

John Painter

Mark and the Pauline Mission

In my 1997 commentary on Mark, I suggested that Mark is an expression of the Pauline mission, rather than a Petrine Gospel as claimed by Papias.¹ I argued that *Mark* is shaped by and provides a basis for the Pauline Law-free mission to the nations.² By Law-free I meant free from those ritual elements of Jewish Law, like circumcision and purity laws, that separated Jews from Gentiles. The argument for this hypothesis was further developed in my monograph on James.³ Although the evidence of two missions is generally recognised (see Gal 2:7-8 in context), the complexity of divisions (factions) within the two missions is not. In 1998 Joel Marcus gave a paper entitled “Mark – Interpreter of Paul” at the Orlando SBL Meeting, which was published two years later.⁴ While it is relevant to my study, I have a more limited objective, seeking only to show that Mark was both shaped by and provided a basis for the Pauline mission to the nations. Two recent books, whose conclusions are relevant to this position, can be used as a way into this discussion.⁵

1 James G. Crossley: Mark as Pre-Pauline

James Crossley sets out to show that the commonly accepted date for Mark (c. 70 CE) is not convincingly established. It is true that the evidence upon which the authorship and date of composition are to be identified is flimsy, not only for Mark, but for each of the four canonical Gospels. None of them identifies its author. Authorial names appear to have been added when the fourfold Gospel col-

1 Papias was Bishop of Hierapolis in the first half of the second century. Around 130 CE he wrote *Expositions of the Oracles of the Lord*, a work in “five books” now lost but known in fragments preserved in the works of others, especially by Eusebius the early fourth century bishop of Caesarea. See especially Eusebius, *H.E.* 2.15.2; 3.36.2; 3.39; and also Irenaeus (c. 180 CE) *Adv. Haer.* 5.33.4.

2 John Painter, *Mark’s Gospel* (London: Routledge, 1997), i, 3-8, 24, 113, 168, 175, 213, 217.

3 John Painter, *Just James: The Brother of Jesus in History and Tradition* (Columbia, S.C.: University of South Carolina Press, 1997), 67-102.

4 Joel Marcus, “Mark – Interpreter of Paul.” *NTS* 46 (2000): 473-87. See the revised version of this article in vol. II of “Mark and Paul”.

5 James G. Crossley, *The Date of Mark’s Gospel: Insight from the Law in Earliest Christianity*, *JSNTSup* 266 (London: T & T Clark International, 2004); and Michael F. Bird, *Jesus and the Origins of the Gentile Mission*, *LNTS* 331 (London: T & T Clark International, 2007).