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## A REDEPTIVE READING OF MARK 5:25-34

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Julie M. Smith

In what is surely one of the saddest tales in the Bible, Jephthah vows that if granted success in battle, he will sacrifice the first person to cross the threshold of his home upon his return. Tragically, it is his only child, a daughter, who hurries out to meet him (Judges 11:29-34). New Testament scholar Mary Ann Beavis shows that this harrowing text has many similarities to the story of Jairus and his daughter in the Gospel of Mark (5:21-24 and 35-43).<sup>1</sup> Mark's story, however, has a joyous outcome: Jairus intercedes for his daughter, and Jesus raises her from the dead. Beavis calls this a motif inversion,<sup>2</sup> meaning the text in Mark establishes similarities to Jephthah's story to encourage the audience to compare the events, only to reverse course and have the story end on a very different note. In other words, Mark suggests correspondences but then shows how, when the story plays out in Jesus' life, it has a dramatically dissimilar ending. Beavis also discusses another widely recognized example of motif inversion in Mark: in the story of the calming of the sea (Mark 4:35-41), there are many echoes of the story of Jonah (1-4). Jesus, like Jonah, is asleep in a boat and is awakened by questions when a terrifying storm threatens. But Jesus, of course, is no Jonah. The motif is inverted as Jesus, who initially parallels Jonah, takes on the role of God, and, being the only one who can, calms the storm.

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1 Similar to Jairus, Jephthah (a judge) is also a prominent religious leader. Both Jephthah and Jairus are distraught over the deaths of their daughters; both fathers are met with noise and chaos when they return home. But Jairus intercedes to reverse the death of his daughter while Jephthah's foolishness seals his daughter's fate. (Jairus, perhaps not coincidentally, shares the name of the judge who served immediately before Jephthah; this may explain the inclusion of his name in the account at a time when naming individuals involved with healing miracles was uncommon.)

2 Mary Ann Beavis, "The Resurrection of Jephthah's Daughter: Judges 11:34-40 and Mark 5:21-24, 35-42," *Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 72, no. 1 (January 2010): 46-62.

Expanding on Beavis's analysis, I propose that Mark's practice of motif inversion evinces a clear theological purpose: to show that Jesus is the one who literally "redeems" history, as biblical events are partially re-enacted in his ministry but end differently because of his presence and power. Thus the earlier narrative is redeemed in a most literal sense. This sets the pattern for Jesus' redeeming actions and his unique role as Redeemer. Mark shows how Jesus' life redeems the mistakes and errors of history: Jonah is now Jesus; Jephthah is now Jairus ("The Resurrection," 61).

In this essay, I will discuss another example of an inverted motif — or, as I prefer to call it, a redemptive reading — in this section of the Gospel of Mark.<sup>3</sup> I will show how the story of the woman with the hemorrhage of blood (Mark 5:25-34) redeems the story of the fall of Eve (Genesis 3) by paralleling and then inverting that text.<sup>4</sup>

There are two potential objections to reading Mark 5:25-34 as the symbolic redemption of the Fall; I will address both before proceeding. First, it is correct that the Fall is not a major concern of the Hebrew Bible, with no obvious references to it outside of the first few chapters of Genesis. But this does not imply that Mark had no interest in it. Rather, during the first century, there was renewed attention to this text: "Jewish literature from 200 BCE to 200 CE reflects an interest in Eve and Adam far beyond that found in the Hebrew Scriptures. . . . [These works] retell, expand, and comment on Genesis 1-5."<sup>5</sup> So reading Mark 5:25-34 as a commentary on Jesus' relationship to the Fall reflects then-current concerns, since it was written at a time of much interest in Genesis 3.<sup>6</sup>

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3 This every miracle in Mark 4:35-5:43 is a redemptive reading of a story from the Hebrew Bible: Mark 4:35-41 redeems Jonah; Mark 5:1-20 resonates with Exodus 14-15 as the destruction of the swine — likely the food supply for the Roman army — reenacts the drowning of Pharaoh's army; and Mark 5:21-43 echoes Genesis 2-3. Admittedly, the allusion to Exodus 14-15 in Mark 5:1-20 is more subtle, perhaps because of its Gentile setting.

4 There is a danger of "parallelomania" that needs to be kept in check when relationships between texts are suggested. Throughout, this paper seeks to show that the weight of evidence supports the suggested parallels; extensive shared vocabulary as well as shared themes will be examined. Parallels will be shown (1) to operate the same way in multiple stories since, in each case, the texts first parallel and then invert each other, and (2) to have consistent theological meaning as Jesus is shown to invert and then redeem history.

5 Kristen E. Kvam, Linda S. Schearing, and Valarie H. Ziegler, *Eve and Adam: Jewish, Christian and Muslim Readings on Genesis and Gender* (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1999), 41.

6 While it is impossible to know whether any of these texts related to the Fall were known to Jesus, to Mark, and/or to his audience, it is true that some themes from these writings are mirrored in Mark's account. For example, the Apocalypse of Moses relates the story of the Fall from the perspective of Eve and includes the Lord's telling Eve that the time will come when she will say, "Lord, Lord, save me." There is some thematic overlap with Mark's story in which the woman seeks healing from the Lord. See Kvam, *Eve and Adam*, 62.

So despite the lack of references to the Fall in the Hebrew Bible, the story was examined closely in the centuries around Jesus' lifetime and may well have been an interest of Mark. The second objection is this: since modern LDS interpretations of the Fall are generally positive and optimistic (especially concerning Eve's role<sup>7</sup>), there is no need for a "redemptive" reading in the first place. However, this positive view of Eve was certainly not common in the first century and so there is a need for a redemptive reading of the story in its own context. And the redemptive reading should still be of interest to LDS readers, since it shows Jesus in the role of Redeemer and has much to say about the meaning of the Fall, its consequences, and Jesus' relationship to it.

### **The Story of the Hemorrhaging Woman Re-Enacts and Redeems the Fall**

With those objections addressed, I now turn to the stories themselves. Mark's account of the woman with the hemorrhage has extensive verbal parallels to the story of the Fall: the texts share nearly a dozen terms,<sup>8</sup> and the same concepts, if not the same words, are found in many other instances.<sup>9</sup> But more significant than the shared vocabulary are the thematic associations. Because menstruation was regarded as one of the results of Eve's sin<sup>10</sup> and was linked with sin in general (Lamentations 1:17 and Ezekiel 36:17-18),<sup>11</sup> the hemorrhaging woman is associated with Eve. More broadly, the woman's condition of ceaseless menstrual hemorrhaging is a magnification of the normal female condition. These associations make the hemorrhaging woman the ideal narrative re-creation of Eve in her fallen state.

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7 See, e.g., Dallin H. Oaks, "The Great Plan of Happiness," *Ensign*, November 1993, noting especially the sources that he cites in the fifteenth paragraph.

8 Shared vocabulary between Mark 5 and the Greek translation (the Septuagint, or LXX) of Genesis 3 includes the words "woman" (Genesis 3:1 and Mark 5:25), "all" (Genesis 3:1 [κῑν: "any"] and Mark 5:26), "heard" (Genesis 3:8 and Mark 5:27), "knowing" (Genesis 3:5 and Mark 5:29 [κῑν: "felt"]), "touch" (Genesis 3:3 and Mark 5:28, 30, and 31), "see" (Genesis 3:6 and Mark 5:32), "done" (Genesis 3:13 and Mark 5:32), "fear" (Genesis 3:10 and Mark 5:33), "happen" (Genesis 3:22 [κῑν: "become"] and Mark 5:33), and "told" (Genesis 3:13 and Mark 5:33).

9 Both passages refer to clothing (see Genesis 3:21 and Mark 5:28), hiding (see Genesis 3:10 and Mark 5:31 [implied]), walking (see Genesis 3:8 and Mark 5:24), becoming aware (see Genesis 3:7 and Mark 5:29), seeing/looking (see Genesis 3:6 and Mark 5:32), and children/daughters (see Genesis 3:15-16 and Mark 5:34).

10 See Joel Marcus, *Mark 1-8* (New York: Doubleday, 2002), 358.

11 The purity laws in Leviticus 15 and 18 teach that a menstruating woman is impure and that impurity extends to anything that she touches; while there is a distinction between sin and impurity, the lines often blurred.

The plot of Mark's story tracks the plot of the Fall closely. In both, the thought process behind the woman's decision-making is narrated (Genesis 3:6 and Mark 5:28); the audience knows what each woman is thinking as she takes the initiative to act in a difficult situation. This is unusual for any biblical text and even more so for a female character. Further, both stories feature a transgressive touch: Eve is commanded not to touch the fruit (Genesis 3:3),<sup>12</sup> and the hemorrhaging woman must not touch Jesus.<sup>13</sup> And just as Eve's touch leads ultimately to death, the hemorrhaging woman's touch causes a delay during which time Jairus's daughter dies (Mark 5:35). In Mark, many people are touching Jesus, but the touch of the bleeding woman is distinct (Mark 5:30-31). It parallels Eve's touch, which led to unique consequences and similarly ushered in death. Because the hemorrhaging woman is most likely standing,<sup>14</sup> it is possible that she touches Jesus' side or ribs. While speculative, this would be another point of contact with the Genesis text and suggests that, since Eve came from Adam's rib, the woman in Mark's story is re-establishing contact with the source of her creation, this time in the form of the mortal Jesus.

In the Genesis text, Adam is passive. In the hemorrhaging woman's story, Jesus is similarly passive. So Mark's audience assumes that Jesus will be filling the role of Adam<sup>15</sup> since Jesus' otherwise puzzling passivity suggests the association. After the transgressive touch, the women hide from the divine presence in both texts (Genesis 3:8 and Mark 5:30 [implied]). Then the women are questioned about their behavior: in the garden, God asks whether Eve has eaten (Genesis 3:13), and in Mark, Jesus asks who has touched him (5:30). The focus of both passages is on the consequences of the women's actions. Because a woman's initiative was the catalyst for the Fall, it is crucial that Mark's story of redemption from the Fall also occurs by the initiative of a woman. Indeed, one of the things redeemed in this story is woman's initiative.

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12 Note that the original commandment in Genesis 2:16 did not prohibit touching the fruit, but Eve's restatement of the commandment did.

13 Her bleeding rendered her and anyone she touched unclean; see Leviticus 15:19.

14 Many readers, including most artists, imagine the woman kneeling; this is unlikely since she could have been trampled by the crowd and would have been unable to get close enough to touch. She was probably walking and therefore would have touched him on the shoulder, arm, or back. Readers may be interpreting Mark under the influence of Luke 8:44 where the woman touches the edge of Jesus' hem, but this is not how Mark tells the story. See Richard W. Swanson, "Moving Bodies and Translating Scripture: Interpretation and Incarnation," *Word & World* 31, no. 3 (June 1, 2011): 273.

15 The idea of Jesus as the "new Adam" is also found in 1 Corinthians 15:45.

In addition to these extensive similarities, there are profound differences between the stories. These divergences allow Mark's story to "redeem" the Fall. So while both stories feature a transgressive touch which changes the nature of the woman's bodily experience and results in new knowledge for her, the change in Mark's text reverses the change in the garden: Eve's touch results in her entry into the fallen world and the end of the perfected state of her body, while the hemorrhaging woman's touch results in her body returning to a (more) perfected state.

Another inversion occurs in the response to questioning: after the Fall, when Adam is queried, he focuses on Eve, and when Eve is questioned, she focuses on the serpent (Genesis 3:9-13). There is a pattern of avoiding responsibility by ascribing responsibility to someone else. In contrast, the hemorrhaging woman told the whole truth when she was questioned (Mark 5:32). Her response shows that this time, "Eve" (in the role of the hemorrhaging woman) took complete ownership of her own actions, and this, in terms of the narrative, leads to Jesus' claiming her as his daughter (Mark 5:34). The refusal to accept responsibility is one of the hallmarks of the Fall. The hemorrhaging woman inverts this plot point by wholeheartedly accepting responsibility for her actions. Being Jesus' daughter means that the woman has a closer relationship to him than she previously did; this also inverts the Fall where Eve becomes estranged from the presence of God as a result of her action. Through Mark's story — through the woman's accepting responsibility — the breach in the relationship between the woman and the divine is healed.

### **Results of the Redemptive Reading: New Roles**

The final outcome of each text also features an inversion. In Mark, the wording suggests that the woman came back when questioned, implying that she had already moved on (Mark 5:33). She had left Jesus' presence, which is analogous to leaving the garden and the presence of God. But Jesus invited the now-healed woman back into his presence. This is in contrast to Eve, who is cast out from the presence of the Lord for her action (Genesis 3:23). This inversion points to Jesus' ability to welcome the woman symbolically back into the presence of God. Similarly, the story of the Fall ends with serious consequences and curses; Mark's story ends with a blessing: "go in peace" (5:34). The hemorrhaging woman's "curse" was menstruation as a symbol of identification with Eve and with sin, but it is now gone. The peace with which Jesus commands her to go forth can be understood as the opposite of the enmity toward and from

Satan that resulted from the Fall (Genesis 3:15). Jesus literally redeems the story of the Fall through his interaction with the healed woman.

A key inversion occurs in Jesus' role: when he becomes the interlocutor and the one who pronounces a blessing (instead of the expected curse), he is no longer filling the role of Adam but rather the role of God, since in the garden it is God who asks the questions and pronounces the curses. As in the story of the stilling of the storm — where Jesus shifted from filling Jonah's role to filling God's role — Mark first encouraged the audience to think of Jesus in the role of Adam but then pivoted so that Jesus is in the role of God. Mark expects the audience to learn from the shift: Jesus is not merely the new Adam; he also fills the role of God. Mark is making a profound statement about Jesus' identity. Further, this shift makes sense of a disjuncture between the stories: the Fall ends with Eve's desire for her husband (Genesis 3:16), but the story of the hemorrhaging woman begins with her desire for Jesus (in the role of Adam). Mark's story ends with the woman's assuming the role not of wife but of daughter, as Jesus addresses her as his daughter (Mark 5:34); Jesus' role in the story has shifted from Adam to God.<sup>16</sup>

The woman's status as Jesus' daughter is key to Mark's story. Just as the Fall reconfigures Eve's relationship with God, the story of the hemorrhaging woman realigns the woman's relationship to Jesus. Much as Adam named his wife Eve, this story has Jesus name the woman his daughter; the name gives her a new identity (especially since she is not otherwise named in the story). The designation of daughter echoes earlier stories in Mark when Jesus called the palsied man his son (Mark 2:5) and when Jesus claimed not his biological kin but rather those who listened to him as his family (Mark 3:31-35). The type of woman who is a part of Jesus' new family is one who, like the hemorrhaging woman, is willing to violate social conventions and to respond to Jesus' invitation to speak up and testify even in the center of attention. At his baptism, Jesus was declared the son of God (Mark 1:11); this woman is now, in effect, God's grand-daughter. And just as Jesus' faithful decision to be baptized led to the declaration of sonship, her faith led to this declaration.

The hierarchical relationship between men and women is another motif that is inverted in these texts. One of the consequences of the Fall is Adam's power over Eve (Genesis 3:16). In Mark, that dynamic is reversed as power flows out of the passive and unaware "Adam" into "Eve" as a result of her decision to access that power. The power Jesus

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16 Although, interestingly, there is also a sense that Eve is Adam's "daughter" inasmuch as she was birthed from his side; see Genesis 2:21.



holds is accessible to the woman even without his specific foreknowledge. This is another way in which the story of the Fall is redeemed in Mark's text; inequality between the genders (which, in Genesis 3, is one of the characteristics of the fallen world) is overcome. Similarly, the pain that Eve experiences as a result of the Fall (Genesis 3:16) is inverted as the hemorrhaging woman's suffering ends as a result of her encounter with Jesus. There is also another inversion regarding the women's relationships to the Adam/Jesus figure: Eve's touch leads to the contagion of sin and death eventually being transmitted to Adam. In Mark's story, the woman's touch also should convey impurity to Jesus, but precisely the opposite happens. This time, the woman's touch brings life and healing to herself instead of sin and death to others. This inversion highlights Jesus' unique nature by illustrating that his relationship to the Law of Moses is different from that of any other person. He does not fall as Adam did; instead, he lifts the hemorrhaging woman from her fallen state as she accesses his power.

### **The Hemorrhaging Woman's Body Parallels and Prefigures Jesus' Body**

And yet her suffering plays a very important role in the story: it permits the hemorrhaging woman to be a type and shadow of Jesus, particularly the suffering that will be part of the Atonement. Mark has taken special pains to encourage the audience to see the woman's suffering as a prototype of Jesus' own suffering through verbal similarities: the same Greek adverb (translated as "many") is used to describe both of their sufferings (Mark 5:26 and 8:31); the same Greek verb for "suffer" is used for both of them (and for no one else) (Mark 5:26, 8:31, 9:12); the same Greek root word describes their suffering (Mark 5:29 [KJV: "plague"] and Mark 10:34 [KJV: "scourge"]); and the word "body" is used for both of them (Mark 5:29 and Mark 14:22). Additionally, there are significant thematic similarities. Due to purity laws and social taboo, the hemorrhaging woman was considered shameful and embarrassing; similarly, Jesus' torture and crucifixion as a criminal would have been considered an embarrassment. Blood pours out from both the woman and Jesus (Mark 14:24); associating Jesus' blood with menstrual blood would have emphasized the theme of embarrassment. Also, both the woman and Jesus instantly know in their bodies that something has happened with the same Greek verb used for their "knowing" (Mark 5:29 and Mark 50). This emphasis on knowing is particularly significant given the key role that knowledge plays in the Fall where the concern is

expressed that the humans will become like the gods who know good from evil and where Eve eats from the tree of knowledge of good and evil.

These robust similarities imply that Mark wants the audience to think of the woman — and particularly the woman's suffering body — as foreshadowing Jesus and his suffering body. She is a type of Christ, and her suffering is a type of his suffering. The fact that she is female and that her suffering is a uniquely female form of suffering amplifies the unexpectedness of the comparison. The female body is redeemed as it is allowed to stand proxy for Jesus' body, which stands proxy for all bodies.

Additional insight into the concept of virtue (or power) going out of Jesus comes from the Prophet Joseph Smith: "the virtue here referred to is the spirit of life; and a man who exercises great faith in administering to the sick ... is liable to become weakened."<sup>17</sup> Joseph Smith taught this concept when he became "pale and [lost] strength" after performing a healing, suggesting that physical exhaustion can be the result of exercising spiritual power. So perhaps Jesus' awareness that power had gone out of him was tied to an awareness of his own physical depletion. Further, it is reasonable to think that the hemorrhaging woman would have had anemia-like symptoms and would therefore have been pale and weak. Mark does not mention any of this, but we might speculate that the woman became physically more vigorous at precisely the same moment when Jesus' strength faded. This would be another instance where the woman's body and Jesus' body are paralleled; it perhaps also serves as a foreshadowing of the Atonement when Jesus' body would experience the pains and sins of all other human bodies.

The parallel between their bodies is an important underpinning to the redemptive reading of the Fall: because of the association of menstruation with sin (and thus a fallen state), the hemorrhaging woman is redeemed by Jesus' actions. When Jesus says that her faith has saved her (Mark 5:34),<sup>18</sup> this symbolizes being saved from the effects of the Fall. One of the consequences of the Fall is that Adam's body will eventually return to dust (Genesis 3:19). Jesus is the first person for whom this does not apply so Adam's curse ends with him. This is true for Jesus in other ways as the feeding miracles show (Mark 6:30-44 and 8:1-10), he can acquire bread in a manner other than by the sweat of his brow. Similarly, Eve's curse will symbolically end with the woman. The

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17 Joseph Smith, Jr., *History of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*, ed. B. H. Roberts, 2d ed. 7 vols. (Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1946-50), 5:303.

18 The verb used here can refer to physical healing as well as to spiritual salvation.

fact that the curses end for both of them makes sense of the parallels between the woman's body and Jesus' body.

Because the woman's body foreshadows Jesus' suffering, the story powerfully affirms the idea that all human bodies are made in God's image. A compelling inversion occurs here as the end of the woman's uncontrollable flow of blood happens in the same moment when Jesus experiences an uncontrollable flow of power — the very power which heals her. There is a sense she exerts some control over Jesus by drawing on the power he holds (compare Ether 3:20 and D&C 82:10) at the same time that Jesus exerts control over her by healing her. This shared power — particularly when read as the corrective to Adam's rule over Eve after the Fall — is another of Mark's inversions. And since under the Law of Moses, any sort of bodily discharge rendered the person unclean, for Jesus' discharge of power to be evidence of strength points to his unique relationship to the Law of Moses. Inasmuch as this story suggests a similarity between blood and power, it establishes the groundwork for the shedding of Jesus' own blood to be viewed as the source of his power.

The parallels between the woman's suffering and Jesus' suffering require the audience to think anew about the symbolism of blood. In the Hebrew Bible, the blood contained the life force (Leviticus 17:10-14), leading to the ritual prohibitions related to blood. The story of the hemorrhaging woman invites the audience to re-examine the symbolism of blood since her hemorrhaging impedes her life and her life-giving ability. At the same time, this rethinking of the meaning of blood sets the stage for the shedding of Jesus' blood when his shed blood leads to the possibility of eternal life. The story of the hemorrhaging woman is thus an important prelude to understanding the symbolism of Jesus' blood.

### **Relationship to the Story of the Raising of Jairus's Daughter**

It also works hand-in-hand with the story that literally surrounds it in Mark's Gospel. The narrative of the raising of Jairus's daughter begins in Mark 5:21-24 but is interrupted by the story of the hemorrhaging woman before concluding in Mark 5:35-43. Scholars have long recognized that Mark frequently "sandwiches" stories in order to encourage the audience to compare them. Because the hemorrhaging woman's story is enclosed by the story of the raising of Jairus's daughter, both of the main effects of the Fall — sin and death, or spiritual death and physical death — are done away with in this section of the text. And just as the hemorrhaging woman prefigures Jesus' suffering, the girl brought back to life prefigures his resurrection. (Much common vocabulary shared by both accounts

emphasizes this point<sup>19</sup>). It is significant that the body of a young girl, which is the proxy for the body of Jesus, that is ultimately the proxy for everyone else's bodies. With both the hemorrhaging woman and the raised girl, Mark asks the reader to re-imagine the function and worth of female bodies. Through the "sandwiching" and the redemptive reading, Mark makes clear that Jesus brings relief from spiritual and physical death to all people.

The compelling combination of similarities and inversions between the hemorrhaging woman and Eve strongly implies that Mark intended for this text, as with the stilling of the storm and the raising of Jairus' daughter, to function as a redemptive reading. This is a clever literary device that rewards the audience's close attention with greater insight into each story. But more importantly, it allows form to follow function: the form of the story is to redeem the mistakes in the biblical story (made by Eve, Jephthah, and Jonah), and the function is to introduce the idea of Jesus as the redeemer. Mark teaches that through Jesus the effects of the Fall can be overcome. By showcasing a woman — and a woman with a uniquely female problem — the story emphasizes that Jesus' ability to overcome the effects of the Fall extends to all people. By permitting this hemorrhaging woman to take on Eve's role, Mark's text shows that the effects of the Fall are now symbolically overcome through Jesus.

## Conclusions

As one scholar described it, "ancient man reacted to the phenomena of menstruation with a horror that seems to us grotesque and hysterical."<sup>20</sup> So a story that centered on a woman's unceasing menstruation would have been embarrassing for everyone involved. One imagines Mark's audience squirming as they listen to the account of Jesus requiring the now-healed woman to describe to the entire crowd how she "felt in her body that she was healed" (Mark 5:29). The fact that Mark included this story in his record challenged the then-current (and, to some degree,

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19 Many similarities tie the story of the raising of Jairus's daughter to the story of Jesus' resurrection: (1) they are the only two instances in Mark's Gospel when someone is raised from the dead; (2) the same word translated as "rise" (Greek: *egeiro*) in 5:41 is used in Mark 16:6 to describe Jesus' rising; (3) in both stories, Jesus is mocked (Mark 5:40 and 14:65); (4) the word for "astonishment" (Greek: *ekstasis*) is used in Mark only for the reaction to the girl's raising and the reaction to Jesus' raising (Mark 5:42 and 16:8); and (5) in Aramaic, "talitha" can refer to a lamb, which further encourages the association between the girl and Jesus. (Although Mark does not use the symbolism of the lamb to directly refer to Jesus [compare John 1:29], it is probably implicit in the links between the Passover and the Last Supper.)

20 B. J. Bamberger, "Defilement by Discharge from the Sex Organs," in *The Torah: A Modern Commentary* (New York: Union of American Hebrew Congregations, 1981), 849.

still-extant) discomfort with the normal functions of the female body. This story requires male audience members to be like Jesus in showing concern for (and no discomfort with) these uniquely female concerns. The effect (if not the purpose) of the purity regulations related to menstruation in the Law of Moses was to severely restrict female activity and public presence; the hemorrhaging woman should not be in a crowd and should not be touching Jesus. Yet Jesus not only permits her touch but requires her to take a more public position than she herself was willing to by speaking to the entire crowd about her personal situation. This story — as a vehicle to teach about Jesus' power, the Fall, and his Atonement that makes it possible for humans to overcome the Fall — profoundly challenges Mark's audience.

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