

ANDREW J. KELLEY

Thaumaturgic Prowess

*Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen
zum Neuen Testament 2. Reihe*
491

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491



Andrew J. Kelley

Thaumaturgic Prowess

Autonomous and Dependent Miracle-Working
in Mark's Gospel
and the Second Temple Period

Mohr Siebeck

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*To my dad, Joe Kelley
I follow him as he follows Christ.*

Preface

This book first came into being as the result of my research for a PhD at the University of Edinburgh which I completed in 2015. Over the course of the last three years Mohr Siebeck extended me an offer of publication and permitted me ample time to address more issues with the argument that needed to be addressed in order for it to be ready for publication. Although I researched and wrote this thesis myself – it is absolutely essential that I acknowledge many other people.

I first wish to acknowledge the Lord Jesus Christ. It may seem out of order to permit any space to my religious beliefs anywhere in this book. However, the work I have done here is not just an act of scholarship, it is an offering of worship.

I wish next to thank my intelligent and caring wife, Stephenie. Ph.Ds can be emotionally draining and isolating. Having her present with me throughout the course of my studies has been beyond invaluable. She has continually offered me a measure of grace and kindness I do not deserve. I also want to thank my two children, Kadence and Sterling. I had thought that the most important thing I would add to my life in Edinburgh would have been a Ph.D. I was wrong. My two children made dark nights in Edinburgh brighter and warmer.

I am also supremely grateful to Professor Helen Bond. I have met few people in my life with both her level of intelligence as well as the ability to deftly articulate her ideas. However, she is not only an excellent scholar, but a profoundly attentive advisor. Her mentorship and advice throughout this entire project has been overwhelmingly supportive. Her patience with me borders on the supernatural. I could never have navigated such a project without an advisor like her.

I am very thankful to Dr. Todd Klutz and Dr. Philippa Townsend for their thorough and kind examination of my thesis. They put a great deal of time into carefully working through my argument. Ultimately, the work I have now produced is far better due to their key involvement.

I would like to additionally thank Dr. Matthew Novenson, Professor Larry Hurtado, Professor Paul Foster, and Professor Hans Barstad for their assistance and careful advice as I completed my thesis. Each of them contributed in a substantial way to the formation of my ideas and the manner in which I communicated them. Beyond this, they formed me as a thinker and scholar and exemplified for me a well-run, unified university department.

I also wish to thank Dr. Darian Lockett, Dr. Joseph Sanzo, Dr. Matthew Hoskin, Dr. Sean Adams, Dr. Seth Ehorn who each extensively read my work, mentored me in sub areas within the field of New Testament Studies and encouraged me throughout the entire process. In particular, Dr. Sean Adams and Dr. Seth Ehorn who read and re-read extensive sections of my work and offered helpful comments. I wish also to thank Dr. Kurtis Peters, Dr. Kengo Akiyama, Dr. James Petitfils, Dr. Will Kelly, Dr. Luke Wisley, Dr. Ray Lozano, Dr. Mark Batluck, Dr. Brendon Witte, Dr. Andrew Jones, Dr. Zac Cole, Elizabeth Corsar, Dr. Steven Stiles, Dr. Samuel Hildebrant, Dr. Bernardo Cho, Dr. Jay Thomas Hewitt, Dr. Elijah Hixson, Alix Rouvinez and Jeremiah Dobruck. They all generously read and discussed my thesis with me, and their input only made it better.

Immense appreciation goes out to St. Paul and St. George's Church in Edinburgh. They provided for my family a deep caring community of faith. The congregation there was welcoming from the very beginning to our last day in service. We made friends there that we will treasure for life.

I also wish to thank my parents, Joe and Dianne Kelley, my parents-in-law, Steve and Dawn Beyersdorff, and my sister, Katy Kelley. Their emotional and financial support during our time in Edinburgh relieved a huge burden on us in more way than one. We were grateful for their frequent visits for us and for our children. A special thanks also to Kelly and Shelley Kemp, Peter Knutson, and the congregation of Hope Chapel for their generous financial support.

Last, but not least, I would also like to thank Robert McKay, Eli Appleby-Donald, Ming Cao, Kathy Christie, Karen Duncan, Jo Hendry, Karoline McLean, Kate Munro and Felicity Smail. Each of these staff members were exemplary. They were always remarkably helpful in both administrative matters and in guidance for essentially anything that wasn't directly related to my research. I am thankful that New College has such an excellent team of people offering support and look back on my time there with immense joy.

I must also extend thanks to the many people at Mohr Siebeck that have graciously made the publication of this book possible: Dr. Henning Ziebritzki, Klaus Hermannstädter, and Elena Müller. I also wish to thank Professor Jörg Frey as the editor of this series. Lastly, a special thanks to Professor James Kelhoffer for his thorough read of my work with many insightful and helpful comments – he made my work better and I greatly appreciate the investment he made.

Lomita, California
May 2018

Andrew J. Kelley
SDG

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Introduction

In 1924, Harry Houdini, perhaps history's most famous illusionist published his book, *A Magician Among the Spirits*. In it he seeks to discredit the evidence for the growing spiritualism movement in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. In the opening lines he says, "The ancients' childish belief in demonology and witchcraft; the superstitions of the civilized and uncivilized, and those marvellous mysteries of past ages are all laughed at by the full grown sense of the present generation."¹ Houdini continues by relaying the fascinating story of Margaret Fox, a child medium who captured the attention of spiritualists worldwide, and her eventual confession that she was never contacted by any spirits at all – it was actually all an elaborate trick. Using darkened rooms, invisible strings, and a special foot-tapping technique cultivated from a very young age, Margaret and her sister led many to believe that spirits were present.

In this example, Houdini inadvertently highlights one of the most striking differences between the ancient and modern world. For Houdini, and those interested in his illusions, the governing question was *how a trick was done*. This answered the relevant question. The *trick* by which an illusion was performed had been revealed.

Although Houdini's characterization of the first century is potentially belittling, he reveals in his narration of Fox's story at least one difference between "the present generation" and the "ancients." The prevailing question of those witness to magic or miracles in the first century would usually not have been, "*How did you trick us?*" It would have instead been, "*By whom?*"² In either case, method matters. Early in Mark's Gospel, Jesus stirs the ire of the scribes when he forgives the sins of the paralytic brought to him for healing.

"What is easier to say to the paralytic? 'Your sins are forgiven' or to say 'arise, pick up your mat, and go?' But so you may know that the son of man has authority on earth to forgive sins" – he said to the paralytic – "I say to you, arise, pick up your mat, and go home." And he rose, immediately picking up his mat, and departed before everyone, so that everyone glorified God saying, "we have never seen anything like this." (Mark 2:9–12)

¹ H. Houdini, *A Magician among the Spirits* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1924), xxi.

² The word "magic" and to what it refers is a complicated and heavily debated subject. For a further discussion of these words and this particular field of discipline, please refer to chapter three.

The implication of Jesus's response, "which is easier to say," is that both the forgiveness of sin and the healing of the sick are difficult, perhaps impossible feats for human beings to achieve. Some commentators on Mark have argued that Jesus's healing miracle in this text serves to prove that he has the authority to forgive sins, which is in fact something that only God has the authority to do.³ What is striking about Jesus's miracles throughout the Gospels, and particularly in Mark, is that he never prays, petitions, or coerces God to perform any miracle or to give him the power to perform a miracle. He simply acts. A cursory reading of other miracle narratives roughly contemporary to Mark shows that some form of deferment is usually present when miracle-workers perform miracles. At the least, Jesus's technique is ambiguous when compared to miracle-workers who defer.

As deferment is an essential category for the argument of this thesis, it will be helpful here to be clear about what it refers to. When a miracle-worker defers in order to perform a miracle, he or she calls on someone else for the power to perform the miracle, is specifically directed to perform certain actions by someone else, or is clear in attributing the power for such a miracle to someone else. As one can see throughout the course of the data surveyed for this thesis, this "someone else" is almost always a deity.

The question governing this thesis is: *How is Mark's characterization of the method of Jesus's miracle-working distinct from other characterizations of miracle-working in Mark's milieu, and what function does it serve in his narrative?* I will attempt to answer this question by conducting my thesis in two steps. After a brief literature review, I will spend two chapters examining the depiction of miracle-working in a variety of sources outside of the Gospel of Mark. Then I will spend two chapters dealing with the miracle narratives of Mark's Gospel in detail.

1. Method

1.1. Date Ranges

For this thesis, I will be working with sources as early as the Septuagint and as late as Josephus's *Jewish Antiquities*. This means that my date range is roughly 300 BCE to 125 CE. This range will incorporate as many relevant sources as possible without extending too far beyond the composition of the Gospel of

³ V. Taylor, *The Gospel According to St. Mark: The Greek Text with Introduction, Notes, and Indexes* (London: MacMillan, 1952), 197; J. R. Edwards, *The Gospel According to Mark*, PNTC (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2002), 79; R. H. Stein, *Mark*, BECNT (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic Press, 2008), 120. For an alternative view, see T. Hägerland, *Jesus and the Forgiveness of Sins: An Aspect of His Prophetic Mission*, SNTSMS 150 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012).

Mark. However, when working with magical materials, I will be extending the date range slightly – from the second century BCE to the third century CE – so that I can incorporate enough material to have a more reliable data set.

1.2. How Sources Relate to Each Other

In terms of the comparative work, I adopt the approach outlined in Samuel Sandmel’s article titled, “Parallelomania.”⁴ In the search for similarities and distinctions between Mark and other miracle narratives of its time, I will not assume that there are direct “organic literary connections” between narratives nor that one predates or postdates another (unless of course there is general consensus regarding dating).⁵ Instead, I will seek to identify clear and general trends in the way miracle narratives are told and then apply that trend to my understanding of the Gospel of Mark. I will not try and directly relate one narrative as a source for another.

1.3. Use of the Septuagint

As I believe that the New Testament writers, when working with Old Testament traditions, were primarily interacting with the Greek versions, I will do the same. That is, in cases where I am evaluating an Old Testament narrative, I will primarily refer to the Greek version. There will be cases in which I refer to the Hebrew Bible – but only as a point of comparison when the two versions differ in a way that is relevant to my thesis.

1.4. What is a Miracle?

The definition of a miracle is notoriously difficult to pin down. Today, most people consider miracles to be an event that violates, or appears to violate, the natural order. This definition is heavily indebted to figures from the Enlightenment, and not only them, but the continual forward march of science, not as a discipline, but a worldview.⁶ No such definition will suffice for this study. I prefer the definition provided by Eric Eve in his monograph, *The Jewish Context of Jesus’s Miracles*. In his view, a miracle is “a strikingly surprising event, beyond what is regarded as humanly possible, in which God is believed to act, either directly or through an intermediary.”⁷ This definition relies not on the violation of scientific laws – a somewhat anachronistic category for the ancient authors investigated here – but instead on human perception and expectation. I

⁴ S. Sandmel, “Parallelomania,” *JBL* 81 (1962): 1–13.

⁵ Sandmel, “Parallelomania,” 1.

⁶ See D. Hume, *An Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1777), 12.

⁷ E. Eve, *Jewish Context of Jesus’ Miracles*, JSNTSup 231 (London: Sheffield Academic Press, 2002), 1.

would also note that there is little disagreement among New Testament scholars and other sources from the Second Temple period regarding which narratives include miracles and which do not. A search through some of the more important monographs discussing miracle narratives will almost always yield nearly identical lists of events.⁸

1.5. The Narrative Level

It is helpful to note that this study is not a historical Jesus study. I have no intention of making any about what the historical Jesus did.⁹ Instead, my investigation takes place at the level of the narrative. I will use many sources from the same historical period to better understand the cultural, social, and religious assumptions that both the author and his or her readers may have shared about miracles.¹⁰ This may mean that my thesis takes a historical-grammatical approach – the “historical” here though is referring to broad beliefs of those living at the time of Mark’s composition, not the historical Jesus himself.

⁸ Some important studies with similar or exact lists of miracle narratives in the Second-Temple period include: A. Richardson, *The Miracle Stories of the Gospels* (London: SCM Press, 1941); H. C. Kee, *Miracle in the Early Christian World: A Study in Sociological Method* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1983); G. Theissen, *The Miracle Stories of the Early Christian Tradition*, trans. F. McDonagh, SNTW (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1983); H. C. Kee, *Medicine, Miracle, and Magic in New Testament Times*, SNTSMS 55 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986); G. Twelftree, *Jesus the Exorcist: A Contribution to the Study of the Historical Jesus*, WUNT 2.54 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1993); W. Kahl, *New Testament Miracle Stories in their Religious-Historical Setting: A Religionsgeschichtliche Comparison from a Structural Perspective*, FRLANT 163 (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1994); W. Cotter, *Miracles in Greco-Roman Antiquity: A Sourcebook for the Study of the New Testament Miracle Stories* (London: Routledge, 1999); G. Twelftree, *Jesus the Miracle Worker: A Historical and Theological Study* (Downers Grove, IL: Intervarsity Press, 1999); M. Becker, *Wunder und Wundertäter im frührabbinischen Judentum: Studien zum Phänomen und seiner Überlieferung im Horizont von Magie und Dämonismus*, WUNT 2.144 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2002); E. Eve, *Jewish Context*; E. Koskeniemi, *The Old Testament Miracle-Workers in Early Judaism*, WUNT 2.206 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2005). Differences amongst these scholars usually have more to do with which sources they select (a focus on Jewish or Greco-Roman sources) or if they are editing the set of data to better match the sorts of miracles that Jesus performs in the gospels (healings, exorcisms, nature miracles, etc.).

⁹ For studies that hold such interests regarding miracles see P. J. Achtemeier, “Miracles and the Historical Jesus: A Study of Mark 9:14–29,” *CBQ* 37 (1975): 471–91; J. D. Crossan, *The Historical Jesus: The Life of a Mediterranean Jewish Peasant* (New York: Harper Collins, 1992); E. P. Sanders, *The Historical Figure of Jesus* (London: The Penguin Press, 1993); J. P. Meier, *A Marginal Jew: Rethinking the Historical Jesus*, ABRL 2 (New York: Doubleday, 1994); B. Chilton, “An Exorcism of History: Mark 1:21–28,” in *Authenticating the Activities of Jesus*, ed. Chilton, B. D. and C. A. Evans (Leiden: Brill, 1999), 215–45; J. P. Meier, “The Present State of the ‘Third Quest’ for the Historical Jesus: Loss and Gain,” *Bib* 80 (1999): 459–87; Twelftree, *Miracle Worker*.

¹⁰ Throughout this thesis, I will be referring to the writer of the Gospel of Mark as “Mark.” When I refer to Mark using a pronoun it will be a masculine one.

1.6. An Argument from Silence

I must, from the outset, address the issue of an essential feature of my investigation being the *lack* of a narrative feature – that is, express deferment indicated in the description of events. In the case of narratives, sometimes the feature is explicitly present, or strongly implied. In other cases, particularly in the Gospel of Mark, it can be conspicuously absent. Within a narrative, I believe that certain conclusions can be drawn from this absence, but the same may not be true of some of the magical materials that I discuss in chapter three. As these texts do not narrate the actual performance of the rituals they lay out instructions for, one cannot draw as firm of conclusions. I believe, however, that the genre distinction between these materials and those of the narratives I discuss throughout mean that I can assume we are getting a fuller picture of the events in the narratives. Thus, a lack of deferment in certain magical materials that could, theoretically, be accompanied by some form of deferment in their actual performance does not necessarily mean that a lack of deferment in a narrative might also be accompanied by some unstated deferment in the narrative. The absence of deferment in a narrative is just that – a choice on the part of the author not to include it. This conclusion is made possible by the clear inclusions of indications of deferment in many of the narrative background materials that survey throughout.

2. Chapter Overviews

Chapter one will provide a history of literature regarding miracles, Mark, and the identity of Jesus. The goal of this chapter is to provide a clear overview of previous work related to this topic and show why my thesis is warranted. The review is comprised of five sections: (1) History-of-Religions and the *Theios Anēr* Debate; (2) The Miracle, Medicine, Magic discussion; (3) Miracles and the Historical Jesus; (4) Recent Comparative and Literary Studies; and (5) Markan Studies and the Identity of Jesus. We shall see that although there is a great deal of scholarship dedicated to the study of miracles, the research required to answer my particular thesis question has not yet been conducted. Specifically, the background survey has not been exhaustive and the data from such a survey has not yet been adequately compared to a careful reading of the miracle narratives in Mark. Further, no one has drawn conclusions about Mark's depiction of Jesus as an autonomous miracle-worker in distinction from miracle-workers, both inside and outside of his Gospel.

Chapter two is concerned with miracles as they appear in narrative literature. The bulk of these narratives are Jewish and mostly from the Old Testament or retellings of narratives that first appeared there. The goal of this chapter is to illustrate the nearly ubiquitous inclusion of deferment in miracle narratives.

That is, human miracle-workers do not act autonomously but show clear and explicit dependence on God to perform their miracles.

After a broad investigation of miracle-narratives, chapter three turns to an investigation of the miraculous as it appears in non-narrative and other secondary texts. This investigation collects its evidence from four primary places: fragments from Qumran, Greco-Roman writers discussing magic or miracles (e.g. Pliny, Plato, etc.), the *Testament of Solomon*, and magical materials. In this chapter, I discuss the relationship of magic materials to the phenomena of miracles and spend the bulk of the chapter dealing with various magical materials extant from the specified time period. The goal of this chapter is to illustrate that a wide range of both publicly and privately used texts – not just narratives – featured deferment as an important characteristic of miracle-working and other numinous activity. These sorts of texts help to support the general trend apparent in the narratives: that miracle-workers defer in order to perform miracles. Together, these two chapters will demonstrate the widespread assumption that with supernatural feats, the practitioner is typically also a petitioner.

In chapter four I will begin an investigation of Jesus as a miracle-worker in the Gospel of Mark. The goal of this chapter is to illustrate that Jesus is an autonomous miracle-worker – distinct from other miracle-workers depicted in works of the same period. There is an overview of Jesus's method of miracle working, which primarily includes word of command and touch. The broad survey of other works describing human agency in the supernatural provides a reliable background for understanding the significance of Jesus as an autonomous miracle-worker. Additionally, this chapter seeks to show how Jesus as an autonomous miracle-worker undergirds the high view of Jesus that Mark seems to hold, which is exemplified by a few passages which are particularly epiphanic.

Chapter five draws another distinction between Jesus and other miracle-workers, but this time focuses on miracle-workers who appear in the same narrative. The goal of this chapter is to illustrate that Jesus's autonomous miracle-working is not an idiosyncratic feature of Mark's writing style but integral to his characterization of Jesus as Mark portrays other miracle-workers in the text as dependent on either God or Jesus to perform miracles.

I shall conclude that Mark's characterization of Jesus as an autonomous miracle-worker – one who does not defer to perform miracles – was intended to undergird his high view of Jesus. He uses this characterization at key points in his narrative and draws out distinctions between Jesus as an autonomous miracle-worker and other miracle-workers in his narrative to further emphasize his high view of Jesus. When I say "high view" of Jesus I am referring to Mark's christology. In my conclusion I state that "Mark exhibits what may be a remarkable innovation in the abilities that human miracle-workers possess and further that the characterization of Jesus "probably indicates something scan-

dalous about his identity.”¹¹ This conclusion implies that Mark view of Jesus is not less than human, but probably something more. It may in fact support Richard Bauckham’s work arguing for a “divine identity” model of christology.¹² I must also state that this conclusion is not without reservation as it may be viewed by some as an extreme assertion, however, I do at least conclude that Jesus sharing in this particular act of God in a way considerably different from other miracle-workers depicted in the time period may mean that Mark is communicating a profound unity between God and Jesus.

¹¹ See page 176.

¹² As described by R. Bauckham, *God Crucified: Monotheism and Christology in the New Testament* (Carlisle, UK: Paternoster Press, 1998); R. Bauckham, *Jesus and the God of Israel: ‘God Crucified’ and Other Studies on the New Testament’s Christology of Divine Identity* (Milton Keynes, UK: Paternoster Press, 2008); R. Bauckham, “Paul’s Christology of Divine Identity,” in *Jesus and the God of Israel: ‘God Crucified’ and Other Studies on the New Testament’s Christology of Divine Identity* (2008): 182–232.

Chapter 1

Miracles in Mark and Jesus's Identity – A Literature Review

1. Introduction

To write a comprehensive but still reasonably sized survey of secondary literature regarding miracle narratives and the Gospels would itself be miraculous.¹ It is my task to present a review that is faithful to the history of literature about miracles but focused directly on studies most relevant to my thesis concerning Mark's characterization of Jesus as an autonomous miracle-worker.

The development of miracle studies has multiple facets and has been approached in a variety of disparate ways, not all of which can be represented here. In order to facilitate the most clear review, I have placed major works into five different categories: (1) History-of-Religions and the *Theios Anēr* Debate; (2) The Miracle, Medicine, Magic discussion; (3) Miracles and the Historical Jesus; (4) Recent Comparative and Literary Studies; and (5) Markan Studies and the Identity of Jesus. Although this review will run in a roughly chronological manner, this will not always be the case as some of the different discus-

¹ There are a number of works that are worth mentioning, but do not warrant the time it would take to categorize and discuss for *this* literature review. For works that read much like commentaries on the various miracle stories, see: A. Richardson, *The Miracle Stories of the Gospels* (London: SCM Press, 1941); R. H. Fuller, *Interpreting the Miracles* (London: SCM Press, 1963); H. Van Der Loos, *The Miracles of Jesus*, NovTSup 9 (Leiden: Brill, 1965); R. Latourelle, *The Miracles of Jesus and the Theology of Miracles*, trans. M. J. O'Connell (New York: Paulist Press, 1988); C. W. Hedrick, "Miracles in Mark: A Study in Markan Theology and its Implications for Modern Religious Thought," *PRSt* 34 (2007): 297–313. For works of a somewhat apologetic nature see: J. Kallas, *The Significance of the Synoptic Miracles*, SPCKBM 2 (London: SPCK, 1961); F. Mussner, *The Miracles of Jesus: An Introduction*, trans. A. Wimmer (Exeter: Paternoster Press, 1970); C. Brown, *Miracles and the Critical Mind* (Exeter: Pasternoster, 1984); C. Brown, *That You May Believe: Miracles and Faith Then and Now* (Exeter: Paternoster Press, 1985); C. S. Keener, *Miracles: The Credibility of the New Testament Accounts* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2011). For a redaction-historical investigation see K. Kertelge, *Die Wunder Jesu im Markusevangelium: Eine redaktionsgeschichtliche Untersuchung*, SANT 23 (München: Kösel-Verlag, 1970). For a much broader literature review on miracles and New Testament studies, see G. Twelftree, "The Miraculous in the New Testament: Current Research and Issues," *CBR* 12 (2014): 321–52.

sions happen simultaneously. Furthermore, many studies can fit into more than one of the sections that I have outlined. In these instances, I simply put them into whichever section I believe they best fit.

To limit further the scope of this literature review, I will only interact with sources that take interest in at least one of two tasks: first, the comparison of miracle-workers in the milieu of Jesus and, second, the identification or categorization of Jesus by the miracle material in the Gospels. Not all studies that take one of these themes into account seriously consider the other. Thus it is the case that not every study will have maximal relevance to my thesis. In addition, this thesis is concerned with Jesus at the literary level as opposed to the historical level. This does not mean that historical Jesus studies are completely irrelevant to my thesis – only that their usefulness is at least partly limited.

At the end of this review, I hope to show there are two ways in which miracles in regard to Jesus’s identity can be further explored. First, the means by which Jesus performs miracles have not been adequately compared to the full body of contemporary miracle literature. Second, the import of this comparative study has not yet been brought to bear fully on the miracle narratives in the Gospel of Mark.

2. History-of-Religions and the Theios Anēr Debate

During the time of the early form critics,² a category of miracle-worker emerged within scholarship that stamped a permanent impression on the field: the *theios anēr*.³ Richard Reitzenstein in *Hellenistic Mystery Religions: Their Basic Ideas and Significance* (1910) began to develop the idea that would eventually be attached to this religious type. He contended that within the cultural landscape that cradled “infant Christianity,”⁴ the type of the “godly man” begins to emerge:

A general conception of the θεῖος ἄνθρωπος begins to prevail, according to which such a divine man combines within himself, on the basis of a higher nature and personal holiness, the profoundest knowledge, vision, and the power to work miracles. Without this conception, phenomena such as the preacher and wonder-worker Apollonius of Tyana, or the seer and religious founder Alexander of Abonoteichos, remain incomprehensible.⁵

² M. Dibelius, *From Tradition to Gospel*, trans. B. Woolf (New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1935); R. Bultmann, *History of the Synoptic Tradition*, trans. J. Marsh (New York: Harper & Row, 1963).

³ Greek: θεῖος ἀνὴρ.

⁴ R. Reitzenstein, *Hellenistic Mystery Religions*, trans. J. Steely PTMS 15 (Pittsburgh: Pickwick Press, 1978), 17.

⁵ Reitzenstein, *Mystery Religions*, 26.

Although Bultmann and Dibelius do not, as pointed out by Barry Blackburn, use the term *theios anēr*,⁶ the concept still plays a significant role in their treatment of the miracle narratives in the Gospels.

First in Dibelius (but soon followed by Bultmann), the Greco-Roman miracle narratives found throughout the ancient world serve as a background for the formation of what Dibelius terms “Tales” in the Gospel narratives.⁷ He notes two processes within the Hellenistic miracle stories that can be brought to bear on Gospel narratives: “the incidental replacement of Myths by miracles and . . . the disappearance of the boundaries between God and the God-sent man.”⁸ The Hellenistic background that Dibelius draws on to illustrate his point includes Asklepios, Serapis, Apollonius of Tyana, and Alexander of Abonuteichus. Although this is not a fully formed and articulated *theios anēr* hypothesis, it stands in continuity with Reitzenstein and others to come.⁹

Over the next few decades, various scholars – most notably Bieler, Weinreich, Wetter, and Windisch – continued to develop and utilize the *theios anēr* category in their studies of Jesus, concluding that the miracle material in the Gospels is evidence that early Christians adapted Jesus tradition in an effort to win over Greco-Roman converts. This adaptation consisted most importantly of the inclusion of miracle narratives paralleling Hellenistic miracle-workers (e.g. Apollonius of Tyana, Pythagorus, etc.).

⁶ B. Blackburn, *The Theios Anēr and the Markan Miracle Traditions: A Critique of the Theios Anēr Concept as an Interpretative Background for the Miracle Traditions Used by Mark*, WUNT 2.40 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1991), 3.

⁷ Dibelius, *Tradition*, 40; in Bultmann, *Synoptic Tradition*, 218–41.

⁸ Dibelius, *Tradition*, 96.

⁹ A list of those who agree with the *theios anēr* hypothesis includes: G. P. Wetter, *Der Sohn Gottes: Eine Untersuchung Über Den Charakter und Die Tendenz Des Johannes-Evangeliums*, FRLANT 26 (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1916); O. Weinreich, “Alexander der Lügenprophet und seine Stellung in her Religiosität des zweiten Jahrhunderts nach Christus,” *NJKA* 47 (1921): 129–51; H. Windisch, *Paulus und Christus*, UNT 24 (Leipzig: J. C. Hinrichs, 1934); H. Leisegang, “Der Gottmensch als Archtypus,” *ErJb* 18 (1950): 9–45; D. Georgi, *Die Gegner des Paulus im 2. Korintherbrief*, WUNT 11 (Neukirchen: Neukirchener Verlag, 1964); L. Bieler, *ΘΕΟΙΣ ΑΝΗΡ: Das Bild des “Göttlichen Menschen” in Spätantike und Frühchristentum* (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1967); T. J. Weeden, “The Heresy that Necessitated Mark’s Gospel,” *ZNW* 59 (1968): 145–48; T. J. Weeden, *Mark – Traditions in Conflict* (Philadelphia, PA: Fortress Press, 1971); L. Schenke, *Die Wundererzählungen des Markusevangeliums*, SBS 33 (Stuttgart: Verlag Katholisches Bibelwerk, 1974); D.-A. Koch, *Die Bedeutung der Wundererzählungen für die Christologie des Markusevangeliums*, BZNW 42 (Berlin: de Gruyter, 1975); Reitzenstein, *Mystery Religions*; E. V. Gallagher, *Divine Man or Magician? Celsus and Origen on Jesus*, SBLDS 64 (Chico, CA: Scholars Press, 1982). A good discussion of sources specific to the idea of Hellenism as a mediator between the *theios anēr* hypothesis and early Christianity (e.g. Hahn) see C. R. Holladay, *Theios Aner in Hellenistic-Judaism: A Critique of the Use of This Category in New Testament Christology*, SBLDS 40 (Missoula, MT: Scholars Press, 1977).

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