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978-1-107-41481-5 - Jesus and the Forgiveness of Sins: An Aspect of his  
Prophetic Mission

Tobias Hägerland

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# 1

## INTRODUCTION

Two Gospel episodes portray Jesus of Nazareth as someone who forgives sins. All three synoptic Gospels relate how Jesus once told a paralyzed man in Capernaum that his sins were forgiven (Mark 2.5 par.). This occasion instigated a controversy, which culminated in Jesus' declaration that the Son of Man has authority to forgive sins on earth (Mark 2.10 par.). In addition, Luke's Gospel includes an episode in which Jesus tells a sinful woman that her sins are forgiven (Luke 7.47–8), which made the onlookers wonder who he might be, since he even forgives sins (7.49).

It is the aim of the present study to enquire how Jesus related forgiveness and its proclamation to his own person and mission. I will attempt to answer, within the necessary limits set by the nature of historical reconstruction generally and of Jesus research specifically, the following basic questions: is it plausible that the historical Jesus did claim to forgive sins in some manner that resembles the way in which this is narrated in the Gospels? If so, in what sense did he purport to forgive sins? What, if anything, does this tell us about who Jesus claimed to be and how he was perceived by his contemporaries?

### Previous studies and the present study

Relatively few monographs and articles have addressed these questions specifically, no doubt because, as just mentioned, this theme occurs only sparingly in the Gospels themselves and is not usually perceived as lying at the centre of Jesus' mission and message.<sup>1</sup> On the other hand, many scholarly portraits of the historical Jesus have touched briefly on the topic. To collect all these scattered comments and to list the view of each Jesus scholar on this question would transcend the limits of the

<sup>1</sup> See J. D. G. Dunn, *Jesus Remembered*, Christianity in the Making 1 (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2003), p. 788.

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study undertaken here; instead, the following review will be kept brief, concentrating on the major contributions.

Since discussion of the topic has taken many different paths and has occasionally even moved in conflicting directions, a chronological presentation would be difficult to grasp. I will therefore group the contributions into three categories: first of all, those who have denied all historical value in the Gospels' portrayals of how Jesus forgives sins; secondly, those who have affirmed the historicity of these portrayals more or less *in toto*; and, thirdly, those who have argued a middle position, having found both a historical core and later theological developments in the Gospel depictions. While acknowledging the progress already made in the study of Jesus and forgiveness since the mid-nineteenth century, this review will also point out some of the shortcomings of earlier contributions that warrant renewed investigation of the topic.

## Negative proposals

*Bruno Bauer, William Wrede and Rudolf Bultmann*

Bruno Bauer (1841–2) presented the first serious challenge to the historicity of Mark 2.1–12. Bauer thought that the episode contained a number of features that could not plausibly have taken place; for example, breaking up a roof of a house full of people would have been a far too dangerous activity.<sup>2</sup> Moreover, Jesus' knowledge of the thoughts of the scribes, which serves to introduce the topic of forgiveness, is a historical impossibility, and the offence taken by the scribes has been created by Mark for literary purposes. The forgiveness sayings (Mark 2.5, 10), Bauer argued, had originated as an expression of the belief of the primitive Church that Christ had a timeless authority to forgive sins. The community then created the surrounding episode about the paralytic as a miraculous demonstration of this authority.<sup>3</sup> In other words, Bauer thought that the Gospels had historicized what was from the beginning a theological conviction.

According to William Wrede's influential work on the messianic secret (1901), the Markan portrayal of the Son of Man, who forgives sins and who is lord of the Sabbath, reflects faith in Jesus as the Messiah – an

<sup>2</sup> B. Bauer, *Kritik der evangelischen Geschichte*, 2nd edn (Leipzig: Wigand, 1846), pp. 91–2. Earlier D. F. Strauss, *Das Leben Jesu, kritisch bearbeitet*, 4th edn, 2 vols. (Tübingen: Ossiander, 1840), vol. II, pp. 81–4, had used this to argue for the priority of Matthew's version.

<sup>3</sup> Bauer, *Kritik der evangelischen Geschichte*, pp. 91–3.

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identity which Jesus did not claim for himself.<sup>4</sup> Three years later (1904), Wrede became the first proponent of the form-critical division of Mark 2.1–12 into a healing episode (2.1–5a, 11–12) and a controversy passage crafted by the primitive Church to express its christology (2.5b–10).<sup>5</sup> Wrede's solution differed from that of Bauer, since he did not take the theological concerns of the inserted passage to invalidate the entire historicity of the pericope, but his assessment of the forgiveness theme in the episode was as clear as Bauer's: this notion did not stem from the historical Jesus.

Rudolf Bultmann's consistent form-critical approach (1921) both confirmed Wrede's division of the Markan episode into two distinct parts and lent support to the view that Jesus himself had not claimed to forgive sins. The forgiveness sayings did pass Bultmann's first criterion of historicity, as they did not betray any Hellenistic influence, but were declared inauthentic by his second criterion, since they seemed to serve the interests of the primitive Church too well.<sup>6</sup> For Bultmann, the concern of the community was in this case not christological, but ecclesiological. Mark 2.5b–10 had been inserted not to express belief in the divine authority of Jesus, but to legitimize the community's own practice of forgiving sins.<sup>7</sup> To this he added another observation, originally made by Heinrich Weinel, which seemed to confirm the negative verdict: corresponding forgiveness sayings were absent from the rest of the tradition, with the exception of Luke 7.48, which Bultmann argued had been secondarily derived from Mark.<sup>8</sup> Bultmann's conclusion is dependent on the methodological principle that the criteria of discontinuity and multiple attestation may also be applied negatively in order to refute the historicity of Gospel material.

*Peter Fiedler*

In *Jesus und die Sünder* (1976), Peter Fiedler offered the first extensive treatment of the present topic within the framework of a broader

<sup>4</sup> D. W. Wrede, *Das Messiasgeheimnis in den Evangelien: Zugleich ein Beitrag zum Verständnis des Markusevangelium* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1901), p. 222.

<sup>5</sup> W. Wrede, 'Zur Heilung des Gelähmten (Mc 2, 1ff.)', *ZNW* 5 (1904), 354–8.

<sup>6</sup> R. Bultmann, *Jesus*, 3rd edn (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1964), p. 13, spells out his criteria briefly.

<sup>7</sup> R. Bultmann, *Die Geschichte der synoptischen Tradition*, 10th edn (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1995), pp. 12–14.

<sup>8</sup> H. Weinel, *Biblische Theologie des Neuen Testaments: Die Religion Jesu und des Urchristentums*, 2nd edn (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1913), pp. 45, 220–2; Bultmann, *Die Geschichte der synoptischen Tradition*, p. 13.

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discussion of Jesus' attitude towards sinners. His investigation of the OT and early Jewish background discards the opinion that Israelite priests were recognized as having authority to forgive sins. Such authority was the prerogative of God. The forgiveness saying of Mark 2.10 and the public reaction of Luke 7.49 cannot, however, be taken to say anything less than that Jesus, as the Son of Man, did assume such authority for himself.<sup>9</sup>

According to Fiedler, the forgiveness episodes are unhistorical. Like Bultmann, he points out that the theme is sparsely, indeed singularly, attested, for Luke 7.48–9 is a redactional addition, which has been modelled on the Markan passage. Had Jesus actually offered forgiveness in this way, the notion should have left more and clearer imprints in the tradition. More probably, then, the primitive Church desired to secure a 'christologoumenon' in the life of the earthly Jesus. The occurrence of the self-designation 'Son of Man', which might not have been in use prior to the resurrection, points in the same direction.<sup>10</sup> In seeing christology, rather than ecclesiology, as the bottom line of the unhistorical forgiveness sayings, Fiedler sides with Bauer and Wrede.

Another objection to the historicity of these sayings is the causal connection between sin and illness presupposed by Mark. According to Fiedler, the notion of a link between sin and illness contradicts Jesus' stance as recalled in John 9.2 and Luke 13.1–5, and therefore cannot reflect an opinion taken by the historical Jesus.<sup>11</sup>

Fiedler's most decisive argument involves a discussion of the criteria of discontinuity and coherence. The lack of parallels in early Judaism, far from affirming the historicity of the saying in Mark 2.10, rather disproves it. Such a sacrilegious claim is incomprehensible in an early Jewish context and, accordingly, it cannot be ascribed to Jesus.<sup>12</sup> It is clear that Fiedler has moved the debate over Jesus and forgiveness into a mode of thinking that is now commonly associated with 'the third quest'.

Twenty years later (1996), Fiedler returned to the topic in an article on sin and forgiveness in the gospel tradition. Here he defends his earlier thesis, clarifying especially the argument pertaining to Mark's unrealistic portrayal of the scribes in the light of what is known about

<sup>9</sup> P. Fiedler, *Jesus und die Sünder*, BET 3 (Frankfurt: Peter Lang, 1976), pp. 104, 111.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 106–8, 111, 115–16. Fiedler appears to have received the impetus for speaking of a 'christologoumenon' from the more cautious suggestion of a possible 'theologoumenon' made in J. Michl, 'Sündenvergebung in Christus nach dem Glaube der frühen Kirche', *MThZ* 24 (1973), 25–35 (30–1).

<sup>11</sup> Fiedler, *Jesus und die Sünder*, p. 108.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 97–8, 112, 115, 275–6, 329 n. 376.

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first-century Judaism: the historical scribes would not have heard the divine passive ‘your sins are forgiven’ as a claim to any independent authority, and the charge of blasphemy does not comply with Mishnaic stipulations.<sup>13</sup> Fiedler’s most recent treatment of the topic (2004) brings his argument further up to date by taking into account the fragmentary *Prayer of Nabonidus* (4Q242).<sup>14</sup> Here Fiedler once more defends and elucidates a position that has remained unaltered for three decades: that the historical Jesus did not forgive sins.

## Affirmative proposals

*Responses to Bauer, Wrede and Bultmann*

Bauer’s attack on the historicity of Mark 2.1–12 remained largely unnoticed throughout the second half of the nineteenth century. Some scholars attempted to evade the disturbingly high christological implications of Mark 2.10 by suggesting that, retranslated into Aramaic, the expression ‘Son of Man’ was originally nothing more than a generic term for human beings.<sup>15</sup> Others, seeing that Jesus himself had not been immune to the mythical and apocalyptic thinking of his day, found it quite plausible that it was Jesus, and not the Church, who had formulated expressions of an elevated christology such as Mark 2.10. In this context Wilhelm Bousset (1892) argued that Jesus had proleptically claimed some of the privileges of the Son of Man that he was later going to become, one of which was the authority to forgive sins.<sup>16</sup>

Wrede’s and Bultmann’s arguments against the possibility that forgiveness sayings might have come from the historical Jesus were also questioned. Paul Wernle (1916) made an effort to turn the criterion

<sup>13</sup> P. Fiedler, ‘Sünde und Sündenvergebung in der Jesustradition’, in H. Frankemölle (ed.), *Sünde und Erlösung im Neuen Testament*, QD 161 (Freiburg: Herder, 1996), pp. 76–91 (pp. 86–7).

<sup>14</sup> P. Fiedler, ‘Gottes Vergebungsbereitschaft und Heilswille’, in L. Schenke et al. (eds.), *Jesus von Nazaret – Spuren und Konturen* (Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 2004), pp. 164–92 (pp. 164–5).

<sup>15</sup> A. Meyer, *Jesu Muttersprache: Das galiläische Aramäisch in seiner Bedeutung für die Erklärung der Reden Jesu und der Evangelien überhaupt* (Freiburg/Leipzig: Mohr Siebeck, 1896), p. 94; H. Lietzmann, *Der Menschensohn: Ein Beitrag zur neutestamentlichen Theologie* (Freiburg/Leipzig: Mohr Siebeck, 1896), pp. 81–5.

<sup>16</sup> W. Bousset, *Jesu Predigt in ihrem Gegensatz zum Judentum: Ein religionsgeschichtlicher Vergleich* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1892), pp. 110–11. Cf. the author’s subsequent reconsideration of Mark 2.10 as a secondary addition in W. Bousset, *Kyrios Christos: Geschichte des Christusglaubens von den Anfängen des Christentums bis Irenaeus*, 2nd edn (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1921), p. 40.

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of multiple attestation on its head, by arguing that the low frequency of sayings that imply Jesus' oneness with God – such as Mark 2.10 – should count as an indication that they are genuine.<sup>17</sup> Later on, Vincent Taylor (1953) accepted the form-critical division of Mark 2.1–12, but saw no reason to conclude that 2.5b–10 was unhistorical. The inserted pronouncement story was, according to Taylor, a historical account that had been merged with the surrounding healing episode in order to serve the urgent interests of the primitive community.<sup>18</sup> Against Wrede's general view of Jesus' ministry as non-messianic, British scholarship tended to claim that there was no trace of any pre-messianic stage in the gospel tradition, and that the amalgamation of the titles Messiah, Suffering Servant and Son of Man cannot be derived from primitive Christianity. As a follower of this scholarly tradition, C. H. Dodd (1970) argued that through offering the forgiveness of sins, Jesus both hinted at his messianic identity and ignited a controversy that was possibly called to mind during his trial.<sup>19</sup>

*Geza Vermes*

Jesus had been labelled a 'charismatic' already in 1934 by Rudolf Otto, whose idiosyncratic work placed the identity of Jesus as the Son of Man within the currents flowing from the Enochic Book of Parables. Otto had also suggested that the conjunction of healing and forgiveness in Mark 2.1–12 was typical of a charismatic person and historically plausible.<sup>20</sup> But it was Geza Vermes' scholarly work that definitely placed the conception of Jesus as charismatic figure firmly within the realities of first-century Galilean Judaism.

In *Jesus the Jew* (1973), Vermes pointed out that several of the christological titles found in the synoptic Gospels could be explained and properly understood in the context of charismatic Judaism.<sup>21</sup> One such title is 'Son of Man', which, according to Vermes, was a circumlocution for the speaker ('I') in first-century Aramaic.<sup>22</sup> Only in the gospel tradition was

<sup>17</sup> P. Wernle, *Jesus*, 2nd edn (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1916), pp. 317–19, 331–4.

<sup>18</sup> V. Taylor, *The Gospel according to St. Mark* (London: Macmillan, 1953), pp. 191–2.

<sup>19</sup> C. H. Dodd, *The Founder of Christianity* (New York: Collier, 1970), pp. 158–9.

<sup>20</sup> R. Otto, *Reich Gottes und Menschensohn: Ein religionsgeschichtlicher Versuch* (Munich: C. H. Beck, 1934), pp. 134–5.

<sup>21</sup> G. Vermes, *Jesus the Jew: A Historian's Reading of the Gospels*, 2nd edn (London: SCM, 1983).

<sup>22</sup> G. Vermes, 'Appendix E: The Use of *בן נשא* / *בן נש* in Jewish Aramaic', in M. Black (ed.), *An Aramaic Approach to the Gospels and Acts*, 3rd edn (Oxford: Clarendon, 1967), pp. 310–30.

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this idiomatic expression – now coloured by and reinterpreted through allusion to ‘the one like a son of man’ in Daniel 7 – understood christologically. Consequently, whenever a ‘Son of Man’ saying exhibits no traces of influence from Daniel, it can be held to stem from Jesus.<sup>23</sup> In Vermes’ opinion, this is indeed the case with Mark 2.10. Vermes juxtaposes the *Prayer of Nabonidus* with Mark 2.1–12: in the fragmentary episode from Qumran, exorcism, healing, and forgiveness appear to be closely interrelated. Vermes thinks that, in the same way as the unnamed Jew of the fragment, Jesus equated healing with forgiving, so that the claim to the authority to forgive sins was merely an assertion of his ability to heal the paralytic. The scribes were not accustomed to this kind of language and took it as Jesus infringing God’s own prerogative.<sup>24</sup>

Twenty years later, in *The Religion of Jesus the Jew* (1993), Vermes approaches Mark 2.1–12 somewhat differently. He now makes a distinction between the bestowal of forgiveness and the declaration that sins have been forgiven. He focuses on the passive voice of Mark 2.5, which indicates that Jesus thought that God was the agent of forgiveness.<sup>25</sup> While Vermes did not hesitate to equate healing with forgiveness in his earlier work, in his more recent writings he draws a sharper line between the two. His conclusion that Mark 2.1–12 is historically plausible, however, remains unchanged.

*Otfried Hofius, Otto Betz and Volker Hampel*

Since the 1980s a group of Tübingen-based scholars have paid attention to the topic of the forgiveness of sins in relation to Jesus’ self-understanding. This ‘Tübingen School’ defends the historical accuracy of the forgiveness sayings and assigns a messianic consciousness to the historical Jesus.

Otfried Hofius’ articles on the forgiveness sayings in Mark provide several observations that have a bearing on the historical question. In his first article (1983), Hofius examines the allegation that Jewish priests pronounced absolution in a ritual context. He concludes that there is no evidence that this was ever the case.<sup>26</sup> In a second study (1994), Hofius

<sup>23</sup> Vermes, *Jesus the Jew*, pp. 177–86.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 67–9, 180.

<sup>25</sup> G. Vermes, *The Religion of Jesus the Jew* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1993), p. 192. See also G. Vermes, *The Changing Faces of Jesus* (London: Allen Lane, 2000), p. 268; G. Vermes, *The Authentic Gospel of Jesus* (London: Allen Lane, 2003), pp. 40–2.

<sup>26</sup> O. Hofius, ‘Vergebungszuspruch und Vollmachtsfrage: Mk 2,1–12 und das Problem priesterlicher Absolution im antiken Judentum’, in H.-G. Geyer et al. (eds.), ‘Wenn nicht jetzt, wann dann?’, FS H.-J. Kraus (Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener, 1983), pp. 115–27.

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seeks to demonstrate that the saying at Mark 2.5b cannot be construed as a mere proclamation of forgiveness, but must be taken as a formula that purports to effect forgiveness in itself. Both the literary context and parallel expressions in Aramaic literature indicate that the implied agent of forgiveness is Jesus. Mark thus portrays Jesus as doing what only God could do, and Jesus does so as being God, present on earth. For Hofius, this would also be what the historical Jesus laid claim to.<sup>27</sup> In his most recent article on the topic, Hofius (2000) argues against Klaus Koch's proposal that the Messiah of *Targum Jonathan* to Isa 52.13–53.12 is portrayed as someone who forgives sins.<sup>28</sup>

Otto Betz (1984) finds the key to unlock Mark 2.1–12 in Psalm 103, 'Jesus' favourite psalm', where forgiveness and healing are paralleled as divine works (Ps 103.3). Wrede's form-critical division of the Markan passage destroys a corresponding parallelism in Jesus' act of forgiving and healing the paralytic, and the unity and historicity of the episode should be maintained.<sup>29</sup> A pupil of Betz, Volker Hampel also argues for the integrity and authenticity of Mark 2.1–12 in his monograph on the historical Jesus as the Son of Man (1990). According to Hampel, the theme of forgiveness cannot have been introduced by the Church, for primitive Christianity did not connect forgiveness and healing. Moreover, one cannot find a suitable *Sitz im Leben* for this passage. Bultmann's idea that Christians thus legitimized their own claims to authority is not convincing to Hampel, since forgiveness was thought to be possible only by virtue of Christ's expiatory death and resurrection. Neither could the passage have resulted from a wish to apply the characteristics of the risen Lord to the earthly Jesus. Had that been the case, the designation given to Jesus would have been 'Son of God' or 'Christ', but not 'Son of Man', Hampel argues. He concludes that, in his capacity as the Son of Man, destined to be the Messiah, Jesus laid claim to God's own authority and expressed an understanding of himself as God's representative on earth.<sup>30</sup>

<sup>27</sup> O. Hofius, 'Jesu Zuspruch der Sündenvergebung: Exegetische Erwägungen zu Mk 2,5b', in I. Baldermann et al. (eds.), *Sünde und Gericht*, JBT 9 (Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener, 1994), pp. 125–43.

<sup>28</sup> O. Hofius, 'Kennt der Targum zu Jes 53 einen sündenvergebenden Messias?', in O. Hofius, *Neutestamentliche Studien*, WUNT 132 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2000), pp. 70–107.

<sup>29</sup> O. Betz, 'Jesu Lieblingspsalm: Die Bedeutung von Psalm 103 für das Werk Jesu', *TBei* 15 (1984), 253–69.

<sup>30</sup> V. Hampel, *Menschensohn und historischer Jesus: Ein Rätselwort als Schlüssel zum messianischen Selbstverständnis Jesu* (Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener, 1990), pp. 189–99.



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*Chong-Hyon Sung*

The most extensive project so far that sets out to provide an answer to the question of whether Jesus forgave sins is Chong-Hyon Sung's *Vergebung der Sünden* (1993), an edited version of a doctoral thesis written under the auspices of Peter Stuhlmacher and Betz.<sup>31</sup> Sung has divided his book into three parts. The first part deals with the concept of forgiveness in the OT, while the second extends the investigation into intertestamental and rabbinic literature. Finally, the third part is devoted to Jesus' activity of forgiving sins according to the synoptic Gospels.

To establish Jesus' view on forgiveness, Sung not only explores those texts that have Jesus voicing explicit claims to the authority to forgive, but also – like Joachim Jeremias and others before him – provides evidence of Jesus' attitude towards sinners on a broader scale: Jesus' dining with sinners, his parables, the Lord's Prayer and so on. In addition, Sung pays attention to the sayings of Jesus that express an intention to suffer and to die in order to bring forgiveness. Sung concludes that the concept of forgiveness was central to Jesus' entire mission, that Jesus thought of himself as dying for the sins of people, and that the historical Jesus did forgive sins during his ministry.

Mediating proposals

*Martin Dibelius, William Manson and August Strobel*

While scholars such as Betz and Hampel completely reject the excision of Mark 2.5b–10 from 2.1–12, others have argued that the form-critical division of this pericope should be modified. The first to argue in favour of such a mediating proposal appears to have been Martin Dibelius (1919). Doubting Bultmann's hypothesized *Sitz im Leben* for the Markan episode, Dibelius suggested instead that the controversy in Mark 2.6–10 had grown out of the original forgiveness saying (2.5) in the context of primitive Christian preaching.<sup>32</sup> In effect, while Dibelius would not apply the term 'rhetoric' to the preaching of the primitive Church, he was the first

<sup>31</sup> C.-H. Sung, *Vergebung der Sünden: Jesu Praxis der Sündenvergebung nach den Synoptikern und ihre Voraussetzungen im Alten Testament und frühen Judentum*, WUNT 2:57 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1993).

<sup>32</sup> M. Dibelius, *Die Formgeschichte des Evangeliums*, 1st edn (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1919), pp. 34–5. Dibelius' critique of Bultmann was introduced in the 2nd edn (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1933), pp. 63–6.

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to claim that the narration of a controversy over forgiveness developed out of a brief saying of the historical Jesus, with an intent to persuade.

William Manson added two arguments in support of Dibelius' analysis (1943). Against the contention of Weinel and Bultmann that the rest of tradition was silent on Jesus' ministry of forgiveness, Manson claimed that the theme was implicitly present in the sayings that allow for the inclusion of tax collectors and harlots in the kingdom. Also, he argued that the forgiveness saying in 2.5b must also have been part of the original episode, or else the introduction of the forgiveness theme into a miracle story would be inexplicable. Hence, while regarding 2.10 as representing primitive Christian preaching, Manson insisted on the historicity of the saying in 2.5, which he held to be indicative of Jesus' messianic authority.<sup>33</sup>

August Strobel's study on sin and confession in Judaism and the NT (1968) includes a pondering of the theme of forgiveness as part of the ministry of the historical Jesus. While he agrees with Dibelius and Manson on the partition of Mark 2.1–12, Strobel differs from the vast majority of interpreters by regarding Luke 7.44–50 as a separate, pre-Lukan tradition, coherent with Mark 2.5 and confirming the historicity of Jesus' proclamation of forgiveness. While the primitive Church reinterpreted this proclamation as a declaration of forgiveness by Jesus' own authority, the historical Jesus intended to offer God's mercy and forgiveness, which he expressed by the divine passive.<sup>34</sup>

*Hans-Josef Klauck*

An article by Hans-Josef Klauck (1981) deals with the issue of forgiveness in Mark 2.1–12 par. from a number of perspectives. Klauck's treatment of the Jewish background includes a discussion of both *Targum Jonathan* and the *Prayer of Nabonidus*, neither of which Klauck views as evidence for human mediation of forgiveness in early Judaism. Like Manson, when it comes to the historical question, Klauck argues that Jesus' positive attitude towards sinners is multiply attested, and the saying in Mark 2.5 agrees well with this broader outlook on the part of Jesus. By contrast, the 'Son of Man' saying in 2.10 betrays post-resurrection theology and probably originated in the community. Klauck follows the tradition

<sup>33</sup> W. Manson, *Jesus the Messiah: The Synoptic Tradition of the Revelation of God in Christ, with Special Reference to Form-Criticism* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1943), pp. 40–2, 116.

<sup>34</sup> A. Strobel, *Erkenntnis und Bekenntnis der Sünde in neutestamentlicher Zeit*, AzT 1 37 (Stuttgart: Calwer, 1968), pp. 56–62.