

Jesus as BenAdam

(Son of Adam/Man)

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That Jesus was believed to be an historical figure known to the people of first century Palestine as Jesus of Nazareth is very evident in the Gospel of John. The personal and historical name "Jesus," and "Jesus of Nazareth" are found in 247 occurrences in this Gospel. There can be little doubt but that John wanted to establish the fact that the Jesus of his faith was a real historical figure, truly evidenced as a human being in the fullest sense of the word. Jesus of Nazareth was, in John's belief, "one of us."

Jesus is called "Lord" in the Gospel of John some 38 times. In a similar fashion, he is addressed as "Teacher" and "Rabbi" some 14 times, and is called "a Prophet" in 6 occurrences. The title "Christ" or "Messiah" is given to Jesus in 17 occurrences, with a number of other titles associated with the Jewish Messianic expectation. He is called "the one who is to come," "the one sent," "the one of whom Moses and the Prophets wrote," "the son of David," in some 16 occurrences; and the title "king of Israel" is used of him 12 times. John wishes to clearly establish that many of the people of Galilee and Judea believe Jesus to be the expected Messiah spoken of in the Hebrew Scriptures and in much of the Jewish apocalyptic literature of the time (e.g., the Dead Sea Scrolls, the Jewish Pseudepigraphal writings, and the Jewish oral tradition which later became the Rabbinic Traditions).

In John's Gospel one finds Jesus' self-designation, "the Son of Man," in 12 occurrences. It is used in a number of ways: (1) a poetic metaphor for an offspring of Adam (*ben adam* - son of Adam), a way of speaking of a human being; (2) it is used of an otherworldly figure who is from heaven but looks like a man (Daniel 7, 1 Enoch, 4 Ezra);

(3) he is a servant figure who suffers for the redemption of mankind (Isaiah 53).

Poetic Metaphor for a Human Being

The expression “son of man” is not found in book of Torah, nor in any of the historical writings. It occurs only in the poetic and prophetic writings. The oldest occurrence of this expression is found in the poetic books of the Hebrew Scriptures (*Tanakh*). It occurs first in Job 25:6, “How much less man (*enosh*), that is a worm? And the son of man (*ben adam*), which is a worm?” Also 35:8, “Your wickedness may hurt a man (*iysh*) as you are; and your righteousness may profit the son of man. (*ben adam*).” It is also found in Psalms 8:4, “What is man (*enosh*), that you are mindful of him? And the son of man (*ben adam*), that you visit him?” So also Psalms 146:3, “Put not your trust in princes, nor in the son of man (*ben adam*), in whom there is no help.” It is found also in Proverbs 8:4, “Unto you, O men, I call; and my (Wisdom-mwl) voice is to the sons of man (*ben adam*).” It is found in three occurrences in Ecclesiastes, “And I gave my heart to seek and search out by wisdom concerning all things that are done under heaven: this sore travail has God given to the sons of man (*ben adam*) to be exercised therewith,” (1:13); and 3:18-19,

I said in mine heart concerning the estate of the sons of men (beni adam), that God might manifest them, and that they might see that they themselves are beasts. For that which befalls the sons of men (beni adam), befalls beasts; even one thing befalls them: as the one dies, so dies the other; yea, they have all one breath; so that a man hath no preeminence above a beast: for all is vanity,” (Eccl 3:18-19).

In all of these occurrences we see this expression used as a poetic metaphor for man as a human being. In several of these texts we see an initial identification of man, using the Hebrew *enosh*, meaning, “man as a mortal.” This is followed in repetition for emphasis using the expression *ben adam*, the more poetic expression for man as an offspring of the original man – Adam. It is of no little significance that this term first occurs in the poetic writings of the Hebrew Scriptures. Poetry is essentially writing which addresses the

imagination and utilizes figures of speech, symbolism, types and archetypes, parallelism or repetition, emphatic constructions using redundancy, even double negatives, to express the thought, idea, or concept desired. This is clearly seen here in these occurrences. The subject is man, which is introduced with the generic term for mortal man, *enosh*, it is then followed with the more poetic expression *ben adam*, to include the offspring of man. The expression is intended to be expressive of mankind as a whole, all men, and their offspring as well.

This poetic metaphor is carried over into the prophetic writings, which are considered poetic in nature, especially within the class of poetry called "Hebrew poetry." In Isaiah 51:12 we read, "I, even I, am he that comforts you: who are you, that you should be afraid of a man (*enosh*) that shall die, and of the son of man (*ben adam*) which shall be made as grass;" and in 52:14, "As many were astonished at you; his visage was so marred more than any man (*enosh*), and his form more than the sons of men (*ben adam*);" and in 56:2, "Blessed is the man (*enosh*) that does this, and the son of man (*ben adam*) that lays hold on it; that keeps the Sabbath from polluting it, and keeps his hand from doing any evil." In all of these occurrences of this expression we see the same use of the poetic aspect of the term as is found in the poetic literature.

This usage is even more evident in Jeremiah, "As in the overthrow of Sodom and Gomorrah and the neighbor cities thereof, says the LORD, no man (*iysh*) shall abide there, neither shall a son of man (*ben adam*) dwell in it," (49:18). In 49:33, we read, "And Hazor shall be a dwelling for dragons, and a desolation for ever: there shall no man (*enosh*) abide there, nor any son of man (*ben adam*) dwell in it." In 50:40, "As God overthrew Sodom and Gomorrah and the neighbor cities thereof, says the LORD; so shall no man (*enosh*) abide there, neither shall any son of man (*ben adam*) dwell therein;" and in 51:43, "Her cities are a desolation, a dry land, and a wilderness, a land wherein no man (*enosh*) dwells, neither doth any son of man (*ben adam*) pass thereby," (51:43). So also in Micah 5:7 we read, "And the remnant of Jacob shall be in the midst of many people as a dew from the LORD, as the showers upon the grass, that tarries not for man (*enosh*), nor waits for the sons of men (*ben adam*)."

In all of these occurrences, the expression “son of man” is being used as a poetic metaphor for man as a human being, the offspring of the first man Adam. In fact, this expression becomes a poetic form of address for Ezekiel in his collection of prophetic visions. Throughout this book, Ezekiel is addressed by God as, “son of man - *ben adam*.” From chapter 2 on, in 82 occurrences, God address Ezekiel as “*ben adam*.”

And He said to me, "Son of man (ben adam), stand on your feet, and I will speak to you." ²Then the Spirit entered me when He spoke to me, and set me on my feet; and I heard Him who spoke to me. ³And He said to me: "Son of man (ben adam), I am sending you to the children of Israel, to a rebellious nation that has rebelled against Me; they and their fathers have transgressed against Me to this very day. ⁴For they are impudent and stubborn children. I am sending you to them, and you shall say to them, "Thus says the Lord GOD.' ⁵As for them, whether they hear or whether they refuse - for they are a rebellious house - yet they will know that a prophet has been among them. ⁶"And you, son of man (ben adam), do not be afraid of them nor be afraid of their words, though briars and thorns are with you and you dwell among scorpions; do not be afraid of their words or dismayed by their looks, though they are a rebellious house. ⁷You shall speak My words to them, whether they hear or whether they refuse, for they are rebellious. ⁸But you, son of man (ben adam), hear what I say to you. Do not be rebellious like that rebellious house; open your mouth and eat what I give you," (Ezekiel 2:1-8).

This usage is found in one other writing from the prophetic collection, the book of Daniel, where the expression is found in three occurrences. In Daniel 8, a being having the appearance of a man (*adam*) is told to interpret the vision Daniel has seen:

And I heard a man's (LXX anthropos) voice between the banks of the Ulai, who called, and said, "Gabriel, make this one understand the vision." ¹⁷So he came near where I stood, and when he came I was afraid and fell on my face; but he said to me, "Understand, son of man (ben adam) that the vision refers to the time of the end," (Dan 8:15-17).

Here Daniel, as Ezekiel, is addressed as a *ben adam*. Then in 10:15-18, we read of the appearance of another angel whom Daniel identifies as, “one having the likeness of the sons of man (*beni adam*),” in verse 16 and “one having the likeness of a son of man (*ben adam*),” in verse 18.

The Son of Man Figure in Daniel

Thus far, all references to the son of man are, essentially, poetic metaphors for a human, an offspring of the first man Adam – Ben Adam. In Daniel 7:13-14, however, we find a significant change. Here the son of man designation is used to identify the being Daniel sees as a human offspring of Adam, here an embellishment occurs which gives this son of man figure in Daniel’s vision far more significance and mysteriousness than we have seen used of this figure before.

I was watching in the night visions, and behold, one like the Son of Man (Aramaic, bar nasha; Greek LXX, huios anthropou) coming with the clouds of heaven! He came to the Ancient of Days, and they brought him near before him. ¹⁴Then to him was given dominion and glory and a kingdom that all peoples, nations, and languages should serve Him. His dominion [authority/rule] is an everlasting dominion [authority/rule], which shall not pass away, and his kingdom [reign] the one which shall not be destroyed. (Daniel 7:13-14)

Here we see the same metaphoric terminology with the “son of man” designation, but we are also introduced to a new dimension given this figure having the appearance of a man. This text is found in the Hebrew Scriptures in a dialect of Hebrew known as Aramaic. Rather than the Hebrew expression “*ben adam*” we have its Aramaic equivalent, *bar nasha*; it is, however, essentially the same, a poetic metaphor for a human being or offspring of the first man Adam. The characteristics identified with Daniel’s son of man figure are unique to the messianic hope of Israel and their longing for divine deliverance, as is reflected in the Isaiah 40-66. This son of man figure is identified as:

- One like the Son of Man,
 - He rides on the clouds of heaven,
- He comes into the presence of the Ancient of Days,
 - He is brought before the Ancient of Days,
- To him was given dominion and glory and a kingdom,
 - all peoples, nations, and languages would serve him,
 - His dominion has otherworldly characteristics:
 - it is everlasting and it shall not pass away,
- His kingdom/reign shall not be destroyed (the forces of darkness shall not prevail against it).

The Son of Man in the Apocalyptic Writings of Judaism

There was within the Judaism of the first century Mediterranean world a significant diversity of theological beliefs. This was true of Diaspora Judaism; due to the influence of Hellenistic thought on them, but Hellenism was just as much an influence on Palestinian Judaism as it was in the Greco-Roman world outside of Palestine, especially from Babylonian and/or Persian influences. There were core beliefs rooted in the *Torah* (monotheism, the ritual and moral covenant teachings of the *Torah*, etc.), but beyond that the theology of the people was very much eclectic, as is reflected in the diversity of sects within Judaism, especially in Palestine.

Sectarian Judaism

There was within the whole of first century Judaism and a number of theological and religio-political movements. We know of the theological movement and/or sect known as **the Pharisees**. These were a group of theological elitists who saw themselves as the only Jews faithfully practicing the rule of Moses and were loyal to the letter of the *Torah*. The **Sadducees** were more of a religio-political movement than a theological movement. They were the descendents of the Maccabees who had assumed the priesthood after the Maccabean wars, but those serving in the role of the high priest were not believed to be of the lineage of Aaron. The **Dead Sea Sect** (whom some identify with the **Essenes**) did not recognize the Sadducees as

scripturally authorized to offer sacrifice to God and, consequently, had separated themselves from the worship of Israel and had gone into the desert to offer the sacrifice of praise and purity in the place of animal sacrifices. The priests making up the Sadducees were sanctioned by the Roman Governor as the legitimate priesthood of Judaism and most of Judaism acknowledged them. The Sadducees were a sect in which only priests could belong to this sect.

There was another major religio-political movement called **the Zealots**. They were a terrorist movement who believed that the Roman occupation of Palestine was a sacrilege to the promise and will of God and must be overturned at all cost. The Romans called them the "*Sicarii*," taken from the Latin word for "dagger." The Zealots' were devoted to the overthrow of the Roman occupation of their land, sacrificing themselves in acts of terrorism, assassinating Romans and Jews in league with the Romans at every opportunity.

Popular Judaism

In addition to these designated sects of Judaism (all mentioned by Josephus in his *History of the Jews*) there was also the presence of what should be called "theological movements." These were not organized bodies, with a membership and acknowledged leaders; they were, rather, ideological movements based on a mind-set or belief/disbelief system. To such a category would belong the theological movements out of which grew Hasidim Judaism, the branch of mystical Judaism known as *Kabbalah*, Jewish Gnosticism, and even some philosophical movements influenced by such Jewish philosophers as Philo of Alexandria, who was much influenced by the Greek philosophers Plato and Aristotle.

Every movement or sect had a theology and/or ideology that gave them a unity. What the Dead Sea Sect, the Essenes, and the Zealots held in common was the belief that God was to someday appear to overthrow the enemies of Israel and drive them from the land he had promised to the descendants of Abraham. This view was embraced, not only by these various sects, but by most of the populace of Israel (the *'am ha'ares* - the people of the land), who were

not members of any particular sect or party within the Judaism.

These people could only be called part of a movement of thought or expectation, which was rooted in the longing desired for deliverance from the oppressors of the people of Israel. This movement was, without doubt, much greater in number than any or all the Jewish sects mentioned above. Scholarly estimates of the numbers of these sects runs from a few hundred to a few thousand: six thousand for the Pharisees as the largest Jewish sect (less than 2 percent of the total population), four thousand for the Essenes, and only a few hundred Sadducees, and even less for the Dead Sea Sect specifically. There are no numbers for the Zealots since they were a secret terrorist group.

The Writings of Judaism

The Sadducees left no writings of their theology or ideology, the only Essene writings are those found at Qumran on the Dead Sea (if they were Essenes), and the only writings of the Pharisee are those which eventually became the preserved oral traditions of the elders, called the *Mishnah*, which were put in written form at the end of the first century AD.

Other Jewish writings, however, did exist, which were not associated with a particular sect, and they appear to have been of significant influence and circulation in Palestine and Diaspora Judaism. These writings date from the second century BC to the end of the first century AD. They are not identified with any of the known Jewish sects of the first century period, even though they have similarities with the beliefs of *Kabbalah* and *Hasidim* Judaism. Rather, these are writings that were more likely a part of a movement within Judaism than a sect or organization. These writings all have a common agenda, a common purpose, and common themes. The agenda is an agenda of deliverance of Israel from its foreign oppressors, the purpose is that of planting hope within the nation of Israel that God would someday appear and usher in this deliverance, and the themes developing out of this literature had to do with the particulars of this deliverance: redeemer figures, heavenly armies,

sons of light and sons of darkness, the existence of angelic and demonic beings, with descriptions of conflict, battles, and wars between the forces of God and the forces opposing his will.

This movement is evidenced by a significant collection of writings, called by community of biblical scholarship, "Pseudepigraphal writings," because these writings are all attributed to a biblical hero figure who was believed to have been given revelation from God which were written down in scrolls and hidden until God chose to disclose them to later generations. It was also believed that some of the figures were sent from God to reveal event that were about to occur. The agents of this hidden revelation from God were such figures as Enoch, Baruch, Ezra, and many of the Patriarchs of Israel, whose spirits had been in the presence of God since their deaths on earth.

These writings must have been widely circulated in that copies of the most significant of these books have been found throughout the Mediterranean world, in a number of languages (Hebrew, Aramaic, Greek, Coptic, Syriac, et. al.). The fact that these writings have been discovered in such a wide spread area and were translated into so many different languages indicates that they must have enjoyed a significant popularity among the Jews of the first century AD. In fact, their popularity and influence was one of the factors leading to the rabbinic determination to develop and close the canon of the Hebrew Scriptures at the Academy of Jamnia at the close of the first century AD.

The Closing of the Canon of Hebrew Scripture

The closing of the canon of the Hebrew Scriptures did not occur until the end of the first century AD. One of the reasons for this action was to determine what writings were to be considered inspired of God and what writings were not. This implies that there were in circulation, writings not considered inspired by the rabbinic community. Those causing the greatest concern were certain esoteric writings claiming books written in ancient time and hidden from mankind until the time of the end. At this time God would make

them known so that Israel would know how to recognize the signs of the times and the signs of the coming of God's deliverance of Israel and his destruction of those responsible for the evil in the world. These writings were called "apocalyptic," from the Greek word *apokalupto*, meaning, "to uncover, disclose, or reveal;" thus, they are books that were hidden but are now uncovered, disclosed, or revealed. In fact, a number of these writings were called "Apocryphal Writings," from the Greek word *apokruphos*, meaning, and "hidden away."

These apocalyptic writings were known and read within the Judaism of the first century, but were banned by the council of Jamnia with the canonization of the Hebrew Scriptures at the end of the first century AD. Reference is made in rabbinic writings to "outside books/writings," which were not considered books which "do not define the hands," a technical term used by the rabbis to refer to inspired writings; i.e., writing which by their sacredness defile human hands." In the tractate Sanhedrin 10:1 of the *Mishnah*, Rabbi Akiba is represented as saying that among those who have "no part in the world to come" is "he who reads in outside books."

These books were read and quoted by the early Christian writers, but were also eliminated from use with the canonization of the New Testament Scriptures, which occurred in the late third century and early fourth century AD. Prior to this time they were quoted by early Christian writers, and even considered inspired by others. One apocalyptic writing was preserved in the New Testament canon, the book of Revelation, which in the Greek New Testament is called, *Apokalupsis Ioannou* - the Revelation of John.

Rediscovery of the Hidden Books

Within the past two centuries, archaeologists and biblical scholars began to discover ancient manuscripts of these writings, collected them, translated them into modern languages, and published them for public use. The primary documents of this collection are 1 Enoch, 2 Enoch, 4 Ezra, 2 Baruch, 4 Baruch, the Sibylline Oracles, Jubilees, Joseph and Aseneth, the Life of Adam and

Eve, the Psalms of Solomon, the Odes of Solomon, and the Testament of the Twelve Patriarchs. There are over 60 of these writings found in the collection done by James Charlesworth, *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha*, 2 Vols, but these listed are the most useful for a study of the literature of the apocalyptic movement of the first century period.

The most significant of these for New Testament backgrounds are 1 Enoch, 4 Ezra, and 2 Baruch, in that in these books the Messiah is identified with the Son of Man. In that Jesus chose this term as his self-designation, this is a matter of no little significance. The value of these writings, then, is the information they give concerning the kind of ideas, belief, and concepts that filled the minds of the Jews and others of the first century Mediterranean world. The fact that there was a genre' of literature in circulation prior to and during the life of Jesus, which contained terminology and imagery similar to that used by Jesus to identify himself to the people of first century Israel is of great significance to our understanding of what he was saying to these people and what they must have understood by what they heard.

Here we move to the most salient examples of this literature containing the terminology and imagery used by Jesus in speaking of himself as the Son of Man.

The Son of Man in the Apocalyptic Writing of 1 Enoch

At that place, I saw the one to whom belongs the time before time. And his head was white like wool, and **there was with him another individual, whose face was like that of a human being. His countenance was full of grace like that of one among the holy angels.** And I asked the one - from among the angels - who was going with me, and who had revealed to me all the secrets regarding **the One who was born of human beings.** Who is this, and from whence is he who is going as the prototype of the Before-Time?" And he answered me and said to me, **"This is the Son of Man,** to whom belongs

righteousness, and with whom righteousness dwells. And he will open all the hidden storerooms; for **the Lord of the Spirits has chosen him**, and he is destined to be victorious before the Lord of the Spirits in eternal uprightness (1 Enoch 46:1-8).

Here we see the following identifying characteristics of the Son of Man:

The **Son of Man** will have **a face like that of a human being**, with the countenance full of grace like one of the holy angels. **He was born of human beings**. He was before time, to him belongs righteousness, with him righteousness dwells.

.....

At that hour, that **Son of Man was given a name**, in the presence of the Lord of the Spirits, the before time, even before the creation of the sun and the moon, before the creation of the stars, **he was given a name in the presence of the Lord of the Spirits**.

.....

For this purpose **he became the Chosen One**; he was concealed in the presence of (the Lord of the Spirits) prior to the creation of the world, and for eternity and he **has revealed the wisdom of the Lord of the Spirits** to the righteous and the holy ones, for he has preserved the portion of the righteous because they have hated and despised this world of oppression (together with) all its ways of life and its habits in the name of the Lord of the Spirits; and because **they will be saved in his name** and it is his good pleasure that they have life (1 Enoch 48:2-8).

Those of the earth shall be humbled because they have denied the Lord of the Spirits and **his Messiah** (the Son of Man, the Chosen One?). **The Chosen One** stands before the Lord of the Spirits; his glory is forever and ever and his power is unto all generations. In him dwell the spirit of wisdom, the spirit, which gives thoughtfulness, the spirit of knowledge and strength, and the spirit of those who have fallen asleep in righteousness (1

Enoch 49:2-4).

In those days, (the Chosen One) shall sit on my throne, and from the conscience of his mouth shall come out all the secrets of wisdom, for the Lord of the Spirits has given them to him and glorified him. In those days, mountains shall dance like rams; and the hills shall leap like kids satiated with milk. And the faces of all the angels in heaven shall glow with joy, because on that day **the Chosen One has arisen** (1 Enoch 51:1-5; cf. 52:1-4).

All things Enoch has seen have happened by the authority of the Messiah (the Son of Man, the Chosen One?) The Lord of the Spirits has sat down on the throne of his glory and the spirit of righteousness has been poured out upon him.

.....

Then pain shall come upon them as on a woman in travail with birth pangs - when she is giving birth (the child) enters the mouth of the womb and she suffers from childbearing. One half portion of them shall glance at the other half; they shall be terrified and dejected; and pain shall seize them when they see that **Son of Man** sitting on the throne of his glory (1 Enoch 62:1-9; cf. 69:27-29).

Jesus' Use of the Son of Man Title

The expression or title "the Son of Man" is found in the New Testament in 82 occurrences, all in the Gospels. Eighty occurrences are on the lips of Jesus; the two exceptions are found in the text of John 12, where those hearing Jesus refer to the death of the Son of Man reply, "We have heard from the law that the Christ remains forever. How can you say that the Son of Man must be lifted up? Who is this Son of Man," (John 12:34)? The expression Jesus uses, as recorded by John, is the Greek "*ho huios anthropou*," the same expression as is found in the LXX of Daniel. If Jesus used the Aramaic expression, which is very possible, he would have used same expression as is found in the Aramaic text of Daniel 7, "*Bar Nasha*." The text of Daniel

7 is in Aramaic rather than Hebrew in the *Biblia Hebrica*, or the traditional Messoretic Text. The title in Hebrew is *Ben Adam*, as is found throughout the Hebrew Scriptures.

As has been discussed, the earliest use of this expression is that of a poetic metaphor for man as a mortal or human being, an *enoch* (a mortal being), or *adam*, (a man as created in Gen 1-2), one who is from the clay (*adamah*). This is the sense in which this expression is used throughout the Scriptures. It's used in Daniel 7:13-14, however, gives otherworldly characteristics to this being who looks human and is referred to as an offspring of Adam, a *bar nasha* (Aramaic), *ben adam* (Hebrew), or *huios anthropou* (Greek). The Son of Man figure of the Daniel text, however, is given embellishment of a heavenly being, who stands in the very presence of God: he has the appearance of a man or human being (a son of man), he rides on the clouds of heaven, he is in the presence of the Ancient of Days (God), is brought before or presented to God, who gives him dominion, glory, and a kingdom or reign wherein all people, nations, and languages serve him, his dominion is everlasting and shall not pass away (he is eternal), and his reign or kingdom shall not be destroyed.

The Son of Man as Ben Adam and the Apocalyptic Figure of Daniel 7

In John, Jesus takes up this expression as a self-designation and uses it as a circumlocution or poetic metaphor of a member of the human race. He is a *Ben Adam*, a human being, an offspring of Adam. But, in a way similar to the son of man figure in Daniel 7, Jesus speaks of himself as a human figure who has come from above, who is to die in his confrontation with evil, and will ascend back to the presence of God who sent him. This can be seen in the following: John 1:51, 3:13, 5:27, 6:27, 53, 62, 8:28, 9:35, 12:23, 34, 34, and 13:31.

Speaking to Nathaniel in John 1:51, Jesus uses the Son of Man title to identify himself as a *Ben Adam* as well as the Daniel 7 apocalyptic figure: "And He said to him, 'Most assuredly, I say to you, hereafter you shall see heaven open, and the angels of God

ascending and descending upon the Son of Man' In John 5:27, we see the same usage; Jesus tells the Jews in Jerusalem,

*Most assuredly, I say to you, he who hears My word and believes in Him who sent Me has everlasting life, and shall not come into judgment, but has passed from death into life. ²⁵Most assuredly, I say to you, the hour is coming, and now is, when the dead will hear the voice of the Son of God; and those who hear will live. ²⁶For as the Father has life in Himself, so He has granted the Son to have life in Himself, ²⁷and has given Him authority to execute judgment also, because He is **the Son of Man**. ²⁸Do not marvel at this; for the hour is coming in which all who are in the graves will hear His voice ²⁹and come forth--those who have done good, to the resurrection of life, and those who have done evil, to the resurrection of condemnation. (John 5:24-29)*

There can be little doubt that Jesus is here speaking of the Son of Man as an apocalyptic heavenly figure who has been given authority from God to judge the human race as well as the power to give life to the dead, both images consistent with the Dan 7 imagery.

The idea of giving life to the dead is also found in 6:27, "Do not labor for the food which perishes, but for the food which endures to everlasting life, which **the Son of Man** will give you, because God the Father has set His seal on Him."

The ascension imagery of the Son of Man riding on the clouds of heaven into the presence of the Ancient of Days (Dan 7:13) is seen in Jesus' statement of 6:62, "What then if you should see **the Son of Man** ascend where He was before? Then in 9:35 a reference is made to the glorification of **the Son of Man**, which appears to be Jesus interpretation of Dan 7:14,

He (the Son of Man) was given authority, glory and sovereign power; all peoples, nations and men of every language worshiped him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion that will not pass away, and his kingdom is one that will never be destroyed.

This saying is repeated in John 12:23, "The hour has come that **the Son of Man** should be glorified," and in 13:31, "Now **the Son of Man** is glorified, and God is glorified in him," both saying understood as a reference to his crucifixion. It is clear in all these references that Jesus is using the Son of Man figure, drawing on the apocalyptic imagery of Daniel 7, as is found also in the apocalyptic books of 1 Enoch, 4 Ezra, and 2 Baruch. The identification of the glorification of the Son of Man with his death on the cross is a creation of which Jesus is himself the architect.

*The Connection of the Son of Man
with the Suffering Servant of Isaiah*

The connection of the *Ben Adam* figure as man as a human being and heavenly apocalyptic figure of Daniel 7 are joined to the idea of the Son of Man as one who is glorified by means of his death on a cross of crucifixion is not an image or motif found in the apocalyptic literature. It is, however, the imagery of the suffering servant figure of Isaiah 52: 13-53:12. Jesus speaks of the Son of Man in the context of suffering and dying. In John 3:13-14; 6:53; 8:28 as well as 12:23 and in 13:31.

In John 3:13, speaking to Nicodemus, Jesus uses the title in the same sense, "No one has ascended to heaven but He who came down from heaven, that is, **the Son of Man** who is in heaven;" but in verse 14, another piece of imagery is added to it, that of the Suffering Servant of Isaiah 53, "and as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must **the Son of Man** be lifted up. Here Jesus is clearly talking about his death, which will be the death of the same Son of Man figure mentioned in verse 13.

Then, in 6:53, Jesus makes what is, perhaps, his most enigmatic statement concerning the Son of Man. He says to an assembly of pilgrim Jews in route to Jerusalem for the Passover Feast, "Most assuredly, I say to you, unless you eat the flesh of **the Son of Man** and drink his blood, you have no life in you." Jesus had fed this same group by means of a miracle the day before. He had left them but the follow him to the other side of the Sea of Galilee in order to be

fed again. Jesus' response to them was, "Do not labor for the food which perishes, but for the food which endures to everlasting life, which **the Son of Man** will give you," (6:27). In the discussion that develops we have what is called Jesus' "Sermon on the Bread of Life," in which he tells them,

Your forefathers ate the manna in the desert, yet they died. ⁵⁰But here is the bread that comes down from heaven, which a man may eat and not die. ⁵¹I am the living bread that came down from heaven. If anyone eats of this bread, he will live forever. This bread is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world," (John 6:49-51).

When the crowd responds by saying, "How can this man give us his flesh to eat?" Jesus make the statement, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, you have no life in you," implying that to feast on him is to receive spiritual nourishment from God. An additional possibility here is that Jesus was referring to his identity as the Lamb of God. These people were in route to Jerusalem for the Passover Feast; perhaps, Jesus is suggesting to them that he is the true Passover lamb, whose flesh and blood will be given to deliver the Jews again, as did the flesh and blood of the original Passover lamb of the Exodus.

We have mentioned the saying in John 12:23, "The hour has come that **the Son of Man** should be glorified," as references of Jesus to his death on the cross. There is within this text a significant point with reference to the understanding of identity and nature of the Son of Man common within Jewish thought during Jesus' ministry. Concerning the fact that Jesus development of the Son of Man designation. The comment of the crowd in response to Jesus' statement in 12:23 indicates that there was an understanding on the part of this crowd that the Son of Man figure was an eternal being, as would be consistent with the eternal nature of his kingdom as expressed in Dan 7:14. Jesus' comments concerning the death of the Son of Man, however, appears to be something with which Jesus' audience was not familiar.

Now there were certain Greeks among those who came up to worship

at the feast. ²¹Then they came to Philip, who was from Bethsaida of Galilee, and asked him, saying, "Sir, we wish to see Jesus." ²²Philip came and told Andrew, and in turn Andrew and Philip told Jesus. ²³But Jesus answered them, saying, "The hour has come that the Son of Man should be glorified. ²⁴Most assuredly, I say to you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the ground and dies, it remains alone; but if it dies, it produces much grain. ²⁵He who loves his life will lose it, and he who hates his life in this world will keep it for eternal life. ²⁶If anyone serves Me, let him follow Me; and where I am, there My servant will be also. If anyone serves Me, him My Father will honor. ²⁷"Now My soul is troubled, and what shall I say? "Father, save Me from this hour"? But for this purpose I came to this hour. ²⁸Father, glorify Your name." Then a voice came from heaven, saying, "I have both glorified it and will glorify it again." ²⁹Therefore the people who stood by and heard it said that it had thundered. Others said, "An angel has spoken to Him." ³⁰Jesus answered and said, "This voice did not come because of Me, but for your sake. ³¹Now is the judgment of this world; now the ruler of this world will be cast out. ³²And I, if I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all peoples to Myself." ³³This He said, signifying by what death He would die. ³⁴The people answered Him, "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?**" ³⁵Then Jesus said to them, "A little while longer the light is with you. Walk while you have the light, lest darkness overtake you; he who walks in darkness does not know where he is going. ³⁶While you have the light, believe in the light, that you may become sons of light." These things Jesus spoke, and departed, and was hidden from them (John 12:20-36).

It appears that this role of the Son of Man is a concept of which Jesus himself is the author. The Son of Man figure in the popular thinking of the apocalyptic movement was that of a *Ben Adam* (a son of Adam), an earthly figure, who was revealed as a heavenly being in Daniel 7, a concept which was greatly embellished upon in 1 Enoch, 4 Ezra, and 2 Baruch. The juxtaposition of the human nature of the Son of Man set over against his divine nature is, in the mind of Jesus, to be understood as a comparison rather than a contrast. In Jesus' use it becomes the perfect vehicle to speak of himself as one who was both

human and divine.

Jesus' comments concerning the death of the Son of Man appears to be the final touch of the portrait of the Son of Man as God intended him to be seen. The Son of Man figure we see in the Old Testament and in the apocalyptic literature, especially Daniel 7, reaches its completion in Jesus of Nazareth. The Son of Man's identity, as found on the lips of Jesus, is a concept of which he is both the creator and the fulfillment.

MWLIII