the coming of Jesus, as many scholars have observed, the age to come has been inaugurated without destroying the present age. The kingdom has both future and present dimensions (1:15; 14:25). Jesus speaks of it in both present and future tenses in 10:17-22. God's dominion will be complete when the Son returns in his glory (13:26-27). But Jesus has brought it into the present through his words and deeds, "by defeating Satan and his forces, healing the sick, forgiving the sinner, feeding the hungry, and raising the dead--all indications of the promised day of salvation."¹⁰ People in Jesus' day would have expected to hear salvation proclaimed in the context of the kingdom of God and the life of the age to come. The shocking element in Jesus' message would have been that the kingdom had arrived in his own person--and even more startling, that entering that kingdom was equivalent to entering upon a relationship of discipleship to him. Life with Jesus is equivalent to life in the kingdom.

Mark depicts the group of Jesus' disciples as the community of salvation. First-century Mediterranean culture did not emphasize individualism as modern Western culture does. In fact, some scholars argue that first-century

Mediterraneans did not have the concept of individual identity at all. Their identity was primarily corporate, and it was defined by the groups to which they belonged. They had natural groups, such as kinship groups, and voluntary groups, such as the parties of the Pharisees and Sadducees. Significant interpersonal relationships could be conducted only with other members of one's "in-groups." Relationships with "out-groups" would always remain impersonal.¹¹ Seen in this light, the call of the gospel is an invitation to enter a new community and thereby establish a new identity.

Mark 4:11 clearly establishes an "inside" group and an "outside" group: "To you has been given the secret of the kingdom of God, but for those outside, everything comes in parables." This distinction between insiders and outsiders contributes to the secrecy theme that many have noticed in Mark's Gospel. Jesus suggests, quoting Isaiah 6:9, that this division is part of God's plan: "in order that [*hina*] they may indeed look, but not perceive, and may indeed listen, but not understand; so that [*mepote*] they may not turn again and be forgiven" (4:12). The division is brought about by the proclamation of the gospel. One must become part of Jesus' in-group to benefit from his teaching; to outsiders, it will remain a mystery.

Salvation means entering that inside group. In its fullest sense, this concept can be expressed as entering the kingdom of God (9:47; 10:15, 23-26) or entering into life (9:43, 45). It is clear from Jesus' discussion with the rich man that the terms "inheriting eternal life" (10:17), "entering the kingdom" (10:23) and "being saved" (10:26) are synonymous. In 9:42-48, entering the kingdom is put in opposition to being thrown into hell. There are apparently degrees of proximity to the kingdom; Jesus tells the scribe that he is "not far" from it (12:34).¹²

The members of Jesus' inside and outside groups are not at all what his audience would have expected. For example, his natural kinship group has been displaced by the new "family" of his disciples, those who do the will of God. When his natural family comes to "restrain him," they are left "standing outside," while his disciples sit in a circle around him (3:21, 31-35).¹³ His in-group is not even limited to Jews but admits a Syrophoenician woman (7:24-30). Furthermore, even for a voluntary group, Jesus' in-group is not socially respectable. He associates not with the righteous, but sinners (2:17); not with the scrupulously "clean" Pharisees, but the "unclean" leper (1:40-42); not with prominent leaders, but servants (10:42-45). In a patriarchal society that reveres age, he says the kingdom belongs to children and those like them (10:14-15). The kingdom involves a radical reversal of expectations in which many who are first will be last (10:31).

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The group of disciples is a privileged group, yet not a closed one. Jesus issues an open invitation to the crowds to become his followers (8:34). When the disciples want to stop someone from casting out demons in Jesus' name because he isn't "following" them, Jesus prefers to leave the boundaries of the group open (9:38-40). Even the teaching on parables in 4:12 may mean (if we understand the *hina* and *mepote* clauses as result rather than intention) that those who repent will be able to understand. Matthew 13:14-15 renders the verse in this way. In this case, rather than teaching exclusivity, this saying teaches the requirements for entering the community. Those who respond become part of the in-group which receives Jesus' private instruction. In short, those who follow Jesus receive the mysteries of the kingdom because they ask (4:10).

Mark's Gospel implies that the conditions of salvation involve both divine initiative and human response. Jesus' saying about the camel and the eye of the needle (10:25-29) puts salvation beyond the reach of any effort or merit of human beings. It must be a gift of God, accomplished and initiated by God.¹⁴ The Evangelist emphasizes Jesus' authority and initiative throughout the Gospel. He shows Jesus' authority in his calling of the disciples (1:17-18), his teaching (1:22), his exorcisms (1:27), his forgiveness of sins (2:10), his healings and those of the disciples (3:15), and his dealings with the Sabbath laws (2:28).¹⁵

Jesus' initiative in calling people is contrary to the practice of first-century rabbis. He calls (*kaleo*) both the Twelve (1:20) and sinners in general (2:17).¹⁶ When his family calls him, he disregards their authority (3:31). He calls to himself (*proskaleo*) his disciples (3:13; 10:42), the scribes (3:23), and the crowds (7:14; 8:34), in order to teach them. Calling does not bear heavy theological weight in Mark's Gospel. Nevertheless, it does suggest that any meaningful interaction with Jesus involves both his initiative and people's response.¹⁷

To benefit from God's gift and Jesus' call, one must first be receptive. This is the point of the parable of the soils, the quotation from Isaiah, and the saying about the measure in chapter 4. The condition of the soil (people's receptivity to the word) is the crucial factor in determining the harvest. Similarly, however we decide to translate 4:12, Jesus' Isaiah quotation indicates that people's attitude is closely connected to their understanding of his parables. Jesus directs his teaching to "anyone with ears to hear" (4:9, 23). His statement about the measure (4:24-25) also points out the importance of receptive hearing. Those who perceive truly now will be rewarded even more fully in the coming kingdom.¹⁸

Jesus rewards receptivity in both a literal and a figurative sense. He promises rewards for those who receive the disciples (6:11; cf. 9:41) and children (9:37) for his sake, saying that they have received both him and his Father (9:37). Receiving (*dechomai*) means welcoming, and in at least one case it includes the idea of humility and dependence: Jesus declares that one can enter the kingdom of God only by receiving it as a little child (10:15).

Besides being receptive, one must acknowledge Jesus. To receive salvation, one must recognize the bearer of salvation. Many commentators have observed that in Mark's Gospel, the disciples must understand who Jesus is before they can begin to learn about his mission and about their own discipleship (8:27-38).

However, acknowledging Jesus is insufficient, as the frequent "testimonials" by the demons illustrate (1:24-25, 34; 3:11-12; 5:7; cf. Jas. 2:19). As Ralph Martin states in his discussion of 12:28-34, "[A] theoretical acceptance of truth never suffices; it brings a person only in sight of the kingdom (vs. 34). Personal attachment to Jesus and the demands of discipleship are needed to bring a person, however well-meaning and sincere, into the kingdom."¹⁹ Salvation requires an active response to Jesus that has both negative and positive aspects. Two verses express this response most clearly. Mark 1:15 summarizes Jesus' message: "The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God has come near; repent, and believe in the good news." Mark 8:34 casts Jesus' invitation in different terms: "If any want to become my followers, let them deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me." Repentance and faith are paralleled in self-denial and discipleship.

The commands to repent and believe grow directly out of the declaration of the presence of the kingdom.²⁰ Repentance is preached by John the Baptist (1:4), by Jesus himself (1:15), and by the Twelve (6:12). It is a necessary precondition for understanding Jesus' teaching (4:12). Repentance (*metanoia*) means more than feelings of piety or remorse. It is a demand for conversion, a turning to God. The OT prophets had called Israel to repentance. John the Baptist preached repentance to prepare people for the one who was coming to bring forgiveness of sins. Jesus announced that the time was fulfilled (1:15) and that he himself had the authority to forgive sins (2:10). His call to repentance was a demand for conversion in view of the presence of the eschatological kingdom in his person.²¹

If repentance is the negative aspect of conversion (a turning away from sin and self), faith is its positive aspect (a turning to God). Faith and believing (*pistis, pisteuo*) are important themes throughout the Gospel. People are to believe in the gospel (1:15), in Jesus himself (9:42), and in God (11:22). Faith

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plays an important role in Jesus' healings and exorcisms (2:5; 5:36; 9:23). Twice he says "your faith has made you well" (using *sozo*, 5:34; 10:52).²² The lack of faith in Nazareth affects his ability to do miracles (6:5-6). Jesus criticizes the disciples for their lack of faith (3:40) and includes them in his exclamation against that "faithless generation" (9:19). Yet he heals a boy in response to his father's plea, "I believe, help my unbelief!" (9:24). He seems to reward any degree of faith. Faith in Mark's Gospel is a trust in God's saving power, present in Jesus, which leads one to take action.

Jesus specifies in 8:34 the actions he wants people to take. They are to deny themselves and follow him--actions which again involve a turning away from and a turning toward. He describes these actions to the crowd, not to his disciples privately. This suggests that he intends them to be conditions of entrance into the community rather than optional steps taken by some believers.²³

To deny oneself (*aparneomai*) means "to say no to one's self and to surrender oneself totally." The same word is used for Peter's denial of Christ (14:30, 31, 72).²⁴ Jesus tells the crowd that if they are ashamed of him and his words, he will be ashamed of them when he comes in glory (8:38). Their choice seems to be between denying themselves and denying him. Self-denial expresses itself in a radical rejection of anything that would cause one to sin (9:42-48) or would stand in the way of discipleship (10:21-22). Its ultimate expression is taking up the cross--a willingness to die if necessary for the sake of Jesus (8:34). The cross here is literal, referring to the real possibility of death by crucifixion or other means. If the disciples deny their Master to save their own lives, they will lose eternal life (8:35, 38). This challenge is particularly relevant to a church facing persecution, as was Mark's audience in Rome.²⁵

The positive counterpart to self-denial is following Jesus. Jesus invites many people to follow him: Simon and Andrew (1:17), James and John (1:20), Levi the toll collector (2:14), anyone in the crowd (8:34), the rich man (10:21), blind Bartimaeus (10:49, 52), and a number of women (15:41). It is probably not an accident that Jesus' first command to "follow me" comes immediately after his announcement of the gospel (1:14-18). The command is central to his message. In 8:34-38, Jesus makes following him a condition of ultimate salvation in his coming kingdom. In 10:17 and 21, "follow me" is Jesus' answer to how one inherits eternal life. When Peter says that the disciples have left all to follow him, Jesus promises them rewards in this life and eternal life in the age to come (10:28-30).

The most common word for following, *akoloutheo*, is used sometimes

in the sense of external following of Jesus (which the crowds can do) but more importantly in the sense of discipleship to him: "*akolouthein* signifies self-commitment in a sense which breaks all other ties." No noun form exists in the NT. The NT uses the verb form because it wants to express an action rather than a concept.²⁶ The present tense of "follow" in 8:34 (in contrast to the aorist tenses of "deny themselves" and "take up their cross") suggests "a continuous relationship in contrast with the decisive acts."²⁷

Jesus' call to discipleship is not a call to accept and pass on his teaching (such as the rabbis would make) or a call to accept a philosophy (such as the Stoics would issue) or an invitation to pass through rites of initiation (as in the mystery religions). "It is a call to fall in behind Jesus and go with him."²⁸ In Mark's Gospel, the word *akoloutheo* is used for a relationship of intimate discipleship with the earthly Jesus; the Fourth Gospel uses it in 12:26 to imply a continuing fellowship with the exalted Lord.²⁹ The word is used exclusively for following Jesus: "For primitive Christianity there is only one discipleship and therefore only one following, namely, the relationship to Jesus. The demand *akolouthei moi* in Mk. 2:14 and par. is a Messianic demand. . . . Because it signifies following the Messiah, this discipleship is essentially a religious gift. *akolouthein* means participation in the salvation offered in Jesus."³⁰

Although the earthly Jesus is taken from them, the disciples continue to follow him. He predicts that after the resurrection he will go ahead of them to Galilee (14:28), just as he had gone ahead of them to Jerusalem (10:32), and the young man at the empty tomb confirms that this is so (16:7). The ending of the Gospel looks forward to the reunion of Jesus with his disciples in Galilee, as they become followers of the risen Lord.³¹ The end of the Gospel thus creates a bridge to Mark's audience--and to us.

Salvation as Mark presents it is both gift and demand.³² It is first of all God's gift of life in its fullness, the life of the age to come (10:30). Salvation is "salvation from anything that might hamper the development of this life, whether it be death and sickness or unbelief and sin. . . . [This] giving of life is possible only as one follows Him who gave His own life for all."³³ The gift of life is shown preeminently in Jesus' raising the dead (5:35-43).³⁴

In Jesus' own ministry, and in the ministry of his disciples as his messengers, both demons and illness were overcome. Jesus' healings and exorcisms "declared that it was God's intention to apply salvation to man in his wholeness."³⁵ In the healing stories, the word *sozo* always means the healing of the whole person.³⁶ Jesus' cleansing of the leper in particular shows "the surpassing nature of the salvation which Jesus brings . . . Salvation transcends

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cultic and ritual regulations, which were powerless to arrest the hold that death had upon the living, and issues in radical healing."³⁷

Jesus brings freedom from bondage, whether to illness, demons, or sin. Forgiveness of sins is the object of Jesus' coming (1:4; 2:1-12; 3:28; 4:12). Forgiveness of sins was not a central feature in the Messianic ideas of first-century Judaism.³⁸ Both Jesus' healings and his offer of forgiveness for sins are evidence that the day of salvation has come. His table fellowship with sinners (2:15-17) has the same significance; it shows "the promise of wholeness of the age of salvation and the forgiving reconciliation of God with his alienated people."³⁹ Jesus' table fellowship illustrates the reality that salvation is primarily the gift of relationship with him. It also serves as the model for his new reconciled--and reconciling--community.

But the gift of salvation brings with it the demand for discipleship. Mark's Gospel never suggests that discipleship *earns* salvation; discipleship is simply the only appropriate response to the dominion of God present in Jesus. Not everyone Jesus heals becomes his follower; in fact, he tells the Gerasene (or Gadarene) demoniac *not* to follow him but to go home and witness to his friends about what God has done (5:18-19). Nevertheless, the Gospel gives no support to the modern notion that discipleship is an optional step for particularly spiritual believers. To be in the kingdom is to be in submission to the King.

Disciples are called to live with Jesus (3:14), preach as he preaches (3:15; 6:12-13), forgive as he forgives (11:25), and serve as he serves (10:42-45)--in essence, to be involved in extending the salvation he brings. Jesus' call to discipleship means "to drop in behind him, to be ready to go to the cross as he did, to write oneself off in terms of any kind of importance, privilege or right, and to spend one's time only in the service of the needs of others."⁴⁰ Given the OT concept of salvation as rescuing from death, Jesus' call to discipleship is unexpected and paradoxical: "For those who want to save their life will lose it, and those who lose their life for my sake, and for the sake of the gospel, will save it" (8:35). Disciples must be willing to die in order to live. They may have to forgo physical salvation in order to experience eschatological salvation.⁴¹

Their model, of course, is Jesus himself. The scribes and chief priests mock him on the cross, saying, "He saved others; he cannot save himself" (15:31). Their view of salvation is purely physical, but the Evangelist intends a double entendre. The one who had raised the dead could have come down from the cross and saved himself (physically), but not if he was going to save human beings (spiritually).⁴²

The Evangelist emphasizes that discipleship to Jesus involves acceptance of suffering. Following Jesus means participation in his fate. This is not simply an imitation of his example, "but exclusively a fellowship of life and suffering with the Messiah which arises only in the fellowship of His salvation."⁴³ Jesus' teaching about his coming death is usually connected with teaching about the suffering that disciples can expect for his sake (8:31-38; 10:32-40). Master and disciples are identified with one another: "[Jesus'] destiny requires, as a divine necessity, an acceptance of suffering and woe (vs. 31); and discipleship equally requires a close identification with him as corporate Son of Man and servant of God in a similar fate."⁴⁴

In order to participate in the eschatological life the Messiah brings, his disciples must be willing to take part in his sufferings. This is more than imitation; they are experiencing part of the Messianic woes that must take place before his return. The Evangelist makes clear, however, that the suffering of disciples is not redemptive; only Jesus gives his life as a ransom (10:45).⁴⁵

The picture of salvation in Mark's Gospel offers several challenges to modern believers. First, it provides a needed corrective to the view of some evangelicals that salvation is a purely judicial transaction that has no necessary consequences for one's behavior. Evangelicals have been right to stress that salvation is by grace alone, through faith. But in that stress we have downplayed--sometimes even eliminated--the demand of discipleship. No one could develop a concept of salvation without Lordship by reading the Gospel of Mark. The authority of Jesus as exalted Lord is not less than the authority of Jesus during his earthly ministry; surely his claim upon the allegiance and obedience of his followers is no less now than it was then.

Second, this Gospel challenges the idea that salvation is a purely "spiritual" matter that has no impact on social realities. This position has been argued, for example, by fundamentalists who think that social action is no business of the church. It has also been advanced by those who believe that the inclusion of "male and female" in Galatians 3:28 refers to the equality of men and women in the "sphere of salvation" but has no effect on social roles. In the Gospel of Mark, salvation is wholeness, fullness of life in all its dimensions. It calls forth a response of complete commitment which reorders the whole of a person's life. It also calls disciples to ministry within the church and mission to the world. It may even involve suffering. This last fact is not news in some parts of the world today, but it is in American culture, the land of paved parking lots and padded pews.

Third, Mark's soteriology contradicts the view--common in our individualistic American culture--that salvation is a purely individual

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experience. Although people respond to Jesus' call as individuals, they do not respond in isolation. They become part of the community of salvation. Many in America who regard themselves as Christians see no need for affiliation with an organized body of believers. Even evangelicals often seem to regard the church as an afterthought to the issue of personal (i.e., individual) salvation. Catholics have accused Protestants of having no doctrine of the church.⁴⁶ Perhaps an inadequate ecclesiology is the result of an inadequate soteriology.

Our individualized and spiritualized soteriology affects our presentation of the gospel. Many American evangelicals think that salvation means "accepting Christ as personal savior" (language that is foreign to the NT). This model locates the individual at the center of the salvation process, inviting Christ to enter his or her sphere of influence. By contrast, Mark's model shows that people must deny themselves and enter Christ's sphere of influence on *his* terms. To enter the kingdom, one must give absolute allegiance to the king.

Finally, Mark's soteriology establishes that salvation is fundamentally relational. Before he calls disciples to serve, Jesus first of all calls disciples *to himself*. The demands of the gospel take place in the context of this relationship. Ultimately, salvation means replicating the life of Christ in us. This happens not just by imitation, but by participating in his life. The life he brings is one of healing and wholeness. It reminds us that the gospel is addressed to whole persons, whether the wounded within the church or the lost outside. This life is also meant to be lived out in community. The Gospel of Mark shows us that salvation is an eschatological reality based on the in-breaking of God's dominion in the person and work of Jesus Christ. It is a living relationship with the living Lord, expressed in a life of loving, obedient discipleship within the community of faith.

Endnotes

¹Noted by Grant R. Osborne in the *Evangelical Dictionary of Theology*, ed. Walter A. Elwell (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1984), s.v. "Mark, Theology of." Osborne disagrees, citing such verses as Mark 10:45.

²Osborne; R. T. France, "Matthew, Mark, and Luke," chap. in George Eldon Ladd, *A Theology of the New Testament*, rev. ed., ed. Donald A. Hagner (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1993), 233; Ernest Best, *The Temptation and the Passion: The Markan Soteriology*, 2nd ed., Society for New Testament Studies Monograph Series, ed. G. N. Stanton (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), xiv. Robert A. Guelich identifies three popular approaches to Mark's thought: eschatology, Christology, and "discipleship and paraenesis." *Mark 1-8:26*, Word Biblical Commentary Series (Dallas: Word Books, 1989), xxxviii. All scripture citations will be taken from the New Revised Standard Version.

³Ernest Best, *Disciples and Discipleship: Studies in The Gospel According to Mark* (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1986), 2; *Mark: The Gospel as Story*, ed. John Riches (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1983), 84.

⁴Guelich, 49. See also Osborne; and France, 233.

⁵I will not give attention to the atonement itself. In brief, Jesus presents his death as an atonement to benefit others (Best, *Temptation*, liii-lv). Jesus views his death as a divine necessity prophesied by the Scriptures (8:31; 14:21). He gives his life as "a ransom for many" (10:45), and in death his blood is to be "poured out for many" (14:24).

⁶Colin Brown makes this observation of all the Synoptic gospels. Colin Brown, ed., *The New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1986), 3:212.

⁷Gerhard Kittel and Gerhard Friedrich, eds., *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, trans. Geoffrey W. Bromiley (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1965-76), 7:990. Mark 16:16 ("The one who believes and is baptized will be saved") is textually suspect. Furthermore, its connection of baptism with salvation, its formulaic character, and its use of *sozo* in a strictly theological sense are at odds with the rest of the Gospel.

⁸William L. Lane, *The Gospel According to Mark, New International Commentary on the New Testament Series* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1974), 64. Guelich (44) states that verse 15 could be translated either as "come near" or "arrived." The kingdom has both come near and arrived in Jesus himself (44).

⁹C. E. B. Cranfield, *The Gospel According to Saint Mark, Cambridge Greek Testament Commentary Series*, ed. C. F. D. Moule (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1959), 35. He lists such passages as Is. 40:9; 41:27; 52:7; 60:6; 61:1; Nah. 1:15; Ps. 40:9; 96:2. He believes that Mark sees Jesus' preaching in terms of the messenger of the kingdom of God in Second Isaiah, except that for Mark, Jesus is both the announcer and the content of the message. See also Kittel, 2:728.

¹⁰Guelich, xli-xlii.

¹¹Bruce J. Malina, *The New Testament World: Insights from Cultural Anthropology* (Louisville: Westminster/John Knox Press), 45-47, 66-68.

¹²As in the case of the two ages, the salvation experienced by the community of disciples is inaugurated but not yet complete. Indeed, the unflattering portrait of the disciples in Mark suggests that they have a considerable journey ahead of them.

¹³France, 233. For Mark's audience, the community would include themselves as Jesus' disciples and the presence of the risen Lord (Best, *Gospel as Story*, 91).

¹⁴Lane, 370.

¹⁵See Guelich, 47. Brown contends that Jesus called his disciples with divine authority as God called the OT prophets (1:482).

¹⁶Luke's addition of "to repentance" to the latter saying (Luke 5:32) seems to dilute the sense of relationship.

¹⁷See Guelich, 157.

¹⁸Lane, 167.

¹⁹Ralph P. Martin, *New Testament Foundations: A Guide for Christian Students*, vol.

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1, *The 4 Gospels*, rev. ed. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1975), 195.

²⁰Guelich, 41, 43. As Lane observes, "Jesus proclaims the kingdom not to give content but to convey a summons. He stands as God's final word of address to man in man's last hour" (66).

²¹Kittel, 4:1000, 1002; Guelich, 17-20.

²²Brown states that the person's faith "makes effective Christ's saving power" (3:212).

²³Best, *Disciples*, 10. The parallel in Luke 9:23 also has Jesus addressing the crowd; the parallel in Matthew 16:24 has Jesus addressing only his disciples.

²⁴Brown, 1:455. Best emphasizes that they are to deny themselves, not deny things to themselves (*Disciples*, 8).

²⁵Best, *Disciples*, 8-9; Cranfield, 282; France, 233; Martin, 205. Best believes that Luke's addition of "daily" to the saying (Luke 9:23) makes the expression metaphorical.

²⁶Kittel, 1:213, 214.

²⁷Cranfield, 282.

²⁸Best, *Disciples*, 7-8.

²⁹Brown, 1:482.

³⁰Kittel, 1:214.

³¹Best, *Disciples*, 14.

³²I have borrowed these terms from Rudolf Bultmann, *Theology of the New Testament*, 2 vols., trans. Kendrick Grobel (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1951-1955).

³³Kittel, 9:639, 643.

³⁴Lane, 199.

³⁵Lane, 209-210.

³⁶Kittel, 7:990; Brown, 3:212.

³⁷Lane, 89.

³⁸Kittel, 7:991.

³⁹Guelich, 95, 104-06; Cranfield, 84-85, 101; Lane, 98-99; Best, *Temptation*, lviii.

⁴⁰Best, *Disciples*, 13. "[The] call to follow entails a call to mission, to being involved in the rescuing operation that Jesus saw as his own task in life." Ben Witherington, III, *The Christology of Jesus* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1990), 131.

⁴¹Brown, 3:212.

⁴²Cranfield, 456-57. Lane (311) believes that the Evangelist describes Jesus' submission to suffering as a model for his audience.

⁴³Kittel, 1:214.

⁴⁴Martin, 189, 205.

⁴⁵Best, *Temptation*, 155; *Disciples*, 13. The disciples must be willing to suffer with him in order to be glorified with him (Lane, 308).

⁴⁶See, for example, the discussion in Timothy George, "What I'd Like to Tell the Pope About the Church," *Christianity Today*, 15 June 1998, 41-44.