

Recap

- We examined Isaiah 53 and Psalm 22 in detail.
- This is important for seeing how Jesus’ suffering and glory were predicted.

1. Jesus’ favorite title was “the Son of Man”.

- The Gospels use the title *Son of Man* 78 times.
- *Son of Man* in many ways is more significant than the title *Son of God*.
- Jesus was the *Messiah*, but He didn’t want His disciples to say so.
- Nevertheless, Jesus was being very clear about who He was. He wasn’t hiding His identity; He was managing it.

In many well-known verses, Jesus calls Himself the Son of Man:

- “Foxes have holes and birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay His head.” (Matt. 8:20)
- “...the Son of Man is Lord even of the Sabbath.” (Matt. 12:8)
- “Who do men say that I, the Son of Man, am?” (Matt. 16:13)
- “...the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many.” (20:28)
- “...the Son of Man has come to seek and to save that which was lost.” (Luke 19:10)
- “...as the lightning comes from the east and flashes to the west, so also will the coming of the Son of Man be.” (Matt. 24:27)

2. What is the difference between the titles “Son of Man” and “Son of God”?

What was the idea of sonship in biblical culture in general?

A son as a picture of a person exemplifying something.

In the ancient Middle East, if someone exemplified a characteristic or a quality, they thought of that person as being the “son” of that quality.

- You might call a flaming redhead the *son of red hair*.
- Barnabas was called that because he was the “*son of encouragement*.”
- People often say that Jesus prefers the title *Son of Man* because He wants to identify with us. But there’s more to it than that.

What makes Jesus a “son” anyway... isn’t a son less than a father?

In their **being** the Father and the Son are the same. They have the same nature. The Trinity is one “what” and three “whos.”

Perhaps these Persons of the Trinity are *the Father* and *the Son* because fatherhood and sonship was the relationship that would best describe to our small minds the parameters of their relationship.

Did God create fatherhood as a way to help us grasp Him? Paul says (Eph. 3) that He is the Father from whom every family in heaven and on earth is named.

Jesus **represents** the Father: *God... has in these last days spoken to us by His Son... through whom also He made the worlds... the brightness of His glory and the express image of His person... (See: Heb. 1:1-3)*

A third aspect of sonship is that a son can **reign** for his father.

In Hebrew thinking, the idea of the king as a son of God was also present (e.g., God takes David and Solomon as sons), but they purified that concept.

- They understood that Messiah would *function* as the Son of God. He would be a king whom God would consider His son.
- Messiah would establish the reign of God all over the world.
- But Jesus was not just the Son of God because He was **ruling** for God, but because God really **was** His Father.
- The Gospels show us that people understood that the Messiah was the Son of God. They just didn't know all that that meant.
- Peter joined together the two terms "Messiah" and "Son of God."
- The High Priest also said to Jesus at His trial, "... tell us whether you are the Christ, the Son of God."

Jesus was *related* to the Father, He *represented* and *reigns* for the Father, and in Jesus' very unique case, He is a *real* Son, one nature with the Father.

3. By using the title "Son of Man", Jesus was pointing us to Daniel Chapter 7.

Son of Man was not a new term. It comes from Daniel 7, where Daniel sees someone who looks like a Son of Man in Heaven.

"I was watching in the night visions, and behold, One like the Son of Man, coming with the clouds of heaven! He came to the Ancient of Days, and they brought Him near before Him. Then to Him was given dominion and glory and a kingdom, that all peoples, nations, and languages should serve Him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and His kingdom the one which shall not be destroyed." (Dan. 7:13-14)

- Perhaps you've heard people say *Son of Man* refers to Jesus' *manhood* and *Son of God* refers to His *Deity*, but it's much more than that.
- In fact, *Son of Man* is more of a Divine title than *Son of God*.
- *Son of God* or *Messiah* is His **function**, but *Son of Man* is His **identity**.

The Son of Man is a Divine figure who is actually **in** Heaven. He receives a commission from the Father Himself to rule Heaven and Earth.

- When Jesus calls Himself Son of Man, He's not just identifying with our humanity.
- He's claiming to be the One that Daniel saw, who will be sent into the world to rule over it.
- How did the Son of Man get back into Heaven to be sent down again? Through His death and resurrection!
- Jesus discusses this by pointing them to Psalm 110: "How then does David in the Spirit call Him 'Lord,' saying: 'The LORD said to my Lord, "Sit at My right hand, till I make Your enemies Your footstool"'?"
- In other words, if Messiah is David's son, and just a regular human being, how is He now in Heaven, and where did He get these enemies from?
- His origin and His ultimate destiny as the Son of Man was even greater than being the King of Israel, as great as that is.

4. Why did Jesus prefer the title "Son of Man"? Exploring Daniel Chapter 7.

A. Jesus wanted to point us to His true identity.

He was very consciously pointing us to Daniel 7, where we have a much clearer picture of His true identity.

1 In the first year of Belshazzar king of Babylon, Daniel had a dream and visions of his head while on his bed. Then he wrote down the dream, telling the main facts. 2 Daniel spoke, saying, "I saw in my vision by night, and behold, the four winds of heaven were stirring up the Great Sea. 3 And four great beasts came up from the sea, each different from the other. (Daniel 7:1-3)

- Daniel was given a vision of four symbolic beasts: empires which would oppress the people of God. Much of the vision focuses on the fourth beast, the empire of the Antichrist at the end of the age.
- That beast has ten horns, which are ten kings. Another horn grows up among them, speaking boastful things. That is a reference to the Antichrist.

9 "I watched till thrones were put in place, and the Ancient of Days was seated; His garment was white as snow, and the hair of His head was like pure wool. His throne was a fiery flame, its wheels a burning fire; 10 A fiery stream issued and came forth from before Him. A thousand thousands ministered to Him; ten thousand times ten thousand stood before Him. The court was seated, and the books were opened.

11 "I watched then because of the sound of the pompous words which the horn was speaking; I watched till the beast was slain, and its body destroyed and given to the burning flame. 12 As for the rest of the beasts, they had their dominion taken away, yet their lives were prolonged for a season and a time.

13 "I was watching in the night visions, and behold, One like the Son of Man, coming with the clouds of heaven! He came to the Ancient of Days, and they brought Him near before Him. 14 Then to Him was given dominion and glory and a kingdom, that all peoples, nations, and languages should serve Him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and His kingdom the one which shall not be destroyed.

- Heaven’s court is seated and passes judgment on the fourth beast.
- In verse 13, Daniel sees the Son of Man coming with the clouds of Heaven.
- In verse 14 He receives a kingdom which is both universal and permanent.

26 ...the court shall be seated, and they shall take away his dominion, to consume and destroy it forever. 27 Then the kingdom and dominion, and the greatness of the kingdoms under the whole heaven, shall be given to the people, the saints of the Most High. His kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and all dominions shall serve and obey Him.’

- Realize: Jesus’ understanding of Himself – and later the disciples’ understanding of who Jesus was – was built around this passage.
- This is an important key to understanding how Jesus thought of Himself, and why he emphasized the death of the Son of Man.

B. Jesus wanted to explain the fullness of His role more completely; He wanted to emphasize the fuller scope of the work of the Son of Man.

Read the accounts of Jesus’ trial:

55 Now the chief priests and all the council sought testimony against Jesus to put Him to death, but found none. 56 For many bore false witness against Him, but their testimonies did not agree. 57 Then some rose up and bore false witness against Him, saying, 58 “We heard Him say, ‘I will destroy this temple made with hands, and within three days I will build another made without hands.’” 59 But not even then did their testimony agree.

60 And the high priest stood up in the midst and asked Jesus, saying, “Do You answer nothing? What is it these men testify against You?” 61 But He kept silent

and answered nothing. Again the high priest asked Him, saying to Him, "Are You the Christ, the Son of the Blessed?" 62 Jesus said, "I am. And you will see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of the Power, and coming with the clouds of heaven." 63 Then the high priest tore his clothes and said, "What further need do we have of witnesses? 64 You have heard the blasphemy! What do you think?" And they all condemned Him to be deserving of death.

- Jesus admits that He is the Messiah, but deliberately makes the claim to be the heavenly figure seen by Daniel.
- The High Priest was so shocked that he broke the Law of Moses.
- In the Old Testament the One who rides the clouds is Yahweh Himself.
- Those clouds are the clouds of Heaven, but likely also a reference to clouds of people, namely the saints and the holy angels.
- The Son of Man is Himself God, as well as God's ruling King.

Now Enoch, the seventh from Adam, prophesied about these men also, saying, "Behold, the Lord comes with ten thousands of His saints, to execute judgment on all, to convict all who are ungodly among them of all their ungodly deeds which they have committed in an ungodly way, and of all the harsh things which ungodly sinners have spoken against Him." (Jude vv. 15-15)

Behold, He is coming with clouds, and every eye will see Him, even they who pierced Him. And all the tribes of the earth will mourn because of Him. Even so, Amen. (Rev. 1:7)

- Jesus, God in the flesh, is the Cloud Rider coming from Heaven!

C. Jesus wanted to avoid the political connotations of the terms “Messiah” and “Son of God.”

- Jesus knew that those terms were **loaded terms**.
- Jesus blessed Peter because Peter understood that Jesus was the Christ. However, Jesus had to rebuke Peter for telling Jesus not to go to the Cross.
- “And I, if I am lifted up from the earth [meaning, crucified], will draw all peoples to Myself.” (John 12:32)
- The people responded: “*We have heard from the law that the Christ remains forever; and how can You say, ‘The Son of Man must be lifted up’? Who is this Son of Man?*” (v. 34)

Jesus wanted to emphasize His identity as Son of Man, and reduce the false expectations concerning His role as Messiah.

5. Daniel 7 shows us the outline of the Gospel and salvation history.

Notice these elements of the Gospel from Daniel 7:

- God’s ruling King is in the form of a Man.
- Someone who is recognizably human is presented to God.
- This Man must therefore be brought up to Heaven.
- All peoples will serve Him. This implies Gentiles following Him, too.
- His Kingdom will last forever.
- The saints will be persecuted; however, the kingdom will be given **to** them.
- The Son of Man will have a people with whom He shares the kingdom and dominion. These people will participate in ruling the Earth with Him.
