

Excerpt from Prof. Chávez's doctoral dissertation *The Theological Significance of Jesus' Temple Action in the Gospel of Mark* (Edwin Mellen Press, 2002), 16-20

2. The Son of man

In Mark 2:1-12, Jesus presents himself as “the Son of man” who has ἐξουσία [authority] to forgive sins ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς [upon the earth]. The setting is the house in Capernaum in which he lived. Due to the multitude, a paralytic who could not otherwise reach Jesus was raised up to the roof and brought down through it by his four companions. Jesus, seeing their *faith*, tells the paralytic that his sins are forgiven (ἀφίενται, a theological passive, 2:5). The scribes thought he was blaspheming, usurping a divine prerogative (2:6-7).¹ Jesus refutes them, simply demonstrating his ἐξουσία to forgive sins by restoring the paralytic from his prostration (2:8-12).

This episode is an important presentation of Jesus' ἐξουσία, “one of Mark's chief theological concerns.”² The word is indissolubly linked to the Danielic “one like a son of man,” who is given (theological passive)³ an eternal ἐξουσία (mentioned three times in LXX Dan 7:14, dominating the verse), which shall not be taken away, and all glory, and whom all the peoples of the earth shall worship. Ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς (Mark 2:10) is found in LXX Dan 4:17: “Until it be *known* that the Lord of heaven has ἐξουσία over everything that is in heaven and *upon the earth*, and that he does whatever he wants in them.” Jesus' statement in Mark 2:10 (“so that you *know* that the Son of man has ἐξουσία to forgive sins *upon the earth*”) echoes Daniel; in LXX Dan 4:31, it is said that the “God of heaven has ἐξουσία in the kingdom of men and gives it to whomever he wills.”⁴

¹ “Denn nach jüdischer Auffassung ist das Recht der Sündervergebung Gott allein vorbehalten, und nur im Tempkult können die Menschen nach Gottes gnädiger Ordnung für einzelne Vergehen Vergebung erlangen. [fn. omitted] Jesus aber spricht den Menschen die endzeitliche Sündervergebung zu und setzt damit die Sühneinstitution des Tempels außer Kraft.” [“For in the Jewish view the right to forgive sins is reserved to God alone, and only in the temple cult, according to God's gracious arrangement, can men obtain forgiveness for particular trespasses. Jesus, however, declares to men the end-time forgiveness of sins and thereby leaves the atonement-institution of the temple powerless.”] F. HAHN, *Der Urchristliche Gottesdienst* (Stuttgarter Bibel Studien 41; Stuttgart 1970) 26-27.

² DONAHUE, *Are You the Christ?*, 119. He considers this passage as the most important use of ἐξουσία in Mark, and as a companion piece to the ἐξουσία question in 11:27-33 (considered by many to refer to the temple act, although Donahue connects it with Jesus' earlier ministry). On p. 120, Donahue states that Norman “Perrin has discovered that it is only in Mark and in dependence on him that *exousia* is used of the earthly ministry of Jesus, and that it is Mark who makes the earthly ministry of Jesus into a full-scale presentation of the authority of the Son of Man. [Fn.:] N. Perrin, “The Son of Man in the Synoptic Tradition,” *Biblical Research*, XIII (1968), 20-21.” J. SCHNIEWIND, *Das Evangelium nach Markus* (NTD 1; Göttingen 1958) 116, connects 1:27, 2:10 and 11:28.

³ ἐδόθη [was given], Dan 7:14; cf. Matt 28:18, ἐδόθη μοι τὰσα ἐξουσία ἐν οὐρανῷ καὶ ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς [all authority in heaven and upon the earth has been given me].

⁴ See FEUILLET, “L'Exousia,” 161-192. On p. 172, he states that “Le mot ἐξουσία (venant de ἕξεστιν) signifie le plus souvent dans le grec classique le pouvoir, la faculté, la liberté de faire quelque chose qui résulte de l'absence d'obstacles extérieurs (à la différence de δύναμις, κράτος, ἰσχός, qui expriment la force physique ou spirituelle présente dans un être). Mais ἐξουσία peut encore vouloir dire la puissance qui s'impose par elle-même, qui se manifeste par un simple commandement.” [“The word ἐξουσία (deriving from ἕξεστιν) most often means in classical Greek the power, the faculty, the freedom to do something which results from the absence of exterior obstacles (in contrast to δύναμις, κράτος, ἰσχός,

Whether Jesus ever used the expression “the Son of man,” and whether it referred to himself, has been much debated.⁵ It is clear that for Mark Jesus is the Son of man.⁶ This designation of Jesus (one of his titles in 14:62) has the important function of accomplishing the eschatological gathering of the elect (13:26-27).⁷ This points to the new community which will result from his ministry, death and resurrection, and is thus related to the temple.⁸

Lohmeyer emphasizes the opposition of Jesus as the Son of man to the Jewish cult.⁹ The Jewish view was that God forgave sins on the basis of the sacrifice commanded by Him and through the priest commissioned by Him. Jesus’ word is: “the Son of Man has

which express the physical or spiritual force present in a being). But ἐξουσία can also mean the strength which is self-imposing, manifested by a simple command.”]

⁵ See, e.g., SANDERS, *Jesus and Judaism*, 145; STEGEMANN, “Some Aspects of Eschatology,” 425 fn. 65. The expression in itself can mean merely “human being;” cf. its use in Ezek 2:1, etc.

⁶ See 8:31; 9:9, 12, 31; 10:33, 45; 14:21. Feuillet thinks Jesus used the title often; “L’*Exousia*,” 165. GÄRTNER, *Temple*, 127, believes that “The figure of the Son of man was undoubtedly of great importance for Jesus’ Messianic consciousness.” See the Son of man in 1 Enoch 48, referred to as “the Righteous One” and “the Chosen One” in 1 Enoch 38:2; 48:6 (i.e., in Servant-terms, Isa 42:1; 53:11), and as “the messiah,” 48:10. D. FLUSSER, “Messianology and Christology in the Epistle to the Hebrews,” in *Judaism and the Origins of Christianity* (Jerusalem 1988) 270, in reference to eschatological figures datable to the first century C.E., writes: “Melchizedek became a pre-existent and immortal being; he was thought as having been begotten in his mother’s womb by the Word of God, and there were those who expected him to ascend the heaven and to be the judge to the Latter Days, when he, together with celestial powers, will vindicate the judgment of God so that the righteous would become his lot and heritage. [fn. omitted] Such a concept of the Messiah is extremely supernatural, as is also the concept of the messianic Son of Man.” On Melchizedek as a “divine hypostasis,” see J.M. BAUMGARTNER, “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* (ed. D.W. PARRY - E.W. ULRICH) (Leiden - Boston - Köln 1999) 539. More will be said below in regard to messianism. L.F. HARTMAN - A.A. DiLELLA, *The Book of Daniel* (AB 23; Garden City, NY 1978) 97-98, conclude “that the expression *kēbar ’enaš*, ‘one in human likeness’, does not in itself point to an angel or to a mysterious figure of the past or present or to a figure to appear in the distant eschatological future. Rather the expression is nothing more or less than a symbol of ‘the holy ones of the Most High’, who are, as we have seen and as many commentators agree [fn. omitted], the faithful Israelites to be rewarded for their steadfastness in the face of persecution and martyrdom.” Cf. Dan 7:14, 18, 27. However, G.R. BEASLEY-MURRAY, “The Interpretation of Daniel 7,” *CBQ* 45 (1983) 58, points out that “The man-like one represents the saints in the kingdom . . . but inasmuch as the sovereignty over the world exercised through the ‘man’ is that of God, he is also the representative of God. This dual role of the ‘man’ accords with the messianic traditions of the Old Testament.” “The oscillation between corporate and individual interpretation [in the “unitive exegesis” combining the Servant and the Son of man] that can be traced in the Qumran documents is matched by the oscillation between a community and its individual representative in the biblical texts themselves [i.e., in Isa and Dan].” BRUCE, *Biblical Exegesis*, 58.

⁷ The in-gathering of all dispersed Israel was a fervent eschatological hope, expressed in such passages as Ezek 11:16-20 (where YHWH says he has been a sanctuary to the Diaspora he himself caused, but will give the people a new, obedient heart; cf. 36:24-26); 37:21-28, an important text which mentions David as servant, prince (*nasî*, 37:25) and shepherd in the context of an eternal covenant of peace and God’s sanctuary being in the people’s midst. Isa 56:8, coming after the verse which Jesus quoted in part in the temple act, is most important: in it YHWH announces the gathering of “still *others*” (= Gentiles) to the dispersed of Israel who have already been gathered.

⁸ “The Jesus who will found the new community is the coming Son of Man.” DONAHUE, *Are You the Christ?*, 185. We will come back to the link between ἐξουσία and Mark’s anti-temple theme, as discussed by Donahue, in the section on the *Vollmachtsfrage* (Mark 11:27-33) in chapter four.

⁹ *Lord of the Temple*, 26-27.

power.” Here then we have the cult once ordained by God, and the Son of Man, now sent by God, ranged against one another in sharp opposition.¹⁰

“The concept of Son of Man in Daniel is very close to that of the kingdom of God.”¹¹ We will have occasion to discuss how the kingdom is related to the new temple the risen Christ will build.¹² Here we should note that the combination of Son of man with Servant is already found in Daniel;¹³ remarkably, in the Targum version of the “Song of the Suffering Servant,” it says:

¹⁰ *Lord of the Temple*, 26; on p. 49: “Those who prepared this (Jesus’) Passover are priests; they contrive His death, they hire the traitor, they dispatch the arresting party composed of their own servants, they examine Him and abuse Him, they incite the people to demand His crucifixion, and they mock Him on the cross. All this is the priests’ doing, and illustrates with what implacable hatred the chief priests pursued Jesus, with what abhorrence also the narrators, the early community, regarded their Master’s arch-enemies and murderers.”

¹¹ GASTON, *No Stone*, 381.

¹² For DONAHUE, *Are You the Christ?*, 126, “the Marcan addition of 11:10 stresses the substitution of kingdom for temple.” Thus MACK, *A Myth*, 292. For GASTON, *No Stone*, 229, “those aspects of the kingdom of God in the teaching of Jesus which have been neglected by the modern consensus point to an understanding of the community as the temple.” On p. 230, he states that “that the kingdom of God is equivalent to the temple was drawn with all its consequences only by E. Lohmeyer,” (citing “*Kultus und Evangelium*, Göttingen, 1942, pp. 72f; *Das Vater -Unser*, Göttingen, 1960⁴, pp. 64-68”). For W.G. KÜMMEL, *Verheissung und Erfüllung* (Zürich 1956³); Eng. trans., *Promise and Fulfillment. The Eschatological Message of Jesus* (London 1957) 102, the “entry of the kingdom” is linked to the doom of the temple.

¹³ GASTON, *No Stone*, 380; GÄRTNER, *Temple*, 128. These two authors also refer to the pertinent Qumran texts where the Servant concept is combined with that of “the holy ones of the Most High” and applied to the community or to their “instructor” (“*maskîl*”). See K. KOENEN, “שכל,” *TWAT* VII, 794. The verb שכל (“to teach, act prudently, have success”), used of the Servant in Isa 52:13, is taken up as a plural participle-noun (*maskîlîm*) in Dan 11:33, 35; 12:3 to designate those who encouraged the Jews persecuted by Antiochus Epiphanes to remain faithful to the Law; they thus make the many (*rabbîm*) righteous (12:3), as did the Servant (Isa 53:11). See H.L. GINSBERG, “The Oldest Interpretation of the Suffering Servant,” *VT* 3 (1953) 400-404. In Qumran, the idea of atonement by suffering is quite important; see esp. 1QS 8:3-4. *Maskîl* appears in 1QS 9:12; 1Qsb 1:1; 3:22; 5:20; 4Q510 1:4; CD 12:21; 13:22; 4Q511 2:I,1; the verb שכל appears in 1QS 3:13; 4:22; 9:20; 1QSa 1:7; 4Q381 69:4-5; in CD 13:8, the *m^ebaqqer* (translated as “instructor” by F. GARCÍA MARTÍNEZ, *Textos de Qumrán* [Valladolid 1993⁴] 91, but as “supervisor” [and thus analogous to, and a forerunner of, ἐπίσκοπος, whence “bishop”] by R.E. BROWN, “Dead Sea Scrolls,” *NJBC*, 1076) is said to “make the many wise.” Despite a review of K.G. KUHN, *Konkordanz zu den Qumrantexten* (Göttingen 1960) and of J.H. CHARLESWORTH, *Graphic Concordance to the Dead Sea Scrolls* (Tübingen - Louisville 1991), I cannot corroborate the claim made in BRUCE, *Biblical Exegesis*, 55, that “the members of the community called themselves *maskîlîm*,” he gives no reference to any passage. See also W.H. BROWNLEE, “The Servant of the Lord in the Qumran Scrolls (parts I-II),” *BASOR* 132 (1953) 8-15; 135 (1954) 33-38. This author discusses (10-11) the possibility that the reading משהתי in 1QIsa^a 52:14b (resulting in the translation “I so anointed you”) is really a conflation of the verbs משה (“anoint”) and the MT’s משהת, a hapax, and here ungrammatical, since it is the noun form of the verb שחת (“to mar, disfigure”). The Targum, of course, identifies the Servant as the Messiah. Brownlee (12) sees the Servant even in Zech 9:9, where the king who comes to Zion is described as עני, as is the sufferer in Ps 22:25; cf. Isa 53:7 (the Servant was נענה, “afflicted”). Also interesting is the idea of the just one’s “refinement;” צרף, “to smelt,” is applied to the *maskîlîm* in Dan 11:34; cf. 12:10. It appears in Isa 48:10; Zech 13:9. The Targum applies it to the Servant in 53:10; cf. Wis 3:6. The Qumranites apply it to themselves in 1QS 4:20, along with its synonym זקק, due to the influence of Mal 3:2-3, which refers

Behold, my Servant, *the Messiah*, shall prosper . . . (Isa 52:13) . . .
And he *will build the sanctuary which was profaned for our sins* . . .
(53:5) . . . Yet *before the LORD it was a pleasure to refine and to
cleanse the remnant of his people, in order to purify their soul from
sins; they shall see the kingdom of their Messiah* . . . (53:10).¹⁴

The expression the “Son of man” is used in Mark in regard to Jesus’ ἐξουσία twice (2:10, 28); thrice in regard to the parousia (8:38; 13:26; 14:62), once in regard to the resurrection (9:9) and seven times in regard to the passion (8:31; 9:12, 31; 10:33, 45; 14:21, 41): before he returns in the glory of his Father with the holy angels (8:38) to gather the elect (13:26) and sit at the right hand of God (14:62), the destiny of the Son of man is to suffer like the Isaianic Servant.¹⁵ We thus find a connection between various images and concepts which are important for an understanding of Jesus’ mission.

Conclusion. Jesus’ use of the expression the “Son of man” serves at once as a seemingly humble self-appellation (“this man, this human being”) and as evocative of the mysterious figure in Dan 7 who is given by God all power, glory and kingship. Jesus demonstrates his Danielic ἐξουσία in Mark 2:10, but he will refuse to explain its basis in 11:33. There it regards, as we shall see, his action in the temple. In response to the high priest’s question (14:61-62), Jesus will identify himself (and thus, indirectly, also identify the source of his ἐξουσία), but it will only be after Jesus dies on the cross that his temple-ἐξουσία will be manifested. And it is only “after three days” that the full implications of his ministry, life and death (and of his action and teaching in the temple) begin to emerge. But this will require the explanation of Mark 11:15-17 that we propose to provide in these pages.

to the Levites (and is a very important text in our study). See BRUCE, *Biblical Exegesis*, 52-55. Cf. 1QH^a 13:16.

¹⁴ B. CHILTON, *The Isaiah Targum. Introduction, Translation, Apparatus, and Notes* (Aramaic Bible 11; Edinburgh - Wilmington 1987) 103-104 (the italics are Chilton’s, to indicate where the Targum departs from the MT). These passages certainly found their present formulation after 70 C.E., but the ideas reflected therein may be as old as the time of Jesus; see CHILTON, *op. cit.*, xxi, xxiv. An important example of probable use of the Targum by Jesus or Mark is in Mark 4:12, where “forgive” in the Isaian quotation (Isa 6:10) corresponds neither to the MT nor to the LXX (which have “heal”), but to the Targum; see CHILTON, *op. cit.*, xxvi; *A Galilean Rabbi and His Bible* (Good News Studies 8; Wilmington 1984) 91. We shall have occasion to revisit the Targum when we discuss the possible notion that the messiah would rebuild the temple (in chapter three), and in regard to the tower in the parable of the violent vinedressers (in chapter four).

¹⁵ FEUILLET, “L’Exousia,” 191.