

Prof. Chávez

The attached would be very useful regarding John 10, the “Good Shepherd” discourse.

Excerpts from Emilio G. Chávez, *The Theological Significance of Jesus’ Temple Action in Mark’s Gospel* (Edwin Mellen Press: Lewiston, 2002), regarding Ezek 34 and Jesus’ ministry. It is in our library, call no. BS 2585.2 C512 2002.

Pages 40-43 of the book:

Lohmeyer, who sees a reference to Jesus’ priestly nature in 1:24 (when the demoniac calls him the “Holy One of God”),<sup>21</sup> stresses the conflict between Jesus and the priests. He remarks that:

The conflict, not apparent until that incident [the demonic confession of Jesus as the “Holy One of God”], appears again in another story of healing (Mk. 1.40-5) in Jesus’ own words. To the leper whom He has “made clean” of his disease Jesus says: “show yourself to the priest, and offer for your cleansing what Moses commanded, for a proof to the people.” This passage is frequently interpreted as meaning that Jesus was recognising existing cultic requirements, or at least not questioning them. But the more correct exegesis is rather different, for whenever the formula “for a proof unto them” occurs the reference is to the proof over against an unbelieving, God-forsaking world. Therefore it is the priests who are the unbelieving enemies of Him who performed this miracle, they are enemies even before they see it; and the sacrifice offered by the healed leper is to serve not merely to prove the “cleanness” of the man but by means of this proof to bear witness to the power of the agent of eschatological fulfillment, to whom in reality the commandment of Moses refers. The conflict between Jesus’ healing power and priestly sacrifice is thus made abundantly clear; the sacrifice is to point to the means “which Moses commanded,” but at the same time to the end of sacrifice and priesthood, and Jesus’ work has the as yet veiled object of “destroying sacrifice,” to quote from an apocryphal saying.<sup>22</sup>

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<sup>21</sup> LOHMEYER, *Lord of the Temple*, 25. Cf. Num 16:7; Ps 106:16. The high priest’s great function was to eradicate uncleanness in the Day of Atonement (Lev 16).

<sup>22</sup> LOHMEYER, *Lord of the Temple*, 25-26. The reference is to the Gospel of the Ebionites: ἦλθον καταλῦσαι τὰς θυσίας, καὶ ἐὰν μὴ παύσηθε τοῦ θύειν, οὐ παύσεται ἀφ’ ὑμῶν ἡ ὀργή [I have come to destroy the sacrifices, and if you do not cease to sacrifice, my wrath upon you shall not cease]; K. ALAND (ed.), *Synopsis Quattuor Evangeliorum. Locis parallelis evangeliorum apocryphorum et patrum adhibitis edidit* (Stuttgart 1996<sup>15</sup>) 78. See also LOHMEYER, *Gleichnis*, 172.

## 2. Table-fellowship with sinners

In 2:14, Jesus calls Levi son of Alphaeus, a tax-collector, to follow him as a disciple.<sup>23</sup> The next scene is evocative: Jesus is lying at table “in his house”<sup>24</sup>

with many tax-collectors and “sinners,” who have joined him and his disciples for a meal. Commensality is twice mentioned in 2:15 (κατάκειμαι, συνανάκειμαι with verbs indicating “reclining, lying at table;” it is thus a Jewish festal meal.<sup>25</sup> More importantly, Jesus is breaking a strong societal taboo having to do not only with respectability and honor, but with religious purity: the tax-collectors were perpetually ritually-defiled through their constant contact with foreigners. The “sinners” are in analogous parallelism therewith (note the reverse order in 2:16); they are excluded from Israel’s cultic and, hence, even community life.<sup>26</sup> The “scribes of the Pharisees” criticize Jesus’ blatant stance, although they are portrayed as addressing the disciples. Jesus’ reply evokes Ezek 34:15-16, where the Lord YHWH declares that *he* will shepherd his flock and *he* will make them lie down;<sup>27</sup> he will seek the strayed (אבד) and make return (שוב) the banished (נרח) and bind the broken (Niphal of שבר)<sup>29</sup> and strengthen the

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<sup>23</sup> It is not clear that we can find support in Mark (see 3:18) for the tradition that identifies Levi with Matthew. D.E. NINEHAM, *Saint Mark* (London 1963) 99, says Levi was not “one of the Twelve.”

<sup>24</sup> There is no reason to attribute the possessive pronoun αὐτοῦ to Levi, as is usually done; the previous use of the pronoun αὐτῶ (2:14) clearly refers to Jesus. Cf. 1:29; 2:1; 3:20; 7:17; 9:28. It is quite possible, of course, that after identifying Simon and Andrew’s house in Capernaum (2:1; 9:33), the evangelist simply refers to it as “the house,” even in the sense of Jesus’ “being home” (see *NRSV* 2:1; 3:19). See NINEHAM, *Saint Mark*, 99.

<sup>25</sup> This in itself is significant; cf. Luke 15:22-23. Writes GASTON, *No Stone*, 78: “The unclean come to Jesus, not to the temple, for the banquet, and they are purified by him, not by sacrifice, to enable them to take part in it. The whole distinction between clean and unclean, as well as all cultic means of removing uncleanness, are here radically abolished. Whether or not this was Jesus’ intention, it is definitely the point of the story [Mark 2:15-17].”

<sup>26</sup> “The sinners (*hamartoloi*) were persons whose occupation or life-style prevented them from full observance of the Jewish law. Though some of them may have been notoriously immoral, the designation of them as “sinners” was more a social characterization than a moral judgment.” HARRINGTON, “Mark,” 602. On the ‘*amme ha’aretz*, see S.J.D. COHEN, “Judaism to the Mishnah: 135-220 C.E.,” in *Christianity and Rabbinic Judaism. A Parallel History of Their Origins and Early Development* (ed. H. SHANKS) (Washington, D.C. 1992) 212-213. One should not downplay the moral aspect, however: the types of trades involved (tax-collection, prostitution) did not build up character, but were based at least partly on an inherent dishonesty.

<sup>27</sup> רבץ (“to stretch oneself out, lie down”) is used for man and beast to indicate repose and feeding; see Isa 14:30; Job 11:19; in Zeph 2:7; 3:13, it is used of the “faithful remnant.” See *BDB*, 918. The reclining position of the banqueters in Mark 2:15 is therefore not without significance. In Ezek 34:23, it is through the sole shepherd David, YHWH’s servant, that the flock will be shepherded.

<sup>28</sup> We previously observed that this term, used in Isa 66:5 for the hateful exclusion by their brethren of those who “quake” at YHWH’s word, became in Mishnaic Hebrew *terminus technicus* for excommunication.

weak. The two latter terms are used for healing,<sup>30</sup> and thus point to Jesus' role as physician (ἰατρός) in Mark 2:17. But the situation is dialectical: YHWH in Ezek 34:16 states that the "fat and strong" he will exterminate (Hiphil of שָׁמַד). Why should this be? In 34:1ff, YHWH accused the shepherds of pasturing themselves instead of the flock. This means that they have "fed and dressed" on the sheep, instead of being true shepherds.<sup>31</sup> They have "dominated" (רָדָה, cognately related to verbs meaning "chastise, trample")<sup>32</sup> the weak of the flock with violence and cruelty (בְּחֹקָה וּבַפֶּרֶךְ, 34:4). The flock is thus scattered (פָּרֹץ, see Jer 10:21, which would seem to be at least in the background of our passage, and in an eschatological sense, Zeph 3:10 and Zech 13:7, this latter used in Mark 14:27; cf. Mark 6:34; Matt 9:36; Luke 15:1-7) and prey to the wild beasts (i.e., YHWH's people are exposed to destruction). YHWH will remove these false shepherds from their office (34:10); in his *mišpat* [divine judicial redress], he will annihilate those who have grown fat and strong (34:16; see 34:17-22), among whom would certainly be the false shepherds.<sup>33</sup>

We see a reflection of this dialectical tension in Mark 2:17. Jesus contrasts the "strong" (οἱ ἰσχυροὶ; cf. τὸ ἰσχυρόν in Ezek 34:16, although the LXX changes the sense of the Hebrew) with the ill (οἱ κακῶς ἔχοντες; cf. τὸ κακῶς ἔχον in Ezek 34:4), and, in parallelism, the "just" (δίκαιος) with the "sinner." It would make no sense for

<sup>29</sup> This word recalls Isa 61:1, where the anointed one of the Lord YHWH will bind the "heart-broken."

<sup>30</sup> חָבַשׁ ("to bind [up]") "viz. a wound, usually in fig. of comforting the distressed;" see *BDB*, 290, with reference to Hos 6:1 and to our passage. *BDB*, 304, renders the Piel of חָזַק used here as "restore to health;" see the parallel passage in Ezek 34:4, where רָפָא ("to heal") is used. Jesus, or Mark, understands "healing" as divine forgiveness (see 4:12, where he agrees with the Targum rather than with MT or LXX in his citation of Isa 6:10); B. CHILTON, *A Galilean Rabbi and His Bible. Jesus' Use of the Interpreted Scriptures of His Time* (Wilmington 1984) 91.

<sup>31</sup> We shall see in our discussion of the widow that "to eat and drink and dress" were technical Rabbinic terms for the abuse by guardians and administrators of widows and others who entrusted their estates to them; see J.D.M. DERRETT, "'Eating Up the Houses of Widows': Jesus's Comment on Lawyers?," *NovTest* 14 (1972) 4; Mark 12:38-40.

<sup>32</sup> See *BDB*, 921.

<sup>33</sup> Who these shepherds were for Jesus becomes apparent in the parable of the murderous tenant-farmers, Mark 12:1-12. "The parable is a polemic text which is directed against the Jewish leaders among whom we find the high priests, who are responsible for the management of the temple." W.J.C. WEREN, "The Use of Isaiah 5,1-7 in the Parable of the Tenants (Mark 12,1-12; Matthew 21,33-46)," *Bib* 79 (1998) 17. "The Gospels are agreed that the Jewish leaders understood immediately that the parable was directed against them. The leaders concerned are the chief priests, scribes and elders (Mark 12:12, referring back to 11:27), or chief priests and Pharisees (Matt 21:45), or scribes and chief priests (Luke 20:19)," B. CHILTON - C.A. EVANS, "Jesus and Israel's Scriptures," in *Studying the Historical Jesus. Evaluations of Current Research* (ed. B. CHILTON - C.A. EVANS) (New Testament Tools and Studies XIX; Leiden - NY - Köln 1994) 304-305.

Jesus to mean that he wanted nothing to do with the righteous; he has in fact come to make many righteous (see Mark 10:45; 14:24; Isa 53:11). The meaning rather is that he has not come for the sake of those who take themselves to be righteous; see Luke 18:9-14; Matt 5:20), but for those who are open to conversion (made explicit in the parallel passage in Luke 5:32).<sup>34</sup>

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<sup>34</sup> PESCH, "Der Anspruch," 69: "Gott hat an den Sündern größeres Interesse als an den Gerechten, weil ER, Jahwe, als der Hirte Israels die ganze Herde sammeln will und sich deshalb der verlorenen, der versprengten Schafe annehmen muß." ["God has a greater interest in sinners than in the righteous, because HE, Yahweh, as the shepherd of Israel, wants to gather the whole flock, and must therefore take unto himself the lost, the scattered sheep."]