

Who is Elijah in the Gospel of Mark?

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Abstract

Elijah is the most frequently mentioned figure from the Hebrew Scriptures in the Gospel of Mark—yet, despite Elijah’s unusual prominence, relatively little has been written on the matter. In Mark’s Gospel, Jesus is popularly associated with Elijah *redivivus*, Elijah himself appears at Jesus’ Transfiguration, and in a discourse with the disciples Jesus strongly implies that Elijah has already come in the person of John the Baptist. Furthermore, both John and Jesus show various literary similarities to the ‘historical’ and eschatological Elijah. This paper will argue that whilst the identity of Mark’s Elijah is not consistently maintained, Mark has subsumed his presentation of Elijah under an eschatological framework found elsewhere in contemporary Jewish thought—the appearance of Elijah signals to Mark’s readership the imminence of the Day of the Lord, and therefore, the end of the world.

Statement of Candidate

I certify that the work in this thesis entitled “Who is Elijah in the Gospel of Mark?” has not previously been submitted for a degree nor has it been submitted as part of requirement for a degree to any other university or institution than Macquarie University.

I also certify that the thesis is an original piece of research and it has been written by me, Nathanael Smith. Any help and assistance that I have received in the course of my research and preparation for this thesis have been appropriately acknowledged.

In addition to this, I certify that all sources of information and literature used are indicated in the thesis.

Signature

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'Nathanael Smith', written in a cursive style.

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Abbreviations

Citations from the Old and New Testaments come from the New Revised Standard Version. The Greek text of the New Testament follows the Nestle-Aland 27th edition. Translations of Greek and Latin texts are taken from the Loeb Classical Library, unless otherwise noted. The abbreviations used in this work follow *The SBL Handbook of Style: For Biblical Studies and Related Disciplines* (2nd ed., ed. B. J. Collins. Atlanta: SBL Press, 2014). These abbreviations include those for academic journals, commentary and monograph series, as well as biblical books and other ancient literature.

1. Introduction

1.1. Background to research:

Elijah is the most frequently mentioned figure from the Jewish scriptures in the Gospel of Mark: he is referred to directly a total of nine times—with Moses and David mentioned eight and seven times, respectively. Yet unlike Moses and David, Elijah does not figure heavily in later Christian imagination—although, the prophet remained a prominent figure in Jewish eschatology and folklore.¹ In this regard, Mark’s fascination with the figure of Elijah seems to be something of an anomaly in early Christian literature. Indeed, if it were not for his identification with John the Baptist (Mk 9:13), it is doubtful whether Elijah would have featured in the Christian tradition at all: Matthew, who repeats and expands Mark’s Elijah tradition, seems only concerned with identifying the Baptist (Mt 11:14; 17:13)—whereas this concern has almost vanished by the time of Luke and John (Lk 1:17; cf. 4:25-26; Jn 1:21, 25). The inclusion of Elijah in Christian theology, therefore, is solely attributable to Mark—although, the prophet’s theological significance is almost entirely indebted to Matthew’s reformulation of the Markan tradition: καὶ εἰ θέλετε δέξασθαι αὐτός [Ἰωάννου] ἐστὶν Ἠλίας ὁ μέλλων ἔρχεσθαι (Mt 11:14).

Given the significance of Mark’s contribution to the history of *Eliasvorstellungen*, it is perhaps surprising that there has yet to be a full-length English language work published on the matter.² Moreover, previous interpreters have almost exclusively seen the Markan Elijah in terms of his identification with John the Baptist—which only accounts for a portion (Mk 9:11-13) of Mark’s treatment of Elijah (cf. 6:14-16; 8:27-30; 9:2-8; 15:34-36). This limitation has prevented a full appreciation of Elijah’s place in the Gospel—as Robinson notes, “Perhaps we have allowed ourselves to be obsessed with Elijah as a category in terms of

¹ For the influence of Moses see F. Stier and E. Beck, *Moses in Schrift und Überlieferung*. Düsseldorf: Patmos-Verlag, 1963; and David see J. M. Bassler, “A Man for All Seasons: David in Rabbinic and New Testament Literature,” *Interpretation* 40 (1986): 156-169; cf. the development of Elijah-tradition in the Fathers, C. Böttrich, “Elia im Christentum,” in *Elia und andere Propheten: in Judentum, Christentum und Islam*, eds. B. Ego and F. Eißler. Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2013, pp. 75-139.

² Whereas there have been extensive publications in the German language; see ‘Literature Review’, n. 7.

whom somehow John must be interpreted.”³ With this in mind, the following study will adopt a fresh approach and examine every explicit reference to Elijah in the text, as well as every proposed allusion, in order to better address the question: who is Elijah in Mark’s Gospel?

1.2. Literature Review:

A number of studies have made significant contributions to the issue. We must first note the surveys of Elijah in the extant literature: the influential studies of L. Ginzberg and J. Jeremias, as well as the more recent contributions of B. Ego and B. J. Shaver.⁴ Likewise, the surveys of Elijah in Rabbinic thought—A. Wiener, K. H. Lindbeck, and H. Lichtenberger—as well as in Christian theology (C. Böttrich) and the Dead Sea Scrolls (J. J. Collins) are similarly noteworthy.⁵ Relevant studies on the figure of John the Baptist include the form-critical approaches of M. Dibelius, M. Goguel, E. Lohmeyer, and C. H. Kraeling; the redaction-critical approaches of W. Marxsen, W. Wink, and J. Ernst; as well as the more recent social-scientific studies of R. L. Webb and J. E. Taylor.⁶ The studies of Elijah

³ J. A. T. Robinson, “Elijah, John and Jesus: an Essay in Detection,” *NTS* 4 (1958): 265.

⁴ L. Ginzberg, *The Legends of the Jews*. Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1937, 4.233-35, 316-342; 6.339; J. Jeremias, “Ηλ(ε)ίας,” *TDNT* 2.928-41; B. Ego, “Elia im Judentum,” in *Elia und andere Propheten*, pp. 10-74; B. J. Shaver, “The Prophet Elijah in the Literature of the Second Temple Period: The Growth of a Tradition,” Ph.D. diss., University of Chicago, 2001.

⁵ A. Wiener, *The Prophet Elijah in the Development of Judaism: A Depth Psychological Study*. London: Routledge, 1978; K. H. Lindbeck, *Elijah and the Rabbis: Story and Theology*. New York: Columbia University Press, 2010; H. Lichtenberger, “Elia-Traditionen bei vor- bzw. frührabbinischen Wundertäten,” in *Yearbook 2008: Biblical Figures in Deuterocanonical and Cognate Literature*, eds., Lichtenberger and U. Mittmann-Richert, Deuterocanonical and Cognate Literature. Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2009, pp. 547-563; Böttrich, *Op. Cit.*, pp. 75-139; see “Teacher, Priest and Prophet” in J. J. Collins, *The Scepter and the Star: Messianism in Light of the Dead Sea Scrolls*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2010, pp. 110-148.

⁶ M. Dibelius, *Die urchristliche Überlieferung von Johannes dem Täufer*. Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1911; M. Goguel, *Au seuil de l’Évangile: Jean-Baptiste*. Paris: Payot, 1928; E. Lohmyer, *Das Urchristentum, 1: Johannes der Täufer*. Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1932; C. H. Kraeling, *John the Baptist*. New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1951; W. Marxsen, *Der Evangelist Markus: Studien zur Redaktionsgeschichte des Evangeliums*. Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1956; W. Wink, *John the Baptist in the Gospel Tradition*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1968; J. Ernst, *Johannes der Täufer: Interpretation-Geschichte-*

in the Gospel of Mark by German commentators are particularly relevant: M. Öhler, G. Dautzenberg, J. Majoros-Danowski, S. Pellegrini, and E.-M. Becker.⁷ Similar treatments of Elijah can be found in the unpublished dissertations of C. E. Joynes, L. M. Jordan, D. P. Truitt, D. M. Hoffeditz, and D. S. Black.⁸ Whilst less expansive, the articles of J. A. T. Robinson, M. M. Faierstein, D. C. Allison, J. A. Fitzmyer, M. E. Thrall, M. D. Hooker, C. E. Joynes, R. Janes, M. F. Whitters, and M. Goodacre bear direct relevance to the study of Elijah in the Gospel of Mark—as well as the relevant sections in the commentaries of C. E. B. Cranfield, V. Taylor, D. Nineham, E. Schweizer, W. Lane, M. D. Hooker, R. H. Gundry, J. Marcus, B. Witherington, R. T. France, J. R. Donahue and D. J. Harrington, E. Boring, and A. Yarbro Collins.⁹ Finally, we must note the recent contributions of mimetic-

Wirkungsgeschichte, BZNW 53. Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1989; R. L. Webb, *John the Baptizer and Prophet: A Socio-Historical Study*, JSNTSupp 62. Sheffield: JSOT, 1991; J. E. Taylor, *The Immerser: John the Baptist within Second Temple Judaism*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1997.

⁷ M. Öhler, *Eli im Neuen Testament: Untersuchungen zur Bedeutung des alttestamentlichen Propheten im Neuen Testament*, BZNW 88. Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1997; G. Dautzenberg, “Elija im Markusevangelium,” in *The Four Gospels 1992: Festschrift Frans Neirynck*, ed. F. Van Segbroeck, BEThL 100. Leuven: Peeters, 1992, pp. 1077-1094; J. Majoros-Danowski, *Elija im Markusevangelium: Ein Buch im Kontext des Judentums*, BWANT 180. Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 2008; S. Pellegrini, *Elija – Wegbereiter des Gottessohnes: Eine textsemiotische Untersuchung im Markusevangelium*, HBS 26. Freiburg: Peterson, 2000; E.-M. Becker, “Elija redivivus im Markus-Evangelium? Zur Typologisierung von Wiederkehr-Vorstellungen,” in *Biblical Figures in Deuterocanonical and Cognate Literature*, pp. 587-625.

⁸ C. E. Joynes, “The Return of Elijah: An Exploration of the Character and Context of the Relationship between Elijah, John the Baptist and Jesus in the Gospels,” Ph.D. diss., Oxford University, 1999; L. M. Jordan, “Elijah Transfigured: A Study of the Narrative of the Transfiguration in the Gospel of Mark,” Ph.D. diss., Duke University, 1981; D. P. Truitt, “The Function of Elijah in the Markan Messianic Drama,” Ph.D. diss., Baylor University, 1993; D. M. Hoffeditz, “A Prophet, a Kingdom, and a Messiah: The Portrayal of Elijah in the Gospels in Light of First-Century Judaism,” Ph.D. diss., University of Aberdeen, 2000; D. S. Black, “How the Markan Reader Understands Jesus Through John/Elijah,” Ph.D. diss., University of St. Michael’s College, 2012.

⁹ Robinson, *Op. Cit.*, pp. 263-281; M. M. Faierstein, “Why Do the Scribes Say That Elijah Must Come First?” *JBL* 100 (1981): 75-86; D. C. Allison, “Elijah Must Come First,” *JBL* 103 (1984), 256-258; J. A. Fitzmyer, “More about Elijah Coming First,” *JBL* 104 (1985): 295-296; M. E. Thrall, “Elijah and Moses in Mark’s account of the Transfiguration,” *NTS* 16 (1970): 305-317; M. D. Hooker, “What Doest Thou Here, Elijah?: A Look at St Mark’s Account of the Transfiguration,” in *The Glory of Christ in the New Testament: Studies in Christology in Memory of George Bradford Caird*, eds. L. D. Hurst and N. T. Wright.

criticism with the study of the Elijah-Elisha cycle in the Gospel of Mark by T. L. Brodie, W. Roth, A. Winn, and J. L. Watts.¹⁰

The following study will critically evaluate the ideas of these authors, as well as others, for the purpose of better addressing the question of Elijah's identity in Mark's Gospel. These works, with a few notable exceptions, tend not to veer from the traditional interpretation

Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1987, pp. 59-70; C. E. Joynes, "A Question of Identity: 'Who Do People Say That I am?' Elijah, John the Baptist and Jesus in Mark's Gospel," in *Understanding, Studying and Reading: Essays in Honour of John Ashton*, eds., Rowland and Fletcher-Louis, JSOTSup 153. Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1998, pp. 15-29; idem, "The Returned Elijah? John the Baptist's Angelic Identity in the Gospel of Mark," *Scottish Journal of Theology* 58 (2005): 455-467; R. Janes, "Why the Daughter of Herodias Must Dance (Mark 6.14-29)," *JSNT* 28.4 (2006): 443-467; M. F. Whitters, "Why Did the Bystanders Think Jesus Called upon Elijah before He Died (Mark 15:34-36)? The Markan Position," *HTR* 95 (2002): pp. 119-124; M. Goodacre, "Mark, Elijah, the Baptist and Matthew: The Success of the First Intertextual Reading of Mark," in *Biblical Interpretation in Early Christian Gospels, vol. 2, The Gospel of Matthew*, ed. T. Hatina, Library of New Testament Studies 310. Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 2008, pp. 73-84; C. E. B. Cranfield, *The Gospel according to St. Mark*, Cambridge Greek Commentary. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1959; V. Taylor, *Gospel According to St. Mark: An Introduction and Commentary*. London: MacMillan, 1953; D. E. Nineham, *The Gospel of St. Mark*. Baltimore: Penguin Books, 1964; E. Schweizer, *The Good News According to Mark*. Atlanta: John Knox, 1970; W. L. Lane, *The Gospel of Mark*, The New International Commentary on the New Testament 2, ed. F. F. Bruce. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1974; R. H. Gundry, *Mark: A Commentary on His Apology for the Cross*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1989; M. D. Hooker, *The Gospel According to St. Mark*, Black's New Testament Commentaries. London: A&C Black, 1991; J. Marcus, *Mark 1-8: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*, The Anchor Bible 27. New York: Doubleday, 2002; B. Witherington, *The Gospel of Mark: A Social-Rhetorical Commentary*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2001; R. T. France, *The Gospel of Mark: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary 2. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2002; J. R. Donahue and Harrington, *The Gospel of Mark*, Sacra Pagina 2. Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 2002; M. E. Boring, *Mark: A Commentary*, New Testament Library. Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2006; A. Yarbro Collins, *Mark: A Commentary*, Hermeneia. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2007.

¹⁰ T. L. Brodie, *The Crucial Bridge: The Elijah-Elisha Narrative as an Interpretive Synthesis of Genesis-Kings and a Literary Model for the Gospels*. Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 2000; W. Roth, *Hebrew Gospel: Cracking the Code of Mark*. Oak Park: Meyer-Stone Books, 1988; A. Winn, *Mark and the Elijah-Elisha Narrative: Considering the Practice of Greco-Roman Imitation in the Search for Markan Source Material*. Eugene: Pickwick Publications, 2010; J. L. Watts, *Mimetic Criticism and the Gospel of Mark: An Introduction and Commentary*. Eugene: Wipf & Stock, 2013.

(i.e. John the Baptist is Elijah).¹¹ This interpretation, however, fails to take into account the full range of Elijah-traditions utilized in the Gospel. In the following chapters it will become clear that Mark includes traditions which seem to identify Elijah with Jesus, as well as John the Baptist—and indeed, traditions where Elijah is identified with neither Jesus nor John.

1.3. *Methodology:*

In my approach to this study I have incorporated a wide range of Jewish and Christian literature: delineating the reception of Elijah in Second Temple Judaism, the expectation of his return, as well as the return of other prophetic figures, and the broader outlines of Jewish and early Christian eschatology.¹² In so doing, I hope to situate the Markan treatment of Elijah within the diversity of Second Temple Judaism—and as such, better understand how our author has both incorporated and revised the eschatological hopes of his Jewish contemporaries.¹³

¹¹ Robinson, Dautzenberg, Joynes, Becker, and Goodacre question the prevailing Markan interpretation (i.e. John is consistently identified as Elijah)—and Collins and Taylor suggest that there may be a historical basis for Jesus' identification with Elijah; Collins, *Op. Cit.*, pp. 131-141; Taylor, *Op. Cit.*, pp. 287-294.

¹² Given the scarcity of extant material dating from the mid-first century C.E., this study will attempt to incorporate literature ranging from the early Second Temple period to early Rabbinic Judaism: i.e. the Tanakh, the Jewish Apocrypha, the Pseudepigrapha, the Dead Sea Scrolls, Philo, Josephus, the Mishnah, the Gemaras, the Targums, additional Rabbinic documents, and Samaritan texts, as well as early Christian writings. It is my hope that this wide selection of texts will provide an adequate understanding of the broader outlines of the religious environment from which Mark emerged. For an introduction to the problem of sources in ancient Judaism see W. S. Green, "The Scholarly Study of Judaism and its Sources," in *Judaism in Late Antiquity: Part One: The Literary and Archaeological Sources*, eds., J. Neusner and A. J. Avery-Peck, Handbuch der Orientalistik 16. Leiden: Brill, 1995, pp. 1-10. Furthermore, it seems reasonable to accept the consensus date for Mark's Gospel, placing its composition shortly before or after the destruction of the Jerusalem Temple in 70 C.E.; Yarbro Collins, *Op. Cit.*, pp. 11-14; P. Fredriksen, "Jesus and the Temple, Mark and the War," *SBL 1990 Seminar Papers*, ed. D. J. Lull, SBLSP 29. Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1990, pp. 293-310.

¹³ It is essential to recognize that Second Temple Judaism, like New Testament Christianity, does not present a monolithic system of beliefs—but consists of diverse, often conflicting worldviews. A failure to appreciate this background will ultimately skew the results of any New Testament study. See the discussion

This study is especially concerned with examining the consistency of Mark's conception of Elijah: is Mark's treatment of Elijah sustained and coherent—or can we detect the presence of conflicting traditions? In which case, has Mark uncritically incorporated these traditions, or have they been subsumed under a redactional framework? To answer these questions, this study will attempt to locate tendencies within the Markan material: the use of the Jewish scriptures, as well as the treatment of broader themes: particularly eschatology and Christology. My hope is that this approach will allow for both similarities and differences to emerge between the various Markan traditions concerning Elijah.¹⁴

The presentation will proceed as follows: the first section will examine, in order of appearance, every occurrence of Ἠλίας in the Gospel—concluding with a brief summary of our findings. The second section will, in a similar fashion, examine potential allusions to Elijah in the description of John the Baptist. The third section will examine proposed links between Jesus and Elijah in the Gospel. Finally, the conclusion will summarize the findings of the previous study and suggest potential directions for future research.

in Neusner, *Judaism when Christianity Began: A Survey of Belief and Practice*. Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2002, pp. 1-13.

¹⁴ It is crucial to avoid methodological approaches that only serve to reinforce a narrow set of assumptions. Previous approaches to the issue (Elijah in Mark) have often begun with assumptions regarding the literary or theological character of the Gospel and Second Temple Judaism that have effectively pre-determined their results. No methodology can begin without assumptions, but a good methodology must protect against unnecessary presuppositions that will unduly affect the nature of the research. My aim is that the methodology outlined above will allow sufficient space for any number of conclusions, whilst inexorably tying the research to the available evidence. Similar methodological concerns are raised in H. Räisänen, *The 'Messianic Secret' in Mark*, trans. C. Tuckett. Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1990, p. 5.

2. Ἡλίας in the Gospel of Mark

2.1. *The popular identification of Jesus with Elijah: 6:14-16; 8:27-28.*

Elijah is first mentioned in 6:14-16, where the people identify Jesus with either a resurrected John the Baptist, or Elijah, or a prophet like one of old. This *vox populi* appears again, almost verbatim, in 8:27-28—the disciples report to Jesus that he is identified by some as, Ἰωάννην τὸν Βαπτιστὴν καὶ ἄλλοι Ἡλίαν ἄλλοι δὲ ὅτι εἷς τῶν προφητῶν.¹⁵ The opinion of the crowds reflects the belief in Elijah *redivivus*: namely, that Elijah—who ascended into heaven in 2 Kgs 2:1-12—would return before the judgment at the end of the world.¹⁶ There is no extant evidence to suggest that Elijah's return was ever envisaged as a non-eschatological event in contemporary Judaism—so the statement, ὅτι Ἡλίας ἐστίν, is most likely an eschatological claim.¹⁷

¹⁵ On this repetition, Bultmann finds 8:28 to be the original. Indeed, 8:27-30 seems a more plausible context for its original setting—whereas Mark seems to re-use this survey as an introductory seam to transition the narrative from reports of Jesus' miracles to John's death (6:17-29). R. Bultmann, *The History of the Synoptic Tradition*, trans. J. Marsh. Peabody: Hendrickson, 1964, p. 302.

¹⁶ Mal 4:5: :הַנְּבִיאִים יְהוֹשֻׁעַ הַגִּדְלִי וְהַנְּבִיאִים; cf. Mal 3:1-5; Sir 48:1-12a; 1 En. 89:52; 90:31; 93:8; 4 Ezra 6:26; 7:109; Sib. Or. 2.187-189; 194-202; LAB 48.1; Rev 11:3-13; Apoc. El. 4.7; 5.32; Just. Dial. 8.4; 49.1; and m. Sot. 9:15. For an overview of the literature see Jeremias, “Hλ(ε)ιας,” pp. 934ff. For a more recent appraisal see Öhler, “The Expectation of Elijah and the Presence of the Kingdom of God,” *JBL* 118 (1999), 461-76. For Rabbinic material detailing the expectation of Elijah see Ginzberg, *The Legends of the Jews*, 4.233-35, 6.339. The earliest references are the most useful for our purposes: m. Sot. 9:15; m. B. Mes. 1:8, 2:8, 3:4; m. Eduy. 8:7; b. San. 98a; b. B. Metz. 85b; cf. Ginzberg, *Op. Cit.*, 4.316-342.

¹⁷ Thus Kee: “The evidence thus points to the conclusion that Elijah was considered in first-century Judaism as an almost exclusively eschatological figure.” H. C. Kee, “The Transfiguration in Mark: Epiphany or Apocalyptic Vision?,” in *Understanding the Sacred Text: Essays in honor of Morton S. Enslin on the Hebrew Bible and Christian Beginnings*, ed. J. Reumann. Valley Forge: Judson Press, 1972, p. 146. cf. Vermes' discussion of the miracles of Elijah in the Galilean Hasidim, on which basis he suggests a non-eschatological understanding of Elijah at the time of Jesus. The sources for the Hasidim, however, are very late and not always useful for reconstructing a first century setting. Furthermore, there is enough evidence elsewhere to suggest that miracles were regarded as eschatological signs in some corners of Second Temple Judaism (see nn. 24-30). G. Vermes, *Jesus the Jew: a Historian's Reading of the Gospels*. Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1981,

There is also no indication that the identification of Jesus with Elijah was typological, functional, or merely comparative (i.e. ‘one *like* Elijah’). It is clear from the identification of Jesus as John the Baptist in 6:14 (ἐγγήγερται ἐκ νεκρῶν) that the crowds did not think that Jesus was ‘*like* John the Baptist’ (i.e. John’s successor)—but was, in fact, John himself. In this case, Jesus’ identification with Elijah doesn’t appear to be any different.¹⁸ Indeed, the extant literature seems to speak of Elijah’s return in very literal terms: καὶ ἰδοὺ ἐγὼ ἀποστέλλω ὑμῖν Ηλῖαν τὸν Θεοβίτην (Mal 3:22 LXX).¹⁹ The claim of the crowds, therefore, appears to be that Jesus was, in fact, the eschatological return of Elijah himself.²⁰

It is not immediately clear, however, on what basis the crowds made the identification of Jesus with Elijah, and given the eschatological nature of the claim it is difficult to determine a *Sitz im Leben* in the ministry of Jesus—although it is possible this was derived from reports of Jesus’ miracles.²¹ Indeed, many of Jesus’ miracles are reminiscent of the ‘historical’ Elijah.²²

p. 90; S. Freyne, *Galilee: From Alexander the Great to Hadrian 323 BCE to 135 BCE*. London: Continuum, 1998, pp. 331–332.

¹⁸ Especially given that ὅτι Ἡλίας ἐστίν lacks the adverbial ὡς, unlike the following ὅτι προφήτης, ὡς εἰς τῶν προφητῶν—probably a reference to Deut 18:15 LXX: προφήτην ἐκ τῶν ἀδελφῶν σου ὡς ἐμέ ἀναστήσει σοι κύριος ὁ θεός σου αὐτοῦ ἀκούσεσθε (cf. Jn 1:21; Acts 3:22–23).

¹⁹ Öhler, *Elia im Neuen Testament*, p. 27, 108; in agreement with Molin, “John the Baptist is not just a new Elijah, but Elijah himself.” G. Molin, “Elijah: Der Prophet und sein Weiterleben in den Hoffnungen des Judentums und der Christenheit,” *Judaica* 8 (1952): 89.

²⁰ There is also evidence to suggest that other first century C.E. Palestinians—Dositheus, Simon Magus, and Menander—were, in turn, seen as the eschatological return of a prophetic figure (i.e. Moses). For a summary of the evidence see S. J. Isser, “Dositheus, Jesus, and a Moses Aretalogy,” in J. Neusner, *Christianity, Judaism and Other Greco-Roman Cults: Studies for Morton Smith at Sixty*, Vol. 1. Leiden: Brill, 1975, pp. 167–89; idem, *The Dositheans: A Samaritan Sect in Late Antiquity*, Studies in Judaism in Late Antiquity 17. Leiden: Brill, 1976, pp. 131–142; J. E. Fossum, *The Name of God and the Angel of the Lord: Samaritan and Jewish Concepts of Intermediation and the Origin of Gnosticism*, WUNT 36. Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1985, pp. 112–155; idem, “Samaritan Sects and Movements,” in A. D. Crown, *The Samaritans*. Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1989, pp. 293–389; S. Haar, *Simon Magus: The First Gnostic?*, BZNTW 119. Berlin: Walter de Gruyter 2003, pp. 294–306; M. Smith, “The Account of Simon Magus in Acts 8,” in S. Lieberman, *The Harry Austryn Wolfson Jubilee Volume: On the Occasion of His Seventy-Fifth Birthday*, Vol. 2. Jerusalem: American Academy for Jewish Research, 1965, p. 743.

²¹ It is difficult to distinguish the eschatological thoughts of Jesus from those of the early church—and in the context of the Markan narrative, Jesus’ eschatological pronouncements only appear after 8:38 (with the

Moreover, we know from Josephus of several Jewish agitators who claimed to re-enact the works of the prophets, and conceivably understood themselves to be something like a prophet *redivivus*:²³

- (i) For example, the Egyptian deceiver or magician (γόης) who attracted a following of 30,000 men and led them from the desert to the Mount of Olives where he promised to repeat the miracle of Joshua at Jericho—at his command the walls of Jerusalem would fall.²⁴
- (ii) Likewise, Theudas, another γόης, who promised to part the River Jordan in imitation of Joshua, allowing his followers to re-enter and re-conquer the Promised Land.²⁵
- (iii) The Samaritan who, like Moses, led a band of armed followers to Mount Gerizim where he promised to reveal long-hidden sacred vessels—apparently in fulfillment of a legend concerning Jeremiah.²⁶
- (iv) The shepherd Athronges, Simon of Peraea, Simon bar Giora,

possible exception of 1:15). Some have suggested, however, that John's comments in 1:7-8 indicate that he expected the advent of an eschatological figure (i.e. Elijah)—and it is not implausible that both John and Jesus were identified with this figure during their lifetimes (and possibly by each other). J. A. T. Robinson was the first to explore these possibilities in his paper, "Elijah, John and Jesus: an Essay in Detection," pp. 263-281. For a more recent treatment see Taylor, *The Immerser*, pp. 287-294—Taylor, building on the work of Collins, sees a possible connection between the Elijanic figure of 4Q521 and Q 7:18-19, 22-23 (Mt 11:2-6; Lk 7:18-23); cf. Collins, *The Scepter and the Star*, pp. 131-141.

²² See section 4.3-5.

²³ R. Gray, *Prophetic Figures in Late Second Temple Jewish Palestine: The Evidence from Josephus*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993, pp. 112-163; M. Hengel, *Die Zeloten: Untersuchungen zur Jüdischen Freiheitsbewegung in der Zeit von Herodes I. bis 70 n. Chr.*, AGJU 1. Leiden: Brill, 1961, pp. 230-245, 289-300; Smith, "The Troublemakers," in W. Horbury, W. D. Davies, and J. Sturdy, *The Cambridge History of Judaism, Volume Three: The Early Roman Period*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999, pp. 501-568. An impressive list of texts shows belief in the eschatological return of Moses, Joshua, Jeremiah, Phinehas, Enoch, Melchizedek, and others before the end of days—often with great signs accompanying them. The description of Jesus as either Elijah, or a prophet ὡς εἷς τῶν προφητῶν, as well as Jesus' enigmatic question in 8:27, must be therefore be understood with this milieu in mind. See the survey in H. L. Strack and P. Billerbeck, *Kommentar zum Neuen Testament aus Talmud und Midrasch*, vol. 1. Munich: Beck, 1922, pp. 753-8.

²⁴ Josephus, *J.W.* 2:261; *Ant.* 20:171.

²⁵ Josephus, *Ant.* 20:97-8. For a discussion of the meaning of γόης see Smith, *Jesus the Magician*. New York: Harper & Row, 1978, p. 20.

²⁶ Josephus, *Ant.* 18:85-87. For the prominence of Moses amongst the so-called 'sign prophets' see Jeremias, "Μωυσῆς," *TDNT* 4.862. Jeremiah: In 2 *Macc.* 2:1-8 Jeremiah hides the Tent of the Lord's Presence and the Covenant Box inside a cave in the mountainside where Moses had died (τὸ ὄρος οὗ ὃ Μωυσῆς ἀναβὰς

and Menahem—who seem to model themselves after the appearance of King David.²⁷ (v) Also, Jesus bar Ananias, who wailed in lamentation for the fate of Jerusalem and its temple, prophesying their destruction, in an apparent imitation of Jeremiah.²⁸ (vi) The many others who, according to Josephus, promised “signs of deliverance” (σημεῖα ἐλευθερίας *J.W.* 2.259; τὰ σημεῖα τῆς σωτηρίας, *J.W.* 6.285) like those of Moses and Joshua.²⁹ (vii) As well as the Galilean holy men, who reputedly performed various miracles of Elijah: nature miracles, healings, and the multiplication of food.³⁰

These examples seem to show the role that signs and omens played in authenticating the prophetic or messianic identity of Jesus’ contemporaries—and this is probably the popular belief that underlies Jesus’ question in 8:27-28: τίνα με λέγουσιν οἱ ἄνθρωποι εἶναι;³¹ Indeed, it is precisely Jesus’ ability to perform miracles that prompts the crowds to identify him with the resurrected John the Baptist in the first place: i.e. 6:14, καὶ διὰ τοῦτο ἐνεργοῦσιν αἱ δυνάμεις ἐν αὐτῷ—and again, there is no indication that the identification

ἐθεάσατο τὴν τοῦ θεοῦ ξληρονομίαν)—which is identified as Mount Gerizim in later Samaritan tradition (*Memar Marqah* 5.4.). The re-discovery of this cave will be the sign of eschatological renewal (ἕως ἂν συναγάγῃ ὁ θεὸς ἐπισυναγωγὴν τοῦ λαοῦ καὶ ἵλεως γένηται). This legend appears in truncated form in *4 Bar.* 3:9-20 and *Liv. Pro.* 2:11-15 and was probably developed from Jer 27:16-22. Cf. M. F. Collins, “The Hidden Vessels in Samaritan Traditions,” *JSJ* 3 (1972): 97-116. For the influence of this legend on Samaritan Dositheanism see Isser, *Dositheans*, p. 137.

²⁷ Athronges: Josephus, *J.W.* 2:60-65; *Ant.* 17:278-84; Simon of Peraea: *J.W.* 2.57-9; *Ant.* 273-7; Simon bar Giora: *J.W.* 2-7; *Vita* 191-2; Menahem: *J.W.* 2:433-48.

²⁸ Josephus, *J.W.* 6:300-309.

²⁹ Josephus, *J.W.* 2.258-60; 6.285; 7.437-41; *Ant.* 20.168, 188.

³⁰ Honi: Josephus, *Ant.* 14.22-9; *m. Taan.* 23a; *b. Taan.* 23a; *Gen. Rab.* 13:7; Hanina ben Dosa: *m. Ber.* 5:1; *m. Sot.* 9:15; *m. Ab.* 3:9-12; *y. Ber.* 9a-b; *b. Ber.* 2:20; 33a; 34b; 61b; *b. Taan.* 24b; *b. Hag.* 14a; Abba Hilkiyah: *b. Taan.* 23a-b; Hanan, *b. Taan.* 23b; Vermes, *Jesus the Jew*, pp. 58-82.

³¹ This belief certainly seems to be evident in the Gospels: Mk 8:11-12; Mt 12:38-39; 16:1-3; Lk 11:16; 11:29-30; Jn 2:18-19; 4:48; 6:14; 6:30; 7:31; 10:41; 12:37; Acts 2:22. E. Eve, *The Jewish Context of Jesus’ Miracles*, JSNTSupp 231. London: A&C Black, 2002, pp. 243-376. Horsley argues that Jesus’ Mosaic and Elijanic miracles indicate his prophetic status—and find further confirmation in the appearance of Moses and Elijah at the Transfiguration. Idem, “Jesus-in-Context: A Relational Approach,” in *Handbook for the Study of the Historical Jesus*, eds., T. Holmén and S. E. Porter. Leiden: Brill, 2011, p. 237.

with Elijah is any different.³² It seems likely that reports of Jesus' miracles in the preceding narrative (1:31-34; 1:40-45; 2:3-12; 3:1-5; 3:10-12; 4:39-41; 5:1-13; 5:24-34; 5:41-43; 6:5) are what prompted the crowds to identify him with the miracle-working Elijah—and it is probably no coincidence that many of these miracles resemble those of the Elijah-Elisha cycle (see sections 4.3-5).

It is significant, however, that in both narratives (6:14-16; 8:27-28), the identification of Jesus with Elijah is ultimately rejected: Herod believes Jesus to be John the Baptist in 6:16—ὃν ἐγὼ ἀπεκεφάλισα, Ἰωάννην οὗτος ἡγέρθη—and Peter proclaims Jesus the Messiah in 8:29.³³ On this basis, it seems to follow that Mark also rejected this identification; but nevertheless, the inclusion of 6:14-16 and 8:27-28 probably indicates that some in Mark's own lifetime held Jesus to be Elijah—and it is possible this identification had its origin in the ministry of Jesus.

2.2. *Elijah at the Transfiguration: 9:2-8.*

We are told in 9:2-8 that Elijah appears on the mount of Transfiguration with Moses alongside Jesus, in the presence of Peter, James, and John—only to disappear after a heavenly

³² The claim that Jesus was Elijah is here perhaps less shocking than his identification with the resurrected John. Mark wants to have us believe that people who saw or knew John (i.e. Herod) were able to reach the conclusion, however mistaken, that Jesus was really the same John—and do so with apparent ease! This credulity has not been adequately considered as a historical factor in recent works on the resurrection of Jesus; cf. N. T. Wright, *The Resurrection of the Son of God*, Christian Origins and the Question of God 3. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2003, pp. 411-414; cf. S. J. Nortje, "John the Baptist and the Resurrection Traditions in the Gospels," *Neotestamentica* 23 (1989): 353-354.

³³ Perhaps the most puzzling thing about the two alternatives ('John' and the 'Messiah') is that neither accurately presents the beliefs of our author: for Mark, Jesus is certainly not John, and the belief that Jesus is the 'Messiah' is an insufficient or incomplete view: cf. Ἀρχὴ τοῦ εὐαγγελίου Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ, Υἱοῦ Θεοῦ (1:1). F. J. Moloney, *The Gospel of Mark: A Commentary*. Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2012, pp. 165-167; Witherington, *The Gospel of Mark*, p. 240; Hooker, *The Gospel According to St. Mark*, pp. 202-203; cf. A. Winn, *The Purpose of Mark's Gospel: An Early Christian Response to Roman Imperial Propaganda*, WUNT 245. Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2008, pp. 116-121.

voice announces concerning Jesus, οὗτός ἐστιν ὁ υἱός μου ὁ ἀγαπητός, ἀκούετε αὐτοῦ.³⁴ The account is similar, in many respects, to the glory of God descending before Moses and Joshua on Mount Sinai (Exod 24:15-16 LXX), as well as other aspects of the Mosaic legend.³⁵ (i) Both events take place atop a mountain (ὄρος—Exod 24:15; Mk 9:2). (ii) Both texts feature a reference to “six days” (ἕξ ἡμέραι—Exod 24:16; ἡμέρας ἕξ—Mk 9:2). (iii) In both texts Moses is present, conversing with one in glory. (iv) In both texts, a cloud (νεφέλη) descends, out of which God speaks (Exod 24:16; Mk. 9:7; cf. Exod 40:34-35). (v) Later on, in Exod 25:8-9 LXX, God commands Moses to build a tent (σκηνῆς) to house the glory of God, echoed in Peter’s suggestion (καὶ ποιήσωμεν τρεῖς σκηνάς—Mk 9:5). (vi) Likewise, in Exod 34:35, Moses’ face appears to shine (ἔλαμψε—Exod 34:29 MT; δεδόξασται—LXX), because he has seen God—not unlike the brightness of Jesus’ garments (στίλβοντα λευκά—Mk 9:3). (vii) Finally, the command issued from the cloud (ἀκούετε αὐτοῦ—Mk 9:7), directly parallels the command that the Israelites heed to the prophet like Moses (αὐτοῦ ἀκούσθε—Deut 18:15 LXX).³⁶

Yet, as Bultmann notes, these similarities do not necessarily constitute dependency: the six days could conceivably be derived from tradition; Jesus takes Peter, James, and John, whereas only Joshua accompanies Moses to the revelation in Exod 24:13; and the theophanic cloud and μετεμορφώθη are familiar motifs in Greek mythology—also appearing elsewhere in Jewish literature.³⁷ Also, as Yarbrow Collins notices, Jesus’ glory is the subject of the

³⁴ We must note that Elijah appears *in propria persona*: i.e. no one else is signified—the assertion that John the Baptist appears at the Transfiguration is a gratuitous addition to the text; cf. C. K. Rothschild, *Baptist Traditions and Q*, WUNT 190. Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2005, pp. 137-138. Similarly gratuitous is Wink’s suggestion that Jesus discovers John’s “Elijahship” on the Mount of Transfiguration; cf. Wink, *John the Baptist*, p. 15.

³⁵ For an expanded discussion, including additional similarities, see J. A. Zeisler, “The Transfiguration Story and the Markan Soteriology,” *ExpTim* 81 (1970): 265-267; W. M. Swartley, “The Structural Function of the Term ‘Way’ (Hodos) in Mark’s Gospel,” in *The New Way of Jesus*, ed. W. Klassen. Newton: Faith and Life Press, 1980, p. 80; A. P. Tarrech, “The Glory on the Mountain: The Episode of the Transfiguration of Jesus,” *NTS* 58 (2012): 154-5; A. Yarbrow Collins, *Mark*, pp. 416-17.

³⁶ The passage is also similar to the revelation of the ‘Son of Man’ in Dan 7:13a: ἐθεώρουν ἐν ὁράματι τῆς νυκτὸς καὶ ἰδοὺ μετὰ τῶν νεφελῶν τοῦ οὐρανοῦ καὶ ὡς υἱὸς ἀνθρώπου ἐρχόμενος.

³⁷ Bultmann, however, does not see any significance in the three companions said to accompany Moses in Exod 24:9 (Aaron, Nadab, and Abihu). Bultmann’s use of vague ‘tradition’ to explain the ἡμέρας ἕξ is due to

epiphany, not the result of it—whereas the δεδόξασται of Moses comes directly from his contact with the divine.³⁸ Perhaps most significantly, this reading does not account for the presence of Elijah—who is inexplicably placed ahead of Moses (Ἡλίας σὺν Μωϋσεί—9:4; cf. Μωϋσῆς καὶ Ἡλίας—Mt 17:3; Lk 9:30).

Indeed, it is not immediately clear from the narrative—or from the extant literature—what Moses and Elijah are doing at the Transfiguration of Jesus.³⁹ It has traditionally been supposed that together they represent the Law and the Prophets—which have reached their fulfillment in Jesus—but this reading is without contextual parallel.⁴⁰ Likewise, there does not seem to be anything in the text to indicate a ‘suffering’ role for Elijah and Moses.⁴¹ This interpretation seems to be an intrusion from 9:11-13, which makes no mention of Moses, as well as the Lukan redaction (Lk 9:31): ἔλεγον τὴν ἔξοδον αὐτοῦ, ἣν ἤμελλεν πληροῦν ἐν Ἱερουσαλήμ—which still makes no connection between Jesus’ suffering and that of Moses and Elijah. Similarly, Bultmann’s suggestion that the two visitors were originally unnamed

his insistence that the Transfiguration is a misplaced Resurrection appearance—the event taking place ‘six days’ after the Resurrection; Bultmann, *Op. Cit.*, pp. 259-261; cf. F. R. McCurley Jr., “‘And After Six Days’ (Mark 9:2): A Semitic Literary Device,” *JBL* 93 (1974): 67-81. For parallels in Greek mythology, see Yarbro Collins, *Op. Cit.*, pp. 418-419; C. R. Moss, “The Transfiguration: An Exercise in Markan Accommodation,” *Biblical Interpretation* 12 (2004): 69-89. Dan 12:3; 2 Bar. 51:1-3; Rev 7:13-14; 2 Cor 3:7-18. For transformed appearances and theophanic clouds in Jewish literature see the following section.

³⁸ Yarbro Collins, *Op. Cit.*, p. 417.

³⁹ Hooker, “What Doest Thou Here, Elijah,” pp. 59-70.

⁴⁰ D. E. Nineham, *The Gospel of St Mark*, pp. 234-5; R. Grob, *Einführung in das Markusevangelium*. Zurich: Zwingli Verlag, 1965, p. 130; cf. Mt. 22:40; Cranfield, *The Gospel according to St. Mark*, p. 295. As Kee notes, this interpretation breaks down, since Elijah is named first, and “was not numbered among the prophets of the *Nebi'im*” or included in the prophetic literature; Kee, *Op. Cit.*, p. 144. Perhaps a more compelling argument is the absence of any evidence of a pre-Christian understanding of both Moses and Elijah representing the Law and the Prophets. This interpretation, however, was certainly in use by the late second, early third century C.E. (Tertullian, *Marc.* 4.22).

⁴¹ A. R. C. Leaney, *The Christ of the Synoptic Gospels*, Supplement to the New Zealand Theological Review, The Selwyn Lectures. Auckland: Pelorous Press, 1966, pp. 22-5. This identification is made on the basis of Mk. 9:11-13; Acts 8:17-44; Heb. 11:23-9; Rev. 11:3-10. For other supporters see the survey in A. D. A. Moses, *Matthew’s Transfiguration Story and Jewish-Christian Controversy*, JSNT Supp 122. London: A&C Black, 1996, pp. 26-32.

(*Apoc. Pet.* 6; cf. *Gos. Pet.* 39-42) and were assigned the names of Elijah and Moses due to the ‘naming tendency’ of synoptic development seems equally unnecessary.⁴²

Elijah and Moses, however, do share several common characteristics pertaining to this narrative: both receive theophanies from God atop a mountain;⁴³ they both depart this world under mysterious circumstances;⁴⁴ and it seems both were believed to return before the end of the world.⁴⁵ It is very possible that the association of the two figures in 9:3 originated from their pairing in Mal 4:4-5 MT (3:22-24 LXX): “Remember the teaching of my servant

⁴² Bultmann, *Op. Cit.*, p. 260. For a full discussion on Mark’s use of names see pp. 67-69. The possibility that originally only Elijah was named is explored in a dissertation by L. M. Jordan (and supervised by W. D. Davies): “Elijah Transfigured: A Study of the Narrative of the Transfiguration in the Gospel of Mark,” Ph.D. diss., Duke University, 1981. There are several arguments in favour of this suggestion: (i) Elijah is a regularly mentioned figure in the Gospel, whereas only the Law of Moses is mentioned elsewhere (1:44; 7:10; 10:3-4; 12:19, 26). (ii) Upon leaving the Transfiguration, the disciples only ask Jesus about Elijah (9:11-13). (iii) If the Transfiguration depicts a heavenly scene, Elijah is the more likely candidate—Elijah was certainly translated into heaven in 1 Kgs 2, whereas the traditions about Moses are inconclusive. (iv) Also, if the Transfiguration depicts an eschatological scene, Elijah, again, is more suitable—expectation of Elijah’s return far outweighed that of Moses. Indeed, without Moses, it is not clear what would be lost from the narrative—albeit some of the Sinaitic imagery. It is possible that *ὁν Μωϋσῆ* is a scribal addition, originating with Mt 17:3 (*Μωϋσῆς καὶ Ἡλίας*)—Matthew, unlike Mark, seems to have more of a vested interest in a Moses-typology; D. C. Allison Jr., *The New Moses: A Matthean Typology*. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1993, pp. 243-244.

⁴³ Exod 19:16-25; 24:9-18; 1 Kgs 19:8-19.

⁴⁴ Like Elijah, traditions were circulated of Moses’ deliverance from death, or his heavenly ascent (cf. Deut 34:5): *b. Sot.* 13b; *Sifre* 357; *Mid. Tan.* 224; *Memar Margab* 1.51.95; cf. Josephus, *Ant.* 4.325; Philo, *Mos.* 2.288; *1 En.* 89:36; *LAB* 19.12; *As. Mos.* 11:5-8; J. D. Tabor, “‘Returning to the Divinity’: Josephus’s Portrayal of the Disappearances of Enoch, Elijah, and Moses,” *JBL* 108 (1989): 225-238. Surprisingly, traditions seem to have existed which cast doubt on Elijah’s escape from death—probably in order that Moses’ prophetic status not be surpassed; L. H. Feldman, “Josephus’ Portrait of Elijah,” *JSP* 8 (1994): 61-86.

⁴⁵ For Elijah’s association with the end of the world see nn. 83-86; W. A. Meeks, *The Prophet-King: Moses Traditions and Johannine Christology*, NTSupp 14. Leiden: Brill, 1967, pp. 25-29, 211-214, 246-254; F. Hahn, *Christologische Hohheitstitel*, FRLANT 83, 3rd ed. Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1966, pp. 380-404. At least a general expectation is found unambiguously in one contemporary Jewish text: Moses, ‘having put on flesh’, returns along with Elijah—as well as Isaac, Jacob, Joshua, Daniel, Habbakuk, and Jonah; *Sib. Or.* 2:245-248.

Moses, the statutes and ordinances that I commanded him at Horeb for all Israel. Lo, I will send you the prophet Elijah before the great and terrible day of the Lord comes.” Mark at least shows a familiarity with this passage in 1:2, and it is almost certainly the source of the statement concerning Elijah in 9:12 (ἀποκαθιστάνει πάντα): ὃς ἀποκαταστήσει καρδίαν πατρὸς πρὸς υἱὸν καὶ καρδίαν ἀνθρώπου πρὸς τὸν πλησίον αὐτοῦ (Mal 3:23 LXX).⁴⁶

Furthermore, there is little doubt that the δυσὶν μάρτυσιν of Rev 11:3-12 envision the eschatological return of Elijah and Moses.⁴⁷ The two witnesses are said to prophesy in sackcloth for 1,260 days—in which time they will consume their foes with fire (Num. 16:35; 2 Kgs 1:10), and will possess the authority to cause drought (1 Kgs 17:1), turn the waters into blood (Exod 17:17), and cause every kind of plague (Exod 7:14-12:36). The beast, however, will make war on the witnesses and kill them—their corpses will lie exposed for three and a half days, until God raises them and calls them up to heaven in a cloud (*Ant.* 4.326; 2 Kgs 2:11-12). This identification was probably not original to Revelation, and is expanded in later apocalyptic literature—of both Christian and Jewish origin.⁴⁸

Elsewhere, in a tradition attributed to R. Johanan ben Zakkai (seemingly independent of Rev 11:3-12), Elijah and Moses are said to return together—“In the time to come”: ליה אמר הנביא אליהו את להם כשאביא לבוא לעתיד כך, הזה בעולם עליהן שדנפ את שנתת כשם! חייך משה: ה"הקב באין שניכם.⁴⁹ Likewise, Poirier has recently suggested that the eschatological Messiah and Prophet at Qumran should be identified with Elijah and Moses, respectively—though

⁴⁶ E. Assis, “Moses, Elijah and the Messianic Hope: A New Reading of Malachi 3, 22-24,” *ZAW* 123 (2011): 207-220.

⁴⁷ D. Aune, *Revelation 6-16*, Word Biblical Commentary. Dallas: T. Nelson, 1997, p. 603.

⁴⁸ Although, the literature speaks more often of the martyrdom of Enoch and Elijah at the hands of the Antichrist: *2 Esd.* 6:26; *Apoc. El.* 4:7; R. Bauckham, “The Martyrdom of Enoch and Elijah: Jewish or Christian?,” *JBL* 95 (1976): 447-58. The description of the two heavenly figures goes back to Zech 4:14—the δύο ἐλαῖαι, καὶ αἱ δύο λυχνίαι in Rev 11:4 is in apparent reference to the δύο ἐλαῖαι and single λυχνία in Zech 4:2-3. Note also the two figures in v. 14: καὶ εἶπεν οὗτοι οἱ δύο υἱοὶ (Hebrew: בְּנֵי הַיָּצָרָה) τῆς πιστότητος παρεστήχασιν τῷ χυρίῳ πάσης τῆς γῆς—possibly the source for the δυσὶν μάρτυσιν in Rev 11:3 (also the two Messiahs in the *DSS*).

⁴⁹ *Deut. Rab.* 3:17. Glasson argues that this tradition goes back to the 1st c. C.E.—whilst possible, the lateness of the work makes it highly improbable. T. F. Glasson, *Moses in the Fourth Gospel*, Studies in Biblical Theology 40, ed. C. F. D. Moule. London: SCM Press, 1963, p. 27.

this is somewhat debatable.⁵⁰ Nevertheless, there seems to be enough evidence to suggest that Elijah and Moses were sometimes paired together in Jewish expectation—which understanding seems to fit the eschatological tenor of the Transfiguration narrative.

Mk 9:2-8 is bookended by two eschatological discussions: the Son of Man coming in glory and the Kingdom coming in power (8:38-9:1), and the resurrection of the Son of Man and the coming of Elijah (9:9-13). In particular, 9:1 could be seen to anticipate what follows: Ἀμὴν λέγω ὑμῖν, ὅτι εἰσὶν τινες ὧδε τῶν ἐστηκότων, οἵτινες οὐ μὴ γεύσονται θανάτου, ἕως ἂν ἴδωσιν τὴν βασιλείαν τοῦ Θεοῦ ἐληλυθυῖαν ἐν δυνάμει. Whilst this is possible, the inclusion of τῶν ἐστηκότων, οἵτινες οὐ μὴ γεύσονται θανάτου seems fairly redundant considering the Transfiguration is supposed to have taken place μετὰ ἡμέρας ἕξ. The βασιλείαν τοῦ Θεοῦ ἐληλυθυῖαν ἐν δυνάμει in 9:1 should therefore be regarded as an event entirely in the future—thus its fulfillment in the following scene seems unlikely.⁵¹

There is still reason, however, to suppose that the Transfiguration is giving both the disciples and Mark's readers a glimpse of the coming Parousia (cf. Dan. 10:14)—or in the words of Boobyer, a “miniature representation of that eschatological event.”⁵² The account features many of the distinctive markers of apocalyptic visions:⁵³

⁵⁰ J. C. Poirier, “The Endtime Return of Elijah and Moses at Qumran,” *DSD* 10 (2003): 221-242. This argument rests on the identification of Elijah as the messianic figure in 4Q521 (i.e. Collins) and Moses as both priest and prophet (1QS; 4Q377). This suggestion is plausible, but by no means certain—the description of Messianic figures in Qumran is amorphous: apparently different figures are given identical attributes, and often the same texts are used in support; J. H. Charlesworth, “From Messianology to Christology: Problems and Prospects,” in *The Messiah: Developments in Earliest Judaism and Christianity*, ed. idem. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1992, p. 10; idem, “Messianology in the Biblical Pseudepigrapha,” in *Qumran-Messianism: Studies on the Messianic Expectations in the Dead Sea Scrolls*, ed. Charlesworth, H. Lichtenberger, and G. S. Oegema. Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1998, pp. 21-52; cf. Collins, *Op. Cit.*, pp. 131-141.

⁵¹ Gundry, *Mark: A Commentary on His Apology for the Cross*, pp. 440, 457; C. A. Evans, “‘Mark,’ in The Gospel and Acts,” in *The Holman Apologetics Commentary on the Bible*, eds., idem, M. Wilkins, D. Bock, and A. J. Köstenberger. Nashville: B&H Publishing Group, 2013, pp. 199-318. This interpretation, however, seems to arise out of an apologetic concern to alleviate the theological problems posed by the apparent failure of Jesus' prediction in Mk 9:1.

⁵² G. H. Boobyer, *St. Mark and the Transfiguration Story*. Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1942, pp. 29, 119.

⁵³ C. Fletcher-Louis, “Jesus and Apocalypticism,” in Holmén, *Op. Cit.*, p. 2883.

(i) The Transfiguration takes place on a high mountain (ὄρος ὑψηλόν)—i.e. the favoured location for eschatological revelations (cf. Mk 13:3; Mt 24:3; Rev 21:10; 2 Bar. 13:1) and visions of an apocalyptic nature (Ezek 40:2; 1 En. 17-26; Apoc. Ab. 21-31; T. Naph. 5.1-8; 2 Macc. 2:7; Liv. Pro. 2:11-15; Tg. Ps.-J. Deut. 34.1; Memar Marqah 5.3).⁵⁴ (ii) The transformation of Jesus' physical appearance—particularly his shining white garments ὡς γναφεὺς ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς οὐ δύναται οὕτως λευκᾶναι—resembles the appearance of the elect at the final judgment (Dan 12:3; Mt 13:43; Rev 3:4-5; 7:9, 13-14; 1 En. 62:15-16; 1QM 1:6-8) and the glory of heavenly beings in apocalyptic scenes (Dan 7:9; 1 En. 14:20; 2 En. 22:8-9; 3 En. 12:1-5; T. Job. 46:7-9). (iii) As previously noted, Elijah and Moses probably appear here as the vehicles of contemporary Jewish expectation—the harbingers of the Day of the Lord (Mal 4:4-6 MT; Rev 11:3-10; Sib. Or. 2:240; Deut. Rab. 3:17). (iv) Similarly, Peter's confused offer to build tabernacles (τρεῖς σκηνάς) could be seen as a reference the festival of Sukkot, which, at that time, may have symbolized eschatological and messianic expectation—i.e. tabernacles often appear as the future dwelling-place of the righteous (Zech 14:16-19; 1 En. 39:3-8; T. Ab. A 20:13-14).⁵⁵ (v) The fearful response of the disciples is characteristic of recipients of apocalyptic visions (Dan 7:15, 28; 8:27; 10:2, 7-10, 15-16; 1 En. 21:7-10; 83:6-7; 90:41-42; 2 En. 20:1-2; 37:1; Rev 1:17; 4 Ezra 13:14; 2 Bar. 53:12; 3 Bar. 7:5-6; Apoc. Zeph. 6:8-10; Lad. Jac. 2:1). (vi) Likewise, the appearance of the overshadowing cloud in 9:7a (Ezek 1:4; 10:4; Isa 19:1; Dan 7:13; 2 Macc. 2:8; Mk 13:26; 14:62; Rev 1:7; 1 Thess 4:16-17; 1 En. 14:8; 2 Bar. 53; 3 En. 24:1-14; Gk. Apoc. Ezra 5:7; Sib. Or. 3:805-8) and the proclamation of the heavenly voice in 9:7b (Ezek 1:25; Rev 11:12; 12:10; 14:2; 18:4; 12:3; 2 Bar. 13:1; Lad. Jac. 1:8-2:1) are both regular features of eschatological scenes. (vii) As with other apocalyptic visions, the scene ends abruptly—both

⁵⁴ Yarbrow-Collins, *Op. Cit.*, p. 127. For a helpful survey of the relevant literature see T. Donaldson, *Jesus on the Mountain: A Study in Matthew*, The Library of New Testament Studies. London: Bloomsbury Publishing, 1987, pp. 25-81.

⁵⁵ H. Riesenfeld, *Jésus transfigure: L'arrière-plan du récit évangélique de la transfiguration de notre-seigneur*. Copenhagen: Ejnar Munksgaard, 1947, pp. 16-17. The presence of the ἡμέρας ἕξ may also indicate a connection to Sukkot: McCurley, *Op. Cit.*, pp. 67-81. Likewise, Zechariah prophesies the revelation of God to Israel, in the presence of the Mountain of the Lord: καὶ ἔξει κύριος ὁ θεός μου καὶ πάντες οἱ ἄγιοι μετ' αὐτοῦ (14:5 LXX; cf. 14:16-19). There is evidence elsewhere that Mark is familiar with Zechariah's prophecy (Mk 14:27; cf. Zech 13:7).

the cloud and the visitors vanish immediately (2 *Bar.* 53:12; *Ezek. Trag.* 1.82; *Gos. Nic.* 27:1; *P.Oxy.* 850). (viii) And perhaps most significantly, the Transfiguration features the glorious revelation of a messianic figure (1 *En.* 45:3-5; 46:1-5; 48:2-7; 62:1, 7-9; 69:27; 90:37; 3 *En.* 48a:10; 2 *Bar.* 30-31; 4 *Ezra* 7:28; *T. Jud.* 24; *Rev* 5:6-10; 19:11-16).

These considerations, whilst plausible, are still not conclusive in establishing the eschatological character of the vision.⁵⁶ There may, however, be clues hidden elsewhere in the Markan narrative that support this view. In 8:38, Jesus predicts that the Son of Man will come ἐν τῇ δόξῃ τοῦ Πατρὸς αὐτοῦ, μετὰ τῶν ἀγγέλων τῶν ἁγίων. As Christine Joynes has shown, there is evidence to suggest that Mark may have believed Elijah to be an angelic being—for example, the prophecy in 1:2, traditionally associated with Elijah, and here, linked with John the Baptist, speaks of τὸν ἄγγελόν μου sent ahead of the Lord.⁵⁷ Elsewhere, Mark uses ἄγγελος exclusively in reference to supernatural beings (1:13; 8:38; 12:25; 13:27, 32). Indeed, Origen entertains the possibility of an angelic identity for Elijah (*Comm. Matt.* 10.20; *Comm. Jo.* 2.31), and it seems that Elijah was almost certainly regarded as an angel in later rabbinic literature.⁵⁸ Likewise, it is possible that Moses attained

⁵⁶ A. M. Ramsey, *The Glory of God and the Transfiguration of Christ*. Eugene: Wipf & Stock, 2009, p. 118. On this basis, early Christian interpreters understood the Transfiguration to prefigure the advent of Christ's second coming. For example, 2 *Pet* 1:16-18 recounts the story of the Transfiguration in the context of the δύναμιν καὶ παρουσίαν of the Lord (cf. *Mk* 8:38-9:1); D. Lee, "On the Holy Mountain: The Transfiguration in Scripture and Theology," *Colloquium* 36 (2004): 147. Similarly, *Apoc. Pet.* 4-6 presents the Transfiguration as a glimpse of the fate of the righteous and the wicked—leading into a prolonged discussion of eschatological reward and punishment. This understanding also appears in the Fathers—i.e. Basil: "Peter and the sons of thunder saw his beauty on the mountain, outshining the brightness of the sun, and they were deemed worthy to receive the anticipation of His glorious parousia with their eyes." *Hom.* in *Ps* 45.5; also Theodoret: "Taught by these signs the manner of his second epiphany." *Epistle* 145.

⁵⁷ C. E. Joynes, "The Returned Elijah?" pp. 455-467. The discussion of John's resurrection in 6:14-16, however, shows no sign of this 'angelic' understanding—it is not John's 'angel' they think they are seeing (i.e. Elijah), but John himself, raised from the dead. Moreover, Mark distinguishes this belief from the belief that Jesus is Elijah. If such a complex identification (John the Baptist/angelic Elijah) existed, it is difficult to see why there would be no mention of it here (6:14-16).

⁵⁸ *b. Ber.* 4b: למיכא באחת גבריאל בשמים אליהו בארבע ומלאך המות בשמנה ובשעת המגפה באחת: 6.325-326. Likewise, the sect of the Melchizedekites were said to believe Elijah was an angel: Epiphanius, *Pan.* 15. Phinehas—with whom Elijah is sometimes identified—is also called the "angel of God": *Judg.*

angelic status during the Second Temple period—in *Sir.* 45:2, Moses is made like the δόξη ἁγίων, in *T. Mos.* 1:14 he is described as the “great angel” (*nuntius*), and in the later Samaritan *Memar Marqah*, Moses is glorified to the ranks of the angels, in whose company he dwells forever (*MM* 4.3; 4.6; 4:12; 6:3).⁵⁹ Whilst these texts come from considerably different periods and contexts, together they may point to the wide reception of the angelic status of Moses and Elijah and the penetration of this idea into disparate corners of Judaism.

In this regard, it is conceivable to think the ἄγγέλων τῶν ἁγίων who will return with the Son of Man in the glory of the Father—as well as the two figures destined to sit on either side of Jesus in his glory (10:35-40)—refer to the same two figures that flank Jesus at his Transfiguration: namely, Elijah and Moses.⁶⁰ It seems equally plausible, therefore, that the Transfiguration intends to represent this event—albeit in the form of a prolepsis: allowing us to glimpse the glorious eschatological event to which the whole Markan narrative has been pointing.⁶¹ The appearance of Elijah, in particular, serves to validate Jesus’ role as the eschatological figure *par excellence*—to Mark, the Parousia is ultimately a revelation of Jesus’ identity as the glorified Son of Man, coming to inaugurate the Kingdom of God in power. Whatever role Elijah had played in contemporary Jewish expectation, it was now subordinate to the heavenly rule of the Son of Man.

Rab. 16.1; cf. *Ps.-Philo* 48:1; R. Hayward, “Phinehas—the Same is Elijah: The Origins of a Tradition,” *JJS* 29 (1978): 22-34.

⁵⁹ This may also be seen in the *DSS*: P. Makiello, “Was Moses considered to be an angel by those at Qumran?” in *Moses in Biblical and Extra-Biblical Traditions*, BZAW 372, eds., A. Graupner and M. Wolter. Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2007, pp. 115-127. And likewise in Samaritan Dositheanism: R. M. M. Tuschling, *Angels and Orthodoxy: A Study in Their Development in Syria and Palestine from the Qumran Texts to Ephrem the Syrian*, STAC 40. Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2007, pp. 91-92.

⁶⁰ The angels in 13:27 even have a similar role as the eschatological Elijah: they are said to ἐπισυνάξει τοὺς ἐκλεκτοὺς αὐτοῦ, whereas Elijah is said to καταστήσαι φυλὰς Ἰακωβ (*Sir.* 48:10).

⁶¹ The Markan conception of history determines the shape of the narrative: in the words of Yarbrow Collins, “The discourse of Jesus in chap. 13 also makes clear that a divine plan is in the process of unfolding: the ‘beginning of the birth-pains’ (ἀρχὴ ὠδίνων) of 13:8 will be followed by the ‘tribulation’ (θλίψις) of 13:19, which in turn will be succeeded by the appearance of the Son of Man (13:24-27). But before ‘the end’ (τὸ τέλος), mentioned in 13:7, the good news must ‘first’ (πρῶτον) be proclaimed to all nations (13:10).” *Idem*, *Op. Cit.*, p. 43. The proclamation of John the Baptist in 1:4-8—and then Jesus in 1:14-15—points towards the eschatological fulfillment of 9:1 (cf. 13:24-27). As Marxsen has shown, Mark is to be read backwards—each preceding narrative pointing forward to its fulfillment and completion; Marxsen, *Op. Cit.*, p. 11.

Mark's readers knew that this event was soon to take place—some of the bystanders in 9:1 will live to see it; the generation will not pass away until it takes place (13:30); and even the wicked high priest will see τὸν υἱὸν τοῦ ἀνθρώπου ἐκ δεξιῶν καθήμενον τῆς δυνάμεως, καὶ ἐρχόμενον μετὰ τῶν νεφελῶν τοῦ οὐρανοῦ (14:62). The presence of Elijah, then, serves to reinforce the imminence of the Parousia and the seriousness of Jesus' prediction—his appearance serves as a guarantee that this is indeed the ἐλθεῖν ἡμέραν κυρίου τὴν μεγάλην καὶ ἐπιφανῇ (Mal 3:22 LXX).

It is probably no coincidence that Jesus, who is here presented with the righteous in the brightness of the glory of God, will later appear crucified with the unrighteous, in shame and darkness, even forsaken by God.⁶² There, too, we hear of Elijah—notable not in his presence, but in his absence.⁶³ Whilst the Transfiguration foreshadows the future glory, the attentive reader knows that for Mark, the way of glory is the way of the Cross—in the midst of suffering, there will be no Elijah: but salvation is near, ἐπὶ θύραις. Elijah will soon appear, and the Son of Man will come on the clouds of heaven to vindicate the righteous ahead of the day of judgment.

2.3. *The Elijah Discourse: 9:11-13.*

Upon leaving the mountain in 9:9-13, Jesus commands the disciples to tell no one about what they had just seen, ὅταν ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ ἀνθρώπου ἐκ νεκρῶν ἀναστῇ. Jesus' talk of resurrection confuses the disciples and they ask him, ὅτι λέγουσιν οἱ γραμματεῖς ὅτι Ἡλίας δεῖ ἐλθεῖν πρῶτον; Jesus answers that Elijah does come first and restore all things—adding, πῶς γέγραπται ἐπὶ τὸν υἱὸν τοῦ ἀνθρώπου, ἵνα πολλὰ πάθῃ καὶ ἐξουδενηθῇ; Jesus continues to say that Elijah has indeed come and was treated as it is written of him.

This short dialogue presents the reader with a number of difficulties: As Strauss notes, the disciples' question in 9:11 seems to imply that Elijah's appearance was in doubt—and not, as Strauss goes on to say, "Wie wenn sie eben von einer Erscheinung desselben

⁶² Indeed, the correspondence between the Baptism, Transfiguration, and Crucifixion accounts at the beginning, middle, and end of the Gospel does not seem to be accidental: J. Painter, *Mark's Gospel: Worlds in Conflict*, ed. J. Court, New Testament Readings. New York: Routledge, 1997, p. 207. Witherington finds these events to be the fulfillment of the "thesis statement" in 1:1; Witherington, *Op. Cit.*, p. 39.

⁶³ See section 2.4.

herkämen!”⁶⁴ Indeed, almost none of what Jesus says seems to figure with the appearance of Elijah only moments before. Elijah, according to Jesus, comes to ἀποκαθιστάνει πάντα (9:12a)—yet there is no sign of this restoration in his momentary Transfiguration appearance. Likewise, Jesus says of Elijah, ἐποίησαν αὐτῷ ὅσα ἤθελον (9:13)—which is also in no way applicable to the Transfiguration scene. From this it follows that Jesus is not speaking of the Ἡλίας who had indeed come (μὲν ἐλθὼν πρῶτον) only moments prior in the Markan narrative (9:4), but to some other figure entirely. On this basis, it seems reasonable to conclude that 9:2-8 and 9:11-13 present independent traditions concerning the appearance of Elijah—and aside from their topical arrangement, the Markan redactor doesn’t appear to have made any attempt in harmonizing them.⁶⁵

Nonetheless, the disciples’ question itself is puzzling: what exactly is Elijah supposed to be coming *before*? The passage itself doesn’t make this abundantly clear. Firstly, the λέγουσιν οἱ γραμματεῖς can be interpreted a number of ways:

(i) It has been traditionally understood that the “Teaching of the Scribes” is that Elijah would appear before the coming of the Messiah. Because of this, it is assumed that Jesus’ opponents held up this doctrine as a counter-claim to his messiahship: Elijah has not yet come, therefore the Messiah has not come—i.e. Jesus cannot be the Messiah.⁶⁶ The disciples

⁶⁴ D. F. Strauss, *Das Leben Jesu, kritisch bearbeitet*. Tübingen: Osiander, 1835, p. 267. Whilst Strauss’ comment is, in this case, referring to Matthew’s account (17:9-13)—he regards Mark as an “epitomizer”—the same logic, of course, applies to Mk 9:9-13. Strauss adds, somewhat drily, that if the disciples had, in fact, come from such a scene, they would have expressed their satisfaction in like manner: “εἰκότως οὖν οἱ γραμματεῖς λέγουσιν κ. τ. λ.” *Ibid.*

⁶⁵ There is no reason to suppose some grand over-arching Baptist-Elijah theme in 9:2-13—in which John appears incognito at the Transfiguration. See Hooker, “Elijah,” p. 67; a similar claim is made by Wink, *Op. Cit.*, p. 16. Rather, 9:2-8 and vv. 11-13 appear to be independent pericopes in their original form; Bultmann, *Op. Cit.*, p. 124.

⁶⁶ Thus A. Schweitzer: “Against the messiahship of Jesus, against his rising from the dead, they [Jesus’ opponents] have only one objection to suggest: Elijah had not yet come.” *The Quest of the Historical Jesus: A Critical Study of Its Progress from Reimarus to Wrede*, trans. W. Montgomery. New York: Macmillan, 1968, p. 381 This opinion certainly appears in Justin—thus Trypho: Ἐὰν δὲ οὗτος φαίνεται ὢν ὁ Χριστός, ἄνθρωπον μὲν ἐξ ἀνθρώπων γενόμενον ἐκ παντὸς ἐπίστασθαι δεῖ· ἐκ δὲ τοῦ μηδὲ Ἡλίαν ἐληλυθέναι οὐδὲ τοῦτον ἀποφαίνομαι εἶναι. *Dial.*, 49.1. More recently this has been argued by Allison, “Elijah Must Come

were naturally curious to see how Jesus would counter this. “Elijah has indeed come,” came the answer from Jesus, his messiahship still intact—although, he adds: like the Son of Man, Elijah must also be mistreated. This interpretation rests on two suppositions: (a) that ἐλθεῖν πρῶτον refers to the future coming of the Messiah, and (b) that Elijah was seen as a messianic forerunner elsewhere in contemporary Judaism. There are, however, some significant problems with these two premises. Firstly, there is nothing in the immediate context that would indicate Jesus’ messiahship was in question—if anything, the Transfiguration would have put these doubts to rest! The preceding discussion concerns the Messianic secret in v. 9 (ἵνα μηδεὶς αὐτοῦ εἶδον διηγήσωνται) and the disciples’ confusion concerning the resurrection in v. 10—whereas Jesus’ messiahship is only ever explicitly addressed in 8:29 and 14:61-62.⁶⁷

Furthermore, it is difficult to find contemporary evidence for the belief that Elijah’s appearance was a necessary condition for the coming of the Messiah. The messenger (מַלְאָכִי) in Mal 3:1a, precedes the coming of the יְהוָה צְבָאוֹת to his temple (3:1b). Likewise, in Mal 4:5, Elijah—presumably to be identified with the messenger in 3:1a—is said to come before the יְהוָה הַגָּדוֹל הַנּוֹרָא (cf. 3:1b).⁶⁸ Indeed, no mention is made of the מָשִׁיחַ in Malachi—and it would be very presumptuous to see Mark’s use of this prophecy as an implicit identification of Jesus as the יְהוָה הַגָּדוֹל הַנּוֹרָא!⁶⁹ The case is similar with *Sir.* 48:1-11, as Faierstein notes, “As with Malachi, if one approaches the text without prior assumptions, references to the Messiah are not found in Ben Sirach...the term ‘Messiah’ appears nowhere in the book.”⁷⁰ There is also no reason to suppose that the two Messiahs of Qumran and *T12P* suggest a belief in Elijah as the messianic forerunner—and the incomplete reference to Elijah in the *4QarP* ([...מִן] כִּי אֵשֶׁת לְאַלְיָהוּ) is clearly inconclusive.⁷¹ Some, however, have pointed to

First,” pp. 256-258; also B. F. Myer, *The Aims of Jesus*, Princeton Theological Monograph Series 48.

Eugene: Wipf and Stock, 2002, pp. 126-128; Jeremias, *Op. Cit.*, p. 938.

⁶⁷ Whilst also discussed indirectly: Mk 12:35-36; 13:21-22; 15:32.

⁶⁸ B. V. Malchow, “The Messenger of the Covenant in Mal 3:1,” *JBL* 103 (1984): 252-255.

⁶⁹ Though this has been done: J. H. Hughes, “John the Baptist: The forerunner of God Himself,” *NovT* 14 (1972): 191-218.

⁷⁰ Faierstein, “Why Do the Scribes Say That Elijah Must Come First?” p. 78.

⁷¹ *Ibid.*, p. 80. Also Fitzmyer: “Whatever the significance of this tiny papyrus scrap is, it should be thoroughly assessed and not too quickly related the idea of a ‘precursor’ of the Messiah.” Idem, “The

Trypho's comment concerning the coming of the Christ in Justin, *Dial.* 8.4: οὐδὲ ἔχει δυνάμιν τινα, μέχρις ἂν ἔλθῶν Ἡλίας χρίσῃ αὐτὸν—though this is clearly a Christian invention originating from Matthew's Gospel (cf. *Dial.* 49.1).⁷² Perhaps better evidence may be found in the rabbinic writings: *b. Erub.* 43a-b seems to connect the appearance of Elijah with the coming of the Messiah on the basis of Mal 4:5—though its meaning is difficult to interpret.⁷³ Similar evidence can be found in *Tg. Ps.-J.* on Deut 30:4, *Pesiq. Rab.* 35:3, and *Pirke R. El.* 43—but these are probably post-Talmudic and too late to be of use.⁷⁴

For these reasons it is presumptuous to regard Elijah as the messianic forerunner in first-century Jewish expectation—the evidence certainly doesn't seem to suggest this.⁷⁵ And yet, Allison's caution is warranted: "If, however, one believed (as did many first-century Jews) in a Messiah who would come on the Day of the Lord, then, by the following simple logic, the idea of Elijah as forerunner would almost inevitably be read into the text."⁷⁶ It is not inconceivable that some first-century Jews made this connection—similar connections were certainly made elsewhere in apocalyptic literature: whether the pairing of Elijah and Enoch (*2 Esd.* 6:26; *Apoc. El.* 4:7), or Elijah and Moses (*Rev* 11:3-12; *Deut. Rab.* 3:17), or the identification of Elijah with Phinehas (*Ps.-Philo* 48:1; *Judg. Rab.* 16.1), to the general expectation of multiple Messiahs in the *DSS* (*1QS* 9.9-11; *CD* 12.22-13.1; 19.10-20.1; *4QFlor*)—or perhaps closer to home, the various titles of Jesus in Mark alone (υἱοῦ θεοῦ:

Aramaic 'Elect of God' Text from Qumran Cave 4," in *Essays on the Semitic Background of the New Testament*. London: Chapman, 1971, p. 137; cf. J. Starcky, "Les Quatre Etapes du Messianisme a Qumran," *RB* 70 (1963): 489-505.

⁷² A. J. B. Higgins, "Jewish Messianic Beliefs in Justin Martyr's Dialogue with Trypho," *NovT* 9 (1967): 298-305.

⁷³ Furthermore, it is too late to be of use; J. A. Fitzmyer, "More about Elijah Coming First," p. 295.

⁷⁴ A. D. York, "The Dating of Targumic Literature," *JSJ* 5 (1974): 49-62; H. L. Strack and G. Stemberger, *Introduction to the Talmud and Midrash*, trans. M. N. A. Bockmuehl. Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1996, pp. 325-329.

⁷⁵ There is, however, no doubt that the early Christians, in their re-interpretation of the prophetic corpus, envisioned Elijah as the forerunner of the Messiah: since John the Baptist is Elijah, and John preceded the coming of Jesus (the Messiah), it follows that Elijah must be the forerunner of the Messiah. Indeed, support for this conclusion was not hard to find: Elijah was certainly the forerunner of the ἡμέραν κυρίου (Mal 3:23 LXX)—which event became associated with the ministry and imminent return of Jesus.

⁷⁶ Allison, *Op. Cit.*, p. 257.

1:1, 11; 3:11; 5:7; 9:7; 14:61; 15:39; *χριστός*: 1:1; 8:29; 9:41; 14:61; 15:32; υἱὸς Δαυίδ: 10:47-48; υἱὸς τοῦ ἀνθρώπου: 8:31, 38; 9:9, 31; 10:33, 45; 14:21, 41, 61-62).⁷⁷ In this way, the apocalyptic imagination was able to harmonize seemingly disparate traditions: i.e. the writer of Rev 11:4 was even capable of pairing the expectation of Elijah and Moses with the δύο ἐλαῖαι of Zech 4:3 LXX—given this, it is perhaps less difficult to imagine how the coming *בְּיָמָיו* may have become associated with Elijah and the *יְהוָה הַגָּדֹל הַנּוֹרָא*.⁷⁸ Whilst this possibility remains somewhat plausible, ultimately no indication of this is given in 9:11, and such an understanding seems alien to the context of 9:1-13—so in the final analysis, a Messianic understanding seems unlikely.

(ii) Bultmann entertains an alternative possibility: the disciples' question is occasioned by Jesus' comment in 9:1 that some standing there will not taste death before they see τὴν βασιλείαν τοῦ Θεοῦ ἐληλυθυῖαν ἐν δυνάμει.⁷⁹ The objection is raised: how can the kingdom come if Elijah has not appeared?⁸⁰ Their question, however, is misguided: Elijah has already appeared, so the kingdom is liable to come at any time—thus the command in 13:37: γρηγορεῖτε! This interpretation has two key strengths: (a) Elijah was certainly expected to come before the ἡμέραν κυρίου, and (b) the context of 8:38-9:8 is predominantly eschatological. Even so, the explanation rests on a fairly tendentious presupposition: “The saying, together with the question asked by the disciples in v. 11 which originally went along with it, in Mark's source followed straight on from v. 1, and Mark separated them by

⁷⁷ For a survey of this approach see A. P. Jassen, “Scriptural Interpretation in Early Jewish Apocalypses,” in *The Oxford Handbook of Apocalyptic Literature*, ed. Collins. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014, pp. 69-84. For this practice in rabbinic Judaism see C. Rowland, *The Open Heaven: A study of Apocalyptic in Judaism and Early Christianity*. New York: Crossroad, 1982, pp. 269-348. In the words of Rowland: “[The biblical text] being in the imaginations of the apocalyptic visionaries a door of perception in which the text could become a living reality as its details merged with parallel passages to form the distinctive visions of heaven now found in some of the apocalypses”; idem, “Apocalyptic literature,” in *It is Written: Scripture Citing Scripture: Essays in Honour of Barnabas Lindars*, eds. D. A. Carson and H. G. M. Williamson. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988, p. 173; Bockmuehl, *Revelation and Mystery in Ancient Judaism and Pauline Christianity*, WUNT 36. Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1990, pp. 27-31.

⁷⁸ R. H. Charles, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Revelation of St. John*. New York: Scribners, 1920, pp. 284-285.

⁷⁹ Bultmann, *Op. Cit.*, pp. 124-5.

⁸⁰ Since Elijah precedes the “kingdom”—i.e. the rule of God: Mal 3:1-2; 4:5-6; *Sir.* 48:10.

inserting the story of the Transfiguration vv. 2-10.”⁸¹ This is due to Bultmann’s insistence that the Transfiguration is a misplaced resurrection scene—however, Jesus’ command that the disciples tell no one until the υἱὸς τοῦ ἀνθρώπου ἐκ νεκρῶν ἀναστῇ (v. 9), and the disciples’ apparent ignorance concerning the resurrection (v. 10), imply that the resurrection has not yet taken place, and thus seem decisive against this interpretation. Nevertheless, if 9:2-10 were in fact an intrusion on the narrative, it would go some way in explaining the irreconcilable portrayals of Elijah (9:4-5; cf. 9:12-13). Although, for Bultmann’s reading to be consistent, vv. 9-10 would have to be Markan additions to the Transfiguration account—in which case, he has not shown why we should prefer 9:1 as the background to the disciples’ question, and not v. 10: ἐκράτησαν πρὸς ἑαυτοὺς συζητοῦντες τί ἐστὶν τὸ ἐκ νεκρῶν ἀναστῆσαι.

(iii) Indeed, 9:9-10 is the first full discussion of a crucial element to the Markan narrative: the υἱὸς τοῦ ἀνθρώπου is to be raised from the dead (cf. 8:31b). Jesus’ talk of the resurrection confuses the disciples—who, presumably, have the eschatological resurrection of the dead in mind (Isa 26:19; Dan 12:2-3; *1 En.* 51:1-5; *Ap. Ad. Ev.* 41:2-3; *Sib. Or.* 4.179-192; *T. Jud.* 25:4; *T. Benj.* 10:6-9; *4 Ezra* 7:28-32; *2 Bar.* 50:2-4).⁸² There is some evidence to suggest that Elijah may have been associated with the eschatological resurrection of the dead:⁸³ (a) *Sir.* 48:11 says of Elijah: μακάριοι οἱ ἰδόντες σε καὶ οἱ ἐν ἀγαπήσει κεκοιμημένοι καὶ γὰρ ἡμεῖς ζωῇ ζησόμεθα. Whilst there is no clear evidence to suggest that Sirach believed in a ‘general resurrection’, the task of Elijah in v. 10 is undoubtedly one of eschatological renewal (χαταστῆσαι)—and as Puech notes, v. 11b could easily be understood as a reference to resurrection (καὶ γὰρ ἡμεῖς ζωῇ ζησόμεθα).⁸⁴ (b) In *Sib. Or.* 2:187-225,

⁸¹ Bultmann, *Op. Cit.*, pp. 124-5.

⁸² For a useful survey of resurrection concepts in Second Temple Judaism see Wright, *Resurrection*, pp. 85-128. For a slightly different take on Mark’s concept of resurrection, emphasizing its relation to Hellenistic thought, see P. Fullmer, *Resurrection in Mark’s Literary-Historical Perspective*, The Library of New Testament Studies. London: Bloomsbury, 2007, esp. pp. 217-220.

⁸³ As outlined in D. G. Clark, “Elijah as Eschatological High Priest: An Examination of the Elijah Tradition in Mal. 3:23-24,” PhD diss., University of Notre Dame, 1975, pp. 124-88; 231-2.

⁸⁴ E. Puech, “Ben Sira 48:11 et la Résurrection,” in *Of Scribes and Scrolls: Studies on the Hebrew Bible, Intertestamental Judaism and Christian Origins*, eds., H. Attridge, J. J. Collins, and T. H. Tobin. Lanham: University Press of America, 1990, pp. 81-90; F. Saracino, “Risurrezione in Ben Sira?” *Henoch* 4 (1982): 185-203.

Elijah (ὁ Θεσβίτης) appears, driving a οὐρανοῦ ἄρμα across the heavens (cf. 2 Kgs 2:11-12), and performs σήματα τρισσά before the end of the world (187-189). After his appearance, the earth will be destroyed with fire (196-213) and the ἄφθιτοι ἀγγελῆρες shall call forth the souls of the dead for judgment (214-220)—at which point their bodies will be resurrected (221-225): ἀμβροσίως μνησθέντα, καὶ ἔμπνοα χυνηθέντα σώματ' ἐπιχθονίων ἐν ἡματ' ἀναστήσονται (225). There is no doubt that this text envisages Elijah as the forerunner of the eschatological resurrection of the dead on the Day of Judgment (cf. Mal 4:5)—and whilst there is evidence of a Christian redactor elsewhere in the work (i.e. 2:39-55; 240-51; 312; especially since Elijah returns again with the χριστός in 247), the section extending from 187-225 is probably representative of Jewish belief.⁸⁵ (c) If Collins is right in interpreting the messianic figure of 4Q521 Frg. 2.2 as Elijah, then we might be able to speak of contemporary evidence connecting the appearance of Elijah with the resurrection of the dead: “For he will heal the wounded, give life to the dead and preach good news to the poor” (cf. Isa 61:1-2; Mt 11:5).⁸⁶ This identification, however, is by no means certain—it largely rests on the later rabbinic association of Elijah with the resurrection (he cites *m. Sot.* 9:15; *j. Shegal.* 3:3; *Pes. Rab. Kah.* 76a), and a tendentious connection with a later fragment from 4Q521 (Frg. 2.3): ואת חק הסוד ואחר איהם...נכון כאים אכות על כנים (cf. Mal 4:6). Whilst the identification with Elijah is to this extent inconclusive, the text (4Q521 Frg. 2.2) does seem to imagine someone like an eschatological prophet: “Releasing captives, giving sight to the blind and raising up those who are bo[wed down]”—and as we’ve seen, it’s not impossible that a connection with Elijah (the eschatological prophet *par excellence*) could have been made on this basis. (d) Clearer evidence, however, can be found in the early rabbinic writing, particularly the saying in *m. Sot.* 9:15, attributed to R. Phinehas ben Jair: אליהו זבור לשוב אמן ורוח הקדש מביאה לידי תחית המתים באה על ידי

⁸⁵ There is nothing necessarily Christian about this section. As mentioned above, the Christian view of Elijah’s return, as one of the saints heralding the Christ, is found elsewhere in the work (2:247)—whereas the prominence of Elijah in 187-189 is unusual for a Christian work, and seems to be drawn from 2 Kgs 2:11-12 and Mal 4:5-6; cf. Collins, “The Sybilline Oracles,” in *Jewish Writings of the Second Temple Period*, ed. M. E. Stone, CRINT 2. Philadelphia: Fortress, 1984, pp. 377.

⁸⁶ Collins, *Scepter*, pp. 131-141.

the resurrection.⁸⁷ Whilst the date of this saying is disputed, it is probably no later than the third-century—and given the prevalence of this tradition, it is reasonable to assume the saying is somewhat representative of mainstream belief (*b. Abod. Zar.* 20a; *j. Shab.* 8a; *j. Sheq.* 14b; *Song Rab.* 1:1).⁸⁸ (e) Although, it is worth noting that the most enduring image of Elijah lies not in the apocalyptic imagination, but rather in the career of the ‘historical’ Elijah: namely, the resurrection at Zarephath in 1 Kgs 17:17-24 (*Sir.* 48:5; *Liv. Pro.* 10:6; 21:7; Josephus, *Ant.* 8.320-327; Lk 4:26; *b. San.* 113a).⁸⁹ By raising the dead, Elijah has performed an act exclusively reserved for God: “Everything that the Holy One will do, he has already anticipated by the hands of the righteous in this world—the resurrection of the dead by Elijah.”⁹⁰ On this basis, it is understandable to see how Elijah’s reputation for resurrection (1 Kgs 17:17-24)—and the expectation of his return (Mal 4:5)—may have reached its synthesis in his association with the eschatological resurrection of the dead (*m. Sot.* 9:15).

If indeed Elijah was regarded as the forerunner of the eschatological resurrection, it would provide a plausible context for the disciples’ question in Mk 9:11 (following on from v. 10)—this argument, however, remains to be proven. Whilst Elijah is both directly (*m. Sot.* 9:15) and indirectly (*Sib. Or.* 2:187-225) associated with the eschatological event, the testimony is by no means unanimous—take for example the comment in *j. Ket.* 35b: “The dead will first come to life in the time of the Messiah.”⁹¹ Similarly, there seems to be a far

⁸⁷ U. Kellermann, “Elia Redivivus und die heilszeitliche Auferweckung der Toten: Erwägungen zur ältesten Bezeugung einer Erwartung,” in *Was suchst du hier, Elia? Ein hermeneutisches Arbeitsbuch*, eds., K. Grüwaldt and H. Schroeter, *Hermeneutica* 4. Rheinbach: CMZ-Verlag, 1995, pp. 72-84.

⁸⁸ For commentary and comparison of the texts see A. R. E. Agus, *Hermeneutic Biography in Rabbinic Midrash: The Body of this Death and Life*, BZNW 16. Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1996, pp. 91-153.

⁸⁹ This is perhaps most beautifully seen in the paintings in the Dura Europos Synagogue (WC1)—wherein scenes from 1 and 2 Kgs are depicted; cf. J. A. Goldstein, “The Judaism of the Synagogues (Focusing on the Synagogue of Dura-Europos),” in *Judaism in Late Antiquity, Part 2: Historical Syntheses*, ed. Neusner. Leiden: Brill, 1995, pp. 109-157.

⁹⁰ *Pesiq. Rab. Kah.* 76a. Elsewhere, Elijah is punished for revealing the power of prayer in achieving resurrection (*b. B. Mez.* 85b).

⁹¹ Collins, however, takes this as a reference to the Prophet-Messiah (i.e. Elijah), as evidenced in 4Q521 2.2; *Scepter*, pp. 134-135. Again, this is possible, but difficult to prove—there is no reason why the eschatological resurrection of the dead couldn’t have been associated with multiple figures (i.e. Moses in *Mek.*, *Shir* 1).

greater expectation of Elijah as the forerunner of the more general *ἡμέρα τοῦ κυρίου*—which, as we’ve seen, later became associated with other eschatological phenomena: i.e. the coming of the Messiah, the eschatological resurrection, the day of judgment etc. In this regard, the event foreshadowed in 9:1 (*τὴν βασιλείαν τοῦ Θεοῦ ἐληλυθυῖαν ἐν δυνάμει*) would provide a more direct point of departure for the question in v. 11—although, there is no reason to accept Bultmann’s assertion that the Transfiguration (vv. 2-10) is an intrusion on the original structure of the pericope. In the final analysis, we are left with two equally plausible explanations for the “Teaching of the Scribes” concerning Elijah—and given that 8:38-9:13 seems to continue on the theme of eschatological expectation, it is not clear which should be preferred.⁹²

Whatever the case, the event that Elijah is preceding in 9:11-12a is without a doubt eschatological—as is clearly indicated by the context and the evidence of broader expectation: Elijah’s re-appearance, without exception, precedes the end of the world. For this reason, Jesus’ remarkable answer in 9:13a—*ὅτι καὶ Ἡλίας ἐλήλυθεν*—takes on a striking dimension: if Elijah has, in fact, already come, then the *ἡμέρα τοῦ κυρίου* is truly at hand!

Another perplexing feature of this passage is Jesus’ rhetorical statement concerning the *υἱὸς τοῦ ἀνθρώπου* in 9:12b: *καὶ πῶς γέγραπται ἐπὶ τὸν υἱὸν τοῦ ἀνθρώπου ἵνα πολλὰ πάθῃ καὶ ἐξουδενηθῇ*; It is not immediately clear what this statement is doing in the middle of a discussion concerning the coming of Elijah—thus Bultmann: “For I cannot think of the intrusive and unconnected saying about the Son of Man in Mk 9:12b as anything else than an interpolation.”⁹³ It is possible, however, to overstate the incongruity of this saying, given that v. 13 does go on to outline the mistreatment of the Elijah figure along fairly similar

⁹² This view is shared by Allison, who finds the issue inconclusive—in an apparent retreat from his earlier position; idem, *Constructing Jesus: Memory, Imagination, and History*. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2010, p. 267, n. 187; cf. idem, “Elijah,” pp. 256-258.

⁹³ Bultmann, *Op. Cit.*, p. 125; likewise, Wink: “This passage teems with confusion. Mark phrases v. 10 in such a manner that the disciples appear to be ignorant about the general resurrection. In v. 12 he completely loses track of the point about Elijah when he stumbles across the saying on the suffering of the Son of man, so that he has to complete the first idea in v. 13. Twice he cites scriptures which are non-existent; this is especially bewildering since Mark is so little concerned with proof-from-prophecy elsewhere. Most puzzling of all is that Mark never really tells us what he means. Why does he not go on and say what we all know, that John is Elijah?” Idem, *Op. Cit.*, p. 13.

lines: καὶ ἐποίησαν αὐτῷ ὅσα ἤθελον καθὼς γέγραπται ἐπ' αὐτόν. Although, it seems relatively clear that in the pericope's current form, the Elijah figure is not to be identified with the υἱὸν τοῦ ἀνθρώπου: the repetition of γέγραπται and the analogous (but not identical) nature of their experiences seems to indicate that a comparison is being made.⁹⁴ Indeed, it is difficult to see how the υἱὸν τοῦ ἀνθρώπου is not intended here as a reference to Jesus—who certainly suffers many things and is rejected (14:53-15:37), apparently in accordance with scripture (12:10-11; 14:21, 27, 49).⁹⁵

Nevertheless, Casey sees υἱὸν τοῦ ἀνθρώπου as a general term for 'man' in 9:12b—when re-introduced into its original Aramaic setting, vv. 11-13 should read as follows: "And (they were) asking him and saying, 'Why do (the) scribes say that Elijah is going to come first?' And he said to them, 'Elijah comes first and turns back all, and how it is written of (a/the son of) man [Aramaic: ܒܪ ܐܢܫ] that he suffers much and is rejected! And I tell you that, moreover, Elijah has come, and they did in the case of him whom they desired according as it is written concerning him/it.'"⁹⁶ According to Casey, Jesus is employing the idiom (ܐܢܫ)ܐܢܫ(ܐ) ܒܪ in a characteristically Aramaic form of biblical exegesis: to paraphrase, "Like all men, Elijah must suffer."⁹⁷ Casey reaches this conclusion via a strange piece of logic: Mk 1:2-3 shows that the Aramaic-speaking Jesus (not Mark!) connected Mal 3:1 to Isa 40:3 in his identification of John the Baptist as Elijah. If Jesus made the connection of Elijah/John with Isa 40:3, he must surely have also connected John's demise with the "metaphorical presentation of the transitory nature of human life" in Isa 40:6: "All flesh (is) grass and all their acts of kindness like the flower of the countryside." This, in turn, would have put Jesus

⁹⁴ That is, unless one is willing to count v. 13 as an editorial addition or interpolation; Goguel, *Au seuil de l'Évangile*, p. 59; Kee, *Op. Cit.*, p. 141; cf. J. A. T. Robinson, *Op. Cit.*, p. 275; Taylor, *Op. Cit.*, pp. 117-18. We must, of course, remain open to the possibility that the pericope originally referred to John the Baptist only.

⁹⁵ M. Dibelius, *Die urchristliche Überlieferung von Johannes dem Täufer*, pp. 30-31.

⁹⁶ M. Casey, *Aramaic Sources of Mark's Gospel*, SNTSMS 102. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998, pp. 121-122.

⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 111. Thus Casey: "The main point is that (ܐܢܫ)ܐܢܫ(ܐ) ܒܪ is a normal term for 'man'." See *Sefire* III.16; *1QapGen* XXI.13; *11QtgJob* IX.9; XXVI.3; cf. Dan 7:13 and 2:38 and 5:21 in the plural; *1En* 7.3; 22.3; 77.3 (*4QEnastr*^b 23); *1QapGen* XIX.15; *4QGiants* 426; *11QtgJob* XXVIII.2.

in mind of Job 14:1: “Man who is born of woman is shortlived and full of turmoil.”⁹⁸ And since the rabbinical *Tg.* on Job 14:1 uses the Aramaic idiom *בֶּרַךְ נִשְׁ* for ‘man’, we can assume a similar understanding was at work in Jesus’ peculiarly Aramaic exegesis of Job 14:1 concerning the death of Elijah/John.⁹⁹

But even if we were to grant Casey’s rigid classification of the Aramaic idiom *בֶּרַךְ נִשְׁ(א)*, it would still not explain why we should interpret 9:12b any differently from its closest Markan parallel: *ὅτι ὁ μὲν υἱὸς τοῦ ἀνθρώπου ὑπάγει καθὼς γέγραπται περὶ αὐτοῦ* (14:21a)—in which instance there is no doubt that Jesus is, in fact, the *υἱὸς τοῦ ἀνθρώπου*.¹⁰⁰ Likewise, Jesus has already argued with the disciples on the necessity of his suffering (*δεῖ τὸν υἱὸν τοῦ ἀνθρώπου πολλὰ παθεῖν*—8:31), and this is to be repeated shortly after 9:12b in v. 31: *ὅτι ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ ἀνθρώπου παραδίδοται εἰς χεῖρας ἀνθρώπων* etc. Essentially, there seems no way around seeing Jesus as the ‘Son of Man’ in 9:12b—in which case, Jesus seems to be comparing the prediction of his future suffering (cf. 8:31; 9:31; 10:33) with those experienced by Elijah in v. 13.¹⁰¹ Naturally, the question should follow: who is this Elijah?

As previously noted, it has been the almost unanimous opinion of scholars that the *Ἡλίας* of vv. 11-13 is a clear reference to John the Baptist. Lane calls this an “explicit identification”, and Boring argues that, “Mark makes the identification explicit”—whereas Faierstein says, “In Mark it is implied that Elijah has come in the person of John the Baptist,

⁹⁸ Given the similarity between Job 14:2 and Isa 40:6: “He comes forth like a flower, and withers; he flees like a shadow, and continues not.”

⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 126-128.

¹⁰⁰ The notion that Jesus believed that all men are “betrayed”, is even harder to accept than Casey’s extraneous reading of 9:12b. On the excessive rigidity of Casey’s terminology see A. L. Lukaszewski: “One may conclude that Casey views Aramaic grammar as being almost completely static for nearly two millennia.” Idem, “Issues Concerning the Aramaic Behind *ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ ἀνθρώπου*: A Critical Review of Scholarship,” in *‘Who is this Son of Man?’ The Latest Scholarship on a Puzzling Expression of the Historical Jesus*, eds. L. W. Hurtado and P. L. Owen, Library of New Testament Studies 390. Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 2011, pp. 10-11.

¹⁰¹ Yarbrow Collins, *Op. Cit.*, p. 432.

while in Matthew the identification of John with Elijah is explicit.”¹⁰² This identification is regularly attributed to Mark: “9,9-13 sicherlich von Mk selbst gebildet worden...ad vocem Elia klärt er die Identität Johannes des Täuflers und die Frage der Wiederkunft des Thesbiten.”¹⁰³ And is similarly attributed to Jesus: “Jesus interpreted John the Baptist’s successful ministry as a fulfillment of prophecy of a successful return of Elijah.”¹⁰⁴ And even to John himself: “This may suggest that John’s position of destiny as the prophesied Elijah is not the invention of the Markan church but was how John saw himself.”¹⁰⁵

It is problematic, however, that John is nowhere mentioned in 9:11-13 or in its immediate context—thus Wink: “Most puzzling of all is that Mark never really tells us what he means...why does he not go on and say what we all know, that John is Elijah?”¹⁰⁶ In this regard, many scholars may have, perhaps unwittingly, been influenced by Matthew’s “strong” reading of Mk 9:11-13 in 17:11-13.¹⁰⁷

ὁ δὲ ἀποκριθεὶς εἶπεν Ἡλίας μὲν ἔρχεται καὶ ἀποκαταστήσει πάντα. λέγω δὲ ὑμῖν ὅτι Ἡλίας ἤδη ἦλθεν καὶ οὐκ ἐπέγνωσαν αὐτὸν ἀλλὰ ἐποίησαν ἐν αὐτῷ ὅσα ἠθέλησαν. οὕτως καὶ ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ ἀνθρώπου μέλλει πάσχειν ὑπ’ αὐτῶν. τότε συνῆκαν οἱ μαθηταὶ ὅτι περὶ Ἰωάννου τοῦ Βαπτιστοῦ εἶπεν αὐτοῖς.

As Goodacre has shown, there are several significant modifications to the Markan text: (a) The structure has been re-arranged so that the statement concerning Elijah is completed before being compared to the fate of the Son of Man. Perhaps most noticeable, in this

¹⁰² Lane, *The Gospel of Mark*, p. 51; Boring, *Mark: A Commentary*, p. 41; Faierstein, *Op. Cit.*, p. 75.

Elsewhere, Lane claims that the “identification is not made explicit”—and that the Messianic secret is also applied to Elijah; idem, *Op. Cit.*, p. 326.

¹⁰³ Öhler, *Elia*, p. 119.

¹⁰⁴ Casey, *Op. Cit.*, p. 126.

¹⁰⁵ M. Goulder, “Jesus without Q,” in Holmén, *Op. Cit.*, p. 1292; likewise, Öhler, “Expectation,” pp. 470-473.

¹⁰⁶ Wink, *Op. Cit.*, p. 13.

¹⁰⁷ M. Goodacre, “Mark, Elijah, the Baptist and Matthew,” p. 79-80. S. Pellegrini agrees: “Die traditionelle Interpretation liest Mk, als ob er Mt wäre, d.h. mit—für Mk—illegitimen Voraussetzungen.” Idem, *Elia*, p. 382.

regard, is the addition: “Then the disciples understood that he was speaking to them about John the Baptist.” (b) Matthew drops the *καθὼς γέγραπται ἐπ’ αὐτόν* in Mk 9:13—presumably because he did not know of any scriptures predicting Elijah’s suffering. (c) Matthew shifts Mark’s *ἀποκαθιστάνει* from the present tense into the future (*ἀποκαταστήσει*)—thus conforming the text closer to Mal 3:23 LXX.¹⁰⁸ (d) Matthew also adds that they “did not recognize him”—presumably to show that they failed to see that John was Elijah.¹⁰⁹ (e) Likewise, Matthew makes it clear that the *υἱὸς τοῦ ἀνθρώπου* is Jesus, and that he is about to suffer at the hands of Elijah’s persecutors (cf. Mk 9:31). Thus Goodacre: “Here we can see the way that one of the first readers of Mark reacted to his text: strongly affirming its direction (John the Baptist = Elijah) but modifying, re-reading, or omitting anything that failed to make this clear.”¹¹⁰ Elsewhere, Matthew goes as far as to make the identification of Elijah with John explicit—albeit somewhat cautiously: *καὶ εἰ θέλετε δεῖξασθαι αὐτός ἐστιν Ἡλίας ὁ μέλλων ἔρχεσθαι*.¹¹¹ But no such statement exists in Mark—again, Wink’s question comes into focus: “Why does he not make the identification with John explicit?”¹¹²

Wink’s answer deserves consideration: perhaps Mark has concealed the identity of John the Baptist under a sort of “Elijianic secret” motif—thus paralleling the hidden identity of

¹⁰⁸ This ultimately leads to the later Christian interpretation of two comings of Elijah, one as John, and again, at the second coming of Christ: Justin, *Dial.* 49; Origen, *Comm. Matt.*; 13.1-2 Chrysostom, *Hom. Matt.* 57.1; Augustine, *Tract. Ev. Jo.* 4.5.1-2; Jerome, *Comm. Matt.* 17.11-12; Gregory the Great, *Forty Gospel Homilies* 4. Indeed, it is possible that Matthew has correctly understood the future appearance of Elijah in Mark (9:2-8) with the former (vv. 11-13)—but it is difficult to see this sort of clarity in Mark itself: according to Jesus, Elijah having come (*ἐλθὼν*—Aorist Participle), restores (*ἀποκαθιστάνει*—Present) all things.

¹⁰⁹ Goodacre does not explore the possibility, but this may be a slight against the author of Mark: they failed to “recognize him”, because Mark did not make it plain.

¹¹⁰ Goodacre, *Op. Cit.*, p. 79.

¹¹¹ It is possible that Matthew hesitates to make an outright identification because this was something of a controversial issue—this may also explain Mark’s reluctance to make a clear statement about the identity of Elijah.

¹¹² Wink, *Op. Cit.*, p. 16. Indeed, Mark is given multiple opportunities to explicitly state that John is Elijah (6:14-16; 8:28; 9:4-5, 11-13), and yet no such statement exists. Whereas, we must note, he seems very happy to make positive statements concerning Jesus: “‘Are you the Christ, the Son of the Blessed?’ And Jesus said, ‘I am’” (Mk 14:61b-62a).

Jesus.¹¹³ “If the disciples cannot comprehend Jesus’ teaching about his own suffering (8:32f: 9:6, 10, 11, 32, 34), then we may fairly infer that they would not be able to understand the saying about Elijah either...they cannot because they *must* not; John’s identity, like that of Jesus, is hidden until the resurrection (9:9b).”¹¹⁴ Wink goes further too suggest that Jesus must have discovered “the secret of John’s Elijahship” on the mount of Transfiguration—apparently in the course of his conversation with Moses and Elijah (καὶ ἦσαν συλλαλοῦντες τῷ Ἰησοῦ—9:4b).¹¹⁵ Whilst there is no reason for this last conjecture, Wink has, in fact, correctly understood the difficulty in identifying the Markan Elijah—namely, that Jesus never openly reveals his identity! There is, however, no reason to suppose a sort of ‘Elijianic secret’ at work in the depiction of John.¹¹⁶ One of the key premises of the so-called ‘Messianic secret’—as formulated by Wrede, and more recently Räisänen—is that the reader is let in on the secret: i.e. Ἀρχὴ τοῦ εὐαγγελίου Ἰησοῦ χριστοῦ υἱοῦ θεοῦ (cf. 1:11; 3:11; 5:7; 9:7; 12:6; 14:61-62; 15:39)!¹¹⁷ The reader knows exactly how to interpret Jesus’ miracles (4:41; 6:52; 8:17-21) and predictions of his suffering and resurrection (8:31-38; 9:9-10; 9:30-32; 10:32-4)—it is the disciples, rather, who are deficient in their understanding.¹¹⁸ Conversely, the identity of Elijah appears to be a mystery to the reader also—whilst there are possibly a few subtle textual indicators suggesting “John’s Elijahship”, the evidence is far less conclusive than most scholars care to admit: ultimately, we are never told.¹¹⁹

¹¹³ *Ibid.*, pp. 16-17.

¹¹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 16. No explanation is given as to why Wink cites 9:6, 10, 11 in reference to Jesus’ future suffering—when they clearly suggest nothing of the sort.

¹¹⁵ *Ibid.* p. 16-17; Rothschild, *Op. Cit.*, p. 132, n. 12.

¹¹⁶ Thus Pellegrini: “Es würde zu weit gehen, von einem ‘Elijageheimnis’ oder einem ‘Elija incognito’ (Wink) zu sprechen, aber es ist sicher zutreffend, daß die Erkennung von Elija (in Täufergestalt) Einstellungen voraussetzt und aktiviert, die auch für das Erkennen des Gottessohnes (in der Gestalt Jesu) notwendig sind.” Idem, *Elija*, p. 383.

¹¹⁷ As outlined by W. Wrede, *The Messianic Secret*, trans. J. C. G. Greig. Cambridge: James Clarke, 1971, pp. 34-36. For more recent treatments see Räisänen, *The ‘Messianic Secret’ in Mark*; C. M. Tuckett, *The Messianic Secret*. Philadelphia: Fortress, 1983.

¹¹⁸ As Dunn puts it, the early communities were “let in on the secret”; idem, *Jesus Remembered: Christianity in the Making*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2003, p. 495.

¹¹⁹ See n. 106.

The best clue to Elijah's identity is the nature of his 'treatment': καὶ ἐποίησαν αὐτῷ ὅσα ἤθελον. This, admittedly, is not much to go on—and the adverbial (καθὼς γέγραπται ἐπ' αὐτόν) does nothing to clarify this. There is nothing in v. 13 itself to give us any indication of who 'they' are, or 'what' they will do to Elijah—but the treatment of the Son of Man in v. 12b (ἵνα πολλὰ πάθῃ καὶ ἐξουδενηθῇ) seems to suggest that the treatment and the perpetrators are the same in both cases.¹²⁰ In this case, it seems reasonable to assume that ἐποίησαν αὐτῷ ὅσα ἤθελον implies mistreatment—in which case there are only really two contenders in the Markan narrative: John the Baptist (1:14; 6:17-29) and Jesus (14:45-15:39). Considering that υἱὸν τοῦ ἀνθρώπου in 9:12b is almost certainly a reference to Jesus, it seems natural, in this case, to conclude that John the Baptist is the aforementioned Elijah.

Nevertheless, this does not explain why John is not explicitly named (cf. Mt 17:13)—and the identity of the perpetrators (i.e. ἐποίησαν) remains likewise mysterious. The identification of John as Elijah, moreover, raises peculiar problems of its own: can it really be said that John the Baptist ἀποκαθιστάνει πάντα in Mark's Gospel?¹²¹ Similarly, if John is the true Elijah in v. 13, then who appeared at the Transfiguration—if not John the Baptist?¹²² The answers aren't immediately clear.

Having said that, John the Baptist certainly does "come first" in Markan chronology: he precedes the coming of Jesus (1:2-14), and therefore the Resurrection and Parousia. On this basis, John the Baptist is probably the Ἡλίας spoken of in 9:11-13—though, as we've seen, considerable questions still remain (to be taken up in sections 3.1-4).¹²³

¹²⁰ In Matthew this is made even clearer: οὕτως καὶ ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ ἀνθρώπου μέλλει πάσχειν ὑπ' αὐτῶν (Mt 17:12b). But can we really say that John and Jesus suffered at the hands of the same enemy? Herod kills John the Baptist in Mk 6:16-29, whereas Jesus only encounters hostility from the Herodian faction (3:6; 12:13)—Herod appears nowhere in Jesus' narrative: the insertion of Herod into Jesus' trial sequence seems to be Luke's invention (23:7-12).

¹²¹ Thus Casey, "But neither John the Baptist nor anyone else came and restored all things." Idem, *Op. Cit.*, p. 111. Joynes suggests that perhaps Jesus fulfills this aspect of Elijah's ministry; idem, "A Question of Identity," p. 25.

¹²² There is no reason to see Ἡλίας σὺν Μωϋσῇ as symbolizing John the Baptist—since Moses is nowhere else associated with John; cf. Hooker, "Elijah," p. 67.

¹²³ In this regard, the possibility that Jesus may be the Elijah mentioned in 9:11-13 should be considered in greater detail; Kee, *Op. Cit.*, p. 141.

Perhaps the most perplexing feature of 9:11-13 is the confusing addition in v. 13b: καθὼς γέγραπται ἐπ’ αὐτόν. There is no extant pre-Christian document that explicitly speaks of the mistreatment or suffering of Elijah *redivivus*. Furthermore, there is nothing in the description of Elijah’s treatment (καὶ ἐποίησαν αὐτῷ ὅσα ἤθελον) that plainly suggests a scriptural basis for Jesus’ assertion. There is also no extant literature that clearly speaks of the suffering of the Son of Man (ἵνα πολλὰ πάθῃ καὶ ἐξουδενηθῇ) as in v. 12b—though it is perhaps less difficult to imagine how Mark may have co-opted traditions to serve this ends.¹²⁴ But in this regard, it is uncharacteristic of Mark to “proof-text” in the first place—the most analogous passage is similarly ambiguous (14:21), otherwise scriptures are only occasionally cited (1:2-3; 7:6-8; 12:26; 14:27).¹²⁵

Several sources have been suggested as a basis for the suffering of Elijah *redivivus*.¹²⁶ As discussed in section 2.2., there is good reason to suppose that Rev 11:3-12 envisages the eschatological return of Elijah (with Moses)—i.e. of whom it is said, οὗτοι ἔξουσιν τὴν ἐξουσίαν κλείσαι τὸν οὐρανὸν ἵνα μὴ ὑετὸς βρέχῃ. These two witnesses (μάρτυσιν) are said to prophesy for one thousand two hundred and sixty days, until the beast wages war on them: καὶ νικήσει αὐτοὺς καὶ ἀποκτενεῖ αὐτούς. At which point, their dead bodies will lie unburied in τῆς πλατείας τῆς πόλεως τῆς μεγάλης—to be identified with Jerusalem.¹²⁷ The earth will rejoice their passing, until after three and a half days when God resurrects them in the sight of their enemies—at which point they are called up to heaven in a cloud. Similarly, in *Ap. El.* 4:7-19, Elijah and Enoch will confront the “shameless one” for his litany of sins, and precede to fight him in the market place of the “great city” (cf. Rev 11:8). They will fight seven days, until the two prophets are killed—and are left lying in the market place for

¹²⁴ J. Marcus, *Way of the Lord: Christological Exegesis of the Old Testament in the Gospel of Mark*. Edinburgh: A&C Black, 2004, pp. 95-96. Thus Marcus: “It is generally agreed that we are dealing not with a direct citation of a specific Old Testament text, nor with a Jewish exegetical tradition, but with a Christian interpretation of several Old Testament passages. Exegetes differ about which Old Testament texts are more important, but most think that both the picture of Yahweh’s suffering servant in Isaiah 52:13-53:12 and the Psalms of the Righteous Sufferer are in the background.”

¹²⁵ In contrast to Matthew’s very liberal use of Jewish scripture; see Hatina, *Biblical Interpretation in Early Christian Gospels: Volume 2: The Gospel of Matthew*, Library of New Testament Studies. Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 2008.

¹²⁶ Öhler, *Elia*, pp. 45-46.

¹²⁷ Rev 11:8b: ὅπου καὶ ὁ κύριος αὐτῶν ἐσταυρώθη.

“three and one half days” in the sight of all (cf. Rev 11:9). But on the fourth day they will be resurrected and will proceed to scold the shameless one. He will fight them, and the city will surround them—but “they will shout up to heaven as they shine while all the people and the world see them.”¹²⁸

Whilst it is possible that together these texts independently witness a pre-Christian belief in the martyrdom of Elijah, it is impossible to prove this—the similarities between *Ap. El.* 4:7-19 and Rev 11:3-12 are far too great to rule out the dependency of the former upon the latter.¹²⁹ Similarly, it is equally possible that the account in Revelation 11:3-12 is indicative of contemporary Jewish expectation (cf. *4 Ezra* 6:26)—although, it must be noted, the martyrdom of the heavenly visitors seems to be unique to Revelation.¹³⁰ Whilst Elijah and Moses are also paired together in Mk 9:4-5 (cf. Rev 11:6), there is still no indication that a similar understanding underlies Jesus’ comment in 9:13.

Nevertheless, ‘The Ascension of Phinehas’ preserved in *LAB* 48:1-2 may provide contemporary evidence for a belief in the death of Elijah *redivivus*—albeit indirectly. Pseudo-Philo records that Phinehas, having reached his a hundred-and twentieth-year, is commanded by God to go and dwell on the mountain in Danaben for many years.¹³¹ There he will be nourished by God (cf. 1 Kgs 17:4), until the time when he will be tested, and will “shut up the heaven”, only to open it again with his mouth (cf. 1 Kgs 17:1). And afterward he will be lifted up to the place where others have ascended—where he will stay, until the time when God “remembers the world”, and will send them all again (apparently not just Phinehas), and Phinehas will “taste what is death.” As we know, Phinehas was later identified

¹²⁸ *Ap. El.* 4:19. This tradition also regularly featured elsewhere—whereas Moses and Elijah are rarely mentioned. See the impressive list in W. Bousset *The Antichrist Legend: A Chapter in Christian and Jewish Folklore*, trans. A. H. Keane. London: Hutchinson, 1896, pp. 203-217; also, Bauckham’s list which includes recent discoveries: idem, “Enoch and Elijah,” pp. 450-451.

¹²⁹ Jeremias entertains the possibility that an independent pre-Christian Jewish tradition regarding the martyrdom of Enoch and Elijah probably exists beneath the Christian redaction; *Op. Cit.*, pp. 939-41. Whereas J.-M. Rosenstiehl is certain that such a connection exists. Idem, *L’Apocalypse d’Elie*. Paris: Geuthner, 1972. See discussion in Bauckham, *Op. Cit.*, pp. 453-454.

¹³⁰ Whereas in Ps.-Philo it is merely ‘death’: Et tunc adducam vos et quod est mortis (48:2).

¹³¹ The location of this mountain is unknown, but in many respects this resembles traditions concerning Nebo and Gerizim: i.e. *2 Macc.* 2:1-8; *Memar Marqah* 5.4. It may be an independent tradition, associating Elijah with a mountain other than Horeb (1 Kgs 19:8).

with Elijah (*Judg. Rab.* 16.1)—and it seems clear that the ‘historical’ Elijah in 1 and 2 Kgs is here understood to be something like a Phinehas *redivivus*.¹³² Clearly, Phinehas is predicted to appear again (apparently for a third time), evidently with others who have not tasted death (i.e. Enoch—possibly Moses, Baruch, Ezra), at which point, Phinehas himself will “taste death”—not unlike the fate of Elijah and Moses in Rev 11:7-9.¹³³ There is reason to suppose that *LAB* is roughly contemporary to the Gospel of Mark, in which case it is possibly an independent witness to the suffering-Elijah-*redivivus* figure of Mk 9:13.¹³⁴ Nonetheless, there are still differences: unlike Jesus’ discussion of Elijah in 9:13, Phinehas/Elijah re-appears alongside the others who have not tasted death—although this could possibly explain the appearance of Moses alongside Elijah in 9:4-5.¹³⁵ Pseudo-Philo’s *LAB*, however, is an imaginative expansion on the Jewish scriptures—and 48:1-2 is only indirect evidence of a roughly contemporary tradition, not a written source, as Jesus clearly states in Mk 9:13b: καθὼς γέγραπται ἐπ’ αὐτόν.¹³⁶

Elsewhere in Mark, γέγραπται refers directly to quotations from the LXX: καθὼς γέγραπται (1:2-3; cf. Mal 3:1; Exod 23:20; Isa 40:3); ὡς γέγραπται (7:6-8; Isa 29:13); οὐ γέγραπται ὅτι (11:17; cf. Isa 56:7; Jer 7:11); and ὅτι γέγραπται (14:27; cf. Zech 13:7).¹³⁷ This would suggest that something similar is going on in 9:12b-13—but as we’ve seen, there is no mention of Elijah’s future suffering in the Jewish scriptures. There is, however, talk of

¹³² It seems that this connection was made given their respective zeal for the Lord: Hayward, *Op. Cit.*, pp. 22-34.

¹³³ Although martyrdom is not mentioned in *LAB* 48:2, the manner of Phinehas’ death is open to interpretation—and martyrdom is not an unreasonable suggestion.

¹³⁴ J. D. Harrington, “Pseudo-Philo,” in *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha: Volume Two: Expansions of the “Old Testament” and Legends, Wisdom and Philosophical Literature, Prayers, Psalms, and Odes, Fragments of Lost Judeo-Hellenistic Works*, ed. Charlesworth. Peabody: Hendrickson, 1983, p. 299. Ps.-Philo seems to speak of the Temple in current terms, as well as the Herodian dynasty—which suggest a pre-70 C.E. date. Likewise, Ps.-Philo’s apparent use of a “Palestinian” biblical text may also suggest an early date; idem, “The Biblical Text of Pseudo-Philo’s *Liber Antiquitatum Biblicarum*,” *CBQ* 33 (1971): 1-17.

¹³⁵ Tabor, *Op. Cit.*, pp. 225-238.

¹³⁶ Harrington, *Op. Cit.*, p. 297.

¹³⁷ For a broader study of Mark’s use of scripture see J. D. M. Derrett, *The Making of Mark: The Scriptural Bases of the Earliest Gospel*. Shipston-on-Stour: Drinkwater, 1985. It must be noted, however, that the γέγραπται is similarly vague in Mk 14:21: ὅτι ὁ μὲν υἱὸς τοῦ ἀνθρώπου ὑπάγει καθὼς γέγραπται περὶ αὐτοῦ.

the ‘historical’ Elijah’s mistreatment and suffering: the persecutions of the prophets and Obadiah at the hands of Jezebel (1 Kgs 18:4-16); Jezebel’s promise to kill Elijah (1 Kgs 19:1-2); Elijah’s fear unto death (1 Kgs 19:3-4); and Elijah’s confrontation with Ahaziah and his men (2 Kgs 1:3-16).¹³⁸ If John the Baptist is, in fact, the Elijah of vv. 11-13, then it may provide an interesting connection: like Elijah, John also suffers at the hands of a weak king and his wicked wife (Herod and Herodias—Mk 6:16-29; cf. Ahab and Jezebel—1 Kgs 19:1-2).¹³⁹ This may make sense of Jesus’ comment that Ἡλίας ἐλήλυθεν καὶ ἐποίησαν αὐτῷ ὅσα ἤθελον—both Herodias and Jezebel desire (ἤθελον—Mk 6:19; cf. 1 Kgs 19:2) to kill John the Baptist and Elijah, respectively. The analogy breaks down, however, when Herodias is successful in the murder of John (6:27-28)—Jezebel is not only spectacularly unsuccessful (Elijah escapes death entirely), but it also is she who ends up being killed (1 Kgs 21:23; 2 Kgs 9:30-37).¹⁴⁰ Moreover, it is important to note that Jesus’ discussion of the suffering of the Son of Man does not seem to have a literal ‘historical’ interpretation in mind—as previously discussed, it is quite possible this understanding was drawn from the ‘Suffering Servant’ (Isa 52:13-53:12) and ‘Righteous Sufferer’ (Ps 22, 27, 37, 38, 41, 42, 54, 69, 140) traditions.¹⁴¹ Since the descriptions of the υἱὸν τοῦ ἀνθρώπου and Ἡλίας seem intended as a comparison, it is reasonable to assume that a similar scriptural understanding underscores the γέγραπται in both cases. In which case, it is possible that Jesus is employing a similar esoteric reading to Elijah, as he had done to the Son of Man.¹⁴² Likewise, it is equally

¹³⁸ Some see this as the basis for Jesus’ comments concerning Elijah’s future suffering: Hooker, *Op. Cit.*, p. 221; Witherington, *Op. Cit.*, p. 265. Although, there are significant divergences between the two narratives: i.e. Elijah does not die in 1 Kgs 19 (cf. Mk 6:16-29).

¹³⁹ R. Janes, “Why the Daughter of Herodias Must Dance (Mark 6.14-29),” *JSNT* 28.4 (2006): 443-467.

¹⁴⁰ Strangely, however, the deaths of Elijah and the Son of Man are not mentioned in 9:12-13. On this basis, Goguel sees vv. 11-13 as an authentic saying of the historical Jesus (*Op. Cit.*, p. 59)—but as Bultmann shows, this is not necessary: unless we suppose that Jesus predicted both his suffering and rejection (which seems a credulous assumption)—unless similar claims can be found elsewhere in contemporary Judaism (i.e. *2 Macc.* 7:11). Nevertheless, some have made such a case: H. F. Bayer, *Jesus’ Predictions of Vindication and Resurrection*, WUNT 20. Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1986; Evans, “Did Jesus Predict His Death and Resurrection?” in *Resurrection*, eds., Porter, M. A. Hayes, and D. Tombs. Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1999, pp. 82-97; cf. Bultmann, *Op. Cit.*, p. 125, n. 1.

¹⁴¹ Marcus, *Op. Cit.*, pp. 95-96.

¹⁴² Yarbrow Collins, *Op. Cit.*, p. 432.

possible that Jesus is referencing the general expectation of prophetic suffering—i.e. Jer 11:19-21; 20:1-2; 26:8-11, 20-23; 37:14-16; 38:4-6; 2 Chr 16:10; 24:20-22).¹⁴³ In the final analysis, however, there is no clear indication as to the source of Jesus' comment in Mk 9:13b—although, considering Mark's tendency to introduce the LXX with καθὼς/ὅτι γέγραπται, the Jewish scriptures appear to be the most likely source.

As we've seen, there were a variety of ways that Mark may have sought to interpret the suffering of Elijah—but ultimately, this difficulty in interpretation seems to suggest that Mark's Elijah suffers because John the Baptist *suffered*: scriptural testimony, in this regard, is conformed to fit the facts about John's death, and not the other way around. John's identity as Elijah, therefore, appears in 9:13, not because of his suffering, but in spite of it.¹⁴⁴

The discourse in 9:11-13 is by far the clearest statement concerning the identity of Elijah in Mark's Gospel—and yet, as we've seen, it is riddled with confusion: the disciples' question is vague, the structure of Jesus' response is complicated, his language is ill-defined, twice he cites unknown scriptures, and ultimately, he never tells us the true identity of Elijah. Still, a few things can be gleaned: the disciples' question probably concerns the ἡμέρα τοῦ κυρίου or the eschatological resurrection (since Elijah was associated with both), and Jesus seems to identify John the Baptist with Elijah, who has already come and suffered (as the Son of Man will also suffer). This interpretation, however, creates some problems: the discourse seems to envisage an entirely separate appearance of Elijah, rather than the one they had only just witnessed (9:2-8); and John the Baptist doesn't appear to restore all things (ἀποκαθιστάνει

¹⁴³ *Ibid.*

¹⁴⁴ This may suggest that Mark's identification of Elijah as John the Baptist was created ad hoc—rather than stemming from a pre-existing tradition. It is possible that Mark did this in order to downplay the identification of Jesus as Elijah; or perhaps in order to invalidate the Messianic claims of the Baptist sect, whilst, at the same time, co-opting John to support the eschatological and Messianic claims of the early Christian movement. If the identification of John as Elijah was widely known, you would expect Mark to reflect this—instead, we only hear of Jesus being identified as Elijah (6:15; 8:28). Likewise, if this was the case, the identification would probably appear more explicit—as it is, the identification of Elijah as John is so unclear and inconsistent, that one suspects that its presence may, in fact, be due to Mark's redaction of earlier material, where the identification was entirely absent.

πάντα) in the Markan narrative, nor does he fulfill the traditional expectations of an Elijah *redivivus* (Mal 4:5-6; *Sir.* 48:10-11).¹⁴⁵

Nevertheless, Mark's early readers would have heard Jesus' comments in vv. 12-13 as a dramatic signal that the Day of the Lord was at hand: Elijah has already appeared, even suffered—eschatological restoration, resurrection, and judgment are to follow. Mark's readers know from elsewhere that the Parousia is near (9:1; 13:29-30; 14:62)—and Elijah's appearance with Jesus at the Transfiguration in 9:2-8 serves to confirm that this is, in fact, the penultimate eschatological event. But Jesus' comment in v. 13 takes this a step further—Elijah's re-appearance is also a thing of the past: the Day of the Lord, therefore, is not just close, but imminent. It is little wonder then that immediately after the arrest of John the Baptist (i.e. Elijah—9:13a), Jesus emerges from the shadows to announce: πεπλήρωται ὁ καιρὸς καὶ ἤγγικεν ἡ βασιλεία τοῦ θεοῦ!

2.4. Jesus' cry of dereliction: 15:34-36.

The last reference to Ἡλίας appears in 15:34-36, when bystanders at Jesus' crucifixion mishear his Aramaic cry of dereliction, thinking that he is calling Elijah. Someone then offers Jesus a drink of wine vinegar, saying, ἄφετε ἴδωμεν εἰ ἔρχεται Ἡλίας καθελεῖν αὐτόν. The scene ends abruptly with Jesus uttering a loud cry and breathing his last.

The words of Jesus are transliterated by Mark (Ἐλωὶ Ἐλωὶ λεμὰ σαβαχθάνι) and then translated (ὁ θεός μου ὁ θεός μου εἰς τί ἐγκατέλιπές με)—in what is apparently a reference

¹⁴⁵ In Mal 3:1, the messenger seems to play a role in restoring the Temple cult, which is applicable to Jesus (Mk 11:15-18), but not John; whereas, in 4:5-6, Elijah “will turn the hearts of fathers to their children and the hearts of children to their fathers,” which may explain Jesus' comment in Mk 9:11—although it is applicable to both John (1:4-5) and Jesus (13:26-27; cf. 13:12). Likewise, Elijah restores the “tribes of Jacob” in *Sir.* 48:10b, which is not easily applicable to John, whereas Jesus appoints twelve (Mk 3:13-19), who he sends out into Judea (6:7-13, 30)—possibly in fulfillment of this prophecy. Whilst John may fulfill some aspects of Elijah's return, it is possible that Jesus was seen to complete the task in earnest; Joynes, “A Question of Identity,” p. 25; cf. Wink, *Op. Cit.*, p. 3. Likewise, S. Moyise sees the Malachi prophecy as barely applicable to the ministry of John. Idem, “Jesus and the Scriptures of Israel,” in Holmén, *Op. Cit.*, p. 1160.

to Ps 22:2 (21:2 LXX): ὁ θεὸς ὁ θεός μου πρόσχες μοι ἵνα τί ἐγκατέλιπές με.¹⁴⁶ We are clearly meant to infer that the bystanders (τῶν παρεστηκότων) mistakenly took this lamentation as a plea for Elijah, given the similarity between Ἐλωϊ and Ἠλίας. Later Jewish tradition clearly envisaged Elijah as a helper for poor and pious Jews, particularly in a time of need (*b. Ber.* 3b; 29b; *b. Sabb.* 109b; *b. Ned.* 50a).¹⁴⁷ Likewise, there are several instances where Elijah intervenes in order to stop the execution of the righteous: during the trials of R. Eleazar b. Parta (*Ab. Zar.* 17b), R. Meir (*Ab. Zar.* 18b), and Nahum of Gimzo (*Taan.* 21a; *San.* 109a). It is also said that Elijah shepherds the righteous, and those who have suffered for their sins, into paradise (*Pirke R. El.* xvi). On this basis, it seems reasonable to think that a similar belief underscores the crowds' concern in Mk 15:36b: ἄφετε ἴδωμεν εἰ ἔρχεται Ἠλίας καθελεῖν αὐτόν.¹⁴⁸ Conversely, Elijah's reputation as a wonder-worker (*Sir.* 48:4-5), coupled with the expectation of his return (*Mal* 4:5; *Sir.* 48:10), conceivably could have served as the basis for the crowds' expectation.¹⁴⁹

There are, however, some significant problems with this reading: Firstly, it is not at all clear that Ἐλωϊ (Aramaic: ܐܠܘܝ) could reasonably be mistaken for Ἠλίας.¹⁵⁰ And even if we were to grant their similarity, are we really to suppose that the crowds at Jesus' crucifixion—presumably Aramaic speakers themselves—were unable to distinguish between the Aramaic terms for 'God' and 'Elijah'? Öhler's objection seems warranted: "Es ist daher auch gemeint worden, daß die Umstehenden keine Juden gewesen, da jene sicherlich die Anrufung Gottes von der Elias unterscheiden hätten können und zudem an der Fortsetzung nach ܐܠܘܝ erkennen hätten müssen, daß Jesus Ps 22 zitiert... Historisch ist eine solche Verwechslung

¹⁴⁶ R. Brown, *The Death of the Messiah: From Gethsemane to the Grave: A Commentary on the Passion Narratives in the Four Gospels*. New York: Doubleday, 1994, 2.1051-54.

¹⁴⁷ Lindbeck, *Elijah and the Rabbis*, pp. 44-94; Weiner, *The Prophet Elijah in the Development of Judaism*, pp. 43-77; Ginzberg, *Op. Cit.*, 4.233-35, 6.339.

¹⁴⁸ Jeremias, *Op. Cit.*, p. 939. It may be presumptuous to see Elijah only in an eschatological capacity in Second Temple Judaism—although the concept of a 'divine helper' or 'intervener', is certainly present in contemporary eschatological thought; A. R. Michalak, *Angels as Warriors in Late Second Temple Jewish Literature*, WUNT 330. Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2012.

¹⁴⁹ Yarbrow Collins, *Op. Cit.*, p. 755.

¹⁵⁰ Matthew seems aware of this problem and changes Ἐλωϊ to Ηλι in Mt 27:46; Jeremias, *Op. Cit.*, p. 936 n. 62; Taylor, *Gospel According to St. Mark*, p. 593.

ohne böses Motiv daher nicht möglich.”¹⁵¹ In fact, the entire context seems implausible.¹⁵² It is possible that the crowds deliberately twisted Jesus’ words—but what reason would they have for doing this?¹⁵³ Similarly, it is conceivable that the crowds merely heard Jesus’ unintelligible cry to heaven, and mistakenly interpreted it as a call for Elijah-the-helper (i.e. *Ab. Zar.* 17b, 18b; *Taan.* 21a; *San.* 109a).¹⁵⁴ Even so, given the thematic continuity of the narrative, it is more reasonable to think that Mk 15:34-36 is a creation of the author—but this solution comes with its own problems. Why would Mark devote a considerable portion of the crucifixion narrative (roughly a quarter), to a confusing discussion amongst the bystanders concerning Elijah, occurring, as it were, off centre-stage? It is, in fact, the last thing that occurs before Jesus’ death in v. 37: ὁ δὲ Ἰησοῦς ἀφείλς φωνήν μεγάλην ἐξέπνευσεν. What, then, is this seemingly irrelevant excursus doing at such a crucial juncture in the Markan narrative?

Perhaps Mark is using this opportunity to correct false perceptions about Jesus and Elijah—commonly attributed to the crowds (i.e. τῶν παρεστηκότων) elsewhere in the

¹⁵¹ Öhler, *Op. Cit.*, pp. 144-145.

¹⁵² Even if we suppose the bystanders were Romans, why would they know anything about Elijah? Supposing then, that the bystanders in vv. 35-36 were Jews, how were they able to intervene in the Crucifixion scene with such ease? It is difficult to imagine that the Romans tolerated the offering of refreshments to victims of capital punishment. We do know, however, of a later tradition in which women offered a narcotic drink to those condemned to death, in order to numb the senses (*b. San.* 43a)—although this does not seem to be done during the execution itself. It is possible that this underscores the offer in 15:36, in order to prolong Jesus’ life to witness the intervention of Elijah—but the sheer implausibility of the event suggests that 15:36 owes more to Ps 69:21 (“They gave me poison for food, and for my thirst they gave me sour wine to drink”) than it does to history. We are not told whether Jesus rejects the offer of wine—in 14:25, he says, “I shall not drink again of the fruit of the vine until the day when I drink it new in the kingdom of God.” It is unclear whether or not this indicates the inauguration of God’s kingdom from the Cross, or whether Jesus abstains in view of the coming kingdom—in either case, Matthew repeats Mark’s assertion (Mt 27:18), whereas in Luke, Jesus is offered vinegar by the soldiers in mockery (Lk 23:36-37), and in John, Jesus declares his thirst, and drinks the vinegar which he is offered (Jn 19:28-30).

¹⁵³ It is possible that Mark intends this to show the crowds’ misguided obsession with Elijah—when someone greater than Elijah is there before them; Öhler, *Op. Cit.*, pp. 150-152.

¹⁵⁴ Such a misunderstanding, if historically based, would not explain the recurrence of the Elijah-motif in the other two “thesis statements” (i.e. the Baptism [John]; the Transfiguration [Elijah]). Witherington, *Op. Cit.*, p. 38.

Gospel (6:14-16; 8:27-28; cf. οἱ γραμματεῖς in 9:11). According to Whitters, “The account of Jesus’ last articulate words (15:34-36) reiterates a frequent concern of Mark’s Gospel, that Jesus not be identified as Elijah.”¹⁵⁵ Indeed, this is coupled with a corrective view of Jesus’ Messiahship in 15:32—the crowds, like Peter in 8:29-33, have failed to understand that the Messiah must suffer: ὁ χριστὸς ὁ βασιλεὺς Ἰσραὴλ καταβάτω νῦν ἀπὸ τοῦ σταυροῦ ἵνα ἴδωμεν καὶ πιστεύσωμεν! And perhaps, as Dautzenberg and Yarbrow Collins suggest, the crowds have also failed to realize the necessity of Elijah’s suffering (as John)—the bystanders still hold to the old view of a glorious interceding Elijah, which Mark intends to counter (i.e. 9:13).¹⁵⁶ Mark intends to show the tragic irony in their misunderstanding: Elijah will not come (he has already come and suffered), and the Messiah will not save himself—instead, he *must* die.¹⁵⁷

It is not, however, entirely true that Mark discards this ‘old’ view of Elijah—recall 9:4-5, where Elijah appears in glory, with Moses and Jesus, in the cloud of the divine presence (i.e. υἱὸς τοῦ ἀνθρώπου...ἔλθῃ ἐν δόξῃ τοῦ πατρὸς αὐτοῦ μετὰ τῶν ἀγγέλων τῶν ἁγίων—8:38; cf. 13:26). As we’ve seen, many aspects of the Transfiguration (and similarly Jesus’ baptism) appear again in the Crucifixion scene—albeit reversed: (a) In 9:3, Jesus is robed in glory (ἐγένετο στίλβοντα λευκὰ λίαν)—whereas at the Crucifixion, he is stripped of his garments, and they are divided amongst his murderers (15:24). (b) In 9:3, Jesus appears in brilliant light, and is then enveloped by the divine cloud (9:7)—whereas in 15:33, darkness descends across ὅλην τὴν γῆν. (c) In 9:4, Elijah appears in glory, conversing with Jesus—whereas in 15:35-36, Elijah is unresponsive, and nowhere to be seen. (d) In 9:4, Jesus is flanked by the

¹⁵⁵ Whitters, “Why Did the Bystanders Think Jesus Called upon Elijah before He Died?” p. 120. It is alleged that 6:14-16 and 8:27-29 support this polemic—whilst this is clearly not the intention of these passages. Although, it should be inferred from the Transfiguration (9:2-8) and the Elijah discourse (9:11-13), that Jesus is not there identified with Elijah—except this is clearly not their primary purpose.

¹⁵⁶ Dautzenberg, *Op. Cit.*, pp. 1088-91; Yarbrow Collins, *Op. Cit.*, pp. 755-757; cf. Öhler, *Op. Cit.*, pp. 139-53.

¹⁵⁷ Mark regularly shows the irony in misunderstanding and amazement elsewhere in the Gospel: 1:22, 27; 2:12; 3:32; 4:41; 5:15, 20, 33, 42; 6:2, 6, 20, 50, 51; 7:37; 9:6, 15, 32; 10:24-26, 32; 11:18, 32; 12:11-12, 17; 14:33; 15:5, 44; 16:5-6, 8; W. R. Telford, “Maze and Amazement in Mark’s Gospel,” *Way* 41 (2001): 339-348. In the words of Yarbrow Collins: “They [Mark’s readership] know that Elijah will not come, since suffering and death are ordained both for Elijah (John the Baptist) and for Jesus.” Idem, *Op. Cit.*, p. 757.

righteous: two angelic figures (cf. 10:40)—whereas in 15:27, Jesus is crucified with the unrighteous: two criminals, ἓνα ἐκ δεξιῶν καὶ ἓνα ἐξ εὐωνύμων αὐτοῦ. (e) In 9:7, God makes his dramatic proclamation over the whole scene (ἐγένετο φωνὴ ἐκ τῆς νεφέλης)—whereas in 15:33, Jesus cries out to the heavens in desperation—but God, like Elijah, is unresponsive: Jesus appears forsaken. (f) And in 9:7, we hear the divine voice declare from above, οὗτός ἐστιν ὁ υἱός μου ὁ ἀγαπητός—whereas in 15:39, it is declared from below, ἀληθῶς οὗτος ὁ ἄνθρωπος υἱὸς θεοῦ ἦν (by a centurion, no less).¹⁵⁸

It seems to be Mark's intention to juxtapose these two events (the Transfiguration and Crucifixion)—in which case, the confusion concerning Elijah in 15:35-36 may be seen in a new light. There is good reason to suggest that Mark believes Elijah will, in fact, intervene dramatically in history on the ἡμέρᾳ τοῦ κυρίου—as one of the ἀγγέλων τῶν ἁγίων heralding the Son of Man, he will gather the elect from the four winds, rescuing them from the unfolding cosmic destruction (13:24-27; 8:28; as glimpsed in the Transfiguration;

¹⁵⁸ Further parallels (also with Jesus' Baptism) can be found in C. Myers, *Binding the Strong Man: A Political Reading of Mark's Story of Jesus*. Maryknoll: Orbis, 1988, pp. 390-91; Witherington, *Op. Cit.*, p. 38. A similar parallel can be found in the suggestions of the bystanders (15:36) and Peter (9:5)—which both foolishly misunderstand the event that is taking place before them. As noted, all this parallelism seems deliberate: Mark's readers know that Jesus will soon come, ἐν τῇ δόξῃ τοῦ πατρὸς αὐτοῦ μετὰ τῶν ἀγγέλων τῶν ἁγίων (8:38; cf. 9:1; 13:26; 14:62). We are shown a brief glimpse of this glorious event in the Transfiguration (9:2-8)—but again, the perceptive reader knows that this must be preceded by suffering: the Son of Man will be rejected and killed (8:31; 9:9, 12, 31; 10:33-34, 45; 12:7; 14:21, 41), and likewise, his followers will be persecuted, even killed (8:34-38; 9:13; 10:29-30, 39; 13:9-25). The task of the faithful disciple, therefore, is to endure in the face of tribulation (13:13)—for when the Son of Man comes in the clouds, flanked by the holy ones, he will only welcome those who persevere (8:34-38). Those who wish to enter into the glory of the Son of Man, must pass through beatings, trials, hatred, and betrayal (13:9-13)—they must deny themselves, take up their crosses and follow him, even to their death (8:34). Indeed, Jesus has already gone ahead of them (10:32): he, too, was beaten (14:65; 15:15, 19), prosecuted (14:53-65; 15:1-15), hated (15:16-36), and betrayed (14:43-50). These direct parallels between Jesus' suffering and that 'predicted' of his followers, suggest that Mark has deliberately fashioned the Passion narrative to mirror the traumatic experience of contemporary Christians—he is the *Christus exemplar*: he provides the blueprint for patient and faithful endurance (14:36, 61; 15:4-5; cf. Peter in 14:66-72). We can see that Mark's purpose was, to a large extent, pastoral: Elijah's failure to appear in 15:35-36 may then be seen to take on a new meaning; cf. Collins, *Op. Cit.*, p. 710, 755.

9:4).¹⁵⁹ The imagery of the Crucifixion then, by mimicking the “miniature representation of that eschatological event” in 9:2-8, may be seen to represent the symbolic antitype of the Parousia.¹⁶⁰

In this regard, it is possible that Mark is wishing to correct those who were expecting Elijah to intervene in the suffering of the early Christians: Elijah did not intervene to save Jesus—Jesus *had* to suffer: in this way, the Parousia must be preceded by a sort of ‘anti-Parousia’.¹⁶¹ Likewise, those who have forsaken themselves to follow the Son of Man should not expect Elijah to rescue them in the midst of persecution—they, too, *must* suffer.¹⁶² But all this suffering will not be in vain: indeed, the faithful can expect Elijah to intervene on the Day of the Lord—albeit as an accessory to the main event: τὸν υἱὸν τοῦ ἀνθρώπου ἐρχόμενον ἐν νεφέλαις μετὰ δυνάμεως πολλῆς καὶ δόξης (13:26). The irony of the scene, therefore, would lie not in the fact that Elijah has *already* come, or that Jesus is *not* Elijah: but rather, that the bystanders, much like the high priest in 14:62, will, indeed, one day see Elijah ἔρχεται καθελεῖν αὐτόν. In a dramatic reversal of the Crucifixion scene, Elijah will appear as one of the angelic heralds of the Son of Man, when he comes in the glory of God, with great power, on the clouds of heaven.¹⁶³ The Crucifixion, therefore, points forward to the event, which the Transfiguration offered only a glimpse: the Parousia.

It is still quite possible that 15:35-36 is intended to discourage Jesus’ identification with Elijah, or intended to reinforce John’s Elijahship—but there is nothing in the immediate context that clearly suggests either of these readings. Instead, Elijah’s absence at the Crucifixion seems to signify the necessity of Jesus’ suffering, and therefore, the suffering of

¹⁵⁹ See section 2.2.

¹⁶⁰ Boobyer, *St. Mark and the Transfiguration Story*, pp. 29, 119.

¹⁶¹ Which points ahead to the future event: before his glorious return, the Son of Man must first appear inglorious—thus Perrin: “The crucifixion [is] an enthronement of the centurion’s confession, and of the parousia.” Idem, “The Interpretation of the Gospel of Mark,” *Int* 30 (1976): 123.

¹⁶² J. A. Kelhoffer, *Persecution, Persuasion and Power: Readiness to Withstand Hardship as a Corroboration of Legitimacy in the New Testament*, WUNT 270. Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2010, pp. 184-221.

¹⁶³ This time not in weakness, not in darkness, and not forsaken by God: a complete reversal. This picture offers vindication to the patient sufferers Mark describes (8:34-38; 13:9-13)—it is only a partial misunderstanding to see a triumphant Messiah-figure (cf. Peter in 8:31-33): the Son of Man will, indeed, come triumphantly in τῇ δόξῃ τοῦ Πατρὸς αὐτοῦ (8:38), with δυνάμεως πολλῆς καὶ δόξης (13:26), and ἐκ δεξιῶν καθήμενον τῆς δυνάμεως.

his followers (i.e. Elijah will not intervene)—and at the same time, it seems to point ahead to the Parousia, when Elijah will, in fact, accompany the Son of Man in glory. Having said that, it is still unclear why Mark decided to insert this puzzling excursus (15:35-36) in between the two most dramatic moments of the Passion narrative: Jesus' tormented cry (v. 34) and his final breath (v. 37). In the final analysis, 15:34-36 remains something of a perplexing end to a most perplexing life.

2.5. Summary:

We can see that Elijah is identified in a variety of ways throughout the Gospel of Mark: (i) Elijah is mentioned three times as a figure of popular expectation (6:15; 8:28; 15:35-36), although Mark seems to present the opinion of the crowds in an unfavourable light. (ii) At the Transfiguration (9:4-5), Elijah himself appears as a heavenly visitor, much like in popular expectation—albeit prefiguring the eschatological glory of the Son of Man. (iii) And in the discourse following the Transfiguration (9:11-13), Jesus seems to identify the Elijah *redivivus* of Mal 4:5-6 with the recently executed John the Baptist.

Whilst Mark does not consistently maintain the identity of Elijah (9:11-13; cf. 9:4-5), it does seem that he uniformly associates Elijah's appearance with eschatological expectation—which, as we've seen, conforms to the broader Jewish understanding of Elijah as the harbinger of the Day of the Lord (Mal 4:5-6; *Sir.* 48:10-11; *Sib. Or.* 2:187-89; *m. Sot.* 9:15). In this regard, Mark uses the figure of Elijah to reinforce one of his chief aims: to persuade the reader that the Day of the Lord has arrived in the person of Jesus. This is achieved in two distinct ways: through Elijah's presence at the Transfiguration (9:2-8) and in the identification of John the Baptist as Elijah (9:11-13). In both cases, Elijah is subordinated to the Son of Man: in 9:2-8, like one of the ἄγγέλων τῶν ἁγίων who will herald the coming of the Son of Man in glory (Mk 8:38; 9:1; 10:40; 13:26-27; 14:62; cf. 15:27, 35-36), and in vv. 11-13 as the one who has come before the end to suffer ahead of the Son of Man (i.e. John the Baptist—Mk 6:16-29). Mark clearly believed that the end of the world was at hand, and that Jesus would play the central role in inaugurating the heavenly kingdom of God. By co-opting the expectation of Elijah's return, Mark was sending a dire message to his readers: Elijah has already come (and suffered), therefore the ἡμέρα τοῦ κυρίου is imminent. Indeed, soon his readers (like Peter, James, and John) will see the Son of

Man, with Elijah and Moses at his side, coming on the clouds of heaven in the glory and power of God.

3. Elijah and John the Baptist

Although he is not mentioned by name, there seems to be almost unanimous agreement amongst interpreters that Mk 9:11-13 identifies John the Baptist as Elijah *redivivus*.¹⁶⁴ As we've seen, this reading is understandable, considering that apart from Jesus, John is the only other Markan figure to suffer the sort of fate described in v. 13: καὶ ἐποίησαν αὐτῷ ὅσα ἤθελον—and given that Jesus seems to be identified with the figure in 9:12b, the identification of John with Elijah seems inevitable.¹⁶⁵ Nonetheless, as we've also seen, John is still never explicitly identified as Elijah—and in other cases, the identification is even less clear, or rather, non-existent (6:14-16; 8:27-29; 9:2-8; 15:34-36).¹⁶⁶ There are, however, several instances elsewhere in Mark's Gospel that may suggest John's identification with Elijah, albeit indirectly—i.e. points of contact between John's portrayal and passages concerning Elijah in the Jewish scriptures (1 & 2 Kgs; Mal 4:5-6).¹⁶⁷

3.1. *Elijah in the introduction to John's ministry: 1:2-3.*

The scriptural introduction to John's ministry in 1:2-3 speaks of a messenger sent to prepare the way of the Lord—φωνὴ βοῶντος ἐν τῇ ἐρήμῳ ἐτοιμάσατε τὴν ὁδὸν κυρίου εὐθείας ποιεῖτε τὰς τρίβους αὐτοῦ. This is immediately followed by a description of John's sojourn in the wilderness, his redemptive activity, his appearance and, ultimately, his subordination to Jesus in vv. 7-11.¹⁶⁸

Whilst Mark attributes the entire quotation to Isaiah, this is, in fact, only true of v. 3 (Isa 40:3)—v. 2 could be a reference to Exod 23:20 LXX: καὶ ἰδοὺ ἐγὼ ἀποστέλλω τὸν ἄγγελόν

¹⁶⁴ Lane, *Op. Cit.*, p. 51; Faierstein, *Op. Cit.*, p. 75; Öhler, *Elia*, p. 119, 470-; Casey, *Op. Cit.*, p. 126; Goulder, *Op. Cit.*, p. 1292; Wink, *Op. Cit.*, p. 13.

¹⁶⁵ See section 2.3.

¹⁶⁶ Wink, *Op. Cit.*, p. 13.

¹⁶⁷ Thus Winn, "Mark's presentation of John the Baptist is clearly imitating the figure of Elijah...we find that a large block of Markan text shows clear and obvious signs that it is dependent on the text of the Elijah-Elisha narrative [of 1 and 2 Kgs]." Idem, *Elijah-Elisha*, p. 76.

¹⁶⁸ As Marxsen notes, the description of John—aside from his Baptism in the Jordan—is primarily theological and a-historical. In Marxsen's words, "The Baptist would still be the one who appears in 'the wilderness' even if he had never been there in all his life." Idem, *Op. Cit.*, p. 38f.

μου πρὸ προσώπου σου, ἵνα φυλάξῃ σε ἐν τῇ ὁδῷ.¹⁶⁹ Although, it also bears a resemblance to Mal 3:1 LXX, which, in turn, probably owes its form to Exod 23:20: ἰδοὺ ἐγὼ ἐξαποστέλλω τὸν ἄγγελόν μου καὶ ἐπιβλέψεται ὁδὸν πρὸ προσώπου μου.¹⁷⁰ It is often assumed that the messenger (τὸν ἄγγελόν) in Mal 3:1 should be identified with the return of the prophet Elijah in Mal 3:22-23 (4:5-6 MT) as the harbinger of eschatological judgment.¹⁷¹ This eschatological context makes Mal 3:1 seem the most probable source for the quotation in Mk 1:2b—and given that it serves to introduce John the Baptist, it could conceivably be intended to indicate his Elijanic identity.¹⁷² Similarly, John's proclamation (ἔρχεται ὁ ἰσχυρότερός μου ὀπίσω μου—1:7-8) is not unlike the expected figure in Mal 3:1 LXX: ὁ ἄγγελος τῆς διαθήκης ὃν ὑμεῖς θέλετε ἰδοὺ ἔρχεται λέγει κύριος παντοκράτωρ.¹⁷³

Nevertheless, there are several problems with viewing 1:2-3 as an implicit identification of John the Baptist as Elijah.¹⁷⁴ Firstly, as we've seen, Mark confuses the source(s) of the quotation, thereby making any connection with Mal 3:1 significantly less apparent. And even if Mark's early readers were astute enough to pick up on the hidden Malachi reference in Mk 1:2, there is no guarantee that they would have then associated Mal 3:1 with vv. 22-23: καὶ ἰδοὺ ἐγὼ ἀποστέλλω ὑμῖν Ηλῖαν τὸν Θεοβίτην.¹⁷⁵ In this regard, it seems to be a remarkably roundabout way of identifying John as Elijah—if that is, in fact, Mark's

¹⁶⁹ See discussion in Yarbrow Collins, *Op. Cit.*, p. 135.

¹⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 136.

¹⁷¹ Öhler, *Elia*, pp. 2-6; Joynes, "Angelic Identity," pp. 1-13; W. C. Kaiser Jr., "The Promise of the Arrival of Elijah in Malachi and the Gospels," *Grace Theological Journal* 3 (1982): 227.

¹⁷² Öhler, *Op. Cit.*, pp. 31-47; Yarbrow Collins, *Op. Cit.*, p. 136.

¹⁷³ On this basis, Wink argues that John fulfills the task of Elijah, according to Jesus: ἀποκαθιστάνει πάντα. *Idem*, *Op. Cit.*, p. 16.

¹⁷⁴ Cf. Öhler: "Wenn in Mk 1,2 daher der Gottesbote genannt wird, dessen Ankunft mit dem Täufer geschehen ist, so würde Johannes hier bereits als der wiedergekommene Elia bezeichnet." *Idem*, *Op. Cit.*, p. 33.

¹⁷⁵ Or, indeed, whether Mark made this connection himself. As Joynes notes, this is merely "assumed". *Idem*, "A Question of Identity," p. 19. Likewise, it is unnecessary to suppose the Isaiah ascription is due to Isaiah's popularity over Malachi; D. Dormeyer, "Mk 1,1-15 als Prolog des ersten idealbiographischen Evangeliums von Jesus Christus," *BI* 5 (1997): 197; cf. Yarbrow Collins, *Op. Cit.*, p. 136.

intention.¹⁷⁶ Although, it is possible that Mark and his readership were in the habit of applying the concept of *forerunner* exclusively to Elijah—which after all, is an understandable reading of Mal 3:22-23 (cf. Mk 9:11-12a): πρὶν ἔλθειν ἡμέραν κυρίου τὴν μεγάλην καὶ ἐπιφανῆ.¹⁷⁷ In this case, Mk 1:2-3 may give us an indication of the way in which Mark and his community imported this understanding of Elijah into broader tradition concerning a forerunner figure (i.e. Isa 40:3)—which sort of scriptural association is evident elsewhere in the Gospel (particularly in the Passion narrative).¹⁷⁸

The citation of Mal 3:1 and Isa 40:3 in Mk 1:2-3, however, is not as concerned with the precise *identity* of John the Baptist, as it is with his *function* in the unfolding of the divine plan: namely, as the harbinger of the υἱοῦ θεοῦ in v. 1, who is coming to usher in the era of eschatological renewal (as described in Isa 40:4-5; Mal 3:2-5). Whilst this may indirectly reflect John's role as Elijah (i.e. 9:13), it does not seem to be Mark's intention here to reveal John's true Elijanic identity—but rather, to place John in his rightful place: as merely a signpost to Jesus, the true messiah.¹⁷⁹ In this regard, vv. 2-3 cannot be said to *clearly* identify Elijah as John the Baptist: here, John is primarily envisaged as the 'forerunner'—but as we've seen, Mark's inconspicuous use of Malachi may be seen to indirectly reinforce his later affirmation of John's Elijahship (9:13).

3.2. *Elijah and the appearance of John: 1:6.*

Perhaps a clearer example can be found in 1:6, where John is described as wearing camel's hair, eating locusts and wild honey, and having a leather belt (ζώνην δερματίνην) around his waist. This description agrees closely with the appearance of Elijah in 4 Kgs 1:8 LXX: καὶ

¹⁷⁶ Unless Mark expects his readers to read 9:11-13 back into 1:2-3 (which doesn't explicitly mention John)—in which case, the identification would still be circuitous.

¹⁷⁷ Though there is evidence for the expectation of other 'forerunners': i.e. Jeremiah (2 *Macc.* 2:1-12, 15:11-16; 5 *Ezra* 2:18) or possibly Moses; N. Wieder, "The Idea of a Second Coming of Moses," *JQR* 46 (1956): 356-366.

¹⁷⁸ See the use of Zechariah 9-14, Daniel 7, and significant portions of the 'Psalms of the Righteous Sufferer' and Deutero-Isaiah; Marcus, *Way of the Lord*, pp. 153-198.

¹⁷⁹ This tendency is probably both theological (i.e. the validation of Jesus' ministry) and polemical (i.e. the implicit invalidation of John's messiahship); K. L. Schmidt, *Der Rahmen der Geschichte Jesu*. Berlin: Trowitzsch & Sohn, 1919, p. 34; Marxsen, *Op. Cit.*, pp. 39-40; cf. Wink, *Op. Cit.*, p. 11.

ζώνην δερματίνην περὶ τὴν ὀσφὺν αὐτοῦ.¹⁸⁰ It is also conceivable that John's garment of camel's skin (τρίχας καμήλου) may have its origin in the description of Elijah in 4 Kgs 1:8 LXX as a "hairy man" (ἄνθρωπος δασύς).¹⁸¹

Whilst it is possible that the belt and hairy garment are merely intended to present John in traditional prophetic garb (i.e. Zech 13:4), the extent of verbal agreement should be seen as an unmistakable reference to the description of Elijah in 4 Kgs 1:8.¹⁸² Many have suggested that this is a clear revelation of the 'Elijianic secret'.¹⁸³ Yet the description of John's appearance and ascetic lifestyle is not uniformly Elijianic—Elijah did not wear the hair of a camel, or subsist on a diet of locusts and wild honey.¹⁸⁴ In this regard, it is not impossible that this description may owe something to the John of history: as Taylor shows, Josephus describes the appearance of his teacher, Bannus, in a relatively similar fashion.¹⁸⁵

Still, John the Baptist's 'leather belt' may be "as clear an allusion to 2 Kgs 1:8 as one [i.e. a Biblical scholar] could wish for."¹⁸⁶ Nevertheless, it is not obvious how clear this allusion would have been for Mark's readership. As Goodacre notes, "Even if one's eye or ear catches the quick sentence of reference to John the Baptist's clothing in an already tightly packed

¹⁸⁰ See discussion in Schweizer, *The Good News*, p. 29.

¹⁸¹ Evans, "The Baptism of John in a Typological Context," in *Dimensions of Baptism: Biblical and Theological Studies*, eds. Porter and A. R. Cross, The Library of New Testament Studies. London: Bloomsbury, 2002, pp. 48-49; Wink, *Op. Cit.*, pp. 6-7; Taylor, *Op. Cit.*, p. 37.

¹⁸² Marxsen, *Op. Cit.*, p. 35. Conversely, Taylor argues, "As (Greek) readers, we are meant to get the hint that John looked like Elijah, though this need not lead us to assume that since the Gospel writers wanted to connect John with Elijah, the description of what he wore must be invented." Idem, *Op. Cit.*, p. 35.

¹⁸³ Thus Wink: "His clothing is like that of the prophet Elijah, his diet that of the strict Nazarites of old. 'All' the people hear him and repent. The perceptive reader cannot miss Mark's point: John is the prophet of the end-time, the eschatological messenger of Malachi; yes, he is Elijah who is to 'come first to restore all things.'" Idem, *Op. Cit.*, p. 3; Rothschild, *Op. Cit.*, pp. 129-130.

¹⁸⁴ But this does not go so far as to disprove that "early Christians had intended to invent an Elijah-like description of John"—contra Evans, "Typological Context," p. 48.

¹⁸⁵ Josephus, *Vita* 11: ἐσθῆτι μὲν ἀπὸ δένδρων χρώμενον. According to Taylor: "When Josephus refers to Bannus wearing what trees provided, he may well have been referring to the camel's hair that stuck to the branches, and not necessarily to 'leaves or, perhaps, bark,' as Thackeray suggest." Idem, *Op. Cit.*, p. 35; cf. H. St. J. Thackeray, trans., *Josephus: The Life and Against Apion*, Loeb Classical Library 1. Cambridge, MA: Heinemann, 1926, p. 7.

¹⁸⁶ Goodacre, *Op. Cit.*, p. 175.

narrative prologue, deciphering the parallel with Elijah requires not a passing acquaintance with the Elijah-Elisha cycle but a detailed knowledge of it.”¹⁸⁷ Indeed, references to the ‘leather belt’ of 2 Kgs 1:8 are mostly missing from contemporary portraits of Elijah—with the one exception of Josephus, who more or less repeats the description: ἄνθρωπον ἔλεγον δασὺν καὶ ζώνην περιειλημμένον δερματίνην.¹⁸⁸ Whatever the case, it was certainly not the most defining feature of the ‘historical’ Elijah in the minds of contemporary Jews, and not an obvious choice to reveal John’s Elijanic identity—i.e. compare Elijah’s miracles or ascension (Lk 4:25-26; *Sir.* 48:2-5; *Liv. Pro.* 21:4-15).¹⁸⁹

The question then follows, whether this can be regarded as an ‘identification’, in the proper sense—given the obscurity of the allusion. As we’ve noted, Mark’s description of John in v. 6, and surrounding, does not show any other verbal similarities with the ‘historical’ Elijah.¹⁹⁰ Although, the location of John’s ministry activity could be seen to provide an additional clue: we know that Elijah sojourned in the wilderness, albeit out of necessity (1 Kgs 19:4-9)—and similarly, Elijah crosses the Jordan before his ascension (2 Kgs 2:7-8).¹⁹¹ There are, however, a number of first century C.E. figures associated with both the wilderness (ἐρήμῳ) and the Jordan river, none of whom appear to be identified with Elijah—if anything, a comparison with Joshua seems more likely.¹⁹²

¹⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 177.

¹⁸⁸ Josephus, *Ant.* 9.2; cf. *Sir.* 48:1-10; *Liv. Pro.* 21:1-15; *LAB* 48:1-2.

¹⁸⁹ Wiener, *Op. Cit.*, pp. 35-37; H. Gunkel, *Elijah, Yahweh, and Baal*, trans. K. C. Hanson. Eugene: Wipf & Stock, 2015, pp. 49-72.

¹⁹⁰ Conversely, it may be Mark’s purpose to present John the Baptist in ‘generic’ prophetic terms (i.e. wilderness, garment, diet), in fulfillment of a then-known prophetic type—rather than identifying him with a particular character *redivivus*.

¹⁹¹ Evans, “Typological Context,” pp. 49; Charlesworth, “The Historical Jesus,” in Holmén, *Op. Cit.*, p. 124; *ibid.*, p. 2236.

¹⁹² The Egyptian: Josephus, *J.W.* 2:261; *Ant.* 20:171; Theudas; *Ant.* 20:97-8. Evans, “Josephus on John the Baptist,” in *The Historical Jesus in Context*, eds., A.-J. Levine, Allison, and J. D. Crossan. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2009, p. 58. It is, however, possible that Mark is deliberately embellishing his description of John the Baptist in terms reminiscent of Joshua (Jos 3)—without the express purpose of ‘identifying’ John as Joshua *per se*. Although, as the above shows, expectation of a Joshua *redivivus* figure was probably a feature of contemporary Judaism; in which case, the location of John’s ministry may suggest an association with Joshua.

In the final analysis, it is difficult to know the significance of the ζώνην δερματίνην in v. 6: it is an obscure reference hidden amidst mostly anecdotal detail—but considering its verbal agreement with the description of Elijah in 4 Kgs 1:8, and John’s eventual association with Elijah (i.e. 9:13), it is unlikely that this similarity is unintentional.¹⁹³

3.3. *Elijah/Ahab/Jezebel and John/Herod/Herodias: 6:17-29.*

Similarly, the relationship between John the Baptist and Herod in 6:17-29 bears a strong resemblance to that of Elijah and Ahab.¹⁹⁴ Elijah shares a strained (i.e. 1 Kgs 18:17; 21:20), if somewhat receptive (i.e. 18:41-19:1; 21:27-29), relationship with king Ahab, but stands in opposition to Ahab’s foreign wife, Jezebel—and particularly, her patronage of the Asherah cult (18:19)—and in turn, Jezebel resolves to kill him (19:2)—albeit unsuccessfully. Likewise, John receives a sympathetic audience from Herod (i.e. Mk 6:20, 26), but his opposition to Herod’s marriage to his brother Philip’s wife, Herodias (6:17-18), causes Herodias to plot, like Jezebel, to put John to death (6:19, 24). At this point, however, the two narratives diverge—Herodias is successful when, at a royal banquet, her daughter dances and pleases Herod and his courtiers, prompting Herod to reluctantly grant Herodias’ wish, conveyed through her daughter, that John be killed (6:21-28). John the Baptist is then beheaded and his head is brought to the banquet on a platter. The narrative ends with John’s disciples taking his body and laying it in a tomb.¹⁹⁵

The similarities are obvious: a righteous prophet confronts a weak king because of his wicked wife, who, in turn, pursues the prophet to death. But, as previously noted, the divergences are similarly clear: (a) Elijah reproaches Ahab for leading Israel astray with the worship of foreign gods, under Jezebel’s influence (1 Kgs 18:18; 21:20-24)—whereas John opposes the lawfulness of Herod’s marriage to his brother Philip’s wife, Herodias (Mk 6:17-18). (b) Jezebel is unsuccessful in her attempt to kill Elijah: Elijah escapes into the wilderness, and it is Jezebel, instead, who is killed (1 Kgs 19:3-4; 21:23-24; 2 Kgs 9:30-37)—whereas John is incarcerated, and executed, apparently on a whim. And clearly, the

¹⁹³ K. Backhaus concurs—arguing that isolated motifs do not support interpreting John’s garments as Elijah *redivivus*, but generally they might. Idem, “Echoes from the Wilderness,” in Holmén, *Op. Cit.*, p. 1775.

¹⁹⁴ Janes, *Op. Cit.*, pp. 448-450; Goodacre, *Op. Cit.*, p. 75.

¹⁹⁵ For a full discussion of narrative details see Taylor, *Op. Cit.*, p. 242-250.

whole business of the banquet—the courtiers, the dance, and the platter—bears absolutely no similarity to the narrative of 1 Kgs 17-21.¹⁹⁶

It does, however, correspond very closely to many aspects of the story of Esther:¹⁹⁷ (a) As in 6:16-29, the narrative revolves around the banquets (δεῖπνον—Est 5:5 LXX [A]; Josephus, *Ant.* 11.6.7, 11; δεῖπνον—Mk 6:21) of the royal court of king Artaxerxes. (b) Like Herodias' daughter, Esther is a young girl (κοράσιον—Est 2:9; κοράσιον—Mk 6:28), whose beauty attracts the attention of a pliable king. (c) The king is so pleased with Esther (ἤρεσεν—Est 2:9; ἤρεσεν—Mk 6:22), that he promises to give her anything she desires (7:2b; and also 5:3, 6): ἕως τοῦ ἡμίσους τῆς βασιλείας μου (cf. ἕως ἡμίσους τῆς βασιλείας μου—Mk 6:23). (d) Esther's wish is granted, and Haman is exposed at an elaborate banquet, and is subsequently executed. As Aus notes, there is further correspondence in *Est. Rab.* 4.11, where Artaxerxes' former queen, Vashti, is beheaded, and her head is brought in to the king upon a platter (cf. Mk 6:25, 28).¹⁹⁸

The extent of this agreement seems fairly conclusive in establishing a literary relationship between Mk 6:16-19 and the Esther legend. And yet, it is clear that Mark, or his source, does not intend this complex literary allusion to identify John the Baptist as the wicked Haman—it is, rather, an appropriation, or imitation, utilizing various aspects of the Esther legend.¹⁹⁹ We should be careful, therefore, before reading too much into Mark's intent in these literary allusions: contra Janes, "As Mark dramatizes the death, focusing on the

¹⁹⁶ Thus Goodacre, "If the beheading of John the Baptist were all we had, we might well join with others in their skepticism [in seeing an Elijah-John connection]." Idem, *Op. Cit.*, p. 75.

¹⁹⁷ R. D. Aus, *Water into Wine and the Beheading of John the Baptist: Early Jewish-Christian Interpretation of Esther 1 in John 2:1-11 and Mark 6:17-29*, Brown Judaic Studies 150. Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1988, pp. 52-55; J. G. Crossley, "History From the Margins: The Death of John the Baptist," in *Writing History, Constructing Religion*, eds., idem and C. Karner. Aldershot: Ashgate, 2005, pp. 150-153; Taylor, *Op. Cit.*, pp. 246-247.

¹⁹⁸ Aus, *Op. Cit.*, pp. 41-42. Taylor also notes similarities with the beheading in *Jdt.* 13:1-10a; idem, *Op. Cit.*, p. 247.

¹⁹⁹ Aus, *Op. Cit.*, pp. 30-74. This may be a fairly clear example of what Winn calls *mimesis* or *imitatio*: "In addition to using quotations, allusions, and echoes of Jewish Scripture, gospel writers could actually use the very structure, details, and literary formulas found in the narratives of Jewish Scripture to formulate their own narrative traditions." Idem, *Elijah-Elisha*, p. 118.

women, he reconfirms John's identity as Elijah and links not only John's death, but also Jairus's daughter's resurrection to Jesus' own resurrection."²⁰⁰

The muted similarities between John's death (6:16-29) and Jezebel's pursuit of Elijah (1 Kgs 19:1-3) are not enough to support such a confident assertion. That said, Mark may offer a subtle suggestion as to John's identity in 6:19: we are told that Herodias "desires" (ἤθελεν) to kill John—which, as we know, is the manner of Elijah's suffering in 9:13 (καὶ ἐποίησαν αὐτῷ ὅσα ἤθελον). This, admittedly, is a fairly impenetrable clue—and, much like the ζώην δερματίνην in 4 Kgs 1:8, it requires a remarkably detailed knowledge of the Markan text. Even then, it would seem that it is not 6:16-29, itself, that reveals John's identity as Elijah—but rather, the *a posteriori* interpretation of this event in 9:13.²⁰¹ Were it not for 9:13, there would be no reason to make anything of the similarities between 6:16-29 and 1 Kgs 19:1-3, which are, in fact, less numerous than those with Esther—as it stands, the 'main point' of the passage still does not seem to be "the identification of John as Elijah to Jesus' Messiah."²⁰²

3.4. Summary:

As we've seen, it is problematic to view these scriptural allusions as clear indications of John the Baptist's true identity as Elijah. These allusions are either circuitous (Mk 1:2-3; Mal 3:1; cf. Mal 4:5), obscure (ζώην δερματίνην—Mk 1:6; 4 Kgs 1:8), or better explained with reference to other scripture (Mk 6:16-29; Est 2-7; cf. 1 Kgs 19:1-3). Whilst it is relatively certain that Mk 9:13 identifies John with Elijah, we can still run the risk of oversimplifying Mark's use of Jewish scripture by importing this understanding back into the narrative—and as 6:16-29 demonstrates, Mark doesn't necessarily use scriptural allusions for the purpose of 'identifying' his characters. Nevertheless, Mark's passing reference to John's ζώην δερματίνην is unlikely to be accidental, and it is probable that Mark sought to

²⁰⁰ Janes, *Op. Cit.*, p. 464.

²⁰¹ As Marxsen notes, Mark has the propensity to read later statements in the Gospel into those made earlier. Marxsen calls this "backward-directed prophecy." Idem, *Op. Cit.*, p. 37.

²⁰² Janes, *Op. Cit.*, p. 455. Although, there is certainly a deliberate parallel being made between the execution of John and the execution of Jesus (cf. 9:12b-13). S. Miller, *Women in Mark's Gospel*, JSNTSupp 259. Edinburgh: A&C Black, 2004, pp. 87-89.

reinforce Elijah's identification in 9:13 by offering this very subtle hint at the outset of his narrative.²⁰³

²⁰³ Although, this hesitation, on Mark's part, may suggest that it is not due to his material, but is rather his creation—especially considering that in both cases the identification is somewhat strained (Mk 1:6; 9:13). This sentiment is echoed by Goodacre: "Perhaps Mark is setting up this John-Elijah identification as a means of countering a dominant tradition and his reason, as so often, is Christological and soteriological. Rather than, as his tradition, having Jesus as Elijah heralding the great and terrible day of the Lord, he has John as the Elijah who heralds the embodiment of that day of the Lord, Jesus." Idem, *Op. Cit.*, p. 82.

4. Elijah and Jesus

In addition to these connections between John the Baptist and Elijah, there are numerous passages where Jesus seems to share Elijanic traits. The crowds have already identified Jesus with Elijah in 6:15 and 8:28, and as we've noted, several of Jesus' miracles correspond quite closely to the account of the 'historical' Elijah in 1 and 2 Kgs.²⁰⁴ These similarities are striking, especially considering the almost unanimous agreement amongst scholars that John is consistently portrayed as Elijah throughout Mark's Gospel—yet as Joynes notes, “We cause more problems than we solve when we try to understand the material simply in terms of one category [i.e. John is Elijah *redivivus*].”²⁰⁵ With this in mind, the following will examine the proposed links between the presentation of Jesus and the 'historical' and eschatological figure of Elijah in 1 and 2 Kgs and later Jewish literature.²⁰⁶

4.1. *Elijah and Jesus' sojourn in the wilderness: 1:12-13.*

In Mk 1:12-13, the spirit sends Jesus from his baptism into the wilderness (τῇ ἐρήμῳ), where he remains for forty days (τεσσαράκοντα ἡμέρας). There, we are told, he is tempted by Satan, and is with the wild animals, and the angels (οἱ ἄγγελοι) minister to him. This

²⁰⁴ See section 2.1.

²⁰⁵ Joynes, “A Question of Identity,” p. 28; cf. Lane, *Op. Cit.*, p. 51; Faierstein, *Op. Cit.*, p. 75; Öhler, *Elia*, p. 119, 470-; Casey, *Op. Cit.*, p. 126; Goulder, *Op. Cit.*, p. 1292; Wink, *Op. Cit.*, p. 13. Indeed, a few recent studies have moved away from this paradigm, signaling a fresh approach to the issue: i.e. the works of Brodie, Roth, and Winn have explored some aspects of the literary relationship between Mark's Gospel and the Elijah-Elisha cycle of 1 and 2 Kgs. These studies have shown, to some extent, the way in which Mark has imitated or incorporated the “structure, details, and literary formulas found in the narratives of Jewish Scripture”—and in this case, the narratives of Elijah and Elisha in the presentation of Jesus' ministry. These works, however, have not thoroughly explored the implications of this literary relationship on the question of Elijah's identity in the Gospel—a question, which, as we've seen, is of great importance to the Markan author. Brodie, *The Crucial Bridge*; Roth, *Hebrew Gospel*; Winn, *Mark and the Elijah-Elisha Narrative*. See the survey of their approaches in Watts, *Mimetic Criticism*, pp. 11-23.

²⁰⁶ Only Winn's study has surveyed the proposed relationship between Mark and 1 and 2 Kgs in detail—but his study does not venture beyond the Deuteronomistic histories. This survey is the first of its kind—albeit a sketch, suggesting threads to be taken up in a further study.

episode brings to mind Elijah's sojourn in the wilderness in 1 Kgs 19:4-8. In this narrative, Elijah flees the wrath of Jezebel into the wilderness (τῇ ἐρήμῳ). There, he despairs of life and begs God for death, until an angel (ὁ ἄγγελος κυρίου) brings him food to eat and water to drink. Again, the angel comes and gives him food and water, and Elijah continues for forty days and nights: τεσσαράκοντα ἡμέρας καὶ τεσσαράκοντα νύκτας ἕως ὅρουσιν Χωρηβ.

The similarities are undeniable: i.e. the wilderness, the ministry of angels, and the period of forty days.²⁰⁷ Having said that, similar parallels can also be found in other formative myths of the Jewish scriptures: Moses spends forty days on Mount Sinai (Exod 24:18; 34:28); Yahweh tests Israel for forty years in the wilderness (Deut 8:2-4); angels minister to the righteous, and deliver them from wild animals (Ps 91:11-13); and Abraham (Gen 22:1; *Jub.* 17:15-18) and Job (1:8-12; 2:3-6) are both tested by Yahweh.²⁰⁸ Moreover, the verbal similarities are too slight to establish 1 Kgs 19:4-8 as the literary model for Mk 1:12-13 with any confidence.²⁰⁹ In isolation, it would be doubtful whether Mk 1:12-13 is dependent on the Elijah-Elisha cycle at all—but the verses following (1:14-20) may suggest that something more complex is at work.

4.2. *Elijah and Jesus' call of disciples: 1:16-20.*

Jesus then leaves the wilderness and begins proclaiming the nearness of the kingdom of God and the necessity of repentance. Then in 1:16-20, Jesus sees two fishermen, Simon and Andrew, casting a net into the sea. Jesus calls them to follow him—and they immediately leave their work and follow (ἠκολούθησαν) him. Again, Jesus sees James and John, the sons of Zebedee, mending fishing nets in a boat with their father. Jesus calls them and they

²⁰⁷ The fact of which many commentators are aware: Marcus, *Mark 1-8*, pp. 167-171; France, *The Gospel of Mark*, pp. 83-87; cf. Yarbrow Collins, *Op. Cit.*, pp. 151-152. Whereas the dissimilarities are likewise obvious: the sending of the πνεῦμα, the temptation from Satan, and the animals. Elijah does, however, dwell with the wild animals in 1 Kgs 17:6, and Winn mounts a fairly compelling case that 19:4 envisages something like the temptation of Elijah—as Elijah struggles with his prophetic mission. Idem, *Op. Cit.*, p. 72; cf. H. Mahnke, *Die Versuchungsgeschichte im Rahmen der synoptischen Evangelien: Ein Beitrag zur frühen Christologie*, Beiträge zur biblischen Exegese Theologie 9. Frankfurt: Lang, 1978, pp. 25-38.

²⁰⁸ Collins, *Op. Cit.*, p. 151; S. R. Garrett, *The Temptation of Jesus in Mark's Gospel*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998, pp. 55-56.

²⁰⁹ Mahnke, *Op. Cit.*, pp. 25-38; cf. Winn, *Op. Cit.*, p. 72.

immediately leave the boat with their father and servants, and follow after (ὀπίσω) him. Similarly in 3 Kgs 19:15-21, following Elijah's forty days and nights in the wilderness, God commands Elijah to anoint Hazael the king of Aram and Jehu the king of Israel. Then Elijah finds Elisha son of Shaphat plowing with twelve yoke of oxen. Elijah places his mantle on Elisha, and Elisha agrees to follow (ἀκολουθήσω) him. Elisha then bids farewell to his parents, slaughters the oxen, and leaves to follow after (ὀπίσω) Elijah.

The sequence of Jesus' movement from the wilderness to the call of his disciples establishes a very close parallel to Elijah's movements in 1 Kgs 19:4-21—the similarity of which, could easily be explained by literary dependence.²¹⁰ Considering that the dual narrative of Elijah's sojourn in the wilderness and the call of Elisha is unique in contemporary Jewish literature, it is fairly likely that it loosely serves as the model for Jesus' actions in Mk 1:12-20.²¹¹ Nevertheless, it would be something of a stretch to see “strong thematic similarities” between Jesus' proclamation of the Kingdom (v. 14-15) and Elijah's consecration of Hazael and Jehu (1 Kgs 19:15-18; cf. 2 Kgs 10).²¹² Again, aside from two statements (ἠκολούθησαν αὐτῷ—Mk 1:18; ἀπῆλθον ὀπίσω αὐτοῦ—v. 20; cf. καὶ

²¹⁰ Winn, *Op. Cit.*, pp. 74-75; Brodie, *Op. Cit.*, p. 91; Marcus, *Mark 1-8*, pp. 183-184. Collins suggests that this is more than literary dependence: “The details and wording [1 Kgs 19:19-21; Mk 1:16-20] are, on the whole, different...[but] if there is an allusion to the story about Elijah calling Elisha, then the Markan story is a deliberate intensification of it.” Idem, *Op. Cit.*, p. 157. Indeed, the key difference is the Markan formula (καὶ εὐθὺς ἀφέντες—1:18; καὶ εὐθὺς ἐκάλεσεν αὐτοὺς καὶ ἀφέντες—1:20)—cf. Elisha asks permission to leave his parents, and throws a feast for the people (1 Kgs 19:20-21). It would almost seem that Mark is presenting Elisha in an unfavourable light, compared to the eagerness of the disciples—which is particularly interesting, considering that Mark seems to portray the disciples unfavourably with Elisha in response to Jesus' Passion predictions (see section 4.6.).

²¹¹ Although, it must be noted, the ‘call narrative’ also shares common characteristics with the biographies of Greek philosophers; A. J. Droge, “Call Stories in Greek Biography and the Gospels,” in *SBL 1983 Seminar Papers*, ed. K. H. Richards, SBLSPS 22. Chico: Scholars Press, 1983, pp. 245-257.

²¹² Winn, *Op. Cit.*, p. 72. Although, it is possible that Mark has merely imported Jesus' unusual proclamation of the kingdom (i.e. Mk 4:11-32) into the structure of the Deuteronomistic narrative—as we've seen, Mark's concern does not seem to be with the details, but rather the chronological framework of Elijah's emergence from the wilderness. Additionally, this shared structure may be intended to imply what it noticeably lacking from Mark's account: God's commissioning of Jesus, like Elijah, in the wilderness (cf. 1 Kgs 19:11-18).

ἀκολουθήσω ὀπίσω σου—3 Kgs 19:20), the verbal similarities are few, and the details are markedly different between the two narratives.

In this case, Winn suggests that Mark may be employing an imitative technique, reminiscent of Livy—quoting Walsh to this effect: “He [Livy] utilizes one main source, reorganizes the structural arrangement, and introduces new material to achieve more dramatic effects.”²¹³ This is, of course, possible—and it may explain the apparent reorganization and dissemination of the Elijah-Elisha cycle: i.e. the ascription of the ζώνην δερματίνην to John in 1:6 (4 Kgs 1:8), and the presence of “wild animals” in 1:13 (i.e. κόρακες—3 Kgs 17:4-6; cf. 19:4-8). It is equally possible, however, that the similarities are due to a Markan source, where the literary allusions were perhaps clearer—in this regard, it is conceivable that the process of redaction may have muted the verbal agreement, whilst retaining the general structure, which is clearly modeled on the narrative of 3 Kgs 19:4-8 and 17:4-6.²¹⁴

In either case, the question arises: what is the purpose of this allusion to the ‘historical’ Elijah? As we’ve seen, aspects of the Elijah legend have already been applied to both John (Mk 1:6) and Jesus (vv. 12-13, 16-20)—in this instance, it seems unlikely that it was Mark’s purpose to identify either with Elijah *redivivus*. Nonetheless, it is possible that Mark has merely incorporated two pre-existing traditions where both John and Jesus were respectively identified with Elijah—however, 1:4-20 seems to form a cohesive narrative, and there is no indication that Mark has moved between sources (cf. 4:1-33; 13; 14-16).²¹⁵ At this point, it is not clear if the similarities here are due to a Markan tendency to imitate Jewish scripture in a relatively indiscriminate manner (i.e. Est 2-7; Mk 6:16-29; Exod 24:15-16; Mk 9:2-8

²¹³ P. G. Walsh, *Livy: His Historical Aims and Methods*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1961, p. 190; Winn, *Op. Cit.*, pp. 72-73, n. 9.

²¹⁴ It is possible to speak of ‘layers’ of scriptural allusions in the Markan narrative—for example, Hatina: “Since Mark uses quotations from other books of Scripture, such as Psalms, Daniel, Zechariah and the Pentateuch, how does one confirm that it is only Isaiah which is intended as an interpretive paradigm? After all, several studies have convincingly documented that Mark was indebted to the story of the first Exodus. While I would not go to the extent of viewing the first Exodus as a hermeneutical key any more than the second exodus, it nevertheless must be incorporated as part of Mark’s larger sphere of influence.” Idem, *In Search of a Context: The Function of Scripture in Mark’s Narrative*, JSNTSupp 232. Edinburgh: A&C Black, 2002, p. 23.

²¹⁵ W. G. Kümmel, *Introduction to the New Testament*. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1975, p. 85.

etc.), or whether they point to a pre-Markan tradition portraying Jesus as an Elijah-like figure, or even identifying him with Elijah *redivivus*.²¹⁶

4.3. *The healing of Jairus' daughter: 5:22-43.*

In 5:22-43, Jesus agrees to heal the daughter of Jairus, a synagogue ruler, and is briefly interrupted by a woman, who is healed of bleeding at the touch of Jesus' clothing. On the way, Jairus is informed of his daughter's death, and is comforted by Jesus, who continues on to Jairus' house with Peter, James, and John. At the house, mourners have gathered, but Jesus tells them not to weep because the child is not dead, only sleeping—which prompts laughter. The girl's parents, the disciples, and Jesus enter the girl's room and Jesus commands her to get up, at which point she gets up and walks—again, Jesus instructs them to keep the miracle secret.

Likewise, this story bears some similarity to Elijah's miraculous cure of the widow of Zarephath's son in 1 Kgs 17:17-24 (cf. Elisha in 2 Kgs 4:25-37). Upon the death of her son, the widow confronts Elijah and accuses him of causing the death. Elijah takes the child, and carries him to the upper chamber and lays him in his bed. Elijah cries out to God and stretches himself out over the child three times—at which point, the child is revived. Elijah brings the child downstairs and the woman recognizes that he is a man of God.

On the surface of it, there is no reason to suppose a direct literary relationship between the resurrection of Jairus' daughter and the widow of Zarephath's son (or the Shunammite woman's son, for that matter).²¹⁷ These stories do, however, seem to conform to a similar type found elsewhere in the Gospels (Mt 8:5-13, Lk 7:1-10; Mk 7:24-30, Mt 15:21-28; Mt 17:14-20, Lk 9:37-43; Lk 7:11-17; Jn 4:46-54; cf. Jn 11:38-44), and in rabbinic literature (most notably *b. Ber.* 34b; *b. Meg.* 17b; *b. Yeb.* 121b; *b. B. Kam.* 50a; *y. Ber.* 9d; *y. Sheq.*

²¹⁶ Dautzenberg thinks it is the latter: Mark is deliberately countering a tradition in his source material where Jesus is, in fact, identified as Elijah—and yet traces of this identification remain in his treatment of the material. Idem, *Op. Cit.*, p. 1080.

²¹⁷ Cf. Roth, *Op. Cit.*, pp. 6, 35, 38. The two accounts (1 Kgs 17:17-24; Mk 5:22-43) fail to show any verbal or structural similarities—which seems decisive in ruling out literary dependency.

48d).²¹⁸ Some common characteristics emerge between these accounts: (a) the request of a parent, (b) the suffering of a child, (c) the undertaking of the request by the healer, (d) the performance of the miracle, and (e) the child restored and united with their parent.²¹⁹ In this regard, all of these accounts can be said to roughly correspond to the miracle at Zarephath (1 Kgs 17:17-24). On this basis, it is possible that the portrayal of later Jewish miracle workers (i.e. Jesus, Hanina ben Dosa, Honi) evidences something of an 'Elijianic type'—i.e. the deeds of holy men were modeled after those of the hasid *par excellence*: Elijah.²²⁰ This may suggest an alternative approach in assessing the literary relationship between Mark and the Elijah-Elisha cycle—it could be that the deeds of charismatic holy men were constructed within the framework of pre-existing legends (i.e. the Moses-Joshua legends, the Elijah-Elisha cycle). In this case, perhaps the broad similarities between Mk 5:22-43 and 1 Kgs 17:17-24 have less to do with direct literary dependence, than they do with contemporary practices in story-telling and legend-making.²²¹

4.4. *The multiplication of food: 6:35-44; 8:1-9.*

In 6:35-44 and 8:1-9, Jesus multiplies food for a large crowd of people. In the first occurrence in 6:35-44, whilst in a deserted place, Jesus is given five loaves of bread and two fish and feeds a crowd of five thousand—with twelve baskets left over. In 8:1-9, Jesus is given seven loaves of bread and a few small fish and feeds a crowd of four thousand—similarly, seven baskets are left over. Whilst these episodes bear some resemblance to Elijah's multiplication of meal and oil for the widow of Zarephath in 1 Kgs 17:11-16 (cf. Elisha in 2 Kgs 4:1-7), a better analogue is found in Elisha's multiplication of twenty loaves of barley

²¹⁸ Eve, *Op. Cit.*, pp. 272-295; T. Ilan, *Jewish Women in Greco-Roman Palestine: An Inquiry into Image and Status*, TSAJ 44. Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2006, p. 52, n. 22.

²¹⁹ Eve, *Op. Cit.*, pp. 288-289.

²²⁰ Vermes, *Jesus the Jew*, p. 90; Freyne, *Galilee*, pp. 331-332. B. J. Malina concurs, suggesting that Jesus was first understood as an Israelite Holy Man like Elijah or Elisha. Idem, "Social-Scientific Approaches and Jesus Research," in Holmén, *Op. Cit.*, 765.

²²¹ Whilst perhaps less significant, Jesus' miraculous journey across the sea of Galilee on foot in 6:47-52 loosely parallels Elijah's crossing of the Jordan on foot in 2 Kgs 2:8—and Hanina ben Dosa reputedly performs a similar miracle (y. Ber. 9a). The miracle also bears similarity with Exod 14:21-29—as well as Hellenistic myth (Homer, *Il.* 13.23-31). Yarbrow Collins, *Op. Cit.*, pp. 328-329.

and fresh ears of grain to feed a hundred people (2 Kgs 4:42-44)—where again, like 6:35-44 and 8:1-9, there are leftovers.

Roth argues that this passage indicates a Markan tendency to present Jesus as Elisha, to John the Baptist's Elijah—like Elijah, John passes the prophetic mantle onto Jesus, who, in turn, receives a double-portion of his spirit.²²² This is not, however, a tacit identification of Jesus with Elisha—in many ways, Jesus exceeds the greatness of Elisha: Elisha performs sixteen miracles to Elijah's eight, whereas Jesus performs twenty-four.²²³ Similarly, with the multiplication of the loaves, Jesus surpasses Elisha: Jesus feeds five thousand, whereas Elisha feeds one hundred—and even more so with Elijah, who only feeds the widow of Zarephath and her son.

The structural similarities between 2 Kgs 4:42-44 and Mk 6:30-44 along with 8:1-10 are fairly clear: (a) a crowd is hungry or deprived of food, (b) a small amount of food is presented, (c) the command is given to distribute the food, (d) doubt is expressed by the servants, (e) the command is reiterated, (f) the food is distributed, (g) a large number of people eat, and (h) some food is left over.²²⁴ It is significantly less clear, however, whether this is intended to reveal Jesus' identity as Elisha—Elisha is, of course, nowhere mentioned in the gospel.²²⁵ Likewise, there is no extant evidence that seems to expect Elisha's return—and it is difficult to see Jesus' characterization with Elisha as any indication of the "Spirit of

²²² Roth, *Op. Cit.*, pp. 9-10, 34, 59. As Elijah imparts his spirit to Elisha beside the river Jordan, so Jesus is filled with the spirit in John's baptism. This is possible, but we must note, the heavenly proclamation in Mk 1:11 presents a radically different picture to 2 Kgs 2:1-18—the implication is that Jesus is imparted with far more than Elijah's spirit; J. Dart, "Better than Elijah, Greater than Elisha," in *Decoding Mark*, ed. idem. Harrisburg: Trinity Press, 2003, pp. 27-33. Similarly, M. Goulder, "Jesus Without Q," pp. 1295-1296; Brodie, "Jesus as the New Elisha: Cracking the Code," *Expository Times* 93 (1981): 39-42; Brown, "Jesus and Elisha," *Perspective* 12 (1971): 84-105.

²²³ *Ibid.*, pp. 16, 113.

²²⁴ Marcus, *Op. Cit.*, pp. 415-16; Donahue and Harrington, *The Gospel of Mark*, pp. 209-211; Brodie, *Op. Cit.*, p. 92; Winn, *Op. Cit.*, pp. 82-85.

²²⁵ It is perhaps somewhat strenuous to see the supposed identification of John the Baptist as Elijah (Mk 1:2-3, 6) as an implicit identification of Jesus as Elisha—as we've seen, the former inference is not clear, making the latter appear even less likely; cf. D. G. Bostock, "Jesus as the New Elisha," *ExpTim* 92 (1980): 39-41; cf. M. Fatehi, *The Spirit's Relation to the Risen Lord in Paul: An Examination of Its Christological Implications*, WUNT 128. Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2000, p. 315.

Elijah” at work in Jesus’ ministry. Nevertheless, we can be fairly confident that Jesus’ miracles in Mk 6:30-44 and 8:1-9 are deliberately modeled on Elisha in 2 Kgs 4:42-44: thus Winn, “That the Elijah-Elisha narrative is a literary source for Mark at this point in the gospel is virtually certain.”²²⁶

4.5. Jesus and the Syrophoenician woman: 7:24-30.

Whilst there are clearly significant differences, it has also been suggested that Jesus’ conversation with the Syrophoenician woman in 7:24-30 bears many similarities with that of Elijah and the widow of Zarephath in 1 Kgs 17:7-16. Whilst in Tyre, Jesus meets a Gentile woman with a sick daughter. The woman requests Jesus to heal her daughter of a demon and Jesus refuses: ἄφες πρῶτον χορτασθῆναι τὰ τέκνα; οὐ γάρ ἐστιν καλόν λαβεῖν τὸν ἄρτον τῶν τέκνων, καὶ τοῖς κυναρίοις βαλεῖν. The woman rebuts Jesus—κύριε καὶ τὰ κυνάρια ὑποκάτω τῆς τραπέζης ἐσθίουσιν ἀπὸ τῶν ψιχίων τῶν παιδίων—at which point he grants her request and casts the demon from her daughter. Similarly, in 1 Kgs 17:7-16, Elijah is in Sidon, where he meets a starving Gentile woman and her child. Elijah speaks to the woman, requesting bread and water, at which point he is refused: καὶ ποιήσω αὐτὸ ἐμαυτῇ καὶ τοῖς τέκνοις μου καὶ φαγόμεθα καὶ ἀποθανούμεθα. Elijah rebuts the woman, requesting that she make a small loaf of bread for him, and then one for herself and her child—at which point his request is granted by the woman, and the miracle of the meal and oil jar occurs.

Winn has summarized the points of agreement as follows: (a) a character makes a request for help (1 Kgs 17:10-11; Mk 7:26); (b) the request is refused, and both times bread is mentioned (1 Kgs 17:12; Mk 7:26); (c) the first character rebuts the refusal, mentioning that there is enough bread (1 Kgs 17:13; Mk 7:28); and the request is granted (1 Kgs 17:15; Mk 7:29).²²⁷ Similarly, in both cases the recipient of the miracle is a gentile woman with a suffering child—and there is probably some connection between the two locations: Elijah’s

²²⁶ Winn, *Op. Cit.*, p. 84. The purpose of this imitation, however, seems much less clear—but it is possibly intended to show the greatness of Jesus, compared to Elisha (cf. Mt 12:6).

²²⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 86-87.

miracle takes place in Sidon, whereas Jesus is in Tyre (only to return to Sidon at the completion of the miracle).²²⁸

It is probable, on this basis, that Mark's account is structurally dependent on the miracle at Zarephath in 1 Kgs 17:7-16—although the purpose is certainly not to identify Elijah with Jesus, considering that in Mk 7:24-30, it is the Syrophoenician woman who fulfills the role of Elijah.²²⁹ Conversely, it seems to reinforce the theme of gentile inclusion (Mk 5:1-20; 7:14-23), which is possibly the major theme of the section—i.e. 7:24-30 is followed by the repetition of the multiplication of the loaves in the gentile Decapolis.²³⁰ Indeed, in Lk 4:25-27, the author is well aware of the controversial nature of Elijah's great miracle among the gentiles: whilst there were many widows in Israel, the Lukan Jesus says—καὶ πρὸς οὐδεμίαν αὐτῶν ἐπέμφθη Ἠλίας εἰ μὴ εἰς Σάρεππα τῆς Σιδωνίας πρὸς γυναῖκα χήραν (likewise, Elisha in v. 27). It is possible that a similar understanding underlies Mark's use of 1 Kgs 17:7-16 in the story of the Syrophoenician woman. In this regard, Mk 7:24-30 may reveal an alternative way in which Mark has incorporated Jewish scripture into his narrative, not for the purpose of identification (cf. 2 Kgs 1:8; Mk 1:6), nor purely for literary reasons (Est 2-7; Mk 6:16-29)—but rather, to reveal a significant theological shift: the kingdom of God is to extend beyond Israel.²³¹

²²⁸ Tyre and Sidon are often paired together (Jer 25:22; 27:3; 47:4; Ezek 27:8; Joel 3:4; Zech 9:2; Mt 11:21-22; Lk 10:13-14).

²²⁹ In much the same way, the use of Est 2-7 in Mk 16:29 in no way 'identifies' John the Baptist with Haman the Agagite. See section 3.3.

²³⁰ It is possible that the first miracle of the loaves represents the Jews (6:35-44), and the second the Gentiles (8:1-9): i.e. the ἑπτὰ στυρίδας symbolizes the world; cf. the δώδεκα κοφίνων symbolizes Israel. For the significance of geographical setting see Hooker, *Mark*, p. 188. See also K. Iverson, *Gentiles in the Gospel of Mark: 'Even the Dogs Under the Table Eat the Children's Crumbs'*, Library of New Testament Studies 339. Edinburgh: A&C Black, 2007, pp. 68, 71-73.

²³¹ This fact is brought out even more clearly in Jesus' comment in the Matthean redaction (15:24): οὐκ ἀπεστάλην εἰ μὴ εἰς τὰ πρόβατα τὰ ἀπολωλὸτα οἴκου Ἰσραήλ.

4.6. *Jesus' three Passion predictions: 8:31-32; 9:31-32; 10:33-34; and Peter's three denials: 14:66-72.*

Jesus predicts his death for the first time in 8:31-32: ὅτι δεῖ τὸν υἱὸν τοῦ ἀνθρώπου πολλὰ παθεῖν καὶ ἀποδοκιμασθῆναι ὑπὸ τῶν πρεσβυτέρων καὶ τῶν ἀρχιερέων καὶ τῶν γραμματέων καὶ ἀποκτανθῆναι καὶ μετὰ τρεῖς ἡμέρας ἀναστῆναι. Peter fails to understand, and attempts to rebuke Jesus—to which Jesus responds indignantly (v. 33b). Jesus repeats this prediction in 9:31-32, following the same formula (rejection/deliverance, death, then resurrection)—and again, the disciples are uncomprehending. Jesus predicts a third time, expanding somewhat on the formula (the Son of Man will be delivered to the Gentiles, then mocked, spat upon, and scourged)—and yet the request of James and John shows that the disciples still fail to grasp the necessity of his suffering.

In like manner, Elijah predicts his departure three times: first, he begs Elisha to let him go, as the Lord has sent him to Bethel, but Elisha swears never to abandon him; likewise, Elijah is sent to Jericho, but Elisha will not leave him; and finally, Elijah heads to the Jordan, but again, Elisha refuses to leave him. Twice the sons of the prophets taunt Elisha, asking whether he is ignorant of the fact that Yahweh will soon take his master away—and each time, Elisha responds: וְשָׁמַעְתִּי יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵי אֲדָמָה (2 Kgs 2:3, 5).

Peter is similarly taunted in Mk 14:66-72—he is accused three times of associating with Jesus, and denies each charge, ultimately cursing himself and swearing: ὅτι οὐκ οἶδα τὸν ἄνθρωπον τοῦτον ὃν λέγετε (v. 71). This fulfills Jesus' prediction that Peter will deny him three times before the cock crows twice—to which Peter had fatefully responded, like Elisha: ἐὰν δέη με συναποθανεῖν σοι οὐ μή σε ἀπαρνήσομαι (14:29-31).

It is conceivable that Mark had 2 Kgs 2:1-12 in mind when constructing Jesus' three Passion predictions and Peter's three denials—although, their interspersal throughout the narrative (8:31-32; 9:31-32; 10:33-34; 14:66-72), as well as marked differences (the respective fates of the teachers; the response of the disciples), may suggest otherwise.²³²

²³² Winn, *Op. Cit.*, pp. 92-99, 110-112; cf. Yarbrow Collins, *Op. Cit.*, p. 397. Thus Winn: "Elijah's final journey with his disciple Elisha and the predictions of Elijah's departure found in 2 Kings 2, provide the Markan evangelist with the perfect model both for Jesus' final journey to Jerusalem and for introducing Jesus' death...the evangelist creatively uses the structure of this Elijah-Elisha episode as the basis structure for his entire central section," *ibid.*, p. 99. Likewise: "There are significant reasons to conclude that Mark's account

These differences, however, may also serve to illustrate Mark's present purpose in utilizing the Elijah-Elisha cycle—in opposition to the disciples, Elisha appears as the model of faithfulness: he refuses to abandon his master (cf. Mk 14:31b, 50-51), refuses to deny him (cf. 14:66-72), and remains faithful till the end (cf. 14:26-31).²³³ Whilst this may be an indirect identification of Jesus as the Elijah-figure, it does not seem to be the primary purpose of this allusion.²³⁴

4.7. *The cleansing of the Temple: 11:15-18.*

As previously discussed, the angelic figure of Mal 3:1 (מִלְאָכִי) is probably identified with Elijah (אֵלִיָּה) in 4:5—both figures are sent ahead of divine judgment (הָאֲדֹנָי—3:1b; יְהוָה—4:5). Additionally, Mal 3:1b seems to envisage a separate figure, the Lord “whom you seek”, who is probably the same as the “Angel of the Covenant” (מַלְאֲכֵי הַבְּרִית אֲשֶׁר-אֲתָם הִפְצִימִי), who will come suddenly into the Temple. It is probably this second figure who will be like a “refiner's fire” (כֶּהֱנֵף מְצַרֶּה) and will purify the descendants of Levi, and restore the Temple cult in vv. 2-4. The meaning of the passage, however, is very difficult to interpret—and it is not clear whether the אֲשֶׁר-אֲתָם מְבַקְשִׁים is the same as אֲתָם מְבַקְשִׁים, or indeed, if the מִלְאָכִי should also be identified with הַבְּרִית.

This is further complicated by the LXX of Mal 3:1, which seems to imagine two separate figures coming into the Temple: καὶ ἐξαίφνης ἦξει εἰς τὸν ναὸν ἑαυτοῦ κύριος ὃν ὑμεῖς ζητεῖτε καὶ ὁ ἄγγελος τῆς διαθήκης ὃν ὑμεῖς θέλετε ἰδοὺ ἔρχεται. Because of this, it is even

of Peter's triple denial of Jesus is an imitation of Elisha's triple affirmation of Elijah,” *ibid.*, p. 112.

Nevertheless, Winn has not adequately explained the clear divergences between the accounts: the dissimilarities are surely too great to suggest literary dependency—perhaps, again, we are dealing with a pre-Markan tradition where the allusions to 2 Kgs 2:1-12 may have been clearer. Perhaps in his redaction of the material, Mark has interspersed throughout the Gospel what was once a cohesive literary unit.

²³³ Roth, *Op. Cit.*, pp. 17-18; Winn, *Op. Cit.*, pp. 98, 111-112.

²³⁴ We must also note the correspondence between the tomb of Jesus and Elisha (Mk 16:8; cf. 2 Kgs 13:20-21)—thus Brodie asks: “Is it coincidence that Mark's picture of the women fleeing frightened from the tomb is partly matched by the apparent fright of the pall-bearers [at the resurrection in 2 Kgs 13:21] and by their implied flight from the tomb of Elisha?” Surprisingly, this similarity is not mentioned in Wright, *Resurrection*.

less clear which figure will come like fire (ὥς πῦρ), and purify the Temple priesthood (vv. 2-3).

By the early second century B.C.E., this figure “like fire” (ὥς πῦρ) had become identified with Elijah: καὶ ἀνέστη Ηλίας προφήτης ὥς πῦρ (*Sir.* 48:1).²³⁵ This understanding also appears in *Liv. Pro.* 21, which describes Elijah’s birth in this way: καὶ ὅτι ἐν πυρὶ αὐτὸν ἐσπαργάνουν καὶ φλόγα πυρὸς ἐδίδουν αὐτῷ φαγεῖν (v. 2b). Furthermore, he will judge Israel with the sword and fire (ἐν ῥομφαίᾳ καὶ ἐν πυρί—*Liv. Pro.* 21:3b)—in similar terms, John the Baptist describes the “mightier one” (i.e. Jesus) in Mt 3:11b: αὐτὸς ὑμᾶς βαπτίσει ἐν πνεύματι ἁγίῳ καὶ πυρί.²³⁶ It seems, on this basis, that later tradition conflated the distinct figures of Mal 3:1-4 with Elijah (4:5-6), and applied this understanding to the purification of the Temple cult (αὐτὸς εἰσπορεύεται ὥς πῦρ χωνευτηρίου καὶ ὥς πόα πλυνόντων—v. 3 LXX).²³⁷

Similarly in Mk 11:15-17, Jesus enters the Temple (εἰσελθὼν εἰς τὸ ἱερόν—v. 15), and drives out the moneychangers, allowing no one to enter, and saying to the chief priests and scribes: οὐ γέγραπται ὅτι ὁ οἶκός μου οἶκος προσευχῆς κληθήσεται πᾶσιν τοῖς ἔθνεσιν; ὑμεῖς δὲ πεποιήκατε αὐτὸν σπήλαιον ληστῶν (v. 17). In so doing, Jesus is clearly citing Isa 56:7, and making an allusion to Jer 7:11 (μὴ στήλαιον ληστῶν ὁ οἶχός μου)—but the action

²³⁵ It seems this literary similarity (ὥς πῦρ—Mal 3:2; *Sir.* 48:1) has often escaped the attention of many biblical scholars; cf. D. Flusser, *Judaism and the origins of Christianity*. Jerusalem: Magnes Press, 1988, p. 42; S. McKnight, *Jesus and His Death: Historiography, the Historical Jesus, and Atonement Theory*. Waco: Baylor University Press, 2005, p. 185; H. H. Drake Williams, *The Wisdom of the Wise: The Presence and Function of Scripture Within 1 Cor. 1.18-3:23*, AGAJU 49. Leiden: Brill, 2001, pp. 282-283.

²³⁶ Indeed, John the Baptist’s speech bears many similarities to Mal 3:1-4:6: γεννήματα ἐχιδνῶν τίς ὑπέδειξεν ὑμῖν φυγεῖν ἀπὸ τῆς μελλούσης ὀργῆς (cf. Mal 3:1-2; 4:5)...πᾶν οὖν δένδρον μὴ ποιοῦν καρπὸν καλὸν ἐκκόπτεται καὶ εἰς πῦρ βάλλεται (cf. Mal 3:2-3)...οὐ τὸ πτύον ἐν τῇ χειρὶ αὐτοῦ καὶ διακαθαριεῖ τὴν ἄλωνα αὐτοῦ καὶ συναξει τὸν οἶτον αὐτοῦ εἰς τὴν ἀποθήκην τὸ δὲ ἄχυρον κατακαύσει πυρὶ ἀσβέστῳ (cf. Mal 3:2-3). Here, Jesus is clearly the figure who will come “with fire”—so it is conceivable that this Q tradition witnesses to an early identification of Jesus with the eschatological Elijah, καὶ κρινεῖ τὸν Ἰσραὴλ ἐν ῥομφαίᾳ καὶ ἐν πυρί (*Liv. Pro.* 21:3b); cf. Rothschild, *Op. Cit.*, p. 17, n. 41. Commentators have tended focus on Elijah’s association with fire in the comment of James and John in Lk 9:54; i.e. Allison, “Rejecting Violent Judgment: Luke 9:52-56 and its Relatives,” *JBL* 121 (2002): 459-478.

²³⁷ For further detail see D. M. Miller, “The Messenger, the Lord, and the Coming Judgment in the Reception History of Malachi 3,” *NTS* 53 (2007): 1-16.

itself could potentially have had its origins in the purification of the Temple cult in Mal 3:1-4.²³⁸

If contemporary Judaism associated Elijah *redivivus* with the purification of the Temple cult (i.e. *Sir.* 48:1), it might suggest a historical connection between Jesus' popular identification with Elijah (Mk 6:15; 8:28) and his actions in the Temple precinct (11:15-17). Moreover, if these actions truly originated with the historical Jesus, it is possible they evidence the existence of something like an "Elijah-consciousness", modeled after the figure of Mal 3:1-4: Jesus enters the Temple in order to overthrow the corrupt priesthood and purify the cultic offerings, in conscious fulfillment of the Malachi oracle.²³⁹ But in the final analysis, these similarities certainly do not constitute literary dependency, although they may suggest an earlier framework through which Jesus' ministry was interpreted—or perhaps, how Jesus interpreted his own ministry, in light of Mal 3:1-4.

4.8. Summary:

Mark has evidently conformed some elements of Jesus' ministry to the Elijah-Elisha cycle of 1 and 2 Kgs—whether in his emergence from the wilderness and call of the disciples (Mk 1:12-20), or the multiplication of loaves (6:35-44; 8:1-9), or the conversation with the

²³⁸ Yarbrow Collins, *Op. Cit.*, p. 531. Whilst it is unnecessary to suppose a direct literary relationship between Mk 11:15-17 and Mal 3:1-4, both appear to be concerned with the corruption of the priesthood, the purity of offerings, and robbery (גַּנְיָ אֶתֶם קִבְעִים אֶתִי—v. 8)—which may suggest a prior connection in the development of the tradition. For a further discussion of the relationship between Mk 11:15-17 and Malachi see Telford, *The Barren Temple and the Withered Tree: A Redaction-Critical Analysis of the Cursing of the Fig-Tree Pericope in Mark's Gospel and Its Relation to the Cleansing of the Temple Tradition*, JSNTS 1. Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1980, p. 163; C. H. Dodd, *According to the Scriptures: The Substructure of New Testament Theology*. London: Nesbit, 1952, p. 71. Joyntes suggests that Jesus "cleansed the Temple using the authority of John the Baptist as his justification", in light of John's failure to live up to the task of Elijah (Mk 9:13; cf. Mal 3-4)—but this reading seems unnecessarily complicated, especially considering that John is never directly associated with the temple. Idem, "A Question of Identity," pp. 24-25.

²³⁹ For an exploration of this 'Elijah-consciousness' see J. P. Meier, "From Elijah-like Prophet to Royal Davidic Messiah," in *Jesus: A Colloquium in the Holy Land*, ed. D. Donnelly. New York: Continuum, 2001, pp. 45-83; idem, *A Marginal Jew: Rethinking the Historical Jesus, Volume IV: Law and Love*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2009, pp. 623-624.

Syrophenician woman (7:24-30). And yet, in these instances, Jesus is not uniformly identified with Elijah: i.e. 6:35-44 and 8:1-9 resemble Elisha, and 7:24-30 seems to place Jesus in the role of the widow of Zarephath. This tendency further demonstrates the diverse and unsystematic way in which Mark has incorporated Jewish scripture into his narrative.²⁴⁰

Nevertheless, the general contour of Jesus' ministry conforms quite closely to that of Elijah: a Northern prophet, who performs great miracles (including resurrection—Mk 5:22-43; 1 Kgs 17:17-24), confronts religious authorities, attracts loyal disciples, and is ultimately delivered from death.²⁴¹ It is conceivable that these similarities are due to the influence of an early tradition identifying Jesus with Elijah *redivivus*—indeed, Mark seems to admit the popularity of this identification (Mk 6:15; 8:28), which may go some way in suggesting the nature of his source material.²⁴²

²⁴⁰ Which likewise, should urge caution before viewing similar allusions in the description of John the Baptist as an “explicit identification” with Elijah (i.e. Mk 1:6; 4 Kgs 1:8); cf. Lane, *Op. Cit.*, p. 75.

²⁴¹ Furthermore, both figures were believed to return before the end of the world (Mal 4:5-6; Mk 13:26-27). As Horsley notes, Jesus role as a prophet-like-Elijah may stem from Northern prophetic tradition, although Malachi and Sirach are decidedly Judean. Idem, “Jesus-in-Context,” in Holmén, *Op. Cit.*, p. 228; F. G. Downing, “Jesus and Cynicism,” in *ibid.*, p. 1119.

²⁴² There are some hints that Mark deliberately tried to minimize the similarities between Jesus and Elijah, so as to discourage the identification, in favour of his own (ὁἰοῦ θεοῦ—Mk 1:1). Mk 6:14-16, 8:27-30 and 9:11-13 may be seen to counter an identification of Jesus with Elijah. See Goodacre, *Op. Cit.*, pp. 81-84. M. F. Bird sees a similar Elijanic pattern in Luke (4:24-27; 7:11-17; 7:59-60; cf. Mt 8:21-22) and argues that primitive Christology regarded Jesus not as *a* prophet, but *the* prophet: i.e. one like Elijah (Deut 18:15; Acts 3:22; 7:37). Idem, “Jesus and the ‘Parting of the Ways,’” in Holmén, *Op. Cit.*, p. 1193. Likewise, J. C. Poirier, “Jesus as a Elijanic Figure in Luke 4:16-30,” *CBQ* 71 (2009): 349-363. See also, P. Guillaume, “Miracles Miraculously Repeated: Gospel Miracles as Duplication of Elijah-Elisha’s,” *Biblische Notizen* 98 (1999): 21-23; B. Lindars, “Elijah, Elisha and the Gospel Miracles,” in *Miracles*, ed. C. F. D. Moule. London: Mowbray, 1965, pp. 63-79.

5. Summary and conclusion

In these final remarks, I wish to summarize the results of the present study, and evaluate the significance of this research in relation to both previous and future studies. It has been the aim of this study to give a full account of Mark's treatment of the figure of Elijah in his Gospel—with a view to assessing the traditional interpretation: that Mark has clearly and consistently identified John the Baptist with Elijah. We have found that such a confident interpretation cannot be maintained in light of complexities in the Markan material.

We began by looking at every instance of Ἡλίας in the Gospel: 2.1. In the first two cases, Elijah is mentioned as a figure of popular expectation (i.e. Mal 4:5-6; *Sir.* 48:1-11). The crowds identify Jesus as Elijah *redivivus*, probably because of his miraculous power—although Mark seems to discourage this identification.

2.2. Elijah and Moses appear in person on the Mount of Transfiguration, where Jesus is revealed in glory to be the heavenly Son of Man. As we found, there are several indications in the narrative that the Transfiguration intends to foreshadow the coming Parousia (Mk 8:38; 9:1; 13:26-27; 14:61)—and given the significance of Elijah and Moses in contemporary eschatology, it is likely that Elijah's presence serves to confirm that the ἡμέρα τοῦ κυρίου is coming through Jesus, the heavenly Son of Man. We also found that there is good reason to think that Mk 9:2-8 identify Elijah and Moses as the ἀγγέλων τῶν ἁγίων who will accompany the Son of Man upon his return (Mk 8:38; 10:40; 13:26-27).

2.3. In the discourse of Mk 9:11-13 we found what appears to be an alternative tradition to the Transfiguration, where Elijah is identified as the executed John the Baptist. Whilst the identification is never made explicit, the suffering that both Elijah and the υἱὸν τοῦ ἀνθρώπου experience seems only applicable to John the Baptist and Jesus, respectively. Still, there are considerable difficulties in interpreting this passage: there is no clear indication of the basis for the statement καθὼς γέγραπται ἐπ' αὐτόν, although it seems likely that John the Baptist's suffering was responsible for the invention of the 'suffering Elijah' motif—and not the other way around. Nevertheless, as in the Transfiguration, Elijah's appearance is associated with the fulfillment of eschatological expectation—Elijah has already appeared (as John the Baptist), therefore the Day of the Lord and the resurrection of the dead is at hand in the person of Jesus.

2.4. Finally, we found that the discussion concerning Elijah during Jesus' crucifixion (Mk 15:34-36) reveals a similar sort of popular fascination as in 6:15 and 8:28. The inclusion of Elijah, however, does not seem to be a product of historical circumstance—rather, it may serve to link Jesus' crucifixion with the event that it reverses: the Transfiguration (9:2-8). In which case, Elijah's presence at the crucifixion may point ahead towards the glorious revelation of the Son of Man, when he returns on the clouds—in a complete reversal of the crucifixion scene—flanked by the ἀγγέλων τῶν ἁγίων (i.e. Elijah and Moses), to deliver the elect from tribulation (13:9-27).

We then examined possible allusions to Elijah in Mark's description of John the Baptist:

3.1. We found that Mark's uncredited use of Mal 3:1 in the scriptural introduction to John the Baptist's ministry does not constitute a clear identification of John as Elijah—but Mark's use of the prophecy elsewhere (Mk 9:12a) may indicate some significance in the allusion.

3.2. Conversely, we found the reference to John's leather belt (ζώνην δερματίνην) a clear allusion to the description of Elijah (4 Kgs 1:8)—although, the sheer obscurity of the allusion suggests that this is not necessarily an explicit identification of John's Elijahship.

3.3. Finally, we found similarities in the description of John's execution by Herod and Herodias (Mk 6:16-29) and Elijah's tempestuous relationship with Ahab and Jezebel (i.e. 1 Kgs 19:1-3). Although, it is perhaps more clear that Mark has deliberately fashioned the narrative after the model of the book of Esther—and not for the purpose of 'identifying' any character *per se*. This seems to suggest that Mark did not necessarily incorporate Jewish scripture in order to support the "identification of John as Elijah to Jesus' Messiah."²⁴³

Finally, we looked at possible allusions to Elijah in the description of Jesus: 4.1-2. We found that the description of Jesus's sojourn in the wilderness and his call of the disciples (Mk 1:12-20) seems to be modeled on Elijah's retreat into the wilderness and his call of Elisha (1 Kgs 19:4-21). Whilst the similar reference to the Elijah-Elisha cycle in the description of John the Baptist (Mk 1:6) may indicate the presence of two competing Elijah-identifications (John and Jesus), it is more likely that this merely indicates a stylistic use of Jewish scripture in the formation of the Markan narrative (i.e. Esther in 6:16-29).

²⁴³ Janes, *Op. Cit*, p. 455.

4.3. Whilst the resurrection of Jairus' daughter in Mk 5:22-43 does not appear to be directly dependent on the Elijah-Elisha cycle, the popularity of this miracle-type may owe its existence to the popular conception of Jewish miracle-workers after the 'historical' Elijah—and, in particular, the resurrection at Zarephath (1 Kgs 17:17-24).

4.4. We found that Mark's two accounts of miraculous feeding (Mk 6:35-44; 8:1-9) are dependent on the Elijah-Elisha cycle: showing verbal and structural similarities to Elisha's multiplication of food in 2 Kgs 2:42-44. Although, the purpose does not seem to be the identification of Jesus as Elisha, to John the Baptist's Elijah—especially considering that Elisha is nowhere mentioned in the Gospel.

4.5. Likewise, we found that Mark has probably modeled Jesus' interaction with the Syrophenician woman (Mk 7:24-30) after Elijah's conversation with the widow of Zarephath (1 Kgs 17:8-16). The purpose, again, does not appear to be identifying the Markan characters (especially since the roles are reversed)—but given the controversial nature of Elijah's miracle (Lk 4:25-27), it is conceivable that Mark is making a similar point: as in 1 Kgs 17:8-16, the Kingdom of God has extended to the Gentiles.

4.6. We also found that Jesus' three Passion predictions (Mk 8:31-32; 9:31-32; 10:33-34), and Peter's three denials (14:66-72), bear many similarities to the three predictions of Elijah's departure, and the faithfulness of Elisha's corresponding affirmations (2 Kgs 2:1-12). It is difficult, however, to prove literary dependence in this case, especially given its distribution throughout the Markan narrative—and if an allusion is being made, the purpose seems to be the contrast of Elisha's faithfulness to Peter and the disciples' unfaithfulness.

4.7. Finally, we found that there is no reason to suppose Jesus' clearing of the Temple (Mk 11:15-18) bears any direct literary relationship to Mal 3:1-4, and the purification of the Temple cult (sometimes attributed to Elijah). Although, it is conceivable that the story itself may have originated in Jesus' popular identification with Elijah *redivivus*—or perhaps, Jesus' own self-understanding as an Elijah-like-prophet.

Previous studies have primarily focused on Mark's identification of John the Baptist as Elijah—seeing Mk 9:13 as an “explicit identification”, supported by scriptural allusions to

Elijah in the description of John (1:2-3, 6; 6:16-29), as well as veiled references to Elijah's suffering (9:4-5; 15:34-36).²⁴⁴

In contradistinction to previous research, this study has found that Elijah's identity is not consistently maintained in the Gospel: rather, it seems that Mark has incorporated traditions identifying both Jesus (Mk 1:12-20; 6:15; 8:28) and John as Elijah (1:2-3, 6; 9:13), as well as Elijah appearing as himself (9:2-8). This inconsistency is probably due to the nature of the Markan source material, as well as contemporary controversies concerning the identity of Elijah—which seems to find confirmation in the later Gospels (Mt 11:14; 17:13; Lk 1:17; Jn 1:21, 25).

And yet, in spite of these apparent discrepancies, Mark consistently portrays Elijah as an eschatological figure who signals the imminence of the Day of the Lord—whether in the glimpse of the Parousia (Mk 9:2-8), or in the suffering of the Baptist (9:11-13), Elijah's appearance points to the eschatological glory of the coming Son of Man.

Whilst John the Baptist is probably identified with Elijah in Mk 9:13, it has become relatively clear in the course of this study that the presence of a scriptural allusion (i.e. 1:2-3, 6; 6:16-29) does not constitute a similar identification. Indeed, Mark may have incorporated the Elijah-Elisha cycle of 1 and 2 Kgs into the narratives of both John (1:6; 6:16-29) and Jesus (1:12-20; 6:35-44; 7:24-30; 8:1-9), but as we've seen, it does not necessarily bear any relevance to the identity of Mark's Elijah (see sections 3.3. and 4.5.). It seems, to this end, that Mark's treatment of Jewish scripture in the formation of his narrative is relatively unsystematic and does not provide a reliable basis for the identification of a character.

Nevertheless, the overarching similarities between Jesus and Elijah deserve further consideration: both Jesus and Elijah are Northern prophets, who perform miracles (i.e. raise the dead), attract disciples, confront religious authorities, and depart the earth under mysterious circumstances—only to be said to return again before the end of the world. As we've discussed, it is possible that these similarities owe something to a sort of Elijah-typology in the pre-Markan material, or perhaps, as Meier suggests, something like an 'Elijah-consciousness' in the historical Jesus himself.²⁴⁵ Whatever the case, further research

²⁴⁴ Lane, *Op. Cit.*, p. 51.

²⁴⁵ Meier, *Marginal Jew: Vol. IV*, p. 624.

into the matter may indicate that there is something more than gossip behind the assertion:
ὅτι Ἡλίας ἐστίν!

Nathanael Smith

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