

# Comprehensive Notes for MSBIB 668E “Jesus as Savior in the Gospel of Mark”

Prof. Emilio G. Chávez

## ASPECTS OF THE HISTORY OF ISRAEL WHICH ARE IMPORTANT FOR AN UNDERSTANDING OF THE SYNOPTICS

*The Babylonian Exile.* Israel, or really, the tribe of Judah, went into exile in Babylon in 587 B.C.E.<sup>1</sup> The exile lasted until 538, when the Persian king Cyrus decreed that the Jews (named after their tribe) could return to Palestine and rebuild their Temple. The exile was an important religious and theological event for Jews. It was there that Judaism, as a religion which sought separation from Gentiles (a necessary survival mechanism) emerged. Circumcision and the Sabbath became hallmarks of the Jew, and signs of their fidelity to God, who became known as the one Creator and Lord of the universe. It was “Second Isaiah” (found in chapters 40-55 of Isa) who promoted the latter important theological developments, and whose reflection on the sufferings of Israel found sublime poetic expression in the four “Servant songs:” Isa 42:1-4 (+ 5-9); 49:1-6 (+ 7-23); 50:4-9 (+ 10); 52:13-53:12. The Servant is described as having a world-wide mission, and his suffering will have redemptive value. This figure, seen collectively or individually, will have tremendous importance in the centuries preceding Christianity, and for Christ himself. It was during this period and the Persian period which followed that Jews came to believe in angels and demons; the Deuteronomistic history was completed, as was the Priestly document of the Pentateuch.

*The Second Temple Period.* This is what we now call the period when Jews had a second Temple<sup>2</sup> (515 B.C.E.-70 C.E.). It is a distinctive phase of Judaism,<sup>3</sup> although

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<sup>1</sup> “Before the common era,” to avoid a reference to Christ which may offend non-Christians; “C.E.” = “common era,” i.e., Anno Domini, “A.D.” = “in the year of the Lord,” for Christians. Jews are more neutral in dating things “A.M.,” = Anno Mundi, from the creation of the world (according to the biblical account).

<sup>2</sup> After Solomon’s was destroyed in 587; Herod the Great began rebuilding the second Temple on a grandiose scale in 20 B.C.E. (cf. John 2:20), and the work was finished only shortly before the second Temple was destroyed in 70 C.E.

<sup>3</sup> After 70 C.E., Judaism still survives, now characterized by rabbinism. It is thus incorrect (and pejorative) to refer to the time of Jesus as “late Judaism,” as if after Jesus Judaism and Jews simply disappear!

there are diverse groups oftentimes at odds with each other. One has only to compare Deut 23:2-9 and the Jewish reformers Ezra and Nehemiah (who made the Jews dismiss their foreign wives, Ezra 9-10; Neh 10) with the universalism of “Third-Isaiah” (chapters 56-66); see 56:3-8, part of which Mark uses in 11:17, and 66:21.<sup>4</sup> These tensions will continue to be operative in this period and into the very time of Jesus. The first part of Zech (1-8) is from early in this period; Zech 9-14 is from late in the period, and is eschatological and apocalyptic. See esp. Zech 9 and 14.

*The Hellenistic Period* is still within the Second Temple Period, but it specifically characterizes Judaism after Alexander the Great’s conquest in 333. Alexandria, a city in northern Egypt named after this conqueror, became the new Athens, known for its learning until well into the Christian era (Philo, Origen, Cyril). It had many Jews who lost the ability to read Hebrew: thus the Greek translation of the Scriptures known as the Septuagint (LXX). Some of Alexander’s successors, known as the Seleucids, conquered Judea; of these, Antiochus IV “Epiphanes” plundered the Temple around 169, set up therein the statue of Zeus Olympios (the “desolating abomination,” 1 Macc 1:54; 2 Macc 5:2; Dan 9:27; 11:31; 12:11 – these passages should be read along with their surrounding context) and launched a terrible persecution of the Jews, attacking especially their dietary laws and circumcision (attempting to destroy their Jewishness). It is in this period (ca. 165) that the Book of Daniel is written, set in Babylon and borrowing the name of an ancient, legendary sage (see Ezek 14:14). Dan 7-12 is apocalyptic literature: in a time of persecution and defeat, the seer sees what is “behind the veil” (*apokalypto* in Greek means “to uncover, unveil”), the real struggle between the forces of good and evil, where God can only be victor, although a time of trial must be passed-through first (see Dan 11:35; 12:10; Mal 3:2-3; Luke 3:15-18; Rev 7:14; cf. Mark 9:49; 13:14-20). We now have full-blown belief and hope in the resurrection, unknown or unclear in the Hebrew Bible (except for Dan 12:2, 13). This is an extremely important background for understanding Christianity. Part of this thought-world is the concept of the Son of man (Dan 7), linked as it is to the Kingdom, and with the “Suffering Servant” of Isa 53 in the background (the *maskilim*, “wise teachers,” of Dan 11:35; 12:3 are followers of the Servant and *justify many*). Mark is a good

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<sup>4</sup> A “nervous editor” (Blenkinsopp’s description) corrected this with v. 20, demoting the prospective priestly and Levitical “vocations” to mere transporters!

representative of this thought-world: he appears to expect a imminent parousia (see 9:1; 13:20, 29-30), although apocalyptic time-tables (predicting an exact date) are definitely avoided (see Mark 13:32-33).<sup>5</sup> The sense of imminence, quite evident in Paul (1Thess 4:15-17; 1Cor 15:51; 7:29) diminishes with Matt (25:19; compare with Mark 13:34-35) and Luke (Acts 1:7), and may have become “realized” (C.H. Dodd) in John (17:1-5).

*Additional Observations.* The last three portions of the “Twelve Prophets” — each beginning with *massa*’ = “burden, oracle,” and eschatological— are Zech 9-11, 12-14 (Hellenistic period, thus “late”) and Mal (mid-fifth century). All three have an important role in the synoptics. Zech 9:9 was enacted by Jesus in his “messianic” entry into Jerusalem; ultimately, the prophecy may refer back to Gen 49:10-11, the Oracle of Judah. Zech 9:11-12 has the mysterious expressions “by the blood of your covenant” and “prisoners of hope.” Zech 14 tells of the eschatological Day of YHWH, when God will plant his feet on the Mount of Olives (rarely mentioned in the OT). The Mount of Olives became the “eschatological place;” for Rabbinic Judaism it was the place the Messiah was to appear. It is where Jesus’ eschatological last days begin to unfold (Mark 11:1); seated there and looking down at the Temple, he delivers his “eschatological discourse” (Mark 13). Cf. Matt 24-25; Acts 1:12.<sup>6</sup> Mal, the last book of the OT, ends with the expectation of Elijah (= John the Baptist, for Christians) before the Day of YHWH.<sup>7</sup> Mal 3:1-3 announces that the Lord (*ha ’adon*) will suddenly come to his Temple, “the angel of the covenant whom you desire,” in order to purify the sons of Levi (= the priests). Finally, the *targum*, probably by the first century C.E., (Aramaic translation of the Heb) of Isa presents the Servant as a *teaching Messiah* with a Kingdom.

## THE GOSPEL OF MARK

### *Important Points.*

A. The importance of Mark for our understanding of Jesus; “Mark is the genius”

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<sup>5</sup> Dan, or his editors, “updated” (revised) his initial prediction in 8:14 twice (12:11, 12).

<sup>6</sup> See F.F. BRUCE, “The Book of Zechariah and the Passion Narrative,” *Bulletin of the John Rylands Library* 43 (1961) 336-353.

<sup>7</sup> This Day of YHWH is an important judgment-related concept, evidenced as far back as Amos 5:18-20 (760 B.C.E.). Its most terrible depiction is found in Zephaniah 1:14-18, which gave rise to the medieval hymn *Dies irae* = Day of Wrath.

B. The main themes of this gospel

1. Jesus Christ is the Son of God (a mystery)
2. Jesus has come as the plenipotentiary, Danielic Son of man; Jesus is also the Isaianic Servant
3. The Kingdom of God has arrived, this is the *éschaton*; characteristics of the Kingdom
4. Jesus' ministry effects and symbolizes eschatological salvation
5. The Christian is to follow Jesus during the tribulations which precede his parousia

C. Other topics and observations may be made, as seen below

**JESUS AS SON OF MAN, SERVANT, SAVIOR, MESSIAH AND PROPHET  
IN MARK**

*Jesus as Son of man.* The “Son of man” became an important eschatological concept in the late Second Temple Period (515 B.C.E.-70 C.E.; Book of Enoch). In Dan, it is associated with followers of the Servant (the *maskilim*, “wise teachers,” of 11:35; 12:3). Thus Mark (or Jesus) uses the expression in 2:10 in the context of capacity to forgive sins and heal (cf. Isa 53:5, 10-12; Matt 8:17 “he *took away* our *infirmities* and carried our *diseases*”). This is clear in Mark 10:45. The “many” here and in 14:24 comes from Isa 53:11-12); see Dan 11:35; 12:2, 10. Jesus uses “Son of man” in his passion predictions: 8:31; 9:12, 31; 10:33; 14:21, 41 (seven times with 10:45). The Son of man will rise again (9:9) and will return in glory (8:38; 14:62) to *gather* (an important eschatological term) his elect (13:27).

*Jesus as the Servant.* In addition to the above combination of Servant with Son of man, it must be emphasized that Jesus gives his life (*psyche*, 10:45) and pours his blood of the covenant (14:24) for many; this is the language of Isa 53:12, where the LXX uses *psyche* for the Heb *nepheš* (“soul, life,” but here also “blood”), in the context of expiation of sins (53:10, where *’ašam* = guilt-offering appears [though not *kipper* = expiate/atonement]). It is clear that this refers to expiation = forgiveness of sins. This is in the background of the healing of the leper in Mark 1:40-45 and the woman with the blood flow in 5:25-34. Both of these would have presented pigeons to expiate if they

were poor (Lev 14:22, 30-32; 12:7 [exactly quoted in part in Mark 5:29!]). Jesus gives his life as ransom (*lutron*, 10:45), the word the LXX uses to translate “expiate” (*kipper*) and “redeem” (*ga’al*) in Heb. See Exod 30:12, which gave rise to the Temple tax and the need to change the money into the “sanctuary-sheqel” (v. 13). This is the background of Mark 11:15-16. On the blood of the covenant, see Exod 24:8 and esp. Zech 9:11.

*Jesus as savior.* Jesus’ name *yešua* is short for “YHWH (is) salvation.” “Legion” links this name with “Son of God Most High” in 5:7. Cf. Matt 1:21. The woman with the blood flow wants to be saved (5:28); her faith saves her (5:34). Healing and liberation are synonyms of salvation and forgiveness; see 2:10-11; 6:56; 10:52; cf. John 5:14. Jesus “frees” the leper in Mark 1:43 with an unusual use of *ekballō* (= cast-out, the exorcism term), also used for the Egyptians’ sending out the Israelites from Egypt (= slavery) in Exod 12:33. In 4:12, Mark uses neither the Heb nor the LXX in quoting Isa 6:10, but the *targum* (Aramaic translation of the Heb), substituting “forgive” for “heal.”

*Is Jesus the Messiah in Mark?* The appearance of the “Messiah” (= the anointed king of the Jews, Davidic descendant) was an important eschatological expectation in the Second Temple period. See Isa 11:1-9; 61:1-2; Jer 23:5-6; 33:15-16; Ezek 34:23-24; 37:24-25. Jesus in fact became known as the *Christ* (Greek for messiah, but with different connotations); he was executed as a messianic pretender. Mark, however, has no Bethlehem tradition; the kingdom is God’s or David’s (11:10; cf. Matt 21:5, 9; Luke 19:38), never Jesus’ (cf. Mark 10:37; Matt 20:21; see Luke 23:42). But faith in Jesus as son of David saves Bartimaeus, Mark 10:46-52, and Jesus does admit being the Christ “with explanation” in 14:62. He is more than David’s son; see 12:34-37: this is really the issue. His being confused with an earthly messiah is tragically ironic, like a murderer being confused with the “Son of the Father (which is what Barabbas means in Aramaic!, 15:6-15). “Messiah” is just a popular, earthly view of Jesus: it does not go to the depths (see 8:27-30, in the context of the *gradual* coming to sight in 8:22-25 and the corrective passion prediction, 8:31-33). Ezek 34 provides the most suggestive actual “messianic” text for Jesus’ ministry: healing and making turn (Heb *šub*, “conversion,” whence Greek *metanoia*) the weak/sick, and setting himself up against the strong (see Mark 2:17).

Likewise, *Jesus is much more than one of the prophets*, as the popular view would have it: 6:15; 8:28. He is the beloved Son sent in the End, after the prophets have been sent (12:1-8).

**Notes Used for the Defense of the Doctoral Thesis  
of Emilio G. Chávez,  
January 13, 2000, Angelicum, Rome**

**Title: “EXORCISM, *EXOUSIA*, THE WIDOW AND THE TEMPLE.  
THE MEANING OF JESUS’ ACTION AND TEACHING  
IN THE TEMPLE (MARK 11:15-17)”**

**Fr. Joseph Agius, O.P., Dean of the Theology Faculty, Presiding  
Moderator: Fr. Richard Taylor  
Second Reader: Fr. Stipe Jurič, O.P.**

**THESIS:** Jesus’ action and teaching in the temple, as narrated in Mark 11:15-17, is a symbolic cessation of the Jewish sacrificial system, and a prelude to the destruction of the temple that he predicts in 13:2. Mark subtly but carefully prepares the knowing reader for this understanding of the action from the first verses of his gospel, and symbolically depicts the destruction of the temple, rendered obsolete by Jesus’ sacrificial death, by the rending of the temple curtain in 15:38, simultaneously with Jesus’ death.

**ARGUMENT:**

1. Mark’s first verses (1:1-4) subtly announce the eschatological, purifying visit of the Lord to his temple (Mal 3:1-5).
2. Jesus’ first act in his public ministry is a teaching and an exorcism (Mark 1:21-27). The teaching is said to be based on *exousia*, and is contrasted with that of the scribes (1:22). The unclean spirit announces that Jesus has come to destroy evil spirits (1:24). Finally, the exorcism itself is described as “a new teaching according to *exousia*” (1:27). Jesus’ ministry is thus a victory over evil accomplished through a new (eschatological) teaching indistinguishable from “exorcism.” The basis for it is his *exousia*. See no. 4 below.
3. Jesus cures a leper (1:40-45), something only God could do (2 Kgs 5:7), and certainly not the Jewish priests, who could only confirm that such a cure had already taken place (Lev 14:3). The purpose of the ritual prescribed was the leper’s readmission into the cultic community. Jesus tells the ex-leper to do what Moses prescribed (1:44), “as a sign against them,”<sup>8</sup> but the leper does not do this (1:45): he starts to preach Jesus, so that they start coming to Jesus from everywhere.

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<sup>8</sup> Such is the accusatory meaning of this expression, which also occurs in 6:11 and 13:9.

4. In 2:1-12, Jesus does two related things: he forgives the sins of a paralytic based on faith (2:5) and demonstrates his *exousia* as Son of man to do this “upon the earth” by restoring the paralytic (2:10-11). *Exousia* (= “dominion,” the Aramaic *shaltan*) is taken from LXX Dan 7:14, where it appears thrice: it is the plenipotentiary authority of the “one like a son of man.” “Upon the earth” alludes to LXX Dan 4:17 (the Lord of heaven has *exousia* over everything that is in heaven and upon the earth).

5. In 5:25-34, Jesus heals a woman with a blood flow. It is her faith which heals her, also described as salvation (5:34). Lev 15 has the prescriptions for “expiation” (Hebrew verb *kapar*) after such a woman is found to be healed; as in the case of a poor leper, the poor Israelite offers doves for his or her “expiation.” Since Jesus has saved the woman, any reference to what the temple may have to offer her seems superfluous.

6. Near the center of Mark’s gospel is Jesus’ great diatribe against the Pharisees and some scribes who had come from Jerusalem (7:1-13). Jesus accuses them of abandoning God’s law in favor of their tradition. This results in death: depriving one’s parents of what they need to live by claiming “(temple) offer” (*korban*, 7:10-12) is the “curse” prohibited in Exod 21:17, part of the homicide legislation. Jesus goes on to completely redefine the purity laws, making (or declaring) all foods clean (7:15, 19). This has far-reaching consequences for the whole temple sacrificial system, based on, and aiming at, ritual purity.<sup>9</sup>

7. Jesus predicts the passion and death of the Son of man, 8:31; 9:12, 31; 10:33. In 10:45, the Son of man is identified with the Isaianic Servant, who came to give his life as a ransom (*lutron*) for “many” (Isa 53). *Lutron* is the LXX word for Hebrew “expiation, atonement” (*kippur*) and “redemption” (*g<sup>e</sup>ullah*). Mark is saying that it is Jesus who truly effects these (14:24). Another feature of the Jewish law which is thus obviated is the temple tax prescribed by Exod 30:12-16, called an “atonement price” (*ha-kippurim*) in 30:16. It had to be paid near Passover time, and only in “sanctuary sheqels,” (30:13). This was the principal reason for the money-changers in the temple, to change the coins brought by the pilgrims into the prescribed currency.

8. With the foregoing elements, we can now approach the temple act and teaching. Jesus enters Jerusalem and the temple (11:11), but Mark, alone among the evangelists, “sandwiches” the “cleansing” with the cursing of the fig tree. Jesus curses a leafy but fruitless fig tree; it is not the *kairos* for figs, for the *kairos* (= time) is fulfilled and the kingdom has arrived (1:15). Never again shall anyone avail himself of the fruits of this tree. This means that the time of the temple is over, as will become clearer.

9. The act itself is symbolic. Jesus throws (using the exorcism verb *ekballo*) everyone (“sellers and buyers”) out of the temple, and “catastrophizes” (using the LXX verb applied to Sodom and Gomorrah) the now-obsolete tables of the money-changers and dove-sellers (11:15). Mark alone (11:16) notes that he permitted no one to transport sacred vessels through the temple: the temple system is suspended. And then Jesus *teaches* (see no. 2 above): he announces the Isaianic eschatological name for God’s

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<sup>9</sup> A related opposition of human convention and divine precept is found in 3:1-6, where Jesus asks if it is licit to do good on the Sabbath or to kill. This healing results in the decision to kill Jesus.

house, “a house of *prayer* for all nations” (Isa 56:7), and denounces what it has become, “a cave of violent persons,” borrowing a phrase from Jeremiah’s speech against the temple (Jer 7), where the temple’s destruction is prophesied (7:14). Who the “violent persons” are (not “thieves”) will be illustrated by the parable to follow (Mark 12:1-12).<sup>10</sup>

10. Now Jesus’ *exousia* is challenged (11:27-33). Jesus harkens back to John the Baptist, who began the eschatological period as Elijah (9:12-13; Matt 17:13) preaching forgiveness of sins apart from the temple (Mark 1:4-5) and announcing Jesus (1:7-8). The leaders’ “pondering among themselves” (11:31) links up with the scribes’ “pondering” in 2:6 against Jesus’ ability to forgive sins, and also with his *exousia* as Son of man.

11. Jesus then replies to the leaders with the parable of the violent vinedressers, who kill the “servants” (prophets) diligently sent by the Lord of the vineyard (Isa 5), terms also evocative of Jer 7:21-28. In the *eschaton*, the “beloved Son” is sent (cf. Mark 1:11, with Passion-overtones, and 9:7, a prophetic commissioning), and he is killed. Therefore these leaders will have God’s vineyard taken away from them (12:9); “others” will be given the “vineyard.” The vinedressers’ actions make them the sort of bloodshedders that *parîtsîm* indicates in Jer 7:11 (cf. Ezek 18:10). Then Jesus speaks of a new construction of which he is the cap- or cornerstone, 12:10. Can we know who the “others” are? See no. 13 below.

12. Jesus teaches in the temple, but his last words there (12:38-44) condemn the scribes, who devour widows’ houses under the pretext of piety, and he praises a poor widow who puts her whole *bios* (“life, means of subsistence”) into the temple treasury. Jesus then *leaves* the temple, and predicts that not one stone will remain upon another (13:2). He is sitting on the eschatological Mount of Olives (cf. Zech 14), opposite (and perhaps looking *down* on the temple), Mark 13:3, as he delivers his “eschatological discourse.” A desecration of the temple (13:14) plays a role in the events of the End.

13. In Jesus’ “trial before the whole Sanhedrin,” “false witnesses” (reminiscent of the “false prophets” in Jeremiah’s own temple-speech trial in LXX Jer 33 [MT Jer 26]) state that they heard Jesus say he would destroy the man-made (a LXX term for idols) temple and build *another* not man-made *in three days* (Mark 14:58). This “other” temple may be the “others” to whom the vineyard is to be given (12:9), and who seem to be related to the construction of which the “builders” rejected the chief stone, 12:10. And the Isaianic citation (Isa 56:7) in Mark 11:17 is followed by an oracle (56:8) that YHWH will yet gather “others” to the dispersed of Israel which He has already gathered.<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> That Mark does not portray Jesus’ act as a “cleansing” is borne out by comparing the role of the elements in his gospel (branches, tables, sacred vessels, the nations, the temple curtain, etc.) with their contrary role in what is truly described as a temple cleansing in 1 Macc 4:36-58; 2 Macc 10:1-8.

<sup>11</sup> Although “others” does not appear in the Hebrew or LXX, it needs to be provided in any translation in order to make sense of the text. In any case, the inclusion of Gentiles is clearly intimated.



14. As Jesus dies, Mark sees fit to repeat the “accusation” (15:29), using present participles which may indicate that Jesus is destroying the old temple and building the new one then and there as he gives up his life. Then when he dies, the temple curtain is completely rent (15:39), symbolizing the disappearance of the edifice made obsolete by Jesus’ expiatory and redemptive death.

**Excerpt from Emilio G. Chávez, *The Theological Significance of Jesus’ Temple Action in Mark’s Gospel* (Toronto Studies in Theology; v. 87; New York – Queenston, Ontario: Edwin Mellen Press, 2002), 106-109.**

Still, we may simply allow the possibility that there may have been some expectation in Judaism that the messiah would cleanse the temple. It is clear, however, that such a notion is extremely difficult to adduce as a factor in Jesus’ trial. And, short of entering now into the discussion to take place in chaps. four and five, it is clear that Mark could not ultimately have had a cleansing, messianic or otherwise, in mind when he redacted his gospel. The clearest accounts of an actual temple cleansing —1 Macc 4:36-58; 2 Macc 10:1-8— involve elements totally at odds with the Second Gospel. In the first account, Judas Maccabeus proposes that the sanctuary (τὰ ἅγια) be cleansed (καθαρίσαι) and dedicated (or “renewed”). The people see that the sanctuary (τὸ ἅγιασμα) was desolated (ῥηρωμένον) and the altar profaned (βεβηλωμένον). After disposing of the profaned altar stones in a suitable place, to await the word of a prophet on what to do with them (1 Macc 4:46), they built a new altar and sanctuary, made new vessels (σκεύη), and brought the lampstand, the incense altar and the table (τράπεζαν) into the sanctuary (νάον). They proceeded to burn incense and light up the temple (4:50), and the temple curtains (τὰ καταπετάσμα) were spread out. There was gladness among the people because the reproach of the nations was turned away (ἀπεστράφη ὄνειδος ἔθνων, 4:58), and they therefore celebrated with branches and palm fronds and sang hymns (i.e., psalms, 2 Macc 10:7).

In Mark 11:15-17, the action takes place in τὸ ἱερόν [in the temple]. Any celebration with branches and psalms took place *prior to* (11:8-10), not after, a purported “cleansing.” τὰς τράπεζας [the tables] are overturned. σκεύος [vessels] are not permitted to be carried through the temple. The nations are mentioned as beneficiaries (τοῖς ἔθνεσιν [for the nations]), not as enemies who reproach (cf. 15:32). No altar is

mentioned.<sup>12</sup> There is a reference to prayer (προσευχή) not explicitly found in the Maccabean accounts,<sup>13</sup> and a portent of destruction in the citation of the verse from Jer 7.<sup>14</sup> In Mark 13, not only is the temple to be destroyed (by God, 13:2); it is to be made desolate and profaned (that is, by τὸ βδέλυγμα τῆς ἐρημώσεως [the abomination of the desolation], 13:14), precisely the reverse of what Judas Maccabeus purified the temple from! Finally, when Jesus is about to die on the cross, there is darkness (15:33), not light, and τὸ καταπέτασμα [the veil] is completely rent. Mark could not have had a cleansing in mind in 11:15-17. We may thus conclude with the words of E.P. Sanders:

The assumption seems to be that Jesus made, and wanted his contemporaries to accept, a distinction between this sort of ‘practice’ [the selling of animals and the changing of money] and the ‘real purpose’ of the temple. This seems to owe more to the nineteenth-century view that what is external is bad than to a first-century Jewish view. [fn. omitted] Those who write about Jesus’ desire to return the temple to its ‘original’, ‘true’ purpose, the ‘pure’ worship of God,<sup>15</sup> seem to forget that the principal function of any temple is to serve as a place for sacrifice, and that sacrifices *require* the supply of suitable animals. This had always been true of the temple in Jerusalem. In the time of Jesus, the temple had long been the only place in Israel at which sacrifices could be offered, and this means that suitable animals and birds must have been in supply at the temple site.<sup>16</sup> There was not an ‘original’ time when worship at the temple had been ‘pure’ from the business which the requirement of unblemished sacrifices creates. Further, no one remembered a time when pilgrims, carrying various coinages, had not come. In the view of Jesus and his contemporaries, the requirement to sacrifice must always have involved the supply of sacrificial animals, their inspection, and the changing of money. Thus one may wonder what scholars have in mind who talk about Jesus’ desire to stop this ‘particular’ use of the temple. Just what would be left of the service if the supposedly corrupting externalism of sacrifices, and the trade necessary to them, were purged? Here as often as [*sic*] we see a failure to think concretely and a preference for vague religious abstractions.<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> Though it may be the place where the abomination of desolation will stand in 13:14.

<sup>13</sup> Though the people worshiped and blessed (προσεκύνησαν καὶ ἐλόγησαν), 1 Macc 4:55, and petitioned (ἤξιωσαν) God, 2 Macc 10:4.

<sup>14</sup> Jer 7:11; 7:30 in fact accuses the “sons of Judah” of profaning the house called by God’s name by putting their “abominations” (שְׂרָפָה, τὰ βδέλυγματα) in it; they are then threatened in 7:34 with the punishment that the earth will become a desolation (εἰς ἐρημωσιν ἔσται). Whence the language in Dan 9:27; 11:31; 12:11; HOOKER, *Son of Man*, 154.

<sup>15</sup> Fn.: “Most explicitly, Bornkamm speaks of the action as ‘more than an act of reform to restore the temple service to its original purity’ (*Jesus of Nazareth*, pp. 158f.), which means that it was also that.”

<sup>16</sup> Note that the problem with transporting one’s own animals was that they could become blemished and thus unacceptable as an offering (Lev 22:18), the risk increasing with the distance. See SANDERS, *Jesus and Judaism*, 64-65; cf. the diatribe against defective offerings in Mal 1:6-8.

<sup>17</sup> SANDERS, *Jesus and Judaism*, 63.