

Chapter Four: Jesus, the “Son of God” (Messiah)

Jesus’ exousía (dominion). In this chapter, we enter into Marcan Christology. We begin by analyzing the concept of *exousía*, the “authority” Jesus has, which is better translated “dominion,” according to its meaning in Daniel, especially in Dan 7:14. I think that this biblical concept gives us the key to understanding how it is that Jesus is the “Son of God.” And Christology takes us by the hand into soteriology (= how it is that Jesus is the Savior).

Let us go over the passages in Mark where we are told that Jesus is the “Son of God.” First, in the title to the gospel, Mark 1:1, where it is possible that we have for the first time the word “gospel” as the title of a book: that is, “Mark” (whoever actually wrote the gospel) possibly invented this new literary genre (a type of “life” or biography of Jesus), and called it “gospel,” a word which formerly had designated the message, but not a writing or literary genre.

Secondly, the voice of the Father in the baptism says to Jesus: “You are my beloved son, in you I am pleased.” It is difficult to know if the voice was public or only directed personally to Jesus. It would seem that no one else became aware of this: this is Mark’s design. We have already seen that this was the delivery of the complete “messianic package” to Jesus: he was the “beloved Son of God,” but with an unmistakable echo of the “sacrifice of Isaac” (Gen 22); and by saying “in you I am pleased,” the first verse of the first Servant song is likewise evoked, Isa 42:1 (and thus, all four Servant songs). Thus, there shall be much suffering before any glory; it is what theologians call the “kenotic” existence of Christ, in some ways emptied of his divinity, according to Phil 2:6-11. Any doubts in this regard are removed by Mark in 12:6, where “beloved Son” is repeated in order to indicate that after the “sending” of the prophets (“servants”), there was still a beloved son for the “Lord of the vineyard” to send, who will be killed because he is the heir.

The Father’s voice is also heard in the Transfiguration, Mark 9:7. Here, we are again in the context of the Passion, because Passion predictions flank this episode. Then Jesus himself answers “I am” when the high priest asks him if he is “the Messiah, the son of the Blessed,” in Mark 14:61-62. Note that Jesus’ response (which I describe as “guilty,

with an explanation”) combines “Messiah, son of the Blessed” (“Blessed” is a circumlocution for God) with the “Son of man . . . who comes with the clouds” and is “seated at the right hand of the Power.” That is, who Jesus is (the Son of God) is laden with references to the “Son of man” of Dan 7 (which Jesus has used as a preferred title regarding his Passion: Mark 8:31; 9:9, 12, 31; 10:33, 45; 14:21, 41), and to the priest-Messiah ‘according to the order’ of Melchizedek of Psa 110 (see Mark 12:35-37) who seats (or will seat) at the right hand of God.⁵⁶

We also saw that the only other ones who know who Jesus is (the Son of God) are the demons; these recognize him, or at least proclaim him, *in crescendo*: Mark 1:23-24; 3:11; 5:6-7 (the number of demons grows, as does the magnitude of what they proclaim when they see Jesus, and even the distance from which they first see Jesus and react to him grows).

Mark presents us with Jesus’ “dominion” from his first “miracle,” the exorcism in Mark 1:21-28. We should consider this pericope as “programmatically,” as Luke 4:17-22 is in that gospel. That is, Mark introduces a Jesus who “teaches” with *exousía*, and not like the scribes. But what is it that Jesus “teaches”? The content of such “teaching” is not mentioned, but the “teaching” is described, in Mark 1:27: it is “a new teaching according to *exousía*: he commands the unclean spirits and they obey him.”⁵⁷ Already in verse 24 it had been declared that Jesus had come to destroy the evil spirits, that is, evil (see the eschatological scenario in Zech 13:1-2). The rebuke (or exorcism formula) that Jesus uses

⁵⁶ Both the Midrash (Jewish biblical commentary) and Heb 1:5, 13, associate Psa 2:7 (“you are my son, today I have begotten you”) with Psa 110, which also appears to refer to the birth of the Messiah (110:3; the Hebrew text is very difficult to elucidate). Here reference must be made to other passages regarding the Davidic Messiah as being “God’s son”: 2 Sam 7:14; Psa 89:27-28; Psa 80:18 (which speaks of the “man of the right” of Yahweh, who is the “son of Adam” whom Yahweh strengthened, that the Targum interpreted as the ‘eschatological Messiah’, in combination with Psa 8:5). Psa 45:7 refers to the king (originally Solomon?) as “Elohim” = “God” (see Heb 1:8). Psa 82, which says that “Elohim” will rise up in the assembly (or council) of El (God), was applied to Melchizedek (“Elohim”) by the Qumranites, as we saw in 11QMelchizedek. This psalm was used by Jesus himself in John 10:31-38 to justify his referring to himself as “Son of God.” By “guilty with an explanation,” I mean to say that Jesus, when he accepted that he was the “Messiah,” subtly qualifies this with a reference to the “son of man” that the reader, at least, knows is linked to his rather unmessianic Passion (the Messiah should not suffer; cf. Mark 8:31-33; Luke 24:18-21, 25-26). See GIANCARLO BIGUZZI, *Io distruggerò questo tempio. Il tempio e il giudaismo nel vangelo di Marco* (Roma: Pontificia Università Urbaniana, 1987), 119-121; Spanish version, “*Yo destruiré este templo. El templo y el judaísmo en el Evangelio de Marcos* (Córdoba: El Almendro, 1992), 132-134.

⁵⁷ I owe some of the main ideas of what I am expounding to Burton Mack’s *A Myth of Innocence*; see my *Theological Significance*. Mack has made important contributions to the understanding of Mark, although our respective points of view could not be more different.

with the evil spirit —“be muzzled [imperative, aorist passive tense] and come out of him”— is linked to the rebuke Jesus uses against the tempestuous sea in 4:39: “silence, be muzzled [imperative, perfect passive tense].”⁵⁸ That is, Jesus’ struggle is against cosmic evil, the chaos that existed from before creation (Gen 1:2), not so tamed by God, since in Gen 6 there is so much evil that God repents of having created, and begins anew with Noah. But in the Maccabean period, the time of the composition of Dan 7, there is still need for visions of a future time (remember that “Daniel” is supposedly in Babylon hundreds of years before) in which the forces of evil, which come out of the sea, will be tamed, that is, their “dominion” (in Greek, *exousía*) shall be taken away from them, Dan 7:12, in order to be given to the one who is “like a son of man,” Dan 7:14.⁵⁹

This refers to the Kingdom of God. This is what Dan 7 is talking about, but, really, it is the concern of the whole book of Daniel (see, e.g., Dan 2:44-45). This is also the context of Zech 13-14 (see 14:9, 16, after the battle of the Mount of Olives, the place where the Messiah was to appear, in Jewish tradition). With the kingship of God comes the end of evil and wicked powers. But how is this to be accomplished? It comes about through a new state of things —we could say a “new creation”— in the sense in which Second Isaiah spoke of it. For him, the New Exodus will be a new creation, and God the redeemer is God the creator (cf. Isa 65:17; 66:22); God can redeem because he can create. We could even speak of a “new Torah,” a new way of relating to God, given that God has instituted a new order, once God has again begun to act as he did in the beginning, seemingly after a long slumber.⁶⁰ Thus, all foods are clean, according to Mark 7:19, which does not comport well with Leviticus. And with regard to divorce, permitted by Moses in Deut 24, Jesus calls for a return to what prevailed in the *beginning*, in Gen 1:27; Mark 10:1-10. This is what Stegemann calls the return to the state of things before the Fall. It is in this biblico-theological context that we can situate the (cleansed) leper

⁵⁸ See Isa 51:9-11, an eschatological petition in which a plea is made that God do in the End Time what he had done in the Beginning. In the “eschatological framework,” the End corresponds to the Beginning (in the words of Hermann Gunkel, “Die Urzeit steht in Entsprechung zur Endzeit”).

⁵⁹ This dominion comes from God, who gives it to whom he will (cf. John 19:11; 10:18), Dan 4:22-23 (the verse numbering is different in the LXX, where it is 4:17). This is related to Mark 2:1-12.

⁶⁰ I got this idea from Harmut Stegemann, in his book *The Library of Qumran*. There is a very interesting discussion of what a “new” or “other” Torah could mean in DAVIES, *Torah in the Messianic Age*. See also the index in Davies’ book, *Paul and Rabbinic Judaism*, and footnote 27 above. *The Jerusalem Bible* entitles Ezek 40-48 (the eschatological ending of that book) “The Torah of Ezekiel,” in the sense of “priestly teaching,” which is the original meaning of “Torah.”

and the woman with the blood flow, from whom, in a sense, the curse of Gen 3:16 is removed.

We return to the question: how will all this take place? Perhaps a rather subtle hint, which Mark does not develop (but which I will try to do in the final chapter), is given in Mark 1:24. The unclean spirit calls Jesus the “holy one of God,” an expression which Ernst Lohmeyer considered a priestly title, as in Psa 106:16 (applied to Aaron; it is not difficult to see the priestly relevance of its use in John 6:69). But we must first tread a more immediate path, that regarding Jesus’ “power” (dominion), and its effects. From thence we pass over to soteriology, the question of how Jesus saves, to finally enter more fully into Christology (who is Jesus, and what does it mean to call him the “Son of God”?).

It is Jesus’ *exousía* which permits him to cast out the demon in Mark 1, and, ultimately, do away with evil (at least incipiently; perhaps this is the meaning, or a meaning, of some of the instances of “he began” which Mark is so fond of; see, e.g., Mark 11:15). We can say that this *exousía* is what enables Jesus to cleanse, heal, the leper in Mark 1:40-45; the leper in fact begs Jesus to do what the leper knows Jesus *is able* to do.⁶¹ It is *exousía* which allows Jesus both to restore the paralytic as well as forgive his sins, Mark 2:1-12; here we should note verse 10 (in the Greek word order): “so that you know that *exousía* has the Son of man to forgive sins *upon the earth*.” Feuillet has noted how “upon the earth” remits us to LXX Dan 4:17, which says: “until it be known that the Lord of heaven *exousía* has over all that is in heaven and upon the earth, and what he wills, he does in them.” Jesus communicates this *exousía* to cast out demons to the Twelve, Mark 3:15; 6:7; cf. 13:34. But the great discussion of this word is found in Mark 11, the chapter of the “cleansing of the temple.”

We have seen that it was Burton Mack who pointed to the link between Jesus’ first exorcism in Mark 1 and the “casting out” (it is the same Greek verb, *ekballō*, used

⁶¹ Lohmeyer, Lloyd Gaston, and many others have seen in the leper episode a great anti-priestly critique, since Jesus is in effect rubbing in their face what no Jewish priest could do (cf. 2 Kgs 5:6-7; only God could heal a leper). Jesus “commands” the leper to comply with the Lev 14 ritual (where, by the way, an *ašam* —that global sacrificial offering which we saw with respect to Isa 53:10; Rom 8:3— was offered). But the leper disobeys and begins, on the contrary, to preach about Jesus. The Greek phrase *eis martúron autois*, which also appears in Mark 6:11 and 13:9, should be translated “as a witness *against* them” (i.e., the priests of the temple which Jesus will “destroy”). The leper would be testimony of Jesus’ *exousía* which will render them obsolete.

for exorcisms in Mark 1:34, 39; 3:15, etc.) of the sellers and buyers in Mark 11:15. Mack also points to the references to “teaching” in both passages, Mark 1:22, 27; 11:17, 18. But most important is the link by way of *exousía*.⁶² The Jewish leaders ask Jesus with what *exousía* he does “these things.” The apparent reference is to what Jesus has just done in the temple; see John 2:18, where clearly they ask Jesus for a “sign” (a Johannine concept) to justify his action in the temple; Jesus then obviously refers to his body which will be destroyed and raised, which will be the new temple, the new place to encounter God (cf. John 4:21-24) and the Lamb, Rev 21:22; cf. Acts 7:48-50.

If the reference in Mark 11 is only to what Jesus has just done in the temple, this would suffice, because if that is understood at the deep level of Mark’s gospel, it comprises its whole theology and soteriology. We will return to this. But “these things,” given the fact that Jesus refers back to John the Baptist, could very well stand for the whole of the *éschaton*, the End Time which began with the Baptist and his preaching and dramatic symbolization (by the crossing of the Jordan) of the final Exodus, of definitive salvation by the eschatological forgiveness of sins (that of the New Covenant of Jer 31:31-34, a concept dear to the Qumranites, too; cf. Heb 8:6-10:18). And it is a time (or season, in Greek *kairós*) when there is no mention of the temple in regards to this forgiveness, at least if by “temple” we understand the Herodian building in Jerusalem so despised by the Qumran Essenes. It is the *kairós* of the ‘fullness of time’ of the Kingdom, Mark 1:15; it is the final *kairós*, when the beloved Son is sent, Mark 12:2, 6; it is the *kairós* in which there is no more place for the fig tree which represents the temple, Mark 11:13.

We can therefore say that what Jesus “programmatically” does in Mark 1 is closely related to his last great action, what he did in the temple. The whole of Mark’s gospel up to this point has been a preparation for this.⁶³ We have to return to this, too. But, in reality, there remains another very great action for Jesus: his crucifixion, preceded by his trial before the “whole Sanhedrin.” In these two instances, there is the shadow of

⁶² There is also a very clear link between Mark 2:6 and 11:31 which is lost in translation. In both verses, the Greek verb *dialogízomai*, “to discuss, reason,” which always appears in Mark in the context of lack of faith: 2:6, 8; 8:16-17; 9:33; 11:31. Another link is the strange “bed-fellowship” of Pharisees and Herodians in 3:6 and 12:13.

⁶³ We can actually begin with Mark 1:2, where Mal 3:1 is quoted, a verse which is followed by “and suddenly shall come to his temple (Hebrew *hēikal*, Greek *naós*) the Lord whom you seek, and the angel of the covenant in whom you delight.”

the “destruction” of the temple. In Mark 14:58, Jesus is “accused” of threatening to destroy the temple made by human hands (an expression applied to idols in Psa 115:4; Isa 37:19, etc.) in order to build another one in (or after) three days.⁶⁴ In Mark 15:29, the crucified Jesus is “mocked” with the utterance that ‘he is [at that very moment, using the present participle] destroying the temple and building [another one] in three days’. It is Mark who wants to inculcate this, more or less subtly, and he again intimates it when the temple curtain is rent as Jesus dies.⁶⁵ We then have to ask ourselves: what kind of *exousía* is this, and where did Jesus get this *exousía* from?

The *exousía* is that of Dan 7:14, which God has and gives to whom he will. It is the *exousía* that is given to the “Son of man.” Jesus uses this title often in Mark; it refers to the one with power (cf. Mark 2:10, 28; 9:9) who comes on the clouds, 8:38; 13:26; 14:62 —except when it is the subject of the Passion: 8:31; 9:12, 31; 10:33-34, 45; 14:21, 41. This means that the glorious Son of man has much to do with —is combined with— the Suffering Servant of Isaiah.⁶⁶ The Daniel group had already identified itself with the Servant of the fourth poem, linking their common destinies. The fourth poem begins “behold my servant ‘shall prosper’ (*yaskîl*); the Daniel group called itself the *maskîlîm*, the participle of the same Hebrew verb *sakal*, which can also mean “teach, be successful.”⁶⁷ This group, similar to that of the “servants” of Tr-Isa (also called the “chosen ones,” “mourners,” “tremblers”) who shall be vindicated (Isa 65:13-25; 66:5), suffers because of their leadership in the resistance of the “many,” Dan 11:33-35, thus

⁶⁴ A clear link has been noted between Jesus’ trial, featuring witnesses who give false testimony, Mark 14:57, and the trial of Jeremiah for having prophesied in his day the destruction of the temple, Jer 7 (it is from this chapter that Jesus quotes in Mark 11:17). In the LXX version of Jer 26 (LXX Jer 33), it is the “false prophets” who seek Jeremiah’s death.

⁶⁵ In the “Gospels according to the Hebrews,” quoted by Jerome in his Commentary on Matthew, 27:51, says that the stone lintel of the temple, “of infinite size,” was broken and split when Jesus died. On the other hand, although I did not quite see it thus in my dissertation (see pp. 119-120), the rending of the temple curtain in Mark can signify not only destruction, but also a new access to God inaugurated by Jesus (see Heb 10:19-20, and 6:19-20, with reference to Melchizedek); this can be deduced from the connection between Mark 1:10 (where the heavens are *split*) and 15:38 (where the curtain was *split*); in both instances, the passive form of the Greek verb *schizo* (whence comes the words “schizophrenia” and “schism”) is used (“schism” appears in Mark 2:21, translated by the RSV “tear”). BIGUZZI, *Io distruggerò*, 147-151, 166, does not see it thus. See DAVID ULANSEY, “The Heavenly Veil Torn: Mark’s Cosmic Inclusion,” *Journal of Biblical Literature* 110 (1991) 123-125.

⁶⁶ The Similitudes of 1 Enoch had already combined the Chosen (or Elect) One of Yahweh of Dt-Isa with the Son of man, but the latter is not to suffer; see JAMES VANDERKAM, *An Introduction to Early Judaism* (Grand Rapids – Cambridge, UK: Eerdmans, 2001), 112.

⁶⁷ See H.L. GREENBERG, “The Oldest Interpretation of the Suffering Servant,” *Vetus Testamentum* 3 (1953), 400-404.

being purified and even martyred, “until the time of the End.” They are the ones who in the resurrection “shall shine like the brightness of the firmament” (*RSV*), because they *justified many*, Dan 12:1-3; cf. Matt 13:43. “To justify” and “many” are our second and third links (the first came from the common use of the verb *sakal*) between the Daniel group and the Suffering Servant, who will “justify many,” Isa 53:11.⁶⁸

The basis for the efficacy of Jesus the Son of man’s exousía. There is no doubt that Jesus has—that he has been given (cf. Matt 28:18; John 10:18)— *exousía*. It is the *exousía* of the Danielic Son of man, connected to the Kingdom of God and to purificatory suffering, as we have seen. This “son of man,” who in the Jewish tradition became the Messiah (1 Enoch is the best illustration of this, in the part called the Similitudes or Parables, considered by Nicklesburg and VanderKam as having been written before the time of Jesus),⁶⁹ already in Daniel sits on a throne beside God, and receives divine prerogatives, Dan 7:14 (although the collective aspect is also present in Dan 7, i.e., “the saints of the Most High”). Psa 89, much influenced by Ugaritic traditions regarding the ancient God ’El and the younger, kind-of usurper Ba’al, presents David as God’s lieutenant, sharing with God great cosmic power (both tame Sea, with protological-eschatological nuances).⁷⁰

Now, this “Messiah” is the “son of God” by antonomasia (use of an epithet or title in order to refer to a person with whom it is closely associated, as saying “the Apostle” to mean “Paul”). This is apparent from the foundational messianic prophecy, 2 Sam 7:14, “I will be to him a father and he will be to me a son.” Also in Psa 2:7, “You are my son, today I have begotten you,” a psalm linked, as we said, to Psa 110 (Heb 1:5-13).⁷¹ Psa 89:27-28 says that ‘David the servant of God’ will call God his father, and that God will

⁶⁸ We might ask if the “knowledge” (*da’at*) of the Servant, Isa 53:11, has something to do with “knowledge” in Dan 12:4 (in Hebrew; the text is sometimes emended to *ra’ah*, “evil”), or even Dan 12:10 (only the *maskilim*, who have been purified by suffering, understand; cf. Heb 5:8; Mark 13:14).

⁶⁹ I think these two are the most knowledgeable contemporary experts on 1 Enoch; Nicklesburg has written a substantial first volume (Hermeneia Series) on 1 Enoch, but we await the second volume, which will deal with the Similitudes, the latest part of 1 Enoch.

⁷⁰ See PAUL MOSCA, “Ugarit and Daniel 7,” *Biblica* 67 (1986), 496-517. Mosca says that in Psa 89 David is invited to play Ba’al to Yahweh, in ’El’s role. Dominion over Sea (the Canaanite deity Yamm) and the destruction of the sea monster Rahab (Psa 89:10-11; Isa 52:9-11), like messianic dominion over them (Psa 89:26; Zech 9:9-10; Psa 72: see the likening of the Messiah to the sun in verses 5, 17 and in 2 Sam 23:1-5), are models or types of God’s eschatological victory (see the passages in Revelation on the Beast, 13:1; 19:20; Sea will disappear, 21:1).

⁷¹ Jesus (or, at least, Mark), criticized the scribes’ interpretation of Psa 110 in Mark 12:35-37: the Messiah is not merely son of David, but rather his Lord, sitting as he does at God’s right hand (cf. Mark 14:62).

make him the first-born, and *'elyôn* (“Most High,” an epithet of Ba‘al and of God, e.g., in Gen 14:18; Deut 32:8, and Dan 7, in Aramaic *'elyônîn*; cf. Mark 5:7) of the kings of the earth. Now, “first-born” is also Israel, Exod 4:22; the plagues of the Book of Exodus are the result of Egypt’s enslavement of Israel (cf. Wis 18:13; Hos 11:1; Matt 2:15). See also Wis 12:7; 9:4; 12:20; 18:9; 19:7, for instances of Israel as son (in Greek, *pais*) of God, in the context of the Exodus.

“Son of God” is also the righteous sufferer, as in Wis 2:18 (in Greek, *huiós*, “son,” but also *pais*, “child, servant,” as in 2:13). We recall that *pais* is the LXX translation of “slave, servant” (Hebrew *'ebed*) in Isa 52:13.⁷² Matt 27:43 cites or alludes to Wis 2:17-20, applying it to Christ on the cross. Moreover, the child or son is disciplined, corrected, as we see frequently in Proverbs (e.g., Prov 13:24), and as Yahweh did with Israel in the desert, Deut 8:2-6 (cf. 1:31). Jesus as Son also had to experience this: Heb 5:8; cf. 12:5-9. He was put to the test in the wilderness, Mark 1:12-13, as Israel had been (cf. Matt 4:4, 7), and as the Servant, he accepted this “correction or discipline.”⁷³ So that Jesus, as the “Son of God,” had to suffer, Mark 8:31; cf. Luke 24:26-27. This is the mystery of the “Son of man,” the title that Jesus uses when speaking of his Passion. It is an enigmatic, polyvalent expression; some have thought that it is a humble way of referring to himself, and there is some truth to this. But the “Son of man” who travels on clouds at God’s right hand (Mark 13:26; 14:62) is not just humble. In Daniel he receives “dominion and glory and kingship, that all peoples, nations and languages should serve him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion that shall not pass away, and his kingship is one that shall never be destroyed” (NRSV). Great Daniel scholars (such as John J. Collins) have seen an angelic figure in the “one like a son of man,” even the angel Michael of Dan 10:13, 21; 12:1. It is common in the Bible to say “man” to mean “angel”: Gen 18:2, 22; 19:1, 5; Judg 13:6; LXX Judg 13:11; Luke 24:4, 23. etc. Now, what at one point in the Bible is called “angel” was previously called “a son of God”: thus the Hebrew text of Deut 32:8 and Job 1:6; 2:1, while the LXX translates

⁷² In Isa 53:11, the LXX has “he shall justify the righteous one who serves many well.” Recall Acts 4:27, 30.

⁷³ In Hebrew, *mûsar*, Isa 53:5, as in Prov 13:24; the verb form is found in Deut 8:5; in Greek the word is *paideia* (cognate of *pais*), and the verb is *paideuein*, which figures prominently in Heb 12:5-11.

“angels.” Cf. Luke 20:36; Wis 5:1-5 (“holy ones” usually means “angels,” as in Zech 14:5).

The Qumranites saw in the figure of Melchizedek a divine being (Baumgarten calls it a “divine hypostasis”), the *’Elohim* of Psa 82:1 who presides (“stands up”) in the divine assembly, amidst the other *’elohim*.⁷⁴ He is the heavenly counterpart (as is Michael) to the evil being Beliar (“Melchireša’,” “king of wickedness,” as Melchizedek means “king of righteousness”).⁷⁵ This Melchizedek is the one who will proclaim the final Jubilee, on Yom Kippur (11QMelchizedek). Jesus also proclaimed this final Jubilee in Luke 4, and is likened to Melchizedek in the Epistle to the Hebrews (besides the allusions to Melchizedek when there are references to Psa 110, as in, e.g., Mark 12:35-37; 14:62). Baumgarten also notes that another redeemer figure in “intertestamental” Judaism is that of the eschatological priest, who binds Belial (as Jesus does with Satan in Mark 3:22-30), who “is to atone [Hebrew verb *kipper*] for all the children of his generation.” He is like the Suffering Servant in that he is “the object of rejection and calumny on the part of his antagonists.” Baumgarten defends the use of the singular verb in regards to messianic expiation (that is, he advocates that there is but one Messiah, not two, as is often said of Qumran) in CD 14:19, an atonement for sin which will be better than the *minhā* (cereal offering, as in Mal 3:4) and the sin-offering.⁷⁶ Our good rabbi says that these sectarian writings

envison a time when the perfection of priestly and lay institutions will become a source of atonement which will be available without the need for ritual sacrifice [footnote omitted]. In CD 14:19 it is the Messiah of Aaron and Israel, standing at the head of the total community, both priestly and lay, who will have the role of

⁷⁴ BAUMGARTEN, “Messianic Forgiveness,” 539. In Ugarit, as in Greece, there was a great God surrounded by his court, which was made up of lesser deities (in both cultures, they lived atop a mountain). In Ugarit, the great God was *’El*, portrayed as an old man with white hair, like the “Ancient of days” of Dan 7:9 (whom “one like a son of man” approaches on clouds; Ba’al, the Ugaritic-Canaanite god inferior to *’El* but who was on the way up, also traveled on clouds). There is much literature on all this, but one could begin with J.A. EMERTON, “The Origin of the Son of Man Imagery,” *Journal of Theological Studies*, N.S. 9.2 (1958) 225-242, and with the works of John J. Collins. Many see the divine “council” (*sôd*) in the background of the use of the plural in Gen 1:26 (“let us make Adam etc.”); the *sôd* (the heavenly court, God’s attendants, his “cabinet”) figures in Jer 23:18, 22; 1 Kgs 22:19-23; Isa 6:1-8; Job 1:6-12; 2:1-7. J.A. Sanders has interpreted Phil 2:6 (Christ who was in the form of God emptied himself) as a voluntary fall from the divine council, where he occupied a divine position. Recall that Jesus cites Psa 82 in John 10:34.

⁷⁵ See the interesting work of KOBELSKI, *Melchizedek and Melchireša*.

⁷⁶ BAUMGARTEN, “Messianic Forgiveness,” 540-541.

providing atonement. He will do so not through any prescribed ritual, but as the divinely anointed redeemer through whom forgiveness of sin will be granted.⁷⁷

Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, who is also the Suffering Servant of Yahweh (and the Chosen One) and the “Son of man” of Daniel. It is his sacrificial offering which Yahweh accepts as “ransom (the *kōpher* of Exod 30:12) for many,” Mark 10:45; cf. Isa 53:4-6, 10-12; Eph 5:2; Heb 10:12. Jesus undergoes —*suffers*, from the Latin *sub-fero*, sub-port, carry— all that brings one to obedience, that is, he submits to a purification (cf. Mal 3:3-4; Zech 13:7-9; Luke 12:49-50) which “perfects” him (Heb 5:5-10), probably in the sense of “priestly ordination.”⁷⁸ This disciplinary correction, of a father to his son, is the *mûsar* which brought of salvation (*šalôm*; cf. Eph 2:14) of Isa 53:5.⁷⁹ It is the purification, the crossing of the sea (not just as an instrument of cleansing, as was the flood, but also as the place of the ordeal, as in Psa 69 (quite “quarried” in the effort to understand Jesus’ Passion, e.g., in John 2:17). It is in this sense that Jesus speaks of his “baptism,” Luke 13:50; Mark 10:38-39.⁸⁰ But this “baptism” had already been symbolized by John the Baptist, who thus pointed not only to “conversion” (in Hebrew, *šûvah* or return) to Yahweh, but to the return (same Hebrew verb) to the Land, not merely in a geographical sense, but in a theologico-salvific one, that is, the final salvation which Israel awaited (it is in this sense that in Luke 9:31 Moses and Elijah talk with Jesus

⁷⁷ BAUMGARTEN, “Messianic Forgiveness,” 541-542. In answer to those who doubt that such divine powers could be attributed to one who is not God, Baumgarten notes that “In apocalyptic literature, however, one finds considerably less restraint in assigning the function of divine judgment to surrogate figures. This is well illustrated by the role of the Elect One or the Messiah in the *Parables of Enoch*, whose pre-Christian origin is now widely accepted. As Nicklesburg observes, the ‘Elect One is the agent of God’s judgment and as such is depicted with imagery that the early chapters of Enoch ascribe to God himself’ [footnote omitted].” Already in the Hebrew Bible, we find something like “lieutenants” of God in the theologies of the Name of Yahweh (Deuteronomistic; it is God’s Name, not Yahweh himself, who dwells in the temple, e.g., in 1 Kgs 8:16, 20, 27-29) and of God’s Glory (Priestly; it is Yahweh’s Glory which leaves the temple by grades in Ezek 9:3; 10:4, 18; 11:23; it returns in 43:1-4, in the eschatological restoration. Jesus himself used circumlocutions for God (“hallowed by thy Name,” “the Kingdom of the heavens”). The Targum (Aramaic “translation” —really, a commentary— of the Hebrew Scriptures) uses “Word” (*Memra*) for this divine presence, which is reminiscent of the Johannine Logos. One can consult the somewhat extravagant work of DANIEL BOYARIN, “The Gospel of the *Memra*: Jewish Binitarianism and the Prologue to John,” *Harvard Theological Review* 94:3 (2001), 243-284.

⁷⁸ The LXX translates the Hebrew expression “and you shall fill the hands of Aaron and his sons” in Exod 29:9 by “and you shall perfect the hands of Aaron and of his sons.”

⁷⁹ Eph 2:11-22, which speaks about the end of the Torah whose purpose was to separate Jew from Gentile; cf. Rom 10:4; Matt 5:17-18.

⁸⁰ See also the terrible Psa 88:17-18, “your burning anger has crossed over me. . . they surround me like the waters all the day.” This psalm (verses 9, 19 in the LXX) explains (together with Psa 38:12) why Jesus was abandoned, according to Luke 23:49.

about his *exodus*). This is the Good News of Isaiah, the “consolation” (cf. Luke 2:25) of Israel after having paid “double” for its sins, Isa 40:1-11. And an integral part of what this prophet wrote about were the famous “songs of the Suffering Servant.” But it was Jesus who paid this *kōpher* required for entrance into the Land: Exod 30:13 literally says: “this shall give everyone who *crosses* to the numbering (census), a half sheqel according to the temple sheqel.”⁸¹ In Exod 30:16, it is called “a memorial (*zikkārôn*) before Yahweh for the ransom of their lives.”⁸² The “temple” (or “sanctuary”) sheqel had a purer content of silver: it was the Tyrian sheqel, the only one accepted in the temple. This was the principal reason for the moneychangers in the temple, especially during Passover; this was the reason for the tables which Jesus overturned. The beneficiary of this tax was the temple, Exod 30:16; 38:24-26. This is why, as part of his symbolic destruction of the temple, with the cessation of its sacrificial cult, Jesus overturned the moneychangers’ tables: the children of God do not have to pay this tax, Matt 17:24-26.

But the question remains how this Messiah, or “global redeemer,” shall bring about this atonement, and why it will be efficacious. This will be the work (see John 4:34; 17:4; 19:30) of Jesus’ Passion and crucifixion. In Gethsemane, he submits to the [page 46] will of the Father, Mark 14:32-42 (cf. Isa 53:10, and, really, the whole of Isa 53). Jesus gives us a glimpse of this in Mark 10:45 and 14:22-24. And, according to

⁸¹ Recall that Deut 29:11 (or 29:12) uses the expression “to cross into the covenant” (see footnote 36 above). A recent book which I have had the opportunity only to peruse is that of ALFRED MARX, *Les systèmes sacrificiels de l’Ancien Testament: Formes et fonctions du culte sacrificiel à Yhwh* (Supp. Vetus Test. 105; Leiden: Brill, 2005), reviewed by James W. Watts in *Review of Biblical Literature* (May 2007; it can be read on the Society of Biblical Literature’s website (<http://www.sbl-site.org>)). As indicated in the review, Marx (50, 77-80, 86-87, 202-204) says that Israel’s sacrifices were a feudal tribute, that is, rental fees to God as the owner of the Land (see Lev 25:23). He notes that *minhāh* (usually, “cereal offering,” though not always) means “tribute,” and that the vegetable offerings could have represented the Land itself. I would further state that the purpose of the temple was to legitimize the bloody sacrifice of animals (mostly for eating purposes). In the return to mankind’s original state (the goal of the eschatological hope), these violent killings would end (cf. Isa 11:6-9, featuring a vegetarian lion, etc., and Dan 6:23-25; Daniel was a vegetarian, Dan 1:12-17); the concession (allowing the killing of animals for food) made after the flood (Gen 9:1-7; cf. Gen 1:28-31) would end. Watts states that Marx sees, “In P’s unique attention to vegetable offerings (Lev 2) [an anticipation of] an eschatological time marked by nonviolence (222).” Recall also that in Mal 3:3-4, what the Levites, who shall have been purified by the Lord who comes to his temple, will offer is the *minhāh*. The *kōpher* (“ransom”) of Exod 30:12 in order to enter the Land accords very well with Marx’s idea; we could almost speak of a toll.

⁸² This expression, “as a memorial or reminder,” is found in reference to the Passover, Exod 12:14; to the solemn festal assemblies, Num 10:10; to the crossing of the Jordan, Josh 4:7; and in Zech 6:14, in a messianic context. The verse in Num 10:10 is translated by the LXX “and it shall be for you a reminder (*anámnesis*) before your God;” *anámnesis* is the word used in Luke 22:19; 1 Cor 11:24-25 (also in LXX Psa 69:1 [MT 70:1]).

Mark, it is only when Jesus has died in this way that the first human being (besides the narrator, the Father, the demons and Jesus himself), the Roman centurion, can recognize that Jesus “was truly the Son of God,” 15:39. He is the son whom the Father did not spare, John 3:16; Rom 8:32; 1 John 4:9-10, as Abraham (the “great father,” which is the meaning of *Avram*, of which *Avraham* is a variant) did not spare Isaac.⁸³ Now we have to explore why Jesus’ sacrifice was efficacious (why it, or he, could “replace” the temple).

⁸³ The popular etymology of Abraham in Gen 17:5 is not accurate; see the *Jerusalem Bible* note. The “revelation of his Son” which God the Father granted to Paul, Gal 1:15-16, was essentially that of the crucified Lord, Gal 3:1-5; 6:14; 1 Cor 2:1-2; cf. Eph 3:1-13; John 12:32.

