

# Jesus and the High Priest

Crispin H.T. Fletcher-Louis, University of Nottingham, UK

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In his book on the historical Jesus Jürgen Becker says that "if anything is incontrovertible from the Jesus material, it is that there is not the slightest connection between Jesus and the theological self-understanding of the Jerusalem priesthood."<sup>1</sup> In a brief article on Jesus and messianism J.D.G. Dunn has said that "we can dismiss at once" the possibility that Jesus thought of himself as a priest messiah. "There is no indication whatsoever that this was ever canvassed as a possibility or seen as an option in the case of Jesus."<sup>2</sup> Whilst these statements accurately express a consensus in historical Jesus scholarship,<sup>3</sup> it is the contention of this paper that this opinion is misguided. Reflection on the history of New Testament Scholarship and what, in fact, can be known of Jesus' historical context provokes a consideration of some important evidence that Jesus thought of himself as Israel's eschatological high priest, and that this self-perception explains otherwise puzzling aspects of his behaviour and teaching.

## The Priesthood: a Pariah of Biblical Scholarship

The assertion that Jesus had not the slightest connection to the priesthood's self-understanding is not, in truth, borne of much considered reflection. To my knowledge, this possibility has received little serious consideration. Reasons to dismiss the possibility have therefore been perfunctory. And reflection on the nature of historical Jesus scholarship within the wider context of biblical studies generally, and the modern church and

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<sup>1</sup> J. Becker, *Jesus of Nazareth* (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1998) 215.

<sup>2</sup> J. D. G. Dunn, "Messianic Ideas and Their Influence on the Jesus of History," *The Messiah. Developments in Earliest Judaism and Christianity* (ed. J. H. Charlesworth; Minneapolis: Fortress, 1992) 365-381 (p. 373). Dunn's brief survey of evidence for Jewish messianic expectations (367-370) does recognize the role of priestly (and diarchic) categories, but subordinates these to royal, Davidic messianism that is the "most important" (367).

<sup>3</sup> Partial exceptions can be found in the work of Bruce Chilton and Margaret Barker whose work in various ways anticipates the arguments that follow.

academy, suggests that a lack of attention to Jesus' priestly language and behaviour reveals prejudice and a failure of historiographic responsibility.

Jesus' priestly character has been ignored, first and foremost, because the priesthood has itself been ignored in modern biblical studies. In the Old Testament the priesthood – its ordination, clothing, sacrificial and other responsibilities – is described with considerable detail; in the Pentateuch (Exodus-Numbers), in the works of the Chronicler and various other texts (e.g. Ezekiel, Zechariah 3-6, Malachi, Joel). But Old Testament scholarship has traditionally marginalized these portions of the canon. They have been judged a lamentable decline in Israelite religion from the pure faith of the prophets and the Deuteronomist into a post-exilic obsession with cultic order and institutional religiosity. J. Wellhausen's brazen derision of the Priestly material in the Pentateuch is now well-known as a parade example of this prejudice.<sup>4</sup> And Wellhausen is, in this respect, of course a clear example of the commitments and values of the (liberal) Protestantism that has dominated biblical scholarship for the majority of the modern period. Disinterest in, for example, the description of Aaron's garments in Exodus 28 and the minutiae of Tabernacle measurements and upholstery in Exodus (chs. 25-31, 35-40), reflects for this scholarly 'tradition' a deeply felt antipathy to anything that smacks of a high church spirituality.<sup>5</sup> And that antipathy has, until the post-modern resurgence of interest in metaphor, story, drama and sacrament, been validated by the modern secular opposition to mystery, symbol, allegory and ritual (a.k.a 'magic').

Happily, Old Testament scholarship is now more attentive to these aspects of biblical religion and, thanks in particular to the leavening influence of Jewish scholarship, the vital contribution of the priesthood and priestly theology for biblical religion is now receiving the attention it deserves. The failures of Wellhausen and his successors are openly lamented.<sup>6</sup> The impact of this revisionism on New Testament scholarship has,

<sup>4</sup> J. Blenkinsopp, *Prophecy and canon: a contribution to the study of Jewish origins* (University of Notre Dame, Center for the Study of Judaism and Christianity in Antiquity 3; Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1977) 18-23.

<sup>5</sup> The Priestly portions of the Old Testament are treated in the same way as the Deutero-Pauline and pastoral epistles, and Luke's gospel. Each exemplify the onset of a Frühkatholizismus in Israelite and then early Christian faith.

<sup>6</sup> For this lamentation see e.g. Blenkinsopp, *Prophecy and Canon*, 17-23; Z. Smith Jonathan, *Drudgery divine: on the comparison of early christianities and the religions of late antiquity* (Jordan lectures in comparative religion 14; London: School of Oriental and African Studies University of London, 1990).

however, been slower in coming. E.P. Sanders has done much to advance the case for a Jesus more attuned to a temple- and cult- centred Judaism.<sup>7</sup> His concern to locate Jesus in this specific Jewish context has been taken up in different ways by the likes of N.T. Wright, Bruce Chilton and Paula Fredricksen.<sup>8</sup>

However, it may be fairly stated that these recent contributions have been concerned primarily to relate Jesus to the temple.<sup>9</sup> For Sanders, Wright and Chilton Jesus looks forward to a new temple (Sanders), or actively sets about the establishing of alternative (Wright) or distinctive (Chilton) temple programme. But for none of these is Jesus concerned to set himself up as Israel's true high priest, whether as claimant to Caiaphas' office, or as the sacerdotal head of new cultic community outside Jerusalem. For the latter case, there is here perhaps a reluctance to pursue a priestly Christology for fear of its *theological* consequences – a supercessionist Jesus, though *historical* analogies at Shechem, Leontopolis and Khirbet Qumran provide clear precedent for a heterodox leadership proclaiming itself the *true* priesthood.<sup>10</sup> But, more importantly, there is a failure to appreciate the role and identity of the priest in Jesus' Jewish world. To that subject we now turn.

<sup>7</sup> Though he has met with some stiff resistance in this regard (see M. Hengel and R. Deines, "E.P. Sanders' 'Common Judaism', Jesus, and the Pharisees. Review article of *Jewish Law from Jesus to the Mishnah and Judaism: Practice and Belief* by E.P. Sanders," *JTS* 46 (1995) 1-70)

<sup>8</sup> D. Chilton Bruce, *The Temple of Jesus: his sacrificial program within a cultural history of sacrifice* (University Park, Pa.: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1992); N. T. Wright, *Jesus and the Victory of God* (London: SPCK, 1996) & P. Fredricksen, *Jesus of Nazareth, King of the Jews: a Jewish life and the emergence of Christianity* (London: Macmillan, 2000).

<sup>9</sup> The rediscovery of the Temple by Sanders and his successors has also been utterly lacking in any real appreciation of the Temple's mythology; its cosmic and primeval significance which is now widely acknowledged in Old Testament and post-biblical scholarship.

<sup>10</sup> This can be presumed for Sanders, is almost explicit in Chilton, but does not apply to Wright. Of course, at Shechem, Leontopolis and, perhaps Qumran, after the Maccabean accession there were legitimate Zadokite priests, where Jerusalem lacked them.

## The High Priesthood in Jesus' Jewish World

For a proper assessment of the possibility that Jesus thought of himself as a priest or, even, as Israel's true high priest, a fresh examination of (a) priestly identity and (b) the position of the priesthood within the (competing) vision(s) of Israel's polity, is necessary.

### (a) The Jewish Priest: A Divine and Human Office

Here I summarise in reliance on the arguments of earlier publications.<sup>11</sup> The High Priestly office is described in Exodus 28 (within Exodus 25-40-Leviticus-Numbers). This description was intended, I would contend, and was certainly taken in the early post-biblical period to describe a cultic office that was at once human, divine and cosmic.<sup>12</sup>

<sup>11</sup> See generally C. H. T. Fletcher-Louis, "The High Priest as Divine Mediator in the Hebrew Bible: Dan 7:13 as a Test Case," *SBLSP* (1997a) 161-193, C. H. T. Fletcher-Louis, "The Worship of Divine Humanity and the Worship of Jesus," *The Jewish Roots of Christological Monotheism. Papers from the St. Andrews Conference on the Historical Origins of the Worship of Jesus* (eds. C. C. Newman, J. R. Davila and G. Lewis; JSJSup 63; Leiden: Brill, 1999) 112-128, C. H. T. Fletcher-Louis, "Wisdom Christology and the Partings of the Ways Between Judaism and Christianity," *Jewish-Christian Relations Through the Centuries* (eds. S. E. Porter and B. W. R. Pearson; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 2000) 52-68, C. H. T. Fletcher-Louis, *All the Glory of Adam: Liturgical Anthropology in the Dead Sea Scrolls* (STDJ 42; Leiden: Brill, 2002) and see further C. H. T. Fletcher-Louis, "God's Image, His Cosmic Temple and the High Priest: Towards an Historical and Theological Account of the Incarnation," *Studies in the Biblical theology of the Temple* (eds. S. Gathercole and T. D. Alexander; Carlisle: Paternoster, forthcoming-a), C. H. T. Fletcher-Louis, "The Temple Cosmology of P and Theological Anthropology in the Wisdom of Jesus ben Sira," (ed. C. A. Evans; SSEJC 8, forthcoming-b) forthcoming, C. H. T. Fletcher-Louis, "The Worship of the Jewish High Priest by Alexander the Great," *Papers from the Durham Seminar on Jewish Monotheism and early Christology* (eds. L. T. Stuckenbruck and W. S. North; Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, forthcoming-c) Many of the arguments in these publications overlap with those of Margaret Barker (see esp. her M. Barker, "The High Priest and the Worship of Jesus," *The Jewish Roots of Christological Monotheism. Papers from the St. Andrews Conference on the Historical Origins of the Worship of Jesus* (eds. C. C. Newman, J. R. Davila and G. S. Lewis; JSJSup 63; Leiden: Brill, 1999) 93-111; M. Barker, *The Revelation of Jesus Christ* (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 2000) chs. 1-3; M. Barker, *The Great High Priest. The Temple Roots of Christian Liturgy* (London: T. & T. Clark, 2003)).

<sup>12</sup> Whilst scholars (esp. Christian New Testament ones) have struggled in recent decades to come to terms with the fact of a widespread interest in priestly 'messianism' and relative lack of royal messianism in

The High Priest is obviously a human being. He is the new Adam,<sup>13</sup> wearing the garments that Adam lost on leaving Eden,<sup>14</sup> doing what Adam failed to do in the temple-as-restored-Eden.<sup>15</sup> He represents, or embodies, the people of God, Israel (who are, in turn, the true humanity); wearing on his breastpiece and lapels the names of the twelve tribes of Israel (Exod 28:9-21). He brings humanity and Israel to God.<sup>16</sup> He also brings the cosmos, the created world, to God since this is represented by his garments in its various parts. This idea is widely attested in post-biblical literature,<sup>17</sup> and, I would argue, is already in the mind of P; the author responsible for the final form of the bulk of the Pentateuch.<sup>18</sup>

Second Temple Judaism there has not, it seems, been enough emotional and intellectual energy left over to reckon with the character and function of the priesthood. Dead Sea Scroll scholarship, for example, has devoted extensive discussion to the configuration of prophetic, priestly and royal offices in QL, but has said relatively little about how, at Qumran, priesthood was understood theologically, anthropologically or cosmologically. Fletcher-Louis, *All the Glory of Adam*, is an attempt to reckon with those questions.

<sup>13</sup> See, for example, Ezek 28:12-16, the priestly characterization of Adam in Gen 2-3 (discussed by, e.g. G. J. Wenham, "Sanctuary Symbolism in the Garden of Eden Story," *1 Studied Inscriptions from before the Flood": ANE literary and linguistic approaches to Gen 1-11* (eds. R. Hess and D. T. Tsumura; Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 1994) 399-404) and the equation of the high priest in Ben Sira 50 with Adam through the parallelism between 50:1 and 49:16 (discussed, with parallels, in C. T. R. Hayward, *The Jewish Temple: A non-biblical sourcebook* (London: Routledge, 1996) 45-46). A longer discussion would demonstrate that the Adamic identity of Aaron is fundamental to the theology of P.

<sup>14</sup> E.g. Pseudo-Philo's *Biblical Antiquities* 26:6.

<sup>15</sup> In 26:6 Pseudo-Philo faithfully spells out the narrative logic of the intratextuality between Gen 2-3 and the vision of Aaron in the restored Eden of the Sinaitic Tabernacle. It is the priesthood that discerns between good and evil (Lev 27:12) as Adam and Eve were supposed to. The Levites guard and keep the sanctuary as Adam was called to (Gen 2:15; Num 3:8, 38). The fecundity of Eden is restored at the sanctuary etc ...

<sup>16</sup> His relationship with Israel is also such that his own personal sin will bring guilt on the people (Lev 4:3). And, conversely the people's guilt is transferred and borne by the high priest (Exod 28:38).

<sup>17</sup> Ben Sira 50:6-12; Wis 18:24; Philo *Mos.* 2:117-126, 133-135, 143; Josephus *Ant.* 3:180, 183-187.

<sup>18</sup> Besides the obvious vegetative language for the high priest's garments (Exod 28:13-14 (cf. 1 Kgs 7:17, 43); 28:33-34) and the homology of textiles and colours between Aaron's garments and the tabernacle(-as-microcosm) materials, note the way in which the making of the priestly garments in Exodus 39 is structured so as to recall the ten-fold sequence of creative acts of Genesis 1 (see C. J. Labuschagne, *Numerical Secrets of the Bible: Rediscovering the Bible Codes* (North Richland Hills, Texas: Bibal Press, 2000) 44-46).

On the other hand, the high priest brings the one creator God to Israel and to the created world. He is the embodiment of God's Glory,<sup>19</sup> wearing "the garment(s) of Glory".<sup>20</sup> On the stage of the cultic microcosm he is the creator.<sup>21</sup> He is the divine warrior, who is surrounded by *clouds* of incense (Exod 40:27, 34; 1 Kings 8:10; 2 Chr 5:11; Lev 16:12-13, cf. Lev 9:22-24), carrying *fiery* coals, dressed in garb that (according to Josephus *B.J.* 5:231; *Ant.* 3:184 symbolises *thunder* and *lightning*, his garments sprinkled with the blood of God's victories (Exod 29:19-21, cf. esp. Isa 63:1-6, but also Deut 33:2-3; Judg 4-5; Ps 68:8-9, 18).<sup>22</sup> He is divine Wisdom's Avatar.<sup>23</sup> According to a brief and tantalising passage in Josephus he is, in effect, called Yahweh, "the most honoured of revered names" (*B.J.* 4:163-4). Israel's cult, it is has been thought, is aniconic. But this view is mistaken, since at least for one *dominant* strand of biblical thought, the high priest is the true idol, the image (אלהים Gen 1:26-27), of the one creator God.<sup>24</sup> And as the "statue" of the living God he is rightly

<sup>19</sup> Ben Sira 50:7; 4Q405 23 ii lines 9 (Fletcher-Louis, *All the Glory of Adam*, 374-377) & the כבוד אלהים of the *musaph* prayer for Yom Kippur all identify the High Priest with the anthropomorphic Glory of Ezek 1:26-28. Cf. generally *Aristeas* 96-99 (where the high priest in his garments is "the fulfilment of Glory"); Josippon 10:11-12 (see Fletcher-Louis, "Alexander the Great," *ad loc.*); Samaritan *Chronicle II* 130a and the language of Glory used of the (high priestly-Enochic) Son of Man in the *Similitudes* and the gospels.

<sup>20</sup> This is the post-biblical expression (Sirach 50:11; 2 *Enoch* 22:8) that derives from Exodus 28:2, 40 where Aaron's garments are made "לכבוד אלהים" (cf. generally Ps 29:1; 96:7; Job 37:22; LXX Job 40:10 & Ps 8:6). Cf. 1QSb 4:28; 4Q511 35 4; *Aristeas* 97-99, and the peculiar expression for the (high) priestly ministry "in" God's Glory (Sirach 45:7 "אשרוהו בכבודו"; 4Q405 23 ii "בכבוד משה כבודו").

<sup>21</sup> This is the burden of the complex intratextuality between Gen 1:1-2:4 + Exod 25-31 in Sirach 24 + 50 which I have discussed briefly in Fletcher-Louis, "Wisdom Christology," Fletcher-Louis, *All the Glory of Adam*, 73-81 & Fletcher-Louis, "Temple Cosmology of P". The notion is fundamental to P itself, as can readily be seen from the way in which Aaron's tending of the tabernacle menorah at the Tamid sacrifice (Exod 27:20-21 & 30:7-8) recapitulates God's separation of the day and night through the creation of light and the boundaries of the evening and morning (Gen 1:3-5).

<sup>22</sup> See further Barker, "The High Priest and the Worship of Jesus," Fletcher-Louis, *All the Glory of Adam*, 81-83, 222-251 (and see Sirach 45:6-8; 4Q408 3; *T. Reub.* 6:12).

<sup>23</sup> Hence the precise parallelism between Wisdom's and Simon's prosopographies in Sirach 24:1-24 and 50:1-21.

<sup>24</sup> Besides the material discussed in Fletcher-Louis, "God's Image," and Fletcher-Louis, "Alexander the Great," see Philo *On Dreams* 1:208-115.

the recipient of cultic devotion, of worship.<sup>25</sup> All this, it must be stressed, is true of the high priestly *office* (that is ritually prescribed for particular times, a particular place, to specific garments and liturgical acts). None of this applies – at least not directly – to the various private individuals who held that office when they were about their daily activities outside the bounds of that office. You are to worship the high priest at the right moment on certain cultic occasions in the temple courts, but not if you happen to bump into him in the Jerusalem fruit market.<sup>26</sup>

### (b) The High Priesthood in Jewish Political Theology

Historical Jesus scholarship has rightly been concerned to relate Jesus' self-consciousness to Jewish messianism. However, engagement with that issue has been blighted by two conceptual mistakes. The first of these is the decision that Jewish messianism means Jewish *expectation* of a *future messiah*. A future messianic hope is a vital concern, but biblically messianism is before all else a question of alternative and competing models of political leadership; it is a matter of political theology. In the period of the monarchy the king was Israel's messiah (anointed one) with a high priest acting as his deputy (along with prophets, military commanders and others in attendance). In the Pentateuch Aaron, the chief priest, is the messiah. In neither of these is a future, eschatological, messiah looked for and messianism is dynastic, thereby guaranteeing continuity between past, present and future. In the post-biblical period, as in some portions of the biblical text, a future messiah is looked for because, in the present one or other messianic office is vacant or the current incumbent to the office is deemed inadequate and there is a pressing need for a current domestic and international political crisis to be put right.

Jewish messianic *expectation* always *presumes* a particular political theology; by what leadership the nation will achieve its political goals and, thereafter, how its ideal constitution should be governed in a time of peace. Once a particular group or tradition

<sup>25</sup> E.g. Pseudo-Hecataeus in *Diodorus Siculus* XL.3.4-6; *T. Reub.* 6:12; Ben Sira 50:1-21 (esp. vv. 20-21); Josephus *Ant.* 1:331-335; *b. Yoma* 69a; 4Q405 23 ii; Luke 24:50-53; the כבוד אלהים of the *musaph* prayer for Yom Kippur.

<sup>26</sup> The high priest is expressly forbidden to wear his sacred garments outside the sanctuary (Lev 21:10-12; Ezek 42:14; 44:19). Josephus says Hyrcanus I, and his sons after him, kept their high priestly vestments in the Antonia fortress whenever they went down to the city (*Ant.* 20:91-92). For the Hasmoneans the fortress was evidently considered to fall within the bounds of the sanctuary prescribed by Leviticus and Ezekiel.

decides upon a particular political theology the degree to which it is yet unrealised in the present decides in what ways political actors (royal (military) leaders, prophets, priests) are expected in the future to bring it about. So, too, in the case of Jesus the primary historical question is, 'what view of Israel's ideal leadership (whether in this or in some new age) did the prophet from Nazareth take?' The answer to that question then leads us to another; 'what view of his own role in the nation's leadership (in the present or 'messianic age') did he have?' Of course, in answering these questions, at times, the primary sources will have to be used to work backwards from the second to the first question. A particular expectation of the future arrival of a new David *may* tell us that a group believed the nation should be led by a king. On the other hand, other evidence may indicate that that group's political theology was diarchic, with the future royal messiah subordinate to an existing priest occupying the Aaronic office.<sup>27</sup> So, too, if Jesus endorses a Davidic messianic hope, it does not mean that he envisages no future role for a high priest, alongside, above or beneath the nation's king. Nor does it mean he excluded the possibility that he would himself be both that royal messiah *and* the nation's priestly one. All this means that our historical task must be attentive to the shape of Jewish political theologies, not just instances of a future hope, if we are to make sense of Jesus and his options as a self-conscious leader of a movement vying for a place in the political game.<sup>28</sup>

The second weakness of historical Jesus research is its fixation on *royal* messianism.<sup>29</sup> This is understandable. In the gospels royal language is obvious to the casual reader. And, throughout the New Testament Jesus is hailed messiah, Son of David,

<sup>27</sup> This approximates to the situation at Qumran where there was already an established high priesthood, at least for some of the movement's history, though a future royal, warrior prince was awaited (see esp. 1QSb).

<sup>28</sup> The problem here identified is perhaps, again, symptomatic of the location of modern scholarship which has largely been practiced by Christians for whom there has been a separation between politics and religion. Jesus (until recently) has been seen in spiritual categories, for which Jewish messianic hope is believed to provide a degree of precedent. The possibility that Jesus has to be placed on a map of competing political theologies does not occur to scholars in this tradition because Jesus is assumed, at the outset, to transcend quotidian political realities.

<sup>29</sup> It might seem to some that C.H. T. Fletcher-Louis has a high priestly *idée fixe*. In fact the New Testament guild has operated until now with a gaping priestly blind spot, partly due to its own *royal* messiah *idée fixe*. The ideological (theological, cultic and political) supremacy of the high priest is firmly fixed by the canonical shape of Israel's scriptures.

where it is only obviously Hebrews, at the margins of the canon, that shows any interest in Jesus' high priesthood. Although, as I shall argue, there is priestly language in the gospels, it is less obvious and the average reader of the New Testament knows little of the material in the Pentateuch that brings it to light. Priestly categories have played a significant role in Eastern Christianity, but in the (especially Protestant) West, they have all but disappeared. And, latterly, in the Protestant West disinterest in Jesus' priesthood has probably been exacerbated by the stigmatisation of a developed and elaborate priestly privilege in both the ceremonial, ecclesiological and political spheres.

But, as is now widely recognised, there is not, on close inspection, the interest in royalty and royal messianic expectation in the gospels or their historical context that the reader might expect. According to the extant gospel records, Jesus freely spoke of himself as prophet and as Son of Man. He was reluctant to accept the title messiah or its royal associations, at least until his final entry into Jerusalem and showdown with the authorities (Mark 10:46-52 + 11:1-11 with *par.*).<sup>30</sup> And even then, at his trial, just as he had qualified Peter's messianic acclamation at Caesarea Philippi (Mark 8:29-31; Matt 16:16, 20-21; Luke 9:20-22), he prefers to speak of the Son of Man than of David (or of the royal messiah who is "the son of God/the blessed").<sup>31</sup>

The popular assumption that all first century Jews were eagerly awaiting a royal figure as their sole messianic hope of release from (Roman) oppression is also not borne out by the evidence.<sup>32</sup> We have perhaps just one or two texts that unequivocally testify to

<sup>30</sup> What (royal) messianism does figure in the gospels is therefore suspected by some of being the product of later Christian theologizing.

<sup>31</sup> Matt 26:63-64; Mark 14:61; Luke 22:69-70. The way the title "messiah" is qualified by "son of God/son of the blessed" in the high priest's questioning of Jesus is best explained by the fact that "messiah" itself is an open title with several possible meanings. The appositional "son of God" phrase makes clear that Caiaphas thinks Jesus claims to be a *royal* messiah, given the preponderance of the phrase son of God in royal contexts (Ps 2; 2 Sam 7:13-14 etc ...).

<sup>32</sup> For those who have seen a minimal (royal) messianic expectation in Jesus' Jewish context see W. S. Green, "Introduction. Messiah in Judaism: Rethinking the Question," *Judaisms and Their Messiahs at the Turn of the Christian Era* (eds. J. Neusner, W. S. Green and E. Frerichs; Cambridge: CUP, 1987) 1-13; J. H. Charlesworth, "The Concept of the Messiah in the Pseudepigrapha," *Aufstieg und Niedergang der römischen Welt (ANRW)* (eds. W. Haase and H. Temporini; Berlin/New York, 1979) 188-218, p. 217; J. H. Charlesworth, "From Jewish Messianology to Christian Christology. Some Caveats and Perspectives," *Judaisms and Their Messiahs at the Turn of the Christian Era* (eds. J. Neusner, W. S. Green and E. S. Frerichs; Cambridge: CUP,

such a royal messianic expectation in the centuries immediately prior to the ministry of Jesus (*Psalms of Solomon* 17-18, cf. *Sibylline Oracles* 3:652-6). A sensitive use of (a) the evidence for probably royal 'messianic' movements in the first and second centuries,<sup>33</sup> (b) post-A.D. 70 pseudepigraphical literature (*Sibylline Oracles* 5, 4 *Ezra*, 2 *Baruch*), (c) traditions which speak in unspecific terms of a (sometimes heavenly) redeemer (e.g. Daniel 7:13; Luke 1:78), (d) the targums and (e) the possible messianic motivations in the 'translations' of the Hebrew Bible into Greek (the LXX), can all be used responsibly to build up a picture of some Jews some of the time pinning their hopes and aspirations for the future on a royal messiah figure.<sup>34</sup> Some have exaggerated the absence of a belief in a royal messiah.<sup>35</sup> But much of the material that does attest this assumes that a royal office is exercised in tandem, or overlaps with a high priestly one.

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1992) 225-64, p. 29; E. P. Sanders, *Judaism: Practice and Belief* 63 BCE - 66 CE (London: SCM, 1992) 295: "The expectation of a messiah was not the rule." Here, by "messiah" Sanders means a royal messiah.

<sup>33</sup> As described by Josephus and from what we can learn of the leaders of the second Jewish revolt in 115-117 A.D. Though it should be noted that many of the revolutionary movements and several of the key actors in the first Jewish revolt as described by Josephus are priestly.

<sup>34</sup> For this approach see esp. W. Horbury, *Jewish Messianism and the Cult of Christ* (London: SCM, 1998a) & W. Horbury, "Messianism in the Old Testament Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha," *King and Messiah in Israel and the Ancient Near East: Proceedings of the Oxford Old Testament Seminar* (ed. J. Day; JSOTS 270; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1998b) 402-33. Though Horbury overstates the case for a royal messiah when, for example, he claims there is sufficient warrant in 1 Chr 29:5 and 2 Chr 29:31 for thinking the angel/messenger (*nuntius*) whose hands are filled in *T. Mos.* 10:2 is a "messianic king," rather than a priest (Horbury, "Messianism in the Old Testament Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha," The overwhelming majority of cases of the expression 'fill the hands' (Exod 28:41; 29:29, 33, 35; Lev 8:33 etc ...), and the location "in the highest (heaven?)" demands a priestly identification here (J. Tromp, *The Assumption of Moses. A Critical Edition with Commentary* (SVTP 10; Leiden: Brill, 1993) 230-231). It is not surprising that *Testament of Moses* does not look for a royal messiah since otherwise its author sees kingship in only negative terms (6:2 "a petulant king ... who will not be of priestly stock" (i.e. Herod), cf. 5:1-2; 6:1). In another publication (Horbury, *Jewish Messianism*, 84) sees more clearly the priestly characterization at 10:2.

<sup>35</sup> Sanders (Sanders, *Practice and Belief*, 296) is wrong, for example, to claim the *War Scroll* (1QM, 4QM) from Qumran has no royal military messiah. It does, as 1QM 5:1 and, now, 4Q285 show.

Evidence for an expectation of a *sole* royal figure at Israel's (eschatological) head is hard to find.<sup>36</sup> Whether they were already exercising a political programme or looking forward to a new (eschatological and, perhaps, transcendent) future, the vast majority of Jews believed there were principally three possible God-given forms of government.<sup>37</sup> Either,

- (a) the nation should be ruled by one high priest, and a priest alone (the Samaritans, Hecataeus of Abdera,<sup>38</sup> Sirach(?),<sup>39</sup> Daniel,<sup>40</sup> the Oniad community

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<sup>36</sup> The *Psalms of Solomon* – the one apparently obvious example of a belief in a single royal messiah – is not, on close examination devoid of comment on the role of the high priesthood. The Hasmoneans are arrogant sinners who have, with the arrival of Pompey, been dethroned (17:4-10). The new Davidic king is to do what the Hasmonean's failed to do. He will glorify the name of God, the Lord, (17:30-32) as the "Lord messiah" (contrast 17:6 the Hasmoneans "did not glorify your honourable name" – a traditional high priestly duty, as 1QSb 4:28 shows) and he will cleanse Jerusalem of its sin and impurity as had Judas Maccabeus in the previous century (1 Macc 4:36-41). Whilst the king takes over some of the responsibilities that had previously been those of the high priesthood, the *Psalms* nowhere deny a continuing role for the Jerusalem high priesthood. And criticism of the Hasmoneans seems to imply the need for a proper priesthood, albeit one that knows its place (17:6).

<sup>37</sup> This brief overview of the sources would need a much longer explanation to be fully demonstrated. And I have omitted the role of Mosaic, Levitical and prophetic offices, and the role of a supreme council, a Sanhedrin, that complicate the picture further. I find no evidence to support E.P. Sander's proposal that some Jews did not believe in the messiah because they thought God alone would bring about the eschatological dénouement (*Practice and Belief*, 297-98).

<sup>38</sup> Hecataeus (in *Diodorus Siculus* 40.3) describes the Jewish state as a temple state ruled by priests for which reason "the Jews never have a king".

<sup>39</sup> Whether there is any real hope for a Davidic king in Ben Sira/Sirach is debatable. The judgement depends on the textually difficult 45:25. The fact that the role of the priesthood is otherwise the supreme, all-consuming attention of the author, and the way in which his hero Simon the high priest takes over the role of Israel's kings in fortifying Jerusalem and the Temple (50:1-4, cf. 48:17-25) suggests that a state ruled by a king priest may be the author's ideal political settlement. In this light 49:4 – "Except for David and Hezekiah and Josiah, all of them were great sinners, for they abandoned the law of the Most High; the kings of Judah came to an end (Ms B "מלך יהודה", "ἑξέλιπον")" – clearly declares the obsolescence of kingship.

<sup>40</sup> Daniel's eschatological expectation and worldview is primarily priestly. The "one like a son of man" is a high priest (see below), 9:24-27 the "messianism" is obviously priestly and in Daniel himself Israelite

at Leontopolis(?),<sup>41</sup> Judith,<sup>42</sup> the *Animal Apocalypse*,<sup>43</sup> the *Epistle of Aristeas*, the *Testament of Moses*,<sup>44</sup> the view of some who send embassies to Pompey (63 B.C.) asking Rome to restore a hierocracy (Diodorus Siculus XL.2; Josephus *Ant.* 14:41),<sup>45</sup> or

(b) It should be ruled by one who is both priest and king:<sup>46</sup> The *Aramaic Levi Document*,<sup>47</sup> some (pre-Christian) material in the *Testament of Twelve Patriarchs*,<sup>48</sup>

royalty (1:3-7), is divested of the normal responsibilities of kingship and made an exemplar of an apocalyptic piety characteristic of Israelite laity in general.

<sup>41</sup> The direct literary evidence (from Josephus) and the likely indirect evidence of *Joseph and Aseneth* indicates that the Oniad community at Leontopolis had an entirely priestly leadership. The community's military role in supporting the Ptolemaic rule in Egypt suggests that they had little room for a royal leader alongside their Zadokite head. (On the community's character see ABD 3:1065-66).

<sup>42</sup> Judith 4:6-8; 15:8.

<sup>43</sup> Judas Maccabeus plays the key role (90:9-14), not a king. But, *pace* J. J. Collins, *The Sceptre and the Star: the Messiahs of the Dead Sea Scrolls and Other Ancient Literature* (New York: Doubleday, 1995), 34 this does not mean that the *Animal Apocalypses* lacks messianism; it simply means the "messianism" is priestly. And the climactic vision of the white bull with huge black horns in 90:37-39 is of a new Adam with no clear royal, let alone, Davidic, characteristics.

<sup>44</sup> *T. Mos.* derides Israel's recent kings (5:1-2; 6:1-2), and looks forward to the coming of a heavenly-human high priest (10:1ff) in the eschatological dénouement. Whether its appreciation of Moses means the author sees a role for prophets or teachers like Moses in the eschaton is not clear.

<sup>45</sup> The views expressed in these texts might in fact belong to those who believed the nation should be ruled by one who is both priest and king. For example, when Hecataeus describes the Judaism known to him he need not know, or faithfully report, the fact that the Jews that worship the high priest at the head of the temple state believe him to be both priest and king.

<sup>46</sup> For this there is, of course, clear precedent in the figure of Melchizedek as he is celebrated in Psalm 110. Because in Genesis 1-2 Adam has both royal characteristics (in 1:26-30 and in ch. 2 as God's gardener) and priestly ones (see e.g. Wenham, "Sanctuary Symbolism in the Garden of Eden Story," and because Second Temple political theology sought to replicate the conditions of the paradisaic *Urzeit*, the combination of king and priest in one figure will have been conceptually far more attractive than modern scholarship has appreciated. (The view of D. W. Rooke, "Kingship as Priesthood: The Relationship between the High Priesthood and the Monarch," *King and Messiah in Israel and the Ancient Near East. Proceedings of the Oxford Old Testament Seminar* (ed. J. Day; Sheffield: SAP, 1998) 187-208 (pp. 207-8) that the Hasmonean priesthood's adoption of kingship is an aberration and "equivalent to blasphemy of the worst kind" seems unaware of the

the Hasmoneans from Hyrcanus I onwards; (some) Sadducees,<sup>49</sup> some Pharisees,<sup>50</sup> Josephus' preferred state,<sup>51</sup> *The Similitudes of Enoch*,<sup>52</sup> 2 *Enoch*,<sup>53</sup> or

evidence that follows. And there is no direct evidence that anyone thought the later Hasmonean position blasphemous). The taking up of kingship into priesthood is already a feature of the vision of P, where (*pace* Rooke) Aaron wears garb previously associated with (sacral) kingship (Exod 28).

<sup>47</sup> In this 3<sup>rd</sup> century B.C. text Levi absorbs the character of kingship. Isaiah 11:2 is applied to Levi in 4QTL<sup>evi</sup> col. 1:14 (= *Testament of the Twelve Patriarchs* ms. e = Athos Cod. 39, §8). See M. E. Stone and J. C. Greenfield, "The Prayer of Levi," *JBL* 112 (1993) 247-66 (p. 261), and cf. *T. Levi* 2:3; 4:5; 18:7. Language in the royal blessing of Judah (Gen 49:10) is transferred to Kohath in the *Aramaic Levi Document* 66-67 (= Camb. Col. c. 5-6, cf. *T. Levi* 11:5, noted by M. E. Stone and J. C. Greenfield, "Remarks on the Aramaic Testament of Levi from the Geniza," *RB* 86 (1979) 214-230 (pp. 223-224)). The statement that Kohath "καὶ τὸ σπέρμα αὐτοῦ εἰσονται ἀρχὴ βασιλείων ἱεράτευμα τῷ Ἰσραὴλ" probably means Kohath "and his seed will be the beginning of kings, a priesthood for Israel", though it might envisage diarchic rule: "... will be a ruler of kings, a priesthood for Israel". This all provides vital evidence that the combination of priesthood and kingship in the one ruler antedates the Hasmonean dynasty.

<sup>48</sup> E.g. *T. Reub.* 6:12, *T. Dan* 5:10 and portions of *T. Levi* 18.

<sup>49</sup> The Sadducees who support Hyrcanus I against a Pharisaic attack on his legitimacy presumably accept his claim to be the nation's priest-king-prophet (*Ant.* 13:288-296).

<sup>50</sup> All parties, Pharisees included, in the story of the previous note apparently accept the legitimacy in principle of rule by one who is both priest and king. The issue for the Pharisee Eleazar is the possibility that Hyrcanus' mother was raped while in captivity rendering him an illegitimate high priest according to Lev 21:14 (so also the rabbinic version of this story: *b. Qiddushin* 66a).

<sup>51</sup> Josephus' hero is John Hyrcanus who perfectly embodies the high priesthood, kingship and prophecy (see *B.J.* 1:68; *Ant.* 13:299). And Josephus sees himself as the true bearer of that aristocratic, Hasmonean, tradition (see Josephus priest and prophet: *B.J.* 3.352; priest and descendent of Hasmonean royalty: *Vita* 1-6; *Ant.* 16:187; Mosaic constitution a clerical theocracy – an aristocracy: *C. Ap.* 2:164; 185-89; *Ant.* 4:214, 218 (cf. *Deut* 17:9); 6:83-84; 11:111, 326-339; 20:224-229; the theoretical acceptability of a diarchy of king subordinate to high priest (and Sanhedrin): *Ant.* 22:3-4; 6:157). And perhaps, as Bruce Chilton has suggested, he was seeking himself to be given a position of high priestly governance in Judaea by his Flavian patrons (Chilton Bruce, *Temple of Jesus*, 77). At *Ant.* 4:223-224 he concedes the possibility of a constitutional monarchy, but only as a lesser form of government and provided the king is subordinate to the priesthood.

<sup>52</sup> I take it that the "messiah" (48:10; 52:4) of the *Similitudes* is identified throughout the text with Enoch (so C. H. T. Fletcher-Louis, *Luke-Acts: Angels, Christology and Soteriology* (WUNT 294; Tübingen: Mohr-Siebeck, 1997b) 151-152, following the seminal insights of J. C. VanderKam, "Righteous One, Messiah, Chosen

- (c) It should be ruled jointly by a priest and a king,<sup>54</sup> with the latter subordinate to the former: *Jubilees* (31:11-20), Qumran-Essenism, some (pre-Christian) material in the *Testament of the Twelve Patriarchs*,<sup>55</sup> Pseudo-Philo's *Biblical Antiquities*,<sup>56</sup> Sirach(?), (probably) the founders of the "fourth philosophy",<sup>57</sup> Josephus'

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One, and Son of Man in 1 Enoch 37-71," *The Messiah. Developments in Earliest Judaism and Christianity* (ed. J. H. Charlesworth; Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1992) 161-191). I also take it that the identification of Daniel's "one like a son of man" (*Eth. Enoch* 46:1 etc ...) with Enoch is based on the axiomatic identification of both Enoch and the figure in Daniel 7:13 as Israel's true (proto-, or eschatological) high priest. The Son of Man-messiah of the *Similitudes* is not a king, but he has absorbed the trappings of royalty, as the use of Isa 11 in 49:1-4 & 62:2, and a possible influence of Psalm 110 (M. Hengel, *Studies in Early Christology* (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1995) 184-85), shows. That the *Similitudes* has such an explicit priest-king messianic expectation will partly explain why it is not found in the Qumran library.

<sup>53</sup> This appears to be the logic of the claim that Enoch is the founder of the line of the true priesthood (22:8-10 chs. 68-72) and as the seventh from Adam he possesses Adam's divine kingship (30:12) (on this see A. A. Orlov, "On the Polemical Nature of 2 (*Slavonic*) *Enoch*: A Reply to C. Böttrich," *JSt* (2003) forthcoming). The true lineage of high priests will pass to Melchizedek (chs. 71-72). The same view may be expressed in the earliest Enochic literature (1 *Enoch* 1-36 etc ...), where the priestly Enoch takes over the role of the Mesopotamian king-priest.

<sup>54</sup> This view, of course, finds precedent in biblical texts such as Jer 33:17-22; Zech 4:14; 6:11-13 and, in effect, this is the view of the Deuteronomist (Deut 17:18-20).

<sup>55</sup> E.g. *T. Judah* 21:1-2; *T. Sim.* 7:1-2.

<sup>56</sup> Anointed priest: 48:2 (Phinehas); 51:7 (Samuel); anointed king: 51:6. The difficult material surrounding the Judahite Kenaz and the high priestly garments in chapters 25-28 appears to have in mind an ideal diarchic constitution for the nation.

<sup>57</sup> They are called Zadok and Judah (Josephus *Ant.* 18:4), names that surely indicate a claim to a true diarchic leadership of priest and king. This circumstantial evidence is supported by textual material at Masada that has an Essenic provenance (see material in C. A. Newsom, Y. Yadin, S. Talmon and E. Qimron, *Masada VI: Yigael Yadin excavations, 1963-1965: final reports: Hebrew fragments from Masada* (Israel Exploration Society: Hebrew University of Jerusalem, 1999). The "fourth Philosophy's" diarchic messianism is perhaps continued one or two generations later with Judah's (grand)son, Menahem playing the role of royal messiah (B.J. 2:434, 444) alongside the priest(?) Eleazar (B.J. 2:447), who then leads the movement at Masada.

acceptable, but not preferred state,<sup>58</sup> leaders of the third Jewish revolt (Bar Kosiba and Eleazar).<sup>59</sup>

The absence of a purely royal messianism and the ubiquity of priestly messianism in the political theology of the later years of the Second Temple is not surprising.<sup>60</sup> *This is the picture presented by the Hebrew Bible*. A description of the biblical vision – and its legacy in post-biblical messianism – that emphasises the presence of royal messianism is only possible if the Old Testament is itself read without due attention to its canonical shape.<sup>61</sup> Whilst it is true that historically kingship (Saul, David, Solomon and the rest) precedes a shift in the exilic and post-exilic period to the rule of the priesthood, this is not the story of God's dealings with his people that the Bible tells. In its canonical form the Sinaitic covenant, the institution of the tabernacle (as ideal temple) and the supremacy of the (high) priesthood of Aaron and the prophetic-teaching role of the Levite Moses define the utopian vision of Israel's political existence.<sup>62</sup> The Pentateuch is almost devoid of royalty.<sup>63</sup> The highest honour P gives to the older royal tribe of Judah is to work as temple architects, artisans and builders (represented by the Bezalel from the tribe of Judah of Exod 31:1-3),

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<sup>58</sup> *Ant.* 2:223-4; 6:157.

<sup>59</sup> Their diarchic leadership is clear on coins minted by the revolutionaries that mention 'Eleazar the Priest' alongside Simon. See E. Schürer, G. Vermes, F. Millar and M. Black, *The History of the Jewish People in the Age of Jesus Christ (175 B.C. - A.D. 135)* (3 vols.; Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1973-87) vol. 1, p. 544, who, without justification, refer to Simon only as "Bar Kochba's deputy".

<sup>60</sup> Pace e.g. Collins, *Sceptre*, 95. I have not included the evidence of Philo that is hard to define, though it takes utterly for granted the priestly hegemony of the Pentateuch.

<sup>61</sup> In all the, highly productive, detailed examination of the targums, the Septuagint and the allusive interpretation of scripture in the pseudepigrapha and DSS that is now undertaken in some quarters, there is a danger of missing the canonical narrative wood for the exegetical trees of scriptures individual portions.

<sup>62</sup> Sanders *Practice and Belief*, 297 sees the dominance of the priesthood in the biblical text, but not the full force of priestly hegemony in the narrative shape of scripture. And ironically he cites the Deuteronomist (Deut 31:9) with not reference to P's material.

<sup>63</sup> Royalty is implicitly exalted (over priesthood) in Genesis 49. But the blessing of Moses (Deut 33) that closes the Pentateuch, and perhaps supercedes that of Jacob, downplays the role of Judah (33:7) at the expense of Levi (33:8-11). The prophecy of Numbers 24:7, 17 looks forward to a royal figure, though many in the post-biblical period read Balaam's oracle in diarchic terms (esp. QL, but perhaps also the LXX and the revolutionaries Bar Kochba and Eleazar).

servicing the needs of the priests and the people.<sup>64</sup> In antiquity, unlike modernity, what matters, what is trustworthy and authoritative, is what is old. And the Pentateuch is constructed to claim that the priestly-temple state on which the returnees from exile would model their life is based on that of Sinai, and that, in turn, the Tabernacle-camp revealed to Moses at Sinai is a recapitulation of the originally intended order of creation. The monarchy came later and was bedevilled from the start by theological and political problems (1 Sam 8; 10:17-19; 12:12, 17-25).<sup>65</sup> The prophets, by and large, see the future in priestly terms (esp. Zech 1-8, Haggai, Joel, Malachi, Daniel and, already Ezekiel), even where future rule is shared with kings.<sup>66</sup>

Jesus' Jewish contemporaries did not have the benefit of modern historical criticism that writes a history of Israel in which (the reality of pre-exilic) kingship precedes the (fiction of post-exilic) priestly hegemony. Whatever the historical actuality, later Jews read their bible as a whole and took for granted its construal of Israelite history. The competing political theories they espouse arise from different forms of accommodation – where one is not clearly given in scripture itself – between the priestly hegemony of the Pentateuch and the belief (outside Samaritanism) that God had ordained, at least for a period, kings to rule the nation. The one striking example of a hope for a single royal messiah (*Psalms of Solomon* 17-18) is highly situational in outlook, responding to the failure of the Hasmoneans after the triumph of Pompey.<sup>67</sup> This single witness is hardly sufficient statistically to establish a

<sup>64</sup> For the likelihood that P's depiction of Aaron, Moses and the Tabernacle is a critique of the older Davidic Temple state see J. D. Levenson, "The Jerusalem Temple in Devotional and Visionary Experience," *Jewish Spirituality: From the Bible through the Middle Ages* (ed. A. Green; New York: Crossroad, 1986) 32-61, pp. 33-34. And for the anti-monarchic priestly vision of God's intended order see M. G. Brett, "Earthing the Human in Genesis 1-3," *The Earth Story in Genesis* (eds. N. C. Habel and S. Wurst; Sheffield: SAP, 2000) 73-86 (pp. 77-78).

<sup>65</sup> For a nice example of this sensitivity to the canonical narrative shape of scripture and the consequent supremacy of the priesthood in the ideal Israelite state see Ben Sira 44-50. Josephus' preference for a priestly aristocracy is also due to the narrative plot of Israel's political history (see Josephus *Ant.* 6:83-84; 11:111-112; 20:224-251).

<sup>66</sup> The conclusions of, for example, Collins, *Sceptre*, 95, to the effect that dual messianism is only really found at Qumran and within Essenism – as a reaction to the Hasmonean position – and that the role of the priesthood in messianism is an aberration from the biblical picture puzzling.

<sup>67</sup> See esp. *Pss. Sol.* 2 and 17:4-10.

resurgence of widespread interest in David and the monarchy after the collapse of the Hasmoneans, as is sometimes claimed.

Much of the evidence noted above is for a political theology that is already realised (e.g. Hecataeus, Judith etc ...), not a messianic *expectation* for a *future* redeemer. But even though priests held power to one degree or another throughout our period, some looked forward to a future when, because of the contemporary corruption of the priesthood, an ideal priest would reign.<sup>68</sup> And there is other circumstantial evidence that the priestly office and its accoutrements were the focus of messianic, revolutionary fervour. This, for example, is perhaps one reason why the Romans put the high priest's garb under lock and key for much of the first century.<sup>69</sup> The garb represented the whole cosmos and both Romans and Jews must have been alive to its potent political symbolism for Jewish aspirations of freedom and world dominion.<sup>70</sup>

### Jesus and the Political Theology of His Age

What does the hierocratic form of Jewish political theology mean for our quest for the historical Jesus? The following general considerations now demand fuller investigation:

1) If our sketch of high priestly identity is anywhere near the mark then as part of the question of Jesus' messianic self-consciousness, the possibility of him thinking he had a divine identity, must be reopened. If Jesus thought of himself in priestly categories then he could, in theory have believed that he was a peculiar embodiment of God's own identity, just as the high priest (in the context of his office) was. Since I cannot yet claim to have demonstrated my construal of the biblical and post-biblical understanding of priestly identity, and since first the fact that Jesus thought of himself in priestly terms needs to be established on other grounds, this avenue of discussion will have to be closed off for a future occasion. Instead, I turn in the rest of this paper to more immediate questions: 'what

<sup>68</sup> E.g. *T. Mos.* 10:1 (where the existing priesthood is corrupt – 5:4; 6:1-3, cf. 7:3); Qumran community (for whom the Jerusalem priesthood is corrupt and the true priesthood is already up and running, ready in waiting for the community's rise to power (1QSb, 4Q400-405)); the so-called Fourth Philosophy (that is led, in part, by the Pharisaic priest Zadok as an alternative revolutionary candidate for the nation's priesthood over against the high priest of Roman choice, Joazar son of Boethus (Josephus *Ant.* 18:2-4)).

<sup>69</sup> *Ant.* 15:403-6; 18:90-95; 20:6-9.

<sup>70</sup> Similar garments were famously worn as a display of military and political power by the Greek Demetrius Poliocertes (see e.g. Plutarch's *Lives*, *Demetrius* XLII) in the 3<sup>rd</sup> century B.C.

version of Israel's political constitution did Jesus adopt?' and, 'did Jesus think he was a priestly messiah?'

2) In the light of our sketch of Jewish 'messianism' we should now expect to find more interaction with priestly categories in the Jesus material than has hitherto been assumed by those who have worked within the royal-messiah paradigm. As I proceed, I will venture to demonstrate that Jesus thought of himself as Israel's true, eschatological high priest and that this played a central role in his aims and self-perception. Even if we were to decide that Jesus did not, in any way, think in terms of his own priesthood, that itself would be a fact that called for historical comment.

Assuming that Jesus was not just a preacher of subversive wisdom – that he identified himself and his mission with the larger sweep of Israel's story, her competing eschatological, that is *political*, aspirations and, therefore, that, at the very least, he believed he was a prophet of restoration – he must have taken a view on the various alternative visions for Israel's ideal leadership structure. If (as argued by Sanders and others) he believed that the present temple state stood under judgement and was to be replaced by a new one, how did he think the nation would be led in the new age? He had five options:

(i) Did Jesus look for a return to the golden age of Hasmonean rule when a new high priest would function also as monarch? If he did he must have looked to another to be the new high priest-king, since, as a layman, he did not qualify. (ii) Likewise, if Jesus believed the nation should be headed by a priest free of royal responsibilities and without a separate king at his side, all he himself need do was teach, prophecy, heal the sick and prepare the ground for the coming of the man with the right credentials. (iii) Did Jesus believe, from his reading of scripture and dialogue with the teachers of the day (cf. Luke 2:46-47), that the nation should be led by a king alongside, but also subordinate to, a high priest? If so, then given that it is highly likely that during his ministry he was believed to have a Davidic lineage, he might have thought of himself as the royal messiah of that diarchic rule. And, of course, there is some, albeit limited evidence that Jesus did think he was a royal messiah. But in this case he should either have worked with a Levitical/Aaronic/Zadokite partner (cf. Zadok and Judah founders of the '4<sup>th</sup> Philosophy' & Eleazar and Bar Kosiba leaders of the third Jewish revolt), or he should have spoken and acted in the belief that one was shortly to be given him. Does he hope for a rapprochement with Caiaphas; the aristocratic high priest accepting his (highly spiritual) royal status alongside his own priestly messiahship? Nothing indicates he did. In fact, there is no indication in the gospel records, or other early Christian texts, that he held any of these three opinions.

It is worth pondering the possibility that at an early stage of his ministry, and for his disciples who first followed him, Jesus operated under the diarchic model with John the Baptist playing priest to his kingship. John was of priestly descent; for which he is remembered in Luke's prologue (1:5-25). Did the earliest followers of Jesus, when Jesus was closely associated with John, think that Jesus was the king destined to rule in the new age alongside and under their priestly prophet? The sources give no clear picture of what the earliest believers thought might happen to a John-the-Baptist-plus-Jesus movement, which is hardly surprising since the gospels are written *after* what *did* happen. And Jesus evidently broke away from John's ministry whilst the prophet was in prison (Q 7:18-35), if not before (Mark 2:18-20). By the time John was beheaded Jesus was an independent spirit, acting and preaching without any obvious interest in sharing his leadership of a rapidly growing movement. If John did harbour hopes of a messianic double-act with his near relative does this partly explain his puzzlement at his former 'disciple's' behaviour (Q 7:18-20)? At any rate, Jesus does not look for a successor to John after his death and so the relationship between Jesus (the Davidide) and John (the priest) is important because it indicates that Jesus consciously *rejected* one of the 'messianic' options open to him – diarchy.

Then Jesus is left with two remaining options. (iv) Perhaps he came to believe that he was the son of God, the royal messiah, and that he alone would rule at the dawn of the eschaton: there would be no future need of a high priesthood. (This, of course, is a common Christian reading of the gospels, with the 'dawn of the eschaton' achieved – *spiritually* – at the cross and resurrection). The problem here is that had he held that view Jesus would have been so odd as to be barely intelligible to his disciples, the crowds and the authorities. There just wasn't the widespread expectation for *the* royal messiah that this scenario assumes.<sup>71</sup> The sources *agree* that a high priesthood has to figure somewhere in the nation's polity. But Jesus *apparently* – so scholarship has assured us – has nothing to say on the subject of the ideal priesthood.<sup>72</sup> And if Jesus erases the high priesthood from the

<sup>71</sup> Even *Psalms of Solomon* 17 expresses a view on the relationship between king and priest, to the extent that the new Davidic messiah takes over something of the priestly role (see n. 36 above).

<sup>72</sup> The authorities' questions in Mark 11:27-28 – "by what authority do you do these things? Or who gave to you this authority that you do these things?" – perhaps seek, in part, for Jesus' view on his relationship to the priesthood. Does Jesus think he has the power to do what he does because he works alongside an eschatological high priest? (Cf. 1QSb 4-5 where the angelomorphic high priest wears, and glorifies, i.e. gives tangible presence to, God's name (4:23-28), but the royal messiah is merely *strengthened* by

eschatological picture, why does he nowhere comment on the fact that the office is central to the Mosaic dispensation? Why, if Jesus was heard to state, or imply, the obsolescence of the priesthood, was he not directly challenged on this point?<sup>73</sup>

(v) Lastly, Jesus might have thought he was Israel's designated royal messiah and, as such, he was *also* her true eschatological high priest. Again, for his followers, the crowds and the authorities this would have been a puzzling sort of messianism. There is hardly any precedent in post-biblical tradition for a king claiming the priesthood. For his Greco-Roman readers Josephus is unequivocal on this possibility; Torah prohibits it.<sup>74</sup> And, of course, there is the dramatic tale of king Uzziah's unfortunate attempt to assume the high priesthood as a warning to any future aspirant (2 Chr 26:16-21). But, on the other hand, a biblically literate Jew knows matters are not so straightforward. For David and his successors kingship entailed certain cultic responsibilities. And even though the Davidic monarchy is subordinate salvation-historically to the priesthood, the Aaronic dispensation is itself subsequent to alternative political models that preceded Sinai. If Jesus thought he was not only a royal messiah (for which he qualifies at birth), but also a high priest he has two biblical texts which he can claim to fulfil: the description of Adam in Genesis 2-3 and Psalm 110.

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God's name (5:28), as its power is mediated by the high priesthood). Jesus answers with recourse to John the Baptist's baptism. But, for Jesus, this is more a matter of John's status as a prophet than his perfect embodiment of a new high priestly office.

<sup>73</sup> If, as the gospels claim, Jesus' final meal was invested with sacrificial symbolism – the making of a new covenant and the setting up of a new mechanism for the mediation of the forgiveness of sins – then it is, again, hard to see how he did not consciously take a view on the proper role of the priesthood. It was the Levite Moses that inaugurated the covenant at Sinai and, to all intents and purposes, priests must preside over sacrificial offerings. The tradition that Jesus is *both* sacrificial victim *and* priest that is found, for example, in Hebrews and Revelation (victim: 5:6; priest 1:13-16) is not simply the product of later theological reflection. Once Jesus is viewed as a sacrifice, within the historical context of his 'life' the question, 'which priest offered that sacrifice?', follows immediately.

<sup>74</sup> *Ant.* 20:226: "wherefore it is also a tradition that none should hold God's high priesthood save him who is of Aaron's blood, and that one of another lineage, even if he happened to be a king, should attain to the high priesthood." That Josephus can so flatly reject kings being priests, whilst idealizing the Hasmonean model of priests being kings, demonstrates the axiomatic priority of priesthood in the political and religious spheres.

In Psalm 110 one who is first and foremost king (vv. 1-3) is also a priest "according to the order/because of Melchizedek" (v. 4). Melchizedek is a king-priest who, according to biblical chronology, precedes the Aaronide priesthood by some four centuries. For any Jew committed to the authority of antiquity, the supremacy of primeval and patriarchal history over subsequent 'fallen' history, Melchizedek offers a potent alternative to the political models that give primacy to Sinai.<sup>75</sup> With the partial exception of material from Zechariah,<sup>76</sup> Psalm 110:1 is the only text to speak of a royal 'messiah' that Jesus cites. And he cites it twice: once at his trial where its royal figure is fused with the Son of Man of Daniel 7:13 and once, in a less confrontational scene, whilst teaching in the temple shortly before his arrest.

In the latter context (Mark 12:25-27 & *parrs.*) Jesus asks his audience how it can be that the royal messiah is the "son of David" if David himself speaks, in Psalm 110:1, of him as his Lord, i.e. his superior. Jesus' question is not answered, but there should be little doubt what Jesus was thinking. Psalm 110 is the *only* biblical text that *explicitly* speaks of a king who is also a 'priest'. Melchizedek, whose royal priesthood it mentions, was a figure who attracted considerable interest in Jesus' Jewish world; not because as a mythical figure he was a screen onto which merely *religious* imaginative speculation could be projected, but because, in a world where religion and politics were inseparable, he offered a distinctive, non-Mosaic, political solution to the fraught questions of priestly and royal functions in God's kingdom. The sources are eerily silent on the matter,<sup>77</sup> but it strains credulity to imagine that Melchizedek had not featured prominently in the, sometimes bloody, arguments over the Hasmonean fusion of royalty and priesthood. Melchizedek was (along

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<sup>75</sup> It is not a coincidence that *Jubilees* ignores Melchizedek in its retelling of the patriarchal narratives. *Jubilees* assiduously retrojects the Sinaitic dispensation into patriarchal narratives whilst advocating a separation of priestly and royal offices.

<sup>76</sup> Zechariah 13:7 is cited in Mark 14:27 and parallels.

<sup>77</sup> I have suggested that the Psalm 110 influenced the behaviour of Herod Agrippa at Caesarea Maritima (Josephus *Ant.* 19:344-347; Acts 12:20-23) (Fletcher-Louis, *All the Glory of Adam*, 125-126), but otherwise it is nowhere used of an historical figure in extant Second Temple sources. There is evidence that at points it has influenced the Jewish messianic material in the *Testament of the Twelve Patriarchs* and it was probably important for the Samaritans who located the Salem of Gen 14 at Shechem (see the material in James L. Kugel, *Traditions of the Bible: a guide to the Bible as it was at the start of the common era* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1998) 159-60).

with his predecessor Enoch) to some Jews what Arthur was for medieval kings of England; a mythical prototype for a political settlement.<sup>78</sup>

It is absurd to imagine that Jesus' audience (and implied readers of the gospels) did not have in mind the rest of the Psalm that Jesus cites. In fact it is only because they know what follows that Jesus can reasonably expect his hearers to answer his question. The royal messiah is not adequately designated David's son because, as Psalm 110:1-4 shows, David himself speaks of that character as one superior to his own, relatively recent kingship. The monarchy of Psalm 110 combines priesthood and kingship in a fuller fashion than he ever did,<sup>79</sup> and is of more ancient pedigree than the parvenu David and his troublesome heirs. In isolation therefore Mark 12:35-37 is Jesus' thinly veiled public statement on the question of Israel's God-intended eschatological constitution: the nation should, and will, be led by one is both king and priest.<sup>80</sup>

Did Jesus think he was that priest-king? If he did, then he would have to carefully manage his declaration of messianic intent. More than any other messianic model this would be destined to cause him trouble. In the first place, it obviously entails a direct attack on the Sadducean high priesthood. Secondly, few in the crowds would be sympathetic to this claim. Some may have hankered (like Josephus) for the Hasmonean model, but that accorded more straightforwardly with the Mosaic priestly hegemony by

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<sup>78</sup> The role of the Melchizedekian priesthood in 2 *Enoch* (ch. 71) deserves far greater attention as a witness to competing Jewish notions of political order than it has hitherto received. Despite the fact that to a modern reader it seems more concerned with pre-scientific cosmology, obscure cultic instruction and bizarre religious experience, it is a vital witness to the late Second Temple form of a highly political genre in a continuous tradition back through 1 *Enoch* (via Priestly material in Ben Sira), all the way to Mesopotamian notions of an antediluvian sacral kingship. Indirectly 2 *Enoch* probably attests to the importance of Melchizedek for the Hasmoneans.

<sup>79</sup> David is never called "priest (כֹּהֵן)" (though his non-reigning sons are in 2 Sam 8:18) and Israel's official history of the monarchy limits the cultic responsibilities of the king (see e.g. the role of the priests in 1 Kings 8) and describes the sacral duties of kings in particularly negative contexts (1 Kings 12; 2 Kings 16).

<sup>80</sup> Read this way Mark's version perhaps also becomes an attack on the Scribes. Once Jesus has appealed to Psalm 110 for the scriptural view of 'the messiah', his audience hears again his original question, 'Why indeed, do the scribes say that the messiah is a Son of David?' If these are scribes who work for the temple establishment in support of the Sadducean priesthood – as the location of Jesus' teaching might suggest (cf. 8:31; 10:33; 11:18, 27; 14:1, 43, 53; 15:31) – then they have a vested interest in looking only for a non-priestly Davidic messiah who would, as all assumed, be subordinate to the (existing) high priestly establishment.

having priests become kings. Those who lamented the Hasmonean corruption that opened the door to Roman rule will have reacted violently to any suggestion of a fresh combination of priesthood and kingship. And, as the Uzziah incident reminded them a monarch who would usurp the priesthood could be severely condemned by God. During his ministry his disciples too knew his piety and would, therefore, have had little thought for the possibility that their leader was about to launch his candidacy as the nation's king-priest. If they thought he was a son of David they would know that he could not also be a son of Aaron.

So, if Jesus *did* think he was a king-priest, he would have considerable political obstacles to negotiate and public-image hurdles to overcome. *According to the gospels* he does not appeal to Psalm 110 until his last days in Jerusalem and it is, ultimately, his self-referential interpretation of that passage that gets him crucified. Is there any evidence that during his ministry he already thought of himself in terms of Israel's true priesthood? And, as he wandered around Galilee and Judaea, did he prepare his disciples for the revelation of his Melchizedekian aspirations? Is there anything in the pattern of his teaching and healing that betrays a priestly consciousness?

The rest of this paper will offer in outline the beginnings of an affirmative answer to these questions. Space is limited and a comprehensive engagement with these questions relies on a detailed discussion of the Son of Man title.<sup>81</sup> Since I have discussed the priestly contours of the Son of Man at an earlier meeting of the British New Testament Conference, I will concentrate here on other material. But my primary goal – a new reading of the programmatic Jesus material in Mark 1-6 – depends in part on my understanding of the priestly Son of Man, so I will review that hypothesis now.

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<sup>81</sup> Fuller discussion would show that the Son of Man title, along with other portions of the gospel material, allows Jesus to exploit the other biblical precedent for unification of priestly and royal offices – the original state of humanity before the fall in Genesis 2-3.

## Jesus the high priestly Son of Man

A solution to the intractable problems of the Son of Man expression depends on a new reading of Daniel 7.<sup>82</sup> That reading and its implications for the New Testament material can be briefly summarised as follows:<sup>83</sup>

In the first place, a strict decision between an angelic (Michael?) or human (symbolic Israel or messiah) identification of the 'one like a son of man' of 7:13 is unnecessary. There is data that supports both the human and the heavenly character of the man figure. This ambivalence is entirely explicable in the non-dualistic worldview of Second Temple Judaism where various individuals (Adam, Noah, Enoch, Melchizedek, Jacob-Israel etc ...) are thought of as divine and/or angelic and, simultaneously, thoroughly human. On numerous counts the best candidate for the heavenly-human part the 'one like a son of man' plays is the high priest. In Daniel's Jewish world, as we have seen, it is the high priest who dominates the political and religious landscape. Daniel itself is barely interested in kingship, but is consumed by the crisis facing the defiled temple and the broken line of legitimate high priests (see esp. 8:9-14; 9:24-27). The mythological landscape on Daniel 7 centres of Zion and the Temple. The chaos monsters arise from the Mediterranean ('the great sea', 7:2) and the *Chaoskampf* comes to a climax at Israel's holy mountain, where God's throne is set, in her temple (vv. 9ff).<sup>84</sup> This is roughly the same staging as that used in the salvation-historical drama of chapter 2, with which chapter 7 stands in literary parallelism.

The crisis faced by Israel's temple state under Antiochus IV's persecution is cosmic because the cult is the bond of heaven and earth (cf. 8:9-14). The monsters Daniel sees embodying the nations are impure *Mischwesen* (cf. Lev 11) whose pollution comes from the

<sup>82</sup> Strictly speaking my reading is not new, since it is anticipated by a minority of Daniel commentators (see esp. A. Lacocque, *The Book of Daniel* (Translated by D. Pellauer; London: SPCK, 1979) 124-5) who have made no discernable impact on the discussion of the New Testament material.

<sup>83</sup> For a fuller, though not complete discussion, see Fletcher-Louis, "High Priest as Divine Mediator," and C. H. T. Fletcher-Louis, "The Revelation of the Sacral Son of Man: The Genre, History of Religions Context and the Meaning of the Transfiguration," *Auferstehung - Resurrection. The Fourth Durham-Tübingen-Symposium: Resurrection, Exaltation, and Transformation in Old Testament, Ancient Judaism, and Early Christianity* (eds. F. Avemarie and H. Lichtenberger; WUNT 135; Tübingen: Mohr-Siebeck, 2001) 247-298 (pp. 257-261).

<sup>84</sup> Throughout the aNE and in Israel the *Chaoskampf* is centred on a temple – in Israel's case, on Zion (cf. Ezek 38-39; Joel 3; Zech 14).

watery abyss that makes desolate God's sanctuary. Yet God's sanctuary is also the point at which that cosmic chaos is defeated and its impurity removed when the true high priest is brought before God on the Day of Atonement – the day of purgation on which creation is reconstituted. Just as the high priest comes to God on that day surrounded by clouds of incense (Lev 16) that represent the clouds of heaven in the temple's symbolic language (cf. Exod 40 etc ...), so too the man figure of Daniel 7 goes to the Ancient of Days with the clouds of heaven. That the arrival of the 'one like a son of man' – the true human set over against the bestial nations – recalls the creation of Adam in Genesis 1 is fitting because the high priest is the true Adam (see above).<sup>85</sup> That the 'one like a son of man' recalls the divine warrior and the OG can say he comes not "to the Ancient of Days" (so MT), but "as (ὡς) the Ancient of Days", is not unexpected given that the high priest bears God's image and acts as divine warrior and creator on the cultic stage. And, of course, the high priest represents Israel, the people to whom the kingdom is given in vv. 18, 22, 27.<sup>86</sup>

<sup>85</sup> I am thus sympathetic to the recent proposal by Joel Marcus ("Son of Man as son of Adam," RB 110 (2003) 38-61) that in the gospels ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ ἀνθρώπου means "the son of Adam", which in a sense is what the high priest was. However, W. Horbury's argument that biblical psalmody (esp. Ps 8, 80) and Septuagintal interpretative translation (esp. LXX Num 24:7, 17) shows that "a/the man" would carry royal messianic significance at this time (W. Horbury, "The Messianic Associations of the 'Son of Man'," JTS 36 (1985) 34-55; Horbury, *Jewish Messianism*, 29-30, 44-45, 50) is problematic. The only interpretations of Psalm 8 attested before the much later rabbinic *Midrash Tehillim* identify the 'man/son of man' in that psalm (v. 4), not with the king, but with the high priest (Hebrews 2:5-8 in context and see J. K. Aitken, "The Semantics of 'Glory' in Ben Sira - Traces of a Development in Post-Biblical Hebrew," *Sirach, Scrolls, and Sages. Proceedings of the Second International Symposium on the Hebrew of the Dead Sea Scrolls, Ben Sira, and the mishnah, held at Leiden University, 15-17 December 1997* (eds. T. Muraoka and J. F. Elwolde; STDJ 33; Leiden: Brill, 1999) 1-24 (p. 10) on Ben Sira 49:16-50:1 and Fletcher-Louis, "Temple Cosmology of P," on Ben Sira 50:11-13). And Horbury's royal messianic reading of the Septuagint's ἀνθρώπος at Num 24:7, 17 is not entirely convincing. It should be contrasted with Targumim that do have 'king (מלך)' (see G. S. Oegema, *The Anointed and His People. Messianic Expectations from the Maccabees to Bar Kochba* (JSPS 27; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1998) 45). Given that the Pentateuch sets up Aaron as the true Adam, it is possible, if not more likely, that the LXX thinks Num 24:7, 17 predicts a priest, or a priest and a king (as was the case in Qumran interpretation).

<sup>86</sup> The slippage between the individual 'one like a son of man' and corporate righteous Israel in the movement from vision to interpretation is simply a function of the sacramental worldview of the text's cultic life-setting.

Parallels between Daniel 7 and, for example, 1 Enoch 14 and 11QMelchizedek (to which interpreters frequently turn for help) confirm this priestly/ cultic reading. In 1 Enoch 14 Enoch is the proto-typical high priest who comes to the Great Glory in his sanctuary to deal with the fallen watchers (led by Asael/Azazel) in the same way that the high priest comes before God on the Day of Atonement to rid the world of pollution through the scapegoat  $\text{לְחַטָּאת}$ . In 11QMelch, obviously, again the hero is a divine, but human, (king-)priest who appears on the Yom Kippur of the eschatological Jubilee (11QMelch 2:6-8). The earliest interpretation of Daniel 7:13, outside of the (Jewish) NT, is the *Similitudes* of Enoch. There the identification of the 'one like a son of man' with Enoch is intended throughout and is natural given that both are priests. Features of the *Similitudes*, such as the dating of the third parable to the eve of Tabernacles (60:1) also corroborate the New Year festival reading of Daniel 7.

This high priestly reading of Daniel 7 is natural for Jews who inhabited the world of temple and liturgy that modern scholarship has so resolutely resisted entering. Most in the first century A.D. will have looked for the fulfilment of Daniel's vision in the future. Some however, for example the Sadducees, may well have thought the vision had already been fulfilled by the Maccabean heroes and that, thereafter, it continued to be fulfilled by subsequent holders of the high priestly office.<sup>87</sup>

A core set of New Testament Son of Man sayings confirms that this high priest reading of Daniel 7 was well-known in the first century and taken for granted by the earliest followers of Jesus. In Rev 1:13-16 John sees Jesus as Son of Man (in the image of the Ancient of Days), dressed with the distinctive foot-length robe and golden girdle that the high priest wears on the Day of Atonement (cf. Lev 16:4; Josephus *Ant.* 153-5, 159). The Son of Man of the gospels comes in (divine) Glory and theophanic power (Mark 8:38; 13:26), just as the high priest (far more than any other character) embodies God's Glory (Exod 28:2, 40; Sirach 50:7; 2 Enoch 22:8; 4Q405 23 ii etc ...) and represents the divine warrior. In Mark 14:62 and Q 12:10 the Son of Man title is closely associated with the issue of blasphemy. Slandering the high priest was blasphemous and, therefore a capital offence, because he represented God; he was God's image (see e.g. Josephus *Ant.* 13:294). Jesus' claim to be the true high priestly Son of Man at his trial therefore entailed a blasphemous negation of Caiaphas' position. In Q 12:10 Jesus plays with the ironies inherent in the expression "s/Son of (the) m/Man" and excuses those who slander him without realising

<sup>87</sup> There is circumstantial evidence that this is how the Sadducees interpreted the vision in the way they, in disagreement with the Pharisees, carried out the burning of incense on the Day of Atonement (see Fletcher-Louis, "High Priest as Divine Mediator," 181-186).

he is Israel's long awaited true high priest. Those who think he is just a man, a son of man, will be forgiven their ignorant attacks on him, but none can be excused a failure to respect the work of the Holy Spirit through him (and his followers).

The Son of Man is associated with the lightning and thunder (Luke 17:24) just as the high priest (according to Josephus by virtue of his pomegranates and golden bells) is dressed as the divine warrior. In several texts the Son of Man is predicted to suffer at the hands of his generation (Mark 8:31; Luke 17:25 etc ...). The only Jewish precedent for such suffering – albeit not to the point of death – is the high priest (cf. esp. 4QTLevi<sup>d</sup> with Q 17:24-25).

According to Mark 10:45 the Son of Man came not to be served (cf. Dan 7:14), but to serve and to give ( $\delta\omicron\upsilon\upsilon\alpha\iota$ ) his life as a ransom ( $\lambda\upsilon\tau\omicron\upsilon\upsilon\alpha$ ) for ( $\acute{\alpha}\nu\tau\iota$ ) many. This saying has puzzled commentators because, whilst direct linguistic associations to the suffering servant song of Isaiah 53 are lacking, it is really hard to know what Jesus means.<sup>88</sup> The saying is difficult in large part because the use of the word  $\lambda\upsilon\tau\omicron\upsilon\upsilon\alpha$  for a human person, rather than for a pecuniary object, is almost unprecedented. The only precedent for this, and for the idea of someone *giving* themselves as this kind of 'ransom', is the stipulation in Numbers 3 that the tribe of Levi is to be given (in 3:9 the tribe are  $\delta\omicron\mu\alpha$   $\delta\epsilon\delta\omicron\mu\epsilon\upsilon\omicron\iota$ ) to serve (3:7-8:  $\text{לְעָבֹד}$ , LXX has  $\epsilon\pi\gamma\acute{\alpha}\lambda\epsilon\sigma\theta\alpha\iota$ ) in the sanctuary where they are to act as ransom monies ( $\lambda\upsilon\tau\omicron\upsilon\upsilon\alpha$ ) in place of (vv. 12, 41, 45,  $\acute{\alpha}\nu\tau\iota$ ) the lives of the firstborn of the tribes of Israel. That the Son of Man should act as a  $\lambda\upsilon\tau\omicron\upsilon\upsilon\alpha$  is therefore fitting if he is of priestly (or Levitical) pedigree. And a connection between Daniel 7:13 and Numbers 3 is perhaps also forged through the common use of the verbal root  $\text{קָרַב}$  "draw near". The Levites in Numbers 3:6 are "brought near ( $\text{קָרַב}$ )" to serve as a ransom for Israel's firstborn, just as in Daniel 7:13 the one like a son of man "came to the ancient of Days and was *brought near* ( $\text{קָרַב}$ ) to him".<sup>89</sup>

<sup>88</sup> The problems posed by C.K. Barrett ("Mark 10.45: A Ransom for Many," *New Testament Essays* (London: SPCK, 1972) 20-26.) and Morna D. Hooker (*Jesus and the Servant. The Influence of the Servant Concept of Deutero-Isaiah in the New Testament* (London: SPCK, 1959) 74-79) have never been satisfactorily addressed.

<sup>89</sup> The sacrificial uses of the verb  $\text{קָרַב}$ , at for example Ezra 6:10, 17, might also suggest the reading according to which the 'one like a son of man' is 'offered' to the Ancient of Days (see Barker, *Great High Priest*, 82).

Not all gospel Son of Man sayings require or overtly carry priestly connotations.<sup>90</sup> However, the overall picture in the gospels of a character who spans the ontological hierarchy of human, angelic and divine identities accords best with the high priestly reading of Daniel 7:13 given the ease with which Israel's true high priest moves up and down this ladder of being. Two other Son of Man sayings, the first two of Mark's (and Luke's) narrative (Mark 2:10, 28), are also only intelligible if the expression can be assumed to refer to one with priestly credentials. We will discuss these two shortly.

## A Case Study in Jesus' Priestly Consciousness: Mark 1-6<sup>91</sup>

Mark 1:14-6:13 can fairly be treated as a literary unit that is programmatic for the Markan (and synoptic) profile of Jesus' ministry. It summarises the key characteristics of the ministry whilst providing stories that exemplify and provide a theological foundation for his distinctive behaviour:

1. Jesus announces the good news of God; "the time has been fulfilled and the kingdom of God has drawn near". His hearers are to repent and believe in the good news (Mark 1:14-15). This proclamation of the kingdom is distinctive of all else that Jesus does and it is generally acknowledged that the kingdom proclamation was a foundational theme for the historical Jesus.
2. Jesus calls twelve followers to be his disciples (1:16-20; 3:13-19). As a twelve they symbolise the reconstitution of Israel, thereby defining Jesus' ministry as one of national restoration.<sup>92</sup> These disciples are to take the message and pattern of ministry that they have learnt from Jesus to the villages (6:6b-13).
3. Jesus heals the sick. Summary statements of Jesus' healing of many sick and his casting out of demons that cause illness (1:32-34, 39; 3:10-11) are illustrated through

<sup>90</sup> In John priestly imagery for the Son of Man is particularly evident in 6:27. For the Father setting his seal on the Son of Man compare Exodus 28:11, 21, 36.

<sup>91</sup> For other case studies in the influence of priestly categories in the formation of Jesus materials see my "Revelation of the Sacral Son of Man" and "Jesus Inspects His Priestly War Party (Luke 14:25-35)," *The Old Testament in the New Testament. Essays in Honour of J.L. North* (ed. S. Moyses; JSNTS 189; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 2000) 126-143.

<sup>92</sup> The teaching in 4:31-35 (and the Parable of the Sower) redefines family around Jesus so that national restoration is defined in terms of fictive kinship and, therefore, a kind of remnant theology is espoused.

stories of specific, individual healings. These may be categorised according to several different types:

- Jesus casts out demons or unclean spirits (1:21-28; 5:1-20, cf. 3:20-30), as he will do throughout his ministry in the synoptics.
  - Jesus heals by command, by word alone (2:1-12; 3:1-5, cf. 1:21-28; 5:1-20), as he will do on many other occasions (cf. Mark 10:46-52; Q 7:1-10; 8:5-13; Luke 17:11-19; John 5:2-9 etc ...)
  - Jesus heals those categories of sick person and raises the dead where, ordinarily, physical contact means the contracting of impurity (a leper: 1:40-45; a *zaba*: 5:24b-34; a corpse: 5:35-43). Again, Jesus' healing ministry will, time and again, bring him into contact with contagious impurity (cf. Q 7:22; Luke 7:11-17, cf. Luke 15:1-2).
4. Jesus is able to forgive sins (2:1-12) as he is at other times too (cf. Luke 7:36-50; 15:11-32; 23:40-43).
  5. Jesus acts on Sabbath in such a way that he causes offence and is perceived to be in breach of Torah (2:23-28, 3:1-6). The theme is reiterated elsewhere (cf. Luke 13:10-17; 14:1-6).
  6. Jesus teaches. He proclaims the fact that the time of eschatological fulfilment has, in some sense, already arrived (Mark 2:18-22) and he teaches in parables (4:1-34).<sup>93</sup> Both these themes are taken up extensively in the rest of the gospels.
  7. Jesus meets with opposition (6:1-6a) from those willing to take his life (3:6, cf. 5:14-29).

Mark has carefully chosen material in the opening chapters of his life of Jesus so as to encapsulate themes that dominate the Jesus tradition. And the way this block is taken up by Matthew and Luke indicates its programmatic character was well taken by its earliest readers.

Literarily, the one obvious reason Mark has done this is because he wants the pattern of Jesus' ministry to be the model for that of the disciples who are sent out in 6:6b-13 to do what he does, to heal the sick, to cast out demons, "to proclaim (the gospel of the drawing near of the kingdom) that people might repent" (6:12, cf. 1:15). An *inclusio* frames the section. The gospel begins with the ministry of John the Baptist, before Jesus sets out to

<sup>93</sup> The programmatic form of the parable chapter is clear in the way that the Parable of the Sower is a parable about Jesus' teaching in parables.

proclaim the kingdom and call four disciples. The section ends with the disciples setting out to proclaim the kingdom. On their return the reader is informed of John the Baptist's grizzly death.

A Ministry of the Baptist (1:1-11)

B Ministry of Jesus – proclaiming the Kingdom (1:14-15)

C Calling of disciples (1:16-20)

C' Disciples sent out (6:7-13)

B' Ministry of Disciples – proclaiming and inaugurating the kingdom (6:12-13)

A' Death of the Baptist (6:14-29)

At a number of points Jesus' behaviour in the material within this *inclusio* creates open conflict (forgiving sins, working on Sabbath, and casting out demons). In each of these cases Mark has Jesus engage in a dialogue that gives theological and scriptural justification for his behaviour. His apology for his deliverance ministry (3:22-30), which then covers all other such incidences, need not concern us any further. However, Jesus' apology for his pronouncing the forgiveness of sins (2:1-12) and his disciples' apparent transgression of the Sabbath (2:23-28) are bold claims to a high priestly consciousness.<sup>94</sup> And his healing through touch those with contagious impurity is a matter of interpretative difficulty that, again, is best read through an appreciation of Jesus' belief that he bears a priestly ontology.

## Jesus the 'Holy One of God'

Jesus' first act of healing is the deliverance of a man with an unclean spirit. On seeing Jesus, the spirit cries out, "I know who you are Jesus ... *the holy one of God* (ὁ ἅγιος τοῦ θεοῦ)" (1:24) This greeting does not suit a king or a prophet. God is Israel's Holy One. And angels are often called holy ones. But the only precedent for a singular '*the Holy One of God*' is Aaron (Psalm 106:16; Num 16:7 "*the holy one (of the LORD)*"), who dramatically

<sup>94</sup> Space is limited. A fuller discussion would show that Jesus' priestly consciousness stands behind his "transgression" of the Sabbath in Mark 3:1-6.

wins the right to the title in the battle with the Korah and his rebellious company in Numbers 16.<sup>95</sup>

So, does the unclean spirit think Jesus is Israel's true high priest – the one before whom uncleanness cannot endure?<sup>96</sup> That partly depends whether anything else in the context supports a priestly sense to the epithet. Even if this is what the demon means, does Jesus agree he is worthy of an Aaronic title? Or does his command that the demon be silent (1:25) entail a denial of any desire for priestly pretensions? First impressions would suggest the latter. A couple of passages later Jesus expressly commands the leper whom he has cleansed to go through the normal channels of priestly inspection for cured leprosy (1:44-45, cf. Lev 14). If he thought he was himself a priest he might surely have offered to give the man a clean bill of health himself. On the other hand, in other ways that passage and several others that follow indicate that, even if Jesus is unhappy with the timing and the precise form of the unclean spirit's acclamation of his priestly identity, he nevertheless accepts its core premise.

## Jesus' Contagious (Priestly) Holiness

Three of Mark's healing stories are noteworthy because the conditions they claim Jesus healed correspond in content and order to conditions of impurity which Numbers 5:1-4 says require removal from the Israelite camp:

Num. 5:1 The LORD spoke to Moses, saying: 2 Command the Israelites to put out of the camp everyone *who is leprous* (or "*who suffers scale-disease*"), or

<sup>95</sup> In 2 Kings 4:9 Elisha is "*a holy man of God*" and in Judg 16:17 Samson a holy one of God (ἅγιος θεοῦ). In the Dead Sea Scrolls this use of 'holy one' for the priesthood is intensified. The Aaronic priesthood are "*holiest of the holy ones*" (4QMMT B 75-82; cf. 4Q511 35 2-5; 4Q418 81 4) and the laity are the "*holy ones*" (4Q511 2 i 6; 4Q511 35 2; 4Q418 81 1, 12). This usage is probably idiosyncratic to QL and, from the 4QMMT passage, evidently polemical towards (mainstream) non-sectarian Jewish parlance. Even if behind Mark's Greek there is a play between Jesus of Nazareth (נצ) and Jesus the Nazirite (נז), translated ἅγιος θεοῦ at LXX B Judg 13:7) a priestly association remains given the connections between the Nazirite and the priesthood (cf. Lev 21 and Num 6).

<sup>96</sup> W. Grundmann, *Das Evangelium nach Markus* (THNT 2; Berlin: Evangelische Verlagsanstalt, 1968) 42-43 (who compares T. Dan 5:10f; T. Levi 18:12); J. Marcus, *Mark 1-8: a new translation with introduction and commentary* (The Anchor Bible 27; New York: Doubleday, 1999) 188.

has a discharge, and everyone who is unclean through contact with a corpse; 3 you shall put out both male and female, putting them outside the camp; they must not defile their camp, where I dwell among them. 4 The Israelites did so, putting them outside the camp; as the LORD had spoken to Moses, so the Israelites did.

In Mark 1:40-45 Jesus cleanses a leper. In 5:25-34 a woman with an abnormal discharge – a twelve-year-long flow of menstrual blood – is healed by touching Jesus. Immediately after that Jesus comes into contact with corpse impurity, raising Jairus' daughter from the dead (5:35-43). So, these three stories are evidently exemplary, not just because they testify to Jesus' power to heal, but because in each case Jesus removes contagious impurity.<sup>97</sup>

According to the Torah all who have contact with these three categories of person are contaminated by their impurity. And in each case a period of decontamination, of purification through separation and washings is prescribed. (Being under the same roof as a leper is enough to contract uncleanness which is removed, provided one washes at nightfall<sup>98</sup>; any one who touches a woman with an abnormal discharge (a *zaba*) shall be unclean, and shall wash their clothes, and bathe in water, and be unclean until the evening (Lev 15:27); contact with a corpse requires a week long period of purification and multiple washings with the waters of the red heifer (Num 19)). Mark is clear that, although on occasion Jesus could heal by word alone, in these three instances he goes out of his way to touch the sufferer (1:41 "stretching out his hand he touched (ἥψατο) him", 5:27 "coming from behind she touched (ἥψατο) his garment", 5:41 "taking the child's hand he said to her ...") in such a way that contact with contagious impurity is unavoidable.<sup>99</sup>

So, does Jesus' touching of these impure people mean that he disregards OT law? Does the *emphasis* on Jesus' deliberate physical contact mean that Mark thinks Jesus thought the purity laws were now redundant. This is the view many have taken. But arrival at such a conclusion is not straightforward. As Paula Fredriksen argues, we should

<sup>97</sup> For the three stories' relationship to Numbers 5 see Marcus, *Mark 1-8*, 367-68.

<sup>98</sup> J. Milgrom, *Leviticus 1-16* (ABC 3; New York: Doubleday, 1991) 876 on Lev 14:46.

<sup>99</sup> Though there is some distance between the first and the second stories they evidently form a conceptual succession based on the categories of person in Numbers 5. Although there were perhaps many other stories in which Jesus healed by touch available to Mark (cf. e.g. Mark 7:31-37; 8:22-26; Matt 9:27-31; Luke 13:10-17; 14:1-6), since these others are healings of those *not* suffering the same contagious impurity, it is fitting that they were not incorporated between Mark 1:41 and 5:43. Because Mark 2:1-3:6 and 4:1-34 were perhaps once separate literary blocks, the possibility that 1:41-45; 5:24-34; 5:34-43 stood much closer in a pre-Markan tradition should also be borne in mind.

perhaps assume that Jesus (and, by the same token, the implied reader of the gospels) simply takes for granted that Jesus went through those prescribed periods of purification?<sup>100</sup> No one thinks that the disciples who retrieved and buried John's headless corpse (Mark 5:29) ignored the necessary steps to deal with their corpse impurity, so why assume that Jesus did after touching Jairus' daughter?

On the other hand there is now an emerging consensus championed by B. Chilton (and taken up the likes of M. Bockmuehl, Craig Evans and Joel Marcus) that a third way through these two alternatives best explains Jesus' behaviour.<sup>101</sup> The way Jesus heals means that, *instead of the contagion of impurity flowing from impure to pure, it flows from pure to impure*. Or, in the words of the narrator at Mark 5:30, after Jesus is touched by the haemorrhaging woman, "... aware that *power* had gone out from him, (Jesus turned in the crowd and said 'who touched me?')" Because Jesus purifies through his power to heal it is not he who contracts impurity, it is the woman who contracts purity.<sup>102</sup> This means that Mark's Jesus *did* respect the distinction between impure and pure, but because he is so supercharged with purity, he is not contaminated by impurity and does not need to go through the requisite rites of purification.<sup>103</sup> The historical Jesus may well have undertaken those rites. But the fact that he expressly tells the purified leper to present himself to the priest in accordance with Torah, whilst nothing is said of Jesus' own submission to purification rites, expresses the early Christian view that Jesus thought them unnecessary in his own case.

Now this interpretation raises another question. Is there any *precedent* for this way of understanding human interaction, or is this Jesus' *original* contribution to Jewish purity

<sup>100</sup> Fredriksen, *Jesus of Nazareth*, 200, 203.

<sup>101</sup> B. Chilton, *Jesus' Baptism and Jesus' Healing: His Personal Practice of Spirituality* (Harrisburg, PA: Trinity Press International, 1998) 58-71; M. Bockmuehl, *Jewish Law in Gentile Churches: Halakhah and the Beginning of Christian Public Ethics* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 2000) 11; C. A. Evans, "'Who Touched Me?' Jesus and the Ritually Impure," *Jesus in Context: Temple, Purity, and Restoration* (eds. B. D. Chilton and C. A. Evans; AGFU 39; Leiden: Brill, 1997) 353-76 (pp. 368-69); Marcus, *Mark 1-8*, 206, 209.

<sup>102</sup> This interpretation goes back to John Chrysostom (*Homily on Matthew 25.2*).

<sup>103</sup> Some seem sympathetic to this contagious purity view of Jesus' behaviour, but nevertheless hang on to the traditional view that Jesus simply dispenses with impurity altogether. For example Dunn ("Jesus and Purity: An Ongoing Debate," *NTS* 48 (2002) 449-467) at first considers favourably Chilton's contagious purity thesis, but then, without obvious reason, says "it may be fairly concluded that Jesus was indifferent to such purity issues" (p. 461).

consciousness, as Bruce Chilton thinks?<sup>104</sup> And is there any Jewish precedent for the contagious power to heal and purify flowing from Jesus' *garment* (that is touched by the haemorrhaging woman)? No biblical precedent for the distinctive pattern of Jesus' contagious purity has been put forward by the commentators.<sup>105</sup> Was there any? And if there is no precedent for this way of thinking in Jewish tradition, might not this now fashionable notion of contagious holiness be imaginative, but nevertheless fanciful and ultimately implausible within the constraints of Jewish practice and belief?

### The High Priest's Contagious Holiness

In biblical texts that describe the priesthood and their garments it is clearly stated that the garments, which define the priestly office, have a contagious holiness. According to two passages in Ezekiel (42:14; 44:19) the priests must undress and leave behind their sacred vestments when they leave the temple precincts to rejoin the people:

Ezek. 44:19 When they go out into the outer court to the people, they shall remove the vestments in which they have been ministering, and lay them in the holy chambers; and they shall put on other garments, so that they do not communicate holiness to the people with their vestments.

In the Mosaic Torah it is also stated that ordinarily a high priest must not leave the sanctuary, nor must he go near a dead body (Lev 21:10-12):

The priest who is exalted above his fellows, on whose head the anointing oil has been poured and who has been consecrated to wear the vestments, ... shall not go where there is a dead body; he shall not defile himself even for his father or mother. 12 He shall not go outside the sanctuary and thus profane the sanctuary of his God; for the consecration of the anointing oil of his God is upon him: I am the LORD.

<sup>104</sup> B. Chilton, *Jesus' Baptism and Jesus' Healing: His Personal Practice of Spirituality* (Harrisburg, PA: Trinity Press International, 1998) 63.

<sup>105</sup> Gundry (*Mark: A Commentary on His Apology for the Cross* (1993) 280) draws a parallel to the numinous, revivifying power of Elisha's corpse in 2 Kgs 13:20-21. But this is not a parallel to the power of a living healer to overcome impurity and there is no interest in Elisha's garments. Bockmuehl (*Bockmuehl, Jewish Law*, 273) compares 1QapGen 20:28-29 and Exod 29:37. But in the latter text it is the *altar* not a person that communicates cleanness and in the former Pharaoh's illness, that Abraham heals through the laying on of hands, is not a case of impurity, but is caused by an "evil spirit" (cf. Gen 12:17).

The rationale given in Ezekiel – that the vestments communicate holiness to whatever touches them – is perhaps implicit here. Earlier in the law given at Sinai, Moses is told that everything that is anointed with the oil of consecration – and that includes the priestly garments – is supercharged with holiness, so that "whatever touches (πᾶς ὁ ἀπτόμενος) them will become holy" (Exod 30:29).<sup>106</sup>

Ideally, we need to understand what in their original Israelite context these texts mean. Why would it be a bad thing if the high priestly garments came into contact with the people so that they became holier than they were already? What in practical terms would this entail? It is, at least clear, however, that this material *might* shed some light on Jesus' interaction with impurity, insofar as the basic understanding of a human agent's interaction with others is the same – the superholy communicates holiness/purity to the not-so-holy.

For our purposes the more pressing issue is how this material was understood in the first century of the Christian era. In Jesus' day was there an active interest in the ability of the priest's garments to communicate holiness? Did anyone think that the anointed and vested priest had the ability thereby to heal the sick or overcome the power of death? There is one text near in time to the New Testament that does address these questions.

In Wisdom of Solomon 18 there is a story in which Aaron *deliberately* wears his garments outside the sanctuary. In Numbers 16:41-50, after the rebellion of Korah, Dathan and Abiram, the Israelites complain against Moses and Aaron. In defence of his chosen representatives, God's wrath breaks out against the Israelites and they begin to die in large numbers in the camp. Aaron collects some incense from the sanctuary altar and rushes into the midst of the congregation where he makes atonement for the people and stops the mortal plague. 17,400 Israelites are killed but Aaron's intercession stops the annihilation of the assembly.

In the biblical story we are not told explicitly whether Aaron remembers to take off his garments. Wisdom of Solomon retells the story, and is in no doubt that he kept them on:

18:20 The experience of death touched also the righteous, and a plague came upon the multitude in the desert, but the wrath did not long continue. 21 For a blameless man rushed to be their champion; he brought forward the armour of his ministry, prayer and propitiation by incense; he withstood the anger and put an end to the disaster, showing that he was your servant. 22

<sup>106</sup> For reasons that there is not space here to lay out, I disagree with J. Milgrom who thinks that according to P, unlike Ezekiel, the priestly garments *do not* communicate holiness (*Leviticus*, 447-449).

He conquered the wrath not by strength of body, nor by force of arms, but by word (or, perhaps, "by Logos") he subdued the avenger, appealing to the oaths and covenants given to our fathers. 23 For when the dead had already fallen on one another in heaps, standing between he drove back the wrath, and cut off its way to the living. 24 For on his foot-length robe the whole world was depicted, and the glories of the fathers were engraved on the four rows of stones, and your majesty was on the diadem upon his head. 25 To these the destroyer yielded. And these he feared; for merely to test the wrath was enough.

In this retelling of the biblical story (that has several intriguing additions to the biblical text) two points are clear. (1) Wisdom has Aaron do what Leviticus (21:10-12) and Ezekiel (chs. 42; 44) say he should *not* do, that is he wears his garments outside the sanctuary. (2) Secondly, where, in Numbers, it is just the offering of incense that effects atonement, now it is also the high priest's garments. To these the destroyer, the angelic manifestation of divine wrath, yields (v. 25). This probably has something to do with the fact that the high priest wears a diadem on which God's Name is engraved – what Wisdom calls God's 'majesty' (see Deut 32:3). The majesty and name of God are already associated in Deut 32 and in contemporary texts they are both expressions of creative power over the forces of chaos (that includes death).<sup>107</sup> As the representative of Israel's God, of Yahweh, Aaron is able to plead mercy in the face of divine justice. Wisdom highlights the cosmic significance of the garb and this too probably contributes to Aaron's ability to withstand the power of death. As an embodiment of the perfect order and beauty of the cosmos, Aaron withstands the forces of death, that would undo that order in the lives of the Israelites. Aaron's clothing gives him a sacramental power over death.

Wisdom *does not* say that Aaron touches all those whose lives are spared (this would be impractical).<sup>108</sup> But the apocryphon is surely reflecting on the kind of statements regarding the power of the garments to sanctify, that we have seen are so important to the biblical priestly tradition. The high priest's garments emanate a cosmic power that overcomes the physical presence of disease and death.

<sup>107</sup> MAJESTY: T. *Levi* 3:9 "So, when the Lord looks upon us we all tremble. Even the heavens and the earth and the abysses tremble before the presence of his majesty." WORD: Heb 1:3 "... and he sustains all things by his powerful word."

<sup>108</sup> The need for physical contact in this context might also be thought unnecessary because just as the miasmatic force of death can be communicated without touch, but merely by overhang (Num 19:14-15), so can its opposite.

So, to an extent, the way Jesus behaves in his interaction with the impurities of disease and death are less original than Chilton and others have supposed. As an argument against thinking that Jesus was influenced by priestly notions of identity, J. Becker asserts that "no Jew who had a close relationship to the priesthood or more generally to the temple could treat the purity laws as Jesus obviously did."<sup>109</sup> On the contrary, it now seems that, if the Wisdom of Solomon can be taken as representative of first century ideas,<sup>110</sup> then Jesus' interaction with impurity is best understood on analogy with high priestly contagious impurity. And we can now be confident that the way of reading the text proposed by Chilton and others is plausible within the parameters of Jewish thought. But how exactly is Jesus related to the high priest on this reading of the evidence? Does Mark think Jesus fulfils and therefore replaces or usurps the role of the high priest?

There *are* significant points of difference between the material in Mark and Wisdom. First, Jesus *proactively* touches the unclean. Aaron in Wisdom's version of Numbers 16 does not touch anyone.<sup>111</sup> Secondly, Jesus is not a priest in the usual sense, nor is he dressed as the high priest and, at least in two of our three passages, his touch is direct, with the hand, and not mediated through clothing (the leper and Jairus' daughter are taken by the hand). Jesus' contagious holiness, we might say, is not the product of the apparatus of *office*, but rather a manifestation of his *person*. However, the fact that in one of the three stories it is Jesus' garments which channel the power that goes out from him, invites further reflection, especially because later on in Mark 6:56 the narrator says that "wherever he went, into villages or cities or farms, the sick ... begged him that they might touch even the fringe of his cloak; and all who touched it were healed." For Mark, though *Jesus* did not think it a *necessary* means of healing, the crowds focused their attention on his garments' quasi-magical power.

In fact the whole situation is complicated further by the significance of the fringes of his cloak that the sick clamour to touch. These are almost certainly the tassels (*tsitsit*) that

<sup>109</sup> *Jesus of Nazareth*, 215.

<sup>110</sup> For the view that the Aaronic priesthood is to follow the model of Num 16:41-50 in turning back wrath from God's people see the discussion of 4Q418 10 in Fletcher-Louis, *All the Glory of Adam*, 180-82.

<sup>111</sup> Though this might simply be because the understanding of the miasmatic power of death renders touch unnecessary. The high priest is to 'atone over (עַל) the Israelites (Heb Num 17:10-11) and in Lev 21:11 he is told not to go "over (עַל)" any dead body. The principal of overhang is probably operative here (cf. Num 19:14-15).

Israelites are commanded to wear on the corners of their cloaks in Numbers 15 (vv. 37-41). Those *tsitsit* are the ordinary Israelites' equivalent of the *tsits*, the rosette that bears the Name of God on the high priest's forehead. In both cases a distinctive "purple cord (תכני לרמה)" is used, to fasten the rosette to the turban (Exod 28:36-37) and within the tassels of the cloak (Num 15:38). And, like the high priest's garments (Exod 28:5-6, Josephus *Ant.* 3:102-103; *m. Kil* 9:1; *b. Yoma* 69a), the ordinary Israelite's *tsitsit* are a mixture of wool and linen.<sup>112</sup> In wearing these tassels the whole nation is "a kingdom of priests" (Exod 19:6). So, although Jesus does not wear the high priest's full regalia he does wear garments by which the laity are identified with the high priest. This means that the relationship between Jesus' and the high priest's contagious holiness is ambiguous.

Is Jesus acting as high priest with the implication that he hereby assumes the right to hold Caiaphas' office with the dawn of the kingdom? That is one way of construing his behaviour. On the other hand, perhaps in mediating contagious holiness through that symbol of the whole nation's priesthood he was not so much interested in his own, singular, high priesthood as the fulfilment of the call that the whole of Israel be a "kingdom of priests," sharing the contagious, restorative, ontology of the high priest. Jacob Milgrom sees the *tsitsit* as "the epitome of the democratic thrust within Judaism, which equalizes not by levelling but by elevating. All of Israel is enjoined to become a nation of priests" with the character of royalty symbolised by the precious purple hue.<sup>113</sup> Perhaps this, too, was the way Jesus' power to heal, his contagious holiness, would have been viewed by his earliest Jewish followers, since they also are given authority over *unclean* spirits, to heal the sick (6:7, 13).<sup>114</sup> In this case Jesus is a proto-Protestant undermining the mediatorial role of the clergy through a priesthood of all believers of which he, as a layman, is the founder and champion.<sup>115</sup>

Does other material in these early chapters of Mark confirm this priestly understanding of Jesus' contagious holiness? And is there other material that clarifies the purpose of Jesus' priestly behaviour for his vision of the nation's eschatological constitution?

<sup>112</sup> See J. Milgrom, *Numbers* (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1990) 413.

<sup>113</sup> Milgrom, *Leviticus* 1-16, 414.

<sup>114</sup> In the Acts of the apostles healing is communicated through garments (Acts 19:12) and by the principle of overhang (Acts 5:15).

<sup>115</sup> Cf. the Levitical priesthood of all Jesus' followers in Luke 14:25-34 (Fletcher-Louis, "Priestly War Party").

## The Son of Man in Mark 1-6

Within his programmatic outline of Jesus' ministry Mark includes two Son of Man sayings. The Son of Man has authority to forgive sins (2:10) and he is Lord of the Sabbath (2:28). These belong together insofar as they are part of a distinct literary block (2:1-3:6) with its own loose chiasmic structure and thematic development.<sup>116</sup> These two Son of Man sayings also share an ignoble reputation for frustrating New Testament interpreters.

Space prohibits a comprehensive interpretation of each in their respective passages. Our main aim is to show that they confirm the high priestly Son of Man hypothesis and that each makes a vital contribution to the golden thread of priestly Christology running through Mark 1-6. And our first task is to make sense of the material in its current gospel form, before we distil its implications for our understanding of the historical Jesus.

### Jesus' Priestly Mediation of Forgiveness (Mark 2:1-12)

In Mark 2:1-5 Jesus is confronted with a paralytic in a crowded house. He tells him his sins are forgiven. This provokes the scribes present who think that this is blasphemy since God alone can forgive sins. What Jesus has said need not amount to the claim that he himself has forgiven the man's sins. Jesus could be declaring that God has forgiven his sin, perhaps as a result of some prior act of penance and petition. Assuming the man is not otherwise known to Jesus, this would only amount to the claim to know, by revelation, what Jesus could not ordinarily know.

But Jesus does not explain away his words so as to avoid the scribes' accusation. Neither does he claim directly to be able to forgive sins himself. Instead he speaks of the mysterious Son of Man who "has authority to forgive sins on earth." To prove that this Son of Man does have this authority he tells the man to get up and walk and he is instantly healed. Who is this Son of Man and what is he doing here? For the gospel writers the title obviously refers to the figure of Daniel 7:13. But what is there in Daniel that could possibly lead to the claim that the figure predicted in 7:13 has authority to forgive sins? The 'one like a son of man' in Daniel 7:14 is given 'authority (ἐξουσία), glory and kingship', but if he is an angel, a royal messiah or, merely a literary symbol for righteous Israel, then it is not at all clear why anyone would think he has authority to forgive sins.

<sup>116</sup> See J. Dewey, "The Literary Structure of the Controversy Stories in Mark 2:1-3:6," *JBL* 92 (1973) 394-401.

Recent discussion of this story and its historicity has highlighted the fact that the scribes' initial concern must be understood with reference to the Jerusalem temple establishment. There is only one God who forgives sins and he resides in the nation's temple where he has instituted appropriate mechanisms for the forgiveness of sins. So, E.P. Sanders, J.D.G. Dunn and N.T. Wright all deny that the issue at the historical heart of this story is Christological.<sup>117</sup> That is, the story does not celebrate Jesus' unique claim as a human being to do only what God can do. Rather Jesus' offence is his challenge to the temple establishment.<sup>118</sup>

This might mean that what Jesus does is what only priests do in the temple. But Sanders, Dunn and Wright all bracket out the Son of Man title from the historical event that has given rise to our story. And, whilst it is generally recognised that priests have a necessary role in the process by which God communicates his forgiveness to the people, they provide no precedent for a priest ever saying to a penitent "your sins are forgiven" or a priest claiming to have the authority to forgive sins.<sup>119</sup> So the hard historical question remains. What possible grounds could (the historical) Jesus have for thinking that he has the right to mediate the forgiveness of sins in the way he does?

These difficulties are eased considerably once we adopt a high priestly reading of Daniel 7:13. If Jesus thinks he is the 'one like a son of man' prophesied in Daniel then, even though he is not in the Jerusalem temple, he would have authority – that stands in continuity with the Mosaic institutions and scriptural prediction – to mediate forgiveness as priests do in the temple. And, although we do not know that priests ever told worshippers that their sins were forgiven, what is said of the Son of Man in 2:10 can be

<sup>117</sup> E. P. Sanders, *Jesus and Judaism* (London: SCM Press, 1985) 272-74; J. D. G. Dunn, *The Partings of the Ways Between Christianity and Judaism and Their Significance for the Character of Christianity* (Philadelphia: Trinity Press International, 1991) 45-46 and Wright, *Jesus*, 434.

<sup>118</sup> In his more recent work (*Jewish Law from Jesus to the Mishnah: Five Studies* (London: SCM, 1990) 60-62) Sanders has shifted his position. He now thinks forgiveness was available outside the temple and without the priesthood and Jesus' original offence was the offer of forgiveness without expecting confession and repentance.

<sup>119</sup> In Lev 4-5 individual sins require sin offerings that are handed over to the priest. The priest makes the sacrifice and the sinner is promised "thus shall the priest make atonement on your/his behalf, and you/he shall be forgiven" (4:26, 31, 35; 5:5, 10, 13, 16). But in none of these does the priest tell the sinner "your sins are forgiven". And in these chapters it is not said that the priest making atonement on the sinners' behalf amounts to him forgiving them.

derived straightforwardly from biblical statements on the role of the high priest.<sup>120</sup> In Exodus 28:36-38, at the end of the account of Aaron's garments, God commands Moses;

36 You shall make a rosette/flower (רֹסֶת) of pure gold and you shall engrave on it the engravings of a seal "holy to Yahweh" (or, "and you shall engrave on it the engravings of a holy seal 'יהוה'"). 37 You shall put it on a blue cord that it may be on the turban, on the front of the turban. 38 It shall be on Aaron's forehead and Aaron shall bear/remove/forgive (נָשָׂא, עָשָׂרָה) the guilt of the holy things that the sons of Israel sanctify for all their holy donations; it shall always be on his forehead, in order that they may find favour before Yahweh.

Later in Leviticus Moses becomes angry with his sons Eleazar and Ithamar because they did not eat of the sin offering, but burnt it whole:

Lev. 10:17 "Why did you not eat the sin offering in the sacred area? For it is most holy, and God has given it to you in order that you may remove/forgive (נָשָׂא, אָפְעֵלְתֶם) the guilt of the congregation, to make atonement on their behalf before the LORD.

The precise meaning of these two passages in their original historical and literary contexts is uncertain. For our purposes they offer clear precedent for Jesus' words in Mark 2:10. Although the LXX does not translate either instance of the Hebrew verb נָשָׂא with ἀφίημι – the verb used in Mark – where נָשָׂא is used with sin as its direct object the meaning is usually "forgive" and ἀφίημι is a normal translation.<sup>121</sup> And in each of the Torah passages it is natural to understand the priests' action as a form of forgiveness. In the first it is because Aaron bears God's Name that he is – ritually speaking – Yahweh, and that what he does entails a removal, a forgiving, of the peoples' sins.

We know that some Jews took these passages to mean that the high priest's job was to take away – to forgive – sin because in 2 *Enoch* 64 his contemporaries come to Enoch at the site of Israel's future temple,<sup>122</sup> they fall in reverential prostration before him, kiss him and say:

You will be glorified in front of the face of the LORD of all eternity, because you are the one whom the LORD chose in preference to all the people upon the earth; and he appointed you

<sup>120</sup> For what follows compare Barker *Revelation*, 46; *Great High Priest*, 48-49.

<sup>121</sup> For נָשָׂא meaning 'forgive' see Num 14:18; Gen 18:26; Josh 24:19; 1Sam 15:25; Psalm 25:18; Gen 50:17. For נָשָׂא translated with ἀφίημι see Gen 18:26; 50:17; Isa 33:24; Ps 25 [LXX 24]:18; 32 [LXX 31]:1, 5.

<sup>122</sup> The scene takes place at Akhuzan (64:3) a place name which alludes to the use of נָשָׂא in Ezek 48:20-21 for Jerusalem as the special property of God (cf. 68:57).

... to be the one who carried away the sin of mankind (J recension; A recension has "who carries away our sins") and the helper of your own household. (64:5)

Enoch has already been installed as high priest in chapter 22 (vv. 8-10) and here he does what Exod 28:38 and Lev 10:17 say he should do: he takes away the sin of the people.

In Mark 2:1-12 Jesus appeals to the high priestly Son of Man's authority to "forgive" – to remove – sins as the justification for his declaring of the paralytics sins forgiven. To a degree this is entirely reasonable and should not cause theological difficulty for his scribal detractors. However, the precise intent of Jesus' appeal to the Son of Man is ambiguous. Jesus words can be taken in one of two ways.

On the one hand, the reader of Mark knows that Jesus thinks he himself is the Son of Man. This means that Jesus' claim to be the eschatological high priest entails a serious breach of Mosaic protocol in two respects. First, forgiveness can only be dispensed through the priesthood (and sacrifices) *in the temple*. Jesus is offering forgiveness outside those boundaries. And secondly, Jesus' claim to be the Son of Man entails a messianic challenge to the serving high priest (Caiaphas) who would regard such a threat a matter of blasphemy.

On the other hand, Jesus does *not* say 'I am the Son of Man and as such I have the right to forgive sins'. For his ability to do what he does – command the paralytic to get up and walk – Jesus refers his audience to the authority of another, the Son of Man. This could therefore be heard to say no more than that Jesus believes his healing power is derivative of the sacramental authority of a legitimate high priestly Son of Man. Jesus could perhaps have in mind a Son of Man who is already waiting in heaven to be revealed (cf. the *Similitudes*), and who now through his servant Jesus can forgive sins 'on earth'. Jesus could even be heard to say that his healing power is possible because *Caiaphas*' serves as the nation's high priest and has, thereby, taken away the paralytic's sins, since some probably believed that the post-Hasmonean, Sadducean priesthood already fulfilled the vision of Daniel's 'one like a son of man'.

In Mark Jesus' language is ambiguous. That ambiguity and the crucial role of the high priestly Son of Man title can reasonably be taken to reflect the actual words of the historical Jesus.<sup>123</sup> For the reasons given above it would make sense for Jesus to speak of himself as the Son of Man in only veiled terms early in his ministry. As the fateful end of his career proved – after the events of passion week and at his interrogation before the

<sup>123</sup> Jesus need not have used *son* for his reference to Exod 28:38 and Lev 10:17 to be heard. Whilst *son* does occur in Aramaic other verbs translate the Hebrew in the Targums to Exodus and Leviticus.

ruling council – an open declaration that he believed himself to be the priest-king of Daniel 7:13 (and Psalm 11) meant a direct challenge to the serving high priesthood; an act of blasphemy worthy of death. That said, a few episodes later Jesus is more open and explicit in his claim to act as the true eschatological high priest.

### Jesus' Priestly Prerogatives over the Sabbath (Mark 2:23-28)

In Mark 2:23-28 Jesus' disciples pluck grain whilst walking through the cornfields on the Sabbath. Pharisees complain to Jesus that they break the Sabbath in doing so. Jesus apologises for his disciples' behaviour, first by appeal to the behaviour of David and his men in eating the Shewbread in 1 Samuel 21, then by a cryptic statement about the Sabbath being made for man and not vice versa and, lastly, with the assertion that "The Son of Man is Lord even of the Sabbath." Again problems of interpretation in this passage abound and there is not space to address them all. The high priestly understanding of the Son of Man title solves the text's difficulties.<sup>124</sup> In brief:<sup>125</sup>

Jesus agrees that, in principle, what his disciples do infringes the Sabbath.<sup>126</sup> And the David story does not at first blush offer them a loophole. In several, but not all, respects the story in 1 Samuel 21 is analogous to the situation for Jesus' disciples. David and his disciples eat the bread of the presence *on the Sabbath*. This must be the case because the bread is only removed from the sanctuary on the Sabbath to be replaced by new bread for the week ahead (Lev 24:5-9, cf. 1 Sam 21:6). And Jesus is of Davidic lineage. So he and his disciples wander around the Galilean countryside like David and his band of merry men. But otherwise 1 Samuel is an imperfect parallel to the Jesus situation.

What the priests do on the Sabbath in the temple, including their preparation and eating of the bread of the presence, is a work.<sup>127</sup> This is perfectly legitimate because the

<sup>124</sup> Given the priestly material throughout this section, it is not a coincidence that between the first (2:1-12) and the second Son of Man (2:23-28) passages in Mark Jesus is recorded calling a tax-collector called Levi (2:13-17). Jesus' restoration of the nation entails a reconstitution, a purification, of her Levitical membership.

<sup>125</sup> What follows develops the insights of B. Chilton and J. Neusner, *Judaism in the New Testament: Practices and Beliefs* (London: Routledge, 1995) 142.

<sup>126</sup> With Sanders (*Jewish Law*, 12-13, 19-21), against Casey (P. M. Casey, "Culture and Historicity: the Plucking of the Grain (Mark 2.23-8)," *NTS* 34 (1988) 1-23 (pp. 5-6).

<sup>127</sup> According to 1 Samuel 21:6 the bread of the presence is hot on the Sabbath. It is therefore cooked on that day. This must have presented a difficulty for Pharisees since later rabbinic tradition is clear that the

temple is a time and space with an ontology that transcends that of the world outside. Work in the temple is allowed on the Sabbath, because according to some Jews it is God's own work in an Eden free of the curse on labour.<sup>128</sup> The behaviour of David and his men would provide a precedent therefore for Jesus and his disciples acting as priests *if the latter were in the temple in Jerusalem*, which they are not. They are in a Galilean cornfield. The David story only provides a precedent if the Galilean cornfield has the legal status of the Temple (or Tabernacle).

Other details of Jesus' apologetic show that this is precisely what he claims. He is the Son of Man, the true eschatological high priest. According to Exodus it is the high priest, properly dressed, ordained (with oil, blood and through the eating of the bread of the presence, Exod 29), and performing the daily temple office, who brings about the presence of God in the sanctuary. He is the physical, human, embodiment of the divine Glory (Exod 28:2, 40), the image-idol of Israel's god, whose ordination (Lev 8-9, esp. 9:23) and subsequent offering of the Tamid sacrifice (29:42-45) sanctifies the tent of meeting guaranteeing the continual presence of the LORD. Holiness of place is dependent of the sanctifying presence of holy humanity, perfectly embodied in the (high) priesthood. If Jesus is the true eschatological high priest then it stands to reason where ere he may be there will be the sacred space of the true temple. And if David's men can eat the bread of the presence at a sanctuary at Nob (1 Sam 21:1), why can't Jesus set up a new sanctuary for his disciples in a Galilean cornfield?

Several points confirm that this is the logic of Jesus' argument. In 1 Samuel 21 David, and even more so his men, are passive participants in the life of the temple. They simply eat the bread that is given to them by the priest (21:6 "So the priest gave him the holy bread ..."). They have kept themselves holy by abstaining from sexual intercourse over the previous days, but neither they nor David act as priests beyond eating the bread that, according to Mosaic law, is reserved for the priests. However, the way Jesus tells the OT story *David* plays the role of the priest who enters the sanctuary on the Sabbath to

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bread of the presence is *not* cooked on the Sabbath (B. Chilton and J. Neusner, *Judaism in the New Testament: Practices and Beliefs* (London: Routledge, 1995) 142).

<sup>128</sup> See esp. Fletcher-Louis, "Temple Cosmology of P," on Sirach 50:14-21.

collect the old bread and distribute it to his fellow priests: David “entered the house of God ... ate the bread of the presence ... and gave it to those with him” (Mark 2:26).<sup>129</sup>

Jesus’ use of the high priestly Son of Man title not only follows logically from his claim to act as sacral king, it also resonates in other ways. Jesus says the Son of Man is Lord of the Sabbath. This accords well with the fact that Daniel 7:13 envisages the future arrival of a high priest *on the Day of Atonement*, the day that is elsewhere called the “Sabbath of Sabbaths” (Lev 16:31; 23:32). Yom Kippur is the day of cosmic purgation when creation recovers its rest; a rest that Jesus now gives to his weary disciples. Mark 2:27 relates the Son of Man figure to the Adam for whose benefit the Sabbath came about according to Genesis 1. The conceptual transition between verses 27 and 28 is natural within the cultic worldview, where the God-intended humanity of Genesis 1 is recapitulated, and sacramentally reconstituted, in Israel’s priesthood, in the temple-as-microcosm. As true high priest ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ ἀνθρώπου is both Son of Man and Son of Adam,<sup>130</sup> the one who extends the Sabbath rest for the good of his fellows.

Jesus justifies his disciples’ breach of the Sabbath because he claims to be a sacral king and high priestly Son of Man. Where *he* is there there is the transcendent liturgical space and time of the temple in which his disciples can legitimately act as priests for whom the Sabbath prohibition against work does not apply. The logic of Jesus’ argument is dense and the Christological claims more veiled than they will be when Jesus stands in the Sanhedrin and claims to be both Daniel’s Son of Man and king-priest of Psalm 110. Jesus’ identification with David is only inferential and it is possible that in his original Aramaic Jesus’ reference to the Son of Man as the definite figure of Daniel 7:13 was not picked up by all immediately. The audience’s recognition of the high priestly Son of Man title might have been drowned out by the sound of the more recognisable claim to Davidic privilege. On the other hand, to the attentive reader Jesus’ argument is straightforward, and it is entirely understandable that only a little later the Pharisees and Herodians band together to conspire to destroy him (3:6). Their cabal nicely anticipates the open conflict between Jesus and the Sanhedrin when the secret of Jesus’ two-fold messiahship is no longer hedged about by scriptural typology and cryptic soundbites.

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<sup>129</sup> Compare the fragmentary account of the changing of the bread of the presence in 2Q24 frag. 4 and 11Q18 frag. 20. There the sequence is entry into the Hekhal, taking and distribution of the bread to be shared amongst the priests outside.

<sup>130</sup> See Marcus, “Son of Adam.”

## Conclusion

Mark 1-6 is a programmatic statement of Jesus' ministry, its character and his identity. Jesus is hailed as a (probably) royal Son of God by the demons (3:11; 5:12), but is also recognised to be the priestly 'holy one of God' (1:24). In several key respects his ministry extends or takes over that of the temple priesthood. He has a contagious holiness, mediates the forgiveness of sins and brings the reality of the temple to those around him, such that ordinary Sabbath laws are transcended. For one of any number of reasons, Jesus respects the God-ordained role of the priest in inspecting and declaring cleansed a healed leper (1:44). Perhaps (at this stage in his developing self-consciousness?) he did not think his own priesthood need entail any conflict with that of the Aaronic line. Or perhaps he believed it did necessarily entail such conflict, but he did not believe the time was yet right to openly and publicly ignore the Mosaic dispensation (which in fact he believed redundant).<sup>131</sup>

Only in one of these passages does Jesus openly state his priestly consciousness (2:23-28) and even there some in his audience may have missed it. When the man with the unclean spirit declares him the priestly holy one of God, Jesus is anxious that the matter not be broadcast (1:25, cf. 3:11) and his relationship to the Son of Man who forgives sins is opaque. But with the passages that follow the implied reader of the whole is bound to tie together the threads and see emerge a consistent picture of Jesus the nation's true eschatological Son of Man. After passion week and his trial, Jesus' claim to be both messianic king and priest can be seen to have grown straightforwardly from the character of his first acts of ministry. But even there his high priestly consciousness is inextricable from a concern to extend priestly privileges to his followers.

One final exegetical suggestion clarifies the point of the material in Mark 1-6 we have examined. In Mark 1:15 Jesus proclaims "the time is fulfilled and the kingdom of God has drawn near (ἤγγικεν)". Much exegetical ink has been spilt over the precise meaning of the perfect tense and the choice of the verb ἐγγίζω. I suggest that for Mark the point is that the reality of God's presence that has hitherto been present primarily in the temple and her priesthood is now available not (just) in Jerusalem but in the towns and villages of Galilee. Those who go to the temple to worship "draw near (קרבו Heb. & Aram.)" (to God) (Exod 16:9; Lev 9:5; Deut 4:11; Ps 65:4, cf. Exod 12:48; 4Q400 1 i 6). And those who are ordained

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<sup>131</sup> Of course if the leper was not given a clean bill of health through the official channels he would have found himself physically healed, but still socially estranged from the rest of his community.

are similarly drawn near (Priests: Exod 40:12, 14; Lev 7:35; 8:6, 13, 24; Levities: Num 3:6; 8:9, 10). So, in a narrow sense, only those ordained can draw near to God (Num 16:5, 9, 10; 17:5; Lev 21:17). Now, with the eschatological arrival of the kingdom of God, the potent reality of God's presence has proactively drawn near to God's people. They no longer need to go to him in Jerusalem to encounter the kingdom because its reality (forgiveness of sins, the Sabbath rest and contagious healing holiness) are coming to them. And, by the same token, the *καιρός* that is now fulfilled is not just eschatological it is quasi-liturgical (cf. the semantic range of the Hebrew *קרוער*).

Whether all of this is original to the historical Jesus would depend on a wider ranging discussion. But there is clearly here a cumulative case for reopening the (rather thin) scholarly file on the relationship between Jesus' self-consciousness and that of the priesthood. The historical context of Jesus' life demands that he thought about his own relationship to the priesthood. Plenty of Jesus material in the gospels indicates that he thought, spoke and acted in categories derived from the theology of priestly identity. And our discussion of Psalm 110 and the Son of Man suggests that overarching critical questions in the quest for the historical Jesus may yet be clarified once we consider the possibility that he thought he was Israel's long awaited Great High Priest.