

## ***The Background of the "Son of God" Text***

JOHN J. COLLINS  
THE DIVINITY SCHOOL, UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO

*E. M. Cook has proposed that the background of 4Q246 is to be found in Akkadian prophecies (BBR 5 [1995] 43-66). This interesting suggestion has the merit of expanding the horizons of the discussions, but it is not ultimately persuasive. 4Q246 has far closer parallels, both in its visionary genre and in actual phraseology, in the Book of Daniel. The argument that the "son of God" should be understood as a negative figure is in no way corroborated by the alleged Akkadian parallels. The argument still depends on the assumption that there is a single turning point in the text, and that everything before it is negative. This assumption is not warranted by comparison with other apocalyptic texts. By far the closest parallel to the language of 4Q246 about the "son of God" is found in the Gospel of Luke, where the "son of God" is associated with "the throne of David his father" and so is explicitly messianic.*

*Key Words: Son of God, messiah, Akkadian prophecies, Luke 1:32, 35; 4Q246; 4Q174; Psalm 2; 2 Samuel 7*

4Q246, better known as the "Son of God" text, was already the subject of scholarly debate for twenty years before its official publication in 1992, and has attracted renewed attention in recent years.<sup>1</sup> Most of the discussion has focused on the identity of the figure who is called "the son of God" and "son of the Most High" in col. ii, line 1. Scholarly opinion is divided between those who regard this figure as a future Jewish king (usually identified as the messiah) and those who see him as a negative figure (usually a Syrian king).<sup>2</sup> The editor

1. See especially E. Puech, "Fragment d'une apocalypse en araméen (4Q246 = pseudo-Daniel<sup>d</sup> et le 'Royaume de Dieu,'" *RB* 99 (1992) 98-131; J. A. Fitzmyer, "4Q246: The 'Son of God' Document from Qumran," *Bib* 74 (1993) 153-74; J. J. Collins, "The 'Son of God' Text from Qumran," in *From Jesus to John: Essays on Jesus and New Testament Christology in Honour of Marinus de Jonge* (ed. M. C. deBoer; JSNTSup 84; Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1993) 65-82.

2. The messianic interpretation was originally proposed by F. M. Cross and the negative interpretation by J. T. Milik. Neither scholar has published his full analysis of the text.

of the text, Emile Puech, insists that neither interpretation can be excluded. Recently E. M. Cook has offered the most extensive defense to date of the negative interpretation, and has also broadened the discussion by attempting to place the text in a literary context.<sup>3</sup> It is Cook's contention that the most convincing background for 4Q246 is provided by Akkadian prophecy. The relevance of Akkadian prophecy to Jewish apocalyptic literature, especially the Book of Daniel, has long been recognized,<sup>4</sup> but Cook argues for a direct relationship with the Qumran text. I wish to argue, to the contrary, that while there is a limited relationship with Akkadian prophecy here, the primary background of 4Q246 is provided by Jewish apocalyptic literature and specifically by the Book of Daniel. I also remain convinced that the "son of God" figure is most plausibly identified as a Jewish messiah.

### THE AKKADIAN PROPHECIES

The Akkadian prophecies in question are a corpus of five texts, ranging in date from the late twelfth century BCE to the Seleucid period. The genre is described as follows by A. K. Grayson:

Akkadian prophecies are actually pseudo-prophecies, for they consist in the main of predictions after the event (*vaticinia ex eventu*). The predictions are divided according to reigns and often begin with some such phrase as "a prince will arise." Although the kings are never named it is sometimes possible to identify them on the basis of details provided in the "prophetic" descriptions. The reigns are characterized as "good" or "bad" and the phraseology is borrowed from omen literature.<sup>5</sup>

Grayson goes on to say that "the relation of the prophecies . . . to divination is purely stylistic."<sup>6</sup> At least some of these texts are pseudonymously ascribed to famous ancient figures (Marduk, Shulgi). In other cases, the beginning of the text is lost. These prophecies also share some features that are commonplace in ancient Near Eastern literature. Statements of the type "there will be a hard time in the land" (Uruk obv., line 9) and "confusion, disturbance, and disorder in the land" (Text A, first side, ii:13) can be paralleled from many sources, not least biblical prophecy.<sup>7</sup> Parallels of this sort have little

3. E. M. Cook, "4Q246," *BBR* 5 (1995) 43-66.

4. E.g., W. G. Lambert, *The Background of Jewish Apocalyptic* (London: Athlone, 1978).

5. A. K. Grayson, *Babylonian Historical-Literary Texts* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1975) 13.

6. *Ibid.*, 16.

7. E.g., Isa 24:17: "Terror and the pit and the snare are upon you, O inhabitant of the land." See also the remarks of S. A. Kaufman, "Prediction, Prophecy, and Apocalypse in the Light of New Akkadian Texts," in *Proceedings of the Sixth World Congress of Jewish Studies . . . 13-19 August 1973* (ed. A. Shinan; Jerusalem: World Union of Jewish Studies, 1977) 1.227, who points to several instances of *ex eventu* prediction for propagandistic purposes in the Hebrew Bible.

significance. The analogy with Jewish apocalyptic writings, and also with 4Q246, depends on the use of extended *ex eventu* prophecy and the particular, somewhat cryptic, way of referring to successive rulers ("a prince will arise"). It should be noted that a very similar style of prophecy is found in the Greek Sibylline Oracles, where a relationship to Akkadian prophecy cannot be demonstrated.<sup>8</sup>

The purpose of the *ex eventu* prophecy is to establish that certain events that have come to pass were predicted long ago, and thereby lend credibility to a real prediction at the end. (In some cases, the end of the prophecy is lost.) The Uruk prophecy "predicts" a sequence of events culminating in the restoration of Uruk by Nebuchadnezzar II. It then concludes: "After him his son will arise as king in Uruk and rule the entire world. He will exercise authority and kingship in Uruk, and his dynasty will stand forever. The kings of Uruk will exercise authority like the gods."<sup>9</sup> In this case, the prophecy appears to muster support for Awel-Marduk, son of Nebuchadnezzar II, by predicting that his dynasty would stand forever. The prophecies do not necessarily always support and justify the final reign. Grayson has suggested that the Dynastic Prophecy, which dates from the Hellenistic period, may have concluded with the capture of Babylon by Seleucus I, and characterized his reign as bad. If this is correct, the prophecy "is a strong expression of anti-Seleucid sentiment,"<sup>10</sup> and would have presumably either predicted or implied the overthrow of the Seleucids. The argument is tentative, since the end of the text is not extant. Grayson's suggestion is significant, however, in drawing attention to the *Babylonian* origin and perspective of these oracles. Cook's statement that "it seems probable that the advent of the Seleucids was accompanied by the dissemination of propaganda, including *ex eventu* prophecies of the Akkadian type" is pure speculation, unsupported by any evidence.<sup>11</sup>

## THE BACKGROUND OF THE "SON OF GOD" TEXT

In support of his contention that the Akkadian prophecies provide the most convincing background for 4Q246, Cook offers a list of twelve supposed "traits" that the Aramaic and Akkadian texts have

8. Grayson (*Babylonian Historical-Literary Texts*, 18) suggests that *Sib Or* 3:381-87 may be Babylonian in origin and related to Akkadian prophecy. But there is no evidence for Babylonian oracles, sibylline or other, composed in Greek. On the alleged Babylonian elements in the Sibylline Oracles, see P. Schnabel, *Berosos und die babylonisch-hellenistische Literatur* (Leipzig: Teubner, 1923) 63-93; V. Nikiprowetsky, *La troisième Sibylle* (Paris: Mouton, 1970) 39.

9. Kaufman, "Prediction, Prophecy, and Apocalypse," 224.

10. Grayson, *Babylonian Literary-Historical Texts*, 17.

11. Cook, "4Q246," 65.

in common. On examination, however, this list becomes much less impressive than it may initially seem. It is padded with commonplaces, such as "tribulation will come upon the land," "oppression and submission," and "'the sword' as a symbol of violence," which are in no way distinctive to Akkadian prophecies. Even some of the less commonplace motifs have biblical parallels closer to hand. The phrase "his kingdom is an eternal kingdom" is paralleled more exactly in Daniel than in the Uruk prophecy. "He shall judge the land in truth" recalls Isa 11:3-4. The idea that "the great God is his help, he himself shall fight for him," would hardly bring Marduk to the mind of a Jewish reader.<sup>12</sup> Some of the parallels require sleight of hand. "The people of God will arise" is offered as a parallel to "a prince will arise." The last line of 4Q246 col. i is read as "[his son] will be called Great, and by his name he will be designated." This provides a parallel to Akkadian prophecies about the succession of sons only because Cook has restored it so as to create the parallel; "his son" is not extant in the Aramaic. The meteors of col. ii line 1 are compared to "astrological omens of Text B." But the scholars who edited the Akkadian texts have long recognized that Text B does not belong to the genre of Akkadian prophecies.<sup>13</sup> When all this padding is stripped away we are left with only one parallel that gives any reason to suggest a relationship to Akkadian prophecy. This is in 4Q246 col. v, which Cook construes to read "A prince of nations [will arise]." The text is fragmentary and problematic, and no other scholar has construed it in this way. Even if Cook is right, however, we must bear in mind that precisely this stylistic feature of Akkadian prophecy is also paralleled in Dan 8:23-25 and 11:3-45.<sup>14</sup>

Only three words are preserved in 4Q246 line 5:

[וּנְחַשִּׁירוֹן רַב בְּמִדְיָנָה]

Another lacuna follows in the next line. Cook reads [לְמִדְיָנָה], but the trace of the first letter descends vertically, and cannot be *lamed*. The dot of ink above the line, which Cook takes to be part of a *lamed*, is too far to the right. The upper stroke in the other *lameds* in this text, are either vertical or incline slightly to the left. In no case is the upper tip to the right of the lower part of the letter. Cook's translation, "prince of nations," must at least be emended to "a prince in the city (or province)."<sup>15</sup>

12. See the biblical and Jewish parallels cited by Puech, "Fragment," 122.

13. Grayson, *Babylonian Literary-Historical Texts*, 15.

14. *Ibid.*, 21; Lambert, *The Background of Jewish Apocalyptic*, 9.

15. On the meaning of מִדְיָנָה see J. A. Fitzmyer, *The Genesis Apocryphon from Qumran Cave I* (Rome: Pontifical Biblical Institute, 1971) 138.

Most scholars who have commented on this text have taken רב as an adjective qualifying נחשירון, which is taken as a singular noun. Cook objects that "there is no such word as נחשירון," and that "the word is the plural of the normal Aramaic form נחשירו." He does not specify where he finds this "normal" form. Presumably it is in Syriac, and in a single occurrence of the emphatic נחשירוהא in a medieval manuscript of the Aramaic Levi apocryphon from the Cairo Geniza.<sup>16</sup> The word is derived from Persian, and extremely rare in any form in Aramaic. It occurs in Hebrew in 1QM 1. This sparse attestation hardly warrants the finality of Cook's pronouncement. We may grant, however, that it is better to read a form of the word that is attested once than one that is never attested at all. If נחשירון is a plural, then רב must introduce a new sentence, which is largely lost in the lacuna. It can be construed in more than one way; e.g. one might propose רב ב[מ]דינתא קרב ("great war in the city/province") or a similar construction. I find Cook's proposal attractive, however, and I am inclined to accept it. I merely want to make the point that the text is very uncertain, and that it provides a shaky foundation for the interpretation of the document.

If we accept Cook's reading of line 5, we have one plausible instance of an idiom of Akkadian style prophecy in 4Q246. Col. i line 7, ("he will be chief [רב] over the land") may be considered a second instance. Because of the fragmentary nature of the text, we cannot be sure how these figures are connected or related. In-between there is mention of "the king of Assyria and Egypt" but we do not know whether he is identical with either figure who is called רב or even whether the phrase refers to one figure (Cook) or two (Puech). It is probably safe to say that the column refers to a sequence of at least two kings, possibly more. Is this point of resemblance sufficient to establish Cook's conclusion that "the Akkadian prophecies provide the most convincing background for 4Q246"?

Not quite. Fragmentary though the opening column is, it still preserves some clear indications of the genre of the text. It is an interpretation of a vision. Col. i, line 3, refers to "your vision." Col. ii, line 1, refers to "the meteors that you saw." The opening lines describe how someone "fell before the throne." Cook himself interprets these lines as follows: "At the reception of divine inspiration, the interpreter falls before the throne, implying that the figure requiring his divinely given interpretive powers is a king or other royal figure."<sup>17</sup> Such a scene finds no parallel in the Akkadian prophecies; they are never presented as interpretations of visions. There are, however,

16. Cf. Puech, "Fragment," 112.

17. Cook, "4Q246," 49.

obvious parallels to this scene in Jewish tradition, as even Cook recognizes: "The situation, then, is similar to the biblical stories about Daniel or Joseph." The content of the interpretation is especially reminiscent of Daniel, even in those details that find parallels in the Akkadian prophecies, such as the succession of kings. Most notably, two phrases in column 2 correspond exactly to phrases in Daniel; in Cook's translation: "His kingdom is an eternal kingdom" (Dan 3:33; 7:27) and "His dominion is an eternal dominion" (Dan 4:31; 7:14).<sup>18</sup> These parallels with Daniel are far more precise than anything adduced from the Akkadian prophecies, and there is no uncertainty about the readings or the construal of the text. They suggest that the most convincing background of 4Q246 is not to be found in Akkadian prophecy but in Jewish apocalyptic visions. Cook's own reading of col. i, line 2, "to the world wrath is coming," also strongly suggests an apocalyptic context.

Other parallels confirm this conclusion. Craig Evans has pointed to parallels with Isa 10:20-11:16, a passage that is interpreted in a messianic sense in other Qumran texts, and also in the targum.<sup>19</sup> Assyria and Egypt figure in both texts. Both passages speak of a figure who "will judge the earth in truth" and who "will bring peace to the land." (Note especially the terminological parallels in the targum). There are also noteworthy parallels in 1QM 1 (נְהַשִּׁיר), Assyria and Egypt, the people of God), a passage that is also conspicuously indebted to the Book of Daniel.

#### THE INTERPRETATION OF 4Q246

Recognition of the appropriate background material makes a significant difference in the interpretation of the text. Cook proceeds on the assumption that it is largely *ex eventu* prophecy, like the Akkadian texts. The reconstruction of col. i, line 9, is crucial for this interpretation. Cook translates:

"[Likewise his son] will be called The Great  
And by his name he will be designated."

The words in brackets, which do not exist in the text, determine the interpretation. By restoring the text in this way, Cook makes the text speak of a dynastic succession, from father to son, in a way that is paralleled in the Akkadian texts. But the only "son" mentioned in the Aramaic text is "the son of God" in col. ii, line 1. The latter figure must also be the referent in col. i, line 9; there is no indication of a

18. *Pace* Cook, "their kingdom" is not a possible variant translation of מלכותה.

19. Craig Evans, *Jesus and His Contemporaries* (AGJU 25; Leiden: Brill, 1995) 108.

change of referent at the beginning of col. ii. If we ask by whose name this figure will be designated, we are given our answer in col. ii, line 1: "He will be called the son of God and the son of the Most High they will call him." The internal evidence of the text, then, requires that some reference to God/ the Most High be restored in the lacuna as the antecedent of "his name." Puech's suggestion, "[Son of] the great [Lord] he will be called" is plausible, and, unlike that of Cook, does not introduce any idea that is not already found in the text.

Cook, however, contends (p. 62) that "if the reconstruction given here is correct, the historical referent must be sought in a king of both Assyria (= Syria) and Egypt who is succeeded by a (*sic!*) arrogant son of the same name." He goes on to argue (p. 64) that "the Maccabean revolt immediately suggests itself as the true referent of 'the rise of the people of God.' The 'son of God,' in that case, would be Antiochus IV Epiphanes, a supposition that fits our textual reconstruction ('[also his son] shall be called Great, and by his name [Antiochus] he shall be designated'). The extension of the Seleucid realm under Antiochus III to include Palestine might be referred to in the fragmentary first column . . ."

But this reconstruction is clearly wrong on two counts. Antiochus Epiphanes was not called "the Great" and Antiochus III was never king of both Syria and Egypt. To suggest that he was called king of Egypt because he conquered Palestine (if that is what Cook means) is without any hint of support in any ancient text, and would be ludicrous in any case. There is a passage in Porphyry of Tyre (third century CE) that claims that Antiochus IV Epiphanes defrauded his nephew Ptolemy Philometor and had himself crowned king of Egypt during his first invasion of that country in 169, but Otto Mørkholm has shown that this account crumbles at a close scrutiny, and that Epiphanes "certainly did not assume the crown of Egypt in 169."<sup>20</sup> The only king who might be said to have ruled both Syria and Egypt was Alexander the Great, but there is no reason why he should ever be referred to as king of [As]syria and Egypt.

Cook's assumption that "the rise of the people of God" must refer to the Maccabean revolt is simplistic, and oblivious to the great bulk of Jewish apocalyptic literature. Virtually all Jewish apocalypses of the historical type conclude with "the rise of the people of God" in some form or other (e.g., the rule of "the people of the holy ones of the Most High" in Daniel or the salvation of the people of God in 1QM

20. O. Mørkholm, *Antiochus IV of Syria* (Copenhagen: Gyldendalske Boghandel, 1966) 83. 1 Macc 1:16 claims that Epiphanes aspired to become king of Egypt and rule over both kingdoms, but does not say that he did so.

1:5). In all the apocalypses, this is an eschatological event that remains in the future. Even the apocalypses that appear to be pro-Maccabean (the Animal Apocalypse and the Apocalypse of Weeks in *1 Enoch*) do not regard the rise of the Maccabees as the fulfillment of history. It is far more likely that the rise of the people of God is a future, eschatological event here too.

In fact, if the reference to "the king of Assyria and Egypt" in column 1 is to a single king, it is likely that the entire interpretation of the vision is future (relating to "the wrath to come") and that there is no *ex eventu* prophecy here at all. Even if the reference is to a king of Syria and a king of Egypt (as Puech suggests), this could still be part of an eschatological scenario, as we can see from the first column of the *War Scroll*, where the Kittim of Assyria and the Kittim of Egypt are mentioned separately.

### THE "SON OF GOD"

The identity of the figure who is called "the son of God" is not ultimately determined by the background material against which the text is read, important though this is. The argument turns on the construal of the logical progression of the text. The reference to the "Son of God" is followed by a situation where "people will trample on people and city on city, until the people of God arises (or: until he raises up the people of God)." There is a lacuna before the word "until" which strengthens the impression that this is a point of transition in the text. Those who see the "son of God" as a negative figure read the text on the assumption that events are reported in strict chronological sequence. They infer that the "son of God" belongs to the time of distress, and so must be a negative, evil figure. This inference is not warranted by comparison with other apocalyptic texts. It is quite typical of apocalyptic literature that the same events are repeated several times in different terms. Apocalypses such as Daniel, the Similitudes of Enoch, 4 Ezra, 2 Baruch and Revelation all juxtapose multiple visions that go over the same ground with different imagery. Within the single chapter of Daniel 7, the same events are presented first in the form of a vision, then in two successive interpretations, so that the kingdom is given, in turn, to the "one like a son of man," the holy ones of the Most High and finally to the people of the Holy Ones. I have argued elsewhere that 4Q246 should be read in this way, so that the coming of the "Son of God" parallels the rise of the people of God rather than precedes it.<sup>21</sup> It is true that the repetitions in

21. Collins, "The 'Son of God' Text," 70-71; *The Scepter and the Star* (New York: Doubleday, 1995) 158.

Daniel 7 are occasioned by the process of interpretation, and this is not overtly the case in 4Q246. The Qumran text does, however, refer to a vision in col. i, and the remainder of the text is presumably the interpretation of that vision. Even Cook admits that the setting of this text is especially reminiscent of Daniel, and that some phrases are found *verbatim* in both texts. These correspondences raise the possibility that 4Q246 is dependent on Daniel. If that were the case, the repetitions in Daniel 7 would be highly relevant to our understanding of 4Q246. Even if the parallel with Daniel 7 is not accepted, however, a second consideration should warn against the simple sequential understanding of the text. The appearance of a savior figure does not inevitably mean that the time of strife is over. In Dan 12:1 the rise of Michael is followed by "a time of anguish, such as has never occurred since nations first came into existence." No one suggests that Michael therefore belongs to the time of distress and is a negative figure. In 4 Ezra 13, the apparition of the man from the sea is followed by the gathering of an innumerable multitude to make war on him. The strife that follows his coming is described in terms that directly parallel 4Q246: "and they shall plan to make war against one another, city against city, place against place, people against people and kingdom against kingdom" (4 Ezra 13:31). It is possible then that the text envisages an interval of warfare between the apparition of the deliverer and the actual deliverance. So, while the order of the text may suggest *prima facie* that the figure who appears is called "son of God" belongs to the era of wickedness, this is not necessarily the case.

Two other factors strongly suggest that the one who is called "son of God" is accepted as a positive figure in this text. First, the title is never disputed, and no judgment is passed on this figure after the people of God arises. Cook cites several examples of biblical polemic against the divine pretensions of foreign rulers. In each case, however, the figure in question is unambiguously condemned. Isa 14:13-14, cited by Cook, continues in v. 15: "But you are brought down to Sheol, to the depths of the pit" (not cited by Cook). In Ezekiel 28 the one who says "I am god" is told unambiguously: "you are not a god but a man." In Psalm 82, the "sons of the Most High" are told: "you shall die as men do, fall like any prince." The hybristic pretensions of Antiochus Epiphanes in Daniel 8 and 11 lead directly and very explicitly to his downfall. It would be truly extraordinary if the figure in 4Q246 were an impostor and this was never pointed out. Second, by far the closest parallel to the titles in question is explicitly messianic. In Luke 1:32 the angel Gabriel tells Mary that her child "will be great, and will be called the son of the Most High, and the Lord God will give to him the throne of his ancestor David. He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there will be no end."

In 1:35 he adds: "he will be called the Son of God." The Greek titles "son of the Most High" and "Son of God" correspond exactly to the Aramaic fragment from Qumran. (Note also the reference in both texts to an everlasting kingdom). The fact that these parallels are found in the New Testament does not lessen their relevance to the cultural context of the Qumran text. Neither Cook nor anyone else has been able to adduce a parallel of comparable precision from any other source. Whether Luke is dependent on the Qumran text or the parallel is due to "coincidental use by Luke of Palestinian Jewish titles known to him"<sup>22</sup> makes little difference for the significance of the parallel. Luke would hardly have used the Palestinian Jewish titles with reference to the messiah if they were hitherto associated negatively with a Syrian king.

The messianic connotation of "son of God," when applied to a future king,<sup>23</sup> has its basis in two biblical texts. In Nathan's oracle in 2 Samuel 7, God promises David: "Moreover, the Lord will make you a house. When your days are fulfilled and you lie down with your ancestors, I will raise up your offspring after you, who shall come forth from your body, and I will establish his kingdom. . . . I will be a father to him and *he shall be a son to me*." This text is the Magna Carta of Davidic messianism. When the Davidic line lapsed in the Second Temple period, this text was the basis of hope that it would be restored. Cf. Jer 33:20-21: "If any of you could break my covenant with the day and my covenant with the night, so that day and night would not come at their appointed time, only then could my covenant with my servant David be broken, so that he would not have a son to reign on his throne . . ." The second text that refers to the king as son of God is Psalm 2: "Why do the nations conspire, and the peoples plot in vain? The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together against the Lord and his anointed (מֶלֶךְ יְהוָה) . . . I will tell of the decree of the Lord: He said to me, 'You are my son; today I have begotten you.'"

The Psalms and the historical books were regarded as a store of prophetic utterances by the Dead Sea sect. Both 2 Sam 7:14 and Ps 2:7 are cited in an eschatological midrash, 4Q174 (the *Florilegium*). The "anointed" of Psalm 2 is read as a plural and interpreted with reference to God's elect people.<sup>24</sup> The interpretation of 2 Sam 7:14, how-

22. Fitzmyer, "4Q246," 174.

23. For the full range of meanings of the title "Son of God," see M. Hengel, *The Son of God: The Origin of Christology and the History of Jewish-Hellenistic Religion* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1976).

24. The psalm is interpreted in a messianic sense in the Midrash on Psalms and in *b. Sukk.* 52a (Evans, *Jesus and His Contemporaries*, 97).

ever, is explicitly messianic: "[I will be] his father and he shall be my son. He is the Branch of David who shall arise with the Interpreter of the Law [to rule] in Zion (at the end] of days."

If the "son of God" text is read as messianic, it fits nicely with everything we know about the Davidic/royal messiah in the Scrolls. He functions as a warrior to subdue the Gentiles: God will make war on his behalf and cast peoples down before him. Cook's interpretation, in contrast, requires us to posit a kind of Seleucid propaganda for which there is no other evidence.<sup>25</sup> It also requires us to suppose that Luke applied to Jesus, without explanatory comment, a title that had hitherto in Palestine carried "overtones of (spurious) divinity." I find such suppositions implausible and unnecessary.

### CONCLUSION

The results of our discussion may be summarized as follows:

1. 4Q246 is an eschatological prophecy presented as the interpretation of a vision. The closest parallels are found in Jewish apocalyptic writings, especially in the Book of Daniel. The features of Akkadian prophecy found in this text are also found in Daniel.
2. Cook's attempt to read this text as an *ex eventu* prophecy of Antiochus III and his son Antiochus IV fails. No Seleucid was ever king of both Syria and Egypt. The extant text never refers to anyone as the son of another human ruler.
3. The sequential logic of the text does not require us to regard everything prior to the rise of the people of God as negative. In apocalyptic writings we often find continued conflict after the initial manifestation of the savior figure (Daniel 12; 4 Ezra 13).
4. By far the closest parallel to the language of 4Q246 col. ii line 1 ("he shall be called the son of God") is found in Luke 1:32, 35, where the relevant terms are explicitly messianic. The messianic interpretation of 4Q246 remains overwhelmingly probable.

25. Cook, "4Q246," 55.