***Session 30 The Son of Man and the Gospel of the Kingdom – Part I***

1. **JESUS MOST FAVORITE TITLE – *THE* SON OF MAN**

A. *The Son of Man* is the title Jesus used to refer to Himself most in all four Gospels. When compared to the other titles we to see it is significantly more. The other titles used by Him are: *the Christ, the Son of David, the Son of God.* In descending order of His use concerning Himself we see:

 Son of Man – 78

 Christ – 11

 Son of God – 5

 Son of David – 1

B. The significance of the use of this term then cannot be overlooked, especially in relation to His message and demonstration of the Gospel of the Kingdom. The title *Son of God* was used to refer to Himself *and* others.

 Matthew 5:9 says the peacemakers are call *sons of God*.

 Luke 20:34-36 says the *sons of this age* marry, but those who attain to the resurrection are “equal to angels and are sons of God, being sons of the resurrection.”

 When the Apostle Nathanael received Jesus’ prophetic word concerning being seen under the fig tree, he said, “Rabbi, you are the Son of God!” Jesus redirected his focus to *the Son of Man*

 “Truly, truly, I say to you, you will see heaven opened, and the angels of God ascending and descending on the Son of Man.” (John 1:51 ESV)

 In doing so, Jesus brought together two passages from Genesis 28 and Daniel 7.

C. The Kingly title or designation as the Anointed King (Melech Ha Mashiach) is *Mashiach* in Hebrew or *Christos* in the Greek. Both mean exactly the same in this case, *the Anointed King*. It is frequently applied to Jesus in the Gospels but He only used it occasionally when referring to Himself. Jesus acknowledged He was the Messiah but avoided using it as His main title. Most Christians assume Jesus nearly always presented Himself as Messiah, but He did not. On the contrary, He tended to avoid the title Messiah, and never used it publicly.[[1]](#footnote-1) The reason for this according to Whitefield, “Jesus was not trying to keepa secret – He was trying to avoid confusion…Jesus’ identity is at the heart of the gospel, and therefore, we must learn how Jesus presented Himself.”[[2]](#footnote-2)

D. One of Jesus’ purposes was to reveal His union with the Father and thus His divine person (the mystery of Yahweh made flesh). Taking His use of *the Son of Man* as the primary way He addressed Himself, it would have been understood by a First Century Jew as having some relationship with Daniel 7. The Gospels (Matthew-John) demonstrate this very truth.

 64 Jesus said to him, “You have said so. But I tell you, from now on you will see the Son of Man seated at the right hand of Power and coming on the clouds of heaven.” (Matt. 26:64; Mark 14:63-64 ESV)

E. What is this Daniel 7reference?

13 “I was watching in the night visions, and with the clouds of the sky one like a son of man was approaching. He went up to the Ancient of Days and was escorted before him. (Dan. 7:13 NET)

While it is true the use of the phrase *son of Man* can and should be translated as *human*, Jesus turned the phase into a title to communicate His uniqueness and holiness. One of the great challenges Jesus had was to reveal His divinity, not in proving His humanity.[[3]](#footnote-3) He was never questioned on His humanity. This only happened later in the following centuries as heresies emerged denying He was human at all. No one in the first century doubted His humanity.

F. Jesus added the definite article *the* to the Son of Man and applied it to Himself. Meaning the identity of the noun is known to the reader or audience, unlike the indefinite article *a, an* where it could be one of any number of things. For example, *the* cat in the barn versus *a* cat in the barn. One would presumably know which cat if *the cat* is used as opposed to *a cat* which could be any feline.

G. Jesus turned *the Son of Man* into a title to separate Himself from all other *sons of men*, and His use of this term was so out of place so as to draw the hearer’s attention to it. Had we been there we would have asked, “What did He say? What did He call Himself? *The* Son of Man?” As such, when compared to the rest of the Bible (for example Ezekiel was referred to as *son of Man*, but not *the Son of Man*), the Gospel’s use of this title is unusual and unique. No one other than Jesus was called this in the Gospels and was the only one to call Himself this. As Whitefield notes,

 Furthermore, Jesus used man to refer to Himself as a man in John, 22 revealing Jesus did not use Son of Man to reference His humanity. The Gospel authors made a clear distinction between Son of Man and generic references to humanity. They did not use Son of Man and man or human interchangeably. They expected us to read Son of Man as a unique title and not a generic reference to humanity.[[4]](#footnote-4)

H. While it is not necessarily what you would expect for Jesus to call Himself, (Messiah, Son of God, or God), He never had to explain what He meant by it, meaning one reason we can extrapolate from this is that just like the term *kingdom of God*, those who heard him *knew* what *the Son of Man* meant. No one else ever claimed to be *the Son of Man*. Some would claim to be the Messiah, some *sons of God*, such as the Caesars and pagan rulers, but no one else ever claimed to be the Son of Man. It was in fact the very claim that ultimately led to His crucifixion.

I. Not only was it the final indictment that led to Jesus’ crucifixion, it also led to the *first* martyr Stephen’s death. After declaring their disobedience to Torah, which if obeyed would have led them to Jesus, the unbelieving Jewish authorities and others who rejected Jesus became furious. And then Stephen said this,

 55But Stephen, full of the Holy Spirit, looked intently toward heaven and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing at the right hand of God. 56 “Look!” he said. “I see the heavens opened, and the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God!” (Acts 7:55 NET)

 The next thing they did was take him outside of the city and stone him. Why did this declaration provoke the same response as it did to the high priest Caiaphas? Because it is not a statement of Jesus *humanity*, rather it is about His Divine Person.

**II.**  **JESUS USE OF THE SON OF MAN AND DANIEL 7**

A. Daniel’s vision of the Son of Man is contextualized within another series of visions related to the domain of darkness and its world kingdoms represented in four beasts, the last being the man of sin. So his visions in are eschatological in nature. However, as we have seen, the already-but-not-yet truth of the kingdom is the answer to *when* these things happen or have happened.

B. Daniel sees then the Ancient of Days and the divine council along with all others of His family and court taking their place in judgment against the beast and his empire of darkness. And the one to whom the dominion of the earth is given is none other than the Son of Man.

 *13 I saw in the night visions, and behold, with the clouds of heaven there came one like a son of man, and he came to the Ancient of Days and was presented [NET: escorted] to him. 14 And to him was given dominion and glory and a kingdom, that all peoples, nations, and languages should serve him; his dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom one that shall not be destroyed. (Dan. 7:13-14)*

 This section of Daniel 7 becomes the central focus of the chapter as we will see later in its *chiastic[[5]](#footnote-5)* structure.

C. We see the main or key points of this section of Daniel in *the Son of Man*, *the Ancient of Days*, *someone or something* presenting Him to the Father, *dominion, kingdom, all peoples, nations, languages*, *everlasting kingdom*. Prior verses show the divine council, that is the divine sons of God, or *the angelic host*.

D. Notice now the following places where Jesus speaks of Himself as the Son of Man and the context of Daniel 7 themes. As with the Sermon on the Mount, He is giving divine insight and correct interpretation to the events of Daniel 7 and how these truths have and will play out.

1. Matthew 13:37-41

In the parable of the wheat and tares Jesus says, “The one who sowed the good seed is the Son of Man. The field is the world and the good seed are the people of the kingdom.” This is contrasted with the tares or poisonous weeds who He calls “the people of the evil one, and the enemy who sows them is the devil.” We see yet again the contrast of the Kingdom of God and the Domain of Darkness. Each is manifest in the people of each domain. They *are different*. At the end of the age, the time of harvest, He, the Son of Man, will send his angels to gather *out of his Kingdom* all of those who cause sin and lawlessness (iniquity). So at that time it’s not a matter of removing believers from the earth, it’s a statement of judgment on the wicked sons of the devil in the Day of the LORD. Afterwards, the people of His kingdom, which Daniel saw as those from every nation, tribe, and tongue, they will shine like the sun in the Kingdom of *their* Father.

This is a reference to Daniel 12:3 speaking of the resurrection of believers, “but the wise will shine like the brightness of the heavenly expanse. And those bringing many to righteousness will be like the stars forever and ever.”

When we see the Son of Man escorted before His God and Father, Yahweh on the Throne, He has accomplished something. He has sown seed in the world and His heavenly host is going to help Him remove all evil from the world.

1. Matthew 16:13-27

At the base of Mount Hermon Jesus asks His disciples the famous question for which Simon Peter (Shimon Kefa) gives his famous reply. “Who do people say that *the Son of Man* is?” Now the question at this point is obviously *more* than a personal reference to Himself. It is that, but it is a specific title He has applied to Himself that points us to Daniel 7. The question then is, *who* is that *Son of Man* being presented to the Ancient of Days? Some say, John the Baptist. Some say, Elijah. Some say Jeremiah. Others say one of the prophets. And by Jesus own direction all of these are *wrong answers*. Notice here *one of the prophets* would also include Ezekiel who was often referred to as *son of man*.

Peter then receives revelation from the Ancient of Days, the Father in Heaven. He declares, “You are the Messiah (Christ), the Son of the Living God.” Notice then, the question of *the Son of Man* takes into account not only Jesus’ most used title, but also the others! They are all found *in Him*. The Son of Man is the Messiah (King) and the Son of God! So that One who is escorted before the Ancient of Days is the Christ, the Son of God, the Davidic King *and* the Eternal Divine Son of Man, one in the same. The Father then revealed to Peter the identity of *the Son of Man* in Daniel 7. And it is *this* revelation that Jesus said He would build His Church on: The identity of *the Son of Man* as the Christ, the Son of the Living God. And along with that His Eternal and Glorious Kingdom.

1. Matthew 16:28

Jesus explicitly validates the *already-but-not-yet* reality of His Kingdom by saying: “…there are some standing here who will not experience death before they see the Son of Man coming in his kingdom.”

We know then that something happened before those to whom He was speaking died physically: they experienced the Son of Man *coming in His Kingdom*. That means in the ascension (the escorting of the Son of Man before the Ancient of Days) they began to enter into the reality of the power of the age to come, the Messianic Age. How did this happen? Daniel says that at that time He was given dominion over the people on the earth. He says the same thing in Matthew 28:26, “All authority (permission to rule and reign in power) in heaven and earth has been given to Me.” When was it given? When He was presented to the Ancient of Days.

1. Matthew 17:9

After the *transfiguration* Jesus tells Peter, James, and John to not speak of the *vision* until *the Son of Man* is raised from the dead. We see here then the presentation of the Son of Man before the Ancient of Days happens *after* He dies and it raised from the dead, thus connecting Him to the Resurrection of Daniel 12, Himself being the First Fruits of that Resurrection. When we see the resurrected Jesus in other passages and it points out the brilliant light and shining glory, recontextualize it with Daniel 12:3, “but the wise will shine like the brightness of the heavenly expanse.”

1. Matthew 26:64

64 Jesus said to him, “You have said it yourself. But I tell you, from now on you will see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of the Power and coming on the clouds of heaven.” (Matt. 26:64)

Here Jesus quotes directly from Daniel 7:13. The Son of Man is riding on the clouds when He is presented before the Ancient of Days, His God and Father, Yahweh. Not only does He draw the attention to the Rider on the Clouds, but also Psalm 110:1. Who is the One sitting at the Right Hand of Power?

“Yahweh said to *my Adon*, ‘Sit at My right hand until I make all of Your enemies a footstool for your feet.’” (Ps. 110:1)

The author of Hebrews clearly identifies this Divine King Priest as *God the Son*, quoting from Psalm 45:6-7:

8But of the Son he says, “Your throne, O God, is forever and ever, the scepter of uprightness is the scepter of your kingdom. 9 You have loved righteousness and hated wickedness; therefore God, your God, has anointed you with the oil of gladness beyond your companions.” (Heb. 1:8-9)

Recall, Peter received the revelation that the Son of Man is the Messiah and Son of God and thus the One in Psalm 110 is the same in Daniel 7. The Son of Man is the Messiah, David’s Son, and He is God manifested in visible radiance, form, exact imprint of the Father’s person (see Heb. 1:3).

You could then write Psalm 110:1 to say, “Yahweh said to *the Son of Man*, sit at My right hand until I make all your enemies a footstool for your feet.” Psalm 110 then becomes a key to interpreting Daniel 7 and visa versa.

**III. DANIEL 7 AND THE GOSPEL OF THE KINGDOM**

A. Daniel 7 provides a dynamic context to both Jesus’ identity as *the Son of Man* and His Declaration of the Gospel of the Kingdom. We have seen the direct references to Isaiah 61 and the setting free from the domain of darkness, demons, and sickness those who are bound by Satan and the ravages of sin and exile. Daniel gives more insight into this domain. As we have seen in previous sessions, the image from Nebuchadnezzar’s dream in Daniel 2 provides a template for the world governments and ‘system’ that is used by the powers of darkness to keep men blind. Some of the same metals are described in Daniel 4 when the tree is cut down and a band of iron and bronze is put around it (Dan. 4:23). Daniel 7 gives greater clarity on that ‘system’ and the reality of the Kingdom of God as the only answer to the domain of darkness.

B. Daniel 7 has a chiastic structure in the presentation of the vision and prophecy, that has at its center both the Ancient of Days and *the* Son of Man.

 

‘C’ is the middle section of the chapter in both instances as a repeat of the structure. The fact of the repetition is in of itself a key to understanding the already-but-not-yet truth of the Kingdom of God and the leading toward the culmination of the complete overthrow of the beast empires of this present evil age by the Son of Man, the Lord Jesus Christ.

C. Daniel introduces the events of chapter 7 by noting the vision occurred before the overthrow of the Babylonians by the Medes and Persians under the de facto king/ruler Belshazzar (his father the actual king Nabonidus). This is the same one who engaged in the profaning of the Jerusalem Temple’s vessels in a Babylonian party and saw the ‘writing on the wall.’ Daniel 7 then reflects back during this time of Babylonian rule prior to the advancement of the Persians. Remember, Daniel sees the *prince and kings of the kingdom of Persia*, a supernatural enemy of Michael and the angel that delivered the message in chapter 10. They were on the rise in ascendency of authority and power over the realm of Persia, revealed through the reign of the Persian King Cyrus.

D. Daniel saw the *four winds of heaven* stirring up the great sea. More likely he saw the *four angels* or divine sons of God that stand at the four corners of the earth that have power over the *four winds* of the earth. These *four winds of heaven* (arba ruach samayin) can be seen as these *four spirits* of or in heaven that have power over all of the winds on earth.

E. We see these same *four winds* or *spirits* or *angels* in Revelation 7:1: “After this I saw four angels standing at the four corners of the earth, holding back the four winds of the earth, that no wind might blow on the earth or sea or against any tree.” The four angels in heaven have power over the wind of the whole earth. This is consistent with the impact of the heavenly host and the events on planet earth.

 The writer of Hebrews confirms one of the purposes for these divine sons are to minister to believers: “Are they not all ministering spirits sent out to serve for the sake of those who are to inherit salvation? (Heb. 1:14)” The context concerns the place of *angels* or the divine sons contrasted with *the Son of Man, the Divine Son*. The point here, they are ministering spirits, or pneumata (winds).

F. These four divine spirits of heaven are seen in Zechariah 6:1-8. The key notes are they ride chariots and are pulled by horses of varying colors. The first are a red horses, the second black horses, the third white horses, and the fourth dappled horses. Zechariah asks one of the angels, “what are these?” The angel’s response, “These are the four spirits (or winds) of heaven that have been presenting themselves before the Lord of all the earth. (Zech. 6:5 NET)” These then can be in some way identified with the first four seals opened by the Lamb in Revelation 6. The four riders would serve the same purpose of stirring up the winds of the earth, specifically the great sea.

G. Carson and Beal note the following, “If there is any significance in the change from Zechariah’s “winds of heaven” to “winds of the earth,” it may lie in an attempt to emphasize the earthly havoc that these heavenly agents accomplish. For “winds” in general as agents of divine judgment elsewhere in the OT, see Ps. 18:10; 104:3–4; Isa. 19:1; 66:15; Jer. 4:11–12; 23:19; 51:1; Hos. 13:15–16 (cf. also Jub. 2:2). Of relevance for comparison to Rev. 7:1 is Josephus, J.W. 6.297–301, where heavenly chariots purportedly were seen as warning signs of Jerusalem’s impending destruction, followed by a reference to “a voice from the four winds” also as a warning sign.”[[6]](#footnote-6)

H. Daniel then sees these four angels, perhaps in their chariots, stirring up *the great sea*. They are affecting events on the earth by *stirring up* the nations. The great sea here can be descriptive of the Mediterranean Sea. However, the picture we are given should cause us to think back to Genesis 1:2 where the Ruach of God was hovering over the face of the waters waiting for God to speak. Here is another example of the impact of God’s Spirit in heaven over the order on the earth. The point is the *great sea* is more than just water. It is where Leviathan, Rahav, and the Dragon resides. (Isa. 27:1, 51:9) As such it is also representative of chaos these wicked spirits produce.

I. The picture then Daniel sees is the four divine sons stir up the winds of the earth to as to create the conditions where chaos will emerge. Why would these divine sons do this? What would be the purpose? Divine judgment. Yahweh raised up Babylon to judge Judah. (Ezek. 21:18-19) It also serves His purpose to expose the enemy and raise them up to be Judged.

J. 5This is evidence of the righteous judgment of God, that you may be considered worthy of the kingdom of God, for which you are also suffering— 6 since indeed God considers it just to repay with affliction those who afflict you, 7and to grant relief to you who are afflicted as well as to us, when the Lord Jesus is revealed from heaven with his mighty angels 8in flaming fire, inflicting vengeance on those who do not know God and on those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus. 9They will suffer the punishment of eternal destruction, away from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of his might, 10 when he comes on that day to be glorified in his saints, and to be marveled at among all who have believed, because our testimony to you was believed. (2 Thess. 1:5-10 ESV)

K. This passage sounds remarkably similar to the scene we see in Daniel 7. As the winds of chaos are stirred and the four beasts emerge from that chaos, it leads ultimately to a *little horn* that persecutes the saints, who in turn are raised from the dead and receive the Kingdom of God. (Matthew 5:10-12)

L. Daniel sees four great beasts come out of the sea of chaos. These four beasts are four beast empires that we have seen previously in Daniel 2: Babylon, Persia, Greece, Rome. Each are represented by specific metals so as to distinguish them from each other and to give insight into their economic, political, and military power. We see more insight in Daniel 4:23 that after the Babylonian empire is cut down, a band of bronze and iron will be placed around the stump. Here is the point: these empires are a result of the winds of heaven being moved in a way to create chaos on the earth so the beast empires will arise and receive the ultimate judgment.

M. At this point, identifying the four beasts as Babylon, Persia, Greece, and Rome is not necessarily the main purpose of the vision. In this pursuit one can miss the forest for the trees. These four beast empires represent the full scope of the economies, governments, and militaries of the world empires beginning with Babylon and ending with a radical demonized Beast at the end of the present evil age. They are the means and methods employed by the wicked spirits of the domain of darkness and stand in contrast to the Kingdom of God and His Messiah, our Lord Jesus Christ.

N. Daniel continues looking until the fourth beast (the number four represents the total earth, just as the four winds represent the total earth) appeared with iron teeth and devoured and broke in pieces and stamped what was left with its feet. It was *different* from the previous beasts. What were these differences? It had ten horns. Horns are symbols of power and authority in an economic/political/military empire. This Beast has 10 horns. Again, we are not interested at this point in trying to identify these as 10 nations, or 10 generals, or 10 periods of time where evil rulers do evil things. It simply points to an enormous amount of power and control it exercises as a world empire. The last of them.

O. This Beast Empire is the Empire governed by the Antichrist, the Man of Sin. For out of the 10 Horns comes a *little horn*, that uproots or removes three of the 10 horns. And this little horn has eyes like the eyes of a man and a mouth that speaks great things. We have seen a similar wicked being in Revelation 12 portrayed as a Great Red Dragon with Seven Heads and 10 Crowns. Once this Dragon Spirit (i.e., Satan) is cast to the earth out of the heavenly realm, John then writes in Revelation 13:1-10

 1And I saw a beast rising out of the sea, with ten horns and seven heads, with ten diadems on its horns and blasphemous names on its heads. 2And the beast that I saw was like a leopard; its feet were like a bear’s, and its mouth was like a lion’s mouth. And to it the dragon gave his power and his throne and great authority. 3 One of its heads seemed to have a mortal wound, but its mortal wound was healed, and the whole earth marveled as they followed the beast. 4And they worshiped the dragon, for he had given his authority to the beast, and they worshiped the beast, saying, “Who is like the beast, and who can fight against it?”  5And the beast was given a mouth uttering haughty and blasphemous words, and it was allowed to exercise authority for forty-two months. 6 It opened its mouth to utter blasphemies against God, blaspheming his name and his dwelling, that is, those who dwell in heaven. 7 Also it was allowed to make war on the saints and to conquer them. And authority was given it over every tribe and people and language and nation, 8 and all who dwell on earth will worship it, everyone whose name has not been written before the foundation of the world in the book of life of the Lamb who was slain. 9 If anyone has an ear, let him hear: 10If anyone is to be taken captive, to captivity he goes; if anyone is to be slain with the sword, with the sword must he be slain. Here is a call for the endurance and faith of the saints…14:12 Here is a call for the endurance of the saints, those who keep the commandments of God and their faith in Jesus. (Rev. 13:1-10; Rev. 14:12)

 The Beast rising out the sea is a product of the Four Angels stirring up the chaos at the end of the age. Chaos that will result in the Last Beast Empire to arise. This beast represents *all of the other beasts*. This is one reason it was different from the others. This one brings into view all of the others that had come before. While those others had governing powers of wickedness empowering them (Prince and Kings of Persia, Prince of Greece) this one is empowered by Satan himself. This is the full manifestation of the domain of darkness at the end of the age.

P. The full intention is to bring the earth to the place of worshipping the Beast himself, and he will point men to overt, open, full-blown Satan worship. Daniel saw the little horn (the Beast) had eyes like a man and spoke great things. We know from John in Revelation 13 the *great things* are haughty and blasphemous words. His eyes can view the entire earth. And his target is the Church of the Lord Jesus. And he will have limited success in his war against the Saints.

Q. In the next session we will see the answer to this *little horn*, the Man of Sin, the Beast. At this point, we know the complete and ultimate failure and judgment of the last attempt will happen because it has already happened in the first three beast empires and Yahweh’s judgment on them. This is the inevitable end. The Ancient of Days will hold a Divine Council Session and render divine judgment and wrath against the Man of Sin and those who bear his image and take his mark and name.

R. Remember, our end-times approach takes into account the already-but-not-yet truths of the Kingdom of God, which is eschatological. Meaning by virtue of the future hope and promise and its reality breaking into this present evil age, Jesus has already secured the end, that hope and promise is now reality in part, His Holy Spirit is the downpayment of that promise and He stands as guarantor of the New Covenant. This is not going to end well for Satan, the Beast, the False Prophet, and all of the Wicked Spirits.

 19 And I saw the beast and the kings of the earth with their armies gathered to make war against him who was sitting on the horse and against his army. 20 And the beast was captured, and with it the false prophet who in its presence had done the signs by which he deceived those who had received the mark of the beast and those who worshiped its image. These two were thrown alive into the lake of fire that burns with sulfur. 21 And the rest were slain by the sword that came from the mouth of him who was sitting on the horse, and all the birds were gorged with their flesh. (Rev. 19:19-21)

 10 and the devil who had deceived them was thrown into the lake of fire and sulfur where the beast and the false prophet were, and they will be tormented day and night forever and ever. (Rev. 20:10)

 41 “Then he will say to those on his left, ‘Depart from me, you cursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels. (Matthew 25:41)

 To be continued…

1. Whitefield, Samuel. Son of Man: The Gospel of Daniel 7 (p. 22). OneKing Publishing. Kindle Edition. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Ibid. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. Ibid. p. 23 [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. Whitefield, Samuel. Son of Man: The Gospel of Daniel 7 (p. 25). OneKing Publishing. Kindle Edition. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. A *chiastic structure* or *chiasm* is a literary technique used on purpose by the author to lead the reader to a central point by the use of words and ideas that follow a basic A -> B -> C -> C -> B -> A, meaning you will find the same word use or ideas from A on both ends of the chiasm and the same for B. In the middle is the what A and B point to from both sides. [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. Commentary on the New Testament Use of the Old Testament (Kindle Locations 42104-42109). Baker Publishing Group. Kindle Edition. [↑](#footnote-ref-6)