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Rhetorical Ritual: Apocalyptic Discourse in Mark 13

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Every text is a fabric woven from multiple textures. Those textures include its relationships to historical events, other texts, and contemporary discourses (intertexture),¹ its location within the web of sociocultural conventions and institutions (social and cultural texture),² its connection with the larger values and beliefs of its authors and readers, including

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modern readers (ideological texture),³ and the variety of ways that it transmits sacred experiences (sacred texture).⁴ The goal of this essay is to describe the inner rhetorical texture, or persuasive design, of the little apocalypse in Mark 13.⁵ Along the way, the essay explores some of the oral-scribal intertexture and sacred texture of Mark 13. The

¹ Robbins, *The Tapestry*, 96-143; *Exploring*, 40-70. For Mark 13, cf. Brandon, *Jesus*, 221-82; Gaston, *No Stone*; Lührmann, *Das Markusevangelium*, 222; Hengel, "Entstehungszeit," 21-43; Myers, *Binding*, 327-29; Marcus, "The Jewish War"; A. Y. Collins, "The Apocalyptic Rhetoric"; Hartman, *Prophecy Interpreted*; Brandenburger, *Markus 13*.

² Robbins, *The Tapestry*, 144-91; Robbins, *Exploring*, 71-94.

³ Robbins, *The Tapestry*, 192-236; Robbins, *Exploring*, 95-119. For Mark 13, cf. Belo, *A Materialist Reading*, 193-204; Wink, *Naming*; Myers, *Binding*, 324-53.

⁴ Robbins, *Exploring*, 120-31.

⁵ Robbins, *The Tapestry*, 44-95; Robbins, *Exploring*, 7-39. I am deeply grateful to the following people for helping me to sharpen the insights in this essay: Gordon D. Newby, Laurie L. Patton, L. Gregory Bloomquist, Wesley H. Wachob, and Anders Eriksson.

major goal of the essay is to give a thick description of the inner rhetorical texture of the little apocalypse in the Gospel of Mark.⁶

It is well known that apocalyptic discourse does creative things with time.⁷ Often there is less attention to the rhetorical effects of apocalyptic discourse on space.⁸ To move beyond the limitations of current literary, historical, and social approaches, this essay uses insights about ritual placement of the holy from Jonathan Z. Smith's book *To Take Place*, about the placement of the holy in people from Peter Brown's "The Holy Man in Late Antiquity," about boundaries in apocalyptic from Leonard Thompson's *The Book of Revelation*, and about body zones from Bruce Malina's *The New Testament World*.⁹ Insights from these writings energize a

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socio-rhetorical approach to apocalyptic discourse as a rhetorical ritual that recreates all regions of time and space in the body and in the world on the basis of their relation to the sacred or the profane.¹⁰ In the Gospel of Mark, apocalyptic discourse creates new boundaries within time and space, gathers turmoil and distress within those boundaries, and re-replaces the holy from the sacred boundaries of the Jerusalem Temple into the bodies of Jesus' disciples. What appears to the listener to be undifferentiated, chaotic

⁶ C. Clifton Black, "An Oration," presented perhaps the first modern rhetorical analysis of Mark 13, interpreting it from the perspective of rhetorical situation, arrangement, and invention, including a display of its tropes, figures of speech, and figures of thought. A. Y. Collins, "The Apocalyptic Rhetoric," has followed guidelines of Greco-Roman rhetoric and Bitzer's concept of rhetorical situation to analyze Mark 13 in its historical context.

⁷ See the discussion of kinds of eschatology in J. J. Collins (ed.), *Apocalypse*; A. Y. Collins (ed.) *Early Christian Apocalypticism*, 5-6; O'Leary, *Arguing the Apocalypse*, 45-51; J. J. Collins (ed.), *The Encyclopedia of Apocalypticism*, vol. 1.

⁸ See an exception in Rowland, *The Open Heaven*; Thompson *The Book of Revelation*, 63-64, 75-86; Thompson, "Mapping an Apocalyptic World."

⁹ Smith, *To Take Place*; Brown, "The Rise and Function"; Thompson, *The Book of Revelation*, 63-64, 75-86; Thompson, "Mapping an Apocalyptic World"; Malina, *The New Testament World*, 73-77.

¹⁰ Cf. Robbins, "Making Christian Culture."

time, apocalyptic discourse organizes into periods of sacred time leading up to a new time. What appears to the listener to be well-ordered sacred place is replaced with a different and unexpected order. A major goal of this essay, then, is to explore the effects of apocalyptic discourse as a ritual of rhetorical performance on time, space, and the body. When the ritual has been concluded, time and space in the world and in the body have been changed through the power and authority of divine pronouncement and action.

This essay proposes that Jesus performs five ritual acts with the bodies of his disciples. These acts occur within four stages of ritualized experiences of the end time. Each stage has a focus both on a particular region of geographical space and on a particular body zone of Jesus' disciples. By the end of the ritual, all regions of geographical space and all regions of the disciples' bodies have been reconfigured and replaced through divine pronouncement and action.

One of the ritual actions occurs through the use of oppositional rhetoric. Jesus' use of oppositional rhetoric creates a potential within the disciples to open and shut both their ears and eyes to control what goes into their minds, hearts, and bowels (the place of the emotions). This ability to control what comes in through their ears and eyes leads to an ability to shut out or invite into their bodies what certain people show them and say, and thus to control both their understanding and their emotions.

A second ritual action occurs through the use of argumentative rhetoric. Jesus' use of argumentative rhetoric creates an ability within the disciples to control the intensity of their emotions, lessening anxiety and worry at certain times and increasing fear and concern at other times. Argumentative rhetoric, then, organizes and clarifies confusing and distressing things one is unable to stop from seeing and hearing in the world.

A third ritual action occurs within Jesus' use of passive action narration that creates contexts where the focus is on the mouths of the disciples. Jesus' use of passive action narration places the bodies of the disciples in contexts of physical punishment and verbal abuse. Jesus explains that their

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bodies are sites for action by the Holy Spirit. The content of the testimony and preaching of the gospel by the disciples is really, Jesus explains, speech by the Holy Spirit rather than by their own self-knowledge and self-will. While, at the opening of Mark 13, the disciples participate in Jesus' movement of his body with their own self-expressive speech, Jesus recreates them into sites for the expressive speech of the Holy Spirit. In contexts where their bodies are delivered up for physical punishment and verbal abuse, the Holy Spirit will speak through their mouths.

A fourth ritual action occurs through hyperbolic exhortative rhetoric. Jesus' use of hyperbolic exhortation motivates the disciples to move their feet and hands in a swift and decisive manner with no turning back or turning to the side. With this rhetorical action, Jesus creates within the disciples a potential for purposive action that embodies radical urgency. This will be a necessary ability, Jesus asserts, at a particular time that will be worse than all other times.

A fifth ritual action occurs through recitation of authoritative testimony. It is well-known that when sun, moon, and stars lose their power and direction, then the entire universe will disintegrate. Jesus adds to this the pronouncement that the Son of man will come and gather the bodies of the elect together. The unstated reason for this action is that these bodies are the places of the holy scattered throughout space in the earth and the heavens. This ritual action provides a means for all bodies on earth that are sites of the holy to be preserved during the time when all heaven and earth are falling into chaos and passing away.

J. Z. Smith has observed that "Sacrality is, above all, a category of emplacement."¹¹ The little apocalypse in Mark 13 re-replaces the sacred from the Jerusalem Temple to the bodies of Jesus' followers. Through Jesus' self-expressive speech, the bodies of the disciples are transported throughout all nations. Their bodies become traveling sacred places, and they will be able to create momentary ritual sites wherever they go bearing testimony and preaching the gospel. Then Jesus' self-expressive speech enacts the Son of man gathering all of the bodies of the disciples together. Marcan discourse does not bother to tell the reader to what place in space the

¹¹ Smith, *To Take Place*, 104.

Son of man takes these bodies! For this discourse, it is enough for them to be gathered together. They are the sites where the sacred dwells and enacts its benefits. Wherever they are, they are the places of the sacred in the world!

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Jesus Moves to a Place of Opposition to the Temple: Mark 13:1-4

Mark 13 begins with narrational discourse that presents Jesus engaged in purposive action¹² that moves his body out of the Jerusalem temple. This focus on the body zone of purposive action starts the chapter with an emphasis on geographical space that is central to its inner fabric. While 13:1 presents the beginning of the movement of Jesus, 13:3 presents its ending. The result of the movement is Jesus' establishment of an authoritative place to sit and speak about the destruction of the Jerusalem Temple. The place is the Mount of Olives, which the narration describes as opposite (13:3: *katenanti*) the Temple. There is no more movement of Jesus throughout the rest of Mark 13. After Jesus establishes a place opposite the Temple from which to speak authoritatively to his disciples about the destruction of the Temple, he moves no further until his speech is ended.

The narrational discourse that introduces Jesus' purposive movement through space introduces dialogue between Jesus and his followers. The dialogue transports the disciples from the Temple to the Mount of Olives along with Jesus. It is noticeable that the narration does not speak of movement on behalf of the disciples. Rather, the focus is on the purposive movement of Jesus, and the disciples are transported with Jesus through the medium¹³ of their self-expressive speech.¹⁴ As Jesus moves out of the Temple, the narration introduces one of the disciples asking Jesus a question (13:1). Immediately after the question, the narration introduces Jesus accepting the opportunity to respond (13:2). When Jesus sits down on the Mount of Olives, the narration introduces Peter, James, John, and Andrew continuing the dialogue in private (13:3). The private nature of the context signals, using the words of Thomas P. Kasulis, that Jesus will use language of

¹² Malina, *The New Testament World*, 75; Robbins, *Exploring*, 31.

¹³ I am grateful to L. Gregory Bloomquist for the insight about the bodies of the disciples.

¹⁴ Malina, *The New Testament World*, 75; Robbins, *Exploring*, 31.

intimacy as he speaks.¹⁵ This means that Jesus leaves entire chains of reasoning unexpressed, because he is speaking to an inner circle of disciples who have accompanied him from the earliest moments of his ministry in Galilee (Mark 1:16-20). Jesus can presuppose that these four disciples know things he has said earlier in the narrative and things both

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he and they have done prior to the time they are spending together on the Mount of Olives. Jesus' speech to the four disciples in Mark 13 is rivaled in length in the Gospel of Mark only by 4:10-34 where he teaches parables about the kingdom to the twelve disciples after he has taken them throughout Galilee (1:39) and focused special attention on Capernaum (2:1-3:6; 3:19b-35).¹⁶ In other words, in the context of the purposive action of Jesus at the opening of Mark 13, Jesus and his disciples engage in self-expressive speech that creates a setting for Jesus to present his final major speech in the Gospel of Mark.

In the context of the purposive action by Jesus that moves him to a location opposite the Temple, the speech of both the disciples and Jesus in the opening four verses interweave emotion-fused thought¹⁷ with discussion of future time. One of the regions of emotion-fused thought is the eyes, and this is the region with which the disciples and Jesus begin. The speech of the disciple in 13:1 concerns what they are seeing as they leave the Temple: "Look, Teacher, what wonderful stones and what wonderful buildings." Jesus responds in 13:2 by comparing what they see in the present with what they will see in the future: "Do you see these great buildings? There will not be left here one stone upon another, that will not be thrown down." The concentration on the eyes in the zone of emotion-fused thought continues through 13:4 as the four disciples ask about the time when they will see the destruction of the Temple and about the sign they will see when these things are all to be accomplished.

¹⁵ Kasulis, "Intimacy"; Kasulis, "Intimations of Religious Experience."

¹⁶ Robbins, *Jesus the Teacher*, 27-34, 82-123; Mack and Robbins, *Patterns of Persuasion*, 143-60.

¹⁷ Malina, *The New Testament World*, 75; Robbins, *Exploring*, 30-31.

Smith has observed that “When one enters a temple, one enters marked-off space ... in which, at least in principle, ... everything, at least potentially, demands attention.”¹⁸ The disciple who speaks to Jesus in 13:2 appears to be a model for how people should focus their attention when they are in the presence of a temple, since, extending Smith’s comments a bit, a temple itself becomes sacred “by having attention focused on it in a highly marked way.”¹⁹ This disciple is engaged in the process of focusing attention in a marked way on the Temple itself. Such a focus has the potential to make the Temple itself especially sacred in the experience of the disciple. The Marcan Jesus responds that there will be a time when the Jerusalem temple’s “complex and rigorous systems of power and status with their attendant

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idioms of sacred/profane and pure/impure”²⁰ will no longer exist. There will be a space filled with rubble in its place.²¹ This response by Jesus arrests the focused attention of the disciple on the beautiful, magnificent Temple in Jerusalem. The disciples must focus their attention elsewhere, namely, on their own bodies. This Temple will be a heap of stones thrown down on one another. The bodies of the disciples, in contrast, will still exist when the Temple is destroyed. Their bodies will be the place where the holy will dwell and be transported throughout space.

Eyes, Ears, and Emotions during the Beginning of the Birthpangs: Mark 13:5-8

When Jesus responds to the four disciples in 13:5, his self-expressive speech introduces emotion into seeing that has implications for the heart, the region within the zone of emotion-fused thought that concerns knowing, understanding, thinking, remembering, choosing, feeling, and considering.²² Jesus begins with a command to see

¹⁸ Smith, *To Take Place*, 104.

¹⁹ Smith, *To Take Place*, 104.

²⁰ Smith, *To Take Place*, 73.

²¹ Cf. Smith, *To Take Place*, 80, where Eusebius interprets the rubble as concealing the site of Jesus’ tomb and resurrection.

²² Malina, *The New Testament World*, 74; Robbins, *Exploring*, 30.

“carefully” or “intently” (*blepete*), but now he is not talking about looking at the Jerusalem Temple. His goal is to turn the eyes of the disciples away from the Temple toward their own bodies and the wide world of historical events and natural disorder that is the environment in which their bodies live. A common way to translate the emotionally charged command of Jesus about seeing (*blepete*) is “take heed” or “beware.” We can experience its rhetorical force better by articulating its foundational meaning “Look out!” As Jesus’ speech continues, repetitive commands about seeing become the primary threads of the discourse. All of the topics that emerge are interwoven into these threads. The command to look out (*blepete*) occurs four times in the speech (13:5, 9, 23, 33), creating a repetitive texture that emphasizes the act of seeing certain things in the world, understanding them in particular ways, feeling certain ways about them, choosing particular ways to act in the midst of them, and remembering always to think, feel, and choose in these ways. As the speech progresses, this texture is thickened with specific references to seeing in 13:14, 29 (*idete*) and 26 (*opsontai*). Into this thick visual texture the discourse weaves a rich sequence of temporal words in the body of the speech: when (*pote*: 4, 33, 35; *hotan*: 4, 7, 11, 14, 28, 29); not yet (7); beginning (8); first (10); in that day (11); to the end (13); then (14, 21, 26, 27); winter (18); those days (18, 24); from the

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beginning (19); until now (19); after that tribulation (24); and summer (28). The result is a thick tapestry of visual and temporal discourse. At the end of the speech, the emphasis on seeing is intensified through repetitive use of “watch” (*agrypneite*, *grēgorēi*, or *grēgoreite*: 13:33, 34, 35, 37). Into this intensified visual context 13:35 embeds references to specific times when people must be alert: evening, midnight, cock crow, morning. The next to last verse clarifies the nature of the watching by setting it in opposition to sleeping (*katheudontas*: 13:36), a condition of the body in which the eyes are closed and the mind has no sense of time. The speech, then, focusses attention in a marked way on time itself and on the bodies of the disciples as they live in time. During the end time, the eyes of the disciples are especially important. They are to keep alert, remember what they see, carefully organize what they see into sequential periods of time,

establish discriminating dispositions, guard their emotional responses, and resist alternative ways of perceiving and responding to the world than the one this discourse introduces.

As Jesus' self-expressive speech flows from his mouth, it creates pictures of future situations and introduces instructions for the purpose of controlling the disciples' actions, thoughts, and emotions in those situations. In other words, throughout the speech Jesus embodies and enacts the role of "teacher" (*didaskalos*), which the disciple evokes for Jesus in the initial verse of the chapter.²³ Mark 13:5-6 thematizes a future situation when people will come in Jesus' name, saying, "I am he!" Jesus describes the activity of these people as "leading many astray" (*planaō*). He counters their activity with emotion-fused language about seeing supplemented with a personalized negative assertion: Look out that *no one* leads you astray (13:5). This is unelaborated oppositional rhetoric.²⁴ Jesus says nothing to amplify or explain his command. One might call this an anticipatory challenge that allows no riposte.²⁵ There is to be no interaction – no dialogue or discussion. Simply turn away from these people. Do not look at them, do not talk to them, and by all means do not follow them. Jesus' statement anticipates future discourse and action that interprets events in an alternative manner to his discourse. The goal of the abrupt, oppositional rhetoric is to nurture an immovable defensive posture within Jesus' followers. Jesus' true disciples will refuse to be influenced by alternative systems of thought and action.

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In addition to describing what people will see, Jesus speaks about things people will hear. The opening verses of Jesus' speech, therefore, interweave directives for seeing with directives for hearing. In the context where Jesus turns to what the disciples will hear, he is concerned to control their emotions rather than simply their actions and beliefs. When they hear of wars and rumors of wars, they must not be alarmed (*me throeisthe* or *me thorubeisthe*: 13:7). To control their emotions, Jesus moves beyond

²³ See Robbins, *Jesus the Teacher*.

²⁴ Robbins, "The Dialectical Nature."

²⁵ Malina, *The New Testament World*, 34-37; Robbins, *Exploring*, 80-81.

oppositional rhetoric into argumentative rhetoric.²⁶ This is perhaps the most surprising phenomenon for interpreters who presuppose that apocalyptic discourse is primarily emotionally driven epideictic rhetoric (containing praise and blame) with a judicial goal of indicting the wicked and acquitting the righteous. At various points in Mark 13 Jesus' discourse is remarkably deliberative in nature. Imitating political rhetoric, it begins with implicit or explicit syllogistic reasoning and envisions a goal of persuading the hearers toward right action and dissuading them from wrong action.²⁷ In rhetorical discourse, it is commonplace to leave entire chains of argumentation unexpressed. In language of intimation,²⁸ it is even more pronounced. The presumption is that the hearer knows the reasoning behind certain assertions; thus, it would be foolish to state all of it. An entire syllogism of reasoning underlies the statements in Mark 13. Out of this reasoning, Mark 13:7-8 makes assertions about the necessity of certain things happening during the end time and about certain events functioning as the beginning of the end time. After looking at this discourse, we will turn to the directions Jesus gives to the disciples concerning what they should do and not do. Displayed in a logical sequence, the reasoning in Mark 13:7-8 looks as follows:

Unexpressed Rule: In order for the end time to occur, it is necessary for destructive events to begin and grow to a point that provokes God to produce a new situation that brings an end to the distress.

Unexpressed Case: Nation rising against nation, kingdom rising against kingdom, and earthquakes and famines in various places are destructive events that begin and grow to a point that has the potential to provoke God to produce a new situation that brings an end to the distress.

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Unexpressed Result: Therefore, when the end time occurs, nation rising against nation, kingdom rising against kingdom, and earthquakes and famines in various places will take place.

²⁶ Robbins, "Enthymemic Texture," 343-44.

²⁷ Cf. Robbins, "Progymnastic Rhetorical Composition," 121-31.

²⁸ Kasulis, "Intimacy"; Kasulis, "Intimations of Religious Experience."

Abductive Reasoning: Necessity	Analogical Reasoning: Beginning
Abductive Case: The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand (1:15).	(Unexpressed Analogy/Rule: The end time is like a birth that begins with birth pangs.)
	(Unexpressed Case: Nation rising against nation, kingdom rising against kingdom, and earthquakes and famines in various places start a process of distress like birth pangs begin the process of birth.)
Result: Therefore, wars and rumor of wars must take place (13:7).	Result: Therefore, nation rising against nation, kingdom rising against kingdom, and earthquakes and famines in various places are the beginning of the birth pangs (13:8).

The unexpressed syllogism (Rule/Case/Result) above the columns presents overall reasoning that underlies the statements in Mark 13. From this syllogism, the reader sees that the Gospel of Mark does not exhibit reasoning that explains why evil, destructive powers have become so powerful on earth. The reasoning begins with the beginning of the end time and describes events that have the potential to provoke God to take decisive action that will produce a new situation that will bring an end to the distress.

The left column shows that an abductive intuition that God’s kingdom is drawing near energizes an argument about the necessity of certain things happening during the end time. The statement is an abductive intuition, since it is an imaginative leap rather than an inductive observation or deductive inference.²⁹ According to this intuition, soon God will act decisively to bring about the end: The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand (1:15). If God is going to act soon, this means that things are happening that soon will provoke God to action. Since wars and rumors of wars signify that people are in conflict with one another in such proportion that chaos and distress will grow and

²⁹ For a discussion and exhibition of abductive reasoning in contrast to deductive and inductive reasoning, see Robbins, “From Enthymeme to Theology”; Robbins, “Enthymemic Texture.”

spread throughout the inhabited world, then it is necessary that wars and rumors take place during this time. One of the conclusions in the reasoning, therefore, is

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that wars and rumors of wars are necessary events within the end time. If these events do not occur, there will be no end time; if they do, then the end time is at hand.

The right column reveals another argument about the end time. This one is an argument from analogy rather than an argument from abduction: the distress of wars, earthquakes, and famines during the end time is like the distress of childbirth. The analogical reasoning produces a sphere of thinking that could be applied in various ways to circumstances that bring about the end time (conception, time of gestation, growth of a fetus, initial contractions, the throes of the final moments, the emergence of new life, the time of joy and peace after the travails of the birth). In this instance, the reasoning is applied to the beginning of the process of the emergence of the child from the womb. Wars, rumors of wars, earthquakes, and famines are the beginning of the birth pangs that will, in time, produce a new situation.

In addition to the topics of necessity and the beginning of the end time, Mark 13 addresses the topic of the end itself. In 13:7, the discourse introduces the topic of the end in an argument from the contrary: the time of the beginning of the birth pangs is not the time of the end itself. Later in the discourse (13:24-27), Jesus introduces a positive description of the end. In order to see how the argument from the contrary and the positive work, the following diagram displays them in parallel columns.

The End as Topic

Contrary Deductive Reasoning: End	Inductive Description: End
<p>Unexpressed Contrary Rule: The beginning of the birth pangs is not the end.</p> <p>Case: Wars and rumors of wars occur during the beginning of the birth pangs (13:8).</p>	<p>Unexpressed Case: The darkening of the sun, moon, and stars; the shaking of the powers in the heavens; and the coming of the Son of man with great power and glory are God’s decisive actions that produce a new situation that brings an end to the distress.</p>
<p>Result: Therefore, when you hear of wars and rumors of wars, it is not yet the end (13:7).</p>	<p>Result: Therefore, the darkening of the sun, moon, and stars; the shaking of the powers in</p>

<p>Exhortative Result: Therefore, do not be alarmed (13:7).</p>	<p>the heavens; and the coming of the Son of man with great power and glory are the events of the end (13:24-26).</p> <p>Unexpressed Rule: The end is God’s decisive action that produces a new situation that brings an end to the distress.</p>
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The reasoning in the left column presents a deductive argument from a contrary. To understand its nature, it is necessary to distinguish between “contraries” and “opposites.” An opposite is a direct contradiction.³⁰ One way to formulate the opposite would be: “Wars and rumors of war are not a part of the end time, because they occur throughout all history.” Jesus’ statement does not address a contradiction or opposite formulation of the assertion. Rather, it addresses a contrary, a statement that presents an alternative that does not deny the initial assertion but qualifies and clarifies it.³¹ Within the context of reasoning that it is necessary for wars and rumors of wars to take place during the end time, Jesus argues that wars, rumors of wars, earthquakes, and famines do not occur at the end itself but, on the contrary, at the beginning of the birth pangs, the process that starts the end time. The interpreter will notice that 13:7-8 presents the reasoning in the reverse direction of philosophical discourse. This is the normal practice in rhetorical discourse. At the beginning of the statement, Jesus embeds the exhortative conclusion to the reasoning (“Do not be alarmed”) in the abductive conclusion (“It is necessary for wars and rumors of wars to take place”). After these conclusions, Jesus presents the contrary, which clarifies that all the “necessary” things of the end time are not “the end” itself. Last of all, Jesus presents the rationale for the contrary in an argument from analogy: wars, earthquakes, and famines do not occur at “the end,” because they occur during the “beginning of the birth pangs.”

The stated purpose of the argumentative discourse in 13:7-8 is to lessen emotional anxiety: the disciples should not be alarmed. Jesus’ argument addresses the last question of the four disciples in a deliberative manner: What will be the sign when these things are

³⁰ Hurley, *A Concise Introduction*, 167-69, 263-64.

³¹ *Ibid.*, 167-69.

all to be accomplished?” (13:4). Wars and rumors of wars are not the sign of the end. Neither are earthquakes and famines. Why? Because these events occur within the time of “the beginning of the birth pangs” (13:8). The disciples should not be alarmed, then, but should engage in emotions appropriate for the period of the end time in which they are living.

In rhetorical terms, Mark 13:7-8 creates a “temporal place” for widespread wars, earthquakes, and famines. This organization of time is a basis for controlling the thoughts, actions, and emotions of the disciples. They should not let people who come in the future influence their way of

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thinking or acting (13:5-6). In addition, they should not allow emotions of alarm to grow within them during the period of the beginning of the birth pangs (13:7-8). Jesus’ dissuasion aims at the thoughts, actions, and emotions of the disciples. A major body zone of the disciples Jesus does not address in these verses is their self-expressive speech. This is a topic in the next section of the speech. Seeing is a special topic from the beginning of Mark 13, and both narration and self-expressive speech by Jesus and his disciples in the opening verses of the chapter create an authoritative geographical place for Jesus and his disciples as Jesus interprets how the Temple will look in the future and what they will see when the end of time begins. Jesus’ self-expressive speech turns decisively to thoughts, actions, and emotions in 13:5-8. These verses create a period of time called the beginning of the birth pangs that precedes “the end.” During this time, the disciples must hold back their thoughts, actions, and emotions, allowing neither person nor event to influence either the inner workings or the outer expressions of their bodies.

In words influenced by J. Z. Smith,³² Jesus’ purposive action and self-expressive speech in the first eight verses of Mark 13 perform a ritual of movement and speech that changes geographical, temporal, and bodily spaces into sacred places. In 13:5-8, the time of ravaging wars, earthquakes, and famines receives a place within God’s sacred, temporal plan for the end time. In addition, the bodies of the disciples become places where thoughts, actions, and emotions are organized as carefully as geographical and

³² Smith, *To Take Place*.

temporal spaces. Both destruction and construction accompany the geographical, temporal, and bodily changes. The sacred place of the Jerusalem Temple changes into a space of rubble. The place on the Mount of Olives where Jesus sits becomes an authoritative place of proclamation. The bodies of Jesus' followers become sites of construction of sacred order. Times and spaces of destruction change into places under construction within God's plans. These things must take place, Jesus says (13:7). Both destruction and construction have their place and their rationale within a period of sacred time called "the beginning of the birth pangs" (13:8). The next section of Jesus' speech discusses attempts by various people to destroy the bodies of the disciples that are under construction within God's plans.

**Mouths as Media for the Holy Spirit
during the Time of Being Handed Over: Mark 13:9-13**

Mark 13:9 introduces the second section of Jesus' self-expressive speech. This section addresses the life of the disciples during the birth pangs

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until the end. The first word of this section also is "look out," the emotionally charged warning based on sight that started the first section (13:5). In this instance, the command associated with the warning is not oppositional rhetoric. The command is: "Look out, you, for yourselves" (*blepete de hymeis heautous*: 13:9). This general assertion focuses the discourse on the bodies of the disciples. In contrast to 13:5-8, which begins with actions people direct toward the disciples and ends with generalized events among the nations, 13:9-13 both begins and ends with a focus on purposive actions people will direct against the bodies of the disciples. In this

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context, the disciples must have special understanding of the purposive action of their bodies and the expressive speech of their mouths so they are able to endure to the end. Again the mode of Jesus' discourse is argumentative – it presents an argument for why

the disciples must be especially attentive to themselves in the midst of all the things that will occur.

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Abductive Reasoning: Necessity	Deductive Reasoning: Benefit	Contrary Abductive Reasoning: Holiness
<p>Unexpressed Abductive Rule: The activities Jesus began both with his own body and with the bodies of the disciples must achieve the fullest results possible before the end.</p> <p>Case: Jesus preached the gospel of God, saying, “The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand; repent and believe in the gospel” (1:14-16); he appointed the twelve to send them out to preach and have authority to cast out demons (3:14-15); and the twelve went out and preached that people should repent, they cast out demons, and they anointed with oil many who were sick and healed them (6:12).</p> <p>Abductive Result: The gospel must first (before “the end”) be preached to all nations (13:10).</p>	<p>Unexpressed Rule: It is good to be saved from the destruction of the end time.</p> <p>Case: Those who endure to the end will be saved (13:13).</p> <p>Exhortative Result: Therefore, when you go out to preach the gospel and are delivered up to councils and beaten in synagogues, and you stand before governors and kings, and bear testimony before them for my sake, and are hated by all for my name’s sake, look out, you, for yourselves (that you endure to the end) (13:9, 13).</p>	<p>Unexpressed Rule: When people are preaching the gospel to all nations, the Holy Spirit is with them.</p> <p>Abductive Contrary Case: When you speak (while preaching the gospel to all nations) it is not you who speak, but the Holy Spirit (13:11).</p> <p>Exhortative Result: Do not be anxious beforehand what you are to say; but say whatever is given you in that hour (13:11).</p>

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The left column exhibits the presupposition underlying 13:9-13: the gospel must first be preached to all nations. This is another abductive argument from necessity, related to the earlier argument that it is necessary that there be wars, earthquakes, and famines at the beginning of the end time. In the earlier abductive argument, the intuitive leap occurred in the statement of the case in 1:15: the time is fulfilled and the kingdom of God is at hand. In 13:9-13, the intuitive leap occurs as an inference from actions by Jesus and the twelve in chapters 3-6. If Jesus preached that the kingdom is at hand and sent the twelve out to preach the gospel, then the gospel must be preached to all nations before the end arrives. The inference emerges from an environment of inductive reasoning, but it goes beyond what is actually stated in the case. On the basis of the case, an intuitive result is inferred that this activity must continue until the end. In logical terms, this reasoning is abductive, based on an imaginative leap beyond either inductive or deductive reasoning. The intuitive conclusion that the preaching of the gospel must reach all nations evokes an unexpressed rule that God's plan is for the preaching of the gospel to achieve the fullest possible results before God shortens the days and brings in the end.

The middle column exhibits the situation that emerges as a result of the reasoning that it is necessary to preach the gospel first to all nations. When Jesus' followers go out, they will face severe situations that threaten their endurance. Jesus argues the case that those who are engaged in this activity and endure to the end will be saved. In this section, then, the discourse focuses on the topics both of necessity and of benefit. When the disciples are maligned and abused while preaching the gospel, they should persist and endure, knowing that persistence fulfills a necessity and endurance brings a benefit.

The right column presents an argument from the contrary based on the perception that the disciples will be the new location for the holy. When they speak, it will not be they themselves who speak but the Holy Spirit within them. Their bodies will be the place where the holy resides, wherever they go. Again this is an intuitive, abductive leap in Jesus' reasoning. It moves beyond either inductive or deductive reasoning in Jesus' statements. Part of God's organization of the end is that Jesus' followers go out among the nations and preach the gospel. Another part of God's organization is

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to locate his Holy Spirit within the disciples to guide their self-expressive speech. In contrast to the speech of people who point to themselves saying, “I am he” (13:6), the speech of Jesus’ disciples will be guided by the Holy Spirit.

In 13:9-13 where the discourse focuses on the bodies of the disciples engaged in preaching the gospel, the focus on destruction in the world shifts from wars, earthquakes, and famine to betrayal and death in homes. The actions of brother against brother, father against child, and children against parents brings death into the realm of the home (13:12) that correlates with death in the realm of the nations and the earth. Chaos that exists in the world at large invades the realm of kinship. Even under the most severe circumstances, brother usually stands up for brother, fathers protect their children, and children maintain loyalty to their parents.³³ Mark 13:9-13 reveals a progression from evil in the world to evil in the home. This is no longer the beginning of the birth pangs. It is the time when bodies in every place have suffering and death inflicted upon them by people who, at other times, would protect and care for them.

Mark 13:13 provides a conclusion for the section with its summary that the disciples will be hated by all for the sake of Jesus’ name, but he who endures to the end will be saved. In this context it becomes obvious that the actions of the disciples in the future will produce ritual speech and action that is related to Jesus’ ritual speech and action in Mark 13. As the disciples travel throughout the world, their actions will be performing a ritual that transforms specific times and spaces into ritual moments and places. The ritual requires endurance. If each disciple understands that the times when the Holy Spirit speaks through them are sacred moments and the spaces where they speak are sacred places in the plan of God, then each situation becomes an opportunity for purposive action and expressive speech in the sacred plan that produces the benefits of salvation. This discourse makes the actions of the disciples a ritual that changes times of affliction into sacred times and “foreign” spaces into sacred places as they perform necessary actions within God’s plan for the end time. As both destruction and construction progress in the bodies of the disciples, destruction occurs in the bodies of people in homes. Again the argumentative discourse contains an assertion designed to

³³ Malina , The New Testament World, 117-48.

control the emotion of the disciples. They are not to be anxious beforehand what they will say when they are delivered up to councils and courts. Others will be anxious and distressed as loved ones hate them and deliver them to death.

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But the deliverance up of Jesus' followers is different. The purposive action against them is part of God's plan of destruction and construction with the bodies of Jesus' followers. If Jesus' followers maintain control of their mouths, understanding, and emotions in the contexts of abuse and hatred against them, they will be saved from destruction.

In this section of the speech, then, the discourse shifts from the zone of emotion-fused thought associated with the eyes and ears to the zone of self-expressive speech. People will deliver the disciples up to councils and beat them in synagogues. The disciples they will stand before governors and kings, because they are engaging in purposive action that bears testimony before governors and kings and preaches the gospel to all nations. What the disciples will be doing must be done "first," before the coming of the end. Mark 13:11 describes how the geographical spaces into which they go will function as sacred places. When they are allowed to speak in the places into which they are delivered, the Holy Spirit will give them testimony to speak and gospel to preach. Again, then, Jesus' speech is constructing the bodies of the disciples into holy places. The hours and the spaces of the affliction of the bodies of the disciples become sacred times and sacred places. Wherever the disciples go, their bodies will create sacred times and places as they participate in God's sacred time and place. Therefore, their action and speech will be holy ritual. God will cause them to be there, and God's Holy Spirit will give them the litany to speak. They, then, need not be anxious. They can have peace within themselves when they are brought to trial. Their participation in God's plan results in a sacred ritual that constructs special understanding and emotions. Both strength of will and control of emotion in the disciples will stand in contrast with chaos and destruction in homes. While chaos and destruction progress from the world into the home, construction of the holy will progress through the bodies of the disciples into the time and space of all the nations.

**Feet and Hands during the Time
of the Desolating Sacrilege: Mark 13:14-23**

Mark 13:14 shifts from the time of the birth pangs to the time of the desolating sacrilege. At this point the discourse returns to an emphasis on sight. When the disciples see the desolating sacrilege set up where it ought not to be, a new period of time has come. This is a point where the analysis should turn to historical intertexture, since the emphasis on seeing seems to be a reference to a specific historical event. The range of possibilities envisioned by interpreters covers a time span from Gaius Caligula's threat to put Roman standards in the Jerusalem Temple (38-41

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CE) through various events during the Roman-Jewish Wars of 66-70 CE.³⁴ Whether the historical intertexture refers to one or more of the events within 38-70 CE, the use of the recontextualized phrase “desolating sacrilege” (13:14: *to bdelygma tes eremoseos*) from Daniel 9:27; 11:31; 12:11 in the context of the opening verses of Mark 13 points decisively to a horrible event concerning the Jerusalem Temple.³⁵ Reference to this event in Mark 13:14 changes the tone and mode of the rhetoric. Suddenly the discourse contains hyperbolic rhetoric that calls for extreme emotions and actions. The discourse describes extreme purposive action people should or should not take when they see the desolating sacrilege: (a) those in Judea should flee to the mountains; (b) those on the housetop should not go down, nor enter the house, to take anything away; (c) those in the field should not turn back to take their mantle. In contrast to statements designed to lessen emotions during earlier periods of time, these statements are designed to intensify emotions. Usually people in Judea live in houses and villages – they must flee to the mountains. Usually people go back into their houses after they have been on the rooftop – they must not enter their house. Usually people take things with them when they go to

³⁴ Cf. Myers, *Binding*; Marcus, “The Jewish War”; Hengel, “Entstehungszeit”; A. Y. Collins, “The Apocalyptic Rhetoric”; Holland, *The Tradition*. For a masterful discussion of the range of possibilities, see Theissen, *The Gospels in Context*, 125-65.

³⁵ Lars Hartman, *Prophecy Interpreted*; Brandon, *Jesus and the Zealots*; Lührmann, *Das Markusevangelium*.

another place – they must not take anything away. Usually people in the field turn back to find their mantle and take it with them – they must not turn back even for their essential protective garments. There is urgency in these assertions that leads to outbursts of emotion : “Woe (*ouai*) for those who are with child and for those who give suck in those days” (13:17). “Pray that it may not happen in winter!” (13:18). Jesus’ discourse pictures circumstances that will make this time unbearable for certain people. Even worse, nothing can be done about it if they are caught in these circumstances! “Too bad if ...” is the rhetorical mode expressed here, and this mode creates emotions of extreme fear and concern that call for extreme purposive action with the feet and hands of the disciples.

Immediately after the statements that evoke extreme emotions and actions, the discourse presents a rationale. Analysis of the discourse shows

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that it remains argumentative even as it moves into hyperbole. The argumentation explains why it is necessary both for God and for people in Judea to engage in extreme, decisive action.

Inductive Argument: Necessity

Case: In those days (when you see the desolating sacrilege set up where it ought not be) there will be such tribulation as has not been from the beginning of the creation which God created until now, and never will be.

God	Humans
Result: If the Lord had not shortened the days, no human would be saved (13:20).	Unexpressed Result: If people in Judea do not engage in extreme action to save their lives, they will be destroyed.
Rule: For the sake of the elect, whom he chose, God shortened the days (13:20).	Exhortative Rule: When you see the desolating sacrilege set up where it ought not to be (let the reader understand), then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains; let the one who is on the

	housetop not go down, nor enter his house, to take anything away; and let the one who is in the field not turn back to take the mantle. . . . Pray that it may not happen in winter (13:14-16, 18).
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Mark 13:14-20 again is an argument designed to organize the thoughts and actions of the disciples. The argument is inductive. When you see the desolating sacrilege set up where it ought not be, this is the time when there will be the worst time of suffering that has ever existed in the world (13:19). From this case there are two lines of reasoning: one concerning the Lord God and another concerning humans. The left column displays the reasoning concerning the Lord: If the Lord allowed this time of suffering simply to run its course, no human being would be saved. But the Lord will not do this. Rather, for the sake of the elect whom he chose, he has shortened the days (13:20). The right column leaves unexpressed the reasoning concerning people in Judea: If they do not flee, they will be destroyed. Mark 13:14-18 expresses only an exhortative result of the reasoning: Everyone in Judea must flee, without hesitation, to the mountains.

In 13:21-22 Jesus speaks of false messiahs and false prophets who will arise after the time when the disciples see the desolating sacrilege set up where it ought not be (13:14). This discourse builds on the oppositional rhetoric in the opening verses of Jesus' speech (13:5-6). Those verses only implied that future people would introduce false interpretations. Mark 13:22 uses the prefix "*pseudo-*" twice as it describes "false messiahs" and

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"false prophets" who will arise with special interpretations of events. Jesus does not attribute to these messiahs and prophets the same self-expressive speech ("I am he!": 13:6) that he attributes to those who arise during the beginning of the birth pangs. Rather, he describes them as attempting to direct and control what people look at and how they understand what they see. According to Jesus, they will say, "Look, here is the messiah!" or "Look, there he is!" In addition, they themselves will "give (*dōsousin*) or

perform (*poiēsousin*) signs and wonders” for people to see (13:22). Jesus’ instruction is, “Do not believe it” (13:21). In other words, again Jesus’ statement takes the form of abrupt, oppositional rhetoric – decisive challenge that invites no riposte, no dialogue, no action that runs the risk of participating in an alternative view of things. Followers of Jesus are to allow only Jesus’ discourse and action to control what they believe about what they will see.

Jesus gives closure to the section on the desolating sacrilege with a statement that repeats the warning “look out” that occurs in the opening verse of his speech (13:5) and the opening verse of the section on preaching the gospel (13:9). This repetition creates an opening section (13:5-8), a middle section (13:9-13), and a closing section (13:14-23) prior to the description of “the end” (13:24-27). Jesus’ statement “But look out; I have told you all things beforehand” (13:23) reminds them that his speech introduces the true version of things that will happen in the future. Under no circumstances are they to allow someone else’s version of what will be happening to influence them when these things actually occur. The implication is that the disciples will remember what they have been told “beforehand” (13:23), and they will apply this memory appropriately to their purposive actions with their feet and hands, and with their thoughts and emotions. The opening and closure, therefore, embed all parts of the speech prior to the description of the end in oppositional rhetoric, a type of rhetoric designed to safeguard against alternative interpretations that will arise in the future.

The Son of Man Gathers the Bodies of the Elect at the End: Mark 13:24-29

Mark 13:24-29 describes the end, which includes the coming of the Son of man. The end represents the final period of time in the overall end time. As indicated in the section on the beginning of the birth pangs, the section on the end does not present a rationale for the darkening of the sun and moon, for the stars falling from heaven, or for the shaking of the powers in heaven. Jesus simply presents these events as authoritative pronouncements. The reason appears to be their status as traditional topics in

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texts concerning the Day of the Lord. Mark 13:24-25 reconfigures Isaiah 13:10; 34:4 into a two-step *parallelismus membrorum* that introduces a three-step statement³⁶ about seeing the Son of man as he comes, sends out his angels, and gathers all the elect together:

- (a) the sun will be darkened,
and the moon will not give its light (cf. Isa. 13:10);
- (b) and the stars will be falling from heaven (cf. Isa. 13:10; 34:4),
and the powers in the heavens will be shaken (cf. Isa. 34:4);
- (c) [1] and then they shall see the Son of man coming on the clouds with great
power and glory (cf. Dan. 7:13),
[2] and then he will send out the angels
[3] and gather the elect from the four winds, from the ends of the earth to the
ends of heaven.

Here Jesus' statements are based on authoritative testimony from the past. The balanced structure of the statements evokes their authoritative status. As a result, there are no rationales that support the statements. Rather, there is an argument from analogy that functions as an exhortative conclusion for the section:

From the fig tree learn the analogy:³⁷ As soon as its branch is tender and puts forth its leaves, you know that summer is near. So also, when you see these things take place, you know that he is near, at the very gates.

Interpreters have missed the division between the conclusion to the account of the end (13:28-29) and the beginning of the conclusion of Jesus' speech (13:30-31) in Mark 13. One of the main reasons would appear to be the reconfiguration of this part of Mark 13 in Luke 21:25-33. Lukan discourse presents a sequence of: (a) Jerusalem surrounded by armies (21:20-24); (b) the signs that accompany the coming of the Son of man (21:25-28); (c) a parable that shows the nearness of the kingdom (21:29-33); and (d) a warning for the disciples not to be weighed down with drunkenness and cares of this life

³⁶ Robbins, "Summons and Outline in Mark"; Robbins, *Jesus the Teacher*.

³⁷ For the meaning of *parabolē* as analogy, see Hermogenes, *Progymnasmata*: Hock & O'Neil, *The Chreia*, 176-77.

(21:34-36). The instructive part is Luke 21:28, which concludes the section on the coming of the Son of man. Luke 21:28 introduces the final statement of this section by Jesus with *de*, just as Mark 13:28 does. Luke 21:28 formulates a new

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conclusion to the unit by reconfiguring the topics of “drawing near” (Mark 13:28-29) and “these things taking place” (Mark 13:29) into a statement that “when these things begin to take place, look up and raise your heads, because your redemption is drawing near” (Luke 21:28). When Lukan discourse reformulates the Markan conclusion (13:28-29) in this manner, then it can introduce Mark 13:28-29 as a parable about the nearness of the kingdom of God rather than the nearness of the Son of man (Luke 21:29-33). Mark 13, in contrast to Luke, concludes the section on the coming of the Son of man with an exhortation to learn by analogy from the fig tree that when “you see these things taking place,” namely the darkening of the sun and moon, and the disordering of the stars and powers in the heavens (13:24-25), then they will know that the Son of man is near (13:26-27), indeed, at the very gates (13:29). The Lukan concern to speak about the nearness of “redemption” with the coming of the “kingdom” rather than the Son of man turned the parable of the fig tree into a commentary on the nearness of the kingdom that brings redemption “before” the coming of the Son of man. Interpreters have followed the Lukan procedure when they have concluded that Mark 13:28-29 begin a new part of Jesus’ speech. In Markan discourse, Mark 13:28-29 concludes the section on the coming of the Son of man with the analogy of the fig tree, which explains the relation of the cosmic events (“these things”) to the coming of the Son of man.

The focus of Mark 13:24-29 is on God’s preservation of the bodies of those people in whom God has placed the holy. The Son of man will send out the angels and gather together the elect, those who have endured while traveling to all nations preaching the gospel. As a result of their traveling, their bodies are spread “abroad like the four winds” (cf. Zech. 2:6). Again, however, there is an emphasis on the eyes. When they see the events with the sun, moon, stars, and powers in the heaven, they will see the Son of man coming in clouds with great power and glory. The conclusion to the section asserts that what they learn from looking at the fig tree, they may apply to when they see these

things (the heavenly events) taking place. When they see these things, they will know the Son of man is near (13:29).

**Eyes, Ears, and Thoughts as the Keys to Preparedness
for Divine Action: Mark 13:30-37**

Mark 13:30-37 presents the conclusion to Jesus' speech. While the body of the speech creates special periods of time within the overall period of the end time, the conclusion moves out to the overall context of the end time – watching and waiting that finally leads to the coming of the Son of man.

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The conclusion begins with an authoritative pronouncement by Jesus about this generation in the context of all the things that will take place. The emphasis in 13:30-31 returns to Jesus' own self-expressive speech. The challenging part for modern interpreters is that Jesus predicts that "this generation will not pass away before all these things will take place" (13:30), a prediction that appears not to have occurred. Mark 13:32 reconfigures the topic of "knowing," which 13:29 introduces in relation to the coming of the Son of man. When they see these things happening in the heaven, they will know the Son of man is coming. But they do not know when the end itself will come. Jesus introduces an argument from the contrary that qualifies the nature of what is known: "But of that day or that hour no one knows, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father." This means that while they can know that the Son of man is drawing near when they see the darkening and shaking of the sun, moon, stars, and powers in heaven, even Jesus himself does not know when those events will occur! Knowledge about the precise time of the end, then, is uncertain. Jesus restates the contrary in 13:33, applying the inability to know the precise time to the bodies of the disciples. They must use their eyes in relation to what they know in their hearts and minds: "Look out, watch; for you do not know when the time will come" (13:33). The conclusion, then, continues to emphasize the disciples' use of their eyes in the context of what Jesus knows and does not know, and what the disciples themselves know and do not know. But now Jesus uses a mode of analogy that moves beyond the mode of childbirth

in 13:8 and the fig tree in 13:28-29. The coming of the end is like a man who goes on a journey and leaves his servants in charge of the work and commands the doorkeeper to watch (13:34). Here Jesus shifts to an analogy that summarizes the purposive action with hands and feet, and the attentiveness with the eyes, that he has emphasized in previous sections of the speech. The bodies of the disciples are like servants and doorkeepers, maintaining the work of the holy with their knowing eyes attentive to all that is happening. They will be able to understand the nature of what they see at various periods of time, because Jesus has organized what they will see into meaningful periods of time. But they cannot know when the Son of man will come. The final three verses of the chapter (13:35-37) summarize the conclusion by applying the analogy of the master of the house going on a journey directly to the disciples. Jesus begins and ends this summary with “Watch” (*grēgoreite*). Into this framework, he embeds a restatement of the thesis about knowing in the mode of the analogy of the man going on a journey (13:35): the disciples do not know when the lord of the house will come. Progressive reiteration emphasizes the passing of the time. They do not know whether he will come in the evening, at midnight,

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at cock crow, or in the morning (13:35). The prolongation of the statement mimics the prolongation of the time of waiting: time goes on and on and on, and no one knows when the Son of man will come. Mark 13:36 introduces the rationale for watching: if you do not, he will come suddenly and find you asleep. The final verse appeals to all to watch, ending the entire chapter with an exhortation about the use of the eyes that enacts a complete refocusing of the eyes of the disciples that were looking at the Jerusalem Temple in the opening verse (13:1). The disciples, and indeed all people, must remain attentive to their bodies rather than to the Jerusalem Temple as the place of the holy in order to do what must be done during the end time.

Conclusion

Immediately after Jesus' speech ends, narrational discourse transports the reader to the time of the Passover and the Feast of Unleavened Bread (Mark 14:1). After this, the narrational discourse takes the reader to the house of Simon the leper in Bethany (Mark 14:3). In this house, a woman exhibits that her body is a special site of the sacred. With her body she enacts a ritual burial upon Jesus' body, and this enacts a memory of her body to be enacted by all the bodies of Jesus' followers as they go throughout "the whole world" (Mark 14:9). Thus, as narrational discourse transports the reader away from the Mount of Olives, where Jesus announced the destruction of the Jerusalem Temple, it establishes the new place for the sacred in the world in the bodies of Jesus' followers – wherever they go, and whether they are men or women.

As the followers of Jesus go out, they have an elaborated system of understanding about the end time. They know (thesis) that other people will arise in the future with alternative interpretations of events, and they are not to follow the interpretations, belief, or actions of those people. They know that the basic reason for this is necessity during the end time. Their understanding of the end time is clarified through arguments from the contrary that establish four periods of the end time: (a) the beginning of the birth pangs, during which there will be wars, earthquakes, and famines; (b) the time of preaching the gospel to all nations, during which people in homes will kill one another and people will abuse and hate followers of Jesus, but the Holy Spirit will speak again and again through the mouths of the disciples; (c) the time of the desolating sacrilege, during which there will be the worst suffering ever, and everyone must flee to the mountains; and (d) the time of the end, during which the sun, moon, stars, and powers in the heavens will lose their power and order and the Son of man will gather together all the elect. Arguments from analogy clarify that the end time is like child birth (13:8), like the approach of

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summer (13:28-29), and like a man going on a journey (13:34-36). The different periods of time proceed like child birth: (a) initial contractions (13:5-8); (b) difficulties as necessary preparations are made for the birth (13:9-13); (c) exceptional distress just before the birth (13:14-23); and (d) the final emergence of the new that brings relief

(13:24-29). The coming of the Son of man after the waning of the sun, moon, stars, and powers in the heavens are like summer following the appearance of leaves on the fig tree (13:28-29). Watching while one does what it is necessary to do is like a man going on a journey and leaving servants and a doorkeeper in charge (13:34-36). Argument from general example clarifies that the disciples will be delivered up to councils, synagogues, governors, and kings. Also it indicates that brother will deliver up brother to death, the father his child, and children their parents. In addition, it identifies actions that must be undertaken by those in Judea, those on rooftops, and those in the field. It also describes how difficult it will be for those who are with child or are suckling little children. In addition, this elaboration uses authoritative testimony to identify the time of the desolating sacrilege and the time of the end. Finally, it has an extensive exhortative conclusion. Thus, Mark 13 is not simply a narrative account of the end time. Rather, it is a rhetorical elaboration of a thesis that in order for the end time to occur, it is necessary for destructive events to grow to a point that provokes God to produce a new situation that brings an end to the distress. Elaboration of this thesis in the mode of apocalyptic discourse presents the key topics of rhetorical elaboration as both the *Rhetorica ad Herennium* and Hermogenes' *Progymnasmata* recommend them. This elaboration does not assert these topics in a traditional mode of deliberative, judicial, or epideictic rhetoric. Rather, the discourse presents a rhetorical ritual that creates new boundaries within time and space, gathers turmoil and distress within those boundaries, and re-replaces the holy from the sacred boundaries of the Jerusalem Temple into the bodies of Jesus' disciples.

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