BUGEMA UNIVERSITY

AN EXAMINATION OF THE PHRASE *"NEITHER THE SON… KNOWS"* IN THE BOOK OF MARK 13:32 (NKJV) AND ITS IMPLICATION FOR CHRISTIAN BELIEVERS.

A RESEARCH PROJECT SUBMITTED TO THE DEPARTMENT OF THEOLOGY

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# **ABSTRACT**

This research aimed at finding the meaning of the phrase “neither the Son knows” as in the book of Mark 13:32 NKJV. The text has received divergent interpretations. Some believers and bible readers report that the phrase mean that Jesus is not Divine. William reports that, the phrase “nor the Son” indicate that Jesus is God. On the other hand, some scholar’s belief that the phrase means that Jesus was both Divine and human.

Jesus was distinguishing between knowing that an event was approaching or near at hand (vv. 28-29), from knowing the exact time of its arrival. God the "Father" alone "knows" the "day" and the "hour" of the Son's return (cf. Acts 1:7). Jesus' ignorance of this information was a result of His incarnation (Phil. 2:6-8).

Therefore, Mark 13:32 relates with the words Jesus spoke concerning His second coming and that no one knows including Him except the Father. Many people and believers deny the divinity of Jesus. However, Christ's apparent 'ignorance' here, during His incarnation, is because the Lord Jesus only says what the Father tells Him to say and He only does what the Father instructs Him. Although Christ was fully God, during His life on earth, He lived His life as fully man - demonstrating to believers how they should live their lives in total dependence on Him.

# **DECLARATION**

I, WILLIAM J. LEPARAN, declare that the content of this research paper is my original piece of work and that it has never been presented to any other institution or

University for any award.

Signature……………………………

Name: WILLIAM JOHN LEPARAN Date Signed………………………….

# **DEDICATION**

I dedicate this work to my beloved wife Elizabeth Nekura, my parents, family and Church whom I am indebted from their priceless support. May the grace of God be upon them all those who helped me in my education journey.

# **ACKNOWLEDGEMENT**

I am privileged to acknowledge my God far He Has brought me. Much thanks go to my supervisor and a research coordinator Pr. Ofwono Fredrick and Nicholas Bitamazire, Members of research committee; Pr. Nicolas Bitamazire, Pr. Jimmy Kajjura for reading and editing this work, the Head of the Department of Theology Dr. Javan Harelimana, the Dean of the School of Theology and Religious Studies Pr. Anthony Achiga. Lastly, appreciation goes to class members and my family as the whole and individuals who supported me in my studies Amen.

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# INTRODUCTION

The Gospel of Mark is the only Gospel that identifies itself as “the Gospel.” The Gospel presents memorable accounts of the life of Jesus of Nazareth presenting him as the Son of Man. The consensus of biblical scholarship is that Mark was the first Gospel, so that Mark is foundational.1 The nature of the Trinity is a puzzle which theologians have struggled with for centuries. God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit are members of the Trinity. He is separated from God on the cross (Mark 15:34). Stephen sees Jesus standing at God's right hand (Acts 7:55). Jesus even *learned* obedience as a man (Hebrews 5:8).

Does Jesus know when He will return now that He lives in heaven with a glorified body? Acts 1:6–7 allows for that. After the resurrection, when Jesus is in His glorified body, moments before He ascends to heaven, the disciples ask again when He will return and "restore the kingdom to Israel." He responds that it is not for *them* to know the timing, This does not mean that Jesus is not God. It merely means that in His incarnate form, the Son has ''emptied himself'' (Philippians 2:7) of God's omniscience and omnipotence. Like a weightlifter who only uses a portion of his strength

1William A. Anderson, T*he Gospel of Mark. Revealing the Mystery of Jesus, Liguori Catholic Bible Study, Liguori,* (Missouri: Liguori Publications, 2012). 67-76. at times, God incarnate can limit expressing His omnipotence. This is a message for us that we should not believe those who claim to know when Jesus is returning. This warning is also found in Luke 21:34–36 while Matthew gives this warning along with the parable of the ten virgins and the parable of the talents in Matthew 24:42–25:30.2

## Background of the Study

In regard to Jesus’ Second Coming, He is recorded as saying, “But of that day or hour, no one knows, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but the Father alone” (Mark 13:32, NASB. The word alone is italicized because it was supplied by the translator). The church fathers wrote much explaining this statement of the Lord, most often because of its import regarding Christology. Since the passage allegedly presents Christ as ignorant, the Arians of the early church, who denied that the Son was consubstantial with the Father, used it as a proof-text for their belief in a less-than-divine Son of God.3

Ellen White comments that:

“While God’s Word speaks of the humanity of Christ when upon this earth, it also speaks decidedly regarding His pre-existence. The Word existed as a divine being, even as the eternal Son of God, in union and oneness with His Father. From everlasting He was the Mediator of the covenant, the one in whom all nations of the earth, both Jews and Gentiles, if they accepted Him,

2Brendan Byrne, *A Costly Freedom: A Theological Reading of Mark’s Gospel*, (Collegeville Minnesota: Liturgical Press, 2008). 89.

3Ibid. 69.

were to be blessed. “The Word was with God, and the Word was God.”

Before men or angels were created, the Word was with God, and was God.”4

Besides, Ellen White argues that, there are three living persons of the heavenly trio; in the name of these three great powers—the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit— those who receive Christ by living faith are baptized.5

On the other hand, those who held to Nicene orthodoxy and believed that Jesus was fully God and possessed all the attributes of divinity, including omniscience, responded to the Arians with Colossians 3:2, “In Him are all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.” The adherents of Nicene orthodoxy, besides asserting Christ’s omniscience, also had to make sense out of Mark 13:32, which seemed to teach that Jesus was ignorant of at least one detail concerning the future, i.e., the time of His return. To solve the theological dilemma of the omniscient Son of God not knowing the time of His Own Second Coming, the church fathers proposed a variety of explanations.6

In the fourth century, Basil of Caesarea offered a philological solution to the problem. He argued that the Greek words in Mark 13:32 do not teach that the Son was ignorant. He noted that a literal, word for word translation of the verse reads, “But of that day or hour no one knows, neither the angels in heaven, nor the Son, if not the Father.”

4Ellen White. *Review and Herald*, (Grand Rapids. April 5, 1906). 78.

5Ellen White. *Special Testimonies*, Series B, No. 7. (1905). 62, 63.

6George Martin, *Bringing the Gospel of Mark to Life: Insight & Inspiration*, (Huntington, Indiana: Our Sunday Visitor Inc., 2013). 67-73.

From this philology Basil reasoned that Jesus was in effect saying: If I were not one with the Father, even I would not know the time of my Second Coming. Basil commented, “But the saying of Mark…we understand in this way: that no one knows, neither the angels of God, but not even the Son would have known, unless the Father had known, that is, the cause of the Son’s knowledge is from the Father.”[[1]](#footnote-1) According to this interpretation, Mark 13:32 is not a statement about the Lord’s ignorance, but the exact opposite. It is a statement about Christ’s divinity and omniscience. Basil’s argument has several positive qualities. First, it is based on the Greek text itself. Ei me in Greek can mean “if not.”5 In fact, the words ei and me are often translated “if” an “not”, as in the NASB and NIV translations of

John 9:33 which both read: “If this man were not from God, He could do nothing” (italics mine). Basil’s interpretation also entirely erases the problem of Christ’s supposed ignorance.[[2]](#footnote-2)

Several patristic authors attempted to solve the problem of Christ’s supposed ignorance by saying that Jesus was speaking figuratively when He said that the Son did not know the time of the Second Coming. Augustine of Hippo, for example, wrote that many times in Scripture the statement “God knows” means “God reveals.” When it says in Mark 13:32 that the Son does not know the day or hour, according to Augustine, it really means that the Son does not reveal the day or hour.[[3]](#footnote-3)

For support, Augustine gave the example of Genesis 22:12, where God said to Abraham after his test of obedience in sacrificing Isaac:

“**Now I know that you fear Me**.” In reality, Augustine argued, the omniscient God did not increase in knowledge. It was a figurative way of saying, “Now it is revealed that you fear Me.” Augustine cited Deuteronomy 13:3 as another biblical example of this kind of figure of speech. Here Moses said that God would test the love of His people by means of false prophets. He wrote: “For the Lord your God is testing you that He may know whether you love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul.” According to Augustine, the phrase “that He may know” does not mean that God would increase in knowledge once the Israelites were tested, but that at that time it would be revealed whether the children of Israel loved God. Augustine’s view also has problems. If his definition of “not knowing” as “not revealing” is applied throughout the whole verse, the meaning of the passage significantly changes from what Augustine claimed it meant. For, the scripture passage not only says that the Son does not know the day or the hour of His coming; it also says that humans and angels do not know. When, therefore, the definition of “not knowing” as “not revealing” is applied throughout the verse, the meaning becomes: But of that day or hour, no one, e.g., prophet, has revealed, neither have the angels in heaven revealed it, nor has the Son revealed it, but only the Father will reveal it in His good time.[[4]](#footnote-4)

Another “figure of speech” interpretation is found in the writing of Gregory of Tours. He said that the words “son” and “father” in Mark 13:32 are not speaking of persons of the Trinity, but are figures of the church and Christ. Since these words do not represent

the father and Son, in his view the passage would read without the words “Father” and

“Son” capitalized: “But of that day or hour, no one knows, neither the angels in heaven, nor the son, but only the father.” For Gregory, the church, made up of the adopted children of Christ and designated by the word “son,” does not know the time of the Lord’s Second

Coming. Designated by the word “father” is Jesus, the Lord and presiding judge at the Last Judgment; and He does know its time.11

Athanasius of Alexandria proposed still another solution to the problem of Christ’s supposed ignorance. For him, Mark 13:32 does not detract from the Son’s consubstantial omniscience, it simply speaks of the limited knowledge of Christ’s humanity. He writes that:

“Jesus made this [statement] as those other declarations as man by reason of the flesh. For this as before is not the Word’s deficiency, but of that human nature whose property it is to be ignorant…For it is proper to the Word to know what was made, nor be ignorant either of the beginning or of the end of these…Certainly when he says in the Gospel concerning Himself in His human character, ‘Father, the hour is come, glorify Thy Son,’ it is plain that He knows also the hour of the end of all things, as the Word, though as man He is ignorant of it, for ignorance is proper to man…for since

He was made man, He is not ashamed, because of the flesh which is ignorant

11Gregory of Tours, *History of the Franks, Prologue*. (PL 1999). 71:162-3.

to say, ‘I know not,’ that He may show that knowing as God, He is but ignorant according to the flesh.”[[5]](#footnote-5)

Similarly, Gregory of Nazianzus wrote about Christ that “everyone must see that He knows as God, and knows not as Man…We are to understand the ignorance in the most reverent sense, by attributing it to the Manhood, and not to the Godhead.”[[6]](#footnote-6) And later that century, Rufinus the Syrian anathematized anyone who would interpret Mark 13:32

“in accordance with the blasphemy of the Arians, rather than understand that the passage concerns the dispensation of His assumed flesh.”[[7]](#footnote-7) The main strength of Athanasius’ anthropological interpretation is that it harmonizes with Luke’s Gospel, which assigns to Christ a growth in wisdom. Since the Gospel writer claims that the Christ-child “grew in wisdom and stature” (Luke 2:52), it is inferred that Christ was ignorant of certain things.[[8]](#footnote-8) The orthodox position, articulated in reaction to Nestorianism, was that because of the unity of the two natures in the incarnation, the Lord’s human mind was fully enriched with the fullness of divine knowledge. For example, Fulgentius of Ruspe wrote that because of the hypostatic union, the human soul of Christ possesses “the full knowledge of the infinite divinity,” since the Scripture says that was given the Spirit without measure.[[9]](#footnote-9)

That same century, Pope Vigilius wrote against the Nestorians on Christ’s supposed ignorance of the day and the hour: “If anyone says that the one Jesus Christ who is both true Son of God and true Son of man did not know the future or the day of the Last Judgment and that He could only know as much as the divinity, dwelling in Him as in another, revealed to Him, anathema sit.”

Thus, viewing Jesus as an ignorant man, knowing only as much as the divine nature would permit Him to know at a given time, was judged in the early Christological debates to be Nestorian. Instead of the two natures united in one person, it hinted at a mere man sharing in divinity. It nullified not only Paul’s statement that in Christ were “all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge” (Col 3:2), but also Jesus’ own words: “Everything which the Father has is mine.” (John 16:15). In addition, the opponents of Nestorianism reasoned that if the Father had committed to the Son of Man all of the details of the Last Judgment (John 5:22-27), including the knowledge of the thoughts, words, and actions of every human that ever lived, certainly the knowledge of the time of the appointed judgment was entrusted to Him.17

17Pope Vigilius, *Constitutum I. Cited in Neuner and Dupuis, Christian Faith*, (2002). 157.

## Statement of the Problem

The phrase “neither the son…. knows,” in Mark 13:32 remains one of the most arguable verses in the Bible. Questions over the deity of Christ have led to many heretical positions over the centuries. Many scholars have denied the divinity of Christ, and many still exist today, even among those that seek to be faithful to God’s Word. Some scholars and bible readers report that the phrase mean that Jesus Christ is not divine. Arianism beliefs that the Jesus Christ is not eternal and is slightly below the Father thus he cannot know. On the other hand, some scholars such as Augustine opine that the phrase means that Jesus chose to ignore his divinity yet he is divine and equal to God. Based on the above views, the researcher thus, conducts a study to find the meaning of the phrase, “neither the son,” in Mark 13:32,” and its implications to the Christian believers.

## Research Questions

1. What is the original meaning of the phrase “neither the son….knows” in the

context of Mark 13:32 (NKJV)?

1. How does “neither the son…knows” in the context of Mark 13:32 (NKJV) relate to salvation?
2. What is the implication of the phrase “neither the son…knows” in the context of Mark 13:32 (NKJV) for the Christian believers?

## Objectives of the Study

The objectives of this study are;

1. To find out the original meaning of the phrase “neither the son…knows” in the context of Mark 13:32 (NKJV).
2. To examine on how does “neither the son…knows” in the context of Mark 13:32

(NKJV) relate to salvation.

1. To search for the implications of the phrase “neither the son…knows” in the context of Mark 13:32 (NKJV) for the Christian believers for the Christian believers.

## Significance of the Study

First and foremost, the phrase “neither the son…knows” in Mark 13:32 is a part of God's written revelation to and for man. The wide spectrum of interpretations of this passage, has kept many churches from gaining God's intended teaching from this passage. The study of this passage will help the Church in grasping important doctrinal truths for edification. On the other hand, this study will be beneficial to the researchers and academicians who would want to refer to as the source of their future works.

#### Scope of the Study

This study will cover areas such as the delimitations, limitations and sources as follows;

### Delimitation

At this section, the researcher took the New Testament book of Mark 13:32, secondary sources like journals, dissertations, and other books from the library. The researcher focused on the phrase *“neither the…son”* in the context of Mark 13:32 seeking to identify the true meaning and its implication for the Christians believers.

### Limitations

This study covered all scriptural areas that aided in the correct investigation of this passage. It was limited to the context of Mark 13:32. Some of the limitations encountered include: financial constraints, lack of internet, missing books on given ideas in the library among others.

### Sources

The library materials available in Bugema University will be used and they include; books, Journals, Magazines, Articles, Bible commentaries, Dictionaries, Encyclopedia, and Media Centers. Internet sources will also be used.

## Methodology

The researcher used the review of literature and exegetical way of collecting data, which involve the following procedure; Historical Analysis, Literary Analysis, Contextual

Analysis, and Grammatical Analysis.

## Summary of Chapters

This paper consists of five chapters. Chapter one provides a background of the problem statement, research questions, purpose and significance of the study, scope of the study, methodology and summary of chapters. Chapter two deals with literature review, chapter three comprises of Exegetical analysis, chapter four focuses on theology of the text and its implication and chapter five contains a summary and conclusion of the study.

# RELATED LITERATURE REVIEW

# Introduction

This chapter deals with the literature review connected to the topic. Several literatures are visited and examined by the researchers. This chapter covers the concept of trinity using various theories.

Questions over the deity of Christ have led to many heretical positions over the centuries. Many have come before this day in age that have denied the divinity of Christ, and many still exist today, even among those that seek to be faithful to God’s Word. While they may use many other passages of Scripture to argue against Christ’s deity, two important passages present a common starting point for such contentions. Mark 13:32 (par. Matthew 24:36) appears to clearly indicate that God the Father has knowledge the Son does not have, so the challenge has arisen that Christ therefore cannot be equally divine with the Father. Second, John 14:28 also has been the source of much debate as it seems to describe the Son as inferior, or subordinate, to the Father. The claim is made, then, that anything not equal with the Father is not divine, so Jesus is not divine. This paper seeks to examine the validity of belief systems that deny the full deity of Jesus, giving particular attention to the two passages mentioned above. After first noting four of the main arguments offered against the full divinity of Christ, and then carefully exegeting these two texts, this essay will conclude that those wishing to be faithful to the complete Word of God must necessarily accept and cherish the full deity of Jesus the Nazarene, who was, and is, and forevermore will be co-equal with the Father and Spirit.18

18Rufinus the Syrian, Libellus de Fide, 4. E. Schwartz, ed., *Acta Conciliorum Oecumenicorum, I.5* (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter & Co., 1924), 4-5.

# **Positions on the Issue**

Essentially, there are only two views that can be taken on this issue. Either Jesus

is not divine—at least not fully or equally with the Father—or He is. Within each of these groups, there are subsets of beliefs. Yet whatever one concludes will ultimately boil down to one of these two answers.

## Jesus is Not Fully Divine

There are numerous examples of groups throughout history that have denied the

deity of Christ. It must be concluded that the beliefs regarding the deity of Christ—or the lack thereof—proposed by these groups are heretical. Some of the groups mentioned below have officially been condemned as heretical by the church, while others remain alive and accepted today by many outside of evangelical Christianity. What follows is a truncated list of beliefs systems that seek to faithfully study the Christian Scriptures, certainly including Mark 13:32 and John 14:28, and yet deny the full deity of Jesus.[[10]](#footnote-10) While there are many examples of these systems that could be discussed at length— including Adoptionism, Apollinarianism, Arianism, Nestorianism, Psilanthropism,

Socinianism, Subordinationism, Catharism, Jehovah’s Witnesses, Unitarianism, and the Kenosis Theory—for the purposes of this paper, only three of the leading views will be outlined below. These select three are Arianism, Unitarianism and Non-Trinitarianism, and the Kenosis Theory.

#### Unitarianism

The next major rejection of Christ’s full divinity is Unitarianism, or Monarchianism. Several groups of professing Christians subscribe to this, going back to

Socinianism,[[11]](#footnote-11) and, most notably today in the Jehovah’s Witnesses tradition. In an effort

to maintain the strict unity of God, Unitarianism is essentially the belief system whose foundational tenet is that “our heavenly Father is the one true God, and every other being, including the Messiah, is subordinate to Him.”21 God exists in one person, not three. There is a denial of the Trinity and the full deity of the incarnate Christ. Rather, “Scripture is much too clear that (God) has no equals and, because of this, we need a guide to Him. This guide is our Lord Jesus Christ.”22 Jesus is not believed to be God; He was merely a man sent by God to live a holy life and demonstrate to all mankind how we should live to please God. Jesus is worthy of praise, honor, love, trust and obedience. He lived a sinless life, was crucified, buried, and rose from the dead by God’s power, and now He sits at the right hand of God while awaiting a return to earth one day. It is only by coming through Christ— the way, truth, and life—to God that one is saved. But Jesus was not, is not, and never will be God, for God is One, period. Unitarians view any claim to the contrary—namely one that says Christ Jesus was divine—is a “direct attack upon [God’s] Supremacy.”23 Instead,

“Unitarians hold that Jesus is regarded in his entire being and offices as second only to God….God has bestowed upon him the greatest honor and power due to his obedience during his life here on earth.”24 Unitarians point to several passages in Scripture to argue

21Donald R. Snedeker, *Our Heavenly Father Has No Equals: Unitarianism, Trinitarianism, and the Necessity of Biblical Proof* (San Francisco: International Scholars Publications, 1998), 19.

for their position (e.g., Exod. 20:3; Deut. 6:4; 32:39; Ps. 83:18; 86:10; Isa. 40:25; 44:6, 8;

45:21; 46:9; Mk. 12:29; Jn. 14:1, 28; Acts 2:36; 1 Cor. 8:6; 11:3; Gal. 3:20; 1 Tim. 2:5; Jms. 2:19; et al.). But this still runs into clear orthodox understandings of the Trinity, which includes a fully divine Jesus Christ.

## Jesus is Fully Divine

When one has considered the four major positions mentioned above, and

perhaps the others mentioned but not discussed in this essay, and is still not yet convinced, he is likely to find himself believing just the opposite. Namely, the opposite to all of the views mentioned earlier is that indeed Jesus was fully divine, co-equal and co-eternal with the Father and the Holy Spirit, and therefore equally worthy of worship. This is the view that is argued in this essay, and it is to arguments for such that we now turn to.

#### Support for the Full Deity of Jesus

Arians, Unitarians, and proponents of the kenosis theory all deny the full, and

they often use Mark 13:32 and John 14:28 to support their positions. But what will be explained below is why each of these views must be denied and replaced with an affirmation in the full divinity of Jesus Christ, the Son of God. We will begin by looking at Mark 13:32, and then examine John 14:28.[[12]](#footnote-12)

### Mark 13:32

Throughout many generations of Biblical studies, many have pointed to Mark 13:32 to claim that Jesus did not know the future, and therefore was not divine. And even if was divine, that divinity was bound by His humanity. These views surely find resonance among

Arians, Unitarians, and kenotic theorists. But it is true of others as well, even if it be in other ways. One may take Athanasius for example. He argued that not knowing the future is characteristic of the human condition. As applied to Christ, Athanasius wrote, “For as upon becoming human he hungers, thirsts, and suffers, along with all human beings, similarly as human he does not see the future. But viewed according to his divinity as the

Word and wisdom of the Father, he know, and there is nothing which he does not know.”26 Subscribes to the Kenosis Theory would certainly agree with Athanasius and others here in the argument that the divinity of Jesus knew the hour, but he emptied in humanity He emptied Himself of omniscience, which included the knowledge of the end.27 His divinity knew, but he refused to let His humanity know. But this pushes Nestorianism and leads down a dangerous path of two separate natures in Christ. The present writer does not wish to go that far.

Along similar lines, yet thankfully different, Edwards offers a bit of a different answer to this exegetical issue—ignorance of certain things was simply a part of Jesus’ authentic humanity. Jesus does not “claim the prerogatives of divine Sonship apart from

complete obedience to the Father’s will but rather forsakes claims and calculations in favor of humble confidence in the Father’s will…The Son, unlike the disciples, relinquishes all

claims concerning the future into the Father’s plan….the effect of v. 32 thus directs attention exclusively to the Father.”28

### John 14:28

John 14:28 contains Jesus’ statement “the Father is greater than I,” which has been used to argue that He is not co-equal with the Father, but is subordinate to Him in every way. In other words, it appears that this verse proves that Jesus is not divine, and knew this Himself. But in no way is that actually the case. There have been several suggestions made to answer this difficult interpretive question, four primarily. The first is one that some of the early church fathers—such as Tertullian, Origen, Athanasius, Gregory of Nazianzus, Epiphanius, John Damascene, and Hilary—explained the text as one that expresses the distinction between the Son and the Father, namely that the Son was generated while the Father was ascetic29. The former view must certainly be denied, for it rejects the eternality of the Son. This simply cannot be, for the Bible makes it very clear that Jesus was in existence with God from the beginning (Jn. 1:1; 8:58; Heb. 7:3; 1 Jn. 1:1;

Rev. 1:8; et al.). Second, other early fathers—Augustine, Ambrose, and Cyril of Alexandria—explained that in his humanity, the incarnate Son was less made lower than the angels (Heb. 2:7), and therefore than the Father also.30 This calls into question the equal

coexistence of Christ’s two natures and pushes close to the kenosis theory. It is best to leave this another option alone and pursue another solution.

Third, John Gill mentions option that is similar to the previous view in that both

focus on a certain reality of Christ’s humanity for explanation, yet this view presents a bit of difference. It is argued that John 14:28 is to be taken in regards to Christ’s state of humiliation with many griefs, sorrows, exposure to enemies, and an accursed death. The Father is greater because He is in full (greater) glory.31 In other words, according to this third option, the Father was greater in blessedness and gloriousness, at least at the moment that Christ uttered these words, for He was not just a human, but more than that, a humiliated man.32 But soon, Christ would go and partake in the same blessings and glory as the Father, after He died, rose, and ascended into heaven. Thus John 14:28 does not call into question Christ’s divinity or eternality, but indicates that Jesus is lesser because of His humiliation. His own words in Matthew 5:3-11 would have served as a good reminder to Himself and provided Him with comfort that one day, despite His lowliness on Earth, He would once again be made great, even as great as God the Father.

1. John Gill, *An Exposition of the Gospel According to John:* In Which the Sense of the Sacred Text is Given; Doctrinal and Practical Truths are Set in a Plain and Easy Light; The Whole Illustration with Notes Taken from the Most Ancient Jewish Writings in The Newport Commentary Series (Springfield: Particular Baptist Press, 2003), 461.

32Ibid. 461.

## Summary

This paper sought to argue for the full deity of Jesus Christ of Nazareth. Jesus was fully God and fully man—the God-Man. Though Mark 13:32 and John 14:28 seem to read as a denial of His authentic divinity equal with the Father, quite the opposite is reality. In the former, Jesus is still fully God with omniscience as an attribute; He simply choses to hold that knowledge from His hearers for their protection and to wait on His perfect timing. Concerning the latter, Jesus’ divinity is not even in focus. Rather, what is in view is the glory of God the Father, magnified by the humiliation of the Son. He was still divine, but was experiencing a lesser amount of glory than the Father while on Earth. The summary of both verses, then, is that Christ Jesus, the God-Man, is worthy of all praise, honor, worship, and glory, for He has since reentered into the glory of His Father, where He currently reigns as our Mediator.

28Edwards, *The Gospel According to Mark*, (1999). 407-408.

29Raymond E. Brown, *The Gospel According to John (xiii-xxi): Introduction, Translation, and Notes* in *The Anchor Bible* (Garden City: Doubleday & Company, Inc., 1970), 654-655.

1. Brown, *The Gospel According to John*, (1998). 654-655.

EXEGETICAL ANALYSIS OF MARK 13:32

# Introduction

This chapter covers the historical analysis, historical setting, literary analysis of the book and locate the verse under study. Contextual and linguistic analysis has been considered in order to draw an interpretation and finally the interpretation in order to reach the conclusion.

## Historical Analysis

The topic deals with the title of the book, the author, date and place of writing, recipient’s audience, relationship of recipients and the author, theme and lastly purpose of the book.

### Title of the Book

Scholars argue that Mark’s name was associated with the Gospel from the earliest times. The writers of the *CSB Study Bible* denote that “the title that ascribes this Gospel to Mark appears in the earliest manuscripts and is possibly original. Titles became necessary to distinguish one Gospel from another when the four Gospels began to circulate as a single collection.”[[13]](#footnote-13)

The title, 'According to Mark' (… [kata Markon]), was probably added when the canonical gospels were collected and there was need to distinguish Mark's version of the

gospel from the others. The gospel titles are generally thought to have been added in the second century but may have been added much earlier. Certainly, we may say that the title indicates that by A.D. 125 or so an important segment of the early church thought that a person named Mark wrote the second gospel."[[14]](#footnote-14)

### Authorship of Mark

There are many statements of the early church fathers that identify the "John Mark" who is frequently mentioned in the New Testament as the writer.[[15]](#footnote-15)

The earliest reference of this type is in Eusebius' Ecclesiastical History (ca. A.D. 326). Eusebius quoted Papius' Exegesis of the Lord's Oracles (ca. A.D. 140), a work now lost. Papius quoted "the Elder," probably the Apostle John, who said the following things about this Gospel: Mark wrote it, though he was not a disciple of Jesus during Jesus' ministry or an eyewitness of Jesus' ministry. He accompanied the Apostle Peter and listened to his preaching. He based his Gospel on the eyewitness account and spoken ministry of Peter.

Mark did not write his Gospel in strict orderly sequence, meaning either chronological order1 or rhetorical and artistic order, but he recorded accurately what

Peter remembered of Jesus' words and deeds. He considered himself an interpreter of

Peter's content. By this, "the Elder" probably meant that Mark recorded the teaching of

Peter for the church, though not necessarily verbatim, as Peter expressed himself. Finally, "the Elder" said that Mark's account is wholly reliable.[[16]](#footnote-16)

Another important source of the tradition that Mark wrote this Gospel is the AntiMarcionite Prologue to Mark (A.D. 160-180).[[17]](#footnote-17) It also stated that Mark received his information from Peter. Moreover, it recorded that Mark wrote after Peter died, and that he wrote this Gospel in Italy.4 Irenaeus (ca. A.D. 180-185), another early church father, noted that Mark wrote after Peter and Paul had died.5 Other early tradition documenting these facts comes from Justin Martyr (ca. A.D. 150-160), Clement of Alexandria (ca.

A.D. 195), Tertullian (ca. A.D. 200), the Muratorian Canon (ca. A.D. 200), and Origen (ca. A.D. 230). This testimony dates from the end of the second century. Furthermore, it comes from three different centers of early Christianity: Asia Minor (modern Turkey),

Rome (in Italy), and Alexandria (in Egypt). Thus, there is strong external evidence that Mark wrote this Gospel.[[18]](#footnote-18)

The Mark in view is the "John Mark" mentioned frequently in the New Testament

(Acts 12:12, 25; 13:5, 13; 15:36-39; Col. 4:10; Phile. 24; 2 Tim. 4:11; 1 Pet. 5:13; et al.). He was evidently a relative of Barnabas, and he accompanied Barnabas and Paul on their first missionary journey, but left these apostles when they reached Perga. Mark became

useful to Paul during Paul's second Roman imprisonment, and was also with Peter when

Peter was in Rome. Peter described him as his "son," probably his protégé.39

### Date and Place of Writing

Many critical scholars perceive that the author of the Gospel of Mark wrote during or soon after the Neronian persecution in AD 64. R. A. Cole dated Mark to between the death of Peter and the fall of Jerusalem.19 Donahue dated the Gospel of Mark to after the martyrdom of Peter in AD 64.40 The apocalyptic literature of Mark 13 depicted Jesus predicting the Jewish wars in AD 66–70, which is a significant factor for dating Mark later.20 Marcus also reported that some scholars perceived the persecution in Mark 13 as indicating the Neronian persecution in AD 64.

Other scholars perceived that the period of Mark is the Palestinian Jewish war with the Romans from AD 66–73.21 Craig Evans dated Mark to AD 66–70 because Mark appears to include the early stages of the Jewish war with Rome. Evans reported that some critical scholars have argued that Mark wrote after AD 70. Evans recognized that

Jesus predicted the complete destruction of the last Temple preceding the coming of the Son of Man. Evans also thought that Jesus predicted the destruction of Jerusalem and that he must have warned his disciples to flee from Jerusalem when they saw the “abomination

39Schmidt, Karl Ludwig. *The Place of the Gospels in the General History of Literature*. Translated by Byron R. McCane. Columbia, (S.C.: University of South Carolina Press, 2002). 78.

40Dewey, Joanna. “The Literary Structure of the Controversy Stories in Mark 2:1– 3:6.” *Journal of Biblical Literature* 92 (1973): 394–401.

that desolates.” One affirmation that Jesus made this prediction includes that Jesus instructed his disciples to pray that this great tribulation did not occur in winter, and yet the Romans took Jerusalem in the summer.[[19]](#footnote-19)

Most of the early Christian tradition says Mark wrote in Italy, and specifically in

Rome.3 This external testimony finds support in the internal evidence of the Gospel itself. Many indications in the text point to Mark's having written for Gentile readers originally, particularly Romans. He explained Jewish customs that would have been strange to Gentile readers (e.g., 7:2-4; 15:42). He translated Aramaic words that would have been unfamiliar to Gentiles (3:17; 5:41; 7:11, 34; 15:22). Compared to Matthew and Luke he used many Latinisms and Latin loan words, indicating Roman influence.[[20]](#footnote-20)

### Audience and Purpose of Mark

Achtemeier perceived that the audience and purpose of the Gospel of Mark revealed more about the author.[[21]](#footnote-21) Achtemeier noted that the author explains Jewish tradition (Mark 7:2–4).[[22]](#footnote-22) The author of Mark translated Aramaic words into Greek (Mark 5:41; 7:34; 15:34). Donahue perceived the translation of Aramaic phrases as an indication that the Gospel was composed outside of Palestine (Mark 7:1–23; 11:15–19).[[23]](#footnote-23) While

recognizing Semitic influence, Donahue concluded that the writer of Mark wrote to an audience of Jewish-Christians in Rome.[[24]](#footnote-24) The Gospel of Mark also contains Latinisms that imply the audience understood Roman culture (Mark 5:9; 6:37; 7:4; 12:14, 42; 15:15–16, 19, 39). The Aramaic translations to Greek and Latinisms indicate that the author’s audience include those who were not familiar with Aramaic and Jewish traditions, but were familiar with Roman culture.[[25]](#footnote-25)

Mark's purpose was not just to give his readers a biographical or historical account of Jesus' life. He had a more practical purpose. The biographical material he chose to include and omit suggests that he wanted to enable his Christian readers to endure suffering and persecution for their faith effectively. To do this, he recorded much about

Jesus' sufferings. About one third of this Gospel deals with the passion of Jesus. "Mark's Gospel has been called a Passion story with a long introduction."[[26]](#footnote-26) Moreover, there are many other references to suffering throughout the book (e.g., 1:12-13; 3:21-22, 30-35; 8:34-38; 10:30, 33-34, 45; 13:8, 11-13). Clearly, Mark implied that faithfulness and obedience as a disciple of Jesus will inevitably result in opposition, suffering, and perhaps death. This emphasis would have ministered to the original readers who were undergoing persecution for their faith. It is a perennial need in pastoral ministry. It is interesting that the theme of suffering is strong in Peter's first epistle, too. Evidently this was a subject

that lay heavily on Peter's heart. Mark also wanted his Gentile Christian readers to be good servants of God and other people. Therefore, he devoted much attention to Jesus' training of the Twelve for service.49

Mark had a theological (Christological) as well as a pastoral (discipleship) purpose in writing. It was to stress the true humanity of the Son of God. Whereas Matthew presented Jesus as the Messiah, Mark showed that He was the human servant of God who suffered as no other person has suffered. Mark stressed Jesus' complete obedience to His

Father's will. This emphasis makes Jesus an example for all disciples to follow (10:45). One wonders if Mark presented Jesus as he did, in order to balance a tendency that existed in the early church, by Docetists and others, to think of Jesus as divine but not fully human.50

Whereas a parenetic [exhorting] purpose with regard to Christian discipleship would explain only one small element in the contents of Mark and even then would misconstrue that element, an apologetic purpose with regard to the Cross provides a comprehensive explanation of all elements and, more especially, of the ways in which those elements are presented. Fitting together to form an apology for the Cross are not only the authority and radicalism of Jesus' teaching but also the fulfillment of his predictions, not only his power-packed miracles and exorcisms but also the supernatural

manner and accompaniments of his death, not only his attraction of crowds but also his burial by a pious and brave member of the Sanhedrin, not only his baptismal approval by the Father and enduement with the Spirit but also his resurrection."

"In my view, the Markan evangelist presents Jesus as the true son of God and in doing so deliberately presents Jesus in opposition to Rome's candidates for a suitable emperor, savior, and lord. All the features that made up the emperor cult and the various customs associated with the office and title of emperor in various ways find expression in NT Christology. Most of these features are paralleled in Mark; others are paralleled elsewhere in the NT."[[27]](#footnote-27)

### Audience

It is likely that Rome is where Mark’s Gospel was addressed. The author employs Greek loanwords derived from Latin and expressions reflecting Latin grammar, suggesting a locale where Latin was spoken. There are parallels between Mark and Paul’s letter to the Romans. For example, “[H]e declared all foods clean” (Mark 7:19 NRSV) mirrors Rom 14:14: “I know and am persuaded in the Lord Jesus that nothing is unclean in itself” (NRSV). The Gospel’s strong emphasis on the failure of the disciples to comprehend Jesus’ mission and on their flight when Jesus was arrested implies the presence of a Christian community within the addressed locale that had failed under persecution.[[28]](#footnote-28) This appears to be a Roman persecution, for Mark 10:42 condemns those

who rule over the Gentiles and lord it over them. While Christians were maltreated in various places, only the Christian community in Rome is known to have experienced major Roman persecution before AD 70, under Nero in AD 64. First Clement 5:2–7 and Tacitus (Annals 15.44) independently attest to the community’s failure during that persecution, including Christian betrayal of other Christians. Other locales for Mark’s Gospel—Syria, the northern Transjordan, the Decapolis, and Galilee—are based on various presuppositions. For example, the Syrian proposal is based on the hypothesis that if both Matthew and Luke were written around Antioch, their independent knowledge of

Mark would imply the Gospel being written in the area.53

### Relationship of Recipient and Author

Mark showed special interest in persecution and martyrdom, which would have been of special interest to Roman readers when he wrote (e.g., 8:34- 38; 13:9-13). Christians were then suffering persecution in Rome, and in various other places throughout the empire, especially after Nero began to persecute Christians in A.D. 65. For Romans, death by crucifixion was enough to disqualify Jesus as the Savior, and much of what Mark emphasized showed that He did not deserve crucifixion.1 Finally, the early circulation and widespread acceptance of this Gospel among Christians suggest that it originated from, and went to, a powerful and influential church.2 "Matthew is directed to

the religious man. Mark was written to the strong man. Luke is addressed to the thinking man. The Gospel of John is directed to the wretched man, the man who needs salvation."

### Themes of the Book

Mark tells his story of Jesus with an urgency that surpasses what is found in the other Gospels. Jesus’ first words in this Gospel are: “The time is fulfilled!” (1:15), and after that everything seems to happen very quickly in a world that is rapidly changing and will never be the same again.[[29]](#footnote-29)

Mark’s Gospel is imbued with a sense of mystery and ambiguity. Jesus doesn’t mind leaving people in the dark (4:10-12), nor does Mark feel any compul-sion to sort everything out for us. In particular, Jesus speaks about “the secret (or mystery) of the kingdom of God” (4:11); he tells people not to make his miracles known (1:43-44; 5:43;

7:36; 8:26); and his very identity remains a mystery to most throughout the story (1:27; 2:7; 4:41; 6:2-3, 14-16; 8:27-28). The effect seems to be to focus attention on his climactic death and resurrection, for it is only through the cross that Jesus’ true nature and purpose becomes apparent (15:39).[[30]](#footnote-30)

Mark offers a very human portrait of Jesus. Of course, Jesus is an extraordinary, divine being who exhibits power over disease, nature and unclean spirits. But he is also depicted as a man subject to human weakness and frailty. He gets hungry (11:12), he

doesn’t know everything (13:32), and he is unable to work miracles for those who have no faith (6:5). He exhibits a full range of human emotions, including pity (1:41), anger (3:5), sadness (3:5), wonder (6:6), compassion (6:34), indignation (10:14), love (10:21) and anguish (14:34).56

Jesus is presented as a preacher of the gospel and the content of his preaching can be summarized in one sentence: “The kingdom of God has come near” (1:14-15). The phrase “kingdom of God” refers to the phenomenon of God ruling, wherever and whenever that may be. When Jesus says this phenomenon has “come near,” he means that the possibility of God ruling our lives is greater now than ever before. Childlike faith makes the possibility of God ruling our lives greater still (10:14); attachment to riches makes it more remote (10:25).

Mark tells his story of Jesus with an urgency that surpasses what is found in the other Gospels. Jesus’ first words in this Gospel are: “The time is fulfilled!”57

Further, the in-breaking of God’s rule challenges any separation of what is pure or holy from what is defiled or unclean. When Jesus touches a leper, he doesn’t become unclean, but rather the leper is cleansed (1:40-42). Similarly, he associates with sinners without worrying that they will contaminate him (2:15-17). Throughout Mark’s Gospel,

we learn that “holiness” is now contagious in a way that “uncleanness” was before: what is holy now has the power to transform what is unclean.

The climax of Mark’s Gospel comes with its account of the passion and resurrection of Jesus. In Mark, the plot to kill Jesus is introduced much earlier than in the other Gospels (3:6; cf. Matthew 12:14; Luke 19:47; John 11:53). Thus, most of the story may be read as a prelude to what happens at the end when Jesus dies on the cross. Indeed, Jesus has not ultimately come to heal the sick or to argue with the Pharisees—he has come to give his life (10:45).

Mark doesn’t spell out exactly why Jesus must do this or how his death serves God’s purposes, but he does offer us two figurative images: ransom and covenant. The language of “ransom” (10:45) implies that Jesus’ death somehow purchases human freedom, and the language of “covenant” (14:24) implies that it seals or establishes a relationship between humanity and God. Further, the cross of Christ becomes the primary symbol for the life of self-denial, service and sacrifice that Jesus’ followers are called to

embrace (8:34).58

With regard to those followers, Mark’s Gospel seems to portray Jesus’ disciples in ways that accentuate their failings. They rarely understand what Jesus says to them and

they inevitably fail to carry out his demands. When the shadow of the cross looms near, they scatter: one betrays him, another denies him and the rest desert him. Still, Jesus never gives up on these terribly inadequate disciples. At the end of the story, the message that goes out from the empty tomb is that he wants his disciples back (16:7).[[31]](#footnote-31)

Mark probably portrays the disciples as he does because he knows that inadequate Christians everywhere will be able to identify with them. He wants to teach us that our relationship to Christ depends on his faithfulness to us, not on our faithfulness to him.

## Historical Setting

### Geographical Location

The gospel is also located in southern Syria, Transjordan, or upper Galilee, ca.

A.D. 70, by R. I. Rohrbaugh, "The Social Location of the Markan Audience," Int 47

(1993) 380-95, also published with more extensive documentation in BTB 23 (1993) 114-

27. 6 Marcus, "Jewish War,".[[32]](#footnote-32)

The Beginning of Jesus' Ministry (Mark 1 1-6 29). In view of the universally admitted priority of Mark, any scientific study will begin with that Gospel, taken by itself with no harmonizing combinations. The picture of the movements of Jesus in the first six chapters of Mark is intelligible and topographically reasonable. The site of John's baptizing is in the 'Arabhah east of the Jordan., When Jesus begins his ministry,

Capernaum is his center. He walks by the lakeside, he goes back into the mountains, he

tours through Galilee, he sails across the lake. If, however, one attempts to plot exact itineraries, he finds that the data fail him. In most of the sections of Mk 1 1-6 29, there is nothing to determine clearly either geographical or chronological connection. Except in a general and indefinite fashion there is no development to indicate what is early and what is late. As Matthew's rearrangement proves, the various sections can be shuffled into a different order without affecting the total impression of the narrative.61

### Trade and Economic Activity

According to the New Testament Gospels, some of Jesus’ followers were fishers or from fishing villages (Mark 1:16-20, Luke 8:2). Jesus also spent time in Galilean seaside villages such as Capernaum (Mark 2:1). Fishing was a fundamental part of the embedded agrarian economy of first-century Galilee. This region was ruled by Herod

Antipas; a client king of the Romans. An “embedded” economy was one in which

questions of production, processing, trade, and their regulation could not be separated from politics, religion, and family or village life. There was no free market that functioned independently from other dimensions of society, and little if any upward mobility. Most peasant fishing families were poor and lived at subsistence level, while a small minority of elites held the bulk of wealth and power. Fishing licenses were required for access to certain areas, and fishers needed various raw materials such as wood for their boats and flax for their nets. Evidently, families had to occasionally hire day laborers for assistance with the haul (Mark 1:19-20). Fish processors and distributors were required to pay taxes

61Don B. Garlington, "Jesus, the Unique Son of God: Tested and Faithful," Bibliotheca Sacra 151:603 (July-September 1994). 288-89.

for the product and tolls for its transport. A reference to processed fish, opsarion, appears in John 6: 9-11.

In general, the economy of the Roman Empire was extractive insofar as production and distribution served the interests of the powerful, not those who actually performed the labor. Peasant fishers and processors had little to no control over fees for fishing licenses or tax and toll rates. It is reasonable to conclude that such an economic situation was largely one of exploitation. This exploitation may have intensified in the Galilee during Herod Antipas’s reign, due largely to his increased commercialization of fishing and his own luxurious living. At any rate, fishers, farmers and other laborers in the Galilee sought ways to resist exploitation by hiding goods, lying about the size of their families in order to pay fewer poll taxes, and other covert strategies.62

### Society and Politics

Unlike most books which are written by and for the ruling élite, Mark is ‘people’s history’. First-century Palestine is best understood as a ‘third-world’ region comparable to present-day Iran or Afghanistan. Illiteracy was very high—possibly as high as 97% in Roman Palestine. Horsley questions whether a Galilean village would have possessed any OT scrolls (even of the Torah), or anyone who could read them. Appeals to ‘scripture’ are not to written texts but to remembered tradition.[[33]](#footnote-33) Galilee did not have the Torah at all until it was conquered by Judaea in 104 b.c and what Jesus represents is not the Torah-

based ‘great tradition’ of Jerusalem but the ‘little tradition’ of Galilean villages, based on fundamental Israelite norms rather than Jerusalem Torah.

The Pharisees were a Jerusalem-based group who did not operate in Galilee except as emissaries from the temple authorities. ‘Synagogues’ were not religious buildings like our churches but village assemblies, loudaios (‘Jew’) was not a religious but a regional term for an inhabitant of Judaea, so that Jesus was not a Jew but a Galilean Israelite. By reading the gospels as dealing with two rival religious traditions, ‘Judaism’ and

‘Christianity’. NT scholarship has badly skewed the gospels, which are about the confrontation between subject peoples of village Galilee and the ruling authorities (Roman and Judaean) in Jerusalem. It was Jesus’ mission to restore the Israelite covenant community, a village-by-village renewal of Israel over against the rulers’ (109); Mark’s aim was to expand that ideology to neighboring village communities outside Galilee Jesus’ exorcisms were political acts (Satan and demons represent Rome); Horsley milks the name ‘Legion’ for all it’s worth, and interprets it by means of a dubious model of French colonization of Algeria.63

### Culture

The Gospel according to Mark shows influence of Aramaic through the syntax of many passages and the transliteration of Latin constructions into Greek. This fits perfectly

with a writer from 1st century Judea who traveled extensively and whose native language was Aramaic, but was also fluent in Greek and familiar with Latin. Linguistically, this suggests a native of Judaea who made his way to Rome. Historically, this matches what we know about the life of John Mark.64

John Mark, with both a Hebrew and Roman name, and a cousin from Cyprus, would have had at least partially a Hellenistic cultural background and may have come from a family that was both Jewish and Greek. Examination of the format of Mark’s Gospel suggests that it was written primarily to a Roman audience unfamiliar with Jewish customs.

### Religion

Though the followers of Jesus would have still considered themselves Jewish, the Romans did not. They rejected the idea that Jesus was the Messiah they had been waiting for, so they had little tolerance for Christian ideas and theology. Christians were tortured and killed in the time of emperor Nero And, in the eyes of the orthodox Jews of the day, they were. This is probably why Mark dislikes the Pharisees so much. He thinks they are hypocrites who've turned their back on God. But, from their point of view, they are just continuing to faithfully guide the religion that was handed down to them through the generations.65

### Literal Analysis

There are two main sections in the Gospel of Mark. The first section (1:1–8:26) deals with Jesus’ ministry in Galilee, while the second section (8:27–16:8) deals with

Jesus’ crucifixion and resurrection and the events leading up to it. This paper will use the second section. The outline of the book is as follows:

### Outline of the Book of Mark[[34]](#footnote-34)

* 8:27–16:8—Jesus’ journey to, suffering in, and triumph through Jerusalem
* 8:27–10:52—Activities on the journey
* 8:27–33—Peter’s confession of and failure to understand Jesus’ messiahship; First passion prediction
* 8:34–9:1—Requirements of discipleship
* 9:2–13—Transfiguration
* 9:14–29—Exorcism on boy
* 9:30–50—Second passion prediction; childlike humility
* 10:1–12—Condemnation of divorce
* 10:13–16—Blessing of children
* 10:17–34—Rich man and the kingdom; third passion prediction
* 10:35–45—Request of James and John versus self-sacrificial service
* 10:46–52—Restoring Bartimaeus’ sight
* 11:1–16:8—Activities in Jerusalem on passion week
* 11:1–11—Triumphal entry
* 11:12–26—Symbolic destruction of the temple and literal destruction of the fig tree
* 11:27–13:2—Debates in the temple
* 11:27–33—Demand for a sign
* 12:1–12—Parable of the wicked tenants of the vineyard
* 12:13–17—Paying taxes to Caesar
* 12:18–27—General resurrection
* 12:28–34—Most important commandment
* 12:35–37—David’s son and David’s lord
* 12:38–13:2—Condemnation of the scribes and temple for shaming and impoverishing widow
* 13:3–37—Olivet discourse
* 14:1–2—Sanhedrin’s plot against Jesus
* 14:3–11—Jesus’ anointing by Mary of Bethany and initial betrayal by Judas
* 14:12–31—Last Supper
* 14:32–52—Agony in Gethsemane, final betrayal by Judas, and arrest
* 14:53–15:20—Jesus’ trial
* 14:53–72—Before the Sanhedrin
* 15:1–20—Before Pilate
* 15:21–47—Jesus’ crucifixion, death, and burial
* 16:1–8—Jesus’ resurrection

## Literal Genre

Scholarship since the 1990s has largely considered the Gospel of Mark closest in genre to ancient biography—that is, a “life” or bios. A bios displayed a historical interest in portraying truthfully the life of its subject However, a bios differs in crucial

respects from modern biography.[[35]](#footnote-35) Unlike modern biography, a bios was

unconcerned with placing events in chronological order and had no intention of giving a sequential account of the subject’s life from birth to death. Rather, a bios arranged its material in topical order, stressing anecdotes that painted the clearest picture of the

subject’s personality. Similarly, a bios had no interest in recording the subject’s words verbatim; it was perfectly acceptable to employ a paraphrase or summary that preserved the sense of the subject’s speech.68

## Location of the Text

The text is located from the book of Mark 13:32 which state “But of that day and that hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels which are in heaven, neither the Son, but the Father.” The pericope has been taken from verse 32-37. The researcher concentrates on the part in verse 32 which states “neither the Son.”

## Structural Analysis of Mark[[36]](#footnote-36)

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| A (13:32-33) | 13:33 You do not know when the time will come. (13:33) (οὐκ οἴδατε) |
| B (13:34) | 13:34 to stay awake (13:34) (γρηγορῇ) |
| B (13:35) | 13:35 you do not know when the lord of the house is coming |

(13:35) (οὐκ οἴδατε)

A'(13:36-37) 13:37 Stay awake (13:37) (γρηγορεῖτε)

## Contextual Analysis

The nature of the Trinity is a puzzle which theologians have struggled with for centuries. God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit are members of the Trinity. They are all God, they are all One, but They are not each other.Days before the crucifixion, the disciples praise the glory of the temple. When Jesus tells them, the temple will be destroyed, they ask for signs of that coming destruction and of His return

(Matthew 24:3). Jesus answers their second question with information crucial for believers in the end times, and any time. Tribulation Christians will face horrifying hardships and violence, as may believers of any era, but they must remember that the hardships will not last. Jesus will return so quickly, any attempt to live by the world's rules will be futile.[[37]](#footnote-37)

Mark 13:32–37 continues Jesus talking about the end times by relating the fact that not even He knows when He will return: only God does. This does not mean that Jesus is not God. It merely means that in His incarnate form, the Son has ''emptied himself'' (Philippians 2:7) of God's omniscience and omnipotence. Like a weightlifter who only uses a portion of his strength at times, God incarnate can limit expressing His omnipotence. This is a message for believers that they should not believe those who claim to know when Jesus is returning. This warning is also found in Luke 21:34–36 while Matthew gives this warning along with the parable of the ten virgins and the parable of the talents in Matthew 24:42–25:30.[[38]](#footnote-38)

## Grammatical Analysis of Mark 13:32

The phrase “nor the son…. knows” translated in Greek as οὐδὲ ὁ uios, has raised

heated debated among the scholars as to the true identity of Jesus.[[39]](#footnote-39) οὐδὲ is a conjuction

meaning “nor, Not however, neither, nor, not even” ὁ is a article in nominative masculine singular (Art-NMS) meaning “the,” and lastly “Υἱός” is a noun appearing in nominative masculine singular (N-NMS) meaning “Son (sometimes of animals), used very widely of immediate, remote or figuratively, kinship.”[[40]](#footnote-40)

Scholars suppose the verb οιδεν to have the force of the Hebrew conjugation Hiphel, in which verbs are taken in a causative, declarative, or permissive sense and that it means here, make known, or promulge, as it is to be understood in 1 Corinthians 2:2. This intimates that this secret was not to be made known, either by men or angels, no, not even by the Son of man himself; but it should be made known by the Father only, in the execution of the purposes of his justice.

"That day" is the day of Jesus' return, contrasted with "those days" preceding it (vv. 17, 19, 24). Jesus was distinguishing between knowing that an event was approaching or near at hand (vv. 28-29), from knowing the exact time of its arrival. God the "Father" alone "knows" the "day" and the "hour" of the Son's return (cf. Acts 1:7).

Jesus' ignorance of this information was a result of His incarnation (Phil. 2:6-8).[[41]](#footnote-41)

## Interpretation

Many scholars think that the Phrase “nor the Son” is not an original reading in

Matthew but rather has been introduced on the basis of Mark 13:32. However, Luke omits

the entire verse. There is also a possibility that Matthew casually names the Son. J.P Meier further affirms Francis’s point of undermining Jesus’ subordination by asserting that the verse actually affirms that we are all ignorant of the timing of the Parousia and as such the Son because he partially shares in our humanity he also shares in our ignorance.75

The distinction between the destruction of the temple and the Parousia has no basis in the text. Likewise, the reservation concerning the ignorance of the Son has no basis in this text. It is in the glory of the incarnation that Christ accepted the limitations of knowledge which are inseparable from a true humanity.

It is also noted that the phrase “nor the Son” is absent in the Byzantine Manuscript possibly because of its low Christology thus presenting a doctrinal difficulty. However, the best Manuscripts contain this phrase and the syntax of the sentence (“neither the angels...but the Father alone”) demands it. These include, the Western text, Caesarean and Alexandrian texts. Thus, the imminent Parousia must not tempt Christians to indulge in calculation and speculation of precise dates.76

The clause “neither the Son” is not found either in Matthew or Luke; and Ambrose

says it was wanting in some Greek copies in his time. To me it is utterly unaccountable,

how Jesus, who knew so correctly all the particulars which he here lays down, and which were to a jot and tittle verified by the event - how he who knew that not one stone should be left on another, should be ignorant of the day and hour when this should be done, though Daniel, Daniel 9:24, c., could fix the very year, not less than five hundred years before it happened: how he in whom the fulness of the Godhead dwelt bodily, and all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge, should not know this small matter, I cannot comprehend, but on this ground, that the Deity which dwelt in the man Christ Jesus might, at one time, communicate less of the knowledge of futurity to him than at another.77

That Christ did indeed know all the future had just been proved by the accurate prophecy of the destruction of a city, and this binds us to the conclusion that whatever was unknown to the Son was unknown to him by his own choice of not knowing.78

**Summary**

This chapter covered the exegetical analysis of Mark 13:32. It begins with historical background of the book of Mark identifying its title, authorship, audience, themes, purpose, and its literary analysis. Further it has covered the location and pericope of the text under study.79 The context of the phrase “neither the Son,” is covered showing that the eternal Son, as God, knows perfectly the day and hour; but as man, and as God's messenger to men, he did not know it so as to be able to reveal it to men. As an ambassador, he only communicated those things committed to him.

79 Craig A. Evans, “Mark,” ECB, eds. James D. G. Dunn and John W. Rogerson (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2003), 1064.

77Stein, Robert H. "The Gospel of Mark/The Gospel According to Mark/The Gospel of Mark: A Commentary on the Greek Text." *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* 46, no. 2 (2003): 342. 78Craig A. Evans, “Mark,” ECB, eds. James D. G. Dunn and John W. Rogerson (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2003), 1064.

THEOLOGY AND APPLICATION

This chapter deals with the theology and implication of the phrase under the study. It looks at the verse and how the concept has been interpreted by the scholars. Furthermore, the researcher goes deep in theology of the Seventh-day Adventist and the application of the study to the Christian believers.

## Theological Analysis of Mark 13:32

It must be observed here, that “the words ουδε ο υιος, neither the Son, have been omitted in some copies of Mark, as they are inserted in some copies of Matthew: but there is no sufficient authority for the omission in Mark, any more than for the insertion in Matthew. Erasmus, and some of the moderns, are of opinion, that the words were omitted in the text of Matthew, lest they should afford a handle to the Arians, for proving the Son to be inferior to the Father: but it was to little purpose to erase them out of Matthew, and to leave them standing in Mark.[[42]](#footnote-42)

On the contrary, St. Ambrose, and some of the ancients, assert that they were inserted in the text of Mark by the Arians: but there is as little foundation or pretense for this assertion, as there is for the other. It is much more probable that they were omitted in some copies of Mark by some indiscreet orthodox, who thought them to bear too hard upon our Savior’s dignity: for all the most ancient copies and translations extant retain them: the most ancient fathers quote them, and comment upon them. Admit the words,

therefore, as the genuine words of Mark, we must, and we may, without any prejudice to our Savior’s divinity. For Christ may be considered in two respects, in his human and divine nature; and what is said with regard only to the former, doth not at all affect the latter. As he was the great teacher and revealer of his Father’s will, he might know more than the angels, and yet he might not know all things. It is said in Luke 2:52, that Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favour with God and man. He increased in wisdom, and consequently in his human nature he was not omniscient. In his human nature, he was the Song of Solomon of David; in his divine nature, he was the Lord of David. In his human nature, he was upon earth; in his divine nature, he was in heaven, John 3:13, even while upon earth. In like manner it may be said, that though as God he might know all things, yet he might be ignorant of some things as man.[[43]](#footnote-43)

So likewise, in the text, “But of that day and that hour none maketh you to know, none hath power to make you know it;” (just as the phrase, Matthew 20:23, is not mine to give, signifies, is not in my power to give;) — no, not the angels, neither the Son, but the Father. — Neither man nor angel, nor even the Son himself, can reveal the day and hour of the destruction of Jerusalem to you; because the Father hath determined that it should not be revealed. The divine wisdom saw fit to conceal from the apostles, and the other disciples of Jesus, the precise period of the destruction of Jerusalem, in order that they might be laid under a necessity of watching continually. And this vigilance was especially proper at that time, because the success of the gospel depended, in a great measure, upon the activity and exemplary lives of those who first professed and published

it.” Most commentators, however, prefer the former interpretation. As God, who by his Son revealed to the apostles and first disciples of Jesus the destruction of Jerusalem and the Jewish state, and marked a variety of particulars which were to precede or accompany it, yet did not acquaint them with the day and hour when it should actually take place; so while he has warned us of the certainty of death and a future judgment, and discovered to us many circumstances which will attend, precede, or follow these solemn, and, to us, infinitely interesting events, he has seen fit to conceal from us the exact time when they shall happen, that we may be always expecting and preparing for them. And therefore, the subsequent exhortation as much concerns every one of us, as it could possibly concern those to whom it was first given.82

## Application of the Text

Throughout Mark 13, Jesus addresses issues connected with the end times, and from other passages we understand that the 'end times' or 'last days' started in the times of the disciples, with Christ's death, burial, Resurrection, and Ascension and will continue until His Second Coming to set up His earthly kingdom. Indeed, in its broadest context it also encompasses His millennial rule and that future day when God will make a new heaven and a new earth to usher in the ages to come.

Some people use this passage to deny the deity of Christ because God the 'Father' alone 'knows' the 'day' and the 'hour' of the Son's return. However, Christ's apparent

'ignorance' here, during His incarnation, is because the Lord Jesus only says what the

Father tells Him to say and He only does what the Father instructs Him. Although Christ was fully God, during His life on earth, He lived His life as fully man - demonstrating to believers how they should live their lives in total dependence on Him.

This does not lessen His omniscience as the eternal God, for Jesus is the Son of the Father. He is the Second Person of the Trinity. All authority in heaven above and on the earth below is His, but in His humanity, He only informed His disciples what He was permitted to tell them by His Father in heaven, and the blasphemy of denying the deity of the eternal Son must be vigorously refuted.

## Summary

Mark 13:32 relates with the words Jesus spoke concerning His second coming and that no one knows including Him except the Father. Many people and believers deny the divinity of Jesus. However, Christ's apparent 'ignorance' here, during His incarnation, is because the Lord Jesus only says what the Father tells Him to say and He only does what the Father instructs Him. Although Christ was fully God, during His life on earth, He lived His life as fully man - demonstrating to believers how they should live their lives in total dependence on Him.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

## Summary

Chapter one of this study contains the background of the study. In this chapter, there is the introduction and the background to the statement of the problem, whereby scholarly opinions are presented with divergent views on the meaning of the phrase “to renew them to repentance.” This chapter further states the significance of the study, scope, as well as the methodology followed in the study.

In chapter two, there is the belief that Jesus is not Divine. While there are many examples of these systems that could be discussed at length—including Adoptionism, Apollinarianism, Nestorianism, Psilanthropism, Socinianism, Subordinationism, the next major rejection of Christ’s full divinity is Unitarianism, or Monarchianism. Several groups of professing Christians subscribe to this, going back to Socinianism, and, most notably today in the Jehovah’s Witnesses tradition. The idea here is that Jesus, when He became incarnate, emptied Himself of his divinity in terms of self-retraction, divestment of powers, or a shedding of absolute qualities. This theory lurks with danger if it concludes that the incarnate second person of the Trinity forfeited or lost any mixture of His divine attributes when He took on humanity. There is an apparent contradiction in claiming that a man who does not have all of the attributes of God is still fully God. But most kenotic theorists try to say that Jesus was still fully and unequivocally God the Son, and this is where the theory becomes very complex. This leads the Kenotic theorists to conclude that it is simply a mystery.

Besides, others hold the belief that Jesus Divine. Throughout many generations of [[44]](#footnote-44)

Biblical studies, many have pointed to Mark 13:32 to claim that Jesus did not know the future, and therefore was not divine. And even if was divine, that divinity was bound by His humanity. These views surely find resonance among Arians, Unitarians, and kenotic theorists. But it is true of others as well, even if it be in other ways. One may take Athanasius for example.

In chapter three, the book of Mark was written by Mark, and the title indicates that it was written to a Jews. The book probably written while Mark in late 64 A.D. Besides, the book of mark carries a number of themes such as the Jesus as the son of man, Jesus as

God, and suffering. Also in this chapter, an exegetical analysis of the phrase “nor the son” in the book of Mark 13:32 was conducted. Mark 13:32 relates with the words Jesus spoke concerning His second coming and that no one knows including Him except the Father.

Many people and believers deny the divinity of Jesus. However, Christ's apparent 'ignorance' here, during His incarnation, is because the Lord Jesus only says what the Father tells Him to say and He only does what the Father instructs Him. Although Christ was fully God, during His life on earth, He lived His life as fully man - demonstrating to believers how they should live their lives in total dependence on Him.

In chapter four, Mark 13:32 relates with the words Jesus spoke concerning His second coming and that no one knows including Him except the Father. Many people and believers deny the divinity of Jesus. However, Christ's apparent 'ignorance' here, during

His incarnation, is because the Lord Jesus only says what the Father tells Him to say and He only does what the Father instructs Him. Although Christ was fully God, during His life on earth, He lived His life as fully man - demonstrating to believers how they should live their lives in total dependence on Him.

## Conclusion

Throughout Mark 13, Jesus addresses issues connected with the end times, and from other passages we understand that the 'end times' or 'last days' started in the times of the disciples, with Christ's death, burial, resurrection, and ascension and will continue until His Second Coming to set up His earthly kingdom.

Therefore, the phrase “neither the son…. knows” relates with the words Jesus spoke concerning His second coming and that no one knows including Him except the Father.

Many people and believers deny the divinity of Jesus. However, Christ's apparent 'ignorance' here, during His incarnation, is because the Lord Jesus only says what the Father tells Him to say and He only does what the Father instructs Him. Although Christ was fully God, during His life on earth, He lived His life as fully man - demonstrating to believers how they should live their lives in total dependence on Him

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