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The Concept of Faith in Paul and Mark

Faith is a central concept in both Mark and Paul's undisputed letters and serves as a useful basis for comparison between the two. There have been few attempts to compare faith in Mark and Paul, most focusing on what is believed rather than the nature of faith itself.¹ The following discussion understands faith as the expected or hoped for response by human beings to God, especially as expressed in response to the good news set forth in word and action. It includes therefore much more than a word study of the πιστ –stem, not least because sometimes faith's response is depicted not by such words but by narrative description. It necessarily includes beliefs, which are addressed more directly in other contributions to this volume. In this chapter they cannot be ignored, because how faith responds has much to do with what faith believes, but they will be dealt with only in overview. The chapter first explores faith in Mark (understood as the earliest Gospel) and Paul (the undisputed letters) before turning to compare the two and reflect on the implications of the comparison.

¹ Thus Joel Marcus, "Mark – Interpreter of Paul," *NTS* 46 (2000): 473-87, notes the following similarities: use of εὐαγγέλιον; the crucifixion as apocalyptic turning point; victory over demonic powers; fulfilment of prophecy; Jesus as the new Adam; faith in God and Jesus; the dualism of election and universal choice; atoning death; the sequence, first Jews, then Gentiles; change to the Law, including abrogation of food laws. See also Joel Marcus, *Mark*, AB 27 and 27A (2 vols; New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1999, 2009), 74-75. Similarly William R. Telford, *The Theology of the Gospel of Mark* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), who also includes the eucharistic tradition; attitude towards the state; preference for Son of God over Son of David; language of mystery; tensions with the Jerusalem church (164-69). See also John R. Donahue and Daniel J. Harrington, *The Gospel of Mark*, SP 2 (Collegeville, Pa.: Liturgical Press, 2002), who list also common vice lists; Rufus (Mark 15:21; Rom 16:13); and church houses (40). For a critical assessment of such claims and their significance see most recently James G. Crossley, "Mark, Paul and the Question of Influence." In *Paul and the Gospels: Christologies, Conflicts and Controversies*, eds. Michael F. Bird and Joel Willits, LNTS 411 (London: T & T Clark International, 2011), 10-29, who argues that many are not limited to Mark and Paul, but reflect common tradition, some contain significant differences (such as on Israel's ultimate salvation), and others are wrongly conceived (disputing Mark's alleged abrogation of food laws). Marcus is deliberately challenging the arguments by Martin Werner, *Der Einfluss paulinischer Theologie im Markusevangelium. Eine Studie zur neutestamentlichen Theologie* (Giessen: Töpelmann, 1923), who disputed such influence. Werner's exposition is unmatched in detail and precision by the dissenting responses and so remains fundamental to the discussion.