MARK’S ὁδός MOTIF AS INFORMED BY DEUTERO-ISAIAH: AN INTERTEXTUAL ANALYSIS OF MARK 1.2-3 AND 8.22-10.52

By

JOSHUA D. CARROLL

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Approved By:

Mary F. Foskett, Ph.D., Advisor

Examining Committee:

Fred L. Horton, Ph.D.

Kenneth G. Hoglund, Ph.D.
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This thesis is dedicated to my two brothers—Zac and Daniel Carroll—who walk together ἐν τῇ ὄδῷ Κυρίου.
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ABSTRACT ............................................................................. i</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## Chapter

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Pages</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. FOCUS OF THE STUDY .................................................... 1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brief Introduction to Mark’s Gospel</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“The Way” in the Gospel of Mark—Citations and Questions</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relevant Research</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Approach—Intertextuality and Intertextual Analysis</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Progression of the Paper</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Καθώς γέγραπται ............................................................ 15</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Analysis of Mark 1.2-3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The “Way of God” in Deutero-Isaiah</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mark and Isaiah</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Function of the Citation</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. RHETORICAL PATTERNS: REPETITION, SERIES OF THREE, AND THREE-STEP PROGRESSION ............................................. 36</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Triple Passion Predictions</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Three-Step Progression</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Healing of Sight Narratives</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Progression of 8.22-10.52</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Way</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. REALTIONSHIP BETWEEN “YOUR [JESUS’] WAY” AND “THE WAY OF THE LORD” .......................................................... 64</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Ethical Way</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conclusion</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

WORKS CITED BIBLIOGRAPHY ..................................................... 73
Joshua D. Carroll

MARK’S ὁδός MOTIF AS INFORMED BY DEUTERO-ISAIAH:
AN INTERTEXTUAL ANALYSIS OF MARK 1.2-3 AND 8.22-10.52

Thesis under the direction of Mary Foskett, Ph.D., Professor of Religion

The Gospel of Mark is replete with words and phrases that point to the Jewish Scriptures. This suggests that the Jewish Scriptures were important to Mark and that they inform his understanding of Jesus. This study intends to examine the Markan ὁδός motif to show that Deutero-Isaiah plays an important role in the Mark’s reference to “the way.” To demonstrate my argument I will employ an intertextual analysis of Mark 1.2-3 and 8.22-10.52. These two sections provide evidence that Deutero-Isaiah is a significant intertext for Mark’s ὁδός motif. My conclusion is that Mark flips Deutero-Isaiah’s depiction of God’s victorious “way” on its head to portray Jesus’ “way” to suffering and death.
Chapter 1

Focus of the Study

The Gospel of Mark is replete with quotations from and allusions to the Jewish Scriptures.1 At the beginning of the gospel, Mark announces that his story of the good news about Jesus Christ takes place “as it is written in the prophet Isaiah” (1.2a). In the climatic scene of Jesus’ crucifixion, Jesus responds to the high priest’s question about his identity with a quotation from Daniel that is blended with an allusion to Psalm 110 (14.61-62). Between the first and final chapters of Mark, Jewish Scriptural citations continually pop up – usually on the lips of Jesus himself. From the start of this thesis, it is important to note that when I refer to Jewish Scriptures I am specifically referring to the Greek version of the Jewish Scriptures know as the Septuagint.2

The wealth of references to the Jewish Scriptures indicates their importance to Mark and their impact on his understanding of Jesus. This study intends to examine the ὁδός motif in the Gospel of Mark. The thesis of this paper

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2 In chapter two, I will provide detailed arguments for why the Septuagint – instead of the Hebrew text – is the source of Mark’s “way” language, but for now, it is sufficient to say that the author of Mark wrote in Koine Greek. See also Morna Hooker, The Gospel According to Saint Mark, Black’s New Testament Commentaries (London: Hendrickson Publishers, 1991), pp. 3-8.
is that Mark’s use of the term ὁδός is informed by and points to the Deutero-Isaian “way” of God. This supposition indicates that Deutero-Isaiah plays an important, though not exclusive, role in Mark’s construction of the “way”. To demonstrate my position I employ an intertextual analysis of Mark 1.2-3 and 8.27-10.52. These two sections serve as evidence that Deutero-Isaiah is a significant intertext for the Markan “way” motif. This observation will allow me to suggest that, through the use of dramatic irony, Mark recontextualized the triumphal “way” of God’s return to deliver his people as described in Deutero-Isaiah to illuminate the “way” of Jesus. By doing so, Mark reveals to his audience that though Jesus’ “way” is one of suffering, it is nonetheless a continuation of the “way” of God “as it is written in the prophet Isaiah” and

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4 This paper attempts to show that Deutero-Isaiah informs Mark’s construction of the “way.” This does not mean that I believe Deutero-Isaiah is the only text that influences the “way” motif in Mark’s gospel; however, for the purposes of this paper I intend to focus only on the Isaiah influences. R. Watts is one scholar who illuminates other texts that have a significant impact on Mark’s “way” motif. Although Watt’s affirms the Isaian influence, he argues that Mark’s “way” motif illustrates a new exodus typology that is best understood against the background of Malachi, which draws on both Exodus and Isaiah. See, Watts, Isaiah’s New Exodus and Mark, pp. 67-87.
interpreted by Mark. Because the “way” language in the second gospel is informed by Deutero-Isaiah, I employ an intertextual analysis to support my argument. An intertextual analysis is important because it takes into account phenomena in the “world” outside of the text being interpreted.5

Brief Introduction to Mark’s Gospel

An intertextual analysis presupposes that language and the production of written language do not exist in a vacuum. In other words, everything in an author’s “outside” world influences his or her language and the way he or she uses language, including the written and orally transmitted “texts” that figure prominently in one’s Sitz im Leben. It is, therefore, important to consider the period in which Mark wrote and the shape of his gospel. Scholars usually date the second gospel between 65 and 75 C.E.6 Although there is some debate as to whether the gospel was written before or after the destruction of the Jerusalem temple, it seems likely that it was written subsequently.7 Evidence supporting a

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subsequent date is that Mark 13 reflects the trauma of those who believed the temple’s destruction ushered in the end of the era.\(^8\)

The author of the second gospel intended for it to be read aloud to an audience, not privately. Constant repetitions in the gospel support this insight. Words, stories, and geographical locations are repeated in the gospel, so the audience would be able to connect the entire narrative into a unity.\(^9\) Reading the gospel today, we tend to isolate certain sections that deal with different themes, but those who first heard it would have been far more aware and attuned to repetition and linking words. The gospel also has a clear shape: after the prologue, we have an account of Jesus’ ministry in Galilee.\(^10\) Following the events at Caesarea Philippi (8.27-30), Jesus teaches his disciples about discipleship and his approaching fate. In 11.1, Jesus arrives in Jerusalem, and in

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\(^9\) Ibid., p. 16.

\(^10\) M. Hooker points out that there is frequent debate as to whether 1.14-15 belong to the “Prologue” (vv. 1-13) or introduce the first main section. She also notes that 3.7-12 and 6.7-13 are sometimes regarded as the opening paragraphs in new sections and other times they thought to be the closing paragraphs of the previous ones. Questions also surround the exact division of the major section that begins at the end of chapter 8: does it begin in 8.22, 8.27, or 8.31? This paper agrees with her argument that it is difficult, if not impossible, to clearly divide the gospel of Mark into sections. I believe the best way to describe the gospel’s divisions is to say that transition points do exist in the narrative. This means the passages listed above refer both backwards and forwards, functioning as both conclusions and introductions. See Ibid.
Mark 14.1, the story of the passion begins; the gospel ends with the women’s fear and amazement at the empty tomb in 16.8.¹¹

“The Way” in the Gospel of Mark—Citations and Questions

In the Gospel of Mark, the term ὁδός makes a total of sixteen appearances (1.2, 3; 2.23; 4.4, 15; 6.8; 8.3, 27; 9.33, 34; 10.17, 32, 46, 52; 11.8; and 12.14). It appears twice at the head of the gospel in a conflated citation that Mark attributes to Isaiah. The conflated citation establishes a parallel between “your way” and the “way of the Lord” (1.2b-3).¹² Then, Mark uses the term as he narrates the story about Jesus and his disciples making their “way” through the grain fields (2.23). The next two occurrences are found on the lips of Jesus as he instructs his disciples to take nothing except a staff on their “journey” (6.8), and then he tells them that they must feed the crowd so they will not faint on their “way” home (8.3). In Chapters 8.22-11.1, Mark uses various forms of ὁδός seven times. The prolific use of the term in this section leads J. Markus and R. Watts to call this the “way/journey section.”¹³

The phrase ἐν τῇ ὁδῷ is located near the beginning and end of 8.22-11.1 where Mark links it with the miracles of sight (8.27; 10.46, 52). The prepositional form, εἰς ὁδόν, is used in the story of the rich man who encounters Jesus on the

¹¹ Ibid.
way (10.17). In 8.27, ἐν τῇ ὁδῷ introduces Jesus teaching on discipleship, which is followed by the first passion prediction. Again, in 9.33, 34 ἐν τῇ ὁδῷ links the second passion prediction with teaching on discipleship and in 10.32 the same phrase introduces the final passion prediction. Mark uses the term so often in this section it is important to ask two questions: How does Mark use the term in his Gospel and what is the “way?”

Scholars interpret Marks use of ὁδός in various ways. W. Swartley focuses on the structural function of ὁδός. Swartley notes that ὁδός appears in key contexts and is programmatic for motifs such as covenant, Temple, desert, and kingdom of God. These motifs are picked up in the Temple cleansing and at transitional places such as “by the sea” (1.16-20), “on the mountain” (3.13-35), and “in the wilderness” (6.7-31). According to Swartley, these motifs provide the gospel’s six-fold framework and present Jesus’ ministry as “the ὁδός to the kingdom of God.” On the other hand, V. Taylor believes Mark used ὁδός as a linking phrase creating a transition from Jesus’ work in Galilee to his fate in Jerusalem. This journey from Galilee to Jerusalem is linked with his teaching on discipleship and his approaching fate, which illustrates that the “way” of

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discipleship is exemplified by Jesus’ own way of suffering. Although each study is important, neither directly addresses the intertextual context of Mark’s use of the “way.”

In 1.2a, Mark ascribes the scriptural citation in vv. 2b-3 to Isaiah: “just as it is written in the prophet Isaiah.” This declaration directly points to Isaiah, a text that seems to have been familiar and important to Mark. Mark’s use of Isaiah also reveals that Isaiah informs his interpretation or understanding of Jesus’ life. Therefore, I believe an examination of ὁδός in Mark’s gospel, especially in Mark 8.22-10.52, should account for the Isaian influence, to which Mark points in 1.2a.

**Relevant Research**

Most Markan scholars are aware of Mark’s abundant use of the Jewish Scriptures. Recently, however, Markan scholarship has come under sharp criticism for neglecting the function and importance of such citations. Speaking of recent scholarship, Joel Markus points out that A. Suhl’s dissertation was the only full-length monograph of major importance, which was published in 1965. Following Suhl’s lead, U. Mauser, and more recently, J. Marcus, and R. Watts

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have successfully completed studies on the importance of Jewish Scriptural citations and their influence on Mark.

In his monograph, “Christ in the Wilderness,” U. Mauser carries out a detailed study of the “wilderness” motif in Mark’s gospel.\textsuperscript{18} The thesis of Mauser’s book is that Mark used traditions about the “wilderness” that were both peculiar to him and highly significant for his theology.\textsuperscript{19} Mauser shows that the primary background for Mark’s “wilderness” theme is fixed in the Jewish Scriptures—namely Hosea (2.14), Ezekiel (20.35-38), and Deutero-Isaiah (40.3; 48.20-21).\textsuperscript{20} He contends that when the Markan “wilderness” image is read in light of these Jewish prophets’ expectation that Israel will move into the desert a second time to experience God, it does not recall the story of the first exodus. Instead, it expresses a hope for a second exodus at the end of days, which is illustrated in Deutero-Isaiah:

\begin{quote}
Isa 40 seems to open the scene with a description of the council of Yahweh. A herald announces the coming of the Lord to the towns of Judah (40.9) and to Zion (52.7). The return of God to the desolate Jerusalem is a picturesque figure of speech which has the same meaning as other passages proclaiming the return of the exiled people to their land.\textsuperscript{21}
\end{quote}

\footnotesize
\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{19} Ibid., p. 13.
\item \textsuperscript{20} Ibid., pp. 45-52.
\item \textsuperscript{21} Ibid., p. 51.
\end{itemize}
He believes this same expectation can be observed in Mark 1.35-37; 1.45; 6.33 where people tend to flock to Jesus after he goes into the wilderness.22

Joel Marcus takes a different approach. In “The way of the Lord: Christological Exegesis of the Old Testament in the Gospel of Mark,” Marcus focuses on passages in Mark’s gospel that cite or allude to verses in the Jewish Scriptures which could reveal Mark’s christological understanding of Jesus: 1.2-3; 1.9-11; 9.2-8; 9.11-13; 12.10-11; 12.35-37; and 14-16. Marcus interprets these passages within their wider Jewish Scriptural context and shows the importance for understanding them within that context. In his examination of the text, he employs the traditional methods of historical criticism. His discussion of ὁδός in 1.2-3 and 8.27-11.1 will be of great importance for this paper as he suggests that Mark turns the Isaian triumphal “way” of God image (cf. Isa 40.3) on its head to describe Jesus’ way up to Jerusalem where he undergoes suffering and death.23

Another study that will be important in this paper is Rikki Watts’, “Isaiah’s New Exodus in Mark.” Watts follows in the footsteps of U. Mauser by scrutinizing the exodus typology in Mark. Watts, however, contends it is Isaiah’s concept of the eschatological hope for a “New Exodus” that is crucial for Mark.24 In the first section of the book, Watt’s discusses Mark’s introductory citation and

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22 Ibid., p. 107.
24 Watts, Isaiah’s New Exodus and Mark, pp. 48-49.
its relation to Jewish Scriptures—especially Deutero-Isaiah. In the second section, Watts discusses Mark’s Jesus as the culmination of Deutero-Isaiah’s “Yahweh-Warrior” and Israel’s “New Exodus healer.” In the final section, Watts contends Isaiah’s portrayal of Yahweh’s enthronement in Zion becomes Jesus enthronement on Calvary.

Each of these studies highlights Mark’s use of Jewish Scriptures. For that reason, they will be immensely helpful in this study. This thesis, however, will focus solely on the way in which Mark’s construction of the ὁ δὸς motif is informed by Deutero-Isaiah. Following Marcus’ lead, I specifically aim to show that beginning in Mark 1.1-3 and especially in Mark 8.22-10.52 Mark recontextualized the Deutero-Isaian “way” to describe the “way” of Jesus.

The Approach—Intertextuality and Intertextual Analysis

The authors of the New Testament drew most of their argumentative methods from contemporary rhetorical practice. One of the more common techniques they employed was the relatively free quotation of Jewish Scriptures to support an argument or illustrate their point. What is astonishing about this method is how the New Testament writers understood and applied the authoritative texts to their stories and situations.25 The approach of this study

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25 The author of Mark is not the only, or first, author to use outside authorities. The appropriation of authoritative texts is widely observed within the Dead Sea Scrolls where it is evident that the community interpreted the Hebrew Scriptures and
will be to do an intertextual analysis of the Markan ὠδός motif, which will show that Deutero-Isaiah is one source informing Mark’s description of Jesus’ ὠδός.

Defined by V. Robbins, intertexture is “a text’s representation of, reference to, and use of phenomena in the ‘world’ outside the text being interpreted.”26 In other words, the intertexture of a text is the complex interrelationship between language in the text and “outside” material. “Outside” material includes, but is not limited to, other texts, historical events, values, customs, or social institutions. An intertextual analysis focuses on how an author appropriates or configures the “outside” material in his or her own text. A major goal of an intertextual analysis is to “ascertain the nature and result of processes of configuration and reconfiguration of phenomena in the world outside the text.”27

One of the ways to study the intertexture of a text is to examine the relationship between the language used in early Jewish-Christian writings and the language of other “outside” sources – precursors and contemporary. This is known as the oral-scribal intertexture of a text.28 Oral-Scribal intertexture concerns a text’s dependency, either explicitly or without reference, on any other

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27 Ibid.
28 In addition to oral-scribal intertexture, a text may also exhibit cultural intertexture, social intertexture, or historical intertexture. See Ibid., pp. 40-71.
text outside of itself, whether it is an ascription, a Greco-Roman document, non-canonical manuscripts, or the Hebrew Bible. Two forms of oral-scribal intertexture that are important for this paper are recitation and recontextualization.

Recitation is the transmission of speech or narrative with the implication or explicit statement that the words “stand written.” Recitation may be a verbatim word-string from another text or speech. Often people of antiquity committed to memory word-strings from popular or authoritative texts. An example of recitation is Mark 12.26: “… have you not read in the book of Moses, in the story about the bush, how God said to him, ‘I am the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob?’” Jesus’ quotation of God’s speech is a verbatim quotation of the LXX version of Exodus 3.6. On the other hand, recitation may present speech or narrative with one or more differences. The differences can include the omission of words, addition of words, or using words different from the authoritative source. John 2.17 is an easy example: “His disciples remembered that it was written, ‘Zeal for your house will consume me.’” The source of this phrase, Psalm 69.9, reads, “It is zeal for your house that

29 Ibid., p. 40.
31 In this paper, LXX will occasionally be use as an abbreviation for Septuagint.
has consumed me; the insults of those who insult you have fallen on me." A close reading reveals a change in verb tense from has consumed to will consume.

Recontextualization presents language from an “outside” source without stating that the words “stand written” anywhere else. Like recitation, recontextualization can be in the form of a word-for-word word string or it can exhibit one or more differences from the source. An example of recontextualization is Mark 15:34: “On the ninth hour Jesus called out with a loud voice, ‘Eloi, Eloi, lema sabachthani?’ which is translated, “My God, My God, why have you forsaken me?” In this instance, Mark places the Aramaic words of Psalm 22.1 in the mouth of Jesus without any reference to the source.

In this paper, recitation and recontextualization are important. I show that Mark recites and recontextualizes Deutero-Isaiah’s “way” to describe Jesus’ “way” in Mark 1.2-3 and 8.22-10.52.

Progression of the Paper

In chapter two I analyze Mark 1.1-3 to show that Deutero-Isaiah provides significant intertexture for the ὁδός language in Mark 1.2-3. Because I believe Deutero-Isaiah informs Mark’s ὁδός motif it is important to examine the “way of God” image depicted in Deutero-Isaiah. Then I discuss the points of contact

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33 This example is borrowed from V. Robbins. See, Ibid.
between Mark and Deutero-Isaiah. In the conclusion of chapter two, I discuss the function of the conflated citation in Mark 1.2b-3.

In chapter three, I turn my attention to Mark 8.22-10.52, the section of the Gospel that contains extensive references to the ὀδὸς. I examine the rhetorical patterns in Mark 8.22-10.52 to show that the section progresses in a way that leads to the climatic story about blind Bartimeaus, who follows Jesus ἐν τῇ ὀδῷ. I argue that the story about blind Bartimeaus has significant intertext with the Deutero-Isaian “way of God” image. Then I demonstrate that Jesus’ “way” up to Jerusalem exhibits a strange reversal of the Deutero-Isaian “way of God” image.

In the conclusion of chapter three, I argue that Mark reinterpreted the Deutero-Isaian “way of God” image to describe Jesus’ way, which is also the way of discipleship.

In my conclusion, I revisit the parallel between the “your [Jesus’] way” and the “way of the Lord” established in Mark 1.2b-3 and discuss the relationship between the “way” that is described under two names. Then I show that the “way” motif in Mark’s gospel is a way of “ethics.” It is the “way” in which Jesus calls his disciples to follow.
Chapter 2

The purpose of this chapter is to argue that Mark 1.2-3 points to Deutero-Isaiah and that Deutero-Isaiah informs Mark’s construction of the “way.” I begin by claiming that Mark 1.1-3 constitutes the first sentence of Mark’s gospel. This is in opposition to many commentators who place a period at the end of 1.1.34 R. Guelich, however, convincingly argues that in the New Testament the scribal formula καθὼς γέγραπται always plays a transitional role; its function is to link a previous statement to a Jewish Scripture citation that follows.35 Not only is this important as it affects our reading, it also allows me to define the parameters of the passage I examine. In the second section of chapter two, I provide a detailed analysis of 1.2-3. My analysis reveals two pieces of information that will be germane to our discussion.

That Isaiah was available to Mark seems clear, for Mark begins his “gospel about Jesus Messiah” with a quotation that he attributes to Isaiah the prophet. Moreover, this is the only explicit editorial Scripture citation in the entire gospel, since the other references are always in the form of dialogue and usually come

from the lips of Jesus.  

It is also striking that Mark refers to Isaiah by name twice in the course of his gospel but does not identify by name any of the other biblical texts to which he alludes. Since Mark’s Isaiah quotation is found in the very first sentence of his work, Isaiah seems to be of particular importance to Mark and his composition.

Καθώς γέγραπται

Although scholars commonly regard Mark 1.1 as a distinct unit, Guelich argues that the scribal formula καθώς γέγραπται makes the reading of Mark 1.1 with 1.2-3 imperative. According to Guelich, the function of the words καθώς γέγραπται is to form a bridge between what has preceded and the citation that follows. In other words, the quotation always refers back and never forwards; therefore, vv. 2b-3 comment on v. 1.

Guelich finds evidence supporting his thesis in the Septuagint (2 Kgs 14.6), Pauline literature (Rom 14 times; 1 Cor 1.31; 2.9; 2 Cor 8.15; 9.9), Luke Acts (Lk 2.23; Acts 7.42; 13.33; 15.15), John (6.31) and Mark (7.6; 9.13; 14.21). Guelich also uses literature from Qumran to defend his position as he believes καθώς γέγραπται has a direct Hebrew counterpart (1QS 5.17; 8.14; CD 7.19; 4QFlor

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37 Mark refers to Isaiah by name in 1.2 and 7.6. For this observation I am indebted to Marcus, "Mark and Isaiah," p. 451.
In the light of this evidence, I agree with Guelich that in an English translation of the gospel, a comma—not a period, should be placed directly before the scribal formula. Therefore, this paper proposes that the first few verses of the gospel are best translated thusly:

The beginning of the good news of Jesus Messiah son of God, just as it is written by Isaiah the prophet, 'behold I am sending my messenger ahead of you, who will prepare your way; a voice crying in the wilderness, 'Prepare the way of the lord, make straight his paths.'

Consequently, Mark creates a rather ponderous opening to his gospel, consisting of a statement (1.1) supported by a citation of Isaiah’s promise (1.2-3). Such a construction creates difficulty for some scholars. Commentators who place a period at the end of 1.1 often argue that 1.1 is a title and 1.2-3 refers to John the Baptist and his coming “in the wilderness.” John the Baptist, then, is

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39 Ibid.
40 Unless noted otherwise, all translations are the author’s. I should also note that I use the words “good news” to translate εὐαγγελίον. My reason for doing this is simply to avoid the confusion surrounding the word “gospel” as it is also designation of a literary genre. I believe that M. Hooker rightly states that the term was not yet a technical term meaning a document during the time in which Mark wrote. See Hooker, The Gospel According to Saint Mark, p. 33.
41 There are many discussions surrounding the function of Mark 1.1. M. Eugene Boring, "Mark 1:1-15 and the Beginning of the Gospel," Semia 52 (1990): pp. 50-51, Hooker, The Gospel According to Saint Mark, p. 33. argue that Mark 1.1 originally functioned as a title rather than as an element of the first sentence. The two main arguments for their position are: 1.) Mark 1.1 does not contain a verb; 2.) the ἀρχὴ τοῦ εὐαγγελίου refers not to the following verses, as would be the case if this were the first sentence of the pericope, but to the work as a whole. However, as R. Guelich demonstrates 1.1 must be read in conjunction with 1.2-3. Thus, this paper agrees with R. Guelich that 1.1-3 constitutes the first sentence of the prologue. The extent of the prologue is another issue that has gained the attention of many scholars. To see a concise list of past scholarly
Jesus’ precursor and the beginning of the gospel of “Jesus Messiah” is the preaching of John the Baptist. Although it is not the intent of this paper to enter that dialogue, a brief comment is in order.

If 1.1 is a title, then the ascription to Isaiah and the citation of his promise (1.2-3) are the opening words of the gospel and their function is to introduce John’s coming and teaching “in the Wilderness.” For Mark to have constructed such an elaborate beginning in 1.1-3 with Jewish Scriptural citations, simply to identify John’s role without mentioning the main person in the gospel would seem strange.42

Above I argued that 1.1-3 is the first sentence of Mark’s gospel. Also, I suggested that the scribal formula in 1.2a requires us to read the citation in 1.2b-3 as a comment on the “the beginning of the good news” in 1.1. This analysis allowed me to establish the parameters of the passage I will analyze.

Analysis of Mark 1.2-3

Following the comment in 1.1, Mark immediately refers to the Jewish Scriptures, with the introductory clause, “Just as it has been written in Isaiah the


prophet.” In spite of Mark’s ascription to Isaiah, the quotation is in fact a composite one: v. 2b combines Exodus 23.20 and Malachi 3.1, while Isaiah 40.3 is the source of v. 3. The accompanying chart shows the different versions of the Jewish Scriptures conflated by Mark. I will address two questions in this analysis: 1.) is the Septuagint or the Hebrew text the source of Mark’s citation? 2.) is Mark responsible for the conflation?

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43 Some manuscripts (codex Vaticanus and Codex Sinaiticus) read ἐν τοῖς προφήταις and omit the reference to Isaiah. I retain the reading “ἐν τῷ Ἑσαίᾳ τῷ προφήτῃ” on the criteria: 1.) the suggested reading is the more difficult one; 2.) the earliest representative witnesses of the Alexandrian, the Western, and the Caesarean types of texts suggest my reading. It seems, therefore, a copyist altered the words “in Isaiah the prophet” to the more comprehensive introductory formula “in the prophets” because of the conflation which follows. See also Bruce Metzger, A Textual Commentary on the Greek New Testament, ed. Kurt Aland and et al, 3rd. ed., A Companion Volume to the United Bible Societies’ Greek New Testament (New York: United Bible Societies, 1971), p. XXV and p. 73.

Mark 1.2 combines Exodus 23.20 (“behold I am sending my messenger before you”) and Malachi 3.1 (“he will survey a way before me”). Mark 1.2b reflects the LXX of Exodus 23.20 almost verbatim. The only difference is Mark omitted the emphatic ἐγώ, which is found in the LXX of Ex. 23.20.

Mark 1.2c presents a little more difficulty than 1.2b. The verb used in Mark, κατασχευάσει (“to prepare”), differs from the verb used in the Septuagint of Mal. 3.1, ἐπιβλέπεσθαι (“to see/survey”). This has led R. Watts to

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mark 1.2</th>
<th>Exodus 23.20 LXX</th>
<th>Malachi 3.1 MT</th>
<th>Malachi 3.1 LXX</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>behold I am sending (ἀποστέλλω) my messenger before you</td>
<td>behold I am sending (ἀποστέλλω) my messenger before you</td>
<td>behold I send out my messenger</td>
<td>behold I am sending out (ἐξαποστέλλω) my messenger</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>who will prepare (κατασχευάσει) your way</td>
<td>to guard you on the way</td>
<td>and he will clear/survey a way before your face</td>
<td>and he will survey (ἐπιβλέψται) a way before you</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mark 1.3</th>
<th>Isaiah 40.3 MT</th>
<th>Isaiah 40.3 LXX</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a voice crying in the wilderness</td>
<td>the voice of one crying</td>
<td>a voice crying in the wilderness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>prepare (ἐτοιμάσατε) the way of the Lord</td>
<td>prepare (ἐτοιμάσατε) the way of the Lord</td>
<td>make straight (ἐνθεῖάς ποιεῖτε) the way of the Lord</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>make straight (ἐνθεῖάς ποιεῖτε) his paths</td>
<td>straighten in the desert a highway for our God</td>
<td>make straight (ἐνθεῖάς ποιεῖτε) the paths of our God</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
believe that Mark 1.2c represents the Hebrew found in the Masoretic Text of Mal. 3.1. Joel Marcus, however, points out that “both verbs can translate the Hebrew found in the Masoretic Text; the Septuagint apparently takes Vbšr as a qal, while the Synoptic version take it as a pi’el.” As Marcus suggests, the case may be that rather than being taken from the Septuagint, Mark 1.2c may represent an independent textual rendering of the Hebrew text into Greek; therefore, the Masoretic Text cannot be favored solely on the grounds of a variant translation of one verb. The other difference in 1.2c is that Mark omitted the words “before you” from Mal. 3.1. This detail will be discussed later.

The conflated text of Mark 1.2b-c also occurs in Q (Mt 11.10=Lk 7.27). In Q, however, the conflation appears in a different context. It is found on the lips of Jesus as praise of John the Baptist instead of a narrator’s comment and it retains the words of Malachi 3.1 “before you” at the end.

Unlike Mark 1.2b-c, there is little reason to believe that the citation in Mark 1.3 comes from any other source than the LXX of Isaiah 40.3. The citation is nearly verbatim; the only difference is that Mark substitutes αὐτοῦ for τοῦ θεοῦ ημῶν. The citation in Mark 1.3, also, follows the Septuagint in connecting “in the

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45 Watts, Isaiah’s New Exodus and Mark, pp. 61-62.
47 In other words, Marcus argues that Mark might be using a Greek textual tradition other than the Septuagint. See Ibid.
wilderness” with the crying voice rather than with the imperative “prepare,” as it is in the Hebrew.\textsuperscript{48} Further evidence of Mark’s dependence on the Septuagint is that both Mark and the Septuagint make use of the periphrastic construction εὐθείας ποιεῖτε.\textsuperscript{49}

Like the citation in Mark 1.2b-c, though, Mark 1.3 seemingly exhibits some variation from Q. Matthew and Luke agree in quoting Isaiah 40.3 directly after the introduction of John the Baptist. Moreover, Matthew directly states that Isaiah’s prophecy is about John the Baptist which indicates he is the one who will prepare the “way”: “In those days John the Baptist appeared in the wilderness of Judea … This is the one of whom the Prophet Isaiah spoke when he said, ‘a voice crying in the wilderness…”’ (Mt 3.1-3).

From this analysis, we saw that the source of Mark’s quotations of Exodus 23.20 and Isaiah 40.3 is the Septuagint. Although Mark 1.2c confronted us with some difficulty, there does not seem to be any compelling evidence that Mark used the Hebrew text for this citation; thus, the Septuagint is favored here also.\textsuperscript{50}

\begin{flushright}
\textsuperscript{48} Ibid.  \\
\textsuperscript{49} Ibid., p. 15.  \\
\textsuperscript{50} H. C. Kee, provides us additional evidence that the Septuagint is Mark’s preferred source for citing Jewish biblical tradition. Although his study does not directly address our passage, he demonstrates that in Mark 11-16 there are 21 citations from the textual tradition of the LXX. He also notes that Mark employs Jewish Biblical quotations from the LXX at the most crucial points in the developing arguments of chapters 11-16. See, Howard Clark Kee, "The Function of Scriptural Quotations and Allusions in Mark 11-16," in \textit{Jesus Und Paulus: Festschrift Fur Werner George Kummel Zum 70. Geburtstag}, ed. E. Earle Ellis and Erich Grasser (Gottingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1978), p172-74.
\end{flushright}
It is also important to keep in mind that Mark wrote in Greek; therefore, the Septuagint seems to be the natural and most likely source of Mark’s citation in 1.2b-3.\(^{51}\) This analysis also demonstrated that while Q includes these citations, their contexts are different from the Markan version. This suggests that Matthew and Luke followed Q rather than Mark. This indicates that Mark is responsible for the fusion of Exodus 23.20 and Malachi 3.1, and the context of the entire conflated citation.\(^{52}\) The evidence supporting this argument is threefold: the introduction of Exodus 23.20 and Malachi 3.1 into its present context (Mk 1.2b), the elimination of the words “before you” from Malachi 3.1, and the movement of Isaiah 40.3 from its more natural position after John the Baptist is introduced to its Markan location before John the Baptist.\(^{53}\) Moreover, the synthesis of two or more Jewish Biblical traditions in one citation is a well-documented characteristic of Mark’s work.\(^{54}\) This brings me back to the observation that Mark omitted the words “before you” from Malachi 3.1.

\(^{51}\) Ibid., p. 174.
\(^{52}\) It is also important to note that the combination of Ex 23.20 and Mal 3.1 is not found in any known text that predates Mark. See Watts, *Isaiah’s New Exodus and Mark*, p. 74.
\(^{54}\) In addition to 1.2-3, Kee notes the fusion of 1.11 (Is 42.1/Ps 2.7); 11.1-11 (Zec 10.10/Ps 118.25-26); 12.1-12 (Is 5.1-2/Ps 118.22-23); 13.24-26 (Is 34.4/Jo 2.10/Ez 32.7-8/Dn 7.13-14); 11.17 (Is 56.7/Jer 7.11); and 14.62 (Dn 7.13/Ps 110.1). See Kee, “The Function of Scriptural Quotations and Allusions in Mark 11-16,” pp. 175-77.
By linking the conflated citation (1.2) with the one from Isaiah (1.3) and by eliminating the words “before you,” Mark establishes a formal parallelism between 1.2 and 1.3.\textsuperscript{55} The elimination of the words “before you” also places emphasis on the “way” motif and parallels the two ways – “your way” and “the way of the Lord.” That the emphasis of this opening section is on “the way” motif is also supported by P. Stuhlmacher’s observation that Mark’s use of εὐαγγέλιον is rooted in the same Isaian passage from which Mark draws his Isaiah quotation in v. 3.\textsuperscript{56}

The opening words of the second gospel are in the form of \textit{recitation} because Mark explicitly states that these words stand written in “Isaiah the prophet.”\textsuperscript{57} Citing outside authorities was a common rhetorical practice employed by ancient authors.\textsuperscript{58} Often, the author’s purpose for citing an outside authority was to validate or lend credibility to his or her argument.\textsuperscript{59} This seems to be Mark’s purpose as he explicitly cites a text that is known by Q, and as we

\textsuperscript{55} Marcus, \textit{The Way of the Lord: Christological Exegesis of the Old Testament in the Gospel of Mark}, p. 16.


shall see later, other Jewish literature. Moreover, by citing Isaiah, Mark situates his gospel in the history of Jewish tradition. In other words, he is illustrating his belief that the following story about Jesus is a continuation of the Jewish tradition that began with Israel’s inception, was prophesized by Isaiah, and continues in Jesus.60

As I have shown, following Mark’s ascription to Isaiah is a conflated citation. This has serious implications for our study. I argued that Mark linked Exodus 23.20 and Malachi 3.1 with Isaiah 40.3 to parallel “your way” and the “way of the Lord,” with the resulting emphasis being on ὅδος. The conflated citation and Mark’s recitation of Isaiah 40.3 act like a sign post pointing to a text outside Mark’s work – namely Deutero-Isaiah. Therefore, Mark’s reference to Isaiah means Isaiah provides the proper context for understanding “the way” and the gospel’s beginnings.

The “Way of God” in Deutero-Isaiah

It is commonly agreed that Isaiah falls into three major literary units composed shortly before, during, and soon after Israel’s return from the Babylonian exile: chaps. 1-39 address issues of foreign and domestic enemies and the consequences of Israel’s alliance with rebellious Egypt; chaps. 40-55 are written towards the end of the exile and joyfully anticipate Judah’s restoration in

Jerusalem; and chaps. 56-66 concern the time after the return and the sobering realities of living in a restored nation. Deutero-Isaiah will be most important to this discussion because it is the source of the Markan citation in 1.3.

F. Landy correctly recognizes Deutero-Isaiah as a “post-catastrophe text” because it was composed during or shortly after the Babylonian Exile. For that reason, the voice of Deutero-Isaiah juxtaposes voices of hope for return with silence, absence, and grieving. Isaiah 1.1-11 functions as the prologue to Deutero-Isaiah. As the prologue, Isaiah 40.1-11 constructs the past and future. The past is characterized as a bygone age that has passed away (40.2), which sets the stage for God’s comfort, return, and restoration (40.10; cf. 49.8-13, 51.11-16; 52.7-10).

The proclamation in 40.1 sets the tone. According to the LXX, God commands the priests to comfort Israel. This comfort is further communicated in the declaration that Israel has served double the iniquity for her sins and her sins have been pardoned; thus, Israel’s time of mourning is over. In 40.3f, a declaration in the form of “prophetic speech” goes forth to prepare the way of

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62 Ibid.
the God. The preparation of the “way” includes the leveling of mountains and
the making of rough places smooth. The prepared way is God’s and as the
leader, God is depicted both as a mighty warrior who has come to rule (v. 10;
LXX μετὰ ἰσχύος) and as a loving shepherd who will lead the flock on their
“way” to Jerusalem (1.11 cf. 44.26; 45.13; 52.7-8). There is no reason to suppose
that there is a distinction between God’s “way” and the people’s “way,” for God
crosses with the people being both the front guard and rear (cf. 42.16; 43.1-3, 19;
49.10; 51.9; 52.12). Thus, the “way” in Isaiah 40.3 is the path upon which God
will lead Israel back to Jerusalem (1.11; cf. 49.8-13, 51.11-16; 52.7-8).65 Also
inherent in the Isaian prologue is the everlasting promise of God: unlike the
withering grass and fading flowers – which represents human mortality – God’s
promise and words stand forever (40.8).66

McKenzie, Second Isaiah, pp. 18-19. These three studies illustrate the view of a majority
of commentators who agree that the “way of the Lord” in Isaiah 40.3 refers to the “way”
upon which God will lead the people back to Jerusalem. One scholar who favors a more
literal or restrictive reading is, Joseph Blenkinsopp, Isaiah 40-55: A New Translation with
Doubleday, 2002), p. 181. He believes we should not suppose that the “way” in Isaiah
40.3 refers to a return from exile in Babylon because it is not explicitly stated. I,
however, agree with the majority of commentators who believe God’s return, as
described in Isaiah, includes the restoration of Jerusalem (52.7-8). Therefore, the
prepared “way” is the road upon which God leads the people back to Jerusalem.
The main emphasis of this section is on the heralding of the good news to prepare “the way” upon which God will lead Israel back to Jerusalem. As R. Watts notes, Isaiah’s declaration of deliverance presupposes Israel’s founding moment and an underlying two-part exodus schema: a journey along a “way” in which God leads Israel from their exile to Jerusalem; and arrival in Jerusalem where God reigns in the gloriously restored Zion.\(^6^7\) The language used to describe God’s return and enthronement is that of joy, celebration, and victory (cf. 40.9-10). Moreover, God’s victory procession leading the people on the “way” to Jerusalem closes the gap between past, present, and future, and fulfills the promise that the word of God stands forever (Isa 40.8). Therefore, Deutero-Isaiah does not represent a new tradition; rather, it expresses a continuation of the tradition that began with Israel’s inception.\(^6^8\)

In Deutero-Isaiah, the term ὠδός is not limited to Isaiah 40.3, for it occurs nine times outside of the Deutero-Isaian prologue (40.14, 27; 43.16, 19; 48.15, 17; 51.10; 53.6; and 55.7). In three of the Deutero-Isaian passages where the term appears it is in reference to the human ὠδός (40.14; 53.6; and 55.7). In these passages the human “way” stands in opposition to the “way” of God. They are characterized by a call for the people to turn away from the human “way” in order that they may follow in the “way” of God: “let the wicked forsake their

\(^{67}\) Watts, Isaiah’s New Exodus and Mark, p. 77.

\(^{68}\) Landy, “The Ghostly Prelude to Deutero-Isaiah,” p. 357.
way, and the unrighteous their thoughts; let them return to the Lord” (Isa 55.7). From these passages, it seems that human action is required to follow in the “way” of God.

In the other Deutero-Isaian passage where the term ὁδός appears it is in reference to God’s “way.” It is a “way” that is constructed by God’s and it is the “way” upon which God leads the people: “I will lead the blind by a way they do not know ... I will turn the darkness before them into light and the crooked places I will make straight” (Isa 42.16). The “way” is depicted as an extension of God’s salvation and rule into a lost world.69 Certainly, it is a path upon which humans are invited to follow, but their ability to follow is made possible only by God (cf. Isa 42.16).

It is also important to note that in Deutero-Isaiah the “way” is often described using eschatological language. Isaiah’s eschatological depiction of the “way” can be noted in a passage such as Isaiah 43.18-19:

Remember not the former things, nor consider the things of old. Behold I am doing a new thing ... I will make a way in the wilderness and rivers in the desert.

In this passage, God’s actions mark the end of the old times and the beginning of the new.

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The Deutero-Isaian “way of God” is best described as an image. The image is of a literal “way” through the wilderness by which God victoriously leads the people back to Jerusalem. Thus in Deutero-Isaiah the “way of God” is an eschatological image of hope and consolation that is extended to the people through God’s rule.

Given the prophet’s presentation of comfort and hope in 40.1-11, it is not difficult to see how this passage became the source for several Jewish authors who articulated their hope for God’s return and redemption. In the Qumran texts, Isaiah 40.3 is used to define the community’s self-understanding that they and their actions are a necessary element in preparing the “way” for God’s return (1QS 8.12b-16a; 9.17b-20a). Baruch 5.7 draws on Isaiah 40.4 to describe Israel’s redemption: “For God ordered every high mountain and the eternal hills to be lowered and the ravines to be filled to make a smooth land in order that Israel may walk securely in the glory of God.” Similarly, in the Assumption of Moses mountains are made low before the coming of God (10.1-5; c.f. Isa 40.4-5).

It seems various Jewish traditions regarded Isaiah 40.1-11 as a *locus classicus* articulating God’s comfort and return. As K. Snodgrass notes “the focus

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71 Ibid. p. 31. Also, his translation.
on the preparation of the way gave specific focus to the eschatological orientation by being interpreted of the return of the exiles.” The various uses and translations of Isaiah 40.1-11 might explain why Mark was able to use this passage without explanation in the first sentence of the gospel. Moreover, this suggests that the “way” in Mark 1.2-3 probably presupposes the eschatological hope for God’s presence, which the latter writers ascribed to Isaiah 40.3.

Mark and Isaiah

My position that the text of Mark 1.1-3 points to Deutero-Isaiah is becoming clear. Our first and most obvious indication of this is that the text attributes the conflated citation in 1.2b-3 to Isaiah. Second, our analysis showed that 1.3 is virtually a word-for-word quotation from the LXX of Isaiah 40.3 – the only exception is the substitution of αὐτοῦ for τοῦ θεοῦ ἡμῶν. Third, from P. Stuhlmacher, we learned that the New Testament understanding of εὐαγγέλιον is rooted in Isaiah 40.9. In the LXX, the Greek substantive participle εὐαγγελιζόμενος translates the Hebrew participle for “herald of good tidings.” Isaiah 40.9 is linked to Isaiah 40.3 by both proximity and thematically; the declaration in 40.9 “behold your God” completes the imperative of 40.3 to

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prepare God’s way. Moreover, in Isaiah, as is in Mark 1.15, the good news is the announcement of God’s presence. Lastly, I pointed out that Mark’s citation of an ancient authority, Isaiah, situates his story about Jesus in the Jewish tradition, which began with Israel’s inception. Although in a different way, the analysis of the prologue to Deutero-Isaiah showed that it is also situated in the traditions of Israel, for it juxtaposes the withering grass and fading flowers with the eternal word of God (Isa 40.8).

The numerous points of contact between Mark 1.1-3 and Isaiah 40.1-11 show that Mark was familiar with Jewish Scriptural traditions. Mark’s ascription to Isaiah and the recitation of the Isaian passage is especially important because it points to a text outside Mark’s writing. This suggests one source that influenced the “way” motif in Mark 1.2-3 is Deutero-Isaiah. Moreover, because Mark’s text points to Deutero-Isaiah, the “way of the Lord” in Mark 1.3 seems to refer to God’s way through the wilderness leading the people back to Jerusalem, as described by Deutero-Isaiah.

Function of the citation

Mark 1.2b-3 functions as a comment on the first verse of Mark’s gospel. The structure of this passage (1.1-3) reveals Mark’s belief that “the beginning of the good news of/about Jesus Messiah” began with Isaiah’s prophecy of God’s

return. This reading forces us to ask a question: is the good news about Jesus or from Jesus? It is possible to read the genitive Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ as either objective (about Jesus Messiah) or subjective (from Jesus Messiah). M. Hooker argues that the genitive should be read as an objective, since “Jesus is certainly the content of Mark’s gospel.” Another commentator, Ched Myers, suggests that one should read the genitive as an objective genitive. He notes that at the end of the prologue (1.14-15) Jesus proclaims the good news of God, which is the Deutero-Isaian promise of God’s rule; thus, in Mark’s gospel the good news comes from Jesus. Both arguments are convincing and I do not believe it is necessary to choose between the two senses. Mark’s intention may very well have been for the word to be bi-referential. The good news of Mark’s gospel is certainly about Jesus, but the good news is also, the message Jesus proclaims.

Following the opening verse, Mark presents a conflated citation that he attributes to Isaiah. The textual recitation of Mark 1.2b-3 points to Isaiah 40.3. In Isaiah 40.3, the proclamation of the good news concerns the return of God, which entails God’s enthronement and God’s rule of the people in Zion. The structure of Mark 1.1-3 establishes a pattern. The good news about Jesus is the good news prophesied by Isaiah, which is the good news that comes from Jesus in 1.14-15.

The structure of 1.1-3 introduces Jesus in line with the traditions of Israel:

75 Hooker, The Gospel According to Saint Mark, p. 34.
76 Myers, Binding the Strong Man: A Political Reading of Mark’s Story of Jesus, pp. 92-93.
Isaiah gets the good news from God (Isa 40.1-2)
Mark gets the good news from Isaiah (Mk 1.2a)
Jesus proclaims the good news to the people (Mk 1.14-15)

The structure of 1.1-3 illustrates Mark’s belief that the story about Jesus and the Deutero-Isaian promise of God’s return are inseparable.

The conflated citation in 1.2b-3 further supports the inseparability of Jesus’ “way” and the “way of the Lord.” As we saw in our analysis, the conflated citation of Exodus 23.20, Malachi 3.1, and Isaiah 40.3 is a Markan creation. In the citation, one way is described under two names: “your way” and “the way of the Lord.” The parallel demonstrates Mark’s belief that “your [Jesus] way” is an extension of the Deutero-Isaian “way” of God. Thus, the citation functions to place Jesus in line with the traditions of Israel and illustrates Mark’s belief that the “way of Jesus” cannot be understood outside of the Deutero-Isaian “way of God.”
Chapter 3

In this chapter, I show that the message Mark conveys in 8.22-10.52 is the meaning of Jesus’ identity and the intricacies of following in the “way” of Jesus (i.e. discipleship). The structure and rhetorical patterns in Mark 8.22-10.52 exhibit an advanced level of literary sophistication that attracts much attention. Defined by G. Kennedy, ancient rhetoric is “that quality in discourse by which a speaker or writer seeks to accomplish his purposes.” Modern rhetorical analysis “gives special attention to the subjects and topics a text uses to present thought, speech, stories, and arguments.” Mark, like all authors of New Testament books, had a message to convey and sought an audience who would accept it. Important to the author’s rhetorical techniques are choice and arrangement of words.

In my examination, I reveal three types of rhetorical patterns that Mark employed in 8.22-10.52 to advance his message—series of three, repetition, and three-step progression. Within the framework of these rhetorical patterns Jesus’ identity as Messiah and the meaning of discipleship unfolds in the text. These

rhetorical patterns indicate that Mark carefully constructed this section to convey his particular message.

Mark 8.22-10.52 is introduced with a healing of a blind man story, which is followed by three passion predictions and three sequences of three-step progression. The section comes to a dramatic conclusion with the story about blind Bartimeaus. The story of blind Bartimeaus is important to our study because after Jesus heals him Bartimeaus gets up and follows Jesus ἐν τῇ ὁδῷ. As I will demonstrate, the story of blind Bartimeaus is informed by the Deutero-Isaian image of the “way of God.” Because Deutero-Isaiah informs the ὁδός motif in the climatic episode of this section, I suggest that the other six occurrences of the term in Mark 8.22-10.46 should be read in the same light.

Rhetorical Patterns: Repetition, Series of Three, and Three-Step Progression

Redaction critics have long been aware that repetitions, pleonasms, and duplications are characteristics of Markan style. Frans Neirynck’s study of Mark illustrates the abundance of repetitive forms in the Gospel of Mark.79 His analysis shows that there are twenty-two three-fold repetitive forms in Mark. Mark 14.66-72 is a well-known example where three-fold repetition provides the framework for an entire scene:

1. A young girl came by ... but he denied (ἠρνήσατο) it (14.66-68)
2. and the young girl ... again began to say ... but again he denied (ἠρνεῖτο) it (14.69-70)
3. and ... again ... said ... but he began to invoke a curse on himself and to swear ... then Peter remembered that which Jesus had said to him ... “you will deny (ἀπαρνήσῃ) me three times” (14.70b-72)80

In this scene, repetition occurs in Peter’s denial. In the first unit, a young girl identifies Peter as one of Jesus’ followers and he denies the affiliation. In the second unit, bystanders recognize Peter as one of Jesus’ disciples and again he denies it. The first two units set the stage for the third where Peter swears he has no knowledge of Jesus. The unit comes to a dramatic close as Peter remembers Jesus telling him that he will deny Jesus three times. This brief analysis demonstrates that repetitive forms are a common rhetorical technique that Mark employed throughout his text.81

V. Robbins analysis of “series of three” is also important for this study. At the most primary level of composition, a “series of three” occurs when three people, things, or phrases occur in a series where the second and third items are connected to the first by the conjunction καί.82

Mark 5.37 and 6.4 are simple examples of a series of three where the second and third items are linked to the first by the conjunction καί:

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80 This example is found in Ibid., p. 112.
81 For a complete list of series of three repetition in Mark’s gospel see Ibid., pp. 110-12.
1. And he did not allow anyone to follow him except Peter and James and John (Mk 5.37)
2. Then Jesus said to them, “Prophets are not without honor, except in their home town, and with their own kin, and in their own house (Mk 6.4)\textsuperscript{83}

In the first example, the names Peter, James, and John are linked by the conjunction καί. The second example shows a construction where three things are linked in a series. Interestingly, one finds the exact construction of Mark 5.37 in 9.2 and 14.33:

1. Six days later, Jesus took with him Peter, and James, and John, and led them up a high mountain ... (Mk 9.2)
2. He took with him Peter and James and John, and began to address them ... (Mk 14.33)\textsuperscript{84}

This brings us to Mark 8.22-10.52, which is the focus of this chapter. I will begin by analyzing the rhetorical patterns within this section. I will show that the passion predictions in Mark 8.31, 9.31, and 10.32-34 exhibit repetitive forms. Then I will demonstrate that each passion prediction exists in a framework that contains a three-step progression.\textsuperscript{85} Lastly, I will show that the healing of sight miracles, which are located at the beginning and end of this section, are linked to the passion predictions; thus, they establish the parameters of Mark 8.22-10.52.

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\textsuperscript{83}These examples are found in Neirynck, \textit{Duality in Mark: Contributions to the Study of the Markan Redaction}, p. 111.
\textsuperscript{84} Although I used these verses as an example of series of three, we should note that Peter, James, and John are repeatedly mentioned because they are significant disciples in Mark’s narrative.
\textsuperscript{85} Three-step progression will be defined later in this chapter.
This is important to our analysis of the “way” because the healing of blind Bartimaeus exhibits significant Isaian intertext.

Triple Passion Predictions

The triple passion predictions in Mark 8.31; 9.31; and 10.33-34 are the most well-known instances of repetitive form in the gospel of Mark.86 The first two passion predictions are quite similar. Some variation, however, occurs in wording and in reference to those who abuse Jesus:

1. The Son of man must undergo much suffering and be rejected by the elders and by the chief priests and the scribes and be killed; and after three days he will rise up (8.31)
2. The Son of Man will be handed over into the hands of men, and they will kill him; and when he is killed, after three days he will rise up (9.31)

In 8.31 and 9.31 repetition occurs in the words “Son of man,” “being killed,” and “rising after three days” (italicizes). Moreover, the repetitive forms in 8.31 and 9.31 are presented within in a series of three, for the “Son of man” is connected to the actions of being killed and rising with the conjunction καί. In Mark 8.31, those who mistreat Jesus are also depicted in a series of three (underlined words).

The third passion prediction differs from the first two in terms of length, wording, and those who mistreat Jesus:

3. Look, we are going up to Jerusalem and the Son of man will be handed over to the chief priest, and the scribes, and they will condemn him to death and hand him over to the Gentiles; and they will mock him, and spit upon him, and flog him, and kill him; and after three days he will rise up.

The third passion prediction is linked to the first two by the same repeated phrases “Son of man,” “being killed,” and “rising after three days.” However, in this prediction the depiction of the events are presented in expanded form. Jesus’ arrest, trial, and conviction by the Jewish authorities are followed by another series of three: mocking, spitting, and flogging by Gentiles. The details listed in the final unit of the sequence stresses the brutality of the events prior to Jesus’ death and rising up.

The images of “Son of man,” “being killed,” and “rising” in Mark 8.31; 9.31; and 10.33-34 reveal repetition within three passion predictions. Marks use of repetition illustrates that 8.31-10.34 is a carefully constructed section, where the first two predictions anticipate the third, which is the most dramatic.87

Three-Step Progression

Each passion prediction also occurs as the initial step in a three-step progression. Three-step progression is a rhetorical literary technique where a

sequence of three steps builds upon one another like building blocks. Each step provides information and contributes to the meaning and significance of the final step in the progression. The three-step progression in 8.27-10.45 resides within a framework that consists of a passion prediction, a response from the disciples, and Jesus’ instruction on discipleship:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Passion Prediction</th>
<th>Response</th>
<th>Instruction on discipleship</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>8.31 The Son of man /be killed /and after three days he will rise up</td>
<td>8.32-33 Peter rebukes Jesus</td>
<td>8.34-9.1 save life /lose life</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.31 The Son of Man /and they will kill him /after three days he will rise up</td>
<td>9.32-34 Disciples do not understand, they are afraid, and silent</td>
<td>9.35-37 first /last</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.33-34 the Son of man /and kill him /and after three days he will rise up</td>
<td>10.35-41 Sons of Zebedee petition Jesus for positions of power</td>
<td>10.42-45 great /least</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In each sequence of three-step progression, the first step consists of Jesus’ prediction of his ensuing fate. The passion prediction paves the way for the second step as it invites a response from Jesus’ disciples concerning the prediction. The third step ends the three-step progression. In each of the

88 The definition of three step progression is found in Robbins, Jesus the Teacher: A Socio-Rhetorical Interpretation of Mark, p. 23.
sequences, the final step begins with Jesus summoning (προσκαλεσάμενος) or calling (ἐφώνησεν) his disciples for instruction and ends with Jesus’ teaching. It is also important to note that each sequence also plots a journey in three stages.

The first sequence occurs in Caesarea-Philippi (8.27). The second sequence takes place in between Galilee and Judea (8.30; 10.1) and the final sequence transpires ἐν τῇ ὁδῷ up to Jerusalem (10.32).

In the scene that introduces the first three-step progression (8.27-9.1), Jesus asks his disciples, “Who do people say that I am?” Jesus poses this question while he and his disciples are ἐν τῇ ὁδῷ. The query is one about Jesus’ identity and it recalls the first verse of Mark’s gospel where the narrator identified Jesus as Messiah Son of God. Interestingly, the question and answers recall the series of three that gives the subject matter of 6.14-15: John the Baptist, Elijah, or one of the prophets. Just as the people displayed their ignorance in 6.14-15, their reiteration in 8.28 exposes the disciples’ continued incomprehension of Jesus’

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89 Ibid.  
90 I believe C. Myers correctly notes that this is the “second prologue” of Mark’s Gospel. In the chapters leading up to 8.27 Jesus’ disciples struggle with understanding Jesus’ words and deeds. Beginning with 8.22 and through the rest of the gospel, the disciples’ struggle takes on a new dimension. Now the disciples must incorporate suffering, death, and resurrection into Jesus’ identity as the suffering servant. Myers also notes that 8.27, like 1.1, concerns Jesus’ identity. Moreover, the “way” motif of 1.2-3 is reintroduced in 8.27 but it takes a new direction. The former “way” (1.2-3) is articulated as the “way through the wilderness,” whereas the “way in 8.27-10.52 is the “way to Jerusalem.” See, Myers, Binding the Strong Man: A Political Reading of Mark’s Story of Jesus, p. 235.  
91 Robbins, Jesus the Teacher: A Socio-Rhetorical Interpretation of Mark, p. 38.
identity. After the disciples speak, Jesus asks them who they themselves say he is. This question forces the disciples to produce an answer based on their association with Jesus as disciples. Peter answers on behalf of all the disciples: “You are the Messiah.” Peter’s confession introduces the title “Messiah” to Mark’s story world. This title, which was first introduced in 1.1, does not occur anywhere between 1.2 and 8.30. Peter’s confession, therefore, is a narrative restatement of 1.1 and marks the beginning of the disciples’ attempt to understand Jesus’ identity and the implications associated with his role as Messiah. This section (8.22-26) introduces the first step and forms the backdrop for the other two sequences of three-step progression in 9.30-37 and 10.32-45.

The first sequence (8.27-9.1) reveals the three-step progression thusly:

1. **Prediction**: Then he began to teach them that the *Son of man* must undergo much suffering and be rejected by the elders and chief priests and scribes and be killed and after three days rise up (8.31)
2. **Disciples’ response**: He said these words openly. And Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him. But turning and looking at his disciples he rebuked Peter and said, “Get behind me, Satan, for you are setting your mind not on things of God but on things of humans (8.32-33)
3. **Instruction on discipleship**: He called (προσκαλεσάμενος) to him the crowd with his disciples and said to them … (8.34-9.1)

The text introduces the first step with Jesus teaching his disciples that the Son of man must suffer many things, die, and rise up. This is the first instance of Jesus’ incorporating public humiliation and death into his identity. This teaching sets

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92 Ibid., p. 39.
the stage for the second step. In the second step of the progression, Peter responds to Jesus teaching about his fate by rebuking him. Peter’s response is in the form of qualitative progression. The third step ends the first sequence of three-step progression as Jesus calls (προσκαλεσάμενος) the crowd and his disciples for instruction. The instruction concerns discipleship and is presented in the form of a series of sayings. The series of sayings juxtapose saving one’s life and losing one’s life for Jesus’ sake and for the sake of the gospel.

The second passion prediction also resides in the framework of three-step progression. The second sequence (9.31-9.50) progresses in this manner:

1. **Prediction**: For he was teaching his disciples and saying to them that the Son of man will be handed over into the hands of men, and they will kill him; and, when he is killed, after three days he will rise up (9.31)
2. **Disciples’ Response**: But they did not understand and they were afraid to ask him. Then they came to Capernaum ... he asked them, “What were you arguing about on the way?” But they were silent, for on the way they had argued with one another who was the greatest. (9.32-34)
3. **Instruction on Discipleship**: And he sat down, called (ἐφώνησεν) the twelve and he said to them ... and ... he said to them ... but Jesus said ... (9.35-9.50)

Again, the first step introduces Jesus teaching his disciples that the Son of man will be handed over, killed, and rise up. In the second step, the disciples’

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93 Qualitative progression is when “unexpected developments” or a “reversal of expectation” occur. V. Robbins says a qualitative rhetorical progression occurs in the narrative when the disciples react differently from what the reader expects. He also notes that when new attributes and new titles emerge in the gospel’s portrayal of Jesus, the narrative acquires a qualitative progressive form. See Ibid., p. 9.
94 Myers, Binding the Strong Man: A Political Reading of Mark’s Story of Jesus, p. 237.
response to the passion prediction occurs in narrative form; they did not understand so they were afraid and silent. Like Peter’s response in 8.32-33, the disciples’ response in 9.32-34 features a qualitative progression. The disciples’ incomprehension, fear, and silence present a quality which illustrates that they are in need of further instruction. In the final unit of this sequence, Jesus calls (ἐφώνησεν) the disciples and teaches them the intricacies of discipleship through a series of sayings that juxtaposes first and last. In this step, the series of sayings are supported by demonstrative action where Jesus uses a child as an example of welcoming the least.95

The final three-step progression (10.32-45) ends the series and it is analogous to the form of 8.27-9.1 and 9.30-50.

1. **Prediction:** And taking the twelve again he began to tell them what was to happen to him saying, “See, we are going up to Jerusalem and the Son of man will be handed over to the chief priests and the scribes, and they will condemn him to death and hand him over to the Gentiles; and they will mock him, and spit upon him, and flog him, and kill him; and after three days he will rise up (10.33-34)
2. **Response:** James and John, the sons of Zebedee, came forward to him and said to him … And he said to them … And they said to him … But Jesus said to them … they replied … and Jesus said to them … When the ten heard this, they began to be angry with James and John (10.35-41)
3. **Instruction on Discipleship:** So Jesus called (προσκαλεσάμενος) them and said to them … (10.42-45)

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95 C. Myers argues that children represented the bottom of the social and economic scale in terms of status and rights in the ancient Mediterranean world. See Ibid., p. 261. To support his argument he also cites C. Carney who argues the same. See Thomas Carney, *The Shape of the Past: Models and Antiquity* (Kansas: Coronado Press, 1975), p. 92.
Just like the first two three-step progressions, this one begins with Jesus’ teaching about his fate. If there was any question that Jesus was speaking about himself when he refers to the Son of man in 8.31 and 9.31, it is now clear that he is: “And taking the twelve again he began to tell them what was to happen to him” (10.32). Again, the second step introduces the disciples’ response to what Jesus has told them. The episode that follows demonstrates that the disciples still do not comprehend Jesus’ identity as Messiah. Having just completed the teaching about becoming last and servant of all, one can almost feel Jesus’ exhaustion as he listens to James’ and John’s requests for privileged seats at Jesus’ right and left.96 The third and final step ends with Jesus calling (προσκαλεσάμενος) his disciples for instruction. The juxtaposition of great and least, first and slave, and served and serve in Jesus’ final teaching summarizes Jesus’ teaching on discipleship in 8.34-9.1 and 9.35-37.

From this analysis, we have seen that 8.31-9.1; 9.31-50; and 10.33-45 are all part of a framework that exhibits three-step progression. Each sequence contains three steps whereby there is a passion prediction, a response from the disciples, and Jesus calling (προσκαλεσάμενος/ἐφώνησεν) his disciples for instruction on

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96 Myers, *Binding the Strong Man: A Political Reading of Mark’s Story of Jesus*, p. 278.
discipleship. The three predictions provide a dramatic progression to the third prediction, which is the most emphatic:97

Behold we are going up to Jerusalem, and the Son of man will be handed over to the chief priests and the scribes, and they will condemn him to death, and deliver him to the Gentiles; and they will mock him, and spit upon him, and flog him, and kill him; and after three days he will rise (10.33-34).

Redaction critics have provided one other very important piece of information to our analysis of the rhetorical patterns in this section of Mark’s gospel. E. Schweizer correctly argues that the three sequences of progression contained in 8.31-10.45 are part of a larger section in Mark’s Gospel.98 He notes that this section is framed by stories of blind men receiving sight (8.22-26; 10.46-52).

Healing of Sight Narratives

In this section, I begin by showing that the text links the healing of sight miracles to the first and third passion prediction. H. Lightfoot has shown that there is remarkable parallelism between the first healing of sight story (8.22-26) and Peter’s confession story (8.27-30).99 The parallelism is seen most easily when the successive clauses of the two stories are set down side by side.

**Mark 8.22-26**

They came to Bethsaida. Some people brought a blind man to him and begged him to touch him. And he took the blind man by the hand and brought him out of the village; and when he spit into his eyes, and laid his hands upon him, he asked him, “Can you see anything?”

And he looked up and said, “I see people as trees, walking.

Then again he laid his hands upon his eyes; and he looked intently and his sight was restored, and he saw everything clearly.

And he sent him away to his home saying, “Do not even go into the village.”

**Mark 8.27-30**

And Jesus went on with his disciples into the villages of Caesarea Philippi; and on the way he asked his disciples, “Who do people say that I am?”

And they answered him saying, “John the Baptist; and others, Elijah; and still others, one of the prophets.

And he asked them, “But who do you say that I am?”

Peter answered and said to him, “You are the messiah.”

And he sternly ordered them not to tell anyone about him.

From this table one sees that the first section of each story begins with Jesus and his disciples entering a village and Jesus posing a question. The second section of the stories presents the answers to Jesus’ question. The blind man answers Jesus saying that he sees “people as trees walking,” and in the story of Peter’s confession, Jesus’ disciples answer him by telling Jesus who people say that he is. Neither answer in the second section reflects a sense of fulfillment – the blind man’s sight is not fully restored nor have the disciples fully understood the identity of Jesus. The second section of each story lays the
foundation for the third where by the blind man’s sight is fully restored and Peter provides the correct answer to Jesus’ question.\textsuperscript{100} Both stories end with a negative command. In the story of the blind man, Jesus instructs the healed man to avoid the village on his way home and he orders his disciples not to tell anyone about him in the story of Peters confession.

This brief analysis demonstrates that the story about the healing of the blind man (8.22-26) parallels Peter’s confession in (8.27-30). As I argued above, Peter’s confession in 8.27-30 that Jesus is “messiah” introduces the first passion prediction and forms the foundation for the other two passion predictions in 9.31 and 10.33-34. Therefore, the healing of the blind man story in 8.27-30 is linked to the following section in Mark’s gospel that contains the three-sequences of three-step progression.\textsuperscript{101}

\textsuperscript{100} Although Peter answers Jesus’ question correctly his response to Jesus’ passion prediction indicates that he does not fully understand the ramifications of the title Messiah. This is simply to say that in the story of Peter’s confession, his correct answer does not signify understanding.

\textsuperscript{101} This of course does not exclude the likelihood of a connection backwards with 8.14-21. R. Lightfoot and R. Watts note that the healing of the blind man in 8.22-26 is also connected to 8.14-21 by the disciples’ inability to perceive: “Do you have eyes, and fail to see?” (8.18) This paper affirms the position of R. Lightfoot and R. Watts who argue that 8.22-26 serves as a transition passage, ending the story of the feeding four thousand and introducing the story of Peter’s confession. However, I do believe 8.22-26 has a greater significance in 8.27-10.45 than it does in 8.14-21. The reason for my position is that another healing of the blind story occurs after the third and final sequence (10.32-10.45). These are the only two healing of the blind stories in the gospel of Mark and they are linked to the first and third sequences in 8.27-10.45.
In Mark 10.46-52, there is a second narrative depicting Jesus healing a blind man. This narrative occurs directly after the third sequence of progression (10.32-45). The text opens the second story of a blind man as it did in the first: “Καὶ ἔρχονται εἰς” (cf. 8.22). However, unlike the first story the text does not link the second healing story to the previous three-step progression by a formal parallel; rather, the text connects the second story of a blind man to the preceding sequence with a question. Following Jesus’ third and final passion prediction, the sons of Zebedee tell Jesus to do for them whatever they ask and Jesus replies, “What is it you want me to do for you” (10.36). To blind Bartimaeus’ petition in 10.47-48 Jesus responds with exactly the same words. Moreover, it is important to note that the text also links the story of blind Bartimaeus to the previous section (8.22-10.45) with Bartimaeus’ action following his healing. After Jesus heals Bartimeaus he follows Jesus ἐν τῇ ὁδῷ. The exact phrase, ἐν τῇ ὁδῷ, is found near the beginning of the first passion prediction (8.27), directly after the second (9.33, 34), and at the beginning of the final passion prediction (10.32).

My structural analysis of the healing of sight narratives (8.22-26; 10.46-52) demonstrates that they are linked to the first and third sequences of three-step progression (8.27-9.1; 10.32-45); thus, they form an inclusio around the three

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102 Myers, *Binding the Strong Man: A Political Reading of Mark’s Story of Jesus*, p. 282.

103 More will be said about the term ὁδός and how it functions in this section later in this paper.
sequences of three-step progression. The first healing of sight narrative sets the stage for the disciples’ incomprehension. The second dramatically concludes the section by portraying Bartimeaus as an exemplary disciple who follows Jesus ἐν τῷ ὀδῷ.

The analysis the series of three, repetition, and three-step progression in 8.27-10.45 reveals that this is a carefully constructed section whereby Mark’s message of Jesus’ identity and the details of following in Jesus’ ὀδός unfolds.

The construction of Mark 8.22-10.52 emerges in this manner:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Healing of sight at Bethsaida 8.22-27</th>
<th>Site</th>
<th>Passion Prediction</th>
<th>Response</th>
<th>Instruction</th>
<th>Healing of blind Bartimeaus 10.46-52</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Caesarea-Philippi</td>
<td>8.31</td>
<td>8.32-33</td>
<td>8.34-9.1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Galilee to Judea</td>
<td>9.31</td>
<td>9.32-34</td>
<td>9.35-50</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>On the way to Jerusalem</td>
<td>10.33-34</td>
<td>10.35-41</td>
<td>10.42-45</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Progression of 8.22-10.52

Not only do the rhetorical patterns in 8.22-10.52 provide the construction of this section, they also reveal how the section progresses. The text introduces the section with the first healing of a blind man story. The story begins with Jesus and his disciples arriving in Bethsaida. We should note that Bethsaida was the disciples’ destination on the second major sea journey (6.45).104 Their voyage,

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104 Myers, *Binding the Strong Man: A Political Reading of Mark’s Story of Jesus*, p. 240.
however, was unsuccessful and the story ends with the first indication of the disciples’ blindness and incomprehension: “when they saw him (Jesus) walking on water … they did not understand” (6.49-52). Their journey to Bethsaida is completed as the blind disciples finally arrive and Jesus heals a blind man.

Qualitative progression occurs in the healing of the blind man story, just as it transpires in the following sequences of three-step progression. Against what one might expect, Jesus’ first attempt to heal the blind man fails: “I see people as trees walking” (8.24).\textsuperscript{105} The blind man does not see clearly until after Jesus’ second attempt at healing him. The fuzzy vision following the first attempt is symbolic of “eyes that do not see.”\textsuperscript{106} It is also related to the disciples’ blindness in the following section; the disciples will not perceive until they accept Jesus’ teaching that he will suffer, die, and rise again, and understand his teaching on discipleship.\textsuperscript{107}

The section continues as Jesus and his disciples are “on the way” to the villages of Caesarea Philippi. It is in 8.27-30 that Jesus begins to require the

\textsuperscript{105} C. Meyers notes that the verb βλέπω occurs four times in the gospel before this story as warnings to the disciples about perception (4.12, 24; 8.15, 18) and will continue to appear in the remainder (12.38; 13.5, 9, 23, 33). See Ibid.

\textsuperscript{106} Ibid., p. 241.

disciples to understand his identity as messiah and the ramifications of the title: suffering, rejection, and death.\textsuperscript{108}

My analysis of 8.27-10.45 shows that the section provides the framework for Mark’s portrayal of Jesus’ true identity as messiah. However, like the blind man in 8.22-26 the disciples understanding of Jesus’ identity is fuzzy, for they do not fully understand his identity or the ramifications of following in the way of Jesus. In each sequence, their lack of understanding leads to teaching where the characteristics of following in the “way” of Jesus unfold.

The entire section is brought to a dramatic conclusion with the story of blind Bartimeaus. Unlike the first healing of the blind man story where people bring the blind man to Jesus, Bartimeaus, the blind beggar, is sitting “beside the way” anticipating Jesus’ arrival. The identification of Bartimeaus as a beggar is important because he represents the “least,” just like the little children in 9.36. When Bartimeaus hears that Jesus is approaching he shouts out and petitions Jesus to have mercy on him and Jesus’ followers respond by rebuking him and telling him to be quiet. Their rejection of Bartimeaus is a further illustration that the disciples still do not comprehend the implications of following in Jesus’ “way” (cf. 9.36).

\textsuperscript{108} Robbins, \textit{Jesus the Teacher: A Socio-Rhetorical Interpretation of Mark}, p. 162.
As the story progresses, Jesus is approached by Bartimeaus and Jesus asks him, “what do you want me to do for you?” Bartimeaus responds to the question by telling Jesus to do a service for him—restore his sight. The text draws a devastating contrast between Bartimeaus the beggar’s initiative and the objections of the disciples.109 Bartimeaus’ courage in calling Jesus to do him a service illustrates his understanding that Jesus accepts and serves the “least.” Unlike the first healing of sight story, Jesus restores Bartimeaus’ sight immediately. The story comes to a dramatic end as Bartimeaus follows Jesus ἐν τῷ ὁδῷ.

The analysis of the progression in 8.22-10.52 reveals a crescendo effect. The three three-step progressions provide information about following in the “way” of Jesus and they anticipate the one who does. The entire section leads to the story of blind Bartimeaus which is dramatically concluded with the words that Bartimeaus followed Jesus ἐν τῷ ὁδῷ. The story of Bartimeaus stands in contrast to the story about the rich man who refused to follow Jesus (10.17-22). Bartimeaus also stands in contrast to Jesus’ disciples who desire status and privileged positions. The dramatic irony in the story about blind Bartimeaus is that the first have become last, and the last first.

109 Myers, Binding the Strong Man: A Political Reading of Mark’s Story of Jesus, p. 282.
The Way

Mark’s ὁδός motif figures centrally in 8.22-10.52. ὁδός first appears in 8.27 where Jesus asks his disciples, “Who do people say that I am?” ὁδός occurs within or near the beginning of each of the three-step progressions (8.27; 9.33f.; 10.32). Εἰς ὁδόν is where Jesus encounters a rich man who refuses to follow him (10.17). The majority, if not all, of the seven occurrences of ὁδός in 8.27-10.52 function programmatically – Jesus is about to begin to go “on the way” prepared by John the Baptist, which ends in Jerusalem.\textsuperscript{110} His disciples are to follow him on this “way.” As E. Best notes, this section is the center of Jesus’ instruction on the meaning of Messiah and discipleship, and it would be no exaggeration to say that the phrase “on the way” could be used as the section’s title.\textsuperscript{111}

In chapter two, I argued that Deutero-Isaiah informs the “way” motif in Mark 1.1-3. This is also true of the “way” motif in 8.22-10.52. The most direct evidence for this claim comes from the climactic instance of ὁδός in the story of blind Bartimeaus, which occurs at the edge of the wilderness.\textsuperscript{112} Here Mark

\textsuperscript{111} Ibid., p. 15.
\textsuperscript{112} Jericho is located at the edge of the Judean desert. On Jericho’s wilderness location see Mauser, Christ in the Wilderness: The Wilderness Theme in the Second Gospel and Its Basis in the Biblical Tradition, p. 19.
draws on Isaiah, specifically. It is a peculiar Isaian feature to associate the cure of blindness with the coming of the new age (Isa 29.18; 32.3; 35.1-7; 42.16). Isaiah 35.5-8 links the cure of blindness with God’s “way” through the wilderness:

Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf unstopped; then the lame shall leap like a heart, and the tongue of the speechless shall speak plainly. For water has broke forth in the wilderness, and a channel of water in a thirsty land … There will be there a pure way, and it will be called the holy way.

The combination of three motifs – a cure of blindness, the way, and a wilderness location – in both Isaiah 35.5-8 and Mark 10.46-52 suggests that Isaiah is a significant intertext for the “way” motif in the story of blind Bartimeaus.

Another passage in Deutero-Isaiah is even closer to Mark’s terminology, for it portrays God healing the blind and leading them in a way:

I will lead the blind in a way they do not know, and I will cause them to walk in paths which they have not known; I will turn darkness before them into light, and I will make crooked things straight. (LXX Isa 42.16)

This passage speaks not only of God healing the blind but also of God leading the people in a way; compare the story of blind Bartimeaus, his blindness healed, following Jesus in the way. R. Watts points out that while there are

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113 Marcus, "Mark and Isaiah," p. 453. See also chapter one, footnote three.
114 Ibid.
115 I have noted that the alleviation of blindness is an Isaian feature associated with God’s return. I would be remiss if I did not point out that the healing of deafness is also an Isaian feature associated with God’s return (Isa. 35.5-8). In Mark 4.11-12 Jesus explains parables to his disciples by tells his disciples that they have been given the
numerous Jewish Scriptural references to God’s desire to heal people (e.g. Jer 33.6; Pss 147.3; 60.4), statements concerning specific healings, such as, the blind, deaf, or lame occur infrequently.\textsuperscript{116} He argues that the healing of blindness and deafness image originate in Isaiah 6 where the language is used metaphorically for Israel’s failure to understand which leads them to be a faithless people.\textsuperscript{117} This observation lends further evidence that the healing of the blind episode in Mark 10.46-52 is informed by the Isaian “way” of God image.

The oral-scribal intertexture of 10.52 occurs in the form of recontextualization. Recontextualization recalls language from “outside” a text without stating that the words stand written elsewhere. The story of Bartimeaus points to Isaiah 42.16 with the words τυφλός and ἐν τῇ ὁδῷ. Variance occurs in number, for in Deutero-Isaiah God leads the τυφλοί (plural) whereas in Mark the text mentions only one blind man. However, in both passages the blind follow ἐν τῇ ὁδῷ. Interestingly, the healing of the blind in Isaiah 42.16 is accompanied by making crooked places straight, an image associated with “the way of the Lord” in Isaiah 40.3-4, which as I have noted appears in the form of recitation in Mark 1.3. Thus, as in the story of Bartimeaus, the healing of the blind is linked to

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{itemize}
\item “secret of the kingdom of God but to those outside, everything comes in the form of parables…”
\item \textsuperscript{116} R. Watts does point out that Jeremiah 31.8 briefly mentions the blind and lame as examples of the extent of God’s compassion as even they are included as part of God’s family, but they are not healed. See Watts, \textit{Isaiah’s New Exodus and Mark}, p. 170.
\item \textsuperscript{117} Ibid., 170 & 88.
\end{itemize}
\end{footnotesize}
Deutero-Isaiah with the motif of ὁδός and in a way that evokes the initial Markan reference to ὁδός, which occurs in the Jewish Scriptural citation in the first sentence of Mark’s gospel.\textsuperscript{118}

If any question remains about the Isaian influence on the healing of the blind narrative one can note two previous passages in Mark that mention not only blindness but also deafness—Mark 4.11-12 and 8.17-18. These passages are important for two reasons. On the one hand, they link the Isaian blind and deaf images to understanding. On the other hand, the blind and deaf images are used in 8.14-21, directly before the first healing of sight narrative (8.22-26) to describe Jesus’ disciples. In Mark 4.11-12, Jesus tells his disciples that everything comes to those “outside” in the form of parables in order that “they may indeed look, but not perceive, and may indeed listen, but not understand.” The LXX of Isaiah 6.9 is the source of Jesus’ teaching: “You shall indeed hear, but not understand; and you shall indeed see, but not perceive.” In Mark 4.11-12, the seeing and hearing clauses are reversed, perhaps because of the interest in “sight” that Mark 8.22-26 and 10.46-52 reveal.\textsuperscript{119} This passage leads one to believe that the disciples, in contrast to outsiders, are insiders who possess the “secret of the Kingdom of God.” This, however, is not the case. The disciples fail to understand the parable

\textsuperscript{118} Marcus, \textit{The Way of the Lord : Christological Exegesis of the Old Testament in the Gospel of Mark}, p. 35.

\textsuperscript{119} Watts, \textit{Isaiah’s New Exodus and Mark}, p. 186.
(4.13), Jesus’ abilities (4.40f.; 6.37, 49-52; 8.4), and his teachings (8.32-34; 9.32-4; and 10.32, 35-40). Following the Isaian citation in Mark 4.11-12, Mark emphasizes the disciples’ lack of comprehension.

In the episode directly before 8.22, Jesus asks his disciples, “Do you still not perceive or understand? Are your hearts hardened? Do you have eyes, and fail to see? Do you have ears and fail to hear?” The language of Jesus’ rebuke illustrates a connection between 8.14-21 and 4.1ff as it follows closely that use in the parables material: συνίημι (4.9, 12), βλέπω (4.12), ἀκούω (4.3, 12), and in particular the question ὡτα ἐχοντες οὐκ ἀκούετε (8.18) which juxtaposes the command ὃς ἔχει ὡτα ἀκούειν ἀκουέτω (4.9). In Mark 8.14-21, Jesus’ closest companions continue to be depicted as blind, deaf, uncomprehending disciples. This passage occurs directly before the first healing narrative and it foreshadows the disciples’ incomprehension of Jesus’ identity and teachings in 8.27-10.45. Ironically, it is Bartimeaus, the outsider, whose sight is healed. Given that Mark links sight and blindness with understanding, the healing of Bartimeaus’ sight suggests that he, unlike the disciples, understands what it means to follow Jesus ἐν τῇ ὁδῷ.

As I have shown, the climatic instance of ὁδός in Mark 8.22-10.52 is informed by the Deutero-Isaian image of God’s triumphal victory march up to

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120 Ibid., p. 227.
Jerusalem. We can also note that in Deutero-Isaiah, God leads the people “in a way” that they have not known. The same is true for the blind, deaf disciples, for Jesus is leading them to Jerusalem although they do not understand what will happen to him there.

Because the climatic use of ὁδός in 8.22-10.52 reflects Deutero-Isaiah’s portrayal of God’s way, it seems likely that the other six occurrences of this word should also be read in the same light. Mark 8.27 reintroduces the ὁδός motif before Jesus’ first passion prediction. It occurs twice following the second passion prediction (9.33, 34) and it is not until the third prediction that the reader becomes aware of the final destination: “They were on the way, going up to Jerusalem … He took the twelve aside again and began to tell them what was to happen to him, saying ‘See, we are going up to Jerusalem” (10.32-33). It is no accident that the text uses the term ἀναβαίνω to describe Jesus’ and the disciples’ way into Jerusalem. Ἀναβαίνω literally means “to go up” and it best describes one’s journey to the Levant.121 J. Schneider, however, points out that in the Septuagint and New Testament the term has rather more than a topographical significance. He convincingly shows that in the Septuagint and the New Testament ἀναβαίνω is a technical term for the festal ascent into the

holy city and the Jerusalem temple.\textsuperscript{122} Thus, just as the Deutero-Isaian image of God’s victorious arrival carries in its wake the people’s return to Zion – so too the textual language of Mark 10.33 depicts Jesus victoriously leading a small band of followers into the holy city.

An ironic twist, however, flips the Deutero-Isaian image of God’s triumphant return to Jerusalem on its head.\textsuperscript{123} Jesus tells his followers three times (8.31; 9.31; 10.33) that he is going up to Jerusalem not in order to be enthroned in the holy city but in order to be killed. As can be seen in the disciples’ response to Jesus’ teaching, nothing could have been more antithetical to the conventional understandings of Messiah. Yet, I must forcefully add that this is not a denial of the Deutero-Isaian image of God’s victorious “way” that culminates in God’s enthronement; it is rather, a radical, cross-centered recontextualization of it.\textsuperscript{124} Thus, in Mark’s gospel the “way of Jesus” is the way of suffering and death. It is also the way in which Jesus calls his disciples to follow (8.36). Finally, from our observation in chapter two that Mark 1.2-3 parallels the “way of Jesus” and the “way of God,” we can conclude that Jesus’ “way” is the “way” to suffering and death, it is also the “way” upon which the

\textsuperscript{122} Ibid. Also Marcus, The Way of the Lord : Christological Exegesis of the Old Testament in the Gospel of Mark, p. 36.

\textsuperscript{123} Marcus, The Way of the Lord : Christological Exegesis of the Old Testament in the Gospel of Mark, p. 36, Watts, Isaiah’s New Exodus and Mark, pp. 130; 257.

\textsuperscript{124} Marcus, The Way of the Lord : Christological Exegesis of the Old Testament in the Gospel of Mark, p. 36.
disciples are called to follow, and it is a reinterpretation of the Deutero-Isaian “way” of God.
Chapter 4

Relationship Between “Your [Jesus’] Way” and “the Way of the Lord”

I showed in chapters two and three that the Deutero-Isaian image of the “way” informs the Markan “way” motif in 1.2-3 and 8.22-10.52. Mark’s gospel introduces the “way” motif in Mark 1.2-3 by creating a parallel between “your way” and the “way of the Lord.” In chapter two, I argued that Mark established this parallel by eliminating the words “before you” from the end of 1.2. The parallel creates a relationship between “your way” and the “way of the Lord.” 125 The relationship that is established by this parallel has yet to be addressed.

K. Stendahl and M. Hooker propose that the parallel is evidence that Mark wishes to identify Jesus with the κύριος. Stendahl notes that the LXX of Isaiah 40.3 reads, “make straight the paths of our God,” whereas the end of Mark 1.3 reads “make straight his paths.” According to Stendahl, the elimination of the direct reference to God in the Markan citation suggests that κύριος is not an allusion to the God of the Jewish Scriptures, instead it points to Jesus.126 M. Hooker agrees with this interpretation but she uses other evidence to support it. Hooker notes that for Mark and his community κύριος would already be a

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125 Ibid., p. 37.
familiar title used of the risen Jesus; thus, it was easy for Mark to apply to Jesus those Jewish Scriptures that mention κύριος.127

K. Snodgrass differs from Stendahl’s and Hooker’s interpretation. K. Snodgrass points out that elsewhere in Mark’s gospel κύριος is never used as a title to refer to Jesus. This leads Snodgrass to conclude that the κύριος in 1.3 must be in reference to God; thus, creating a distinction between God and Jesus.128

As one can see, the relationship between “your [Jesus’] way” and the “the way of the Lord” in 1.3 is quite complicated. Beyond establishing a relationship between the two ways, it also establishes a relationship between Jesus and κύριος. This thesis agrees with K. Snodgrass that in Mark’s gospel Jesus is depicted as distinct from κύριος. We must note, however, that in certain passages a close connection exists between Jesus and the κύριος. For example, in 2.28 Jesus says, “The Son of man is κύριος even of the Sabbath.” Most likely, “Son of man” is a phrase that Jesus used of himself; thus, this passage illustrates a close connection between Son of Man and the κύριος.129 In 11.3, Jesus sends his disciples to fetch him a colt. He instructs them that if anyone questions their

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acquisition of it to say, “ὁ κύριος needs it, and will send it back here immediately.”

A close connection is also visible in 12.36-37 where Jesus quotes Psalms 110.1 to illustrate that the χριστός is David’s κύριος. Mark 2.28; 11.3; and 12.36-37 are a few examples that illustrate a close connection between “Jesus” and κύριος. However, we must keep in mind that Mark never explicitly uses κύριος as a title for Jesus. What we may say is that the in the Gospel of Mark, Jesus and the κύριος are closely connected, yet Mark affirms their distinction by not using κύριος as a title for Jesus.

The complex combination of close connection with distinction between the terms “Jesus” and κύριος in Mark’s gospel recalls the juxtaposition of “your [Jesus’] way” and “the way of the Lord” in 1.2-3. While Mark 1.2-3 establishes a close relationship between “your [Jesus’] way” and the “way of the Lord” it is evident here too that Mark is reluctant to identify Jesus as the κύριος. The Markan depiction of “your [Jesus’] way” and “the way of the Lord” cleverly combines a recognition of the separateness of the two ways with a recognition of their inseparability. J. Markus explains the inseparability of Jesus and the κύριος best when he says, “Perhaps the best way to express this complex relationship is

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131 Ibid.
132 Ibid., p. 39. In contrast, such a juxtaposition does not occur in Mark’s reference to the Son of man.
to say that, in Mark, where Jesus acts, there the Lord is also powerfully at work.”¹³³ This supports my position that in the Gospel of Mark Jesus’ “way” is depicted as an extension of the Deutero-Isaian image of God’s “way.”

The Ethical Way

As we saw in chapter three, “the way” motif in Mark’s gospel is Jesus’ “way” up to Jerusalem where he will undergo suffering and death. It is also the way upon which Jesus calls his disciples to follow, that is, “the way” of discipleship in which Jesus instructs them (8.34); therefore, it may be suggested that in the Gospel of Mark the “way” is an ethical path upon which the disciples are called to action.

K. Snodgrass’ important study, “Streams of Tradition” supports my suggestion that the Markan “way” motif is best interpreted as a religious ethic. He argues that the synoptic use of Isaiah 40.3 has its forerunner in the Qumran literature.¹³⁴ This is important because the Qumran community’s interpretation (1QS 8.12-16 and 9.17-20) of Isaiah 40.3 is an ethical one—they viewed their right living in the wilderness as preparation for the imminent coming of God.¹³⁵ We should note, however, that in 1QS 8.12-16 it is God who makes possible the community’s interpretation of Isaiah 40.3 and their ethical way of life, because it

¹³³ Ibid., 39f.
¹³⁵ Ibid.
is said that God “revealed time and again” to the leader of the community “the mysteries of wonder and truth.” Similarly, Isaiah 40.3 is cited explicitly in 1Q5 9.17-20 within a context that speaks of “walking in all that has been revealed by God.” In the Qumran passages that cite Isaiah 40.3, it is apparent that human action is of great concern. However, it is important to note that the main emphasis seems to be on God’s own revelation of the way, just as in Deutero-Isaiah God is the one who creates the “way” and leads the people back to Jerusalem (43.16).

Just as the Qumran community placed emphasis on human ethical actions, Jesus’ teaching on discipleship (i.e. following in the “way” of Jesus) in Mark 8.34-9.1; 9.35-37; and 10.41-45 concerns ethical actions. In Mark 8.35, Jesus instructs his followers that in order to follow him one must be willing to lose their life for his sake and for the sake of the good news. The reference to the good news recalls Mark 1.14-15 where Jesus proclaims that the good news of God is the coming of God’s rule. The ethical dimension of this teaching is portrayed in one’s willingness to sacrifice his or her life for something greater than his or her own being. In the second teaching on discipleship (9.35-37), Jesus tells his disciples that another requisition of following in his way is that they must become a servant of all people. Jesus supports his servant teaching with a

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demonstrative action that illustrates welcoming the least. This instruction exhibits the ethical actions of serving and accepting people. The final instruction on discipleship follows the story of the Zebedees who are vying for seats of status and authority. Jesus uses this occasion to counter the Zebedees’ wish by instructing the disciples that whoever wants to be great must be a servant to all and whoever wishes to be first must be a slave. This teaching stands in contrast to societal positions of authority desired by the Zebedees, which people use to subjugate others (10.42). The final teaching comes to a dramatic end as Jesus offers himself as an example of how the disciples are expected to live: “For the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve and to give his life as a ransom for many.” The Son of man’s willingness to “give his life” recalls Jesus’ first instruction on discipleship in 8.35. Moreover, Jesus’ use of himself as an example signifies that in order to follow in the “way” of Jesus one must possess Jesus’ qualities—a willingness to lose one’s life, serve people, accept the least, and become a slave unto death. In Mark 8.27-10.45, Jesus transfers his ethical qualities to his disciples through his teaching. Thus, following in “the way” of Jesus requires ethical human actions that mimic Jesus’ actions.

I believe J. Marcus correctly argues that the Deutero-Isaian passages that speak about God’s processional “way” through the wilderness form the most direct background for the Synoptic sayings about entering the Βασιλεία τοῦ
θεοῦ. He claims that in Deutero-Isaiah the return of God is depicted as an extension of God’s kingly power, which culminates in the messenger’s announcement of salvation, “Your God reigns” (Isa 52.7). The enthronement of God in the holy city carries in its wake the return of the people. Read against this background, the Markan sayings about entering the βασιλεία conceive of the βασιλεία not as a place but as an eschatological extension of God’s rule in which God invites people to participate.

Following in the footsteps of W. Kelber, J. Markus also shows that in Mark 8.26-10.52 the redactional use of ὁδός is linked with the theme of entrance into the kingdom of God (9.47; 10.15, 23-25). Read in this way, the ὁδός of Jesus is a “way” in which people are called to participate and it is “the ὁδός to the kingdom of God.” Just as God’s return is depicted as an eschatological extension of God’s rule in Deutero-Isaiah, it is likewise in Mark. Following in the ὁδός of Jesus entails ethical behavior that is illustrative of participating in God’s Βασιλεία. Finally, just as we saw in Deutero-Isaiah and the Qumran literature, the “way” motif in Mark’s gospel is not about the way to a place of God’s

138 Ibid.: p. 113.
140 Swartley, "The Structural Function of the Term 'Way' in Mark," pp. 78-79.
Instead, it is about the disciples’ participation in God’s rule, which God made possible through Jesus’ example. Thus, in the Gospel of Mark “the way” motif is Jesus’ way to suffering and death and it is also an “ethical way” in which the disciples are called to act.

Conclusion

The intent of this paper was to show that the Deutero-Isaian “way” image informs the ὁδός motif in Mark’s gospel. To do this I analyzed the ὁδός motif in Mark 1.2-3 and 8.22-10.52 through the lens of intertextual analysis, which showed that the Markan ὁδός motif points to and is informed by the Isaian “way.”

In chapter two, I showed that the text introduced the ὁδός motif is a conflated citation. I argued that Mark is responsible for the conflation and that it establishes a parallel between “the way of Jesus” and “the way of God.” As we saw, the citation is attributed to Isaiah and Mark 1.3 presents the words of Isaiah in the form of recitation. This observation indicated that Mark’s text points to Deutero-Isaiah; thus, to understand the ὁδός motif in Mark’s gospel one must examine the “way” image in Deutero-Isaiah.

In chapter three, I began by examining the complex rhetorical patterns in 8.22-10.52. I showed that within the framework of three-step progression Jesus teaches his disciples about his identity and the implications of discipleship. I
argued that the section progresses in a way that leads to the story of blind Bartimeaus and I showed that the ὀδός motif in this story also points to Deutero-Isaiah. Because the ὀδός motif in this climatic story pointed to Deutero-Isaiah I suggested that the other six occurrences of the term in 8.22-10.46 should also be read in the same light. This enabled me to show that the “way” of Jesus up to Jerusalem is portrayed using Deutero-Isaian imagery; however, with dramatic irony Mark reinterpreted the victorious Deutero-Isaian image of God’s “way” into Zion and used it to describe “Jesus’ way” to suffering and death.

Finally, in chapter four I recalled the parallel between the “way of Jesus” and “way of the Lord” in 1.2-3 and examined the relationship between “your way” and the “way of the Lord.” I suggested that the parallel establishes a complex combination of close connection with distinction between Jesus and κύριος. In doing so, it illustrates a close connection between Jesus’ way and the way of the Lord. In the final section of this paper, I proposed an ethical interpretation for the ὀδός motif in the Gospel of Mark. I showed that the “way” is Jesus’ way, and it is an ethical “way” in which he calls his disciples to follow. What linked the disciples’ ethical “way” to “the way of Jesus” is that participation in “way” is portrayed as participation in the eschatological extension of God’s rule.


**Tools**

