

Community versus Communities: The Gerasene Demoniac Depicting Authors of the
Synoptic Gospels' Agendas

By

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Abstract

New Testament scholars have debated whether the gospels were written for specific early Christian communities or include bias from particular communities, instead of being written for the religious tradition as a whole.¹ Both form critics and redaction critics emphasize that the stories in these books are collections of oral sources that have been circulated around folk communities for decade before being written.² Thus, the author of the Gospel of Mark edited the oral sources that he had heard of when he wrote his own version in his gospel. Then the authors of the Gospel of Matthew and the Gospel of Luke used the Gospel of Mark and some additional sources to edit their own versions into their gospels. By doing this, there are three similar accounts of the life of Jesus, however, the messages that are revealed through each account differ, because each author/editor was writing for their own specific community of followers. I will demonstrate how to determine each of the authors' objectives and concerns by initially analyzing the Gerasene demoniac story in Mark 5:1-20 through the application of Bultmann's form critical and demythologizing methodology, and then examine the redactional differences amongst the synoptic gospels. At first glance, the Gerasene demoniac pericope depicts the power of Jesus, as he enters a Gentile community and exorcises a legion of demons from a citizen walking around the tombs into a herd of swine, which in turn, drown themselves in the nearby lake. Through the stages of analysis however, this paper will demonstrate that there is a deeper meaning rooted in the text. The significance of this analysis is to illustrate that each author of the synoptic gospels was both influenced by their community of followers, as well as social constructions and thus, exterior factors affected their written work. Therefore, conclusions can be made that each author wrote with a specific objective for a specific community, as well as provide insight into who these members of each community were. This analysis will allow for an educated hypothesis to be made about why each author wrote his gospel, as well as what he was trying to illustrate in his work for his community of followers.

¹ Thomas Kazen, "Sectarian Gospels for some Christians? Intention and Mirror Reading in the Light of Extra-Canonical Texts," *New Testament Studies* 51 (2005): 562, DOI:10.1017/S0028688505000299

² Stanley Stowers, "The Concept of 'Community' and the History of Early Christianity," *Method and Theory in the Study of Religion* 23 (2011): 240.

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I. Introduction

For years, scholars have struggled with the identity of the man called Jesus. Was he an apocalyptic preacher, a Cynic sage, a teacher, the Jewish messiah, or a prophet? The optimum sources scholars have to begin to answer these questions are the gospels (both canonical and non-canonical). Thus, can individuals use the canonical gospels and other material about Jesus to create a biography of the man and not just examine whom the Jesus of doctrine/faith was? Furthermore, can his two natures actually be separated? There has been an entire quest devoted to answering these questions that I pose; scholars throughout the various stages of the ‘quest for the historical Jesus’ have proposed differing theories to who Jesus actually was. To be able to understand who Jesus was however, one must first examine the sources that provide information about the man. Therefore, this paper will examine the sources, in particular, the Gospel of Mark, in hopes of concluding whether the information provided might be used to learn about Jesus or if the material sheds insight into particular early Christ groups instead.

In the beginning of his chapter “For Whom were Gospels Written?” in *The Gospels for all Christians: Rethinking the Gospel Audiences*, Richard Bauckham asks two questions, which are essential to consider when studying New Testament texts. The first is whether the texts were written for Christians or non-Christians, which he concludes that the gospels (the texts he is focusing on) were in fact, written for Christians. The second is whether the gospels were written for a general Christian audience or for

specific Christian audiences.³ It is the latter question that will be the focus of my paper. By examining the Gospel of Mark, focusing on the pericope of Mark 5:1-20, I will demonstrate how the author wrote for a specific community and thus draw conclusions about the author's objective, the social situation of his time, and the message he wanted to share with his community. Therefore, by applying Bultmann's demythologizing methodology to a New Testament narrative, I will not only illustrate how biblical scholars may gain insight about the historicity of the text, but also demonstrate how individuals may discover information about authorship, objectives of the authors, bias and influences that arose based on the community of followers, ideologies of the 'primitive' Christian community, and the early Christ followers' theological framework.⁴ Thus, initially applying Bultmann's demythologizing program to Mark 5:1-20 will allow us to highlight the very real socio-historical situation the community is facing in Roman occupied Palestine, as well as their desire for freedom from Roman oppression, and then compare the corresponding passages in the synoptic gospels to distinguish the redactional differences.

I. A. Methodology

To illustrate that in fact, the author of the Gospel of Mark wrote for a community of followers in which he expected to relay particular meaning as well as both intentionally and unintentionally reflect the concerns of his community in his gospel, we will be focusing on applying Rudolf Bultmann's form critical and demythologizing

³ Richard Bauckham, "For Whom were the Gospels Written?" in *The Gospels for all Christians: Rethinking the Gospel Audiences*, ed., Richard Bauckham (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1998), 9-10.

⁴ Edgar V. McKnight, *What is Form Criticism?* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1969), 19-20; Rudolf Bultmann, "The Study of the Synoptic Gospels," in *Form Criticism: Two Essays on New Testament Research by Rudolf Bultmann and Karl Kundsinn*, trans. Frederick C. Grant (New York: Harper & Row, 1966), 17.

methodology to the pericope Mark 5:1-20. We will commence with a brief explanation to highlight how source critics have concluded that Mark was the first of the four canonical gospels to be written, followed by a brief literature review of some of the material that scholars have written exploring gospel community theory. In addition, we will examine the redactional differences between the synoptic gospels to demonstrate that both the authors of the Gospel of Matthew and the Gospel of Luke have their own agenda and thus, each of the gospel authors are influenced in their writing by their own community.

To successfully explain how each author wrote their gospel for a specific community of followers, it is necessary to first explore what evidence scholars are providing that oppose community theory. Therefore, the first section of this paper will provide a brief literature review of some of the material that denies the gospel community theory. This section will focus on the work of Richard Bauckham. However, in addition to Bauckham, we will also examine an article written by Stanley Stowers, a book by Richard Burridge, as well as some evidence provided by Ben Witherington III from his commentary on the Gospel of Mark. Moreover, we will use an article by Thomas Kazen to challenge the above authors' arguments. A quick synopsis of these scholars illustrates that they argue that the gospels were written for a vast amount of people due to their origin and style of how the stories in the gospels are presented. Thus, this section will provide a more in-depth analysis of these works, so that we may then further challenge their claims when applying Bultmann's methodology as well as exploring redactional differences amongst the synoptic gospels.

After providing the necessary foundation for the paper, we will move on to applying various methodological approaches to the Gerasene demoniac, first in Mark 5:1-

20 and followed by the corresponding passages in the Gospels of Matthew and Luke. The second section will be an analysis of Mark 5:1-20. As Mark was the first of the four canonical gospel authors to write his version of the story,⁵ it is key to commence with a more in-depth analysis of his version. The analysis will apply Bultmann's form critical and demythologizing methods to the pericope in order to exemplify how the author depicts the concerns of his community within the story that was initially circulated orally. Bultmann argued that the gospels were developed out of the kerygma or the preaching of the early church, and that the gospels finished what the earliest oral communities had started,⁶ thus the authors used the oral stories or teachings of the early Christ communities, but edited them in a way that emphasized different objectives based on their community of followers.

After having a thorough analysis of the Gerasene demoniac from the first canonical gospel to be written, the final section will examine the redactional differences between this pericope and the corresponding texts in the Gospels of Matthew and Luke. The purpose of this analysis is to examine the differences the authors of the other two synoptic gospels made to Mark to illustrate that each author had their own objective. Redaction critics analyze texts to reveal the motivation behind them, which critics believe is revealed through the author's arrangement of his/her material, any modifications an author made to the original source/material, or any addition of new material and/or new forms.⁷ Therefore, this section will first explore the alterations that the author of the Gospel of Luke made to the original source found in the Gospel of Mark, in regards to

⁵ Although the Markan Priority is highly agreed upon amongst New Testament scholars, there is a small, yet loud contingent of scholars who argue that the Gospel of Matthew was written first.

⁶ Adela Yarbro Collins, *Mark: A Commentary* (Hermeneia. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2007), 19-21.

⁷ Norman Perrin, *What is Redaction Criticism?*, ed. Dan O. Via Jr., (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1969), 1.

word choice and themes. This will be followed by a similar analysis of the Gospel of Matthew and what the author changed in his gospel from Mark's gospel. This process will emphasize the objective of each author, and how changing a few words can alter the entire meaning of passages.

I. B. Mark Came Before the Others

Before we can commence with an analysis of the Gerasene demoniac pericope, it is imperative to briefly explain the important conclusions most source critics developed. New Testament form criticism (which will be examined in the third section of this paper) developed out of source criticism, which, by the beginning of the twentieth century, had recognized the existence of the Synoptic problem of who wrote the first gospel. By realizing that there were similarities and differences amongst the literary material in the synoptic gospels, critics began to question the relationship between the three gospels.⁸ This questioning led scholars to conclude that due to the length of Mark in comparison to the other two synoptic gospels, his poor Greek grammar, various verbal and literary agreements as well as disagreements amongst the three, and the harshness of Mark's description of the apostles, the Gospel of Mark was the first of the three Gospels to be written (the "Markan priority" solution to the synoptic problem).⁹

As a result, source critics concluded that the gospels were not purely historical sources in the sense that they could not be relied on to provide complete insight into the historical Jesus and his environment. In addition, critics also deduced that the gospels were not purely theological frameworks used for multiple Christian communities, as they

⁸ Robert H. Stein, *The Synoptic Problem: An Introduction*, (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1989), 45.

⁹ *Ibid.*, 86-87.

included bias of the different early church communities.¹⁰ It is important to highlight the conclusions made by source critics because we will be relying on them throughout this paper (especially when we explore the redactional differences amongst the synoptic gospels). Therefore it is necessary to stress that I am in accord with the majority of scholars who agree that the Gospel of Mark was the first of the canonical gospels to be written and that the other synoptic gospel authors used the Gospel of Mark as one of their sources.

II. Community versus Communities: For Whom Did the Gospel Authors Write?

There seems to be some uncertainty and disagreement among New Testament scholars when discussing whether or not the authors of the gospels wrote for specific communities or if they were addressing a wider audience that consists of no particular group. In other words, did Mark write for his Markan community and Matthew write for his Matthean community, etc., or did each author envision his work being read and heard by any church?¹¹ Scholars such as Bauckham, Stowers, and Burridge believe that the authors of the gospels did not write for a specific group of Christians, and thus, they challenge the community theory that has been taken for granted in gospel scholarship for decades.¹² As the aim of this paper is to challenge these scholars' arguments through an analysis of the Gerasene demoniac pericope in the synoptic gospels, we begin by providing an overview of what they argue and the evidence they provide in their work.

A point of contention amongst New Testament scholars is the understanding of the gospels' genre. By determining the gospels' genre, scholars are able to use their theory to aid in their arguments either for or against community theory. For instance,

¹⁰ McKnight, *What is Form Criticism?*, 9-10.

¹¹ Bauckham, "For Whom were the Gospels Written?," 10.

¹² *Ibid.*, 10.

Bauckham and Ben Witherington believe the gospels are examples of the Graeco-Roman *βίοι*, which can be translated as “biography”.¹³ These scholars are not the only ones who argued this, for many (i.e. Ernest Renan and C.W. Votaw) from “the nineteenth century [made] assumptions about the gospels as biographies....”¹⁴ Later scholars in the twentieth century challenged this view, only for there to be a resurgence in more recent years that are in accord to previous assumptions made by Renan and Votaw that the gospels were biographies.¹⁵

Scholars found correlations between how the gospels were presented (especially Mark’s Gospel) and other Greek and Roman biographies such as, Thræsea Paetus’s *Life of Cato*, Tacitus’s *Agricola*, Plutarch’s *Lives*, or narratives about the Caesars by Suetonius.¹⁶ For instance, the length of Mark is similar to the average length of Plutarch’s *Lives*, while Matthew and Luke’s Gospels are almost at the maximum length of Greek biographies at the time. Furthermore, “Mark follows the ancient biographical convention of using indirect portraiture to reveal his central figure.”¹⁷ In addition, according to Burridge, ancient genres were very flexible, often mixing the boundaries with other genres, thus, an ancient βίος would often incorporate history, moral philosophy, concern for character, and encomium and rhetoric within their format.¹⁸ Both Bauckham and Witherington used Burridge’s conclusion as a key piece of supporting evidence to argue the genre of the gospels.

¹³ Bauckham, “For Whom were the Gospels Written?,” 28; Ben Witherington III, *The Gospel of Mark: A Socio-Rhetorical Commentary*, (Grand Rapids, MI: William B Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2001), 4.

¹⁴ Richard A. Burridge, *What Are the Gospels: A Comparison with Graeco-Roman Biography*, 2nd ed., (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2004), 3-4.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 3-4.

¹⁶ Witherington III, *The Gospel of Mark*, 7-9.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 6.

¹⁸ Burridge, *What Are the Gospels*, 66-7.

Bauckham argues that it would be unlikely to have a βίος written for a specific community or reveal the concerns about a specific community because its often ‘propagandist’ views would be ‘pitched’ to any competent reader.¹⁹ However, as “no more than 10 percent” of individuals in the ancient Mediterranean world could read, most individuals in the author’s target group would have heard his gospel orally.²⁰ Therefore, if the gospels were supposed to be read, as Witherington highlights,²¹ then in fact, they were actually written for a very small fraction of the population and this contradicts Bauckham’s argument.

Furthermore, Bauckham contends that the authors would not write down a biography of Jesus for the use of the church he belonged to and potentially taught at himself, because oral preaching would be a more appropriate method; Bauckham questions why the author would ‘freeze’ his teachings in writing for his community, when their beliefs, understandings, situation, and knowledge may change.²² Therefore, although the authors of the gospels may begin by reading their βίος initially to a smaller group, the text in fact would be written in hopes of wider circulation and to potentially create contact with other Greek-speaking Christian communities.²³ But according to Kazen, Bauckham’s argument could be turned around, as the gospels could have been written as a theological framework to aid in preaching, and thus would be used in limited circles and would be orally read in worship.²⁴

¹⁹ Bauckham, “For Whom were the Gospels Written?,” 28.

²⁰ R.T France, *The Gospel of Mark: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2002), 8.

²¹ Witherington III, *The Gospel of Mark: A Socio-Rhetorical Commentary*, 29.

²² Bauckham, “For Whom were the Gospels Written?,” 29.

²³ *Ibid.*, 29-30.

²⁴ Kazen, “Sectarian Gospels for Some Christians?,” 565.

Moreover, there are many differing arguments about what type of genre Mark is. For instance A. Y. Collins argues that the gospel is “an eschatological historical monograph.”²⁵ C. Clifton explains that Bilezikian argued in 1977 that the gospel is a “Greek tragedy,” while in 1997, Wills contemplated that Mark’s work was a “cult narrative of the dead hero.”²⁶ The issue is that each proposition touches on various parts of Mark.²⁷ Therefore, the Gospel of Mark is unique in the sense that it incorporates many types of genres throughout, instead of being classified as only one genre. It was important enough for the author/editor to use genres that his listeners and readers would understand,²⁸ but by altering the gospel’s form and including many genres, the author was making sure his text was different. Thus, it seems that Bultmann’s idea that the Gospel of Mark was unique in its form may be the most correct argument; the author fused together sayings with oral and written narratives based on the kerygma about Christ. By doing so, this allows the ancient text to mix the boundaries of the type of genre as well as, have the author’s personal agenda shine through his editorial work.

Another argument that Bauckham makes is that the authors of the gospels did not write for a specific audience²⁹ due to the understanding that the early Christ groups were in communication with each other and thus had formed self-identity, easy accessibility for travelling, and easier communication could occur both orally as well as written through the correspondence of letter-writing during the Graeco-Roman era.³⁰ Some scholars criticize his argument because there is, “no firm evidence that the gospel authors

²⁵ Collins, *Mark: A Commentary*, 42.

²⁶ C. Clifton Black, *Abrington New Testament Commentaries: Mark* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2011), 34.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, 34.

²⁸ Collins, *Mark: A Commentary*, 42.

²⁹ Bauckham, “For Whom were the Gospels Written?,” 45.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, 30-34; Kazen, “Sectarian Gospels for Some Christians?,” 563.

were frequent travelers,”³¹ as well as some scholars have highlighted that lack of unity amongst the early Christ groups/early church.³² Therefore, even if the authors travelled while writing their gospels, the lack of unity amongst the various Christ groups would not guarantee that their text would spread to all churches. Instead, the text would be used at the churches that the author was a part of/visited (the churches that built up the author’s community). Moreover, even if the author wrote for other churches, it is difficult to write without taking one’s own experiences, circumstances, and environment as a point of reference,³³ and thus, the author at least unintentionally reflected the concerns of his community. Therefore, even if the author intended for his text to be used in many churches, his social environment would influence his writing, and thus, be prevalent throughout the text. As only 10 percent of individuals in the period of antiquity could read, it makes more sense that the gospels were written as an aid to preach in smaller congregations and be read aloud to a community of followers. This is because the smaller groups would understand even the unintentional biases and messages, because they are from the area in which the author was writing.

The final criticism that we will highlight in which scholars have argued against community theory is that scholars who use the words ‘community’ or ‘communities’ actually use the theory without proper justification.³⁴ Stowers explains that scholars are using a romanticized idea of community. After analyzing Paul’s letters, he concludes that the New Testament scholarship notion of community is incorrect; instead of connecting the communal failure in the Corinthian letters to Paul’s reality, scholars are using Paul’s

³¹ Kazen, “Sectarian Gospels for Some Christians?,” 563.

³² *Ibid.*, 563.

³³ *Ibid.*, 565.

³⁴ Stowers, “The Concept of ‘Community’ and the History of Early Christianity,” 245; Bauckham, “For Whom were the Gospels Written?,” 22.

imaginative ideal of community he discusses in his rhetoric.³⁵ Furthermore, Bauckham argues that after years of assuming community theory, scholars are not willing to justify any other hermeneutical attempt that may be more useful and informative.³⁶ In other words, scholars have been using a notion of community that is confusing and non-definitive for too long, which has led them to approach a text with assumed ideas and preconceived notions of what to look for when exegeting a New Testament text. All of this is done, according to Bauckham and Stowers, without proof or justification. Therefore, the two scholars criticize the use of “methods from the social sciences to reconstruct [the authors’] communities.”³⁷

According to Kazen, however, the issue with Bauckham’s argument is that he bases his thesis on a source that is already highly criticized for examining the Matthean community in isolation from other potential Christian groups.³⁸ Furthermore, Bauckham should have approached his claims in a more balanced manner. Instead of assuming that the author either wrote for a general Christian audience or a specific community, perhaps he could have explored the possibility that the author wrote for a “loosely associated group of churches [that] possibly cover ... a larger geographical area.” This is clearly the approach taken by the author of the book of Revelation, who imagines his text circulating among various Christian groups, albeit limited to those in Asia Minor (Rev. 1:19-3:22). Thus, the gospels cannot be used to attain specific information about a community or to

³⁵ Stowers, “The Concept of ‘Community,’” 242-44.

³⁶ Bauckham, “For Whom were the Gospels Written?,” 22.

³⁷ Kazen, “Sectarian Gospels for Some Christians?,” 564.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, 564.

reconstruct a community, but they can detect social circumstances or characteristics of the environment of a larger community.³⁹

Therefore, although these scholars have provided strong arguments when challenging community theory, as well as highlight the relevance of how scholars approach their analysis of the gospels, after this brief literature review, it is evident that community theory still seems to be the more plausible conclusion. However, we will further demonstrate that the authors of the gospels wrote for specific communities in the analysis below of the Gerasene demoniac pericope. Before doing so, however, we will return to my initial question about retaining information from the gospels about the historical Jesus. Bauckham assumes that scholars are trying to compensate their inability to reconstruct the historical Jesus by reconstructing communities,⁴⁰ however, if the gospels are *βιοι*, then according to Bauckham's theory, New Testament scholars should be able to find some truth behind who the historical Jesus was. Moreover, if we use Bultmann's idea that the gospels are oral stories about Jesus fused together, as well as redactional critics' notions that the authors of the gospels are editors, then the gospels may be used to discover information about the authors' communities and the historical Jesus. Of course, scholars may not completely reconstruct the historical Jesus or even the community of an author solely on the basis of gospel evidence; however, the books at least reveal unintentional biases and influences from their community. Therefore, the gospels can be used to learn certain characteristics about an environment and the man known as Jesus.

³⁹ Ibid., 564.

⁴⁰ Bauckham, "For Whom were the Gospels Written?," 20.

III. Form Critical and Demythologizing Analysis of Mark 5:1-20

After providing a foundation for this paper by examining the evidence provided by scholars who deny community theory, we will use this next section to further challenge the above scholars' claims by applying Bultmann's form critical and demythologization methodology to the original pericope of the Gerasene demoniac in Mark 5:1-20. This methodological approach will illustrate the objective of the author and the message this evangelist wanted to share with his Markan community. Therefore, this section exemplifies how the author's editorial work reveals his biases that were based on the concerns of his community.

Although New Testament hermeneutics experienced various modifications (with source criticism evolving into redaction and form criticism, followed by Smith's comparison method years later), the form critical approach has continued to base its foundations on Dibelius' and Bultmann's original work in the field.⁴¹ Therefore, Bultmann's analytical form critical approach and demythologization methodology have been quite influential in the field of New Testament studies. It is for this reason that this section will focus on Bultmann's practice. Bultmann and other form critics found room for improvement when using a source critical approach of comparison because they found that previous scholars ignored the fact that for several decades, the early Christ/Christian groups relied upon the oral tradition to transmit their theological message. Therefore, scholars had to adjust their approach in attempt to identify which stories in the gospels were circulated amongst the 'primitive' Christian groups.⁴² This desire to investigate the gospels from the original pre-literary period led to a form critical

⁴¹ McKnight, *What is Form Criticism?*, 17.

⁴² John Paul Pritchard, *A Literary Approach to the New Testament*, (Oklahoma: University of Oklahoma Press, 1972), 20-1.

method in New Testament scholarship. To fully comprehend the author's objective for Mark 5:1-20 and the context of the story, it is necessary to begin by applying Bultmann's form critical methodology to analyze the Gerasene demoniac story. We will initially explain the context of the story, followed by demythologizing the pericope to understand the context behind the story. By combining the two methods, we will then conclude the socio-political concerns expressed in the kerygmatic format of this miracle story.

III. A. Mark 5:1-20

Provided below is the Gerasene demoniac pericope in Mark 5:1-20. Certain parts of the text have been highlighted so that we may refer to them throughout the rest of this paper.

¹They came to the other side of the sea, to the country of the Gerasenes. ²And when he had come out of the boat, there met him out of the tombs a man with an unclean spirit, ³who lived among the tombs; and no one could bind him any more, even with a chain; ⁴for he had often been bound with fetters and chains, but the chains he wrenched apart, and the fetters he broke in pieces; and no one had the strength to subdue him. ⁵Night and day among the tombs and on the mountains he was always crying out, and bruising himself with stones. ⁶And when he saw Jesus from afar, he ran and worshiped him; ⁷and crying out with a loud voice, he said, **“What have you to do with me, Jesus, Son of the Most High God? I adjure you by God, do not torment me.”** ⁸For he had said to him, “Come out of the man, you unclean spirit!” ⁹And Jesus ask him, “What is your name?” He replied, “My name is **Legion; for we are many.**” ¹⁰And he begged him eagerly **not to send them out of the country.** ¹¹Now a great heard of **swine** was feeding there on the

hillside; ¹²and **they begged him, “Send us to the swine, let us enter them.”** ¹³So he gave **them** leave. And the **unclean spirits** came out, and entered the swine; an **the herd numbering about two thousand, rushed down the steep bank into the sea, and were drowned in the sea.** ¹⁴The herdsmen fled, and told it in the city and in the country. And people came to see what it was that had happened. ¹⁵And they came to see Jesus, and saw the demoniac sitting there, clothed and in his right mind, the man who had had the legion; and they were afraid. ¹⁶And those who had seen it told what had happened to the demoniac and to the swine. ¹⁷And they began to **beg Jesus to depart** from their neighborhood. ¹⁸And as he was getting into the boat, the man who had been possessed with demons begged him that he might be with him. ¹⁹But he refused, and said to him, “Go home to your friends, and tell them how much the Lord has done for you, and how he has had mercy on you.” ²⁰And he went away and began to proclaim in the Decapolis how much Jesus had done for him; and all men marveled.

III. B. Context of the Story: A Form Critical Analysis of Mark 5:1-20

Bultmann’s approach to New Testament interpretation was to, “relegate ‘history’ to the realm of contingent facts, while [leaving] faith belong[ing] to the realm of value.”⁴³ Therefore, Bultmann attempted to separate history from faith; as outlined earlier, Bultmann’s goal of New Testament hermeneutics was to make the kerygma clearer for rational/enlightened individuals. Form criticism combined with demythologization were approaches in which Bultmann attempted to present a way for individuals to gain historical and sociological information about the ‘primitive’ Christian communities,

⁴³ Anthony C. Thiselton, “Texts, Truth and Significance: Biblical Interpretation,” in *The Modern Theologians: An Introduction to Christian Theology Since 1918*, ed. David F. Ford and Rachel Muers (Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing, 2010), 291.

while learning about their theological frameworks. For instance, scholars may discover the Markan community's ideologies, theological beliefs, community organization, community interests, daily life, etc., by analyzing what literary forms the author emphasized in his gospel and whether the author of the text shifted from the fixed form. Bultmann believed his methodological approach would allow scholars to comprehend how the communities altered the forms as they were transmitted orally from prior traditions; if Bultmann could comprehend how the Matthew and Luke communities modified Mark's source, then he considered that it would be possible to understand how the Markan community adapted earlier sources.⁴⁴ Although I am addressing the form of this pericope, Bultmann applied both a form critical analysis at the same time as he removed the myth when interpreting the gospels. Therefore, we will allude to some information that will be discussed in greater detail in other sections.

When applying Bultmann's form critical methodology to Mark 5:1-20, it is imperative to commence by categorizing the narrative under one of the fixed literary forms Bultmann believed to exist. For Bultmann, there are two main divisions in the gospels, which can then be subdivided into smaller categories: the first group is apophthegms and dominical sayings (which can be subdivided into three smaller categories), and the second group consists of narrative material, which can be subdivided into miracle stories, legends, and historical narratives.⁴⁵ Although there are moments throughout this pericope that might be misclassified under the prophetic and apocalyptic sayings, the main theme of the narrative is the miraculous performance of Jesus. Therefore, Mark 5:1-20 can be classified as a miracle story. As Bultmann understood

⁴⁴ Bultmann, "The Study of the Synoptic Gospels," 29.

⁴⁵ McKnight, *What is Form Criticism?*, 25.

miracles stories to be similar to Hellenistic miracle narratives, the next step to understanding the Markan community is to compare how this particular miracle story differs from other literature that can be classified under the same category of “miracle story”.

As was mentioned, sometimes Mark 5:1-20 can be misclassified under the prophetic and apocalyptic sayings form, however this pericope is not apocalyptic in nature. Although the larger themes prevalent throughout the Gospel of Mark are prophetic and apocalyptic, as is evident when the author begins his gospel with the Holy Spirit descending onto Jesus from Heaven (Mark 1:10-11), these themes are not the main focus in Mark 5:1-20. It is evident that prophetic sayings can be found in this pericope, but the main theme remains miraculous. Locating apocalyptic sayings however, is more difficult in this passage, as there is no evidence of apocalyptic discourse taken from Hosea or Leviticus (something the author emphasized in the beginning of his gospel),⁴⁶ or even of him recontextualizing any passage from the Hebrew Bible that was either prophetic or apocalyptic in discourse.⁴⁷ Furthermore, there is no evidence of the Holy Spirit appearing to assist Jesus or reveal God’s plan, which is important to note, because prophets need assistance to understand revelations.⁴⁸ Because Jesus does not appear as an apocalyptic preacher in this pericope, he must hold some other significance, and thus, the Gerasene demoniac must be classified under a different form.

Furthermore, although miracle discourse is often correlated with prophetic discourse, which is illustrated with the character of Elijah-Elisha (a prophetic healer) in

⁴⁶ Vernon K. Robbins, “The Intertexture of Apocalyptic Discourse in the Gospel Mark,” in *The Intertexture of Apocalyptic Discourse in the New Testament*, ed. Duane F. Watson (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2002), 16.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 23.

⁴⁸ Paul S. Minear, *New Testament Apocalyptic* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1981), 19-22.

both 1 and 2 Kings⁴⁹ and Jesus' healing miracles further exemplify prophetic discourse – with God's rule overpowering the evil spirits and sick individuals being avoided due to being impure and contaminated by evil⁵⁰ – this particular passage does not include or alter these characteristics. Although the man possessed is avoided in the beginning of the pericope, it is Jesus (the healer) who ends up being avoided by the community. Finally, although miracle discourse/prophetic teachings in Mark, often expand into apocalyptic discourse when witnesses to Jesus' miracles point out that he is introducing a “new teaching” where even “unclean spirits” obey his actions and commands,⁵¹ the demon in this passage does not initially obey Jesus' commands, but tries to barter and plead with him, in hopes of staying in the village. Thus, it is evident that although there may be prophetic concepts found in Mark 5:1-20, apocalypticism is not prevalent.

Bultmann explained that the literary forms of both the Hellenistic and Christian healing miracle traditions commence with the illness of an important character, followed by a healing executed by the protagonist, and ending with consequences of the miracles.⁵² A quick analysis of the Mark 5:1-20 illustrates that it does fit under the characteristics of the category, as the narrative commences with the recognition that the inhabitant of the city of Gerasenes is possessed by demonic forces (the illness), and followed by Jesus casting the demons out of one of the members of the community and into the swine (the healing; Mark 5:1-20). There are consequences of the miracle as well, but this must be examined in more detail, and thus will be address later in this section. For now, we can conclude that Mark 5:1-20 is a miracle story.

⁴⁹ Ibid., 23.

⁵⁰ Richard Ascough, *Miracles of Jesus*, (Ottawa: Novalis, 2003), 14.

⁵¹ Robbins, “Intertexture of Apocalyptic Discourse,” 23-4; Mark 1:27.

⁵² Bultmann, “Study of the Synoptic Gospels,” 36-7; McKnight, *What is Form Criticism?*, 32.

At first glimpse, this pericope may appear to be similar to other miracle stories as it commences with the recognition of an illness: the demonic possession of one of the citizens of Gerasenes. This pericope however, differs from other exorcisms or miracle stories. In Mark 5:9, the author names the demon legion, which means “many.” If we refer to Mark 5:13, the author further depicts that there are many demons as he refers to the demoniac as ‘them’ and ‘unclean spirits,’ both implying that the author did not just include one demon, but several. This is important, as the common characteristic of a miracle story was a single illness, or in the case of exorcisms, a single demonic presence.⁵³ Having more than one demon not only varies the traditional form, but also differs from other exorcism stories found throughout the Gospel of Mark. For instance, a single demonic presence is depicted in Mark 1:23-28, with the healing of the demoniac in the synagogue, as well as when Jesus rebukes a fever that was produced by a demon in Mark 5:29-31. Therefore, this pericope alters its foundational characteristic by including many demons instead of one. It is only once the pericope is demythologized however, that a scholar can understand why the author changed from the traditional form.

Another difference that occurs in Mark 5:1-20 is that it does not follow the particular literary pattern that tends to be used in this type of miracle story, which is that a command against a demon tends to be accompanied by a physical reaction.⁵⁴ In this pericope Jesus uses name magic to cast out demonic forces; Jesus casts the demons out by winning the name magic battle (Mark 5:7).⁵⁵ Most miracle workers in antiquity were known to have secret identities, which should not be revealed. If their identity were revealed, then the one who exposed their identity would gain power over the miracle

⁵³ Ascough, *Miracles of Jesus*, 55.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 25.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 55.

worker.⁵⁶ Therefore, although name magic was not unique in exorcism stories or throughout the gospels, what makes this pericope different, is that Jesus uses name magic against the demons to cast them out;⁵⁷ the demons are most presented as trying to use name magic against Jesus, but he does not tend to use it against the unclean spirits.

Furthermore, Jesus never falls privy to name magic, which is important to note. Although this pericope is similar to other gospel accounts of exorcisms, as Jesus is not affected by demons calling his name, it changes the rules of name magic, and thus, this exorcism account and others in the gospels represent Jesus as a very powerful miracle worker. As Bultmann explains that it is difficult to establish what the editorial work of the author is in this passage, he concludes that the story must be in its original form,⁵⁸ and thus, the author's desire to demonstrate the power of Jesus, teaches readers about the kerygmatic importance of Jesus.

Although Mark 5:1-20 differs slightly in content from other miracle stories, the main characteristics of recognizing an illness followed by a healing of the illness occurs. Even the consequences of the miracle occur in this pericope. It is in this final part however, that Bultmann's approach reveals larger differences. Therefore, although this passage tends to follow the framework of Hellenistic and early Christian miracle stories, it differs from other miracle narratives in significant ways. To understand the consequence of the miracle, one must consider the author's objective and message, which we will explore below when applying Bultmann's demythologization method to the text.

III. C. The Context Behind the Story: Removing the Myth from Mark 5:1-20

⁵⁶ Ibid., 25.

⁵⁷ See Mark 5:9 when Jesus asks the name of the demon.

⁵⁸ Rudolf Bultmann, *The History of the Synoptic Tradition*, trans. John Marsh (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1963), 210.

Bultmann expanded his form critical methodological approach, by trying to remove the ‘myth’ from the gospels. Myth, in this context and according to Bultmann, is “a very specific historical phenomenon and ... a very specific mode of thinking,” that provides a report of an event where superhuman forces and people are involved.⁵⁹ What is important about myth, for Bultmann, is that although it is the opposite of scientific thinking, it provides an objective world picture and expresses both the faith of individuals and how humans understood the world at a particular time in history.⁶⁰ Therefore, similar to the categorization of various literary forms, demythologization attempts to discover the intention behind the myth.⁶¹ For instance, if a scholar removed the myth from one of the passages that involved apocalyptic sayings from Jesus in the Gospel of Mark, he/she would realize (according to Bultmann), that Jesus was not actually an apocalyptic preacher.⁶²

Bultmann understood myth as something that did not provide an objective worldview. Instead, myth was used to express how individuals understood themselves in their world; it is an historical phenomenon and specific way of thinking about the world.⁶³ Myth is supposed to illustrate that the “familiar and disposable world ... does not have its ground and aim in itself but that its ground and limit lie beyond all that is familiar and disposable and that this is all constantly ... controlled by the uncanny

⁵⁹ Rudolf Bultmann, *New Testament and Mythology and Other Basic Writings*, trans. Schubert M. Ogden (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1984), 95.

⁶⁰ David F. Ford, Mike Higton and Simeon Zahl eds., “Texts, Truth, and Significance: Biblical Interpretation,” in *The Modern Theologians Reader*, first ed., (Massachusetts: Blackwell Publishing, 2012), 169.

⁶¹ Bultmann, *New Testament and Mythology*, 99.

⁶² It is important to note that although Bultmann focuses on the gospels, his methodology is applicable to all the books found in both the Hebrew Bible and New Testament; Bultmann, *History of the Synoptic Tradition*, 2-3.

⁶³ Bultmann, *New Testament and Mythology*, 95.

powers....”⁶⁴ In other words, myth provides reason and meaning for humans in a way so that they do not control what occurs. As there is so much uncertainty and unfamiliarity in the world, this frightens humanity; it is easier to have a higher power in charge of things that are unfamiliar and uncontrollable. As society has shifted toward science and technology to answer the unknown in an attempt to control the unfamiliar, there is a transition to a different form of understanding. Therefore, this shift has allowed individuals to criticize and analyze the older way of understanding, and this is where Bultmann’s demythologizing method is applied, as demythologizing a text is stripping away the pre-scientific worldview; it is de-objectifying a narrative⁶⁵ and attempting to understand the historicity of the text. In other words, scholars are attempting to discover the intent of the text,⁶⁶ and for Bultmann, it was a way to explain the important theological concepts taught in the New Testament to ‘enlightened’ individuals; demythologizing is critically analyzing the words of the text and exegeting its meaning in the historical context in which it was written.

To begin, it is imperative to place the Gospel of Mark into the correct historical context. Although the time period of when exactly the gospel was created is not definite and continues to be debated amongst New Testament scholars, as mentioned earlier, it is agreed upon by most scholars that Mark was the first of the four canonical gospels to be written. Some scholars have proposed that the text was written as early as 50 CE, while others argue around 62 CE. Either way, by demythologizing the gospel we will be able to discover a more accurate time period because, as in dispute with Bauckham, the author

⁶⁴ Rudolf Bultmann, “New Testament and Mythology,” in *Kerygma and Myth: A Theological Debate*, ed. Hans Werner Bartsch (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1961), 10.

⁶⁵ Roger A. Johnson, *Rudolf Bultmann: Interpreting Faith for the Modern Era*, (London: Collins Liturgical Publications, 1987), 37.

⁶⁶ Bultmann, “On the Problem of Demythologizing,” 99.

has intentionally shared his community's concerns and thus, will provide insight into his environment and the period of time he was writing. If we explore other areas of the gospel, it is evident that there is a foreign reign causing turmoil in the author's land. For instance, the author warns his audience to prepare for the persecution of both the Roman state and the synagogue in Mark 13:8-9:⁶⁷

‘for nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom; . . . , there will be famines; this is the beginning of the birthpangs. But take heed to yourselves: for they will deliver you up to councils; and you will be beaten in synagogues; and you will stand before governors and kings for my sake.’

Examining this passage, it is evident that the author is alluding to destruction, brutality, and war (political overtones), as he uses the motif of nation, governors and councils who will over take other nations and kingdoms all while persecuting those who visit the synagogue.

In Mark 5:9, Jesus asked the name of the demon who had possessed an individual of the town of Gerasanes. The response was “Legion” for, “we are many” (Mark 5:9). If an individual reads the pericope with the inclusion of myth, the text appears to illustrate the power of Jesus, as he exorcises numerous unclean spirits from the town of Gerasanes. However, if the myth/pre-scientific thought is removed, then an individual is able to discover the author's allusion to the Roman's military occupancy and brutality, as the word ‘legion’ is symbolic of the Roman legions whom were occupying the author's land.⁶⁸ Instead of using a descriptive phrase, such as “demon,” “Satan,” or “unclean spirit,” the author chooses to provide the demon with a Latin name that had to be

⁶⁷ Robert H. Stein, *Mark: Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament*, (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2008), 11.

⁶⁸ Ascough, *Miracles of Jesus*, 55.

translated into Greek. Decades before the birth of Jesus, Roman legions marched through the area of Galilee as well as its surrounding areas. They burnt villages, killing all those who were ill and infirm while enslaving the able; it was the Romans who determined the conditions of the public.⁶⁹ By the time Jesus was born, the Romans were using crucifixion as a means to terrorize and instill fear in the local populace.⁷⁰

Furthermore, in Mark 5:10, the legion of demoniacs begs Jesus to allow them to remain in the country. The author could have said “land,” or “town,” but he chose to say country. From this passage, it is evident that the legion of individuals who are unwelcome are not native to the land, as they are begging to remain; if the legion was native to the country, they would be welcome, or be exiled to another place within their homeland. Thus further emphasis is placed on the Roman legion being a foreign occupant that remains in the land although they are unwanted, just as the legion of demons wish to remain in Gerasanes even though they are neither native to the land nor welcomed by its inhabitants.⁷¹

Therefore, by applying Bultmann to both Mark 5:9-10 and Mark 13:8-9, it is evident that the author of the Gospel of Mark must have wanted to illustrate that the foreign authority or nation rising against another nation was the Romans. Moreover, as discussed previously, the author altered the form of exorcism stories when he included more than one demon. Therefore, if Bauckham’s denial of community theory was correct, then there would be no reason for the author to change the form of this exorcism passage. Thus, by altering this passage from other exorcism pericopae in his gospel, the author

⁶⁹ Richard A. Horsley, *Jesus and Empire: The Kingdom of God and New World Disorder*, (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2003), 15.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, 28.

⁷¹ Ascough, *Miracles of Jesus*, 55.

wanted to emphasize that he has a specific objective or message that he wanted to share with his community of followers, who themselves were aware of and probably experiencing, occupation by the Roman legions in Palestine or Syria.

To return to Mark 13:8-9, the author writes in a future tense, where the destruction of the temple has not occurred yet. But it is unlikely the author could anticipate what was about to happen to the city, thus the future tense actually is a representation of what the onlookers must have felt when the Romans moved from Syria down to Palestine. The author depicts the fear and expectations of what would occur once the Romans reached their land or made their final move on the city of Jerusalem. Therefore, although the events in the passage may have occurred by the time the author wrote it, the future tense is symbolic of what his community of followers must have felt at the time. If this gospel was written as a βίος about Jesus for a general Christian audience, then the author could have written in present or past tense to explain what had occurred and how the Christians overcame the devastation. Instead, the author decided to write Mark 13:8-9 with apocalyptic rhetoric, thus, allowing him to reveal the fear his community of followers were feeling, while protecting himself if his work were to be obtained by a Roman soldier.⁷²

It is also important to note that in Mark 5:11, Jesus casts the legion of demons onto swine. If this pericope was a part of a βίος, then having Jesus exorcise demons onto swine makes sense, as Jesus was a Jew, and swine are considered a dirty and impure animal. However, the audience hearing or reading the βίος would have to understand the significance of swine, and therefore, the audience of this gospel must have been Jewish. Once again, Bauckham's denial of community theory is challenged, because the author

⁷² Witherington, *The Gospel of Mark: A Socio-Rhetorical Commentary*, 27.

must have had an intended audience; not everyone would have understood that the swine illustrate that demons and/or even those who do not follow Jesus, would be impure like the pig was considered in Judaism. Therefore, to make this message relevant, it could not have been written for any Christian at the time (as the Gentiles would not have understood the significance of the swine), but for Jewish Christians. We can see, then, that the author had a target audience for whom he highlighted specific things he wanted to share and reveal with that audience.

In Mark 5:13, the author states about Jesus: “So he gave them leave. And the unclean spirits came out, and entered the swine; and the herd numbered about two thousand....” Although the author does not specify at this specific time that the ‘legion’ came out, the author did identify that the unclean spirits were a legion in the previous versus. Furthermore, it is unlikely that a herd would reach such a large size, thus by linking legion and the size of the heard together, it is apparent that the author is trying strengthen his message that this particular passage is about the Roman occupation. While the Roman legion numbered in about 6000 soldiers, there were many smaller military designations.⁷³ Moreover, the author specifically chose not to rebuke the demons completely out of the country, but instead cast them onto swine. Nevertheless, by setting the pericope in the village of Gerasenes, the author brings attention to the fact that Jesus is aiding a Gentile, as Gerasenes was not a Jewish town, but was an area of gentiles.⁷⁴

The author could have chosen any animal, or followed the form of other exorcisms in his gospel and exorcised the demons out completely. For instance, in Mark 1:23-27, Jesus rebukes the demoniac out of the man in the synagogue; Jesus does not cast

⁷³ Ascough, *Miracles of Jesus*, 55.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, 54.

the unclean spirit onto another object, animal, or person. Thus, by choosing swine, the author clearly reflects his distaste towards the Roman occupation, as he chose the dirties and impure animal to cast the ‘legion’ onto; this passage then, “represents the transference of aggression from the Romans to the demons.”⁷⁵ In addition, the swine may also represent the author’s self-understanding; just as the author used the apocalyptic rhetoric in Mark 13:8-9 to illustrate the fear of his community, the swine also indicate how the Romans make him and other natives of the land feel: humiliated, worthless, powerless, etc. By casting the demons onto the swine instead of removing them completely from the area (Mark 5:13), the author depicts his and his followers’ desire to reverse the roles by having the Romans feel the humility of being treated like the lowest of animals.

Furthermore, in Mark 5:13, the swine that now have the legion of demons in them, run down a bank and drown themselves in the nearby water. If one is to keep the myth in the narrative, this part of the story emphasizes Jesus’ power, and hence the power of God (a message that could be important to a general Christian audience throughout history). However, by demythologizing, we can posit that if the author was writing about the Roman legion, then the death of the swine symbolizes the ‘primitive’ Christians/Jewish peoples’ desire for the Romans to be driven out of their land.⁷⁶ To drive the Romans out of their land however, the various Christian groups must unite. While exorcisms tend to represent God overpowering Satan,⁷⁷ due to its political overtones, this specific exorcism represents the ‘primitive’ Christian communities rallying together (depicted as Jesus) to overthrow the Romans and drive them out of their land (the legion of demons being cast

⁷⁵ Ibid., 55.

⁷⁶ Ibid., 55.

⁷⁷ Ibid., 14.

onto the swine and then drowning). Therefore, this particular passages demonstrates that the author believes it is important for the ‘primitive’ Christian community to expand their group of followers and unit under one belief, which for Bultmann was the most important message: unity in the belief and devotion for Jesus could overcome all ‘evil’ or problematic powers. In other words, the unity of the Markan community with other Christ groups, is symbolized by having one protagonist, Jesus, overpower the entire Roman legion.

This educated hypothesized meaning behind Mark 5:1-20 challenges Bauckham’s belief that the early Christ groups were in communication with each other quite regularly.⁷⁸ If the author of the Gospel of Mark was in communication with other Christ groups, why would he call for the uniting of these groups through a gospel rather than through letter or word of mouth? Also if Bauckham is correct, and the author of the Gospel of Mark wrote without a specific community in mind, then the question remains why the author would go to the trouble of specifically choosing the word “legion” to describe the two thousand unclean spirits that had taken over a citizen of the town of Gerasenes, or why the author would alter the miracle story form for only this one exorcism story if he did not want to relay a specific message. Therefore, as the above analysis illustrates, the gospel was written to intentionally reflect concerns of the author’s community and address a specific community of followers that would understand his particular word choice. Thus, Mark 5:1-20 illustrates the historical context of the work and that it was written during Roman occupation of Palestine Furthermore, the author’s

⁷⁸ Bauckham, “For Whom were the Gospels Written?,” 30-34; Kazen, “Sectarian Gospels for Some Christians?,” 563.

dissatisfaction of their current political situation is clearly illustrated by him choosing the most impure animal to cast the demons onto.

The above analysis also challenges scholars, such as Witherington, who believe that the Gospel of Mark was written either in Rome, for Roman Christians, or both; he concluded this because the author of the gospel often combines Greek words that render from Latin idioms.⁷⁹ For instance, as mentioned earlier, the word legion is actually a Latin word. The problem with Witherington's argument however, is that even if the pericope was not about the dissatisfaction toward the Roman occupation, including a word such as legion when describing demonic forces is problematic. Why would the author use a word that clearly represents the Roman legion in a text that would be read by Romans, and potentially be found by Romans who were not Christians?

Furthermore, this logic can be applied to challenge Bauckham as well. If the gospels were meant for a general Christian audience, then the text would most likely be read or heard by others who were not Christian; once a book is circulated widely, it is difficult to control who hears or reads it. Therefore, it would be risky to include descriptions of demons that use the same language to describe the occupying force. Thus, it is more logical that the author wrote for a specific community of followers that were not Roman and who would understand his references. It is also more plausible that the author did not write his gospel in Rome, as he included language and references that could be considered treasonous.

This leads us to the consequence part of the pericope. It is important to reiterate that the swine that are possessed by the legion of demons drowning themselves in the water symbolizes the Jewish people's desire for the Romans to be driven out of their

⁷⁹ Witherington III, *The Gospel of Mark: A Socio-Rhetorical Commentary*, 20-1.

land,⁸⁰ and thus, the exorcism does not just represent God overpowering Satan, but also is symbolic of the ‘primitive’ Christian groups rallying together in their faith and overpowering the Romans. With this in mind, the final part of the pericope, where the citizens plead for Jesus to leave their region (Mark 5:17), leads to the consequence of the miracle. In other miracle stories, witnesses of a miracle become full of faith in Jesus and are appreciative of his blessing: “And they were all amazed, so that they questioned among themselves, saying, ‘What is this? A new teaching! With authority he commands even the unclean spirits, and they obey him. And at once his fame spread ...’” (Mark 1:27). Instead however, the people want to rid their land of Jesus: “And they began to beg Jesus to depart from their neighborhood” (Mark 5:17). This is due to the fact that although Jesus drove the Romans out of one region, they remain having power everywhere else, hence the author using the word neighborhood instead of country. If word reached other Roman soldiers, the inhabitants of this region would be killed for their lack of loyalty. Therefore, the consequence of this miracle is treason in the eyes of the Romans, which is punishable by death. Mark’s objective with this narrative then, is to illustrate that the growth and unity of Christ followers may drive out the Romans, and therefore, faith in Jesus/God and unity in large numbers is the goal. The author’s message then, must be to a specific community, and not for an indefinite number of people, as it is applicable to the situation that is occurring when he is writing as well as, the author is trying to relay the message of growth.

Therefore, although there are various angles in which to approach the miracle story of Mark 5:1-20, the overarching theme or objective of the text, appears to be an attempt to emphasize the importance of collaboration and unification amongst the

⁸⁰ Ascough, *Miracles of Jesus*, 55.

Markan community with other early Christ groups (thus challenging Bauckham's claim that there is communication amongst the early Christ groups). This unity can then allow the community to move forward and expand, allowing not only Jewish followers, but also Gentiles to be accepted into the Kingdom of God. This expansion will allow the rightful power (the 'primitive' Christians – who are represented by Jesus in this particular passage) to overpower the foreign authority (the Romans) and restore justice to the land.

Therefore, by removing the myth from Mark 5:1-20 and concluding that it was written during the time of Roman occupation in Palestine, then the synagogue being destroyed in Mark 13:8-9 must represent the destruction of the temple, and thus, the Gospel of Mark must have been written around 70 CE and after the destruction of the temple.⁸¹

III. D. Summary: Mark's Socio-Political Concerns Expressed in the Kerygmatic Form of a Miracle Story

It is evident that there are many conclusion that can be drawn about the author's objective, his message, his biases, the community that he writes for, and the historical setting that he is writing in by using Bultmann's form critical and demythologizing methodology. By applying Bultmann methodological approach to Mark 5:1-20, it became apparent that the author of Mark was dissatisfied with the current Roman control, and thus, he tried to rally his group of followers in the belief that they had the power to overcome the Romans and drive them out of their land, just as Jesus overpowered the legion of demons. Similar to Jesus, the Markan community's belief and devotion in God would provide them with the strength and protection to do the 'right' thing and rid their land of 'evil.' Furthermore, the author realized his community was not large enough to

⁸¹ Stein, *Mark: Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament*, 12.

face the legion of Roman soldiers, and thus, encouraged his followers to reach out to gentiles as well as other Jewish communities. He did this by explaining that the story took place in a community of gentiles, and still Jesus helped them exorcise the demons. With the use of symbolism, this pericope about exorcism unconventionally followed the form of a miracle story, to illustrate not only the power of Jesus as a miracle worker, but to demonstrate the power those who united with one another over their devotion for Jesus and God could have, and thus overcome the ‘demonic/evil’ powers of the Romans.

Therefore, the “mythical view of world which the New Testament presupposes when it presents the events ... of Jesus ... is the subject of its preaching.”⁸² Or in other words, the mythical tales throughout Mark’s gospel are representative of the kerygma of the early church. According to Bultmann, the gospels mythic background and lack of historical or scientific concerns means that these texts are meant to illustrate the early Christ communities’ belief and worship in Jesus as the Son of God and hero for the Christian nation (the kerygma of the early church); he understood the origin of the gospels to come from the kerygma.⁸³ Therefore, by analyzing the gospels, interpreters learned about the theological framework of the early churches. What we did with Mark 5:1-20, was to take Bultmann further in order to learn about the socio-political concerns of the author and his followers by applying Bultmann’s methods. A similar application of Bultmann and the redaction critical method likewise helps illustrate how subsequent authors edited not only oral preaching but also written texts that they edited for their own purposes, as we shall see with an examination of Matthew’s and Luke’s use of the Markan version of the Gerasene demoniac story.

⁸² Bultmann, “New Testament and Mythology,” 2.

⁸³ Burridge, *What Are the Gospels*, 10.

IV. Changing Situations: What about Matthew and Luke?

As previously mentioned, the Gospel of Mark was written prior to the Gospels of Matthew and Luke. This is important to reiterate, as this section will explore the redactional differences between the three gospels; in other words, we will examine what Matthew and Luke have altered from Mark's original pericope about the Gerasene demoniac. The purpose of illustrating the alterations to the Gospel of Mark by both Matthew and Luke is to elucidate the fact that each author had a specific objective as well as wrote for a particular group. Therefore, this section, which applies the redactional critical method, will further disprove scholars such as, Martin Hengel, Richard Bauckham, and other scholars that I mentioned in section II, who claim that each author of the synoptic gospels did not write for a specific community/group of people, but for an unlimited and indefinite audience.⁸⁴ As we have just analyzed Mark's version of the Gerasene demoniac in detail and have illustrated his objective and concerns, this section will solely focus on the difference in themes and language/diction between the synoptic gospels.

Furthermore, as previously mentioned, for quite some time, New Testament scholars have debated whether the gospels were written for specific early Christian communities or include bias from particular communities, instead of being written for the religious tradition as a whole.⁸⁵ Both form critics and redaction critics emphasize that the stories in these books are collections of oral sources that have been circulated around folk communities for decade before being written;⁸⁶ as the stories were orally transmitted for so long, it would be nearly impossible to identify what personal marks are in the text and

⁸⁴ Kazen, "Sectarian Gospels for some Christians?," 563.

⁸⁵ Ibid., 562.

⁸⁶ Stowers, "The Concept of 'Community' and the History of Early Christianity," 240.

from what community they belong to. It is for this reason that Martin Hengel denied that the author of the Gospel of Matthew wrote for the South Syrian and Palestinian communities, and Richard Bauckham contended the notion that the canonical gospels were limited to local communities.⁸⁷

Although the above scholars and those who concur with Hengel and Bauckham, make some valid points, it is difficult to edit or write a piece of work without including biases or being influenced by social constructions from the author's environment. Therefore, it seems plausible that the authors/editors of the canonical gospels wrote for a specific community or were influenced by their own community of followers. Moreover, by combing redaction and form critical methods to an analysis of a gospel, scholars are able to demonstrate the community theory while illustrating the author's objective, concerns, and characteristics about the environment.

IV. A. Redaction Critical Analysis: How and Why Luke Changed Mark

Below is the Gerasene demoniac pericope found in Luke 8:26-39. Certain parts of the text have been highlighted so that we may refer to them throughout this section.

²⁶**Then they arrived at the country of the Gerasenes, which is opposite Galilee.**

²⁷And as he stepped out on land, there met him a man from the city who had demons; for a long time he had worn no clothes, and he lived not in a house but amongst the tomb. ²⁸When he saw Jesus, he cried out and fell down before him, and said with a loud voice, 'what have you to do with me, Jesus, Son of the Most High God? I beseech you, do not torment me. ²⁹For he commanded the unclean spirit to come out of the man. (For many a time it had seized him; he was kept under guard, and bound with chains and fetters, but he broke the bonds and was

⁸⁷ Kazen, "Sectarian Gospels for some Christians?," 563.

driven by the demon into the desert.)³⁰ Jesus then asked him, ‘What is your name?’ and he said, **“Legion;’ for many demons had entered him.**³¹ And **they** begged him not to command them to depart into the **abyss.**³² Then the demons came out of the man and entered the swine, and the herd rushed down the steep bank into the lake and were drowned.³⁴ When the herdsmen saw what had happened, they fled, and told the city and in the country.³⁵ Then people went out to see what had happened, and they came out to Jesus, and found the man from whom the demons had gone, sitting at the feet of Jesus, clothed and in his right mind; and they were afraid.³⁶ And those who had seen it told them how he who had been possessed with demons was healed.³⁷ Then all the people of the surrounding country of the Gerasenes asked him to depart from them; for they were seized with great fear, and he got into the boat and returned.³⁸ The man from whom the demons had gone begged that he might be with him but he sent him away, saying, ‘Return to your home, and declare how much God has done for you.’ And he went away, proclaiming throughout the whole city how much Jesus had done for him.

The author of the Gospel of Luke is the only author of the four canonical gospels to write a sequel; the author also wrote the Acts of the Apostles. By doing this, the author highlights God’s plan through Jesus as a fulfillment figure in his gospel, and then uses Acts to, “chronicle ... the initial key chapter of the new community”⁸⁸ that follows after the death of Jesus. In other words, the Gospel of Luke sets up what the early Christ group believed, and follows up with how the early community (which included Jews and Gentiles) created a niche for themselves and how they set themselves apart from other

⁸⁸ Darrell L. Bock, *Luke, Volume 1: 1:1-9:50*, Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 1994), 1-3.

Jewish sects. Therefore, this analysis explores the redactional differences between the corresponding passage in Mark and Luke to understand the objective of the author of the Gospel of Luke.

As previously discussed, the word ‘legion’ in the Gospel of Mark is a symbol for the Roman legion and thus represents the socio-historical situation the Markan community is facing in Roman occupied Palestine at the time the author was writing his gospel. Therefore, “Mark does not replace the old colonial order with a radically new and peaceful alternative, but re-inscribes the very order it opposes. The ‘kingdom of God’ reflects a neo-Roman empire, Jesus a neo-emperor, with all the attending power and authority.”⁸⁹ But does the Gospel of Luke share the same socio-political message as the Gospel of Mark? According to Bauckham’s theory, it must, as the gospels did not have a specific community to appease or write for. Instead, they just edited different stories in hopes of making their βίος as popular as they could. If we compare the diction between the two authors however, difference will reveal that the two authors had different agendas.

In Mark 5:9, the author explains that the demoniac replies: “‘My name is Legion; for we are many.’” The author does not specify that the demoniac has been possessed by many demons, but specifies that his name means that there are many. Although it may appear that the reader should assume that the author meant that there were many demons, it was the author’s specific choice to not specify when explaining what legion represents in his gospel. What makes this more evident is when this verse is compared to Luke’s in Luke 8:30, where the author of the Gospel of Luke specifies that many demons have entered the man: “Jesus then asked him, ‘What is your name?’ and he said, ‘Legion;’ for

⁸⁹ Joshua Garroway, “The Invasion of a Mustard Seed: A Reading of Mark 5.1-20,” *Journal for the Study of New Testament* 32, no. 1 (2009): 58, DOI: 10.1177/0142064X09339138.

many demons had entered him.” The two authors differ in their approach to how they explain legion, because the word has different meaning for each of them. For Mark, the word means the Roman legion (for there were many Romans occupying Palestine at the time the author wrote his gospel), but for Luke, it seems that he wanted to both demonstrate the power of Jesus as well as intensify Mark’s original message.

By differing his language from the author of the Gospel of Mark, the author of Luke’s gospel changes the meaning of legion. The word legion still represents a legion of soldiers, but because the Roman legion cannot ‘enter’ an individual while a demon can when it possess a human, the word legion actually represents Satan’s ‘foot soldiers’ (Luke 8:30).⁹⁰ Therefore, by having a legion of Satan’s foot soldiers, the author of Luke intensifies the political message that was originally read/heard in the Gospel of Mark. As the Gospel of Luke was written after the Gospel of Mark, some individuals would have heard or read the original source and began to understand the context behind the initial message. Therefore, the author of Luke is calling the Roman legion Satan’s foot soldiers, and thus, intensifying the message. For the author of Mark, it was enough to warn and reflect his community’s political concerns, but the Roman occupation had been in full swing longer by the time the author of Luke wrote his gospel, and thus, it appears as though the author was frustrated with his social and political environment. Furthermore, the author of the Gospel of Luke writes: “And they begged him not to command them to depart into the abyss” (Luke 8:31). Unlike the author of Mark, who uses the word country instead of abyss, Luke further emphasizes his frustration/hatred toward the Romans, as he sends the Roman legion to hell for not following; the Roman legion is no longer being exiled, but sent straight to hell to spend eternity.

⁹⁰ Ascough, *Miracles of Jesus*, 55.

The author also wanted to illustrate the power of Jesus, by depicting the protagonist exorcising many of Satan's foot soldiers and sending them to hell. One reason an author may want to highlight the power of a leader is to ensure that an uncertain and questioning community may be persuaded and reassured that they have chosen the right path following a strong leader. If this is the case, then the author of the Gospel of Luke may be a Gentile, as this group would be more likely to question if they belong to a division of Judaism.⁹¹ Returning to Luke 8:31, the author uses the word abyss instead of 'country.' By using the word country, the author of the Gospel of Mark illustrated that the Romans entered, took control and desired to remain in power of a country that was not their native land nor welcomed. Thus, instead of being sent to hell, the author just exiles the Roman legion. However, in Luke 8:31, the author explains the demons begging not to be sent into the 'abyss.' By choosing abyss, the author of the Gospel of Luke wants to further emphasize the power of Jesus, as he has the ability to rebuke the powerful demons to hell. Therefore, it is evident that not only is the author of Luke a Gentile, but that he was writing to a community of followers that must have been Gentile as well.⁹²

Another example of Luke emphasizing the power of Jesus is in Luke 8:35 when the author stresses that the man that was possessed by many demons sat by Jesus' feet. The same verse in Mark does not emphasize the importance of the man sitting near Jesus. By specifically explaining that the once possessed man is sitting next to Jesus healed, the author draws attention to the power of Jesus as well as, the importance of following Jesus and what happens to those who do and those who refuse to believe. As Mark's pericope has a strictly political message, he does not need to incorporate the man sitting next to

⁹¹ Bock, *Luke Volume 1: 1:1-9:50*, 6-7.

⁹² *Ibid.*, 14-15.

Jesus, because he does not need to highlight the powerfulness of a central figure to a new movement.

In Luke 8:26, the author highlights that the country of Gerasenes is opposite of Galilee, which is important to note, as there were “two major religions [that] originated in ancient Galilee. Both rabbinic Judaism and Christianity stem from and lay claim to ancient Israelite tradition that were cultivated in Galilee...”⁹³ At the time of Jesus, Galilee’s major religion would have only been the rabbinic religion, as Christianity did not exist yet. Thus, by mentioning Galilee in the beginning of this pericope, the author finds it significant to contrast the Gentile Gerasenes against the Jewish Galilee. As the author of Mark did not mention that Gerasenes was opposite to Galilee in Mark 5:1, the author of the Gospel of Luke must have wanted to highlight something different than Mark. By contrasting the two countries at the very beginning of a pericope where Jesus visits a land of Gentiles, Luke is depicting that the Jesus movement or new Jewish-Christian community accepts Gentiles, and thus, the author’s intentions are to reassure any Gentile feeling out of place or doubt about his/her association. Therefore, Luke’s intended audience was anyone feeling this tension by following a new association.⁹⁴ This is important, because Luke’s intentions differs from the author of Mark’s, due to their different audiences, and thus, the Lukean community is probably made up of mostly Gentiles, or Jewish-Christians who are questioning their religious affiliation.

Moreover, the difference in audience is further illustrated in the next verse. Firstly, in Mark 5:10, the author uses the singular pronoun ‘he’ instead of the plural pronoun ‘them’ (which is used in Luke 8:31). ‘He’ is used to represent the singular Roman Legion

⁹³ Richard A. Horsley, *Galilee: History, Politics, People* (Harrisburg, PA: Trinity Press International, 1995), 1.

⁹⁴ Bock, *Luke Volume 1: 1:1-9:50*, 14-15.

as a unit, while ‘them’ represents the numerous demons possessing the man of Gerasenes as well as, the numerous smaller military designations of the Roman legion⁹⁵ occupying various lands. The first representation in Luke illustrates the power of Jesus and what happens to those who follow or do not believe in Jesus, while the latter idea further intensifies the political message that was found in Mark. If Mark’s message was unity amongst the various early Christ groups to overpower the Roman legion, Luke’s message is a little more realistic. By addressing the Gentiles, and reassuring their faith, he is asking the Gentiles to unite with other Jewish-Christian movements to overpower the small military designations, and thus, eventually overthrow the powerful Roman legion.

Only some of the alterations that the author of the Gospel of Luke made to the Gospel of Mark are highlighted, to provide evidence that will challenge Bauckham’s claim. If Luke and Mark wrote βίοι, then they would differ somewhat (depending on what was popular at the time they were written), but the author of the Gospel of Luke changes a lot of Mark’s original version of the pericope. Therefore, we are left questioning why the author of the Gospel of Luke spent so much time editing his sources if he was basically writing the same biography about Jesus. The author clearly made alterations to ensure that his message was understood by his group of followers; although a variety of people may have understood his intensification of Mark’s political overtones, many individuals would not have understood why he was emphasizing the unity of the Gentile community with the Jewish-Christian community (unless they were a part of his community of followers).⁹⁶

⁹⁵ Ascough, *Miracles of Jesus*, 55.

⁹⁶ There are many differences that could be discussed, especially when exploring more than specific word choice, such as verb tense and usage in the Greek form. It is important to note however, that an entire paper could focus just on the redactional differences between the two gospels, and thus, due to the parameters of

IV. B. Redaction Critical Analysis: How and Why Matthew Changed Mark

Below is the Gerasene demoniac pericope found in Matthew 8:28-34. Certain parts of the text have been highlighted so that we may refer to them throughout this section.

²⁸And when he came to the other side, to the country of the Gadarenes, **two demoniacs** met him, coming out of the tombs, so fierce that no one could pass that way. ²⁹And behold, they cried out, “What have you to do with us, O Son of God? Have you come here to torment us before the time?” ³⁰Now a herd of many swine was feeding at some distance from them. ³¹And the demons begged him, “If you cast us out, send us away into the herd of swine.” ³²And he said to them, Go.” So they came out into the swine and behold, the whole herd rushed down the steep bank into the sea, and perished in the waters. ³³The herdsmen fled, and going into the city they told everything, and what had happened to the demoniacs. ³⁴And behold, all the city came out to meet Jesus; **and when they saw him**, they begged to leave their neighborhood.

As the author of the Gospel of Matthew, “impresses by the care and literary artistry involved in composition,”⁹⁷ it is clear that the author of Matthew is very particular in what he includes in his gospel, and chooses his words carefully. This is evident in his version of the Gerasene demoniac pericope, as his version is the shortest of the three synoptic gospels. Just with an initial glimpse at the pericope, it is evident that the author had a different objective than the other two synoptic authors. Thus, with an on-

this paper, I chose to focus on the specific word alterations between the two authors and the different themes that can be found.

⁹⁷ R.T. France, *The Gospel According to Matthew: An Introduction and Commentary*, Tindal New Testament Commentaries 1 (Leicester: Inter-Varsity Press, 1990), 21, quoted in Mika Hietanen, “The Gospel of Matthew as a Literary Argument,” *Argumentation* 25 (2011): 65.

the-surface comparison of these pericopae, Bauckham's theory clearly does not conform to the information provided. Furthermore, Matthew being the shortest is significant, as it is evident that it is not only important to examine what Matthew has altered from Mark's original version, but also what he has left out to understand what his objective is. For instance, the author of the Gospel of Matthew decided not to include the information about the legion of demons; he does not mention the legion at all in his version. This is because he does not have a political message, nor does he find it necessary to illustrate the power of Jesus (as Luke did). Therefore, the author of the Gospel of Matthew must have a different objective/message to share with his community.

It is important to highlight that the author of Matthew did not find it necessary to alter the traditional literary form of an exorcism story. Both in Mark and Luke, the authors strayed from the traditional miracle story form by having Jesus rebuke the demoniacs by using name magic. This was to allow the authors to emphasize their political overtones with the introduction of the name 'legion.' However, as Matthew does not have a political message, he does not need to create a name for the demoniacs, and therefore, he did not include Jesus using name magic against the demons.⁹⁸ Although the other two authors followed the literary form enough that their audiences could understand what type of story the Gerasene demoniac was, they altered the form to highlight that their pericope differed from the original form, and thus had an important message. This logic can be applied to this pericope too. As Matthew does not modify the traditional literary form, he must be addressing a community that has long become accustomed to the exorcism form; he must be addressing a community that has previously used exorcism stories in similar ways.

⁹⁸ See the above discussion on name magic in the previous section or Ascough, *Miracles of Jesus*, 25.

Furthermore, by depoliticizing the original pericope of Mark, this exorcism Jesus performs returns to signifying the spoken word of God overthrowing the kingdom/power of Satan (something many exorcisms in the gospels tended to represent).⁹⁹ Thus, Matthew demonstrates that Jesus is working for God, and has the power of the Holy Spirit to heal individuals. He does this by focusing this pericope on Jesus' ability to exorcise demons out of individuals, and thus, illustrating God's rule coming into the world¹⁰⁰ through Jesus.

Another part of the pericope that the author decides to refrain from including in his version is the ending where the previously possessed man begs to join Jesus. The author chooses to end with the citizens of Gerasenes begging Jesus to leave (Matt 8:34). This is important, as it was not until the Gentile community saw Jesus that they begged him to leave, and thus the author makes it appear as though the citizens of Gerasenes wanted nothing to do with Jesus. By depicting the Gentile community's displeasure and unwelcoming nature towards a Jewish miracle worker, the author may be reflecting the conflict developing Gentiles and Jews; some scholars argue that Matthew's writing appears to reflect the conflict developing between the early church and rabbinic Judaism.¹⁰¹

If this is the case, then the Gentile community is not in fear of Jesus like they are in the other two synoptic pericopae. Instead, the Gentile community does not understand the power and significance of Jesus and thus, it makes sense why no one followed Jesus at the end of the pericope; no one followed Jesus to his boat at the end of the story,

⁹⁹ Eric Sorensen, *Possession and Exorcism in the New Testament and Early Christianity*, ed. Jörg Frey, Martin Hengel, and Otfried Hofius, (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2002), 128-9.

¹⁰⁰ Ascough, *Miracles of Jesus*, 14.

¹⁰¹ David L. Turner, *Matthew: Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament*, (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2008), 13.

because although he appeared to be a miracle worker, he was Jewish, and that would be problematic for the Gentile community.

Therefore, it appears that the Matthean community consists of Jewish followers, as he is writing to someone who is used to using exorcism stories in a similar way (for instance the Lord's rebuke of Satan in Zechariah 3:2), and has not attempted to recruit Gentiles to their associations. Furthermore, the author focuses on depicting Jesus' power and the ungratefulness of the Gentile community, thus it is evident that the Matthean community must be made up of Jewish followers. This notion, however, has been debated by scholars: New Testament scholars have debated whether or not the Matthean community is made up mostly of Jewish followers that are still associated with the synagogue or if his community includes many Gentiles that have separated from the synagogue.¹⁰² By analyzing this pericope and comparing it to Mark's original version, it appears that the Matthean community consists of mostly Jewish-Christian followers who are still associated with the synagogue. If the Jewish followers still associated themselves with the synagogue, then they would not be interested in converting Gentiles, and thus, this returns to the analysis of the Gentile community of Gerasanes, where the citizens of the town did do not hold Jesus on the same level of importance as the Jewish-Christian of the Matthean Jewish community would.

Unlike the author of the Gospel of Luke, Matthew wrote for a Jewish-Christian audience in hopes that his followers would be able to use the themes and messages in his gospel to teach others. The author's desire to reach Jewish-Christians is evident, as he begins his gospel by providing Jesus' ancestral background and links Jesus to the

¹⁰² Ibid., 14.

ministry of John the Baptist.¹⁰³ The author of the Gospel of Matthew wrote during a time when Judaism was presenting many competing and diverse divisions. Therefore, the purpose of his gospel was to illustrate that the new movement was just another sect of Judaism. In other words, that ‘Christianity’ was another division of Judaism, and thus, the author was writing for Christian Jews who continued to have communication with “non-Christian Jews in the synagogue.”¹⁰⁴ In addition, Matthew depicts Jesus as a man who came to fulfill the law and the prophets, not to destroy them,¹⁰⁵ which further illustrates that the Matthean community was compiled of Jewish-Christians. Therefore, by exploring the Gospel of Matthew as a whole, it is evident that the author had a different objective than both the authors of the Gospel of Luke and the Gospel of Mark.

Although the author of the Gospel of Matthew does exclude a lot of information that the original version included in the Gospel of Mark, the author also altered some of the words to further emphasize his objectives, thus illustrating the concerns of his community of followers. The one example that I would like to focus on is at the beginning of the Gerasene demoniac pericope. In Matthew 8:28, the author says: “And when he came to the other side. . . .” The author chooses to use the personal pronoun ‘he’ instead of the plural ‘they’ that both the authors from the Gospel of Mark and the Gospel of Luke use in the beginning of their versions of the narrative. The author chose to use a personal pronoun because his focus is on Jesus (as I mentioned earlier), the man that Jewish followers have been waiting for, who has come to fulfill the law and the prophets.¹⁰⁶ Moreover, the author may not want to mention ‘they,’ meaning the apostles

¹⁰³ Ibid., 1.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid., 3.

¹⁰⁵ Ibid., 14.

¹⁰⁶ Ibid., 14.

of Jesus, because then his Jewish-Christian followers may focus more on questioning who was following Jesus instead of on the more important message of the story. In addition, Luke needed to include ‘they’ at the beginning, to illustrate to his community that Jesus already had a following (something that Matthew did not need to demonstrate).

This returns us to Bauckham’s theory that the gospels were written for a general Christian audience instead of specific communities. By comparing both the Gospel of Mark and the Gospel of Luke, Bauckham potentially could state his claim. However, by including a redactional analysis of the Gospel of Matthew, it is evident that each author wrote for a specific community. In addition to altering his pericope, the author of Matthew edited out too much material for the case to be made that he was writing another biography about Jesus. By profusely changing the original text, it is highly unlikely that the author of Matthew had the same objective as Mark or Luke, and thus would have written for a community that understood his message and agenda.

IV. C. Summary: Matthew and Luke Have Their Own Agendas

As the Gospel of Mark was written first, it is the authors of the Gospel of Luke and the Gospel of Matthew alter Mark’s version when they edit their own gospels. Therefore, these differences are significant because they demonstrate that each author had his own agenda based on his community of followers. The author of the Gospel of Luke wanted to reassure his community of Gentiles and those questioning their religious associations that they had chosen the correct path in following Jesus by promoting the positive things that happen to those who believe in Jesus, as well as depicting the

negative consequences of not following Jesus. The author's message is easier to comprehend when comparing it to the original source in Mark, because a reader may analyze what the author had changed from the original material and thus figure out why he did it. This method can also be applied to the Gospel of Matthew, who wanted his community to understand that Jesus was the Jewish Messiah, and thus, his community was actually another sect of Judaism. By emphasizing this, the author hoped to ease the conflict between the early Christ movement and rabbinic Judaism.

By applying a redactional critical method to the Gerasene demoniac pericopae in the synoptic gospels, I was able to determine the agenda of the two gospels that were written after Mark. As redactional critics believe the authors edit the oral and original written material, their theological motivations or personal agendas shine through their editorial work. The editors/authors are influenced by their environment and group of followers/community, thus it is difficult for them to not reveal their influences and concerns in their work. It is for this reason that redactional criticism is a useful form of comparison in New Testament studies.¹⁰⁷

V. Conclusions

So what was the purpose of arguing in accord with community theory for 50 plus pages when many scholars are already in agreement that you can learn about the gospel authors' environments, socio-political situations, and crucial characteristics about their community of followers through analyzing their gospels? The answer is because although

¹⁰⁷ This paper will not be applying Smith's methodology to the Gerasene demoniac pericopae, but it is important to note that this would be the next step a scholar would make to provide a more encompassing understanding of the authors of the gospels, what they were trying to illustrate and why they wrote what they did. Furthermore, I want to mention that although I only focused on the English translation of the gospels in this paper, I could have drawn even more conclusions by analyzing the Greek translation. However, due to the parameters of this paper and my current level of Greek, this type of analysis must be left for my PhD dissertation.

the majority of scholars concur with community theory, there are a select group of New Testament scholars who disagree. Furthermore, there seems to be a resurgence of interest in the topic of community theory. Some scholars such as Bauckham, Hengel, Stowers, and others believe that the authors wrote for an unlimited audience, where the goal of each gospel author was to have their text read by as many Christians and non-Christians as possible. Non-Christians are included as well, because if the authors wrote for a general audience, then they were probably hoping their texts would aid others in accepting their theological messages and converting to the Christian movement. It is for this reason, that adding to the discussion to prove community theory is significant, as it challenges these views and illustrates that scholars may obtain information about the gospel authors' community and the man known as Jesus. Although the gospels are now used for an unlimited audience, it is hard to ignore the fact that authors and editors are influenced by their own environment and social situation, which they reveal in their writing. Furthermore, as there was such a low population who could actually read at the time, it seems to make more sense that the authors wanted to use their texts didactically, and thus they would be used in smaller circles to teach their own group of followers the messages they wanted to share.¹⁰⁸

Furthermore, one of the objectives of this paper was to disprove Bauckham's argument that scholars who are in agreement with community theory often do not prove that the authors of the gospels actually wrote for specific communities, but instead translate the texts with the assumption that community theory is correct. By doing so, scholars miss out on other hermeneutical methods, which can potentially illuminate meaning behind the texts that have yet to be discovered. Although Bauckham himself,

¹⁰⁸ Kazen, "Sectarian Gospels for Some Christians?," 565.

does not provide a different way of interpreting the text, this paper has strongly attempted to challenge this argument by allowing the gospels to speak for themselves. Although I do agree with community theory, I did not want to approach this paper assuming that I was correct, or take for granted the work already accomplished by other scholars within the field. Instead, I wanted to use this paper to explain why community theory is true. Bauckham is right in that scholars may approach gospel analysis in other ways, however, the same conclusions will arise, as the authors' personal agendas and messages shine through their work. Even if Bauckham was correct, the question remains on why each author altered the original source of Mark? Of course each author had other sources than just the Gospel of Mark, but why would the authors not combine everything they had into one large writing about Jesus. This brings scholars back to community theory, and the authors of the gospels editing their sources to create a message that can be understood by their specific community of followers.

Therefore, by challenging scholars who disagree with community theory, I was able to make educated hypothesis about what the agenda of each author of the synoptic gospels was, learn general characteristics about each authors' community of followers, and discover traits about the environment each author was writing in. The author of the Gospel of Mark had a political message for his readers, as he was writing in a time when the Romans occupied Palestine. The author of the Gospel of Luke wanted to focus on uniting and reassuring both Gentiles and other followers questioning their religious association, while the author of the Gospel of Matthew wanted to focus on bridging the gap between the new Jewish-Christian movement and formative rabbinic Judaism. By applying both Bultmann's form critical and demythologizing methodologies as well as a

redactional critical method to the synoptic gospels, each of the authors' objectives became apparent.

First by applying Bultmann's methodology, I was able to understand what the author of Mark had changed from similar miracle and exorcism story forms from around the same time period. In addition, by demythologizing the text, I was able to hypothesize why he altered the form, and what message he was trying to send to his community, which in turn, provided insight into the environment he was writing in. After providing a foundation, I was then able to examine some redactional changes the later two authors made in their own gospels to understand their agendas and the characteristics of their community. Although I only focused on the Gerasene demoniac pericopae, this method can be used throughout each gospel, which will allow scholars to gain further insight into who the authors of the gospels were, the community they were writing for, and the overall objectives they were trying to project in their writing.

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