

Excerpts from Prof. Chávez's Notes for Mark Seminar

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.) [p.17]

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 52:13.¹ 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.”² So that

¹ In Isa 53:11, the LXX has “he shall justify the righteous one who serves many well.” Recall Acts 4:27, 30.

² 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.

Jesus, as the “Son of God,” had to suffer, Mark 8:31; cf. Luke 24:26-27. This is the mystery of the “Son of man,” the title that Jesus uses when speaking of his Passion. It is an enigmatic, polyvalent expression; some have thought that it is a humble way of referring to himself, and there is some truth to this. But the “Son of man” who travels on clouds at God’s right hand (Mark 13:26; 14:62) is not just humble. In Daniel he receives “dominion and glory and kingship, that all peoples, nations and languages should serve him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion that shall not pass away, and his kingship is one that shall never be destroyed” (NRSV). Great Daniel scholars (such as John J. Collins) have seen an angelic figure in the “one like a son of man,” even the angel Michael of Dan 10:13, 21; 12:1. It is common in the Bible to say “man” to mean “angel”: Gen 18:2, 22; 19:1, 5; Judg 13:6; LXX Judg 13:11; Luke 24:4, 23. etc. Now, what at one point in the Bible is called “angel” was previously called “a son of God”: thus the Hebrew text of Deut 32:8 and Job 1:6; 2:1, while the LXX translates “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*.³ He is the heavenly counterpart (as is Michael) to the evil being Beliar (“Melchireša’,” “king of wickedness,” as Melchizedek means “king of righteousness”).⁴ 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),

³ 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.

⁴ See the interesting work of KOBELSKI, *Melchizedek and Melchireša’*.

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.⁵ Our good rabbi says that these sectarian writings

envision a time when the perfection of priestly and lay institutions will become a source of atonement which will be available without the need for ritual sacrifice [footnote omitted]. In CD 14:19 it is the Messiah of Aaron and Israel, standing at the head of the total community, both priestly and lay, who will have the role of 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.⁶
[pp. 43-44]

⁵ BAUMGARTEN, “Messianic Forgiveness,” 540-541.

⁶ 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.