

Yesterday I started mounting the case that rather than being a zealot interested in a military overthrow of the Romans to reclaim the land for God, Jesus was an apocalypticist who believed that God himself would intervene in history to destroy the forces of evil (presumably including the Romans; and certainly including the Jews who were not “on the right side”) to set up his kingdom.

It is worth re-emphasizing that all over the map in our early sources Jesus speaks about the Kingdom of God. He does not speak about the Kingdom of Israel, or about the use of military force (I’ll get to the scattered exceptions eventually), or about “retaking the land.” This is a key point because Aslan thinks that for Jesus it was all about getting rid of the Romans and taking the land back; but Jesus doesn’t talk about that in our earliest sources - even the ones that Aslan cites (as I showed in earlier posts: unlike zealots, Jesus told his followers that they *should* pay taxes to Rome!). He instead talks about the coming Kingdom, to be brought in a cosmic act of supernatural force, by the judge sent from heaven, the Son of Man. (I’ll say more about that figure in a later post.)

In any event, yesterday I showed that the teachings of the coming Son of Man (as opposed to the raising of the Jewish armies) was multiply attested, in all our earliest sources (Mark, Q, M, and L). As an intriguing side note, I want to stress that this heavily apocalypticized message comes to be muted in later sources, the further we get away, in time, from the historical Jesus. I make that point as well in my book on [Jesus the Apocalyptic Prophet](#), as follows:

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