Food and Gift: On the ‘Words of Institution’ in the Gospel of Mark

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Abstract
This article examines the significance of the notion of the ‘gift’ and ‘givenness’ in the account of Jesus’ last meal (‘last supper’) in the Gospel of Mark. It asks whether attention to the notion of the ‘gift’ can be a useful heuristic for the exegesis of the Markan account of Jesus’ last meal with his disciples, particularly regarding the symbolic actions that Jesus performs during this meal. This question is answered affirmatively by highlighting how attention to the narrative representation of the ritual of Jesus’ last meal in the Gospel of Mark can enhance an understanding of Jesus’ violent death in terms of self-giving. The breaking of the bread at this meal becomes, then, a corollary to Jesus’ (bodily) giving of himself for others, as it is connected to the narrative of his violent death, and likely gains meaning beyond that of being a regular part of a meal and a necessary act that enables the sharing of bread.

Keywords
Eucharist, Gospel of Mark, gift, martyrdom, last supper, Jesus

Introduction
This article examines the significance of the notion of the ‘gift’ and ‘givenness’ in the account of Jesus’ last meal (‘last supper’) in the Gospel of Mark. It does so as part of a broader discussion of the symbolic aspects of this meal, recent attention to the ‘gift’ in disciplines such as ritual studies, systematic theology and also New Testament studies at large, and a more specific scholarly awareness

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of the importance of ‘self-giving’ as an element of Markan soteriology and Christology. Accordingly, it asks whether attention to the notion of the ‘gift’ can be a useful heuristic for the exegesis of the Markan account of Jesus’ last meal with his disciples, particularly regarding the symbolic actions that Jesus performs during this meal. The broader context that provokes asking this question will be outlined in the next section of this article. This leads, next, to a discussion of aspects of Markan soteriology in relation to the gift, with particular attention given to Mk 10.42-45, a key text for the understanding of Markan soteriology that emphatically refers to giving. Then, the focus will turn to the question of symbolism with regard to the gift, concentrating on Mk 14.22-25 (which also concerns the pouring out of the wine/blood) and the closely related narratives of the miraculous feedings in Mk 6 and 8. These discussions pave the way for an (affirmative) answer to the research question. This answer comes in this contribution’s conclusion, which will highlight how attention to the narrative representation of the ritual of Jesus’ last meal in the Gospel of Mark can enhance an understanding of Jesus’ violent death in terms of self-giving. The breaking of the bread at this meal becomes, then, a corollary to Jesus’ (bodily) giving of himself for others, as it is connected to the narrative of his violent death, and likely gains meaning beyond that of being a regular part of a meal and a necessary act that enables the sharing of bread. Through an exploration of the intertextual links between the two accounts of a ‘miraculous feeding’ in Mark and the Markan account of Jesus’ last meal, it will also become apparent that the two (sets of) narrative episodes mutually interpret each other: Jesus’ last meal indicates that Jesus’ self-gift is the foundation of the community of the kingdom, while the ‘miraculous feedings’ (as well as other parts of this gospel’s narrative) indicate the shape of this community.

**Mark as a Focus and the Gift in Current Research**

The Gospel of Mark has been chosen as a case study because the gift plays such an important role in this gospel’s soteriology and Christology (cf., e.g., du Toit 2019; Smit 2018a). This also invites us to consider the question of the gift in its account of Jesus’ last earthly meal. Scholars interested in early Christian meals have stressed the significance of the celebration (or ‘performance’) of such common meals as the events at and through which early Christian identity took shape (and fellowship with Christ was experienced; cf. al-Suadi 2011; al-Suadi and

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1. Terms such as ‘soteriology’ and ‘Christology’ are used in a relatively loose sense here, without wishing to suggest that Mark is involved in systematically discussing loci of later systems of dogmatics.

2. Jesus, of course, looks forward to a heavenly banquet in Mk 14.26, or at least to a renewed enjoyment of wine with his disciples. See Smit 2008.
Smit 2019; Klinghardt 1996; Klinghardt and Taussig 2012; Smit 2008; Smith 2013; Smith and Taussig 2012; Taussig 2009). This discourse, however, seldom refers to the notion of the gift. Yet, as this article intends to show, insights from these two discourses on meals and gifts can be fruitfully brought together. In doing so, a contribution will also be made to an exegetical debate that Matthias Klinghardt has done much to enliven by arguing that the brokenness of the bread has no particular significance in the account of Jesus’ last meal, at least in its functioning in Pauline rhetoric. The implications of his thesis go further than just this tradition’s Pauline form and context:

That the bread is ‘broken’ carries no emphasis, but is inevitable and happens in every meal. The broken bread does not refer to the broken body of Jesus: the death of Jesus is not present either in the opening gesture or in the interpretation of the ‘statement about the bread’.3

As already indicated, it will be argued that, conversely, the brokenness may indeed have a meaning beyond its role as a regular part of the meal ritual, at least in Mark and the extent that it is a corollary to Jesus’ body being given for others in the concrete shape of being crucified and killed.

As noted above, this article was provoked by converging developments in a number of disciplines. A number of observations can be made. First, the gift plays a key role in both ritual studies and in systematic theology (also in studies focusing on the Eucharist). Influential ritual scholars such as Roland Grimes (2014: 197, 206, 280), theologically inclined philosophers such as Jean-Luc Marion (2002, 2016) and systematic theologians such as Louis-Marie Chauvet (1987) or Catherine Pickstock (1997, 2018; cf. Smit 2019) have all made the ‘gift’ a key category in their treatment of ritual in general and of the Eucharist in particular. A second observation is that, in New Testament studies, John Barclay’s magisterial Paul and the Gift has drawn substantial attention to the topic of the gift (Barclay 2015),4 albeit with a focus primarily on the question of grace,

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3. ‘Dass das Brot “gebrochen” wird, trägt keine Betonung, sondern ist unvermeidlich und geschieht in jedem Mahl. Das gebrochene Brot verweist nicht auf den gebrochenen Körper Jesu: Der Tod Jesu ist weder im Eröffnungsgestus noch in der Deutung des “Brotwortes” präsent’, Klinghardt 2011: 54. For a broad overview of breaking bread in early Judaism and Christianity, which also discusses the role of the expression ‘breaking bread’ as a metonymy for the Eucharist in Luke, see Leonhard 2016. Leonhard seems to suggest that the breaking of the bread only became ritualized relatively late in the histories of Judaism and Christianity. This, however, may also have to do with a broader or narrower understanding of ritual: as soon as an act occurs in a more or less formalized way, even if not in each and every situation, and has a specific function, such as starting off the meal (by breaking the bread), it may already be considered to be a ritual, however ‘everyday’ it is simultaneously. Similarly, e.g., Boring 2006: 291.

4. Barclay presents a taxonomy of six aspects of gifts, which he uses as an analytical tool for researching different kinds of gifts in early Judaism and Christianity. This taxonomy could
which, as he has shown, can be understood well when using a nuanced understanding of the gift. For Barclay, as for many ritual scholars and systematic theologians, the reception of anthropological research on the gift plays an important role (see especially Mauss 2016 [1925]). A third observation is, to a certain extent, a consequence of the other two: Barclay does not discuss the Lord’s Supper (including the account of the last supper) as it occurs in 1 Cor. 11.23-26 from the vantage point of the gift. There would, however, be at least some reasons to connect the notions of gift and meal (also Jesus’ last meal), one of which Barclay provides himself when he indicates that community in Christ is the ‘expression of the gift’. Another reason would be that, although verbs indicating a gift are absent in these verses (except for forms of παραδίδωμι in v. 23), possibly due to ellipsis, the statement that the bread is Jesus’ body τὸ ὑπὲρ ὑμῶν (v. 24) nonetheless indicates a gift and would, therefore, be worth considering in this light. In fact, when considering together (a) Barclay’s emphasis on communities as the expression of the gift, (b) the stress that is placed by other scholars on the constitution of early Christian communities through the celebration of meals and (c) the connection between both gift and meal at the last supper and meal and salvation in Mark (i.e., in Mk 10.32-45 and 14.22-26), the relation between gift and meal becomes all the more inviting to explore. On this basis, a key text for Markan soteriology can be approached as a building block for the exegetical argument set forth here.

Jesus and the Gift in Mark 10.42-45

In a recent contribution on Jesus’ death, Helen Bond makes a strong case for the coherence of Jesus’ teaching and the manner of his death in the Gospel of Mark (Bond 2019; for a review of tradition-historical backgrounds, see Breytenbach 2014: 154-59). She emphasizes Jesus’ own agency and the exercise of his own will when it comes to his approaching end and his embrace of it:

As Mark moves towards the Passion Narrative, it becomes apparent that Jesus has a choice over his own death. Our author stresses Jesus’ courage and fortitude as he

also be applied to the Gospel of Mark and the gift of Jesus there, yet the focus of this article is on givenness and brokenness, not on the gift per se; this may have to wait until a further study. A ‘gift economy’ of benefaction and the public bestowal of honor is also a thread running through Kloppenborg 2019, demonstrating the extent to which the giving and reciprocation of gifts permeated the Greco-Roman world.

5. Barclay 2015: 423-46, esp. 423 (focusing on Galatians): ‘Because it is an incongruous gift, given without regard to worth, the Christ-gift neither reflects nor endorses the criteria of value operative in its context’. And ‘This novel endowment now governs the tenor of their life together’.

6. See the studies mentioned in note 3. Taussig 2009.
makes his way to Jerusalem in obedience to the will of God, even though he knows how things will end. (Bond 2019: 437)

The Gethsemane scene also bears witness to this when Jesus submits himself to the father’s will ‘not what I want but what you want’ (Mk 14.36) (Bond 2019: 437). Bond also notes a close connection with Jesus’ instructions concerning greatness and service in Mk 10: ‘For Mark, then, Jesus’ free choice to submit to the will of the Father, even though he has done nothing deserving death, is the ultimate expression of what it means to be a “slave of all”’ (Bond 2019: 438). Thus, Jesus dies in accordance with his own teaching, thereby proving himself to be a reliable teacher (or at least as Mark presents him).7 This teaching also includes a view of what constitutes a good life as it is to be lived by his disciples,8 which is outlined in Mk 10.42-45, verses that also involve language referring to the ‘gift’.

When Jesus states in Mk 10.45, καὶ γὰρ ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ ἀνθρώπου οὐκ ἦλθεν διακονηθῆναι ἀλλὰ διακονῆσαι καὶ δοῦναι τὴν ψυχὴν αὐτοῦ λύτρον ἀντὶ πολλῶν, he both uses the language of giving (δοῦναι τὴν ψυχὴν αὐτοῦ λύτρον ἀντὶ πολλῶν) and connects this with agency on the part of the Son of Man, who is likely to be identified with himself. The effect is considerable, which makes this verse a key starting point for exploring Markan soteriology and Christology in relation to the gift. A number of observations are in order.9

First, the broader literary context of 10.42-45 is of significance. This pericope is usually seen to be part of the section 8.22–10.52. It contains three passion predictions: in 8.31, 9.31 (with a striking parallel to 10.43-44 in 9.35 and to 10.45 in 9.31) and finally in 10.32-45 (prediction in vv. 33-34).10 This section is separated from its immediate narrative context by means of two changes of place in vv. 32 and 46 that are accompanied by a change of theme. Verses 32-45 can themselves be subdivided into three sections, one dealing with a passion prediction (vv. 32-34), one with the request of James and John (vv. 35-40) and one dealing with Jesus’ concluding teaching (vv. 41-45). The three sections are interconnected in various ways, particularly thematically: the topic of death and martyrdom recurs in each of them. For the purposes of this article, one aspect of this

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7. Bond 2019: 438: ‘His artful composition shows that there is no mismatch between what Jesus teaches and his death; he remains true to his teaching to the very end. And, just as significantly, what he demands of others is no more than he is prepared to undergo himself.’
8. In a countercultural manner, to be sure. This is also stressed by Bond 2019: 437.
9. For the following section, see also: Smit 2018a: 288-91; 2018b: 19-23.
10. See Moore 2013: 63. For the structure, see also Donahue and Harrington 2005: 314; Evans 2015: 113-14 (on the relation to the passion predictions: 115-16). On the passion predictions at large, see also Breytenbach 2014. The pericope of the ‘last supper’ can also be understood as a further passion prediction, both when it comes to words (vv. 18-21) and (ritual) actions and words (vv. 22-26).
is especially relevant: the relation between the passion prediction in v. 33 (ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ ἀνθρώπου παραδοθήσεται τοῖς ἁρχιερεῦσιν καὶ τοῖς γραμματεῦσιν καὶ κατακρινοῦσιν αὐτὸν θανάτῳ καὶ παραδώσουσιν αὐτὸν τοῖς ἐθνεῖσιν) and what Jesus has to say about the Son of Man in v. 45 (ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ ἀνθρώπου ὑλὲν διακονηθήναι ἄλλα διακονήσαι καὶ δοῦναι τὴν ψυχὴν αὐτοῦ λύτρον ἀντὶ πολλῶν). The significance of this observation is twofold. First, in both texts the (impending) death of the Son of Man is mentioned; this connects the two texts. Second, however, the two verses are quite distinct when it comes to describing the manner of this death. In v. 31, Mark uses passive tenses whenever the ‘Son of Man’ is the subject of a verb; when others are the subject, he is rather emphatically the object of their actions. In v. 45, the reverse is the case. Here, the Son of Man is the subject of all the verbs, and each indicates an action on his part. His death amounts not so much to being killed as to laying down his life. He even acts on behalf of many in the later verse, while, by contrast, in v. 33 the Son of Man ends up as the possession of the nations (‘Gentiles’). Within the span of a few verses, two totally different representations of the Son of Man’s (i.e., Jesus’) death occur with a clear shift in agency, which is of much soteriological and Christological significance.

Second, some observations can be made regarding the possible background to the rhetoric of ruling, serving and self-giving in vv. 42-45. Recent scholarship tends to avoid following the (apparent) lead of Markan rhetoric here and asks whether Gentile leadership in general – or just particularly bad examples of it – is in view in Jesus’ criticism of it (v. 42). While there is no consensus concerning the genealogy of the topics found here in Mark, three things can be noted. (1)

11. Baarlink (2004: 109) elects to see the use of passiva divina here. It has significant exegetical results. In Baarlink’s case the effect is to marginalize any suggestion of human agency and to turn the entire statement of v. 31 into one about God’s own offering up of the Son of Man. However, an agentless passive always gives room to the involvement of multiple possible agents. See Smit and Renssen 2015. Backhaus (1995: 100-101) also uses the notion of the passivum divinum (finding one in 9.31; 10.33; 14.41) and sees a shift in agency in the Gospel of Mark, from God’s ‘dahingeben’ of the Son of Man to Jesus’ giving of himself. It would be preferable to do away with the use of this concept and to speak of a coinciding of divine commissioning and sending of the Son of Man and the Son of Man’s active execution of this commission.

12. Should Isa. 53.12 LXX indeed be part of the background of Mk 10.45, then it is worth noting that there the fate of the servant is described in passive terms, whereas Mk 10.45 states the fate of the Son of Man using active verbs. See Yarbro Collins 1997: 372.

13. This discussion is partially determined by the interpretation of the verbs κατακυριεύω and κατεξουσιάζω in relation to the more common forms κυριεύω and ἐξουσιάζω and whether the former two verbs represent intensified forms of the latter two, potentially signifying instances of tyranny and oppression. See, e.g., Winn 2014a: 342-43 for an overview of the discussion; it certainly would suit the context of colonial Palestine and the experience of Gentile rulership (see Donahue and Harrington 2005: 312; similarly, Mann 1986: 414; Evans 2015: 118).
In Jewish circles the combination of leadership, service and self-offering existed as a kind of (expiatory, liberating) sacrifice on behalf of the people (‘noble death’), both with and without a direct relationship to Isa. 53. (2) In non-Jewish texts, similar combinations can also be found, in particular when related to ideal (philosophical) kingship. This also applies to the gift of one’s life as a λύτρον. (3) When considering Roman and affiliated political leadership in Mark, the two prime examples are Herod and Pilate, both of whom fail spectacularly in their roles (notably in Mk 6 and 15). The combination of these factors leads to an interpretive situation in which not Gentile leadership as such, let alone Gentile leadership ideals, are at stake in v. 42, but a perverted form of such leadership, which the readers of Mark would have been familiar with since ch. 6 (Herod), while both Gentile and Jewish leaders would be able to make sense of what follows, particularly in terms of ideal-typical leadership. Common to the two discourses of leadership – and for this the shift in agency between v. 33 and v. 45 is of significance – is that a person leads through intentional service on behalf of and for the benefit of the community and that it is also precisely due to this intentionality that it is service exercised as leader.

14. See van Henten 1997. See also the texts collected in van Henten and Avemarie 2002.
15. The connection between the ‘suffering servant’ and Mk 10.42-45, in particular to v. 45, is a much-debated question that cannot be addressed on its own here and which is also of secondary importance for the argument advanced here. Should there indeed be a direct connection between these two texts, then this would mainly reinforce what can be argued on the basis of a more general pattern of ideals concerning leadership, self-giving and service. For a survey of the debate, see Edwards 2012.
16. See Seeley 1993. Following the line of thought of Seeley, see also Thiessen 2016, who argues convincingly that Mk 10.45 can be understood against the backdrop of prevailing imperial ruler ideology, albeit it with a twist: in the case of Mark, the ‘ruler’ gives his life for the people, rather than that it is assumed that the people ought to give their lives for their king.
17. See Yarbro Collins 1997, with reference to actual liberation through manumission in relation to this term. Breytenbach (2014: 162) interprets the expression not in the light of statements about ‘giving someone’s life for someone else’, in order to avert evil, but as follows: ‘In the light of his utterances in 8,36 and 37, it is fair to argue that Jesus as Son of Man in Mark announces to give his life as λύτρον for many, because at the final judgment men and women have nothing that they can give as ἄλλαγµα for their lives’. I remain unconvinced, especially as I do not think that the two scenarios are mutually exclusive.
18. On Mk 6, see Smit 2017a: 57-66 and Ebner 2004. On the characterization of both Herod and Pilate, see, e.g., Winn 2014b. For the suggestion that Herod and Pilate are in view here, see De Mingo Kaminouchi 2003: 207, commenting in particular on the οἱ δοκοῦντες ἄρχειν in v. 42, as indeed both rulers fail rather spectacularly.
19. The use of a negative example about the ‘other’ can also function as a rhetorical ploy: as the Markan community may well have distanced itself from ‘pagan’ practices at large, the last thing that its leadership would want is to be seen as ‘typically pagan’ leaders. By identifying a particular style of leadership as ‘pagan’, it immediately becomes much less attractive to members of the Markan community.
20. The gendered aspects of this cannot be explored in this article, but see Smit 2018a and Asikainen 2018.
The key to all of this is the fact that in Mk 10.45 both the character of Jesus and the manner in which he acts salvifically are described in terms of a gift: specifically, a giving of himself. Such an overwhelming gift can be seen as a supreme act of benefaction (euergetism) when interpreting it as a form of patronage, which had the bestowal of gifts as one of its key properties. Simultaneously, however, the notion that Jesus gives himself freely and actively sets him up as a forceful actor, living up to the highest standards of virility and leadership. Bond and others have shown how this matches ancient ideals, though they have not argued that the gift is at the core of Jesus’ behavior to the extent to which I do here.

Yet, something also remains open in Mk 10.45 – the manner in which Jesus will give his life as a ransom for others. The expression permits a more metaphorical interpretation, one that is apart from the fact that someone literally dies for another person; it can also indicate, for instance, that someone works hard on behalf of others. It is only in the rest of Mark’s narrative that the concrete shape of Jesus’ giving of himself becomes clear. The narrative of the last supper, which, of course, reaches its climax in the crucifixion, is crucial to understanding the meaning of Jesus’ words the meaning of Jesus’ words in Mk 10.45.

**Symbolic Self-Giving at the ‘Last Supper’**

When turning to Mk 14.22-25 (the gift) and, with that, to questioning what the significance of the breaking of the bread in a setting such as this (here, in v. 22) may be, there are a few aspects worth paying attention to. In doing so, the giving of the cup and the pouring out of its contents will also be discussed.

To begin with, the language of ‘giving’ obviously plays a role in this pericope. In v. 22, there is the bread, which Jesus gives (ἐδώκεν) after having taken it, said thanks over it and broken it (ἐκλασεν). The counterpart of giving, receiving, is also made explicit when Jesus exhorts his disciples to accept the bread while identifying the act at the same time: λάβετε, τοῦτο ἐστιν τὸ σῶμά μου. Grammatically and dramatically, this formulation raises the question of what (the Markan) Jesus refers to exactly when he employs the demonstrative pronomen τοῦτο here. It is unlikely that he refers to the bread as such, given that τοῦτο is neuter and ἄρτος is masculine. Much more likely is a generic reference back to all that has been said and done, i.e., to the entire compound of taking, blessing, breaking and giving bread, which Jesus turns into a (symbolic)

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21. See, e.g., the survey in Barclay 2015: 24-51 and further studies such as Marshall 2009; Crook 2004; Saller 1982: 7-39; Danker 1982; Lomas and Cornell 2003; Nicols 2006. For the New Testament, see, e.g., deSilva 2000: 23-93. The connection between πίστις and patronage in the Gospel of Mark is explored in Smit 2020.
representation – the most likely interpretation of the ἐστιν – of his body. Jesus may also be employing the term σῶμα metonomically to indicate ‘myself’, as has been endlessly debated, but possibly for the wrong reasons: i.e., reasons that distinguish too strictly between self and body. I would at least want to consider the option of a reference to an embodied self here.

The breaking of the loaf of bread that is subsequently identified as Jesus’ body thus receives no emphasis as such. Yet, it is also clear that what the disciples receive is a broken piece of bread that is given to them as representing Jesus’ body (or ‘embodied self’). In the ritual that the text recounts, the breaking of the bread and the brokenness of what the disciples receive is thus an aspect of the gift as a whole (the entire ‘movement’ of taking, blessing, breaking and giving). The bread needs to be broken to be given, nothing more, but, also, nothing less. The question remains, of course, what the purpose of this giving is, especially as Mark does not include something like the Lukan/Pauline τὸ ὑπὲρ ὑμῶν διδόμενον/ τὸ ὑπὲρ ὑμῶν (Lk. 22.19/1 Cor. 11.24) in his description of Jesus’ actions with the bread and the words accompanying them, even though this does make an appearance at the end of the words over the cup (τὸ ἐκχυννόμενον ὑπὲρ πολλῶν, v. 24). Rather than discovering what benefit this giving has by reading on in the Markan passion narrative, a possible answer can also be found by retracing one’s steps in the story.

With his remarks about the bread that is taken, blessed, broken, given and thus represents his body (his embodied self), Jesus seems to comment, when following the flow of the narrative, on what Mark has him say just one verse earlier: i.e., ὅτι ὁ μὲν υἱὸς τοῦ ἀνθρώπου ὑπάγει καθὼς γέγραπται περὶ αὐτοῦ, οὐαὶ δὲ τῷ ἀνθρώπῳ ἐκείνῳ δι’ οὗ ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ ἀνθρώπου παραδίδοται· καλὸν αὐτῷ εἰ οὐκ ἐγεννήθη ὁ ἄνθρωπος ἐκεῖνος (Mk14.21). Jesus says this as the conclusion to a slightly longer exchange with his disciples on the subject of his upcoming betrayal in vv. 18-21, which he began by stating, ἀμὴν λέγω ὑμῖν ὅτι εἷς ἐξ ὑμῶν παραδώσει με ὁ ἐσθίων μετ᾽ ἐμοῦ (v. 18). In particular, the connection between ‘handing over’ (παραδώσει, v. 18; παραδίδοται, v. 21) and ‘giving’ (ἔδωκεν, v. 22) is of interest. It may well be that (the Markan) Jesus interprets his being handed over as his own giving of himself by intentionally and freely taking, breaking and giving what he identifies as his own body (or his embodied self). In fact, his reference to this body also points in the direction of his death: apart from being mentioned in 14.22, this body occurs only in two other places in Mark:

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22. See Klinghardt 2011: 53: ‘Längst ist erkannt, dass das Brotwort sich nicht auf das Brot, sondern auf den gesamten Gestus der Mahleröffnung bezieht’. Similarly, see his argument in Klinghardt 2012.

23. See the remark on this by Guttenberger 2004: 224; this is argued more extensively by Gnilka 1979: 244.

24. Jesus’ blood is only mentioned in Mk 14.23-24; the only other blood in this gospel belongs to the hemorrhaging woman in Mk 5 (vv. 25, 29).
when it is anointed in preparation for its burial (προέλαβεν μυρίσαι τὸ σῶμά μου εἰς τὸν ἐνταφιασμόν), and in 15.43, when Joseph of Arimathaea requests Jesus’ body in order to bury it (ἠτύχασεν τὸ σῶμα τοῦ Ἰησοῦ). This makes it likely that when Jesus’ body is mentioned in 14.22 an association with his upcoming death and, especially, burial is also appropriate. It would, in any case, fit the connection between Jesus’ giving of himself and his death (14.22/10.45).25

If this line of thought were to be pursued further, then the words, actions and symbolic interpretations of v. 22 may well appear to be somewhat subversive in nature, as they create a shift in agency from the betrayer to the betrayed. While in vv. 18-21 Jesus is the victim who is treacherously handed over by one of his closest friends, from v. 22 onward he is pictured as giving himself over. If this is the case, then it is inviting to see a parallel here with what was observed regarding Mk 10.45 and the preceding passion predictions in 8.31, 9.31 and 10.33-34, all of which refer to the Son of Man (compare the reference to the same in 14.21) being handed over, a turn of phrase that is restated with a significant shift in agency in Mk 10.45. Here, the Son of Man gives himself (δοῦναι), as was outlined above already.

This interpretation receives further support from the parallel to 14.22, i.e., 14.23-24, where Jesus’ actions with the cup are reported as analogous to those that are performed with the bread in v. 22 (καὶ λαβὼν ποτήριον εὐχαριστήσας ἔδωκεν αὐτοῖς, καὶ ἔπιον ἐξ αὐτοῦ πάντες). The interpretation of this action is more extensive than the one concerning the bread and has ended up in a verse (and clause) of its own (v. 24: τοῦτο ἐστιν τὸ αἷμά μου τῆς διαθήκης τὸ ἐκχυννόμενον ὑπὲρ πολλῶν). The action with and the interpretation of the cup and the wine in it both restate what was said about the bread/body in v. 22 and go beyond this. To begin with, here the τοῦτο in Mk 14.24 must also refer to the entire ritual action involving both cup and wine – without having wine in mind, the comparison or equation with blood becomes much less perspicuous, if not outright incomprehensible – which is accordingly identified as τὸ αἷμά μου τῆς διαθήκης τὸ ἐκχυννόμενον ὑπὲρ πολλῶν. When reading the verse in this manner, then the pouring out of Jesus’ blood is also not something in and of itself, but rather is a corollary of his giving of himself (Mk 10.45) that creates a further contrast with what

25. That the bread is likely to just signify Jesus’ body and not the community primarily, as might be the case in 1 Cor. 11 (where ‘body’ functions with multiple meanings), is unlikely in the case of Mark.

26. Tradition-historical questions pertaining to the potentially secondary character of this statement and the originality of what appears now as an eschatological afterthought in v. 25 cannot be discussed here, but see Smit 2008: 97-110.

27. As, e.g., Boring 2006: 291, also indicates. See, for a more detailed syntactical argument, Guttenberger 2004: 223-24.
has been said about the son of man’s betrayal in vv. 18-21 and prepares the rest of the passion narrative.

The pouring out of the blood, which is equated with the wine in the cup that had already been shared (v. 23), and its interpretation can well be understood as a parallel to the breaking and giving of the bread (and its respective interpretation), which had already been shown to signify Jesus’ body or his embodied self, i.e., his person. As blood can also represent a person or a person’s life, this action and this statement repeat what v. 22 had already expressed in terms of Jesus’ giving of himself (i.e., his embodied self). Pouring out blood is an established idiom for dying or killing. So far, then, the statement in v. 24 is a parallel to that in v. 22. However, by identifying an effect (the renewal of the covenant) and a beneficiary (‘you’) of this pouring out of Jesus’ blood, the identification of the action with the cup of wine goes, in fact, beyond what was said concerning the breaking of the bread. Whatever intertexts or background may be involved here (sacrificial, martyriological or anything else), the point of the symbolism is that the poured out cup of wine represents Jesus’ spilled or poured out blood and is of benefit to ‘many’. More specifically, the benefit that is involved is the renewal of the covenant and with that the restorative renewal of communion between God and God’s people. If the connection between 10.45 and 14.22-24 is as strong as suggested here, then 14.24 also further qualifies what the effect of the λύτρον mentioned in 10.45 might be. That is to say that, in this second metonymical reference to the gift of Jesus’ embodied self, which is performed by Jesus himself, a similar shift in agency takes place here as in 10.45 and 14.22: Jesus himself does the giving and the pouring out, rather than being handed over (‘given’ – i.e., ‘poured out’) by others. Yet, because the interpretation of Jesus’ action with the cup of wine also identifies the effect and beneficiary of (this (proleptic enactment of his) death, the two statements about bread and wine are

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28. See, e.g., Boring 2006: 291. See also the observations in Smit and Oldhoff 2015.
29. See, e.g., the various options mentioned by Breytenbach 2014: 166-67. Yarbro Collins (2007: 656-57) is (wisely) open to a combination or fusion of backgrounds.
30. I.e., a kind of libation; whether it ought to be understood as a libation as it was common at non-Jewish meals remains to be seen. If Leonhard’s stress on the absence of libations at Jewish meals is right (2016), then Mark, like Luke, uses a ‘hybrid’ meal in which both Jewish and non-Jewish elements play a role, the libation being one of them. For the current interpretation, it is not essential that the pouring out of the cup is a libation in the technical sense of the word. One reason to be hesitant regarding seeing a libation here is that, besides the fact that it was not common at Jewish meals, as Leonhard also indicates, an invocation of a deity is missing. If, however, the libation is the background, this probably adds to the strength of what takes place here as far as the reinterpretation of Jesus’ (imminent) death is concerned. A libation is also ‘beneficial’ spilling of a liquid, just as is the case with Jesus’ blood.
31. Or ‘all’ – another discussion beyond the scope of this article. A tendency seems to be to translate as ‘many’; see, e.g., du Toit 2019: 204-205; Yarbro Collins 2007: 656-57, for a different position, see Boring 2006: 291.
not quite parallel. Rather, the second elaborates on the first. One result of this is now that vis-à-vis 10.45 both the contours of the Son of Man’s laying down of his life as a ransom for many are clearer (it means dying), as are its effect in terms of ‘ransom’: it renews the covenant, and with that the self-gift of Jesus/the Son of Man has a clear and salvific purpose.\footnote{As, e.g., Breytenbach (2014: 166) has it: ‘The wine in the cup symbolizes the life of Jesus, which will be poured out in terms of the covenant. His death sets the prisoners free, having a ransoming effect (Mark 14,24 with Zech 9,11) … In the scene of the last supper, he recaps on the announcement that he came to give his life as ransom (10,45).’}

Without being able to unpack this fully here, the logic that is involved in Mark seems to be informed by the notion of salvific martyrdom, which also occurs in the Maccabean tradition. Note, for example, the parallel between Mk 10.45 and 2 Macc. 7.37, ἐγὼ δέ καθάπερ οἱ ἀδελφοί καὶ σῶμα καὶ ψυχὴν προδίδωμι: in 7.38 a ‘gift’ of oneself is associated explicitly with the redemption of the people of Israel (van Henten 1997; de Jonge 1988), which in Mark involves the self-giving of Jesus, i.e., of his body (and blood), which leads to a reestablishment of the covenant, i.e. covenantal community.

These considerations show how attention to the question of ‘giving’ in the Markan account of Jesus’ last meal aids in appreciating how in the account of the ‘last supper’ the topic of Jesus’ self-giving, key to his identity as a trustworthy teacher and competent leader (cf. Mk 10.45), is highlighted. This is done through contrasting statements about the Son of Man’s betrayal and his being handed over with statements about Jesus’ active giving of himself, which is symbolically and proleptically enacted in the context of the meal.\footnote{Because it seems to be the interpretation of the actions that matters the most, the precise framework of the meal also becomes less important, even if it is also obvious that real bread, real wine and a real meal are involved. However, given the manner in which things are being described here, i.e., in the narrative representation of the meal in Mk 14, there is little to suggest that the bread is broken at the start of the meal; vv. 17-21 presuppose that the meal is already taking place, otherwise the remark about dipping a hand into a bowl (and eating) would make little sense, while also the absolute genitive in v. 22 (ἐσθιόντων αὐτῶν) suggests that the meal is already under way when Jesus engages in his symbolic acts. For the argument as it is presented here, the precise moment of the breaking of the bread (and the pouring out of the wine) is not essential, but the topic is a matter of interest for the reconstruction both of the meals of the Markan community and of Jesus’ last meal. However, Klinghardt’s strong dependence on his appeal to the common opening of a meal in his argument against a possible symbolic meaning to the breaking of the bread (2011: 54) is weakened considerably because of the fact that, at least in Mark’s narration, Jesus breaks the bread after the meal is well under way. Interpretations of food and drink, including bread, in the context of death and dying that occur beyond the opening of meals (and libations during meals), might then also become more relevant as backgrounds for the Markan account of the last supper; one may think of a text such as Jer. 16.7.} The meal elements themselves, such as the breaking of the bread likely to have been part of every meal, remain in place in the course of these events. The question is not one of either/or,
i.e., something is either part of a regular meal or it has a symbolic function, but one of both/and. Here, a relatively generic act, the breaking and giving of bread (and, analogously, the actions with the cup) are given a particular interpretation and with that they become more than they usually are. With regard to this, the shift in agency that occurs in this enactment, with Jesus moving from being betrayed to giving oneself, as it is symbolized by the giving of the bread (and of the cup of wine), is the most important. Yet, the brokenness of the bread – and it is broken bread that is given – is an inherent part of this ritual representation of Jesus’ self-giving. The bread, which turns out to be Jesus’ body, needs to be broken in order to be given (just as the wine needs to be poured out in order to represent Jesus’ shed blood). The breaking and pouring out are corollaries to the giving of bread and wine but are of no lesser significance.

Having established this much concerning agency and the gift in relation to Mk 10.45 and 14.22-24, now this article will explore a topic that further enhances the relation between the gift, salvation and the meal in Mark: the connection between Jesus’ most dramatic (and last) meal and his most spectacular (and superabundant) meals i.e., between the last supper and the miraculous feedings. This will address the question of the shape of salvation (i.e., of the kingdom, cf. Mk 1.14-15), which has, so far, remained open, as mainly formal aspects of it were addressed: its foundation (Jesus’ self-giving in terms of his death) and its character (the renewal of the covenant, though what this entails is not yet revealed).

**Gift, Meal and Kingdom: Jesus’ Utopian Banquets in the Wilderness**

The literary, intratextual connection between the narrative of Jesus’ last supper and the miraculous feedings is well known. Attention is usually given to the four actions that Jesus performs with the bread in both cases: taking, blessing, breaking and giving.

λαβὼν τοὺς πέντε ἄρτους καὶ τοὺς δύο ἰχθύας ἀναβλέψας εἰς τὸν οὐρανὸν εὐλόγησεν καὶ κατέκλασεν τοὺς ἄρτους καὶ ἐδίδου τοῖς μαθηταῖς (Mk 6.41)

καὶ λαβὼν τοὺς ἑπτὰ ἄρτους εὐχαριστήσας ἐκλάσεν καὶ ἐδίδου τοῖς μαθηταῖς αὐτοῦ (Mk 8.6)

34. Although for modern readers a meal of bread and fish may not sound particularly abundant, when compared to meals of associations (a useful *comparandum* for early Christian meals, including the early Christian literary representation of Jesus’ wilderness banquets), the menu seems to have been within the scope of what might be expected at such a meal. See Kloppenborg 2019: 147, 150, 211, 214, 382, 400 for examples of ‘sponsored’ meals at which the main foodstuffs were bread and sardines.
Together with the fact that all three pericopes concern meals, these literary similarities offer an invitation to read these narratives in conjunction with each other. Yet, the meaning of this conjunction is one that is somewhat opaque. Here it will be explored in relation to Mk 6 in particular, with some comments on Mk 8.

In Mk 6, this giving of the (broken and ‘blessed’) bread has a very practical function: providing for the five thousand in a utopian setting, an enactment of what God’s (beginning) rule would be like. The bread itself is not identified with anything. Yet, what is enacted there is amplified in its significance by the contrast with the preceding narrative of Herod’s birthday banquet, usually known as the story of the beheading of John the Baptist (cf. Smit 2017b). In both stories, ‘giving’ plays a key part. In the first of the two, ‘king’ Herod says to the dancing princess: αἴτησόν με με δ ἑὰν θέλης, καὶ δώσω σοι· (6.22). This is repeated in v. 23, where Herod states, ὅ τι ἐάν με αἰτήσῃς δώσω σοι ἕως ἡμίσους τῆς βασιλείας μου. The request of the girl also uses the verb δίδωμι: θέλω ἵνα ἔξαγον δῶς μοι ἐπὶ πίνακι τὴν κεφαλὴν Ἰωάννου τοῦ βαπτιστοῦ (v. 25). All of this is duly executed, and Mark informs us that the one who beheaded John ἤνεγκεν τὴν κεφαλὴν αὐτοῦ ἐπὶ πίνακι καὶ ἔδωκεν αὐτὴν τῷ κορασίῳ, καὶ τὸ κοράσιον ἔδωκεν αὐτῇ τῇ μητρί αὐτῆς (v. 28). I need not dwell on the gruesomeness of all this, but I would like to draw attention to the occurrence of the same verb in the subsequent episode of Jesus’ feeding of the multitude in the wilderness. Here, giving first occurs in Jesus’ response to his mutinous disciples: δότε αὐτοῖς ύμεῖς φαγεῖν. καὶ λέγουσιν αὐτῷ: ἀπελθόντες ἀγοράσωμεν δηναρίων διακοσίων ἄρτους καὶ δώσομεν αὐτοῖς φαγεῖν (v. 37). It returns in Jesus’ presiding over what turns out to be a banquet in the desert: καὶ λαβὼν τοὺς πέντε ἄρτους καὶ τοὺς δύο ἰχθύας ἀναβλέψας εἰς τὸν οὐρανὸν εὐλόγησεν καὶ κατέκλασεν τοὺς ἄρτους καὶ ἐδίδων τοῖς μαθηταῖς [αὐτοῦ]. (v. 41). It is all about giving, it seems – Standhartinger, for instance, has rightly stressed the connection between the offering of public feasts in antiquity, while Sick has underlined the connection with euergetism in general (Sick 2015; Standhartinger 2013).

Despite the connection of both Herod’s and Jesus’ banquets with feast culture, euergetism and gift giving in general, what is being given at these meals differs,

35. Of course, the occurrence of the same verbs, with the exception of breaking (for obvious practical reasons), in v. 23 strengthens the parallel even further: καὶ λαβὼν ποτήριον εὐχαριστήσας ἔδωκεν αὐτοῖς, καὶ ἔπιον ἐξ αὐτοῦ πάντες.

36. Of course, the miraculous feedings are not the only episodes in the Gospel of Mark that outline the (salvific) contours of the kingdom proclaimed by Jesus; also other actions of Jesus (healings, exorcisms, etc.) can be understood as proleptic instantiations of God’s reign. See, e.g., du Toit 2019: 191-192, also 195 (‘Speisungserzählungen’).
of course, strongly: the head of John the Baptist or bread and fish in abundance. The difference between the gifts leads to a difference in community and certainly signifies the different kinds of ‘patronage’ that are involved. If the ‘miraculous feeding’ in Mark is intended as a (proleptic) enactment of the conditions of the kingdom of God (as seems likely), then this enactment is closely bound up with the provision of bread, even in a rather stylized manner that may have, in the context of Mk 6, no further symbolic meaning (even if bread and life were closely associated in Jewish tradition). When reading further in the Gospel of Mark and encountering the narrative of the last supper with its largely identical wording when it comes to Jesus’ handling of the bread, one might indeed associate the two narratives with each other, such that the bread distributed in the wilderness to sustain a community (and thereby enabling meal fellowship) is given a further layer of significance when the given bread becomes identified with Jesus’ given body (as a further elaboration of the soteriology performed by Jesus according to Mk 10.45). Conversely, when reading the narrative of the last supper with Mk 6 in mind, the contents of the ‘beneficial’ character of Jesus’ giving of his body may become clearer to the reader: they are akin to the contours of the kingdom, as enacted at the banquet in the wilderness, which can easily be related to the statement concerning the libation and Jesus’ blood as well. Thus, the two narratives can be seen to reciprocally interpret one another.

When it comes to the second of the two Markan accounts of a surprising and surprisingly abundant meal fellowship in the wilderness, i.e., in Mk 8.1-9, in which the same intertextual connection with Mk 14.22-25 occurs as in Mk 6, the setting is different. In Mk 8 the narrative does not derive (additional) meaning from a contrast with Herod’s meal and what is being served there, but from a subsequent instruction on the part of Jesus that draws the attention not so much to the fact that people were fed bread rather than a decapitated head but that the amount of leftovers that was gathered up was so abundant. In addition, it is significant that this meal seems to take place in Gentile territory, which may well suggest the scope of the envisioned meal fellowship. Therefore, it would seem plausible to me that here the notion of gathering of people into a fellowship beyond (cultural and religious) boundaries is dominant. Again, this may be associated with the bread that Jesus designates as his body in Mk 14.22 in two ways: Jesus qua bread is the foundation of a fellowship, and the ‘benefit’ of Jesus’ death is the establishment of a community qua a renewed covenant.

37. The fact that the ‘miraculous feeding’ culminates in a superabundance of foodstuffs, and that the ‘last supper’ does not, does not foreclose the connection or comparison between the two meals; rather, this difference shows that they have distinctive foci. Yet, as meals described in a similar manner and in the context of the same literary work, their connection is not negated by differences in focus or in detail.

38. See the references to place in 7.24 and 8.10.
The ‘rituals’ of the three meals thus reciprocally interpret each other, which leads to the creation of additional associations and meanings that, to my mind, make sense in the context of the Gospel of Mark and its Christology of martyr-logical self-giving (a form of the ‘noble death’). The narration of the enactment of a particular ritual, i.e., a meal, by Jesus in the context of a longer narrative of this meal also shows that the two kinds of meals need each other: the significance of the ritual is explicated and amplified by the narrative (as part of which it is recounted), and the narrative itself gains part of its force from the ritual that it reports. Whereas the ‘last supper’ and its relation to Jesus’ death (also in relation to Mk 10.45) provides the soteriological basis for a (re)new(ed) kind of communion (‘covenant’), the ‘miraculous feedings’ provide its shape as far as utopian meal community is concerned (other acts of Jesus also contribute to outlining the contours of the kingdom, of course). As none of this is completely realized yet, the kinds of community described in Mark and probably as performed by the Markan audience can well be understood as ‘prefigurative communities’, in which a future utopian situation is already enacted and can be experienced.

That Mark thinks in such communal terms when it comes to experiencing the reality of God’s rule proleptically (quite possibly in the shape of a meal and thereby approaching Barclay’s observation that the community is the concrete expression of the gift; Barclay 2015: 423-46) is indicated by a number of factors both in the accounts of the ‘miraculous feedings’ and the ‘last supper’. The communal dimension of the former is obvious and was already discussed. With regard to the latter, the following observations indicate that the communal shape of the meal also has a bearing on the reception of the ‘benefits’ of Jesus’ death. This amounts to the following: Mark consistently uses plural forms when he indicates what Jesus is doing in Mk 14.22-25. ‘Take, eat’ is a plural in v. 22 (λάβετε, cf. also ἔδωκεν αὐτοῖς), as is the exhortation to drink in v. 24. The recipients of the cup in v. 23 and the reference to the covenant in v. 24 are communal in scope as well, of course, as is the reference to those for whom Jesus’ blood is being poured out (περὶ πολλῶν). This agrees with other soteriologically focused statements such as 10.45 (ἀντὶ πολλῶν) and also, perhaps especially, with the key term used in Jesus’ proclamation in Mark: the kingdom of God, which is always focused on redemption of the whole, by bringing it into relationship with God and the parts of the whole with each other again (cf. the banquets in the

39. See van Henten and Avemarie 2002.
40. Therefore, any dichotomy between ritual and narrative is potentially misleading, as is certainly the case with the following statement with regard to the tradition of the last supper/Lord’s supper: ‘Die für die Fundierung der Gemeinschaft grundlegende Kategorie ist das Ritual, nicht eine Geschichte’ (Klinghardt 2011: 55). Ritual and narrative mutually imply each other: the narrative authenticates the ritual, while the narrative itself is traditioned ritually.
41. On which, see, e.g., Gordon 2017.
wilderness, for example). The meal as the key place for the ritual performance of this kingdom qua (social) space redeemed through Jesus’ self-giving is rather fitting, given that a proper meal, at least in antiquity, was always a communal affair and frequently related to the enactment of utopian scenarios in a proleptic or prefigurative manner.42

**Brokenness and the Gift**

Now that the relation between the gift, Markan Christology and ‘ecclesiologically shaped’ soteriology (i.e., salvation has the shape of restored community)43 has been explored, the detail of the brokenness of the bread and its possible relation to Jesus’ broken body on the cross can be discussed further.44 So far, it has appeared as part of the (self-)gift of Jesus as it is represented by the broken bread at the ‘last supper’: in order to be given, bread needs to be broken. As there are no other occurrences of κλάω in the Gospel of Mark that could have linked the use in 14.22 to Jesus’ death (even) more directly, a different way of considering the issue in ch. 14 is appropriate. The parallel between v. 22 on the one hand and vv. 23-24 on the other is key. While the bread is said to be taken, given thanks over, broken and given, the cup is taken, given thanks over and given only at first (v. 23) to be identified with Jesus’ blood of the covenant, which is poured out for the many (v. 24). The remark about this, i.e., the cup’s contents,45 being poured out reflects on the action that it accompanies. In this case, the (implied) pouring out of the wine is linked directly to the spilling of Jesus’ blood and, in the context of a discussion of his impending death (vv. 18-21) and the subsequent events of his arrest, trial, and execution (vv. 27ff.), a connection with his upcoming

42. As argued extensively in Smit 2008. Of course, beyond the meals that occur in this gospel, everything that Jesus is said to do or say in the Gospel of Mark is a performance of the kingdom and contributes to outlining the shape of the ‘social space’ that this kingdom amounts to.

43. Which would be similar to other kinds of early Christian soteriology in which participation in a community played a central role: see the discussion in MacAskill 2013.

44. In John, though not in Mark, it would be inviting to consider the reference to Jesus’ bones that are not broken on the cross (κατάγνυμι in 19.31, 32, 33; the only other NT occurrence: Mt. 12.20), even if in John neither bread is broken at the last supper nor Jesus’ bones at the cross. One could argue, also by way of the broken or disjointed bones in Ps. 22.14, the psalm that Jesus quotes at the cross, that there is a strong connection between crucifixion and the breaking of bones, given that in Jn 19 it is referred to as a self-explanatory praxis. Yet, it might still be too much of a leap to assume this is an intertextual connection with regard to Jesus’ body when it comes to its link with the bread broken at the last supper in Mark. Such caution is also invited by the observation that it is not common in ancient sources to think of Jesus’ body being broken at the cross (crurifragium). See the sources collated in Elowsky 2007: 330; for more historical background, see Cook 2014: 429 n. 65. References kindly provided by Mr Ruben van Wingerden, MA, Tilburg School of Catholic Theology, the Netherlands.

45. With all due respect for Klinghardt’s argument regarding Lk. 22.20, cups cannot be poured out. See Klinghardt 2012.
and violent death is hard to avoid. The pouring out of the blood (i.e., wine) is a parallel to the breaking of the bread (or body), ritually speaking. When thinking of this in terms of giving and the gift, it would appear that they, pouring out and breaking, are both part of the larger act of giving and a practical and ritual precondition for being able to perform the specific gift of bread (i.e., body) and wine (i.e., blood). In that sense, the pouring out and the breaking in the meal ritual in order to give wine and bread is analogous to the killing of Jesus in order to give himself for others. For that reason, it would stand to reason to see a connection between, first, the pouring out of blood (which is represented by wine) and the breaking of bread (which represents Jesus’ body), which suggests that the manipulation of both food and drink have to do with their character as food-stuffs and with their character as representations of Jesus’ embodied self, and, second, between this broken bread/body and poured out wine/blood and Jesus’ just-discussed (vv. 18-21) death (at the cross), to which the narrative also turns again from v. 27 onwards. Thus, the body/bread is broken because it needs to be given; brokenness is a corollary of givenness – *mutatis mutandis*, the same applies to the pouring out of the wine.

Concluding Observations

At this point, it is possible to return to this article’s research question and to see what kind of answer can be given to it (i.e., ‘can attention to the notion of the “gift” be helpful heuristically for the exegesis of the Markan account of Jesus’ last meal with his disciples, in particular with regard to the symbolic actions that Jesus performs during this meal?’). Broadly speaking, the answer to this question can be affirmative. In more detail, this means the following. First, focusing on ritual actions, as they are represented by the text, as a whole has proven to be useful. In the case of Mark, this leads to an emphasis on the ritual or ritually prefigured giving of Jesus’ body in terms of its violent death at the Markan last

46. When connecting the breaking of the bread with the beginning of the meal and the pouring out of the wine with the start of the symposium, the parallelism runs as follows: in order to perform a libation and to be able to start drinking, wine needs to be shed, in order to be able to begin eating, bread needs to be broken.

47. With regard to the connections between bread, death and salvation, Mark differs, then, from Paul, at least in his interpretation by Klinghardt 2011: 54: ‘Dass Paulus dem Tod Jesu eine entscheidende und unverzichtbare Funktion für die Bestimmung christlicher Identität zuweist, steht außer Frage, wie ja nicht zuletzt die Herrenmahlsparadosis sehr deutlich zeigt. Aber der Tod Jesus ist nicht automatisch ‘gemeinsinnig’: Dass er nicht nur die individuelle Identität jedes einzelnen Christen definiert, sondern auch die Gemeinschaft der Christen untereinander begründet, ergibt sich nicht unmittelbar. Dazu bedarf es der vermittelnden Kategorie des Mahls ... Diese Verbindung von Mahl und Tod Jesu zeigt Paulus, indem er den Tod Jesu in der Deutung der Libation als Begründung des Neuen Bundes benennt ... Während Paulus den Tod Jesu im Zusammenhang der Libation erwähnt, kommt er im Zusammenhang der Mahleröffnung nicht vor: Dass die Gemeinde zu einem Leib wird, konnte Paulus auch ohne die Erwähnung des Todes Jesu denken. Aber nicht ohne das Mahl.’
supper. Of this, the breaking of the bread qua symbol of Jesus’ body is seen to be a corollary. In this respect, the Markan gospel may well differ from Paul (at least in Klinghardt’s interpretation) in that the breaking further develops the giving and can be imagined as related to the breaking of Jesus’ body; the narrative context gives every reason to think so. Furthermore, it is plausible to argue that the account of the last supper and the two accounts of ‘miraculous feedings’ interpret each other. What the (self-)gift (of Jesus) amounts to that will enable a (re)new(ed) kind of community qua covenant, as it was indicated in Mk 10.45, is unpacked in the account of Jesus’ last meal, where it becomes apparent that this gift involves his death. The shape of such community, which may well be the shape of the kingdom of God, becomes visible in the ministry of Jesus (as recounted by Mark), particularly in the two accounts of his ‘miraculous feedings’ (and each and every episode of Jesus’ deeds). Community is both the result and the ‘expression of the gift’, as Barclay put it for Paul in more systematic-theological terms. For Mark’s gospel and probably in his community, Christology, soteriology and ecclesiology all cohere. The concrete shape of the kingdom that Jesus proclaims is the renewal of the covenant through Jesus’ self-giving and with that the establishment of new communion with God (and presumably among humans) in and through the meal that is again a ritual performance of Jesus’ self-giving and the communion that that establishes.48

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