

Preface

When there are so many major commentaries on the Gospel of Mark available in the market, what place is there for another? This question has been uppermost in my mind as I write this volume which the reader now have in his/her hands.

Without competing with these major commentaries, I have nonetheless utilized their research findings, and summarized them for an audience which may not have the time or expertise to pore through them. Moreover, I have kept in view the notion of a New Covenant Commentary Series. A new covenant presupposes a previous one, I have therefore sought assiduously to show how Mark is connected to the OT. Furthermore, the word covenant reminds me of a community, and hence, I have written this with a view to making Mark's message applicable to the challenges of being a Christian community in this complicated world. I have introduced as best as I can some Asian insights—I hope this has not been too obtrusive—believing that my social location may bring some benefits to a worldwide audience, for after all this may very well be the reason why the editors of the series approached me to contribute this volume.

I have kept in mind that my primary task is to explain Mark's message, not to show the prehistory of his sources, or attempt to justify his point of view (although I must add that at times resistance was futile). No attempt is made to treat completely or eruditely every issue connected with the interpretation of the Markan text. There are commentaries that have taken on this task, and there is no need to match their feat. Focusing on Mark's text also means I've given scant attention to historical issues or problems raised by parallel accounts in the other Gospels. My task is to explain Mark's tale, and not to assess whether it stands up to historical or synoptic scrutiny. Otherwise this commentary would have been twice as long.

As this is not a commentary on commentaries of Mark, certain issues that have taken much space in them are sometimes given scant notice, if I have judged that their resolution does not illuminate Mark's text. On the rare occasion I have struck out on my own, generating new issues and offering interpretations hitherto not found in other commentaries.