

OPENINGS and ENDINGS OF MARK'S GOSPEL

Mark's prologue Mark 1:1-13 in the style of Greek drama?

Prologue/Disclosure"Complication"....Turning point...Denouement....Epilogue?

- "Good News about Jesus Christ the (Son of God)"
- Quotation from the Old Testament - unusual for Mark- and inaccurate!
 - and about the messenger, not Jesus
- Enter John the Baptist as typical (and successful) Old Testament prophet a la Isaiah or Elijah But: "I'm only the messenger" Points 'offstage' to Jesus (cf. John 11:27-33)
- But John the Baptist does not (acc to Mark) know what we (the readers) know...
- Then the voice from heaven...
- Significance of all this happening in the wilderness
- Temptations of Jesus – a foretaste of confrontation
- v 14 then the play 'proper' begins

"Things happen in the prologue that happen nowhere else; characters appear here who are not seen again, and truths are spelt out here that are not explained elsewhere. Only when we get to the end of Mark's story is Jesus openly proclaimed as the Messiah – in the accusation nailed to the cross; only then is he acknowledged as God's Son – by the centurion who executes him." Morna Hooker "Beginnings" 1997 p21

Strange Endings : 4 permutations:

- Most ancient authorities end at v 8
- One authority has the 'shorter ending'
- A few have shorter ending + vv 9-20
- Others have v8 then vv 9-20 without shorter ending

Why? – several theories

- Front and back missing from Mark's paperback?!
- Shorter/longer endings added after other gospels written to 'complete' Mark's work?
- Shorter/longer endings added to reflect developments in Early Church?

Does it 'work' if you finish at v 8?

- Resurrection IS attested by 3 witnesses
- Angel re-appears (last seen at the beginning at 1:13)
- Told to pass the message on
- 'On the Way' you will see him – get going!
- It's OK to be fearful
- **Now over to you the reader... to become part of "The Never-ending story"**