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Mission as an Apocalyptic Event: Reflections on Luke 10:18 and Mark 13:10

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I. Introduction

The late German New Testament scholar Ernst Käsemann once said that 'apocalyptic was the mother of all Christian Theology'.[1] Ironically, Martin Kähler had earlier said an almost identical thing, namely that mission was 'the mother of all theology'.[2] In the attempt to avoid a theological custody battle I intend to argue that 'apocalyptic' and 'mission' can be integrated together in the unlikely area of missiology. Furthermore, I contend that such an integration can be traced back to the ministry of the historical Jesus.

First, however, there is the matter of *working* definitions. 'Mission' may be defined as the activity of a movement that attempts to win others to a new understanding of a transcendent reality through either active (imparting truths) or passive (attractive presence) means. Jesus' proclamation of the kingdom of God, his offer of new life to the outcasts of Jewish society, and announcement of the coming judgment all possess a 'missionary character'. Hengel is then quite correct to label Jesus as the 'primal missionary'.[3] 'Apocalyptic' (although an adjective) can be used to describe those elements of a person's or

1 Ernst Käsemann, 'The Beginnings of Christian Theology,' in *New Testament Questions of Today* (London: SCM, 1969), 102. See also, I. Howard Marshall, 'Is Apocalyptic the Mother of Christian Theology?' in *Tradition and Interpretation in the New Testament*, eds. G.F. Hawthorne & O. Betz (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1987), 33-42.

2 Martin Kähler, *Schriften zur Christologie und Mission* (Munich: Kaiser, 1971 [1908]), 190.

3 Martin Hengel, *Between Jesus and Paul: Studies in the Earliest History of Christianity*, trans. John Bowden (London: SCM, 1983), 61-62.

community's teachings, actions or worldview that are found in or shaped by apocalyptic literature and expressed in apocalyptic movements.[4] Within this framework, there have been substantial attempts to locate Jesus within the context of Jewish apocalyptic expectation. Albert Schweitzer brought to an abrupt end the romantic and rationalistic lives of Jesus and in their place he offered a picture of a Jesus who was thoroughly apocalyptic in outlook and believed that God would imminently intervene to inaugurate the kingdom of God. When it did not eventuate, he morbidly set off for Jerusalem in hope of forcing God's hand by throwing himself onto the wheel of history, only to have it fall back and crush him in the process.[5] Schweitzer has been extremely influential and others have followed him closely (albeit with modification) in identifying Jesus within the matrix of Jewish apocalyptic.[6] Indeed, the similarities between the teaching of the historical Jesus and ideas in apocalyptic literature are not hard to find: Jesus spoke of a future resurrection (Mk. 12:18-27; Lk. 14:12-14); he discussed the defeat of Satan (Mk. 3:20-27; Lk. 10:18); and he taught frequently about the kingdom of God, the Son of Man, and future judgment. James H. Charlesworth avers, 'The impact of Jewish apocalypticism and apocalyptic thought upon Jesus is undeniable and pervasive.'[7] This in turn must be balanced with stark discontinuities between Jesus and apocalypticism, such as the fact that Jesus proclaimed the presence of the kingdom (Mk. 2:18-22; Mt. 21:31; Mt. 11:12/Lk. 16:16; Lk. 11:20; 17:20-21), he denied knowledge of the end times (Mk. 13:32), and he rejected those who sought signs from him (Mk. 8:11-13; Mt. 16:4/Lk. 11:29; Lk. 17:20-21). Consequently, Charlesworth also writes:

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4 I concede that this is an exceedingly complex topic and my definition here does not do justice to the debate surrounding the discussion. Even so, a differentiation should be made between: (i) 'apocalypse' which is a literary genre; (ii) 'apocalyptic eschatology' which is a comprehensive worldview with a specific focus on 'last things'; (iii) 'apocalypticism' which is a historical movement most noticeably found in millenarian movements that anticipate the dawning of a new world order; and (iv) 'apocalyptist' who is a charismatic religious figure who propagates apocalyptic views. For discussion see, J. J. Collins, *The Apocalyptic Imagination* (New York: Crossroad, 1984), 1-32; D. S. Russell, *Divine Disclosure: An Introduction to Jewish Apocalyptic* (London: SCM, 1992), 13.

5 Albert Schweitzer, *The Quest for the Historical Jesus*, trans. W. Montgomery (Great Britain: Unwin, 1945), 328-95.

6 See most recently Dale C. Allison, *Jesus of Nazareth: Millenarian Prophet* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1998); Bart D. Ehrman, *Jesus: Apocalyptic Prophet of the New Millennium* (New York: OUP, 1999).

7 James H. Charlesworth, *Jesus Within Judaism: New Light from Exciting Archaeological Discoveries* (New York: Doubleday, 1988), 42.

> Certainly Jesus was not one of the apocalyptists. They were personally exhorted to write down what they had seen and heard. Jesus wrote nothing. The apocalyptists were often scribes influenced by Wisdom literature and preoccupied with encyclopaedic scientific knowledge. Jesus was an itinerant teacher who, rather than debate esoterica, was obsessed with the need to proclaim to all Israel the approaching nearness and importance of God's Kingdom.[8]

Rather than the portrayal of the historical Jesus as an apocalyptist, in my own view the category that most aptly describes Jesus is that of an eschatological prophet with an underlying messianic vocation. However, when properly understood, prophetic, apocalyptic and arguably even wisdom themes are not poles apart; as Ben Witherington states, 'Jesus lived at a time when the rivers of the prophetic, apocalyptic, and sapiential traditions had already flowed together. . . .'[9] There is, then, nothing erroneous about affirming the presence of apocalyptic motifs in Jesus' ministry and self-understanding, even if in a new context and with transformed meaning.[10]

The significance of this is that, if the influence of apocalyptic upon New Testament Theology as a whole, and in particular upon Jesus, is conceded, it beckons the question as to what influence apocalyptic may have upon missiology. Or in more precise terms, how does an apocalyptic motif drive, inform and forge a contemporary Christian perspective of mission? What the rest of this essay will attempt to do is to identify the significance of apocalyptic for mission by examining Jesus' conception of his own mission and that of his disciples. In view of that, this investigation will centre upon two instances of how apocalyptic was both appropriated by Jesus and redefined in accordance with his own aims (Lk. 10:18 and Mk. 13:10). It is surely noteworthy that these two passages, that resemble apocalyptic far more than most others, both pertain to the topic of mission.

II. A Vision of Victory – Luke 10:18

Not long into his journey narrative (Lk. 9:51-19:10), Luke presents Jesus as commissioning the seventy (-two) to go out preaching and

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8 Charlesworth, *Jesus Within Judaism*, 38-39.

9 Ben Witherington, *Jesus the Seer: The Progress of Prophecy* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1999), 291.

10 In contrast, Marcus Borg (*Jesus in Contemporary Scholarship* [Valley Forge, Pennsylvania: Trinity Press, 1994], 82-83) thinks that a combination of literal eschatology and wisdom motifs in Jesus' ministry is possible but improbable. One need only invoke a document such as *Daniel* to point out how the roads of apocalyptic and wisdom can easily merge.

healing as the vanguard for his own itinerant ministry (Lk. 10:1-16). Their jubilant return is met with a series of cryptic remarks by Jesus in Lk. 10:17-20. The most enigmatic logion is v. 18: 'And he said to them, "I saw Satan fall as lightning from heaven".' In this peculiar saying it may be observed that the apocalyptic hope of victory over Satan is correlated with the triumphant mission of the disciples.

The saying appears to be a vision report typical of prophetic and apocalyptic literature. This would imply that it is based on an ecstatic vision of some kind by Jesus, which is not altogether implausible if one considers similar visionary activity reported at Jesus' baptism (Mk. 1:9-11) and the temptation narrative (Mk. 1:12-13; Mt. 4:1-11/Lk. 4:1-13). It is debatable whether 10:18 derives from Q or Luke's special source 'L' or else is a Lucan construction. I. Howard Marshall contends that the material belongs to Q and its omission from Matthew stems from the fact that Matthew had used the mission discourse in relation to the Twelve and so had no place for the return of the seventy (-two).[11] The problem with Marshall's proposal is that in the absence of a Matthean parallel we cannot be sure whether it is Q material or not. Although certainty is impossible, a better suggestion is that Lk. 10:18 belongs to 'L'; this is rendered all the more probable by the fact that Lk. 10:18 comports with other eschatological material in the same source (Lk. 12:54-56; 13:1-9; 17:20-21, 28-32).[12] There are also several good reasons for upholding the authenticity of the logion: (i) The sheer bizarreness of the saying, or 'its opacity and its striking imagery'[13] means it is likely to derive from the historical Jesus; (ii) T.W. Manson and U. B. Müller both point out the sharp dissimilarity between the logion and Jewish and Christian views of the demise of Satan. For both groups, the defeat of Satan was always in the future (1QM 15.12-16.1; 17.5-8; 11QMelch 13-14; Test. Lev. 18.12; Test. Jud. 25.3; Test. Ash. 7.3; Test. Dan. 5.10-11; Ass. Mos. 10.1; Jub. 23.29; Jn. 12:31; Rev. 20:1-3; Rom. 16:20) and yet here the fall of Satan is interpreted as occurring in the ministry of Jesus and

11 I. Howard Marshall, *The Gospel of Luke* (NIGTC; Exeter/Grand Rapids, MI: Paternoster/Eerdmans, 1987), 427.

12 See also T.W. Manson, *The Sayings of Jesus* (London: SCM, 1957), 74, 258; Joseph A. Fitzmyer, *The Gospel According to Luke X-XXIV: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary* (AB; New York: Doubleday, 1985), 859; John Nolland, *Luke 9:21-18:34* (WBC; Dallas, TX: Word, 1993), 2:561; on its independent origin in the Jesus tradition, cf. Rudolf Bultmann *History of the Synoptic Tradition*, trans. John Marsh (New York: Harper & Row, 1963), 109, 161.

13 Nolland, *Luke*, 2:561; cf. Bultmann, *History of the Synoptic Tradition*, 163; Joachim Jeremias, *Die Sprache des Lukasevangeliums* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1980), 187-88; Fitzmyer, *Luke*, 859; Ben Witherington, *The Christology of Jesus* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1990), 147.

his disciples. However, both of them also note the similarity to Is. 14:12 and Rev. 12:8-7 as well.[14] J.P Meier seizes upon this and argues that it undercuts their claim to dissimilarity as Lk. 10:18 may have derived from the same apocalyptic stream as Rev. 12:8-9.[15] Meier, however, overlooks three aspects. Firstly, the saying coheres with other material generally regarded as being authentic, where Jesus conceives of his work as inaugurating a victory over Satan (cf. Mk. 3:20-30; Lk. 11:20). Secondly, although Rev. 12:8-9 and Lk. 10:18 both refer to a fall of Satan, different referents are in mind. In the case of Rev. 12:8-9, it is specifically influenced by traditions found in Genesis 1-3, 6:1-4; Is. 14:12; and Jude 6, where Satan falls as a prelude to his persecution of the Messiah and the Church. However, in Lk. 10:18 it is unlikely to refer to a primordial event, but instead it denotes a present reality. What is more, in Rabbinic thought the Messiah was expected to defeat Satan in the last days,[16] and, if Jesus believed that this was happening through him, we have good reason for seeing this as evidence of his Messianic self-consciousness.[17] Thirdly, Lk. 10:18 is christologically subdued in comparison to Revelation 12 which is saturated in a rich and triumphant Christology, atonement theology and martyrology, indicative of later Christian reflection. (iii) The verse is unlikely to be attributable to Luke's theological motif of Jesus' ministry comprising a 'Satan free zone' simply because Luke has no such conception. The activity of Satan, though seriously paralyzed by Jesus, lingers as Lk. 13:16; 22:3, 31 demonstrate.[18]

Despite the agnosticism of some[19] about identifying a *Sitz im Leben* in Jesus' ministry, I believe a probable context is the one given by Luke. A plausible setting for v. 18 (along with v. 19), is that of an exhortation *to future mission*[20] or an acclamation *of a prior mission* by a group of disciples in view their missionary charge. Furthermore, on

14 Manson, *The Sayings of Jesus*, 258; U.B. Müller, 'Vision und Botschaft: Erwägungen zur prophetischen Struktur Verkündigung Jesus.' *ZTK* 74 (1977), 416-48; cf. too Eduard Schweizer, *The Good News According to Luke*, trans. David E. Green (London: SPCK, 1984), 179.

15 J.P. Meier, *A Marginal Jew: Rethinking the Historical Jesus: Mentor, Message, and Miracles* (ABRL; New York: Doubleday, 1994), 492-93 n. 177.

16 SB 2:167-68.

17 The tradition of Solomon as an exorcist (Test. Sol. 1.5-7), though possibly post-Apostolic, makes a similar link of kingship and exorcisms. Additionally, 4Q510 1.1-4, associates the kingship of God with exorcisms.

18 *Pace* Hans Conzelmann, *The Theology of Saint Luke*, trans. Geoffrey Buswell (London: Faber & Faber, 1961), 16.

19 Bultmann, *History of the Synoptic Tradition*, 161; Fitzmyer, *Luke*, 859.

20 David Crump, 'Jesus, the Victorious Scribal Intercessor in Luke's Gospel,' *NTS* 38 (1992), 57.

the reasonable assumption that Jesus did have a definite circle of disciples who operated as itinerant missionaries (cf. Mk. 6:7-12; Mt. 10:5-24; Lk. 9:1-6, 60; 10:1-20) there is nothing incongruous about him exhorting them on either their embarkation or on return from their journey, and employing apocalyptic motifs in such a discourse. The mission setting utilized by Luke or his source is then potentially correct.

A point of contention is whether the verse is referring to a visionary experience,[21] is a symbolic description of the fruitfulness of the disciples' ministry,[22] or both.[23] Given the presence of other visionary descriptions from Jesus' ministry (baptism and temptation stories), coupled with the occurrence of the verb θεωρεω which is prominent in the vision in Daniel 7 (vv. 2,4,6,7,9,11,13 [LXX]), and the fact that Jesus believed in a literal Satan, demons and a spiritual battle, the vision option is to be preferred. This raises the question as to whether the vision refers to a past, present or future event. Several Patristic commentators believed that it referred to Jesus in his pre-incarnation observing the casting out of Satan from heaven as found in Gn. 6:1-5; Is. 14:12; Jude 6 and Rev. 12:8-9. Yet Luke shows no interest in Jesus' pre-existence. Joel Green has recently argued that, in accordance with Jewish hopes of the times (cf. Test. Lev. 18.12; Test. Sim. 6.6; Test. Zeb. 9.8), it refers to the ultimate downfall of Satan: 'The decisive fall of Satan is anticipated in the future, but is already becoming manifest through the mission of Jesus and, by extension, through the mission of

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21 C. A. Webster, 'St. Luke x. 18.' *ExpT* 57 (1945-46), 52-53; J. M. Creed, *The Gospel According to St. Luke* (London: Macmillan, 1942), 147; Bultmann *History of the Synoptic Tradition*, 108, 161 n. 2; Manson, *Sayings of Jesus*, 258;W.G. Kümmel, *Promise and Fulfillment: The Eschatological Message of Jesus*, trans. Dorothea M. Barton (London: SCM, 1957), 113-14; C.K. Barrett, *The Holy Spirit and the Gospel Tradition* (London: SPCK, 1966), 64; E. Earle Ellis, *The Gospel of Luke* (NCB; London: Thomas Nelson, 1966), 155; Müller, 'Vision und Botschaft', 416-48; Schweizer, *Luke*, 179; N.T. Wright, *Jesus and the Victory of God* (COQG 2; Minneapolis: Fortress, 1996), 164; James D. G. Dunn, *Christ and the Spirit: Pneumatology* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1998), 2:26; Witherington, *The Christology of Jesus*, 146-48; idem, *Jesus the Seer*, 278-80.

22 A. Schlatter, *Das Evangelium des Lukas aus seinen Quellen erklärt* (Stuttgart: Calwer, 1931), 279; J. Schmid, *Das Evangelium nach Lukas* (Regensburg: Pustet, 1960), 187; Alfred Plummer, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Gospel According to St. Luke* (ICC; Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1923), 278; I. Howard Marshall, *The Gospel of Luke* (NIGTC; Exeter/Grand Rapids, MI: Paternoster/Eerdmans, 1978), 429; Fitzmyer, *Luke*, 860; Crump, 'Jesus, the Victorious Scribal Intercessor in Luke's Gospel,' 57-58.

23 Nolland, *Luke*, 2:563-64; Darrell L. Bock, *Luke 9:51-24:53* (BECNT; Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1996), 2:1006-07.

his envoys.'[24] The problem with this is threefold: (i) The lack of any future verb and the distinct use of past tenses (i.e., imperfect verb ἐθεώρουν and aorist participle πεσόντα). (ii) The language here is stronger than that of previewing the eschatological defeat of Satan, but actually celebrates it. (iii) Despite Green's objections, the exorcisms of Jesus do presuppose an initial victory of Jesus over Satan.[25] The disciples' authority to heal and conduct exorcisms is contingent upon the usurping of Satanic authority. The vision probably pertains to an earlier episode of Jesus' career when he believed he had fought a decisive battle against Satan which climaxed in a vision that defined his purpose and mission.[26] For Luke, however, the 'seeing' refers to what is happening in the activity of the disciples (emphasized by the imperfect tense of ἐθεώρουν which may be iterative: 'I formerly saw in a recurring vision').[27] Jesus is interpreting his own victory over Satan as recurring, or being re-enacted and relived in the disciples' ministry. A last exegetical hurdle concerns whether ἐκ τοῦ οὐρανοῦ ('from heaven') modifies πεσόντα ('falling') or ὡς ἀστραπὴν ('as lightning'). A translation of 'falling from heaven' is supported by the fact that Satan was regarded as occupying a place in heaven (Job. 1:6; 2:1; Zc. 3:1-5; Rev. 12:7). In this sense, and true to the apocalyptic genre, the battle that rages in heaven soon gives way to earthly realities.[28] However, I find the latter view more likely, supposing that 'Satan falls as lightning' because, firstly, it is clearest meaning of the Greek word order.[29] Secondly, the emphasis falls not upon the where of Satan's fall, but upon the swift and devastating defeat he has suffered. Satan falls from his position of

24 Joel B. Green, *The Gospel of Luke* (NICNT; Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1997), 419; see similarly, Robert C. Tannehill, *Luke* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1996), 178.

25 So too Müller, 'Vision und Botschaft', 418; Crump, 'Jesus, the Victorious Scribal Intercessor in Luke's Gospel,' 57-58; Wright, *Jesus and the Victory of God*, 457-58.

26 Sydney H. T. Page (*Powers of Evil: A Biblical Study of Satan and Demons* [Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 1995], 110) thinks the vision stems from the temptation narrative. Susan B. Garrett (*Demise of the Devil: Magic and the Demonic in Luke's Writings* [Minneapolis: Fortress, 1989], 51-52) perceives it to refer to the death of Christ. Conversely, Barrett (*The Holy Spirit and the Gospel Tradition*, 64) sees the fall of Satan as occurring in the 'Messianic work of Jesus'. For Müller ('Vision und Botschaft', 428-29) in the beginning of Jesus' preaching ministry, and according to George R. Beasley-Murray (*Jesus and the Kingdom of God* [Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1986], 9-11) in the entirety of Jesus' ministry.

27 So also Plummer, *St. Luke*, 278; Creed, *St. Luke*, 147; G.B. Caird, *The Gospel of Saint Luke* (Middlesex: Penguin, 1963), 143; Barrett, *The Holy Spirit and the Gospel Tradition*, 64; Fitzmyer, *Luke*, 2:860; but cf. the objections of Crump, 'Jesus, the Victorious Scribal Intercessor in Luke's Gospel,' 56-57.

28 For this argument see Müller, 'Vision und Botschaft', 416-29; Schweizer, *Luke*, 180.

29 Witherington, *Christology of Jesus*, 147.

power[30] which enables the disciples to dominate the spiritual landscape, albeit, not unchallenged.

What becomes apparent from Lk. 10:18 is that the future demise of Satan earnestly hoped for by Jewish apocalypticism, has been reinterpreted by Jesus to be occurring in and through his own ministry, and now also in that of his disciples.[31] We observe similar motifs elsewhere, for instance, in Jesus' confrontation with the scribes over the origin of his power to perform exorcisms (Mk. 3:20-30; Lk. 11:14-23; cf. Mt. 10:25). The point of contention there centred upon the fact that the miraculous and supernatural nature of the exorcisms could not be denied, even by Jesus' opponents. Yet it seemed unintelligible to them, in their thinking, that one could transgress the boundaries of torah, sabbath and purity and God would approve of it. Instead, the activity must be attributed to a pagan or demonic power, Beelzebub.[32] The account is historically plausible as the allegation that Jesus was in league with Beelzebub is a slur the early Church would be most unlikely to invent.[33] Yet Jesus exposes the logical fallacy of their accusation (i.e., that no king is foolish enough to invade himself). The exorcisms of Jesus are not to be understood as signifying the existence of civil war within the satanic realm, but rather, they are the indicators of full scale invasion: Jesus is the strong man who plunders and sacks the satanic kingdom.[34] This corresponds largely with the Q

30 So too Plummer (*St. Luke*, 258) and Jürgen Becker (*Jesus of Nazareth*, trans. James E. Crouch [New York: Walter de Gruyter, 1998], 108).

31 This is not to say that Jesus regarded Satan as being completely defeated and having no remaining power or influence upon the world. Elsewhere in the Jesus tradition, Jesus is said to allude to Satan's continuing effect, even upon his own hour of suffering (Lk. 22:3, 31, 53). Satan, then, is much like a malignant cancer that has been shrunk by chemotherapy, but even in its depleted state it is still capable spreading its toxins. What is asserted in references to Jesus' victory over Satan is that: (i) Satan's *de facto* authority over the world has been usurped; and (ii) His power has been defeated, both in principle and in example. The early Church focused largely on the future aspect of Satan's downfall, no doubt influenced by Jewish apocalyptic expectation, but also because it seemed the logical implication Jesus' work. The ministry and crucifixion-resurrection of Jesus constituted the *coup de main* of the kingdom against Satan, and now the Church waits anxiously (as in Rev. 20:1-10) for the *coup de grace.*

32 On the origin of the term Beelzebub see, 2 Ki. 1:2-16; Test. Sol. 3.1-6; 6.1-11.

33 For this topic an informative study is by Graham Twelftree, *Jesus the Exorcist: A Contribution to the Study of the Historical Jesus* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1993), § 16.

34 Günther Bornkamm (*Jesus of Nazareth* [London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1970], 68) offers a colourful remark: 'What distinguishes Jesus from these seers is that he himself enters the battlefield; God's victory over Satan takes place in his words and deeds, and it is in them that the sign of this victory are erected. In Jesus himself is to be found the stronger man who puts an end to the rule of Satan and takes his booty from him.'

saying in Lk. 11:20/Mt. 12:28: 'If I cast out demons by the Spirit of God, then the Kingdom of God has come upon you.' Another significant element, which I think has become Luke's point, is that this same victory is now being accomplished in the activity of the disciples as they emulate the ministry of Jesus. The disciples, through their commission as Jesus' kingdom agents, are duplicating the triumph of God's kingdom. The activity of preaching and healing, however mundane in appearance, is correlated to the divine conquest. As Leon Morris wrote, 'To the casual observer all that happened was that a few mendicant preachers had spoken in a few small towns and healed a few sick folk. But in that gospel triumph Satan had suffered a notable defeat.'[35] To this we must add that it is not simply *a* defeat, but it is *the* defeat, it is the promised and long awaited demise of the evil one. Like a rolling thunder the mission of Jesus and his disciples is breaking upon the satanic shores and laying waste to the all opposition in its path. Indeed, I would assert that this perhaps explains why Luke has inserted the independent saying where he has it after the return of the seventy (two). The following logion in v. 19 continues the theme, that in a future mission the disciples will continue to overcome 'the enemy'. Luke, perhaps with a missionary and pastoral intent, is concerned that his readers would sense their own missionary vocation and realise that the same Spirit that was at work in Jesus and the first band of disciples, can also be at work in them to overcome the Satan as the gospel goes forth to the ends of the earth (Acts 1:8). Graham Twelftree has argued that although Jesus' exorcisms imply the defeat of Satan they still necessitate a future stage when Satan will be finally destroyed.[36] That must be qualified, for we are not to envisage two separate battles, a skirmish by the Church followed by a divine *blitzkrieg*. Both mission and God's final intervention at the last day are part of the one salvific event and the one act that orchestrates Satan's downfall. In this sense any uncertainty about who actually vanquishes Satan is resolved. The act belongs to God alone, but the divine choice of weapons to execute his plan is the witness of the Church. Thus, the Church continues to exist for the purpose of mission which means that it will inevitably be brought into confrontation with the satanic horde. In Lk. 10:18 the entire sending out and return of the disciples highlights, '*the experience of the mission*

35 Leon Morris, *Luke* (TNTC; Leicester, England: IVP, 1974), 185. Similarly, Bock (*Luke*, 2:1007) writes, 'The disciples' work is no small affair and is part of an increasingly significant set of theological realities.'

36 Twelftree, *Jesus the Exorcist*, 218-24

as the arena of conflict and eschatological engagement with diabolic forces'.[37] Yet, it is upon the globe and not simply in the heavenlies that the battle is fought and won. As the anointed community who go out with the power of Jesus' name and authority, it is a campaign that the Church is expected to win.

III. The Gospel for Apocalyptic Times – Mark 13:10

There is no need here to enter into the complicated debates over the Olivet Discourse of Mark 13.[38] My immediate concern focuses upon the significance of Mk. 13:10: 'And the gospel must first be proclaimed to all nations.' In the midst of this 'apocalyptic' speech opposite the Temple, Jesus overtly associates the proclamation of the gospel to the nations with God's final and salvific purposes. In the discourse, the verse follows on from the initial question of the disciples (vv. 3-4), Jesus' warning about being deceived amidst turbulent times (vv. 5-8), and the personal tribulation that believers can expect to suffer (vv. 9-13). Its purpose is to spell out the activity of Jesus' representatives who, amidst persecution, act as heralds of the good news and become agents of God's salvation.

The discourse is no doubt coloured by the experience of Christians in Mark's day, but it plausibly derives from an anti-Temple address in Jerusalem given by Jesus, somewhat akin to other prophetic anti-Temple speeches in the Old Testament (e.g., Je. 7:1-15; 19:14-15; Ezk. 10:1-19;). By and large, virtually all commentators regard Mk. 13:10 as being a Markan interpolation that reflects (or even retrojects) the mission experience of the Church.[39] The saying is possibly independent as evidenced by the fact that it does not appear in the parallel speech of Matthew 11 and Luke 21, and is reworded somewhat in Mt. 24:14. However, two things should be noted, firstly, although v. 11 can indeed flow on from v. 9, v 10 provides the explanation of why believers can expect to stand before courts, viz., evangelistic preaching. Secondly, the authenticity of the verse stands or falls on the issue of

37 Green, *The Gospel of Luke*, 411 (italics original).

38 For a recent bibliography see, Craig A. Evans, *Mark 8:27-16:20* (WBC; Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 2001), 285-89.

39 A few dissenters include, C. E. B. Cranfield, *The Gospel according to St. Mark* (CGTC; Cambridge: CUP, 1966), 400; G. R. Beasley-Murray, *Jesus and the Future: An Examination of the Criticism of the Eschatological Discourse, Mark 13* (London: Macmillan, 1954), 194-96; William L. Lane, *The Gospel of Mark* (NICNT; Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1974), 462; Robert H. Gundry, *Mark: A Commentary on His Apology for the Cross* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1993), 766-68; James R. Edwards, *The Gospel According to Mark* (Pillar; Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2002), 393.

whether or not Jesus envisaged a Gentile mission.[40] Words such as ἔθνη (nations) and likewise κηρύσσω (preach) certainly echo the mission language of the early Church. But what is to say that such language did not originate with Jesus? Rejection of this possibility stems from an over zealous application of the criterion of dissimilarity. A ruthless application of this criterion yields, 'a Jesus who never, said, thought, or did anything that other Jews said, thought, or did, and a Jesus who had no connection or relationship to what his followers said, thought, or did in reference to him after he died.'[41] Consequently, many scholars have abandoned the idea of dissimilarity from Judaism in order to keep Jesus thoroughly Jewish. Alternatively, the criterion of dissimilarity has been utilised only in terms of discontinuity from the early Church.[42] This, however, breaks the crucial nexus between Jesus and primitive Christianity. Oscar Cullmann pointed out that the Church may have selected and maintained genuine sayings of Jesus in accordance with their own theological tendencies as to emphasize what was important to them.[43] Markus Bockmuehl writes, 'It is historically legitimate to see Jesus of Nazareth in organic, causal, continuity with the faith of the early Church.'[44] For this reason, I would want to argue that such language about a future mission by Jesus would provide a plausible starting point for the mission of the early Church. The following points, though not an exhaustive treatment of the topic, render the likelihood that Jesus envisaged a Gentile mission all the more probable:

(i) Jesus defined his ministry as being directed towards 'sinners' (Mk. 2:15-17; Mt. 11:19/Lk. 7:34; Lk. 15:1-2). This could potentially have included Gentiles as, like the Old Testament concern for the

40 For an introduction to this topic see, Eckhard J. Schnabel, 'Jesus and the Beginning of the Mission to the Gentiles,' in *Jesus of Nazareth Lord and Christ*, eds. Joel B. Green & Max Turner (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1994), 37-58; and for a more extensive, though now dated work, Joachim Jeremias, *Jesus' Promise to the Nations*, trans. S.H. Hooke (London: SCM, 1958 [1956]).

41 Raymond E. Brown, *New Testament Introduction* (ABRL; New York: Doubleday, 1997), 827.

42 Ben F. Meyer, *The Aims of Jesus* (London: SCM, 1979), 86; Charlesworth, *Jesus Within Judaism*, 6; Craig A. Evans, 'Authenticity Criteria in Life of Jesus Research,' *CSR* 19 (1989), 25; T. Holmén, 'Doubts about Double Dissimilarity: Restructuring the Main Criterion of Jesus-of-history Research,' in *Authenticating the Words of Jesus*, eds. Bruce D. Chilton & Craig A. Evans (Leiden: Brill, 1999), 74-75; Stanley E. Porter, *The Criteria for Authenticity in Historical-Jesus Research: Previous Discussion and New Proposals* (JSNT SS 191; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 2000), 75-76.

43 Oscar Cullmann, *Salvation in History* (London: SCM, 1967), 189.

44 Markus Bockmuehl, *This Jesus* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP, 1996), 8; cf. similarly Steven M. Bryan, *Jesus and Israel's Traditions of Judgment and Restoration* (SNTS 117; Cambridge: CUP, 2002), 9.

alien, they may have been considered as part of those marginalised by Jewish society. Furthermore, 'sinners' could also function as a technical term for Gentiles (1 Macc. 2.44; Pss. Sol 1.1; 2.1; Is. 14:5; Mt. 26:45; Lk. 6:32-33; Gal. 2:15).

(ii) R. David Kaylor denies outright that Jesus envisaged a Gentile mission, but he tentatively leaves open the possibility that Jesus may have thought of Gentiles joining the covenant community.[45] Yet if Jesus did entertain the notion that the Gentiles would join the alternative Israel he was reconstituting around himself, it becomes far more credible that he spoke of a *means* for their inclusion.

(iii) The emphasis prevalent in the 'Third Quest' for the historical Jesus, rightly stresses the mission of Jesus as being the restoration of Israel. Accordingly, N.T. Wright states, 'that the fate of the nations was inexorably and irreversibly bound up with that of Israel there was no doubt whatsoever.'[46] When God dealt with the nations, for judgment or salvation, Israel was the appointed means. For this reason Jesus can affirm the salvation-historical priority of Israel (Mk. 7:27-29; Mt. 10:5-6; 15:24; Jn. 4:22; cf. Rom. 1:16; Test. Ben. 10.9). Nonetheless, the affirmation is that of a divinely commissioned vocation that would, in the end, embrace the nations (cf. e.g., Is. 2:2-5; 52:10; 60:1-14; Mi. 4:1-5; Zc. 8:20-23; 14:12-19).

(iv) Jesus' view of the Gentiles is often inferred from Mt. 8:11/Lk. 13:28-29: 'I say to you that many will come from the east and the west, and will take their places at the feast with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven.'[47] Dale C. Allison has effectively argued that this logion in fact does not refer to the inclusion of Gentiles, but rather, to the end of the Jewish dispersion and exile.[48] Be that as it may, in texts like Tob. 14:4-7; 1 Enoch 90.30-36; Test. Ben. 9.2; Je. 3:17-18; Is. 49:6; and Zc. 8:1-23, the return from exile by Israel and Judah is a precursor to the Gentiles joining the worshipping community. Thus, if Jesus did preach on Israel's return from exile (which is not an uncontroversial

45 R. David Kaylor, *Jesus the Prophet: His Vision of the Kingdom on Earth* (Louisville: Westminster/John Knox, 1994), 120, 185.

46 N.T. Wright, *The New Testament and the People of God* (COQG 1; Minneapolis: Fortress, 1992), 268.

47 Note the constant reference to this verse throughout Meyer, *The Aims of Jesus*, and Jeremias, *Jesus' Promise to the Nations*.

48 Dale C. Allison, 'Who will Come from East and West? Observations on Matt. 8.11-12 – Luke 13.28-29,' *IBS* 11 (1989), 158-70; cf. E.P. Sanders, *Jesus and Judaism* (London: SCM, 1985), 219-20.

topic),[49] it would imply that the nations would soon be joining Israel in worshipping God.

(v) Jesus spoke favorably about Gentiles including the Queen of the South (Mt. 12:42/Lk. 11:31), Nineveh (Mt. 12:41/Lk 11:32), Naaman the Syrian and the widow in Zarephath (Lk. 4:26-27), Tyre and Sidon (Mt. 11:21-22/Lk. 10:13-14), and Sodom and Gomorrah (Mt. 11:23-24/Lk. 10:12). However, in other passages Jesus does seem genuinely indifferent towards Gentiles. For instance, in the case of the Syro-Phoenician woman of Mk. 7:24-30, some perceive Jesus' response to her as being unabashedly anti-Gentile.[50] However, George Caird urged us to see the passage in a more ironic sense, picturing Jesus speaking with a grin and tone of voice that invited the woman's clever reply.[51]

(vi) Finally, the speech of Mark 13 should be understood from the perspective of Jesus' final period of ministry in Jerusalem which appears to have centered upon his critique of the Temple. But what was the nature of that critique? Part of the reason may lie in the role of the Temple as a means of economic exploitation of the poor.[52] What I regard as more likely is that Jesus' critique was aimed against the role of the Temple in fostering a nationalistic

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49 See Wright, *The New Testament and the People of God*, 268-71; Wright, *Jesus and the Victory of God*, 126-29, 428-30; J. M. Scott, ed., *Exile: Old Testament, Jewish and Christian Conceptions* (Leiden: Brill, 1997); Craig A. Evans, 'Jesus and the Continuing Exile of Israel,' in *Jesus and the Restoration of Israel: A Critical Assessment of N.T. Wright's Jesus and the Victory of God*, ed. C. C. Newman (Downers Grove, IL: IVP, 1999), 77-100; T. R. Hatina, 'Exile,' in *DNTB*, eds. Craig A. Evans & Stanley E. Porter (Downers Grove, IL: IVP, 2000), 348-51; Scot McKnight, *A New Vision for Israel: The Teachings of Jesus in National Context* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1999), 13-14, 70, 77, 91 n. 79; Bryan, *Jesus and Israel's Traditions of Judgment and Restoration*, 12-20.

50 Geza Vermes, *Jesus and the World of Judaism* (London: SCM, 1983), 54; Interestingly, J. R. Michaels (*Servant and Son: Jesus in Parable and Gospel* [Atlanta: John Knox, 1981], 163-66) thinks that Jesus decided to enlarge his mission to include the Gentiles after the encounter with the Syro-Phoenician woman who surprised him by her exercise of faith.

51 G.B. Caird & L.D. Hurst, *New Testament Theology* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1999), 394-95.

52 Josephus records in *Jewish Wars*, 2.427 that one of the first things the Zealots did when they seized the Temple was to destroy the records of debt. On the role of the Temple as part of a socio-religious domination system and on profiteering by its leadership see, Richard Bauckham, 'Jesus' Demonstration in the Temple,' in *Law and Religion: Essays on the Place of the Law in Israel and Early Christianity*, ed. Barnabas Lindars (Cambridge: James Clarke & Co., 1988), 72-89; John Dominic Crossan, *The Historical Jesus: The Life of a Mediterranean Jewish Peasant* (San Francisco: Harper, 1991), 360; C.A. Evans, 'Jesus' Action in the Temple and Evidence of Corruption in the First-Century Temple,' in *Jesus and His Contemporaries: Comparative Studies* (AGJU; Leiden: Brill, 1995), 319-44.

and exclusivist ideology for Israel. In the dramatic action that Jesus performed in the Temple, specifically in the court of the Gentiles, he quotes Is. 56:7 and Je. 7:11[53] the latter referring to the Temple as a 'den of thieves'. A better translation of λῃστής is probably 'bandit', 'violent one', 'guerilla' or even 'terrorist'. Josephus and the New Testament arguably use the term in this way.[54] It carries the implication that Jesus censures the Temple for failing to draw the nations and instead became exploited as the chief symbol of a militant, factionalized, anti-Gentile, separatist movement. If this is close to what Jesus found wrong with Israel's most treasured religious monument, then it largely explains why in a speech just opposite the Temple (Mk 13:1-37), he would urge the reverse view, viz., that God's purpose for the Temple was meant to bring salvation to the nations. This concept was not at all foreign to Jewish writings: 1 Ki. 8:41-43; 2 Ch. 6:32; Is. 2:1-4; 60:1-14; Mi. 4:1-4; Josephus, *Against Apion.* 2.193; Philo, *The Special Laws* 1.68-70; Sib. Orc. 3.565-69, 616-34, 715-20; 1 Enoch 90.32-33; 2 Bar. 68.5-8; Test. Ben. 9.2.

There are, however, other ways of understanding Mk. 13:10 without a reference to world mission. G.D. Kilpatrick, following the parallel passage in Mt. 10:18 and the textual variants of Mk. 13:10 in W Θ *pc*, takes 'to the nations' (καὶ εἰς πάντα τὰ ἔθνη) to refer back to v. 9. Additionally, he regards the preposition εἰς as being locative (i.e., 'among the nations'). Kilpatrick also sees 'first the gospel must be preached' (πρῶτον δεῖ κηρυχθῆναι τὸ εὐαγγέλιον.) as belonging to v. 11. The result is: 'You will stand for my sake as a witness to them, and among the nations. First [of all], it is necessary that the gospel be preached, and when they bring you . . .'. Consequently, any hint of world mission is vanquished from Mark.[55] Apart from the majority textual witnesses being against this grammatical arrangement, the change from a purposive use of εἰς to a locative use in the next phrase

53 On the authenticity of these quotations by Jesus see, Marcus J. Borg, *Conflict, Holiness and the Politics in the Teachings of Jesus* (Harrisburg, PA: TPI, 1998), 182-87.

54 Josephus, *Antiquities*, 14.415-16; 15.345-48; *Jewish Wars*, 1.304; Mk. 14:48; 15:27; Lk. 10:30, 35; Jn. 10:1, 8; 18:40. I remain unconvinced by Martin Hengel's suggestion (*The Zealots: An Investigation into the Jewish Freedom Movement in the Period from Herod I until 70 A.D.* trans. D. Smith [Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1989], 43-44) that Josephus uses the term λῃστής in order to talk down their political and religious agenda. The very activities Josephus describes them as performing make such a connotation visible and unavoidable.

55 G. D. Kilpatrick, 'The Gentile Mission in Mark and Mark 13:9-11,' in *Studies in the Gospels: Essays in Memory of R.H. Lightfoot*, ed. D.E. Nineham (Oxford: Blackwell, 1957), 145-48.

is extremely awkward. Not only that, Kilpatrick's non-temporal employment of 'first' (πρῶτον) posits too abrupt a break in v. 10.

Joachim Jeremias does not see in Mk 13:10 (or 14:9) a reference to world mission, instead what he perceives is an apocalyptic event, viz., the angelic proclamation of God's final action (as in Rev. 14:6).[56] The problem is that this disregards the context of Mark 13 and the reference to angels is read into the text. Not only that, but it sets human preaching and apocalyptic activities over against each other.[57] Preaching precedes the end but is not part of it. I think that Jeremias is correct in that the theme is apocalyptic, but why cannot the missionary preaching itself be the declaration of God's final action? The preaching of the gospel is a 'sign' of salvation and a warning of judgment.[58] The concept of missionary witness as comprising part of the Messianic tribulation is also found elsewhere in the New Testament (cf. Acts 9:15-16; 2 Cor. 1:5-11; Col. 1:24; Eph. 3:8-13).[59] Here I think we have evidence of the appropriation and transformation of Israel's sacred traditions by Jesus. The idea of the Law or news about God going forth to the nations is firmly anchored in the Old Testament (Dt. 4:6-8; Pss. 9:11; 45:17; 57:9; 67:2; 96:3-10; 105:1; 108:3; Is. 5:36; 11:10-12; 12:4; 42:1; 51:4-5; 52:10-15; 55:5; 62:10; Ezk. 36:22-23; Ob. 1; Zc. 9:10). Yet such traditions have been apocalypticized by Jesus and transposed into the end-time saga. The tribulation includes God's people suffering in the birth pains, but the sequel is not divine vengeance upon the nations, but rather the proclamation of good news to the world. When Israel finally became what she was meant to be, the word of the Lord would go forth from Jerusalem. This promise would be fulfilled in the new Israel that Jesus was forming. What is more this application of Israel's sacred traditions is set over and against other competing interpretations. In Bar. 4.1-3 Israel is forbidden from sharing the Law with the nations because they lack wisdom. In 1 Macc. 2.48 whilst delivering Israel from a pagan king the Law is stripped from the possession of Gentiles. Josephus records how the zealots forbade foreigners worshipping in the Temple (*Jewish Wars*, 2.414). Here Gentile worship of God is excluded from the apocalyptic schedule. By contrast, for Jesus the restoration of Israel,

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56 Jeremias, *Jesus' Promise to the Nations*, 22-23.

57 So also Cranfield, *St. Mark*, 399.

58 Oscar Cullmann, 'Eschatology and Missions in the New Testament,' in *The Background of the New Testament and Its Eschatology*, eds. W.D. Davies & D.D. Daube (Cambridge: CUP, 1956), 413-15.

59 James W. Thompson, 'The Gentile Mission As an Eschatological Necessity,' *ResQ* 14 (1971), 21-22.

the end of exile, and building of the eschatological Temple would all encompass the Gentiles in God's salvific purposes. Instead of angelic warriors joining the sons of light against the sons of darkness (1QM), the good news of God's salvation would be preached to the nations.

In addition, we should not overlook the fact that Mark 13, which in one way or another is an apocalyptic discourse despite the fact that it does not contain every conceivable apocalyptic literary device and motif, gives a central place for mission in the divinely determined scheme of salvation. Mission, for Mark and no less Jesus, is part of the eschatological program put into effect in order to achieve that which apocalyptic dreamers hoped for: the revealing of God's salvation. In this sense, mission does not simply anticipate the final triumph of God, but it actually achieves it in embryonic form. Mission is more than a foretaste of things future and apocalyptic, rather, it is *performative apocalyptic.* Mission, the proclamation of the gospel, is the pivotal act whereby God begins to repossesses the world for himself.

IV. Conclusion

The normal praxis of an apocalyptic community (though it is somewhat of a generalisation to even speak of one) often commences with disenchantment with the world as corrupt and secularised followed by estrangement and withdrawal. This is in turn generates a deep pessimism, dualism, determinism and isolationism. Under such circumstances, if mission were conceived of at all, it would have to be through centripetal terms, that is, by those who are willing to abandon the world in its corruption and impurity and join the righteous remnant in waiting for the final apocalyptic showdown where God would vindicate the loyal and righteous (e.g., Qumran). In contrast, though Jesus shared many elements of the apocalyptic worldview, he did not regard it as meaning passively awaiting the arrival of God's kingdom. The apocalypticism of Jesus, though sometimes pessimistic, was not world-negating but world-engaging. David Batstone states, 'Jesus' historical mission was not only directed toward the "millenarianistic" envisioning of another world, but it also sought the actual transformation of human history itself.'[60] I depart from Batstone only by specifying that the transformation of world history occurs through the invasion of the future age into the present one. Hence, the hope remains for the kingdom to be, 'on earth as it is in heaven'. To this end, Jesus saw himself as the agent of the kingdom par excellence,

60 David B. Batstone, 'Jesus, Apocalyptic, and World Transformation,' *Theology Today* 49 (1992), 396-97.

called to proclaim, realise and embody its arrival in his *discourse* with the crowds, *dining* with sinners, *debating* with the religious establishment, by *defeating* Satan, in miraculous *deeds* and even through his *death*. In the aftermath of his suffering and vindication his disciples would become Isaianic heralds, proclaiming that God had fulfilled his promises to Israel and what is true for Israel shall now be true for the world. Jesus criticised Israel for failing to realise her divinely appointed vocation as being a light to the nations. Instead, influential groups within Israel defined themselves in terms of separation from the nations and indulged the angry voices of nationalistic hotheads. If the nations were drawn to her, it would not be to worship God, but instead they would come with soldiers, swords, and siege engines. But if Israel would not be the light of the world, a house of prayer for all nations or the salt of the earth – then Jesus and his community would be. The Messianic community would appropriate for themselves the mission of Israel. The rejection of Jesus' message by national Israel meant the end of the possibility of a centripetal attraction by the nations. The inversion of eschatological hope meant the inversion of the direction of mission. It would now be conceived of as the renewed Israel going to the nations. This task is neither a prerequisite for God's final triumph nor an addendum to it; rather, mission is part of the very means by which God fulfils his promises. On such analysis, mission emerges as nothing other than the enactment of God's victory in Jesus over Satan, over worldly rulers, and finally evil itself. Mission is the mechanism of God's eschatological salvation until the eschaton arrives in its fullness. No surprise then that the early Church adopted this nexus of (apocalyptic) eschatology and mission from Jesus. Their central conviction was that the end of the ages had come and it was now time for God's salvation to reach the Gentiles. This would appear then to vindicate the insightful statement of David Bosch, 'It is not true that, in the early church, mission gradually *replaced* the expectation of the end. Rather, mission was, in itself, an eschatological event.'[61] To this I add the label 'apocalyptic event', for mission is not only part of the last things, but it conjures up a very specific set of hopes. As we have seen, in mission, the battle against Satan is enacted and won; similarly, the Messianic woes are endured so that the gospel can reach the world.

The implication for contemporary missiology is that to be engaged in mission is not only a continuation of the mission of Jesus but is also a continual re-creation of the triumph of God. Satan falls once more

61 David J. Bosch, *Transforming Mission: Paradigm Shifts in Theology of Mission* (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis, 1991), 41.

where the reign of God and the gospel of the kingdom are proclaimed. To undertake mission is to embark on an apocalyptic enterprise. The apparently innocuous and earthly character of mission in fact makes riveting waves upon invisible and transcendent realities. Mission is never undertaken for its own sake or out of duty for things noble and Christian. Mission means participating in the continuing saga of God's conquest where each mission is another campaign into the demonic realm. The challenge for Christians is to see mission not in terms of killing time until the Parousia of the Lord, but as an instrument of the end time saga where God's salvific purposes are constantly being realised through their witness and profession of faith. To recapture the New Testament vision of mission means forcing ourselves to grapple with the apocalyptic substance of its hope. If mission is to be mission in the sense that Jesus envisaged, then it must come under the rubric of apocalyptic. Mission is, in the final analysis, the apocalypticism of Jesus expounded and applied. Furthermore, apocalypticism far from breeding contentment that ultimately God himself will wrap things up without human agency, in fact, quickens missionary impulse in a manner akin to casting gallons of petrol upon an open fire. Apocalyptic enthusiasm awakens Christians from their apathy and challenges them to see history in teleological terms. The hour of salvation is coming and has come, and what is more, the Church is the vanguard of God's salvation that advances the kingdom of God. Amidst a world of radicalized evil we may offer them a radicalized hope of a new day that is dawning.

Abstract

The essay contends that 'apocalyptic' and 'mission' are not two unrelated entities but are integrated together in the mission of Jesus which expresses the apocalyptic nature of mission. Two passages are examined to demonstrate this. In Lk. 10:18 Jesus sees the defeat of Satan as being linked to the mission of the disciples. Conversely, in Mk. 13:10 the proclamation of the gospel to the nations amidst the tribulation is the means by which apocalyptic salvation is realized. The essay concludes that mission is an apocalyptic event and that a proper biblical understanding of mission must recognize this facet of its character.