

**I. The Confession in Capernaum**

**A. The Devotion**

"Many" left, but Peter asks "to whom shall we go?"

**B. The Doctrine**

"You have the words of eternal life"

"You are the Holy One of God."

**C. The Dogmatism**

"We have believed, and have come to know" (Heb 11:1-3)

John 6:66–69 (ESV)

<sup>66</sup>After this *many of his disciples turned back and no longer walked with him.*

<sup>67</sup>So Jesus said to the *Twelve*, "Do you want to go away as well?"

As was often the case, Peter speaks for the 12

<sup>68</sup>Simon Peter answered him, "Lord, *to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life,* <- Acts 4:12

Indicates a definitive conclusion

<sup>69</sup>and *we have believed, and have come to know*, that you are the *Holy One of God.*" <- Jn 1:35, 41; Ps 16:10; Acts 2:27; 3:14

Turned back...

- "disciples" refers to the gathered crowd and NOT the 12

- Many in the crowd wanted Christ to provide bread for their stomachs (6:26)

- He had earlier done this very thing (6:1-14)

- On this occasion He is teaching the crowd about Himself as the bread of life (6:27-65; 4:7-15)

**II. The Confession in Caesarea Philippi**

Mk 8:27-29

Lk 9:18-20

**A. The Inquiry**

1) "Who do people say that the Son of Man is?"

2) "Who do you say that I am?"

**B. The Instruction**

1) *The Revelation About Christ*

2) *The Revelation About the Church*

**a. Foundation**

-Acts 4:10-12

-1Co 3:11

-1Pe 2:5-8

**b. Endurance**

**c. Authority**

Extended to all of the Apostles of Jesus Christ  
Mt 18:18

Matthew 16:13–19 (ESV)

<sup>13</sup>Now when Jesus came into the district of *Caesarea Philippi*, he asked his disciples, "*Who do people say that the Son of Man is?*"

Jesus' favorite self-designation...allusion to Dan 7:13. Occurs 30 times in Matthew.

<sup>14</sup>And they said, "*Some say John the Baptist, others say Elijah, and others Jeremiah or one of the prophets.*"

<sup>15</sup>He said to them, "*But who do you say that I am?*"

<sup>16</sup>Simon Peter replied, "*You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.*" <- Jn 1:35, 41

**Four Theories**

- 1. John the Baptist**  
-Mt 14:2 Herod's view
- 2. Elijah** - Believed to have been prophesied by Malachi to return in advance of the Messiah (Mal 4:5-6)
- 3. Jeremiah** - Legend (mentioned in the Apocrypha) said Jeremiah was coming back to prepare a way for the Messiah.
- 4. Some other prophet come back to life**

Note the definite articles

<sup>17</sup>And Jesus answered him, "*Blessed are you, Simon Bar-Jonah! For *flesh and blood has not revealed* this to you, but *my Father* who is in heaven.*

**Father**

-Bar-Jonah = Son of Jonah (Jn 1:42)

-Jesus says that this truth confessed by Peter was not revealed by his **earthly father** (Jonah), but instead by his **heavenly Father**.

<sup>18</sup>And I tell you, you are Peter, and on *this rock* I will *build my church*, and the *gates of hell shall not prevail* against it. **Cephas = Aramaic / Peter = Greek Both mean "Rock"**

**Rock**

-Peter = Πέτρος Petros

-Rock = πέτρα petra  
Play on words in the Greek...likely that Jesus is pointing to Peter's confession as the foundation of the church.

<sup>19</sup>I will give you the *keys of the kingdom of heaven*, and whatever you bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven."

### Turned Back...

#### **John 6:1–14 (ESV)**

<sup>1</sup> After this Jesus went away to the other side of the Sea of Galilee, which is the Sea of Tiberias. <sup>2</sup> And a large crowd was following him, because they saw the signs that he was doing on the sick. <sup>3</sup> Jesus went up on the mountain, and there he sat down with his disciples. <sup>4</sup> Now the Passover, the feast of the Jews, was at hand. <sup>5</sup> Lifting up his eyes, then, and seeing that a large crowd was coming toward him, Jesus said to Philip, “**Where are we to buy bread, so that these people may eat?**” <sup>6</sup> He said this to test him, for he himself knew what he would do. <sup>7</sup> Philip answered him, “Two hundred denarii worth of bread would not be enough for each of them to get a little.” <sup>8</sup> One of his disciples, Andrew, Simon Peter’s brother, said to him, <sup>9</sup> “There is a boy here who has five barley loaves and two fish, but what are they for so many?” <sup>10</sup> Jesus said, “**Have the people sit down.**” Now there was much grass in the place. So the men sat down, about five thousand in number. <sup>11</sup> Jesus then took the loaves, and when he had given thanks, he distributed them to those who were seated. So also the fish, as much as they wanted. <sup>12</sup> And when they had eaten their fill, he told his disciples, “**Gather up the leftover fragments, that nothing may be lost.**” <sup>13</sup> So they gathered them up and filled twelve baskets with fragments from the five barley loaves left by those who had eaten. <sup>14</sup> When the people saw the sign that he had done, they said, “This is indeed the Prophet who is to come into the world!”

#### **John 6:22–65 (ESV)**

<sup>22</sup> On the next day the crowd that remained on the other side of the sea saw that there had been only one boat there, and that Jesus had not entered the boat with his disciples, but that his disciples had gone away alone. <sup>23</sup> Other boats from Tiberias came near the place where they had eaten the bread after the Lord had given thanks. <sup>24</sup> So when the crowd saw that Jesus was not there, nor his disciples, they themselves got into the boats and went to Capernaum, seeking Jesus.

<sup>25</sup> When they found him on the other side of the sea, they said to him, “Rabbi, when did you come here?” <sup>26</sup> Jesus answered them, “**Truly, truly, I say to you, you are seeking me, not because you saw signs, but because you ate your fill of the loaves.**” <sup>27</sup> **Do not work for the food that perishes, but for the food that endures to eternal life, which the Son of Man will give to you. For on him God the Father has set his seal.**” <sup>28</sup> Then they said to him, “What must we do, to be doing the works of God?” <sup>29</sup> Jesus answered them, “**This is the work of God, that you believe in him whom he has sent.**” <sup>30</sup> So they said to him, “Then what sign do you do, that we may see and believe you? What work do you perform?” <sup>31</sup> Our fathers ate the manna in the wilderness; as it is written, ‘He gave them bread from heaven to eat.’” <sup>32</sup> Jesus then said to them, “**Truly, truly, I say to you, it was not Moses who gave you the bread from heaven, but my Father gives you the true bread from heaven.**” <sup>33</sup> **For the bread of God is he who comes down from heaven and gives life to the world.**” <sup>34</sup> They said to him, “Sir, give us this bread always.”

<sup>35</sup> Jesus said to them, “I am the bread of life; whoever comes to me shall not hunger, and whoever believes in me shall never thirst. <sup>36</sup> But I said to you that you have seen me and yet do not believe. <sup>37</sup> All that the Father gives me will come to me, and whoever comes to me I will never cast out. <sup>38</sup> For I have come down from heaven, not to do my own will but the will of him who sent me. <sup>39</sup> And this is the will of him who sent me, that I should lose nothing of all that he has given me, but raise it up on the last day. <sup>40</sup> For this is the will of my Father, that everyone who looks on the Son and believes in him should have eternal life, and I will raise him up on the last day.”

<sup>41</sup> So the Jews grumbled about him, because he said, “I am the bread that came down from heaven.” <sup>42</sup> They said, “Is not this Jesus, the son of Joseph, whose father and mother we know? How does he now say, ‘I have come down from heaven?’” <sup>43</sup> Jesus answered them, “Do not grumble among yourselves. <sup>44</sup> No one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws him. And I will raise him up on the last day. <sup>45</sup> It is written in the Prophets, ‘And they will all be taught by God.’ Everyone who has heard and learned from the Father comes to me— <sup>46</sup> not that anyone has seen the Father except he who is from God; he has seen the Father. <sup>47</sup> Truly, truly, I say to you, whoever believes has eternal life. <sup>48</sup> I am the bread of life. <sup>49</sup> Your fathers ate the manna in the wilderness, and they died. <sup>50</sup> This is the bread that comes down from heaven, so that one may eat of it and not die. <sup>51</sup> I am the living bread that came down from heaven. If anyone eats of this bread, he will live forever. And the bread that I will give for the life of the world is my flesh.”

<sup>52</sup> The Jews then disputed among themselves, saying, “How can this man give us his flesh to eat?” <sup>53</sup> So Jesus said to them, “Truly, truly, I say to you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, you have no life in you. <sup>54</sup> Whoever feeds on my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life, and I will raise him up on the last day. <sup>55</sup> For my flesh is true food, and my blood is true drink. <sup>56</sup> Whoever feeds on my flesh and drinks my blood abides in me, and I in him. <sup>57</sup> As the living Father sent me, and I live because of the Father, so whoever feeds on me, he also will live because of me. <sup>58</sup> This is the bread that came down from heaven, not like the bread the fathers ate, and died. Whoever feeds on this bread will live forever.” <sup>59</sup> Jesus said these things in the synagogue, as he taught at Capernaum.

<sup>60</sup> When many of his disciples heard it, they said, “This is a hard saying; who can listen to it?” <sup>61</sup> But Jesus, knowing in himself that his disciples were grumbling about this, said to them, “Do you take offense at this? <sup>62</sup> Then what if you were to see the Son of Man ascending to where he was before? <sup>63</sup> It is the Spirit who gives life; the flesh is no help at all. The words that I have spoken to you are spirit and life. <sup>64</sup> But there are some of you who do not believe.” (For Jesus knew from the beginning who those were who did not believe, and who it was who would betray him.) <sup>65</sup> And he said, “This is why I told you that no one can come to me unless it is granted him by the Father.”

#### **John 4:7–15 (ESV)**

<sup>7</sup> A woman from Samaria came to draw water. Jesus said to her, “Give me a drink.” <sup>8</sup> (For his disciples had gone away into the city to buy food.) <sup>9</sup> The Samaritan woman said

to him, “How is it that you, a Jew, ask for a drink from me, a woman of Samaria?” (For Jews have no dealings with Samaritans.)<sup>10</sup> Jesus answered her, “If you knew the gift of God, and who it is that is saying to you, ‘Give me a drink,’ you would have asked him, and he would have given you living water.”<sup>11</sup> The woman said to him, “Sir, you have nothing to draw water with, and the well is deep. Where do you get that living water?<sup>12</sup> Are you greater than our father Jacob? He gave us the well and drank from it himself, as did his sons and his livestock.”<sup>13</sup> Jesus said to her, “Everyone who drinks of this water will be thirsty again,<sup>14</sup> but whoever drinks of the water that I will give him will never be thirsty again. The water that I will give him will become in him a spring of water welling up to eternal life.”<sup>15</sup> The woman said to him, “Sir, give me this water, so that I will not be thirsty or have to come here to draw water.”

### Words of Eternal Life

#### **Acts 4:5–12 (ESV)**

<sup>5</sup> On the next day their rulers and elders and scribes gathered together in Jerusalem,<sup>6</sup> with Annas the high priest and Caiaphas and John and Alexander, and all who were of the high-priestly family.<sup>7</sup> And when they had set them in the midst, they inquired, “By what power or by what name did you do this?”<sup>8</sup> Then Peter, filled with the Holy Spirit, said to them, “Rulers of the people and elders,<sup>9</sup> if we are being examined today concerning a good deed done to a crippled man, by what means this man has been healed,<sup>10</sup> let it be known to all of you and to all the people of Israel that by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom you crucified, whom God raised from the dead—by him this man is standing before you well.<sup>11</sup> This Jesus is the stone that was rejected by you, the builders, which has become the cornerstone.<sup>12</sup> And there is salvation in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved.”

### Dogmatism

#### **Hebrews 11:1–3 (ESV)**

<sup>1</sup> Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen.<sup>2</sup> For by it the people of old received their commendation.<sup>3</sup> By faith we understand that the universe was created by the word of God, so that what is seen was not made out of things that are visible.

### Holy One of God

#### **John 1:35–36 (ESV)**

<sup>35</sup> The next day again John was standing with two of his disciples,<sup>36</sup> and he looked at Jesus as he walked by and said, “Behold, the Lamb of God!”

**John 1:41 (ESV)**

<sup>41</sup> He first found his own brother Simon and said to him, “We have found the Messiah” (which means Christ).

**Psalm 16:10 (ESV)**

<sup>10</sup> For you will not abandon my soul to Sheol,  
or let your holy one see corruption.

**Acts 2:27 (ESV)**

<sup>27</sup> For you will not abandon my soul to Hades,  
or let your Holy One see corruption.

**Acts 3:14 (ESV)**

<sup>14</sup> But you denied the Holy and Righteous One, and asked for a murderer to be granted to you,

**Confession in Caesarea Philippi**

**Mark 8:27–29 (ESV)**

<sup>27</sup> And Jesus went on with his disciples to the villages of Caesarea Philippi. And on the way he asked his disciples, “Who do people say that I am?” <sup>28</sup> And they told him, “John the Baptist; and others say, Elijah; and others, one of the prophets.” <sup>29</sup> And he asked them, “But who do you say that I am?” Peter answered him, “You are the Christ.”

**Luke 9:18–20 (ESV)**

<sup>18</sup> Now it happened that as he was praying alone, the disciples were with him. And he asked them, “Who do the crowds say that I am?” <sup>19</sup> And they answered, “John the Baptist. But others say, Elijah, and others, that one of the prophets of old has risen.” <sup>20</sup> Then he said to them, “But who do you say that I am?” And Peter answered, “The Christ of God.”

**Jesus’ Declaration at Caesarea Philippi**

The gospel accounts present Caesarea Philippi as the site of a defining confession in the story of Jesus’ life. There, after Jesus asked the disciples who they believed Him to be, Peter confessed Him to be “the Christ, the Son of the living God” (Matt 16:16). In Matthew’s Gospel, the account continues with a powerful declaration by Jesus about the Church and its mission (Matt 16:13–20; see also Mark 8:27–29)—a statement that continues to inspire interpretation about the nature of the Church and its role in God’s redemption of creation (see note on Matt 16:18, see also note on Matt 16:19).

The Bible only records Jesus traveling to Caesarea Philippi on this one occasion. Why would He intentionally take a 14-hour walk (a 30-mile journey) away from the region of the Sea of Galilee where most of His ministry took place?

Caesarea Philippi is located in the northern part of Israel in a plain in the upper

Jordan Valley along the southwestern slopes of Mount Hermon. This ancient city was built on and against a majestic rock formation with lush vegetation. In biblical times, it served as the water source for the Huela Marshes that gave birth to the Jordan River.

Augustus gave Caesarea Philippi to Herod the Great in 20 BC. Formerly called Panion (and later Paneas), the city was renamed Caesarea Philippi by Herod's son, Philipp II, in 3 BC in honor of Caesar Augustus. The naming of this city as Caesarea Philippi differentiated it from Caesarea Maritima, which was located on the coast of the Mediterranean Sea. Herod also made the city the administrative capital of the region.

The city was formerly called Paneas because it housed a cave and spring dedicated to the Greek god Pan. A temple to Pan was built in the midst of the city at the mouth of this cave, where people would make sacrifices to him. According to a historic narrative at his temple, Pan was one of the few gods who could cross into Hades and return to earth. As result, this site was recognized as the gate of Hades in the disciples' day. Christ's declaration about the Church was given powerful significance because it was uttered here.

Given this, Peter confessed Jesus to be "the Christ, the Son of the living God" at the temple of a false god (Matt 16:16). Jesus followed by declaring that "on this rock" He would build His Church (Matt 16:18). He continued by professing that the gates of Hades (on which He may have literally stood) will not prevail against the Church (Matt 16:18). From that point on, He began to tell them of His impending sacrificial death that would make all of this possible (e.g., Matt 16:21).

Jesus fulfilled this declaration by dying on the cross and rising on the third day. Today, His Church is powerful and glorious while the temples of the Greek and Roman gods lie in ruins...CHUCK BOOHER<sup>1</sup>

## **Son of Man**

### **Daniel 7:13 (ESV)**

<sup>13</sup> "I saw in the night visions, and behold, with the clouds of heaven there came one like a son of man, and he came to the Ancient of Days and was presented before him.

### **Excursus: "The Son of Man" as a christological title**

During the last twenty-five years, more than a dozen books and scores of important articles on the Son of Man have appeared. This excursus on the Son of Man as a christological title will provide some of the evidence and its interpretation in the recent debate and will sketch in the approach adopted for the commentary. Good summaries of earlier treatments are found in the work of A.J.B. Higgins (*Jesus and the Son of Man* [London: Lutterworth, 1964]), J. Neville Birdsall ("Who Is This Son of Man?" EQ 42 [1970] 7–17), and I. Howard Marshall ("The Son of Man in Contemporary Debate," EQ 42 [1970]: 67–87). More recent treatments of the term and its major theological implications may be found in the works and bibliographies of C. Colpe (TDNT, 8:400–

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<sup>1</sup> Barry, J. D., Heiser, M. S., Custis, M., Mangum, D., & Whitehead, M. M. (2012). *Faithlife Study Bible*. Bellingham, WA: Logos Bible Software.

477), C.F.D. Moule (*Christology*, pp. 11–22), I. Howard Marshall (*The Origins of Christology* [Downers Grove, Ill.: IVP, 1976], pp. 63–82), the essays edited by R. Pesch and R. Schnackenburg (*Jesus und der Menschensohn* [Freiburg: Herder, 1975]), Goppelt (*NT Theologie*, pp. 226–53), Ladd (*NT Theology*, pp. 145–58), Dunn (*Christology*, pp. 65–97), Guthrie (*NT Theology*, pp. 270–82), Matthew Black (“Jesus and the Son of Man,” *Journal for the Study of the New Testament* 1 [1978]: 4–18), and Stanton (*Jesus of Nazareth* pp. 156ff). To this can be added the recent work by Maurice Casey and that of A.J.B. Higgins (*The Son of Man in the Teaching of Jesus* [Cambridge: University Press, 1980]).

The expression Son of Man occurs eighty-one times in the Gospels, sixty-nine in the Synoptics. In every instance it is found either on Jesus’ lips or, in two instances, on the lips of those quoting Jesus (viz., Luke 24:7; John 12:34). Outside the Gospels it is found in the NT as a christological title only in Acts 7:56; Revelation 1:13, 14:14 (Heb 2:6–8 is not relevant). The Gospel occurrences are usually classified according to the themes associated with the title: (1) the apocalyptic Son of Man who comes at the end of the age; (2) the suffering and dying Son of Man; and (3) the earthly Son of Man, engaged in a number of present ministries (in this context the title may serve as a circumlocution for “I”). Ladd (*NT Theology*, pp. 149–51) offers a typical breakdown of all the passages. There is some overlap of these categories and room for differences of interpretation. But of the thirty occurrences of “Son of Man” in Matthew, approximately thirteen belong to the first category (Mt 13:41; 16:27; 19:28; 24:27, 30 [*bis*], 37, 44; 25:31; 26:64; probably 24:39; and possibly 10:23; 16:28), ten to the second (12:40; 17:9, 12, 22; 20:18, 28; 26:2, 24 [*bis*], 45), and seven to the third (8:20, 9:6, 11:19–12:8, 32; 13:37; probably 16:13; cf. also the variant at 18:11).

The meaning of any term or title depends at least in part on the way it has been used before. Much of the debate surrounding the precise significance of “Son of Man” in the Gospels turns on the influence ascribed to one or the other of the following backgrounds.

1. Daniel 7:13–14 pictures “one like a son of man” who approaches the Ancient of Days and is given “authority, glory and sovereign power” and “an ever lasting dominion that will not pass away” in which “all peoples, nations and men of every language” worship him.

2. In Psalm 8:4 it is used generically for man.

3. In Ezekiel it appears repeatedly in the vocative as God’s favorite way of addressing the prophet.

4. Psalm 80:17 places “son of man” in the context of vine imagery in such a way that it clearly refers to the nation Israel.

5. In 1QapGen 21:13 it appears as a Semitism for man generically (“I will make your descendants as the dust of the earth, which no son of man can number”). According to Vermes, “son of man” or “the son of man” in Aramaic was used in Jesus’ day to refer generically to man or as a circumlocution by which a speaker might refer to himself (cf. G. Vermes in Black, *Aramaic Approach*, Appendix E; id., “The ‘Son of Man’ Debate” *Journal for the Study of the New Testament* [1978]: 19–32). But some of his claims must

be tempered by the more sober dating and philology of Joseph A. Fitzmyer (“Another View of the ‘Son of Man’ Debate,” *Journal for the Study of the New Testament* 4 [1979]: 58–68).

6. Many detect a background in the Similitudes of Enoch (1 Enoch 37–71) or other apocalyptic literature. Some have raised grave doubts that such literature is pre-Christian, based largely on the fact that the Similitudes are not found in the DSS copy of 1 Enoch; and if they are right, clearly the use of “Son of Man” in 1 Enoch 37–71 cannot have influenced Jesus’ use of the term (cf. Longenecker, *Christology*, pp. 82–88; Dunn, *Christology*, pp. 67–82). The consensus among specialists of 1 Enoch, however, is that the Similitudes were in fact written before Christ’s ministry, but that the “Son of Man” in these writings unambiguously refers to Enoch. The famous but unsupported emendation by R.H. Charles (“This is the Son of Man who was born unto Righteousness,” 1 Enoch 71:14) is without warrant: the text reads “Thou, O Enoch, art the Son of Man” (cf. further James H. Charlesworth, *The Pseudepigrapha and the New Testament* [Cambridge: University Press, forthcoming]). We thus reach an ironic conclusion: the similitudes are pre-Christian and therefore must be considered a possible influence on Jesus’ usage of “the Son of Man”; but they narrowly identify the figure with Enoch, and so whatever influence they exercised cannot be more than that of model or pattern, if that.

Against such diverse backgrounds, then, how are we to understand “the Son of Man” in the NT? Numerous proposals have been made, many of which fail to explain the evidence. The following are the most important.

1. Bultmann (*NT Theology*, 1:29–31, 49) made popular the view, later espoused by P. Vielhauer, H. Conzelmann, and H.M. Teeple, that Jesus never used the title “Son of Man” of himself but only of another figure coming in the future; and this future figure was based in Jesus’ mind on the apocalyptic redeemer figure in 1 Enoch. This idea has been developed by other scholars who say that Jesus originally justified his authority by referring to a future apocalyptic figure who would come and vindicate him but that the church connected that figure with Jesus himself. This will not do, for even if the Similitudes are not a late addition to 1 Enoch, the “Son of Man” figure there *may* not be an apocalyptic figure (cf. Casey, pp. 99–112) and in any case refers primarily to Enoch. Moreover the NT evidence connects Jesus with the Son of Man (e.g., Mark 14:62 and parallels); and, more important yet, any interpretation is called in question that flies in the face of the fact that the Gospel writers never use the term to describe Jesus but always report it as being on Jesus’ lips. On the face of it, this shows that it was Jesus’ favorite self-designation and that the early church respected this, even when it did not always know what to make of it (cf. further Jeremias, *NT Theology*, pp. 267f.).

2. Jeremias (*NT Theology*, pp. 257–76) has argued that some of the Son-of-Man sayings in all three classifications are authentic; but where in synoptic parallels one Gospel includes the reference to the Son of Man and another omits it (e.g., Matt 24:39–Luke 17:27; Matt 10:32–Luke 12:8), the latter is authentic. On the last point, some have argued just the reverse (e.g., F.H. Borsch, *The Son of Man in Myth and History* [London: SCM, 1967]). The weakness of Jeremias’s view lies primarily in the consistency with

which the expression occurs on Jesus' lips alone: if evangelists were adding the title to displace "I," it is at least strange they never use the title to refer to Jesus in contexts where there is no synoptic parallel. Here it seems best to side with Borsch, though we cannot be sure. Moreover Jeremias's chosen background runs from Daniel 7:13–14 in a straight line through the Similitudes of Enoch to the NT. Thus he depends on an established apocalyptic Son-of-Man figure that the sources do not support.

3. By appealing to Aramaic background, Vermes (Black, *Aramaic Approach*, Appendix E) argues that only those passages are authentic in which "Son of Man" is no more than a circumlocution for "I," by which the speaker refers to himself obliquely out of modesty or humility; the other uses in the Gospels are the creation of an apocalyptically minded church. Somewhat similar stances are adopted by Casey, who deems authentic the sayings that refer to mankind generally, and Barnabas Lindars ("Jesus as Advocate: A Contribution to the Christology Debate," BJRL 62 [1980]: 476–97; id., "The New Look on the Son of Man," BJRL 63 [1981]: 437–62), who argues that the use of the article (*ho*) in Greek, making the expression "that Son of Man" or "the [known] Son of Man" or "the [expected] Son of Man," shows that it was the translation of the tradition from Aramaic to Greek that gave messianic or Danielic meaning to the term. Therefore usages reflecting such meaning cannot be authentic. Quite apart from problems surrounding the dating of the linguistic evidence (cf. Fitzmyer, above), this theory postulates a creative church and a comparatively dull Jesus even though the evangelists consistently restrict the creative use of "Son of Man" to Jesus. The more it is argued that the church exercised a creative role in the theological development of this title, the stranger it is that the evangelists themselves do not apply the term to Jesus.

4. In his most recent book (*Son of Man*), Higgins reiterates and polishes his thesis that the "kernel" (i.e., authentic) sayings are all from Q and refer without exception to some of the future activities of the Son of Man, but not to his "coming" or "coming in glory," based on the "reasonable assumption of the existence of a Son of man concept in Judaism" (p. 124), and on a strange appeal to multiple attestation even though all his "kernel" sayings originally spring from Q (p. 125). Higgins says Jesus does not so much identify himself as the Son of Man (counterevidence, such as Mark 14:62, he ascribes to the church) as confine the term "to Jesus' clothing of his message of his anticipated judicial function in the judgment in symbolic imagery" (ibid.). The theory therefore falls under the strictures raised against 1 and 2.

5. C.F.D. Moule ("Neglected Features in the Problem of 'the Son of Man,'" in Gnilka, *Neues Testament*, pp. 413ff.; id., *Christology*, pp. 11–22), in contrast to Vermes, insists that the definite article (used everywhere except John 5:27) proves the designation to be titular, and thus whatever Semitic construction lay behind it, it must have referred to a particular, known "Son of Man." The only candidate is the figure in Daniel 7:13–14, possibly expounded in Judaism. This figure was understood to refer in a corporate way to "the saints of the Most High" (Dan 7:18); and, applied to Jesus, the title simultaneously affirms that he represents those saints and is a part of them. "Son of Man" is less a title than "a symbol of a vocation to be utterly loyal, even to death, in the confidence of ultimate vindication in the heavenly court.... Jesus is thus referring to the

authority (whether in heaven or on earth) of true Israel, and so, of authentic Man, obedient, through thick and thin, to God’s design” (*Christology*, p. 14).

Despite attractive features of this reconstruction, some reservations must be voiced. There appears to be more titular (indeed, messianic) force in some passages than Moule allows (e.g., Matt 16:13–20; 26:63–64); yet ironically he may be overemphasizing the significance of the definite article, since there is evidence in the Gospels that the people of Jesus’ day did not always understand the designation to refer to the “well-known” Son of Man (e.g., Matt 16:13–28; John 12:34).

The best explanation attempts to avoid the reductionism that is implicit in most of the previous approaches, which too quickly rules out certain kinds of evidence or takes them as late creations of the church. Apart from the fact that in the Gospels “Son of Man” is always found on Jesus’ lips, the authenticity of the Son-of-Man sayings stands up well under the criteria of redaction criticism (R.N. Longenecker, “‘Son of Man’ Imagery,” *JETS* 18 [1975]: 8–9).

But what did Jesus mean by the expressions? The simplest answer is that he used the term precisely because it was ambiguous: it could conceal as well as reveal (cf. E. Schweizer, “The Son of Man,” *JBL* 79 [1960]: 128; Longenecker, “‘Son of Man’ Imagery,” pp. 10–12; Hendriksen; Marshall, *Origins*, pp. 76–78). When Jesus vested the term with its full messianic significance, it could only refer to Daniel 7:13–14. He did this most often toward the end of his ministry when alone with his disciples and talking about eschatological events (esp. Mt 24:27, 30 and parallels), or when under oath at his trial (26:63–64). Despite the fact that the Danielic figure is often said to be a symbol for the saints of the Most High (Dan 7:18), this is not certain. A good case can be made for the hypothesis that “one like a son of man” is not a symbol for the saints (7:18, 27). *He* is in the presence of the Ancient of Days; *they* are on earth during the time of the “little horn” (v. 21). Perhaps “one like a son of man” secures the everlasting kingdom for the saints of the Most High (cf. W.J. Dumbrell, “Daniel 7 and the Function of Old Testament Apocalyptic,” *Reformed Theological Review* 34 [1975]: 16ff.; and esp. Christopher Rowland, “The Influence of the First Chapter of Ezekiel on Jewish and Early Christian Literature,” [Ph.D. dissertation, Cambridge University, 1974], p. 95). One “like a son of man” is a representative figure, not a corporate one; and the use of the symbol of the cloud rider favors a personal rather than a corporate interpretation.

Be that as it may, the messianic import of the title in some NT passages can scarcely be doubted. But Daniel 7:13–14 did not wield such large influence on first-century Judaism that simple reference to “the Son of Man,” even with the article, would be instantly taken to refer to the Messiah. John Bowker (“The Son of Man,” *JTS* 28 [1977]: 19–48) has decisively shown how many Semitic passages—in Ezekiel, Psalm 8, the Targums—use the term to contrast the chasm between frail, mortal man and God himself. This admirably suits a host of NT references, not only the suffering and passion texts, but others like Matthew 8:20. Jesus combined the two, Danielic Messiah and frail mortal, precisely because his own understanding of messiahship was laced with both themes.

We have already detected in Matthew the intermingling of Davidic Messiah and

Suffering Servant. While “Son of Man” captures both authority and suffering, it is ambiguous enough that people who did not think of the Messiah in this dual way would have been mystified till after the Cross. It may well have been an acceptable way for a speaker to refer to himself, in which case the titular usage could only have been discerned from the context. Moreover it would have been extremely difficult for Jews expecting a purely political and glorious Messiah to know what the title meant, because just when they thought they had discerned its messianic significance, Jesus inserted something about the Son of Man’s sufferings. That explains the perplexed question, “Who is this ‘Son of Man’?” (John 12:34; cf. Luke 22:69–70). Even the disciples who had at some level begun to recognize Jesus the Son of Man as Messiah (Matt 16:13–16) could not accept or comprehend Jesus’ repeated assertions that the Son of Man was destined to suffer and die (Matt 16:21–23; 17:9–12, 22, and parallels). Only when under oath and when it no longer mattered whether his enemies heard his clear claim to messiahship did Jesus reveal without any ambiguity at all that he, the Son of Man, was the messianic figure of Daniel 7:13–14 (Matt 26:63–64 and parallels); and then his opponents did not realize that an essential part of his messiahship was suffering and death. In Jesus’ ministry “Son of Man” both reveals and conceals. Therefore he chose it as the ideal expression for progressively, and to some extent retrospectively, revealing the nature of his person and work.

After the Passion, Jesus’ disciples could not help but find in his frequent earlier use of the term a messianic claim. Indeed, it is a mark of their fidelity to the separate historical stages of the unfolding history of redemption that in describing Jesus’ prepassion ministry they confine the designation to the lips of Jesus alone. Thus no reader of Matthew who through the prologue knows that Jesus though a man is more than a man and through 16:13–20; 26:63–64 knows that the Son of Man is the Messiah could fail to see irony in 9:1–8. Jesus forgives sins and performs a miracle so that the onlookers may know that the “Son of Man” has authority on earth to forgive sins; but the people praise God because he has given such authority “to men.” They are right (Jesus, the Son of Man, is mortal, a man born of woman, and heading for suffering and death), and they are wrong (they do not yet recognize him as more than a man, virgin born, and the messianic figure who appeared “as a son of man”—i.e., in human form—in one of Daniel’s visions). So the interpretation that prevailed from the second century on—that “Son of Man” designates Jesus’ humanity and “Son of God” his divinity—is not so much wrong as simplistic.

In Matthew 8:20, “the Son of Man” could easily be replaced by “I.” Moreover it occurs in a setting that stresses Jesus’ humanity and may foreshadow his sufferings. For postpassion Christian readers, it could only speak of the Messiah’s wonderful self-humiliation. For the teacher of the law (vv. 18–19), it was a great challenge just how great a one could only be known after the Resurrection.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> Carson, D. A. (1984). Matthew. In F. E. Gaebelin (Ed.), *The Expositor’s Bible Commentary: Matthew, Mark, Luke* (Vol. 8, pp. 209–213). Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House.

### Four Theories

#### **Matthew 14:2 (ESV)**

<sup>2</sup> and he said to his servants, “This is John the Baptist. He has been raised from the dead; that is why these miraculous powers are at work in him.”

#### **Malachi 4:5–6 (ESV)**

<sup>5</sup> “Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the great and awesome day of the Lord comes. <sup>6</sup> And he will turn the hearts of fathers to their children and the hearts of children to their fathers, lest I come and strike the land with a decree of utter destruction.”

### Bar-Jonah

#### **John 1:42 (ESV)**

<sup>42</sup> He brought him to Jesus. Jesus looked at him and said, “You are Simon the son of John. You shall be called Cephias” (which means Peter).

### Foundation

#### **Acts 4:10–12 (ESV)**

<sup>10</sup> let it be known to all of you and to all the people of Israel that by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom you crucified, whom God raised from the dead—by him this man is standing before you well. <sup>11</sup> This Jesus is the stone that was rejected by you, the builders, which has become the cornerstone. <sup>12</sup> And there is salvation in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved.”

#### **1 Corinthians 3:11 (ESV)**

<sup>11</sup> For no one can lay a foundation other than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ.

#### **1 Peter 2:5–8 (ESV)**

<sup>5</sup> you yourselves like living stones are being built up as a spiritual house, to be a holy priesthood, to offer spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ. <sup>6</sup> For it stands in Scripture:

“Behold, I am laying in Zion a stone, a cornerstone chosen and precious, and whoever believes in him will not be put to shame.”

<sup>7</sup> So the honor is for you who believe, but for those who do not believe, “The stone that the builders rejected has become the cornerstone,”

<sup>8</sup> and “A stone of stumbling, and a rock of offense.” They stumble because they disobey the word, as they were destined to do.

## Rock

**Πέτρος Petros**; a noun akin to 4073, used as a proper name; “a stone” or “a boulder,” *Peter*, one of the twelve apostles:—Peter(150), Peter’s(5).<sup>3</sup>

**πέτρα petra**; a prim. word; *a* (large mass of) *rock*:—rock(10), rocks(3), rocky(2).<sup>4</sup>

## Authority

### **Matthew 18:15–20 (ESV)**

<sup>15</sup> “If your brother sins against you, go and tell him his fault, between you and him alone. If he listens to you, you have gained your brother. <sup>16</sup> But if he does not listen, take one or two others along with you, that every charge may be established by the evidence of two or three witnesses. <sup>17</sup> If he refuses to listen to them, tell it to the church. And if he refuses to listen even to the church, let him be to you as a Gentile and a tax collector. <sup>18</sup> Truly, I say to you, whatever you bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven. <sup>19</sup> Again I say to you, if two of you agree on earth about anything they ask, it will be done for them by my Father in heaven. <sup>20</sup> For where two or three are gathered in my name, there am I among them.”

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<sup>3</sup> Thomas, R. L. (1998). *New American Standard Hebrew-Aramaic and Greek dictionaries : updated edition*. Anaheim: Foundation Publications, Inc.

<sup>4</sup> Thomas, R. L. (1998). *New American Standard Hebrew-Aramaic and Greek dictionaries : updated edition*. Anaheim: Foundation Publications, Inc.