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Mark's Gospel Compared with Virgil's *Aeneid*

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by

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To Christine,

who, while leading a ladies' Bible study in Mark, asked the question,

"I wonder what Mark's audience was reading while he was writing his Gospel?"

CONTENTS

Abbreviations

Aen.	*Aeneid*
ANRW	*Aufstieg und Niedergang der römischen Welt: Geschichte und Kultur Roms im Spiegel der neueren Forschung*
App. *BC*	Appian, *Civil Wars*
App. *Pun*.	Appian, *Punic Wars*
BibInt	*Biblical Interpretation*
CBQ	*Catholic Biblical Quarterly*
De. Or.	*De Oratore*
Dio *Rom. Hist.*	Cassius Dio, *Roman History*
HNT	Handbuch zum Neuen Testament
Hom. *Il*.	Homer, *Iliad*
Hom. *Od.*	Homer, *Odyssey*
Hor. *Ars.*	Horace, *Ars Poetica*
Hor. *Od*.	Horace, *Odes*
Inst.	*Institutio oratoria* (Quintilian)
Jos. *Ant*.	Josephus, *Antiquities*
JETS	*Journal of the Evangelical Society*
JTS	*Journal of Theological Studies*
JSNT	*Journal for the Study of the New Testament*: SAGE Journals
KKNT	Kritisch-exegetischer Kommentar über das Neue Testament
Kilo	*Beiträge zur Alten Geschichte*
Liv. *Hist.Rom.*	Livy, *The History of Rome*

Nic. *Aug.*	Nicolaus of Damascus, *Life of Augustus*
NovT	*Novum Testamentum*
NTS	*New Testament Studies*
Od.	*Odyssey*
Ov. *Met*.	Ovid, *Metamorphoses*
Plut. *Ases*.	Plutarch, *Caesar*
Plb. *Hist*.	Polybius, *Histories*
Plut. *Caes*.	Plutarch, *Caesar*
Poet.	*Poetics*
Rhet.	*Rhetoric*
Servius *ad*.	Servius, 4th Century *Aeneid* Commentary
Sib. Or.	*Sibylline Oracles*
Suet. *Aug*.	Suetonius, *Life of Augustus* (*Divus Augustus*)
Suet. *Vita Verg*.	Suetonius, *De Vita Vergili*
Suet. *Vita Caes.*	Suetonius, *Life of the Twelve Caesars* (*De Vita Caesarum*)
Tac. *Ann*.	Tacitus, *Annals*
Tac. *Hist*.	Tacitus, *Histories*
TAPhA	Transactions of the American Philological Association
Verg. *Aen*.	Vergil, *Aeneid*
Verg. *Ecl*.	Vergil, *Eclogues*
Verg. *G*.	Vergil, *Georgics*
VH	Virgil, *Homer*
WUNT	*Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament*

Abstract

This dissertation will present the Gospel of Mark in light of the *Aeneid*, Virgil's epic poem published by Augustus immediately after Virgil's death in 19 B.C. The *Aeneid's* genre, literary style, grammar, symbolic hermeneutics, and lasting influence has been thoroughly researched and dissected in literature courses throughout the centuries. It has been translated into numerous languages and widely distributed in terms of geography and nationalities. Virgil wrote the *Aeneid* to proclaim the deity of Augustus. "Hic Caesar et omnis Juli progenies magnum caeli ventura sub axem. Hic vir, his est, tibi quem promitti saepius audis, Augustus Caesar, Divi genus, aurea condet saecula qui rursus Latio regnata per arva Saturno quondam."[1] This was the message the Romans wanted to hear: a Savior from the unending civil wars.

In complete contrast to Augustus as the Progenitor / Savior, the Gospel of Mark proclaims Jesus as the Son / Servant of God. This study will seek to demonstrate three contentions, that 1) the *Aeneid* received wide dissemination immediately after Augustus had it published, that 2) Mark had knowledge of, and access to, the *Aeneid*, and that 3) one of the reasons that Mark wrote his Gospel was to engage the *Aeneid*'s concepts and theology. This paper will continue the research of previous scholars by revealing an original and additional component of Mark's intentions as He wrote his Gospel. This dissertation will help the reader understand Mark from the perspective of Roman theology as found in the *Aeneid*, which elevated Augustus to the status of a god, and then demonstrate Mark's contrast between the *Aeneid*'s presentation of Augustus and Mark's presentation of Jesus.

[1] Virgil, The *Aeneid*, trans. A. S. Kline (Seattle: Amazon Digital Services, LLC, Poetry in Translation, 2015): VI, 789-794.

CHAPTER 1

Research Question

David E. Garland contends that "Mark [Gospel writer] does not engage in apologetics for a non-Christian audience in providing his written argument."[2] This dissertation will disagree with Garland's statement. It will seek to determine 1) if the *Aeneid* had wide dissemination soon after its initial publication, 2) whether Mark had knowledge of, and access to, the *Aeneid*, and 3) whether Mark addressed the concepts and theology of the *Aeneid*.

Mark did not use foreign terms or alien concepts to induce the Romans to evaluate the differences between the two kingdoms, to switch allegiances, and to follow the true Son of God. Mark used Roman vocabulary and concepts that were political, imperial, economic, eschatological and rhetorical to weave the teachings and works of Jesus into his message for the Romans to read and compare with the *Aeneid*'s portrayal of Augustus. Augustus was viewed as the emperor who had reached the pinnacle of Roman rule by bringing stability to Rome after five vicious civil wars. Augustus' influence was so great that the emperorship stayed within his family through the next five emperors. His accomplishments were so spectacular that no later emperor accomplished anything of significance in comparison with the 200-year *Pax Romana* (Roman Peace) ushered in by Augustus. Mark had no need to compare Jesus with any other emperor besides Augustus. The *Aeneid* proclaimed Augustus as the Roman hero who would bring peace to the world. The Gospel of Mark proclaims Jesus as the savior of mankind, bringing peace with God before bringing peace on the earth. This dissertation will attempt to determine if

[2] David E. Garland, *A Theology of Mark's Gospel* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2015): 98.

Mark addressed those differences between the *Aeneid* and his Gospel, and the choices Mark's audience faced because of those differences.

Methodology

Researching a subject written in the distant past presents almost insurmountable challenges. Some topics have so much information at hand that the historian has to selectively choose what "evidence" he / she wants to use to present his view of that particular past. The challenge for that historian is internal: he has to choose the right evidence so that his choice truly represents the past, and that his conclusion is not skewed because some vital part was left out. Some topics, however, have too little information to offer the luxury of selecting the appropriate artifacts to build the case that characterizes the past properly. These topics have had historians struggling with the missing pieces ever since historians have been studying history. The challenges for these topics are external. The historian has no choice but to accept and evaluate anything that might possibly even touch on that topic.

For the historian with too little evidence, no eyewitnesses are still alive to be questioned about the actual event(s) being researched. Little, if any, forensic evidence remains to be tested in the laboratory. A case has to be built entirely around circumstantial evidence. Making connections of a puzzle that contains missing and faded pieces often requires more speculation than desired to produce a coherent whole. The task is not hopeless, however. Although direct evidence seldom exists in such research, such research and investigations have been successfully carried out for centuries based upon proper methods of historical study.

Mary Beard has written the most recent definitive history of Rome.[3] She addresses the changing aspects of historical research. "This research is partly because of the new ways of looking at evidence, and the different questions we choose to put to it."[4] Beard notes that since Edward Gibbon's book,[5] information has surfaced about Rome through archaeology on land and under water, as well as lost manuscripts found in recently discovered libraries, so much so that she concludes that "in some ways we know more about ancient Rome than the Romans themselves did."[6] One historian today would be incapable of assimilating all the information available on even one aspect of Rome.

This new evidence still requires analysis that connects as many dots as possible to arrive first at a reasonable conclusion, and to the most probable one. The methodology for this dissertation will employ fourteen pieces of evidence that will need to be taken collectively (to connect the dots) in order to build a case for the proposition that Mark had knowledge of, and access to, the *Aeneid*, that one of Mark's main purposes was to engage the concepts and theology of Virgil's *Aeneid* and Aeneas[7] / Augustus as the savior of the world, and to offer Jesus as the only alternative. The evidence must be exhaustive, with as many pieces of the puzzle being brought to light as possible. This method has been used by theologians in the past. John Wenham (1912-1996), an Anglican Bible scholar, wrote an intriguing article postulating the date of Peter

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[3] Mary Beard, *SPQR The History of Rome* (New York: Liveright Publishing Corporation, a division of W. W. Norton & Company, Inc., 2015).

[4] Ibid., 16.

[5] Edward Gibbon, *The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, intro. Hugh Trevor-Roper (London: Everyman's Library, 2010).

[6] Beard, 16.

[7] The spelling of the main character in the Aeneid occurs in two forms. Some authors use "Aeneas," while others use "Aeneis." This dissertation will respect both uses.

and Mark's time in Rome. Wenham justified his methodology with the following defense: "Another scrap of positive evidence is to be found in the presence of a Cephas-party in Corinth. It is evidence of the kind so effectively used in an earlier generation in William Paley's *Horae Paulinae* (1790)[8] and in J. J. Blunt's *Undesigned Coincidences* (1847).[9] Relatively insignificant details from three separate documents dovetail to make a coherent little piece of history."[10] This approach underscores the collective evidence methodology of this dissertation.

The dating of Mark's Gospel has been thoroughly researched elsewhere.[11] Although determining the reliability and early date for the Gospel of Mark would be valuable, that topic is not a vital part of the evidence. The theology of the *Aeneid* was fixed in time when it was published. Although the emperors came and went with the normal flow of despots begin replaced by despots, the concepts, categories and theology of the *Aeneid* remained unchanged. If Mark addressed the theology of the *Aeneid* early or late, that would make no difference in his comparisons between the message of the *Aeneid* and the message of the gospel. This dissertation will accept the highly probable position that Mark wrote the Gospel of Mark. The Apostle Peter may or may not have had access to the *Aeneid*, but that has no crucial bearing on Mark's ability

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[8] William Paley, *Horae Paulinae, or the Truth of the Scripture History of St. Paul: Evinced by a Comparison of the Epistes Which Bear His Name, With the Acts of the Apostles* (London: Forgotten Books, 2012).

[9] John James Blunt, *Undesigned Coincidences in the Writings of the Old and New Testament* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Library, 1869). John James Blunt, *Undesigned Coincidences in the Writings Both of the Old and New Testament, an Argument of Their Veracity: With an Appendix, Containing ... and Acts, and Jowephus* (London: Forgotten Books, 2017).

[10] John Wenham, "Did Peter Go to Rome in AD 42?," *Tyndale Bulletin* 23 (1972): 94-102.

[11] See Michael F. Bird, Dr. Craig A. Evans, Simon Gathercole, Charles E. Hill, and Chris Tilling's, *How God Became Jesus: The Real Origins of Belief in Jesus' Divine Nature---A Response to Bart D. Ehrman*, 1st edition (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2014). Craig L. Blomberg, *The Historical Reliability of the Gospels*, 02 edition (Downers Grove, Ill: IVP Academic, 2007). Gary R. Habermas, *The Historical Jesus: Ancient Evidence for the Life of Christ* (Joplin, Mo: College Press Publishing Company, Inc., 1996). Andreas J. Köstenberger, Michael J. Kruger, and Ian Howard Marshall, *The Heresy of Orthodoxy: How Contemporary Culture's Fascination with Diversity Has Reshaped Our Understanding of Early Christianity*, 5.10.2010 edition (Wheaton, Ill: Crossway, 2010). J. Warner Wallace and Lee Strobel, *Cold-Case Christianity: A Homicide Detective Investigates the Claims of the Gospels* (Colorado Springs, CO: David C. Cook, 2013).

to interact with the theology of the *Aeneid*. If Peter had had access to the *Aeneid*, certainly he and Mark would have discussed it, but the emphasis of this dissertation is the connection between the theology of Mark's Gospel and the *Aeneid*, regardless of Peter's involvement.

A thorough literature review in this chapter will demonstrate how no scholar has approached the subject of Mark's Gospel addressing the *Aeneid*. Chapter two will present the case that the *Aeneid* had wide and deep penetration into the Roman world. Chapter three will provide fourteen pieces of evidence that will lead to the cumulative conviction that Mark had knowledge of, and access to, the *Aeneid*. Life is never separated into neat compartments, and it will become obvious that some of these pieces of evidence overlap one another. Although the pieces will be treated separately, they must be considered as a whole. If there were no overlap, their connections would be difficult to accept, let alone prove. Chapter four will present how Mark uses his theology in his Gospel to engage Virgil's theology in the *Aeneid*. The procedure will seek to demonstrate how those who read both texts could see the comparisons and contrasts between them.

Literature Review

New Testament scholarship has adequately revealed that both the Jewish and the Roman worlds were the two major audiences of Mark's Gospel. The literary search will also disclose the fact that New Testament scholarship has written profusely about the Jewish world connection, some of which is directly relevant to the audience of the Roman world. However, neither New Testament nor Classical Humanities scholarship has adequately researched Mark's connection with the Roman world as seen through the eyes of Virgil's *Aeneid*. Many scholars have written

about every aspect of this dissertation thesis except the central claim that one of Mark's main motivations for his Gospel was to engage the theology of the *Aeneid*. Some aspects have been covered comprehensively, leaving little to be contributed to those aspects. An extensive literature search has been made on the three questions to be answered by this dissertation: 1) the *Aeneid*'s dissemination, 2) Mark's knowledge of, and access to, the *Aeneid*, and 3) the Gospel of Mark's engagement of the *Aeneid*. This chapter will survey the most important books and articles that contribute to the specific aspect of the thesis. The lesser pertinent items can be found in the bibliography.

Authors have ably defended the authenticity of Mark, and therefore Mark's theology takes center place as one of the main presuppositions of the thesis of this dissertation.[12] David E. Garland's six-hundred-page book, *A Theology of Mark's Gospel: Good News about Jesus the Messiah, the Son of God*, published in 2015, covers the major and minor points of theology in Mark's Gospel.[13] Every chapter of Garland's book has been referenced in this dissertation for the purpose of comparing Mark's theology with the *Aeneid*. For the methodology of this research, Warner J. Wallace's unique tactics in solving cold case crimes provides the perfect approach for connecting every piece of significant evidence that establishes and confirms Mark's Gospel as a challenge to the *Aeneid*'s theology.[14] The books and articles reviewed in this chapter are evaluated in the order of their appearance in the dissertation, although some of them are more relevant to later aspects of the thesis. Many authors have written on almost every aspect of every

[12] Bird, *How God Became Jesus.* Blomberg, *The Historical Reliability of the Gospels.* Habermas, *The Historical Jesus.*

[13] Garland, *A Theology of Mark's Gospel.*

[14] Wallace and Strobel, *Cold-Case Christianity.*

topic in this dissertation. Only those authors whose research touched on the thesis of this dissertation will be evaluated.

Concerning Augustus

Mark Toher completed a thorough work, published in 2016, on Nicolaus of Damascus' biography of Augustus.[15] Adrian Goldsworthy published his work in 2014 in which he incorporates references to all the research on Augustus available throughout the centuries.[16] Brenda Deen Schildgen's book explores thoroughly how providence has been used to explain the divine purpose for humans throughout history.[17] She treats literary, historical, philosophical and theological texts, all of which record the political and military successes and failures as determined by the gods. She demonstrates how Virgil and the Bible were used as authoritative forerunners of Augustine and his student, Orosius, the two greatest political thinkers during their time.[18] These men produced theories of Christian history and politics that have influenced Christianity to this present day. Their connection of God's plan for humanity with the late Roman Empire laid the foundation for Dante's political and religious views, which Schildgen

[15] Nicolaus of Damascus, *The Life of Augustus and The Autobiography: Edited with Introduction, Translations and Historical Commentary*, Bilingual edition, trans. Mark Toher (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2016).

[16] Adrian Goldsworthy, *Augustus: First Emperor of Rome*, 1st edition (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2014).

[17] Brenda Deen Schildgen, *Divine Providence: A History: The Bible, Virgil, Orosius, Augustine, and Dante*, NIPPOD edition (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2014).

[18] Paulus Orosius, *Seven Books of History against the Pagans*, trans. A. T. Fear (London: Liverpool University Press, 2010).

examines in detail.[19] Perhaps her contribution and correlation of theology and politics contribute significantly to the thesis of this dissertation, but she only brushes the edges of the *Aeneid* and never links Mark's Gospel with the *Aeneid*'s theology.

One of the few works that directly connects the *Aeneid* with the New Testament is David R. Wallace's book *The Gospel of God: Romans as Paul's* Aeneid.[20] Wallace maintains that Paul wrote the book of Romans to explain the gospel itself in detail, but Wallace shows that the Apostle Paul was also directly challenging the *Aeneid*'s theology as he penned that epistle. Wallace contributes significantly to the understanding of Virgil's place in helping Augustus secure his position as savior of the Empire. Wallace's magnificent work focuses solely on the book of Romans, which was probably written from Corinth around A.D. 57, though Donald Guthrie notes that "it is almost impossible to reconstruct the occasion of the epistle."[21] The occasion of the writing of the book of Romans does not affect the content of Romans, which Wallace claims challenges the theology of the *Aeneid*. Wallace makes no further connection with the *Aeneid*.

Concerning Virgil

Scholars have researched Virgil's life, writings, and influence over the past two millennia as much as they have covered Augustus. One of the most recent works is by Peter Levi.[22] He

[19] Schildgen.

[20] David R. Wallace, *The Gospel of God: Romans as Paul's Aeneid* (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock Pub, 2008).

[21] Donald Guthrie, *New Testament Introduction* (Downers Grove: Intervarsity Press 1990), 396, n. 1.

[22] Peter Levi, *Virgil: A Life* (London: Tauris Parke Paperbacks, 2012).

replaces the research jargon with a novel style of writing this biography. He rejects the myths that surround Virgil's life for a progression of life expressed in a comfortable narrative. He contends that Virgil wrote with a very subtle irony, that his writings "had a glamorous and to my mind unpredictable success."[23] Levi believes that because of Virgil's subtlty, Virgil's success "is almost bound to be based on a misunderstanding."[24] Beginning with Virgil's youth and ending with "Ashes," Levi exquisitely uncovers Virgil's life and times by analyzing the *Eclogues*, then the *Georgics*, eventually viewing the *Aeneid* through the lens of a matured Virgil who "did not believe in the gods, but who simply picked through them somewhat fastidiously, and employed only those he would need for his Homeric poem."[25] Peter Levi's work must be consulted for any serious research into Virgil and Roman history, but Levi contributes nothing to a connection between the Gospel of Mark and the *Aeneid*.

Peter White combines social history and literary interpretation to explain the production of poetry in the golden age of Virgil and the other poets of his time.[26] He focuses on the relationships between the poets and the wealthy people who supported them. He includes all the institutions involved and connected with poetry and the furtherance of poetry and poets in Roman society: the schools of the grammarians, libraries, and public recitations. He believes that Augustus did not use poetry for propaganda purposes, since the poets' poetry was solely independent and inventive.

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[23] Ibid., 1.

[24] Ibid.

[25] Ibid. 237.

[26] Peter White, *Promised Verse: Poets in the Society of Augustan Rome* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1993).

Concerning Mark's Dating

The debate over the date of Mark's Gospel has vacillated between the extremes of a very early date before the destruction of the temple in Jerusalem to a very late date after that event. Robert Thomas edited a book that discussed all the issues involved and arrived at the conclusion that scholars might actually never really discover the answer to the riddle of Mark's date.[27] The date of Mark would be affected by the discovery of what kind of literary dependence exists between the three synoptic Gospels (the Synoptic problem). However, no scholars have arrived at a firm conclusion as to who copied from whom, and if the future produces a clear answer, the date of Mark's Gospel does not affect the content of Mark.

Concerning the *Aeneid* in Greek

Robert M. Grant co-published a text of essays that connect the writings of early Christianity with the Graeco-Roman world.[28] Those essays demonstrate conclusively that the *Aeneid* had been published in Greek very soon after it was published in Latin. Other works listed in the bibliography have contributed to that conclusion. Nathan Drazin wrote a book in 1940 on the topic of Jewish education from 515 BCE to 220 CE.[29] His work was very thorough, and he

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[27] Robert L. Thomas, ed., *Three Views on the Origins of the Synoptic Gospels* (Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel Academic & Professional, 2002).

[28] Robert M. Grant, David Edward Aune, and Robin Darling Young. *Reading Religions in the Ancient World: Essays Presented to Robert McQueen Grant on His 90th Birthday* (Leiden; Boston: Brill, 2007).

[29] Nathan Drazin, *History of Jewish Education From 515 B.C.E. to 220 C.E.*, During the Periods of the Second Commonwealth and Tanniam (Baltimore: John Hopkins Press, 1940). Drazin, *History of Jewish Education From 515 B.C.E. to 220 C.E.* (Plano, TX: Mottelay Press, 2007). Drazin, *History of Jewish Education From 515 B.C.E. to 220 C.E.* (London: Nabu Press, 2011).

included the fact that the Jews were also exposed to the propaganda of the Roman religion that portrayed Augustus as the savior of the Empire. Brian Incigneri's book proposes a post-70 CE origin of Mark, and that it was written for a Roman audience.[30] He bases his post-70 view on Mark 13, the war chapter, and states that Mark would not have been distraught with the destroyed temple if it had still been standing when he wrote his Gospel.[31] He believes that the Flavians would have killed him for writing about the destruction of the temple before the event. He attributes the darkened sun and moon to the enormous cloud of smoke caused by the Roman burning of the temple. His book supports the claims made in this dissertation when he contends that the Gospel of Mark is a piece of counter-propaganda to Rome. If the Roman government had known about the Gospel of Mark and had viewed it as having a strong adverse propaganda effect on the politics of Rome, it seems reasonable to expect that they would have executed a person for producing such a piece of writing. Incigneri does not consider the Aeneid in light of his idea of propaganda with the *Aeneid*.

Marianna Palmer Bonz wrote her dissertation on the relationship between the Luke-Acts literature and the Roman Epic tradition.[32] She focuses on the genre and interpretation of Luke–Acts as it connects with its contemporary social, literary, and ideological background, especially as these elements are revealed in the Latin epics, with a heavy emphasis on Virgil's *Aeneid*. She

[30] Brian Incigneri, *The Gospel to the Romans: The Setting and Rhetoric of Mark's Gospel* (Leiden; Boston, MA: Brill, 2003).

[31] It seems that Mark would have been distraught over the destruction of the temple, whether he was prophesying its destruction beforehand or bemoaning its destruction after the fact.

[32] Marianna Palmer Bonz. "The Best of Times; the Worst of Times: Luke-Acts and Epic Tradition" (PhD diss., Harvard, 1997), accessed January 25, 2017, https://www.cambridge.org/core/journals/harvard-theological-review/article/div-classtitlesummaries-of-doctoral-dissertationsa-hreffn01-ref-typefnadiv/88E3C086D386585B781B22B4B338A85C. Marianna Palmer Bonz, *The Past as Legacy* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 2000).

also contends that literary evidence indicates that Virgil's works had been translated into Greek prose by the middle of the first century.[33]

Concerning Hebrew Education

The ancient writer Flavius Josephus[34] and the twentieth century writer William Barclay[35] have firmly established that Jewish education included exposure to the Roman worldview. Rabbi Simeon Ben Shetach required elementary school as a mandate as early as 75 BCE.[36] The Talmud accredits Joshua Ben Gamla, who laid down an ordinance in 64 CE that schoolteachers had to be placed in every town, and children should begin schooling at 6 or 7.[37] A child could not be transferred from school to school. The child had to be taught in his own town. The children could be introduced to other synagogues. His ordinance even forbid the taking of a child across a river for fear of the child falling in and drowning.[38] The Pirkei Avot states that

> He [Yehudah ben Teima] used to say: Five years [is the age] for [the study of] Scripture, Ten [is the age] for [the study of] Misnah, thirteen [is the age] for [observing] commandments, Fifteen [is the age] for [the study of] Talmud, Eighteen [is the age] for the [wedding] canopy, Twenty [is the age] for pursuit, Thirty [is the age] for [full] strength, Forty [is the age] for understanding, Fifty [is the age] for [giving] counsel, Sixty [is the age] for mature age, Seventy [is the age] for a hoary head, Eighty [is the age] for

[33] Wallace, *The Gospel of God: Romans as Paul's Aeneid*. xv-xvi.

[34] Flavius Josephus, *Jewish Antiquities* (London: Wordsworth Editions Ltd, 2006).

[35] William Barclay, *Educational Ideals in the Ancient World* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book, 1974).

[36] Nissan Mindel, "Rabbi Shimon Ben Shetach" (Brooklyn: Kehot Publication Society, n.d.), accessed December 15, 2017, http://www.chabad.org/library/article_cdo/aid/112342/jewish/Rabbi-Shimon-Ben-Shetach.htm.

[37] B.T. Bava Batra.21a. The William Davidson Talmud, accessed December 16, 2017, https://www.sefaria.org/Bava_Batra.21a.9?lang=bi&with=all&lang2=en. The sefaria.org website is the largest free library of Jewish texts available to read online in Hebrew and English including Torah, Tanakh, Talmud, Mishnah, Midrash, commentaries and more.

[38] Ibid.

> [superadded] strength, Ninety [is the age] for [a] bending [stature], One hundred, is [the age at which one is [as if dead, passed away, and ceased from the world.[39]

The Jewish community took the education of their people very seriously, beginning with small children and continuing until a very old age.

Concerning Roman Education

Many of the works that include some information on Roman education during the Roman period only mention it as an aside while describing the Roman audience intended by Mark's Gospel. M. L. Clarke gave a more detailed description of the subject. His work demonstrates the pervasiveness of Roman education throughout the Empire.[40] Edward E. Best, Jr. wrote a very convincing article contending that the average Roman soldier was quite literate, which supports the thesis that even the less educated Romans would have been able to read the *Aeneid*.[41]

Concerning Virgil's Knowledge of Moses

Moses Hadas identified Aeneas as the Roman Moses.[42] Hadas' article shows how well

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[39] "Pirkei Avot 5:21," accessed December 16, 2017, https://www.sefaria.org/Pirkei_Avot.5.21?lang=bi. *Pirkei Avot* (literally, "Chapters of the Fathers," but generally translated as "Ethics of Our Fathers") is one of the best-known and most-cited of Jewish texts. See also https://www.myjewishlearning.com/article/pirkei-avot-ethics-of-our-fathers/.

[40] M. L. Clarke, *Higher Education in the Ancient World* (Abingdon-on-Thames: Routledge, 2012).

[41] Edward E. Best, Jr. "The Literate Roman Soldier," *The Classical Journal* 62, no. 3:122–27.

[42] Moses Hadas, *The Story of Virgil's Aeneid: Introduction and Readings in Latin and English* (New York: Folkway Records, Smithsonian Institution, 1955). Moses Hadas, "Vergil, Hebrew Prophecy, and the Roman Ideal: Aeneas as the Roman Moses." *Commentary Magazine* (1953), accessed December 20, 2016, https://www.commentarymagazine.com/articles/vergil-hebrew-prophecy-and-the-roman-idealaeneas-as-the-roman-

Virgil knew and understood the Old Testament. No piece of literature is ever written in a vacuum. It would be difficult to contend that the Romans were completely unaware of Jewish literature. The Old Testament was not an insignificant side product of an insignificant conquered people. As Paul reminded Agrippa in Acts 26:3, "you are an expert in all customs and questions concerning the Jews," indicating that some in high places were fully aware of the Old Testament and the Jewish understanding and application of their literature. Although no written evidence has surfaced that reveals any other Roman experts in Jewish literature, since a high official like Agrippa was an expert in Jewish customs and questions, it is reasonable to assume that the other people in power would have scrutinized any literature that appeared to challenge Rome.

The Romans experienced more difficulty ruling over the Jews than many of the other subjugated peoples. Jewish unrest and uprisings confronted the Roman leaders constantly.[43] Although Jewish literature was a small part of the output of the Empire, those who supported the Empire by writing to defend the Roman way of life through literature, i.e., the poets of the Epic like Virgil, were plausibly informed about what was coming out of the Jewish world, especially if a major piece of Jewish literature surfaced directly in Rome that seemed to challenge the *Aeneid*.

Concerning the Jewish Knowledge of the *Aeneid*

moses/. See the footnote on page 64 of this dissertation for a complete description of Hadas' contribution to this field.

[43] Martin Goodman, *Rome and Jerusalem: The Clash of Ancient Civilizations* (New York: Knopf Doubleday Publishing Group, 2008).

Volumes have been written about Augustus' desire to spread his message of salvation beyond the official borders of the Empire.[44] Israel lay inside those borders. It seems very unlikely that the Jewish community would have missed the *Aeneid*. As Alan K. Bowman wrote about the Vindolanda manuscripts found in northern England,

> In the *praetorium* at Vindolanda, probably during the occupation of Cerialis and his family, someone took a writing-tablet on which a private letter had been begun, but not finished, and wrote on the back of it in rather good, but degenerating, capital hand a line from the *Aeneid* of Vergil (9.473): a complete line, not a complete sentence and certainly not a readily memorable one, from the second half of the poem which is generally much less in evidence as a quarry for writing exercises; and one with the remarkable for of *e*, hitherto unparalleled in ink texts. Are texts of Vergil available at Vindolanda? Are they used for writing practice (as is commonly found on papyri) and by whom? Cerialis' children? There is a limit to the value of speculation and we may yet learn more. But the existence of this text is perhaps the most single remarkable phenomenon of our find. It may, indeed, not be the only literary text at Vindolanda (even if it is the only one of which we can be certain) and one of the fragmentary letters carries a clear reference to 'books' (*libros*). If the imagination may be tickled by a remarkable coincidence, it is worth adding that almost on the same day as the Vindoland text came to light, a batch of Latin military papari from Herod's fortress at Masada in Israel was found to include a scrap containing a line from the fourth book of the *Aeneid*.[45]

Can it be assumed that the Romans carried the *Aeneid* into northern Britain and to Masada on the eastern edge of the Judean Desert overlooking the Dead Sea, and that the Jewish people never had knowledge of, or access to, the *Aeneid*? Does that appear to be reasonable?

Scholars writing on a wide variety of topics about the Roman world have mentioned the breadth and depth of the Roman education system as support for their main research topic.

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[44] For instance: Adam Winn, *The Purpose of Mark's Gospel: An Early Christian Response to Roman Imperial Propaganda* (Tübingen, Germany: Mohr Siebeck, 2008). Alex Pollok, "Roman Propaganda in the Age of Augustus," (Dominican University of California Dominican Scholar Senior Theses and Capstone Projects Theses and Capstone Projects 5-2017, Dominican University of California). Katharine Allen, "The Fasti of Ovid and the Augustan Propaganda," *The American Journal of Philology*, Vol. 43, no. 3 (1922), 250-266.

[45] Alan K. Bowman, *Life and Letters on the Roman Frontier* (London: Routledge, 1994), 91-92. See also Vindolanda Tablets Online, accessed December, 16, 2017, http://vindolanda.csad.ox.ac.uk/4DLink2/4DACTION/WebRequestQuery?searchTerm=118&searchType=number&searchField=TVII.

Richard A. Burridge wrote a meticulous work comparing the Gospels with the Graeco-Roman literary form of biographies.[46] His work supports the thesis of this dissertation by demonstrating that Mark wrote an ancient biography of Jesus, very similar to how Virgil wrote about Aeneas, thus indicating Mark's knowledge of the form of writing Virgil used when he wrote the *Aeneid*. Gerald F. Downing's work presents the harmonious order at all levels of society in the Roman world, while revealing the underlying voices of dissidence against oppressive and unjust order in all areas.[47]

He mentions some strands of resistance against Rome in the words of Jesus and Paul, and a special connection between the early Christian movement, contemporary Judaism and the Graeco-Roman world. His article confirms the Jewish knowledge of Rome's attempt to spread its religion everywhere. Wayne A. Meeks had also demonstrates the depth of Jewish knowledge of the literature of Rome.[48]

Concerning Mark's Education

Already noted above is Nathan Drazin's work that serves as a thorough overview of the Jewish education received by Mark. Little evidence exists concerning Mark's Roman education. All such evidence is circumstantial. Mark's name may indicate that he might have had Roman citizenship. If that assumption is true, then it is unreasonable to assume that Mark received no

[46] Richard A. Burridge, and Graham Stanton, *What Are the Gospels?: A Comparison with Graeco-Roman Biography* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2004).

[47] Gerald F. Downing, *Order and (Dis)order in the First Christian Century: A General Survey of Attitudes,* Novum Testamentum, Supplements (Leiden: Brill, 2013).

[48] Wayne Meeks, *The First Urban Christians: The Social World of the Apostle Paul* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2003).

Roman education. The point that Mark's mother apparently owned her own home and had a servant (Acts 12:12-13), and that Mark's uncle was wealthy (Acts 4:36-37), could support the contention that Mark received more than just a Hebrew education. However, since the Hebrews held any other education but their own in low esteem, the opposite may have been true. Mark's family may have viewed any Roman education as a waste of time and money. The only two positive reasons for Mark receiving a Roman education were survival in the Roman world and the ability to contextualize the gospel. And if Mark wrote his Gospel based on Peter's teachings, then Peter's Roman education plays no part in Mark writing down his Gospel. Since there is no extant evidence of Peter having received a Roman education, the point is moot.

It has been established by the Church Fathers that Peter was the source of Mark's Gospel. Papias of Hierapolis (60-130AD) echoed the disciples of the Apostles when he stated that Mark wrote his Gospel in Rome based on Peter's teachings.

> And the elder used to say this, Mark became Peter's interpreter and wrote accurately all that he remembered, not, indeed, in order, of the things said and done by the Lord. For he had not heard the Lord, nor had followed him, but later on, followed Peter, who used to give teaching as necessity demanded but not making, as it were, an arrangement of the Lord's oracles, so that Mark did nothing wrong in thus writing down single points as he remembered them. For to one thing he gave attention, to leave out nothing of what he had heard and to make no false statements in them.[49]

Irenaeus (130-200AD) agreed with Papias. "Matthew composed his Gospel among the Hebrews in their own language, while Peter and Paul proclaimed the gospel in Rome and founded the community. After their departure, Mark, the disciple and interpreter of Peter, handed on his preaching to us in written form."[50] Clement agreed.

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[49] Philip Schaff, *Eusebius' Ecclesiastical History: Complete and Unabridged* (Peabody: Hendrickson Publications, 1998), xxxix, 15. See also Philip Schaff, NPNF2-01. Eusebius Pamphilius: Church History, Life of Constantine, Oration in Praise of Constantine, and http://www.ccel.org/ccel/schaff/npnf201.iii.viii.xxxix.html?highlight=papias#highlight, 15.

[50] Irenaeus, *Against Heresies* (Pickering, OH: Beloved Publishing, LLC, 2014), Book 3, chapter 1.

> 1. And when the divine word had made its home among them, the power of Simon was quenched and immediately destroyed, together with the man himself. And so greatly did the splendor of piety illumine the minds of peters hearers that they were not satisfied with hearing once only, and were not content with the unwritten teaching of the divine gospel, but with all sorts of entreaties they besought Mark, a follower of Peter, and the one who's Gospel is extant, that he would leave them a written monument of the doctrine which had been orally communicated to them. Nor did they cease until they had prevailed with the man, and had thus become the occasion of the written Gospel which bears the name of Mark.
>
> 2. And they say that Peter when he had learned, through a revelation of the Spirit, of that which had been done, was pleased with the zeal of the men, and that the work obtained the sanction of his authority for the purpose of being used in the churches. Clément in the eighth book of his Hypotyposes gives this account, and with him agrees the Bishop of Hierapolis named Papias. And Peter makes mention of Mark in his first epistle which they say that he wrote in Rome itself, as is indicated by him, when he calls the city, by figure, Babylon, as he does in the following words: "The church that is at Babylon, elected together with you, saluteth you; and so doth Marcus my son.[51]

Eusebius added,

> The Gospel according to Mark had this occasion. As Peter had preached the Word publicly at Rome, and declared the Gospel by the Spirit, many who were present requested that Mark, who had followed him for a long time and remembered his sayings, should write them out. And having composed the Gospel he gave it to those who had requested it. When Peter learned of this, he neither directly forbade nor encouraged it.[52]

Tertullian (160-225AD) stated that "While that [gospel] which Mark published may be affirmed to be Peter's whose interpreter Mark was."[53] The Muratorian Fragment, the oldest known list of New Testament books (170AD), opens with the first line: "But he was present among them, and so he put [the facts down in his Gospel]."[54] Eusebius notes that Origen (185-254AD) attributed Mark's Gospel to Peter.

> In his first book on Matthew's Gospel, maintaining the Canon of the Church, he testifies that he knows only four Gospels, writing as follows: Among the four Gospels, which are

[51] Schaff, *Eusebius' Ecclesiastical History: Complete and Unabridged*, Book 2, chapter 15.

[52] Ibid., Book 6, chapter 14.

[53] Ibid., Book 4, chapter 5.

[54] Samuel Prideaux Tregelles, Canon Muratorian: The Earliest Catalogue of the Books of the New Testament, Edited With Notes (London: Forgotten Books, 2017), 1.

> the only indisputable ones in the Church of God under heaven, I have learned by tradition that the first was written by Matthew, who was once a publican, but afterwards an apostle of Jesus Christ, and it was prepared for the converts from Judaism, and published in the Hebrew language. The second is by Mark, who composed it according to the instructions of Peter, who in his Catholic epistle acknowledges him as a son, saying, 'The church that is at Babylon elected together with you, salutes you, and so does Marcus, my son.' 1 Peter 5:13 And the third by Luke, the Gospel commended by Paul, and composed for Gentile converts. Last of all that by John.[55]

Lastly, an Anti-Marcionite Prologue (4th century) for the Gospel of Mark confirms Peter's connection to Mark. "Mark declared, who is called 'stump-fingered,' because he had rather small fingers in comparison with the stature of the rest of his body. He was the interpreter of Peter. After the death of Peter himself he wrote down this same gospel in the regions of Italy."

It could be argued that all the Church Fathers simply quoted Papias when they connect Mark to Peter. Papias's comments seem to be the earliest statements on this subject. However, there is no evidence for such an assumption that Papias is the only separate source for the connection. The variations are indicators that the other sources were original and did not mimic Papias. There are also no grounds for doubting any of these sources. Mark wrote his Gospel based on Peter's teachings.

Like all other Romans, Mark's Roman education would have been influenced by *The Twelve Tables*, which were a set of laws inscribed on 12 bronze tablets supposedly formulated in Rome around 450 BCE.[56] They were passed down from the government to the people and were the first set of laws in the Roman world establishing equality among the citizens. These laws

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[55] Schaff, Book 6, chapter 25.

[56] Lucilius, *Remains of Old Latin, Volume III, The Law of the Twelve Tables*, Revised edition, Loeb Classical Library No. 329, trans. E. H. Warmington (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, January, 1938). Paul Robinson Coleman-Norton, *The Twelve Tablets* (Princeton: Princeton University Department of Classics, 1948) Anonymous, *The Twelve Tables* (Los Angeles: Hardpress, 2016). Mark Cartwright, *The Twelve Tables,* Ancient History Encyclopedia. Last modified April 11, 2016, http://www.ancient.eu/Twelve_Tables/.

permitted wrongs to be redressed through clearly-worded written laws known to everybody.[57] The existence and prolific dissemination of these tables reveal the education that the Romans received. Brian Incigneri's work, also noted above, seems to support the viewpoint that Mark received a typical Roman education.[58] Joanna Dewey's article argues that Mark has no set structure, but is rather an interwoven tapestry with overlapping layers and sequences, all of which forecast the future and echo the past.[59] She contends that this approach was normative for aural narrative of that day. Her work contends that Mark's education provided him with such intricate literary ability.[60] Knowing that all pupils in the Roman world had been given training in rhetoric, George Alexander Kennedy's work on Greek textbooks makes it plausible that Mark might have used some of these textbooks in his education.[61] Although Thomas Söding does not mention the *Aeneid*, Söding's article presents Mark as an educated theologian capable of understanding and countering the theology of the *Aeneid*.[62]

Concerning Mark's Family and Travels

[57] Ibid.

[58] Incigneri.

[59] Joanna Dewey, "Mark as Interwoven Tapestry: Forecasts and Echoes for a Listening Audience," Catholic Biblical Quarterly 53.

[60] Ibid.

[61] George Alexander Kennedy, *Progymnasmata: Greek Textbooks of Prose Composition and Rhetoric* (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2003).

[62] Thomas Söding, "Der Evangelist in Seiner Zeit," in *Der Evangelist Als Theologe: Studien Zum Markusevangelium* (Stuttgart: Katholisches Bibelwerk, 1995).

In addition to the Scriptures themselves, the two most relevant works on Mark's family and travels are Philip Burton's work on *The Old Latin Gospels*,[63] and Eusebius' invaluable writings on church history.[64] Burton connects Mark to an *Old Latin Gospel* that Mark might have used to write his own Gospel. Eusebius is useful in the attempt to establish the chronology of Mark's connections and movements. No firm evidence exists tosupport the contention that Mark wrote his Gospel in Latin the first time he wrote it.

Concerning the Broader Audience – Rome

Many, many scholars have defended Mark's audience as broader than the Jewish environment.[65] Adam Winn makes a strong case for Mark writing to a Roman audience, but, going further, Winn also contends that Mark's Gospel was an early Christian response to Rome's propaganda.[66] Winn's book is a significant work that supports the thesis of this dissertation, but does not view the theology of the *Aeneid* as Mark's main target. Adela Yarbro Collins locates Jesus, as the Son of God, within the culture of the day.[67] David Edward Aune's work

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[63] Philip Burton, *The Old Latin Gospels: A Study of Their Texts and Language* (New York: Clarendon Press, 2001).

[64] Eusebius, *The History of the Church: From Christ to Constantine*, ed. Andrew Louth, trans. G. A. Williamson (London: Penguin Random House, 1990). Eusebius Pamphilius, *Church History, Life of Constantine, Oration in Praise of Constantine*, Christian Classics Ethereal Library," accessed March 11, 2017. http://www.ccel.org/ccel/schaff/npnf201.iii.vii.xvi.html.

[65] Richard Bauckham, *The Gospels for All Christians: Rethinking the Gospel Audiences* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1997). Craig A. Evans, "Marks Incipit and the Priene Calendar Inscription: From Jewish Gospel to Greco– Roman Gospel," *Journal of Greco-Roman Christianity and Judaism* 1 (2000). Catharine Edwards, *Writing Rome: Textual Approaches to the City* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996).

[66] Winn, *The Purpose of Mark's Gospel: An Early Christian Response to Roman Imperial Propaganda*.

[67] Adela Yarbro Collins, "Mark and His Readers: The Son of God Among Greeks and Romans," *The Harvard Theological Review* 93, no. 2 (April 2000): 85–100.

significantly supports the connection between Mark and the Romans.[68] One of the most significant treatments connecting Jesus to Aeneas is Mark Reasoner's chapter in Aune's book, which compares Aeneas and Jesus as divine sons in the book of Hebrews.[69] Reasoner contends in his chapter that the writer of Hebrews had intentionally promoted Jesus as superior to Aeneas in the *Aeneid*.

Concerning Genre / Biography

As noted above, Richard A. Burridge presents the definitive work on demonstrating the biographical nature of the Gospels. Vernon K. Robbins contributes an article explaining Mark's genre.[70] Ben Witherington builds on Burridge's work supporting the view that the Gospels were written as biographies during the New Testament times.[71] Charles H. Talbert believes that Mark was well aware of the genre of the day, and that he was intentionally writing a biography of Jesus. Talbert believes that Mark placed his Gospel within the biographical category in order to provide himself with a platform used by all Graeco-Roman biographies.[72]

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[68] David Edward Aune, and Robin Darling Young, ed., *Reading Religions in the Ancient World: Essays Presented to Robert McQueen Grant on His 90th Birthday* (Leiden: Brill, 2007).

[69] Mark Reasoner, *Divine Sons: Aeneas and Jesus in Hebrews*, found in Robert M. Grant, David E. Aune, and Robin Darling Young, ed., *Reading Religions in the Ancient World: Essays Presented to Robert McQueen Grant on His 90th Birthday* (Leiden: Brill, 2007).

[70] Vernon K. Robbins, "Mark as Genre," *Society of Biblical Literature Seminar Papers* Vol. 19 (1980): 371-399.

[71] Ben Witherington III, *The Gospel of Mark: A Socio-Rhetorical Commentary* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2001).

[72] Charles H Talbert, *What Is a Gospel?* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1977).

Concerning Genre / Rhetoric

Many scholars have tackled the subject of rhetoric before, during, and after the Roman period.[73] Burton L. Mack reveals patterns of persuasion in the Gospels, used by the authors to convince their audiences of the truthfulness of their message.[74] M. L. Clarke finds rhetorical influences in the *Aeneid*. Virgil made use of this rhetoric to convince his readers of the truthfulness of his epic myth.[75] Karl Billmayer's article does the same in German.[76] Ben Witherington also contributes significantly to this subject.[77]

Concerning the Church Fathers

[73] Aristotle, *On Rhetoric: A Theory of Civic Discourse, 2nd Edition*, trans. George A. Kennedy (New York: Oxford University Press, 2006). Roberta Binkley, and Carol S. Lipson, "The Rhetoric of Origins and the Other: Reading the Ancient Figure of Enheduanna." *Rhetoric before and beyond the Greeks* (New York: State University of New York Press, 2004). Donald Lemen Clark, *Rhetoric in Greco-Roman Education* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1957). Markus Tullius Cicero, *Rhetorica Ad Herennium*, Loeb Classical Library No. 403, trans. Harry Caplan (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1954). George Alexander Kennedy, *Classical Rhetoric and Its Christian and Secular Tradition from Ancient to Modern Times* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1999). Quintilian, *Delphi Complete Works of Quintilian*, trans. H. E. Butler (London: Delphi Classics, 2015).

[74] Burton L. Mack, and Vernon K. Robbins, *Patterns of Persuasion in the Gospels* (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock Pub, 2008).

[75] M. L. Clarke, "Rhetorical Influences in the Aeneid." *Greece & Rome* 18, no. 52 (1949): 14–27, assessed March 2, 2017, https://www.cambridge.org/core/journals/greece-and-rome/article/rhetorical-influences-in-the-aeneid/EF4A83BCDB162B66B1B362AD454986C3.

[76] Karl Billmayer, "Rhetorische Studien zu den Reden in Vergils Aeneis" (PhD diss., Universität Würzburg: Werkbunddruckerei, 1932).

[77] Witherington III, *The Gospel of Mark: A Socio-Rhetorical Commentary*. Ben Witherington III, *Conflict and Community in Corinth: Socio-Rhetorical Commentary on 1 and 2 Corinthians* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1995). Ben Witherington III, *New Testament Rhetoric: An Introductory Guide to the Art of Persuasion in and of the New Testament* (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock Pub, 2009). Witherington III, *The Gospel of Mark: A Socio-Rhetorical Commentary*.

The *Aeneid*'s influence on the church through the Church Fathers is significant. The fact that they recognized the extensiveness of the spread of Virgil's work during the century following Augustus supports the thesis of this dissertation that the church was well aware of the *Aeneid*'s theology. Angela Russell Christmas wrote an exquisite article describing how Ambrose used the *Aeneid* in exegesis.[78] Augustine and Jerome also weighed in on Virgil's work.[79] That Catholic website in footnote fifty-nine on Classical Latin Literature describes Virgil's works in detail, along with many other Latin authors during the Roman period. An excellent work comes from Harold F. Guite on the common elements in Virgil's writings and the Patristic Philosophies.[80] Michael C. J. Putnam presented an outstanding series on Virgil and his continuing influence.[81]

Concerning the History of the *Aeneid*

In addition to Augustus and Virgil, as noted in the bibliography, many original sources[82]

[78] Angela Russell Christman, "Biblical Exegesis and Virgil's *Aeneid* in Ambrose Milan's *Expositio Psalmi CXVIII*," *Studia Patristica* XLVI (Leuven: Peeters Publishers, 2010).

[79] Augustine, *Confessions*, Oxford World Classics, trans. Henry Chadwick (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009). See also Augustine, "Church Fathers: Confessions, Book 1 (St. Augustine)," accessed March 11, 2017, http://www.newadvent.org/fathers/110101.htm. Jerome, *Jerome: Select Letters*, Loeb Classical Library No. 262, trans. F. A. Wright (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1933).

[80] Harold F. Guite, "Common Elements in Vergilian and Patristic Philosophies of History," *Studia Patristica*: Papers Presented to the International Conference on Patristic Studies Held at Christ Church, Oxford / 18.2 Ninth Conference, 1983.

[81] Michael C. J. Putnam, "Review of Vergil at 2000: Commemorative Essays on the Poet and His Influence John D. Bernard," *The American Journal of Philology* 109, no. 2, (1988): 267–70.

[82] Aristotle, Longinus, and Demetrius. *Aristotle: Poetics.; Longinus: On the Sublime; Demetrius: On Style*, ed. Donald A. Russell, trans. Stephen Halliwell, W. Hamilton Fyfe, Doreen C. Innes, and W. Rhys Roberts. Revised edition (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1995).

have been researched, and many secondary and tertiary sources have been published on the history of the *Aeneid*. Excellent research and bibliographies dealing specifically with the history itself have been published by Rosalie F. and Charles F. Baker, *Ancient Romans: Expanding the Classical Tradition*, and Francis Cairns, *Virgil's Augustan Epic*.[83] Three comprehensive works begin with a less thorough history but include a detailed commentary on the *Aeneid*. Kenneth Quinn's *Virgil's Aeneid: A Critical Description* treats the history, the structure, the text, the form and technique and the style of the *Aeneid*.[84] His work came out in 1969. Twenty years later in 1999, Christine G. Perkell presented her history of the *Aeneid* and commentary on each chapter, plus chapters on the *Aeneid* as foundation story and the women of the *Aeneid*.[85] In 2012, Peter Levi brought out his unique and somewhat cynical, but humorous, understanding of the history and interpretation of all three of Virgil's poems, the twelve Eclogues, the four Georgics, and the *Aeneid*.[86]

Concerning the Theology of the *Aeneid*

The most important books on the *Aeneid*'s theology have been written by Kenneth Quinn, Christine Perkell, and J. D. Jefferis.[87] All three must be consulted as references to this topic.

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[83] Rosalie F. Baker, and Charles F. Baker. *Ancient Romans: Expanding the Classical Tradition* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998). Francis Cairns, *Virgil's Augustan Epic*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006).

[84] Kenneth Quinn, *Virgil's Aeneid: A Critical Description*, ed. Kenneth Quinn (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1969).

[85] Christine G. Perkell, *Reading Vergils Aeneid: An Interpretive Guide* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1999).

[86] Levi, *Virgil: A Life*.

[87] Perkell, *Reading Vergils Aeneid: An Interpretive Guide*, Quinn, *Virgil's Aeneid: A Critical Description*, and J. D. Jefferis, *The Theology of the Aeneid; Its Antecedents and Development* (Ann Arbor: Palala Press, 2015).

Quinn tackles the entire background and ensuing problems of the *Aeneid*. No other author has surpassed Quinn's detailed description of the underlying structure of the *Aeneid*. His critical commentary on each book in the *Aeneid* sets the stage for his last two chapters on the form, technique and style of Virgil's most famous book. Perkell critiques every book in the *Aeneid*, but covers more modern questions, like the necessity of the *Aeneid* as the foundation story for the Roman Empire, the place of women in Rome as portrayed by Virgil, and five hundred years of translating the *Aeneid* into English. Jefferis' seven chapters treating the influences underlying the *Aeneid*'s theology give the reader a smooth segue into a clear understanding of Virgil's bold assertion that Rome's religion pointed directly toward Augustus as the savior of the world. His chapter on "The Aeneid and Caesar Worship" leaves no doubt that the *Aeneid* was Virgil's ultimate propaganda piece supporting Augustus and his divinity. Jefferis was originally published in 1934, republished in 2015, but no other authors have contributed specifically to the *Aeneid*'s theology since Jerreris' book in 1934. None of these three authors connect the *Aeneid* with the Gospel of Mark.

Concerning the Introduction to Mark's Gospel

Scholars have treated this subject from every angle, making any new slant difficult to achieve. Many have already been noted above. One of the more recent books comes from Mary Ann Tolbert, who covers the literary-historical perspective of Mark's Gospel thoroughly.[88] Richard A. Horsley uses sociological categories and method to introduce the reader to Mark's

[88] Mary Ann Tolbert, *Sowing the Gospel: Mark's Work in Literary-Historical Perspective* (Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress Publishers, 1996).

challenge against the dominant society of that day.[89] David Rhoads, Joanna Dewey and Donald Michie introduce Mark as predominately a narrative story originally created in an oral society that required writing down later on.[90]

Concerning Mark's Theology Compared with the *Aeneid*'s Theology

No author has addressed the thesis of this dissertation directly. All work to date has covered the spectrum of Roman history, Augustus, Virgil, the *Aeneid*, and connections with the Old and New Testaments from a broad brush stroke[91] to a detailed analysis of some small detail.[92] Alec T. Burkill approaches Mark's theology from the philosophy direction, but does not compare it with the *Aeneid*.[93] This dissertation intends to connect the theology of the Gospel of Mark directly with the theology of the *Aeneid*, and will encourage further research in this area.

Summary of the literature review. The most significant works to-date that come close to addressing the issue of Mark's challenge of the *Aeneid*'s theology are:

1. Marianna Palmer Bonz. "The Best of Times; the Worst of Times: Luke-Acts and Epic Tradition." Dissertation. Harvard, 1997, accessed January 25, 2017, https://www.cambridge.org/core/journals/harvard-theological-review/article/div-classtitlesummaries-of-doctoral-dissertationsa-hreffn01-ref-typefnadiv/88E3C086D386585B781B22B4B338A85C. Marianna Palmer Bonz, *The Past as Legacy* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 2000).
2. Mark Reasoner. "Divine Sons: Aeneas and Jesus in Hebrews," in David Edward Aune,

[89] Richard A. Horsley, *Hearing the Whole Story: The Politics of Plot in Mark's Gospel* (Louisville: Westminister John Knos press, 2001).

[90] David Rhoads, Joanna Dewey and Donald Michie, *Mark as Story: An Introduction to the Narrative of a Gospel* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2012).

[91] M. Eugene Boring, *Mark: A Commentary* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2006).

[92] Hans Dieter Betz, "Jesus and the Cynics: Survey and Analysis of a Hypothesis," *The Journal of Religion* 74, no. 4 (October 1, 1994): 453–75.

[93] T. Alec Burkill, *Mysterious Revelation: An Examination of the Philosophy of St. Mark's Gospel* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1963).

and Robin Darling Young, *Reading Religions in the Ancient World: Essays Presented to Robert McQueen Grant on His 90th Birthday* (Leiden: Brill, 2007).

3. David R. Wallace, *The Gospel of God: Romans as Paul's Aeneid* (Eugene, Or.: Wipf & Stock Pub, 2008).
4. J. D. Jefferis, *The Theology of the Aeneid; Its Antecedents and Development* (Ann Arbor: Palala Press, 2015).

No author has brought all the pieces of this dissertation thesis together to demonstrate Mark's challenge of the theology of the *Aeneid*.

CHAPTER 2

The *Aeneid*'s Importance as Propaganda

The *Aeneid* was written by Virgil and published by Augustus immediately after Virgil's death in 19 B.C.[94] To understand properly the place of the *Aeneid* in history, one must start with Greek Epic poetry. Homer (8th century B.C.) wrote the *Iliad*[95] and the *Odyssey*,[96] which laid the foundation for all future epic heroes. Aristotle in his *Poetics* asserts that ποιητής (the same word "poet" used in Acts 17:28) is less profound than written history because historians only describe events, while poets reveal what might have happened, which is a more noble objective.[97] The Greek world's values and national identity rested on Homer's epics.[98] Aristotle treated poetry as an art and a tool for influencing society[99] and perhaps Aristotle had a significant influence on Virgil.[100]

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[94] Virgil, *The Aeneid*, trans. Robert Fitzgerald (New York: Penguin Random House Publishing, Vintage Classics, 1990).

[95] Homer, *The Iliad*, trans. Robert Fagles, intro. Bernard Knox (London: Penguin Classics, 1998).

[96] Homer, and Bernard Knox, *The Odyssey*, trans. Robert Fagles, intro. Bernard Knox (London: Penguin Classics, 1999).

[97] Aristotle, and Anthony Kenny, *Poetics* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013). Aristotle, Longinus, and Demetrius, *Aristotle: Poetics; Longinus: On the Sublime; Demetrius: On Style*, in *Aristotle: Poetics*, 1451b5-7.

[98] Gregory Nagy, *Pindar's Homer: The Lyric Possession of An Epic* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1994). G. S. Kirk, *Homer and the Oral Tradition* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010).

[99] Wallace, 41.

[100] Theodor W. Stadler, *Vergils Aeneis: Eine poetische Betrachtung* (Einsiedeln: Benzig, 1942): 63-64. Theodor W. Stadler maintains this view.

Virgil had a higher calling than just contributing to the great literature of his day by furthering Greek myth through Greek epic poetry.[101] Virgil, trained in Homer's style, intended to surpass him. Virgil recognized that he could not discard the epic tradition, since it was the most revered type of writing in his day. Virgil could not simply sweep aside 700 years of literary tradition. The Cyclic Epics that followed Homer evidenced the impact of Homer on the Greek and Roman Empires. Although this tradition waned 400 years before Virgil,[102] 100 years later Aristotle attempted to resurrect it.[103] Some authors modified Homer's form,[104] while others did not.[105]

Christine Perkell demonstrates with numerous illustrations that "Aeneas appears several times in the *Iliad*,"[106] indicating that the mythical figure of Aeneas appears in Greek literature before Virgil wrote his epic. Gregory Nagy points out the extensive grounding of the *Aeneid* in the Greek epic traditions.[107] The concept of *pietas*, or loyalty and faithfulness to all relationships,

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[101] E.g., *Thebais, Cypria, Aithiopis, Telogonia, Nostoi*. Herbert Richardson, *The Development of the Poetic Epic: Classic, Comic, Cyclic, Romantic, Satanic*: an Invited Lecture at the University of Toronto (Lewiston, NY: Edwin Mellen Press, 2016).

[102] Brooks Otis, *Virgil: A Study in Civilized Poetry* (Norman, OK: University of Oklahoma Press, 1995).

[103] Aristotle, and Stephen Halliwell, *Aristotle's Poetics*, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998). Callimachus, *Callimachus: Hymns, Epigrams, Select Fragments*, trans. Stanley Lombardo and Diane J. Revor, (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 1987).

[104] Callimachus, *Callimachus: Hymns, Epigrams, Select Fragments*. Callimachus, Lycophron, and Aratus, *Callimachus: Hymns and Epigrams, Lycophron and Aratus*, trans. A. W. Myer, and G. R. Myer (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1921).

[105] Apollonius Rhodius, *The Argonautica*, trans. R. C. Seaton (Charleston, SC: CreateSpace Independent Publishing Platform, 2016). Naevius, *De Bello Punico Reliquiae* (Charleston, SC: Nabu Press, 2010). Ludwig Schemann, *De Legionum per Alterum Bellum Punicum Historia Quae Investigari Posse videantur* (Charleston, SC: BiblioBazaar, 2009).

[106] Perkell, *Reading Vergils Aeneid: An Interpretive Guide*, 12.

[107] Gregory Nagy, *The Best of the Achaeans: Concepts of the Hero in Archaic Greek Poetry* (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 1981), 265-75.

arose in the *Iliad* when Aeneas carried his dying father away from the lost battle of Troy, and this act has been imprinted on objects like vases as early as the sixth century B.C.[108] Gnaeus Naevius, a poet in 270 B.C., began the Roman national epic with a poem about the First Punic War (*Bellum Punicum*).[109] He wrote the poem in the Saturnian verse,[110] which was a rigid style of poetry, but connected to the Roman god Saturn who was supposed to bring about a golden age for the Romans. Naevius appears to have mentioned Aeneas in his poem, connecting Romulus as the grandson of Aeneas.

By the time Virgil began writing the *Aeneid*, the Greek epic had blossomed into a myriad of gods, goddesses and humans, to the point that everyone understood what a poet meant by some reference to a context that contained some of these characters. Wallace parallels this situation with intertextual allusions and typology between the Old Testament and New Testament.[111] This intertextuality allowed Virgil to view Homer as his primitive starting point, while going beyond him and completing the 'history' of the founding of the Roman Empire. There is no doubt that Virgil made extensive use of Homer's style in the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*, but Virgil was no copycat. Using the form most understood and accepted in his world, Virgil

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[108] Karl Galinsky, *Aeneas, Sicily, and Rome* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2015), 130: "It is remarkable that the base paintings from Etruria with Aeneas' flight outnumber the vases with Aeneas as a warrior and Paris' accomplice by only fifteen to twenty." The Fine Dictionary defines Saturnian verse as a meter employed by early Roman satirists, consisting of three iambics and an extra syllable followed by three trochees, as in the line: -- Thĕ quēen | wăs īn | thĕ kītch | ĕn ‖ ēatĭng | brēad ănd | hōn. Trochee is a metrical foot consisting of an accented syllable followed by an unaccented syllable. Examples of trochaic words include "garden" and "highway." Iambus contains two syllables, an unstressed followed by a stressed in accentual meter, as in *Come live / with me / and be / my love.*

[109] Thomas Fitzhugh, *The Literary Saturnian, the Stichic Norm of Italico-Keltic, Romanic, and Modern Rhythm, Vol. 2: Naevius and the Later Italic Tradition* (London: Forgotten Books, 2015).

[110] Jed Parsons, "A New Approach to the Saturnian Verse and Its Relation to Latin Prosody, (1974-)" *Transactions of the American Philological Association*, Vol. 129 (1999), 117-137.

[111] Wallace, 40. The *Aeneid*'s intertextuality: Cairns, *Virgil's Augustan Epic*, 129-51. Wendell Clausen, *Virgil's Aeneid and the Tradition of Hellenistic Poetry* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1987). E. L. Harrison, "Cleverness in Virgilian Imitation," *Classical Philology* (1970): 241-43.

went beyond it to "proclaim the Augustan Gospel—which navigated the course of his unique poem."[112] Wallace notes that "For the modern reader, to try and make sense of the *Aeneid* without continual recourse to Homer is like trying to read a code whose secret is lost."[113]

Why and how Virgil wrote the *Aeneid* has continued to challenge scholars. Kenneth Quinn demonstrates that Virgil had to solve two problems before he could complete the work that he produced.[114] Augustus wanted an epic poem written about himself. Although no written documentation verifies this statement absolutely, Quinn notes that "Rome was full of epic poets; the historical epic poem extolling the achievements of a general or politician was an established instrument of public relations."[115] T. W. Dickson laid out verification of over two dozen such epics that were lost during the Augustan period.[116] Therefore, it can be assumed that Augustus' ego would have wanted someone to write an epic about him.

Virgil's closest contemporaries who joined him in the inner circle around Maecenas (Augustus' closest advisor) were Horace and Propertius.[117] Horace, one of the famous poets of his time, wrote *Ars poetica*[118] (the art of poetry) in which he advised poets to read widely, to practice absolute precision and to seek out the most critical advice for their work possible.

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[112] Wallace, 41.

[113] Ibid., footnote 14. Although Virgil could have been addressing the previous Greek writers instead of the *Aeneid*, their works do not seem to be a direct challenge to Jesus as the Son of God, as were the Roman emperors, and especially Augustus in the *Aeneid*.

[114] Quinn, *Virgil's Aeneid: A Critical Description*.

[115] Ibid., 26-27.

[116] T. W. Dickson, "Lost and unwritten epics of the Augustan poets," *TAPhA* 63 (1932), lii-liii.

[117] Bobby Xinyue, "The Divinity of Augustus in the Poetry of Vergil, Horace, and Propertius," (PhD diss., University of Warwick, 2015). John F. Miller, *Apollo, Augustus, and the Poets* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009).

[118] C. O. Brink, *Horace on Poetry: The 'Ars Poetica,'* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985).

Horace would not write something that did not meet his own criteria. When Augustus requested that a poet write him an epic, "Horace refuses to praise military achievements"[119] and politely declined. Propertius wrote four books of elegies, and in Book II he considered writing an epic, but when Augustus makes the offer, he too declined.[120]

The task of writing an epic for Augustus was a daunting one. Quinn believes that they turned Augustus down because of the difficulty of writing what he wanted. Epic poems required more than just a special kind of artistic form. "The moral function of poetry and the moral responsibilities of poets were issues that were hotly debated."[121] The poet would have been required to express "one's personality, or one's ideas about right and wrong."[122] This moral problem haunted the project. Augustus was not above carrying out his own vicious will against all who opposed him. Everyone hated the civil wars, about which both Horace and Propertius had written. Propertius had grown up "near Perugia, where Octavian besieged the forces of L. Antonius in 41 B.C., and exacted a bloody vengeance when finally he took the town,"[123] and Propertius had lost his own estate due to the civil war. No poet wanted to glamorize a war that everyone so vividly remembered. What, then, was the point of writing an epic for Augustus, an epic that would probably condemn him?

The "real" history would, in fact, condemn Augustus. Virgil, therefore, had to choose what kind of "history" he needed to write. He could not write history as the total content of time,

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[119] Hans-Christian Günther, *Brill's Companion to Horace* (Leiden: Brill, 2013), 259.

[120] Ibid.

[121] Quinn, 30.

[122] Ibid.

[123] Ibid., 32.

nor even limit that content to the past. All written history is, by definition, selective. He could not write history based on everything that had already been discovered and written as a report of the past. He could not base his epic on the popular sense of the word, those different versions and explanations of history that other historians had worked up from their research of the historical facts. Virgil had to produce something apart from any actual historical facts. He had to integrate some historical facts with enough philosophy to make his story palatable to all levels of society. Instead of staying in the world of hard facts, he had to shift into the land of shadows, so his readers could be guided to draw their own conclusions that Virgil intended for them to draw. As C. S. Lewis remarks, "It is not at all surprising, of course, that those who stare at it [the *Aeneid*] too long should see patterns. We see pictures in the fire. The more indeterminate the object, the more it excites our mythopoeic or 'esemplastic' faculties. To the naked eye there is a face in the moon; it vanishes when you use a telescope."[124] Virgil had to avoid the open world of historical facts and enter the shadows of myth, but he had to appeal to the real world, damaged by destruction and looking for meaning in life.

Virgil tackled the assignment. He could begin with a broader context to win the reception of those who had not lost so much in the war. Augustus' achievements could be praised while his vices could be shrouded behind generalities. A broader theme could also include those character qualities presupposed of all good Romans, like *pietas* (faithfulness and loyalty), *dignitas* (personal pride), *firmitas* (tenacity), *humanitas* (cultured), *industria* (hard working), *prudential* (wisdom), *veritas* (truthfulness), and *pas* (peace loving). If the reading audience could be guided to see these things in Augustus, then these traits could potentially overshadow negative ones.

[124] C. S. Lewis, "Historicism," *Fern-Seed and Elephant and other essays on Christianity* (Glasgow: Collins, 1975), 52.

Virgil could also make use of legend, which was the normal mode for an epic poem. And Virgil did not have to invent his characters for the *Aeneid*, as mentioned previously. Quinn states that "Many of Virgil's contemporaries no doubt accepted the stories quite uncritically. They would have regarded Virgil's recasting of them as a poetic presentation of things that actually happened."[125] Once a legend has become accepted in society, the emperor could have coins molded with his image on them and even become deified. Lewis notes that we find ourselves living "in the queer world of official make-believe, in which the old legends of the divine origins of leading Roman families became articles of public cult, to be accepted, even by sophisticated Romans, as literally as the divine origins of Hellenistic kings had been accepted by their most credulous subjects."[126]

Propertius recognized what Virgil had in mind. He saw the brilliance and magnitude of this forth-coming epic. Of the *Aeneid* he wrote, "*Cedite Romani scriptores, cedite Grai! Nescio quid maius nascitur Iliade."*[127] ("Make way, you Roman writers, make way, Greeks! Something greater than the *Iliad* is born"). He foresaw that the *Aeneid* would encompass both the victory at Actium, Augustus' victory over Antony, and the person of Aeneas, the Trojan founder of Rome.[128]

Virgil's genius carried him through the ten years it took him to complete (almost) the *Aeneid*. He summarizes the entire poem in the first seven lines. He focuses on Rome, but insinuates the war and fighting found in the *Iliad* and the story of a hero in the *Odyssey*. Quinn

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[125] Ibid., 38.

[126] Ibid., 39.

[127] Propertius, *Elegies. Book 2*, ed. and trans. G. P. Goold (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, Loeb Classical Library 18, 1990). 34, 65-66.

[128] Ibid., 34.59-66.

expounds every word and every line of the *Aeneid* in showing its connections with these two previous epics.[129] Most important is the fact that Virgil's first six books address the *Odyssey*, while Books 7 to 12 address the *Iliad*. Aeneas (*uir* = "man" in line one and in lines 5-7) ties the first six and the last six books together. Virgil "expressly recalls Homer's story and constantly evokes Homers conventions,"[130] and the parallels between the *Aeneid* and its two predecessors jump off the page throughout the *Aeneid*. G. N. Knauer published a book that brought together over 550 pages of explications of Virgil's imitations of, and allusions to, Homer.[131] Yet, as Quinn states, "Virgil's poem remains consciously, fundamentally, and unmistakably, Roman."[132] This cannot be considered plagiarism, since Virgil wants his readers to closely associate Aeneas' travels and victories to challenge and overshadow his predecessors. Virgil is bringing material together from what is commonly understood and transforming it into the foundation epic for Augustus and the Roman Empire. When one compares Virgil with other literature of his day, one notices the use that Virgil made of each of them: Greek tragedy, Plato, Apollonius. Quinn declares that "Actium and the conquest of Egypt symbolized for the Romans not only the final political triumph of Rome over the Hellenistic world, but the coming of age of Rome as a cultural power with a national literature of her own, able to rival and outdo the Greek masterpieces of the past."[133]

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[129] Quinn, 41-58.

[130] Ibid., 42.

[131] G. N. Knauer, „Die Aeneis und Homer. Studien zur poetischen Technik Vergils mit Listen der Homerzitate in der Aeneis," *Hypomnemata*, 7 (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1964), 550 Pages.

[132] Quinn, 43.

[133] Ibid., 47.

In fact, the *Aeneid* is an actual reversal of Homer's epics. The gods choose the Greeks as world rulers in the *Iliad*, and helped them win the war against Troy. The Trojan Aeneas, almost an insignificant character in the *Iliad*, rises as the hero with help from the gods to found the Roman Empire at the expense of the Greeks. The heroes in Homer embrace the old, while Aeneas leaves the old to establish the new. Odysseus attempts to return home, whereas Aeneas leaves to establish a new kingdom. Odysseus reaches his goal after losing all his men, whereas Aeneas leads most of his people to safety. Aeneas' initially impulsive character,[134] like Homer's hero, goes beyond Homer's hero and changes gradually into a leader who exhibits faithfulness for his mission and community over individual emotional love, thus receiving the character qualities of a Roman leader who will be deified. Aeneas' father in the underworld defines the Roman mission being given to Aeneas, that of government and civilization, as opposed to the Greek dream of art and literature and philosophy. In stark contrast to these two rivalries of warring cultures, Mark's Gospel will portray God, the proud Father of His Son, as sending Jesus to offer forgiveness of sins as salvation to all who desire to live in God's kingdom. The last chapter of this dissertation will uncover the significant differences between Augustus' self-centered drive to rise to the top of the Roman political world as opposed to Jesus' humble descent from heaven to become God's servant to save others from their sins.

Virgil's premier recipient of Aeneas's characterization, Augustus, appears three times in the *Aeneid*. The first time occurs at the end of Book I (1.286-96) with Virgil's embodiment of Roman history. However, Augustus is never directly mentioned and the evils of the previous civil war are significantly underplayed. In Book 6 (6.789-805) Augustus is specifically

[134] For instance, Aeneas' decision to attempt to save his wife, Creusa, in Book II, or his adultery with Dido in Book IV.

mentioned with being praised through seventeen lines. Only one short note surfaces about the civil war, but Augustus receives high praise as "the divine general whose conquests cover a wider expanse of the earth than that traversed by Hercules in his labours,"[135] while Julius Caesar is blamed for the civil war. The third passage (8.671-713), the longest, describes the battle of Actium and then Augustus' return in triumph to Rome (714-28). This section includes the revealing of the magic shield[136] upon which Roman history is inscribed. Virgil uses the shield to make his case. If the readers can accept the shield and if those pictures on the shield are truly there on the shield, then those events might have actually taken place.

So the only "trick" that Virgil slips into his masterpiece is that of presenting the events of recent history as the very probable "culmination of a historical process."[137] Since the Romans viewed history as part of their family record, the readers would have little problem accepting the *Aeneid* as their own personal history. Since the Romans viewed history to be cyclical[138] (in contrast to a present-day linear continuum), accepting Virgil's take on history found wide and grateful acceptance. Virgil rejected the use of an "historical epic linking legendary past and recent events in a chronological sequence, in favour of a tale from legend,"[139] and this was acceptable to his Roman audience, who believed that Aeneas' experiences were directly related to their real life. When Virgil recognized that when he wrote of a war and a man in the past, the Romans would recognize the not-so-hidden message of another war and another man.

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[135] Ibid., 49.

[136] The fire-god made this magic shield for Aeneas at Venus' request in his workshop under Mount Etna.

[137] Quinn, 50.

[138] Friedrich Klingner, *Romische Geisteswelt: Essays zur lateinischen Literatur*, 3rd ed. (Stuttgart, Deutschland: Reclam jun. Philipp Verlag, 1979), 293.

[139] Quinn, 52.

It would be difficult to improve on Quinn's comments on Virgil's success. Virgil had sailed as close as possible to plagiarism, had produced a poem which imitated other poems to an extent that, one would have thought, must preclude creativity. If instead, Virgil succeeded in producing an imaginative fiction that arouses and holds our attention, one major reason for his success is that he has transcended Homer's objective. In one important respect the *Aeneid* differs from all preceding epic poems: it is no longer a story told for the story's sake. It is a poetic myth, appealing more to our fancy than to our taste for adventure.[140]

The *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* take place in the memorable past, with characters a little stronger than normal people, a story that barely stretches the limits of suspended disbelief. The *Aeneid* reaches into the distant, magical past, written to appeal to an educated, intelligent audience who can grasp the world of imagination. Virgil moves away from Homer's narrative tragedy into moral lessons of life, connecting through the symbolism of fantasy to the concrete world of Augustus, a human who had become deified, who overcomes his obstacles because his cause is noble. The mythical approach lessens the harshness of the intended propaganda. His rivals are not viewed as ruled by evil, and they gain the reader's respect, even if the reader wants Aeneas to win in the end.

The truth of poetry is not the same kind of truth as that of fact. S. H. Butcher states that "Things that are outside and beyond the range of our experience, that never have happened and never will happen, may be more true, poetically speaking—more profoundly true than those daily occurrences which we can predict with confidence."[141] Virgil masterfully inserted fantasy

[140] Ibid., 52-53.

[141] S. H. Butcher, *Aristotle's Theory of Poetry and Fine Art*, intro. John Glassner, with a Critical Text and Translation of the *Poetics*, with a Prefatory Essay Aristotelian Literary Criticism by John Gassner (Mineola, NE: Dover, 1951), 171.

in between facts. Butcher again asserts that "[. . .] the *άλογα* (the impossible or what is improbable to the reason) are so disguised that they become ευλόγα: the αδυνατα, things factually impossible in fact, become πιθανά (probable) and therefore δυνατά κατα το εικός ή το αναγκαιον ('strong according to the reasonable or the necessary)."[142]

As established above, the *Aeneid* held a position of the highest importance as the foundational piece of propaganda promoting the destiny of the Roman Empire as defined and set in motion by Augustus. Virgil intended to portray Augustus as the peace-maker of the Roman Empire. Sabine Grebe begins her article affirming this premise with, "As is well known, Vergil's *Aeneid* contains a political message."[143] Grebe's article firmly categorizes the *Aeneid* as propaganda to establish Augustus "as *primus inter pares*."[144] Numerous times the *Aeneid* alludes to and promotes the legitimacy of Augustus' rule based on the life of Aeneas. The Deification of Augustus occurs in The *Aeneid VI:801*. The Closure of the *Gates of Janus* in *IV:159* demonstrated the peace that Augustus brought. The Fate (*Fatum*) of Aeneas steered him toward the priestly office of *Pontifex Maximus*, which became the natural fate of Augustus *Pontifex Maximus* in *X:112-3*. The piety of Aeneas became the piety of Augustus in *II:695*. Aeneas

[142] Ibid., 173. Eduard Norden, *Kleine Schriften zu Klassischen Altertum* (Berlin: de Gruyter, 1966), 397: "in dem die Gegenwart mit den leuchtenden Farben einer idealisierten Vergangenheit umkleidet, die Vergangenheit selbst in die Gegenwart hineinprojiziert wird, so daß die römische Geschichte als ein großer, aus Verheißung, Erwartung, Vorbereitung und Erfüllung planmäßig sich zusammenschließender Kreislauf erscheint, in dem Anfang und Ende unterscheidungslos sich vereinigen. Den daß der Gang der kosmischen und politischen Verhältnisse gewaltigen Kreisen von bestimmtem Umfang gleiche, und daß daher von Zeit zu Zeit ein neuer Weltlauf mit genauer Wiederholung des früheren eintrete, war eine seit Jahrhunderten bei Griechen und Römern feste Anschauungsform, von der gerade auch das Zeitalter des Augustus beherrscht wurde: den die unnatürliche Störung der normalen Verhältnisse durch das Chaos der Bürgerkriege schien im Verein mit furchtbaren Prodigien den Beweis zu liefern, daß der alte Kreislauf beendet sei und eine Periode der Regeneration beginne [. . .] Im Zentrum des alten Kreises hatte Aeneas gestanden, in dem des neuen stand sein Nachkomme Augustus. Seine Person bildet daher den geistigen Mittelpunk des Gedichts auch da, wo er nicht unmittelbar genannt oder indirekt bezeichnet ist."

[143] Sabine Grebe, "Augustus' Divine Authority and Vergil's *Aeneid*," *Vergilius* (1959-), Vol. 50 (2004), 35.

[144] Ibid.

triumphed as a great warrior, making Augustus his natural successor in *I:283-5 and VI:839-40*. Both established an empire of peace in *VIII:8.678*. Aeneas predicted the successful battle of "*Actium*" in *VIII:679*. Augustus brought peace by being the Restorer of the golden Saturnian age in *VI:793*. The Shield of Aeneas attributed glory to Augustus in *I:291-3*. The best quotation of all: Augustus will be the natural ruler through a series of legitimate successions in *I:288*.

David R. Wallace contends that "The most well-known prophetic source in first Century Rome, which strengthened Roman ideology and assured Roman salvation, was Virgil's *Aeneid*."[145] In a footnote, Wallace writes,

> Gavin Townend believes that the influence of the great Roman poets beyond Rome is questionable; Townend, "Literature and Society," 929. He asserts that shortly after the Aeneid appeared, the claim can be made that Virgil produced the Bible of Rome, but most likely, the occasions of hearing the poem read could not have been frequent, which means his influence on Roman life might not have been widespread.[146]

Townsend's viewpoint is founded on pure speculation, "most likely," "could not have been," and "might have been."

Wallace continues,

> On the other hand, Marianne Bonz argues that the theme of Roman dominion in literature during Augustus's reign was widespread, and "in no other work is it expressed with such artistic power, clarity, and religious overtones as it is in the *Aeneid*"; Bonz, *Past as Legacy*, 57. Furthermore, Bonz sites a letter from Seneca to the imperial slave Polybius (Seneca *Consolatio ad Polybium* 11.5) in which is noted the importance of Polybius's translation of Virgil's poetry into Greek and Homer's works into Latin; thus, Bonz reasons that the *Aeneid* was probably published in Greek in the mid–first century, read and admired throughout the major cities in Greece "at least by the time of Paul," ibid., 55. This study does not assume that Paul read the *Aeneid*, but it presupposes that Paul and his travels listened to the basic plot and episodes from those who retold Virgil's epic story, such as Roman citizens, soldiers, or philosophers.[147]

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[145] Wallace, *The Gospel of God: Romans as Paul's Aeneid*.

[146] Ibid., xv-xvi.

[147] Ibid., xv-xvi

Both Wallace and Bonz make a strong case for the wide dissemination of the *Aeneid* soon after its publication. Christine Godfrey Perkell, Emory Classics Professor, has written and published extensively on all aspects of the *Aeneid*. She was on the Board of Trustees for the Vergil Society from 2007-2010.[148] She proclaims that "Yet in its haunting and resonant verse, vivid characters, dramatic confrontations, and melancholy memorializing of tragedy and triumph, the *Aeneid* eclipsed its predecessors in epic, becoming immediately *the* Roman poem and—worst of fates—a standard school text."[149] She ends her description of the depth of the *Aeneid*'s dissemination by stating that "The long established fame of the *Aeneid* inclines us to forget how innovative and comprehensive was Vergil's achievement."[150]

The *Aeneid* legend had reached national importance as *the* Roman poem, both in its wide dissemination throughout the Empire and deep penetration into the everyday life of the Romans. A new age was dawning. The civil wars were over. History was circling back upon itself. "During the Age of Augustus, heightened expectations arose out of the chaos of civil war. In the center of the old cycle stood Aeneas, and in the new stood his descendant Augustus, the spiritual focus of the story."[151] Thus, the *Aeneid* became the centerpiece of literature for the propagation of Augustan theology.

[148] Classics Emory, "Christine Godfrey Perkell," Emory University, Atlanta, GA, accessed November 28, 2017, http://www.classics.emory.edu/indivFacPages/perkell/documents/PerkellCV.pdf.

[149] Perkell, 12.

[150] Ibid.

[151] Wallace, 60.

CHAPTER 3

Mark's Knowledge of, and Access to, the *Aeneid*

How much contact did Mark have with the *Aeneid*? The *Aeneid* was published in 19 B.C., approximately sixty to seventy years before Mark lived in Rome. In order to establish the level of contact that Mark had with the *Aeneid*, this study will seek to present fourteen pieces of evidence and evaluate them separately and collectively. Some pieces of evidence will be stronger than other pieces. No one piece can provide enough support to promote the probability of the thesis. Some of these pieces of evidence overlap one another. Although the pieces will be treated separately, they must be considered collectively as a whole. At the end of each piece of evidence, an evaluation of the strength of that piece will be made. If it can be determined that Mark had access to the *Aeneid*, then it will strengthen the assertion that the Gospel of Mark addresses and responds to the theology of the *Aeneid*.

Pertinent to this dissertation, this method of research has also been used by theologians. John Wenham (1912-1996), an Anglican Bible scholar, wrote an intriguing article postulating the date of Peter and Mark's time in Rome. Wenham justified his methodology with the following defense: "Another scrap of positive evidence is to be found in the presence of a Cephas-party in Corinth. It is evidence of the kind so effectively used in an earlier generation in William Paley's *Horae Paulinae*[152] (1790) and in J. J. Blunt's *Undesigned Coincidences*[153] (1847). Relatively insignificant details from three separate documents dovetail to make a coherent little piece of

[152] Paley, *Horae Paulinae*.

[153] Blunt, *Undesigned Coincidences in the Writings of the Old and New Testament*.

history."[154] Marrianna Palmer Bonz wrote her dissertation[155] on the relationship between the Luke-Acts literature and the Roman Epic tradition. She focuses on the genre and interpretation of Luke–Acts as it connects with its contemporary social, literary, and ideological background, especially as these elements are revealed in the Latin epics, with a heavy emphasis on Virgil's *Aeneid*. She also contends that literary evidence indicates that Virgil's works had been translated into Greek prose by the middle of the first century. One of the few works that directly connects the *Aeneid* with the New Testament is David R. Wallace's book *The Gospel of God: Romans as Paul's* Aeneid.[156] Clearly Paul wrote Romans to explain the gospel itself in detail, but Wallace shows conclusively that the Apostle Paul was also directly challenging the *Aeneid*'s theology as he penned that epistle. Wallace contributes significantly to the understanding of Virgil's place in helping Augustus secure his position as savior of the Empire. Wallace's magnificent work focuses solely on the book of Romans, which was probably written from Corinth around A.D. 57. David Edward Aune's work significantly supports the connection between Mark and the Romans.[157] One of the most significant treatments connecting Jesus to Aeneas is Mark Reasoner's chapter in Aune's book, which compares Aeneas and Jesus as divine sons in the book of Hebrews. Reasoner contends in his chapter that the writer of Hebrews had intentionally promoted Jesus as superior to Aeneas in the *Aeneid*.[158]

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[154] John Wenham, "Did Peter Go to Rome in AD 42?," 94-102.

[155] Marianna Palmer Bonz. "The Best of Times; the Worst of Times: Luke-Acts and Epic Tradition."

[156] Wallace, *The Gospel of God: Romans as Paul's Aeneid*.

[157] Aune, and Young, *Reading Religions in the Ancient World*.

[158] Reasoner, *Divine Sons: Aeneas and Jesus in Hebrews*.

Thus surfaces the question and probability of Mark doing the same thing as the writers of Luke/Acts, Romans, and Hebrews. The following fourteen pieces of cumulative circumstantial evidence will present the case that Mark had access to the *Aeneid*. The connections between Mark's theology and the *Aeneid*'s theology will be treated in the next chapter, but some of those connections will surface in this chapter due to the nature of evidence. The point of this chapter, however, is to present fourteen pieces of evidence that *cumulative*ly demonstrate the probability that Mark had access to the *Aeneid*. Mark's response to that access will be demonstrated in the next chapter.

1. Dominant civilizations acculturating conquered societies

The first piece of evidence that Mark had direct access to the *Aeneid* is found in the history of nations conquering nations and their treatment of their conquered subjects. Many of those nations forced the acculturation of the dominant culture onto their conquered populations. For example, when Nebuchadnezzar took the Jews into captivity, he chose the best prisoners to indoctrinate into the culture and literature of the Babylonian Kingdom.[159] Nebuchadnezzar ordered his chief official to choose the best young men taken as prisoners from Israel and from Israel's royal families who were "without any physical defect, good-looking, suitable for instruction in all wisdom, knowledgeable, perceptive and capable of serving in the king's palace—and *to teach them the Chaldean language and literature*."[160] Not every culture did this, but the Babylonian practice of forcing their language, literature and culture onto their conquered

[159] Daniel 1-4.

[160] Daniel 1:4, Holman Christian Standard Bible (Nashville: Holman Bible Publishers, 2012).

subjects is an example of an ancient civilization whose dominant civilization acculturated their conquered subjects. A modern day example has been taking place in Southern Sudan. This author has interviewed Christians in Southern Sudan, who have experienced the kidnapping of their children by Muslims, who come from Northern Sudan for the purpose of taking them into Northern Sudan and indoctrinating them in Islam and then sending them back down to Southern Sudan to 'evangelize' the Christians. Rome eventually chose to assimilate non-Romans into society. Mary Beard notes that Romans abused their power in the mid 120s BCE, which resulted in the Gaius' revolutionary reforms, one of which was "to extend Roman citizenship more widely."[161] After a brutal civil war in central Italy, Rome enacted legislation in 90 and 89 BCE "that extended full citizenship to most of the peninsula."[162] Beard notes that the effects of this legislation were dramatic. "The number of Roman citizens increased at a stroke by about threefold, to something over a million."[163] This citizenship that was "granted to the allies,"[164] stopped the civil war and opened the door for non-Romans to become a part of the Roman culture. The Romanization of subject peoples has been researched and established in a number of areas in Europe.[165]

[161] Beard, 233-234.

[162] Ibid., 239.

[163] Ibid.

[164] Ibid., 240.

[165] Leonard A. Curchin, *The Romanization of Central Spain: complexity, diversity, and change in a Provincial Hintellrfreshsrland* (New York: Routledge, 2004). D. J. Mattingly, "Being Roman: Expressing Identity in a provincial setting", *Journal of Roman Archaeology* Vol. 17, (2004), 5–26. F. Haverfield, *The Romanization of Roman Britain* (Oxford: Claredon Press, 2016). M. Millet, "Romanization: historical issues and archaeological interpretation", in Blagg, T. and Millett, M. (Eds.), *The Early Roman Empire in the West* (Oxford: Oxbow Books, 1990), 35–44.

The best way to climb in society in a new culture is become more educated in the new culture.[166] No document states that new Roman citizens were required to read the *Aeneid*, but since the *Aeneid* promoted Augustus and Roman religion more than any other document, and the *Aeneid* has been discovered as far away from Rome as northern Britain and Masada, it is a reasonable plausibility that many non-Romans were familiar with the *Aeneid*.[167]

How much contact did Mark have with the *Aeneid*? No one piece of evidence is conclusive. This piece of evidence shows how some dominant cultures sought to acculturate those societies it conquered.[168] The Roman acceptance of non-Romans as citizens sought to bring peace between the original citizens and the conquered peoples. This acculturation would have included not only politics, but literature as well, illustrated by Babylon in Daniel 1:4. This acculturation indicates, whether Peter or Mark had become roman citizens or not, the reasonable probability that Mark had at least heard of, and had access to, the *Aeneid* in Rome.

2. The Date of Mark's Gospel in relationship to the *Aeneid*

The next piece of evidence begins with the time proximity of Mark's Gospel with relation to the *Aeneid*. Virgil got sick in 19 B.C. and demanded that the *Aeneid* be burned and not

[166] This author has interviewed numerous refugees in America who want to get a college education more than anything else. Danish, a Muslim refugee from Afghanistan said, "I want to get a college degree and become an American citizen as soon as possible. I love this country." Gaining citizenship in America requires knowledge of the US Constitution and passing some history exams.

[167] Bowman, *Life and Letters on the Roman Frontier*.

[168] Leonard A. Curchin, *The Romanization of Central Spain: complexity, diversity, and change in a Provincial Hintellrfreshsrland* (New York: Routledge, 2004). D. J. Mattingly, "Being Roman: Expressing Identity in a provincial setting", *Journal of Roman Archaeology* Vol. 17, (2004), 5–26. F. Haverfield, *The Romanization of Roman Britain* (Oxford: Claredon Press, 2016). M. Millet, "Romanization: historical issues and archaeological interpretation", in Blagg, T. and Millett, M. (Eds.), *The Early Roman Empire in the West* (Oxford: Oxbow Books, 1990), 35–44.

published.[169] Then Vergil died. Augustus ordered Varius to publish it anyway. "Varius published the 'Aeneid' at Augustus' request, making only a few slight corruptions, and even leaving the incomplete lines just as they were."[170] Mark's Gospel was produced within seventy to ninety years later. Although the early church held that Matthew was the first Gospel to have been written, dated roughly between A.D. 50 and A.D. 70, there was a shift in the early twentieth century in which theologians began to maintain that Mark was the first Gospel written.[171] Since 1979, however, Mark has fallen out of favor as the earliest Gospel to have appeared.[172] Scholars seem to have come to terms with the reality that they will never know which Gospel came first, as Grant R. Osborne wrote at the end of Thomas' book: "It makes a great deal of difference if Mark depends on Matthew, or Matthew depends on Mark, or they were independent of one another."[173] Two sentences later he adds: "We make no pretense of solving the issue."[174]

For the sake of this paper, it makes no difference. If Mark appeared first, then that would lend more emphasis to Mark's impact as the first Gospel to enter the Roman world. Whether Matthew or Mark appeared first is of little consequence, since the purpose of each Gospel was unique, yet comprehensive. Many prophecies in Matthew illustrates that Matthew's Gospel was written to the Jewish people of his day to proclaim the arrival of the Messiah, the Hope of

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[169] Virgil, *Virgil's Aeneid*, The Harvard Classics With Introduction and Notes, Vol. 13, ed. Charles W. Eliot, LL.D., trans. John Dryden (New York: P. F. Collier & Son Corporation, 1937), 3.

[170] Suetonius, *Suetonius: The Life of Vergil*, trans. J. C. Rolfe (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, Loeb Classical Library, 1914), 479.

[171] Thomas, ed., *Three Views the Origins of the Synoptic Gospels*). Marcan priority is the hypothesis that the Gospel of Mark was the first Gospel to be written of the three Synoptic Gospels. Matthew and Luke would have quoted much of their material from Mark.

[172] David Alan Black, *Rethinking the Synoptic Problem*, ed., David R. Beck (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2001).

[173] Ibid., Grant R. Osborne, "Response," 137.

[174] Ibid.

Israel.[175] Luke wrote his Gospel to Theophilus, a Greek believer, indicating the direction Luke will develop his Gospel. John wrote to everyone with the distinct purpose of bringing people to faith in Jesus as the Christ, the Son of God. Many, many scholars have defended Mark's audience as including, but broader than, the Jewish environment.[176] Adam Winn makes a strong case for Mark writing to a Roman audience (which included the Jews in Rome), but, going further, Winn also contends that Mark's Gospel was an early Christian response to Rome's propaganda.[177] This theme will be developed in more depth later in this paper.

How much contact did Mark have with the *Aeneid*? No one piece of evidence is conclusive. This piece of evidence establishes the approximate timelines of the *Aeneid* and Mark's Gospel. The *Aeneid* appeared around 19 B.C., and Mark followed between 70 and 90 years later. It is simply necessary to show that Mark was in a position to speak to the *Aeneid*. First, Mark's Gospel followed the *Aeneid*. Second, the *Aeneid's* extensive proliferation and dissemination, as established previously above, kept it prominent during Mark's lifetime. Therefore it is reasonably probable that Mark had contact with the *Aeneid*.

3. The *Aeneid* in Greek

There are no direct quotations of the *Aeneid* in the New Testament. Even J.J. Wettstein, a New Testament scholar who focuses heavily on the parallels found within the Greek and Roman

[175] Verse 5, 15, 16, 22 in chapter one alone begin the long list of these prophecies.

[176] Richard Bauckham, *The Gospels for All Christians: Rethinking the Gospel Audiences*. Evans, "Marks Incipit and the Priene Calendar Inscription: From Jewish Gospel to Greco–Roman Gospel," 70. Edwards, *Writing Rome: Textual Approaches to the City*.

[177] Winn, *The Purpose of Mark's Gospel: An Early Christian Response to Roman Imperial Propaganda*.

world, only mentions the *Aeneid* at Hebrews 13:14 in his *Novum Testamentum*. A few authors – Hurst[178], Koester,[179] Braun,[180] – cite the *Aeneid* in reference to a couple of verses in Hebrews. Most, however, agree with Otto Michel that Hebrews connects with Jewish parallels but only occasionally with a couple of Greek parallels.[181] The tenses of Latin and Greek are similar with a few exceptions,[182] and the case systems show close affinities: the genitive of the Greek a-declension (-as/-es) is the same as the old Latin genitive of that declension (*pater famili**as***), and the long dative -o of the o-declension in both Latin and Greek goes back to the Indo-Germanic ending –oi. Varro mentions the similarities between Latin and Greek in his book, *de lingua Latina*.[183] Macrobius and Servius, both wordsmiths, have presented a list of possible places where Virgil borrowed Greek phrases in his Latin writings.[184] J.N. Adam presents one instance where Virgil alludes to a Greek word.[185] Dionysius of Halicarnassus, a teacher in Rome during

[178] L.D. Hurst, *The Epistle to the Hebrews: Its Background of Thought*, SNTSMS (Society for New Testament Studies Monograph Series, 65), (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 7-42; quotation from 41.

[179] Craig R. Koeser, *Hebrews*, AB 36 (New York: Doubleday, 2001). Harold W. Attridge, *The Epistle to the Hebrews*, Hermeneia (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1989).

[180] Herbert Braun, *An die Hebräer*, HNT 14 (Tübinger: J.C.B. Mohr—Siebeck, 1984), 469.

[181] Otto Michel, *Der Brief an die Hebräer*, KKNT 8th ed. (Göttinger: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1949).

[182] The Latin perfect and aorist tense have merged into one tense, but Ancient Greek kept both separate, and the subjunctive absorbed the optative in Latin, but Ancient Greek kept them separate.

[183] Varro, *On the Latin Language,* Volume I, Books 5-7, Loeb Classical Library 333, trans. Roland G. Kent (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Pres, 1938).

[184] John Conington, *The Works of Virgil, with a Commentary*, Vol. 1, 4th edition, ed. Henry Nettleship (London: Whittaker & Co. 1881), xlviii-xlix mentions how book 5 of Macrobius' Saturnalia lists these in the 18th and following chapters.

[185] J. N. Adams, *Bilingualism and the Latin Language* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003): 77-78 n. 173, citing *Aen.* 6.438-39.

Virgil's time, wrote his *Roman Antiquities* in Greek. He demonstrated his prowess in both languages by discussing how different words in Latin should be translated into Greek.[186]

C. Iulius Polybius[187] (c. 200 – c. 118 B.C.), a freedman Greek historian during the reign of Claudius, [188] wrote *The Histories*,[189] which delineated Rome's drive to rule the *ecumene* (US) or *oecumene* (UK; Greek, lit. "inhabited"), i.e., the inhabitable known world,[190] and the extent to which the Romans went to destroy Carthage[191] for political and economic purposes. In addition to *The Histories*, Polybius sought to "assess the merits of the Roman constitution and compare it with other constitutions; and consequently, as a political theorist, Polybius was brought up against decline (of the Roman Empire) as a problem."[192] Polybius was well acquainted with all the Greek myths and Roman legends, and his interest in the history and significance of Rome led him to translate the *Aeneid* into Greek, his own mother language and culture.[193] Seneca (c. 4 B.C. – A.D. 65) mentioned and actually praised that translation in his *Consolatio ad Polybium* 8.2; 11.5-6![194] This led some scholars to date that translation as early as 42 or 43 A.D., which would

[186] Dionysius of Halicarnassus, *The Roman antiquities of Dionysius of Halicarnassus*, trans. Earnest Cary, and Edward Speman (Rochester: Scholar's Choice, 2015), 1.67.3.

[187] For the more important reviews on Polybius, see Stiewe-Holzberg, N. (eds.), *Polybios* (Darmstadt: Wege der Forschung, 1982), 347.

[188] Johannes Irmscher, "Vergil in der griechischen Antike," *Klio* 67 (1985): 281.

[189] Polybius, Robin Waterfield, and Brian McGing, *The Histories*, Oxford World's Classics, 1st Edition (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010). This is the first new translation in over thirty years.

[190] The term came to be used to refer to the Roman secular and religious imperial administration.

[191] The "Sack of Carthage" was in 146 B.C.

[192] Frank W. Walbank, *Polybius, Rome, and the Hellenistic World: Essays and Reflections* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006): 193.

[193] Ibid., 178-192.

[194] L. Annaeus Seneca, *Moral Essays* volume 2, trans. John W. Basore (London and New York: Heinemann. 1932; 2014).

indicate a wide distribution of the *Aeneid* in Greek decades before Mark wrote his Gospel. Wide dissemination indicates that anyone who could read Latin or Greek would have plausibly read the *Aeneid*.[195]

Harold Attridge claims that the author of Hebrews most certainly had read the *Aeneid* in either Latin or Greek for the simple reason that Hebrews is dated by most scholars between 54 and 90 A.D.[196] His assertion may be too strong considering a lack of substantial evidence. Marianne Palmer Bonz wrote her dissertation on the connections between Luke-Acts and the Epic tradition, and especially the *Aeneid*. She connects Luke and Acts with the *Aeneid* when she writes: "Literary evidence indicating that Virgil's works had been translated into Greek prose by the middle of the first century makes this line of inquiry especially promising."[197] Bonz suggests that the "historical circumstances which produced the historical situation for the composition of Luke-Acts was closely analogous [to the writing of the *Aeneid*] in certain key respects,"[198] and then she applies the "hermeneutical model of historical epic"[199] to the composition of Luke-Acts. Since Bonz' research makes it probable that Luke wrote his Gospel along the literary lines of the *Aeneid*, then Mark, although writing to a different audience than Luke, would have faced the same set of general circumstances as background for the writing of his Gospel.

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[195] Bowman, *Life and Letters on the Roman Frontier.* See also Vindolanda Tablets Online, accessed December, 16, 2017, http://vindolanda.csad.ox.ac.uk/4DLink2/4DACTION/WebRequestQuery?searchTerm=118&searchType=number&searchField=TVII.

[196] Harold Attridge, *The Epistle to the Hebrews*, 9.

[197] Marianne Palmer Bonz, "The Best of Times, the Worst of Times: Luke-Acts and Epic Tradition," 1.

[198] Ibid.

[199] Ibid.

On his deathbed, Virgil ordered Varius, his executor, to burn the *Aeneid*, because it had not gone through a final editing by Virgil. However, Augustus ordered the publication of the *Aeneid* anyway.[200] Seneca may not have referred to a complete translation of the *Aeneid*, but Augustus' desire to rule the entire known world, and especially the Greek part of that world, would have motivated him to support that such translations appear as quickly as possible. In Mark Reasoner's article "Divine Sons: Aeneas and Jesus in Hebrews," Reasoner uses Homer's *Odyssey*, written in Greek, to connect the book of Hebrews and Virgil's *Aeneid*.[201] Reasoner claims that the author of Hebrews would have been schooled in "the basic text of Greek literature,"[202] and this "clue alerts us to the possibility of literary influence from epic poetry known to the author."[203] Reasoner goes further to show that Hebrews is more closely aligned with the *Aeneid* than with the *Odyssey*. Virgil's *Aeneid* was steeped in Homer and his Greek world.[204] Peter Levi notes that Virgil "was essentially a Hellenistic poet to the marrow of his bones, a stylist who had learnt to apply his dazzling ability to a long narrative."[205] Levi draws the conclusion that one should think of Virgil "as a Greek poet who just happened to write in Latin."[206]

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[200] This is common knowledge within the Classical world of literature. C.G. Hardie, "Virgil," *OCD* (Oxford Classical Dictionary) 2nd ed., 1124.

[201] Reasoner, 152.

[202] Ibid.

[203] Ibid.

[204] Knauer, *Die Aeneis und Homer: Studien zur poetischen Technik Vergils mit Listen der Homerzitate in der Aeneis*.

[205] Peter Levi, *Virgil: A Life*, 236.

[206] Ibid.

Reasoner argues that Augustan theology in the *Aeneid* makes three direct connections between Augustus and Jesus in Hebrews. "The divinely born Aeneas is presented as pious son, priestly son, and founding son in Augustan theology."[207] The connections are obvious between the two pieces of literature. At the beginning of Mark's Gospel, Mark reveals Jesus as the "pious son" when the Father praises Jesus: "You are My beloved Son" (1:11). This event reveals the relationship between the Father and the Son. John is baptizing people if they repent of their sins. John also baptizes Jesus, but Jesus has no sins for which He needs to repent. The Father claims Jesus as "My beloved" Son. Jesus, as the sinless Son of the Father, has a "pious" (holy, righteous) relationship to the Father. A Father is always proud to proclaim that He has a Son who has a righteous relationship with the Father.

At the turning point in the book, the transfiguration, the disciples want to build three tabernacles for Moses, Elijah and Jesus.[208] A "tabernacle" (σκηνάς) could have referred to the front part of the tabernacle or the Holy Place (Hebrews 9:2, 6, 8), the Holy of Holies (Hebrews 9:3), or heaven itself as the true dwelling place of God, of which the earthly tabernacle was the prototype (Hebrews 9:11). In this context the disciples were elevating these three men to the status of mediators. The Father's response was: "This is my beloved Son, listen to him."[209] The Greek text (οὗτός ἐστιν ὁ υἱός μου ὁ ἀγαπητός, ἀκούετε αὐτοῦ.) is instructive. The Father emphasizes "THIS is the Son of Me the Beloved, listen (imperative) to HIM."

[207] Reasoner, 154.

[208] Mark 9:5.

[209] Mark 9:7.

Calvin contends that the cloud and the Father's command declare Jesus "to be the Mediator, by whom he reconciles the world to himself."[210] Although his commentary is dated, Matthew Henry recognizes Christ's mediatorship in this event. He supports his view by noting the cloud that immediately appeared and overshadowed them. "Peter had talked of making tabernacles for Christ and his friends; but while he yet spoke, see how his project was superseded; this cloud was unto them instead of tabernacles for their shelter (Isa. 4:5); while he spoke of his tabernacles, God created his tabernacle not made with hands."[211] In comparison with Jesus, Augustus did not offer himself as a mediatory sacrifice for the sins of his people, and neither a voice nor a cloud appeared as evidence from God that Augustus was any type of priestly son.

Aeneas, on the other hand, did experience some supernatural events that support his choice by the gods to found a new race. His mother, a goddess, materialized to guide him. Miracles occurred to direct his path. One could interpret his descent into the Dis as a sacrifice, although he did not die, and his supernatural ascent was facilitated by the gods, not by his own power. All of the miracles that occurred in his life were used to help him achieve what the mythical gods wanted for him. Aeneas performed none of the miracles himself. According to Mark, Jesus performed all the miracles himself, actually physically died as a sacrifice for others, did not descend into the Dis, and rose from the dead without having to be guided out of the grave. And even though Virgil is promoting Aeneas as the prototype for Augustus, none of the

[210] John Calvin, *Calvin on Mark: John Calvin's Bible Commentary*, Kindle Edition (Seattle: Amazon Digital Services LLC, 2015), Mark 9:1.

[211] Matthew Henry, *Matthew Henry's Commentary on the Whole Bible*: New Modern Edition (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, Inc., Box Una edition, 2009), Mark 9:1.

miracles that Aeneas experienced occurred in the life of Augustus. Neither did Augustus perform any miracles himself. Augustus fails as a type of priestly son when compared with Jesus.

The man Augustus was praised as the "founding son" of Rome, but Mark records the centurion, who oversaw the crucifixion of Jesus, as recognizing and stating that "Truly THIS THE man the Son of God was" (ἀληθῶς οὗτος ὁ ἄνθρωπος υἱὸς θεοῦ ἦν) (Mark 15:39). At the beginning the heavens are torn open, indicating something new is happening. At the end the tearing of the veil (Mark 15:38) indicated that something had changed. The Romans would not have understood that verse in Mark without a Hebrew explanation, but the Romans would have understood something catastrophic had happened. The concept of resurrection was not a foreign concept to the Romans, but when someone was proclaimed as having risen from the dead, it was not an everyday occurrence, and needed to be taken more seriously than someone who stayed dead. Jesus, God's beloved, pious, priestly Son, rose from the dead. In opposition to Augustus, Jesus would become the founder of a new era in God's Kingdom.

Virgil wrote the *Aeneid* as a myth that had preceded Augustan history to explain why Augustus was the pious, priestly and founding son of the Roman Empire. Mark's Gospel counters the *Aeneid* by writing the actual historical events of what had already happened and explaining how Jesus was the pious, priestly and founding Son of GOD. Mark makes the connection between Augustus and Jesus clear enough for a Roman centurion to recognize and understand that connection, as demonstrated by Mark's revealing of the centurion's response at the foot of the cross. "And when the centurion, who stood facing him, saw that in this way he breathed his last, he said, "Truly this man was the Son of God!"[212]

[212] Mark 15:39.

The author of Hebrews may still remain anonymous, but he was clearly a master of the Greek language and the Septuagint. Hebrews could have been written as late as A.D. 100, but because Hebrews makes no mention of the temple's destruction or of the discontinuance of the Jewish sacrifices and the text constantly refers to the temple and the priest's work within the temple in the present tense,[213] Hebrews could have been written before A.D. 70. Since Knauer and Levi have connected the *Aeneid* to the Greek world, and Reasoner connects the book of Hebrews to the *Aeneid*, Mark could plausibly have had knowledge of the *Aeneid,* since Mark lived in the years nearer to the writing and publication of Virgil's *Aeneid* than the writer of Hebrews.

It could be objected that there was not enough time for Mark to have become familiar with the *Aeneid* and then formulate a challenge to its theology. A teacher of the *Aeneid* would have needed time to incorporate new material into the curriculum, and then it takes time for a text to become famous enough to permeate a culture and for distribution to reach all classes of society. In Mark's case, since he was a young man during the time of Christ, he would have been born around the time that the *Aeneid* was first published.[214] The *Aeneid* was first published in 19 B.C. Jesus was crucified around A.D. 33, and a "young man" referred to a male who was younger than Jesus at that time. Mark would have been born before Jesus began his public ministry (A.D. 30). If Mark wrote his Gospel just before the destruction of the temple in Jerusalem (A.D. 70), then this chronology would allow over eighty years for Rome to thoroughly saturate the Empire (and beyond) with the *Aeneid*. Knowing that he was going to die, Virgil did

[213] 5:1-3; 7:23, 27; 8:3-5; 9:6-9, 13, 25; 10:1, 3-4, 8, 1; 13:10-11.

[214] Mark might have been the young man who ran away naked in the garden when Jesus was arrested, and Mark is the only Gospel to record that event, Mark 14:51-52.

not want the *Aeneid* to be published, and he tried to have it burned. Immediately upon Virgil's death, Augustus had it published. A tyrant always wants to promote himself as quickly as possible, and propaganda becomes one of his main weapons to do so.

Reasoner states that although "it cannot be argued that Hebrews is intentionally referring to Virgil's *Aeneid* or other media of Augustan theology, it is clear that Hebrews employs categories that ascribe to the divine son and that son's people who were current in Augustan theology of the first century."[215] Applying this same framework and reasoning to Mark's Gospel, it will become plausibly evident in chapter three of this dissertation that Mark employed categories that, as stated by Reasoner, "were current in Augustan theology of the first century."[216] Mark will compare Augustus without actually stating it. The *Aeneid* shows Aeneas killing his enemies (*Aeneid*, chapters seven to twelve) and forsaking his love (*Aeneid*, chapter four, Dido) for the sake of his calling as founder and king of a new empire. Mark shows Jesus as loving and healing his enemies, forsaking his own life, and rising from the dead for the sake of his calling as founder and king of all of creation. As noted at the beginning of this paper, the *Aeneid*'s wide distribution would have given the average reader of the *Aeneid* the ability to see these comparisons if that reader came across the Gospel of Mark.[217]

The importance of the Greek language in the Roman mind also appears in the work of Dio Cassius. He was born *c*. A.D. 150 and died A.D. 235, and was a Roman administrator and

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[215] Reasoner, 154.

[216] Ibid.

[217] Bowman, *Life and Letters on the Roman Frontier.* See also Vindolanda Tablets Online, accessed December, 16, 2017, http://vindolanda.csad.ox.ac.uk/4DLink2/4DACTION/WebRequestQuery?searchTerm=118&searchType=number&searchField=TVII. Perkell, 12. Best, Jr., "The Literate Roman Soldier." Quintilian, *Institutes of Oratory: or, Education of an Orator*, XI. 3.36-38.

historian, as evidenced by his book *Romaika*.[218] He wrote *Romaika* in Greek, a history of Rome, which became one of the most valuable manuscripts about the last years of the Roman Republic and the early Empire.[219] His work is important for the thesis of this dissertation because of the fact that he wrote it in Greek (the world language until Latin surpassed it) indicating how much the Romans wanted the rest of the world to know about the Roman civilization.

Even three hundred years after Augustus had come and gone, the Romans continued to influence their conquered peoples as far away as North Africa to learn Greek, as evidenced by Augustine's comments. Augustine, born A.D. 354 and died A.D. 430, who was raised in North Africa, mentions his hatred of his Greek lessons because of his Roman tutor's brutality.[220] "But what was the cause of my dislike of Greek literature, which I studied from my boyhood, I cannot even now understand."[221] Rome had an adversarial relationship with North Africa. The *Aeneid* was Rome's main piece of literature propaganda.[222] It is reasonably plausible to assume that the *Aeneid* had become part of Augustine's hated Greek lessons. Perkell[223] and Roger S. Bagnall[224] have drawn the same conclusion.

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[218] Dio Cassius, *Roman History: With an English Translation, Volume VIII*, Books 61-70, 63.13, ed. and trans. Earnest Cary and Herbert B. Foster, (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1925).

[219] Cassius Dio, *Dio's Roman History: With an English Translation*, trans. Herbert Baldwin Foster, and Earnest Cary (Charleston: Nabu Press, 2010).

[220] Augustine, *Confessions*, trans. Henry Chadwick, Oxford World's Classics (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), Book 1, chapter 9, paragraph 14 reveals his being flogged by his tutor.

[221] Ibid., Book 1, chapter 13, paragraph 20.

[222] Winn, *The Purpose of Mark's Gospel: An Early Christian Response to Roman Imperial Propaganda*.

[223] Perkell, 12.

[224] Roger S. Bagnall, *The Oxford Handbook of Papyrology* 1st edition (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), 334.

How much contact did Mark have with the *Aeneid*? No one piece of evidence is conclusive. This piece of evidence is necessary to demonstrate that the original Latin version of the *Aeneid* was not a hindrance to Mark. Since the *Aeneid* was translated into the language that Mark wrote his Gospel, Mark's access to the *Aeneid* would have also been in the Greek language, not just Latin, presenting no obstacles to reading and understanding it, if Mark had ever come in contact with the *Aeneid* itself. No evidence exists that allows the contention that Mark or Peter actually had direct contact with the *Aeneid* on papyri rolls.

4. Hebrew Education

The responsibility for the education of Jewish children was placed primarily on the fathers, as commanded in Deuteronomy 6:6–9 and 11:18–20. The fathers were to be the initial channel for teaching Jewish morality based on the commandments (Ps. 78:5), as well as the meaning and purpose behind the feasts and customs associated with them (Ex. 13:6-8). The mothers took over the responsibility when the fathers went to work.[225] Although girls were excluded from school, their parents still had to teach them the basic precepts of the Torah (law). Mary, the mother of Jesus, was well acquainted with the Scriptures, as demonstrated by her many references to the Old Testament in the Magnificat (See Luke 1:46–55). Numerous Scriptures contain examples of Jewish women who were devoted and conscientious teachers of their children. Paul reminded Timothy of his exemplary mother and grandmother, who had taught Timothy the holy Scriptures since his youth (See 2 Tim. 1:5; 2 Tim. 3:14–15).

[225] See for a thorough treatment of this subject: Nathan Drazin, *History Of Jewish Education From 515 B C E To 220 C E* (London: Nabu Press, 2011).

William Barclay points out numerous aspects of the Hebrew education system.[226] Simon ben-Shetach, the brother of Queen Alexandra (who reigned over Judea from 76 to 67 B.C.), enacted a law in 75 B.C. that "children shall attend the elementary school,"[227] and her command was further supported by Joshua ben Gamla in 64 A.D. The education of Jewish boys focused on certain passages of Scripture that each boy was expected to know.[228] First was the *Shema* (Deut. 6:4–9; Deut. 11:13–21; Num. 15:37–41). *Shema* means "hear." It is derived from the first word of Deuteronomy 6:4: "Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God is one Lord." This is the foundation of the Jewish creed and the sentence with which every morning service in the synagogue still begins. In addition, every devout Jew must recite it every morning and evening. Jesus himself named verses four and five as the foremost of all the commandments (See Mark 12:29). Second was the Hallel (Ps. 113–18). Hallel means "Praise [God]!" It is the series of psalms of praise that were recited at all festivals and played an important role in the Passover ritual. Third was the story of the Creation and the Fall (Gen. 1–5). And fourth was the basic elements of the Levitical Law (Lev. 1–8). These chapters focus on the purpose, performance, and types of offerings and sacrifice. The children were also taught to read the Hebrew of the Old Testament, because the Jewish men were expected to read sections of the Hebrew Scriptures in the synagogue service (See Luke 4:16–29). Aramaic—a language closely related to Hebrew—was also probably taught in the synagogue schools. It was the native tongue of most Jews living in Palestine and the language of the Targums, which were esteemed translations and interpretations of the Old Testament.

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[226] Barclay, *Educational Ideals in the Ancient World*.

[227] Ibic., 32–33.

[228] Ibid., 42.

The study of Greek was apparently not important in the education of Jewish boys, but George Holley Gilbert quotes numerous scholars to indicate their opinion that the Jews learned Greek through the Hellenization period.[229] The second half of the Second Temple period witnessed a rapid increase of Hellenization in Israel. Jewish high priests and aristocrats took on Greek names.

> 'Ḥoni' became 'Menelaus'; 'Joshua' became 'Jason' or 'Jesus.' The Hellenic influence pervaded everything, and even in the very strongholds of Judaism it modified the organization of the state, the laws, and public affairs, art, science, and industry, affecting even the ordinary things of life and the common associations of the people […] The inscription forbidding strangers to advance beyond a certain point in the Temple was in Greek; and was probably made necessary by the presence of numerous Jews from Greek-speaking countries at the time of the festivals (comp. the "murmuring of the Grecians against the Hebrews," Acts vi. 1). The coffers in the Temple which contained the shekel contributions were marked with Greek letters (Sheḳ. iii. 2). It is therefore no wonder that there were synagogues of the Libertines, Cyrenians, Alexandrians, Cilicians, and Asiatics in the Holy City itself (Acts vi. 9).[230]

If the high priest and aristocrats did learn Greek, it is plausible that many Jews, for business or daily communication, learned some Greek on their own. Josephus excuses himself for his occasional infelicities in Greek with this remark about Jewish education: "Our people do not favor those persons who have mastered the speech of many nations [. . .]. They give credit for wisdom to those alone who have an exact knowledge of the law and who are capable of interpreting the meaning of the Holy Scriptures."[231]

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[229] George Holley Gilbert, "The Hellenization of the Jews between 334 B. C. and 70 A. D.," *The American Journal of Theology*, Vol. 13, No. 4 (1909), 520-540.

[230] Carl Siegfried, and Richard Gottheil, "Range of Hellenic Influence," under "Hellenism," Jewish Encyclopedia, ed. Isidore Singer (New York: KTAV Publishing House, 1960). Webpage for this encyclopedia, http://jewishencyclopedia.com/articles/7535-hellenism. Martin Hengel, *The 'Hellenization' of Judaea in the First Century after Christ* (London: Hymns Ancient & Modern Ltd, 2012).

[231] Mireille Hadas-Lebel, *Flavius Josephus: Eyewitness to Rome's First-Century Conquest of Judaea*, trans. Richard Miller (London: Macmillian Publishing Co., 1993), 48. Flavius Josephus, *The Complete Works of Flavius Josephus*: Complete and Unabridged, "Jewish Antiquities 20:263-64," trans. William Whiston (London: Andesite Press, 2015). Christian Classics Ethereal Library can be consulted for such works electronically. Christian Classics

Mark wrote his Gospel in Greek. A literature search found no scholar who believes that the Holy Spirit gave ("inspired") the words of Mark's Gospel to a Jewish man (Mark) who had no knowledge or ability in the Greek language. In whatever way that Mark acquired his ability in the Greek language, he was able to handle the language well enough to write down the words inspired by the Holy Spirit.[232]

How much contact did Mark have with the *Aeneid*? No one piece of evidence is conclusive. This piece of evidence demonstrates that Mark's Hebrew education in no way hindered his ability to write his Gospel in Greek. In fact, his Hebrew education would have broadened and deepened his understanding of the *Aeneid*'s theology.

5. Roman Education

Mary Beard maintains that Rome based its importance on the myths brought together in Virgil's *Aeneid*.[233] More important than war, ideas brought the Roman people together in their raising and carrying the Roman banner of superiority. The myths of the *Aeneid* contributed significantly to this cause. Rome wanted to rule the world, and especially the Greek world, and the best method of indoctrination was to put their best literature in the language of the conquered people, and to place this literature into the hands of the educators: thus the translation of the *Aeneid* into Greek. Roger S. Bagnall notes that when in the late Roman period some knowledge

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Ethereal Library, "Jewish Antiquities 20:263–64," in *Josephus,* 9:527, 529, trans. William Whiston, accessed on October 10, 2016, https://www.ccel.org/j/josephus/works/JOSEPHUS.HTM.

[232] 2 Timothy 3:16; 2 Peter 1:20-21.

[233] Beard, 74-78.

of Latin became mandatory, the educators used "bilingual glossaries and bilingual lists of authors. Most of the glossaries are transliterated; that is, they're written entirely with the Greek script. The vast majority of the bilingual word lists are from the *Aeneid* and show either the whole text or isolated words rendered in Greek,"[234] indicating the importance of the *Aeneid* in Roman education long after the *Aeneid* was published. Bagnall also notes that along with the works of Terence, Cicero, and Sallust, it [the *Aeneid*] served as one of the basic works of education from the beginning of its publication. Augustus had it published to educate the Empire of his position, and that education included the children. Many scholars have demonstrated the reliance of Rome on Greek culture. Cambridge University Publishing has a section devoted entirely to "Greek Culture in the Roman World."[235] A. J. S. Spawforth's work argues that Augustus proclaimed that Rome owed a debt of gratitude to Greece and Greek culture, and praised Athens, Sparta, and Olympia as symbols of Greece's glories and classical legacy.[236] Cambridge's scholarly publications indicate that although the Romans viewed the Greeks as weak and decadent, the Romans nonetheless viewed the Greeks as their cultural models. One result of this was that the Romans brought Greek tutors into their homes to educate Roman children.

[234] Bagnall, *The Oxford Handbook of Papyrology*, 334.

[235] Susan E. Alcock, Brown University, Rhode Island, Jaś Elsner, Corpus Christi College, Oxford, Simon Goldhill, University of Cambridge, and Michael Squire, King's College London, eds., "Greek Culture in the Roman World," https://www.cambridge.org/core/series/greek-culture-in-the-roman-world/9CBACE3925A75AA8332C258A5065D02A, accessed October 26, 2017.

[236] A. J. S. Spawforth, *Greece and the Augustan Cultural Revolution: Greek Culture in the Roman World* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Publishing, 2015).

The research into the education of Roman children has taken a recent upswing.[237] Until lately, scholars have assumed that very few children received any official education. Apparently, the Romans had no official department of education that required a minimum of schooling for any given age of children. Only the wealthy made use of tutors. A wealthy Roman husband might have married a non-Roman wife, but, as a Roman, he would have been impelled to use his wealth to promote the Roman empire through the education of his own sons. The content of that education would have included abilities in rhetoric and the propaganda of Roman myths that supported the establishment and continuing existence of Rome as a civilization.[238] The *Aeneid* held a prominent place in the education of Rome's sons, which Quintilian clearly demonstrates.

Quintilian played an active role in supporting the thesis that the *Aeneid* had become part of the fabric of Roman education.[239] Marcus Fabius Quintilianus (born AD 35, died after AD 95 in Rome) was a Latin teacher and wrote *Institutio Oratoria*, a major work of educational theory and literary criticism.[240] He was the first teacher to receive a state salary for teaching Latin rhetoric, as well as being Rome's leading teacher under the emperors Titus and Domitian. He was entrusted with the education of the Emperor's two heirs. His *Institutio Oratoria*, in 12 books, was published shortly before the end of his life. This work shaped Roman education for the next two hundred years.

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[237] Aubrey Gwynn, *Roman Education From Cicero to Quintilian* (London: Forgotten Books, 2017).

[238] Winn, *The Purpose of Mark's Gospel: An Early Christian Response to Roman Imperial Propaganda*.

[239] George Alexander Kennedy, and Giles Lauren, *Quintilian: A Roman Educator and His Quest for the Perfect Orator* (Berlin: Sophron, 2013). Quintilian, *Institutes of Oratory: or, Education of an Orator*, ed., Curtis Dozier and Lee Honeycutt, trans. Rev. John Selby Watson (Seattle: CreateSpace Independent Publishing Platform, 2015).

[240] Quintilian, *Institutes of Oratory: or, Education of an Orator*.

The *Aeneid* was prominent immediately after its publication, as evidenced by the fact that Quintilian incorporated it in a long discussion on how to read the opening lines of the *Aeneid* when giving a speech. Quintilian was not teaching the *Aeneid* to students who had no knowledge of that text. He was using a well-known text to teach rhetoric. Quintilian began his *Institutio Oratoria* with general instructions on how to read a text in public.

> 8 1 Reading remains for consideration. In this connexion there is much that can only be taught in actual practice, as for instance when the boy should take breath, at what point he should introduce a pause into a line, where the sense ends or begins, when the voice should be raised or lowered, and when he should increase or slacken speed, or speak with greater or less energy. 2 In this portion of my work I will give but one golden rule: to do all these things, he must understand what he reads. But above all his reading must be manly, combining dignity and charm; it must be different from the reading of prose, for poetry is song and poets claim to be singers. But this fact does not justify degenerating into sing-song or the effeminate modulations now in vogue: there is an excellent saying on this point attributed to Gaius Caesar while he was still a boy: "If you are singing, you sing badly: if you are reading, you sing."[241]

When Quintilian reached chapter eleven, he used the opening lines of the *Aeneid* to demonstrate specifically how to properly read Virgil's poem in a speech.

> After the words *arma virumque cano* there is a momentary suspension, because virum is connected with what follows, the full sense being given by *virum Troiae qui primus ab oris*, after which there is a similar suspension. For although the mention of the hero's destination introduces an idea different from that of the place whence he came, the difference does not call for the insertion of a stop, since both ideas are expressed by the same verb *venit*. 37 After *Italiam* comes a third pause, since *fato profugus* is parenthetic and breaks up the continuity of the phrase *Italiam Lavinaque*. For the same reason there is a fourth pause after *profugus.* Then follows *Lavinaque venit litora,* where a stop must be placed, as part of a new sentence begins. But stops themselves vary in length, according as they mark the conclusion of a phrase or a sentence. 38 Thus after *litora* I shall pause and continue after taking breath. But when I come to *atque altae moenia Romae* I shall make a full stop, halt and start again with the opening of a fresh sentence. 39 There are also occasionally, even in periods, pauses which do not require a fresh breath. For although the sentence in *coetu vero populi Romani, negotium publicum gerens, magister equitum*, etc., contains a number of different *cola*, expressing a number of different thoughts, all these *cola* are embraced by a single period: consequently,

[241] Ibid., I. 8. 1-2. An online version of the complete text can be found at Quintilian, *Institutio Oratoria*, I. 8. 1-2. http://penelope.uchicago.edu/Thayer/E/Roman/Texts/Quintilian/Institutio_Oratoria/1C*.html#8. Accessed October 13, 2017.

> although short pauses are required at the appropriate intervals, the flow of the period as a whole must not be broken. On the other hand, it is at times necessary to take breath without any perceptible pause: in such cases we must do so surreptitiously, since if we take breath unskilfully, it will cause as much obscurity as would have resulted from faulty punctuation. Correctness of punctuation may seem to be but a trivial merit, but without it all the other merits of oratory are nothing worth.[242]

Quintilian's use of the *Aeneid* assumes that his pupils were familiar with the *Aeneid*, had read it, and could interact with Quintilian's use of it in their speeches.

However, there is more to the education of Roman children than previous scholars have believed. One must not underestimate the importance of reading among the common Roman people. Edward E. Best, Jr. demonstrates that even the common Roman soldier was required to read.[243] His evidence from Livy's Latin that the *tessera* was used throughout the Roman Empire is compelling. A *tessera* was a small tablet used for a number of functions, one of which was to send non-vocal messages to the troops. Marcus Valerius Martialis, a Roman poet, "boasts of his popularity that the hardy centurion stationed near the far-off Black Sea wears out the poets' books of poems."[244] He also states that "It is also interesting to note the excavations at Ostia of the barracks second century Vigiles reveal that the walls of the sleeping quarters were so covered with graffiti that one observer has suggested that writing on the wall was one of the main ways these troops occupied their free time."[245]

How much contact did Mark have with the *Aeneid*? No one piece of evidence is conclusive. This piece of evidence demonstrates that Roman education was broader and more comprehensive than scholars previously realized, that even Roman soldiers could read, and that

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[242] Ibid., XI. 3.36-38.

[243] Best, Jr., "The Literate Roman Soldier."

[244] Ibid., 127.

[245] Ibid.

the *Aeneid* permeated Roman education. Quintilian did not have to instruct his pupils in the content of the *Aeneid*. He assumed the content when he used it to teach rhetoric. This indicates that the *Aeneid* was widely available and used prominently, as evidenced by Quintilian's use of it. Quintilian was born in 35 A.D. and died after 96 A.D. He was younger than Mark. Since the *Aeneid* was still prominent after Mark's lifetime, during Quintilian's lifetime, then the *Aeneid* was equally prominent during the period of Mark's life. This evidence makes it plausible that Mark had knowledge of, and access to, the *Aeneid*.

6) Virgil's Knowledge of the Old Testament

In attempting to assess Mark's connection with the *Aeneid*, scholars have generally overlooked Virgil's sources for the *Aeneid*. The importance of this will become evident. Virgil mostly held to Homeric conventions in writing the *Aeneid*.[246] Literary composition demanded strict adherence to the accepted forms in order to be understood by his Roman audience. Virgil's motives required that he deviate from that form in two ways, however. Virgil shifted to the apocalyptic style, communication from the gods in a time of crisis, and he developed a new kind of hero. Homer was written to promote a person and individual hero. Virgil wrote the *Aeneid* to commend the Roman people and to promote patriotic obedience to the Roman mission established by the gods. The hero of the *Aeneid*, Aeneas, presents the Roman people with the hope of a better future.

[246] Richard Jenkyns, *Classical Literature: An Epic Journey from Homer to Virgil and Beyond* (New York: Basic Books, 2016).

Virgil embodied this hope with three unique themes in the *Aeneid*. First, he used fulfilled prophecies. The setting of the *Aeneid* was the Trojan War. Writing hundreds of years later allowed Virgil to prophesy future events that had already come true. Looking back from Virgil's standpoint, those prophecies had already occurred, but writing ancient history as current events allowed Virgil to invent prophesies for his hero to fulfil after the fact. If a Roman could practice a little bit of suspended disbelief and accept the *Aeneid* as actual history, then those prophecies Virgil had already invented as completed deeds, had been correct.

When Dido foretells the Roman victory of the wars between Rome and Carthage, Virgil was asking his audience to believe that his other prophecies will also come true, which included universal peace being on the horizon under a united Rome. Since everyone wanted peace, especially when nationalism reigns, it was a logical step to gain the Roman populace's support of the *Aeneid's* message. Virgil used this apocalyptic style for political and religious reasons. The reader should note that the prophet Daniel used the same apocalyptic style of writing to comfort the Jewish people and to strengthen their faith in their God, who had revealed the future to Daniel. Mark, on the other hand, shows Christ fulfilling prophecies given hundreds of years before, including some of Daniel's, to confirm God's underlying and overarching control of all past, present, and future events. Mark's prophecies did not use myths nor pseudo-proofs to promote Jesus, but actual historical events that could be evaluated based on the logical understanding of history. Whereas Virgil combined myth with facts and presented his poem as true, Mark did not distort any facts in order to fit in with the genre of the day.

Second, after fulfilled prophecies, Aeneas did not fit with any of the previous heroes whose individual abilities were prominent.[247] Aeneas was a loser in comparison with those supermen. Aeneas was strong, but not exceptionally so, and his desertion of Dido would normally be considered despicable, except for the fact that he unwillingly gave her up for a higher calling. His divine mission took priority, and he received support from the gods for making that choice.

Third, Aeneas' progeny, Silvius and Romulus (discounting Remus, Romulus' twin brother), experienced extremely successful careers as leaders. Silvius, the son of Aeneas and Lavinia, produced the Alban kings, who ruled over Italy 400 years before Romulus (who was a much later descendent of Aeneas). Romulus founded the city of Rome as their first king and established the house of Augustus. Aeneas became *the* parent of the Roman people, who are called "children of Aeneas." Virgil implanted in Aeneas all the virtues (an important Latin word and Roman human attribute) his descendants would inherit. Aeneas' character was sacred and holy. Virgil had raised patriotism to the status of religion. The gods blessed and guided the Romans with a divine plan.

However, Aeneas' holiness is tainted by the fact that he laid aside his calling to begin an affair with Dido and led her to believe that he would be faithful to her forever. He then recaptured his virtue of *pietas* by leaving her for his higher calling to establish Rome. The virtue of *pietas* translates into "duty", "loyalty", "devotion", "duty to country and the gods", adding religion to justify using that word in contexts that contradict the word itself. When Virgil claimed

[247] Odysseus, or Ulysses, in the Odyssey and the Iliad; Achilles, half-human and half-god, hero in the Trojan War and greatest warrior in the Iliad, et.al.

that Aeneas chose *pietas* over personal desires, Virgil pulls on the emotions of the reader to draw pity for Aeneas when Aeneas "has to" leave Dido for his higher calling.

Did Virgil pull this idea out of his own imagination, or was he influenced by some previous literature or historical events? Virgil's creation and development of the Aeneas legend is unique to classical literature, but Virgil was not immune to the past. It is not to be contested that Virgil was brilliant, but very few brilliant people start a movement for no reason. Virgil's predecessors abound. When Alexander conquered the Hellenistic world, he was not able to eradicate all the conquered cultures and amalgamate them into one world culture. Political independence and religious freedom remained a cauldron of dissention everywhere. The antiquity of national traditions began to appear in fictionalized forms and these fictional characters often returned nationalism back to its former glory.[248] The heroes within these stories all performed supernatural deeds and gave the people hope of survival and pride in their past. Peter S. Wells makes the case for the cultural survival of many conquered cultures under the Roman Empire.[249] The Romans classified these cultures as barbaric, but Wells shows that the Germans and Celts actually developed their own cities and minted their own coins, illustrating a money economy before and during the Roman occupation. Greg Woolf covers the same subject among the Gauls.[250] The bibliographies of these two scholarly texts are extensive. Moses Hadas becomes much more specific in this field. Hadas was a Jewish professor of classics at Columbia

[248] Babylonian Ninus, founder of Nineveh; Semiramis, Queen of Babylon; Sesostris, a king of Egypt, et. al.

[249] Peter S. Wells, *The Barbarians Speak: How the Conquered Peoples Shaped Roman Europe* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001).

[250] Greg Woolf, *Becoming Roman: The Origins of Provincial Civilization in Gaul* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000).

University who wrote and published extensively in his field.[251] In 1953 he wrote an article which he later incorporated into his book, *Hellenistic Culture: Fusion and Diffusion*.[252] He researched *all* the literary efforts intended to support cultural survival of conquered peoples in the Hellenistic world, and he concludes that "we have the most extensive remains and are best informed concerning those produced by the Jews, and especially by the Jewish community in Alexandria."[253] The primary hero figure promoted by the Jewish community was Moses, who was more significant than any other biblical figure, since Moses saved his people from the Egyptians. Hadas proposes: "Of the series of legendary heroes celebrated by the descendants of the non-Hellenenic peoples of the Near East, it is Moses who is most likely to have become

[251] "Moses Hadas," *Columbia College: The Core Curriculum*, accessed November 29, 2017, https://www.college.columbia.edu/core/oasis/profiles/hadas.php. "Although he was known as a quiet, even shy man, Moses Hadas made his presence felt at the College as a prolific scholar and as one of the College's truly great teachers. A classicist by training, he began teaching as an instructor in the General Honors course in 1925, and except for brief service in the Office of Strategic Services during World War II, he stayed at Columbia for the rest of his career, remaining one of the College's most sought-after teachers until his death in 1966. Born in Atlanta, Hadas received his bachelor's degree from Emory University in 1922, and came to Columbia to do advanced work in Greek and Latin literature. Even as his own academic accomplishments mounted, Hadas continued to embrace undergraduate education. After teaching General Honors, he taught the Colloquium on Important Books; he was one of the original teachers of Humanities A and continued to teach it for years. It was said of Hadas that he 'always had enough time to discuss anything of humane interest with the demanding young.' Little wonder that, as a teacher, he was often mentioned in the same breath as Mark Van Doren. Early on Hadas won recognition as a gifted scholar, not only of Greek and Latin, but also of Hebrew and Arabic. A colleague once remarked that Hadas knew most classical authors 'as if he had just met them at a faculty meeting.' Among his distinguished books on classical culture were *A History of Greek Literature* (1950) and *Humanism: The Greek Ideal and Its Survival* (1960); he translated Greek, Latin, and Hebrew texts; and he edited many other volumes." Among many other publications, Moses Hadas published the following, *The Story of Virgil's Aeneid: Introduction and Readings in Latin (and English)* (1955); *The Latin Language: Introduction and Reading in Latin (and English)* (1955); *Plato on the Death of Socrates: Introduction with Readings from the Apology and the Phaedo in Greek & in English trans.* (1956); *Caesar: Readings in Latin and English* (1956); *Cicero: Commentary and Readings in Latin and English* (1956); *Longus - Daphnis and Chloe* (1958).

[252] Moses Hadas, "Vergil, Hebrew Prophecy, and the Roman Ideal: Aeneas as the Roman Moses," accessed December 21, 2016, https://www.commentarymagazine.com/articles/vergil-hebrew-prophecy-and-the-roman-idealaeneas-as-the-roman-moses/. Moses Hadas, *Hellenistic Culture: Fusion and Diffusion* (New York: W. W. Norton and Company, 1989). This work was originally written in 1959.

[253] Hadas, *Commentary*.

known to Vergil, and certainly Moses who provides the clearest pattern for Aeneas."[254] Hadas then shows clear parallels between Moses' deeds and Aeneas' deeds. Both were unique heroes. Hadas admits that if the deeds of Aeneas are judged apart from Moses, then scholars will concede that Virgil's imagination was more independent from all other cultures than any other known writer of fiction, but Hadas, an expert in the classics, states more cautiously than the evidence indicates, that "taken together, however, they would seem to argue very strongly that Virgil was deeply influenced by Jewish tradition."[255] Hadas gives further support by quoting Virgil's first draft of the *Aeneid*, where Virgil writes:

> All lingering traces of our guilt shall be erased and the earth released from its continual dread. He shall have the gift of divine life [. . .]. The earth untitled shall pour forth her gifts [. . .]. Uncalled the goats shall bring home their udders swollen with milk, and the herds shall not fear huge lions; unasked thy cradle shall pour forth flowers for their delight. The serpent too shall perish [. . .].[256]

Hagan notes that "This poem has been more widely discussed than any other piece of similar length in classical literature. From Constantine and Augustine until the age of modern criticism, Christian writers have interpreted the *Eclogue* as a prophecy of the birth of Jesus,"[257] and they connect it with Isaiah 7:14.

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[254] Ibid.

[255] Ibid.

[256] Virgil, *The Eclogues of Virgil*: A Bilingual Edition, (English and Latin Edition) 1st Edition, trans. David Ferry (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux; 2000), IV.4. The so-called *Fourth* (of ten) or "Messianic" written between 37-40 B.C. Virgil took the Greek *Bucolica* ("on care of cattle") by Theocritus (poet of *idylls*, or "little scenes," "vignettes") and modified it into a Roman version that gave a political and mythic (and dramatic) explanation of the troubles in the Roman Empire between 44 and 38 B.C. *Eclogues* means "draft" or "selection", to be performed as herdsmen's singing imagined conversations in the country about suffering or revolutionary change or love. Virgil became a legend because they were wildly successful on the Roman stage, combining far-reaching politics and eroticism.

[257] Hadas, *Vergil, Hebrew Prophecy, and the Roman Ideal: Aeneas as the Roman Moses*.

Hagan firmly concludes that "there is no reason to exclude the possibility that Virgil may have known of it or at least of the Messianic speculations that derived from it."[258] Hagan then delineates all the contacts Virgil had had with that Jewish culture that would have given him more than merely a summary of ideas for the *Aeneid*. Virgil's wanderings often took him to the Campania coast which had a Palestinian flavor and a large Jewish population. Petronius, a Roman citizen and a contemporary of Seneca (died A.D. 66), wrote a comic novel, *Satyricon*,[259] in which he mocks the lifestyles of Roman citizens who formerly had been slaves. In his novel he mentions locations where Syrians and Hebrews lived. He expected his Roman readers, Virgil included, to recognize those locations and those who lived there. Horace, the leading Roman lyric poet during Augustus' time, was supposedly of Jewish origin and Virgil's friend, and he also assumed that his readers had some knowledge of Judaism. Based on this information, and leaving aside minor details, the evidence points to the plausibility that Virgil was at least acquainted with the major players, their deeds and ideas in the Old Testament.

Hagan then connects those ideas with the seriousness, strength and epoch-making ideas found within the *Aeneid*. Religion merging with politics fits the theocracy of the Pentateuch well. "Belief in the supernatural sanction of a specific national group and in the supernatural authority of its founder, and concomitant convictions of national election as the special instrument of providence and of responsibility to a divinely ordained mission"[260] fit perfectly with the message Moses brought to Israel, and these ideas are very foreign to classical Greek literature.

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[258] Ibid.

[259] Petronius, *The Satyricon* (Oxford World's Classics) 1st Edition, trans. P. G. Walsh (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009).

[260] Hadas, *Vergil, Hebrew Prophecy, and the Roman Ideal: Aeneas as the Roman Moses*.

Patrick V. Reid contributes to the connection between Virgil and Moses in his book, *Moses Staff and Aeneas's Shield: The Way of the Torah Versus Classical Heroism*. He begins by stating that "The *Aeneid* and the Exodus lend themselves to comparison."[261] He then proceeds to make numerous comparisons between Moses' actions among the Egyptians and Virgil's thoughts through Aeneas. He does not state that Virgil copied Moses, but simply demonstrates Virgil's actions as mimicking Moses.

The Stoic Zeno, of Semitic origin, founded the Stoic School of Philosophy in Athens which promoted universal reason that would lead to a united world under one divine law.[262] The Cynics before Zeno agreed, but chose to withdraw from society. The Stoics believed in cultural engagement to bring about their dreams. Therefore, when Augustus entered history, the Stoics recognized how perfectly he fit their philosophy (and theology). They adopted him as their hero, a hero who would fulfill their ideal of world peace, after the previous vicious Civil Wars, and that peace would be established on the basis of a Roman constitution. Since Augustus was not, in fact, God, the ultimate eternal ideal never materialized, and the Roman Empire was left fragmented five hundred years later.[263]

Hagan believes that Virgil, "depressed by a century of incessant war and by the knowledge that Rome was ruining peoples more cultured than herself, would grasp at the new promise like a drowning man at a straw."[264] All past wars could be accepted, and even justified,

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[261] Patrick V. Reid, *Moses's Staff and Aeneas's Shield: The Way of the Torah Versus Classical Heroism* (Lanham, Maryland: University Press of America, 2005), 6-10.

[262] Keith Seddon and C. D. Yonge, *A Summary of Stoic Philosophy: Zeno of Citium in Diogenes Laertius Book Seven* (Morrisville, NC, Keith Seddon Press, 2008).

[263] Accepting various starting and ending points, the Roman Empire began with the crowning of Gaius Octavian Thurinus in 31 B.C. and fell to the German Goths in A.D. 476, for a total of 507 years.

[264] Hadas, *Vergil, Hebrew Prophecy, and the Roman Ideal: Aeneas as the Roman Moses*.

if the result was an orderly world peace that preserved and spread Roman culture throughout that peaceful world. Augustus brought the politics to the table, but Virgil, borrowing and modifying the Jewish idea of a Messiah, inserted religion into the mix, thus creating a divine plan to give Rome a mission to c[265]onquer the world. The agent of that plan was Aeneas, who symbolized Augustus. Hagan's conclusion is that Virgil "introduced the immortal values of Moses and the prophets into the political life of the Western world."[266] Hagan may be correct since the text of the Hebrew Bible does compare with the *Aeneid* in a couple of ways.[267] Other theories have been proposed, but none of which affect the answers to this theses.

First, God promised the Hebrews the land, along with adoption and victory and utopia during the Millennium. The *Aeneid* promises the Roman people a similar destiny. Second, the Hebrew Bible also prophesied a period of suffering for the Hebrews, but Virgil chose to place that aspect of the Roman people behind them. Schildgen notes that "whereas the Hebrew Bible collects a Canon of texts that expresses a search for understanding of a mournful history of exile and loss, Virgil and Livy write at a moment of 'epochal' events. This historic achievement provides the foundation for Roman preeminence."[268]

How much contact did Mark have with the *Aeneid*? No one piece of evidence is conclusive. This piece of evidence is not necessary to show Mark's connection with the *Aeneid*. It does however contribute to the background and context in which Virgil wrote the *Aeneid*.

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[265] The different authors arrived at the idea separately, or similarities are read into the texts, or the Jews borrowed the idea from an earlier people.

[266] Ibid.

[267] Although comparisons do not necessitate a relationship, the similarities and contrasts of the comparisons can challenge the reader to evaluate his own value system against the two opposite texts.

[268] Schildgen, 31, 32.

Mark's Hebrew education probably rendered him well-versed in the Old Testament. No counting any allusions in His Gospel, Mark quotes the Old Testament twenty-eight times.[269] No sources have surfaced indicating that Mark was aware of Virgil's knowledge and understanding of the Old Testament. However, any association with the *Aeneid* on Mark's part would have probably made the connections between the *Aeneid* and the Old Testament apparent.

7) Jewish Knowledge of the *Aeneid*

More recent studies identify the genre of Mark's Gospel as biography. Although the Jewish and Roman literatures were each somewhat rigid in genre, Mark's biography of Jesus connects with the biographical genre within Roman literature. Francis Cairns demonstrates that ancient society was well aware of genres and that their operation was taught to all the school children as "the minimum formal rhetorical equipment of any literate person from the Hellenistic period on."[270] Richard A. Burridge notes that the

> content of Hellenistic primary education centered around reading and writing skills based on extracts from classical literature, with moral education being imparted through the choice of elevating stories. These would often be biographical—the great deeds of this or that hero put forward as a model for the children to emulate, and this moral, paradigmatic purpose was typical even at a high literary level. Thus the concepts and nature of βίος[271]

[269] 1:2; 1:3; 4:12; 7:6-7; 7:10; 9:48; 10:4; 10:6; 10:7-8; 10:19; 10:34; 11:9; 11:17; 12:10-11; 12:19; 12:26; 12:29-30; 12:31; 12:36; 13:14; 13:19; 13:24-25; 13:36; 14:27; 14:62; 15:34; 15:36; 16:19.

[270] Francis Cairns, *Generic Composition*, in Greek and Roman Poetry, (Grand Rapids: Michigan Classical Press; Revised edition, 2008).

[271] Βιοι, *Bioi*, or "Lives" was the Greek word for biography in the ancient world. Literary criticism within the New Testament and Greco-Roman worlds treats it a literary genre. It was based on a specific individual, but focused on the social background of community and emphasizing the character and accomplishments as a public example.

> were taught indirectly at primary level, followed by direct teaching of genres and other aspects of rhetoric and composition at secondary level.[272]

According to Burridge's research, Roman schools existed all over the Middle East in Asia Minor and Syria, and even in Palestine, and, more importantly, in Greek areas to facilitate the process of Hellenization. Previously the Jewish Maccabees had revolted against the Seleucid Empire when the Greeks demanded that the Jews worshipped the Greek gods.[273] Being ultra conservative, the Maccabeans revolted for a number of reasons, one of which was to protect their own school systems as "exclusively a moral and a religious education."[274]

There have always been people who have chosen to attempt to escape to the country to protect their children's upbringing. Even if any Christians (Mark, included) had fled away from Roman centers of influence to avoid contamination by any Greek literary forms, he could not have escaped every vestige of the culture of the Roman world. As Downing stresses, awareness of the literature and the culture was passed down the social ladder from the upper educated classes through numerous channels: public debates, the theater, courts, the detractors and philosophers and in the marketplace, and even after-dinner entertainment for the wealthy, in which servants and slaves (the lower classes) would have learned about Roman literature by simply being in the room.[275] Downing concludes, "there is no sign of a culture-gap between the

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[272] Richard A. Burridge, *What Are the Gospels?*: 244. H. I. Marrou, *A History of Education in Antiquity* (London: Sheed and Ward, 1956): esp. 142-75.

[273] Daniel J. Harrington, The Maccabean Revolt: Anatomy of a Biblical Revolution (Eugene: Wipf & Stock Publications, 2009).

[274] E. B. Castle, *Ancient Education and Today* (Gretna, LA: Pelican, 1961), 184; see also 160-4 on the clash with Hellenism. Updated version, London: Penguin, 1964.

[275] Burridge, 244-45.

highly literate aristocracy and the masses."[276] Graham N. Stanton has recently rejected the belief that the early manuscripts of the Gospels were written by workaday "documentary hands" of the lower classes; the gulf between the education of the upper and lower classes has been exaggerated.[277] This begins to seriously diminish the age-long belief of a gap between the Gospels and Graeco-Roman literature. Going further, Burridge argues that the false belief that early Christians were found only in the lower classes can be traced back to two sources, one of which is based in philosophy and the other in history. The early Marxist analysis viewed Christianity as a "working class movement" (philosophy), and Deissmann's work (history) connected the insults of Celsus about Christians that they were "wool-workers, Cobblers, laundry-workers, and the most illiterate and bucolic yokels" (Origin, *Contra Celsum* 3.55) with Paul's admission that "not many of you were wise according to worldly standards, not many were powerful, not many were of noble birth" (1 Cor. 1:26).

The latest research offers another interpretation of these suggestions. Burridge puts forth the argument that as with "the Names in the New Testament and indirect evidence about travel, slave ownership, money and the tensions within Pauline communities, Meeks has argued that 'a fair cross-section of urban society' is represented, bringing together several social levels, and only 'the extreme top and bottom of the Greco-Roman social scale are missing.'"[278] Meek's argument supports the thesis that the Jewish community would have been as literate in Greek literature as in Jewish literature. Abraham J. Malherbe has demonstrated that allusions and

[276] F. Gerald Downing, *Order and (Dis)order in the First Christian Century: A General Survey of Attitudes* (Leiden: Brill, 2013): 9, footnote: "A bas les aristos. The Relevance of Higher Literature for the Understanding of the Earliest Christian Writings", *NovT* 30 (1988): 212-30.

[277] Graham N. Stanton, *Jesus and Gospel* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), see especially chapter 9, 192ff.

[278] Burridge, 245.

quotations in the New Testament reveal information about the educational levels in the New Testament.[279]

Wayne Meeks notes that the allusions and quotations in the New Testament "help us to establish the lowest educational level that can reasonably be assumed for the New Testament writers who use them, *i.e.,* the upper levels of secondary-School instruction."[280] Although there is no direct evidence that the Graeco-Roman literature was taught in the Jewish secondary school systems or the synagogues, nor that all the gospel writers were officially educated by the Roman system, it is no longer feasible to contend that the early Christians knew little about Graeco-Roman literature, and therefore the form-critical view has fallen out of favor among present-day scholars. The Gospels can no longer be considered as simply "popular, non-literary and oral in character."[281] Burridge rightly concludes: "There is nothing about either the literary ability or education of the evangelists, nor the social and cultural setting in which they wrote and were interpreted, to prevent the generic link of the Gospels with βίοι."[282]

How much contact did Mark have with the *Aeneid*? No one piece of evidence is conclusive. This piece of evidence is crucial for establishing the reasonableness of the thesis that Mark had direct access to the *Aeneid*. Roman schools existed everywhere. Roman literature was so widespread at all levels of society that no one could avoid coming in contact with it. The Jewish community knew as much about Greek literature as they did about their own literature. The Christians were as well versed in Graeco-Roman literature as anyone else. This piece of

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[279] Abraham J. Malherbe, *Social Aspects of Early Christianity,* 2nd ed. (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1983): 45; Derek Tidball, *An Introduction to the Sociology of the New Testament* (Exeter: Paternoster, 1983): 90-103.

[280] Wayne Meeks, *The First Urban Christians,* 51-73.

[281] Burridge, 245.

[282] Ibid.

evidence supports the proposition that Mark received a dual education in the Jewish and Roman worlds of literature. It goes without saying that every emperor wanted to promote himself to everyone. Augustus would have been no different, and he would have used the best means to do so. The *Aeneid* had become the supreme and exclusive piece of literature that promoted Augustus and the Roman Empire. It's acquired position kept the *Aeneid* prominent in society way beyond Mark's day. It is more than reasonable to conclude that Mark had direct and on-going access to the *Aeneid*.

8) Mark's Education

As noted above, the Jews took the education of their children very seriously. No evidence exists revealing any information about Mark's education. Although Rome dominated the Middle East, the older disciples of Jesus, like Peter, probably did not receive an intense Roman education. They had already become established in their professions. It cannot be argued conclusively that Mark's education encompassed both the Hebrew and Roman worlds. It can be postulated, however, on the basis of two points. The wealth of his family, which will be discussed in this section, would have given Mark a broader education than the other disciples, and working with Peter in Rome indicates that Mark was not a Jewish monk hiding out in Rome among a small group of Hebrews. No evidence exists as to the kind of education Peter received.

What part did Mark's parents play in his education? There is no official record of Mark's father. The Orthodox Church holds the tradition that Mark's parents were Jewish, Aristopolos his father and Mary his mother, and that he was born three years after the birth of Jesus in the city of

Cyrene in Pentapolis, making him a native of Libya in North Africa.[283] His parents escaped from the Berber attacks and migrated to Palestine, settling in Cana of Galilee. When Mark's father died, Peter, who was married to a relative of Mark's father, took Mark in, considered him a son (1 Peter 5:13), raised him, and saw to it that Mark received an excellent education in law and the classics.[284] No scholars have substantiated this. No sources outside the Coptic Church agree with the Coptic tradition. The Coptic Church believes that Mark was the founder of the Coptic Church, as indicated by Robert Morgan's research: "All facts considered we must acknowledge that Christianity took flight only after St. Mark graced this land with his visits and started preaching the good word to the populace.[285]

Another theory is that Mark's father was Roman. The first piece of evidence is Mark's name. Several apostles had two names. Mark (Markus) was his Roman name (Acts 15:39; 2 Timothy 4:11), whereas John was his Jewish name (Acts 13:5, 13). The second evidence is Mark's family. When the Apostle Peter realized that an angel of the Lord had released him from prison in Acts 12:12, "he went to the house of Mary, the mother of John who was also called Mark, where many were gathered together and were praying." There did not seem to be a strong middle class in Palestine at that time in history. Apparently, only wealthy people owned houses. Although the text does not clearly state that Mary owned her house, the connection of wealth can be made with Barnabas, her brother. Barnabas was a Levite[286] from Cyprus, living in Jerusalem

[283] Coptic Orthodox Church Network, "St. Mark The Apostle, Evangelist," accessed on October 7, 2016, http://www.copticchurch.net/topics/synexarion/mark.html. Other sources within the Coptic Orthodox Church teach the same thing about Mark's origin.

[284] Ibid.

[285] Robert Morgan, *History of the Coptic Orthodox People and the Church of Egypt* (Victoria, BC, Friesen Press, 2016), 8.

[286] Acts 4:36-37.

at the time of Pentecost. As the believers were helping one another financially in the church in Jerusalem, Barnabas "owned a tract of land, sold it and brought the money and laid it at the apostles' feet."[287] A firm assumption can be made that Barnabas' sister also shared in the wealth exhibited by Barnabas' financial standing in the community. The Romans allowed their subjugated peoples to retain wealth to the point of owning houses and owning slaves. Owning a slave was also evidence of wealth. Mary apparently had at least one female slave, Rhoda, who was the first person to realize that Peter had been freed from prison.[288] No evidence exists explaining how Barnabas and his sister came into their wealth, nor is there any evidence that reveals anything about Mark's father, whether he was a poor or wealthy Roman, or even a Roman at all. Therefore, nothing can be determined about the role that his father played in Mark's education. This in no way deters from Mark's education through other means.

Going beyond their own Roman children, the Romans also took their Greek-based education of Roman philosophy and religion to the other cultures. George Alexander Kennedy's translation of the *Progymnasmata* delves into the world of Roman education using Greek textbooks to teach prose composition (writing) and rhetoric (speaking).[289] His work assumes that the Romans laid a premium on education, and especially education in the Greek language, in order to teach everyone the basics of writing and speaking. Greek was so important to the Romans, that they began with four main Greek works (which were attributed to Theon,[290] a first

[287] Acts 4:36.

[288] Acts 12:13-14.

[289] Kennedy, *Progymnasmata: Greek Textbooks of Prose Composition and Rhetoric*, ix.

[290] Leonhard von Spengel, *Rhetores graeci*, Vol. 2, Bibliotheca scriptorum graecorum et romanorum (originally Leipzip/Stuttgart: aedibus B. G. Teubneri, 1854; Ann Arbor: University of Michigan, 2008).

century teacher of grammar and rhetoric, Hermogenes,[291] Aphthonius,[292] and Nicolaus[293]), and then translated them into Latin as needed. These Latin translations were so far less important than the Greek originals that the only translations still in existence from the Roman period are some exercises in Quintilian's *Education of the Orator*[294] (1.9; 2.4; 10.5), published around A.D. 94. All other Latin translations were completed no earlier than A.D. 500.[295]

The program of study laid out in these four works contained a progression of Greek exercises that increased in difficulty as they trained students (and adults) in writing and public speaking. More importantly, "the compositions inculcated *cultural values*, as well as understanding of *conventional literary forms* for those who entered on literature as a career or as an elegant pastime."[296] The Romans used the Greek language in their education system to spread their propaganda to all their subject peoples. Even more significantly, Kennedy notes that "not only the secular literature of the Greeks and Romans, but the writings of early Christians *beginning with the Gospels* and continuing through the patristic age, and of some Jewish writers

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[291] Thomas Conley, *Rhetoric in the European Tradition* (Chicago: University of Chicago, 1990). George Alexander Kennedy, *Progymnasmata: Greek Textbooks of Prose Composition and Rhetoric* (London: Brill, 2003). Cecil W. Wooten III, *Hermogenes' On Types of Style* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press Books, 2012). Hermogenes, and Malcom Heath, *Hermogenes on Issues: Strategies of Argument in Later Greek Rhetoric* (Gloucestershire: Clarendon Press, 1995).

[292] Aphthonius, and Ray Nadeau, *The Progymnasmata of Aphthonius in Translation*, Speech Monographs, v. 19, no. 4,1952, in George Alexander Kennedy, *Progymnasmata: Greek Textbooks of Prose Composition and Rhetoric* (London: Brill, 2003).

[293] Patricia P. Matsen, Philip B. Rollinson, Marion Sousa, *Readings from Classical Rhetoric* (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1990).

[294] Quintilian, *Institutes of Oratory: or, Education of an Orator*, Curtis Dozier, ed., Lee Honeycutt, ed., John Selby Watson, trans. (Seattle: CreateSpace Independent Publishing Platform, 2015).

[295] "A Latin version of the Greek handbook attributed to Hermogenes was made by Priscian about A.D. 500, preserved with his extensive works on grammar, and given some use in medieval schools." Kennedy, *Progymnasmata: Greek Textbooks of Prose Composition and Rhetoric*.

[296] Kennedy, ix.

as well, were molded by the habits of thinking and writing learned in schools."[297] His research indicates the desire of the Romans to influence the world with their vision of Augustan soteriology, and the reasonable probability that the New Testament (Luke and Acts, Romans, Hebrews) writers wrote their inspired works as a direct challenge to the "habits of thinking" of Rome.[298]

Further, these four works were so tightly structured in the progression of difficulty, from simple stories to debates of logic, that the Romans have been accused of providing "the students with lists of things to say on many subjects,"[299] and thus the Romans had opened themselves up to the charge that they "tended to *indoctrinate students in traditional values* and inhibit individual creativity."[300] Though the accusation was only partially correct,[301] the Romans did have a clear agenda of propagating their Augustan theology to the rest of the known world. The *Progymnasmata* was used the most during the Roman period, when freedom of speech was curtailed (Augustan propaganda), but during that time there still existed philosophical skepticism which "flourished in the schools of the time, and the political context of the exercises looked back nostalgically to the time of democratic Athens,"[302] indicating the unrest with strict

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[297] Ibid.

[298] Luke and Acts: Marianna Palmer Bonz. "The Best of Times; the Worst of Times: Luke-Acts and Epic Tradition." Romans: Wallace, *The Gospel of God: Romans as Paul's Aeneid*. Hebrews: Mark Reasoner, *Divine Sons: Aeneas and Jesus in Hebrews*, 152.

[299] Kennedy., x.

[300] Ibid.

[301] Ibid: "a major feature of the exercises was stress on learning refutation or rebuttal: how to take a traditional tale, narrative, or thesis and argue against it. If anything, the exercises may have tended to encourage the idea that there was an equal amount to be said on two sides of any issue, a skilled practiced at a later stage of education in dialectical debate.."

[302] Ibid.

Augustan theology in the Realm during the time that Mark wrote his Gospel (A.D. 50-70). Someone during the highpoint of Roman power who disagreed with Augustan soteriology would not have been completely out of the mainstream. The Gospel of Mark would have been a refreshing alternative for those Gentiles who were not completely captivated by Augustan propaganda.

Brian Incigneri believes that Mark's style of writing was such that "the text appears to be designed so that certain features only become clear on a re-reading [which] indicates that Mark aimed at an audience that would read or hear the text several times."[303] This view of the text leads him to agree with Thomas Söding's assumption that Mark knew that his audience had a high level of education, which included Christian traditions, important theological terms, people in Mark's Gospel, and most of the locations mentioned.[304] John Paul Heil[305] and Donald H. Juel[306] agree with this analysis. If Mark's audience had this high level of education, then it is a small step to presume that his audience was also very familiar with the Roman educational world, which included the *Aeneid* as its premier piece of literature.

Bauckham argues that since Matthew and Luke encountered Mark, Bauckham contends that Mark had to have been written for a wider audience. He states that he cannot imagine that Mark wrote his Gospel "merely for a few hundred people."[307] Incigneri claims that the original

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[303] Incigneri, *The Gospel to the Romans: The Setting and Rhetoric of Mark's Gospel*, 31. Dewey, "Mark as Interwoven Tapestry: Forecasts and Echoes for a Listening Audience," 224, views Mark as an "interwoven tapestry," which would require multiple readings by the audience.

[304] Söding, "Der Evangelist in seiner Zeit," in Thomas Söding (ed.), *Der Evangelist als Theologe: Studien zum Markusevangelium* (Stuttgart: Katholisches Bibelwerk, 1995): 11-62, see 27.

[305] John Paul Heil, *The Gospel of Mark as a Model for Action: A Reader-Response Commentary* (New York: Paulist Press, 1992).

[306] Donald H. Juel, *A Master of Surprise: Mark Interpreted* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1994): 133-37.

[307] Bauckham, 30.

readers of Mark, whoever they were, had far more knowledge about the events surrounding the gospel than later readers had.[308] Because Mark's Gospel progressively reveals new information and upcoming events, the original readers would have understood far more than what Mark wrote in his Gospel, since Mark did not have to communicate to them what they already knew. This surrounding knowledge would have allowed them to evaluate Mark's Gospel in more precise detail than later readers, building on the reader's knowledge and understanding of their Hebrew and Greco-Roman world.

It is a plausible that conquered cultures on the outer edge of the Empire were introduced to and influenced by Roman propaganda, as evidenced when Rome invaded England. Britain was nothing more than a disparate group of peoples with no sense of national identity beyond their local politics. The research of Alan K. Bowman[309] and Peter Salway[310] have shown that the most important legacy of Rome in England was that every generation of British inhabitants that followed the invasion strove to be Roman! The Saxon, Norman, Renaissance English and Victorian were all attempting to regain the glory of that age when Britannia was considered to be a grand civilization established by the Romans. Until 1992 neither Bowman nor Salway make any reference to the *Aeneid*, John Creighton firmly supports the view that: "It is perfectly possible that a foundation myth from LIA Britton did survive through the Roman period to be transcribed at a later date in Ireland, especially if it was associated with the story of the

[308] Incigneri, 36.

[309] Bowman, *Life and Letters on the Roman Frontier.*

[310] Peter Salway, *Roman Britain* (Oxford: Oxford Paperbacks, 2015).

Aeneid."[311] Creighton admits that there is not enough evidence to prove this possibility, but he believes that it probably happened. His belief would need to be supported by hard evidence. He does state that "It [the *Aeneid*] exemplifies precisely the genre of foundation myth which would have been created within the political context of Britain in the early first century AD."[312]

In 1992, however, Bowman was involved in deciphering a piece of script from a fort in northern Britain, Vindolanda. Bowman wrote,

> In the *praetorium* at Vindolanda, probably during the occupation of Cerialis and his family, someone took a writing-tablet on which a private letter had been begun, but not finished, and wrote on the back of it in rather good, but degenerating, capital hand a line from the *Aeneid* of Vergil (9.473): a complete line, not a complete sentence and certainly not a readily memorable one, from the second half of the poem which is generally much less in evidence as a quarry for writing exercises; and one with the remarkable for of *e*, hitherto unparalleled in ink texts.[313]

The *Aeneid*, at least in the memory of the Romans, had arrived in northern Britain! Creighton could potentially claim this evidence as support of his belief. The Romans wanted the world, but they also wanted peace everywhere they conquered a culture. If the Hebrews could be convinced that Augustus was a product of the gods, that might produce peace in Palestine. Thus it seems implausible that the Hebrews could have avoided being confronted with the *Aeneid* and its theology.

Comparing Greek, Roman and Jewish education will underscore some of the above points. Robin Barrow covers the subject of Greek and Roman Education thoroughly, and Nathan

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[311] John Creighton, *Coins and Power in Late Iron Age Britain* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 143.

[312] Ibid.

[313] Bowman.

Drazin treats Jewish education.[314] Greece aimed for "good citizens" through their educational endeavors. Individual excellence was paramount as applied to public usefulness. Virtue, the supreme goal of all education, was always connected with civic duties. Gymnastics was for physical and military training, and music for the arts. Although Plato focused on society and Aristotle on the individual, the final goal was a combined effort to produce a well-organized state. Socrates was absorbed with the power of thinking that was intended to produce fundamental universal moral principles. If contemplative thinking was unique to humans, then the pursuit of knowledge was man's highest function. Where Greek philosophy dominated, nothing practical surfaced, only philosophical speculations seeking ultimate truth. A true liberal education was required for all who could afford it. Dionysius' opinion of the necessity of a promotion of *paideia* within education, from true knowledge of Classical sources, endured for centuries in a form integral to the identity of the Greek elite.[315]

Rome's goals were similar: preparation for Roman citizenship, which included military, civic duties and economic acumen. Oratory eventually became the superior aspect of their education, and the finest citizen was the orator, but the underlying Greek philosophy still dominated. Pertaining to Roman education before the birth of Jesus, the "Twelve Tables comprised the chief content of Roman education in this early period."[316] The "Twelve Tables" was a written law code that applied to every person in the Roman Empire, from the patricians to

[314] Robin Barrow, *Greek and Roman Education* (New York: Bloomsbury Publishing, 2011). Nathan Drazin, *History of Jewish Education from 515 B.C.E. to 220 C.E.*, 137-143.

[315] Dionysius of Halicarnassus, *The Roman antiquities of Dionysius of Halicarnassus*, 1.67.3. Note: T. Hidber. Encyclopedia of Ancient Greece: 229. Routledge 31 Oct 2013, 832 pages, ISBN 1136787992, (editor N. Wilson).

[316] Barrow, 139.

the plebeians.[317] There were no social distinctions within this law code. Only parts of these laws are still in existence, but they are viewed as the beginning of European law. The original tables were destroyed in 390 B.C. when the Gauls moved into Rome. These laws were committed to memory, then understood and mastered as practical guidance for the life after death. These laws affected every aspect of Roman life, and especially the intellectual discipline necessary for life. "No people, either before or since, has made such use of its own history in education. History, including biography and the study of Roman law, comprised the subject matter of early Roman education."[318]

The Jews viewed the world differently. Religion dominated their education. The Law, its observance, and the practical implications involved in following the Law influenced every activity in life, and if intellectual ability happened to improve, so much the better, though it was not a necessary result. Good citizens before God were more important than either Greek or Roman nationalism. Moreover, physical and military education was treated with hostility.[319] Jewish education focused on the study and observance of the Torah, and was essentially character education.

The Jewish educational system, although similar in commitment to the Romans, was far more extensive than Rome's. First, "the Holy Scriptures were exceedingly more inclusive and extensive than the Twelve Tables. Secondly, the Jewish child was not confined to the study of

[317] Lucilius, *Remains of Old Latin, Volume III, The Law of the Twelve Tables*.

[318] Ibid.

[319] Drazin,

the written laws alone. He was also required to learn and memorize many specific oral details of each Scriptural law and how these were deduced from the text or otherwise originated."[320]

Bringing all three educational systems to bear on Mark's upbringing, one understands that once a child reached the age of six or seven and entered a school "system" the major difference between the Jewish and Greek/Roman elementary schools was one of content. The Jewish system focused entirely on the Torah and Jewish daily conduct. Science was practically looked down upon by the Rabbis.[321] The Greeks and Romans nearly worshipped the sciences, relegating the study of ethics to mere theoretical speculation about the nature of man and the universe.

Another major difference between the Jewish educational system of children and the Roman system was the social positions of the teachers. The Jews placed the highest priority on knowledge of the Law, the teacher's piety and sincerity, and the respect of the community for the teacher. The Romans cared only about the content of the teaching, not the person of the teacher. Therefore, the Romans used highly educated slaves as mentors for their children.[322] And most of these highly educated slaves were Greeks.

How much contact did Mark have with the *Aeneid*? No one piece of evidence is conclusive. This piece of evidence reveals that Mark's education gave him more than adequate connection with the *Aeneid*. If Mark's father was a Roman, a very weak assumption, Mark would have received both a Jewish and Roman education. The Roman use of Greek in their education, as illustrated by the four Greek works attributed to Theon, Hermogenes, Aphthonius, and

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[320] Drazin, 137.

[321] Ibid.

[322] Ibid., 142.

Nicolaus, would have given Mark the opportunity to read and interact with the *Aeneid* in Greek, while writing his Gospel in Greek. The story of the *Aeneid* was very widely known, and Mark had not been an isolated Jew who had rejected Roman influence and education. It cannot be contended that Mark had direct access to a copy of the *Aeneid*, but regardless of his formal education, he most certainly was subjected to the concepts and theology of the *Aeneid*.

It could be postulated that any connection with the *Aeneid* was irrelevant since Mark simply wrote down what Peter taught, who might have given no attention to the *Aeneid*. This view simplifies the writing of Mark's Gospel too much. Peter gave the teaching, but then he left and returned to Jerusalem for a time. While he was gone, the believers begged Mark to write down what Peter had taught them. Mark obliged and finished his Gospel before Peter returned. When Peter read what Mark had written, Peter approved! His approval does not assume that Mark wrote down, word for word, what Peter had taught. Mark had the freedom to write down what he had understood from Peter's teaching, and Mark could have easily contextualized his Gospel to address the current wrong theologies of his day. This line of reasoning does not include Peter's own words, that "no prophecy was ever produced by the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit" (2 Peter 1:21).

The confluence of the three educational systems would have given Mark a breadth and depth of education for understanding the *Aeneid* and how to contextualize his Gospel, as he sought to draw them away from Augustus and toward Jesus. This piece of evidence makes it reasonably probable that Mark had extensive contact with the *Aeneid* and a deep enough understanding of it in Greek to present counter arguments in his Gospel.

9) Mark's Family & Travels

As more pieces of evidence are presented, it will become apparent that many of them overlap other pieces of evidence. The uncertain probability that Mark's father was Roman has been dealt with, but will surface again in this piece of evidence. The background of Mark's family connects directly to the Apostle Peter. There is no firm evidence that Peter, along with Mark, planted the church in Rome. The Catholic Church contends that Peter and Paul planted the church there. They present statements by some Church Fathers in favor of their viewpoint. Ignatius of Antioch [A.D. 110] stated, "Not as Peter and Paul did, do I command you [Romans]. They were apostles, and I am a convict."[323] Dionysius of Corinth wrote, "You [Pope Soter] have also, by your very admonition, brought together the planting that was made by Peter and Paul at Rome and at Corinth; for both of them alike planted in our Corinth and taught us; and both alike, teaching similarly in Italy, suffered martyrdom at the same time."[324] Irenaeus [A.D. 189] wrote, "Matthew also issued among the Hebrews a written Gospel in their own language, while Peter and Paul were evangelizing in Rome and laying the foundation of the Church."[325]; ". . . the greatest and most ancient church known to all, founded and organized at Rome by the two most glorious apostles, Peter and Paul . . .."[326] Clement of Alexandria added, "The circumstances which occasioned . . . [the writing] of Mark were these: When Peter preached the Word publicly at Rome and declared the gospel by the Spirit, many who were present requested that Mark, who

[323] Temple Chevallier, *Translation of the Epistles of Clement of Rome, Polycarp and Ignatius; And of the Apologies of Justin Martyr and Tertullian* (London: Forgotten Books, 2017), 4.3.

[324] (Letter to Pope Soter [A.D. 170], in *Eusebius: The Church History*, trans. Paul L. Maier (Grand Rapids: Kregel, 2007), 2.25:8.

[325] Irenaeus, *Against Heresies,* 3,1,1.

[326] Ibid., 3,3,2.

had been a long time his follower and who remembered his sayings, should write down what had been proclaimed."[327] Tertullian [A.D. 200] wrote, "But if you are near Italy, you have Rome, where authority is at hand for us too. What a happy church that is, on which the apostles poured out their whole doctrine with their blood; where Peter had a passion like that of the Lord, where Paul was crowned with the death of John [the Baptist, by being beheaded]."[328]; "[the Romans], to whom both Peter and Paul bequeathed the gospel and even sealed it with their blood."[329]

The Protestants protest against Peter and Paul as founders of the church in Rome. The evidence comes from the book of Romans. Paul wrote the book of Romans to an existing church, and he makes reference to Peter, which it is assumed he would have, had Peter been in Rome at that time. It seems more plausible that the "visitors from Rome" (Acts 2:10) were among the 3,000 saved on that day of Pentecost, and they returned to Rome and planted the church there before either Peter or Paul arrived the first time. The only firm evidence that both sides acknowledge is that Peter preached in Rome and the believers asked Mark to write it all down. Therefore, it is reasonably probable that Mark spent enough time in Rome to disciple the believers and gain the trust of those believers to have them ask him to write down the teachings of Peter. No one disputes that Peter discipled other believers, and Mark would have been one of those believers. I Peter 5:13 places Mark in Rome with Peter. "The church in Babylon, also chosen, sends you greetings, as does Mark, my son."[330] Considering the time and involvement in

[327] Sketches [A.D. 200], in a fragment from Eusebius, History of the Church, 6,14:1).

[328] Tertullian, *Prescription Against Heretics* (Pickerington, OH: Beloved Publishing, LLC, 2015), 36.

[329] Terfullian, *Against Marcion* Paperback – (Pickerington, OH: Beloved Publishing, 4,5:1.

[330] Holman Christian Standard Bible.

the lives of those Roman believers, it is doubtful that the believers or Mark would not have heard of the *Aeneid* in Rome.

Opinion is divided as to whether Mark 14:51-52[331] refers to Mark, but since his mother lived in Jerusalem at the time of Jesus, one could also assume that Mark had had the personal experience of following Jesus for some part of the Lord's three years before the crucifixion. Pure conjecture could assume that Jesus included Mark among the seventy who were sent out in pairs to inform the people that the Messiah was right behind them. There is no evidence to support this conjecture. A little firmer conjecture could assume that Mark was not yet considered a "man" when Peter announced that the apostles needed to choose a replacement for Judas: "Therefore is it necessary that of the *men* who have accompanied us all the time that the Lord Jesus went in and out among us--."[332] Replacing conjecture with a probability, Mark could have been one of the 120 believers at Pentecost.[333]

Mark's age at that time might be significant for his continuing education, but neither Scripture nor church history records that information. Mark's formal education probably would have been enhanced by his uncle Barnabas' tutoring. After Peter was rescued from prison in Acts 12, and then disappeared or went into hiding "to another place,"[334] Barnabas and Paul took Mark with them on the first missionary journey.[335] Although Mark returned to Jerusalem after their

[331] "And a young man followed him, with nothing but a linen cloth about his body. And they seized him, but he left the linen cloth and ran away naked."

[332] Acts 1:21.

[333] Acts 1:15.

[334] Acts 12:17.

[335] Acts 13: 5.

ministry on Cyprus and a short[336] sailing trip to Perga in Pamphylia, Luke records Mark's responsibility during that trip as a "helper."[337] The Greek word, ὑπηρέτην, is not as low as a slave, δουλος, but can mean anything from the officers of magistrates (Matt. 5:25), to the attendants or soldiers of a king (John 18:36), to the officers of the Sanhedrin (Matt. 26:58), to a minister of the gospel (Acts 26:16).

This seems to indicate that Mark did receive delegated authority from Paul and Barnabas. Since Paul and Barnabas were fully engaged in evangelizing the people on Cyprus, Mark, who probably had received an excellent Roman and Jewish education, could have been practicing his skills as a recorder of everyone's activities, like a designated amanuensis. Since Luke wrote Acts 13 in the third person, it is probable that Luke did not accompany them, so Luke would have received a report about that journey from them, and Mark may have even been a "source" that Luke drew from when Luke wrote the Book of Acts (Luke 1:3). Mark would use this skill later when he recorded his Gospel. Mark's experience on Cyprus added to his education of watching Paul and Barnabas evangelize Gentiles.

Although Paul and Mark had a falling out during the first missionary journey (A.D. 44), Paul later came to appreciate Mark, as demonstrated by his request from Timothy in 2 Timothy 4:11: "Get Mark and bring him with you, for he is useful to me for ministry." If Paul wrote 2 Timothy around A.D. 67, then over twenty years would have gone by since Paul and Mark had been on Cyprus together. It seems unreasonable that they had had no contact with each other for over twenty-three years. In order for Paul to have arrived at the conclusion that Mark was useful

[336] Less than two days with favorable winds. Lionel Casson, "Speed under Sail of Ancient Ships," *Transactions and Proceedings of the American Philological Association*, Vol. 82 (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 1951), 136-148.

[337] Acts 13:5.

to Paul "for ministry," either they had spent time with each other in previous situations, or Paul received enough positive communication about Mark's activities to cause Paul to revised his previous opinion of Mark. Paul's complaint about Mark leaving them on Cyprus had nothing to do with Mark's abilities, but with his endurance or commitment. After twenty-three years Paul would have begun to recognize Mark's literary abilities and requested in 2 Timothy 4:13 that Luke bring "the books, and above all the parchments." Wenham in the NTC notes that "There is also particular interest in the *scrolls* and *parchments.* What these were it is impossible to say. They may have been OT texts, or perhaps Paul's personal papers, or some of each."[338] It seems unrealistic that Paul would have been overly concerned about personal papers, and the text does not state that these parchments were in Luke's possession. The parchments may have been Mark's own writings. If Paul wrote 2 Timothy three to ten years earlier than Mark (A.D. 60 – A.D.67), the possibility exists that Mark might have read Romans, since it had been directed to the Romans specifically, and most likely, widely circulated by the time that Peter and Mark arrived in Rome.

Many of the church members in Rome would have been Romans and would have spoken Latin. As in every culture, many people only learn their own mother tongue. Some Romans, having grown up and been educated in Latin, would have seen no reason to learn to read or write or speak Greek. Peter might have learned Latin, since fishermen had to pay taxes and probably had to deal with the Roman authorities, who might have chosen to speak Latin. Equally, Mark's background and youth could have been Peter's arm of outreach and teaching to the Romans. It is feasible that Mark used Latin to communicate and teach the gospel to the new Roman converts, some of whom might not have had any opportunity to learn anything other than Latin.

[338] Gordon J. Wenham, J. Alec Motyer, Donald A. Carson, R. T. France, eds., *New Testament Commentary* (Downers Grove: IVP Academic, 1994), comment on 2 Timothy 4:13.

Another tantalizing fact is the existence of the Old Latin Gospels, of which scholars know very little, except that they did exist during Mark's time. Philip Burton admits that "It is clear, then, that the question of the origins of the Old Latin Gospels are not fully understood."[339] Having said that, however, their existence raises the question of their origin and their usage. Wenham's article[340] makes the point that the believers in Rome had asked (begged?) Mark to write down what they had been taught orally. Wenham's logic flows thus: Peter went to Rome immediately after escaping from prison in Acts 12. Mark joined him soon thereafter. Peter taught the small church in Rome and discipled Mark during that time. Because of the reasonable plausibility that Mark had been educated in all three worlds, he would have been conversant in Latin and taught the Roman believers in Latin, the Greeks in Greek, and the Hebrews in Hebrew. However, many Romans were fluent in Greek, so it is also possible that some Romans (who understood Greek) could translate for Mark and Peter to those Romans who did not. Thus, Mark did not have to an expert in Latin, though he might then have needed an interpreter. Any new believers in Rome who knew only Latin would have had a number of options for receiving Peter's teachings. Peter returned to Antioch in A.D. 46 due to the tension between Jerusalem (Jewish believers) and Antioch (Gentile believers). The believers in Rome wanted the gospel written down.

In the fourth century Eusebius claimed that the believers in Rome had to almost beg Mark to write his Gospel.

> And thus when the divine word had made its home among them, the power of Simon was quenched and immediately destroyed, together with the man himself. And so greatly did the splendor of piety illumine the minds of Peter's hearers that they were not satisfied with hearing once only and were not content with the unwritten teaching of the divine

[339] Philip Burton, *The Old Latin Gospels: A Study of their Texts and Language*, 31.

[340] Wenham, ibid.

> Gospel, but with all sorts of entreaties they besought Mark, a follower of Peter, and the one whole Gospel is extant, that he would leave them a written monument of the doctrine which had been orally communicated to them. Nor did they cease until they had prevailed with the man, and had thus become the occasion of the written Gospel which bears the name Mark. And they say that Peter when he had learned, through a revelation of the Spirit, of that which had been done, was pleased with the zeal of the men, and that the work obtained the sanction of his authority for the purpose of being used in the churches.[341]

Jerome confirms this request with variations: "Mark the disciple and interpreter of Peter wrote a short Gospel at the request of the brethren at Rome embodying what he had heard Peter tell. When Peter had heard this, he approved it and published it to the churches to be read by the authority as Clement in the sixth book of his Hypotyposes and Papias, bishop of Hierapolis, record."[342] Even Papias wrote, "Mark, the interpreter of Peter, wrote carefully down all that he recollected, but not according to the order of Christ's speaking or working."[343]

How much contact did Mark have with the *Aeneid*? No one piece of evidence is conclusive. This piece of evidence places Mark in the center of Augustan power, and the location where the *Aeneid* would have been most prominent. This evidence also points toward the reasonable probability that Mark was conversant in Latin and could teach the believers in Rome in all three languages: Hebrew, Greek and Latin. It is reasonable to believe that the new believers in Rome had read the *Aeneid* and that Mark taught them the gospel against the backdrop of the *Aeneid*.

10) Mark's Broader Audience: Rome!

[341] Eusebius, *Eusebius: The Church History*, trans. Paul L. Maier, 2.15.1-2.

[342] Jerome, and Gennadius, *Lives of Illustrious Men* (London: Aeterna Press, 2016), chapter 8.

[343] Eusebius, 3.39.15.

This piece of evidence will, of necessity, repeat some of the information presented in the literature review in chapter two in order to support the fact that Mark wrote his Gospel for a wider audience. This evidence begins with the statement made by Papias and preserved by Eusebius in *HE* III.39.14[344] that Mark acted as the "interpreter" of Peter in Rome.[345] Richard Bauckham gathered a number of authors together to propose that Mark wrote his Gospel to an audience of small communities of believers throughout the Roman world.[346] Stephen C. Barton's article in Bauckham's volume stated that "the assumption that the Gospel was written for a particular community – variously located in Rome or Galilee or Syria [the range and disparity of suggested geographical locations are telling! – is all-pervasive."[347] Bauckham argues that since Matthew and Luke knew about Mark's Gospel, Mark had to have been written for a wider audience. As quoted previously, Bauckham states that he cannot imagine that Mark wrote his Gospel "merely for a few hundred people."[348] This idea opens the door for the possibility that Mark wrote for a number of audiences, and one of those audiences would have been the largest audience in Mark's day, the Romans: thus the importance of the *Aeneid*. Theologians posit a general audience rather than specific communities (with little concrete evidence as to which community), but no scholar has clearly ruled out any of the other options proposed. Regardless of whether Mark wrote for small communities or for the Realm, the *Aeneid* was intended for

[344] Eusebius, *Eusebius: The Church History*, trans. Paul L. Maier, III, 39, 15.

[345] This does not imply that Mark was the only interpreter available to Peter. Maybe Peter simply wanted someone better in Latin to interpret for him.

[346] Richard Bauckham, *The Gospels for All Christians: Rethinking the Gospel Audiences*.

[347] Ibid., 182.

[348] Bauckham, 30.

anyone the Romans had conquered! None of the other scholars weighing in on this topic of Mark's audience make any connections between Mark's Gospel and the *Aeneid*.

Foster edited and published a large volume of scholars' papers that were presented in Oxford, 2008.[349] This publication followed a series of previous conferences on the Synoptic Problem. The publication was 970 pages in length and covered every aspect and every theory of the Synoptic Problem from every direction. Pertinent to this dissertation, that book included three articles dealing directly with the Gospel of Mark,[350] and a few articles that touched on aspects that were included in Mark.[351] Nothing in the volume even approached the subject of Mark's potential connection with the *Aeneid*.

Michael Bird's article "The Markan Community, Myth or Maze?"[352] reviews Bauchkam's[353] opinion that the Gospels were written for all believers, not for a single small group. Bird focuses on Mark, stating that there is no connection between Mark's Gospel and a specific "Markan community" in any written record, making Bauckman's opinion no more than speculation. Pieter Botha claims that Mark was written by an itinerant radical teacher to a variety of audiences, but presents very little immediate context, and, therefore, scholars will never be able to ascertain a specific audience or group that Mark was targeting.[354]

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[349] P. Foster, A. Gregory, J. S. Kloppenborg, and J. Verheyden, eds., *New Studies in the Synoptic Problem: Oxford Conference, April 2008* (Leuven: Peeters, 2011).

[350] "Reading Mark from the Perspectives of Different Synoptic Source Hypotheses: Historical, Redactional and Theological Implications," "Duality in Mark," and "The Longer Gospel of Mark and the Synoptic Problem."

[351] For instance, "Miracle Stories and the Synoptic Problem," "The Parables and the Synoptic Problem," etc.

[352] Michael F. Bird, "The Markan Community, Myth or Maze? Bauckham's The Gospel for All Christians Revisited," JTS 57 (2006).

[353] Richard Bauckham, *The Gospels for All Christians: Rethinking the Gospel Audiences*.

[354] Pieter J. J. Botha, "The Historical Setting of Mark's Gospel: Problems and Possibilities," *Journal for the Study of the New Testament* 51 (1993): 27-55.

Craig Evan's article "Mark's Incipit and the Priene Calendar Inscription: from Jewish Gospel to Greco–Roman Gospel" makes a clear and detailed connection of Mark's opening verse to Augustus Priene Calendar Inscription (OGIS 458; c. 9 B.C.).[355] He then gives three reasons why Mark intentionally used the phrase "son of God" as a comparison with the Priene. Evan goes further by expounding eight supporting points that "Mark appears deliberately to highlight parallels between Jesus' behavior and his treatment at the hands of the Romans, on the one hand, and Roman traditions and practices concerning the ruler cult, on the other."[356] His arguments are very compelling, but he notes at the end of his article that the epithet "son of god" had other definitions in addition to deity, and that Mark was not comparing Jesus directly with Augustus. Augustus' golden age had ended (A.D. 14) by the time Mark wrote his Gospel (mid 60's), and all the following emperors became more and more decadent and violent, even though each one had been given the title "son of God." Evan's conclusion was that Mark was comparing Jesus with all the evil Roman emperors. His conclusion could be accurate without negating the thesis statement of this paper, that Mark wrote his Gospel with the express purpose of challenging the *Aeneid*. Although Augustus had been in the grave fifty years when Mark wrote his Gospel, the Roman Empire was still in full swing attempting to convince the world of Rome's superiority. The Roman-Parthian War of 58-63 forced the submission of Armenia to Rome's puppet king, Tigranes VI. Nero viciously attacked the Christians immediately after the great fire of Rome in 64. And the first Jewish-Roman War began in 66, just four years before Titus besieged and leveled Jerusalem. One year later Roman forces conquered Britain and entered Scotland. Rome was still extending its realm beyond its borders and forcing its will upon its conquered subjects.

[355] Evans, "Marks Incipit and the Priene calendar inscription: from Jewish Gospel to Greco–Roman Gospel."

[356] Ibid., 70.

It is possible that Mark was challenging all of the evil Roman emperors, but every emperor promoted the *Aeneid* as Roman's major propaganda piece for taking Rome's view of the world to the rest of the world. Evan makes no mention or connection with the *Aeneid*.

Alberico Gentili's book *The Wars of the Romans: A Critical Edition and Translation of De Armis Romanis* reveals Rome's true motives for the Third Punic war (149 B.C.-146 B.C.) against Carthage: power and greed.[357] This war took place before the time of Augustus (63 B.C.-A.D. 14), and would have influenced Augustus' views on the power of the Roman Empire. The *Aeneid* was written under the presupposition that Rome had a right to take over the known world (Sicily and Carthage herself). Adam Winn[358] makes the claim that Mark wrote his Gospel as an early Christian response to Rome's imperial propaganda. He surveys New Testament scholarship's search for Mark's purpose in writing his Gospel, and provides some excellent comparisons between Jesus and the Roman propaganda, but Winn makes no mention of Virgil or the *Aeneid*, which was Rome's main piece of propaganda.

Closer to the thesis of this dissertation, Adela Collins[359] attempts to discover how the Jewish community, but more significantly, how the Gentile community, would have understood Jesus' statement in Mark 10:45: "The Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many." Collins briefly expounds on the Jewish community's take on this verse, but then focuses exclusively on the usage and meaning of the word *lutron*, and the

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[357] Alberico Gentili, Benedict Kingsbury, Benjamin Straumann, and David Lupher, *The Wars of the Romans: A Critical Edition and Translation of De Armis Romanis* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011).

[358] Winn, *The Purpose of Mark's Gospel: An Early Christian Response to Roman Imperial Propaganda*.

[359] Adela Yarbro Collins, "The Signification of Mark 10:45 among Gentile Christians," *The Harvard Theological Review*, Vol. 90, No. 4. See the webpage: "Jesus' Sayings in the Life of the Early Church: Papers Presented in Honor of Helmut Koester's Seventieth Birthday," (October, 1997): 371-382, accessed February 2, 2016, http://www.jstor.org/stable/1510097.

impression it made on the Roman world. The words in this word group referred to "transactions between human beings and gods in which sins were forgiven and offenses expiated." He connects this type of saying with the cup in Mark 14:24, where the blood of Jesus was poured out for many. If the Gentiles had been familiar with the Hebrew customs, then everyone would have understood these sayings as referring to the death of Jesus "in a metaphorical way as a ritual expiation of the offenses of many."

Collins notes the close connection of Mark 10:45 to a statement made by Dio Cassius. As noted previously, Dio Cassius' work, *Romaika*, a history of Rome, had become one of the most valuable manuscripts about the last years of the Roman Republic and the early Empire. This work is important for two reasons. The fact that he wrote it in Greek indicates how much the Romans wanted the rest of the world to know about the Roman civilization. Second, Cassius made a reference to Otho, a Roman emperor, born in A.D. 32 who died in A.D. 69. Otho is claimed to have said, "I shall free myself [that is, take my own life], that all may learn from the deed that you chose for your emperor one who would not give you up to save himself, but rather himself to save you."[360] Collins observes, however, that Otho only claims to give his life for the people, a noble and honorable thing to do, but there is no connection to being a "ransom" for the people, nor does Collins make any connections to the *Aeneid* in his discussion of Mark or the concept of a 'ransom.'

In Collins' next article he references Wilhelm Bousset's view that the "Son of God" spoken by a Roman in Mark 15:39 demonstrates that Mark "intended his Gospel for the Gentile Christian community."[361] Martin Hengel disagreed and claimed that the "Sons of God" in Greek

[360] Dio Cassius, *Roman History: With an English Translation, Volume VIII*: 214-17.

[361] Adela Yarbro Collins, "Mark and His Readers: The Son of God Among Greeks and Romans," 85-100.

had no connection with the Christians belief in Jesus as the Son of the only God. Augustus adopted the title immediately after the assassination and divinization of Caesar, and, as such, made no impact on Christianity. Collins argues that the term "Son of God" actually has a number of meanings among the early believers, based on their reception of Mark's Gospel, especially those who were closer to the Greek and Roman religious traditions than to the Hebrew ones. These people wanted to interpret Jesus through the eyes of the Greeks and Romans. Again, Collins does not include the *Aeneid* in these considerations. The fact that Augustus first coined the phrase 'Son of god' to refer to himself demonstrates that the theology was already known to everyone in Mark's day. For Mark and the other Gospel writers to appropriate that term for Jesus would have caught the immediate attention of anyone who read it.

Brian Incigneri's book *The Gospel to the Romans* studies in depth Mark's intention to bring the gospel to the Romans.[362] He critiques Mary Ann Beavis' reasons why she believes that Mark was written to convert unbelievers.[363] He disagrees with her, stating that unbelievers would probably not be drawn to a religion that prophesied the martyrdom of believers. Instead, believers needed assurance that the martyrdom they had already witnessed was part of God's plan, and God would bring justice to all. As stated previously, Incigneri's view that Mark was designed to be heard over and over leads to Söding's view that Mark's audience knew as much about Christian traditions and Christian teaching as Mark knew. Incigneri[364] presents an excellent analysis of the rhetoric character of Mark's Gospel, pointing out the personal emotions

[362] Incigneri, *The Gospel to the Romans: The Setting and Rhetoric of Mark's Gospel*.

[363] Mary Ann Beavis, *Mark's Audience: The Literary and Social Setting of Mark 4:11-12* (London: Bloomsbury Publishing, 2015).

[364] Incigneri, 51-56.

experienced by all his readers, both Jewish and Roman, whom Mark addresses in order to overcome his audience's apathy and fear in the face of persecution.[365]

In addition, Incigneri discusses the depression that pervaded Rome, and he sees a direct correlation between the city's social and political climate and the severe persecution that the Christians, both Jewish and Roman, experienced in many arrests and executions. He states that "if the Gospel is read from that point of view, it appears to contain a significant number of allusions to events that had occurred or had become known in the city from late A.D. 69 to mid A.D. 71."[366] Incigneri finds no direct references in the Gospel of Mark to those events in Rome, and no allusion can be proven, but "the coexistence of so many indirect references is unlikely to be coincidental. Taken together, they strengthen the case for a setting in Rome in late A.D. 71. If so, Mark's frequent use of such allusions indicates that he had his eye firmly on the external pressures upon his readers as he wrote."[367] This line of reasoning of taking numerous pieces of evidence to demonstrate the high probability of a proposition can be applied with equal force to demonstrate that Mark wrote his Gospel for the reasons cited by Incigneri, but also for the reason of addressing the theology of the *Aeneid* specifically.

Incigneri does connect the Temple of Jupiter with two lines in the *Aeneid*. The Temple of Jupiter "was a sign of the ongoing welfare of both the city and empire."[368] Silius Italicus, in his

[365] From Plato's time, along with justice (Socrates), truth (Plato), and logic (Aristotle), the appeal to emotions has been heavily debated as a vital part of rhetoric. Burton Mack, *Rhetoric and the New Testament* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1989): 26-28.

[366] Incigneri, 156.

[367] Ibid.

[368] Ibid., 160.

Puncia,[369] "depicts the people of Rome crying out to Jupiter: 'They held their hands up humbly towards the lofty Capitol and wreathed the temple on the hill with festal laurel,' calling on the 'supreme father of the gods'"[370] to defeat Hannibal. The invincible temple symbolized Rome's security under the gods. Tacitus wrote about the anxiety of the Romans during those years.[371] Catherine Edwards brings Virgil into the discussion: "The Capitol's unyielding rock and the Roman father hold the empire" (*Aeneid* 9.448-49).[372] Incigneri's book is the most in-depth study and expression of Mark's underlying motive to reach out to the Romans with the Gospel. His book has shown conclusively that Mark wrote his Gospel for a wider audience than the Jewish nation, that Rome was paramount in Mark's mind as he penned each narrative and miracle and conclusion in his Gospel. Incigneri, however, never mentions any connection between Mark and Virgil's *Aeneid*. The majority of Rome's literary support for their worldview of superiority comes from the *Aeneid*, yet Incigneri misses Mark's probable connection with this major propaganda of Roman theology.

Mark Reasoner's article,[373] connecting the book of Hebrews with the *Aeneid*, is monumental and compelling. His three categories and arguments *support the thesis* that Mark likely had access to the *Aeneid* and wrote his Gospel to combat Augustan theology. The following chapters of this thesis will go into more depth to demonstrate Mark's tactics in writing

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[369] Silius Italicus, *Silius Italicus: Punica*, Volume I, Books 1-8, Loeb Classical Library No. 277, trans. J. D. Duff (Cambridge: Harvard University Publishing, 1934), 7.635-45, 657, 730, 740. See also Silius Italicus, *Silius Italicus: Punica*, Volume II, Books 9-17, Loeb Classical Library No. 278.

[370] Ibid.

[371] Tacitus, and W. H. Fyfe, *The Histories,* Oxford World's Classics, ed. D. S. Levene **(**Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), 3.iii.

[372] Catherine Edwards, *Writing Rome* 88.

[373] Mark Reasoner, *Divine Sons: Aeneas and Jesus in Hebrews*, 152.

his Gospel to undermine the *Aeneid*'s theology and declaration of the divinity of Augustus as a son of the gods. Reasoner's work will serve as an introduction to this part of the evidence. Reasoner argues and demonstrates that the "divinely born Aeneas is presented as pious son, priestly son and founding son in Augustus theology."[374] The book of Hebrews challenges Augustus's ontology and heritage in contrast with Jesus, the true Son of God.

When the date of the writing of Hebrews is compared with the date of Mark, two options surface. The letter to the Hebrews was probably written after Christ's ascension (about A.D. 30) and before the destruction of Jerusalem (A.D. 70) because the Temple was still standing, most likely around A.D. 65. The recipients of the book of Hebrews were persecuted Jews, some believers and some non-believers, somewhere outside of Israel. There are no references to Gentiles. The cross-cultural challenges between the Jews and Gentiles in the Church in Jerusalem are not mentioned. The purpose of the letter was to demonstrate the superiority of Jesus over any other claims of divinity. Reasoner's article references the *Aeneid* for that very purpose, to challenge the claims of Augustus over the claims of Jesus.

Scholars date the Gospel of Mark by early date of A.D. 55, or a later date of A.D. 75. Ivan Head revisited Martin Hengel's thesis that the Gospel of Mark was a Roman document written in A.D. 69.[375] Hengel maintained that "more should be made of the Year of the Four Emperors, a period of civic chaos and warfare that ensued on the death of Nero."[376] The role of the emperor is discussed as a powerful force in all areas of Roman life: religious, political, civic and military unity. The place of the Jerusalem temple and Josephus's return to Rome in A.D. 71,

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[374] Ibid., 154.

[375] Ivan Head, "Mark as a Roman Document from the Year 69: Testing Martin Hengel's Thesis," *The Journal of Religious History* Vol. 28, No. 3 (October 2004).

[376] Ibid., 240.

along with the publication of *The Jewish War,* all play a supporting role in Hengel's thesis. His conclusion is that, while Mark was in Rome, the Triumph of Vespasian and Titus in A.D. 71 provoked Mark into writing his Gospel.

The first option would be if Mark was written later, either in A.D. 69 or A.D. 75, then the letter to the Hebrews would have already been in circulation for over a decade, and available to have influenced Mark in the writing of his Gospel. The idea that Jesus was a direct challenge to Augustus would have been a topic of discussion among the Jews and the Greeks (since Mark was written in Greek), and the Romans, since Rome was constantly conscious of insurrection.[377] The second option would be if Mark and Hebrews were written around the same time, then both the writer of Hebrews and Mark would have been thinking along the same lines, but from a different angle. The writer of Hebrews was probably challenging the divinity of Augustus in the *Aeneid*, whereas Mark was probably challenging the claims of divinity of Augustus and the salvation he offered as put forth in the *Aeneid*. Hebrews compared the persons, while Mark compared the theologies of Augustus and Jesus.

In supporting the thesis that Mark wrote for a wider audience that included Rome, Brenda Deen Schildgen[378] acknowledges that all historians "organize and arrange their narrative and the particular positions they adopt to interpret the meaning of historical events."[379] The Gospels were also written with purpose in mind. Schildgen treats the "epistemological distinction between fact and fable, truth and falsity, and history and myth [that] was emerging in the literary production

[377] Five bloody civil wars before Augustus squelched all opposition.

[378] Brenda Deen Schildgen, *Divine Providence: a history: the Bible, Virgil, Orosius, Augustine, and Dante*.

[379] Ibid., 8.

of the fifth century B.C. in Greece."[380] Schildgen quotes Bernard Williams as arguing that "historical time provides a rigid and determinate structure of the past,"[381] since historical time sets itself against myth and legend which are not specific to any time frame. He compares the approach of the three cultures to myth. He claims that the Hebrews and Christians "historicize myth," the Greeks "philosophize and rationalize it," and the Romans "politicize it."[382] Schildgen then demonstrates how "Virgil's *Aeneid* and Livy set out the theory of historical destiny for the Romans and how it parallels or contrasts with the idea of the promised land found in the Hebrew Bible."[383]

Both the Hebrew Bible and the Roman poets previous to the time of the New Testament based their existence on providential history, land they assumed had been promised to them, and divine election of deity. The term "epochality" refers to history having reached "a turning point and fulfillment of destiny."[384] Virgil makes use of this idea in the sense "that a whole new unparalleled era was beginning [. . .] the end of history."[385] This term describes how historians "defend the historical meaning and significance of the present moment and the present age against all claims of the past and future."[386] The Roman poets based their entire philosophy and theology of the future on the belief that the ascent of Augustus Caesar had begun an

[380] Ibid., 9.

[381] Ibid.

[382] Schildgen, 10.

[383] Ibid., 16.

[384] Ibid., 19.

[385] Ibid.

[386] Ibid., 20.

"unprecedented and new epoch, a golden age."[387] Virgil's major poem, the *Aeneid*, mimics the epic tradition of Homer and offers the establishment of Rome as the story of triumph in which Rome rises from the ashes of Troy and becomes an empire by destiny that upholds laws and rules by military might.

Schildgen notes the differences between Virgil's concept of the Roman empire and the Jewish view of their future kingdom. First, the *Aeneid* was written by one author, whereas the Hebrew Bible came into being from many sources over one thousand years. Second, Rome rose as the victor over adversity, whereas the Hebrew canon reveals "a postexilic search for understanding that itself is the catena [a connected series of related things] of texts with all its surprising promises, contradictions, failures, and disappointments."[388] The hermeneutics of the Hebrew text results in "a literary response to crisis threatening any sense of communal continuity."[389] The Hebrews were assured of victory in the future, if they would obey in the present. Yahweh was the Creator God, as opposed to Augustus who made himself into a god. Jewish history taught the Jewish people that Yahweh keeps His promises, and those promises included the promised land and the providential divine election as the people of God. The present subjugation of the Jewish people to the Romans had nothing to do with Augustus or his self-proclaimed deity. Yahweh had also promised that if the Jewish people disobeyed God's Law (Deut. 27-28), then God would punish them by allowing them to be subjugated by Gentile nations. The time of the Judges and Israel's seventy years in Babylon chronicled this direct

[387] Ibid.

[388] Ibid., 21.

[389] Ibid., 21.

experience of God's promise. Subjugation to the Romans was simply another experience of their disobedience to Yahweh, this time for rejecting their Messiah.

The *Aeneid* appeared on the historical stage after the Hebrew text. Schildgen unpacks the history of how Virgil's *Aeneid* took the position within Roman history that the Hebrew text held in Jewish history: driven by destiny, pushed to overcome suffering, promised some land and prosperity, based in morality, forced to overcome the opposition by military power, thus having initiated an epochal turn in history. Where the Hebrew text presented a Messiah, the *Aeneid* went a step further and added a son of the gods, Augustus Caesar.[390]

Enter the New Testament age and the clash of ideologies, i.e., theologies. As Jesus entered Roman history, the Romans had built and refined their propaganda for the purpose of convincing the subjugated world that the myths of Homer were factual history. Everyone under Roman domination had been presented with the *Aeneid*'s version that Augustus had been divinely appointed to save and rule the world. With the death and resurrection of Jesus, this Roman theology began to be challenged. Josephus, who had eventually come under Roman favor, still attributed the fall of Jerusalem to the disobedience of the Hebrew people. "Reflecting on these things one will find that God has a care for man and by all kinds of premonitory signs shows His People the way of salvation, while they owe their destruction to folly and calamities of their own choosing."[391] By the time Mark wrote his Gospel, the *Aeneid* had achieved premier status as Rome's top literary propaganda,[392] but not without being challenged by the Jews,

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[390] *Aeneid* 6.791-4.

[391] Josephus, *The Jewish War*, trans. Thackeray (London: William Heinemann, LTD, 1928), 6.4.3110-311. Josephus, *The Jewish War*, accessed October 12, 2016, https://archive.org/stream/L487JosephusIIITheJewishWar47/L487-Josephus%20III%20The%20Jewish%20War%204-7#page/n475/mode/2up/search/folly+calamities.

[392] Winn, *The Purpose of Mark's Gospel: An Early Christian Response to Roman Imperial Propaganda*.

themselves, and by the writers of the New Testament. "Pauline, Petrine, and Johannine Christianity offer, instead of tribe and place, a timeless-spaceless 'belonging' in this world. Like Roman citizenship, it provides a universal status to replace the loss of the idea of clan or of religious, ethnic, and national identities."[393] However, no authors have offered a connection of this subject between Mark's Gospel and the *Aeneid*, even though the entire Middle East had been indoctrinated in the *Aeneid* and its theology of the divinity of, and salvation brought by, Augustus.

One of the closest studies connecting the *Aeneid* and the gospel is David R. Wallace's book, *The Gospel of God: Romans as Paul's* Aeneid.[394] He wrote the book because "no significant attempt has been made to investigate Paul's political and religious response concerning the salvation of Israel as it might encounter the symbolism in the message of the *Aeneid* and its salvific promise for Rome."[395] In his book Wallace wants to fill that gap by demonstrating that "Virgil's Roman Epic and Paul's letter to the Roman Church were both written for the purpose of sending a universal message to a people of divine election with a promised, victorious future accomplished through the prophetic fulfillment of a divine son."[396] Wallace details the connections between the *Aeneid* and Romans. "The imagery, symbolism, and message of the *Aeneid*, particularly books 5-8, establishes the focus from which Paul's Gospel in Romans will be analyzed. Paul's argument concerning God's election and plan for Israel share

[393] Schildgen, 48.

[394] Wallace, *The Gospel of God: Romans as Paul's Aeneid*.

[395] Ibid., 96.

[396] Ibid.

similar themes with the *Aeneid*,"[397] of which there seem to be no end: "divine election, a divine son, the fathers, divine providence, prophetic fulfillment, and salvation."[398] Wallace addresses the relevant form, style, and content when these all connect with any of the parallel themes. He also underscores the themes and imagery of "race, sacrificial imagery, victory, reversals, reversal significance, olive tree metaphor, stone, and descent into the abyss."[399]

Wallace delivers an outstanding contribution to the scholarship of the New Testament's connection to the Roman world, but his work is limited to Paul and especially to the book of Romans. Wallace mentions no correlation between Mark's Gospel and the *Aeneid*. His references and bibliography for building his case lack any treatment of Mark and the *Aeneid*. Stating the obvious, if Paul wrote for the Romans, with his close connections and Roman citizenship,[400] then Mark, who wrote his Gospel earlier than Paul wrote Romans, would have also had similar motives as Paul in writing for the Romans. The difference between Paul's Romans and Mark's Gospel is significant. Paul wrote like a prosecuting attorney: point, counterpoint, building his case into an airtight theological proclamation that the gospel is superior to the *Aeneid*. Mark approached the *Aeneid* from the actual events of Jesus during the last three years of his adult life. Mark builds and interweaves his theology through the narratives and miracles, in comparison to Paul's theological discourse. And in contrast to Virgil's myth which was interspersed with a few historical details, Mark begins a new epoch: "The time is

[397] Ibid., xviii.

[398] Ibid.

[399] Ibid., 28.

[400] Acts 22:28.

fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand." Mark writes his open epic story, but based on historical fact with no myth added.

Another strong indication that Mark wrote for the Latin world appears in Mark's use of Latin words in his Gospel. The obvious words in Mark, in alphabetical order, are *census* (κηνσος, "poll tax," 12:14), *centurio* (κεντυρίων, "centurion," 15:39, 44, 45), *denarius* (δηνάριον, a Roman coin, 12:15), *legio* (λεγιών, "legion," 5:9, 15), *modius* (μόδιος, "peck measure," 4:21), *praetorium* (πραιτώριον, "governor's official residence," 15:16), *quadrans* (κοδράντης, a Roman coin, 12:42), *sextarius* (ξέστης, quart measure, "pitcher, " 7:4), *speculator* (σπεκουλάτωρ, "executioner," 6:27), and *flagellum* (φραγελλόω, "to flog," 15:15).

Henry C. Cadbury argues that these specific words do not place Mark in Rome, since these words are exactly those "which would be adopted outside of Italy in any of the Greek-speaking provinces of the Roman Empire."[401] Incigneri, however, disagrees and shows that this evidences comes from a later period when Latin was more prominent and had a wider audience.[402] He adds that "the most likely place for Latinisms to predominate is in the city of Rome, where the Latin and Greek languages were closely intermingled as nowhere else at that time [. . .]. It was in Rome most of all that the ordinary person was forced to deal with both languages in daily life."[403] Barry D. Smith, who agreed with Incigneri, contributed a small summary list of Latinism, as well.[404]

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[401] Henry C. Cadbury, *The Making of Luke-Acts*, 1999. Reprint (Peabody, Mass: Hendrickson, 1999): 88-89.

[402] Incigneri, 101, note 169.

[403] Ibid., 101-02.

[404] Barry D. Smith, *Introducing the New Testament: A Workbook* (Moncton, NB, Canada: Crandall University, 2010): 58.

Finally, Marianne Palmer Bonz's work, mentioned in the previous section about the *Aeneid* in Greek, must be recalled.[405] She wrote in her dissertation comparing Luke and Acts with the *Aeneid*, that "the historical situation for the compilation of Luke-Acts was closely analogous in certain key respects." After laying out her premise and analyzing the *Aeneid* in detail, along with its direct literary descendants, she launches an exhaustive exegetical analysis of Acts 2, and concludes by stating that "in his Dynamic narrative presentation of a divinely ordained mission which begins with Jesus in Nazareth and ends with Paul in Rome, Luke has endeavored to interpret the underlying meaning of the whole of Christian history."[406] She summarizes her view of Luke's theological motivation by concluding: "At the center of his theological reflections is the conviction that the divine solution for the human salvation involves not just the death of the beloved Son but the rebirth of the people of God."[407] Bonz's work is monumental in demonstrating the centrality of the *Aeneid* throughout the Roman world, infiltrating every culture that the Romans conquered.

How much contact did Mark have with the *Aeneid*? No one piece of evidence is conclusive. This piece of evidence confirms that Mark wrote his Gospel for a wide audience, which included the Romans. It has also been established that Luke, Paul and the writer of Hebrews had access to, and interacted with, the *Aeneid*. It has been established that Luke wrote Luke-Acts to challenge the *Aeneid*, that Paul wrote the book of Romans to challenge the *Aeneid*, and that the author of Hebrews wrote the book of Hebrews to challenge the *Aeneid*. This piece of evidence is one of the strongest pieces that supports Mark's connection with the *Aeneid*. No

[405] Wallace, 96.

[406] Ibid.

[407] Ibid.

scholar contends that Luke or the writer of Hebrews founded the church in Rome. The divided opinion as to whether Peter (with Mark at his side) or Paul did so indicates the probability that these men spent more time in Rome and with Romans than Luke or the writer of Hebrews. It is more than reasonably probable, even highly probable, that Mark interacted with the *Aeneid* as they did. If Mark was written early (50 A.D.), then Mark would have been the first discordant voice speaking out against the *Aeneid*.

11. Books, Publishers and Readers

Before researching the form of Mark's Gospel to see how it compares with the *Aeneid*, it seems logical to assume that very few people could actually read during the Augustan age because of the primitive stage of book production. Research indicates, however, that book production was more advanced than previously believed and well underway by the time Virgil wrote the *Aeneid*. David Diringer thoroughly treats this subject in exquisite detail.[408] Beginning with the fifth century B.C., Diringer lists some famous Greek authors – Aeschylus, Sophocles, Euripides, Aristophanes, Herodotus, Thucydides, and Xenophon – and then makes the statement that "Greek literature reaches its zenith; book production and book trade were already organized."[409] No original Greek manuscript has survived today, but Diringer's research has discovered that "we know from several sources that from the fifth century B.C. onwards the Greeks made much use of producing, selling and reading books."[410] Diringer offers a couple of

[408] David Diringer, *The Book Before Printing: Ancient, Medieval and Oriental* (New York: Dover Publications, Inc., 1953, 1982).

[409] Ibid., 233.

[410] Ibid.

examples and then states that "Aristophanes implies that books were easily procured in his time."[411] He relates that one of Xenophon's expeditions against the Thracians that the Greeks who went with him "found at Salmydessus, on the western shore of the Black Sea, boxes, written books, and many other things, such as seamen carry in their wooden store chests (*Anabasis*, vii, 5.14)."[412] During the Graeco-Roman period, Aristotle quoted Dionysius of Halicarnassus in *Isocrates*, 18 (*c*. 25 B.C.) as saying that "the speeches of famous orators were sold in Athens by the hundreds."[413] Diringer relates a statement by Aristophanes "which tells us that each man of the audience holds in his hand a copy of the play."[414] Diringer shows the breadth of book publishing and reading. "During the last three centuries B.C. Greek book production was spreading over the wide regions of the Hellenistic world; there was a large output of literature, and there was also a general habit of reading the great works of previous ages."[415] This fact indicates that the great works of previous ages were prolific enough to have been preserved after their age had morphed into a new one. "After the Roman conquest, the Graeco-Roman population, which was mainly Greek-speaking, greatly increased; and the first three centuries of the Roman Empire mark in Egypt the climax of Greek culture, including book production and the practice of reading."[416] All such information supports the thesis that Augustus had the *Aeneid* translated into Greek immediately after Virgil's death. As Diringer brings his readers into

[411] Ibid.

[412] Ibid.

[413] Ibid.

[414] Ibid.

[415] Ibid.

[416] Ibid., 233, 234.

Virgil's time, he notes that "We can take it for granted that the dramas, the tragedies, and the other plays, the lyric poems and epics, the historical works, produced inconsiderable quantities, must have been accessible to those who desired them; in other words, they imply the existence of a reading public and the circulation of books in manuscript."[417] Greek models of literature became the basis for Latin literature, and "education was based upon teaching of Greek and Greek literature, and numerous Greek slaves were brought to Rome, where they taught the subjects."[418] During Virgil's period, Atticus had slaves who were "highly educated men and numerous copyists."[419] Atticus actually "published the works of Cicero and other authors, and sold them not only in Rome but also in Athens and in other Greek cities, and probably in other places connected with Rome."[420] A very significant piece of research shows the breadth of Roman literature: "According to the second-century A.D. writer Lucian, the works published by Atticus and by Callinus were in demand 'in the whole world.'"[421] Diringer then lists many details of other writers and their publishers, until he arrives at Varro whose works "are said to have been sold in 'the furthest corners of the world.'"[422] The vast breadth of Rome's literature throughout the Empire is revealed in Diringer's statement: "Rome was the main centre of the ancient book trade in Latin books–we are told, for instance, of the famous bookshops in the Argiletum; but even provincial cities like Brindisi, Lyons, Rheins, and many others, had great bookshops, where

[417] Ibid, 236.

[418] Ibid.

[419] Ibid.

[420] Ibid.

[421] Ibid.

[422] Ibid., 237.

new and second–hand books were sold."[423] There so many books being produced during this time, that the "ancients were already complaining about the mistakes of the copyists."[424] Diringer quotes Cicero grumbling that "I no longer know where to turn for Latin books, the copies on the market are so inaccurate."[425] The preservation of important works began in earnest.[426]

How much contact did Mark have with the *Aeneid*? No one piece of evidence is conclusive. This piece of evidence supports the thesis of this dissertation that the *Aeneid* had been published in Latin and Greek and distributed widely. No one could have missed hearing about it and probably reading the *Aeneid*. Mark had more access to the *Aeneid* than most in the Empire because he had spent enough time in Rome with Peter planting the local church there. It is a reasonable probability that Mark interacted with the *Aeneid*.

12. Genre: Biography

One piece of evidence that Mark had access to the *Aeneid* is Mark's style of writing his Gospel. If Mark had read the *Aeneid*, then he was aware of the genre used by Virgil in writing his epic poem. The genre of Mark's Gospel has been debated and disputed since the middle of the nineteenth century. Vernon K. Robbins wrote an excellent survey of a variety of viewpoints on this subject, beginning with Robbins giving his idea of the speech that Heinrich Julius

[423] Ibid.

[424] Ibid., 238.

[425] Ibid., see Cicero, *Epistulae: Volume III: Ad Quintum Fratrem, Ad M. Brutum, Fragmenta Epistularum, Commentariolum Petitionis, Pseudo-Ciceronis Epistula ad Octavianum*, trans. W. S. Watt (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1958), iii, 5.

[426] Ibid., 238, 238.

Holtzman's gave at the Society of Biblical Literature's inauguration on May 18, 1880.[427] Holtzman, according to Robbins, summarized the state of affairs in the study of Mark's genre by stating that Mark's Gospel was a reliable report and a coherent whole.

The next theory postulated that Mark was similar to biographical literature during its day, but this viewpoint was soundly rejected by the next wave of speculations that mandated agreement within the theological community. Karl Ludwig Schmidt began the wave that shifted the study to the form-critical view of studying the small units of the text with no certainty of a coherent whole and that Mark had no connections with any of the literature of his day, thus making Mark an entirely original creation of Christianity.[428] Rudolf Bultmann (1921) supported that speculation so firmly that his first analysis presented an "absolute stance"[429] against the previous views. This absolute stance lasted until redactional criticism rose to prominence in the 1950's. The human cycle of unnegotiable theories continued coming full circle and returning back to the view that "the Gospel of Mark had to be much more of a self-conscious literary product than had been assumed."[430] The dam broke when Ehrhardt Güttgemanns pointed out the narrow theological assumptions that limited biblical criticism's ability to ask the right kind of questions needing to be answered. He proposed looking at secular literary criticism's approach to correct the problem.[431] Eventually, Robbins demonstrates that since the "Gospel of Mark is a product of two streams of culture, Jewish and Graeco-Roman, neither must be allowed to fall out

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[427] Vernon K. Robbins, "Mark as Genre," 371-72.

[428] Ibid., 378.

[429] Ibid.

[430] Ibid., 384.

[431] Ehrhardt Güttgemanns, "Candid Questions Concerning Gospel Form Criticism," *Pittsburgh Theological Monograph* 26, trans. William G. Doty (Pittsburgh: Pickwick, 1979), originally published 1970.

of sight in genre analysis of Mark."[432] The Graeco-Roman background placed Mark in the biography category, and the Jewish background placed it among apocalyptic literature.

Directly applicable to this paper's thesis, Gilbert G. Bilezikian's research compared Mark to Greek tragedies.[433] He "argues that Mark has been exposed to Greek tragedy through the Hellenistic school curriculum and the large number of theaters distributed throughout the Mediterranean world."[434] This fact further offers evidence that Mark's education did not take place in some backwater village disconnected from the Greek and Roman world.

From the Graeco-Roman perspective, Mark wrote a contemporary piece of literature, which was a biography of Jesus, and he slanted it to present a direct challenge to the *Aeneid*. Howard C. Kee proposes the Jewish perspective that the tradition and literary framework behind Mark's Gospel "was not a hypothetical form in which the career of a divinized man is traced, a form that can be documented only in the second century of our era, but the figure of the eschatological deliverer as portrayed in Jewish apocalyptic literature."[435] Robbins sums up this perspective: "The role of the wise, prophetic seer, a central figure in apocalyptic literature, produces the biographical style of the Gospel. Also, the literary device of historical backdating provides the means of which the author can communicate to his reader the divine purpose that governs their lives."[436] Both background settings demonstrate the connection between Mark's

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[432] Robbins, 390.

[433] Gilbert G. Bilezikian, "The Liberated Gospel: A Comparison of the Gospel of Mark and Greek Tragedy," Baker Biblical Monograph (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1977). Updated version: Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock Pub, 2010.

[434] Robbins, 389.

[435] Howard C. Kee, "Aretalogy and Gospel," *Journal of Biblical Literature* 92 (1973): 114-33.

[436] Robbins, 385.

Gospel of both the Graeco-Roman and the Jewish worlds, while contributing his own unique perspective. Mark's multi-purpose Gospel was written to communicate his message to many aspects of humanity's problems.

Mark's Gospel would have also been a correction to the Jewish apocalyptic hysteria that ran rampant during the Roman occupation of Israel. That subject requires more study, but is beyond the subject of this thesis. From the Graeco-Roman perspective, Mark wrote a biography for several reasons. Richard A. Burridge, writing twenty years after Robbins, presents the latest and thorough contribution to the view that Mark wrote a biography.[437] He states the purpose of his book: "the Gospels are a sub-set of the broad ancient literary genre of 'lives,' that is, biographies. Even if the evangelists were largely ignorant of the tradition of Greek and Roman 'lives,' that is how the Gospels were received and listened to in the first decades after their composition."[438] He places his conclusion at the top of all other options by stating that it "is a 'first order' conclusion, for the interpretation of any writing rests on a decision about its literary genre."[439]

How conscious was Mark, as opposed to Matthew and Luke, of the character of his Gospel? Burridge states the negative first. The latest study of literary theory demonstrates that society, passively and actively, mediated subconsciously the common conventions and expectations "and that the originators of generic shifts and new types are often not the great writers."[440] Burridge seems to contend that Mark may have subconsciously written in the

[437] Richard A. Burridge, "What are the Gospels?"

[438] Ibid., ix.

[439] Ibid.

[440] Ibid., 246.

biographical genre because that was the subconsciously accepted and expected form of writing during his day. The biographical genre was ingrained in the literary world. The era of Augustan literature has been termed the Golden Age of Latin Literature.[441] The most famous writers who surrounded Augustus were Virgil, Horace, Propertius, Livy, and especially Ovid. When Augustus asked his authors for an epic biography of himself, Propertius turned him down. In addition to his political reasons, Propertius understood the styles and uses of the different literature genres, and he did not feel competent to write a biographical epic.[442]

Even if Mark did subconsciously write in the accepted biographical form, Burridge believes that Mark received an education that was more than just the basics. "Both Beavis and Tolbert have argued that Mark's educational background and the reader response expected from the audience suggest a basic level of popular education at least."[443] Matthew and Luke would have been cognizant of the similarity between the biographical genre and Mark. If scholars choose to believe that Mark was written first, then Matthew's and Luke's versions corrected Mark's Greek style, as well as expanded and developed Mark's Gospel to help it conform more with that genre. Kee supports this: "Matthew was also strongly affected by the biographical tradition, especially in his interests in the circumstances of Jesus' birth and infancy. In Luke, however, the impact of Hellenistic and Roman biography is clearly and pervasively apparent."[444]

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[441] Augustan Poets, *Golden Verses: Poetry of the Augustan Age*, trans. Paul T. Alessi (Bemidji, MN: Focus, 2003).

[442] Hans-Christian Günther, *Brill's Companion to Horace*, 259.

[443] Ibid. See also Mary Ann Beavis, *Mark's Audience: The Literary and Social Setting of Mark 4.11-12* (New York: Bloomsbury Academic, 2015), 20-44, and Mary Ann Tolbert, *Sowing the Gospel: Mark's Work in Literary-Historical Perspective* (Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress Publishers, 1996): 301-9.

[444] H. C. Kee, *Christian Origins in Sociological Perspective* (London: SCM, 1980): 145. Also H. C. Kee, *Christian Origins in Sociological Perspective* (Philadelphia: Westminster John Knox Press, 1980).

Lastly, would it not be odd if the person(s) who wrote or edited Mark's Gospel had not recognized the parallels with the biographical genre, since of all the Gospels, Mark had used and included many connections with philosophical and religious thoughts in the Graeco-Roman and Jewish literature?

From the above research and ensuing conclusions, it has become obvious that all the Gospel writers were aware that they were writing in the biographical genre of their day. Their audiences recognized this, since that genre was prevalent everywhere. As Hengel says, "The ancient reader will probably have been well aware of the differences in style and education, perhaps, between Mark and Xenophon; but he will also have noticed what the Gospels had in common with the literature of biographical 'reminiscences'."[445] Helen Elsom wrote: "Such conventions were part of the literature in Greek which was likely to be familiar to the urban citizens of the Roman Empire who read the Gospels."[446] It seems clear that the majority of the Romans were motivated to read the *Aeneid*, and Elsom's comments do more than imply that pagan Romans read the Gospels, as well, which adds to the circumstantial evidence that Mark wrote his Gospel for the purpose of challenging the *Aeneid*.

Biographical references to Jesus could be traced back to the writers themselves. This biography of Jesus (βίοι 'Ιησοῦ) could be considered a subgenre of βίοι, making the Gospel texts indistinguishable in form from other biographies of their day and from the numerous non-canonical Gospels and commentaries that followed them. Mark was making use of the present-day concept of contextualization in order to reach his target audience. The biography of Jesus

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[445] Martin Hengel, *Acts and the History of Earliest Christianity* (Wipf & Stock Pub, 2003): 29.

[446] Helen Elsom, "The New Testament and Greco-Roman writing," in *The Literary Guide to the Bible*, ed. Alter and Kermode (Cambridge: Harvard University Publishing / Belknap Publishing, 1990): 561-78: 'Such conventions were part of the literature in Greek which was likely to be familiar to the urban citizens of the Roman Empire who read the Gospels,' 563.

differed from the biography of Aeneas in the *Aeneid* in its substance of myth versus narrative of historical events. Not overlooking the Jewish side of the discussion, the common features of the texts and their social setting within early Christianity which sprang up at that time inside the Roman Empire also connected the biography genre with the Hellenistic literary culture. Numerous scholars agree with Burridge on this point.[447]

All studies have clearly demonstrated that Mark's Gospel has some similarities and some differences with the cultures that surrounded Mark's gospel. Most scholars believe that Mark's motivation for writing his Gospel remains shrouded in mystery. The prevailing climate of Mark's diverse cultures certainly influenced him in some way. That modern-day scholars should assume that Mark wrote according to the 20th century style is ludicrous. Mark had a number of conscious reasons for writing his Gospel in accord with the standards of his day. Placing the Gospel within the biographical category provided Mark with a platform used by all Graeco-Roman biographies, which Charles H. Talbert believes to be a platform.[448] It is used "to dispel a false image and provide a true model to follow."[449] That part of biographical literature, *Memorabia*, "creates an obligation upon the reader to respond to the value system of the person about whom the incidents are recounted."[450] Mark's gospel does in fact challenge the reader to interact with the value system of Jesus. Mark's text indicates that his conscious motives of which style of writing to use agree with the styles of other authors of his day. He would have wanted his readers to reevaluate

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[447] Christopher Bryan, *A Preface to Mark: Notes on the Gospel in Its Literary and Cultural Settings* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993), vii, 27-30. Ezfa S. B. Shim, "A Suggestion about the Genre of Text-Type of Mark," *Scriptura* 50 (1994), 69-89, see especially pp. 70-75. W. R. Telford, *Mark* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1995), Chapter 3, 86-119; see 95. Ben Witherington III, *The Gospel of Mark: A Socio-Rhetorical Commentary,* 1-9; see esp. n. 18, p. 6.

[448] Talbert, *What Is a Gospel?*

[449] Robbins, 388.

[450] Ibid., 393.

their image of Augustus and their own value systems in light of the biography of Jesus, and then choose to follow Jesus. The differences in Mark's Gospel that make his biography unique are centered in the message that contrast Rome's worship of Augustus, and the Christian's worship of Jesus.

How much contact did Mark have with the *Aeneid*? No one piece of evidence is conclusive. This piece of evidence places Mark's gospel firmly in the same genre of biography as the prevailing literature of his day. Virgil wrote a biography of a fictional character, Aeneas, and Virgil encouraged his readers to identify with Aeneas' values and vision. This piece of evidence lends credence to the reasonable probability that Mark knew the *Aeneid* well enough to write a biography, as well, but of a different kind of savior, Jesus.

13. Genre: Rhetoric

The biographical nature of the Gospel has finally risen to the prominence it deserves. The rhetorical nature of the biographical style of composition deserves the same status. Both the *Aeneid* and Mark's gospel used rhetoric to tell their stories and convince the reader of their truthfulness. Rhetoric is another element of Mark contextualizing the gospel for his listeners and readers.

Mark might have been influenced by other parts of the surrounding Greek and Roman cultures, especially in their use of rhetoric, but it needs to be kept in mind, as the origination and use of rhetoric is discussed, that the prominence and importance of the *Aeneid* in Roman society and beyond will overshadow any other sources using rhetoric that might have influenced Mark's Gospel. It is reasonable to assume that since the *Aeneid* was so popular, that if Mark had

knowledge and access to the *Aeneid*, he would have deliberately chosen to use the specialized tools of Graeco-Roman rhetoric as a direct challenge to the *Aeneid*, as opposed to any other Latin work.

Ben Witherington III states that "the Greco-Roman world of the NT was a rhetorically saturated environment."[451] Although rhetoric generally included writing and speaking effectively, the writers during Greek and Roman times used rhetoric primarily to persuade.[452] Written history records the first appearance of rhetoric in Mesopotamia.[453] Akkadian writings left examples of the princess and priestess Enheduanna (c. 2285-2250 B.C.).[454] The Neo-Akkadian Empire continued the use of rhetoric with Sennacherib (704-681 B.C.).[455] Egypt, in the Middle Kingdom period (c. 2080-1640 B.C.), gave rhetoric a very high place in society. The "Egyptian rules of rhetoric"[456] also clearly specified that "knowing when not to speak is essential, and very respected, rhetorical knowledge."[457] Their use of rhetoric balanced articulateness and silence. They emphasized "adherence to social behaviors that support a

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[451] Ben Witherington III, *New Testament Rhetoric*: 4.

[452] Andrew Aberdein, and Adina Arvatu, *Rhetoric: The Art of Persuasion* (New York: Bloomsbury Press, 2016).

[453] William W. Hallo, "The Birth of Rhetoric", in Carol S. Lipson & Roberta A. Binkley, *Rhetoric Before and Beyond the Greeks* (New York: State University of New York Press, 2004): 25-46.

[454] Roberta Binkley, "The Rhetoric of Origins and the Other: Reading the Ancient Figure of Enheduanna", in Carol S. Lipson & Roberta A. Binkley, *Rhetoric Before and Beyond the Greeks*, 47–64.

[455] Paul Y. Hoskisson, and Grant M. Boswell, "Neo-Assyrian Rhetoric: The Example of the Third Campaign of Sennacherib (704–681 B.C.)", in Carol S. Lipson & Roberta A. Binkley, *Rhetoric Before and Beyond the Greeks*, 65-78.

[456] David Hutto, "Ancient Egyptian Rhetoric in the Old and Middle Kingdoms," in *Rhetorica*, *20 (3),* the official publication of the International Society for the History of Rhetoric (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002): 213-233.

[457] Ibid.

conservative status quo" and held that "skilled speech should support, not question, society."[458] Chinese rhetoric goes back to Confucius (551-479 B.C.) and emphasized eloquence in speaking.[459] David Metzger documents rhetoric in the Middle East during the time of Moses (born sometime between 1592-1271 B.C.).[460]

The *Aeneid* had an interest in rhetoric because rhetoric is first mentioned in Homer's *Iliad*,[461] providing a model for later authors. His heroes received honor for their use of rhetoric to communicate effectively with everyone.[462] As Greek society developed, rhetoric came to be used in politics and in the courts. The form of rhetoric was intended to convince the audience of the speaker's viewpoint, whether the speaker was representing the truth or not. Rhetoric was used to win the argument or discover the truth, depending on the speaker's intentions.

The first appearance of rhetoric in Europe came from Empedocles (d. c. 444 B.C.), and the first written manual was put together by Corax and his student Tisias.[463] The Sophists began teaching oratory in the 5th century B.C.[464] They taught grammar and invented argumentation tactics. Initially they intended to teach their students "excellence," which meant virtue, which

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[458] Ibid.

[459] George Q. Xu, "The Use of Eloquence: The Confucian Perspective," in Carol S. Lipson & Roberta A. Binkley, *Rhetoric Before and Beyond the Greeks* (New York: State University of New York, 2004): 115–30.

[460] David Metzger, "Pentateuchal Rhetoric and the Voice of the Aaronides," in Carol S. Lipson & Roberta A. Binkley, *Rhetoric Before and Beyond the Greeks*, 165–82.

[461] Neil Croally and Roy Hyde, *Classical Literature: An Introduction* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2011).

[462] Several sources have researched and publishing this information in this field. cf. Mogens Herman Hansen, *The Athenian Democracy in the Age of Demosthenes* (Hoboken, NJ: Blackwell, 1991). Josiah Ober, *Mass and Elite in Democratic Athens* (Princeton: Princeton UP, 1989). Jeffrey Walker, *Rhetoric and Poetics in Antiquity* (Oxford: Oxford UP, 2000).

[463] George Alexander Kennedy, *A New History of Classical Rhetoric* (Princeton: Princeton University Press. 1994).

[464] John Dillon and Tania Gergel, trans. and intro. *The Greek Sophists* (London: Penguin Classics, 2003).

was not innate nor limited to the nobility, but could be learned. When they began to teach that morality and immorality were a function of culture, they separated virtue from the higher authority of the Greek gods, limited it to the human level, thus making the definition relative to any given culture. "Man is the measure of all things" originated from this philosophy.[465] Many Sophists placed more value on winning the argument than presenting logical truth. This labeled them as contra-virtue, but rhetoric did not disappear. Instead the popular and well-paid professionals held the stage, some despicable and some honorable.

Eventually, professionals arose who took the positive side of rhetoric to higher levels. Isocrates (436-338 B.C.), a humble anti-sophist, focused more on a combination of factors that produce good character: natural talent, self-drive, practice, and following good models.[466] He became an outspoken supporter of using rhetoric in the civic arena.[467] It is quite probable that Plato's Academy[468] and Aristotle's Lyceum[469] were founded on Isocrates' works, which also highly influenced Cicero and Quintilian,[470] and the entire educational system throughout the Middle East and the Western world. Plato (428-348 B.C.) followed Isocrates' positive use of rhetoric by showing that the Sophists were only flattering their audiences by telling them what

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[465] Plato, *Protagoras* (Oxford World's Classics) 1st edition, trans. C. C. W. Taylor (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009).

[466] Isocrates, *Volume I: To Demonicus. To Nicocles. Nicocles or the Cyprians. Panegyricus. To Philip. Archidamus*, Loeb Classical Library No. 209 (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1928).

[467] Isocrates, "Against the Sophists." In *Isocrates with an English Translation in three volumes*, trans. George Norlin, Ph.D., LL.D. (Cambridge, MA, Harvard University Press; London, William Heinemann Ltd. 1980).

[468] W. K. C. Guthrie, "A History of Greek Philosophy: Volume 5, The Later Plato and the Academy" (Cambridge: Cambridge University Publishing, 1986).

[469] Mick Isle, *Aristotle: Pioneering Philosopher and Founder of the Lyceum* (New York: Rosen Central, 2006).

[470] Quintilian, *Delphi Complete Works of Quintilian (Illustrated)*, Kindle Edition (East Sussex: Delphi Publishing, 2015).

they wanted to hear. Aristotle (384-322 B.C.), Plato's student, wrote "The Art of Rhetoric"[471] and "On Rhetoric,"[472] which promoted the dialectic system of building arguments, a structured exchange of questions and answers that connect dialogue and controversy. Aristotle believed that rhetoric should be used in the courtroom to determine the guilt or innocence of people charged with crimes, and in politics when the community needed to make some decisions. In all cases rhetoric was intended to persuade an audience. It was a mode of discovering the truth, emphasizing the logic of the subject matter, not simply an exercise in discussing theoretical ideas. Mark will use rhetoric for the same purpose: to help the reader discover the truth.

Both Mark and Virgil will incorporate all three stages of rhetoric in the Gospel and in the *Aeneid*. An understanding and mastering of the three stages, and even just a cursory reading of the Gospel and the *Aeneid*, will reveal that both books used rhetoric well. Examples of the use of rhetoric in both books will be given later in this dissertation.

Aristotle identified three stages of rhetoric, which functioned as three types of proof. First, the speaker's "ethos" was the speaker's character, which should be stellar enough to persuade an audience to believe him. "Ethos" includes perceived intelligence, virtuous character, and goodwill. This would include a recognized expert and an acquaintance who knows the subject matter well. The second stage of rhetoric, "pathos," uses emotional appeals to change an audience's viewpoint. The speaker can use metaphor, stories, and other literary devices. The end objective is to invoke strong emotion from the audience. The third stage, "logos," concentrates on the argument itself by using inductive and deductive reasoning to build the argument.

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[471] Aristotle, *The Art of Rhetoric,* ed., trans., intro., Hugh Lawson-Tancred, (London: Penguin Classics, 1992).

[472] Aristotle, *On Rhetoric: A Theory of Civic Discourse*.

Aristotle also used a unique process of enthymematic reasoning, which presented the information, but left out either a premise or a conclusion, thus forcing his audience to discover the missing piece for themselves. This resulted in gaining more of the audience's trust. Instead of being spoon-fed everything, they were able to discover one of the main premises or conclusions for themselves, and this gave them the self-confidence to trust their own judgments and believe the entire message.

Aristotle also distinguished three types of subgenre within rhetoric. The forensic (judicial) subgenre attempted to discover the truth in past events and the ensuing guilt or innocence. The deliberative (political) subgenre focused on reaching the best decisions and actions to be taken in the future, like making laws. The epideictic (ceremonial) subgenre dealt with blame, praise, values, right, wrong, showing skill and beauty, like a wedding toast. The detailed depth to which Mark used rhetoric similar to Aristotle need not be treated in this dissertation in order to demonstrate the correctness of the thesis.

Demosthenes (384-322 B.C.), who lived the same time as Aristotle, has been recognized as the greatest of ancient Greek orators[473] before Augustus. Demosthenes and Aristotle preceded Cicero (106-43 B.C.), who carried rhetoric into the Roman world and made it a prominent aspect of public life. He became the premier rhetorician among Romans.[474] Rhetoric was in full form during the reign of Augustus. Cicero required that the orator be conversant in all areas of life.

Quintilian (35-100 A. D.) lived shortly after the time of Jesus and Mark. Quintilian began his career as a defense attorney in the courts, but rose quickly to prominence to the point of being

[473] Ian Worthington, *Demosthenes of Athens and the Fall of Classical Greece,* Reprint Edition (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015).

[474] Cicero, *Rhetorica ad Herennium*.

given a chair of rhetoric in Rome. His major work, *Institutes of Oratory*,[475] laid out the training of the best kind of orator. His work is most significant because it began with elementary education, which included training in reading, writing, grammar, and literary criticism. Practical exercise permeated his entire system. He inserted speeches into every aspect of society, including both education and entertainment. Quintilian refined the entire program of rhetoric under five canons[476] that are still being taught in speech and preaching courses today: 1) *invention* (invention) develops and refines an argument, 2) *disposition* (arrangement) arranges the speech for the greatest effect (beginning with *exordium*, or introduction of a speech), 3) *elocution* (style) and *pronuntiatio* (presentation), 4) *memoria* (memory), helps the speaker recall the above points while giving the speech, and 5) *actio* (delivery), the presentation itself. Quintilian wanted his student to enter society as politically active and virtuous human beings, who were willing to challenge their own culture. He continued to fight against the misuse of rhetoric of placing style over substance.

Witherington addresses the subject of rhetoric in the educational system of the Roman Empire. He demonstrates that the teaching of rhetoric began at the elementary level where the children learned *synkrisis*, or how to do rhetorical comparisons which would form their values. These values had the function of clarifying the difference between good and evil, between being a virtuous person and being a wicked one. The composition of *chreia* followed, short pithy stories, which included a statement that summed the story up in one sentence—like the statement Jesus made to the rich young man: "it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich person to enter the Kingdom of God" (Mark 10:25). "Rhetorical education would

[475] Quintilian, *Institutes of Oratory: or, Education of an Orator*.

[476] Witherington presents a modified list of canons with a similar outcome, *New Testament Rhetoric*.

continue as the child got older and it was even made a requirement of higher education in Roman times. In fact, the rhetor came to be the person who dictated what was taught in higher education during the period of the Empire."[477] He concludes this quick overview with the summary affirmation: "Rhetoricians were found in all the great cities of the Roman Empire, many of which also had schools of rhetoric or at least schools which made rhetoric one of the dominant subjects studied."[478]

Since the Romans had their own program of indoctrination of their conquered peoples, it follows that foreigners who could influence their own people would also be schooled in this form of communication. Witherington notes that "a good rhetorician knew that he had to start with a person or a group where they were culturally in order to lead them in a different direction."[479] This meant that the Roman educators would have studied the culture of their conquered students, and then contextualized the theology of Rome, the deity of Augustus and his salvation of the realm. It will become evident that Mark used rhetoric in the same way in his Gospel, beginning with the Roman culture and then challenging Roman theology in the *Aeneid*.

Before seeking to discover rhetoric in Mark's Gospel, it needs to be demonstrated that Virgil vigorously applied rhetoric in the *Aeneid*. M. L. Clarke states the consensus of scholarship: "I think it will be agreed that the lines from Virgil belong to an age which devoted itself to the study and practice of the art of using words to create a desired effect—in other words, to a rhetorical age—whereas Tennyson's lines belong to a non-rhetorical age."[480]

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[477] Witherington III, *Conflict and Community in Corinth: Socio-rhetorical Commentary on 1 and 2 Corinthians*. Clark, *Rhetoric in Greco-Roman Education*, 12.

[478] Ibid.

[479] Ibid. 19.

[480] Clarke, "Rhetorical Influences in the Aeneid," *Greece & Rome*, vol. 18, no. 52, 15.

Accepting Cicero's definition of rhetoric as the art of persuasion, he clarifies "art" as something that has to be studied and taught in a systematic way, which was the case with rhetoric in Virgil's time.

Within Roman education, every piece of prominent literature in the Roman world was subjected to the study and use of rhetoric. The basic function of rhetoric was to find good arguments from good sources. The choice of sources, or *loci*, needed to focus on the audience's context. This entailed contextualizing the message to speak into the culture of the audience. Clarke states that the rhetor "must say nothing which is outside their comprehension or beyond their experience. His philosophy must be in the nature of commonplace and his history mainly a matter of stock examples."[481] However, Virgil wrote poetry, not speeches. This required even more that Virgil keep his audience's context in mind. He could not simply tell his audience how to do rhetoric by providing them with a "ready-made set of themes complete with appropriate treatment."[482] A lesser poet might have been a slave to the conventions of trained rhetoric, but Virgil was not one of those lesser men. This said, Virgil might not have used rhetoric in the style properly taught for non-poets, but if he did use rhetoric in any way, he would have been very conscious of such uses.

Clarke reveals that Roman rhetoric changed during Virgil's lifetime. It moved away from the courts into the public theatres, which were widely attended, thus taking on more of an entertainment function. The rhetor's ability and the audience's enjoyment began to outweigh

[481] Ibid., 16.

[482] Ibid.

truth and virtue. This affected poetry significantly. Hard and cold facts became less important, to be replaced by "romantic stories of pirate chiefs, disinherited sons, and the like."[483]

How did Virgil relate to this shift? He no longer had to present solid facts to make his case. He could dispense with *inventio*, because he had no need to prove anything. The *Aeneid* became his playground. His characters spoke to communicate an attitude or an emotion, not facts, not to win an argument, but to "move" the audience into the story, regardless of the truthfulness of the story's content. Clarke points out several times that Virgil clearly used rhetoric: the speech of Sinon in Book II,[484] the debate between Venus and Juno[485] where the gods become eloquent orators, Dido's first speech to Aeneas where she uses lots of arguments and entreats that he not leave her. When Homer's *Illiad* is compared with Virgil's *Aeneid*, it becomes evident that Virgil used rhetorical questions in the speeches four times more than Homer in the *Illiad*.[486] Virgil's emphasis centered on the emotional passages that required no logic, just tears or anger as illustrated by Cicero who "prided himself on his mastery of the pathetic and his power of swaying the emotions."[487] Virgil, using the same process, and having a different purpose, had learned well. Karl Billmayer examined sixteen methods of *commiseration* (pathos, rousing of pity) and found examples of fifteen of them in Virgil.[488] Clarke summarizes well: "Virgil is eloquent in this sense. He had studied well the heart of man and found the just

[483] Ibid., 18.

[484] *Aeneid* Ii. 77f.

[485] *Aeneid* xi. 336f.

[486] Ibid., 24.

[487] Ibid., 25.

[488] Karl Billmayer, *Rhetorische Studien zu den Reden in Virgils Aeneis*, 34 f.

proportions of his discourse. He had put himself in the place of his hearers and knew how to force them to surrender."[489]

How much rhetoric did Mark use in writing his Gospel, if any? If it be established that Mark used rhetoric, both in similar ways to the normal Roman rhetorician and dissimilar as Virgil did, then this fact will add one more support for Mark's challenge of the *Aeneid* by using the literary form of his day. Beginning with the New Testament, it has been established that the NT writers used "rhetorical conventions and structures of various sorts. The NT writers obviously wanted their material to persuade people in a rhetorical-saturated culture, and they shaped their materials accordingly."[490] Orators were taught to write out their speeches, memorize them, and present them. If an orator could not be present to present his speech, then his written speech would stand in as his speech. All aspects of rhetoric were included in these written speeches. Only body language and voice intonation were missing. This resulted in the epistles becoming the major form of transcribed oral rhetoric, read aloud by someone who had not written it, absent the original writer of the speech. Witherington notes that "various of the authors of the NT, especially Paul and the authors of Hebrews, 1 Peter and Luke, were capable of considerable sophistication (without becoming Sophists in the negative sense) in their use of rhetoric."[491]

As a preface to looking at Mark's rhetoric style in places, it is noteworthy that the biographical style of writing was intended "to teach lessons to audiences and inform not merely their view but their behavior. In other words, ancient biographies were exercises in persuasion,

[489] Clarke, 27.

[490] Witherington, 19.

[491] Ibid.

using story-telling and speeches to accomplish their aims. They were not disinterested investigations of the lives of ancient worthies."[492] Rhetoric was a perfect fit for the Gospels. Mark wanted to persuade the world, and especially the Roman Empire, that Jesus was superior to Augustus in every way.

Rhetoric in Mark clearly surfaces in numerous forms. The *chreia*[493] were small stories that presented tales of the character of the person about whom they were written. They are found in Plutarch, Tacitus, and Mark's Gospel. These stories were not intended to include every detail of the central figure, but enough to present a clear picture of the person's character. The very use of *chreia* indicated the intention to persuade the audience of the person's character and mission. The shortness of this style fit Mark's Gospel perfectly. The Olivet Discourse in Mark 13, the longest speech of Jesus in that Gospel, "appears to take the form of a rhetorical speech with its various functioning parts."[494] It is also noteworthy that Mark intended that his Gospel be read by individuals, not just in groups. In Mark 13:14, Jesus said, "ό άναγινώσκων νοείτω" (let the reader understand), in which both the noun and the verb are in the singular. This indicates that Mark wanted his Gospel to be read as a narrative, not just as a series of speeches. As Witherington concludes, "The Gospel of Mark is not *kerygma*; it is βιος in rhetorical form. Mark's Gospel is in a sense the textbook that gathered up the memoirs and recollections of Peter and presented them in persuasive form."[495] Witherington expands his analysis of Mark's use of rhetoric by comparing Mark to Matthew and Luke, and found lots of similarities. Beyond the

[492] Ibid., 24.

[493] See also Burton L. Mack, *Patterns of Persuasion in the Gospels*.

[494] Witherington, 25.

[495] Ibid., 26. Side note: Witherington mentions how deeply flawed form criticism has been as it postulated the Gospels as narratives patched together from bits and pieces of edited the material by unknown assailants.

chreia Witherington includes parables (*synkrisis*) so he can show how the parable in Mark 4 functions as a paradigm of rhetoric style.

Mark's use of rhetoric fits the same rhetoric mold as the *Aeneid* in many, many ways. Most of Augustan literature used rhetoric, and since the *Aeneid* used the rhetoric form in the same fashion as the rest of Latin literature, it is not technically possible to demonstrate that Mark mimicked the *Aeneid* exclusively. However, since the *Aeneid* was the most prominent piece of Roman literature to promote Augustus and Roman theology, it is reasonable to assume that Mark contextualized his Gospel by making use of the same form. Only a small sampling will be possible. The "ethos" aspect of Mark's rhetoric easily applies to both Mark as the author and to Jesus as the subject of his Gospel. "Ethos" includes perceived intelligence, virtuous character, and goodwill. This would include a recognized expert and an acquaintance who knows the subject matter well. Mark fits the expert who is persuading his audience of the intelligence, virtuous character and goodwill of Jesus.

Aristotle used an enthymematic process of presenting his arguments. He would leave out a key premise or conclusion, forcing the listener or reader to discover the missing piece and draw their own conclusion. In the *Aeneid* Virgil used enthymematic rhetoric by employing myth to convince the reader to draw his own conclusions. The mythical form allowed the reader to see what he wanted to see. Mark made extensive use of this approach in relating the Lord's parables and incomplete stories. Mark's Gospel is famous for being mysterious. "The secret of the Kingdom of God" (Mark 4:11) is mysterious. Jesus is mysterious. At times, He intentionally keeps people from understanding who he really is. He shuts up demons and does not allow them to reveal His true identity. He performs a miracle and tells people to keep quiet about it. Why? Aristotle might answer that question by exclaiming that Jesus was using enthymematic rhetoric!

Jesus was forcing the people to draw their own conclusions as to His true character, the main premise and conclusion of His life, miracles and teaching.

The second stage of rhetoric, "pathos," uses emotional appeals to change an audience's viewpoint. The speaker can use metaphor, stories, and other literary devices. The end objective is to invoke strong emotion from the audience. Virgil used "pathos" in all the key locations in the *Aeneid*: the terror of fleeing from Troy, the heartbreak of leaving Dido, the anger of remembering the death of Pallas and killing Turnus, the realization that the gods were going to allow him to fulfill his destiny and establish the Roman Empire. Of the many stories Mark used to persuade his audience through emotions, the injustice of the Cross stands out as a supreme example of a "pathos" appeal to the emotions.

The third stage, "logos," concentrates on the argument itself by using inductive and deductive reasoning to build the argument. Aeneas claimed logic when he listed the reasons for leaving Dido, but "logos" was never a strong element in Aeneas' life and actions. Mark challenges the *Aeneid* by using λογος in numerous contexts twenty-four times. Mark 2:2 is one example: "he was speaking the word (λόγος) to them," the verb, imperfect, indicates the Lord's consistent on-going activity throughout the Gospel, and the content being the λόγος itself. Mark makes use of all of Aristotle's three subgenre: the forensic scene at the trial of Jesus in Mark 14, the deliberative aspect when Jesus is speaking about decision-making in the context of light in Mark 4:21-25, and the epideictic praise and blame in the Lord's accusations of the Pharisees in Mark 7:1-23.

Quintilian wanted his students to enter society as politically active and virtuous human beings, who were willing to challenge their own culture. Virgil presented Aeneas as a virtuous man who was willing to reject the culture of being led by his emotions, and who chose to follow

the gods out of duty. Jesus was the epitome of a virtuous human being, and he challenged the culture at every level by demanding that His followers (Mark 8:34) "deny themselves," the opposite of self-centeredness, "take up the cross," a complete rejection of Roman superiority, "and follow Jesus," a repudiation of following Augustus.

How much contact did Mark have with the *Aeneid*? No one piece of evidence is conclusive. This piece of evidence places Mark's Gospel and the *Aeneid* together in the use of rhetoric. Rhetoric had permeated every culture ruled over by the Roman Empire. Mark would not have been able to avoid it, even if he had wanted to. Since the *Aeneid* was used as one of the texts to teach rhetoric, it is a reasonable probability that Mark came in contact and interacted with the *Aeneid*.

14) The Church Fathers' Contributions

Did the Church Fathers comment in any way that Mark might have come in contact with the *Aeneid*, or even intentionally targeted Rome, and Augustus, with his Gospel? Incigneri seems to thoroughly covers almost every aspect of the question as to where and when Mark wrote his Gospel.[496] In his research he includes a number of Church Father's quotes, most of whom place the location of the writing of Mark's Gospel in Rome. Incigneri advocates for Rome as the location, as opposed to Palestine, but he begins his discussion with the disclaimer that "although no firm proof will be found in the patristic texts, they do add considerable weight. No one in the early church attempted to refute the claims that Rome was the place of origin, so there was apparently no other significant church championing Mark as its own. The external evidence

[496] Incigneri, 59-115.

indicates only Rome."[497] Rome was the center of the Empire. The *Aeneid* would have been the most prominent piece of literature in the bookshops and the schools. If Mark chose to challenge the *Aeneid*, he would have done so in Rome, the center of the Empire, the source of Augustus' propaganda. None of the Church Fathers, however, make any reference to Mark's motive for writing.

The thesis of this dissertation rests on the cumulative evidences that Mark had been steeped in the *Aeneid*. How Virgil affected the Church Fathers does not directly add to this evidence, since the Church Fathers appeared after Mark finished writing his Gospel. Since none of them make any references to Mark being involved with or connected to Virgil's *Aeneid*, little needs to be added from their point of view for this dissertation.

Having admitted that, one point of indirect support can be seen through the eyes of the Church Fathers. When Peter and Mark arrived in Rome, the Romans had been educated through the study of Horace and Virgil. The value of such classical studies (as termed today) was not only invaluable, it was all they had. Peter and Mark had also lived and breathed Roman culture. Their everyday world consisted of working with Gentiles who had been steeped in mythology and ancient religious traditions. No one questioned the source of Peter's and Mark's education and life experiences. Peter and Mark simply had to evangelize in that world of myth and false history.

As the Church expanded, the Church Fathers recognized the benefits of what the pagans were bringing with them. The Church Fathers used those myths to contextualize the gospel and to attack paganism. One of the best examples of this can be found in the sermons of Ambrose. Angela Russell Christman describes Ambrose' intriguing use of Virgil in Ambrose's sermon on

[497] Ibid., 105.

Psalm 118 (119).[498] She demonstrates that Ambrose' "borrowings from Virgil in this homily are not merely literary adornment, but rather serve to illuminate and deepen the theological points Ambrose is making."[499] She points out the exact phrases that Ambrose copied from the *Aeneid* to make his point about the need for higher moral purity among believers, and the arbitrariness of the Greco-Roman gods. By referring "to Laocoön's cruel end, Ambrose subtly underscores God's compassion and justice, and by implication, the superiority of Christianity over paganism."[500]

Christopher A. Hall claims that the Church Fathers were trained just as much to listen to the text as to read it, and thus learned to see more "allusions and allegories within the broader biblical narrative"[501] than are seen today by modern readers. "The church fathers were educated, for the most part, in this Greek culture. They were raised on these stories, and the way they learned to read Homer and Virgil deeply influenced the way they read Scripture."[502] Since this pagan literature was so well known by the Church Fathers, this evidence supports the thesis that Virgil's writings permeated the known world during Mark's time.[503] "So, the significance of the Father's[504] insights into the biblical text grows when we remember how Greek Fathers learned to

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[498] Christman, "Biblical Exegesis and Virgil's *Aeneid* in Ambrose Milan's *Expositio Psalmi CXVIII*," 149-153.

[499] Ibid., 149.

[500] Ibid., 153.

[501] Christopher A. Hall, "Classical Ear-Training," Issue 80: The First Bible Teachers (Worcester, PA: Christian History, 2003).

[502] Ibid., 40.

[503] This does not speak to Mark's education, just his plausible connection with the *Aeneid*.

[504] i.e., Church Fathers

read Homer, or Latin Fathers Virgil."[505] Even when the Church Fathers began to reject these writings as pagan, their comments reveal the depth and intensity to which these writings had infused themselves into the people's hearts and minds. Jerome found fault with people who take more pleasure in reading Virgil than the Scriptures, even though he admits that the youth have to study him.[506] Harold F. Guite writes an excellent piece, with exquisite sarcasm, showing the connections between Virgil and the philosophies of history in the Church Fathers. He states plainly that Augustine testified "that some Greek-speaking children studied Vergil in Latin."[507] Augustine wrote that piece describing how and why he despised Greek literature and learned Latin easily. Guite notes that "The Latin Fathers had Vergil built into the structure of their minds and could only dislodge him by doing themselves psychic injury."[508] Even though Augustine understood the negative aspects of this literature, he still claimed that these pagan classics lead to a more perfect understanding of the Scriptures, and are actually an introduction to them."[509] The Church Fathers could not do without this literature because Virgil and others had become ingrained in society long before the Church Fathers were born.

How much contact did Mark have with the *Aeneid*? No one piece of evidence is conclusive. This piece of evidence demonstrates how deeply and widely Virgil's *Aeneid* had permeated the Roman world and beyond immediately after its publication and into the next few centuries. No Church Father connected Mark's Gospel with the *Aeneid*. However, the staggering

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[505] Ibid., 41.

[506] Jerome, *The Letters of Saint Jerome*, trans. F. A. Wright (London: Aeterna Press, 2016), Letter 25.

[507] Guite, "Common Elements in Vergilian and Patristic Philosophies of History," 93.

[508] Guite, 93.

[509] Augustine, *On Christian Doctrine* 1st edition, trans. D. W. Robertson Jr. (London: Pearson, 1958).

proliferation of Virgil's propaganda piece clearly existed during Mark's lifetime. The influence it had on the Church Father's came from its widespread appearance even among non-Roman societies. One could compare the extended influence of the *Aeneid* with "Romeo and Juliet," whose author everyone still knows. This lends credibility to the reasonable probability that Mark had come in contact with the *Aeneid* in his lifetime and would have interacted with it, as did the Church Fathers.

Conclusion

The thesis of this dissertation seeks to determine to what extent Mark had access to Virgil's epic poem, the *Aeneid*, and then to compare the theology of the *Aeneid* with the theology of Mark's Gospel. This chapter has sought to present fourteen pieces of *cumulative* evidence that demonstrates the reasonable probability, and not just the plausibility, that Mark had access and connection to the *Aeneid*. Viewing each piece of evidence separately is inconclusive. Some pieces are weaker or stronger than other pieces. The fourteen pieces of evidence are as follows.

1. Dominant civilizations acculturating conquered societies. This piece of evidence shows how some dominant cultures sought to acculturate those societies they conquered. The Roman acceptance of non-Romans as citizens sought to bring peace between the original citizens and the conquered peoples. This acculturation would have included not only politics, but literature as well. This acculturation indicates the reasonable probability that Mark had at least heard of, and had access to, the *Aeneid* in Rome. It is doubtful that Mark or the believers would not have heard of the *Aeneid* in Rome.

2. The Date of Mark's Gospel in relationship to the *Aeneid*.

This piece of evidence establishes the approximate timeline and interconnection between the *Aeneid* and Mark's Gospel. It is necessary to show that Mark was in a position to speak to the *Aeneid*. First, Mark's Gospel followed the *Aeneid*. Second, the *Aeneid's* extensive proliferation, as established previously above, kept it prominent during Mark's lifetime. Therefore it is reasonably probable that Mark had contact with the *Aeneid*.

3. The *Aeneid* in Greek. This piece of evidence is necessary to demonstrate that the original Latin version of the *Aeneid* was not a hindrance to Mark. Since the *Aeneid* was translated into the language in which Mark wrote his Gospel, Mark's access to the *Aeneid* would have been in the Greek language, presenting no obstacles to reading and understanding it.

4. Hebrew Education. This piece of evidence demonstrates that Mark's Hebrew education in no way hindered his ability to write his Gospel in Greek. In fact, his Hebrew education would have broadened and deepened his understanding of the *Aeneid*'s theology.

5. Roman Education. This piece of evidence demonstrates that Roman education was broader and more comprehensive than scholars previously realized, that even Roman soldiers could read, and that the *Aeneid* permeated Roman education. Quintilian did not have to instruct his pupils in the content of the *Aeneid*. He assumed the content when he used it to teach rhetoric. This indicates that the *Aeneid* was widely available and used prominently, as evidenced by Quintilian's use of it. Quintilian was born in 35 A.D. and died after 96 A.D. He was younger than Mark. Since the *Aeneid* was still prominent during Quintilian's lifetime, then the *Aeneid* was equally prominent during the earlier period of Mark's life. Since Quintilian was Rome's most prominent teacher, as noted above, this evidence offers a more direct connection between Mark and the *Aeneid*.

6. Virgil's Knowledge of the Old Testament. This piece of evidence is not necessary to show Mark's connection with the *Aeneid*. It does however contribute to the background and context in which Virgil wrote the *Aeneid*. Mark was obviously well-verse in the Old Testament. No sources have surfaced indicating that Mark was aware of Virgil's knowledge and understanding of the Old Testament. However, any association with the *Aeneid* on Mark's part would have made the connections between the *Aeneid* and the Old Testament glaringly apparent.

7. Jewish Knowledge of the *Aeneid*. This piece of evidence is crucial for establishing the reasonableness of the thesis that Mark had direct access to the *Aeneid*. Roman schools existed everywhere. The Maccabeans rebelled in part against the Greek attempt to replace the Jewish education with Roman education. Roman literature was so widespread at all levels of society that no one could avoid coming in contact with it. The Jewish community plausibly knew as much about Greek literature as they did about their own literature. The Christians were as well versed in Graeco-Roman literature as anyone else. This piece of evidence supports the proposition that Mark received a dual education in the Jewish and Roman worlds of literature. It goes without saying that every emperor wanted to promote himself to everyone. Augustus would have been no different, and he would have used the best means to do so. The *Aeneid* was the most famous and most extensive piece of literary fiction in the Greek and Hebrew world when Mark wrote his Gospel. It is more than reasonable to conclude that Mark had direct and on-going access to the *Aeneid*.

8. Mark's Education. This piece of evidence reveals that Mark's education gave him more than adequate connection with the *Aeneid*. If Mark's father was a Roman, a very weak assumption, Mark would have received both a Jewish and Roman education. The Roman use of Greek in their education, as illustrated by the four Greek works attributed to Theon,

Hermogenes, Aphthonius, and Nicolaus, would have given Mark the opportunity to read and interact with the *Aeneid* in Greek, while writing his Gospel in Greek. The confluence of the three educational systems would have given Mark a breadth and depth of education for understanding the *Aeneid* and how to contextualize his Gospel, as he sought to draw them away from Augustus and toward Jesus. This piece of evidence makes it reasonably probable that Mark had extensive contact with the *Aeneid* and a deep enough understanding of it in Greek to present counter arguments in his Gospel.

9. Mark's Family and Travels. This piece of evidence places Mark in Rome, the center of Augustan power, and the location where the *Aeneid* would have been most prominent. This evidence also points toward the reasonable probability that Mark was conversant in Latin and could teach the believers in Rome in all three languages: Hebrew, Greek and Latin. It is reasonable to believe that some of the new believers in Rome had read the *Aeneid* and that Mark taught them the gospel against the backdrop of the *Aeneid*.

10. Mark's Broader Audience: Rome! This piece of evidence confirms that Mark wrote his Gospel for a wide audience, which included the Romans. It has also been established that Luke, Paul and the writer of Hebrews had access to, and interacted with, the *Aeneid*. It has been reasonable defended that Luke wrote Luke-Acts to challenge the *Aeneid*, that Paul wrote the book of Romans to challenge the *Aeneid*, and that the author of Hebrews wrote the book of Hebrews to challenge the *Aeneid*. These pieces of evidence are some of the strongest pieces that support Mark's connection with the *Aeneid*. Mark had more connections with Rome and with Romans than these other authors. It is more than reasonably probable, even highly probable, that Mark interacted with the *Aeneid* as they did. If Mark was written early (50 A.D.), then Mark would have been the first discordant voice speaking out against the *Aeneid*.

11. Books, Publishers and Readers. This piece of evidence supports the thesis of this dissertation that the *Aeneid* had been published in Latin and Greek and distributed widely. No one could have missed hearing about the *Aeneid*, and probably no one who was literate could have missed reading the *Aeneid*. Mark had more access to the *Aeneid* than most in the Empire because he had spent enough time in Rome with Peter planting the local church there. It is a reasonable probability that Mark interacted with the *Aeneid*.

12. Genre: Biography. This piece of evidence places Mark's Gospel firmly in the same genre of biography as the prevailing literature of his day. Virgil wrote a biography of a fictional character, Aeneas, and Virgil encouraged his readers to identify with Aeneas' values and vision. This piece of evidence lends credence to the reasonable probability that Mark knew the *Aeneid* well enough to write a biography, as well, but of a different kind of savior, Jesus.

13. Genre: Rhetoric. This piece of evidence places Mark's Gospel and the *Aeneid* together in the use of rhetoric. Rhetoric had permeated every culture ruled over by the Roman Empire. Mark would not have been able to avoid it, even if he had wanted to. Since the *Aeneid* was used as one of the texts to teach rhetoric, it is a reasonable probability that Mark came in contact and interacted with the *Aeneid*.

14. Church Father's Contribution. This piece of evidence demonstrates how deeply and widely Virgil's *Aeneid* had permeated the Roman world and beyond immediately after its publication and into the next few centuries. No Church Father connected Mark's Gospel with the *Aeneid*. However, the staggering proliferation of Virgil's propaganda piece clearly existed during Mark's lifetime. The influence it had on the Church Fathers came from its widespread appearance even among non-Roman societies. One could compare the extended influence of the *Aeneid* with "Romeo and Juliet," whose author everyone still knows. This lends credibility to the

reasonable probability that Mark had come in contact with the *Aeneid* in his lifetime and would have interacted with it, as did the Church Fathers.

Some of the fourteen pieces of evidence are stronger than others, but viewing all fourteen pieces collectively presents the case that the thesis statement is correct: It is more than reasonably probable that Mark had connection and interaction with the *Aeneid*. As Warner states, "All of us need to *respect the power and nature of circumstantial evidence in determining truth* so that we can be open to the role that circumstantial evidence plays in making the case for Christianity.[510] The same principle can be applied to the thesis that Mark had access to the *Aeneid*.

There is one final point to glean from those scholars who claim that Mark wrote for a wider audience than the Hebrews, but in fact wrote with Rome in view. These scholars declare that three New Testament writers had knowledge of the *Aeneid* and challenged its teachings. First, Marrianna Palmer Bonz wrote her dissertation in 1997,[511] and her book followed in 2000.[512] She asserts that Luke had knowledge and access to the *Aeneid* and wrote Luke/Acts in response to it. The chapter titles in her book indicate her views of the relationship of Luke and the *Aeneid*. Chapter two is entitled "The Aeneid: Rome's Sacred History," and the sub-chapter, "The *Aeneid* as a Paradigm and Inspiration for Luke-Acts." In chapter three she reviews the *Aeneid's* prophecy and eschatology. In chapters four and five she presents the unfolding of prophecy and history in Luke-Acts in her effort to support her thesis that Luke wrote Luke-Acts in response to the *Aeneid*. She published her work in 1997.

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[510] Wallace, Kindle Locations 971-975.

[511] Marianna Palmer Bonz. "The Best of Times; the Worst of Times: Luke-Acts and Epic Tradition."

[512] Marianna Palmer Bonz, *The Past as Legacy* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 2000).

In 2007 Mark Reasoner wrote his article asserting that the writer of Hebrews had knowledge and access to the *Aeneid* and wrote the book of Hebrews in response to it.[513] "Virgil's Aeneid is the primary exemplar of 'Augustan theology' for this study."[514] Reasoner states that "far from being an incidental source, the *Aeneid* models for Hebrews what Hebrew's other sources cannot—a hero story that shows how the hero's people are religiously superior to their cultural ancestors."[515] Reasoner sums up his paper by stating that

> In this paper I trace three continuities of portraiture between Aeneas in Augustan theology and Hebrew's Jesus. The divinely born Aeneas is presented as pious son, priestly son and founding son in Augustan theology, and these categories are emphasized in Hebrew's depiction of its divine son, without consistent emphasis in the Scriptures employed by that letter. While it cannot be argued that Hebrews is intentionally referring to Virgil's *Aeneid* or other media of Augustan theology, it is clear that Hebrews employs categories ascribed to the divine son and that son's people that were current in Augustan theology of the first century.[516]

Reasoner not only asserts that the writer of Hebrews had knowledge and access to the *Aeneid*, but that the author of Hebrews was addressing the theology of the *Aeneid*.

In 2008 David R. Wallace wrote his book asserting that Paul had knowledge of and access to the *Aeneid* and wrote the book of Romans in response to it.[517] His work is one of the closest studies connecting the *Aeneid* to writers of the NT. He wrote the book because "no significant attempt has been made to investigate Paul's political and religious response concerning the salvation of Israel as it might encounter the symbolism in the message of the

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[513] Mark Reasoner, *Divine Sons: Aeneas and Jesus in Hebrews*.

[514] Ibid., 149.

[515] Ibid.

[516] Ibid., 154.

[517] Wallace, *The Gospel of God: Romans as Paul's Aeneid*.

Aeneid and its salvific promise for Rome."[518] Wallace contends that "The most well-known prophetic source in first Century Rome, which strengthened Roman ideology and assured Roman salvation, was Virgil's *Aeneid*."[519] In a footnote, Wallace writes,

> Gavin Townend believes that the influence of the great Roman poets beyond Rome is questionable; Townend, "Literature and Society," 929. He asserts that shortly after the Aeneid appeared, the claim can be made that Virgil produced the Bible of Rome, but most likely, the occasions of hearing the poem read could not have been frequent, which means his influence on Roman life might not have been widespread.[520]

Townsend's viewpoint is founded on pure speculation, "most likely," "could not have been," and "might have been."

Wallace continues,

> On the other hand, Marianne Bonz argues that the theme of Roman dominion in literature during Augustus's reign was widespread, and "in no other work is it expressed with such artistic power, clarity, and religious overtones as it is in the *Aeneid*"; Bonz, *Past as Legacy*, 57. Furthermore, Bonz sites a letter from Seneca to the imperial slave Polybius (Seneca *Consolatio ad Polybium* 11.5) in which is noted the importance of Polybius's translation of Virgil's poetry Greek and Homer's works into Latin; thus, Bonz reasons that the *Aeneid* was probably published in Greek in the mid–first century, read and admired throughout the major cities in Greece "at least by the time of Paul," ibid., 55. This study does not assume that Paul read the *Aeneid*, but it presupposes that Paul and his travels listen to the basic plot and episodes from those who retold Virgil's epic story, such as Roman citizens, soldiers, or philosophers.[521]

Wallace makes no mention of Reasoner's work on this subject. Reasoner references Bonz only once in a footnote at the beginning of his work. "I am therefore not claiming that the *Aeneid* is

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[518] Ibid., xiii.

[519] Ibid., xv.

[520] Ibid., xv-xvi.

[521] Ibid., xv-xvi

the only literary foundation for Hebrews, as Marianne Palmer Bonz does for Luke-Acts in her *The Past is Legacy: Luke-Acts an Ancient Epic* Minneapolis: Fortress, 2000)."[522]

As Reasoner agrees that "it cannot be argued that Hebrews is intentionally referring to Virgil's *Aeneid* or other media of Augustan theology,"[523] nor does this research assume that Mark read the *Aeneid*. It also cannot be argued that Mark is intentionally referring to Virgil's *Aeneid*. However, all three of these scholars have firmly concluded that those New Testament writers had knowledge and access to the *Aeneid* and responded to it. They referenced each other's work only to note one point each, so collaboration on their conclusion was minimal. If all three came to the same conclusion that Luke, the author of Hebrews, and Paul the Apostle had knowledge and access to the *Aeneid*, and since Mark had long-term proximity to the *Aeneid* (he spent more time in Rome than Paul), then it is more than reasonably probable (not just plausible), that Mark had knowledge and access to the *Aeneid*. When the fourteen pieces of evidence are viewed collectively, and when three separate scholars have concluded that other writers of the New Testament had knowledge and access to the *Aeneid*, then it is a reasonable probability that Mark had the same knowledge and access to the *Aeneid*.

[522] Reasoner, 149.

[523] Ibid., 154.

CHAPTER 4

The Gospel of Mark's Response to the *Aeneid*

Following the *Aeneid*'s extensive distribution and Mark's probable knowledge and access to the *Aeneid*, how did Mark address the theology of the *Aeneid*? Although Mark did use Latin words, as noted previously, there is not enough linguistical evidence to make a connection between the *Aeneid*, written in Latin, and the Gospel of Mark, written in Greek. Reasoner did not use linguistics to demonstrate his contention that Hebrews addressed the *Aeneid*. He connected Hebrews with Aeneas in Augustan theology and Jesus in Hebrews. "The divinely born Aeneas is presented as pious son, priestly son and founding son in Augustan theology."[524] Having previously demonstrated the wide usage of the *Aeneid* in all areas of Roman life, culture and religion, the concepts and religious ideas in the *Aeneid* were firmly embedded in the minds of the Romans. If a Roman read the *Aeneid* and then read Mark's Gospel, would that person have recognized the similarities and contrasts between the theologies of those two pieces of literature? Even if Mark had had no knowledge of the *Aeneid*, and a Roman had read both the *Aeneid* and the Gospel of Mark, would the reader have recognized those similarities and contrasts anyway?

The answer depends on two points. The first point harks back to the depth of assimilation of the *Aeneid* into society. Since the *Aeneid* had been used extensively in the school systems, as evidenced by Quintilian (as previously demonstrated), then the wording and concepts and theologies of the *Aeneid* had settled into the minds of most who read it. The second point relates to the clarity of the comparisons between the text of the *Aeneid* and Mark's Gospel. Christopher

[524] Reasoner, 154.

A. Hall wrote about the principle of one text bringing to mind another text. "'Blessed are the meek,' Jesus taught in the Sermon on the Mount, 'for they shall inherit the earth.' When Chrysostom, Theodoret of Cyrrhus, and Eusebius heard Jesus speaking of meekness, they immediately thought of Moses."[525] Hall then describes the Greek educational system and how it used this principle. "Think of an educational system in which the study of Homer's great works, the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*, played a central role in forming young, impressionable Greek minds. Homer was the backbone—even the Bible—of the Greek-speaking world. Greek culture turned to Homer for guidance and insight much as Jews turned to Moses."[526] He further states that the church fathers were steeped in Greek cultures, and "the way they learned to read Homer and Virgil deeply influenced the way they read Scripture."[527] Hall adds that they also listened to the texts as they were read to them, and concluded that "the harmonies and melodies of Homer's text, its narrative connections and allusions, were unveiled."[528] Hall chides modern readers for having lost the ability to recognize these allusions due to their "historically conditioned deafness to oblique allusions in the Bible."[529] They can no longer "hear the echoes and harmonies"[530] between the two texts. He compares the principle of identifying the harmonies with listening to a song on the radio enough to bring the song to mind later through just a short phrase uttered in a completely different context. Hall applied this principle of harmonies to seeing connections

[525] Hall, "Classical Ear-Training," 40.

[526] Ibid.

[527] Ibid.

[528] Ibid.

[529] Ibid.

[530] Ibid., 41.

between Virgil and the Bible. The reverse would also be true. Reading the *Aeneid* and then reading the Gospel of Mark would have had the same effect on all those who had read and listened to the *Aeneid* in its assimilation into society. To determine how well a reader of the *Aeneid* would recognize the similarities and contrasts between the *Aeneid* and Mark's Gospel requires direct comparisons of the two texts. This aspect of research will center mainly on the *Aeneid* and the Gospel of Mark directly. What scholars have to say about these respective pieces of literature is valuable, but the similarities and differences will be taken directly from the two texts. The problem today is that the Church is no longer familiar with the *Aeneid* as the Romans were during the first two centuries. Some may think, "I don't see the comparisons," but the more one reads and re-reads the *Aeneid*, more and more contrasts jump off the page. And when it is recognized how important the *Aeneid* was as Roman propaganda, then the Gospel of Mark becomes a major thorn in the side of Augustus.

The three parts of this dissertation present evidence that the *Aeneid* had wide and deep dissemination, that Mark had knowledge and access to the *Aeneid*, and that the Gospel of Mark addressed the *Aeneid*. The key performers in this third part stand opposite one another. Virgil and Mark: Virgil will present the mythical Aeneis as the forerunner of Augustus, a human son of God. Mark will address the same theme of a forerunner and a human son of God, but Mark will direct the reader's attention to a different kind of forerunner of the historical John the Baptist and the historical Jesus, the Son of God. Both the *Aeneid* and Mark's Gospel open with a forerunner. Aeneas, the mythical founder of the Roman race, will precede Augustus. They are connected by lineage. John the Baptist will found no race or kingdom. His lineage is irrelevant in comparison to the lineage of the coming King. He will do no more than announce the coming King. Both

forerunners will attempt to convince the readers of the deity of their respective Kings, Augustus having been deified, while Jesus came as the eternal King.

Augustus and Jesus: lastly, but the most important performers. Augustus will use human wisdom and power to make Rome's destiny a political reality, while Jesus will use the weakness of the Cross to save the world from their sins. Augustus will reform the Realm through deceit and war, but Jesus will transform souls through truth and peace with God. Augustus will display outward strength but inward evil and sinfulness. Jesus will stand up to and confront his enemies by demanding that they show him where he has sinned,[531] which they cannot do. Augustus will establish his temporal kingdom and die. Jesus will die, rise from the dead, and begin establishing the first part of his eternal kingdom during this age. Ultimately Jesus will outshine Augustus. Jesus died. So did Augustus. Jesus rose from the dead. Augustus did not. Mark will address the issues that will compare the answers to two decisive questions. His Gospel will ask: "Who is Jesus, and what is His agenda?" The *Aeneid* asks: "Who is Augustus, and what is his agenda?"

These questions require looking closely at both texts for similarities and contrasts. Two approaches will be used to develop what the texts reveal. The first approach will compare the flow of the text of the *Aeneid* with the flow of the text of Mark's Gospel at the beginning of Mark, as well as noting the middle point and end point of each text. The *Aeneid* was divided into twelve distinct chapters. Mark wrote no such clear chapters into his text. Chapters and verses were not part of the original manuscripts. Therefore, a comparison will be made of the content and concepts between the two texts in a linear fashion of what came first, then second, etc. In order to keep the dissertation to a manageable level, not ever comparison can be addressed. The second approach will compare different themes and theologies of the two texts.

[531] John 8:46.

The Flow of the Texts

The beginning of Mark offers the first and direct engagement with the *Aeneid*. Craig Evan's article, "Marks Incipit and the Priene calendar inscription: from Jewish gospel to Greco–Roman gospel" makes a clear and detailed connection of Mark' opening verse to Augustus Priene Calendar Inscription (OGIS 458; c. 9 B.C.). As noted earlier, Evan gives three reasons why Mark intentionally used the phrase "son of God" as a comparison with the Priene. Evan goes further by expounding eight supporting points that "Mark appears deliberately to highlight parallels between Jesus' behavior and his treatment at the hands of the Romans, on the one hand, and Roman traditions and practices concerning the ruler cult, on the other."[532] His arguments are very compelling, but he notes at the end of his article that the epithet 'son of god' had other definitions in addition to deity, and that Mark was not comparing Jesus directly with Augustus. Augustus' golden age was over (A.D. 14) by the time Mark wrote his Gospel (mid 60's), and all the following emperors became more and more decadent and violent, even though each one had been given the title, 'son of God.' Evan's conclusion was that Mark was comparing Jesus with all the evil Roman emperors. His conclusion could be accurate without negating the thesis statement of this paper, that Mark wrote his Gospel with the express purpose of challenging the *Aeneid*, which still impacting the Roman world as its main piece of propaganda. Evan also neglects to note that Romans always worshipped their past Caesar's who have been deified. The divine Augustus was still worshipped by every Roman while Mark was writing his Gospel.

[532] Evans, "Marks Incipit and the Priene calendar inscription: from Jewish Gospel to Greco–Roman Gospel," 70.

The opening line of Mark 1 contains no verb: Ἀρχὴ τοῦ εὐαγγελίου Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ υἱοῦ θεοῦ. Thus this first line is a title and also a summary of the entire book. Mark now has to prove that there are two points of the good news: Jesus is the promised Messiah, the Christ, and Jesus is the Son of God. Mark fulfills both assignments. In Mark 8:29 Peter, the prominent Jewish member of the disciples, had his eyes opened: "But you," Jesus asked them again, "who do you say that I am?" Peter answered Him, "You are the Messiah!" In Mark 15:39, as Jesus finished His sacrifice, the Roman centurion, who probably directed the crucifixion of Jesus, had been stunned by "the way He breathed His last." Mark always comes right to the point, never adding what he considers unnecessary to make his point. John 19:30 reveals that Jesus' last utterance was a victory cry: "It is finished!" That centurion would have heard that victory cry. Romans yelled victory when they had won a battle. A crucified criminal was the furthest away from someone who should be celebrating anything. Obviously the entire crucifixion, and especially His exit, made the opposite impression on that centurion. "This man really was God's Son!" Not Augustus of the *Aeneid*.

The opening line of the *Aeneid* begins with the description of a warrior who has lost a battle because the Gods were against him.

> Arma virumque canō, Trōiae quī prīmus ab orīs
> Ītaliam, fātō profugus, Lāvīniaque vēnit
> lītora, multum ille et terrīs iactātus et altō
> vī superum saevae memorem Iūnōnis ob īram;[533]
>
> I sing of arms and the man, he who, exiled by fate,
> first came from the coast of Troy to Italy, and to
> Lavinian shores – hurled about endlessly by land and sea,
> by the will of the gods, by cruel Juno's remorseless anger,

[533] Virgil, *The Aeneid*, trans. A. S. Kline (London: Poetry in Translation Publishing, 2002), 1.1-4.

The contrast is extreme between "Jesus the Messiah and Son of God" and an exile chased off by the gods. Aeneas had been rejected and exiled by the Greeks, his enemies. Jesus was a voluntary exile from his homeland who asked why he was being forsaken by God when Jesus took the sins of the world onto himself (Mark 15:34).

Following the title, the reader is invited to view Mark's message about John's actions and message of Jesus' baptism and temptation, through the lens of Rome's Aeneas and the *Aeneid*. Mark's first point in his introduction connects Isaiah's prophecy with its intended fulfillment, John the Baptist, as the herald of the Messiah and Son of God, Jesus of Nazareth. Mark veiled much of his deeper message behind the obvious, but Mark was speaking to a dual audience: the Romans and the Jews. Because of the extensive promotion and proliferation of the *Aeneid*, both of these groups, had they read both texts, would make the connection between Aeneas and John the Baptist. Mark reminds the people that Aeneas, the forerunner of Augustus, has been superseded by another. Aeneas came to establish the Roman destiny. His heritage supported his mission. His father was a prince (Anchises) and his mother a goddess (Aphrodite/Venus). King Priam of Troy, the cousin of his father and the grandson of Ilus, was the founder of Troy. His second cousins, sons of Priam, Hector and Paris, were Trojan heroes.

John the Baptist was nobody. For the Jewish people, John was recognized as an Elijah figure who would come to prepare the people for God's arrival (Mal. 4:5-6), but his parents, Zacharias and Elizabeth, were merely insignificant humans in the larger picture, Jews of a priestly family, who lived away from the importance of Jerusalem, in the "hill country" of Judea (Luke 1:39). Elizabeth was only related to Mary, a poor carpenter's wife, who bore Jesus and at least six other children (Matt. 13:55-56). John's parents were known and praised for their character ("righteous before God," Luke 1:6), but not for their valiant deeds. Zacharias could not

even be credited with having believed the message brought to him by the Archangel, Gabriel. Zacharias was not even allowed to name his one and only son after himself. Although John had a priestly background, Mark mentions nothing of John's importance, as does Luke. Mark's focusses on comparing John with Jesus as extreme opposites. "After me comes he who is mightier than I, the strap of whose sandals I am not worthy to stoop down and untie."[534] John was not in the line of David. Aeneas' lineage was foundational to his mission.

John's message asked people to make a choice: with whom to identify. Baptism was a ritual of identification that resulted from a person changing his mind ("repentance") about his sins and about God's promise of a savior, whom John would identify shortly. The Roman State Religion required absolute obedience to Caesar. Intentionally or unintentionally, John was preaching against the message of Aeneas. John was also preaching about power. John's power consisted of challenging people's minds and persuading them to re-think their allegiances, because someone more powerful than himself was entering the world. Even modern-day readers will hear Propertius exclaim "*Cedite Romani scriptores, cedite Grai! Nescio quid maius nascitur Iliade."*[535] ("Make way, you Roman writers, make way, Greeks! Something greater than the *Iliad* is born"). The power of this Messiah would surpass anything Rome had ever experienced, a power that emanated directly from *the* Holy Spirit, not from any mythical Roman Cacodaemones (harmful spirits).[536] In addition, the position of this person would be such that John was not worthy to untie his sandals, an indication that this coming Messiah would be above humans. He

[534] Mark 1:7.

[535] Propertius, *Elegies. Book 2*, ed. and trans. G. P. Goold (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, Loeb Classical Library 18, 1990). 34, 65-66.

[536] Richard Buxton, *The Complete World of Greek Mythology* (New York: Thames & Hudson, 2004). Evil spirits which came from the underworld to cause harm to humans, "Underworld Gods."

would not be a weak human who needed to be deified. The implication is there for those who would read and compare both texts.

John's second point shows the coming Messiah as identifying Himself with the Jewish people as a peasant from a small village, Nazareth, in Galilee, the lower class of the Jewish nation. Rome already had its savior(s), and it could never imagine a savior of the world originating from such an unknown location in one of its conquered cultures. John's only point of this identification is that the heavens were torn open, a display of power in the realm above humans, and something like a dove, a symbol of peace, coming from *the* Spirit onto Jesus, and a voice from heaven: God's statement of Jesus' being, "*my* beloved *Son*," and God's attachment to Him: "I delight in You!" The rumbling of the Roman gods usually indicated they were upset and seldom brought peace. Although the gods and goddesses occasionally bequeathed a glowing aura on a person who pleased them, or a goddess might appear to that person in a material form when that person needed help, God the Father never stated that His son needed His help, nor did any of the gods or goddesses express such explicit love for Aeneas as the Father expressed for his son ("beloved").

John's third point in his introduction relates the Messiah's testing in the wilderness by the Devil. Every person who read the *Aeneid* would think of the suffering of Aeneas at the hands of the gods and goddesses, Juno, etc., and the trials and tribulations Aeneas went through in order to reach and conquer Italy. They would see Venus, his goddess mother, helping him survive Juno's attacks. They would recognize Dido's temptation to draw Aeneas away from his destiny, and Aeneas placing honor and duty above personal love. His audience would be surprised, however, to read that Jesus was attacked by the most powerful evil among the gods, the Devil himself, something Aeneas never faced. Jesus faced his temptations alone, with no help from any of the

mythical gods. The angels only appeared to "serve" him after the most grueling torture ever experienced by a human being was over. Mark only reveals the bare facts. God, the Spirit, wanted Jesus to be tempted continuously (πειραζόμενος, present participle) by the Devil for forty days. Jesus endured wild animals and was then given help by the angels.[537]

The signature verses of Jesus' mission are 1:14-15: "After John was arrested, Jesus went to Galilee, preaching the good news of God: 'The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God has come near. Repent and believe in the good news!'" In these verses, Mark's message will engage the *Aeneid*'s premise that Rome is the right kingdom, and that the deified Caesars are those to be worshipped. Aeneas, the *Aeneid*'s hero, established Rome. In fact, the death of his father prefigures his own rise to power and authority. If his father had continued to live, Aeneas would not have been able to shine in his own right. The Father of Jesus could not die, and was no hindrance for His son to die in order to complete his mission. John was arrested, his mission accomplished. He is removed by execution by a ruler from Rome.[538] Now the real King will step up and make his entrance.

Mark is not writing in a vacuum, and the good news (*evangel*, 1:15) is only the beginning of what the real King will bring to the world. Adam Winn views the good news as "bringing together the language of both Deutero-Isaiah and the Roman imperial cult."[539] Most Romans would have understood "good news" to refer to announcements of a male child being born to a

[537] "The Spirit immediately drove him out into the wilderness. And he was in the wilderness forty days, being tempted by Satan. And he was with the wild animals, and the angels were ministering to him." Mark 1:12-13.

[538] Mark 6:27.

[539] Winn, *The Purpose of Mark's Gospel: An Early Christian Response to Roman Imperial Propaganda*, 99.

king and the future consequences for the kingdom.[540] Although Paul used the Greek word "gospel" sixty times in his letter to the Romans, he never defined it in Romans, as he did in 1 Corinthians 15:3-5. It can be assumed that Paul's readers in Rome understood what he was writing about, a concept that had already permeated the Roman world. The best good news from Imperial Rome's viewpoint was the emerging of an empire of peace because the gods had sent Rome a savior: Augustus. Even though Augustus had died by the time Mark used the word "good news," every Roman understood the meaning, and they would be surprised to see Jesus' name replace the name of the Caesar.[541] Exaggerated praise often accompanied such "good news" announcements in the Roman world, as exhibited on a calendrical inscription from Priene about Augustus' birthday: "it is a day which we may justly count as equivalent to the beginning of everything [. . .] it has restored the shape of everything that was failing and turning into misfortune, and has given a new look to the Universe at a time when it would gladly have welcomed destruction if Caesar had not been born to be the common blessing of all men."[542] The Romans understood the "good news" to mean immediate salvation by the appearance of a new emperor and the accompanying sacrifices to the gods. Salvation was defined as no more civil wars, to be replaced by a restored and growing economy and social order. Political power was viewed as worthy of divine worship. Evans recognizes the ingrained understanding of this phrase in the Roman mind: "There can be little doubt that when the Marken evangelist began his Gospel with the words, 'The beginning of the good news of Jesus Christ, the Son of God' (Mark 1:1), he

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[540] C. E. B. Cranfield, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans* (ICC; Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1975), 1:55.

[541] J. Rufus Fears, "Rome: The Ideology of Imperial Power," *Thought: Fordham University Quarterly*, vol. 55, no. 1 (1980), 103-4.

[542] Ernest Barker, *From Alexander to Constantine: Passages and Documents Illustrating the History of the Social and Political Ideas 336 B.C.-A.D 337* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1956, 211-12.

deliberately imitated the language used in reference to the Roman emperors."[543] Mark clearly challenges the *Aeneid*'s assertion that Augustus was the son of god. Peter G. Bolt adds: "Mark's Gospel proclaimed an alternative kingdom: the kingdom of God. It spoke of Jesus in terms associated with the Caesars, and, by doing so, proposed an alternative view of reality which offered an alternative set of hopes for the future."[544] Bolt further notes that Mark's Gospel was subversive by undermining the claims of Rome for their Caesars, which were supported by Virgil's epic poem, the *Aeneid*. Mark's "good news" differs from Rome's propaganda by using historical facts to tell the truth about Jesus, God's true Son. Further in this study, the "good news" will include not only the ontology of Jesus as the Son of God, but also His death as a propitiatory sacrifice, and His resurrection to directly challenge the deification of Augustus who did not rise from the dead. Although Aeneas entered the Dis, he did not physically die in order to do so. Therefore, Aeneas' resurrection was not the equivalent of Jesus' physical resurrection from the grave.

Many more such comparisons can be discovered following these signature verses of Jesus' mission in 1:14-15. When one reaches the middle of both texts, one discovers a strong contrast between Aeneas, who represents Augustus, and Jesus. In Book six of the *Aeneid*,[545] Aeneas finally reaches Italy. He obeys his father by reaching the Temple of Apollo, where he has to get permission from the Sibyl, a priestess, who helps him gain access to Dis, the Underworld,

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[543] Craig A. Evans, "Jesus and the Dead Sea Scrolls from Qumran Cave 4," in *Eschatology, Messianism and the Dead Sea Scrolls*, ed. C. A. Evans, and P. W. Flint (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1997), 93.

[544] Peter G. Bolt, *Jesus' Defeat of Death: Persuading Mark's Early Readers*, SNTSMS 125 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 42-43.

[545] Virgil, The *Aeneid*, VI.

(which Dante interpreted as hell)[546] where he can speak with his father about the future. The Sibyl informs Aeneas that he first has to find a golden bough in the forest so that fate will allow him to enter the Underworld. Two doves guide Aeneas to this bough, which he uses to obtain passage into the Blessed Groves where the good exist in peace and comfort. His father, Anchises greets him and congratulates him on having made it thus far. Anchises then assures Aeneas that Aeneas will found a race and Rome, and that a Caesar will eventually establish a Golden Age of rule over the world. Then Aeneas returns to Italy to face more attacks from Juno, the Goddess who hates him and fights him every step of the way, even though she knows that Jupiter has informed everyone that fate has determined that Aeneas will fulfill his prophecies.

This trip to the Underworld allows Virgil to promote Rome's future glory, and especially the glorification of the Caesars, with Augustus being the epitome of the Roman Empire, the promised ruler over the Golden Age. One of the most important statements made by Anchises, Aeneas' father, is the command to Aeneas as to how he is to rule.

> *Roman, remember by your strength to rule*
> *Earth's peoples—for your arts are to be these:*
> *To pacify, to impose the rule of law,*
> *To spare the conquered, battle down the proud.*[547]

Virgil justifies the conquering of other nations by being merciful to them and bringing justice, law, and warfare to pacify the conquered.

Numerous stark contrasts appear between the journey of Aeneas and Jesus' transfiguration in Mark 9:1-10.

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[546] Dante, Steven Botterill, and Anthony Oldcorn, *Inferno*, ed. Stanley Lombardo (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Company, 2009).

[547] Virgil, *The Aeneid*, VI.1151-1154. See also E. B. Alston, *The Adventures of Anchises*, Kindle (Chapel Hill: Writer Book Publishing, 2012).

> And he said to them, "Truly, I say to you, there are some standing here who will not taste death until they see the kingdom of God after it has come with power."
> After six days Jesus took with him Peter and James and John, and led them up a high mountain by themselves. And he was transfigured before them,
> and his clothes became radiant, intensely white, as no one on earth could bleach them.
> And there appeared to them Elijah with Moses, and they were talking with Jesus.
> And Peter said to Jesus, "Rabbi, it is good that we are here. Let us make three tents, one for you and one for Moses and one for Elijah."
> For he did not know what to say, for they were terrified.
> And a cloud overshadowed them, and a voice came out of the cloud, "This is my beloved Son; listen to him."
> And suddenly, looking around, they no longer saw anyone with them but Jesus only.
> And as they were coming down the mountain, he charged them to tell no one what they had seen, until the Son of Man had risen from the dead.
> So they kept the matter to themselves, questioning what this rising from the dead might mean.

When Jesus ascended up the mountain on which he was transfigured, he did not descend into hell. God, the Father, came down to Jesus on that mountain. Jesus took three disciples with him. He needed no mythical Sibyl to guide him to a magic artifact to open the door of hell. Aeneas needed constant guidance through the Dis. Jesus was in complete control of his journey. Nothing new about Aeneas was revealed about Aeneas through his experience in hell. Jesus began walking up that mountain as what appeared to be just a human being, but when he arrived, he was transfigured into such a whiteness that revealed something completely supernatural about his very being. In hell, Aeneas was assured that fate would direct him to found Rome, and that Augustus would eventually establish a rule of peace. Jesus received the declaration directly from the Father, "This is my beloved Son; listen to him," not to some other future rulers. At the end of the *Aeneid* Aeneas kills Turnus out of extreme anger and revenge.[548] Mark ends his Gospel with the death of Jesus at the hands of the Romans, but follows that with Jesus' resurrection. Both Aeneas and Augustus died, and it is assumed that they both entered the Blessed Groves of the

[548] Ibid., XII.945-952.

Dis, but neither rose from the dead to re-enter the world of the living. The similarities and contrasts between the message of the *Aeneid* and Mark's Gospel are clear to all who have read both texts. Having demonstrated in a linear fashion that Mark engages the *Aeneid* in content and concepts, the themes and theologies of these two texts will conclude these comparisons. Again, in order to keep the dissertation to a manageable level, not ever comparison of themes and theologies can be addressed.

Themes and Theologies Compared

God's Control of History

There has been no end to the publishing of information about the gods of Rome.[549] Many texts combine the subject of the Greek gods with the Roman gods. Within the world of classical studies, the knowledge of the gods has been placed under the concept of common knowledge as a backdrop of deeper studies on Roman history and culture. This study will confine itself to consulting the common knowledge of the Roman gods.

No omniscient and omnipotent God existed within the Roman religion. No god with those attributes surfaces in the *Aeneid*. Therefore, the Roman gods had no foundation of absolute truth. No god was infallible. No god was eternal past. No god was omniscient nor omnipotent nor omnipresent. Whenever Jupiter proclaimed the fate of something or someone, it could not be changed.[550] Jupiter did not control fate. He was bound by it.

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[549] Mary Barnett, *Gods and Myths of the Romans* (New York: Smithmark Publications, 1996).

[550] Markus Tullius Cicero, *On Divination*: Book 1, Clarendon Ancient History Series, 1st edition, ed. David Wardle (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), 2.8.21.

In demonstrating that Mark is responding to the *Aeneid* one needs to stay within the boundaries of Mark's Gospel. It is tempting to make use of cross-references from the other Gospels, but since Mark wrote for the Romans and, as advocated in this dissertation, to address the *Aeneid*, he chose his material quite selectively to make his points. He did not need to present every facet of the life of Jesus. He only needed to lay out the essentials.

Mark never focuses on God's attributes.[551] Instead, Mark pictures God as invading history to direct and push history in His own predetermined direction with the purpose of beginning something entirely new that will save humanity from itself. Mark reveals Isaiah's prophecy of God directing the historical events that would send a forerunner ahead of His Messiah (Mark 1:2-3).

> Καθὼς γέγραπται ἐν τῷ Ἡσαΐᾳ τῷ προφήτῃ·
> *ἰδοὺ ἀποστέλλω τὸν ἄγγελόν μου πρὸ προσώπου σου,*
> ὃς κατασκευάσει τὴν ὁδόν σου·
> *φωνὴ βοῶντος ἐν τῇ ἐρήμῳ·*
> *ἑτοιμάσατε τὴν ὁδὸν κυρίου,*
> *εὐθείας ποιεῖτε τὰς τρίβους* αὐτοῦ,
>
> As it is written in Isaiah the prophet,
> "Behold, I send my messenger before your face,
> who will prepare your way,
> the voice of one crying in the wilderness:
> 'Prepare the way of the Lord,
> make his paths straight,'"

John the Baptist's arrival challenges the character and nature of Aeneas, the forerunner of Augustus.

God does not place Himself front and center throughout Mark. God makes His first entrance at Jesus' baptism to introduce the first eight chapters of Mark: "You are my Son, whom I love; with you I am well pleased" (1:9-11). By the quote from Isaiah, God challenges Jupiter's

[551] John R. Donahue, "A Neglected Factor in the Theology of Mark," *Journal of Biblical Literature* 101 (1982), 563-94.

nebulous and indeterminate control of the future. Jupiter had trouble controlling the female goddesses, Venus and Juno, as they wanted different futures for Aeneas. God, the Father, had only one Son, whom He praises, and whom He does not have to control. The Romans should note that Augustus' father, Gaius Octavius, died when Augustus was four years old. It can be assumed that Gaius was proud of his son, Augustus, though that praise was never recorded. Mark, however, does not present Joseph, the husband of Mary, as the one praising the true Savior. God, the Father, praises His Son. Jupiter never expressed love for Augustus. Mark begins his Gospel with the personal relationship between God, the Father, who controls history, and His Son, who will offer a personal relationship to those who choose to follow Him.

God remains in the shadows until the middle of Mark (9:3-7), where Jesus is revealed in His true divine glory. God, the Father, again praises the Son: "This is my Son, whom I love. Listen to him!" Once Jesus has been revealed as the true Son of the real God, He will begin revealing His mission to those who choose to follow Him. Therefore, God issues His injunction to listen to the true Son of God. The real Savior's mission was to place Mark's Gospel into the hands of every Roman willing to listen. God appears one last time at the end of Mark when God rips the veil from top to bottom (15:38), as His Son dies on the Cross. God has opened the door of access to Himself to everyone.

Jesus, filled with the Spirit, (as opposed to the magic of Roman religion) announced that the time had been fulfilled (1:15) for a new stage in God's determination to save humanity. God's Son had arrived. When the Son is murdered, mourning will follow (2:19-20), along with persecution (13:5-13). Mark does not give a detailed chronology of this new age that has just been ushered in, nor how it will play out in detail, but Mark reveals that God will in some aspect protect "the elect, whom he has chosen" from the tribulation (13:20). God is in ultimate control

of man's entire history, including the end, and only God knows the time of the coming of the Son of Man, "not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son" (13:32). God's final confirmation that His kingdom is the only kingdom will occur when His Son returns in glory as the final victor (13:24-27).

God as Father

Jupiter's original name, *Dyeus-pater*, means "Father Sky-god."[552] The closest he came to being a father figure was a higher distant being in the sky. He never reached out to every Roman, inviting them into a personal relationship with himself. He remained a distant "parent." Mark reveals the true God as first having a love relationship with His own Son (1:11), who has come with the same glory that the Father has (8:38). The Son reveals his close emotional relationship with the Father when the Son requests of the Father that the cup of the cross be circumvented (14:36), but the Son will still obey (14:36). Jesus addresses God as "Abba" (14:36). It would never have entered Aeneas' mind to address Jupiter with such an intimate term, even though Aeneas addresses Venus as his mother. If someone chooses to follow Jesus, then God will have the same close relationship with that person by forgiving his sins (11:25). Lars Hartman comments that the readers "are invited to see themselves here as the brothers of Jesus, because their life—both the biological and the spiritual—originates with this father; that he is 'in heaven' implies that he is the deepest and the highest being within, beyond, and under everything."[553]

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[552] Editors of the American Heritage Dictionaries, "Indo-European and the Indo-Europeans," in *American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language*, 4th ed. (*Boston*: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2000).

[553] Lars Hartman, *Mark for the Nations: A Text- and Reader-Oriented Commentary* (Eugene: Pickwick, 2010), 475.

God as All Powerful

None of the Roman gods were omnipotent, not even Jupiter. Virgil never even attempts to invent this myth among the gods in the *Aeneid*. God's omnipotence is undisputed in Mark's Gospel. Jesus, as God's representative, uses his power to heal the sick (1:34, et. al.), bind Satan (3:23-27), cast out demons (1:21-26, et. al.) and raise the dead (5:41-42). Augustus was incapable of doing any miracles. When Mark claims for God that "all things are possible" (9:23; 11:23), Mark is not making reference in those contexts to the miracles of Jesus, but to the miracle that occurred on the Cross (14:36). The Romans were powerful enough to have crucified thousands of people for the purpose of putting down insurrection and subjecting other cultures to the Roman Empire. God is all powerful and can therefore do all things to do just the opposite: putting down evil and saving humanity from their sins. Virgil attempted in the *Aeneid* to cover up the evil carried out by Augustus. Mark reveals that Jesus was powerful enough to give himself as a paid ransom for the evil (10:45), and still rise from the dead.

God as the One Who Breaks Down Barriers

The *Aeneid* presents Aeneas and Augustus as religious and political protectors of the realm. Jupiter sent Aeneas, both myths, who represented Augustus, a mere mortal, to fulfill the destiny of one specific culture, the Romans, and force everyone to submit to the Roman State Religion. Jesus made no distinction between cultures. He rejected any religious traditions that functioned as fences to keep people away from His Father, claiming that he only distinguished

between the righteous (those who perceived themselves as such) and sinners (9:13). Jesus came to heal the sick, not those who considered themselves healthy. Rome despised the sick and weak. A strong Roman soldier was Rome's model of a perfect citizen. Augustus was determined to guard and protect the Empire with the use of force. The only force that Jesus used was the power to heal people and cast out demons. The only force the Father used was to tear open the veil at the baptism of Jesus. Normally when the heavens open, they close again.[554] The action of forcefully ripping them open indicates that the heavens are no longer intended to close again. Access to God directly has been performed by God Himself. Donald Juel describes this by saying "that the protecting barriers are gone and that God, unwilling to be confined to sacred spaces, is on the loose in our own realm."[555] Jesus is going to break down all barriers for humanity to directly connect with the omnipotent God, His Father, and Jesus is going to do so from a position of weakness: becoming human and dying on the Cross. His display of power will be revealed through the resurrection, and the final barrier of death will be overcome.

God as the Justified and Justifier

Jupiter destined Aeneas to succeed, and not to die. Aeneas has to justify himself and his actions by achieving the victory that fate has already willed for him. He cannot die until that is accomplished. Mark makes it clear that God intended for Jesus, His Son, to die (14:21, 49) in order to succeed in his mission. Aeneas is advised to pray to the gods for victory and for protection against the other gods. Jesus predicts three times in Mark that Jesus "must" suffer

[554] Ezek. 1:1; John 1:51; et. al.

[555] Donald Juel, *A Master of Surprise: Mark Interpreted*, 34-35.

many things and be killed (8:31). When Jesus prayed in the garden that the Father find another way other than the Cross to accomplish salvation for mankind (14:36), Jesus acknowledged that God was not going to provide another method or a different sacrifice. Jesus was the centerpiece of human history at that moment on Calvary, and with the heavens opened and all of Creation watching, God, the Father, had destined His Son to die on the Cross. Jesus is actually "handed over" to Pilate in 15:1. God is in charge of this entire operation. Evil humans were nothing more than tools that God used to carry out His predetermined plan to put His Son on the Cross. Garland states: "God is not involved in Jesus' destiny as a remote, impersonal, and impassive divinity."[556] At the last Supper, Jesus quotes Zech. 13:7 referring to God striking the shepherd (14:27). Mark does not state clearly that God's active execution of His own Son is carried out for the purpose of satisfying (justifying) God's righteousness. The fact, however, that God is the driving force behind the Cross, and that Jesus is going to die, in order to save people from their sins, points toward God being the one who justifies the sinner who repents. The Apostle Paul will flesh out God as justified and justifier in Romans 3:26, but Mark, the earliest announcement of God's salvation for mankind, reveals indirectly that the Father is going to be justified (satisfy His Law) by paying the price He Himself demanded by the Law for the sin of mankind.

The Humanity of Jesus Versus Aeneas/Augustus Compared

As a young person Augustus (Octavian) overcame some tremendous obstacles in his life.[557] His father died when Octavian was four years old. He was plagued by frequent

[556] Garland, 323.

[557] C. Wardle, *Suetonius: Life of Augustus*, Clarendon Ancient History Series (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015).

sicknesses. Having been raised by two women, he had little military experience as a boy. His age was a brutal one, and feeble young men did not survive long. At sixteen, however, in spite of being seriously ill, he traveled through enemy territory with just a few companions and suffered a shipwreck before arriving on the battlefield to join Julius Caesar and taking part in the battle against the Spanish. This event endeared him to Caesar, who began to treat him as his own son, praising him for his tenacity and ingenuity. When news arrived that Caesar had been assassinated, history records Augustus' revenge and the five civil wars he waged.[558] His public morals were impeccable and strict. He became a pontifex (priest) at the age of sixteen, and, later in life, he exiled his daughter and his grand-daughter for lax morals. He almost died in 23 B.C. from illness, and his faith in spiritual forces re-exerted itself.[559] He "regularly sought interpretations of omens and dreams to discern the future of the best course of action to take in order to maintain an appropriate relationship with heavenly powers, resulting in his advancement (*auctoritas*) [. . .]. He perceived the less fortunate (e.g., those disfigured and crippled) as a bad omen [. . .]. Even certain days were unlucky to him."[560] He was petrified of lightning and thunder, thinking that the god Jupiter was upset. In direct contrast to Augustus' relationship to the gods, and especially Jupiter, Mark reveals a relationship of love and trust between Jesus and the Father (14:36). Destiny (*fortuna*, τυχα) played a vital role in the Greek and Roman worldview. "Livy, in his Roman history, expresses this common attitude when he places Fortune alongside military courage and the general's ingenuity as great powers over human destiny,

[558] There were five civil wars, Mutina, Philippi, Perusia, Sicily, and Actium; the first and last of these were against Marcus Antonius, the second against Brutus and Cassius, the third against Lucius Antonius, brother of the triumvir, and the fourth against Sextus Pompeius, son of Gnaeus.

[559] Andrew Wallace Hadrill, *Suetonius* (St. Albans: Bristol Classical Press, 1998): 22-24, 129-30. An excellent text on the socio-historical side of Augustus, as opposed to the military aspect.

[560] Wallace, 11.

especially in war (*fortuna per omnia humana, maxime in res bellicas potens*, 9.17.3)."[561] Octavian was brutal with his enemies, even Roman ones, but overly generous with his trusted friends. He always exhibited outward humility by stating that "he did not like flattering titles" and by "melting down silver statues in his honor and dedicated the money toward things like golden tripods to Apollo."[562] His lifestyle was more than modest (clothing, food, sleeping quarters), "although he enjoyed it when others believed him to have divine powers."[563] In 12 B.C., Augustus assumed the religious title of *pontifex maximus*, thus giving himself the highest religious position in the Empire. The pinnacle of his successful grab for power came in 2 B.C. when the Senate gave him the title of *pater patriae*, "the father of the county."

The significance of this for Mark's Gospel must not be overlooked. In the Roman worldview, the family god and the national gods were strongly connected. Everything was protected by the gods, and the "Father" presided over them all. Roman worship elevated the Roman home, and the Roman city functioned as a religious center above all other functions. The *pomerium* was home to the local gods that protected the sacred land around the city. The home, the city, and the administration were all centers of worship, and "temples functioned for the purpose of government."[564] Once Augustus received the title of *pontifex maximus*, all the gods supposedly brought their successes together for the Roman State, under their "Father," who had become their "Savior." As a gracious benefactor, he alone received glory and he alone bestowed

[561] Ibid. 12.

[562] Wallace, 14.

[563] Ibid., 15.

[564] Wallace, 16.

glory. In 29 B.C., the provinces honored him as "a savior who put an end to war and established all things," and they announced him as "son of god."[565]

Augustus had reorganized the politics[566] and the military[567] of the Roman Empire. These functions were permeated with a religious nature of full dedication to Augustus. Soldiers swore an oath calling down the vengeance of Jupiter on themselves for perjury if they ever spoke negatively about Augustus. He had created a Realm ruled by peace and unprecedented prosperity. He won far-reaching support by hosting games, building new buildings, up-dating the city's water system, building two new aqueducts, and restoring 82 temples in one year, one of those temples being the huge Mausoleum of Augustus. And he built himself a palace on the Palatine Hill, yet outwardly avoiding any signs or symbols of monarchy. In 27 B.C., he even gave back the right of coinage, a symbol of sovereignty, to the Senate.[568]

He allowed the Senate to believe that they ran the country, while styling himself "*divi filius*," son of the deified Caesar. He avoided any form of worship directed at himself, even

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[565] S. R. F. Price, *Rituals and Pow*er*: The Roman Imperial Cult in Asia Minor* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985): 54-55. Priests of Augustus were found in dozens of cities throughout that area. After 20 B.C., all edifices dedicated to Augustus had religious connotations. See Paul Zanker, *Power of Images in the Age of Augustus*, Repring edition, trans. Alan Shapiro (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1990), 160. Lily Ross Taylor, *The Divinity of the Roman Emporer* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1981). Lily Ross Taylor, *The Divinity of the Roman Emperor: Philological Monographs*, American Philological Association, No. 1, ed. Joseph William Hewitt (Whitefish, MT: Literary Licensing, LLC, 2011). Duncan Fishwick, *The Imperial Cult in the Latin West: Studies in the Ruler Cult of the Western Provinces of the Roman Empire* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1987). Duncan Fishwick, *The Imperial Cult in the Latin West: Studies in the Ruler Cult of the Western Provinces of the Roman Empire*, Vol. II, Pt. 2 (Leiden: Brill Academic Publishers, 1992).

[566] J. A. Crook, *Law and Life of Rome, 90 B.C.–A.D. 212: Aspects of Greek and Roman Life* (Cornell: Cornell University Press, 1984).

[567] Frank Ezra Adcock, *Roman Political Ideas and Practice* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan, 1964). Frank Ezra Adcock, *Roman Political Ideas and Practice: Jerome Lecture, Sixth Series* (Whitefish, MT, Literary Licensing, LLC, 2012).

[568] H. Michael Crawford, *Coinage and Money under the Roman Republic, Library of Numismatics*, (Oakland: University of California Press, 1985). Augustus had taken this right from the Senate in 43 B.C. and kept it for seventeen years.

though this was normal procedure for the kings in the world at that time. He was a master of delegation. He allowed Agrippa to carry out most of Augustus' plans, as well as functioning as his brilliant military general.

The images and symbols of Rome functioned to bring all glory to Rome through Augustus. Even "the image of his seal for passports, formal communication, and personal letters was first a sphinx, later an image of Alexander the Great, and eventually an image of himself."[569] In 27 B.C. he received "a sacred laurel tree representing religion, the oak wreath *corona civica* representing victory, and the Greek shield *clypeus virtutis* representing virtuous rule."[570] The message was clear: "The victor at Actium brings restoration."[571] The assimilation of this message into the entire Realm, especially the private sphere, could not be avoided. And Augustus manipulated the official imagery "in the skillful portrayals of the past sculpted in memorials, statues, and decorative detail."[572] He channeled the symbols to all the buildings that gave him "high recognition factors."[573] Every monument and building included "the skulls of sacrificial animals, offering bowls, priestly tokens, or garlands wound with fillets, even when the structure itself is purely secular, so that even slaves contributed to *pietas* of new age in service to the gods."[574]

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[569] Wallace, 25.

[570] Wallace, 25, 26; Alan Wardman, *Religion and Statecraft Among the Romans* (Oakland: Humanities Press, 1985).

[571] Zanker, *Power of Images*, 93.

[572] Wallace, 26.

[573] William L. MacDonald, *The Architecture of the Roman Empire*, Volume 1: An Introductory Study (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1982). William James Anderson, and Richard Phené Spiers, *The Architecture of Greece & Rome: A Sketch of Its Historic Development* (San Bernadino: Ulan Press, 2012).

[574] Zanker, 116, 131; see also J. B. Ward-Perkins, *Roman Imperial Architecture* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1992).

Aeneas and Romulus played a prominent role in gracing the architecture as their imagery portrayed the Roman virtues of *pietas* and *virtus*. "The actions of the heroes are displayed and whenever possible linked with the living moral point of the *Princeps* (the noble man), creating an emotional and spiritual association between the present and the mythological past."[575] Virgil's *Aeneid* became the centerpiece of all such images. It was "visually expressed most prominently in the Forum of Augustus, celebrating Augustus' victories over Julius Caesar's murderers."[576]

Confirming the thorough and far-reaching presence and promotion of the *Aeneid* in and far beyond the Roman Empire, Wallace states,

> The mythological symbolism of Aeneas and his family served as a token of loyalty. These images have been found on finger rings, lamps, and terracotta statuettes. Wall paintings in a house from Pompei reflect the imagery of Aeneas and Romulus depicted in the Forum of Augustus. Furthermore, sculptors and patterns use the scene of Aeneas and his family on grave monuments as a symbol of personal piety and devotion.[577]

Zanker states that the "subliminal absorption over time, even if unconscious, was not inconsiderable."[578] "Political symbolism such as this was found on every imaginable object: jewelry, utensils, furniture, textiles, walls, ceilings, clay facings, roof tiles, tombs, and ash urns."[579] No one in the entire world that was controlled by Rome could have missed the *Aeneid*. Augustus' success was unprecedented. No one had seen it coming. He lived a long life, but he produced no personal dynasty. He died at Nola in A.D. 14. His ashes were placed in his Mausoleum. Creating a kingship and building a dynasty requires an intricate weaving together of

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[575] Wallace, 28.

[576] Ibid.

[577] Ibid.

[578] Zanker, 274. See also Gordon McNeil Rushforth, *Latin Historical Inscriptions: Illustrating the History of the Early Empire* (London: Forgotten Books, 2016).

[579] Ibid., 266.

personalities who all eventually find their place in the power structure of the kingdom. Augustus navigated that process in the usual manner by killing his enemies and rewarding his supporters. Virgil presents Aeneas in the *Aeneid* as Augustus' forerunner who preceded Augustus in establishing Aeneas' kingdom in the same fashion. Virgil used every tactic to convince the Romans of the deification of Augustus.

In stark contrast to Virgil's presentation of the personage of Augustus, Mark's Gospel reveals Jesus first as human. Ralph P. Martin describes a paradox when Mark reveals "a human Jesus who at the same time as revealing his frailty in embarrassing realism also exercises supernatural powers and strides majestically through the Markan stories."[580] Jesus sleeps through a storm (4:38), he cares for children (10:14-16), he loves those who reject him (10:21), he complains about people's unbelief (9:19), he got angry at the Pharisees (3:5), and yet, in that same verse, Mark shows Jesus' divinity in that Jesus can read the hardness of their hearts. Jesus even gets upset at his own disciples when they attempt to chase away parents who have brought their children to Jesus for a blessing. His most intense emotion ("deeply distressed and troubled") surfaces (14:33) in the garden before the cross when he knows what he is going to go through within the next twenty-four hours. Jesus is fully human with parents and siblings and enemies. He was a humble servant who came to serve humanity by living a simple life while healing people and teaching them. He used no deception. Mark presents Jesus as God's king, God's own Son, who offered the proof of his kingship by performing miracles that normal human kings could not carry out. Whereas Augustus received vindication for his achieving kingship by winning wars, Jesus, on the other hand, never practiced revenge. In fact, in Mark, Jesus commands his followers to love their neighbors as they love themselves (12:31). Mark

[580] Ralph P. Martin, *Mark: Evangelist and Theologian* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1975), 139.

does not go further, as does Matthew, that Jesus' followers should love their enemies (Matt. 5:44), but neighbors could include enemies. Immediately after Jesus had taught in his hometown synagogue, the people who knew him best were astonished at his teaching and rejected Him because they could not believe that one of their own, who had not been raised as a rabbi, could have acquired such a splendid education as was evident by Jesus' teaching. Nor could they accept the implications that came with acknowledging his miracles. A carpenter's son never received the necessary training that led to such wisdom. In addition, his mother, Mary, and Jesus' brothers were used as evidence that Jesus could not have been anything other than a normal human being, raised in semi-poverty in a small village that would never have a reputation for anything more than a bumper crop of grapes during the harvest season. His humanness revealed itself in his amazement at the unbelief of his own people. They referred to him as the "son of Mary" (6:3), indicating that Jesus probably lost his earthly father before Jesus entered his ministry at the age of thirty. Jesus would have been the oldest son, and would have taken on the responsibility for the family. He was fully human.

Both Augustus and Jesus were human, but the similarities stop there. Augustus came from human royalty; Jesus was raised in obscurity (even though he was in the line of David). Mark does not even mention the name of the village Jesus was raised in (6:1). Augustus was placed in high society for his own advancement; Jesus was raised as a carpenter, around common people, who seldom left their village. Augustus grew in favor with Julius Caesar because of Augustus' persistence, precision and discernment in the face of weakness, sickness and struggles. Mark does not even mention Jesus' reputation in the temple at twelve years old,[581] nor

[581] Luke 2:41-50.

that He obeyed his parents for the next eighteen years before beginning His ministry.[582] Mark contrasts the position and prominence of Augustus with the obscurity of Jesus. Mark does not mention the birth of Jesus and the attending shepherds and angels. Mark says nothing about the date of Joseph's death, nor the line of David that preceded the Messiah. How can Mark ever hope to convince his readers that Jesus will replace Augustus as the savior of the world? The only incident that Mark mentions in just these two verses (1:12-13) is the temptation of Jesus in the desert. The major comparison with Augustus is plausibly obvious to anyone who had been steeped in the *Aeneid* and then heard someone reading (let alone teaching) the Gospel of Mark.

Combining all the struggles of Augustus into one vision produces a terribly weak and shallow comparison with the suffering and torture[583] of Jesus that permeated the forty days of direct and unceasing and relentless temptation by the most powerful evil force in the universe. With Aeneas, Augustus' proto-type, Venus fought against Juno to help Aeneas. With Jesus, the Spirit drove Him into the arms of God's biggest enemy to endure that enemy alone. The only animals Augustus was with during his lifetime were the horses he was raised around. It can be assumed that the wild animals in the desert with Jesus were not looking to be petted, but hoping to have lunch. This negative relationship of wild animals with Jesus would have been understood by the Romans as painting a picture of the torture of humans in the coliseum among the lions. A Roman steeped in the *Aeneid* would probably ask why those animals were there, and why Jesus survived their arrival. Only after the period of torture, does Jesus, very much human, receive service from angels. The vague nebulous sacrificial offerings of Augustus to the gods for victory and safety and a more comfortable lifestyle could not compete with God's angels serving Jesus

[582] Luke 2:51-52.

[583] Abject hunger, thirst, lack of sleep, etc.

after that forty days. Virgil would have the readers believe that Aeneas suffered significantly, but managed to overcome adversity with the help of Venus. Mark tells his readers that God sent Jesus directly into the Devil's persecution, alone, to make the point that Jesus needed no help and was therefore clearly superior to Aeneas/Augustus. In the end, Jesus intentionally allowed himself to be crucified by the Romans, and postponed his vindication as king until after his death by rising from the dead. Augustus' attempt to further his kingship by establishing an heir eventually failed. Augustus had no control over the future of the Roman Empire after he died. Jesus' resurrection nullified the necessity of seeking a successor. The King had died, but had risen from the dead. No one would have to replace him for all of eternity.

The Deity of Jesus Versus Aeneas/Augustus Compared

The Greeks contributed considerably to helping the Romans accept the idea that man could become a god (apotheosis).[584] Virgil made good use of deified humanity in the *Aeneid*. Jupiter had been elevated to the highest position among the gods. Evidence of the deification of man is overwhelming in Roman religious thought, and Julius Caesar wanted that status. He did not receive that title until immediately after his death.[585] Virgil had gained fame for himself as promoting Caesar worship long before he wrote the *Aeneid*. He openly presented himself as deifying the young Augustus. To Tityrus, the shepherd in Virgil's Eulogues, *ille juvenis*'s actions

[584] Karl Kerenyi, and Carl Kerenyi, *The Gods of the Greeks* (London: Thames and Hudson Publishing, 1980).

[585] Suetonius, *Lives of the Caesars: The Life of Julius Caesar*, trans. Catharine Edwards (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), 84, 85, 88.

had already made him appear as a god and Tityrus will worship him.[586] Virgil endows the *Georgics* with an authority that places Caesar as the climax of Virgil's catalog of deities.[587] Virgil advocated more than private worship toward Caesar. Caesar will become a god.[588] This is not simply an altar sacrifice to honor Caesar, but a temple to be built and garnished with tokens of the most important successes and achievements by Caesar abroad and at home.[589] Virgil's last *Georgic* comes full circle to assert that Caesar is more than a mortal victor; he is moving into the heavens.[590] Julius Caesar's official and popular deification was Virgil's launching pad for Augustus to follow suit. Augustus would be compared to none other than Jupiter himself.[591]

Virgil had already deified Augustus as his personal god, but now he had to insert Augustus' divinity into the life of Aeneas through a national epic poem. However, the chronology of turning Augustus into a god plagued him. Many gods already existed, but Augustus could not simply replace one of them. He had to be a new god, not an old inactive one. Therefore, Virgil had to resort to prophecy, as demonstrated throughout the *Aeneid*. Virgil's short revelation of Jupiter's communication to Venus, the divine mother, is intentionally placed in the first prophecy of the poem. Virgil needed to begin the deification process of Augustus early in the poem. And Venus makes no objections. Caesar worship will enter human history at the proper time. *Apotheosis* (deification) seemed to assault the Roman mind with revulsion, and

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[586] Virgil, *Eclogues and Georgics of Virgil*, trans. David R. Slavitt (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 1990), 40-3; V, 79-80.

[587] Ibid., *Georgics* I, 24-42.

[588] Ibid., 503-4.

[589] Ibid., *Georgics* III, 16-48.

[590] Ibid., *Georgics* IV, 560-2.

[591] Horace, *The Odes of Horace*, English and Latin Edition, 1st edition, trans. David Ferry (New York: Farrar, Straus & Giroux (T), 1997), Book 1, 1.12.46-47.

Virgil produced no simplistic theory to be presented for blind acceptance, nor did he present an explanation of how what he wanted everyone to believe could actually happen, a man becoming a god. Virgil presents a human who had already achieved deification: Anchises, the father of Aeneas. Anchises' first appearance[592] presents him as fully human, when Dido asks Aeneas if the "Trojan Anchises" was his father. In Book II, Anchises is described as "worn-out with age."[593] And since normal humans die, even Dido considered Anchises to be dead and buried ("the ashes and ghost of his father Anchises").[594] Yet Aeneas views Anchises as his *divinus parens*[595], and after Aeneas establishes Rome, he goes beyond honoring his father by simply writing something in remembrance of him; Aeneas dedicates temples to his father,[596] an act carried out, not for humans, but for the gods. Although no longer among the living, prayers are offered to Anchises.[597] When Aeneas appears at the tomb of his father to pay tribute to his father,[598] a snake slithers out of the tomb. Aeneas has to decide if the snake is simply "the guardian of the place," or "his father's attendant spirit." He concludes the latter and proceeds to make an offering to his father as having achieved divinity, calling "on the spirit (*anima*) and shadow (*manos*) of great Anchises." Aeneas' companions join in by bringing gifts gladly and sacrificing animals on high altars. If Aeneas was only honoring his dead parent, Aeneas' friends, who had no obligation to honor someone outside of their own family, would not have made offerings that were fitting for

[592] Virgil, *The Aeneid*, Book I. 618.

[593] Ibid, II, 597.

[594] Ibid., IV, 427.

[595] Ibid., V, 47.

[596] Ibid, V, 60.

[597] Ibid., 80-3.

[598] Ibid., 94-103.

the gods. Upon their departure, the entire company sets up a sacred grove for the divine Anchises.[599]

Virgil uses both the humanity among the dead[600] and the divinity among the gods to place Anchises in the perfect position to reveal to Aeneas the future and greatness of the Roman race. Toward the end of the sixth book, Anchises is partially separated from the dead and is met by Jupiter[601] and Venus,[602] in the context of receiving prayers, just making him their equal in nature (which does not contradict the various stations and power positions among the gods). Thus Virgil had circumvented any logical explanation of how humans can become divine, and presented Anchises as an example (not explanation) of the deified Julius Caesar. Aeneas and his struggles to establish Rome and bring his gods to Rome, would be a palatable parallel to Augustus, who had just spent twelve years keeping Rome on the foundations set by Aeneas, and restoring the prestige and dignity of Aeneas' gods to Rome. Aeneas is obviously human, but his divine mother has destined him for divinity, as was his father. In the *Aeneid*, Jupiter, who was the son of Saturn, had somehow become the high king of the Roman Pantheon of the gods. He ruled from a distance, treating the affairs of humans in an arbitrary manner. He spent much of his time mediating squabbles among the lesser gods. He had the power to deify humans after their death. After Aeneas died, Venus, his mother, asked Jupiter to make her son immortal, to which Jupiter

[599] Ibid., 761.

[600] Ibid., VI, 679.

[601] Ibid., VII, 133-4.

[602] Ibid., 140.

agreed.[603] The river god Numicus was called in to cleanse Aeneas, and Venus anointed him with nectar and ambrosia, thus turning him into a god.

Just before the last drama in the *Aeneid* closes,[604] Jupiter announces Rome's future fame and prominence, and adds that Augustus is both *divi genus* and mortal. Augustus has not yet arrived at a state of complete divinity, but he will, just like the experiences of Aeneas. Virgil has succeeded in revealing resemblances between these two human *pietas* Romans who are dedicated to sacrificing their own agendas and embracing their fate from the gods, and who will be honored with divinity for their efforts. Both men will be worshipped. *Apotheosis* has firmly embedded itself inside the Roman State Religion. All Roman citizens will eventually bow to divine kingship.

Emperor worship during the Roman age blurred the particular distinctions between the gods and men. In the *Aeneid* Virgil was able to convince the Romans that Augustus was the son of a god, thus making him a god, whom Virgil promised would establish a golden age:

> *hic Caesar et omnis Iuli*
> *progenies magnum caeli ventura sub axem.*
> *hic vir, hic est, tibi quem promitti saepius audis,*
> *Augustus Caesar, divi genus, aurea condet*
> *saecula qui rursus Latio regnata per arva*
> *Saturno quondam, super et Garamantas et Indos*
> *proferet imperium; iacet extra sidera tellus,*
> *extra anni solisque vias, ubi caelifer Atlas*
> *axem umero torquet stellis ardentibus aptum.*
> *huius in adventum iam nunc et Caspia regna*
> *responsis horrent divum et Maeotia tellus,*
> *et septemgemini turbant trepida ostia Nili.*
>
> Now direct your eyes here, gaze at this people,
> your own Romans. Here is Caesar, and all the offspring
> of Julius destined to live under the pole of heaven.
> This is the man, this is him, whom you so often hear

[603] Titus Livius, *The History of Rome*, Vol. 1 of 2, ed. Canon Roberts (London: Forgotten Books, 2017).

[604] Ibid., XII, 794-5.

> promised you, Augustus Caesar, son of the Deified,
> who will make a Golden Age again in the fields
> where Saturn once reigned, and extend the empire beyond
> the Libyans and the Indians (to a land that lies outside the zodiac's belt,
> beyond the sun's ecliptic and the year's, where sky-carrying Atlas
> turns the sphere, inset with gleaming stars, on his shoulders)[605]

Virgil mentions Augustus as one of the "gods among us,"[606] leaving the impression that Augustus was exceptional enough to have inherited divine qualities. Since the line was so nebulous, the adherents to these religions habitually honored their rulers by giving them mementos of devotion worthy only of the gods, thus elevating those humans to the heavenly realm who had chosen to appear on the earth. If the rulers found themselves no longer in power, and maybe even dead, they were deified.[607]

The imperial cult permeated the Roman era during Mark's day. The Roman rituals supported and promoted the power of the state foisted on the conquered world.[608] Barrett unveils Caesar's political move to make use of this tradition: "His successor, while outwardly foreswearing any desire for divinity, could at least present himself in his public pronouncements, on his coins and on his inscriptions, as son of a god."[609] The Romans had not gone so far as to worship the person of the Emperor. They supposedly worshipped the Emperor's mental capacity, which guided his leadership, but Philo's *On the Embassy to Gaius*[610] shows the Emperor actually

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[605] Virgil. *The Aeneid* Book V1, 789-798.

[606] Virgil. *The Eclogues*, 1.41.

[607] Anthony A. Barrett, *Caligula: The Corruption of Power* (New Have, CT/London: Yale University Press, 1989), 140. See also Collins, "Mark and His Readers: The Son of God among Greeks and Romans," *Harvard Theology Review* 93 (2000): 85-100. Michael Peppard, *The Son of God in the Roman World: Divine Sonship in Its Social and Political Context* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011).

[608] Simon R. F. Price, *Rituals and Power: The Roman Imperial Cult in Asia Minor*.

[609] Barrett, *Caligula,* 142.

[610] Philo, *On the Embassy to Gaius*, Volume X, Loeb Classical Library No. 379, trans. F. H. Colson, contributor J. W. Earp (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1962).

expecting divine accolades while he was still alive, and he was upset that the Jews offered no sacrifices to him. An angel killed Herod with stomach worms because he accepted such praise.[611] A person usually lasted a few days before expiring from this sickness, a very humiliating disease. God is going to humble Augustus by comparing him to Jesus.

Jesus is labeled as the "Son of God" in Mark 1:1.[612] Garland says that "the audience most likely would realize that Jesus is being presented as a challenger to the Roman emperor."[613] Considering the drive of the Romans to force their religion onto all other cultures, Garland's assumption is correct, but too weak. Mark was putting himself in the dangerous position of writing his own piece of propaganda that was clearly intended to directly challenge the Roman piece of propaganda, the *Aeneid*, and Augustus who was presented to the world as a god. In the first half of his Gospel, Mark veiled Jesus' identity by showing what Jesus was doing, and along the way asked the question, Who is Jesus? Once the disciples recognized that Jesus was Messiah, Mark began communicating what was going to happen to Jesus, as the Messiah. The second half of Mark presents a Son of God who is intentionally heading toward persecution and crucifixion, not the expected path of victory over the world, as would have been presumed by the Roman perception of success. Augustus came to serve by ruling, whereas Jesus came to rule by serving through his perfect life and death on the cross. Obviously, this made no sense to anyone, not

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[611] Acts 12:23.

[612] It must be noted that *ui˚ouv qeouv* is not in å* œ 28[c] and some other witnesses, and Bruce Metzger, *A Textual Commentary on the Greek New Testament* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers; 2nd ed. Edition, 2005) gives it a {C} rating. The absence in these manuscripts "may be due to an oversight in copying, occasioned by the similarity of the endings of the *nomina sacra.* On the other hand, however, there was always a temptation (to which copyists often succumbed) to expand titles and quasi–titles of books. Since the combination of B D W and some other witnesses in support of *ui˚ouv qeouv* is extremely strong, it was not thought advisable to omit the words altogether, yet because of the antiquity of the shorter reading and the possibility of scribal expansion, it was decided to enclose the words within square brackets.

[613] Garland, 198.

even to the disciples who had recognized Jesus as the Messiah. If Jesus was intentionally going to die, then He was no threat to Augustus or the Roman Empire. But Jesus came to win the Romans over to His message in Mark's Gospel, and as He died on the cross, He succeeded in convincing His first convert: a Roman! "When the centurion, who was standing opposite Him, saw the way He breathed His last, he said, 'This man really was God's Son!'" (15:39). The centurion's declaration leaves no doubt as to what that Roman understood. He did not say that "This man has become a son of a god, like Augustus." Jesus had not started out as a human who was to be deified by other humans because of his military and political prowess, as had occurred with the Caesars. Mark is not mocking Augustus. The Romans themselves did that. The satire by Seneca, *Apocolyntesis (The Pumpkinification of [the Divine] Claudius)*,[614] made a farce out of the ceremony of deification of the Emperor Claudius when he died. Even the Emperor Vespasian was reported on his death bed to have said, "Oh, I think I'm becoming a god!"[615] Mark made it clear: that centurion understood the ontology of Jesus by stating: ἀληθῶς οὗτος ὁ ἄνθρωπος υἱὸς θεοῦ ἦν. Jesus "was" (ἦν) the Son of God. Mark's quote was intended to challenge Augustus in the most unique way possible. The death of Jesus was a victory. Jesus had conquered, not killed, a Roman centurion.

Earl S. Johnson represents those scholars who believe that centurion's statement in 15:39 was not made sincerely, but a cynical statement that rejected the idea that Jesus was the Son of God.[616] Garland, however, presents a convincing and comprehensive counter-argument,

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[614] Lucius Annaeus Seneca, *Apocolocyntosis divi Claudii: (The pumpkinification of Claudius)* (Coronado, CA: Coronado Press, 1993).

[615] Cassius Dio, *Rom. Hist.* 66.3.

[616] Earl S. Johnson, "Is Mark 15,39 the Key to Mark's Christology," *JSNT* 31 (1987), 13.

especially when he notes the centurion's use of ἀληθῶς, a word that is never used in the New Testament to express sarcasm. Mark focuses the reader's (and listener's) attention on Jesus, not on the centurion. Mark uses the centurion to show that anyone can recognize truth when they see it, and that Jesus is more than a small town messiah for a conquered people, but someone that even the Romans realize is not a criminal, but just the opposite, the Son of God. Once a Roman recognizes this, then the crucifixion of the Son of God becomes another proof that the *Aeneid* is a myth. Rome, through Augustus and all the emperors who follow him, will not rule the world through war and terror. The splitting of the heavens at the beginning of Mark (1:10) and the ripping of the veil at the end (15:38) also bracket Mark's Gospel, not just for his Jewish audience, but for the Romans, as well. Virgil wrote the *Aeneid* to demonstrate the connection between Jupiter's heaven and Aeneis' earth. Mark wrote his Gospel to reveal the true connection between those realities. The rending of the veil would have been viewed by the Romans, as well as the Jews, as having revelatory consequences.[617] The glorious expanse of the heavens "allows the centurion to see Jesus' death from a supernatural perspective and to recognize that the crucified Jesus is "the Son of God."[618] The rending of the veil demonstrates that God transcends the limitation of the Roman gods because the real God is not confined "either in an earthly holy place or in the heavens."[619] Whitney Taylor Shiner recommends that the tearing of the veil is

[617] Otfried Hofius, *Der Vorhang vor dem Thron Gottes: Eine exegetisch-religionsgeschichtliche Untersuchung zu Hebräer 6,19f und 10,19f*, WUNT 14; (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1972), 24-25, cited by Daniel M. Gurtner, "The Rending of the Veil and Markan Christiology: 'Unveiling' The 'ΥΙΟΣ ΘΕΟΥ (Mark 15:38-39)," *BibInt* 15 (2007), 304.

[618] Howard M. Jackson, "The Death of Jesus in Mark and the Miracle from the Cross," *NTS* 27 (1987), 16-37.

[619] Boring, *Mark: A Commentary,* 432.

releasing the secret that Jesus is God's Son.[620] Frank J. Matera sees the centurion being granted "access to the divine glory and allows him to make the first public proclamation of the gospel, by a human being, that Jesus is the Son of God."[621] The first proclamation of Jesus' Messiahship came from Peter, a Jew (8:29). The first proclamation of Jesus' deity came from a Roman. The centurion had not come to that crucifixion expecting any supernatural revelation, but a miracle happened. He saw the truth about the person of Jesus. Since Jesus is the center of attention, Mark does not comment further on the possibility of that centurion comparing Jesus with Augustus, and possibly becoming a martyr himself. Listening to Mark's Gospel challenged other Romans to look up and scrutinize Jesus with the same perspective as that centurion.

Jupiter never spoke directly to Aeneas or Augustus. Aeneas and Augustus always had to guess what the gods were up to, and they were always offering sacrifices to please the gods in hopes that the gods would look favorably on them. Mark reveals God speaking directly to humanity about His Son who is the bridge between heaven and earth. At the beginning of Jesus' ministry, "You are my beloved Son, I take delight in You!" (1:11), spoken to Jesus, and after Mark has answered the question about the identity of Jesus to the disciples, "This is my beloved Son, listen to Him!", spoken to Peter, James and John, immediately after his closest disciples recognized that Jesus was the Messiah (8:29). When Jesus collided with demons, even they knew who he was, "the Son of God" (3:11) where Mark includes the definite article, "the" Son of God, and "Son of the Most High God" (5:7). From the perfect good Creator who is above all of

[620] Whitney Taylor Shiner, "The Ambiguous Pronouncement of the Centurion and the Shrouding of Meaning in Mark." *Journal for the Study of the New Testament* 78 (2000), 3-22.

[621] Frank J. Matera, *The Kingship of Jesus: Composition and Theology in Mark 15*, Society of Biblical Literature Dissertation Series 66 (Chico, CA: Scholars, 1982), 139.

creation to the lowest most evil beings within creation, Mark leaves no doubt that everyone knows who Jesus is, except the Jews and Romans who rejected the truth.

Garland divides the instances when Jesus is identified as the Son of God into two groups, sympathetic and hostile.[622] God is sympathetic and the demons are hostile. The high priest is hostile (14:61) and the centurion is sympathetic (15:39). This interesting arrangement places the High Priest in league with Satan, but the Roman agreeing with God.

This raises an interesting question. Mark is famous for concealing a deeper meaning with veiled allusions. Since allusions speak to those seeking more than the mystery veiled by the text, Mark may be describing the rise of the Gentiles who had already populated the Church (Cornelius, Acts 10) by the time of Mark's composition of his Gospel. In any case, Mark's placing the revelation of the Son's ontology in four locations arranges his narrative within two sets of brackets: the "Son of God" at the beginning (1:1) and the end (15:39), and "My Son" at the start of the question phase (1:11) and after the arrival of the correct answer in the middle of the book (9:7). This bracketing demonstrates clearly that Mark did not simply throw a pile of isolated events together in a weak attempt to promote a failed messiah concocted by the early church. Mark's structure reveals a piece of literature equal to the best in the Roman world, including Virgil's epic poem, the *Aeneid*, but Mark based his Gospel on historical fact, not made-up myth.

Another aspect of the deity of Jesus that Mark compares with Augustus is their respective residences. Augustus began in wealth and ended in deification, but he was not assigned any special place in the heavens. Apparently, he moved in among all the other nebulous half-human and half-gods who would eventually be forgotten as they were replaced by new generations of

[622] Garland, 228.

humanly fabricated mythical beings who would push them out of the memories of the latest worshippers. Mark leaves no doubt of Jesus' residence and the accompanying permanent position of power by quoting Jesus himself: "I am, and all of you will see the Son of Man seated at the right hand of the Power and coming with the clouds of heaven" (14:62). Garland states that "Jesus violated the fundamental demarcation between the human and the divine by laying claim to a seat at the right hand of power and sharing in God's authority."[623] The possibility that Jesus could be the Jewish Messiah would not have disturbed the Roman mind, since Rome had experienced a number of Jewish messiahs during the Jew's conquered history. However, sitting at the right hand of God in heaven raises the status of his claims beyond any self-asserted, elevated position of the Roman gods. The position of power next to God will find Jesus returning to judge everyone, Jews and Romans alike, for their rejection of his deeds and works, and especially his sacrificial payment for their sins. He will return to carry out divine vengeance. This declaration places Jesus far beyond a temporal messiah, but equal with God Himself. Virgil would never have ventured to make that claim for Augustus. Nothing in the *Aeneid* even approaches such an inconceivable, but unashamed, declaration by Jesus Himself.

The Power and Authority of Jesus Versus Aeneas/Augustus Compared

Power and Authority, even when connected, are separate entities. A free system will be based on authority, backed up by power. A tyrannical system will reverse these two. A free system only needs to use its power when its authority is spurned. A tyrannical system will use

[623] Ibid., 236; see also Morna D. Hooker, *The Son of Man in Mark: A Study of the Background of the Term "Son of Man" and Its Use in St. Mark's Gospel* (Montreal: McGill University Press, 1967), 172-73.

power first to force its people to submit to its authority. Aeneas in the *Aeneid*, and Augustus, his prophesied reality, had to use power to force the submission of its conquered peoples. The Romans were tired of the civil wars, five of which Augustus took part in. Without those wars Augustus could never have gained the authority that allowed him to rule the Empire.

Mark's Gospel, bypassing myth, reveals the reality of the mature Jesus entering the Empire with authority. John the Baptist stated at the outset of Jesus' ministry that "someone more powerful (ἰσχυρότερός) than I will come after me," referring to Jesus. Yet, the temptation by the Devil is barely mentioned, with the Devil having failed to entice Jesus to sin. John is arrested and Jesus uses no power to free him. Somehow Jesus motivates his first disciples to follow him, although Mark gives no reason for their decision. Boring attests that "There is no parallel to such an unmotivated call story in ancient literature."[624] It is almost as if God had called them to follow Jesus. As opposed to Augustus' use of power, followed by self-proclaimed authority, Jesus begins with teaching, which the people recognize as authoritative (1:22, 27). Jesus did not need to use power to convince the people to listen to his teaching. Mark wants his listeners to recognize the authority of God in Jesus' teaching, which motivates the minds and hearts of people to follow him, as opposed to the force exercised by the Romans to submit. When Jesus called Levi, Levi responded as quickly as the earlier disciples, and his submission to the authority of Jesus was an even more radical break from his previous worldview. Fishermen could always fish, but tax collectors could only move forward. Mark is discussing discipleship here. He is focusing on Jesus calling with (divine) authority to follow him. Fishermen and tax collectors were not ignorant people with little education. Fishermen faced death every time they left port.

[624] Boring, *Mark*, 60. Speculation as to why Mark left out the disciples' motivation is wasted effort. Luke and John provide more information, but Mark has his own narrative to write.

They were extremely skeptical people. Tax collectors were always looking over their shoulders. These two would have been the most difficult to convince that they needed to follow Jesus on the basis of nothing more than his word. They followed him, because, unlike Augustus, Jesus had God's authority. Ernst Lohmeyer agrees.[625] Ernst Haenchen promotes "the miracle of [Jesus'] compelling word" ("dem Wunder des zwingenden Wortes").[626] Morna Hooker remarks that Jesus "conveys vividly the authority and power which he exercises."[627] Gundry adds his view, "How great must be the power of Jesus to induce that kind of conduct."[628] Gundry misses the distinction between power and authority. Jesus has no need to implement his power at this point in the narrative. People follow him without any use of power. Some followed Jesus before he demonstrated his power over nature and sickness. With his word alone, he calms the storms (4:39), raises a dead girl (5:41-42), opens a deaf man's ears (7:34-35), and withers a fig tree (11:14, 20). Yet, when he calls men to follow him, Jesus uses his authority (1:22). Augustus never dreamed of gaining adherents with authority alone. He needed his civil wars to force his will on the people. They were forced to recognize his authority because of his power.

Jesus begins his challenge toward the power of Rome by demonstrating his power when he drives out demons (1:21-28). Jesus does not begin his challenge with an insignificant display of power. The war with the Devil immediately after his baptism will continue, but Jesus is attacking the Devil's own stronghold, the demons themselves. Augustus needed to be protected

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[625] Ernst Lohmeyer, *Das Evangelium des Markus*, Kritisch-exegetischer Kommentar über das Neue Testament 2. 2nd ed. (Göttingen: vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1963), 32.

[626] Ernst Haenchen, *Der Weg Jesu* (Berlin: Tlpelmann, 1966), 80.

[627] Morna Hooker, *The Gospel according to Saint Mark*, Black's New Testament Commentary (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1991), 59.

[628] Robert Horton Gundry, *Mark: A Commentary on His Apology for the Cross* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1993), 67.

from the gods who would do him harm. The contrast is blatant. Humanity needs divine power to overcome the satanic world. Further, Augustus forced people under his control, whereas Jesus uses his power to help people. With every occurrence noted by Mark of Jesus' contact with demons, Jesus wins every time (1:21-28, 32-34, 39; 3:22-30; 5:1-20; 7:24-30; 9:14:29). Even further, Jesus gives his authority to his disciples to cast out demons (3:15; 6:7, 12-13). Augustus had no authority over the demonic realm, nor could he help his people fight that world, nor could he delegate any authority or power to his followers to do what he could not do.

Mark also emphasizes that the demonic world clearly knows who Jesus is: the Son of God. Only spirit beings recognize Jesus' true identity. They were not concerned with the Roman Empire. R. T. France claims that "few exorcism narratives exist in ancient literature and even fewer stories about particular exorcists exist."[629] Jesus was not one of many exorcists in the region, and few would have expected a self-proclaimed religious leader, who was only a carpenter's son, to have such authority and power. His authority was viewed as "a new teaching" (1:22). The demons knew they had met the ultimate enemy, the one who had come to destroy them and their master (1:24; 5:7). In 1:24, they call Jesus "the Holy One of God," but in 5:7, "Son of the Most High God." The demons made one mistake. They came in contact with Jesus, who is both the Holy One of God and the Son of the Most High God. They met the one who had come to destroy them, and he was more than capable of doing so. It was only a matter of time. They were petrified of him. They were not afraid of Augustus.

Jesus had come to free the human race from demonic power. He needed no special magic chants or objects or incantations. T. A. Burkill compares the demon with Jesus. "Unlike the demon, Jesus does not make an elaborate declaration; his supernatural power is such that he

[629] France, *The Gospel of Mark*, 100-101.

needs no sacred name, no mysterious formula, and no expression of special gnosis."[630] His word ("rebuke") alone seizes the demonic power from the demons, and they are left powerless. Mark challenges Augustus' power by comparing Jesus with the demons.

Jesus' authority and power coexist because of his divinity, but he exhibits his authority first. This word ἐξουσίαν refers to supernatural powers, "especially of God and God's works, representatives and emissaries."[631] The word was usually "reserved for or derived from supernatural authority."[632] Mark uses the word ten times, seven in connection with Jesus (1:22, 27; 2:10; 11:28, 29, 33). Twice Jesus gives authority to his disciples (3:15; 6:7). Mark shows the difference between Jesus' authority and that of the scribes, who never claimed direct revelation from God. The impact on those who viewed his encounter with demons was dramatic. Mark records three things that occurred simultaneously: God's powerful deed, human response of shock, and their statement of astonishment.[633] Aloysius M. Ambrozic shows the enormity of the situation. For the people, Jews and Romans alike, the miracles "are concrete manifestations of God's eschatological power bringing about His kingdom in and through Jesus."[634] Something far greater than the Roman Empire is being presented to everyone. Only God could have performed this miracle. Mark is showing Augustus to be merely a pawn in the hands of the man to whom

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[630] Burkill, *Mysterious Revelation: An Examination of the Philosophy of St. Mark's Gospel*, 74.

[631] James R. Edwards, "The Authority of Jesus in the Gospel or Mark," *JETS* 37 (1994), 217-33 (219).

[632] Ibid., 220.

[633] Gen. 42:28; 1 Kings 9:8; 2 Chr 7:21; Isa. 52:13-53:4; Ezek. 26:16-17; Daniel 3:24-25. Joel Marcus, *Mark 1-8*, Anchor Bible (New York: Doubleday, 2000), 189.

[634] Aloysius M. Ambrozic. "New Teaching with Power (Mk 1:27)," 113-49 in *Word and Spirit: Essays in Honor of David M. Stanley, S.J. on His 60th Birthday*. Edited by Joseph Plevnik (Willowdale, ON: Regis College, 1975), 127-28.

God has given His authority for the purpose of bringing down the demonic world and bringing real peace to the world.

Werner H. Kelber points out that the crowd did not initially ask, "Who is this?" but "What is this?" The people believed that these miracles against the demonic world were publically revealing "an apocalyptic power struggle."[635] This struggle was God's kingdom attacking the kingdom of Satan, and this assault is probably just the beginning of the end. The scream of the demon before the holy presence of the Son of God was followed by the man being freed from, and left unharmed by, the demon. Jesus was delivering a premonition to all who would believe Mark's Gospel and "follow Jesus," leaving the myth of the *Aeneid* and its weak hero sitting on a useless throne in Rome.

Jesus' authority extends to every aspect and relationship of life. He healed Peter's mother-in-law of fever (1:29-31). Fever was regarded as punishment from God for violating the covenant in Lev. 26:16 and Deut. 28:22. Jesus in no way reprimanded this woman. He simply took her hand and raised her up. Since a fever is not always a result of sin of some kind, this first healing miracle performed by Jesus in Mark's Gospel reveals that he will heal people who are suffering under wrong theology. The second healing dealt with leprosy. Scholars have dealt extensively with this disease in its context of the Bible[636] and the affect it had on the Jewish people. Josephus verified that the leper was considered a dead person. [637] Peter G. Bolt shows the connection that curing a leper was equivalent to raising the dead, and that the Greeks and

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[635] Werner H. Kelber, *The Kingdom in Mark: A New Place and a New Time* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1974), 16.

[636] Garland, 281, footnotes 94, 95.

[637] Josephus, *Josephus – Complete Works*. Includes Life of Flavius Josephus, Antiquities of the Jews, Wars of the Jews and others, trans. William Whiston, forward William Sanford Lasor (Grand Rapids: Kregel Publishing, 1971), Jos. *Ant*. 3.11.3.

Romans associated leprosy with death.[638] Aeneas in the *Aeneid* never encountered leprosy, nor did Augustus ever heal anyone, and especially not someone with leprosy. The government required lepers to remain apart from society. No Roman would have ever expected Augustus to violate those norms by crossing over into a leper colony and hugging a leprous person, let alone cure him. The Romans may or may not have been familiar with the Torah that stated that only God could cure leprosy (Deut. 32:39).

Although leprosy was thought to have been God's punishment for sins, Jesus did not verbally connect this healing with the forgiveness of sins. When he heals the lame man (2:1-12), however, Jesus states clearly that he has forgiven the man's sins. This miracle is described in detail, illustrating the depth of faith on the part of the man wanting to be healed that led him and his friends to so doggedly pursue their course to reach Jesus inside that house. Instead of healing the man first, and then telling him that his sins were forgiven, Jesus did the reverse. In numerous passages the Old Testament connected forgiveness as a requirement for physical healing to take place. "If my people who are called by my name will humble themselves, and pray and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin and heal their land" (2 Chr. 7:14). The disciples held this view: "And his disciples asked him, saying 'Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?" (John 9:2). Since Jesus forgave the man's sins before healing him, the Jewish leaders stopped the sequence by asking a very valid question, "Who can forgive sins but God alone?" (Mark 2:7). These leaders had the Old Testament to support their question (Ex. 34:6-7; Isa. 43:25; 44:22; Micah 7:18). This was a question of authority and power combined. Anyone could claim to have the authority to forgive someone's sins, but a display of power was needed to verify that claim. Jesus

[638] Bolt, *Jesus' Defeat of Death: Persuading Mark's Early Readers*, 93-102.

accommodated them by stating: "That you may know that the Son of Man has power on earth to forgive sins," and he healed the man. The healing was a clear indication that Jesus had forgiven the man's sins. Jesus used this healing to draw attention to his claim that he has the same authority and power that God has. Neither Jewish leaders nor Roman emperors would ever claim to be able to forgive sins. There is no incident in the *Aeneid* where Aeneas forgives someone's sins, and then verifies that claim by healing that person. Even when Aeneas has an opportunity to show mercy and forgiveness, he kills instead. During the last battle, Turnus realizes that he has lost the battle with Aeneas. At that point he begs Aeneas to have pity for Turnus's father, and for Aeneas to end his hatred. Aeneas hesitates to kill Turnus, "his eyes flickered, and he held back his hand: and even now, as he paused, the words began to move him more deeply,"[639] but then Aeneas remembered the death of Pallas, caused by Turnus. Aeneas' emotions took over and Virgil writes: "a memory of cruel grief, Aeneas, blazing with fury, and terrible in his anger, cried: 'Shall you be snatched from my grasp [. . ..] Pallas it is, Pallas, who sacrifices you with this stroke, and exacts retribution from your guilty blood.' So saying, burning with rage, he buried his sword deep in Turnus's breast." Instead of loving forgiveness, Aeneas chose rage and death. He did not have power over his own emotions. Although Turnus had sinned against Aeneas by killing his friend, and Turnus had been severely wounded, he begged for help. Aeneas killed him. When Mark records Jesus healing the man on the stretcher, Mark is drawing the listener's attention to the contrast of a mere human ruler, who himself is no different from any other human being, and Jesus. When confronted with a sinful human being whom he is going to heal, Jesus is in complete control of his emotions. He forgives the man's sins, which were ultimately against God, and therefore against Jesus, and heals him to prove that the forgiveness,

[639] Virgil, *The Aeneid*, Book XII, 31-52.

which can only come from God, is real. The human emperors who became deified gods never made such claims because they did not love people, nor desire to forgive their sins if they could have done so, and they knew that they could not prove their claims by healing people.

When Jesus was summoned to Jairus' house because Jairus' daughter was dying, a woman with a uterine bleeding for twelve years just touched his garment (mentioned four times) and was immediately healed. Mark reveals that the power that healed her "had gone out from him" (Mark 5:30). When Jesus finally arrived at Jarius' home, the daughter had died. Jesus raised her from the dead. There was no loss of power from healing the woman, and the source of power did not originate outside of Jesus, with him acting simply as the channel. Mark makes it clear that the power is inexhaustible and that it is sourced in Jesus. Since God is the source of all power, and all-powerful, these two events demonstrate that Jesus is equal with God. The woman was afraid when she was discovered to have touched Jesus. Garland records a number of commentators who believe that the woman feared destruction because her impurity had come in contact with holiness, which should have resulted in her destruction.[640] Contact with the Roman gods was not fearful because of their holiness, but because of their emotional arbitrary use of their power. Mark presents Jesus as the Holy One, and Jesus is redefining the relationship between impurity and holiness. The woman could not contaminate Jesus, but his holiness could heal her sickness. When Jesus raises Jairus' daughter, Jesus simply grasps her hand and commands the girl to get up. Mark makes it clear that Jesus is not using any type of magic or incantations, but simple language, indicating the power of his spoken word. Only God can speak and something happens immediately thereafter. Augustus needed his army to force humans to obey. Jesus speaks, and the dead arise.

[640] Garland, 287.

When Jesus feeds thousands of people in Mark 6:30-44 and 8:1-10, Mark is saying one thing to the Jews and another thing to the Romans. The Jews would have understood the connection with Exek. 34:14-15 because of the reference to the lost sheep. The Romans, however, were the conquerors, not the lost sheep, as least from their perspective. They did not need a shepherd, they needed a strong king. And their strong king needed to feed his army. Many a battle has been lost due to poor supply lines. Jesus used no supply lines. Whereas *Aeneas* needed to constantly connect with locations that would provide him and his men with food, Jesus went into the desert to perform this miracle. Jesus provided the food directly from heaven, not from Rome.

In two miracles, Jesus walked on the water and calmed a storm. When Jesus calmed the storm (Mark 4:35-51), he had fallen asleep in the stern of the boat. The storm was vicious. The wind was so strong that the waves were breaking over the sides of the boat, and the boat was filling with water. The severity of the storm raises the question as to how Jesus managed to stay asleep in boat, even if he was strapped in. When the disciples woke him up, their politeness ceased after addressing him as teacher when they began to accuse him of not caring that they were going to die. He made no response to the disciples. He simply gave an order: "Peace! Be still!" The *Aeneid* contains a couple of storms caused by the gods for the purpose of hindering Aeneas from arriving in Italy and fulfilling his destiny. Virgil placed Aeneas and his crew at the mercy of the gods, whom Aeneas could not control. The uncertainty and fear caused by those storms were well-known throughout the Roman world. Every time Aeneas landed on a strange shore, he never knew if that was where he was supposed to be. Jupiter had not communicated to Aeneas the final outcome of Aeneas' destiny. Virgil wrote the *Aeneid* to assure the Romans that Aeneas' fate was firmly established, even if Aeneas did not have any emotional certainty through

those challenges. The real story in the *Aeneid* is the battle between the gods, with Aeneas as their pawn. In one storm incident, Juno persuades Aeolus to throw a storm at Aeneas to slow him down, and Neptune intervenes and calms the storm.

Mark does not portray Jesus as causing the storm, but as someone who is so calm in the middle of it that his disciples wonder if Jesus even cares about dying. When Jesus rebukes such a severe storm by simply speaking, the Roman mind would not connect that event with Neptune, but with Jupiter, the highest god among the Romans. Jupiter, however, did not have absolute power to control nature. In fact, he had to control the damage caused by the lesser gods, especially Juno, in order to assure that Jupiter's declaration of fate would come to fruition. Even after it became clear to Juno that Aeneas would reach Italy, establish his kingdom and destroy Carthage, and even after Juno acquiesces, Jupiter has to negotiate with her by agreeing to force the victorious Trojans to take on the name and language of the Latins. Mark portrays Jesus as making no concessions with any lesser gods. With his word alone, he stills the storm. He does not find a safe harbor to save the disciples from Juno. He does not call on Neptune for help. He does not make the storm less severe. He speaks and stops the wind and flattens the sea, instantaneously. Then Jesus asks about their faith in Him (not in the Roman gods). Jesus had just performed every kind of miracle possible that demonstrated his authority and power over every aspect of creation: the demonic world, fever, leprosy, forgiveness of sins as proven by a healing, curing an impurity and not becoming contaminated, raising the dead, and feeding an army of hungry people. If Jesus could stay asleep in that kind of storm, why would they believe that he thought that they were going to die? Did they not believe that he was the Messiah? Had he not done enough thus far to demonstrate his own innate divinity, a divinity that far exceeded all of the self-proclaimed divinity of the entire mythical Roman Pantheon?

When Jesus walked on the water the significance for the Romans had more to do with Mark's comment that Jesus was "meant to pass them by" (6:48). Romans understood epiphanies. Aeneas needed an explanation for the fact that he had to flee from burning Troy. He found his excuse in an epiphany of Hector appearing to him in a dream and telling him to leave.[641] "Almost all ancient epiphany dreams that are described in literary texts are explicable as attempts to bestow prestige or to explain action, or as some combination of the two."[642] William V. Harriis states that "this kind of dream is also a way of presenting in palpable dramatic form the inner promptings of a divided or malicious mind."[643] Aeneas was always hesitant in major decisions, therefore most of the dreams in the *Aeneid* are epiphanies. Mark wants the Romans to view this vision of Jesus walking on the water as an epiphany of Jesus demonstrating "his transcendent, divine majesty to them,"[644]

The first question about the identity of Jesus was "What is this?" (1:27). The second question appears when Jesus calms the storm, "Who is this?" (4:41). The third question comes as an exclamation of fear when Jesus walks on the water. Their reaction to this epiphany was typical,[645] and Jesus answers, "Have courage, I am, do not be afraid" (6:50). "Have courage" is appropriate as a first response to their fear; "I am" signals that they are not seeing a ghost (which does not walk on water); and "Do not be afraid" wraps up the Lord's response to their fear.

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[641] Virgil, *The Aeneid*, Book II, 268-297.

[642] William V. Harris, *Dreams and Experience in Classical Antiquity* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2009), 56.

[643] Ibid.

[644] Garland, 297.

[645] Collins, *Mark*, 334.

When he enters the boat, the storm ceases, again. Mark's message to the Romans: this transcendent and divine human being need not be feared.

The major epiphany in Mark is clearly the Transfiguration (9:2-13). When an epiphany occurred, the Romans thought they were viewing a god. The character of the Roman god was scarcely revealed or discussed. They came to cause fear or to give guidance or assurance. Mark places the transfiguration at the turning point of his Gospel. Two questions have been directly: What is this? (1:27), Who is this? (4:41), It is I (6:50). It is now time to open the heavens and let the disciples, and the Romans through Mark's Gospel, see the Son of God for themselves. At Jesus' baptism, God said, "You are my beloved Son; with you I am well-pleased," spoken to Jesus. At the transfiguration, God will say, "This is my beloved Son; listen to him!" spoken to humanity. This event is absolutely unique. James R. Edwards states: "The transfiguration of Jesus is a singular event in ancient literature. It has no analogy in the Bible, or in the extrabiblical literature from the Apocrypha, Pseudepigrapha, rabbinic literature, Qumran, Nag Hammadi, or in Hellenistic literature as a whole."[646] The Greco-Roman world understood metamorphosis, as seen in Ovid's *Metamorpheses*,[647] fifteen books of myths about the history of the world from creation to the deification of Julius Caesar. Mark uses that word, μετεμορφώθη, as a starting point to contextualize his message to the Romans, although the Greek and Roman concept of Ovid's mythical metamorphoses cannot be compared with the physical, historical transformation of Jesus. Jesus is revealing to everyone that his humanity does not negate his inherent divine essence. Jesus is not just a backwoods self-proclaimed Messiah, but the actual Son of God.

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[646] James R. Edwards, *The Gospel According to Mark*. Pillar New Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2002), 269.

[647] Ovid, *Metamorphoses*, Oxford World's Classics, trans. A. D. Melville, intro. E. J. Kennedy (Oxford: Oxford University Publishing, 2009).

Garland describes it thus: "The garb of a Galilean teacher/prophet is transformed before their eyes into the transcendent raiment of the Son of God."[648] Simon J. Gathercole notes that since God is doing the transforming, He is revealing that "the preexistent, heavenly Son (seen in his radiant glory in the transfiguration) is the very person sent by the Father into the world to be crucified by humankind and to give his life as a ransom for many."[649] The spiritual and material world meet in reality, not in myth. The mystery of the divinity of Jesus, veiled by his incarnation, is revealed to three men who will eventually tell others, and Mark will write it down for all of Rome to ponder. Jesus will not be deified as was the mythical Aeneas or the historical Augustus, because Jesus had no need to be deified. Human deification is a myth, while Jesus' divinity is reality. Jesus divine preexistence enters the Roman world to show mankind what humanity was really meant to be like—not a myth or a tyrant who hopes that his followers will believe that he was pushed by humans and pulled by the gods into divinity. Thus, the transformation of Jesus culminates in God's pronouncement to Rome: your myths are false and your emperors are temporary. Real authority and power have arrived, because the preexistent Son of God is inherently divine.

The Salvation of Jesus Versus Aeneas/Augustus compared

A dead messiah cannot logically save anybody from anything. The Roman understanding of the purpose of a Roman savior was to kill the enemies of Rome and stop the civil wars. No

[648] Garland, 301.

[649] Simon J. Gathercole, *The Preexistent Son: Recovering the Christologies of Matthew, Mark, and Luke* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2006), 20.

savior could do that from the grave. Mark does not make a direct statement that Jesus is going to save the people from anything, civil wars or personal sins. When Mark states the key to his Gospel, that the Son of Man came to give his life a ransom for many (10:45), Mark did not clarify, except to write that it would be for "many." Mark begins his Gospel with the words of Jesus that people need to "believe in the gospel" (1:15), and he ends his Gospel with the words of Jesus that "he who believes…will be saved" (16:16).[650] Neither verse clarifies the "gospel." In the middle of Mark, Jesus says that "Whoever wants to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life because of me and the gospel will save it" (8:35). The content of the gospel is not spelled out as a theological statement, nor does Mark present any standard creed that contained "the gospel," as Paul did later in 1 Timothy 3:16. Mark's emphasis was not on the theological content of the gospel, but on the person of Jesus. Mark did not compare Roman theology with the Bible; he compared Jesus with Aeneas and Augustus, who were both kings. Donald H. Juel contends that the Messiah had to die as a king.[651] Neither Aeneas nor Augustus died to save their people. The mythical Aeneas died after he had fulfilled his destiny of establishing the Roman race. Augustus died after he had made Rome the world power in the Middle East and Europe. Neither of them died to "save" their people from sins. Neither died to offer a personal relationship to the gods. Jesus' death was his destiny. How did their journeys and lives compare with one another?

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[650] Mark 16:9-20 is disputed as having been part of Mark's Gospel because these verses do not appear in the Sinaiticus and Vaticanus, two of the oldest Greek manuscripts of Mark's Gospel. The bracket of 1:15 with 16:16 supports the view that these verses were part of the original manuscript, but somehow came up missing in those two manuscripts, and were found in later manuscripts, from which Irenaeus and Hippolytus quoted in the second and third centuries.

[651] Donald H. Juel, "The Origin of Mark's Christology," in *The Messiah: Developments in Earliest Judaism and Christianity: The First Princeton Symposium on Judaism and Christian Origins* (ed. James H. Charlesworth; Minneapolis: Fortress, 1992), 458.

When Aeneas is compared with Jesus, Aeneas had no idea how much he was going to have to suffer on his journey to fulfill his destiny to establish the Roman people. The gods helped or hindered him, depending on their emotional investment in their chosen human objects of affection, Venus for Aeneas, Juno for Dido and anti-Aeneas. Aeneas knew none of this along the way. The gods had not revealed anything to him, until he was informed that he had to leave Dido behind because his fate was calling him to fidelity and honor for his destiny.

Jesus, on the other hand, spent the first half of Mark demonstrating his authority and power over every aspect of creation, and when he reached the midpoint of his ministry in Mark, he announced that the Son of Man *must* suffer many things, be rejected by the elders, the chief priests, and the teachers of the law (scribes), and be killed (8:31). Mark is challenging the *Aeneid*'s presentation of a savior, who is destined to establish a people (Romans), but who is clueless as to that destiny or, once he leaves Dido, clueless as to how fate is going to work out the details. Jesus was not an indecisive ignorant loser who had to flee from the Greeks in Troy, and then who needed help from the arbitrary gods of Jupiter, Venus, Juno, Neptune, *et. al*. Jesus needed no help for anything during his time on this earth. Garland agrees that "Jesus' death is not a tragic accident, a miscalculation, or an unhappy twist of fate,"[652] as was Julius Caesar's end, whose death saved no one. Jesus knew his "destiny" before he arrived. Jesus foretold his death three times in Mark (8:31; 9:31; 10:33-34), and each time echoed an underlying theology of providence. His death on the Cross was the payment for human sin, but the Father was the one who demanded the payment. The Father laid this plan down before the foundation of the world,

[652] Garland, 473.

as opposed to Jupiter's weak attempts to fight off Juno's endeavors to sidetrack Jupiter's declaration of Aeneas' fate.[653]

When Pilate asked Jesus if he was a king, Jesus answered in the affirmative (15:2). This confession could have been enough to crucify any criminal in the Roman Empire. Pilate, however, recognized no threat from this King of the Jews. It seemed as if Jesus wanted to die. From Rome's perspective, that would be the end of this messiah's kingdom, having not even saved himself. Mark does not elaborate on Jesus as a savior. Mark focuses on establishing the deity of Jesus in the minds of the Romans. The high point of success for Mark was the Roman centurion's declaration, "Truly (ἀληθῶς) this Man was the Son of God" (15:39). Only the Son of God could somehow save people.

How did Mark define and describe this salvation offered by a king who would die to save the people? When Jesus announced his death in 8:27, he culminated this announcement with his statement about paying a ransom. Toward the end of Mark's Gospel at the high point of the Last Supper (14:24), Jesus adds more information about his ransom when he states that the cup is his blood, which is poured out for many—a ransom for many (8:27) and his blood for many (14:24). His death would facilitate some type of salvation for mankind (many) that had nothing to do with economics or the military or politics. The Romans understood paying a ransom for the release of prisoners.[654] Jesus had identified himself with sinners who needed a physician (2:14-17) and then states that they need to be ransomed (10:45). His death would pay their debt for their sins. Jesus

[653] One could mention the fact that Jesus knew that Judas was going to betray him because his betrayal had already been prophesied in Psalm 41:9, but Mark does not mention Jesus quoting that Psalm during the last supper before Jesus is arrested.

[654] Max Wilcox, "On the Ransom-Saying in Mark 10:45c, Mark 20:28c." in *Geschichte—Tradition—Reflection: Festschrift für Martin Hengel zum 70. Geburtstag. Bd. 3: Frühes Christentum.* ed. Hubert Cancik, Hermann Lichtenberger, and Peter Schäfer (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1998), 173-86.

was not an unwilling scapegoat, but an active volunteer giving his life to pay a debt to God. Bruce K. Waltke notes that Jesus "not only is the price paid for the redemption of the many, stressing the redemptive work on the cross, but also He did this by '…nothing less than to step into their places…,' enduring the divine wrath to make propitiation."[655] Waltke further explains that "The meaning *in exchange for* points to the results of His vicarious suffering; and the meaning *in place of* points to the method in which this redemptive work is accomplished."[656]

Drinking blood would have been abhorrent to the Jews, but the Romans would have connected Jewish sacrifices with the temple, not with a hill outside of Jerusalem. Jesus blood was shed for "many" at Golgotha, the place of the skull, a symbol of death. Death resulted from sin, and Jesus had identified himself with sinners very early in Mark's Gospel. Sinners were never considered a part of any Jewish in-group, thus the "many" included the Romans.

When Jesus rode into Jerusalem on a donkey (11:1-11), the Romans would have wondered how weakness could save people, and when Jesus attacked the money-changers and turned over their tables in the temple (11:15-19), the Romans would have viewed that as sacrilegious, but there would have been no doubt that Jesus was rejecting the Jewish worship service. In fact, it looked as if he was actually condemning it by pronouncing God's judgment on it. Jesus will ultimately prophesy the temple's destruction (13:1-2), a destruction that Mark does not record. Any Roman who read Mark after A.D. 70 would note the fulfillment of Jesus' words. Jesus' rejection of the Jewish temple as a place of ritual sacrifices for the atonement of one's sins would cause the reader to ask, How then does one get forgiveness of one's sins? The Romans

[655] Bruce K. Waltke, "The Theological Significance of 'Αντί and 'Υπέρ in the New Testament" (Th.D. dissertation; Dallas Theological Seminary, 1958), 1:127-28.

[656] Ibid.

were never allowed to offer sacrifices in the Jewish temple for their sins. Is Jesus offering the Romans a different way of atonement? Jesus had already made it clear that he had the authority and power to forgive sins (2:1-12). When the temple was actually destroyed in A.D. 70, the point would have been blatantly clear to anyone who had read Mark's Gospel: the sacrifice on the Cross had replaced the temple, and now atonement for sins was open to everyone, even the Romans who had carried out the crucifixion.

The atonement is a foundation stone for soteriology, but soteriology needs a more concrete definition. Brian K. Gamel's article brilliantly captures Mark's confrontation with Virgil's *Aeneid*, Aeneas and Augustus. He states that in Mark 15:39, the centurion's confession "offers us a compact expression of Mark's soteriology [. . .]. Mark 15:39 demonstrates what salvation means for Mark."[657] Mark is not simply presenting the gospel to a general audience, but he is connecting Israel's blessings to the Romans and all Gentiles. Humanity is blind to itself and God, and therefore Mark opens their eyes to "see" eschatologically what God is doing in human history through Jesus. The centurion "sees," at the moment of Jesus' death, who Jesus is by how (οὕτως, "in what manner") Jesus died on the Cross. Humanity is separated from God, but at the moment of his death, "'this man' is declared to be 'God's Son,' demonstrating that at the cross God and humanity are no longer hostile spheres but brought together in the same realm."[658] It is clear that Mark is focusing on his challenge to Rome by stating that the centurion is "standing opposite" Jesus, indicating that the Romans were not previously a part of Israel's calling, but their enemy. Now they are included in Jesus' offer of salvation from their sins (not

[657] Brian K. Gamel, "Salvation in a Sentence: Mark 15:39 as Markan Soteriology," *Journal of Theological Interpretation*, 6 (2012):65.

[658] Ibid.

from enemies of Rome or from civil wars) through his payment on the Cross for everyone. Jesus' salvation cures blindness, reconciles to God, and redeems Jews and Gentiles alike. Rome wanted to assimilate all cultures under Roman authority and power. Jesus wants to bring all of humanity under the love and protection of God. Augustus was connected to the Roman religion of myth. Jesus is connected to the living God who saves peoples' souls.

Most scholars understand soteriology to be defined as the comprehensive content of how God saves mankind through Jesus. This definition makes soteriology propositional, which it is, and therefore, scholars look primarily for these propositions, especially explicit statements, in any given text to build their theology of soteriology. This highlights Mark 10:45 as the epitome of Mark's soteriology, although Mark makes no clear propositional statement that Jesus' death is an atoning sacrifice for sin. Instead, Mark simply tells the reader how Jesus died. Gamel rejects Mark as a manuscript filled with "theological propositions to be sorted and categorized but rather a narrative whose aim is to proclaim 'The beginning of the good news about Jesus the Messiah, the Son of God.'"[659]

If the centurion in Mark 15:39 is the high point of Mark's narrative, then Mark is very interested in challenging Rome's claim to salvation. Early on, Jesus is the target of death by enemies who had found a common enemy (3:6). The reader is reminded that this murderous atmosphere existed at the beheading of John the Baptist (6:14-29) long before Jesus fully revealed his mission. When the passion narrative begins, this hatred connects the Jewish clergy with Judas, who betrays Jesus into the hands of God's enemies (the Jews!). There seems to be no good outcome to this conflict. Jesus will die, as have all other Jewish messiahs during Rome's

[659] Gamel, 67.

occupation (Acts 5:33-39).[660] Jesus did die, but "how" he died revealed to a Roman the true meaning of the ransom in 10:45 and the blood that was shed in 14:24. The Son of God died as that ransom.

Different from propositional teaching, narrative allows the reader to discover what is being said by watching events instead of listening to a lecture. This does not negate the necessity of propositional teaching, but offers another door to understanding. The narrative passion passage (14:1-15:47) details the death of Jesus, which Mark makes clear that everyone wanted and that Jesus himself foretold. It culminates in the centurion's confession (15:39). The clearest focal point centers on the actual death of Jesus (15:33-39), which connects the identity of Jesus as the Son (υιός) of God, which was not recognized by the disciples even at the transformation (9:14-29; although the demons understood), and that the Son of God is actual deity, as revealed by the three references to him at the beginning (1:11, baptism), the middle (9:7, transfiguration), and the end (15:39, death by crucifixion). The centurion is the first human to recognize that the man hanging on that cross is the actual divine Son of God, and Mark makes it clear that that first human is a Roman. Gamel believes that "the first and last occurrences are likely part of a document-wide *inclusio*, in which they are one of several elements that are paralleled in both scenes, which further confirms the weight of this passage."[661]

It might be valuable to attempt to determine if the centurion really believed that Jesus was the divine Son of God, since that would support Mark's goal of reaching the Romans with the gospel. As noted earlier, numerous scholars have tackled this topic, and Gamel has contributed significantly to this question. "It is the title 'Son of God,' which most scholars agree

[660] Theudas, Judas the Galilean.

[661] Gamel, 68.

is the most important title for Jesus in Mark. It occurs eight times in the Gospel (1:1, 11; 3:11; 5:7; 9:7; 13:32; 14:61; 15:39), but the last time is especially important. Mark calls Jesus the Son of God in 1:1, God does so in 1:11, the demons did in 3:11 and 5:7, God does in 13:32, and the Jewish high priest asked him if he was the Son of God in 14:61. For the first time in 15:39, a human being recognizes what Mark has been revealing through the text, through God, through demons, and through the question of the high priest, that Jesus is in fact God's Son. If the centurion did not believe his own statement, then his confession "would still function as an anti-climax—the one moment when a human uses language only supernatural beings have utilized, but in so doing actually gets it wrong."[662] Whether the centurion believed his own statement revolves around the missing definite article "before υίός, the imperfect ην, and the status of the speaker as a Roman centurion."[663] Gamel does an exceptional job of discussing the pros and cons of this subject, and he concludes that the lack of the article is a matter of "qualitative significance; that is, it expresses something vital about the nature or character of the subject, in this case, that the kind of son "this man" is to God is defined by his crucifixion."[664] The use of the imperfect of εἰμί "should have no bearing for how we evaluate the 'orthodoxy' of his statement, for it rightly describes Jesus in the narrative as someone who is currently dead but whom the centurion evaluates as having been, while alive, God's Son."[665] In addition, Mark's Roman audience "would have understood the disposition of a Roman centurion to control our interpretation of his words. Like vocabulary, characters are primarily determined by the manner

[662] Ibid.

[663] Ibid.

[664] Ibid.

[665] Ibid.

in which an author deploys them, not in an essentialist fashion."[666] Another objection to the sincerity of the centurion's declaration is that "A Roman soldier's allegiance to the Emperor was expected to be absolute and it is unlikely that Mark's readers would find it believable that a professional soldier would risk his career in order to worship a crucified man."[667] Raymond Brown responds that scholars today should not ask "what a soldier meant at Golgotha in the year 30/33 [. . .]. We are to ask what this scene meant to the Marcan readers in the late 60s or 70s. For them the centurion would have had the representative value both as a Gentile and as a Roman official with responsibility who would not have reacted out of sheer pity or credulity."[668] Early Christianity is not lacking in other Romans exhibiting such recognition and faith (Matt. 18:5-13; Luke 7:1-10; and especially Cornelius in Acts 10). In contrast to the responses of everyone else at the cross, the centurion is not mocking or taunting Jesus, and certainly not after he died. This is this centurion's first appearance in Mark, and Mark wants his Roman readers to fully understand what this Roman centurion discovered, understood, and professed: Jesus is the (without the definite article: a character quality) Son of God.

Gamel's analysis of the soteriology of Mark 15:39 is excellent.

> It provides a compact expression of how Mark understands the death of Jesus to offer salvation to the world. For Mark, spiritual blindness is a condition that grips the entirety of humanity. Jesus appears preaching the good news of God's kingdom (1:15), defeating the spiritual forces oppressing humanity (1:21-28), and announcing that his coming marks the end of Satanic tyranny over the world (3:23-27). Yet the world does not recognize Jesus as God 's agent of deliverance but rather disowns him (6:2-3) and conspires to "destroy" him (3:6). For Mark, however, this Christological blindness is paradigmatic for the kind of blindness that is inherent to the human condition as a whole. After Jesus offers his parable about the sower (4:1-9), he explains to his disciples, privately, why he speaks in parables: "for those outside everything comes in parables, in

[666] Ibid.

[667] Ibid., 70.

[668] Raymond E. Brown, *The Death of the Messiah: From Gethsemane to the Grave: A Commentary on the Passion Narratives in the Four Gospels*, 2 vols. (New York: Doubleday, 1994), 2:1148-49.

> order that (ἱνα) 'seeing they might see and not perceive and hearing they might hear and not understand lest they turn and it be forgiven them'" (4:11-12) [. . .] the conceptuality lying behind this statement is a dualistic worldview in which God, through the agency of Satan, has blinded the "outsiders" while offering insight to the privileged "insiders." The world as a whole, thus, is oblivious to the spiritual realities that govern their lives. Human beings as human beings do not know the truth about God, Jesus, or their own condition. For them to recognize vital truth, an act of God is necessary.[669]

Although Jesus offers the "mystery of the kingdom of God" (4:11) to his disciples, even they still do not understand. Therefore, it comes as a shock when Jesus dies and the temple veil rips and the centurion "sees" (ιδών). The Jewish leaders deride Jesus as the "King of Israel" and suggest that if he comes down from the cross, they will "see and believe" (15:32). Others standing around are waiting to "see" if Elijah will come (15:36). No, a Roman first "sees"[670] who Jesus is and utters "truly" (αληθώς), this is the Son of God.

Very important is Mark's placement of the tearing of the veil, just before the centurion's confession. The ripped veil represented to both Jews, and now through Mark's Gospel, to the Romans, that God is removing an obstacle that is preventing him from an apocalyptic revelation of Himself to humanity. When the centurion makes his confession, he connects two opposites: ἀληθῶς οὗτος ὁ ἄνθρωπος υἱὸς θεοῦ ἦν, "truly, this *man* is the Son of *God*." The centurion was not claiming that Jesus had *become* a Son of God, as the deified Aeneas and Augustus. Essence, not progression, is the issue because Jesus can do what only God can do. Humanity (άνθρωπος) and Deity (θεός) come together on the Cross, and Mark wants his readers to know that a Roman saw it first. Gamel states that "Jesus, God's Son, becomes the new meeting place of God and humanity, replacing the temple as the locus of divine human encounter."[671] Mark

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[669] Gamel, 72.

[670] ίδείν is a verb of perception and it occurs as the first word in the sentence.

[671] Gamel, 74.

wanted to make his point very clear that he was addressing and challenging Virgil's Latin audience of the *Aeneid*. "Unlike Matthew and Luke, who use the more proper Greek terms (εκατόνταρχος and έκατόνταρχης, respectively), Mark uses the transliterated Latin loanword κεντυρίων to describe the figure on the cross."[672] Mark's statement that the Roman κεντυρίων stands έξ εναντίας of Jesus could imply opposition, as in "against" or "in opposition" to Jesus. [673] Mark does not explicitly write that, but the centurion would be considered an enemy of the Jews, and especially of a criminal considered bad enough to be crucified. This was probably the only centurion present, since more than one was not needed to oversee a crucifixion.[674] The symbolism of a centurion standing against this criminal would underscore the shock of that Roman representative being shocked into a confession that the Romans had just crucified the Son of God.[675] That a Roman centurion would care is significant to Mark's argument that Jesus is speaking through his death to Augustus, whose death opened no doors to heaven for his people. Mark is not interested in telling the reader the centurion's motives for making his confession. Gamel asks: "What is it that Mark is telling us by showing us that this kind of person—a Gentile, Roman soldier known for oppressing righteous Jews and the one who stands overseeing Jesus' own execution —and not another, receives the divine insight which enables him to utter this

[672] Ibid.

[673] "The spatial description of the centurion as standing opposite Jesus, if it has any symbolic or metaphorical force at all, may well signify the initial role of the centurion as an enemy of Jesus or as one who afflicts him" (Collins, *Mark*, 765).

[674] "This reading is all the more likely when we consider that the centurion was likely the one who was in charge of leading out the soldiers to crucify Jesus." Gamel, 75; Cf. Rudolf Pesch, Das Markusevangelium, vol. 2 (Freiburg: Herder, 1991), 499.

[675] John Pobee, "The Cry of the Centurion: A Cry of Defeat," in The Trial of Jesus: Cambridge Studies in Honour of C. F. D. Moule, ed. Ernst Bammel (London: SCM, 1970), 99.

confession?"[676] Gamel adds in a footnote, "In other words, we should read why his statement is plausible not based on these known descriptions but rather on what the ridiculousness of it on his lips shows us. The narrator determines characterization ultimately, not the readers' experiences."[677]

Mark's Jewish audience would most certainly remember Ps. 22:27, which announces that "All the ends of the earth will remember and turn to the Lord. All the families of the nations will bow down before You." This background would not have entered the Roman centurion's mind. His response was not ignited by the Old Testament, but by "how" Jesus died. Whatever that meant to the centurion, Mark uses that centurion to proclaim to Virgil's worldview that the Son of God's death will affect Romans more than anything that the mythical Aeneas or the historical Augustus did with their lives or their deaths. Centurions, as important as they were within the Roman system, were still a dime a dozen. The insignificance of a single statement from a trained killer over the entire existence of the Roman empire would normally never even be worth mentioning. The Jews, like Peter or James or John, should have proclaimed that God was reaching out to the nations, but Mark reaches out to quote that one insignificant centurion to make a statement so profound, that the fact of that statement will assign the entire Roman empire to the normal oblivion of every other temporary dictatorship throughout written history. The Son of God will save those who choose Jesus over Augustus. The Cross does not simply "show" salvation to the world, but it "accomplishes" it (14:24), because the Son of Man, not a Roman emperor, paid mankind's debt of sin. All of humanity's destiny is fixed to the Cross, and a

[676] Gamel, 76.

[677] Ibid.

Roman centurion has informed humanity that the man Jesus, the Son of God, used the Cross to become a "ransom for many."

The Afterlife of Jesus Versus Aeneas/Augustus Compared

Mark wrote his Gospel shrouded in just enough mystery to raise important questions. His terse style left some of these questions unanswered, forcing the reader to ask how those things were possible, and why they had happened. This approach to communication makes the reader wonder if the author just wants to raise the curiosity of the reader, but has no interest in satisfying the reader's curiosity, or if the author realizes that the reader cannot comprehend well enough what is being witnessed without more information and further experiences. The resurrection of Jesus supports the second reason for Mark's unanswered questions.

The Gospel began with fulfilled prophecy (Isa. 40), it seems to end with prophecy that will be fulfilled within hours of its prediction ("I will strike the shepherd, and the sheep will be scattered," 14:27), and then closes with a prophecy that would be filled within three days ("But after I have been resurrected, I will go ahead of you to Galilee," 14:28; "But go, tell His disciples and Peter, 'He is going ahead of you to Galilee; you will see Him there just as He told you,'" 16:7). The first mention that Jesus was going to rise from the dead (8:31) occurs after Mark has been asking the question, 'Who is Jesus?' through the first half of the book. Immediately after Peter answers the question correctly, Jesus reveals that he will die and three days later rise from the dead. Then Jesus reveals his true identity to three disciples.

Augustus did everything he could to promote himself as the fulfillment of Aeneas' fate for the Roman race. Virgil wrote the *Aeneid* for the main purpose of propagandizing Augustus to

the people. Virgil wrote an epic poem, a form of writing that had become firmly embedded in the reading habits and theaters of the Roman people. By using the form that was familiar to everyone, Virgil's story went straight to the heart of every Roman, who desperately wanted a live savior, a champion, who would grant them the comfort of a people who would rule the world. Virgil's story was reverse history. He wrote a myth about Aeneas that rewrote history to support and elevate Augustus to his desired position of divinity. When Aeneas and Augustus died, they entered the realm of the gods, but the realm of the gods is a vague, grey, nebulous world with minimal connection to the physical world of Rome. Neither Aeneas nor Augustus ever predicted that they would rise from the dead, nor would it have even entered their minds. Not even Virgil could have imagined any of his heroes physically rising from the dead and actually returning to eat and drink with their followers.

Jesus not only predicted his resurrection, but he revealed that he was in complete control of the entire event, even to the point of predicting the time he would be absent, three days. He made that added statement three times in the Gospel. But Jesus had no aspirations of becoming immediately famous. His plans were focused on others, not himself, and those plans encompassed eternity. He charged the disciples to tell no one about his transfiguration until after the resurrection. When they discussed among themselves what he meant by rising from the dead, Jesus gave them no further clarification. His agenda went beyond the selfishness of a deceptive dictator who was intent on using people to promote himself. Jesus was intent on serving others for their sakes, and rising from the dead so he could have an eternal relationship with those who chose to follow him.

The second revelation of his resurrection comes between the story of a vicious and powerful demon that Jesus casts out and the argument among the disciples as to which one of

them is the greatest. Jesus' resurrection will finalize his victory over Satan, and the disciples will realize that their discussion is equivalent to Augustus' attitude about himself. The third prediction of his resurrection precedes Jesus' central verse that he came to serve and give his life as a ransom for many, as opposed to Augustus' drive to serve himself.

Although Aeneas, Augustus' forerunner, never argued for his place as the greatest, he is clearly chosen by the gods for greatness from the beginning. Aeneas' main motivation was to serve his present and future people. He gives up almost all personal desire to accomplish this, giving of himself in a way incredibly selfless for a human (Book IV). Initially the sacrifices he makes are intended for his own people, but the *Aeneid* implies that with the establishment of the Roman Empire, the safety and security of the world can be secured. The similarities and differences between the sacrifice of Aeneas and the sacrifice of Jesus on the Cross are obvious. The main difference between Aeneas' sacrifice and Jesus' sacrifice is the lack of a personal relationship with God through the forgiveness of sins. Augustus, on the other hand, did not sacrifice himself for his people, as did Aeneas. It could be contended that Aeneas, the forerunner, was a better man than the person he represented. In any case, with these three predictions of his resurrection, Jesus is not putting his hope in a general resurrection at the end of the age, but his own, specific physical resurrection.

The idea of a physical resurrection was believed by many, as evidenced by those few who openly rejected the idea. When the Sadducees tried to mock Jesus and the resurrection, he uses the physical resurrection as the main presupposition for his argument when he replies, "For when they rise from the dead" (12:25). Only a few people doubted that a physical resurrection was a real phenomena. Yet, no one believed that any Roman emperor would ever experience such an event.

When Jesus rose from the dead, no one saw it coming. Some women had come to anoint his dead body, but when they went to the grave, the last thing they expected to experience was an angel telling and showing them that they had the right tomb but that Jesus, the Nazarene, who was still very much human, was "not here," i.e., physically alive and in a different physical location (16:6). John the Baptist had been a camel-skin clad messenger when Jesus began his servant ministry, and now the opposite appears: a live angel, a messenger, dressed in radiant white clothing, informs the ladies that Jesus is risen, and then that angel makes them messengers to tell the disciples. Jesus had come from Nazareth in Galilee (1:9), and after the resurrection he is returning to Galilee (16:7), returning to his starting point.

One might expect Jesus or the angels to have instructed the women, or at least some of the more important men in Israel, to immediately communicate to Pilate that Jesus had risen from the dead, and suggest that he inform Augustus. Mark records that the women "said nothing to anyone, since they were afraid" (16:8). This response plays a major part in the discussion about which ending of Mark is the most probable, the shorter one that ends at 16:8, or the longer one that continues on to 16:20. The thesis of this dissertation is not seriously affected by the answer to that question, but Garland, after thoroughly presenting extensive support for all the different views, including an excellent discussion about the fear of the disciples throughout the Gospel, believes that the fear of the women "is the normal response to divine revelation that cannot yet be fully understood,"[678] and that "Mark understood the women's silence to be limited,"[679] in Larry W. Hurtado's view, that they did not speak to the general public (especially

[678] Garland, 552-557. For an extensive and evolving bibliography on this subject, see http://www.daveblackonline.com/last_twelve_verses_of_mark.htm.

[679] Ibid., 555.

to Pilate or Augustus), but that they did tell the disciples.[680] Of all the accomplishments completed by Aeneas and Augustus, they never had to rise from the dead in order to make sense of their lives or to fulfill their agenda and destiny. Only God could have done what Jesus did, and the resurrection proved that. Aeneas' and Augustus' essences were not ontologically divine, but declared divine by humans who followed them. There is no competition possible between what they did and what Jesus did.

When Augustus died, Rome moved on to the next emperor. When Jesus rose from the dead, the "empty tomb is not the end of the gospel, only the beginning."[681] Jesus gathered no army, "wins no military battles, ascends no earthly throne to rule a great empire, and dies ignominiously on a cross on the orders of a Roman ruler [. . ..] Only after Jesus' death and resurrection can one begin to understand the momentous nature of the news that God has acted decisively in and through Jesus, who is the true Christ of God."[682]

When Jesus prophesied his coming in glory in 8:38, he brought the shame into the discussion.[683] No Roman wanted to be shamed. Nationalism and loyalty to Augustus controlled and directed the Roman mind. Jesus boldly claimed that he would return in the glory of the Father, not Jupiter, and with the holy angels, not the apparitions and ghosts of the *Dis*, the underworld, of Virgil's *Aeneid*. If a person chose the Roman savior over Jesus, he would

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[680] Larry W. Hurtado, "The Women, the Tomb, and the Climax of Mark," Pp. 427-50, esp. 439, in *A Wandering Galilean: essays in Honour of Sedn Freyne*. Supplements to the Journal for the Study of Judaism 132, ed. Zuleika Rodgers, Margaret Daly-Denton, and Anne Fitzpatrick McKinley (Leiden: Brill, 2009), 439.

[681] Ibid., 47. See also Rudolf Pesch, *Naherwartungen: Tradition and Redaktion in Mk 13*. Kommentare und Beiträge zum Alten und Neuen Testament (Düsseldorf: Patmos, 1968), 2:536.

[682] Garland, 195.

[683] "For whoever is ashamed of me and of my words in this adulterous and sinful generation, of him will the Son of Man also be ashamed when he comes in the glory of his Father with the holy angels."

experience God's shame instead of the expected Roman honor. Those who chose to follow Jesus now will be gathered by the angels from anywhere on the earth (13:26-27). When Jesus returns, everyone will experience his power as they view him seated at the right hand of God (14:62).

The resurrection becomes the ultimate foundation that verifies the reason for his death and teaching about his second coming. As he would return to Galilee before them and "see" them after his resurrection, so would he return to take them with him into his eternal kingdom. His coming kingdom will not be limited to the conquered territories of the Roman armies. Reading and listening to Mark's Gospel allows one to "see" Augustus and Jesus from God's (not the Roman gods') eternal perspective.

The Kingdom of Jesus Versus Aeneas/Augustus Compared

The first message Jesus begins with in Mark is that "the kingdom of God has come near" (1:15). The Roman kingdom had already arrived, begun by Aeneas and brought to its pinnacle by Augustus. For Jesus to claim that the kingdom "has come near" reveals that God's kingdom is different than Rome's kingdom. As the people watched Jesus edge closer and closer to the cross, he continually presented different aspects of God's kingdom with his teachings and miracles. Later in the Gospel Jesus will reveal that the Kingdom of God has a facet of power that some of his disciples would see come in the future (9:1). The entrance requirement to become a member of Rome's kingdom was to accept and support Rome's State Religion, which included recognizing Aeneas and Augustus as deified. The entrance requirement to become a member of God's kingdom was a two-sided coin. Repentance (a "change of mind," "a conversion from one

system to another") meant turning away from other religious systems, and believing (place one's trust in/on) in the good news, as will be expressed and explained by Jesus through Mark.

The kingdom of Rome contained all the normal human aspects of kings and vassals, soldiers and merchants, priests and laymen. It was founded on the myths of Virgil and the blind obedience of the people. The required religion permeated every aspect of life, but no Roman or foreign god had conquered the hearts and minds of the people. The kingdom of God consists of God creating humanity and being actively and directly involved in directing human affairs to accomplish His ultimate purposes. When Jesus says "The time is fulfilled," he is claiming that God's plans are absolute, as opposed to Jupiter's arbitrary "fate" that was continually challenged by the other gods (Juno). God placed His divine Son, the human Jesus, at the center of His reign, and focuses everything on who Jesus is, what Jesus does, and why Jesus does it. God's kingdom is effectively the kingdom of Jesus. The followers of Jesus have entered his kingdom, but because Jesus' kingdom is directly connected to the supernatural spiritual world, everyone is directly affected by his kingdom.

God's kingdom has been in existence for eternity. The revelation of His kingdom during the Roman era appeared deceptively small and temporary. Jesus had no army and no support system to support an army. No one believed that his kingdom would last long. Then he began to feed thousands of people, and he had no discernable food source from which he received his supplies. Jesus compared his kingdom to a mustard seed, the smallest, most insignificant seed among seeds, but regardless of human response to this small seed, the kingdom's future growth was as certain as the growth of that mustard seed, and that growth will surpass any human kingdom, since God's visible kingdom will become "the largest of all garden plants, with such big branches that the birds can perch in its shade" (4:32). Jesus had no intention of storming

Rome with an army of fishermen to free the Jewish people from Roman oppression. Had he done so, his kingdom would have been no different than any other human-led kingdom based solely on human power, that could not have overcome the death of its King.

If King Jesus had not risen from the dead, his perfect life would not have paid for all of humanity's sins. God's kingdom did not focus on the "disciples' hopes of achieving precedence and rank above others (9:33-35), and James's and John's hopes of sitting on thrones and basking in glory (10:35-45)."[684] Earthly triumph would come soon enough. First the inexplicable suffering, and then the growth of the kingdom through the spreading of the gospel, followed by the return of the equally inexplicably resurrected King. During and after the suffering the kingdom of God will experience cosmic opposition. Augustus' kingdom had to defend itself against other human kingdoms, and it survived because God allowed it to do so. God's kingdom coexists with Satan's kingdom, and God allows that to exist as well, but Satan's kingdom is coming to an end (Mark 3:26). "God's kingdom redeems; Satan's kingdom tyrannizes and destroys."[685] Augustus' kingdom was not in opposition to Satan's kingdom, and it could be argued that Satan supported Augustus through the false worship of the gods, from Jupiter on down. Satan removes the seed from the Romans (4:15) in order to keep them from being drawn to God's kingdom. Augustus has a powerful ally, but both kingdoms, the evil spiritual one and the puppet one, with Augustus playing the role of a marionette without knowing that he was that insignificant, would be destroyed. Augustus' kingdom would disappear into the pages of history, while Satan would move on to find another minion to continue his losing battle against the true King: Jesus. Satan lost the battle in the desert (Mark 1:12-13), and the victor has arrived to

[684] Ibid., 352.

[685] Ibid., 364.

destroy him (1:24; 3:11; 5:7-8). The King will come as someone who is stronger (1:7), and he will bind the strong man (3:22-30) and free the captives. Mark illustrates the helplessness of human effort to fight satanic power in the story of the demon-possessed Gerasene (5:3-4). If the people choose Augustus as their king, then they will face the demonic world armed with only human power. Augustus will be of no help, since he had to ask the gods for help to ward off the Cacodaemones.[686] Romans were helpless in the real spiritual war, but salvation is available if a Roman would return to the words of Jesus in Mark 1:15 – repent and believe.

Discipleship with Jesus Versus Citizenship with Augustus Compared

A Roman citizen (*Civitas*, plural *Civitates*) had privileges beyond anyone else in the realm.[687] Protection, wealth, and prestige topped the list of benefits enjoyed by a Roman citizen. A person was not "called" to be a Roman citizen. One was born with that position or one earned it or one bought it. From a comfort-level perspective, it was highly recommended that a person be a Roman citizen. Such citizenship was obtained at birth if both parents were Roman citizens themselves, even if the mother had been an alien with the right to marry a Roman man. Citizenship could be granted by generals and emperors to people for any number of reasons. Voting rights usually came with citizenship, but the Roman society was organized around property ownership, thus voting rights were normally channeled toward the wealthy landowners. Public office was available to citizens, as well as the right to serve in the military, if the person owned enough land or was connected with a wealthy relative. Inhabitants of communities and

[686] Buxton, *The Complete World of Greek Mythology*.

[687] Beard, 66-9, 137, 254. See also Jane F. Gardner, *Being a Roman Citizen* (New York: Routledge, 2010).

towns came to govern their local affairs while remaining loyal citizens. Some members of non-Roman communities were given Latin Rights, but were not allowed to vote in any national politics. If they moved to and lived in Rome, they received full citizenship with all the ensuing rights. The non-Roman allies (*socii*) connected to Rome by treaty had no Roman citizenship rights, but still had to fight for Rome and pay taxes. The *Socii* revolted in 90-88 B.C. and were granted full citizenship at the end of the war.[688] Under Julius Caesar citizenship to soldiers and aristocrats was extended outside of Italy, not everywhere, but the move quickened Romanization among the conquered cultures around Rome. By A.D. 212 Roman citizenship was no longer of great importance.

In Acts 16 Paul mentioned his Roman citizenship. That information caused a stir among the officials in Phillipi, who had instigated the beating of Paul without a trial. Rome had strict laws against treating Roman citizens in such a way. In Acts 22:28 a Roman commander told Paul that he had bought his Roman citizenship. Paul informed him that he, Paul, had been born a Roman citizen.

In Mark, Jesus never spoke about citizenship in the kingdom of heaven, but he did speak extensively about being a disciple. Jesus immediately begins Mark's Gospel with a call to discipleship (1:16-20). (Luke does not get around to doing that until Luke 5). Garland notes that "Rabbis in this era never directed persons to become their disciples. Pupils were self-selecting and chose a rabbi they thought would best instruct them in the law [. . ..] The primary loyalty of the disciple was to the law."[689] Martin Hengel states that Jesus had not proclaimed himself to be a rabbi, and Hengel supports this further by noting that rabbinic literature reveals no such

[688] Ibid., 155, 159, 165-6, 217, 233-41, 251-2, 292.

[689] Garland, 389.

"calling" and "following after" rabbis.[690] Jesus called his disciples to follow *Him*, not to get a degree in the study of the law. His call did not focus on a proven academic record. He chose men who lived in the real world, with real professions, with the responsibilities of having families and neighbors and problems – not educated Roman poets or highly intelligent political advisors.[691]

The call to discipleship came with different benefits and with lots of problems. The benefits included a personal relationship with Jesus, much closer friendships than in normal Roman society with the other disciples, a different kind of life on this earth that transformed the person into the image of the one being followed, and the promise of eternal life. The problems consisted of suffering and being misunderstood by almost everyone along the way. The disciples would learn to compare the challenges and benefits between the kingdom of Rome and the Kingdom of God. Only Judas chose Rome over Jesus. Commitment to Rome entailed moral duty and ritual worship. Discipleship under Jesus required the complete person: body, mind, soul and heart. Augustus wanted loyalty. Jesus wanted unwavering love. Augustus commanded his people to kill Roman enemies. Jesus commanded his followers to love the Romans. Augustus promised a comfortable life on this earth. Jesus promised suffering now with comfort to follow in the next life. A person could earn Augustus' respect. The eternal life promised by Jesus could only be accepted as a gift of grace.

The Roman people were to avoid being negative about Rome in any way. Jesus sent his followers out to actively and intentionally preach the good news to everyone. Augustus had little patience with those who were slow to understand. Jesus gave the disciples the same lessons over and over. Augustus always attempted to motivate the people to be proud of the Roman Empire.

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[690] Martin Hengel, *The Charismatic Leader and His Followers*. Translated by John Bowden (London: SCM Press, 1985), 32.

[691] Gaius Cilnius Maecenas.

Jesus replaced pride with humility and servanthood. Augustus considered desertion to be treason. Jesus forgave Peter for denying him three times. Augustus treated women well, but considered them less qualified than men for the more important things in life. Jesus put women in the position of being his first messengers to proclaim that he had risen from the dead. Augustus did everything to promote himself. Jesus healed people. Augustus allowed no competition, no other kingdom, during his reign. When the Herodians attempted to trick Jesus into either heresy or treason (Mark 12:13-17), they asked him about paying taxes. He responded that they should give the coins back to Caesar whose face was on them. They were amazed. It is possible that their amazement was based on Jesus' requirement of denying oneself in order to follow Jesus. That type of commitment did not usually acknowledge another kingdom that might have some authority over the followers. The disciples would eventually recognize that Jesus had introduced a different type of kingdom to them, but not only to them – a kingdom that a Roman centurion "saw" when Jesus died on the cross (15:39).

The Secrets of Jesus Versus Aeneas/Augustus Compared

Before comparing Jesus with Aeneas/Augustus, the presupposition is affirmed that Jesus was the Messiah when he entered human history. William Wrede's book *The Messianic Secret* theorized that Jesus' followers believed that Jesus became the Messiah after his resurrection.[692] He further believed that this tradition of Jesus' secret messiahship began very early, and that Mark amplified this secret that was "read back into the story of Jesus to account for why he was

[692] William Wrede, *The Messianic Secret: Das Messiasgeheimnis in den Evangelien*, Library of Theological Translations, First Edition, trans. J. C. G. Greig (Cambridge: James Clarke & Co., 1971, original 1901 in German), 225-29.

not acknowledged as the Messiah during his ministry."[693] After detailed treatment of each of Wrede's arguments, T. W. Manson disagrees by commenting that Mark adopted

> the hopeless contradiction that he [Mark] must record acts and words of Jesus that demand publicity and recognition of him as the Messiah within a framework that demands secrecy and non-recognition [. . .]. The evangelist cannot be given credit of having invented the lunatic structure by himself; so we fall back on that ever-present help in critical difficulties, the anonymous Group. They concocted the bulk of the farrago of nonsense, which Mark, with a few embellishments of his own, eventually put into writing.[694]

William Sanday agrees with Manson: "That any ancient should seek to cover the non-existence of certain presumed facts by asserting that they did exist, but that the persons affected were compelled to keep silence about them, is a hypothesis altogether too far-fetched to be credible."[695] R. T. France is stunned that "The longevity of Wrede's speculation, which has set (and perhaps skewed) the agenda for subsequent discussion, that the theme of secrecy is a Marcan apologetic invention, is one of the more remarkable phenomena of biblical scholarship."[696] N. T. Wright weighed in with similar comments.[697] Empty speculation contributes very little to serious biblical scholarship, but such speculation has plagued serious research throughout the history of the Church. Wrede's opinion has been almost universally rejected, but Mark's secrecy still needs to be explained, especially in light of Virgil's success at spreading the message of the *Aeneid* across the known world.

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[693] Garland, 369; Wrede, 145-46.

[694] T. W. Manson, "Realized Eschatology and the Messianic Secret," *Studies in the Gospels: Essays in Memory of R. H. Lightfoot*, ed. Dennis E. Nineham (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995), 209-22. Garland, 368-371.

[695] William Sanday, "The Injunctions of silence in the Gospels," *JTS* 5 (1904), 324.

[696] France, *The Gospel of Mark,* 331, n. 43.

[697] N. T. Wright, *Jesus and the Victory of God* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1996), 529, n. 181.

Virgil used an epic poem, a commonly understood form of communication, to convince the people that his myth was true. Mark used parables. Parables were not stories used to simply explain or compare ideas; nor to spice up a boring conversation. Parables "bring truth itself to expression, which cannot be expressed abstractly."[698] Garland believes that "The mystery of the coming of the kingdom of God cannot be satisfactorily communicated except in parables that both reveal and conceal at the same time."[699] The inherently paradoxical finds clarity within the genre of parables. How can a messiah die and still save his people? How can humility and service overcome pride and the regime of dictators? The parable of the vineyard owner answers both questions. The messiah will rise from the dead (12:10). Parables also reveal new panoramas that "can subvert previous biases, assumptions, and predispositions, because it can draw from a 'common stock' of 'well-known narrative themes, characters, and actions' to sculpt a transformative view of reality."[700] God's kingdom exists in the present because Jesus has entered the scene with his teaching and miracles, but it will continue to exist in the future, as explained by the parable of the mustard seed (4:8, 20, 26-29, 30-32). God's kingdom, in spite of resistance, will thrive and outgrow the opposition. The kingdom of Rome came with Aeneas' and Augustus' armies, Jesus came from an obscure village among an inconspicuous conquered people. Augustus was constantly looking over his shoulder to see who would try to topple him from power. Jesus was constantly looking at the Cross, an event that would not rob him of his power: Augustus' uncertainty contrasted with Jesus' absolute certainty. Mark does not record Jesus making the direct claim that he alone is in absolute control of his death (John 19:18), but

[698] Joachim Jeremias, *The Parables of Jesus*, rev. ed., trans. S. H. Hooke (New York: Scribner's, 1963), 20.

[699] Garland, 342.

[700] Ibid.

characteristically, Mark reveals Jesus stating unequivocally that he will be killed and that "after three days he will rise" (Mark 9:31). There is no hesitancy or wavering or "if fate allows it" or "if it is written in the stars." Jesus said it; that settles it. The glorious kingdom of Rome has passed its pinnacle, but the visible aspect of the Kingdom of God was just emerging in its eschatological glory.

The parable of the sower (4:3-8) compares Jesus as the sower of the seed, as God's representative of who is sowing seed, to draw people to himself. He sows to everyone, regardless of their attitude toward the seed. Entrance to the kingdom of God does not depend on one's relationship to the Roman gods, but to the seed of God, His Word, in the person of Jesus and Mark's written revelation. The sower is the key. Mark's secret is not that the kingdom of God will surprise everyone when it suddenly appears, but that the sower has already arrived incognito and is already sowing the seed. Immediately after the parables about seed, Jesus surprises the disciples with his ability to control nature (4:35-41), which forced the disciples to ask the question, "Who is this?" Is Jesus the sower, who scatters the seed? Is Jesus the secret? The kingdom of God is so very different from the kingdoms of this world, that God sent His messenger to reveal His kingdom piece by piece, requiring those seeking His kingdom to focus on the messenger, the sower, Jesus of Nazareth, a carpenter's son who does not fit the cultural description of the Jewish messiah, nor a King who could oppose Augustus. The sower's ministry progresses like a hidden seed growing in the ground. The kingdom of God cannot be recognized and understood by looking at the surface ground before the seed has sprouted (4:27). That "revelation" will appear when the time is ready. Mark does not state directly that "unless a grain of wheat falls to the ground and dies, it remains by itself. But if it dies, it produces a large crop" (John 12:24). Mark lets the reader figure it out for himself, which the reader cannot do until after

the resurrection. France remarks that the kingdom of God "is something so paradoxical, so totally opposed to natural human insight, that it takes nothing less than divine revelation to enable people to grasp it."[701] Because the Roman and Jewish understanding of God's kingdom was alike and wrong, both would need to wait until after the resurrection to grasp God's kingdom as revealed through the risen Son of God.

The unique feature of parables is the different effects they have on the listeners. Whether Jewish or Roman, a person could be an insider or an outsider, depending on whether that person was sincerely listening or not (4:9). Jesus was not a Jewish messiah who had come to support a Jewish rebellion against the Roman Empire. He came to challenge everyone's view of God's kingdom. Besides that, the present hiddenness of God's kingdom was not to be permanent, as illustrated by a parable about a lamp, that "comes" (active voice) to be put on a lampstand instead of being hidden under a bed (4:21). By staying close to Jesus and observing with the intention of discovering truth, one will discover that Jesus is the lamp that comes (1:38) as the materialization of God's kingdom. Looking closely at the light, one discovers that Jesus is the Son of God, not just a myth to trick people into believing in the glory of God's kingdom, as Virgil intended with the *Aeneid*. Jesus' hidden method of saving mankind will be revealed when the divine Son of God volunteers to die on the Cross and then surprise the Roman world by rising from the dead. God values weakness over power, and He rewarded the humility of the Cross with vindication of the resurrection. Rome valued power over weakness, and Augustus never rose from the dead to be vindicated for anything.

Sometimes Jesus demanded silence about his person or some event, but sometimes he ordered an announcement. The Gerasene demoniac was told to go home and tell everyone what

[701] France, *Mark*, 197.

happened (5:19-20). Jesus required no silence about his public miracles, which with so many witnesses, could not have been hushed up, anyway. After some of the healings, Jesus did not tell people to keep quiet about his person, but about the miracles (1:32-34; 3:6-12; 6:54-56). Even though Jesus told Jairus' household to be quiet about raising their daughter, he openly promoted the knowledge that He had been the one who had healed the woman on the way to Jairus' home (5:22-43). His commands to be silent about his person are obeyed, but about the miracles are usually not obeyed. There is no coherent system of theology that surfaces from these instances. The three specific types of silencing commands have different things to say to Rome.

When the demons shrieked out who Jesus was (3:11-12), they were petrified. They were either hoping to ward Him off by shouting His name, or more likely, fear simply exploded into screams. Speculating which is true would require interviewing the demons, but such contact is the very thing that Jesus wanted to hinder. When Jesus silenced them, he was stopping the use of their supernatural knowledge that humans did not have. First, Jesus began early demonstrating his power over the demonic world, and silencing them was another proof of his superiority over them. Mark's readers would notice that almost immediately (3:11-12). Second, Aeneas and Augustus ruled in a world of magic, and Jesus wanted no source of information about his being coming from the demonic world. Jesus called people to follow him long before he revealed his true identity. Being assured of Jesus' identity by demons held a person in the Roman world of animism and precluded trusting Jesus before knowing all that He was going to reveal through the Cross and the resurrection. In addition, Jesus did not want the people to become enamored with demons and be drawn away from His message of repentance (1:15, 38). Thirdly, Mark wrote his Gospel to point out to future readers that Jesus did not want his identity to be revealed by the demonic world. The power of His word silences the demons, and this allows people to "see"

Jesus through the event without being hindered or deceived or misguided by demonic messengers. Jesus was not hiding his divinity by silencing the demons. He was demonstrating his power over them, and hindering the people from looking to demons instead of directly at Jesus to answer their questions about him when they asked, "Who is this?"

Augustus did everything he could to promote his power and authority through Virgil's propaganda of the *Aeneid*. Augustus attempted to squash any mention of his part in the civil wars, so the Roman people would believe that fate had brought him to Rome to solidify what the mythical Aeneas had begun when he established Rome. All other actions by Augustus were promoted by every means possible to draw attention to himself, in order to gain the populace's approval and support. It was the only way that Augustus, and any other world ruler, could envision receiving the power of the people to support him.

Jesus, on the other hand, did not need the masses to support him. Although he opened the door to everyone, he only drew those who wanted to follow him, before they knew all that he was going to reveal to them in the course of time. Although Augustus gave his all to a propaganda machine throughout the Roman Empire, he still could not erase entirely many of his previous cruelties, thus exposing his weaknesses to those who chose to look closely enough. Jesus chose to conceal his personal identity and his power until it became obvious that the people recognized Jesus' miraculous power, and they began to exclaim, "Who is this person who drives out demons?" "Who is this person who rules over nature?" Who is this person who heals the sick?" So why did people want to kill him? Humility in Jesus is contrasted with arrogance in Augustus. Jesus never sought fame or glory for himself, which was quite the reverse with Augustus. Adam Winn sees modesty in Jesus instead of secrecy. He believes that the Romans

promoted modesty more than honor at the time of Jesus, and therefore Mark is presenting Jesus as a good Roman who demonstrated excellent Roman values of imperial virtue.[702]

Jesus also never took the offensive to bring in the kingdom of God, as opposed to Augustus' passion to see his Roman Empire above all other kingdoms. Jesus never raised an army nor debated the positives and negatives of myth over history. In fact, Jesus made it quite clear to Pilate that Rome had nothing to fear from him as the King of the Jews (15:2-5), because His kingdom was categorically different from the Roman Empire. This stance made Jesus a different kind of Jew. Jeremy F. Hultin thinks that Jesus wanted silence so that his miracles would not rile up the Roman government, especially if they perceived that Jesus wanted to use his power to attract supporters who were willing to overthrow the government.[703] The problem with this view is the fact that Jesus never worried about other people's reactions causing him problems or not allowing him to fulfill his goals. He clearly could have raised an army by demonstrating that he would have no trouble feeding them (6:30-44), or raising from the dead any of his soldiers killed in action, or win battles of power against demonic forces, something that the Romans could not do. His secrecy focused on giving people time to learn and re-learn lessons about his person (miraculously feeding the masses: 6:30-44 followed by 8:1-10) before revealing his true identity at the transfiguration (9:2-7). The fact that Jesus forbid the disciples to reveal his identity to others in 8:30 simply indicates that Jesus knew that the people would misunderstand his kingship and his presentation of the kingdom of God if they drew their conclusions about him before they had experienced all they needed to know in order to "see"

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[702] Winn, *The Purpose of Mark's Gospel: An Early Christian Response to Roman Imperial Propaganda*, 190-92.

[703] Jeremy F. Hultin, "Disobeying Jesus: A Puzzling Element in the Messianic Secret Motifs," *Portraits of Jesus: Studies in Christology*, Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament 2/321, ed. Susan E. Myers (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2012), 92.

Him properly: his death and resurrection. Even the transfiguration would not have been enough without the cross and the resurrection (9:9).

The responses to His demand are unique to the entity being commanded. When Jesus silenced demons, they always obeyed (1:25, 34; 3:11-12). Those humans who benefited from some miracle usually disobeyed Jesus. Eventually, there would be no doubt as to who Jesus was; everything will be disclosed (4:22). After the resurrection, Jesus is fully revealed to those who had chosen to follow him. Mark's "suspended ending" in 16:8 has a direct parallel to Homer's *The Iliad*, and *The Odyssey* and Virgil's *Aeneid*. All three "leave their readers in suspense at the end."[704] Jodi Lee Magness presents evidence that "it was normal literary practice in the ancient world to allude to well-known events that occurred after those being narrated in the text without actually narrating those events."[705] Mark's last challenge to the *Aeneid* ends with the same kind of abrupt ending that Virgil used in the *Aeneid*.

When Aeneas met his father in the *Dis*, his father advised Aeneas to spare the conquered. At the very end of the *Aeneid* Aeneas rejects his father's advice. Aeneas had just defeated Turnus in battle, and Turnus begs for mercy. The last three lines of the *Aeneid*: ""So saying, burning with rage, he buried his sword deep in Turnus' breast: and then Turnus's limbs grew slack with death, and his life fled, with a moan, angrily, to the Shades." The contrast with the last three verses of Mark 16:6-8:

> And he said to them, "Do not be alarmed. You seek Jesus of Nazareth, who was crucified. He has risen; he is not here. See the place where they laid him.
> But go, tell his disciples and Peter that he is going before you to Galilee. There you will see him, just as he told you."

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[704] Morna D. Hooker, "Beginnings and Endings," *The Written Gospel*, ed. Markus Bockmuehl, and Donald A. Hagner (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 194.

[705] Jodi Lee Magness, *Marking the End: Sense and Absence: Structure and Suspension in the Ending of Mark's Gospel*, Semeia Studies (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1986), 30-31. Garland, 548.

> And they went out and fled from the tomb, for trembling and astonishment had seized them, and they said nothing to anyone, for they were afraid.

The contrast would not be missed by anyone who had been steeped in the *Aeneid* and then read the Gospel of Mark.

Mark portrays Jesus as holding back information about his person and his mission until the disciples are presented with the transformation. Jesus had no sins which he needed to hide from his followers, so they would continue to think well of him. His secrecy was for their benefit, not for himself. Augustus had his own secrets.[706] He preached Roman traditional family values and virtue. He presented the Romans with a public face of strictness but noble and high-minded *paterfamilias* who treasured a simple lifestyle. He stayed married to one woman for over fifty years, and he set up morality laws to regulate sexual behavior and to punish adultery. He despised the mysterious fertility rites of foreign cults. At one point he ordered a favored ex-slave to commit suicide, because the freedman had been having sex with women of Roman nobility. He banished his own daughter for adultery.

Augustus was no saint, however. He was married three times. Although his third wife, Livia, never gave him a child, he remained married to her for over fifty years. However, Tacitus called her an "easy wife," because she ignored his notorious womanizing. Many asked her how she had obtained such a commanding influence over Augustus. She answered that "it was by being scrupulously chaste herself, doing gladly whatever pleased him, not meddling with any of his affairs, and, in particular, by pretending neither to hear of nor to notice the favorites that were the objects of his passions."[707] Augustus divorced his second wife on the day she gave birth to

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[706] Beard, 32, 122-3, 188, 305-11, 313-315, 329, 377-8, 428-34.

[707] Cassius Dio, *Dio's Roman History* in Six Volumes, trans. Herbert Baldwin Foster (New Zealand: Halcyon Press Ltd., 2010), 54.19.3; 58.2.5.

his daughter, Julia. He married a heavily pregnant Livia immediately. Augustus also took to bed Terentilla, wife of his best friend and closest political advisor, Maecenas. It was rumored that Livia procured young girls for Augustus' pleasure. Everyone in Augustus' household were involved in gross immorality, conspiracy and scandal, with Augustus arranging and rearranging many of their marriages.[708]

Whenever someone suspects a secret to be discovered, one usually thinks that some immorality or crime is involved. Augustus fit that normal human pattern well. With Jesus however, the deeper one dug into his life, the more perplexed the revelation. How does a person enter a world of evil and debauchery without being dragged down into that world and becoming like everyone else? Hypocrisy was normal life. Jesus was not a normal person. Jesus never lied, he never broke a Roman law, he never committed a crime, he never had an affair. Mark used secrets to draw the Roman mind to a man, Jesus, who would completely put Augustus to shame, simply by showing up.

The Mission of Jesus Versus Aeneas/Augustus Compared

The mission of a king arises from that king's culture, his own personality, and his own dreams and goals. Although those dreams and goals vary, there are only so many options. Power, fame, and wealth, and a combination of those three perfectly describe the history of political aspirations in every society and kingdom. Augustus wanted all three. He spent his life accumulating wealth, but not for the sake of wealth itself. He used it to bring himself power and

[708] Christ Scarre, *Chronicle of the Roman Emperors: The Reign-by-Reign Record of the Rulers of Imperial Rome (Chronicles)*, 1st Edition (New York: Thames and Hudson, 2012).

fame. His intrigue and wars all contributed to placing him in the center of everything, even to the point of being deified. He surrounded himself with trusted people who could and would fully support him personally, and support his goals. He wanted them to focus on him and his kingdom.

At the very beginning of his ministry, Jesus called his disciples to go with him as active participants in His mission. "Let's go on to the neighboring villages so that I may preach there too. This is why I have come."[709] Jesus gave them training by combining teaching and showing them what He was doing, then He sent them out to do the same thing (6:6b-13, 30-31). Augustus was only interested in the activity of his followers if that activity drew attention to himself. The same could be said of Jesus, since he did want people focusing on him, but Jesus was also sincerely interested in helping people, not just using them as supporters. Jesus focuses on freeing people from sickness, the demonic world, and their sins. Augustus could do none of these, thus placing the two kingdoms and their missions in two different realms. Jesus gave his followers power over demons (6:7, 12-13): "They went out and preached that people should repent. They drove out demons and anointed many sick people with oil and healed them." When the disciples returned to Jesus, they "reported to him all they had done" (6:30). Furthering the kingdom of God involved more than preaching about the King, and it included no forced submission.

Augustus had to supply his followers with an array of provisions, which took empire-wide preparation, whereas Jesus told his disciples to just take a staff and sandals (6:8-9). Hans Dieter Betz refutes the view that Jesus was modelling his ministry after the wandering Cynic philosophers in the ancient world.[710] Jesus was not thinking primarily of mobility and speed. He was also teaching them that their dependence rested completely on God, who would

[709] Mark 1:38

[710] Betz, "Jesus and the Cynics: Survey and Analysis of a Hypothesis," 453-75.

supernaturally motivate the people they met to provide for their physical needs. Augustus needed to motivate the people to support his troops by taxing and threatening the people. For the disciples, self-sufficiency would not teach them to rely on God when they encountered opposition, as they would. Although Jesus called Matthew to be one of his disciples, and Matthew was obviously wealthy as indicated by his profession and his home (2:14-15), there is no mention of Jesus asking the disciples to fund their ministries out of their own pockets. Mark only mentions the woman at the house of Simon in Bethany who poured expensive oil on his head, which he accepted as worship, not support. Matthew mentions women who had "served" (διακονοῦσαι) Jesus during his ministry (Matthew 27:55), but no mention was made of his needs. Therefore, it can be assumed that Jesus accepted their help as their gift to him for his ministry to them.

Being involved in Jesus' mission did not always mean success. The disciples were warned about rejection, and they were told how to respond to it. They were to shake the dust from their feet as a symbol of acknowledging that rejection (6:11). The disciples were not sent out to force everyone into the kingdom of God, nor to change the world into a Christian culture. Augustus expected the Roman army to win every battle to bring more honor to Rome and more people under Roman power. Augustus wanted the Roman culture to replace all those conquered cultures from the Middle East to Britain.

G. D. Kilpatrick believes that in the Gospel of Mark "there is no preaching the gospel to Gentiles in this world and there is no interest in their fate in the world to come."[711] Kilpatrick completely overlooks Mark's location in Rome for a good part of his life and ministry alongside

[711] G. D. Kilpatrick, "The Gentile Mission in Mark and Mark 13:9-11," in *Studies in the Gospels: Essays in Memory of R. H. Lightfoot*, ed. Dennis E. Nineham (Oxford: Blackwell, 1955), 157.

of Peter. Even if the absurd idea might be entertained that Mark focused solely on the believers in the local church in Rome, there is no way that Mark would have kept the gospel from those Romans who found their way to Jesus through a number of channels (Mark 15:39; Acts 10). Garland disagrees with Kilpatrick, but even Garland claims that "Mark presents Jesus' ministry as largely limited to Israel."[712] Surely the influence of Peter and Paul on Mark would have shown him Jesus' love for Romans, and the *Aeneid*, being read by every literate Roman, would be Mark's main target for demonstrating to the Romans the vast difference between Jesus and Augustus.

Mark shows Jesus drawing Romans into the kingdom of God in a number of ways. Whoever does God's will brings that person into a new family relationship as Jesus' "brother and sister and mother" (3:31-35). Jesus healed many Gentiles: the Gerasene demoniac (5:1-20) and the Syrophoenician woman's daughter (7:24-30) being just two examples. Jesus tells the ruling world power, Rome, that "the gospel must first be preached to all nations" (13:10; 14:9). Mark is directly competing with the *Aeneid*'s myth that Rome will rule the world. Jesus' mission is to rule the Romans and the rest of the world. Herod's temple will be destroyed. Jesus wants the temple to be "called a house of prayer for all nations" (11:17), so that even Romans can have a personal relationship with the Father based on forgiveness (11:25), as opposed to the non-relational god system of Rome based on myth.

The Romans relied on religious rituals to bring them in contact with their gods. Roman ritual impurity was not considered to be sinful or problematic except that the offender was barred access to the temple and any approach to the gods in the sanctuary until corrected.[713] Sexual

[712] Garland, 458.

[713] Eyal Regev, "Moral Impurity and the Temple in Early Christianity in Light of Ancient Greek Practice and Qumranic Ideology," *Harvard Theological Review* (2004): 388.

immorality was generally assigned to the category of moral impurity, rather than ritual impurity. Even grave sins held no devastating punishment, meriting nothing more than disbarment from civic sanctuaries. Everything could be purified through ritual means because the Roman system of the gods ascribed to no close relationship between humans and the gods. In Aeschylus's *Eumenides*, Orestes is successfully purified from matricide.[714] The *lex sacra* from Selinos shows the process of purification for a murder: until he was purified, he could not speak or be addressed, and he could not feed himself. After the rituals were completed, he was free from exile, and carried out all the normal human functions.[715]

Jesus changes the definition of defilement. In Mark 7:1-23, he classifies the Roman external defilement as only a symptom of internal defilement, which takes place in the heart (7:6). Jesus actually vilifies those who hold to external defilement as "hypocrites" who have no connection with God (7:6), and their worship is useless (7:7a). The *Book of Jubliees* 22:16-19[716] scornfully forbids any contact between Jews and Gentiles, including simply conversing with them out of politeness. Eating with them was strictly forbidden. Jesus demolishes those cultural walls with his scathing reply to their accusations of impurity. "Nothing outside a person can defile them by going into them. Rather, it is what comes out of a person that defiles them" (7:15). Jesus declares all foods clean (7:19). This barrier had kept the Jews separated from the Gentiles for centuries. Jesus wants his disciples to follow him as he reaches out to Romans with the gospel.

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[714] Keith Sidwell, "Purification and Pollution in Aeschylus' Eumenides," *Classical Quarterly*, New Series, 46/1 (1996): 44-57. Aeschylus, *Eumenides* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989).

[715] Michael H. Jameson, David R. Jordan, Roy David Kotansky, "A 'lex sacra' from Selinous," Issue 11 of Greek, Roman, and Byzantine monographs (Durham: Duke University, 1993), 174-78.

[716] James H. Charlesworth, ed., *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha*, trans. O. S. Wintermute (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1985), 2:98.

The Eschatology of Jesus Versus Aeneas/Augustus Compared

Strong leaders challenge their followers to seize the day and to look to the future. Augustus convinced the Romans that utopia had arrived under his leadership, and that the Roman empire would last. He used Virgil's *Aeneid* to support his contention that the god, Jupiter, had ordained the fate of Rome to place Augustus in that position, and all Romans would enjoy the fruits of their victories under Augustus. Augustus desired to be viewed as the pinnacle of Roman history. Having successfully pushed the civil wars behind him and out of sight, he tricked the Romans into believing that he had brought eternal peace into the world. His deification was more than justified.

Mark counters this fantasy by laying out the authentic and unquestionable eschatology that Jesus was bringing to the world. One could expect that the Son of God could and would bring eternal peace to the world, but God the Creator, superior beyond comparison to the mythical Jupiter, has already established His own fate for the world, while allowing individuals to choose their place in that fate.

Mark begins his Gospel with "The time had come!" (1:15) in the context of challenging the world's view of peace, and especially Augustus' rendition of that peace, and Mark ends his Gospel with "The time has come!" (14:41) in the context of Jesus on the point of making eternal peace possible and offering it to all of mankind by going to the Cross. The gospel is not the message of Rome, and the peace of salvation comes not from the external civil wars ceasing, but from having one's sins forgiven.

As Augustus sought to establish his kingdom on the earth, Mark is proclaiming in 1:15 that God has always been active within history, and He is now challenging Augustus publically

by inaugurating His kingdom on the earth, which can be experienced by following Jesus. Like Yahweh challenging Pharaoh, who claimed to be the Egyptian god, Ra, Jesus is challenging Augustus, who views his future among the Roman pantheon of the gods.

But God's kingdom is not temporal. Jesus also revealed a bigger fate than expected by any of the mythical gods of Rome. When Jesus was asked about fasting (2:18), he spoke of himself as a bridegroom and the joy of his followers as his bride in present time, but then he revealed that the bridegroom would be taken away, which will occasion fasting (2:19-20). A bridegroom only leaves under duress. Mark reveals the immediate cause of such duress: the hatred of Jewish leaders (3:6). Warnings about persecution toward Jesus' followers surface throughout Mark, and then Jesus reveals even worse things for his followers: wars (13:7), persecution (13:9), betrayal (13:12-13), trials (13:19), and deception (13:21-22). His followers can expect hatred and rejection from the world.

Augustus promised his followers peace and comfort, things that every Roman longed for. Jesus promised persecution and discomfort, things that no one wants. How could Jesus ever imagine that anyone would want to follow him? His most important message to them was a warning that they not be deceived by the negative things he prophesied. One would expect a message of comfort to minimize the fear of such prophesies, but why was deception the main thing that Jesus warned them about?

Jesus' followers, which included both Jews and Gentiles, were being offered two diametrically opposed kingdoms, Rome's and God's. Jesus' followers would be persecuted by the other kingdom. The *Aeneid* promised a temporal kingdom on this earth, which would persecute God's kingdom. Then Jesus reveals that there is more to God's kingdom than the current visible one. The disciples need to recognize and understand both aspects of God's

kingdom, and not be deceived into believing that this present world is the extent of total reality. Jesus would be ushering in a future aspect of God's kingdom, "in his Father's glory with the holy angels." Augustus could make no such promises. Augustus knew that he would not return to the earth to continue his rule after his death, and therefore, he made no such promises. Augustus had died, and there was only the common-held mythical belief that he had been deified. He would not be returning to complete the setting up of his kingdom. Jesus warned his followers to not be deceived by the transient nature of Rome's empire. If some of his followers became "ashamed" of him and his word, in preference for "this adulterous and sinful generation," then he would be ashamed of them, and they would be judged (8:38), not welcomed into God's kingdom. The Son of Man would "send his angels and gather his elect from the four winds, from the ends of the earth to the ends of the heavens" (13:27).

Jesus offered no timeline for the coming of the second part of God's kingdom. Rome claimed that the wars were over, but Jesus prophesied a future of wars beyond the Roman Empire. These wars would be accompanied by natural disasters, false prophets and persecution. The followers of Jesus would be sorely tested to continue in believing in Jesus as God's representative for God's kingdom. In spite of the challenges promised by Jesus for his followers (13-14), Mark closes his challenge to the mythical *Aeneid* with an event that no one could have foreseen: the resurrection of the Son of God.

The debate over the authenticity of the additional endings to Mark[717] contributes little to the thesis of this dissertation. Only that, if the shortest ending is to be preferred, then Mark used those last verses of Mark 16:1-8 as a culmination of his nebulous predictions, three times, that he would die and rise from the dead (8:31; 9:31; 10:33-34). Jesus knew that the disciples would not

[717] Garland, 535-559.

comprehend his predictions. Mark builds his case as a master literary craftsman, introducing the conflict between the two kingdoms, reaching the climax by having the earthly kingdom win the day by crucifying the king of the intruding kingdom, and blindsiding the readers with the most unexpected resolution ever to have appeared in written history: The crucified victim rises from the dead. With that resolution Mark drove a stake into the heart of the *Aeneid*'s message about a temporal kingdom founded by Aeneas and set in place by Augustus. Aeneas/Augustus were dead. They were not returning to the earth to complete anything. Their destiny was already finished. Jesus had risen from the dead. His kingdom was just beginning. Augustus' death did not redeem the Roman Empire. Jesus death offered redemption to anyone choosing to follow Him. Augustus' grave still contains his corpse, or the dust that it became. Jesus' tomb is empty. The response of the women demonstrates Mark's success of grabbing the reader's complete attention: "So they went out and started running from the tomb, because trembling and astonishment overwhelmed them" (16:8).

Conclusions and Further Research

This thesis has sought to discover if 1) the *Aeneid* had permeated the entire Roman world and beyond, that 2) Mark had knowledge of, and access to, the *Aeneid*, and that 3) Mark wrote his Gospel to address the *Aeneid*. This research builds on the previous work of other scholars who have demonstrated that the *Aeneid* was widely disseminated immediately after its publication, that it permeated deep into the Roman world and beyond, that other NT authors were at least confronted with concepts and theologies of the *Aeneid*, and that those NT authors addressed the *Aeneid* in their writings (Bonz – Luke, Wallace – Romans, Reasoner – Hebrews). Through fourteen pieces of independent, but interlocking pieces of evidence, the case has been made that these other scholars are correct in discovering the *Aeneid*'s extensive circulation and entrenchment into Roman society, that Mark had knowledge of, and access to, the *Aeneid*, and that he addressed the *Aeneid*'s concepts and theology in his Gospel. Virgil wrote the *Aeneid* to woo the whole world into the mythology that Aeneas had laid the foundation for the Roman Empire, and Augustus had brought it to full fruition. Mark wrote his Gospel to counter this epic myth with the historical truth of Jesus' life, death, and resurrection. The *Aeneid* captivated the hearts and minds of people for centuries. Only recently has its existence and influence begun to wane. Mark's message confronts the *Aeneid* with the words of Jesus: "Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will never pass away" (13:31).

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