

JESUS, FOURTH EZRA AND A SON OF MAN TRADITION
IN THE FIRST CENTURY A.D.

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Abstract

The title that Jesus most often applied to himself is ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ ἀνθρώπου. This is an intriguing choice considering the ambiguity of this particular designation. For instance, the Son of Man pericopes in the Gospels reveal that Jesus applied Son of Man to himself in order to communicate that he was the divine Messiah. There is no such use of Son of Man as a title in the OT; it is simply a poetic equivalent of “man” or “mankind.” There is only the obscure reference to a son of man figure as a heavenly personage in Daniel 7.

Close scrutiny of the Son of Man sayings reveals that a large number of these sayings emphasize the supernatural aspects of Jesus and his ministry. These are features of Jesus’ ministry that go beyond the sense of the son of man designation given in the Old Testament. There must have been a “son of man” tradition during Jesus’ earthly life and ministry that depicted the Jewish Messiah as a glorious “son of man.” This tradition, found in Fourth Ezra and the Similitudes of Enoch, made it possible for Jesus to apply the obscure reference to the כִּבְרֵ אֱנוֹשׁ in Daniel 7:13 to himself as a Messianic title. This thesis demonstrates how 4 Ezra gives evidence for such a tradition that serves as a catalyst for Jesus to communicate that he was the divine Messiah.

It appears that Jesus chose Son of Man as a title because of the essentially eschatological nature of the apocalyptic son of man figure found in this tradition. And by so doing he established a point of contact with his hearers and presented himself as that heavenly, pre-existent, God-anointed personage whose eschatological mission was to accomplish salvation and execute judgment. This point of contact was due to the son of man tradition conveyed by 4 Ezra.

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List of Abbreviations

Bible

| | |
|------|-----------------|
| OT | Old Testament |
| NT | New Testament |
| Ge | Genesis |
| Ex | Exodus |
| Lev | Leviticus |
| Nu | Numbers |
| Dt | Deuteronomy |
| 1 Sa | 1 Samuel |
| 2 Sa | 2 Samuel |
| Ps | Psalms |
| Pr | Proverbs |
| Isa | Isaiah |
| Eze | Ezekiel |
| Da | Daniel |
| Hos | Hosea |
| Jnh | Jonah |
| Hab | Habakkuk |
| Mt | Matthew |
| Mk | Mark |
| Lk | Luke |
| Jn | John |
| Ac | Acts |
| Ro | Romans |
| 1 Co | 1 Corinthians |
| 2 Co | 2 Corinthians |
| Gal | Galatians |
| Eph | Ephesians |
| Php | Philippians |
| Col | Colossians |
| 1 Th | 1 Thessalonians |
| 2 Th | 2 Thessalonians |
| Tit | Titus |
| Heb | Hebrews |
| 1 Pe | 1 Peter |
| 2 Pe | 2 Peter |
| Rev | Revelation |

Pseudepigrapha

| | |
|-------|----------------------|
| 4 Ezr | Fourth Ezra |
| 1 Eno | Similitudes of Enoch |

General

| | |
|-------|-----------------------------|
| Cf. | confer |
| ed. | edited by |
| eds. | editors |
| e.g., | exempli gratia, for example |
| i.e., | id est, that is |

Note: Scripture citations are from the NIV Study Bible, 10th Anniversary Edition, 1995.

CHAPTER ONE INTRODUCTION

JESUS, FOURTH EZRA AND A SON OF MAN TRADITION IN THE FIRST CENTURY A. D.

A Statement of the Problem

The quest to know who Jesus is has persisted since Jesus' earthly life and ministry. Opinions concerning his identity are just as divergent today as they ever have been in spite of the fact that Jesus himself made explicit claims as to his identity and mission. The first step in understanding Jesus' identity is to examine his own claims about himself and his purpose. Indeed, the titles that Jesus used for himself demonstrate his self-conscious awareness of his person and mission. For example, Jesus referred to himself as $\acute{o} \upsilon\iota\acute{o}\varsigma$ (to communicate a special relationship to God the Father) and as $\acute{\epsilon}\gamma\omega \acute{\epsilon}\iota\mu\iota$ (in order to align himself with יְהוָה). $\acute{o} \upsilon\iota\acute{o}\varsigma \tau\omicron\upsilon \tau\omicron\upsilon \alpha\acute{\nu}\theta\rho\omega\pi\omicron\upsilon$ is however, the title that Jesus most often applied to himself. Where did this come from? Did Jesus intend for this title to be so ambiguous? Did he intend for such a great mystery to surround his messianic office? Or did he perhaps intend to emphasize his humanity in contrast to his deity? The problem is compounded in that Jesus did not fit the mould of Jewish messianic expectations nor did the Son of Man title conform exactly to the more common messianic titles (e.g., עֲבֹד-יְהוָה , בֶּן-דָּוִד , מָשִׁיחַ). A river of ink has been poured over the subject of the background and meaning of this title, and there is yet no consensus for a resolution to the problem.

The prominent meaning of בֶּן-אָדָם in the Old Testament is "man" or "mankind". For example, the Psalmist employs this term in synonymous parallelism with אָדָם on several occasions.

What is *man* that you are mindful of him,
the *son of man* that you care for him (8:4)?

Let your hand rest on the *man* at your right hand,
the *son of man* you have raised up for yourself
(80:17).

O LORD, what is *man* that you care for him,
the *son of man* that you think of him (144:3)?

Do not put your trust in *princes*,
in *mortal men*, who cannot save (146:3).

It is a title for the prophet Ezekiel, emphasizing his humanity in contrast to God (e.g., Eze 2:1,3; 3:1,3,4,10,17,25). And the angel addresses Daniel as “Son of man” (Da 8:17). Thus, when we come across Jesus’ Son of Man sayings in the Gospels we may assume that Jesus is depicting his humanity in distinction to his deity. This is indeed a very popular notion concerning Jesus as the Son of Man.

However, close scrutiny of the Son of Man sayings reveals that a large number of these sayings emphasize the supernatural aspects of Jesus and his ministry. Also, when we take into account that the only Son of Man text that Jesus explicitly refers to is Daniel 7:13 (e.g., Mt 24:30; 26:63-64; Mk 13:26; 14:61-62; Lk 21:27), which is a depiction of a heavenly being who appears before the Ancient of Days as “one like a son of man” (כְּבֶרֶךְ אִנְשׁ) it becomes more apparent that Jesus depicts his heavenly nature by using Son of Man as a title. This heavenly being is the agent of God’s eternal kingdom and representative of the saints of the Most High. Jesus declares that he has fulfilled this very role.

There are also features of Jesus' ministry that go beyond those features of the "son of man" in Daniel, adding to the ambiguity. Yet, a possible solution to this dilemma may be found in an apocalyptic tradition containing the son of man figure as Messiah. The Messiah in this tradition shares many characteristics with Jesus the Son of Man. It can be demonstrated through a literary, theological, and historical comparison of the book of Fourth Ezra with Daniel and with Jesus' eschatological Son of Man sayings that such a tradition existed during the earthly ministry of Jesus the Son of Man. Jesus was able to convey his messiahship through this "son of man" tradition that has its origin with Daniel. As the Son of Man sayings are explored it becomes evident that Jesus employs "Son of Man" as a messianic title. Perhaps Jesus did not intend "Son of Man" to be a secretive description after all, but *au contraire* he may have intended it to convey that he was the divine Messiah who, as the agent of God's eternal kingdom, had come to accomplish salvation and execute judgment. And this could have been understood by "those who had ears to hear" (i.e., those who were more discerning among Jesus' hearers).

It is intriguing that Jesus chose Son of Man as a messianic title for himself. The terms בֶּן אָדָם in the Hebrew and בֶּר אָדָם in the Aramaic are attributive genitives. These convey the sense of being a man or human, i.e., the terms are usually synonymous with אָדָם as was demonstrated by the previously cited biblical texts. The exception to this is Daniel 7:13 where the בֶּר אָדָם is a heavenly being. The Greek phrase $\text{ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ ἀνθρώπου}$ is used exclusively of Jesus in the New Testament. Moreover, there are only four occurrences of the phrase outside the Gospels (Ac 7:56; Heb 2:6; Rev 1:13, 14:14). This phrase is also an attributive adjective, yet Jesus applies it as a title. As an attributive adjective the designation would simply speak of Jesus as the Man, a member of the human race. Yet, the Son of Man pericopes in the Gospels make it

clear that Jesus' intends to convey more than his solidarity with the human race. The designation as Jesus applies it must be taken as it stands, as a reference to a divine messianic figure.

Statement of Purpose

The driving force behind this thesis is the phenomenon that Jesus chose Son of Man as a messianic title for himself, while it is not employed as such in the Old Testament. This thesis will seek to discover how Jesus took an obscure reference to "one like a son of man" in Daniel 7 and applied it messianically to himself. Further, this thesis proposes that Jesus accomplished this by using an existing apocalyptic tradition along with Daniel as a catalyst to convey to his hearers that he, as the Son of Man, was the divine Messiah. This was possible because the Messiah in this tradition is depicted as a "son of man" who is the eschatological agent of God's Kingdom.

Statement of the Importance of the Problem

It is of vital importance that one understands who Jesus is and is able to offer a defense of the person of Jesus Christ. This understanding and apologetic must be squarely based on Jesus' own teaching and the New Testament's presentation of him. The Son of Man title is therefore a significant pursuit for the following reasons: (1) it is the title that Jesus most often used for himself; (2) it is found almost exclusively on the lips of Jesus himself; (3) it was associated with a messianic figure of Jewish apocalypticism; and (4) it disclosed Jesus' self-conscious identity.

Statement of Position

Why Jesus would use such an ambiguous title is the question that sparked my curiosity and moved me toward a quest to discover the origin, tradition, and significance of Jesus' self-conferred title of Son of Man. The Son of Man sayings in the Gospels indicate that Jesus as the Son of Man fulfilled the OT prophecies concerning God's Kingdom (this will be discussed in chapter two). Though these sayings ultimately depend on the OT, a gap exists between the OT

messianic prophecies and Jesus' fulfillment of them. This gap was created because "Son of Man" was not a messianic title in the OT but Jesus used it as such. Why then did Jesus choose this particular title to identify himself as the Messiah?

It appears that Jesus chose Son of Man first of all because of its ambiguity as a messianic title (it avoided the baggage of the more familiar messianic terms), and secondly because of its connection with the eschatological messiah within Jewish apocalyptic literature (esp. Da 7; 1 Eno 37-71; 4 Ezr). Therefore, this thesis will answer the stated problem by focusing on 4 Ezra and the eschatological figure found therein and its close relation to the messianic expectations of the OT. I propose that the eschatological messiah in Fourth Ezra constitutes the conceptual link between the OT messianic promises and Jesus' fulfillment of them as the Son of Man.

Limitations

This thesis will focus on Fourth Ezra and its theological and messianic affinities to the OT Scriptures generally and the book of Daniel specifically. Special attention will be given to the relationship between the Messiah in 4 Ezra and Jesus the Son of Man, and their basis in Daniel. Fourth Ezra is the focus because it is illustrious of a "son of man" tradition that was current in Jewish apocalypticism at the end of the first century A. D. The historicity and authenticity of the Son of Man sayings in the Gospels are assumed.

Development of Thesis

Chapter two, "The Son of Man in the Synoptic Gospels and John," will set the stage for an examination of Fourth Ezra in chapters three and four. The Son of Man sayings in the Synoptic Gospels may be collated and then categorized into three divisions. These are related to the function and nature of the Son of Man, and may be classified by the following categories: (1) the earthly ministry of the Son of Man, (2) the suffering, death, and resurrection of the Son of

Man and (3) the eschatological mission of the Son of Man. The category of the earthly ministry of the Son of Man contains five sets of references.

1. Matthew 8:18-22; Luke 9:57-62
2. Matthew 9:1-8; Mark 2:1-12; Luke 5:17-26
3. Matthew 10:21-23; Luke 6:22
4. Matthew 11:16-19; Luke 7:18-35
5. Matthew 12:1-8; Mark 2:23-28; Luke 6:1-5

The category of the suffering, death, and resurrection of the Son of Man includes the following:

1. Matthew 17:1-13; Mark 9:1-13; Luke 9:28-45
2. Matthew 17:14-22; Mark 9:14-32; Luke 9:37-42
3. Matthew 20:17-19; Mark 10:32-34; Luke 18:31-34
4. Matthew 20:20-28; Mark 10:35-45
5. Matthew 26:1-5; Mark 14:1-2; Luke 22:1-2
6. Matthew 26:24; Mark 14:17-21; Luke 22:20-2
7. Matthew 26:45; Mark 14:41; Luke 22:48

The category of the eschatological Son of Man includes the following:

1. Matthew 13:36-43
2. Matthew 16:13-20; Mark 8:27-30; Luke 9:18-21
3. Matthew 16:21-28; Mark 8:31-9:1; Luke 9:21-27
4. Matthew 19:23-30
5. Matthew 24:26-51; Mark 13:1-37; Luke 21:5-36
6. Matthew 25:31-46
7. Matthew 26:57-67; Mark 14:61-65; Luke 22:66-71
8. Matthew 12:40; Luke 11:30
9. Luke 18:8

The Johannine Son of Man sayings are found at 1:51; 3:13; 3:14-15; 5:27; 6:27, 53, 62; 8:28; 9:35-38; and 12:23. These occurrences further validate that Jesus, by conferring upon himself the title of "Son of Man," evidenced the self-conscious perception that he was the preexistent, eternal Son of God and Messiah who was commissioned by the Father to accomplish salvation and execute judgment.

Chapter Three, "The Relationship Of Fourth Ezra To Biblical Theology," will demonstrate that there are significant affinities with the OT generally and Daniel specifically.

Fourth Ezra was written as an endeavor to account for the suffering of God's people at the hands of an ungodly nation. Ezra seeks to make sense of it all and to offer hope to the oppressed. This hope is summoned by looking to the end of this age and anticipating the world to come. Ezra is dependent on the OT for his rationale and theological perspective, though he deviates on key points. This reliance is apparent in five major areas. First, 4 Ezra's perspective of God correlates with the OT. He perceives God as Creator, Judge, and the Sovereign Lord whose ways are incomprehensible and who also predetermined the course of history.

Second, 4 Ezra's perspective of mankind is drawn from OT anthropology. He depicts mankind as the workmanship of God's hands, steward of God's creation, sinful, condemned, and dying.

Third, 4 Ezra's perspective of salvation correlates to the OT. Ezra depicts the salvation of the righteous, emphasizing the place of Torah, and the salvation of the "few" versus the "many." He refers to the "treasury of works," and the necessity of works and faith.

Fourth, Ezra's perspective of the end times follows in the tradition of Daniel and other apocalyptic literature. This literature depicts the imminence of the end of this age and the revelation of the world to come. Ezra describes the end as being predetermined by God, as following the prescribed order of God, as being accompanied by certain predicted signs, and as proceeding the messianic age.

Fifth, Ezra's perspective of the Messiah shows heavy reliance on OT messianism. The Messiah is called God's Son/Servant; he is pre-existent (having been prepared in advance by the Most High and concealed until his revelation); he is from the seed of David; he judges the ungodly and delivers God's people (i.e., He acts as both Judge and Savior). This two-fold

function of the apocalyptic Messiah gives evidence that Jesus tied into a concurrent tradition in order to communicate his messianic role (e.g., Jn 3:14-15; 5:22, 27; 9:39; Lk 19:10).

Chapter Four, "The Relationship Of Fourth Ezra To The Eschatological Son of Man Sayings," will demonstrate that 4 Ezra's dependence on Daniel shows that Jesus used an apocalyptic tradition containing the "Son of Man" figure as a catalyst for interpreting his own identity and mission. Specific Son of Man sayings will be selected as evidence of the viability of this thesis. These are sayings that have no exact parallels in the OT but do correlate with an apocalyptic tradition that had its origin with Daniel and was projected by 4 Ezra.

This chapter will demonstrate how 4 Ezra gives evidence of an apocalyptic son of man tradition that serves as a catalyst that bridges the gap between OT messianic prophecies and Jesus' fulfillment of them as the Son of Man. It can be maintained from Daniel's Son of Man vision in the sixth century B. C. through 1 Enoch (2/100 B. C. - A. D. 100) and 4 Ezra (A. D. 100) that an apocalyptic son of man tradition existed within Judaism. This tradition conveyed a messianic ideal that Jesus tied into by choosing Son of Man as a messianic title for himself. It appears that Jesus chose Son of Man as a title because of the essentially eschatological nature of this apocalyptic son of man figure. And by so doing he established a point of contact with his hearers and presented himself as that heavenly, preexistent, God-anointed personage whose eschatological mission was to accomplish salvation and execute judgment. This point of contact was due to the son of man tradition conveyed by 4 Ezra.

A Brief Survey of the Literature

Drummond, James. The Jewish Messiah (London: Longmans), 1877.

Drummond states that the Jewish character of 4 Ezra has been proven by research. He also demonstrates that the date of 4 Ezra's composition was during the final quarter of the first

century A. D. Concerning Daniel 7:13-14 Drummond says that "one like a son of man" is a representation of Israel the people of God. Just as the beasts represented kingdoms of this world, so does the son of man represent a kingdom, a pure theocracy (226).

Cullmann, Oscar. The Christology of the New Testament. trans. Shirley C. Guthrie and Charles S M. Hall (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1963): 137-192.

Cullmann explores the literature of Judaism in order to determine whether the title "Son of Man" as a general expression for "man" served to designate an eschatological redeemer. He discusses Daniel 7, 1 Enoch, and 4 Ezra as the primary documents containing the son of man figure. The Son of Man concept is contained in esoteric Judaism, and was connected with the concept of Messiah.

The Son of Man concept related to the Heavenly Man, and the Second Adam. The Heavenly Man/Son of Man figure appears in two different forms in Judaism, (1) as an exclusively eschatological figure to be revealed at the end of time to judge and to establish his kingdom (Da 7; 1 Eno 37-71; and 4 Ezr) and (2) as the Ideal Heavenly Man who is identified with the first Adam (Philo of Alexandria, Pseudo-Clementine and Rabbinical Adam speculations).

Jesus took the term and uniquely combined the Old Testament concepts of the ebed-Yahweh and the son of man in his declarations of suffering and death. The Son of Man represents an exalted personage and Ebed-Yahweh depicts deepest humiliation in Judaism. And in John's gospel account Jesus employed the Son of Man title in order to emphasize his pre-existence, execution of judgment, humiliation, and glorification.

Tödt, H. E. The Son of Man in the Synoptic Tradition (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1965): 22-31.

Tödt begins with a discussion of the Son of Man in Jewish apocalyptic literature stating that the “intimate connection of the Synoptic presentation of the Son of Man with that of Jewish apocalyptic literature can no longer be seriously contested” (p. 22). He especially notes those features of sovereignty of the Son of Man in Jewish apocalypticism. The figure from Daniel 7 was modified during the development of Jewish religion in the pre-Christian and late Hellenistic stages into a transcendent eschatological savior. The son of man possesses sovereignty, power and honor (27).

Borsch, F.H. The Son of Man in Myth and History (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1967): 137-156.

Borsch states that the son of man as he appears in late Jewish literature is predominantly an eschatological figure (p. 135). He refers to Ezekiel and Daniel as providing a basis for this figure. As for the son of man in 4 Ezra, Borsch says is a composite hero or Messiah (156-159).

Marshall, I. Howard. The Origins of New Testament Christology (Downers Grove: InterVarsity), 1976.

Marshall addresses the problem of Jesus’ self-understanding as it relates to his use of christological titles in chapters three “Did Jesus Have a Christology” and four “Who Is This Son of Man”. Jesus demonstrates through the titles he chose for himself that: 1) He perceives his own authority and exercises it in his forgiving sins, interpreting the law of Moses, and preaching of the kingdom of God; and 2) He expresses a unique relation to God through these titles. Marshall points out that it is most probable that Jesus did use the term himself and that it was not simply read back into the Gospels by the Christian writers. This is demonstrated by the virtually

exclusive use of the term by Jesus and the lack of evidence for any "Son of Man" confessionals in the early church.

Casey, Maurice. Son of Man, The Interpretation and Influence of Daniel 7 (London: SPCK, 1979): 29-129.

Casey interprets the "one like a son of man" in Daniel 7:13 corporately, as being the saints of the Most High (p. 29). Fourth Ezra, especially 11-13, depends on Daniel and also reinterprets Daniel for his own time and purposes (pp. 122-129). Casey suggests that the "man-like figure flying with the clouds" (4 Ezr 13:3) is symbolic of the Messiah (p. 124). Yet, 4 Ezra does not prove that there was a "Son of Man" concept in Judaism on the basis that "man" is not a title in the reference just cited (p. 126).

Guthrie, Donald. New Testament Theology (Downers Grove: Inter-Varsity, 1981): 270-290.

Guthrie proposes that the most likely origin of the Son of Man designation is Daniel 7:13. He discounts the influence of the Similitudes of Enoch and 4 Ezra because of their pre-Christian development. However, it is commonly viewed that these documents were being developed both prior to and during the first century A. D., as well as containing messianic concepts that would have been current with Jesus. Guthrie points out several closely linked themes that run through the various Son of Man sayings, namely, (1) the theme of authority, (2) future glorification, (3) humiliation of earthly existence and (4) suffering, death and resurrection.

Bruce, F. F. "The Background to the Son of Man Sayings," Christ The Lord, ed. Harold H. Rowdon (Downers Grove: Inter-Varsity, 1982): 50-70.

Bruce deals with the specific backgrounds and primary aspects of the Son of Man designation. He proposes a dual basis for the background of the Son of Man sayings, namely, Daniel 7:13 as the basis for those sayings that refer to the authority and glorification of the Son

of Man and the Isaianic Servant Songs as the basis for those sayings that contain allusions to suffering and contempt. Bruce explores the Qumran literature and other Jewish writings for parallels to the Danielic son of man figure. Qumran contains commentaries on the Servant Songs wherein the Righteous Servant suffers and executes judgment. The phrase "son of man" does not occur in Qumran except to refer to man.

Jewish sources other than Qumran reveal a Son of Man figure who is concealed by God and then revealed by God at the time of the end. These sources are 1 Enoch 37-71 and 4 Ezra 13:1-3. Bruce points out that 4 Ezra contains language that is reminiscent of Daniel 7:13 and is most likely based on it. He denies, however, that these apocalyptic sources had any influence on the Gospels.

Bruce concludes that "Son of Man" was not a current title, so Jesus chose this expression as a title filling it with significance by fusing the figure of the glorious son of man (Da 7:13) with the Servant of the LORD (per the Isaianic Servant Songs). Thus, he presented himself as the people's Savior and Advocate. Further, a theology of the "Son of Man" must be derived from Jesus' self understanding and not from developments represented by 1 Enoch and Fourth Ezra.

Rowe, Robert D. "Is Daniel's 'Son of Man' Messianic?" Christ the Lord, ed. Harold H. Rowdon (Downers Grove: Inter-Varsity, 1982): 71-96.

Rowe proposes that Jesus' use of Son of Man is messianic because of the background of Daniel 7:13 which contains "one like a son of man" as a messianic figure. He provides three arguments in favor of the messianic content of Daniel's "son of man." First, the enthronement of God and the bestowing of kingship upon the "one like a son of man" are reminiscent of Psalm 2. Second, the son of man figure in Daniel 7:13 is a heavenly being who represents the saints of the Most High. Third, this "one like a son of man" represents the Davidic king.

Carson, D. A. "Christological Ambiguities in the Gospel of Matthew," Christ the Lord. ed. Harold H. Rowdon (Downers Grove: Inter-Varsity, 1982): 113-114.

Carson suggests that Jesus may have chosen the Son of Man title because it was ambiguous thus avoiding the baggage of other messianic titles. Yet, whether Jesus was speaking of eschatological matters or speaking under oath at his trial, the title carried with it the sense of the eschatological figure of Daniel 7. Carson concludes that Jesus intentionally combined the theme of royal authority with the theme of suffering and death in the Son of Man title.

This brief summary illustrates that there are divergent approaches to solving the problem of the Son of Man designation as Jesus employed it. The solutions range from working strictly within the biblical text to finding a possible connection with a son of man tradition current in Judaism. The next chapter of this thesis, "The Son of Man Sayings in the Gospels," will show that although Jesus interpreted his ministry on the basis on the Old Testament he went beyond it in order to project certain supernatural aspects of his identity and mission. This phenomenon is pointed out in the commentary on Jesus' Son of Man sayings in chapter two.

CHAPTER TWO

THE SON OF MAN SAYINGS IN THE GOSPELS

Introduction

The title that Jesus most often applied to himself was ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ ἀνθρώπου. Therefore, it is of utmost importance that the origin and sense of this particular title be determined because it reveals what Jesus himself intended to convey to his hearers about his person and eschatological mission as the Messiah. This may be accomplished by comparing the sense between the terms “son of man” and “messiah” and by exploring the Son of Man pericopes in the Gospels.

The development and sense of the term “messiah”

The term מָשִׁיחַ is derived from the verb מָשַׁח that means to anoint or to smear, thus, an anointed or consecrated person. The Israelite kings and priests were anointed with oil to symbolize the Lord's having chosen them and set them apart for a unique service (1Sa 16:13; 24:7; Lev 4:3). Messiah became a title for the Davidic king (e.g., Ps 2). It is also used to describe Cyrus who was commissioned by God to subdue kingdoms (Isa 45:1). The future, ultimate Messiah is attributed with this designation only once in the Old Testament, namely Daniel 9:25-26, which refers to the temporal rule and death of the Anointed One. Messiah did not become a full-fledged designation for Israel's ultimate king until the intertestamental period when the Dead Sea Scrolls and much of the Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha were written. And by the time the New Testament was being written “Messiah” (the Greek equivalent of the Hebrew is χριστός) had become a designation for the future and ultimate Davidic king who would rule in absolute peace. Therefore, the term “messiah” denotes one who has been anointed

with oil to symbolize his having been anointed with God's Spirit, chosen and set apart for a God-given task. As the Davidic king took on the overtures of a future ruler the term became a specific designation for this unique individual.

The development and sense of the term "son of man"

The term בן־אדם is used in the Old Testament to denote that one was a man or member of the human race. It is simply a poetic equivalent to אדם (e.g., Ps 8:6). Only once does the term refer to something other than a human. This occurs in Daniel 7 during Daniel's dream episode when he sees "one like a son of man coming with the clouds of heaven" (7:13). The figure is a heavenly being who resembles a human being. The context of the vision/interpretation indicates that the "one like a son of man" symbolizes the "saints of the Most High" (7:26-27). Later apocalypticists developed this figure from Daniel into an individual messianic personage. This son of man as a messianic figure occurs in the Similitudes of Enoch, the Gospels and 4 Ezra.

The term "son of man" is used quite extensively in the Similitudes of Enoch as a title for an eschatological personage who embodies righteousness (1Eno 46:3), reveals mysteries (46:3), is chosen by the Lord of the Spirits (46:3), removes kings from their thrones (46:5), is pre-existent (48:2-4), is a staff for the righteous and a light to the Gentiles (48:4) and is seated on his glorious throne (62:5-16; cf. Da 7:13-14). Jesus applies the term to himself as a messianic title to denote his transcendence and solidarity with humanity (e.g., Mt 16:13-17 where Jesus combines the designations of $\delta \text{ υἱὸς τοῦ ἀνθρώπου}$, $\delta \text{ χριστός}$ and $\delta \text{ υἱὸς τοῦ θεοῦ}$

τοῦ ζῶντος). The term occurs in 4 Ezra as an attributive adjective, as it does in Daniel 7:13, describing a personal messiah who arrives at the end of days (13:52). During the development of the son of man concept the term took on the sense of a personal, transcendent Messiah who appears at the end of the age as the agent of God's kingdom.

“Messiah” carries the sense of an anointed, immanent Davidic king while “son of man” denotes an eschatological, transcendent personage. As time passed and the promises of the future Davidic ruler remained unfulfilled certain ones of Israel began to anticipate the remote future, the end of the age and the arrival of a personal, transcendent Messiah who would destroy the ungodly nations and deliver the remnant of God’s people. In this eschatological framework the concepts of the Messiah and the Son of Man were blended into one eschatological figure.

An investigation of the Son of Man sayings reveals this combination and gives rise to three categories, each of which reveal something about the identity and mission of Jesus.¹ Though critical theologians have used similar categorizations to discount the titularic usage of “Son of Man,” these divisions can be maintained while asserting such a usage.² It is proposed here that Jesus used Son of Man as a title in order to convey his nature and mission in three phases. First, Jesus used the title in relation to his earthly life and ministry. Second, he depicted himself as the Son of Man in relation to his suffering, death, and resurrection. Third, Jesus ascribed this title to himself in relation to his eschatological mission. A survey of each group of Son of Man sayings will follow.

The Earthly Ministry of the Son of Man

Jesus characterized his life and ministry on the earth in this group of sayings. He employs the “Son of Man” title in these instances in order to identify himself with both God and humanity. He was able to communicate this concept via the “Son of Man” title because the “one like a son of man” (Da 7:13) was a heavenly being (depicted by his “coming on the clouds of

¹ See George Eldon Ladd, A Theology of the New Testament (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1975), 149; Norman Perrin, “Son of Man in the Gospel Tradition,” Biblical Research: Journal of the Chicago Society of Biblical Research 13 (1968): 3-25.

² Rudolf Bultmann, Theology of the New Testament, 1 vol. trans. Kendrick Grobel (New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1955).

heaven”) who was set in sharp contradistinction to the beasts that had just been described (Da 7:1ff). They were brute beasts whereas he resembled a human being. The “one like a son of man” is also symbolic of the saints of the Most High who receives the eternal kingdom and dominion from the Ancient of Days.³ This son of man figure became individualized during the growth of the tradition.

Several themes characterize the Son of Man on earth. First, the Son of Man would live a life of sacrifice and destitution. There was an occasion when Jesus was approached by three would-be disciples who indicated a desire to follow him, but had other pressing needs that they had to attend to first. In his response, Jesus characterized himself as the Son of Man whose life on earth would be one of sacrifice (e. g., “the Son of Man has no place to lay his head,” Mt 8:20).

Furthermore, the Son of Man demanded immediate and exclusive loyalty (e.g., “Follow me and let the dead bury their own dead.” Mt 8:22). Following the Son of Man meant a life of total commitment and self-sacrifice. If the would-be disciples could not follow through then they had no place in God’s Kingdom (e.g., “No one who puts his hand to the plow and looks back is fit for service in the Kingdom of God,” Lk 9:62).

Jesus makes it clear that following the Son of Man and serving in God's Kingdom are synonymous, as is made clear in Luke's gospel. Jesus responded to the one who wished to first go and bury his father: “Let the dead bury their own dead, but you go and proclaim the kingdom of God” (Lk 9:60). And again: “No one who puts his hand to the plow and looks back is fit for

³Further, the Son of Man title as Jesus employed it conveys this concept of the Son of God/Divine Messiah who identifies with humanity due to the influence of Psalm 8 as it reflects Genesis 1:26-27, and Psalm 2 that depicts the Davidic king as God’s son, and Psalm 110 that refers to the Davidic king as being positioned at the right hand of God, thus, eschatologizing the Davidic king and interpreted messianically by Jesus and the New Testament writers (cf., 1 Co 15:25-27; Eph 1:20-22; Php 2:9; Heb 2:5-8).

service in the kingdom of God" (Lk 9:62). The idea that the Son of Man was the agent of God's Kingdom is inherent in these texts.

A second characteristic of the Son of Man on earth is his divine authority to forgive sins. A case in point was the occasion when four men presented a paralytic before Jesus, who after perceiving their faith forgave the paralytic's sins and simultaneously healed him of his paralysis (Mt 9:1-8; Mk 2:1-12; Lk 5:17-26). The scribes and Pharisees perceived this to be blasphemy because only God has the authority to forgive sins.

When Jesus saw their faith, he said to the paralytic, Son, Your sins are forgiven. Now some teachers of the law were sitting there, thinking to themselves, Why does this fellow talk like that? He's blaspheming! Who can forgive sins but God alone? Immediately Jesus knew in his spirit that this was what they were thinking in their hearts, and he said to them, Why are you thinking these things? Which is easier: to say to the paralytic, 'Your sins are forgiven,' or to say, 'Get up, take your mat and walk'? But that you may know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins...(Mk 2:5-10).

Jesus answered this unspoken charge that he had committed blasphemy (Mk 2:7) by stating that the "Son of Man had the authority on earth to forgive sins" (Mk 2:10). Thus, Jesus is an "earthly" Messiah who exercises the divine prerogative of forgiving sins.⁴

The Pharisees' supposition that only God could forgive sins was squarely based on the Old Testament Scriptures. The Fall of Adam was due to his disobedience to God's directive. Adam sinned against the Sovereign God, and thus God Himself pronounced judgment against mankind (Gn 3). When mankind became extremely immoral God sent a universal flood as an act of divine judgment (Gn 6). Therefore, because sin was against God it was He only who could judge sin.

⁴See Darrell J. Doughty, "The Authority of the Son of Man (Mk 2:1-3:6)," Zeitschrift für die Neutestamentliche Wissenschaft und die Kunde der Älteren Kirche 74 (1983): 161-181.

Further, not only was it God's prerogative to judge sin, it was also the Divine prerogative to forgive sin. The Old Testament Scriptures declare:

Blessed is he whose transgressions are forgiven, whose sins are covered. Blessed is the man whose sin the LORD does not count against him and in whose spirit is no deceit. When I kept silent, my bones wasted away through my groaning all day long. For day and night your hand was heavy upon me; my strength was sapped as in the heat of summer. Then I acknowledged my sin to you and did not cover up my iniquity. I said, I will confess my transgressions to the LORD-- and you forgave the guilt of my sin. (Ps 32:1-5).

I, even I, am he who blots out your transgressions, for my own sake, and remembers your sins no more. (Isa 43:25)

There is also an intriguing parallel in Psalm 103:3 where the psalmist praises Yahweh because of all of His benefits toward His people. The psalmist exclaims:

Praise the LORD, O my soul; all my inmost being, praise his holy name. Praise the LORD, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits-- who forgives all your sins and heals all your diseases (Ps103:1-3).

Jesus as Son of Man accomplished both of these divine activities; he both healed and forgave the paralytic, and by so doing claimed equality with God. He did not respond by denying that only God could forgive sins, but actually affirmed his own divinity by claiming to possess the authority to forgive sins and to heal. The logical conclusion is that if only God can forgive sins, and the Son of Man exercised this power on earth, then the Son of Man is God.

A third characteristic of the Son of Man on earth is his identification with sinners (Mt 11:7-19; Lk 7:24-35). In this context John the Baptist sent his disciples to question whether Jesus was the Coming One or if he should look for another. Jesus recounted the miraculous deeds he had accomplished during his earthly ministry. He then commended John for accomplishing the task for which he had been predestined (e.g., he was the messenger, Mt 11:10, cf. Mal 3:1, and the coming Elijah, Mt 11:14, cf. Mal 4:5). These two were very different in their earthly activities,

yet the people found fault in them both. Jesus depicted his earthly activity in juxtaposition to his divine activity, and by so doing he identified himself with humanity while maintaining his divine identity.

A fourth characteristic of the Son of Man on earth is his superiority over the religious institutions and laws. One particular example is Jesus' declaration of his Lordship over the Sabbath (Mt 12:1-8; Mk 2:23-28; Lk 6:1-5).

At that time Jesus went through the grain fields on the Sabbath. His disciples were hungry and began to pick some heads of grain and eat them. When the Pharisees saw this, they said to him, "Look! Your disciples are doing what is unlawful on the Sabbath" (Mt 12:1-2).

Jesus responded to this accusation with a five-fold answer. First, he referred to an historical precedent for breaking the Sabbath laws (Mt 12:3-4; e.g., David in 1Sa 21:6). Second, he reminded them that the Law itself provided for the innocence of the priests who "desecrate the day" (Mt 12:5; cf. Nu 28:9-10). Third, he declared that he was greater than the Temple (Mt 12:6). Fourth, he pointed out the Scriptural precedent of mercy over sacrifice (Mt 12:7; cf. Hos 6:6). And fifth, he pronounced his lordship over the Sabbath Day (Mt 12:8).

The Sabbath Day and the Temple had taken an exalted position in the religious life of the Jews. Pharisaic Judaism had riveted multumous laws onto the Torah in order to assure themselves of keeping the Sabbath. Their focus was removed from God and placed on the Temple and the Sabbath. In light of this Jesus' statements are especially astounding. The Son of Man was superior to and Lord over the Sabbath and the Temple. He was to be the true object of worship.

A fifth characteristic of the Son of Man on earth is his messianic affirmation (Mt 16:13-20; Mk 8:27-30; Lk 9:18-21). On this occasion Jesus inquired of his disciples as to the opinion of

the populace regarding his identity. They replied that people thought he might be one of the great prophets of the past. Then Jesus directed the question to them, "But what about you?" He asked, "Who do you say I am?" (Mt 16:15). This question elicited Peter's great confession, "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God" (Mt 16:16). Jesus pronounced a blessing on Peter because of his confession and declared that it was his Father in heaven who had revealed this to Peter. Jesus strongly affirmed this messianic confession by stating that his Father had revealed it ("...this was not revealed to you by man, but by my Father in heaven," Mt 16:17). Jesus equated ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ ἀνθρώπου with the designations of ὁ χριστός and ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ θεοῦ by affirming this confession. Thus, Jesus as the Son of Man is the Messiah, God's Son.

A sixth characteristic of the Son of Man on earth was his salvific mission. Jesus stated in Luke 19:10 that "the Son of Man came to seek and to save what was lost." This recalls the shepherd/sheep imagery of the Old Testament (e.g., Eze 34:1-6).

The Suffering, Death, and Resurrection of the Son of Man

There are several instances in the Gospels in which Jesus speaks of his suffering, death, and resurrection.⁵

Now as Jesus was going up to Jerusalem, he took the twelve disciples aside and said to them, "We are going up to Jerusalem, and the Son of Man will be betrayed to the chief priests and the teachers of the law, they will condemn him to death and will turn him over to the Gentiles to be mocked and flogged and crucified. On the third day he will be raised to life" (Mt 20:17-19).

Jesus' application of the "Son of Man" title to himself in these sayings conveyed a very different

⁵See George R. Beasley-Murray, "Resurrection and Parousia of the Son of Man," *Tyndale Bulletin* 42 (Nov. 1991): 296-309; Bruce A. Stevens, "Why Must the Son of Man Suffer: The Divine Warrior in the Gospel of Mark," *Biblische Zeitschrift* 31, no. 1 (1987): 101-110.

idea than the other two categories. The Son of Man on earth and the eschatological Son of Man portrayed an exalted, even divine personage, whereas this group of sayings depicts a humiliated, suffering servant. That the Messiah would suffer and die was incomprehensible to Jesus' disciples (e.g., Mt 16:22). The Messiah would inherit the throne of David and deliver his people from their oppressors.⁶ Jesus was indeed the Son of David as Matthew and Luke show in the genealogical records. However, he was more than an earthly king, he was the Sovereign Lord, and at the same time, he was the Suffering Servant (cf. Isa 53).

The ambiguity of Son of Man as a messianic title is highlighted in this group. It is important to note here that Luke adds that Jesus said, "everything that is written by the prophets about the Son of Man will be fulfilled" (18:31). Jesus directly related his mission as being the fulfillment of the prophets (i.e., Old Testament Scripture). Yet the prophets make no mention of the Son of Man in this sense. Jesus elaborated on this concept following his resurrection, particularly when he spoke to the disciples who were on the road to Emmaus (Lk 24:13-49). These two were very perplexed about all the recent events surrounding Jesus and while they were discussing these matters he appeared and began walking with them. He rebuked them for their reluctance to believe all that he had taught them concerning his suffering, death and resurrection (v.25), and stated:

Did not the Christ have to suffer these things and then enter his glory? And beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, he explained to them what was said in all the Scriptures concerning himself (Lk 24:26-27).

This is what I told you while I was still with you: Everything must be fulfilled that is written about me in the Law of Moses, the Prophets and the Psalms (Lk 24:44).

⁶See Isaac Landman, ed., The Universal Jewish Encyclopedia In Ten Volumes, vol. 7 (New York: KTAV, 1969), 499-501.

This is what is written: The Christ will suffer and rise from the dead on the third day, and repentance and forgiveness of sins will be preached in his name to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem (Lk 24:46-47).

Jesus clearly presented himself as the Messiah in these post-resurrection teachings: first, by interchanging the first person personal pronoun ἐμού with the title of ὁ χριστός (Hb. מָשִׁיחַ) and second, by basing his messianic claims on Old Testament prophecies pertaining to Messiah. There are specific messianic prophecies in the Old Testament that Jesus the Son of Man fulfilled while on earth and ones that he will fulfill in the eschaton. He referred to the three divisions of the Hebrew Old Testament as containing prophecies that he fulfilled. The Law of Moses contains prophecies in Genesis 3:15; Numbers 21:9; Deuteronomy 18:15. The Prophets speak of the messianic figure in Isaiah 7:14; 9:6; 40:10,11; 52:12-53:13; Ezekiel 34:23; Daniel 9:24; Micah 7:20; Malachi 3:1. The Psalms contain messianic allusions in Psalm 2; 16; 22; 69; 72; 110; 118. Jesus alludes to several of the messianic Psalms in order to depict himself as the Messiah. For example, Jesus quotes Psalm 22:1 while hanging on the cross.

About the ninth hour Jesus cried out in a loud voice, “Eloi, Eloi, lama sabachthani?”—which means, “My God, my God, why have you forsaken me” (Mt 27:46)?

Also, Jesus warns his disciples that just as the world has hated him it will hate them and alludes to Psalm 69:9, declaring,

But this is to fulfill what is written in their Law: ‘They hated me without reason’ (Jn 15:25).

And again, Jesus quotes Psalm 110:1 in order to demonstrate to the Pharisees that he is the Messiah, the greater Son of David.

While the Pharisees were gathered together, Jesus asked them, ‘What do you think about the Christ?’ ‘Whose son is he?’ ‘The son of David’, they replied. He said to them, ‘How is it then that David, speaking by the Spirit, calls him Lord?’ For he says,

The Lord said to my Lord: Sit at my right hand
until I put your enemies under your feet
If then David calls him Lord, how can he be his son (Mt22:41-45)?

Thus, Jesus equated the titles of "Son of Man" and "Messiah" in his teachings concerning his identity and mission. The "one like a son of man" in Daniel 7:13 is the most probable origin of Jesus' Son of Man title, but even here Son of Man is not used in a titularic sense, but he was however a messianic figure. An explanation of this apparent incongruity will be given in the following chapters in which it will be proposed that Jesus tied into a concurrent apocalyptic tradition that contained the son of man figure. Both Jesus' teaching and this tradition originated from the Old Testament Scriptures. Jesus combined the two distinct concepts of the Davidic king and the Suffering Servant of Yahweh by his use of the Son of Man title.⁷ Jesus states in Mathew 20:28 (cf. Mk. 10:45) that "just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many." The very purpose for Jesus' coming was to offer up his own life as an atoning sacrifice.⁸ Jesus also spoke of being handed over to be crucified (Mt 26:1-5; Mk 14:1-2; Lk 22:1-2). The term ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ ἀνθρώπου παραδίδοται conveyed a passive sense reminiscent of the Servant of Yahweh in Isaiah 53:7 where this Servant is depicted as a lamb being led to the slaughter. Even so, he constantly directed attention to his resurrection on the third day.

Jesus was indeed the Servant of Yahweh who fulfilled the Isaianic prophecies about the Servant. He quoted Isaiah 61:1-2 in Luke 4:18-19 and proposed to be the fulfillment of this Ebed-Yahweh prophecy when he said, "Today this scripture is fulfilled in your hearing" (v. 21).

⁷See D. S. Russell, The Method and Message of Jewish Apocalyptic (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1964), 334.

⁸See C. K. Barrett, "The Background of Mark 10:45," New Testament Essays, ed. A. J. B. Higgins (Manchester: University, 1959), 1-18. Barrett suggests that a background other than Isa.53 is behind Mark 10:45 because the Son of Man is antithetical to the Suffering Servant.

Jesus declared at the Last Supper in reference to the cup that “this is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins” (Mt 26:28). The New Testament writers clearly understood this aspect of Jesus’ death and resurrection (cf. 1Ti 2:6; Tit 2:14; Heb 9:28; 1Pe 1:18-19).

Jesus again points out that his life mission and death were according to what had been written (Mt 26:24; Mk 14:17-21; Lk 22:20-23). Luke uses a stronger term (ὁρίζω) in reference to Jesus’ mission in order to emphasize that God has appointed his suffering, death and resurrection. This speaks of the messianic fulfillment of Old Testament prophecies by Jesus.

The Eschatological Mission of the Son of Man

There are instances in which Jesus employs the Son of Man title in reference to his person and mission as the eschatological King, Savior and Judge. Jesus bases the Son of Man designation in these pericopes directly on Daniel 7:13, while moving beyond the Danielic son of man. Indeed, he individualizes the **בֶּן אָדָם** and explicitly applies it to himself as a messianic title. This is demonstrated by the vision/interpretation in Daniel 7. Whereas in the vision one like a son of man receives the eternal kingdom from the Ancient of Days (11-14), the interpretation reveals that it is the saints who receive the kingdom from the Most High (23-27). This eschatological concept was also current in the apocalyptic figures of Judaism who would be the agents of God’s Kingdom. Following are the instances in which Jesus as the Son of Man speaks of his future kingdom, power, and glory.

“Son of Man” reflects Jesus’ earthly ministry and relates him to the imminent Kingdom of God (Mt 10:21-23; Lk 6:22). There seems to be both an immediate and an eschatological import to Jesus’ statements in this text. Jesus shifts at (Mt 10:21) to speak more generally, making reference to a more remote parousia. In this case Jesus employs the “Son of Man” title to depict

his still future ministry. Jesus makes reference, in his Kingdom parables, to the end of the age during which time he, the Son of Man, will have a Kingdom and will send his angels to purge it of the sons of the Evil One so that only the sons of the Kingdom will be left to inherit it (Mt 13:36-43).

Jesus began explaining his inevitable suffering and death following Peter's confession that "You are the Christ, the Son of the Living God" (Mt 16:16). He speaks of his resurrection and future coming in his Father's glory and in his Kingdom. Jesus depicts himself as King and Judge who would reward each person. This is indeed reminiscent of Daniel 7:13-14 of which more will be said in the proceeding chapters (Mt 16:21-28; Mk 8:31-9:1; Lk 9:21-27). Jesus proclaims that he, as the Son of Man, will be seated on his glorious throne (Mt 19:23-30).

Jesus highlights a still future coming of himself as the Son of Man (Mt 24:26-51; Mk 13:1-37; Lk 21:5-36). He points out the signs that will accompany his coming (Mt 24:27), the manner of his coming (Mt 24:30), the imminence of his coming (Mt 24:37), the unexpectedness of his coming (Mt 24:39,44). Jesus again declares that he, as the Son of Man, would come in his glory, be seated on his throne and gather all the nations before him. The King of verse 34 is in apposition to "Son of Man" in verse 31 signifying that the Son of Man is indeed King (Mt 25:31-46).

Jesus responds to the demand of the high priest, "I charge you under oath by the living God: tell us if you are the Christ, the Son of God" (Mt 26:63), by affirming this charge. He then added: "In the future you will see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of the Mighty One and coming on the clouds of heaven" (Mt 26:64). There is no doubt as to the claim that Jesus makes here. The high priest perceived this to be blasphemy because he claims to be the Messiah via Psalm 110. Jesus made a direct reference to Daniel's "one like a son of man" (Da 7:13), and by

so doing depicts himself as the Son of Man who would receive the Kingdom and dominion from God. When he speaks of being "seated at the right hand of the Mighty One" he combines Psalm 110:1 with Daniel 7:13 in order to further illuminate his Divine Messiahship (Mt 26:57-67; Mk 14:61-65; Lk 22:66-71).⁹

Having examined some of the significant texts that contain Jesus' Son of Man designation, we can proceed to determine the source or sources of the Son of Man concept as Jesus used it. It is clear that a source is to be sought within Judaism. Since Jesus was a Palestinian Jew and focused his ministry on the Jewish nation during his earthly ministry, we need not look outside of the Hebrew religion for backgrounds to the concept. The remainder of this thesis, following the section on the Johannine Son of Man sayings, will focus on 4 Ezra as being illustrative of a son of man tradition that provided a bridge to link Jesus' Son of Man title to Old Testament messianism. It is evident that Jesus intended to convey more by the Son of Man title than the obscure reference in Daniel 7 allows for. Jesus drew from concurrent apocalyptic traditions in order to bridge the gap between himself as the Messiah and the Old Testament concept of the Kingdom of God.

The Son of Man Sayings in the Gospel of John

The apostle John included thirteen of Jesus' Son of Man sayings in his Gospel account. These occurrences are distinct from and compliment the Synoptic sayings. Jesus' claims about himself indicate that he was fully aware of his divine nature and mission from the Father. As the

⁹ See Ernest J. Tinsley, "Sign of the Son of Man," Scottish Journal of Theology 8 (Spr., 1956): 297-306. Tinsley, commenting on the parallel text in Mark 14:62, proposes that Jesus' reply was not so explicit; Ernst Bammel, "Problems of the Eschatology of Jesus," The Modern Churchman 6 (January 1963): 150-164.

Son of Man Jesus fully reveals God, and the apostle John makes this absolutely clear by his selections of Jesus' Son of Man sayings.¹⁰

The titles that Jesus ascribed to himself in the fourth Gospel clearly show that he had a full understanding of his person and unique mission. He was cognizant of his preexistence with God and of his mission from God to accomplish the means of reconciliation between God and humanity. He also claimed by his self-designations his equality with God the Father by declaring, ἐγὼ καὶ ὁ πατήρ ἐν ἐσμεν (Jn 10:30).¹¹

Jesus' self-conferred titles were laden with theological significance. He makes it clear that he came to fulfill the Law and the Prophets (Jn 5:39; 46; 6:45; 7:38; 13:28; 15:25). This may be evidenced by a close examination of the titles that Jesus ascribed to himself. Jesus most probably bases his Son of Man title on Daniel 7:13, as well as drawing from an apocalyptic tradition in order to add certain dimensions to the Son of Man concept. Dan Davis suggests that this title indicates four main meaning components: 1) rejection by men; 2) suffering, death, and resurrection; 3) descension from heaven and authority from God; and 4) deliverance as Savior.¹² Leon Morris suggests a threefold meaning: 1) as a periphrasis for "I"; 2) as the heavenly Son of Man, who will come in glory; and 3) as the Son of Man who suffers to bring men salvation.¹³ J. Louis Martyn suggests that Jesus, by drawing from Daniel and 1 Enoch, depicts himself as a heavenly eschatological figure of judgment.¹⁴

¹⁰ See Francis J. Moloney, "The Johannine Son of Man," Biblical Theology Bulletin 6 (June-October, 1976): 177-189.

¹¹ The Greek adj. ἐν is neuter indicating "one thing" or "one essence" and not "one person."

¹² Dan Davis, "The Semantic Content Of 'Son of Man,'" Notes on Translation 4, no. 3 (1990): 13-14.

¹³ Leon Morris, The Gospel According To John, New International Commentary of the New Testament (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1981): 172-173.

¹⁴ J. Louis Martyn, History and Theology in the Fourth Gospel (Nashville: Abingdon, 1979): 138; Barnabas Lindars, ed., The Gospel of John, New Century Bible (Greenwood: Attic, 1972): 120.

There are thirteen occasions in John where Jesus employed the Son of Man title and each of these will be briefly examined in order to demonstrate the meaning that Jesus himself intended to convey to his hearers. The first Son of Man saying in John is found at John 1:51 where Jesus directly alludes to Jacob's vision in Genesis 28:10ff. He then added, "I tell you the truth, you shall see heaven open, and the angels of God ascending and descending on the Son of Man" (Jn 1:51). Jesus intended to evoke the entire episode of Genesis 28, not merely the vision of the angels on the ladder. Jacob's vision consisted of a ladder reaching from heaven to earth and above it the Lord (Yahweh) stood and reaffirmed the covenant promises which he had established with Abraham and Isaac. The reality of the Lord's presence is evidenced by Jacob's reaction. He was afraid and declared the experience to be awesome. He also set up a memorial and called the place Bethel (the House of God).

Therefore, it appears that Jesus alluded to Jacob's vision, first, to present himself as the heavenly Son of Man who came to reveal God and to open communication between God and man. Second, Jesus affirmed the reality of Yahweh's presence with humanity. Third, Jesus reaffirmed Yahweh's covenant promises. Just as Jacob (Israel) experienced the Lord's presence and the reaffirmation of the Abrahamic covenant, so also would Nathaniel ("an Israelite indeed," 1:47) and others experience the glory of the Son of Man and his reaffirmation of the covenant promises.¹⁵ Jesus employed the Son of Man title in this instance in order to proclaim himself as the vital connection between heaven and earth, God and humanity.

Jesus' conversation with Nicodemus reveals another significant factor conveyed by the "Son of Man" title. Jesus states in John 3:13

And no one has ascended into heaven except the one who

¹⁵Lindars, ed., The Gospel of John, 119-122; Morris, The Gospel According to John, 169-171.

descended from heaven, the Son of Man.

During this conversation Jesus spoke of entering the Kingdom of God and of being born from above. Nicodemus could not comprehend Jesus' teaching and so Jesus mildly rebuked him and launched into a short discussion about heavenly knowledge. His statements here imply that only he, the Son of Man, has this heavenly wisdom (Jn 3:1-15). The significance of Jesus' self-conferred title as the Son of Man begins to unfold in this dialogue.

First, Jesus asserts that "no one has ascended into heaven." There is inherent in this statement a polemic against the notion that one can somehow ascend into the heavens and acquire a special, heavenly knowledge. Perhaps this is directed against the Jewish merkabah mysticism in particular¹⁶ or it may have been a more inclusive polemic.¹⁷ There certainly must be a reference to the Jewish tradition that the apocalyptic seers gained their knowledge by ascending into the heavens via visions and dreams.

Second, Jesus asserts his heavenly origin by declaring that he has descended from heaven. This refers to the incarnation when the very Son of God became human.¹⁸ There is an apparent time discrepancy (i.e., ascension coming before descension). Why would Jesus put the ascension before his incarnation? Jesus, by this statement, affirmed the reality of his incarnation and anticipated his future glory.¹⁹ The significance of Jesus' ascription of the Son of Man title to himself in this case is that (1) he stressed his heavenly origin, (2) he claimed to be the only one who had seen God and (3) he had therefore acquired heavenly wisdom.²⁰

¹⁶Ibid., 156.

¹⁷ Ibid., 156; Raymond E. Brown, The Gospel According To John, The Anchor Bible vol. 29 (New York: Doubleday, 1966): 145.

¹⁸ Brown, The Gospel According to John, 132-133.

¹⁹ Lindars, ed., The Gospel of John, 156.

²⁰ Brown, The Gospel According to John, 132-133.

A third element of the Johannine Son of Man is contained in John 3:14-15, where Jesus refers to the episode in Numbers 21:1-9. The Israelites had complained against God and Moses, and as a result God sent serpents among them and many of them died. The Lord commanded Moses to make a bronze serpent and lift it up so that anyone who had been bitten might look on it and live. Jesus said,

Just as Moses lifted up the snake in the desert, so the Son of Man must be lifted up, that everyone who believes in him may have eternal life (Jn 3:14-15).

Jesus stands in a typological relation to Moses in his being “lifted up.” Just as Moses was Israel’s redeemer, so too was he the Redeemer and Savior.²¹ The typology ends there because Jesus goes on to state the necessity for his being lifted up. Jesus declared himself to be Savior and at the same time as providing the means of salvation.

Jesus’ statement here is one of several in John (e.g., 8:28; 12:32) that he personally anticipated the fulfillment of his *salutis opus*.²² His emphasis on the necessity of being “lifted up” shows that he viewed his death as fulfilling God’s purpose for the sacrifice for sins, and referred to the manner of death he would experience (cf. 12: 32-33).²³ Therefore, in this instance by designating himself as the Son of Man, Jesus infers that he was both the Savior and the sacrifice for sins. The Son of Man title implies that Jesus was the Servant of Yahweh who would give his own life as a sin offering (cf. Isa 53). Jesus reiterates this phenomenon,

When you have lifted up the Son of Man, then you will know that I am the one I claim to be and that I do nothing on my own but speak just what the Father has taught me (Jn 8:28).

²¹ It is interesting to note here that Jesus followed his statement concerning the necessity of the Son of Man being lifted up with the result clause in verse 15 and by so doing universalized his role as Savior whereas Moses was Israel’s redeemer only.

²² See W. Robert Cook, The Theology of John (Chicago: Moody, 1979): 75.

²³ Ibid., 75.

This statement is in the context of Jesus' conversation with the Pharisees concerning his identity. He referred to being sent from the Father, whom he addressed as "My Father" and by so doing implied a special relation to the Father and a unique mission from him. Here as in 3:14 the term ὑψώσητε contains both a metaphorical sense of exaltation and a literal sense of hanging on a cross. ἐγώ εἰμι is used in an absolute sense and is equivalent to the Divine Name.²⁴ Jesus is asserting that when he, the Son of Man, is lifted up (dies on the cross and is exalted) then they will then recognize him as God.

One other important nuance of Jesus' statements here is that as the Son of Man he was taught and commissioned by God the Father. Son of Man was thus a title that was equivalent with Messiah in the sense of being commissioned and sent by the Father; anointed as it were for a unique task. Though Jesus does not normally refer to himself as Messiah (only in John 4:24-25), he nevertheless depicts himself as fulfilling that role as the Son of Man. Jesus accentuates that God the Father has sent him and is with him when he declares, ὁ πέμψας με μετ' ἐμοῦ ἐστίν (Jn 8:29). Thus, the Son of Man had acted on the Father's initiative and in his authority.²⁵

Jesus also claims to have received authority from the Father to execute judgment.

I tell you the truth, whoever hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life and will not be condemned; he has crossed over from death to life. I tell you the truth, a time is coming and has now come when the dead will hear the voice of the Son of God and those who hear will live. For as the Father has life in himself, so he has granted the Son to have life in himself. And he has given him authority to judge because he is the Son of Man (Jn 5:24-27).

This statement occurs in the context of Jesus' assertion of equality with the Father (Jn 5:17-21).

²⁴ See especially verse 24 where Jesus said, "...for unless you believe that I Am (He), you will die in your sins." By this statement Jesus aligned himself with Yahweh of OT Scriptures because only Yahweh, the living God had the ability to deliver from sin. For an excellent discussion of the Johannine usage of ἐγώ εἰμι see Raymond Brown, The Gospel According to John, 533-538.

²⁵ See C. Merz, "APOSTELLEIN and PEMPEIN in John," New Testament Studies 36 no. 4 (1990): 619-624.

Apocalyptic language is picked up in verse 25 with reference to a future resurrection. Jesus claims to have received authority from the Father to execute judgment. It is God who executed judgment in the Old Testament. He was called “the Judge of all the he earth” by Abraham (Ge 18:25). He was called “Yahweh, the Judge” in an oath statement (Jdg 11:27). The psalmist anticipated the Lord coming to execute judgment upon the entire earth (Ps 96:13). Thus, the Son of Man is equal with God the Father, because he had received the authority from the Father to execute judgment.

Following the statement that the Father gave him authority to execute judgment, Jesus says this is “because he is [the] Son of Man” (Jn 5:27).

καὶ ἐξουσίαν ἔδωκεν αὐτῷ κρίσιν ποιεῖν, ὅτι υἱὸς ἀνθρώπου
ἐστίν.

Also, Jesus states,

οὐδὲ γὰρ ὁ πατὴρ κρίνει οὐδένα, ἀλλὰ τὴν κρίσιν πᾶσαν
δέδωκεν τῷ υἱῷ (Jn 5:22).

Some view the anarthrous construction as stressing the human nature of Jesus. Because he is both God and man he is qualified to execute divine and final judgment.²⁶ However, the most probable explanation is that Jesus was alluding directly to Daniel 7:13ff. The grammatical construction is almost identical with the LXX of Daniel.²⁷ In which case, “Son of Man” indicates one whom God had given dominion, glory, and a Kingdom. He was an agent of divine judgment, who was himself Divine. There are interesting parallels in 4 Ezra where the Messiah executes judgment just prior to his setting up the Messianic kingdom (4 Ezr 12:31-34; 13:25-39).

Jesus’ Bread of Life discourse follows the miraculous feeding of the five thousand (Jn

²⁶ Cook, The Theology of John, 60.

²⁷Lindars, ed., The Gospel of John, 225-226.

6:25-59). During this discourse Jesus employs the Son of Man title three times in order to emphasize his existence with God the Father and his provision of eternal life (27,53,62).

He implores,

Do not work for food that spoils, but for food that endures to eternal life, which the Son of Man will give you. On him God has placed his seal of approval”(6:27).

These comments reveal that Jesus as the Son of Man first provides an eternally satiating food, and second, God has approved him.

Jesus the Son of Man declares “I am the Bread of Life” and gives a four-fold description of himself as such. First, he was the bread who came down from heaven (6:48), signifying his existence in heaven. Second, he was the bread who provides eternal life (6:50). Third, he was the living bread who was eternal (6:51). Fourth, He was the bread who would be given for the life of the world (6:51). Jesus again alluded to his pre-existence when he exclaimed: “What if you see the Son of Man ascend to where he was before” (6:62)!

The conclusion to Jesus’ discourse is that God the Father had set his seal of approval on him, the pre-existent Son of Man, to provide eternal life to those who partake of the life of Jesus. The Son of Man provided eternal life through giving his own life for the world. The significance of the “Son of Man title in John 6 is equivalent to the Suffering Son of Man in the Synoptic Gospels.

Jesus as the Son of Man received faith and worship from those whom he had helped in some way. Jesus healed a man who had been born blind (Jn 9:1-7). This healing elicited an unfavorable response from the Pharisees, especially since the event occurred on the Sabbath. The man did not know who Jesus was other than that he was called Jesus (9:11), and that he was a prophet (9:17), and so he must be from God since he opened his blinded eyes (9:30-33). When

Jesus learned that this man had been thrown out of the synagogue he found him and asked: "Do you believe in the Son of Man?" (9:35). The man did not know who the Son of Man was, but when Jesus disclosed that he was speaking of himself, he believed and worshipped Jesus (9:38). It seems that Jesus presupposed a concept related to the Son of Man. It is most interesting here that Jesus did not ask if the man believed in the Messiah instead of the Son of Man. Jesus must have assumed that the man had a prior knowledge of a "son of man" tradition that was then current. Perhaps Jesus presupposed an awareness of his own teaching about himself as the Son of Man. At any rate, the Son of Man was worthy of faith and worship.

Elsewhere, Jesus speaks of his glorification as Son of Man. He indicates that in his glorification God is at the same time glorified. Jesus replies, "The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified" (Jn 12:23). And again, Jesus says, "Now is the Son of Man glorified and God is glorified in him" (Jn 13:31). The "hour" in this Gospel is extremely significant because it indicates the death-resurrection-ascension event that Jesus would experience. The term *ώρα* is used seven times by John to point to this event and to show Jesus' own determination to accomplish his God ordained task (e.g., "Now my heart is troubled, and what shall I say? Father, save me from this hour? No, it was for this very reason I came to this hour. Father, glorify your name" 12:27). Jesus first reference to his hour was in chapter two at the wedding in Cana. He states, "...My time has not yet come" (2:4). And his final reference to his hour was "Father, the time has come, glorify your Son that your Son may glorify you" (17:1). Jesus, in his last Son of Man saying in this Gospel states: "Now is the Son of Man glorified and God is glorified in him" (13:31).

The Johannine Son of Man is thus a preexistent heavenly personage who acquired wisdom from God and divine authority to execute judgment. He was also appointed by God to

accomplish the task of suffering and dying on the cross in order to provide salvation for the world. Jesus reached beyond Old Testament “messianism” into the concurrent apocalyptic traditions in order to convey his Divine Messiahship to his hearers. The content of the Son of Man sayings went beyond the Old Testament messianic ideal.

This investigation yields at least three results. First, the “Son of Man” sayings reveal Jesus’ self-conscious awareness of being the divine Messiah by applying Son of Man to himself messianically. Second, the Son of Man sayings show Jesus’ intent to base his messianic claims upon the Old Testament Scriptures, and by so doing elicited God’s approval. God validated Jesus’ claims during his earthly life through the miracles he performed and by raising him from the dead.²⁸ Third, the Son of Man sayings demonstrate a connection with an apocalyptic tradition within Judaism. Jesus tied into this concurrent tradition in order to convey his messiahship to his hearers.

²⁸ See Gary R. Habermas, The Resurrection of Jesus (Lanham: University Press, 1984).

CHAPTER THREE

THE RELATIONSHIP OF FOURTH EZRA TO BIBLICAL THEOLOGY

Introduction

The previous chapter has shown that Jesus explicitly interprets his person and mission on the basis of the Old Testament. Yet, the Son of Man pericopes also suggest that Jesus goes beyond the Old Testament messianic ideal. This chapter seeks to substantiate that a son of man tradition existed and that Jesus used it as a catalyst to communicate to his hearers that he was the divine Messiah. This tradition along with Daniel 7 provided Jesus with a platform to express his divine identity and mission. The Similitude's of Enoch and the book of 4 Ezra illustrate that this tradition was current during the first century A. D. Fourth Ezra will be explicated in the present chapter.

An examination of 4 Ezra reveals significant affinities to OT theology in both its theological perspectives and messianic expectations.¹ This dependence demonstrates that an apocalyptic tradition that has its inception with Daniel and continued through the first century A.D. contained a son of man figure. It is this figure that Jesus had in mind when he chose Son of Man as a messianic title for himself (to be discussed in the following chapter). The present investigation will focus on the key theological areas in Fourth Ezra. These include theology proper, anthropology, soteriology and eschatology. The messianology of 4 Ezra will be discussed fully in the following chapter.

¹ See Jacob M. Meyers, I and II Esdras, The Anchor Bible (Garden City: Doubleday, 1974): 121-126.

Fourth Ezra is related to the theology of the Old Testament in several ways including, (1) its view of God as the “Most High” or *Altissimus* (3:3); (2) its belief in God as the creator of the universe (3:4); (3) its description of God's covenant relationship with His people (e.g., 5:27; 6:58-59; 7:11); (4) its emphasis on God's dynamic concern for His people, wherein God is described as loving and merciful in regard to His covenant people (7:132; 8:31-36); (5) its great sense of the universal effects of sin and of God's mercy as the only hope for humanity and 6) its belief that God is in control of history and world events (e.g., 3:7; 4:28-32; 11-12).

The messianology of Fourth Ezra is also derived from the Old Testament.² The Messiah in 4 Ezra is depicted as God's “son” or “servant” (13:32; cf. Ps 2; Isa 52:12-53:12); he resembles a man/son of man (13:12,25,32; c.f. Da 7:13); he is depicted as a lion in the Eagle vision in chapters 11-12 (c.f., Ge 49:6); he is the “anointed one”/ messiah (7:28,29; 12:32); he is pre-existent or at least pre-created (7:28; 12:32; 13:52; 14:9; cf. Da 7: 13). The messianic figure in Fourth Ezra functions as one who will set up God's Kingdom on earth, judge and destroy the enemies of God's people, and then gather a peaceful multitude to himself (12-13). There will be 400 years in the messianic age (7:28), which will serve as an interval between the present age and the coming one.³

Analysis of Fourth Ezra

A literary analysis of the book of 4 Ezra is in order before exploring its dependence on OT theology, the book of Daniel, as well as its relationship to Jesus' eschatological Son of Man

² Ibid., 126

³ The 400 year Messianic kingdom comes from the Latin text. The Syriac reads 30 years, while Arabic 2 has 1000 years. See G. H. Box, *The Apocalypse of Ezra Translated from the Syriac Text, with brief annotations* (London: Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, 1917): 51; A. Frederik J. Klijn, *Der Lateinische Text Der Apokalypse Des Esra* (Berlin: Akademie-Verlag, 1983): 45.

sayings. Following is a discussion of the structure, authorship, setting, date, and purpose of 4 Ezra.

Structure

The structure of 4 Ezra follows a question\answer or problem/solution motif. It is made up of seven visionary experiences during which Ezra carries on a dialogue with an angel who responds to Ezra's inquiries on behalf of God. The basic structure of 4 Ezra is as follows:

Christian Addition, 1-2

Introduction, 3:1-3

The First Vision Containing a Series of Questions and Answers, 3:4-5:13

Interlude, 5:14-20

The Second Vision Containing a Series of Questions and Answers, 5:21-6:34

The Third Vision Containing a Series of Questions and Answers, 6:35-9:25

The Fourth Vision (The Woman and the Child), 9:26-10:59

The Fifth Vision (The Eagle and the Lion), 10:60-12:51

The Sixth Vision (The Man from the Sea), 13:1-58

The Seventh Vision (Ezra's Final Encounter), 14:1-48

Christian Appendix, 15-16

Authorship and Setting

The author identifies himself as "Salathiel, who am also called Ezra" (4 Ezr 3:1; cf. 1Ch 3:17; Ezr 3:2; 5:2; Ne 12:1). A study of 4 Ezra yields at least two results concerning its authorship. (1) "Ezra" is a Jewish author who yearned for God's vindication on the ungodly (i.e., the nations that oppress Israel, the only people of God). (2) The author is engrossed with the future of Israel in the eschaton. The Jewish character of 4 Ezra is undeniable, even though it has passed through the hands of Christian editors.

The Jewish character and concerns of 4 Ezra can be discovered in at least eight areas.

(1) The setting and purpose statement (3:1-2), (2) the historical review of Israel (3:3-27), (3) the emphasis on Torah (3:16-19), (4) the content of Ezra's inquiries (e.g., 4:23-24), (5) the reliance on the Old Testament (e.g., 5:21-30; 7:132-140), (6) the references to Zion (e.g., 9:38-10:59),

(7) the mention of the ten tribes (13:40) and (8) the Messiah as a descendent of David (12:32) and as the eschatological agent of God's kingdom (11:36-13:52).

Christian influence in 4 Ezra is minimal in relation to the overwhelming Jewish content. The structure of the book shows that Christian editors added four chapters (1-2 and 15-16). Yet, the corpus of 4 Ezra (3-14) has received very few Christian interpolations. Granted, there is evidence of Christian insertions within the corpus of 4 Ezra, these were however, kept to a minimum. For instance, there is the mere insertion of the name "*Jesus*" at 7:28 in the Latin version. Here also the Syriac renders a thirty-year duration for the Messianic kingdom while the Latin reads four hundred years and the Arabic 2 renders a 1000 year period.⁴ According to some the "son" title in 7:28-29; 12:32; 13:32 are also indicative of Christian tampering.⁵ However, contra to this view, could not the Messiah as God's son in the Ezra apocalypse have been due to the influence of the Old Testament concept of the Davidic king as God's son (via Ps 2)?

Further, if Christian influence had been formidable chapter thirteen would have been greatly altered. This would have been the prime place to insert a definite reference to Jesus the Son of Man, yet there is no such reference to Jesus nor is son of man used in a titularic manner in this text.

The setting is Babylon thirty years after the destruction of Jerusalem (3:1). The author wishes to place himself in Babylon after Jerusalem's destruction by Babylonia in 587/86 B C that would have dated this work at about 557 B C. However, this is an obvious anachronistic identification. He is addressing current problems under the guise of Ezra the scribe because of

⁴ See G. H. Box, The Apocalypse of Ezra, 51 who suggests that both the insertion of "my son Jesus" in the Latin and the thirty years in the Syriac are due to Christian influence.

⁵ See J. Bloch, "Some Christological Interpolations in the Ezra Apocalypse," Harvard Theological Review 51 (1958): 87-94, who suggests that all extant versions of 4 Ezra have been carelessly transmitted by the Christian scribes so as to conform the teaching of the Ezra apocalypse to "fundamental Christian doctrines" (p. 87).

the similar circumstances faced by the Jews. It becomes apparent as the apocalypse unfolds that these are cryptic references and that the author actually wrote approximately thirty years after Jerusalem's destruction by the Romans in A. D. 70. The details given in the Eagle Vision (11-12) explicitly describe the Roman Empire during the final decades of the first century.⁶

Purpose

Ezra raises many disturbing questions that relate to God's character and his promises to Israel his chosen people. The purpose of 4 Ezra surfaces as one examines the questions that Ezra raises and the answers to these perplexing inquests. The main corpus of 4 Ezra (which is considered to be the original corpus by the textual critics) is contained in chapters three through fourteen. Chapter three begins with the author's identification of himself and the setting (discussed above). Ezra sets the tone for the book in his beginning statement.

"I was troubled as I lay on my bed, and my thoughts welled up in my heart, because I saw the desolation of Zion and the wealth of those who lived in Babylon. My spirit was greatly agitated, and I began to speak anxious words to the Most High, and said..." (3:1b-3).

The cause of Ezra's troubled and anxious spirit is Israel's current state of sinfulness and suppression by an ungodly nation. For example, Ezra recalls Israel's history from Adam to David (3:4-27) and concludes that God had allowed the evil heart to remain in them (3:20) and that just as Adam had transgressed, so had all who have descended from him (3:21). And because of their sinfulness God had judged them by turning them over to their enemies (3:9-11; 25-27).

⁶ See James Drummond, The Jewish Messiah (London: Longmans, 1877): 117; Bruce M. Metzger, The Fourth Book of Ezra, The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha, ed. James H. Charlesworth, vol. 1 (New York: Doubleday, 1983): 520; Andre Lacocque, "The Vision of the Eagle in 4 Ezra: A Rereading of Daniel 7 in the First Century CE," Society of Biblical Literature 20 (1981): 239-40; Geert Hallback, "The Fall of Zion and the Revelation of the Law: An Interpretation of 4 Ezra," Scandinavian Journal of the Old Testament 6 no. 2 (1992): 271.

This leads to the more pressing problem that Ezra faced, namely, Israel's fate of being dominated by even more ungodly nations than themselves (6:57-59; 10:23). Ezra admits that Israel has transgressed, but questions "Are the deeds of those who inhabit Babylon any better" (3:28)? And again, "Are the deeds of Babylon better than those of Zion" (3:31)? Then Ezra expresses the real heart of the problem when he declares:

For I did not wish to inquire about the ways above, but about those things which we daily experience: why Israel has been given over to the Gentiles as a reproach; why the people whom you loved has been given over to godless tribes, and the law of our fathers has been made of no effect and the written covenants no longer exist; and why we pass from the world like locusts, and our life is like a mist, and we are not worthy to obtain mercy (4:23-24). And now, O Lord, behold, these nations, which are reputed as nothing, domineer over us and devour us. But we thy people, whom thou hast called thy first-born, only begotten, zealous for thee, and most dear, have been given into their hands. If the world has indeed been created for us, why do we not possess our world as an inheritance? How long will this be so (6:57-59)?

The answer/solution is to be found in the end of the age (4:26; 5:41; 6:6,15,25) at which time God will send his Messiah to judge the ungodly nations, deliver the remnant of God's people, and inaugurate a temporal earthly kingdom in which the remnant may rejoice (7:28-29; 12:32-33; 13:25-52). The only hope for Zion is at the end of this age and the coming age when God will ultimately fulfill his promises to Zion. Therefore, the purpose for the writing of 4 Ezra is to provide an explanation for Israel's current fate and to offer hope for the righteous remnant (7:47) by anticipating the coming age/eternity when Zion will be re-established (8:52; 10:44; 13:35-36).

Date

Fourth Ezra's date of writing may be deduced by pursuing two avenues of evidence,

namely, external evidence and internal evidence. Each of these avenues will be discussed respectively. A reference to 4 Ezra 5:35 found in Clement of Alexandria, Stromateis III, chapter 26, proves that 4 Ezra was written at least by the end of the second century A. D.⁷ Some suggest that the Hebrew original must have been written before the Bar-Kokhba revolt because following this event church and Synagogue were alienated.⁸ This would place the original writing before A. D. 120.

The internal evidence for the production of 4 Ezra may be deduced from three texts within the book, namely 3:1-3; 10:19-24, 48; and 11:1-12:51. The opening statement in 3:1 places this work "in the thirtieth year after the destruction of our city" (i.e., Jerusalem). By using Ezra's name and by referring to Babylon the author purports to have written after Jerusalem's destruction by Babylonia in 586/87 B. C., placing date at about 556/57 B. C.⁹ Another reference to the destruction of Jerusalem is given in 10:19-24 where the author vividly describes the demolition of the Temple and climaxes with, "and what is more than all, the seal of Zion--for she has now lost the seal of her glory, and has been given over into the hands of those that hate us" (10:23). There is an admixture of chronistic references in this description. This is one reason for proposing that the author is pseudonymous and the reference to Babylon is cryptic.

⁷ John Ernest Leonard Oulton and Henry Chadwick, eds., Alexandrian Christianity, The Library of Christian Classics (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1954): 87. Oulton translates the text from Stromateis chapter 26:

"Why did not my mother's womb become my tomb, that I might not see the distress of Jacob and the toil of the nation of Israel?" says Esdras the prophet.

See Michael Edward Stone, A Commentary on the Fourth Book of Ezra (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1990): 9.

⁸ Bruce M. Metzger, The Fourth Book of Ezra, The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha, vol. 1, ed. James H. Charlesworth (Garden City: Doubleday, 1983): 520; Jacob M. Myers, I and II Esdras, 129-130 suggests that the book's close connection with the Hebrew Old Testament and with 2 Apocalypse of Baruch, and its obviously Semitic concerns indicate a Hebrew original written in Palestine by a Jewish author; M. E. Stone, Fourth Ezra, 10; Joseph Klausner, The Messianic Idea in Israel, trans. W. F. Stinespring (New York: Macmillan, 1955): 349.

⁹ See 1 Chron. 3:17; Ezra 3:2, 5:2; Neh. 12:1.

For example, Ezra refers to the Ark of the Covenant being carried away (10:22) and the seal of Zion being taken away (10:23). These events occurred at two different times in Israel's history.¹⁰

We must move on to the third text, the Eagle Vision (11:1-12:51) for a more precise date of 4 Ezra, because the details contained herein are rather explicit. Though scholarship on 4 Ezra is in disagreement as to the unity of the book and the dates of the various compositions, there is, however, overwhelming concurrence that the Eagle Vision is an allegorical reference to the Roman Empire in the first century A. D.¹¹ J. Drummond, following a critical evaluation of the proposed dates for 4 Ezra, concludes that it was written during the last quarter of the first century A. D., the second wing representing Augustus, and the three heads of the eagle depicting the Flavian emperors (11:1), placing the original at about 96.¹² A. Lacocque attempts to solve the problem of the 12 kings preceding the three Flavian emperors by proposing that the 12 were originally six pairs of wings, referring to the six Julian emperors. Further, for Lacocque the decisive element is found in the two winglets, Nerva (96-98) and Trajan, (98-117) that reigned after the death of the third head, i.e., Domitian (12:2). He concludes that the Eagle vision was therefore composed about A. D. 100.¹³

Therefore, following the external and internal evidences one may conclude that 4 Ezra was composed after the fall of Jerusalem in A. D. 70 and by the end of the second century A. D. The Eagle Vision makes the more precise date of about A. D. 81-96 a viable proposal. This thesis proposes that 4 Ezra was therefore composed after Jesus' earthly ministry and serves as

¹⁰ G. H. Box notes in The Apocalypse of Ezra (p. 84), concerning the reference to the ark of the covenant "occurred at the destruction of the first Temple" and that the seal of Zion is her independence with a possible reference to the national coinage in A. D. 66-70.

¹¹ Jacob M. Myers, I and II Esdras, 129.

¹² James Drummond, The Jewish Messiah (London: Longmans, 1877): 117.

¹³ Lacocque, "The Vision of the Eagle in 4 Ezra: A Rereading of Daniel 7 in the First Century C.E.," Society of Biblical Literature, 239.

evidence that a tradition containing the Messiah as a “son of man” existed during this time. This tradition provided Jesus with a platform to communicate certain supernatural aspects of his person and mission, and became the catalyst for Jesus to take an obscure reference to “one like a son of man” in Daniel 7:13 and apply it to himself as a Messianic title.

The Theology of Fourth Ezra

The theology of Fourth Ezra is inextricably connected to Biblical theology. This relationship is seen especially in five major areas of biblical theology: 1) theology proper, 2) anthropology, 3) soteriology, 4) eschatology, and 5) messianology, which will be discussed in the next chapter. Each area will be explicated respectively.

Fourth Ezra's Perspective of God

Fourth Ezra presents God as the Creator who spoke “at the beginning when thou didst form the earth-and that without help” (et dixi: O Domine Dominator, nonne tu dixisti ab initio, quando plasmasti terram, et hoc solus, et imperasti pulveri, 3:4). The pericope in 6:38-53 lists the six days of creation and emphasizes the concept that God formed the world by his speech. The seer exclaims, “O Lord, thou didst speak at the beginning of creation, and thy word accomplished the work” (et dixi: O Domine, loquens locutus es ab initio creaturae inprimo die dicens: fiat caelum et terra, et tuum verbum opus perfecit, 6:38). Again he emphasizes that “thy word went forth, and at once the work was done” (verbum enim tuum processit, et opus statim fiebat, 6:43). The seer reminds God “that it was for us that thou didst create this world” (haec autem omnia dixi coram te, Domine, quoniam dixisti quia propter nos creasti primogenitum saeculum, 6:55; cf. 7:11), and wondered why the people of God did not therefore inherit the world (6:58).

The dependence on the biblical account of creation is evident. The Old Testament begins with the declaration that בְּרֵשִׁית בָּרָא אֱלֹהִים אֶת הַשָּׁמַיִם וְאֶת הָאָרֶץ (Ge 1:1) and recounts the six days of creation with the repetition of the formula “God said...and it was so” (Ge 1: 3,6,9,14-15,20-21,24). The Psalmists reiterate this as well on several occasions.

By the word of the LORD were the heavens made,
their starry host by the breath of his mouth (Ps 33:6).

For he spoke and it came to be; he commanded,
and it stood firm (Ps 33:9).

Let them praise the name of the LORD, for he com-
manded and they were created (Ps 148:5).

The writer of the book of Hebrews quoting Psalm 102:25-27 states,

σὺ κατ' ἀρχάς, κύριε, τὴν γῆν ἐθεμελίωσας,
καὶ ἔργα τῶν χειπῶν σου εἰσιν οἱ οὐρανοί (Heb 1:10).

And again in the great faith chapter he exclaims,

πίστει νοοῦμεν κατηρτίσθαι τοὺς αἰῶνας ῥήματι θεοῦ, εἰς
τὸ μὴ ἐκ φαινομένων τὸ βλεπόμενον γεγονέναι (Heb 11:3).

Fourth Ezra depicts God as Judge (5:42; 7:34, 44; 8:61). The seer recounts the basic history of Israel ending with David (3:3-27). Divine judgment began when Adam transgressed God's commandment and “immediately thou didst appoint death for him and for his descendants” (et huic mandasti diligentiam unam tuam, et praeterivit eam, et statim instituisti in eum mortem et in nationibus eius, 3:7). Later God brought the flood upon mankind because they continued to transgress (3:8-11). God chose Abraham in order to make an everlasting covenant with him (3:12-15), and promised never to forsake his descendants (3:15). God delivered the descendants of Jacob out of Egypt (3:17), and gave the Torah to them (3:19). Yet they continued to transgress God's commands because of the evil heart within them (3:20-22). God raised up

David to be his servant (3:23) and commanded him to “build a city for thy name, and in it to offer thee oblations from what is thine” (*aedificare civitatem nominis tui et offerre tibi in ea de tuis oblationes*, 3:24). However “the inhabitants of the city transgressed... for they had the evil heart” (*et dereliquerunt qui habitabant civitatem ... utebantur enim et ipsi cor malignum*, (3:25-26). He then comments, “So thou didst deliver the city into the hands of thy enemies” (*Et tradidisti civitatem tuam in manibus inimicorum tuorum* 3:27; c.f., 10:23). This implies the prophetic concept that exile under enemy nations is an act of Divine punishment for Israel’s sins.¹⁴

Divine judgment had its inception “when Adam transgressed my statutes, and what was made was judged” (*et quando transgressus est Adam constitutiones meas, iudicatum est quodfactum est*, 7:11). There will also be an eschatological Judgment Day in which “the Most High will be revealed upon the seat of judgment, and compassion shall pass away, and patience shall be withdrawn” (*et revelabitur Altissimus super sedem iudicii, et pertransibunt misericordiae, et longanimitas congregabitur*, 7:33). God’s judgment is described as following a “prescribed order” (7:44), being “decisive” and as displaying “the seal of truth” (7:104).

There are many affinities to the biblical teaching concerning the judgment of Almighty God. God immediately judged Adam when he transgressed God’s directive (Ge 3:1-24). When “the LORD saw how great man’s wickedness on earth had become” (Ge 6:5) “he was grieved that he had made man” (Ge 6:6), and determined that he would “wipe mankind ...from the face of the earth...” (Ge 6:7). God accomplished this by the universal flood (Ge 7:13-24). The prophets of the Lord constantly warned Israel about God’s judgment (Isa 3:13; Jer 4:12; Eze 14:12-14;). Isaiah recounts the indictments against Judah and Jerusalem and warns,

¹⁴ See Stone, *Fourth Ezra*, 75.

The LORD takes his place in court; he rises to judge the people.
The LORD enters into judgment against the elders and leaders
of his people...(Isa 3:13-14).

Historically, God's judgment upon Israel and Judah came in the form of the destruction of their land and the captivity of the people. This is the problem that Ezra was so concerned about in the first century A..D.

Fourth Ezra acknowledges that God's ways are incomprehensible (3:3-4:25). The book opens with Ezra's troubling thoughts about the "desertionem Sion" on the one hand and the "abundantiam eorum qui habitabant in Babylone" on the other hand (3:2). Ezra carries on a dialogue with the angel Uriel and tries to discover why God has allowed his people to suffer at the hands of the ungodly. While inquiring about this phenomenon, Ezra states that God "hast not shown to any one how thy way may be comprehended" (*nihil nemini quomodo debeat derelinqui via haec. numquid meliora facit Babilon quam Sion?* 3:31). Following a series of questions by Ezra (3:28-36) the angel comments, "Your understanding has utterly failed regarding this world, and do you think you can comprehend the way of the Most High" (*excedens excessit cor tuum in saeculo hoc, et comprehendere cogitas viam Altissimi?* 4:2). Again the angel asks, "how then can your mind comprehend the way of the Most High? And how can one who is already worn out by the corrupt world understand incorruption" (*et quomodo poterit vas tuum capere Altissimi viam, et iam exeritus corrupto saeculo intellegere incorruptionem?* *Et cum haec audissem, cecidi infaciem meam,* 4:11). Furthermore, God says, "so you cannot discover my judgment, or the goal of the love that I have promised my people" (*sic non poteris invenire iudicium meum aut finem caritatis quam populo meo promisi,* 5:40). Thus, the conclusion reached is that mere human wisdom cannot understand the course of life events; faith in the Most High and his outworking of things at the end of the age is necessary.

The incomprehensibility of God is integral to the theology of Fourth Ezra and both compares and contrasts the biblical suppositions concerning God's ways. This integrality is expressed by Ezra's questions concerning God's having allowed the evil heart to remain in man; God's having created the world for Israel, yet they do not inherit it; and God's having allowed Israel to remain under Roman dominion.

The very title "Most High" (*Altissimus*) suggests that the ways of God are beyond human comprehension. Though the title *Altissimus* does not occur in chapters 1-2 and 15-16, it is prominent in chapters 3-14, appearing sixty-eight times in all.¹⁵ It is also a prominent title in the literature of the Old Testament. The Hebrew אֵל עֶלְיוֹן, אֵל עֲלִיִּין and the Aramaic ܥܠܝܢܐ or a derivative thereof occurs some forty-nine times in the OT. The Greek ὑψίστος appears nine times in the New Testament. It is significant that Daniel's favorite title for God is ܥܠܝܢܐ which occurs thirteen times in the book. Thus, it is no accident that Ezra also chooses this particular title for God, since he is dependent on the book of Daniel. This is just one of the many affinities that 4 Ezra has with Daniel and illustrates its dependence on Daniel, and its projection of a continuing apocalyptic tradition derived from the same.

Perhaps the most vivid scriptural parallel to Fourth Ezra's quest to comprehend the ways of the Most High God is the prophet Habakkuk. Habakkuk had identical concerns that Ezra did, i.e., the fate of Israel falling into the hands of her enemies as an act of Divine judgment. The first two chapters of Habakkuk contain a dialogue between the prophet and the Lord, which is very similar to the structure of Fourth Ezra, except that Ezra's dialogue is with the angel. The book follows the pattern: complaint-answer-complaint-answer-resolve. Habakkuk questions

¹⁵ Robert L. Bensly, *The Fourth Book of Ezra: The Latin Version Edited From The Mss*, Texts And Studies, vol. 3, no. 2, ed. J. Armitage Robinson (Cambridge: Cambridge University, 1895): 95; Myers, *I and II Esdras*, 121.

why God allows Israel to continue in wickedness without being punished (Hab 1:2-4). God's answer is that he will not allow the wicked of his people to go unpunished, but that he will raise up a nation, the Babylonians, to be the instrument of his judgment (Hab 1:5-11). This leads Habakkuk to his second complaint; how can God use a nation that is even more wicked than his own people to judge them (Hab 1:12-2:1)? The essence of the Lord's answer is that even though Judah will fall unto the hands of the wicked Babylonians as her punishment, the Babylonians will not go unpunished (Hab 2:1-20). Habakkuk then resolves: "I will wait patiently for the day of calamity to come on the nation invading us (Hab 3:16b), and "yet I will rejoice in the LORD, I will be joyful in God my Savior (Hab 3:18). Habakkuk then concludes that "The Sovereign LORD is my strength; he makes my feet like the feet of a deer, he enables me to go on the heights" (Hab 3:19).

Even though the prophet did not understand the ways of God, he resolved to wait for the Lord, to rejoice in the Lord, and to rely on the Lord for strength. Similarly, at the end of the sixth vision Ezra is in the field *multum glorificans et laudans Altissimum de mirabilibus, quae per tempus faciebat et quoniam gubernat tempora et quae sunt in temporibus inflata* (greatly glorifying and praising The Most High because of his wonders, which he did from time to time and because he governs the times, and such things as fall in their seasons, 13:58). Indeed, God's ways are incomprehensible to man because God is *Altissimus Deus* who is sovereign over the affairs of mankind.

This leads to a related attribute that the seer addresses, namely, God's sovereignty. The dual title *Dominator Domine* is dispersed throughout the book of 4 Ezra (3:4; 4:38; 5:23,38; 6:11; 7:17, 58, [75]; 12:7; 13:51). Sometimes the seer uses this title to address God (e.g., 3:4; 5:23) and at other times he addresses the angel as such (e.g., 4:38; 5:38; 6:11; 7:58,75). At any

rate, he appears to either address God directly or indirectly through the angel when using this title.

God's sovereignty is especially depicted in the eagle vision (11:1-12:51). Following a detailed description of the eagle, a lion-like creature arises and speaks with a human voice (11:37), announcing to the eagle:

Listen and I will speak to you. The Most High says to you, Are you not the one that remains of the four beasts which I had made to reign in my world, so that the end of my times might come through them (11:38-39)?

The Most High had made the worldly kingdoms to rule on his earth in order to fulfill his times. The four kingdoms that the seer refers to per Daniel were all in God's agenda leading to the eschaton. Following the vision of the man from the sea (13:1-58), Ezra praises God "because he governs the times and whatever things come to pass in their seasons" (13:58).

This theological motif clearly defines Fourth Ezra's dependence on the Old Testament generally and Daniel specifically. God's sovereignty is a prominent theme in the Psalter. For example, the psalmist in the forty-seventh Psalm the writer extols, "How awesome is the LORD Most High, the great King over all the earth!" (47:2), and "God reigns over the nations; God is seated on his holy throne" (47:8). The psalmist iterates, "Let them know that you, whose name is LORD-that you alone are the Most High over all the earth" (Ps 83:18). The ninety-seventh Psalm begins, "The LORD reigns, let the earth be glad" (97:1).

God's sovereignty is the major theme in the book of Daniel. For example, Daniel declares that "...the God of heaven will set up a kingdom that will never be destroyed... but it will endure forever" (2:44). Then later he recounts how king Nebuchadnezzar was deposed from his throne "until he acknowledged that the Most High God is sovereign over the kingdoms of

men and sets over them anyone he wishes" (5:21; e.g., 7:11,25-27; 8:25; 9:27; 11:45; 12:13; cf. Rev 11:15).

A related Divine attribute in Fourth Ezra is the predeterminism of God (6:1-6; 7:30; 7:70-74; 9:4). God has determined the course of history before the creation of the world according to 4Ezra. The sixth chapter begins with a beautiful poetic section that answers the question Ezra poses, "O Lord, I beseech you, if I have found favor in thy sight, show thy servant through whom thou dost visit thy creation" (Et dixi: rogo domine, Si inveni gratiam ante oculos tuos, demonsira servo tuo per quem visitas creaturam tuam, 5:56). This pericope (6:1-6) consists of fourteen prepositional phrases that begin with the preposition "before" (*antequam*) and climaxes in verse six.

And he said to me, "At the beginning of the circle of the earth, *before* the portals of the world were in place, and *before* the assembled winds blew, and *before* the rumblings of thunder sounded, and *before* the flashes of lightning shone, and *before* the foundations of paradise were laid, and *before* the beautiful flowers were seen, and *before* the powers of movement were established, and *before* the innumerable hosts of angels ere gathered together, and *before* the heights of the air were lifted up, and *before* the measures of the firmaments were named, and *before* the footstool of Zion was established, and *before* the present years were reckoned, and *before* the imaginations of those who now sin were estranged, and *before* those who stored up treasures of faith were sealed—then I planned these things, and they were made through me and not through another, just as the end shall come through me and not through another.

Following the "before phrases" God asserts, "then I planned these things, and they were made through me and not through another" (*tunc cogitavi... non per alium*, 6:6). Prior to creation God had planned it out, and not only did he plan creation, he also determined the end (*ut et finis per me et non per alium*, 6:6b). The seer thus emphasizes that God had predetermined creation and the course of history leading to the eschaton (7:70-74). He states in 7:74 that the Most High

has been patient with people, yet not for their sakes "but because of the times which he has foreordained!" (sed propter ea quae providit tempora).

When the seer implores, "Behold, O Lord, thou hast now shown me a multitude of the signs which thou wilt do in the last times, but thou hast not shown me when thou wilt do them" (Ecce nunc, Domine, demonstrasti mihi multitudinem signorum quae incipies facere in novissimis, sed non demonstrasti mihi quo tempore, 8:63), God refers to the "predicted signs"(signorum quae praedicta, 9:1) of the end. These signs will introduce the arrival of Divine visitation (9:2). When these phenomena occur "then you will know that it was of these that the Most High spoke from the days that were of old, from the beginning" (et tunc intelleges, quoniam de his erat Altissimus locutus a diebus quifuerunt ante ab initio, 9:4).

Another significant parallel to the Old Testament is the pericope of the seven-fold attributes of God that is presented in 4 Ezra 7:132-139 (cf. Nu 14:18; Ne 9:17; Ps 86:15; 103:8, 145:8; Joel 2:13; Jnh 4:2). Here the Most High is called (*vocatus est Altissimus*) merciful (*misericors*, 132), gracious (*miserator*, 133), patient (*longanimis*, 134), bountiful (*munificus*, 135), abundant in compassion (*multae misericordiae*, 136), giver (*donator*, 138), and judge (*iudex*, 139).

I answered and said, "I know, O Lord, that the Most High is now called *merciful*, because he has mercy on those who have not yet come into the world; and *gracious*, because he is gracious to those who turn in repentance to his law; and *patient*, because he shows patience toward those who have sinned, since they are his own works; and *bountiful*, because he would rather give than take away; and *abundant in compassion*, because he makes his compassions abound more and more to those now living and to those who are gone and to those yet to come, for if he did not make them abound, the world with those who inhabit it would not have life; and he is called *giver*, because if he did not give out of his goodness so that those who have committed iniquities might be relieved of

them, not one ten-thousandth of mankind could have life; and *judge*, because if he did not pardon those who were created by his word and blot out the multitude of their sins, there would probably be left only very few of the innumerable multitude.”

Therefore, the dependence of 4 Ezra on OT Theology is demonstrated by Ezra’s understanding of God as, (1) Creator, (2) Judge, (3) Incomprehensible, (4) Sovereign and (5) Predetermining the course of history. Fourth Ezra also correlates with OT Theology in its view of mankind.

Fourth Ezra's Perspective of Man

Ezra states uncategorically that God created mankind. Adam was the “workmanship” (*ipsum figmentum manuum tuarum erat*, 3:5; c.f., Ge 1:2) of God's hands, and received the breath of life from God (3:5). Man is described as the “work of thy hands” (*solus enim es, et unaplasmatio nos sumus manuum tuarum, sicut locutus es*, 8:7), whose life God fashions in the womb (8:8). The seer exclaims that man was created by God and in God's own image:

But man, who has been formed by thy hands and is called thy own image because he is made like thee, and for whose sake thou hast formed all things—hast thou also made him like the farmer’s seed (8:44)?

Man is in a position of dominion over God's creation (*et super his Adam, quem constituisti ducem super omnibus factis quae fecisti, et ex eo educimur nos omnes quem elegisti populum*, 6:54; cf. Ge 1:26-28; Ps 8:1-9).

Ezra also describes man as sinful and depraved. Adam transgressed God's command (3:7; cf. Ge 3; Ro 3:12-21), and his descendants became even more ungodly (3:12-13). God did not take away their “evil heart” (*cor malignum*, 3:20), so Adam and his descendants were “burdened with an evil heart” (*cor enim malignum baiulans*, 3:21), which is described as a “permanent disease” (*permanens infirmitas*, 3:22). The “evil seed was sown in Adam's heart” (*granum*

seminis mali seminatum est in corde Adam ab initio, 4:30), so mankind is “full of ungodliness” (sed et nos omnes pleni sumus impietatem, 4:38).

The pericope in 7:19-24 describes depraved humanity as having devised for themselves vain thoughts (22), proposed to themselves wicked frauds (23), declared the Most High non-existent (23), ignored God’s ways (23), scorned God’s law (24), denied God’s covenants (24), been unfaithful to God’s statutes (24), and failed to perform God’s works (24). Sinful humanity is further described as having “defiled God’s name” and as being “ungrateful to God,” 8:59-60).

The seer portrays the universality of sin and a fatalistic outlook for humanity (7:62-69; 118; 8:34-36). It would be “better if dust itself had not been born” (*melius enim erat et ipsum pulverem non esse natum, ut non sensus inde fieret*, 7:63), because it is torment in that we are perishing and know it (*Nunc autem nobiscum crescit sensus, et propter hoc torquemur, quoniam scientes perimus*, 7:64). Further, “all who have been born are involved in iniquities, and are full of sins and burdened with transgressions” (*Omnes enim qui nati sunt commixti sunt iniquitatibus et pleni sunt peccatis et gravati delictis*, 7:68). The seer bemoans the universal effects of Adam’s transgression, “O Adam, what have you done? For though it was you who sinned, the fall was not yours alone, but ours also who are your descendants” (*O tu quid fecisti, Adam? Si enim tu peccasti, non est factum solius tuus casus sed et nostrum qui ex te advenimus*, 7:118).

Man is under the judgment of God as the consequence of sin. Judgment was the consequence of Adam’s transgression (7:11). There will be a decisive Day of Judgment (7:104) in which each one will be personally accountable and will “bear his own righteousness or unrighteousness” (*omnes enim portabunt unusquisque tunc iniustitias suas aut iustitias*, 7:105; cf. Dt 30:19).

Death is also a consequence of man's sinfulness. God appointed death for Adam and his descendants (3:7; cf. Ge 3; Ro 3:23; Heb 9:27). Man's life is temporary "and why we pass from the world like locusts, and our life is like a mist, and we are not worthy to obtain mercy" (et pertransivimus de saeculo ut locustae, et vita nostra ut vapor, et nec digni sumus misericordiam consequi, 4:24). The evil heart has "alienated us from God" and leads us to "corruption, death, and perdition" (Increvit enim in nos cor malum quod nos abalienavit ab his et deduxit nos in corruptionem, et in itinera mortis, ostendit nobis semitas perditionis et longe fecit nos a vita; et hoc non paucos sed paene omnes qui creati sunt, 7:48). Ezra reiterates that death is certain (convenisti enim obaudire et profecta es nolens, non enim tibi est datum spatium nisi solum modicum vivere, 8:5) and that "we who have received the law and sinned will perish, as well as our heart which received it" (nos quidem qui legem accepimus peccantes peribimus et cor nostrum quod suscepit eam, 9:36).

Ezra thus describes mankind as (1) the creation of God in God's own image, (2) sinful and depraved, (3) under divine judgment, and (4) appointed unto death. These descriptions are vitally related to OT Theology. This leads to Ezra's view of salvation and its relation to the Old Testament.

Fourth Ezra's Perspective on Salvation

Ezra explains salvation in terms of pre-Torah, Torah, the Remnant, and the Treasury of Works. First, Ezra refers to the deluge in Noah's day as an act of divine judgment on the world.

But again, in its time thou didst bring the flood upon the inhabitants of the world and destroy them. And the same fate befell them: as death came upon Adam, so the flood upon them (3:9-10).

Noah and his household, the righteous, were delivered from the consequences of the flood (dereliquisti autem ex his Noe cum domo sua; ex eo iustos omnes, 3:11; cf. Ge 6:5-7). Noah is illustrious of this judgment/salvation motif in several Biblical texts (e.g., Eze 14:14,20; Mt 24:37-39; Lk 17:26,27; 1Pe 3:20; 2Pe 2:5).

Another aspect of pre-Torah salvation is God's choosing of Abraham and establishing an eternal covenant with him and promising to never forsake him nor his descendants (3:12-15; cf. Ge 15:17). Then God delivered the descendants out of Egypt and gave them the Torah (3:16-19; cf. Ex 13; 19:16-19).

The Torah is central to Ezra's understanding of salvation. Bizarre natural phenomena accompanied the giving of the Torah (3:18). The seer suggests the Torah was rendered ineffective because God had allowed the evil seed to remain in man (3:20). The seer employs a sowing/reaping analogy to indicate that the Torah is the seed and the fruit that it produces is the eternal reward (3:33; 4:30; 6:28; 8:6, cf. Ro 7:4-5). According to Proverbs 3:18 and 11:30 the Torah is a tree of life whose fruit is immortality and planted in human hearts.

Another aspect of salvation in relation to the Torah is righteousness (7:49-51, 57, 60; 8:37-40; cf. Ezr 9:8; Isa 11:11; Jer 23:3; Zec 8:12; Ro 11:5). As stated previously, for Ezra it is the righteous who are saved. The righteous are said to inherit the land promised to them in the Torah (7:17).¹⁶ The eternal fate of the righteous is in stark contrast to the ungodly. While the ungodly will experience torment (7:78-87), the godly will enjoy rest (7:88-105). It is said that God rejoices over the salvation of the righteous (8:39, 41).

¹⁶ This verse is most likely based on Deut. 8:1, Be careful to follow every command I am giving you today, so that you may live and increase and may enter and possess the land that the LORD promised on oath to your forefathers. See M. E. Stone, Fourth Ezra, 199-200.

Salvation is also discussed in terms of the few versus the many. God states that "I will rejoice over the few who shall be saved, because it is they who have made my glory to prevail now, and through them my name has now been honored" (*iucundabor enim super paucos qui saluabuntur, propterea quod ipsi sunt qui gloriam meam nunc dominationem fecerunt, et per quos nunc nomen meum nominatum est*, 7:60). Though many have been created, only few will be saved (8:3; 9:13, 14, 22). Finally, the Messiah "will deliver in mercy the remnant of my people..." (*nam residuum populum meum liberabit cum misericordia*, 12:34).

The treasury of works is another aspect of the salvation of the righteous "who have many works laid up with thee, shall receive their reward in consequence of their own deeds" (*quibus sunt operae multae repositae apud te, ex propriis operibus recipient mercedem*, 8:33). Ezra is told that "you have a treasure of works laid up with the Most High" (*Etenim est tibi thesaurus operum repositus apud Altissimum*, 7:77).

Thus, Ezra understands salvation in relation to (1) the Noahic covenant, (2) the Abrahamic covenant, (3) Torah, (4) the Remnant and (5) the Treasury of Works. Next, a survey of 4 Ezra's perspective on the "end" will show that Ezra seeks to offer hope to his fellow countrymen who were in despair by concentrating his gaze upon the "coming age."

Fourth Ezra's Perspective on Eschatology

God has predetermined the order of events in history and the eschaton (4:26-28; 11:44; 13:58). There are three primary concepts that convey the eschatology of 4 Ezra, namely, the end, the world to come, and the predicted signs. The term "end" is usually indicated by the Latin *finis* and is used technically (4:26; 5:41; 6:6,15-25).¹⁷ For Ezra, God has predetermined history, thus

¹⁷ See M. E. Stone, Fourth Ezra, 102-104.

the course of events leading to the eschaton can be predicted. This is implied in the secrets revealed to Abraham (3:14) and to Moses (14:5). In his eschatological schema, Ezra speaks of “the harvest of our reward” (4:35) and “the time of threshing” (4:39). After Ezra inquires as to how much time is left to pass (4:44-46), the angel delineates the signs of the end (5:1-13). Though the term “end” does not occur in this context, the “signs” refer to the messianic woes which are the events leading to the end of the age.¹⁸ The seer is assured that the predicted signs will come to pass (7:26), and God will reveal the Messiah who will lead the remaining people into a temporal age of rejoicing (7:28).

The predicted signs are again delineated in 9:1-13 where these are clearly the messianic woes that were predicted “from the beginning.” The seer inquires in another way in order that he may know when the end will occur, “What will be the dividing of the times? Or when will be the end of the first age and the beginning of the age that follows?” (*et respondi et dixi: quae erit separatio temporum, aut quando prioris finis aut sequentis initium?*, 6:7). The end will be indicated by Divine visitation (6:18), bizarre natural phenomena (6:19-24), and a revival of faithfulness and truth (6:25-28).

Ezra understands “that the world to come will bring delight to few, but torments to many” (*quoniam ad paucos pertinebit futurum saeculum iocunditatem facere, multis autem tormenta*, 7:47). The “day of judgment will be the end of this age and the beginning of the immortal age to come” (*Dies autem iudicii erit finis temporis huius [et initium] futuri immortalis temporis, in quo pertransivit corruptela*, 7:113). Commenting on the “world to come,” the seer declares that the Most High had made the “world to come for the sake of few” (8:1). The coming age is further described as being plenteous and restful, wherein “goodness is

¹⁸ See M. E. Stones’ discussion in Fourth Ezra, 105ff. Also compare Mt 24:4-32; Mk 13:5-27; Lk 21:8-28.

established," "wisdom is perfected," evil is sealed up, illness is banished, death, hell, and sorrows have fled, and the "treasure of immortality is made manifest" (8:51-54). Ezra uses the expression "the age to come" quite commonly.¹⁹

The concepts of the end, the coming age and the predicted signs of the end convey the eschatology of 4 Ezra. Ezra's eschatology may be summed up as the present age--the end--the Day of Judgment--the coming age. God has predetermined the course of history, will send his Messiah to inaugurate a temporal earthly kingdom (7:28-29), will judge the ungodly nations, and will re-establish Zion for the Remnant in the coming age.

Fourth Ezra's Perspective on the Messiah

This perspective will be summarized here and will be discussed in detail in chapter four. The Messiah is referred to in 7:28-29; 11:37-12:1; 12:31-34; 13:3-13; 13:25-52; and 14:9. The title "Messiah" occurs only in 7:28-29 and 12:32. There are several key characteristics and functions of the Messiah that surface from these texts. The Messiah in Fourth Ezra is called God's son or servant; he is preexistent; he is responsible for judgment at the end of the present age; he is the lion in the eagle vision (11-12); he is "one like a son of man" (13); he is of Davidic descent and he is the Savior of the people of God.

CONCLUSION

This overview of 4 Ezra demonstrates that there are significant affinities with the OT generally and Daniel specifically. Fourth Ezra was written as an endeavor to account for the suffering of God's people at the hands of an ungodly nation. Ezra seeks to make sense of it all

¹⁹ See Charles K. Barrett, "New Testament Eschatology," The Scottish Journal of Theology 6 (June 1953): 141.

and to offer hope to the oppressed. This hope is summoned by looking to the end of this age and anticipating the world to come.

Ezra is dependent on the OT for his rationale and theological perspective, though he deviates on key points. This reliance is apparent in five major areas. First, Ezra's perspective of God was shown to correlate with the OT. He perceives God as Creator, Judge, and as the Sovereign Lord whose ways are incomprehensible and who also predetermined the course of history.

Second, Ezra's perspective of mankind draws from OT anthropology. He depicts mankind as the workmanship of God's hands, steward of God's creation, sinful, condemned, and dying.

Third, Ezra's perspective of salvation correlates to the OT to an extent. Ezra depicts the salvation of the righteous. He emphasizes the place of Torah, and the salvation of the "few" versus the "many." Stress is laid on the "treasury of works," but then he equates works with faith.

Fourth, Ezra's perspective of the end times follows in the tradition of Daniel and other apocalyptic literature. This literature depicts the eminence of the end of this age and the revelation of the world to come. Ezra describes the end as being predetermined by God, as following the prescribed order of God, as being accompanied by certain "predicted signs" and as following the messianic age.

Fifth, Ezra's perspective of the Messiah shows heavy reliance on OT messianology. The Messiah is called God's Son/Servant; he is pre-existent (having been prepared in advance by the Most High and concealed until his revelation); he is from the seed of David and he judges the ungodly and delivers God's people (i.e. He acts as both Judge and Savior). This two-fold

function of the apocalyptic Messiah demonstrates that Jesus tied into a concurrent "Son of Man" tradition in order to communicate his messianic role (e.g., Jn 5:22, 27; 9:39; Jn 3:14-15; Lk 19:10).

The next chapter will confirm that 4 Ezra depends on Daniel specifically, and that it correlates with some of Jesus' eschatological Son of man sayings. It will be shown that there are aspects of these sayings that have no parallel in Daniel but do share certain features with the Messiah in 4 Ezra. Specific Son of Man sayings in the Gospels will be selected as evidence that Jesus used an apocalyptic tradition containing the son of man figure as a catalyst for interpreting his own identity and mission. These are sayings that have no exact parallels in OT messianology but which do indeed correlate with an apocalyptic tradition that has its origin with Daniel and is illustrated by 4 Ezra.

CHAPTER FOUR

THE RELATIONSHIP OF FOURTH EZRA TO THE ESCHATOLOGICAL SON OF MAN SAYINGS

Introduction

The content of a number of Jesus' Son of Man sayings does not have a true parallel in the Old Testament. Some have explained this to be the Messianic secret with Jesus, that he veiled his identity. Yet, the Son of Man title must have surely communicated something to Jesus' hearers. This opens up the possibility that Jesus may have relied on an existing apocalyptic tradition that contained the son of man figure and used it as a catalyst to communicate his identity and mission. Fourth Ezra's historical setting and its dependence on the canonical book of Daniel show that such a tradition did exist and would have been current during Jesus' ministry.¹ This chapter will explore the direct parallels between Fourth Ezra and Daniel. It will become evident that Daniel provided the basis for Fourth Ezra,² as well as many of Jesus' Son of Man sayings. Following will be a discussion of the relationship between Fourth Ezra and Daniel, and certain apocalyptic features of the Son of Man in the Gospels that correlate with certain apocalyptic features of the Messiah in Fourth Ezra, but do not parallel the Danielic son of man.

¹ H. C. Fee, "The Man" in Fourth Ezra: Growth of a Tradition," Society Of Biblical Literature 1981 Seminar Papers, ed. Kent Harold Richards 20 (December 1981): 199-208. Fee demonstrates that Fourth Ezra (esp. chapters 11-13) is an outgrowth of the apocalyptic tradition of Daniel 7 and 8 by showing Fourth Ezra's direct references to Daniel and its enunciation of basic Biblical themes. See Hartmut Gese, "Wisdom, Son of Man, and the Origins of Christology: The Consistent Development of Biblical Theology," Horizons in Biblical Theology 3 (1981): 23-57. Gese discusses the origins of New Testament Christology by tracing the development of wisdom tradition as it relates to messianology. He demonstrates that Daniel 7, the Similitudes of Enoch (chs. 37-71), and 4 Ezra contain "motifs of the traditional Davidic messianology" that are applied to the Son of Man (p. 38). This is indicative of a developing messianic tradition that was applied to an apocalyptic matrix. See Andre Lacocque, "The Vision of the Eagle in 4 Ezra: A Rereading of Daniel 7 in the First Century CE," Society of Biblical Literature 20 (1981): 237-58.

² Robert D. Rowe, "Is Daniel's 'Son of Man' Messianic?" Christ the Lord, ed. Harold H. Rowdon, (Downers Grove: Inter-Varsity, 1982): 71-96; Leopold Sabourin, "About Jesus' Self-Understanding" Religious Studies and Theology 3 no. 3 (Spring 1983): 129-134.

The Parallels Between Fourth Ezra 11-13 and the Apocalypse of Daniel

Fourth Ezra chapters 7 and 11-13 contain the most extensive outlook of the Messiah in the book. Actually, the Messiah is not a prominent figure at all until we arrive at chapters 11-13. These contain two separate visions centering on the Messiah. The first explicit mention of the Messiah is found in 7:28-29. Chapters 11-12 contain the second vision in the book known as the eagle vision. The main characters in the vision are the eagle (symbolizing the Roman Empire) and the lion (symbolizing the Messiah).³ A second vision is contained in chapter 13 and it centers on the Man who arose from the depths of the sea (symbolizing the Messiah, cf. 13:26,32,36;51-52). A literary analysis will make it clear that Ezra is an expansion and reinterpretation of Daniel (esp. Da 2, 7-12).⁴

The Eagle Vision (11:1-12:39) and Its Relationship to the book of Daniel

What is implicit within the vision per se is made explicit in Fourth Ezra 12:11, namely that the content of Ezra's vision is a deliberate reinterpretation of Daniel. Ezra says in the interpretation of the Eagle Vision that "the eagle which you saw coming out of the sea is the fourth kingdom which appeared in a vision to your brother Daniel" (12:11). That 4 Ezra is dependent on Daniel is shown by (1) the direct allusions to Daniel, (2) the visionary structure, (3) the sea motif and (4) the messianic symbolism. The vision begins with an eagle coming up from the depths of the sea.

On the second night I had a dream, and behold, there came up from the sea an eagle that had twelve feathered wings and three heads (11:1).

³ The details of the vision suggest that the Roman Empire is in view here. See Chapter Three of this thesis under the discussion of the Date and Provenance.

⁴ Andre Lacocque, "The Vision of the Eagle in 4 Ezra: A Rereading of Daniel 7 in the First Century CE," Society of Biblical Literature 20 (1981): 237-58.

A direct parallel is found in Daniel where he had a vision of four world empires that were symbolized by four distinct animals:

In my vision at night I looked, and there before me were the four winds of heaven churning up the great sea. Four great beasts, each different from the others, came up out of the sea (7:2-3).

The remaining description of the eagle differs from Daniel's fourth beast (Da 7:7). The eagle is described as having twelve wings and three heads (11:1), a rather detailed description of which is given in 11:14-12:3. This description is missing in Daniel because of the different context (this will be discussed further in the interpretation of the vision). Daniel's fourth beast is described as having ten horns and a little horn that uproots three existing ones (Da 7:7-8).

After that, in my vision at night I looked, and there before me was a fourth beast, terrifying and frightening and very powerful. It had large iron teeth; it crushed and devoured its victims and trampled underfoot whatever was left. It was different from all the former beasts, and it had ten horns. While I was thinking about the horns, there before me was another horn, a little one, which came up among them; and three of the first horns were uprooted before it. This horn had eyes like the eyes of a man and a mouth that spoke boastfully.

Another distinctive feature is found in the messianic figure (4 Ezr 11:37-12:46). Here a lion-like creature arises out of the forest speaking with a man's voice (1:37). The lion indicts the eagle for its reign of terror, grievous oppression, affliction of the meek, injuring the peaceable, hating the truthful and loving liars, and overall insolence (11:38-42). The lion delivers this message from the Most High (11:38), and warns the eagle that "the Most High has looked upon his times, and behold, they are ended, and his ages are completed"! (11:44). Daniel's visions do not contain this lion-like figure as representing the Messiah. Instead, a rock is cut out of the mountain without human hands, symbolizing divine activity (Da 2:34,44), and "one like a son of

man” receives the eternal kingdom from God (Da 7:13), representing a divine agent of God’s kingdom.

Following the lion’s indictment of the eagle two wings that arose when the last remaining head disappeared reigned for a brief time (4 Ezr 12:1,2), then also disappeared and the whole body of eagle was burned (12:3). This phenomenon corresponds to the fourth beast of Daniel where he records that “I kept looking until the beast was slain and its body destroyed and thrown into the blazing fire” (Da 7:11). The point of both Daniel and Ezra is that God will ultimately triumph over the kingdoms of this world and will set up his eternal kingdom.

The interpretation of Ezra’s vision is given (12:10-39), and both correlates with and differs from the interpretation of Daniel’s vision (Da 7:15-28). He explicitly states that “the eagle which you saw coming up from the sea is the fourth kingdom which appeared in a vision to your brother Daniel” (12:11). The interpretation given to Daniel is that “the four great beasts are four kingdoms that will rise from the earth” (7:17). The fourth beast of Daniel is further described (7:23).

He gave me this explanation: The fourth beast is a fourth kingdom that will appear on earth. It will be different from all the other kingdoms and will devour the whole earth, trampling it down and crushing it.

Ezra is only concerned with the fourth kingdom of Daniel but with a different explanation (12:12).⁵ The difference lies in some of the details involved and the functions of the Messiah, who is more prominent in Fourth Ezra than in Daniel.

The interpretation of the eagle is given. The twelve wings are twelve kings (12:13-16), the voice from the midst of its body represent great struggles (17-18), the eight little wings are eight short lived reigns (19-21), the three resting heads are three kings who reign in its final days

⁵ Ibid., 240-241.

(22-25) and the two little wings that pass over the head on the right side are two kings whom the Most High has kept until the eagle's end (29-30). Daniel's fourth kingdom is described differently. The ten horns represent ten kings that will rise out of the fourth kingdom (Da 7:24), and the little horn represents a king who will arise and subdue three existing kings (24-25).

Apocalyptic Features of the Messiah in Fourth Ezra

One feature of the Messiah in Fourth Ezra is that he is God's Son or Servant. God answers Ezra's inquiry concerning the punishment of the wicked by referring to the coming of His Son the Messiah to inaugurate the messianic kingdom that will precede the end of the world.

For my Son the Messiah shall be revealed with those who are with him, and those who remain shall rejoice four hundred years. And after these years my Son the Messiah shall die, and all who draw human breath (7:28,29).⁶

Then while giving the interpretation of the vision of the man from the sea God declares "and when these things come to pass and the signs occur which I showed you before (cf. 6:20-24; 7:28-29), then my Son will be revealed, whom you saw as a man coming up from the sea" (13:32). The storm in the vision symbolized "my Son" who "will reprove the assembled nations for their ungodliness" (13:37). God explains why the man came up from the depths of the sea by stating that "just as no one can explore or know what is in the depths of the sea, so no one on earth can see my Son or those who are with him, except in the time of his day" (13:52).

Then finally in 14:9 God assures Ezra that "you shall be taken up from among men, and henceforth you shall live with my Son and with those who are like you, until the times are

⁶ Gustav Volkmar, Handbuch Der Einleitung, Die Apokryphen, Das Vierte Buch Esdra (Tubingen: Verlag und Druck von L. F. R. Fues, 1863). Volkmar notes concerning the Latin which reads: *Revelabitur enim filius meus Iesus...* that "Jesus" is an interpolation via Ambrosius. See Bruce M. Metzger, "The Second Book of Esdras" The Oxford Annotated Apocrypha of the Old Testament Revised Standard Version (New York: Oxford University, 1965): 37. Metzger refers to the ancient versions (Syriac, Arabic 1, Ethiopic, and Arabic 2) which have "Messiah", or "my Son the Messiah" and only the Latin contains the reading "Jesus"; Joseph Klausner, The Messianic Idea in Israel, 354; G.H. Box, The Apocalypse of Ezra (II Esdras III-XIV), (London: Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, 1917): 51.

ended.” Is this Davidic kingship or Servant of the Lord? If the Danielic son of man is an eschatologizing of the Psalm 2 enthronement festival then “my Son the Messiah may very well be a reference to the Davidic kingship of the future Messiah. The Messiah is given the title “my Messiah” or “my Son” or “my Servant the Messiah” in 7:28-29. The Latin text reads *Filius meus Iesus* (7:28) and *Filius meus Christus* (7:29). The insertion of *Iesus* into the text is commonly taken as a Christian interpolation. The textual phenomena must be examined in order to determine which title, “Son” or “Servant,” is original and even then we may not be dogmatic in favor of one title over the other. J. Drummond, who detects Christian influence in the “Son” title, proposes that due to the disagreement among the versions one cannot derive from 4 Ezra that the Jews considered the Messiah to be the “Son of God.” He states that the title “Son” was most likely עֶבֶד in a Hebrew original and should be translated “Servant.”⁷

On the contrary, J. Klausner asserts that “calling the Messiah ‘My son’ is something commonly found in ancient Jewish literature, and is here not due to Christian influence at all.”⁸ The designation “my son” is based on Psalm 2:7 which reads, “You are my Son, this day I have begotten you.” Thus, in 4 Ezra the Messiah as the Son of God is emphasized and is drawn from the concept of Davidic kingship.

A second feature of the Messiah is that others will accompany him when he arrives on the scene. “For my Son the Messiah will be revealed with those who are with him...(7:28). And again in 13:52 God says, “...so no one on earth can see my Son or those who are with him, except in the time of his day.” Whether those who will accompany the Messiah refer to angels or to saints is not answered explicitly in 4 Ezra. This becomes more interesting when compared

⁷ James Drummond, *The Jewish Messiah* (London: Longmanns, 1877): 285-88; M. E. Stone, *Fourth Ezra*, 207, who concurs that when the Christian translator came across παῖς he chose *filius* in order to demonstrate the sonship of the Messiah.

⁸ Joseph Klausner, *The Messianic Idea*, 354.

to some of Jesus' statements concerning the coming of the Son of Man with his holy angels (cf. Mat. 24:31; 25:31) and to Paul's statement concerning Jesus' coming with his holy ones (cf. 1 Th 3:13; 2 Th 1:7). This phenomenon will be discussed in more detail when the eschatological Son of Man sayings are compared to the features of the Messiah in 4 Ezra.

A third feature of the Messiah is that he will inaugurate a temporal kingdom that will serve as a prelude to the end of the world.⁹ The angel (speaking on God's behalf) reminds Ezra that the foretold signs will occur and that "the Messiah shall be revealed with those who are with him, and those who remain shall rejoice four hundred years" (7:28). Those who are with the Messiah are perhaps angels or saints (see discussion below), and "those who remain" are perhaps the "peaceful multitude" whom the Messiah gathers unto himself following his denouncement of the ungodly nations (13:12, 39-40). Though the four hundred years kingdom is not specified elsewhere, it is implied in the interpretation of the eagle vision (12:32-34). Here it is said that the Messiah will reprove, judge, and destroy the ungodly nation (12:32-33), and then "he will deliver in mercy the remnant of my people, those who have been saved throughout my borders, and he will make them joyful until the end comes, the day of judgment..." (12:34).

There are at least four aspects of this kingdom that are derived from these texts, namely, (1) this kingdom is inaugurated by the Messiah, (2) it is delimited to four hundred years, (3) it serves as a prelude to the end which will be a time of Divine judgment and (4) it is a period of rejoicing for the remnant.

A fourth feature of the Messiah is that he will die when the four hundred years are complete. The angel states "after these years (the four hundred years of rejoicing, 7:28) my Son

⁹ Arthur J. Lelyveld, "Messianic Era" *The Universal Jewish Encyclopedia in Ten Volumes*, vol. 7 ed. Isaac Landman (New York: KTAV, 1969): 503-504. Lelyveld discusses the presence of the Messianic Era within Jewish ideology.

the Messiah shall die, and all who draw human breath” (7:29). There is no further explanation as to why or how the Messiah dies. This may be reminiscent of Daniel’s reference to the cutting off of the Anointed One (Da 9:26). A general resurrection will follow and then everyone will be judged by the Most High (7:31-44). Though a general resurrection is mentioned here, it is not specified whether the Messiah is resurrected. However, Ezra is assured that “you shall be taken up from among men, and henceforth you shall live with my Son and with those who are like you, until the times are ended” (14:9). The Messiah is certainly alive following the events of divine judgment. It is, therefore, safe to assume that 4 Ezra implies the resurrection of the Messiah.

A fifth feature of the Messiah is the messianic lion imagery. The lion imagery is introduced during the eagle vision (11:37) and is interpreted specifically as the Messiah (12:31-32). Following the description of the eagle the angel implores Ezra to look and consider what he sees (11:36). As he looked a creature like a lion was aroused out of the forest, roaring and uttering with a man's voice (11:37). The lion reproved the eagle for all his affliction, injury, hatred, and destruction (11:38-46). While the lion was reproving the eagle its whole body was eventually burned and the entire earth was terrified (12:1-3). The lion is symbolic of “the Messiah whom the Most High has kept until the end of days, who will arise from the posterity of David...” (12:31-32). This lion imagery is reminiscent of Genesis 49:8-10 where Jacob is blessing his sons and says to Judah, “You are a lion's cub, O Judah; (v.9) ... The scepter will not depart from Judah, nor the ruler’s staff from between his feet, until he comes to whom it belongs and the obedience of the nations is his” (v. 10). The apostle John provides a midrash on this text (Ge 49:8-10) when he refers to the “Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David...” who has triumphed (Rev 5:5).

This leads to a sixth feature, namely that the Messiah is a descendent of David. The angel declares that "this is the Messiah, ... who will arise from the posterity of David..." (12:32).¹⁰ That the Messiah would come from the seed of David stems from the Old Testament,¹¹ specifically the Lord's promise to king David in 2 Samuel 7:11b-16 (cf. Isa 9:7; 11:1-10).

The LORD declares to you that the LORD himself will establish a house for you: When your days are over and you rest with your fathers, I will raise up your offspring to succeed you, who will come from your own body, and I will establish his kingdom. He is the one who will build a house for my Name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever. Your house and your kingdom will endure forever before me; your throne will be established forever.

Here there is already an eschatologizing of the Davidic king as reference is made to David's throne being established forever. The Davidic king was considered to be both God's anointed one and God's son (Ps 2:7). This is indeed inherent in the Lord's promise to David concerning the future king of Israel (2Sa 7:14). The present text along with 4 Ezra 13:5, 34 reflects Psalm 2. When these two concepts are taken together it is apparent that 4 Ezra presents the Messiah as the Davidic King who will conquer the ungodly nations and lead the remnant of Israel into the peaceful Messianic kingdom. This is another example that 4 Ezra is indicative of a continuing tradition that stems from the Old Testament.¹²

¹⁰ Robert L. Bensly, The Fourth Book of Ezra: The Latin Version Edited From the Mss, Texts And Studies, vol., 3, no. 2, ed., J. Armitage Robinson (Cambridge: Cambridge University, 1895): 79. Bensly notes that the lacuna that exists in the Latin text (in finem...ad eos) is supplied by the Syriac, thus the reading (dierum, qui oritur/orietur ex semine Daud, et ueniet et loquetur).

¹¹ See Emil Shürer, The History of the Jewish People in the Time of Jesus, 518, who presents several examples of a general acknowledgment that on the basis of Old Testament prophecy (Isa. 11:1, 10; Jer. 23:5,30;9,33:15, 17,22; Ezek. 34:23,37:24; Hos. 3:5; Amos 9:11; Mic. 5:1; Zech. 12:8) the Messiah would be a descendent of king David (Ps Sol. 17:5,23; Mt. 22:42; Mk. 12:35; Lk. 20:41; 4 Ezra 12:32; Targ. Jonathan on Isa. 11:1; Jer. 23:5; 33:15).

¹² Hartmut Gese, "Wisdom, Son of Man, and the Origins of Christology: The Consistent Development of Biblical Theology" Horizons in Biblical Theology 3 (1981): 38-40. Gese discusses the development of the 'wisdom' tradition and how it supplied the origins of New Testament Christology. He proposes that messiology fits into the wisdom tradition and may have even been shaped by it, referring to Daniel 7 as "a transformation of the traditional Davidic messianology", and to 4 Ezra as containing "motifs of the traditional Davidic messianology" that are applied to the Son of Man.

A seventh feature of the Messiah in 4 Ezra is that he is being kept with the Most High, or is "pre-existent." Again, in giving the interpretation of the lion the angel states that "this is the Messiah whom the Most High has kept until the end of days... (12:32). The Man from the sea also depicting the Messiah (13:1-52), "is he whom the Most High has been keeping for many ages..." (13:26). And when asked why this man arose from the heart of the sea the angel responded, "Just as no one can explore or know what is in the depths of the sea, so no one on earth can see my Son or those who are with him, except in the time of his day" (13:51-52). These pericopes do seem to indicate that this Messiah existed with the Most High and was transcendent. Emil Shürer, in his systematic presentation of messianism, describes the growth of messianic ideas that eventually led to a belief in the pre-existent Messiah.¹³ According to Shurer pre-Christian Judaism regarded the Messiah to be fully human, and of royal lineage (i.e., a descendent of King David). Then, as apocalypticism grew the messiah took on more supra mundane characteristics, yet remaining fully human. And by the period of the Second Temple the appearance of the messiah "is raised to the level of the supernatural and he is credited with pre-existence."¹⁴ This text does not make it clear whether heavenly or earthly pre-existence is meant. A survey of the Jewish literature shows that both ideas have been espoused within Judaism.¹⁵ What is merely suggested in the present text is made more explicit in 12:32 and 13:26. Though these statements in 4 Ezra concerning the pre-existence of the Messiah are somewhat opaque, Ezra may very well have had in mind a Messiah who is a pre-existent heavenly personage. This may be so because of Ezra's heavy dependence on Daniel (esp. Da 2,7) who is the first to mention this heavenly figure appearing as "one like a son of man" (Da 7:13).

¹³ Emil Shürer, *The History of the Jewish People*, 518.

¹⁴ Ibid., 519. Shurer refers to 4 Ezra, and the Parables of Enoch to demonstrate this shift in messianic ideas.

¹⁵ "Messiah" *The Jewish Encyclopedia*, vol. 3 (Leon-Moravia: KTAV, 1964): 511.

Yet, it remains questionable whether this refers to supernatural existence. The options are (1) he pre-existed in the mind of God (foreknowledge) and was not known until God chose to disclose him in order to accomplish his mission or (2) he actually existed with God supernaturally.¹⁶

An eighth feature of the Messiah is that he will execute judgment. The aspects of judgment and deliverance are combined in this figure much like they are in Jesus. The Messiah will reprove the unrighteous nations, denouncing them for their ungodliness and bringing up their contemptuous dealings (12:31-32). Then “for the first time he will set them living before his judgment seat, and when he has reproved them, then he will destroy them” (12:33). The man from the sea who is God’s Son the Messiah “will reprove the assembled nations for their ungodliness... and will reproach them to their face with their evil thoughts and the torments with which they are to be tortured... and will destroy them without effort by the law...” (13:37-38).

A ninth feature of the Messiah is that he will deliver the remnant of God’s people. Again, following the interpretation of the lion as the Messiah (12:32) and his denouncement of the ungodly nation, it is said that the Messiah “will deliver in mercy the remnant of my people, those who have been saved throughout my borders, and he will make them joyful until the end comes, the day of judgment ...” (12:34). The man from the sea, also depicting the Messiah, is the one whom the Most High has been keeping and “who will himself deliver his creation; and he will direct those who are left” (13:26). Then after reproving the nations who had assembled against him, the Messiah gathered a peaceable multitude unto himself (13:39-40).

¹⁶ T. W. Manson, “The Son of Man in Daniel, Enoch, and the Gospels,” *Bulletin of the John Rylands Library* 32 (1949-50): 180-186. Though Manson is not considering the book of 4 Ezra in this article, his comments are pertinent to this present discussion because of the similar descriptions of the Son of Man in Enoch and the Messiah in 4 Ezra. Commenting on the passages in Enoch that refer to the Son of Man as being hidden with the Lord, Manson emphasizes that this hiddenness does not mean that the Son of Man was pre-existent but that he was simply elected prior to his having been born.

A tenth feature of the Messiah is his description as one who resembled a man. The seer observes (13:1-2).

After seven days I dreamed a dream in the night; and behold, a wind arose from the sea and stirred up all its waves. And I looked, and behold, this wind made something like the figure of a man come up out of the heart of the sea.

This is another significant parallel with Daniel (Da 7:13), and serves to decisively connect Daniel, Jesus as the Son of Man, and 4 Ezra.

An eleventh feature of the Messiah is that he makes his appearance flying with the clouds of heaven. Again, the seer observes (13:3),

And I looked, and behold, that man flew with the clouds of heaven; and wherever he turned his face to look, everything under his gaze trembled, and whenever his voice issued from his mouth, all who heard his voice melted as wax melts when it feels the fire.

Fourth Ezra depicts the Messiah as the pre-existent Son/Servant of God who will arise from the posterity of David when the Most High decides to reveal him. He will inaugurate the messianic kingdom that will durate 400 years, at which time he will judge the ungodly nations and destroy them while delivering God's people and directing them to the Holy Land where they will rejoice during the Messiah's hegemony. This leads us to a discussion of the Danielic son of man in which more will be said in relation to the last two mentioned features of the Messiah in 4 Ezra.

The Features of the Danielic "son of man"

Daniel's vision of the four beasts continues as he captures the scene in heaven.

As I looked, thrones were set in place, and the Ancient of Days took his seat. His clothing was as white as snow; the hair of his head was white like wool. His throne was flaming with fire, and its wheels were all ablaze. A river of fire was flowing, coming out from before him. Thousands upon thousands attended him; ten thousand times ten

thousand stood before him. The court was seated, and the books were opened (Da 7:9-10).

This scene in heaven depicts God's having been seated for judgment against the ungodly nations. The Ancient of Days pronounced judgment on the beasts (7:11-12). Daniel says: "I kept looking until the beast was slain and its body destroyed and thrown into the blazing fire" (7:11), and the other beasts were "stripped of their authority, but were allowed to live for a period of time" (7:12). Next, he describes the "one like a son of man."

In my vision at night I looked, and there before me was one like a son of man, coming with the clouds of heaven. He approached the Ancient of Days and was led into his presence. He 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 (7:13-14).

It may be said on the basis of the text that this "one like a son of man" is set in sharp contra-distinction to the previous beasts in the vision. Whereas they arose from the sea, he "came with the clouds of heaven". They were antithetical to God's kingdom, he was presented with the eternal dominion. This "one like a son of man" also identifies in some way with the saints of the Most High (7:26-27). There are several options concerning his identity. First, he may be symbolic of the saints, making the "one like a son of man" in verse 13 the same as the saints of the Most High in verses 26-27. Second, he may be representative of the saints. Third, the son of man pericope may indicate the scene in heaven (i.e., divine judgment and oversight), while the saints pericope (7:26-27) depicts the scene on earth where divine decisions are carried out to fruition.¹⁷ Fourth, "one like a son of man" and the saints are a corporate unity, much like the relation of the king to the nation in ancient Israel. Fifth, "son of man" is the Davidic king set

¹⁷ William J. Dumbrell, "Daniel 7 and the Function of Old Testament apocalyptic," Reformed Theological Review 34 (1975): 16-23.

in an eschatological schema via Psalm 2 and other Royal Psalms.¹⁸ A. Bentzen's proposal that the son of man in Daniel 7:13 is an eschatologizing of Psalm 2 seems to be the most viable in light of the nature of Daniel's apocalypse. Daniel is set in an eschatological framework as he envisions the end of the age when God's kingdom will finally and ultimately triumph over the ungodly nations of this world. The "one like a son of man" who receives the eternal kingdom from the Ancient of Days embodies the kingship and sonship of the Davidic king (Ps 2).

Daniel describes the "one like a son of man" as "coming on the clouds of heaven" (7:13). That he appeared in this manner emphasizes his divine quality (cf. Dt 33:26; Ps 68:4).

A third feature of Daniel's "son of man" is that he is presented with authority, glory, and sovereign power by the Ancient of Days. Daniel states that "he approached the Ancient of Days and was led into his presence. He was given authority, glory and sovereign power..." (7:13-14).

A fourth feature of Daniel's "son of man" is that he receives worship from the nations. Following the Ancient of Days presenting him with sovereign power, "all peoples, nations and men of every language worshipped him" (7:14).

A fifth feature of Daniel's "son of man" is that he is endowed with eternal dominion. Daniel states that "His dominion is an everlasting dominion that will not pass away, and his kingdom is one that will never be destroyed" (7:14b).

A sixth feature of Daniel's "son of man" is that he represents the saints. Following the "little horn's" rule of terror the Most High will judge the fourth kingdom, strip it of its power and destroy it. Daniel states:

But the court will sit, and his power will be taken away and completely destroyed forever. Then the sovereignty, power and greatness of the kingdoms under the whole heaven will

¹⁸ Aage Bentzen, King and Messiah (London: Lutterworth, 1955): 73-80. For a review of Bentzen's original work see R. Lansing Hicks, "Messiah, Second Moses, Son of Man: Review of "Messias Redivivus-Menschensohn" by A. Bentzen" Anglican Theological review 33 (1951): 24-29.

be handed over to the saints, the people of the Most High.
His kingdom will be an everlasting kingdom, and all rulers
will worship and obey him (Da 7:26-27).

Elsewhere in Daniel the Messiah is described as the ruler who comes at an appointed time (9:25). It is also stated that "the Anointed One will be cut off and will have nothing" (9:26).

The Apocalyptic Features of the Son of Man in the Gospels

There are at least six pericopes in the Synoptic Gospels that contain certain apocalyptic features of the Son of Man. These are (1) Matthew 13:36-43, (2) Matthew 16:24-28; Mark 8:34-9:1; Luke 9:23-27, (3) Matthew 19:23-30; Mark 10:23-31; Luke 18:24-30, (4) Matthew 24:26-51; Mark 13:1-37; Luke 21:5-36, (5) Matthew 25:31-46 and (6) Matthew 26:57-67; Mark 14:61-65; Luke 22:66-71. Many of these features correlate with some of those features of the Messiah in 4 Ezra as will be shown below. First, a discussion of the apocalyptic features found in the above listed pericopes will ensue.

The first feature of the Son of Man is that he will send out his angels at the end of the age to purge his kingdom (Mat. 13:40-41), and to gather his elect from the four corners of the earth (Mt 24:31; Mk 13:27).

A second feature of the Son of Man is that his kingdom stands in apposition to the kingdom of God. Jesus in describing some of the events that will occur at the end of the age specifies that he will send his angels to purge his kingdom (Mt 13:41), then describes the state of the righteous "in the kingdom of their Father" (Mt 13:43). Then after predicting his suffering, death and resurrection, Jesus refers to his parousia in his Father's glory. He states that there would be some standing there who would not taste death "before they see the Son of Man coming in his kingdom" (Mt 16:28). The parallel accounts describe this as the kingdom of God (Mk 9:1; Lk 9:27). The kingdom of God and the kingdom of the Son of Man are used

interchangeably in these texts, indicating that they are one and the same. Also, in describing his Parousia, Jesus refers to himself as the Son of Man who will sit on his throne in heavenly glory and judge the nations (Mt 25:31-33). Then he states what the King will say to those on his right hand and then to those on his left (34-46). Therefore, the Son of Man and The King are synonymous in this context, and are clearly distinct from the Father (v. 34).

A third feature of the Son of Man is that he will be accompanied with his angels when he comes. Jesus says “for the Son of Man is going to come in his Father’s glory with his angels...” (Mt 16:27). He warns that “if anyone is ashamed of me and my words in this adulterous and sinful generation, the Son of Man will be ashamed of him when he comes in his Father’s glory with the holy angels” (Mk 8:38; cf. Lk 9:26). Also, when he speaks of the nations being gathered before the Son of Man at his parousia, refers to all the angels who will accompany him (Mt 25:31).

A fourth feature of the Son of Man is that he will judge the nations. Jesus states that the Son of Man will “reward each person according to what he has done” (Mt 16:27). There may be a reference to judgment when Jesus warns to “be always on the watch, and pray that you may be able to escape all that is about to happen, and that you may be able to stand before the Son of Man” (Lk 21:36). All the nations will be gathered before the Son of Man and he will separate them like separating sheep from goats (Mt 25:32-33). He will invite those on his right to take possession of their inheritance (v. 34) and command those on his left to depart to eternal fire (v.41).

A fifth feature of the Son of Man is that he will be seated on his glorious throne on the right hand of God the Father. Jesus refers to the time when the Son of Man sits on his glorious throne (Mt 19:28). The Son of Man will come in his glory, seated on his throne in heavenly

glory (Mt 25:31). When Jesus was standing condemned before Caiaphas, the high priest, he responded to Caiaphas' demand to tell them if he were "the Christ, the Son of God" (Mt 26:63) by declaring "Yes, it is as you say. But I say to all of you: In the future you will see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of the Mighty One and coming on the clouds of heaven" (Mt 26:64). Jesus uniquely combines Psalm 110:1 with Daniel 7:13 in order to communicate that he is the divine Messiah. Luke records Jesus as saying, "But from now on, the Son of Man will be seated at the right hand of the mighty God" (Lk 22:69).

A sixth feature of the Son of Man in the Synoptic Gospels is that his parousia will be apparent. Jesus warns his disciples against listening to any pronouncements of Christ's coming "because as lightning that comes from the east is visible even in the west, so will be the coming of the Son of Man" (Mt 24:27; Lk 17:24).

A seventh feature of the Son of Man is that certain signs will precede his coming. Jesus answers the disciple's question concerning the end of the age and of the signs of his coming in the Olivet Discourse (Mt 24:1-25:46). After describing some of the events that will occur at the end of the age Jesus pronounces,

Immediately after the distress of those days, the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light; the stars will fall from the sky, and the heavenly bodies will be shaken. At that time the sign of the Son of Man will appear in the sky, and the nations of the earth will mourn" (Mt 24:29-30).

An eighth feature of the Son of Man is his future coming with the clouds of heaven. Three aspects describe the mode of his coming, namely, (1) he will come on the clouds of the sky, (2) he will come with power and (3) he will come with glory. Jesus announces to his disciples that "They will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of the sky, with power and great glory" (Mt 24:30b, 26:64; Mk 13:26, 14:62; Lk 21:27). Jesus directly refers to Daniel 7:13

where "one like a son of man" comes on the clouds of the sky and appears before the Ancient of Days in order to align himself with that personage. And in so doing Jesus reveals himself as a heavenly personage who identifies with humanity.

A ninth feature of the Son of Man is that his coming will be unexpected. Jesus declares in the Olivet Discourse that the Son of Man's coming will occur in the midst of daily activities (Mt 24:36-41). He then emphasizes the importance of being prepared for his coming "because the Son of Man will come at an hour when you do not expect him" (Mt 24:44; cf. Lk 17:30).

A Comparison between the Messiah in 4 Ezra and the Eschatological Son of Man

There are several comparisons between the Messiah in 4 Ezra and Jesus as the Eschatological Son of Man. These comparisons indicate that Jesus used an existing tradition as a catalyst to communicate his divine identity and mission.

The first comparison may be seen in the purging of the world and gathering of the elect. Jesus speaks of this event at the end of the age.

He answered, "The one who sowed the good seed is the Son of Man. The field is the world, and the good seed stands for the sons of the kingdom. The weeds are the sons of the evil one, and the enemy who sows them is the devil. The harvest is the end of the age, and the harvesters are angels. As the weeds are pulled up and burned in the fire, so it will be at the end of the age. The Son of Man will send out his angels, and they will weed out of his kingdom everything that causes sin and all who do evil. They will throw them into the fiery furnace, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth. Then the righteous will shine like the sun in the kingdom of their father. He who has ears, let him hear (Mt 13:37-43).

And he will send his angels with a loud trumpet call, and they will gather his elect from the four winds, from one end of the heavens to the other (Mt 24:31).

And he will send his angels and gather his elect from the four winds, from the ends of the earth to the ends of the heavens (Mk 13:27).

Ezra also anticipates the arrival of the Messiah who will judge the ungodly nations and then will destroy them and deliver the righteous remnant:

...this is the Messiah whom the Most High has kept until the end of days, who will arise from the posterity of David, and will come and speak to them; he will denounce them for their ungodliness and for their wickedness, and will cast up before them their contemptuous dealings. For first he will set them living before his judgment seat, and when he has reproved them, then he will destroy them. But he will deliver in mercy the remnant of my people, those who have been saved throughout my borders, and he will make them joyful until the end comes, the day of judgment, of which I spoke to you at the beginning (4 Ezr 12:32-34).

And he, my Son, will reprove the assembled nations for their ungodliness (this was symbolized by the storm), and will reproach them to their face with their evil thoughts and the torments with which they are to be tortured (which were symbolized by the flames), and will destroy them without effort by the law (which was symbolized by the fire). And as for your seeing him gather to himself another multitude that was peaceable, these are the ten tribes which were led away from their own land into captivity in the days of King Hoshea...(4 Ezr 13:37-40).

A second comparison may be made between the kingdom of the Son of Man and the Messianic kingdom of the Messiah in 4 Ezra. Jesus states that the Son of Man will send his angels to purge his kingdom (Mt 13:41). He also refers to a future appearance in his kingdom (Mt 16:28). Ezra indicates that the Messiah along with those who are revealed with him and those who remain will participate in a temporal Messianic kingdom (4 Ezr 7:28). Also, the Messiah inherently possesses the qualities of kingship in 4 Ezra because he is a descendent of David (4 Ezr 12:32). Jesus declares,

The Son of Man will send out his angels, and they will weed out of his kingdom everything that causes sin and all who do evil (Mt 13:41).

I tell you the truth, some who are standing here will not taste death before they see the Son of Man coming in his kingdom (Mt 16:28).

Ezra says of the Messiah:

For my Son the Messiah shall be revealed with those who are with him, and those who remain shall rejoice four hundred years (4 Ezr 7:28).

But he will deliver in mercy the remnant of my people, those who have been saved throughout my borders, and he will make them joyful until the end comes, the day of judgment...(4 Ezr 12:34).

And as for your seeing him gather to himself another multitude that was peaceable...(4 Ezr 13:39).

There when he destroys the multitude of the nations that are gathered together, he will defend the people who remain. And then he will show them very many wonders (4Ezr 13:49-50).

A third point of comparison between the two concerns the companions of the Messiah of 4 Ezra and the Son of Man. Jesus refers to a future coming with his angels when he will be seated on his glorious throne:

For the Son of Man is going to come in his Father's glory with his angels...(Mt 16:27).

When the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, he will sit on his throne in heavenly glory (Mt 25:31).

If anyone is ashamed of me and my words in this adulterous and sinful generation, the Son of Man will be ashamed of him when he comes in his Father's glory with the holy angels (Mk 8:38).

Ezra depicts the Messiah coming with his companions:

For my Son the Messiah shall be revealed with those who are with him...(4 Ezr 7:28).

He said to me, "Just as no one can explore or know what is in the depths of the sea, so no one on earth can see my Son or those who are with him, except in the time of his day."
(4 Ezr 13:52).

A fourth point of comparison between the two concerns the features of judgment that each are depicted as having. When the Son of Man comes in the future, he will be sit in judgment rewarding each person:

For the Son of Man is going to come in his Father's glory with his angels, and then he will reward each person according to what he has done (Mt 16:27).

All the nations will be gathered before him, and he will separate the people one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats. Then the King will say to those on his right, 'Come, you who are blessed by my Father; take your inheritance, the kingdom prepared for you since the creation of the world.' Then he will say to those on his left, 'Depart from me, you who are cursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels (Mt 25:32-33).

Again, in 4 Ezra the Messiah sits in judgment, reproofing and then destroying the ungodly:

...he will denounce them for their ungodliness and for their wickedness, and will cast up before them their contemptuous dealings. For first he will set them living before his judgment seat, and when he has reproofed them, then he will destroy them (4 Ezr 12:32-33).

...and he, my Son, will reprove the assembled nations for their ungodliness ..., and will reproach them..., and will destroy them without effort by the law...(4 Ezr 13:36-38).

Now focus will be given to the two salient comparisons between 4 Ezra's Messiah and Jesus the Son of Man, namely, the descriptor "son of man" and the aspect of "coming on the clouds of heaven." These two phenomena are descriptive of a messianic figure that appears in

several documents within Judaism.¹⁹ However, the only ones that are of concern here are Daniel, Jesus' Son of Man sayings, and 4 Ezra. The description "son of man flying with the clouds" is the primary correlation between Jesus, 4 Ezra, and Daniel, and provides evidence for the existence of an apocalyptic tradition that originated with Daniel and grew throughout the first century A. D. This will be borne out by the following comparison.

The Danielic Basis

In my vision at night I looked, and there before me was *one like a son of man, coming with the clouds of heaven*. He approached the Ancient of Days and was led into his presence. He 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 (Da 7:13-14).

Jesus' Eschatological Son of Man Sayings

At that time the sign of the *Son of Man* will appear in the sky, and all the nations of the earth will mourn. They will see the *Son of Man coming on the clouds of the sky, with power and great glory* (Mt 24:30).

The high priest said to him, "I charge you under oath by the living God: Tell us if you are the Christ, the Son of God." Yes, it is as you say, Jesus replied. "But I say to all of you: In the future you will see the *Son of Man* sitting at the right hand of the Mighty One and *coming on the clouds of heaven*" (Mt 26:63-64).

At that time men will see the *Son of Man* coming in clouds with great power and glory (Mk 13:26).

Again the high priest asked him, "Are you the Christ, the Son of the Blessed One?" "I am", said Jesus. "And you will see the *Son of Man* sitting at the right hand of the Mighty One and *coming on the clouds of heaven*" (Mk 14:61-62).

¹⁹ Raphael Patai, The Messiah Texts (Detroit: Wayne State, 1979): 81-83. Patai lists several instances in Jewish literature where the Messiah is referred to as the "son of the clouds" or as coming on the clouds.

At that time they will see the *Son of Man coming in a cloud* with power and great glory (Lk 21:27).

The Son of Man in Fourth Ezra

After seven days I dreamed a dream in the night; and behold, a wind arose from the sea and stirred up all its waves. And I looked, and behold, this wind made *something like the figure of a man* come up out of the heart of the sea. And I looked, and behold, *that man flew with the clouds of heaven*; and wherever he turned his face to look, everything under his gaze trembled, and whenever his voice issued from his mouth, all who heard his voice melted as wax melts when it feels the fire (4 Ezr 13:1-4).

This comparison between Jesus' eschatological Son of Man sayings, Daniel and 4 Ezra suggests the probability that a son of man tradition was current with Jesus. This tradition developed from Daniel to 1 Enoch, the Gospels, Revelation and 4 Ezra. Of course, this thesis has only dealt with this tradition as it relates to Daniel, the Gospels (the Son of Man sayings) and 4 Ezra due to the scope to the study. The Son of Man in 1 Enoch, the Gospels and 4 Ezra is not a mere reduplication of the literary content of Daniel 7 but has taken on distinctive features throughout the growth of the tradition.

There are at least three distinctive features that the Son of Man figure has acquired in this tradition. One is that the son of man figure has developed from a corporate symbol to an individual personage. The "one like a son of man" (7:13) in Daniel's vision is interpreted as the "saints of the Most High" (7:26-27). A second is that the description "one like a son of man" changes from an attributive adjective in Daniel to an actual title in the Gospels as in the Similitudes of Enoch. For example, the writer of 1 Enoch writes "this is the Son of Man, to whom belongs righteousness" (1Eno 46:3). There are other references to the Son of Man in 1 Enoch 48:2-4; 62:5-9; 62:14; 63:11; 64:29; 70:1-4; 71:14-17. The third feature is that "son of

man” has grown from an ambiguous reference to a specific messianic designation. This is true in 1 Enoch, the Gospels and in 4 Ezra as has been demonstrated above.

Finally, this comparison yields several conclusions. (1) Jesus, while definitely basing his ministry on the Old Testament Scriptures, went beyond them in order to communicate certain supernatural aspects of his person and mission. He used an apocalyptic “son of man” tradition as a catalyst for conveying aspects of his kingship, judgment and salvation. (2) The aspects of kingship, judgment, and deliverance are united in Jesus, the Son of Man as they are in the Messiah of 4 Ezra. (3) Jesus used “Son of Man” as a messianic title for himself via Daniel 7:13 and a “son of man” tradition. (4) Jesus employed the Son of Man title in order to present himself as the divine Messiah who identifies with mankind.²⁰ Jesus as the Son of Man is God identifying with humanity.

²⁰ See I. H. Marshall, “The Son of Man and the Incarnation,” *Ex Auditu* 7 (1991): 29-43, who concludes that the term “Son of man thus functions in an extraordinarily impressive way as one which binds together the relationships of Jesus to God and to the human race, and it sums up, as no other Christological expression does, the concept of Jesus as God incarnate in human form” (p. 41).

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

A survey of the Son of Man sayings in the Gospels brings several salient issues to surface. First, Son of Man is the title that Jesus most often conferred upon himself and it is therefore vital to our understanding of Jesus that we discover the meaning this title conveys. Second, the Son of Man sayings may be divided into three distinct categories. They can be grouped in relation to 1) Jesus' earthly ministry; 2) Jesus' suffering, death, and resurrection; and 3) Jesus' eschatological ministry. Third, many of the Son of Man sayings contain aspects of Jesus' ministry and person that do not truly correlate with the messianic descriptions of the OT or of Daniel specifically. Therefore, apocalyptic traditions must be explored in order to discover what Jesus intended to convey to his hearers by the use of the Son of Man title. These traditions, though moving beyond OT expectations, are clearly based on the OT. Fourth Ezra is an example of such a tradition that was current with Jesus and that contained the "son of man" figure as the Messiah.

A son of man tradition that was current within Judaism during the first century A. D. can be validated, at least in part, by exploring development from Daniel to 1 Enoch, the Gospels and finally 4 Ezra. The son of man figure in these documents are not mere reduplications of the literary content of Daniel 7 but has taken on distinctive features. Those distinctive features include (1) the son of man as a corporate symbol in Daniel to an individual in 1 Enoch, the Gospels and 4 Ezra, (2) the term "son of man" as an attributive adjective in Daniel to an actual title in the tradition and (3) one like a son of man as an ambiguous reference in Daniel to a specifically messianic designation in the tradition.

The earthly ministry of the Son of Man in the Gospels is characterized by (1) sacrifice and destitution (Mt 8:20-22), (2) authority to forgive sins (Mt 9:1-8; Mk 2:1-12; Lk 5:17-26), (3) identification with sinners (Mt 11:7-19; Lk 7:24-35), (4) superiority over religious institutions and laws (Mt 12:1-8; Mk 2:23-28; Lk 6:1-5), (5) messianic affirmation (Mt 16:13-20; Mk 8:27-30; Lk 9:18-21) and (6) salvific mission (Lk 19:10).

As the Son of Man Jesus would suffer, die and then be resurrected (Mt 20:17-19). These sayings are characterized by (1) the juxtaposition of "Son of Man" and "Messiah" (Lk 24:46-47), (2) the purpose of offering his life as an atoning sacrifice (Mk 10:45) and (3) the fulfillment of OT prophecies (Mt 26:24; Mk 14:17-21; Lk 22:20-23).

There is also a distinct category of Son of Man sayings in which Jesus depicts his future coming as King, Savior and Judge. Jesus proclaims (1) his future coming as the Son of Man in his Father's glory and in his Kingdom (Mt 16:21-28), (2) that the Son of Man will be seated on his glorious throne (Mt 19:23-30), (3) the signs and imminence of the future coming of the Son of Man (Mt 24:26-51) and (4) that the Son of Man will be seated on the right hand of God and coming with the clouds of heaven (Mt 26:64).

John's Gospel contains thirteen Son of Man pericopes in which Jesus depicts his divine nature and mission. Several characteristics of the Son of Man come to surface in these texts. First, Jesus as the Son of Man is the vital connection between God and humanity (Jn 1:51). Second, the Son of Man came from the presence of God in order to reveal heavenly wisdom (Jn 3:1-15). Third, the Son of Man is both Savior and sin-sacrifice (Jn 3:14-15; cf. Isa 52:12-53:12). Fourth, the lifting up of the Son of Man will reveal that he is who he claims to be and that he has revealed what his Father had taught him (Jn 8:28-29). Fifth, the Son of Man has received the authority from God to execute judgment (Jn 5:24-27). Sixth, during the Bread of

Life discourse Jesus employed the Son of Man title three times in order to stress his pre-existence with God and his provision of eternal life for mankind (Jn 6:27,53,62). Seventh, the Son of Man elicited faith and worship (Jn 9:1-7). Eighth, the Son of Man will be glorified and at the same time God will be glorified in him (Jn 12:23; 17:1; 13:31). The Johannine Son of Man is thus the pre-existent heavenly personage who acquired wisdom from God and Divine authority to execute judgment. He was also appointed by God to accomplish the task of suffering and dying on the cross as a vicarious sacrifice in order to provide salvation to the world.

While Jesus makes it very clear that his ministry is in fulfillment of the OT, there are, however, aspects of Jesus as the Son of Man that do not correlate with the OT. First, the term “Son of Man” itself is an ambiguous title. The OT is replete with examples where בן אדם is equivalent to man or mankind. Ezekiel is called “son of man” and Daniel is addressed as “son of man.” There is an obscure reference to a heavenly, messianic figure who is described as “one like a son of man” in Daniel 7:13. This obscure reference is the text that Jesus clearly alludes to in several of his Son of Man Sayings.

Second, there are aspects of Jesus the Son of Man that do correlate with certain aspects of the Messiah in apocalyptic literature that dates both before and after Jesus’ earthly ministry. This opens up the possibility that Jesus used a current apocalyptic tradition containing the son of man figure as Messiah as a catalyst to communicate his own divine identity and mission. The book of 4 Ezra demonstrates that such a tradition did exist and would have been current with Jesus. Fourth Ezra was produced toward the end of the first century A. D., so Jesus certainly was not dependent on nor was he referring to this document in any way. However, 4 Ezra’s dependence on OT Theology and its admitted reliance on the canonical book of Daniel

demonstrates that a "son of man" tradition existed that Jesus would have been familiar with and used as a catalyst for communicating his messiahship.

Various attempts have been made to resolve the problem of the ambiguity of the son of man designation and the possibility of a son of man tradition current with Jesus. The survey of literature has illustrated the diversity of opinions regarding this problem. On one hand there are those such as Guthrie, Bruce, Rowe and Carson who are confined to the biblical texts. And on the other hand some such as Cullmann, Fee, Gese and Stone find a connection with a son of man figure in an apocalyptic son of man tradition. This thesis demonstrates that not only did Jesus connect with a son of man tradition, he used this tradition as a platform to communicate that he was the divine Messiah. He accomplished this by blending the immanent with the transcendent via the Son of Man designation (this phenomenon occurs in 4 Ezra 13). Further, this study shows the specific parallels between Jesus the Son of Man and the Messiah in 4 Ezra (which is indicative of the son of man tradition).

Fourth Ezra's dependence on the OT is proven by its (1) perspective of God as Creator, Judge, Incomprehensible, and sovereign, (2) perspective of man as created by God, made in God's image, sinful, under judgment, and condemned to death, (3) perspective of salvation and (4) perspective on eschatology as having been predetermined by God. Then, more specifically, 4 Ezra's dependence on Daniel is shown by its (1) direct statement of reliance (4 Ezr 12:11), (2) literary similarities and (3) son of man figure who flew with the clouds (4 Ezr 13:1-52; cf. Da 7:13).

An exploration of Jesus' Son of Man sayings brings to surface certain aspects of the Son of Man that correlate with some functions of the Messiah in 4 Ezra. This is demonstrated by a comparison between Jesus the Son of Man and the Messiah in 4 Ezra. First, Jesus the Son of

Man purges the world and gathers his elect. The Messiah in 4 Ezra functions in a similar way. Second, Jesus the Son of Man and the Messiah in 4 Ezra are both depicted as being the agent of God's Kingdom (Mt 13:41; 16:28; cf. 4 Ezr 7:28; 12:34; 13:39, 49-50). Third, both are depicted as being accompanied at their coming (Mt 16:27; 25:31; Mk 8:38; cf. 4 Ezr 7:28; 13:52). Fourth, both exhibit features of divine judgment (Mat. 16:27; 25:32-33; cf. 4 Ezra 12:32-33; 13:36-38).

Finally, the textual phenomenon that inextricably unites Jesus the Son of Man, Daniel, and 4 Ezra is the reference to "one like a son of man" who comes "flying with the clouds of heaven" (Da 7:13-14; Mt 24:30; 26:63-64; Mk 13:26; 14:61-62; Lk 21:27; 4 Ezr 13:1-4). These occurrences show that from Daniel in the sixth century B. C. (in evangelical estimations; the second century B. C. in critical estimations) to the end of the first century A. D. there existed an apocalyptic son of man tradition. Certainly, Jesus knew the Danielic son of man figure and relied upon it. However, he also goes beyond the Danielic son of man figure in depicting himself as the Son of Man. Thus, Jesus uses this tradition as a catalyst for conveying to his hearers that he is the eschatological agent of God's Kingdom, the divine Messiah.

Therefore, as the Son of Man Jesus is the eternally existent Son of God, the Messiah who has identified with humanity in order to accomplish his God anointed mission, which includes judgment and salvation. The Son of Man title as it is derived from Daniel points to Jesus as God incarnate, who identifies with mankind. He is the Messiah who receives the eternal kingdom and dominion from God. The aspects of the Son of Man title that are derived from the apocalyptic tradition point to Jesus as the Messiah who will come with his companions at God's appointed time in order to purge the world of the ungodly nations, executing judgment upon them, and then who will gather the remnant of God's people into the Messianic kingdom.

Thus, those aspects of the Son of Man title that are derived from Daniel include (1) the title per se (i.e., Jesus applied the obscure reference of a humanlike figure as a Messianic title for himself), (2) the kingdom, power, and dominion being given to Jesus and (3) the heavenly nature of Jesus. Those aspects that are derived from the Son of Man tradition include (1) the individualized use of the Son of Man designation, (2) the execution of judgment, (3) the companions of the Messiah and (4) his purging of the world and gathering the elect.

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