Jesus, the Divine Exorcist: Markan Demonology and Christology in Dialogue

JOHN PATRICK VOIGT

Abstract

This thesis argues that the demonological material in the Gospel of Mark contributes to a divine Christology. Scholarly discourses concerning Markan Christology and demonology have largely remained separate, with christological exploration rarely taking into consideration the Markan exorcism pericopae and Jesus's encounters with Satan. This thesis, then, brings Markan Christology and demonology into dialogue. Chapter one offers an introductory overview of previous work on Markan demonology and Christology. The second chapter provides a typology of demon possession and exorcism in the ancient world, setting a social context within which the Markan demonological material will be read. Chapter three provides a profile of divine messianic figures in Second Temple Jewish literature–most notably the Enochic Son of Man and *11QMelchizedek*'s Melchizedek–who act as the eschatological judge of the demons, and whom the author brings into dialogue with Mark's portrait of Jesus. Chapter four examines the exorcisms in Mark, arguing, in light of the previous two chapters, that the Markan exorcisms present Jesus as an eschatological embodiment of Israel's God. The fifth and final chapter shifts toward the material in Mark concerning Satan, which presents Jesus as a divine messianic figure who has come to bring an end to Satan's reign. Special attention is given to the Beelzeboul controversy (3:22-27) and ransom logion (10:45), arguing that scholars have failed to take seriously the ransom saying within Mark's broader narrative world. The ransom logion presents a framework within which Jesus offers his life as an acceptable ransom payment to Satan, who then relinquishes control over humans. This ransom payment to Satan, the thesis argues, is the dominant soteriological motif in Mark's Gospel. These themes work together to provide a coherent reading of the Gospel of Mark which depicts a divine Jesus who acts as the eschatological judge of the demonic realm via his exorcisms, and who frees people from Satan's reign by giving his life to Satan as a satisfactory ransom payment.

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JESUS, THE DIVINE EXORCIST: MARKAN DEMONOLOGY AND CHRISTOLOGY IN DIALOGUE

by

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CONTENTS

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INTRODUCTION

At the opening of a lecture given in 1988 in Hermannsburg, Germany, Ernst Käsemann remarked:

> Jesus, so the Gospels tell us, healed the possessed. If anything in New Testament tradition is as historically well attested, as, say, the baptism by John and the cross on Golgotha, it is that Jesus, as early Christian language would have it, fought with and drove out demons, freed the possessed from the realm of darkness, and set them under his lordship. For good reason Mark… gives considerable space and emphasis to the healing of the possessed.[1]

This dissertation is an examination of said "considerable space and emphasis" which Mark devotes to Jesus's encounters with Satan and demons, and the contributions these encounters make toward Mark's depiction of Jesus.

The Gospel of Mark is a story about Jesus Christ, the Son of God (Mk. 1:1; 15:39): his life, proclamation of the arrival of God's reign on earth, miracles, teachings, death, and resurrection. Mark[2] does not merely provide a history in which Jesus of Nazareth is a primary or main character; rather, his work is a biography of which Jesus is the subject.[3] Unsurprisingly, then, no character in Mark has garnered more attention than Jesus. New Testament scholarship's interest in early Christians's diverse portrayals of the figure of Jesus has included extensive debate over the identity of the Markan Jesus, heightened in part by the rise of narrative critical and other literary readings of the Gospels. This literary interest in Mark's Gospel extends back at least as far as Wrede's examination of the Markan messianic secret motif over a century ago in his 1901 work, *Das*

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[1] Käsemann, Ernst. *On Being a Disciple of the Crucified Nazarene: Unpublished Lectures and Sermons*. Edited by Rudolf Landau and Wolfgang Kraus. Translated by Roy A. Harrisville. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2010. 61.

[2] Although the Gospels were anonymous in their earliest forms, early manuscript traditions attribute the names to the four figures of Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John. For the sake of simplicity, I will refer to the author of the second Gospel as "Mark."

[3] See the foundational work for establishing the Gospels as ancient *bioi*: Burridge, Richard A. *What Are the Gospels?: A Comparison with Graeco-Roman Biography*. Second edition. The Biblical Resource Series. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2004. See also the work of Helen Bond, who offers a reading of Mark as a *bios* among others: Bond, Helen K. *First Biography of Jesus*. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2020.

Messiasgeheimnis in den Evangelien.[4] With less attention to *Redaktionsgeschichte*, *Quellenkritik*, and *Formgeschichte*, and more attention to theological shapes of the final forms[5] of the texts, interpreters of the Gospels have taken great interest in Jesus's first biographer's portrayal of the Galilean teacher and miracle-worker. Like the disciples in Mark 4:41, recent critics of Mark's Gospel have asked: "Who is this man?" In the parlance of New Testament scholarship, this is a conversation about Markan Christology.

The Gospel of Mark also has a unique demonological[6] interest in comparison to the other canonical Gospels, the rest of the New Testament, the Hebrew Bible, and even to most of the surviving literature from the ancient world.[7] In the Markan prologue, Satan waits for Jesus in the wilderness, and the spirit forces Jesus to encounter Satan in such hostile territory (1:12-13). Jesus's inaugural miracle in the Gospel is an exorcism in the Capernaum synagogue, in which the demon is overwhelmed with the dread of the eschatological destruction of all of the demonic host at Jesus's presence (1:23-28). Mark includes Jesus's exorcistic ministry in his summary statements, informing the reader that Jesus was casting out many demons which are not permitted space in the narrative (1:34, 39; 3:11). Jesus sends out his disciples to accomplish two tasks: to preach and to have authority to cast out demons (3:14-15; 6:7). Jesus implies that Satan has a well-established kingdom, and that he will plunder Satan's possessions (3:23-27). Satan is active throughout the story in hindering people from understanding Jesus's teaching (4:15). The longest miracle story Mark records is the exorcism of the Gerasene demoniac (5:1-20). Satan's influence reaches even

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[4] Wrede, William. *Das Messiasgeheimnis in den Evangelien: Zugleich ein Beitrag zum Verständnis des Markusevangeliums*. Göttingen: Vandenhoeck und Ruprecht, 1901.

[5] I refer to the "final form" of a text with an acknowledgement of the text-critical histories of the New Testament texts, all of which have text-critical issues. Nevertheless, the reconstruction of critical editions of the texts provide a reliable form of the text, in which individual text-critical issues can be considered.

[6] I use the term "demonological" in reference to both demons and Satan, who is the ruler of the demons (Mk. 3:22).

[7] Chapter two highlights the unique demonological emphasis of Mark in the ancient world.

into Jesus's innermost circle of followers (8:31-33). The most explicit soteriological statement in the Gospel of Mark (10:45), I argue in chapter five, should be read in reference to Jesus's death as a ransom payment to Satan.

Compare this high volume of demonic and Satanic activity in Mark with the other Synoptic Evangelists, who, although they take on a generally Markan shape, tend to abbreviate the Markan demonological material they inherit,[8] and make very little contribution to this material. John's Gospel contains no exorcisms, and sparse references to Satan, a noteworthy departure from the Markan motif. The book of Acts contains a couple of exorcisms (Acts 16:16-34; 19:13-16). The Pauline epistles include few references to Satan, whom God will soon crush (Rom. 16:20), to whom believers might hand over those who harm the church (1 Cor. 5:5), and who hinders Paul from visiting the Thessalonians (1 Thess. 2:18). For the most part, demons seem to function in Pauline thought at more of a corporate and cosmic level than and the level of individual possession.[9] Similarly, Satan functions in Revelation to empower the Roman empire rather than to harass individuals. If the Gospel of Mark (and its influence on Matthew and Luke) had been lost to history, it is unlikely that later Christianities–even up to the present day–would retain their interests in Satan and demons. Mark, then, is perhaps the most demonically and Satanically interested author in the New Testament. This dissertation provides a reading of Markan Christology which aims to highlight the role of the demons and Satan both historically and within the Markan narrative.

Debates in Markan Christology are not, first and foremost, concerned with the identity of the historical Jesus who lived in the first century; rather, the inquiry at hand is concerned with how

[8] The notable exception here is the wilderness encounter with Satan. Mark's account is just two verses (Mk. 1:12-13), whereas Matthew (4:1-11) and Luke (4:1-13) expand the story to include specific temptations of Satan to Jesus.

[9] See, for example, Paul's quotation of Deut. 32:17 in 1 Cor. 10:19, which identifies pagan gods as demons.

the second evangelist depicts his subject for the readers. Ancient biographers inherited traditions about their subjects, but formed and presented their material so as to serve their own authorial purposes.[10] Mark's Jesus is a Galilean teacher and miracle worker who dies at the hands of the Jewish and Roman authorities, but he's also a messiah (Mk. 1:1) who bears a special relationship with Israel's God (e.g. Mk. 1:9-11; 9:7). But what kind of messiah is he, and what exactly is his relationship to God as Mark presents it? These questions provide the general parameters of conversations within debates about Markan Christology, and it is to this conversation that I hope this thesis contributes by bringing the Gospel of Mark into dialogue with ancient demonologies and perceptions of exorcists, as well as particular strands of Second Temple Jewish messianisms. First, however, we will briefly introduce those who have contributed to conversations in Markan Christology and their approaches.

[10] See: Bond, *Biography*, 56-58. See also discussion in chapter five.

1.1 Recent Proposals

Although many works engage the topic of Mark's Christology,[11] and many other works engage the demonological material in Mark,[12] interpreters rarely consider the value of bringing the two

[11] See, for example: Kirk, J. R. Daniel, Adam Winn, Sandra Huebenthal, L. W. Hurtado, and Anthony Le Donne. *Christology in Mark's Gospel: Four Views*. Grand Rapids, MI: HarperCollins Christian Publishing, 2021; Boring, M. Eugene. "Markan Christology: God-Language for Jesus?" *New Testament Studies* 45, no. 4 (1999): 451–71; Broadhead, Edwin Keith. *Teaching with Authority: Miracles and Christology in the Gospel of Mark*. vols. Journal for the Study of the New Testament. Supplement Series 74. Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1992; Malbon, Elizabeth Struthers. *Mark's Jesus : Characterization as Narrative Christology*. Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, 2009. Dunn, James D. G. *Christology in the Making: A New Testament Inquiry into the Origins of the Doctrine of the Incarnation*. London: SCM, 1980; Crisler, Channing L. *A Synoptic Christology of Lament: The Lord Who Answered and the Lord Who Cried*. Lanham, MD: Lexington Books/Fortress Academic, 2023; Hays, Richard B. *Echoes of Scripture in the Gospels*. Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, 2016; Broadhead, Edwin Keith. *Naming Jesus: Titular Christology in the Gospel of Mark*. vols. Journal for the Study of the New Testament. Supplement Series 175. Sheffield, England: Sheffield Academic, 1999; Broadhead, Edwin K. "Jesus the Nazarene: Narrative Strategy and Christological Imagery in the Gospel of Mark." *Journal for the Study of the New Testament* 16, no. 52 (January 1, 1993): 3–18; Jacobs, M. "Mark's Jesus through the Eyes of Twentieth Century New Testament Scholars." *Neotestamentica* 28, no. 1 (1994): 53–85; Pascut, Beniamin. *Redescribing Jesus' Divinity Through a Social Science Theory : An Interdisciplinary Analysis of Forgiveness and Divine Identity in Ancient Judaism and Mark 2:1-12*. Vol. 00438. Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament. 2. Reihe. Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2017; So too will many commentaries comment on Mark's Christology: Boring, M. Eugene. *Mark: A Commentary*. The New Testament Library. Louisville, KY.: Westminster John Knox Press, 2014; Collins, Adela Yarbro. *Mark: A Commentary*. Edited by Harold W. Attridge. Hermeneia--a Critical and Historical Commentary on the Bible. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2007; Marcus, Joel. *Mark 1-8: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*. The Anchor Bible. New York, NY: Doubleday, 1999; Myers, Ched. *Binding the Strong Man: A Political Reading of Mark's Story of Jesus*. Maryknoll, N.Y.: Orbis Books, 1988; Rhoads, David, Joanna Dewey, and Donald Michie. *Mark as Story: An Introduction to the Narrative of a Gospel*. Third edition. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2012.

[12] See: Dochhorn, Jan. "The Devil in the Gospel of Mark." In *Evil and the Devil*, edited by Erkki Koskenniemi and Ida öhlich. London: Bloomsbury Publishing, 2013; Shively, Elizabeth E. *Apocalyptic Imagination in the Gospel of Mark: The Literary and Theological Role of Mark 3:22-30.* Beihefte zur Zeitschrift für die Neutestamentliche Wissenschaft und die Kunde der Älteren Kirche, v. 189. Berlin: De Gruyter, 2012; Shively, Elizabeth. "Characterizing the Non-Human: Satan in the Gospel of Mark." In *Character Studies and the Gospel of Mark*, 127–51. Bloomsbury Publishing, 2014; Pero, Cheryl S. "Demonic Possession and Exorcism in the Gospel of Mark: Liberation from Empire." Ph.D., Lutheran School of Theology at Chicago; Sorensen, Eric. *Possession and Exorcism in the New Testament and Early Christianity*. Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament. Reihe 2 157. Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2002; Strecker, Christian. "Jesus and the Demoniacs." In *The Social Setting of Jesus and the Gospels*, edited by Gerd Theissen, Wolfgang Stegemann, and Bruce J. Malina. Minneapolis, Minn: Fortress Press, 2002; Twelftree, Graham. *Jesus the Exorcist: A Contribution to the Study of the Historical Jesus*. Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1993; Van Oyen, Geert. "Demons and Exorcisms in the Gospel of Mark." In *Demons and the Devil in Ancient and Medieval Christianity,* Vol. 108. Vigiliae Christianae, Supplements. Boston, MA: Brill, 2011; Wahlen, Clinton. *Jesus and the Impurity of Spirits in the Synoptic Gospels*. Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament. 2. Reihe. Tübingen, Germany: Mohr Siebeck, 2004; Witmer, Amanda. *Jesus, the Galilean Exorcist: His Exorcisms in Social and Political Context*. T & T Clark Library of Biblical Studies. London ; T & T Clark, 2012; Wright, Archie, T. "The Demonology of 1 Enoch and the New Testament Gospels." In *Enoch and the Synoptic Gospels : Reminiscences, Allusions, Intertextuality*, edited by Loren T. Stuckenbruck and Gabriele Boccaccini. Early Judaism and Its Literature. Atlanta, GA: SBL Press, 2016; Breytenbach, Cilliers. "Metaphor in Argument: The Beelzebul-Controversy in the Gospel According to Mark." *Zeitschrift für die Neutestamentliche Wissenschaft und die Kunde der Älteren Kirche* 110, no. 2 (2019): 133–45; Elder, Nicholas A. "Scribes and Demons: Literacy and Authority in a Capernaum Synagogue (Mark 1:21-28)." *Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 83, no. 1 (January 2021): 75–94; Elder, Nicholas A. "Of Porcine and Polluted Spirits: Reading the Gerasene Demoniac (Mark 5:1-20) with the *Book of Watchers* (*1*

together, which is my aim in this project. In his work on Markan Christology via Old Testament intertextuality, for example, Richard Hays does not engage the Markan demonological material.[13] Elizabeth Shively's monograph on the function of the Beelzeboul controversy as a programmatic text for understanding the whole of Mark's Gospel is a significant contribution which thrusts demonological interests into the foreground of Markan narrative strategy, yet the project has little to say about the impact of such an interest on Jesus's identity in Mark.[14] Nicholas Elder has produced insightful articles on two of the major individual exorcism pericopae (1:21-28; 5:1-20), and highlights the significance of reading these texts with an awareness of the demonological influence of the Enochic literature (primarily the *Book of Watchers*) and *Jubilees*.[15] While helpful, such articles do not offer great insight into Mark's Christology in light of the demonological features Elder brings to light. Joel Marcus is a demonologically attentive interpreter with his interest in apocalyptic features in Mark, and he makes large-scale statements such as this: "For Mark as for other Jewish apocalypticists, this salvation is above all a liberation of humanity from the cosmic powers that oppress it; Jesus' main mission is to clear the earth of the demons."[16] Such a statement is ripe with potential for investigation into Markan Christology, but Marcus's discussion of Jesus's identity leaves more to be desired. Andreas Hauw's monograph, *The Function of the Exorcism Stories in Mark's Gospel*, comes closer to considering the christological implications of the exorcism pericopae.[17] He concludes that the exorcisms depict Jesus as the Son

Enoch 1-36)." *The Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 78, no. 3 (July 2016): 430–46; Kallas, James G. *Jesus and the Power of Satan*. Philadelphia, PA: Westminster Press, 1968.

[13] Hays, *Echoes.*

[14] Shively, *Apocalyptic.*

[15] Elder, "Of Porcine;" Elder, "Scribes."

[16] Marcus, *Mark 1-8*, 72.

[17] Hauw, Andreas. *The Function of Exorcism Stories in Mark's Gospel*. Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock Publishers, 2019.

of God, the one who brings God's kingdom, and bears the Holy Spirit, yet does not provide adequate consideration of Jesus's specific relation to Israel's God.

The methods and outcomes of many works on Markan Christology and demonology are significant, and it will be apparent throughout this thesis that I am indebted to many who have contributed to both topics. Studies in Christology and demonology each provide fertile interpretive ground for the consideration of the other, and I hope to bring the most potent interpretive insights of each to bear on the other in this thesis. I will engage many of these works throughout this study; however, for the present task of situating my project within literature which engages *both* Christology and demonology, I will limit my discussion here to two of the only figures who consider both topics, namely Richard Bauckham and J.R. Daniel Kirk. Of the sparse conversations of the intersection of Markan demonology and Christology in the secondary literature, Bauckham and Kirk are broadly representative. Although their respective works focus only briefly on the contribution of the exorcism and Satan material in Mark's Christology, they help to offer some preliminary boundaries of the conversation, which I hope to both engage and expand in the present thesis.

1.1.1 Richard Bauckham

Richard Bauckham's work on early Christology, particularly in his books *God Crucified* and *Jesus and the God of Israel*, is significant in our examination of Mark.[18] His contribution is grounded in his paradigm of the divine identity within Second Temple Judaism. In a summary statement he writes,

> Most Jews in this period were highly self-consciously monotheistic and had certain very familiar and well-defined ideas as to how the uniqueness of the one God should be understood. In other words, they drew the line of distinction between the one God and all

[18] Bauckham, Richard. *God Crucified: Monotheism and Christology in the New Testament*. Didsbury Lectures 1996. Carlisle: Paternoster Press, 1998; Bauckham, Richard. *Jesus and the God of Israel: God Crucified and Other Studies on the New Testament's Christology of Divine Identity*. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2009.

> other reality clearly, and were in the habit of distinguishing God from all other reality by means of certain clearly articulated criteria.[19]

That is, Judaism was largely monotheistic, believing that the one God of Israel was fundamentally unique and distinguishable from all other beings. Even highly exalted intermediary figures, in Bauckham's view, are clearly distinguishable from Israel's God. This God has a unique identity, by which one can identify God among other realities or beings, and which Bauckham finds to be a more helpful category than divine nature.[20] A few identity markers in particular distinguish God from all other creation. First, God is known as the one who bears the divine name, YHWH.[21] Second, God is unique in Second Temple Jewish thought from all other beings in that he is the "sole Creator of all things and sole Ruler of all things."[22] Bauckham stresses the significance of these criteria: "God alone brought all other beings into existence. God had no helper, assistant or servant to assist or to implement his work of creation. God alone created, and no one else had any part in this activity. This is axiomatic for Second Temple Judaism."[23] Likewise, God's status as the sole ruler of all things is exemplified in the imagery of his great throne in the high heavens, to which all beings–even the most highly exalted–are subordinate.[24] Another important consideration, although not a defining marker of the divine identity for Bauckham, is that the God of Israel is the lone worthy recipient of worship.[25]

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[19] Bauckham, *God Crucified*, 3.

[20] Bauckham comments: "The value of the concept of divine identity appears partly if we contrast it with a concept of divine essence or nature. Identity concerns what God is or what divinity is… Some Jewish writers in the later Second Temple period consciously adopted some of the Greek metaphysical language. But even in these writers the dominant conceptual framework of their understanding of God is not a definition of divine nature – what divinity is – but a notion of divine identity, characterized primarily in ways other than metaphysical attributes." *God Crucified*, 8.

[21] Bauckham, *Jesus*, 7.

[22] Bauckham, *Jesus*, 9.

[23] Bauckham, *Jesus*, 10.

[24] Bauckham, *Jesus*, 10.

[25] Here Bauckham distinguishes his view from the work of Larry Hurtado. For Bauckham, God's worthiness to be worshipped is not a marker of the divine identity; rather, it is "precisely *a recognition of and response to* his unique identity. It is God's unique identity which requires worship of him and him alone." Bauckham, *Jesus*, 11-12.

Thus Bauckham formulates the divine identity, as well as its criteria (the divine name, sole creator and ruler of all things, lone recipient of worship), by which the one God of Israel is distinguishable from all other creation. When Bauckham approaches the New Testament and investigates the views of Jesus in relation to Israel's God, then, he looks for instances in which Jesus participates in or belongs to the divine identity as evinced by the aforementioned criteria. With regard to Mark's Gospel, Bauckham finds such instances as early as the opening lines in the conflated, Isaianic scriptural quotation in Mark 1:2-3:

> The parallelism of 'you [i.e. Jesus'] way' and 'the way of the Lord' (where 'Lord' represents the divine name YHWH in the text of Isa. 40:3) is an instance of the common early Christian practice of applying to Jesus Old Testament texts that use the divine name. God's name refers, not to divine functions, but to the unique divine identity. Jesus, according to Mark, participates in this unique identity of the God of Israel.[26]

This divine identity paradigm shapes the way that Bauckham interprets the Markan Jesus. Although one might expect the rest of Mark's Gospel to be full of such clear (in Bauckham's view) texts which include Jesus in the divine identity, Bauckham suggests that Mark instead implies and hints at Jesus's participation in the divine identity throughout the story. He briefly mentions in a footnote that it is significant that "in his teaching, exorcisms and healings, Jesus never appeals to any authority beyond himself."[27] In an article responding to Richard Hays's christological explorations in *Echoes of Scripture in the Gospels*, Bauckham offers his thoughts on the christological connotations of Jesus's inaugural exorcism in the Gospel of Mark (1:21-28). Here, he expands on the note about Jesus not appealing to any external authorities. Bauckham claims that there are two methods by which exorcists gained power over demons: to employ an instrument

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[26] Bauckham, *Jesus*, 265. Bauckham offers a fuller discussion on this text in: Bauckham, Richard. "Markan Christology According to Richard Hays: Some Addenda: Journal of Theological Interpretation." *Journal of Theological Interpretation* 11, no. 1 (2017): 22-26.

[27] Bauckham does not explain here why this is significant for considerations of Mark's Christology. I explore the implications of Jesus's lack of appeal to authority in exorcisms in chapters two and four. Bauckham, *Jesus*, 265.

such as an apotropaic object or an incantation, or to invoke the power of a god in order to channel its authority over the demon.[28] Bauckham finds it significant that Jesus does not employ either of these means; rather, he merely rebukes demons, and they immediately submit to his authority. I find this point to be instructive, and develop it in chapters two and four. Further, Bauckham finds the language of rebuke within Mark's first exorcism story to be important: "Jesus rebuked it" (καὶ ἐπετίμησεν αὐτῷ ὁ Ἰησοῦς; Mk. 1:25). He notes concerning the use of ἐπιτιμάω that "[i]t is the equivalent of the Hebrew גער, which is often used in the Hebrew Bible of God's power to rebuke and to subdue the cosmic elements, especially the sea imagined as a hostile force of chaos. Used in that sense, only God appears as the subject of this verb."[29] For Bauckham, this is evidence that the Markan Jesus is divine, as he rebukes in a way that only God does in the Hebrew Bible. This argument seems to be a stretch, as it is difficult to prove with any certainty that Mark had an idea as specific as God's rebuking (גער) in the Hebrew Bible. I would also be cautious to claim that ἐπιτιμάω and גער are equivalents as Bauckham does here. I am not convinced that words have such one-to-one correspondences, and even within Mark's narrative, other characters than Jesus are attributed with this kind of rebuke, such as the crowd to blind Bartimaeus in Mark 10:48 (καὶ **ἐπετίμων** αὐτῷ πολλοὶ ἵνα σιωπήσῃ).

For Bauckham, then, "Throughout the narrative, Mark provides indications for his readers that Jesus does not merely act on God's behalf, as the messianic king might be expected to do, but actually belongs to the divine identity."[30] As it stands, Bauckham's arguments concerning Markan Christology in light of Jesus's interactions with demons are brief and underdeveloped, as he refrains from interacting with most of the demonological material in Mark with depth. Granted,

[28] Bauckham, "Markan Christology," 29.
[29] Bauckham, "Markan Christology," 29.
[30] Bauckham, *Jesus*, 265.

such a focus was never central to his investigations into Markan Christology, yet there remains room to explore how the exorcisms and Jesus's encounters with Satan inform Mark's depiction of Jesus within the broader narrative.

1.1.2 J.R. Daniel Kirk

In his 2016 monograph, *A Man Attested By God: The Human Jesus of the Synoptic Gospels*, J.R. Daniel Kirk pushed back on the divine interpretations and the Markan Jesus from Bauckham, Hays, and Hurtado. Without rejecting divine christological paradigms outright, Kirk offers an alternative paradigm within which one might understand Mark's (and the other synoptic evangelists's) Jesus: the idealised human figure.[31] At the outset of his lengthy chapter on idealised human figures, Kirk provides a definition for this interpretive category:

> The category I posit here, 'idealized human figure,' refers to non-angelic, non-preexistent human beings, of the past, present, or anticipated future, who are depicted in textual or other artifacts as playing some unique role in representing God to the rest of the created realm, or in representing some aspect of the created realm before God.[32]

That is, Kirk reads the textual data of both the Hebrew Bible and other pre-Christian Jewish literature, and finds a category for an exalted or idealised human who is closely identified with God, shares in God's unique attributes, and acts on God's behalf. This flows out of an emphasis on the human vocation in Genesis 1:26-27, which is to be God's image, acting on behalf of God on the earth.[33] Some humans in the Jewish tradition, such as Adam, Moses, royal figures, and priest figures, fulfill this vocation in such a way that an author "assigns to human figures the roles and attributes that are typically seen as being reserved uniquely for God alone."[34] We observed earlier that Bauckham's method involved identifying features of the divine identity which are reserved

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[31] See Kirk's study on Idealised human figures within early Judaism: Kirk, J. R. Daniel. *A Man Attested by God: The Human Jesus of the Synoptic Gospels*. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2016. 47-149.

[32] Kirk, *A Man,* 47.

[33] Kirk, *A Man*, 40.

[34] Kirk, *A Man*, 47.

for God alone (creator of heaven and earth, worthy to receive cultic worship, and worthy to bear the divine name), so that Israel's God, who possesses these attributes, stands on one side of the ontological leger, and all other beings stand on the other. If a figure shares in these unique attributes of God, then such a figure is uniquely identified with God in such a way that the figure may be on the 'God side' of the bifurcated ontological spectrum. It is this foundational claim of Bauckham's argument with which Kirk takes issue. Drawing on and expanding the work of Second Temple Judaism scholars into the category of "ideal figures,"[35] Kirk posits that there is a readily available category in early Judaism of humans who meaningfully bear the attributes which are reserved for God alone.

Kirk identifies the figure of Moses, for example, as an idealised human figure both in the Hebrew Bible and in later Jewish literature from the Second Temple period. In the Exodus narrative, two texts portray Moses as representative of God in a heightened sense.[36] First, in Exodus 4:16, when instructing Moses concerning Aaron as a speaker on Moses's behalf, God says, "[Aaron] will be for you a mouth, and you will be for him God" (וְהָיָה הוּא יִהְיֶה־לְּךָ לְפֶה וְאַתָּה תִּהְיֶה־לּוֹ לֵאלֹהִים). Second, the same idea occurs in Exodus 7:1 with regard to Pharaoh: "The LORD said to Moses, 'See that I have made you a god/God to Pharaoh'" (נְתַתִּיךָ אֱלֹהִים לְפַרְעֹה). Moses plays a representative role for God in these texts, and as Mary Mills notes, "Moses now becomes the human being in whom cosmic power resides and the source of that power's practical working out. Moses is to use Aaron as his prophet to Pharaoh… The human agent is the site for the earthly dwelling of the divine energy."[37] Moses continues to represent God to Pharaoh, and God works

[35] Cf. Nickelsburg, George W. E., John J. Collins, *Ideal Figures in Ancient Judaism: Profiles and Paradigms*. Septuagint and Cognate Studies Series ; No. 12. Chico, CA: Scholars Press, 1980.

[36] Kirk, *A Man*, 68.

[37] Mills, Mary E. *Human Agents of Cosmic Power in Hellenistic Judaism and the Synoptic Tradition*. Journal for the Study of the New Testament. Supplement Series. Sheffield, England: JSOT Press, 1990. 34.

his power through Moses as his human agent throughout the Exodus narrative. When Moses exhorts the Israelites that "God will fight for you" (Ex. 14:14), "the divine response is to have Moses lift up his staff and divide the sea (14:16). When Moses complies, it is God who divides the sea (14:21)."[38] Kirk also offers of Moses's face shining after his encounter with YHWH at Sinai alongside the Aaronic blessing in Numbers 6:24-26, in which God's face shines on his people, lifting up his countenance to them. As one whose face shines with and reflects the glory of YHWH, "Moses not only has received such a blessing, but also is the agent of this blessing to the people of Israel. Through him, the light of God's face shines on the congregation."[39] Moses, here, is both a conduit of God's power for the people of Israel, and a human locale of God's presence, so that (at certain points) to encounter Moses is to encounter something of God himself.

Later Jewish authors took up and contributed to this exalted portrait of Moses, as Kirk observes. In Philo's *Life of Moses* 1.155-158, for example, Philo offers an exceptionally high view of Moses, to whom God gave all the wealth of the world as his possession. All of the elements of the world obeyed Moses as its master (ὑπήκουεν ὡς δεσπότῃ τῶν στοιχείων ἕκαστον; *Life,* 1.156). Philo also draws on the aforementioned Exodus texts in which Moses is אלהים either to Aaron or to Pharaoh, and extends their reach by claiming that Moses was named God and king over the whole nation of Israel (ὠνομάσθη γὰρ ὅλου τοῦ ἔθνους θεὸς καὶ βασιλεύς; *Life,* 1.158). Kirk characterises this exaltation as a sort of "divinization" of Moses which "provides an alternative paradigm to the notion that Jewish monotheism requires a reconfiguration of our understanding of the inherent identity of God once another creature has been assigned certain divine characteristics."[40]

[38] Kirk *A Man*, 69.
[39] Kirk, *A Man*, 70.
[40] Kirk, *A Man*, 71.

Such an interest in the Exodus texts naming Moses as אלהים is also present in a Qumran text. In 4Q374 2.6-8 the author recounts that God

> made him as a God over the powerful ones, and a cause of reel[ing] (?) for Pharaoh … [...] melted, and their hearts trembled, and [th]eir entrails dissolved. [But] he had pity with [...] and when he let his face shine for them for healing, they strengthened [their] hearts again, and at the time [...].

Here the author seems to do a bit more in the elevation of Moses than is already present in the text of Exodus. In lines 8-9, the mention of melting, trembling hearts, dissolving entrails–which is likely applied to the effect of Moses's presence–is typical theophanic language. Once again, Kirk sees an echo of the Aaronic blessing in the mention of Moses's face shining. Moses, then, is described in Godlike terms. Kirk concludes his study of Moses's exalted status in the Torah and later traditions:

> The ascription of the title God, the actions of conquering hostile, even cosmic powers, sitting on God's throne, and receiving celestial adoration — all of these place Moses in a unique standing vis-à-vis God, yet without transforming the identity of God in any other way than binding God's identity to the identity of this human agent through whom God has chosen to act.[41]

I have only highlighted Kirk's survey of Moses as an idealised human figure, but should note again that Kirk finds the paradigm useful for making sense of a number of traditions concerning biblical figures such as kings, priests, prophets, Son of Man/messiah figures, and the elect community of God's people. Contra Bauckham, Kirk finds that such human figures bear the unique marks which serve to delineate between the God of Israel and all other beings. By bearing these qualities or roles, such figures do not infringe upon or dramatically redefine God's divine identity; rather, idealised human figures fulfill the Adamic vocation to represent God to creation. Such a role is thoroughly human, and does not require recategorization onto the divine side of the ontological

[41] Kirk, *A Man*, 74.

ledger. Idealised human figures in ancient Judaism can and do rule over the cosmos, receive worship, and embody God's presence and power.

When Kirk encounters Jesus in the Synoptic Gospels performing actions and bearing attributes that are reserved for Israel's God, then, he finds no need to conclude that the authors intend to portray Jesus as divine; instead, Kirk finds the category of idea to be sufficient to explain the Synoptic portrayals of Jesus. In one section, Kirk considers the exorcisms in the Gospel of Mark with an eye to Mark's Christology:

> This section shows that the exorcism narratives… demonstrate that Jesus is a specially empowered and authorized human agent of God… Moreover, the idea that Jesus is engaged in a battle with Satan draws the demonic contests into a battle for the throne of rule over the earth (e.g., Matt 4:8-10)... Inasmuch as the exorcism stories provide preliminary indication that they address similar themes in the identity of Jesus, I argue here that they further the picture of Jesus as idealized human being rather than adding a unique piece of divine ontology.[42]

It is in this last sentence that Kirk discloses the unsurprising thesis of his writing on exorcisms and Christology, namely that the exorcism pericopae contribute to an idealised human Christology and not to a portrait of Jesus as a divine being.

Kirk first points out that Jesus is not the lone exorcist in Mark's account.[43] The twelve, too, cast out demons at Jesus's direction (Mk. 3:15; 6:7). Therefore, one should not look to the exorcisms in order to find any hint of a divine status for Jesus. Kirk concludes:

> Thus, in the narrative world of the Synoptic Gospels, the ability to cast out demons per se is not an indication of any peculiar ontological status, but is indicative of possessing an authority or power of such a sort as human beings can exercise. Put differently, if the Synoptic Gospels are willing to show the reader that exorcism is a part of Jesus's ministry that humans can share in, then exorcisms are not attempts to point the reader to a divine Christology.[44]

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[42] Kirk, *A Man*, 333-334.
[43] Kirk, *A Man*, 334.
[44] Kirk, *A Man*, 334.

Kirk offers a bold conclusion at the outset of this chapter, prior to any discussion of the content in the exorcism pericopae. I am skeptical of the premise, and therefore the conclusion, of Kirk's argument here. The data set of the premise is extremely limited, considering only the fact that other characters in the story also participate in Jesus's exorcistic ministry. Kirk fails to consider here whether Mark portrays Jesus and the other exorcists (the disciples and the rogue exorcist whom John mentions to Jesus in Mk. 9:38-40) are portrayed as exorcistic equals. Should it not be taken into consideration that the disciples must receive authority over demons *from Jesus* in order to perform exorcisms (3:15), and that the rogue exorcist is casting out demons *in Jesus's name* (9:38)? Further, the disciples attempt and fail to expel a demon from a young boy, which Jesus promptly exorcises without any evocation of a higher power. When the disciples ask Jesus why they were unable to cast out the demon, he says that this kind of spirit does not come out by any means except prayer (τοῦτο τὸ γένος ἐν οὐδενὶ δύναται ἐξελθεῖν, εἰ μὴ ἐν προσευχῇ; Mk. 9:29). Jesus himself, however, does not pray in order to perform the exorcism. Surely it is a flattened argument to only observe that exorcism is an act in which both Jesus and the disciples participate without regard for their respective exorcistic prowesses or that Jesus is himself a source of exorcistic authority for others in the narrative. We should also consider portraits of exorcists and exorcism in the ancient world, and how Jesus both follows and departs from widely accepted exorcistic conventions. Kirk devotes about one page to exorcists in the Jewish tradition,[45] but limits his emphasis to exorcism as a royal tradition within ancient Judaism as if kingship is the only or primary category within which Jewish exorcists operated without much attention to broader Jewish demonology. Even within the kingship exorcism tradition, Kirk gives little attention to significant details of the texts he references from Qumran and Josephus concerning the means by which David and Solomon

[45] Kirk, *A Man*, 334-335.

perform their exorcisms. The truncated demonological and exorcistic evidence stacks the deck to support Kirk's idealised human figure paradigm as adequate for dealing with the Markan Jesus.

Therefore, I find Kirk's assessment of Jesus's interactions with the demons insufficient to bear the weight of his conclusion that "the authority by which Jesus casts out demons can be bestowed upon other persons, and is thus not inherent in any sort of distinct divine identity that other representative humans cannot share… The fact that other human beings can extend this role is a sure indication that divinity is not a prerequisite to exercising such power and authority."[46] Kirk provides an interesting paradigm for reading the Gospel miracle stories, but his consideration of Second Temple demonology and ancient exorcists fails to provide an adequate context within which we should examine Jesus's encounters with demons and Satan.

1.2 Markan Christology: Demonological Considerations

The current project aims to bring the demonological material in Mark's Gospel into debates about Mark's Christology. Such an endeavor will require considerable investigation into ancient exorcistic practices, demonologies, and messianisms which interact with such demonological topics. Chapter two provides a typology of both spirit possession and exorcism in the ancient world. Here, I consider anthropological perspectives on possession and exorcism more broadly, and use such perspectives in my examination of ancient concepts of possession and exorcism from ancient Mesopotamia to Greco-Roman and Jewish contexts. Particularly important in this chapter are the ancient exorcistic practices, within which we will later consider Jesus as an ancient exorcist–where he both departs from and adheres to the exorcistic conventions of his day. Such practices are varied and complex, and the aforementioned studies which briefly engage with Markan Christology in light of ancient exorcistic practices tend to flatten the data in favour of the

[46] Kirk, *A Man*, 340, 341.

conclusions that their respective projects will reach. It is my hope that the lengthy discussion on ancient possession and exorcism will provide a more complete social context within which we will consider Jesus as an exorcist as he is depicted in Mark's narrative.

Chapter three provides further historical groundwork for considering Markan Christology in light of his demons and Satan. Here, I give special attention to the Son of Man figure in the *Similitudes of Enoch* and Melchizedek in *11QMelchizedek* as divine, preexistent, human messianic figures who act as divine messiahs and enact eschatological judgement over Satan and demons while receiving theophanic characterisations from the authors such as judging from God's heavenly throne or bearing the divine name. Such figures, I suggest, provide helpful dialogue partners for the Markan Jesus, who also enacts eschatological judgement over Satan and demons while receiving theophanic characterisations from his author. This chapter will offer insight into dynamics of divine judgment at work in Mark's exorcism pericopae which might otherwise be difficult to detect with a narrative-critical reading.

Next, Chapter four is an examination of the Markan exorcism material (1:21-28; 5:1-20; 9:14-29) with an eye toward the christological implications based on the previous two chapters' portraits of exorcists and certain messianic figures. In this chapter, I make use of Bauckham's divine identity paradigm, and consider the contributions of the Markan exorcisms pericopae in Jesus's inclusion in the divine identity in Mark's narrative. The Markan Jesus, I conclude, is the embodiment of Israel's God at his advent for the eschatological destruction of the demons.

Finally, Chapter five offers an examination of the Satan material in Mark with an interest in soteriology as the natural outworking of Christology. In this chapter, I offer a coherent reading of Mark's Gospel as a story about the conflict between Jesus and Satan. With special attention to Jesus's encounter with Satan in the wilderness (1:12-13), the Beelzeboul controversy (3:22-27),

and the ransom logion (10:45), I demonstrate that the Markan Jesus provides widespread deliverance for those under Satan's reign by means of giving his own life as an acceptable ransom payment to Satan in exchange for the elect. Within this framework, I also provide a reading of the Markan exorcisms in light of Jesus's salvific death. Whereas chapter four explores what type of messianic figure Jesus *is* within ancient Judaism, chapter five explores what this messiah actually *does* to provide deliverance for his people. This consideration of soteriology rounds out Markan Christology in a way that interpreters do not always consider.

Great antagonists often serve to sharpen protagonist portraits. The failure to consider the role of an antagonist in the characterisation of the protagonist leaves readers with a truncated view of the protagonist. By combining the historical study of ancient demonologies and exorcism with a literary reading of Mark, this thesis offers a contribution to the study of Markan Christology and highlights the often underappreciated contribution of Jesus's primary opponents–the demons and Satan–in the task of interpreting Mark's Jesus.

PART ONE

Possession and Exorcism in the Ancient World

2.1 Introduction

This chapter will provide a typology of spirit possession and exorcism in the ancient world. We will first consider the phenomena of spirit possession broadly across time and culture from an anthropological perspective in order to differentiate between types of possession which are often conflated. Next, we will examine literary and material data relating to possession and exorcism in the ancient world. We will briefly examine possession and exorcism in ancient Mesopotamia before giving more sustained attention to Greco-Roman and Jewish contexts, including references to exorcism in the New Testament which are not performed by Jesus, yet provide insight into Jewish exorcistic practices in the first century. This examination will provide a social context within which we will later locate Jesus's exorcisms in the Gospel of Mark.

2.2 An Anthropological Perspective on Possession and Exorcism

Spirit possession phenomena appear in nearly every culture throughout human history, albeit the form and function of possession might differ considerably from culture to culture.[1] The task of the anthropologist is to observe such phenomena in various cultures and to identify their universal and particular features in a given context. In this section we will propose that while some aspects of the cases of possession and exorcism in the Synoptic Gospels had precedence in the ancient world, there are other aspects of spirit possession in the New Testament for which there was no verifiable precedent. Employing findings from anthropological studies of spirit possession and exorcism will prove helpful in our task of locating the social context of the corresponding Synoptic exorcism pericopae.

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[1] Laycock, Joseph P. *Spirit Possession Around the World : Possession, Communion, and Demon Expulsion Across Cultures*. London: Bloomsbury 2015, 15.

Providing a definition and scope of possession at the outset will be a critical part of our work in understanding the spirit possession which is present in the Synoptic Gospels. Working from the perspective of neuroanthropology, Pieter F. Craffert notes that possession, although a phenomenon experienced widely across cultures, can vary greatly in the form it takes in a given culture.[2] The spirit can be a malevolent being, such as what we see in the Gospels or Ancient Mesopotamian texts, or a neutral or benevolent being, such as the Greek gods Eros, Dionysus, Ares, and Aphrodite who possess humans in Sophocles's tragedies in order to accomplish their purposes on the earth.[3] Scholars also have a framework for viewing some events in the New Testament as unambiguously positive spirit possessions, such as Jesus's (and other early Christian's) encounter with the holy spirit at his baptism.[4] Because benevolent spirit possession is generally not a problem which requires deliverance, we will focus on cases of possession which involve evil spirits.

Important for our discussion is the anthropological construction of differing *levels* of possession: "Possession ranges from incorporation or fusion (the spirit becomes part of the medium) and oscillation (where spirit and medium vie for control) to displacement (where the own self is overshadowed or replaced) – the latter being the most pervasive model of possession in the

[2] Craffert, Pieter F. "Spirit Possession in Jesus Research: Insights from the Anthropological Study of Possession." *Religion and Theology* 25, no. 1–2 (June 20, 2018): 114.

[3] Sorensen, Eric. *Possession and Exorcism in the New Testament and Early Christianity*. Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament. Reihe 2 157. Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2002. 78-80.

[4] Stevan L. Davies. *Jesus the Healer: Possession , Trance, and the Origins of Christianity*. London: SCM Press, 1995. I would refrain from using the word "possession" to describe Jesus's encounter with the holy spirit at his baptism because the language of "possession" in the context of NT studies often serves as a shorthand (as it will be in this project) for a possession of displacement (see category below). Jesus's experience would be better understood in the incorporation/fusion category of possession. It does seem that when one slanders Jesus, so too does one slander the spirit (see Mk. 3:22-30); however, Jesus's interaction with the holy spirit is markedly different from those who have unclean spirits, as Jesus's dialogues with the possessed people are really interactions only with the unclean spirit residing in them. In contrast, it does not seem that the holy spirit overshadows Jesus in such a way that he is a passive host for the spirit's activity.

ethnographic record."[5] Emma Cohen offers a similar, bifurcated model of possession with the categories of executive (displacement) possession and pathogenic possession: "Pathogenic possession concepts result from the operation of cognitive tools that deal with the representation of contamination (both positive and negative); the presence of the spirit entity is typically (but not always) manifested in the form of illness. Executive possession concepts mobilise cognitive tools that deal with the world of intentional agents; the spirit entity is typically represented as taking over the host's executive control, or replacing the host's 'mind' (or intentional agency), thus assuming control of bodily behaviours."[6] The type of possession by demons present in the Synoptic Gospels most often takes the form of displacement/executive[7] possession, where the possessed individual is overshadowed or effectively replaced by the evil spirit. When a person who is displaced by a demon speaks or acts in the Synoptics, it is, in actuality, the demon who is speaking or acting.[8] This phenomenon creates a unique scenario of Synoptic exorcisms in relation to other healing miracles, as the possessed person is unable to ask Jesus for help. Possession as displacement is the dominant understanding of possession in many parts of the modern world.[9] The concept of displacement spirit possession is also well-represented in the often lighthearted phrase, "The devil made me do it," as well as in popular depictions of spirit possession in films

[5] Craffert, "Spirit Possession" 115. See also: Cohen, Emma, and Justin Barrett. "When Minds Migrate: Conceptualizing Spirit Possession." *Journal of Cognition and Culture* 8, no. 1–2 (January 1, 2008): 29.

[6] Cohen, Emma. "What Is Spirit Possession? Defining, Comparing, and Explaining Two Possession Forms." *Ethnos: Journal of Anthropology* 73, no. 1 (March 2008): 103. Cohen also offers a helpful history of possession research throughout the article.

[7] From this point "displacement" will be used to represent this category of possession.

[8] See Mk. 1:23, where the man with an unclean spirit asks Jesus, "Have you come to destroy *us*?" and Jesus rebukes *him.* When Jesus gave a rebuke to the man, he was, in reality, rebuking the spirit(s) which were residing within him.

[9] For example, On February 16, 1981, Arne Cheyenne Johnson murdered Alan Bono in Brookline, Connecticut by stabbing him repeatedly with a pocket knife. Johnson's attorney attempted a defence by claiming that Johnson was possessed by demons which caused him to commit the murder, and was therefore not culpable for the murder. See: "Arne Cheyenne Johnson | Archives & Special Collections." Accessed February 9, 2024. https://archives.law.virginia.edu/dengrove/writeup/arne-cheyenne-johnson.

such as *The Exorcist* (1973), *The Exorcism of Emily Rose* (2005), and *The Conjuring* series. In the case of the Synoptic Gospels, restored former demoniacs, such as the Gerasene demoniac who lived in tombs, displayed superhuman strength, and cut himself with rocks, would be right to claim afterward that, "The devil (or, rather, a demon) made me do it."

Throughout this chapter, we will adopt Emma Cohen's model of possession and classify the data as examples of either pathogenic or displacement (executive) possession.[10] Pathogenic possession, as we will see, accounts for most of the interactions between humans and demons that are present in ancient literature, although we will come across a few occurrences of displacement possession outside of the New Testament.[11]

2.3 Possession and Exorcism in Ancient Mesopotamia

Because it is difficult to prove that the New Testament writers display influence from Mesopotamian exorcistic traditions,[12] it will suffice here to provide a summary of Eric Sorensen[13] and Lorenzo Verderame's[14] work on Mesopotamian possession and exorcism.

Mesopotamian cuneiform tablets contain incantations which could be recited by a priest in order to cure a person of demonic harassment, or what Cohen would call pathogenic possession.[15] Here, it is already important to note that the language of "possession" and "exorcism" is contested. Marten Stol, for example, refuses to label these texts as representative of exorcisms: "Normally, a spirit 'reaches' or 'seizes' a human being and he is closest when he is 'tied' to his victim. There is

[10] When we speak of demon "possession" in the New Testament without a qualifier, we will be referring to a possession of displacement.

[11] When we come across instances of pathogenic possession, the treatment of which is often labelled as "exorcism," we will opt for the language of "healing" or "cure" rather than "exorcism."

[12] Although it might be possible that some of the traditions which influenced New Testament writers were aware of and interacting with Mesopotamian thought about evil spirits. See: Drawnel, Henryk. "The Mesopotamian Background of the Enochic Giants and Evil Spirits." *Dead Sea Discoveries* 21, no. 1 (2014): 14–37.

[13] Sorensen, Eric. *Possession,* 18-46.

[14] Verderame, Lorenzo. "Demons at Work in Ancient Mesopotamia." In *Demons and Illness from Antiquity to the Early-Modern Period*, edited by Siam Bhayro and Catherine Rider. Boston, MA: Brill, 2017. 61-80.

[15] Cohen, Emma. "What Is Spirit Possession?" 103.

no evidence that he enters and settles in his body… So far as I am aware there is no Babylonian evidence for possession at all… The term 'exorcism' presupposes possession."[16] For Stol, the manner of possession (displacement) and exorcism as it appears in the New Testament is a foreign concept to the Babylonian texts that have survived. Eric Sorensen notes one occasion in the *Udug-hul* tablets in which something similar to possession and exorcism might be present; however, as Sorensen notes this isolated example is an exception which proves the rule.[17] Displacement possession did not play a meaningful part in the demonological imagination of ancient Mesopotamia, but demonic activity did contribute to human suffering, often in the form of sickness.[18] Therefore, it is appropriate to discuss the cure to demonic affliction as a healing rather than as an exorcism.

2.3.1 Demonic Affliction in Ancient Mesopotamia

There are three collections of primary texts from which scholars are able to examine ancient Mesopotamian ideologies about demons,[19] their contribution to human suffering, as well as portraits of those within the community who were able to provide relief from demonic affliction. The texts are the *Šurpu,*[20] *Udug-hul,* and *Maqlû* tablets. The most relevant of these tablets for our discussion is the *Udug-hul*, "a serialised composition of apotropaic rituals against demons and the

[16] Stol, Marten. *Epilepsy in Babylonia*. Groningen: Styx Publications, 1993. 52.

[17] Sorensen, *Possession,* 32.

[18] Verderame is not as optimistic as most scholars that a clear, cause-and-effect relationship can be traced between demons and human illness. He notes that this assumption is most often adopted uncritically in academic works, but that it is a "groundless" claim in ancient Mesopotamian sources. See: "Demons," 61.

[19] The idea of the English term "demon" does not map on well to the malevolent beings in Mesopotamian literature. Many different kinds of beings can be included in this category. The spiritual beings which were lower than the gods could be either malevolent or benevolent. See: Verderame, Lorenzo and Capomacchia, Anna Maria Gloria. "Some Considerations about Demons in Mesopotamia." *Studi e Materiali Di Storia Delle Riligioni* 77, no. 2 (2011): 291–97.

[20] The *Šurpu* tablets were discovered from King Assurbanipal's Royal Library (668–627 BCE), and it is likely that the tablets date back to the Kassite period of 1700-1600 BCE. Walid Khalid Abdul-Hamid and George Stein. "The Surpu: Exorcism of Antisocial Personality Disorder in Ancient Mesopotamia." *Mental Health, Religion, & Culture* 16, no. 7 (2013): 674.

sorcerers who manipulated them"[21] which range in date from around 2300-200 BCE.[22] In these texts, the incantation priest encounters evil spirits in order to expel them from their host.

As Verderame observes, one's lot in life was directly related to one's standing before the gods.[23] When a person found favour with the gods, so too would a person receive protection from various forms of hardship, including affliction from a range of malevolent spiritual beings. The notion that the absence of the gods leaves a person open to demonic affliction is present in the opening of an incantation against the *Asakkû* demon:

> It (*Asakkû*) attacks the man without a god.
> This man has been attacked and it has confused his mind,
> It has struck his head and [. . .] the skull,
> It has slapped his face and made his eyes sleeping.[24]

The unfortunate individual who suffers from the demon's attack in this text is identified as "the man without a god," implying that because the man lacks the protection which a god would offer, he is vulnerable to the demon's attack. A similar phenomenon of a human experiencing demonic affliction in the absence of the protection of the gods is visible in the *Šurpu* tablets 5-6:

> An evil curse like a *gallû*-demon has come upon (this) man,
> Dumbness (and) daze have come upon him, evil curse, oath, headache.
> An evil curse has slaughtered this man like a sheep,
> His god has left his body,
> His goddess (Sumerian add: his mother), usually full of concern for him, has stepped aside.
> Dumbness (and) daze have covered him like a cloak and overwhelm him incessantly.[25]

Here, the man of interest experiences demonic torment in the form of severe physical symptoms because his god and goddess have abandoned him to the attacks of a demon.

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[21] Sorensen, "Temple." 31.

[22] Our texts of focus will come from the second millennium BCE.

[23] Verderame, "Demons," 62.

[24] W. Schramm, *Ein Compendium sumerisch-akkadischer Beschwörungen* (Göttingen, 2008), pp. 34–35. Quoted in Verderame, "Demons," 63.

[25] *Šurpu,* 5–6. 1–16; trans. Reiner. Quoted in Sorensen, *Possession,* 24.

The demons in Mesopotamia, similar to the later Greek δαίμων, were generally neutral, incorporeal beings of a lower status than the gods. Mesopotamian demons were able to move freely between the heavens above, the Netherworld beneath, and the earth in between, although they generally had their dwelling on the outskirts of human civilizations (i.e. the deserts).[26] Their perceived nature carried considerable fluidity. Although they had no physical bodies and could not be seen, depictions of demons often display "hybrid monsters, whose body is composed of parts of aggressive animals."[27] The *Asakkû* demon was one which could enter into a community in the form of a hot wind, which would blow through a village and spread diseases such as epilepsy, fever, chills, extreme headache, and exhaustion.[28] Other demons, too, were identified with air or wind, and as such they were able to enter into buildings and humans and cause various diseases.[29] In general, however, demonic entities attack people when they are outside of civilised areas. An encounter with a demon is most likely to occur "in the open field, in the darkness and silence, opposed to the protected space of the city with its sounds and lights."[30] After the initial encounter, the demon latches on to its host in the form of a physical sickness and develops into a complete seizing of the victim. If left untreated, the demonic disease would often result in death.

The *Maqlû* text contains apotropaic rituals for the specific scenario of someone who has fallen to demonic oppression or illness due to the malevolent action of sorcerer or witch against

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[26] Bácskay, András. "Asakkû: Demons and Illness in Ancient Mesopotamia." In *Studies on Magic and Divination in the Biblical World*, edited by Hellen R. Jacobus, Anne Katrine de Hemmer Gudmer, and Philippe Guilaume, 1–8. Gorgias Press, 2013. 2; Heiser, Michael S. *Demons: What the Bible Really Says about the Powers of Darkness*. Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2020. 27; Talmon, Shemaryahu. "The 'Desert Motif' in the Bible and in Qumran Literature." In *Biblical Motifs: Origins and Transformations*, edited by Altmann, Alexander. Peabody, MA: Harvard University Press, 2013. 43.

[27] Verderame, "Demons," 64.

[28] Bácskay, "Asakkû," 6.

[29] It is important to note that not all disease in ancient Mesopotamia was related to supernatural causes. One could suffer from the effects of consuming too much alcohol, for example, without attributing the pain to demonic causation. See: Verderame, "Demons," 66.

[30] Verderame, "Demons," 67.

the individual. Tzvi Abusch's theory about the *Maqlû* rituals provides insight into the conditions under which one might become vulnerable to demonic affliction.[31] The theory posits that the exorcistic ceremony took place in a three-tiered judicial setting. "The first consists of the heavenly night court of Anu and the netherworld court of Ereskigal. The second comprises the heavenly court of Enlil and the chthonic court of Ekur. Over the third presides the sun god Šamaš with his retinue of the morning sky, and the subterranean abyss of Ea and Asalluhi."[32] Abusch theorises that such a legal setting is necessary *because* a witch or sorcerer has defamed the suffering individual before the gods, causing them to abandon the victim and thus leave them unprotected from demonic harassment. In this instance we observe that the cause of demonic affliction resides in the abandonment of the gods due to slander on the part of a witch or sorcerer.

Of interest to our project is that the manner of demonic interaction with humans was one in which the demon could enter into a human just as air enters through the nostrils or mouth, resulting not in displacement of the person, but in sickness. A person who was vulnerable to demonic affliction was one who had been abandoned by the gods, and thus lost the divine protection afforded to them. Those who suffered from such demonic affliction, though helpless in their own right to deal with the spirit, were able to receive help from specially-appointed individuals within the community.

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[31] See: Abusch, Tzvi. "The Demonic Image of the Witch in Standard Babylonian Literature: The Reworking of Popular Conceptions by Learned Exorcists." In *Religion, Science, and Magic: In Concert and In Conflict*, edited by Jacob Neusner, Ernest S. Frerichs, and Paul Virgil McCracken Flesher. New York: Oxford University Press, 1989; Abusch, Tzvi. "The Magical Ceremony *Maqlû*: A Critical Edition." In *The Magical Ceremony* Maqlû. Brill, 2015. Abusch, Tzvi. "Maqlû." In *Reallexikon der Assyriologie*, edited by Erich Ebeling et al., 7:346–51. Berlin: De Gruyter, 1928.

[32] Sorensen, *Possession,* 29.

2.3.2 Exorcists in Ancient Mesopotamia

Multiple figures in ancient Mesopotamia were able to bring relief to those who suffered from the hands of demonic affliction,[33] but the *Āšipu* is of primary interest to our current project as the one who was most similar to later exorcist traditions. As Sorensen notes, "it is in the context of *Udug-hul* (tablets) that the *āšipu* most foreshadows the New Testament exorcist in his attribution of affliction to the demons, in his dependence upon divine powers to treat those afflictions, and in his own role as the mediator between that divine assistance and the human victim which includes a confrontation with the demonic antagonist."[34] The exorcistic work of the *āšipu* was framed in terms of battling against the unwanted demon, and the exorcist had to enter the demon's territory in order to confront it, as Gina Konstantopoulos illustrates:

> The demons that both embodied and acted as vectors for illness occupied a liminal space in Mesopotamian religious thought, and in order to combat them the exorcist found it necessary to place himself in the same liminal territory these demons occupied, opening himself up to the possibility of attack by the very demons he fought. The ensuing battle could be either implicitly or explicitly stated in the text of the incantation, and many incantations have a narrative quality that resembles the structure and plot found in myths and literary epics. The stage then set for the āšipu's epic struggles, the exorcist would have access to a number of tools to aid him in achieving victory, thus driving out the demon or witchcraft causing the affliction and so curing his patient.[35]

There seem to have been three factors which gave the *āšipu* the upper hand in his contests with demons. The first is the *āšipu'*s employment of the incantations, such as those found in the *Udug-hul* (meaning "evil demons") tablets which were written by the *āšipu*. Tablet 8 reads:

> Do [not say, "let me] stand [at the side]."
> [Go] out, [evil Udug-demon,] to [a distant place],
> [go] away, [evil Ala-demon], to [the desert].[36]

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[33] Sorensen also lists "the *asû* (medical practitioner), the *bārû* ("divination priest"), and non-professionals such as the *kaššāpu* and *kaššāptu* ("sorcerer," and "female sorcerer" or "witch" respectively). *Possession,* 19.

[34] Sorensen, *Possession,* 25-26. Parentheses are mine.

[35] Konstantopoulos, Gina. "Shifting Alignments: The Dichotomy of Benevolent and Malevolent Demons in Mesopotamia." In *Demons and Illness from Antiquity to the Early-Modern Period*, edited by Siam Bhayro and Catherine Rider. Boston, MA, Brill, 2017. 22.

[36] *Udug-hul* 6.567-572a; trans. Geller

It seems that the very words written on the *Udug-hul* tablets had apotropaic power which the *āšipu* could access by speaking them to the demon in order to exercise power over it. We will observe a similar phenomenon in Josephus's account of the exorcism which Eleazar performed, in which Eleazar recited incantations which Solomon had written.[37] In both cases, it seems that certain words provide the exorcist an advantage over the demonic adversary.

The second advantage for the *āšipu*'s work against demons is that he received power from Enki (known as Ea in Akkadian texts), the god of magic.[38] Consider the following text from *Udug-hul* tablet 8:

> [I] am the chief incantation priest of [the pure] *Eridu* [rite],
> And I am the messenger, herald of Enki.
> I am Asalluhi, the wise *mašmaš*-priest, chief son of [Enki]; I am the messenger.
> I am the incantation [priest] of Eridu, and I am his [clever incantation].[39]

The power that the *āšipu* relied upon in order to perform the exorcism was not internal, as the *āšipu* was still a human being of lower status than the malevolent or benevolent demons; rather, he was able to summon the authority of Enki, who had the authority of a god and could thereby expel a demon. This theme of the exorcist's derivative power over demons which comes from a god will continue to appear across the traditions which we explore.

The third advantage of the *āšipu* in an exorcistic contest is the protection afforded by his own personal god, "a protective spirit attached specifically to him, who would protect him or appeal to the greater gods upon his behalf."[40] Again, it is apparent that the *āšipu* did not act alone in performing exorcisms; he was aided both by higher gods and spiritual beings of the same level

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[37] Josephus, *Ant.* 8.47.

[38] Konstantopoulos, "Shifting," 22; Konstantopoulos, Gina. "Demons and Exorcism in Ancient Mesopotamia." *Religion Compass* 14, no. 10 (2020): 9.

[39] *Udug-hul* 8.867-870; trans. Geller.

[40] Konstantopoulos, "Shifting," 22.

as a demon. The exorcist required the intervention of the gods not only to drive out a demon, but also to be protected from demonic antagonists. As we noted earlier, a person who had been abandoned by the gods was a person who was vulnerable to demonic attack, and the same holds true for the *āšipu.* Exorcism was a dangerous form of work which, if engaged without the protection of the gods, left the exorcist at risk of demonic harassment.[41]

2.3.3 Summary

In this section we have observed possession and exorcism in ancient Mesopotamian culture. Individuals relied on protection from the gods to keep them from the harm caused by evil spirits. An individual who was abandoned by the gods would be susceptible to demonic attack. Therefore, an individual who was afflicted by demons was one who had been abandoned by the gods. Such demonic affliction was generally thought to take the form of illness, due to the incorporeal demon entering into a person and taking up residence. Ancient Mesopotamian cultures had professional exorcists (*āšipu*), who were able to confront and expel demons from victims by reciting written incantations and through the help of the gods to overpower the demon. The *āšipu* could conjure up the favour of the gods for the victim, which would bring protection from evil spirits. In this sense, the *āšipu* accomplishes his exorcistic work by means of mediation on behalf of the victim before the gods.

2.4 Possession and Exorcism in the Greco-Roman World

We now turn to examine possession and exorcism phenomena in the Greco-Roman world. Although the role of the exorcist is not especially elevated here, there are a few text which will help to fill out ancient portraits of exorcists.

[41] Such a scenario is recorded in the Sons of Sceva narrative of Acts 19:11-20. See discussion later in this chapter.

2.4.1 Demons and Possession in the Greco-Roman World

The use of the English rendering "demon," with its later, negative connotations in Jewish and Christian thought, must be qualified when discussing the δαίμων in Greco-Roman thought.[42] As Frederick Brenk notes in the introduction of his significant essay on demonology in the early imperial period, δαίμων is "an extremely ambiguous word"[43] in much of Greek literature. As culture changed through time, so too did the connotations of the δαίμων. The Greek demon was not necessarily a malevolent being, nor was it a benevolent being. Instead, a demon was a spiritual being who was of a lower status than the gods and who could act either in a nefarious or charitable manner toward human beings, similar to what is meant by the term πνεῦμα in the New Testament, where the word often requires a qualifier in order to identify its disposition toward the other characters in the story.[44] As we will examine in the following texts, it is difficult to locate traces of displacement possession anywhere prior to Lucian's mid-late second century CE *Lover of Lies*, though the concept must predate this work by a considerable amount of time.

2.4.2 Divine Aggression in Sacred Disease

In *Sacred Disease (ca. 400 BCE)*, the author displays a particularly pessimistic attitude toward many practitioners of medicine in his day, who he says falsely attribute various illnesses to the activities of the gods in order to make a living:

> Just as people in need of a livelihood have invented and developed many and various theories in every other field, so too for this disease they have attributed the cause of each form of the condition to some god—for it is not one thing at one time and another thing at another time that diseases imitate, but often the same things. For example, if patients imitate the bleating of a goat or the roar (sc. of a lion), or have spasms on their right side, they say the Mother of the Gods is to blame; or if a patient gives out a very high, piercing

[42] For simplicity, however, we will use the term "demon" to refer to δαίμων.

[43] Brenk, Frederick E. "In the Light of the Moon: Demonology in the Early Imperial Period." In *Aufstief und Niedergang der Römischen Welt (ANRW)/Rise and Decline of the Roman World: Geschichte und Kultur Roms im Spiefel der Neueren Forschung.*, edited by Haase, Wolfgang, 2068–2145. Berlin: De Gruyter, 1986. 2068.

[44] For example: a πνεῦμα could be unclean (ἀκάθαρτον; cf. Mk. 1:23) holy (ἁγιον; cf. Mt. 1:18), or evil (πονηρόν; cf. Lk. 7:21). See: Sorensen, *Possession,* 121.

> cry, they liken him to a horse, and say Poseidon is to blame. If faeces are passed, which often happens in people in the throes of this disease, they give it the name of the goddess Enodia. But if they pass stools that are more frequent and thinner like birds', it is Apollo god of shepherds. Or if a patient expels froth from his mouth and kicks with his legs, Ares is to blame. And in patients visited at night by terrors and frights, together with derangement of the mind, leaping up out of bed, and fleeing outside, they say these are the attacks of Hecate and onslaughts of the heroes.[45]

The author's disposition toward such practices is clearly negative, but the need to address this medical mishandling suggests that these practices must have been somewhat common in the author's context. The phenomenon present here is considerably different from the possession we observe in the New Testament in some ways, but strikingly similar in others. Notably, it is the gods–not daimons–here who are thought to be interacting with humans in a harmful and disruptive manner. This state of affairs should not come as a surprise, as even a cursory knowledge of the Homeric epics regularly portray the gods as involved with humans.[46] Identifying the supernatural being responsible for one's illness, however, is of importance both for these ancient medical practitioners, as well as to Jesus's own work of exorcism and healing.[47] The New Testament authors do not seem to recognize the legitimacy of gods other than Israel's God. The gods of the other nations–including Greek and Roman gods–are δαίμονες and therefore of a lower status in comparison to Israel's God.[48]

The description of the illness in *Sacred Disease* 10, as Eric Sorensen has pointed out, is remarkably similar to the description of the possessed boy in Mark 9:14-29: The boy in Mark is

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[45] Hippocrates, *Sacred Disease.* 4. In: Hippocrates. *Hippocrates, Volume II*. Edited and translated by Paul Potter. Loeb Classical Library. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press. 2023

[46] For example, in book one of the Odyssey, Zeus's statement to the other gods on Olympus: "But come, let us who are here all give thought to his (Odysseus's) return, how he may come home; and Poseidon will let go his anger, for he will in no way be able, against all the immortal gods and in their despite, contend alone." Homer, *Odyssey*, 1.76-79. In: Homer. *Odyssey, Volume I*. Translated by A.T. Murray. Loeb Classical Library. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1919.

[47] In Mark 5:8-9, Jesus inquires concerning the name of Legion, perhaps in order to gain the upper hand in the contest.

[48] See LXX Deut. 32:17 and Paul's use of it in 1 Cor. 10:20, where the δαιμόνια refer to pagan idols/gods.

foaming from the mouth (ἀφρίζει), just as the patient in *Sacred Disease* is foaming from the mouth (ἄφρος). The boy in Mark becomes stiff or dry (ξηραίνεται), and in *Sacred Disease,* the patient's hands lose strength (ἀκρατεῖς) and become twisted (συσπῶνται). Both patients lost the ability to speak (Mk: ἄλαλον; *Sacred Disease:* ἄφωνον). Mark's boy is falling (πεσών) and convulsing (συνεσπάραξεν), and the *Sacred Disease* patient kicks with his feet (λακτίζει) and becomes senseless (ἄφρονα).[49] Although some of the medical vernacular is somewhat different in the two texts, they describe an unmistakably similar condition. Further, both texts attest to the tendency to attribute such symptoms to demonic affliction. The author of *Sacred Disease* is disparaging of such a tendency, while Mark depicts Jesus's diagnosis as accurate.[50] Another difference is that the patient in *Sacred Disease* is afflicted but not displaced by the demon, whereas the boy in Mark 9 experiences both affliction and displacement. The boy thus requires a full exorcism to experience relief.

The author of *Sacred Disease* stands firmly against the tendency of ancient medical practitioners to treat all physical ailments as though they are due to spiritual causes. Those who do so are merely grifters who contrive misleading diagnoses in order to profit from those who suffer. Although the author holds a view which contrasts with that of Jesus's exorcisms, the occasion for the author to address such an issue suggests that the tendency to attribute conditions which resemble epilepsy to demonic foul play was widespread enough in his context to warrant a rebuttal.

2.4.3 Demons and Possession in Plutarch

In *Obsolescence of Oracles,* for example, Plutarch (ca. 46-119 CE) engages in a considerable discussion concerning the identity of demons. Plutarch was influenced primarily by the Greek literary tradition, notably that of Homer and Hesiod. While Homer could use θεός and δαίμων as

[49] Sorensen, *Possession*, 107.
[50] Sorensen, *Possession,* 107.

almost synonymous terms, it was Hesiod, Plutarch notes, who was the first to classify a pecking order of rational beings: gods (θεός), demigods (δαίμων), heroes (ἥρως), and humans (ἄνθρωπος).[51] According to Plutarch, Hesiod claimed that δαίμονες could live for 9,720 years.[52] This model for understanding rational beings seems reasonable for Plutarch, who adopts the categories and claims that one might be able to change from one category of rational being to another. For example, Plutarch mentions the belief held by some in his day that a human could become a hero, a hero could become a demigod, and–with much difficulty–a demigod could become fully divine (παντάπασι θειότητος μετέσχον). Similarly, unfortunate souls could also descend the divine ladder and become mere mortal humans. Even the demons, Plutarch notes, do not possess immortality in Hesiod's view; rather, they come to an end (γίγνεσθαι τοῖς δαίμοσι τὰς τελευτάς).[53]

Plutarch does write about the interactions that demons have with humans. Here, we begin to see a description of these demons that is more negative than the more neutral it carried early. One passage is particularly illuminating here. After describing some apotropaic festivals and sacrifices in which people would eat raw flesh, beat their breasts, frenzy, shout, and wildly toss their heads in the air, Plutarch writes in defence of the gods:

> I should say that these acts are not performed for any god, but are soothing and appeasing rites for the averting of evil spirits (δαιμόνων δὲ φαύλων ἀποτροπῆς). Nor is it credible that the gods demanded or welcomed the human sacrifices of ancient days, nor would kings and generals have endured giving over their children and submitting them to the preparatory rites and cutting their throats to no purpose save that they felt they were propitiating and offering satisfaction to the wrath and sullen temper of some harsh and implacable avenging deities, or to the insane and imperious passions of some who had not the power or desire to seek satisfaction in a natural and normal way. But as Heracles laid siege to Oechalia for the sake of a maiden, so powerful and impetuous divinities (ἰσχυροὶ καὶ βίαιοι δαίμονες), in demanding a human soul which is incarnate within a mortal body,

[51] Plutarch, *Obsolescence of Oracles,* 10. In: Plutarch. *Moralia, Volume V*. Translated by Frank Cole Babbitt. Loeb Classical Library. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1936.

[52] Plutarch, *Obsolescence,* 11.

[53] Plutarch, *Obsolescence,* 11.

> bring pestilences and failures of crops upon States and stir up wars and civil discords, until they succeed in obtaining what they desire. To some, however, comes the opposite; for example, when I was spending a considerable time in Crete, I noted an extraordinary festival being celebrated there in which they exhibit the image of a man without a head, and relate that this used to be Molus, father of Meriones, and that he violated a young woman; and when he was discovered, he was without a head.[54]

In this text, a class of δαίμονες begins to emerge which are appeased through cultic activities similar to those of the gods. On one hand, these δαίμονες were demanding that human sacrifices were offered to them, and worked to stir up wars and famines among communities. On the other hand, the festival which Plutarch saw in Crete seems to celebrate the pious acts of a δαίμον for giving retribution to a certain Molus who violated a young woman. Here, we see the δαίμον interacting with humans in a manner similar to that of the Greek gods.

Plutarch also shows knowledge of the sort of demonic possession phenomena which feature in the New Testament. In *Lives, Marcellus*, Plutarch writes of a certain Nicias, who was about to be arrested after speaking against the manifestations of the Mothers:[55]

> But just as they were ready to arrest him, an assembly of the citizens was held, and here Nicias, right in the midst of some advice that he was giving to the people, suddenly threw himself upon the ground, and after a little while, amid the silence and consternation which naturally prevailed, lifted his head, turned it about, and spoke in a low and trembling voice, little by little raising and sharpening its tones. And when he saw the whole audience struck dumb with horror, he tore off his mantle, rent his tunic, and leaping up half naked, ran towards the exit from the theatre, crying out that he was pursued by the Mothers. No man venturing to lay hands upon him or even to come in his way, out of superstitious fear, but all avoiding him, he ran out to the gate of the city, freely using all the cries and gestures that would become a man possessed and crazed (δαιμονῶντι καὶ παραφρονοῦντι).[56]

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[54] Plutarch, *Obsolescence,* 14.

[55] Cotter notes that "the Mothers" "is a reference to mystery cults to two great female deities, Magna Mater and Cybele. Cotter, Wendy. *Miracles In Greco-Roman Antiquity: A Sourcebook for the Study of New Testament Miracle Stories*. London: Routledge, 1999. 79.

[56] Plutarch, *Lives, Marcellus,* 20.5. In: Plutarch. *Lives, Volume V: Agesilaus and Pompey. Pelopidas and Marcellus*. Translated by Bernadotte Perrin. Loeb Classical Library. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1917.

That Nicias is actually possessed by a demon in this story is not entirely clear;[57] however, those who are watching Nicias, and Plutarch as the narrator, recognize the man's symptoms as that of someone possessed by a demon. Plutarch's description of Nicias's altered state has notable resonances with Mark's description of the Gerasene Demoniac (Mk. 5:1-20). Both men remove their clothing and become naked in their possessed state.[58] Both men run around violently in a manner which prevents them from being bound. Both men are driven outside of city life: Whereas Nicias runs out to the gate of the city, the Gerasene Demoniac was among the tombs and mountains day and night (Mk. 5:5). Mark's reference to the Demoniac returning to a right state of mind (σωφρονοῦντα, Mk. 5:15) after the exorcism provides an opposite state to Plutarch's reference to the man being crazed or beside himself (παραφρονοῦντι). Plutarch's demoniac is shouting (βοῶν) his fear of being pursued by the deities just as Mark's demoniac is shrieking (κράξας φωνῇ μεγάλῃ) in fear of being tormented by Jesus.

For Plutarch's story, there is no exorcist present on the scene to cast the spirit out from Nicias. Unlike the demoniac stories in the Synoptic Gospels, in which the possessed person(s) are present only for Jesus to interact with (exorcise) them, Plutarch's demoniac can stand alone in the narrative without the presence of an exorcist.

2.4.4 Demons and Possession in Lucian of Samosata

Lucian of Samosata (ca. 120-190 CE) was a second century satirist from the eastern region of the Roman empire. His writings provide a unique lens into life in the ancient Mediterranean world. Through the medium of satire, Lucian critiqued various parts of everyday life, including religious

[57] It is possible that Nicias was playing into the superstition of those present in order to escape his arrest. The last line of the excerpt might be particularly telling, as Plutarch notes that Nicias made use of (φεισάμενος) the cries and gestures of a possessed man. Whether or not he was possessed, the story presents him as someone who fits the description of "demon-possessed."

[58] Mark's comment that the man sits ἱματισμένον after the exorcism implies that he had previously been naked.

and superstitious practices. Although we cannot read Lucian in the same way we would read a historian, the objects of his facetious criticisms–which were widely enjoyed–often provide valuable insight into broadly held views and practices in the eastern Roman empire.

In one such excerpt from *The Lover of Lies* 16, Ion refutes the narrator's scepticism by recounting a Syrian exorcist from Palestine, providing us with insight into belief about both possession and exorcism:

> "You act ridiculously," said Ion, "to doubt everything. For my part, I should like to ask you what you say to those who free possessed men (τοὺς δαιμονῶντας) from their terrors by exorcising the spirits (ἐξάδοντες τὰ φάσματα) so manifestly. I need not discuss this: everyone knows about the Syrian from Palestine, the adept in it,1 how many he takes in hand who fall down in the light of the moon and roll their eyes and fill their mouths with foam; nevertheless, he restores them to health and sends them away normal in mind, delivering them from their straits for a large fee. When he stands beside them as they lie there and asks: 'Whence came you into his body?' the patient himself is silent, but the spirit answers in Greek or in the language of whatever foreign country he comes from, telling how and whence he entered into the man; whereupon, by adjuring the spirit and if he does not obey, threatening him, he drives him out. Indeed, I actually saw one coming out, black and smoky in colour."[59]

The historicity of this account is not particularly important to our current project. It is likely that Lucian was mocking beliefs about demons held by so-called superstitious folk, rather than beliefs which he affirmed. Instead, we can glean from his account beliefs about possession and exorcism which were broadly accepted in his context. In Lucian's day, as in the present day, satire doesn't work when it critiques niche or marginal views; rather, satire can be broadly effective only when it engages with broadly experienced phenomena. Lucian was widely read in his day, in part, because his satirical engagement with the world around him resonated with enough people that it must reflect broadly held social realities.[60] That Lucian was geographically located in the east is

[59] Lucian of Samosata, *Lover of Lies,* 16. In: Lucian. *Lucian Volume III*. Translated by A.M. Harmon. Loeb Classical Library. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1921.

[60] Andrade, Nathanael, and Emily Rush. "Introduction: Lucian, A Protean Pepaideumenos." *Illinois Classical Studies* 41, no. 1 (2016), 152.

significant in that it provides insight into conceptions of possession and exorcism in Syria and Palestine within roughly a century of the composition of the Synoptic Gospels.[61] Lucian does not seem to be particularly impressed with exorcists, highlighting the fact that they provide delivery for those suffering from demonic antagonists for a large fee. We will first consider the views about spirit possession which are present in this excerpt, and then the views about exorcism and exorcists.

The profile of the possessed in Lucian is easily comparable with those present in the Synoptics. Symptoms of demon possession include: falling down, being affected by the moon, the rolling of the eyes, foaming at the mount, being out of one's mind, and the demon speaking through the mouth of the afflicted. All of these symptoms find parallels in the synoptic demoniac stories. The first three are present in the Synoptic accounts of Jesus' exorcising the boy with a spirit (Mt. 17:14-21; Mk. 9:14-29; Lk. 9:37-43). Matthew and Mark both note that the demon causes the boy to fall down (Mt. 17:15; Mk. 9:18, 20). Lucian's mention that possessed individuals fall down *in the light of the moon* (πρὸς τὴν σελήνην) is matched by Matthew's mention that the boy was "moonstruck" or "affected by the moon" (σεληνιάζεται). Mark and Luke both record the boy foaming at the mouth (Mk. 9:18; Lk. 9:39), and the rolling of the eyes in Lucian fits well with the boy's convulsions (Mk. 9:20, 26; Lk. 9:39). Often in the Synoptic Gospels, we see the demon speaking through the mouth of the victim (Mk. 1:24; 5:7, 9, etc.).

Wesley Smith argued, in his aptly-titled article "So-Called Possession in Pre-Christian Greece," that this excerpt from Lucian is the earliest example of demons possessing human beings in pagan literature.[62] In the anthropological terms we used earlier, Smith would say that there are examples of what Emma Cohen pathogenic possession, in which a daimon's interactions with a

[61] Cotter, *Miracles,* 81.

[62] Smith, Wesley D. "So-Called Possession in Pre-Christian Greece." *Transactions and Proceedings of the American Philological Association* 96 (1965), 409.

human manifest primarily as disease or affliction. Cohen's executive/displacement possession, in which "the spirit entity is typically represented as taking over the host's executive control, or replacing the host's 'mind' (or intentional agency), thus assuming control of bodily behaviours,"[63] however, is entirely absent from pagan literature prior to Lucian's *Lover of Lies.* Frederick Brenk would agree with Smith in this respect: "[The Greek demon] was never in a human body… nor is it embarrassed by an exorcist. It is limited to a number of psychic functions: Thoughts, dreams, a feeling of supernatural strength and purpose. It is vaguely responsible for misfortune, and guides things through difficult places for good or evil .... It has only the faintest association with disease, though this it sends. There is not a hint that it could ever enter a body, and only the slightest that it could perform any physical action."[64] After examining a large amount of ancient literature which predates or can be confidently said to be free from Christian influence, I am in agreement with Smith and Brenk.[65]

The profile of Lucian's exorcist is, in some ways, similar to Jesus in the Synoptic Gospels, and significantly different in other ways. Notably, the exorcism event for Lucian includes a dialogical component between the exorcist and the demon, in which the exorcist asks the demon

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[63] Cohen, "What is Spirit Possession," 103.

[64] Brenk, "In the Light of the Moon," 2081.

[65] There is perhaps one piece of evidence for the place of displacement possession in pre-Christian Greek thought. The ancient temple at Delphi, which was devoted to the Greek god Apollo, contained priestesses who were called Pythia. The ancient sources which survive and tell of the events which took place between Apollo and the Pythia in the temple are varied in their account and notably influenced by the philosophical traditions from which they arise. Further, the account is of a god, not a daimon, entering the Pythia and speaking on their behalf. See: Maurizio, L. "Anthropology and Spirit Possession: A Reconsideration of the Pythia's Role at Delphi." *Journal of Hellenic Studies* 115 (November 1995): 69–86; Smith, "So-Called," 414-425. Further, I will argue in the following pages that displacement possession, which dominates the New Testament, is difficult to locate even in Second Temple Jewish literature. Pathogenic possession is the primary mode of demonic encounter in Jewish literature prior to the New Testament. There are examples in which we lack the detail to determine what sort of possession an author had in mind, but we can confidently say that displacement possession–if it is present at all–is a rare phenomenon in pre-Christian Judaism. The earliest clear example of displacement possession in Jewish literature seems to be Josephus's account of Eleazar's exorcism in Antiquities 8.45-48. This is not to say that Lucian is the first pagan to conceive of the idea of displacement possession; rather, his satirical writing reflects what must have been an intelligible scenario in the imagination of those in Palestine prior to his composition.

when it entered the body of the victim and the demon answers. This interaction might serve to empower the exorcist with information about the demon. The exorcist then drives the demon out, and the departure is visible, although only to some.[66] Lucian's satirical edge is on display when he notes that the exorcist performs his work for a large fee, implying that in performing an exorcism, the exorcist is in it for the money.[67] As a satirist, Lucian is deliberately emphasising this payment.[68] Ion's speech, however, casts the exorcistic work in a more positive light when he–like many of his contemporaries–said that the exorcist "free possessed men from their terrors," which seems to be a noble task.

We are left without any significant details of the exorcistic event. Whether the exorcist employs a physical object, recites incantations, or calls on the power of a divine being in order to overpower the demon is not stated. Although such details would be particularly helpful for our project given Lucian's geographical proximity to the events of the Gospel narratives, they are not provided.

2.4.5 Demons and Possession in Philostratus's "Life of Apollonius of Tyana"

Flavius Philostratus (ca. 170-245 CE), writing in the early third century, recorded *The Life of Apollonius of Tyana*, a charismatic[69] figure who lived in the latter half of the first century. Unlike Josephus's account of Eleazar, which we will examine later, Philostratus's writing took place over a century after the life of his subject. Apollonius, however, lived within a generation of Jesus and likewise travelled around performing exorcisms. Although the historicity of some of the events

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[66] In the lines following our excerpt, Lucian notes that Ion (the speaker of our excerpt) is able to see the demon come out, but that it is "a hazy object of vision to the rest of us, whose eyes are weak."

[67] Cotter, *Miracles,* 81.

[68] Jesus, too, received monetary support for his ministry, which included exorcism. See, for example, Lk. 8:1-3.

[69] On charismatics, see: Twelftree, Graham H. *Jesus the Exorcist: A Contribution to the Study of the Historical Jesus.* Peabody, Mass: Hendrickson, 1993. 22-34; Freyne, S. "The Charismatic." In *Ideal Figures in Ancient Judaism: Profiles and Paradigms*, edited by George W. E. Nickelsburg and John J. Collins. Septuagint and Cognate Studies Series ; No. 12. Chico, CA: Scholars Press, 1980.

recorded by Philostratus is questionable,[70] his *Life* is nonetheless a helpful analogue for the Synoptic Gospels inasmuch as it relates the author's views concerning demons, possession, exorcisms, and exorcists.

The first of Apollonius's exorcisms recorded by Philostratus appears in *Life* 4.20, in which Apollonius gave a lecture on libations in Athens.[71] While instructing the crowd concerning that precise manner by which to pour libations from cups, a young man interrupted him:

> The youth greeted his remark with a loud, licentious laugh, at which Apollonius looked up at him and said, "It is not you that are committing this outrage, but the demon who controls you without your knowledge." In fact without knowing it the youth was possessed by a demon (Ἐλελήθει δὲ ἄρα δαιμονῶν τὸ μειράκιον). He laughed at things that nobody else did and went over to weeping without any reason, and he talked and sang to himself. Most people thought that the exuberance of youth produced these effects, but he was being prompted by the demon, and only seemed to be playing the tricks that were being played on him. When Apollonius looked at the spirit, it uttered sounds of fear and fury, such as people being burned alive or tortured do, and it swore to keep away from the youth and not enter into any human. But Apollonius spoke to it as an angry householder does to a slave who is wily, crafty, shameless, and so on, and told it to give a proof of its departure. It replied, "I will knock that statue over," indicating one of the statues around the Royal Colonnade, where all this was taking place. When the statue first moved slightly, then fell, the outcry at this and the way people clapped in amazement were past description. The youth, as if waking up, rubbed his eyes, looked at the sun's beams, and won the respect of all the people gazing at him. From then on he no longer seemed dissolute, or had an unsteady gaze, but returned to his own nature no worse off than if he had taken a course of medicine. He got rid of his capes, cloaks, and other fripperies, and fell in love with deprivation and the philosopher's cloak, and stripped down to Apollonius's style.

The portrait of demon possession in this episode is interesting in a few ways. First, the youth was unaware that he was possessed by a demon. Likewise, all those around him believed that his strange actions were due to his youthful enthusiasm rather than a demonic presence. The Gospel accounts do not usually comment on the awareness of the victim or of others about the presence of a demon, but at least twice there are instances of parents approaching Jesus and asking him to

[70] Twelftree, *Jesus the Exorcist,* 24.
[71] For a collection of Apollonius's exorcism narratives, see: Cotter, *Miracles,* 85-89.

expel a demon from their child.[72] This detail means that the parents are aware that their child is suffering at the hands of a demon. In this story, however, it is only Apollonius who is able to discern the presence of the demon in the youth: "It is not you… but the demon who controls you without your knowledge."[73]

Next, the symptoms of the youth's demon possession include laughing, crying, talking, and singing in inappropriate contexts. We might label this instance of possession as "partial displacement." It is not a full displacement, as the demon has not completely dissolved the youth's agency and person. The youth, however, does not seem to have any control over his laughing or crying. This possession does not seem nearly as sinister as the Gerasene demoniac, in which the demon causes the victim to cut himself with rocks and live in the mountains and tombs, outside of civilization.

A few details in particular from this exorcism resonate with Jesus's exorcism in the Capernaum synagogue (Mk. 1:21-28).[74] First, both Apollonius and Jesus are lecturing/teaching when they are loudly interrupted by a person with a demon. Apollonius is confronted with a loud laugh, and Jesus is confronted with a man screeching, "What have we to do with you, Jesus of Nazareth? Have you come to destroy us? I know who you are, the holy one of God" (Mk. 1:24).

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[72] See Mk. 7:24-30; 9:14-29.

[73] This is not to say that Philostratus does not know of spirit possession in which it is evident to those around the victim that demonic activity is at play. For example, in *Life* 3.38 there is a story of a mother who believes that her son was possessed for two years by the spirit of a man who died in war: "In the middle of this conversation, the Wise Men were interrupted by the messenger bringing some Indians in need of cures. He brought forward a woman praying to them on her son's behalf. He was sixteen years old, she said, but had been possessed by a spirit for two years, and the spirit had a sly, deceitful character. When one of the Wise Men asked on what evidence she said this, she replied, "This boy of mine is rather handsome to look at, and the spirit is in love with him. He will not allow him to be rational, or go to school or to archery lessons, or to stay at home either, but carries him off into deserted places. My boy no longer has his natural voice but speaks in deep, ringing tones as men do, and his eyes, too, are more someone else's than his own. All this makes me weep and tear my hair, and I naturally scold my son, but he does not recognize me." In: Philostratus. *Apollonius of Tyana: Books 1-4*. Translated by Christopher P. Jones. Loeb Classical Library. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2005.

[74] Litwa, M. David. *How the Gospels Became History*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2019. 147-49.

Second, both Apollonius and Jesus attribute the interruption not to the human before them, but to a demon lurking within them. Apollonius remarks, "It is not you that are committing this outrage, but the demon who controls you without your knowledge." Similarly, Jesus's speech is directed exclusively to the demon: "Be silent and come out of him" (Mk. 1:25). Third, both demons respond to their exorcists with an agonising sense of doom. The demoniac in the Capernaum synagogue convulsed violently and cried out in a great voice (Mk. 1:26), while the demon responded to Apollonius by uttering sounds of fear and fury, as if he were being burned alive or tortured. Finally, both stories have a crowd responding with amazement, an appropriate response to both scenes. Outside of the Capernaum Synagogue story, one might also recall the Gerasene demoniac's attachment to Jesus after the Legion has departed: "The man who had been possessed begged Jesus that he should stay with him" (Mk. 5:18b) Similarly, the youth in Philostratus's story experiences a radical transformation after his exorcism and adopts Apollonius's way of life as his own. The similarities between Apollonius and Jesus are prominent enough that some have wondered whether Philostratus might have been influenced by Jesus traditions.[75] The number of significant differences between the Jesus of the Gospels and Philostratus's Apollonius, however, are significant enough that the two are unlikely to share traditions.[76] Further, we should be cautious to overemphasise the role that exorcism played in early Christianity. Matthew and Luke do not contribute to Mark's exorcism material in a substantive manner; on the contrary, they often abbreviate Markan exorcism material. John's Gospel is void of Jesus as an exorcist. Exorcism does not feature prominently in the rest of the New Testament or much early Christian literature. In this sense, exorcism is a special Markan emphasis. It seems much more likely that Philostratus was

[75] Meier, John P. *A Marginal Jew : Rethinking the Historical Jesus. v.2, Mentor, Message, and Miracles*. The Anchor Bible Reference Library. New York, NY: Doubleday, 1994. 579, 624.

[76] Witmer, *Jesus,* 53. Witmer notes Apollonius's reputation as an ascetic, his giving away of his large inheritance, and his spending five years in silence.

influenced by existing traditions of Apollonius as an exorcist than that he drew upon a somewhat underwhelming (outside of Mark) tradition of Jesus as an exorcist.

Interestingly, Apollonius does not speak to the demon until it has already come out of the youth. As we noted, Apollonius does not use dialogue to expel the demon. There is, however, a dialogue between Apollonius and the demon *after* the demon has come out: "[Apollonius] told it to give a proof of its departure. It replied, 'I will knock that statue over.'"[77] We might wonder what form the response of the demon took, because it could not have come from the mouth of the boy, who, at that point, was already freed from the demon. We know the demon was incorporeal at this point, as Apollonius required a physical sign of its departure, so it is not as though there was a visible being present who was speaking to Apollonius. Was the response a disembodied voice which all who were present were able to hear? While Jewish demonologies seem to allow for this phenomenon (speaking to a disembodied demon),[78] it is worth noting that it does not occur in the Gospels.

It is worth noting that Apollonius, like Jesus, does not invoke the power or authority of another being, nor does he make use of an object. Further, Apollonius does not really *do* anything in order to cast out the demon; rather, it simply grovels in submission and leaves the youth when Apollonius looks at it. What kind of human being might we expect to be dealing with when we see a hero such as Apollonius who has an unrivalled authority over demons, and who strikes grave fear into them? Should we think that Apollonius is a human with heightened wisdom and ability, or perhaps a magician or sorcerer? Evidently, some in Philostratus's day came to such conclusions. (*Life* 1.2) Philostratus, however, is at pains to demonstrate to his readers that this would be a

[77] In the Gerasene Demoniac story, too, there is proof of the Legion's departure from the demoniac in their entrance into the pigs. See Mk. 5:11-13.

[78] Consider, for example, *Testament of Solomon,* in which Solomon speaks with multiple demons face-to-face.

misunderstanding of Apollonius, because those in Apollonius's day "did not perceive him to be a magician, even though no one attracted more jealousy because of their wisdom" (οὔπω μαγεύειν ἔδοξε, καίτοι πλεῖστα ἀνθρώπων φθονηθεὶς ἐπὶ σοφίᾳ. *Life* 1.2). The literary work as a whole is intended to combat such ignorance about Apollonius, and to give an accurate account of his life. For Philostratus, Apollonius, due to his words, acts, and special wisdom (καθ' οὓς εἶπέ τι ἢ ἔπραξε, τοῖς τε τῆς σοφίας τρόποις), was in some manner divine, (δαιμόνιός τε καὶ θεῖος νομισθῆναι)[79] and this is how Philostratus wishes to portray him also to readers in his own day.[80]

2.4.6 Greek Magical Texts

The Greek magical papyri[81] are a collection of texts found in Egypt from the Greco-Roman period which include "a variety of magical spells and formulae, hymns and rituals… mainly from the second century B.C. to the fifth century A.D."[82] Like many of our sources, they provide a limited, but helpful view into possession and exorcism in antiquity. The spells in the magical papyri and amulets were used for healing, protection from diseases, charms, divination, and other daily needs.

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[79] Philostratus, *Life*, 1.2. For Apollonius to be in some sense divine does not mean that he is a god. In his 2005 Loeb translation, Christopher P. Jones translates ὑφ' ὧν ἔψαυσε τοῦ δαιμόνιός τε καὶ θεῖος νομισθῆναι as "by which he came close to being thought *possessed* and *inspired*." Translating δαιμόνιος as "possessed" is possible, but I find it difficult to take such a specific reading of the adjective, which could refer to one who is incredible to the point of being associated with daimons or gods. See: Henry George Liddell, Robert Scott, Henry Stuart Jones, and Roderick McKenzie, *A Greek–English Lexicon*, rev. Henry Stuart Jones and Roderick McKenzie. Oxford: Clarendon, 1996. s.v. "δαίμων." Further, to describe a more explicitly possessed person, Philostratus will use the verb form δαιμονάω (*Life*, 4.20). Translating θεῖος as "inspired" is likewise possible, so long as it is taken in the sense of divinely empowered, similar to the concept of μανία. Consider, for example Socrates's explanation to Ion that the great epic poets do not create their art by their own minds, but do so in a state of being inspired and possessed: πάντες γὰρ οἵ τε τῶν ἐπῶν ποιηταὶ οἱ ἀγαθοὶ οὐκ ἐκ τέχνης ἀλλ' **ἔνθεοι** ὄντες καὶ κατεχόμενοι πάντα ταῦτα τὰ καλὰ λέγουσι ποιήματα. Plato, *Statesman. Philebus. Ion.* Translated by Harold North Fowler and W. R. M. Lamb. Loeb Classical Library. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1925. By employing the description of Apollonius as δαιμόνιός τε καὶ θεῖος, Philostratus seems to be remarking not so much on his ontology or essence as much as his divinely-animated abilities.

[80] Cf. Billault, Alain. "The Rhetoric of a 'Divine Man': Apollonius of Tyana as Critic of Oratory and as Orator According to Philostratus." *Philosophy & Rhetoric* 26, no. 3 (1993): 227; Litwa, *How the Gospels Became History,* 149. Based on Hesiod's order of rational beings (gods, demigods/daimons, heroes, and humans), it is unsurprising that demons are not fearful of humans. It makes sense, however, that they would be fearful of a god.

[81] Texts and translations of PGM are from: Betz, Hans Dieter. *The Greek Magical Papyri In Translation: Including the Demotic Spells*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1986.

[82] Betz, Hans Dieter. "Introduction to the Greek Magical Papyri." In *The Greek Magical Papyri In Translation: Including the Demotic Spells*, edited by Betz, Hans Dieter, xli–liii. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1986. xli.

A few of the texts were used apotropaically or in the case of one already experiencing demonic affliction. The texts which survive are severely fragmented, and their lost content is difficult to identify. For this reason we will briefly examine two of these texts which have the most to offer our current project and the insight they provide into conceptions of possession and exorcism.

One of the more extensive rites for driving out a demon is found in PGM IV. 1227-64. The opening inscription instructs the exorcist to speak the rite over the victim's head, to place olive branches before the victim, and to stand behind the victim.[83] The exorcist is then instructed to recite the following:

> Hail, God of Abraham; hail, God of Isaac; hail, God of Jacob; Jesus Chrestos,[84] the Holy Spirit, the Son of the Father, who is above the Seven, / who is within the Seven. Bring Iao Sabaoth; may your power issue forth from him, NN, until you drive away this unclean daimon Satan, who is in him. I conjure you, daimon, / whoever you are, by this god, SABARBARBATHIÕTH SABARBARBATHIOUTH SABARBARBATHIÕNĒTH SABARBARBAPHAI. Come out, daimon, whoever you are, and stay away from him, NN, / now, now; immediately, immediately. Come out, daimon, since I bind you with unbreakable adamantine fetters, and I deliver you into the black chaos in perdition.

This formula, which displays clear Jewish and Christian influence, provides us with valuable data concerning both possession and exorcism in its context. Concerning possession, we are not able to construct from this text any symptoms of possession, such as illness or altered mental state. It is evident, however, that the text reflects a view that the demon was inside the victim and needed to be dislodged, as the exorcist commands the demon to "Come out" (ἔξελθε). As we noted earlier, the view that a demon resides inside of the victim is absent from Greek literature prior to Lucian's *Lover of Lies* 3.16.

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[83] Twelftree takes this instruction to be placing the exorcist in a position of dominance over the demon/afflicted person: Twelftree, Graham. "Jesus the Exorcist and Ancient Magic." In *A Kind of Magic: Understanding Magic in the New Testament and Its Religious Environment*, edited by L. J. Lietaert Peerbolte and Michael Labahn. T & T Clark Library of Biblical Studies. London: T & T Clark, 2007. 71.

[84] See Betz's comment on "Chrēstos" (excellent on) rather than "Christos" (anointed one) Betz, *The Greek Magical Papyri,* 62; Smith, Morton. *Jesus the Magician*. New York: Harper and Row, 1977. 63. Layton, B. *The Gnostic Treatise on Resurrection from Nag Hammadi*. Missoula MT: Scholars Press, 1979. 44-45.

Concerning the act of exorcism, this rite serves almost as a prayer, in which the exorcist invokes a god to come down and perform the exorcism itself. "May *your* (referring to God) power issue forth… until *you* drive away this unclean demon Satan." This is not a text which conveys veneration for the exorcist; rather, "the god is called up and asked to perform the exorcism."[85] After the exorcism, the practitioner is instructed to hang a phylactery around the patient's neck, presumably to protect the patient from the possible return of the demon. Other than this phylactery, however, the exorcist does not make use of any objects such as a ring. This view of exorcism fits well within other forms in which the exorcist is successful by invoking the power of a god, angel, or legendary historical figure. Similarly, in PGM V. 165-170, the participant prays, "Subject to me all daimons, / so that every daimon whether heavenly or aerial or earthly or subterranean or terrestrial or aquatic, might be obedient to me and every enchantment and scourge which is from God." The text then informs the exorcist that "all daimons will be obedient to you." These texts generally reflect a view that a god/gods are the enabling factor which allow the exorcist to be successful.

The second text we will consider is much more fragmented, but it still exhibits important data about demons and their interactions with humans. PGM CXIV. 1-14 is a prayer, which reads:

> [Protect] her, NN, O lord, [from all] evil acts [and from every] demonic visitation [and] … of Hekate and from … / attack and [from every onslaught (?)] in sleep … [from] mute demons [and from every] epileptic fit [and from all] epilepsy…

The concern with demonic visitation is one which we have not encountered often. We will see something similar in our examination of the *Testament of Solomon*, in which the demon Ornias visits a little boy at night and afflicts him by sucking his thumb, causing him to wither away. Here, the concern is also about nightly visitation from demons, although it takes the form of causing the

[85] Twelftree, "Jesus," 73. Twelftree continues, "The forceful expulsion of the daimon from the person is expected to be successful because the practitioner is using the god as his means to affect the eviction."

person to fall mute and suffer epilepsy. Similarly, the demon in Mark 9:14-29 causes epileptic symptoms and is addressed by Jesus as a mute and deaf spirit (τὸ ἄλαλον καὶ κωφὸν πνεῦμα; Mk. 9:25). Demonic visitation in this magical text, however, seems to denote periodically present symptoms rather than a continuous affliction.

This text is not representative as an exorcism per-se, but it does reflect the tendency of the practitioner to call upon divine power in order to ward off harmful spirits: "[Protect] her, NN, O lord, [from all] evil acts [and from every] demonic visitation…" Like the previous PGM text we observed, protection from evil spirits is ultimately of divine prerogative. The exorcist is not able to simply recite a collection of effectual texts or employ a physical object in hopes that the demons will be kept at bay; instead, the action of the gods is necessary to attain protection from demons.

2.4.7 Summary

In our examination of Greco-Roman texts, three noteworthy factors represent broad views about demons, possession, and exorcism in the Greco-Roman world.

First, I am in agreement with Wesley D. Smith, who argues that possession was not one of the ways that daimons interacted with humans in the Classical and Hellenistic periods: "later forms of demonology have been erroneously read back into the earlier period, with the result that connections between popular and educated thought have been obscured, and the gap between them magnified."[86] It was not until the Common Era (cf. Plutarch's *Lives*[87] or Lucian's *Lover of Lies*) that we were able to observe an recorded occurrence of displacement possession. That such a view of possession is absent in pagan texts prior to Lucian means that it is difficult to identify how early displacement possession entered the Greco-Roman imagination. The presence of displacement

[86] Smith, Wesley D. "So-Called Possession," 404.

[87] Nicias exhibits features which resemble that of someone possessed by a demon, although it is not clear from the story that he is actually possessed.

possession in Lucian's discussion could reflect Jewish or Christian influence on the region's beliefs about possession, as Lucian's exorcist is a Syrian from Palestine. Although we cannot be certain about the origins of displacement possession in Greco-Roman thought, we have observed that pathogenic possession is the primary mode of demonic affliction in the period, especially prior to the second century C.E.

Second, at least some authors were sceptical about exorcistic practices, and viewed them as fraudulent. Lucian's satirical text displays such a disposition toward exorcists, who he says only deliver victims from demonic possession "for a large fee."[88] In *The Sacred Disease,* likewise, the author presents exorcists as a negative example of those who attribute merely physical diseases to supernatural causes for money.

Third, the figure of the exorcist lacks consistent features, and at times it is questionable how prominently an exorcist figure existed in the Greco-Roman imagination. While Plutarch can have a (seemingly) possessed individual, no figure emerges to deal with the perceived demonic affliction. In Philostratus's account of Apollonius of Tyana, on the other hand, possessed individuals exist in the story in order to highlight Apollonius's exceptional exorcistic abilities which do not require him to evoke the power of a deity to gain control over demons. In the Greek magical papyri, one could call upon the authority of a god in order to receive protection from nefarious demons.

2.5 Possession and Exorcism in Early Judaism

Turning our attention now to phenomena of spirit possession and exorcism in Judaism, we will examine texts from the Second Temple period as well as a couple of sources which postdate the first century, yet seem to contain influence from traditions which may predate Christianity.

[88] Lucian of Samosata, *Lover of Lies*, vol. 3

While recounting a brief history of the development of evil spirits and possession in the Ancient Greco-Roman and Jewish world Amanda Witmer writes that "the notion that evil spirits might take possession of human beings appears to have developed during the Second Temple period within Judaism, along with the corresponding shift from monism to dualism."[89] This will prove largely true in our examination of the sources, yet it will be important for our project–as it has been already–to carefully define what we mean by possession. Possession in this period was largely presented in terms of illness or external afflictions, to which we have been referring as pathogenic possession. Displacement possession, as we will see, is difficult to locate in the literature of this time.

With the rise of the notion of demon possession in the Second Temple period, the exorcist, too, begins to take form as an identifiable figure who evokes the authority of God or a human known for exorcistic prowess in order to drive demons out of victims. Traditions would arise in which God would provide exceptional exorcistic ability to figures from the Hebrew Scriptures, namely Solomon and David.

2.5.1 1 Enoch 15:10-11

Here, we will briefly examine a passage which may provide insight into a belief about demon possession in Second Temple Judaism, namely the belief that demonic possession could prevent a person from eating and drinking.

While Enoch serves in an intercessory role between God and the fallen Watchers, he receives a lengthy speech from God which he is to relay to the Watchers concerning their sin and punishment. From this point forward, "the giants who are born from the (union of) the spirits and

[89] Witmer, Amanda. *Jesus, the Galilean Exorcist: His Exorcisms in Social and Political Context*. T & T Clark Library of Biblical Studies. London: T & T Clark, 2012. 34.

the flesh shall be called evil spirits upon the earth" (*1 En*. 15:8).[90] These giant offspring will become the demonic figures with whom we are familiar in later texts. God's description of the evil spirit continues: "The spirits of the giants oppress each other; they will corrupt, fall, be excited, and fall upon the earth, and cause sorrow. They eat no food, nor become thirsty, nor find obstacles. And these spirits shall rise up against the children of the people and against the women because they have proceeded forth (from them)" (*1 En*. 15:10-12). Of particular interest is the statement that the evil spirits of the giants will not eat,[91] become thirsty, nor find obstacles. The text does not immediately seem to relate to spirit possession, but we encounter this idea in Jesus's teaching on John the Baptist and the accusations that John was demon-possessed: "For John came neither eating nor drinking and they said, 'He has a demon'" (Mt.11:18; Lk. 7:33). It is difficult to explain how John's detractors would have come to the conclusion that he was possessed based on his abstinence from food and drink, yet they clearly tried to make such a case based on an idea about the relationship between abstinence from food and drink and demon possession. Perhaps the notion from *1 Enoch* 15:11 that evil spirits would neither eat nor become thirsty lies behind the charge of John's opponents, or perhaps simply that John possesses some supernatural capability to abstain from eating and drinking. It is difficult to say more than this about the concept, as we know that fasting in itself was not inherently thought to denote demon possession.[92] Likewise, there seem to be examples of people who were possessed for periods of time much too great to survive without food and water.[93] We cannot, therefore, say that this text from *1 Enoch* 15 was widely taken to

[90] Trans. J.H. Charlesworth, in: James H. Charlesworth. *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha: Apocalyptic Literature and Testaments*. Two vols. Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 1983. Vol. One.

[91] The Greek text further intensifies the spirits' abstinence from food: μηδὲν ἐσθίοντα, ἀλλ'ἀσιτοῦντα…

[92] See, for example, Matthew 6:16-18, in which there is no concern about demonic activity in the act of fasting.

[93] See Mark 9:21, in which the father tells Jesus that the boy has been possessed from childhood.

mean that demon-possessed individuals could not eat or drink; rather, we can merely suggest that it provides a plausible pre-text for the possession charges against John.

2.5.2 Possession and Exorcism at Qumran

We will now examine texts from the Dead Sea Scrolls which pertain to demon possession and exorcism. In these texts we will begin to see developments in the profile exorcist which expand features from the Hebrew Bible and anticipate conceptions of exorcists which would become more prevalent in the New Testament's first century context.

2.5.2.1 The Prayer of Nabonidus (4Q242)

The Prayer of Nabonidus (4Q242) is a brief text, written from the perspective of the Babylonian king who suffered for seven years with a malignant inflammation (בשחנא באישא) and was banished to live far from other humans until he prayed to God and "an exorcist forgave my sin" (וחטאי שבק לה גזר), restoring him from his affliction.[94] The exorcist, a Jew in exile, brought deliverance to Nabonidus from his ailment by forgiving his sin. Interestingly, there are no demons mentioned in this text, and if it was not for the comment that this healer was a Jewish exorcist, nothing in the text would suggest the presence of demonic possession or exorcism. We can, however, cautiously observe a couple possible conceptions of possession and exorcism present in this text, as it seems unlikely that the Jewish character's status as an exorcist is unrelated to Nabonidus's healing and restoration.

First, if we place this story in the context of spirit-possession more broadly, the manifestation of demonic affliction in the form of physical ailment (or rather, the attribution of

[94] That this text strongly resembles the Nebuchadnezzar story in Daniel 4 indicated that there is a literary relationship between the two texts. Many scholars take the prayer of Nabonidus as prior to Daniel 4, although Steinmann convincingly argues that the Prayer of Nabonidus found at Qumran was likely based on the Daniel narrative: Steinmann, Andrew. "The Chicken and the Egg: A New Proposal for the Relationship between the 'Prayer of Nabonidus' and the 'Book of Daniel.'" *Revue de Qumrân* 20, no. 4(80) (2002): 557–70.

physical ailment to demonic affliction) is a welcome concept in the intensely dualistic Qumran community as well as in many ancient contexts. We do not observe here the idea of displacement possession, although we can imply from the context that pathogenic possession is perhaps present in Nabonidus's situation.

Second, the exorcist's action of sin-forgiving invites the reader to make a connection between Nabonidus's sin and his affliction. This reading is confirmed when considered alongside the Daniel 4 passage in which Nebuchadnezzar's altered state is directly connected to his sin. That the exorcist is able to forgive sins which brings healing is resonant with Jesus's healing of the paralytic in Mark 2:1-12, in which Jesus offers forgiveness prior to healing the paralytic.[95] Whether the author envisaged a scenario in which the exorcist directly confronted a demon is not clear. The exorcist does go on to instruct Nabonidus to write down an account of what happened so that glory, exaltation, and honour would be given to God.[96]

2.5.2.2 4QExorcism ar (4Q560)

The brief text of 4Q560 is a magical text[97] which was used apotropaically at Qumran against a certain demon, identified as:

> "Evil visitor … [...] 3 [... who] enters the flesh, the male penetrator and the female penetrator 4 [...] … iniquity and guilt; fever and chills, and the heat of the heart 5 [...] in sleep, he who crushes the male and she who passes through the female, those who dig 6 [... w]icked [...] …

[95] Joel Marcus notes this similarity between Mark 2 and the Prayer of Nabonidus: *Mark 1-8,* 221.

[96] Similarly, Jesus tells the man who had the Legion to go and tell his family what the Lord had done for him (Mk. 5:19).

[97] Penney and Wise examine this text in light of other Aramaic magical texts: Penney, Douglas L., and Michael O. Wise. "By the Power of Beelzebub an Aramaic Incantation Formula from Qumran (4Q560)." *Journal of Biblical Literature* 113, no. 4 (Winter 1994): 627-650.

At the end of the second line, after "evil visitor" (פקד באיש), one can make out part of the singular letter ש before the line is fragmented. Given the context and the later adjuration of a spirit in the second column, it is likely that this ש is the beginning of the word שיד (demon), as באיש (bad, evil) is "the standard modifier of שיד and other demons in later magic."[98] The author then addresses both a male and female demon, which was a common practice in ancient magical texts.[99] The description of the demon as one who enters the flesh (בבשרא עלל) is best understood in terms of disease entering a person's flesh, as the following description of afflictions (fever and chills, heat of the heart) are inwardly held sicknesses. This description suggests that pathogenic possession is the primary mode of possession in mind, manifesting as disease. The diseases mentioned here could also serve as the names of specific demons, as Penney and Wise note: "Aramaic magical texts frequently do not distinguish between the name of a given disease and that of the demon who causes it… The terminology of 4Q560 likewise designates not disease per se but rather disease demons."[100] Whether these words serve as identifications of the demons themselves or the disease which they cause, they serve here as an identification of the demon, a factor often present in exorcisms.[101]

[98] Penney and Wise, "By the Power," 637.

[99] Naveh notes this feature in texts such as the Aleppo Amulet, an amulet from southern Turkey, and multiple incantation bowls: Naveh, Joseph. "Fragments of an Aramaic Magic Book from Qumran." *Israel Exploration Journal* 48, no. 3/4 (1998): 258.

[100] Penney and Wise go on to cite Luke's account of the healing of Peter's mother-in-law as an example of this kind of demonic identification: "The synoptic pericope concerning a cure of Peter's mother-in-law from fever appears at face value as a simple healing (Matt 8:15//Mark 1:31), but the words of Luke, the beloved physician, betray the ambiguous nature of the event: ἐπετίμησεν τῷ πυρετῷ καὶ ἀφῆκεν αὐτήν, 'he rebuked the fever and it left her.' This standard rendering "it left her" … follows the accounts of Matthew and Mark. In its own Lucan context, the translation "He rebuked the fever(-demon) and it let her go" is equally plausible, as we hope to show elsewhere." While I agree that such a reading of the Lucan account is plausible, I would not count it as a reading strong enough to use as evidence for the legitimacy of this phenomenon more broadly. Penney and Wise, "By the Power," 642.

[101] See, for example, Mk. 5:9 in which Jesus asks for Legion's name, and Mk. 9:25 in which Jesus, during the exorcism, addresses the demon as "Mute and deaf spirit."

It is likely that the mention of iniquity and guilt (עוון ופשע) at the beginning of line four is a partial quotation of Exodus 34:7, in which Israel's God describes himself to Moses as one who keeps lovingkindness for thousands, forgiving iniquity, transgression, and sin (נֹשֵׂא עָוֹן וָפֶשַׁע וְחַטָּאָה). If this is the case, this mention of the divine epithet likely functions to allow the exorcist who is reading text to evoke God's authority over the demon. There is a more fragmented second column in which the exorcist adjures and enchants the spirit, in order to expel it.

From this exorcistic text we can note that possession appears primarily in the form of illness (fever, chills, chest pain) and that the exorcist likely called on the authority of Israel's God as he revealed himself to Moses in order to gain the upper hand of the demon who is causing the illness. The process is formulaic in that it follows a pattern of identifying the demon, calling on a divine help (Israel's God), and then adjuring the spirit so that it leaves the victim. Although it is possible that the fragmented text contains other features which have not survived, these surviving features provide valuable insight into notions of possession and exorcism in the Qumran community.

2.5.2.3. 11QPsalms[a] (11Q5)

In our discussion of David as exorcist, we will examine a passage from 11Q5 XXVII concerning David's songs to perform over those possessed by evil spirits. We will therefore limit our examination here to the content in column XIX. During a prayer asking Israel's God for deliverance from both the guilt of transgression and danger of external enemies, a plea for deliverance from a unique foe arises: "Do not let Satan rule over me (אל תשלט בי שטן), nor an unclean spirit (ורוח טמאה)."[102] Although it is not entirely clear that the author has demonic possession in mind, the language could describe displacement possession in a manner similar to

[102] 11Q5 XIX.15.

the New Testament texts. The notion of Satan or an evil spirit ruling over or being the master of (שלט) a person could easily be understood as a description of displacement. Conversely, when Jesus gives his disciples the ability to participate in his exorcistic ministry, he does so by giving them authority over unclean spirits (Mk. 3:15; 6:7: ἐδίδου αὐτοῖς ἐξουσίαν τῶν πνευμάτων τῶν ἀκαθάρτων). It is worth noting here that the prayer itself is functioning apotropaically. In other words, the psalmist here understands prayer to Israel's God as a legitimate means by which he is able to obtain protection from demonic affliction.

Also of significance is the vocabulary used to describe the evil forces in this prayer, namely Satan (שטן) as a proper name, and the designation "unclean spirit" (רוח טמאה). Satan as a figure who is involved in possession is a familiar idea to the author of Luke's Gospel, who records in his passion narrative Satan's entrance into Judas, which leads to his betrayal of Jesus (Lk. 22:3). Shortly thereafter, Luke's Jesus informs Peter that Satan has asked to sift him like wheat (Lk. 22:31). In this instance, however, Jesus has prayed for Peter's faith, in order that it should not fail. Both in 11Q5 and in Luke 22, prayer is an effective defence against Satan's attempts to rule over God's people. Further, the designation "unclean spirit" (רוח טמאה/πνεῦμα ἀκάθαρτον) is one that is rarely attested outside the Synoptic Gospels, but a favourite demonic designation for the Synoptic authors.[103] The association of demons with ritual impurity in both cases likely stems from the influence of the Watchers myth, in which the giants–and later, the spirits of the giants–are inherently impure due to their composite nature.[104]

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[103] See: Wahlen, Clinton L. *Jesus and the Impurity of Spirits in the Synoptic Gospels*. Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament. 2. Reihe 185. Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2004.

[104] Stuckenbruck, Loren T. "Giant Mythology and Demonology." In: Die *Dämonen: die Dämonologie der israelitisch-jüdischen und frühchristlichen Literatur im Kontext ihrer Umwelt*, edited by Armin Lange, Hermann Lichtenberger, and Diethard Römheld. Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2003. 335; Nickelsburg, George W. E. and James C. VanderKam. *1 Enoch: A Commentary on the Book of 1 Enoch*. Hermeneia--a Critical and Historical Commentary on the Bible. Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2001. 272.

2.5.2.4 Songs of the Sage (4Q510/4Q511)

4Q510 and 4Q511 are two manuscripts of the same text, the Songs of the Sage, although 4Q511 survives in a more complete form. These hymns could be sung by a musical leader not only to ward off demons, but to terrify them: "I, a Sage (משכיל), declare the splendour of his (YHWH's) radiance in order to frighten and terr[ify] all the spirits of the ravaging angels and the bastard spirits, demons, Lilith, owls and [jackals …] and those who strike unexpectedly to lead astray the spirit of knowledge, to make their hearts forlorn."[105] It is not clear from the text whether demonic possession is in view, but the Sage in his interaction with the demons can assist our quest to construct a portrait of an exorcist at Qumran.

The most notable feature of the Sage in his work which terrifies the evil spirits is that the Sage understands God to be the one who is at work through him: "Through my mouth he (YHWH) startles [all the spirits of] the bastards."[106] The Sage does not present himself as an exceptionally powerful figure with authority over the demons apart from God's work in him; rather, he is an instrument through whom God is at work against the evil spirits. For the Sage to say that his work is "[... to terrify] with his (God's) power al[l] spirits of the bastards, to subjugate them by [his] fear"[107] is to reveal that God is the one at work in his apotropaic hymns. This text provides us with some of the most explicit framework with which the Qumran community understood the role of the exorcist, namely that the exorcist was a figure who was able to succeed in his work due to God's power at work through him.

[105] 4Q510 frag. 1, col. 4-6.
[106] 4Q511 frags. 44-62, col. 2.
[107] 4Q511 frag. 35, col. 1, lines 6-7.

2.5.2.5 Summary

In our examination of demon possession and exorcism at Qumran, two features stand out. First, pathogenic possession seems to be the primary manner in which demons afflict humans. Although there are a couple of texts which might have displacement possession–or something like it–in mind, most often and most clearly demonic affliction takes the form of illness and contamination.

Second, although our exorcistic profile is limited in the Dead Sea Scrolls, the common feature which is regularly present is God's empowerment of the exorcist. There is not evidence of a class of human who, on their own, is able to ward off or exorcise demons;[108] instead, it is regularly the case that an exorcist is able to succeed over a demon because God is at work through him.

2.5.3 Solomonic Exorcistic Traditions

The Biblical figure Solomon, although he did not perform any exorcisms in the Hebrew Bible, gained a significant exorcistic reputation in the Second Temple period. The tradition has its roots in 1 Kings 5:12 (LXX 3 Kgdms. 4:28), where, after receiving wisdom from God, Solomon spoke 3,000 proverbs (מָשָׁל) and 1,005[109] songs (שִׁיר).[110] This tradition is expanded in Wisdom of Solomon, a book written in the voice of Solomon in the first century B.C.E. or early first century C.E. In Wisdom 7:17-20, the Solomonic narrator writes:

> "For [God] gave me truthful knowledge of the things which exist, to know the structure of the world (σύστασιν κόσμου) and the working of the elementary principles (ἐνέργειαν στοιχείων), the beginning and the end and the middle of the times, the changes and the transitions of the times, the circles of the years and the arranging of the stars (ἀστέρων

[108] As we will see later, the text of 11Q5 portrays David in the same way.

[109] The LXX reports that Solomon spoke 5,000 (πεντακισχίλιαι) songs. It is likely here that the LXX translator confused the Hebrew חֲמֵשֶׁת וְאֶלֶף to mean 5,000 instead of five and one thousand.

[110] Duling, Dennis C. "Solomon, Exorcism, and the Son of David." *The Harvard Theological Review* 68, no. 3/4 (1975): 237.

> θέσεις), the nature of living things and the wrath of beasts, the forces of spirits (πνευμάτων βίας) and the thoughts of men, the distinctions of plants (διαφορὰς φυτῶν) and the powers of roots (δυνάμεις ῥιζῶν)."

The language here describing Solomon's insight is not as clear as later texts which will attribute exorcistic work to Solomon; however, it is not difficult to see how later writers would come to associate some of these terms with magic and the demonic realm.[111] The mention of the arranging of the stars, for example, is significant, as it is common in ancient literature to refer to spiritual beings as stars or lights in the sky. In the later work, *Testament of Solomon,* Solomon interrogates the demon Ornias and gains power over him in part by learning with which zodiac Ornias is associated. Similarly, during Enoch's tour of Sheol in *1 Enoch* 18:14-19:1, the angel Uriel shows Enoch "the prison house for the stars and the powers of heaven. And the stars which roll over upon the fire, they are the ones which have transgressed the commandments of God from the beginning of their rising because they did not arrive punctually… the spirits of the angels which have united themselves with women." The stars in this text are clearly representing the fallen Watchers who sinned. Further, one of the main reasons for which the Watchers are punished in *1 Enoch* is that they taught the women magic (φαρμακείας), spells (ἐπαοιδὰς), and the cutting of roots (ῥιζοτομίας), and they explained plants to them (καὶ τὰς βοτάνας ἐδήλωσαν αὐταῖς; 1 En. 7:1). Here, there is a clear link between the fallen Watchers, whose offspring would later become demons, and magic and plants. This context is helpful in understanding why some traditions would understand the tradition of Solomon, who was given unrivalled wisdom for God, and spoke about cedar trees in 1 Kings 5:13 (וַיְדַבֵּר עַל־הָעֵצִים מִן־הָאֶרֶז), which was later specified as the powers of roots in Wisdom 7:19 (δυνάμεις ῥιζῶν), as fertile ground for later exorcistic traditions when spirit possession and exorcism became an interest in Judaism.

[111] Duling, "Solomon," 238.

Solomon's exorcistic ability, as we will see, is consistently rooted in God's empowerment of Solomon, either through his unrivalled cosmological knowledge, or through his special ring with roots in it, both of which he received from God and are closely related due to the connection between cosmological wisdom and the cutting of roots.

2.5.3.1 Solomon as Exorcist at Qumran

We can see clear evidence of Solomon's exorcistic reputation as early as the writings of the Qumran community, although the fragmentary text which remains is unable to provide a detailed exorcistic portrait. In column one and the beginning of column two of *11QApocryphal Psalms* (11Q11) we read:

> *Col.* I 2 [...] and who weeps for him [...] 3 [...] oath [...] 4 [...] by YHWH [...] 5 [...] dragon 6 [...] the ear[th …] 7 [...] exor[cising …] 8 [...] … [...] 9 [...] this [...] 10 [...] the demon [...] 11 [...] he will dwell [...]
> *Col.* II 1 [...] … [...] 2 [...] Solomon, and he will invo[ke…] 3 [... the spir]its and the demons, [...] 4 [...] These are [the de]mons, and the Pri[nce of Animosi]ty 5 [... w]ho [...] the aby[ss …] 6 [...] … [...] the gre[at …] …

The text in its current form makes it difficult to say much more than that Solomon is mentioned in relation to demons. It is not clear what Solomon's precise role is,[112] other than that Solomon invokes/calls upon (ויקרא) someone, presumably YHWH, who is mentioned shortly after as Israel's God, "who made the heavens and the earth and all that is in them, who separated light from darkness." At best, we can say that the tradition of Solomon as an exorcist might be present, but not necessarily prevalent in the Qumran community, who, as we will see, were more interested in David as an exorcist.

[112] Bohak notes the difficulty of discerning whether this psalm is attributed to Solomon, David, another figure, or whether it might be intentionally anonymous: Bohak, Gideon. "Exorcistic Psalms of David and Solomon (an Introduction and Translation)." In *Old Testament Pseudepigrapha: More Noncanonical Scriptures*, edited by Richard Bauckham, James Davila, and Alexander Panayotov, 1:287–97. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2013. 289.

2.5.3.2 The Testament of Solomon

The *Testament of Solomon*[113] is a notoriously difficult text in terms of its origins. Although the book speaks as king Solomon in the first person ("I, Solomon… said… *TSol.* 1:3), the date of its composition was certainly much later, though a precise date might not be possible.[114] Whether the versions of the text which have survived until today are a Jewish composition from the first century C.E., a later Christian composition, or an older Jewish text with significant Christian recensions is not entirely clear. The text survives in two main recensions, *TSol* A and *TSol* B, and there is no consensus regarding an *Urtext* for *TSol*.[115] Whatever the origins of the text as we now have it may be, it is at least generally accepted among scholars that "much of the testament reflects first-century Judaism in Palestine."[116] Even if the composition of the *Testament* postdates that of the Synoptic Gospels by multiple centuries, it does contain earlier demonological traditions which will be helpful for our current study.

TSol is a parabiblical[117] narrative concerning the events surrounding the building of the temple under Solomon's reign (1 Kings 6). Unlike the account in the Hebrew Scriptures, this account includes demonic opposition to the temple construction efforts. A basic outline of the contents of *TSol* is as follows: Solomon is introduced in the opening Greek title of the *TSol.* as "Son of David, who reigned in Jerusalem, and subdued all the spirits of the air, of the earth, and

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[113] Hereafter, *TSol.* Translation and versification are taken from Duling, "Testament," 1983.

[114] See: James Harding and Loveday Alexander, "Dating the Testament of Solomon," (posted on 28-5-1999, removed after 20 years), accessible via: https://web.archive.org/web/20190503205000/https://www.st-andrews.ac.uk/divinity/rt/otp/guestlectures/harding.

[115] Although even these two attestations are gathered through multiple subrecensions. See: Jan Dochhorn. "The Testament of Solomon: Some Preliminary Remarks." In *Editionen und Studien zum Testamentum Salomonis*, edited by Jan Dochhorn, Felix Albrecht, Christried Bõttrich, Nils Arne Pedersen, Jacques van Ruiten, and Tobias Thum, 183–94. Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2023. 184-85.

[116] D.C. Duling. "Testament of Solomon." In *Old Testament Pseudepigrapha. Volume 1: Apocalyptic Literature and Testaments*, edited by James H. Charlesworth. Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 1983. 942; Jan Dochhorn. "*The Testament,"* 184-188; Twelftree, Graham. *Jesus the Exorcist: A Contribution to the Study of the Historical Jesus*. Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1993. 36.

[117] On "parabiblical" as a literary category, see: Jan Dochhorn. "Überlegungen zu der Neuen Reihe "Parabiblica." In *Editionen* 1-20. Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2023. 1.

under the earth; through (them) he also accomplished all the magnificent works of the Temple."[118] The book begins during the construction of the temple. There was a certain craftsman working on the temple who was a little boy, whom Solomon loved more than all of the other builders.[119] Solomon was paying double wages for the boy, yet he notices that the boy is growing thinner every day (1:1-2). At this point, the little boy reveals to Solomon that the demon Ornias has been coming to him each night, stealing half of his pay and sucking on his right thumb, which is causing him to grow thin (1:3-4). Solomon is disturbed by the boy's report, and prays to God in order that he might gain authority over the demon (1:5). During the prayer, Solomon is visited by the archangel Michael, and receives a special "ring which had a seal engraved on precious stone" (1:6) which he is instructed to use in order to "imprison all the demons, both female and male, and with their help you shall build Jerusalem when you bear this seal of God" (1:7). Solomon gives the ring to the little boy, and he brings Ornias to Solomon. Solomon interrogates the demon, asking him, "Who are you? What is your name? … Tell me, in which sign of the zodiac do you reside" (2:1-2)? Ornias answers all of the questions and adds that the archangel Ouriel has the power to thwart him. Ornias is the first demon who is bound, and he is given the ring and sent out to bring all of the other demons to face the same interrogation before Solomon. Just as Michael had promised

[118] Fisher would contend that Solomon's identification here as the "son of David" is a significant one for understanding the Synoptic Gospels in that it associated the title with Solomon's healing or exorcistic abilities in texts such as this one, and in the Aramaic incantation bowls. The same title is applied to Jesus in the Synoptics by those who wish for healing: Fisher, Loren R. "Can This Be the Son of David?" In *Jesus and the Historian. Written in Honor of Ernest Cadman Colwell*, edited by F. T. Trotter, 82–97. Philadelphia: Westminster, 1968. 82-97. It is difficult to say with confidence that Jesus receives the title "son of David" as an echo of the Solomonic tradition of exorcism. It is just as possible that the reference is meant to invoke more about David's exorcistic reputation than Solomon's. That the title "son of David" is applied to Jesus in non-exorcistic/healing contexts (Mt. 1:1; 21:9, 15) is also important.

[119] Duling's translation recounts that the little boy is the son of the master craftsman, but we will go with Felix Albrecht critical Greek text which has the little boy being the worker and visited by the demon: φθονήσαντος δὲ τοῦ δαίμοσος ἐπὶ τὴν τοῦ παιδὸς προθυμίαν, ἤρχετο καθεκάστην ἡμέραν ὁ δαίμων καὶ ἐλάμβανε τὸ ἥμισυ τῶν σιτίων αὐτου καὶ ἐξήλαζεν ἐκ τῶν ἀντιχείρων τῆς δεξιᾶς αὐτοῦ χειρός. Felix Albrecht. "Neue Textzeugen für das Testamentum Salomonis." In *Editionen und Studien zum Testamentum Salomonis*, edited by Jan Dochhorn, Felix Albrecht, Christried Bõttrich, Nils Arne Pedersen, Jacques van Ruiten, and Tobias Thum, 32–54. Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2023. 32.

Solomon (1:7), all of the demons were bound and forced to participate in the constructing of the temple (ch. 3-17). The latter part of the story shifts focus from the building of the temple to other parts of Solomon's life, including his fall into idolatry. The book ends with the spirit of God departing from Solomon, causing him to become a laughingstock to idols and demons, and with a subsequent purpose statement for the book's composition: "For this reason I have written about this, my testament, in order that those who hear might pray about, and pay attention to, the last things and not to the first things, in order that they might finally find grace forever. Amen" (26:8)

Five demonological features in the *TSol.* are worth noting. The first is that, unlike in the Synoptic Gospels, humans in the *TSol.* are able to physically see demons. There are no instances in the Synoptics in which a person sees an unclean spirit.[120] After the demon Ornias is corralled by the little boy's use of Solomon's ring, the demon is brought to Solomon, and the solomonic narrator writes "I, Solomon, got up from my throne and saw the demon shuddering and trembling with fear" (2:2).

The second noteworthy demonological feature is that unlike in the Synoptic accounts, displacement is not present in *TSol*. We do not see, for example, the demon Ornias taking control of the little boy's bodily functions so that when Solomon speaks to the little boy he is actually speaking to the demon. What appears instead is similar to the demonic harassment which occurs in the book *Tobit*, in which the evil demon Asmodeus harasses Sarah by killing her husbands on their wedding night before they are able to consummate the new marriage. Ornias remains distinct from his victim throughout the story, harming him by sucking his thumb.

[120] The closest example would be Jesus' report to the disciples that he saw Satan fall like lightning in Lk. 10:18. Likewise, in Josephus' account of Eleazar performing an exorcism in Solomon's name, it is clear that neither Eleazar nor the spectators are able to see the demon. Thus, Eleazar asks the demon to overturn a cup of water in order to confirm that it had left the man. Contrary to these texts, in the TSol. humans are able to physically see demons.

Third, the knowledge of a particular demon's name, activity, astronomical association, and thwarting angel (or magical/medical formula[121]) provide Solomon in particular and humans in general with protection against, and even power over, demons who would bring harm. Although such an apotropaic strategy does not appear here in the context of an exorcism, part of a similar idea might be present in the Markan and Lukan accounts of the Gerasene demoniac (Mk. 5:1-20; Lk. 8:26-39) when Jesus asks the demon, "What is your name?" to which the demoniac replies "Legion is my name, for we are many" (Mk. 5:9). Commentators on Mark will often note here that Jesus asks for the name of the demon in order to gain power over him.[122] Similarly, the demons in Mark might be attempting to gain power over Jesus in their confrontations by naming him.[123]

Fourth, Solomon gains power over the demons primarily by means of the ring which God gave to him through the archangel Michael. That Solomon is not immediately able to exercise authority of Ornias is a significant detail for our project. When Solomon heard of Ornias harassing the little boy, he "went into the temple of God and, praising him day and night, begged with all my soul that the demon might be delivered into my hands and that I might have authority over him" (*TSol.* 1:5). Although such an episode is not present in all of the literature containing Solomonic exorcist traditions, the idea of Solomon's reliance on God for his exorcistic power fits well into the other literature. As we will see, the tradition of Solomon and a ring used for exorcism is also present in Josephus's account of a certain Eleazar, who used a ring which Solomon had

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[121] Duling, "Testament," 952.

[122] See: Marcus, Joel. *Mark 1-8: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*. The Anchor Bible. New York, NY: Doubleday, 1999. 344; Gundry, Robert H. *Mark: A Commentary on His Apology for the Cross*. Vol. 1 (1-8). Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2004. 260; Collins, Adela Yarbro. *Mark: A Commentary*. Edited by Harold W. Attridge. Hermeneia--a Critical and Historical Commentary on the Bible. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2007. 268. See also: Bonner, Campbell. "The Technique of Exorcism." *Harvard Theological Review* 36, no. 1 (January 1943): 39–49.

[123] Mk. 1:24: τί ἡμῖν καὶ σοί, Ἰησοῦ Ναζαρηνέ; ἦλθες ἀπολέσαι ἡμᾶς; οἶδά σε τίς εἶ, ὁ ἅγιος τοῦ θεοῦ. Mk 3:11: σὺ εἶ ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ θεοῦ. Mk. 5:7: τί ἐμοὶ καὶ σοί, Ἰησοῦ υἱὲ τοῦ θεοῦ τοῦ ὑψίστου; ὁρκίζω σε τὸν θεόν, μή με βασανίσῃς.

prescribed in order to draw out a demon through a man's nose.[124] Both exorcists–Solomon in *TSol.* and Eleazar in *Antiquities*–employ the special ring which enables them to access a special exorcistic power which they would not otherwise have. Even the little boy in *TSol.* 1:11 is able to bind the demon Ornias by making use of the ring. Likewise, Ornias himself uses the ring to bind Beelzeboul (3:1-6). This kind of exorcistic work which relies on the use of a physical object–in this case a ring–signals to the reader that the one who uses the ring is not of any special status or possessing any notable virtue which would enable them to have such authority over demons, as even little boys and fellow demons can make use of such a powerful aide.

The subjection of the demons to those who hold the ring, however, is not always complete. When a bound Ornias, who is terrified to touch iron (2:6), receives an order from Solomon to assist in the temple construction by cutting stones for the temple, he is still able to resist Solomon's command (2:7). Ornias's resistance prompts Solomon to pray that Ouriel, Ornias's thwarting angel, would come down from heaven and assist him. Ouriel immediately comes down and subjects Ornias, causing him to cut stones for the temple (2:8).

Ornias's resistance to Solomon's command and the presence of the thwarting angels in this story demonstrate the limited nature of any human's authority over demons. Even the great Solomon, with his unparalleled cosmological wisdom (Wisdom of Solomon 17:15-20), is unable to completely control the demons by using his God-given ring. Such details in the text would suggest that without divine aid, humans are not able to overcome the power of demons at all. Further, the presence of the thwarting angels in the story demonstrates that even humans with a God-given piece of subjecting equipment are not able to fully subdue the demons without the help of angels.

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[124] Josephus, *Jewish Antiquities 8.46*

The fifth demonological feature of note is that of the role of Beelzeboul. *TSol.* 2:9-3:6 reads:

> Then I gave [Ornias] the seal and said, "Go and bring here to me the Prince of demons." So Ornias took the ring and went to Beelzeboul, and said to him, "Come! Solomon summons you!" But Beelzeboul said to him, "Tell me, who is the Solomon of whom you speak?" Then Ornias flung the ring into the chest of Beelzeboul and replied, "Solomon the king summons you!" Beelzeboul cried out like (one who is burned) from a great burning flame of fire, and when he had gotten up, he followed (Ornias) under coercion and came to me. When I saw the Prince of Demons approaching, I glorified God and said, "Blessed are you, Lord God Almighty, who has granted to your servant Solomon wisdom, the attendant of your thrones, and who has placed in subjection all the power of the demons." Then I interrogated him and said, "Tell me, who are you?" The demon said, "I am Beelzeboul, the ruler of the demons." I demanded that without interruption he sit next to me and explain the manifestations of the demons. Then he promised to bring me all the unclean spirits bound. Again, I glorified the God of heaven and earth, continually giving thanks to him."

That there is a prince of demons named "Beelzeboul" in this story is of interest to the study of Synoptic demonology.[125] In the Beelzeboul controversy of the Synoptic Gospels a charge of collusion with the prince of demons himself is levied against Jesus in order to discredit his exorcisms: "The scribes who came down from Jerusalem were saying, 'He is possessed by Beelzeboul,' and 'By the prince of the demons he casts out demons" (Mk. 3:22b; cf. par. Mt. 9:34; 12:24; Lk. 11:15).[126] In a reference to himself in Matthew 10:25, Jesus says, "If they have called

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[125] Among the names given to an arch-demon or leader of the demons in Jewish literature, the name Beelzeboul is somewhat unique. There are more familiar names, such as Satan (שטן; Jub. 10:12; 11Q5 14:15), Mastema (משטמה; which possibly derives from שטן; Jub. 10:8), Belial/Beliar (1QS 1:18, 24; 1QM 4:2; 8:11, 2 Cor. 6:15; etc.), and Azazel (1 En. 9:6; 10:4; 13:1). Beelzeboul, however, is not a common name for the leader of the demons in Second Temple Jewish literature. The name Beelzeboul might come from 2 Kings 1:2, where the Philistine deity Baal Zebub (בעל זבוב) is mentioned, which means "lord of the flies," and it is probably a taunting word play on the name of the Canaanite God Baal Zabul (בעל זבל) See: Marcus, *Mark,* 272; Collins, *Mark,* 228. The rarity of this name and its lack of precedence for serving as the name of the prince of demons prior to Mark's Gospel would suggest that this story in TSol. shows clear Christian influence, and cannot serve as an occurrence prior to Mark which preserves an older Jewish tradition of Beelzeboul as the prince of the demons.

[126] The Markan account has the scribes saying that Jesus is *possessed* by Beelzeboul (Βεελζεβοὺλ ἔχει) and that by (means of) the prince of demons he casts out demons (Mk. 3:22). This charge of possession is dropped by Matthew and Luke, who report only that by the means of Beelzeboul's power is Jesus able to perform exorcisms. The Markan version also leaves open the possibility that Beelzeboul and the prince of demons are two different figures by placing them in two distinct indirect discourses marked by ὁτι, whereas both Matthew (οὗτος οὐκ ἐκβάλλει τὰ δαιμόνια εἰ μὴ τῷ Βεελζεβοὺλ ἄρχοντι τῶν δαιμονίων) and Luke (ἐν Βεελζεβοὺλ τῷ ἄρχοντι τῶν δαιμονίων ἐκβάλλει τὰ δαιμόνια) clarify that the two designations refer to the same being by placing them in an appositional construction.

the master of the house 'Beelzeboul,' how much more those in the house." This saying is unique from the other Beelzeboul logia, in that it has people saying that Jesus himself *is* Beelzeboul.

TSol. presents a story in which humans are beleaguered by demons who oppose the work of God which is carried out by humans, namely the construction of the temple under Solomon's reign. The most prominent example of a demon harassing a human is that of Ornias sucking the little boy's thumb and taking half of his wages. Although the little boy is not possessed in the sense of displacement such as we see in the Synoptic Gospels, and therefore Solomon's work is not formally exorcistic (i.e. driving a demon out from within a person.), the text still provides valuable insight into ancient notions of exorcism. The ring Solomon uses to gain control over the demons is a feature which the story shares with the Josephus excerpt we will examine next, a more formal example of an exorcism. Even Solomon, who possesses an unrivalled wisdom of the cosmos, was dependent on multiple forms of divine assistance in order to subjugate the demons.

2.5.3.3 Josephus "Antiquities" 8.45-48

Outside of the New Testament, only one account of an exorcism survives in Jewish literature from the first century C.E. In *Ant.* 8.45-48, while reflecting on the unrivalled wisdom of Solomon, Josephus mentions Solomon's God-given knowledge and ability to perform exorcisms. Further, among the written traditions attributed to Solomon, there remain incantations and forms of exorcism (τρόπους ἐξορκώσεων) which were utilised by later generations. Josephus recalls a certain Eleazar who continued such work in his own day:

> And this kind of cure is of very great power among us to this day, for I have seen a certain Eleazar, a countryman of mine, in the presence of Vespasian, his sons, tribunes and a number of other soldiers, free men possessed by demons, and this was the manner of the cure: he put to the nose of the possessed man a ring which had under its seal one of the roots prescribed by Solomon, and then, as the man smelled it, drew out the demon through his nostrils, and, when the man at once fell down, adjured the demon never to come back into him, speaking Solomon's name and reciting the incantations which he had composed. Then, wishing to convince the bystanders and prove to them that he had this power, Eleazar

> placed a cup or foot-basin full of water a little way off and commanded the demon, as it went out of the man, to overturn it and make known to the spectators that he had left the man. And when this was done, the understanding and wisdom of Solomon were clearly revealed, on account of which we have been induced to speak of these things, in order that all men may know the greatness of his nature and how God favoured him, and that no one under the sun may be ignorant of the king's surpassing virtue of every kind.[127]

Of particular relevance for the current project is the mode by which Eleazar delivers those who are possessed by demons (τοὺς ὑπὸ τῶν δαιμονίων λαμβανομένους). First, Eleazar used a ring containing a root prescribed by Solomon, placing the ring to the nose of the man to draw the demon out through his nostrils. Charles Isbell notes that "the signet-ring of Solomon" appears often on magical bowls[128] which were used for warding off demons from one's home. The connection between Eleazar and magical bowls suggests that the practice of invoking Solomonic authority through an object such as a ring was a somewhat common practice. The majority of the magical bowls which have been discovered were found upside down, likely to trap demons inside of them.[129] Eleazar, in order to demonstrate his great power to those watching, placed a cup of water on the ground and commanded the demon to overturn the cup.[130] The command of Eleazar might have functioned to demonstrate not only that the demon was present, but that it was inside the cup, no longer able to return to its former host.

Second, after the demon comes out of the man, Eleazar employs a verbal tactic against it by invoking Solomon's name–and therefore his power–and by reciting incantations that had supposedly been written down by Solomon himself. The reference here to incantations which

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[127] Josephus, *Antiquities 8.46-48.* Translated by H. St. J. Thackeray.

[128] Isbell, Charles D. *Corpus of the Aramaic Incantation Bowls*. SBLDS 17. Missoula, MT: Scholars Press, 1975. 7.

[129] Twelftree, Graham H. "Jesus the Exorcist," 69; Budge, E.A. Wallace. "Babylonian Terra-Cotta Devil-Traps." In *Amulets and Talismans*. New Hyde Park, NY: University Books, 1961. 283-90.

[130] Cotter, *Miracles,* 105. Cotter notes the similarity between Josephus's account of Eleazar and Philostratus's account of Apollonius of Tyana, both of which "show that a listening audience appreciates some proof that demons are indeed present, and are subject to the hero."

Solomon had composed is ambiguous. The most likely referent of these incantations is found in 1 Kings 5:12 (LXX 4:28) which, as we observed earlier, received considerable expansion in texts like Wisdom of Solomon 7:15-20.

Josephus's account of Eleazar performing an exorcism is a valuable analogue for the Markan accounts of Jesus's exorcistic ministry because it is the only surviving Jewish account of an exorcism from the first century. The most obvious difference between Jesus and Eleazar as exorcists is their means by which they carry out the exorcistic task. Eleazar uses both the ring and a traditional incantation to complete his work. The Markan Jesus, by contrast, speaks directly to demons in his exorcisms, but never uses any aids nor calls upon any authority outside of himself.[131] Mark's Gospel even records an occasion in which Jesus performed an exorcism from a distance, without any noted interaction between Jesus and the demon at all (Mk. 7:24-30). Rather than an exorcist who relies on fumigations and incantations like other first century exorcists,[132] Mark depicts Jesus as one who has the ability to cast out demons apart from any known confrontation. The implications for such a portrayal of Jesus will be explored in full later, but for now it will suffice to note the contrast between Jesus and his lone first century Jewish contemporary.

This text enables us to observe the tradition of Solomon's special exorcistic abilities through the actions of Eleazar. That neither Eleazar nor Solomon are able, by their own ability, to subjugate demons is important for understanding their role in this text. Eleazar needed to use the ring which Solomon had prescribed. Solomon's exorcistic authority was not intrinsic or merely a virtue he fostered; rather, according to 1 Kings 5:12 (LXX 4:28) he received wisdom and insight as a gift from God. The portraits of both Eleazar and Solomon as exorcists are that of those who

[131] Witmer, *Jesus,* 46.

[132] Cf. Justin Martyr, *Dial.* 85.3 (ca. 100-165 CE) in which he recalls that both Jewish and Gentile exorcists employed fumigations and incantations.

are aided by divine power, showing that neither of them have authority on their own to cast out demons.

2.5.3.4 Incantation Bowls

After pointing out that a generation of New Testament scholars, Bultmann the foremost among them,[133] had started to make use of non-canonical material for understanding Jesus's exorcisms which still dominate historical discussions,[134] Loren Fisher put forward Aramaic magical literature as a new corpus to advance the knowledge of exorcistic practices in antiquity.[135] This literature has been preserved written on the inside of bowls which have been discovered in modern day Iraq and Iran, and dates back ca. 7th century CE. Although the bowls are much later than the writings of the New Testament, we will see that they draw on tradition likely found in the *Testament of Solomon*, a work which is much closer in its composition to the Gospels. The texts of the incantation bowls, then, contain fragments of thought drawn from much earlier Solomonic tradition. Most of the bowls which have been discovered have been facing down toward the ground, buried underneath the floors of houses.[136] Some scholars believe this to be a significant detail, noting that the bowls were left upside down which indicated that they had trapped a demon inside of them, which offered protection from that demon for the rest of that room or house.[137] This theory is rejected by some, and other theories of the bowls' praxis have been offered.[138] Whatever the precise means by which people used the bowls, people must have been using them

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[133] Bultmann, Rudolf. *The History of the Synoptic Tradition*. Translated by John Marsh. Rev. ed. New York: Harper & Row, 1968. 231.

[134] Josephus, *Ant.* 8.45-48; Philostratus, *Life of Apollonius of Tyana*.

[135] Fisher. "Son of David?" 82.

[136] Hilprecht comments: "most of the one hundred bowls excavated while I was on the scene were found upside down in the ground." Hilprecht, H.V. *Explorations in Bible Lands During the 19th Century*. Philadelphia, PA: A.J. Holman, 1903. 447.

[137] Yamauchi, Edwin M. "Aramaic Magic Bowls." *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 85, no. 4 (1965): 522; Twelftree, "Jesus the Exorcist," 69; Budge, "Babylonian," 283-290.

[138] Yamauchi summarises other theories: "Aramaic" 522. Theories range from the bowls serving as utensils for the dead, to hydromancy, to serving as amulets for families.

apotropaically. The bowls have text written on the inside, starting on the outside edge and spiralling inward toward the middle, where there is often a drawing of the demon *Lîlît* being bound, or another demon. The texts in the incantation bowls do not contain a narrative about Solomon performing exorcisms; rather, they invoke the authority of Solomon in order to gain control over the demon. The other ancient sources we examined contain exorcisms attributed to Solomon, and these traditions provide a context for the invocation of Solomon in the bowls. We will now examine one of these texts which will serve as an example of a common feature in other bowls, namely utilising the Solomonic tradition in order to ward off evil spirits.[139] One bowl ends its textual spiral with the following proclamation to the demon:

> "You are now bound,
> demons, and sealed, devils. The devils are bound . . . . . [y]ou will do, with the bond of El Shadday and with the seal-
> ing of King Solomon the son of [David . . . . .] . . . . . Amen."[140]

The mention of the sealing of King Solomon and his identification as the son of David at the end of the inscription is of particular relevance for the current study. We noted in Josephus' account of Eleazar the use of the ring with a seal inside of it which had been prescribed by Solomon (τὸν δακτύλιον ἔχοντα ὑπὸ τῇ σφραγῖδι ῥίζαν ἐξ ὧν ὑπέδειξε Σολομών).[141] Likewise, in the *Testament of Solomon*, Solomon receives from God through the archangel Michael a ring with a seal by which he gains control over the demons and is thus able to employ their help in the construction of the temple in Jerusalem (*TSol.* 1:6). Mentions of this kind of signet-ring of Solomon are a common feature in the incantation bowls.[142] Whereas Josephus gives a narrative in which Eleazar uses the

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[139] We will make use of Charles Isbell's text and translation of the bowls in:Isbell, Charles D. *Corpus of the Aramaic Incantation Bowls*. SBL Dissertation Series 17. Missoula, MT: Society of Biblical Literature, 1975.

[140] . . דויד] [...ת] עבדון באיסורא דאל שדי ובחותמא דישלומו מלכא בר אתון כען אסיריתון שידין וחתימיתון דיוין אסירין דיוין . . . . . [. . . Ibsell, *Corpus*, 31-33. אמן

[141] Josephus, *Antiquities,* 8.47.

[142] Isbell, *Corpus,* 7; See also: Perdrizet, Paul. "Σφραγις Σολομωνος." *Revue des Études Grecques* 16, no. 68/69 (1903): 42–61.

signet-ring to draw out the demon through a man's nose, and in the *Testament* Solomon uses the ring to control the demons, this bowl offers only a brief mention of the seal. That the sealing of Solomon is in a parallel construction with El Shadday might suggest that the means by which God's power will bind the demon is the sealing of Solomon. An earlier portion of the bowl reads, "My power comes from the one who created heaven and earth," and then continues to make threats against any demon who would attempt to harm a certain Marai, the son of 'Itay and Qurdas with the binding with which the seven stars and the twelve signs of the zodiac have been bound until the great day of judgement.[143] Duling notes that out of the incantation bowls, there are eighteen references to "Solomon, the son of David," and that thirteen out of these refer to Solomon's signet-ring or seal.[144] That these texts are not exorcistic texts *per se* is important; rather, the texts in the bowls seem to have apotropaic properties which serve as preventative measures against demons and night demons. What the incantation bowls demonstrate is that the tradition of Solomon as a prolific exorcist was influential enough to be employed centuries after Josephus and the *Testament of Solomon* by families in their homes. That Solomon is explicitly identified as the "son of David" in these demon-related texts might noteworthy in providing a context for instances in the Gospels in which Jesus is addressed as the son of David by someone who needs deliverance from a demon or a disease;[145] however, Duling convincingly refutes this idea, noting that "Never is 'Son of David' used [in the bowls] absolutely or as a form of address, as in the New Testament; rather, it appears more as an additional clarification of descent, as in the wisdom literature and some passages of the *Testament of Solomon*."[146]

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[143] We might detect here an allusion to the Enochic Watchers myth, in which the fallen Watchers are called "stars" (1 En. 18:4, 14, 15; 21:6). The stars (Watchers) in *1 Enoch* are likewise bound and awaiting a final day of judgement (1 En. 10:5-6, 12; 14:5; 19:2; 21:1-10; 54:6)

[144] Duling, "Solomon," 246-47.

[145]Fisher, "Son of David?" 82-83.

[146] Duling, "Solomon," 247.

The incantation bowls, then, draw upon the tradition of Solomon as an exorcist, and in particular upon Solomon's signet-ring which was powerful to ward off demonic spirits. The ring, as we saw in the tradition represented in *TSol.* is a gift from God which enabled Solomon to subjugate the demons. The apotropaic property of Solomonic authority is invoked in conjunction with an invocation of El Shadday, presenting Solomon's ability as dependent on God's ability.

2.4.3.5 Summary

The texts which we have examined portray Solomon as a revered exorcist who received wisdom and insight from God which enabled him to have authority over demons. The data consistently shows Solomon's exorcistic authority to be derivative and part of the gift of wisdom from God. By making use of Solomon's wisdom or his ring, authors present Solomon's exorcistic ability as a gift which ultimately comes from God's empowerment.

2.5.4 Davidic Exorcistic Traditions

David, less than Solomon, also had an exorcistic reputation in the Second Temple period. The foundations of David's ability as an exorcist arise out of 1 Samuel 16:14-23, where, after Samuel finds and anoints David, and the spirit of YHWH rushes upon him, Saul is abandoned by the spirit of YHWH and harassed by an evil spirit from YHWH (רוּחַ־רָעָה מֵאֵת יְהוָה). Saul calls David to play songs on the harp[147] for him, in which Saul finds relief from his torment. We will examine two texts from Qumran, as well as Josephus's account of this story, both of which highlight David as an exorcist.

2.5.4.2 David as Exorcist at Qumran

11Q5 (*11QPsalms*^{a}) column 27 recounts David's life and career. In particular, the text is interested in David's musical activity, listing each of the different kinds of psalms he wrote. The last category

[147] Or some other kind of stringed instrument, see: Biegas, Marcin. "Was King David an Exorcist?" *Biblical Annals* 13, no. 4 (October 2023): 594.

is that of the songs to perform over the stricken (ושיר לנגן על הפגועים), of which he wrote four (27:9-10). This text appears to be drawing on the tradition of David which arises out of 1 Samuel 16:14-24, in which David would expel an evil spirit (רוּחַ הָרָעָה) from Saul by playings songs on his harp. Whatever the author of 1 Samuel might have meant by a harmful spirit, its reception at Qumran takes it to be something like a demon. For the Qumran community, we can observe a development in which demons harass or terrify humans as in the case of Saul and those who are stricken (הפגועים) by demons.

The use of music as a means of exorcism is notably different from most of the exorcistic strategies which we have observed in other sources. Whereas other exorcists commonly confront a demon by speaking directly to it, David employs the power of song. It is quite possible that the song envisioned here has words, and that these words might follow more traditional exorcistic formulae. Although 1 Samuel 16 mentions the harp, but no lyrics, David's reputation as a poet and lyricist make it highly plausible that the author envisions a song with words which confront the evil spirit.

These four songs which David wrote to perform over the possessed, along with all of the 4,050 total songs he wrote, were given to him by God: "All these he spoke through (the spirit of) prophecy which had been given to him from before the Most high."[148] This note is important, as once again the successful exorcist is not one who holds a special ability to cast out demons; instead, the ability to be successful in exorcism is a gift given from God himself.

11Q11 (*11QapocrPS*) is another text which can provide insight into Davidic traditions related to demons and exorcism. As in 11Q5, the victims of demonic harassment are here described

[148] 11Q5 XXVII.11.

as stricken (הפגועים).[149] There is a ascription to David (לדויד) in the opening lines, which could imply that this was thought to be one of the four compositions of David to be performed over those stricken by demons. The text is then described as an incantation in the name of YHWH, evoking YHWH's power over the demon, and the author instructs his readers to say the following to a demon who comes in the night:

> Who are you, [oh offspring of] man and of the seed of the ho[ly] ones? Your face is a face of [delus]ion, and your horns are horns of illu[si]on. You are darkness and not light,[injus]tice and not justice. [...] the chief of the army. YHWH [will bring] you [down] [to the] deepest [Sheo]l, [he will shut] the two bronze [ga]tes through [which n]o Light [penetrates.][150]

We observe here what is consistent with other Davidic material, namely that Davidic exorcistic activity is a result of YHWH's confrontation with a demon, for it is YHWH who will drag the demon down to Sheol.

2.5.4.3 Josephus

In *Antiquities 6.166-169,* Josephus recounts the narrative from 1 Samuel 16:14-23, noting first that the deity (τὸ θεῖον) left Saul and went to David, causing David to begin to prophesy. Josephus then follows the LXX rendering of the text, in which Saul's affliction takes the form of asphyxiation (δαιμόνια πνιγμοὺς αὐτῷ καὶ στραγγάλας ἐπιφέροντα). Unlike the LXX, in which the source of Saul's suffocation is a singular evil spirit from the Lord (πνεῦμα πονηρὸν παρὰ Κυρίου), Josephus has multiple demons (δαιμόνια) attacking Saul. When David comes to Saul and plays his harp and sings for him, he restores Saul to himself (ποιῶν ἑαυτοῦ γίνεσθαι τὸν Σαοῦλον). As Twelftree

[149] 11Q11 V. 2.
[150] 11Q11 V. 6-10.

notes, Josephus later frames this event in more standard exorcism language (τοῦ πονηροῦ πνεύματος καὶ τῶν δαιμονίων … ἐξέβαλεν; 6.211).[151]

It is possible that Josehpus has in mind multiple forms of demonic affliction in this text. Saul's ailment is framed in terms of external affliction, and perhaps that of internal affliction. The demons are externally assailing and tormenting Saul (προσίῃ τὰ δαιμόνια καὶ ταράττῃ), as is seen in his suffocation. Possibly implied in the description of David's action as making Saul be himself (6.169) is that he was previously beside himself. Josephus's account of Eleazar's exorcism, as we noted, might show awareness of such a displacement possession. The phrase is dense, however, and the most we can confidently say is that a pathogenic possession is present in this text.

2.5.4.4 Summary

David's reputation as an exorcist is not nearly as pronounced as Solomon's, but it was prominent enough to survive in a few texts. The primary feature we observed that is consistent throughout the Davidic material, similar to the Solomonic material, is the acknowledgement by authors that exorcistic success is a result of God's power at work through David or his music.

2.5.5 Tobit

The book of *Tobit* is a fascinating story in which a young woman named Sarah is tormented by the evil demon Asmodeus (Ασμοδαῖος τὸ δαιμόνιον τὸ πονηρὸν, Tob. 3:8). When the author introduces Sarah to the reader, she has had seven husbands, all of whom Asmodeus killed before they were able to consummate the new marriage. Sarah is profoundly grieved by the repeated losses of her lovers, and prays to God in order that he might kill her and end her grief. Instead of taking her life, God sends to her the angel Raphael and Tobit's son, Tobias, to free her from the presence of Asmodeus. Raphael instructs Tobias to burn the heart and liver of a fish in the presence

[151] Twelftree, Graham. *Jesus the Exorcist: A Contribution to the Study of the Historical Jesus*. Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1993. 37.

of a man or woman who is afflicted by a demon or an evil spirit (δαιμονίου ἢ πνεύματος πονηροῦ, Tob. 6:8), and it will flee from the person. Tobias marries Sarra, and on their wedding night he burns the liver and heart of the fish. The odour from the fish organs causes Asmodeus to flee to Egypt, where Raphael follows him and binds him (Tob. 8:2-3).

This story is not one of possession and exorcism per se, but rather of demonic harassment and repellent. Nevertheless, this book can provide valuable insight for understanding possession and exorcism in the Jewish imagination. *Tobit*, likely written near the end of the third century or beginning of the second century B.C.E.,[152] is an early example of a demon having a personal name and acting independently.[153] Similar to the victims we examined in the Mesoptamian material, Sarah is bereft of divine protection in this story, which leaves her vulnerable to demonic attack. Although demon possession is not present in this story, we can observe in Asmodeus's badgering of Sarah the concept of a demon inflicting harm on a helpless individual until someone–in this case, Tobias–comes and drives the demon away with divine assistance. The specifics vary, but this narrative arc is broadly characteristic of Jewish exorcism narratives which will follow.

In terms of exorcistic practices, we will note two features. First, Tobias, by the instruction of the angel Raphael, uses specific materials to rid the area of the demon. It is clear in the story that it is the liver and heart of the fish which, when burned, have the ability to expel the demon. Employing this combination of ancient Jewish and Hellenistic medical practices[154] might give warrant to associate the entire event with pathogenic possession, in which the patient suffers from

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[152] Schürer, Emil. *A History of the Jewish People in the Time of Jesus Christ.* 2d and rev. ed. of a "Manual of the history of New Testament times." ed. Clark's Foreign Theological Library, New Ser., Vol. XXIII-XXV, XLI, XLIII. Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1890. 222-232.

[153] Sorensen, *Possession,* 49.

[154] Askin, Lindsey A. "Binding Asmodeus: A Lexical Analysis of the Ritual and Medical Use of Fish in Tobit." In *New Perspectives on Ritual in the Biblical World*, edited by Laura Quick and Melissa Ramos. London: Bloomsbury, 2022. 137.

illness, although this is not a necessary conclusion. Second, the detail of the demon departing to a specific spatial location is one that is atypical to the Gospels.[155] In the event of the Gerasene demoniac, the Legion leaves the man/men and enters a herd of pigs which rushes down the banks into a watery abyss. Outside of this episode, however, it is not clear where demons go after they are cast out of humans.

While the story of Tobias and Sarah represents a development of demonology in which demons interact more and more with individuals, demonologies in the Second Temple period continue to develop in order to reach a point where the demon-possessed individuals of the Gospels make conceptual sense for readers.

2.5.6 Possession and Exorcism in the New Testament

We will now examine possession and exorcism in the New Testament where Jesus is not involved as the exorcist. In order for these stories to have been intelligible to early readers, they must reflect perceptions about possession and exorcism which were somewhat common in the first century Mediterranean milieu. The following collection of texts tends to provide more information about exorcism than they do about spirit possession.

Prior to the New Testament, as we have observed, it is rare to find evidence of spirit possession in the form of displacement. As Sorensen notes, "it is in the New Testament literature that the notion of indwelling possession begins to dominate the perception of humanity's interaction with demonic and divine spiritual forces."[156] That is not to say, however, that pathogenic possession is absent from the New Testament. We see, for example, a similar demonic affliction in Luke 13:10-13, where a woman is bent over and unable to stand up straight for ten

[155] An exception here is Jesus's teaching about demons leaving a person and going to the waterless places (Mt. 12:43-45/Lk. 11:24-26). It is more apparent in this text where the expelled demon goes.

[156] Sorensen, *Possession,* 118.

years, which the author attributes to her having a spirit of sickness (καὶ ἰδοὺ γυνὴ πνεῦμα ἔχουσα ἀσθενείας). In this section, we will examine the handful of New Testament data concerning possession and exorcism.

2.5.6.1 Matthew 12:43-45/Luke 11:24-26

Shortly after Matthew and Luke's respective Beelzebul controversies, Jesus tells a short parable in Matthew 12:43-45/Luke 11:24-26 about unclean spirits coming out from a person,[157] wandering through waterless places, and later returning to the person with seven other evil spirits. As R.T. France notes, "It is probably unwise to use this folksy parable as in its own right a guide to demonology, since its foundation here is to illustrate the danger facing 'this generation.'"[158] When the spirit initially leaves a person, according to Jesus, it wanders through waterless places (ἀνύδρων τόπων) seeking rest. Such a notion might reflect the ancient Mesopotamian belief we observed earlier, in which demons dwell in the desert and the locations which are uninhabitable for humans.[159] For our present purposes, we first note that the spirit in this parable tends toward inhabiting a human body. We might connect this tendency to influence from the Watchers myth, in which the evil spirits were one hybrid, embodied beings, although it is difficult to be sure about this conclusion. A second, and closely related point, is that this parable seems to reflect a concern that spirits could return to a person after they had been expelled.[160] Such a concern also seems to be present in Josephus's story of Eleazar's exorcism when Eleazar adjured the demon never again

[157] Twelftree takes this passage to refer to the possession of places rather than to the possession of people. Twelftree, Graham. *Jesus the Exorcist*, 1993. 13. It seems best, however, to understand the passage as referring to humans, as the text begins with "When an unclean spirit comes out of a person…" Instead, the house imagery reflects the house imagery from the parable of the strong man, in which one can only plunder his house when the strong man is first bound.

[158] This statement is true of Matthew's contextual use of this teaching, but not of Luke's: France, R. T. *The Gospel of Matthew*. The New International Commentary on the New Testament. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2007. 494

[159] Albright W.F. and C.S. Mann. *The Anchor Bible: Matthew*. Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1971. 159.

[160] See Jesus's rebuke of the spirit in Mk. 9:25 in which he orders the spirit never to return again.

to come back to the victim.[161] Although the value of this text for understanding ancient beliefs about possession are limited, these points interact well with other data from the ancient world.

2.5.6.2 1 Corinthians 10:14-22

In Paul's instruction to the Corinthians concerning food which has been offered to idols, he informs them that the food has, in reality, been offered to demons. Such an idea is based on Deuteronomy 32:17, in which Moses indicts the Israelites for offering sacrifices, not to God, but to demons (שֵׁדִים/LXX: δαιμονίοις). Paul's concern is that participating in eating food offered to the demons would cause the Corinthians to become sharers of demons (κοινωνοὺς τῶν δαιμονίων). It is difficult to determine what exactly Paul means by this phrase other than that idolatry leaves one vulnerable to demonic association.[162]

2.5.6.3 Mark 9:38-41/Luke 9:49

In a briefly recorded interaction, John says to Jesus, "Teacher, we know someone casting out demons in your name and we hindered him, because he was not following us" (Mk. 9:38; par. Lk. 9:49). We learn in this comment from John information only about exorcistic methods, and nothing about possession. Like others we have seen, this anonymous exorcist performs his work by evoking the authority of a higher power–in this case, Jesus.[163]

2.5.6.5 Matthew 7:22

Near the end of the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus informs his hearers of the eschatological surprise concerning those who will not be admitted into the kingdom of heaven. Among the future outsiders

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[161] Josephus, *Antiquities,* 8.47.

[162] Conzelmann, Hans. *1 Corinthians: A Commentary on the First Epistle to the Corinthians*. Second. Philadelphia, PA: Fortress Pr., 1981. 173; Joseph Fitzmyer takes the danger to be "not warning the Corinthian Christians about becoming partners of idols (which have no reality), but rather partners with idolaters." See: Fitzmyer, Joseph A. S.J. *First Corinthians: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*. Vol. 32. The Anchor Yale Bible. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2008. 393-394.

[163] Marcus, Joel. *Mark 8-16: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*. The Anchor Bible, v. 27. New York: Doubleday; 2000. 684.

are those who claim to have performed exorcism in Jesus's name: "Many will say to me on that day, 'Lord, Lord… did we not cast out demons in your name'" (Mt. 7:22)? We see here the practice of evoking a higher authority in order to gain the upper hand over a demon in an exorcism. If we take these people at their word here, we might be surprised to find that they were successful in employing Jesus's name, and therefore authority, in their exorcisms. We do not have any information here about the nature of demon possession, only that a successful exorcism required the evocation of a superior power to the demons.

2.5.6.6 Matthew 12:27-28/Luke 11:19-20

Matthew and Luke's versions of the Beelzeboul controversy both add a comment from Jesus to the Marcan account: "If I cast out demons by Beelzeboul, by whom do your sons cast them out" (Mt. 12:27; Lk. 11:19)? Implied here in Jesus's question to the Pharisees is that the Pharisees were involved in exorcisms just as Jesus was. Further, Jesus's question implies that the exorcistic practice of the Pharisees relied upon the power of a being with authority to cast out demons: "By whom do your sons cast them out?" Again we meet the notion that one could perform exorcisms through the power of a higher being. Even the Pharisees's earlier accusations against Jesus reflect this notion: "He does not cast out demons except by Beelzeboul, the prince of the demons" (Mt. 12:24; Lk. 11:15). The accusation that Jesus's exorcisms are empowered by the prince of the demons reflects the popular belief that one could only perform an exorcism by a power higher than themselves.

2.5.6.7 Acts 19:13-20

As a failed exorcism attempt, the story of the seven sons of Sceva (Acts 19:13-20) provides a unique angle into possession and exorcism in the New Testament. Described as a group of Jewish

exorcists,[164] some people were attempting to employ Jesus's name in order to cast out demons: "I adjure you by the Jesus whom Paul preaches" (Acts 19:13). One such subgroup of these Jewish exorcists were the sons of Sceva, who was a high priest, were participating in this very practice. The move backfired on Sceva's sons when one evil spirit replied, "I recognize Jesus, and I know Paul, but who are you" (Acts 19:15)? The possessed man then leapt up and beat up the exorcists, so that they had to flee from the house naked.

The possession in this text is certainly a case of displacement possession, as the spirit speaks through the man. Likewise, when the man jumps on and overpowers the exorcists, it is the evil spirit doing so who has taken control of the victim's body.[165]

Once again we see the exorcistic strategy of attempting to cast out demons by using the name, and therefore authority, of a more powerful being.[166] Unfortunately for the exorcists in this story, the strategy is unsuccessful, and leads to their own harm. Evoking the authority of a superior being is a two-way activity. If the superior being does not answer, or if the answer is a negative one, the exorcist is left exposed to the attack of a demon. In other words, one can only successfully employ the power of a god or powerful being if that being allows it.[167]

2.6 Conclusion

In our examination of ancient sources, we have outlined a portrait of spirit possession and exorcism in the ancient world. Beginning with ancient Mesopotamian incantation tablets, we saw that when an individual was abandoned by the gods, he was left exposed to demonic attack which manifested

[164] This is the lone use of ἐξορκιστής in the NT.

[165] Fitzmyer, Joseph A. S.J. *The Acts of the Apostles*. Vol. 31. The Anchor Yale Bible. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1998. 650.

[166] As Dunn notes, "The key to successful exorcism was to be able to call upon a spiritual power stronger than that which was oppressing the sufferer." See: Dunn, James D.G. *The Acts of the Apostles*. London: Epworth Press, 1996. 260.

[167] See earlier discussion about the gods's protection of the Mesopotamian *āšipu*.

in the form of illness. A professional exorcist (*āšipu*) could recite the incantations on the tablets and thereby restore divine protection on the individual, which would result in healing. The Greco-Roman material does not show much interest in demon possession and exorcism until Lucian of Samosata (ca. 120-190 CE), who exhibits a negative view of exorcists in his day. Generally, an exorcist would channel divine authority in order to free the victim from demonic affliction, with the exception of Apollonius of Tyana, who is himself described as divine. In Jewish sources, we likewise see demonic affliction take the form of pathogenic possession, although later sources move toward displacement as a prominent means of possession. A successful exorcist across traditions was one who was granted power over the demons by his God/gods.

The Judge of the Demons: A Profile

3.1 Introduction

The last decade has enjoyed a renewed interest–due largely to broad consensus of pre-Christian dating–in the Son of Man figure from the *Similitudes of Enoch* in scholarly discourse concerning early Christology.[1] With regard to the Son of Man material in the Synoptic Gospels, and with special attention to the Gospel of Matthew,[2] scholars have aimed to identify pre-Christian, Jewish

[1] The dating of the *Similitudes* has a difficult history. See Fletcher-Louis's discussion of the pre-Christian dating which came from the Enoch Seminar in 2005: Fletcher-Louis, Crispin. *Jesus Monotheism: Volume 1: Christological Origins: The Emerging Consensus and Beyond*. Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock Publishers, 2015; 175-176. Scholars have often pointed out that the work is absent in the surviving Qumran collection. Richard Bauckham, who holds to a later view of the composition of the *Similitudes*, pushes back on this data point as proof of a later dating of the *Similitudes*: "It would be hazardous to conclude anything from the absence of the Parables among the scrolls. It may have been in the Qumran library, though not identifiable in any surviving fragments. If it was not in the library, it may have been preserved by other Jewish groups during the period when the Qumran library was in use… In the case of the Parables Qumran is hardly any help at all." Bauckham, Richard. *"Son of Man": Early Jewish Literature*. Chicago, IL: Eerdmans, 2023. 9. Bauckham avers that the so-called "emerging consensus" for a pre-Christian dating of the *Similitudes* is exaggerated and unconvincing: "It is quite possible, even probable, that, given the nature of the Parables of Enoch, we simply do not have enough evidence to be specific about the date." Bauckham, *Son of Man*, 115. Bauckham ultimately argues for a dating of the *Similitudes* in the range of 50 BCE to 150 CE, and makes a case for a post-70 CE dating on the basis that "The portrayal of the Messianic Figure in the Parables has a distinctive resemblance to the portrayals of such a figure in the three apocalypses from the late first century: 4 Ezra, 2 Baruch, and the book of Revelation. At the core of this resemblance is a particular set of biblical sources: Daniel 7, Isaiah 11:1-5, and Psalm 2. These messianic passages are common to all four works, and the combination is distinctive." Bauckham, *Son of Man*, 116. The other three apocalypses, Bauckham notes, employ Psalm 2 in order to cast their messianic figure as a Davidic messiah, while the *Similitudes* do not. From this Bauckham argues that "The Parables of Enoch have refunctioned an exegetical tradition that related to the Davidic Messiah, applying it to Enoch instead." Bauckham, *Son of Man*, 117. This move makes the *Similitudes* typologically (though not necessarily chronologically) later than the other apocalypses, and Bauckham concludes that this evidence favors a dating "not too much earlier than the late first century." Bauckham, *Son of Man*, 117. Later, Bauckham also argues that the *Similitudes* display direct literary dependence on 4 Ezra, which would make it chronologically later. Bauckham, *Son of Man*, 267-285. See also: Charlesworth, James H., and Darrell L. Bock. *Parables of Enoch: A Paradigm Shift*. Jewish and Christian Texts in Contexts and Related Studies 11. London: Bloomsbury, 2013; Collins, John J. "Enoch and the Son of Man." In *Enoch and the Messiah Son of Man: Revisiting the Book of Parables*, edited by Gabriele Boccaccini. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2007; Kirk, J. R. Daniel. *A Man Attested by God: The Human Jesus of the Synoptic Gospels*. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2016. My argument is not dependent on a pre-Christian dating of the *Similitudes.* By employing a dialogical approach, the selected texts (*Similitudes* and *11QMelchizedek*) serve to provide a social context within which we can consider various messianic traditions. Rather than identifying pre-Christian works which could provide the conceptual materials later applied to the Markan Jesus, I have selected texts which appropriate various ideas (messianism, the demonic realm) in various ways for their own authorial interests. Thus, a text may be later than Mark, yet provide a stronger social context for concepts Mark engages.

[2] Walck, Leslie W. *The Son of Man in the Parables of Enoch and in Matthew*. Jewish and Christian Texts in Contexts and Related Studies 9. New York: Bloomsbury, 2012.

precedent for a divine, preexistent, human messianic[3] figure who also functions as an eschatological judge seated on YHWH's throne. This chapter will profile such a figure in the *Similitudes* and *11QMelchizedek*, as a human figure who both acts as God's divine Messiah and who brings judgement at the end of time over Satan and his demons. Such a profile will provide further conceptual framework against which we will later locate the Markan Jesus's interactions with Satan and unclean spirits.[4] We will first examine the motif of God as eschatological Judge in early Judaism, and then examine the concept of a messianic figure's inclusion into this role.

3.2 God and Eschatological Judgment of Spiritual Beings in the Early Judaism

Before we examine the theological innovation of the Jewish Son of Man tradition, we will briefly consider the Hebrew Bible's portrait(s) of YHWH as eschatological judge, and as the judge of spiritual beings in particular. This motif is maintained and further developed in the Second Temple Period texts which we will later examine.[5]

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[3] As Novenson notes, the language and concepts of messianism are variegated, and scholarly impositions of one meaning onto the term has often been arbitrary. Still, though, "For the exegete, it is entirely possible and methodologically far preferable to describe the various ancient uses of the word 'messiah' and the pertinent differences among them without artificially privileging one as the ostensibly real, proper, strict, fully evolved definition." Novenson, Matthew. *The Grammar of Messianism.* New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2017. 63. Acknowledging the polyvalent nature of messianism, I use the category here in one of its more narrow senses, namely that of an eschatological redeemer. See: Ruzer, Serge. *Early Jewish Messianism in the New Testament*. Leiden: Brill, 2020. 2.

[4] My contention is not based on a genealogical relationship between the Son of Man in the *Similitudes* or *11QMelchizedek* and the Synoptic Gospels, in which the latter is predicated on the former (cf. Boccaccini); instead, I find Logan Williams's dialogical approach helpful, in which the *Similitudes* and Synoptic authors are both interpreters and appropriators of the Son of Man figure in Daniel 7. By shifting the focus from 'influence' to 'interaction,' we will be able to note both parallels and divergences of the textual handlings of the Son of Man figure in the Gospels and *Similitudes.* See: Williams, Logan. "Debating Daniel's Dream: The Synoptic Gospels and the Similitudes of Enoch on the Son of Man." In *Beyond Canon*, 23–38. Bloomsbury Publishing Plc, 2021. 23-28. By engaging the Enochic Son of Man and *11QMelchizedek*'s Melchizedek with Mark's Jesus in a dialogical model rather than by searching for linear influence between one text and another, we are able to observe how both texts appropriate the certain concepts in service of their respective authorial interests. The *Similitudes of Enoch* and *11QMelchizedek* have been chosen for dialogue with Mark on the basis that they both (1) refer to messianic figures who (2) interact with the demonic realm. For the focus of the current project, these criteria limit the texts to the two which have been selected, and excludes other potentially relevant texts such as 4 Ezra.

[5] See, in particular, *1 Enoch* 1:3-5, where God's eschatological, theophanic judgement extends to the Watchers.

A final day of judgement in which Israel's God sets the world right by means of retribution occupies a significant thematic position in much of the Hebrew Bible. Although spoken without an eschatological regard, Abraham pleads with God not to destroy righteous Lot with the unrighteous in Sodom by appealing to God as "the Judge of all the earth" (הֹשֵׁפֵט כׇּל־הָאָרֶץ) who judges justly in Genesis 18:25. A text such as Isaiah 2, however, does envision a future in which YHWH will judge between all of the nations of the earth, resulting in widespread peace:

> The word that Isaiah son of Amoz saw concerning Judah and Jerusalem. In days to come the mountain of the Lord's house shall be established as the highest of the mountains and shall be raised above the hills all the nations shall stream to it. Many peoples shall come and say, "Come, let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob, that he may teach us his ways and that we may walk in his paths." For out of Zion shall go forth instruction and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem. *He shall judge between the nations* and shall arbitrate for many peoples; they shall beat their swords into plowshares and their spears into pruning hooks; nation shall not lift up sword against nation; neither shall they learn war any more (Is. 2:1-4 NRSV).

Likewise in Isaiah 26:21:

> For the Lord comes out from his place to punish the inhabitants of the earth for their iniquity; the earth will disclose the blood shed on it and will no longer cover its slain.[6]

Common enough is the view that God does and will judge human beings in general and Israel's enemies in particular. Such a view is likewise reflected in Paul's reading of Psalm 62:13 in which God will repay each person according to their works.[7] Some texts, however, expand this vision of God's judgement to include judgement over spiritual beings. In Psalm 82, for example, God stands as judge not only over the inhabitants of the earth (Ps. 82:8), but also over his own heavenly council (82:1). As we will observe, *11QMelchizedek* makes the surprising exegetical move by identifying Melchizedek as the God who stands in judgement over the other gods. Further, in Isaiah 24:21-23

[6] See such imagery also in Micah 1:3, Jeremiah 46:10, and Deut. 32:40-42.
[7] See Rom. 2:5-6; it could also be that Prov. 24:12 is the referent of Rom. 2:6.

God brings judgement over the whole host of heaven, employing cosmic imagery in reference to spiritual beings:

> On that day the Lord will punish *the host of heaven* in heaven (יפקד יהוה על־צבא המרום במרום) and on earth the kings of the earth. They will be gathered together like prisoners in a pit; they will be shut up in a prison, and after many days they will be punished. Then the moon will be abashed and the sun ashamed, for the Lord of hosts will reign on Mount Zion and in Jerusalem, and before his elders he will be glorified.

The texts envisioning YHWH's judgement over heavenly beings are few in the Hebrew Bible, and it would be an overstatement to say that this particular feature of God's judgement is a prominent one. Such texts did, however, provide precedent for later Jewish authors to make more of the idea of eschatological judgement over heavenly powers as demonological interests increased during the later Second Temple Period. It is a few examples of this phenomenon to which we now turn.

3.3 God and Eschatological Judgment of Spiritual Beings in Second Temple Texts

We are limiting the scope of the current examination primarily to the Enochic literature (with the addition of a few texts from *Jubilees*) because the *Similitudes* will also be critical in our later examination of the fusion of the Son of Man's identification with God himself. The opening scene of the *Book of Watchers*, drawing on a number of Hebrew Bible judgement texts, depicts God's theophanic judgement over all of the earth, including the Watchers:

> The God of the universe, the Holy Great One, will come forth from his dwelling. And from there he will march upon Mount Sinai and appear in his camp emerging from heaven with a mighty power. And everyone shall be afraid, and the Watchers shall quiver.[8] And great fear and trembling shall seize them unto the ends of the earth. Mounts and high places will fall down and be frightened. And high hills shall be made low; and they shall melt like a honeycomb before the flame. And earth shall be rent asunder; and all that is on the earth shall perish. And there shall be a judgement upon all, (including) the righteous. (*1 En.* 1:3-7)[9]

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[8] See Nickelsburg's reconstructed Greek text: καὶ φοβηθήσεται πάντες καὶ <σαλευθήσεται> οἱ ἐγρήγοροι. Nickelsburg, George W. E. *1 Enoch: A Commentary on the Book of 1 Enoch*. Hermeneia: A Critical and Historical Commentary on the Bible. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2001. 146.

[9] Unless otherwise noted, translations of *1 Enoch* are from: E. Isaac, "The Book of Enoch," in *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha: Volume One, Apocalyptic Literature and Testaments*, ed. James H. Charlesworth, Hendrickson Publishers; Peabody, MA; 1983.

This scene, says the narrator, is not for Enoch's generation, but for a distant one (1:2). The notion of eschatological divine judgment, however, is a heightened concern in *1 Enoch* and its readers who inhabit the last days. God's advent for eschatological judgement, resulting in such a great "cosmic upheaval,"[10] is consistent with the theme of judgement in Israel's Scriptural tradition, although material in the Watchers tradition tends to place greater emphasis on the judgement of spiritual beings than do earlier Biblical texts. Although God often employs angels to bind the fallen Watchers and their offspring, their final judgement regularly belongs to God in *1 Enoch* and *Jubilees*. In other words, God's judgement against the fallen Watchers sometimes appears to be carried out in a twofold manner: First, God commands his angels to bind/restrain the Watchers, where they await a final judgement. Second, God visits them at the eschaton to bring final judgement and destruction. In *1 Enoch* 10, for example, God gives orders to the archangels to carry out his punishment of the Watchers:

> And secondly the Lord said to Raphael, "Bind Azazel hand and foot and throw him into the darkness!" And he made a hole in the desert which was in Dudael and cast him in there; he threw on top of hum rugged and sharp rocks. And he covered his face in order that he may not see light; and in order that he may be sent into the fire *on the great day of judgment*… And to Gabriel the Lord said, "Proceed against the bastards and the reprobates and against the children of adultery; and destroy the children of adultery and expel the children of the Watchers from among the people…" And to Michael God said, "Make known to Semyaza and the others who are with him, who fornicated with the women, that they will die together with them in all their defilement… Bind them for seventy generations underneath the rocks of the ground *until the day of their judgment and of their consummation, until the eternal judgment is concluded*" (*1 En.* 10:4-6, 9, 11-12).

We see here God's use of angelic agents to carry out initial judgement on the fallen Watchers and their offspring; however, the text also signals that there will later be a final judgement for the Watchers which will not come from the archangels. The judgement of the rebellious Watchers and

[10] Nickelsburg, *1 Enoch,* 146; Jeremias, Jörg. *Theophanie: Die Geschichte einer alttestamentlichen Gattung*. WMANT 10; Neukirchen: Neukirchener Verlag, 1965. 109.

their offspring in this text is two-staged. First, there is a period of restriction in which the Watchers are contained under the earth for seventy generations until the day of judgement. Second, the Watchers will be led down into an eternal fiery torment, which will correspond with their complete eradication. God only instructs Michael to carry out the initial binding of the Watchers and their offspring, before shifting focus toward future events which will be carried out, although he does not say who will do it. It is difficult to imagine that this envisioned future of the destruction of the fallen Watchers and their offspring is not included in the opening passage we examined from *1 Enoch* 1:3-7, in which God comes from his dwelling for the judgement of the earth, resulting in terror from the Watchers. It appears, rather, that in the second and definitive stage of the evil spirits' judgement, God himself is expected to carry out their destruction.

It is also worth noting briefly the summary statement which completes *1 Enoch* 10 and its vision of eschatological renewal by means of demonic judgement and the cosmic restoration of worship to YHWH. As was quoted above, "the earth shall be cleansed (καθαρισθήσεται) from all pollution, and from all sin (ἀκαθαρσίας), and from all plague, and from all suffering" (10:22). On one level, it makes logical sense that all ritual impurity (ἀκαθαρσία), which precludes those who contract it from holy places and things, must be removed from the earth in order for all of earth's inhabitants to come and worship Israel's God (10:21). We might wonder, however, to what extent ancient readers would have correlated the Watchers's offspring, who were born out of an impure mixing of the divine and human realm,[11] with ritual impurity, such that an author like Mark would designate demons as impure spirits. In YHWH's eschatological visitation, the removal of unclean spirits would be a natural precursor to the cosmic vision in which "all the children of the people

[11] Stuckenbruck, Loren T. "Giant Mythology and Demonology." In *Die Dämonen: die Dämonologie der israelitisch-jüdischen und frühchristlichen Literatur im Kontext ihrer Umwelt*, edited by Armin Lange, Hermann Lichtenberger, and Diethard Römheld. Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2003. 335.

will become righteous, and all nations shall worship and bless me (God); and they will all prostrate themselves to me" (10:21).

In another text, while Enoch tours earth and Sheol and sees the stars of heaven, the angel Uriel informs Enoch:

> Here shall stand in many different appearances the spirits of the angels which have united themselves with women. They have defiled the people and will lead them into error so that they will offer sacrifices to the demons as unto gods, *until the great day of judgement* in which they shall be judged till they are finished (*1 Enoch* 19:1).

Again, there seems to be a two-staged judgement of the spirits of the fallen Watchers. Just before this text, Enoch observed "the prison house for the stars (Watchers) and the powers of heaven" (δεσμωτήριον τοῦτο ἐγένετο τοῖς ἄστροις καὶ ταῖς δυνάμεσιν τοῦ οὐρανοῦ; *1 Enoch* 18:14). Now, Uriel tells Enoch that this is where the spirits are kept until the great day of judgement in which they will be judged till they are finished (μέχρι τῆς μεγάλης κρίσεως, ἐν ᾗ κριθήσονται εἰς ἀποτελείωσιν).[12] Here again, the text harkens back to the vision from *1 Enoch* 1:3-7, expanding God's eschatological arrival for judgement to include the judgement of the fallen Watchers. Such a vision of a two-staged judgement for the fallen Watchers is present in two New Testament texts. In 2 Peter 2:4, the author uses the angels as an example in comparison with the false prophets and teachers who will receive judgement: "For if God did not spare the angels when they sinned, but cast them to Tartarus and with chains of gloom delivered them to be kept for judgement." Likewise, in Jude 6, "The angels who did not keep their own authority, but left their dwelling, he has kept with eternal chains under deep gloom for the judgement of the great day."

The final text from the Watchers tradition which we will examine is *Jubilees* 5:10. This text sits within the fall of the Watchers narrative. After the angels bore giant children with human

[12] While it is grammatically possible here that the subject of this clause is the humans who sacrifice to demons, the surrounding context of the judgement of the spirits points toward the spirits as the grammatical subject.

women (5:1-2), God becomes angry and has the angels bound in the depths of the earth (5:6). God then causes the giant children of the Watchers begin to kill one another, and "subsequently they (the children) were bound in the depths of the earth forever, until the day of great judgement in order for judgement to be executed upon all of those who corrupted their ways and their deeds before the Lord" (5:10).[13] Similar to the examples from *1 Enoch*, this text assumes a great day of judgement depicted in the Hebrew Bible, in which YHWH will judge between the righteous and the unrighteous. We thus see demonic activity on the earth in the interim in *Jubilees* (7:21; 10:1-2), and even a story in which Mastema/Satan bargains with God in order that 1/10th of the demons might remain on the earth to corrupt humanity (10:7-13). Mastema, however, acknowledges his fate in his plea to God:

> O Lord, Creator, leave some of them before me, and let them obey my voice. And let them do everything which I tell them, because if some of them are not left for me, I will not be able to exercise the authority of my will among the children of men because [the demons] are (intended) to corrupt and lead astray *before my judgement* because the evil of the sons of men is great (*Jub.* 10:8).

Again, an awareness of eschatological judgement is present. Mastema, recognizing his status under God's authority, asks God to grant him a measure of authority over some of the demons *before* his judgement. God's role as judge has already featured earlier in *Jubilees* 5:12-19, in a passage replete with language from the Hebrew Scriptures:[14]

> He will judge concerning every one: the great one according to his greatness and the small one according to his smallness, and each one according to his way. And he is not one who accepts persons, and he is not one who accepts gifts when he says that he will execute judgement upon each one. If one gave everything which is in the earth, he would not accept gifts or persons. And he would not accept (anything) from his hand because he is a righteous judge (*Jub.* 5:15-16).

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[13] Unless otherwise noted, translations of Jubilees are from O.S. Wintermute, "Jubilees," in The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha: Volume Two, Apocalyptic Literature and Testaments, ed. James H. Charlesworth, Hendrickson Publishers; Peabody, MA; 1983.

[14] For example, compare with Deuteronomy 10:17.

The eschatological judgement of the demons and Mastema are the unique purview of YHWH himself in *Jubilees*, and Mastema even shows an awareness of this coming event.[15] This eschatological judgement of the demons, throughout *1 Enoch* and *Jubilees*, becomes part of the vision for YHWH's eschatological arrival which is depicted in the Hebrew Bible.

This tradition of YHWH's eschatological advent for the destruction of evil spiritual beings is significant in our consideration of pre-Christian, Jewish demonologies; however, there is another strand which merges together with it in which another figure joins Israel's God to share in his final judgement. It is this figure to whom we now turn.

3.4 The Son of Man Tradition from Daniel and Beyond

The Son of Man figure is undoubtedly important in the study of the christology of the Synoptic Gospels. Crispin Fletcher-Louis comments that "the lack of interest in the Jewish Son of Man texts among those championing the early high Christology emerging consensus is striking."[16] This figure, which originated in Daniel 7, would become prominent in messianic texts in the Second Temple Period such as the *Similitudes of Enoch*, 4 Ezra, and the *Sibylline Oracles*. At present, we will examine this figure's development from Daniel 7 through the *Similitudes.*

3.4.1 The Danielic Son of Man

The Son of Man figure comes from Daniel's vision in Daniel 7:13, where, after he sees four terrifying beasts come up out of the sea (7:1-8), he observes a counter-scene in which the Ancient of Days (עתיק יומין) takes his seat on his throne of judgement (7:9-10). It is in the midst of this apocalyptic vision that Daniel sees his famous vision:

> As I watched in the night visions, I saw one like a [son of man] being coming with the clouds of heaven. And he came to the Ancient One and was presented before him. To him was given dominion and glory and kingship, that all peoples, nations, and languages should

[15] Compare this awareness with Matthew's Gadarene demoniac in Mt 8:29, who asks Jesus if he has come to torment them *before the time* (ἦλθες ὧδε πρὸ καιροῦ βασανίσαι ἡμᾶς;).

[16] Fletcher-Louis, *Jesus Monotheism,* 173.

> serve him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion that shall not pass away, and his kingship is one that shall never be destroyed (Dan. 7:13-14 NRSV).

Of interest for the current project is the figure who comes forward with the clouds, the one like a human being/son of man (כבר אנש), who is elevated by the Ancient of Days to an extremely high status in his reception of an everlasting reign over the earth. Later in the text of Daniel 7, the son of man is identified as the saints of the most high (Dan. 7:18). Some ancient interpreters, as we will shortly observe, reinterpreted the son of man to be a human messianic figure. The Synoptic evangelists identify Jesus as the Danielic son of man in his trial before the high priests (Mk. 14:62 parr.). Others have suggested that in its context the Danielic son of man is an angel,[17] an idealised human figure[18] or is representative of the nation of Israel.[19] More important for our purposes than the authorial intent of the identity of Daniel's son of man is the subsequent appropriation of the figure in later Jewish writings which bear important parallels with the Synoptic Gospels. As has been shown in the work of others, the Synoptic Jesus often diverges from other contemporary theological receptions of Daniel's son of man in significant ways;[20] however, that some ancient interpreters came to identify a divine human figure who acted as the eschatological judge of Satan and his demons–which, as I will argue in the following chapter, is a helpful framing for the Markan Jesus in his exorcisms–allows us to place the Markan presentation of Jesus in dialogue with such figures.

3.4.2 The Enochic Son of Man

The *Similitudes of Enoch* (*1 En.* 37-71), the second major section of *1 Enoch*, is the primary object of focus here. Because the *Similitudes*, unlike the other books of *1 Enoch*, was not found in the

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[17] Collins, John J. "The Son of Man and the Saints of the Most High in the Book of Daniel." *Journal of Biblical Literature* 93, no. 1 (1974): 50–66.

[18] Kirk, *Man,* 110-118.

[19] Wright, N.T. *The New Testament and the People of God*. London: SPCK Publishing, 2013. 305-306.

[20] E.g. Williams, "Debating Daniel's Dream," 23-28.

library of scrolls at Qumran,[21] scholars in the twentieth century often assumed that it must have been a later, post-Christian composition.[22] The tide has shifted in recent years, however, as scholars are generally more open to the possibility that the *Similitudes* was composed[23] in the (probably late) first century BCE.[24] Whether or not the text predates the first century CE, it seems to represent ideas which were of interest in other first century texts.[25] In this text the Son of Man undergoes somewhat of a development from the original figure preserved in Daniel 7. Whereas Daniel's Son of Man comes before God's throne to receive dominion in order to reign over the earth as a kingly figure (Dan. 7:13-14), the Enochic Son of Man[26] arrives more narrowly as a cosmic judge who executes eschatological judgement on both the (human and spiritual) righteous and unrighteous. Although judgement is a kingly role, "the author is remarkably uninterested in any other royal function of this figure. He is a judge, but not, in any broader sense, a king, and is never called one."[27]

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[21] Although, as Charlesworth reminds us, this does not mean that the *Similitudes of Enoch* was never present at Qumran: "Conceivably about 10 to 20 percent of what was placed in the Qumran caves is available for us to study." See: Charlesworth, James H. "The Date and Provenience of the Parables of Enoch." In *Parables of Enoch: A Paradigm Shift*, edited by James H. Charlesworth and Darrell L. Bock, 37–56. Jewish and Christian Texts in Contexts and Related Studies. New York, NY: Bloomsbury T & T Clark, 2013. 44.

[22] J. D. G. Dunn, for example, suggested that the *Similitudes* might be a late first century CE composition, written as a Jewish refutation of early christological conceptions. See: Dunn, J. D. G. *Christology in the Making: A New Testament Inquiry into the Origins of the Doctrine of the Incarnation*. London: SCM, 1980. 77-82. This is a difficult position to substantiate, and it could also be argued in the reverse, that early Christian texts adapted christologies from the *Similitudes*. See also Fletcher-Louis's account of New Testament scholars who have dismissed the importance of the *Similitudes* in early christology, largely due to what was believed to be a post-Christian dating: *Jesus Monotheism*, 174.

[23] Although there is still debate concerning the composition and date of chapter 71, which (possibly) reveals Enoch to be the Son of Man, and the preceding chapters.

[24] See, for example, James Charlesworth's summary: Charlesworth, "The Date and Provenience of the Parables of Enoch," in *Parables of Enoch: A Paradigm Shift*. 37-53.

[25] For example, note the interest in both *1 Enoch* 60:8 and Jude 14 that Enoch lived in the seventh generation from Adam.

[26] This figure goes by multiple titles in the *Similitudes*, such as Son of Man, the Elect One, the Righteous One (38:2) and Messiah (48:10). For the sake of consistency, I will refer to him primarily as the Son of Man.

[27] Bauckham, *Son of Man,* 31.

We see multiple points, for example, at which the Son of Man sits on God's unique, glorious throne:

> On that day, my Elect One shall sit on the seat of glory and make a selection of their deeds, their resting places will be without number, their souls shall be firm within them when they see my Elect One, those who have appealed to my glorious name (*1 En.* 45:3).
>
> In those days, (the Elect One) shall sit on my throne, and from the conscience of his mouth shall come out all the secrets of wisdom, for the Lord of the Spirits has given them to him and glorified him (*1 En.* 51:3).

Here, the Son of Man is seen acting in the place of God himself. As we noted earlier, there is a strong eschatological expectation both within and following the Hebrew Bible that God is the one who will carry out final judgement over the cosmos, which serves as a defining identifiable feature of the uniqueness of God. Although there is distinction between God and the Son of Man in the *Similitudes* (e.g. "the Son of Man stands before the Lord of the Spirits;" 49:2), the two are nevertheless identified together in surprisingly close ways, namely that they both seem to be sitting on God's glorious throne.[28] It even appears as though the angels of heaven participate in the worship of the Son of Man (61:7). Likewise, all the people of the earth will worship this Son of Man (48:5). Such worship, one would think, should be reserved exclusively for the one God of Israel. Here, however, the Son of Man joins even in this highly exalted position. The Son of Man might be a preexistent figure, as the narrator comments that:

> Even before the creation of the sun and the moon, before the creation of the stars, he was given a name in the presence of the Lord of the Spirits… For this purpose he became the Chosen One; he was concealed in the presence (of the Lord of the Spirits) prior to the creation of the world, and for eternity. And he has revealed the wisdom of the Lord of the Spirits to the righteous and the holy ones (*1 En.* 48:3; 6-7).

As the one who was present before the creation of the celestial bodies (likely referring to the angels here), the Son of Man is depicted as one who existed long before his appearance, or–for that

[28] Perhaps Matthew 25:31 has in mind such a scene when Jesus speaks of the Son of Man coming in glory with his angels to sit on his glorious throne. See: Walck, *The Son of Man,* 204-206.

matter–before the appearance of anything in the created order. That the Son of Man was *hidden* before all of creation, I would submit, implies his existence before all creation. This idea surfaces again in 62:7, where "The Son of Man was concealed from the beginning, and the Most High One preserved him in the presence of his power; then he revealed him to the holy and the elect ones." Nickelsburg asserts that "both texts presume the actual, hidden existence of the Son of Man in God's presence before creation."[29] Such a description is resonant with personified Wisdom in Proverbs 8,[30] who was present prior to and during God's act of creation.[31] Such Wisdom, as Bauckham notes, is "precisely God's own wisdom, not something or someone other than God but integral to God's unique divine identity."[32] The Son of Man, though easier to distinguish from God than God's wisdom, is so closely identified with God that he too becomes integral to God's unique divine identity. Where the Son of Man acts, as we will see, God is at work.

A feature of unique significance for the current thesis is the Son of Man's role as the eschatological judge of the rebellious angels. We observed earlier that in the prologue of *1 Enoch* it is God who would make an eschatological arrival which would cause the Watchers to tremble with fear (1:6) and the cosmic upheaval of the earth's mountains melting like a honeycomb before the flame. In particular, such a theophanic advent occurs for the purpose of judgement (1:7). This is a trope from the Hebrew Bible to refer to the Lord's day of judgement.[33] For the author of the *Similitudes,* however, the Son of Man has come to take on this theophanic description:

> And he said to me, "All these things which you (Enoch) have seen happen by the authority of his Messiah so that he may give orders and be praised upon the earth… As for these mountains which you have seen with your own eyes–the mountain made of iron, the mountain of copper, the mountain of silver, the mountain of gold, the mountain of colored metal, and the mountain of lead–all of them, in the presence of the Elect One, will become

[29] Nickelsburg, *1 Enoch 2*, 170.
[30] See also Sir. 24:1-3.
[31] Cf. Prov. 8:22-31.
[32] Bauckham, *Son of Man*, 23.
[33] See: Ps. 68:2; 97:5; Micah 1:4.

> like a honeycomb (that melts) before fire, like water that gushes down from the top of such mountains, and become helpless by his feet" (*1 En*. 52:4, 6).

The author(s) of the *Similitudes* was certainly aware of the earlier *Book of Watchers* and its theological framework, and continues to merge the identity of the Lord of the Spirits with the Son of Man. Horbury comments on this feature in 52:6 as comparable to the divine messiahship present in the New Testament: "Such uses of the biblical theophany passages indicate a messiah endued with divine traits, which in the outlook of the Second-Temple period would have been classified as angelic characteristics; but they also suggest that some biblical theophanies could be understood to speak of an angelic messiah acting on behalf of God himself. These passages may then form an antecedent for the familiar New Testament phenomenon of the application to Christ of biblical texts which in their own contexts appear to refer to God."[34]

For the community which produced the *Similitudes* in the face of perceived geopolitical oppression,[35] the Son of Man is the one who brings judgement on their oppressors, and therefore the one who offers hope for their helpless current situation: "He shall judge the secret things…[36] In those days, there will be a change for the holy and the righteous ones and the light of days shall rest upon them; and glory and honor shall be given back to the holy ones, on the day of weariness" (*1 En.* 49:4; 50:1). All of the earth's kings and potentates will be held accountable for their oppression of God's people when the Son of Man arrives to usher in the day of the Lord's eschatological judgement.

Without denying the *Book of Watchers's* (and Hebrew Bible's) assertion that it is God who will arrive on the earth to carry out final judgement, the *Similitudes* presents the Son of Man as a

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[34] Horbury, William. *Jewish Messianism and the Cult of Christ*. London: SCM, 1998. 103.

[35] Williams, "Debating Daniel's Dream," 29; Suter, David W. *Tradition and Composition in the Parables of Enoch* (SBLDS 47; Missoula: Scholars Press, 1979), 164.

[36] See Paul's expectation in Rom. 2:16 that *God* will judge the secrets of men.

distinct yet inseparable divine figure who takes on theomorphic properties. If we were able to ask the author(s) of the *Similitudes* whether we should expect God or the Son of Man to arrive for the cosmic upheaval of eschatological judgement, we would likely receive a one-word answer: Yes. There is a real sense in which, when one sees the Son of Man acting, one sees God acting.

We see the more specific notion of the judgement of spiritual beings at a couple of key points in the *Similitudes*. First, in *1 Enoch* 53-55, Enoch observes the judgement of both the kings of the earth and Azaz'el with his armies. In chapter 54, there is a scene in which the judgement is being prepared:

> Then I looked and turned to another face of the earth and saw there a valley, deep and burning with fire. And they were bringing kings and potentates and were throwing them into this deep valley. And my eyes saw there their chains while they were making them into iron fetters of immense weight.[37] And I asked the angel of peace, who was going with me, saying, "For whom are these imprisonment chains beings prepared?" And he said unto me, "These are being prepared for the armies of Azaz'el, in order that they may take them and cast them into the abyss of complete condemnation,[38] and as the Lord of the Spirits has commanded it, they shall cover their jaws with rocky stones.[39] Then Michael, Raphael, Gabriel, and Phanuel themselves shall seize them on that great day of judgment and cast them into the furnace (of fire) that is burning that day, so that the Lord of the Spirits may take vengeance on them on account of their oppressive deeds which (they performed) as messengers of Satan, leading astray those who dwell upon the earth (*1 En.* 54:1-6).

With this description looking forward to an eschatological judgement of Azaz'el/Satan and his minions,[40] the text then gives an explicit mention of both God and the Son of Man sitting on God's

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[37] As we will observe more closely in the next chapter, the motif of demons and sufficient chains is significant in Mark's depiction of the Gerasene demoniac: διὰ τὸ αὐτὸν πολλάκις πέδαις καὶ ἁλύσεσιν δεδέσθαι καὶ διεσπάσθαι ὑπ' αὐτοῦ τὰς ἁλύσεις καὶ τὰς πέδας συντετρῖφθαι, καὶ οὐδεὶς ἴσχυεν αὐτὸν δαμάσαι (Mk. 5:4). See also the parable of the Strong Man and his binding in Mk. 3:27.

[38] A similar expectation of demons being sent into the abyss is present in Luke's account of the Gerasene demoniac, who begs Jesus not to send them into the abyss: καὶ παρεκάλουν αὐτὸν ἵνα μή ἐπιτάξῃ αὐτοῖς εἰς τὴν ἄβυσσον ἀπελθεῖν (Lk. 8:31).

[39] The reference to rocky or jagged stones harkens back to *1 Enoch* 10:5, in which sharp rocks are piled on top of Azaz'el. Nickelsburg, *1 Enoch 2,* 202.

[40] Nickelsburg takes 54:1-6 to refer to the first phase of judgement before the final phase. As we observed earlier, this coincides with depiction in *1 Enoch* 10, where God sends angels to initially bind the Watchers, where they wait for his final judgement. If that is the case, then the next text (55:3-4) still envisions the final judgement. Nickelsburg, *1 Enoch 2*, 203.

throne of glory and judging Azaz'el and the demons while the rulers of the earth are forced to watch:

> "When I would give consent so that they should be seized by the hands of the angels on the day of tribulation and pain, already I would have caused my punishment and my wrath to abide upon them–my punishment and my wrath," says the Lord of the Spirits. "Kings, potentates, dwellers upon the earth: *You would have to see my Elect One, how he sits in the throne of glory and judges Azaz'el and all his company, and his army*, in the name[41] of the Lord of the Spirits" (*1 En.* 55:3-4).

Whereas the *Book of Watchers* and *Jubilees* envisioned God as the judge of Satan and the demons in the second (and final) stage of their judgement, this text attributes such a role to the messianic Son of Man who takes his seat on God's throne. This narrative presentation in 55:3-4 serves as the fulfilment of the angel of peace's prediction to Enoch in 54:4-6. The notion that the Son of Man, from God's throne, will be the final judge of Azaz'el and his army is a striking development and once again locates his status higher than that of even the archangels who assist in the judgement of the demons. Such a messianic figure is comparable to Justin Martyr's second century CE propositional description of Jesus's advent, who Justin states became a man for the destruction of the demons (2 Apol. 6:5).[42] We will argue in the next chapter that Justin's assertion is a helpful way to frame the story of the Markan Jesus who, like the Enochic Son of Man, acts as the eschatological judge of Satan and the demons, a role which had traditionally been reserved for God.

The final text from the *Similitudes* which we will consider comes at the end of the third parable.[43] In a vision focused on the messianic Son of Man, the narrator exults:

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[41] Here, the Son of Man judges Azaz'el and the demons *in the name of* God. The Markan Jesus, as we will argue in the next chapter, is in some ways a comparable figure to the Enochic Son of Man; however, Jesus never evokes the name of God or any other in confrontations with demons, some of which, I suggest, envision an eschatological judgement scene.

[42] Καὶ γὰρ ἄνθρωπος… γέγονε κατὰ τὴν τοῦ θεοῦ καὶ πατρὸς βουλὴν… καταλύσει τῶν δαιμόνων.

[43] It is possible, however, that this section was originally located somewhere in chs. 61-64. See Nickelsburg excursus: *1 Enoch 2*, 313-314.

> He (the Son of Man) shall never pass away or perish from before the face of the earth. But *those who have led the world astray* shall be bound with chains; and their ruinous congregation shall be imprisoned; all their deeds shall vanish from before the face of the earth. Thenceforth nothing that is corruptible shall be found; for that Son of Man has appeared and has seated himself upon the throne of his glory; and all evil shall disappear from before his face; he shall go and tell to that Son of Man, and he shall be strong before the Lord of the Spirits. Here ends the third parable of Enoch (*1 En.* 69:27-29).

This text envisages not merely the unrighteous humans facing judgement before the Son of Man, but rather the fallen Watchers and their offspring. They are designated as *those who have led the world astray*, which recalls the Watchers narrative in which the watchers produce hybrid offspring with human women (ch. 6) and teach humans all sorts of heavenly secrets which they were not intended to know (chs. 7-8), leading to violence and oppression filling the earth (ch 9). Here, the Son of Man is again identified with theophanic categories as the one who will judge all evil–including evil spiritual entities–leading to its permanent eradication on the earth. The final lines, concerning the one who goes and tells that Son of Man and is strong before the Lord of the Spirits, is somewhat awkward. Peter Schäfer offers a possible explanation for the peculiarity of the passage:

> There can be no doubt: what we have here before us borders on a theophany, the appearance and revelation of God. The last part of verse 29, "And the word of that Son of Man will go forth and will prevail in the presence of the Lord of Spirits," sounds more like a somewhat half-hearted attempt to once again restrict the visual and thematic force of this theophany, and dutifully admonish readers or listeners not to equate this Son of Man with God. Actually, though, the author did just that.[44]

In other words, the author has just raised the Son of Man to such a high status in his description of him that when one sees the Son of Man–based on his description here–it is not immediately apparent whether one is beholding the Son of Man or God himself. The mention of the Lord of the

[44] Schäfer, Peter. *Two Gods in Heaven: Jewish Concepts of God in Antiquity*. Translated by Allison Brown. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2020. 49.

Spirits at the end of the text serves to remind the reader that these are two separate figures, no matter who indistinguishable they might become in their descriptions.

Of particular interest for our purposes is that the evil spiritual beings, who have led the world astray, are in view when the author then says that when the Son of Man appears on the throne of glory, *all* of the evil ones will be imprisoned, their works will vanish from the earth, and all evil will be eradicated. That is, although it is not specified whether the judgement of evil spiritual beings will consist of their total annihilation or whether they will remain imprisoned under the Son of Man's judgement, Enoch's divine Son of Man will enact a final judgement over the demons which will cleanse the earth of their corruption, pollution, and violent oppression of humans. This eschatological moment fulfils, and even transfigures, God's promise in the watchers narrative which anticipates the second stage of the watcher's judgement, namely that:

> All the children of the people will become righteous, and all nations shall worship and bless me; and they will all prostrate themselves to me. *And the earth shall be cleansed from all pollution, and from all sin, and from all plague, and from all suffering* (*1 En.* 10:21-22).

That it is within God's purview to at some future day ensure that the earth will be cleansed (καθαρισθήσεται) from all impurity (ἀπὸ πάσης ἀκαθαρσίας)–a reference to the impure offspring to the hybrid human-angel offspring produced in the watchers's rebellion–is significant in our consideration of Mark's portrayal of Jesus, who has frequent and contentious encounters with what are (usually) explicitly called unclean spirits (πνεῦμα ἀκάθαρτα), an unusual demonic moniker which is idiosyncratic to Mark (and Matthew and Luke after him) in the ancient world. The *Similitudes*, which imports this eschatological and clearly theophanic expectation to a divine messiah–namely the Son of Man–who sits on God's throne to enact eschatological judgement, provides us with a strikingly apt parallel to consider the Markan Jesus, before whom the unclean

spirits tremble with fear that their eschatological judgement is at hand.[45] As will be made clear in the following chapter, yet bears stating at present, my argument is not that the Mark drew from the Enochic Son of Man in a straightforward genealogical way, whether intertextually or by a broader form of dependance. Such a proposal, while resting on a great number of criteria with varying probabilities, tends to downplay important ideological differences between the two texts;[46] rather, I offer the Enochic Son of Man figure as a helpful figure *in dialogue* with Mark's presentation of Jesus's encounters with Satan and his exorcistic ministry. The next chapter will offer my reading of Mark's Jesus, whom I will place in dialogue with the Enochic Son of Man.

3.5 11QMelchizedek (11Q13)

At present, there is another figure worthy of our consideration for a dialogical relationship with the Markan Jesus. This figure is that of Melchizedek in *11QMelchizedek* (11Q13) from the Qumran writings.[47] The text is highly fragmentary at parts; however, there are striking features in the reconstructed document which, by means of the well-known Qumran *pesher*, portray a heavenly messianic figure[48] who is identified as God/a god and comes to bring judgement on Belial and his demonic minions. The author offers a few texts from the Hebrew Bible, and then offers a less-than-obvious interpretation of each of the characters in the text, while imparting an eschatological bent to each text's meaning. We will examine the two primary *pesharim* of the Biblical texts presented, and consider the profile which emerges as a result.

[45] Cf. discussion in the next chapter on Mk. 1:24; 5:7.

[46] As noted by Logan Williams. See: "Debating Daniel's Dream," 23-27.

[47] *11QMelchizedek's* Melchizedek, like the Enochic Son of Man, is a valid dialogical partner for the Markan Jesus on the basis of his being a messianic figure who engages the demonic realm.

[48] It has also been argued that Melchizedek in *11QMelch* is in reality an angel/archangel, God himself, or a second deity. See: van de Water, Rick. "Michael or Yhwh? Toward Identifying Melchizedek in 11Q13." *Journal for the Study of the Pseudepigrapha* 16, no. 1 (2006): 75–86.

Before the two texts of interest in our investigation, let us first set the context. At the beginning of column two, where the fragmentary text is first legible, there is a quotation of the Jubilee legislation from Leviticus 25:13, which instructs that "in [this] year of jubilee (בשנת היובל), [you shall return, each one, to his respective property." This refers in Leviticus to the first year of every forty-nine year cycle in which those who have lost their land property would return to it. The author of *11QMelchizedek* then interprets this jubilee in light of Deuteronomy 15:2: "This is [the manner of the release:] every creditor shall release what he lent [to his neighbour. He shall not coerce his neighbour or his brother, for it has been proclaimed] a release (שמטה) for G[od]." Here is the command that every *seven* (Deut. 15:1) years, the Israelites are to forgive any debts which people owe. Logan Williams helpfully articulates the interplay between these two text from Israel's Torah in *11QMelchizedek*:

> By synthesizing these two sections of the Pentateuch, the author portrays the jubilee as including two related but distinct features: return to ancestral property and the release of all debts. This conflation between jubilee (יובל) and the *shemittah* year (שמטה) is attested in other contemporary Jewish authors, including possibly the Septuagint, which translates the terms יובל (jubilee) in Lev. 25.10/13, דרור (liberty) in Lev. 25.10, and שמטה (release) in Deut. 15.1–2, with the noun ἄφεσις—'release' (or 'forgiveness').[49]

The jubilee as *11QMelchizedek* presents it, then, consists of both returning to one's land (Lev. 25:13) and the clearing of all debts (Deut. 15:2). The author, believing that the Qumran community was living in the last days, offers an eschatological interpretation of the jubilee:

> [Its interpretation] (פשרו) for the last days (לאחרית הימים) refers to the captives (השבויים), who [...] and those teachers have been hidden and kept secret, and from the inheritance of Melchizedek… (11Q13 II.4-5)
> And liberty will be proclaimed to them, to free them from [the debt of] all their inequities. (11Q13 II.6)

[49] Williams, Logan. "Melchizedek, the Son of Man, and Eschatological Jubilee: The Sin-Forgiving Messiahs in 11QMelchizedek and Mark." *Journal for the Study of the New Testament* 46, no. 2 (2023).

Whereas the jubilee legislation in its original literary context is not eschatologically focused, *11QMelchizedek* offers eschatological reading (פשרו לאחרית הימים) of it for the author's own day in reference to those who have not returned from exile (השבויים).[50] Together with a reference to the liberty preached to (exiled) captives in Isaiah 61:1 (לקרא לשבוים דרור), the author claims that these captives will be freed from the debt of their iniquities. All of this will take place in the first week of the jubilee which follows the nine jubilees (11Q13 II.7), connecting the eschatological reading of the jubilee legislation to the Jewish return from exile.

From here, the focus of the text shifts to Melchizedek, the enigmatic king of Salem and priest to God who blessed Abraham in Genesis 14:18-20. Melchizedek also appears in Psalm 110:4, where an eternal priesthood is promised in his order. In the current form of the Masoretic text, Psalm 110 is difficult to understand.[51] The issue of YHWH's relationship to (and the identity of) the other "Lord" which David depicts is ambiguous and welcomes creative interpretive moves from later authors, including the author of *11QMelchizedek* and some in the New Testament.[52]

In *11QMelchizedek*, Melchizedek is the one who will enact this eschatological jubilee and thereby bring an end to the exile by means of forgiving their iniquities. The identity of Melchizedek would seem at this point to be that of the מלכי צדק from Genesis 14 and Psalm 110, the lone mentions of the name/title in the Hebrew Bible. As we will see, the figure called Melchizedek in *11QMelchizedek* is a figure of particularly high esteem who will be conflated with Israel's God in several of the author's *pesharim*. Many have suggested that Melechizedek must be an archangel,

[50] Williams, "Melchizedek."

[51] Kvanvig states that it is "readable only with emendations." Kvanvig, Helge S. "The Son of Man in the Parables of Enoch." In *Enoch and the Messiah Son of Man: Revisiting the Book of Parables*, edited by Gabriele Boccaccini. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2007. 190.

[52] See: Mk. 12:35-37; Mt. 22:41-45; Lk. 20:41-44; 1 Cor. 15:25.

as he is presented as the equal-but-opposing figure to Belial in this text,[53] much unlike the human figure from the human Melchizedek in Genesis 14. I find convincing Crispin Fletcher-Louis's argument that the Melchizedek of *11QMelchizedek* is at the same time both human and divine, taking on angelomorphic qualities, but not as an angel.[54]

With this context in mind, we can now examine the descriptions of Melchizedek which resonate with the Markan depiction of Jesus. The first Hebrew Bible textual reference we will examine in *11QMelchizedek* is Psalm 82:1. The reconstructed Qumran text reads:

> For it is the time for the year of grace of Melchizedek, and of [his] arm[ies, the nat]ion of the holy ones of God, of the rule of judgment, as it is written about him in the songs of David, who said "Elohim will [st]and in the assem[bly of God,] in the midst of the gods he judges." And about him he sai[d, "And] above [it,] to the heights, return: God will judge the peoples." As for what he sa[id: "How long will you] judge unjustly and show partia[lity] to the wicked" (11Q13 II.9-11)?

This section grounds Melchizedek's enactment of the eschatological jubilee year by stating that it is the time for the year of the favour of Melchizedek (כיא הואה הקץ לשׁנת הרצון למלכי צדק). This is another clear reference to proclamation of Isaiah 61, where the spirit of the Lord is upon the messianic servant to announce the year of YHWH's favour (לקרא שׁנת־רצון ליהוה)[55] which consists

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[53] Woude, A.S. van der. *Melchisedek als himmlische Erlösergestalt in den neugefundenen eschatologischen Midraschim aus Qumran-Höhle XI.* Vol. 14. United States: BRILL, 1965. 367-368.

[54] Fletcher-Louis, Crispin H. T. *All the Glory of Adam: Liturgical Anthropology in the Dead Sea Scrolls*. 1st ed. Vol. 42. Boston: Brill, 2002. 216-221. Fletcher-Louis provides a three-fold argument for not eschewing Melchizedek's human identity for a full embrace of a superhuman one. First, it is difficult to imagine the author choosing the name Melchizedek for this figure unless the author wanted the readers to associate the figure with the human Melchizedek figure in Genesis 14 and Psalm 110. "Whilst it is possible that in the latter passage Melchizedek is a somewhat mythological figure, the founder of an order of priest-kings, it is hard to see how a Jew in the first century B.C. (when 11 QMelch was copied) could read the scriptures and find a Melchizedek who is an *entirely* other-worldly figure, none other than the archangel Michael." 217. Second, Fletcher-Louis denies that there was ever a strand in early Judaism or Christianity in which Melchizedek is an angel. In texts such as *2 Enoch* 71, for example, where Melchizedek is "a divine child without father and, it seems, only a weak maternal parentage," Fletcher-Louis attributes this feature to "the theology of priestly transcendence." The comparison of Jesus with Melchizedek in Hebrews 7 in combination with the author of Hebrews's sharp distinction between Jesus and the angels (1:5-2:18), likewise, works in favour of a human Melchizedek. See: 217. Third, priests are human. Melchizedek is known especially for his priestly role, and the declaration in *11QMelchizedek* II.9 that "it is the time for the year of the favour of Melchizedek," Fletcher-Louis notes, "has strongly cultic overtones within the context of the DSS corpus. 217.

[55] Is. 61:2.

in the return of the captives from exile by means of God's vengeance. Here, the author of *11QMelchizedek*, in a scriptural quotation of Isaiah 61:2, has substituted the tetragrammaton (ליהוה) and inserted Melchizedek's name (למלכי צדק). Instead of the year of YHWH's favour beginning the eschatological jubilee, it is the year of Melchizedek's favour, a striking development. Whatever else we might say about Melchizedek's identity, this text seems to identify him extremely closely with/as(?) Israel's God. God and Melchizedek are distinguishable by name, but it is not immediately apparent that they are distinguishable by virtue of their status or actions. This is not a lone instance, however. As we will continue to see, it will happen repeatedly in this text.

The author continues to explain the place of Melchizedek in this eschatological moment, this time with an explicit scriptural citation formula: "Just as it is written (כאשר כתוב) about him (Melchizedek) in the Psalms of David." This is followed by a citation of Psalm 82:1: "Elohim will [st]and in the assem[bly of God,] in the midst of the gods he judges."[56] Here is a heavenly court in which Israel's God stands in judgement over all other gods. According to the author of *11QMelchizedek*, however, David was referring to none other than Melchizedek when he referred to אלוהים/אל. Once again the author has taken a text with what seems to be a clear reference to YHWH and inserted Melchizedek as the one of whom the passage speaks.

Two subsequent quotations of Psalms follow the reference to Psalm 82:1. First, the author asserts that David was speaking about Melchizedek in Psalm 7:8-9, which reads, "And above it, to the heights, return: God[57] will judge the people." Here is another text which, explicitly referring to YHWH, the author of *11QMelchizedek* takes as a reference to Melchizedek. Whereas the initial quotation of Psalm 82:1 provided a portrait of God over other spiritual beings, this reference to

[56] אלוהים [נ]צב בע[דת אל] בקורב אלוהים ישפוט

[57] 11Q13 reads אל, whereas MT reads יהוה.

Psalm 7:8-9 provides a portrait of God over the nations (ידין עמים). Taken as texts referring to Melchizedek, the portrait of a divine human acting as judge over both the nations and the host of spiritual beings begins to emerge.

This portrait sharpens with the following quotation. In a return to the next line Psalm of Psalm 82:2, the author quotes David who wrote, "How long will you judge unjustly and show partiality to the wicked?" With this specification, the author has narrowed in on the judgement of the wicked, whom the psalmist fears receive a free pass on their oppression of God's people. The author continues to give the interpretation of this passage in relation to his own day:

> Its interpretation (פשׁרו) concerns Belial and the spirits of his lot, wh[o…] turn[ing aside] from the commandments of God to [commit evil.] But, Melchizedek will carry out the vengeance of Go[d's] judgments, [and on that day he will fr]e[e them from the hand of] Belial and from the hand of all the sp[irits of his lot] (11Q13 II.12-13).

Here, Belial and his minions are identified as the wicked which are referenced in the Psalm 82 citation. In no uncertain terms, the author identifies Melchizedek as the one who will arrive at the previously-mentioned eschatological jubilee in order to enact God's vengeful judgement over Belial and the demons who are the gods in the midst of whom God/Melchizedek stands to judge in Psalm 82:1. Similar to the Enochic Son of Man whom we examined previously, Melchizedek acts as an eschatological judge of the evil spiritual forces in this scroll. This figure who will judge Belial and his lot is somewhat surprising given expectations that it is God who will be the eschatological judge of all. For this function to be attributed to a messianic figure is a striking development in the Second Temple period.

The judgement of Belial with his minions and the eschatological jubilee which combines debt-forgiveness and return from exile are not two separate actions; rather, they go hand-in-hand. Following the reading proposed by Yuditsky and Haber, line 5 refers to the one who caused them to turn astray from the paths of the law and from the inheritance of Melchizedek (מדרכי הדיחמה

מלכי צדק התורה ומנחלת). This seems to be referring to Belial, who causes God's people to stray from his commandments. The debt which the sons of light have accrued is owed not to God, but to Belial.[58] Such a loss of one's inheritance in the lot of Melchizedek ultimately results in exile, which is the removal from the lot of the sons of light, and one is ultimately "forced to become the slave and captive of Belial."[59] Because the captives are exiled to slavery to Belial, by enacting the eschatological jubilee in which debts are cancelled and freedom is proclaimed to the captives, Melchizedek carries out God's vengeful judgements on Belial–to whom the debts of the captives are owed–and frees the captives from the hands of Belial and the spirits of his lot. Melchizedek, then, is a figure who brings the exiles home out of their slavery to Belial due to their lack of Torah observance by enacting the eschatological jubilee which cancels all outstanding debts. I will suggest in a later chapter that a similar dynamic is at play Mark 10:45, in which Jesus explains his death as a ransom payment. Satan, I will argue, is the most logical figure to whom a ransom payment could be given in order to free many from slavery.

The second major *pesher* is an extensive discourse on Isaiah 52:7, a text which looks forward to the return of the captives in exile, in which the author assigns an eschatological referent to each figure mentioned in the text:

> This [...] is the day of [peace about whi]ch he said [... through Isa]iah the prophet, who said "[How] beautiful upon the mountains are the feet [of] the messen[ger who] announces peace, the mess[enger of good who announces salvati]on, [sa]ying to Zion: your God [reigns]" Its interpretation: The mountains [are] the prophet[s …] … [...] for all … [...] And the messenger i[s] the anointed of the spir[it] as Dan[iel] said [about him: "Until an anointed, a prince, it is seven weeks." And the messenger of] good who announ[ces salvation] is the one about whom it is written that [...] "To comfo[rt] the [afflicted," its interpretation:] to instruct them in all the ages or the wo[rld …] in truth … [...] … [...] [...] has turned away from Belial and will re[turn …] … [...] in the judgment[s of] God, as it is written about him: "[Saying to Zi]on: your God rules." ["Zi]on" i[s] [the congregation of

[58] See: Williams, "Melchizedek;" Ariel, Chanan. "Semantic and Exegetical Observations on Metaphors for Sin in the Dead Sea Scrolls / מתמוטטים, כושלים, נידחים ושבויים: עיוני סמנטיקה ופירוש בדימויי החטא במגילות." *Megillot* 13 (2017): 21.

[59] Chanan, "Semantic," 21.

> all the sons of justice, those] who establish the covenant, those who avoid walking [on the pa]th of the people. And "your God" is [... Melchizedek, who will fr]e[e them from the ha]nd of Belial (11Q13 II.15-25).

The Isaiah 52:7 citation concerning the messenger's announcement to Zion that her God reigns is interpreted for the author's own perceived eschatological moment. Of particular interest for the current project is the author's interpretation of the final figure in Isaiah 52:7, namely "your God" (אלהיך). Although the text above is reconstructed to refer to Melchizedek in line 25, due to the prior mention of Melchizedek in line 13 as the one who will free the captives from Belial and from his spirits, as well as the earlier scriptural citations in which the author identifies Melchizedek as the referent of אלוהים, we are on firm ground in assuming that the author would here identify Melchizedek as the אלהיך of Isaiah 52:7. Once again, the author has elevated Melchizedek to an extremely high status by asserting that when Isaiah speaks of God, he is in fact speaking about Melchizedek. And once again, it is said of this divine-human, messianic Melchizedek that he will free the captives from the hand of Belial to whom they are enslaved and in exile. Melchizedek's enactment of the eschatological jubilee will cancel the debts which the captives owe to Belial and thereby free them from Belial's power over them.

In *11QMelchizedek*, then, we have an instance of a divine messianic figure who, at the eschaton, frees God's people from the power Belial and the demons. I will argue in the following chapters that something similar is at play with the Markan Jesus's conflict with Satan and his exorcistic ministry.

In his examination of *11QMelchizedek*'s presentation of Melchizedek, Daniel Kirk notes that "the both/and of an exalted, divine figure and human identity provides a startling portrait of an idealized figure who crosses the porous boundary between the one true God and other beings, but without any indication that the identity of God as such has been transformed or that Jewish

monotheism has been given up."[60] I find Kirk's assertion that God's identity has not been transformed in this text difficult. For Kirk, Melchizedek fits well within his framework of an exalted and idealised human figure.[61] If a human (Melchizedek) is–as Kirk himself acknowledges–able to function as the referent of the tetragrammaton in this text (II.9), how does the identity of God remain unchanged? Would the author of *11QMelchizedek* be able refer to Melchizedek without referring to God, any more than he could refer to God without referring to Melchizedek? What would the author have needed to say in order to bind up God's identity with Melchizedek more than he already has? Working out the exact relationship between Melchizedek and Israel's God in *11QMelchizedek* is a difficult task, but I find it difficult to assert that God's identity has not undergone development in this text due to God's relationship with Melchizedek who participates in the divine identity.

3.6 Looking Forward

Out of a variety of possible texts which portray a divine human messiah,[62] I have chosen to examine the Enochic Son of Man and *11QMelchizedek*'s Melchizedek as a part of a messianic profile with which I will enjoin the Markan Jesus for dialogue. I have chosen these two texts/figures in particular because of their interaction with and eschatological judgement of evil spiritual figures. In both texts, the authors imagine a person who will liberate a helpless humanity from the rule of Satan by means of acting as the eschatological judge of Satan and the demons who sits upon God's throne and acts with God's authority.

The Enochic Son of Man, for example, arrives at the eschaton to take his seat on God's judgement throne in order to enact a final judgement on Azaz'el and all of his lot (*1 En.* 55:3-4).

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[60] Kirk, *A Man,* 99.
[61] Kirk, *A Man*, 98.
[62] Cf. 4 Ezra 12-13, book five of the *Sibylline Oracles.*

At the same time, the expectation in the Book of Watchers had been that it would be God himself at whose advent the fallen watchers would tremble with dread at the prospect of their judgement (1:6); however, the chronologically later *Similitudes of Enoch* employ this theophanic language for God's Chosen One/Son of Man who arrives to act as judge (52:4, 6).

Similarly, the Melchizedek figure in *11QMelchizedek*, by means of scriptural engagement, is interpreted as the referent of several texts which refer to Israel's God. In the *pesher* of Psalm 82:1-2, the author, while reading the description of God as the judge of the other אלוהים (including the wicked), asserts that it is in reality Melchizedek who takes his seat for judgement of the spiritual beings and thereby delivers the captives from the hand of Belial and his lot. In a manner similar–as I will argue in the next chapter–to the scriptural engagement in the Markan prologue, *11QMelchizedek* makes use of key deutero-Isaian themes and texts, yet employs them with a sharp cosmic and eschatological focus.

My argument is not that the *Similitudes* and *11QMelchizedek* portray figures with an identical messianic profile. There are significant differences between the two figures. For example, they are based on different scriptural traditions. Whereas the Enochic Son of Man often has (a development of) the Danielic son of man in view, the *11QMelchizedek* focuses on applying a few texts about Israel's God and applying them to Melchizedek from Genesis 14:18-20 and Psalm 110:4. Rather than broadly comparing the Enochic Son of Man and *11QMelchizedek*'s Melchizedek, my interest is in one feature which both figures share, namely their roles as eschatological judges of Satan and his host while taking on descriptions which are indistinguishable from YHWH. That these two figures differ in meaningful ways helpfully illustrates the prominence of such a figure in ancient Judaism. Had the Enochic Son of Man and *11QMelchizedek*'s Melchizedek been nearly identical figures, one might argue that the concept of

such a figure was more fringe view with something of a linear development between the two texts. On the contrary, these are two different, independent texts and traditions. The idea that hostile spirits require an eschatological judgement from a divine messianic figure was prominent enough to make an appearance in these two very different traditions.

Further, I will not be arguing that the Markan Jesus shares a genealogical relationship with both or either of these figures, nor that all Jews in the first century shared messianic expectations of a divine messiah who would judge Satan. In the previous chapter I offered an extensive discussion on exorcists in the ancient world, constructing broad exorcist profiles, considering exorcistic techniques and the dynamics at play between exorcists, demons, and gods during the exorcism event. Although, as we will observe in the next chapter, the Markan Jesus shares some features is common with other exorcists, I submit that he is also categorically different than other exorcists–even a figure such as Israel's exorcist *par excellence*, Solomon–in his sweeping, intrinsic authority over demons who tremble with fear before him as they anticipate their eschatological destruction. In some notable ways, such a figure bears greater resemblance to the messianic figures of the *Similitudes* and *11QMelchizedek*, who share in the unique identity of Israel's God by acting as the eschatological judge of Satan and his minions. I have presented these figures in order to bring them into dialogue with the Markan Jesus as another angle from which we may view Jesus's encounters with Satan and demons.

PART TWO

"Have You Come to Destroy Us?" A Christology of Exorcism in the Gospel of Mark

4.1 Introduction

This chapter will argue that the exorcism pericopae serve to include Jesus within the divine identity in Mark's Gospel.[1] Having previously examined possession and exorcism in the ancient world, as well as Jewish traditions depicting a divine messiah who would come at the eschaton to judge the demons, the present chapter will examine the primary exorcism material in Mark's Gospel (1:21-28; 5:1-20; 9:14-29)[2] and consider its contribution to the christology of the narrative.

4.1.2 Apocalyptic Eschatology in the Gospel of Mark

Before examining the exorcism texts from Mark, it will prove beneficial to consider Mark's cosmological imagination, within which the exorcisms serve a clear narrative purpose. In particular, Mark's Gospel–to a significant degree–engages in Jewish apocalyptic discourse.[3]

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[1] I draw on Bauckham's framework of divine *identity* rather than divine agency, divine function, or divine nature. In particular, "for the Jewish religious tradition in general, what is primary is not what God is, or what divinity is (divine nature or essence), but *who God is, who YHWH the God of Israel is*. In the Hebrew Bible and Second Temple Jewish literature, God is depicted as a unique personal agent, identified by his distinctive characteristics… Some of these come to special prominence in statements of his unique identity. They are those that most easily identify him as absolutely unique by attributing to him a unique relationship to the rest of reality." Bauckham, Richard. *Jesus and the God of Israel: God Crucified and Other Studies on the New Testament's Christology of Divine Identity*. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2009. 154.

[2] The other exorcism narrative in Mark is that of the Syrophoenician woman's daughter in 7:24-30. Although important material, the exorcism is a subordinate focus to Jesus's interaction with a Gentile woman. I have therefore chosen to give more space to the other three exorcism narratives.

[3] See Collins's definition of apocalyptic literature: "a genre of revelatory literature with a narrative framework, in which a revelation is mediated by an otherworldly being to a human recipient, disclosing a transcendent reality which is both temporal, insofar as it envisages eschatological salvation, and spatial insofar as it involves another, supernatural world." Collins, John. J. "Apocalypse: Morphology of a Genre," Semeia Studies 14. Missoula, MT: Scholars Press, 1979. These and other features are not limited to literary apocalypses such as sections of Daniel, *the Book of Watchers* (*1 Enoch* 1-36), the *Revelation* in the New Testament, or the *Shepherd of Hermas*. It has become common to recognise apocalyptic features within other literary genres. See, for example: Marcus, Joel, and Marion L. Soards, eds. *Apocalyptic and the New Testament: Essays in Honor of J. Louis Martyn*. Journal for the Study of the New Testament Supplement Series 24. Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1989.

On apocalyptic discourse in Mark, see: Shively, Elizabeth E. *Apocalyptic Imagination in the Gospel of Mark: The Literary and Theological Role of Mark 3:22-30.* vols. Beihefte zur Zeitschrift für die Neutestamentliche Wissenschaft und die Kunden der Älteren Kirche, v. 189. Berlin: De Gruyter, 2012. 153-171; Robinson, James M. (James McConkey). *The Problem of History in Mark and Other Marcan Studies*. Philadelphia, PA: Fortress Press,

Elizabeth Shively refers to Mark's use of "apocalyptic *topoi,*" common themes from apocalyptic literature which, when employed by an author, "triggers apocalyptic ideas" in order to construct a particular symbolic world.[4] In particular, Shively identifies "Satan or the equivalent, cosmic battle, the oppression/persecution of human beings, and the interconnection of heavenly and human powers" as features common to texts which engage in apocalyptic discourse, as well as those which are prominent in Mark. Without delving into discussions concerning the manner that or extent to which apocalyptic thought is present in early Christian literature, and especially the Gospel of Mark, we will briefly mention two features of apocalyptic literature which play a prominent role in Mark's narrative world, namely dualism and an eschatological focus.

First, and of great relevance to the current project, dualism is a persistent feature in apocalyptic thought. Dualism, in general, refers to "a number of philosophical and religious thought systems shaped by a fundamental physical or metaphysical duality, a teaching of two powers, principles or states of being which cannot be explained as originating in or leading to an overall unity."[5] More narrowly, *apocalyptic* dualism refers to a thought system shaped by duality between good and evil (between both human and spiritual beings), an ultimate good deity (God) and an ultimate evil spiritual being (e.g. Satan, Beliar, Mastema, etc.), and the present age and the age to come. These features are famously present in texts from the Qumran community.[6]

Some scholars have used the language of a "cosmic struggle" when referring to this duality between good and evil in the Gospel of Mark.[7] On one side stands God, Jesus, his angels, and his

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1982; Marcus, Joel. *The Way of the Lord: Christological Exegesis of the Old Testament in the Gospel of Mark*. Louisville, KY: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1992. 26-31.

[4] Shively, *Apocalyptic*, 84-87.

[5] Frey, Jörg. "Apocalyptic Dualism." In *The Oxford Handbook of Apocalyptic Literature*, edited by John J. Collins. Oxford Handbooks in Religion and Theology. Oxford University Press, 2014. 272.

[6] See, for example, the "sons of light" and "sons of darkness" in 4Q547.

[7] Robinson, *Problem*, 90; Shively, *Apocalyptic*, 84. Marcus

elect people. On the other side of the sharp divide are all who oppose the work of God in Jesus, namely Satan, the demons, the scribes, the Pharisees, the Sadducees, and anyone else who would be *against* Jesus and his followers.[8] Shively captures the idea well: "Mark employs apocalyptic *topoi* to interpret Jesus' ministry as a skirmish in a dualistic cosmic contest in which the Spirit-empowered Jesus wages war against Satan to rescue people oppressed by demonic powers."[9] Not only does Mark's Jesus have allies and opponents. He has both *human* and *spiritual* allies and opponents. The side of Satan is notably hierarchical, as the Jerusalem scribes narrate in the Beelzeboul controversy: "He is possessed by Beelzeboul," and "By the prince of the demons he casts out demons" (Mk. 3:22). Although the scribes's assertion that Jesus is empowered by Beelzeboul to perform exorcisms is false, their underlying framework regarding a singular leader/prince of all of the demons (Beelzeboul/Satan) is accurate in Mark's narrative world. Such a framework is also foundational in apocalyptic texts such as *1 Enoch*, in which Semyaz is initially identified as the leader of the Watchers (*1 En.* 6:3), a role which later seems to be occupied by Azaz'el. The hierarchical framework is even more explicit in *Jubilees*, in which Mastema/Satan acts as "the chief of the spirits" (*Jub.* 10:8) and to whom the remnant of the evil spirits are subject on the earth (*Jub.* 10:11).[10] Conversely, there are also benevolent angels in the story who are subservient to Jesus (cf. Mk. 1:13; 13:26-27). Within this dualistic framework of a cosmic struggle, humans are helpless to the power of Satan and the demons. Likewise, exorcisms, although at one level they function as historical events, are situated as the outworking of the cosmic struggle, in

[8] Mk. 10:40: ὅς γὰρ οὐκ ἔστιν καθ'ἡμῶν, ὑπὲρ ἡμῶν ἐστιν.
[9] Shively, *Apocalyptic*, 84.
[10] Notably, Mastema/Satan/Azaz'el is always depicted as subservient to the Lord.

which Jesus–the Stronger one (Mk. 1:7)–plunders the house of the strong man (Mk. 3:27) and thereby sets enslaved humanity free from the captivity of Satan.[11]

Second, Mark's Gospel bears an eschatological focus common to apocalyptic literature. Eschewing for now the little apocalypse in Mark 13, we will focus on two eschatological cue from the Markan prologue. The first is Mark's opening scriptural citation, a composite citation of Exodus 23:20, Malachi 3:1, and Isaiah 40:3 which he employs to introduce the ministry of John the Baptist and Jesus. Although he draws from three separate texts, Mark introduces "the beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ" specifically "just as it is written in Isaiah the prophet" (1:2).[12] Although the singular Isaianic ascription appears to be an authorial oversight, it seems more probable that the mention of Isaiah[13] is best understood as a theological innovation.[14] This Isaianic reference, with its placement in the opening lines as a modifier of ἀρχὴ τοῦ εὐαγγελίου Ἰησοῦ

[11] Rüggemeier, contra Malbon and others, objects to this sense of a cosmic struggle in Mark's Gospel and thus the dualism entailed therein: "Das Markusevangelium ist weit davon entfernt, einen 'cosmic struggle' (Malbon) zu präsentieren. Ein entsprechend dualistisches Weltbild liegt ihm gerade nicht zu Grunde. Vielmehr sind die Dämonen stets gezwungen, Jesus in seiner Übermacht als Sohn Gottes anzuerkennen. Jedes Aufeinandertreffen zeugt abermals davon, dass der Kampf längst entschieden und der 'Starke' d.h der Satan, seines Hausrats und seines Hauses beraubt und gefesselt ist (3:27)." See: Rüggemeier, Jan. "Poetik der markinischen Christologie: eine kognitiv-narratologische Exegese." Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament. 2. Reihe, 458. Mohr Siebeck, 2017, 246. I find Satan to be more active than Rüggemeier suggests. In Jesus's interpretation of the parable of the Sower, for example, he clarifies that Satan is the one who comes and takes away the word which is sown, hindering the reception of Jesus's hearers (Mk. 4:15). Based on the lack of understanding of those who hear Jesus throughout the narrative, including his own disciples, it seems that Satan is both active and often successful. Further, as I will argue in the next chapter, Jesus's ransom logion in Mark 10:45 has a payment to Satan in mind, which implies that Jesus/God and Satan have been interacting behind the scenes.

[12] Guelich analyses ὡς/καθὼς γέγραπται and כתוב כאשר in the NT, LXX, and Qumran literature when introducing a scriptural citation. He concludes, "The formula *kathōs/hōs gegraptai never* appears at the start of a new sentence when used as an introductory formula. The very function of the words 'as has been written,' when used as an introductory formula consists in forming a bridge between what has preceded and the quotation that follows. The formula and quotation always refer back and never forward in the context." See: Guelich, Robert A. "'The Beginning of the Gospel' - Mark 1:1-15." *Biblical Research* 27 (1982): 5–15. It is on this basis that I assert that the composite scriptural citation in Mark 1:2-3 is something of an explanation or road map for understanding ἀρχὴ τοῦ εὐαγγελίου Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ.

[13] Many manuscripts (A K P W Γ f^{13} 28 579 1424 2542 and others) drop the reference to Isaiah in 1:2, and simply locate the scriptural citation ἐν τοῖς προφήταις. This omission, however, clearly seems to be a scribal attempt to resolve the difficulty of the composite citation with a singular attribution to Isaiah.

[14] Marcus, *The Way*, 12-18.

Χριστοῦ, signals to the reader that the Hebrew Scriptures–and Isaiah in particular–are foundational in understanding the story which follows.[15] As Richard Hays notes:

> Mark's use of the Isaiah ascription here signals that the conceptual framework for his Gospel is the Isaianic new exodus. By naming Isaiah in particular—and by bringing the citation to its climax with the words taken from Isaiah 40, Isaiah's pivotal declaration of hope for the end of exile—Mark signals his readers that the *euangelion* of Jesus Christ is to be read within the matrix of Isaiah's prophetic vision: God will return to Zion and restore Israel.[16]

Although there is much to consider concerning Mark's employment of Exodus 23:20 and Malachi 3:1,[17] we limit our present examination to the reference to Isaiah 40:3.

Mark could have quoted a number of Isaian texts to open the narrative;[18] however, the choice to quote from Isaiah 40:3 in particular serves clear theological intentions in the prologue. There is a heightened focus on the location of the wilderness in these opening lines. In the citation of Exodus 23:20, for example, the messenger/angel (מלאך/ἄγγελος) who will go before you (the people of Israel) is presented to guide the people from Sinai, through *the wilderness*, into the promised land, thus completing the first exodus. In Isaiah 40:3, the voice is of one who is crying out *in the wilderness* (φωνή βοῶντος ἐν τῇ ἐρήμῳ) who "announces the second exodus through the wilderness to the final delivery of God's people."[19] The theme of wilderness, then, takes on an

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[15] Although some, such as Gundry (See: Gundry, *Mark,* 32.), argue that Mark's opening citation pertains only to the early ministry of John the Baptist in 1:4-8 as the one who prepares the way of the Lord in the wilderness, this view is difficult to sustain due the significance of introductory sentences in ancient writings. For a summary of opening sentences in antiquity, see Watts, Rikki E. *Isaiah's New Exodus in Mark*. Biblical Studies Library. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2000. 54-55; Watts quotes Aristotle, who contends that the function of the prologue was to provide "an indication of what is to be said so that the hearers can know beforehand what the work is about" (*Rhetoric*, 1414b). Likewise, he references Lucian's assertion that a good historian is one who "will make what is to come easy to understand and quite clear, if he sets forth the causes and outlines the main events… He will use a virtual preface to clarify what he is going to say" (Hist. 53).

[16] Hays, *Echoes*, 21.

[17] See Watts's, *New Exodus,* 61-75.

[18] Luke, too, finds Isaiah helpful in the task of identifying Jesus with Israel's Scripture and return from exile; however, Isaiah 61:1 functions as the programmatic Isaiah text for Luke's Jesus who begins his public ministry by reading from this portion of the Isaiah scroll in the Nazareth synagogue (Lk. 4:14-30).

[19] Mauser, Ulrich. *Christ in the Wilderness: The Wilderness Theme in the Second Gospel and Its Basis in the Biblical Tradition*. Studies in Biblical Theology 39. London: SCM, 1963. 81.

important role in the scriptural citation in 1:2-3, and likewise is the geographical backdrop of John the Baptist's ministry (1:4) and Jesus's initial confrontation with Satan (1:12). Mauser notes the significance of the wilderness location as evoked in the composite citation and following verses:

> The wilderness in Mark 1.3 carries with it the full weight of a great religious tradition embracing high hopes and promises as well as the deep shadows of judgment and despair, and this is imposed upon the succeeding verses, moulding them as counterparts of Israel's experience in the desert.[20]

Mauser's analysis is helpful, but Joel Marcus critiques his lack of attention to the distinct function assumed by the wilderness motif in the so-called first and second exoduses. Whereas in the first exodus, the wilderness functioned as a location of judgement and rebellion, texts such as Isaiah 40:1-6 which employ the wilderness as part of a second exodus do so by transforming the motif into "the expectation that Israel will move into the desert a second time in order to experience a new encounter with God."[21] Mark's attribution of the scriptural texts–all of which concern the wilderness motif–to the prophet Isaiah (Mk. 1:2) signals that it is not merely that the Old Testament wilderness motif is informative for Mark's prologue and therefore his Gospel; rather, it is the Isaian rendition of the wilderness motif in particular which will be programmatic:

> In the Deutero-Isaian picture of the wilderness sojourn, little room is left any longer for human disobedience; it has been crowded out by the titanic proportions of the divine victory… Mark 1:2a indicates that it is the Deutero-Isaian use of the theme that is determinative for Mark… it is specifically the Deutero-Isaian form of this theme, with its hope of eschatological victory in the wilderness, that is crucial for Mark.[22]

Further, the wilderness motif serves an eschatological purpose in Isaiah 40:1-11. Consider in particular the dramatic transformation of the desolate places:

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[20] Mauser, *Christ*, 82.

[21] Marcus, *The Way,* 24. Marcus notes Mauser's acknowledgement of this concept in his examination of Isaiah 40, Hosea 2:14, and Ezekiel 20:35-38. His critique is that Mauser fails to bring this distinction to bear on the wilderness concept in Mark's Gospel, where Marcus would argue that only the second exodus wilderness motif (one of restoration) is present in the Markan appropriation of it, due in part to Mark's explicit mention of Isaiah in the citation formula (1:2).

[22] Marcus, *The Way*, 26.

> A voice cries out:
> "In the wilderness prepare the way of the Lord;
> make straight in the desert a highway for our God.
> Every valley shall be lifted up,
> and every mountain and hill be made low;
> the uneven ground shall become level,
> and the rough places a plain" (Is. 40:3-4 NRSVUE).

The Deutero-Isaian vision is one which imagines an eschatological transformation of the world in order to prepare for "the triumphant march of the holy warrior, Yahweh, leading his people through the wilderness to their true homeland in a mighty demonstration of saving power."[23] Mark was not unique in his employment of the Deutero-Isaian desert motif; indeed, multiple leaders around the time of the first Jewish revolt against Rome (C.E. 66-74) "led their followers out to the wilderness with the promise that they would there see miraculous signs of God's redemption… They were probably in large measure motivated by the hope that God would fulfill the ancient promises of eschatological victory contained in the scriptures, notably in Isaiah 40."[24]

The second evangelist, then, in his opening scriptural reference to the good news which was written "in Isaiah the prophet" concerning desert events in the context of eschatological hope, introduces the following narrative with an eschatological focus. The events which take place between John and Jesus in the wilderness, in some way, set the stage for the Lord's triumphal march through the deserted places in order to procure an eschatological release from captivity. Such captivity, for the Markan narrative, is not merely geopolitical; rather, it is cosmic in scope, a captivity to the strong man, Satan himself. As Elizabeth Shively notes,

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[23] Marcus, The Way, 29.

[24] Marcus, *The Way*, 23. Marcus refers to: D.R. Schwartz, "Wilderness and Temple: On Religion and State in Judea in the Second Temple Period," in *Priesthood and Kingship* (Jerusalem: Zalman Shezer Center for the History of Israel, 1987 [Hebrew]), pp. 61-78. Schwartz examined texts from Josephus involving revolutionaries who went out into the wilderness. Marcus also notes 1QM 1:2-3, which likely alludes to Isaiah 40:3 in reference to the Qumran community who live in the wilderness to prepare for an eschatological holy war.

> Mark calls the reader to imagine Jesus in light of the larger context of Isaiah 40, as the divine Warrior who comes to ransom God's people from the nations. In Mark's story, however, Jesus struggles not against a human enemy, but against a cosmic enemy, Satan.[25]

The second eschatological cue in the Markan prologue is Jesus's opening message and further explanation of τὸ εὐαγγέλιον τοῦ θεοῦ in Mark 1:15: "The time has been fulfilled and the kingdom of God has come near. Repent and believe in the gospel."[26]

That the words "the time has been fulfilled" (πεπλήρωται ὁ καιρός) are the first to be uttered by the Markan Jesus in his condensed inaugural preaching raises a number of important questions for understanding the statement in Mark's Gospel. What is this time, which has now been completed, to which Jesus refers? What event(s) has transpired in order to fulfil the time? How does this former time relate to the arrival of God's reign? And how might all of this relate to Jesus at this moment in the narrative? We will consider these questions in detail in the next chapter, particularly in their relation to Jesus's parable of the strong man in Mark 3:23-27. For now, however, we will briefly consider the eschatological charge with which the Markan Jesus's first words introduce his ministry.

We note first that Jesus's return to Galilee and gospel proclamation in 1:14-15 occur immediately following his baptism and his spirit-compelled testing by Satan in the wilderness. Mark's account of the wilderness temptation is brief and ambiguous, perhaps to an uncomfortable extent.[27] Mark does not inform the readers regarding whether or not Jesus was successful in his encounter with Satan, only that he was there and surrounded by wild beasts and angels. Instead,

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[25] Shively, *Apocalyptic*, 36.

[26] I contend that Mk. 1:14-15 concludes the Markan prologue, and that the prologue is bookended with mentions of the gospel.

[27] See, for example, Matthew's (4:1-11) and Luke's (4:1-13) wilderness testing narratives, which are much more comprehensive than Mark's, and grant readers a great measure of certainty regarding Jesus's success. Such certainty is absent in Mark's account.

Jesus himself makes an announcement, namely that a particular span of time[28] has been completed and that God's kingdom has come near. The reader gains further insight into Jesus's interaction with Satan in the Beelzeboul controversy (3:22-30), in which he depicts Satan as one who has a kingdom and is a strong man with great possessions. Jesus, however, is the *stronger* man (1:7) who has come to bind Satan and plunder his possessions (referring to the release of humans under Satan's reign, by means of exorcisms).[29] The completion of the time in 1:15, then, refers to the time period in which Satan's reign stood in domination over humanity.[30] The inverse proclamation of Jesus is that God's reign has now drawn near, which is somehow due to Jesus's confrontation with Satan in the wilderness, and expressed in Jesus's exorcistic ministry.

What we have, then, in Jesus's opening preaching is an apocalyptic, eschatological presentation of Mark's narrative world, in which an ancient, eschatological vision of the cosmos signals toward YHWH's arrival to make a way of restoration in the wilderness and to establish his own reign on earth in the place of Satan's. Having this apocalyptic framing in mind will aid our attempt to locate the significance of Jesus's exorcisms–to which we now turn–in our examination of Mark's portrayal of Jesus.

4.2 Mark 1:21-28

Jesus's exorcism in the Capernaum synagogue is the first miracle recorded in the Gospel of Mark, a position which grants the exorcism a unique, programmatic status in relation to Jesus's broader

[28] On ὁ καιρός as a span of time rather than a singular moment of time, see: Marcus, Joel. "'The Time Has Been Fulfilled!' (Mark 1.15)." In *Apocalyptic and the New Testament: Essays in Honor of J. Louis Martyn*, edited by Marion L. Soards and Joel Marcus. Journal for the Study of the New Testament. 24. Supplement Series. Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1989. 50-53; J. Schlosser, *La règne de Dieu dans les dits de Jésus* (EBib; Paris: Gabalda, 1980), vol. 1, 100.

[29] In context, John refers to Jesus as "the one stronger *than me*" (ὁ ἰσχυρότερός μου); however, Mark will show Jesus to be even more powerful than the strong man, able to bind him and plunder his possessions. The first description of Jesus in Mark's story, depicting a measure of power, reads naturally in tandem with the description of Satan as a powerful being. We will revisit this text and these claims in the next chapter.

[30] In the next chapter, we will consider 11QMelchizedek and the implications of its divine messiah who frees God's people from the hand of Belial and the spirits of his lot.

ministry in Mark.[31] This is one of two exorcisms in which Jesus and his demonic opponent engage in dialogue.[32] We will examine four features of the pericope: (1) The interpretive significance of the interpolated structure of the episode, namely the relation between the scribes and demons, and between Jesus as teacher and Jesus as exorcist, (2) the demon's address to Jesus in dialogue with Jewish eschatological demon-judgement texts, (3) Jesus's exorcistic performance, and (4) the response of the crowd. Then, we will consider the pericope's contribution to Mark's portrait of Jesus.

After his encounter with the holy spirit at his baptism (1:9-11), his encounter with Satan in the desert (1:12-13), his proclamation of the arrival of God's kingdom (1:14-15), and the calling of the first four of his disciples (1:16-20), Jesus begins his public ministry by teaching in a synagogue on the Sabbath, where he is met by a disruptive opponent:

> They went to Capernaum, and immediately on the Sabbath he went into the synagogue and taught. They were amazed by his teaching, for he was teaching them as having authority, and not like their scribes. Immediately in the synagogue there was a man with an unclean spirit, and he shrieked, saying, "What do you have to do with us, Jesus of Nazareth? Have you come to destroy us? I know who you are, the Holy One of God." So Jesus rebuked it, saying, "Be silent and come out of him." After the unclean spirit shook him violently and shouted in a great voice, he came out of him. And all were amazed, so that they were discussing with themselves, saying, "What is this? A new teaching with authority. He commands even the unclean spirits, and they obey him." So the news about him went out everywhere into all the surrounding region of Galilee (Mk. 1:21-28).[33]

Drawing from the anthropological categories of possession discussed in chapter two, the victim in this story is suffering from displacement possession, in which the demon has taken over his bodily

[31] Bultmann notes that "Mark introduces this story in the context of 1:16-39, which is plainly meant to give a paradigmatic illustration of the ministry of Jesus… The passage so emended exhibits the typical characteristics of a miracle story, and especially of an exorcism: (1) the demon recognizes the exorcist and puts up a struggle; (2) a threat and command by the exorcist; (3) the demon comes out, making a demonstration; (4) an impression is made on the spectators." See: Bultmann, *History,* 209-210.

[32] Also, Mk. 5:1-20

[33] Unless otherwise noted, translations of Mark are my own.

functions, including his speech.[34] When Jesus speaks to the man, he is, in reality, speaking to the demon who resides in the man. When the man shrieks and convulses, it is the demon within the man who is at work.[35] Mark's description of the demon's relationship to its host (ἄνθρωπος ἐν πνεύματι ἀκαθάρτῳ) is idiosyncratic.[36] The ἐν preposition is likely a semitism, functioning with a flexibility similar to that of the ב preposition in Hebrew.[37] It is thus unnecessary to read woodenly that the unclean spirit had enveloped the man (Marcus).

4.2.1 Scribes and Unclean Spirits: Jesus's Intercalated Opponents

The description of the spirit as unclean (ἀκάθαρτος) is likewise worth consideration. What purpose might this demonic designation serve in this opening exorcism and in the rest of Mark? And what pretext, if any, might Mark be interacting with in his description of the demon as an unclean spirit in this pericope? It is to these questions that we will shortly turn; however, a structural observation is first needed.

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[34] See: Cohen, Emma, and Justin Barrett. "When Minds Migrate: Conceptualizing Spirit Possession." *Journal of Cognition and Culture* 8, no. 1–2 (January 1, 2008): 23–48; Collins, John. J. *The Apocalyptic Imagination: An Introduction to Jewish Apocalyptic Literature*. 3rd ed. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2016; Craffert, Pieter F. "Spirit Possession in Jesus Research: Insights from the Anthropological Study of Possession." *Religion and Theology* 25, no. 1–2 (June 20, 2018): 111–29.

[35] It is not entirely clear, however, the extent to which Markan demoniacs retain the ability to move their bodies. For example, the demon-possessed individuals are repeatedly drawn to Jesus throughout the story, which always leads to the demon's defeat (see esp. Mk. 5:2, 6, in which the demoniac runs from a great distance to meet Jesus). Is it the case that the demons have a sort of "fatal attraction" (Marcus, *Mark 1-8,* 192) to Jesus, similar to the way that moths are attracted to bright light? Conversely, it could be that the victims are thought to have some measure of agency which allows them to approach Jesus and receive deliverance from demonic possession. The descriptions of Mark's demoniacs are vague enough to leave either option open as a possibility. It may thus be appropriate to refer to these possessions as displacement with the acknowledgement that the victim could possibly retain some physical agency.

[36] Joel Marcus suggests that a very wooden understanding of ἐν ("a man *in* an unclean spirit") might be a viable interpretive option: "The terror of the scene is increased by the description of the demoniac as 'a man in an unclean spirit.' This phrase is usually interpreted as a Semitic idiom meaning 'a man *with* an unclean spirit'... But a literal interpretation has a great deal to commend it: the man's personality has been so usurped by the demon that the demon has, as it were, swallowed him up. The fusion of the man's identity with that of the demon is underlined by the grammar of the passage; in 1:23-24 it is the man who cries out, but in the next verse Jesus rebukes 'him,' which now means the unclean spirit. Since normal human beings keep their distance from uncleanness or dirt, this picture of 'a man in an unclean spirit,' enclosed by that which contaminates him, is horrifying." Marcus, Joel. *Mark 1-8,* 192.

[37] Gundry, *Mark*, 82.

The consideration of Markan intercalation in 1:21-28 will prove useful in the interpretive task. Mark (or one of his sources) has taken two stories (Jesus teaching in the Synagogue, and an exorcism) and fused them into a single literary unit in which the two strands are mutually interpretive.[38] What emerges is an A-B-A narrative structure: (A) Jesus teaches the crowd in the synagogue with surprising authority in 1:21-22, (B) Jesus is confronted by a demon-possessed man and performs an exorcism in 1:23-26, and (A) the crowd re-emerges, discussing Jesus's unparalleled authority in his teaching and exorcistic abilities in 1:27-28. In this scheme, Jesus's exorcism is "sandwiched" by his teaching in the synagogue and the crowd's comparison of Jesus to their scribes. Nicholas Elder has helpfully stated that

> Jesus's teaching in the synagogue and his exorcistic activity are one and the same. Jesus's pedagogy is 'not like the scribes' (v. 22) insofar as he does not act as a "text broker" in the synagogue, mediating written traditions to the illiterate masses. Nor is his authority over unclean spirits dependent on the technologies of writing and reading, as is the case with other Second Temple-period intermediaries whose prestige is rooted in their scribal abilities. Unlike these figures—and Enoch is the most prominent among them—Jesus directly mediates between the deity and the spirit world.[39]

In short, the Markan narrative structure of 1:21-28 invites the reader to form a strong connection between Jesus's scribal and demonic opponents. The people in the synagogue marvel at Jesus's teaching, and immediately locate his teaching as having authority, as opposed to that of their scribes. Once again, the pericope closes with the astonished onlookers of Jesus's exorcism linking his teaching authority with his exorcistic prowess: "What is this? A new teaching with authority.

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[38] On Markan interpolation, see: Dobschütz, Ernst von. "Zur Erzählerkunst des Markus: Zeitschrift für die Neutestamentliche Wissenschaft und die Kunde der Älteren Kirche." *Zeitschrift Für Die Neutestamentliche Wissenschaft und die Kunde der Älteren Kirche* 27, no. 2 (1928): 193–98; Edwards, James R. "Markan Sandwiches: The Significance of Interpolations in Markan Narratives." *Novum Testamentum* 31, no. 3 (1989): 193–216. I am in agreement with Edwards both that the intercalations in the Gospel of Mark serve theological purposes, and that "the middle story nearly always provides the key to the theological purpose of the sandwich." That is, "the insertion interprets the flanking halves." 196. Edwards does not identify Mark 1:21-28 in his list of nine Markan intercalations, though I argue in this section that it fits the criteria. See also Nicholas Elder's article in which he argues for understanding Mark 1:21-28 as an intercalation: Elder, Nicholas A. "Scribes and Demons: Literacy and Authority in a Capernaum Synagogue (Mark 1:21-28)." *Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 83, no. 1 (January 2021): 77.

[39] Elder, "Scribes and Demons," 77.

He commands even the unclean spirits, and they obey him" (Mk. 1:27). Thus, by bookending the exorcism with references to Jesus's teaching, which is superior to that of the scribes, Mark may be signalling to his readers that the demonic and scribal opposition to Jesus are somehow related. Such a suspicion will be strengthened throughout the story, as both the scribes and demons will regularly oppose Jesus throughout Mark's Gospel. As Joel Marcus notes,

> Jesus' eschatological divine power, his "authority," is immediately contrasted with the impression made by the teaching of the scribes, who will turn out to be Jesus' constant opponents throughout the Gospel (see 2:6, 16; 3:22, etc.; …) Lührmann ("Pharisäer," 182) notes that the scribes are terminologically linked with the theme of authority throughout Mark's narrative (see 1:22; 2:6, 10; 3:15, 22; 11:27, 28, 29, 33). This is partly because of their role as the custodians of traditional interpretation; the eschatological newness of Jesus' teaching is bound to clash with the way of teaching that takes its point of departure from precedent and tradition (see 7:1-13). In Mark's view the scribes' teaching is a merely human one that nullifies the commandment of God (see 7:8-9), and such a preference for the human will over the divine will places them, in Mark's dualistic universe, on the side of Satan. It is no accident, then, that the contrast between Jesus and the scribes is immediately followed by an exorcism, which demonstrates Jesus' authority in an even more astonishing fashion.[40]

Marcus's apocalyptic reading of Mark's Gospel, with the cosmic dualism it entails,[41] envisages a narrative world in which Jesus and the companions stand on one side, and anyone who opposes Jesus stands on the other. Within this framework, Jesus's scribal opponents fit well within the side of Satan and the demons. Such a reading helps make sense of the intercalation which structures Jesus's teaching and exorcism pericope here in Mark 1, where Jesus's human and spiritual opponents are introduced to the story, as well as Jesus's means of overcoming them, namely superior teaching authority and exorcistic authority.

We will now return to Mark's description of the demon as an unclean spirit. Our first inquiry is seemingly simple: What has influenced Mark so as to use the language of impurity to describe the spirit? Here, we will find that Zechariah 12-13 serves as an illuminating intertext in

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[40] Marcus, *Mark 1-8, 192.*

[41] On apocalypticism in Mark, see: Marcus, *Mark 1-8, 71-73.*

our reading of Mark 1:1-28. Secondly, what effect does the presence of an unclean spirit generate in the context of Mark 1:21-28? In this case we will observe Mark's contrast of Jesus's reception of the Holy Spirit at his baptism with the man who has an unclean spirit in the synagogue.

Only one time does the Hebrew Bible mention an unclean spirit, which appears in Zechariah 13:2. Here I will argue that Zechariah 12-13 serves as a broader pretext for the opening of Mark's Gospel, within which we can locate a precursor to Mark's description of Jesus's human and demonic foes in Zechariah 13:1-2, an eschatologically-focused text in which YHWH promises to come to his people and cleanse their land of all things which defile it:

> On that day a fountain shall be opened for the house of David and the inhabitants of Jerusalem, to cleanse them from sin and impurity. On that day, says the Lord of hosts, I will cut off the names of the idols from the land, so that they shall be remembered no more, and also I will remove from the land the prophets and the unclean spirit (Zech. 13:1-2).

The final two objects which YHWH promises to remove from the land are of interest to the current project, namely prophets and the unclean spirit. Our attention is drawn to this text, as it provides the singular occurrence of an impure spirit (רוח הטמאה/τὸ πνεῦμα τὸ ἀκάθαρτον) in the Hebrew Bible or Septuagint.[42] This feature alone does not constitute an intertextual relationship between Mark 1 and Zechariah 12-13. As we have already demonstrated, however, Mark's intercalation closely ties together the scribes and the unclean spirit in Mark 1:21-28. Similarly, although not by means of intercalation, the prophets and the unclean spirit in Zechariah are placed in a parallel position as the objects which together will be removed by YHWH in his eschatological arrival. Just before this promise, God makes another promise which seems relevant to Mark's opening verses: "And I will pour out a spirit of compassion and supplication on the house of David and the

[42] It is possible that Zechariah means what Mark does in the reference to an unclean spirit. Whereas Mark refers to a singular demon, Zechariah could use the word רוח to refer to a disposition among the people of the land. Whether or not Zechariah had a demon in mind, the term was helpful for Mark's authorial purposes. See further discussion: Thiessen, *Jesus,* 126-129.

inhabitants of Jerusalem" (Zech. 12:10). This spirit of compassion and supplication is a foil for the unclean spirit which God will remove from the land, and God's pouring out of this spirit on the inhabitants of Jerusalem is resonant with John's message that a stronger one would come after him and baptise the inhabitants of Judea and Jerusalem with the holy spirit (Mk. 1:8).[43] Thus the intertextual resonance locates Jesus's arrival in terms of YHWH's eschatological arrival, in which he dispenses his spirit upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, and stands victorious over the prophets/scribes and the unclean spirit. The primary narrative mode of this fulfilment is in Jesus's first exorcism in Mark 1:21-28, in which he demonstrates unrivalled authority over the scribes and an unclean spirit.

4.2.2 The Unclean Spirit's Address to Jesus

We now turn our attention to the unclean spirit's address to Jesus, which we will examine in two parts: (1) The spirit's questioning of Jesus, and (2) the spirit's identification of Jesus. First, the man with the unclean spirit inquires, "What do you have to do with *us* (ἡμῖν), Jesus of Nazareth? Have you come to destroy *us* (ἡμᾶς)" (Mk. 1:24)?[44] The unclean spirit's use of the first person plural is a strange feature, especially given the narrator's identification of a singular unclean spirit in the verse prior, as well as the switch to the first person singular in the subsequent speech (οἶδά σε τίς εἶ). There seem to be three explanations for this phenomenon: (1) the author made a mistake, and the text as it survives is incoherent, (2) the man is actually possessed by multiple demons, similar to the Gerasene demoniac (5:1-20) who is possessed by a legion of spirits, or (3) the speech is acting as a programmatic question on a larger narrative level for the whole of Jesus's exorcistic ministry, and is able to be coherent in this pericope because it serves as the programmatic exorcism

[43] John's audience is identified in Mk. 1:5.

[44] The latter phrase, ἦλθες ἀπολέσαι ἡμᾶς, does not necessary need to be read as a question, as the punctuation was not present in early versions of the text. Taking this phrase as an indicative statement ("You have come to destroy us.") works to the same effect on a narrative level.

in Mark's Gospel. In the Gerasene demoniac pericope, the author begins to use plural language in reference to the legion after it discloses its plurality,[45] a feature which does not appear in the current text. It is worth noting that Jesus does not answer the question concerning his reason for coming. Rather than with an answer, the question is instead accompanied by Jesus's display of authority.[46] Given its programmatic positioning in the narrative as the opening exorcism and miracle, the third option seems to be the most helpful. The unclean spirit's question concerning whether Jesus has come to destroy *us* (i.e. *all* of the demons in Mark) invites the reader to provide an answer to that question based on the outcome of this opening pericope. In other words, Mark's presentation of Jesus's opening exorcism will provide a resounding "Yes" to the question "Have you come to destroy us?"[47]

We should also consider the ideological presuppositions behind such a question. What kind of eschatological expectations might one have held about judgement and demons? The demon in this opening exorcism seems to be fearful of Jesus based on the expectation that Jesus has come in order to destroy the demons. In the previous chapter, we observed the phenomenon of the eschatological judgement of Satan and the demons in the *Similitudes of Enoch* and *11QMelchizedek*, both of which envisioned a messianic figure as the one who would arrive to sit on God's throne in order to carry out God's own judgement on evil spiritual beings. Rather than merely functioning as a powerful exorcist, I submit that the eschatological, theophanic advent of a divine human for the final judgement of the demons fits well within certain strands of messianic

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[45] Cf. Mk. 5:12-13.

[46] This functions similarly to the disciples's unanswered question after the stilling of the story in Mk. 4:41: "Who is this, that even the wind and the sea obey him?" Here, the reader is invited to answer the question based on the surrounding narrative content.

[47] Contra Best, who asserts that "we may not then take this as a statement of the full activity of Jesus or even as a part of the central activity unless there is corroborative evidence elsewhere." As I explore in this and the following chapter, there does seem to be plenty of corroborative evidence elsewhere, particularly in the Beelzeboul controversy. See: Best, Ernest. *The Temptation and the Passion: The Markan Soteriology*. 2nd ed. Society for New Testament Studies Monograph Series. Cambridge; Cambridge University Press, 1990. 136.

expectations in first century Judaism, and that such strands provide a helpful analogue for Mark's presentation of Jesus.

While considering possible Enochic influence on this pericope, Nicholas Elder rightly identifies the angels as the agents of the binding and destruction of the giants, their children, and their spirits in *1 Enoch* 10:9, 15-16, in which God instructs Gabriel and Michael to destroy (ἀπόλεσον) the half-breeds. Elder concludes that:

> "It is not likely that Mark is directly correlating Jesus with the Enochic deity in this pericope… Jesus is an apocalyptic proxy who works on the deity's behalf… Jesus's role corresponds to that of the holy angels in the Book of the Watchers. The spirit's question in Mark 1:24, 'Have you come to destroy us?' (ἦλθες ἀπολέσαι ἡμᾶς;) suggests that this is the case. In 1 En. 10:9 and 15, the Lord commissions Gabriel and Michael, who had been called 'holy archangels' (ἁγίοι ἀρχαγγέλοι) previously in the narrative (1 En. 9:4), to destroy the giants and the spirits that came from them… Thus it is the angels who enact God's judgment on the watchers and their offspring as emissaries in 1 Enoch."[48]

Elder is correct in his identification of angelic agents as those who carry out the binding and even destruction of the giants and their children in the Book of Watchers. He does not, however, consider the two-stage judgement of the watchers, in which they are temporarily bound and await a final judgement at the end of time. In *1 Enoch* 10, God is giving the angels Gabriel and Michael instruction prior to the great flood.[49] The two angels are given the task of binding Azaz'el (10:4), Semayaza (10:11), and the offspring of the watchers (10:9-13) for seventy generations, at which point they will wait underground for seventy generations underneath the ground "until the day of their judgment and of their consummation, until the eternal judgment is concluded" (10:12). After this information, an aside is added which interrupts the string of imperatives to the angels: "Then they will be led away (τότε ἀπαχθήσονται) into the bottom of the fire and into the torment and into the eternally-closed prison. And whoever is burned and destroyed, they will be bound with them

[48] Elder, "Scribes," 84-85.

[49] *1 Enoch* 10:2: "And the Deluge is about to come upon all the earth; and all that is in it will be destroyed."

from now until the end of generations" (10:13-14). The activity of Gabriel and Michael is clearly defined with regard to the initial binding and judgement (including the destruction of the offspring of the watchers; 10:9, 15), but less so with regard to the final stage of judgment, which is only briefly mentioned in this passage with the future, passive verb (ἀπαχθήσονται) which lack an explicit agent. Perhaps this lack of clarity is felt by the author of the *Similitudes*, who more clearly depicts the Lord of Spirits (54:6)[50] and his Elect One as enacting the final judgment of the demonic realm

In the opening section of *1 Enoch*, however, it is much more clear that God will arrive at the end to enact eschatological judgment: "The God of the universe, the Holy Great One, will come forth from his dwelling. And from there he will march upon Mount Sinai and appear in his camp emerging from heaven with a mighty power. And everyone shall be afraid, and Watchers shall quiver. And great fear and trembling shall seize them unto the ends of the earth… And there shall be judgment upon all. (*1 Enoch* 1:3-5, 8)." The final judgement in the Watchers tradition ultimately belongs to God, and in the *Similitudes* this role belongs to the Son of Man as we observed in the previous chapter.

Returning to Mark, Jesus's prior message that the time has been fulfilled (Mk. 1:15) charges this programmatic pericope with a pronounced eschatological thrust. My contention is that the eschatological energy of Mark's text and the unclean spirit's question therein, when considered with the eschatological day of the Lord–which, in the Watchers tradition has expanded to include the final judgement of the spirits who emerged from the giants–invites Mark's readers to associate Jesus's advent with YHWH's advent as depicted in *1 Enoch* 1:4 rather than with the subservient

[50] Here, the angels Michael, Raphael, Gabriel, and Phanuel play an important role in the final judgment of the armies of Azaz'el by seizing them and casting them into the burning furnace (54:6). The narrator clarifies, though, that the angels will do this "so that the Lord of the Spirits may take vengeance on them on account of their oppressive deeds which (they performed) as messengers of Satan, leading astray those who dwell upon the earth" (54:6).

role of his archangels who carry out an initial binding in the same narrative. Similarly to the way that messianic figures such as the Enochic Son of Man and *11QMelchizedek's* Melchizedek take on theophanic properties in their judgement of Satan and the demons, the Markan Jesus's advent which causes demons to fear for their eschatological destruction is best understood in theophanic terms. In other words, Mark's Jesus is not "an apocalyptic proxy who works on the deity's behalf," nor does his role correspond "to that of the holy angels in the Book of the Watchers;" rather, Mark's Jesus in his inaugural exorcism–like the Enochic Son of Man and Melchizedek–takes on God's prerogative of destroying the demons.

The depiction of Watchers trembling with fear at YHWH's visitation in *1 Enoch* 1:4 is thus a more fitting context than *1 Enoch* 10:9-15 against which we can consider the fear and question of the unclean spirit in Mark 1:24, just as it was a fitting context for the Enochic Son of Man in the *Similitudes*. As we observed in chapter two, demons are generally not afraid of humans, even humans who are powerful exorcists.[51] We did observe a phenomenon in which an exorcist would invoke the power of YHWH in order to terrify an evil spirit, such as in 4Q510/4Q511 (Songs of the Sage). The demons in the *Testament of Solomon* are subjugated by the ring which God gives to Solomon, and therefore cry out in fear when faced with the powerful ring. In the previous chapter, we observed the development from the *Book of Watchers* to the *Similitudes of Enoch* in which the theophanic description of God's eschatological arrival as the judge of Azaz'el and his demonic minions is applied to the Son of Man figure who takes his seat on God's throne to execute the final judgement over nefarious spiritual powers. In *1 Enoch* 52:4-6, for example, the author describes the heavenly Son of Man with terms borrowed from *1 Enoch* 1:4, as it is now the Son of Man before whom the mountains melt like the honeycomb before the fire. Further, in *1 Enoch*

[51] The exception here is Apollonius of Tyana, whom Philostratus describes to his readers as divine (δαιμόνιός τε καὶ θεῖος νομισθῆναι; Philostratus, *Life*, 1.2).

55:3-4 the Lord of the spirits designates his Chosen One to sit on his glorious throne and judge Azaz'el and all of his company:

> "When I would give consent so that they should be seized by the hands of the angels on the day of tribulation and pain, already I would have caused my punishment and my wrath to abide upon them–my punishment and my wrath," says the Lord of the Spirits. "Kings, potentates, dwellers upon the earth: You would have to see my Elect One, how he sits in the throne of glory and judges Azaz'el and all his company, and his army, in the name of the Lord of the Spirits!"

By depicting the unclean spirits as beings fearful of Jesus, Mark offers a portrait of Jesus who is not easily contained within the historical bounds of ancient exorcistic profiles; instead, the Markan Jesus's inaugural exorcism is cast with theophanic overtones, identifying Jesus's advent with that of Israel's God.

The reading of the unclean spirit's question and fear in light of a day of the Lord tradition such as we see in the prophets and the aforementioned texts from *1 Enoch* and *Jubilees* is strengthened by Mark's opening composite scriptural citation in 1:2-3, particularly in his use of Isaiah 40:3.[52] Mark has opened his Gospel with the notion that Israel's God is on the move through the wilderness in order to bring restoration to his people. This will happen in part by God freeing the people from their oppressors, which will take place by means of God's judgement of said oppressors. The oppressive kingdom in view for Mark is not first and foremost an earthly one, but the kingdom of Satan (Mk. 3:24-26), who holds people captive as his possessions (Mk. 3:27), and whose house Jesus plunders through his exorcistic ministry and by giving his life to Satan as a ransom payment for the release of his prisoners.[53] Such a view of God's people as enslaved to Satan is resonant with the *11QMelchizedek* scroll we examined in the last chapter, in which the

[52] The significance of Deutero-Isaiah's influence on the Gospel of Mark has been explored in depth by others, whose work has been highly formative in my own reading of Mark, namely Joel Marcus and Rikki Watts. See: Marcus, *The Way of the Lord*; Watts, *New Exodus,* 2000.

[53] On the function and referent of the ransom logion (Mk. 10:45), see the next chapter.

people have taken on an unpayable debt to Belial and have been exiled and enslaved to his power, producing their need for an eschatological jubilee which the divine messiah, Melchizedek, will enact. The function of the exorcism periocpae in Mark, and this first exorcism in particular, is not merely to relay certain historical events to the readers; rather, Mark's citation of Isaiah's eschatological apocalyptic vision of YHWH's arrival in his opening lines situates Jesus's exorcisms within a broader cosmic struggle,[54] namely YHWH's victory march within Deutero-Isaiah's divine warrior motif. Within this framework, the unclean spirit addresses Jesus as we might expect it to address God himself. Mere human exorcists do not, by their exorcisms, bring final eschatological judgement over the whole of the demonic realm. Such a task is suitable for YHWH or a divine and human messiah who bears his presence. In other words, the fearful dread of the unclean spirit in the Capernaum synagogue frames its encounter with Jesus as an encounter with God's presence. YHWH's triumphal march through the wilderness and judgement on his enemies takes place through Jesus's travels and exorcisms which bring judgement on the demonic forces which harass humans.

Further, in none of the texts we examined in chapter two is exorcism depicted as the eschatological destruction of all of the demons. Mark's unclean spirit, screeching in fear and asking if Jesus has come to destroy all of the demons, functions on a narrative level within an expectation that Israel's God would come for the final judgement of the offspring of the Watchers. We will return to this theme in the pericope of the Gerasene demoniac, which presents the same themes and provides the readers with more complete answers. Mark has brought his readers into a story with intense eschatological focus in which "the time has been fulfilled and God's reign has drawn near" (Mk. 1:15). The demon does not fear a God whom Jesus does not invoke, nor does

[54] Mauser, *Christ,* 142.

the demon fear any special object which Jesus does not employ in order to perform the exorcism. Rather, before Jesus addresses the unclean spirit in any capacity, the demon recognises Jesus as the one who has come to destroy the demons. Jesus's opening miracle, an exorcism in which God's eschatological judgement of the demonic realm in Jesus is brought to the forefront of the narrative, invites readers to identify God's presence and action in Jesus himself, who has come to destroy the demons. This kind of divine messianic figure who appears in order to finally vanquish Satan and his demonic host, as we examined in the *Similitudes* and *11QMelchizedek*, would have been broadly intelligible within first century Judaism, and it appears that Mark employs such a profile in order to depict Jesus's exorcistic ministry.

4.2.2.1 God's Holy One

In the second part of the unclean spirit's speech, the spirit further identifies Jesus: "I know who you are: the Holy One of God" (1:24) The unclean spirit has previously identified Jesus as "Jesus of Nazareth," but it seems that the spirit is merely identifying Jesus in a way that any other character in the story could have done at this point. This second identification holds greater significance in the text. It is in this text that we first encounter the Markan motif in which the demons are able to articulate the identity of Jesus in a way that humans generally cannot.[55] Much has been written about this motif, and about its value in Mark's characterization of Jesus.[56] Some,

[55] The humans in Mark who seem to somewhat correctly identify Jesus include Peter (8:29), perhaps Bartimaeus in calling Jesus "son of David" (10:47-48), and the Centurion at the crucifixion (15:39) who is the first to correctly identify Jesus with the "son of God" title from the baptism (1:9-11) and transfiguration (9:8).

[56] This motif is part of the larger Messianic Secret motif. Wrede brought this motif to prominence over a century ago: "Where Mark is concerned it is quite false to speak of the demoniacs' knowledge of the Messiah. Not the human beings but the demons dwelling in them have this knowledge; it is that of supernatural beings. And the object of their knowledge is equally supernatural; it is not the human Jesus as such, but the supernatural Jesus equipped with the pneuma—the Son of God." Wrede, William. *The Messianic Secret*. Translated by J.C.G. Greig. Library of Theological Translations. Altrincham, England: James Clarke, 1971. 25. While his contemporaries were primarily focused on unearthing the historical Jesus, Wrede considered Mark's role as a redactor, working and reworking traditions for his own authorial purposes. For Wrede, Jesus's secrecy injunctions to the demons helped to explain the historical gap between the lack of the historical Jesus's messianic claims and the early Christians's belief that Jesus was, in fact, the Messiah. Although interpreters since Wrede have, in general, moved on from his *conclusions*, the

including Wrede, have suggested that the demon's unique insight into Jesus's identity might hint toward a divine identity for Jesus; however, I would not draw any such conclusion from this feature.[57]

The unclean spirit's identification of Jesus as "the Holy One of God" (ὁ ἅγιος τοῦ θεοῦ) is a unique one. Whereas many of the christological titles (Son of God, Son of Man, Christ, Son of David, Lord) in Mark and other early Christian texts–even if they function in novel ways–can be observed in earlier texts, scholars have struggled to find a convincing precedent for God's Holy One. Kirk has argued that Psalm 16:10 (15:10 LXX), a text which Peter employed to preach the resurrected Christ (Acts 2:25-29), is the closest parallel to the spirit's christological title, in which David prays,

> For you do not give me up to Sheol
> or let your faithful one see the Pit. (Ps. 16:10)

In particular, it is the Greek rendition of this text which Kirk suspects might serve as a pretext, in which David declares that God will not give his holy one (τὸν ὅσιόν σου) to see destruction.

Although it has become commonplace for commentators to state that "the Holy One of God" did not function as a messianic title in first century Judaism,[58] Max Botner has argued convincingly that the opposite is true.[59] By examining multiple texts (Ps 88:19 LXX, LAB 59:2, Pss 152, 153) which identify David as the Holy One of God, as well as texts (Ps 89:21 [88:21]; llQPs^{a} XXVIII, 11; Josephus, *Ant* 6.157) which identify the anointing oil used in anointing kings

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concern to read Mark as a literary work attempting to do more than relay historical events has been influential in scholarship ever since, including this dissertation.

[57] I find Daniel Kirk's observation helpful that the demon in the sons of Sceva narrative (Acts 19:13-15) identifies both Jesus and Paul in a similar manner: "I recognize Jesus, and I know about Paul, but who are you?" See: Kirk, *A Man,* 339. It would be difficult to say, then, that the demon's identification of Jesus contributes to a divine ontology.

[58] See, for example: Morna D. Hooker. *The Gospel According to St Mark*. London: Bloomsbury, 2001. 64; Gundry, *Mark*, 82.

[59] Botner, Max. "The Messiah Is 'the Holy One': Ὁ Ἅγιος Τοῦ Θεοῦ as a Messianic Title in Mark 1:24: Journal of Biblical Literature." *Journal of Biblical Literature* 136, no. 2 (2017): 417–33.

in Israel as holy, Botner argues that the designation of Jesus as God's Holy One is best understood in light of his kingly anointing which took place at his baptism (1:9-11) where he encountered the *holy* spirit. His analysis highlights the readily available category of an messianic, Davidic king as a holy one, and helps make narrative sense of Mark with such a messianic title at his disposal. For Botner, the anointing of the Messiah by the holy spirit is the undergirding referent to Jesus as God's Holy One.

Further, as Matthew Thiessen suggests, the reference to Jesus as God's *Holy* One in conflict with an *impure* spirit creates a scene in which opposing ritual forces clash and one will withdraw from the other.[60] Thiessen's work draws out Jewish concerns regarding ritual purity found in the Levitical priestly texts as they appear in the Synoptic Gospels. Within this framework, he notes that "while holy and profane are opposites, and pure and impure are opposites, only the holy and the impure are *forces* in priestly thinking—forces that are opposed to one another."[61] In a clash between a holy force and an impure force, one would expect the holy force to withdraw. At the very least, the meeting of holy and impure forces creates a high-tension situation in which one side will be forced to leave. The reader of Mark's opening conflict in the synagogue might anticipate that Jesus, as God's Holy One, would withdraw from an impure spirit. That God's Holy One does not withdraw from conflict with an impure spirit, but rather confronts and overpowers it, suggests that the force of holiness which Jesus embodies–as the one marked by the holy spirit at his baptism–is more powerful than the impurity of the spirit which confronts him in the synagogue.[62] I find this reading convincing due to its coherence with the narrative of Mark, taking into account

[60] Thiessen, Matthew. *Jesus and the Forces of Death: The Gospels' Portrayal of Ritual Impurity within First-Century Judaism*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2020. 115. See his earlier discussion in ch. 1 on holy vs. profane and pure vs. impure in ancient Judaism.

[61] Thiessen, *Jesus*, 115. Italics added.

[62] Thiessen, *Jesus*, 115.

holiness and uncleanness as opposing forces in Jesus, the Spirit, and the unclean spirit in the synagogue.

Further, the narrative gives the reader a thread between the spirit's concern of its destruction and Jesus's identity as the Holy One of God. The line of reasoning from "Have you come to destroy us?" to "I know who you are" to "the Holy One of God" links the christological title with the task of destroying the demons. In this sense, Mark does a great deal in the demon's speech to provide us with information about God's Holy One.

4.2.3 The Exorcism

Having examined the unclean spirit's address to Jesus, we now turn to the exorcistic event in Jesus's rebuke of the unclean spirit. It is at this time that the material from chapter two concerning ancient exorcistic profiles will be relevant to our examination of the Markan Jesus. By considering exorcists in the ancient world, an exorcistic portrait of Jesus emerges which surpasses that of any of the known Jewish exorcists–even that of the idealised human figures in the Second Temple period. Not only does Mark's Jesus have a teaching authority (ἐξουσία) superior to that of the scribes, he also demonstrates his authoritative status as exorcist *par excellence* in his first century context. This section examines Mark's exorcistic portrayal of Jesus in his inaugural exorcism, and considers its christological implications.

4.2.3.1 Jesus's Exorcistic Authority

Mark writes that "Jesus rebuked it,[63] saying, 'Be silent and come out of him.' After the unclean spirit shook him violently and shouted in a great voice, he came out of him" (Mk. 1:25-26). After the demon spends its speech identifying Jesus in 1:24, perhaps in an attempt to gain power over

[63] Although αὐτῷ could be masculine or neuter and therefore refer to either the man or the spirit, Jesus's following speech is directed exclusively to the spirit.

Jesus,[64] Jesus sharply rebukes the demon with a brief response: φιμώθητι καὶ ἔξελθε ἐξ αὐτοῦ. The command is successful, and the spirit leaves the man. It is important to note here that Jesus departs significantly from ancient exorcistic practices. In chapter two, we observed that in general, humans do not possess the ability on their own to ward off malevolent spirits. Successful exorcists, however, were able to successfully cast out demons through the authority granted by a god. One might pray to his god or evoke the name (and thereby authority) of a god,[65] recite certain incantations which granted divine power,[66] or employ a physical object which possessed special apotropaic properties[67] in order to ensure protection and success in exorcism. In contrast, Jesus does not utter a prayer, invoke a higher power, recite an incantation, or employ a physical object in order to gain the upper hand over the demon in the contest. Mark does not record Jesus's use of any of these tactics; rather, the Markan Jesus acts with sweeping authority over the unclean spirits in his first exorcism.

It is important now to engage Kirk's objection to the notion that Jesus's exorcism here and in other places contributes to a divine ontology. We will revisit in our examination of the Mark 9:14-29 exorcism Kirk's emphasis that because humans (i.e. the twelve) participate in his exorcistic practise (3:14; 6:7), Jesus's exorcisms must not point to a divine Christology.[68] At

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[64] See discussion on naming demons in exorcisms in discussion on Mark 5:1-20.

[65] See: PGM IV. 1227-64 in which the exorcist serves to invoke a god to come and perform the exorcism itself: "May *your* (referring to God) power issue forth… until *you* drive away this unclean demon Satan." See also the apotropaic prayer in 11Q5 XXVII: "Do not let Satan rule over me (אל תשלט בי שטן), nor an unclean spirit (ורוח טמאה)." Here, the one who prays is asking God for protection, in an acknowledgment that protection from nefarious spirit beings is found only in God's power. Likewise, in *Testament of Solomon*, Solomon–prior to any interaction with Ornias or any of the other demons, asks God to grant him authority over the demons (1:5).

[66] In Josephus *Ant*. 8.45-48, Eleazar is successful in his exorcism, in part, by reciting the incantations which Solomon had composed (ἐπῳδὰς ἃς συνέθηκεν ἐκεῖνος ἐπιλέγων). See also the *āšipu*'s use of incantations in ancient Mesopotamia.

[67] See the ring which God gives to Solomon in order to imprison all of the demons and employ them in the temple-building efforts (*TSol* 1:6). Likewise, Josephus records Eleazar's use of "a ring which had under its seal one of the roots prescribed by Solomon" (τὸν δακτύλιον ἔχοντα ὑπὸ τῇ σφραγῖδι ῥίζαν ἐξ ὧν ὑπέδειξε Σολομὼν), which he placed at the man's nose and drew out the demon. See also the Aramaic incantation bowls.

[68] Kirk, *Man*, 334.

present, however, our focus turns to Kirk's emphasis that Jesus's power of demons fits well within a royal framework, particularly as a subset of his idealized human figure category in Second Temple Judaism. It is my contention here that the royal strand of the idealized human figure and the supporting textual data which Kirk provides are insufficient to account for Mark's depiction of Jesus as exorcist; rather, when read in light of earlier and contemporary Jewish exorcists, the manner and scope of the Markan Jesus's authority over the demonic realm is unparalleled. The christological contribution of this and other Markan exorcisms, as I will argue, are best understood as contributing to a divine ontology.

Kirk points primarily to Davidic and Solomonic exorcistic traditions to illustrate the royal framework within which Jesus's exorcisms are to be understood:

> Power over demons fits easily within a royal framework in early Judaism. After his anointing, David not only was endowed by the spirit but also served as an exorcist (1 Sam 16:23), a tradition that appears to be preserved in 11QPs^{a} XXVII, 9-10 as it lists among David's compositions four songs to sing over the possessed… Josephus, writing in the late first century, also reflects a tradition in which God enabled Solomon to learn the arts of exorcism (*Ant*. 8.45)… Josephus tells of his own contemporary, Eleazar, who not only mimics the spells, but also invokes the name of Solomon (Σολόμωνος μεμνημένος) as he commands the demons to leave (*Ant*. 8.47)… Such biblical and post-biblical reflections on exorcising royalty are significant: *power to exorcise fits within a royal framework*.[69]

Kirk is correct to point to David and Solomon, Israel's most famous kings, as perhaps the two figures who had the greatest exorcistic reputation in the Second Temple period. In chapter two, we examined diverse traditions of Solomon's exorcistic prowess, and I made sure to include the primary sources cited by Kirk as a part of constructing an ancient exorcistic profile. The difficulty with Kirk's assertion is not necessarily that he associates exorcistic power with royalty; rather, his construction fails to account for the vast difference between the narrative presentations of Solomon and David as exorcists on the one hand, and Jesus as exorcist on the other. Solomon and David are

[69] Kirk, *Man*, 334-335.

consistently portrayed as possessing a derivative authority over demons, whereas Mark's Jesus commands demons with an authority which is best understood as intrinsic authority in the narrative. It is this distinction to which we now turn. We will briefly revisit the material related to Solomon and David, and then return by way of contrast to Jesus's inaugural exorcism.

We first consider David's exorcistic authority, which stems from 1 Samuel 16:23 and is attested in 11Q5, 11Q11, and Josephus's *Antiquities* 6.166-169. Kirk briefly notes the Qumran text 11Q5 (*11QPsalms*^{a}) and David's musical compositions to be performed over the possessed (הפגועים),[70] but provides nothing more than a passing mention. As we observed in the previous chapter, exorcists are often depicted as possessing power which God/gods have given in order to be successful in their contests with demons. David, as the composer of four apotropaic songs in 11Q5, follows this pattern, as the author notes that "all these (songs) he spoke through (the spirit of) prophecy which had been given to him from before the Most high."[71] The presentation of David, then, is not as one who has an intrinsic ability to compose songs which drive out demons; instead, the author understands David as one who was given the songs by God.

Further, 11Q11 (*11QapocrPS*) is a text bearing a Davidic inscription (לדויד) to be performed over those stricken (הפגועים) by night demons, which appears to draw on a similar tradition as 11Q5. God's role is even more explicit in this text, as the author informs the night demons that:

> YHWH [will bring] you [down] [to the] deepest [Sheo]l, [he will shut] the two bronze [ga]tes through [which n]o Light [penetrates].[72]

[70] It is not clear that הפגועים refers to those who are displaced by demons. It is possible that the author has in mind a pathogenic possession.

[71] 11Q5 XXVII.11.

[72] 11Q11 V. 6-10.

The author demonstrates an awareness that David's success as an exorcist is, in reality, YHWH's display of power over demons.

The Solomonic exorcistic tradition, which–based on both textual and archaeological evidence–seems to have been more prominent in ancient Judaism than that of David, likewise regularly attributed Solomon's exorcistic ability to a derivative authority which God gave him. As we saw in chapter two, the tradition has its roots in 1 Kings 5:12 (LXX 4:28), in which Solomon received wisdom from God which he preserved in his writings. This wisdom of Solomon would develop in later writings to include cosmological and pharmaceutical knowledge (cf. Wisdom 7:17-20). Such wisdom was not inherent to Solomon; rather, it was an external gift from God.

The Qumran community likely held Solomon as an exorcist. As we observed in 11Q11, Solomon is mentioned in what seems to be an exorcistic text as one who calls upon the Lord in order to gain power over the demons.[73] Once again, Solomon is not portrayed as one with sweeping authority over the demons; instead, he calls upon the Lord in order to ensure exorcistic success.

The most extensive portrait of Solomon as an exorcist is contained in the *Testament of Solomon*. In this text Solomon is portrayed as somewhat helpless against the demons who are at work against his efforts to construct the temple. When he learns that the little boy is being harassed by the demon Ornias, he possesses no immediate ability which would be able to subdue the demon. Instead, Solomon went to the temple to beg God day and night "with all my soul that the demon might be delivered into my hands and that I might have authority over him."[74] It was only after this begging that the Lord gave Solomon the gift of a signet ring, by which he would imprison the demons and employ them in the temple-building efforts.[75] Again, even Solomon–perhaps the most

[73] 11Q11 II.2-5.
[74] *TSol.* 1:5.
[75] *TSol.* 1:7.

famous Jewish exorcist–is not presented to the reader as one who can simply command demons without an appeal to God's supreme authority; instead, he is consistently envisaged as possessing authority over demons inasmuch as he asks for and receives it from God, the lone character in these narratives who possesses and distributes such an authority over demons.

With a fuller picture of Solomon's exorcistic profile in place, we can now return Kirk's engagement with the text from *Antiquities* 8.45-48 and Eleazar's evocation of Solomon's exorcistic authority. This text is significant for our study as it is the lone exorcism account from a Jewish author in the first century outside of the New Testament. Josephus provides few details of Solomon's exorcistic authority, but he does mention the ring Eleazar had which had a root under its seal which was prescribed by Solomon. This reference to the ring appears to draw from the same tradition which influenced the *Testament of Solomon* and the later incantation bowls. Given the consistency of the tradition that God gave Solomon the wisdom which enabled him to exorcise demons, it is difficult to imagine that Josephus believed that the exorcistic authority resided finally in Solomon and not God who gives authority over evil spirits.

In stark contrast to David and Solomon, the Markan Jesus's inaugural exorcism depicts a scene in which an unclean spirit, upon encountering Jesus, is filled with the fearful dread of its imminent eschatological destruction.[76] Jesus neither calls upon God, nor does he make use of an incantation or apotropaic object in order to prevail over the demon; instead, he rebukes[77] the demon with minimal instructions: φιμώθητι καὶ ἔξελθε ἐξ αὐτοῦ.

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[76] The destruction is eschatological in that the prologue (1:1-15) has situated the following narrative within eschatological expectations. See chapter three discussion (pp. 123-131) on the programmatic nature of the apocalyptic and eschatological elements of Mark's prologue.

[77] Bauckham, in support of Hays, points out the word choice that Jesus rebuked (ἐπετίμησεν) the unclean spirit. He notes that the verb's Hebrew counterpart is גער, which is " often used in the Hebrew Bible of God's power to rebuke and to subdue the cosmic elements, especially the sea imagined as a hostile force of chaos. Used in that sense, only God appears as the subject of this verb." He continues to argue that because only God is able to do this kind of rebuking the author is depicting Jesus as assuming a divine role. See: Bauckham, Richard. "Markan Christology According to Richard Hays: Some Addenda." *Journal of Theological Interpretation* 11, no. 1 (2017): 21–

While Kirk contends that Josephus's tradition of Solomon as exorcist provides an apt parallel for Jesus's exorcistic profile,[78] the difficulty with this assertion lies in the fact that Jesus and Solomon are not particularly similar as exorcists. Whereas Solomon is consistently portrayed as asking for or calling upon God's authority over demons, or even employing physical objects which give him power, Jesus never evokes an external authority in order to gain the upper hand over a demonic foe; rather, he merely speaks: "Be silent and come out of him." To *everyone's* amazement the unclean spirit obeys Jesus. The royal framework within which Kirk places Jesus's exorcistic power, then, fails to take into account the nature of David and Solomon's exorcistic authority and therefore is unable to bear the weight of the Markan Jesus as an exorcist. In other words, Jesus's inherent authority over the demons is unrivalled in Jewish tradition and thereby exceeds the Davidic and Solomonic royal framework of derivative exorcistic authority. The Markan Jesus acts with divine authority over the demon. In contrast with Kirk's contention that David and Solomon provide us with apt parallels for Jesus's exorcistic authority, I submit that the textual data points only to Israel's God and divine messianic figures (e.g. Enochic Son of Man; *11QMelchizedek*'s Melchizedek) as apt parallels for the level of authority which Jesus possesses over demons. That Jesus's authority over demons was unable to be contained within traditions of royal authority in exorcisms is evident in the crowd's response, to which we now turn.

4.2.3.2 "What is this?" The Crowd's Response

After Jesus expels the unclean spirit from the man, the onlookers respond in astonishment:

> And all were amazed, so that they were discussing with themselves, saying, "What is this? A new teaching with authority. He commands even the unclean spirits, and they obey him." So the news about him went out everywhere into all the surrounding region of Galilee (Mk. 1:27-28).

36; Although I agree that Jesus assumes a divine role in this text, I find this line of reasoning to be difficult to demonstrate as it seems to load one word with more significance than it deserves.

[78] Kirk, *Man*, 334.

That the crowd responds to Jesus's display of authority by asking the question "*What* is this?" (τί ἐστιν τοῦτο;) is significant in our investigation of the contribution of Jesus's exorcistic profile to Markan christology. Richard Bauckham points out that it is not the case that the surrounding crowds would be asking such a question in reference to exorcism in general, as though they did not know what an exorcism was.[79] As we observed in the previous chapter, the breadth of exorcism material across ancient authors suggests that people in the first century would have had conceptual space for exorcism. Here, however, the question is not "What is exorcism?" but rather "What is this unique (exorcistic) authority?" They continue to provide logical grounds for their question and astonishment, namely by noting that (1) Jesus commands the unclean spirits[80] and (2) that they obey him.[81] This remark from the crowd shows that they were well informed concerning ancient exorcistic practices, for it was not possible in the ancient world for a mere human being to command a demon without making use of prayer, incantation, or an apotropaic object in order to gain divine authority over his demonic foe.[82]

Having witnessed a contest between Jesus and a man with an unclean spirit, in which the unclean spirit expresses fear that Jesus has come to destroy all of the demons and obeys Jesus's brief command, the crowd's question concerning the nature of Jesus's authority is a natural one. In fact, we should read the scribes's accusations against Jesus in the Beelzeboul controversy (3:22) as legitimate attempts to answer the crowd's question. Although Jesus will refute the claim of the scribes, their theory that Jesus exercised authority over the demons and that they obeyed him

[79] Bauckham,"Markan Christology," 29-30.

[80] I take this reference to plural unclean spirits (τοῖς πνεύμασιν τοῖς ἀκαθάρτοις) to be functioning on a larger narrative level, referring not only to this exorcism (in which he commanded only one unclean spirit) but to his exorcistic work as a whole.

[81] Luke changes ὑπακούουσιν αὐτῷ to ἐξέρχονται. This possibly functions to provide some distance between Jesus and the demons, so as to deter the notion that Jesus and the demons are working together.

[82] As noted in chapter two, the exception to this rule is Apollonius of Tyana, who Philostratus says was thought to be divine (δαιμόνιός τε καὶ θεῖος νομισθῆναι; Philostratus, *Life*, 1.3).

because he was working in the power of Satan is a reasonable assertion based on the evidence to which they had access. The accusation of Jesus working as an agent of Satan's authority is plausible precisely because Jesus has performed his inaugural exorcism in a way that cannot be located within any exorcistic tradition before him, namely those of exorcists who are successful over demons by evoking the power of God/a god; rather, Jesus has bypassed the reception of divinely-gifted authority, and displayed dominance over the unclean spirit in a way that only the two figures at the top of Mark's dualistic world can, namely God and Satan. Having objected to the possibility that he works on the side of Satan (3:23-27), then, Mark portrays Jesus as sharing in the unique authority of Israel's God over demons in a way that even idealised human figures such as David and Solomon do not.

4.2.4 Summary

Mark's presentation of Jesus in his inaugural exorcism, as we have argued, locates Jesus's authority well beyond the range of any exorcist who preceded him. Rather than playing a role akin to the archangels in the *Book of Watchers* or to idealised human figures who exorcised demons, Mark relays Jesus's interaction with the unclean spirit in the synagogue in a manner resonant only with the authority of Israel's God. The spirit's immediate fear of its impending destruction, Jesus's minimal but potent command, and the crowd's bewilderment work together to locate Jesus within the divine identity. Within Mark's apocalyptic eschatology, which anticipates YHWH's arrival on earth to bring final judgement to the demons, Mark's Jesus acts as Israel's God on his victory march through the wilderness, liberating his people from the forces which oppress them. It is in this way that the first exorcism narrative in the Gospel of Mark contributes to a divine Christology.

4.3 Mark 5:1-20: Jesus and the Gerasene[83] Demoniac

[83] Some manuscripts attest that the event took place in the region of the Gadarenes (Γαδαρηνῶν) rather than that of the Gerasenes (Γερασηνῶν). The Matthean version of this story is located in the region of the Gadarenes.

We now move on to the next exorcism story in Mark's Gospel. Although exorcism is mentioned in the summary statements of Jesus ministry between the Capernaum synagogue and the Gerasene demoniac (1:32-34; 3:9-12), and the Beelzeboul controversy contains relevant demonological material (see next chapter), we will devote this next section to the exorcism in Mark 5:1-20. Mark's account of Jesus's encounter with the Gerasene demoniac is the most extensive exorcism account in the New Testament and the longest miracle story in Mark's Gospel. In it Jesus is met by a man with a fierce legion of demons which no one was able to bind (Mk. 5:4). This ferocious legion, upon seeing Jesus, fears for its existence and begins to beg him for mercy, leading Jesus to arrange a bargain with the legion which frees the possessed man from the demons. Finally, Jesus tells the restored man to go and tell his family what the Lord has done and the compassion he has shown to the man, and the man tells everyone what Jesus did for him.

As such a spectacular story, the Gerasene demoniac pericope has not been in want of scholarly conversation. Rudolf Pesch summed up well the hectic array of discourse which this story attracts, remarking that "To the naive it seems a glorious demonstration of Jesus' power over Satan's legions; to the sceptical it comes pretty close to turning Jesus into a miracle monger, duped by or duping the devil, but in any case deceiving his unsuspecting contemporaries. Despite the efforts of scholars, this miracle story stubbornly refuses to yield a convincing interpretation, and it still attracts both the credulous and the rationalist."[84] Although my investigation will certainly agree with those whom Pesch labels as "naive," I will also posit that this story makes key

Further, Mark's designation makes little geographical sense, as the city of Jerash is over 30 miles from the shore of the Sea of Galilee. Given that Γερασηνῶν has "the strongest external evidence and is the most difficult… it is the preferred reading." Shively, *Apocalyptic*, 173.

[84] Pesch, Rudolf. "Markan Version of the Healing of the Gerasene Demoniac." *The Ecumenical Review* 23, no. 4 (October 1971): 349.

christological contributions in Mark's Gospel when read in concert with other ancient Jewish demononologically-focused texts.

I argue here that Mark's narrative presentation of Jesus in this pericope functions to identify Jesus with Israel's God by means of his power over Satan's legions. As we have examined earlier in this chapter, Mark's employment of Isaiah's "second Exodus" motif provides a significant interpretive grid for Mark's Gospel from its opening lines. Unsurprisingly, similar themes are at work in the Gerasene demoniac episode. The story as Mark presents it also has overtones of the Watcher's myth from *1 Enoch* which we will examine. Next, we will examine Jesus's bargain with the legion in light of Jewish texts which depict Israel's God bargaining with the devil. Finally, we will consider this pericope's contribution to Mark's motif of Jesus as the stronger man who plunders the strong man's house.

4.3.1 Mark's Description of the Gerasene Demoniac

The narrator introduces the reader(s) to the Gerasene demoniac with a strikingly long description. Whereas the inaugural exorcism pericope merely introduced a man with an unclean spirit who appeared screeching in the synagogue (1:23), the present scene spends six verses describing the state of the man with the legion. We will examine some of the individual features of the description in the following sections, as well as possible texts from Israel's Scriptures which may have provided the author with some of the imagery present in the story. First, however, we will consider what I propose is the dominant function of the extensive description of the demoniac, namely to portray the Legion as terrifying and powerful, and thus to build suspense leading up to Jesus's confrontation with it.

In particular, the description in Mark 5:3-4 escalates suspense, giving the reader cause to question whether or not Jesus will emerge from the contest victorious. Mark describes the demoniac as follows:

> [A man with an unclean spirit] who had his dwelling among the tombs, and no one was able to bind him with chains any longer, because he had been bound with hand and foot chains, and the hand chains were torn apart by him and the foot chains were shattered, and no one was strong enough to control him (Mk. 5:3-4).

Twice the author expresses the excessive strength of the man by noting that no one could bind or control him (οὐδε… οὐκέτι οὐδεὶς ἐδύνατο αὐτὸν δῆσαι / οὐδεὶς ἴσχυεν αὐτὸν δαμάσαι). Even strong chains were routinely broken by the demoniac. That no one was able to bind him with chains any longer (οὐκέτι) implies that chains had once been able to contain the man, but that his strength had increased to the point that they were now futile. At this point in time there is no one who possesses the ability to control the man who is possessed by the Legion.

Two related elements of the man's state harken back to Jesus's parable of the strong man. First, Mark's emphasis that no one was able to *bind* (δῆσαι) the man recalls Jesus's teaching that no one is able to enter the strong man's house an plunder his goods unless he first *binds* that strong man (ἐὰν μὴ πρῶτον τὸν ἰσχυρὸν δήσῃ; Mk. 3:27). Mark employs three negatives in the span of four words to emphasise to the reader in no uncertain terms that *no one* could bind the demoniac: καὶ **οὐδὲ** ἁλύσει **οὐκέτι οὐδεὶς** ἐδύνατο αὐτὸν δῆσαι.[85] The motif of binding a demon was common in Second Temple Jewish texts such as *1 Enoch* and *Jubilees*.[86] Second, Mark's choice to describe the inability of others to control the demoniac in terms of a lack of strength (οὐδεὶς **ἴσχυεν** αὐτὸν δαμάσαι). This use of the ισχ- root to describe the strength of the Gerasene demoniac calls the reader back to Jesus's description of Satan as the strong man (ὁ ἰσχυρός) in 3:27. While Satan and

[85] Gundry comments that this heightened emphasis on everyone else's failure to bind and control the man "sets the stage in a way that will make Jesus' exorcism uniquely masterful." Gundry, *Mark*, 249.

[86] Cf. *1 En.* 10:4, 12, 14; 21:4, 6; 54:4-5; *Jub.* 5:6, 10; *Testament of Solomon* 1:7; 3:6; 4:12.

this Legion of demons are depicted as possessing an excessive amount of strength by which they inflict harm on humans, John the Baptist has has already announced that there is an even stronger one (ὁ ἰσχυρότερός; 1:7) who is coming. In the parable of the strong man, Jesus suggests that he–the stronger one–will come and bind up Satan–the strong man–and plunder his possessions, namely the people he has held captive.[87] With this background in mind, the Gerasene demoniac pericope functions not merely as a self-contained exorcism; rather, by closely connecting this pericope with the Beelzeboul controversy, Mark offers this exorcism as a narrative presentation of Jesus's plundering Satan's house. As Elizabeth Shively aptly notes, "Mark's extended description urges the reader to interpret the exorcism as an illustration of Jesus' role in the battle between the kingdom of God and the kingdom of Satan."[88] And further, "if 3:22-30 is an apocalyptic speech, then the story of the Gerasene demoniac is an apocalyptic narrative that functions to illustrate it."[89] Not only does the Legion possess uncontrollable strength, it is also bent on bringing death to those it harms. This bent toward death is seen both in his causing the victim to dwell among the tombs (5:3, 5) and in the drowning of the pigs into which Jesus sends the Legion (5:11-13).[90]

That *no one* was strong enough to bind the Gerasene demoniac heightens the anticipation of the contest. If *no one* has the strength to control the man, will Jesus–the stronger one–emerge successful?

4.3.1.1 Enochic Considerations in Mark 5:1-20

The Enochic literature is illuminating in our examination of this demonological text in Mark. Some fascinating parallels have led some to believe that there is likely a meaningful influence from the *Book of Watchers* on Mark's Gerasene Demoniac pericope. Nicholas Elder, for example, contends

[87] Shively, *Apocalyptic*, 156.
[88] Shively, *Apocalyptic*, 177.
[89] Shively, *Apocalyptic,* 173.
[90] Gundry, *Mark*, 249.

that the watchers myth in *1 Enoch* is conceptually and verbally linked with Mark 5:1-20 and is thus able to help make sense of some of the text's more peculiar features.[91] Elder identifies five points of contact between the *Book of Watchers* and Mark 5:1-20: "(1) the use of ἐν πνεύματι ἀκαθάρτῳ rather than δαιμόνιον; (2) the evil spirits' recognition of Jesus as Son of the Most High God; (3) the significance of the demoniac's dwelling in tombs; (4) the theme of swearing on a mountain; and (5) the theme of binding."[92] We will consider a couple of these features as helpful analogues for the Markan text in our examination of the exorcism, although I point to some other features which Elder does not mention.

4.3.2 The Exorcism

We now turn our attention to the confrontation between Jesus and the demoniac as it is recorded in 5:6-13. First, we will examine the demoniac's initial address to Jesus in 5:7. Similarly to the Capernaum synagogue exorcism in Mark 1:21-28, the demon shows awareness and fear of its impending destruction at the hands of Jesus. Next, we will consider the narrative aside in 5:8 which reports that the spirit was still present in the man after Jesus had commanded it to come out. Third is the significance of the unclean spirit's name being "Legion." Finally, we will consider the christological implications of the bargain between Jesus and Legion in light of other Jewish texts which envisage a bargain between God and Satan.

4.3.2.1 The Unclean Spirit's Address to Jesus

[91] Elder, Nicholas A. "Of Porcine and Polluted Spirits: Reading the Gerasene Demoniac (Mark 5:1-20) with the Book of Watchers (1 Enoch 1-36)." *The Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 78, no. 3 (July 2016): 430–46.

Elder is not arguing for a direct textual relationship between the *Book of Watchers* and Mark, such as a citation, allusion, or echo (borrowing terms from Richard Hays). Instead, he describes a "broad interplay" between the two texts. More specific than an *intertextual* relationship, Elder defines the relationship as *intertraditional*. I find this approach to be helpful, as it brings the two texts in dialogue with one another without the need to discern a direct influence where it is not clear.

[92] Elder, "Of Porcine," 434.

Mark noted back in 5:2 that a man with an unclean spirit came out from the tombs and met Jesus as he was getting out of the boat. After his detailed description of the man in 5:3-5, he once again returns to the meeting: "When he saw Jesus, he ran from far off and bowed down before him" (5:6). We can infer here that something about Jesus attracted the spirit, compelling him to run from a distance. Given the demons's knowledge of Jesus's identity as the one who would enact their destruction in Mark,[93] it is striking that they seem to be continually drawn to him at a high volume. Instead of running *away from* Jesus, the demoniac runs *toward* Jesus in order to confront him.[94]

When the spirit speaks to address Jesus, it shrieks with a loud voice as was common in the other Markan demons's encounters with Jesus (1:23, 26; implied in 1:34; 3:11; 9:26): "What do you have to do with me (τί ἐμοὶ καὶ σοί), Jesus, Son of the Most High God? I adjure you by God, do not torture me" (Mk. 5:7)! As in Jesus's first confrontation with the unclean spirit in the synagogue, the demon asks what Jesus has to do with it. Whereas in 1:24 the spirit asked τί ἡμῖν καὶ σοί, the demon here produces an identical construction, only replacing the plural ἡμῖν with the singular ἐμοὶ.[95]

The demon continues to follow the pattern set in the previous exorcism narrative by identifying Jesus with a christological confession, calling him here "Jesus, Son of the Most High God" (Ἰησοῦ υἱὲ τοῦ θεοῦ τοῦ ὑψίστου). Scholars have often suggested that the spirit is trying to gain the upper hand over Jesus by identifying him by name.[96] As we observed in a previous chapter, one way that exorcists could gain power over a demon was by identifying its name.[97] And

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[93] See 1:24; 5:7.

[94] Gundry views this running as an act of desperation. See: Gundry, *Mark*, 250.

[95] Compare with the Johannine account of Jesus's response to his mother at the Cana wedding in John 2:4: Τί ἐμοὶ καὶ σοί, γύναι;

[96] See: Collins, *Mark*, 268; Gundry, *Mark*, 250; Thiessen, *Jesus*, 117.

[97] See especially *Testament of Solomon*, where Solomon gains power over the demons in part by learning their names: 2:1; 3:6; 4:3; etc. See also: *PGM* 4.3037-3039.

as we will see shortly, Jesus will ask this demon what its name is, perhaps as a means of gaining the advantage in the contest. In support of such a reading, Matthew Thiessen points out that in the following statement by the demon (ὁρκίζω σε τὸν θεόν, μή με βασανίσῃς) the spirit's adjuration of Jesus follows the linguistic pattern of certain charms used by exorcists to gain power over demons. In PGM 4.1239– 41, 1243– 48, for example, one charm reads thus: ""I adjure (ἐξορκίζω) you, daimōn, whoever you are… Come out (ἔξελθε), daimōn, whoever you are, and withdraw from so-and-so, quickly, quickly, now, now. Come out (ἔξελθε), daimōn, since I fetter you with unbreakable adamantine fetters, and I hand you over into the black chaos into destruction."[98] Similarly, in Josephus's account of Eleazar's exorcism, he records Eleazar adjuring the demon to not come back (μηκέτ᾽ εἰς αὐτὸν ἐπανήξειν **ὅρκου**).[99] The ὅρκου in Josephus's text is a form of ὀρκόω which, like its cognate ὁρκίζω, is also employed in exorcistic contexts by (or in reference to) the exorcist against the spirit.[100]

While these connections are interesting, and perhaps reflect the spirit's attempt to exorcise Jesus at some point in the text's tradition, I find it to be a difficult argument to sustain in the text's current form, primarily due to the spirit's following comment which contains its main point, namely a grovelling plea that Jesus would not torture the spirit: μή με βασανίσῃς. Such a desperate request hardly envisages the demon attempting to gain the upper hand. At best, this begging represents a surrendering plea for mercy at the hands of one's conqueror.

Although the unclean spirit may not be attempting to exorcise Jesus as some have suggested, its christological confession is nonetheless significant. The demon correctly identifies Jesus as the son of the Most High God (Ἰησοῦ υἱὲ τοῦ θεοῦ τοῦ ὑψίστου). On a narrative level,

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[98] Betz, Hans Dieter. *The Greek Magical Papyri in Translation: Including the Demotic Spells*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1986.

[99] Josephus, *Ant*. 8.47.

[100] Collins, *Mark*, 268.

there is a great irony in the spirit's correct and confident confession. In the immediately preceding pericope of Jesus's calming of the storm, his display of unparalleled power only leads the disciples into further ignorance of his identity, as Mark reports that after witnessing Jesus's authority over the forces of nature, "They were terrified (καὶ ἐφοβήθησαν φόβον μέγαν) and they were saying to one another, 'Who is this, that even the wind and the sea obey him'" (Mk. 4:41)? Strikingly, these disciples who are the insiders of God's reign and to whom Jesus has given the mystery of God's reign (4:10) are uncertain who it is that they deal with in the person of Jesus. By contrast the Gerasene demoniac, who is surely an outsider with his home in the abode of death, immediately and correctly identifies Jesus as the son of the Most High God. By naming Jesus as God's son, the unclean spirit shows itself to be in agreement with God himself concerning Jesus's identity (1:11; 9:7). Here, as in the Capernaum synagogue exorcism and in previous summary statements of Jesus's ministry,[101] the demon shows a supernatural knowledge of Jesus's identity as God's son. Such knowledge recalls the heavenly voice at Jesus's baptism. Unlike the voice in the Matthean account which speaks about Jesus in the third person (οὗτός ἐστιν ὁ υἱός μου ὁ ἀγαπητός, ἐν ᾧ εὐδόκησα; Mt. 3:17), presumably for all bystanders to hear, the Markan voice speaks directly to Jesus in the second person (σὺ εἶ ὁ υἱός μου ὁ ἀγαπητός, ἐν σοὶ εὐδόκησα; Mk. 1:11), which presents a more private encounter between Jesus and the voice which others did not hear. The unclean spirits, whether because they were able to hear the heavenly voice at the baptism or for some other reason,[102] possess a unique insight into Jesus's identity which humans struggle to achieve throughout the story.[103] The Legion which Jesus encounters in Mark 5 follows this pattern.

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[101] Cf. Mk 1:34; 3:11.

[102] Collins suggests that because they are spiritual beings, they possess knowledge of the spiritual reality of Jesus's identity: *Mark,* 170.

[103] Elder, correctly in my view, points to the *Book of Watchers* as a helpful aetiology of the unclean spirits which can help explain the spirits' knowledge of heavenly secrets, and previous interactions with God and his agents. See: Elder, "Of Porcine," 437/

That the unclean spirit names Jesus specifically as the son of the *Most High* God is also significant. As Adela Yarbro Collins comments:

> The title "God the Most high" (ὁ θεὸς ὁ ὑψίστος) was not unknown among Jews as an epithet of the God of Israel.[104] In Greek translations of the Hebrew Bible עליון ("Elyon") is always translated by (ὁ) ὕψιστος, but in non-Jewish, non-Christian Greek texts, the expression occurs as a divine name for Zeus. Zeus Hypsitos was revered from Athens, through Asia Minor, Syria, and on into Egypt. An inscription dating to 22 or 23 CE attests a temple and cult of Zeus Olympius in Gerasa. Thus for members of Mark's audience familiar with this cult, the demon's address to Jesus is equivalent to "son of Zeus."[105]

Perhaps it is because the Markan Jesus moves into the Gentile region of Gerasa[106] in this story that the distinction of God as the most high is present. Deuteronomy 32:8 recalls the most high God allotting the nations to spiritual beings[107] to be gods over them. The unclean spirit, in his address to Jesus as the son of the *Most High* God, acknowledges God's status as superior over all the other beings, even as Jesus–the embodiment of Israel's God–enters into territory which had been allotted to lesser spiritual beings. Such beings, as this unclean spirit, despite their received authority over Gentile territory in Jewish tradition, are full of fear at the arrival of Jesus of Nazareth, the son of the Most High God.

There is also in the unclean spirit's cry a sense of impending doom which is resonant with that of the spirit in the synagogue which asked Jesus: "Have you come to destroy us" (1:24)? Here, the spirit begs Jesus not to torment it. The fear of such a request recalls the traditions we examined

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[104] Collins points to: Deut. 32:8; *1QapGen* 21:2; *4QAramaicApocalypse* 2:1.

[105] Collins, *Mark*, 268.

[106] This geographical note by the author is difficult, as Mark 5:1-2 records Jesus getting out of the boat and immediately being confronted by a man from the Gerasene region who lived among the mountains. Gerasa, however, is miles from the water. This led a number of scribes, as well as the author of Matthew, to locate the story in Gadara. It seems unlikely that the author of Mark had first-hand knowledge of the Palestinian land. Nevertheless, the Markan Jesus is now in Gentile territory.

[107] The Masoretic text seems to reflect a later reading in recounting that God established the boundaries of the nations according to the number of the sons of Israel (בני ישראל). The LXX and Qumran readings, ἀγγέλων θεοῦ and בני אלוהים respectively, agree against the MT in identifying angels/sons of God as those to whom God allotted the nations. The LXX later reads in Deut. 32:17 that the sons of Israel ἔθυσαν δαιμονίοις καὶ οὐ θεῷ, θεοῖς, οἷς οὐκ ᾔδεισαν.

in the previous chapter from the *Similitudes of Enoch* and *11QMelchizedek* which picture a divine messiah who judges the fallen watchers at the end of the age. The Matthean addition to this text even seems to emphasise the eschatological expectation that the demons would be judged at a fixed time: "Have you come here to torment us *before the time*" (ἦλθες ὧδε *πρὸ καιροῦ* βασανίσαι ἡμᾶς; Mt. 8:29)? Luke perhaps shows this expectation in his own way. Whereas the Markan spirit begs Jesus not to send them out of the region (ἔξω τῆς χώρας; Mk. 5:10), the Lukan account has the spirit begging Jesus not to command them to go into the abyss (εἰς τὴν ἄβυσσον; Lk. 8:31). The demons's fear of the abyss is resonant with the Enochic vision of the kings and potentates, along with Azaz'el and his armies, being thrown into the deep, fiery valley.[108] In both *1 Enoch* and Luke, the notion of evil spirits being sent down into a deep place is present. That these two of Mark's earliest readers find it appropriate to allude more explicitly to the expectation of the eschatological judgement of the demons is significant. Simply by Jesus's getting out of the boat and stepping onto soil which was under the jurisdiction of the demons, the demonic Legion which occupies this region is threatened and faces the fear of his eschatological judgement at the advent of Israel's God.

4.3.2.2 "My Name is Legion, because we are Many"

After the demon's initial begging of Jesus to abstain from tormenting it, Jesus asks the demon for his name: "And Jesus asked him, 'What is your name?' And he said to him, "Legion is my name, because we are many'" (Mk. 5:9). A great deal has been made of the demon revealing that its name is Legion, especially among those who read anti-imperialism in the story. Ched Myers, for example, notes that the reader who pays attention to the militaristic overtones of the Legion will begin to notice it elsewhere in the pericope:

[108] *1 En.* 10:3-6; 14:5; 18:9-16; 21; 54-55.

> In this, the most dramatic exorcism in the Gospel, Jesus puts an end to the efforts by the demons (a.k.a. the powers) to "name" him, by turning the tables. In 5:9 Jesus wrests from this powerful demonic horde its name: Legion. A Latinism, this term had only one meaning in Mark's social world: a division of Roman soldiers. Alerted by this clue, we discover that the rest of the story is filled with *military* imagery. The term used for "herd" (*agelē*, 5:11)—inappropriate for pigs, who do not travel in herds—often was used to refer to a band of military recruits (Derrett, 1979:5). Derrett also points out that the phrase "he dismissed them" (*epetrepsen*) connotes a military command, and the pigs' charge (*ōrmēsen*) into the lake suggests troops rushing into battle (5:13).[109]

So too does Richard Hays note this feature:

> No first century reader would need to be reminded that the Legions stationed throughout the Mediterranean world and ready to respond to rebellion and revolt belonged to Rome. When Jesus then powerfully dispatches the demons into a herd of unclean pigs who plunge to their death in the sea, Mark hardly needs to explain the joke. It is a kind of political cartoon, in which the Roman army is driven out by Israel's true king, sent back into the sea from which their invading ships had come.[110]

While I do not disagree with these and others who have helpfully brought out significant first century political aspects of the text, it seems to me that such military imagery also functions in a manner similar to the extensive description of the demoniac in 5:2-5, namely to highlight the excessive strength of the Legion. In this regard, Matthew Thiessen's analysis is helpful:

> The demon divulges his name: Legion—a Roman military term for a unit of about five thousand soldiers—revealing the vast number of demons that afflict this man and give him his overwhelming strength. The battle between Jesus and the impure, then, appears unevenly matched—five thousand demons against one holy one of God.[111]

Without denying the political connotations of the demon's name in relation to Rome, I wish to highlight the intensifying effect of the name Legion. The reader has already learned in the previous description that this man, allegedly with a single unclean spirit (5:2), is fiercely strong and his description induces terror. The name Legion only adds to this apparent power disparity between Jesus and the spirit: it is not just one unclean spirit which Jesus faces as he has in prior scenes;

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[109] Myers, Ched. *Binding the Strong Man: A Political Reading of Mark's Story of Jesus*. Maryknoll, N.Y.: Orbis Books, 1988. 191.

[110] Hays, Richard B. *Echoes of Scripture in the Gospels*. Waco, Texas: Baylor University Press, 2016. 93.

[111] Thiessen, *Jesus*, 117-118.

rather, it is an entire Legion–perhaps a couple thousand if the pigs are an indication (5:13)–of demons which torment the victim and oppose Jesus. This is again highlighted in the move from the singular to plural language for the spirit's self description, that is, from "What do you have to do with me (ἐμοί)… I adjure you (ὁρκίζω)... My name (ὄνομά μοι) is Legion" to "We are many (ὅτι πολλοί ἐσμεν)... Send us (πέμψον ἡμᾶς) into the pigs so that we might enter (εἰσέλθωμεν) them."[112]

The extensive emphasis on the demoniac's strength ironically serves to emphasise Jesus's power. Mark is reserved in his description of Jesus, withholding any physical description of Jesus from his readers.[113] By contrast, the description of the Gerasene demoniac receives a great deal of space in this pericope. In the end, however, this description serves to highlight Jesus's power over a being(s) so powerful as the dark force which oppresses the Gerasene man. If Jesus is able, by mere virtue of his presence, to cause such a frighteningly vicious and strong Legion of demons to become full of fear and beg for his mercy, what should we make of Jesus's identity? It is surely greater than the exorcists of his day, who rely on the power of their god by means of prayer or apotropaic object in order to subjugate demons. We will return to this question shortly, as the end of this pericope provides an answer.

4.3.2.3 Making Deals with the Devil

One of the more striking features of this text is Jesus's act of bargaining with Legion. We will consider this motif of bargaining with the devil in greater detail in the following chapter when we consider the ransom logion of Mark 10:45; however, it is present here on a smaller scale and is

[112] We observed a similar feature in the Capernaum synagogue exorcism, where the spirit moved in the opposite direction from plural to singular (1:24). There, however, it seems that the plural designation functioned on a programmatic narrative level to make a statement about Jesus's exorcistic ministry throughout the whole of Mark's Gospel.

[113] Helen Bond has noted the lack of a physical description of Jesus in Mark compared to the tendencies of other ancient biographers, who often devoted space to describing their subjects. See: Bond, Helen. *The First Biography of Jesus*. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2020. 124-127.

worth mentioning. I propose that Mark plays here on a familiar motif in Jewish literature of Satan bargaining with God in order to locate Jesus within the role traditionally occupied by Israel's God.

Several notable texts provide us with examples of Israel's God making a bargain with the devil. The opening chapter of Job provides the foundational story. Here, in God's heavenly council, the accuser (השׂטן/ὁ διάβολος) comes before God and the two parties arrange a deal that the accuser would test Job's loyalty to God. However the authors and editors of Job might have intended the accuser figure to be understood in the early stages of the book's composition, it is easy to imagine early Christian and Jewish readers finding a more developed devil figure of their own eras in the text.[114] God is very willing in this text to arrange a deal with the accuser.

A similar scene takes place in *Jubilees* 10. When, after the flood, Noah prays to God that he might keep the demons from harassing his children and grandchildren, God orders his angels to bind all of the demons. Before this binding takes place, however, Mastema–the chief of the spirits–comes before God with his own reverent petition:

> O Lord, Creator, leave some of them before me, and let them obey my voice. And let them do everything which I tell them, because if some of them are not left for me, I will not be able to exercise the authority of my will among the children of men because they are (intended) to corrupt and lead astray before my judgment because the evil of the sons of men is great (*Jub.* 10:8-9).

Surprisingly, God accepts this deal and instructs his angels to let one tenth of the demons remain on the earth while the remainder might go down into judgement. The demons which remain on the earth will remain "so that they might be subject to Satan upon the earth" (*Jub.* 10:12). Yet again, we have a scene in which God is happy to engage in a bargain with Satan.

Something similar seems to be present in Luke 22:31-32, where Jesus informs Peter of an unsuccessful bargain of Satan which presumably took place out of the scenes of or prior to Luke's

[114] Mark does not use ὁ διάβολος to refer to Satan. The later evangelists, however, find it a helpful title for the Satan figure in Mark's Gospel. Cf.: Mt. 4:1; 13:39; Lk. 4:2; 8:12; etc.

narrative of Jesus: "Simon, Simon. Behold Satan has asked to sift you (plural) like wheat. But I have prayed for you, in order that your faith should not fail." Here seems to be an alluded-to scene reminiscent of Job 1:6-12 in which Satan asks Jesus or God to sift the disciples, but his request was unsuccessful because Jesus prayed for their faith. Such a request could have been granted, as it was granted in Job 1 and partially granted in *Jubilees* 10. Here, however, the request for a bargain was denied.

Mark's sequence of the events of the contest in 5:6-10 does not follow a chronological order. After the spirit cries out begging Jesus not to torment it, Mark provides an explanatory narrative aside which informs the reader of what took place prior to the demonic cry: "For [Jesus] was saying to it, 'Unclean spirit, come out from the man" (5:8). The chronology which emerges, then, is one in which Jesus first addresses the spirit with a command to come out, and then the spirit addresses Jesus in response to the command to come out: "What do you have to do with me, Jesus, son of the Most High God? I adjure you by God, do not torment me!" (5:7) Some have noted this sequence and concluded that Jesus's first attempt to drive out the demon (5:8) was unsuccessful, as the demon is still present in the man to address Jesus afterward in 5:7.[115] Matthew Thiessen, for example, notes that "Jesus's first effort to exorcise this impure pneuma fails."[116] I find it more likely that this exchange is instead similar to the scene in *Jubilees* 10. There, after God commands the angels to bind Mastema and all of the demons, Mastema brings the request. The presence of Mastema's request for a deal does not mean that God's attempt to bind the demons

[115] The use of the imperfect ἔλεγεν in aside of 5:8 locates Jesus's command for the spirit to come out as chronological prior to the spirit's naming of Jesus and plea against torment. Those who would want to read this construction as a failed exorcism attempt from Jesus might take ἔλεγεν as in iterative ("Jesus was *repeatedly* saying…") or tendential ("Jesus *had tried* to say…") imperfect. While syntactically possible, the demon's desperate plea against torment in 5:7 does not give the impression that Jesus had been totally unsuccessful. Even if the spirit does not immediately come out, it is clearly in a distressed state, and it believes that, apart from some change of course, it will be subject to torment.

[116] Thiessen, *Jesus*, 144.

had failed; rather, it seems that Mastema was able to make the request before the binding could take place. Similarly, before the Markan spirit's exit from the man took place, it begged Jesus to not torment it.

Further, after Jesus learns the name of the demon, he does not use that information to make another attempt at exorcising Legion. Instead, the scene returns to that of a bargain between Jesus and Legion:

> And [Legion] was begging him excessively in order that he should not send them out of the region. Now there was there at the mountain a great herd of pigs feeding. And they were begging him, saying, "send us into the pigs, in order that we might enter into them." And Jesus allowed them, and the unclean spirits went out and went into the pigs, and the herd rushed down the bank into the lake, about two thousand, and they drowned in the lake (Mk. 5:10-13).

The unclean spirits do not put up a fight against Jesus's original command to leave the man; rather, their concern is about being sent out of the region (5:10). They acknowledge that they will have to leave the man, but try to bargain what they can, and choose the herd of pigs. Here, the host of unclean spirits offers a compromise with Jesus concerning the command which he has previously given them, and he permits it to them (ἐπέτρεψεν αὐτοῖς). There is not a second attempt at exorcism present here; rather, the bargaining all presumes the demons's subjugation to Jesus's initial command. As God permits Mastema to keep a tenth of the demons on earth, so too does Jesus allow the Legion to enter the herd of pigs.

If Mark is engaging the motif in which God makes deals with the devil, he does so by placing Jesus in the role which was typically filled by God himself. By granting Legion's request, however, Jesus brings about the destruction which the spirit had feared from the beginning, as the herd rushes into the lake and drowns. Whatever we might make of the Markan Jesus, he closely resembles prior depictions of Israel's God as one to whom the demonic forces submit, desperately devising bargains in an attempt to retain their power over an oppressed humanity.

4.3.3 "Tell them what the Lord has done for you."

Following the dramatic exorcism and the demise of the pigs, those in the nearby town and marketplace hear about the commotion and come to see what has happened. When they see Jesus sitting with the now fully-clothed and sane man who previously had the legion, their response is one of great fear (5:15), so much so that they beg Jesus to leave their region. Like the disciples in the boat (4:41), they are fearful of Jesus and unsure what to make of his presence. Jesus complies with their request to leave, but the man who had the legion begs Jesus to stay. Unlike the request of the demons to enter the pigs and of the crowds to leave the region, Jesus rejects this request. Instead, he instructs the man to return to his home and report to his family "that which the *Lord* has done for you, and how he had mercy on you" (ὅσα ὁ κύριός σοι πεποίηκεν καὶ ἠλέησέν σε; Mk. 5:19). Presumably obeying Jesus's directive, the man leaves for the Decapolis and proclaims to all that which *Jesus* had done for him (ὅσα ἐποίησεν αὐτῷ ὁ Ἰησοῦς). For all the ways in which the preceding narrative identified Jesus with Israel's God, this is the most explicit. It is not that the man mistook the work of Israel's God for the work of Jesus, but rather that the work of Israel's God and the work of Jesus were inseparable in this story. This is a striking point from Mark to identify Jesus as the Lord.

To return to the question of Jesus's identity, what should we make of Jesus who strikes fear into thousands of vicious demons, bargains with them as Israel's God bargains with the devil, and ultimately liberates people from the reign of the devil? We might think back to the composite citation in the Markan prologue, where YHWH's way is prepared by the messenger (1:3; Isa. 40:3). In the Isaian context of this verse, YHWH makes his way through the desolate wilderness to bring restoration to Israel after their subjugation to their enemies.[117] Mark employs an emphasis on Isaiah

[117] See: Isa. 42:13-17; 43:14-21.

in the introductory lines of his Gospel, and includes an explicit mention of Isaiah as an indicator of the way that the good news of Jesus Christ would unfold: "Just as it is written *in Isaiah the prophet.* When we continue through the narrative, however, it is John the Baptist who is identified as the messenger and prepares the way for Jesus who is identified as the Lord, who delivers people from enemies. In Mark's story, the enemies are not Gentile powers, but demons who harass people under Satan's kingdom. Rikki Watts helpfully summarises: "For Mark the pericope of the Gerasene demoniac shows Jesus to be the INE (Isaiah's New Exodus) Yahweh-Warrior who defeats the hostile powers, now in their NT demonic manifestation as 'Legion', by drowning them in the sea."[118] Whether or not Mark attributed apotropaic properties to the temple, he does seem to do so to Jesus, who houses the holiness of Israel's God, and at whose appearance the most ferocious unclean spirits are overcome with the dread of their eschatological destruction.[119]

In summary, by identifying Jesus as the referent of ὁ κύριος, the restored man provides a significant interpretive clue for readers who have not already concluded that the Markan Jesus is the embodied God of Israel, the Lord who comes in the wilderness to free his people from the powers which afflict them. Comparing Jesus with his contemporary exorcists and the great exorcists in the Jewish tradition will only get us so far. He does not evoke the power and authority of God in order to subjugate the demonic realm. He instead embodies it. God's power and authority over the demons is precisely Jesus's own power and authority, to the extent that when Jesus tells the restored demoniac to tell his family what the Lord has done for him, he is correct to tell that it was Jesus who has done great things for him.

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[118] Watts, *New Exodus*, 160. Parentheses added. On the motif of Isaiah's New Exodus in Mark, see: Watts, *New Exodus*, 29-136.

[119] "Jesus's presence on earth introduces a power of holiness within the terrestrial realm that is both radically opposed to and stronger than the demonic. If some contemporaries of the Gospel writers were ascribing this same function to Israel's tabernacle (and by extension to the Jerusalem temple), since it housed the holy God of Israel, then the Gospel writers might have been implying that the holiness of Israel's God was housed in the person of Jesus in a way that actualized God's control over the demonic forces that plagued humanity." Thiessen, *Jesus*, 119-120.

4.4 Mark 9:14-29: This Kind Only Comes Out By Prayer

We find in Mark 9:14-29 Jesus's final exorcism and lone exorcism following Peter's christological confession. In this story Jesus descends the mount of transfiguration with Peter, James, and John, and casts out a mute and deaf spirit from a boy after his father begs Jesus for help following a failed exorcism attempt by the other nine disciples. The pericope presents two primary exegetical difficulties which we will consider in this section. First, even though Jesus has, at prior points in the narrative, given his disciples the authority to cast out demons (3:15; 6:7), and although they have reported their exorcistic success to Jesus (6:12, 30), they find themselves unable to cast out the unclean spirit which possesses the boy. Such a limitation of the disciples's exorcistic ability calls into question the scope of Jesus's own authority over the demonic realm. Second, when the disciples ask Jesus why they were unable to cast out the demon, he informs them that "this kind only comes out with prayer" (9:29).[120] This response is difficult in its context because Jesus does not offer a prayer in order to perform the exorcism. This section will examine both of these features of the story and argue that they serve Mark's portrayal of a divine Jesus who is a superior exorcist to others who are empowered by the spirit, as well as a Jesus who receives and answers prayer as only Israel's God can.

4.4.1. Exorcistic Failure and Success: An Issue of Status

That the post-transfigured Jesus descends the mountain to find his disciples in a dispute concerning their inability to perform an exorcism is significant. At multiple prior points in the story, Jesus has endowed the twelve with special authority to cast out demons:

> He appointed twelve in order that they would be with him and in order that he should send them to preach and *to have authority to cast out demons* (ἔχειν ἐξουσίαν ἐκβάλλειν τὰ δαιμόνια; Mk. 3:14-15).

[120] The variant "and fasting" (και νηστεια), although in many manuscripts, is absent in early manuscripts and "probably reflects a later ecclesial emphasis on fasting," see: Marcus, *Mark 9-16*, 655.

> He called the twelve to himself and he began to send them out two by two and *he gave them authority over unclean spirits* (καὶ ἐδίδου αὐτοῖς ἐξουσίαν τῶν πνευμάτων τῶν ἀκαθάρτων; Mk. 6:7).

Mark even notes that the disciples were successful in casting out demons due to the authority Jesus gave them,[121] and nowhere does Jesus qualify the authority he gives by noting that there are certain types of demons which reside outside of the scope of such an authority. When we arrive at the bottom of the mountain, then, we should be surprised at the father's initial report to Jesus that "I brought my son to you, because he has a mute spirit… and I told your disciples to cast it out, and they were not able" (9:17, 18). If the unqualified authority over demons which Jesus has given to his disciples is not enough for them to expel this particular demon, what should we make of Jesus's authority, which has likewise known no superior demonic opponent in the story? By calling into question the disciples's derivative authority over demons, Mark calls into question Jesus's own authority over the demonic realm, and thus sets the stage for this pericope to further demonstrate Jesus's superior status.

Aside from Kirk's focus on the royal aspect of exorcistic authority which we visited in Jesus's inaugural exorcism in Mark 1, he also insists that because Jesus shares his exorcistic authority with his human followers, his exorcistic ministry must not point to a divine christology:

> If the Synoptic Gospels are willing to show the reader that exorcism is a part of Jesus's ministry that humans can share in, then exorcisms are not attempts to point the reader to a divine Christology. To the contrary, by locating the power of Jesus's ability to exorcise in his possession of the spirit (Mark 3:22-30; pars.), we receive clear indication that even Jesus has such authority inasmuch as he acts within this narrative world as God's specially authorized agent.[122]

Such an argument would be much stronger if Mark had not included this final exorcism of Jesus in which the disciples are unable to cast out the demon by means of the authority Jesus has given

[121] Mk. 6:12; implied in Mk. 6:30 summary.
[122] Kirk, *Man*, 334.

them. Unfortunately for Kirk's argument, this text breaks with the notion that Jesus and the disciples are authoritatively similar by virtue of their possession of the Holy Spirit. If we locate exorcistic authority in one's possession of the Holy Spirit, the logic of this story collapses. By including this story where Jesus is able to exorcise this demon which the disciples are not able to exorcise, Mark depicts Jesus's exorcistic authority as categorically different from that of the disciples.

It is significant that Mark has the father informing Jesus that the disciples were not strong enough (οὐκ ἴσχυσαν) to cast out the demon. We might expect Mark to have used a form of δύναμαι in order to speak of their exorcistic inability, such as he relates Jesus's inability to do a single miracle (οὐκ ἐδύνατο ἐκεῖ ποιῆσαι οὐδεμίαν δύναμιν) in his hometown apart from a few healings.[123] The choice to depict the disciples as lacking the strength to cast out the demon harkens back to John the Baptist's first words in the story: "The one who is stronger than me (ὁ ἰσχυρότερός μου) is coming after me, of whom I am not worthy to bend down and untie the strap of his sandals. I baptised you with water, but he will baptise you in the Holy Spirit" (Mk. 1:7-8). Jesus's identity as the stronger one, as we have seen in the Gerasene Demoniac episode and will observe further in the next chapter's examination of the Beelzeboul controversy, is an important motif in Mark's depiction of Jesus in the cosmic struggle against Satan, who is the strong man (ὁ ἰσχυρός; Mk. 3:27). The disciples, even with the authority they have received from Jesus, are not strong enough to cast out this demon unless they first pray. Jesus, however, does not offer a prayer in order to cast out the demon; instead, as is usual in his exorcisms, he merely rebukes the demon and instructs it to come out. If this type of demon–as Jesus informs his disciples–is not able to come out with any means other than prayer, and Jesus does not pray in this story, what might we conclude about

[123] Matthew and Luke both make this redactional decision, recording that Jesus's disciples οὐκ ἠδυνήθησαν (Mt. 17:21; Lk. 17:40).

Jesus's identity? And how does the story make logical sense? It is these questions to which we now turn.

4.4.2 The Father's Cry as a Prayer of Lament and Jesus's Response as a Divine Answer

In attempting to make sense of Jesus's somewhat ambiguous words to the disciples which end the scene, commentators have offered various explanations as to how the prayer logion should be understood. Mara Rescio, for example, notes the "problem" of "the apparent inconsistency between Jesus' exorcistic procedure and what he commands his disciples to do… Jesus did not pray during the exorcism. Why, then, would the disciples be asked to do something that Jesus himself did not do?"[124] Rescio argues with a minority of scholars that the variant reading καὶ νηστεία should be read in the text, which alleviates some of the difficulty of the saying:

> "Since the disciples could not fast at that moment, it becomes clear that the prayer requested by Jesus was not a prayer dictated by occasion. Jesus is not saying that the disciples should have prayed (and fasted) immediately before the exorcism: such a request, in those circumstances, would have been impossible to satisfy, not least because the disciples should have known that they had to perform an exorcism on that day. Jesus, therefore, is not offering an immediate solution to a crisis: rather, he is instructing the disciples on how they should proceed to defeat a special kind of demon."[125]

For Rescio, then, the prayer logion does not prescribe that one should pray on the scene of an exorcism; instead, the Markan Jesus imagines "a persistent practice of prayer."[126] She suggests that the narrative context should be considered: Jesus has just come from the transfiguration, an experience which "implied for Jesus a certain period of isolation and almost certainly prayer."[127] Mark, however, does not do anything to imply that the transfiguration involved a period of isolation and prayer, although it would have been easy to do so. On the contrary, he is *with* Peter,

[124] Rescio, Mara. "Demons and Prayer: Traces of Jesus' Esoteric Teaching from Mark to Clement of Alexandria." *Annali di Storia dell'Esegesi* 31 (2014). 70.

[125] Rescio, "Demons and Prayer." 70.

[126] Rescio, "Demons and Prayer." 70.

[127] Rescio, "Demons and Prayer." 70.

James, and John, from whom he withdraws in Gethsemane in order to pray privately,[128] but there is no indication that Jesus does so here. Rescio is right to search for a narrative antecedent to the prayer instruction, but finds it in the wrong place. I will argue here that prayer is in fact present in the narrative, but it is instead found in the father's cry to Jesus.

Joel Marcus also notes the difficulty of the prayer logion:

> "Jesus' answer raises as many questions as it answers, since Jesus himself, despite his prescription of prayer as the antidote for an epileptic spirit, is not described as praying before he expels the demon. It may be that his prayer is implied or that Mark has already identified him sufficiently as a man of prayer that he need not do so here (see 1:35; 6:46; cf. 14:32–42). It is still striking, however, that in 9:29 he lays down a rule for exorcism that he himself is not described as fulfilling."[129]

Marcus mentions one solution, namely that the discrepancy displays the tension between the evangelist relaying the events of a story, and redacting the story in order to address the needs and concerns of his audience, perhaps here the concern of early Christians around unsuccessful exorcism attempts. Thus, the prayer logion might represent a later, early Christian teaching on exorcism.[130]

Marcus does, however, briefly acknowledge the father's cry to Jesus as a prayer: "But there *is* a character in the story who prays, and that is the boy's father… His very language in addressing Jesus is reminiscent of liturgical intercession, and his believing-yet-disbelieving posture is meant by Mark to be an image of the way in which Christians stand before God and Jesus in prayer."[131] Marcus arrives at a similar conclusion to my own, noting that the father's cry echoes prayers from the Old Testament and other Jewish literature. "It seems plausible, then, that Mark's audience

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[128] Mark notes that Jesus leaves the three to go a little farther (καὶ προελθὼν μικρὸν; Mk. 14:35) to pray, came back after a prayer (καὶ ἔρχεται; 14:37), departed to pray again (καὶ πάλιν ἀπελθὼν προσηύξατο; 14:39), and came back a third time (καὶ πάλιν ἐλθὼν; 14:40).

[129] Marcus, *Mark 8-16*, 665.

[130] Marcus, *Mark 8-16*, 665.

[131] Marcus, *Mark 8-16*, 665.

would see in the father's plea an echo of a prayer formula current in their community and that the Markan narrative is placing Jesus in a position analogous to God's."[132] I will develop this line of argument and conclusion, considering as well the implications of Matthew and Luke's respective receptions of the passage.

In her commentary, Adela Yarbro Collins comments that "it is striking that the means recommended, prayer, does not occur in the story itself."[133] Then, in a footnote, Collins mentions the possibility that the father's cry in 9:24 "is construed here as a prayer."[134] Ultimately, however, Collins argues that the discrepancy between Jesus's admonition that this type of demon does not come out by any means except for prayer and his own lack of prayer in the exorcism is best explained by Mark merging two different traditions, the result of which is a lack of coherence in the story as it now stands.[135] That is, the prayer logion was taken from another tradition and attached to this exorcism pericope, perhaps reflecting both the events contained in one tradition, and the interests of those in Mark's day in another. In these and other[136] interpretations, it is common to suggest that the prayer logion does not make logical sense within the context of the preceding exorcism. While this is of course, my argument aims to show that the narrative as it stands is coherent and makes logical sense with the recognition of prayer in the father's cry. The narrative consistency as well as early Synoptic reception work together to make this interpretation preferred over those mentioned above. Here I argue along lines similar to those of Joel Marcus that Mark depicts the father's cry to Jesus in Mark 9:24 as a prayer, and thereby function as the

[132] Marcus, Mark 8-16, 660.
[133] Collins, *Mark*, 439.
[134] Collins, *Mark*, 439.
[135] Collins, *Mark*, 439.
[136] Löfstedt, for example, argues that the disciples were unable to cast out the demon because Jesus was absent at the transfiguration and thus was not present with them in the way he had been earlier. This is a difficult reading because in earlier stories, the disciples were also presumably absent from Jesus when they cast out demons. See: Löfstedt, Torsten. "Why Did Jesus' Disciples Fail to Cast Out the Deaf and Mute Spirit?: (Mark 9:14–29)." *Svensk Exegetisk Årsbok* 88 (2023). 153-174.

referent of 9:29 (a necessary prayer for the exorcism).[137] We will proceed first by examining the cry of the father in light of lament prayers in the LXX, and then by examining Matthew and Luke's reception of this text, in which they intensify prayer language around the father's request.

4.4.2.1 Echoes of Lament in the Father's Cry

It is my contention here that the father's words to Jesus function as a prayer in the vein of Old Testament lament prayers.[138] I am not arguing that the father's request is echoing any particular text from Israel's Scripture, but rather that it participates in the broader tradition of Israel's lamenters, a feature which both Matthew and Luke recognise and intensify in their respective accounts.

A lament is a prayer offered by an individual or community which asks for deliverance from the affliction caused by an enemy which calls into question the lamenter's standing before God. In form-critical perspective, a lament can be reduced to a prayer which includes three participants: God, the lamenter, and the enemy.[139] Laments are often marked by desperation due to the impending destruction if God does not quickly act on the behalf of the lamenter.[140] This

[137] This is similar to the argument that C.D. Marshall makes, although he does not provide an argument for reading the father's cry as a prayer other than the fact that 9:29 must point backward as an interpretive key in the passage. See: Marshall, Christopher D. *Faith as a Theme in Mark's Narrative*. Society for New Testament Studies Monograph Series. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989. 223. Here, I provide a more extensive argument for understanding the father's cry as an intelligible prayer.

[138] For further examination on the Synoptic authors's use of Old Testament lament, see: Crisler, Channing L. *A Synoptic Christology of Lament: The Lord Who Answered and the Lord Who Cried*. Lanham, MD: Lexington Books/Fortress Academic, 2023. This work is foundational in understanding the interplay between cries to Jesus in the Gospels and laments in Israel's Scriptures.

[139] Westermann, Claus. *Praise and Lament in the Psalms.* Trans: Keith R. Crim and Richard N. Soulen; J. Knox Press, 1981. 168; These three participants are often represented by personal pronouns such as "I/we" (the lamenter), "You" (God), and "they/them" (enemies). See Crisler, Channing L. *Echoes of Lament and the Christology of Luke.* Sheffield Phoenix Press, 2020. 51.

[140] In particular, lament arises when one's lived experience conflicts with God's prior promises. For example, God promises his people that those who follow his ways will do well and live long in the land (Deut. 5:33). When a person with self-perceived innocence (cf. Ps. 73:13) faces danger or death, the circumstance calls into question the lamenter's standing before God, as well as God's faithfulness to his promises: "Has God forgotten to be gracious?" (Ps. 77:9) See also: Fløysvik, Ingvar. *When God Becomes My Enemy: The Theology of the Complaint Psalms*. St. Louis, MO: Concordia Academic Press, 1997. 140.

desperation produces cries for help directed to God. Further, there is a particular register, or stock language, to the cries of lament in Israel's Scriptural tradition–most notably in the Psalter–which is typical to lament and which other figures can evoke in order to participate in the tradition of lament. Typical cries for help include requests such as:

> "Arise (קוּמָה/ἀνάστα), LORD! Save me (הוֹשִׁיעֵנִי/σῶσόν με), my God!" (Ps. 3:7)
>
> "Have mercy on me (חָנֵּנִי/ἐλέησόν με), LORD!" (Ps. 6:2)
>
> "Save me (הוֹשִׁיעֵנִי/σῶσόν με) from all who persecute me and
> rescue me (וְהַצִּילֵנִי/ῥῦσαί με)!" (Ps. 7:1)
>
> "Do not abandon me (אַל־תַּעַזְבֵנִי/μὴ ἐγκαταλίπῃς με), LORD;
> O my God, do not be far from me!
> Make haste to help me (חוּשָׁה לְעֶזְרָתִי/πρόσχες εἰς τὴν βοήθειάν μου),
> O LORD, my salvation!" (Ps. 38:22-23/LXX 37:22-23)

These and other cries for God's help are offered as imperative verbs in the face of the lamenter's enemies who cause the lamenter's affliction.

We can now return to Mark's text to consider the potential presence of lament. The father offers two requests to Jesus. The first comes at the end of his second description of his son's demonic affliction. When Jesus asks how long his son has been in his present condition, he responds: "From childhood. And he often throws him into fire and into water in order that he should destroy him (ἵνα ἀπολέσῃ αὐτόν). But if you are able to do anything, help us (βοήθησόν ἡμῖν) and have compassion on us (σπλαγχνισθεὶς ἐφ᾽ ἡμᾶς)" (9:21-22). Jesus responds by scolding the father's lack of belief (9:23), reminiscent of his scolding of the disciples earlier (9:19).[141] This

[141] Jesus's scolding of the disciples (ὦ γενεὰ ἄπιστος, ἕως πότε πρὸς ὑμᾶς ἔσομαι; ἕως πότε ἀνέξομαι ὑμῶν;) evokes texts such as Deut. 32:20 in which God, in reference the wilderness generation, says, "They are a perverse generation, Sons in whom there is no faith" (ὅτι γενεὰ ἐξεστραμμένη ἐστίν, υἱοί, οἷς οὐκ ἔστιν πίστις ἐν αὐτοῖς), as well as Numbers 14:27, in which God says to Moses and Aaron, "How long (ἕως τίνος) will I put up with this evil gathering (τὴν συναγωγὴν τὴν πονηρὰν ταύτην;)?" Crisler compares Jesus's scolding with YHWH's scolding: "The sense of ἀνέχω here is that Jesus must tolerate unbelief in his power despite overwhelming evidence to the contrary. Jesus's toleration of this γενεὰ ἄπιστος echoes YHWH's toleration of unbelieving Israel… YHWH himself cries out against his people because of their lack of faith in him despite overwhelming evidence that they should do so given

scolding causes the father to emit the words which successfully move Jesus to cast out the spirit: "Immediately, the father of the child cried out (κράξας) and said, 'I believe, help (βοήθει) my unbelief (μου τῇ ἀπιστίᾳ)'" (9:24). This cry from the father exhibits the desperation which is typical of Old Testament lament prayers. It is common, for example, for lamenters to refer to their prayers as cries to God:

> "Listen to my words, Lord,
> Take notice of my cry (σύνες τῆς κραυγῆς μου);
> Pay attention to the sound of my prayer (τῇ φωνῇ τῆς δεήσεώς μου),
> My king and my God;
> For I pray to you, Lord" (Ps. 5:2-3 LXX).

> "When I was afflicted, I called upon the Lord
> And I cried out (ἐκέκραξα) to my God;
> He heard my voice from his holy temple,
> And my cry (ἡ κραυγή) came before him into his ears" (Ps. 17:7 LXX).

> "Lord, my God, I have cried out (ἐκέκραξα) to you,
> And you healed me" (Ps. 29:3 LXX).[142]

The father's cry for help is produced by both the unclean spirit intent on destroying his son (ἵνα ἀπολέσῃ αὐτόν, 9:22) and his own lack of belief in Jesus's ability to cast the demon out. The former cause is similar to lamenters in the Psalms who fear that their enemies will destroy them. In Psalm 13, for example, the Psalmist fears that God's abandonment will result in his enemy's victory over him:

> How long shall my enemy be exalted over me?
> Consider and answer me, O Lord my God!
> Give light to my eyes, or I will sleep the sleep of death,
> and my enemy will say, "I have prevailed";
> my foes will rejoice because I am shaken (Ps. 13:2b-4).

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his deliverance and protection that they have witnessed. It follows that Jesus's cry in Mk 9:19 not only echoes lamenters who cry out against Israel but also Israel's God who tolerates, and even laments, the nation's unbelief." Crisler, *Synoptic*, 120.

[142] This motif spans across the Psalter. See, for example, LXX Ps. 4:4; 9:13; 21:3, 6, 25; 26:7; 30:23; 33:7; 56:3; 76:2; 85:3; 87:2, 10, etc.

The latter cause, i.e. lack of belief in God's (here, Jesus's) ability to provide deliverance, is likewise prevalent in Israel's Scripture.[143]

The content of the father's cry which causes Jesus to act, interestingly, no longer concerns the exorcism itself; rather, the content of the father's cry concerns his own belief in Jesus's ability to cast out the spirit, belief which Jesus claims is essential for this impossible act to become possible. On a narrative level, the father's uncertainty regarding Jesus's ability to help his son is well-reasoned given the fact that Jesus's own disciples, to whom he had given unqualified authority to cast out demons, were not strong enough to cast out this particular spirit. The disciples's inability, by association, calls into question Jesus's ability to perform the exorcism.

Jesus's admonition that all things are possible to the one who believes implies that he will not perform the exorcism for the father if he remains in a state of unbelief. The prospect of Jesus leaving the unclean spirit to destroy his son fuels the desperation which elicits the father's cry for Jesus to help his unbelief. Because the father is unable to conjure up the belief that Jesus is able to cast out the demon, he must beg Jesus for help. Crying out for God to help the lamenter is another common feature of lament prayers in Israel's Scriptures. Crisler notes resonance with Ps. 108:26 LXX: "Help me (βοήθησόν μοι), O Lord, my God, save me according to your mercy," Ps. 27:7 LXX: "The Lord is my helper" (κύριος βοηθός), and Isaiah 41:10, in which God recalls helping Israel (ἐβοήθησά σοι).[144] Likewise, as far back as Song of the Sea, Moses refers to God as "my helper" (βοηθὸς μου)[145]. Crisler further comments that "when the father's cry for help is read

[143] See, for example, the complaint of the Israelites against God in Numbers 14:3 which displays their lack of belief in God's ability and/or faithfulness to do what he promised: "Why is the Lord bringing us into this land to fall by the sword? Our wives and our little ones will become plunder; would it not be better for us to go back to Egypt?"

[144] Crisler, *Synoptic,* 120.

[145] Ex. 15:2.

against this intertextual backdrop, it indicates that Mark keys Jesus to YHWH who is Israel's 'helper' in their distress."[146]

On these grounds, it seems plausible that Mark portrays the father's cry to Jesus as tantamount to a lamenter's prayer to YHWH in Israel's Scriptures. The foregrounded participants in the 9:14-29 pericope provide the reader with a lamenter (the father), an enemy (the unclean spirit), and Jesus in the role traditionally occupied by Israel's God. As was often the case with Israel's enemies, the boy's/father's enemy, namely the unclean spirit, has as its aim the destruction of the victim (ἵνα ἀπολέσῃ αὐτόν, 9:22). The father's cry for help, given Jesus's later assertion that this kind of demon only comes out by prayer, is best understood as functioning as such a prayer directed to Jesus, which he answered by performing the exorcism.

4.4.2.2 Synoptic Reception and Intensification of Prayer Language

Hearing resonances of prayer in the father's cry for Jesus's help goes back to two of Mark's earliest readers, namely Matthew and Luke. We now turn to their respective versions of this pericope, in which they both amplify prayer imagery and language in the father's petition. Matthew and Luke both drastically reduce this story, preserving less than half of the material found in Mark. Both evangelists remove Mark's description of the frenzied argument which awaits Jesus at the beginning of the scene (Mk. 9:14-16), as well as the father's extended interaction with Jesus which includes his description of the boy's affliction and his cry for help (Mk. 9:20-24) which we have just examined. Further, both later accounts omit Jesus's explanation to the disciples that this particular type of demon can only come out by prayer (Mk. 9:29), and Matthew attributes the disciples's inability to their little faith (ὀλιγοπιστία; Mt. 17:20). The omission of the prayer logion absolves Matthew and Luke from the difficulty in Jesus's lack of prayer in performing the

[146] Crisler, *Synoptic,* 120.

exorcism. As we will see, however, the two latter Synoptic Evangelists employ other means to import prayer language into the father's initial interaction with Jesus.

4.4.2.2.1 Amplification of Prayer in Matthew 17:14-21

Upon descending the mountain, the Markan Jesus encounters a dispute between his disciples and the scribes. When Jesus inquires concerning the commotion, one man comes forward from the crowd and informs Jesus concerning his son's demonic affliction. In Matthew's account, however, a man merely approaches Jesus and informs him concerning his son. Let us compare the accounts of the father's initial approach side-by-side:

Mark 9:17-18	Matthew 17:14-16
17 καὶ ἀπεκρίθη αὐτῷ εἷς ἐκ τοῦ ὄχλου·	14 Καὶ ἐλθόντων πρὸς τὸν ὄχλον προσῆλθεν αὐτῷ ἄνθρωπος γονυπετῶν αὐτὸν
	15 καὶ λέγων·
Διδάσκαλε, ἤνεγκα τὸν υἱόν μου πρὸς σέ,	Κύριε, ἐλέησόν μου τὸν υἱόν,
ἔχοντα πνεῦμα ἄλαλον· 18 καὶ ὅπου ἐὰν αὐτὸν καταλάβῃ ῥήσσει αὐτόν, καὶ ἀφρίζει καὶ τρίζει τοὺς ὀδόντας καὶ ξηραίνεται·	ὅτι σεληνιάζεται καὶ κακῶς πάσχει, πολλάκις γὰρ πίπτει εἰς τὸ πῦρ καὶ πολλάκις εἰς τὸ ὕδωρ.
καὶ εἶπα τοῖς μαθηταῖς σου ἵνα αὐτὸ ἐκβάλωσιν, καὶ οὐκ ἴσχυσαν.	16 καὶ προσήνεγκα αὐτὸν τοῖς μαθηταῖς σου, καὶ οὐκ ἠδυνήθησαν αὐτὸν θεραπεῦσαι.

Rather than follow Mark's description of a man answering from a crowd, Matthew presents the father of the afflicted boy as kneeling before Jesus in a posture of reverence (γονυπετῶν) often assumed in the worship of, or prayer to, a deity.[147] Further, Matthew exchanges the father's

[147] See, for example, God's distinction of the faithful as those whose knees have not bowed to Baal in 1 Kings 19:18. See also Isaiah 45:23, in which God promises that every knee will bow before him, and its use in Philippians 2:10. See also, Daniel 6:10, in which Daniel "continued to go to his house, which had windows in its upper room open

opening, merely informative words (Teacher, I have brought my son to you; Mk. 9:17) for a petition which much more closely resembles prayers from the Psalms: "Lord, have mercy on my son" (Mt. 17:15). Consider, for example Ps. 26:7 LXX: "Listen, Lord, to my voice, with which I cry; Have mercy on my and listen to me" (εἰσάκουσον, *κύριε*, τῆς φωνῆς μου, ἧς ἐκέκραξα, *ἐλέησόν με* καὶ εἰσάκουσόν μου)! Likewise in Ps. 30:10 LXX: "Have mercy on me, Lord" (ἐλέησόν με, κύριε)! That the father in Matthew's account addresses Jesus as Κύριε rather than the Markan Διδάσκαλε is significant. The attribution of the title κύριος does not necessarily entail divinity or equation with the divine name;[148] however, the formulation of κύριε in combination with ἐλέησόν is best understood as a prayer given its frequent appearance as prayer to YHWH in the LXX Psalter.[149] This combination of the father's kneeling posture and "Lord, have mercy" formulation elevates the father's initial interaction with Jesus from Mark's mere informative statement to an act which, at the very least, closely resembles a prayer to Jesus.

4.4.2.2.2 Amplification of Prayer in Luke 9:37-43

Luke modifies the Markan pericope differently than Matthew, yet he nevertheless exhibits the father's interaction with Jesus in a manner which resembles prayer. Consider the Lukan account next to Mark's:

Mark 9:17-18	Luke 9:38-40

toward Jerusalem, and *to get down on his knees* three times a day to pray to his God and praise him, just as he had done previously."

[148] Even in Matthew's own Gospel, κύριος is regularly used by a slave in reference to a master, as in Mt. 24:45-51.

[149] See also: LXX Ps. 6:3; 9:14; 118:29, etc.

17 καὶ ἀπεκρίθη αὐτῷ εἷς ἐκ τοῦ ὄχλου·	38 καὶ ἰδοὺ ἀνὴρ ἀπὸ τοῦ ὄχλου ἐβόησεν λέγων·
Διδάσκαλε, ἤνεγκα τὸν υἱόν μου πρὸς σέ,	Διδάσκαλε, δέομαί σου ἐπιβλέψαι ἐπὶ τὸν υἱόν μου, ὅτι μονογενής μοί ἐστιν,
ἔχοντα πνεῦμα ἄλαλον· 18 καὶ ὅπου ἐὰν αὐτὸν καταλάβῃ ῥήσσει αὐτόν, καὶ ἀφρίζει καὶ τρίζει τοὺς ὀδόντας καὶ ξηραίνεται·	39 καὶ ἰδοὺ πνεῦμα λαμβάνει αὐτόν, καὶ ἐξαίφνης κράζει, καὶ σπαράσσει αὐτὸν μετὰ ἀφροῦ καὶ μόγις ἀποχωρεῖ ἀπ’ αὐτοῦ συντρῖβον αὐτόν·
καὶ εἶπα τοῖς μαθηταῖς σου ἵνα αὐτὸ ἐκβάλωσιν, καὶ οὐκ ἴσχυσαν.	40 καὶ ἐδεήθην τῶν μαθητῶν σου ἵνα ἐκβάλωσιν αὐτό, καὶ οὐκ ἠδυνήθησαν.

From the outset, we see Luke’s portrayal of the father crying out (ἐβόησεν) to Jesus, with a request that Jesus would look upon (ἐπιβλέψαι) his son. By locating the father’s request in his initial words to Jesus, Luke–like Matthew–is able to bypass Mark’s extended dialogue between Jesus and the man in regards to belief and unbelief. Luke, similarly to Matthew, dresses up the father’s address to Jesus in typical prayer language, although he does not opt for the Κύριε, ἐλέησόν formulation. Instead, Luke records the father begging Jesus and his disciples (δέομαί/ἐδεήθην) to help his son. Although δέομαι is not always a term associated with prayer,[150] it is very frequently used to explicitly denote prayer.[151] In LXX Psalms, psalmists often implore God to listen to their δέησις. For example:

> Hear the sound of my prayer when I pray to you (εἰσάκουσον τῆς φωνῆς τῆς δεήσεώς μου ἐν τῷ δέεσθαί με πρὸς σέ);
> Blessed is the Lord, because he heard the sound of my prayer (εὐλογητὸς Κύριος, ὅτι εἰσήκουσεν τῆς φωνῆς τῆς δεήσεώς μου).[152]
> To you, Lord, I cry out,

[150] Cf. 2 Cor 5:20; 8:4; 10:2, where it refers to one person/group requesting something from another person/group.

[151] Cf. Mt. 9:38/Lk.10:2; Lk. 21:36; Lk. 22:32; Acts 4:31; 8:22, 24; 10:2.

[152] Ps. 27: 2, 6 LXX.

And to my God I will pray (καὶ πρὸς τὸν θεόν μου *δεηθήσομαι*).[153]

In Luke's account, then, it is possible that such a prayer was offered both to the disciples (v. 40) and to Jesus (v. 38). The Lukan disciples–although they had just recently received authority from Jesus to cast out demons[154]–were not suitable as worthy recipients of the father's δέησις, and were therefore unable to cast out the demon. The Lukan Jesus, on the other hand, is a worthy recipient of the father's δέησις, and is able to answer the δέησις by performing the exorcism.

Further, the father's δέησις is that Jesus would look upon (ἐπιβλέψαι) his son. This is another common request which psalmists make to God in their prayers:

Look at me (ἐπίβλεψον), listen to me, Lord my God![155]

Look at me (ἐπίβλεψον) and have mercy on me,
For I am alone and poor.[156]

According to your great compassion,
Look upon me (ἐπίβλεψον ἐπ' ἐμέ)![157]

The lone additional occurrence of the term in the Gospels comes earlier in Luke's Gospel in Mary's Magnificat, in which her spirit rejoices in God because he has looked upon (ἐπέβλεψεν) the low state of his servant (Lk. 1:48).

With this data in mind, I posit that Luke–like Matthew–picks up on and amplifies the notion that the father's interaction with Jesus closely resembles the act of prayer. The presence of added prayer features in Matthew and Luke's account of the father's speech to Jesus provides us with firm interpretive ground in positing that the father's cry to Jesus in the Markan account functions as the prayer necessary to drive out "this kind" of demon (Mk. 9:29).

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[153] Ps 29:9 LXX.
[154] Lk. 9:1.
[155] Ps. 12:4 LXX.
[156] Ps. 24:16 LXX.
[157] Ps. 68:17 LXX.

4.4.3 Jesus as Recipient of Prayer: Christological Considerations

If we accept the previous argument that the father's cry to Jesus in Mark 9:24 functions as the prayer which is necessary in order to satisfy Jesus's prayer requirement for exorcising this kind of demon (9:29), it follows that we now turn to consider the christological implications of a Jesus who both receives and answers prayer. We will briefly consider the limitations of prayer (προσευχή) in Second Temple Judaism, and to whom Jews could offer prayers, namely God, as well as Jewish exorcistic practices involving prayer. Then, we will consider Mark's presentation of Jesus as a recipient and as one who answers prayer in the context of exorcism.

Defining prayer within Second Temple Judaism has proven to be a remarkably difficult task. In their initial survey, Feldman and Sandoval provide seven initial definitions which scholars have posited in an attempt to briefly describe the phenomenon.[158] Definitions which attempt to describe something more than one's interaction with God are generally unable to account for the broad range of prayer forms and practices. Esther Chazon provided a simple, yet inclusive, definition of Jewish prayer in her article in which she examines prayer at Qumran, stating that prayer is "any form of human communication with God."[159] Throughout the Hebrew Bible and Second Temple Jewish literature, one constant is that the recipient of prayer is God. The Hebrew Psalter is comprised of prayers directed toward Israel's God. Likewise, the early Christians made much of the oft-quoted line from Joel, that "Everyone who calls upon the name of the Lord will be saved" (Joel 3:5 LXX).[160]

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[158] Feldman, Ariel, and Timothy J. Sandoval. "Introduction." In *Petitioners, Penitents, and Poets*, De Gruyter, 2020. 2-4.

[159] Chazon, Esther Glickler. "Prayers from Qumran and Their Historical Implications." *Dead Sea Discoveries* 1, no. 3 (1994): 266; See also Heiler's broad definition as "a living communion of the righteous man with God" in: Heiler, Friedrich. *Prayer: A Study in the History and Psychology of Religion*. London: Oxford University Press, 1938. 353-63.

[160] Cf. Acts 2:21; Rom. 10:13.

Further, in the context of exorcism, it was a common feature to pray to one's god in order to gain the upper hand over a demon, as we observed in chapter two.[161] After one prayed, a successful exorcism would signal that the god who received the prayer had answered it by driving out the demon. We discussed earlier in this chapter instances in which an exorcist might invoke the name, and thereby the authority, of one of the great figures from Israel's past, such as in Josephus's account of Eleazar invoking the name of Solomon.[162] Prayer, however, seems to have been reserved for Israel's God.

What might we then make, if the present line of argumentation is accepted, of Mark presenting an exorcism scene in which the father prays to Jesus as one prays to God, and Jesus answers the prayer as God answers prayer, particularly one in which the disciples who have previously received unqualified authority over demons from Jesus are unable to perform the exorcism? In particular, what does such a scene contribute to the Markan Jesus's identity in relation to Israel's God?

I suggest that by presenting Jesus in this scene as a worthy recipient of prayer which is traditionally offered exclusively to Israel's God, Mark presents to his readers a Jesus who shares in the identity of Israel's God. Further, by including this exorcism in which Jesus's disciples are unable to cast out the demon, and in which Jesus merely rebukes the demon of his own authority to come out (ἐπιτάσσω σοι, ἔξελθε ἐξ αὐτοῦ; Mk. 9:25), Mark combats the idea that Jesus's exorcistic authority is derivative or merely due to his possession of the holy spirit in a manner similar to that of the disciples; rather, as we have noted in previous exorcisms, Jesus is unique in the ancient world as an exorcist who does not invoke or depend upon the authority of a higher power in order to gain an advantage over his demonic opponents. Instead of invoking God's power

[161] Cf.: PGM IV. 1227-64; V. 165-170; CXIV. 1-14; 11Q5 XIX.15; *TSol.* 1:5.
[162] Josephus, *Ant.* 8.45-48.

to drive out this demon which is not able to be driven out by any means except prayer, Jesus acts as God to whom the possessed boy's father prays in order to cast out the demon. In observing Luke's account of the penitent thief's cry to Jesus that he remember him when Jesus comes into his kingdom, Crisler makes a similar point: "The interplay between Jewish lament language and various episodes in which figures cry out to Jesus produces the unstated point that the Lukan Jesus shares in the divine identity of YHWH, relating to these figures in a way that only YHWH can, namely by answering their requests for deliverance through a command or promise."[163]

4.4.4 Jesus's Exorcistic Authority

Finally, as we have observed in previous exorcisms[164]–and will therefore only do so briefly here–Jesus's exorcistic authority as Mark presents it is unrivalled in the ancient world, and therefore is unable to be accounted for within exalted human or angelomorphic paradigms. Rather than praying, reciting an incantation, or employing a physical apotropaic object, Jesus's exorcistic process is minimalistic in comparison with his contemporaries:

> Jesus, seeing that a crowd was gathering, rebuked the unclean spirit, saying to it, "Mute and deaf spirit, I command you, come out from him and never again enter into him!" After crying out and convulsing, it came out. And he became as dead, so that many said that he died. But Jesus grabbed his hand, and raised him, and he arose (Mk. 9:25-27).

Jesus's prohibition to the spirit that it should no longer enter into the boy is unique in Mark's Gospel; however, the concern of demonic re-entry does seem to be present for Matthew and Luke, although in other contexts.[165]

As we noted Mark's depiction of the disciples as not beings strong enough (οὐκ ἴσχυσαν) to cast out this particular spirit serves to differentiate Jesus. The Markan Jesus's exorcistic ability

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[163] Crisler, Channing L. "The Divine Christology of 'Remember Me' (Luke 23:42) in Light of Lament." *Tyndale Bulletin* 74 (December 15, 2023): 165.

[164] See especially the discussion on Mark 1:21-28 exorcism.

[165] See our discussion in chapter two on Matthew 12:43-45/Luke 11:24-26.

is not merely a matter of his *possession* of the spirit; instead, it is also an issue of Jesus's *status* as the stronger one. It seems that, in this story, possession of the spirit is not by itself sufficient to cast out this kind of demon, which is not able to come out by any means except prayer. Jesus does not pray in order to cast out this demon, and so he does not operate within the same limitations as everyone else in the story. Instead, I have argued here that Jesus *receives* prayer in this passage, and by answering it acts with an authority over the demonic realm which is comparable only to Israel's God.

4.4.5 Summary

In this section we observed Jesus's final exorcism in the Gospel of Mark. I have argued that Jesus's post-exorcism explanation to the disciples that "this kind only comes out with prayer" (9:29) is best understood as referring to the father's cry to Jesus in 9:24. The cry/prayer resembles the lament prayer form in the Hebrew Psalter. Further, Matthew and Luke both–in distinct ways–contribute to the notion that the father's interaction with Jesus closely resembles Israel's lamenters in their interaction with God. All of this, in combination with the exorcistic failure of the disciples who previously had received and demonstrated unqualified exorcistic authority from Jesus, functions to closely identify Jesus with Israel's God. The story, therefore, contributes to a divine Christology for the Markan Jesus.

4.5 Conclusion

This chapter examined the three main exorcism pericopae–1:21-28, 5:1-20, and 9:14-29–in the Gospel of Mark and considered their contribution to Markan christology. Having previously examined possession and exorcism in the ancient world, as well as a messianic profile of a divine human who would come to destroy the demons at the eschaton, I have argued here that

understanding the Markan Jesus to be the eschatological embodiment of Israel's God is a reading which is able to make sense of the data of the texts in question.

In the next chapter, we will examine Satan's role in Mark's Gospel and christology. A considerable amount of that discussion will focus on the Beelzeboul controversy in Mark 3:22-27. At present, however, let us consider the initial accusation of the scribes against Jesus: "The scribes who came down from Jerusalem were saying that 'He has Beelzeboul' and that 'by the ruler of the demons he is casting out demons'" (3:22). It does not seem to be the case that the scribes genuinely believe this claim, as Jesus's opponents are already plotting against him at this point (3:6); however, the fact that Jesus devotes a parable to its refutation should cause us to consider the plausibility of their accusation as one possible way to make sense of Jesus's exorcistic prowess. Even if the scribes don't believe their own accusation and the story shows it to be misguided, it could very well account for the unparalleled authority which Jesus displays over the demons we observed in his opening exorcism. There, the astonished crowds ask, "What is this? A new teaching with authority. He even commands the unclean spirits, and they obey him" (1:27). Jesus's displays of power and authority over demons were so unparalleled that one logical solution was that he must have been working in tandem with the devil himself. It is worth noting that such an accusation has the potential to work well precisely because the scope of Jesus's authority over the demonic realm is unparalleled by even the greatest of Israel's exorcists who came before him. In other words, the Beelzeboul controversy would not be a compelling accusation if Jesus was–by and large–categorically similar to other exorcists.

I have offered a very different solution to account for Jesus's exorcistic abilities than that of the Jerusalem scribes. Rather than being in league with the devil, the Markan Jesus is the embodiment of Israel's God who has come to destroy the demons.

Jesus and Satan in the Gospel of Mark

5.1 Introduction

Having examined the christological significance of Jesus's exorcistic ministry, we now turn to the role of Satan–the ruler of the demons (Mk. 3:22)–in Mark's Gospel. I argue here that these encounters between Jesus and Satan function to highlight Jesus's identity as a divine messianic figure who brings an end to Satan's reign in his death and resurrection. Jesus frees those under Satan's reign by giving his life to Satan as an acceptable ransom payment, in exchange for captive humans. I will proceed by examining the primary Satan texts in Mark, namely Jesus's testing in the wilderness (Mk. 1:12-13), the Beelzeboul controversy and parable of the strong man (3:22-27), Jesus's encounter with Satan in Peter's resistance to a passion prediction (8:31-33), and the ransom logion in Mark 10:45, where Jesus depicts his death as a ransom payment offered to Satan for the release of many. Mark 10:45 plays a central role in the demonological logic of the Markan narrative. I argue here that interpreters have failed to adequately engage the ransom metaphor, and therefore failed to understand the role of Satan in Mark's passion.

5.2 Mark 1:12-13

Compared to later versions of the story offered by Matthew and Luke, the Markan Jesus's wilderness encounter with Satan is notably terse. Spanning only two verses and just over 30 words in Greek,[1] Mark's account of the testing lacks significant details which were of interest to early readers. For example, Mark does not give any description of *how* Jesus was tested by Satan.[2]

[1] Depending on variants the text is 30 or 31 words.

[2] This fairly consensus view that Mark does not provide readers with any content or outcome of Jesus's testing is contested by Jeffrey Gibson. See: Jeffrey B. Gibson. "Jesus' Wilderness Temptation According to Mark." *Journal for the Study of the New Testament* 16, no. 53 (April 1994): 3–34. Gibson argues that most have wrongly read the wilderness temptation as beginning in 1:12. Instead, says Gibson, there is good reason to understand this single literary unit as beginning in 1:9, the beginning of the baptism scene. Further, the occurrence of πειράζω (1:13) would

Further, Mark does not tell the reader whether or not Jesus emerged from the testing as successful. The reader may infer the result of the testing from other clues throughout Mark's Gospel, such as Jesus's subsequent proclamation that God's reign has drawn near (1:15) or from the parable of the strong man (3:23-27), but Mark does not give immediate or explicit content concerning Jesus's success or failure in the testing. The lack of such information made Matthew and Luke (or their sources) uncomfortable enough to include lengthy accounts of Satan's temptations of Jesus,[3] as well as definitive markers of Jesus's success in the contest by virtue of Satan's departure.[4] While scholars do not argue that Jesus was defeated by Satan in the wilderness, some do stress Mark's lack of indication concerning the result of the contest. Heikki Räisänen criticises the narrative abilities of the author, arguing that if Mark did attempt to portray Jesus as having emerged victorious from the wilderness episode, he was not convincing.[5] Evans likewise concludes that "since no temptations are specified, victory over them cannot be expressed."[6]

Due to the brevity of the Markan account, it is difficult to extract from the testing pericope more than a couple features which aid the reader in making sense of Jesus's identity. First, the reader is introduced here to the character of Satan in Mark's Gospel. Although the figure has its roots in some parts of the Hebrew Scriptures (Job 1; Zech. 3:1-2), it is in the pseudepigrapha of

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have conjured up more than simply images of temptation or testing. Gibson's argument is unconvincing here, as he loads too much semantic potential into this singular occurrence. He also argues that Satan's reputation as the one "whose primary activity was the proving of the faithfulness and steadfastness of the pious" in pre-Markan thought is enough context to hint that Satan was there to test Jesus's faithfulness to God. This is difficult for two reasons. First, testing/proving the steadfastness of God's people (such as we might see in Job) does not seem to be the primary function of Satan as Mark understands it. In Mark, Satan harasses people by means of their being possessed by unclean spirits, and he actively works to oppose Jesus and God's activity (cf. 4:15; 8:33). Second, such a function is only one of multiple attributed to Satan in Second Temple Judaism, and it is difficult to assert that this was even among Satan's primary functions.

[3] Mt. 4:3-10; Lk. 4:3-12.

[4] Mt. 4:11; Lk. 4:13.

[5] Räisänen, Heikki. *The "Messianic Secret" in Mark*. Studies of the New Testament and Its World. Edinburgh: Clark, 1990. 16-17.

[6] Evans, Christopher Francis. *The Beginning of the Gospel: Four Lectures on St. Mark's Gospel*. London: S.P.C.K, 1968. 14.

the Second Temple Period that a pronounced leader of the demonic realm emerges as an established character. In texts such as *1 Enoch*, *Jubilees*, as well as in the writings of the Qumran community, a figure known by names such as Satan, Belial, Mastema, or Azaz'el functions as the archdemon who stands at the helm of the opposition against God and God's elect.[7] By placing Jesus's initial confrontation with Satan prior to any of Jesus's conflicts with other characters, Mark identifies Satan as Jesus's primary opponent in the narrative. As we will observe in our later examination of the ransom logion and of the Markan passion narrative, in which explicit Satanic and demonic activity are notably absent, Satan stands as the driving force behind opposition to Jesus even where he is not mentioned.

That Jesus's first confrontation–his confrontation with Satan–in the Gospel occurs in the prologue (1:12-13) suggests that it carries programmatic force and will inform the reader of themes which will reverberate throughout the narrative.[8] In the prologue, Jesus's only opposition is Satan himself. Jesus's first miracle and confrontation after the narrative–which, as we discussed in the previous chapter, likewise grants a programmatic status–involves one of Satan's minions, namely an unclean spirit in the synagogue (1:21-27). Mark is sure to include in his summary statements of Jesus's ministry (1:32-34; 3:11-12) his continued work against the underlings of the prince of the demons. Further, in the passage which provides, perhaps more than any other, a sort of narrative grid for Mark, Jesus casts Satan as his primary opponent who holds people hostage and himself as the stronger man whose work is to bind Satan and liberate his hostages. Shively rightly summarizes: "Mark's concentration on the power struggle between Satan and the Spirit-filled Jesus at the beginning of the Gospel, both in the temptation account and in Jesus own explanation

[7] Multiple names for this figure are present in the New Testament. Here, it is Satan. In Mk 3:22, it is Beelzeboul. Paul refers to the figure of Beliar in 2 Cor. 6:15

[8] So, Shively: "In the temptation narrative (1:12–13), Mark establishes Satan as Jesus' first and foremost adversary." Shively, *Apocalyptic*, 158. See also: Marcus, *Mark 1-8*, 72.

of the purpose of his ministry in the Beelzebul discourse (1:12–13; 3:22–30), establishes the presence of satanic activity for the whole Gospel. Through the rest of the narrative, the activity of Satan appears both explicitly and implicitly."[9]

In the parable of the sower, Jesus tells first of seed which falls by the road, only for birds to come and devour it. In his explanation of the parable to the confused disciples, Jesus clarifies: "These are those by the road: Where the word is sown and when they hear, immediately *Satan* comes and takes away the word which was sown to them" (Mk. 4:15). Thus Satan is active in Jesus's preaching, causing some to fail to understand. If it were not for this clarification, we might think that Satan is more or less inactive in the narrative outside of the few places where he is mentioned. On the contrary, the lack of understanding of Jesus's teaching throughout the story can be attributed to Satanic activity. Satan takes away the ability of people to understand Jesus's message, even where the author does not specify the presence of Satanic activity. The link between Satan and people's consistent failure to understand Jesus is strengthened by Jesus's rebuke of Peter: "Get behind me, Satan, for you do not understand the things of God but the things of people" (Mk. 8:33).

Even in the climactic Markan passion narrative, there are hints of demonic opposition. Marcus notes that Jesus dies in a scene of cosmic darkness. "Darkness suggests demonic powers elsewhere in the NT (e.g. Eph 6:12) and in Jewish sources (e.g. 1QS 3:15-4:26), and Mark himself links an apocalyptic darkening of the sun with the disturbance of cosmic (demonic?) powers (13:24-25)."[10] Austin Busch convincingly argues that Satan is active in the Markan passion through Jesus's human opponents, which Mark strategically portrays so as to evoke Jesus's demonic opponents from his Galilean ministry. For example, twice in Mark's Gospel do military-

[9] Shively, *Apocalyptic*, 159-160.
[10] Marcus, *Mark 1-8*, 73.

oriented Latin loanwords appear: First in the story of the Gerasene demoniac, where Jesus encounters "Legion" (λεγιών; 5:9, 15), and second with the centurion (κεντυρίων; 15:39, 44-45) who supervises Jesus's death.[11] Further, Mark establishes a pattern in which only Jesus's (mostly demonic) enemies openly declare his identity.[12] In the passion, the high priest (14:61) and the centurion (14:39) follow this pattern, on account of which Busch, Danker, and Marcus read such figures as being in league with demonic forces.[13]

A second feature in the wilderness testing pericope which deserves our attention is its location *in the wilderness*. It is redundant for Mark to say in 1:12 that the spirit sends Jesus out into the wilderness because he was already in the wilderness at his baptism by John (cf. 1:3-4). As we observed in the previous chapter, the Markan prologue situates the opening scene of the Gospel in the wilderness in line with the prophecy from the Hebrew Scriptures (especially from Deutero-Isaiah) that God would come to the wilderness–which was formerly associated with rebellion and judgement–and victoriously lead his people through it, thus granting their eschatological deliverance from exile. Mark's redundant comment that the spirit sends Jesus out into the wilderness likely serves to highlight the wilderness motif once again. When Jesus arrives in the wilderness, it is a place occupied by Satan and wild beasts.

Scholars have spent a great deal of time attempting to identify scriptural texts which might have provided Mark with the conceptual framework with which he crafts the pericope.[14] For

[11] Busch, *Risen Indeed?*, 185.

[12] God, by contrast, declares Jesus's identity in private.

[13] Busch, *Risen Indeed?*, 186; Danker, "Demonic Secret," 62; Marcus, *Mark 8-16*, 1016.

[14] For a survey of proposals, see: Filannino, Francesco. *The Theological Programme of Mark: Exegesis and Function of Mark 1:1,2-15*. Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament. 2. Reihe, 0340-9570 551. Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2021. 142-148. Filannino examines a number of texts which scholars have put forward as a Markan pretext, including: Gen. 3:1-24 and the apocryphal *Life of Adam and Eve* (Adam), various texts from Exodus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy concerning Israel's forty year wandering in the wilderness, Moses who fasts for forty days atop Mount Sinai (Ex. 24:18; 34:28; Deut. 9:9, 18; 10:10), and Elijah's forty day period in the wilderness (1 Kings 19:1-8).

example, some have taken Mark's comment that Jesus was with the beasts (καὶ ἦν μετὰ τῶν θηρίων) to signify that Jesus, like Adam prior to the fall, lived in harmony with dangerous wild animals and therefore acts as a new Adam who restores creation to a state of harmony between man and beast.[15] Richard Bauckham avers that Isaiah 11:6-9 should act as a particularly helpful pretext.[16] In this Isaianic eschatological vision, animals of prey rest at peace with their predators without fear of potential danger as a result of the previously-mentioned arrival of the spirit-filled descendant of Jesse's root (11:1-5). Wolves will live at peace with lambs, leopards will lay at peace with young goats, and calves and lions will live together without violence.

Peter Joshua Atkins points to the Old Greek version of the Nebuchadnezzar narrative of Daniel 4 in which Nebuchadnezzar dwells among the beasts (τὰ θηρία).[17] Atkins draws a number of parallels between Daniel 4 and Mark 1:12-13 and concludes that rather than Mark depicting Jesus as living in harmony with the wild animals, Jesus (like Nebuchadnezzar) actually becomes *like* a wild animal.

I, along with a number of interpreters,[18] prefer a different view on the beasts, namely that they are hostile entities which reside in the wilderness. Multiple texts in the Hebrew Bible envision dark spiritual forces inhabiting the wilderness. In the day of atonement passage of Leviticus 16:8-10, for example, there is a command for Aaron to cast lots on two goats. He is then to offer one of the goats to YHWH as a sin offering. As for the goat upon which the lot of Azazel falls, however, Aaron shall send it into the wilderness to Azazel (לעזאזל). The referent of the term עֲזָאזֵל has caused

[15] See especially: Marcus, *Mark 1-8*, 167-170.

[16] Bauckham, Richard. "Jesus and the Wild Animals (Mark 1:13): A Christological Image for an Ecological Age." In *Jesus of Nazareth: Lord and Christ: Essays on the Historical Jesus and New Testament Christology*, edited by Joel B. Green and Max Turner, 3–21. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1994.

[17] Atkins, Peter Joshua. "The Son of Man Behaving Beastly: Reading Jesus and the Wild Animals of Mk 1.13 with Dan. 4." *Journal for the Study of the New Testament* 46, no. 3 (March 2024): 401–16.

[18] See: Collins, *Mark*, 153.

a great deal of controversy among interpreters. Scholars have proposed that Azazel could refer to a demonic entity, a physical location, the god of another nation who dwelt in the desert, or the word could serve as a reference to Yahweh himself.[19] We will not attempt here to provide an answer. At least some Second Temple period authors, it seems, believed that Azazel is the name of a fallen watcher, as is evidenced in *1 Enoch*'s designation of one of the prominent watchers as Azaz'el (8:1; 9:6; 10:4; 13:1; 54:5). Those who read and enjoyed *1 Enoch* would likely have associated the name Azazel with the desert-dwelling figure mentioned in Leviticus 16, and understood it as a demonic being.

Likewise, wild beasts are sometimes associated with demonic entities. In Isaiah 13:19-22, the desolate Babylon is filled with all kinds of beasts and demons:

> And Babylon, the glory of kingdoms,
> the splendor and pride of the Chaldeans,
> will be like Sodom and Gomorrah
> when God overthrew them.
> It will never be inhabited
> or lived in for all generations;
> Arabs will not pitch their tents there,
> Shepherds will not make their flocks lie down there.
> But wild animals will lie down there,
> and its houses will be full of howling creatures;
> there ostriches will live,
> and there goat-demons will dance.
> Hyenas will cry in its towers,
> and jackals in the pleasant palaces;
> its time is close at hand,
> and its days will not be prolonged.
> Spirit throwing Jesus into temptation.

Here, the great Babylon is envisaged as a deserted wasteland which will never again be inhabitable. Shepherds, the author notes, will not lie down in the desolate place; wild animals (ציים/θηρία),

[19] For summary and history of positions, see: Blair, Judit. *De-Demonising the Old Testament: An Investigation of Azazel, Lilith, Deber, Qeteb and Reshef in the Hebrew Bible*. Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2009. 16-24.

however, will lie down there. The text then goes on to offer different kinds of wild animals, most notably the howling creatures and goat-demons. As Frey-Anthes describes it:

> The concept of a subdivided world which is present in the Old Testament text leads to the idea of animals and not clearly definable creatures, who are the inhabitants of a counterworld to human civilisation. Included among the eerie and dangerous animals who haunt deserted places… The following are mostly called "desert-demons": Those who live in the ruins … As the name of the ציים explains where they dwell ("those whole belong to the dry landscape/desert dwellers"), the expression איים has rather got an onomatopoeic nature, it defines a howling creature ("howler")... the pair איים and ציים belongs to the description of a destroyed city in Isa 13:21f.; Isa 34:14 and Jer 50:39… The texts, however, speak of ghosts living at the periphery but they avoid a clear identification, which would be needed for an incantation, to identify the evil forces it wants to drive away.[20]

Further, in the prediction of the doom of the nations in Isaiah 34:14, the author includes the desert-dwelling animals from Isaiah 13:19-22, but also includes Lilith (לילית)–an ancient Mesopotamian demon-goddess–as one who will find rest in the rubble of the formerly inhabited ruins of the cities.[21] These Isaiah texts associate desert-dwelling animals with demonic figures. This feature is not unique, however, to the Hebrew Scriptures. As we saw in chapter two, other ANE cultures sometimes viewed the wilderness as a sort of netherworld inhabited by malevolent spiritual beings.

Consider also early Jewish texts which associate the archdemon with wilderness. In the *Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs*,[22] an expansion of Jacob's dying addresses to his sons (Gen. 49), Jacob is particularly careful to warn his offspring about the eschatological activity of Beliar. There is a motif present in the *Testaments* which correlates wild animals and evil spirits. To Issachar, for example, Jacob admonishes:

> You do these as well, my children, and every spirit of Beliar will flee from you, and no act of human evil will have power over you. Every wild creature you shall subdue, so long as

[20] Frey-Anthes, Henrike. "Concepts of 'Demons' in Ancient Israel." *Die Welt des Orients* 38 (2008): 43.

[21] Heiser, *Demons*, 28. See also: Jeremy Black and Anthony Green, *Gods, Demons and Symbols of Ancient Mesopotamia: An Illustrated Dictionary.* Austin TX: University of Texas-Austin, 2003, 118.

[22] The *Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs* is likely a later composition than the Gospel of Mark, but still contains ancient motifs of demons in the form of wild animals, which provides a helpful dialogue for reading Mark's wilderness account.

> you have the God of heaven with you, and walk with all mankind in the sincerity of heart (*Testament of Issachar* 7:7).

Here the author invites a connection between the spirits of Beliar (πᾶν πνεῦμα τοῦ Βελίαρ) and the wild creatures (πᾶν ἄγριον θηρίον) as those who stand in opposition to Jacob's children. Likewise to Naphtali, Jacob says:

> If you achieve the good, my children, men and angels will bless you; and God will be glorified through you among the gentiles. The devil will flee from you; wild animals will be afraid of you, and the angels will stand by you (*Testament of Naphtali* 8:4).[23]

Again a link is present between the devil who will flee from Jacob's sons (ὁ διάβολος φεύξεται ἀφ᾽ ὑμῶν), and the wild animals who will fear them (τὰ θηρία φοβηθήσονται ὑμᾶς) if they hold fast to their father's instructions. Joel Marcus points out that in both here *TNaph*. 8:4 and in Mark 1:13, the supporting characters present are the devil, wild animals, and angels. The passage from the *Testament of Naphtali* is preceded by a proclamation that God will appear in order to save Israel, a message similar to that of Jesus after the wilderness testing, namely that the time has been fulfilled and God's reign has drawn near (Mk. 1:15).

Finally, Jacob advises Benjamin that "if you continue to do good, even the unclean spirits (τὰ ἀκάθαρτα πνεύματα) will flee from you and the wild animals (τὰ θηρία) will fear you" (*Testament of Benjamin* 5:2). These texts, it seems, participate in a wider conceptual framework which associates the devil and demons with the wilderness and wild animals. Such an association is not difficult to imagine, as the wilderness is a place in which human life is difficult to sustain. Some animals, however, do well in desolate places which are hostile to civilised human life.

I am inclined, then, to see a similar phenomenon at work in Mark's location of Jesus in the wilderness among the wild beasts. Rather than living in harmony with the beasts, it seems that Mark sets the scene with Satan and the beasts–likely associated with the demons–on one side, and

[23] Marcus, *Mark 1-8*, 170.

Jesus and the angels on the other: “He was in the wilderness forty days being tested by Satan, and he was with the wild beasts, and the angels were ministering to him” (Mk. 1:13).

The wilderness which was mentioned in the opening Isaianic citation (Mk. 1:3) is a location where God was to meet with his people and deliver them from their enemies. When the recently-baptised Jesus is thrust into the wilderness by the spirit, however, it is still a place of hostility and opposition, occupied by nefarious spiritual forces which Jesus will have to overpower in order to make good on God’s prior promises of restoration for his people. As we will see, this Satan whom Jesus meets in the wilderness has a kingdom of his own, one which the Markan Jesus expects to stand tall. Here, into the wilderness, the spirit sends Jesus for the inaugural skirmish against Satan’s reign. If Jesus is able to emerge victorious from the wilderness where Satan and the demonic wild beasts roam, it will surely be a devastating blow to Satan’s kingdom. Although Mark does not provide the readers with an explicit result of the contest, Jesus emerges announcing that God’s reign is at hand (1:15). Further, Jesus shortly thereafter encounters a lone unclean spirit in the Capernaum synagogue who shrieks in terror that Jesus of Nazareth has come to destroy the whole demonic realm (1:24), an assertion which likely arises from knowledge of Jesus’s success in the wilderness.

On the other hand, Jesus’s refutation of the scribes’s accusation that his exorcistic ministry is empowered by Satan hints at the notion that Satan still has a standing kingdom and house: “How is Satan able to cast out Satan? If a kingdom is divided against itself, that kingdom is not able to stand. If a house is divided against itself, that house is not able to stand. If Satan rises up against himself and is divided, he is not able to stand but has an end” (Mk. 3:23-26). The logic of Jesus’s argument here assumes that Satan still has a unified kingdom which stands. It would then be difficult to say, as some have, that Jesus was victorious in his encounter with Satan in the

wilderness to the extent that Satan is definitively defeated and bound (3:27) for the rest of the story.[24] On the contrary, I find Shively's assessment helpful that although Jesus's announcement of God's dawning reign implies that Jesus was in some sense successful, "the ambiguity of the temptation narrative suggests that Satan retains some measure of influence through the rest of the narrative."[25] That is, by the end of the prologue, the extent of Jesus's success against Satan in the wilderness is not clear.

The wilderness testing pericope, then, serves to introduce the reader to Jesus's opposition in the Gospel of Mark, namely Satan and his (demonic) minions. This scene sets the stage for much of the rest of the narrative, which contains a number of Jesus's contests with his spiritual and human opponents (1:21-28; 2:1-11, 15-17, 18-22, 23-28; 3:1-6, etc.). Here in the wilderness we are introduced to the primary matchup between God/Jesus and Satan, which is now clear and present, but will continue to be engaged in conflict throughout the story, even when it is behind the scenes.[26] The conflict introduced in the wilderness episode of the prologue will be filled out in the rest of Mark's narrative.

5.3 Mark 3:22-30

In the Beelzeboul controversy of Mark 3:22-30 we find the most explicit material in regard to Satan in the Gospel of Mark. The text also provides something of an interpretive grid for much of the rest of the Gospel, and its importance will be apparent in our discussion of the ransom logion (Mk. 10:45). Elizabeth Shively correctly asserts that "Mark 3:22-30 shapes the literary and

[24] This is the route taken by Rhoads, Dewey, and Michie. In their view, all of Jesus's exorcistic encounters with demons (which all take place after 1:12-13) are merely "a mopping up operation." See: David Rhoads, Joanna Dewey, and Donald Michie. *Mark as Story: An Introduction to the Narrative of a Gospel*. 3rd, Third edition. ed. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2012. 83.

[25] Shively, Elizabeth. "Characterizing the Non-Human: Satan in the Gospel of Mark." In *Character Studies and the Gospel of Mark*, 127–51. Bloomsbury Publishing Plc, 2014. 140.

[26] Contra: Combrink, H. J. Bernard. "Salvation in Mark." In *Salvation in the New Testament: Perspectives on Soteriology*, edited by Jan G. van der Watt. Brill, 2005. 43. Combrink contends that "Satan is effectively written out of the story" after Jesus's encounter with him in the wilderness.

theological logic of the rest of the narrative. This passage depicts a cosmic struggle between two opposing powers that repeats and expands throughout the Gospel."[27]

After Mark introduced readers to Jesus's primary opponent (Satan) in the wilderness (1:12-13), the careful reader might be surprised by the lack of explicit satanic activity thus far in the narrative. Jesus has encountered Satan's subordinates (unclean spirits) but Satan, it seems, has gone silent. In fact, after Jesus's initial encounter with Satan in the wilderness, Satan never again appears as a character in the narrative, except on the lips of Jesus who seems to be the only character who is able to track Satan's activity (3:26; 4:15; 8:33). This passage, however, maps the narrative of Mark's Gospel onto the broader cosmic conflict between Jesus and Satan, and thereby trains readers to see Satan's presence in the rest of the story.

The passage unfolds in three parts. In the first, the Jerusalem scribes accuse Jesus of casting out demons by Satan's power. In the second, Jesus responds with parables, in which he explains the significance of his exorcistic ministry as it relates to his battle with Satan. In the third, Jesus returns to the accusation of his collaboration with Satan by pronouncing his detractors as guilty of an eternal sin, namely blaspheming the holy spirit. We will proceed by examining the first two and considering their contribution to Mark's portrayal of Jesus.

5.3.1 The Accusation (Mark 3:22)

Jesus resides in a house, surrounded by great crowds while some are saying that he has lost his mind (3:20-21) when Mark introduces a new and elevated conflict into the story: "The scribes who came down from Jerusalem were saying, 'He is possessed by Beelzeboul,' and 'He casts out demons by the ruler of the demons'" (3:22). I argued in the previous chapter that this accusation serves to emphasise Jesus's unmatched authority over the demonic realm which he has

[27] Shively, *Apocalyptic*, 41.

demonstrated so far (1:23-28, 33; 3:11-12, 15). That is, Jesus acts with such sweeping authority over his demonic opposition that people are floundering for possible explanations. At his inaugural exorcism, the bystanders ask a genuine question: "What is this? A new teaching with authority. He even commands the unclean spirits, and they obey him" (1:27)! Even if those who were present had not seen an exorcism with their own eyes, they likely knew how exorcists operated in the ancient world, namely by evoking the authority of a higher power through prayer, incantation, or the use of an apotropaic object.[28] In stark contrast with his exorcistic contemporaries, the Markan Jesus–by mere virtue of his presence–strikes the dread of eschatological destruction into the unclean spirits. Then, without employing any of the conventional exorcistic tactics, Jesus simply commands the unclean spirit to be silent and leave the man. To everyone's amazement, it works. For Jesus to act with such a unique authority over the demons must have been puzzling for those around him, and his human opponents saw an opportunity to capitalise on the confusion surrounding his authority by offering a damning solution: Jesus must be in league with Satan himself. In fact, Jesus must be possessed by Beelzeboul (Βεελζεβοὺλ ἔχει) and secretly channelling Satan's authority over the demons in order to cast them out (ἐν τῷ ἄρχοντι τῶν δαιμονίων ἐκβάλλει τὰ δαιμόνια). This attack surely has nefarious motives and is logically flawed, but it does offer a compelling solution to the puzzle of Jesus's unrivalled authority over the demonic realm.[29]

[28] See chapter two.

[29] Breytenbach makes a similar argument: "The thesis of the scribes is based on data which they do not challenge: Jesus casts out demons. Let us call this data 'a'. So the question is how to explain this 'a' – how come this is possible? The scribes accept that Jesus casts out demons and offer and explanation with their thesis: Jesus is possessed by the highest of demons, by Βεελζεβούλ. Let us call this thesis 'b'. Therefore, in the authority of Beelzeboul as the ruler of the demons, Jesus can cast them out – 'a'. If the charge is proved to be true, Jesus should have been stoned according to Lev 20:27 (against those who have a spirit of divination). Thus, the accusation implies great danger for the Markan Jesus." See: Breytenbach, Cilliers. "Metaphor in Argument: The Beelzebul-Controversy in the Gospel According to Mark." *Zeitschrift für die Neutestamentliche Wissenschaft und die Kunden der Älteren Kirche* 110, no. 2 (2019): 139-140.

Ironically, the accusation that Jesus's exorcistic authority is powered by Beelzeboul serves to highlight the great extent of Jesus's authority. Such an accusation is strengthened by Jesus's exorcistic authority being categorically different from that of his contemporaries. Jesus's authority over unclean spirits is so vast that his body houses either the power of the leader of the demons or the power of the God who created heaven and earth, and at whose eschatological advent demons melt like wax (*1 En.* 1:4). When Jesus dismantles the former possibility, the implication is clear, namely that Jesus's interactions with the demons are indistinguishable from what one might expect of God's interactions with demons.

5.3.2 Jesus's Response (Mark 3:23-27)

The Markan Jesus responds to the accusation that he is possessed by and casts out demons by the power of Beelzeboul with a series of brief parables:

> Jesus called them to himself and was speaking to them in parables: "How is Satan able to cast out Satan? And if a kingdom is divided upon itself, that kingdom is not able to stand. And if a house is divided upon itself, that house is not able to stand. And if Satan rises up upon himself and is divided, he is not able to stand but he has an end. But no one is able, entering the house of the strong man, to plunder his possessions, unless he first binds the strong man, and then he will plunder his house" (Mk. 3:23-27).

Jesus's words here provide more information about Satan's role in relation to Jesus's life and ministry than any other passage in Mark's Gospel. We will examine three demonological features of the text, and consider their contribution to Mark's portrait of Jesus. First, we will examine Jesus's view of Satan's kingdom and its relation to God's inbreaking reign which Jesus heralds. Second, we will consider the strong man motif here and elsewhere in Mark, as well as the binding of the strong man and its referent in Mark's narrative. Third, we will bring the Satan-centric parables into dialogue with *11QMelchizedek* (11Q13) and its portrayal of a divine messianic figure who frees God's people from the hand of Belial.

5.3.2.1 Satan's Kingdom

We should remember when considering Jesus's response that the accusation concerns Jesus's exorcisms, namely that Jesus casts out demons by the ruler of the demons (3:22). This context forms Jesus's opening question which exposes the absurdity of the scribes's accusation: "How is Satan able to cast out Satan?" Exorcism was common enough in the ancient world, but it would not make sense for an entity to exorcise itself from a victim.

Jesus then offers three related scenarios to answer the question he poses. The first concerns a kingdom, the second concerns a house, and the third concerns Satan. If any of these entities are divided on themselves, they will not be able to stand. Neither a kingdom nor a household would willingly attack itself, because such a move would lead to its demise. Likewise, Jesus says, Satan would not rise up against himself by empowering Jesus's exorcisms, because such a move would lead to Satan's end (τέλος ἔχει).

Jesus's mention of Satan in relation to a kingdom recalls his announcement that God's kingdom has drawn near (1:15). The notion of an archdemon who rules over the other demons was a common belief in early Judaism. In *Jubiless*, for example, Noah prays to God in order that the evil spirits should not harass his offspring. Before God answers Noah's request by bringing judgement on the spirits, Mastema–who is called the chief of the spirits (שר הרוחות משטמה)–approaches God to ask for one tenth of the spirits to remain on the earth under Mastema's authority (*Jub.* 10:8-9). God obliges and one tenth of the spirits remain subject to Satan[30] upon the earth. Prince Mastema (השר משטמה) is also a common name for the archdemon throughout *Jubilees*,[31] which resonates with the scribes's designation of Beelzeboul as the ruler of the demons (τῷ ἄρχοντι τῶν δαιμονίων).

[30] The text shifts from the name Mastema (משטמה) to Satan (השטן), but the names refer to the same figure.
[31] Cf. 11:5, 11; 17:16; 18:12, etc.

Similarly, in the *Book of Watchers* the fallen watchers have a leader. Initially, the leader is identified as Semyaz: "And Semyaz, who was their leader, said to them" (καὶ εἶπεν Σεμειαζᾶς πρὸς αὐτούς, ὃς ἦν ἄρχων αὐτῶν; *1 En.* 6:3)… This role is later transferred to Azaz'el, who becomes the representative of the fallen watchers,[32] and such a transition likely represents two separate traditions present in the text. Likewise, in the later *Similitudes of Enoch*, Azaz'el stands as the ruler of the demonic host. When Enoch sees the great chains being prepared in the fiery valley, the angel informs him that the chains are being prepared for the armies of Azaz'el (*1 En.* 54:1-5). In the following scene, the Lord of the Spirits tells the rulers of the earth that they will have to watch God's Elect One judge "Azaz'el and all his company, and his army, in the name of the Lord of the Spirits" (*1 En.* 55:4).

Such an idea of a single archdemon is also present throughout the Qumran literature. While we could look at many examples of this phenomenon in the Qumran corpus,[33] let us consider *11QMelchizedek*, a text which we examined at length in chapter three, and which we will continue to put forward in dialogue with the Markan view of Satan. At least twice in this text, the author refers to Belial and his lot.[34] In reference to the wicked who are mentioned in Psalm 7:8-9, the author clarifies for the reader that the psalmist is referring to Belial and the spirits of his lot: פשרו על בליעל ועל רוחי גורלו.[35] Here, the author reflects a similar view of the demonic hierarchy to the views present in *1 Enoch* and *Jubilees*, both of which were enjoyed by the Qumran community.

Mark takes Satan's reign a step further than the notion that Satan is in charge only over all of the demons. More than that, the Markan Jesus seems to assert that Satan's kingdom has captives,

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[32] Cf. 10:4; 13:1.

[33] Collins draws the comparison of Satan's kingdom in Mark with the dominion of Belial (ממשלת בליעל) in the Dead Sea Scrolls (1QS 2:19; 1QM 1:14-15): Collins, *Mark*, 233.

[34] It is possible that there are more occurrences, but the text is highly fragmentary.

[35] *11QMelchizedek* 2:12.

and that these captives are humans who suffer under Satan's tyrannical reign. This information is contained in the parable of the strong man: "But no one is able, entering the house of the strong man, to plunder his possessions, unless he first binds the strong man, and then he will plunder his house" (Mk. 3:23-27). This parable has three characters: the strong man (Satan), the one who binds the strong man and plunders his possessions (Jesus), and the possessions (humans).

The notion of humans being under the reign of Satan is also well known in *11QMelchizedek*. As we observed in chapter three, *11QMelchizedek* interprets the jubilee legislation of Leviticus 25:13–in which, in the first year of every forty-nine year cycle, the Israelites are instructed to return all forfeited property to the original owners–in light of the shemittah legislation of Deuteronomy 15:2, in which the Israelites are instructed to forgive any outstanding debts every seven years. The author of *11QMelchizedek* not only interprets the former in light of the latter, but conflates the two legislations, offering an eschatological interpretation of the jubilee for the Qumran community who believed themselves to be living in the last days:

> [Its interpretation] (פשׁרו) for the last days (לאחרית הימים) refers to the captives (השׁבויים), who [...] and those teachers have been hidden and kept secret, and from the inheritance of Melchizedek… (11Q13 II.4-5)
> And liberty will be proclaimed to them, to free them from [the debt of] all their iniquities. (11Q13 II.6)

This eschatological interpretation of the jubilee shifts the focus to the captives (השׁבויים) who have not returned from exile. Logan Williams rightly points out that the people are exiled because of their sins, and that they remain in exile due to their unpayable debt they have accrued which they owe to Belial. Thus, the captives are in need of an eschatological jubilee in order to procure their release from their debt to Belial.[36] The enactment of such a jubilee will free them from the hand

[36] Williams, Logan. "Melchizedek, the Son of Man, and Eschatological Jubilee: The Sin-Forgiving Messiahs in 11QMelchizedek and Mark." *Journal for the Study of the New Testament* 46, no. 2 (2023).

of Belial and from the hand of all the spirits of his lot (11Q13 II.13), which implies that the people are currently under the power of Belial and his spirits.

This view of people who are under the power of a supreme demonic figure and his minions is shared between *11QMelchizedek* and the Markan Jesus. The author of *11QMelchizedek* portrays exiled Jews as under the power of Belial, and Jesus's parable of the strong man depicts people as the possessions (τὰ σκεύη) of the strong man. In the context of the Beelzeboul controversy, the people identified as the strong man's possessions are likely meant to be understood as those who are possessed by unclean spirits. Such people are clearly under Satan's control, and Mark's high volume of people approaching Jesus who are afflicted by demon possession suggests that Mark understands possession to be a significant problem for humans.

It would be a mistake, however, to conclude that Satan's reign victimises only those who are possessed by demons. Because of satanic activity, some people will not receive Jesus's message (4:15). Even Peter, one of Jesus's closest companions, opposes the heart of Jesus's mission under satanic influence (8:33). To be certain, demonic possession functions as a uniquely visible manifestation of Satan's dominion over his human victims, but Mark hints at multiple points that Satan exercises an influence over humans which vastly transcends demon possession. Therefore, the captives of Satan's kingdom–as Mark imagines it–likely include all those who are opposed to Jesus and his kingdom.

Having an established notion of Satan's kingdom in mind helps us understand Jesus's initial proclamation that the time has been fulfilled and the kingdom of God has drawn near (1:15). As Joel Marcus helpfully notes, "the *kairos* that is fulfilled with Jesus' advent is the time of the

dominion of Satan; his reign is now over."[37] In Mark's understanding, the drawing near of God's kingdom directly correlates with the recession of Satan's kingdom. Satan's kingdom is not destroyed after Jesus's encounter with Satan in the wilderness, as is evidenced by the high volume of demon-possessed individuals who continue to appear in the narrative; however, Satan's regime seems to have sustained a devastating loss in the wilderness, as is evidenced by the first unclean spirit Jesus meets, who shrieks in terror, "Have you come to destroy us" (1:24)? Such a fear, from the spirit who speaks on behalf of the demonic realm, does not represent an unthreatened, secure kingdom, but one that is well aware of its impending destruction.

The notion of a "cosmic regime change," Elizabeth Shively notes, is also present in the *Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs*.[38] We considered a few texts from the *Testaments* during our discussion of Jesus in the wilderness with Satan and beastly evil spirits. The *Testaments* depict a similar view of the cosmos, with people either on the side of the Lord or on the side of Beliar. In the *Testaments,* Jacob repeatedly admonishes his sons to reject Beliar and to follow the Lord. He also believes that God will raise up a new leader to bring an end to Beliar's dominion and set people free from his reign. Shively points to the *Testament of Levi* 18:10-12 as an example.[39] Here, Jacob has been telling Levi about eschatological priests who will rise up in the last days, some of whom are overcome by evil (*T. Levi* 17); however, the Lord will one day raise up a new priest who is highly exalted who will "shine forth like the sun in the earth; he shall take away all darkness

[37] Marcus, Joel. "'The Time Has Been Fulfilled!' (Mark 1.15)." In *Apocalyptic and the New Testament: Essays in Honor of J. Louis Martyn*, edited by Marion L. Soards and Joel Marcus. Journal for the Study of the New Testament. 24. Supplement Series. Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1989. 55.

[38] Elizabeth Shively. "The Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs and Mark 3:7-35: Apocalyptic and the Kingdom." In *Reading Mark in Context: Jesus and Second Temple Judaism*, edited by Ben C. Blackwell, John K. Goodrich, and Jason Maston, Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2018. 62-68. Shively also points to the presence of this phenomenon in *1 Enoch*, *Jubilees*, *Testament of Moses*, and *1QM*. 65.

[39] Shively, "Testaments," 64.

from under heaven, and there shall be peace on the earth" (*T. Levi* 18:4). In reference to this priest, Jacob says:

> And he shall open the gates of paradise; he shall remove the sword that has threatened since Adam, and he will grant to the saints to eat of the tree of life. The spirit of holiness shall be upon them. And Beliar shall be bound by him. And he shall grant to his children the authority to trample on wicked spirits (*T. Levi* 18:10-12).

Here the priest brings restoration for God's people in part by binding Beliar and enabling his children to prevail over the evil spirits.[40] This notion is remarkably similar to the demonic imagination in Mark 3, where Jesus has previously given the twelve authority to cast out demons (ἐξουσίαν ἐκβάλλειν τὰ δαιμόνια; 3:15) and now in the parable of the strong man depicts the binding of Satan (τὸν ἰσχυρὸν δήσῃ; 3:27). The binding of Satan in both texts, results in freedom for those who had been subjected to his reign.

We have examined here the notion of Satan's reign in the early chapters of Mark's Gospel. The parable of the strong man (3:27), however, is designed to give further insight into Mark's satanic imagination, and it is this parable to which we will now turn our focus.

5.3.2.2 Binding the Strong Man

In response to the scribes's accusation of Jesus's collusion with the devil, Jesus has offered two brief parables (the kingdom and the house) to illustrate the absurdity of such an accusation. In the final parabolic statement, Jesus uses the imagery of a strong man in order to describe Satan. In what follows, we will first consider the motif of the strong one in Deutero-Isaiah, and then consider Mark's employment of the motif here and throughout the narrative.

As others have pointed out, the Markan strong man motif likely has its roots in the Hebrew scriptures.[41] Shively notes that Israel's enemies (kings, warriors, or entire people groups), who

[40] Καὶ ὁ Βελίαρ δεθήσεται ὑπ᾽αὐτοῦ, καὶ δώσει ἐξουσίαν τοῖς τέκνοις αὐτοῦ πατεῖν ἐπὶ τὰ πονηρὰ πνεύματα.

[41] See: Watts, Rikki E. *Isaiah's New Exodus in Mark*. Biblical Studies Library. Grand Rapids, MI.: Baker Books, 2000. 149; Shively, *Apocalyptic*, 73.

pose a threat to Israel, are repeatedly described as ἰσχυρός.[42] Additionally, Israel's God often shares in being identified as ἰσχυρός, because it is God who prevails over the other ἰσχυρός nations on Israel's behalf.[43] In Isaiah 49:24-26, the author participates in both sides of this motif:

> "Who will take spoils from a giant? And if someone is taken captive unjustly, will he be saved? Thus says the Lord, "If anyone takes giants captive, he will take the spoils. And taking from the strong one, he will be saved. I will judge your judgement, and I will rescue your sons. And those who afflict you will eat their own flesh, and drink like wine their own blood and become drunk. And all flesh will understand that I am the Lord who rescues you, and the redeemer, the Strong One of Jacob."[44]

In this passage, it is God, the Strong One of Jacob (ἰσχύος Ἰακωβ) who promises to be the deliverer (ὁ ῥυσάμενος) of his people who are afflicted by their enemies. The oppressors of Israel are giants (γίγαντα) and strong ones (οἱ ἰσχύοντες) who take God's people captive (αἰχμαλωτεύσῃ) as their spoil (σκῦλα). Similarly, Mark–who draws on deutero-Isaianic notions of cosmic redemption in his prologue which find their expression in Jesus's advent–offers the parable of the strong man, in which people are envisioned as possessions which belong to a strong man.

Isaiah's notion that one stronger than the nations, namely God, will have to set the people free from the strong one is matched by Mark's presentation of Jesus as the stronger one who sets people free from the strong man, namely Satan. Jesus enters the narrative of Mark's Gospel on the lips of John the Baptist, who proclaims that "One stronger than me is coming after me, of whom I am not worthy to bend down and untie the straps of his sandals. I baptised you with water, but he will baptise you in the holy spirit" (1:7-8). This opening title of Jesus as the stronger one (ὁ ἰσχυρότερος) is significant in identifying Jesus as the one who, in his own parable, binds the strong one and plunders his house. Whereas in Isaiah 49:24-26, it is YHWH, the Strong One who redeems

[42] Shively points to: Num. 20:20; 22:6; Deut. 2:10; 7:1; 9:1; 11:23; Josh. 23:9; Joel 1:6; 2 Kings 24:14-15; Isa. 43:17; Jer. 46 [LXX 26] 5-6; 49; Lam. 1:15; Wis. 6:8; Judges 5:13. See: *Apocalyptic*, 73.

[43] Cf. Deut. 10:17; Jer 27 [LXX 50]:34.

[44] Translation is my own from LXX.

his people from their strong enemies, Mark envisions Jesus as freeing people from Satan the strong one. By doing so, Mark places Jesus in the role which Isaiah attributed to Israel's God as the one who frees the captive people from a strong enemy. Shively correctly concludes that:

> "Mark evokes a picture of Jesus as the divine warrior who overcomes the strong man of war in order to rescue those held captive by him… That is, Jesus has appeared to struggle against the enemy who struggles against God's people. While Mark recasts the human ὁ ἰσχυρός as a cosmic enemy, he recasts the Strong One of Jacob as the man Jesus… By recontextualizing Isaianic themes with apocalyptic *topoi*, Mark envisions Jesus bringing the redemption of God's people by means of a cosmic struggle."[45]

Mark's application of Isaiah's motif of the strong divine deliverer to Jesus serves to identify Jesus as the answer to God's promise to deliver the captive people. Doing so identifies Jesus closely with God in his conflict with Satan.

5.3.2.3 The Enochic Son of Man, 11QMelchizedek's Melchizedek, and the Markan Jesus in Dialogue

In chapter three, I outlined a messianic profile present in texts such as the *Similitudes of Enoch* and *11QMelchizedek* in which a divine messiah would come in theophanic fashion in order to bring eschatological judgement on the demons. There, we traced the theme of eschatological judgement over nefarious spiritual forces which authors attributed to Israel's God, and which some later authors applied to a divine messianic figure who was identified extremely closely with Israel's God. The Enochic Son of Man, for example, takes his seat on God's unique, glorious throne (*1 En.* 45:3; 51:3) and acts as the judge of the cosmos in ways only YHWH does in the Hebrew Scriptural tradition. The angels of heaven (61:7) and all of the people of earth (48:5) will worship the Son of Man as they would be expected to worship God. In the prologue of *1 Enoch*, Enoch observes God's eschatological arrival for judgement:

> The God of the universe, the Holy Great One, will come forth from his dwelling. And from there he will march upon Mount Sinai and appear in his camp emerging from heaven with

[45] Shively, *Apocalyptic*, 75.

> a mighty power. And everyone shall be afraid, and Watchers shall quiver. And great fear and trembling shall seize them unto the end of the earth. Mountains and high places will fall down and be frightened. And high hills shall be made low; and they shall melt like a honeycomb before the flame… And there shall be a judgement upon all (*1 En.* 1:3-8).

This theophanic description employs a great deal of imagery from the Hebrew Bible's depiction of the day of the Lord,[46] and such imagery could clearly be used to identify YHWH's advent, even if YHWH was not named in the text. The author of the *Similitudes*, however, applies the same theophanic description to the Son of Man's advent for eschatological judgement:

> As for these mountains which you have seen with your own eyes… all of them, in the presence of the Elect One, will become like a honeycomb (that melts) before fire, like water that gushes down from the top of such mountains and become helpless by his feet… All of these substances will be removed and destroyed from the surface of the earth when the Elect One shall appear before the face of the Lord of the Spirits (*1 En.* 52:6, 9).

The author of the *Similitudes* does not reject YHWH as the one who bears this description as the one before whom the earth trembles at his arrival for eschatological judgement; however, the author *does* envision the Son of Man as a distinct but inseparable divine figure who bears theomorphic properties.

Not only does the Enochic Son of Man come for a general eschatological judgement, he also comes for the judgement of spiritual beings. In *1 Enoch* 54:1-6, Enoch sees a deep, fiery valley into which the kings and potentates of the earth were being thrown. Massive iron chains were being made in the valley, and when Enoch asks the angel of peace for whom the chains are being prepared, the angel replies,

> "These are being prepared for the armies of Azaz'el, in order that they may take them and cast them into the abyss of complete condemnation… Then Michael, Raphael, Gabriel, and Phanuel themselves shall seize them on that great day of judgment and cast them into the furnace (of fire) that is burning that day, so that the Lord of the Spirits may take vengeance on them on account of their oppressive deeds which (they performed) as messengers of Satan, leading astray those who dwell upon the earth" (*1 En.* 54:5-6).

[46] Cf. Ps. 68:2; 97:5; Micah 1:4.

Here, the angel of peace informs Enoch that the heavy chains of judgement are being prepared for the host of evil spiritual beings which is led by Azaz'el. Shortly thereafter, and with this scene still fresh on the reader's mind, the text points to an eschatological moment in which the Son of Man sits on God's glorious throne in order to bring judgement on Azaz'el and his host:

> "When I would give consent so that they should be seized by the hands of the angels on the day of tribulation and pain, already I would have caused my punishment and my wrath to abide upon them–my punishment and my wrath," says the Lord of the Spirits. "Kings, potentates, dwellers upon the earth: *You would have to see my Elect One, how he sits in the throne of glory and judges Azaz'el and all his company, and his army*, in the name of the Lord of the Spirits" (*1 En.* 55:3-4).

I pointed out in chapter three that although earlier texts in the Watchers tradition such as the *Book of Watchers* and *Jubilees* portray God alone as the one who brings a final judgement upon the evil spiritual beings, this text in the *Similitudes* transfers the role of the demons's eschatological judge to the Son of Man figure. At multiple points in the *1 Enoch* the author envisions an intermediate judgement (binding) of the spiritual beings which is generally carried out by the archangels.[47] This judgement consists of the fallen watchers and their offspring being bound up and thrown into a deep pit or somewhere under the earth. There is also a prominent expectation that this intermediate judgement would be followed by a future day of the Lord, in which God would bring final judgement and destruction on the demonic realm. The author of the *Similitudes*, here, includes the Son of Man with God on his throne as the agent of eschatological demonic judgement.[48]

Another text which we examined in chapter three is *11QMelchizedek*, a text from the Qumran writings which portray Melchizedek as a divine messianic figure who arrives at the eschaton to bring final judgement upon Belial and his demonic host. What is striking about this text is the identification of Melchizedek as the subject of a number of Hebrew Scriptures which

[47] *1 En.* 10:4, 9-13; 54:5-6.
[48] See also chapter three discussion on *1 En.* 69:27-29.

clearly refer to YHWH in their contexts.[49] The author identifies Melchizedek as God who brings the release of an eschatological Jubilee to God's people by freeing them from the hand of Belial and from the spirits of his lot. In discussion on Psalm 82:1-2, the author of *11QMelchizedek* locates Melchizedek as the referent of the God (אל) who judges in the midst of the gods (אלוהים). And concerning the wicked upon whom the psalmist longs to see the realisation of God's (Melchizedek's) judgement, the author notes that the wicked should be interpreted as Belial and the spirits of his lot (פשרו על בליעל ועל רוחי גורלו). In light of this appropriation of Psalm 82, wherein Melchizedek stands in the place of God in the divine council, and the place of the wicked is occupied Belial and his minions, the author offers a word of hope for the readers:

> But, Melchizedek will carry out the vengeance of Go[d's] judgments, [and on that day he will fr]e[e them from the hand of] Belial and from the hand of the sp[irits of his lot] (11Q13 II.12-13).

Here the author envisions an execution of divine judgement from Melchizedek over the evil spiritual forces to whom God's people have accrued an unpayable debt. The divine judgement enacts an eschatological jubilee, whereby the debts of God's people that are owed to Belial are forgiven and they can return to their land from exile. The author then relates this judgement of Belial to the day of peace envisioned in deutero-Isaiah:

> This [...] is the day of [peace about whi]ch he said [... through Isa]iah the prophet, who said: ["How] beautiful upon the mountains are the feet [of[the messen[ger who] announces peace, the mess[enger of good who announces salvati]on, [sa]ying to Zion: your God [reigns"] (11Q13 II.15-16).

A similar *pesher* interpretation of the text follows, in which the author identifies each of the figures in the text (the mountains, the messengers, etc.). In the proclamation to Zion that "Your God

[49] The author identifies Melchizedek in Ps. 7:8-9; 82:1-2; Isa. 52:7; 61:2. See chapter three for discussion on these texts.

reigns" (מלך אלוהיך), the author identifies the character "your God" (אלוהיך) as Melchizedek, the one who will free the people from the hand of Belial (11Q13 II.24-25).

What we have in *11QMelchizedek*, then, is an extremely high view of a human figure whose identity is bound up together with that of Israel's God. This figure, Melchizedek, brings an end to the people's debt slavery to Belial by enacting an eschatological jubilee and bringing divine judgement on Belial in a manner which makes it difficult to distinguish Melchizedek from Israel's God.

We can bring the Son of Man from the *Similitudes* and Melchizedek from *11QMelchizedek* into dialogue with Mark's presentation of Jesus, especially as it pertains to Jesus's parable of the strong man. I propose a dialogical approach between these figures rather than a genealogical approach, as it is not clear that Mark knew either of the prior texts, and because there are meaningful differences between each of the figures which would likely be overshadowed if we proceed in terms of dependance. Dialogue enables us to consider each of the traditions and respect the places where they diverge.

It is significant that the tradition of a divine messiah who arrives to bring eschatological judgement on evil spiritual beings is present in texts which represent such different traditions. The Son of Man in the *Similitudes* seems to emerge as a development of the Son of Man figure from Daniel 7, whereas *11QMelchizedek*'s Melchizedek largely draws on separate Hebrew Scriptural traditions by engaging Genesis 14, Psalm 82:1-2, 110, Isaiah 52:7, and 61:2. That Jewish authors who worked out of various scriptural traditions with various figures (Son of Man and Melchizedek) exhibit similar messianic expectations of a divine messiah who would save God's people by judging Satan (Belial, Azaz'el) and his minions suggests that such a messianic profile was likely fairly mainstream (or at least not a fringe view) in late Second Temple Judaism. Mark shares with

11QMelchizedek the view that there are people who are captives under the dominion of the devil. Further, just as the *Similitudes* and *11QMelchizedek* envision a divine figure who is identified closely with Israel's God and who comes to bring eschatological judgement upon the devil and evil spirits, we observed in chapter four that such a view is also present in Mark's inaugural exorcism, in which the unclean spirit in the Capernaum synagogue shrieks in fear of its eschatological destruction at Jesus's advent (Mk. 1:24). Similarly to the divine Melchizedek figure in *11QMelchizedek* (in light of the Psalms and Isaian texts in which the author identifies Melchizedek in the place of YHWH), the Markan Jesus in the parable of the strong man plays the role of YHWH–the stronger one from Isaiah 49:24-26–as the divine figure who frees God's people from the reign of their strong enemy. Reading the Markan Jesus in dialogue with the messianic profiles provided by the *Similitudes* and *11QMelchizedek* helps to situate Jesus as a divine deliverer of God's people from the reign of Satan. Such texts help to illuminate the dynamics at play in Mark's depiction of Jesus's conflict with Satan.

There are meaningful differences, however, between the Markan Jesus, the Enochic Son of Man, and *11QMelchizedek*'s Melchizedek. Whereas the latter two figures enact the eschatological judgement of the demonic realm from their location in the heavens, the Markan Jesus does so on earth, in part through his exorcistic ministry. Nevertheless, Mark makes similar moves in his depiction of Jesus as do the authors of the *Similitudes* and *11QMelchizedek* with their respective messianic figures. Part of the human plight in the minds of some Jews was that people have been taken captive by the devil, and that they are unable to procure their own deliverance. Mark, as well as other Jewish authors, envisioned a divine messiah who would bring eschatological judgement on the demonic realm and free the captive people from the devil's reign. Through

Jesus's ministry of casting out demons from their victimised hosts, he plunders the strong man's house.

5.3.3 Summary

In our examination of the satanic material in the Beelzeboul controversy, I have demonstrated that Mark offers a high Christology, in which he casts Jesus in the role of Israel's God who brings eschatological judgement over Satan and the demons in order to release his people from captivity to Satan. The scribes's accusation that Jesus's exorcistic prowess has satanic origins is plausible precisely because Jesus's authority over the demonic realm is unparalleled by any human exorcist. The type of authority Jesus wields is that which only Israel's God possesses in Jewish tradition. Further, the Markan Jesus is a divine messianic figure who releases people from demonic captivity by bringing judgement on the demonic realm in the vein of the Enochic Son of Man and *11QMelchizedek*'s Melchizedek, which both locate their messianic figures within the identity of Israel's God. It is my contention here that Mark makes the same move in his presentation of Jesus's engagement with Satan.

5.4 Mark 8:31-33

Satan is named only a handful of times in the Gospel of Mark (1:13; 3:23, 26; 4:15) and makes his final explicit appearance in Jesus's first passion prediction (8:31-33). Immediately preceding this passion prediction, Jesus asks his disciples about his public perception before turning the question toward their understanding of his identity:

> Jesus and his disciples went out to the villages of Caesarea Philippi. On the road, he asked his disciples, saying to them, "Who are people saying I am?" They answered him, saying, "John the Baptist, and others say Elijah, and others say one of the prophets." So he asked them, "But who do you say that I am?" Peter answered and said to him, "You are the messiah." And [Jesus] rebuked them so that they should not say anything about him (Mk. 8:27-30).

Here, among the rumours about Jesus's identity Peter correctly identifies Jesus as the messiah (σὺ εἶ ὁ χριστός). The reader knows that this identification is correct from the opening words of the Gospel which identify him as such: ἀρχὴ τοῦ εὐαγγελίου Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ (Mk. 1:1). Peter's correct assertion is met with a rebuke from Jesus that the disciples should keep quiet about his messianic identity.

The following interaction between Jesus and Peter shows that although Peter correctly identified Jesus as ὁ χριστός, he was far from fully comprehending what kind of messiah Jesus thought himself to be:

> He began to teach them that it is necessary for the Son of Man to suffer many things, and to be rejected by the elders and high priests and scribes, and to be killed and to rise after three days. And he was speaking the word plainly. Peter took Jesus aside and began to rebuke him. When Jesus turned and saw his disciples, he rebuked Peter and said, "Get behind me, Satan! For you do not understand the things of God, but the things of people" (Mk. 3:31-33).

Whatever images of a messiah the disciples might have conjured up, Jesus is careful to explain that his messianic identity first and foremost necessitates his suffering (δεῖ τὸν υἱὸν τοῦ ἀνθρώπου πολλὰ παθεῖν; 8:31), his rejection from Jewish religious leaders, his death, and resurrection. Peter attempts to privately rebuke Jesus for the notion of his necessary suffering. Jesus responds to Peter's rebuke with a scathing rebuke of his own, and he calls Peter Satan (ὕπαγε ὀπίσω μου, σατανᾶ) before scolding him for understanding the matters of humans instead of the matters of God (οὐ φρονεῖς τὰ τοῦ θεοῦ ἀλλὰ τὰ τῶν ἀνθρώπων). The irony of the text is sharp: Peter, who is the only character in the narrative to correctly identify Jesus as ὁ χριστός, is rebuked by Jesus for not understanding the things of God, but the things of people. For the Markan Jesus, the correct application of titles is insufficient for making sense of his identity. ὁ χριστός, as Jesus understands the title, must be understood in light of his suffering and death. Peter's preconceived notions about what it means for someone to be the messiah are not merely incomplete, but satanically deficient.

In a brief authorial aside after Jesus's assertion that the Son of Man must suffer, be rejected, killed, and raised, Mark notes that Jesus was speaking the word plainly (καὶ παρρησίᾳ τὸν λόγον ἐλάλει; 8:32). The mention of Jesus speaking the word plainly which precedes Jesus's addresses Peter as Satan perhaps calls back to Jesus's explanation of the parable of the sower:

> The sower sows the word. These are those along the road, where the word is sown and when they hear, immediately Satan comes and takes away the word which was sown to them (Mk. 4:14-15).

Jesus explains that the message (ὁ λόγος) is sown to those who hear, although he does not in this text define exactly what the message is. He does, however, attribute to Satan the role of taking away the word, so that even though people hear it, they are prevented from receiving it (ὅταν ἀκούσωσιν εὐθὺς ἔρχεται ὁ σατανᾶς καὶ αἴρει τὸν λόγον τὸν ἐσπαρμένον εἰς αὐτούς; Mk. 4:15). Myers suggests that readers should recall this point when, in the first passion prediction, Jesus speaks the word plainly, and then relates Peter's misunderstanding to the character of Satan.[50] The implication is that just as Jesus asserts in the explanation of the parable of the sower that Satan takes away the word from people so that they cannot receive it, Satan is present and active following Peter's confession that Jesus is the messiah when Peter–due to satanic involvement–rejects Jesus's messianic vision of suffering, rejection, and death.[51] Whereas the Markan Jesus speaks in parables so that outsiders do *not* understand his message (4:11-12), here he speaks the word–the message of his messianic suffering–plainly (παρρησίᾳ). Satan, however, takes away the message and causes Peter to reject it and rebuke Jesus.

In this reading, it is tempting to assert that Jesus detects Satan's presence and activity, and that his rebuke is directed to Satan. This is difficult, however, as Mark is clear that Jesus rebukes

[50] Myers, Ched. *Binding the Strong Man: A Political Reading of Mark's Story of Jesus*. Maryknoll, N.Y.: Orbis Books, 1988. 244-245.

[51] Shively, *Apocalyptic*, 224.

Peter in particular (ἐπετίμησεν Πέτρῳ). We have seen prior in the Gospel instances where unclean spirits use humans as their mouthpiece and Jesus's rebuke toward the person is really directed toward the spirit.[52] Such a reading would require Satan to have possessed Peter in the scene, which is difficult because one would expect Jesus to exorcise Satan from Peter in that moment if this was the case.

Perhaps the difficulty of Peter's act of getting tangled up with Satan is why Luke's account of this initial passion prediction drops Peter's rebuke of Jesus and mention of Satan from the text (Lk. 9:22). Luke depicts Satan entering Judas (Lk. 22:3), but makes sure that a reader could not conclude that the same satanic possession happened to Peter. To the contrary, the Lukan Jesus informs Peter that Satan has asked to sift the remaining eleven disciples, but that he has prayed for Peter to preserve his faith:

> Simon Simon, behold, Satan has asked to sift you all like wheat. But I have prayed for you in order that your faith should not fail (Lk. 22:31-32).

The Lukan Jesus here avers that Satan has asked to sift the disciples collectively (ὑμεῖς). Interestingly, however, it is only Peter's (σύ) faith for which Jesus prays. To be sure, the Lukan Peter fails in his denial of Jesus, but Luke is careful not to leave open the possibility that Peter had a Judas-like fall at the hands of Satan. Perhaps the ambiguity of Mark's portrayal of Jesus's identification of Peter as Satan is one contributing factor to the clarification of Luke's account.

Whatever Mark intends his readers to understand as the relationship between Peter and Satan in Jesus's rebuke of Peter, the scene contributes to the role of Satan as Jesus's chief opponent in the Gospel. Jesus's vocation consists of the things of God (τὰ τοῦ θεοῦ), but Peter's mind is set on the things of people (τὰ τῶν ἀνθρώπων) which are antagonistic to the things of God here. Even

[52] See, for example, Mk. 1:23-24, where it is the man (with the unclean spirit) who addresses Jesus: "Have you come to destroy us?"

Peter, one within Jesus's inner circle, is not immune to Satanic influence. This contrast between the things of God and the things of people recalls the dualistic nature of Mark's narrative world, in which Satan opposes the plan of God in Jesus, and it will continue to be operative in the section of teaching in Mark 8:27-10:45.[53] The contrast will culminate in Jesus's ransom logion (Mk. 10:45), and it is this teaching to which we now turn.

5.5 Satan and Mark's Passion

Satan never again explicitly appears in the Gospel of Mark after Jesus's rebuke of Peter (8:33), and Jesus's final encounter with an unclean spirit occurs in his healing of the boy with a mute and deaf spirit (9:14-29).[54] Apart from John's report to Jesus that the disciples encountered an unnamed exorcist who casts out demons in Jesus's name (9:38-40), the dark spiritual powers do not explicitly enter the stage for the final seven chapters of Mark's narrative. Such silence from Jesus's demonic adversaries might come as a surprise. Jesus's encounter with Satan in the wilderness (1:12-13), as we have seen, is a programmatic piece of the Markan prologue which establishes Satan as Jesus's chief rival in the story. Likewise, Jesus's first conflict after the prologue–and his first miracle in the Gospel–is a theophanic display of authority over an unclean spirit in the Capernaum synagogue (1:21-28). This story is the first of four scenes in which Jesus demonstrates his power over the demonic realm by performing exorcisms (1:21-28; 5:1-20; 7:24-30; 9:14-29), and Mark is sure to include reports of Jesus's exorcistic activity in summary statements (1:34; 3:9-12). Given the lack of the stated presence of Satan and his host of unclean spirits in the Markan passion narrative, we might conclude that such forces are trivial in the latter half of the Gospel, and that although Mark devotes considerable space to the evil spiritual beings in the first half, he

[53] Shively, *Apocalyptic*, 225.
[54] See discussion in chapter four.

must have shifted the locus of Jesus's opposition fully to his human adversaries, namely the Jewish high priests, scribes, and Roman political figures.

In this section I argue that although Satan and the unclean spirits do not explicitly appear after Mark 9, a careful reader should be able to detect their presence at key points in the Markan passion narrative. Satan and the demonic realm still stand as Jesus's opponents throughout the passion. I will give special attention to the function of the ransom logion (Mk. 10:45) as an interpretive key for Mark's presentation of Jesus's death within his narrative world. In particular, I argue that in the ransom logion Jesus presents his death as a ransom payment to Satan in order to set free those who are captive to Satan.

5.5.1 A Ransom to Whom?

Jesus's ransom logion does not occur in a textual vacuum. Jesus at this point is travelling to Jerusalem where he will die. Three times Jesus has explained to his disciples that he must go to Jerusalem in order to be rejected and killed, and that he will also be raised (8:31; 9:31; 10:33-34), but each time the disciples have failed to understand and accept such a fate for their leader. This section of Mark's Gospel contains a number of teachings about life under God's reign, which is better to enter with one eye or one hand (9:42-48), and is especially difficult for the rich to enter (10:17-27). Teachings in this section provide consolation for those who suffer on the basis of eschatological restoration (10:28-31).[55] After Jesus's final passion prediction (10:33-34), he has an interaction with James and John that demonstrates their continued failure to understand Jesus's fate which is full of suffering. The two brothers make a bold request: "Give to us that we should sit–one at your right and one at your left–in your glory" (10:37). Jesus points out that they do not understand what they are asking for, but says that they will be able to drink the cup which he drinks

[55] Cf. also Jesus's confidence that he will be raised from the dead following his execution (8: 31; 9:31; 10:34).

and be baptised with the baptism with which he is baptised; however, it is not for him to decide who will sit at his right and his left. The cup–symbolically related to Jesus's death–will appear again at the last supper, where Jesus gives his blood of the covenant to his disciples (14:23), and in Jesus's agony at Gethsemane, where Jesus begs the Father to take this cup (i.e. his death) from him if at all possible (14:36). Likewise, the mention of sitting at Jesus's right and left (10:37, 40) is recalled when two criminals are crucified on either side of Jesus–one at his right, and one at his left (ἕνα ἐκ δεξιῶν καὶ ἕνα ἐξ εὐωνύμων αὐτοῦ; 14:27). For the Markan Jesus, contra the view of his disciples, to sit at his right and left in his glory includes suffering with Jesus.

The other ten disciples overhear James and John's request and become angry at them, prompting Jesus to offer the teaching which culminates in the ransom logion:

> Calling them together, Jesus said to them, "You know that those who seem to rule the nations lord over them, and their great ones exercise authority over them. This is not how it will be among you, but whoever wants to be great among you will be your servant, and whoever among you wants to be first will be a slave of all. For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve and to give his life as a ransom in the place of many (Mk. 10:42-45).

Here, Jesus puts forward contemporary models of leadership as a negative example against which he offers a vision for the social dealings of his disciples.[56] Those who seem[57] to rule the nations do so in a fashion which wields power inappropriately according to Jesus. Instead, Jesus instructs his disciples to follow a different social ordering, namely that greatness is attained through becoming a servant of others. Not only does Jesus redirect efforts for greatness, he redefines greatness by locating it at the bottom of the social stratosphere.

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[56] As Collins points out, Jesus's teaching here has precedent in the Hebrew Scriptures, particularly in 1 Kings 12:7, where the leader (the king) of the people should act as a servant of the people. See: Collins, *Mark*, 499; Weinfeld, Moshe, "The King as the Servant of the People: The Source of the Idea," JJS 33 (1982) 189-194.

[57] The meaning of οἱ δοκοῦντες is debated. For discussion of various interpretations, see: Alberto de Mingo Kaminouchi. *"But It Is Not So Among You" Echoes of Power in Mark 10. 32-45*. London: T&T Clark, 2003. 118-123. I find the position that the phrase carries an ironic critique of power by recognising that it is God who *really* rules over the nations to be the most convincing.

Jesus's redefinition of greatness is ultimately grounded in his own exemplification of the ideal in his death, as the γάρ in 10:45 serves to introduce the rational grounds for the preceding claims about who is and is not great. "For (γάρ) even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve and to give his life as a ransom in the place of many." This is perhaps the most explicit christological statement in Mark's Gospel concerning Jesus's mission,[58] although, as Collins notes, it "is not included primarily because of an interest in defining the nature and work of Jesus as the Christ, but as a rhetorical example related to teaching that concerns the formation of communities."[59] Because *even* the Son of Man serves others, so too should his disciples take postures of servitude in their communities. I, however, find the saying to carry more explanatory power than Collins does for understanding Jesus's death in Mark.

It is likely that traces of the force of such a saying about Jesus's death are present in the Markan passion narrative. Jesus offers an explanation for the Son of Man's coming. The verb ἦλθεν is complemented by three infinitives. The Son of Man did *not* come in order to be served (διακονηθῆναι); rather, he *did* come to serve (διακονῆσαι) and to give (δοῦναι) his life as a ransom in the place of many. The act of serving and giving his life are not two unrelated acts on the part of the Son of Man. Instead, the καί in between the two infinitives (διακονῆσαι **καὶ** δοῦναι) functions epexegetically, explaining the first in light of the second.[60] One could thus translate the verse as follows: "For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve *by* giving his life as a ransom in the place of many."

Of primary interest to our project is what the Markan Jesus means when he claims that he has come to give his life *as a ransom* in the place of many. This short saying from Jesus has been

[58] See also Mark 2:17: "I did not come to call the righteous, but sinners."
[59] Collins, *Mark*, 499-500.
[60] Kaminouchi, *But it is Not So Among You*, 141.

one of the most disputed of all of the sayings attributed to Jesus in the Gospels.[61] In particular, what does Jesus mean when he explains his death as a ransom payment? To whom is the ransom paid? What is the result of the paid ransom for the many? What, if any, texts from Israel's Scriptures might have influenced this saying? How does it fit within the whole of Mark's narrative world? These are the questions which we will consider here.

Interpreters often locate the Isaianic Servant as a conceptual precursor to the ransom logion of Mark 10:45. Most arguments of this sort note points of lexical or conceptual contact between Mark 10:45 and Isaiah 53 (esp. 53:10-12).[62] Rikki Watts, for example, points to the designation of the figure in Isaiah 53:11 as "my servant for many" (עבדי־לרבים) which the LXX renders as "the one who serves many" (δουλεύοντα πολλοῖς). Although the Markan Jesus does not designate himself as δοῦλος in 10:45, he has just called his followers to take on such a role. And although it is not an exact verbal parallel, Jesus does describe the purpose of the Son of Man's coming as that of service: He came… to serve (διακονῆσαι).[63] Another point of resonance between the two texts is the mention of the many (οἱ πολλοί). The Isaianic servant serves many (εὖ δουλεύοντα πολλοῖς; 53:11), he will inherit many (αὐτὸς κληρονομήσει πολλοὺς; 53:12), he bears the sins of many (αὐτὸς ἁμαρτίας πολλῶν ἀνήνεγκεν; 53:12), and is handed over because of their sins. Similarly, Jesus describes his death as taking place in the place of many (ἀντὶ πολλῶν; Mk. 10:45). The other prominent connection posited between the two texts is their fate which ends in death. In Isaiah 53:12, the servant's life is handed over into death (παρεδόθη εἰς θάνατον ἡ ψυχὴ αὐτοῦ), and Jesus likewise speaks of giving his ψυχή for many which is a clear reference to his imminent death.

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[61] For a summary of positions, see: Reid, Duncan. "The Significance of the 'Ransom Saying' in Mark 10:45." *Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 84, no. 3 (July 2022): 424–41.

[62] See: Rikki E. Watts. "Jesus' Death, Isaiah 53, and Mark 10:45: A Crux Revisited." In *Jesus and the Suffering Servant: Isaiah 53 and Christian Origins*, edited by W. H. Bellinger and William Reuben Farmer, 125–51. Eugene. OR: Wipf and Stock Publishers, 2009.

[63] Watts, *New Exodus*, 274.

The reading that Joel Marcus puts forward supports this interplay between Isaiah's servant and the Markan Jesus, but he also points to Markan interaction with the Danielic Son of Man. Marcus notes the following parallels as allusions:[64] (1) James and John ask Jesus to sit with him at his right and his left in his glory (Mk. 10:37), and in Daniel's vision, the "people of the holy ones of the Most High" reign with the Son of Man (Dan. 7:9, 13-14, 27) who receives glory (Dan. 7:14). (2) Jesus asserts that to sit at his right or his left is not for him to give, but it is for those for whom it has been prepared, presumably by God (Mk. 10:40). Similarly, it is the Most High in Daniel who rules over humans, and who "gives it to whom he will" (Dan. 4:22; 2:21). (3) As we noted earlier, Jesus comments that the rulers of the nations only *seem* to be in charge (Mk. 10:42). Marcus notes a corresponding view in Daniel 7-12, in which "pagan leaders' authority is a sham; behind them stand angels/demons and ultimately God."[65] (4) Jesus's assertion that anyone who wants to be great will become the servant of all is paralleled by the Most High who gives the kingdom to the lowest of all humans (Dan. 4:17). With these allusions in mind, Marcus argues that Jesus's self-designation as the Son of Man (Mk. 10:45) likewise recalls the one like a Son of Man in Daniel 7:13-14; however, Marcus views the allusion to the Danielic Son of Man as a polemical one. Whereas Daniel's Son of Man figure receives authority, honour, and a kingdom, and all of the nations *serve* the Son of Man (Dan. 7:13-14), the Markan Son of Man–Jesus–does not come to be served, but to serve others.[66] The Markan Jesus, then, evokes the Danielic Son of Man perhaps in order to contrast himself with it, by subverting the expectations of power and rule, and by framing his own mission as one who did *not* come to be served.

[64] Marcus, *Mark 9-16*, 753.
[65] Marcus, *Mark 9-16*, 753.
[66] Marcus, *Mark 9-16*, 756.

I find Marcus's argument for the presence of interaction with the Danielic Son of Man in Mark 10:35-45 to be more plausible than the presence of interaction with the Isaianic Servant which is so often asserted by interpreters. If some trace of Isaiah's Servant is present in the text, it seems much more brief than many would propose. Although I generally suggest that deutero-Isaianic motifs are highly operative in much of Mark's Gospel (see my discussion on the programmatic function the Isaianic attribution of the conflated scriptural citation in Mk. 1:1-3), I do not, as some, find Isaiah 52-53 to be a particularly compelling pretext in making sense of Jesus's ransom metaphor. One primary difficulty makes Isaianic influence on the ransom logion improbable: Although the Isaianic servant bears the sins of many, the Markan Jesus says that he will give his life *as a ransom* in the place of many. Adela Yarbro Collins notes that while the Markan Jesus gives his life in exchange for many, the Isaian servant functions more like a scapegoat, upon whom the sins of many are placed (καὶ αὐτὸς ἁμαρτίας πολλῶν ἀνήνεγκεν; Isa. 53:12).[67] The idea of the servant's life as a ransom is absent from Isaiah. A ransom (λύτρον) is a concrete concept, involving three parties, in which party *A* provides party *B* with an acceptable payment, in order that party *B* should take the payment and release party *C* to party *A*. In the opening scene of Homer's *Iliad*, for example, when Chryses comes to the Achaeans to free his daughter from them, he brings with him a ransom payment that he offers in exchange for his daughter. He pleads with the sons of Atreus:

> Sons of Atreus, and you other well-greaved Achaeans, to you may the gods who have dwellings on Olympus grant that you sack the city of Priam, and return home safely; but set my dear child free for me, and accept the ransom in reverence for the son of Zeus, Apollo, who strikes from afar.[68]

[67] Collins, *Mark*, 500. See also Isa. 53:4: οὗτος τὰς ἁμαρτίας ἡμῶν φέρει καὶ περὶ ἡμῶν ὀδυνᾶται.
[68] Homer, *Iliad* I.17-21. Loeb Classical Library, translated by A. T. Murray.

Agamemnon ultimately rejects Chryses's request to set his child free and accept the ransom (παῖδα δ᾽ ἐμοὶ λύσαιτε φίλην, τὰ δ᾽ ἄποινα δέχεσθαι), but the formula still stands. Party *B* might set the terms of the ransom, or party *B* is free to reject party *A*'s offer.

Homer does not use the language of λύτρον to speak of the ransom payment, but instead refers to the ransom as ἄποινα. Centuries later, however, Plato recalls this scene in his *Republic*:

> But if the poet were not to conceal his identity anywhere, the whole of his poetry and narrative would have been created without imitation. Now, to stop you saying you don't understand again, I'll explain how this comes about. For if Homer had said that Chryses came with a ransom (λύτρα) for his daughter as a suppliant of the Achaeans and their kings in particular and after this he was still speaking in the person of Homer, and not as Chryses, you know that this would not be imitation, but plain narrative. It would go something like this (I'm not going to speak in verse— I'm no poet): The priest came and prayed that the gods would grant them the capture of Troy and a safe return home. He asked them to accept the ransom, respect the god and release his daughter to him. When he had said this everyone else paid their respects and approved his proposal, but Agamemnon grew angry and told him to go away immediately and never return; that his scepter and the wreaths he wore would not protect him; before his daughter was ransomed (πρὶν δὲ λυθῆναι αὐτοῦ τὴν θυγατέρα) she would grow old with him in Argos.[69]

Plato does call the ransom a λύτρα, and uses the cognate verb λύω in reference to Chryses's attempt to ransom his daughter. Once again, party *A* (Chryses) offers party *B* (the Achaeans) a ransom payment in exchange for the release of party *C* (his daughter). Similarly, Thucydides writes in the *History of the Peloponnesian War* about an incident in which Hippocrates received land as a ransom payment in exchange for some captives:

> But the Camarinaeans were driven out by the Syracusans in a war which arose from a revolt, and some time later Hippocrates, tyrant of Gela, receiving the territory of the Camarinaeans as ransom for some Syracusan prisoners of war, himself became founder and recolonized Camarina.[70]

Here the land acts as the ransom payment (λύτρα) which was paid to Hippocrates in the place of the Syracusan war captives (ἀνδρῶν Συρακοσίων αἰχμαλώτων).

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[69] Plato, *Republic* III.393d-e. Loeb Classical Library, edited and translated by Chris Emlyn-Jones and William Preddy.

[70] Thucydides, *History of the Peloponnesian War* IV.V. Loeb Classical Library, translated by C. F. Smith.

The LXX translators also used λύτρα to translate words such as כפר and פדין. Collins lists a few helpful examples:

> According to Exod 21:29, if an ox is accustomed to goring people and the owner has been warned but fails to restrain it with the result that it kills a man or a woman, the ox shall be stoned and its owner shall also be put to death. According to v. 30, if the relatives of the deceased are willing to accept a ransom (MT כפר; LXX λύτρα) for the life of the owner, he should pay the redemption money… in whatever amount they ask… Num 35:31-34, however, stipulates that no ransom (MT כפר; LXX λύτρα) should be accepted for a murder subject to the death penalty.[71]

Although these occurrences do not arise in the context of war and captives, the basic idea of the payment from party *A* to party *B* in place of party *C* still stands.

I have taken the time to consider these occurrences of ransom payments in order to illustrate the basic outline of a ransom. In particular, a ransom payment must have a recipient (party *B*). Interpreters often eschew the concreteness of the Markan ransom metaphor by failing to clearly identify the recipient of the ransom payment.[72] C.E.B. Cranfield is representative of the interpretive strategies of many scholars here: For example, Cranfield considers uses of λύτρον in the LXX other Greek literature, in which the word refers to the "ransom of a prisoner of war or a slave." Ultimately, however, Cranfield concludes:

> "While כפר may have contributed to the thought, another Hebrew word, never represented by λύτρον in the LXX probably underlies the use of λύτρον here — אשם (= 'guilt-offering': see Lev. v. 14-vi. 7, vii. 1-7, Num. v. 5-8). This word is used in Isa. liii. 10: 'when thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin'; and it seems likely that Jesus had this passage in mind (the use of διακονεῖν seems to point to a reference to the Servant, and ἀντὶ πολλῶν

[71] Collins, *Mark*, 501.

[72] Joel Marcus, for example, identifies the ransom as referring to slaves giving themselves to servitude in order to ransom others out of slavery, which is a helpful point in recognising the concreteness of the metaphor; however, he does not then consider to whom the ransom might be paid in the Markan narrative. *Mark 8-16*, 749. Eugene Boring, on the other hand, suggests that questions such as "Why is a ransom necessary?" and "To whom was the ransom paid?" are ultimately not important for Mark to answer: "*That* Jesus' death was not a meaningless surd, but was a necessary part of God's will and plan is important to Mark's theology (repeated *dei*; cf. 8:31), but he is not concerned to offer a comprehensive scheme within which Jesus' death can be incorporated." Boring, M. Eugene. *Mark: A Commentary*. The New Testament Library. Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2014. 303.

> looks like an echo of the repeated rabbîm in Isa. liii. 11f.), and was thinking of himself as the Servant who was to suffer vicariously for the sins of others."[73]

Cranfield's rationale is driven by his assumption that Isaiah 53 must lie behind the Markan text, so much so that he is willing to import an entirely foreign meaning to the imagery of Jesus as a λύτρον in Mark 10:45, concluding that the primary meaning of the word must not be at all operative because of the Isaianic pretext. It seems to me that Morna Hooker's critique here that "the influence of Isaiah 53 on this saying has… been grossly exaggerated"[74] is spot on. Had Mark wanted to convey the idea of אשׁם he likely would have used a word such as πλημμέλεια, which is a standard translation in LXX Leviticus. Cranfield is representative of scholarship more broadly, as although he considers what sort of imagery λύτρον might have evoked, he nevertheless fails to bring that meaning to bear on the logic of the Markan text.

A great deal of focus rightly falls on the exemplary nature of the Son of Man who came to serve others even to the point of his own death; however, many fail to give adequate attention to the meaning and function of Jesus's death as a transactional ransom payment in Mark's narrative.

Let us return to Mark 10:45: "For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve by giving his life as a ransom in the place of many." Jesus is party *A*, who gives his life (ἡ ψύχη) as a ransom payment (λύτρον) in the place of many (ἀντὶ πολλῶν), who make up party *C*. The text, however, does not divulge the identity of party *B*, the one to whom the ransom is paid. If Jesus's statement in 10:45 had not included any mention of a λύτρον (e.g. The Son of Man came… to give his life in the place of many.), we might be less concerned with the recipient of the Son of Man's life, although it would still be a worthy question, as even δίδωμι implies a recipient. Jesus's apposition of λύτρον with his life, however, places conceptual expectations on the giving of his

[73] Cranfield, C. E. B., ed. *The Gospel According to St Mark: An Introduction and Commentary.* Cambridge Greek Testament Commentaries. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1959. 342.

[74] Hooker, Morna D. *Gospel According to St. Mark*. London, UK: Bloomsbury Publishing, 2001. 249.

life, especially that his life–as a λύτρον–must be given to someone (party *B*). Were this not the case, it is unlikely that the Markan Jesus would use a metaphor as concrete as a ransom payment. Said differently, the language of a ransom payment provides a shared set of conceptual expectations, and the expectation of a recipient has not often received sufficient attention. This is surprising given the significance of this saying as perhaps Jesus's most explicit self-descriptive moment in Mark's Gospel.

Who, then, is the recipient (party *B*) of the ransom payment in Mark's narrative world? Some argue that God is the recipient of Jesus's life as a ransom payment, so that Jesus's life functions like a Levitical offering for sin offered to God for propitiation.[75] Those who find the Isaian servant (Isa. 53) to be highly operative in this passage liken Jesus's ransom payment to the death of the servant, as the author comments that it was the will of the Lord to crush the servant (Isa. 53:10).[76] Still others find echoes of the Maccabean martyrs and their atoning deaths in Jesus's ransom.[77] These interpreters, as I will explain below, tend to "read the ransom logion with more careful attention to its possible Old Testament background than to the surrounding narrative."[78] Other interpreters have located Satan as the recipient of Jesus's ransom payment in Mark's Gospel.[79] Such a view is generally more grounded in the ransom logion within its larger narrative context, and is the view for which I argue here.

It is, of course, possible for metaphors to function even if they are incomplete. Mark could employ the ransom (or some other) metaphor with regard to Jesus's death and not assume that the

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[75] See: Collins, Adela Yarbro. "Mark's Interpretation of the Death of Jesus." *Journal of Biblical Literature* 128, no. 3 (2009): 548.

[76] See: Watts, "Jesus's Death," 125-51.

[77] See Busch's discussion on such interpretations: Busch, Austin. *Risen Indeed? Resurrection and Doubt in the Gospel of Mark*. Early Christianity and Its Literature 31. Atlanta, GA: SBL Press, 2022. 180.

[78] Busch, *Risen Indeed?*, 181.

[79] See: Busch, *Risen Indeed?*, 179-185; Fridrichsen, Anton. "The Conflict of Jesus with the Unclean Spirits." *Theology* 22, no. 129 (1931): 122–35; Danker, Frederick W. "The Demonic Secret in Mark: A Reexamination of the Cry of Dereliction (15:34)." *ZNW* 61 (1970): 48–69.

reader fills in all the metaphorical implications (recipient, captive) which are not explicitly stated in the saying. It would not be a rarity for an author to employ a metaphor which breaks down fairly early. My contention, however, is that it would be strange for Mark to employ this metaphor as one that is incomplete because a fuller version of the ransom metaphor fits so easily within his narrative. There is, for Mark, a readily available group who are held captive in his story (3:27), namely humans. And there is, for Mark, a readily available character who holds them captive and would naturally act as the recipient of a ransom payment (3:27), namely Satan. The difficulty of reading the ransom metaphor as incomplete is the narrative of Mark itself, which readily supplies the necessary content to read the metaphor in a complete manner.

Before arguing positively for understanding Satan as the recipient of Jesus's life as a ransom payment, let us briefly consider the difficulty of understanding God in such a role in Mark's narrative. As Austin Busch notes, this passage occurs in the context of Jesus contrasting his own vocation with pagan rulers who domineer over the people in their purview. Such oppressors are the immediate foil for Jesus's saying about serving and giving his life as a ransom for many.[80] These pagan powers rule by coercion and by keeping people under their reigns of domination. Busch, while reflecting on this view of foreign powers, offers a sharp critique of the view that Jesus's life is paid to God for the release of many:

> Against the rhetorical and ideological background of the Markan episode it caps, 10:45 can only with difficulty be interpreted to characterize God as a despotic slaveholder, the ultimate enforcer of the oppressive social order Jesus critiques in 10:42-45, who demands a life in return for releasing his captives. This, however, is the implication of the readings holding that the Son of Man gives his life as a payment to God in exchange for God's release of those he holds in bondage or coercive obligation.[81]

[80] Busch, *Risen Indeed?*, 181.
[81] Busch, *Risen Indeed?*, 182.

In other words, portraying God as the one who requires Jesus's life as a ransom payment for the release of many captives serves to portray God as the very kind of ruler against which Jesus so sharply contrasts the model his followers should emulate. Such a characterisation of God is inconsistent with the view of God Mark has already presented in his Gospel, which is undoubtedly shaped by the Jewish scriptural tradition with its formative stories in Israel's exodus from Egypt, where God frees his people from an oppressive ruler akin to the one Jesus describes in 10:42-44. To locate God as the recipient of the ransom payment would make God out to be a Pharaoh-like character. While this could potentially happen, the rest of Mark's Gospel does not contribute anything to such a view.

An alternative view, and the one I propose, is that Jesus's death in Mark should be understood as a ransom payment to Satan.[82] This view best explains the function of the ransom metaphor within Mark's broader conceptual world. In particular, the exorcism pericopae and the parable of the strong man train the readers to understand humans as those who are helpless against the demonic forces. Mark does not present victims of demonic possession as those who have meddled with demonic entities or those who have been handed over to the powers of darkness as a punishment for their own sin; rather, they really are victims to the unclean spirits who displace their bodily agency. Consider, for example, the Gerasene demoniac, who–due to the influence of the legion of spirits–is forced to live outside of society in a graveyard, cuts himself with sharp rocks, and shatters chains that are meant to secure him (5:3-5). Further, there are even children who are victims of demonic possession in the Gospel of Mark (7:24-30; 9:14-29). The father of

[82] Busch (182-183) also argues that the payment is to the foreign, hostile powers of the nations that Jesus describes in 10:42-44. These powers are not completely separated from demonic influence, but Busch does emphasise the agency of Rome as a figure oppressing people in Mark. I would not strongly disagree, but as I argue here, Satan makes sense as the primary oppressor who receives Jesus's ransom payment.

the possessed boy vividly describes the ruthless attacks from the demon who is bent on destroying his son:

> Teacher, I brought my son to you, because he has a mute spirit. Whenever it takes hold of him, it throws him to the ground, and he foams from the mouth, and gnashes his teeth and becomes stiff… And he often throws him into fire and into water in order that he should destroy him (9:17-18, 22).

That even a child would be subjected to such torment suggests that any–and perhaps all–humans are helpless victims to the reign of Satan. Mark's Gospel depicts the world as full of demons who afflict people. Modern readers might assume that such a high volume of demonic activity was fairly standard in ancient literature, but in fact Mark's narrative world is one crawling with demons compared to most ancient works. Not only does Mark record four exorcist narratives, he also notes that Jesus healed many more demons in his summary statements of Jesus's ministry (cf. Mk. 1:34: δαιμόνια πολλὰ ἐξέβαλεν; 3:10-12). Further, there are enough demons in Mark's cosmological imagination that it is necessary for Jesus to give the twelve disciples authority to cast out even more demons outside of the recorded narrative (3:15; 6:7, 12), and there is even a rogue exorcist who does not follow Jesus, but casts out demons in his name (9:38-40). The world Mark presents in his narrative is filled to the brim with demons lurking around and victimising humans who are helpless to Satan's reign.

In addition to Mark's Gospel being filled with demons, the brief parable of the strong man (see discussion above) depicts humans as the plunder of Satan (τὰ σκεύη αὐτοῦ; 3:27). This is perhaps the most explicit example which illuminates for us the situation which the ransom logion presumes. The parable occurs in the context of the Beelzeboul controversy, which is immediately concerned with Jesus's exorcistic ministry after the Jerusalem scribes accuse Jesus of carrying out his exorcism of demons by the power of the ruler of the demons. While exposing the absurdity of such an accusation, Jesus asserts that Satan does, in fact, have a powerful kingdom (3:24-26). Not

only does Satan have a kingdom; he also has captives. Jesus presents his exorcistic ministry as plundering the house of Satan by releasing people from Satan's tyrannical reign. Jesus does not state who it is that has humans as captives in need of redemption in 10:45, but he does so clearly in the parable of the strong man. This clear depiction of Satan as one who is keeping humans as captives makes Satan the obvious, readily-available candidate to be the recipient of Jesus's ransom payment in 10:45. Within the context of the narrative, then, Jesus is saying that "Even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve by giving his life as a ransom *to Satan* in the place of many." In his death, Jesus gives his own ψύχη to Satan as a ransom payment in order to release all of those who are under Satan's reign.

The idea of God making a bargain with Satan, as we noted in the previous chapter, is one with precedent. Consider again the scene from *Jubilees* in which, after Noah prays to God to keep the evil spirits from ruling over his descendants (*Jub.* 10:3-6), Mastema/Satan bargains with God to allow one tenth of the evil spirits remain on the earth to be subject to Satan and so that Satan can exercise his authority on the earth over humans (*Jub.* 10:7-14). Similarly, the legion of demons bargains with Jesus that he should not send them out from the region, but instead that they might enter into the large herd of pigs. Jesus consents and allows the legion to enter the pigs (Mk. 5:10-11). These interactions do not result in ransoms, but they are transactionary in a similar manner to the ransom Jesus describes in 10:45.

5.5.2 The Ransom in Mark's Narrative

It is one thing to assert, as I have just done, that Satan is the recipient of Jesus's life as a ransom payment in Mark's Gospel. It is another to explain how this ransom makes sense in Mark's narrative world in light of the questions it raises. For example, who are the many who are freed by the ransom payment? Does it include only those who are possessed by unclean spirits, or is its

scope broader than that? How does the ransom and release function? What is the relationship between Jesus's battle against Satan in his exorcistic ministry during the first half of the Gospel and his giving of his life as a ransom payment to Satan in the passion narrative? Doesn't this payment from Jesus to Satan imply that Jesus is indebted to Satan, and therefore in the weaker position? It is these questions to which we now turn.

First: for whom is the ransom payment effective? To answer this question, we must consider who it is that is afflicted by Satan in the Gospel of Mark. Shively correctly notes that "Satan's power is reflected not only in demonic possession, but also in sin, illness, death, peoples' rejection of Jesus, and the misuse of the temple."[83] That is, demon possession is the obvious first place to look for Satanic activity; however, consider Jesus's parable of the sower, where Jesus attributes Satanic activity to the inability of those who hear the word to receive it: "These are those by the road: Where the word is sown and when they hear, immediately *Satan* comes and takes away the word which was sown to them" (Mk. 4:15). Similarly, when Peter opposes Jesus's first passion prediction, Jesus identifies Satanic activity which causes Peter to think the things of humans instead of the things of God (8:33). All of Jesus's hearers–even his closest disciples–are susceptible to Satan's influence. Mark also closely associates demonic power with death in the story of the Gerasene demoniac (5:1-20). The victim of the legion, for example, lives among graves–the abode of death. Further, when the legion enters the pigs, it causes them to rush into the water where they drown and die. Jesus's inaugural proclamation of the advent of God's reign (1:15), as we observed earlier, presupposes an apocalyptic dualism which envisages Satan's kingdom as active and powerful in Mark's narrative world (cf. 3:24). If, then, Satan's reign manifests clearly in spirit possession but extends far beyond it, then Jesus's ransom payment frees

[83] Shively, *Apocalyptic*, 231.

many more than those who are possessed by demons. Even demonic possession, however, is widespread, reaching both Jews and Gentiles, children and adults, and male and females. Mark does not specify exactly how far Satan's reign reaches, but if Satan's realm of influence is so far-reaching that it extends even to the inner circle of Jesus's community (i.e. Peter), it would not be a stretch to imagine that the whole world is subject to Satan's reign.[84] The Markan Jesus does have a notion of God's elect within the broader realm of the whole of humanity. In his little apocalypse, Jesus mentions such a group: "Unless the Lord shortens the days, no flesh would be saved. But on account of the elect, whom he chose, (ἀλλὰ διὰ τοὺς ἐκλεκτοὺς οὕς ἐξελέξατο) he will shorten the days" (Mk. 13:20; see also 13:22). Here, the elect are those who remain faithful to God throughout persecution, within which the Markan community likely found itself.[85] Exactly how far the ransom reaches is difficult to define, and although Mark does not indicate that it provides release for all, we can say that it is widespread and effective for many (λύτρον ἀντὶ **πολλῶν**; 10:45) whom God has chosen and who remain faithful to God.

Next, how does Jesus's ransom payment to Satan relate to Jesus's exorcistic ministry? To answer this question, we must again read the ransom logion in tandem with the parable of the strong man. That is, the reign and power of Satan in Mark's Gospel is found in his control of human victims. This power is most clearly seen in Jesus's depiction of Satan as the strong man who has a house full of human possessions. It will take an even stronger man to bind the strong man, and then plunder and free the possessions (3:27). The careful reader will note that Jesus is tied to this parable as the stronger one multiple times. In John's opening preaching, for example,

[84] Sloan points out that the nations are all already under Satan's rule, and that Israel, having been handed over to the nations as a result of their covenant discipling, is also subject to Satan's power. Sloan, Paul. *Jesus and the Law of Moses: The Gospels and the Resurrection of Israel within First-Century Judaism.* Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2025. 192-195.

[85] Marcus, *Mark 8-16*, 896.

he calls Jesus the stronger one (ὁ ἰσχυρότερος; 1:7). Jesus's exorcistic ministry depicts skirmishes between God's reign in Jesus and Satan's reign in unclean spirits. Each time Jesus frees a person from demonic possession, he frees them from captivity to Satan, and God's reign gains ground in these exorcisms. As we have seen, however, Satan's reign extends far beyond those who are possessed by unclean spirits, into Jesus's inner circle and possibly to all humans. Even those who are not possessed by unclean spirits, such as Peter, are afflicted by Satanic influence which causes them to misunderstand Jesus and think the things of humans rather than the things of God (8:33). Satan, as a king with his own widespread kingdom, keeps humans as his prisoners. Jesus frees one of these captives at a time in his exorcistic ministry, but the release of the many will require a different strategy. As Austin Busch explains:

> When he speaks of the Son of Man giving his life as a ransom for many, Jesus envisions a strategic transition corresponding to the end of his exorcistic ministry in Galilee and his return to the environs of Jerusalem, where he will again confront Satan (see 1:12– 13)—this time in the guise of the Roman authorities working in tandem with his domestic enemies in the city… Jesus's goal remains the same as in Galilee, namely, to free people from demonic power (see 3:27). The difference is that now he will achieve the liberation of many at once, by paying the ransom of his life to their demonic captors (10:45), rather than by violently defeating individual demons or groups of them that enslave one hapless person or another, as he has been doing throughout his ministry.[86]

In 10:45, Jesus explains that such release will come in the form of giving his own life to Satan, which will act as a ransom payment for the release of many. This transaction results in Satan giving up his power over the captive humans he has afflicted. Ironically, Satan accepts Jesus's life as a satisfactory payment in the place of the captives. It was in his reign over these captives that Satan's kingdom was manifest. That is, Satan's great power was one and the same with his oppression of human beings. In accepting a dead Jesus as an acceptable ransom payment, Satan gives up his power over the other humans in captivity to him, resulting in their freedom from Satanic influence.

[86] Busch, *Risen Indeed?*, 184.

The plan, however, does not end here. Jesus is able to give his life to Satan because he believes that God will give it back to him. In each of the three passion predictions, Jesus predicts that he will not only die, but that he will also be raised from the dead (8:31; 9:31; 10:34). He is likewise true to embody his own teaching even at the point of his death: "Whoever would want to save his life will lose it, but whoever would lose his life for my sake and the sake of the gospel will save it. For what does it profit a person to gain the whole world but to forfeit his life? For what would a person give in exchange for his life" (8:35-37)? The Markan Jesus willingly loses his life to Satan, procuring the release of the many from Satan's tyranny, and also trusts God to raise him from the dead, thereby gaining both the whole world and his own life (τὸν κόσμον ὅλον καὶ… τὴν ψυχὴν αὐτοῦ; 9:36).

The exorcisms in Mark's Gospel, then, are small-scale liberations from the power of Satan, subordinate to the much broader liberation of the many which comes as a result of the Son of Man giving his life as an acceptable ransom payment to Satan. That is, the exorcisms of Jesus (and his disciples) are not an end in themselves; rather, they prefigure the cosmic liberation of God's elect from Satan's power when, to his satisfaction, Satan receives a dead Jesus. So if we ask *how* the stronger man binds the strong man to plunder his house (3:27), the exorcisms do play a role, but it is a subservient one. The ransom agreement provides a binding (pun intended) contractual agreement between Jesus/God (party *A*) and Satan (party *B*), whereby Satan must release those under his control (party *C*) when he receives an acceptable ransom payment (Jesus's life). Both the exorcisms and the ransom provide liberation for those under Satan's reign, but the wide range of Satan's reign can only be sufficiently combatted through a wide ranging action by Jesus. Whereas each exorcism frees one person, the ransom payment frees the many.

The notion of Jesus giving his life to Satan might help to explain some of the horrific features in Mark's portrayal of Jesus's passion. Jesus might have died with the typical resolve of a martyr who accepts his fate if it were not for the horror of giving himself over to Satan. Helen Bond points out that death scenes in biographies are the chief opportunity for the biographer to honour his subject through a noble death:

> The moment of transition between life and death was an especially clear window into a person's character… And the way in which he met his death—his fortitude, resilience, and the lessons he drew from it—mattered far more than what killed him. Socrates's death in 399 BCE became the ultimate paradigm for the demise of a philosopher… Showing no anguish, he faced his end with fearlessness and nobility, safe in the assurance that his soul would live on in a better world. As the numbness from the poison spread from his feet up through his body, he faded gently from life, the moment of death almost imperceptible as his soul was set free from its physical prison… Yet… this is hardly a credible portrayal of the effects of hemlock poisoning—which involved trembling, spasms, convulsions, vomiting, and finally organ failure. However the "historical Socrates" died, it was not like this. Clearly what mattered most was not the actual course of events, but *the way that the story was told*.[87]

Contrast this serene death of Socrates with the agonising death of Jesus. In historical reality, both suffered intense physical pain, but Mark–for what I propose are literary purposes–covers the passion narrative with horror. The Maccabean martyrs are another example of those who face their death with resolve. In the face of incredibly cruel torture the mother and sons "encouraged one another to die nobly, saying, 'The Lord God is watching over us and in truth has compassion on us, as Moses declared in his song that bore witness against the people to their faces, when he said, 'And he will have compassion on his servants'" (2 Mac. 7:5-6). Whether or not the historical Maccabean martyrs actually died in with the nobility that the narrator ascribes them in the face of their torture, it is of central importance that the narrator positions them as a noble example by the way he tells the story.

[87] Bond, *Biography*, 179.

In many instances the Markan Jesus is the antithesis of such a noble death. Consider, for example, the agony of Jesus in Gethsemane: When he pulls his inner circle of Peter, James, and John away from the others, he begins to be overwhelmed and filled with angst (ἤρξατο ἐκθαμβεῖσθαι καὶ ἀδημονεῖν; Mk. 14:33). In order to explain his experience to the three disciples, he draws from the language of Psalm 42: "My soul is overwhelmed unto death" (περίλυπός ἐστιν ἡ ψυχή μου ἕως θανάτου; Mk. 14:34).[88] It is significant that this psalmist offers this prayer to God in his experience primarily of God's absence. That the soul of the psalmist longs for God as a deer longs for streams of water implies that the psalmist is not able to sense God's presence in the way that he once did. The last time that Jesus pulled together Peter, James, and John, they heard the divine voice express its satisfaction with Jesus the beloved son of God. This time, however, Jesus will pray three times with no divine voice to be found. Like the psalmist he evokes, Jesus agonizes in Gethsemane in part over God's silence in his moment of turmoil. As Jesus nears his death, in which his life is given to Satan as a ransom payment, he more and more experiences abandonment from God who called him his beloved son. This will culminate in Jesus's cry of divine abandonment at the cross, but as early as Gethsemane Jesus experiences his distance from God and its inversely related Satanic embrace.

Further, after Gethsemane Jesus is abandoned by his followers, and surrounded by political leaders who Mark portrays as demonically empowered.[89] The crowd with Judas, the Jewish council, Pilate, and even the Roman centurion at the cross are all, as Jesus's opponents, in league with Satan. Jesus's descent into enemy territory leads to his abandonment and denial from all twelve of his disciples (although there are a few women who remain present through the

[88] Cf. LXX Ps. 41:6, 12: ἵνα τί περίλυπος εἶ, ψυχή;

[89] See: Busch, *Risen Indeed?*, 185-191. Busch draws literary connections between Jesus's opponents in the Markan passion and the legion of demons in the Gerasene demoniac pericope, showing that the two are mutually interpretive.

crucifixion (Mk. 15:40-41) and ultimately his abandonment by God, as evinced by his final cry from Psalm 22: “In the ninth hour Jesus shouted with a great voice, ‘Eloi, Eloi, lema sabachthani?’ which is translated, ‘My God, my God, what have you forsaken me” (Mk. 15:34)? Jesus has none of the resolution we might expect from a martyr who faces death with confidence; rather, his moment of death horrifies him. Crucifixion is, to be sure, a horrible death; however, other martyrs die horribly painful deaths, and remain (at least according to their biographers) composed in their final moments. Why would Mark, as the possibly the first to write Jesus’s passion narrative, write his subject’s death in such a humiliating and horrifying manner? One could, of course, answer this question by saying that Mark wrote it just like it happened. While this might be true, my question is more a literary one than a historical one. Mark, a capable biographer, runs counter to biographical conventions here, which generally sanitise the moment of the subject’s death in order to make a literary point. As a biographer, Mark could have presented this scene very differently, so that his subject does not die screaming that his God has abandoned him. Considering this scene in light of my proposed reading of Mark 10:45–namely that Jesus in his death gives himself to Satan–has explanatory power. Like other martyrs, Jesus dies an agonising death. Unlike other martyrs, though, Jesus is given over to Satan at his death as part of a ransom agreement. Satan is a ruthless, horrific figure in Mark’s story, and the prospect of being given over to Satan is a terrifying experience for the Markan Jesus. Such horror begins in Gethsemane and climaxes at his cry that God himself has abandoned him.

Jesus’s death as a ransom to Satan could also help explain the brevity of the Markan resurrection narrative. If the point of Jesus’s death is to give his life as a ransom payment to Satan, the task is complete once Satan receives the satisfactory payment, which in this case is a dead Jesus. The brevity of the resurrection highlights the centrality of the death of Jesus in Mark’s

perspective. Mark clearly knows about a resurrection of Jesus, and briefly narrates a scene to show it; however, the main point of the narrative, given the explicit framing of 10:45, is for Jesus to die. In this scheme, a resurrection is of secondary importance, and the limited space Mark allows for the resurrection bears this out. In fact, in typical Markan fashion, the story ends with ambiguity regarding the efficacy of the ransom payment. Mark does not do much, if anything, to demonstrate that the plan for Jesus to offer himself as a ransom to Satan was successful. Busch comments: "As Mark neglects to represent or guarantee God's salvation of Jesus from death, so it offers no assurance of that death's emancipatory efficacy. Mark neither represents the ransom payment's reception by demonic Death nor signals the liberation of many from it."[90]

If we find this ambiguity and silence on the evangelist's part troubling, we are in good company. For so too are the women–the exemplary disciples who endure with Jesus until the end–gripped by fear and trembling (16:8) after their strange encounter with the young man at Jesus's tomb (16:5-7). It is not clear to the characters in the story, or for the reader, that the Markan Jesus is victorious or that the Markan Satan has been defeated. This unsettling dissonance at the ending of the story is likely what caused later readers of Mark to add resolutions in alternate endings (Mk. 16:9-20). Perhaps it was this dissonance that the fourth evangelist sought to address in John 12:31-33:

> "Now is the judgement of this world, now the ruler of this world will be cast out. And I will be lifted up from the earth, I will draw all to myself." He was saying this to show what kind of death he was about to die.

Here the Johannine Jesus explicitly links his death with the defeat and casting out of Satan. John's Jesus says that the ruler of the world is about to be cast out, and the fourth evangelist employs a

[90] Busch, *Risen Indeed?*, 191. Busch here presses the neglect of Mark to represent God's salvation of Jesus from death more than I would, as the young man at the tomb at least offers a report of Jesus's resurrection. Although Mark's account bears ambiguity in regards to Jesus's resurrection, he does not neglect to interact with it entirely.

narrative aside to inform the reader that the casting out takes place in Jesus's death. Whereas Mark frames Jesus's death in relation to Satan as a ransom, John frames it as a judgement and a casting out. John's account helps to give readers certainty about the efficacy of Jesus's dealing with Satan which is absent in Mark's account.

Although Mark is not nearly as explicit as John concerning the efficacy of Jesus's death and its effect on Satan we might be able to take a literary cue to help interpret the ambiguity of the narrative's closing scene. The young man at the tomb instructs the women who see Jesus to "go tell his disciples and Peter that he is going ahead of you into Galilee. There you will see him, just as he said to you" (Mk. 16:7). M. Eugene Boring helpfully reads this instruction to find Jesus in Galilee as an invitation to the reader to return to the first half of the narrative, which took place in Galilee, and reread the story in light of the end.[91] The ambiguity of the ending raises rather than answers questions, but its call back to Galilee invites the reader to return to Jesus's ministry there. This return to the beginning, while having the end in mind, brings the end and beginning of the Gospel into dialogue with itself. It is not merely that the Galilean portion of Jesus's ministry provides the key to understanding Jesus's passion in Jerusalem, or vice versa; rather, the two become mutually interpretive when the reader finishes the story and is asked to begin again at the beginning of the good news about Jesus Christ. Returning to the prologue ensures the bewildered reader, who has just finished the unnerving ending, of Jesus's inaugural message: "After John was imprisoned, Jesus went into Galilee preaching the good news about God and saying, 'The time has been fulfilled and the kingdom of God has drawn near. Repent and believe in the Gospel" (Mk. 1:14-15). Further, it was in Galilee that Jesus demonstrated his sweeping authority over the demonic realm through his exorcisms, which is notably absent from his passion in Jerusalem.

[91] Boring, *Mark,* 447-448.

But is there any evidence in Mark to substantiate the claim that Jesus's death effectively breaks the power of Satan over people? Here, I tentatively point to two examples that demonstrate this phenomenon. First, the Roman centurion at Jesus's death makes a surprisingly accurate confession for an opponent of Jesus to make: "When the centurion who was present saw in front of him that Jesus thus breathed his final breath, he said, 'Truly this man was the son of God'" (Mk. 15:39). This soldier, who was a part of the opposition who crucified Jesus, makes a correct christological confession at the exact moment of Jesus's death. As we considered earlier, Satan darkens the minds of people so that they are unable to understand who Jesus is (4:15; 8:31). At the moment of Jesus's death, however, Satan accepts Jesus's life as a ransom payment and thereby gives up his power over humans. As a result, the Satanic veil is lifted when Jesus dies, and the centurion confesses Jesus as God's son. When Satan releases his influence over humans at the moment of Jesus's death, even one from Jesus's opposition–the centurion–is now able to understand that Jesus was God's son. Because Jesus's satisfactory ransom payment was received by Satan at the moment of his death, humans were released from Satan's reign, and even the centurion could now see who Jesus really was.

Second, Joseph of Arimathea comes to honour Jesus by burying his corpse. Although later Christian testimony held that Joseph was an ally and disciple of Jesus (Mt. 27:57; John 19:38), Mark's description lacks such positive identifiers of Joseph. On the contrary, "he identifies Joseph as a member of the very Sanhedrin which unanimously condemned Jesus (cf. 14:64 with 14:55). As a 'councilor' (βουλευτής), Joseph belongs to that body the whole of which held a 'consultation' (συμβούλιον) issuing in the delivery of Jesus to Pilate."[92] This second opponent of Jesus to interact

[92] Gundry, Robert H. *Mark: A Commentary on His Apology for the Cross*. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2004. 981.

with him after his death does so to honour Jesus by placing him in a tomb, wrapped in fine cloths (15:46). Jesus's death which frees the many from Satan has also freed Joseph to honour Jesus.

We should also consider this proposed view of Jesus's death as a ransom paid to Satan for the release of many in dialogue with the messianism present in *11QMelchizedek*. Mark shares key pieces of his conceptual framework with *11QMelchizedek* in some places, and departs in others. We will briefly consider here two parallels and one ideological departure of the two texts. First, like we have recently seen in Mark, the view espoused in *11QMelchizedek* is one in which many of God's people are under the rule of Belial. This view is present in multiple places where Melchizedek frees the people from the hand of Belial and from the hand of the spirits of his lot.[93] That the people will be freed from the hand of Belial and his lot implies that they are presently under the power of Belial and his lot. Second, this captive state of humans under Belial's/Satan's power requires salvific action from a messiah figure who is identified with theophanic language and categories.[94] The means by which the two messianic figures free people from the reign of the devil, however, is different. Melchizedek acts as the divine, eschatological judge of Belial and the spirits of his lot.[95] Jesus does play this role first–on a small scale–in his exorcistic ministry, as is evidenced, for example, at his inaugural exorcism, where the unclean spirit shrieks in fear that its eschatological judgement has come in the person of Jesus.[96] Whereas Melchizedek, however, ultimately frees people by enacting an eschatological jubilee which clears their sin debt they have accrued to Belial,[97] the Markan Jesus frees many by giving his life as an acceptable ransom

[93] *11QMelchizedek* II.13, 25.

[94] See chapter three for discussion on Melchizedek's identification with YHWH, and chapter four for theophanic categories in Mark's depictions of Jesus in his exorcistic ministry.

[95] *11QMelchizedek* II.10-12.

[96] See chapter four for extended discussion on Jesus's exorcisms as eschatological judgement over the demonic realm.

[97] Williams, "Melchizedek."

payment in the place of the many. Both, however, are similar divine messianic figures who are identified extremely closely with Israel's God and free people from demonic enslavement. Although Mark's Jesus uses a different means (ransom) to accomplish this release of captives, his messianic profile participates in a similar messianic framework as *11QMelchizedek*'s Melchizedek. As a divine figure identified with Israel's God, Jesus is able to bring an end to Satan's reign over people by giving his life as an acceptable ransom payment in the place of many.

5.6 Conclusion

In this chapter we have examined Mark's presentation of Satan, as well as Mark's presentation of Jesus in light of his interactions with Satan. First and foremost, Satan is Jesus's primary opponent in the cosmic contest which unfolds in Mark's Gospel (Mk. 1:9-11). Jesus announces the advent of God's reign (1:15) over against Satan's reign (3:23-24). Satan holds hostages (3:27) most manifestly through the displacement of people in demonic possession. Jesus encounters such victims who are possessed by unclean spirits and frees them from Satan's reign often (cf. 1:21-28, 39; 5:1-20; 7:24-30; 9:14-29), and such episodes are direct affronts to Satan's control of humanity. In chapter four, we examined these exorcisms and their contribution to Mark's divine christology. Satan's influence, however, reaches far beyond victims of spirit possession. For example, Satan takes away people's ability to receive Jesus's message (4:15), and even penetrates Jesus's inner circle of followers, causing Peter to reject the heart of Jesus's mission (8:31-32). In order to break Satan's far-reaching power over humanity, Jesus gives his own life as an acceptable ransom payment in exchange for many of Satan's captives. Jesus's death seems to be immediately effective, so that even those who are responsible for Jesus's death (Roman centurion and Joseph of Arimathea), turn to honour Jesus immediately after his death. This change is evidence that Satan accepts Jesus's life as an acceptable ransom payment, and that he lifts his distorting power over

even those who opposed Jesus. As Jesus predicts, however, he is raised from the dead, presumably breaking Satan's power over Jesus as well. As a result, Satan loses his dominion over both humans and Jesus, leaving him empty-handed at Jesus's resurrection. Mark thus presents Jesus as the one who frees Satan's captives by means of giving his own life as a ransom payment to Satan.

CONCLUSION

Καὶ γὰρ καὶ ἄνθρωπος, ὡς προέφημεν, γέγονε κατὰ τὴν τοῦ θεοῦ καὶ πατρὸς βουλὴν ἀποκυηθεὶς ὑπὲρ τῶν πιστευόντων ἀνθρώπων καὶ καταλύσει τῶν δαιμόνων.[1]

-Justin Martyr, II Apol. 6.5

The Gospel of Mark narrates the conflict between God and Satan, which reaches its eschatological climax in the life and death of Jesus of Nazareth. This thesis has offered a coherent reading of this conflict Mark, as well as its role in Mark's soteriology and divine christology. Chapters two and three provided historical foundations within which we examined Mark's christology in light of the demons and Satan. Chapter two served as a typology of possession and exorcism in the ancient world. Here, we examined exorcistic phenomena from a range of cultural contexts. Even the most powerful exorcists, we noted, relied on the power and authority of a god or another powerful spiritual being (by reciting an incantation, a prayer, or employing an apotropaic object) in order to perform an exorcism. Powerful exorcists did not, in themselves, have authority over demons; however, they could become conduits of divine authority over demons should they properly invoke the authority of a powerful divine being. Chapter three was an examination of divine messianic figures who enact eschatological judgement over the demonic realm, namely the Enochic Son of Man and *11QMelchizedek*'s Melchizedek. Such figures would later provide helpful dialogue partners for Mark's messianic portrait of Jesus, who is likewise a divine figure who came to bring eschatological judgement for the demons, though he differs from the aforementioned figures in notable ways. For example, Jesus frees God's people from Satan's hand by giving his life to Satan as an acceptable ransom payment, whereas Melchizedek enacts an eschatological jubilee, and the Enochic Son of Man judges from God's heavenly throne.

[1] "As we said before, he became human according to the will of God the Father, being brought forth for those who believe and for the destruction of the demons."

In chapter four, I examined the three primary exorcism narratives in Mark, namely the inaugural exorcism in the Capernaum synagogue (1:23-28), the Gerasene demoniac (5:1-20), and the exorcism of the boy at the request of his father (9:14-29). The basis of the previous two chapters enabled historically sensitive location of Jesus as exorcist among his contemporaries and predecessors, as well as a messianic figure whose advent produces eschatological terror in the demons he encounters. We also observed in each of these episodes the ways by which Mark signals Jesus's divine identity to his readers.

Chapter five narrowed in on Jesus's encounters with Satan, or other relevant Satan material in Mark. In particular, I examined Jesus's wilderness encounter with Satan (1:12-13), the Beelzeboul controversy (3:22-27), Satan in Jesus's rebuke of Peter (8:33), and the ransom logion in Mark 10:45, which I interpreted as a reference to Jesus's death being a ransom paid to Satan. This chapter also served to provide a reading of Mark in which the exorcisms in the first half of the Gospel are related to Jesus's death in the second half, which interpreters rarely consider.

The main contribution of this thesis is christological in nature. That is, it aims to offer insight into both *who* the Markan Jesus is, and *what* he does to deliver people. In terms of Jesus's identity, this thesis argues in support of a divine christology in the Gospel of Mark via extensive consideration of the demonological material. Departing from standard exorcistic practices, the Markan Jesus never evokes a power outside of himself in order to subjugate demons. Further, the demons show an intense eschatological dread when they encounter Jesus, which one might expect them to express at the eschatological advent of Israel's God based on various Second Temple Jewish traditions.

Whereas in his exorcistic ministry, Jesus frees one person at a time from demons (and therefore from Satan, the ruler of the demons; 3:22), Jesus also redeems a great many people from

Satan's dominion in his death which acts as an acceptable ransom payment to Satan. Thus in the reading of Mark's Gospel which I have proposed in this thesis, the conflict between God and Jesus on the one hand, and Satan and the demons on the other is central to the narrative as a whole. The primary soteriological motif in Mark is concerned with the freedom of humans from Satan's reign, which comes through Jesus giving himself to Satan in his death, where he is abandoned by God so that many others would be released and received into God's people.

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