

JESUS AS THE HOLY ONE OF GOD:  
THE HEALING OF THE *ZAVAH* IN MARK 5.24B-34\*

Horace Jeffery Hodges

Ewha Womans University, Seoul, South Korea

John C. Poirier

Kingswell Theological Seminary, Middletown, OH, USA

Mark 5.24b-34 tells the story of Jesus healing a woman suffering from a flow of blood. The story has a number of features that make it more than just another account of a healing miracle. It is foremost a story about the woman's faith (Jesus is unwitting to the miracle until it actually occurs),<sup>1</sup> but it also informs the reader, in a not-so-subtle way, that the healing virtue that flowed from Jesus has certain dynamic properties not unlike those characterizing the egressive properties of ritual impurity. The story, as Mark has redactionally cast it, interrupts the narrative of Jesus bringing Jairus's daughter back to life (vv. 21-24a, 35-43).<sup>2</sup> Two questions arise: (1) What does the miraculous healing of the woman signify? and (2) Why

\* We wish to thank the following (listed alphabetically) for commenting on earlier drafts of this article: Robert N. Bellah, Scott Corey (for his close reading and many critical notes), Alberdina Houtman (for several valuable questions and corrections), Jacob Milgrom† (to whom we are especially indebted for a close, critical reading of an earlier version and for many astute remarks during a private meeting), Marcel Poorthuis, Serge Ruzer, David Satran, Benjamin Sommer, Alan Treloar, and Graham Twelftree (for a close, critical reading). H.J. Hodges also wishes to thank the Australian Friends of Hebrew University, the Golda Meir Foundation, and Hebrew University's Office for Visiting Faculty as well as its Comparative Religion Department (especially Gedaliahu Stroumsa and David Satran) for his postdoctoral year as a Golda Meir Fellow at Hebrew University (1998–99).

1. See Thomas Kazen, *Jesus and Purity Halakhah: Was Jesus Indifferent to Impurity?* (ConBNT, 38; Stockholm: Almqvist & Wiksell, 2002), pp. 130-31.

2. It is often noted that the two stories are written in different styles, e.g. see Paul J. Achtemeier, 'Toward the Isolation of Pre-Markan Miracle Catenae', *JBL* 89 (1970), pp. 265-91 (277).

does it interrupt the narrative about Jairus's daughter?<sup>3</sup>

*Purity Concerns in the Story of the Woman with the Flow of Blood*

A number of scholars have noted that Mark's Gospel does not explicitly mention the issue of the woman's ritual purity.<sup>4</sup> They usually do so to suggest that such issues were not intended to be a part of the complex of issues driving the narrative. However, such a conclusion is too hasty, as

3. Achtemeier suggests that the story of the woman with a flow of blood originally fit between the story of Jesus' exorcism of an impure spirit (or spirits) from the Gerasene man (5.1-20) and the story of Jesus' resuscitation of Jairus's daughter (5.21-24a, 35-43), but that Mark changed the order as 'a stylistic act characteristic of his use of his material' ('Pre-Markan Miracle Catenae', p. 279). He does not specify what this stylistic act accomplishes, but he notes that Mark combined other stories (p. 278). Vincent Taylor, however, calls this interweaving of two stories unique in Mark, arguing '[t]he case is somewhat different from iii.22-6 and xiv.3-9, which separate different sections or stories' (*The Gospel according to St Mark* [London: Macmillan, 1966], p. 289). According to Taylor, 'A story may be told to fill an interval (e.g. vi.14-29), but the intercalation of narratives is not a feature of Mark's method'. Much earlier Julius Wellhausen had characterized this intercalation as unique (*Das Evangelium Marci* [Berlin: Georg Reimer, 1903], p. 43.) See James R. Edwards, 'Markan Sandwiches: The Significance of Interpolations in Markan Narratives', *NovT* 31 (1989), pp. 193-216; F. Gerald Downing, 'Markan Intercalation in Cultural Context', in G.J. Brooke and J.-D. Kaestli (eds.), *Narrativity in Biblical and Related Texts* (BETL, 149; Leuven: Leuven University Press, 2000), pp. 105-18.

4. E.g. Adela Yarbro Collins: 'ritual impurity is not an explicit theme in the story' (*Mark: A Commentary* [Hermeneia; Minneapolis: Fortress, 2007], p. 283). Collins does note, however, that 'the story portrays Jesus as relatively indifferent to the issue of the transmission of ritual impurity due to genital discharges' (*Mark*, p. 284). See also Shaye J.D. Cohen, 'Menstruants and the Sacred in Judaism and Christianity', in Sarah B. Pomeroy (ed.), *Women's History and Ancient History* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 1991), pp. 273-99 (279); Brigitte Kahl, 'Jairus und die verlorenen Töchter Israels: Sozioliterarische Überlegungen zum Problem der Grenzüberschreitung in Mk 5,21-43', in Luise Schottroff and Marie-Theres Wacker (eds.), *Von der Wurzel getragen: Christlich-feministische Exegese in Auseinandersetzung mit Antijudaismus* (BIS, 17; Leiden: Brill, 1996), pp. 61-78; Charlotte Fonrobert, 'The Woman with a Blood-flow (Mark 5.24-34) Revisited: Menstrual Laws and Jewish Culture in Christian Feminist Hermeneutics', in Craig A. Evans and James A. Sanders (eds.), *Early Christian Interpretation of the Scriptures of Israel: Investigations and Proposals* (JSNTSup, 148; SSEJC, 5; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1997), pp. 121-40 (128-29); Susan Haber, 'A Woman's Touch: Feminist Encounters with the Hemorrhaging Woman in Mark 5:24-34', *JSNT* 26 (2003), pp. 171-92.

one need not have been a Jew to read purity issues into the matter of a woman's flow of blood. We can come at this issue on two levels: that of Mark, and that of the pre-Markan tradition.

Mark's understanding of *Jewish* purity laws was hardly keen, but no Mediterranean (Jew or Greek) would have been so dull as not to recognize the purity dimensions of the story. Ritual purity was a part of how Jews and Greeks alike organized the world—as Mary Rose d'Angelo notes, Greek purity laws 'appear to be rather symmetrical with those of Judaism of the same period'.<sup>5</sup> While it remains *possible* that Mark does not have purity issues in view, it seems, on balance, less likely. For one thing, the symmetry between the dynamic of Jesus' healing virtue and the woman's impurity suggests that the latter is an issue at hand.<sup>6</sup>

As part of her overall argument against reading a purity concern

5. Mary Rose d'Angelo, 'Gender and Power in the Gospel of Mark: The Daughter of Jairus and the Woman with the Flow of Blood', in John C. Cavadini (ed.), *Miracles in Jewish and Christian Antiquity: Imagining Truth* (Notre Dame Studies in Theology, 3; Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1999), pp. 83-109 (85). D'Angelo writes, '[W]ithout denying that the wording and details of the laws of Leviticus influenced Christian restrictions on menstruant women, I wish to suggest that such restrictions might well have been viewed by the early Christians not only as taught by Judaism but even more as universally comprehensible, as "natural"' ('Gender and Power', pp. 87-88). The best (but not the only) evidence of Mark's imperfect understanding of Jewish purity laws is found in his misguided attempt to derive a general censure of *kashrut* from a story having to do with ritual purity (7.1-23). Mark's belief (in 9.2) that the Transfiguration could have transpired less than seven days after Jesus had healed a number of people (presumably laying hands on them) also betrays ignorance of the week of purificatory preparation usually presupposed for those seeking theophanic experiences.

6. The idea that Jesus' healing power even imbued the hem of his garment is of a piece with the description of Peter's healing power in Acts 5.15, in which it sufficed merely for Peter's shadow to overpass those in need of healing. See Hyam Maccoby, *Ritual and Morality: The Ritual Purity System and its Place in Judaism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), p. 51. In both instances, the dynamics of healing power follow the rules of impurity egress informing the purity laws: just as impurity, in certain cases, could spread by means of touching one's clothing, or by means of an 'overhang', so also healing power could be spread by way of the same 'physics'. (In both cases, the possibility of egress-by-overhang signaled the extraordinary potency of what was being spread.) The reader might object that the woman, on the terms of the purity laws here presumed, would have spread impurity to many in the crowd, but that is to assume that the crowd's pressing in upon Jesus was thick enough on its own account not to allow the woman to pass as she normally would have. Even that, at any rate, might be to import too much verisimilitude into Mark's account.

into Mk 5.24b-34, Charlotte Fonrobert contends that the *zavah* (i.e. a woman with a non-menstrual vaginal discharge) was not as untouchable as commentators on Mark's text have usually supposed. According to Fonrobert, 'the masoretic text does not include an explication that she communicates impurity by *being touched*, as does the menstrous [*sic*] woman (Lev. 15.19). Nor is there any mention that either she or the menstruant woman communicate [*sic*] impurity by *touching anyone*.'<sup>7</sup> On the basis of her strictly literal reading of Leviticus, Fonrobert concludes that a *zavah* communicates impurity only by way of someone sitting on her bed or on something on which she sat, but *not* by direct touch.<sup>8</sup> Such an arrangement, of course, is surely strange enough that it should elicit questions—it bypasses the normal logic of impurity egress to allow direct touch but not indirect touch. Thomas Kazen addresses the problems with Fonrobert's reading of Leviticus: Fonrobert assumes that the discrepancies between the text's discussion of the *zab* and its discussion of the *zavah* should be 'exploited' (or 'taken at face value') rather than resolved by reading the text in a more 'systemic way' (Kazen's terms).<sup>9</sup> Kazen writes

As several interpreters point out, the discussions about female dischargers are made dependent on the previous basic regulations concerning the *zab*. The whole chapter should probably be read in a more systemic way. As the *zab* is first treated, the *niddah* and *zabah* incorporate certain traits of the former.<sup>10</sup>

7. Fonrobert, 'Woman with a Blood-flow', p. 130.

8. Fonrobert, 'Woman with a Blood-flow', p. 131. D'Angelo takes the same view: 'There is no evidence that the touch of a woman's hand or brushing up against her in a crowd would have been considered a pollution in the first century' ('Gender and Power', p. 87).

9. Kazen, *Jesus and Purity Halakhah*, pp. 140-41.

10. Kazen, *Jesus and Purity Halakhah*, p. 140. Kazen writes, '[C]omplications arrive when discussing the case of a person unclean with discharges touching a clean person, as in the Markan story of the bleeding woman. This is explicitly forbidden only in the case of the *zab*. He is said to contaminate clean persons and vessels by touching them without having first washed his hands (vv. 11-12). It is reasonable to assume such contamination at least in the case of the *zabah* by analogy, and by implication from the fact that the *zabah* contaminates persons via her bed or seat' (*Jesus and Purity Halakhah*, p. 143). A more equalizing reading is also suggested by two manuscripts that read ׀ב (viz. 'everyone who touches *her*') instead of ׀ב, as pointed out by Jacob Milgrom, *Leviticus 1-16: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary* (New York: Doubleday, 1991), p. 943, and supported, as Kazen notes, by the Septuagint (*Jesus and Purity Halakhah*, p. 142).

By reading the text as a logical progression that (for the sake of abbreviation) does not repeat everything it assumes, the rules of the *zavah* are allowed to develop in a more sensible line. Kazen argues that this, in fact, is how the Rabbis read Leviticus: instead of seeing the *zavah* as the least imposing category of impurity among seven-day impurities (*zab*, *zavah*, menstruant and parturient), as Fonrobert would have it, ‘the *zabah* came to be regarded as the epitome of all those with discharges’.<sup>11</sup> The fact that both the Rabbis and the Qumranites portrayed an ‘equalizing tendency’ in their reading of the text of Leviticus suggests (to Kazen) that such a tendency characterized the reading of the text in the Second Temple period.<sup>12</sup> In response to Brigitte Kahl’s claim that Mk 5.24b-34 is little concerned with purity, Kazen notes that the Markan story is replete with the terminology of Leviticus:

The presence of words and expressions belonging to the key terminology of Lev 12 and 15 has been pointed out by several exegetes, and is admitted by Kahl herself. These are ῥύσει αἵματος (Mk 5:25), ἡ [*sic*] πηγὴ τοῦ αἵματος (v 29), and the repeated use of the verb ἄπτεσθαι (v 27, 28, 30, 31). ῥύσις αἵματος is not a normal expression for menstruation, used in Greek literature, but is paralleled by Lev 15:19, 25 LXX. Likewise, πηγὴ τοῦ αἵματος is never used for vaginal bleeding, except in Lev 12:7 LXX (cf. 20:18). ... These phrases show some kind of dependence on the language of Leviticus, and reveal an awareness of the purity issue involved in the story of the woman touching Jesus, at some stage in the tradition.<sup>13</sup>

In short, purity concerns most likely *do* represent an important aspect of the Markan account.<sup>14</sup>

11. Kazen, *Jesus and Purity Halakhah*, p. 129. Kazen elsewhere refers to another assumption of the Leviticus text that is often missed: ‘The rules in Lev 15 dealing with the *zav*, the *zavah*, the menstruant, and the semen emitter indicate that all dischargers are thought of as remaining within their own homes. While this is not explicitly stated, it is implied by the fact that contact leading to defilement is assumed and means are provided for the purification of both dischargers and those who have contacted them’ (Thomas Kazen, *Issues of Impurity in Early Judaism* [ConBNT, 45; Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2010], p. 91).

12. Kazen, *Jesus and Purity Halakhah*, p. 156.

13. Kazen, *Jesus and Purity Halakhah*, pp. 133-34.

14. Marla J. Selvidge has drawn a lot of criticism for her attempt to read Mk 5.25-34 as a polemic against the Jewish ritual purity system (‘Mark 5:25-34 and Leviticus 15:19-20: A Reaction to Restrictive Purity Regulations’, *JBL* 103 [1984], pp. 619-23). D’Angelo quotes a number of ‘extracts’ from Selvidge, and notes that they ‘present a wide variety of philological and historical problems’ (‘Gender and Power’, p. 84). For example, Selvidge’s ‘claim that a woman’s “normal biologic rhythms”

It should perhaps be mentioned that the denial of some scholars that purity issues are in view (e.g. Fonrobert, d'Angelo) is based, at least partly, on the mistaken idea that the only consequence of ritual impurity was that it barred one from access to the temple. As the Markan episode takes place in Galilee, these scholars tell us, ritual purity could hardly be a relevant issue.<sup>15</sup> That understanding of ritual purity, however, is beset with serious problems, and there is no reason why ritual purity would not be a concern for everyday life in Galilee.<sup>16</sup>

*The Fundamental Binarisms of the Logic of Ritual Purity*

Certain aspects of Jesus' healing of the woman make sense only within the context of ritual purity concerns. Therefore, in pursuing the question of what the story is about we will pay attention to recent discussion of the sacred and the profane in comparative religion, especially as it deals with the interrelation of two paired binarisms in the Hebrew Bible: holy<sup>17</sup>–

were considered abnormal by the Jews is contradicted by the chapter of Leviticus she is using; it carefully distinguishes between a woman's regular period (Lev 15:19-24) and a discharge that seems to indicate disease (Lev 15:25-30)'. Selvidge's arguments, according to d'Angelo, 'display a combination of inappropriate generalization, extravagant rhetoric, and naive or specious use of language'. More 'disturbing' still, d'Angelo notes, is the way in which a number of feminist interpreters of Mk 5.21-43 have failed to consider Judith Plaskow's critique of the anti-Jewishness of this sort of interpretative work. See Judith Plaskow, 'Anti-Judaism in Feminist Christian Interpretation', in Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza (ed.), *Searching the Scriptures: A Feminist Introduction* (New York: Crossroad, 1994), I, pp. 117-29; Haber, 'A Woman's Touch'.

15. The role this mistaken assumption plays in d'Angelo and Fonrobert is noted in Susan Miller, *Women in Mark's Gospel* (JSNTSup, 259; London: T. & T. Clark, 2004), p. 53.

16. See John C. Poirier, 'Purity beyond the Temple in the Second Temple Era', *JBL* 122 (2003), pp. 247-65.

17. On the holy as the essential quality of the divine, see J. Muilenburg, 'Holiness', *IDB*, II, pp. 616-25; John G. Gammie, *Holiness in Israel* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1989), pp. 5-8.

common<sup>18</sup> (חל-קדש) and impure<sup>19</sup>–pure<sup>20</sup> (טהור-טמא). Despite its usefulness, the binarism of sacred–profane does not map easily onto these Scriptural binarisms, although the mapping works at a deeper level.<sup>21</sup> Leviticus 10.10 demonstrates this difficulty: one should ‘distinguish between the holy and the common and between the impure and the pure’. The opposition of the holy to the common and of the impure to the pure is here struck in a parallelism that might suggest the equivalence of holy with impure and common with pure.<sup>22</sup> The Bible draws an unequivocal

18. Scholars of religion usually employ the term ‘profane’, but as that word often serves as a synonym for ‘impure’, we prefer the term ‘common’. But cf. L.E. Toombs, ‘Common’, *IDB*, I, p. 663: ‘In OT priestly literature “common” is the opposite of “holy”...the unconsecrated rather than the consecrated. ...Although in the OT the common is ritually neutral, and may be either clean or unclean, in the NT κοινός is synonymous with “unclean”.’

19. On the impure as a power opposed to the divine, see Friedrich Hauck, ‘καθαρός κτλ.’, *TDNT*, III, pp. 413-17 (414-15). On the relations of holy, common, pure and impure, see Muilenburg, ‘Holiness’, p. 619.

20. On purity as the result of having been cleansed of all power opposed to the divine, cf. Hauck, ‘καθαρός’, pp. 414-15.

21. Philip Peter Jenson notes that the sacred–profane dichotomy does not do justice to the complexity of the sacred and the nonsacred in the Hebrew Scriptures (*Graded Holiness: A Key to the Priestly Conception of the World* [JSOTSup, 106; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1992], pp. 42-43). He refers to others who also have noted this inadequacy.

22. Jenson, *Graded Holiness*, p. 43. As Benjamin Sommer has pointed out (personal conversation), Lev. 10.10 might have a chiasmic structure. Although this is a syntactic possibility, the dynamic nature of the holy and the impure—in particular, their contagious character—suggests a fundamental similarity expressed better as parallelism than as chiasm. Moreover, as Alberdina Houtman notes (private communication), rabbinic thought records a ‘discussion on sacred books that render the hands unclean (e.g. *m. Toh.* 15.6)’. This mishnaic passage reflects an equivalence of the holy and the impure recognized across many religious traditions. Some sociologists of religion have developed this into a far-reaching logic of ambiguity: Denis Hollier, ‘On Equivocation [between Literature and Politics]’, *October* 55 [1990], pp. 3-22 (10), writes regarding the views of the Collège de Sociologie, ‘[A]mbiguity is the very substance of the sacred. What a narrow logic separates as contradictory, the sacred joins.... “The two poles of the sacred”, Caillois writes, “identically oppose themselves to the profane. In their confrontation with it, their own antagonism becomes attenuated, tends to disappear”’ (citing Roger Caillois, *L’homme et le sacré* [Paris: Gallimard, 1939], p. 73). We can agree to some extent, given the apparent equivalence of the holy to the impure in so many religions, but would extend the ambivalence even to the relations between the holy/impure, on the

contrast between holiness and impurity,<sup>23</sup> however, and the common can actually exist in a state of purity or impurity, or even in a state of holiness!

According to Jacob Milgrom's analysis, the ancient Israelites understood the holy and the impure as mutually antagonistic dynamic forces and the common and the pure as *states*,<sup>24</sup> although using 'state' to characterize the common does not precisely convey its nature (as will become clear).<sup>25</sup> Milgrom emphasizes the antagonism between the holy and the impure, but in pointing to their dynamism he indicates their similarity. One could (perhaps too conveniently) label them as the positive and negative poles of the spiritual realm.<sup>26</sup> One would do better, however,

one hand, and the 'profane' on the other. This will be clarified further on.

23. Jenson, *Graded Holiness*, p. 44. Clinton Wahlen writes, "'Holiness" is not the semantic opposite of "impure" or "unclean". There is, however, a fundamental incompatibility between them so that, normally, contact between the two is prevented' (*Jesus and the Impurity of Spirits in the Synoptic Gospels* [WUNT, 2.185; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2004], pp. 10-11).

24. Milgrom, *Leviticus 1-16*, p. 732. Cf. David P. Wright, 'Holiness (OT)', *ABD*, III, pp. 246b-47a; L.E. Toombs, 'Clean and Unclean', *IDB*, I, pp. 641-48 (642b). Andrew Mein writes, '[I]mpurity does seem to be more than just a state: it is an active (if not personal) force inimical to YHWH and his holy things, which is activated by human actions and conditions' (*Ezekiel and the Ethics of Exile* [Oxford Theological Monographs; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001], p. 149). Yehezkel Kaufmann, noting that impurity presents no danger to human beings, dissents from the view that it constitutes a dynamic force, although he acknowledges its contagious character (*The Religion of Israel: From its Beginnings to the Babylonian Exile* [Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1960], pp. 103-104). Most commentators would argue that the contagiousness of impurity, at the very least, reveals its dynamism. Gerhard von Rad even notes (citing Hag. 2.10-13) that '[t]here are cases in which the potency of the unclean is greater than that of the holy' (*Old Testament Theology* [2 vols.; Edinburgh: Oliver and Boyd, 1962], I, p. 273). On the binarisms, see especially Milgrom, *Leviticus 1-16*, pp. 616-17, 731-32.

25. According to Milgrom, 'the holy may never become impure' (*Leviticus 1-16*, p. 732). We take it that he means 'the holy', in *itself*, cannot become impure. Objects imbued by 'the holy' can become impure, and this constitutes the danger that impurity poses to the tabernacle (or the temple) and the sacred objects within it. Moreover, in a larger sense, impurity poses a danger to 'the holy' by forcing it to retreat from the realm of the common, thereby ceding territory to 'the impure'. That this retreat can occur stems not from a lack of dynamism on the part of 'the holy' but, more likely, from the limited amount of 'the holy' actually in the world. See below.

26. Interestingly, in equivalent finite amounts, impurity acts more dynamically than holiness, for the former can displace the latter, which explains the need to separate holy things from impure things. See Jacob Milgrom, 'The Priestly Laws of Sancta

to conceive of the common as an inert ‘substance’ rather than as a state, a substance that (as noted above) can exist in a ‘spiritually contaminated’ state of holiness or impurity, or in an ‘uncontaminated’ state of purity.<sup>27</sup> (This is the deeper level at which the binarism of sacred and profane maps onto the scriptural binarisms.) Indeed, the common naturally exists in a pure state, but one constantly under threat of contamination by the impure. As Melissa Raphael writes, ‘Holiness is... a relational quality of things that participate in both divine consciousness and its reception in history’.<sup>28</sup> The latter quality—‘reception in history’—comprises a threat to those who treat it negligently. Consequently, for the holy to imbue the common, the natural purity of the common space needs protection. Failure to insure the purity of common space occupied by the holy (see Leviticus 11–15) brings punishment<sup>29</sup> and the withdrawal of the holy from that space.<sup>30</sup>

Due to the difficulty of maintaining the purity of common space, religious injunctions require the physical separation of the holy from everything else.<sup>31</sup> The word for ‘the holy’ (הַקִּדְּוָה) means both ‘apartness’ and ‘sacredness’.<sup>32</sup> Separation fits with the understanding

Contamination’, in Michael Fishbane and Emanuel Tov (eds.), *‘Sha‘arei Talmon’: Studies in the Bible, Qumran, and the Ancient Near East Presented to Shemaryahu Talmon* (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 1992), pp. 137-46 (142-43).

27. Our understanding of these categories departs from that of Milgrom, who treats the common as a state. We treat the common as a substance that can exist either in a state of purity (its natural, neutral state) or in a state of impurity or holiness (when imbued with either of these dynamic forces). Milgrom’s understanding of the common as a state (rather than a substance) leads to the paradoxical conclusion that a state can exist in a state.

28. Melissa Raphael, *Rudolf Otto and the Concept of Holiness* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1997), p. 35.

29. E.g. see Milgrom, *Leviticus 1–16*, p. 346. Cf. also Exod. 19.21-24.

30. Milgrom, *Leviticus 1–16*, p. 258.

31. This might suggest that the holy is not particularly dynamic and does not seek to extend its influence over the common and the pure. In the Hebrew Bible, however, holiness exists in the realm of the common only in a finite amount. Consequently, its dynamism remains centered within the sanctuary, from which it exerts a two-fold influence: (1) a danger to any impure or unsanctified common object brought within its proximity, and (2) an implicit exhortation—made explicit in the laws—that the Israelites purify and separate themselves in an imitation of God as a separate, pure and holy being. The New Testament, as will become clear later in this article, transforms these ideas.

32. In terms of Israelite covenant theology, the term ‘holy’ extended to cover

of the holy and the impure as antithetical dynamic forces. The holy, therefore, both endangers and is endangered.<sup>33</sup> Consequently, physical separation not only protects persons carrying impurity from the holy, but it also protects the holy from contamination by the impure.<sup>34</sup> Due to the

anything belonging to God, including Israel as a 'holy nation'. Because the Israelites belonged to God, they had to keep themselves both separate and pure. The root  $\text{שָׁדַק}$  appears to have a basic meaning of 'separation, withdrawal'. Walther Eichrodt suggests parallels in other languages (Greek, Latin, Polynesian) to terms 'that indicate the holy as *that which is marked off, separated, withdrawn from ordinary use*' (*Theology of the Old Testament* [2 vols.; London: SCM Press, 1961], I, p. 270). He therefore derives  $\text{שָׁדַק}$  from the stem  $\text{קָדַח}$  ('to cut'), rather than from  $\text{קָדַד}$  or  $\text{קָדַדו}$  ('to be pure or bright', as per Arabic and Ethiopic philology [pp. 270-71]). Arthur Jeffery cites as the original meaning of the radicals, 'to withdraw, separate' (*The Foreign Vocabulary of the Qur'an* [Baroda: Oriental Institute, 1938], p. 232). Jenson, however, rejects the theory that  $\text{שָׁדַק}$  originally meant 'separation' (*Graded Holiness*, p. 48 n. 4), as does Helmer Ringgren (*Israelite Religion* [London: Fletcher & Son, 1969], pp. 73-74). Note also that Ludwig Koehler and Walter Baumgartner do not give 'separation' as an original meaning for  $\text{שָׁדַק}$  (*Lexicon in Veteris Testamenti Libros* [Leiden: Brill, 1958], p. 825a). Jacob Milgrom does not trace the etymology of the radicals to the meaning of 'separation' or 'withdrawal', but nonetheless considers this meaning as always implied and never lost throughout the radicals' use in biblical Hebrew ('The Changing Concept of Holiness in the Pentateuchal Codes with Emphasis upon Leviticus 19', in John F.A. Sawyer [ed.], *Reading Leviticus: A Conversation with Mary Douglas* [JSOTSup, 227; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1996], pp. 65-75 [65-66]).

33. According to C.F. Whitley, 'Holiness...originally connoted a quality which was inherently angerous to man' (*The Genius of Ancient Israel: The Distinctive Nature of the Basic Concepts of Israel Studied against the Cultures of the Ancient Near East* [Amsterdam: Philo, 1968], p. 153). In the Hebrew Bible, the endangeredness of the holy seems to apply to the finite amount of holiness present in the world rather than to God's inexhaustible holiness itself. Marianne Sawicki, speaking primarily from a New Testament studies perspective, objects: 'Holiness...is perceived to obtain in the land of Israel when everything moving across the land is maintaining its own proper momentum. The holy land itself is regarded as the most stable element, and so it is understood to be a stabilizer, magnet, and modulator of that which crosses it... The notion of holiness as separation was an analytic model constructed within the academic discipline of the history of religions, and it can be applied only with difficulty in the interpretation of Israel's experience' (*Crossing Galilee: Architectures of Contact in the Occupied Land of Jesus* [Harrisburg: Trinity Press International, 2000], p. 34).

34. There are degrees of holiness—see Milgrom, 'Priestly Laws', p. 139. Milgrom's argument that '[h]oliness and impurity are finite quantitative categories' (p. 143) allows him to formulate his laws of the contamination of the sanctuary, the

double danger posed by this dynamic opposition between the holy and the impure, humans must approach the holy in the proper state and with the proper respect, viz. they must have obtained the requisite degree of purity, and they must display the appropriate fear. The latter, of course, constitutes a normal response to the holy.<sup>35</sup> Genesis 31.42 and 53 even use ‘Fear’ (MT: **פִּיִּי**; LXX: φόβος) as a name for God.<sup>36</sup> Scripture generally presupposes fear of God as a proper and natural response to God’s majesty, power and holiness.<sup>37</sup> This fear is well-grounded, as any impurity in the presence of the holy meets with severe punishment, even death.<sup>38</sup>

first two of which prove significant for the present study: (1) ‘*Sancta contamination varies directly with the charge (holiness) of the sanctuary, the charge of the impurity, and inversely with the distance between them*’ (p. 142), and (2) ‘*Impurity displaces an equal amount of sanctuary holiness*’ (pp. 142-43). This implies that the fullness of God’s holiness never completely pervades even the inner shrine of the sanctuary. But see Roy Gane’s critique of Milgrom’s understanding of sacrifices as purgation of the sanctuary (*Cult and Character: Purification Offerings, Day of Atonement, and Theodicy* [Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2005], pp. 106–23).

35. See Rudolf Otto, *The Idea of the Holy* (London: Oxford University Press, 1950), especially his analysis of the holy as a *mysterium tremendum* (pp. 13-14). See Sumner B. Twiss and Walter H. Conser, Jr, *Experience of the Sacred: Readings in the Phenomenology of Religion* (Hanover, NH: Brown University Press, 1992); Muilenburg, ‘Holiness’, pp. 616, 618; Robert Hodgson, Jr, ‘Holiness (NT)’, *ABD*, III, pp. 249-54 (249); Raphael, *Otto and the Concept of Holiness*. Von Rad notes that, in encounters with the holy, one ‘initially feels fear rather than trust’ (*Old Testament Theology*, I, p. 205).

36. On **פִּיִּי** as dread before YHWH/God, see 1 Sam. 11.7; 2 Chron. 14.13; 2 Chron. 20.29; Isa. 2.10, 19, 21. Cf. also Job 13.11; Ps. 119.120. The form **פִּיִּי** (being in dread [of YHWH/God]) appears in Job 23.15; Ps. 14.5; 53.6. The same verb refers to dread before YHWH’s word in Ps. 119.161 and Jer. 36.13, and to submitting to YHWH in Hos. 3.5 and Mic. 7.17. (Cf. the participial form in Prov. 28.14.) See Günther Wanke, ‘φοβέω κτλ.’, *TDNT*, IX, pp. 197-205 (203-204).

37. Cf. Wanke, ‘φοβέω’, pp. 201-203. Cf. e.g. Isa. 8.13, which parallels the Lord’s holiness with the terror it arouses. C.J. Lambuschagne draws attention to YHWH’s warlike nature to explain the fear that his holiness aroused (*The Incomparability of Yahweh in the Old Testament* [Pretoria Oriental Series, 5; Leiden: Brill, 1966] pp. 97-98). On history-of-religions grounds, however, it is more likely that the holy generates fear by its very presence and that the fear that YHWH aroused in wartime derived ultimately from his holiness rather than his role as a warrior.

38. Miller writes, ‘Jesus is anointed by the Holy Spirit (1.10), and the Spirit dwells in him (1.24). In this way the woman risks her life in approaching Jesus; as she is unclean, she may be destroyed by coming into contact with the holy’ (*Women in*

*The Situation of the Zavah in Mark 5.24b-34*

The Israelites understood the holy as a force of legitimate power, and the impure as a force of illegitimate power. Any instance in which the holy strikes out in power against the impure thus stands as a legitimate judgment and not an arbitrary act. Consequently, any violation of the ancient Israelite purity laws would set in motion the inexorable process of God's legitimate judgment.

Leviticus 15 defines as 'impure' any woman with a vaginal 'flow of blood' (LXX: v. 19 ῥέουσα αἵματι, referring to a menstrual flow; v. 25 ῥύσει αἵματος, referring to a nonmenstrual flow). Verse 31 implies that such a woman, if not kept separate from the other Israelites, will contaminate God's people and leave them to die in their impurity for

*Mark's Gospel*, p. 58). Cf. the danger implicit in the theophany at Sinai as presented in Exodus 19. According to Ringgren, YHWH's holiness 'signifies the unapproachability, the awesomeness, even the dangerousness of the God who is wholly other' (*Israelite Religion*, p. 74). Cf. 1 Sam. 6.13-20, where God strikes down many of the men of Beth Shemesh for looking into the ark while sacrificing before it (in honor of its return from the Philistines), and 2 Sam. 6.1-7 (cf. 1 Chron. 13.1-10), where God strikes down Uzzah for reaching out to steady the ark when the oxen pulling its cart stumble. Cf. also Isa. 6.1-7, where Isaiah encounters in a vision the thrice-holy YHWH seated upon a throne in the temple and cries out in fear of being 'lost' (i.e. destroyed) due to his own impurity. Only the intervention of one of the attendant seraphim purifies him of his guilt and sin and allows him to speak to and for YHWH without fear of being destroyed. The dynamic force of the holy poses a lethal threat. Encounters with lesser degrees of holiness also demonstrate the dynamism of the holy—e.g. see Lev. 6.27, which presents this dynamism in terms of the 'contagiousness' of the holy, stating that anything/anyone touching the flesh of the sin offering becomes holy (cf. also Ezek. 46.20). See also Ezek. 44.19, which warns Levitical priests to store in a holy place the linen garments they wear while ministering at the gates of the inner court and within—to wear these garments among the people would risk communicating holiness to the people through the sacred accoutrements (cf. Lev. 16.4, 23-24). See also Isa. 65.5; Hag. 2.12-13. Good intentions do not mitigate punishment. This is, to some extent, reminiscent of the Polynesian concept of taboo (in which the effect of contacting a taboo object bears no connection with the intention of the one who contacts it), but there is a difference. Whereas Polynesian religion does not *radically* divide the power (i.e. *mana*) that characterizes the spiritual realm into two opposing forces, Israelite religion divided that power into the two opposing forces of 'holy' and 'impure', associating the former with God and the latter with whatever is opposed to God. Cf. Muilenburg, 'Holiness', p. 616: 'Primitive societies seek to do justice to the maleficent and beneficent powers of "the holy" in such words as "mana" and "taboo", but these positive and negative forces are present wherever "the holy" is present'.

defiling God's dwelling place (the tabernacle containing the ark).<sup>39</sup> Leviticus 12.4 states that a woman in a state of impurity from bleeding must not touch anything sacred or approach the sanctuary. Although this specifically refers to the bleeding that accompanies childbirth, v. 2 compares the impurity due to this type of bleeding with that due to menstrual bleeding. Thus, all three types of vaginal bleeding—from childbirth, menstruation and irregular discharges—place a woman in comparable (though not identical) states of impurity.<sup>40</sup> Depending upon textual evidence, Lev. 15.27 may go even further, perhaps specifying that those who touch a woman with a nonmenstrual flow will enter into a state of impurity and have to wash their clothes, bathe and wait until sunset.<sup>41</sup> This would imply that a *zavah* exists in a state of even greater impurity

39. Milgrom (private communication) has pointed out that Lev. 15.31 speaks not of keeping sources of impurity separated from the Israelites, but rather of keeping the Israelites separated from that which makes them impure. The latter, however, also logically implies the former. Moreover, the position of Lev. 15.31—part of the conclusion to a chapter on polluting discharges—leaves little room for doubt that a menstruating woman belonged categorically to that which imparts impurity and from which the Israelites must be separated. Cf. the rules governing the *zavah* in 4Q274 1, I.5-6: 'And she must not mingle in any way during her seven day period, lest she contaminate the camps of the holy [ones of] Israel. Nor should she touch any woman [with a discharge] of blood of seven[ral] days' (trans. from Florentino García Martínez and Eibert J.C. Tigchelaar, *The Dead Sea Scrolls Study Edition* [2 vols.; Leiden: Brill, 1997–98], p. 629). See Joseph M. Baumgarten, 'Zab Impurity in Qumran and Rabbinic Law', *JJS* 45 (1994), pp. 273-77 (276); Thomas Kazen, '4Q274 Fragment 1 Revisited—Or Who Touched Whom? Further Evidence for Ideas of Graded Impurity and Graded Purifications', *DDS* 17 (2010), pp. 53-87. Note that the menstruating woman should not touch the *zavah*. On various anthropological understandings of the symbolic significance of menstrual blood, especially regarding its supposedly universal subscription and its inherently polluting nature, cf. Thomas Buckley and Alma Gottlieb, 'A Critical Appraisal of Theories of Menstrual Symbolism', in Thomas Buckley and Alma Gottlieb (eds.), *Blood Magic: The Anthropology of Menstruation* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988), pp. 1-50, esp. 25-41. See Cohen, 'Menstruants and the Sacred'.

40. Cf. Lev. 12.1-8 on impurity due to childbirth (esp. v. 2, which explicitly compares childbirth impurity with menstrual impurity); 15.19-24 on impurity due to menstruation; and 15.25-30 on impurity due to irregular genital flows (esp. vv. 25-26, which explicitly compare irregular genital-flow impurity with menstrual impurity).

41. Milgrom notes that two Hebrew manuscripts (and the LXX) have the reading 'her' (referring to the woman with the nonmenstrual flow of blood) rather than the MT reading 'them' (i.e. those things upon which the woman has sat) in specifying what one may not touch lest one enter into a state of impurity (*Leviticus 1–16*, p. 43).

than that stemming from two otherwise similar cases.<sup>42</sup> The LXX reading supports this understanding, as it states that no one should even touch a woman with a nonmenstrual vaginal flow of blood.<sup>43</sup>

This leads us to an analysis of the meaning of Mk 5.21-43. Robert Guelich has noted that the Greek expression describing the woman's condition in v. 29 corresponds to LXX Lev. 12.7 verbatim.<sup>44</sup> Leviticus 12.7 refers to the general flow of blood following childbirth rather than to the incessant flow described in Lev. 15.25-30, but the parallel terminology in Mk 5.29 and Lev. 12.7 strongly suggests that the Evangelist had in mind some vaginal flow of blood and the resulting impurity. This is further supported by the identical wording of Lev. 15.25 and Mk 5.25 (ρύσει αίματος),<sup>45</sup> which, in the former, explicitly refers to an incessant, nonmenstrual vaginal discharge of blood. One can safely conclude that the Evangelist at least intended the story to allude generally to the Levitical strictures concerning such flows of blood, and probably more specifically to those concerning the nonmenstrual types.<sup>46</sup>

42. To purify herself completely, the *zavah* must bring a sacrifice to the final purity rite (cf. Lev. 15.29-30). Like anyone else in a state of impurity, the *zavah* cannot come into contact with the temple or tabernacle or its cult. On the laws on the *zavah*, see Hannah Harrington, *The Purity Texts* (Companion to the Qumran Scrolls, 5; London: T. & T. Clark, 2004), pp. 98-99.

43. Cf. *m. Zab.* 5.6: 'If a man touched...a woman that had a flux...he conveys uncleanness at a first remove and at a second remove and renders [the heave-offering] invalid at a third remove. It is all one whether he touched, shifted, lifted, or was lifted' (translation from Herbert Danby, *The Mishnah* [London: Oxford University Press, 1933], p. 772).

44. Robert A. Guelich, *Mark 1-8:26* (Dallas: Word Books, 1989), p. 297. ἡ πηγή τοῦ αίματος αὐτῆς translates a technical expression used in the Mishnah. 'Fountain' refers to various sorts of flows, e.g. flux, semen, urine, spittle (including the phlegm of the lungs, throat and nose) or menstrual blood (Danby, *Mishnah*, p. 801 [items 3a, 3b]).

45. The two passages generally reflect each other: Lev. 15.25: καὶ γυνή, ἐὰν ῥέῃ ῥύσει αίματος ἡμέρας πλείους; Mk 5.25: καὶ γυνή οὖσα ἐν ῥύσει αίματος δώδεκα ἔτη (as noted in Rudolf Pesch, *Das Markusevangelium. I. Einleitung und Kommentar zu Kap. 1,1-8,26* [Freiburg: Herder, 1977], p. 301).

46. Milgrom cites Mk 5.25 as referring to what Lev. 15.25 mentions—a woman with vaginal flow of blood other than or lasting longer than her menstrual flow (*Leviticus 1-16*, p. 942). Martin Hengel and Rudolf Hengel note that twelve years of such a condition would be 'für eine Jüdin deshalb so schwerwiegend, weil sie in den Zustand ständiger kultischer Unreinheit versetzte, das Betreten des Heiligtums, die Teilnahme an religiösen Festen, z.B. am Passafest, unmöglich machte, ja überhaupt,

Mark's story becomes one concerning the impurity of a woman with a nonmenstrual genital discharge and Jesus' reaction to having been 'touched' by her:

And a large crowd followed him (i.e. Jesus) and pressed around him. And a woman being in (a condition of) a flow of blood for twelve years and having suffered much from (the treatment of) many doctors and having spent all of that (belonging to) her and in no way having been benefited but rather having come into a worse (condition), having heard concerning Jesus, having come in the crowd from behind, she touched his garment: for she said (to herself), namely, 'If I should just touch his garment, I will be saved/cured'.<sup>47</sup> And immediately, the spring/well of her blood (ἡ πηγὴ τοῦ αἵματος αὐτῆς) became dried, and she became aware in (her) body that she had been (completely) cured from the scourge. And immediately, Jesus, having perceived in himself the power from him having gone out,<sup>48</sup> having turned around in the crowd, said, 'Who touched my garments?' And the disciples said to him, 'You see the crowd pressing around you, and you say, "Who touched my (garments)?"' And he was looking around to see the one

ähnlich dem Aussatz, aus der menschlichen Gesellschaft ausschloß' ('Die Heilungen Jesu und medizinisches Denken', in Paul Christian and Dietrich Rössler [eds.], *Medicus Viator: Fragen und Gedanken am Wege Richard Siebecks: Eine Festgabe seiner Freunde und Schüler zum 75. Geburtstag* [Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1959], pp. 331-61 [338]).

47. Note the ambiguity in σωθήσομαι (a future passive), which can mean either 'save' or 'cure'. See below.

48. Walter Grundmann compares Jesus to other healers whose power was transferable (*Das Evangelium nach Markus* [THKNT, 2; Berlin: Evangelische Verlagsanstalt, 8th edn, 1980], p. 151). He does not mention the holy character of Jesus' power. William L. Lane notes that 'Power is a constitutive element in the biblical concept of the personal God. Jesus possesses the power of God as the representative of the Father' (*The Gospel according to Mark* [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1974], pp. 192-93). More to the point: Jesus possesses this power because of the extraordinary holiness that imbues him, endowed upon him by God at his baptism (cf. Mk 1.10-11). The active nature of this power is perhaps suggested by the expression τὴν ἐξ αὐτοῦ δύναμιν ἐξελοῦσαν. According to Taylor, *Mark*, p. 291, 'the Markan phrase ἐξ αὐτοῦ is adjectival, "the power from Him", and by this is meant the outgoing of a personal power which resides in Him and is available for healing'. If so, then the Markan use of ἐξ αὐτοῦ implies that power actively emanates from Jesus. This fits the biblical understanding of the holy power that emanates from God and would follow from Jesus' status as the holy one of God in Mk 1.24 and explain why impure spirits feel threatened by Jesus' presence. It also explains why touching Jesus' cloak (rather than Jesus himself) results in the woman's healing (but cf. v. 34, and the similar understanding of Jesus' outflowing in Lk. 6.19).

having done<sup>49</sup> this. Then, the woman, fearing and trembling, knowing what had happened to her, came and fell down before him and said to him the whole truth. He, however, said to her, ‘Daughter, your faith has saved/cured you<sup>50</sup>—go in peace and be in health from your scourge’ (Mk 5.24b-34).

Verse 28 says that the woman expected the mere touch of Jesus’ cloak to suffice for her healing.<sup>51</sup> The Evangelist (or the tradition) perhaps portrays the woman as attempting to meet the letter of the law, as a close reading of Lev. 15.27 might suggest that the category of physical contact between a woman in this impure state and a man would not include contact with the man’s cloak (assuming that the afflicted woman does not sit upon the cloak). The woman’s condition of impurity, however, fits the rabbinic category of a ‘father of impurity’, which means that her touch would make Jesus’ cloak impure and therefore unfit for a man to physically contact.<sup>52</sup> Whatever other narrative reasons there might be for the woman touching only Jesus’ cloak (and not Jesus himself), her action presupposes that a holy person’s healing power imbued that person’s clothing.<sup>53</sup>

49. τὴν... ποιήσασαν is an aorist feminine participle, perhaps implying that the Evangelist presents Jesus as knowing that a woman has touched him (but which alternatively might indicate the *Evangelist’s* knowledge of this fact).

50. Note the Greek σέσωκεν (a perfect form) and the ambiguity of ‘saved/cured’. See below.

51. As Pesch notes, the passage refers four times to the touching of Jesus’ cloak by the woman, emphatically calling attention to the act by which power flows over from Jesus to the woman (*Das Markusevangelium*, p. 303).

52. The woman’s status as a *zavah* means that she should keep outside of Jewish society altogether so as not to defile it (see Num. 5.1-4). Cf. 4Q274 1, I.5-6. David P. Wright holds that the touch of a *zavah* conveys impurity to an object but that this object does *not* in turn convey impurity to other persons (*The Disposal of Impurity: Elimination Rites in the Bible and in Hittite and Mesopotamian Literature* [SBLDS, 101; Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1987], pp. 193-95 [194; cf. p. 184]). Jesus’ holiness apparently imbues his cloak, the significance of which will become clear.

53. Cf. Pesch: ‘Die zugrunde liegende Vorstellung von der mit Kraft (δύναμις, vgl. V 30) geladenen Person ist in der Antike weit verbreitet; die heilende Kraft strömt durch Berührung auf den Kranken über. Auch Kleider, Schweißtücher (Apg 19,12) und selbst der Schatten (Apg 5,15) eines Wundertäters können mana-geladen sein’ (*Das Markusevangelium*, p. 302). On the concept of holiness within a history-of-religions framework, see Norman H. Snaith, *The Distinctive Ideas of the Old Testament* (London: Epworth, 1944). See also Geerhardus Vos, *Biblical Theology* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1948), pp. 265-68. The belief in the power of a holy person’s belongings also appears in the Hebrew Bible—cf. 2 Kgs 13.21, where the bones of

Before analyzing this passage in more detail, let us first consider another Markan passage that helps to connect the analysis of 5.24b-43 to the discussion of the holy and the impure:

And immediately, a man with an impure spirit was in their synagogue, and he/it cried out, saying, ‘What (is) to us and to you,<sup>54</sup> O Jesus the Nazarene? Did you come to (utterly) destroy us? (Or: You have come to destroy us!) I know who you are—the holy (one) of God [ὁ ἅγιος τοῦ θεοῦ]’. And Jesus subdued him, saying, ‘Be silent, and come out of him!’ And the impure spirit, convulsing him (i.e. the man) and uttering a loud cry, came out of him (Mk 1.23-26).

As in the understanding of Leviticus, this passage presents the holy and the impure as dynamic forces rather than static conditions, and the conflict inevitably resulting from their confrontation leads inexorably to the destruction of the impure by the holy—as the impure spirit itself recognizes and proclaims.<sup>55</sup>

This portrayal of a conflict between Jesus and an impure spirit marks Jesus as one whose degree of holiness approaches that characteristic of God’s own presence: Jesus is the ‘holy one of God’ (Mk 1.24; cf. Lk. 4.34; Jn 6.69).<sup>56</sup> Whether this conveys some recognized messianic title

Elisha raise a dead man (although such bones should also have conveyed impurity). Elisha himself seems to have received Elijah’s spiritual power by inheriting Elijah’s cloak—though the cloak may serve merely as a symbol of God-given authority (cf. 2 Kgs 2.1-15). Note that this cloak transmits spiritual power (2 Kgs 2.8, 14). See Graham H. Twelftree, *Jesus the Miracle Worker: A Historical and Theological Study* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1999), p. 317.

54. As Lane notes, the question τί ἡμῖν καὶ σοί (and variants) in the LXX ‘is a common formula in the Old Testament within contexts of combat or judgement’ (*Mark*, p. 73). See the LXX rendering of the following: Judg. 11.12; 2 Kgdms 16.10; 19.23; 3 Kgdms 17.18; 4 Kgdms 3.13; 2 Chron. 35.21. The plural ‘us’ used by the impure spirit in Mk 1.24 demonstrates not that several spirits possess the man, but that the conflict pits Jesus as the holy one of God against the entire realm of impure spirits (cf. Mk 5.9-13). Taylor notes the verbal similarities between Mk 1.24 and 1 Kgs (LXX 3 Kgdms) 17.18 (*Mark*, p. 174; cf. LXX 3 Kgs 17.18: Τί ἐμοὶ καὶ σοί, ἄνθρωπε τοῦ θεοῦ; εἰσηλθες πρὸς με τοῦ ἀναμνήσαι τὰς ἀδικίας μου καὶ θανατῶσαι τὸν υἱόν μου;). See Roger Remondón’s remarks on the difficulty of translating ὥτι αὐτῷ ἐστίν or τί ἡμῖν καὶ σοί (‘Les antisémites de Memphis [P. IFAO inv. 104=CPJ 141]’, *Chronique d’Egypte* 35.69 [1960], pp. 244-61 [256 n. 1]).

55. Dieter Lührmann, *Das Markusevangelium* (HNT, 3; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1987), p. 51 notes the emphasis here on the conflict between the holy and the impure.

56. The Hebrew Bible says little about the demonic. Jacob Milgrom suggests that in the priestly theodicy of the Israelites, humans had replaced demons as the

remains unclear, but it does emphasize Jesus' extraordinary holiness, and it comes very early in the Markan account, soon after John has baptized Jesus.<sup>57</sup> Note that Mk 1.8 has the Baptist announcing that 'the one to come'

source of impurity, in contrast to the religious thought of surrounding peoples, whose priests appealed to demons as the source of impurity (*Studies in Cultic Theology and Terminology* [SJLA, 36; Leiden: Brill, 1983], pp. 82-83). Jenson expresses skepticism about Milgrom's theory (*Graded Holiness*, p. 158), but recognizes that 'the demonic world occurs very rarely' in the Hebrew Bible (p. 74 n. 2). The New Testament presupposes the existence of demonic/impure spirits. Cf. Toombs, 'Clean and Unclean', p. 643: 'When a religion has developed to the point of possessing a pantheon of deities, uncleanness is defined in relation to the will of these supreme beings. The unclean is repulsive to or prohibited by the gods (Isa. 35:8; 52:1; Ezek. 39:24; Rev. 21:27), or belongs to the sphere of the demonic powers opposed to the gods (Zech. 13:2; Mark 1:23; Luke 4:33; Acts 5:16)'. Regarding Jesus' degree of holiness, Otto Procksch notes that the 'description of Jesus Christ as ἅγιος is rare' but 'it is ancient and full of content' ('ἅγιος κτλ.', *TDNT*, I, pp. 100-115 [101]). By this he means that the term ἅγιος belongs to the earliest strata of New Testament Christology. James D.G. Dunn writes, "'The Holy One of God" (1.24) is hardly a common title for Christ, so attribution to later Christian faith is less obvious. And conceivably the exorcistic power of one reputed to be a holy man might have occasioned such an address' (*Jesus Remembered* [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2003], p. 676).

57. The use of 'holy one of God' in the Fourth Gospel tends to support this: Jn 6.69 portrays Peter as confessing οὐ εἶ ὁ ἅγιος τοῦ θεοῦ. These words parallel the Markan phrase in Peter's confession of Jesus' messianic identity: οὐ εἶ ὁ χριστός (Mk 8.29; cf. Mt. 16.16; Lk. 9.20). As Erich Klostermann points out, the analogy to the impure spirit's words in Mk 5.7 (Ἰησοῦ υἱὲ τοῦ θεοῦ τοῦ ὑψίστου) shows that Mark intends ὁ ἅγιος τοῦ θεοῦ to designate the Messiah (*Das Markusevangelium* [HNT, 3; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1926], p. 20; so also John Painter, *Mark's Gospel: Worlds in Conflict* [London: Routledge, 1997], pp. 43-44). Joel Marcus connects the 'holy one of God' to the high christological title 'Son of God': 'In Mark 1:11, then, Jesus is the Son of God because he is granted substantial participation in God's holiness, God's effective opposition to the powers of evil (see 1:21-28, in which Jesus' exorcism of the demon is linked with the title "Holy One of God")' (*The Way of the Lord: Christological Exegesis of the Old Testament in the Gospel of Mark* [Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1992], p. 71). The title ὁ ἅγιος τοῦ θεοῦ appears unique to Jesus. A search of the *Thesaurus Linguae Graecae* (TLG), using the masculine singular ἅγιος with the article declined in all four cases (excluding the vocative), and θεοῦ both with and without τοῦ turned up no uses of this expression outside of Christian writings (which apply it to Jesus). One possible exception occurs, a grammatically possible reading of Dan. 9.20 that would understand τοῦ ὄρους τοῦ ἁγίου τοῦ θεοῦ as either 'the mountain of the sanctuary of God' or 'the mountain of the holy (one) of God' (see below). Although the vocative does not distinguish

will baptize with the Holy Spirit, and that 1.10 has Jesus perceiving the Spirit's descent upon him at the concluding moment of his baptism in the Jordan. These two verses single out Jesus as a holy one (by virtue of the Holy Spirit within him), and thus prepare the reader for the reference to Jesus' extraordinary holiness in Mk 1.24.<sup>58</sup> The expression ὁ ἅγιος τοῦ θεοῦ elevates Jesus as a unique figure whose holiness approaches that of God's presence. Consider the difference in significance of a similar expression ἅγιος τοῦ θεοῦ (i.e. 'a holy [one] of God'). In that case, Jesus would assimilate to various other holy ones, like Samson (e.g. LXX Judg. 16.17 B: ἅγιος θεοῦ).<sup>59</sup> The article thus elevates Jesus above various

between *a* holy one of God and *the* holy one of God, another search of the *TLG* database was conducted using the vocative ἅγιε (τοῦ) θεοῦ. No pre-Christian occurrences registered. The *Greek Apocalypse of Ezra*, however, uses ἅγιε τοῦ θεοῦ in 5.10 to refer to the prophet Ezra. (All *TLG* searches were conducted in 1999.)

58. Mark 3.19b-30 (esp. vv. 29-30) shows the seriousness with which Mark understands Jesus' holiness: those who call the (Holy) Spirit that imbues Jesus an impure spirit commit an unpardonable sin.

59. Horst Balz, 'ἅγιος κτλ.', *EDNT*, I, pp. 16-21 (17), notes that the LXX use of the expression ἅγιος τοῦ θεοῦ 'applies this epithet to a person only in Jdg 13:7; 16:17, to the Nazirite Samson', but he does not remark upon the lack of an article in the Septuagint. F. Mussner, 'Ein Wortspiel in Mark 1:24', *BZ* 4 (1960), pp. 285-86 suggests that a wordplay is being made here based upon Judg. 13.7 (or 16.17, for that matter). He argues that one should understand 'Jesus of Nazareth...God's Holy One' as a collective echo of נזיר אלהים נזיר (ναζιραῖον θεοῦ in LXX ver. A, together with ἅγιον θεοῦ in LXX ver. B), 'so that there is a combination of both LXX texts', thereby making a 'play on words in Iēsou Nazarēne (Hebrew *Yeshûa' hanna-sîi*)', such that "'Holy One of God" would...be an interpretation of Jesus' place-name as well as a revelation of his true nature'. This interesting suggestion bears consideration, but one should note that the 'holiness' of the Nazirites primarily meant separation, purity and belonging to God rather than being filled with God's holy power. Indeed, God's Spirit only intermittently comes upon the Nazirite Samson (cf. Judg. 14.6, 19; 15.14) during his years as a Nazirite (which also fits the biblical paradigm of the prophet as charismatic figure—see the next footnote). Cf. the references to holy individuals in Num. 16.5-7; Judg. 13.7; 16.17; 2 Kgs 4.9; Sir. 45.6; Bar. 4.22, 37 (God as 'the holy one'); 5.2, 5 (God as 'the holy one'). The expression 'the holy one of Israel' (referring to God) occurs many times (see Isa. 1.4; 5.19, 24; 10.20; 12.6; 17.7, 8; 30.12, 15; 31.1; 37.23 [cf. 40.25]; 41.20; 43.3, 14 [cf. v. 16]; 45.11; 47.4; 48.17; 49.7; 55.5; 60.9, 14; LXX Jer. 2:2 [cf. LXX Jer. 27.29]; Jer. 28:5 [= LXX Jer. 51.5]). Note Dan. 4.13 (cf. 4.17, 23; 8.13; *1 En.* 12.2; *Jub.* 4.15), which refers to a 'watcher', a 'holy one' who comes down from heaven to announce God's judgment upon Nebuchadnezzar. (This verse is found in the Theodotonic version of the Greek Old Testament in 4.10 [cf. 4.20; 8.13].) 'Holy ones' is also a prominent expression

holy men.<sup>60</sup> As for Jesus' subordination to God, consider a contrasting construction: ὁ ἅγιος (the holy [one]). This might assimilate Jesus to God more completely (e.g. Bar. 4.22: τοῦ ἁγίου).<sup>61</sup> Despite Jesus' subordination to God, his work in exorcising impure spirits qualifies him as one capable of filling a role prophetically specified as belonging to the Lord. The question remains as to the proximity of the relationship that the Evangelist considers Jesus to have to God.

ὁ ἅγιος τοῦ θεοῦ is very close to an expression used of Aaron in LXX Ps. 105.16: Ἀαρὼν τὸν ἅγιον κυρίου<sup>62</sup> ('Aaron, the holy [one] of [the] Lord'). Aside from a passage occurring only in the Septuagint version of Daniel,<sup>63</sup> an expression using the article to designate a human being as

(for angels and/or covenanters) found at Qumran. See John J. Collins, 'In the Likeness of the Holy Ones: The Creation of Humankind in a Wisdom Text from Qumran', in Donald W. Parry and Eugene C. Ulrich (eds.), *The Provo International Conference on the Dead Sea Scrolls: Technological Innovations, New Texts, and Reformulated Issues* (STDJ, 30; Leiden: Brill, 1999), pp. 609-18.

60. Jesus is presented here as qualitatively different from these other 'charismatics', as the use of the article ('the holy one of God') shows. The motif of the *fear* that Jesus inspires by virtue of his holy power also goes beyond the reactions inspired by the prophets, and this also distinguishes the Markan Jesus from these other charismatic leaders. Moreover, although the Bible does present the prophets as those on whom the Spirit of YHWH had come, it generally portrays the Spirit coming and going at will rather than abiding (cf. 1 Sam. 10.6, 10, 13; 11.6). But cf. 2 Kgs 2.1-15; 13.21, which treat Elijah and Elisha as prophets upon whom the power of the Spirit appears to abide. But note also that nowhere does Scripture refer to either of them as 'the holy one of God'. Cf. a similar distinction in Matthew between 'a son of David' (1.20) and 'the son of David' (12.23; 21.9; 22.42).

61. Note that Daniel is called 'the holy (one)' in *Vitae Prophetarum* 4.18, 23 (cf. Anna Maria Schwemer, *Studien zu den frühjüdischen Prophetenlegenden: Vitae Prophetarum. I. Die Viten der großen Propheten Jesaja, Jeremia, Ezechiel und Daniel* [TSAJ, 49; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1995], p. 298), but the Greek reads ὅσιος, which avoids a parallel of Daniel to God as 'the holy (one)'. Note that Rev. 3.8 and 6.10 use the article with ἅγιος in a way that *does* tend to conflate Jesus with God—something typical of Revelation throughout.

62. Cf. the Hebrew (Ps. 106.16): לְאַהֲרֹן קִדְּוֶה יְהוָה (which could read either 'for Aaron, the holy one of God' or 'for Aaron, a holy one of God'). The early Christian use of Ps. 16.10 (cf. 'your holy one') would also have suggested the use of the article before 'holy one'.

63. LXX Dan. 3.35 (in a prayer to κύριε ὁ θεός [3.26]) calls Israel 'your holy one' (Ἰσραηλ τὸν ἅγιόν σου) in a sequence referring to Abraham as 'your beloved' and Isaac as 'your slave/servant'. 'Israel' here must refer to Jacob but probably also entails a reference to the people of Israel as a 'holy nation'. Indeed, the concept of

‘the holy one’ occurs nowhere else in the Septuagint.<sup>64</sup> Thus, the parallel of Mk 1.24 to LXX Ps. 105.16 would set Jesus up as at least as holy as Aaron.<sup>65</sup> The expressions, however, are not perfectly parallel (i.e. θεοῦ versus κυρίου), and although it might be interesting to consider whether or not Mk 1.24 makes an obscure allusion to the figure of the priestly messiah described in some of the Qumran writings, little else in Mark’s Gospel lends support to this hypothesis.<sup>66</sup> Moreover, the context of the

Israel as a *holy* nation probably influenced this verse. Holiness in this sense would therefore convey the meaning of being separate, pure and belonging to God rather than the meaning of having an indwelling holy power. Moreover, the expression τὸν ἅγιόν σου does not precisely parallel the Markan ὁ ἅγιος τοῦ θεοῦ.

64. But cf. LXX 4 Kgdms 4.9, which has a woman refer to Elisha as ‘a holy man of God’ (ἄνθρωπος τοῦ θεοῦ ἅγιος). But note the lack of an article and the emphasis upon Elisha’s humanness. Taylor sees the expression used of Elisha and the one used of Aaron as counterparts to the expression ὁ ἅγιος τοῦ θεοῦ used of Jesus, and notes other parallels, concluding that the term expresses ‘a sense of the presence of a supernatural person’ (*Mark*, p. 174). Note also Otto Bauernfeind’s argument that the formula ὁ ἅγιος τοῦ θεοῦ derives from a parallel formula in LXX 3 Kgdms 17.18, ἄνθρωπε τοῦ θεοῦ; (*Die Worte der Dämonen im Markusevangelium* [Beiträge zur Wissenschaft vom Alten und Neuen Testament, 3.8; Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 1927], pp. 3-4). (The argument for this lies in the larger parallel of Mk 1.24 [τί ἡμῖν καὶ σοί...ὁ ἅγιος τοῦ θεοῦ] to LXX 3 Kgdms 17.18 [τί ἐμοὶ καὶ σοί, ἄνθρωπε τοῦ θεοῦ]).) But the expression ἄνθρωπε τοῦ θεοῦ lacks both an article and any reference to holiness. It therefore cannot clarify the Markan expression ὁ ἅγιος τοῦ θεοῦ other than by an implicit contrast between the status of Elijah and that of Jesus.

65. Note that the reference to Aaron as ‘the holy one of the LORD’ occurs in the account of the rebellion against Moses and Aaron. Numbers 16.3 represents the rebels as complaining that Moses and Aaron have exalted themselves above the rest of the people. The rebels assert that the entire assembly is holy (LXX: ἅγιοι). In 16.7, Moses counters that the one the LORD chooses ‘is a holy one’ (LXX: οὗτος ἅγιος). As Gammie writes, ‘for the pentateuchal, priestly writers, the most holy of human beings is Aaron and, next to him, his sons’ (*Holiness*, pp. 34-35). Cf. the expression ἅγια ἁγίων/ם׳שׁדק שׁדק in 1 Chron. 23.13, which older exegetes often saw as referring to Aaron as ‘a most holy one’ (e.g. Edward L. Curtis and Albert A. Madsen, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Books of Chronicles* [Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1910], p. 265; James A. Montgomery, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Book of Daniel* [Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1927], p. 375), but this interpretation does not find much support today (see John E. Goldingay, *Daniel* [WBC, 3; Dallas: Word Books, 1989], p. 229; Louis F. Hartman and Alexander A. Di Lella, *The Book of Daniel: A New Translation with Notes and Commentary* [AB, 23; New York: Doubleday, 1978], p. 244).

66. Although ‘holy one of God’ is different from Aaron’s title as ‘holy one of the LORD’, it is near enough that we should not too quickly dismiss the possibility of a

Markan title ὁ ἅγιος τοῦ θεοῦ makes clear that Jesus' status exceeds that of the high priest of the Levitical priesthood. Jesus' holiness imbues him; the holiness of the high priest seems more of an ascribed holiness.<sup>67</sup> Jesus' mere presence disturbs impure spirits. He does not become impure by approaching impure things, whereas the high priest does become impure and require purification before entering the innermost part of the sanctuary. Indeed, the dynamism of Jesus' holiness is a closer parallel to the dynamism of the holiness present in the inner sanctuary that the high priest enters on the Day of Atonement than the holiness of the high priest himself.<sup>68</sup> Consistent with this, the Markan expression ὁ ἅγιος τοῦ θεοῦ

connection. Given the widespread expectation of a priestly messiah, it is not unlikely that notions connected with such a scheme were present in Christian messianic speculation, especially at the earlier stages. (See Crispin H.T. Fletcher-Louis, 'Jesus as the High Priestly Messiah (Part 1)', *Journal for the Study of the Historical Jesus* 4 [2006], pp. 155-75; Fletcher-Louis, 'Jesus as the High Priestly Messiah (Part 2)', *Journal for the Study of the Historical Jesus* 5 [2007], pp. 57-79.) In Mk 5.24b-34, however, 'holy one of Israel' does not function merely as an unreflected-upon title, but rather seems to be unpacked into the notion of a singularly holy representative of God, in the sense of owning 'holiness' as a force antagonistic to unclean spirits.

67. In Mk 1.10, the (Holy) Spirit descends upon Jesus at his baptism. Note also the parallel to Mk 1.24 in 3.11, in which the impure spirits fall down before Jesus and call him ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ θεοῦ. In LXX Exod. 28.36-38, Aaron wears a turban with a plate of gold on which is engraved 'Holy to the LORD' ('Αγίασμα κυρίου). Like all high priests, Aaron must undergo rigorous purification before approaching the ark in the sanctuary (τὸ ἅγιον; cf. Lev. 16.1-15). Gammie notes, 'Despite the high standing of Aaron and his sons, their holiness is derivative and must be understood as subservient to the divine holiness' (*Holiness*, p. 36). Aaron's holiness, therefore, more likely means being separate, pure and belonging to God, and not being imbued with an indwelling holy power. Jenson, however, seems to suggest that God's holy power imbues the Aaronic priests when Moses anoints Aaron and his sons with oil (*Graded Holiness*, p. 48, cf. p. 119). He cites Exod. 40.9-11, 12-15, but these verses say nothing of their 'infilling by the glory of God'. Exodus 40.34-35 mentions only that the glory of the LORD fills the tabernacle—it says nothing of this glory filling the priests.

68. See N.T. Wright, *Jesus and the Victory of God* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1996), pp. 406-407; Milgrom, *Leviticus 1-16*, p. 1011. Milgrom has argued that the fact that the sanctuary 'can be defiled' obviates the parallelism that we draw between the dynamism of Jesus' holiness and the dynamism of the holiness of the inner sanctuary (private communication). But our point is that both Jesus and the inner sanctuary are possessed by the dynamic force of holiness, for great power flows from both of them—unlike the holiness of the priest, which, being an ascribed holiness, is achieved by purification and separation. We will also make two points

is a close parallel to the expression found in LXX Lev. 21.23 that refers to the tabernacle as the sanctuary of God, τὸ ἅγιον τοῦ θεοῦ (αὐτοῦ).<sup>69</sup> This expression is a closer parallel than the one found in Ps. 105.16 that refers to Aaron as the holy (one) of (the) Lord (Ἀαρων τὸν ἅγιον κυρίου).

The parallel goes beyond the merely verbal. With respect to this understanding of Jesus as symbolically identical to the holy presence in the innermost sanctuary, compare Mk 14.58 and 15.29, both of which refer to Jesus' putative threat to destroy the temple and build another in three days. Mark 14.58, which emphasizes the building of another temple not made with human hands, and 15.29, which immediately precedes the dramatic irony of the words 'save yourself' (v. 30), seem to allude to the temple of Jesus' resurrected body (see Mk 8.31; 10.34, which present Jesus as predicting his death and subsequent resurrection).<sup>70</sup> See also Mk

(below) about nonparallelism, namely that Mark portrays Jesus as being possessed by *inexhaustible* holiness (in contrast to the finite holiness of the inner sanctum) and is therefore incapable of being defiled, *and* that the holiness emanating from Jesus (in contrast to that emanating from the ark of the covenant) does not destroy the carrier of impurity along with the impurity itself, but rather leaves the carrier unharmed while completely purging the impurity.

69. The Hebrew (מִקְדָּשׁ) of Lev. 21.23 differs from the Greek, but both LXX and MT forbid any priest with a physical defect from approaching the sanctuary. Cf. Lev. 21.12, which has 'the sanctuary of his God' (MT: מִקְדָּשׁ אֱלֹהֵי; LXX: τὸ ἡγιασμένον τοῦ θεοῦ αὐτοῦ). Several passages speak of the sanctuary (in these instances, the temple) using a genitive construction: Ps. 60.8 (= LXX 59.8) and 108.8 (= LXX 107.8) 'his sanctuary' (LXX: τῷ ἁγίῳ αὐτοῦ; MT: בְּמִקְדָּשׁוֹ). A number of passages use a genitive construction to refer to the LORD's sanctuary (here again, the temple): LXX Ps. 101.20 refers to 'his sanctuary' (LXX: ἁγίου αὐτοῦ; cf. MT [102.20]: מִמְּרוֹם קְדָשׁוֹ). MT Isa. 60.13 refers to 'the place of my sanctuary' (מִקְדָּשׁוֹ), while the Septuagint renders this as 'my holy place' (τὸν τόπον τὸν ἅγιόν μου). MT Isa. 62.9 speaks of 'the courts of my sanctuary' (בְּחִצְרוֹת קְדָשׁוֹ), while the Septuagint renders this as 'my holy courts' (ταῖς ἐπαύλεσιν ταῖς ἁγίαις μου). MT Isa. 63.18 refers to 'your sanctuary' (קְדָשׁוֹ), while the Septuagint has 'your holy mountain' (τοῦ ὄρους τοῦ ἁγίου σου); LXX Jer. 32.30 refers to 'his sanctuary' (τοῦ ἁγίου αὐτοῦ). Note also 1 Esd. 1.3, which speaks 'of the holy ark of the LORD' (LXX: τῆς ἁγίας κιβωτοῦ τοῦ κυρίου). LXX Ps. 14.1 (= MT 14.1) and LXX Ezek. 48.10 do not reflect this wording.

70. Cf. also Jn 2.18-22, which makes the parallel between Jesus and the temple explicit (cf. also Mt. 26.61). For more on Jesus as temple in John's Gospel, see Anthony T. Hanson, *The New Testament Interpretation of Scripture* (London: SPCK, 1980), pp. 110-21; Mark Kinzer, 'Temple Christology in the Gospel of John', in *Society of Biblical Literature 1998 Seminar Papers* (SBLSP, 37; Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1998),

15.37-38, where Jesus' loud cry and last breath occur simultaneously with the rending of the temple curtain. Traditional interpretation, following Heb. 10.19-20, has often understood the symbolism of this curtain rending as meaning that Jesus' death has provided unhindered access to God. This may constitute a further layer of meaning, but the more immediate significance of this simultaneity of Jesus' death with the rending of the temple curtain<sup>71</sup> implies the identifying of Jesus with the temple in the sense that the power of the divine presence imbues both and simultaneously exits both.<sup>72</sup>

pp. 447-64; Stephen Um, *The Theme of Temple Christology in John's Gospel* (LNTS, 312; London: T. & T. Clark, 2006). On Jesus as 'temple' in early Christian thought, see N.T. Wright, *The New Testament and the People of God* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1992), p. 366; Wright, *Jesus*, pp. 426, 523; and Gottlob Schrenk, 'ἱερός κτλ.', *TDNT*, III, pp. 221-93 (244-45).

71. Note that for the purposes of this interpretation, it does not matter which curtain of the temple Mk 15.38 intends. Whether the verse refers to the outer curtain separating the forecourt from the sanctuary (cf. Exod. 26.37; 38.18; Num. 3.26; *Ep. Arist.* 86) or to the inner curtain separating the sanctuary from the holy of holies (cf. Exod. 26.31-35; 27.21; 30.6; Lev. 16.2, 12-15, 21, 23; 24.3; 2 Chron. 3.19; *m. Yom.* 5.1; see Lane, *Mark*, p. 574), this 'destruction' of the temple occurs simultaneously with Jesus' death and thus serves to demonstrate the symbolic identity of both the temple and Jesus as sites of God's holiness. Michael Newton argues for Paul's identification of Jesus with the covering of the ark (*The Concept of Purity at Qumran and in the Letters of Paul* [SNTSMS, 53; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985], pp. 75-77). On the biblical background to the idea of the divine presence in the temple and its significance for the early Christian understanding of Jesus as the temple, see R.E. Clements, *God and Temple: The Idea of the Divine Presence in Ancient Israel* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1965), pp. 138-39.

72. Luke Timothy Johnson, *Writings of the New Testament* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, rev. edn, 1999), p. 176, combines the traditional interpretation of the torn curtain as signifying unhindered access to God with a symbolic identity of Jesus and the temple: '[W]hen Jesus dies on the cross, "the curtain of the temple was torn in two, from top to bottom" (15:38). Mark thereby signals that the old separation between insider and outsider, between sacred and profane, is gone. Jesus is the place of the mystery where the holy is revealed.' On the Messiah as symbolically identical with the sanctuary, see the clause in Dan. 9.24 that is at times understood messianically, and which refers to God's intention 'to anoint a holy of holies' (MT: וְלִמְשַׁח קֹדֶשׁ קְדוֹשִׁים; θ': χρισται ἁγίου ἁγίωσ; LXX: εὐφρᾶναι ἁγίου ἁγίωσ). An 'anointed one' appears in Dan. 9.25 (MT: מְשִׁיחַ; θ': χριστου) and 9.26 (MT: מְשִׁיחַ; LXX: χριστου). On this basis, perhaps, some Jewish exegetes have explained וְלִמְשַׁח קֹדֶשׁ קְדוֹשִׁים in Dan. 9.24 as meaning 'to anoint a most holy one'. Montgomery, *Daniel*, p. 376, cites Jewish commentators (cf. Aquila, *ad loc.*; *Ber. R.* 14.18) who understood

None of this should be taken to say that the Aaronic association explains everything that ‘the holy one’ conveys as a christological title. The connections between Jesus’ holiness and his healing power traced above are equally evident when one comes at the term ‘holy one’ from the standpoint of a christological application of Ps. 16.10 (‘You will not allow your holy one to see corruption’): Jesus’ body, so the Psalm (read christologically) promised, would not ‘see decay’, and this promise was somehow connected to his being ‘the holy one’. The verse seems to imply the same sort of antagonistic relationship between holiness and impurity that we saw in the Aaronic connection. Psalm 16, in all probability, played a more significant role in christological speculation than the New Testament evidence might suggest. (In addition to Acts 2.27 and 1 Cor. 15.4, there is a possible allusion to Ps. 16.10 in Acts 13.33-34 [cf. v. 37], which, if so, provides a nexus between the notions of ‘holy one’ and ‘son’.) In fact, the antagonism between Jesus’ holiness and the threat of death probably worked to some degree as a primary explanation for what happened at the resurrection. Such an explanation, of course, easily accounts for references to the resurrection as a vindication of God’s pronouncement of Jesus’ identity.

As with the holy power present in the inner sanctuary, the holy power present in Jesus exerts destructive force.<sup>73</sup> The impure spirit’s own words

this clause in Dan. 9.24 as meaning ‘anoint a most holy one’ and referred it to the Messiah. Mark 13.14 seems to allude to Dan. 9.27, which would indicate that early Christian exegesis focused upon this passage (i.e. Dan. 9.20-27). Since one can read  $\chi\rho\iota\sigma\alpha\iota \acute{\alpha}\gamma\iota\omicron\nu\varsigma \acute{\alpha}\gamma\iota\omega\nu$  as meaning either ‘to anoint a most holy one’ or ‘to anoint a holy of holies’, these words might well have given rise to the Markan identification of Jesus with the temple (as well as to the Markan use of  $\acute{\omicron} \acute{\alpha}\gamma\iota\omicron\varsigma \tau\omicron\upsilon \theta\epsilon\omicron\upsilon$  to describe Jesus). Such an identification might have gained further impetus from Dan. 9.20 (LXX,  $\theta'$ ), which has  $\tau\omicron\upsilon \acute{\omicron}\rho\omicron\upsilon\varsigma \tau\omicron\upsilon \acute{\alpha}\gamma\iota\omicron\upsilon \tau\omicron\upsilon \theta\epsilon\omicron\upsilon$  (cf. MT:  $\text{הַר־קֹדֶשׁ אֱלֹהֵי}$ ). Although the phrase means ‘the holy mountain of God’ (i.e. Jerusalem), one could also read it as meaning either ‘the mountain of the sanctuary of God’ or ‘the mountain of the holy (one) of God’. (The syntax allows this and the neuter and masculine of ‘sanctuary/holy’ have the same form in the genitive singular.) Whatever the influence of Dan. 9.20-27 on the Christology of the early church, Mark’s Gospel does characterize Jesus as the holy one of God and symbolically identifies him with the temple.

73. Christian Grappe, ‘Jesus et l’impureté’, *RHPR* 84 (2004), pp. 393-417 (394), writes, ‘Avec Jésus, ce n’est plus l’impureté qui est contagieuse et se propage: c’est la pureté/sainteté!’ Technically, Grappe errs somewhat in that purity is an absence and thus cannot be contagious, but his basic point holds, as holiness is contagious. James D.G. Dunn writes, ‘[W]e should perhaps give weight to Chilton’s suggestion

imply this: ‘Did you come to destroy us?’ C.S. Mann finds in this cry ‘the language of terror’ recognizing that God’s presence ‘can destroy the dominion of evil’.<sup>74</sup> Guelich infers from the demon’s reaction at the moment of its exorcism that Jesus destroys this particular demon: its ‘crying “with a loud voice” (φωνῆσαν φωνῆ μεγάλη), a death wail, signals the fact of the spirit having been vanquished’.<sup>75</sup> Whether that is the case is open to debate (cf. Mk 5.10), but the demon’s words attest to Jesus’ power to destroy impurity, and this destructive power in Jesus recalls the similarly destructive power manifested by the holy presence in the inner sanctuary.

There is a significant distinction, however, between the consequences of contact between the holy and the impure in the inner sanctuary and the consequences here. In Mk 1.23-26, the human carrier of the impurity does not die, but rather undergoes purification by the holy. Yet an interesting similarity remains in the encounter here between the holiness inherent in Jesus and the impurity inherent in those possessed by impure spirits: intention on the part of an impure one apparently makes no difference.<sup>76</sup> Mark 1.23-26 does not explicitly state that the possessed man sought out Jesus for cleansing from the impure spirit.<sup>77</sup>

The woman with the nonmenstrual flow of blood, however, *does* seek out Jesus. Therefore, intention plays a role in her case, but what sort of role? She approaches Jesus expecting to be healed merely from touching his garment.<sup>78</sup> (Mark 6.56 describes many as seeking out Jesus in order to

that what is in view in this episode [= Mk 1.40-44] is not Jesus’ attitude to the rules regarding impurity so much as the power of Jesus’ own purity. In this case Jesus countered the contagion of *impurity* with the contagion of *purity*. Holiness for Jesus, we might say, was not a negative, defiling force, but a positive, healing force’ (‘Jesus and Purity: An Ongoing Debate’, *NTS* 48 [2002], pp. 449-67 [461]). We would again point out that this conflates purity and holiness, wrongly assuming that purity can be contagious.

74. C.S. Mann, *Mark: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary* (AB, 27; New York: Doubleday, 1986), pp. 212-13.

75. Guelich, *Mark*, p. 58.

76. See above on the death of the man who reached out to steady the ark (2 Sam. 6).

77. But cf. Mk 5.13, where the possessed man (or the possessing demon?) comes forward to worship Jesus.

78. A question arises: does a healing constitute purification? In 2 Chron. 30.20, YHWH ‘heals’ (יָרַם/ἰάσατο) people in a context (vv. 15-20) that suggests they are being rescued from a state of impurity (cf. v. 17 [לֹא טָהוֹר קִדְשִׁים] and v. 18 [הַטְהָרוּ לֹא/οὐχ ἡγνίσθησαν]). Note as well that 2 Kings 5 presents the healing (vv.

touch the edge [κρασπέδου] of his garment and be cured [ἔσωζοντο].) The woman's healing is effected as power goes out of Jesus and enters her. Jesus perceives that power has gone out of him, yet the text presents him as not knowing why it has gone out of him and who the recipient of the power might be.<sup>79</sup> The healing of the *zavah* thus occurs without Jesus having consciously willed it. This healing thus presents an interesting contrast to the exorcising of the impure spirit in Mk 1.23-26, in which the possessed man did not seek purification, but Jesus willed it. Here, the impure woman seeks healing, and Jesus, without consciously willing it, provides it. Yet both cases bear an intriguing similarity: the healing does not depend upon the mutual consent of healer and healed. In the woman's case, the healing even appears to occur automatically.<sup>80</sup>

3, 6, 7 and 11, נָסַח/ἀποσυνάγω) of Naaman's leprosy as a purification (vv. 10, 12, 13, and 14, נָסַח/καθαρίζω) effected by his dipping seven times in the Jordan (cf. 31-32; pp. 261-62). Moreover, Lev. 15.25-30, which specifies the regulations concerning a woman suffering from an irregular genital flow, implies three stages of purification, one being equivalent to a healing. Therefore, a healing of a woman with an irregular genital flow would constitute at least one stage of purification. For some other sorts of healings, however, it does not seem to be the case that a healing constitutes a purification. Leviticus 14.1-32 describes the purifying rituals for lepers who have been healed, never implying that the leper is in any way cleansed of impurity prior to these rituals. Indeed, it strongly suggests the opposite (cf. Lev. 14.7-9, 14, 17-20, 25, 28-29, 31). Mark 1.40-44, by contrast, portrays Jesus as healing leprosy by *purifying* a leper. The qualifying remark (εἰς μαρτύριον αὐτοῖς) should not be taken as implying a two-stage process of purification, for Mark portrays Jesus as having the power and authority to bypass the Mosaic law's requirements. One sees this in Jesus' healing of a paralytic (2.1-12), which immediately follows his purification of the leper, since Jesus forgives the paralytic's sins directly. Mark's Gospel, therefore, presents Jesus as having respect for the Mosaic law even while reserving for himself the authority and power to annul it. In fact, Mark's description of Jesus' method for purifying the leper in Mk 1.40-44 demonstrates that Jesus need not follow the precepts of the Mosaic law. Verse 41 states that Jesus reached out and *touch*ed the man to effect purification despite the clear implication in Lev. 13.45-46 that lepers, by living separated from Israelite society, were to remain physically untouched (and, evidently, unapproached) by other Israelites.

79. Mark 5.30 does not state that Jesus experienced a *loss* of power. Rather, it states that he felt power go out of him. This would only constitute a loss if Jesus were possessed of a finite amount of holiness, but the text presents Jesus as possessed of an inexhaustible amount of holiness (see below).

80. This suggests a type of 'contagious' holiness. Concerning similar transfers of *mana*-power, Anthony F.C. Wallace notes that 'the transfer of power proceeds automatically, as if mere contact permitted its flow; the source, furthermore, is

From the standpoint of the woman's action, however, the healing is perhaps not *entirely* automatic.<sup>81</sup> Her intention, after all, counts. Jesus' parting words to the woman may imply that her attitude plays a role: 'Daughter, your faith has saved (σέσωκεν) you—go in peace (ὑπάγε εἰς εἰρήνην) and be in health (ἴσθι ὑγιῆς) from your scourge' (Mk 5.34). Although σώζω can mean 'cure' (cf. v. 28), the wording in v. 34 might indicate that whereas the healing of the *zavah* occurred automatically (cf. ἴαται in v. 29), her faith (πίστις) saved her in a more profound sense. The phrase ὑπάγε εἰς εἰρήνην ('go in peace') may also suggest this, for its New Testament usage can signify salvation.<sup>82</sup> The use of πίστιν in Mk 2.5 supports this suggestion, for this verse emphasizes the concept of faith in Jesus the healer in order to connect Jesus' healing power with his power to forgive the sins of the one being healed, a connection that posits a causal link between sin and infirmity (cf. Jn 9.1-3). Jesus not only removes the effect (infirmity), but he also removes the cause (sin).<sup>83</sup> Thus, Mark's Gospel represents people's belief in Jesus' power to heal as faith in Jesus' authority to forgive sins (cf. Mk 2.1-12), thereby underlining his status as a uniquely holy one.<sup>84</sup> D.L. Tiede notes that while 'faith' in Mk 5.34 (or 4.40) 'is not connected with any of Jesus' edifying teachings or with the significance of his passion, the christological value of these [miraculous] performances must not be underrated since they evoke the numinous religious response of awe and wonder (cf. Mk 4.41; 5.20, 42;

usually considered to be inexhaustible' (*Religion: An Anthropological View* [New York: Random House, 1966], p. 61).

81. Lane points out that 'not every contact with the person of Jesus resulted in a transmission of power' (*Mark*, p. 193).

82. Cf. Eduard Schweizer, *The Good News according to Mark* (Richmond, VA: John Knox Press, 1970), p. 118; Lane, *Mark*, p. 194.

83. Note also the use of μάστιξ ('scourge'), which Mary E. Mills notes is 'exactly the term used for the effect of demons on human beings in the language of our period' (*Human Agents of Cosmic Power in Hellenistic Judaism and the Synoptic Tradition* [JSNTSup, 41; Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1990], p. 102).

84. On the close relationship of healers to God in first-century Judaism, see David Flusser, *Jesus* (Jerusalem: Magnes Press, 1997), pp. 113-14. Flusser places Jesus in the category of the 'charismatic holy man'. Such holy men, Flusser claims, stood in tension with the Pharisaic establishment, considered themselves divinely elected and felt themselves to have an especially intimate status of sonship to God as father (p. 117). Flusser notes that the Synoptic presentation of Jesus shows him as having an even higher self-awareness of his intimate connection to God than other charismatic holy men appear to have had (p. 118). Flusser's views cohere with our conclusions about the Markan Jesus.

6.51; 7.37)'.<sup>85</sup> In other words, those confronted by Jesus' miracles react like those in the presence of the holy.

Certain details in the story of the *zavah's* healing fit this pattern of human encounters with the holy. Not only did power go out of Jesus, but the healing resulted in fear:<sup>86</sup> 'Then, the woman, fearing and trembling, knowing what had happened to her, came and fell down before him' (Mk 5.33). Recalling that holiness inspires fear, it is worth noting that the healed woman came to Jesus 'fearing and trembling' (φοβηθεῖσα καὶ τρέμουσα).<sup>87</sup> This expression seems to indicate great fear, for the

85. David Lenz Tiede, *The Charismatic Figure as Miracle Worker* (SBLDS, 1; Missoula: SBL, 1972), p. 268. Cf. Twelftree, *Jesus the Miracle Worker*, p. 101; C. Clifton Black, review of *The Motif of Wonder in the Gospel of Mark* (JSNTSup, 128; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1996), by Timothy Dwyer, in *JBL* 118 (1999), pp. 752-55.

86. Cf. Horst Balz: 'The widespread motif of fear at God's epiphany...plays a special role in the New Testament in accounts of the deeds and destiny of Jesus. The related statements occur chiefly in Mark (8 times), Luke (10 times with echoes in Ac. 2:43; 5:5, 11; 19:17) and Matthew (6 times). There is also one each in John's Gospel and Revelation' ('φοβέω κτλ.', *TDNT*, IX, pp. 205-19 [209]). It would appear that Mark places special emphasis upon such fear (cf. Maksimilijan Matjaz, *Furcht und Gotteserfahrung: Die Bedeutung des Furchtmotivs für die Christologie des Markus* [Würzburg: Echter Verlag, 1999]). Note that the narrative of the two miracles preceding the healing of the *zavah* emphasizes the fear of those who witness Jesus' great power (Mk 4.41; 5.15).

87. Cf. Mk 1.27. Twelftree interprets ἐθαμβήθησαν to express not just the crowd's amazement, but even its *fear* (*Jesus the Miracle Worker*, p. 286). See James D.G. Dunn, *Jesus and the Spirit* (London: SCM Press, 1975), pp. 76-77. Gerd Theissen sees the Gospels' miracle stories as having a specific intention: 'primitive Christian miracle stories...testify to the action of a divine figure, of "the Holy One of God" (Mk 1.24), who can transform disease and distress' (*The Miracle Stories of the Early Christian Tradition* [Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1983], p. 33). Following Otto's analysis, Theissen describes five characteristics of the experience of the holy, the fifth being the ambivalent emotion of fascination mixed with fear (pp. 35-40). Mann attributes the woman's fear to her knowledge of having been healed, but offers the possibility that it may have increased through knowing that she had rendered Jesus ritually impure (*Mark*, p. 286). It seems unlikely that Mark intends to suggest that the woman feared because of the healing itself, for she had expected a healing (v. 28). Rather, her fear stems from the force of her encounter with the power of Jesus' holiness, which so overwhelmed her impurity that she felt its effect in her body (v. 29). As for Mann's suggestion about the woman's fear being increased from her (supposedly) having rendered Jesus ritually impure, it might be noted that holiness alone inspires fear, and Guelich notes that 'in view of the similar responses

woman falls down (προσέπεσεν) before Jesus (Mk 5.33), placing herself at his mercy.<sup>88</sup> Note that the Evangelist states that the impure spirits (who fear Jesus' ability to destroy them [cf. Mk 1.24]) repeatedly fall down at Jesus' feet, for Mk 3.11 says, 'And whenever the unclean spirits beheld him, they fell down before him (προσέπιπτον) and cried out "You are the Son of God"''.<sup>89</sup>

Why should the woman have such great fear—so great that her response parallels that of the demons? The construction of v. 33 suggests the reason: 'Then, the woman, fearing and trembling, knowing what had

in 4:41 and 5:15 to the miraculous deed, this description expresses her reaction of awe at what had happened to her' (*Mark*, p. 298). In the former of those two miracles, Jesus had manifested his control over the wind and sea, and in the latter, over the demonic realm. The fear of those privy to the two miracles conforms to the pattern of fear felt before expressions of the power of the holy. Moreover, the woman has actually 'contracted' holiness and thus ostensibly exists in a very dangerous state, one that potentially deserves death. Menahem Haran writes, 'Complete avoidance of all contact with this holiness is an absolute necessity, for anyone who contracts it is liable to meet immediate death at the hands of heaven' (*Temples and Temple-Service in Ancient Israel: An Inquiry into Biblical Cult Phenomena and the Historical Setting of the Priestly School* [Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 1985], p. 176). On the basis of Scripture, the woman could have anticipated judgment, but she receives healing and peace (and perhaps salvation).

88. This verbal expression is very rare, occurring nowhere else in the New Testament and only once elsewhere, in a version of the Old Greek (Dan. [θ'] 5.19), albeit reversed ('trembling and fearing': τρέμοντας καὶ φοβούμενοι). If one broadens the search to include variants with the same Greek roots (sometimes reversed), then the usage becomes clearer: the fear usually results from the intervention of the divine in the human realm or from the occurrence of something considered thoroughly unnatural. There are eleven instances of this expression and its variants in the Greek Old Testament: three of a divinely inspired fear of/before God (Ps. 2.11; Isa. 19.16; Dan. 4.37a), three of a divinely inspired fear of/before a human being (Dan. [θ'] 5.19; Deut. 2.25; 11.25); one of a (divinely inspired?) fear of/before angels (*4 Macc.* 4.10); one of a (divinely inspired?) fear on the part of animals of/before humans (Gen. 9.2); and three of a fear of/before one's human enemies (Judg. 15.2 [because Judith's killing of Holofernes was considered uncanny?]; Ps. 54.5 [because the psalmist's close friend had become his enemy?]; *1 Macc.* 7.18 [because a high priest's violation of an oath was especially egregious?]). As for the New Testament, the expression occurs outside of Mk 5.33 in the noun form (φόβω καὶ τρόμω), but only three times, all in Paul's writings, where it is a formulaic term denoting humility (1 Cor. 2.3; 2 Cor. 7.15; Eph. 6.5).

89. Recall Mk 5.7, which presents the fear of the unclean spirit(s) at the possibility of being tortured by Jesus: μή με βασανίσῃς.

happened to her, came and fell down before him'. Note the apposition of the two participial constructions, 'fearing and trembling' and 'knowing what had happened to her'. These constructions separate the subject (the woman) from the predicate ('came and fell down before him'). Their position in the sentence serves to explain the woman's action, and their apposition indicates that the woman's fear and knowledge come simultaneously and from the same cause: her bodily experience (τῶ σῶματι, v. 29) of Jesus' power to overcome her impurity. Her fear is the result of her encounter, as an impure woman, with 'the holy one of God'. It is as if she had touched the ark of the covenant. As such, she could have expected a legitimate judgment of destruction.<sup>90</sup> Instead of being destroyed, she receives from Jesus the promise that her faith has saved her: 'Daughter, your faith has saved/cured you—go in peace and be in health from your scourge'. This passage, then, signifies a new relation between impure humanity and the holy. One can approach the holy in an impure condition if one has the necessary faith. The holy still destroys the impurity, but faith preserves the one bearing impurity from destruction.<sup>91</sup> Consequently, this provides an answer to the first question posed at the beginning of this article: 'What does the miraculous healing of the woman signify?' The healing demonstrates that everyone, even the

90. Her status as a *zavah* made her approaching the holy one of God even more dangerous, for Num. 5.1-4 states that those suffering from a discharge of any kind must stay outside the camp of the Israelites so as to avoid defiling it, for the LORD dwells in the camp. Cf. Jenson, *Graded Holiness*, p. 139. Wright notes that Numbers appears more rigorous here than Leviticus (*Disposal of Impurity*, pp. 168-69). Raphael writes, 'Holiness...straddles the categories of time and eternity. As Otto and, later, Eliade and Tillich recognize, holiness belongs to the divine sphere, but is none the less an experienced phenomenon' (*Otto and the Concept of Holiness*, p. 29).

91. Note also that the sense of 'holy' as 'separation' has altered. Mark presents Jesus as the holy one of God, but Mark's Jesus mingles with crowds, inevitably comes into contact with impurity (both ritual and moral) and evinces no concern that impurity might contaminate him. This differs considerably from the conception of the holy in the Hebrew Bible, which enjoins the physical separation of the holy from the impure, as well as from the common. Newton notes that the Qumran sectarians emphasized physical separation to ensure their holiness: 'As the "saints" or "holy ones", the members of the community see themselves as separated from the polluted world around them' (*Concept of Purity*, p. 40). The difference between the understanding of the holy in the Hebrew Bible and in Mark finds its explanation here: in Jesus, holiness constitutes an inexhaustible force. Unlike the sanctuary, which, as Milgrom points out, has a finite amount of holiness and can become contaminated by impurity, Jesus suffers under no such restriction or violability.

impure, can approach the holy without being destroyed so long as they approach in faith. Indeed, Mk 2.15-17 explicitly presents Jesus' role as that of calling sinners to himself, which implies the approachability of the holy despite one's impure status.<sup>92</sup> This approachability also implies that the holy 'object' no longer suffers from the danger of being contaminated by the impure.<sup>93</sup>

Understanding why this danger to the holy 'object' no longer obtains requires an answer to the second question: 'Why does this miraculous healing interrupt the narrative of the miraculous revivification of the girl?' (See Mk 5.21-14a, 35-43.) Whether this interruption predates Mark or stems from his own editorial hand does not matter—either way, the interruption demonstrates a significant point about Jesus' holy power: it is *inexhaustible*. According to Mk 5.30, Jesus recognizes that power has gone out of him. The reader of Mark's Gospel might suppose that this implies a reduction of Jesus' finite power. The interruption, however, serves to place the healing of the *zavah* directly before the raising of Jairus's daughter from the dead and thereby to demonstrate Jesus' power to perform an even greater miracle *despite* the transfer of power from himself to the *zavah*. In fact, Jesus has performed a series of miracles up to this point, including stilling a storm (4.35-41) and driving out a legion of impure spirits (5.1-20). All four of these miracles occur on a single evening (cf. Mk 4.35-36 and the narrative transitions in 5.1-2, 17-18, 21-22, 24-25, 34-35), which emphasizes even more the inexhaustibility of Jesus' holy power.

Paradoxically, then, Mark's Gospel presents Jesus as *the* holy one of God—a source of inexhaustible power—and yet approachable even by those in a state of impurity.<sup>94</sup> This suggests that Mark intends to

92. Cf. Mk 7.14-23 on the link between sin (implied by the list of evils in vv. 21-22) and impurity (implied by κοινός in v. 23: in the New Testament, κοινός is a synonym for 'unclean' [cf. Toombs, 'Common', p. 663]).

93. The idea that a seminal node of holiness can purify other objects is possibly reflected in the Sadducean view of the temple menorah's properties. Joseph M. Baumgarten writes, '[W]e should like to propose for the consideration of scholars that in asserting the immunity of the Menorah to contamination the Sadducees were not negating their otherwise strict stance in matters of purity, but basing themselves on a priestly tradition concerning the purifying power of its radiance' ('Immunity to Impurity and the Menorah', *Jewish Studies, an International Journal* 5 [2006], pp. 141-45 [145]).

94. Jerome Neyrey also notes this paradoxical emphasis in Mark upon Jesus as the holy one of God who 'appears to be out of place most of the time, dealing with people he should avoid, doing unconventional things and not observing customs

present God as judging according to his mercy rather than his justice (to use the rabbinic terminology). This fits with the interpretation of Mark's portrayal of Jesus' mission as being motivated primarily by the politics of compassion rather than that of purity.<sup>95</sup> This also signifies an increased emphasis in Mark upon the very *personal* nature of the divine.<sup>96</sup> Destruction no longer occurs automatically when the impure comes

about places and times' ('The Idea of Purity in Mark's Gospel', *Semeia* 35 [1986], pp. 91-128 [91]). See Neyrey's list of the ways in which the Markan Jesus ignored the purity maps of the Judaism of his day, which implies that Jesus' holiness could overcome all impurity (pp. 107-109). See also his lists of Jesus as an agent of purity and cleanness (pp. 111-13). Cf. also Wright, *Jesus*, pp. 191-92.

95. See Marcus J. Borg, *Jesus, A New Vision: Spirit, Culture, and the Life of Discipleship* (San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 1991). Borg elsewhere argues that the new understanding of the holy and the impure lies in a role reversal: 'in the teaching of Jesus, holiness, not uncleanness, was understood to be contagious' (*Conflict, Holiness, and Politics in the Teachings of Jesus* [Harrisburg, PA: Trinity Press International, 2nd edn, 1998], p. 147). Unfortunately for Borg's argument, the roles do not reverse in this way. Judaism (like traditional religions generally) understands *both* holiness and impurity as contagious. Mark's Gospel (like the New Testament generally) shares this view of the dynamic nature of both the holy and the impure. The New Testament understanding of the holy and the impure differs from the traditional understanding in the following respect: through Jesus, the balance of power in the world between holiness and impurity has shifted in favor of holiness, and this (rather than a role reversal) explains why holiness triumphs over impurity in any confrontation (cf. *Conflict*, p. 136). Borg correctly emphasizes the role of mercy in the new understanding of the holy (cf. *Conflict*, pp. 123-34), but his thesis that mercy replaces holiness misstates the case. Rather, mercy tempers the justice that God's holiness traditionally demanded. As the Rabbis would say, God determines to judge by his mercy instead of by his justice. On this point, see also John Riches, *Jesus and the Transformation of Judaism* (London: Darton, Longman & Todd, 1980), pp. 116-17, as well as his ch. 6 generally: 'Jesus and the Law of Purity', pp. 112-44.

96. Thus, the conventional understanding of the numinous 'as something "wholly other" (*ganz andere*), something basically and totally different...like nothing human or cosmic' (Mircea Eliade, *The Sacred and the Profane: The Nature of Religion* [New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1959], pp. 9-10), which stems from Otto's reflections on the holy, does not perfectly fit Mark's understanding. Indeed, it does not easily fit into any tradition in which the divine assumes human form. Despite the almost automatic manner in which the holiness of the sanctuary seems to function in the Israelite and Second Temple Jewish tradition, the anthropomorphism of the Hebrew Bible itself implies the personal nature of God, which the early Christian tradition inherits from Judaism and reworks in a way that comes to 'democratize' (and ultimately 'domesticate'?) the sacred (see the following footnote). Cf. Eliade's similar views on the sacred entering into history (*Sacred and Profane*, pp. 110-12).

near or even into contact with the holy, despite the fact that the impure and the holy remain antithetical forces characterized by their dynamic opposition. From a history-of-religions perspective, this means that in Mark's portrayal of Jesus as the *approachable* holy one of God, a new relation between the holy and the profane is emerging.<sup>97</sup>

### *Conclusion*

Mark 5.24b-34 depicts the healing power of God's holy one as (automatically) antagonistic to the impure force binding the woman with the flow of blood. The way in which Jesus' healing power flows into the woman—even without his initially knowing it!—is similar to how her ritual impurity was imagined to flow from her into whomever she touched. The story is about more than just healing. Its main lesson is about the woman's faith, but it tells us much more about the dynamics of Jesus' healing power, and about the identity of Jesus as the holy one. Mark's Gospel portrays Jesus as an ever-replenishing repository of healing virtue because he is God's holy one. Jesus' identity as the holy one pits him against the debilitating power of disease, for impurity cannot withstand the presence of the holiness itself.

97. Indeed, the early Christian tradition emphasized a vast 'democratization' of the holy by extending holy power to all believers. Cf. Mk 1.8 (cf. Mt. 4.11; Lk. 3.16) on Jesus baptizing believers with the Holy Spirit, or 1 Cor. 3.16-17 and 6.19 (cf. 12.13) on Paul's understanding of believers' bodies as temples of the Holy Spirit (see Clements, *God and Temple*, p. 139). The early Christians consciously understood this as a new development within their Jewish tradition (cf. Acts 2.1-4), though they also believed that the prophet Joel (3.1-2 = LXX 2.28-29) had prophesied it (cf. Acts 2.16-18). They thus understood themselves as a 'holy people' in a sense differing from the ancient calling of Israel as a 'holy people'. For the ancient Israelites, being a 'holy people' had entailed being separate and pure, meaning that the Israelite nation modeled itself upon God's holiness through imitating his qualities of separation and purity (cf. Gammie, *Holiness*, esp. pp. 33, 43, 110, 195; Jenson, *Graded Holiness*, pp. 49, 146 n. 1; Hannah K. Harrington, 'Interpreting Leviticus in the Second Temple Period: Struggling with Ambiguity', in Sawyer [ed.], *Reading Leviticus*, pp. 214-29, esp. 214-15). The concept of God's holiness actually dwelling within each individual member of the people of God in a sense similar to its dwelling within the sanctuary of the people of God does not correspond to ancient Israelite views on the relation between God and his people—though it does bear some similarity to the view that the Spirit comes upon a prophet (cf. 1 Sam. 10.6, 10; Isa. 61.1; cf. also Robert Koch, *Geist und Messias: Beitrag zur biblischen Theologie des Alten Testaments* [Vienna: Herder, 1950], pp. 119-27; Max Weber, *Ancient Judaism* [New York: Free Press, 1952], p. 292).