

6. A Right Pair: Reading Mark with the help of Ezekiel

Each gospel writer used various Old Testament motifs to interpret the life of Jesus:

- Matthew = Jesus as Mosaic lawgiver, Servant/King
- John = Jesus as Passover Lamb, the great 'I am'

The Prophets in Mark

- Mal 3:1/Mark 1:2
- Isa 40:3/Mark 1:3
- Isa 42:1/Mark 1:11
- Isa 6:9-10/Mark 4:12
- Isa 29:13/Mark 7:6
- Psa 118:22-23/Mark 12:10-11
- Psa 110:1/Mark 12:36
- Joel 2:1-2, 10/Mark 13:24-25
- Zech 13:7/Mark 14:27

Markan allusions to Ezekiel

- Baptism of the Holy Spirit (1:8/Ezek 36:22-32)
- Wild beasts (1:13/Ezek 34:25)
- The Greatest Shrub (4:32/Ezek 17:23; 31:3-9)
- Reading Mark with the help of Ezekiel (or other prophets) helps us interpret the Gospel within its Old Testament context.
- We will use in particular the process of restoration described in Ezekiel 36 and surrounding chapters.

In addition there are a number of allusions to Ezekiel. We aim to read Mark in light of Ezekiel.

Characteristics of Mark

1. No early mention in Mark of sin as the reason for Christ's mission

- Matthew 1:21
- Luke 1:77; 2:7
- John 1:29, 36.

Characteristics of Mark

2. Lack of 'sin' imagery

- Matthew 26:27-28/ Mark 14:24-25

Characteristics of Mark

3. Harsher on the disciples

- Matthew 8:26 / Mark 4:40

Characteristics of Mark

4. Lack of teaching

- Mark 1:21, 38
- Mark 2:2,13
- Mark 6:2, 6b, 34

Ezek. 36:20 But when they came to the nations, wherever they came, **they profaned my holy name**, in that it was said of them, “These are the people of the LORD, and yet they had to go out of his land.” 21 But **I had concern for my holy name**, which the house of Israel had **profaned** among the nations to which they came.

22 Therefore say to the house of Israel, Thus says the Lord GOD: It is **not for your sake**, O house of Israel, that I am about to act, but **for the sake of my holy name**, which you have profaned among the nations to which you came. 23 **I will sanctify my great name**, which has been profaned among the nations, and which you have profaned among them; and the nations shall know that I am the LORD, says the Lord GOD, when through you I display my holiness before their eyes.

Sanctifying His Great Name

The LORD’s name has been profaned amongst the nations (Ezek 36:20-21, 23)

The LORD desires to sanctify his name (Ezek 36:22-23)

This will be done by displaying his holiness through ‘you’ (Ezek 36:23)

Cleanse (36:24-25, 29)

New heart (36:26)

His Spirit within you (36:27; 37:1-14)

Response of repentance (36:31)

‘Not for your sake’ (Ezek 36:22, 32)

A shepherd, ‘my servant David’

He shall feed you (Ezek 34:23, 29)

He shall banish wild animals (Ezek 34:25)

He shall be king over you (Ezek 37:24)

Ezek. 36:24 I will take you from the nations, and **gather you** from all the countries, and bring you into your own land. 25 I will sprinkle clean water upon you, and you shall be **clean from all your uncleannesses**, and from all your idols I will cleanse you. 26 A **new heart I will give you**, and **a new spirit I will put within you**; and I will remove from your body the heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh. 27 **I will put my spirit within you**, and **make you follow my statutes and be careful to observe my ordinances**.

Ezek. 34:11 For thus says the Lord GOD: **I myself will search for my sheep**, and will seek them out. 12 As shepherds seek out their flocks when they are among their scattered sheep, so I will seek out my sheep.

Ezek. 34:20 Therefore, thus says the Lord GOD to them: **I myself will judge between the fat sheep and the lean sheep.**

Ezek. 34:23 **I will set up over them one shepherd**, my servant David, and he shall feed them: he shall feed them and be their shepherd. 24 And I, the LORD, will be their God, and my servant David shall be prince among them; I, the LORD, have spoken.

Ezek. 34:25 I will make with them a covenant of peace and **banish wild animals from the land**, so that they may live in the wild and sleep in the woods securely.

- Problem: Yahweh's defiled name (vv. 16-17, 19-20)
- Yahweh's desire: to sanctify his name (vv. 21-22)
- Yahweh's method: 'through you I will display my holiness' (vv. 23, 26-32)
- Yahweh's instrument: his shepherd (cf. 34:11, 23; 37:24)

Key Themes

- 'not for your sake'
- restored reputation
- new heart
- new spirit
- uncleanness
- repentance
- kingly shepherd

Which of these themes are appropriated, developed, or dropped by Mark?

1:1-13

- John the Baptist
- baptism
- temptation
- restored reputation
- new heart
- new spirit (1:8)
- uncleanness
- repentance (1:4)
- kingly shepherd (1:13)

John the Baptist proclaimed a baptism of repentance and hinted at one who would baptise with the Holy Spirit. In the temptation story Jesus deals with the wild beasts.

1:14-15, 16-21

- proclamation
- calling of disciples
- restored reputation
- new heart
- new spirit
- uncleanness
- repentance (1:15)
- kingly shepherd (1:17, 20)

Jesus preaches repentance, and then calls disciples who (in Greek), follow behind him (1:20).

1:21-28

- teaches
- casts out spirit
- restored reputation (1:28)
- new heart
- new spirit (1:23)
- uncleanness (1:23)
- repentance
- kingly shepherd

Jesus teaches and casts out an unclean spirit.
His reputation spreads (1:28)

1:29-34

- heals mum-in-law
- heals whole town
- restored reputation (1:32, 37)
- new heart
- new spirit
- uncleanness
- repentance
- kingly shepherd (1:29ff)

Jesus looks after the family of his followers - a good shepherd.

1:40-44

- heals a leper

- restored reputation

- new heart

- new spirit

- **uncleanliness (1:41-44)**

- repentance

- kingly shepherd

The unclean leper is made clean.

2:1-12

- forgives paralytic
- restored reputation (2:12)
- new heart (hard hearts, 2:6)
- new spirit
- uncleanness
- repentance
- kingly shepherd

3:1-6

- restores withered hand
- restored reputation
- new heart (hard hearts, 3:5)
- new spirit
- uncleanness
- repentance
- kingly shepherd

'amazed' (1:28, 32, 45; 2:2; 3:7, 20, 32; 4:1; 11:18)

Restored Reputation

Mark 1:28 At once his **fame** began to spread throughout the surrounding region of Galilee.

Mark 1:33 And the **whole city** was gathered around the door.

Mark 1:45 But he went out and began to proclaim it freely, and to spread the word, so that Jesus could no longer go into a town openly, but stayed out in the country; and **people came to him from every quarter**.

Mark 2:12 And he stood up, and immediately took the mat and went out before all of them; so that they were all **amazed and glorified God**, saying, "We have never seen anything like this!"

Mark 3:7 Jesus departed with his disciples to the sea, and a **great multitude** from Galilee followed him; 8 hearing all that he was doing, they came to him in great numbers from Judea, Jerusalem, Idumea, beyond the Jordan, and the region around Tyre and Sidon. 9 He told his disciples to have a boat ready for him because of the crowd, so that they would not **crush him**;

Mark 3:20 and **the crowd came together again**, so that they could not even eat.

Mark 5:20 And he went away and began to proclaim in the Decapolis how much Jesus had done for him; and everyone was **amazed**.

Mark 5:42 And immediately the girl got up and began to walk about (she was twelve years of age). At this they were overcome with **amazement**.

Mark 6:53 When they had crossed over, they came to land at Gennesaret and moored the boat. 54 When they got out of the boat, **people at once recognized him**, 55 and rushed about that whole region and began to bring the sick on mats to wherever they heard he was. 56 And wherever he went, into villages or cities or farms, they laid the sick in the marketplaces, and begged him that they might touch even the fringe of his cloak; and all who touched it were healed.

Mark 7:24 From there he set out and went away to the region of Tyre. He entered a house and did not want anyone to know he was there. Yet **he could not escape notice**,

Mark 7:37 They were **astounded** beyond measure, saying, "He has done everything well; he even makes the deaf to hear and the mute to speak."

How do you feel when someone says something negative about you to someone else? How can you stop it? How does the Lord maintain/restore his reputation? Case Study: The firm of Arthur Andersen was founded in 1913. Andersen was known for an unwavering faith in education as the basis upon which the new profession of accounting should be developed. He was a generous man of good reputation who headed the firm until his death in 1947. He once refused to sign off on flawed accounts of a local rail utility even, 'for all the money in America.' Andersen's motto was 'think straight, talk straight' and everyone knew his reputation. With that impeccable reputation. Then something happened. Their reputation was severely damaged due to their conviction for obstruction of justice in the shredding of documents relating to the Enron scandal. Two employees were prosecuted for ordering the shredding of accounts. Though the conviction was overturned on technical grounds, this once mighty firm with 85,000 employees worldwide was quickly whittled down to some 200 employees based primarily in Chicago. (sister group Anderson Consulting split and changed name to Accenture).

6:30-52; 9:2-8

- feeding 5,000 (1 Ki. 17:8-16; 2 Ki. 4:1-7)
- walking on water (Jb. 9:8; Ps. 77:19)
- the transfiguration
- restored reputation
- **hard hearts (6:52; cf. 9:19)**
- **new spirit (9:17)**
- uncleanness
- repentance
- **kingly shepherd (6:43-44)**

Ultimately the hard hearts of the disciples led to their desertion of Jesus.

16:1-8

- the empty tomb and future appearance
- restored reputation? (16:8)
- hard hearts
- new spirit
- uncleanness
- repentance
- kingly shepherd (16:7)

Jesus will meet the disciples and Peter - shepherdly care.

The reputation of Jesus now involves his resurrection, that is, if the women (and us) tell others.

Later Reflections on Jesus' Actions

2Pet. 1:3 His divine power has given us everything needed for life and godliness, through the knowledge of him who called us by his own glory and goodness.

2Pet. 1:16 For we did not follow cleverly devised myths when we made known to you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but we had been eyewitnesses of his majesty. 17 For he received honor and glory from God the Father when that voice was conveyed to him by the Majestic Glory, saying, "This is my Son, my Beloved, with whom I am well pleased." 18 We ourselves heard this voice come from heaven, while we were with him on the holy mountain.

2 Peter 1:3,5, 16-21

power for life and godliness

the transfiguration

spiritual checklist

