

TOPICAL OUTLINE FOR “THE JEWISH GOSPELS”

Introduction

p.1--“...Jews and Christians were much more mixed up than they are now...”. [see pp. 21-22]

p.2--“The question was not 'Is a divine Messiah coming?' but only “Is this carpenter from Nazareth the One we are expecting?’ Not surprisingly, some Jews said yes and some said no. Today we call the first group Christians and the second group Jews, but it was not like that then, not at all.”

p.2--“Everybody then—both those who accepted Jesus and those who didn't—was Jewish (or Israelite, the actual ancient terminology). Actually, there was no Judaism at all, nor was there Christians....the idea of a religion...to which one might or might not belong had not come on the scene yet and wouldn't for centuries....We are not talking about a separate institution, a separate sphere of 'religion,' still less of a 'faith' for the Jews...[rather] the complex of rituals and other practices, beliefs and values, history and political loyalties that constituted allegiance to the People of Israel, not a religion called Judaism.”

p.4--“In antiquity,...cult is an ethnic designation; ethnicity is a cultic designation.” (Paula Fredriksen)

p.10--“For centuries after Jesus' death...was an environment where many people, it would seem, thought that there was no problem in being both Jew and a Christian....many of the very items that would form the eventual checklist for being a Jew or being a Christian did not at all form a border line at that time.”

p.14--“Nicaea effectively created what we now understand to be Christianity, and, oddly enough, what we now understand as Judaism as well.”

CHAPTER 1 –From Son of God to Son of Man

p.26--“Son of God referred to the king of Israel, the earthly king of David's seat, while 'Son of Man' referred to a heavenly figure and not a human being at all.”

pp.27-8--“Samuel pours a vial of oil over the head of Saul and then explicitly names him King of Israel. This king of Israel has been appointed by God to be the ruler of Israel, to be charismatic, and to represent Israel before God....No awaited or future divine king is contemplated in any of these instances. The term *Mashiach* throughout the Hebrew Bible means a historical actual reigning human king of Israel, neither more nor less.”

p.29--“...early on the term 'Son of God' was used to refer to the Davidic king without any hints of incarnation of the deity in the king...”

p.30--“The people...went into exile in Babylonia...when they were allowed to come back...there

was no more Davidic kingdom and no glorious kind ruling in Jerusalem....In this prayer for an absent king, for a new kind of the House of David, the seeds are planted...of the notion of a promised Redeemer, a new King David whom God would send at the end of days.”

p.44--”The Messiah-Christ existed as a Jewish idea long before the baby Jesus was born in Nazareth. That is, the idea of a second God as viceroy to God the Father is one of the oldest of theological ideas in Israel. Daniel 7 brings into the present a fragment of what is perhaps the most ancient of religious visions of Israel...”

P.45--”...the ancient relationship between the gods 'El and Ba'al in which Ba'al comes near in his shining storm cloud. 'El is the transcendent one. 'El, the ancient sky god of all the Canaanites (his name comes to mean just 'God' in biblical Hebrew), was the god of justice, while his younger associate, named Ba'al by most of the Canaanites—but not the Israelites, who called him Yahweh—was the god of war. In the biblical religion, in order to form a more perfect monotheism, these two divinities have been merged into one, but not quite seamlessly.”

p.45--”A God that is very far away generates—almost invariably—a need for a God who is closer; a God who judges us requires almost inevitably a God who will fight for us and defend us (as long as the second God is completely subordinate to the first, the principle of monotheism is not violated).”

p.45-6--”The unconstructed relic of Israel's past...that we find in the two-thrones theophany of Daniel 7...became the progenitors of the Judaism of Jesus and his followers.”

Daniel 7 (2nd century B.C.)

p.39—Text, Daniel 7:9-14

p.40--”The act of coming with clouds suggests a theophany of Yahwe himself. If Daniel 7:13 does not refer to a divine being, then it is the only exception out of about seventy passages in the Old Testament.” [J.A. Emerton]

p.40--”This, in effect, means that Dan. 7 knows of two divinities, the Head [Ancient] of Days and the Son of Man.” [Matthew Black] Those two divinities, in the course of time, would end up being the first two persons of the Trinity.”

p.49--”El was the general Canaanite high divinity while Yahweh was the Ba'al-like divinity of a small group of southern Canaanites, the Hebrews, with 'El a very distant absence for these Hebrews. When the groups merged and emerged as Israel, Yahweh, the Israelite version of Ba'al, became assimilated to 'El as the high God, and their attributes largely merged into one doubled God, with 'El receiving his warlike stormgod characteristics from Yahweh....the ancient 'El and Yahweh...apparently merged at some early point in Israelo-Canaanite history, thus producing a rather tense and unstable monotheism....This tension and resultant splitting

manifests itself in the traditions behind the Daniel 7 theophany, where we see a new young one, apparently nameless until he comes to be called Jesus – or Enoch.”

p.46--”The two-thrones apocalypse in Daniel calls us a very ancient strand in Israel's religion, one in which, it would seem, the 'El-like sky god of justice and the younger rider on the clouds, storm god of war, have not really been merged as they are for most of the Bible. I find it plausible that this highly significant passage is a sign of the religious traditions that that gave rise to the notion of a Father divinity and a Son divinity that we find in the Gospels.”

p.46--”...even if the actual notion of the Messiah/Christ is not yet present here, the notion of a divinely appointed divine king over earth is, and that this has great potential for understanding the development of the Messiah/Christ notion in later Judaism (including Christianity, of course). The second-God Redeemer figure thus comes, on my view, out of the earlier history of Israel's religion. Once the messiah had been combined with the younger divine figure that we have found in Daniel 7, then it becomes natural to ascribe to him also the term 'Son of God'.”

p.47--”It follows that the ideas about God that we identify as Christian are not innovations but may be deeply connected with some of the most ancient of Israelite ideas about God.”

p.52--”There are thus two legacies left us by Daniel 7: it is the ultimate source of 'Son of Man' terminology for a heavenly Redeemer figure, and it is also the best evidence we have for the continuation of a very ancient binitarian Israelite theology deep into the Second Temple period.”

pp.50-51--“The young God in the original mythic text in Daniel is the figure who will redeem Israel and the world, not an exalted Davidic king [messiah]...we will have to try to understand better the relation of this divine Redeemer to the human one, the Davidic Messiah.”

pp.54-5—Two proposed origins for orthodox (“High”) Christology: 1) Originated only after Jewish Christianity has been transformed by Hellenistic (pagan) religion and philosophy; ie, in the Gospel of John c. 100 AD; 2) “...it is possible to understand the Gospel only if both Jesus and the Jews around him held to a high Christology whereby the claim to Messiahship was also a claim to being a divine man.

p.56--”The reasons that many Jews came to believe that Jesus was divine was because they were already expecting that the Messiah/Christ would be a god-man. *This expectation was part and parcel of Jewish tradition.* The Jews had learned this by careful reading of the Book of Daniel....In that book...the divine figure is given sovereignty and made ruler of the world forever. I want to show that Jesus saw himself as the divine Son of Man...”.

p.57—[Jesus' forgiveness of sins] Text of Mark 2:5-10. Verse 10: “But that you may know that the Son of man has authority on earth to forgive sins'-- he said to the paralytic...”.

pp.58-9--"...what Jesus is claiming for the Son of Man is exactly what has been granted to the one like a son of man in Daniel; Jesus rests his claim on the ancient text quite directly...Jesus claims to be the Son of Man to whom divine authority on earth 'under the heavens' (Daniel 7:27) has been delegated. The sovereign, moreover, is the one who has the power to declare exceptions to the Law.

"The objection of the Scribes, calling Jesus' act of forgiveness 'blasphemy,' is predicated on their assumption that Jesus is claiming divinity through his action; hence their emphasis that only the *one* God may forgive sins, to which Jesus answers in kind: the second divine figure of Daniel 7, the one like a son of man, authorized to act as and for God. This constitutes a direct declaration of a doubleness of the Godhead, which is, of course, later on the very hallmark of Christian theology....the later Rabbis, in naming this very ancient religious view a heresy, refers to it as 'two powers in heaven'."

p.60—[Jesus is Lord of the sabbath] Text of Mark 2:23-28. Verses 27-28: [27]"And he said to them, 'The sabbath was made for man, not man for the sabbath; [28] so the Son of man is lord even of the sabbath.'"

pp.64; 67--"If it is the case, as it seems, that the Rabbis' law applies only to Jews, Jesus' extension of it is a product of the radical apocalyptic moment within which the Gospel of Mark is written, a moment in which the Torah was not rejected but expanded and 'fulfilled'-- to use Matthean terminology – a moment in which the Son of Man was revealed and claimed his full authority. The Son of Man, according to Daniel, was indeed given jurisdiction over all of the nations...this explains the extension of the Sabbath (and thus Sabbath healing) to them. Here in Mark we find a Jesus who is fulfilling the Torah, not abrogating it....[p.67] "This is not an attack on the Law or on alleged pharasaic legalism but an apocalyptic declaration of a new moment in history in which a new Lord, the Son of Man, has been appointed over the Law."

pp.69-70--The comparison to David [Mark 2:25-26] is, of course, very pointed and does suggest that the Redeemer of Daniel 7:13-14 is indeed understood as the messianic king, son of David. I would find here, therefore, clear evidence of identification of the Davidic Messiah with the Son of Man...Mark's saying about the Son of Man being Lord of the Sabbath is precisely a radical eschatological move, but not one that is constituted by a step outside of the broad community of Israelites or even Jews."

p.70--"...this divine figure to whom authority has been delegated is a Redeemer king, as the Daniel passage clearly states. Thus he stands ripe for identification with the Davidic Messiah, as he is in the Gospel [of Mark] and also in non-Christian contemporary Jewish literature such as Enoch and Fourth Ezra....The usage of 'Son of Man'...(and, more important, the concept of a second divinity implied by it) [is now understood] as the common coin – which I emphasize does not mean universal or uncontested – of Judaism already before Jesus."

Chapter Two:The Son of Man in First Enoch and Fourth Ezra: Other Jewish Messiahs of the First Century

pp.71-72-- Read “Exagogue of Ezekial”. “...if we find a figure distinguishable from God seated on God's throne itself, we should see that as one of Judaism's most potent theological symbolical means of including such a figure in the unique divine identity.”[Richard Bauckham] Following this principle, we see that in this text Moses has become God....If Moses could be God in one version of a Jewish religious imagination, then why not Jesus in another?”

p.73--”The single most exciting document for understanding this aspect of the early history of the Christ idea is to be found in a book known as the Similitudes (or Parables) of Enoch. This marvelous text (which seems to have been produced at just about the same time as the earliest of the Gospels) shows that there were other Palestinian Jews who expected a Redeemer known as the Son of Man, who would be a divine figure embodied in an exalted human. Because it is unconnected with the Gospels in any direct way, this text is thus an independent witness to the presence of this religious idea among Palestinian Jews of the time and not only among the Jewish groups within which Jesus was active.”

pp.74-75--”In the Similitudes of Enoch, a Jewish writer of sometime in the first century A.D. makes extensive use of the term 'Son of Man' to refer to a particular divine-human Redeemer figure eventually incarnated in the figure of Enoch, thus exhibiting many of the elements that make up the Christ story. Enoch's “'Son of Man' is the descendant in the tradition of Daniel's 'one like a son of man'.”

Referring to the Similitudes: “We certainly find blurring of the lines between human messiah and heavenly or angelic deliverer in the Son of Man tradition.” (A. Y. & John Collins, note 4, p.175.)

pp.78-79--Read text of 1 Enoch 48: 1-9.

p.80--”This piece of beautiful religious poetry forms an absolutely pivotal text for illuminating the Christology of the Gospels – as well as for demonstrating the essential Jewishness of that phenomenon. First of all, we find here the doctrine of the preexistence of the Son of Man. He was named even before the universe came into being. Second, the Son of Man will be worshipped on earth. “All who dwell on the earth will fall down and worship before him, and they will glorify and bless and sing hymns to the name of the Lord of Spirits.’ Third, and perhaps most important of all, in v.10 he is named the Anointed One, which is precisely the Messiah (Hebrew *mashiach*) or Christ (Greek *Christos*). It seems clear, therefore, that many of the religious ideas that were held about the Christ who was identified as Jesus were already present in the Judaism from which both the Enoch circle and the circles around Jesus emerged.”

pp.80-81-- Read text of 1 Enoch 69:26-29.

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p.81--"Here the Son of Man is clearly occupying his throne of glory, seated, perhaps, at the right hand of the Ancient of Days. It is hard to escape the conclusion that the Son of Man is in fact a second person, as it were, of God. And all of the functions assigned to the divine figure called 'one like a son of man' in Daniel 7 are given to this Son of Man, who is also called, as we have seen, the Christ."

p.82--"In the main body of the Similitudes, Enoch is *not* the Son of Man....In the end, however, in Chapters 70 and 71, Enoch becomes the Son of Man – he becomes God."

pp.88-89: Read text of Genesis 5:21-24.

Read text of 1 Enoch 70-71. (from separate hard copy)

p.89--"Something special happened to Enoch: not only was he shown visions and wonders and given understanding, but he was with God and he was not; he was taken by God. Chapters 70-71...explain what happens when Enoch walks with God; he becomes the Son of Man, and that is why he was no longer among humans. This literary move, interpreting the obscure text of Genesis by splicing together two apparently originally separate texts about Enoch, has had an enormous theological effect."

pp.90-91-- Two traditions are combined in the Similitudes of Enoch: the preexistent, second God, Redeemer of Daniel, now not only described as the Son of Man but so named, and the exalted antediluvian sage, Enoch, who went up to heaven because he walked with God, and God took him and he was not....we have here an instance of the 'Son of Man' as apotheosis, a man becoming God, and, at the same time, the 'Son of Man' as theophany, the self-revelation of God in a human....both elements are present in both versions [Gospel and Similitudes] of the *Jewish* Son of Man traditions."

pp.94-95--"All the elements of Christology are essentially in place then in the Similitudes. We have a preexistent heavenly figure (identified as well with Wisdom), who is the Son of Man. We have an earthly life, a human sage exalted into heaven at the end of an earthly career, enthroned in heaven at the right side of the Ancients of Days as the preexistent and forever reigning Son of Man. While the Gospels are certainly not drawing on the Similitudes, the Similitudes help illuminate the cultural religious context in which the Gospels were produced. As New Testament scholar Richard Bauckham so well phrased it,

'It can readily be seen that early Christians applied to Jesus all the well-established and well-organized characteristics of the unique divine identity in order, quite clearly and precisely, to include Jesus in the unique identity of the one God of Israel.'

In the worship of the Messiah/Son of Man/Enoch in the Similitudes of Enoch, we find the closest parallel to the Gospels....together they provide strong evidence for the confluence of ideas about the human Messiah, the son of David, and the divine Messiah, the Son of Man, in

Judaism by at least the first century A.D. and probably earlier.”

pp.99-100--”Two different strands of the religious imagination, one in which the ancient binitarianness of Israel's God is essentially preserved and transformed and one in which that duality has been more thoroughly suppressed, live side by side in the Jewish thought world of the Second Temple and beyond, being mixed in different ways but also contesting each other and sometimes seeking to oust the other completely. This background, I think, explains much of the religion of the Gospels as a continuation and development of a strand of Israelite religion that is very ancient indeed.”

p.100-- The Gospel of Mark and the Similitudes of Enoch are independent witnesses to a Jewish pattern of religion at their shared time. Texts are not religions...but they are evidence of the religion, tips of icebergs that suggest massive religious developments and formations below the surface...The territory was surely as bumpy and variegated as an earthly territory would be; as Carsten Colpe has put it, 'The differences in the functions of the Son of Man may be explained by the differences between the groups which expected Him and the times in which they did so.’”

p.101--”The great innovation of the Gospels is only this: to declare that the Son of Man is here already, that he walks among us. As opposed to Enoch, who will be in those last days the Messiah Son of Man, Jesus already is. As opposed to the Son of Man flying in the clouds, who is a vision for the future, Jesus has come, declare the Gospels and the believers. The last days are right now, proclaims the Gospel. All of the ideas about Christ are old; the new is Jesus. There is nothing in the doctrine of the Christ that is new save the declaration of *this* man as the Son of Man.”

Chapter 3: Jesus Kept Kosher

Chapter 4: The Suffering Christ as a Midrash on Daniel

p.129--”Over and over again, we find the commonplace (and commonsense) statement that what divides Christians and Jews most sharply is the idea that the divine Messiah could suffer and die...that was the tangible marker of an absolute break between Jews and...Christians.”

p.131--”After the Messiah Jesus' humiliation, suffering, and death, according to this view...the theology of Jesus' redemptive, vicarious suffering was discovered, as it were, in Isaiah 53, which was allegedly reinterpreted as referring not to the persecuted people of Israel, but to the suffering Messiah...”

pp.132-3--”This commonplace view has to be rejected completely. The notion of the humiliated and suffering Messiah was not at all alien within Judaism before Jesus' advent, and it remained current among Jews well into the future following that—indeed, well into the modern period....Jews, it seems, had no difficulty whatever with understanding a Messiah who would

vicariously suffer to redeem the world....That the Messiah would suffer and be humiliated was something Jews learned from close reading of the biblical texts...”

pp.133-134—Rather than seeing Christianity as a new invention, seeing it as one of the paths that Judaism took – a path as ancient in its sources as the one that rabbinic Jews trod – has a majesty of its own.

p.134—Although there is precious little pre-Christian evidence among Jews for the suffering of the Messiah, there are good reasons to consider this too no stumbling block for the 'Jewishness' of the ideas about the Messiah, Jesus as well....I am claiming that even this innovation, if indeed they innovated, was entirely within the spirit and hermeneutical method of ancient Judaism, and not a scandalous departure from it.”

p.134--”This point of the 'Jewishness' of the vicarious suffering of the Messiah can be established in two ways: first by showing how the Gospels use perfectly traditional, midrashic ways of reasoning to develop these ideas and apply them to Jesus, and second, by demonstrating how common the idea of a suffering and dying Messiah was among perfectly 'orthodox' rabbinic Jews from the time of the Talmud and onward....if this were such a shocking thought, how is it that the rabbis of the Talmud and midrash, only a couple of centuries later, had no difficulty whatever with portraying the Messiah's vicarious suffering or discovering him in Isaiah 53, just as the followers of Jesus had done?”

p,137—Read text of Mark 14:62. [“Hermeneutical method of ancient Judaism”]

p.137-139--”We learn several things from this passage. The first...is that 'Messiah' is for Jesus equivalent to the 'Son of Man.' Second, we learn that to be the Son of Man was considered blasphemy by the high priest and thus a claim not only to messianic status but also to divinity. When Jesus answers 'I am'...is precisely what Yahweh calls himself when Moses asks his name...Third, we learn that for the Jesus of the Gospels, the title 'Son of Man' derives from Daniel 7...the name for the divine redeemer of a high Christology, and thus constitutes the blasphemy of which the high priest speaks.

p.140--”...there is a direct allusion to the Danielic source of the narrative of the Son of Man, which is explicitly signaled by the words 'coming with the clouds of heaven.'...in [Mark] 14:62 he refers to the exaltation of the Son of Man, which is then cited again in [Mark] 9:12, 'as it is written.' The two verses thus complement each other.”

p.141--”It is precisely under the title Son of Man that Jesus predicates his sufferings. At the end of chapter 7 of Daniel, the symbol of the Son of Man is interpreted as 'the People of the Saints of the Most High,' who will be crushed for a certain amount of time...and then will arise and, defeating the beast, 'will receive the kingdom and hold the kingdom forever and ever.' "

p.141--”...the phrase 'the Son of Man must suffer many things, and be rejected' is a palpable

allusion to Isaiah 53:3, in which we are told that the suffering servant of the Lord 'is despised and rejected of men.' This...is very plausibly read about the Messiah.”

p.141;148-9--”the primary mode of early Jewish biblical exegesis is midrash, which is the concatenation of related (or even seemingly unrelated) passages and verses from all over the Bible to derive new lessons and narrative. It is midrash that we see at work here too.” [148-9] ”...midrash is a way of multiply contextualizing verses with other verses and passages in the Bible, in order to determine their meaning.”

pp.141-142--”The association of these prophetic texts with the Son of Man from Daniel is precisely what enabled the full development of a suffering Christology, according to which Jesus' demise (and exaltation) was interpreted....we find a Jesus who sees himself, imagines himself, and presents himself as entirely fulfilling the messianic expectation already in place to the effect that the 'Son of Man must suffer many things.”

p.144--”This narrative of the Messiah was not a revolutionary departure within the religious history of the communities of readers of the Bible but an obvious and plausible consequence of a well-established tradition of reading Daniel 7 as being about a divine-human Messiah.”

p.150--”The idea of a suffering Messiah is present in ancient, medieval, and early modern Judaism....Not only, then, is the Gospel drawing on Jewish tradition but this idea remained a Jewish one long after Christianity had indeed been separated off in late antiquity.”

pp.150-152—Read text of Isaiah 53:1-12.

p. 152--”It has generally been assumed...that Jews have always given the passage a metaphorical reading, understanding the suffering servant to refer to the People of Israel, and that it was the Christians who changed and distorted its meaning to make it refer to Jesus. Quite to the contrary, we now know that many Jewish authorities, maybe even most, until nearly the modern period have read Isaiah 53 as being about the Messiah; until the last few centuries, the allegorical reading was a minority position.”

pp.155-156--”...neither Judaism nor Jews have ever spoken with one voice on this (hermeneutical) theological question, and therefore there is no sense in which the assertion of many sufferings and rejection and contempt for the Son of Man constitutes a break with Judaism or the religion of Israel. Indeed, in the Gospels these ideas have been derived from the Torah (Scripture in its broadest meaning) by that most Jewish of exegetical styles, the way of midrash. There is no essentially Christian (drawn from the cross) versus Jewish (triumphalist) notion of the Messiah, but only one complex and contested messianic idea, shared by Mark and Jesus with the full community of the Jews. The description of the Christ as predicting his own suffering and then that very suffering in the Passion narrative, the Passion of the Christ, does not in any way then contradict the assertion of Martin Hengel that 'Christianity grew *entirely* out of Jewish soil'.”

Epilogue—The Jewish Gospel

p.157--"...Christianity hijacked not only the Old Testament but the New Testament as well by turning that thoroughly Jewish text away from its cultural origins among the Jewish communities of Palestine in the first century and making it an attack on the traditions of the Jews, traditions that [the NT Gospel initially] sought to uphold and not destroy, traditions that give the narrative its richest literary and hermeneutical context."

p.157-158--"...the New Testament is...deeply embedded within Second Temple Jewish life and thought...in the very moments that we take to be most characteristically Christian as opposed to Jewish: [1] the notion of a dual godhead with a Father and a Son; [2] the notion of a Redeemer who himself will be both God and man, and [3] the notion that this Redeemer would suffer and die as part of the salvational process....the Father/Son godhead and the suffering savior have deep roots in the Hebrew Bible...and may be among some of the most ancient ideas about God and the world that the Israelite people ever held."

p.158--"Many, perhaps even most, New Testament scholars today argue that the most striking parts of the Jesus story as told in the Gospels – that he was the Messiah, the Son of Man; that he died and was resurrected; and that he is to be worshipped as God – all stem ex eventu (after the fact) from the earliest followers of Jesus, who developed these ideas in the wake of his death and their experiences of his resurrection appearances."

p.159--"The historian in me rebels at such an account. Taking even the remarkable nature of Jesus...as the historical explanation for a world-shifting revision of beliefs and practices seems to me hardly plausible. It may have been necessary...but it was hardly sufficient....the notion that some kind of experience of the risen Christ preceded and gave rise to the idea that he would rise seems to me so unlikely as to be incredible....surely this must be because they had a narrative that led them to expect such appearances, and not that the appearances gave rise to the narrative."

p.159-160--"An alternative account...[a] people had been for centuries talking about, thinking about, and reading about a new kind, a son of David, who come to redeem them...they had come to think of that king as a second, younger, divine figure on the basis of the Book of Daniel's reflection of that very ancient tradition. So they were persuaded to see in Jesus of Nazareth the one whom they had expected to come: the Messiah, the Christ....all developed out of close midrashic reading of the biblical materials and fulfilled in his life and death."

p.160--"The exaltation and resurrection experiences of his followers are a product of the narrative, not a cause of it. This is not to deny any creativity on the part of Jesus or his early or later followers, but only to suggest strongly that such creativity is most richly and compellingly read within the Jewish textual and intertextual world, the echo chamber of a Jewish soundscape

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