

## *The Background to the Son of Man Sayings*

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In his New Testament Theology Donald Guthrie concludes a discussion of the Son of man in the Gospels with the observation 'that the title Son of man applied to Jesus made no important impact on early Christian theological thinking and that there is no evidence of a Son of man Christology.... The title itself was displaced, but the basic ideas it was intended to express lived on in other forms.'<sup>1</sup> None would have agreed more cordially with that last statement than the late T. W. Manson, who cherished at the back of his mind a project (to be undertaken, perhaps, when he retired) of writing a comprehensive 'Son of man' theology. His untimely death robbed us of a work which might well have crowned his earlier studies.

The problems of the use of 'the Son of man' in the Gospels continue to fascinate New Testament scholars,<sup>2</sup> not least the problem of the almost entire

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absence of any echo outside the Gospels of an expression which plays such a prominent part within them.

In an incident towards the end of Jesus' ministry as recorded in the Fourth Gospel, he speaks of his shortly being 'lifted up from the earth', and the Jerusalem crowd replies, 'We have heard from the law that the Christ remains for ever. How can you say that the Son of man must be lifted up? Who is this Son of man?' (Jn. 12:34).

The Johannine idiom in this interchange is readily recognized. The double entendre of the verb 'lift up' is characteristic of this evangelist. Moreover, there are two surprising features in the crowd's response. Jesus had not said, in the immediately preceding context, 'the Son of man will

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<sup>1</sup> D. Guthrie, *New Testament Theology* (IVP, 1981), p.291.

<sup>2</sup> Some recent contributions (in addition to those cited in following footnotes) are M. Black, 'Jesus and the Son of Man', *JSNT*, issue 1, 1978, pp.4ff.; J. Bowker, 'The Son of Man', *JTS*, n.s., 28, 1977, pp. 19ff.; J. Coppens, *Le Fils de l'Homme* (Louvain UP, 1981); J. A. Fitzmyer, 'Another View of the "Son of Man" Debate', *JSNT*, issue 4, 1979, pp.58ff.; A. J. B. Higgins, *The Son of Man in the Teaching of Jesus* (CUP, 1980); M. D. Hooker, 'Is the Son of Man problem really insoluble?' in *Text and Interpretation: Studies in the New Testament presented to M. Black* (CUP, 1979), pp. 155ff.; J. Jeremias, *New Testament Theology 1* (SCM, 1971), pp. 257ff.; R. Leivestad, 'Exit the Apocalyptic Son of Man', *NTS* 18, 1971-72, pp.243ff.; B. Lindars, 'Re-enter the Apocalyptic Son of Man', *NTS* 22, 1975-76, pp. 52ff.; 'The New Look on the Son of Man', *BJRL* 63 (1980-81), pp.437ff.; I. H. Marshall, 'The Synoptic Son of Man Sayings in Recent Discussion', *NTS* 12, 1965-66, pp. 327ff.; 'The Son of Man in Contemporary Debate', *EQ* 42, 1970, pp.67ff.; *The Origins of New Testament Christology* (IVP, 1976), pp.63ff.; C. F. D. Moule, 'Neglected Features in the Problem of "the Son of Man"', in *Neues Testament and Kirche* (R. Schnackenburg *Festschrift*), ed. J. Gnllka (Herder, Freiburg, 1974), pp. 413ff; R. Pesch and R. Schnackenburg (eds.), *Jesus und der Menschensohn* (A. Vögtle *Festschrift*) (Herder, Freiburg, 1975). 50.

be lifted up' but 'when I am lifted up' (Jn. 12:32). He had, however, said in verse 23, 'The hour has come for the Son of man to be glorified', and in earlier situations in this Gospel he had spoken of the lifting up of the Son of man (Jn. 3:14; 8:28). From this it might be gathered that his being glorified and his being lifted up are identical. So, indeed, they are: we are dealing with two different ways of expressing the same idea. It is plain from some of the contexts in which the lifting up of the Son of man is mentioned that the verb (Gk. *hypsōō*) refers also to Jesus' being literally 'lifted up' on the cross. And the context in which he says, 'The hour has come for the Son of man to be glorified' (Jn. 12:23), makes it clear that here too the crucifixion is meant.

Also, and even more surprisingly, the crowd seems to identify the Son of man with the Christ or the Messiah, although Jesus has not spoken about the Messiah. To Christians, who believed Jesus to be the Messiah and who were familiar with his use of the term 'the Son of man', the equation 'The Messiah = the Son of man' came naturally; here there may be an antedating of this equation into the setting of Jesus' ministry. Certainly there is no reason to suppose that at the time of the ministry the expression 'the Son of man' was current in Judaism as a synonym of 'the Messiah'.

Nevertheless the crowd's question, 'Who is this Son of man?' was a natural one to ask, and may still be asked by readers of the Gospels as they are repeatedly confronted by it.

### **'The Son of man' in the Gospels**

All four of the evangelists regard 'the Son of man' as a self-designation of Jesus. Sometimes, indeed, a comparison of Gospels or Gospel sources indicates that on his lips it could be taken as a periphrasis for 'I'. The Marcan form of his question at Caesarea Philippi, 'Who do men say that I am?' (Mk. 8:27; *cf.* Lk. 9:18), is replaced in Matthew 16:13 by 'Who do men say that the Son of man is?' On the other hand, 'I' may appear as a later re-wording of 'the Son of

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man'. The Lucan form of another saying of Jesus, 'every one who acknowledges me before men, the Son of man also will acknowledge before the angels of God' (Lk. 12:8), has a Matthaean counterpart with the simple pronoun: 'every one who acknowledges me before men, I also will acknowledge before my Father who is in heaven' (Mt. 10:32; the locution 'my Father who is in heaven' is distinctively Matthaean). But the following words in Matthew, 'whoever denies me before men, I also will deny before my Father who is in heaven' (Mt. 10:33), correspond to a Marcan saying in which it is the Son of man who will be ashamed of those who are ashamed of Jesus and his words<sup>3</sup> 'in this adulterous and sinful generation' (Mk. 8:38; *cf.* Lk. 9:26).

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<sup>3</sup> The rather weakly attested omission of *logous* from this text (*P<sup>45vid</sup> al*) makes Jesus utter a warning to any one 'who is ashamed of me and mine'. It was regarded as 'probably the true reading' by T. W. Manson, who regarded it as confirming his thesis that 'the "Son of man" here stands for the Remnant, the true Israel of which Jesus is the head' (*The Sayings of Jesus* [SCM, 1949], p.109). C. K. Barrett finds an echo of the full (and authentic) reading in Paul's 'I am not ashamed of the gospel' (Rom. 1:16) and similar statements in early Christian literature ('I am not ashamed of the gospel', *Analecta Biblica*, 42 [P. B. I., Rome, 1970], pp. 19ff.).

This oscillation between 'I' and 'the Son of man' is sufficient to make the reader stop and ask before each 'Son of man' saying in the Synoptic record, 'Is this original, or has it replaced an earlier "I"?' However, even when allowance has been made for the possibility of a change from 'I' to 'the Son of man', the fact that sometimes the change seems to have worked the other way confirms the impression made by the spread of the designation 'the Son of man'—the impression that, not only in the Gospels as they stand but in the tradition behind them, 'the Son of man' was a distinctive locution of Jesus, one which he used as a self-designation.

The criteria of authenticity invoked by proponents of modern redaction criticism of the Gospels are not so conclusive as is sometimes supposed; but if one of them, the 'criterion of dissimilarity', be applied to the occurrences of 'the Son of man', the conclusion seems plain (although indeed a number of redaction critics would not concede its validity in this instance).<sup>4</sup> Here is a locution unparalleled in the Judaism of the period and one which, outside the Gospel tradition, was not current in the early church. Its claim to be recognized as an authentic *vox Christi* is thus remarkably strong.

It has often been pointed out that the Greek phrase translated 'the Son of man' in the Gospels, *ho huios tou anthrōpou*, means literally 'the son of the man', which would naturally prompt the question: 'the son of which man?' But no such question is prompted by the phrase as used in the Gospels, where it is a conventional rendering of an Aramaic expression, probably *bar ʿnāšā*. But *bar*

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*ʿnāšā* is the regular Aramaic form for 'the man', 'the human being' or even, when the emphatic state (rendered in English by means of the definite article) is used generically, 'a man'. (We may compare John the Baptist's words in Jn. 3:27 NIV: 'a man can receive only what is given him from heaven.') It is argued by M. Casey that this construction and meaning lie behind the Gospel use of *ho huios tou anthrōpou*, the speaker saying something which is true of a man generically and applying it to himself. Thus the statement of Mark 14:21a, 'the Son of man goes as it is written of him', could have originated in Jesus' application to himself of the general principle that 'a man goes (to death) as it is written of him' (cf. Heb. 9:27, 'it is appointed for men to die once').<sup>5</sup> G. Vermes has argued, more generally, that the Gospel use goes back to the circumlocutional use of *bar ʿnāšā* ('the man', 'this man') as a substitute for the pronoun 'I', 'me'.<sup>6</sup>

There are indeed some passages in the Gospels where 'the Son of man' on the lips of Jesus seems to mean little more than 'I'—for example, when he compares himself with his forerunner

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<sup>4</sup> E.g. N. Perrin, *Rediscovering the Teaching of Jesus* (SCM, 1967), pp. 164ff.

<sup>5</sup> M. Casey, *Son of Man* (SPCK, 1979), pp. 224ff.

<sup>6</sup> G. Vermes, 'Appendix E: The use of *bar nāš / bar nāšā* in Jewish Aramaic', in M. Black, *An Aramaic Approach to the Gospels and Acts* (Clarendon, 1967), pp. 310ff.; *Jesus the Jew* (Collins, 1973), pp. 160ff.; ' "The Son of Man" Debate', *JSNT*, issue 1, 1978, pp. 19ff.

in the words: John the Baptist has come eating no bread and drinking no wine; ... the Son of man has come eating and drinking...' (Lk. 7:33f.; cf. Mt. 11:18f.). Again, there is reason to think here and there that the Greek rendering *ho huios tou anthrōpou* has been used where *bar nāsā* meant simply 'man'—for example, a comparison of the Q saying in Luke 12:10 with its Marcan counterpart in Mark 3:28-30 (the two are conflated in Mt. 12:31f.) suggests that in the original form Jesus contrasted the venial sin of speaking against men with the 'eternal sin' of speaking against the Holy Spirit; the Son of man' in the distinctive sense of the expression is not in view.

There are, however, two outstanding situations in which the Son of man (in the distinctive use of the phrase) figures. One of these is his appearing in glory; the other is his suffering.

#### *His appearing in glory*

In the Olivet discourse it is said that, after the great tribulation which leads up to the end-time, 'they will see the Son of man coming in clouds with great power and glory. And then he will send out the angels, and gather his elect...' (Mk. 13:26f.). It is difficult to avoid the conclusion that the Son of man coming in clouds harks back to the 'one like a son of man' (Aram. *k<sup>e</sup>bar nās*) who, in Daniel's vision of the day of judgment, comes 'with the clouds of heaven' to be

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presented before the Ancient of Days and to receive universal and eternal dominion from him (Dn. 7:13f.).

Similar language is used by Jesus in his reply to the high priest's question 'Are you the Christ?' in Mark's trial narrative: 'I am; and you will see the Son of man seated at the right hand of Power, and coming with the clouds of heaven' (Mk. 14:62). It is as though Jesus meant: 'If "Christ" ("Messiah") is the term which you insist on using, then I have no option but to say "Yes"; but if I may choose my own words, I tell you that you will see the Son of man...'. In this reply the language of Daniel 7:13f. is fused with that of Psalm 110:1, where one whom the psalmist calls 'my lord' is invited in an oracle to take his seat at Yahweh's right hand until his enemies are subdued beneath his feet.

The other Synoptic traditions add further *logia* to the same effect. The Q counterpart to Mark's Olivet discourse says that on the day when the Son of man is revealed his revelation will be like a flash of lightning illuminating the whole sky; it will be the occasion of sudden judgment such as, in the Old Testament record, was manifested in the flood of Noah's day and in the destruction of Sodom and the neighbouring cities (Lk. 17:24-32). Matthew adds references of his own to the Son of man coming 'with his angels in the glory of his Father' to 'repay every man for what he has done' (Mt. 16:27), coming 'in his glory, and all the angels with him', to 'sit on his glorious throne' (Mt. 25:31). He may even introduce the Son of man in this kind of context where the Synoptic parallels make no mention of him: seeing 'the kingdom of God come with power' (Mk. 9:1; cf. Lk. 9:27) becomes for Matthew seeing 'the Son of man coming in his kingdom' (Mt. 16:28).

If Daniel's vision indeed stands behind Gospel references to the Son of man's being invested with glory, some attention to that vision is called for. In the vision Daniel sees four beasts coming up, one after another, from 'the great sea' and exercising dominion for a time. The most fearful of the four has ten horns, among which a 'little horn' sprouts forth, exceeding all predecessors in its ambition to wield unlimited power. Then comes the day of judgment, one who is 'Ancient of Days' takes his seat, and he bestows world dominion on a human, not a bestial, figure—on 'one like a son of man'.

One of the attendants on the Ancient of Days explains the details of the vision to Daniel. 'These four great beasts are four kings who shall arise out of the earth' (Dn. 7:17). But the interpreter does not tell Daniel who the 'one like a son of man' is. He simply says that 'the saints of the Most High (*qaddîšê 'elyônîn*) shall receive the kingdom, and possess the kingdom for ever, for ever and ever' (Dn. 7:18). The 'saints of the Most High' in the interpretation correspond to the 'one like a son of man' in the vision, but the two are not expressly identified.

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Attempts have been made to establish the background of the figure 'like a son of man'—for example, in the supposed New Year enthronement festival in pre-exilic Israel,<sup>7</sup> or in the Ugaritic scene where Ba'al, the 'rider on the clouds', comes before El, the father of the gods.<sup>8</sup> Such attempts are precarious in themselves and in any case are irrelevant to the understanding of Daniel's vision and to the question of its influence on the thought or language of Jesus and the evangelists.

The 'saints of the Most High'—more fully, 'the people of the saints of the Most High' (Dn. 7:27)—who figure in the interpretation of the vision are most probably those Israelites who remained faithful to the covenant in time of persecution. Weighty arguments have indeed been put forward, by M. Noth and others,<sup>9</sup> for their identification with the holy beings of angelic rank who serve God in his heavenly dwelling. But these arguments are not conclusive. It is unlikely that even one so powerful as the 'little horn' should be able to wage war successfully against these holy ones, as it is said to have done against 'the saints' in Daniel 7:21. It is more natural to think of the many *h<sup>a</sup>sîdîm* who died rather than commit apostasy under Antiochus Epiphanes. If it is faithful men and women that are intended, then their being given 'the kingdom and the dominion and the greatness of the kingdoms under the whole heaven' (Dn. 7:27) offers itself as an Old Testament background to Jesus' words of encouragement to his followers (not in a 'Son of man' saying): 'Fear not, little flock, for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom' (Lk. 12:32).

Since Daniel's 'one like a son of man' is not explicitly identified with the 'saints of the Most High', it might be wiser to say that he represents them than that he symbolizes them. But the

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<sup>7</sup> Cf. A. Bentzen, *King and Messiah* (Lutterworth, 1955), pp. 74f.

<sup>8</sup> Cf. C. Colpe, "Ho huios tou anthrōpou", *TDNT*, 8 (Eerdmans, 1972), pp.415-419.

<sup>9</sup> M. Noth, 'The Holy Ones of the Most High', in *The Laws in the Pentateuch and Other Studies* (Oliver & Boyd, 1966), pp. 215ff.; cf. L. Dequeker, 'The "Saints of the Most High" in Qumran and Daniel', *OTS* 18, 1973, pp. 108ff.

relation between him and them in Daniel's vision and its interpretation is independent of the question whether or not the Son of man in the Gospels is (sometimes at least) a corporate entity. Jesus certainly associated his disciples closely with himself in coming glory as in present suffering. His words (partly derived from Q) in the Lucan narrative of the Last Supper are relevant in this regard: 'You are those who have continued with me in my trials; as my Father appointed a kingdom for me, so do I appoint for you that you may eat and drink at my table in my kingdom, and sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel' (Lk. 22:28-30).

But their association with him in his coming authority depended on their

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continuing with him in his trials. We recall his assurance to James and John, when they professed themselves ready to drink his cup and share his baptism, that they would indeed do so (Mk. 10:38f.). But when his trial reached its climax, they proved unable to stand the test. T. W. Manson remarked that, if it had been James and John, and not the two robbers, that were crucified with Jesus, 'one on his right and one on his left', their request to be enthroned on either side of him (Mk. 10:37) would have been fulfilled and the church's formulation of the doctrine of the atonement might have been somewhat different from what it has been.<sup>10</sup> As it was, Jesus himself at the time fulfilled single-handed 'everything that is written of the Son of man' (Lk. 18:31). The time was to come, however, when he would return from death to gather his demoralized followers together again and lead them as before and associate<sup>11</sup> them even more closely with himself in his continuing ministry. 'The aliveness of Christ,' says C. F. D. Moule, 'existing transcendently beyond death, is recognized as the prior necessity for the community's corporate existence, and as its source and origin.'<sup>12</sup> Positive evidence is lacking that Jesus ever included his followers in the concept of the Son of man, but he did attach them as firmly as possible to the Son of man.

### ***His suffering***

In these last paragraphs we have already begun to refer to the suffering Son of man.

Alongside those sayings which reflect Daniel's vision of 'one like a son of man' who receives sovereign authority from God, there is a group of sayings, especially in the Marcan record, which speak of the Son of man as suffering. In this record, from the Caesarea Philippi incident onward, Jesus emphasizes repeatedly that 'the Son of man must suffer many things' (Mk. 8:31; 9:31; cf. 10:33). The necessity of the Son of man's suffering lies in its being the subject-matter of Scripture: Jesus' consciousness that his own deliberately chosen mission was in accordance with what was written confirmed his resolution to submit to arrest in Gethsemane with the words: 'Let the scriptures be fulfilled' (Mk. 14:49). The other Synoptic evangelists bear similar testimony: Luke, for example, inserts into his description of the lightning-like appearance of the Son of man

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<sup>10</sup> T. W. Manson, *The Teaching of Jesus* (CUP, 21935), pp.231ff.

<sup>11</sup> Cf. Mk. 14:28.

<sup>12</sup> C. F. D. Moule, *The Origin of Christology* (CUP, 1977), p.70.

'in his day' the caveat: 'But first he must suffer many things and be rejected by this generation' (Lk. 17:25).

The fourth evangelist brings the two groups of Son of man sayings together

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in his distinctive idiom<sup>13</sup> is For him the crucifixion of Jesus is the 'lifting up' (*hypsōsis*) or 'glorifying' of the Son of man; it is the moment of disclosure, when the disciples will 'see heaven opened, and the angels of God ascending and descending on the Son of man' (Jn. 1:51).

But in the Synoptic records the two groups of passages remain separated. There is no difficulty in seeing the influence of Daniel 7:13f. on those which speak of the Son of man's glorious advent and judicial authority; but 'how is it written of the Son of man, that he should suffer many things and be treated with contempt?' (Mk. 9:12).

Many have seen a pointer to answering this question in Mark 10:45, where Jesus sets an example before his disciples by impressing on them that 'the Son of man also came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many'. This saying is reproduced verbatim in Matthew 20:28, but is missing from the parallel context in Luke 18 (between verses 34 and 35). Luke has indeed a parallel elsewhere, in the context of the Last Supper, but it is not a Son of man saying and makes no reference to a ransom (Lk. 22:27, 'I am among you as one who serves').

The wording of the Son of man saying in Mark 10:45 has often been held to reflect that of the fourth Isaianic Servant Song (Is. 52:13-53:12). It does not, strictly, reflect its wording but it does reflect its thought. The word for 'serve' in Mark 10:45 (*diakoneō*) is not that used to render Hebrew 'ebed in the Servant Song (*ho pais mou*, Is. 52:13, LXX; *douleuō*, Is. 53:11, LXX), and the word for 'ransom' in Mark 10:45 (*lytron*) is not used to render 'āšām ('guilt-offering') in Isaiah 53:10 (LXX *peri hamartias*). But the sense of the saying in Mark 10:45 corresponds well to the description of the Servant's self-giving in which he procures righteousness for 'many' and bears the sin of many' (Is. 53:11f.). The linking of this saying with Isaiah 52:13-53:12 has, indeed, been ably contested:<sup>14</sup> it is pointed out, for example, that to give one's life as a ransom or atonement for others was a familiar concept in the Judaism of the time, as the Maccabean martyrologies show (*cf.* 2 Macc. 7:37f.; 4 Macc. 6:27-29; 17:22; 18:4). It is not suggested that either Jesus or Mark was familiar with these Greek martyrologies; on the other hand, the book of Isaiah was well known to them both.

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<sup>13</sup> Cf. S. S. Smalley, 'The Johannine Son of Man Sayings', *NTS* 15, 1968-69, pp. 278ff.; B. Lindars, 'The Son of Man in the Johannine Christology', in *Christ and Spirit in the New Testament* (C. F. D. Moule *Festschrift*), eds. B. Lindars and S. S. Smalley (CUP, 1973), pp.43ff.

<sup>14</sup> E.g. by C. K. Barrett, 'The Background of Mark 10:45', in *New Testament Essays: Studies in Memory of T. W. Manson*, ed. A. J. B. Higgins (Manchester UP, 1959), pp. 1ff.; M. D. Hooker, *Jesus and the Servant* (SPCK, 1959).

Moreover, the Son of man's suffering is said to be something that was 'written' concerning him. This is a reference to Hebrew Scripture, in which the books of Maccabees played no part. Where, then, in Hebrew Scripture is it written that the Son of man is to suffer?

It is not so written of Daniel's 'one like a son of man'. True, his counterparts, the saints of the Most High, are targets for the assault of the 'little horn' (Dn. 7:21), and it could easily be inferred that, in a situation dominated by God-defying powers, the 'one like a son of man' would fare ill until the time of divine intervention,<sup>15</sup> but the statement 'it is written' implies more than an inference. In any case, the 'one like a son of man' makes his appearance in Daniel's vision at the moment of the overthrow of the God-defying powers and the vindication of righteousness, and it is probably inappropriate to import him into an earlier phase of the vision where he does not figure. Further, when the activity of the little horn is recapitulated in greater detail, and we might expect Daniel to say that he saw the little horn making war against the 'one like a son of man', he does not say so; he imports a feature from the interpretation and says that the little horn 'made war with the saints' (Dn. 7:21), as though deliberately avoiding a suggestion that the 'one like a son of man' was attacked. This could be explained if for Daniel the 'one like a son of man' is not the symbolical personification of the saints but their heavenly representative.

If we look for a figure in Hebrew Scripture who suffers many things and is treated with contempt, the righteous sufferer of Psalms and the suffering Servant of Isaiah come to mind at once. As between these two, the balance is tipped in favour of the Isaianic Servant because his sufferings, unlike those of the righteous sufferer of Psalms, are explicitly said to procure the removal of sin for others. Is the Son of man in the Gospels, then, to be equated with the Servant of Yahweh?

Let it be said at this point that there is some reason to think that the Daniel texts we have been considering, and some others associated with them, had the Isaianic Servant Songs in view and were indeed intended to provide an interpretation of them.

One of the designations of the faithful in the time of trial depicted in Daniel's visions is *maskîlîm*, the 'wise' or the 'teachers' (*i.e.* those who acquire wisdom or those who impart it, the latter activity naturally following from the former). The reference is especially to those who communicate to others the insight which they themselves have gained into the times of the end; 'none of the wicked shall understand, but the *maskîlîm* shall understand' (Dn. 12:10).

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Daniel himself is given such insight: when Gabriel is about to impart to him the revelation of the seventy heptads, he says, 'I have come out to make you wise (*l'haški'kā*)... know therefore and understand (*w<sup>e</sup>taškēl*) that ... there are to be seven heptads...' (Dn. 9:22, 25).

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<sup>15</sup> Cf. C. F. D. Moule, 'From Defendant to Judge—and Deliverer', *SNTS Bulletin* 3, 1952, pp. 40ff.; M. D. Hooker, *The Son of Man in Mark* (SPCK, 1967), pp. 11ff.

When the minds of many are shaken by the apostates, 'those who make the people wise (*maškilē 'am*) shall make many understand', although their faithfulness involves them in severe persecution (Dn. 11:33). So severe will the persecution be, indeed, that some even of the *maškilîm* will fall away, but their defection will but serve to refine those who remain faithful (Dn. 11:35). And when at last the righteous are delivered and the faithful departed are raised to everlasting life, 'the *maškilîm* shall shine like the brightness of the firmament, and those who turn many to righteousness (*mašdîqê hārabbîm*) like the stars for ever and ever' (Dn. 12:1-3).

It would be rash to draw too certain inferences from the coincidence between these instances of the hiph'il conjugation of *škl* and the opening words of the fourth Servant Song, *hinnēh yaškil 'abdi*, 'behold, my servant will deal wisely' (Is. 52:13); but that we have to do with more than a mere coincidence is suggested by the statement in Isaiah 53:11 that the Servant will by his knowledge 'make the many to be accounted righteous' (*yašdîq... lārabbîm*)—*i.e.* he will fulfil the role assigned to the *maškilîm* in Daniel 12:3. But if Daniel is thus providing an interpretation of the figure of the suffering Servant, it is a corporate interpretation.

To revert to the Gospels: there is one exception to the rule that when Jesus speaks of 'the Son of man' both nouns have the article (*ho huios tou anthrōpou*). The exception comes in John 5:27, where the Father delegates judicial functions to the Son, 'because he is Son of man' (*hoti huios anthrōpou estin*). Grammatically, this doubly anarthrous form can be adequately accounted for in terms of Colwell's law: it is the complement with the copulative verb. But exegetically, even if there is no particle *hōs* here, it is not far-fetched to recognize a specific reference to the 'one like a son of man' (*hōs huios anthrōpou*) who is assessor to the Ancient of Days on his judgment-throne (Dn. 7:13f.)

There is, again, one exception to the rule that only in the Gospels, and only on Jesus' lips (apart, of course, from Jn. 12:34, where the crowd takes up his own words), does the expression 'the Son of man' occur in the New Testament. The exception comes in Acts 7:56 where Stephen, at the end of his defence before the Sanhedrin, sees 'the heavens opened, and the Son of man standing at the right hand of God'.<sup>16</sup> The language resembles that of Jesus himself before

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the same body: in the Lucan form of his reply to the high priest Jesus says, 'But from now on the Son of man shall be seated at the right hand of the power of God' (Lk. 22:69). The change from 'seated' to 'standing' arrests the attentive reader, and points to the meaning of Stephen's words. The Son of man is Stephen's advocate in the presence of God, and standing is the posture proper for an advocate. Stephen, so to speak, appeals from the judgment of the earthly court to the arbitrament of the heavenly court, where the Son of man stands as his prevailing advocate. It is illuminating to read Stephen's words against the background of the dominical logion of Luke

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<sup>16</sup> The expression 'the Son of man' is placed on the lips of James the Just in Hegesippus's account of his martyrdom (Eusebius, *HE* 2.23.13), but this account is modelled on Luke's narrative of the trial and death of Stephen.

12:8, 'every one who acknowledges me before men, the Son of man also will acknowledge before the angels of God.'<sup>17</sup>

Whatever the Aramaic phrase was that Jesus used (and it can scarcely have been anything other than *bar 'e nāšā*), and whatever its significance may have been, there was a time antecedent to the compilation of all our Gospels and their ascertainable sources when *ho huios tou anthrōpou* was fixed as its appropriate Greek equivalent. M. Hengel considers that 'an unequivocal christological conception' must stand behind 'this unusual translation' and he is disposed to believe that Stephen's vision of 'the Son of man' may have had something to do with this development.<sup>18</sup>

Hengel's understanding of the matter underlines the conclusion to which the available evidence in any case points—that 'the Son of man' was not a current title, whether for the Messiah or for any other eschatological figure. When Jewish thinkers devised a title for the figure who is brought to the Ancient of Days, it was not the Son of man but Anani (the 'cloud-man').<sup>19</sup> There does not appear to have been any existing concept of 'the Son of man' which Jesus could have taken over and used either to identify himself or to denote a being distinct from himself. The expression as Jesus used it was evidently original to himself: one reason for his use of it may have been precisely that it was not a current title which would already have had associations in the minds of his hearers. It could well have meant for him 'the one like a son of man' (of Daniel's vision) but he could fill it with such further significance as he chose, and not the least part of the significance with which he filled it was the prophetic picture of the humble and suffering Servant of Yahweh. If the

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heavenly voice at his baptism (Mk. 1:11) hailed him in language which he recognized as that of Isaiah 42:1, there was no problem in his associating with that scripture another which similarly begins with 'Behold, my servant'—the scripture which we call the fourth Servant Song. It was this that gave him the assurance that a mission involving suffering and contempt was written for 'the Son of man', and that this mission was the Father's will for him.

### **Evidence from Qumran**

The transition from suffering for faithfulness to exercising authority and executing judgment is well attested in the Qumran literature (from *c.* 130 BC onwards), and the phase of suffering for faithfulness is bound up with the portrayal of the Isaianic Servant.

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<sup>17</sup> Cf. B. Lindars, 'Jesus as Advocate: A Contribution to the Christology Debate', *BJRL* 62, 1979-80, pp.476ff.

<sup>18</sup> M. Hengel, 'Zwischen Jesus and Paulus', *ZTK* 72, 1975, pp. 151ff. (p.203).

<sup>19</sup> *Tanḥuma Tōl dōt* 20; Anani in this sense is linked with the Anani who ends the catalogue of David's descendants in 1 Ch. 3:24 (and who is identified with the Davidic Messiah).

### ***The Servant Songs***

Shortly after the publication of the complete Isaiah scroll from Cave 1 at Qumran (1QIs<sup>a</sup>), a peculiar reading was noted in Isaiah 52:14. Of the Servant it is said there (in MT) *kēn mišḥat mē'iš mar'ēhū*, 'such was the marring of his appearance, beyond (that of) man.' The common translation treats *mišḥat* as construct state of *mišḥat*, 'marring' (from root *šḥt*), but there is an awkwardness in that the construct is separated from its following genitive by the comparative expression *mē'iš*. The same awkwardness would persist if *mišḥat* were treated (less probably) as the construct of *mišḥah*, 'anointing' (from root *mšḥ*), the sense then being 'such was the anointing of his face, beyond (that of) man'. (The awkwardness would be avoided if the word were vocalized *mošḥāt*, hoph'al participle of *šḥt*, the sense then being 'his appearance was marred beyond that of mankind'.) In 1QIs<sup>a</sup>, however, the spelling *mšhty* appears—*i.e.*, probably, *māšḥatī*, 'I have anointed' (perfect qal of *mšḥ*). It is unlikely that the prophet meant 'I have anointed his face beyond that of mankind', but the curious spelling may reflect a messianic interpretation placed on the figure of the Servant by some members of the Qumran community. D. Barthélemy, indeed, one of the first scholars to draw attention to this spelling, thought it had serious claims to be regarded as original;<sup>20</sup> W. H. Brownlee compared the construction with that of Psalm 45:7 (MT 8), 'God ... has anointed you with the oil of gladness above your fellows' (*mēḥ<sup>a</sup>bērēkā*), where a royal anointing is in view.<sup>21</sup>

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The prophet himself, speaking perhaps in the role of the Servant, claims in Isaiah 61:1, 'Yahweh has anointed me' (*m<sup>e</sup>šāḥtānī*), where a prophetic anointing is in view. But what kind of anointing was in the mind of the editor or scribe responsible for the spelling *māšḥatī* in Isaiah 52:14? Perhaps a priestly anointing, in view of the following words, 'so shall he sprinkle many nations.' Brownlee rightly retained the MT reading *yazzeḥ* ('will sprinkle'), adding that, according to his understanding of the Qumran interpretation, 'the anointing of the Servant would indicate his consecration for the priestly office, so that he could "sprinkle" others.' It may be, then, that here we have a pointer to an identification of the Servant with the expected priestly Messiah, the 'Messiah of Aaron'.

But this is not the only interpretation of the Servant attested in the Qumran writings. In the *Hôdāyôṭ* (the 'Hymns of Thanksgiving') the person who speaks in the first person singular—be he (as some have thought) the Rightful Teacher himself or some other spokesman for the community—repeatedly applies to himself the language of all four of what we have come to call the Servant Songs. From the first song (Is. 42:1) possibly comes:

Thou hast shed [thy] holy spirit on thy servant. (1QH 17.26)

From the second (Is. 49:1ff.):

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<sup>20</sup> D. Barthélemy, 'Le grand rouleau d'Isaïe trouvé pres de la Mer Morte', *RB* 57, 1950, pp.530ff. (pp.546ff.).

<sup>21</sup> W. H. Brownlee, 'The Servant of the Lord in the Qumran Scrolls', *BASOR* 132, Dec. 1953, pp.8ff.

For thou knowest me from (better than) my father,  
and from the womb [hast thou set me apart].  
[Yea, from the body of] my mother hast thou dealt  
bountifully with me,  
and from the breast of her who conceived me have  
thy tender mercies been on me.  
In the bosom of my nurse [hast thou sustained me],  
and from my youth hast thou enlightened me in the  
understanding of thy judgments.  
With thy truth hast thou supported me firmly,  
and in thy holy spirit hast thou made me rejoice. (1QH 9.29-32)

From the third (Is. 50:4):

My tongue is as that of those who are taught [by thee]. (1QH 7.10)

I could not raise my voice  
[with the tongue]ue of those who are taught [by thee],

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to revive the spirit of the stumbling,  
or to sustain with a word him that is weary. (1QH 8.35f.)

And from the fourth (Is. 53:4, 10):

[My] dwelling-place is with diseases,  
and my resting-place among those that are stricken;  
I am as a man forsaken. (1QH 8.26f.)

Whether the composer was speaking of his personal experience or not, the community probably used these hymns in worship, as an adjunct to the canonical Psalter, and in that case each member who participated in the worship made the composer's language his own.

There is, moreover, evidence to indicate that the Qumran community viewed itself as called corporately to fulfil the Servant's ministry. It believed that by its painstaking study and practice of the divine law, and by its patient endurance of the persecution inflicted on it by the ungodly, it would not only secure its acceptance in God's sight but also accumulate a store of merit sufficient to atone for people and land polluted by the dominion of the wicked. In default of Levitical sin-offerings, sin would be atoned for 'through an upright and humble spirit' (1QS 3.8). When all the prescriptions of the community rule were fulfilled, 'to establish a holy spirit for eternal truth, to make atonement for the guilt of rebellion and for sinful faithlessness, and to obtain favour for the land apart from the flesh of burnt-offerings and the fat of sacrifice, then the oblation of the lips according to right judgment shall be as a sweet savour of righteousness, and the perfectness of one's ways as an acceptable freewill offering' (1QS 9.3-5).

In the *Rule of the Congregation*, which envisages the new order when the rightful regime of the sons of Zadok has been restored, the members of the community are described as 'the men of God's counsel who kept his covenant in the midst of wickedness, so as to make atone[ment for the lan]d' (1QSa. 1.1-3).

With this may be compared what is said of the Servant of Yahweh in the Targum of Jonathan: 'He will make entreaty for our trespasses and for his sake our trespasses will be forgiven; ... by his instruction peace will flourish over us, and when we follow his words our trespasses will be forgiven us. All we like sheep had been scattered, each in his own way we had gone astray, and it was the Lord's good pleasure to forgive all our trespasses for his sake' (Tg. Is. 53:4-6). There the speakers are the people of Israel, and the Servant for whose sake they have been forgiven is the Messiah; but in the Qumran texts it is not

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for the sake of one individual, but for the sake of the righteous community, that this forgiveness is bestowed on the nation. Nor is the community's suffering minimized almost to the point of disappearance, as the Servant's suffering is in the Targum.

If the whole community had its mission prescribed in terms of the ministry of the Isaianic Servant, it was possible for some smaller body, acting or speaking in the name of the community, to be referred to in similar terms.<sup>22</sup> In one place the atoning terminology is used of the inner council of twelve laymen and three priests, who are called 'a holy house for Israel, a most holy foundation for Aaron, true witnesses in judgment, the elect ones of God's favour, to make atonement for the land and to requite the wicked with their recompense' (1QS 8.5-7).

In the Old Testament atonement 'for the land' is necessary when it has been polluted by bloodshed, and this atonement can be made only by the blood of those responsible (Nu. 35:33). In the Song of Moses God makes atonement for his people's land by avenging the blood of his servants at the hands of his and their enemies (Dr. 32:43).

### ***Vindication and judgment***

When the inner council of the community is said to 'requite the wicked with their recompense,... to execute judgment on wickedness, that perversity may be no more' (1QS 8.7, 10), it has an activity prescribed for it which cannot be paralleled in the Servant Songs. Nor can it have been possible for the inner council, or for the community as a whole, to undertake this activity in the days when it was at the mercy of its powerful opponents. But the community looked forward to a time when the roles would be reversed, when God would intervene in justice, and then it would be his chosen instrument to execute judgment on the ungodly.

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<sup>22</sup> It is just possible that in one place an individual is so referred to—in 1QS 4.20f., where it is said that 'God will purify by his truth all the deeds of (a) man, and will cleanse (him) for himself more than (or 'from among') the sons of man'. But the wording is too ambiguous for any certain conclusions to be drawn. Cf. J. A. T. Robinson, 'The Baptism of John and the Qumran Community', in *Twelve New Testament Studies* (SCM, 1962), pp. 23f.

It would be misleading if we said that the community believed itself called to fill the role of Daniel's 'one like a son of man' as well as that of the Isaianic Servant, for there is no reference in the extant Qumran texts to Daniel's 'one like a son of man', nor does 'son of man' appear anywhere in them except in the regular sense of 'human being'.

Nevertheless, some of the ideas associated with Daniel's 'one like a son of man' and with 'the Son of man' in the Gospels find expression, albeit in

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different terminology, in the Qumran literature. Here, for example, is the Qumran commentator's explanation of Habakkuk 1:12b ('Thou hast ordained him to execute judgment; and thou, O Rock, hast established him to inflict chastisement'):

The interpretation of this is that God will not destroy his people by the hand of the nations, but into the hand of his elect will God commit the judgment of all nations, and by the chastisement which they inflict those who have kept his commandments in the time of their distress will condemn all the wicked of his people (1QpHab 5.3-6).

God's 'elect'—'those who have kept his commandments in the time of their distress'—are presumably the members of the righteous community who have maintained their fidelity in spite of persecution. They are, in the words of the *Community Rule*, 'to condemn all transgressors of the law' as well as 'to make atonement for all volunteers for holiness in Aaron (the priesthood) and for the house of truth in Israel (the laity)' (1QS 5.6).

In the *Rule of War* the righteous community is the spearhead of the successful attack on the Gentile oppressors of Israel, but in the Habakkuk commentary it is plain that it will also administer final judgment on evildoers within Israel. It is not unreasonable to conclude that its members identified themselves with the 'saints of the Most High' to whom, in Daniel 7:18, 22, 27, judgment and sovereignty are given.<sup>23</sup>

### **Melchizedek**

Before we leave Qumran, we should glance at the heavenly judge Melchizedek who has given his name to the fragmentary document 11Q Melchizedek, published in 1965.<sup>24</sup>

Quoting the passages about the year of jubilee (Lv. 25:13) and the year of release (Dt. 15:2), this document understands both as references to the return from exile at the time of the end, in the tenth and last year of jubilee, 'the acceptable year of the Lord' (Is. 61:2), when the dispersed of Israel will be gathered home. The proclaimer of restoration and liberty at that time will be Melchizedek, 'for that is the epoch of Melchizedek's "acceptable year"' (line 7).

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<sup>23</sup> Judgment is given to them and not merely for them (*cf.* Rev. 20:4); see C. F. D. Moule, *The Origin of Christology*, p. 21.

<sup>24</sup> *Cf.* A. S. van der Woude, 'Melchisedek als himmlische Erlösergestalt in den neugefundenen eschatologischen Midraschim aus Qumran Höhle XI', *OTS* 14, 1965, pp. 354ff.

A scriptural basis for Melchizedek's heavenly ministry is sought in Psalm

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82:1, 'God (<sup>e</sup>lōhîm) stands in the congregation of 'Ēl: he judges among <sup>e</sup>lōhîm,' Melchizedek is promoted to be president of the heavenly court; he sits in judgment on the 'elohim, the spirits of Belial's lot. This is related to the statement of Psalm 7:8, 'God (<sup>e</sup>lōhîm) will judge the nations', through the exegetical device of *g<sup>e</sup>zērāh šawāh* ('equal category'), since <sup>e</sup>lōhîm occurs in the singular in both texts as the subject of the verb 'to judge' (and is taken in both to mean Melchizedek, to whom the Most High has delegated his judicial authority). But Melchizedek's ministry of liberation for the men of his own 'lot', the children of light, is celebrated in Isaiah 52:7, 'How beautiful on the mountains are the feet of him who brings glad tidings,... who says to Zion, "Your <sup>e</sup>lōhîm reigns!"' Here also, as in the other two texts, the 'elohim in question is Melchizedek. By passing sentence on the hosts of Belial, Melchizedek inaugurates the age of liberation for the righteous.

There is little enough in the two explicit references to Melchizedek in the Hebrew Bible to provide a basis for this conception of him as a heavenly judge and saviour. Some have tried (unsuccessfully, I think) to relate this conception to the portrayal in Hebrews of the Son of God, enthroned at his Father's right hand, discharging a ministry of intercession as his people's high priest 'after the order of Melchizedek' (cf. Ps. 110:4). A distant parallel might be found in Luke 4:18f., where the proclamation of the 'acceptable year of the Lord' is fulfilled in Jesus' ministry on earth, but the other side of the coin, 'the day of vengeance of our God', is designedly missing from Luke's quotation of Isaiah 61: If. (There is indeed, in Jn. 10:34-36, an argument based on Ps. 82:6, 'I have said, "You are gods"', but that argument bears no resemblance to that of 11Q Melchizedek.)

In the Letter to the Hebrews, Melchizedek, 'made like the Son of God' (Heb. 7:3), is a very great man as men go, but he is not a heavenly figure and it is not by him that salvation and judgment are administered. The closest parallels to 11Q Melchizedek appear in those rabbinical texts where Melchizedek is identified with the archangel Michael, 'head keeper of the gates of righteousness' (*Midrash Hanne'elam Lekh*). (Daniel's 'one like a son of man' has been identified with Michael by one or two scholars, but this is not of much relevance here.)

### **Other Jewish evidence**

The closest resemblances to the Gospel usage of 'the Son of man' are found in documents neither of which is likely to have influenced the Gospels—the Parables of Enoch (1 Enoch 37 - 71) and the Apocalypse of Ezra (2 Esdras 3-14).

#### ***The Parables of Enoch***

The Parables of Enoch appear to be later than the other sections which make up the composite 'Ethiopic Enoch'. We should be cautious in drawing chrono-

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logical inferences from the absence of any part of the Parables from the Aramaic fragments of 1 Enoch which have been identified among the Qumran texts; but the comparative lateness of the Parables is suggested by their internal evidence.<sup>25</sup>

In the Parables God is described as 'one who had a head of days' (or, more briefly, 'the Head of days'), whose hair is white like wool (1 Enoch 46:1). This language is clearly based on Daniel 7:9, where God is seen as 'one that was ancient of days' with 'the hair of his head like pure wool'. Alongside the Head of days Enoch sees 'another being whose countenance had the appearance of a man' (46:1). This being is referred to repeatedly in the sequel as 'that Son of Man'—an expression which renders three distinct phrases in the Ethiopic version (so that one may wonder about the precise Greek wording, now lost, which was so translated). It is, however, evidently the same figure that is indicated by all three Ethiopic phrases. Here, beyond doubt, we have the 'one like a son of man' who is brought to the Ancient of Days in Daniel 7:13; but as in Daniel 'one like a son of man' is not a title, so 'that Son of Man' is not a title in the Parables. 'That Son of Man' is simply that particular 'Son of Man' (human figure) whom Enoch saw in the company of the 'Head of days'. In 1 Enoch 46:3 he is called 'the Son of Man who has righteousness' and is apparently identical with the being denoted elsewhere in the Parables as 'the righteous one ... whose elect works depend on the Lord of spirits' (38:2), the 'elect one of righteousness and faith' who 'dwells under the wings of the Lord of spirits' (39:6f.), the 'anointed one' (Messiah) of the Lord of spirits (48:10; 52:4). He is to be a support to the righteous and 'a light to the nations' (48:4; *cf.* what is said of the Servant in Is. 49:6), and the executioner of divine judgment on the ungodly (48:8-10).

From the beginning the Son of Man was hidden  
and the Most High preserved him in the presence of his might  
and revealed him to the elect (62:7).

But on the day of visitation he comes out of his place of concealment and is manifested as vindicator of the righteous and judge of the wicked:

and pain shall seize them  
when they see that Son of Man  
sitting on his throne of glory (62:5).

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This Son of Man 'was named before the Lord of spirits, and his name before the Head of days,... before the sun and the signs were created, before the stars of heaven were made' (48:2f.). But his

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<sup>25</sup> The date around AD 270 proposed by J. T. Milik, *The Books of Enoch: Aramaic Fragments of Qumrân Cave 4* (Clarendon, 1976), is widely regarded as unacceptably late. See M. A. Knibb, 'The Date of the Parables of Enoch: A Critical Review', *NTS* 25, 1978-79, pp.345ff, who prefers a date in the period following AD 70; also C. L. Mearns, 'Dating the Similitudes of Enoch', *NTS* 25, 1978-79, pp. 360ff, who thinks of the late 40s AD.

name is not divulged until near the end of the Parables: then Enoch is translated to heaven and welcomed by God in the words: 'You are the Son of Man born for righteousness; righteousness abides over you, and the righteousness of the Head of days does not forsake you' (71:14).

The relation borne by the Son of Man in the Parables of Enoch to the community of righteous and elect ones is comparable to that borne by Daniel's 'one like a son of man' to the saints of the Most High. If he is righteous, so are they (38:1ff., *etc.*); if he is elect, so are they (38:3, *etc.*). While hidden in God's presence from all eternity, he takes historical form on earth from time to time in someone who is outstandingly righteous, such as Enoch. If in another section of 1 Enoch the patriarch is commissioned, because of his righteousness, to pronounce God's judgment on the disobedient angels, in the Parables he has been chosen, for the same reason, to pronounce judgment on all the ungodly at the time of the end.

The identification of the Son of Man with Enoch (which may be compared with Enoch's portrayal as the Servant of the Lord in Wisdom 4:10-15 is evidence enough that in the Parables we are not dealing with a Christian work. Yet there are some verbal links between the tradition which finds expression in the Parables and certain strands of the Gospel tradition, especially the distinctively Matthaean strand. We recall Matthew 19:28, where the Q promise that Jesus' followers will 'sit on thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel' (*cf.* Lk. 22:30) finds its fulfilment 'in the new world (*palingenesia*), when the Son of man sits on his throne of glory', or the similar words at the beginning of the judgment scene of Matthew 25:31-46: 'When the Son of man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, then will he sit on his throne of glory.' So in the Parables of Enoch the day of judgment dawns when 'that Son of Man' is seen 'sitting on his throne of glory', having been installed there by the Lord of spirits.<sup>26</sup>

### ***The Apocalypse of Ezra***

it is certainly to the period following AD 70 that the Apocalypse of Ezra belongs.

In a dream vision recorded in this apocalypse (2 Esdras 13:1-53) 'something resembling a man' (Syr. 'ēyk d' mūtā d' barnāšā) is seen coming up from the sea: that man' flies with the clouds of heaven to judge the ungodly and deliver

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creation. He is acknowledged by God as 'my son' (verses 32, 37, 52) and described as 'the one whom the Most High has kept for many ages' (verse 26). This language, which in other dream visions in the same work is used of the Messiah (7:28, 29; 12:32), is fairly certainly based on that of Daniel 7:13f., although it is reminiscent also of Enoch's 'hidden' Son of Man. The Semitic original of the Apocalypse of Ezra is lost, as is also the Greek version; it survives in a number of secondary versions (notably Latin, Syriac and Ethiopic) based on the Greek. We can only guess what the Semitic term for the 'man' was (Heb. *ben 'ādām*, perhaps, or Aram. *bar 'nāšā*); since

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<sup>26</sup> There is a brief but helpful account of the Son of Man in 1 Enoch in M. D. Hooker, *The Son of Man in Mark*, pp. 33ff.

the Latin refers to him as *ipse homo* (in the vision, but *vir* in the interpretation),<sup>27</sup> the lost Greek version presumably had *autos ho anthrōpos* (i.e. no attempt was made to reproduce the Semitic idiom by some such rendering as *huios anthrōpou* with accompanying pronoun or article).

The Apocalypse of Ezra (a Jewish work) could have had no influence on the development of the Gospel tradition. Its vision of the man from the sea represents an independent line of interpretation of Daniel's vision, parallel to that in the Parables of Enoch.

### ***Aqiba***

The identification of the 'man' of Ezra's sixth vision with the Messiah crops up elsewhere in Judaism. Naturally, with the growth of exegetical controversy between Jews and Christians towards the end of the first century, the messianic interpretation of Daniel's 'one like a son of man' was bound to become as unacceptable to Jewish theologians as the messianic interpretation of the Isaianic Servant. But the messianic interpretation of Daniel's figure had already been established in some Jewish circles, and it emerges in the remark attributed to Aqiba that the thrones set for judgment in Daniel 7:9 were two in number one for God and one for 'David', i.e. the Messiah (cf. Ps. 122:5, 'There thrones for judgment were set, the thrones of the house of David'). Aqiba's colleagues were shocked to hear him voice an interpretation which by now smacked of profanity, but Aqiba would not have voiced it had it not been of respectable origin.<sup>28</sup>

### **Summary**

Our conclusions, then, are as follows:

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1. 'The Son of man' was not a current title for the Messiah or any other eschatological figure.
2. Jesus' special use of the expression (as distinct from its general Aramaic use in the sense of 'man', 'the man', or a possible use to replace the pronoun 'I') was derived from the 'one like a son of man' who is divinely vested with authority in Daniel 7:13f. Because it was not a current title, it was not liable to be misunderstood, as current titles were, and Jesus was free to take up the expression and give it what meaning he chose.
3. Jesus enriched the expression by fusing with it the figure of a righteous sufferer, probably the Isaianic Servant, so that he could speak of the suffering of the Son of man as something that was 'written' concerning him. By suffering and vindication Jesus, the Son of man, became his people's deliverer and advocate.

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<sup>27</sup> Similarly the Syriac version has *barnāšā* in the vision but *gabrā* in the interpretation. Presumably, then, the Greek version had *anēr* in the interpretation.

<sup>28</sup> See b*Hag.* 14a; b*Sanh.* 38b; cf. n. 19 above. The LXX reading of Dn. 7:13, in which the 'one like a son of man' (*hos huios anthrōpou*) arrives 'like an ancient of days' (*hōs palaios hēmerōn*), would call for more serious attention in this connection if its text were more certain.

F.F. Bruce, "The Background to the Son of Man Sayings," *Christ The Lord. Studies in Christology presented to Donald Guthrie*. Leicester: Inter-Varsity Press, 1982. Hbk. ISBN: 0851117449. pp.50-70.

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4. A similar fusion of suffering and vindicated figures is found in some Qumran texts, although they use a different vocabulary (in which 'one like a son of man' does not appear), and there is no indication that Jesus or the evangelists were influenced by Qumran thought.

5. The 'Son of Man' in the Parables of Enoch and the 'man' in the Apocalypse of Ezra also hark back to Daniel's 'one like a son of man', but in these works also the expression is not a title, and they represent developments probably later than Jesus and the Gospels and certainly independent of them.

6. A 'Son of man' theology could be nothing other than a theology based on what can be ascertained about Jesus' understanding of his identity and life-mission.

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