



1. The use of psalm 22 (21 [LXX]) in Mark's Gospel: Intertextuality, the scripturization of history, and christology

El uso del salmo 22 (21 [LXX]) en el Evangelio de Marcos: intertextualidad, la escriturización de la historia y cristología

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Abstract

Usually, the interpreters of Mark's gospel understand the allusions and citations to psalm 22 in his passion narrative as proof of prophetic fulfillment. This reveals a theological conclusion rather than a literary one. Instead, this article poses, using a literary approach, that Mark uses psalm 22 for three purposes: firstly, he wants to scripturize the historical details of Jesus' crucifixion account. Secondly, he uses psalm 22 to enhance the literary motifs of abandonment, despair, contempt, and defeat present in his narrative. He invites his readers to understand the details of Jesus crucifixion in light of the sufferings of the psalmist wherein the motifs aforementioned are represented vividly. Thirdly, as a completion of his picture of Jesus as divine, psalm 22 enables Mark to present Jesus as human. Jesus' despair, divine and human abandonment, and defeat are proper of human experience. By describing Jesus this way, a divine-human Christology emerges.

Keywords

Psalm 22 — Gospel of Mark — Intertextuality — Christology

Resumen

Por lo general, los intérpretes del Evangelio de Marcos comprenden las alusiones y citas al salmo 22 en la narrativa de la pasión de Cristo como indicaciones del cumplimiento profético de las escrituras de Israel. Sin embargo, esto es una conclusión teológica, no literaria. En ese contexto, este artículo plantea, utilizando un enfoque literario, que Marcos usa el salmo 22 con tres propósitos: en primer lugar, quiere escriturizar los detalles históricos del relato de la crucifixión de Jesús. En segundo lugar, él utiliza el salmo 22 para realzar los motivos literarios de abandono, desesperación, desprecio y derrota presentes en su narrativa. Él invita a sus lectores a comprender los detalles de la crucifixión de Jesús a la luz de los sufrimientos del salmista, en quien los motivos, antes mencionados, están representados vívidamente. En tercer lugar, para completar su imagen de Jesús como divino, el



salmo 22 le permite a Marcos presentar a Jesús como humano. La desesperación, el abandono divino y humano y la derrota de Jesús son característicos de la experiencia humana. Al describir a Jesús de esta manera, surge una cristología divino-humana en el Evangelio.

Palabras claves

Salmo 22 — Evangelio de Marcos — Intertextualidad — Cristología

Introduction

The Gospel of Mark is no exception to the rule that the Old Testament plays a decisive and fundamental role in the construction of New Testament (NT onwards) theology and narrative.¹ Mark frequently employs the Hebrew Scriptures from sections as diverse as the Torah, the Prophets, the Psalms, and even the historical books in his Gospel.² All of them are crucial in his draft of the good news about Jesus the Messiah.³ As Mark's gospel reaches its climax, the Book of Psalms becomes relevant. Particularly, psalm 22 is fundamental in the narrative of Jesus's crucifixión.⁴ While scholars debate the exact number of allusions and echoes of psalm 22 present in this pericope, at least it is evident that Mark 15,24 alludes to Psalm 22,19, Mark 15,29 to Psalm 22,8 and Mark 15,34 to Psalm 22,2.⁵

The proper interpretation of psalm 22 and the particular function of the allusions of psalm 22 in Mark 15 have been debated for centuries.

¹ B. Lindars, *New Testament apologetic: The doctrinal significance of the Old Testament quotations* (Philadelphia, PA: Westminster Press, 1961); C.H. Dodd, *According to the Scriptures: The sub-structure of New Testament theology* (London: Nisbet, 1952).

² Rikk Watts, "Mark," in *Commentary on the New Testament use of the Old Testament*, ed. by G. K. Beale and D. A. Carson (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2007), 111.

³ Joel Marcus, *The way of the Lord: Christological exegesis of the Old Testament in the Gospel of Mark* (London: T&T Clark International, 2004), 1.

⁴ Rikki Watts, "The Psalms in Mark's Gospel," in *The Psalms in the New Testament, The New Testament and the Scriptures of Israel* (London: T&T Clark International, 2004), 41-44.

⁵ Joel Marcus proposes at least five allusions from psalm 22 in Mark 15; cf. Marcus, *The way of the Lord*, 175. The three allusions mentioned above are listed in most of the scholarly commentaries as well as in the margins of NA²⁸. See Eberhard Nestle and Erwin Nestle, *Novum testamentum Graece*, ed. by Barbara Aland et al., 28th ed. (Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 2016), 171. From here onwards the verse's numbers correspond to BHS and LXX.

For instance, Justin Martyr thought, via prosopological exegesis, that psalm 22 was an address from Christ to God.⁶ For Justin, the real author behind the words of the psalm was Christ.⁷ In this sense, psalm 22 was not only about Christ but from Christ.⁸ Therefore, from this perspective, Mark's use of psalm 22 points out the fulfillment of the prediction made by David and Jesus himself in the Old Testament (OT onwards).⁹

Nonetheless, there were alternatives to the reading of Justin and those akin to him.¹⁰ Diodore of Tarsus, known by being the head of the

⁶ Justin Martyr, *Dial.* 98. Although Justin Martyr explicitly states that the author of the psalm was David (ibid., 97), in the previous quotation is clear that he envisages Christ as the speaker of the psalm. The use of αὐτοῦ, ἀναφέρει, the locative ἐν τῷ ψαλμῷ along with the referential of ἐπισυνιστάμενοι κατ' αὐτόν and ἀληθῶς γέγονεν ἄνθρωπος ἀντιληπτικός παθῶν point to Jesus as speaker of the psalm. Otherwise, these phrases would be incomprehensible if David is the speaker. In this context, it is better to understand these instances as examples of prosopological exegesis which feature in other places in Justin's writings, cf. Justin Martyr, *First apol.* 36.1-2; 38.1; Matthew W. Bates, *The hermeneutics of the apostolic proclamation: The center of Paul's method of scriptural interpretation* (Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, 2012), 199-209; Madison N. Pierce, *Divine discourse in the Epistle to the Hebrews: The recontextualization of spoken quotations of Scripture*, Society for New Testament Studies Monograph Series 178 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2020). Of special importance is *First apol.* 38 because Justin explicitly says that the prophetic spirit ἀπὸ προσώπου τοῦ Χριστοῦ λέγει quoting Psalm 21,17-19 (LXX). The common order behind Justin's proof texts suggests that prosopological exegesis was inherited by Justin instead of created. Skarsaune has proved particularly that the prosopological exegesis of psalm 21 (LXX) belonged to prior Christian exegetical tradition, cf. Oskar Skarsaune, *The proof from prophecy: A study in Justin Martyr's proof-text tradition; Text-type, provenance, theological profile*, NovTSup 56 (Leiden: Brill, 1987), 80. On the exegesis of psalm 21 (LXX) by Justin, see Naomi Koltun-Fromm, "Psalm 22's christological interpretive tradition in light of Christian anti-Jewish polemic," *Journal of Early Christian Studies* 6, No. 1 (1998): 37-57.

⁷ Justin Martyr, *First apol.* 38.

⁸ Justin uses these twofold strategies as exegetical techniques to approach psalm 21 (LXX). Above, we have mentioned how he used prosopological exegesis. But he also understands this psalm to be prophetic in the lips of David, cf. Justin Martyr, *First apol.* 35; Justin Martyr, *Dial.* 97, 99.

⁹ For examples of this reading, cf. "Though the psalm is not messianic in its original sense or setting, it may be interpreted from a NT perspective as a messianic psalm par excellence... Indeed, the psalm takes on the appearance of anticipatory prophecy" (Peter C. Craigie, *Psalms 1-50*, Word Biblical Commentary 19 [Waco, TX: Word Books, 2000], 202); Shon Hopkin, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?: Psalm 22 and the mission of Christ," *BYU Studies Quarterly* 52, No. 4 (2013): 117-151.

¹⁰ Theodoret of Cyrus interprets these psalms along with Justin Martyr. For Theodoret "This psalm foretells the events of Christ the Lord's Passion and Resurrection, the calling of the nations and the salvation of the world" (*Comm. Psa.* 22.1 [FC 101:145]). All quotations from

Antiochene School of exegesis, writes the following concerning the interpretation of psalm 22:

The psalm is composed from the viewpoint of David when pursued by Absalom, God permitting him to fall foul of such trials on account of the sin with Bathsheba. Now, similarities in facts emerged also in the case of Christ the Lord, especially in the passion, such that some commentators thought from this that the psalm is uttered on the part of the Lord. But it is not applicable to the Lord: David is seen to be both mentioning his own sins and attributing the sufferings to the sins, something in no way applicable to Christ. The partial resemblances in the sufferings do not completely displace the psalm's theme: it is possible both for the factual basis to be preserved and the resemblance to occur as well, with neither displacing the other.¹¹

Diodore not only claims the aforementioned but, systematically, throughout his exposition of the psalm, he is concerned to show the impossibility of the Lord being the speaker of the psalm while, at the same time, he shows how it applies to David.¹² Diodore does not deny the resemblances between the experiences of David in psalm 22 with the suffering of the Lord in the Gospels' passion narrative. Yet, he does not see these resemblances as prophetic fulfillments but as two separate experiences that share similarities.¹³ Therefore, for Diodore, the use of psalm 22 in the Gospels' passion narrative is just a literary device that allows the reader to understand that similarities exist between Christ's suffering and David's suffering when Absalom rebelled against him.

Theodoret comes from Theodoret of Cyrus, *Commentary on the Psalms*, trans. by Robert C. Hill, *The Fathers of the Church 101* (Washington, DC: Catholic University of America Press, 2000). Similarly, Theodoret also employs prosopological exegesis to portray Christ as the real speaker of psalm 22. For instance, he mentions "So blessed David, *in the person of Christ the Lord*, says, You both formed me in the womb and in turn brought me forth from there; still suckling and pulling on my mother's breast, I rested my hope on your care" (*Comm. Psa. 22.7* [FC 101:148], italics added). See also Augustine, *On the Psalms 22.1* (NPNF¹ 8:58).

¹¹ Diodore of Tarsus, *Comm. Psa. 22.1* (WGRW 9:69). All translations from Diodore comes from Diodore of Tarsus, *Diodore of Tarsus: Commentary on Psalms 1-51*, trans. by Robert C. Hill, *Writings from the Greco-Roman World 9* (Boston, MA: Brill, 2005).

¹² Diodore of Tarsus, *Comm. Psa. 22.17* (WGRW 9:72).

¹³ For a similar position, see "We cannot think of direct prophecy. The reference to a historical situation is unmistakable" (Charles A. Briggs and Emilie Grace Briggs, *A critical and exegetical commentary on the Book of Psalms*, ICC [Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1987], 192).

These two positions are not the only ones in the history of interpretation of psalm 22. However, these positions anticipate the modern discussions on the use of psalm 22 in the gospels, especially Mark.¹⁴ The issue at hand behind these two interpretations is what is the purpose of Mark in using psalm 22 in Christ's passion narrative? What kind of intertextual connections does psalm 22 create when put in a new context? What is the literary effect of the use of psalm 22 in Mark's passion narrative?

The present article aims to tackle these questions. It does not want to engage with the text through redactional approaches. Instead, it takes the final form of Mark as definitive and assumes that Mark utilizes Scripture carefully and purposefully when he crafts the story of the good news of Jesus Christ.¹⁵ To understand Mark's purpose in using psalm 22, it is necessary to understand psalm 22 in its context and then, examine how the use of the psalm impacts the story told in Mark 15, what features it brings from its original context, how the psalm is redefined in a new context, and what is the input of psalm 22 to the story of Jesus's passion.¹⁶ Therefore, this is an inter-textual study that focuses particularly on literary analysis.

¹⁴ Holly J. Carey, *Jesus' cry from the Cross: Towards a first-century understanding of the intertextual relationship between psalm 22 and the narrative of Mark's Gospel*, Library of New Testament Studies 398 (London: T&T Clark, 2009), 13-22.

¹⁵ This article takes Mark as the assumed author of the second Gospel.

¹⁶ Great attention will be given to the exegesis of psalm 22 since a lot of studies dealing with how Mark uses psalm 22 assume concepts as the righteous sufferer or the transition from lament to actual praise without dealing closely with the text and its meaning. For instance, notice how a close exegesis of the text would reevaluate the transition from lament to actual praise in the study of Steve Ahearne-Kroll, "Challenging the divine: LXX Psalm 22 in the passion narrative of the Gospel of Mark," in *The trial and death of Jesus: Essays on the passion narrative in Mark*, ed. by Geert Van Oyen and Tom Sheperd, CBET 45 (Leuven: Peeters, 2006), 119-148. While it is true that texts have meaning in context, it is implicit in the aforementioned statement that context determines meaning. So, it is important to pay close attention to the context of psalm 22, cf. G. K. Beale, *Handbook on the New Testament use of the Old Testament: Exegesis and interpretation* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2012). This must be done not because the original context would be brought everywhere is quoted. Instead, it is necessary to do it because psalm 22 could be quoted in a new context that is similar or equal to the original one. In this sense, the new context determines if the original context is in view, cf. Thomas Hatina, *In search of a context: The function of Scripture in Mark's narrative*, Journal for the Study of the New Testament Supplement Series 232 (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 2002). In this sense, I use metalepsis as a rhetorical figure that invites the reader to go back to the original context and see how this might impact its meaning in the target context as long as the target context invites the

Psalm 22 (21 [LXX]): Exegesis and context

Prolegomena

The exegesis that follows is not complete. Instead, it focuses on three structural units which Mark alludes to 1-3; 7-9; 12-19. Since Mark does not allude to or quote from the second section of the psalm, no exegesis would be provided for this section. The reader of psalm 22 would readily realize that the aforementioned units address the topics of divine abandonment, rejection and mockery from society, and persecution and victory of David's enemies. The phrases Mark alludes to in his Gospel are taken from each of these sections. However, Mark only quotes a few words. It is necessary to understand that these words are in a context where usually they recapitulate the main topics of their section. Therefore, they could not be understood without their immediate context. Thus, attention to the allusions as well as their context is necessary to grasp Mark's use of them and the following exegesis focuses on that.

Exegesis

In the first section (22,1-10 | 21,1-10 LXX), David, who is identified as the author of the psalm in the superscription, expounds on his abandonment by God and humanity. David expresses the feeling of abandonment through various elements. Firstly, the use of the verb עָזַב | ἐγκαταλείπω conveys the idea of separation by breaking a previous connection with someone/something.¹⁷ Usually, when God is the subject, the verb emphasizes a positive sense, affirming that God will not abandon or forsake his

reader to do so. To sum up, the intertextual reading of this article is informed by Beale, Hatina, and Hays.

¹⁷ Gen 2,24; Josh 8,17; Judg 2,12, cf. Francis Brown, Samuel Rolles Driver and Charles Augustus Briggs, *The enhanced brown-driver-briggs Hebrew and English lexicon* (Oak Harbor, WA: Logos Research Systems, Inc, 2000), 737; T. Muraoka, *A Greek-English lexicon of the Septuagint* (Louvain: Peeters, 2009), 186-187. The verbal construction is part of a rhetorical question אֵלֵי אֵלֵי לָמָּה עִזַּבְתָּנִי which “expresses in a powerful way the great alienation that he felt” (Allen P Ross, *A commentary on the Psalms: Volume 1 [1-41]* [Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel Academic & Professional, 2011], 1:531). The LXX enhances the feeling of abandonment by adding πρόσχεζ μοι where προσέχω + imperative mood is a desperate cry for attention from the psalmist, cf. Muraoka, *A Greek-English lexicon of the Septuagint*, 594; Friedrich Blass, Albert Debrunner

people.¹⁸ Here, however, we have a reversal of fortunes. What is unusual, now it is the most real experience of David. He feels separated from God and alienated from the connection he previously enjoyed with him.¹⁹

Secondly, the feeling expressed by עזב|ἐγκαταλείπω is emphasized by the use of רחוק|μακρὰν.²⁰ רחוק is an adjective frequently employed to conceptualize distance. Besides the idea of separation present in עזב|ἐγκαταλείπω, רחוק|μακρὰν emphasizes the fact that God is far from David.²¹ He articulates this idea using the constructions מישועתי|ἀπὸ τῆς σωτηρίας μου and דברי שאגתי|οἱ λόγοι τῶν παραπτωμάτων μου.²²

The word ישועה is of particular importance. The word encapsulates the experience of being freed from physical/spiritual foes by receiving help from someone. Frequently, this word is linked contextually with

and Robert W Funk, *A Greek grammar of the New Testament and other early Christian literature* (Chicago, MI: University of Chicago Press, 1961), 195.

¹⁸ Deut 31,8; Josh 1,5; Ps 9,11, cf. Carl Schultz, “עזב,” in *Theological wordbook of the Old Testament*, ed. by Harris Laird et al. (Chicago, IL: Moody Press, 1999), 659.

¹⁹ The lexical meaning of עזב along with the constative perfect portray the action as a whole. The use of this construction summarizes David's feelings and captures in a snapshot the extended experience of his sufferings, cf. Bruce K. Waltke and Michael Patrick O'Connor, *An introduction to biblical Hebrew syntax* (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 1990), 480. The same verbal aspect is captured by the LXX translators in the use of the aorist form.

²⁰ Dahood takes this word not as an adjective but as a piel infinitive, cf. Mitchell J. Dahood, *Psalms. 1: 1-50*, The Anchor Yale Bible 16 (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2008), 138. However, even taking *rāḥōq* as piel infinitive, the function remains the enhancing of the experience described in Psalm 22,1a.

²¹ See especially למה יהוה תעמד ברחוק (Ps 10,1). For the role of רחוק as imaginary language to depict the dichotomy between the nearness of enemies and distance of God, see Luis Alonso Schökel and Cecilia Carniti, *Salmos I: traducción, introducciones y comentario (Salmos 1-72)* (Estella: Verbo Divino, 1992), 1:380-381.

²² Both constructions represent a syntactical problem. דברי שאגתי could depend on מישועתי, and the translation provided by the LXX would be close to the sense “Far away from my deliverance are the words of my roaring”. Notwithstanding, דברי שאגתי and מישועתי could both depend on רחוק implying that the salvation of the psalmist is far along with his words of groaning. Implied in the sentence would be that God is the one distant. If we fill up the sentence, the translation would be similar to NIV “Why are you so far from saving me, so far from my cries of anguish?”. See, Robert G. Bratcher and William David Rebyburn, *A translator's handbook on the Book of Psalms*, UBS Handbook Series (New York: United Bible Societies, 1991), 214.

God.²³ Especially in the Book of Psalms, there is always a connection between this word and God except for a few exceptions.²⁴ As it is usually related to God, this word denotes the deliverance brought by God in order to help his people out of their foes. When David says *רחוק מישועתי* he is implying that the only thing which could save him (i.e., the deliverance of God, is far from him). In this way, he heightens his condition of abandonment by God.

The construction *דברי שאגתי* intensifies the feeling of abandonment.²⁵ The word *שאגה* is literally the roar of an animal like a lion.²⁶ However, when it is understood metaphorically and applied to humans, it implies the anguished cry of a person who is in deep suffering.²⁷ In this sense, not only is David's salvation distant but also God is distant from his words of anguish. This phrase rounds up the feeling of total abandonment felt by David at this moment.

Thirdly, David reemphasizes his abandonment by claiming that God does not hear him whether on day or night. In a parallel construction, he contends that he calls on—*אקרא*—God constantly. The Hebrew word *קרא* denotes “primarily the enunciation of a specific vocable or message”²⁸ with the purpose of “draw someone's attention...in order to establish contact.”²⁹ Usually, in the Book of Psalms, this word denotes a cry for help to God which includes a message to him and implies a relationship

²³ Ps 3,9; 13,6; 12,6 (LXX); 20,6; 19,6 (LXX), cf. Ludwig Köhler et al., *The Hebrew & Aramaic lexicon of the Old Testament* (Leiden: Brill, 2000), 446.

²⁴ Ps 3,3; 9,15; 13,6; 14,7; 18,51; 20,6; 21,2.6; 22,2.

²⁵ LXX translators rendered this construction as *οἱ λόγοι τῶν παραπτωμάτων μου* introducing a foreign concept, namely sin, not present in HB. It is not clear why the translators of Psalms chose to render *שאגה* as *παραπτωμα*. Maybe, the translators ignore the Hebrew word due to its low frequency or they thought their rendering was more appropriate.

²⁶ Isa 5,29; Ezek 19,7.

²⁷ Ps 32,3; Job 3,24.

²⁸ Leonard Coppes, “קרא,” in *Theological wordbook of the Old Testament*, ed. by Harris Laird et al. (Chicago, IL: Moody Press, 1999), 810.

²⁹ C. J. Labuschagne, “קרא,” in *Theological lexicon of the Old Testament*, ed. by Ernst Jenni and Claus Westermann (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 1997), 1159

between the supplicant and God.³⁰ Accordingly, David is begging God constantly for help hoping he could get an answer from him.³¹

As constant as is David's cry for help, it is also his rejection by God.³² Again, David experiences a reversal of fortune since it is usual for the person who cries out—אָקראַ—to God to receive an answer for him.³³ Nonetheless, David's experience is one where no answer is given, and therefore he cannot get rest.³⁴ Thus, David is left to wander disoriented in his situation overwhelmed by the feeling of being abandoned by God.³⁵

From verses 7 to 9, David moves from rejection and abandonment by God to scorn and abandonment by humankind. First, he evinces this by portraying himself as his enemies think of him (i.e., as less than a human and unpleasant as a worm).³⁶ תולעה in its figurative sense describes, by comparison, the worthless and decayed state of a man.³⁷ David articulates in verse 7 a miserable situation wherein pomp, glory, and richness are gone. The psalmist is in decay to such a point that nobody cares what happens to him because he is worthless.³⁸

David then moves on to state clearly that he is rejected by those who surround him. He says that he is חרפת אדם. חרפת usually conveys the

³⁰ Ps 3,4; 4,1; 14,4; 17,6; 18,3; 20,9.

³¹ The phrases יומם and לילה which modify the main verb form a merism, cf. Ross, *A commentary on the Psalms*, 1:531. That קרא here means a cry for help is well captured by the LXX translators with κερράξουμαι, cf. Muraoka, *A Greek-English lexicon of the Septuagint*, 410.

³² “ענה תענה” וְלֹא תִעַנֶּנּוּ אֹתִי (Ps 22,3).

³³ Ps 3,4; 17,6; 20,6; 34,4.

³⁴ “דומיה” | ἄνοιαν. The Hebrew word usually means silence (Ps 39,3; 62, 2). Here “indicates that his pain is not alleviated, he gets no relief” (Bratcher and Reyburn, *A translator's handbook on the Book of Psalms*, 214). It is not clear why the LXX translators rendered the Hebrew word in this way.

³⁵ Derek Kidner, *Psalms 1-72: An introduction and commentary*, Tyndale Old Testament Commentaries 15 (Nottingham: InterVarsity Press, 2008), 123.

³⁶ Bratcher and Reyburn, *A translator's handbook on the Book of Psalms*, 216.

³⁷ Isa 14,11; Job 25, 6.

³⁸ Ross, *A commentary on the Psalms*, 1:534.

feeling of reproach, scorn, taunt, disdain or contempt³⁹ while אדם functions as subjective genitive signaling agency.⁴⁰ Through this expression, David is asserting an unfavorable condition colored by dishonor, shame, and rejection by those near him that enable his enemies to make him scorn humankind.⁴¹ In a parallel construction, David repeats the previous idea declaring that he is ובוזי עם. This construction adds to what he previously said the notion of abhorrence and hate. בזה usually expresses the action of despising.⁴² Yet, in certain contexts, the notion of despise is stronger and acquires a sense of hate or abhorrence.⁴³ This is the case here in verse 7.⁴⁴ David is not only scorned but also detested by his people.

The psalmist expands his condition and the reaction of the people to it in verse 8 through three clauses. First, he says כל ראי ילעגו לי. The experience of the psalmist generates mocking and derision by the community. The verb לעג encapsulates an attitude of contempt towards someone expressed in steering and laughing, which suggests, along with verse 7, that David's experience was pitiful.⁴⁵

In order to highlight the character of his condition, the psalmist continues saying יפטירו בשפה. Although the exact nature of the expression is elusive, its contextual use points to mocking and derision as well.⁴⁶

³⁹ Ps 15,3; 22,7; 31,12; 39,9; 44,14; 69,8.10-11, 20-21; 71,13; 74,22; 78,66; 79,4.12; 89,42.51; 109,25; 119,22.39.

⁴⁰ Waltke and O'Connor, *An introduction to biblical Hebrew syntax*, 143.

⁴¹ This idea is well captured by the LXX rendering the Hebrew construction as θνείδος ἀνθρώπου, cf. Muraoka, *A Greek-English lexicon of the Septuagint*, 498.

⁴² Köhler et al., *The Hebrew & Aramaic lexicon of the Old Testament*, 117.

⁴³ 2 Sam 6,16; Obad 2; Mal 2,9.

⁴⁴ The LXX is once more insightful, cf. ἐξουδένημα λαοῦ. ἐξουδένημα is defined by Muraoka as "that which is thought to be of no account and treated as such" (Muraoka, *A Greek-English lexicon of the Septuagint*, 254).

⁴⁵ Jer 20,7; Ps 2,4; 59,8; 80,6, cf. Walter Kaiser, "לעג," in *Theological wordbook of the Old Testament*, ed. by Harris Laird et al. (Chicago, IL: Moody Press, 1999), 481.

⁴⁶ "To open the lips wide, open the mouth wide in a derisory gesture" (Köhler et al., *The Hebrew & Aramaic lexicon of the Old Testament*, 925); "In verse 7b the Hebrew is literally 'they shoot out the lips... an expression of derision'" (Bratcher and Reyburn, *A translator's handbook on the Book of Psalms*, 216); cf. Briggs and Briggs, *A critical and exegetical commentary on the Book of Psalms*, 194.

In the same line of thought, David adds **יניעו ראש**. This expression sets the tone for the climax expressed in verse 9 which make round David's argument from verse 7. **יניעו ראש** is a joint construction that captures the ideas of disapproval, unconformity, derision, and rejection.⁴⁷ Through this gesture, David's marauders expressed their contempt for his situation and strongly suggested their rejection and disapproval of the situation wherein he was.⁴⁸

Verse 9 climaxes the derision and rejection of David's enemies. In an ironic tone, they mock his trust in God claiming that if his trust would have been rightly placed, God would have saved him.⁴⁹ They imply that since God has not saved him, this means David does not really trust God. Then, David's enemies attack his relationship with God, implicitly affirming that the situation he is in is the result of the abandonment by God due to his faulty faith. After David's response in verses 10-11, the psalm moves on to the next section (12-19).

Verse 12 is a bridge between 1-11 and 13-19. The psalmist begins crying out **אל תרחק ממני**. The verb **רחק** recapitulates the theme of the distance of verse 2 while at the same time encapsulates the wish of David at the face of his enemies surrounding him, whereas he stood alone to confront them.⁵⁰ Verses 13-19 are a powerful poetic description of David's

⁴⁷ 2 Kgs 19,21; Isa 37,12; Ps 109,25; Job 16,4; Lam 2,15.

⁴⁸ Willem A. VanGemeren, "Psalms," in *The expositor's Bible commentary*, ed. by Allen P. Ross, Frank Gaebelin and Willem A. VanGemeren (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1991), 5:202.

⁴⁹ The argument from David's enemies is structured as an ABB'A' thematic chiasm. They say "He trusted the Lord" following the LXX reading (ἠλπίσεν ἐπὶ κούρην) instead of HB reading (גל אל יהוה). Therefore, the natural consequence is that the Lord should rescue him (יפלטוהו). The volitional nature of the jussive along with the imperfective aspect of the verb points to the elusive character of the divine salvation at this moment. In reverse order, they say again יצילוהו because חפץ בו. The center of the argument of David's enemies is that the Lord should rescue and save him, but he does not because A and A' are taken ironically.

⁵⁰ The linguistic connection between the verbal form of **רחק** and the noun form **רחק** tie together verse 2 and 12. Also, **אל תרחק** in verse 12 and 19 forms an *inclusio* which highlights the topic of nearness and distance of God as key in the second section of the psalm. The *inclusio* suggests that what David wants is God's presence to face his enemies.

enemies and verse 12a is just the desperate cry of a man who longs for at least the company of God amid his agony and distress.⁵¹

The psalmist articulates the reasons for longing the presence of God as **כי אין עוזר** and **כי צרה קרובה**. The lexeme **צרה** also points back to verse 2 because it has the sense of a difficult and adverse situation which stands as an opposite to **ישועה**.⁵² Therefore, as stated before, David is experiencing a reversal of fortunes because while **ישועה** is far, **צרה** is near. To this David adds that there is no one to help wherein **עזר** signals an effort of cooperation between two unequal parties.⁵³ David presents himself as helpless wanting divine or human assistance so that he can endure his trials.

In verse 13, the situation David is in has escalated. It is not only the abandonment by God or the mockery of the people. Now, it includes the antagonism of his enemies. He describes them as bulls that are strong, dangerous, and powerful.⁵⁴ And the experience as such is described as an encirclement. **כתר** and **סבב** used figuratively to convey the idea of reducing the number of opportunities to someone, implicating proximity and inescapability.⁵⁵ David is encircled without a chance to escape by his most powerful enemies.⁵⁶

Now, the figural enemies change from bulls to lions. Specifically, the comparison is between the opening of the mouth of the lion and of David's enemies.⁵⁷ Just like when a lion opens his mouth to roar and tear apart his prey which indicates his power, dominion, and cruelty over his

⁵¹ **אל תרחק** the jussive meaning associated with this construction articulates David's expression as a wish (Ps 35,22; 38,22; 71,12); cf. Paul Joüon and T. Muraoka, *A grammar of biblical Hebrew*, Subsidia Biblica 27 (Rome: Pontificio Istituto biblico, 2006), 347.

⁵² Rightly captured by $\theta\lambda\eta\iota\sigma$ in the LXX. See also, Gen 35,3; 42,21; Judg 10,14; 1 Sam 10,19; 26,24; 1 Kgs 1,29. For the contrast between salvation and distress, see **זה עני קרא ויהיה שמע** **ומכל צרותיו הושיעו** (Ps 34,7). Also, **צרה** encapsulates the description of the enemies in 22,13-19.

⁵³ U. Bergmann, "עזר," in *Theological lexicon of the Old Testament*, ed. by Ernst Jenni and Claus Westermann (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 1997), 872.

⁵⁴ **פריים** is used metaphorically only here in the HB. The point of contact between metaphor and reality is the strength which is heightened by the addition of **אבירי** and **בשן**.

⁵⁵ Ps 118,10-12; 109,3; 88,17; 2 Sam 22,6; 1 Kgs 5,3.

⁵⁶ The verse follows ABB'A'.

⁵⁷ In the LXX, the comparison is made explicit by the addition of $\omega\varsigma$.

victims, in the same way, David's enemies open their mouths indicating his cruelty and victory over the psalmist.⁵⁸ David is in a position where there is no scape.⁵⁹

The result of David's enemies surrounding him is deep distress and agony.⁶⁰ These feelings are evinced in a powerful poetic language full of similes. The first one is **כמים נשפכתי**. Although this expression is enigmatic, the meaning is related to the condition of feeling weak and being in deep agony.⁶¹ The agony is also painted by the next enigmatic expression **והתפרדו כל עצמותי**, wherein bones scattered are an image of anxiety, distress, and agony reaping apart the mental health of David.⁶² Lastly, the psalmist state **היה לבי כדונג נמס בתוך מעי** through which he wants to convey that he "has lost all courage and hope".⁶³

As a consequence of his enemies' encirclement, David not only feels agony, distress, anxiety but death itself. The psalmist writes **יבש כחרש כחי**. This phrase builds upon the common association of dryness with death.⁶⁴ Whether it is the vital strength or the mouth that is dried,⁶⁵ the

⁵⁸ Hos 5,14; Mic 5,8; Nah 2,12.

⁵⁹ Ps 7,2; 50,22; 17,12.

⁶⁰ Some authors think that the description of verses 15-16 relates to physical illness. Yet, it is better to think that they relate to inner-spiritual agony, cf. Bratcher and Reyburn, *A translator's handbook on the Book of Psalms*, 219; Craigie, *Psalms 1-50*, 200; VanGemeren, "Psalms," 205.

⁶¹ The primary meaning of the word is to cause something to flow. Metaphorically, it can refer to the flow of the wrath of God or idolatries (Ezek 7,8; 14,9; 21,1). In this case, the personal object signaled by the *nifal* root gives the sense of "to make flow the inner self" similar to Psalm 42,5. To say that the self is poured out is to say that the agony is so great that it consumes your inner self. The expression **כמים** conceptualizes abundance, cf. Hos 5,10. Therefore, the agony that consumes the inner self of David is acute.

⁶² The bones are a metonymy of the self, cf. Ps 6,2; 35,10; 38,3; 51,8; 102,5; Ronald Allen, "עצם," in *Theological wordbook of the Old Testament*, ed. by Harris Laird et al. (Chicago, IL: Moody Press, 1999), 690. The fact that the bones are scattered means that the integrity of the emotions of the psalmist is shattered. He is in deep agony and feels that his emotions cannot stand the challenge he is up to.

⁶³ Bratcher and Reyburn, *A translator's handbook on the Book of Psalms*, 220.

⁶⁴ Isa 15,6; 19,5; 27,11; Jer 12,4; 23,10; Joel 1,10.

⁶⁵ There is a textual variant here. The majority of textual witnesses along with ancient versions support the reading **כחי**. Nonetheless, there is a variant who supports "my mouth" (**תשפתי**). Cf. *Biblia hebraica Stuttgartensia: Apparatus criticus* (Stuttgart: German Bible Society, 2003), 1104.

message is clear, death is near David.⁶⁶ So intense is the situation, David cannot even speak, he is mute.⁶⁷ Finally, David clearly articulates his nearness to death by saying that *ולעפר מות תשפתי*.⁶⁸ Therefore, God is not only far from David, but he is the agent bringing death upon him.

In verse 17, David returns to the topic of verse 13 (i.e., his enemies). While verse 13 symbolized the strength of his enemies, verse 17 represents their characters and insatiableness.⁶⁹ Yet, the message is the same. David is surrounded, his enemies are near, and he has no chance of scape.⁷⁰ So critical is his condition that he can count all his bones whereas people stare and mock him.⁷¹

Finally, the situation reaches its climax in verse 19. In a parallel construction where David expresses that his enemies possess his robes,⁷² he conceptualizes that from his perspective, except for divine intervention, all hope is lost because *יחלקו בגדי להם*, which symbolizes that the

⁶⁶ If the reading “my strength” is preferred, this word refers to vital strength. If the vital strength is dried up, it means death is near. If the reading “my mouth is dried up” is preferred, this expression is also a metaphor of death. The comparison of dryness with a potsherd means that the condition is extreme emphasizing the proximity of death.

⁶⁷ For the meaning of *מלכותי מדבק* ולשוני, see Ezek 3,26.

⁶⁸ The imperfective aspect breaks the chain of perfects in order to give vividness to the story, cf. Waltke and O'Connor, *An introduction to biblical Hebrew syntax*, 502-503.

⁶⁹ For bulls as a metaphor of strength, see my exegesis above. *עדת מרעים* refers to the character of his enemies, cf. Ps 26,5; 27,2; 37,9; 64,2. *כלבים* metaphorically refers to insatiableness since its usual connotation of low value is not proper to the context of psalm 22, cf. Isa 56,11.

⁷⁰ The combination of *סבב* with *נקף* convey the same message of *סבב* and *כתר*. The use of *נקף* instead of *כתר* might be due to stylistic variation. The repetition of *סבב* forms an *inclusio* where the center focuses on the extreme anguish of David in light of his irreversible situation. See, VanGemeren, “Psalms,” 206.

⁷¹ To count all the bones means that the physical condition is critical. Cf. Bratcher and Reyburn, *A translator's handbook on the Book of Psalms*, 221.

⁷² Both expressions mean the same “*יחלקו בגדי להם | גורל | יעל לבושי יפילו* and *בגד לבוש* are interchangeable, cf. Isa 63,2. The parallelism suggests that David's enemies divide his clothes by casting lots on them and not as if these two actions were distinct, cf. “The Hebrew text does not mean that two different actions were performed... The meaning is that by means of casting lots they divided the psalmist's clothes among themselves” (Bratcher and Reyburn, *A translator's handbook on the Book of Psalms*, 222).

dominion of David's enemies was so great over him that they could even get the last possession a man has before he dies.⁷³

Therefore, verse 19 encapsulates and recapitulates verses 13-18, picturing the triumph of David's enemies who surrounded him up to this point where they finally are victorious. Verse 19 implies along with 13-18 that David is without scape from this situation. Once his clothes were in his enemies' hands, his destiny was sealed. Lastly, verse 19 implies a state of internal devastation for David, a state of hopelessness, anxiety, and discouragement. Verse 19 implies death is near for David.

The use of psalm 22 (21 [LXX]) in Mark 15

Psalm 22,19 (21,19 [LXX]) in Mark 15,24

Mark 15,24 clearly quotes Psalm 22,19 almost *verbatim*.⁷⁴ But, what is the function of this citation within Mark's passion narrative? What does Mark intend to accomplish by quoting psalm 22 here?

If the quotation is read atomistically, its function is to "scripturize" history. The "scripturization" of history is a process in which the evangelist cast the narrative details of his story in scriptural language.⁷⁵ By doing so, he seeks to give historical credibility to his account. This process does not entail what Crossan has called "prophecy historicized", which implies that most of the details of the passion narrative are not historical and are devoid of memory. Rather, Crossan posits, the evangelists

⁷³ Ross, *A commentary on the Psalms*, 1:541.

⁷⁴ The changes made by Mark can be understood as stylistic improvements from the LXX since originally Psalm 22,19 (21,19 [LXX]) conforms to Hebrew syntax and style. The change from aorist to present fits Mark's style (cf. *σταυρούσιν*), the replacement of *μου* by *αυτου* is due to the change of speaker, the transition from finite verb to participle of *βάλλω* improves the syntax of the clause by connecting it with the main verb instead of giving the impression of being two separate sentences, and the inclusion of *ἐπ' αὐτᾶ* avoids the repetition of *ἱμάτιον*, cf. Raymond Brown, *The death of the Messiah: From Gethsemane to the grave; A commentary on the Passion narratives in the four Gospels* (New York: Doubleday, 1994), 2:954.

⁷⁵ On the meaning of scripturization, see Mark Goodacre, "Prophecy historicized or tradition scripturalized? Reflections on the origin of the Passion narratives," in *New Testament and the Church*, ed. by John Barton and Peter Groves, Library of New Testament Studies 532 (London: T&T Clark, 2015), 37-51; Dale C. Allison, *Constructing Jesus: Memory, imagination, and history* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2010), 388-390.

deliberately took certain OT prophecies that might be read as prefiguring Jesus' passion, and portrayed them as if they were historical facts.⁷⁶ Conversely, what the "scripturization" of history implies is that the evangelist, remembering the history of Jesus, found out unexpected correspondences between Jesus' actual experiences and OT figures. Accordingly, they decided to narrate Jesus's life in light of these scriptural characters. Therefore, the evangelist created a chronicle of Jesus that uses scriptural language to portray certain details of his life, and in this way, he confirms the historicity of the overall narrative.⁷⁷ In the words of Goodacre, "traditions generated scriptural reflection, which in turn influenced the way the traditions were recast."⁷⁸ Particularly, in the story of Jesus' death, Mark "scripturizes" history so as to place Jesus' passion as part of, and in continuation with, the meta-narrative of Israel's Scripture.

Considering the previous discussion, we must now turn to the use of Psalm 22,19 in Mark 15,24. Within the immediate context, the citation of Psalm 22,19 seems unnatural. The unit of thought enclosed in verses 22-26 is, as Mark's passion narrative, characterized by being succinct and focused on major details.⁷⁹ Amid this general narrative, two details stand out: the offering of wine mixed with myrrh and the division of Jesus's clothes. These details should be given due importance because they are intentional. Probably, the division of Jesus's clothes is a historic fact that due to its similarity with Scripture is introduced as such in Mark's

⁷⁶ John Dominic Crossan, *Who killed Jesus? Exposing the roots of anti-semitism in the Gospel story of the death of Jesus* (San Francisco, CA: Harper San Francisco, 1996), 1-10.

⁷⁷ Allison aptly comments that "to biblicalize is not necessarily to invent" (Allison, *Constructing Jesus*, 389).

⁷⁸ Mark Goodacre, "Scripturalization in Mark's crucifixion narrative," in *The trial and death of Jesus: Essays on the Passion narrative in Mark*, ed. by Geert Van Oyen and Tom Sheperd, CBET 45 (Leuven: Peeters, 2006), 40.

⁷⁹ The sequence is marked by the following verbs: φέρουσιν, ἐδίδουν, ἔλαβεν, σταυροῦσιν, διαμερίζονται and ἐσταύρωσαν. None of these expressions describe details except for the above mentioned. On this point, Lane rightly mentions "The fact of Jesus' crucifixion is recorded with utmost restraint" (William L. Lane, *The Gospel according to Mark*, NICNT [Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2008], 564).

narrative to present Jesus's death as according to the Scripture.⁸⁰ But this is not presented in Mark as if psalm 22 was prophetic. Instead, as if history is Scripture.⁸¹

If the larger context is allowed to weigh in,⁸² then the citation functions to portray the triumph of Jesus's enemies, signaling the nearness of his death as well as the inescapability of his situation. This meaning is rooted in the exegesis of Psalm 22,13-19.⁸³ The citation recalls David's experience from which he could not escape. Thus, the citation confirms that Jesus cannot get away from his enemies' plot, even if this plot leads him to fulfill his mission. Psalm 22,19 in Mark 15,24 signals that death is near for Jesus; agony is real; God is far from him; and that his enemies' victory is complete. Just as David's enemies enclosed him in order to destroy him and, finally, they triumphed over him (encapsulated in the act of dividing his garments), in the same way, Jesus goes through the same experience.

Jesus's enemies have a crucial role in the passion narrative. From 14,1 onwards, the narrative is set as a story about Jesus and his enemies.⁸⁴ Initially, "the chief priests and the teachers of the law were scheming to

⁸⁰ R. T. France, *The Gospel of Mark: A commentary on the Greek text*, NIGTC (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2002), 644; James R. Edwards, *The Gospel according to Mark*, PNTC (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2002), 472.

⁸¹ Craig A. Evans, *Mark 8:27-16:20*, WBC 34 (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 2008), 502; Alfred Suhl, *Die funktion der alttestamentlichen zitate und anspielungen im Markusevangelium* (Mohn: Gütersloh, 1965), 47-48.

⁸² Mark frequently employs Scripture with the larger context in view, cf. Carey, *Jesus' cry from the Cross*, 70-92; Marcus, *The way of the Lord*; Rikki E. Watts, *Isaiah's new Exodus in Mark* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2000). However, sometimes there are novel exegesis which yield imaginary results that might represent more the exegetical training of current biblical scholars rather than first-century Christians, cf. Paul Foster, "Echoes without resonance: Critiquing certain aspects of recent scholarly trends in the study of the Jewish Scriptures in the New Testament," *Journal for the Study of the New Testament* 38, No. 1 (2015): 96-111. Nonetheless, in this case, I think that the context of psalm 22 and Mark are similar. Therefore, this warrants the possibility to read Mark's quotation of psalm 22 within its larger context. In this sense, Metalepsis is a modern lens valid to explore Mark's intertextual reading of Hebrew Scriptures, cf. Richard B. Hays, *Echoes of Scripture in the Gospels* (Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, 2016), 15-104.

⁸³ See the exegesis of the psalm above.

⁸⁴ Evans, *Mark 8*, 355.

arrest Jesus secretly and kill him”⁸⁵ and this comes closer to realization when “Judas Iscariot... went to the chief priests to betray Jesus to them.”⁸⁶ The beginning of the end for Jesus started when “Judas appeared. With him was a crowd armed with swords and clubs, sent from the chief priests, the teachers of the law, and the elders... The men seized Jesus and arrested him.”⁸⁷ Once arrested, “the chief priests and the whole Sanhedrin were looking for evidence against Jesus so that they could put him to death”⁸⁸ until they found it, and “they all condemned him as worthy of death.”⁸⁹

Moreover, “the chief priests, with the elders, the teachers of the law and the whole Sanhedrin... handed him over to Pilate”⁹⁰ where “the chief priests accused him of many things.”⁹¹ The chief priest and leaders of Israel led the multitude “to have Pilate release Barabbas instead.”⁹² Finally, Pilate “handed him over to be crucified”⁹³ and his soldiers “crucified him.”⁹⁴ Once Jesus is crucified, his clothes are divided among the soldiers. Therefore, this act of casting lots on the clothes of Jesus represents that the plans of his enemies came to the realization (i.e., they succeeded in their purpose). Hence, the quotation of Psalm 22,19 in Mark 15,24 serves to enhance the sense of triumph of Jesus’ enemies in their purposes.

Although Jesus is not dead in verse 24, his death is imminent. The fact that Roman soldiers possess his clothes means he cannot escape from his situation. This is what is developed in the narrative when the marauders tell Jesus “he can’t save himself.” Finally, the dividing of his clothes

⁸⁵ Mark 14,1. All biblical texts are taken from NIV.

⁸⁶ Mark 14,10.

⁸⁷ Mark 14,43.

⁸⁸ Mark 14,55.

⁸⁹ Mark 14,64.

⁹⁰ Mark 15,1.

⁹¹ Mark 15,3.

⁹² Mark 15,11.

⁹³ Mark 15,15.

⁹⁴ Mark 15,24.

pictures Jesus as powerless and impotent before his situation.⁹⁵ The use of Psalm 22,19 in Mark 15,24 is intentional. What Mark tries to accomplish is to portray Jesus's death as according to the Scripture—to provide historical reliability—and picture the triumph of Jesus's enemies over him rendering him as powerless and close to death itself.⁹⁶ The citation grounds in scripture the narrative's impending sense that Jesus cannot flee his inevitable destiny; that he has been “overpowered” by his enemies. In short, the citation helps the reader remember that there is no help for the helper of mankind.

Additionally, Mark's allusion to Psalm 22,19 is an invitation for the reader to see Jesus' passion in light of David's experiences. These unexpected correspondences between these two characters, which are only discovered when the evangelist read the story of Jesus backwards into the OT, intend to confirm the messianic identity of Jesus. Psalm 22 suggests that the road to kingship consists of abandonment, rejection, mockery, fear, distress, agony, even the victory of the closest enemies over oneself. David provides a prototype that allows Mark to explicate the inextricable reality of Jesus: it is at his crucifixion that he becomes the king of Israel, the Messiah. What psalm 22 proved conclusively is that suffering, rejection, and abandonment are not absent from kingship but rather are quintessential to it. Therefore, if David, the greatest king of Israel, went through the agonies described in psalm 22, his son—but at the same time the Lord of David—must go through the same. Mark is just drawing from the royal ideology of Israel's scripture to make sense of the person of Jesus. Considering his use of psalm 22, we can answer confidently the question of who Jesus is. He is the Messiah, a suffering one, but nonetheless the Messiah.⁹⁷ Thus, by equating Jesus and David through the use of Psalm 22,19, Mark articulates his vision of the identity of Jesus.

⁹⁵ Lane, *The Gospel according to Mark*, 566; Larry Hurtado, *New International biblical commentary: Mark* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1989), 274.

⁹⁶ David E. Garland, *The NIV application commentary: Mark* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1996), 589.

⁹⁷ Max Botner, *Jesus Christ as the Son of David in the Gospel of Mark*, Society for New Testament Studies Monograph Series 174 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2019), 174-188.

Psalm 22,8 (21,8 [LXX]) in Mark 15,29

As in the previous section, Mark alludes to Psalm 22,8 in Mark 15,29 in order to “scripturize” history and boost Jesus’s mockery by his opponents.⁹⁸ Regarding history as scripture, Mark depicts a historical fact—shaking of the heads—using Septuagintal language to render Jesus’s death as according to the Scriptures even in minor details such as this.⁹⁹

Regarding Jesus’s mockery by his opponents, the allusion of Psalm 22,8 might have a deeper contextual function. The expression “to shake the head” in psalm 22 is one of a long series of expressions that serve the purpose of making known to the psalmist the derision, mockery, disapproval, contempt, and rejection of the people.¹⁰⁰ Overall, Psalm 22,7-9 summarizes that David is abandoned and mocked by those who see him. Now, Mark places the allusion to Psalm 22,8 in a context where mockery and derision are explicitly articulated.¹⁰¹ It follows that Mark does not need the allusion to convey the idea of derision and mockery. Therefore, what is then its purpose?

⁹⁸ “ἐκίνησαν κεφαλὴν” Psalm 22,8 (21,9 [LXX]). “κινούντες τὰς κεφαλὰς” Mark 15,29.

⁹⁹ Goodacre, “Prophecy historicized or tradition scripturalized?,” 37-51.

¹⁰⁰ See the exegesis above.

¹⁰¹ Mark identifies three groups that mock Jesus: οἱ παραπορευόμενοι, οἱ ἀρχιερεῖς μετὰ τῶν γραμματέων, and οἱ συνεσταυρωμένοι σὺν αὐτῷ. The mockery is described by βλασφημέω, ἐμπαίζω and ὀνειδίζω. βλασφημέω in Mark 15,29 means to revile, cf. Frederick W. Danker, Walter Bauer and William Arndt, *A Greek-English lexicon of the New Testament and other early Christian literature*, 3rd ed. (Chicago, MI: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 178. This attitude is made explicit by two circumstantial participles. The παραπορευόμενοι express their negative attitude towards Jesus by the gesture of shaking the head (κινούντες) and by saying (λέγοντες) that if Jesus is so powerful as to destroy the temple and rebuild it in three days, he should be able to save himself by coming down from the cross. Implicit in their mockery is the idea that Jesus is not powerful because he cannot come down from the cross. If he is not capable of doing that simple thing, how could he be able to rebuild the temple or destroy it in the first place? Cf. France, *The Gospel of Mark*, 647. ἐμπαίζω means “to make fun of someone,” cf. J. P. Louw and Eugene A. Nida, eds., *Greek-English lexicon of the New Testament: Based on semantic domains*, 2nd ed. (New York: United Bible Societies, 1989), 1:434. It functions as a circumstantial participle modifying ἐλεγον giving a glance at the attitude which the words in verse 31-32 were spoken. Therefore, the priests and scribes show contempt for Jesus verbally telling him that if he was able to save others, why couldn’t he save himself? If he was truly the king of the Jews, why wouldn’t he come down from the cross to prove it? The impossibility of Jesus to prove these claims reveal that he is helpless, and this becomes the basis of mockery by his opponents at the cross. Finally, even those who were crucified with him, those who did not have any standing, revile (ὀνειδίζω) him as well.

In light of the context, the purpose of the allusion is to enhance the mockery of Jesus. Since history is described using scriptural language, Mark invites his readers to read metaleptically his allusion and go back to the context of Psalm 22,8.¹⁰² There the reader will find a thorough description of the rejection lived by the psalmist.¹⁰³ Then, Mark's audience will realize that Jesus underwent what David experienced. Thereby, just as the psalmist was mocked, derided, rejected, disapproved, abandoned, scorned by people, Jesus went through the same. Therefore, the allusion to Psalm 22,8 boosts the portrayal of Jesus's mockery by depicting him, in conjunction with the literary context, as someone who is scorned even by those who were the lowest in the Palestine society. The allusion provides confirmation that Jesus was utterly rejected, mocked, scorned, and humiliated just as David was. Once more, Mark identifies Jesus with David, pointing out the messianic identity of the former.

Psalm 22,2 (21,2[LXX]) in Mark 15,34

Mark 15,34 quotes Psalm 22,2, making Mark 15,34 one of the most difficult texts in the Bible.¹⁰⁴ Are the words of Jesus a cry of defeat or triumph? A great number of scholars claim that in order to properly understand Mark 15,34, attention should be given to the whole context of psalm 22 where the sufferer experiences vindication. Therefore, they interpret the words of Jesus as anticipating his later vindication at his resurrection.¹⁰⁵ In this sense, his words are an expression of confidence in the future deliverance of God. Yet, Mark 15,34 should be understood at his face value, Jesus is hanging from a cross feeling abandoned by God.¹⁰⁶

¹⁰² Psalm 22,7-9.

¹⁰³ See the exegesis of this passage above.

¹⁰⁴ Regardless of the language Jesus spoke, in Mark's narrative, the Markan Jesus quotes Psalm 22,2.

¹⁰⁵ Carey, *Jesus' cry from the Cross*; R. Alan Cole, *Mark: An introduction and commentary* (Nottingham/Downers Grove, IL: Inter-Varsity Press/Intervarsity Press, 2008), 327-328.

¹⁰⁶ There is nothing in the narrative in Mark that points to the positive section of psalm 22. In fact, Mark alludes to or quotes psalm 22 in a way that distance itself from the positive section (from verse 19 to 8 and finally 2). The inverse order of the citations/allusions of psalm 22 in Mark 15 actually points that the climax of the use of psalm 22 in Mark 15 is not the topic of vindication but of abandonment. Vernon Robbins is right when he says "the context of mockery into

Psalm 22,2 is a cry from the psalmist begging God to don't be far from him. Its main issue is abandonment. The psalmist feels abandoned by God since He does not answer neither hear him. When Jesus hangs on a cross and pronounces these words, he recapitulates the experience of the psalmist. He feels abandoned by God, who is his Father, and left alone in the darkest hour of his life.¹⁰⁷ Mark, by quoting Psalm 22,2, creates a literary effect where horror, loneliness, agony, and abandonment climax in this moment of Jesus's life.¹⁰⁸

Mark creates the aforementioned literary effect by deploying a strategy where Jesus, who is accompanied by God and people from the beginning of his ministry, is left alone as his death approaches. First, the crowds and disciples who followed him everywhere left him alone. Once he is captured, he is nowhere to be seen accompanied.¹⁰⁹ Even Peter, the only disciple that followed him in the Markan account after he was arrested, abandoned Jesus when conditions worsened.¹¹⁰ Jesus had to endure his

which Markan discourse places psalm 22 reverses the sequence of scenes in the psalm and subverts the rhetoric of confidence expressed in it" (Vernon Robbins, "The reversed con-textualization of psalm 22 in the Markan crucifixion: A socio-rhetorical analysis," in *The four Gospels 1992: Festschrift Frans Neirynck*, ed. by F. Van Segbroeck, BETL 100 [Leuven: Leuven University Press, 1992], 1:1179). It is true, even we have stated it in this document, that Mark alludes to the context of the citation in order to illuminate its own use. Yet, this is controlled by the *Markan* context. As long as the Markan context is similar (thematically) to the original context of the situation, we can infer that he has the context of the quotation in view. Otherwise, the inquiries would yield many imaginary results not present in the text itself. For a defense of Mark 15,34 as an abandonment lament, see Rebecca Cerio, "Jesus' last words: A cry of dereliction or triumph?," *The Expository Times* 125, No. 7 (2014): 323-327; Morna Hooker, *The Gospel according to Saint Mark*, Black's New Testament Commentaries (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2005), 374.

¹⁰⁷ Lane, *The Gospel according to Mark*, 572-573; France, *The Gospel of Mark*, 652-653; Evans, *Mark* 8, 507.

¹⁰⁸ "Jesus' last words in Mark are passionate, expressing both the loneliness of intense suffering and a bold and demanding challenge addressed to God" (Adela Yarbro Collins, *Mark: A commentary*, Hermeneia [Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2007], 754). Also, Ben Witherington, *The Gospel of Mark: A socio-rhetorical commentary* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2001), 399.

¹⁰⁹ Mark 14,50-52.

¹¹⁰ Mark 14,66-72.

trials and crucifixion alone.¹¹¹ The only ones watching him were some γυναῖκες ἀπὸ μακρόθεν (Mark 15,40). Jesus is alone in his final hours.

Notwithstanding, this was not as painful as God's abandonment because he, who is the one who should not be expected to leave him since Jesus is doing his mission and has claimed from the beginning to be with him, abandoned him as well.¹¹² The one who does not abandon anybody has abandoned Jesus. The unthinkable becomes real.¹¹³ Just as David felt that God did not hear him, Jesus's prayer at Gethsemane is left unanswered. Also, just as God was far from David's roaring, God is far from Jesus's cry. Finally, David felt divine deliverance was far from him and Jesus's cry from the cross implies that his deliverance will not come and therefore he is left alone in the cross.

Mark builds the passion's narrative in such a way that it reaches the climax with Jesus in the cross at the utmost possible experience of loneliness, agony, and abandonment a human being can be (i.e., abandoned by everybody even by God).¹¹⁴ In this context, the use of Psalm 22,2 high-

¹¹¹ The crowd who usually followed him (Mark 2,13) now it is against him. His disciples are nowhere in Mark 15. The only company Jesus has are those who oppose him. The narrative from Mark 14 onwards focuses exclusively on Jesus and his enemies without making any mention of disciples or known ones.

¹¹² The most horrific scene for someone who enjoys the presence of God as Jesus did was to be abandoned by him. Hooker articulates this well when she writes "Jesus now experiences the most bitter blow which can befall the religious man: the sense of having been abandoned by God" (Hooker, *The Gospel according to Saint Mark*, 375).

¹¹³ The intensity of this situation is articulated by φωνῇ μεγάλῃ. On this issue, see Cristian Cardozo Míndiola, "μέγας" en el Apocalipsis de Juan: Aproximación lexicográfica y su importancia en la interpretación de Apocalipsis 12," *Evangelio* 9, No. 1 (2016): 37-63.

¹¹⁴ Joel Marcus, ed., *Mark 8-16: A new translation with introduction and commentary*, The Anchor Yale Bible 27A (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2009), 1064. Witherington comments "Thus Jesus' cry is not seen as playacting, but rather as real agony articulated in scriptural terms of a person who apparently had never been so separated from or abandoned by God previously" (Witherington, *The Gospel of Mark*, 399). Campbell argues convincingly that God's abandonment is just the climax of the abandonment motif thoroughly present in the Gospel of Mark, cf. William Sanger Campbell, "Why did you abandon me?' Abandonment christology in Mark's Gospel," in *The trial and death of Jesus: Essays on the Passion narrative in Mark*, ed. by Geert Van Oyen and Tom Sheperd, CBET 45 (Leuven: Peeters, 2006), 99-105. See also, Matthew Rindge, "Reconfiguring the Akedah and recasting God: Lament and divine abandonment in Mark," *Journal of Biblical Literature* 130, No. 1 (2011): 755-774.

lights the intensity of the abandonment felt by Jesus at the cross and renders this experience as real as possible. If the psalmist experienced this kind of abandonment as real, surely Jesus experienced it as well.

Summary

Overall, we could not claim that Mark is employing psalm 22 in Mark 15 prophetically. Nowhere he claims, when he uses psalm 22, that an event is happening so that Scripture is fulfilled. What Mark does is to use Scripture to narrate the story of Jesus' death. By doing so, he "scripturizes" history. This means Mark intends his readers to notice that Jesus' passion story parallels scriptural motifs and themes. In this way, the historical details of the crucifixion account are read as Scripture, the latter giving its status and credibility to the former.

The immediate effects of reading the passion story in parallel with scripture are twofold: on one hand, Jesus' rejection, abandonment, and derision are bolstered, enhanced, and heightened by Scripture. On the other hand, Jesus is now seen in the light of David. Mark utilizes this to portray Jesus as the Messiah of Israel, and to integrate the horrors described in psalm 22 as an integral part of the messianic mission. Mark employs psalm 22 as a platform to justify his messianic vision, namely, that for Jesus to be King, he must die and experience the agony and raw reality of humanity.¹¹⁵ Therefore, Mark taps into the royal ideology of Israel's Scripture to paint a complex but powerful picture of Jesus.¹¹⁶

However, Mark does not move from prophecy to fulfillment. Rather, this is the result of backwards Reading.¹¹⁷ The magnificent event of Jesus'

¹¹⁵ Jeremy Treat, *The crucified King: Atonement and kingdom in biblical and systematic theology* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2014), 99.

¹¹⁶ Joshua W. Jipp, *The messianic theology of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2020), 80.

¹¹⁷ I rely on Richard Hays for the following description. On the meaning of reading backwards, figural reading, and the bearing on this for Mark's use of scripture, see Hays, *Echoes of Scripture in the Gospels*, 1-5; Richard B. Hays, *Reading backwards: Figural christology and the fourfold Gospel witness* (Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, 2016); Richard Hays, "Figural interpretation of Israel's Story," in *Reading with the grain of Scripture* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2020), 70-88.

death and resurrection turned the world upside down. As the evangelist tried to make sense of this event, they started to read Israel's Scripture in search for clues. Doing this, they found unexpected correspondences between Jesus and OT figures. Then, the logical step for them was to re-interpret Israel's Scripture as to read the story of Jesus back into the OT. It is necessary to be clear, David did not foretell the future in psalm 22. Psalm 22 can only be read as if it were about Jesus only as the result of the retrospective reading that the evangelist did. In other words, as the evangelist read psalm 22 through the lens of the story of Jesus, they found a new, unexpected meaning in this passage that could not be found in it until Jesus ingrained it with a new sense. This is not typology either. This is figur-al exegesis: the recognition of unexpected correspondences between two characters that can only be seen from the vantage place of the later referent.

Scripture, narrative, and christology

From the beginning of Mark's gospel is clear that the Scriptures of Israel function as a subtext of his narrative about Jesus.¹¹⁸ Mark, subtle but cleverly, embeds the identity of Jesus within a cluster of references from Israel's Scripture. For instance, in order to present Jesus as Messiah, Mark uses Zechariah 9,9 to portray Jesus as the Davidic king as well as Psalm 110,1.¹¹⁹ In order to subtly present Jesus as sharing in the unique identity of Yhwh, he alludes to Job 9 where Yhwh walks upon the sea as Jesus does.¹²⁰ To present him as the son of man, Mark employs Daniel 7. Accordingly, Mark presents a complex portrait of Jesus wherein He is divine, equal to Yhwh, Messiah, Son of man among others, using Scripture to back up his claims.¹²¹ Scripture is the brush Mark uses to pint the portrait of Jesus.

¹¹⁸ Immediately after his introduction of Jesus in verse 1 Mark uses a composite quotation in verse 2, cf. Watts, *Isaiah's new Exodus in Mark*.

¹¹⁹ Michael Whitenon, *Hearing kyriotic sonship: A cognitive and rhetorical approach to the characterization of Mark's Jesus*, BibInt 148 (Leiden: Brill, 2016).

¹²⁰ Eugene Boring, "Markan christology: God – Language for Jesus," *New Testament Studies* 45 (1999): 451-471; Daniel Johansson, "Kyrios in the Gospel of Mark," *Journal for the Study of the New Testament* 33 (2010): 101-124.

¹²¹ Philip Davis, "Mark's christological paradox," in *The synoptic Gospels: A Sheffield reader*, ed. by Craig Evans and Stanley Porter (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1995), 163-177.

Since the purpose of the Gospel of Mark is to pen a biography of Jesus, one which builds upon the Scriptures of Israel, which is the overall effect of the use of psalm 22 in the passion narrative? What does this tell us about Jesus? In light of the exposition above, the use of psalm 22 presents Jesus as a human being. Mark is full of details that point to the humanity of Jesus. Yet, the use of psalm 22 in the passion narrative identifies Jesus with humanity in the experience of suffering. Jesus felt at the cross what humans feel from time to time: the rejection of society, hate from enemies, and abandonment by God. Clearly, Jesus's experience surpasses the common experience of everyday humans, but it shows that the same Jesus who is Yhwh embodied, Lord of creation and Son of God is also a human being who in the darkest hour of his life felt agony and experienced suffering.¹²²

Richard Hays describes aptly—and better than anyone—this element:

For one thing, in counterpoint to the previous scriptural evocations of Jesus's identity with the God of Israel, Jesus speaks here as a fully human figure who experiences the radical absence of God. This confirms the enormous complexity of Mark's narrative rendering of Jesus... the one who has power over wind and sea, the one who is described by David as "Lord," the one who will be seated at the right hand of the power and coming with the clouds of heaven is the same Jesus who cries out in dismay from the cross. And—here is the central point—both aspects of his identity are prefigured by Scriptures. The paradoxical unity of his identity is grounded in a hermeneutical vision that discovers attestations of Jesus' sufferings and his exalted status intertwined into God's mysterious revelatory Word.¹²³

Conclusion

What is then the purpose/intention of Mark by quoting/alluding to psalm 22 in his passion narrative? First, his purpose is to "scripturize" history. All the details which Mark articulates using the language of Psalm 22 are historical. However, by using scriptural language he evinces a process

¹²² This invites Mark's readers to understand that if Jesus felt abandoned by God in the face of persecution, sometimes believers will have to face the same reality, cf. Rindge, "Reconfiguring the Akedah." Also, if we read this canonically, the Jesus who experience the worst of human experience is the same one who can offer mercy and grace to those who struggle, cf. Heb 4,15-16.

¹²³ Hays, *Echoes of Scripture in the Gospels*, 84.

where history and Scripture are intertwined which produces the effect of a passion and death of Jesus according to the Scriptures.

Second, the use of psalm 22 invites the readers of Mark to read metaleptically the references in Mark's passion narrative. The dividing of the clothes, as well as the shaking of the heads, are expressions that in their original context conceptualize the triumph of the enemies and the complete rejection of society correspondingly. These expressions have the same meaning in Mark because they are placed in a similar context. Yet, the use of the original context enhances the presentation in Mark's brief narrative. Also, the use of Psalm 22,2 in Mark 15,34 invites the readers to understand the whole context as well as the reference where absolute abandonment by God is experienced.¹²⁴ Therefore, although Mark develops the same topics which he alludes to using psalm 22 in his narrative, the use of Scripture enhances his presentation of it.

Third, the presentation of history as Scripture and the enhancing of the topics of victory, rejection, and abandonment by God generates an image of Jesus where he is a human being. This does not deny his divinity. Rather, this adds one more issue to Jesus' complex identity in Mark. psalm 22 does not invite the reader to consider Jesus as a righteous sufferer.¹²⁵ Instead, the use of psalm 22 in Mark's passion narrative invites the reader to consider Jesus as a human who suffers, who agonizes, and experiences the life of mankind.

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¹²⁴ I mean the whole context of Psalm 22,2 that would be until verse 5 not the entirety of the psalm.

¹²⁵ Mark Hoffman, "Psalm 22 (LXX 21) and the crucifixion of Jesus" (doctoral dissertation, Yale University, 1996). Contra Marcus, *The way of the Lord*; Watts, "Mark".