

The Yarbro Collins Pre-Markan Passion Narrative (2007)

Critique 2 (Mk 14:42-72)

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[ARREST]

14:42. Wake up, let us go. See, the one who hands me over has drawn near.”

14:42. Get up, let us go. See, the one who is to hand me over has drawn near.”

EBB: This, in effect, is a prediction; one that is fulfilled immediately. If predictive material is still found in the PPN, then the PPN does not differ greatly, at least in that respect, from the Markan Passion Narrative. This further suggests that what I will call the early and the late states of Mk 14 both display Markan signature characteristics. I would myself prefer to excise it precisely *because* it is predictive. It turns out that narrative continuity in the early layer is not adversely affected thereby; see my own reconstruction, following these Critiques..

14:43a. While he was still speaking, Judas, one of the Twelve, arrived.

14:43a. And immediately, while he was still speaking, Judas, one of the Twelve, arrived.

EBB: Excising “and immediately” (as with the “and” at 14:32a) does make the reconstructed text less Markan, but it would seem to be based on the hypothesis that the PPN *is* in fact pre-Markan. Is it reasonable that final Mark would leave his source text unchanged save for introducing that one adverb? I see no other examples of equally minute adjustments in the PPN as here reconstructed. I would prefer to let the adverb stand.

As to the supposed independent status of the PPN: The audience at this point surely needs to be told more about Judas than that he was “one of the Twelve.” Why is he doing what he is doing? And who are the Twelve anyway? As noted earlier, a truly independent Passion narrative would have been likely to identify the betrayer and his motive, rather than to introduce him in this rather sudden way. (For considerations of space, I here forbear to analyze “the Twelve”).

14:43b. With him was a crowd with swords and clubs, sent by the chief priests.

14:43b. And with him was a crowd with swords and clubs from the chief priests and the scribes and the elders.

EBB: The “scribes and elders,” on the other hand, are a plausible Markan addition to prior material. Mark piles on all the enemies of Jesus previously identified in his Gospel: not only the Jerusalem establishment, but the lawyers and elders. Whether the *previous* text is an outside document or an earlier version of Mark is not clear one way or the other.

14:44a. Now the one who was about to hand him over had given them a signal,

14:44a. Now the one who was about to hand him over had given them a signal,

14:44b. saying, “The one whom I kiss is he; arrest him and take him securely into custody.”

14:44b. saying, “The one whom I kiss is he; arrest him and lead him away under guard.”

EBB: This comment is a flashback; it provides information on Judas’s plan which was not given in 14:10-11. So far so good, especially since 14:10-11 itself does not figure in this reconstruction. But still, who are the “them?” They were identified in 14:10, but that connection has not been previously established for the audience of the PPN. Excising 14:10-11 thus after all creates a problem for the reader or hearer of the PPN. Here is one argument for defining the PPN as beginning somewhat earlier than at 14:32a, or for somehow introducing the information contained in this earlier text..

14:45. And when he arrived, he immediately went to Jesus and said, “Rabbi,” and kissed him.

14:45. And he came immediately, went up to him and said, “Rabbi,” and kissed him.

EBB: If “immediately” was excised in 14:43a on grounds that it was a Markan stylistic marker, then it might be thought that its presence here constitutes a Markan stylistic marker present in the the prior text.

14:46. The others laid hands on him and arrested him.

14:46. They then laid hands on him and arrested him.

14:47. [om]

14:47. Now a certain one of those who were standing by drew his sword and struck the slave of the high priest and cut off his ear.

AYC (685): “It is also odd that the action described in this verse is not anticipated or prepared for earlier in the narrative and that no consequences of it are described in what follows.”

EBB: This is indeed part of the classic argument for an interpolation. Luke clearly felt the Markan narrative to be inadequate at this point, and he fixed it by supplying the missing elements. So far, AYC’s argument is convincing. But it lacks a convincing motive for the later addition of 14:47. Such a motive seems difficult to find. Then 14:47 might be historically accurate, and if accurate, it might be part of an early Passion narrative. If others were present beside the intimate circle of Jesus, then the circumstances of the arrest might have been different than in the present Mk 14.

