

Jesus with the Wild Animals in Mark 1.13

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The original Greek has been added in some
places, for convenience.

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That Jesus was with the wild animals during his testing by Satan in the wilderness after his baptism by John occurs within the Synoptic Gospels only in Mark 1.13.¹ This motif is often interpreted to mean that Jesus is living in peaceful, paradisaical harmony with the wild animals as a new Adam victorious over the temptations of Satan in contrast to the original Adam who lost this peaceful relationship with wild animals by his disobedience to God.² The following investigation aims to contribute to an alternative interpretation, namely, that this motif, rather than signifying that Jesus is in peaceful co-existence with the wild animals as a new Adam, is part of the menacing wilderness testing by Satan of

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Jesus, the antitypical embodiment of Israel, as the beloved Son and Servant of God.³

I. Jesus as a New Adam in Mark 1.12-13?

As many have noted, there are several serious problems with an Adam-Jesus typology in Mark 1.12-13: Whereas God "drove out" (ἐξέβαλεν) Adam from the garden *after* his temptation and disobedience (LXX Gen 3.24), the Spirit "drives out" (ἐκβάλλει) Jesus into the wilderness *before* he is tested by Satan (Mark 1.12). There is no correspondence in the story of Adam in the garden with the "forty days" that Jesus is tested by Satan in the wilderness (1.13). And whereas the serpent "seduced" or "deceived" (ἠπάτησεν) Eve in the lush *garden* (LXX Gen

¹ For recent discussions of the contrasts between the temptations of Jesus in Mark 1.12-13 and those in Matt 4.1-11 and Luke 4.1-13, see Richard Dormandy, "Jesus' Temptations in Mark's Gospel: Mark 1.12-13," *ExpTim* 114 (2003) 183-87; P.-M. Carré, "Regards sur l'Évangile selon saint Marc. IV— La tentation de Jésus au désert," *Esprit & Vie* 20 (2000) 15-19.

² Richard J. Bauckham, "Jesus and the Wild Animals (Mark 1.13): A Christological Image for an Ecological Age," *Jesus of Nazareth: Lord and Christ: Essays on the Historical Jesus and New Testament Christology* (eds. Joel B. Green and Max Turner; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1994) 3-21; Ulrich Mell, "Jesu Taufe durch Johannes (Markus 1,9-15)— zur narrativen Christologie vom neuen Adam," *BZ* 40 (1996) 161-78; Joel Marcus, *Mark 1-8: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary* (AB 27; New York: Doubleday, 2000) 168-71; John R. Donahue and Daniel J. Harrington, *The Gospel of Mark* (SP 2; Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 2002) 66; Francis J. Moloney, *The Gospel of Mark: A Commentary* (Peabody: Hendrickson, 2002) 38-39; Camille Focant, *L'évangile selon Marc* (Commentaire biblique: Nouveau Testament 2; Paris: Cerf, 2004) 70-71.

³ According to Bauckham ("Jesus and the Wild Animals," 6-7), the interpretation that Jesus with the wild animals indicates his status as the eschatological Adam who restores paradise "has been argued most fully and persuasively in recent discussion, and probably now commands the support of a majority of exegetes." But since this statement a number of exegetes have expressed dissatisfaction with this interpretation and have argued instead for the interpretation that Jesus is being tested as was Israel in the wilderness. The present investigation hopes to further promote and refine this interpretation. For recent interpretations of a Jesus-Israel rather than Jesus-Adam typology in 1.12-13, see Jeffrey B. Gibson, "Jesus' Wilderness Temptation According to Mark," *JSNT* 53 (1994) 3-34; idem, *The Temptations of Jesus in Early Christianity* (JSNTSup 112; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1995) 42-82; A. B. Caneday, "Mark's Provocative Use of Scripture in Narration: 'He Was with the Wild Animals and Angels Ministered to Him,'" *BBR* 9 (1999) 19-36; Jan Willem van Henten, "The First Testing of Jesus: A Rereading of Mark 1.12-13," *NTS* 45 (1999) 349-66; R. T. France, *The Gospel of Mark: A Commentary on the Greek Text* (NIGTC; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2002) 84-87.

3.13), Jesus is “tested” or “tempted” (πειραζόμενος) by Satan in the arid wilderness (Mark 1.13).⁴

In Eden God brought to Adam all the animals, both domestic and wild (Gen

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1.24-31), but Jesus was with only the wild animals (Mark 1.13). For a peaceful subjection of the wild animals to Jesus in a restored paradise we would expect to hear that the wild animals were *with Jesus*; but that Jesus was *with the wild animals* suggests that he was the object of their unfriendly threats just as he was the object of Satan’s unfriendly testing.⁵ Indeed, the very term “wild animals” (θηρία) “normally suggested evil rather than good, fierceness and opposition rather than docility and co-operation.”⁶ Furthermore, the function of the “wild animals” seems to be contrasted rather than paralleled with the function of the “angels” who were ministering to Jesus (1.13), a motif absent from the Eden story. And finally, Jesus is not portrayed as a new or eschatological Adam any where else in Mark’s Gospel.⁷

II. Chiastic Structure and Meaning of Mark 1.12-13

The position of the motif of Jesus with the wild animals within the chiasmic structure of Mark 1.12-13 supports its

interpretation as part of and parallel with the menacing testing of Jesus by Satan in the wilderness.⁸

A	And (καὶ) immediately the Spirit drove him out into the wilderness (v.12)	καὶ εὐθὺς τὸ πνεῦμα αὐτὸν ἐκβάλλει εἰς τὴν ἔρημον. (v.12)
B	and he was (καὶ ἦν) in the wilderness forty days tested by Satan (v.13a)	καὶ ἦν ἐν τῇ ἐρήμῳ τεσσαράκοντα ἡμέρας πειραζόμενος ὑπὸ τοῦ σατανᾶ (v.13a)
B'	and he was (καὶ ἦν) with the wild animals (v.13b)	καὶ ἦν μετὰ τῶν θηρίων (v.13b)
A'	but (καὶ) the angels were ministering to him (v.13c)	καὶ οἱ ἄγγελοι διηκόνουν αὐτῷ (v.13c)

Both the A and the A' units of this chiasm are introduced by the conjunction καὶ followed (after an intervening adverb, “immediately” [εὐθὺς], in the A unit) by noun subjects from the divine or heavenly realm— “the Spirit” and “the angels” respectively. In these parallel units Jesus is the *recipient* of divine or heavenly activity— driven out into the wilderness by God’s Spirit (v. 12) and ministered to by God’s angels (v. 13c) respectively. But both the B and the B' units are introduced by the conjunction καὶ followed immediately by the verb ἦν, “was,” with Jesus as the implied *subject*. This grammatical parallelism indicates

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that Jesus’ being with the wild animals in the B' unit (v. 13b) is a parallel part of his being tested by Satan in the wilderness for forty days in the B unit (v. 13a).

Furthermore, since in the final A' unit of the chiasm the introductory καὶ is followed by a noun subject in contrast to being followed by the verb ἦν, “was,” as in the B and B' units, it is best translated by an emphatic “but” rather than “and”— “but the angels were ministering to him” (v. 13c).⁹ In other words, although God’s Spirit drove Jesus out into the wilderness in the A unit, and although Jesus

⁴ Bauckham (“Jesus and the Wild Animals,” 19) discounts, rather unconvincingly in our opinion, the difficulty with the wilderness by stating that Jesus establishes peace with the wild animals “only representatively, in his own person, and so the objection that a restoration of paradise should not be located in the wilderness is beside the point.” Because there is no other trace of an Adam typology in Mark, Bauckham prefers to see in the wild animals a Davidic Messiah typology: “So it may be more relevant to recall that Isa 11.6-9, the classic vision of the messianic peace with wild animals, is connected with Isa 11.1-5, the classic prophecy of the Davidic Messiah. The peace with wild animals belongs to this Messiah’s righteous reign. Mark’s account of Jesus’ baptism (1.9-11), in which he is anointed with the Spirit (Isa 11.2) and addressed as God’s Son (Ps 2.7), identifies him as this Davidic Messiah, who therefore inaugurates the messianic age not only by overcoming Satan, but also by establishing the messianic peace with wild animals” (pp. 19-20). But Mark 1.13 does not speak of Jesus overcoming Satan and establishing peace with the wild animals so that “the possible parallels with Isaiah are simply too vague for any convincing case to be made,” according to Rikki. E. Watts, *Isaiah’s New Exodus and Mark* (WUNT 88; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1997) 118.

⁵ Robert Horton Gundry, *Mark: A Commentary on His Apology for the Cross* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1993) 58.

⁶ Gibson, *Temptations*, 67; see also Caneday, “Mark’s Provocative Use,” 33.

⁷ For a fuller discussion of the problems with a Jesus-Adam typology in Mark 1.12-13, see Gundry, *Mark*, 58-59; Gibson, *Temptations*, 65-67; Caneday, “Mark’s Provocative Use,” 32-33; van Henten, “First Testing,” 353-56.

⁸ The “balanced structure” of 1.13 alone proposed by Marcus (Mark 1-8, 169) is flawed, as it fails to take into account the close paratactical connection between v. 12 and v. 13 that joins both of these verses together in a single chiastically structured unit.

⁹ Caneday, “Mark’s Provocative Use,” 32-33: “within Mark’s context, it is likely that the function of ‘wild beasts’ and ‘angels’ is contrasted. They stand over against one another, with the conjunction καὶ being translated ‘but.’”

was being tested by Satan and part of that testing in the wilderness was being with the wild animals in the B and B' units, nevertheless, God's angels were ministering to him in the A' unit.¹⁰ Rather than being a parallel part of a paradisaic ministry by the angels, then, Jesus' being with the wild animals stands in sharp contrast to his being ministered to by the angels, and is rather a parallel part of his being tested by Satan.¹¹

Some maintain that the preposition "with" (μετὰ) in the statement that Jesus was with the wild animals signifies their subordination to him and his mastery over them—"that he has somehow subdued them."¹² Appeal for support of this view is made to Mark 3.14 where Jesus appointed the twelve apostles that they might be "with" him, to 5.18 where the man who had been possessed pleaded to be "with" Jesus, and to 14.67 where Peter is addressed as one who was "with" the Nazarene, Jesus. In none of these cases, however, does "with" indicate subordination to or mastery over. Indeed, in accord with its normal lexical meaning "with" in these texts simply means being in the presence of or associated with Jesus. That Jesus was "with" the wild animals, then, means not his mastery over them but his being in the presence of, in association with, in the midst of, or among the wild animals within the hostile environment of being tested by Satan in the wilderness for forty days.¹³

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III. Jesus, the Antitype of Israel as the Son and Servant of God

The motif of Jesus being with the wild animals as part of his being in the wilderness for forty days tested by Satan takes its place within the Marcan theme of Jesus as the

antitypical embodiment of Israel, the Son and Servant of God. This theme is introduced by the scriptural quotation in Mark 1.2-3, and receives further development in the scenes of Jesus' vision after his baptism by John in 1.9-11 and of Jesus' being tested by Satan in 1.12-13.

A. Mark 1.2-3 and Exod 23.20; Mal 3.1; Isa 40.3

The one whom the superscription of Mark (1.1) designates "Jesus Christ, Son of God" is addressed in Mark 1.2 by God himself, the speaker of the combined quotation from Exod 23.20 and Mal 3.1 that is included within a quotation from Isaiah the prophet in Mark 1.2-3:¹⁴

Exod 23.20: Behold, I send a messenger before you, to guard (φυλάξει, in LXX; צרף in MT) you on the way and to bring you to the land I have prepared for you (LXX).¹⁵

Mal 3.1: Behold, I send my messenger and he will prepare (περιβλέψεται in LXX; תכין in MT) the way before me, and the Lord whom you seek will suddenly come to his temple.

Mark 1.2: Behold, I send my messenger before you, who will prepare (κατασκευάσει) your way.

In Exod 23.20 the "way" refers to the "exodus" event of the people of Israel, the movement or "way" of salvation through which God's messenger-angel (ἄγγελος) delivered them from slavery in Egypt and brought them through the wilderness into the promised land. In Mal 3.1 the "way" alludes to the salvific coming of God himself into the temple to purify the priests (Mal 3.3). Mark 1.2 thus inserts "your way," the dynamic "way" of the constant and continual movement of Jesus to be illustrated in the narrative to follow, into the biblical tradition of

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God's "way" of salvation, the dynamic process by which God acts for the salvation of his people Israel. The "way" of Jesus in Mark 1.2 thus represents both the "way" of God and of God's people, Israel.¹⁶

¹⁰ Gibson, *Temptations*, 78: "in the biblical tradition and in Mark 'wild beasts' (θηρία) are hostile creatures and are presented as such in Mk 1.13b. They are congruent with Satan. They are denizens of the wilderness. They stand over against the angels who in this verse are said to be on Jesus' side."

¹¹ Gibson, *Temptations*, 66-67: "in Mk 1.13b the 'wild beasts' and angels stand over against one another. So, while either the reference to the beasts or the reference to the angels might be intended as an allusion to the idea of paradise, both references cannot be intended as such; and therefore an explanation of Mk 1.13b wholly in terms of a *Urzeit-Endzeit/Paradise* typology is incomplete and inadequate."

¹² Gibson, *Temptations*, 79; see also Caneday, "Mark's Provocative Use," 32.

¹³ Walter Radl, "μετὰ," *EDNT* 2.413: "In the local sense it means in the midst of, among, with: Mark 1.13: 'among the wild beasts.'" See also BDAG, 636-38. Gundry, *Mark*, 55: "What is rarely if ever remarked is that Mark does not put the wild beasts with Jesus; rather, Jesus with them. Since τῶν θηρίων connotes wildness, his being with them without harm, or even attack, carries Mark's point." But that Jesus was with the wild animals within the hostile environment of being tested in the wilderness implies danger from attack and possible harm.

¹⁴ The designation "Son of God" is missing from some manuscripts. For the reasons to accept it as original, see Gundry, *Mark*, 33, 39; Donahue and Harrington, *Mark*, 60; France, *Mark*, 49; Moloney, *Mark*, 29 n. 11.

¹⁵ For a comparison of the MT and LXX of Exod 23.20, see John William Wevers, *Notes on the Greek Text of Exodus* (SBLSCS 30; Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1990) 369.

¹⁶ Ermenegildo Manicardi, *Il cammino di Gesù nel Vangelo di Marco: Schema narrativo e tema cristologico* (AnBib 96; Rome: Biblical Institute, 1981) 148-57; John Paul Heil, *The Gospel of Mark as a Model for Action: A Reader-Response Commentary* (New York: Paulist, 1992) 28-29.

In Mark 1.2 “your way” refers to the way of Jesus, just designated as “Son (υἱός) of God” in 1.1. In the biblical tradition, especially in Exodus contexts, the people of Israel as a whole is also designated as God’s Son. In Exod 4.22 God tells Moses, “You shall say to Pharaoh, ‘Thus says the Lord, “Israel is my first-born son (υἱός in LXX).”” In Deut 1.31 in the wilderness God cares for Israel as any man cares for his son (υἱὸν in LXX). And in Deut 8.5 Moses tells the people of Israel, “as if any man should train his son (υἱὸν in LXX), so the Lord God will train you.”

In LXX Jer 38.9 God says, “I have become to Israel as a father and Ephraim is my first-born.” In LXX Jer 38.20, God says, “a beloved son (υἱός) is Ephraim to me, a pleasing child.” In Mal 3.17 God says of the people of Israel, “I will choose them as a man chooses his son (υἱὸν in LXX) who serves him.” In Wis 18.13 when the first-born of the Egyptians were destroyed, they acknowledged that the people of Israel was God’s son (υἱὸν). And in Hos 11.1 God says, “When Israel was a child I loved him and out of Egypt I called my son ([‘his sons’, τέκνα αὐτοῦ] in LXX).”¹⁷ The way of Jesus as Son of God in Mark 1.1-2 thus represents the way of Israel as Son of God in the Exodus event.

The wilderness context implicit in the quotation of Exod 23.20 in Mark 1.2 becomes explicit in the quotation of Isa 40.3 in Mark 1.3: “A voice of one crying out in the wilderness: ‘Make ready the way of the Lord, make straight his paths.’” In this quotation an anonymous “voice” crying in the wilderness urgently enjoins the people of Israel, God’s Son, to prepare for a new Exodus, a new “way” of salvation, the “way” by which the Lord God himself will lead his people from exile in Babylon through the wilderness and back to their homeland. The “way” and “paths” of the Lord express the dynamic process and movement by which God himself saves his people, God’s Son. This heralding voice thus sets the stage for the Marcan narrative to demonstrate how the Way of the Lord God for a new Exodus as the Way to eschatological salvation (1.3) will be accomplished by the Way of Jesus Christ, Son of God, the representative or embodiment of the people of Israel as Son of God (1.1-2).¹⁸

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The “voice of one crying out in the wilderness” (1.3) emerges as that of John the Baptizer who is “in the wilderness proclaiming a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins” (1.4). Although the “wilderness” rep-

¹⁷ Fritz Leo Lentzen-Deis, *Die Taufe Jesu nach den Synoptikern: Literarkritische und gattungsgeschichtliche Untersuchungen* (Frankfurter Theologische Studien 4; Frankfurt: Knecht, 1970) 184–85.

¹⁸ On “Lord” in Mark 1.3 as referring to God rather than Jesus, see Manicardi, *Il cammino*, 151-52.

resented a deserted and hostile area with such obstacles as lack of food and water and dangerous wild animals, for Israel it served ultimately as a special place of encounter with God and of the experience of God’s way of salvation in both the first and second Exodus events.¹⁹ By going out to John in the wilderness and being baptized by him while confessing their sins, “all the region of Judea and all the inhabitants of Jerusalem” (1.5), representative of Israel as God’s corporate Son, are, in accord with the quotation from Isaiah, making ready the salvific way of the Lord God (1.3). This situation of repentance in the wilderness for the forgiveness of sins prepares them for the “stronger one” to come after John, the one who will baptize them with the Holy Spirit (1.7-8).²⁰

B. Mark 1.9-11

By being baptized in the Jordan by John (1.9), Jesus, Son of God (1.1), indicates his solidarity with the sinful situation and repentance of the people of Israel in the wilderness (1.4-5) as God’s corporate Son. But after being baptized along with the other sons of Israel, Jesus is singled out as a very special son. Indeed, the voice of God that earlier addressed Jesus in the Isaian quotation, promising to send a messenger before “you” who will prepare “your” way (1.2) as Son of God (1.1), now addresses him directly from the heavens, declaring that “You are my beloved Son; with you I am well pleased!” (1.11).²¹

1. Isa 63.7–64.8

That God’s Spirit descends upon Jesus as God’s beloved Son in a context of the people of Israel repenting and confessing their sins in preparation for God’s new Exodus or “way” of salvation recalls for the audience of Mark how God’s Spirit descended upon Israel as a son loved by God to guide them on the “way” in a new Exodus context of repentance from their sinfulness in straying from God’s “way” in Isa 63.7–64.8.

In reference to the original Exodus event in Isa 63.9 God “loved” (ἀγαπᾶν in LXX; cf. ἀγαπητός in Mark 1.11) them, the people of Israel who are his children (63.7-8) and invoke him as their “Father” (63.16; 64.7). In 63.14 the

¹⁹ Ulrich W. Mauser, *Christ in the Wilderness: The Wilderness Theme in the Second Gospel and Its Basis in the Biblical Tradition* (SBT 39; Naperville, IL: Allenson, 1963) 15–52.

²⁰ In the biblical tradition the powerful “Spirit” of God accompanies and guides Israel along the salvific “way” of the Lord (Isa 63.11-14; Ezek 36.24-27). See Lentzen-Deis, *Taufe*, 158-60; Manicardi, *Il cammino*, 161-62.

²¹ For a full discussion of the literary genre of 1.10-11 as an “interpretive vision” (Deute-Vision), see Lentzen-Deis, *Taufe*.

“Spirit came down (κατέβη πνεῦμα in LXX; cf. πνεῦμα . . . καταβαίνον in Mark 1.10) from the Lord and guided them on the way (ὡδήγησεν),” the way on which in the Exodus event (63.11-13) God led Israel who had previously disobeyed and provoked the Holy Spirit God had placed in them (63.10-11). After they lament in 63.17, “Why have you caused us to stray, Lord, from your way (ὁδοῦ in LXX; cf. ὁδὸν in Mark 1.3)?,” Israel confesses that “we have sinned (ἡμάρτομεν in LXX), therefore we have been led astray” (64.4) and “you have delivered us up because of our sins (ἁμαρτίας in LXX; cf. Mark 1.5)” (64.6). But Israel as a “son” pleads to God, their “Father” (64.7), “Remember not our sins (ἁμαρτιῶν in LXX; cf. Mark 1.4) forever, but look on us for we are all your people” (64.8).²²

In this Isaian context Israel as God’s beloved son confesses their sins, by which they disobeyed and provoked the Holy Spirit, causing them to stray from God’s “way” of salvation. Their lamentful plea for God, their Father, not to remember their sins is an implicit plea for the descent of God’s Spirit upon them once again to save them from their sins and guide them on God’s “way” of salvation. In Mark, after John promised a “stronger one” who would baptize with the Holy Spirit (1.8) the people who had confessed their sins (1.4-5) to make ready the salvific “way” of the Lord (1.3), the Spirit descended upon Jesus as God’s beloved Son (1.10-11). Jesus as God’s beloved Son, then, has been given God’s Spirit to guide Israel as God’s sinful Son on God’s new Exodus “way” of salvation.

2. LXX Jer 38.8-9, 19-20

In LXX Jer 38.8-9 in a new Exodus context in which God promises to bring Israel back from exile, God declares that “I will cause them to lodge by channels of water on a straight way (ὁδῶ) and they will surely not be led astray on it, for I have become to Israel as a father and Ephraim is my first-born” (38.9). But in 38.19 Israel declares to God that “after my captivity I repented (μετενόησα; cf. μετανοίας in Mark 1.4), and after I knew, I groaned for a day of shame, and I showed you that I received reproach from my youth.” Then, in a statement

²² Ivor Buse, “The Marcan Account of the Baptism of Jesus and Isaiah LXIII,” *JTS* 7 (1956) 74–75; Lentzen-Deis, *Taufe*, 158–60; Manicardi, *Il cammino*, 161–62; Joel Marcus, *The Way of the Lord: Christological Exegesis of the Old Testament in the Gospel of Mark* (Louisville: Westminster/Knox, 1992) 49–50; Watts, *Isaiah’s New Exodus*, 107–8: “Jesus himself is apparently presented as being equivalent to, or representative of, Israel. This identification finds further support not only in Mark’s recalling the more general staples of Israel’s founding moment such as desert, water, and ‘forty days’, but also his emphasis on the baptism’s correspondence with the distinctive features of the Isaianic account of that inaugural event (Isa 63.11ff; cf. 1 Cor 10.1ff).”

that bears a remarkable resemblance to Mark 1.11 but has been largely ignored by Marcan scholarship, God declares in 38.20, “A beloved son

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to me (υἱὸς ἀγαπητὸς . . . ἐμοί; cf. ὁ υἱὸς μου ὁ ἀγαπητὸς in Mark 1.11) is Ephraim, a pleasing child (παιδίον ἐντρυφῶν; cf. ‘with you I am well pleased’ [ἐν σοὶ εὐδόκησα] in Mark 1.11), for because my words are in him I will surely remember him; therefore I hastened to him; I will surely have mercy upon him, says the Lord.”²³

Here is more background for an Israel–Jesus, rather than an Adam–Jesus typology in Mark’s prologue. As God declared Israel to be his beloved and favored son with a promise of mercy in response to their repentance in LXX Jer 38.19-20, so God declares Jesus to be his beloved and favored son after the people of Israel, including Jesus himself, have been baptized with John’s baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins in Mark 1.4-11.

3. Isa 42.1

Another text from a new Exodus context that Mark 1.10-11 is commonly seen as alluding to is Isa 42.1, which refers to Israel not as the “son” but somewhat similarly as the “servant” (παῖς) of God. As God declares Jesus to be “my beloved (ἀγαπητὸς) son” in Mark 1.11, so God in Isa 41.8 declares, “But you, Israel, are my servant Jacob . . . whom I have loved (ἠγάπησα in LXX).” And in Isa 44.2 God declares, “Fear not, my servant Jacob and beloved (ἠγαπημένος) Israel whom I have chosen.”

As God in Mark 1.11 declares to Jesus, “With you I am well pleased (ἐν σοὶ εὐδόκησα),” so God in LXX Isa 42.1 declares, “Jacob is my servant, I will help him; Israel is my chosen, my soul has accepted (προσεδέξατο) him,” and in MT Isa 42.1, “Here is my servant whom I uphold, my chosen one with whom my soul is pleased (הִנְיָצְרִי).” And as the Spirit (πνεῦμα) descended on Jesus as God’s beloved Son in Mark 1.10, so in Isa 42.1 God declares concerning Israel, God’s beloved servant, “I have put my Spirit (πνεῦμά) upon him.”²⁴

²³ For an insightful application of LXX Jer 38.20 to the Matthean account of Jesus’ baptism, see Jeffrey A. Gibbs, “Israel Standing with Israel: The Baptism of Jesus in Matthew’s Gospel (Matt 3.13–17),” *CBQ* 64 (2002) 511–26, esp. 515–20. For Israel as God’s “beloved” Son in an Exodus context, see also Hos 11.1: “When Israel was a child I loved (ἠγάπησα in LXX; cf. ἀγαπητὸς in Mark 1.11) him, and out of Egypt I called my son (‘his children’ in LXX).” Isaac is called Abraham’s “beloved” (ἀγαπητὸς in LXX) son in Gen 22.2, 12, 16, but he is not called God’s beloved son and there does not seem to be a prominent Isaac-Jesus typology in Mark.

²⁴ Lentzen-Deis, *Taufe*, 156–58.

The allusion to the Isaian servant of God in Mark 1.10-11 has a threefold significance for this investigation. First, as “Son of God” is both a corporate concept referring to Israel and an individual concept referring to Jesus, so the Isaian “servant” of God is both a corporate and an individual concept. In Isa 42.1 (LXX) and 49.3 the “servant” refers to the whole people of Israel, but in Isa 42.6 and 49.6 the “servant” refers to an individual within but distinct from the people of

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Israel as a whole.²⁵ Thus, Jesus as both the individual “Servant” and “Son of God” represents or embodies Israel as both the corporate “Servant” and “Son of God.”²⁶

Second, the Isaian servant as an individual is empowered with God’s Spirit to act for the salvific benefit of the whole people of Israel. In Isa 42.6 God designates the servant as “a covenant for a people (γένους in LXX; *ἄν* in MT),” presumably the people of Israel.²⁷ And in Isa 49.5-6 the role of the servant is to regather and establish again the dispersed people of Israel. Similarly, Jesus as the individual Servant and beloved Son of God is empowered with God’s Spirit to act for the salvific benefit of the people who have confessed their sins, been baptized with John’s baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins (Mark 1.4-5), and are awaiting a baptism with the Holy Spirit from a “stronger one” to come after John (1.7-8).

Third, the Isaian servant is empowered with God’s Spirit not only on behalf of Israel but for the nations of Gentiles. In Isa 42.1 God declares about the servant, “I have put my Spirit upon him; he will bring forth justice to the nations (ἐθνέσιν in LXX).” “In his name nations (ἔθνη) will hope,” according to LXX Isa 42.4. And the servant “will be a light to the nations (ἐθνῶν in LXX)” in Isa 42.6 and 49.6.²⁸ This inserts into the Marcan prologue the implication that Jesus as the Servant and Son of God has been empowered with God’s Spirit to act not only on behalf of Israel but for the nations of Gentiles as well. But this implication will not be developed until later in the narrative. During his teaching aimed at restoring the Jerusalem temple to its original purpose, Jesus quotes Isa 56.7 in Mark 11.17: “My house shall be called a house of prayer

²⁵ Gibbs, “Israel Standing with Israel,” 523.

²⁶ What Gibbs (“Israel Standing with Israel,” 524) says for Matthew also applies for Mark: “‘Israel’ is summed up in Jesus; similarly Jesus is himself the one who embodies the figure of Yahweh’s servant.”

²⁷ Gibbs, “Israel Standing with Israel,” 523: “If ‘people’ here refers to Israel, then there is an individualistic cast to the figure of the servant, for he is distinguished from the nation Israel as one who acts on their behalf.”

²⁸ Gibbs, “Israel Standing with Israel,” 524: “Jesus at his baptism is both ‘Israel for Israel’ and ‘Yahweh’s servant for the Gentiles.’”

for all nations (ἐθνέσιν).” And in 13.10 the gospel that Jesus brings is to be preached to all nations (ἔθνη).²⁹

C. Mark 1.12-13

In Mark 1.12-13 the Spirit that descended upon Jesus as God’s beloved and favored Son immediately drives him out into the wilderness where he remained for forty days, tested by Satan. He was with wild animals, but the angels ministered to him. For the Marcan audience this is reminiscent of how God led Israel as God’s

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Son out of Egypt and into the wilderness under the guidance of the Spirit (cf. Isa 63.14) for forty years for the purpose of training and teaching Israel as a father trains and teaches his son— a training and teaching that included being tested or tempted in a wilderness where there are wild animals. But throughout this training and teaching God provided for and protected Israel as God’s Son, so that this training and teaching ultimately results in a beneficial outcome for Israel. Most of the background for this is found in Deut 8.1-16.

1. Deut 8.1-16

That God’s Spirit “drives out” (ἐκβάλλει) Jesus as God’s beloved Son into the wilderness (ἐρημον) in Mark 1.12 recalls how God was the one who “led out” (ἐξαγαγόντος) Israel from slavery in Egypt and through “that great and terrible wilderness (ἐρήμου)” in Deut 8.14-15.³⁰ As Jesus was in the wilderness for “forty” days in Mark 1.13, so Israel was in the wilderness for “forty” years in Deut 8.2,4.³¹

That Jesus was being “tested” or “tempted” (πειραζόμενος) by Satan in the wilderness in Mark 1.13 recalls how God told Israel to remember all the way that the Lord God led them in the wilderness in order to “tempt” or “test” (ἐκπειράσει, in LXX; cf. πειράζει in LXX Deut 13.4) them to see if they would keep his commandments or not in Deut 8.2,16.³² The reason for this testing was to

²⁹ John Paul Heil, “The Narrative Strategy and Pragmatics of the Temple Theme in Mark,” *CBQ* 59 (1997) 76-100, esp. 78-80, 91.

³⁰ See also LXX Ezek 20.10: “I led them out (ἐξήγαγον) of the land of Egypt and brought them into the wilderness (ἐρημον).”

³¹ Susan R. Garrett, *The Temptations of Jesus in Mark’s Gospel* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998) 56-57; Bas M. F. van Iersel, *Mark: A Reader-Response Commentary* (JSNTSup 164; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1998) 102.

³² In Mark 1.13 it is “Satan” who does the testing of Jesus. As Otto Böcher (“σατανᾶς,” *EDNT* 3.234) points out, “Above all, however, Satan is the tempter (cf. Job 1.6-12; 2.1-7) and seducer. He is the originator of both sin and wickedness.” Donahue and Harrington, *Mark*, 66: “The term ‘Satan’ means ‘the adversary.’ In some OT texts Satan is a member of the heavenly court who tests the fidelity of God’s chosen ones (Job 6.6-12; Zech 3.1). By the NT period, however, ‘Satan’ is synonymous with diabolos, the devil.”

train and teach Israel as God's Son, according to Deut 8.5 where God says to Israel: "And you shall know in your heart, that as if any man should train (παιδεύσαι in LXX) his son, so the Lord your God will train (παιδεύσει in LXX) you."³³ And according to LXX Deut 32.10 God maintained Israel in the wilderness; God led him around and "trained" or "instructed" (ἐπαίδευσεν) him and "kept him as the apple of his eye." As for Israel, so Jesus' testing in the wilderness is part of his training, teaching, instruction, and discipline as God's beloved Son.³⁴

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That Jesus "was with the wild animals (θηρίων)" in Mark 1.13 as part of his testing in the wilderness as God's beloved Son corresponds to Israel's instructional and disciplinary testing as God's Son that also included being with hostile and menacing wild animals in the wilderness. In Deut 8.15 God led Israel "through that great and terrible wilderness with its biting serpents and scorpions." After Israel complained as to why God and Moses brought them out of Egypt to die in the wilderness, God sent deadly serpents among the people, which bit the people so that many of them died in Num 21.5-6.³⁵ In LXX Deut 7.22 God describes the wilderness as a place where the threat of numerous wild animals would be overwhelming for Israel: "lest the land become wilderness and the wild animals (θηρία) of the field become too numerous for you."³⁶ And in Ezek 34.5 God promises to destroy evil "wild animals" (θηρία in LXX) from the land so that Israel may dwell securely in the wilderness.³⁷

Although being with hostile wild animals in the wilderness is part of Jesus' testing and training as God's be-

loved Son, it ultimately resulted in God's provision and protection of Jesus in the wilderness, as "the angels were ministering to him" in Mark 1.13. Similarly, Israel's testing and training as God's Son results in God ultimately benefiting them. In Deut 8.16 God tells Israel how he fed them with manna in the wilderness that he might afflict them and "test" (ἐκπειράσει, in LXX) them, but do good to them in the end (MT) or in their later days (LXX).³⁸

2. LXX Ps 77.19, 24-25; Wis 16.20

That the angels were "ministering" (διηκόνουν) to Jesus in Mark 1.13 can mean that they were serving him with food and/or serving him in general, that is, caring for his livelihood.³⁹ Jesus' being

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served food by the angels would be appropriate in view of the wilderness as a place scarce in customary food (cf. 1.4, 6; Dan 4.32-33) and would accord with the way Israel was fed by God in the wilderness. In LXX Ps 77.19 Israel questioned whether God will be able to prepare a table in the wilderness, and in vv. 24-25 God rained upon them manna to eat and gave them bread of heaven; "mortals ate the bread of angels (ἀγγέλων)."⁴⁰ And in Wis 16.20 it is said of God that "you nourished your people with food of angels (ἀγγέλων)."⁴¹

3. LXX Ps 90.11-13

That the angels were ministering to Jesus in the general sense of caring for his livelihood would also be appropriate in view of the danger and hostility connoted by his being with wild animals in the wilderness.⁴² As God's beloved and favored Son (1.11) Jesus would surely qualify as one to whom God promises protection from wild

³³ For the meaning of παιδεύω as "train and teach" in Deut 8.5, see Takamitsu Muraoka, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the Septuagint: Chiefly of the Pentateuch and the Twelve Prophets* (Louvain: Peeters, 2002) 428.

³⁴ In *Pss. Sol.* 13.9 it is stated that God "will instruct (νοουθετήσῃ) the righteous as a beloved son (υἱὸν ἀγαπήσεως; cf. ὁ υἱὸς μου ὁ ἀγαπητός in Mark 1.11) and his training (παιδεία) will be as for a first-born." On the "testing" of God's Son in the wilderness, see Birger Gerhardsson, *The Testing of God's Son* (Matt 4.1-11 & Par) (ConBNT 2; Lund: Gleerup, 1966).

³⁵ For a comparison between MT and LXX Num 21.5-6, see John William Wevers, *Notes on the Greek Text of Numbers* (SBLSCS 46; Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1998) 141-42. In Wis 16.5 it is the "dire venom of wild animals (θηρίων; cf. Mark 1.13)" that came upon the people of Israel in the wilderness.

³⁶ For a comparison between MT and LXX Deut 7.22, see John William Wevers, *Notes on the Greek Text of Deuteronomy* (SBLSCS 39; Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1995) 140-41.

³⁷ On the wilderness as an uninviting and inhospitable place to dwell because of the threat of hostile wild animals, see also Zeph 2.13-14. "Wild animals" (θηρία) are closely associated with "demons" (δαμόνια) in an uninhabited place in LXX Isa 13.21-22; see also 34.13-14. France, *Mark*, 86: "Wild animals are part of the imagery of dangerous places like the wilderness."

³⁸ For a comparison between MT and LXX Deut 8.16, see Wevers, *Deuteronomy*, 153. For the LXX Wevers prefers the translation, "that you might prosper," instead of "that he (God) might do good to you."

³⁹ Alfons Weiser, "διακονέω," *EDNT* 1.302: "The original frame of reference for the use of the entire word group of the διακ- stem in secular Greek was that of table service. The basic meaning of the vb., correspondingly, was wait on tables. From this meaning the wider sense has been derived: care for one's livelihood, and finally serve in general." In the other places in Mark where someone "serves" Jesus (διηκο' νει in 1.31; διηκόνουν in 15.41), it could include but is not necessarily limited to the serving of food. That Jesus did "not come to be served but to serve (διακονηθῆναι ἀλλὰ διακονήσαι)" in 10.45 refers to the more general meaning of "serve."

⁴⁰ Albert Pietersma, *A New English Translation of the Septuagint: The Psalms* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000) 76.

⁴¹ Gundry, *Mark*, 55: "The position of the subject οἱ ἄγγελοι before its verb διηκόνουν emphasizes that they are no less than the angels who give Jesus food-service throughout this period." In 1 Kgs 19.4-7 a single "angel of the Lord" provided food for Elijah in the wilderness.

⁴² France, *Mark*, 86: "Biblical usage suggests, therefore, that θηρία are to be understood, where there is no indication to the contrary, as hostile and dangerous to humans, who need protection from them."

animals through the agency of the angels in LXX Ps 90.11-13: "For he will command his angels (ἄγγελοι) concerning you to guard you in all your ways. On their hands they will bear you up, so that you will not dash your foot against a stone. You will tread on asp and cobra, and lion and dragon you will trample under foot."⁴³

To sum up, that Jesus was baptized with John's baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins places him in solidarity with the sinful and repentant situation of his people, Israel (Mark 1.4-9), as God's Son (cf. Isa 63.7-64.8). But Jesus is distinguished from this people by being given the Spirit and being declared God's beloved and favored Son by God himself (1.10-11). He is thus the "stronger one" who is able to baptize them with the Holy Spirit (1.7-8). Mark 1.12-13 indicates

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to Mark's audience God's angelic care and protection for Jesus throughout the forty days of his "testing" and thus "training" as God's Son in the wilderness, just as Israel for forty years was "tested" and "trained" as God's Son in the wilderness. Jesus' being served by angels while he was with wild animals during his testing in the wilderness confirms and reinforces for the audience that Jesus is God's beloved and favored Son and Servant empowered with the Spirit to act on behalf of the people of Israel as God's sinful yet repentant Son.

IV. Significance of Mark 1.13 for the Subsequent Narrative

In Mark 1.4-5 the people of Israel, while confessing their "sins" (ἁμαρτίας), are baptized with John's baptism of repentance for the "forgiveness of sins" (ἀφεσιν ἁμαρτιῶν). In 2.5 Jesus declares God's forgiveness to a paralytic son of Israel, "Child, your sins are forgiven (ἀφιένται σου αἱ ἁμαρτίαι)." After some of the scribes ask themselves, "Who can forgive sins (ἀφιέναι ἁμαρτίας) but God alone?" in 2.7, Jesus pronounces that as the Son of Man he has God's heavenly authority "to forgive sins (ἀφιέναι ἁμαρτίας) on earth" in 2.9. Jesus as God's beloved and favored Son, empowered with God's Spirit, has God's authority to forgive sins on earth because he was able to withstand his testing by Satan, the

source of sinfulness, when God's angels ministered to him in the midst of wild animals in 1.13.⁴⁴

When scribes from Jerusalem accuse Jesus of driving out demons by the prince of demons, Beelzebul (3.22), he replies, "How can Satan drive out Satan?" (3.23), and goes on to point out in 3.26-27 that "if Satan has risen up against himself and is divided, he cannot stand but has his end; but no one can enter the house of a strong one (ἰσχυροῦ) to plunder his property, unless he first binds the strong one (ἰσχυρόν), and then he will plunder his house." The audience of Mark knows from 1.7-8 that Jesus is the "stronger one" (ἰσχυρότερος) to come after John and baptize with the Holy Spirit. As the "stronger one," Jesus has "bound" Satan, the "strong one," when he withstood with the help of God's angels the testing of Satan in the wilderness that included his being with wild animals in 1.13. Rather than driving out demons by the power of Satan, then, Jesus drives them out by the power of the Spirit given him as God's beloved Servant and Son (1.11-12).⁴⁵

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In 8.11 Pharisees sought from Jesus a sign from heaven, "testing" (πειράζοντες) him. In 8.33 Jesus addresses Peter as "Satan" because his attempt to prevent Jesus from going the way of suffering and death amounts to a diabolical "testing" of Jesus. In 10.2 Pharisees ask Jesus if it is lawful for a husband to divorce his wife, "testing" (πειράζοντες) him. And in 12.15 Jesus asks the Pharisees and Herodians who question him on paying the tax to Caesar, "Why are you testing (πειράζετε) me?" As Jesus prevailed over his being "tested" (πειραζόμενος) by Satan in the wilderness, which included his being with wild animals, but ministered to by God's angels in 1.13, he is able to prevail over these subsequent "testings."

In 1.24 a man with an unclean spirit knows that Jesus is "the Holy One of God." In 3.11 whenever unclean spirits saw Jesus they would fall down before him and cry out, "You are the Son of God!" And in 5.7 a man with an unclean spirit cried out in a loud voice, "What have you to do with me, Jesus, Son of the Most High God?" These unclean spirits know the more profound identity of Jesus as God's beloved and favored Son empowered with the Spirit (1.10-11) to expel them from Israel, God's Son, because Jesus overcame his testing by Satan, leader of

⁴³ Pietersma, *Psalms*, 91. France (*Mark*, 87) states: "οἱ ἄγγελοι διηκόνου αὐτῷ supplies the opposite side to the hostility of Satan and the animals. Jesus is not alone in his conflict. If angelic protection is afforded to all who 'make Yahweh their refuge' (Ps. 91.11-13), how much more to the Son of God?" August Strobel, "θήριον," *EDNT* 2.148-49: "According to Mark 1.13 Jesus, when he was tempted by Satan, was driven out to the dangers of the wilderness among the wild beasts. Inasmuch as it is said that he was served by the angels, no fellowship with the beasts in the sense of a paradiselike situation could be intended."

⁴⁴ Note the relation between forgiveness of sins and the Holy Spirit in Mark 3.28-29.

⁴⁵ Frank J. Matera, "The Prologue as the Interpretative Key to Mark's Gospel," *JSNT* 34 (1988) 3-20, esp. 9: "Thus when Jesus tells the scribes that 'no one can enter a strong man's house and plunder his goods, unless he first binds the strong man' (3.27), the reader understands what the scribes do not. Jesus is the one who plunders Satan's house because he has already confronted Satan."

the unclean spirits, in the wilderness that included his being with wild animals but ministered to by God's angels in 1.13.⁴⁶

V. Conclusion

That Jesus was with wild animals in Mark 1.13 does not mean that he is the new Adam who has restored a paradisaical co-existence with the wild animals. Rather, Jesus' being with wild animals is part of his being tested by Satan and thus trained in the wilderness as God's Son, just as Israel as God's Son was tested and trained in the wilderness during the Exodus event. That Jesus was with wild animals but the angels ministered to him confirms and reinforces for the audience that Jesus is indeed the beloved and favored Son and Servant of God empowered with God's Spirit (1.10-11) to "baptize" with the Holy Spirit (1.8) the sinful and repentant Son of God, Israel (1.4-5).

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Jesus as God's Son "baptizes" with the Holy Spirit (1.8) Israel as God's Son by healing them and forgiving their sins (2.1-12), by expelling Satanic demons and unclean spirits from them as the "stronger one" who has bound Satan (3.22-30), and by prevailing over all subsequent Satanic "testings" from those who misunderstand and oppose his way of suffering, death and resurrection, by which he actualizes the salvific "Way of the Lord" (1.3) not only for Israel but for all peoples. Jesus is able to prevail over all subsequent Satanic "testings" because with the aid of God's angels he persevered and prevailed over his testing by Satan in the wilderness that included his being with wild animals.

⁴⁶ Robert L. Humphrey, *Narrative Structure and Message in Mark: A Rhetorical Analysis* (Studies in the Bible and Early Christianity 60; Lewiston: Mellen, 2003) 44-45: "Jesus goes about his mission as God's Son beset by a succession of 'Satan's,' adversaries such as the unclean spirits and demons, the scribes, Pharisees and Herodians, his family and fellow townspeople, even his own disciples who continually misunderstand, oppose, deny, and betray him, and finally the chief priests, scribes and elders, and the Roman governor and soldiers who bring him to the cross. As Jesus hangs on the cross, his adversaries seem to have won the struggle and triumphed over him. Not until after three days does God have the last word and raise up his Beloved Son to go before his disciples to Galilee. Testing and struggle with Satan continues throughout the narrative— and it continues into the world of the audience who must take up their own crosses, undergo their own testing, and follow Jesus."