

**The Messiah Is “the Holy One”:
ὁ ἅγιος τοῦ θεοῦ
as a Messianic Title in Mark 1:24¹**

‘The Holy One of God’ is found in Mark 1:24, Luke 4:34, and John 6:69

Language used to describe Israel’s ancient kings offered the building blocks with what the linguistic community of ancient Judaism and early Christianity used to construct their messianic ideologies. Scripturally literate Jews and Christians were very aware of ‘the holy one’ as one way of designating Israel’s anointed king, the Davidic ‘messiah.’

The anointed David is referred to as God’s ‘holy one’ in LXX [earliest Greek translation of Hebrew Bible] Psalm 88:19: ‘Help comes from the Lord, and from the Holy One of Israel, our king.’

‘I [YHWH] have anointed him with my holy oil.’

Mark’s descriptions of Jesus are similar to those found in the Psalm. God’s anointing correlates with receipt of YHWH’s strength [Psalm 88:20-21, LXX].

God’s Spirit comes on Jesus to empower him as ‘the Stronger One:’ Mark 1:7-11, 3:23-28.

YHWH delegates his cosmic power over the sea to David [88:26], the same power He displayed when he slew Yam and Rahab [88:10-11, LXX].

Jesus exercises the cosmic authority received from God to rebuke the wind and the sea [Mark 4:35-41, 6:45-52]

Other sources indicate awareness of the archaic tradition that the oil used to anoint Israel’s kings was holy: Psalm 89:21, Josephus *Ant.* 6.157

There is an underlying logical connection between ‘*messiah*’ and ‘*holy one*’ which illuminates certain features in Mark: Jesus’s baptism as a messianic anointing and his wilderness temptation [Mark 1:9-13]

There is a logical connection between the baptism-temptation sequence and Jesus’s first act of public ministry [1:21-28] and the exorcistic usage with the title of ‘son of David.’

Psalm 91 has features from which scholars elucidate the nature of Jesus’s temptation and his messianic role. The Psalm discovered in Cave 11 near Qumran has been reconstructed as being attributed to David, and forms the end of a collection used for performing exorcisms. ‘*Beasts*’ in verse 13 likely represents demons. The Exorcist is invited to take on the role of ‘*Solomon, David’s son.*’ God will command his angels concerning you to guard you in all your ways. You will tread on the lion and the serpent you will trample underfoot.

‘*I know who you are, the Holy One of God...have you come to destroy us?*’ The demon is aware that ‘Jesus’s baptism marks the ultimate demise of demonic entities: the Holy Spirit is the strength of God [1:7, 3:37] at work in the messiah, who has inaugurated ‘...holy war’ against Satan and demons.’

¹ Max Botner (2017). **Journal of Biblical Literature** 136 (2), 417-433. The author concludes that the aim of his study was to ‘rectify the marked absence of messianic traditions in discussions surrounding ὁ ἅγιος τοῦ θεοῦ in New Testament scholarship.’ He suggests that it functions as a messianic title in Mark as well as Luke and John because ‘some early Christians were aware of traditions that spoke of the Davidic ‘messiah’ as YHWH’s ‘holy one.’ The table above abstracted from this published article by Rev. Martha Rogers on 3/8/21.