

## The Fourth Gospel's Reversal of Mark in John 13,31–14,3

Questions regarding the Fourth Gospel's relationship with the Synoptic tradition are ancient and contentious. Over the history of biblical scholarship, the case has been made that John <sup>1</sup> wrote to supplement the Synoptic tradition (B.W. Bacon, B.H. Streeter), to displace it (Hans Windisch), or was simply unaware of it (Percival Gardner-Smith, C.H. Dodd) <sup>2</sup>. Since Gardner-Smith, the majority view has probably been the latter — John had no knowledge of the Synoptic Gospels.

More recently, Ian Mackay has made the argument that John is likely to have known and “performed” Mark <sup>3</sup>. The fourth evangelist then composed his gospel utilising this comprehensive knowledge. Obviously, Mackay is not advocating direct literary dependence as is evident in the relations between the Synoptic gospels. On the contrary, if John knew Mark, he used the tradition loosely, perhaps writing from memory.

If Mackay's thesis is held to be plausible, the significant textual and theological differences between John and Mark remain intriguing. On the basis of a critical exegesis of John 13,31-43 and comparable passages in Mark, this paper analyses the significance of the many similarities and differences between the two works. Similarities do not strongly support the hypothesis that John knew Mark, as they are probably better explained by elements of a common tradition. However, this paper demonstrates that significant Johannine differences function to reverse several key Markan themes. The reversal observed here cautiously supports the view that John was familiar with Mark and composed his Gospel in order to reverse the second evangelist's apocalyptic themes, in order to provide new answers to issues such as the delay of the Parousia and the need to persevere in suffering.

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<sup>1</sup> In keeping with tradition, I have usually referred to the author of the Second and Fourth Gospels as ‘Mark’ and ‘John’ respectively, and used the male pronoun.

<sup>2</sup> D.M. SMITH, *John Among the Gospels* (Columbia, SC 2001) 1-37.

<sup>3</sup> I.D. MACKAY, *John's Relationship with Mark*. An Analysis of John 6 in the Light of Mark 6-8 (WUNT II 102; Tübingen 2004).

## I. John 13,31-32: “Now the Son of Man has been glorified”

Of critical importance here are the themes of “glorification” and the focus on “now” (νῦν), both of which are essential Johannine themes and emphases. Νῦν is critical here, signalling that the hour of darkness has come — through Judas’ action the end has begun. In terms of the narrative, the crucifixion is still to come, but the inevitable result of Judas’ action will be Jesus’ death. The use of the phrase “Son of Man” here links “glory” with the imminent passion and crucifixion<sup>4</sup>. The aorist ἐδοξάσθη and the future δοξάσει are used to show this tension — it is as if, with Judas’ departure, the event has already taken place<sup>5</sup>.

Further, νῦν here points to Jesus’ “hour”, mentioned in 13,1, wherein he is to leave this world and return to his Father<sup>6</sup>. Similarly, in 12,27 and 12,31 νῦν is linked with the “hour” when Jesus will be glorified, the time of his lifting up (or death)<sup>7</sup>. In his imminent death, resurrection and return to the Father, the mission of Jesus is being accomplished “now”, rather than at the end time. In the completion of Jesus’ mission, the glory of God is revealed in Jesus<sup>8</sup>. In the obedience of the Son the Father is glorified, and God’s love for humankind is revealed in his offering of the Son (3,16)<sup>9</sup>. The focus in this saying is that the place where God will be revealed is in the cross, at the death of the Son<sup>10</sup>.

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<sup>4</sup> So Moloney, who makes a distinction between the glorification of the Son of Man, which is the lifting up on the cross, and the glory of the Son, who returns to the Father through the cross. In making this distinction, Moloney qualifies it by stating “passion, death, resurrection and glorification all seems to be one in the Fourth Gospel” (F.J. MOLONEY, *The Johannine Son of Man* [Rome 1978] 200).

<sup>5</sup> W.R.G. LOADER, *The Christology of the Fourth Gospel*. Structure and Issues (Frankfurt 1992) 54.

<sup>6</sup> C.S. KEENER, *The Gospel of John*. A Commentary (Peabody, MA 2003) 921.

<sup>7</sup> R. SCHNACKENBURG, *The Gospel According to St John* (New York 1982) III, 49. Further, Moloney indicates that the expression “Son of Man” points the reader forward to the crucifixion throughout the gospel (1,51; 3,14; 6,27.53; 8,28; 12,23); F.J. MOLONEY, *Glory not Dishonor*. Reading John 13–21 (Minneapolis, MN 1998) 24.

<sup>8</sup> R.E. BROWN, *The Gospel According to John* (London 1966) 606.

<sup>9</sup> G.R. BEASLEY-MURRAY, *John* (WBC 36; Nashville, TN 1999) 246.

<sup>10</sup> Moloney states that “glory” has been used throughout the Johannine narrative to refer to “revelation” (MOLONEY, *Glory not Dishonor*, 24).

Jesus' darkest hour on earth is, to the eyes of faith, the hour of his glorification<sup>11</sup>. This passage is rich in irony, because on the level of "the flesh" Jesus will experience ultimate shame and humiliation in his death on the cross. However, to those who perceive on the level of "the spirit", it is through the cross that Jesus completes his mission and reveals the glory and love of the Father, and returns to the glory he shared with his Father (17,5).

In Johannine thinking, there is one movement of revelation in Jesus' death, resurrection and ascension, whereby he completes his mission and returns to the Father<sup>12</sup>. "The Father and the Son, united in love, act in a reciprocity of glorification"<sup>13</sup>. The whole mission of Jesus has been a revelation of this glory, and it will reach its climax in the imminent crucifixion and resurrection. In this event Jesus will be truly lifted up, and his glorified humanity will be taken up into his Father's presence<sup>14</sup>.

Raymond Brown has suggested that this section bears comparison to eschatological strands in the Synoptic tradition, and cites the example of the Son of Man coming in the clouds in Mark 13,26<sup>15</sup>. Indeed it is Mark 13,24-27 which presents the most obvious parallel, and it is now appropriate to turn to an examination of this passage.

### 1. *Mark 13,24-27: The glorious return of the Son of Man*

In the literary context, the Markan Jesus completes his descriptions of the tribulation and the desolating sacrilege, and then moves into this section. This is marked by the transitional "In that day", indicating a time following the terrible events he has discussed. This is the Markan pattern in the discourse — tribulation followed

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<sup>11</sup> SCHNACKENBURG, *John, III*, 49-50. Segovia suggests that there is a chiasmic structure, indicating that 13,31c and 32c specify the time of this glorification (cf.  $\nu\upsilon\nu$  and  $\epsilon\upsilon\theta\upsilon\varsigma$ ); 13,31c and 32b show different aspects of Jesus' glorification and 13,31d and 32a indicate the glorification of God by Jesus — F.F. SEGOVIA, *The Farewell of the Word*. The Johannine Call to Abide (Minneapolis, MN 1991) 70.

<sup>12</sup> MOLONEY, *Son of Man*, 195.

<sup>13</sup> A.J. KELLY – F. J. MOLONEY, *Experiencing God in the Gospel of John* (New York, NY 2003) 283.

<sup>14</sup> D.A. CARSON, *The Gospel According to John* (Grand Rapids, MI 1991) 483.

<sup>15</sup> BROWN, *John*, 611.

by the appearance of the kingdom of God, represented in Mark by the Parousia of Jesus. Mark draws on traditions in the OT (for example, Isaiah 13,10 [LXX]): “For the stars of heaven and Orion and all the order of heaven will not give their light”<sup>16</sup>.

The Markan Jesus describes the apocalyptic Son of Man, based on the image in Dan 7,13: “In my vision at night I looked, and there before me was one like a son of man, coming with the clouds of heaven”. The apocalyptic imagery of the darkened sun and moon and stars falling from the skies “provides a black curtain against which the glory of the Son of Man’s coming shines all the more”<sup>17</sup>. Angels will gather the elect, covering every corner of the world in their search for the saved<sup>18</sup>. The contrast between Jesus’ words and what will shortly occur in the narrative is very sharp. Far from coming in the clouds, Jesus will presently be betrayed and crucified. Thus, for Mark, Jesus’ revelation as the glorified Son of Man is very much an eschatological theme.

## 2. Similarities and differences

The common elements of John 13,31-33 and Mark 13,24-27 can be summarised as follows:

- The “Son of Man” motif appears in both Mark 13,26 and John 13,31, although the evangelists use the title in different ways.
- The motif of “glory” is present in both.
- The literary context in both cases is similar — Jesus’ execution looms like a shadow over both discourses. Both evangelists use this fact in order to encourage hope in the face of suffering.
- In literary terms, both discourses reach a point of climax here — John by use of the resounding “now” to indicate that glorification has begun, and Mark by indicating that the Parousia will end the time of tribulation.

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<sup>16</sup> This passage also has marked similarities to the early first-century pseudepigraphon *Testament of Moses*. In this work, after a second punishment befalling God’s people, the kingdom of God will appear throughout his whole creation (*T.Mos.* 10,1); C.A EVANS, *Mark 8:27–16:20* (WBC 34b; Nashville, TN 2001) 327, 329-330.

<sup>17</sup> R.H. GUNDRY, *Mark. A Commentary on his Apology for the Cross* (Grand Rapids, MI 1993) 744-745.

<sup>18</sup> B. WITHERINGTON III, *The Gospel of Mark. A Socio-Rhetorical Commentary* (Grand Rapids, MI 2001) 348.

The elements of any common tradition appear in an altered expression, based largely on a different approach to eschatology.

a) *The Glory of the Son of Man* <sup>19</sup>

The Markan discourse contains a parousial eschatology. Everything said assumes that these events will occur after Jesus' imminent death, in the time leading up to the Second Coming. The Parousia will end the present age and usher in the Kingdom of God. Mark also links glory to the end-time. Jesus suffers the humiliation and anguish of the cross, but at the end of the age he will return as the glorious Son of Man. This represents an interpretation of the Hebrew apocalyptic tradition, in which God acts to intervene to bring about the end of the present evil age <sup>20</sup>. This action is to be completed at the point of Jesus' return.

In contrast, John represents a realised eschatology. John's focus is on the "already" rather than the "not yet". The Johannine Jesus, knowing that Judas' departure has sealed his fate, states that he is glorified now — it has begun <sup>21</sup>. John commences this discourse by showing that Jesus' glorification is taking place in the unfolding events of suffering, death, resurrection and return to the Father. Further, John portrays Jesus' humiliation, death and resurrection as one sweeping movement of glory. God's action of revealing salvation and judgment through the Son is completed not in a future coming, but at the point on the cross where Jesus states "It is finished" (19,30) <sup>22</sup>. The focus is not, as in Mark, on a future vision of the Son of Man coming with the clouds, because the glorification is happening now.

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<sup>19</sup> "The noun 'glory' is used repeatedly in the Synoptics in connection with the title Son of Man, although in these cases the context is the coming of this eschatological figure at the end of time. It appears, then, that the allegedly "Johannine" formula at John 13,31-32 in fact resonates with a number of features in the broader Jesus tradition" (J. BEUTLER, "Synoptic Jesus Tradition in the Johannine Farewell Discourse", *Jesus in the Johannine Tradition* [eds. R.T. FORTNA – T. THATCHER] [Louisville, KY 2001] 165-173).

<sup>20</sup> As Moloney indicates, the apocalyptic imagery in Mark is not literal, but should be read as a concrete prophecy of the end of the world as we know it (F.J. MOLONEY, *The Gospel of Mark. A Commentary* [Peabody, MA 2002] 266).

<sup>21</sup> This is paralleled in Mark 14,41, where the Markan Jesus states "The hour has come" in reference to his betrayal by Judas (BEUTLER, *Synoptic Jesus*, 171).

<sup>22</sup> MOLONEY, *Son of Man*, 196.

### *b) Hope and Suffering*

This fundamental difference in eschatology relates to application. As both narratives move toward the passion of Jesus, the problem of suffering in the Christian community is a key concern. Mark's answer to the problem of suffering is the Parousia. The message is straightforward — although you may suffer now, just as Christ suffered, you can look forward to a time of glory and vindication, when there will be no more suffering. The vindication of the suffering faithful will affirm the power and justice of God in the eschaton <sup>23</sup>.

The message to Mark's readers is that suffering is not God's final word; there will ultimately be a reversal of the crucifixion <sup>24</sup>. Those who endure the tribulation are the elect, who will be gathered to the Son of Man at the end of time. Immediately prior to the passion of the Messiah, the Olivet Discourse points forward, past the suffering of Jesus in his death to the eschatological glory of the Parousia.

John's message is more difficult to understand, as the problem of suffering cannot be neatly dealt with by stating that the coming glory of Christ will end suffering. John states that in the midst of suffering Jesus abides with his followers. Jesus represents the hope of the faithful community, who patiently endures suffering understanding that they are following Jesus along the path to glory. Thus, both Mark and John contain calls to endure in obedience, but for subtly different reasons. For Mark, those who endure to the end will be saved at the Parousia. For John, those who obey "follow" Jesus through suffering and death to glory. In Johannine thinking, in the midst of obedience those who follow experience the presence of Jesus among them, mediated by their love for each other and for God.

### *3. Assessment and implications*

Having examined the elements of common thought and tradition, as well as the different expressions of these by the two evangelists, we turn now to the question: can these similarities be explained by John's use of Mark? If so, what would the differences indicate about Johannine emphases?

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<sup>23</sup> J.R. DONAHUE – D.J. HARRINGTON, *The Gospel of Mark* (Collegeville, MN 2002) 380.

<sup>24</sup> GUNDRY, *Mark*, 745; W.L. LANE, *The Gospel of Mark* (Grand Rapids, MI 1974) 447.

As we have seen, Mark 13,24-27 has a significant function in Markan eschatology, as it explicates the eventual vindication of the elect and the commencement of the kingdom of God. In the same context (a farewell discourse), using the same broad motifs of glory and the Son of Man, the fourth evangelist has constructed a narrative which serves Johannine theology and purposes. John's eschatology here is the opposite of what we find in Mark. The glorification and final revelation of Jesus, and of God in him, takes place at the point of the crucifixion/resurrection/return to the Father. Is it possible that John has taken the elements of the Markan pericope and effected a reversal, bending these elements to serve his own purposes? Differences according to this hypothesis are not necessarily problematic, but they could constitute evidence of Johannine reconstruction.

Further, it is not simply a possible reversal in thought that is in evidence here. The description of the Parousia occurs where it does in Mark, toward the end of the eschatological discourse, precisely because the appearance of Christ follows the tribulation. This forms the climax of the passage and the climax of history. Conversely, in John, this parallel section is positioned at the beginning of the Final Discourse. For John, the climax of history is occurring in the outworking of the narrative, as Jesus walks the path toward death and returns to the Father. The Johannine Jesus begins with glorification, and then goes on to talk of the suffering his followers will face after his departure, because the world hates them (14,15-17; 16,2-3.32-33; 17,14).

If we consider that John was familiar with the Markan material and order, it would follow that he may have reversed the order in which the material was placed in order to turn the emphasis on its head. This would mean that John was deliberately bending the elements of the story in order to present a different eschatology. He would also be writing with the agenda of imposing a different answer to the problem of suffering, perhaps an answer more in line with a community coming to terms with a delayed Parousia<sup>25</sup>. Under this hypothesis, John would be reinterpreting the Markan tradition to emphasise the realised nature of Jesus' eschatology, re-locating the locus of hope from the future to the present, possibly to give an existential answer to the problem of suffering.

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<sup>25</sup> Beasley-Murray is prepared to concede that John 13,31–14,31 is a reinterpretation of the Church's traditional hope in the Parousia (BEASLEY-MURRAY, *John*, 244). It is fair to say, however, that Beasley-Murray is suggesting a par-

#### 4. *Summary*

The common motifs of glory and the Son of Man, coupled with a clear correlation in the context of a farewell discourse, may constitute evidence of a connection here between Mark and John. The emphatic and almost enigmatic nature of Jesus' words in John 13,31-33 suggests that John is aware of Mark or of a similar tradition, and writes deliberately to reverse this. This reversal in thought, placed alongside the apparent reversal in order between the two passages, suggests that John may have known Mark and written deliberately to reverse the Markan emphasis.

#### II. John 13,33-38: A new commandment, and the prediction of Peter's denial

This is a critical verse in the discourse, as elements from this saying are expanded throughout the Final Discourse<sup>26</sup>. For John, the motif of discipleship is expressed in the analogy of "following" Jesus, or doing what Jesus did: making the Father known. Jesus is about to commence the final stage of this journey, which will see him complete this mission and return to the Father through his death and resurrection. Reference is made here to earlier points in the narrative where Jesus said to the Jews: "You will seek me... and where I am going you cannot come" (7,34; 8,21). Like the Jews, Jesus' disciples cannot understand the true significance of who Jesus is and where he is going<sup>27</sup>.

However, Jesus does not tell his disciples that they will never find him or follow him (which is exactly what he tells "the Jews"). The disciples cannot follow Jesus on this "way" (14,6) now, but they will participate in the mission of Jesus. The children<sup>28</sup> will find him as they obediently "follow" Jesus on the "way" of reveal-

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allel of motif, rather than Johannine dependence on Mark or 1 Thessalonians (G.R. BEASLEY-MURRAY, *Jesus and the Future* [London 1956] 237-238).

<sup>26</sup> LOADER, *Christology*, 59; SCHNACKENBURG, *John, III*, 52-53.

<sup>27</sup> MOLONEY, *Glory not Dishonor*, 25.

<sup>28</sup> The use of τέκνία here is appropriate, since what follows is a farewell discourse, which is often set in the context of a dying father instructing his children (BROWN, *John*, 611).



ing God to the world, and subsequently pass through death<sup>29</sup> and be reunited with Jesus in his Father's house (14,2-3). Jesus' own resurrection will be the guarantee that his disciples also will live after death (14,19).

Thus 13,33 provides a thought structure to the material which follows, as these themes appear throughout the Farewell Discourse. Any tradition John may be working from would be adapted to the thought structure introduced in this verse.

Jesus calls his followers to show love for each other in the same way he has displayed it to them<sup>30</sup>. It seems likely that this relates back to Jesus' display of love for his disciples in the foot washing (13,1)<sup>31</sup>, and also forward to the imminent passion<sup>32</sup>. When he leaves and they cannot follow him, they are "to repeat the love of Jesus and thus render present the lifestyle of Jesus"<sup>33</sup>. The phrase ἐντολὴν καινὴν appears in the Johannine epistles (1 John 2,7; 2 John 5), and this command of Jesus is a major theme in 1 John (3,1.23; 4,21)<sup>34</sup>. For the Johannine community, the words of Jesus represent a new revelation, a distinct emphasis<sup>35</sup> — the command "love your neighbour as yourself" (Lev 19,18b) becomes here "love one another as I have loved you".

Jesus' followers do not merely render present the lifestyle of Jesus by showing love; they render present his lordship. In the same way Jesus has revealed his Father through his love for them and the world, so his followers will reveal the true God through their love for each other<sup>36</sup>. Though it is not possible to follow Jesus physically, his disciples can continue to "follow" him by embodying the love which he showed to them. In the section which follows, Peter totally misunderstands the true meaning of following Jesus.

<sup>29</sup> KEENER, *John*, 923.

<sup>30</sup> KELLY – MOLONEY, *Experiencing God*, 286.

<sup>31</sup> MOLONEY, *Glory not Dishonor*, 25.

<sup>32</sup> KEENER, *John*, 924.

<sup>33</sup> MOLONEY, *Glory not Dishonor*, 25-26.

<sup>34</sup> SCHNACKENBURG, *John*, III, 53. Schnackenburg suggests that this may be an editorial addition, perhaps by the author of 1 John, or a member of the Johannine community.

<sup>35</sup> W.R.G. LOADER, *Jesus and the Fundamentalism of his Day* (Grand Rapids, MI 2001) 133-134. Keener also points out that Jesus does not appeal to the Decalogue here, but gives one commandment that will define his community (KEENER, *John*, 925)

<sup>36</sup> CARSON, *John*, 485; BEASLEY-MURRAY, *John*, 248.

Peter's question returns to the journey motif introduced in 13,33. Peter has misunderstood the true meaning of Jesus' words. He is thinking of an ordinary — if dangerous — journey, from one place to another, whereas Jesus is referring to his return to the Father. Jesus does not directly answer the question at this point; the answer will come in 14,2, when Jesus tells the disciples that he is going to make preparations for them in the Father's house. John inserts traditional material concerning Peter's denial here and reworks it to expand and explain 13,33<sup>37</sup>. Following Jesus unto death is part of discipleship when necessary, but the point here is that it may prove more difficult than might be expected<sup>38</sup>.

Jesus' prediction, then, is that Peter will be thwarted by his own ignorance<sup>39</sup>. The irony of Jesus' reply, "Will you really lay down your life for me?", is that Peter will indeed eventually follow his Master and lay down his life (21,18-19)<sup>40</sup>. The message to the community is that those who fail yet return and persevere remain disciples<sup>41</sup>.

We now turn to the two parallels in Mark. Individually, Mark 12,28-34 and 14,27-31 do not appear to present strong evidence of a connection. However, when the parallel passages are examined together, the weight of evidence presents a more compelling case for John's possible use of Mark. We begin with some exegetical comments on Mark 12,28-34.

### 1. *Mark 12,28-34: The first commandment*

Mark 12,28-34 forms a unit, featuring the interplay between the scribe and Jesus. Debate over the "first" (most important) commandment was common in Jewish circles<sup>42</sup>, and thus it is hardly surprising that an impressed scribe would take the opportunity to ask Jesus this question. In the Markan tradition<sup>43</sup>, Jesus cites Deut 6,4-5 as the most

<sup>37</sup> SCHNACKENBURG, *John*, III, 55.

<sup>38</sup> KEENER, *John*, 928.

<sup>39</sup> MOLONEY, *Glory not Dishonor*, 26.

<sup>40</sup> LOADER, *Christology*, 55.

<sup>41</sup> KEENER, *John*, 929.

<sup>42</sup> DONAHUE – HARRINGTON, *Mark*, 354.

<sup>43</sup> Matt (22,34-40) and Luke (10,25-29) have similar pericopes, although significant differences make the issue of relationship problematic. Probably there were several traditions in circulation, and Luke and Matt reflect these.

important commandment, and Lev 19,18 as the second commandment. The sympathetic scribe draws the conclusion, based on Jesus' statement, that love for God and one's neighbour is superior to all burnt offerings and sacrifices. This fits well with Markan thinking, since for Mark the elements of the temple cult did not matter at all <sup>44</sup>.

## 2. *Mark 14,27-31: The prediction of Peter's denial*

In Mark, this pericope appears after the disciples have eaten the Passover with Jesus and have gone out again to the Mount of Olives (14,26), just prior to entering Gethsemane. The Markan Jesus quotes Zech 13,7 in support of his startling claim that his followers will desert him <sup>45</sup>. The scattering of the sheep is in sharp contrast to the prediction of 13,27, in which the angels will gather the elect. The scattering is not the last word, however, as the Markan Jesus indicates that following his resurrection he will "go before" them, evoking the image of a shepherd guiding a flock <sup>46</sup>.

In Mark, the irony is very sharp, as Peter makes his claims and not long after is found asleep as Jesus is praying. This is also a very sharp contrast with Jesus' exhortation to be watchful, which is the recurring admonition in Mark 13. Mark's purpose for this pericope is to show the shortcomings of Jesus' followers <sup>47</sup>. The dialogue opens with Jesus' prediction that the disciples will stumble because of him, and this is borne out in the events of Gethsemane. These legendary first followers failed, but they would be given a second chance. Thus Mark offers a "pedagogy of hope" to all subsequent followers of Jesus <sup>48</sup>. The elect may stumble, but it is endurance to the end that counts (13,13).

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(EVANS, *Mark*, 262.) In contrast, Loader theorises that Matt and Luke have edited Mark to fit their own purposes (LOADER, *Fundamentalism*, 91, 110).

<sup>44</sup> LOADER, *Fundamentalism*, 48.

<sup>45</sup> The word σκανδαλισθήσεσθε is translated "be scandalised" by Brown (R.E. BROWN, *The Death of the Messiah*. From Gethsemane to the Grave. A Commentary on the Passion Narratives in the Four Gospels [New York 1994] 117). Evans notes the word is commonly used in the Greek New Testament to refer to stumbling (EVANS, *Mark*, 400).

<sup>46</sup> MOLONEY, *Mark*, 288.

<sup>47</sup> MOLONEY, *Mark*, 287-288.

<sup>48</sup> BROWN, *Death of the Messiah*, 141.

### 3. *Similarities and Differences*

We now turn to consider the elements of common thought and tradition in the three pericopes, while noting the different expressions in each. The common elements across the three pericopes can be summarised as follows:

- Both John 13,34-35 and Mark 12,28-34 contain instruction from Jesus upon the theme of “commandment”. The central focus of the teaching is love. In both, there is the impression that Jesus’ teaching surpasses the old order and points to the new order of the Kingdom of God.
- The journey motif in John 13,33-38 and Mark 14,28 (In Mark Jesus goes before his disciples; in John they are to “follow” him).
- The prediction of Peter’s denial (John 13,36-38 and Mark 14,29-31).

We will now evaluate these similarities in turn.

#### a) *Commandment*

The motif of “commandment” is certainly present in both John 13,34-35 and Mark 12,28-34. However, there are several differences between the two pericopes. Firstly, the setting is very different in both accounts. For John, this pericope is placed in the Final Discourse, where Jesus is passing on instructions to his disciples prior to his imminent departure. Mark, on the other hand, places this pericope earlier. Jesus has been disputing in the temple courts with the scribes and Pharisees, and gives this teaching in response to a question from a sympathetic scribe.

The content of Jesus’ teaching also contains significant differences when the accounts are compared. John’s “I have loved you” moves in the opposite direction of Mark’s “Love the Lord your God”<sup>49</sup>. The foundation of the command to love others is also different: in Mark the measure of love for a neighbour is the extent to which an individual loves him or herself, whereas in John the measure of the love a disciple must show for another is Jesus’ own love for his disciples<sup>50</sup>. The new commandment in John is given concrete expression by Jesus’ washing the feet of his followers, and thereafter by his passion.

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<sup>49</sup> Beutler suggests that the Johannine formulation may represent an earlier stage of a common Jesus tradition (BEUTLER, *Synoptic Jesus*, 168).

<sup>50</sup> KEENER, *John*, 924.

Also, the instruction to love “one another” in John may be a more exclusive idea than the Markan reiteration of the command to love “your neighbour”<sup>51</sup>. Finally, Jesus’ reply to the scribe in Mark is a re-statement of commands contained in the OT. John in contrast has Jesus stating a “new commandment”, not based on anything but Jesus’ own authority as the one who has come from the Father.

However, it is clear from the scribe’s reply and Jesus’ affirmation of him that Mark understood the teaching of Jesus and the new community inaugurated by him to represent the beginning of a new order. The system of sacrifice and the temple establishment were of no further importance. They were superseded by the simple command to love God and others, restated by Jesus here. Further, the theme of love is clearly central to both teachings. The significance of these similarities will be assessed in the next major section, but now we turn to the motif of following Jesus.

b) “Go before you” and “Follow me”

Mark states that Jesus will “go before” his disciples into Galilee. This is clearly a reference to post-resurrection meetings with the disciples, after which the ministry of Jesus is to continue. Galilee is a key location in Mark: “the promise of a post-resurrectional meeting in Galilee is the promise of a new mission”<sup>52</sup>.

In John, the motif of following Jesus, introduced at 13,33, is pursued and expanded throughout the Final Discourse. The language of 13,33 is Johannine, as it provides a structure of thought for the evangelist to place other material within the discourse. Whatever John’s source may have been, it seems likely that the prediction of Peter’s denial has been cleverly edited to expound this theme. The following motif is not a reference here to a physical meeting after the resurrection, but to the spiritual process of walking the same path as Jesus did, making God known and revealing the love of God for the world by being willing to die in order to reveal this love. The journey is complete when Jesus and his followers are reunited in heaven.

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<sup>51</sup> KEENER, *John*, 925-926. Keener notes that John does not contradict the Synoptic tradition here, but is more focused. He rejects the claim that John is “violently” exclusionary, but simply expressing the need for internal cohesion in the Johannine community.

<sup>52</sup> DONAHUE – HARRINGTON, *Mark*, 402.

Clearly, there are important differences between the thoughts of the two evangelists. There are also some commonalities which may point to a similar starting point. In both evangelists, the motif is connected to mission. As has been pointed out, the meeting in Galilee for Mark is the commencement of a new mission. In John, the disciples continue the work of Jesus after his return to the Father. For both evangelists, the mission involves doing what Jesus did — proclaiming the gospel in Mark (13,10); doing the works of Jesus in John (14,12-14).

*c) Prediction of Peter's denial*

We now turn to the prediction itself. The table below compares John 13,37-38 and Mark 14,29-30 side by side. Luke 22,33-34 and Matt 26,33-34 are also included, completing the fourfold tradition. In the comparison that follows, identical textual agreements between John and Mark are represented by a solid underline. Where the two evangelists use the same root words, this is represented by a broken underline. John's agreements with Luke are represented by a rippled underline <sup>53</sup>.

*The prediction of Peter's denial in the fourfold tradition*

Mark 14,29-30	John 13,37-38
<p>ὁ δὲ Πέτρος ἔφη αὐτῷ· εἰ καὶ πάντες σκανδαλισθήσονται, ἀλλ' οὐκ ἐγώ. καὶ λέγει αὐτῷ ὁ Ἰησοῦς· <u>ἀμὴν λέγω σοι</u> ὅτι σὺ σήμερον ταύτη τῇ νυκτὶ πρὶν ἢ δις <u>ἀλέκτορα</u> <u>φωνῆσαι</u> <u>τρὶς</u> <u>με</u> ἀπαρνήσῃ.</p>	<p>λέγει αὐτῷ ὁ Πέτρος· κύριε, διὰ τί οὐ δύναμαί σοι ἀκολουθῆσαι ἄρτι; τὴν ψυχὴν μου ὑπὲρ σοῦ θήσω. ἀποκρίνεται Ἰησοῦς· τὴν ψυχὴν σου ὑπὲρ ἐμοῦ θήσεις; <u>ἀμὴν ἀμὴν λέγω</u> <u>σοι</u>, οὐ μὴ <u>ἀλέκτωρ</u> <u>φωνήσῃ</u> <u>ἕως</u> οὗ ἀρνήσῃ <u>με</u> <u>τρὶς</u>.</p>
Matt 26,33-34	Luke 22,33-34
<p>ἀποκριθεὶς δὲ ὁ Πέτρος εἶπεν αὐτῷ· εἰ πάντες σκανδαλισθήσονται ἐν σοί, ἐγὼ οὐδέποτε σκανδαλισθήσομαι. ἔφη αὐτῷ ὁ Ἰησοῦς· ἀμὴν λέγω σοι ὅτι ἐν ταύτῃ τῇ νυκτὶ πρὶν ἀλέκτορα φωνῆσαι τρὶς ἀπαρνήσῃ με.</p>	<p>ὁ δὲ εἶπεν αὐτῷ· κύριε, μετὰ σοῦ ἔτοιμός εἰμι καὶ εἰς φυλακὴν καὶ εἰς θάνατον πορεύεσθαι. ὁ δὲ εἶπεν· λέγω σοι, Πέτρε, οὐ φωνήσῃ σήμερον ἀλέκτωρ <u>ἕως</u> <u>τρὶς</u> <u>με</u> ἀπαρνήσῃ εἰδέναι.</p>

<sup>53</sup> Agreements between Matthew and Mark and Luke and Mark have not been noted, as such an analysis falls outside the scope of this paper. Similarly,

Mark alone in the fourfold tradition has the cock crowing twice. The second evangelist also specifies that the cock will crow both “today” and “this very night”<sup>54</sup>. Mark also records a rebuttal from Peter. John records this as an “Amen, amen” saying of Jesus, one of 25 in the Fourth Gospel<sup>55</sup>. John alone stipulates that the denials will take place before the next cockcrow. Although John does not contain the rebuttal by Peter found in Mark (and Matt), he does report Peter’s willingness to “lay down his life” prior to Jesus’ prediction<sup>56</sup>. The language here is almost certainly Johannine<sup>57</sup>.

While there are obvious similarities in content, the differences between Mark and John are significant. As Brown notes, if John knew Mark, he has changed the Mount of Olives to “across the Kidron valley” (18,1); has placed the scandal motif in the context of the Final Discourse (16,1) and the scattering motif in 16,32; has changed “after my resurrection ... go before you” to “follow me later” in 13,33.36; and placed the Peter prediction in the Final Discourse and reworded it. Brown argues from this evidence that John did not use Mark, but both drew on a similar early tradition<sup>58</sup>.

While it is difficult to draw any conclusions, Schnackenburg concludes that the fourth evangelist “clearly” made use of a tradition related to Luke<sup>59</sup>. However, it is clear that there are some close similarities between the formulation of the prediction in both the Markan and Johannine accounts (noted above)<sup>60</sup>. Further, agreements between Luke and John do not negate the possibility that

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agreements between Matthew and John are not noted as it is assumed they are attributable to Matthew’s use of Mark.

<sup>54</sup> Possibly Matthew and Luke have simplified this in their accounts (BROWN, *Death of Messiah*, 136)

<sup>55</sup> The ἀμήν is always doubled in John. It seems that in all the gospels, ἀμήν adds a sense of solemnity to what follows (BROWN, *Death of Messiah*, 137).

<sup>56</sup> Luke 22,33 also has Peter indicate his willingness to go to “prison or death”.

<sup>57</sup> SCHNACKENBURG, *John*, III, 55.

<sup>58</sup> BROWN, *Death of the Messiah*, 143. However, this would not negate the overall thesis that John knew Mark. Luke knew and used Mark, yet the second evangelist differs sharply from Mark at this very point, perhaps utilising another tradition.

<sup>59</sup> SCHNACKENBURG, *John*, III, 56.

<sup>60</sup> It could be argued that, apart from the use of πρίν, John’s formulation more closely resembles Mark than Luke.

John was familiar with Mark but did not compose his gospel with Mark in front of him. Neither does the possibility that John utilised other sources negate this possibility <sup>61</sup>.

#### 4. *Assessment and implications*

It is now appropriate to assess the similarities we have noted, considering the possibility of John's use of Mark. We will also consider what Johannine adaptations or reversals may tell us about the emphases of the fourth evangelist.

As we have noted, John in 13,34 is staking a claim to a "new" commandment. This may suggest that John is deliberately not drawing on other material here, but making a unique contribution. We have also noted that the commandments have marked similarities. Of particular significance is the centrality of love. Mark has two commandments — love for God and love for others. Conversely, John has one — love for others based on the love of Jesus.

If we assume John had knowledge of Mark, we could account for this by stating that John may have reworked Mark, reinterpreting it for his own purposes. Such a reworking is not impossible, as for the Johannine community it is Jesus himself who is the foundation of ethics and not the Hebrew Bible. Also, as we have noted, the Johannine version may be an improvement of the tradition found in Mark, giving the command a concrete reality in the love Jesus shows for his disciples. If John is making use of Mark here, it is understandable that he would represent this as a new commandment, pointing to the commencement (at Jesus' glorification) of the new order, but also indicating that this saying of Jesus goes a step further than that represented by Mark.

Secondly, we must consider the question: is it possible John has picked up from memory the Markan saying relating to Jesus "going before" his followers, transformed the language and reversed the em-

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<sup>61</sup> Dodd's observation, "All this looks less like conflation of sources than the kind of variation which arises without deliberation within an oral tradition", does not exclude the thesis that John may have written from a memory of Mark, using what suited and transforming what did not, but not depending on the text of Mark in the same way as Luke and Matt (C.H. DODD, *Historical Tradition in the Fourth Gospel* [Cambridge 1963] 55).



phasis<sup>62</sup>? There are two major points against this proposition. Firstly, there are only two references to “going before” in Mark in relation to Jesus’ resurrection. The phrase does not form part of a major theme in the Markan narrative, as do “glory” or “the Son of Man” in Mark 13,24,27. It is difficult to see why John would reverse the emphasis of what he could hardly have regarded as a major thrust of Markan Christology or eschatology. Secondly, “following Jesus” is a major — if not the major — motif in the first Final Discourse. The language, emphasis and thought are so obviously Johannine that it is difficult to imagine another source being used.

Conversely, we can hypothesise that John picked up the phrase from Mark and reversed the emphasis, moving away from the action of Jesus “leading” his disciples and putting the focus on the disciples’ action of “following” Jesus, in order to expound the theme of discipleship. A stronger case for this proposition could be made if it can be shown that John may have known and used the prediction of Peter’s denial in Mark, as the following motif recurs in the Johannine prediction. If John has reworked the Markan prediction to include this motif, it is possible that he borrowed the original idea from Mark and reworked it.

Having said this, we now turn to the prediction of Peter’s denial. As we have already seen, if significant evidence of similar content exists, differences can be attributed to different purposes<sup>63</sup>. The prediction functions in Mark to illustrate the shortcomings of the disciples, but also to offer hope to the post-resurrection community, struggling with the issue of denial in the midst of persecution. In contrast, John has borrowed the story from Mark or at least a common tradition in order to illustrate the disciples’ inability to follow Jesus now, but that they will follow and be reunited with their Lord later. Adapted in this way, the story worked to comfort the Johannine community, who understood themselves as those following Jesus in the aftermath of the resurrection. Thus both narratives are comforting in similar ways, but are composed for different communities.

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<sup>62</sup> Brown suggests this parallel, but does not regard it as evidence of dependence (BROWN, *Death of the Messiah*, 143).

<sup>63</sup> “The structure of the pericope depends in each Gospel on a somewhat different conception of the situation, and no one of them could readily be derived from another” (DODD, *Historical Tradition*, 56). Against this we might suggest the possibility that it is the difference in agenda and perception which accounts for the differences in content and context.

The question remains as to whether or not John has used Mark or tradition common with Mark. This cannot be conclusively answered from the evidence. What can be stated is that the evangelists have similar overall purposes in using the prediction. The differences in language and positioning in John can be explained by his desire to use the story to illustrate 13,33. Given the evidence of other elements common to both narratives, we can say that it is possible that John knew the pericope from Mark and repositioned and reworded it to suit his own purposes.

We have examined evidence of three motifs common to Mark and John: teaching on commandment; following after Jesus; and the prediction of Peter's denial. Each taken alone does not constitute strong evidence of John's use of Mark, as similarities can be explained in other ways. However, taken together they constitute much stronger evidence of a possible connection, and therefore the fact that all three motifs are present in both evangelists is significant. Assuming John has made use of Mark, differences could be explained as deliberate changes made by John for his own purposes. The case can be made for a reasonable possibility, but no stronger claim can be made at this point.

### III. John 14,1-3: *The Father's House*

The Johannine Jesus makes his devastating prediction concerning Peter and then moves on immediately to an exhortation, stated in the plural to the entire group. It forms an *inclusio* with verse 27. The distress in view is the imminent, violent departure of Jesus. In the midst of the terror that will soon engulf them, Jesus' exhortation is to stop allowing their hearts to be in turmoil, and to keep on believing<sup>64</sup>. The link between the Father and Jesus is a consistent theme in John. The disciples are urged to cling to their faith in God and by doing so also continue to believe in Jesus, who is one with his Father (14,10-11)<sup>65</sup>.

The narrative works to inspire faith, as Jesus gives his followers a reason to continue trusting in the midst of turmoil. Jesus' departure means that he can return to his Father's house and prepare it for his

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<sup>64</sup> BEASLEY-MURRAY, *John*, 249.

<sup>65</sup> SCHNACKENBURG, *John, III*, 59.

disciples. This statement functions as an answer to Peter's question, "Where are you going?" in 13,36a, as well as indicating that the departure is in the disciples' interest <sup>66</sup>.

The term "my Father's house" poses some interesting questions. The simplest explanation is that the phrase refers to "heaven" <sup>67</sup>, where the redeemed dwell together with God after death. Beasley-Murray settles on this meaning, qualifying that for John the meaning is wholly "unapocalyptic" (as such images are developed in Rev 21,9–22,5), but rather eschatological <sup>68</sup>. "My Father's house", then, would refer to where Jesus is returning — to the glory he shared with his Father before creation (17,5). This is also the final destination of the disciples.

There is also precedent in the Fourth Gospel for associating the phrase τῆ οἰκίᾳ τοῦ πατρὸς with the temple <sup>69</sup>. In the cleansing of the temple in 2,16, Jesus orders those selling doves out, saying μὴ ποιεῖτε τὸν οἶκον τοῦ πατρὸς μου οἶκον ἐμπορίου. Further, John alerts the reader that the temple destruction sayings in 2,19–22 were actually references to Jesus' own death <sup>70</sup>. By using the phrase in 14,2 the evangelist gives it an expanded meaning: the earthly temple built by Herod and destroyed in 70 CE, points to the union of Jesus and his followers together with the Father forever in the afterlife. This will be made possible because of Jesus' fulfilled mission of revealing the Father's glory <sup>71</sup>.

Having departed in order to prepare a place for his followers in heaven, he will return in order to take them to himself. This is a theme so little mentioned in the Fourth Gospel that it seems almost out of character with the rest of the discourse. Beutler argues that 14,2 presents John's eschatological reinterpretation of the earthly sanctuary in Jerusalem of Psalms 42/43, arguing that John's contemporaries

<sup>66</sup> SEGOVIA, *Farewell*, 83.

<sup>67</sup> CARSON, *John*, 489; L. MORRIS, *The Gospel According to John* (Grand Rapids, MI 1995) 567.

<sup>68</sup> BEASLEY-MURRAY, *John*, 249.

<sup>69</sup> KEENER, *John*, 932.

<sup>70</sup> BEASLEY-MURRAY, *John*, 41; MOLONEY, *Glory not Dishonor*, 34. See also KELLY – MOLONEY, *Experiencing God*, 288.

<sup>71</sup> Similarly, the Johannine Jesus makes it clear in his conversation with the Samaritan woman (4,21–24) that worship of God is not confined to a particular location (i.e. the temple in Jerusalem), but exists outside the realm of space in the realm of spirit.

were reinterpreting the Psalter's temple texts in this way post 70 CE <sup>72</sup>. He continues that John is most likely drawing on a tradition of Jesus coming on the clouds of heaven — which links neatly to the Markan account <sup>73</sup>. Beutler is concerned to leave the question of John's eschatology to 14,15-31, where John's appropriation of the 'coming on the clouds' tradition can be contextually understood in line with the evangelist's more realised eschatology <sup>74</sup>. Keener is more forthright, stating that John 14,1-3 does not present a future eschatology. He bases his argument on the succeeding context, which emphasises a present dwelling of Jesus and the Father with the disciples (14,23) <sup>75</sup>.

In agreement with Beasley-Murray, Morris and Brown <sup>76</sup>, I maintain that it is best to read 14,3 as a reference to the Parousia, in which Jesus will return in order to take his followers to where he dwells with the Father. There is a reiteration of this statement in verse 28, as the two sayings function as an *inclusio* in the discourse. The tension the evangelist maintains between end-time and realised eschatology is evident here in the awkward combination of the present tense (πάλιν ἔρχομαι) and the future (παραλήμψομαι) <sup>77</sup>. The return is the last of all things, when the goal is completely realised: Jesus' followers are reunited with their Master in his Father's presence forever. This union will be distinct from the mode of Jesus' abiding spiritual presence with them through his Spirit and in their love for each other. There is a physical communion implied here. This represents an eschatology awaiting consummation.

At the same time, an inaugurated eschatology is presented in which Jesus remains with his followers as they remain in him <sup>78</sup>, obeying his commands by showing love for one another. Following Jesus, then, is the path before the disciples, with the Parousia at the end of the journey. Given that the Johannine community was dealing with the delay of the Parousia <sup>79</sup>, it is not surprising that this theme is secondary

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<sup>72</sup> J. BEUTLER, *Do not be afraid*. The First Farewell Discourse in John's Gospel (Frankfurt am Main 2011) 35.

<sup>73</sup> BEUTLER, *Do not be afraid*, 39.

<sup>74</sup> BEUTLER, *Do not be afraid*, 44; 49.

<sup>75</sup> KEENER, *John*, 932. Likewise SCHNACKENBURG, *John*, III, 62.

<sup>76</sup> BEASLEY-MURRAY, *John*, 250; MORRIS, *John*, 568; BROWN, *John*, 626.

<sup>77</sup> MOLONEY, *Glory not Dishonor*, 34.

<sup>78</sup> MOLONEY, *Glory not Dishonor*, 34-35.

<sup>79</sup> J. PAINTER, *The Quest for the Messiah*. The History, Literature and Theology of the Johannine Community (Edinburgh 1993) 420.

in the discourse. Greater emphasis is placed on following Jesus through death to glory, representing a more existential concern for the community.

The interpretation of 14,3 remains a contentious issue in scholarship on John's Farewell Discourse. It is difficult to come to a firm conclusion, and in regard to the theme of this paper such firmness is not crucial. If John knows and is using Mark, either he has retained the Parousia tradition or he has reinterpreted it in line with his own eschatology.

Beasley-Murray remarks that this saying represents a promise of the Parousia, but in more "homey" language than that contained in Mark 13,24-27 and 1 Thess 4,15-18<sup>80</sup>. The first of these passages, the Markan Parousia, offers further evidence for this study.

### 1. *Mark 13,24-27: The elect gathered*

An overview of Mark 13,24-27 has already been presented in this paper. The key features of this text in comparison to John 14,1-3 are:

- The Parousia, described in Mark with apocalyptic flourish and grandeur.
- The gathering of the elect in Mark 13,27.

In this passage, the apocalyptic coming of the glorified Jesus signals the end of suffering for the elect, who are gathered by angels from the four winds, representing a reversal of Zech 2,6 ("for I have spread you abroad like the four winds of heaven"). For Mark, the Parousia represents the fulfilment of the prophecy found in Deut 30,4. Jesus achieves a task assigned to God in the prophecy<sup>81</sup>, indicating the scope of this vision — Jesus' glory and authority is to be equated with that of God himself<sup>82</sup>. Thus Jesus' coming here truly establishes the Kingdom of God.

The gathering of the elect in verse 27 is the climax of this description. The elect are rescued from persecution as the present age draws to a close<sup>83</sup>, and they are gathered together to participate in

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<sup>80</sup> BEASLEY-MURRAY, *John*, 250.

<sup>81</sup> DONAHUE – HARRINGTON, *Mark*, 375.

<sup>82</sup> EVANS, *Mark*, 329.

<sup>83</sup> MOLONEY, *Mark*, 267.

the Kingdom of God, which the majestic Son of Man will rule <sup>84</sup>. There is no mention of the elect returning to heaven with Jesus to dwell with him and the Father forever. Rather, the opposite occurs — Jesus comes to where his people are and dwells with them as ruler of the earth, the location of the Kingdom of God.

## 2. *Mark 13,1-2: The destruction of the temple*

The other Markan parallel to be drawn to John 14,1-3 relates to the phrase “My Father’s House” in 14,2. As we have noted, John connects this phrase with the temple in his Gospel, and may be alluding to this meaning in 14,2. The theme of the temple’s destruction is critical to Mark’s Olivet Discourse.

Mark 13,1-2 immediately follows the pericope of the widow’s offering (12,41-44), which reflects a negative view of the temple and the cult which force every last cent out of the poor widow. This negative tone is carried into the beginning of chapter 13, wherein Jesus predicts the destruction of the temple. The destruction of the temple occurred in 70 CE, probably before the composition of Mark’s gospel <sup>85</sup>. Jesus’ prediction functions in Mark as a judgment on the temple establishment and an announcement of the punishment <sup>86</sup>.

The massive Herodian temple covered one-sixth of the space of the city <sup>87</sup>. Certainly it must have seemed magnificent to the group of disciples from Galilee. The unknown disciple’s observation may have been simply that of an awestruck tourist, or perhaps the remark was made in eager anticipation of taking possession of these buildings once the Kingdom of God arrived in fullness <sup>88</sup>. In the discourse that follows, Jesus expounds the true coming of the Kingdom of God, the judgments on the institutions that oppose it, and the suffering the disciples must endure before the consummation of the plan of God. The Markan Jesus presents a new hope, in which suffering and persecutions by temporal powers will be ended by the Parousia.

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<sup>84</sup> G.R. BEASLEY-MURRAY, *Jesus and the Last Days*. The Interpretation of the Olivet Discourse (Peabody MA 1993) 432.

<sup>85</sup> Cf. DONAHUE – HARRINGTON, *Mark*, 368; EVANS, *Mark*, 298-299.

<sup>86</sup> LOADER, *Fundamentalism*, 46, 48-49; EVANS, *Mark*, 285.

<sup>87</sup> WITHERINGTON, *Mark*, 342-343.

<sup>88</sup> EVANS, *Mark*, 298.

### 3. *Similarities and Differences*

The common elements of John 14,1-3 and Mark 13,24-27 and 13,1-2 are identified as follows:

- Jesus himself relates to his followers what will happen.
- Jesus was to leave (implied in Mark, explicit in John), but he would one day return.
- When he returned, he would take to himself a faithful group. This group was to expect his return and to live according to his teachings in the interim.
- The enigmatic motif of “My Father’s house”, the heavenly dwelling Jesus will take his followers to, appears in John. Mark reports Jesus’ predicting the destruction of the temple. In both evangelists, this theme is connected to the return of Jesus.

We will examine 1 through 3 under the broad heading “The Return of Jesus”. Following this, we will discuss the way in which the two evangelists use the temple and “My Father’s house” in the narrative.

#### a) *The Return of Jesus*

The Parousia is central in both John 14,3 and Mark 13,24-27. However, the two evangelists describe this event in very different ways. The Markan language is apocalyptic. Mark emphasises the epoch-ending advent of the Son of Man, who comes to display his glory and to vindicate himself and his followers. The consummation of the Kingdom of God, ruled by the exalted Son of Man, is the climax of the discourse. The gathering of the elect is significant in that the elect will participate in the new Kingdom.

In contrast, John 14,3 is bare of any apocalyptic references. The glorification of Jesus, and thus the commencement of God’s glorious reign, takes place for John in the cross/resurrection/return to the Father, and thus does not await future fulfilment. The Parousia, on the other hand, is a future event for John, but it is described in simple language as a reunion, emphasising the simple fact that Jesus and his followers will be together. This is the ultimate goal for John <sup>89</sup>: it is this reunion which makes the Parousia significant.

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<sup>89</sup> LOADER, *Christology*, 55.

The differences in approach point to the differing intentions of the two evangelists. Prior to Mark 13,24, Jesus predicts a time of great tribulation that is to precede the Parousia. The focus of the discourse is on future events, after Jesus' own death and resurrection. Conversely, the Johannine Jesus exhorts his followers not to be troubled (14,1.28) in the context of his imminent passion. John's Jesus gives his disciples the assurance of the Parousia as he is about to ascend to the cross. For both evangelists, the promise of the Parousia is intended to be comforting — but for different primary reasons. In Mark, the Parousia will end the suffering of the elect. In John, the Parousia will end the separation which Jesus and his followers have had to endure, which began at the cross. In contrast, later in the discourse, the fourth evangelist reasserts a more fully realised eschatology in Jesus' predictions that he will "come to" his disciples at Easter (4,18-24).

*b) "My Father's House" and the Temple*

The other motif which warrants examination is the possible connection between Mark's reference to the temple and John's "My Father's House". For both Mark and John the focus of the discourse is not the temple. Mark simply uses the prediction of the temple's destruction as a jumping off point to discuss the events leading up to the end of the age. John does not mention the temple at all in this context. We have noted, however, that John connects the phrase "My Father's House" with the temple in 2,16. From this we can infer that whatever else may be meant by the phrase, "my Father's house" in John 14,2 describes the spiritual dwelling of the Father, to which Jesus is returning. This "temple" is more significant than the Herodian temple, as it will never pass away.

The most obvious distinction between the two evangelists is that Mark 13,1-2 is talking about tearing a place down and John 14,2 about preparing a place. The Markan Jesus is announcing judgment on the temple and the scribes who oppress widows and make a show of piety (12,38-44). Further, synagogues together with kings and nations will persecute Jesus' followers, and in announcing the temple's destruction the Markan Jesus points to the fact that these institutions are temporary. Mark urges his readers to look beyond the destruction of the temple, to place their hope in the coming Kingdom of God, and to remain faithful in the midst of suffering<sup>90</sup>. In that kingdom, their suffering will be brought to an end.

<sup>90</sup> WITHERINGTON, *Mark*, 341.



In presenting the image of Jesus preparing a place in the Father's house for his followers, John reveals a different understanding. The real dwelling of God is not of this world, but is spiritual. Those who follow Jesus, pursuing the mission of revealing him to the world as he revealed the Father, have the hope of being reunited with him. The real house of God is for those whom Jesus will take with him at the end, and so it is eschatological and not of the present age<sup>91</sup>. John goes one step further than Mark to state that, beyond the destruction of an earthly temple, beyond suffering and death, Jesus' followers will dwell together with him and the Father forever in the afterlife.

#### 4. *Assessment and Implications*

Having observed the similarities and differences between the two evangelists, it is now appropriate to assess these similarities considering the possibility of John's use of Mark. Once again, we will speculate concerning what the differences may tell us about the emphases of the fourth evangelist.

The Parousia is the central theme of Mark 13,24-27 and the climax of the Markan Olivet Discourse. For Mark, this return is important in that it ends the suffering of the elect and signals the commencement of the Kingdom of God. As we noted in commenting on John 13,31-33, the fourth evangelist uses the same motif of the Parousia to fashion a narrative which functions within John's thought and purposes. It is not the commencement of the Kingdom of God or the cessation of suffering which is of primary importance here, but the fact that Jesus and his followers will be reunited once again.

If we assume that John is using Mark, there is a reversal of thought evident. For Mark it is the Parousia which makes the gathering of the elect significant. Conversely in John it is the reunion which gives the second coming significance. It is possible that John has taken the Markan Parousia motif and modified it to bring out

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<sup>91</sup> Loader indicates that Mark also proposes the idea of a spiritual temple, formed by the community of believers, an uncorrupted house of prayer for all people (LOADER, *Fundamentalism*, 46-47). This would mean the church becomes the spiritual temple, which is still very different from John's view of the Father's house as heaven.

what for him was the crucial point — Jesus coming back means that where he is, his followers may be also.

This would account for the absence of apocalyptic language, as John would be trying to refocus the pericope on this reunion rather than on the Parousia in itself. This may also explain the apparent reversal in structure here. John's Jesus commences in 14,1-3 discussing his return, moves into talking about the interim period, and then mentions the return again in verse 27-28 by way of *inclusio*. Mark's does the reverse, relating the sayings regarding the interim period in 13,1-23, leading up to the climactic description of the Parousia in 13,24-27.

We turn now to the motif of temple and "My Father's House". If we assume that John knows Mark here, he has reinterpreted Jesus' saying from a reference to the fall of Jerusalem in 70 CE to a more generic comfort in troubled times. This makes sense if it is assumed that John writes at a time considerably after 70 CE. The unmistakable implication of Mark is that the Parousia will soon follow the destruction of Jerusalem. By removing any reference to the temple and spiritualising the motif, John is perhaps attempting to sever the connection in the Markan tradition between the destruction of Jerusalem and the Parousia. John's vision is different: the promise of reunion in "My Father's house" does not signal the end of history in the way described by Mark<sup>92</sup>. John 14,2 refers to life and union with God and Jesus after death in the resurrection which is the hope of the suffering Johannine community.

The fact that both John and Mark expound the motif of the Parousia in the context of the final discourse, coupled with significant common elements, suggests the possibility of a connection between the accounts. Examination of the differences can be explained by the different thought of John, who may have modified the common elements in the Markan account accordingly. Taken with the apparent reversal in order between the two passages, these constitute a significant argument in favour of John's possible knowledge of and dependence on Mark.

A possible connection between the motifs of the temple's destruction in Mark and John's "Father's house" is more difficult to establish. It is possible that John has picked up the Markan reference to

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<sup>92</sup> KELLY – MOLONEY, *Experiencing God*, 289.

the destruction of the temple and transformed the motif entirely to point to a spiritual dwelling place. The argument is strengthened when we consider the common elements we have already observed between John 14,1-3 and Mark 13,24-27. However, the language and emphasis of the two evangelists are too different to make a strong case.

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Indeed, taken separately the pericopes would provide very flimsy evidence of anything, as apparent textual similarities (for instance in the prediction of Peter's denial) could be explained in other ways. My thesis rests on the cumulative force of common motifs in all the sections outlined above. This, together with evidence of a possible reversal of the apocalyptic tendencies of Mark executed by John, provides the basis of the claim that John knew and used Mark.

No more definitive statement can be made about what is, after all, an ancient bone of contention. If John knew Mark as theorised here and "flipped" the tradition to reverse the direction of Markan eschatology — from the "not yet" to the "already" — this would be a fascinating glimpse into the way a community knew and made use of the Jesus tradition. Inevitably, this raises possibilities for how believing communities may use the tradition today.

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#### SUMMARY

I argue that the author/s of the Fourth Gospel knew Mark, based on the reversal of certain Markan themes found in John. No attempt is made here to suggest the kind of literary dependence which is the basis of the Synoptic problem. Rather, my thesis is that the author/s of John may have used Mark from memory, writing deliberately to reverse the apocalyptic tendencies found in the Second Gospel. Isolated incidents of this possible reversal demonstrate little, but this paper proposes that the cumulative force of many such reversals supports the thesis of John's possible knowledge of Mark.