

‘Son of man’ in the Gospel of Mark



Author:
Marius Nel¹

Affiliation:
¹Faculty of Theology,
North-West University,
Potchefstroom Campus,
South Africa

Corresponding author:
Marius Nel,
nel.marius1@gmail.com

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What are the origin and source, as well as the meaning of the term *Son of man* as it appears in Mark? Is the background of the term to be found in the Old Testament, in Ezekiel and Daniel 7, or in the apocalyptic figure presented in 1 Enoch 47–71 and 4 Ezra 13? What does the intertextual reference of the term imply? Did the historical Jesus use the term as a reference to himself or to a divine (extraterrestrial) deliverer he believed was coming to save the Jewish people, or is the term a post-Easter title applied retrospectively by the Gospel writer upon the pre-Easter Jesus? Did Jesus use the title as a self-designation, or did he use it in a self-effacing way to refer to himself as a mortal in contrast with God? Did he use the title as a generic designation for all humankind? What is the essence of the Gospel writer’s usage of the term? These questions are discussed in terms of the passages where Mark utilises the term.

Introduction

The term, *Son of man*, is used by Jesus 80 times as a way to refer to himself (32 times in Matthew; 14 times in Mark; 26 times in Luke; and 10 times in a qualitatively different way from the Synoptic Gospels in John). In all these texts Jesus is the speaker; no one ever addresses him as *Son of man*. In some texts the reference is cryptic enough that some interpreters speculate whether Jesus is speaking about Himself or about another person (e.g. in Mk 13:26–27, 34 where Jesus refers in the third person to the ‘Son of man’; cf. Jn 12:34). The identification with Jesus is, however, in most texts clear, and in some texts even explicit (e.g., Mk 2:10; 8:31).¹

The term occurs only five times in the rest of the New Testament outside the Gospels. In Acts 7:56, Stephen says that he sees the heaven open and the Son of man standing at the right hand of God; Hebrews 2:6 quotes Psalm 8:4 and applies the words to Jesus: ‘What is man, that you are mindful of him, or the Son of man, that you care for him’; and in Revelation 1:13–15 and 14:14 Jesus is ‘One like a Son of man’ (ὅμοιον υἱὸν ἀνθρώπου) and described in terms that evoke the imagery of Daniel 7: He is clothed with a long robe; his head and hair are white as white wool or snow; his eyes are like a flame of fire; his feet are like burnished bronze, refined as in a furnace and his voice is like the sound of many waters. John uses language that Daniel 7 employed in its Aramaic description of the *Ancient of days* (ܐܢܬܝܩܐ ܕܝܡܝܢ) and ‘One like a Son of man’ (ܕܒܪ ܐܢܫܐ).

The Greek phrase, ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ ἀνθρώπου, is so *ungriechisch* that a Greek reader would only have been able to make sense of the phrase if he or she knew about the references to it somewhere else, as in Ezekiel, Daniel, or apocalyptic texts (Van Iersel 1993:207). This necessitates a discussion of its origin and source in Mark before the Markan texts will be discussed.²

Origin and source of Mark’s ‘Son of man’

Where does Jesus get the term *Son of man* from, and what are the implications of his intertextual reference? There are two arguments presented by scholars.

Apocalyptic ‘Son of man’

Earlier scholars like Bousset (1970:31–55), Mowinckel (1954:348–353) and Tödt (1965:22–31) pose that Jesus (at least in some references to ‘Son of man’, as in Mk 8:38 and 13:26–27, 34) does not refer to himself but to an apocalyptic figure, a divine nonterrestrial being such as an angel, who would appear at the end of time to judge all people and complete final salvation for the people of God. This being is then derived by Jesus from texts like 1 Enoch 47–71 (in the *Similitudes of Enoch* that forms 1 Enoch 37–71) and 4 Ezra 13 (Loba-Mkole 2013:839). Teeple (1965:213) argues that the

1. The question of who the son of man is, is obfuscated by the issue of the authenticity of the sayings, a matter that will not be discussed in this article.

2. Cf. Luz (1992:7): ‘Son of the man’ is a strange and even mysterious expression without an obvious meaning for the average person in Syria, where Matthew was written. It does not exist in Greek.

'Son of man' is clearly conceived of as the Messiah as he will perform the vital messianic functions: He will terminate the gentile rule over the earth; introduce the new age or new kingdom; be king over all nations, and a light to the Gentiles. The references in 1 Enoch, however, are not included in copies of 1 Enoch found at Qumran in the Dead Sea Scrolls (ca. 250 BCE – 50 CE; Larson 2005:86), implying that it was probably not written early enough to influence early Jewish expectation of the Messiah (Collins 1998:178; Hardin 2015; Heliso 2010:149; VanderKam 1996:33). The author of 4 Ezra (3:1) dates the work at around ad 100, too late to influence Jesus' extensive use of the phrase. It seems that the phrase, 'Son of man' was not well known or used in any titular way in early Judaism to indicate a heavenly redeemer figure (Leivestad 1972:243–267).

Hebrew use of 'Son of man'

Most scholars agree that the background of the term, 'Son of man', used by Jesus is to be found in the Hebrew Bible. Ezekiel is an important source where the prophet uses 'son of man' (בן־אדם) 93 times as a cryptic, indirect reference to himself and as a means of God addressing the prophet (e.g. in Ezk 2:1; DeYoung 1988). When Jesus uses the phrase, 'Son of man', to refer to himself he expresses the desire to identify himself as the eschatological prophet who, like Ezekiel (in Ezk 4, 7, 10, 22, 40–48) speaks about the destruction of the temple and Jerusalem, and the restoration of the kingdom of Israel. But he also emphasises with the term that he is born from a woman and shares the traits of human beings, a fact that he contrasts in the different situations where he uses the term to what he is doing and will be doing (Bock 2012:400).

Poetic parallelisms in the Old Testament also use 'son of man' to refer to people's humanity, always in the second half of the parallelism (Nm 23:19; Job 16:21; 25:6; 35:8; Ps 8:4; 80:17; 146:3; Is 51:12; 56:2; Jr 49:18, 33; 50:40; 51:43). The parallelism in Psalm 8:4(5) is a good example, where *man* (אָדָם) and *son of man* (בן־אדם) are used interchangeably to contrast man's frailty and mortality to the grace bestowed upon man, a phrase applied by the author of Hebrews 2:6 on Jesus in Hebrews 2:9 (τὸν δεῖ βραχὺ τι παρ' ἀγγέλους ἡλαττωμένον βλέπομεν Ἰησοῦν διὰ τὸ πάθημα τοῦ θανάτου δόξῃ καὶ τιμῇ ἐστεφανωμένον), with the emphasis on his humanity (for a little while made lower than the angels) in contrast to his being crowned with glory and honour, because of his suffering of death.

Aramaic use of 'son of man'

Another source of the term is found in Daniel 7:13–14, where 'One like a son of man' (כְּבֶרֶךְ שָׁמַיָּא) comes 'with the clouds of heaven' (בְּעָנָן שָׁמַיָּא). Daniel 2:4b–7 is written in Aramaic while the rest of the book is in Hebrew. Some scholars like Casey (1995:164–182), Lindars (1983:1–28) and Vermes (1973:160–191) limit the meaning of the interpretation to the general reference to a 'human being'; a term that denotes what is true of all human beings. It is not used to refer to a

specific human being. It later, argues Casey (1995:171), becomes an official title in the Gospels although the Aramaic was notoriously difficult to translate into Greek. 'One like a son of man' then indicates a class of people to which the speaker belongs, implying 'this is true of all people, but especially me' (Lindars 1983:3). Vermes (1973:178) argues further from his investigation of Jewish rabbinic literature that the term 'son of man' always refers back to and include the speaker. However, Owen and Shepherd (2001:121) found in their investigation of the Dead Sea Scrolls, which are older than the rabbinic tradition, that the term, 'son of man', is never used there as a self-reference or an idiom for a human being in Middle Aramaic nor any other phase of Aramaic predating the time of Jesus. This concurs with the conclusion reached above that 'son of man' was not a well-known phrase used in any titular way in early Judaism for a heavenly redeemer figure.

As argued, not all scholars agree that there is a relation between the Son of man pronouncements in the Gospel of Mark and Daniel 7:12–13's *bar nasha*. Vermes (1967:316–317) in his study of Aramaic sources comes to the conclusion that the term, 'son of man', is synonymous with the word *man*, a substitute for *somebody*. Hurtado argues that if Jesus used the term, so would have the church. If Jesus' use of 'the Son of man' originated in his pondering of Daniel 7:13–14 and served in particular as his device to affirm his identity as the human-like figure of that passage, it is very curious that this expression was not taken up in early Christian proclamation and confession. Hurtado (2011:171) then asks why the Early Church did drop the expression and connection if Jesus used it in this way. Bock (2012:401) responds that the Gospel texts tied to Daniel 7 are traditional texts, passed on orally long before they were recorded. In other words they were well known and likely widely circulated. Loba-Mkole (2003:838–839) is of the opinion that the term refers to a male human person, a human being in generic, indefinite and circumlocutional sense. Casey (1979:157) writes that Jesus must have known another 'son of man', since he was old enough to find human speech intelligible, because in Aramaic the term was used regularly to indicate a male person. Horsley (2001:127–128) also does not agree that Mark's utilisation of the concept of 'the Son of man' is derived from Daniel 7; he argues that in Mark the 'Son of man' has nothing to do with judgement or the gathering of the elect (which is correct) as is the case in Daniel 7, and therefore it is unlikely that Jesus uses an intertextual reference to Daniel 7 (although other factors make it probable that Jesus interprets himself in terms of the Danielic 'one like a son of man'). This is, however, a minority viewpoint with most scholars seeing a connection between the usage of 'one like a son of man' in the book of Daniel and the usage of 'Son of man' by the Gospel writer of Mark. The most important argument is that the contexts of suffering and exaltation that form the background for both books agree to such an extent that Mark's dependence upon Daniel 7 can be presupposed. Daniel is a theological response to the persecution of Antiochus IV Epiphanes, and it addresses the difficult situation in the Israel of 170–164 BCE.

Like most apocalyptic literature it addresses a situation of seeming hopelessness (Moloney 2013:730). The Markan context is the so-called Caligula crisis (Van Aarde 2015:4).

Josephus (*Antiquities* 10:266–268) already stated that Daniel was popular among 1st-century Jews, implying the probability that Daniel's enigmatic, 'One like a son of man' provides a plausible source for Jesus' 'Son of man' sayings. The context of the literary setting of Daniel 2–7 is the pressure on exiled Jews in Babylon to honour the Babylonian king and worship his gods. In Daniel 7 the prophet sees a vision of four beasts rising out of the sea to attack Israel (Dn 7:2–7). The terrifying, dreadful and exceedingly strong fourth beast with great iron teeth that devours and destroys everything has ten horns (Dn 7:7). Three of these horns are plucked up by the roots to make room for another little horn with eyes like human eyes, and a mouth speaking arrogantly (Dn 7:8, 19–25). These beasts attack the faithful (the holy ones of the Most high: קְדוֹשֵׁי עֲלִיוֹן) while theophanic language is used (Leim 2013:217) to describe the heavenly court adjourned to judge them, and 'One like a son of man, coming on the clouds of heaven' (Dn 7:13: עֶם-עֲנַנִי שְׂמִיָּא כְּבָר אֶנֶשׁ) is being given authority, glory, sovereign power, the worship of all people, and an everlasting kingship (Dn 7:14), in this way equated and being treated equally with the Ancient one.

The context is one of suffering and exaltation; while the little horn makes war against the saints and causing severe trouble when it devours and breaks in pieces, and stamps what is left with its feet (Dn 7:19), 'One like a son of man' is appointed to rule (Dn 7:19–27).

The same context determines Daniel 10 that relates how Daniel's fasting and prayer in mourning is answered by the vision of a man clothed in linen, with a belt of fine gold from Uphaz around his waist, his body like beryl, his face like the appearance of lightning, his eyes like flaming torches, his arms and legs like the gleam of burnished bronze, and the sound of his words like the sound of a multitude. Daniel understands the word and vision although it is difficult, because the interpretation is given by the man (Dn 10:1, 11, indicated by נִגְזַר). The man in the vision is Michael, Israel's patron saint (Dn 10:13), a mighty being with direct access to the Holy one sitting on the throne of fire, implying that the powerless chosen people without any political opportunities and connections will not be destroyed by any circumstances because Michael or God would take care of them (Lourié 2015:91). Collins (2005) states:

The prominence of Michael, the heavenly deliverer, expresses the conviction that the salvation of Israel was not to be attained by human military action but by reliance on the heavenly world. (p. 62)

The image in Daniel 10 reflects Mesopotamian myths where gods fight each other and the outcome of their wars is reflected on earth by determining the wars between nations (Collins 1975:600). In this way the outcome of the Maccabean war in the 2nd century bce between the Maccabees and the Syrian army of Antiochus IV Epiphanes is determined by

the war between the patron saints (שָׂרָא, prince) of the Greeks and Jews (Russell 1964:244–249).

Who is the 'one like a son of man' revealed to Daniel (10:16, 18)? The phrase may refer to one like a human being, one looking like a man, or simply *man*.³ The historical referent may be a figure like Moses, Judas Maccabeus or Daniel, but Daniel 7 suggests that it refers to the saints of the Most high (Collins 1974:53). Daniel 7:13 portrays one like a son of man coming to the Ancient of days where he is given him dominion and glory and a kingdom. His dominion is described as a dominion that will last very long,⁴ and his kingdom one that shall not be destroyed (Dn 7:14). Daniel 7:22 describes how the Ancient of days gives judgement in favour of the saints of the Most high, and the time comes when the saints possess the kingdom, and the kingdom and the dominion and the greatness of the kingdoms under the whole heaven shall be given to the people of the saints of the Most high (Dn 7:27; Brandenburger 1980:43). 'One like a son of man' refers then to the holy people or in derived sense to their representative, the patron saint Michael, as Daniel 10:16 also implies (Hebrew: בְּנֵי אֱלֹהִים), a figure that Ginsberg (2013:26) connects to the Isaianic *Suffering servant*.

Who are the 'saints of the Most high'? A literal translation is 'the holy ones of the highest one' (Koch 1980:239). Some researchers are of the opinion that it denotes the angels (Dequeker 1960:353–392; Noth 1967:215–218), while the majority believes that it refers to the righteous Jews, or more specifically the small group of people sympathetic to the apocalyptic vision (cf. De Boer 1965:305–329). The reference only includes righteous Jews, those following the doctrines of the wise, visionary figures like Daniel, forming an elite group preaching non-violent resistance and seeing persecution as purifying, allowing Collins (2005:65) to speak of apocalypses as resistance literature. The symbol of 'One like a son of man' refers to the election, justification, vindication and elevation of these Jews, a rather small group, the elite responsible for writing Daniel (Tabor 2003:49). Spangenberg (1998:84) thinks there is some textual witness that the 'son of man' might also refer to a future messianic king descended from the saints, the Jews, although this is not clear from the text.

The promise in Daniel 7:18 concurs with the phrase in Daniel 5:22 where the Most high God hands over sovereignty, greatness, majesty and glory to Nebuchadnezzar, the world ruler (מְלִכֻּתָּא וְרִבּוּתָּא וְיִקְרָא וְהִדְרָה). All the possessions of the heathen super powers are given over to the Jews. The super powers succeed each other but the Jewish kingdom will exist without interruption (cf. Dn 2:44; 7:27 as well). The *saints* are the Jews that follow the doctrines of the *wise* who preach non-violent resistance. This group regards the persecution and suffering of faithful Jews at the hands of Syrian oppressors as

3. For a summary of the arguments in the debate, cf. Casey (1979:141), Collins (1993:305), Hartman and Di Lella (1978:217), LaCocque (1988:214), and Loba-Mkole (2000:1119–1145; 2003:837–858).

4. שְׁלֹטֹן עֶלְמָא. The Hebrew עוֹלָם means 'a long period of time', 'an undetermined period' rather than 'eternal', as is translated in most instances (Jenni 1997:853).

a refinement and purification of their faith and in this way transcending their suffering: 'Many will be cleansed, made white and purged' (Dn 12:10: וְהַכְרִירוּ וְהִלְבְּנוּ וְיִצְרְפוּ). The saints utilise an eschatological interpretation in order to understand the claims and stipulations of the Torah for their own day because they are living in the end times (Collins 1981:87). This group, the saints, is in several respects similar to the angels who are the holy ones of heaven and the instruments of divine power contra the animals in the vision that embody earthly human-political power.

The conclusion is that Jesus finds in Daniel a paradigm of suffering, enthronement, and authority that he utilises to describe his own journey and interpret himself, and in the Danielic figure of the 'Son of man' he sees himself as the enthroned figure in the heavenly vision as the representative of the 'saints of the Most high' (Wright 1992:291–297).

The earliest witnesses to the Old Greek version of Daniel 7 equate 'the son of man' with God and represent a perspective of Daniel 7 that most likely existed in the 1st century CE, argues Zacharias (2011:453–455). And the Greek translation of the Hebrew Bible was the primary source of the Scriptures for the Christian church (Phillips, Janse van Rensburg & Van Rooy 2012:2). The Greek 'son of man' coheres with the *Son of man* sayings in Matthew and indicates that the evangelist was familiar with a similar textual tradition that places the *Son of man* on the glorious throne where he judges the nations (Zacharias 2011:459–461).

Jesus' use of 'Son of man'

In the previous section it was argued that Jesus' 'Son of man' sayings exist within the context of suffering, enthronement, and authority that also appear in the narrative of Daniel's visions. It is necessary to investigate the Markan sayings. Bultmann (1972:38) suggests that these sayings about the 'Son of man' can be arranged into three groups or three categories: Those that refer to Jesus' earthly activity (Mk 2:10, 28); those that refer to his passion (Mk 8:31; 9:9, 12, 31; 10:33, 45; 14:21a, 21b, 41); and those that refer to his second coming (Mk 8:38; 13:26, 34; 14:62). The 'Son of man' sayings form part of Jesus' *idiolect*, his unique way of assessing and interpreting his ministry and life (Hurtado 2003:292–293). Van Aarde (2002:135) calls 'son of man' a subversive saying of Jesus, developed into the titular attribution of honouring or renouncing Jesus as 'Son of man'.

Authority and enthronement

The earthly group of sayings applies the title to Jesus when he claims that the Son of man has the authority on earth to forgive sins (Mk 2:10) and exercise authority over the Sabbath because the Son of man is Lord even of the Sabbath (Mk 2:28). The two sayings of Jesus have in common that it was preceded and initiated by a challenge to Jesus' authority.

Firstly, Jesus heals a paralytic when he responds to the man's faith by saying, 'Son, your sins are forgiven' (Mk 2:5).

The scribes judge Jesus' words to be blasphemous because God alone can forgive sins (Mk 2:7; Luz 1992:17). Jesus perceives that they are discussing these questions in their hearts (Mk 2:8: εὐθὺς ἐπιγινούσιν ὁ Ἰησοῦς τῷ πνεύματι αὐτοῦ ὅτι οὕτως διαλογίζονται ἐν ἑαυτοῖς) and he responds by asking the question:

Which is easier, to say to the paralytic, 'Your sins are forgiven', or to say, 'Stand up and take your mat and walk'? 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, stand up, take your mat and go to your home'. (Mk 2:9–11)

Bystanders respond to the miracle with the observation, 'We have never seen anything like this!' (Mk 2:12: Οὕτως οὐδέποτε εἶδομεν).

Secondly, Jesus and his disciples go through the grainfields on the Sabbath and they pluck heads of grain because they are hungry, leading to the Pharisees' remark that the disciples are doing what is not lawful on the Sabbath (Mk 2:23–24). Jesus responds by reminding them how David and his companions consumed the bread of the Presence when they were hungry, which is not lawful for any but the priests to eat (Mk 2:26). He then concludes that the Son of man is Lord of the Sabbath and that the Sabbath was made for humankind, and not humankind for the Sabbath (Mk 2:29: ὥστε κύριός ἐστιν ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ ἀνθρώπου καὶ τοῦ σαββάτου).

These *Son of man* sayings, used seemingly intentionally at the start of his ministry, evoke Jesus' authority (Dn 7:14's dominion, glory and kingship: וְהָיָה שְׁלֹטֹן וְקָר וּמְלָכִי) to act on God's behalf or as his substitute, as given to the figure of 'one like a son of man' in Daniel 7:14. By emphasising his humanity with this term that in its Aramaic form would have reminded his listeners of Ezekiel's description of himself as a 'son of man', a fallible, mortal being that stands before the sovereign God in contrast to Daniel's 'one like a son of man' being appointed as ruler of the cosmos, Jesus contrasts what his disciples see in him with what they experience of him, that he heals and takes authority over the Sabbath (and by implication, the Torah).

Suffering

Eight of Mark's 14 *Son of man* sayings contain references to Jesus' suffering, death, and resurrection (Mk 8:31; 9:9, 12, 31; 10:33, 45; 14:21a, 21b, 41) as a mode of self-reference (Horsley 2001:127–128). Jesus will suffer as a human being but through his death he will be vindicated as the One returning to sit at God's right hand (implying that God reveals himself through Jesus, or that Jesus is rising to enact judgement as McKnight 2010:37 argues, forming the heart of Christian apocalypticism, according to Van Aarde 2002:131); again demonstrating the clear agreement with the context of Daniel, of suffering and exaltation. Moloney (2013:738) argues that Jesus used the term, 'the Son of man' to speak of himself at all stages of his life, based on Daniel 7:13–14 to point toward God as the ultimate actor in the vindication of faithful yet suffering Israel (Dn 7:1–28). When Jesus uses the

expression he makes sense of his life, death, and vindication, as 'anticipating his cruel end, he submitted to it, trusting that his unhappy fate was somehow for the good' (Allison 2009:433). And as in Daniel 7 the final moment of vindication is not seen as something that would completely be *experienced*, but is displaced to the realm where God alone exercises control. In the Synoptic Gospels the final parousia of the vindicating of the Son of man is also displaced to the 'close of the age' (Mt 28:16–20; Van Aarde 1999:684).

In Mark 8:31 Jesus starts teaching his disciples (he continues in 9:30–31 and 10:32–33) that the Son of man must undergo great suffering, and be rejected by the elders, the chief priests, and the scribes, and be killed, and after three days rise again. A characteristic of these teaching is that Jesus refers to himself as the Son of man every time he warns his disciples about his coming persecution and death. The arrest and conviction would lead to his death, but after three days he will rise again, proving his subsequent vindication, hinting that Daniel 7 was a fitting metaphor for Jesus' crucifixion and subsequent resurrection, within the context of suffering and exaltation (Hardin 2015). Mark 8:31 refers to the instruments of Jesus' suffering as the Jewish leaders (ὕπὸ τῶν πρεσβυτέρων καὶ τῶν ἀρχιερέων καὶ τῶν γραμματέων) while Mark 9:31 refers to them as human hands (εἰς χεῖρας ἀνθρώπων) and Mark 10:33 refers to them as the chief priests and scribes (παραδοθήσεται τοῖς ἀρχιερεῦσιν καὶ τοῖς γραμματεῦσιν). Mark 9:31 and 10:31 explain that these instruments are acted upon; the Son of man is handed over to them (παραδίδοται, παραδοθήσεται), illustrating the divine initiative in Jesus' coming suffering. The Son of man's humiliation at the hands of people will lead to his vindication in his resurrection, illustrating the phrase's function as a code word for Jesus humanity, combined with his elevatedness and divinity as the One sitting at the right hand of the Father (Mk 14:62).

Mark 9:2–13 narrates Jesus' transfiguration before Peter, James and John on a high mountain, when with dazzling clothes (as a sign of a divine theophany) he converses with Moses and Elijah. From the cloud the voice states that he is the beloved Son that should be listened to (Mk 9:7) and on their way back Jesus orders the three disciples to keep quiet about the incident until after the Son of man has risen from the dead (Mk 9:9: ὅταν ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ ἀνθρώπου ἐκ νεκρῶν ἀναστῇ). Again Jesus contrasts his frail humanity as a 'Son of man' with the experience of his transfiguration (Mk 9:2: μετεμορφώθη, to take on a different physical form or appearance, to change in appearance; Louw & Nida 1988, 1:586), within the context of his resurrection. In this way he connects the experience on the high mountain with the resurrection of the One who seems to be human but proves to be much more. In Mark 9:12–13 he explains that Elijah has come to restore all things but they (presumably those that also oppose the Son of man) did to him whatever they pleased. Again the figure of the Son of man is explained in terms of many sufferings and contempt (πολλὰ πάθη καὶ ἐξουδενήθη), creating tension of the One who is perceived to be human but who represents what is more than human.

In Mark 10, James and John, Zebedee's sons, request permission from Jesus to sit at his right and left side in his glory (Mk 10:37: καθίσωμεν ἐν τῇ δόξῃ σου), referring to Jesus' revelation in power and glory, presumably with his second coming (Mk 13). Jesus responds by promising them that even though they will drink from the same cup that he has to drink (they will suffer in the same manner as he will), notwithstanding he cannot grant them to sit at his right or left hand. This is a privilege for those for whom it has been prepared (Mk 10:40: ἀλλ' οἷς ἡτοίμασται). The rest of the disciples react with vexation, anger and irritation (ἀγανακτεῖν) to the request of the two brothers and Jesus pleads for understanding because the brothers are products of a culture characterised by rulers and tyrants who lord it over their nationals (Οἴδατε ὅτι οἱ δοκοῦντες ἄρχειν τῶν ἐθνῶν κατακυριεύουσιν αὐτῶν καὶ οἱ μεγάλοι αὐτῶν κατεξουσιάζουσιν αὐτῶν), in contrast to the conditions in the kingdom that Jesus proclaims. Among Jesus' disciples another arrangement is valid, where the great is the servant and the first is the slave of all (Mk 10:43–44: ὃς ἂν θέλῃ ἐν ὑμῖν εἶναι πρῶτος, ἔσται πάντων δοῦλος). This is demonstrated by the Son of man who came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many (Mk 10:45: καὶ γὰρ ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ ἀνθρώπου οὐκ ἦλθεν διακονηθῆναι ἀλλὰ διακονῆσαι καὶ δοῦναι τὴν ψυχὴν αὐτοῦ λύτρον ἀντὶ πολλῶν). Although Jesus is a human being, his coming changes the tonality of being human. He has not come to be served as human beings expect in their selfishness but to serve, to die as a servant in order to ensure salvation for people by becoming the means or instrument by which release or deliverance is made possible when he pays the price or ransom money (Louw & Nida 1988, 1:487).

Mark 14:12–26 narrates how Jesus and his disciples eat the Passover meal, ending in his announcement that one of them will betray him. In Mark 14:21 He adds that the Son of man goes as it is written of him (υἱὸς τοῦ ἀνθρώπου ὑπάγει καθὼς γέγραπται περὶ αὐτοῦ) but woe to that one by whom the Son of man is betrayed. It would have been better for that one not to have been born. After announcing his coming suffering and death for three times, it is clear to the reader (and supposedly the disciples around the table) that Jesus refers with the Son of man's going (figuratively, departing from life, as an euphemistic expression for death; Louw & Nida 1988, 11:263) to his crucifixion. 'Son of man' has become a code word to refer in the majority of cases that Mark utilises the term to the human Jesus' death and vindication as much more than a mere human, as the Son of God. The phrase indicates his vulnerability, but he uses it in an ironic sense to demonstrate how his vulnerability leads to his vindication, as the suffering of the elect in Daniel 7 changes in meaning to become their justification, vindication and elevation.

Moments before his arrest, Jesus wakes his disciples with the news that the hour has come when the Son of man is being betrayed into the hands of sinners (Mk 14:41: παραδίδοται ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ ἀνθρώπου εἰς τὰς χεῖρας τῶν ἁμαρτωλῶν). These probably include those Jesus predicts would introduce his

great suffering and rejection, namely the elders, chief priests, and the scribes (ὕπὸ τῶν πρεσβυτέρων καὶ τῶν ἀρχιερέων καὶ τῶν γραμματέων), who would kill him (Mk 8:31). Jesus' use of the term, 'Son of man' in this context suggests that he contrasts himself to 'the sinners'.

Eschatology

The eschatological group of *Son of man* sayings forms the last group (Mk 8:38; 13:26, 34; 14:62) and refers to the second coming and the end of time (Mk 13:24: ἐν ἐκείναις ταῖς ἡμέραις μετὰ τὴν θλίψιν ἐκείνην).

In Mark 8:38 Jesus warns that those who are ashamed of him and his words will find that the Son of man is ashamed of them when he comes in the glory of his Father with the holy angels, alluding to Daniel 7:13–14; and with Jesus assuming the identity of the One who all peoples, nations, and languages serve, allusions that comes from Daniel 7 (Leim 2013:222).

A second reference is found in Mark 13:24–27 that utilises Isaiah 13:10; 34:4 and Joel's *Day of YHWH* that refer to the coming judgement. Verheyden (1997:525–526) shows the tension in these verses, namely between the purpose of the passage, which is apparently to announce the salvation of the elect (Mk 13:27) within the context of quotations from the Hebrew Bible (13:24–25), and mentions that one way to think about the tension is to give full emphasis to the result of the *parousia* as described in Mark 13:27, as inspired by the theophany of YHWH as described in the Day-of-YHWH traditions. Here it is interpreted essentially as a salvific action, while Mark 13:24–25's images are interpreted as metaphors. The question is the following: Of what are these verses metaphors? Are it of the *Parousia* as a day of judgement led by the Son of man, or as the theophany of the Son of man in which salvation for the elect is realised (Verheyden 1997:533)? Mark 13:25b contains a reading of Isaiah 34:4a that does not go back to the LXX. Four of the differences with the LXX-text go back to another passage from the Day-of-YHWH tradition in Joel 2:10 (Verheyden 1997:539). The combination of the two passages from Isaiah and the agreements with Joel 2:10 suggest that Mark 13:24–25 is the result of a freely formulated conflation of texts from the Hebrew Bible, and the result of the conflation is a quite different text (Verheyden 1997:540) where the representations of the theophany of YHWH and the Day of YHWH have influenced each other, and they have several motifs and images in common. The use of the verb *σαλευθήσονται* in Mark 13:25b, however, gives a clear indication that the *Parousia* is to be understood as an epiphany (Verheyden 1997:544, 546). The coming of the Son of man is mentioned without any recourse to the description of a judgement, although it is expressed in terms of cosmic signs. The appearances of YHWH in the Hebrew Bible are located on earth, often on a mountain, and accompanied by a relatively *natural* event, usually a storm (cf. Mk 9:2–3 and its discussion above). In Mark 13 the *Parousia* is expressed in universalistic terms, which is particularly appropriate in the context of an

apocalyptic discourse describing the theophany of the Son of man as an eschatological event (Verheyden 1997:547).

The entire universe will collapse (Mk 13:24–25), but that is not important in itself. It is the framework for the one thing that is important, which is the coming of the Son of man (Mk 13:26), portrayed in conformity with Daniel 7:13 (Schweizer 1970:275; Vermes 2000:43). Mark 13:26 is a part of Jesus' teaching about the coming destruction of the temple (Mk 13:1–8), with its accompanying false prophets, persecution, wars, earthquakes, famines, and the desolating sacrilege set up where it ought not to be (Mk 13:14) before the Son of man will come back with cosmic and catastrophic phenomena accompanying it (Mk 13:24–25). Then they will see the Son of man coming in clouds with great power and glory (Mk 13:26: καὶ τότε ὁσονται τὸν υἱὸν τοῦ ἀνθρώπου ἐρχόμενον ἐν νεφέλαις μετὰ δυνάμεως πολλῆς καὶ δόξης), reflecting Daniel 7:13. He will then send out the angels to gather the elect from the whole earth (Mk 13:27: ἐκ τῶν τεσσάρων ἀνέμων ἀπ' ἄκρου γῆς ἕως ἄκρου οὐρανοῦ), reminding of Daniel 7:26's prophecy that the court shall sit in judgement over the little horn and its arrogance. Zehnder (2014:337–341) interprets these characteristics of the Son of man as arguments for a divine status of the Danielic and Markan Son of man.

The idea is created that the end that is ushered in with the coming of the Son of man will be an earth-shattering event (Witherington 2001:348). Daniel 7:13 sketches one like a son of man as a human representative empowered by God to overthrow all human powers and reveal God's glory by establishing God's reign (Kleiber 2010:256). In Mark 13:26–27, however, the Son of man is not primarily interpreted as a ruler but rather as a saviour who sends out his angels to collect his elect from the suffering in this world (Marcus 2009:21).⁵ Van Iersel (1993:211) correctly understands this reference to the elect, that the discourse is directly related to the *Postexistenz* of those martyred for their faith, an existence marked by justice and who Jesus really is, when he will show his power and glory as judge, viz. '*die Schuld feststellt und straft, aber auch diejenigen freispricht und bei sich versammelt, die dafür in Frage kommen*' (Van Iersel 1993:212).

Scholars have been discussing who the referent of the verb ὁσονται in Mark 13:26 is and various possibilities have been suggested, that is that it refers metaphorically to the sun, moon and stars in 13:24–25; the pseudo-prophets and pseudo-Christ of 13:21–22; the subjects of the persecutions or those who persecute them; the elect and their persecutors in 13:22; or an indefinite person (cf. Brandenburger 1984:27). In the recent past Du Toit (2006:225) suggested that scholars have reached a consensus that the last possibility is probable, namely that the referent is *a person*.

This figure is a being *like* a human being in Daniel, suggesting that it is not a human being but most likely an angel,

⁵The majority of manuscripts have αὐτοῦ, 'his' after τοὺς ἐκλεκτοὺς, 'the elect'. Some lack 'his'. It is not so clear whether the word should be left out. Collins (2007:593) argues that since it is easier to understand how the word would have been added than omitted, and since some manuscripts of all the important textual families represent the shorter reading, the shorter reading is more likely than the earlier.

perhaps the archangel Michael that represents Israel in die heavenly court before God (Donahue & Harrington 2002:374). In the context of Mark 13 it is made clear, however, that it refers to Jesus.

The significance of the second coming of the Son of man is underlined by the hyperbolic use of language. Witherington (2001:274) refers to Cyril of Jerusalem's opinion in his *Catechetical lectures* (15.15) that even Mark 13's reference to the destruction of the Temple refers not to the events of 70 CE but to events further on in the future, and that the abomination is a reference to the Antichrist's activity.

Mark 13:26 refers to the Son of man's coming: ἐρχόμενον ἐν νεφέλαις μετὰ δυνάμεως πολλῆς καὶ δόξης. Psalm 68:4 celebrates YHWH as the One who rides upon the clouds, a title taken over from the Canaanite storm god Ba'al who was known as the 'cloud rider' (Payne 1979:115). 1 Kings 8:10–11 describes clouds as the symbol of YHWH's presence. Jesus takes up the theme in 14:62 when he affirms during his Jewish trial that the Son of man will be seen seated at the right hand of Power and coming with the clouds (ἐρχόμενον μετὰ τῶν νεφελῶν τοῦ οὐρανοῦ). By coming in the clouds, the Son of man is the One who belongs to the heavenly sphere (Beasley-Murray 1993:429–430; Gnllka 1998:201). The clouds will at the same time conceal and reveal his glory (Moloney 2002:266). The Son of man will descend from the heavenly regions symbolised by the clouds (Mt 24:30; 26:64; Mk 13:26; 14:62; Lk 21:27). According to the Gospel of John (3:13), 'No one has ascended into heaven but He who descended from heaven (ἐκ τοῦ οὐρανοῦ), the Son of man'.

He will send his angels to collect the elect from the whole earth, with the four winds taken as the four points of the compass. It is important to notice that this intervention is conceived by the evangelist as oriented to the salvation of the faithful rather than the judgement of sinners (Collins 2007:614). That God's people are scattered is affirmed by Zechariah 2:6, and that God will gather the dispersed is promised in Deuteronomy 13:7; 30:4–5 (cf. Is 11:11, 16; 27:12; 38:8–9; 43:6; 60:4–6; Ezk 39:27; Mi 4:1–3; Zch 10:6–11). The Son of man is tasked with what YHWH does according to the Hebrew Bible. Schweizer (1970:266) argues from the fact that Mark 13:31 uses the Greek translation of Zechariah 10:6–11, that the expectation of the coming of the Son of man that was important to the Early Church as a goal to which all of the signs were directed, would have been possible only in the Greek-speaking Christian church; the Hebrew text speaks of a scattering of Israel to the four winds, the exact reverse of the Greek translation's rendering. The phrase, 'from the end of the earth to the end of heaven', combines elements in a rather illogical blending (Schweizer 1970:275) from Deuteronomy 13:7; 30:4. Collins (2007:593) translates it as 'from (one) end of the earth to (one) end of the sky'. In 13:27, 31 earth is contrasted to and linked with heaven, where the ends of the earth and the ends of heaven define the universe (13:27) and the universe, consisting of both earth and heaven, will pass away (13:31) (Malbon 1986:81). In Jewish thought around the turn of the eras, heaven and earth were considered separate

realms and communication across their unseen boundaries was not expected as possible. Long ago the *qol YHWH* had spoken directly to the prophets on earth, but now the way between heaven and earth is blocked and the prophet yearns that God would rend heavens and come down (Is 64:1).

Mark 13 offers neither an expectation of a universal resurrection, nor judgement of all people, both good and evil (13:25–7), nor the anticipation of the horror of the end upon all the inhabitants of the world (cf. Rv 16:15–7), nor of an Antichrist (however, cf. Da 13:14, 22). In contrast to Jewish apocalypses, this passage contains no description of the punishment or annihilation of enemies (contra 2 Th 1:6–10). Great importance is rather placed upon the fulfilment of promises found in the Hebrew Bible, which are quoted almost word for word (Schweizer 1970:276). 'Much of the material in these verses is widespread eschatological tradition, deriving ultimately from the Old Testament' (Collins 1992:81). However, it is clear from Mark's use of Bible texts that he views the text not as a self-contained entity but a dynamic and open whole (Van der Merwe 2015:6).

This passage contains no reference to God's military action against foreign rulers as he acts in deliverance of his elect, as is the case in the Hebrew Scriptures' description of the day of YHWH (cf. Ezk 32:7–8; Dn 7:10–12; Jl 2:10). Mark's prophecy focuses solely on the gathering of the elect, with no allusion to judgement against Rome (Liew 1999:107). The gathering of the elect represents the fulfilment of the hope of reunion of Israel's scattered tribes referred to in passages such as Isaiah 11:12; 27:12–13 and 60:1–2, in the light of Zechariah 2:6 and Deuteronomy 30:3, and perhaps Isaiah 43:6 (Beasley-Murray 1986:332). With his coming on the clouds, it is also not the Son of man who gathers the elect, but the angels that he sends out. In terms of the Hebrew Scriptures, the elect can be understood to be the dispersed in the restoration (*diaspora*) of Israel, a standard prophetic image (cf. Dt 30:4; Ps 107:2–3; Is 43:5–7; 56:8; Jr 29:14; 31:8; 32:37; Zch 2:10; 8:7–8; Horsley 2001:130).

A last saying is found in Mark 14:62 as part of Jesus' trial before the chief priests, elders, and the scribes (πρὸς τὸν ἀρχιερέα, καὶ συνέρχονται πάντες οἱ ἀρχιερεῖς καὶ οἱ πρεσβύτεροι καὶ οἱ γραμματεῖς), as mentioned also in Mark 8:31. In Mark 14:61 the high priest asks Jesus whether he is the Messiah, the Son of the Blessed one (Σὺ εἶ ὁ χριστὸς ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ εὐλογητοῦ), and Jesus answers affirmatively that people will see the Son of man seated at the right hand of the power and coming with the clouds of heaven (Mk 14:62: ὁψεσθε τὸν υἱὸν τοῦ ἀνθρώπου ἐκ δεξιῶν καθήμενον τῆς δυνάμεως καὶ ἐρχόμενον μετὰ τῶν νεφελῶν τοῦ οὐρανοῦ). The quotation is from Daniel 7 and Psalm 110. As in Daniel 7, the Son of man comes with the clouds of heaven, and as in Psalm 110, the Son of man sits at the right hand of God. The images of the Son of man condemned to death and the Son of man coming with the clouds of heaven is contrasted to one another and serves to illustrate Jesus' vulnerability and elevatedness.

Conclusion

By way of conclusion, the connection between Ezekiel's 'son of man', Daniel's usage of the term, 'one like a son of man', and Mark's 'Son of man' should be recognised while the use of the phrase in 1 Enoch and 4 Ezra may be ignored. Mark utilises the term in a non-titular way to refer to the 'Son of man' in three ways, namely to Jesus' earthly activity, to his passion, and to his second coming. The first group of texts applies the title to Jesus when he claims to forgive sins and exercise authority over the Sabbath; the second group refers to Jesus' suffering, death, and resurrection; and the eschatological group refers to the end of time to judge. Jesus purposefully contrasts his seeming humanity with what cannot be perceived by others except when his authority to heal and apply Sabbath regulations, are kept in mind. And his suffering that underlines his humanity and vulnerability stands in contrast to his vindication through the resurrection. In an allusion to Daniel 7:13–14, the Markan Jesus assumes the identity of the One who is given dominion and glory and kingship that all peoples, nations and languages should serve him. Mark and Daniel share the same context, that is of suffering and vindication, allowing the modern reader to link the Markan 'Son of man' with the Danielic 'one like a son of man'. Jesus applies the term to himself as a representative of humankind in general. It is also a mode of idiolectal self-reference as used in the three announcements of Jesus' suffering and death. And the Son of man also appears as more of an accuser than a judge, with angels in attendance. Compared with the figure in Daniel 7, the Son of man in Mark is depicted as an eschatological judge or deliverer.

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