

LIBERTY UNIVERSITY SCHOOL OF DIVINITY

**Jesus's Son of Man Strategy in Mark:
The Allegorical "Idiomatic vs. Messianic" Chess Match
and Lessons for Christian Apologetics**

A Thesis Project Submitted to
the Faculty of Liberty University School of Divinity
in Candidacy for the Degree of
Master of Arts in Christian Apologetics

by

Toni Perry

Lynchburg, Virginia

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Thesis Project Approval Sheet

Dr. David Stark
Mentor

Dr. Edward Martin
Reader

ABSTRACT

JESUS'S SON OF MAN STRATEGY IN MARK: THE ALLEGORICAL "IDIOMATIC VS. MESSIANIC" CHESS MATCH AND LESSONS FOR CHRISTIAN APOLOGETICS.

Toni Perry

Liberty University School of Divinity, 2020

Mentor: Dr. David Stark

Reader: Dr. Edward Martin

Played out against the background of a chess game allegory, this thesis argues two key components to discovering Jesus's self-identity in the Gospel of Mark. The first is that Mark's depiction of Jesus's Son of Man self-designation as a messianic interpretation is more plausible than its contemporary idiomatic interpretation. The second is that Jesus reveals His hidden Son of Man identity in Mark via a threefold strategic approach, which not only embodies His intent and mission through serving, suffering, and glorification, but also serves as a paradigm for the Christian witness and discipleship. The fourfold purpose of this study is to 1) glean information of Jesus's self-knowledge and understanding as the Son of Man in Mark's Gospel; 2) resolve any Second Temple Judaism interpretive issues in the text in order to determine its meaning and significance; 3) examine Jesus's Son of Man strategy in Mark and its implications on contemporary Christian apologetics; and 4) contribute intellectually to the ongoing Son of Man debate conversations.

The chapter divisions are arranged according to the Son of Man interpretations. The history of the Son of Man debate and the criteria of authenticity concerning Jesus's sayings are presented in the first chapter. The Second Temple Judaism interpretations and a sampling of key Second Temple period Son of Man and messianic-related texts are offered in the second chapter. The fourteen Markan Son of Man exegetical interpretations, the outcome of the data, and Jesus's Son of Man strategy are expounded upon in the third chapter. Finally, the contemporary apologetics interpretation of Jesus's Son of Man strategy is illustrated in the conclusion.

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Introduction

In the immortal game of chess, a good player contemplates each move in order to anticipate the opponent's response and then strategizes accordingly. Throughout the game, a player may sacrifice pieces in order to gain a more favorable position. To the novice, it may appear as though the player is making a foolish move, but in reality he is positioning himself for the win. On the subject of chess matches, renowned world chess champion, Bobby Fischer, once said, "Chess is war over the board . . . the object is to crush the opponent's mind."¹ The purpose of this boardgame metaphor and future allegorical chess match is to provide context for the knowledge that can be gleaned through a historical and literary reading of Jesus's Son of Man strategy in Mark. The overriding principle of this thesis rests on a biblical basis to Christian apologetics that provides a model to engage one's "opponent" with "moves" that encourage a reasonable understanding of the Gospel.

In the Gospel of Mark, when one considers Jesus's statements that self-identify with the biblical title "Son of Man," it appears as if some of His moves are unwise. For example, at Jesus's trial, when the high priest asks Him if He is the Messiah, Jesus boldly responds: "I am; and you shall see THE SON OF MAN SITTING AT THE RIGHT HAND OF POWER, and COMING WITH THE CLOUDS OF HEAVEN (Mark 14:62)."² The high priest and the Council's reaction to this avowal results in Christ's crucifixion. Prior to Jesus's arrest, however, Mark's Gospel records Jesus referring to Himself as the Son of Man without incident.

¹ David Shenk, *The Immortal Game: A History of Chess, or How 32 Carved Pieces on a Board Illuminated Our Understanding of War, Art, Science, and the Human Brain* (New York: Doubleday, 2006), 5.

² Unless otherwise noted, all biblical passages referenced are in the *New American Standard Bible* (La Habra, CA: Foundation Publications, 1995).

Delbert Burkett asserts that while some in academia today consider the Son of Man expression to have been employed by Christ as an “apocalyptic/messianic” title, others see it more as an “idiomatic/nontitular” expression.³ “Many scholars,” writes Burkett, “believe that Jesus used some such idiom to refer to Himself and that the church subsequently misunderstood it as a messianic title derived from Daniel 7.13.”⁴ According to Burkett, the long history of interpreters who espouse this view include Theodore Beza, Arnold Meyer, and Geza Vermes, to name a few.⁵

Therefore, by drawing on biblical and extrabiblical sources and examining evidence that connects the Second Gospel to other Son of Man traditions in Second Temple Judaism, this thesis argues the premise that Mark’s depiction of Christ’s self-designation as the Son of Man as a messianic title (Mark 14:62) is a more plausible explanation of the data than is the idiomatic theory. Consequently, this thesis concludes that by judiciously revealing His hidden identity through the self-identification as the Son of Man in Mark, Jesus (1) defines His messianic authority through *servicing*; (2) discloses man’s rejection of His messianic authority, which leads to His *suffering* and crucifixion; and (3) ultimately declares His messianic and apocalyptic victory, His vindication by God, and His coming into *glory*. This strategic approach reveals His intent and mission with the self-designation as the Son of Man. Paradoxically, Mark’s depiction of Jesus’s strategy illustrates a proverbial checkmate against the Jewish religious establishment who, envious of Jesus’s popularity, conspired to nail him to the cross (Mark 15:10). It also models how contemporary Christian apologists should defend Jesus’s claims and the faith.

³ Delbert Burkett, *The Son of Man Debate: A History and Evaluation* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 5.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Ibid., 82–86.

Taking into account the plethora of solutions affiliated with the Son of Man debate, this study does not attempt to analyze all the myriad Son of Man theories that have been presented over two millennia. Rather, the purpose of this thesis is to examine the strategy Jesus used in declaring Himself the Son of Man in Mark's Gospel, along with the impact of Jesus's strategy on contemporary Christian apologetics. However, prior to conducting this analysis, it is vital to lay the proper groundwork. Even renowned theoretical physicist Albert Einstein believed that the key to deciphering a problem is to first define it. In fact, Peter Wilson writes that Einstein is purported to have said that "if he had one hour to save the world he would spend fifty-five minutes defining the problem and only five minutes finding the solution."⁶ With that in mind, the focus of this chapter now turns to assessing the problems associated with the Son of Man term, and the negative bias linked to today's unbiblical approaches in Christian apologetics.

Son of Man Problem

Scholars have long considered the interpretation of the Son of Man term to be vital to discovering Jesus's self-knowledge. The Son of Man expression occurs eighty-eight times in the New Testament (NT), of which fourteen references are found in Mark. Eighty-three verses are spoken as a self-designation in the Greek Gospels exclusively by Jesus, and the remaining five verses in which Son of Man term occurs include John 12:34, Acts 7:56, Hebrews 2:6, Revelation 1:13 and 14:14.⁷ For centuries, the enigma of what Jesus meant by self-identifying with the term

⁶ Peter Wilson, "Simplex Creative Problem Solving," *Creativity and Innovation Management* 6, no. 3 (1997): 161, accessed February 20, 2020, ATLA Religion Database with ATLASerials, EBSCOhost.

⁷ Joel B. Green, Jeannine K. Brown, and Nicholas Perrin, eds., *Dictionary of Jesus and the Gospels*, 2nd ed. (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2013), 894.

has resulted in what is commonly known today as “The Son of Man Problem.”⁸ So what exactly are the nuances of said problem? Authors Larry Hurtado and Paul Owen share their insight:

Nearly all scholars admit that this *manner of speaking* [emphasis in original] goes back to the historical Jesus. Whereas other titles like *Son of God*, *Messiah*, and *Lord* [italics in the original] clearly functioned later as means of confessional expression in the early church, “son of man” does not seem to have been picked up and utilized in the same manner. What are we to make of this?

This leads us to an important question. Should “son of man” even be treated as a title for Jesus at all? Is it possible that ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ ἀνθρώπου in Greek translates an original Aramaic expression which designated Jesus in a non-titular manner?⁹

Consequently, as it relates to the Greek Gospels, the Son of Man expression and Jesus’s meaning of self-identifying with the term throughout His ministry has been one of the most debated topics in modern NT scholarship. As such, this evaluation turns to biblical and extrabiblical literature to examine the question of meaning in light of Jesus’s strategic methods of self-employing the Son of Man term as it is portrayed in Mark’s Gospel. In doing so, the primary concern is with the Son of Man expression as grasped by Mark himself, taking into account that the image that appears in his Gospel is only one perspective and one unique portrait of the life and mission of Jesus Christ.

With regard to this study’s contribution to the ongoing Son of Man discussion, the Markan account of Jesus’s explicit threefold approach offers historical insight into His self-understanding, strategy, and divine claims. Furthermore, the manner in which Jesus employs the title throughout Mark in leading the spiritually blind to believe Him to be the messianic Son of Man is analogous to a grandmaster in chess. In doing so, Jesus also demonstrates that, when submitting to God’s will, believers should pay heed to His invitation to “Follow me” (Mark 1:17)

⁸ Edward A. Beckstrom, “The Mystery of Jesus’s Teaching About ‘The Son of Man.’” *Biblical Theology Bulletin* 42, no. 2 (2012): 70, accessed July 22, 2019, ATLA Religion Database with ATLASerials, EBSCOhost.

⁹ Larry W. Hurtado and Paul L. Owens, eds., “Who Is This Son?”: *The Latest Scholarship on a Puzzling Expression of the Historical Jesus*, Library of New Testament Studies 390 (New York: T & T Clark, 2011), vii.

and mirror such Christ-like traits as patience, planning, consideration of others, and self-discipline when engaging in the “defense of the gospel” (Phil. 1:16). Thus, this research benefits not only the academic apologist but every Christian who desires to be an effective witness for Christ.

As it relates to the effects of the idiomatic interpretation on the current debate, Hurtado and Owen maintain that the use of “Son of Man” in the idiomatic sense results in diminishing the Son of Man phrase to either a “circumlocution for ‘I’ (Vermes) or an indirect expression with the force of ‘some person’ (Fitzmyer).”¹⁰ This study will subsequently articulate good reasons to uphold the messianic interpretation of Christ’s Son of Man self-designation that is portrayed in Mark over the idiomatic interpretations. However, the Son of Man problem is not the only issue under consideration in this study. Present-day challenges associated within the field of Christian apologetics warrant assessment as well.

Christian Apologetics Problem

This thesis also takes the position that in the contemporary setting, apologetics is greatly misunderstood due to its frequent abuse by well-meaning, professed Christians. According to Douglas Groothuis, the use of the word *apologetics* is often employed “in a derogatory way to mean a biased and belligerent advocacy of an indefensible position.”¹¹ Instead of presenting sound argumentation for the truth claims of Christianity “with gentleness and respect” (1 Pet. 3:15), some Christian apologists act as though they are in a vehement chess match and are more interested in winning an argument than in winning the soul of their lost opponent. As Jesus said,

¹⁰ Hurtado and Owens, “*Who Is This Son?*”, 89.

¹¹ Douglas Groothuis, *Christian Apologetics: A Comprehensive Case for Biblical Faith* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2011), 23.

“What good is it for someone to gain the whole world, yet forfeit their soul?” (Mark 8:36).

Overzealous apologists might not be at a risk of losing their souls, but they are at a risk of failing to follow Jesus fully in their apologetic methods.

Correspondingly, in his book *Tactics: A Game Plan for Discussing Your Christian Convictions*, Christian apologist and author Gregory Koukl writes that, in addition to the perceived bad public image, apologists face another obstacle. “The truth,” claims Koukl, “is that effective persuasion in the twenty-first century requires more than having the right answers. It’s too easy for post moderns to ignore our facts, deny our claims, or simply yawn and walk away from the line we have drawn in the sand.”¹² This *walking away* that Koukl refers to is a response to what Scripture describes as spiritual blindness to the Gospel message (1 Cor. 4:4). This condition also requires a biblical response from the Christian apologist and will be explored in the conclusion of this study.

Yet, as Groothius, Koukl, and other scholars can attest, not everyone walks away. Many a skeptic will set up arguments against Christianity like a classic game of chess and go on the offensive. As such, Koukl claims that believers need to be strategically equipped in their positioning prior to engagement. “As followers of Jesus,” writes Koukl, “we have tremendous strategic superiority. We are well ‘positioned’ on the field because of the content of our ideas. Our beliefs hold up well under serious scrutiny, especially considering the alternative views.”¹³ However, this strategic advantage must be based on the knowledge that, at its core, Christian apologetics is an instrument of evangelism for the sake of Jesus Christ and His gospel. For this

¹² Gregory Koukl, *Tactics: A Game Plan for Discussing Your Christian Convictions* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2009), 19.

¹³ *Ibid.*, 25.

reason, all hostile attitudes and postures of apologetics need to be acknowledged and addressed in studies such as this thesis presents and thereby shared throughout academia and the church. In order to accomplish this goal, a faithful exposition of Scripture is by all means necessary, as is choosing a proper approach to the task of exegesis.

Methodology

By employing an exegetical methodology, this thesis compares and analyzes the latest results of scholarly and peer-reviewed sources and biblical commentaries that relate to the Son of Man in the Gospel of Mark. A combination of two basic approaches to exegesis, the historical-critical or *diachronic* approach and the literary or *synchronic* approach, are the means to investigating the Markan text. As attested by Paul Noble, these two approaches are mutually complementary and take into consideration that the “text was produced in a particular historical-critical situation, knowledge of which is therefore indispensable for a sensitive synchronic reading; and conversely, historical reconstructions of what lies behind a text are dependent upon an accurate literary appreciation of the text’s final form.”¹⁴ Therefore, by engaging in an analysis of the historical and literary features, these combined methods explore both the realm *within* the text and the realm *behind* the text.

As mentioned previously, Burkett asserts that, in regard to the current Son of Man debate, “two interpretations predominate: the apocalyptic/messianic (in several variations) and the idiomatic/nontitular (also in several variations).”¹⁵ Using the exegetical method with a focus on historical and literary evidence, this thesis argues that Mark’s portrayal of Jesus teaches and

¹⁴ Paul R. Noble, “Synchronic and Diachronic Approaches to Biblical Interpretation,” *Literature and Theology* 7, no. 2 (1993): 132, accessed January 19, 2020, ATLA Religion Database with ATLASerials, EBSCOhost.

¹⁵ Burkett, *Son of Man Debate*, 5.

claims the Son of Man as a messianic title based on the “son of man” allusions from Dan.7:13, Psalm 110:1, and other Old Testament (OT) and Second Temple period messianic-related texts. The secondary goal is to resolve any Second Temple Judaism interpretive issues in the text in order to determine its meaning and significance. The exegetical study will include an introduction to each passage followed by an evaluation of its context, its meaning, its significance, and drawn conclusions. Finally, as tactics and strategy are both intertwined in the game of chess, this paper also presents an interpretive analogy of Jesus’s tactics (short sequence of moves) and strategy (long-term plan) that are associated with the Markan Son of Man designations.

In addition to the primary source of the New American Standard Bible, this study analyzes resources in the form of scholarly books, peer-reviewed journal articles, commentaries, and other Christian apologetic materials. All fourteen Son of Man passages are evaluated in their first-century context, followed by a study of relevant secondary literature for the purpose of accessing the interpretation of acclaimed scholarship.

With the debate over its origin and meaning spanning centuries, the plethora of collected works on the Son of Man is wide-ranging, which requires delimiting this thesis’s focus to literature that supports the contemporary debate’s messianic and idiomatic interpretations. Notwithstanding all of the proposed theories or methods of biblical criticism that have been employed in the past to analyze the subject, the most significant limitation at present is that there are no clear-cut solutions to the Son of Man debate. As Morna Hooker concisely asserts,

But will some clear answer to the problem emerge? Will methods of form-criticism and tradition-criticism ever solve the problem satisfactorily? It looks as if the answer is “No”. The same principles and methods lead one scholar to trace the title ‘Son of Man’ to Jesus, another to attribute it to the Church, and a third to trace the term itself to Jesus, but its use as a Christological title to the community.¹⁶

What Jesus meant when He referred to Himself as the Son of Man has continued to be a mystery among scholars. Thus, the Son of Man presents a challenge for biblical exegesis.

In conjunction with the diachronic and the synchronic exegetical approaches, presuppositional apologetic considerations are also outlined as they relate to approaching Mark’s Gospel. Furthermore, the strategic implications will also be extracted and applied to contemporary Christian apologetic practices. To achieve this end, the reading of Mark’s Gospel will be performed *horizontally* and *vertically*, or as Darrell Bock puts it, reading the text “across various accounts” and comparing it with relevant passages in Scripture, as well as staying “within a given evangelist’s account” and scrolling through the narrative sequentially.¹⁷ With respect to resources, the research for this study is limited to the following: the Markan Son of Man expressions, the two aforementioned interpretations affiliated with the current Son of Man debate (idiomatic versus messianic), and an overview of the Son of Man references and the quotations, allusions, echoes, and parallels as found in the Ezekiel, Daniel, the Similitudes of 1 Enoch, and the Dead Sea Scrolls. To ensure the analysis of said resources is well-organized and delivers a progressive argument, an outline of the thesis chapters is hereby presented.

¹⁶ Morna D. Hooker, *The Son of Man in Mark: A Study of the Background of the Term “Son of Man” and Its Use in St. Mark’s Gospel* (Montreal: McGill University Press, 1967), 4–5.

¹⁷ Darrell L. Bock, *Studying the Historical Jesus* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2002), 213.

Thesis Outline

The following chapter divisions of this thesis are arranged according to Son of Man interpretations. The history of the Son of Man debate interpretations is presented in the first chapter. The Second Temple Judaism interpretations are offered in the second chapter. The fourteen Markan Son of Man exegetical interpretations, the outcome of the data, and Jesus's Son of Man strategy are expounded upon in the third chapter. Finally, the contemporary apologetics interpretation of Jesus's Son of Man strategy is illustrated in the conclusion.

The first chapter, "History of the Son of Man Intellectual Game," is presented in two sections. The first section offers a synopsis of the interpretations of the Son of Man term over two millennia, including the two contemporary readings: the idiomatic interpretation (which encompasses the meanings of the circumlocution sense of "the man" = "I," the generic sense of "man" in general, and the indefinite sense of "a man" or someone), and the messianic interpretation.¹⁸ The second section summarizes the scholarly arguments of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries concerning the authenticity of the Son of Man sayings in Mark.

The second chapter, "The Second Temple Judaism Chessboard," focuses on the Son of Man debate in the context of Second Temple Judaism and first-century contextual understanding. Particular attention is given to the significance of these passages as they are alluded to in Mark's Gospel. An overview of the Son of Man sayings in Ezekiel, Daniel, The Similitudes of 1 Enoch, and the Dead Sea Scrolls will be presented.

The third chapter, "Jesus's Son of Man Tactics and Strategy in Mark," offers an exegesis of all fourteen Son of Man sayings in the Gospel of Mark. Following the completion of this investigation, an analysis of the exegetical results will establish if the data supports Mark's

¹⁸ Burkett, *Son of Man Debate*, 82–96.

depiction of Jesus’s Son of Man sayings as an idiomatic interpretation or (as argued in this study) a messianic interpretation. Finally, a literary analysis of Jesus’s threefold rhetorical strategy will determine if Mark’s intent was to demonstrate and redefine messiahship and the meaning of discipleship to his audience by employing the rhetorical device of allusionary repetition.

The conclusion, “One More Move” and Lessons for Christian Apologetics,” will summarize Jesus’s chess-like *check*, *double check*, and *checkmate* strategic moves against evil as depicted in Mark’s Gospel. Two key verses in Scripture (Mark 10:45 and 1 Pet 3:15) are illustrated to establish the unified lessons to be learned from this Son of Man study for leading the spiritually blind and defending the faith through the biblical tenets of Christian apologetics.

In the realm of game theory, there is a basic principle which states that one should *look forward* and *reason back*.¹⁹ The essence of this precept is that by looking back and learning from the past, one is enabled to move forward to strategize the future. Therefore, prior to moving forward with this study’s allegorical “Idiomatic vs. Messianic” chess match, the focus turns back to examine and glean lessons from the history of the Son of Man debate.

¹⁹ Charles W. Hill, Melissa A. Schilling, and Gareth R. Jones, *Strategic Management: An Integrated Approach to Theory and Cases*, 13th ed. (Boston: Cengage Learning, 2019), 215.

Chapter One: History of the Son of Man Intellectual Game

Considered by many to be the greatest chess player in history, Bobby Fischer is memorialized in *Bobby Fischer Against the World*, a 2011 film documentary about the life of the eccentric child prodigy. At the age of fifteen, Fischer rose from humble beginnings to become the US chess champion.²⁰ By the age of twenty-nine, he had captivated the world by winning the prestigious titles of world champion and chess grandmaster through his victory over Russia's Boris Spassky.²¹ The biographical film recounts Fischer's career, his rise to fame, and the correlation between his intellect, his mastery of chess, and his ultimate descent into madness.

Similarly, a metaphorical intellectual game is found in the medley of solutions proposed by academia throughout the centuries to the Son of Man problem. N. T. Wright notes that when the subject was brought up at a seminar, an Oxford colleague (who Wright leaves unnamed) grumbled, "Son of Man? Son of Man? That way lies madness!"²² However, what some scholars consider to be exasperating has been approached by others as a topic to be ventured.

Surveying and compiling the history of all the various interpretive movements affiliated with the Son of Man debate is not a task for the timid. Yet, there are several scholars who braved the folly and rose to the challenge. With regard to such achievements, the focus now shifts to examine a succinct and chronological account of the key Son of Man debate interpretations in history as reported by various scholars.

²⁰ Shenk, *A History of Chess*, 173.

²¹ *Ibid.*

²² N. T. Wright, *Jesus and the Victory of God* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 1996), 512.

Interpretation Moves from Antiquity to the Contemporary Setting

The first lesson for all novice chess players is to understand the moves associated with each of the thirty-two pieces on the board. There are horizontal moves, backward moves, castling moves, and so forth. At first, the varying movements and activities can be a bit overwhelming, but as the player gets more proficient in the game, the comprehension of the piece movements become more defined. Such is the case with the wealth of Son of Man debate solutions. The aim of this section is to present a summation of the debate moves from antiquity to the contemporary setting. Yet, prior to presenting the historical players, it is vital to understand how the recording of the debate accounts came to be.

Burkett reports that from the second century on, the earliest surveys devoted to chronicling the numerous Son of Man interpretations initially appeared in eighteenth century commentaries by scholars Johann Christoph Wolf and Johann Christoph Köcher.²³ Mogens Müller writes that Wolf's commentary, *Curae philologicae et criticae in IV. ss evangelia et actus apostolicos*, I (1725), "specifically confines itself . . . to a short survey of the different opinions on the Son of Man. The same pertains to Köcher's *Analecta philologica et exegetica in quatuor s. evangelia* (1766)."²⁴ Major monographs on the subject were later produced in the nineteenth century by Wessel Scholten (1809) and Heinrich Appel (1896).²⁵

In the twentieth century, Müller's volume, *The Expression 'Son of Man' and the Development of Christology: A History of Interpretation* (1984), is what Burkett reports to be

²³ Burkett, *Son of Man Debate*, 3.

²⁴ Mogens Müller, *The Expression 'Son of Man' and the Development of Christology: A History of Interpretation* (London: Equinox Publishing, 2008), 29.

²⁵ Burkett, *Son of Man Debate*, 3.

an “extensive excursuses on important aspects of the debate.”²⁶ Müller’s approach traces each interpretation historically and then illustrates the scholarly solution to the Son of Man problem in its relationship to the theological concerns of each era. However, as an exhaustive historical account on the subject was still lacking that presented the interpretations by the various solutions, Burkett remedied that deficiency in *The Son of Man Debate: A History and Evaluation*, which surveys and evaluates the Son of Man problem from the patristic period (AD 100) to the end of the twentieth century. With a general understanding of the historical surveys and their surveyors now established, the next move is to illuminate how—over two millennia—the debate has culminated into two key contemporary interpretations.

Second Century to the Reformation

Beginning with the age of the early church fathers, who established doctrines that defined Christian orthodoxy, the prominent interpretation of the Son of Man term arrived in the form of a genealogical explanation. The literal reading of the Greek ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ ἀνθρώπου was thought to identify Jesus as “the son of the man,” which was understood in a human sense to reference a parent (such as Mary, Jesus’s mother, or Joseph, Jesus’s step-father, or Adam) with the emphasis being placed on the definite article to indicate that Jesus was “*the* son or descendent of” an individual.²⁷ A sampling of patristic authors who held to this interpretation include Ignatius of Antioch (*Epistle to the Ephesians*, AD 108) and Justin Martyr (*Dialogue with Trypho*, AD 135). Ignatius is credited with the first interpretation of the Son of Man as a title of Jesus’s human

²⁶ Burkett, *Son of Man Debate*, 3.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, 7–11.

nature, which he coupled with the “Son of God” as a title of Jesus’s divinity.²⁸ The Ophite and Valentinian Gnostic sects also applied the term in a genealogical manner, but contrarily interpreted the saying to mean that Jesus was the “son of the god Anthropos.”²⁹ What is also notable about this Gnostic interpretation is that it identifies god-like traits versus human attributes.

In the third century, an important but less popular interpretation emerged from Tertullian’s five-book treatise, *Adversus Marcionem* (AD 205). The term *filius hominis* (Latin for “Son of Man”) was designated as a title that affiliated Jesus as the Son of Man coming “with the clouds of heaven,” as recorded in Daniel 7:13.³⁰ Nonetheless, beginning with the patristic era, the genealogical interpretation predominated throughout the Middle Ages until this understanding of the term fell from favor at the end of the Protestant Reformation.³¹

In his evaluation of the genealogical reading, Burkett paraphrases Scholten’s characterization of this interpretive decline when he writes, “If the expression meant ‘son of the human,’ indicating descent from Mary or Joseph, why would Jesus so frequently emphasize that he was born of a human being when none of his hearers had any doubt of this (Scholten 1809)?”³² Yet, the catalyst for the interpretation’s waning was tied to the sixteenth century revelation that, in the first century, Jesus most likely spoke either Hebrew or Aramaic, rather than Greek. Therefore, scholars shifted the debate away from the Greek form of the term. With a

²⁸ Adela Yarboro Collins and John J. Collins, *King and Messiah as Son of God: Divine, Human, and Angelic Messianic Figures in Biblical and Related Literature* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing, 2008), 151.

²⁹ Burkett, *Son of Man Debate*, 6.

³⁰ Maurice Casey, *The Solution to the ‘Son of Man’ Problem* (London: T & T Clark, 2009), 5.

³¹ Burkett, *Son of Man Debate*, 11.

³² *Ibid.*

chess-like backwards move, a linguistic shift ensued that examined the Semitic “Son of Man” idiom that lay beneath the Greek expression.

Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries

Following the Reformation, the encouragement of layperson Bible reading resulted in a rebirth in Semitic studies. Biblical exegetes in the sixteenth century discovered that beneath the Greek expression ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ ἀνθρώπου was the Son of Man idiom in Hebrew, which is transliterated as *ben adam*, and in Aramaic, which is transliterated as *bar enash* or *bar enasha*.³³ At this time, Burkett asserts the interpretation became prominent that “‘son of’ designates an individual as a member of a group, and ‘man’ specifies the group to which he belongs. The idiom therefore simply means ‘man.’”³⁴ Accordingly, scholars of this era began to adopt the interpretation that the Son of Man expression denoted Jesus’s humanity without allusion to any particular parent.

The first scholar to provide such a human-centric and Hebraic reading was the leader of the Reformation in Switzerland, Ulrich Zwingli (1531).³⁵ Zwingli and other scholars of that era understood the term to denote Jesus’s simple manhood and humanity. In 1557, the idiomatic/nontitular interpretation was birthed through Beza, who suggested that the Hebrew Son of Man idiom was a circumlocution for “I” as a self-reference.³⁶ Later, Johannes Cocceius (1701) emphasized the idiomatic/nontitular interpretation from the Aramaic idiom and applied the

³³ Geza Vermes, “The ‘Son of Man’ Debate,” *Journal for the Study of the New Testament* 1, no. 1 (January 1978): 19, accessed January 23, 2020, ATLA Religion Database with ATLASerials, EBSCOhost.

³⁴ Burkett, *Son of Man Debate*, 13.

³⁵ Hurtado and Owens, “Who Is This Son?,” 1–2.

³⁶ Burkett, *Son of Man Debate*, 83.

Daniel 7:13 connection to the church rather than to Christ Himself.³⁷ Yet, the claim that the Son of Man idiom conveyed the inference of lowliness and not divinity, which was held by such scholars as Martin Bucer (1527) and Heinrich Bullinger (1542), was the most widespread interpretation until the eighteenth century.³⁸

Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries

Although the Age of Enlightenment experienced an expansion of human-centric Son of Man interpretations, it was the apocalyptic/messianic interpretation that dominated the Victorian Era and continue into the twentieth century. At the dawn of the eighteenth century, interpreters understood the human element in the Aramaic Son of Man idiom to imply humanity as a superior quality or as an “ideal man.”³⁹ Many scholars, like Augustus Neander, combined the ideal (or superior) man with the Messiah described in Daniel 7:13, which rendered a human messianic Son of Man interpretation that grew in popularity.⁴⁰

However, the acceptance of this reading was short-lived when, in 1773, Scottish explorer James Bruce discovered three complete Ethiopian manuscripts of one of the OT pseudepigrapha: the first book of Enoch.⁴¹ Gabriele Boccaccini maintains that these ancient documents were the “first Ethiopic manuscripts of 1 Enoch to be studied and published in Europe.”⁴² Heinrich Ewald

³⁷ William J. Van Asselt, “Structural Elements in the Eschatology of Johannes Cocceius,” *Calvin Theological Journal* 34 (1999): 23, accessed March 9, 2020, ATLA Religion Database with ATLASerials, EBSCOhost.

³⁸ Burkett, *Son of Man Debate*, 15.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, 19.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 27.

⁴¹ Gabriele Boccaccini, “James Bruce’s ‘Fourth’ Manuscript: Solving the Mystery of the Provenance of the Roman Enoch Manuscript,” *Journal for the Study of Pseudepigrapha* 27, no. 4 (2018): 238, accessed March 1, 2020, ATLA Religion Database with ATLASerials, EBSCOhost.

⁴² *Ibid.*

(1828) ultimately employed Richard Laurence's English translations of the manuscripts to contextually cross-examine the Son of Man expressions.⁴³

Burkett reports that the ultimate outcome of Laurence's translations and Ewald's analysis was a newfound interpretation of the Son of Man as a heavenly Messiah:

In his translation of 1 Enoch, Laurence pointed out two passages (1 Enoch 48:3–5; 61.8–13) which he believed described the Messiah, or “Son of Man,” as a pre-existent divine being (Laurence 1821:xl–xliii). Soon scholars began to interpret not only the figure in 1 Enoch but also the figure in Daniel 7.13 as a heavenly Messiah. Thus, the view arose that Jesus used “Son of Man” to identify himself as the Messiah of apocalyptic literature, understood as a pre-existent, heavenly being. This view ultimately replaced the concept of the Son of Man as a purely human Messiah.⁴⁴

With the waning of the human Son of Man interpretations imminent, scholars such as Johannes Weiss (1882) and R. H. Charles (1893) adopted the heavenly Messiah reading and associated it with the Son of Man expression to Daniel 7:13. This was not, however, an entirely new concept. Hurtado and Owen point out that, beginning with Tertullian in the second century, “exegetes have drawn a correlation between Daniel's vision and Jesus' Son of Man sayings in the Gospels.”⁴⁵ As such, the interpretation that the Son of Man expression denoted a combined apocalyptic and messianic heavenly Messiah became the predominant view espoused by academia and remained as such until the 1960s.⁴⁶

The Twentieth Century to The Contemporary Setting

The twentieth and early twenty-first centuries proved to be a turbulent and defining time period for the Son of Man debate. Like two warring chess pieces, the prevalent messianic

⁴³ Burkett, *Son of Man Debate*, 27.

⁴⁴ Ibid.

⁴⁵ Hurtado and Owens, “*Who Is This Son?*”, 1.

⁴⁶ Ibid., 7.

interpretation came under scrutinizing attack, and the idiomatic interpretation (by which a man could refer to himself in the third person) gained both recognition and momentum. These two opposing Son of Man positions theologically and philosophically battled to be crowned and to gain primacy of interpretation over the other.

Beginning with the Enlightenment period, select academics began to apply rational, scientific, and historical techniques to the study of the NT. Inadvertently, these scholars initiated what eventually became known as a three-part “Quest for the Historical Jesus,” which was coined from Albert Schweitzer’s celebrated 1906 publication, *Von Reimarus zu Wrede: Eine Geschichte der Leben-Jesu-Forschung* (*From Reimarus to Wrede: A History of Research on the Life of Jesus*). When Schweitzer’s book was translated into English, the title was changed to *The Quest of The Historical Jesus*.⁴⁷ The quests owe their origins to the posthumous publication of Hermann Reimarus’s *Fragments* during the Revolutionary period.⁴⁸ A professed Deist, Reimarus argued that the assessment of Jesus in the Gospels was fabricated by the Apostles who stole Jesus’s body. Therefore, Reimarus concluded, discovering the real Jesus of Nazareth required thorough historical research.⁴⁹

Bock purports that the quest’s main focus is to uncover the Jesus of history and to reconstruct what is presumed to be theological mythology that was allegedly fabricated after the Resurrection by the early Church.⁵⁰ Bock points out that such claims are “grounded in an excessive rationalism,” and their purpose is to “separate the dogma in the account from its

⁴⁷ Burkett, *Son of Man Debate*, 45.

⁴⁸ Darrell L. Bock, *Studying the Historical Jesus* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2002), 143.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 79–80.

historical core.”⁵¹ Ben Blackwell, John Goodrich, and Jason Maston concur with Bock’s assessment of the early Historical Jesus movement, noting that the Jesus movement’s scholarly biographies “relied on the tools of historical criticism to separate the authentic *Jesus of history* (believed to be preserved most reliably in Mark) from the mythical *Christ of faith* (presumed to be manufactured by the evangelists and early church) in an effort to make the real Jesus of Nazareth relevant for a modern age.”⁵² This academic method is found in William Wrede’s 1901 publication, *The Messianic Secret (Das Messiasgeheimnis in den Evangelien)*. Expounding on the subject of the Markan Son of Man, Wrede states that

According to the recent view (in fact itself an old one, however), the “Son of Man” is originally supposed to have meant simply “the man” (*bar nasha*). This would naturally make the passages no longer usable as proofs for an earlier use of the messianic title by Jesus. But this judgement is premature. Our primary concern is with Mark, not with Jesus. The original sense of the passage is completely immaterial here.⁵³

Wrede’s writings are a prime example of the quest’s *modus operandi*. Wrede argues that when Mark shares the accounts of Jesus ordering his disciples (and others) not to disclose that He is the Messiah (Mark 1:23–25, 34, 43–44, 4:11–12; 5:43, 7:36; 8:30), Mark devised the supposed “Messianic Secret” as a mechanism to conceal that Jesus’s mission was not messianic in nature.⁵⁴ Commenting on Wrede’s book, Bock notes that “what made this work significant is that it represented a skeptical salvo against the Gospel that most scholars had accepted as both the

⁵¹ Bock, *Studying the Historical Jesus*, 143.

⁵² Ben C. Blackwell, John Goodrich, and Jason Maston, eds., *Reading Mark in Context* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2018), 27.

⁵³ William Wrede, *The Messianic Secret*, trans. J. C. G. Greig, Library of Theological Translations (Greenwood, SC: James Clarke, 1971), 19.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 113–114.

earliest and most historically credible.”⁵⁵ For scholars, the Son of Man expression became the key theological debate that ushered in the new century.

Another proposed polemic of the early twentieth century is the authenticity of the sayings attributed to Jesus in the Bible and whether Jesus actually employed the Son of Man term as a self-designation. German theologian Rudolph Bultmann was particularly skeptical regarding the historical Jesus, and he championed three idiomatic assertions “which speak of the Son of Man (1) as coming, (2) as suffering death and rising again, and (3) as now at work.”⁵⁶ Regarding the three claims, Bultmann argued that Jesus never employed the Son of Man expression to refer to Himself but to the coming apocalyptic redeemer figure who would vindicate his own earthly mission.⁵⁷ In addition, Bultmann accused the early church of weaving the misconception that Jesus identified Himself as the coming Son of Man.⁵⁸ Bock shares that the scholarly consensus of the day declared that “the first quest had traveled the road of rationalistic historical study and had come to a dead end. To use another image, it had dug a massive ditch between the historic Jesus and the Christ of faith”⁵⁹ On this final assessment, Schweitzer also concluded that the quest for the historical Jesus arguments and their Son of Man interpretations had failed, as the biblical exegetes did not take Jesus’s Semitic-cultural upbringing and the Jewish context of Scripture into consideration.⁶⁰

⁵⁵ Bock, *Studying the Historical Jesus*, 144.

⁵⁶ Rudolph Bultmann, *Theology of the New Testament* (Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, 2007), 29–31.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 30.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, 9.

⁵⁹ Bock, *Studying the Historical Jesus*, 144.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*

In the 1960s, Bultmann's students launched a second quest for the historical Jesus.⁶¹ Once again, scholars called into question the authenticity of Jesus's sayings in the Gospels and point to the early church as conspirators. As for the Son of Man term, the consensus of scholars abandoned the apocalyptic/messianic interpretation. Burkett explains the reasoning which led to its rejection and decline:

Several factors led to the dissolution. First, the failure to find the Similitudes of Enoch among the fragments of 1 Enoch at Qumran renewed doubts about dating the Similitudes to the pre-Christian period. Second, Norman Perrin and others challenged the existence of a unified pre-Christian Son of Man concept. Third, Geza Vermes renewed the linguistic arguments against a pre-Christian "Son of Man" title.⁶²

In addition, Vermes also held the view that the historical Jesus was a teacher, healer, and prophet, and that He used the Son of Man term as a circumlocution for "I" or for people in general.⁶³

With the skeptics' cry that there was a lack of evidence (argument from silence) at Qumran to support the pre-Christian dating of the Similitudes, Beza's idiomatic/nontitular reading resurfaced and gain support within academia. However, there were numerous scholars who had no issues with the absence of the Similitudes fragments at the archaeological site of the Qumran caves in the Judean Desert. Theologians such as F. M. Wilson, John J. Collins, and James H. Charlesworth challenged the skeptics' argument from silence concerning the Similitudes and counter with the fact that the book of Esther was also absent from the collection of discovered manuscripts.⁶⁴ That being the case, then why is it that Ester's dating and

⁶¹ Bock, *Studying the Historical Jesus*, 145.

⁶² Burkett, *Son of Man Debate*, 70.

⁶³ Geza Vermes, *Jesus the Jew: A Historian's Reading of the Gospels* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1981), 160–191.

⁶⁴ Burkett, *Son of Man Debate*, 72.

authenticity are not equally called into question? More often than not, and especially in academic circles, it is not unusual to find claims being presented against biblical accounts where the burden of proof is then thrust upon the Christian. As Koukl points out, although many such challenges to Christianity thrive on vague generalizations, “whoever makes the claim bears the burden.”⁶⁵ Thus, what the historical Jesus scholars purported was only an unconvincing logical fallacy based on an *argumentum ex silentio*.

Within recent decades, a third quest emerged that put the historical Jesus and the Son of Man term into the context of first-century Judaism. This modern-day quest is split between scholars like E. P. Sanders (1993), who advocate a return to a non-eschatological portrait of Jesus as a leader and reformer of Judaism, and Paula Fredricksen (2000), who Bock claims “straddle[s] the line between portraying Jesus as prophet and as Messiah.”⁶⁶ Conversely, the list of academics who defend a messianic Jesus include conservative and evangelical scholars, such as Ben Witherington III (1997) and Darrell Bock (2002).⁶⁷

As it relates to the Son of Man interpretations, the majority of scholarship is now divided like black and white pieces on a chessboard. The long history associated with the Son of Man debate comes down to the messianic and the idiomatic interpretations, each with its own variations.⁶⁸ Thus, with the historic and succinct account of the key Son of Man debate interpretations complete, one question remains concerning the authenticity of Jesus’s declarations. Specifically, are the Son of Man sayings in the Second Gospel genuinely Jesus’s

⁶⁵ Koukl, *Tactics*, 59.

⁶⁶ Bock, *Studying the Historical Jesus*, 147–148.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, 148–149.

⁶⁸ Burkett, *Son of Man Debate*, 5.

own words or were they concocted by Mark? As previously noted, Wrede argued that Mark's account of Jesus was historically suspect as it was alleged to be theologically compromised. By their employment of a rationalistic and academic method of inquiry to Mark's Gospel, is it possible for Wrede and other scholars to comprehend the text in the way that the first-century author and his readers would have understood them? According to Jonathan Pennington, reading the Gospels wisely requires a conscientious regard for a passage's historical-cultural context.⁶⁹ To that end, this thesis now moves to examine the ways in which the proverbial game rules of reading the Son of Man sayings in Mark's Gospel have been interpreted by scholars over the past century.

Playing by the Rules: The Question of Authenticity

In the realm of boardgames, checkers and chess are somewhat similar and also quite diverse. For instance, both games require patience, strategic thinking, and planning from the two opponents positioned on opposite ends of the board. To play checkers, a player must think logically and strategically. Chess also requires a player to be analytical. Likewise, in order to win at either game, each player must think ahead to identify opportunities to outwit his or her opponent. However, as it concerns the differences between checkers and chess, the game pieces, the complexity, the directional movements, and the game objectives all vary. Still, the vital distinction between the two is that the games must be played and governed by different rules. One cannot apply the rules of checkers to chess, and vice versa. Therefore, if each player does not abide by the rules of the game, there are bound to be misinterpretations.

⁶⁹ Jonathan T. Pennington, *Reading the Gospels Wisely: A Narrative and Theological Introduction* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2012), 111–112.

In a similar fashion, there are rules that apply to the interpretation of Scripture. In NT studies, one of the rules of the hermeneutical game relates to the various criteria employed to ascertain whether or not a saying is authentic. With respect to the interpretation of the “Son of Man” sayings as they appear in Mark’s narrative, the reliability of both the author and the text come into play. Writing on this subject, Robert Stein points out the importance of this interchange: “the author has played his ‘game’. . . . Unless we know the rules, we will almost certainly misinterpret his meaning.”⁷⁰ In the case of Mark’s Gospel, this also includes consideration of its historical-cultural context (with the thought and knowledge of first-century Judaism). Although not the main focus of this study, the legitimacy and authenticity of the Historical Jesus’s Son of Man sayings in Mark are vital components of the overall defense of His self-designation. With authenticity in mind, a synopsis of the theological polemics on the subject of Jesus’s sayings and Mark’s Gospel over the past century will be presented. But first, one must look at the rules, otherwise referred to as the *criteria of authenticity*.

Since the seventeenth century, historians have applied numerous criteria to the Gospels in order to decipher which sayings of Jesus could be considered genuine and which could be—what skeptics assert are—fabrications of the early church. The three most prominent criteria are *multiple attestation, dissimilarity, and coherence*.⁷¹ Multiple attestation refers to “sayings and actions attributed to Jesus that appear in two or more independent sources (such as Mark and Q),” thus implying that they had been “circulated widely and early and were not invented by a

⁷⁰ Robert H. Stein, *A Basic Guide to Interpreting the Bible: Playing by the Rules* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 1994), 75–76.

⁷¹ Craig A. Evans, *Fabricating Jesus: How Modern Scholars Distort the Gospels* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2006), 50.

single writer.”⁷² The reasoning behind this criterion is that the more layers of tradition that testify to a saying, the more likely the Son of Man saying reached the tradition stage early on.

The second criterion, dissimilarity, is used to determine if a statement attributed to Jesus may be authentic. This criterion contends that “a saying of Jesus that is unlike what Judaism would argue *or* is unlike what the early church would argue goes back to Jesus.”⁷³ N. T. Wright concurs, but claims that in order for this criterion to support historicity, it must also include a double dissimilarity.

Along with the much-discussed “criterion of dissimilarity” must go a criterion of double similarity: when something can be seen to be credible (though perhaps deeply subversive) within first-century Judaism, *and* [emphasis in original] credible as the implied starting-point (though not the exact replica) of something in later Christianity, there is a strong possibility of our being in touch with the genuine history of Jesus.⁷⁴

Yet, in its application, Evans states that dissimilarity can also be a double-edged sword:

Used properly, it can lend support to the conclusion that a given saying or deed is authentic. Applied improperly, it unnecessarily and unreasonably rules out of bounds a host of sayings and deeds. Improperly applied it requires sayings and deeds attributed to Jesus to be dissimilar to (or inconsistent with) the theology of the early church and tendencies and emphases within the Judaism of Jesus’ day.⁷⁵

Thus, when utilized as intended, the function of the dissimilarity criterion is to demonstrate those sayings of Jesus’s teaching that are quite distinctive.

The third and final criterion, coherence (or consistency), argues that “whatever is consistent with what is already shown to be authentic also has a good claim to authenticity.”⁷⁶

This presumes that the biblical exegete is able to isolate some authentic material using one or

⁷² Evans, *Fabricating Jesus*, 48.

⁷³ Bock, *Studying the Historical Jesus*, 200.

⁷⁴ Wright, *The Victory of God*, 132.

⁷⁵ Evans, *Fabricating Jesus*, 50.

⁷⁶ Bock, *Studying the Historical Jesus*, 201.

both of the other two criteria, and that the exegete has created a reference catalog for handling other sayings. Of the three criteria, Bock considers this principle to be more of a “secondary test” that is only as good as the results the other criteria yield.⁷⁷

In accordance with the three aforementioned criteria, Bock maintains that the Son of Man sayings in the Gospels should be authenticated, but arguments and debates continue over how the sayings are exegetically addressed by scholars. For instance, Bock writes that when employing the multiple attestation method, “many critics reject [the Son of Man sayings] by breaking them up into subcategories: earthly ministry Son of Man sayings, suffering Son of Man sayings, and apocalyptic Son of Man sayings.”⁷⁸ Thus, Bock explains, when critics alter the multiple attestation rules by segmenting the sayings in this way, the extent of multiple attestation declines within each category, resulting in less distribution.⁷⁹

What if the requirements of any or all of the above questions of criteria are not met? Does that mean that the saying’s authenticity is then nullified? With clarity, Bock proposes the following response: “One should remember that failure to meet the criteria does not establish a text’s inauthenticity, because the criteria cover only a limited amount of assessment factors. The problem with many critics’ use of this material is that they claim to prove too much by these criteria.”⁸⁰ Simply put, the criteria serve more reliably as an ancillary claim for authenticity versus criteria that actually establish authenticity.

⁷⁷ Bock, *Studying the Historical Jesus*, 201.

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, 200.

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, 202–203.

Despite the rules, critics have employed the criteria to question whether Jesus actually said what the Gospels claim. One group that had been in the forefront of such an endeavor was the Jesus Seminar, which was made up of academics who held to the teachings of Bultmann and the existentialists. Founded in 1985 by Robert Funk, the Jesus Seminar was active until the early twenty-first century. It was comprised of fifty biblical critical scholars, called “Fellows,” and approximately 100 associates.⁸¹ Initially, the goal of the Jesus Seminar was to “assess the degree of scholarly consensus about the historical authenticity of each of the sayings of Jesus,”⁸² and then extract the dogmatic and superstitious interpretations from these sayings. Their conclusions were published in *The Five Gospels*, which contains a summary of the Fellows’ philosophy, their color-coded translation (which they called the Scholar’s Version) of Mark, Matthew, Luke, John, the apocryphal Gospel of Thomas, and a commentary on all the passages containing the sayings ascribed to Jesus.

Many of the members of this group considered the biblical text inauthentic until proven otherwise; thus, their consensus was that only 20 percent of the sayings of Jesus in the Gospels were authentic.⁸³ The other remaining 80 percent, they purported, were put into Jesus’s mouth by the various Gospel writers. This, however, was not the consensus of general scholarship. According to Bock, “the inherent premise, that such a thing needs to be proved, already involves an attitude that approaches the text with criticism.”⁸⁴ In this vein, along with a presuppositional

⁸¹ Michael J. Wilkins and J. P. Moreland, eds., *Jesus under Fire* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1995), 4.

⁸² Robert W. Funk, Roy W. Hoover, and The Jesus Seminar, *The Five Gospels: What Did Jesus Really Say?* (New York: Macmillan, 1993), 1.

⁸³ D. A. Carson and Douglas J. Moo, *An Introduction to the New Testament*, 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2005), 121.

⁸⁴ Bock, *Studying the Historical Jesus*, 200.

post-modern approach, the group consigned much of the Gospels themselves—including Jesus’s Son of Man sayings—to mythology. “The Gospels,” declared Funk, “are now assumed to be mythic elements that express the church’s faith in him, and by plausible fictions that enhance the telling of the gospel story for first-century listeners.”⁸⁵ Contrary to Funk’s late twentieth-century view that the historical Jesus had been shrouded by Christian lore, contemporary NT scholarship has adopted a different approach. “Today,” writes William Lane Craig, “it is widely agreed that the gospels are valuable historical sources for the life of Jesus and that the proper context for understanding the gospels is not mythology, but Palestinian Judaism,”⁸⁶ which Craig claims offers verifiable, external literary evidence.

Although the Second Gospel’s author is left unnamed, the reliability of Mark’s authorship and detailed accounts (including Jesus’s Son of Man sayings) are attested to by many of the early church fathers. Papias, Bishop of Hierapolis (AD 130), was the first to make such a claim in Eusebius’s *Historia Ecclesiastica (History of the Church)*, which was written in AD 325.⁸⁷ Following suit, other second and third century patristic authors, such as Justin Martyr, Irenaeus, Tertullian, and Clement of Alexandria, all confirmed that not only did Mark author what is now attributed to be the earliest Gospel, but that Mark relied on Peter for the full report.⁸⁸

This attestation is key to disputing what other Bulmannian scholars espouse. For instance, in *The Son of Man in Mark*, Hooker offers the following counsel to scholars in their

⁸⁵ Funk and Hoover, *The Five Gospels*, 5.

⁸⁶ William Lane Craig, “Presuppositions and Pretensions of the Jesus Seminar,” *ReasonableFaith.org*, accessed May 12, 2020, <https://www.reasonablefaith.org/writings/popular-writings/jesus-of-nazareth/presuppositions-and-pretensions-of-the-jesus-seminar/>.

⁸⁷ Carson and Moo, *An Introduction to the New Testament*, 172–173.

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*

hermeneutical approaches to the Gospels: “Where a [Son of Man] saying or a tradition about Jesus in the gospels reflects the theology of the post-resurrection church, that saying or tradition must be placed to the credit of the church, rather than to Jesus himself, or to his original history.”⁸⁹ In contrast, Richard Longenecker, who is an advocate for the more traditional reading of Mark, finds Hooker’s position unconvincing:

[T]hough this line of argument is highly defensible on its own presuppositions, it runs roughshod over *prima facie* interpretations of the evidence and bases itself upon hypothetical reconstructions in favor of a more normal reading of the data. We must not deny that there were theological motives and tendencies at work in the composition of the Gospels, so that the reporting of the words of Jesus was conditioned in each case by the author’s background, interests, purpose, and audience. But we handle the evidence much too loosely if we interpret the records as indicating the exact reverse of what they purport.⁹⁰

Longenecker goes on to say that “when the currently proposed literary criteria in Life-of-Jesus research are applied to the Son of Man sayings in the Gospels, the case for authenticity of the expression on the lips of Jesus comes off rather well.”⁹¹ This assessment, however, contradicts the position of skeptics, whose rule-breaking via the misapplication of the criteria of authenticity leads to limited results that are skewed against the grain of the literature.

Indeed, all scholars have a presuppositional starting point on this topic, and it is critical to identify the nuances in order to assess their conclusions. In some cases, such as the results put forth by the Jesus Seminar, Koukl charges that due to their preconceived baseline, the hermeneutical game had been rigged. “Starting with one’s conclusions . . . is cheating,” argues

⁸⁹ Hooker, *Son of Man Mark*, 7.

⁹⁰ Richard N. Longenecker, “‘Son of Man’ as a Self-Designation of Jesus,” *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* 12, no. 3 (1969): 154–155, accessed July 6, 2019, ATLA Religion Database with ATLASerials, EBSCOhost.

⁹¹ Richard N. Longenecker, “Son of Man Imagery: Some Implications for Theological and Discipleship,” *Journal of The Evangelical Theological Society* 18, no. 1 (1975): 8–9, accessed July 6, 2019, ATLA Religion Database with ATLASerials, EBSCOhost.

Koukl; “nothing has been proved, only assumed.”⁹² In this vein and in regard to the aforementioned checkers versus chess analogy, it could be said that if one looks at the Son of Man sayings from a one-dimensional perspective, this could be the equivalent to playing checkers. Conversely, if one approaches the sayings from a multi-layered point of view, this could be the equivalent of playing chess. Nonetheless, as it concerns the historical reliability of the Gospels, Mark Strauss concurs that scholars should play by the rules when employing the criteria of authenticity and “weigh the evidence for their trustworthiness”⁹³ in assessing all aspects of biblical texts. However, the academic’s approach will always dictate the outcome of the analysis, which is continually a topic for debate.

When one considers Jesus’s statements that self-identify with the Son of Man, the relevance of determining the legitimacy in its historical setting cannot be overstated. As illustrated, authenticity addresses whether a text is genuine or of questionable origin, and whether its construction is original and reliable or has been altered or fabricated. If biblical text has been redacted, through textual editing or other means, the exegete clearly needs to identify those alterations. In modern scholarship, authenticity is typically viewed as the most fundamental criterion for all biblical research. Once a text or saying is determined to be genuine and of unquestionable origin, the material becomes affirmed. For this reason, the majority of contemporary NT scholars attribute the Son of Man sayings in Mark’s Gospel to Jesus. Likewise, they also stress the importance of interpreting the Son of Man phrase by referencing the first-century literature in which the term is found. With Jesus’s Jewishness as the gameboard, the next

⁹² Koukl, *Tactics*, 173.

⁹³ Mark L. Strauss, *Four Portraits, One Jesus: An Introduction to Jesus and the Gospels* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2007), 378.

move after examining the rules is to set up and scrutinize Second Temple Judaism's use and understanding of the Son of Man.

Chapter Two: The Second Temple Judaism Chessboard

Every sport has its own strategic playing field and chess is no exception. Believed to have originated in India around AD 550, the game of chess, which is the successor of an ancient Indian strategy game known as *Chaturanga*, was passed on to the West through Persian conquests and has prospered for over 1,500 years.⁹⁴ So significant was the game throughout the world that in 1786, Benjamin Franklin wrote to the editor of the *Columbian Magazine* and professed that playing chess “is the most ancient and the most universal game known among men . . . and it has, for numberless ages, been the amusement of all the civilized nations.”⁹⁵ Historically, each player’s sixteen chess pieces, which consist of the king, the queen, two rooks, two bishops, two knights, and eight pawns, have garnished most of the limelight. Yet, beneath the combined thirty-two chess pieces lies an underrated component which provides the framework for the game: the chessboard. This field of play—with its rank, file, diagonal, and center designations—is the defining element on which hinges the outcome of many a player’s strategy.⁹⁶

This same distinction can also be attributed to the playing field of the Son of Man debate. Comparatively, chess and the Son of Man problem are each played within a dualistic context. The former challenges opponents to engage in this thought-provoking game across a sixty-four squared board made up of alternating light and dark colors, which are arranged on an 8x8 grid. The latter engages in thought-provoking arguments concerning the Son of Man’s idiomatic and messianic interpretations within the field of biblical and extra-biblical literature, including

⁹⁴ Shenk, *A History of Chess*, 4.

⁹⁵ Ralph K. Hagedorn, *Benjamin Franklin and Chess in Early America: A Review of the Literature* (Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1958), 15.

⁹⁶ Shenk, *A History of Chess*, 245–253.

writings from the Second Temple period. In order to ascertain the consensus of scholars in this domain, this essay will now survey the contemporary Son of Man debate in the context of Second Temple Judaism, as well as Son of Man and messianic-related texts that are ascribed to be plausible sources of the apocalyptic and messianic allusions and parallels in Mark's Gospel. Such writings include the books of Ezekiel and Daniel, The Similitudes of 1 Enoch, and select manuscripts from the Dead Sea Scrolls.

What Is Second Temple Judaism?

As previously noted, since the patristic period, the philosophical and theological battlegrounds of the Son of Man debate were first waged from the Old and New Testaments, and then later included Bruce's eighteenth-century discovery of the Ethiopian manuscripts of the Similitudes of 1 Enoch. However, in recent decades, an additional background study has emerged that was birthed from an aroused interest by biblical scholars to understand Jesus's Son of Man self-designation in light of Jesus's Jewishness—in the first-century Jewish world. This historically-cultural and literary approach draws not only from biblical accounts, but also from the non-canonical ancient Jewish writings which stem from the four-hundred-year gap between the Testaments. This Jewish literary period in history, which can be viewed as a metaphorical gameboard in the contemporary Son of Man debate match, is known as Second Temple Judaism.

The term "Second Temple Judaism" denotes the era of Jewish history between the construction of the Second Temple in Jerusalem in 515 BC, and its destruction by the Romans in AD 70.⁹⁷ Matthias Henze writes that some scholars refer to this time period as the "dark centuries of biblical literature" because academics had either ignored or glossed over the literary works

⁹⁷ Matthias Henze, *Mind the Gap: How the Jewish Writings Between the Old and New Testament Help Us Understand Jesus* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2017), 18–19.

produced by Israel's scribes that were not included in the biblical record.⁹⁸ Similarly, Blackwell, Goodrich, and Maston maintain that today's Bible readers hardly give these Jewish texts a glance:

Being generally unaware of the literature produced during the Second Temple period, many assume the so-called "silent years" between the Testaments witnessed little to no development beyond the inherited traditions of the Hebrew Scriptures. Such readers therefore overlook early Jewish literature because they assume that the NT was written in a literary-theological vacuum.⁹⁹

Blackwell, Goodrich, and Maston go on to say that this void stems from scholars pursuing a post-Reformation *sola Scriptura* theological approach, which impede such texts from any type of hermeneutical regard.¹⁰⁰

In order to interpret the Son of Man sayings in Jesus's Jewish context, the exegete can benefit by engaging with Second Temple Jewish literature versus dismissing it. On this subject, Henze agrees and he offers three fundamental reasons why hermeneutical consideration should be given to these ancient Jewish scribal literary works:

First, and perhaps most obviously, the Bible has only preserved a fraction of the Jewish literature that was produced and circulated in ancient Judaism. . . . Many of the books that remained outside the Bible were of crucial importance for different Jewish groups. The second reason . . . is that the oldest manuscripts of the Old Testament come from this period. These manuscripts were discovered among the Dead Sea Scrolls, and they provide invaluable information about the textual history of the Bible. . . . Third, the Second Temple texts tell us a great deal about pre-Christian Judaism. They testify to a Judaism that was heavily fragmented and broken up into smaller groups, sects, and alliances.¹⁰¹

⁹⁸ Henze, *Mind the Gap*, 31.

⁹⁹ Blackwell, Goodrich, and Maston, *Reading Mark in Context*, 29–30.

¹⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, 30.

¹⁰¹ Henze, *Mind the Gap*, 32–33.

Hence, Henze concludes that such texts bear witness to how each group's Jewish worldview and customs differentiated from one another.¹⁰²

In addition to this rationale, another advantage attributed to studying the Son of Man sayings alongside Second Temple literature is that it brings about a better understanding of Jesus as He is depicted according to Mark's Gospel. To achieve this end, an expanded historical summary that conveys the impact that this Jewish framework makes on the contemporary Son of Man debate is conveyed, followed by a selection of key Son of Man and messianic-related texts that contain allusions or run parallel to Mark's Gospel from the books of Ezekiel and Daniel, the Similitudes of 1 Enoch, and the Dead Sea Scrolls.

Second Temple Judaism and the Son of Man Debate

To reiterate, by the beginning of the twentieth century, the consensus of scholars was that there was a unified concept associated with the Son of Man term within first-century Judaism. As previously discussed, the messianic interpretation was the most prominent during the first half of the twentieth century and was based on Daniel 7:13–14 and the Similitudes of Enoch (1 Enoch 37–71). In *The Son of Man Problem: Critical Readings*, Benjamin Reynolds writes that during this era, scholars “understood Jesus’ use of the phrase to have derived from a common, widespread belief in early Judaism that a heavenly, messianic figure would appear to judge the wicked and redeem the righteous. At this figure’s arrival, a new age would begin.”¹⁰³ This understanding became known as the “*Son of Man concept*”.¹⁰⁴ Concerning this concept, John

¹⁰² Henze, *Mind the Gap*, 33.

¹⁰³ Benjamin E. Reynolds, *The Son of Man Problem: Critical Readings*, T & T Clark Critical Readings in Biblical Studies (New York: Bloomsbury T & T Clark, 2018), 9.

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, 10.

Collins believes it also included a “spectrum of Messianic expectations” in Second Temple Judaism.¹⁰⁵ Specifically, Collins suggests the hope was based on a “paradigm” of king, priest, prophet, and heavenly Messiahs.¹⁰⁶

This strategic positioning on the Son of Man debate playing field changed in the 1960s when scholars reconsidered the messianic and apocalyptic interpretations. As noted earlier, this move was mostly attributed to two factors. The first was the *argumentum ex silentio* that the Similitudes of Enoch were not found in the Qumran caves, and the second was the impact of Vermes’s study of the Aramaic utilization of the Son of Man idiom as a circumlocution for the first person pronoun ‘I’.¹⁰⁷

Still, the strategic move that brought a pivotal blow to the prominence of the messianic interpretation was presented by a lesser-known scholar, Ragnar Leivestad, in his 1972 article, “Exit the Apocalyptic Son of Man.” In summary, Leivestad asserts that the Son of Man sayings are not used as a fixed title in the majority of Jewish apocalyptic texts, and that the only expression that correlates can be found in the Similitudes of Enoch, where a human-like figure portrays a messianic-type role and appears to be exalted in nature.¹⁰⁸ Moreover, Leivestad also notes that this exalted figure is not designated by the fixed title, “the Son of Man.” Instead, he concludes that varying Ethiopic expressions were most likely used.¹⁰⁹ The implication by Leivestad is that in either the Greek or the Aramaic form of the text (from which the Ethiopic

¹⁰⁵ John J. Collins, *The Scepter and the Star: Messianism in Light of the Dead Sea Scrolls*, 2nd ed. (Eerdmans Publishing, 2010), 214.

¹⁰⁶ Collins, *The Scepter and the Star*, 18.

¹⁰⁷ Vermes, *Jesus the Jew*, 163–168.

¹⁰⁸ Ragnar Leivestad, “Exit the Apocalyptic Son of Man,” *New Testament Studies* 18, no. 3 (April 1972): 243–267, accessed May 1, 2020, ATLA Religion Database with ATLASerials, EBSCOhost.

¹⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, 259.

was translated), it can be assumed that no fixed expression was used as a title as well. This marked a turning point in the mid-twentieth century Son of Man debate which forced scholars to revisit their views on the subject.

Although the blow to the Son of Man messianic interpretation was significant, it was not fatal. Scholars came to the defense, including Fitzmyer, who was the first to respond to Vermes's philological argument in his 1979 critique, "The NT Title 'Son of Man' Philologically Considered."¹¹⁰ In *Authenticating the Words of Jesus*, editors Bruce Chilton and Craig Evans encapsulate Fitzmyer's argument against Verme's Son of Man idiomatic interpretation:

An Aramaic idiom, '(the) son of (the) man' . . . essentially means 'human being,' and the issue which has emerged in the study of the Gospels centers on whether Jesus used the phrase with the broad, non-messianic reference. Amongst recent contributors, Geza Vermes has perhaps been the most conspicuous exponent of the view that the Aramaic idiom is the only key necessary for understanding Jesus' preaching in regard to 'the son of man.' His own particular generalization, that the phrase is a circumlocution for 'I,' has rightly been attacked: The fact is that '(the) son of (the) man' in Aramaic is generic, in the sense that, insofar as it is self-referential, the speaker is included in the class (or a class) of human beings, but the class normally refers to mortal humanity (or a group of people), not to one human being alone.¹¹¹

This linguistic assault by Fitzmyer on Vermes's circumlocution mistranslation also included critiques against Verme's use of late (post-first century) non-Palestinian Aramaic resources.¹¹² Nonetheless, the idiomatic view captured the strategic advantage and kept the messianic interpretation in check until the end of the twentieth century.

¹¹⁰ Reynolds, *Son of Man Problem*, 11.

¹¹¹ Bruce Chilton and Craig A. Evans, eds., *Authenticating the Words of Jesus* (Boston: Brill Academic Publishers, 2002), 259. See Vermes, *Jesus the Jew*, 160–91; idem, "'Son of Man' Debate," 19–32; see J. A. Fitzmyer, "Another View of the 'Son of Man' Debate," *Journal for the Study of the New Testament* 14 (1979): 58–68; idem, "The New Testament Title 'Son of Man' Philologically Considered," in Fitzmyer, *A Wandering Aramean: Collected Aramaic Essays* (Society of Biblical Literature Monograph Series 25; Missoula, MT: Scholars, 1979): 143–160, esp. 153–155.

¹¹² Chilton and Evans, *Authenticating the Words of Jesus*, 259.

After the discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls and excavations at Qumran in the late 1940s and 1950s, scholarly interest in Second Temple Judaism increased. By the early twenty-first century, such awareness produced a reassessment of key Son of Man debate polemics, including the proposed late dating of the Similitudes of Enoch, and the disputes related to the mutual interpretations of the Danielic Son of Man and Second Temple literature. As Reynolds reports, the results of these reevaluations were game changers: “The consensus within Second Temple Judaism scholarship was that the Parables of Enoch was Jewish *and* pre-Christian [emphasis in original] and that the Enochic Son of Man represented a particular expectation of the Danielic figure.”¹¹³ Consequently, these crucial attestations and similar arguments proposed by scholars, such as James Charlesworth, Adela Yarbro Collins, and John Collins, moved the Son of Man’s messianic interpretation out of check and altered the focus of the debate’s contextual setting to Second Temple period writings.¹¹⁴

Concurrently, another key development in the ongoing debate was the proliferation of studies on Jewish thought in the Second Temple period with respect to the Messiah figure in the Parables of Enoch and the concept of the Messiah figure in the Synoptic Gospels. Scholars began analyzing the Enoch traditions and Synoptic traditions in order to gain insight into both studies and the world of Second Temple Judaism.¹¹⁵ For example, in Gabriele Boccaccini’s *Enoch and the Messiah Son of Man: Revisiting the Book of Parables*, Boccaccini offers a collection of essays from 2005’s Third Enoch Seminar which present arguments for the interpretation of the

¹¹³ Reynolds, *Son of Man Problem*, 12.

¹¹⁴ Ibid.

¹¹⁵ Ibid.

Enoch Son of Man figure to be the Messiah.¹¹⁶ Founded in 2000 by Boccaccini, the Enoch Seminar is an academic group made up of university professors and a group of specialists from around the globe who share information about their work in Second Temple Judaism, early Christianity, and Islam.¹¹⁷ Likewise, Lester Grabbe's essay, "'Son of Man': Its Origin and Meaning in Second Temple Judaism," which was delivered at the 2013 Seventh Enoch Seminar, underscores the degree to which the Danielic Son of Man view has become the consensus *within Second Temple scholarship* and is, therefore, understood to be a title and not a circumlocution as Vermes, Casey, and others have argued. As Grabbe notes in his essay's final summary and conclusions:

It is generally agreed (in spite of Vermes's claim) that the Aramaic expression is not the equivalent of "I" in the first century CE, and my investigation supports that conclusion. . . . On the other hand, 'Son of Man' clearly functioned as a title or something similar to it in some circles of late Second Temple Judaism. Its employment in the Parables of Enoch and in the gospels shows that it was so used by some groups within Judaism . . . [and] functions as a title for Jesus in the gospels.¹¹⁸

While Grabbe supports the titular Son of Man affiliations, he does not argue for the unified Son of Man concept. In his estimation, there is presently not enough evidence that the Son of Man term was a *prevalent* messianic interpretation in first-century Judaism.¹¹⁹

Today, the debate match over the Son of Man idiomatic and the messianic interpretations is at a stalemate. However, it is important to note that such academic endeavors are not for

¹¹⁶ Gabriele Boccaccini, *Enoch and the Messiah Son of Man: Revisiting the Book of Parables* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans Publishing, 2007).

¹¹⁷ "Welcome to Enoch Seminar Online," EnochSeminar.org, accessed May 15, 2020, <http://enochseminar.org/>.

¹¹⁸ Lester L. Grabbe, "'Son of Man': Its Origin and Meaning in Second Temple Judaism," in *Enoch and the Synoptic Gospels: Reminiscences, Allusions, Intertextuality*, ed. Loren T. Stuckenbruck and Gabriele Boccaccini (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2016), 196, accessed May 4, 2020, ATLA Religion Database with ATLASeries, EBSCOhost.

¹¹⁹ Ibid.

naught. As illustrated, the contemporary gameboard shift to examine Jesus's Jewishness via the Son of Man sayings in Second Temple Judaism did ultimately progress pieces of the debate in a historically cultural and literary context. Furthermore, it is anticipated that continued research into Second Temple period literature will ultimately yield a solution to the Son of Man problem which confounds those who study the topic. Therefore, it is against this culturally-rich background that the game begins anew with a sampling of the key Second Temple period Son of Man and messianic-related texts that are attributed to be the most probable sources of the apocalyptic and messianic allusions and parallels in Mark's Gospel.

Ezekiel and Daniel

Any study of the Son of Man would be incomplete without consideration of the sayings as recorded in the Hebrew Bible, or *Tanakh*. While there is no definitive consensus among scholars concerning the dating of the oldest texts in the OT, there is agreement on the evidence that supports the dating of the Hebrew Scriptures, some of which were completed during the Second Temple period.¹²⁰ As Henze explains, "The books of the major prophets—Isaiah, Jeremiah, and Ezekiel—were completed not long after the Babylonian exile . . . [and] the youngest book to be included in the Hebrew Scriptures is the book of Daniel . . . which we can date with some confidence to the middle of the second century BCE."¹²¹ The Hebrew expression "son of man" (*ben adam*) appears over one hundred times in the OT, with ninety-three mentions in Ezekiel and one mention in Dan 8:17.¹²² In each instance, the expression is employed to

¹²⁰ Henze, *Mind the Gap*, 16.

¹²¹ *Ibid.*, 16–25.

¹²² Merrill F. Unger et al., eds., *The New Unger's Bible Dictionary* (Chicago, IL: Moody Publishers, 1988), 1211.

reference a human being. Whereas the only instance of the Aramaic expression “son of man” (*bar enash*) is found in Dan 7:13, which is employed to reference a heavenly being.¹²³ With the intent to narrow this segment of the study to the key Markan Son of Man-related allusions, the focus of the ensuing analysis will cover the OT books of Ezekiel and Daniel respectively.

Ezekiel

In 597 BC, Ezekiel the priest—son of Buzi (Ezek 1:3)—and ten thousand of Israel’s elite were exiled by King Nebuchadnezzar and brought from Jerusalem to Babylon (2 Kings 24:11–14).¹²⁴ In a vision, Ezekiel is given the following divinely appointed commission:

Then He [Yahweh; God] said to me, ‘Son of man, I am sending you to the sons of Israel, to a rebellious people who have rebelled against Me; they and their fathers have transgressed against Me to this very day. I am sending you to them who are stubborn and obstinate children, and you shall say to them ‘thus says the Lord God.’ As for them, whether they listen or not—for they are a rebellious house—they will know that a prophet has been among them’ (Ezek 2:3–5).

Serving in the dual role of priest and prophet, Ezekiel had visions and preached to the Jews, whom God had exiled due to their continued rebellion. Yet, the book of Ezekiel not only pronounces judgment on Israel and her surrounding nations, but it also provides a vision of the future millennial kingdom that complements the visions in both Old and New Testaments. Within the final chapters are vivid illustrations of the resurrection and restoration of God’s people (37), the reconstructed temple in Jerusalem, and the return of God’s glory to His dwelling place (40:1–48:35).

¹²³ Barnabas Lindars, *Jesus, Son of Man: A Fresh Examination of the Son of Man Sayings in the Gospels in the Light of Recent Research* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing, 1985), 26.

¹²⁴ Hayyim Angel, “Ezekiel: Priest–Prophet,” *Jewish Bible Quarterly* 39, no. 1 (2011): 35, accessed May 9, 2020, ATLA Religion Database with ATLASerials, EBSCOhost.

As Ezekiel's actual name only appears two times in the book (1:3; 24:24), throughout the majority of the text he is addressed by God as *ben adam*, Son of Man, which scholars interpret as meaning one's humanness. Alinda Damsma confirms this interpretation of Ezekiel's Son of Man when she writes, "The ubiquitous vocative expression מִדָּאֲדָם (literally 'son of man') in the Book of Ezekiel seems to underscore the prophet's status as a mere mortal."¹²⁵ According to Beckstrom, the relevance of this interpretation, combined with the term's human implications and reoccurrences within the book, creates a significant designation for consideration. "The fact that the term is repeated with such frequency in Ezekiel," explains Beckstrom, "and not in the writings of the other prophets, leads me to believe that . . . [i]t appears to be a title."¹²⁶ Beckstrom goes on to argue that when God calls Ezekiel "the son of man," it not only refers to his humanity, but also acknowledges Ezekiel's priestly title.¹²⁷

Beckstrom's hermeneutical analysis reveals that in key verses, the term is also applied as a prophetic reference to the title of high priest. For instance, in the fortieth to the forty-sixth chapters, Ezekiel is shown visions of the new Temple's Holy of Holies, which was only accessible to the high priest.¹²⁸ Ezekiel 44:5 reads, "Son of man, mark well, see with your eyes and hear with your ears all that I say to you concerning all the statutes of the house of the LORD and concerning all its laws; and mark well the entrance of the house, with all exits of the sanctuary." In like manner, later chapters and verses (Ezek 46:20; 48:10) share the account of Yahweh giving His instructions to the "son of man" that only a high priest would be authorized

¹²⁵ Alinda Damsma, "From Son of Man to Son of Adam: The Prophet Ezekiel in Targum Jonathan," *Aramaic Studies* 15, no. 1 (2017): 23, ATLA Religion Database with ATLASerials, EBSCOhost.

¹²⁶ Beckstrom, "The Mystery of Jesus," 72.

¹²⁷ *Ibid.*, 77.

¹²⁸ *Ibid.*

to administer.¹²⁹ Accordingly, Beckstrom’s proposed manifold reading of *human being* to *priest* to *high priest* brings an enriched interpretation to what is primarily considered to be a nontitular, human-centric Son of Man meaning in Ezekiel.

Still, scholars have examined the larger context of the Hebrew canon and have concluded that the book of Ezekiel is the key to comprehending the “one like a Son of Man” in Dan 7:13. In fact, Edwin Abbot argues that the frequent use of “son of man” in addressing the prophet and the appearance of the one “with the appearance of a man” in Ezek 1:26 appears to have strong ties to the book of Daniel.¹³⁰

Daniel

The OT includes the apocalyptic book of Daniel. As defined by James Charlesworth, the word *apocalypse* comes from the Greek word “*apokalupsis* meaning ‘revelation’ or ‘disclosure.’”¹³¹ As an exile and contemporary of Ezekiel, Daniel served in the courts of Babylon and Medo-Persia throughout Israel’s seventy-year captivity (1:21; 9:2) and eventually rose to become one of three administrators over the provincial governors throughout the Medo-Persian kingdom (6:1). A key theme within the book of Daniel is the sovereignty of God, which occurs on numerous occasions, including Daniel’s deliverance from the lions’ den, his three friends’ rescue from the fiery furnace, and the foretelling of the Ancient of Days (3:23–30; 6:19–23; 7:9–22). Daniel is also one of several books in the Bible that was passed down in two languages. The beginning chapters (1–3a) and ending chapters (8–12) are in Hebrew, while the middle chapters

¹²⁹ Beckstrom, “The Mystery of Jesus,” 77–78.

¹³⁰ Edwin A. Abbott, *The Message of the Son of Man* (London: Forgotten Books, 2017), 9–11.

¹³¹ James H. Charlesworth, *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha*, vol. 1, *Apocalyptic Literature and Testaments* (Hendrickson Publishers, 1983), 3.

(3b–7:28) are in Aramaic.¹³² This fact accounts for the two Son of Man terms being in different languages: 7:13 in Aramaic (*bar enash*), 8:17 in Hebrew (*ben adam*).

As chapters one through six are dedicated to Daniel’s historical accounts, there is a definitive transition from history to prophecy that begins in chapter seven and includes the following vision:

I kept looking in the night visions,
And behold, with the clouds of heaven
One like a Son of Man was coming,
And He came up to the Ancient of Days
And was presented before Him.
And to Him was given dominion,
Glory and a kingdom,
That all the peoples, nations and language
Might serve Him.
His dominion is an everlasting dominion
Which will not pass away;
And His kingdom is one
Which will not be destroyed
(Dan. 7:13–14).

The Book of Daniel records that this vision took place during the beginning of King Belshazzar’s reign (7:1), which scholars estimate to be around 553 BC.¹³³

Scholars continue to be divided over the Danielic Son of Man meaning in this passage, considered to be the most vital passage for the interpretation of Jesus's Son of Man self-designation. Akin to the contemporary Son of Man debate are two key interpretations affiliated with the passage: the symbolic, corporate interpretation and the individual, messianic

¹³² Anatheia E. Portier-Young, “Languages of Identity and Obligation: Daniel as Bilingual Book,” *Vetus Testamentum* 60, no. 1 (2010): 98, accessed May 10, 2020, ATLA Religion Database with ATLASerials, EBSCOhost.

¹³³ Michael B. Shepherd, “Daniel 7:13 and the New Testament Son of Man,” *Westminster Theological Journal* 68, no. 1 (2006): 100, accessed July 10, 2019, ATLA Religion Database with ATLASerials, EBSCOhost.

interpretation.¹³⁴ Incidentally, there is a third angelic interpretation where the Son of Man is attributed to a celestial being.¹³⁵ However, as the angelic argument has no bearing on this study which seeks to determine if the figure is an individual or not, only the symbolic and messianic interpretations will be evaluated.

The corporate interpretation is based on a hermeneutical analysis of Daniel's vision of the four beasts in 7:2–7. Shepherd reports that critical scholars who hold to this interpretation (i.e., Perrin, Casey) contend that the Danielic Son of Man refers to “the saints of the Most High” (7:18, 21, 22, 25, 27), as the saints are given the kingdom (7:18, 27) just as the Son of Man is the recipient of the kingdom in a vision (7:14).¹³⁶ To summarize, the argument purports that the beasts symbolize kingdoms. Therefore, the “one like a Son of Man” also symbolizes a group, which scholars assert are the saints. Shepherd, however, challenges this rendition: “The [Scriptural] interpretation makes it clear that the beasts symbolize kings, not kingdoms [‘These great beasts, which are four in number, are four kings who will arise from the earth,’ Dan 7:17]. To be sure, kings and kingdoms are somewhat inseparable in Daniel (cf. Dan 7:23), but they are also distinct.”¹³⁷

Shepherd also points out that the greatest challenge with the corporate interpretation can be found in 7:14, where it states that all the people on the face of the earth will worship the Son of Man. “How can the saints possibly be the objects of this worship?” asks Shephard; “Not only would this be a blasphemous notion to the author of Daniel, but also it would make for an

¹³⁴ Shepherd, “Daniel 7:13,” 99.

¹³⁵ Grabbe, “Son of Man,” 182n22.

¹³⁶ Shepherd, “Daniel 7:13,” 100.

¹³⁷ Ibid.

internal contradiction.”¹³⁸ Curiously, none of the critical scholars argue that the Ancient of Days figure in Daniel is symbolic as a corporate entity, so it is unclear why the Son of Man would be any different.

According to Casey, the corporate interpretation of Dan 7:13 is taken from a commentary on Daniel written by Abraham ibn Ezra (1089–1164).¹³⁹ While Casey maintains that ibn Ezra’s sources stem from only two passages of Second Temple period texts, he reluctantly admits that the symbolic, corporate interpretation is far “outnumbered” by other rabbinical literature that supports the individual, messianic interpretation.¹⁴⁰ In response to this disproportionate literary playing field, Perrin counters that the messianic interpretation of Dan 7:13 should not be considered valid, as he maintains that *all* messianic Son of Man sayings originated in early Christianity’s post-Resurrection period.¹⁴¹

Historically attested, the individual, messianic interpretation of Dan 7:13 was favored by the earliest interpretations of the text that were read in Jesus’s day. Burkett records that, “Jewish interpreters close to the time of Jesus identified the figure as the Messiah. Thus, whether the Danielic figure originally represented the Messiah or not, numerous scholars have believed that the expression ‘Son of Man’ in the Gospels refers to this figure understood in a messianic sense.”¹⁴² Collins also adds that the two earliest Second Temple period interpretations of Daniel 7 originated in the *Similitudes of Enoch* and *4 Ezra* 13. “Both these passages,” declares Collins,

¹³⁸ Shepherd, “Daniel 7:13,” 101.

¹³⁹ Maurice Casey, “The Corporate Interpretation of ‘One Like a Son of Man’ (Dan. VII 13) at the Time of Jesus,” *Novum Testamentum* 18, no. 3 (1976): 179, accessed May 29, 2020, ATLA Religion Database with ATLASerials, EBSCOhost.

¹⁴⁰ *Ibid.*

¹⁴¹ Collins and Collins, *King and Messiah*, 167.

¹⁴² Burkett, *Son of Man Debate*, 23.

“assume that Daniel’s ‘one like a son of man’ is an individual,”¹⁴³ and both also utilize the expression ‘messiah’ with reference to him.

While contemporary scholarship has not yet come to a consensus on the Dan 7:13 interpretations, Shepherd believes that “the most likely conclusion remains that the figure in Dan 7:13 was intended to be understood by those who knew Scripture,”¹⁴⁴ specifically, the Hebrew Scriptures. Thus, Shepherd concludes that it is highly likely that Jesus, as well as the NT authors, understood the term to reference an individual, messianic figure from Scripture. Equally significant to the argument for the Dan. 7:13 messianic interpretation (and this thesis) is the pre-existent and transcendent Son of Man figure depicted in the *Similitudes of Enoch*, which is one of many literary squares on the Second Temple Judaism chessboard.

The Similitudes of 1 Enoch

The Jewish Tanakh (OT) is a collection of twenty-four books which date from approximately the twelfth to the third centuries BC.¹⁴⁵ As is the case with many ancient writings, the origins and history of the OT canon are a point of contention in academia. Timothy Lim states that while scholarly opinion is divided, there are two fundamental positions that have drawn both supporters and critics: “Sid Leiman and Roger Beckwith argue that the canon was closed by the second century BC, whereas Albert Sunberg and John Barton maintain that it remained open well into the first centuries of the Common Era.”¹⁴⁶ There are, however, other

¹⁴³ Collins, *Scepter and the Star*, 188.

¹⁴⁴ Shepherd, “Daniel 7:13,” 111.

¹⁴⁵ Henze, *Mind the Gap*, 16.

¹⁴⁶ Timothy Lim, *The Formation of the Jewish Canon* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2013), 179.

Jewish writings from the Second Temple period which were omitted from the OT and the NT; these writings are known as the Apocrypha and the Pseudepigrapha books.

The Apocrypha (meaning “hidden or obscure” in Greek) are Jewish books from the Second Temple era which were not preserved in the Tanakh.¹⁴⁷ Henze states that when the ancient scribes set out to translate their Jewish Scriptures into Greek, “The collection of books they translated included some books that are not included in the Hebrew Jewish Bible.”¹⁴⁸ Yet, the Apocrypha books *are* included in the Latin (Vulgate) and Greek (Septuagint) Old Testaments, and they are still considered an integral part of the canon of both Roman Catholic and Orthodox churches.¹⁴⁹

The term Pseudepigrapha (meaning “falsely attributed” in Greek) was given to Jewish writings of the same period that are *not* part of the Hebrew Scriptures, the Septuagint, or the New Testament.¹⁵⁰ Mirroring the common practice in Greco-Roman antiquity, most of these Jewish writings are given pseudonyms of biblical notables such as Adam, Noah, and Enoch, even though these historic individuals did not actually compose the texts. For centuries, scholars struggled with this ancient literary practice, which they considered unethical. However, Henze purports that in recent years, scholars have begun to comprehend that “. . . to use modern sensibilities about what is or is not legitimate for authors to do and to hold ancient authors responsible to modern standards does not work.”¹⁵¹ Henze further stipulates that instead of

¹⁴⁷ Henze, *Mind the Gap*, 39–41.

¹⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 41.

¹⁴⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁵⁰ Charlesworth, *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha*, xxiv–xxv.

¹⁵¹ Henze, *Mind the Gap*, 43.

approaching pseudepigraphy as an act of forgery, scholars should consider the contextual benefits.¹⁵² For example, both the Apocrypha and most of the Pseudepigrapha books provide evidence of Jewish thought and literature during the Second Temple period, as well as offer a wealth of knowledge, insight, and understanding of the origins of Rabbinic Judaism and early Christianity. This is essential for determining Jesus's Jewishness in the first century.

An apocalyptic book that has aroused much scholarly interest in the contemporary setting is the Similitudes of 1 Enoch, which belongs to both the Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha of the OT. Second only to Daniel, the Similitudes are held as the apocalyptic writing most frequently cited as the source of the Son of Man title. In this segment of the codex, distinction is given to the Son of Man who is a messianic figure.

Following the aforementioned discovery of the Ethiopian manuscripts of 1 Enoch by Bruce in 1813, and Laurence's translation into English in 1821, Burkett reports that scholarship was content with the pre-Christian dating for the whole of 1 Enoch.¹⁵³ When the writings of the Similitudes were not included in the discoveries at Qumran, however, renewed doubts surfaced as to whether the Parables were either "pre" or "post" Christian era.¹⁵⁴ Since then, the dating consensus among academia has vacillated, but Grabbe claims that the intratextuality of the Parables appears to support the pre-Christian dating: "If 1 En 67:5–13 refers to Herod's visit to Callirrhoe in search of a cure shortly before his death in 4 BCE, this would suggest a composition in the late first century BCE or the first part of the first century CE."¹⁵⁵ Based on

¹⁵² Henze, *Mind the Gap*, 43.

¹⁵³ Burkett, *Son of Man Debate*, 31.

¹⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 27.

¹⁵⁵ Grabbe, "Son of Man," 182–183.

this and other contextual evidence, Grabbe maintains that this date for the Parables is gaining more recognition and acceptance in contemporary scholarship.¹⁵⁶

The Parables depict Enoch's visions of heaven where he witnesses the judgment of the wicked and the vindication of the righteous. One of the main figures in these visions is a heavenly mediator whose title and authority harken back to the heavenly Son of Man of Daniel 7. As Kristian Bendoraitis explains: "This figure is referred to by a number of titles, such as 'the Anointed One/the Messiah,' 'the Righteous One,' 'the Chosen One,' and most relevantly, 'the Son of Man.' This language of the Son of Man in the Parables resembles that of the individual in Daniel 7:13–14, yet is also reflects further development by referring to a specific figure, one that exercises divine authority in a judicial role."¹⁵⁷ Correspondingly, E. Isaac adds that the heavenly Messiah (1 En 46–57) called the Righteous One, and the Son of Man, is "depicted as a pre-existent heavenly being who is resplendent and majestic, possesses all dominion, and sits on a throne of glory passing judgment" on both human beings and spiritual beings.¹⁵⁸

The Son of Man term is introduced in 1 Enoch 46. This following excerpt describes a scene in 1 Enoch 46 that is analogous to Daniel 7:

¹⁵⁶ Grabbe, "Son of Man," 183.

¹⁵⁷ Kristian A Bendoraitis, "The Parables of Enoch and Mark 1:14–2:12: The Authoritative Son of Man," in *Reading Mark in Context: Jesus and Second Temple Judaism*, eds. Ben C. Blackwell, John K. Goodrich, and Jason Maston (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2018), 50.

¹⁵⁸ E. Isaac, "1 (Ethiopic Apocalypse of) ENOCH: A New Translation and Introduction," in *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha*, vol. 1, *Apocalyptic Literature and Testaments*, ed. James H. Charlesworth (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers), 9.

At that place, I saw the One to whom belongs the time before time. And his head was white like wool, and there was with him another individual, whose face was like that of a human being. His countenance was full of grace like that of one among the holy angels. And I asked the one—from among the angels—who was going with me . . . ‘Who is this, and from whence is he who is going as the prototype of the Before-Time?’ And he answered me and said to me, ‘This is the Son of Man, to whom belongs righteousness, and with whom righteousness dwells. And he will open all the hidden storerooms; for the Lord of the Spirits has chosen him, and he is destined to be victorious before the Lord of the Spirits in eternal uprightness (1 En. 46:1–3).¹⁵⁹

Bendoraitis further stipulates that the Son of Man figure plays a significant role in the Similitudes. The Son of Man is given a name by God, who is referenced as the “Lord of the Spirits” (48:2–8), who sits on a “throne of glory” (45:3; 61:8; 62–63; 69:26–29), and who judges sinners as well as saves the righteous (51:5; 62–63; 69:26–29).¹⁶⁰

The general consensus of scholarship is that this portrait of the Son of Man derives from “one like a Son of Man” in Dan. 7:13. Also accepted is the concept that the Enochic Son of Man references an individual versus a corporate entity. As Joel Marcus claims, “In the Similitudes there is no more ambiguity about whether the Son of Man figure is an individual or a symbol for a collectivity. Although strongly linked with the elect people, he is clearly an individual, *the* Son of Man, a glorious heavenly figure who has preexisted with God from the beginning.”¹⁶¹

Still, the Enochic Son of Man is not just a *cameo* figure like the Son of Man mentioned in Daniel 7. As discussed, Enoch’s Son of Man is a *central* figure, and he bears four designations: the Son of Man, the Chosen One, the Righteous One, and the Anointed One/the Messiah, which is the focus of this study. For example, in 1 En. 52:4, the text reads, “And he said to me, ‘All these things which you have seen happen by the authority of his Messiah so that he may give

¹⁵⁹ Isaac, “1 Enoch,” 34.

¹⁶⁰ Bendoraitis, “The Parables of Enoch,” 51.

¹⁶¹ Joel Marcus, *Mark 1–8: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*, Anchor Yale Bible 27 (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2000), 529–530.

orders and be praised upon the earth.”¹⁶² On this matter, Grabbe reveals that this Enochic concept of Messiah differs from the prevailing concept of the two Messiah’s in Second Temple literature. “Although there is a variety of messianic types,” declares Grabbe, “most are not heavenly figures. Instead of an earthly . . . conqueror and champion of the Jews, the Parables put forward a heavenly messiah, hidden from before creation but revealed to the righteous (48:6–7).”¹⁶³ Such conclusions from Second Temple period writings have added value to NT exegetical studies. On this topic, David Stark concurs and believes that “continued study and reflection have only stressed further the value and necessity of carefully seeking to understand the hermeneutical paradigms current in various forms of Second Temple Judaism and early Christianity.”¹⁶⁴ Therefore, to argue the probability of Jesus’s self-designation as the Son of Man in Mark being interpreted as messianic, an appreciation of the messianic expectations in Second Temple Judaism merits further consideration.

Qumran’s Dual Messiahs

Considered by scholars to be the most important biblical discovery of the last century, the Dead Sea Scrolls shed light into the world of rabbinic Judaism via the preserved ancient manuscripts of the Essenes. The Essenes were a Jewish sect who founded the Qumran community in Israel around the first century BC.¹⁶⁵ In protest of the priestly practices at the temple in Jerusalem, the Essenes chose a celibate lifestyle that was dedicated to studying the

¹⁶² Isaac, “1 Enoch,” 37.

¹⁶³ Grabbe, “Son of Man,” 184.

¹⁶⁴ J. David Stark, *Sacred Texts and Paradigmatic Revolutions: The Hermeneutical Worlds of the Qumran Sectarian Manuscripts and the Letter to the Romans*, Jewish and Christian Texts in Contexts and Related Studies 16 (New York: Bloomsbury, 2013), xix.

¹⁶⁵ Richard Bauckham, *The Jewish World around The New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2010), 6.

Hebrew Scriptures.¹⁶⁶ As previously noted, scrolls belonging to this Jewish community were found in the Qumran caves in the Judean Desert. While the Dead Sea Scrolls do not employ the Son of Man term, they do provide insight into the messianic teachings of the Second Temple period. Such information is key when considering the arguments presented in this thesis. Therefore, this section contains a condensed resume of the messianic expectations in light of the Dead Sea Scrolls. This section then reflects on how the Second Temple period's cultural context relates to the messianic hope in Mark's Gospel.

One of the challenges in discussing the topic of Messianism is attempting to come to a clear definition. Currently, there is no general agreement, as scholars employ the term in a broad sense. Nonetheless, Charlesworth offers an inclusive definition of Messianism as “the belief in a Messiah . . . an ideal person, probably a king or priest, who will bring in perfect peace.”¹⁶⁷ In this vein, some in the Essene community based their belief in a future Messiah from the line of King David on the writings of the prophets in the OT (Isa. 9:2–7, 11:1–9; Jer. 33:14–22; Ezek. 37:24–28), while others based their belief in a future Messiah of Aaron and Israel as reflected in the Dead Sea Scrolls (CD Text B 19.11.; cf. 1QS9.11).¹⁶⁸

Only five ancient writings in the Dead Sea Scrolls contain Jewish traditions about the Messiah: *The Damascus Document* (4Q265–73), *The Community Rule* (1QS), *The Messianic Rule* (1Q28a), *The Blessings* (1Q28b), and *The Book of War* (4Q285).¹⁶⁹ Collins writes that these five documents, which point to a royal and priestly “bi-messianism,” indicate a “greater diversity

¹⁶⁶ Bauckham, *The Jewish World*, 182.

¹⁶⁷ Charlesworth, *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha*, xxxi.

¹⁶⁸ Ibid.

¹⁶⁹ Beckstrom, “The Mystery of Jesus,” 74.

of messianic expectations in Judaism around the turn of the era than was apparent before their discovery.”¹⁷⁰ Evans concurs and points out that although scholars, such as Michael Wise and James Tabor, purport that Qumran’s Messianism holds a monarchy-based interpretation (“monarchic view”), the near consensus supports the dual Messiah interpretation (“diarchic view”).¹⁷¹ This concept of two anointed figures stems from the Essenes’s interpretations of the Hebrew Scriptures, including passages from the books of Zechariah, Haggai, and Jeremiah.¹⁷²

One of many eschatological beliefs in Second Temple Judaism was that, in the last days, two messiahs would come: the Messiah of Aaron and the Messiah of Israel. Of the five aforementioned pseudepigrapha, Evans states that the most authoritative writings that presuppose the messianic diarchic nature are *The Damascus Document* and *The Community Rule*. “Since these texts explain the sect’s origin, reason for being, and requirements for membership,” says Evans, “what they say about messianism should be accorded normative status, even if it is mentioned only in passing.”¹⁷³ One instance of such a mention is found in *The Community Rule*. It reads: “They should not depart from any counsel of the law in order to walk in complete stubbornness of their heart, but instead shall be ruled by the first directives which the men of the Community began to be taught until the prophet comes, and the Messiahs of Aaron and Israel (1QS 9:10–11).”¹⁷⁴ Yet, this is just one illustration among many in the Dead Sea Scrolls which

¹⁷⁰ Collins, *Scepter and the Star*, 16.

¹⁷¹ Craig A. Evans, “The Messiah in the Dead Sea Scrolls,” in *Israel’s Messiah in the Bible and the Dead Sea Scrolls*, ed. Richard S. Hess and M. Daniel Carroll (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2003), 94.

¹⁷² *Ibid.*, 95.

¹⁷³ Evans, “Messiah Dead Sea Scrolls,” 95.

¹⁷⁴ Florentino García Martínez, *The Dead Sea Scrolls Translated*, 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids, MI: Brill, 1996), 13.

reveals that dual Messianism was part of this community's eschatology, along with the hopes of restoration for the nation of Israel.

By the first century CE, the expectations of messianism varied from Jewish sect to Jewish sect. Those living during the time of Jesus could have been expecting a regal Messiah who would restore the house of David and defeat Rome, a priestly Messiah who would act as high priest, or a prophetic Messiah who would bring healing and usher in God's Kingdom, to name a few. Moreover, Israel's hope was also affected by the socio-political and religious issues of its day. On this subject, Nancy Perkins shares her observations:

The messianic hopes that arose from the political and religious turmoil of the time were maintained among the common people and directed toward a desire for impending salvation . . . The various groups that maintained these hopes were not uniform. Sometimes the Messiah was viewed as embodied in a single individual, at other times more than one Messiah was mentioned. Dual messiahs, for instance, were mentioned in the Qumran writings . . . All the messianic movements stressed a common belief that God would deliver his people from the current circumstances and provide them with freedom.¹⁷⁵

Perkins further states that such messianic movements were the only sign of hope for those who were impoverished in this Jewish culture.¹⁷⁶ The messianic concepts were manifold in the Second Temple period, and the expectations included numerous features and functions of the Messiah that were dependent upon the spiritual and theological approach of the various Jewish sects.

This concise survey of select Second Temple Jewish literary works that are relevant to the contemporary Son of Man debate illustrates the complexities of the Jewish gameboard's framework, pieces, and players. While past centuries of debate were limited to the canonical

¹⁷⁵ Nancy Perkins, "The Book of Enoch and Second Temple Judaism" (Master's thesis, East Tennessee State University, 2011), 40.

¹⁷⁶ Perkins, "The Book of Enoch," 40.

writings and the Ethiopian manuscripts, the Judean Desert manuscripts that were discovered in the caves at Qumran have illuminated the playing field with new data and new thought-provoking arguments.

The results of this analysis have revealed seven key points of scholarly agreement on the idiomatic and messianic interpretations. First, the messianic interpretation was reinstated into the debate through the general acceptance of the pre-Christian dating for the Similitudes of 1 Enoch. Second, despite Verme's claims and mistranslations, the general consensus within *Second Temple scholarship* (versus general scholarship) is that the Aramaic idiom *bar enash* is not a circumlocution for 'I' in first-century Judaism but references the Danielic Son of Man. Third, there is presently not enough literary evidence to solicit *general scholarship* support for a unified Son of Man concept during the Second Temple period. Fourth, the frequent use of "son of man" in addressing the prophet Ezekiel and the appearance of the one "with the appearance of a man" in Ezek. 1:26 have strong ties to the book of Daniel. Fifth, there were a variety of messianic figures during the Second Temple era, including the duality of a priestly Messiah of Aaron and a kingly Messiah of Israel. Sixth, the frequently designated Enochic Son of Man is a title derived from "one like the Son of Man" in Dan. 7:13 that presents a heavenly Messiah who existed before creation. Finally, the individual, messianic interpretation of Dan. 7:13 was favored by Jewish interpreters in the first century. Thus, the Son of Man term in Mark 14:62, which is recognized as the most crucial passage in Scripture concerning Jesus's Son of Man self-designation, alludes to this figure.

All things considered, the advances made to the debate through Second Temple Judaism offer insight into Jesus's Son of Man self-designation. Therefore, having firmly established

Jesus's Jewish context that existed around the NT, the game progresses by exploring Jesus's strategy through an exegesis of the Son of Man sayings in Mark.

Chapter Three: Jesus's Son of Man Tactics and Strategy in Mark

Chess is a game of strategy. With each move, a player must maneuver purposefully and engage tactically in order to achieve the game's objective: to checkmate the opponent's king. This principle is also found in the art and science of biblical hermeneutics where strategies and tactical methods are applied in order to achieve the exegete's objective: to read and interpret Scripture properly. As it concerns this thesis, a historical and literary analysis is the methodological means by which this study will achieve its interpretive objective: to determine if the results of the data collected from the exegeses of the Markan Son of Man passages support the idiomatic interpretation or the messianic interpretation.

As previously reported, the early church fathers attributed the anonymous Second Gospel to a man named John Mark, who was the son of a woman named Mary (Acts 12:12) and the cousin of Paul's missionary companion, Barnabas (Col. 4:10). The contemporary consensus of scholars is that Mark's narrative, which was addressed to the church at Rome, was the first Gospel to be written around AD 70.¹⁷⁷ According to Gathercole, the fourteen Son of Man sayings in Mark can be broken down into the following topics: authoritative, servitude, suffering, Resurrection and second coming.¹⁷⁸ To facilitate the scope of this study, select passages have been put into collective, exegetical groups that are recognized by NT scholars as sharing key Son of Man themes. The two collective groups are the three passion predictions (8:31; 9:31; 10:33–34) and the two Transfiguration passages (9:9; 9:12). As it concerns the passion predictions, while it might appear to the reader that other Son of Man passages generally qualify to be

¹⁷⁷ Robert H. Stein and Robert W. Yarbrough, eds., *Mark*, Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2008), 10–12.

¹⁷⁸ Simon Gathercole, "The Son of Man in Mark's Gospel," *The Expository Times* 115, no. 11 (2004): 369–371, accessed September 10, 2019, ATLA Religion Database with ATLASerials, EBSCOhost.

categorized in a similar fashion, this study follows the NT scholarship approach of examining the remaining Son of Man passages independently.

Prior to initiating the exegesis of the Son of Man sayings, an understanding of the two key apologetic presuppositions that are brought to this study is hereby presented to establish the foundation for each interpretation. First, Mark's Gospel is a historical (versus mythological) and summarized (versus exhaustive) account of the person and ministry of Jesus Christ. Second, Jesus's sacrificial death plays a crucial role, which Robert Stein describes as a "Passion narrative with an extended introduction,"¹⁷⁹ in the Markan account.

With this in mind, the following succinct exegesis of the fourteen Son of Man sayings expounds on Mark's depiction of Jesus's use of the Son of Man expression, and highlights the *quotations, allusions, echoes, and parallels* in the texts that are affiliated with OT and Second Temple period literature. To clarify the differences between these categories, Christopher Beetham offers the following basic definitions. A quotation is a "reference to an authority or precedent," which cites verbatim the spoken or written words of another.¹⁸⁰ An allusion is an "intentional, conscience attempt by an author to point a reader back to a prior text" with a single and identifiable source.¹⁸¹ Whereas, an echo can be a "conscience or unconscious act" performed by the author that was not intended to point the reader to the text.¹⁸² Finally, a parallel is a "substantial similarity between the two elements under discussion" when taken in context.¹⁸³

¹⁷⁹ Stein and Yarbrough, *Mark*, 33.

¹⁸⁰ Christopher A. Beetham, *Echoes of Scripture in the Letter of Paul to the Colossians*, Biblical Interpretation Series 96 (Boston: Brill, 2008), 15.

¹⁸¹ *Ibid.*, 18.

¹⁸² Beetham, *Echoes of Scripture*, 20.

¹⁸³ *Ibid.*, 25.

Subsequently, this essay will analyze the data concerning how Mark depicts Jesus's Son of Man utilization and strategy, identify any and all quotations, allusions, echoes, and parallels to relevant OT and Second Temple period literature, then conclude whether the results are plausibly attributed toward either the idiomatic interpretation or the messianic interpretation.

Exegesis of Jesus's Son of Man Passages

Mark 2:10: *"But so that you may know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins . . ."*

The second chapter of Mark is the introduction to one unit (Mark 2:1–3:6) comprised of five arguments between Jesus and the Jewish religious leaders who are in the region of Galilee in northern Israel.¹⁸⁴ Verse 10 is the first time the Son of Man title is introduced in Mark, and it is used to point to Jesus's authority to forgive sins on earth. James Edwards claims that this nondescript Son of Man first move is a tactic which affords Jesus the advantage of using the title in public without any controversial associations.¹⁸⁵ Stein contends for the authenticity of the Son of Man idiom. "That the title 'Son of Man' occurs only four other times in the NT outside the Gospels argues for the authenticity of this title. It is unlikely that the early church would have created this rather enigmatic title and ascribed it to Jesus throughout the Gospels instead of using their favorite titles 'Christ' and 'Lord'," explains Stein.¹⁸⁶ Thus begins Jesus's strategy of

¹⁸⁴ Mary Marshall, "Josephus and Mark 2:13–3:6: Controversies with the Scribes and Pharisees," in *Reading Mark in Context: Jesus and Second Temple Judaism*, ed. Ben C. Blackwell, John Goodrich, and Jason Maston (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2018), 55.

¹⁸⁵ James R. Edwards, *The Gospel According to Mark*, The Pillar New Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing, 2002), 79–80.

¹⁸⁶ Stein and Yarbrough, *Mark*, 121.

redefining who the Son of Man is in such a way that He can employ the expression so that “his hearers might discover his identity,” even in the face of opposition.¹⁸⁷

Jesus returns from his ministry expedition throughout Galilee (1:38–45) to preach at a home located in the city of Capernaum (perhaps the house of Simon and Andrew: 1:29).¹⁸⁸ During this event, Jesus heals a paralytic (2:1–12), who apparently was absent from Jesus’s mass healings that were held in that city several days earlier (1:32–34; 2:1). Unable to walk, the paralytic is carried by four men (2:3) whose resolve in battling the crowds leads them to lower the invalid through an opening in the house’s roof and position him in front of Jesus. Aware of the four men’s faith, Jesus offers the paralytic forgiveness of his sins and then heals him. (2:5; 2:11–12), thus making the connection of sin and disease.¹⁸⁹ In the first century, the common view was that sin and physical illness were intimately associated.¹⁹⁰ Yet, Jesus shows compassion and affection by providing forgiveness and healing to the paralytic whom he addresses as “son” (Greek *teknon*, “child”).¹⁹¹

Prior to the healing, Jesus asks the scribes a rhetorical question: “Which is easier, to say to the paralytic, ‘Your sins are forgiven’; or to say, ‘Get up, and pick up your pallet and walk?’” (2:9). Mark depicts Jesus as One who does not retreat from the implication of deity. On this note, Marcus comments that “the fact that he [Jesus] can discern and expose the scribes’ innermost thoughts already supports his more-than-human status, especially since God is described in the

¹⁸⁷ Edwards, *Gospel According to Mark*, 80.

¹⁸⁸ Marcus, *Mark 8–16*, 215.

¹⁸⁹ Edwards, *Gospel According to Mark*, 76.

¹⁹⁰ Stein and Yarbrough, *Mark*, 118.

¹⁹¹ *New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology and Exegesis (NIDNTE)*, s.v. “teknon.” Greek entry titles will be transliterated.

OT as the one who knows people's hearts (1 Sam. 17:28; Ps. 139:23; Prov. 24:12; cf. Pesch, 1.159).¹⁹² Therefore, Jesus's *a fortiori* argument implies that the very act of healing will demonstrate His divine authority to forgive sins.¹⁹³

The reaction of the scribes who are present is one of accusation: "Why does this man speak that way? He is blaspheming; who can forgive sins but God alone?" (2:7). The scribes immediately accuse Jesus of blasphemy, which is the same charge the Jewish leaders will ultimately employ to have Him crucified (14:64–65). In the OT, forgiveness is an assumed prerogative of Israel's God, Yahweh (see e.g. Exod. 34:6–7; Ps. 103:3; Isa. 43:25).¹⁹⁴ Marcus shares that in Second Temple Judaism, it was generally held that no one can forgive transgressions except God and that the Messiah and the high priest figures can "only make intercession for sinners and announce God's forgives to them; God himself remains the actual agent of forgiveness."¹⁹⁵ However, a fragment of a Qumran text, the *Prayer of Nabonidus*, is believed to claim that an exorcist or diviner forgives Nabonidus' sins. This reading is a subject of scholarly debate, as the interpretations are unclear whether God or a human being is the forgiving agent.¹⁹⁶ Yet to date, the data supports God, rather than a human, administering forgiveness.

The significance of Mark's text is that it attests Jesus has the authority to forgive sins. Hooker writes that there is "no evidence in other Jewish literature that any man, whether prophet,

¹⁹² Marcus, *Mark 1–8*, 222.

¹⁹³ Stein and Yarbrough, *Mark*, 120.

¹⁹⁴ Marcus, *Mark 1–8*, 222.

¹⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, 217.

¹⁹⁶ *Ibid.*

priest, king, or Messiah, has such authority to forgive sins.”¹⁹⁷ Yet Jesus’s healing of the paralytic demonstrates that He, the Son of Man, has such authority: “‘But so that you may know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins’—He said to the paralytic, ‘I say to you, get up, pick up your pallet and go home’” (2:10–11). The uniqueness of this occurrence is evident by the amazement of those present, who state, “‘We have never seen anything like this’” (2:12).

In the contemporary setting, scholars like Marcus and Edwards are taking the approach of evaluating the Son of Man passages in the Gospels, both collectively and independently, to determine which interpretation (idiomatic or messianic) applies to each passage based on data support. According to Edwards, the idiomatic interpretation does not apply in this passage. “It is thus apparent,” claims Edwards, “that the ‘Son of Man’ is not, as is often supposed today, merely a circumlocution for ‘the human one.’ In the present passage (2:10) ‘Son of Man’ depicts Jesus’ authority to forgive sins, thereby alluding to the ‘son of man’ figure in Dan. 7:13–14.”¹⁹⁸ Marcus agrees and adds that “the juxtaposition of the phrases ‘upon the earth,’ ‘Son of Man,’ and ‘authority’ calls to mind Daniel 7, in which God transfers royal power to ‘one like a son of man’ who is given authority to rule earthly nations.”¹⁹⁹ Thus, this event is the beginning of Jesus’s strategy to redefine who the Son of Man is and what He came to do.

¹⁹⁷ Morna D. Hooker, *The Gospel According to Saint Mark* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1991), 87.

¹⁹⁸ Edwards, *Gospel According to Mark*, 80.

¹⁹⁹ Marcus, *Mark 1–8*, 223.

Mark 2:27–28: “*The Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath. So the Son of Man is Lord even of the Sabbath.*”

This passage is the fourth of Jesus’s five controversies with the Jewish religious leaders.²⁰⁰ The first was the accusation of blasphemy for claiming to forgive sins (2:10). The second was the offense that Jesus associated with sinners (2:13–17). The third was the charge that Jesus’s disciples did not fast according to Jewish traditions (2:18–22). In the fourth and fifth passages, the Pharisees reprimanded Jesus and His disciples twice for not honoring the Sabbath (2:23–28 and 3:1–6). These last two controversies are tied to the fourth of God’s Ten Commandments: “Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy” (Exod. 20:8–11). Subsequently, Jesus’s healing on the Sabbath becomes the tipping point for the Pharisees, who immediately begin plotting His death (3:1–6).

The context of 2:23–28 shows Jesus and His disciples walking through grain fields and the disciples picking heads of grain to eat. To the Pharisees, Jesus and His disciples are guilty of two Jewish Sabbath Law violations: *reaping* (Deut. 23:25) and *laboring* (Exod. 34:21).²⁰¹ Marcus reports that, in response to these charges, Jesus appeals to a biblical precedent and “invokes the example of David and his followers, stressing their hunger” (2:25–26).²⁰² Marcus also suggests that Mark may have other motives for citing the example of David and his men. “Jesus’ allusion to 1 Samuel 21 links the authority of a leader with that of his followers. . . . The Messiah expected by most people, after all, was to be Davidic not only in lineage but also in likeness, and Mark can affirm a properly nuanced understanding of this royal expectation,”

²⁰⁰ Marshall, “Josephus and Mark,” 55.

²⁰¹ Donald A. Hagner, “Jesus and the Synoptic Sabbath Controversies,” *Bulletin for Biblical Research* 19, no. 2 (2009): 215, accessed June 10, 2020, ATLA Religion Database with ATLASerials, EBSCOhost.

²⁰² Marcus, *Mark 1–8*, 239.

argues Marcus.²⁰³ In 2:28, Jesus's meaning is clear. He couples the "Son of Man" title to the "Lord of the Sabbath" and proclaims that He is both. Once again, Jesus positions himself on the gameboard with the authority of God. As the Son of Man is Lord of the Sabbath, He establishes what is lawful on the Sabbath day.

Donald Hagner comments that during the Second Temple period, there was a reasonable amount of consensus as to what was not permitted on the Sabbath. "The Scriptures," reports Hagner, "prohibit work on the Sabbath and further specify that work on the Sabbath is to be avoided 'even in ploughing time and in harvest time' (Exod. 34:21)."²⁰⁴ As it pertains to the Second Temple writings that relate to this passage, Edwards also adds that the Dead Sea Scrolls "preserve the most rigorous Sabbath regulations in Judaism, forbidding even the carrying of children, giving of help to birthing animals, or the retrieval of an animal fallen into a pit on the Sabbath (CD [Damascus Document] 10–11)."²⁰⁵ Hagner goes on to argue that the theological significance of Jesus's claim, which he believes is to display a sovereignty in interpreting the Torah that differs from the Pharisees's understanding.²⁰⁶ From this vantage point, the Pharisees are seen as having relied on their own man-made traditions, and by doing so, misinterpreted the Law of God.

Edwards states that from a literary perspective, the only plausible interpretation of the Son of Man saying in 2:28 is with reference to Jesus. "The Greek syntax of v. 28 is bold," observes Edwards, "and the word for 'Lord' (Gk. *kyrios*) is shifted prominently to the beginning

²⁰³ Marcus, *Mark 1–8*, 244–245.

²⁰⁴ Hagner, "Synoptic Sabbath Controversies," 234–235.

²⁰⁵ Edwards, *Gospel According to Mark*, 93.

²⁰⁶ Hagner, "Synoptic Sabbath Controversies," 235.

of the sentence, which in Greek makes it emphatic, accentuating who the true Lord of the Sabbath is. We might render it, ‘And who is Lord of the Sabbath? The *Son of Man* is!’ [emphasis in original].”²⁰⁷ Interpreting the text from a slightly different approach, Stein puts it this way: “In the present text Mark . . . understood Jesus as saying that he, the Son of Man, was Lord of the Sabbath.”²⁰⁸ Finally, on the subject of authority, Gathercole deduces that Mark’s underlining intent in both 2:10 and 2:28 is a revelation of Jesus’s authority as the Son of Man. “Here at the outset of the ministry,” says Gathercole, “the Son of Man’s authority is not *established* over everyone he meets, but it is *revealed* [emphasis in original].”²⁰⁹ This revealing will be discussed in the exegeses of subsequent passages. In the interim, the results of this concise exegesis of the Sabbath controversies reveal that this particular Markan text is consistent with the “dominion” (authority) references of Dan. 7:14. Therefore, it is sustainable that the Son of Man passages in 2:10 and 2:28 are in the context of a self-reference to Jesus and not an idiomatic rendering.

Collective Exegesis of the Three Son of Man Passion Predictions

Mark 8:31: *“And He began to teach them that the Son of Man must suffer many things and be rejected by the elders and the chief priests and the scribes, and be killed, and after three days rise again.”*

Mark 9:31: *“For He was teaching His disciples and telling them, ‘The Son of Man is to be delivered into the hands of men, and they will kill Him; and when He has been killed, He will rise three days later.’”*

Mark 10:33–34: *“And again he took the twelve aside and began to tell them what was going to happen to Him, saying, ‘Behold, we are going up to Jerusalem, and the Son of Man will be delivered to the chief priests and the scribes; and they will condemn Him to death and will hand Him over to the Gentiles. They will mock Him and spit on Him, and scourge Him and kill Him, and three days later He will rise again.’”*

²⁰⁷ Edwards, *Gospel According to Mark*, 97.

²⁰⁸ Stein and Yarbrough, *Mark*, 149.

²⁰⁹ Gathercole, “Son of Man in Mark,” 369.

The Gospel of Mark presents a collective of Son of Man passages known as the *passion predictions*. These accounts depict three separate instances where Jesus discloses His passion, His death, and His Resurrection to only His twelve disciples (8:31, 9:31, 10: 33–34).²¹⁰ The first instance is found in 8:31. This event directly follows the healing of the blind man at Bethsaida (8:22–26) and Peter’s confession that Jesus is the Messiah (8:29). This is then followed by Jesus’s rebuke of Peter who is spiritually blind to Jesus’s understanding of His messianic mission. The second instance is found in 9:30–32, which follows the disciples’ failure to cast out a demon. In several verses, Mark highlights the disciples’ spiritual blindness and inability to comprehend what Jesus is plainly telling them (6:52; 8:21; 8:32; 9:10). Furthermore, the disciples themselves are afraid to ask Jesus for clarification (9:32). Instead, they proceed to quarrel over a more pleasant topic: who among them will be the greatest in God’s kingdom (9:33–37). The third and final instance in 10:32–34 is positioned between Peter’s declaration that the disciples have left everything to follow Jesus (10:28), and James and John’s mother’s request to have her two sons sit at Jesus’s left and right when He comes into His glory (10:37).

With respect to the idiomatic interpretation, modern-day scholarship concurs that these Son of Man passages are best understood as a title for Jesus.²¹¹ Burkett claims that scholars such as Casey, Lindars, and Bauckham “recognize that the expression must be a title,” yet they deny that Jesus could have predicted His death, and therefore ascribe the thrice-repeated passages to later editorials by the early Church.²¹² In response to their allegation, Edwards counters that the

²¹⁰ Edwards, *Gospel According to Mark*, 252.

²¹¹ Burkett, *Son of Man Debate*, 93.

²¹² *Ibid.*

“differences among the three predictions argue for their originality with Jesus,” and that the passages reliable preservation is attributed to the memory of the church.²¹³

Mark 8:31	Mark 9:31	Mark 10:32–34
And He began to teach them that	For He was teaching His disciples and telling them	And again He took the twelve aside and began to tell them what was going to happen to Him
the Son of Man	the Son of Man	the Son of Man
must suffer many things and be rejected	is to be delivered	will be delivered
by the elders and the chief priests and the scribes	into the hands of men	to the chief priests and the scribes
		and they will condemn Him to death
		and will hand Him over to the Gentiles
		They will mock Him and spit on Him and scourge Him
and be killed	and they will kill Him	and kill Him
and after three days rise again	and . . . He will rise three days later	and three days later He will rise again

As shown in *Figure 1*, in Mark’s three passion predictions, Jesus teaches and foretells four crucial and repeated events in each passage. These texts disclose that the Son of Man must:

- 1) Suffer many things.
- 2) Be rejected by the Jewish authorities.
- 3) Be killed.
- 4) Rise again after three days.²¹⁴

*Figure 1: Marcus’s Son of Man Three Passion Predictions (NASB).*²¹⁵

These passion predictions are a pivotal play in Mark’s Gospel. Immediately after Peter’s confession that Jesus is the long-awaited Messiah (8:29), Jesus begins to divulge to the twelve disciples his secret identity as the messianic Son of Man to reveal His mission and demonstrate the true meaning of discipleship. This undisclosed theme is commonly referred to by scholars as “the messianic secret motif.”²¹⁶

²¹³ Edwards, *Gospel According to Mark*, 320.

²¹⁴ Gregg S. Morrison, *The Turning Point in the Gospel of Mark: A Study in Markan Christology* (Cambridge: James Clarke, 2015), 88.

²¹⁵ Figure 1 copied from Joel Marcus, *Mark 8–16: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*, The Anchor Yale Bible 27A (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2000), 604.

²¹⁶ Marcus, *Mark 8–16*, 525.

As noted earlier, at the beginning of the twentieth century, William Wrede's *The Messianic Secret* argued the nature of the Second Gospel to be one of reconstructing the Historical Jesus. Wrede's publication was met with immediate criticism by scholars, including Albert Schweitzer (*The Quest for the Historical Jesus*). Marcus states that "while such scholars, including Bultmann (*Theology of the New Testament*), have argued that the passion predictions are 'prophecies-after-the-fact' due to their detailed similarity to what actually happened, there are others—such as Jeremias (*New Testament Theology*) and Allison (*End*)—who have argued that they contain a historical core."²¹⁷ Marcus further stipulates that it is conceivable that an "apocalyptic prophet could well have expected his martyrdom as part of the end-time sufferings of the people of God," which corresponds to Judaism's core beliefs concerning a resurrection.²¹⁸

The distinctiveness of Mark's depiction of discipleship in the passion predictions can also be illuminated through a parallel to Second Temple writings, such as the Dead Sea Scrolls. For instance, Jeffrey Aernie remarks that one of the fundamental texts of the Dead Sea Scrolls for discerning the composition of this segment of Second Temple Judaism is the aforementioned *Rule of the Community* (1QS) documents.²¹⁹

At the beginning of Mark's narrative, he declares Jesus to be the Messiah and "the Son of God" (1:1). Until the first passion prediction (8:31), the author has kept this revelation hidden. Peter's confession (8:29) is the game changer that opens up the board for Jesus to speak

²¹⁷ Marcus, *Mark 8–16*, 604.

²¹⁸ *Ibid.*

²¹⁹ Jeffrey W. Aernie, "Rule of the Community and Mark 9:30–50: Discipleship Reordered," in *Reading Mark in Context: Jesus and Second Temple Judaism*, ed. Ben C. Blackwell, John Goodrich, and Jason Maston (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2018), 145.

“plainly” (Greek *parrēsia*, “speak openly”) about His identity and mission (8:32).²²⁰ For the twelve disciples, the connection between a suffering Messiah is lost. Edwards encapsulates their psychological condition as follows:

It is a stupefying pronouncement. When Jesus finally speaks of his messianic status it is not to claim the common understanding but to redefine it practically beyond recognition. . . . Not only does Jesus not fit the messianic stereotype, but he defines his mission in scandalous contrasts to it. The meaning of his life and mission is not about victory and success, but about rejection, suffering, and death.²²¹

Thus, the beginnings of this strategic redefining by Jesus of Second Temple Judaism’s messianic expectation is directly linked to the three Son of Man passion predictions.

In sum, the consensus of scholars, including Collins and Collins, purport that the three passion predictions’ reference to the coming of the Son of Man is closely related to the Second Temple period depiction of the coming of the Son of Man in Dan. 7:13–14. “Both the disciples and the audience,” assert Collins and Collins, “seem to accept the equivalence of ‘messiah’ and ‘Son of Man.’ The messianic use of the title ‘Son of Man’ seems to presuppose a messianic interpretation of Dan. 7:13–14.”²²² Additionally, scholars such as Gordon Kirchhevel argue that the three Son of Man passion predictions contain allusions to other OT writings, including Isaiah 52:13–53:12. As Kirchhevel notes:

Mark 8:31 claimed that Jesus “began to teach them that it is necessary for the [Son of Man] to be killed and after three days to rise. . . .” Why did Mark 8:31 say that it was necessary for the Son of Man “to rise”? Presumably because the Scripture (Isa. 52:13) said, ‘He shall rise.’

²²⁰ *NIDNTTE*, s.v. “parrēsia.”

²²¹ Edwards, *Gospel According to Mark*, 252–253.

²²² Collins and Collins, *King and Messiah*, 159.

According to Mark 9:31 Jesus said, “The [Son of Man] is handed over into human hands. . . .” [which] suggests that Isa. 52:13–53:12 was still being interpreted in Mark 9:31. . . . Mark 10:32b claimed that Jesus “began for them to tell . . . the things that were going to happen to him. . . .” Verses 32b–34 clearly identified Jesus with ‘the Son of Man’ (v.33) for the reader.

Why did Mark 10:32b–34 say that Jesus began to ‘tell’ what was going to happen to the Son of Man? Presumably because 52:13–53:12 was still being interpreted in Mark 10:32b–34. Passages in Mark where Jesus tells the Son of Man’s fortune may have been inspired by Isa. 53:8a.²²³

Hence, the above internal and external evidence for the three Son of Man passion predictions is persuasive evidence that supports a messianic (versus idiomatic) interpretation.

Mark 8:38: *“For whoever is ashamed of Me and My words in this adulterous and sinful generation, the Son of Man will also be ashamed of him when He comes in the glory of His Father with the holy angels.”*

The first passion prediction of the Son of Man’s sufferings (8:31) is quickly followed by the announcement of the Son of Man’s future coming “in the glory of His Father with the holy angels” (8:38). This dialogue takes place immediately after Peter’s rebuke, when Jesus “summoned the crowd with His disciples” (8:34) in order to teach and define the true meaning of Christian discipleship. Paul Tanner emphasizes that when taken in context, “the Lord Jesus totally rejected Peter’s idea that he should abandon the notion of being killed. Instead Jesus laid out what he expected from his disciples who wanted to ‘follow him.’”²²⁴ Tanner then reiterates that both suffering and rejection are not exclusive to Jesus, so He warns those who would follow Him to expect suffering for His sake and for the sake of the Gospel (8:35).

²²³ Gordon D. Kirchhevel, “The ‘Son of Man’ Passages in Mark,” *Bulletin for Biblical Research* 9 (1999): 182–183, accessed June 18, 2020, ATLA Religion Database with ATLASerials, EBSCOhost.

²²⁴ Paul Tanner, “The Cost of Discipleship: Losing One’s Life for Jesus’ Sake,” *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* 56, no. 1 (2013): 46, ATLA Religion Database with ATLASerials, EBSCOhost.

Jesus's statement in 8:38 is directed at those who claim to be His followers, and yet are part of the "adulterous [Greek, *moichalis*] and sinful generation."²²⁵ While every generation since Adam could be considered "adulterous and sinful," the first-century generation bears the brunt of this title since they witnessed the life and ministry of Jesus Christ and they still rejected Him. Edwards underscores that Jesus's declaration not only echoes the prophets of the OT who accused Israel of spiritual adultery (Jer. 5:7; Eze. 16:32–41), but it also harkens back to Mark's account of Jesus's condemnation of the Pharisees and the scribes in 7:6: "This people honors me with their lips, but their heart is far from me" (Isa. 29:13).²²⁶ These same religious leaders of Israel would later ostracize, threaten, arrest, and stone those who were not ashamed to confess Jesus as Messiah.

Remarkably, the Greek word for "ashamed" (*epaischynomai*) in Mark is only found in this passage, and it refers not to emotions or feelings, but to denying Jesus Christ in times of persecution.²²⁷ "The consequence of being ashamed of/denying Jesus," explains Stein, "is that at the final judgement he will be ashamed of/deny us!" Therefore, attempts to disguise one's faith are synonymous to being ashamed of Christ and will result in a disavowal by the Son of Man at His Second Coming. On the other hand, those who hold to the faith and are not ashamed to profess Christ will be vindicated at the Son of Man's return.

The significance of the Son of Man title in this passage is two-fold. First, the statement "in the glory of His Father" ties the Son of Man to the messianic "Son of God" title in 1:1. Some scholars, like Hooker, hypothesize that Jesus was referring to a forthcoming individual and that

²²⁵ *NIDNTTE*, s.v. "moicheuō."

²²⁶ Edwards, *Gospel According to Mark*, 259.

²²⁷ *NIDNTTE*, s.v. "epaischynomai."

the “of His Father” phrase is, therefore, a Markan redaction.²²⁸ Other scholars, such as Stein, counter that the inclusion of the 8:38 passage in other Gospels (Matt. 16:27 and Luke 9:26) implies that it is traditional and the saying refers to Jesus exclusively.²²⁹ Furthermore, the Son of Man’s role in the First Gospel is more explicit than Mark, as Matthew writes: “For the Son of Man is going to come in the glory of His Father with His angels,” then Matthew adds, “and will then repay every man according to his deeds.” This extension of the passage in Matthew echoes Ps. 62:12 concerning God’s judgement in the context of His power and glory.²³⁰

Correspondingly, the second significant aspect of the phrase “in the glory of His Father” in 8:38 ties the Son of Man title to the authority to judge as well as to forgive sins. Once again, the allusion to Dan. 7:13–14 is present, as the Danielic Son of Man receives *dominion, glory, and a kingdom* from the *Ancient of Days*. Kirchhevel argues that Mark echoes the authoritative and military coming of the Messiah as depicted in Isa. 5:26–30.²³¹ By the same token, the parallels of Son of Man in the Parables of Enoch also exercise divine authority in a judicial capacity. The Enochic Son of Man is named by God (1 En. 48:2–8), sits on a “throne of glory” (45:3; 61:8; 62–63; 69:26–29), and judges the unrighteous and sinners while saving the righteous (51:5; 62–63; 69:26–29).²³² Bendoraitis describes a judicial scene from 1 En. 62–63 as follows:

The kings and mighty of the earth fall down on their faces, helplessly hoping to receive mercy from the Son of Man at the final eschatological assize. Instead they are delivered to the angels of punishment as a spectacle to the righteous, who, clothed in garments of glory, dwell with the Son of Man forever.

²²⁸ Hooker, *Gospel Saint Mark*, 210.

²²⁹ Stein and Yarbrough, *Mark*, 409.

²³⁰ Tanner, “The Cost of Discipleship,” 57.

²³¹ Kirchhevel, “Son of Man Passages,” 184.

²³² Bendoraitis, “The Parables of Enoch,” 51.

Importantly, the punishment exacted will be permanent, with no apparent opportunity for forgiveness being made available to the wicked: ‘And the sum of judgement was given unto the Son of Man, and he caused the sinners to pass away and be destroyed from off the face of the earth’ (69:27).²³³

This depiction of the Son of Man in 1 Enoch as judge illustrates an expansion from the Danielic Son of Man and a parallel to Mark’s application of the term in 8:38.

Given the allusions by Mark to Dan. 7:13–14, echoes of Isa. 5:26–30, and the parallels in the Parables of Enoch, it seems reasonable that the Son of Man would also have the authority to judge. Insofar as it concerns Jesus’s self-identification as the messianic Son of Man, Tertullian concluded that this Son of Man passage in Mark 8:38 speaks only of Jesus, and he emphasized this conviction when he wrote, “He who judges also absolves.”²³⁴ Hence, taking into consideration all the aforementioned data, along with the larger context of the passage of Jesus’s rebuke of Peter for rejecting His self-referencing prophecy of rejection, suffering, death (8:31–32), the consensus that the Son of Man “ashamed” passage references Jesus exclusively is most plausible.

Mark 9:9, 12: *“As they were coming down from the mountain, He gave them orders not to relate to anyone what they had seen, until the Son of Man rose from the dead. . . . And He said to them, ‘Elijah does first come and restore all things. And yet how is it written of the Son of Man that He will suffer many things and be treated with contempt?’”*

Mark 9:1–13 briefly describes the transfiguration of Jesus on a high mountain with only three of the twelve disciples: Peter, James, and John (9:2). Mark points his readers to the fact that, despite Jesus’s human appearance, His very nature is divine. The transfiguration account occurs right after Peter’s confession (8:27–30), Jesus’s first passion prediction (8:31), Jesus’s

²³³ Bendoraitis, “The Parables of Enoch,” 51.

²³⁴ Tertullian, *The Sacred Writings of Tertullian*, trans. Peter Holmes and Sidney Thelwall (Altenmünster, Germany: Jazzybee Verlag, 2017), 421.

call to—and redefinition of—discipleship (8:34–38), and Jesus’s assurance that some standing around Him in the “crowd with His disciples” (8:34) would “not taste death until they see the kingdom of God after it has come with power” (9:1).

Six days later, the three terrified disciples make their way down a mountain after having witnessed the revelation of a transfigured and glorified Jesus Christ, the appearance of two of Israel’s greatest prophets, Elijah and Moses, and the overshadowing and eternal voice of Yahweh in a cloud radiating His *shekinah* glory. As proposed by Robert Price, Mark portrays Peter, James and John as “special guardians of private revelation.”²³⁵ During of their descent, Jesus “gave them orders” not to tell anyone of their mountaintop experience “until the Son of Man rose from the dead” (9:9). This is Jesus’s last command of messianic secrecy in Mark and also the only command in Mark that is affiliated with a time limit.²³⁶ Moreover, this passage is what Wrede utilized to develop his *Messianic Secret* polemic to affiliate all of the Son of Man sayings in Mark to secrecy.²³⁷ However, Heikki Räisänen challenged and defeated Wrede’s assumptions by illustrating that the messianic secret in 9:9 is tailored only to the transfiguration discourse.²³⁸

Verse 10 portrays the disciples as perplexed by Jesus’s “until the Son of Man rose from the dead” statement. As for why they are in this state of confusion, Marcus explains that “the disciples are not confused about the concept of the general resurrection, but about Jesus’s prophecy of his resurrection from among the dead, apparently apart from the general

²³⁵ Robert M. Price, *The Incredible Shrinking Son of Man: How Reliable Is the Gospel Tradition?* (Amherst, NY: Prometheus Books, 2003), 201.

²³⁶ Stein and Yarbrough, *Mark*, 423.

²³⁷ *Ibid.*

²³⁸ *Ibid.*

resurrection.”²³⁹ During the Second Temple period, Jewish doctrine concerning the resurrection of the dead was vague at best.²⁴⁰ Nonetheless, the disciples had just witnessed a preview of the resurrection through the transfiguration, but were still blind to the concept of a suffering Messiah. In this regard, Edwards maintains that Jesus’s command in 9:9 serves two purposes. The first is to enforce that “the cross and resurrection are the only vantage point from which Jesus’s [Son of Man] life and ministry can be understood according to their divine purposes.”²⁴¹ The second highlights the spiritually-impaired vision and dullness of the disciples and how fellowship is solely based on Christ’s calling. “Discipleship,” claims Edwards, “does not depend on . . . knowledge and understanding,” but simply on following where Jesus leads.²⁴²

Marcus contends that the mere mention of the general resurrection turns the disciples’ minds toward biblical prophecy stemming from the Second Temple era OT writings of Malachi.²⁴³

Remember the law of Moses My servant, even the statutes and ordinances which I commanded him in Horeb for all Israel. Behold, I am going to send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and terrible day of the Lord. He will restore the hearts of the fathers to their children and the hearts of the children to their fathers, so that I will not come and smite the land with a curse (Mal. 4:4–6).

Mark was familiar with the end times Jewish traditions associated with Elijah (Mal. 4:5–6) and Moses (Deut. 18:18), as were Peter, James, and John (9:12). Therefore, as both Elijah and Moses were present at Jesus’s transfiguration, this prompted a theological question from the disciples:

²³⁹ Marcus, *Mark 8–16*, 643.

²⁴⁰ Edwards, *Gospel According to Mark*, 273.

²⁴¹ *Ibid.*

²⁴² Edwards, *Gospel According to Mark*, 273–274.

²⁴³ Marcus, *Mark 8–16*, 643.

“Why is it that the scribes say that Elijah must come first?” (9:11). To the disciples’ credit, this question is relevant in light of the Scriptures and their recent mountaintop experience.

Jesus replied with a rhetorical question that includes an unexpected and self-revealing connection. “Elijah does first come and restore all things. And yet how is it written of the Son of Man that He will suffer many things and be treated with contempt?” (9:12). David Akin describes what he considers to be a redefining “Son of Man” move by Jesus:

The same divine Scriptures that predicted the coming of Elijah prior to the Day of the Lord also predicted a suffering Messiah. How did they [the disciples] miss Psalms 16; 22; 110; Isaiah 52:13–53:12? Read the whole of the Old Testament in light of Genesis 3:15, and all of it unfolds from there. The Son of Man will suffer, be treated with contempt, be killed, and then rise from the dead.”²⁴⁴

In this context, Matthew’s Gospel expands on Mark 9:12 by alluding to the fact that Elijah did come in the person of John the Baptist (Matt. 17:12–13). Like Israel’s ancient prophets before him, the Jewish leaders rejected John’s message and allowed him to suffer and die. In like manner and to fulfill the Scriptures, Jesus as the messianic Son of Man would also be rejected, suffer, and die, but would be individually and gloriously resurrected.

Last but not least, one particular verse in the context of Mark’s transfiguration account offers additional insight into Mark’s depiction of Jesus as the Son of Man: “And He [Jesus] was transfigured before them; and His [Jesus’s] garments became radiant and exceedingly white, as no launderer on earth can whiten them” (9:3). In Second Temple literature surveyed, there is only one figure whose attire matches this description, and that figure is the Ancient of Days: “the Ancient of Days took His seat; His vesture was like white snow and the hair on His head like pure wool” (Dan. 7:9).

²⁴⁴ Daniel L. Akin, *Christ-Centered Exposition: Exalting Jesus in Mark* (Nashville, TN: B&H Publishing Group, 2014), 183.

In the OT, Dan. 7:9 is the only text that offers this particular description of Yahweh. In the NT, angels are also described as being clothed in robes that are white and radiant. However, in the book of Revelation the apostle John records a vision of “one like a son of man . . . [and] His head and His hair were white like white wool, like snow” (Rev. 1:12–14). John’s description of “a son of man” with hair as white as wool, and Mark’s description of Jesus’s clothing being “radiant and exceedingly white” reinforce Mark’s claim that Jesus is both the Christ (messianic Son of Man) and the Son of God (1:1). Grindheim agrees and states, “When Mark adds that Jesus’s clothes were ‘whiter than anyone in the world could bleach them,’ it may be another indication of Jesus’s nonearthly (in other words, heavenly) nature.²⁴⁵ In sum, Mark’s depiction of Jesus as the Son of Man in chapter nine both illustrates and teaches that He is Israel’s Messiah who is the fulfillment of the Law (Moses) and the Prophets (Elijah). As God’s one and only Son, He would suffer, die, and then reign over God’s kingdom in glory.

Mark 10:45: *“For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many.”*

Succeeding the third Son of Man passion prediction (10:33–34) is the above Son of Man passage (10:45). Considered by scholars to be a key verse in Mark’s Gospel, this passage merits an independent analysis versus inclusion into the aforementioned collective of passion predictions.²⁴⁶ As illustrated in previous Son of Man passage exegeses, the first main theme in Mark’s Gospel is Jesus’s authority. The second main theme, found in 10:45, is Jesus’s servanthood and leadership. As will be examined, when compared to Second Temple Judaism’s

²⁴⁵ Sigurd Grindheim, “Sirach and Mark 8:27–9:13: Elijah and the Eschaton,” in *Reading Mark in Context: Jesus and Second Temple Judaism*, ed. Ben C. Blackwell, John Goodrich, and Jason Maston (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2018), 134.

²⁴⁶ Akin, *Exalting Jesus in Mark*, 228.

eschatological leadership rules, the accounts in Mark 10:42–45 depict Jesus employing the Son of Man idiom as a self-designation. In this context, Jesus teaches His twelve disciples the meaning of what some scholars considered to be a radical and paradoxical form of honor, leadership, and service that Jesus, as the messianic Son of Man, would demonstrate through His suffering and sacrificial death.²⁴⁷

Paradox, which follows several of Jesus’s Son of Man statements, is an important and recurring rhetorical feature in Mark. For example, in chapter eight Jesus claims that “whoever wishes to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake and the gospel’s will save it” (8:35). Similarly, in chapters nine and ten Jesus declares: “If anyone wants to be first, he shall be last of all and servant of all” (9:35), and “many who are first will be last, and the last, first” (10:31). Narry Santos defines a paradox as “an apparently self-contradictory rhetorical statement or concept that deviates from accepted opinion.”²⁴⁸ Jesus’s statement in chapter ten, “For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many” (10:45), delivers a direct Son of Man messianic paradox and presents a lesson about Jesus’s call to His followers to be one of servitude and sacrifice. Francis Moloney underscores the self-referencing aspect found in this passage when he writes, “it becomes clear in 10:45 that Jesus does not ask suffering and service from his disciples as a distant lawgiver. He, the Son of Man, leads the way. . . . Jesus is the Son of Man,”²⁴⁹ and His service will take the form of self-giving unto death.

²⁴⁷ John C. Hutchinson, “Servanthood: Jesus’ Countercultural Call to Christian Leaders,” *Bibliotheca Sacra* 166, no. 661 (January 2009): 54, accessed June 28, 2020, ATLA Religion Database with ATLASerials, EBSCOhost.

²⁴⁸ Narry F. Santos, *Slave of All: The Paradox of Authority and Servanthood in the Gospel of Mark*, Library of New Testament Studies 237 (New York: Sheffield Academic Press, 2003), 2–3.

²⁴⁹ Francis J. Moloney, *The Gospel of Mark: A Commentary* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2012), 92.

Mark 10:32 opens with Jesus leading the way on the road to Jerusalem with His fearful disciples following behind. This occurs shortly after Peter’s declaration that “we have left everything and followed you” (9:28), to which Jesus responds that the sacrifices of Peter and the other disciples will be rewarded a hundred fold both in this world and in the next (10:29–30). In a horizontal Gospel comparison, Matthew expounds on Jesus’s words during this exchange noting that “you who have followed Me, in the regeneration when the Son of Man will sit on His glorious throne, you also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel” (Matt. 19:28). Nevertheless, Mark’s narration of the disciples’ fear about the future provides an opportunity for Jesus to privately teach them what is going to happen in the context of all three passion predictions (8:31; 9:31; 10:33–34).

With a disregard for the *suffering and death* aspects of Jesus’s revelation, the brothers James and John, along with the help of their mother—the sister of Jesus’s mother Mary (Matt. 20:20; Mark 15:40)—seize the moment to present an appeal for Jesus to bestow on them positions of honor and leadership when He comes into His glory (10:37). Stein notes that this request reveals a partial lack of Son of Man messianic interpretation on the brothers’ part:

The brothers’ request reveals both a correct and incorrect understanding of Jesus’s messianic role. They recognize correctly that Jesus is indeed the Messiah. . . . But they refuse to accept Jesus’ repeated teaching concerning his coming passion (8:31; 9:31; 10:33–34). Thus they are correct on the *who* question: ‘Who then is this man?’ (4:41). Jesus is the Messiah, who will one day enter his glory and judge the world (8:38). But they are totally wrong on the *what* of his present messianic task (emphasis in original).²⁵⁰

²⁵⁰ Stein and Yarbrough, *Mark*, 484–485.

Accordingly, Mark utilizes the disciple's misunderstanding to expound on Jesus's Son of Man teachings that suffering precedes glory through a contrast of the honor rules of this world (10:42) with the paradoxical honor rules of God's kingdom (10:45).²⁵¹

The meaning behind the Zebedee brother's request is tantamount to understanding Mark's depiction of Jesus's Son of Man statement in 10:45. To appreciate the radical nature of Jesus's teaching on servitude, one must consider the aspects of the culture in Jesus's day. David deSilva explains that "the culture of the first-century world was built on the foundational social values of honor and dishonor."²⁵² According to deSilva, the two main components of this value system were kinship (family structure) and patronage (favours that a patron or a benefactor would bestow on someone in society).²⁵³ As James and John were Jesus's cousins, their kinship with Jesus would afford them influence in Jewish society, as well as in the Greco-Roman world.²⁵⁴

Along with this honor system was the belief in eschatological leadership, which is documented in the Dead Sea Scrolls' *Rule of the Congregation* (also known as the Messianic Rule), which was written before 75 BC.²⁵⁵ John Goodrich details the importance of its eschatological positioning in the context of the Second Temple Judaism's dual Messiah expectations:

²⁵¹ Stein and Yarbrough, *Mark*, 485.

²⁵² David A. deSilva, *Honor, Patronage, Kinship & Purity: Unlocking New Testament Culture* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2000), 23.

²⁵³ *Ibid.*, 23–24.

²⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 158.

²⁵⁵ John K. Goodrich, "Rule of the Congregation and Mark 10:32–52: Glory and Greatness in Eschatological Israel," in *Reading Mark in Context: Jesus and Second Temple Judaism*, ed. Ben C. Blackwell, John K. Goodrich, and Jason Maston (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2018), 167.

The document concerns the organization of God's people during the period following the arrival of Israel's promised eschatological leadership, both its priest and its prince (i.e., Messiah), yet prior to the final approaching battle between Israel and its enemies. Thus, what is prescribed herein is a socioreligious hierarchy . . . which was to be installed in the last days."²⁵⁶

In this vein and despite the indignation they would receive from the remaining ten disciples (10:41), when James and John request to sit at Jesus's right and left hand in His glory, they are asking for the places of honor—based on kinship and patronage—in Jesus's Son of Man messianic rule.

Second Temple Judaism's beliefs in eschatological leadership and thrones were often rooted in Daniel's prediction that "the sovereignty, the dominion and the greatness of all the kingdoms under the whole heaven will be given to the people of the saints of the Highest One" (Dan. 7:27).²⁵⁷ Taken into account, this begs the question: If James and John did not themselves acknowledge Jesus as the fulfillment of the messianic Son of Man from the book of Daniel, then why would they ask for places of honor when He comes into His glory? As scholars (such as Stein) have perceived in Mark's narrative, while the disciples' understanding of Jesus's words were incorrect, their comprehension of Jesus's Danielic Son of Man affiliation and self-identification with the Son of Man term were correct.

Another paradox is found in the comparison of similar terms in Mark 10:45 and Dan. 7:13–14. Gathercole writes of a "subversion of serving" between the two texts: "In the Daniel vision, we have 'one like a son of man', who 'was coming', with the result that after he receives power, all peoples are to 'serve' him. Mark 10:45 subverts this, of course, in that the Son of Man

²⁵⁶ Goodrich, "Rule of the Congregation," 167–168.

²⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 169.

did not come in order to be served but to serve.”²⁵⁸ Santos concurs and argues that Mark’s utilization of such a paradoxical rhetorical device serves in its own right to challenge readers to abandon worldly opinions that servanthood is in conflict with authority.²⁵⁹ Instead, Jesus demonstrated the epitome of servitude when He did not employ His authority and power for the benefit of Himself but went willingly to suffer and die to redeem mankind (allusion to Isa. 53:10). Thus in light of the above, it is likely that Mark’s depiction of James and John’s request can be acknowledged as a recognition of Jesus as the messianic Son of Man, along with Jesus’s Son of Man self-reference in His servitude-themed teaching response (10:45).

Mark 13:26–27: *“Then they will see the Son of Man coming in clouds with great power and glory. And then He will send forth the angels, and will gather together His elect from the four winds, from the farthest end of the earth to the farthest end of heaven.”*

Along with the three Son of Man *passion predictions*, Mark’s narrative also includes three Son of Man *second coming predictions* (8:38; 13:24–27; 14:62). These passages are what academics refers to as Jesus’s *Parousia* (Greek, “appearing, coming”), or eschatological return.²⁶⁰ Howard Marshall defines Jesus’s *Parousia* as “the coming of the exalted Jesus from heaven to earth,” which is an event affiliated with God’s judgement and the culmination of human history.²⁶¹ As the exegesis of Mark’s first *Second Coming prediction* (8:38) has already

²⁵⁸ Gathercole, “Son of Man in Mark,” 369.

²⁵⁹ Santos, *Slave of All*, 3.

²⁶⁰ *NIDNTTE*, s.v. “parousia.”

²⁶¹ I. Howard Marshall, “The Parousia in the New Testament—and Today,” in *Worship, Theology and Ministry in the Early Church: Essays in Honor of Ralph P. Martin*, ed. Michael J. Wilkins and Terrance Paige, Library of New Testament Studies 87 (Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1992), 194.

been performed, and as the remaining two verses each have their own distinct data to contribute to the Son of Man argument, this study offers an exegesis of 13:26–27 and 14:62 respectively.

Mark 13:1–37 (a.k.a., the *Olivet Discourse*) is the account of a private conversation between Jesus and his inner circle of disciples (Peter, James, John, and Andrew), which takes place as Jesus is “sitting on the Mount of Olives opposite the temple” (v. 3). This eschatological and apocalyptic chapter focuses on both Jesus’s teaching about and revealing of the following events: the coming destruction of Jerusalem’s temple and other disasters (vv. 1–8), the persecution of Jesus’s followers (vv. 9–13), the desecration of Jerusalem’s temple by the “Abomination of Desolation” (vv. 14–23), and finally the gathering of the elect at the return of the glorified Son of Man, who comes to judge the wicked and rule the earth (vv. 24–27). The chapter concludes with Jesus warning His disciples to continually “be on the alert” (v.35), for their Messiah’s return (vv. 28–37).²⁶²

With respect to the contemporary Son of Man debate, there are three main schools of interpretive thought among scholars concerning Mark 13:24–27. Stein shares that the first reading is a traditional interpretation with allusions to Dan. 7:13–14 that purports a literal, future coming of Jesus Christ, which will bring an end to the “space-time universe in which we now live.”²⁶³ Adams writes that the second interpretation, which is espoused by scholars such as N. T. Wright, approaches the prophecy according to Dan. 7:9–14, in which “one like a son of man” comes into the presence of God for the purpose of enthronement and points to Jesus’ post-

²⁶² Jonathan T. Pennington, “The Parables of Enoch and Mark 13:1–37: Apocalyptic Eschatology and the Coming Son of Man,” in *Reading Mark in Context: Jesus and Second Temple Judaism*, ed. Ben C. Blackwell, John K. Goodrich, and Jason Maston (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2018), 210.

²⁶³ Robert H. Stein, *Jesus, the Temple and the Coming Son of Man: A Commentary on Mark 13* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Books, 2014), 113.

mortem vindication—not his second coming.²⁶⁴ Finally, Stein claims that the third approach interprets the passage “metaphorically,” meaning that Jesus’s Parousia took place at the destruction of the temple and Jerusalem in AD 70.²⁶⁵ For the purpose of keeping to the scope of this study, only the traditional (literal) interpretation will be examined in order to achieve the goal of understanding the intended meaning of Mark’s depiction of Jesus’s Son of Man.

According to Adams, Mark 8:38 is the key to interpreting Mark 13:24–27, as this earlier reference to the Son of Man who “comes in the glory of His Father with the holy angels” is the “determinative one . . . [and] it establishes the way in which the others should read it [Mark 13:24–27].”²⁶⁶ Stein adds that when one considers the first-century context in which Mark’s readers would have understood the passage, it is evident that “they would have assumed that the title ‘Son of Man’ referred to the risen Jesus of Nazareth coming from heaven in great glory.”²⁶⁷ Similar parallels to Jesus’s Parousia in Mark 13:26–27 are found throughout the NT, such as in Acts 1:9, 2 Thess. 2:1, 1 Cor. 15:23, Titus 2:13, and 2 Pet. 3:4, to name of few.

However, Figure 2 demonstrates that the closest parallel to Mark 13:26–27 is found in the apostle Paul’s first letter to the church at Thessalonica.

²⁶⁴ Edward Adams, “The Coming of the Son of Man in Mark’s Gospel,” *Tyndale Bulletin* 56, no. 1 (2005): 39, accessed June 30, 2020, ATLA Religion Database with ATLASerials, EBSCOhost.

²⁶⁵ Stein, *Jesus: Mark 13*, 103.

²⁶⁶ Adams, “Coming of the Son,” 60.

²⁶⁷ Stein, *Jesus: Mark 13*, 116.

<p><i>Then they will see the Son of Man coming in clouds with great power and glory. And then He will send forth the angels, and will gather together His elect from the four winds, from the farthest end of the earth to the farthest end of heaven (Mark 13:26–27).</i></p>	<p><i>For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first. Then we who are alive and remain will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and so we shall always be with the Lord (1 Thess. 4:16–17).</i></p>
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Figure 2: Parousia Parallels: Mark 13:26–27 and 1. Thess. 4:16–17 (NASB).²⁶⁸

As reported by Collins and Collins, there are remarkable similarities in both texts. They argue that “the passages look very much like oral variants of a tradition” that could well be attributed to Jesus.²⁶⁹ Hence, it appears that the NT writers, including Mark, understood the “Son of Man coming in clouds with great power and glory” (10:27) as a reference to Jesus, and that they handed down these apostolic teachings in the Second Temple period’s traditional oral and written formats.²⁷⁰ Yet, the NT is not the only ancient text to contain such parallels. The thirteenth chapter of Mark also has connections to the Similitudes, or Parables of Enoch.

As previously stated, the main theme in the Parables of Enoch is the depiction of the Son of Man as an eschatological judge who brings about the salvation of the righteous, the punishment of the unrighteous, and ushers in end-time cosmic phenomena. On the authority of Pennington, the key to understanding who the Son of Man is in Mark 13:26–27 is to consider the context of the apocalyptic and eschatological teachings in Second Temple Judaism, particularly in 1 Enoch 37–71.²⁷¹ As Pennington observes:

²⁶⁸ Collins and Collins, *King and Messiah*, 171–172.

²⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, 172.

²⁷⁰ Stein, *Jesus: Mark 13*, 118.

²⁷¹ Pennington, “Apocalyptic Eschatology,” 210–211.

The shared context [of Mark 13:24–27] with the Parables of Enoch is striking. While there is no evidence Jesus (or Mark) is borrowing directly from 1 Enoch, both documents, along with others from the same time period, reflect an expectation of a messiah who will come from heaven to earth and inaugurate the new age. Mark is using familiar language and images from his own context, but he gives a particular interpretation of Jesus as the true fulfillment of all God’s prophetic promises.²⁷²

In both texts, the apocalyptic and eschatological hope of Israel is predicted, along with the person through whom these prophecies will eventually be fulfilled: the glorious Son of Man.

Mark’s portrayal of Jesus as the Son of Man and His second coming in 13:26–27 finds its prophesied origins in the messianic deliverer who was foretold in both Dan. 7:13 and in the Parables of Enoch. For this reason, there are NT scholars, like Adams, who attest that in the canonical Gospels, “the Son of Man is a ‘titled’ individual who is none other than Jesus himself.”²⁷³ As shown, Mark’s Jesus as the Son of Man in 8:38 and in 13:24–27 can be reasonably interpreted as Israel’s Messiah and His coming.

Mark 14:21: *“For the Son of Man is to go just as it is written of Him; but woe to that man by whom the Son of Man is betrayed! It would have been good for that man if he had not been born.”*

For two millennia, the Gospel accounts of the Last Supper have been among the most exegetically scrutinized passages within the Gospel Canon, as well as within the NT itself.²⁷⁴ While one might assume that the consensus among scholars on the traditions of the Passover meal would foster a unified understanding of the texts, the succinctness and allusiveness of each Gospel writer’s narrative has made the hopes of a unified interpretation quite challenging.²⁷⁵

²⁷² Pennington, “Apocalyptic Eschatology,” 215.

²⁷³ Adams, “Coming of the Son,” 48.

²⁷⁴ Joel B. Green, Jeannine K. Brown, and Nicholas Perrin, eds., *Dictionary of Jesus and the Gospels*, 2nd ed. (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2013), 492.

²⁷⁵ *Ibid.*

Such is the case with Mark, which has the shortest Last Supper account of all four Gospels. With this in mind, this brief exegesis (like the others) seeks only to examine the historical and literary components that offer insight into Mark's utilization of the Son of Man term.

Mark begins his account of the Last Supper with the disciples securing the Upper Room for the Passover feast (14:12–16). The most celebrated of all the Jewish festivals, Passover commemorates Israel's Exodus under the leadership of Moses, which included salvation of the Jews' firstborn through the (then) spreading of Lamb's blood on their doorposts so that the Angel of Death would "pass over."²⁷⁶ Mark records that during a first-century Passover meal Jesus declares a new covenant of salvation, which will be made through the offering of His body and His blood: the bread and the wine (14:22–25). While His disciples partake of the cup, Jesus states that He will "never again drink of the fruit of the vine until that day when [He will] drink it new in the kingdom of God" (14:25). Joel Green suggests that in this context, Mark portrays Jesus as alluding to Second Temple beliefs of the messianic feast:

As Second Temple Judaism understood it, the messianic feast was a celebration not only of Yahweh becoming king, but also of the people of God being ordained into a priestly order. Thus, Mark's presentation of the Jesus movement as a burgeoning temple order and the inaugural manifestation of the kingdom of God blends elegantly with the priestly and royal aspects of the Last Supper.²⁷⁷

Against this Second Temple period background, it is likely that Mark meant for Jesus to be understood as assuming the roles of both the dual Messiahs: the priestly Messiah and the royal (Davidic) Messiah respectively.

Mark 14:21, which contains two references to the Son of Man, is considered to be one of the most profound and theologically significant verses in the Bible: "For the Son of Man is to go

²⁷⁶ Marcus, *Mark 8–16*, 944.

²⁷⁷ Green, Brown, and Perrin, *Jesus and the Gospels*, 494.

just as it is written of Him; but woe to that man by whom the Son of Man is betrayed! It would have been good for that man if he had not been born.”²⁷⁸ This passage is rich with meaning as it not only reveals more of Jesus’s Son of Man strategy, but it also contains allusions to the Danielic Son of Man and an allusion to the book of Isaiah. Reflecting on contemporary Son of Man polemics, Edwards argues for Jesus’s self-designation as the Son of Man in Mark and for the connection to OT prophecy when he writes:

That the saying represents the mind of Jesus is evinced by the presence of ‘Son of Man’ (see further at 2:10; 8:31), a title used only by Jesus himself and not by the early church of Jesus. Of special interest is the statement that ‘the Son of Man will go just as it has been written about him.’ The phrase ‘it is written’ (see further at 1:2) carries the sense of divine purpose or foreordination. There is no place in the pre-Christian tradition, however, where the Son of Man is destined to suffer. The figure who is destined to suffer is rather the Servant of the Lord (Isa. 53:6, 10).²⁷⁹

Therefore, this concept that the Son of Man must be betrayed and suffer is only significant if Mark’s Jesus, as the Son of Man, identifies himself with the suffering Servant of the Lord, whose sacrifice is the prophetic fulfillment for the atonement of man (Isa. 53:4, 12).

Whereas scholars like Edwards hold the opinion that in this verse Mark’s Son of Man alludes to the books of Daniel and Isaiah, others like Stein say the scriptural consideration should not be limited to just Daniel and Isaiah, but to other OT books, such as Zechariah and the Psalms. Stein explains:

Exactly what Scripture is being referred to is not specified. . . . It is unnecessary, however, to assume that the OT Scripture must have specifically referred to the Son of Man, for Jesus used this title to refer to himself, and any Scripture that refers to his giving his life as a ransom for many or his being killed would qualify (cf. Isa. 53; Zech. 13:7; Ps. 41:9, Dan. 9:26; etc.).²⁸⁰

²⁷⁸ Akin, *Exalting Jesus in Mark*, 327.

²⁷⁹ Edwards, *Gospel According to Mark*, 424.

²⁸⁰ Stein and Yarbrough, *Mark*, 648.

In either case, the inferences of the above scholarly views lend support to Jesus's self-identification as the messianic, Danielic Son of Man in Mark 14:21, with prophetic ties to Second Temple period literature and OT texts. Last but foremost, Edwards maintains that in celebrating the Passover with His disciples, Jesus instituted not only a new covenant, but a new commemoration for His followers. "The Last Supper," says Edwards, "is, in the words of Paul, a 'remembrance' (1 Cor. 11:24; although Mark does not use the word), in which the oblation of Jesus effects the final fulfillment of what the earlier blood sacrifices dealt with only provisionally and proleptically (Heb. 7:27; 9:28)."²⁸¹ This memorial illustrates Jesus's sacrificial atonement, anticipates His Second Coming, and celebrates the imminent arrival of God's kingdom on earth in all its glory.

Mark 14:41: *"And He came the third time, and said to them, "Are you still sleeping and resting? It is enough; the hour has come; behold, the Son of Man is being betrayed into the hands of sinners."*

Mark immediately takes his audience from the Upper Room of the Last Supper to the Garden of Gethsemane. Gethsemane was located on the slopes of the Mount of Olives (14:26) and east of the Temple in Jerusalem. The name "Gethsemane" is a transliteration of the Hebrew/Aramaic words for "oil press" (*gat semene*).²⁸² Two other Gospel writers (Luke and John) describe Jesus frequently going to Gethsemane in order to spend time with His disciples and pray (Luke 21:37, Luke 22:39; John 18:2). Mark 14:41 tells us Gethsemane is where Jesus—after an anguished, three-hour prayer vigil—is publicly betrayed and arrested.

²⁸¹ Edwards, *Gospel According to Mark*, 431.

²⁸² Green, Brown, and Perrin, *Jesus and the Gospels*, 309.

Mark 14:32–42 is an intimate look at Jesus’s internal conflict concerning His will versus His heavenly (*Abba*) Father’s will (14:36) as He prays and prepares to confront the cross. For Jesus, this is a critical time of fervent prayer and supplication to His Father, God Almighty. He seeks the prayerful support of His closest friends. “The magnitude of the moment,” says William Cook III, “can be seen in the fact that Jesus takes the inner circle [Peter, James, and John] with him as he prays (cf. Mark 5:37; 9:2; 13:3), while the other disciples are instructed to sit and wait.”²⁸³ The language Mark uses in Jesus’s dialogue with His disciples depicts a deep sense of struggle: “My soul is deeply grieved to the point of death; remain here and keep watch” (14:34). Then Jesus goes a little further away from the disciples, drops to the ground and prays that the “hour might pass” by Him (14:35).

Soon after, Jesus finds His disciples asleep and admonishes them three times to stay awake and “keep watching and praying” (14:38). Yet as Jesus prays through the night watch, His disciples succumb to slumber. Cook expounds on what transpires next:

Mark brings the passage to a climax by describing three fateful forces coming together (14:41–42). He notes that in the quietness of the garden, one of mankind’s darkest moments transpired: “the hour has come,” “behold, the Son of Man is being betrayed,” and “behold, the one who betrays me is at hand.” Jesus’ resolve, steeled by his time of prayer, is seen in his response, “Arise, let us be going. . .” Jesus is not surprised, caught off guard, or unprepared by the arrival of his enemy. The time for prayer is over and the time of testing has begun.²⁸⁴

Mark’s narrative of Jesus’s night of agony and prayer then transitions to Jesus’s complete acquiescence to His Father’s will, followed by Judas’s betrayal. Yet while Jesus confronts His betrayer with resolve, His disciples abandon Him (14:50).

²⁸³ William F. Cook III, “The Passion of the Christ According to the Gospel of Mark,” *Southern Baptist Journal of Theology* 8, no. 3 (2004): 87, accessed July 4, 2020, ATLA Religion Database with ATLASerials, EBSCOhost.

²⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, 88.

As for the meaning and significance behind the Son of Man term in 14:41, Kirchhevel proposes that the key to many of the Son of Man passages, including the phrase “being betrayed into the hands of sinners,” can conceivably be understood through the lens of the following OT Scripture: Ps. 8 (Mark 2:10, 28), Isa. 52:13–53:12 (Mark 8:31; 9:9, 12, 31; 10:32b–34, 45; 14:21, 41) Isa. 5 (Mark 8:38; 13:26; 14:62b), and Ps. 110:1 (Mark 14:62a).²⁸⁵ In addition, Kirchhevel remarks that, in a first-century context, those who knew Hebrew would have been better equipped to grasp Mark’s depiction of Jesus’s Son of Man self-designations in terms of those four OT Scriptures.²⁸⁶ As previously stated, the Old Testament prophecies of Isaiah’s Suffering Servant were not widely held as a messianic expectation. This Second Temple Jewish belief is evidenced in Jesus’s own disciples, who were confounded by the thought of Jesus, whom they interpreted to be the Danielic Son of Man and Messiah, being put to death (8:31–32).

Also significant in this passage is Mark’s depiction of Jesus praying at Gethsemane to His “Abba, Father” (14:36), which discloses a Divine Father-Son relationship.²⁸⁷ The closest example of Second Temple period literature in which God is addressed as *Father* is found in the early first-century Targum of Psalms, which are Aramaic paraphrases of the Old Testament.²⁸⁸ The English translation of Psalm 89:26 in the Aramaic Targum reads, “You are my Father [*Abba*], my God, and the strength of my redemption” (89:27).²⁸⁹ Hence, the “Son of God” (Mark 1:1) can be understood in Mark against the background of the suffering “Son of Man,” who

²⁸⁵ Kirchhevel, “Son of Man Passages,” 187.

²⁸⁶ *Ibid.*

²⁸⁷ Green, Brown, and Perrin, *Jesus and the Gospels*, 310.

²⁸⁸ Nijay K. Gupta, “The Babylonian Talmud and Mark 14:26–52: Abba, Father!,” in *Reading Mark in Context: Jesus and Second Temple Judaism*, ed. Ben C. Blackwell, John K. Goodrich, and Jason Maston (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2018), 226.

²⁸⁹ *Ibid.*

obediently submits Himself to His Father's will for the salvation of mankind.²⁹⁰ In Mark, Jesus reveals that the Scriptures themselves prophesied the arrival of a suffering Messiah. Peter Stuhlmacher sums up this revelation concisely when he writes, "Jesus saw himself as the 'man' or Son of Man whom God in his love willed to deliver up for Israel's salvation, and the . . . 'obedience' of Jesus praised in Philippians 2:8 consisted of his submitting to this will of God (cf. Mark 14:41)."²⁹¹ Meanwhile, Judas—as predicted by Jesus—has arrived at Gethsemane with a crowd carrying swords and clubs (14:43), and he is about to fulfill Jesus's predicted betrayal (cf. 14:18–21 and 14:42).

In terms of the chess game analogy, it could be said that Mark 14:41 is a significant revealing of Jesus's Son of Man *strategy* that was anticipated in His *tactical* passion predictions (8:31; 9:31; 10:33–34). In chess, when the king—the most important piece in the game—is under direct attack by one of the opponent's pieces, the king is put in "check."²⁹² With Jesus as the Son of Man illustrated as the *King* chess piece, Mark's 14:41 play on the proverbial dark square of Gethsemane's gameboard leads to Jesus's opponents' next move: His trial before the Jewish council, a.k.a., *check*.

²⁹⁰ Green, Brown, and Perrin, *Jesus and the Gospels*, 310.

²⁹¹ Peter Stuhlmacher, "Isaiah 53 in the Gospels and Acts," in *The Suffering Servant: Isaiah 53 in Jewish and Christian Sources*, ed. Peter Stuhlmacher and Bernd Janowski (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing, 2004), 150–151.

²⁹² Shenk, *A History of Chess*, 249.

Mark 14:62: *“I am; and you shall see THE SON OF MAN SITTING AT THE RIGHT HAND OF POWER, and COMING WITH THE CLOUDS OF HEAVEN.”*

From Jesus’s betrayal and arrest in the Garden of Gethsemane, Mark transitions directly to Jesus being tried before His accusers at the court of the high priest (14:53–65). For Mark’s readers, this should not be unexpected as all three of Jesus’s Son of Man passion predictions (8:31, 9:31; 10:33–34) foretold this scenario. Yet prior to writing about the trial, Mark shares the Jewish Council’s ultimate intent: “Now the Passover and Unleavened Bread were two days away; and the chief priests and the scribes were seeking how to seize Him [Jesus] by stealth and kill Him; for they were saying, ‘Not during the festival, otherwise there might be a riot of the people’” (14:1–2). For Israel’s leaders, an act of religious and political expediency would ensure that Jesus was killed by dusk on Friday before the beginning of the Sabbath.

In context, Mark writes that Jesus was “led away to the high priest; and all the chief priests and the elders and the scribes gathered together” (14:53). The Council’s mock trial, however, is not going according to plan. Not only are the witnesses giving false testimonies about Jesus that are inconsistent (14:55–59), but Edwards claims that the entire assembly is problematic and violates Jewish jurisprudence:

The Sanhedrin short-circuited procedures and contravened the law, egregiously at points, in order to expedite Jesus’ execution. Josephus, in fact, records a similar trial in AD 62 when the high priest Ananus convened a rump session of the Sanhedrin in order to secure the death of James, brother of the Lord. Mark’s description of the trial resembles such a session, for it does not read like a formal sitting of the Sanhedrin but rather a preliminary hearing, like a grand jury driving for an incrimination.²⁹³

As such, the Sanhedrin sacrifices its own jurisprudence to ensure Jesus’s execution.

In Mark’s narrative, the initial charge brought against Jesus is that He is alleged to have said, “I will destroy this temple made with hands, and in three days I will build another made

²⁹³ Edwards, *Gospel According to Mark*, 444.

without hands” (14:58). Green indicates that the word for “temple” in this verse (Greek, *naos*) refers to specific areas of the Temple in Jerusalem: the Court of the Priests, the Holy Place and the Holy of Holies.²⁹⁴ For the Jews, this was a serious accusation as the Temple not only was the center of worship, but also symbolized the Sanhedrin’s power and authority.²⁹⁵ Furthermore, select Jewish writings from the Second Temple period note that the Messiah would build His own temple. As Green reports, “Jewish sources indicate that some Jews believed that the Messiah would build another temple (*Targum Zech.* 6:12; *Targum Isa.* 53.5), while others held that God would build a new temple (Jub. 1:17).”²⁹⁶ Edwards states that according to 1 Enoch 90:28–36, “the temple, along with the city of Jerusalem, would rival the splendor of the Messiah himself” in the Messianic age to come.²⁹⁷ While Mark records an account of Jesus predicting the Temple’s destruction (13:2), there is no mention of *hands* in that passage as Jesus is charged with in 14:58. Additionally, Mark indicates that the testimonies in this regard were considered inconsistent (14:59).

During His hearing, Jesus remains silent and does not answer His accusers (14:60–61). Edwards asserts that Jesus’s silence was strategic and that His muteness alludes to the suffering servant recorded in the book of Isaiah:²⁹⁸

He was oppressed and He was afflicted,
Yet He did not open His mouth;
And like a sheep that is silent before its shearers,
So He did not open His mouth (Isa. 53:7).

²⁹⁴ Green, Brown, and Perrin, *Jesus and the Gospels*, 974.

²⁹⁵ Edwards, *Gospel According to Mark*, 445.

²⁹⁶ Green, Brown, and Perrin, *Jesus and the Gospels*, 974.

²⁹⁷ Edwards, *Gospel According to Mark*, 445.

²⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, 446.

Frustrated with Jesus’s silence and the lack of progress during these proceedings, the high priest—whom the other Gospel writers identify as Caiaphas (Matt. 26:3, Luke 3:2; John 18:13)—questions Jesus directly and asks, “Are you the Christ, the Son of the Blessed One?” (14:61). In rabbinical tradition, “The Blessed One” is a Jewish circumlocution for God.²⁹⁹ At this moment in Mark’s narrative, Jesus finally breaks His silence and quotes OT Scripture when He says to the high priest, “I am; and you shall see THE SON OF MAN SITTING AT THE RIGHT HAND OF POWER, and COMING WITH THE CLOUDS OF HEAVEN” (Mark 14:62).

Upon hearing Jesus’s declaration, the high priest rends his clothes. According to Marcus, the high priest performs this action in accordance with the *Mishnah*, which prescribes that upon hearing an utterance of blasphemy, one should tear his or her garments.³⁰⁰ Based on the charge of blasphemy, the Council then condemns Jesus to death and proceeds to spit at Him, blindfold Him, and beat Him (14:65). This violent treatment fulfills a portion of the third passion prediction, “they will mock Him and spit on Him” (10:33–34), and also echoes the mockery and spitting prophesied by Isaiah: “I did not cover My face from humiliation and spitting” (Isa. 50:6).

Several times in Mark’s Gospel, Jesus commanded demons, His disciples, and even some of those He healed to be silent concerning His *messianic secret*. Now, at this trial, Jesus claims the messianic title of the Son of Man in Dan 7:13–14, combined with the authority of God as presented in Psalm 110:1: “The LORD says to my Lord: ‘Sit at My right hand until I make Your enemies a footstool for Your feet.’” Kelli O’Brien comments that the reign implied in Ps. 110 is one that speaks of an “active subjugation of enemies, of judgement and complete victory.”³⁰¹ In

²⁹⁹ Marcus, *Mark 8–16*, 1004.

³⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, 1,008.

³⁰¹ Kelli S. O’Brien, *The Use of Scripture in the Markan Passion Narrative*, Library of New Testament Studies 384 (New York: T & T Clark, 2010), 171.

accord, Akin also shares his insight on the significance of these two OT passages in Jesus's avowal to the Jewish Council:

Called, under divine oath, to bear witness to His true identity, He [Jesus] directly and openly affirms, 'I am.' He also identifies the Messiah with Daniel's apocalyptic Son of Man: 'And all of you will see the Son of Man seated at the right hand of the Power [God] and coming with the clouds of heaven' (v. 62). Jesus weds Daniel 7:13–14 with Psalm 110:1 in identifying Himself as the Messiah and God's Son (cf. Mark 12:35–37). Today I stand before you, but there is coming a day when you will stand before Me in judgement! A great reversal is coming!³⁰²

Thus, by self-identifying with Dan. 7:13–14, Jesus invokes the image of the supreme ruler and judge who receives His authority from God Himself. Likewise, by self-identifying with the Lord (*Adonai*) who sits at God's right hand in Psalm 110:1, Jesus invokes the image of kingship.

Taking the exegesis a bit further, Stein highlights the judgement theme and notes that Jesus's inclusion of the Son of Man "COMING WITH THE CLOUDS OF HEAVEN" refers to His Second Coming. "At that time," writes Stein, "there will take place a reversal of roles in that the Son of Man will judge those now judging him."³⁰³ The relevance of the passage points to Jesus as an exalted Messiah, which has now been made public. This declaration, therefore, puts an end to the *messianic secret* and reveals more to Mark's readers about the character and nature of Messiah than Second Temple Judaism beliefs originally anticipated. "In this [passage]," acknowledges Bock, "God revealed Jesus to be more than a prophet and more than Messiah, at least as Messiah had been conceived of in Second Temple expectation. The synthesis showed Jesus to be Messiah, Servant, and exalted Son of Man in one unifying package that older

³⁰² Akin, *Exalting Jesus in Mark*, 340.

³⁰³ Stein and Yarbrough, *Mark*, 685.

revelation had set forth in distinct pieces.”³⁰⁴ Bock’s statement parallels Collins’ aforementioned statement concerning the “spectrum of Messianic expectations” in Second Temple Judaism, which was based on the hope of a “paradigm” of king, priest, prophet, and heavenly Messiahs.³⁰⁵ Accordingly, such statements validate the analysis of Second Temple Judaism literature and its claim that consideration to such writings lends greater insight into interpreting the Son of Man sayings in Jesus’s Jewish context.

Following Jesus’s climatic claim of Deity in 14:62, Mark then proceeds to close the accounts in chapter fourteen with Peter’s denial (14:66–72), followed by Jesus’s trial before Pilate (15:1–15). In chess, when a king is put in *check* by two of the opponent’s pieces (in this context, Jesus is under attack by the Jewish Council and Pontius Pilate), this strategic move is known as a *double check*.³⁰⁶ As it pertains to the “Longer Ending” in Mark, the account continues with Jesus’s crucifixion and burial (15:22–47), His Resurrection (16:1–14), and finally, the disciples’ commission (16:14–20).³⁰⁷ The appeal in 14:62 to Dan. 7:13–14 and Ps. 110:1 serves also as a reminder to Mark’s audience that Jesus’s authority will extend into eternity. Put simply, the strategic combination of authority and suffering in Mark’s depiction of Jesus as Son of Man in 14:62 attests to His future vindication, a.k.a., Jesus *checkmates* His opponents.

³⁰⁴ Darrell L. Bock, “The Parables of Enoch and Mark 14:53–73: Blasphemy and Exaltation,” in *Reading Mark in Context: Jesus and Second Temple Judaism*, ed. Ben C. Blackwell, John K. Goodrich, and Jason Maston (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2018), 236.

³⁰⁵ Collins, *The Scepter and the Star*, 18.

³⁰⁶ Shenk, *A History of Chess*, 252–253.

³⁰⁷ Marcus, *Mark 8–16*, 1091–1096. There are those in NT scholarship who take Mark 16:8 to be the original ending of the Second Gospel and believe that the “Longer Ending” (16:9–20) was a later addition. As neither the shorter nor the longer ending of Mark has any impact on this study’s conclusions, references to the longer ending are considered valid for inclusion.

This concludes the historical and literary exegesis of all fourteen Son of Man passages in the Gospel of Mark. To reiterate, the primary goal of this exercise was to compare and analyze the latest results of scholarly and peer-reviewed sources and biblical commentaries that pertain to the Son of Man in the Gospel of Mark. The secondary goal was to resolve any interpretive issues in the text in the context of Second Temple Judaism. Having achieved these objectives, the attention now turns to analyze the exegetical data with the intent to establish whether the results rationally support Mark's depiction of Jesus's Son of Man sayings as an idiomatic or a messianic interpretation.

More Plausible and Defensible Interpretation

In a study of this limited scope, an exhaustive representation of all scholarly research on the Markan Son of Man is not viable. However, even the modest results presented in this thesis can add value to the ongoing Son of Man debate and two contemporary interpretation discussions which are taking place throughout NT scholarship. Based on an assessment by Hurtado and Owen, research on the Son of Man that offers insight into the “messianic hope(s) in the Second Temple period, the influence of Daniel 7 in Jewish apocalyptic texts, the self-understanding of the historical Jesus, and the relationship of Jesus' modes of speech to the content of early Christian faith” are considered to be “fresh and fruitful” contributions.³⁰⁸ Despite the fact that there are currently no clear-cut solutions to the Son of Man debate, the present section will show that the results of this study's exegesis satisfy Hurtado and Owen's above criteria. In order to achieve this goal, the data collected from the exegesis has been categorized to facilitate a more comprehensive review and outcome. For this reason, the below exegetical

³⁰⁸ Hurtado and Owens, “*Who Is This Son?*”, ix.

summary chart (Figure 2 on the following page) is presented to assist in synthesizing the interpretation of each passage.

Extrapolating from the results of the exegetical data, the evidence supports this study's thesis that the more plausible and defensible of the two contemporary Son of Man debate interpretations is the messianic rather than the idiomatic. In this study, Jesus's self-designation in all fourteen Markan Son of Man passages illustrates Mark's utilization of the term as a title for Jesus that expounds on the character and nature of His messiahship and mission. Contextually, Daniel 7:13–14 appears to be the primary source of the allusion in the Son of Man sayings.

Longenecker concurs and stresses that “the evidence strongly suggests that Son of Man was a distinct self-designation of Jesus,” and that in doing so, Jesus “reached back to the enigmatic figure of Daniel 7 and in fulfillment of the prophet's vision sought thereby to explicate His person and redemptive ministry in terms of glorification through suffering.”³⁰⁹ By the same token, the myriad of other aforementioned OT passages and Second Temple period texts, which are alluded to, echoed, or considered parallel within the framework of Mark's narrative (ref. Figure 3), shed additional light on Jesus's Son of Man identity and offer ancillary support for defending the messianic interpretation.

³⁰⁹ Longenecker, “Self-Designation of Jesus,” 158.

Figure 3: Exegesis Summary

CATEGORICAL DATA RESULTS OF MARKAN SON OF MAN EXEGETICAL SURVEY								
Passage in Mark	Unit Affiliation	Overall Son of Man Theme	Relevant Old Testament and Second Temple Period Literature				Messianic or Idiomatic? <i>(or titled, meaning a self-reference that could fall under messianic category)</i>	Proposed Son of Man Strategy
			Quotations	Allusions	Echoes	Parallels		
2:10	1st of 5 Jewish Leadership Controversies: Accusation of Blasphemy to Forgive Sins	<u>Authority: Healing & Forgiving Sins on Earth</u>	-	Dan. 7:13-14	Exod. 34:6-7; Ps. 103:3; Isa. 43:25; Ps. 8	(In Context) Ps. 139:23; Prov. 24:12; Pesch 1.159 DDS: <i>Prayer of Nabonidus (if interpreted as God being the forgiving agent)</i>	Messianic & Titled: <i>Edwards, Stein, Marcus. (Deity: Marcus)</i> Idiomatic: <i>Edwards and concensus asserts implausible</i>	SERVING: *1st Intro of Title. *Redefining & Expanding Role of Authority through Serving. *Begins educating hearers on identity
2:27-28	4th of 5 Jewish Leadership Controversies: Not Honoring the Sabbath	<u>Authority: Lord of the Sabbath</u>	-	Dan. 7:13-14; 1 Sam. 21.	Exod. 20:8-11; Deut. 23:25; Exod. 34:21; Ps. 8; Damascus Document 10-11	-	Messianic & Titled: <i>Edwards, Stein, Gathercole.</i> Idiomatic: <i>Consensus asserts implausible</i>	SERVING: *Expand Role of Authority through Serving & Redefining Messianic Expectation: <i>Messianic/Davidic, STJ Royal Messiah Expectation, Sovereignty over Sabbath</i>
8:31	Three Son of Man Passion Predictions & Discipleship Discourse	<u>Peter's Confession, Passion of Christ, & Discipleship</u>	-	Dan. 7:13-14 & Isaiah 52:13 - 53:12.	-	Dead Sea Scrolls: <i>Rule of the Community (1QS)</i>	Titled: <i>Casey, Lindars, Bauckham</i> Messianic: <i>Edwards & Marcus</i> Idiomatic: <i>Wrede, Bulmann, but consensus asserts implausible</i>	SUFFERING & DISCIPLESHIP: *Passion Predictions and Teaching of Spiritually Blind Disciples
9:31								
10:33-34								
8:38	1st Second Coming Predictions	<u>Jesus's Parousia, Authority to Judge, Shame and Disavowal</u>	-	Dan. 7:13-14	Jer 5:7; Eze. 16:32-41; Isa. 29:13; Mark 7:6; Isa. 5:26-30.	Parables of Enoch 1 En. 48:2-8; 45:3; 61:8; 62-63; 69:26-29; 51:5; 62-63; 69:26-29	Messianic & Titled: <i>Stein, Tertullian</i> Idiomatic: <i>Support from Hooker, but consensus asserts implausible</i>	SUFFERING & DISCIPLESHIP: *Consequences of shame & disavowel of Jesus & the Gospel *Suffering for Jesus and the Gospel *Vindication for Jesus & His Followers
9:9	Transfiguration	<u>Glorified Jesus and Resurrection</u>	-	Mal. 4:4-6; Deut. 18:17; Matt. 17:12-13; Dan. 7:9	Ps. 16; 22; 110; Isa. 52:13-53:12	Rev. 1:12-14	Messianic & Titled: <i>Räsänen, Edwards, Grindheim</i> Idiomatic: <i>Wrede's argument defeated, consensus asserts implausible</i>	GLORY: *Suffering and Discipleship. <i>Glorification of Jesus not to be revealed until Son of Man rose from the dead</i>
9:12								
10:45	KEY VERSE IN MARK'S GOSPEL	<u>Service and Sacrifice</u>	-	Isa. 53:10	Dan. 7:27 & Dan. 7:13-14	Dead Sea Scrolls: <i>Rule of the Congregation or Messianic Rule</i>	Messianic & Titled: <i>Moloney, as well as internal textual evidence based on James and John's request for seat's when Jesus comes into His glory</i>	SERVING, LEADERSHIP & DISCIPLESHIP
13:26-27	2nd Second Coming Prediction & Olivet Discourse	<u>Eschatological & Apocalyptic</u>	-	Dan. 7:9-14, Dan. 7:13-14	1 Enoch 37-71	1 Thess. 4:16-17 (closest parallel) Acts 1:9, 2, 2 Thess. 2:1, 1 Cor. 15:23, Titus 2:13, 2 Pet. 3:4	Titled: <i>Adams</i> Messianic: <i>via allusions</i>	GLORY: *Private Teaching to Inner Circle Only: <i>Glorification, Parousia, and Judgement</i>
14:21	Last Supper: Betrayal Prediction (Two references to Son of Man)	<u>Sacrifice and Retribution</u>	-	Second Temple Messianic Feast: Dual Messiahs; Dan. 7:13-14;	Isa. 53:6, 10; Isa. 53:4, 12; Zech. 13:7; Ps. 41:9; Dan. 9:26	-	Messianic & Titled: <i>Edwards & Stein</i>	SUFFERING *Passion Predictions
14:41	Betrayal at Gethsemane	Beginning of <u>Passion Predictions</u> fulfillment	-	Isa. 52:13-53:12	Ps. 8	(In context) Targum of Psalms 89:26-27; Phil. 2:8	Messianic & Titled: <i>Cook, Stuhlmacher and in context of "Abba Father" prayer - connection to Diety</i>	SUFFERING *Passion Predictions
14:62	KEY VERSE IN MARK'S GOSPEL & 3rd Second Coming Prediction	Continued fulfillment of <u>Passion Predictions</u>	Dan. 7:13-14; Ps. 110:1	Isa. 50:6; 53:7	1 En. 90:28-36	Targum Zech. 6:12; Targum Isa. 53.5	Messianic & Titled: <i>Akin, Stein, Bock</i>	VINDICATION & GLORY *Passion Predictions

In the first verse (1:1), Mark identifies Jesus as “Christ” (Greek *Christos*, “Messiah”) and “Son of God.”³¹⁰ Mark’s purpose in writing to his audience in Rome is to declare the gospel (Greek *euangelion*, “good news”) about Jesus Messiah, who is also the Son of God.³¹¹ Scholars, such as Gustaf Dalman and Wilhem Bousset, argue that the rendering of “Messiah” and “Son of God” originated from the early Christian community, or from Mark himself.³¹² Contrarily, Paul Danove states that this initial coordination of Christ and Son of God in 1:1 indicates “pre-existing beliefs that identify both designations with Jesus” and that acknowledge Jesus’s explicit Father-Son relationship with God.³¹³

Concerning these two key designations and their *titular* or *nontitular* interpretations, Craig Blomberg infers that although neither designation has the definite article in the Greek, “‘Son of God’ is titular in meaning throughout Mark’s work, so it is reasonable to assume that ‘Christ’ is too. This, in fact, is what subsequent usages bear out.”³¹⁴ Although the usage of “Christ” (Messiah) occurs only ten times in Mark (1:1; 8:27; 8:29; 9:41; 12:35; 13:21, 22, 24; 14:61; 15:32), Blomberg and Stein both state that six of these occurrences (8:27; 9:41; 12:35; 13:21, 14:61; 15:32) are strategically located in the context of the narrative to have titular meaning.³¹⁵

³¹⁰ *NIDNTE*, s.v. “Christos.”

³¹¹ *Ibid.*, s.v. “euangelion.”

³¹² Edwards, *Gospel According to Mark*, 447.

³¹³ Paul Danove, “The Rhetoric of the Characterization of Jesus as the Son of Man and Christ in Mark,” *Biblica* 84, no. 1 (2003): 21, accessed July 22, 2019, ATLA Religion Database with ATLASerials, EBSCOhost.

³¹⁴ Craig L. Blomberg, “Messiah in the New Testament,” in *Israel’s Messiah in the Bible and the Dead Sea Scrolls*, ed. Richard S. Hess and M. Daniel Carroll (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2003), 114.

³¹⁵ *Ibid.*; Stein, *Mark*, 44.

With respect to the idiomatic interpretation, Burkett's review of the *nontitular* versus *titular* arguments includes observations on the Gospel's portrayal of Jesus's Son of Man self-designation. Burkett's concluding evaluation of the nontitular theories is as follows:

The nontitular [idiomatic] interpretation for 'Son of Man' in the Gospels has been around now for about 450 years. The various theories belonging to this class have a certain appeal, because they seek to take seriously the presumed Aramaic expression underlying the Gospel phrase. They also seek to explain why the phrase appears in the third person in Jesus' mouth.

Despite their appeal, the nontitular theories lack any substantial basis. The latest manifestations, while more subtle and complex than the earliest, appear no more convincing. The basic problem with the circumlocutionary theory ['I'] was already pointed out by Strauss: the idiom requires a demonstrative pronoun ('this man') which the Gospel expression lacks. . . . While a generic interpretation of 'son of man' has also been found plausible by numerous scholars in Mark 2.10 and 2.28, applying a generic or indefinite explanation to sayings beyond these leads to forced interpretations. . . .

The time has come . . . to take stock and recognize that this line of research has not led to a convincing solution. Future research will make progress only with the recognition that 'Son of Man' in the bulk of its occurrences is a title rather than a nontitular idiom.

By validating the titular interpretations of the two (formerly challenged) Son of Man passages in Mark (2:10 and 2:28), Burkett thereby validates all fourteen of the Son of Man sayings in Mark as titles. Moreover, while Burkett's assessment of the Son of Man titular theory still holds true today, scholarship has reached the point of recognition that the titular use of "Son of Man" in the NT is derived from Daniel 7:13.³¹⁶

Another related topic that deserves a brief mention is the matter of why Jesus would refer to Himself as the Son of Man in the third-person. According to Ervin Elledge, this practice of third-person self-referencing (*illeism*) is biblically and extra-biblically relevant and provides authentication to Jesus's Divine messianic claim.³¹⁷ "Jesus uses illeism in a similar manner as

³¹⁶ Burkett, *Son of Man Debate*, 122.

³¹⁷ Ervin Roderick Elledge, "The Illeism of Jesus and Yahweh: A Study of the Use of the Third-Person Self-Reference in the Bible and Ancient Near Eastern Texts and Its Implications for Christology" (PhD diss.,

that seen in the speech of OT kings, ANE [Ancient Near East] kings and Yahweh,” writes Elledge, “and both divine and royal themes are potentially associated with this manner of speech.”³¹⁸ For example, in Num. 8:10–13, Yahweh speaks to Moses concerning the consecration of the Levites. Yahweh states that Moses is to bring the Levites “before the LORD” (v. 10), and Aaron will present the Levites “before the LORD” (v. 11). Elledge further states that even if Jesus chooses this manner of speech or the Gospel writer [Mark] chooses to present Jesus as using this manner of speech, “in each case the understanding of the associated themes of royalty and divinity is governing the choice of the third person for self-reference.”³¹⁹ Thus, the illeism maintains the same rhetorical effect.

In closing, the outcome of the preceding exegesis, together with the cross-section of conclusions from scholars who have performed more comprehensive investigations on the topic (i.e., Burkett, Blomberg), points to the Son of Man in Mark being interpreted as a plausible and defensible “title” for Messiah. This Messiah is none other than Jesus Himself. Yet within the series of hidden meanings and “plays” in Mark, the Son of Man passages establish tactical “moves” that reveal a Markan Christological threefold strategy.

Jesus’s Threefold Strategy

Strategizing is what makes chess such an intriguing game. After the memorized opening moves are played and each player has developed a plan of action, the real game begins.³²⁰ At the

Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2015), 15, accessed June 9, 2020, ATLA Religion Database with ATLASerials, EBSCOhost.

³¹⁸ Elledge, “The Illeism of Jesus,” 175.

³¹⁹ Ibid.

³²⁰ Shenk, *A History of Chess*, 104.

onset of this chapter, it was stated that—like chess—biblical hermeneutics applies strategic and tactical methods in order to achieve the goal of reading and interpreting Scripture properly. A similar technique can be applied in theorizing Mark’s use of rhetoric to reveal Jesus’s Son of Man strategy. *Rhetoric* pertains to the manner in which an author writes so as to create certain “effects” on readers.³²¹ Correspondingly, this section presents a cursory literary rhetorical analysis of the Markan Son of Man passages to ascertain how Jesus’s strategic use of the Son of Man title equally demonstrates and redefines His messiahship and the meaning of true discipleship.

Second Temple Judaism was greatly influenced by the spread of the ancient Greek culture (known as *Hellenism*), which began after the conquest of Alexander the Great in 4 BC.³²² Like all those living in the ancient Mediterranean world during this era, Jews engaged with the Hellenistic culture. Thus, the NT authors were immersed in an environment where Greco-Roman rhetoric was highly esteemed and where the principles of persuasion were taught. David Young and Michael Strickland comment on the effect that rhetoric had on Mark’s writing. “[I]t is safe to assume that the author learned to write in one of the many schools in the Greco-Roman world of the first century, where the influence of rhetorical theory would have been pervasive” and where the fundamentals of rhetorical practice would have been learned.³²³

³²¹ David Rhoads, Joanna Dewey, and Donald Michie, *Mark as Story: An Introduction to the Narrative of a Gospel*, 3rd ed. (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2012), 137.

³²² Green, Brown, and Perrin, *Jesus and the Gospels*, 378.

³²³ David M. Young and Michael Strickland, “The Discourses of Jesus as Rhetoric,” in *The Rhetoric of Jesus in the Gospel of Mark* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2017), 50.

A rhetorical strategy is an approach employed by a writer to persuade the audience and to achieve a specific purpose.³²⁴ Among the wealth of rhetorical characterizations of Jesus in Mark's Gospel, the most significant for this evaluation is a threefold rhetorical strategy that engages His *deeds* with His *mission*. This approach involves a tactical development that begins with the Son of Man who *serves* (2:10, 28; 10:45), then expands to the Son of Man who *suffers* (8:31, 9:9, 12; 31; 10:33–34, 45; 14:21, 41), and then reveals the Son of Man who, after being betrayed and killed, is *exalted* (8:38) and will be coming with the clouds of heaven (13:26–27; 14:62).

In tandem with the above threefold strategy in Mark is Yahweh's predetermined plan for the Messiah to *serve, suffer, and then be glorified*.³²⁵ Rhoads, Dewey, and Michie define this key underlying element as *The Rule of God*. As the authors explain, this rule governs the events in Mark's narrative:

In Mark's story, God is the active 'character' or force who drives the whole plot, for God takes action to bring the "creation that God created" to fulfillment: God prophesied powerful words through Isaiah; God sent John; God ripped apart the heavens and sent the holy spirit upon Jesus; God anointed Jesus to usher in God's rule; and God empowered Jesus and the disciples to do the acts of power. It is God who initiates rulership and God who brings forth the fruit of it. And it is God who will establish the divine rulership in power when Jesus returns within a generation.³²⁶

According to Danove, repetition functions rhetorically when "it cultivates beliefs for the narrative audience either by developing or by undercutting elements of pre-existent beliefs."³²⁷

³²⁴ Ben Witherington III, *New Testament Rhetoric: An Introductory Guide to the Art of Persuasion in and of the New Testament* (Eugene, OR: Cascade Books, 2009), ix.

³²⁵ Dean B. Deppe, *The Theological Intentions of Mark's Literary Devices: Markan Intercalations, Frames, Allusionary Repetitions, Narrative Surprises, and Three Types of Mirroring* (Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock, 2015), 233.

³²⁶ Rhoads, Dewey, and Michie, *Mark as Story*, 78.

³²⁷ Danove, "Rhetoric of Son of Man," 19.

Thus, *The Rule of God* in Mark serves as a paradigm of how Mark's Son of Man threefold rhetorical strategy undercuts and develops some of the pre-existent (and aforementioned) Second Temple period messianic and discipleship beliefs.

Although Perrin argues that Jesus's self-designation was assigned to Him by Mark, he still concurs that this rhetorical concept of the Son of Man has consequences not only for Jesus's claim to messiahship but also for the calling of true discipleship. "Mark employs the concept of the Son of Man," writes Perrin, "to teach his disciples to understand both the true nature of his messiahship as including suffering and glory, and the true nature of Christian discipleship as the way to glory through suffering."³²⁸ Mark uses allusionary repetition of the Son of Man multiple times throughout his narrative to redefine the nature of Jesus's messianic ministry (e.g., the three passion predictions) as the suffering Son of Man who demonstrates service, sacrifice, and the true nature of discipleship that leads to glory.

By engaging in rhetoric, Mark portrays Jesus as the main character in his historical narrative. Analogous to the chess player who sacrifices pieces to gain a more favorable position, Jesus's role as a suffering servant was a sacrificial act of atonement for sins, but it was also much more. Moloney expounds on how the threefold rhetorical strategy in Jesus's teaching modeled, and continues to model, for His followers the need to demonstrate servanthood and sacrifice.

With systematic regularity, Mark depicts Jesus calling his disciples and instructing them on the cross (8:34–9:1), on service (9:35–37), and on the cross and service (10:38–40, 42–43). Jesus concludes his instructions with the Christological foundation for discipleship: the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for all (10:45).³²⁹

³²⁸ Norman Perrin, "The Creative Use of the Son of Man Tradition in Mark," *Union Seminary Quarterly Review* 23 (1967): 357, accessed July 13, 2020, ATLA Religion Database with ATLASerials, EBSCOhost.

³²⁹ Moloney, *Mark: A Commentary*, 91.

Moloney concludes that, from this point forward, Mark highlights the disciples's unending failures to understand and Jesus's never-failing efforts to instruct them.³³⁰ Finally, Michael Bird sums up Mark's literary approach as being one that is apologetically all-encompassing:

The incipit of the Gospel of Mark includes the words, 'The beginning of the Gospel of Jesus the Messiah' (Mark 1:1), and the story ends with the crucifixion of the Messiah, the King of Israel (Mark 15:32). Whatever genre Mark thought he was writing, his Jesus-story is explicitly identified as a Messiah-story. Mark redefines the meaning of Christ (Christos) in terms of the life, ministry, and death of Jesus of Nazareth. . . . Mark's Gospel is an apology for the concept of a messianic death in light of a particular reading of Israel's sacred traditions.³³¹

Taking all facets of the presented literary evidence and scholarly analysis into consideration, it is highly probable that the envisioned purpose of Mark's allusionary repetition is to reveal the threefold nature of Jesus's Son of Man strategy, which exemplifies and redefines true messiahship and true discipleship. Thus, with Mark's strategic and rhetorical reasoning in persuasion disclosed, only a few select pieces remain on the board. As this allegorical "idiomatic versus messianic" chess match has reached the endgame, all that remains is just *one more move*.

³³⁰ Moloney, *Mark: A Commentary*, 91.

³³¹ Michael F. Bird, *Jesus is the Christ: The Messianic Testimony of the Gospels* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2012), 1.

Conclusion: “One More Move” and Lessons for Christian Apologetics



Figure 4: Friederich Moritz Retzsch’s painting “The Chess Players” (originally titled “Die Schachspieler”).

Note: This image is in the public domain.

In the mid-1800s, the Reverend R. R. Harrison hosted what is considered today to be a legendary dinner party for members of his local chess club.³³² Taking center stage at this soirée was Friederich Moritz Retzsch’s 1831 painting, “The Chess Players.”³³³ Retzsch’s inspiration for the painting was taken from Johann Wolfgang von Goethe’s early nineteenth century drama, *Faust*, which tells the tale of a young man who sells his soul to the devil in exchange for earthly pleasures.³³⁴ Retzsch’s famous painting portrays a chess match in progress. Black is played by Mephistopheles, a figure from *Faust* who appears to have the game advantage and is confidently anticipating a *checkmate* on his opponent. In contrast, white is played by a young man who appears hopeless in his contemplation of alternative chess moves to avoid defeat. Legend has it

³³² “The ‘One More Move’ Story of Paul Morphy and The Moritz Retzsch Painting,” *One-More-Move-Chess-Art.com*, accessed August 4, 2019, <https://www.one-more-move-chess-art.com/One-More-Move.html>.

³³³ Ibid.

³³⁴ Ibid.

that this etching captured the imagination of Harrison’s dinner guests, including American chess master, Paul Morphy (1837–1884).³³⁵ Morphy was so intrigued with Retzsch’s artwork that when the supper ended, the world chess champion called upon his host to assist him in recreating the chess piece configurations on a chessboard. Upon completing his assessment of each player’s position on the board, Morphy famously declared that the devilish Mephistopheles had not yet won: The young man’s king still had *one more move*.³³⁶

Allegorical parallels exist between Harrison’s “One More Move” story and the depiction of Jesus as the Son of Man in the final chapter of Mark’s Gospel. With the devil in the metaphorical details (8:33), Jesus had been put in *check* at His trial before the Jewish Council (14:62), had been put in *double check* at His trial before Pilate (15:1–5), and then was considered to be defeated by His opponents in a deadly *checkmate* via crucifixion (15:22–47). Yet, the game was not over. The *long* and the *short* ending to Mark’s story is allegorically expressed in Morphy’s revelation. Like the young man in Retzsch’s chess match, Jesus as the Son of Man still had *one more move*, and it would follow soon after His ultimate sacrifice.

In chess, players and grandmasters alike sacrifice pieces in order to gain a more favorable position. For example, in the famous 1852 chess match, “The Evergreen Game,” German chess master Adolf Anderssen played white against his protégé Jean Dufresne’s black.³³⁷ During the middlegame, Anderssen sacrificed the most powerful piece on the board when he lured Dufresne into capturing his white queen. Shortly after, Anderssen revealed his true strategy which was a

³³⁵ Shenk, *A History of Chess*, 141–143.

³³⁶ “One More Move Story.”

³³⁷ Sam Copeland, “Anderssen’s Evergreen Game: Every Move Explained For Chess Beginners,” *Chess.com*, November 29, 2019, accessed July 16, 2020, <https://www.chess.com/blog/SamCopeland/anderssens-evergreen-game-every-move-explained-for-chess-beginners>.

double check on Dufresne from Anderssen's white rook and white bishop. Anderssen's checkmate against Dufresne followed three moves later. Paradoxically, the Jewish religious establishment's proverbial *check* and *double check* moves on Jesus positioned Him to finally reveal his messianic and Danielic Son of Man identity. In Divine *grandmaster* fashion, Jesus willingly sacrificed His life "as a ransom for many" (10:45) in order to gain a more favorable position "at the right hand of Power" (14:62). Another parallel is found in the number of moves associated with each play. Anderssen's checkmate against Dufresne followed *three* moves later, and Jesus's *checkmate* against sin and death followed *three* days later. As the Son of Man, Jesus's messianic *one more move*, which is crowned the greatest move in all history, is His Resurrection. Mark's (short ending) account of this miraculous finish is as follows:

When the Sabbath was over, Mary Magdalene and Mary the mother of James, and Salome, bought spices, so that they might come and anoint Him. Very early on the first day of the week, they came to the tomb when the sun had risen. They were saying to one another, "Who will roll away the stone for us from the entrance of the tomb?"

Looking up, they saw that the stone had been rolled away, although it was extremely large. Entering the tomb, they saw a young man sitting at the right, wearing a white robe; and they were amazed. And he said to them, "Do not be amazed; you are looking for Jesus the Nazarene, who has been crucified. He has risen; He is not here; behold, *here* [emphasis in original] is the place where they laid Him.

But go, tell His disciples and Peter, "He is going ahead of you to Galilee; there you will see Him, just as He told you." They went out and fled from the tomb, for trembling and astonishment had gripped them; and they said nothing to anyone, for they were afraid (16:1–8).³³⁸

Four of the fourteen Markan Son of Man passages attest to this prophetic "rise from the dead" endgame reversal (8:31; 9:9, 31; 10:33–34). Moreover, in Mark 14:28, Jesus tells His disciples that they will see Him again in Galilee, which corresponds with the angelic statement in Mark

³³⁸ As previously mentioned in n307, Mark 16:1–8 is considered the "Short Ending" of Mark's Gospel. Akin claims that verses 9–20 are not found in the oldest and most reliable manuscripts. Akin, *Exalting Jesus in Mark*, 361.

16:7. Irrespective of the academic controversies surrounding Mark's *short* or *long* endings, both Markan Resurrection accounts affirm Jesus's Son of Man prophetic predictions: "And he said to them, 'Do not be amazed; you are looking for Jesus the Nazarene, who has been crucified. He has risen; He is not here; behold here is the place where they laid Him'" (16:6).

Over the course of two millennia, scholars have agreed, disagreed, opposed, and most recently found common ground and an overall consensus on the Son of Man problem. While the issues surrounding the idiomatic/nontitular and apocalyptic/messianic interpretations continue to develop, the final conclusion of this thesis is that the internal and external evidence herein implies that the more plausible interpretation of Jesus's Son of Man self-designation in Mark's Gospel is titular and messianic in nature. This supposition is based on the sound allusions to Daniel 7, Psalm 110, Isaiah 53, and other affiliated echoes and parallels in OT texts (i.e., Psalms, Proverbs, 1 Samuel, etc.).

As previously noted, the interpretation of the Son of Man is key to discovering Jesus's self-knowledge. Thus, with the goal to gain a better understanding and contribute intellectually to the contemporary conversations, three key Son of Man investigations were implemented in this study. The first was a historical literary inquiry that highlighted the impact of Second Temple Judaism's writings on the contemporary Son of Man debate. This survey included the books of Daniel, Ezekiel, the Similitudes of 1 Enoch, and the Dead Sea Scrolls. The second was an exegetical survey of all fourteen Son of Man sayings in Mark, which subsequently analyzed the data collected from the context, meaning, and significance of each passage. Last but not least was the literary analysis to establish how Mark's use of allusionary repetition in the Son of Man sayings revealed Jesus's threefold rhetorical strategy and both exhibited and redefined true messiahship and discipleship.

The common traits associated with the Son of Man passages in all three research studies were serving, suffering, and future glory for Jesus and His followers. These three components are the key to Jesus's Son of Man strategy and are synthesized through the mission and deeds of true Christian discipleship. Christians who engage their culture and share their faith will eventually encounter someone who is hostile to the faith or armed with one or more substantive arguments. When such encounters arise, the Christian should turn to discipleship to address any doubts and turn to God's Word to be thoroughly equipped to respond to challenges to the faith (2 Tim. 3:16–17). Therefore, in conclusion to this allegorical thesis defense, the gameboard is cleared to present a few final thoughts on how Jesus's threefold Son of Man strategy in Mark serves as a model for contemporary Christian apologetics.

Chess and Christian apologetics are not immune to the sinful effects of this fallen world. Both disciplines offer positive lessons for one's benefit and negative lessons for one's detriment. The positive attributes of chess were particularly appealing to Franklin's sense of amusement, his desire for personal development, and his passion for solving problems. In Franklin's revolutionary opinion, chess offered invaluable lessons in life itself:

Chess teaches foresight, by having to plan ahead; vigilance, by having to keep watch over the whole chess board; caution, by having to restrain ourselves from making hasty moves; and finally, we learn from chess the greatest maxim in life—that even when everything seems to be going badly for us we should not lose heart, but always hoping for a change for the better, steadfastly continue searching for the solutions to our problems.³³⁹

³³⁹ There were two versions of Benjamin Franklin's "The Morals of Chess" which circulated during his lifetime. This quote is presumed to have come from the second text, which is a summary of his commentary on the lessons gleaned from chess as found in the first version of "The Morals of Chess" in Hagedorn, *Benjamin Franklin and Chess*, 16–17. For Franklin's publishing history, see Hagedorn, *Benjamin Franklin and Chess*, 21–27, 83–84.

As idyllic as these attributes may be, the negative attributes of the game cannot be ignored. Bobby Fischer’s “crush the opponent’s mind” strategy is just one example.³⁴⁰ Such aggressive tactics are also found in the area of Christian apologetics.

Joshua Chatraw and Mark Allen define Christian apologetics as “the practice of offering an appeal and a defense for the Christian faith.”³⁴¹ In the past, facts, logic, and reasoning were the standard approach for defending the Christian faith. However, the rapid advancement of late modernism, subjectivity, and the rejection of objective truth changed the intellectual landscape.³⁴²

In the contemporary setting, Chatraw and Allen claim that the response in Christian apologetics has been more carnal than Christ-like. “Christians approach apologetics . . . [with] self-assurance and never admit uncertainty. . . . [The main rules are to] never admit weakness and always, *always* talk to win [emphasis in original],” note the authors.³⁴³ This failure is found in overzealous Christian apologists who either neglect or forget to follow two crucial commands in Scripture. The first is one of Jesus’s Son of Man key verses in Mark: “For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many” (Mark 10:45). Equally important is the second tenet and proof text for apologetics in 1 Peter to “sanctify Christ as Lord in your hearts, always being ready to make a defense to everyone who asks you to give an account for the hope that is in you, yet with gentleness and reverence” (1 Pet

³⁴⁰ Shenk, *A History of Chess*, 5.

³⁴¹ Joshua D. Chatraw and Mark D. Allen, *Apologetics at the Cross* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2018), 17.

³⁴² *Ibid.*, 205.

³⁴³ *Ibid.*, 210.

3:15). As an instrument of evangelism, Christian apologetics is to imitate Jesus Christ for the sake of His Gospel (Mark 8:35).

Jesus's serving, suffering, and exalted Son of Man is a paradigm for the Christian witness and Christian discipleship. As Dietrich Bonhoeffer once said, "When God calls a man, he bids him come and die."³⁴⁴ As such, all antagonistic attitudes and postures need to die as well. When submitting to God's will, Christians should pay heed to Jesus's invitation to "Follow me" (Mark 8:34) and mirror such Christ-like traits as patience, planning, consideration of others, and self-discipline when engaging in the defense of the gospel. Contrary to chess, Jesus never came to win a game. He never came to win a debate or to win an argument.³⁴⁵ He came to win a person, to win people, to win souls, to reveal His messianic secret, to teach true discipleship, and to testify about the glory to come. That is the embodiment of the apologetic call and the true essence of Jesus's Son of Man self-designations in Mark.

³⁴⁴ Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *The Cost of Discipleship* (New York: Touchstone, 1995), 6.

³⁴⁵ This statement does not insinuate that Jesus never argued. On the contrary, Mark's narrative includes multiple accounts of Jesus arguing and reasoning with His opponents. However, Jesus's mission was not to destroy those who opposed Him but to teach and reveal God's truth. In addition, Jesus offered many valid reasons and justifications for believing in the goodness of God and the reality of the Messiah (cf. Acts 1:3, esp. vs. 3a, but even 3b).

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