

Theological Interpretation of Jesus' Temple-Action in the Gospel According to Mark

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Introduction

The purpose of these pages, and of this seminar, is to give a global theological interpretation of the person and mission of Jesus according to Mark the Evangelist, taking as a starting point Jesus' famous "action" in the temple, usually called "the cleansing of the temple."¹ We cannot here call it thus, since an important part of our thesis is that, in Mark, what Jesus does and symbolizes in Mark 11:15-16 is the *opposite* of a cleansing: it is rather a portent of the total destruction of the temple, explicitly announced in Mark 13:2. So that we must then speak either of Jesus' "action" in the temple, or of the "so-called temple-cleansing." I do not deny that in Luke or John what is portrayed may well be considered to be a cleansing, or a (mere) protest against commerce in the temple, but it is not so in Mark; what is more, I think I have shown, in my doctoral dissertation, that, if the Marcan account is compared with a true and explicitly so-described cleansing or purification (*katharismós*) of the temple, as occurs in the books of the Maccabees, we find some seven elements common to Mark and 1-2 Macc, only *inversely* related. That is, these seven elements in the books of the Maccabees are part of a purification and restoration of the holy place, while in Mark they are part of a destructive, apocalyptic, profanatory scenario, in which the Jewish temple will no longer have a place.

What we want to do here is, in effect, give a global theological interpretation of the "second" gospel. I, along with most scholars, believe that "Mark" is the first gospel, something which presents an interesting situation in which to deal with two questions: do the other canonical gospels simply follow Mark, perhaps without understanding the significance of what is being narrated in Mark 11:15-17 (or, more broadly, 11:11-26)? And what could Jesus have really done, as far as that type of thing is concerned (protest

¹ Note of caution: this presentation may seem very dense (or complicated) in the beginning, but there will be lots of repetition of the topics and points which will be made. So please follow the class presentations with patience: all will be better understood as we go along. It is very important that the reader look up all the Scripture cites given here, or, at least, as many as possible! Otherwise, a lot of what is being presented will be lost.

against commerce, etc.), in the temple; that is, how historical is Mark's account, or that of the other evangelists? Mark presents a very symbolic and stylized action, literally impossible to carry out, even for the "Son of God": to throw out *everyone* from the temple and not allow anyone to transport vessels (that is, anything) through the temple. Since nothing of this sort is mentioned in any other ancient source, or even as an issue in the trials against Jesus, my conclusion is that if something did take place, its magnitude is inversely proportional to its historicity. That is to say, only something which basically went unnoticed, some minor event, could have happened, and then, what "real" (as opposed to "symbolic") importance did what Jesus is said to do in the temple have?

We hope to see all this more carefully in the chapters which follow. For now, in this introduction, our plan is to proceed from an analysis of the "temple action" (first chapter) on to the topic of what "Mark's Gospel" (Mark) intends to portray regarding Jesus' person and mission.

The title for Jesus which is most operative in Mark, to begin with, is "Son of man," with its unique quality. This term comes from Dan 7:13-14, which depicts an important scenario in the Bible for "advanced circles" in the Judaism of the time. This "son of man" is given, in Greek, *exousía*, what is usually translated "authority" (as in Mark 1:22), but which is better translated "dominion," which better corresponds to the Aramaic *šaltan*. In Aramaic, as in the Greek translation of the LXX, this word "dominion" appears three times in Dan 7:14; it is important. So that in chapter two we will treat of the Son of man and of his "dominion."

This now places us in eschatology, for the whole second part of Daniel, chapters 7-12 (leaving aside what is deuterocanonical, as are chapters 13-14), is eschatological and apocalyptic. That is, Dan 7 speaks of the Kingdom of God, which, together with "the Son of man," are among Jesus' key expressions. Here we also find the "apocalyptic-eschatological" vision concerning the beasts that come out of the Sea (the empires), and from whom dominion is taken away, precisely in order to give it to "one like a son of man," that is, the human being, or, especially, the good Jew, who had maintained faithfulness in trial and had been purified; these are called the "saints of the Most High," or the "people of the saints of the Most High," in Dan 7:18, 27. All this is pregnant with soteriological symbolism, and we wish to show that this is part of the religious world of

Jesus, and of his ideas, and, more specifically, of the picture of the Savior which Mark presents.

We shall also see that the world of Dan 7-12 is not so far removed from that of Second Isaiah (Dt-Isa), chapters 40-55 (or even up to and including chapter 66, at the end of the book). We shall see a link between the “Daniel group” and the “Servant” of Dt-Isa, and perhaps also with the “servants” of Third Isaiah (Tr-Isa, chapters 56-66). Certainly Dt-Isa is the prophet of the “Good News” (Isa 40:9; 52:7; 61:1 in Tr-Isa), and Mark begins his gospel (in Greek, *euangelion*) quoting him. Rikki Watts has a book almost 500 pages long on the topic of “Isaiah’s New Exodus in Mark” (the announcement of the “new exodus” is the “good news,” which is what the word “gospel” means).² These concepts are extremely important, and will be part of our exposition of Mark’s portrait of Jesus, which we shall discuss in the third chapter.

Then, in chapter four, we shall treat of Jesus as Son of God, which is Mark’s highest title for him. This title indicates something mysterious, unknown to all human beings until the moment of Jesus’ death. Rather than it being a matter of a “Messianic Secret” (William Wrede, 1901), the real secret in Mark is about who Jesus really is. Jesus is the one who finally, eschatologically, defeats evil, thus bringing salvation. What must be pondered is what is asked in Mark 4:41: “Who is this who even wind and Sea obey?” Jesus had just then “rebuked” the storm using the same “exorcism formula” (literally, “muzzle yourself”) that he had used in his first exorcism in Mark 1:25, when the demoniac had declared that Jesus, the “holy one of God,” had come to destroy evil.

Finally, we shall discuss other Christological and soteriological issues related to what has preceded, placing Jesus and his interpreters (probably including Mark himself and, if not, us ourselves as Mark’s interpreters) in a broader context, which includes Qumran and the first Book of Enoch, and the “Enochian group” (Sacchi, Boccaccini). Here we shall adduce elements which help us to understand Jesus and his movement within dissident Judaism, “advanced” circles which followed a different sacred calendar, who calculated the time of the end (like Daniel), who combined redeemer-figures into one (Enoch), who awaited final salvation through Melchizedek, in the tenth

² *Isaiah’s New Exodus in Mark* (Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr [Paul Siebeck], 1997; Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, reprinted 2000).

eschatological jubilee (Qumran). In this way, exploring the topic “Jesus as high priest” in Mark, we shall complete our presentation regarding what Mark wants to tell us about Jesus as eschatological savior, after having taken the temple “incident” as our starting point. We shall end with a brief conclusion.

Chapter One: Mark 11:15-17

Literal interpretation of the verses in their context. Mark relates that, after his “messianic entry” into Jerusalem, Jesus’ immediate object, his goal, was the temple, 11:11. But, unlike the other gospels, Jesus, after having observed everything, leaves the temple. That is, only Mark tells us that Jesus interrupted his visit to the temple, that he went out shortly after he first went in.

The reason for this is that Mark wants to “sandwich” the temple incident in between the fig tree episode (divided into the two “breads” of the sandwich, the temple incident being the “meat”). Only Mark has made such a composition. His “sandwiching” or “dovetailing” technique is well-known; he forms a whole out of two separate things or events, like a dovetail. Thus one episode is interpreted through another, mutually; each is reinforced, and the key to the whole is brought out more strongly.³

The unity of the passage is thus: Jesus, the day after leaving the temple, goes out of Bethany and, from afar, sees a fig tree with leaves; each word is important, and has a meaning. Jesus wants to find some fruit on it, but finds only leaves, for it was not the *kairós* for figs. The *kairós* (time, season, moment, period) of the Kingdom brings new things: see Mark 1:15. Leaves only (just appearances) are not enough; cf. Mic 7:1-7. Jesus then says “may no one ever again eat fruit from you.” The disciples heard this: that is, we should be prepared for the sequel, for what follows.

³ A good example is found in Mark 5:21-43, composed of the “breads” of Jairus’ daughter and the “meat” of the woman with the blood flow. Jairus prays that Jesus go and lay his hands on his daughter in order to heal her—she’s about to die—so that she may be saved and live. The girl is twelve, and has already died. What is necessary is faith, and Jesus will take her by the hand and will give her life, that is, he saves her. In the middle, we are told about a woman who had suffered from a chronic blood flow; menstruation is a typical subject in the Bible and in Jewish tradition (the Mishnah devotes a whole tractate to it, Niddah). It is the subject matter of Lev 15, which includes the case of abnormally prolonged menstrual bleeding, 15:25-27. The husband could not have relations with her, for it would bring the most horrific type of impurity, the kind that made the Land vomit its inhabitants (exile), Lev 18:19, 24-30. But Mark 5:29 seems rather to quote LXX 12:7, regarding the woman who has given birth. This indicates that both Jairus’ daughter (whom Jesus touches) and the bleeding woman (who touches Jesus) are really dead, more because of the fact that they had had no children than because of actual death: sterility was death for the Hebrew woman (see Judg 11:37). By quoting Lev 12:7, Mark 5:29 seems to be hinting that the healed woman would give birth, would be alive, just like Jairus’ daughter. The version in Luke 8:42 has been interpreted to mean that the woman had been bleeding *from* twelve years (of age), that is, had never borne children, like Jairus’ daughter. In both cases, faith “saved” (from all forms of death). The “sandwich” enables this mutual interpretation.

It is then that they arrive again in Jerusalem and that Jesus enters the temple.⁴ “He began to cast out those who were selling and those who were buying in the temple.” “Began” is a peculiar Marcan usage, pleonastic (redundant): it does not affect the meaning.⁵ What is important is the expression “cast out;” this is the verb used for exorcisms (as in Mark 3:22). We owe Burton Mack, a scholar with whom I agree but little, the merit of having shown the link between Jesus’ temple action and his first exorcism with “dominion” in Mark 1:21-27.⁶ This we will develop later on.

To cast out sellers and buyers is a “hendiadys,” a totality symbolized by its principal components, or by two extremes (literally, hendiadys means “one thing through/by means of two”). In the temple one was either buying or selling. We may tend to think that the temple should have been a place of prayer, and that animal sacrifices represented an inferior form of worship; at least, the animals should not have been sold in the sacred precincts. But the principal function of the Jewish temple *was to offer such sacrifices*: one need look no further than to the central book of the Torah, Leviticus! The offered animals must be without blemish. We might entertain the speculation that at one time these animals were sold in another place, perhaps across the Kidron Valley (in “Hanuth” = marketplace).⁷ Nothing supports the idea that Jesus was opposed merely to commerce in the holy place, at least according to Mark, albeit that at the level of a more superficial reading one could consider it thus. But let us continue with our exposition of the narrative.

The second element of Jesus’ action is the overturning of the tables of the moneychangers and of the seats of the dove sellers. To “overturn” corresponds to the

⁴ WERNER H. KELBER, in *The Kingdom in Mark. A New Place and a New Time* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1974), 100, has shown that in Mark 11:15-16 we have three prepositions that indicate the totality of Jesus’ action in the temple (it involves the whole of the sacred precincts): Jesus enters *into* the temple, casts out those who were *in* the temple, and allows no transportation of (sacred) vessels *through* the temple.

⁵ See BLASS-DEBRUNNER § 392 (2); J.W. HUNKIN, “Pleonastic ἀρχομαι [to begin] in the New Testament,” *Journal of Theological Studies* 25 (1924) 390-402. But this may also indicate that the End Time and its return-to-Eden state has only begun.

⁶ See Mack’s unbelieving (or at least, iconoclastic) book *A Myth of Innocence. Mark and Christian Origins* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1988).

⁷ See VICTOR EPPSTEIN, “The Historicity of the Gospel Account of the Cleansing of the Temple,” *ZNW* 55 (1964), 49. E.P. SANDERS, in *Jesus and Judaism* (Philadelphia – London: Fortress, 1985), 63, harshly ridicules what he calls the nineteenth-century notion (liberal Protestant) that the temple was for prayer and not animal sacrifice. There was never a time when animals were not being bought or sacrificed right there for that purpose, changing currency if necessary. He concludes by saying: “Here as often as [*sic*] we see a failure to think concretely and a preference for vague religious abstractions.”

Greek verb which gives us the word “catastrophe;” it is a verb which is almost a hapax in the New Testament, that is, it appears only here (“hapax legomenon” = “said only once”); Matt borrows it from Mark.⁸ It is the verb *par excellence* applied to the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah in the LXX, e.g., in Gen 19:25, and to divine threats which seek to evoke that great destruction, “mother of all destructions.”⁹ Now, the tables of the moneychangers were to be found specially during Passover (the Mishnah allowed thirteen of them), for it was then that every Israelite had to pay the “rescue price” (in Hebrew, *kōpher*) for his entry into the Promised Land, Exod 30:12-13, and this was only payable in “sanctuary sheqels,” that is, in Tyrian coinage, from Tyre, in the north of Palestine; it was the silver currency which contained the acceptable level of purity. We shall see that it is Jesus who definitively pays the ransom, Mark 10:45. The doves were what the poor offered (as did Jesus’ parents in Luke 2:24) when they could not afford to buy an animal from the flock (see Lev 12:8; the wretchedly poor could even offer cereal, Lev 5:7, 11). Jesus had healed a leper and a woman with a blood flow; if these were like so many in Israel, they were too poor to offer an animal from the flock, and would have purchased pigeons (see Lev 14 for the case of the leper, and Lev 15 for bleeding women), regarding which, by the way, there are complaints in the Mishnah that they were being sold for twenty-five times their fair price.¹⁰

What follows is very much Mark’s own. He says that Jesus would not allow anyone to transport any *vessels* through the temple. Many translations betray us by translating “anything,” but this *interpretation* is wrong: the Greek word used means

⁸ Other forms of the verb are found in 1 Cor 10:5; the reading in 2 Pet 2:6 is not certain, but in any case refers to Sodom and Gomorrah; see also 2 Tim 2:14, and a variant in Acts 15:16.

⁹ See the interesting use in LXX Job 12:19, in parallelism with the destitution of priests and overthrow of the “powerful” (Hebrew: “those who are firmly in their posts”). See also LXX Job 9:5 (mountains), Job 28:9 (a mountain “from its roots,” like the fig tree in Mark 11:20). In the valuable study by JAMES W. THOMPSON, *The Beginnings of Christian Philosophy: The Epistle to the Hebrews* (Catholic Biblical Quarterly Monograph Series, 13; Washington, D.C.: Catholic Biblical Association of America, 1982), 125, it is stated that a major difference between Christ’s priesthood and the levitical priesthood is that the latter is transitory, while Christ’s *paraménein*, “a strengthened form of [the Greek verb “to remain”], and is used here to mean “abide in office” [footnote reference to Otto Michel’s *Der Brief an die Hebräer* (KEKNT; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck und Ruprecht, 12. Auflage, 1966), 276]. Josephus, *Antiquities* 11. 309, used *paraménein* to claim that the Jewish high priesthood did remain!

¹⁰ See CRAIG A. EVANS, “Jesus’ Action in the Temple: Cleansing or Portent of Destruction?,” *CBQ* 51 (1989), 259, who argues that it is indeed a “cleansing” (against Sanders).

vessel, and we should think of sacred vessels used in the temple worship.¹¹ This verse 16, unique to Mark, was omitted by the other evangelists, who do not follow (or perhaps, even understand) this gospel's (theological) presentation.

Now comes Jesus' teaching, which also takes us back to Mark 1:21-27, his first exorcism (Mack). First, Jesus says that the eschatological name of the temple will be "house of prayer" (Lohmeyer), quoting a significant passage from Third Isaiah, Isa 56:7. This passage is found in an astonishingly inclusive context, regarding eunuchs and foreigners (compare Deut 23:2-7), which forms a set of bookends (inclusion) with the end of Isaiah, where foreigners are admitted to the Jewish priesthood (which had become rigorously exclusive). And Isa 56:8, in a rather veiled manner, speaks of the inclusion of 'yet others' in addition to those already gathered.

The second part of Jesus' teaching is taken from Jer 7:11, in the chapter which predicts the total destruction of the first temple (built by Solomon). Jeremiah denounces the misguided trust placed on the temple, while worshippers kill and exploit and shed blood. The prophet well remembered—he came from a family of priests expelled to Anathoth, that is, Levitical as opposed to Zadokite priests, descendants of Abiathar, the northern rival of Zadok, whom Solomon preferred for having supported his election as king, 1 Kgs 2:26-27—¹² God's destruction of the venerable Shiloh shrine, due to the delinquencies of its priests, the sons of Eli. Thus Jeremiah fears that the House called by Yahweh's Name has become a cave of "bandits," in Hebrew *parîtsîm*, in Greek *lēstaií*. These are not mere thieves or exploiters; the *parîts* sheds blood (see Ezek 18:10), just as the *lēstēs* will become the name of the robbers (who exert physical violence) and of the violent insurgents so despised by Flavius Josephus; this designation appears in Mark 15:27; Luke 10:30; Matt 25:55; John 18:40; 2 Cor 11:26. But who could Jesus have had in mind in Mark 11:17? The "chief priests and scribes" that are mentioned immediately after the temple act (Mark 11:18) want to kill him, but they fear the "people," that is, the

¹¹ Those who argue that Jesus was prohibiting the carrying of anything through the temple think he was following the Mishnah prohibition against using the temple as a shortcut; in other words, he was defending the use of the temple only for sacred purposes. See EMLIO G. CHÁVEZ, *The Theological Interpretation of Jesus' Temple Action in Mark's Gospel* (Lewiston, NY – Queenston, Ontario: Edwin Mellen Press, 2002), 140-142.

¹² Jesus' "mistake" in Mark 2:26 may not be such: Abiathar's name was unmentionable for certain official circles, as can be deduced from 1 Chr 24:3 (the Chronicler, like Jesus, makes a "mistake" and mentions Ahimelek, Abiathar's father, instead of Abiathar, whom he should have named alongside Zadok).

common folk, who favors Jesus. Let us not forget that Jesus would have never been executed by the Romans at the instigation of the Jewish authorities (responsible for keeping the peace, see John 11:47-54) if he had not in some way represented a real threat to the status quo; this is most clearly shown by John 12:12-15, where not just the disciples, but “a great crowd” (NRSV)¹³ acclaims him as king (see already John 6:14-15). This is the “messianic entry” which fulfills the reading of Gen 49:8-12 made by Zech 9:9-10. Only in John do we hear mention of the “palm branches” which were a symbol of political independence (and it was Passover!). And the Romans are in on Jesus’ arrest, John 18:3, 12. For these reasons, the Jewish leaders do not want to arrest him during the feast, fearing the “crowd’s” reaction, Mark 14:1-2.¹⁴ The parable of the “murderous vintners” in Mark 12, which we will see in a moment, illustrates who these “bandits” are, situating them in the history of Israel, which, in Mark’s theological presentation, has reached its end.

And now comes the second half of the fig tree episode; we are now ready for the full sandwich. “Very early” (as in the resurrection, Mark 16:2), the fig tree is seen to have dried up “from the roots.” This evokes total destruction (see LXX Isa 34:1-4). Now we are told (through Peter) that what Jesus had done was to *curse* the fig tree. The drying up of the fig tree symbolizes, represents, the “infarct” that Jesus caused the temple to have when he paralyzed all its activities, casting out the worshippers, “catastrophizing” its providers, and stopping the blood-flow which its vessels made possible. This is how the otherwise unexplainable fig tree episode is mutually-interpreted alongside the temple act.

What follows has to do with the new Christian cult, which consists of having faith (so as to uproot mountains), prayer and mutual forgiveness (on which God’s forgiveness is conditioned, as in the Lord’s Prayer).

¹³ NRSV = *New Revised Standard Version*.

¹⁴ The hypothesis made years ago by Annie Jaubert, that Jesus, like the priestly Qumranites, followed a solar calendar, of very ancient priestly origin, seems to me more and more likely. This could explain how Jesus could have celebrated a Passover “last supper” on Tuesday night, before being arrested and spending a couple of days in jail. Pope Benedict XVI, in his Mass of the Last Supper, Holy Thursday 2007, at St. Peter’s Basilica, adopted this hypothesis of a dissident, solar calendar followed by Jesus, which explains why the official, mainstream Jewish Passover would take place after his death (John 18:28; 19:14, 31); Jesus then ate a lambless Passover, while he died on Friday at the same time that the Passover lambs were being slaughtered in the temple (see the article by Marco Politi, “Quella Pasqua misteriosa,” in the Italian newspaper *La Repubblica*, Saturday April, 7, 2007, page 45). Mark is the gospel most allergic to linking

Now they return to Jerusalem, and the Jewish leaders ask Jesus with what “dominion” he does “this,” and who gave it to him. To what does “this” refer? If we see a hint in Jesus’ reply, “this” must refer to everything that he has done since his baptism by John. Everything depends on whether what John was doing—which initiated Jesus’ eschatological activity—came from heaven (God) or not. God is the one who gives dominion, Dan 4:14, 22-23 (more obvious in LXX 4:17, 31; compare Mark 2:10). John had inaugurated an eschatological mode of forgiveness, which evidently had nothing to do with the temple (see Mark 1:4-8; cf. Matt 3:7-12; 21:31-32). Jesus had been thus initiated into his End Time ministry, one empowered by God, who had granted dominion to his “plenipotentiary” Son of man, Dan 7:14. If the Jewish leaders could not recognize this, too bad, they will have to wait for Jesus’ response. If they do not answer Jesus, neither will he answer them, for the time being. We here have a clear link with the story of the paralytic in Mark 2. There, hearing Jesus forgive sins, the leaders “dialog” (thus is it in Greek, hyperliterally) in their hearts; in Mark 11:31, they “dialog” with each other regarding the origin of Jesus’ *exousía* (linked to his baptism by John). But already, on the basis of Mark 2:10, they should know that Jesus is the Son of man with *exousía* to forgive sins upon the earth, having demonstrated this by healing the paralytic. We must then deepen our discussion of this Danielic *exousía* at work in Jesus, how he could “deserve” it (or how he attained it) and bring it to efficacious perfection (‘the Son of man has to suffer’). This is how Mark 10:45 will be fulfilled.

Now, in order to complete our glance at the context of Jesus’ action in the temple, we will say something about the “bookends,” the *inclusio*, surrounding this context which is delimited precisely by this inclusion (“way of closing in” something). The context begins with Mark 11:1-10, the famous messianic entry into Jerusalem. Note the colt (or young donkey), to which much space is devoted to its being tied and untied. This humble animal that the “Lord” (*kúrios*, also “owner”) needs, is the mount of the humble and peaceful messianic king of Zech 9:9, who enters Jerusalem “just and saved” (this last word has caused perplexity, and the LXX “translate” “saving;” the RSV renders the Hebrew for “just and saved” “triumphant and victorious”); he will have dominion from

Jesus and kingship; compare Mark 10:37 with Matt 11:9-10, and Mark 11:9-10 with Matt 21:4-11 (note the echoes of Matt 2:1-3 here).

sea to sea (see Psa 89). But the originating passage is the “oracle of Judah” in Gen 49:8-12 —we have here one of the instances where Torah is reread by Prophets and definitively reread for Christians as being fulfilled in the New Testament. Jacob, blessing his sons before dying, says that Judah is a lion who will rule over the nations. Judah binds his *purebred jackass* (cf. *NAB*) to the vine: in the eschatological age, the abundance of wine (and of all the products of the earth, see Psa 72) removes any concern that the animal will eat the grapes; what is more, one will even be able to wash clothes in wine! This is the “donkey” that is unleashed in Jesus’ messianic entry: it is the unleashing of the eschatological events. And Jesus is acclaimed with the words of Psa 118, a victory psalm that closes the Hallel, the series of psalms (113-118) that each begins with “hallelu-yah,” that is, they are victory songs which were sung during Passover (see Mark 14:26).

The final section of our context is the parable of the homicidal vinedressers. Jesus here gives his most extended Scripture quote, from Isa 5:1-7, in order to present the history of Israel as one of infidelity. The symbol is the vineyard, cared for by the Lord so that it would give fruit, but it did not; what is more, the “servants” (= prophets) who were sent were mistreated or killed by those who were mere tenants of the Lord’s property (again, *kúrios* in Mark 12:9 means both “owner” and “lord;” cf. Luke 25:23). But in the End (*éschaton*, Mark 12:9), the Lord of the vineyard still had a “beloved son” to send. This is Jesus, the “beloved Son” of the baptism, Mark 1:11, and of the Transfiguration, Mark 9:7 (he is also the “prophet like Moses” who must be listened to, Deut 18:15-19; Acts 3:22-23). “Beloved” (in Greek *agapētós*) is the same word used in the “sacrifice of Isaac,” Gen 22:2, 16, where it translates the Hebrew *yadid*, “only.” Jesus is killed by those who want to usurp the vineyard of the Lord; these are the “bandits” (*lēstai*) alluded to in the Jeremiah quotation in Mark 11:17. Now the ignorance of the authorities (see also Mark 12:24, 27 regarding the Sadducees; cf. Mark 15:35 —the parable follows on the question regarding Jesus’ “authority” in Mark 11:27-33) is interpreted by returning to Psa 118: Jesus is the stone rejected by the builders (of the temple?) which has become the chief stone (of the construction of a new temple, of the Christian community?). The authorities would have arrested him then and there, but they feared the common people (*óchlos*).

Chapter Two: The *exousía* of the Son of man

The connection between exorcism and casting out of the temple. It was Burton Mack, a scholar with whom I have little in common theologically, who first analyzed the role of Jesus' temple action "in terms of Mark's narrative designs."¹⁵ Mack showed that Mark has used an exorcism in order to present to us, for the first time, Jesus' *exousía* ("dominion," usually translated "authority," at times "power"). I have taken a foothold from this observation in order to launch a whole "soteriological Christology" of Mark.

Mark's above-stated presentation takes place in 1:21-27. The gospel has begun with a double-citation of Malachi and Deutero-Isaiah (although only the latter is mentioned by name). We are presented with the figure of John the Baptist, the Elijah of Mal 3 (Mal 4 in the LXX and in Protestant Bibles). This is at the end of the Prophets, and speaks of the forerunner of the Messiah (in the Jewish tradition), or of Yahweh. But more important—and that is why he is the only one named, this is Rikki Watts' thesis—is Dt-Isa, and the whole idea of the Second Exodus-New Creation to be found there. John the Baptist was in the desert (or wilderness) inspired by the same passage of Isaiah that was foundational for the Qumranites (the Essenes, or perhaps we are to think only of the more radical group within that movement): to prepare in the desert the way of the Lord. The Second Exodus announced by Dt-Isa around 540 B.C.E. had already taken place, materially speaking, but the geographical return to the Land had not brought the true end of "Exile," if we understand this as meaning the awaited salvation. Thus, a bit after the return of the exiles from Babylon, Zech 1:12 can ask when the "seventy years" of exile (= of Yahweh's anger) prophesied by Jer 25:11-12; 29:10 will end.¹⁶ They were already back in the Land, but conditions, especially socio-economic ones, did not allow one to say that the "change of fortunes" (another meaning of the Hebrew verb *šûv*, "return, make turn, free captives, turn the captivity, convert [by returning to Yahweh, repenting, hence

¹⁵ ROBERT J. MILLER, "The (A)Historicity of Jesus' Temple Demonstration," *SBL 1991 Seminar Papers* (ed. E.H. LOVERING; Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 1991), 246; BURTON L. MACK, *A Myth of Innocence* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1988), 233-235.

¹⁶ King Cyrus' decree allowing the return of the exiled Jews is dated to 539-538; the date of Zech 1 is 520, some 18 years later.

t̄šûvah, “repentance”]), in other words, the New Exodus of Dt-Isa, had taken place.¹⁷ Centuries later, in the Maccabean period (around 165 B.C.E.), the “exile” Daniel has to ponder what Jeremiah meant to say when he predicted that the “exile” would last “seventy years,” Dan 9:2. The angel Gabriel, in the apocalyptic mode (of revelation, here by means of the *angelus interpretes*, the helpful, interpreting angel), explains to him how Jeremiah must be read: the first word (in the Hebrew of the time, written with consonants only, no vowels), *šv’ym* (which normally, with what follows, *šannah*, means “seventy years”), must be vocalized in two ways, which must be combined: *šavû’im* (“weeks”) and *šîv’im* (“seventy”), so that, combined, what the prophet Jeremiah meant to say was that “seventy weeks of years,” that is, 490 years, would pass before the “Exile” came to an end. This brought the time quite close to that of Daniel (for example, 597 [the first deportation to Babylon] minus 490 = 107 B.C.E., a good estimate given the poor knowledge of Persian period dates that the Jews then had). One could also see in this number of years the seven-fold punishment threatened in Lev 26:18, 24, related to the Sabbatical years which the Land did not “pay” (better, “enjoyed”), Lev 26:34-35, 43; 2 Chr 36:21 thus saw it, at the end of the Jewish Bible. Interestingly, an important Qumran document, 11QMelchizedek, expects final redemption in the tenth Jubilee, that is, at the end of a period of 49 x 10 years (= 490 years). The great atonement of sins, the return to their land and family of those exiled or sold because of debt, the great liberation (in Hebrew, *d̄rôr*, at times translated “liberty, emancipation, manumission”) of the Jubilee would take place on “Yom Kippur,” the great Day of Atonement, Lev 25:8-17. The Qumran sect, in said text, joins the angelic figure of Melchizedek to that of the eschatological prophet, anointed (made “messiah”) by Yahweh to proclaim the “good news” (end of the Exile) to the humble, according to Isa 61:1-2. Now, this is the passage that Luke 4:16-21 has Jesus read in his inaugural speech in his hometown synagogue. Jesus, reading Isa 61:1, presents the “good news” (= end of the “Exile,” beginning of the era of salvation, of the Kingdom of God) as *d̄rôr*, the “liberty” of the Jubilee of which Isa 61:1 speaks, the “year or time” of grace and return from Exile (the meek Luke leaves out “day of vengeance of our God,” Isa 61:2; Luke 4:19).

¹⁷ See Zech 8:9-15 and Hag 1:6-11 for illustrations of the poor material circumstances of the returnees. Decades later things remain as dismal, Mal 1:6-14.

An important aspect of 11QMelchizedek is the definitive combat of the heavenly Melchizedek, seen as the “Prince of Light” and high priest who brings about atonement of sins, against Belial (the devil) and his evil and impure spirits.¹⁸ “The destruction of the powers of evil inaugurates the time of salvation.”¹⁹ The links between this Melchizedek-redemptive figure and the “eschatological priest” of the “Old Testament pseudepigraphical book” of *the Twelve Patriarchs*, Testament of Levi 18:12, have been noted: “And Beliar shall be bound by him [the new priest that the Lord will raise up, 18:2].” The footnote in the edition we quote from (as indicated in the footnote below) refers us to Isa 24:22-23, to Mark 3:27 and to Luke 11:14-22 and 10:19 (but see also Luke 10:18).²⁰

With this background, let us look at the beginning of Mark’s gospel. It announces the “beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ (the) Son of God,” followed by the quote from Exodus/Malachi and of Second Isaiah. John the Baptist is the Elijah-forerunner, be it of Yahweh or of the Messiah (Mal 3:23, LXX 4:5). John says that his baptism of conversion (or repentance) is with water only; the real purification will be with fire, or with Holy Spirit (Mark 1:8; but see the primitive source Q texts in Matt 3:11; Luke 3:16).²¹ Following the great late scholar Harmut Stegemann, I think that what John the Baptist was doing was to call Israel to “conversion,” that is, to “return” to Yahweh, each person repenting of their sins (on the other side of the Jordan, see John 1:28; 10:40), in order to then cross the Jordan and return to the Land as symbolic of entrance into the inheritance or divine promise, what we also call the “end of the Exile” and the “coming of salvation,” or “arrival of the Kingdom of God,” or “Good News” (see Luke 3:18).²² It

¹⁸ The evil spirits are unclean (impure) in Qumran document 4Q286 ii 4, presented and explained in PAUL J. KOBELSKI, *Melchizedek and Melchireša* (Catholic Biblical Quarterly Monograph Series 10; Washington, DC: Catholic Biblical Association, 1981), 43-46. As is known, the most common name for “demons” in the gospels is “unclean spirit,” e.g., in Mark 1:23, 39; 5:2; 6:13; 9:25; Luke 9:42, etc.

¹⁹ See MARINUS DE JONGE – A.S. VAN DER WOUDE, “11Q Melchizedek and the New Testament,” *New Testament Studies* 12 (1965-1966), 305. The variant “Beliar” is found in 2 Cor 6:15.

²⁰ *Old Testament Pseudepigrapha. Vol. 1, Apocalyptic Literature & Testaments* (James H. Charlesworth, ed.; Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1983), 795 (translation and introduction by Howard C. Kee).

²¹ Mark 9:49 says that “all must be salted with fire.” In Mark 10:38-39, Jesus speaks of a “cup” (of suffering) which he must drink, in parallelism with a “baptism” which he must undergo (as if it were a “baptism of blood;” cf. Luke 12:49-50).

²² See Stegemann’s remarkable book, *The Library of Qumran. On the Essenes, Qumran, John the Baptist, and Jesus* (English translation of the 1993 German edition; Leiden – New York – Köln: Brill; Grand Rapids, MI – Cambridge, UK: Eerdmans, 1998), especially chapters eight (on the Baptist) and nine (on Jesus).

is all the same thing: entrance into the “sphere of salvation” (or “justification”). “Righteousness,” the Hebrew *tsedeq* or *ts^edaqah*, is tantamount to “salvation;” that is, once one is declared “righteous” (*tsaddîq*, “innocent,” in a trial, or in the Last Judgment), that person is “safe” (or “saved”) from the divine punishment which the wicked will suffer.

Jesus, in what we can theologically call an act of humility, a “kenotic” act (of “self-emptying,” Phil 2:6-8), joins the penitent people who heed John’s call (Jesus may well have been a disciple of John for some time). We can here give substantial credit to what is narrated in Mark 1:10-11: Jesus had a revelation in which he 1) saw the heavens open; 2) felt the Spirit go down into him; 3) heard the voice of God declaring him to be his “beloved son” with whom he was well-pleased.

It is a very laden revelation. The open heavens indicate total access to the heavenly realm, the world of the divine council (in Hebrew, *sôd*).²³ This was the access that true prophets had; see Jer 23:18; Isa 6:1-11, with 40:1-11; cf. John 1:51. The Spirit would descend upon the “eschatological prophet” of Isa 61:1, anointed by the Spirit in order to announce the Good News to the humble (or afflicted, *anawîm*) and to proclaim the total remission of debts and sins of the final and definitive Jubilee, which would be celebrated on the eschatological Day of Atonement (Lev 25:8-17).²⁴ To be called “beloved son” refers one to Gen 22:2, 12, 16 (the LXX translate “beloved” where the Hebrew has “only”), the so-called “sacrifice of Isaac” (although Abraham [= the “Great Father”] goes no further than to put the wood on his back, Gen 22:6); cf. John 3:16. Finally, to be “well-pleased” with evokes Isa 42:1, the first verse of the first of the four “songs” (poems) of the Servant of Yahweh. Jesus receives a single “messianic commission package.” He is anointed with the Spirit of prophecy, but, as “son,” is also Messiah (see 2 Sam 7:14; Psa 2:7; Psa 89:27-28).²⁵ But he is also the “Suffering Servant”

²³ It is likewise said of the eschatological priest in Testament of Levi 18:6 that “The heavens will be opened, and from the temple of glory sanctification will come upon him, with a fatherly voice, as from Abraham to Isaac. And the glory of the Most High shall burst forth upon him and rest upon him [in the water].” What is in brackets is considered an interpolation based on Mark 1:9-11; *Old Testament Pseudepigrapha. Vol. 1*, 795. This work (minus the Christian interpolations) dates from the Maccabean period (around 165 B.C.E.); *ibid.*, 777-778.

²⁴ Cf. Luke 4:16-21; Acts 10:36-38; 3:17-24; Deut 18:15-19; John 6:14-15.

²⁵ James Sanders, a prominent scholar, has proposed that Phil 2 reflects the idea that Jesus was a member of the divine council (i.e., one of the “sons of God,” as in Job 1:6; Deut 32:8, according to the customary emendation; Psa 82:1, 6; cf. John 10:31-38; Wis 2:13, 18-20, cited in Matt 27:43). Pope Benedict XVI, in

of Dt-Isa, although in the first poem, Isa 42:1-4, he is only the “Chosen One” (there is as yet no intra-communitary conflict as reflected in the following poems, Isa 49:1-6; 50:4-9, and, especially, 52:13-53:12). Already by Jesus’ time, the first (“Ethiopic”) book of Enoch had combined the original distinct figures of the Messiah, the Son of man and the Chosen (or Elect) One into a single individual hidden from the creation of world, who would come to save in the End Time.²⁶

Jesus is Son of God, Son of man and “Suffering Servant” of Isaiah. He is also the Messiah (Mark 8:29-30; 10:47-52; 14:61-62). The combination Son of man/Chosen Servant of Dt-Isa/Messiah, as we stated, had already occurred in 1 Enoch. The designation “Son of God” could refer to: 1) divine beings, deities of the Ugaritic pantheon inferior to the high God ’El, who were later taken to be angels; 2) Israel, God’s firstborn son, Exod 4:22; Hos 11:1; Wis 18:13; 3) the Messiah, Psa 2:7; Psa 89:27-28; 2 Sam 7:14; and 4) the righteous one, Wis 2:13 (in Greek, *pais*), 18; Matt 27:40, 43. But in Mark, that Jesus is the Son of God is unknown until his death, when the centurion (a Gentile, by the way) makes this confession. Before that moment, only the narrator—or the one who gave the title to this gospel, Mark 1:1—the Father (Mark 1:11; 9:7), the Son (Mark 12:6; 14:62) and the demons (Mark 1:24?; 1:32; 3:11; 5:7; note the *crescendo* in what the demons are described as doing) know that Jesus is the Son of God. What Jesus can declare openly is that he is the Son of man and the Servant, who will give his life as a ransom for many, Mark 10:45. ((Pope Benedict XVI also considers Jesus’ divine Sonship as inseparable from the Cross, *Jesus of Nazareth*, 305.)

Now we go on to the first (and programmatic) of Jesus’ exorcisms, in Mark 1:21-28. Jesus *teaches*, it is a “new teaching,” with or “according to one who has” *exousía*. The scribes do not have this *exousía*. It is not mere “authority” to speak—one’s bearing or conviction or tone of voice or tailor-made suit and expensive haircut!— but rather the

his new book *Jesus of Nazareth*, disfavors the revelatory aspect of Jesus’ baptism, advocating a much greater (if not “total”) consciousness of divine sonship *ab initio*. The whole problem of the human versus the divine consciousness of Jesus is a theological one beyond the scope of this biblical analysis, but biblical scholars (many of whom the Pope is displeased with) tend to take seriously such passages as Luke 2:52 (Jesus progressed in wisdom) and 2:46 (Jesus listened to and asked questions of the teachers in the temple). Certainly Jesus’ human will had to struggle, Mark 14:35-36; cf. Heb 5:7-8.

²⁶ *Old Testament Pseudepigrapha. Vol. 1*, 9 (introduction by E. Isaac).

power of eschatological dominion, the dominion given to the Son of man according to Dan 7:14.

The content of Jesus' teaching is not stated. What kind of "teaching" is it? It seems to be defined, as Mack argues, in Mark 1:27, read literally (as it should be, only the correct way, not fundamentalistically): the "new teaching" consists in commanding unclean spirits such that they obey. This "new teaching" might be a new Torah (which means "teaching," especially by priests).²⁷ Jesus has the eschatological power to finish with evil (Mark 1:24), that is, he has come to destroy it (cf. 1 John 3:8). Otherwise stated, he is the Strong One who has come to bind Satan, Mark 3:22-30, as was expected of the eschatological priest in Testament of Levi 18:12.²⁸ The eschatological passage Zech 13:1-2 also looked forward to the day when there would no longer be unclean spirits. The expression "holy one of God" in Mark 1:24 was considered by Ernst Lohmeyer as a priestly term (see Psa 106:16; cf. John 6:69); this is very likely, given the importance of the figure of Melchizedek as eschatological priest who will make atonement in Qumran, and the use of Melchizedek in the Epistle to the Hebrews. Melchizedek comes into play in Mark by way of Psa 110, discussed by Jesus in Mark 12:35-37 and quoted in 14:62. Psa 110 is combined with Psa 2 in Heb 5:5-6; cf. Heb 1:5, 13. We will extend our Christological-soteriological exposition of Mark in order to include a discussion of Jesus' priesthood, so as to give a complete picture of who Jesus is, and of how he saves, in Mark. The priesthood of Christ would not seem to be a topic which jumps out at you when reading this gospel.

What is prominent in Mark is that the *exousía* that Jesus has as Son of man enables him to forgive sins, Mark 2:10, which Jesus manifests by making the paralytic stand up and walk.

²⁷ See the discussions on how a "new Torah" or "another Torah" could have existed or be understood in Judaism in W.D. DAVIES, *Torah in the Messianic Age and/or Age to Come* (Philadelphia: Society of Biblical Literature, 1952), esp. 70-74; see also the index in Davies' book, *Paul and Rabbinic Judaism. Some Rabbinic Elements in Pauline Theology* (Mifflintown, PA: Sigler Press, 1948, 1955, 1980, 1998); DAVID DAUBE, "ἐξουσία in MARK I 22 and 27," *Journal of Theological Studies* XXXIX (1938), 52-59. See also Daube's book, *The New Testament and Rabbinic Judaism* (Peabody: Hendrikson, 1956; 1998 printing), 212-216.

²⁸ See also the references to Jesus as the "strong one" in Mark 1:7; 5:4; 9:18 (these last two instances require looking at the Greek text, where the verb used denotes strength (as in the Spanish verb for "to be able to," *poder*, which is also the noun "power").

Chapter Three: the Good News and the Suffering Servant

In this chapter, we shall present some important biblico-theological points regarding Jesus' ministry, and, at the same time, we shall recapitulate some of the things said earlier, with a view to greater clarity and comprehension of our arguments.

At the heart of Jesus' proclamation is the "gospel," the "Good News," as shown by the important synthesis of his message in Mark 1:15, which we translate as it would have sounded in Aramaic (or also in Hebrew): "The time is fulfilled, the Kingdom of God has drawn near, return and believe the Good News." We have here five very important elements. First, Jesus situates himself in those Jewish circles who awaited redemption, conceived of as a great change in the state of things (in Greek, the *peripeteia*, the sudden turn around in the story). It's even possible that Jesus formed part of, or at least was familiar with, circles who calculated the time of God's final intervention, such as Enochian circles or the "Daniel group," and Qumran. What is certain is that, for Jesus, with his ministry the time of waiting for salvation had been (ful)filled; cf. Luke 3:9; Gal 4:4; 1 Cor 10:11; Eph 1:10; LXX Dan 8:23.

Second, Jesus uses the concept of the kingdom or kingship of God in order to indicate the change which will take place in the world when the powers of evil, headed by the demons, and, ultimately, by Satan, come to their end; see Mark 3:22-30; cf. Luke 10:18. In accordance with the extensive use that Jesus makes of the concept of the Son of man, taken from Dan 7, we can very well suppose that Jesus shares the apocalyptic outlook of that chapter, which is otherwise common to eschatology in general: in the End, the state of creation will return to what it was in the beginning, according to the Creator's original intention. In Dan 7, we are told how, from the chaotic sea, the beasts came out which until then had had dominion over Adam, human being, the opposite of what God had wanted, according to Gen 1:28. But in the End Time, seen from a distance by Daniel the visionary, this dominion will be taken away from the sea beasts (seemingly not as tamed as Gen 1:2 would have led us to believe), in order to be given (or returned, with a surplus) to "one like a son of man," that is, the human being, to whom also shall be given the kingdom, power, dominion and honor, over all peoples, etc., Dan 7:14, for ever. The passage oscillates between a collective conception (those who are to receive the kingdom

are the saints of the Most High) and an individual one (“one like a human being” who travels on clouds), but ancient Jewish tradition had already seen in the “son of man,” who came with or on clouds, the Messiah, who would sit on a throne beside the “Ancient of Days,” God, Dan 7:9. Certainly, in the Parables or Similitudes of 1 Enoch, the Son of man is an individual, combined and identified with the figures of the Messiah and the Chosen one of Dt-Isa.²⁹

Daniel 7, which begins the second part of that book (and which is classic apocalyptic), represents the end of human history as it has been since Adam’s fall. The Creator’s original intention had been spoiled and frustrated through sin, giving rise to the first and prototypical Exile, the expulsion from the garden of Eden. In the End Time, God would take away dominion from the “beasts” (the pagan empires, but really all agents of wickedness) and would return it to the being who should have exercised it without interruption, “Adam,” Gen 1:28; Dan 7:12-14. But there was still a time left for suffering and purification, Dan 11:31-35; 12:1-13. How much time was still left before final salvation? This salvation was seen as the definitive end of “exile.” This was what Daniel was pondering, that is, the prophecy of Jeremiah: Dan 9:1-3; Jer 25:11-12; 29:10-14. This prophet had foretold that “seventy years” would pass before the “exile” ended, meaning the state before salvation, when one is far from God, still in sin, enslaved. The anonymous prophet just before the end of the Babylonian exile, whom we call “Second Isaiah” (Dt-Isa), had consoled the people with the good news of the end of exile, Isa 40:1-11, but even after return to the holy Land, Zechariah asked when the “seventy years” of Yahweh’s anger would end, Zech 1:12. That is, mere return to the Land in conditions of sin and oppression (to begin with, foreign domination), was not yet the end of “Exile.” Now, Daniel is given the key for understanding what Jeremiah had really said: the Hebrew word —only consonants were written at the time— *š b ‘ y m*, had to be read as vocalized in two different ways, *šavû’îm* (= weeks) and *šêv’îm* (= seventy), so that it would produce the total of 490 (7 x 70) years, which referred to a time long after

²⁹ In Psa 110, the Messiah sits at the right hand of God; see Mark 12:35-37; 14:61-62; Heb 1:13. Jewish tradition also made use of Psa 80:18 in order to identify the Messiah with the Son of man. Even more subtle are the creative rabbinic interpretations which make of *the fallen* (in Hebrew, *hannôfeleth*) hut of David, Amos 9:11, a reference to Bar Nafle or Bar Nifle (“son of the clouds,” from Dan 7:13) as a messianic title, taken from the monarchic list in 1 Chr 3:24, which ends with Anani, revocalized to *Anane*, “with the clouds” (Midrash Tanhûma, Toledot s. 20).

“Daniel” (who is in Babylon, according to the apocalyptic fiction of the second half of the book), that is, the Maccabean period. According to the chronologies of the time, 490 was not a bad calculation. This sevenfold punishment, an exile extended seven times, corresponds to the sevenfold punishment of the curses for breaking the covenant in Lev 26:18-33, linked to the sabbatical rest of the Land, Lev 26:34-43. Thus did the Chronicler understand it, 2 Chr 36:20-21 (at the end of the Hebrew Bible, that is, the Jewish canon).

On the other hand, the 490 years can be seen as a period of ten Jubilees, 49 x 10. This is how 11QMelchizedek saw it, a Qumran document which is extraordinarily important for the understanding of Christian origins. We shall quote its second column as presented in the edition indicated in the footnote below.³⁰

Col. II 1 [...] ... [...] *2* [...] And as for what he said: *Lev 25:13* «In [this] year of jubilee, [you shall return, each one, to his respective property]», concerning it he said: *Deut 15:2* «Th[is] is *3* [the manner of the release:] every creditor shall release what he lent [to his neighbor. He shall not coerce his neighbor or his brother, for it has been proclaimed] a release *4* for G[od]». Its interpretation] for the last days refers to the captives, who [...] and whose *5* teachers have been hidden and kept secret, and from the inheritance of Melchizedek, who *6* will make them return. And liberty will be proclaimed for them, to free them from [the debt of] all their iniquities. And this [wil]l [happen] *7* in the first week of the jubilee which follows the ni[ne] jubilees. And the d[ay of atone]ment is the e[nd of] the tenth [ju]bilee *8* in which atonement shall be made for all the sons of [light and] for the men [of] the lot of Mel[chi]zedek. [...] ... over [the]m ... [...] accor[ding to] a[ll] their [wor]ks, for *9* it is the time for the «year of grace» of Melchizedek, and of [his] arm[ies, the nat]ion of the holy ones of God, of the rule of judgment, as is written *10* about him in the songs of David, who said: *Ps 82:1* «Elohim will [st]and in the assem[bly of God,] in the midst of the gods he judges». And about him he sai[d: *Ps 7:8-9* «And] above [it,] *11* to the heights, return: God will judge the peoples». As for what he sa[id: *Ps 82:2* «How long will you] judge unjustly and show partial[lity] to the wicked? [*Se]lah.»* *12* Its interpretation concerns Belial and the spirits of his lot, wh[o ...] turn[ing aside] from the commandments of God to [commit evil.] *13* But, Melchizedek will carry out the vengeance of Go[d's] judgments, [and on that day he will fr]e[e them from the hand of] Belial and from the hand of all the spirits of his lot.] *14* To his aid (shall come) all «the gods of [justice]; and h]e is the one w[ho ...] all the sons of God, and ... [...] *15* This [...] is the day of [peace about whi]ch he said [... through Isa]iah the prophet, who said: [*Isa 52:7* «How] beautiful *16* upon the mountains are the feet [of] the messen[ger who] announces peace, the mess[enger of good who announces salvati]on, [saying to Zion: your God [reigns.]] *17* Its interpretation i[s] the anointed of the spir[it] as Dan[iel] said [about him: *Dan 9:25* «Until an anointed, a prince, it is seven weeks.» And the messenger of] *19* good who announ[ces

³⁰ *The Dead Sea Scrolls Study Edition. Volume 2 (4Q274-11Q31)* (F. García Martínez – E.J.C. Tigchelaar, eds.; Leiden – Boston – Köln: Brill; Grand Rapids – Cambridge, UK: Eerdmans, 1997), 1206-1207.

salvation] is the one about whom it is written that [...] 20 «To comfort the [afflicted], its interpretation:] to instruct them in all the ages of the world [...] 21 in truth ... [...] ... [...] 22 [...] has turned away from Belial and will return [...] ... [...] 23 [...] in the judgment[s of] God, as it is written about him: [Isa 52:7 «Saying to Zion: your God rules.» «Zion» is] 24 [the congregation of all the sons of justice, those] who establish the covenant, those who avoid walking [on the path] of the people. And «Your God» is 25 Melchizedek, who will free them from the hand of Belial. And as for what he said: Lev 25:9 «You shall blow the horn in all the land of

Let's see what this means for the understanding of Christian origins. First, it speaks of the Jubilee, when each exiled person or slave who had been sold returned to his land and family, since all his debts (for which he was exiled or sold) were remitted. The word "remission" (in the above text, "release"), is in Hebrew *šmittah*; it comes from Deut 15:1-6, which is linked to the great "liberty" of the Jubilee in Jer 34:8-16. But the more important term is *d'rôr*, the "liberty" of Lev 25:10, of Jer 34:8 (which never actually took place), and, especially, of Isa 61:1. It is this latter passage that Jesus reads in his first speech in Luke 4:17-22, when he says that that prophecy had been fulfilled "today." So that in primitive Christian tradition, there is the idea of a final Jubilee which must be fulfilled; we can very well see in the Lord's Prayer a clear echo of this final forgiveness and pardoning of all debts.³¹ The Lucan version reads "forgive us our sins, for we ourselves forgive our debtors" (Luke 11:4).

That everyone return to land, family and home, that is, that the Exile end, is the great biblical hope. The whole Pentateuch reflects the desire to enter into the Promise, of possessing the Land on which all the Fathers ("Patriarchs") wandered as pilgrims, Heb 11:13.³² The Hebrew Bible ends with the admonition to *go up* to the Land (2 Chr 36:23), to make the return home, the *'aliyah*, the word for "immigration" (literally, the "going up") to Israel today. Jesus himself seems to situate himself in this perspective. In Mark 1:15, what he proclaims, as the kernel of his message, are five things: 1) the time (of eschatological expectation and waiting) is ended; 2) the Kingdom of God has drawn near; in the central position, providing the interpretive key, 3) *return* (in the double-sense of

³¹ Heb 4:1-11 speaks of the Sabbath "rest" which awaits us; Josh 1:13 speaks of entry into the Land as "rest," but in verse 15 there is mention of those who have yet to enter the rest. Rev 14:13 speaks of the rest which those who die in the Lord enjoy, and 22:1-5 is the return to Eden, for the curse is over.

³² See my article "Welcoming the Foreigner: A Biblical Theology View," *Josephinum Journal of Theology* 11.2 (Summer/Fall 2004) 226-234.

repent and return to the Land, that is, end your exile of self-estrangement from God and his Promise); 4) and believe (the obedient trust which justified Abraham, Gen 15:6; cf. Hab 2:4) 5) the Good News (of Isa 40:9; 52:7; 61:1), that is, the announcement that Exile has ended.³³

The final Jubilee, like all Jubilees (Lev 25:9), would take place on the great Day of Atonement, Yom Kippur, when all sins were forgiven, including the worst ones, Lev 16:16. It was the only day that the high priest could enter the Holy of Holies, with the blood of the young bull and of the he-goat, in order to expiate sins. This is what the Epistle to the Hebrews considers to be a mere figure (“type”) fulfilled by Jesus, Heb 9, the eternal high priest according to the order of Melchizedek, Heb 7 (Jesus’ sacrifice is the “antitype”).

Our Qumran text speaks of the victory of Melchizedek over Belial (or Beliar), the “devil” in the Judaism of the time (see 2 Cor 6:15). The Testament of Levi, in the Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs, describes the eschatological priest in terms which remind us of Jesus (see TestLevi 18), but what we are most interested in now is verse 12, which says that the eschatological priest shall bind Belial. In Mark, Jesus, the “holy one of God” (a priestly epithet in Psa 106:16) is the “stronger one” (Mark 1:7) who can bind and plunder the devil, 3:22-27, even when he is called Legion (the Greek text of 5:4 says: “and no one was strong [so as] to tame him”).

The Qumran Melchizedek text puts into play “the anointed (messiah) of the spirit” of Isa 61:1, who proclaims Good News to the *‘anawîm* (“afflicted, poor in spirit”), and links this with the anointed one in Dan 9:24. It is in this chapter 9 of Daniel, in Dan 9:2, that Jeremiah’s famous prophecy of the seventy years is considered (Jer 25:11-12; 29:10). That is how long the Exile, the time before final salvation, would last. The “seventy years” of Jeremiah (cf. Zech 1:12) become ‘seventy weeks of years’ in Dan 9:24-27, that is, the ten Jubilees of the Qumran document, or 490 years. This will also be the fulfillment of the Good News of Isa 40, the first chapter of the “Book of the Consolation of Israel” (cf. Luke 2:25-32), the passage which became the basis for going into the

³³ I follow the late Harmut Stegemann, who indicated that John the Baptist baptized on the other side of the Jordan (John 10:41) in order to symbolize the entry (“return”) of the “converted” Jew (who had returned to God and to the Land). The term “land of promise” is found in Heb 11:9. By the way, the Baptist, in the

desert to prepare the way of the Lord both for Qumran (Community Rule VIII:12-14) and for John the Baptist (Mark 1:2-3; Luke 3:1-6).

What has all this to do with Mark's gospel? We know that the "Good News" of Isaiah has an important place in Jesus' preaching, and in Mark's presentation of it (and of Jesus' ministry).³⁴ Rikki Watts wrote his doctoral dissertation at Cambridge University on this topic, and published it as "Isaiah's New Exodus in Mark." The evangelist provides the key to this understanding by the mention of Isaiah in Mark 1:2, when in reality he has begun by citing Malachi. But we know that "gospel," in Hebrew *b'ešôrah*, has an important role in Jesus' message, and that the origin of this concept, with this particular meaning, comes from Isa 40. "Second Isaiah" recycles, reutilizes, the saving event *par excellence* for Israel, the exodus from Egypt, in order to speak of a new exodus which will far surpass the first, prototypical one. This new exodus is based on Yahweh's power as Creator to make a new creation, and the New Exodus will in fact be a new creation.³⁵ Except that this did not occur with the return from Babylon to the Holy Land, but was postponed to the times described in "Third Isaiah," that is, later passages in that book, as are chapters 56-66, the "apocalypse of Isaiah" in chapters 24-27, Isa 35 and Isa 19:16-25. Important among these passages, but related to "Second Isaiah," is Isa 61:1-2, to which Luke gives a "programmatically" place which reflects quite well Jesus' historical ministry, even as Mark presents it.

We have said that the whole Hebrew Bible can be summarized as the book of the Jew in exile who seeks, awaits, to go back home, to his fatherland, to his family, to the place he most desires. This would be the great Jubilee, and this is how the Qumranites saw it. This is the hope about to be fulfilled that John the Baptist preaches. He represents the reawakening of prophecy after some four hundred years in which it had disappeared

eschatological role of the prophet Elijah who had returned, baptized on the other side of the Jordan probably precisely where Elijah had been taken up, 2 Kgs 2:6-13, and where he could be expected to return.

³⁴ Note that expressions such as "messenger of good" in the Qumran quote above, which comes from Isa 52:7 (see also Isa 40:9; 61:1; Nah 1:15; 1 Chr 10:9; Jer 20:15; LXX Joel 3:5; 1 Sam 31:9; 2 Kgs 7:9, etc.), are different translations of the same underlying words in Hebrew or Greek; other translations are "herald of glad tidings, he who brings glad tidings, messenger of good tidings, messenger of good news," etc. The Greek form could be very literally translated "evangelizer."

³⁵ See Isa 43; 48:20-22; 49:8-12; 52:7-12 (just before the "Fourth Song of the Suffering Servant"). Isa 54:5-10 links the idea of Yahweh's marriage to Israel, never broken, to the "eternal covenant" in the days of Noah, that "covenant" (more of a promise) that marks a new creation (cf. Gen 1:28 with 9:1-2), whose sign is the rainbow.

(see 1 Macc 4:46; Psa 74:9). And the symbolism behind John's activity revolves around Mal 3's eschatological message, and the crossing of the Jordan as a sign of "returning" (conversion) to the Lord, and its reward, the return to the Land as the sphere of salvation. This is the new covenant of Jer 30-31, especially Jer 30:1-3 and 31:31-34. The Qumranites also considered themselves to be the community of the new covenant, Damascus Document 6:19; 8:21; 20:12.³⁶

But in order to cross into the Land, to enter into salvation, a great purification was necessary. The Enochian circles had already spoken of the insufficiency of the cleansing with water represented by the flood during Noah's time; Yahweh had even had to "water-down" (pardon the pun) moral requirements: the post-diluvial world is not a return to the conditions of Eden, where non-violent vegetarianism was the norm (cf. Gen 1:29-30 and 9:2-6).³⁷ No, the definitive purification would require fire.

This is where we enter into one of the principal topics in the Judaism of the late Second Temple period, the final purification or refinement. The final judgment is by fire, Isa 63:19-64:1; 66:15-16. Jesus quotes Isa 66:24 in Mark 9:48-49 (some would see Nero's fiery persecution in Rome, 64 C.E., in the background). Fire refines, as occurs with precious metals: Dan 11:35; 12:10.³⁸ The righteous one is also purified thus: see Wis 2:18-20; 3:1-7, an important passage in Jesus' Passion (cf. Matt 27:43); see 1 Pet 1:7; 2 Pet 3:7-12; cf. 1 Cor 3:10-15.

³⁶ Their Community Rule, 1:16, speaks of "crossing" (and not merely "entering") into the Rule of the Community, in order to establish a covenant with God, in a way very similar to Deut 29:11, which literally says that the post-wilderness community is about to *cross* into the covenant. This is the "other covenant," one separate (different) from the one made at Horeb (the deuteronomistic term for Sinai), Deut 28:69 (29:1 in some Bibles), which has been identified with Jeremiah's new covenant; cf. Jer 31:31-34 and Deut 30:6-14 (see Jer 4:4; 9:25). The deuteronomistic editors of the books of the prophets put their hand most heavily in their favorite prophet, Jeremiah (he had been protected by Shaphan's family, closely associated with the deuteronomistic reform in 2 Kgs 22). The parallel passages in Deut and Jer are impressively similar.

³⁷ See the discussion of 1 Enoch in my "A Theological Introduction to the Christian Bible." The Enochian world was densely populated with unclean spirits; fire was necessary in order to purify it (1 Enoch 10:6), and the temple cult was no solution. Regarding this, see the important book by GABRIELE BOCCACCINI, *The Roots of Rabbinic Judaism, An Intellectual History from Ezekiel to Daniel* (Grand Rapids – Cambridge, UK: Eerdmans, 2002), especially page 91, and that of his mentor, PAOLO SACCHI, *L'apocalittica giudaica e la sua storia* (Brescia: Paideia, 1990), which exists in English translation, *Jewish Apocalyptic and Its History* (ET by William J. Short; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1990).

³⁸ See also Community Rule 3:4-12; 4:11-26 in Qumran. Here lustral purification (with water, as in baptism) is combined with purification by fire and by the "spirit of truth," which will result in a new creation.

Mal 3 speaks about the purification of the Levites, the demoted branch of the priesthood which was opposed to that of the Zadokites, who had emerged as dominant, especially during the Babylonian Exile.³⁹ This is said in the context of the coming of the Lord (*ha-adôn*) to his temple, with mention of the desired “angel of the covenant.”⁴⁰ This passage is placed right at the beginning of Mark, occupying an important place. By the way, this “messenger” or “angel” (in both Hebrew and Greek, one same word means both things) is that of the exodus, Exod 23:20, the angel who will lead Israel to the Land.

John the Baptist came with a water baptism “with a view towards” (*eis*, “unto”) forgiveness of sins; according to Stegemann, this baptism did not actually forgive sins, but only prepared the person who had repented (converted) for the final purification. This would be by Holy Spirit and fire, as indicated by the Q passage in Matt 3:11 and Luke 3:16. This is what is fulfilled on Pentecost, Acts 2:3-4; it is this Holy Spirit who, through faith, purifies hearts (we could say, “circumcises” hearts, Col 2:11; Rom 2:29; Phil 3:2; cf. Acts 2:37). This is what grants one the new heart, a pure one, of Ezek 36:25-27.⁴¹

But Jesus himself must undergo a new baptism, one of fire; Luke 12:49-50; cf. Mark 10:38; 9:49. Jesus, the Anointed of the Spirit of Isa 61:1 (Acts 10:38), offered himself in his Passion by this same Spirit, Heb 9:14. It was his own blood which sprinkled the Holy of Holies on the eschatological Yom Kippur; this is the meaning of Rom 3:25 (the Greek *hilastērion*, inadequately translated “sacrifice of atonement, propitiation, mercy-seat, expiation,” corresponds in the LXX to the Hebrew *kappôret*, the cover of the Ark of the Covenant; this was what was sprinkled with blood on Yom Kippur, Lev 16:14; Heb 12:24; cf. 1 John 5:6-8).⁴²

³⁹ In Mark 2:26, where Jesus “mistakenly” says “Abiathar” instead of Ahimelek, some have seen a slight against the Sadducean priesthood, descendants (real or claimed) of Zadok, who ousted Abiathar when the priests under him supported the loser at the time of the struggle for succession to David’s throne; Solomon won, and vanished Abiathar to Anathoth, Jeremiah’s hometown; see Jer 1:1; 1 Kgs 2:26-27. See my discussion in “A Theological Introduction to the Christian Bible.” In 1 Chr 24:3, Abiathar is not mentioned: rather Zadok is “mistakenly” given Ahimelek as his partner in the priesthood. In 24:6, it is “mistakenly” said that Abiathar was Ahimelek’s father (see 1 Sam 22:20). I am of the opinion that there are no real errors in the Bible (in order for an error to be such, it must be unintentional). What appears to be error may well be intentional, in order to convey some other message (e.g., saying “Jeremiah” in Matt 27:9).

⁴⁰ Cf. Isa 42:6; 49:8; 55:3; 59:21; 61:7-8; Zech 9:11-12; Heb 13:20.

⁴¹ Water is also associated with final salvation: Ezek 47; Zech 13:1-2; 14:8, 16-17, and with the Holy Spirit, John 4:10-24; 7:37-39, etc. Cf. Ezek 39:21-29.

⁴² Jesus also ‘became sin’, like the scapegoat of Lev 16; this is the meaning of 2 Cor 5:21; cf. Heb 13:11-13. Jesus made himself a “guilt- or sin-offering” (*peri hamartías*, Rom 8:3, as in LXX Isa 53:10, in Hebrew *ašam*). See chapter 7 of the Epistle of Barnabas, where Christ is likened to the scapegoat. According to the

And this brings us to Isaiah's "Suffering Servant." There is no doubt that it has an important place in the New Testament, but let us look at its use in Mark in particular. I am speaking about Isa 52:13-53:12, the famous "fourth song" (in reality, a poem) of the Servant of Yahweh. In much of the New Testament, Jesus' Passion was viewed through the prism of this poem. There are several important passages in Mark: 10:45, where it is said that the "Son of man" came to serve and give his life as a ransom for many, preceded by 10:44 (call to be a slave, *doulos*, of the other).⁴³ "Many" corresponds to the Hebrew *rabbîm*, which appears five times in the fourth song (even though in Isa 53:12^a is usually translated "great"). This word becomes something like a technical term in certain eschatological groups, as is seen in Dan 11:33; 12:2, 10, and in Qumran.⁴⁴ Jesus also uses it in Mark 14:24, when he says that his blood will be poured forth for "many." In fact, the Servant "pours himself out," or pours out his soul (Hebrew *nepheš*, which Westermann says can here be translated "blood"), Isa 53:12. The Hebrew verb is '*arah* ("to empty, pour out"), which corresponds exactly to the Greek verb *kenōō*, as in Phil 2:7.

The Servant, according to the best interpretation of Isa 53:10 (this poem in general presents great textual and interpretive difficulties), 'put himself as *ašam*', a type of "global" expiatory offering.⁴⁵ Here the LXX translated *peri hamartias*, which it usually uses for other types of "sin offerings" (e.g., in Lev 16:27; cf. Heb 13:11). This is the expression which Paul uses for Jesus' sacrifice in Rom 8:3. This represents a cultic view of Jesus' sacrifice, based on the sacrificial cult of the Old Testament.

In Mark 1:40-45, Jesus cleans or purifies a leper. A leper who followed the ritual prescribed in Leviticus for his purification would offer an *ašam*, Lev 14:12-14, 17, 21,

rite described there, the scapegoat was insulted and mistreated; scarlet thread was placed around its head. When Christ returns, the Jews will recognize him in his likeness to the goat, and will understand why, on Yom Kippur, there should be two goats "well-matched"; cf. Lev 16:5-10.

⁴³ This corresponds to the '*ebed* (slave or servant) of Yahweh in the four poems (see page 17 above) in Dt-Isa which have been applied to Jesus, although the LXX uses *pais*, "child or servant" in Isa 42:1; 52:13, and *doulos* ("slave or servant") in 49:5, 7.

⁴⁴ The group which led the anti-Syrian resistance, those pious Jews faithful to Torah who resisted until death (martyrdom) in Daniel, called themselves *maskilîm*, often translated "wise teachers or leaders," Dan 11:35; 12:3, 10. They will "justify" many, Dan 12:3, like the Servant in Isa 53:11. The name *maskilîm* is taken from the verb *sakal* ("be prudent, prosper, teach") in Isa 52:13. The *maskil* ("instructor") is an important figure in Qumran, but we also find the plural *maskilîm*, e.g., in 4Q418 fragment 81 v. 17.

⁴⁵ JACOB MILGROM, the great Jewish scholar, in his *Leviticus. A Book of Ethics and Ritual* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2004), 46, says that: "The verb '*ašam* describes the syndrome of sin, guilt, and punishment. It has a psychological dimension. Wrongdoing creates guilt and fear of punishment, and conversely

24-25, 28. An unblemished lamb was offered. The woman who gave birth could also offer a lamb, Lev 12:6. As in the case of the leper, the priest “made expiation, expiated” for her, Hebrew verb *kipper*. Interestingly, in the LXX translation of Lev 12:7, the expression, “the flow of her blood,” is used, the same as in Mark 5:29, when Jesus heals the woman with the blood flow. This could indicate that this woman, who had suffered from an impure discharge (menstruation) which had made it impossible for her to have sexual relations for twelve years, would finally conceive and give birth, falling under the regulations of Lev 12 (purification for the woman who gave birth), and not that of Lev 15:24-30 (purification for menstruants). She had been in a situation similar to Jairus’ daughter, dead at the age of twelve, who would have never given birth if God had not saved her, Mark 5:23, 41-42.

Lepers and bleeding women who were poor could offer pigeons, Lev 14:21-22, 30-32 (see 5:7-13; there were people so poor who could not buy even pigeons: they could offer cereal); Mary and Joseph offered two pigeons, according to Lev 12:8 (see the case of the bleeding woman in Lev 14:21-22). These sacrifices are in the background of the temple act, Mark 11:15, when Jesus overturned the tables of the pigeon sellers (or of “doves,” it is the same thing, always the same Greek word in Mark and in LXX Lev, *peristerá*, plural *peristerái*).

The Servant was seen, at least in Qumran, as having cultic, expiatory functions. In fact, the word *yazzeḥ* in Isa 52:15 is probably simply the Hebrew verb meaning “to sprinkle,” the same as in Lev 16:14-15 and many other places (see also Isa 63:3, regarding the “grapes of wrath” which sprinkle [or here, more likely “spatter”] Yahweh’s vestments); cf. Heb 9:13-14; 12:24. The presence of this verb in Isa 52:15 caused perplexity, and the LXX translated “startle,” and was followed by almost all modern versions (but the Vulgate and other versions do have “sprinkled;” the Nova Vulgata has “disperse” — or “spread,” a sense used by Catherine of Siena in regards to fire and Jesus’ blood). The good Qumranites understood it ritually. According to one of the first great scholars of the Dead Sea Scrolls, William H. Brownlee, at 1QIsa^a 52:15, in the great scroll of Isaiah found in Qumran, we should understand that the Servant will sprinkle

suffering reinforces the feelings of guilt. Thus we find one word bridging all expiatory offerings: *’ašam*.” Bibles usually translate it as “guilt offering” or “sin offering.”

many nations, perhaps because of his own anointing (= sprinkling) by the Spirit.⁴⁶ The “anointed of the Spirit,” in 11QMelchizedek (unless there are various redemptive figures in this document), would make atonement on Yom Kippur, in the tenth Jubilee. After stating that Melchizedek, in this document, is a “divine hypostasis,” the great Qumran scholar, Rabbi Joseph M. Baumgarten says that we find another figure with a similar expiatory role in 4Q541, an Aramaic fragment regarding the “eschatological priest” we already know from the Testament of Levi. The good rabbi tells us that

Despite this glorification, he is depicted as the object of rejection and calumny on the part of his antagonists, much like the Suffering Servant in Isaiah. Yet, he is to atone for all the children of his generation [I omit the Hebrew quotation].

Here, too, scholars have been inclined to limit the eschatological priest’s atonement function to expiation through sacrifice, although neither 4Q541 frg. 9, nor its parallel, *Testament of Levi* 18 make mention of any priestly sacrifice. The claim that [“atone for,” in Hebrew] always refers to ritual expiation is contradicted by the occasional usage in both biblical and Qumran Hebrew of this phrase for divine forgiveness (Jeremiah 18:23; CD 4:10; 4Q221 4:4). Moreover, even if we take [*kipper*] in the sense of expiation, the allusion to the hostile disparagement suffered by the priest suggests that like the Suffering Servant of Isaiah (Isaiah 53:10) his humiliation was itself considered to constitute an [*ašam*], a guilt offering for the sins of his generation.⁴⁷

If, on the one hand, the Qumranites, in their Isaiah scroll, at Isa 52:15, understood “sprinkle” ritually, on the other, in their famous Temple Scroll, they could leave out “sprinkle” when describing the Yom Kippur ritual. Concerning their shortened version of Lev 16:15 in 11QTemple 26:3-7 (the “Temple Scroll”), the great Jewish scholar Lawrence H. Schiffman tells us that the Qumran version omits the words

“and he shall sprinkle it (the blood) on the (ark) cover and before the (ark) cover.” This is because the author of our scroll views the meaning of the biblical root [*kipper*] in ritual context as a technical term for the sprinkling of blood, in accord with usage later found in rabbinic literature; hence, it was enough to use this verb even without specifying the further details of the practice.⁴⁸

⁴⁶ See “The Servant of the Lord in the Qumran Scrolls, I,” *Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research* 132 (1953), 10.

⁴⁷ “Messianic Forgiveness of Sin in CD 14:19 (4Q266 10 I 12-13),” in *The Provo International Conference on the Dead Sea Scrolls. Technological Innovations, New Texts & Reformulated Issues* (D.W. Parry – E.W. Ulrich, eds.; Leiden – Boston – Köln: Brill Academic, 1999), 540.

⁴⁸ “The Case of the Day of Atonement Ritual,” in *Biblical Perspectives: Early Use & Interpretation of the Bible in Light of the Dead Sea Scrolls. Proceedings of the First International Symposium of the Orion Center, 12-14 May 1986* (M.E. STONE - E.G. CHAZON, eds.; Leiden – Boston – Köln; Brill: 1998), 187.

We have arguments here for understanding the “fourth song” of the Suffering Servant in a ritualistic-expiatory sense. That is, we can understand the enigmatic “thus he shall sprinkle many nations,” Isa 52:15, in the sense of atonement (expiation) as on Yom Kippur, Lev 16:14-15, 19, when blood is sprinkled. This is how Heb 9 seems to understand it.⁴⁹ But there is more. The Servant “shall lift up” the sins of many, Isa 53:12. This Hebrew verb *nasa* has the meaning “to remove sins,” for example, in Lev 10:17, and in the passage which is so important for us, Lev 16:22 (regarding the scapegoat on Yom Kippur). In Isa 53:4, the Servant “lifted up” (= “removed”) our infirmities; this is how Matt 8:17 understands it, applying it to Jesus.⁵⁰

Now, how can we relate the “Suffering Servant” with the rest of Second Isaiah? The “Servant” is usually Jacob–Israel in Dt-Isa. But this identification does not seem applicable to our four poems. The Jewish scholar Harry M. Orlinsky years ago summarized the arguments in favor of considering the subject of Isa 53 as an individual, and not a collectivity (i.e., Israel):

The treatment is entirely individualistic. Unlike the people Israel, which did not keep silent in the face of destruction and exile, which was not cut off from the land of the living, and which deserved the divine punishment of destruction and exile because of transgression of the covenant, the servant in 53 is one who apparently did not complain, who ostensibly did not survive, and who experienced suffering through no fault of his own.⁵¹

The only difficulty in considering the four Servant poems (usually taken to be Isa 42:1-4; 49:1-6; 50:4-9; 52:13-53:12) as referring to an individual not identifiable with the people Israel lies in 49:3, where “Israel” appears after “my servant.” Orlinsky (80-88) is among those who insist that “Israel” is a gloss, absent from a medieval Hebrew manuscript (“Kennicott 96”), an addition which causes syntactic and grammatical difficulties. But the greatest problem is that the Servant in this poem (the second of the four) has a mission *to Israel*. Many commentaries, therefore, see in “Israel” a gloss that

⁴⁹ Regarding “sprinkle, spatter,” some (like Brownlee, regarding Qumran; see footnote 46 above) see a reference to Ezek 36:25; thus also Heb 10:22. But the Hebrew verb in Ezek 36:25 is different from that of Lev 16:14-15, 19, and Isa 52:15, although the meaning is similar.

⁵⁰ See the similar use of the Greek verb *lambanō* (“take”) in Matt 5:40; 15:26. Interestingly, in Aramaic, “to be lifted up” as the double meaning “to be exalted” (like the Servant in Isa 52:13) and “to be crucified;” this is how Jesus uses it in John 3:14; 8:28; 12:32; cf. Ezra 6:11 (an Old Testament passage in Aramaic).

reflects later tradition, that of the collectivistic interpretation of the Servant in general, that is, one applied to all the instances of “servant” in Dt-Isa. However, many scholars see disciples of Isaiah as the ones who are responsible for Dt-Isa (end of Babylonian Exile), just as further disciples in this “movement” are behind a good deal of what we call “Third Isaiah” (Tr-Isa, Isa 56-66). The “original Isaiah,” the eighth-century prophet Isaiah of Jerusalem, started a movement which grew to include disciples. We are dealing with a minoritarian movement which suffered persecution by other Jews; the “Suffering Servant” would then be the model for them, and, in order to clarify their identity, or at least their socio-religious situation, scholars such as Joseph Blenkinsopp begin by looking at the group of “servants” in Tr-Isa (also referred to as ‘those who weep or mourn, tremble, chosen ones’, etc.; see Isa 65:11-15, 22; 66:5, 14), and work their way back to the anonymous “Dt-Isa” and his socio-religious situation.

Whatever we are to make of this, Mark identifies Jesus with the Suffering Servant, as does much (if not indeed all) of the New Testament, and as Jesus probably himself did (see Acts 8:26-35). The most important passage in Mark is 10:45, “for also the Son of man did not come to be served but to serve, and to give his life (“soul,” as in Isa 53:12) as ransom (in Greek, *lútron*) for many.”

Lútron has a cultic meaning. It usually translates (although almost always using the plural, *lútra*) terms derived from the Hebrew verb *kipper* (or from the root *k p r*), the verb for “expiation or atonement.”⁵² At times it means “to appease,” as in Exod 21:30, regarding the redemption price for someone gored by an ox (verse 32 is famous: it is the one that provides that thirty sheqels of silver is the price of the slave or servant who was gored, see Zech 11:12; Matt 27:3). Very important, as we shall see later, is the “ransom price” (*kōpher*) in order to enter into the Land, Exod 30:12. This was the principal reason for the tables of the moneychangers that Jesus overturned in the temple; they were placed there during Passover, when pilgrims paid their annual tax (a half-sheqel, Exod 30:14). In some places in the LXX, *lútra* translates another very important Hebrew word regarding “salvation,” that related to the *gō’ēl*, the rescuer/redeemer or blood avenger (thus in Lev 25:24-28). Clearly, when Jesus spoke about giving his life as a “ransom for many,” with

⁵¹ “The So-Called ‘Servant of the Lord’ and ‘Suffering Servant’ in Second Isaiah,” *Vetus Testamentum Supplement* 14 (1967) 20-21.

the echoes of the Servant reflected in Mark 10:45, we can see another reference to the cultic aspect of his death. But how can we relate this to the theme of “Second Isaiah”?

The great theme of Second Isaiah is the “Good News” of Israel’s return to the Land, after having paid “doubly” for its sin (Isa 40:2; cf. Jer 16:18; Isa 61:7; Zech 9:12). There is certainly no return to the Land without a new heart, without conversion, Deut 30:1-14; Ezek 36:16-36; Jer 30-31. There are certainly references to the “servant of Yahweh” in Isaiah (Isa 42:19) that bespeak a humbled Israel, who suffers paradigmatically, who thus becomes a “light to the nations,” Isa 42:6; 49:6; 51:4.⁵³ Oscillation between individualistic and collectivistic interpretations or use of concepts is common in the Bible. The Son of man (or “one like” him) is individual and collective in Dan 7:13-15, 18, 22, 27 (he becomes definitively an individual in 1 Enoch). The covenant with David (2 Sam 7:1-17) is democratized in Isa 55:3, as collective guilt becomes individualized in Ezek 18. Jacob himself is “Israel,” and Jesus can also be seen as Israel; it is thus that he is called out of Egypt, Matt 2:15 (see Hos 11:1; cf. Exod 4:22; Psa 89:27-28), and that he was tempted in the wilderness for forty days (as Israel in Deut 8:1-6).

So there is no “return” to the Land without purification. John’s baptism was not enough; Jesus speaks of another baptism he requires, Mark 10:38; 14:22-24, 36; Luke 12:49-50. This is how he will fulfill his *exodus*, according to the Greek text of Luke 9:31. Now, a “ransom,” *kōpher*, had to be paid in order to enter the Land, Exod 30:12-16, “for the expiation (*kipper* verb) of your lives.” Both the Hebrew text (*kôl ha-‘ôvêr*) and the Greek (LXX, *hosoi paraporeúôntai*) of Exod 30:13 say “all who cross over,” meaning “to the Land.”⁵⁴ In Hebrew, this is the root whence comes the very word “Hebrew,” *‘ivrî*, “the one who crosses over” (see Gen 14:13, regarding Avram the Hebrew). This rescue price in Greek is *lútra*; it is what Jesus came to give, in the form of his life, according to Mark 10:45 (although here the singular is used, *lútron*). This price is only valid for those who really *cross over* into the new covenant (see the Hebrew text of Deut 29:11, “so that

⁵² The singular *lútron*, as in Mark 10:45, appears in Prov 6:36; 13:8.

⁵³ This language is applied to Paul and Barnabas in Acts 13:46-47.

⁵⁴ The rescue or ransom price applies to those 20 years and up, precisely those who were not to enter the Land, according to Num 14:29, that is, the rebellious murmurers in the desert, the whole generation that must die.

you cross over into the covenant [*l^e 'avr^eja bîb^erîth*] of Yahweh your God").⁵⁵ The concrete form in which Jesus paid this price was by assuming the sufferings of the Servant of Yahweh; it is thus that we can relate the Good News in Second Isaiah to the expiatory sacrifice of the Servant: he shall sprinkle the nations, as on Yom Kippur, Isa 52:13; cf. Lev 16:14-16; he offers his life as an *ašam*, the global offering for removal (purification) of sins, guilt and its punishment, Isa 53:10; and Jesus "lifts up" (removes, expiates, purges) the sin of "many," Isa 53:12; cf. Lev 16:21-22 (and also our "illnesses," whatever they may be, Isa 53:4, as in Matt 8:17). In his action in the temple, Jesus overturned the tables of the moneychangers because there would no longer be a need to pay the ransom price for crossing into the Land, or for maintaining the temple, Exod 30:12-16; 38:24-28.

⁵⁵ The great Qumranites spoke in the same terms of their community; 1QS 1:16, in the Community Rule, it literally reads "all who enter into the rule of the community shall cross into the covenant" (*y{'}'bwrw bbryt*). They also considered themselves the community of the "new covenant," CD 6:19; 8:21 (in the "land of Damascus," in other words, of voluntary exile with the expectation of the final Return). That is why they also called themselves the "converts (or returnees) of Israel who left the land of Judah and dwelt in the and of Damascus," CD 6:5. Damascus here comes from Amos 5:27.

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 “programmatic,” 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.

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

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.”

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.

“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 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,

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).

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 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 an 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,

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).

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.

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 “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 *minh*□*a* (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

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.

[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 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

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.

which Israel awaited (it is in this sense that in Luke 9:31 Moses and Elijah talk with Jesus 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 (*zikkārōn*) 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

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.

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

[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 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).

(*anám̄nēsis*) before your God;” *anám̄nēsis* is the word used in Luke 22:19; 1 Cor 11:24-25 (also in LXX Psa 69:1 [MT 70:1]).

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.

Chapter Five: Christ High Priest: Christology and Soteriology

In this final chapter, we shall engage in a Christological exploration of the gospel of Mark, repeating as may be fitting what we have already seen, but seeking also to go beyond this in our understanding of who Christ is in this gospel.

Jesus, the eschatological priest. We have seen that the Testament of Levi, in the Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs (TestLevi 18:12), says that the “new priest” shall bind Beliar (the “devil” in Jesus’ time).⁸⁴ Jesus in Mark 1:24 is called the “Holy One of God” by the unclean spirit(s) who cry out that he has come to destroy them. “Holy One of God” may be a priestly title; thus is Aaron called in Psa 106:16.⁸⁵ In Mark 3:22-30, there is a discussion between the scribes who come from Jerusalem and Jesus, whom they have accused of casting out demons by means of the prince of demons. Jesus replies that if Satan is divided in this way, his kingdom can no longer stand, and, in order to illustrate what he is saying, he uses the image of the man who can bind the strong one and thus ransack his house (as Jesus has done with Satan; cf. 2 Cor 6:15; Luke 10:17-18). The theme of Jesus as the “strong(er) one” had already been announced by the Baptist, Mark 1:7. In Mark 5:1-20, we have the culmination of the exorcism accounts, where the *crescendo* grows to its most dramatic climax (cf. Mark 1:23-24; 3:11). Here, the conglomerate called “Legion” (some have here seen references to the Roman empire, who indeed was the final “beast” for the Qumranites, as it is in the Book of Revelation), even from afar, runs and falls prostrate a Jesus’ feet, crying “with a loud voice” that Jesus is the Son of God Most High.⁸⁶ No one could tame this imperial beast, not even with chains, Mark 5:3-4. The Greek verb translated “could” (like the Spanish verb *poder*) means “be strong;” we could here translate “and there was no one being strong (enough

⁸⁴ The date of the Testaments is placed in the Maccabean period, except for the Christian interpolations, which could be from the early second century; see *Old Testament Pseudepigrapha. Vol. I, 777-778*.

⁸⁵ JOSEPH A. FITZMYER, *The Genesis Apocryphon of Qumran Cave I. A Commentary* (Rome: Pontifical Biblical Institute, 1966), 79, says that “the Great Holy One” (in Aramaic *qdyš rb*) in 1QapGen 2:14, is a title of God which is also found in 1 Enoch 98:6 (in the Epistle of Enoch, dated by VanderKam to ca. 170 B.C.E.). He adds that the roots of this title are found in the Old Testament (Ezra 5:8; Dan 2:45). We could also cite, in the Book of Isaiah, Isa 12:6.

⁸⁶ There may be here a subtle reference to Melchizedek, called priest of God Most High in Gen 14:18-20. We saw that Heb 7 explains Jesus’ priesthood by referring to Melchizedek in Gen 14. The Qumran document 11QMelchizedek refers often to the spirits of Belial (variant of Beliar) who shall be vanquished by Melchizedek on the final Yom Kippur of the tenth Jubilee, the last one.

so as) to tame him.” The reader knows, or will soon see, that Jesus *is* strong enough. It is a dramatic presentation of Jesus as the Strong One who binds the Evil One, something which can be understood in the light of priestly concepts which are not developed or made explicit in Mark.⁸⁷

The divine presence as the goal of the Exodus. Clearly, the presence of God was for Israel something essential to its existence. Especially in the Priestly tradition, when God went away, due to the uncleanness of his people, and perhaps even more the uncleanness of the Land and of the temple in particular, what prevailed was chaos, something like a return to “un-creation” (as in the threats in Jer 4:23; Zeph 1:2-3). The Land actually purged itself of this indigestible contamination, Lev 18:24-25; this was the “automatic” reason for Exile, according to the great scholar Jacob Milgrom. And we have already seen that in Ezekiel, due to the sins of the people and the contamination they brought especially to the temple, Yahweh God left the temple gradually (by degrees), until it was destroyed. According to Milgrom, paradoxically, what most attracted (like a magnet) contamination, which he calls *miasma* (the Greek word for pollution), was the Holy of Holies, the very presence of Yahweh (especially above the cover—in Hebrew *kappôret*, in the Greek *LXX hilastērion*—of the Ark; see Num 7:89, which indicates the place where God was when Moses went in to speak with him; cf. Exod 25:22; Lev 16:2). The word *kappôret* is sometimes translated “mercy-seat” or “propitiatory” or “place of expiation;” Milgrom does not think it can be translated. It was this cover that was sprinkled with blood once a year on the great Day of Atonement, Yom Kippur, Lev 16:14-16. This took place once a year, year after year (as the Epistle to the Hebrews does not tire of reminding us), but it was then that even deliberate sins were blotted out (or “expiated”), even the worst sins, according to Milgrom. These were the *peša’im*, “crimes, transgressions, rebellions,” Lev 16:16 (a verse we can consider the epicenter of the

⁸⁷ Interestingly, Jesus sends Legion to a great herd of pigs, some two thousand (a Roman legion numbered some five thousand soldiers). Pigs are by antonomasia idolatrous uncleanness; it was the sacrifice of a pig on the altar of the temple which was called the “abomination of the desolation” in the Maccabean period; see 1 Macc 1:54; 6:7; Dan 9:27; 11:31; 12:11; cf. Mark 13:14. RICHARD A. HORSLEY, in his commentary to Mark 5:1-20 in *The New Oxford Annotated Bible. Third Edition, with the Apocryphal/Deuterocanonical Books* (Michael D. Coogan, ed.; Oxford – New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 2001), 65 NEW TESTAMENT, establishes a link between destruction by means of the Sea here in Mark 5 and in Exod 15:4, and also with Mark 11:23, where he thinks that “this mountain” refers to the temple. Cf. Rev 15. Rikki Watts (*Isaiah’s New Exodus in Mark*) connects the “strong man” theme in Mark to that of the divine warrior so important in the Old Testament.

Pentateuch, since Leviticus is its central book, and many see in chapter 16 the center of the center, all this having been designed by the Priestly editors of the Torah). Now, these “crimes” are exactly what the Servant took up for sinners, Isa 53:5, 8, just as he was numbered among “criminals or transgressors,” 53:12, “lifting up the sin (Hebrew *hāēl*) of “many.”

Let us recall that the Servant “shall sprinkle” (an expression which has caused perplexity from the time of the LXX, which translated “shall startle”) “many nations,” Isa 52:15; we should retain the Hebrew verb just as it is. It is the same verb “to sprinkle, spatter” in Lev 16:14-15 (but not the verb used in Ezek 36:25, for a perhaps more abundant “splashing”). Given the expiatory, cultic functions of the Suffering Servant of Isa 52-53, and taking into account the type of exegesis practised by the Qumranites which we briefly saw, we can very well see an allusion to the purification of the sanctuary, of the Holy of Holies, in Isa 52:15. Thus did Heb 9 see it. And thus may we interpret what Paul states in Rom 3:25, where he says that God “put forward” Jesus as *hilastērion*, that is, as the same place (the cover of the Ark) where expiation took place on Yom Kippur.

But let us return to the topic of the goal of the Exodus. It is the end of Exile, understood as a state or condition of sin, of non-redemption, of absence of God and of his blessings, to the point of being outside the covenant, before the time of the new covenant which is necessary for salvation, which implies the forgiveness of sins, Jer 31:31-34; cf. Heb 10:11-25. And what this new condition—which is a new creation, as in Ezek 37—brings is coming to truly be the people of God; see Jer 32:36-41; Ezek 37:20-8. It is the sum of all good things: the reunification of the twelve tribes (which implies the end of all exiles, the definitive return to home and family of the Jubilee, Lev 25:10). But most important of all, and what guarantees definitive wellbeing, is the divine presence; this is what the final chapters of the great priest Ezekiel, 40-48, so beautifully illustrate: they have to do with the new temple, and its healing waters and abundance of fish and fruits; in short, the return to the paradisiacal state (see already Ezek 36:35 and Lev 26:11-12, which Milgrom considers a promise that Yahweh will again take strolls with his people as he did in Gen 3:8). This is why the Book of Ezekiel ends with the announcement of the new name of the holy city Jerusalem (in Hebrew, *Yērušalāim*): *Yēwašammah* (“Yahweh is there”).

Already from Exod 15:17-18 —the famous “song of Moses” after the victory of Yahweh which freed Israel from Egypt— the temple (the divine presence) was spoken of as the goal of the Exodus. The reference is to the holy mountain (Zion), where Yahweh dwells, and to the sanctuary of Adonay (“the, or my, Lord”), which God’s hands established. This is in parallelism with God’s everlasting kingdom. The Qumranites have a *pešer* —one of their peculiar biblical interpretations, which combine diverse passages in order to give them an eschatological interpretation, which they apply to themselves as the protagonists of the last days, as does Paul in 1 Cor 9:9-10; 10:6, or even Jesus, Luke 4:21; 24:44— called precisely by scholars “florilegium” (something like a bouquet of different flowers), which speaks of this passage from the Book of Exodus. It is 4QFlorilegium (4Q174). The fragments which we have begin by speaking of the peace which there will be “at the end of the days,” a peace described in the terms of 2 Sam 7, the famous messianic prophecy of Nathan to David promising him a perpetual dynasty and a father-son relationship between Yahweh and the Davidic descendant. But the author of the *pešer* says that this prophecy refers to the eschatological House (temple), and cites Exod 15:17-18! In fact, 2 Sam 7 begins with David’s desire to build Yahweh a House, except that Yahweh says that it is he himself who will build David a “house” (a dynasty). The *pešer* then seems to use the anti-foreigner language of Ezek 44:4-9 (regarding the eschatological temple; cf. Deut 23:2-9), to go on to speak of a “sanctuary of Adam,” or “temple of men,” in which will be offered works of Torah instead of sacrifices (this situation, according to the Israelite scholar Devorah Dimant is provisional; it will last until the new eschatological temple not built by human hands comes, in accordance with Exod 15:17; in the meantime, the Qumranites did not go to the corrupt Herodian temple).⁸⁸ Our *pešer* continues with more references to 2 Sam 7, in order to interpret the language regarding ‘father and son’ in that passage as a reference to the Messiah, called the “Sprout” (sometimes not too-happily translated “Branch;” in Hebrew it is *ts^emah*□). This important term (it is the same root which indicates the vegetable

⁸⁸ It has also been noted that in Ezek 40-48 there is no command to build the eschatological temple, as occurred with the first temple, in Exod 25:8-9, 40; 26:30. It is important to note that, when the sanctuary is built and Yahweh can then dwell in it, in Exod 40:33-35, it is like a new creation, as indicated by the Priestly date in Exod 40:1; that is, it is the first day of the first month, or New Year’s Day, as in the beginning of creation in Gen and in the “new creation” in Gen 9 (the flood ended on New Year’s Day, Gen 8:13).

growth which comes out of the ground, as in Isa 55:10, applied to the Word of God) refers to the Messiah in Jer 23:5; 33:15 and in Zech 3:8; 6:12; cf. Isa 11:1, on the famous “shoot and stump” of Jesse (terms other than *ts^emah* are used here) upon which Yahweh’s Spirit shall rest. Then the *pešer* goes on to understand the “building” of the Davidic dynasty which Yahweh will do in 2 Sam 7 in terms of Amos 9:11, an eschatological addition to the book of that prophet which speaks of abundance of wine (as in Gen 49:8-12, Jacob’s blessing of Judah), return of exiles and marvelous harvests (as in the great messianic Psa 72).⁸⁹ The *pešer* seems to associate the coming of the Messiah both with the salvation of Israel and with the new eschatological temple. This first column of the *pešer* ends with a reference to the Anointed One of Psa 2, again applied to “the last days.”⁹⁰

Jesus as the Lord who enters the temple. The gospel of Mark begins with a citation of Mal 3, although only (Deutero-)Isaiah is explicitly mentioned (in order to make clear that the topic of New Exodus/New Creation will be very important in this gospel; this is the thesis of Rikki Watts). This means that the last prophet of the Hebrew Bible, which speaks of final salvation, presents the final events as a coming of the Lord (not explicitly “Yahweh,” but *ha-adôn*, “the Lord”) to his temple; it seems that this individual is also the desired “angel (or ‘messenger’) of the covenant” (we are reminded of Isa 42:6; 49:6, 8; 55:3).⁹¹ He shall come to cleanse the Levites (the author of Malachi has been identified with Levitical and deuteronomic [“pre-Pharisaic”] circles, and not with the Zadokites [“pre-Sadducees”]), so that they may present an offering (or tribute, for the Land, see footnote 81 above) “with righteousness” (in Hebrew, *mînh^eah bîtsdaqah*). This latter Hebrew term, *ts^edaqah*, is the “justification” of Abraham in Gen 15:6 (and of the “just one” in Hab 2:4), and comes from the root of the verb applied to the Servant in Isa 53:11 (cf. Rom 3:21-26); it is a root which refers to the declaration of someone as innocent, not-guilty, “justified” (declared just or righteous) in trial or judgment, and is thus synonymous with “salvation” (see Isa 54:17; *La Bible de Jérusalem*

⁸⁹ This passage in Amos was quoted in the “Council of Jerusalem,” Acts 15:13-21, as text to justify to inclusion of the Gentiles in the Church.

⁹⁰ See the similar use of Psa 2 (the nations against Yahweh and his Anointed, his son, verse 7) in Acts 4:23-31.

⁹¹ Cf. Zech 9:9-11.

translates *ts^edaqah* here as “victoire,” victory, but, better, see the parallelism in Isa 56:1, “my salvation” [*y^ešū‘atī*], “my righteousness” [*tsīdqatī*]; cf. Rom 10:9-10).

Now, this “angel” of Mal 3:1 is also the angel of the Exodus, Exod 23:20. This verse speaks of “the *place* which I have prepared for you.” “Place” (*maqôm*) is often another name for the temple, and it has thus been seen here; see, e.g., Deut 16:2, 6, 11; 26:2; Jer 7:3; John 11:48; Acts 6:13. Malachi is then speaking of the Final Exodus, the one announced by John the Baptist dressed as Elijah (Mal 3:23; LXX 4:5) in the context of Second Isaiah’s New Exodus, Isa 40:1-11. This is the “Good News” (cf. Luke 3:18).

We can then consider that the last prophetic message, that of Malachi, taken up by Mark 1:1-8, concerns final salvation understood as the Final Exodus and Coming of the Lord to his temple (with reference to a covenant that can be no other than that of Jer 31:31-34; 32:36-41; Ezek 34:23-31; 37:20-28).⁹² This will make possible the “pleasing offering” to God, ‘as in days of old’, Mal 3:4. It is a new situation, promised and awaited from of old, in which God will indeed make his Dwelling with his people for ever.

But we have seen that there is no “return to the Land” (= end of “Exile,” forgiveness and justification, salvation) without a new, circumcised heart (Deut 30:1-14; cf. Ezek 36:24-29). This is the final purification as a condition to final salvation, seen as a return to Paradise (Ezek 36:35). It is the forgiveness and “lifting up” of sins, the justification, which the Servant of Second Isaiah brings, Isa 53:4-7, 10-12. And this Servant “shall sprinkle” many —with his blood, we could surmise— according to Mark 14:24 (and 10:45). The thinking of the Epistle to the Hebrews makes sense: this blood of Jesus sprinkled the “cover” of the Ark, Heb 9:11-14; 12:24, that is, Christ presented himself before God with his own blood, on “Yom Kippur,” Heb 13:11-14 (Christ suffered outside the camp, like the scapegoat of Lev 16:27). This “Yom Kippur” is the eschatological day of forgiveness, that of the final Jubilee, of the final “liberation” (Hebrew *d^erôr*) of in Isa 61:1-2 (see Lev 25:8-10). This explains, or makes more explicit, what Mark presents in very brief terms. But all these topics are, one way or another, found in Mark’s gospel, all intertwined. Now, the “temple,” or the “Holy of Holies,” is nothing other than the very presence of God. To be there (cf. Heb 10:19-25) is salvation,

⁹² The “Coming One,” or “one who is to come,” is an eschatological-messianic expectation; see Matt 3:11; 11:13; 21:9; 23:39; John 1:15, 27; 3:31; 6:14; 11:27, etc.

or a sure pledge of salvation, all we can hope for in this life, until we see God face to face. This is what Christ, the Son of God, accomplished with his sacrifice. We can say that this is the meaning of the “new temple not built by human hands,” and raised in three days, of Mark 14:58; 15:29.

Christ as eschatological priest in Mark. In Mark 1:21-28, the evangelist presents Jesus as someone who teaches with “authority, dominion.” It is also declared from the beginning that he has come to destroy evil, or perhaps more exactly, *impurity*, precisely what distanced one from God in Judaism (as in so many other cultures; see the work of former Oxford anthropologist Mary Douglas); cf. Zech 13:1-2. The demoniac calls Jesus the “Holy One of God,” probably a priestly title.⁹³ Then this exorcism (which is tantamount to the defeat of evil) is defined as “a new teaching according to *exousía*.” Now, “teaching” is the meaning of “Torah” (= priestly teaching), all of it geared to maintaining the presence of God among his people, in order to avoid the chaos (due to divine absence) brought by impurity. Faults in this sense are reproached by Ez 22:23-31 (with the eschatological counterpart in 44:15-23) and Mal 2:1-9.

In Mark 1:40-45, Jesus heals a leper, something only God could do. Jesus’ command—that the healed leper go to the temple to offer the prescribed sacrifice, which the healed leper disregards, in order to start preaching about Jesus instead—has the Jewish priests in view: they could not heal leprosy, but only verify (Lev 14:1-4, 7, 36, 44, 48, 54-57) that, somehow, the afflicted person had been “cured” (“leprosy” denoted various skin conditions; even houses could suffer from this type of “leprosy”). Jesus’ command to the ex-leper in Mark 1:44 was meant to be a testimony (or witness) *against* these priests (*eis* should be translated *against*, as in Mark 6:11; 13:9). It can be said that the reader is left with the same question as the disciples in Mark 4:41, after Jesus (like

⁹³ Given Jesus’ offering of himself as priest in the Fourth Gospel (see John 10:36; Jesus offers himself in John 17), it is not difficult to interpret “Holy One of God” as a priestly term in the eucharistic discourse John 6:69. Furthermore, in John 10:36, the expression “has sanctified” in Greek is the same one applied in LXX Num 7:1 to God’s Holy Dwelling, which is also anointed. The high point of the Book of Exodus (chapter 40), for the Priestly writer, is the erection of the “Dwelling of the Tent of Meeting,” where the Divine Presence dwells (cf. John 1:14, literally, “and the Word became flesh and put his tent among us;” “put his tent” in Greek is one word, *eskēnōsen*, which evokes the three Hebrew consonants *š k n*, which are the root of the verb “to dwell, encamp, pitch a tent,” which in turn gives rise to the term *šekīnah*, the Divine Presence in rabbinic literature. In Exod 40:9-10, the Dwelling is anointed and sanctified (or consecrated), as is the altar. The altar is likewise sanctified in 1 Macc 4:48, after the cleansing of the temple which had

Yahweh in Isa 51:9-11) had rebuked the tempestuous sea with the same command he used against the demoniac, Mark 1:25; 4:39: “Who is this whom even the wind and sea obey?” Note also the presence of “obey” in Mark 1:27; 4:41. And in the background to the pericope of the leper stands 2 Kgs 5:6-7, where the king of Israel says that only God can cure a person of leprosy.

In Mark 2:1-12, Jesus “restores” a paralytic at the same time that he forgives his sins. Again, the idea comes up that “only God can forgive sins,” Mark 2:7. Some of the scribes “dialogue” (literally) in their hearts against Jesus, accusing him of “blasphemy.” It is the same accusation which will be leveled in Mark 14:64, after Jesus has admitted to the high priest and to the whole Sanhedrin that he is the Messiah, but also the “Son of man” with the prerogatives of Psa 110: he is Lord (even of David, cf. Mark 12:35-37), he shall sit at the right hand of God and will come with the clouds (cf. Mark 13:26) as the Son of man. As the Son of man, Jesus has *exousía* (“dominion, power, authority”) to forgive sins upon the earth (an expression which is reminiscent of God in Daniel, and of the one to whom God will give such *exousía*), Mark 2:10. This scene is also linked to the temple act, for, as we saw, after that action the leaders (now said to be “the high priests, the scribes and the elders,” i.e., all the Jewish leaders) asked Jesus with what *exousía* he had acted, and who had given him such *exousía*, and when Jesus harked back to the beginning of the time of salvation, to the activity of John the Baptist, again the leaders are said to “dialogue” among themselves (same Greek verb as in Mark 2:6). So that the pardoning of the paralytic is related to Jesus’ efficaciousness (because he has *exousía*) which makes the temple and its sacrificial system obsolete. It is the same efficacy manifested in the restoration of the paralytic, as occurred with the leper, and with the first demoniac. In this latter case, a contrast had already been made between Jesus, who “taught” with *exousía*, and “the scribes” of the old Torah.

We then see that this *exousía* is tied to Jesus’ “teaching.” Now, we have said that “teaching” can here be the equivalent of “Torah,” priestly teaching. The purpose of this teaching was to draw the Israelite near to God, or to keep God in his midst, as a source of protection and blessing. All of Israel’s misfortunes had come from not living up to this

been defiled, which we alluded to above. The language in John draws a contrast between Jesus the Anointed and Sanctified One and the altar which must be destroyed and replaced; see John 2:19-22.

consecration as a special people, Yahweh's particular possession, with a priestly character and (as Ugo Vanni, S.J., says) with a royal responsibility (cf. Exod 19:5-6; Rev 1:6). Israel had become mixed up with unclean peoples and had imitated them, falling into idolatry; see Lev 18:24-30; Ezek 8; 16. This was the state of things after the Fall. But it was expected that in the End God would intervene to restore the original state, the one intended in the beginning. This is what is described in Dan 7: dominion is taken away from the beasts, and is returned (or given in a new and more excellent way) to the "Son of man," Human Being as represented by a prototype, but here described in exalted terms, Dan 7:13-14. This is the Kingdom of God, final salvation, including resurrection and the final rewards and punishments, Dan 12.

Jesus in Mark 3 is described as the 'strong one' who can bind Satan. This was something that the eschatological priest in the Testament of Levi was expected to do; the Qumranites also awaited something like this —certainly they expected Melchizedek to defeat Beliar, in the final Jubilee, in the context of the Good News of Second (especially Isa 40) and Third (especially Isa 61, regarding the Anointed of the Spirit and the mourners of Zion) Isaiah. Jesus can bind Beliar, Satan, the devil. Could he not be "God's eschatological agent" (Lohmeyer) who restores the primordial conditions of Paradise, the state of things as they were before the Fall?⁹⁴

In Mark 4:35-41, Jesus calms the tempest of Sea. We capitalize "Sea" because in the context of the Near East, in the context of Israel, and especially due to Ugaritic influence, Sea was a cosmic personage, in Ugaritic *Yamm*, *Yam* in Hebrew. Jesus rebukes Sea with the same exorcistic command (4:39) that he used in 1:25, in the programmatic episode of the first exorcism. Jesus had been sleeping in the boat, and his disciples awaken him. This reminds us of the eschatological passage of Isa 51:9-11, where Second Isaiah pleads that Yahweh awaken and again do what he did in the most remote antiquity: tame the sea monsters Rahab and Dragon, cosmic-mythological creatures.⁹⁵ These constitute something like the details of what is not minutely described in Gen 1:1-2. Yahweh had dried up (Isa 51:9) *Yam* and the waters of *Tehom*, the same word ("deep" in

⁹⁴ KOBELSKI, *Melchizedek and Melchireša*, 68, says of the work of the eschatological priest in TestLevi 18: "During this new age, sin and evil come to an end. The priest of these new times will bind Belial, will open the gates of paradise, and remove the threatening sword against Adam."

⁹⁵ See the note in *The New Oxford Annotated Bible. Third Edition*, 1050 HEBREW BIBLE.

the RSV) as in Gen 1:2, above whose waters Yahweh's creating-taming Spirit hovered. Second Isaiah likens this first creation with the new creation which redemption from Babylon signifies, an exit likened in turn to the Exodus from Egypt, when Yahweh dried up the Sea of Reeds ("Red Sea" according to the LXX). We have already referred to Exod 15, where this victory (by the way, described as that of Yahweh the "warrior," *îš mîlh□amah*, "man-o'-war," 15:3, evocative of both Yahweh in Isa 61:1-6; cf. Rev 19:11-16 and of the "Strong One" of Mark). The goal of Exod 15:15 is the temple made by God's hands.

We can thus say that Jesus represents, or actualizes, Yahweh's awakening after a long slumber in which he had not even spoken through prophets. It was Yahweh's eschatological awakening, in order to make the final creation, that is, to bring his Kingdom and with it his salvation, the definitive Exodus. This is why Jesus works even on the Sabbath; see John 5:16-18.⁹⁶ We can interpret this passage in John as the Working of the New Creation which Jesus is engaged in, until he is finished (in John 19:30, when he hands over the Spirit). One does not rest until the work is finished (cf. Gen 2:2). Jesus has come to his rest (cf. Heb 10:11-14), but our rest still awaits; see Heb 4:1-11 (and the previous verses regarding the forty years in the desert).

This may help explain the difficult saying in Mark 3:28, "the Son of man is Lord of the Sabbath." Jesus, like God, is at work on the New Creation, and had not yet finished; in Johannine terms, his 'hour had not yet come'.⁹⁷

In Mark 5, we saw the great demoniac Legion (a possible allusion to the final beast, Rome), who calls Jesus "Son of God Most High." We can link "Most High" (Hebrew *Elyôn*) with that epithet of God found especially in Gen 14, where it figures in

⁹⁶ I have associated the strange 38 years in John 5:5, during which the paralytic—faithless, sinful (see verse 14) and without the desire to be healed/saved—lies uselessly, with Israel's 38 years of useless wandering in the desert, according to Deut 2:1-2, 14. The march from Sinai-Horeb to the Holy Land (Kadesh-barnea, in this stage of Deuteronomy, is already the Holy Land, according to Norbert Lohfink) should have taken only eleven days, Deut 1:2.

⁹⁷ The profound and difficult PAUL BEAUCHAMP, in *L'uno e l'altro Testamento.2. Compiere le Scritture* (Italian translation of the original French, 1990; Milano: Glossa, 2001), discussing on page 319 John 5:17 ("My Father up to now works and I also work"), says (I translate) that with Jesus, "man's Sabbath has reached God's Sabbath, and this Sabbath cannot be conceived as a projection onto God of the paralytic's immobility." On page 321, footnote 8, citing the Epistle of Barnabas 15:8, which speaks of the eighth day as the beginning of a new world, Beauchamp says that this is "Sunday", the day of the resurrection, wherein the seventh day (of rest) is made to coincide with the first day (that of the first day of the world and of the light); he cites W. Rordorff, *Sabato e domenica nella Chiesa antica*, SEI, Torino, 1979).

Melchizedek's title (Daniel makes frequent use of this appellation, in its Aramaic form, the one probably used by the demoniac in Mark 5).⁹⁸ We can thus here link Jesus' status as Son with what the Epistle to the Hebrews says, when it compares him to Moses, Heb 3:1-6. Moses was a faithful servant in God's House, but Jesus is Son of God (and therefore, heir, as in Mark 12:6-7) and himself *the builder of God's House* (cf. Mark 12:10; 14:58; 15:29).

In Mark 6:30-44, we have the first "multiplication of the loaves," in the wilderness, which reminds us of how God fed his people in the Exodus. We know that in John 6 there is a midrash on the manna and the true bread from heaven which Jesus brings, John 6:32-33. There are eucharistic overtones here (John 6:11), and also in Mark 6:41. What follows is the episode where Jesus walks on Sea, something the disciples do not understand, Mark 6:45-52 (the divine claim "I am" appears in Mark only in 6:50; 13:6 and 14:62). An interpretation of all this is that Jesus, the Son of God, is the one who gave himself, as bread (and wine, Mark 14:22-24, what Melchizedek offered in Gen 14:18 to God Most High), food for the new people of God, pilgrims on earth, but who have already entered into the Final Exodus inaugurated by Jesus. This offering is intrinsically a priestly act.

We have seen that Jesus has come to finish with evil (to destroy the "unclean spirits," which are linked with the "fountain for sin and impurity for the House of David and for the inhabitants of Jerusalem" in Zech 13:1-2); at that time, Jesus is called by a priestly title, Mark 1:24; Psa 106:16. He then cures a leper, something no priest (Jewish or otherwise) could do, but only God. Jesus forgives sins with *exousía* in Mark 2, which is linked to the temple act in Mark 11. He is the Lord of the Sabbath and the one who binds Satan, a function of the eschatological priest (Testament of Levi, Qumran). He acts anew in the *éschaton* in order to tame Sea, something that Yahweh was expected to do (the renewal of the feats of creation, making a new heaven and a new earth). He tames the indomitable final Beast, "Legion," who acknowledges him to be the "Son of God Most High," and he destroys a herd of pigs, impurity *par excellence*, as was the pig sacrificed on the altar of the temple in the days of Daniel and of the Maccabees, the

⁹⁸ *El 'Elyôn*, "God Most High," is a common title for God in the Hellenistic period, and is very frequent in the intertestamental literature, according to FITZMYER, *Genesis Apocryphon*, 91, who cites as examples Sir

“abomination of the desolation.”⁹⁹ In Mark 5:21-43, Jesus, in two episodes intertwined by Mark, so that they interpret themselves mutually, heals an unclean woman (a danger to life, Lev 20:18, and to remaining on the Land, Lev 18:24-30), and gives life to a “little lamb” (*talitha*), the little twelve-year-old virgin, yet childless; he commands her to rise, in Aramaic, using the resurrection verb *qûm* (though the feminine imperative here should be *qûmî*). This “little lamb” that Jesus *grabs* by the hand is one of those “little lambs” (in Hebrew *l’la’im*) that the Shepherd *gathers* in Isa 40:11, when he redeems his people in the New Exodus.

After Jesus walks on Sea, and after having been told that with merely touching the fringe of his cloak people were saved, Mark 6:56, we arrive at Mark 7:1-23. We have here something central for Mark, and it is also the transition point for Jesus’ going over to the pagan zone. The discussion is with the Pharisees and some scribes come from Jerusalem, regarding certain issues of *halacha*, legal interpretation of what the Torah requires. In the gospels, there is a great polemic with the Pharisees, whose points of view prevailed in Rabbinic Judaism, the form of Judaism which survived and predominated after the destruction of the temple in 70 C.E. The *halachot* (plural of *halacha*) of the Sadducees (on some issues stricter than that of the Pharisees) and of the Qumranites (much stricter than the Pharisees, whom they called “seekers of smooth [easy] things, and whose name [meaning “separated ones”] they interpreted as “apostates”) disappeared with them. But we have to ask, “What was Jesus’ *halacha*, how did he “interpret” the Torah? The answer is given in Mark 7:19, where it is said that when Jesus explained what renders one unclean (or, in other words, stated his *halacha*), he was “purifying all foods.”

Is it simply a mere *declaration* that now everything is pure? (see Rom 14:14; cf. Acts 10:13-16, 28; Eph 2:14-18). Or is it rather that in the *éschaton* impurity is done away with, Zech 13:1-2; 14:20-21? It is difficult to make these distinction. Foods in and of themselves were not impure (see, for example, what Philo of Alexandria says about

46:5; 47:5 (apart from Daniel).

⁹⁹ See LEONARD J. GREENSPOON, “Between Alexandria and Antioch. Jews and Judaism in the Hellenistic Period,” in *The Oxford History of the Biblical World* (M.D. Coogan, ed.; Oxford – New York: Oxford University Press, 1998), 329. The expression “abomination of the desolation” comes from Jer 7:34, the speech against the temple from which Jesus quotes in Mark 11:17. Some scholars think that according to Mark 13, there will be not only a destruction of the temple, but a final desecration (see 13:14); cf. JACQUES DUPONT, O.S.B., “La ruine du Temple et la fin des temps dans le discours de Marc 13,” in *Apocalypses et Théologie de l’espérance* (Lectio Divina 95; Paris: Editions du Cerf, 1977), 207-269.

how delicious pork is; the prohibition had nothing to do with trichinosis or hygiene, but with idolatry).¹⁰⁰ The laws of Leviticus had as their purpose to separate Israel from pagans, in order to draw her close to God in pure worship, free of idolatry. But with Jesus comes the “fullness of time” (cf. Mark 1:15; Gal 4:4-11) and the new creation, Gal 6:15. There is a return to the primordial state before the Fall, before there was sin, impurity, exile from paradise, confusion of languages and the need to choose a single people from among the other nations in order to educate it in private, as it were, like home tutoring, on how to serve the one true God. We are now in the new era of the “new commandment” (cf. Mark 12:28-34) of the Kingdom, and there is no more need of sacrifices in the temple (a relic of the need to legitimize animal slaughter), because Jesus has offered his single, unique sacrifice, and with the return to Eden, there is no more killing; see Isa 11.

Now, what Jesus does in Mark 7:1-23 is precisely a priestly act: distinguishing between pure and impure, that is, provide *torot* (plural of *torah*), “priestly teachings” (such as those contained in the Torah, or that which Haggai was asked for, in Hag 2:10-14). It is what Ezekiel had prophesied the priests would do in the final period, Ezek 45:23. But what Jesus does goes much further.

Christ the Son of God works the restoration of fallen humanity. Jesus, proleptically (anticipatedly, in an incipient fashion, cf. 1 Cor 15:24-28), does away with evil, impurity and the curse which brought the Fall, represented by the healing/saving of the woman with the blood flow in Mark 5.¹⁰¹ How did this take place? Reversing, eschatologically, Adam’s fault, the “original” sin. Adam, being a mere man from the ground, had wanted to be like God, Gen 3:5. Christ, being of “divine nature” (Phil 2:6, literally, “having or possessing the form of God”), made the opposite move: he emptied himself, he divested himself of his rank, taking the form of a slave (or servant) to the point of submitting to the most ignoble death, that of crucifixion (the move most opposite to what Adam intended). Only the Son of God could accomplish this, since none other

¹⁰⁰ *De Specialibus Legibus*, 4:100-101, quoted in JAMES L. KUGEL, *The Bible as it was* (Cambridge, MA - London: The Belknap Press of Harvard University, 1997), 445. That is, the most delicious meat is prohibited to Israel in order to educate her in mastering the passions, through the use of reason (what is, in other respects, consistent with rabbinic interpretations of the laws of kashrut); see 4 Macc 1:33-34; 4:16-27.

¹⁰¹ I am here inspired by STEGEMANN, *Library of Qumran*, especially pages 235-257. By the way, menstruation was impurity *par excellence*, Ezek 36:17.

possessed the “divine condition” from which he could divest himself.¹⁰² It was thus that “he learned obedience” (Heb 5:8), what can be considered to be submission to the punishment (better, “correction, discipline,” the *mûsar* of Isa 53:5) that was properly our due, the punishment or correction which was needed in order to ‘return to the Land’, the punishment which brings about conversion; see Lev 26:14-43 (there shall be a sevenfold punishment, if it be necessary, but they will then confess their iniquity); Isa 40:2 (Israel will pay double for its sin, and will then be able to make the new, or final, exodus; cf. Luke 9:31); Dan 9:1-24. With Jesus’ eschatological obedience, the cursed state of Lev 26 is undone, and the blessing of Lev 26:3-13 is inaugurated.¹⁰³ The blessing can be summarized with two images: God establishes his Dwelling amidst his people, and he walks with them again as he did in Eden, Gen 3:8; Lev 26:11. Intimacy with (“knowledge of”) God reigns again (cf. Hos 2:18-25; 1 Pet 2:4-10; Isa 11:1-10), that is, “justification” (a good relationship with God, being able to be with him), and, in its time, salvation (Rom 10:9-10; 8:22-25; 5:9-10). God’s face shines and we are saved, Psa 80; cf. 2 Cor 3:17-18.

Christ’s offering of himself made him a priest, the eschatological high priest, according to the “order” of Melchizedek, Heb 5:9-10. It is thus that he was able to sit at God’s right hand, Heb 10:12-13, as had been written in Psa 110 (cited by Jesus before the Sanhedrin in Mark 14:62). What Jesus has done is to open up a new way to God, Heb 10:19-21. This he did as priest who offered himself, Heb 9:11-14; 12:24, thus entering into the very presence of God, of which the Holy of Holies was a mere type, Heb 9:1-10. And he did it sharing our fragility, Heb 4:14-16; 2:10-18, so that we can follow him, Heb 12:1-4. We form a new temple of God in Christ, Eph 2:19-22. This is the whole of the priestly work performed by Jesus, which can only be gleaned or glimpsed in Mark’s gospel.

¹⁰² Cf. Rom 5:12-19; 1 Cor 15:21-22.

¹⁰³ This is not just a question of “mythology,” but is ethical: Jesus is our model for our relation to God, in order to arrive at him; cf. 1 Pet 2:21-25.

Conclusion

Jesus, in Mark's gospel, is identified as the "Son of God." This title was applied to the Messiah, to divine beings (later thought of as "angels"), to Israel (God's first-born) and to the righteous sufferer. Jesus is all these in Mark. He successfully treads Israel's path and leads those who believe in him to God's very presence.

What being the Son of God really implies can only be understood when Jesus dies on the cross. It is something mysterious and tremendous, only the Father and the demons know it while Jesus walks the earth. During this time, Jesus presents himself as the "Son of man," which places him in the apocalyptic and eschatological context of Daniel, the "prophet" of the Kingdom of God. This Son of man—a figure which was then already well on its way to being the composite final redeemer awaited by Israel—represented the return to the original state intended by the Creator in the beginning, when everything was in order and there was as yet no sin. The key to understand the Son of man in Mark is *exousía*. It is the dominion proper to Adam (Gen 1:28), but which was lost by him and given to the beasts who oppress human beings. This was the case until God acted anew, taking dominion from the beasts to give it to the "Son of man," Dan 7.

The Son of man in Mark must suffer, for this he came, Mark 10:45. The Daniel group also suffered and justified many, like the Servant of Isa 53; Dan 11:35; 12:3, 10. There are the "pains or travails" of the Messiah" of Jewish tradition: there is no redemption without suffering, the Messiah must be given birth to, as it were (John 16:21; Rev 12:1-6; cf. Isa 66:7-12). Jesus makes explicit the suffering which the Son of man must undergo (in his Passion predictions); only then will he be able to sit at God's right hand, Mark 14:62. This seems to indicate the throne of Dan 7:9, on which Jewish tradition sits the Messiah. The Son of man is the Messiah, the Son of God (Psa 2:7; Psa 89:27-28; Mark 14:61-62). As Messiah, he must also build God's House (2 Sam 7; Zech 6:12-13).

But what is "God's House"? Does God dwell in a house? See 2 Sam 7:5-7; Isa 66:1-2; Acts 7:44-50; 1 Kgs 8:27. The Qumranites expected an eschatological temple. They rejected both the first temple (built by Solomon) as well as the second (postexilic)

temple.¹⁰⁴ Before the Messiah came and God built the eschatological temple not made by human hands (Exod 15:17), the Lord had commanded these sectarians to make a “temple of men.” But this was derived from 2 Sam 7:11^a, the divine promise that Yahweh would build David a “house.”¹⁰⁵ Related to this is the passage Amos 9:11, concerning the “hut of David” which was in ruins, which the Qumranites applied to the Messiah in 4QFlorilegium. In Christianity, this Messiah is Jesus, and it is he who builds, or is (John 2:19-22), “God’s temple.”

Amos 9:11, on the “fallen hut” (*hannôfeleth*) that Yahweh will *raise* (Hebrew verb *qûm*, used for the resurrection (cf. Acts 3:22; Deut 18:15; Jer 30:9), was applied to the “Son of man” as Messiah in Jewish tradition, which called him Bar Nafle, “the son of the clouds,” a phrase which sounds like *hannôfeleth*. But only the one who understands the gospel of Mark can know how it is that Jesus built God’s temple in three days.

¹⁰⁴ DEVORAH DIMANT, “4QFlorilegium and the Idea of Community as Temple,” 175, in *Hellenica et Judaica. Hommage à Valentin Nikiprowetzky* (A. Caquot, ed.; Leuven – Paris, Peeters: 1986), 165-189.

¹⁰⁵ DIMANT, “4QFlorilegium,” 177, something which she says had not been seen recognized previously.