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**GREEK AND JEWISH HEROES :  
FOURTH MACCABEES AND THE GOSPEL OF MARK**

In recent years there has been much discussion of miracles in the Gospel of Mark and their alleged relation to a *theios aner* or hero Christology. So far as I know, however, New Testament specialists have paid little attention to the Fourth Book of Maccabees, although Moses Hadas and D.L. Tiede have mentioned aretalogical traits in that book<sup>1</sup>.

In this essay I wish to test several hypotheses. (1) 4 Maccabees has been called an aretalogy of "impure type<sup>2</sup>", but it actually belongs to a distinct type of aretalogy which is not a collection of miracles; at the same time, the immortal life of the martyrs has a miraculous element. (2) Mark can be considered an aretalogy of a mixed type in that Jesus is portrayed through epiphanies and miracles, but also has some of the traits of an ideal teacher and sage; the latter is given a special dimension through a theology of the Cross and of lowly service; and, finally, Mark contains an idea of Jesus' life after death that is usually expressed as his resurrection but at other times contains elements that suggest translation or assumption. These latter traits are found further developed in Luke. (3) All these, including the Crucifixion itself, constitute the glory of Jesus. In this respect there are analogies between Mark and 4 Maccabees, even though Mark does not very explicitly make the connection

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1. M. HADAS and M. SMITH, *Heroes and Gods* (New York, 1965) 87-97; D.L. TIEDE, *The Charismatic Figure as Miracle Worker* (Missoula, Mont., 1972) 57 f.

2. *Heroes and Gods*, 90: "In itself the story of Eleazar may be only an imperfect example of aretalogy, but it is an important monument in the history of the genre because on the one hand it is so palpably influenced by the image of Socrates and on the other it is so palpably a prototype for a long series of subsequent martyrdoms."

between the Cross and the other elements. It is more plausible to suppose that he holds these together as signs of glory than that he sets the miracles up in order to expose them as examples of a false Christology.

Ludwig Bieler's  $\Theta\text{EIO}\Sigma$  ANHP<sup>3</sup> is the starting point for all discussions of divine men. This collection of hero stories is very miscellaneous, and Hadas and Smith have made it clear that "aretalogy", as most scholars understand it, covers a wide range of accounts, usually with certain common features that can be summarized as follows: the hero is a human being, or at least begins as such; he manifests certain unusual, praeternatural or superhuman qualities, and does mighty deeds or miracles; usually he leads a life of signal ethical virtue and teaches wisdom; frequently he dies as a martyr and is deified or assumed into heaven. He does not become a hero, strictly speaking, until after his death<sup>4</sup>.

David L. Tiede has argued for a distinction between two types of divine men, one whose *arete* consists in the working of miracles and the other who is the ideal sage and teacher, who does not resort to the miraculous or at least is portrayed in such a way that the miraculous element is subsidiary<sup>5</sup>.

It is not surprising that most previous studies do not make a distinction between the two types, for in the early case of Pythagoras, images of the shaman, the divine philosopher, and the idealized statesman are already combined, and the traditions about Empedocles indicate that he professed to be both wonderworker and philosopher. When we come to a much later period, Apollonius of Tyana is presented in the double role. But much happened in the meantime. The later Pythagoreans divided sharply, some understanding Pythagoras as the miracle worker and others as the philosopher and scientist (Tiede, 15-20).

Thus there arose a clear distinction between two types. Socrates becomes the Greek ideal of the divine man, and Plato portrays him as the sage, whose rational and moral virtues constitute his godlike quality. The situation, however, is complex; Socrates had a *daimon*, he attended

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3. L. BIELER.  $\Theta\text{EIO}\Sigma$  ANHP (Vienna, 1935-36).

4. *Heroes and Gods*, 16: "For a true aretalogy we desiderate a subject who is, to be sure, human but who can make a claim to preternatural potency by miraculous works or by the circumstances surrounding his death."

5. TIEDE, 4-13, Cf. the criticisms of Otto BETZ. "The Concept of the So-called 'Divine Man' in Mark's Christology", in D.E. Aune ed., *Studies in N.T. and Early Christian Literature* (Leiden, 1972) 229-40.