

GLAD TIDINGS

“And we bring you good tidings of the promise made unto the fathers...” (Acts 13:32)

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The Son of Man

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The phrase, “*the Son of man*” does not first appear on the scene in the life of Jesus.

While it is one of His self-professing titles, it had been attributed to others in the Old Testament. For example, some 90 times in the Book of Ezekiel “*the Son of man*” is used in identifying the prophet Ezekiel. In the vision of God’s glory, God first addresses His prophet as “*Son of man*” and proceeds to instruct him of his mission as God’s spokesman to His people in captivity (Ezekiel 2:1, 8, 3:4, etc.). Again, when God speaks to Daniel concerning matters of a later time, He says, “*Understand, o son of man; for the vision belongeth to the time of the end*” (Daniel 8:17).

Therefore the title, “*Son of man*” was not reserved for just one man, but for God’s prophet, whoever he would be at the time he was used by God to communicate the divine message to man.

Daniel prophesies of another that was to receive an everlasting kingdom. He saw, “*in the night-visions, and behold, there came with the clouds of heaven one like unto a son of man and he came even to the ancient of days,*

and they brought him near before him. And there was given him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all peoples, nations, and languages should serve him: his dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed” (Daniel 7:13-14).

Universal rule over all people was to be given to one like “*a son of man*”. God, the ancient of days would give such rule to one when he came to Him in the clouds. Because of this prophecy, the title of the son of man was connected with the Messiah, God’s anointed, whom the Jews looked forward to for deliverance. So, “*Son of man*” had a history of identifying one who was on a divine mission and a title for the Messiah of God.

Some view Jesus emphasizing his humanity when he says he is “*the son of man*”, just as he attributes deity to himself when he professes to be “*the son of God*”. But the title “*son of man*” transcends such thought. For example, Jesus speaks of himself as the son of man descending from Heaven “*And no one hath ascended but the that descended from heaven, even the Son of man. . .*” (John 3:13).

Jesus does not simply identify with humanity, for what mere man ever descended to earth from Heaven?

His humanity is not being distinguished from His Deity, but the emphasis is upon Jesus identifying with a divine mission for the well-being of man. The verse following reads, “*And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up; that whosoever believeth may in him have eternal life*” (John 3:14).

The multitude had a problem understanding how the son of man was to rule everlastingly and be “*lifted up*,” or put to death on the cross. They replied to such thought with “*and how sayest thou, the Son of man must be lifted up*” (John 12:34)? Jesus could so speak because The “*Son of man*” would carry out God’s mission in God’s way. Remember, he would receive the kingdom when he goes “*to the ancient of days.*” This occurred after his death and resurrection (Acts 2:30-33). The *Son of man* fulfilled his divine mission for man’s benefit.