

In the same boat? Jonah and Jesus as wave-beaten heralds



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Scholars have noted similarities between the accounts of the stilling of the storm in Mark 4:35–41 and Jonah's attempt to run from the commission of Yahweh in Jonah 1. Little attention has been paid, however, to how an allusion to the Jonah narrative might serve the purposes of Mark as he presents Jesus to his readers and hearers. The objectives of this article were to discover: (1) whether there were sufficient similarities between the two accounts to suggest a relationship that might be recognised by Mark's readers and hearers and (2) whether recognition of similarities and differences in the two accounts might lead readers and hearers to a fuller understanding of Mark's presentation of Jesus' person and mission. This study paid attention to the literary structure and the specific terminology of both Mark 4:35–41 and Jonah 1, drawing on studies of the use of the Old Testament in the New Testament by scholars such as J.M. Leonard and R.B. Hays. I discovered: (1) several striking narrative features present in both accounts which might lead someone to recognise similarities between the stories; (2) some common terminology that would reinforce an initial sense of similarity; and (3) significant differences that would lead to Jonah and Jesus being contrasted. I concluded that a neglected connection between these two passages is that both Jesus and Jonah are called to be heralds of God's message to the nations, but that they respond to that calling in very different ways. I have argued that: (1) Mark does intend his hearers and readers to recognise an echo of the story of Jonah in his account, but (2) the primary significance of the comparison between Jonah and Jesus is not in the similarities (which simply serve to bring the Jonah narrative to mind) but in the differences between these two figures. In particular, (3) the wider context of the narrative in Mark indicates that Jesus (unlike Jonah) is making his crossing in obedience to the commission he has received to be the herald of God to the nations and the two narratives agree in showing that God's mission will not be thwarted.

Contribution: This study highlights that Mark's account of the stilling of the storm not only contributes to Mark's Christology but also contributes to a theology of mission, emphasising Jesus' full engagement in the *missio Dei*. This fits well with the scope of the journal in terms of its emphasis on both theology and missiology.

Keywords: Jonah; Jesus; storm; ship; Mark; miracle; mission; gentiles.

Introduction

The biblical accounts of Jonah in the storm (Jnh 1) and Jesus stilling the storm (Mk 4:35–41) are amongst the most dramatic narratives in the canon of Scripture. Although there is no explicit reference to the Jonah narrative in Mark's account, this article explores whether Mark is making a deliberate allusion to the account of Jonah and, if so, what the purpose of such an allusion might be.

This study is important, in my view, for several reasons. Firstly, it contributes to recent study of 'echoes' of and 'allusions' to Scripture in the New Testament (Bates 2019; Hays 1989, 2017; Leonard 2008). Secondly, it contributes to recent work on 'missional readings' of the Bible (ed. Goheen 2016). Thirdly, it suggests a reading of a section of Mark's Gospel that highlights its significance in the context of the wider narrative.

In this article, I will attempt to build on the work of numerous commentators who have noted similarities between the account of Jesus stilling the storm and the narrative of Jonah in the storm. I will argue that Mark's narrative provides an ironic contrast between Jesus and Jonah, with particular respect to their calling to be heralds of the word of God. I will note the obvious points of similarity between the two narratives along with some key points of contrast. I will then

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highlight the significant contextual factor of the mission in which these events take place.

The use of Jonah in the New Testament

We may begin our investigation by asking whether there is evidence that New Testament writers drew on the Jonah narrative in their documents. The *UBS Greek New Testament* (5th edition) Index of Quotations lists only one quotation from Jonah, found in Matthew 12:40 where Jonah 1:17 is the cited text. Here, Jesus draws an analogy between the experience of Jonah and the experience of the Son of man. When we turn to the Index of Allusions and Verbal Parallels, we find several further references: The only reference outside the Synoptic Gospels is identified as a reference to Jonah 1:17 (2:1 in the LXX) in 1 Corinthians 15:4 where, once again, there is a link between Jonah being 'three days' in the belly of the great fish and Jesus having been raised 'on the third day'. The remaining references which are suggested relate to the repentance of the Ninevites (Jnh 3:5–10) in Matthew 12:41, 11:21 and Luke 11:32, and to a similarity in wording in Jonah's expression of self-pity (Jnh 4:9) and Jesus' expression of distress in the Garden of Gethsemane (Mt 26:38 and Mk 14:34). We may say, then, that there is some evidence that the story of Jonah was familiar at the time when Mark wrote his narrative (see also Powell 2007:157–158).

The stilling of the storm in context

In the context of Mark's narrative, this passage follows immediately from the substantial block of parables of the kingdom in Mark 4:1–34. (Parallel accounts are also found in Mt 8:23–27 and Lk 8:22–25, but they are not preceded by the parables. I will focus only on Mark's account in this article.) In particular, Mark's account connects (Moloney 2002:97; Schnabel 2017:112) with the *location* of Jesus' teaching in parables in 4:1–2, where Jesus sits in a boat at the edge of the Sea of Galilee in order to teach, and also with the *time* ('that day, when evening came', ἐν ἐκείνῃ τῇ ἡμέρᾳ ὀψίας γενομένης: v. 35). This account also forms the first of a series of miracle stories which runs from Mark 4:35 to 5:43 in which Jesus demonstrates his authority (as the one who inaugurates the kingdom) over nature, demons, disease and death (Twelftree 2013). Thus, in Mark's narrative, the account of the stilling of the storm serves as a bridge between the parables of the kingdom in Chapter 4 and the powerful acts of Jesus in Chapter 5 (Collins 2007:257–258). Marcus (2000:335) accurately observed, 'Thus a strong connection is suggested between the dominion of God as presented by the parables and the identity of Jesus as presented by the Markan narrative'. I suggest, then, that Mark intends these miraculous events to be interpreted in the context of Jesus' role as the proclaimer or herald of the kingdom of God.¹

1. Although the accounts of the stilling of the storm in Matthew and Luke are not preceded by parables, they are, as in Mark, followed immediately by the exorcism of the demonised man (Mt 8:23–27 followed by Mt 8:28–34; Lk 8:22–25 followed by Lk 8:26–39) which suggests that these narratives should be read with an eye to how one sheds light on the other.

Relationship between the stilling of the storm and Jonah in academic discussion

Many commentators on Mark 4:35–41 have recognised similarities, both verbal and conceptual, between this passage from Mark's Gospel and the first chapter of Jonah. For example, Marshall (1989:213) claimed that it 'is widely recognized that, as it stands, 4:35–41 contains two prominent themes', one of which is 'a Christological theme which, drawing on various Old Testament motifs, sets forth Jesus as one greater than Jonah, as one who himself exercises Yahweh's cosmic dominion over the natural elements'. Commentators differ, however, in their evaluation of the significance of the resemblances.

Thorough surveys of the evidence are provided by Marcus (2000) and Meier (1994). Both scholars, however, regard the links between the stilling of the storm account and the Jonah account as suggesting that, to some extent at least, Mark's narrative is a creative reworking of the Jonah story. They understand this to raise questions about its historicity. For example, Marcus (2000:337) noted the view of Cope (1976) that:

[T]he sleeping of Jesus stretched out on the deck of a small fishing boat on the Sea of Galilee through a storm so violent as to imperil boat and crew is not at all credible. (p. 97)

Marcus (2000:337) goes on to comment, apparently in at least partial agreement with Cope, 'This suggests a literary relationship between the two stories and raises a question about the historicity of our passage, at least in its present form'. Similarly, Meier (1994:933) concluded his detailed study of Mark's account with the assertion that 'the stilling of the storm is a product of early Christian theology'. Cranfield (1977:172), however, claimed that suggestions that the account is a fabrication based on Psalm 89 or the Jonah narrative are 'improbable' on the grounds that the details, 'at once vivid and artless' (drawing on Vincent Taylor), indicate eyewitness testimony. Recent study on eyewitness testimony in the gospels by Bauckham (2017) should lead scholars to be cautious about questioning the historicity of gospel narratives too readily. Whilst I am inclined to follow Cranfield's view, my argument here does not depend on the historicity of Mark's narrative. The key point to note is that several scholars see such strong similarities between the account of Jonah and Mark's account of the stilling of the storm that they regard the latter as drawing on the former. I will argue that Mark's account of the stilling of the storm has indeed notable points of contact with features of the Jonah account whilst retaining its own unique character.

Marcus (2000:332) goes as far as to refer to a 'Jonah typology' in the passage. Stein (2008), however, argued that the case for a 'Jonah typology' is not strong enough, as follows:

Even the matter of whether some of the similarities are intentional is far from clear. The lack of similar terminology in some of the parallels and some of the differences in the story should be

noted. In the story of 4:35–41, there are no terminological parallels for such key terms as ‘great storm’, ‘stern’, the ‘wind ceasing’ and the resulting ‘great calm’ and between the disciples’ question and the captain’s question to Jonah. This suggests that there has been no intentional effort to tie the two stories together. Although the analogies in wording between the Jonah story and the present account are interesting, the differences are too great to speak of a ‘Jonah typology’. (p. 245, cf. Marcus 2000:336)

I agree with Stein that we do not have a ‘Jonah typology’ here. I also suggest that Stein’s points challenge the view that Mark’s account is a retelling of the Jonah narrative. But this is not to say that there is not some measure of connection. How many points of contact are required, and at what level of precision, before an allusion is recognisable? Stein’s hesitations appear arbitrary when points of similarity are considered.

Many commentators, then, see some kind of relationship between the passages in question, although some see the connections as of limited consequence. But even those who do see a strong connection between the accounts do not seem to see the link as providing a significant interpretative key for reading Mark’s narrative.

Hypothesis

I submit that there is evidence for an intentional connection between the narrative of the stilling of the storm and the Jonah narrative which has significance for the way in which Jesus’ crossing of the Sea of Galilee is to be interpreted. I will argue that several initial points of contact would make it possible for someone who was familiar with the story of Jonah to think of the Jonah narrative when they hear the account of the stilling of the storm.

Once that initial connection is suggested, more detailed points of similarity might become evident on further investigation. Once sustained reflection on the two stories takes place, it becomes clear that there are significant contrasts between the two main characters, and these highlight important features of Jesus and his activity.

Recognition of initial points of comparison might lead to recognition of further, less obvious, points of comparison and contrast.

Approach

Rather than regard the account of Jesus stilling the storm as exhibiting a ‘Jonah typology’, I suggest that Mark’s narrative echoes elements of the Jonah story in order to draw a striking and ironic *contrast* between the rather pathetic Jonah, the reluctant herald and Jesus, the true and faithful herald of the kingdom of God.

I believe that there is some evidence for this type of approach. Firstly, in the book of Jonah itself, I believe that there are already signs of intentional irony (Simon 1999:9–14; Timmer 2011:72–74) such as when Jonah confesses that he serves the

God who is maker of heaven and earth as he is trying to flee from God on a sailing ship (1:9), whilst the pagan sailors actually show true devotion and obedience to the point that they address their prayers to Yahweh (1:14). Secondly, in the canonical Gospels, Luke’s account of the temptation of Jesus by Satan in the wilderness (Lk 4:1–13) may be understood to draw an implicit contrast between Jesus and Israel. It is striking that Jesus is tempted on the matters of food, worship and putting God to the test, all of which are also found in the narrative of Israel’s time in the wilderness in the Pentateuch. It seems likely that a deliberate contrast is being drawn between Israel, the faithless son, and Jesus, the faithful son, even though there is no explicit statement to that effect (Green 1997: 192–193).

Points of similarity

Although Mark’s narrative has certain features typical of a Hellenistic miracle story (Boring 2006:143), the most obvious literary connection for this narrative, I believe, is with Old Testament texts, and particularly the story of Jonah. Boring (2006:143), amongst others, noted points of comparison and contrast between the Jonah and Jesus stories.

We may summarise several general points of similarity, which might lead someone familiar with the Jonah narrative to see connections. In both narratives:

- a man travels with others in a boat (Mk 4:36; Jnh 1:3)
- a great storm arises and waves threaten to sink the boat (Mk 4:37; Jnh 1:4)
- the man sleeps through the storm (Mk 4:38; Jnh 1:5)
- the man is roused by others in great fear (Mk 4:38; Jnh 1:6)
- a command is given (Mk 4:39; Jnh 1:12)
- the storm ceases immediately (Mk 4:39; Jnh 1:15)
- the result is ‘fearing a great fear’ (Mk 4:41; Jnh 1:16).

These similarities (compare the similar list of Davies & Allison 1991:70) are sufficient, I think, despite Stein’s caution, to suggest to a mind steeped in the scriptures that there is a broad similarity to the stories so that hearing one would bring the other to mind. It is true that several features of Mark’s account may be compared with narrative features in Homer’s *Odyssey* (Collins 2007:258, citing the work of Dennis R. MacDonald), but given the importance of the Old Testament scriptures in the early Christian communities, the story of Jonah would be a more natural text with which to compare Mark’s narrative. Stein highlights the oral form in which the story would have been passed on to most people, even once the narrative was in written form as part of the Gospel, and suggests that this militates against seeing a deliberate connection between the Jonah story and this account. However, the main points of similarity which we have highlighted are major dramatic moments in the narratives which would not, I suggest, depend on subtle linguistic connections in order to be recognised. Within a canonical context, the broad outline of a narrative presented above could only bring to mind the two narratives we are considering.

However, despite Collins' (2007:259) claim that 'close verbal similarity is lacking', the similarities go beyond general conceptual connections to specific verbal similarities. Leonard (2008) provided a list of eight criteria for evaluating possible textual connections and presented as his first criterion the following (2008:246): 'Shared language is the single most important factor in establishing a textual connection'. In contrast to Collins's and Stein's approach, Boring (2006:143) noted various points of verbal similarity, claiming that: 'Not only themes, but overlapping vocabulary connect the two stories'. If we now compare the precise wording of the two narratives (as does Collins 2007:260), we see the following translation is from the ESV unless otherwise stated):

- a man travels with others in a boat (Mk 4:36: 'And leaving the crowd, they took him with them in the boat, just as he was'; Jnh 1:3: 'So he paid the fare and went down into [the boat], to go with them to Tarshish')
- a great storm arises and waves threaten to sink the boat (Mk 4:37: 'And a great windstorm arose, and the waves were breaking into the boat [τὸ πλοῖον], so that the boat [τὸ πλοῖον] was already filling'; Jnh 1:4: 'But the Lord hurled a great wind upon the sea, and there was a mighty tempest on the sea, so that the ship [τὸ πλοῖον] threatened to break up')
- the man sleeps through the storm (Mk 4:38: 'But he was in the stern, asleep [καθεύδων] on the cushion'; Jnh 1:5: 'But Jonah had gone down into the inner part of the ship and had lain down and was fast asleep [ἐκάθευδεν]')
- the man is roused by others in great fear (Mk 4:38: 'Teacher, do you not care that we are perishing [ἀπολλύμεθα]?'; Jnh 1:6: 'What do you mean, you sleeper? Arise, call out to your god! Perhaps the god will give a thought to us, that we may not perish [ἀπολώμεθα]')
- a command is given (Mk 4:39: 'Peace! Be still!'; Jnh 1:12: 'Pick me up and hurl me into the sea')
- the storm ceases immediately (Mk 4:39: 'And the wind ceased, and there was a great calm'; Jnh 1:15: 'the sea ceased from its raging')
- the result is 'fearing a great fear' (Mk 4:41: 'and they feared a great fear, [καὶ ἐφοβήθησαν φόβον μέγαν]' [author's translation]; Jnh 1:16: 'and the men feared the Lord with a great fear [καὶ ἐφοβήθησαν οἱ ἄνδρες φόβῳ μεγάλῳ τὸν κύριον]' [author's translation]).

Perhaps the most striking point of comparison is the fact that both Jonah and Jesus sleep in the midst of the storm. Witherington (2001:175) noted that this is the only place in the New Testament where Jesus is said to sleep. Commentators tend to see this as an indication of the full humanity of Jesus (which is doubtless part of the significance), but Witherington draws attention to the striking similarity with the Jonah narrative (see also France 2002:223–224).

Beyond these initial points of connection, I think we can identify one further similarity which is less commonly noted, although Boring (2006:144) does mention it briefly: an authoritative instruction initiates the journey. We will return to this later.

Having briefly surveyed the points of similarity between the stilling of the storm narrative and the Jonah narrative, I suggest that there are sufficient points of contact to make it reasonable to claim that a person who was familiar with the story of Jonah and who heard Mark's account of the stilling of the storm might well be prompted to see connections between the two accounts. Collins (2007:260) concluded, 'It is likely that the evangelist is deliberately alluding to the Jonah story here'. Two further pieces of evidence support this contention.

New Testament

Firstly, there are several instances in the canonical gospels where, according to the authors of the gospels, Jesus himself draws a comparison between himself and Jonah, namely Matthew 12:40; 16:4 and the lengthier parallel in Luke 11:29–32. Although there are no similar references in Mark's Gospel itself, and although there is no attempt to make an explicit connection between the two storm narratives in any of the gospels, these references do indicate that Jesus himself and the gospel tradition drew a connection between Jesus and Jonah, albeit focussing on the matter of Jonah being 3 days in the belly of the great fish. It is reasonable, therefore, to imagine that a Christian who was familiar with this tradition who either heard or read the narrative of the stilling of the storm would find Jonah a natural point of comparison.

Early Christian interpretation

Secondly, there is some evidence of early Christian interpreters making a connection between the two narratives. Sherwood (2000:14) noted that although in her opinion 'Jonah and Jesus show little overt resemblance', there was enthusiasm amongst early Christian interpreters for making the connection. However, in general, Christian interpreters appear to have shown little interest in seeing parallels between the two *narratives*. That is not of course to say that Jonah was ignored, far from it. But the main emphasis in early Christian writings was either on the explicit 'sign of Jonah' texts, or on an allegorical use of the specifics of the Jonah story to illustrate Christian doctrine. Sherwood catalogues numerous examples from early Christian interpretation of Jonah which indicate a tendency towards typology and indeed full-blown allegory. Her distaste for this approach is evident in her strong words (2000):

As the text becomes a gigantic and accommodating receptacle for Christ's truth and Christ's sufferings, Jonah's outline begins to melt; he loses his own voice and script and outline and becomes a ventriloquist for Christ. And as the Old Testament narrative is chomped and consumed by the New, emphasis is redistributed and elements of the Old Testament text are lost. (p. 17)

However, Sherwood (2000:15) acknowledged that this was not entirely the case: 'Jerome looks at Jonah sleeping in the hold of the ship and sees Jesus asleep on the storm-tossed lake' (with reference to Jerome, *In Mattheum* 9.24–25).

A lengthier example from Cyril of Jerusalem (ca. 315–386) is provided by Ben Zvi (2003):

Now when we study the story of Jona [*sic*] the force of the resemblance becomes striking. Jesus was sent to preach repentance; so was Jonah. Though Jonah fled, not knowing what was to come, Jesus came willingly, to grant repentance for salvation. Jona slumbered in the ship and was fast asleep amid the stormy sea; while Jesus by God's will was sleeping, the sea was stirred up for the purpose of manifesting thereafter the power of Him who slept. They said to Jona: 'What are you doing asleep? Rise up, call upon your God! that God may save us'; but the Apostles say: 'Lord, save us!' In the first instance they said: Call upon your God, and in the second, Save us. In the first, Jona said to them: 'Pick me up and throw me into the sea that it may quiet down for you', in the other Christ Himself 'rebuked the wind and the sea, and there came a great calm'. Jonah was cast into the belly of a great fish, but Christ of his own will descended to the abode of the invisible fish of death (Cyril of Jerusalem, *Catechesis*, 14.17). (pp. 138–139)

Although Cyril does start to move in the direction of the 'sign of Jonah' type of interpretation and, in fact, starts to develop allegorical connections with his 'invisible fish of death' comment, for the most part, Cyril engages with the two storm narratives in a very natural way.

On the basis of the similarities in the broad outline of the narratives, the striking verbal similarities at certain points, the traditional association of Jonah and Jesus (which, according to Matthew and Luke, stemmed from Jesus himself) and the evidence of some early Christian interpretation, I suggest that there are demonstrable connections between Mark's narrative of the stilling of the storm and the Jonah narrative. Whilst we do not have access to the mind of the author of the gospel to know what his intention was, the evidence is sufficient that one can at least suspect that the author intended the connection to be drawn.

Points of difference

But as soon as one starts to read the two narratives in light of each other, it becomes clear that there are distinct differences between the two narratives as well, and I suggest that it is in these that we see the true significance of the story. France (2002:223–224) helpfully picked up on this aspect of the narrative, commenting 'Jonah's role (as victim rather than victor) itself serves to emphasise Jesus' authority by contrast rather than by similarity ("something greater than Jonah is here", Mt. 12:41).'

The primary differences between the narratives are discussed below.

Jonah fled from his commission to be a herald to the nations, whereas Jesus is committed to taking the message of the kingdom to the gentiles

There are two elements to highlight here. The first is the command indicating the purpose of God. The second is the intended recipients of God's message.

The element of command in the Jonah narrative is unmistakable, as God commands Jonah to go on two occasions in the story (1:1; 3:1). Ironically, when Yahweh commands Jonah to 'rise and go' (Jnh 1:2), we are told that Jonah 'rose to flee'! Thus, the author of the Jonah narrative takes great care to emphasise that Jonah is commissioned (and that Jonah took great care to attempt to escape that commission). In the case of Jesus, the element of command is not so clear but I believe can be seen in two ways. Most obviously, there is Jesus' own statement, 'Let us go across to the other side' (Διέλθωμεν εἰς τὸ πέραν). Boring (2006:144) remarked that this 'is not a suggestion, but a command'. Thus, Jesus takes on the role of the initiator of the journey (so Anderson 1976:144). It is true, as Anderson noted that 'the text shows no interest in Jesus motives for crossing', but the very instruction itself is significant. If Mark does not explain why Jesus wished to cross the lake, yet still includes reference to his instruction, then the instruction itself may well be significant. When read in contrast to the Jonah narrative, it highlights that Jesus was eager to proceed, whereas Jonah was eager to run away.

But lying behind that authority is the authority of God. We can see this in at least three ways in the wider context of Mark's Gospel: the affirmation of Jesus by God at his baptism in 1:10–11, Jesus' urgent call to preach elsewhere in 1:38 'for this is why I came' and the nature of Jesus' proclamation of 'the kingdom of God' (4:1–34). These elements combine to portray Jesus as one who is specially commissioned by God to carry out a specific task which is to declare the message of the kingdom of God.

Regarding the intended recipients of the message, that is quite clear in the Jonah narrative. Jonah was called to proclaim God's word (in the form of a declaration of impending judgement) to the people of Nineveh, a pagan city in Mesopotamia. The dreadful reason behind Jonah's initial flight and his later dark mood is explained in Jonah 4 in terms of his utter horror that Yahweh should show mercy to this people. Jonah's stubborn refusal to show any commitment to the Ninevites (at any time) is contrasted sharply with Jesus taking the initiative with a determined decision ('let us cross over to the other side') to reach the other side of the Sea of Galilee.

Here we see a further parallel between the Jonah narrative and the stilling of the storm account, as Jesus heads for the predominantly gentile region of the Gerasenes. Is there a parallel between Jonah being called to proclaim God's message in Nineveh in Mesopotamia and Jesus crossing to the region of the Gerasenes? It is clearly not an exact parallel, because the events on the other side of the Sea of Galilee still take place within Israel. Yet, the area was regarded as a gentile area (Iverson 2013:303). Writing about the account of the demonised man in Mark 5 (which immediately follows and is directly connected to the stilling of the storm narrative), Bird (2006) comments:

Ultimately, however, the story is one of an unclean man (Gentile), in an unclean place (Gentile territory), in an unclean area (tombs), near unclean animals (pigs), in an unclean state (demonized) who experiences the mercy of a Jewish prophet. (pp. 109–110)

Similarly, Witherington (2001) correctly identified the 'boundary-crossing' nature of this journey, 'as Jesus is depicted as crossing over into foreign, indeed pagan territory – a land where pig herding is acceptable and demons mass in legions'. Witherington (2001) continued:

It is of course true that there were Jews and Gentiles on both sides of the sea, but Mark is using the story symbolically to suggest the crossing over into a largely pagan realm, and indeed this is the first of several crossing stories of this sort. (pp. 173–174)

Gundry (1993:243) is right to reject an interpretation of this event as a picture of the future Christian mission, favouring instead a Christological emphasis. But my reading of Jesus as the commissioned herald is entirely Christological and fits well with the question of the disciples, 'Who is this man?', yet it also takes account of a missional emphasis in the context of Mark's narrative.

Thus, reading the stilling of the storm narrative in the light of the Jonah narrative highlights Jesus as the commissioned herald who is faithful to his calling to take God's message to the gentiles and who carries it out with determination, as discussed next.

God sent the storm to discipline Jonah, whereas Jesus confronts the storm which is portrayed as an agent of opposition to God's kingdom

It is important to note that the storms in the two narratives under consideration are not to be attributed to the same source in the same manner. In the Jonah narrative, God is explicitly identified as the one who sends a storm to put an end to Jonah's escape (Jnh 1:4). However, there is no such statement in Mark's account. Instead, there is a striking use of language which suggests a rather different interpretation of the storm. In Mark's narrative, Jesus 'rebukes' the storm with the command, 'be still'. Forms of the Greek words ἐπιτιμάω and φιμώω, which are used here, are also used in 1:25 to silence an unclean spirit. Marcus (2000:332) thus had a good reason to entitle this section of the narrative in his commentary, 'Jesus Overpowers a Storm'. Similarly, Moloney (2002:98) entitled this section of his commentary, 'Jesus overcomes the stormy sea'.

However, not all commentators are convinced. Gundry (1993) surveyed the literature and suggested that:

We should not think of him as exorcising demons of the wind and sea, but should think instead of language that emphasizes his power by echoing not only the accounts of exorcisms but also OT passages concerning God's rebuking and stilling the sea. (p. 240)

referring to Job 26:11–12; Psalms 65:8[7]; 66:6; 106:9; 107:29–30; Nahum 1:4 amongst other references. Schnabel (2017:114, n.60) expressed similar reservations regarding this

passage as an 'exorcism' on the basis of the language employed, as does France (2002:224) who regarded Mark's language as 'anthropomorphism'. Gundry's inclusive words 'not only ... but also' seem immediately to remove the main aspect of his concern. Of course, the language of God rebuking and stilling the sea is highly relevant, but this does not deny that there may be an echo of the exorcism accounts here also. Whilst France (2002:224) may be correct to consider 'what words other than such anthropomorphisms Mark, as a graphic storyteller, could have used to express Jesus' words of command addressed to inanimate forces', we are still left with the question of why Jesus addresses rather stern words, rather than simple instructions, to the storm.

The relationship of God with the storm is a complex one. Clearly, God is presented in Scripture as the creator who is Lord over all of his creation. It is also clear from the Jonah narrative that the raging sea may be an instrument in his hand to carry out his own purpose (See also Ps 107:25 'For he commanded and raised the stormy wind, which lifted up the waves of the sea' [ESV]). However, Job 1:19 offers a different perspective. There where the mighty wind that causes destruction and death is clearly understood to be an outcome of the conversation in Job 1:12 in which Yahweh gives the Satan restricted liberty to afflict Job. The mighty wind thus is an aspect of creation which is used by malevolent personal forces against God's people. The text in Job provides, by analogy, grounds for understanding the storm as being used by Satan whilst not itself being 'demonic'.

This interpretation is further strengthened if it is seen in terms of Jesus' task of declaring the kingdom of God to the gentiles. In this narrative context, which includes the account of the demonised man in 5:1–20, the storm may be understood as an expression of demonic opposition to the proclamation of the kingdom in general and to the gentiles in particular, over which Jesus demonstrates his authority.

If this reading of the text is accepted, our understanding of Jesus is further enhanced to include his overpowering the opposition which stands in the way of completion of his task, as discussed below.

The storm around Jonah ceased when he was cast into the sea to be overwhelmed by the waves, whereas Jesus commands the waves to cease on his own authority as the one who has authority over them

In both narratives, the fearful (and unnatural?) storm comes to an unnatural end through a command being issued. In the case of Jonah, he instructs the sailors to throw him into the sea (Jnh 1:12). In the case of Jesus, he directly commands the wind and waves. The final statement of fear, which parallels almost exactly the phrase used in the Septuagint account of Jonah, is hugely important. If the disciples thought that they were afraid in the storm, now they are terrified! Why? Although no explanation of their fear is provided in the text, the implication of reading the narrative in the context of the biblical canon is that this man has done what only the Creator

God can do. He speaks to the creation and the creation obeys. Whilst Mark says simply that the disciples ‘feared a great fear’ (Mk 4:41), Jonah 1:16 states that the men in the ship ‘feared *the Lord* (τὸν κύριον) with a great fear’. If the text of Jonah were in the minds of readers of Mark’s narrative, that difference might be understood to have some Christological significance. Gundry (1993) correctly draws of the significance of Mark’s comment:

For Mark, the key point is that the man who will later be crucified is the man who without prayer to God or adjuration in God’s name successfully commands the wind and the sea. He is a divine man who represents the one true God. (p. 241)

This leads to our final contribution to the portrait of Jesus when set against the portrait of Jonah: Jesus is not only the faithful and actively obedient herald to the nations (as opposed to the unfaithful and reluctant Jonah), not only the one who overpowers opposition which stands in his way (as opposed to Jonah who requires hindrance to be sent to stop his flight), but he has the authority to ensure that his commission is completed by exercising his own authority (as opposed to Jonah who is entirely passive and depends on the actions of God). In these ways, Mark presents Jesus not using a ‘Jonah typology’ but by drawing an ironic contrast between Jonah and Jesus in a way that makes clear the pre-eminence of Jesus.

Conclusion

This study has attempted to demonstrate that there is evidence for an intentional connection between Mark’s stilling of the storm narrative and the Jonah narrative. I contend that there are ample reasons to suggest that someone steeped in the Old Testament Scriptures who heard or read the stilling of the storm narrative would be reminded strongly of the Jonah story. This would be possible even at the level of the broad outline of the story, although, for those familiar with the Greek version of Jonah, it would be confirmed by attention to specific details.

I have attempted, however, to go beyond this relatively non-contentious claim to argue that the purpose of the connection is not to highlight similarities but rather to draw out various striking and ironic contrasts between Jesus and Jonah, which become clear once the stories are carefully considered together. Furthermore, I suggest that the wider context of the narrative supports a reading of the stilling of the storm narrative which presents Jesus as the commissioned herald of the kingdom of God to the gentiles who are faithful and committed in carrying out his task and are capable of overcoming every obstacle which faces him. This provides a fitting answer to the disciples’ question, ‘Who is this man that even the wind and waves obey him?’ and demonstrates that, for Mark, truly ‘one greater than Jonah is here’.

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