



Universiteit
Leiden

The Netherlands

The Cleansing of the Temple in Mark 11:15 and Zechariah 14:21

Jonge, H.J. de

Citation

Jonge, H. J. de. (2003). The Cleansing of the Temple in Mark 11:15 and Zechariah 14:21. Retrieved from <https://hdl.handle.net/1887/953>

Version: Not Applicable (or Unknown)

License: [Leiden University Non-exclusive license](#)

Downloaded from: <https://hdl.handle.net/1887/953>

Note: To cite this publication please use the final published version (if applicable).

Chapter 7

The Cleansing of the Temple in Mark 11:15 and Zechariah 14:21

Henk Jan de Jonge

Mark's account of the last week of Jesus' earthly ministry shows the influence of the book of Zechariah in about six passages. In three instances this influence can be established with absolute certainty or reasonable probability.¹ The most certain case is Mark 14:27, where Jesus before entering into Gethsemane says to his disciples: 'You will all become deserters; for it is written "I will strike the shepherd, and the sheep will be scattered."' This is a clear reference to Zech 13:7, introduced with an explicit quotation formula, 'it is written'. It is also a reference which functions on the redactional level of Mark's narrative, for at the end of the Gethsemane episode Mark relates that 'all of (the disciples) deserted him (Jesus) and fled' (v. 50).

The influence of Zechariah is somewhat less evident in two passages in Mark 11, namely in the episodes of Jesus' triumphal entry into Jerusalem and the cleansing of the temple. According to vv. 7–11, Jesus entered Jerusalem on a colt. Matthew, in his reworking of this passage (21:4), adds the comment that 'this took place to fulfill what had been spoken through the prophet, saying "Tell the daughter of Zion, Look, your king is coming to you, humble, and mounted on a donkey, and on a colt, the foal of a donkey."' ² This is a quotation from Zech 9:9, which does not yet occur in Mark. Yet many interpreters of Mark are of the opinion (rightly, I think) that Mark's account of Jesus' entry into Jerusalem alludes to Zech 9:9, even if Mark avoids quoting Zechariah explicitly at this point.³ Not only in Matthew, but also in Mark, is the colt the riding animal mentioned in Zech 9:9.⁴

Quite a few scholars find another trace of Zechariah's influence in Mark 11, in the scene of the cleansing of the temple, Mark 11:15.⁵ The passage in question may well be echoing the closing words of the book of Zechariah (14:21 end): 'There shall no longer be traders in the house of the Lord of hosts on that day' (NRSV). I intend to go into Mark's story about the cleansing of the temple and its relationship to Zech 14:21 presently, but let me mention first three further possible reminiscences of Zechariah in the final section of Mark's Gospel.

First, Mark's account of Jesus' entry into Jerusalem opens with a remarkable note indicating that what is going to happen took place: 'When they were approaching Jerusalem, at Bethphage and Bethany, near the Mount of Olives' (Mark 11:1). At this point in Mark's narrative, however, the Mount of Olives does not yet seem to play a role of any significance. It is understandable, therefore, that several exegetes have taken the mention of the Mount of Olives here as a reference to Zech 14:4,⁶ where the prophet says that on the final day of judgement God will stand on the Mount of

Olives.⁷ The geographical note in Mark 11:1 is so strange and, with no less than four geographical names, so excessive that the suggestion to see the Mount of Olives here as a reminiscence of Zech 14:4 is certainly worth considering. Another possibility is of course that this mention of the Mount of Olives is merely a redactional anticipation of the episodes that are explicitly said by Mark to have taken place on that mount: the eschatological discourse of Mark 13 (see 13:3) and the prediction of Peter's denial (see 14:26).⁸

Secondly, in his account of the Last Supper, Mark has Jesus say over the cup: 'This is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many' (Mark 14:24). The phrase 'my blood of the covenant' has often been taken to be an echo of Zech 9:11. It is true that Jesus' words of institution as recorded by Paul in 1 Cor 11:25 already include the phrase 'this cup is the new covenant in my blood' and that Paul's phrase 'the new covenant' seems to reflect primarily Jer 31:31 and perhaps 32:40. But the passages in Jeremiah do not specify that the restoration of the covenant will come about through blood. The mention of blood is a feature which Mark 14:24 and 1 Cor 11:25 have in common with Zech 9:11. It may well be due to the influence of Zech 9:11. This passage is the opening of an oracle that announces the release of Israel's and Judah's prisoners by God 'because of the blood of his covenant' with them.

Thirdly, it is quite possible that Mark's account of the centurion who was standing opposite the cross and 'saw how he died' is a remote echo of Zech 12:10: 'They will look upon the one whom they have pierced.' The prophetic passage is in any case referred to and quoted in John 19:37 and Rev 1:7.

This must conclude the present survey of the relationships between the final section of Mark, chs. 11–16, and the second part of Zechariah, chs. 9–14. There is no need to repeat that some of these relationships can be established with more certainty than others.

Apart from the question concerning the plausibility or probability with which the relationships mentioned can be established, there are two further questions with regard to each of the connections at issue individually. First, it should be asked at what stage in the tradition running from Jesus to Mark, the link between Jesus' words and actions, on the one hand, and the visions of Deutero-Zechariah, on the other, originated. In theory, the answer to this question can vary from the one extreme to the other. It has often been assumed, for instance, that Jesus himself chose to enter Jerusalem riding on a colt, in order to manifest himself as the triumphant but humble king announced in Zech 9:9–10, who would bring peace to the nations and reign to the ends of the earth. This is the position held, among others, by Robert M. Grant, now half a century ago. He argued that in Mark 11:1–23, in the stories of Jesus approaching the Mount of Olives, his entry into Jerusalem on a colt and the cleansing of the temple, it is not the evangelist, but the historical Jesus himself and the disciples around him, who effected the fulfilment of the prophecies of Zech 9.⁹ Grant also thought that it was Jesus himself who in his words spoken over the cup at the Last Supper applied Zech 9:11 to himself, his death and his followers. Grant even went so far as to assert that the evangelist Mark, in writing his Gospel, was unaware of the relationships between his account in Mark 11 and Zechariah. To quote another example of the tendency to trace the origin of the links between Mark and Zechariah back to Jesus himself, the passage from Zech 13:7 on the shepherd being smitten and the sheep being scattered, quoted in Mark 14:27, induced F. F. Bruce to observe: 'According to

Mark, it is Jesus Himself who makes the identification [of the smitten shepherd with Jesus]. I [i.e., F. F. Bruce] have no doubt at all that Mark is right in ascribing this interpretation of the prophecy to Jesus; (...).'¹⁰

In contrast to this tendency to locate the link between Mark and Zechariah in the actions and words of Jesus himself, more recent interpreters of Mark's Gospel tend to see the connections between this Gospel and Zechariah rather as having originated in later stages of the tradition. It has been argued, for instance, that the words Jesus spoke over the cup at the Last Supper (Mark 14:24) originally contained no reference to the idea of covenant.¹¹ In that case, the echo of Zech 9:11 must have entered the tradition underlying Mark at some later stage. The story of the entry into Jerusalem was explained by R. Bultmann as a legend called forth by Zech 9:9, that is, as a Christian creation developed somewhere on the trajectory from Jesus to Mark.¹² Similarly, according to several commentators, the quotation on the shepherd and the sheep from Zech 13:7 has probably been added to the (older) prediction that the disciples would fall away.¹³ Finally the possibility cannot be ruled out, at least in theory, that Mark himself was responsible for adding one or another reminiscence of Zechariah to the tradition he used.¹⁴ A possible example of such a recent, redactional insertion of a reference to Zechariah is the quotation of Zech 13:7 on the shepherd and the sheep, included in Mark 14:27, but I shall not go into this possibility here.

The other question that should be asked with regard to every single allusion to Zechariah in Mark is whether or not Mark was *aware* of alluding to Zechariah. This question has to be distinguished from the one just mentioned. For it is quite possible for an author to take over from his source or tradition an allusion to some earlier authority without noticing that what he takes over *is* an allusion. This is Robert Grant's view of the relationship between Mark's account of the triumphal entry and the temple cleansing, on the one hand, and the corresponding passages in Zech 9:9 and 14:21, on the other. Grant argued that in these cases Mark's narrative does reflect the visions recorded in the book of Zechariah, but it was the historical Jesus who through his actions and words brought the correspondences about, whereas Mark remained unaware of them. I do not think that Grant is right in this, but it should be admitted that in principle such a view is defensible. Such a recent commentator as Professor Morna Hooker, for instance, is of the opinion that as regards Jesus' entry into Jerusalem, where the later evangelists, Matthew and John, made the link with Zech 9,¹⁵ we cannot be sure that Mark had already done so.¹⁶

To summarize these introductory remarks, Mark's account of the final week of Jesus' earthly ministry seems to reflect traditions deriving from Zechariah in perhaps five or six passages. For each of these instances the question must be asked precisely at what stage of the tradition Zechariah's influence became effective, whether already in Jesus' own actions and utterances, or in a later phase of the forty years' tradition from Jesus to Mark, or only in Mark's redaction. Finally, if in a given passage of the Gospel of Mark Zechariah's influence can be established, it remains to be ascertained whether or not Mark was aware of this influence: did he refer to Zechariah on purpose or pass on an allusion without noticing?

With these considerations and questions in mind, let us turn now to Mark's account of the cleansing of the temple, especially Mark 11:15, examine its possible relations with Zechariah, and consider the consequences for the interpretation of Mark as well as those for the history of the interpretation of Zechariah.

MARK 11:15 AND ZECH 14:21

First I want to argue that Mark's cleansing of the temple (Mark 11:15) is indeed a working-out of the final sentence of the book of Zechariah, 14:21 end. This sentence reads: 'And there shall no longer be traders in the house of the Lord of hosts on that day'. My argument will consist of three successive steps. Before taking the first step, however, I must give some attention to the vocabulary of Zech 14:21.

Modern translations read 'there shall no longer be *traders* in the house of the Lord.' For 'traders' the MT has כְּנַעֲנִי, originally the word for Canaanite. Now the LXX translates verbally, not to say slavishly, καὶ οὐκ ἔσται Χαναανῖος οὐκέτι ἐν τῷ οἴκῳ κυρίου παντοκράτορος ἐν τῇ ἡμέρᾳ ἐκείνῃ. However, already in biblical Hebrew the noun כְּנַעֲנִי repeatedly has the meaning 'trader', 'trafficker', 'merchant'. This applies for instance to Isa 23:8, where the prophet, speaking about the merchants of the city of Tyre, uses the phrase 'her merchants', כְּנַעֲנִיהָ. This is translated by the LXX as οἱ ἔμποροι αὐτῆς, 'her merchants'. It applies also to Prov 31:24, the ode to the dedicated and diligent wife. Here we read: 'She makes lincn garments and sells them; she supplies the merchant with sashes.' For 'merchant' the Hebrew has כְּנַעֲנִי, but here the LXX reads τοῖς Χαναανῖοις. A further instances of כְּנַעֲנִי meaning merchant or trader occurs in Job 40:25 (v. 30 MT, כְּנַעֲנִים), where the LXX has Φοίνικες; compare Zeph 1:11 עַם כְּנַעַן, where the LXX has ὁ λαὸς Χαναάν. As to the meaning of כְּנַעֲנִי in our passage Zech 14:21, here the word must be taken to mean 'trafficker', 'trader', rather than 'Canaanite'.¹⁷ After all, the prophet has just invited 'all the families of the earth' to come up to Jerusalem for the Feast of Tabernacles, and there seems no reason for a last-minute exclusion of Canaanites.¹⁸

It is worth noting that Aquila (ca. 100 CE) translated the כְּנַעֲנִי of Zech 14:21 by μεταβόλος, which means 'huckster', 'retail dealer'.¹⁹ Jerome, who in his commentary on Zechariah records that Aquila's rendering of the Hebrew כְּנַעֲנִי differs from that of the LXX, translates Aquila's reading (μετάβολος) by *mercator*, that is, 'merchant'.²⁰ The same interpretation of Zechariah's Hebrew is given by the Targum of the Minor Prophets, which translates עֹבֵד חֲנָנִי ('*obēd tagg'rā*'), that is, 'someone doing business', 'someone carrying on trade'.²¹ It may be concluded that there was an ancient tradition, going back to the first century CE, which took the final sentence of Zechariah to mean that on the Day of the Lord there would no longer be traders in the temple. The reason why there would no longer be traders in the temple is that they would no longer be needed: on the Day of the Lord Jerusalem will be entirely sacred to the Lord and everything will be holy, even every ordinary cooking pot in Jerusalem (14:21a), nothing excepted. Consequently, traders will no longer be needed to sell ritually pure products used in the cultus, such as wine, oil, salt, sacrificial utensils, such as vessels, or animals without blemish, such as cattle, sheep and doves. Thus, the reason for the absence of traders is *not* that trading in itself would be a defilement of the temple: this somewhat moralistic idea may play a part in popular interpretations of the story of the cleansing of the temple, but it is not yet Zechariah's idea (nor Mark's for that matter).

It is now time to look at Mark 11:15–17, where Jesus is said to enter the temple and to drive out those who were selling and buying. He overturned the tables of the money changers and the seats of those who sold doves. Subsequently, he justified his action by explaining that the temple ought to have been a house of prayer for all nations, not

a den of nationalist rebels. When evening came, Jesus and his disciples left the city. In a three-step argumentation, I shall now try to make a case for the idea that the Markan story of the temple cleansing reflects the influence of Zech 14:21.

First, as has been argued by other critics, in a pre-Markan stage of the tradition the entry into Jerusalem and the cleansing of the temple formed a literary unit.²² As it stands now, the temple cleansing account is sandwiched between the two parts of the story of the cursing of the fig tree. This sandwich composition is notoriously characteristic of Mark.²³ It is Mark who inserted the first part of the cursing of the fig tree between the entry into Jerusalem and the temple cleansing. Originally, entry and cleansing were one story.

This view is confirmed by several observations. For instance, both Matthew (21:12) and Luke (20:45) put the cleansing episode back to Palm Sunday, the day of Jesus' entry into Jerusalem, in contravention of their common source Mark, who had moved the temple cleansing to the day *after* the entry into Jerusalem. Obviously, Matthew and Luke preferred to stick to a common older tradition according to which the temple cleansing was the immediate sequel to, and conclusion of, Jesus' entry into Jerusalem.

Furthermore, the final verse of the entry story in Mark's redaction, Mark 11:11, is a most peculiar and awkward anticlimax of the triumphal entry into Jerusalem.²⁴ The verse just says that Jesus went into the temple, looked around and left because it was already late: a very unsatisfactory end of the glorious entry into the holy city which had started so promisingly. It should also be noticed that on literary-critical grounds, this verse Mark 11:11 must be considered a purely Markan connecting link between the entry story and the scene of the temple cleansing.²⁵ Moreover, the entry story is continued in a smooth and natural way in verse 15, after the first part of the cursing of the fig tree, where we read: 'Then they came to Jerusalem. And he entered the temple and began to drive out those who were selling (etc.).' In brief, there is every indication that in the pre-Markan tradition Jesus' entry into Jerusalem and the cleansing of the temple formed a unit.

Second, I would like to point out that stories about kings who upon their accession to office proceed to the purging of the cult, form a traditional, clearly discernible genre both in the Hebrew Scriptures and Jewish literature.²⁶ For instance, 1 Macc 4:36–61 relates how Judas Maccabaeus, after assuming power in Judea and Jerusalem, cleansed and dedicated the temple and restored the cult. 2 Macc 10:1–8, too, records that Judas, on recovering Jerusalem and the temple, purified the sanctuary and erected a new altar of sacrifice. *Psalms of Solomon* 17 (ca. 40 BCE) expresses the hope that a new Davidic king will soon gain dominion over Israel; this ideal king is expected to 'purify Jerusalem with sanctity, as it was from the beginning' (v. 30).

Third, I wish to point out that in none of the earlier accounts of purifications of the temple, did the cleansing take the form of an expulsion of traders. We hear that idols are removed, sacrifices to other deities than Jahweh are discontinued, idolatrous priests are deposed, altars pulled down, temple furniture and vessels destroyed, the sanctuary is repaired and purified, new vessels are made and brought in, new priests appointed, new offerings and other rituals instituted, etc. We never hear that salesmen and their clients are driven out. Thus, the pre-Markan account of Jesus' entry into Jerusalem and the cleansing of the temple does seem to reflect the tradition of stories about new kings assuming their office and purifying the cult, but the expulsion of

traders and buyers is a new element. This element cannot be explained by referring to the tradition of accounts of accessions to the royal office. Another explanation is called for. It is given by Zech 14:21, where, in a vision of the Day of the Lord, the prophet announces that 'there shall no longer be traders in the house of the Lord of hosts'. Just as the Markan story of Jesus' entry into Jerusalem borrowed the colt from Zech 9:9, the pre-Markan account of the temple cleansing borrowed the traders from Zech 14:21.

THE CLEANSING OF THE TEMPLE: A POST-EASTER TRADITION OF CHRISTOLOGICAL PURPORT

The next issue we have to discuss is at what moment the story of the temple cleansing and the expulsion of the traders came into being. Evidently it is of pre-Markan origin, for, as we have argued above, Matthew and Luke knew it in a version in which the temple cleansing was the conclusion of the entry into Jerusalem, and this is probably a more primitive version of the story, since it is closer to the traditional cleansing stories in Hebrew and Jewish literature. Moreover, it is most unlikely that Mark himself created the stories of Jesus' entry into Jerusalem and purging of the temple. In fact, both stories present Jesus as someone who did not fear to disturb public order. This is a presentation of Jesus which Mark normally tries to avoid. True, in Mark's view, Jesus is the Christ, the Son of David, the royal Son of God; but Mark does everything in his power to make it clear that Jesus had not been an agitator, not an insurgent, not a revolutionary in a social or political sense of the word.²⁷ For Mark, Jesus is the Son of God, but as a suffering righteous one and as the one who accepted death on the cross. The stories of Jesus' triumphal entry into Jerusalem and cleansing of the temple are not really consistent, therefore, with the tendency of Mark's own Christology. This inconsistency is an additional reason to see these stories as deriving from pre-Markan tradition.

On the other hand it seems to me impossible to trace this tradition back to an historical event in Jesus' lifetime. If a tradition can be accounted for satisfactorily on a more recent level, the principle of economy (Ockham's razor)²⁸ forbids us to look for an explanation on a level further back in time. Moreover, the story of the cleansing of the temple is full of historical improbabilities, often enumerated by the commentators: 'How could one person have overcome the resistance to which this action would obviously have given rise? Or, if we suppose that Jesus was assisted by his followers, why did the temple police or the Roman garrison do nothing to preserve the peace (contrast Acts 4:1ff), and why was the matter not raised at Jesus' trial? And how did Jesus gather an audience (v. 17) which included those responsible for the desecration of the temple?'²⁹ Furthermore, what was wrong with the trading in the temple? Was it not essential to the temple cult? Was it not necessary to provide animals without blemish and money of the right currency to pay the temple tax? Was it not strictly controlled and, on the whole, conducted fairly and in the interests of the pilgrims? In brief, it is difficult, if not impossible, to trace the story of the temple cleansing back to an event in the earthly ministry of Jesus.³⁰

In a recent, extensive study of Jesus' attitude towards the temple, Jostein Ådna argues that Jesus' temple action is at least historically conceivable.³¹ First, Ådna

locates the scene of Jesus' cleansing of the temple, not in any of the temple courts, but in the royal portico, a basilica extending from west to east on the southern edge of the temple terrace. Then, on the basis of Mark 11:15 and John 2:15–16 (treated as independent of Mark), he gives a reconstruction of Jesus' temple action as an event of relatively limited, harmless scope, so that the non-intervention of temple police and Romans becomes understandable. Ådna concludes that the cleansing of the temple is historically imaginable.

It should be noticed, however, that Mark does not say that the temple action took place in a portico or basilica. On the contrary, Mark's words 'he (Jesus) would not let anyone carry anything through the temple' (Mark 11:16) rather suggests that the evangelist locates the event somewhere in the temple courts. Furthermore, there is definitely some reason to assume that John 2:13–17 is directly or indirectly dependent on Mark 11:15–17, especially because John concludes his story of the temple cleansing with the question about Jesus' authority (2:18) which is typically an element of Mark's plot (11:28). Consequently, Ådna's effort to present the temple cleansing as less violent and less drastic, and thus more conceivable, than the action narrated in Mark 11:15–16 fails to do justice to Mark, the only source of our knowledge of the tradition in question.

However, if (as we have argued) the cleansing of the temple story is a response in narrative form to the prophetic vision of Zech 14:21, any attempt to interpret it as an account of an historical event in Jesus' life becomes superfluous. The story can well be understood as an interpretation of the already highly valued person of Jesus in the light of Zech 14. This chapter is a vision of the Day of the Lord, when he will come to assume the kingship over all the earth (v. 9). According to Zechariah's vision, the Lord will appear 'on the Mount of Olives, which lies before Jerusalem on the east' (v. 4). When the Lord will appear, 'there shall no longer be traders in the house of the Lord of hosts' (v. 21).

Apparently, in the view of a number of Jesus' followers, sometime in a post-Easter situation, Zechariah's vision of the coming of the Lord had become true in the person and ministry of Jesus. They felt that in Jesus, God had come to the world in order to establish his kingdom on earth. They regarded Jesus as God's definitive representative, and, as a result, Jesus' appearance in the world as the appearance of God. In the words and actions of Jesus, his followers recognized the message and deeds of God intervening in history. Consequently, these followers of Jesus could sometimes speak about Jesus' ministry by appealing to the visionary language which the prophets had used for God and his future intervention in the history of Israel and the world. In other words, Christians sometimes applied the visions in which the prophets had spoken about the coming of God, to the earthly ministry of Jesus. An example of this phenomenon may be found in Mark 1:3, where the evangelist in his introductory remarks states that the coming of John the Baptist was in accordance with the words of Isaiah 'prepare the way of the Lord' (Isa 40:3). In the words of Isaiah, 'the Lord' is God. But in the context of Mark, 'the way of the Lord' which John the Baptist prepares is that of Jesus, or, if it is still the way of God, it is now also the way of Jesus. We would be pushing things too far if we said that Jesus here takes the place of God, but it is correct to say that, since Jesus is God's unique and definitive representative on earth, in the coming of Jesus it was God who came. 'God's advent in salvation and judgement has taken place in Jesus'.³²

In sum, the idea underlying the story of the traders' expulsion from the temple is a specific Christological idea, namely, that when Jesus entered into Jerusalem, he came as God's representative, as judge and saviour on behalf of God. In Jesus, it was God himself who came to what was his own (John 1:11). With Jesus' coming to Jerusalem, the Day of the Lord had dawned, that is, the time when according to Zechariah there would no longer be traders in the temple. The story of the cleansing of the temple thus originated in a Christian environment to give expression to a specific Christology – a Christology which had much in common with the Christology of the Fourth Gospel, namely, that Jesus in his first coming was God's fully authorized representative on earth (compare, e.g., John 5:22, 26–27) and as such functionally one with God (compare, e.g., John 10:30, 37–38). In this view, Jesus is 'the one who enables God himself to be seen'.³³

The idea behind the story of the cleansing of the temple then was that in Jesus' ministry God had begun to intervene in the history of mankind, the Day of the Lord had dawned. This idea was given a narrative form with the aid of the notion of the absence of traders from the temple, a notion found in Zech 14:21. After all, Zech 14 *is* about the Day of the Lord and the beginning of his reign on earth. If Jesus' followers believed him to be the one who had inaugurated God's reign on earth, it was quite natural for them to believe that on arriving in Jerusalem he had driven out the traders from the temple.

But in the story of the purification of the temple we not only get a glimpse into an early, pre-Markan Christology, but also into the early Christian use of Zechariah. In the second and third quarters of the first century CE, Christians believed that certain visions included in the book of Zechariah were relevant specifically to their time. These Christians interpreted the Christ event as the turn of the times about which Zechariah had spoken. Consequently, they interpreted Zechariah's visions as applicable to Jesus and felt free to depict Jesus with features borrowed from these visions. This explains how the traders from Zech 14:21 could turn up in a story about Jesus' appearance in Jerusalem.

THE CHANGE IN MEANING OF THE CLEANSING STORY IN MARK

The question that remains to be considered is whether or not Mark in editing the cleansing of the temple story, was still aware that it was related to Zech 14:21. The answer must probably be to the negative. I give two reasons for this answer.

First, by separating the cleansing of the temple from the entry into Jerusalem, Mark obscures the idea that the purification of the sanctuary was the act of a new king acceding to office and inaugurating a new order. In fact, if the cleansing of the temple is no longer seen as part of the inauguration of a new order, it has lost its link with Zech 14. For Zech 14:21 is about the new order to be established on the Day of the Lord.

Secondly, Mark places the cleansing of the temple within the framework of the cursing of the fig tree. This editorial intervention changes the meaning of the cleansing of the temple considerably. The temple is now cleansed, not because the Day of the Lord has come, nor because in Christ the Lord God has come to his people. The temple is cleansed because, in Mark's view, the Jewish cult has remained

fruitless. In Mark's opinion Jesus condemned the temple cult, the heart of the Jewish religion, because it was as fruitless as a barren tree. It was fruitless as it had not recognized and accepted Jesus as God's unique and definitive envoy (cf. Mark 12:6) and, as a result, had not become a place of worship for *all* nations of the world. For Mark, the cleansing of the temple was a divine punishment for Israel's disobedience. By embedding the incident in the story of the fig tree, Mark shows clearly that he interprets it as a sign of God's condemnation of Israel because of her failure to bear fruit.³⁴ This suggests that Mark sees the temple cleansing as a symbol of the future destruction of the temple and the final cessation of worship (cf. Mark 12:9; 13:1–2).³⁵ Placed in the framework of the story of the barren fig tree, Jesus' words and actions in the temple are a condemnation of the Jewish religion for its failure to produce the fruit expected from it: belief in Jesus Christ. These words and actions imply judgement and destruction. They are thus a reference to judgement to come. Morna Hooker is thus right to comment that Mark, looking back on the events of the year 70 CE, saw the cleansing of the temple by Jesus as a symbol of forthcoming destruction. 'It is hardly surprising if Mark, writing at a time when the Jewish people appeared to have rejected the gospel (...), saw the story as pointing inevitably to the temple's destruction. Mark's community (...) would have found in these incidents the explanation of Israel's apparent rejection as the people of God.'³⁶

If then the cleansing of the temple in Mark is meant as an adumbration of the temple's destruction and as a sign of God's disapproval of the traditional Jewish religion, it is highly questionable whether Mark did still see Jesus' action in the temple as related to the prophecy of Zech 14:21. In Zechariah, the absence of traders is a sign of the holiness of the temple and Jerusalem: traders will no longer be needed for selling products and animals used in the cult, for everything will be pure and holy. In Mark, the expulsion of the traders is symbolic of the condemnation of the Jewish cult as such. By driving out those who bought and sold in the temple, Jesus was interrupting the offering of sacrifices.³⁷ By not allowing anyone to carry anything through the temple (Mark 11:16), Jesus was bringing the temple cult to a standstill. For Mark, the traditional Jewish religion had failed. Mark's view of the temple cult is diametrically opposed to that of Zech 14. It is hard to believe, therefore, that Mark still saw any relationship between his cleansing story and Zech 14:21. The meaning of the Markan cleansing story is mainly determined by Mark's preoccupation with the historical destruction of the temple in 70 CE. This preoccupation is so strong that it seems to have obliterated any awareness of a link between the cleansing story and Zechariah.

Some attention should still be given to v. 17, in which Jesus is said to have explained his action in the temple by referring to two passages from the Jewish scriptures. First, Jesus says: 'Does not Scripture say "My house shall be a house of prayer for all nations?"', a quotation from Isa 56, where the context is concerned with the destruction of the temple. Then Jesus goes on to say: 'But you have made it a den of *λησται*'. Elsewhere in Mark, *λησται* means 'nationalist rebels', 'revolutionaries', 'insurrectionists'. So there is an *a priori* probability that this is the meaning intended by Mark here, too.³⁸ Barrett has argued that the meaning 'nationalist rebels' is confirmed by the fact that Mark contrasts the 'house of prayer *for all nations*' with the 'den of Jewish *nationalists*'. Barret has even gone so far as to argue that v. 17, which contains the two references to Isaiah and Jeremiah, is a secondary accretion to the

story of the cleansing, replacing an earlier reference to Zech 14:21.³⁹ This latter hypothesis, namely that the quotations from Isaiah and Jeremiah replace one from Zechariah, is perhaps one step too far, but it is indeed very probable that v. 17 is more recent than the story of the temple cleansing. It is even probable that v. 17 stems from Mark's own redactional hand, seeing, for instance, the way he introduces here direct discourse with the qualifying verb ἐδίδασκεν (v. 17) the antithetic parallelism of the two quotations from the prophets, and the *inclusio* formed by ἐδίδασκεν and τῇ διδαχῇ αὐτοῦ (vv. 17–18).⁴⁰ In any case, on the level of Mark's redaction, Jesus' protest is not directed against selling and buying in the temple, nor against the existence of the temple market in itself, nor against disrespect for the holiness of God's house. In Mark, the protest is against the temple being a stronghold of Jewish nationalism, instead of being a place of prayer 'for all nations'. Clearly, this Markan protest is levelled against the temple of the year 70 CE as we know it from Josephus' account of the Jewish War, when the temple was indeed a stronghold of nationalists and zealots of all kinds.

It may now begin to become clear that the story of the cleansing of the temple has undergone a drastic change of meaning. At first, when the story was still connected with that of the entry into Jerusalem, it gave expression to the idea that, with and in Jesus, the Day of the Lord had come. Since, according to Zechariah, on the Day of the Lord there would be no traders any more in the temple, early Christians formed a story in which Jesus himself expelled the traders from the temple.

In Mark, however, the story of the cleansing of the temple announces the destruction of the temple in 70 CE. In changing the function and meaning of the story, Mark has Jesus justify his violent action by saying that the temple had failed to fulfil its destination: instead of becoming a religious centre for *all* nations, it had become a garrison of Jewish insurrectionists. This justification is remarkably anachronistic if put in the context of the year of Jesus' death, when the temple was not yet occupied by zealots, as it was in 70.

Obviously, the justification given in v. 17 mirrors Mark's own concerns about the fate of the temple, Jerusalem and Israel. In v. 17, Mark is so much concerned about the fate of Israel's temple that he loses sight of the original connection between the cleansing story and Zech 14:21. Mark is no longer aware of the link between the temple cleansing and Zechariah. He establishes new links between the cleansing story and the Jewish scriptures: no longer with Zechariah, but with Isaiah and Jeremiah. In Mark, the original, Christological function of the cleansing story seems to be forgotten; it is now a prediction concerning the end of the temple and God's judgement on Israel's traditional religion.

Remarkably enough, through the redactional work of Mark, the story of the temple cleansing, which had come into being to show that the prophecies of Zechariah 14 had come to fruition, lost its connection with Zechariah and became itself a *new* prophecy. In fact, the story of Jesus' action in the temple now became the account of a prophetic act which, according to Mark, foreshadowed the destruction of the Jewish temple in 70 CE.

CONCLUSIONS

The story of the cleansing of the temple originated as an expression of the idea that in Jesus Christ God's reign on earth had begun to break through. Followers of Jesus were convinced that, in a way, in the message and actions of Jesus the Day of the Lord had come. This conviction made it possible for them to narrate Jesus' arrival in Jerusalem in terms derived from Zechariah 9 and 14. Zechariah's promise that on the Day of the Lord there would no longer be traders in the temple, was now applied to the days of Jesus' visit to Jerusalem. As a Christian response to Zech 14:21, a story took shape in which Jesus, on his arrival in Jerusalem, drove out the traders from the temple. This story, which had a Christological purport, originated in post-Easter, pre-Markan tradition. Mark used this story to shape his account of the beginning of Jesus' passion week. In doing this, however, he was probably no longer aware that the story had been called forth by Zech 14:21. In Mark, the cleansing of the temple is no longer the actualization of Zechariah's vision; it becomes the foreshadowing of the destruction of the temple. It thus serves Mark's interpretation of the events of his own day.

NOTES

- 1 See Appendix, p. 100.
- 2 NRSV. Compare John 12:14–15, where Zech 9:9 is also quoted but in a different form.
- 3 Thus, e.g., Nineham, 1963, p. 291. The reason why I think that Mark was aware of alluding to Zech 9:9 is the following: Mark 11:1b–7 shows Mark's redactional hand to such an extent that the whole passage must probably be considered of Markan origin. In that case, it was Mark himself who introduced the element of the colt. But why would Mark have introduced the colt if not in response to Zech 9:9?
- 4 Lührmann, 1987, p. 188. Compare, however, Fitzmyer, 1985, 2.1244: 'The extent to which the earliest form of the story in Mark xi reflects Zech ix 9 is a matter of debate.'
- 5 See, e.g., Barrett, 1975, esp. pp. 19–20.
- 6 See for instance Hooker, 1991, p. 258, and Nineham, 1963, p. 291.
- 7 For the significance of the Mount of Olives in the ideology of first-century radical apocalyptic movements, see also Josephus, *J.W.* 2.13.5 and *Ant.* 20.8.6.
- 8 Thus, e.g., Lührmann, 1987, ad loc. In favour of the latter, more sober and mundane, interpretation it may be observed that the mention of Bethany in Mark 11:1 does not seem to have a function other than to prepare the reader for the visits Jesus is going to pay to that place in the following chapters; see 11:11–12 and 14:3. Jerusalem, Bethany and the Mount of Olives, mentioned together at the beginning of ch. 11, form the complete geographical stage of chs. 11–16.
- 9 Grant, 1948. The same view is held by Kümmel, 1957, pp. 116–17 ('There can be no doubt that Jesus consciously associated himself with Zech 9.9') and Roth, 1960.
- 10 Bruce, 1961, esp. p. 343.
- 11 Nineham, 1963, p. 385. Compare Hooker, 1991, p. 342: 'it seems impossible that Jesus himself could have used these words about the wine'.
- 12 Bultmann, 1979, pp. 281, 333. According to Bultmann, the legend may already have grown up in Palestinian Christianity.
- 13 Hooker, 1991, p. 344.
- 14 Just as Matthew added a reference to the thirty pieces of silver of Zech 11:13 to his account of the treachery of Judas; see Matt 27:9. The testimony from Zechariah is combined here with words from Jer 32:6–9. See Dodd, 1965, pp. 64–5.

- 15 Matt 21:5; John 12:15.
- 16 Hooker, 1991, p. 257. She continues: '(...), though he may well have had it in mind.'
- 17 I am aware that among Old Testament exegetes the meaning of כנעני in Zech 14:21 is debated. Yet I am inclined to think that those early interpreters who took it to mean 'trader' are right.
- 18 Dodd, 1955, p. 300.
- 19 Ziegler, 1943, p. 327, second apparatus. The sources for our knowledge of Aquila's reading μετὰβολος include a marginal variant in MS. 86, the Syrohexapla, and Jerome (for whom, see n. 20). Field, 1875, 2.1030. For the meaning of μετὰβολος, see LSJ, p. 1110: 'huckster', 'retail dealer'. The word occurs also in Isa 23:2 and 3 LXX, with the meaning 'merchant'.
- 20 Jerome, *Commentarii in Zachariam*, liber iii, cap. xiv, PL 25, 1540/1: 'Pro Chananaco, Aquila interpretatus est *mercatores*, quem et nos in hoc loco secuti sumus,' namely, in the Vulgate. The Vulgate has indeed: 'et non erit mercator ultra in domo Domini exercituum in die illo': Roth, 1960, p. 180. Interestingly, as Professor A. van der Kooij pointed out to me, Aquila is consistent in rendering כנעני/כנע by μετὰβολος, 'trader'. He does so in Zech 14:21 and Hos 12:7, both times in accordance with the Targum, and in Zeph 1:11 in contravention of the Targum.
- 21 For the Aramaic text, see Sperber, 1992, p. 499. For the vocalization *tagg'râ*, see Jastrow, 1903, p. 1647: s.v. *tagg'râ*: 'business, trade. Targ Zech. XIV, 21.' Compare Cathcart and Gordon, 1989, p. 226: 'and there shall never again be a trader in the Sanctuary of the Lord of hosts at that time.' Gordon adds a footnote running: 'MT "Canaanite", probably here in the sense of "trader" (cf. *b. Pes.* 50a). The reference to the temple's degeneration into a "house of trade" in John 2:16 may contain an allusion to this verse as understood by Tg. (LXX, Syr have "Canaanite").' Compare Roth, 1960, p. 180; Bruce, 1961, p. 351. *b. Pesachim* 50a insists that כנעני in Zech 14:21 should be taken to mean 'trader,' not 'Canaanite'. See Goldschmidt, 1930, 2.456–457.
- 22 See, e.g., Telford, 1980, pp. 45–9.
- 23 Neirynek, 1988, p. 133, records the following instances of sandwich composition in Mark: Mark 3:20–21, 31–35 and 22–30; 5:21–24, 35–43 and 25–34; 6:7–13, 30 and 14–29; 11:12–14, 20–25 and 15–19; 14:1–2, 10–11 and 3–9; 14:53–54, 66–72 and 55–65.
- 24 Telford, 1980, p. 44.
- 25 Telford, 1980, p. 45, who rightly points out that Mark 11:11 contains several Markan characteristics in style and vocabulary.
- 26 2 Kgdms 18:1–4 on Hezekiah, king of Judah; 2 Kgdms 22:3–23:25 on Josiah, king of Judah; 2 Chr 29:1–36 on Hezekiah; 2 Chr 34:3–35:19 on Josiah; see also Neh 13:4–9. Furthermore, as mentioned in the text above, 1 Macc 4:36–61 and 2 Macc 10:1–8 on Judas Maccabaeus, and *Ps Sol.* 17:33 on the future, ideal king, the son of David. I owe the list of passages just enumerated to Ms H. Nicole Roskam (Leiden), who is preparing a dissertation on the relationship between the character of Mark's Gospel as socio-political apologetics and its literary form.
- 27 De Jonge, 2000.
- 28 Entia non sunt multiplicanda sine ratione.
- 29 Nineham, 1963, p. 301.
- 30 Pace such authoritative critics as Bultmann, 1979, p. 59: 'Mk. 11:15–19 ist zwar die erzählte Handlung (Tempelreinigung) ein wahrscheinlich geschichtlicher Vorgang, doch wird er durch das angefügte Wort zur idealen Szene erhoben'; *ibid.* p. 36: 'altüberlieferte Szene V 15f' augmented with a „nachträgliche Deutung"; *ibid.*, p. 66: Mark 11:18 is a Markan addition; Nineham, 1963, p. 301; Lührmann, 1987, p. 193: 'Historisch steht hinter dieser Geschichte und ihrer Parallele bei Joh sicherlich ein demonstratives Auftreten Jesu im Jerusalemer Tempel'; and Hooker, 1991, pp. 263–8.

- 31 Ådna, 2000, esp. pp. 300–33.
- 32 Hooker, 1991, p. 36. She rightly notes (pp. 35–6) that the use of ‘the Lord’ in Mark 1:3 is a significant Christological development. In my view, the same Christological development underlies the pre-Markan story of the temple cleansing.
- 33 Tuckett, 2001b, p. 116, in a chapter on the Christology of Mark.
- 34 Hooker, 1991, p. 265.
- 35 Ibid.; Barrett, 1975, p. 14.
- 36 Hooker, 1991, p. 266. See also Hooker, 1982. The view that Mark saw the cleansing of the temple as pointing to the temple’s destruction is defended by Telford, 1980, pp. 58–9, on the redaction-critical ground that Mark added the logion on ‘this mountain’ that could be uprooted and cast into the sea by anyone who believed in the efficacy of faith (Mark 11:23). Telford argues that, in the context, ‘this mountain’ is to be seen as the Temple Mount.
- 37 Hooker, 1991, p. 267.
- 38 Barrett, 1975, p. 16.
- 39 Barrett, 1975, p. 20: ‘Thus the original Old Testament references [to Zech 14:21] were replaced by a composite quotation which may have been constructed for the purpose, or may (...) have already existed in another setting.’ Barrett also suggests that it was the word כִּנְעָנִי of Zech 14:21 which elicited the word κινῶν = ληστής or ζηλωτής and thus the quotation from Jer 7:11.
- 40 Neirynck, 1988, pp. 123, 134, 174.

APPENDIX ZECHARIAH IN MARK

<i>passage in Mark</i>	<i>theme</i>	<i>passage in Zechariah</i>	<i>status</i>
Mark 11:1	appearance on the Mount of Olives	Zech 14:4	doubtful
Mark 11:2, 7	entry into Jerusalem riding on a colt	Zech 9:9	probable
Mark 11:15	cleansing of the temple	Zech 14:21	plausible
Mark 14:24	a new covenant through blood	Zech 9:11	probable
Mark 14:27	the shepherd smitten and the sheep scattered	Zech 13:7	certain
Mark 15:39	the centurion looking at Jesus on the cross	Zech 12:10	possible

Zech 14:21 MT

לֹא־יִהְיֶה כְנַעֲנִי עוֹד בְּבֵית־יְהוָה צְבָאוֹת בַּיּוֹם הַהוּא:

Zech 14:21 LXX

καὶ οὐκ ἔσται Χαναναῖος οὐκέτι ἐν τῷ οἴκῳ κυρίου παντοκράτορος ἐν τῇ ἡμέρᾳ ἐκείνῃ

Zech 14:21 Aquila

Instead of Χαναναῖος Aquila reads μετάβολος, which Jeromes translates by *mercator*.