

## Dialogue and Resurrection in Mark's Gospel

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Readers of Mark both naïve and critical usually bring to the text the fundamental assumption that Jesus' voice is supremely authoritative in it. As the gospel's hero, Jesus serves as mouthpiece and model by which the narrator articulates, demonstrates, and implicitly urges readers to adopt the evangelist's own views of faith and discipleship. Or, if you like, the evangelist, understanding Jesus' proclamation and ministry to constitute a paradigm and object of authentic faith, creatively and persuasively edits the traditions about Jesus he has collected to ensure that his gospel narrative emphasizes the features in them he found most salient. Ancillary to this assumption is another: Mark's narrative invites—even requires—readers to reject views articulated by Jesus' opponents, especially when Jesus rejects them himself. His is, after all, the gospel's supremely authoritative voice.

Both of these assumptions are mistaken. Since it is impossible to approach any text—especially one as (in)famous as the Bible—without presuppositions about what it says and how it says it, I shall draw on one of Bakhtin's insights into Dostoevsky's prose to present a surrogate assumption, which I shall then test by examining a single Markan episode (12:18-27) from the interpretive perspective it implies.

In "The Hero in Dostoevsky's Art," the second chapter of Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics, Bakhtin writes:

In Dostoevsky's larger design, the character is a carrier of a fully valid word and not the mute, voiceless object of the author's words. The author's design for a character is a design for discourse. Thus the author's discourse about a character is ... oriented toward the hero as if toward a discourse, and is therefore dialogically addressed to him. By the very construction of the novel, the author speaks not about a character, but with him. And it cannot be otherwise: only a dialogic and participatory orientation takes another person's discourse seriously, and is capable of approaching it both as a semantic position and as another point of view. Only through such an inner dialogic orientation can my discourse find itself in intimate contact with someone else's discourse, and yet at the same time not fuse with it, not swallow it up, not dissolve in itself the other's power to

mean; that is, only thus can it retain fully its independence as a discourse (emphasis in original).<sup>1</sup>

Later in the same chapter, he writes:

The finalizing activity of the author of a monologic novel is, indeed, especially evident in the fact that such authors cast a mantle of objectivity over every point of view they do not share, turning it, to one degree or another, into a thing. In contrast to this, Dostoevsky's authorial activity is evident in his extension of every contending point of view to its maximal force and depth, to the outside limits of plausibility. He strives to expose and develop all the semantic possibilities embedded in a given point of view.... This Dostoevsky knew how to do with extraordinary power. And this activity, the intensifying of someone else's thought, is possible only on the basis of a dialogic relationship to that other consciousness, that other point of view.<sup>2</sup>

Applied to Mark's gospel, the first passage from Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics invites us to understand the character Jesus as more than a mouthpiece for the evangelist's views, as more than a static paradigm whose admiration and emulation Mark's narrative demands from the reader. Jesus' rather is an independent voice presenting ideas that may or may not correspond to the evangelist's and with whom the evangelist himself can even enter into a kind of dialogue.<sup>3</sup> Indeed, we ought to be surprised were this not the case, for early Jesus-believers like Mark were convinced that Jesus was literally alive and in prophetic communication with his followers. To them he certainly was not a mouthpiece; his was a living voice that spoke to and among communities of faith.

The second passage suggests that characters other than Mark's hero Jesus may achieve autonomy of voice as well. This too, carefully considered, comes as no surprise. It is a necessary corollary to the independence of Jesus' voice, which, inasmuch as it is independent, can and must address questions articulated by creative and dynamic interrogators, rather than by static caricatures of opponents, whose primary purpose would be to give Jesus a convenient opportunity to present his own fully formed views. If Jesus' challengers in Mark's gospel serve only to allow him to articulate views Mark wholly recommends, in opposition to ill-conceived and ridiculous notions Mark wholly rejects, then Jesus' voice is, for all intents and purposes, identical with the evangelist's. But "only a dialogic and participatory orientation takes another person's discourse seriously," Bakhtin reminds us. So, if Mark takes Jesus'

discourse seriously, then it stands to reason that he would confront it with serious opponents who offer coherent and meaningful challenges to the perspectives Jesus holds, at least with a view toward showing that his Jesus has persuasive responses to such thoughtful adversaries. I shall examine one such challenge in this paper.

In Mark 12:18-27, Jesus enters into a debate with some Sadducees that touches on two crucial questions about the resurrection: the fundamental issue of whether people rise from the dead, and the ancillary issue of the form in which they (might) rise. The Sadducees propose a life after death that does not involve the supernatural restoration of the body. Mark's Jesus responds with an argument that vigorously insists bodies do rise. In this pericope, we encounter among many aspects of Mark that scholars increasingly believe betrays the influence of Paul's writings and/or ideas.<sup>4</sup> The Sadducees' position does not simply constitute a foil to Jesus' (or to Paul's), that is, an opposing view that Mark, through Jesus his hero, easily vanquishes as he affirms his own in good monologic fashion.<sup>5</sup> Jesus' and the Sadducees allusive and complex exchange constitutes an honest dialogue about resurrection that expresses contending points of view, neither of which is easily subordinated to the other. So, if Mark's Jesus' perspective on resurrection betrays Pauline influence, as I will argue it does, then Mark places not only Jesus' voice into a dialogue with contenders, but Paul's voice as well, and this observation will allow us to move beyond the current state of New Testament scholarship on Mark's possible Pauline influence, which by and large shows itself content to chart points of contact between the gospel and Paul's letters. The observation implies a hypothesis about how Mark employs Pauline theological ideas, about the kind of relationship that obtains between Mark's gospel and the Pauline corpus.

The Sadducees propose a scenario implying that the Levirate law from Deuteronomy 25 and exemplified in the story of Tamar from Genesis 38, both of which they quote, challenges belief in an eschatological resurrection of the dead (ἀνάστασις ἐκ νεκρῶν). If six brothers in succession marry a widow in order to "raise up" (ἐξαναστήση, 12:19) an heir for their brother her first husband, then at the

eschatological resurrection whose husband will she be (12:20-23)? Since she cannot be the wife of seven husbands simultaneously, there must be no eschatological resurrection of the dead. Hellenistic and rabbinic texts unanimously agree that the Sadducees reject the resurrection,<sup>6</sup> often associating its rejection with their refusal to accept innovative religious ideas (such as the existence of angels) not found in the Pentateuch, which alone they embraced as canonical scripture.<sup>7</sup> Commentators, therefore, usually understand the Sadducees' scenario to amount to a simplistic assertion that faith in the resurrection contradicts the Torah and therefore cannot be true.<sup>8</sup> But Mark has more sympathy for the Sadducees' ideas about resurrection than other ancient Jewish writers and most modern commentators. In his gospel their ideas do not amount to a simplistic denial that the dead rise based on a fundamentalist reading of the Pentateuch.<sup>9</sup> In 12:19, the Sadducees conflate Genesis 38:8 with Deuteronomy 25:5-6 in order to arrive at the following dictum: ἐάν τις ἀδελφὸς ἀποθάνῃ καὶ καταλίπῃ γυναῖκα καὶ μὴ ἀφῆ τέκνον, . . . λάβῃ ὁ ἀδελφὸς αὐτοῦ τὴν γυναῖκα καὶ ἐξαναστήσῃ σπέρμα τῷ ἀδελφῷ αὐτοῦ (“If a man’s brother dies, leaving a wife but no child, the man shall marry the widow and raise up children for his brother”).<sup>10</sup> The underscored phrase necessarily draws attention to itself in the context of the debate, for it uses terminology commonly associated with the eschatological resurrection.<sup>11</sup> Paul writes of an eschatological ἐξανάστασις ἐκ νεκρῶν (“resurrection” or “raising up from the dead”; Phil 3:11) and Mark, Paul, and other New Testament writers regularly use ἀνίστημι to refer to resurrection as well.<sup>12</sup> Indeed, in this very pericope Mark thrice uses the word or its verbal form with this meaning (12:23, 25). The Sadducees, then, are not simply citing an extreme example of the Levirate law’s application in order to show that, narrowly and legalistically construed, the Torah contradicts the doctrine of the resurrection of the dead. In opposition to Jesus’ (and Paul’s) belief in an ἀνάστασις ἐκ νεκρῶν (“resurrection of the dead”; 12:25), the Sadducees rather contend that the Levirate law of Deuteronomy 25:5-9 (cf. Mark 12:19a), and the famous scriptural application of this law in Genesis 38 (cf. Mark 12:19b), indicate that God provides an alternative form of resurrection: an ἐξανάστασις σπέρματος (“resurrection of offspring”; Mark 12:20; cf.

Gen 38:8). God resurrects people not by transforming their dead bodies, but by providing them with offspring in whom they continue to live after they die.

J. Gerald Janzen argues that Mark 12 goes farther than merely bringing Jesus' understanding of a resurrection of the dead into conflict with the Sadducees' Pentateuchal understanding of a resurrection in offspring, for in the scenario the Sadducees invoke the Levirate law actually fails to raise up an offspring for the deceased husband (καὶ οἱ ἑπτὰ οὐκ ἀφῆκαν σπέρμα ["And none of the seven left children"; 12:22]). Although Janzen neglects to observe it, the Sadducees' scenario finds its basis in Genesis 38, which their example of a woman being married consecutively to seven brothers who each die after marriage extends ad absurdum. Genesis 38, just like the Sadducees' scenario, features the failure of the Levirate law: Er, Onan, and Shelah all fail to produce offspring, which leads Tamar to the morally questionable step of seducing her father-in-law to produce an heir—something the Levirate law certainly never provided for! The Sadducees' rewriting of Genesis 38, then, functions to bring out the Levirate law's failure implicit therein. As Janzen puts it,

If God by the very means divinely provided in the Torah—the Levirate law—cannot or will not raise up children to a dead man (not even after an ideal number of opportunities), on what basis is one entitled to hope that God either will or can raise up that dead man himself—something for which the Mosaic Torah makes no provision at all?<sup>13</sup>

The Sadducees, as Janzen observes,

have to be credited with raising a problem which in one form or another dogs that form of religious existence presented within or based upon the biblical tradition. The problem is this: What credit can one give to the postulates of faith or the claims of revelation, in the face of the unceasing contradictions in human experience of those postulates and those claims?<sup>14</sup>

The Sadducees' objections to resurrection, as Mark represents them, are thoughtful, even profound, and certainly incapable of reduction to a fundamentalist denial of anything contradicting the Torah. Indeed, although the Sadducees do take seriously the Pentateuch's understanding of life after death, which they present as an challenge to Jesus', their scenario implicitly questions even that understanding. They raise

important questions that demand to be taken seriously, both about the form in which the dead rise and about God's power to give the dead life in any way at all.

Jesus initially responds to the former by arguing in a Pauline fashion that the resurrection existence the Eschaton will usher in involves more discontinuity than continuity with pre-resurrection bodily life: people will be transformed into angelic beings who will not marry (12:25) and the kind of familial confusion about which the Sadducees worry will therefore not be an issue. While 12:25, as John P. Meier observes, superficially stands apart from Pauline resurrection theology in that it does not argue for the general resurrection of the dead with reference to Jesus' resurrection, one should not make too much of this difference since Mark's narrative would hardly allow Jesus to articulate such an argument at this point.<sup>15</sup> In order to explain the general resurrection he can discuss with his followers the resurrection of the Son of Man, his eschatological alter-ego (e.g. Mk 8:34-9:1), but the Sadducees would hardly have found an argument based on that line of reasoning convincing or even acceptable.<sup>16</sup> If we disregard Jesus' lack of reference here to his own resurrected existence, his description of general resurrection existence resembles Paul's rather closely and it becomes apparent that Mark understands the Sadducees' question to present a challenge to bodily resurrection analogous to the one Paul addresses in 1 Corinthians 15:35-50.

Commentators correctly note that Jesus' comparison of resurrected life to angelic existence parallels Paul's argument there that resurrection life does not merely continue pre-resurrection existence but rather involves a spiritual transformation of the body.<sup>17</sup> More specifically, Jesus' assertion that eschatological existence will not involve marriage may find its foundation in Paul's writings, for Paul urges believers not to marry and, if they are already married, to live as if they were not (1 Cor 7:25-31a), explaining his advice with reference to the impending eschatological transformation of the world which would make such relationships obsolete: *παράγει γὰρ τὸ σχῆμα τοῦ κόσμου τούτου* ("For the form of this world is passing away"; 1 Cor 7:31b).

This understanding of eschatological existence was not necessarily a common one in Hellenistic Jewish literature. Many contemporary Jewish sources seem to have assumed that pre-resurrection relationships, including marriage, would simply resume after the resurrection.<sup>18</sup> Paul's opponents at Corinth would have found such an expectation distasteful and this may have played a role in generating skepticism about bodily resurrection in the Corinthian church, which Paul attempts to dispel by arguing that the resurrected body will consist not of the flesh conventionally associated with human sexuality and other appetites, but rather of πνεῦμα (often, incidentally, thought to constitute angelic bodies<sup>19</sup>). One could object to this hypothetical Pauline context by arguing that Jesus' comparison of resurrected persons to angels resembles more closely other Jewish apocalyptic eschatological literature than Paul's epistles. It is true that some Jewish apocalyptic literature explicitly associates risen people with angels from heaven, which Paul never does (even though his reference to the risen Christ as a spiritual "man from heaven" in 1 Corinthians 15:47-49 comes close).<sup>20</sup> But the conclusion Mark's Jesus draws from this comparison, namely that risen people will not marry, makes little sense in a general Jewish apocalyptic eschatological context. Jewish apocalyptic literature generally presented angels as sexually threatening, not as asexual. Genesis 6:1-4 was conventionally read as a story of angels from heaven mating with human women, a reading found in some of the same Jewish texts that describe resurrection life as angelic.<sup>21</sup> It is not certain, but Paul himself may invoke the popular belief that angels were sexually threatening when he offers διὰ τοὺς ἀγγέλους ("on account of the angels"; 1 Cor 11:10) as one among many reasons why it is unseemly for women to pray with uncovered heads, even though he seems less than satisfied with his argumentation in this passage and may very well not share that belief.<sup>22</sup> Perhaps, then, Mark is superimposing a Pauline vision of eschatological life, which does not involve marriage or sex, over the historical Jesus' more conventional eschatological association of risen persons with angels. In any case, one must be wary of too easily admitting the equation of angelic with asexual eschatological existence in a general apocalyptic eschatological context. Luke, for instance, felt strongly enough that the ideas did

not belong together that in his redaction of Mark 12:24 he makes Jesus draw from the premise that resurrected persons resemble angels not the conclusion that eschatological life involves celibacy, but rather the less unsettling and indeed self-evident conclusion that resurrected people are immortal (Luke 20:35).<sup>23</sup>

Mark, then, responds to the Sadducees' implicit questions about the form of the resurrection by explaining in good Pauline fashion that the resurrection will involve transformed bodily existence. Jesus' argument, however, does not aim to repudiate belief in a disembodied afterlife, which seems to be the purpose of Paul's extended argument about resurrection in 1 Corinthians 15:35-50. Rather, it decisively rejects an understanding of resurrection as reproduction: the Sadducees suggest that a couple's offspring constitutes its life after death and Jesus totally refutes this idea by explaining that the eschatological resurrection of the dead has nothing to do with marriage at all and, by implication, nothing to do with the generation of children. Resurrection involves such a radical transformation that it will eradicate the very mode of familial continuity the Sadducees understood to constitute it.

The Sadducees, as I mentioned above, raise questions not only about the form of the resurrection, but also about God's power to raise the dead. The latter questions spring from Genesis 38, a story of Judah that implicates God in a scandalous failure to raise up offspring by means of the Levirate law. Indeed, the Genesis text explicitly assigns God responsibility for this failure, claiming that God killed Er, Tamar's first husband, and then Onan, her second, which makes Judah understandably frightened about losing his third son Shelah, were Tamar to marry him as well. Jesus responds to the Sadducees' argument from Genesis 38 by directing them to another passage in the Pentateuch, Exodus 3:6, 15-16, where God calls himself "the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob":<sup>24</sup> περὶ δὲ τῶν νεκρῶν ὅτι ἐγείρονται οὐκ ἀνέγνωτε ἐν τῇ βίβλῳ Μωυσέως ἐπὶ τοῦ βάλτου πῶς εἶπεν αὐτῷ ὁ θεὸς λέγων, "Ἐγὼ ὁ θεὸς Ἀβραὰμ καὶ [ὁ] θεὸς Ἰσαὰκ καὶ [ὁ] θεὸς Ἰακώβ;" ("And as for the dead being raised, have you not read in the book of Moses, in the story about the bush, where God said to him, 'I am the God of Abraham, the God of

Isaac, and the God of Jacob?"; 12:26) The Sadducees ask, "how can one expect the God of Judah to resurrect the dead, since he was implicated in the Law's failure to raise up offspring?" (cf. 12:19-23). Jesus answers, "he is not only the God who presided over the generative fiasco in which Judah found himself embroiled, but also the God of Judah's father Jacob, and of Isaac and Abraham, Jacob's father and grandfather, respectively" (cf. 12:26). In response to the failure of God's law to produce offspring in Genesis 38, to which the Sadducees call attention, the divine appellation from Exodus 3 that Jesus invokes thematizes successful generative production, for it calls God the god of three successive generations. It also, as Janzen observes, necessarily recalls God's faithful and miraculous provision of offspring to the patriarchs in Genesis' earlier narratives.<sup>25</sup> To cite just a few examples, Genesis 29:22 reports that God listened to the prayers of Jacob's wife Rachel and opened her womb, even though she had been barren for many years. Genesis 25:21 reports that when Isaac prayed for his wife Rebekah, who was barren, God answered his prayer and Rebekah conceived Jacob and Esau. Finally, and most impressively, God raised up Isaac for Abraham and Sarah when Abraham was 100 years old (Gen 21:5) and his wife had ceased to menstruate (Gen 18:11-13; cf. 21:7)! In response to the Sadducees' focus on God's generative failure in his interactions with Judah, Jesus recalls the generative successes of the god of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, thereby suggesting that God is able to raise up children in whom parents continue to live even after they die—and not simply through the natural means for which the Levirate law provided, but also through the miraculous opening of barren women's wombs and revitalization of aged, impotent men.

This may seem an overly allusive reading of Jesus' invocation of Exodus 3:6, 15-16, but recognition that Mark was not the only writer to see in the patriarchal generation to which it alludes evidence of God's power to raise the dead bolsters its legitimacy. In Romans 4, Paul explicitly equates the believing community's faith in the resurrection with Abraham's faith that God would produce for him and Sarah offspring in their old age:

ὁς παρ' ἐλπίδα ἐπ' ἐλπίδι ἐπίστευσεν εἰς τὸ γενέσθαι αὐτὸν "πατέρα πολλῶν ἐθνῶν" κατὰ τὸ εἰρημένον, "οὕτως ἔσται τὸ σπέρμα σου," καὶ μὴ ἀσθενήσας τῇ πίστει

κατενόησεν τὸ ἑαυτοῦ σῶμα [ἤδη] νεκρωμένον, ἑκατονταετῆς που ὑπάρχων, καὶ τὴν νέκρωσιν τῆς μήτρας Σάρρας: . . . καὶ πληροφορηθεὶς ὅτι ὁ ἐπήγγελται δυνατὸς ἔστιν καὶ ποιῆσαι. διὸ [καὶ] “ἐλογίσθη αὐτῷ εἰς δικαιοσύνην.” Οὐκ ἐγράφη δὲ δι’ αὐτὸν μόνον ὅτι ἐλογίσθη αὐτῷ ἀλλὰ καὶ δι’ ἡμᾶς, οἷς μέλλει λογιζέσθαι, τοῖς πιστεύουσιν ἐπὶ τὸν ἐγείραντα Ἰησοῦν τὸν κύριον ἡμῶν ἐκ νεκρῶν. . . . (4:18-19, 21-24)

Hoping against hope, he believed that he would become “the father of many nations,” according to what was said, “So numerous shall your descendents be.” He did not weaken in faith when he considered his own body, which was already as good as dead (for he was about a hundred years old), or when he considered the barrenness of Sarah’s womb.... And he was fully convinced that God was able to do what he had promised. Therefore it “was reckoned to him as righteousness.” Now the words, “it was reckoned to him” were written not for his sake alone, but for ours also. It will be reckoned to us who believe in him who raised Jesus our Lord from the dead....

Paul saw God’s revitalization of Abraham’s and Sarah’s aged bodies as a type of Jesus’ resurrection from the dead. Janzen perhaps goes too far when he claims that Mark has in mind this particular Pauline understanding of Isaac’s miraculous conception and birth when he quotes Exodus 3:6, 15-16 as a proof text for the resurrection, but the fact that Paul invokes a miraculous conception and birth from the patriarchal narratives to establish and explain God’s resurrection power at least makes interpreting Mark 12:26’s reference to the “God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob” as an allusion to patriarchal generation an even more attractive option.<sup>26</sup> Such a reading also explains Mark 12:25, where, just before quoting Exodus 3:4, Jesus tells the Sadducees, οὐ διὰ τοῦτο πλανᾶσθε μὴ εἰδότες τὰς γραφὰς μηδὲ τὴν δύναμιν θεοῦ. The reference to the Sadducees’ ignorance of God’s power critiques their fixation on God’s generative failure in the story of Judah and Tamar in Genesis 38.<sup>27</sup> Most translators understand the verse’s first words to mean “are you not therefore wrong because you do not know the scriptures?”<sup>28</sup> The primary definition of πλανᾶσθαι, however, is to wander or to be led astray, and a translation that underscores this connotation brings out a different nuance: “are you not therefore going astray” or “wandering about, not knowing the scriptures?” The Sadducees, wandering in ignorance through the Pentateuch, have gone off on the tangent represented by the story of Judah and Tamar in Genesis 38, the one Pentateuchal narrative in which God does not intervene to provide for an heir to continue the line of succession that will ultimately culminate in King David. Jesus, in response, directs them back to the generative power

that the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob consistently exercises in the preceding patriarchal narratives, for the divine power that miraculously generated offspring from withered men and dead wombs is the same power that miraculously will raise the dead at the Eschaton.

Understood in this way, Mark 12:26 goes some distance toward resolving the Sadducees' skepticism about God's power to raise the dead. If the Sadducees express concern about God's generative failure in one Pentateuchal narrative, which gives rise to doubts about God's resurrection power, then Jesus can recall for them God's overwhelming generative successes in many others. However, even though Jesus emphatically denies the Sadducees' doubts in God's ability to raise the dead, he in the end suggests that the Sadducees' understanding of the resurrection's form, which he initially repudiated in 12:25, cannot be so easily dismissed. Jesus says in 12:27, οὐκ ἔστιν θεὸς νεκρῶν ἀλλὰ ζώντων ("He is God not of the dead, but of the living"). Parallels to this can be found in rabbinic sources and the notion was likely a commonplace among ancient Jews.<sup>29</sup> This leads most commentators to understand Exodus 3:6, 15-16 to function in Mark 12:26-27 as a proof text for the eschatological resurrection of the dead based on a line of reasoning such as that which Craig Evans explains:

Jesus' hearers, friendly or antagonistic, would all agree that God is a God of the living [12:27]. If this is true and if God identifies himself also as the "God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob" [12:26], logic suggests that someday these patriarchs will again be alive. This will take place through the resurrection.<sup>30</sup>

This reading, however, is far from convincing, for the logic it assumes actually demands that the patriarchs be still alive rather than presently dead and awaiting eschatological resurrection.<sup>31</sup> If God is a god of the living and not of the dead, then Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, whose god God is, must not be νεκροὶ but must rather ζῶσιν. Indeed, 4 Maccabees 7:19 draws precisely this conclusion from the tri-generational divine appellation Mark's Jesus invokes: πιστεύοντες ὅτι θεῶ οὐκ ἀποθνήσκουσιν, ὥστε οὐδὲ οἱ πατριάρχαι ἡμῶν Ἀβραὰμ καὶ Ἰσαακ καὶ Ἰακώβ, ἀλλὰ ζῶσιν τῷ θεῷ ("since they believe that they, like our patriarchs Abraham and Isaac and Jacob, do not die to God but live to God"). Some scholars argue that since other texts, like 4 Maccabees, quote Exodus 3:6, 15-16 to draw (admittedly different)

conclusions about immortality, Jesus is merely playing by the accepted hermeneutical rules of his day when he invokes it to support his own belief in an afterlife.<sup>32</sup> In any case, they claim, interpretive conventions change over time and we must be wary of imposing our understanding of what constitutes convincing exegesis on Mark.<sup>33</sup> However, in the context of Mark 12:18-27 the problems with Jesus' exegesis cannot be so easily dismissed as modern impositions on an ancient text, for Jesus' argument is troubling not simply because it may fail to convince a modern audience of the validity of an eschatological resurrection, but also, and more seriously, because it may actually support an understanding of resurrection close to the one the Sadducees maintain, which holds that people rise again in their offspring. The God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob is not a god of the dead but of the living. Therefore, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob are not dead and awaiting resurrection, but are already alive, and this coheres with the view of resurrection the Sadducees' articulated with reference to the Genesis 38 and Deuteronomy 25:5 in Mark 12:19: the patriarchs are presently living on in their offspring.

The understanding of resurrection as reproduction which the Sadducees articulate actually constitutes an accurate idea of immortal afterlife as it is presented throughout the Pentateuch, not only in the expressions of the Levirate law they invoke.<sup>34</sup> When God expels Adam and Eve from Eden and keeps them from the tree of life it contained (Gen 3:24), he immediately compensates them for their loss by helping them conceive and bear a child: Ἀδαμ δὲ ἔγνω Ἐβαν τὴν γυναῖκα αὐτοῦ, καὶ συλλαβοῦσα ἔτεκεν τὸν Καὶν καὶ εἶπεν Ἐκτησάμην ἄνθρωπον διὰ τοῦ θεοῦ ("Adam knew Eve his wife, and having conceived she bore Cain and said 'I have gotten a man through God'"; Gen 4:1). Genesis therefore presents human generation as a divinely instituted alternative to the eternal life humans lost after having been expelled from Eden. This equation of generation and immortality explains why when Rebekah begs Jacob to raise up an offspring in her womb, she says δός μοι τέκνα· εἰ δὲ μή, τελευτήσω ἐγώ ("Give me children; if not, I shall die"; Gen 30:1). Robert Alter sees her words as evidence of "impulsivity," "impetuosity," and "simmering frustration," but this reading does not do justice to the existential

despair she expresses.<sup>35</sup> Without children, Rachel will die, for offspring represent the only hope of immortality the Pentateuch offers.<sup>36</sup>

One finds a more complex equation of eternal life with the generation of offspring in the Abraham cycle. God makes a covenant with Abraham and then proceeds to call it everlasting (διαθήκην αἰνώιον) because it involves Abraham's σπέρμα as well as himself (Gen 17:7-8). Abraham, then, transcends the natural limitations of his life to participate in an eternal covenant with God inasmuch as his offspring live after him. This explains why God constantly and confusingly shifts back and forth between addressing Abraham and addressing Abraham's descendents as the recipients of the promised land (cf., e.g., Gen 12:1-3 and 7; Gen 13:14-15 and 17; etc.), which Abraham will receive only through his descendents' inheritance of it (unless we count the tomb he purchases in Genesis 23). This brings us to Exodus 3:15-17, the text Jesus quotes in Mark 12:26-27, where God tells Moses to assemble the elders of Israel and to say to them, ὁ θεὸς τῶν πατέρων ὑμῶν, θεὸς Ἀβρααμ καὶ θεὸς Ἰσαακ καὶ θεὸς Ἰακωβ, ἀπέσταλκέν με πρὸς ὑμᾶς. . . . καὶ εἶπον "Ἀναβιβάσω ὑμᾶς ἐκ τῆς κακώσεως τῶν Αἰγυπτίων εἰς τὴν γῆν τῶν Χαναανίων. . ." ("The God of our fathers, God of Abraham and God of Isaac and God of Jacob, sent me to you...'. And say, 'I shall bring you up out of the oppression of the Egyptians and into the land of Canaan...'" ). God here remains faithful to the eternal covenant he made with Abraham and the patriarchs by guaranteeing to the patriarchs' descendents the land he had promised to the patriarchs themselves. He emphatically identifies himself as the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob in his dealings with their descendents (the clunky appellation occurs thrice in the chapter and twice in vv. 15-16 alone) because the patriarchs live on in their descendents.

One cannot underestimate the significance of this point: the very Pentateuchal text Jesus cites to prove God is capable of raising the dead in the context of his argument for an ἀνάστασις ἐκ νεκρῶν actually thematizes the continuing existence of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob in their σπέρμα, which is precisely the view the Sadducees presented when they discussed an ἐξανάστασις σπέρματος in 12:19

and which Jesus repudiates in 12:25. Following on the heels of 12:25's explanation of bodily resurrection, 12:26-27 would seem to imply that, as Evans explains it, since God is the God of the living and he is also the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, then at some point these dead figures will have to come back to life in resurrected form. But if we attend to the context of Exodus 3, attention which Mark demands by 1) explicitly contextualizing the Exodus quote (ἐν τῇ βίβλῳ Μωυσέως ἐπὶ τοῦ βάλτου ["in the book of Moses, in the story about the bush"; 12:26]) and 2) critiquing the Sadducees for erring in their own irresponsible use of Scripture (οὐ διὰ τοῦτο πλανᾶσθε μὴ εἰδότες τὰς γραφὰς ["Is not this the reason you are wrong, that you know not the scriptures?"; 12:25]), then the possibility arises that 12:26-27, even as it repudiates the Sadducees' doubt in God's resurrection power, does not deny but rather endorses their scriptural understanding of the resurrection's form. Jesus' argument in 12:26-27 therefore constitutes an example of what Bakhtin refers to as heteroglossic discourse. It contains

two voices, two meanings and two expressions. And all the while these two voices are dialogically interrelated, they—as it were—know about each other (just as two exchanges in a dialogue know of each other and are structured in this mutual knowledge of each other); it is as if they actually hold a conversation with each other.<sup>37</sup>

Since the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob is not a god of the dead but of the living, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob may not be dead but awaiting bodily resurrection, as the context of Jesus' argument initially appears to suggest (cf. 12:25), but may rather be already living, risen in their offspring (12:19), as Exodus 3 and the Sadducees suggest. Jesus' final invocation of Exodus, therefore, does not resolve but rather embodies and perpetuates the dialogue between Jesus and the Sadducees that Mark has related.

The scenario the Sadducees invoke raises questions about both the form in which the dead rise and, more generally, about God's power to raise the dead. Jesus asserts that the dead rise like angels, which initially resolves the former question (12:25); his allusive recollection of the stories of miraculous patriarchal generation resolves the latter (12:26-27). But, carefully read, Jesus' subsequent argument from Exodus 3 opens up the very questions about the resurrection's form his initial association of resurrected persons with heavenly angels apparently resolved. It is as if in the process of invoking the Pentateuch to

refute the Sadducees' doubt in God's ability to raise the dead, Mark's Jesus is forced to take seriously the Pentateuchal view of what actually constitutes resurrection. Mark 12:18-27, then, constitutes a complex and unresolved dialogue, not simply between the Sadducees (12:18-23) and Jesus (12:24-27), but ultimately between a Pauline understanding of bodily resurrection, which has nothing at all to do with the generation of offspring (12:25), and a Pentateuchal one initially attributed to the Sadducees (12:19) but ultimately perpetuated by Jesus (12:26-27), which equates resurrection with the generation of offspring.

In fact, there is evidence that just such a debate occurred within Pauline communities, for two texts from such communities attribute the Sadducean view of resurrection to Paul's opponents Hymenaeus and Philetus (The Acts of Paul and Thecla 14; cf. 2 Tim 2:17-18). Although it is likely (but not certain) that both texts are late, it is possible that the conflict they record dates back to a much earlier time in church history, especially since the resurrection's meaning and precise form was such a controversial issue among Pauline believers. Many scholars believe that the denial of resurrection Paul records in 1 Corinthians 15:12 bears a close relationship to the position associated with Hymenaeus and Philetus in 2 Timothy 2:17-18.<sup>38</sup> If Mark 12:18ff. reflects a similar or identical debate then it is significant that Mark's Jesus, unlike Paul in 1 Corinthians 15, does not simply dismiss opposition to bodily resurrection, nor does he insist that the Hebrew Bible straightforwardly affirms his understanding of resurrection as a purifying transformation of the body. Although Mark seems to favor a Pauline understanding of the resurrection, at the same time he recognizes the legitimacy of the alternative view Jesus' opponents express. Indeed, his argument actually raises the possibility that the Sadducees' understanding of an ἐξανάστασις σπέρματος might be more consistent with Scripture than his Jesus', even as it insists that the Sadducees' doubt in God's power to raise the dead springs from an errant interpretation of the Pentateuch.

It is perhaps significant that Mark ends the pericope by telling the Sadducees that they are "much in error" (πολὸν πλανᾶσθε, 12:27) a phrase which may be read as an indication that they are not entirely wrong. Indeed, this is probably how Matthew and Luke construed it, or at least feared it could be

construed. They both felt the story required a more decisive rejection of the Sadducean perspective and affirmation of Jesus' own: Luke eliminates *πολὸν πλανᾶσθε* in favor of some (Sadducean?) scribes' affirmation of Jesus' arguments (20:39) while Matthew replaces it with a statement indicating everyone who heard Jesus' argument was utterly amazed by the persuasiveness of his teaching (22:33). Mark, though, is not so quick to present the understanding of the resurrection Jesus holds as unimpeachable at the expense of the Sadducees' ideas. For Mark, the Sadducees do not simply raise arguments that Jesus must shoot down as he asserts his own views. Rather, they offer serious challenges to the Pauline understanding of resurrection to which Mark's Jesus is committed, challenges which may have reflected familiar debates among Pauline Christians about the proper way to understand rising from the dead. In any case, Mark does not merely dismiss the Sadducees' perspective, but rather places it in a complex dialogue, highly allusive with reference to the Pentateuch, that allows for serious reflection on the precise mode of life people will enjoy after death, if, that is, God is capable of guaranteeing any eternal life at all.

When one approaches Mark 12 without insisting that Jesus' voice be simply and supremely authoritative in it, when one is open to the possibility that Mark, in Bakhtin's language, "extends the contending point of view to its maximal force and depth," one begins to discern a subtle, sophisticated, and exciting dialogue about a profound theological issue, namely the existence and nature of an afterlife. Jesus' dialogue with the Sadducees does not amount to a high school debate, with a clear cut winner and loser: the Sadducees, according to Jesus, are (only) "much in error," and Jesus' discourse, carefully read, affirms the legitimacy of some of their contentions, even if it refuses to concede to them and outright denies legitimacy to others.

Since the voice of Jesus in this debate has a Pauline timber, the debate may be an instance of Mark placing a Pauline theological position on resurrection in vigorous dialogue with contending points of view. It is far from surprising that Mark would do this: Paul's thinking on resurrection was controversial—at least among the Corinthians—and there is evidence that later Pauline opponents

countered Paul's view of resurrection with one similar to that Mark assigns to the Sadducees. If Paul's voice surfaces in Mark, then, it surfaces in the context of a dialogue with other voices, which at once relativizes Paul's voice and takes it seriously indeed, by allowing it to stand up to vigorous opposition from thoughtful critics. I submit that it is precisely Mark's tendency to dialogize Paul's voice that has made it so difficult for scholars to recognize and understand Paul's influence on Mark's gospel. Mark is Pauline not in the sense that the gospel somehow reflects, emulates, or exemplifies Paul's thought wholesale; rather, Mark's tendency is to challenge Paul by placing perspectives he articulates into a critical conversation with other fully valid voices, a conversation in many ways resembling the kind of dialogue Bakhtin understood to characterize Dostoevsky's mature novels. In this paper I have examined one instance of the dialogue that Mark orchestrates between Pauline and other voices on the resurrection, a dialogue that is ultimately as unfinalizable as Mark's gospel itself, which famously closes with an empty tomb and an anonymous proclamation of Jesus' resurrection, but no appearances of Jesus to eye-witnesses unambiguously to establish his return to life—a vacuum Matthew and Luke rush to fill. This emptiness, however, is itself meaningful. Perhaps not coincidentally, it counters Paul's attempt to establish that Jesus rose from the dead in 1 Corinthians 15 with reference to an overwhelming list of the risen Lord's appearances to eye-witnesses, but with no mention at all of the ambiguous empty tomb. In other words, one way to understand Mark's ending, or lack thereof, is as a dialogic rejoinder to Paul's dogmatic insistence that Jesus rose. Mark will not go so far as to suggest Jesus did not rise, but neither does he provide clear evidence that he does. While for Paul, Jesus' resurrection is a resolved issue, for Mark's narrative as a whole, as well as for the pericope I have examined in detail, resurrection—even Jesus' own—is an open question, the subject of a vigorous dialogue whose voices Bakhtin's theoretical writings can help us to make out.

<sup>1</sup> Mikhail Bakhtin, Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics, trans. Caryl Emerson, *Theory and History of Literature* 8 (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1984), 63-64.

<sup>2</sup> Bakhtin, Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics 68-69.

<sup>3</sup> In "Questioning and Conviction: Double-voiced Discourse in Mark 3:22-30," IBL 125 (2006): 477-505 I use Bakhtin's concept of double-voiced discourse as a lens through which to examine Mark's Beelzebul pericope with a view toward exploring the evangelist's dialogue with Jesus.

<sup>4</sup> Martin Werner's 1923 monograph Der Einfluss paulinischer Theologie im Markusevangelium: Eine Studie zur neutestamentlichen Theologie, BZNW 1 (Giessen: Töpelmann, 1923), which was the decisive work on the issue for several decades, argued that Pauline thought did not directly influence Mark because, Werner concluded, 1) the two agreed only on general early Christian viewpoints and 2) Mark either contradicts or is ignorant of specific Pauline viewpoints (209). Willi Marxsen's Mark the Evangelist: Studies on the Redaction History of the Gospel, trans. James Boyce, et al. (1956; Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1969) challenged Werner's conclusion, claiming that his study, which antedated redaction criticism, was not careful to compare Pauline ideas with those distinctively Markan ideas visible in the choices Mark made about how to edit the traditional materials from which he composed his gospel (213ff.). Recently several other scholars have followed Marxsen's lead, so that Joel Marcus has claimed that "the tide appears to be shifting" ("Mark—Interpreter of Paul," NTS [2000]: 474). In this essay Marcus himself has been especially helpful in shifting that tide by revealing fundamental flaws in Werner's argument, such as his assumption that disagreement between Mark and Paul precludes Paul's influence on Mark. Since Paul was a controversial figure in early Christianity who held views with which even admitted Paulinists like Luke and the authors of the Pastorals felt free to disagree, we should expect similar disagreement in Mark. Such disagreement in no way disproves Pauline influence, if one can

distinguish a matrix of uniquely Pauline ideas that Mark echoes. Marcus, through a careful examination of Paul's and Mark's theologies of the cross, proves that there is such a matrix.

Marcus also notes that since Mark has decided to write a gospel, he is bound to disagree with Paul in his degree of emphasis on the importance and authority of the earthly Jesus and traditions about him, a disagreement that Werner concluded reflects a theological position absolutely incompatible with Paul's emphasis on the weakness of the earthly Jesus'  $\sigma\acute{\alpha}\rho\chi$  (see Phil 2:7-8; Rom 8:3; 2 Cor 8:9). But Mark's decision to write a gospel does not necessarily assume a Christology radically distinct from Paul's, and indeed, later Paulinists like Ignatius follow Mark's example by relying heavily on the Jesus traditions.

<sup>5</sup> See Bakhtin, Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics 78-79.

<sup>6</sup> See, e.g., Acts 4:2; 23:6-8; Jos. AJ 18.16; BJ 2.165; m. Sanh. 10:1; m. 'Abot 1:7; 'Abot R. Nat. [recension A] 5, [recension B] 10.

<sup>7</sup> Jos. AJ 13.297; 18.17

<sup>8</sup> See John R. Donahue and Daniel J. Harrington, The Gospel of Mark, Sacra Pagina (Collegeville: The Liturgical Press, 2002), 350; Robert H. Gundry, Mark: A Commentary on his Apology for the Cross (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1993), 702; and Craig A Evans, Mark 8:27-16:20, Word Biblical Commentary 34B (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 2001), which reductively paraphrases the Sadducees' challenge to Jesus' view of resurrection as follows: "How can one affirm both the suspect doctrine of the resurrection and the eternal validity of the Torah?" (254).

<sup>9</sup> I would argue that this sympathy makes Mark a more reliable witness to Sadducean views on the afterlife than the other witnesses that have survived. In other texts, the Sadducees' views are always represented as foils to an emergent "mainstream" belief in the resurrection of the dead. This is evident in both Jewish and Christian circles, for proto-orthodox Christianity and emergent Rabbinic Judaism agreed on the issue of resurrection. It is not clear from these texts what exactly the Sadducees believe about the

afterlife, if they believe in it at all. Perhaps it is time for a reassessment of the Sadducees' theology of the afterlife in light of Mark's sensitive representation of it.

<sup>10</sup> Here and throughout I quote the NRSV, occasionally with minor alterations.

<sup>11</sup> See J. Gerald Janzen, "Resurrection and Hermeneutics: on Exodus 3.6 in Mark 12.26," JSNT 23 (1985): 45.

<sup>12</sup> E.g. Mark 8:31; 9:9, 10, 31; 10:34; 12:18; 16:9; Rom 1:4; 6:5; 1 Cor 15:12, 13, 21, 42; Phil 3:10; 1 Thess 4:16; Heb 6:2; 11:35; 1 Pet 1:3.

<sup>13</sup> Janzen, "Resurrection and Hermeneutics" 48.

<sup>14</sup> Janzen, "Resurrection and Hermeneutics" 48.

<sup>15</sup> John P. Meier finds the discontinuity between Mark 12:18-27 and other early Christian discourse on the resurrection striking indeed, arguing that it suggests that the pericope had its Sitz im Leben in the life of the historical Jesus and not in the early church ("The Debate on the Resurrection of the Dead: An Incident from the Ministry of the Historical Jesus?," JSNT 77 [2000]: 10).

<sup>16</sup> Jesus' "Son of Man" theology finds its explicit scriptural foundation in Daniel, which the Sadducees did not accept as authoritative. Jesus, however, will follow the Sadducees' lead in arguing within the context of the Pentateuch, which both parties accepted as authoritative.

<sup>17</sup> See, e.g., Donahue and Harrington, The Gospel of Mark 350 and Vincent Taylor, The Gospel According to St. Mark, 2<sup>nd</sup> edn (London: Macmillan, 1966), 483.

<sup>18</sup> See Hermann L. Strack and Paul Billerbeck, Kommentar zum Neuen Testament aus Talmud und Midrasch, 6 vols. (München: C. H. Beck, 1922), 1.887-90 for a list and discussion of such sources.

<sup>19</sup> See, e.g., 1 Enoch 15:6-7; Tert. Apol. 22.5.29-21.

<sup>20</sup> See, e.g., 2 Bar 51:5, 10 and 1 Enoch 104:4, 6 for clear associations between resurrection and angelic existence.

<sup>21</sup> Cf., e.g., 1 Enoch 6-19.

<sup>22</sup> See Dale B. Martin, The Corinthian Body (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1995), 229-49 for this interpretation of 1 Cor 11:10. Troels Engberg-Pedersen, "1 Corinthians 11:16 and the Character of Pauline Exhortation," JBL 110 (1991): 679-89 brilliantly traces Paul's complex rhetoric in 1 Cor 11:2-16. Engberg-Pedersen demonstrates that in 1 Cor 11:11-12 Paul immediately backs away from the arguments he had offered to support his contention that women must pray with covered heads: "The strongly contrastive, even corrective sense of the initial *πλήν* should not be missed, and the content of vv. 11-12 conforms with this" (683). It becomes clear in 11:13-15 that Paul, probably for cultural reasons, finds it repulsive that women would pray with heads uncovered and wants to persuade the Corinthians to adopt the practice he prefers in any way he can, even though he knows that the practice they have adopted coheres with what Engberg-Pedersen calls Paul's "rule of no distinctions" (683; cf. Gal 3:28). Paul ultimately is not committed to any of the arguments he proposes in 1 Cor 11:2-16, nor even, in the end, to the practice he strongly prefers, for he concludes that the issue ought not to be argued about and that the Corinthians should make up their own minds on it (11:16). His only commitment in the passage, as Engberg-Pedersen reveals, is to the conviction that believers ought not to be overly contentious in arguing with one another. Engberg-Pedersen, however, admits that not even this commitment is absolute: "Paul can also be very sharp and insist single-mindedly on one particular type of behavior as opposed to just letting people decide for themselves on the issue" (688).

<sup>23</sup> After Luke's Jesus asserts that marriage is for this age and not for the age to come, he explains that in the age to come οὐδὲ γὰρ ἀποθανεῖν ἔτι δύναται, ἰσάγγελοι γὰρ εἰσιν (20:36).

<sup>24</sup> The divine appellation Jesus quotes in 12:27 occurs in all three of these verses in the story of the burning bush.

<sup>25</sup> Janzen, "Resurrection and Hermeneutics" 51-53.

<sup>26</sup> Janzen, "Resurrection and Hermeneutics" 53-54.

<sup>27</sup> Janzen, "Resurrection and Hermeneutics" 48.

<sup>28</sup> E.g. NRSV, NIV; Donahue and Harrington, The Gospel of Mark 348, 350.

<sup>29</sup> E.g. Midr. Mīslê on Prov 17:1. See also the texts cited and discussed in Strack and Billerbeck, Kommentar zum Neuen Testament aus Talmud und Midrasch 1.892-97.

<sup>30</sup> Evans, Mark 8:27-16:20 256. See also Morna D. Hooker, The Gospel According to St. Mark (London: A & C Black, 1991), 285. Some scholars propose more complicated constructions of Jesus' hermeneutical method, claiming, e.g., that Jesus was using a typical rabbinic mode of grammatical exegesis by playing on the present tense of Exod 3:4 ("I am the God of . . .") in order to argue for immortality. See, e.g., E. Earl Ellis, "Jesus, The Sadducees, and Qumran," NTS 10 (1963-64): 264-79.

<sup>31</sup> See Gundry, Mark 704, 708-09.

<sup>32</sup> In addition to 4 Macc 7:19, see also 16:25. F. Gerald Downing observes parallels between Jesus' and Philo's understandings of Exod 3:6, both of which draw conclusions about immortality from the text ("The Resurrection of the Dead: Jesus and Philo," JSNT 15 [1982]: 42-50). Francois B. Dreyfus argues that Jesus' use of this text parallels other ancient uses of it to invoke God as a protector in the present based on the commitments he made to the patriarchs in the past, ultimately concluding: "Jésus indique comment ce dogma se rattache en profondeur à l'aspect central de la révélation de l'Ancien Testament, l'Alliance, et comment le salut promis par Dieu au Patriarches et à leur descendance en vertu de l'Alliance, contient implicitement la doctrine de la résurrection" ("L'Argument scripturaire de Jésus en faveur de la résurrection des morts (Marc XII, vv. 26-27)," RB 66 [1959]: 213-24 [esp. 224].) D. E. Nineham cites as a parallel Rabbi Gamaliel's argument for "the resurrection of the dead from Deut. 11<sup>9</sup> on the grounds that God there promised the three patriarchs to give the land to them" (The Gospel of St. Mark [Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1963], 321).

<sup>33</sup> See, e.g., Gundry, Mark 704. Many scholars take issue with the sentiment Gundry expresses, arguing that Jesus' exegesis actually violates rather than upholds the conventions commentators invoke to explain it. Dan Cohn-Sherbock argues that Jesus' interpretation is defective from the point of view of Pharisaic or rabbinic hermeneutical conventions ("Jesus' Defence of the Resurrection of the Dead," JSNT 11 [1981]: 64-73). Meier similarly argues that Jesus' exegesis in support of the resurrection is discontinuous with earlier and later Jewish and Christian biblical interpretation. "There was no Jewish exegetical tradition before or after Jesus in ancient times that used Exod. 3.6 to argue for the general resurrection" ("The Debate on the Resurrection of the Dead: An Incident from the Ministry of the Historical Jesus?" 11). Therefore, by the criterion of discontinuity, Jesus' words in Mark 12:26-27 probably originated with the historical Jesus. Meier argues that texts scholars usually point to as parallels (e.g. 4 Macc 7:19 and 16:25) lack the specific references to Exod 3 that Jesus includes, only containing the triple reference to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob and claiming they "live to God" (11). There may have been some sort of tradition that assumed the patriarchs are not dead, but rather live to God, which is invoked both by 4 Maccabees and by Luke's redaction of Mark 12:26 (see Luke 20:38b: "For all live to him"), but that tradition has nothing to do with Exod 3:6, which Jesus quotes in Mark 12:26. Moreover, no argument from the Talmud uses Exod 3.6 to prove the resurrection of the dead. It is not until the medieval Midrash Ha-Gadol that we find such a use of Exod 3.6 (in a variant reading) (Meier 11).

<sup>34</sup> See, e.g., H. Wheeler Robinson, Corporate Personality in Ancient Israel (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1980), 25-29; cf. ABD 5.683. It is commonly believed that Dan 12:1-2, under the influence of Persian thought, constitutes the earliest biblical reference to afterlife understood as the continuation of the individual's personality after death.

<sup>35</sup> Robert Alter, Genesis: Translation and Commentary (New York: Norton, 1996), 158.

<sup>36</sup> Cf. Janzen's response to a different, but complementary, comment Alter elsewhere makes on Gen 30:1: "his interpretation of what Rachel means by these words still stops short of the starkness of her cry. For he takes her in this cry as 'someone who claimed to be on the point of death unless immediately given what . . . she wanted' [The Art of Biblical Narrative (New York: Basic Books, 1981), 187]. Rachel's cry is neither a rhetorically calculated nor a hysterically overwrought and exaggerated warning. It is a realistic, if no doubt emotionally charged, assessment of her case. . . ." ("Resurrection and Hermeneutics" 58).

<sup>37</sup> Bakhtin, "Discourse in the Novel," trans. Caryl Emerson and Michael Holquist, The Dialogic Imagination: Four Essays, ed. Michael Holquist, University of Texas Press Slavic Series 1 (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1981), 324.

<sup>38</sup> Most famously, Hans Freiherr von Soden, "Sakrament und Ethik bei Paulus," Marburger Theologische Studien, vol. 1 (Gotha: Klotz, 1931) 1-40 (esp. 23); see also Ernst Käsemann, "Primitive Christian Apocalyptic," New Testament Questions of Today, trans. W. J. Montague (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1969), 125-26. See Anthony C. Thiselton, The First Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2000), 1173-74 for a discussion of interpretations of 1 Cor 15:12 privileging 2 Tim 2:17-18.