

Theology on the Web.org.uk

Making Biblical Scholarship Accessible

This document was supplied for free educational purposes. Unless it is in the public domain, it may not be sold for profit or hosted on a webserver without the permission of the copyright holder.

If you find it of help to you and would like to support the ministry of Theology on the Web, please consider using the links below:



Buy me a coffee

<https://www.buymeacoffee.com/theology>



PATREON

<https://patreon.com/theologyontheweb>

[PayPal](#)

<https://paypal.me/robbradshaw>

A table of contents for *Journal of Biblical Literature* can be found here:

https://biblicalstudies.org.uk/articles_jbl-01.php

IS THE TRANSFIGURATION (MARK 9:2-8) A MISPLACED RESURRECTION-ACCOUNT?

ROBERT H. STEIN

BETHEL COLLEGE, ST. PAUL, MINNESOTA 55112

SINCE the turn of the century¹ the thesis that the transfiguration was originally a resurrection-account has gained a number of adherents.² Some scholars have gone so far as to claim that this is now the majority view today,³ and others state dogmatically that the burden of proof lies upon those who deny this thesis.⁴ In several recent works on Mark the thesis that Mark has purposely transferred the story of the transfiguration, which was originally a pre-Markan resurrection account, into the lifetime of the historical Jesus forms the basis for a particular view of why Mark wrote his gospel. T. J. Weeden,⁵ for instance, argues that the pre-Markan version of the

¹ According to H. Baltensweiler (*Die Verklärung Jesu* [Zürich: Zwingli, 1959] 91) the first to espouse this view was J. Wellhausen, *Das Evangelium Marci* (Berlin: G. Reimer, 1909) 71. J. Blinzler (*Die neutestamentlichen Berichte über die Verklärung Jesu* [Münster: Aschendorff, 1937] 116 n. 90) and W. Schmithals ("Der Markusschluss, die Verklärungsgeschichte und die Aussendung der Zwölf," *ZTK* 69 [1972] 384 n. 11) have pointed out that G. Volkmar had earlier suggested this.

² Besides G. Volkmar and J. Wellhausen, J. Blinzler (*Die neutestamentlichen Berichte*, 116 n. 90 and 120) lists as advocates of this view: H. von Soden, B. W. Bacon, P. Wendland, G. Wohlenberg, H. Stocks, and J. Kreyenbühl. W. Schmithals ("Der Markusschluss," 384 n. 13) adds the following: R. Bultmann, W. Bousset, E. Klostermann, G. Bertram, K. G. Goetz, M. Goguel, M. S. Enslin, O. J. F. Seitz, C. E. Carlston, P. Vielhauer, H. Koester, and J. M. Robinson. In addition to these we can also add: A. Loisy, *Les évangiles synoptiques* (Haute-Marne: Ceffonds, 1908), 2. 39-40; G. A. van den Bergh van Eysinga, *Indische Einflüsse auf evangelische Erzählungen* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1909) 73; C. G. Montefiore, *The Synoptic Gospels* (London: Macmillan, 1927), 1.204; E. Käsemann, "Wunder im NT," *RGG* 6 (1962) 1835; H. D. Betz, "Jesus as Divine Man," *Jesus and the Historian: Written in Honor of Ernest Cadman Colwell* (ed. F. T. Trotter; Philadelphia: Westminster, 1968) 120; T. J. Weeden, *Mark—Traditions in Conflict* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1971) 118-26; F. W. Beare, "Concerning Jesus of Nazareth," *New Testament Issues* (New York: Harper & Row, 1970) 59; F. R. McCurley, "'And after Six Days' (Mark 9:2): A Semitic Literary Device," *JBL* 93 (1971) 79; W. Schmithals, "Der Markusschluss," 385 and 394; and perhaps M. J. Thrall, "Elijah and Moses in Mark's Account of the Transfiguration," *NTS* 16 (1969-70) 305-17, esp. p. 310.

³ E. Klostermann (*Das Markusevangelium* [Tübingen: Mohr, 1950] 86) states: "Die meisten modernen Erklärer nahmen. . . mit Recht an, dass es sich eigentlich um eine Auferstehungsgeschichte handelt." J. Blinzler (*Die neutestamentlichen Berichte*, 118) rightly criticizes him for this statement.

⁴ C. E. Carlston ("Transfiguration and Resurrection," *JBL* 80 [1961] 235) states: "In short, the 'misplaced resurrection account' can be disproved as the correct explanation of the Transfiguration only if objections to the more primitive form — appearance directly from heaven — can be shown to be insuperable."

⁵ *Traditions*, 123-34; also cf. F. R. McCurley, "'And after Six Days,'" 79 and W. Schmithals, "Der Markusschluss," 385.

transfiguration-account was originally a resurrection-account which belonged to the *theios anēr* tradition of Mark's opponents and that this account was the cornerstone of their christological position. Mark, by pre-dating the transfiguration in the ministry of Jesus and making it a prefigurement of the parousia, has shifted the time of the exaltation from the time of the resurrection (and thus the present time of the church) to the time of the parousia.

The purpose of this article is to investigate critically the arguments which have been set forth in support of the theory that the transfiguration was originally a resurrection-account and to posit some arguments in favor of the view that in the pre-Marcian tradition the transfiguration referred to an event within the lifetime of the historical Jesus. In particular, we shall seek to establish that Mark did not transform a resurrection-account into our present account of the transfiguration.

I. The Transfiguration—A Pre-Marcian Resurrection-Account

Numerous arguments have been posited in favor of the view that prior to Mark the transfiguration originally existed as a resurrection-story. For the sake of convenience we shall group these arguments broadly under the following headings: (a) Terminological Considerations; (b) Form-critical Considerations; (c) Redactional Considerations; (d) Historical Considerations; (e) Parallels to the Synoptic Account of the Transfiguration; (f) A priori Assumptions.

(a) *Terminological Considerations.* Several arguments have been raised to the effect that certain terms contained in the transfiguration-account are best explained if the account originally referred to a resurrection-appearance. The use of the term *ōphthē* ("there appeared") in Mark 9:4 indicates to some that this account was originally a resurrection-account, for this term is "used almost as a technical word in the description of resurrection appearances."⁶ This argument can be quickly dismissed, however, for *ōphthē* is not used in the account to describe Jesus at all. It is not Jesus who *ōphthē*, but Elijah with Moses! On the other hand, if we claim that originally *ōphthē* referred to Jesus in the pericope and that Mark by his redaction modified the tradition so that its original sense was lost, we encounter two problems. First of all, we encounter the difficulty that the term occurs too late in the pericope to refer to an appearance of the risen Lord, for Jesus has been present all along and has already been transfigured. Mark would not only have had to change the subject of *ōphthē* but also the location of the term. Furthermore, we no longer can claim then that *ōphthē* is a *terminus technicus* for the resurrection in the mind of Mark. This would create a great problem for Weeden's thesis, for elsewhere he argues strongly that Mark's careful use of *opsesthe* ("you will see") in Mark 16:7, which is a Marcian insertion, implies that he has the

⁶ Weeden, *Traditions*, 119.

parousia in mind for if he had meant the resurrection he would have used *ōphthē*.⁷

It has also been argued that the presence of a cloud in the account would be more appropriate in a resurrection-context, for the cloud is an appropriate vehicle for ascension.⁸ Acts 1:9 and Rev 11:12 are given as examples. Yet are we to assume from Acts 1:9 that *nephelē* ("cloud") is a kind of *terminus technicus* for the resurrection-ascension of Jesus? In the transfiguration it must be noted that the cloud comes upon *autois* ("them"), not Jesus alone. The *autois* must refer here to Jesus, Elijah, and Moses, or to all present.⁹ It is not an ascension-cloud at all, for when it disappears Jesus remains behind whereas Elijah (cf. 2 Kgs 2:1-2) and Moses have ascended. Actually, the presence of the cloud in the account does not refer to Jesus or the glory of Jesus but is a sign for the presence of God.¹⁰ The presence of the cloud, moreover, cannot refer to the parousia, since the term occurs in the singular, not the plural,¹¹ and whereas the Son of Man at the parousia comes with the *clouds* of heaven, in this account the *cloud* goes away and the Son of Man remains.¹² The presence of the cloud in the transfiguration-account is, therefore, not to be associated with either the ascension or the parousia but most probably with the presence of God.¹³ Its presence in the account in no way proves that originally the account stood as a resurrection-story.

The reference to a high mountain in this account is also seen by some as an indication that the transfiguration was originally a resurrection-account. R. Bultmann has suggested that the mountain in the account is essentially the same mountain referred to in Matt 28:16,¹⁴ and C. E. Carlston argues that in only two other instances in the NT do we find mention of a *oros hypsēlon* ("high mountain"), and in both of these (Matt 4:8 and Rev 21:10) the place designated is a place of "epiphany and supernatural encounter."¹⁵ Does an "epiphany and supernatural encounter," however, require that the incident in question be a resurrection? Certainly not, for neither Matt 4:8 nor Rev 21:10

⁷ *Ibid.*, 111-12.

⁸ *Ibid.*, 120.

⁹ The *autois* ("them") in Luke 9:34 seems to indicate this.

¹⁰ So M. Horstmann, *Studien zur markinischen Christologie* (Münster: Aschendorff, 1969) 99 and H. Baltensweiler, *Verklärung*, 85 n. 87.

¹¹ M. Horstmann, *Studien*, 99. The Son of Man is usually portrayed as coming on the *clouds* of heaven. See Matt 24:30; 26:64; Mark 13:26; 14:62; 1 Thes 4:17; Rev 1:17. Luke 21:27 is the only exception.

¹² The author does not wish to enter at this time into the question of whether Jesus spoke of the Son of Man or used this title of himself. He assumes only that before Mark was written the early church identified Jesus as the Son of Man.

¹³ H. Baltensweiler (*Verklärung*, 93) points out that the cloud serves "... bei der Himmelfahrt und bei der Parusie deutlich als Gefährt, in der Verklärungsgeschichte dagegen 'überschattet' sie die Gestalten."

¹⁴ *The History of the Synoptic Tradition* (New York: Harper & Row, 1963) 259. See H. Baltensweiler (*Verklärung*, 57-59) for the view that the "high mountain" in the account ties the transfiguration with the temptation-account.

¹⁵ C. E. Carlston, "Transfiguration," 237.

refers to a resurrection. As to the *oros* ("mountain") in this account, it is true that a mountain figures in one resurrection-account, but we also read of a mountain in Matt 5:1-2 and Mark 3:13-19 (cf. also Matt 14:23). The presence of a mountain or a high mountain, therefore, does not affect in any way whether an account was a resurrection- or non-resurrection-account.

Although the term *doxa* ("glory") does not appear as a descriptive term for Jesus in the Marcan and Matthean accounts (it does appear in Luke 9:32), it is evident that in these accounts we are dealing with a "glorified" Jesus. Yet the glory of Jesus present at the transfiguration is a glory frequently associated in the NT with the resurrected Lord (Acts 7:55; 9:3; 22:6,9,11; 26:13; 1 Cor 15:8,40; 1 Pet 1:11,21; Heb 2:9; 1 Tim 3:16).¹⁶ It is also pointed out that the glorification of clothes in apocalyptic literature is a distinctive characteristic of the exalted state of a heavenly being.¹⁷ As a result, it is argued, the transfiguration must originally have been a resurrection-pericope which spoke of the *doxa* of the risen Christ. Because of the importance of this point, we shall put off our discussion of this matter until later.¹⁸

Still another terminological consideration that has led some scholars into thinking that the transfiguration was originally a resurrection-story is the temporal designation with which the account begins. It is argued that the few explicit datings we find in the synoptic accounts very often have to do with the resurrection.¹⁹ Various views have been posited as to what the "after six days" refers.²⁰ Recently, F. R. McCurley has argued that "after six days" is a common Semitic literary pattern which dramatically prepares for the climactic event of the seventh day.²¹ Assuming that the temporal designation

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 235; cf. G. H. Boobyer (*St. Mark and the Transfiguration Story* [Edinburgh: Clark, 1942] 24-25) and M. E. Thrall ("Elijah and Moses," 310), who states: "The tradition which we know to be earlier than Mark, and with which we may legitimately conjecture that he was acquainted, implies that Jesus appeared to his followers after the Resurrection in precisely the state of glory in which he is pictured in the Transfiguration scene." As Boobyer himself points out, the risen Christ who appeared to Paul possessed a glorious heavenly body, and Paul regards his own experience as of the same order as those of Peter and James and all the apostles.

¹⁷ Cf. 1 Enoch 62:15-16; 2 Enoch 22:8; Rev 4:4; 7:9. J. M. Robinson ("On the *Gattung* of Mark [and John]," *Jesus and Man's Hope* [Pittsburgh: Pittsburgh Theological Seminary, 1970] 116) points out that "...in gnostic Gospels, cast normally in the framework of resurrection appearances, a luminous apparition comparable to the transfiguration is the rule."

¹⁸ See below, p. 88.

¹⁹ C. E. Carlston, "Transfiguration," 236; cf. also H. Baltensweiler, *Verklärung*, 92.

²⁰ C. E. Carlston ("Transfiguration," 236) lists the following: the six days of Moses on Mt. Sinai (Exod 24:16); the six days of the week leading up to the Sabbath; the six days between the Day of Atonement and the Feast of Tabernacles; the seven days of the Feast of Tabernacles; a hexaemeron of teaching such as found in John 1:19-2:11; and the traditional six-day interval between the first and second initiation in the mysteries.

²¹ "'And after Six Days,'" 67-81. The attempt by McCurley to transpose the temporal designation from the beginning of the account into the middle has no support from the text itself. Furthermore, it is unnecessary. If "the temporal phrase, 'and after six days' (Mark 9:2) is thus equivalent to the expression, 'and on the seventh day'" (81), and if this is a literary device which points to a climactic action on the seventh day, does not a transfiguration six days after the confession at Caesarea Philippi seem more climactic than an ascension after six days on a mountain?

is pre-Markan, he argues that originally this designation stood within the pericope and referred to a six-day period of waiting and preparation on the mountain after which the risen Lord experienced his ascension.²² That the temporal designation in Mark 9:2 is pre-Markan can be assumed²³ and that it is connected with some event in the pre-Markan tradition is evident, but McCurley's attempt to place the designation within the pericope finds no support in the text at all. Not only does it find no support in the text, but it is also opposed by the text. In contrast to McCurley's reconstruction of the text, does not the present connection of the transfiguration with the events at Caesarea Philippi found in Mark, Matthew, and Luke deserve a priori consideration? Certainly the transfiguration provides a perfect climax to the events at Caesarea Philippi. It must also be noted that there are several explicit datings in the synoptic accounts that have nothing to do with the resurrection,²⁴ so that the presence of a temporal designation does not require that the account must have been a resurrection account. Moreover, the reference to "after six days" would be most unusual for a resurrection-appearance since the temporal designations associated in the tradition with the resurrection are "after three days," "on the first day," and "during forty days."

(b) *Form-critical Considerations.* It has been argued by several scholars that the similarity between the transfiguration and various resurrection-accounts indicates that originally the transfiguration must have been a resurrection-account. Some of the similarities which have been mentioned are: both occur on the same day, the Sabbath;²⁵ the dress and glory of the angels in the resurrection-accounts are paralleled by Jesus' metamorphosis in the transfiguration account; the sonship of Jesus is mentioned in both and the divine sonship of Jesus is usually associated with the resurrection (cf. Acts 13:33; Rom 1:4);²⁶ and only in the transfiguration and the resurrection is a miracle performed on Jesus rather than by him.²⁷

Later in this article we shall see that a stronger case can be made for the dissimilarity of the transfiguration and the accounts of the resurrection-appearances,²⁸ but at this point we shall simply look critically at the alleged similarities. With regard to the day of the resurrection it is very difficult to conceive of anyone in the early church assuming that a resurrection-

²² *Ibid.*, 79, 81.

²³ R. Bultmann, *History*, 243; H. Baltensweiler, *Verklärung*, 46; M. Horstmann, *Studien*, 100; F. R. McCurley, "'And after Six Days,'" 81; K. L. Schmidt, *Der Rahmen der Geschichte Jesu* (Berlin: Trowitzsch, 1919) 222.

²⁴ Mark 1:32, 35; 11:12, 20; 14:1, 12; 15:1.

²⁵ Thrall's argument ("Elijah and Moses," 311) that "'after six days' implies 'on the seventh day,' and Mark takes pains to point out that it was on the Sabbath that the Resurrection itself took place" is beside the point. We are not interested here with any possible Marcan redaction, but with what the "after six days" would have meant in the pre-Markan tradition.

²⁶ *Ibid.* Thrall's article is somewhat confusing in that one is never sure as to what *Sitz im Leben* she is referring.

²⁷ C. E. Carlston, "Transfiguration," 234.

²⁸ See below, pp. 91-94.

appearance "after six days" would refer to a sabbath-day resurrection.²⁹ One need not be guilty of historicizing, if one asks the question, "Six days after what?" A resurrection-appearance "after six days" would have been dated, in the mind of the early church, from the crucifixion. This is evident from the parallel expression "after three days." "After six days," therefore, would not imply that Jesus rose on the Sabbath, but six days after the crucifixion. If the account referred to a sabbath-day resurrection, we would expect *meta tēn hektēn hēmeran* ("after the sixth day") rather than *meta hex hēmeras* ("after six days").

With regard to the similarity of dress between the angels at the resurrection and Jesus at the transfiguration, it must be noted that any such similarity is outweighed far more by the dissimilarity between the appearance of Jesus in the resurrection-accounts and in the transfiguration-account. As for the claim that Jesus' sonship is primarily associated with the resurrection, this is debatable. The gospel-tradition assumed that the historical Jesus was no less the Son of God than the risen Lord,³⁰ and it should be noted that at the baptism there is a divine voice affirming Jesus' sonship just as at the transfiguration. The final argument mentioned is that only in the transfiguration and the resurrection-accounts is a miracle worked on Jesus rather than by him. This is simply not true. Certainly the baptism-accounts portray a miracle being worked on Jesus before the resurrection and the similarities between the baptism and the transfiguration are far closer than those between the transfiguration and any resurrection-account.

(c) *Redactional Considerations.* A number of scholars have attempted on the basis of the Marcan redaction of this passage to demonstrate that the transfiguration and the events of Caesarea Philippi were not connected in the pre-Markan tradition and that the Marcan redaction indicates that originally the transfiguration was a resurrection-account. K. G. Goetz has argued that Mark 9:2-10 breaks the sequence of Mark 9:1 and 9:11-12.³¹ As a result, he claims that the transfiguration was not connected originally to Peter's confession. It is far from certain, however, that Mark 9:11-12 was originally connected with Mark 9:1. On the contrary, a good case could be made for assuming that the saying about Elijah (Mark 9:11-12) was originally connected to the transfiguration-account, in which Elijah plays so prominent a part. Yet even if Goetz's thesis is granted, it proves at most that the transfiguration-account was not connected to the events of Caesarea Philippi or Mark 9:11-12 in the pre-Markan tradition. It in no way follows that the transfiguration must therefore have been a resurrection-account in the pre-Markan tradition.

²⁹ So M. E. Thrall, "Elijah and Moses," 311.

³⁰ Cf. Mark 3:11; 5:7; 12:6; 13:32; 14:61-62; 15:39; Matt 2:15; 4:3, 6; 14:33; 16:16; 27:40, 43; Luke 1:35; 4:41. That much of the above is redactional is, of course, true. Nevertheless, it is evident that the early church associated divine sonship with the historical Jesus.

³¹ K. G. Goetz, *Petrus* (Leipzig: Hinrichs, 1927) 78; R. Bultmann, *History*, 124; E. Klostermann, *Das Markusevangelium*, 98; M. Horstmann, *Studien*, 72. For the view that Mark 9:11-13 fits better with the transfiguration-account, see K. L. Schmidt, *Rahmen*, 226; V. Taylor, *The Gospel According to St. Mark* (London: Macmillan, 1959) 393-94.

It has also been argued that in Mark the transfiguration clearly serves the purpose of confirming Peter's confession and ratifying Jesus' prediction of his suffering and resurrection;³² and since the passion-sayings are primarily a Marcan redaction,³³ the arrangement of the transfiguration after Peter's confession and the passion-prediction serves Mark's purpose well. There is no denying that in its present position the transfiguration serves the Marcan redactional aim well. It would be most surprising if it did not. Yet this does not prove that before this these two accounts were not connected, and even if they were not connected, this does not prove that the transfiguration lay before Mark as a resurrection-account.

According to W. Schmithals Mark 9:9-10, which is clearly Marcan, indicates that Mark is explaining to his readers that the reason the transfiguration was known to them as a resurrection-account was due to the fact that the disciples were forbidden to talk about the incident until after the resurrection. Since the disciples faithfully kept Jesus' word on this matter, the account was subsequently misunderstood.³⁴ Schmithals' hypothesis is interesting and unique, but it labors under insurmountable objections. Can one take the Marcan secrecy-motif in Mark 9:9-10 and interpret it uniquely in this one instance, as Schmithals does? It must be remembered that this is not the only command to silence in Mark. Are we to assume that Mark 1:21-28, 32-34, 40-45; 3:7-12; 5:35-43; 7:31-37; 8:27-30, etc. are all to be understood as resurrection-accounts in the Marcan tradition because there is present in each a command to secrecy? A more important and basic objection, however, is the fact that this explanation is based upon too many unproven assumptions. For one it assumes that the transfiguration was a pre-Markan resurrection-account. Secondly, it assumes that Mark's readers knew it as such an account. Thirdly, it assumes that the secrecy motif would have been interpreted by his readers to mean "since this incident was not to be spoken of until after the resurrection, it was subsequently understood as a resurrection account"; and fourthly, it assumes that Mark believed that his readers who only knew of this account as a resurrection-account would immediately give up their understanding of the account and accept this new interpretation. Any one of these assumptions is doubtful, but to assume all four is most unlikely. Essentially, Schmithals' argument is not a proof of his assumption that the transfiguration was a pre-Markan resurrection account but an interpretation of what Mark was doing based upon that assumption.³⁵

Although a great deal has been written on the subject, there still does not exist any consensus on the extent of the Marcan redaction of the passage and thus of the pre-Markan form of the tradition. Many scholars are agreed that

³² C. E. Carlston, "Transfiguration," 240.

³³ J. Schreiber, "Die Christologie des Markusevangeliums," *ZTK* 58 (1961) 154-83.

³⁴ "Der Markusschluss," 394-95.

³⁵ This writer believes that an even better case could be made out, if one wanted, for assuming that Mark created the transfiguration-account and that Mark 9:9-10 is an attempt to explain why his readers had never heard of the story before.

vs. 6 is Marcan;³⁶ F. R. McCurley includes vs. 5;³⁷ and M. Horstmann includes the *akouete autou* ("listen to him") of vs. 7.³⁸ As to the original form of the account, various theories of partition have been proposed, but here too there has been no consensus.³⁹

(d) *Historical Considerations.* One argument presented by C. E. Carlston in favor of the transfiguration having been originally a resurrection-account is that if such an incident took place in the lifetime of Jesus the subsequent behavior of the disciples would be inexplicable. If Peter, James, and John were present at a "transfiguration," could they later have denied their Lord?⁴⁰ At this point we must remember, however, that our primary task is a limited one, i.e., to demonstrate that the transfiguration was not a pre-Markan resurrection-account which the evangelist transformed into an event in the ministry of Jesus. Whatever may be the value of Carlston's argument with regard to the first *Sitz im Leben* (the period of the historical Jesus), it possesses no value for the account in the second (the period of the early church). Certainly in the second *Sitz im Leben* the account could have made sense even as the account in Mark made sense to Matthew and Luke and to many readers after them. If Matthew-Mark-Luke could accept the transfiguration as an event in the life of Jesus, why should we imagine that the pre-Markan tradition could not? Furthermore, if for the sake of argument we assume the historicity of the account, would it have been impossible for Peter to deny his Lord after such an experience?

What concerns us in this paper, however, is the fact that whatever the historical difficulties and the kind of event, if any, that gave rise to the account, there is no reason why the form of the story in the second *Sitz im Leben* could not be substantially the same as the form in which we find it in Mark.

³⁶ R. Bultmann, *History*, 261; M. E. Thrall, "Elijah and Moses," 308; T. J. Weeden, *Traditions*, 121; M. Horstmann, *Studien*, 81; H. Baltensweiler, *Verklärung*, 31; F. R. McCurley, "And after Six Days," 77; F. Hahn, *The Titles of Jesus in Christology* (New York: World, 1969) 300.

³⁷ "And after Six Days," 77.

³⁸ *Studien*, 89.

³⁹ E. Lohmeyer ("Die Verklärung Jesu nach dem Markus-Evangelium," *ZNW* 21 [1922] 186-215) argued that vs. 2 fin., 3 and 6 are secondary, but later (*Das Evangelium des Markus* [Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1937] 174 n. 7) changed his opinion in favor of the unity of the account. H.-P. Müller ("Die Verklärung Jesu," *ZNW* 51 [1960] 57) argues that the present account consists of two stories: vs. 2c-6 + 8 and vs. 2a-b + 7 + (9). Horstmann's conclusion (*Studien*, 80) seems a reasonable minimum: "Die vorliegende Perikope gliedert sich in drei Teile: 1. Verklärung Jesu auf dem Berg und die Erscheinung von Elias und Moses, 2. Vorschlag des Petrus, Hütten zu bauen, 3. Wolke und Wolkenstimme. Dadurch, dass die Wolkenstimme einerseits die notwendige Korrektur des Petrus darstellt und andererseits deutend zurückgreift auf das Verklärungsgeschehen, ist eine Geschlossenheit der Erzählung gegeben."

⁴⁰ He states ("Transfiguration," 233) that ". . . fewer facts in the subsequent history of the disciples are more certain than Peter's denial and the 'cowardice' of all three disciples at the crucifixion; yet it seems *a priori* unlikely that such conduct would follow an experience of this kind, and it is *a posteriori* evident that doubt and fear were banished for these disciples by the Resurrection, not the Transfiguration."

(e) *Parallels to the Synoptic Accounts of the Transfiguration.* According to some scholars⁴¹ the account of the transfiguration in the Apocalypse of Peter, especially in the Ethiopic version, is not only independent of the synoptic accounts but more original despite its later date, and in this work the transfiguration is clearly a resurrection-ascension account. Two of the reasons given for the originality of the account in the Apocalypse of Peter are that the story is more of a unit in it than in the Synoptics and that at times it appears that only Peter is present. The first of these arguments is based upon a subjective judgment⁴² and, even if granted, would prove nothing. As for the second argument, we must remember that the account is found in the Apocalypse of *Peter*, and the reason for his prominence is self-evident. There are serious objections, however, to the view that the Apocalypse of Peter contains an independent and more original account of the transfiguration which portrayed the event as a resurrection-ascension account. The *terminus a quo* for the account is ca. A.D. 100 since the writer in ch. 3 has probably used 4 Ezra 5:33. If the parable of the fig tree in ch. 2 refers to Bar Cochba, then we must date the account ca. A.D. 135.⁴³ That the Apocalypse of Peter could witness to an independent, more authentic oral tradition than Mark, even though written between 35-70 years later, is hypothetically possible but not very likely. It would appear that any of the following possibilities would seem more probable: (1) the writer knew of and used one or more of the synoptic gospels and changed the account to suit his purpose; (2) the writer did not possess any written copy of the synoptic gospel(s) but knew of the tradition originating from them and knowingly/unknowingly changed them;⁴⁴ (3) the writer knew of an oral tradition which was corrupt and unknowingly used it. We should also note that the resurrection is not mentioned in the Apocalypse of Peter. The work begins with a scene from Mark 13 and its parallels, where Jesus is seated with his disciples on the Mount of Olives. The teaching found on his lips comes from the "historical Jesus"⁴⁵ rather than the risen Lord. After the account of the transfiguration in chs. 15 and 16, the seventeenth and final chapter speaks of an ascension. To assume that the writer knew of the transfiguration as a resurrection-account encounters the difficulty that no mention is made of the resurrection anywhere in the work.⁴⁶ Even if we grant that the whole scene of the Apocalypse of Peter must be a resurrection-appearance, since it ends with the ascension, we must acknowledge that the

⁴¹ E.g., K. G. Goetz, *Petrus*, 81-82.

⁴² E. P. Sanders (*The Tendencies of the Synoptic Tradition* [London/New York: Cambridge University, 1969] 272) summarizes his conclusions by saying "*dogmatic statements that a certain characteristic proves a certain passage to be earlier than another are never justified*" (italics his).

⁴³ E. Hennecke, *New Testament Apocrypha* (ed. W. Schneemelcher; tr. and ed. R. McL. Wilson; Philadelphia: Westminster, 1965), 2. 664.

⁴⁴ So R. Bultmann, *History*, 259 n. 2.

⁴⁵ Much of ch. 1 comes from Matthew 24 and ch. 2 from Luke 13.

⁴⁶ G. H. Boobyer (*St. Mark*, 14) states that ". . . to speak of it [the transfiguration] as a resurrection and ascension story as though they were one and the same thing is a mistake which obscures a significant point."

material incorporated into this "resurrection-appearance" comes from the ministry of the historical Jesus. If the sayings of chs. 1 and following have all been transformed from sayings of the historical Jesus to sayings of the risen Christ by the author of the Apocalypse of Peter, it is not unlikely that he has done the same with regard to the transfiguration-account.

It is frequently argued that in 2 Peter 1 we have an account which came to the writer independently of the Synoptics,⁴⁷ in which the transfiguration was likewise understood by him to be a resurrection-account.⁴⁸ The reason generally given for this view is that the expression "honor and glory" can only refer to the resurrection or exaltation. Although it can be debated whether the account in 2 Pet 1:16-18 is independent of the Synoptics, the basic issue narrows down to two questions: Can "honor and glory" refer only to a resurrection-appearance,⁴⁹ and does the account in 2 Peter necessitate our understanding it as a resurrection-account? It should be noted that these words are not in any way technical terms for the resurrection. On the contrary, *timē* ("honor") is never used in any resurrection-account⁵⁰ and *doxa* has closer associations with the parousia than with the resurrection.⁵¹ Mark, however, has no problem in associating "glory" with an event in the ministry of Jesus, for he introduces the transfiguration-account with a reference to seeing the kingdom come in "power,"⁵² and Luke expressly states that Moses and Elijah appeared "in glory" and that Peter and those with him saw "his glory," so that these two writers see no difficulty in attributing "glory" to an event in the ministry of Jesus. There is, therefore, no reason why *doxa* cannot refer to an event in the earthly life of Jesus, for Luke in his redaction explicitly does so. Furthermore, John 1:14 (cf. 1 Cor 2:8) also refers to the *doxa* of the earthly Jesus. To say that the reference to "honor and glory" in 2 Peter 1 requires that we understand this passage as referring to a resurrection-account is incorrect.

⁴⁷ W. Schmithals, "Der Markusschluss," 396; cf. J. Blinzler, *Die neutestamentlichen Berichte*, 72. In contrast see M. Horstmann, *Studien*, 88-89; K. H. Schelkle, *Die Petrusbriefe; Der Judasbrief* (Freiburg: Herder, 1961) 198 n. 3.

⁴⁸ G. Bertram, "Die Himmelfahrt Jesu vom Kreuz aus und der Glaube an seine Auferstehung," *Festgabe für Adolf Deissmann* (Tübingen: Mohr, 1927) 189-90; R. Bultmann, *History*, 259; J. M. Robinson, "Gattung," 117; T. J. Weeden, *Traditions*, 120-21; W. Schmithals, "Der Markusschluss," 395-97.

⁴⁹ Schmithals (Ibid., 396) seeks to argue that the receiving of "glory and honor" follows the voice from heaven (which occurred at the resurrection) and is prospective only. The difficulty with this is that all the participles in vss. 16-18 are aorists (*ontes* does not count since there is no aorist form) and it is best to see *genēthentes* ("became"), *labōn* ("received"), *enechtheisēs* ("borne"), and *enechtheisan* ("borne") as referring to the same event.

⁵⁰ In Heb 2:7, 9; 3:3 (cf. 1:8, 13; 4:14-16; 8:1; etc.); also in Rev 5:12 it is not the risen Christ in fellowship with his disciples who receives "honor" but the ascended Christ who sits at God's right hand.

⁵¹ G. H. Boobyer (*St. Mark*, 44) states: "There is no instance of *timē* standing alone with reference to Christ's resurrection or exaltation; and *doxa* is still less favorable for Bultmann's point—it has stronger parousia associations than uses in connection with the resurrection and exaltation." Cf. also M. E. Thrall, "Elijah and Moses," 309.

⁵² Cf. Mark 8:38, where the parallel is to see the Son of Man come in "glory" with his holy angels.

Yet even if 2 Pet 1:16-18 could be interpreted as a resurrection-account, can we say that the evidence is such that it must be? The answer to this question is clearly in the negative. Yet again, even assuming for the sake of argument that we have in 2 Pet 1:16-18 a resurrection-account, must we then assume that this stems from an early more authentic tradition than that found in the Synoptics? Again we must answer in the negative.⁵³

One additional argument against interpreting 2 Pet 1:16-18 as a reference to the resurrection has come to the attention of the author. It is clear from 2 Pet 2:19 and 3:15-16 that the opponents in this epistle claimed the support of the Apostle Paul and his teaching. Why does the author cite the transfiguration to emphasize the authority of Peter? If the transfiguration were a resurrection-account, the opponents could boast that Paul, too, had seen the risen Lord but since the transfiguration was not a resurrection-account they could not make such a claim and the superiority of the Petrine authority was consequently demonstrated. Within the epistle, therefore, 2 Pet 1:16-18 supports the position of the author best, if it refers to an event in the life of Jesus in which Paul did not share rather than to a resurrection-appearance.

(f) *A Priori Assumptions*. Two final arguments in favor of the thesis that the transfiguration is a misplaced resurrection-account need to be mentioned. The first is the argument that such an event does not harmonize with what we know about the earthly ministry of Jesus and of the naturalistic laws that govern all existence.⁵⁴ This argument, however, is irrelevant for the discussion. We must keep in mind that we are not concerned here with the question of the historicity of the account. During the second *Sitz im Leben* the transfiguration would have harmonized with what the early church "knew" of the earthly ministry of Jesus and of the "divine" laws that govern all existence. If because of naturalistic presuppositions one denies the historicity of the account, a *de novo* creation of the account or a "mythologizing" of an incident in the life of Jesus could have been placed as easily within the ministry of Jesus as elsewhere.

The second argument which is probably more subconscious than conscious is that it is easier to place the origin of such an event as the transfiguration under the appellation of "resurrection-appearance" because here we are dealing with *Geschichte* and not "history," and so in the minds of some it is easier somehow to explain the origin of the transfiguration-account out of this context than out of the ministry of Jesus.⁵⁵ Again, this argument misses the mark, for whereas we may see Jesus' ministry as "history" and his resurrection as *Geschichte* and thus feel more comfortable with placing an

⁵³ We should note carefully the switch from "I" to "we" in 2 Pet 1:16-18. Certainly the writer did not understand this tradition as referring to the resurrection-appearance to Peter.

⁵⁴ A. M. Ramsay (*The Glory of God and the Transfiguration of Christ* [London: Longmans, Green, 1949] 104-5) states: "In some of the expositions of this theory the strongest reason for it was simply an *a priori* feeling that an event of this sort is incongruous with the earthly ministry of Jesus." Cf. also C. E. Carlston, "Transfiguration," 234.

⁵⁵ Ibid.; cf. E. Haenchen, *Der Weg Jesu* (Berlin: Töpelmann, 1966) 310.

account like the transfiguration with the resurrection-tradition, the early church had no such difficulty. For the ministry of Jesus was messianic and *geschichtlich*.

Such arguments may cause an individual to deny the historicity of the event portrayed in the transfiguration-account, but they have no value in deciding whether Mark found the account as a resurrection-account or not. Furthermore, it has no value in deciding whether the original form of the account placed it within the ministry of Jesus or with the resurrection-appearances.

In concluding this analysis of the arguments that the transfiguration was originally a pre-Markan resurrection-account, one becomes impressed not so much by the force of the arguments marshalled in support of this thesis but by their weakness.⁵⁶ On the other hand, as one analyzes the arguments in favor of the traditional view, it will become even more surprising that so many scholars have espoused the view that originally the transfiguration was a pre-Markan resurrection-account.

II. The Transfiguration—A Pre-Markan Account of the Glorification of the Historical Jesus

In order to facilitate our summary of the arguments in favor of the "traditional" view, we shall organize our discussion under the following headings: (a) Terminological Considerations; (b) Form-critical Considerations; (c) Historical Considerations; (d) The Witness of Matthew and Luke.

(a) *Terminological Considerations.* If one seeks to understand the transfiguration as a misplaced resurrection-account, one encounters certain terms and phrases which appear incongruent with a resurrection-account. In vs. 5 Jesus is addressed as *rabbi* ("Rabbi"). Certainly the use of this term in the account is best explained in a non-resurrection context, for one would expect in a resurrection-context a term such as *kyrie*. Matthew and Luke had difficulties even in the present context and changed the term to *kyrie* ("Lord") and *epistata* ("Master") respectively. Any attempt to attribute the term *rabbi* or the verse to a Marcan redaction encounters the difficulty that *rabbi* is not a Marcan term, for it is found in only two other instances in Mark (Mark 11:21; 14:45; cf. 10:51). If the term is pre-Markan and integral to the account, it is most difficult to conceive of the account as a resurrection-appearance of the risen "Rabbi."⁵⁷

⁵⁶ H. Baltensweiler (*Verklärung*, 95) states: "Es zeigt sich also, dass die Theorie, die in der Verklärungsgeschichte eine später vorausdatierte Auferstehungsgeschichte oder eine Christophanie sehen will, in keiner Weise befriedigen kann. Es ist unbegreiflich, dass sie überhaupt so viele Anhänger und Vertreter finden konnte. Denn sie findet im Text keinen eindeutigen Anhaltspunkt; im Gegenteil, ihre Vertreter sind gezwungen, eindeutige Aussage umzubiegen oder gar einfach zu eliminieren. Es gibt in der Tat keine andere Hypothese, die so wenig geeignet ist, gerade die für die Verklärungsgeschichte typischen Züge zu erklären, als die Theorie einer ursprünglichen Auferstehungsgeschichte."

⁵⁷ So W. L. Lane, *Commentary on the Gospel of Mark* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1974) 316.

Another difficulty are the words *akouete autou* in vs. 7. If these words are integral to the account, this would argue against the account being a resurrection-scene, for what need is there for a voice from heaven telling the disciples to "hear the risen Lord." In fact, what need would there be of a voice at all?⁵⁸ The resurrection itself was sufficient to declare Jesus' sonship (cf. Rom 1:3-4). It is not surprising, therefore, that we do not read in any explicit resurrection-account of a voice from heaven,⁵⁹ but if there were such a voice one would expect something like "be witnesses" or "believe in him!"⁶⁰ It is possible, however, that this is a redactional addition to the account.⁶¹ The main argument for this is that the expression draws our attention to Mark 8:31-32, and the union of the transfiguration and Mark 8:31-32 is probably Marcan. Yet even if it be granted that *akouete autou* is Marcan, this would demonstrate only that Mark is emphasizing that the transfiguration should be interpreted in the light of the events of Caesarea Philippi. It does not demonstrate that the transfiguration was originally a pre-Markan resurrection-account; it does not even prove that the transfiguration was not originally connected to the Caesarea Philippi account.

(b) *Form-critical Considerations.* C. H. Dodd in an important article has argued that in form the transfiguration contrasts with the general type of resurrection-accounts in almost every particular. He then lists the following contrasts:⁶²

- (i) Whereas R [general type of post-resurrection narrative] invariably starts with the disciples 'orphaned' of the Lord and records a reunion, in T [the transfiguration] they are together throughout. If the Evangelists were making use of a form of tradition which began with a separation, it would have been easy enough to contrive a setting for it (cf. Jn. 6:15-16, Mk. 6:45).
- (ii) In R, a word of Jesus always has a significant place, either as greeting, or as reproach, or as command, or as any two or all three of these. In T, He is silent throughout.
- (iii) In T, a voice from heaven proclaims the status and dignity of Christ. There is no voice from heaven in R. Only in Rev. 1:10-11 is there a voice (apparently) from heaven, drawing the seer's attention to the vision which he is to see. In the accounts of the appearance to Paul the voice from heaven is that of Christ Himself.
- (iv) In T, Christ is accompanied by Moses and Elijah; in fact the 'appearance' (*ōphthē autois!*) is that of the two personages of antiquity and not of Christ Himself (who is there all alone). In R, Christ always appears alone (never accompanied, e.g., by the angels who figure as heralds of the resurrection).⁶³

⁵⁸ K. H. Schelkle (*Petrusbriefe*, 198 n. 3) states: "Eine Himmelstimme bei einer Auferstehungsvision wäre ganz singulär."

⁵⁹ E. Schweizer, *The Good News According to Mark* (Richmond: John Knox, 1970) 180; C. H. Dodd, "The Appearances of the Risen Christ: An Essay in Form-Criticism of the Gospels," *Studies in the Gospels* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1955) 25.

⁶⁰ Blinzler (*Die neutestamentlichen Berichte*, 125) points this out: "Die Himmelstimme V. 7 fordert: 'Hört ihn!' Wenn Jesus tatsächlich jetzt die Erde verlassen sollte, wären diese Worte doch ganz unpassend. Sinnvoll wäre vielleicht: 'Glaubt an ihn!' oder 'Hört auf das, was er euch gesagt hat!'" Cf. also H.-P. Müller, "Verklärung," 60.

⁶¹ M. Horstmann, *Studien*, 89.

⁶² "Appearances," 25; cf. also C. E. B. Cranfield, *The Gospel According to St. Mark* (London/New York: Cambridge University, 1963) 293.

⁶³ E. Schweizer (*Good News*, 180) and H. Baltensweiler (*Verklärung*, 94) also point out that no

(v) In T, Christ is seen by His disciples clothed in visible glory. This trait is conspicuously absent from R in the Gospels. Only in Rev. 1:16 is He described as 'shining like the sun in his power', and this, as we have seen, stands quite apart from the Gospel tradition. Its absence is perhaps the more remarkable because a dazzling light provides the visible form in which Christ appeared to Paul according to Acts; and since Paul himself includes his own experience in the list of appearances of the risen Lord, there may well have been a temptation to colour other forms of R accordingly. If so, the evangelists have resisted the temptation.⁶⁴

With regard to the latter point it can be argued that the risen Christ does possess certain supernatural features. He can vanish (Luke 24:31), appear mysteriously (Luke 24:36), and go through closed doors (John 20:19). He is even mistaken for someone else (Luke 24:13-14; John 20:11-12), *but* it must be pointed out that in such instances the risen Christ is always mistaken for another *man* (John 20:15; Luke 24:16)! There is, on the other hand, a sharp contrast between the appearance of the risen Christ and the angels. Carlston sees this point and argues that in the vision of Stephen (Acts 7:55), the conversion of Paul, and in the account in the Apocalypse of Peter the risen Christ appears in glory.⁶⁵ We have already discussed the latter account and need only point out that in chs. 1-14 there is every indication that the "risen" Christ possesses no glory. It is only in the story of the transfiguration that he possesses glory. As for the account of Stephen, the Christ who is seen in glory is the risen Christ who has already ascended to heaven (Acts 1:9-11) and stands at the right hand of God (Acts 7:55). Certainly, this is not a general type of resurrection-account. It should furthermore be noted that the *doxa* in Acts 7:55 is associated with God and not Jesus! The conversion of Paul is likewise not to be considered a general type of resurrection-account.⁶⁶ The fact remains that the "glory" of the transfigured Jesus is a strong argument against rather than for the view that the transfiguration is a misplaced resurrection-account.

Another strong argument in favor of the traditional view is the reference to the presence of Peter, James, and John at the transfiguration. No resurrection-story speaks of Jesus being with these three disciples, whereas on several occasions they are present with Jesus during his ministry (Mark 5:35-43; 14:32-42; cf. 1:16-20, 29; 13:3). It has been argued that originally the account spoke only of Peter.⁶⁷ Support for this is sought in the fact that Peter

Easter-story tells of any heavenly companions. Cf. also J. Schniewind, *Das Evangelium nach Markus* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1937) 116.

⁶⁴ See also E. Schweizer, *Good News*, 180 and H. Baltensweiler, *Verklärung* 93-94. The latter states: "In keinem Auferstehungsbericht erscheint Jesus in einem in überirdisches Weiss verwandelten Kleid oder in seiner Doxa. Der Auferstandene hat noch keine 'Herrlichkeit' (Joh 20, 17), nur die Erhöhte (1 Tim 3, 16). . . . Interessant ist, dass in der Emmausgeschichte der Auferstandene den beiden Jüngern darlegt, dass 'Christus dies leiden musste und dann in seiner 'Herrlichkeit' eingehen' (Lk 24, 26). Er selbst wird von den Jüngern gerade nicht an seiner Herrlichkeit, sondern am Brechen des Brotes erkannt (V. 35)."

⁶⁵ D. E. Carlston, "Transfiguration," 235.

⁶⁶ H. Baltensweiler (*Verklärung*, 93) points out that Acts 9:3 does not refer to the risen Christ but to the "light from heaven."

⁶⁷ K. G. Goetz, *Petrus*, 77; R. Bultmann, *History*, 260; H.-P. Müller, "Verklärung," 61. For the view that the presence of James and John is pre-Markan, see M. Horstmann (*Studien*, 83-85).

is the only one of the disciples who speaks and because the Apocalypse of Peter hints that Peter alone was present. Yet in Mark 14:32-42, although the three disciples were all present, Peter alone is singled out. As the spokesman of the disciples it is not illogical that he would speak on behalf of the three. As for the Apocalypse of Peter, it needs to be pointed out that in the account Jesus climbs the "holy" mountain with his *disciples*, and "we" could not look at their faces, "we" prayed, "we" saw, "we" marvelled, he showed "us," etc. It is true that Peter is the main character and is the speaker but what else would one expect in the Apocalypse of Peter? What is significant in the account is not that Peter is the spokesman but that other disciples are mentioned as being present during the transfiguration. It should also be noted in this regard that the writer of 2 Peter carefully changes from "I" in 2 Pet 1:12-15 to "we" in 2 Pet 1:16-18. Does this suggest that in the tradition available to him Peter was not alone in the account? In the Marcan account we should observe carefully the use of *autois* ("them"), *monous* ("by themselves"), *autōn* ("them")—vs. 2; *autois* ("to them")—vs. 4; *hēmas* ("us" or "we"), *poiēsōmen* ("let us make")—vs. 5; *ekphoboi gar egenonto* 'for they were exceedingly afraid')—vs. 6; *autois akouete* ("you listen")—vs. 7; *periblepsamenoi* ("they looking around"), *eidon* ("they saw"), *heautōn* ("them")—vs. 8. This tends to indicate that James and John were integral parts of the pre-Markan account. There does not appear to be, therefore, any exegetical ground for the view that originally the transfiguration-account spoke only of Peter. Such a conclusion is drawn from a priori considerations alone.

If the above is correct and the pericope originally referred to Peter-James-John, then we must acknowledge that the earliest list of resurrection-appearances,⁶⁸ found in 1 Cor 15:3-4, knows of no resurrection-appearance to Peter-James-John, and such an appearance almost certainly would not have remained unknown to Paul. Furthermore, we possess no known resurrection-account which refers to an appearance of the risen Christ to these three disciples. The presence of Peter-James-John in the transfiguration-account, therefore, argues strongly against the account having been originally a resurrection-account. After contrasting the transfiguration and the resurrection-accounts, Dodd concludes:

To set over against these points of difference I cannot find a single point of resemblance. If the theory of a displaced post-resurrection appearance is to be evoked for the understanding of this difficult *pericope*, it must be without any support from form-criticism, and indeed in the teeth of the presumption which formal analysis establishes.⁶⁹

⁶⁸ E. L. Bode (*The First Easter Morning* [Rome: Biblical Institute, 1970] 103) maintains that the tradition which Paul is quoting here may have been formulated by the end of the thirties.

⁶⁹ "Appearances," 25. Cf. also A. M. Ramsay (*The Glory of God*, 117-18), who states: "There is so little resemblance between the details of the Transfiguration and the circumstances of the Resurrection appearances that it is hard to see how any of the evangelists can have thought of the former as a preparation for the latter. If the transfigured Christ is akin to the description in the Epistles of the glorified state of Christ and the Christians, there is no real correspondence with the descriptions of His appearances to the apostles and the women."

Carlston, however, has argued that the uniqueness of the transfiguration-account makes it *sui generis* and that comparison with the resurrection-accounts is invalid.⁷⁰ This may or may not be true, but Dodd's analysis has clearly demonstrated that any comparison of the transfiguration and the resurrection-accounts indicates that they are more unlike than like each other! As a result, we can conclude that form-critical considerations do not support the view that the transfiguration is a misplaced resurrection-account but, if anything, argue against this view.

(c) *Historical Considerations*. At this point it may be profitable to look at some aspects of the account which are obstacles to believing that originally the transfiguration was a resurrection-account. The first involves the words of Peter in vs. 5 *poïēsōmen treis skēnas, soi mian kai Mōysei mian kai Eliā mian* ("let us make three booths, one for you and one for Moses and one for Elijah"). This statement is unexplainable if this were a resurrection-story, for placing the historical Jesus on the same level as Moses and Elijah is conceivable, but would any resurrection-story place the risen Lord on the same level as Moses and Elijah? Surely not! Bultmann and others have seen this difficulty and as a result argue that originally vs. 7 followed vs. 4.⁷¹ Yet it has already been pointed out that the term *rabbi* in vs. 5 argues in favor of this verse being pre-Markan. Furthermore, if vs. 6a and b or both are Marcan explanatory comments, this would also suggest that vs. 5 is pre-Markan, because such explanatory comments usually follow some statement in the tradition which the evangelist is seeking to explain rather than his own redaction.⁷²

A second historical problem in seeking to understand the account as a pre-Markan resurrection-story has to do with the transfiguration itself. There are indications that the risen Christ was awaiting transformation or glory (John 20:17; cf. also John 7:39; 12:16; 16:14; 17:1, 5; Acts 3:13; Heb 5:5), but this glorification was permanent whereas that of the transfiguration was temporary according to the present form of the story. This would mean that after the resurrection Jesus was glorified temporarily and then later permanently glorified, but whereas it is possible to understand Jesus being temporarily transfigured only to lose this glory, it is difficult to see how the tradition would do the same with the risen Christ. Of course, it can be argued that originally in the pre-Markan account the risen Christ did not lose this glory but immediately ascended into heaven.⁷³ All such reconstructions of the text, however, are based less on form-critical and historical grounds than upon a priori assumptions.⁷⁴

⁷⁰ He states ("Transfiguration," 234): "It is consequently not form-critical pedantry to insist that in function and type this story fits with other resurrection appearances."

⁷¹ R. Bultmann, *History*, 260-61.

⁷² Cf. Mark 1:16, 22; 2:15; 3:21; 5:8, 28, 42; 6:14, 18, 20, 31, 48, 52; 7:3; 10:22; 11:13, 18, 32; 14:2, 40, 56; 15:10; 16:8.

⁷³ Note here, however, that in the Luke 24:50-51 and Acts 1:9-11 accounts of the ascension the risen Christ does not ascend in glorified form.

⁷⁴ The only support for such a reconstruction is the form of the account in the Apocalypse of

(d) *The Witness of Matthew and Luke*. One point usually overlooked in the discussion is the agreement of Matthew and Luke with Mark in portraying the transfiguration-account as an event in the life of Jesus. Generally, such agreement is minimized by stating that since these gospels are interdependent we possess only the single witness of their Marcan source. Yet unless we were to assume that Matthew and Luke never knew of the transfiguration-account before they read it in Mark, we must see in their use of Mark corroborative testimony that they agree with Mark that the transfiguration is not a resurrection-account but a story about the historical Jesus.

On the other hand, there are certain agreements between Matthew and Luke which may indicate that they knew another tradition independent of Mark which they have incorporated into their accounts.⁷⁵ The unique contribution of the Lucan account (Luke 9:31-33a) has led some scholars to believe that Luke used a non-Markan tradition at this point.⁷⁶ If Matthew and/or Luke knew and used independent traditions to supplement their Marcan source, then their agreement with Mark is even more impressive testimony to the pre-Markan form of the story being an incident in the ministry of Jesus. In this regard it need only be pointed out that if the Lucan addition is an independent tradition which was connected to the transfiguration-account, the transfiguration could not have been a resurrection-account for the addition speaks of Jesus' exodus which he was about to fulfill in Jerusalem. On the other hand, if this addition was a loose piece of tradition which Luke attached to the account, this intensifies Luke's corroboration of Mark's account as an incident in the life of Jesus. If the addition is traditional, however, it is quite likely that it was associated with the transfiguration since nowhere else do Moses and Elijah ever appear to Jesus.

Peter. Yet the account in this work exhibits characteristics that argue for it being less original than the Marcan account. Note the following secondary characteristics: in ch. 15 the mount of transfiguration is referred to as the "holy mountain"; there is greater detail in the description of the two messengers (e.g., their hair looks like a rainbow); in ch. 16 Jesus is described as "God Jesus Christ"; Jesus is addressed as "Lord" rather than "Rabbi"; Peter asks where Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob are; they are shown a garden full of trees; there is a reference to the blessedness of the persecuted. G. H. Boobyer (*St. Mark*, 13-14), therefore, is certainly correct when he says, "Are not the removal of abruptness and explanations of details more often signs of the secondary nature of a piece of tradition—especially when they mean the expansion of a story in the direction of what is fanciful, as undoubtedly is the case with the Apocalypse of Peter version of this story?"

⁷⁵ Note the following Matthew-Luke agreements: *idou* ("behold," Matt 17:3 and Luke 9:30); the order Moses and Elijah (Matt 17:3 and Luke 9:30); the reference to the face of Jesus (Matt 17:2 and Luke 9:29); changing *rabbi* to *kyrie* ("Lord," Matt 17:5) and *epistata* ("Master," Luke 9:33); referring to Peter speaking (Matt 17:5 and Luke 9:34); *legousa* ("says," Matt 17:5 and Luke 9:35). See T. W. Manson, *The Teaching of Jesus* (London/New York: Cambridge University, 1935) 32, for the view that this account was also in Q. For the view that Matthew and Luke did not possess an additional source besides Mark, see B. H. Streeter, *The Four Gospels* (New York: Macmillan, 1925) 315-16.

⁷⁶ So V. Taylor, *Behind the Third Gospel* (Oxford: Oxford University, 1926) 89; J. Blinzler, *Die neutestamentlichen Berichte*, 42-44, 57-62. Cf. also R. H. Fuller (*The Foundations of New Testament Christology* [New York: Scribner, 1965] 172) who states: "The Lucan account of the transfiguration contains notable deviations from Mark, which are such as to suggest not merely editorial modification but the preservation of valuable independent tradition."

III. *Conclusion*

In light of the evidence presented above the present writer is surprised at the number of scholars who have advanced the view that the transfiguration account was originally a resurrection-story and the more recent view that it was Mark who out of redactional considerations changed it into its present form. The evidence in favor of the traditional view is weighty, indeed, and the criticism of the thesis of a misplaced resurrection-account by J. Blinzler, H. Baltensweiler, C. H. Dodd, and G. H. Boobyer have in the mind of this writer never been answered. The arguments presented in this article do not claim to be definitive, but it is hoped that they will appear to be sufficiently weighty so as to make scholars pause before they so quickly reject the traditional view.