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A CANONICAL BIBLICAL THEOLOGY OF THE SON OF MAN

by
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The theme *son of man* (בֶּן־אָדָם or ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ ἀνθρώπου [hereafter SOM]) threads through the canon and dominates some of the most important junctures in the storyline of Scripture. אָדָם plunges humanity into the curse of sin and death, and בֶּן־אָדָם will put things right. As an exercise in biblical theology (BT), this paper will overview this theme from creation to consummation. Constraints allow for a rough sketch of this pervasive theme, as opposed to a high-definition, feature film. Unfortunately, many SOM interpretive issues remain unaddressed here.[2] The content below disproportionately focuses on the Old Testament contribution to the SOM theme on account of its foundational nature and ironic omission in many SOM studies.[3] Perhaps a future opportunity will permit a more detailed New Testament treatment. The program of this paper develops as follows: the aim is to survey the SOM theme throughout the canon, establishing the genesis of the SOM concept in the creation narrative and underscoring its importance in the overarching plot line of Scripture. The SOM canonical idea is sourced, not in 1 Enoch, Daniel, or the Gospels, but in the beginning. Along the way, the paper will demonstrate the unity of the canonical story by tracing allusions to the creation narrative. A further aspiration of the paper is to show how the SOM theme overlaps with the central themes of divine image and sonship; this connection reinforces the centrality of the SOM theme. The paper starts with a section on BT methodology and then suggests a canonical, thematic center. The body

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[2]For significant historical treatments of the SOM theme see Mogens Müller, *The Expression 'Son of Man' and the Development of Christology: A History of Interpretation* (2008; repr., New York: Routledge, 2014); Delbert Burkett, *The Son of Man Debate: A History and Evaluation* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1999); Richard Bauckham, *"Son of Man,"* vol. 1 in *Early Jewish Literature* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2023).

[3]E.g., Heinz E. Tödt, *The Son of Man in the Synoptic Tradition,* trans. Dorothea M. Barton (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1965) includes a brief section on Daniel and Pseudepigraphal literature but omits the larger OT background.

of the paper begins in Genesis with the creation of אָדָם. Lexical information and a survey of the SOM theme in poetic texts follows next. Both lexical information and the SOM use in poetic literature depend on the creation narrative. The final part of the paper's body traces the development of SOM theme from Abraham to Jesus. On account of its importance for the SOM theme in the biblical corpus, the largest section of the paper focuses on Daniel.

This paper maintains that BT is an inductive discipline guided by progressive revelation. The interest of BT lies in discovering "the interpretive perspective of the biblical authors."[4] In contrast with systematic theology, which begins with *a priori* categories, BT begins with the text and lets the message progressively unfold.[5] As such, BT balances analysis and synthesis. In this pursuit, BT works with the original languages of the text. Since words are the most fundamental building blocks of meaning, words must be understood in their original expression. Indeed, translation itself is a theological exercise.[6] The form of BT espoused in this paper acknowledges the divine authorship and inspiration of Scripture while maintaining a keen interest in the human instrumentation of the Bible. Sound BT pursues the authorial intent of individual texts.[7] This approach assumes that the biblical authors were steeped in antecedent revelation. One of the realities this paper attempts to demonstrate is that the creation narrative sets the plot trajectory for the entire canon.[8] By the end of Genesis 3, the major characters and categories are in play, and the wheels of the plot are set in motion.

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[4]James Hamilton uses this description as a helpful, shorthand definition of BT (*With the Clouds of Heaven: The Book of Daniel in Biblical Theology* [Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2014], 21–27).

[5]See Andreas J. Köstenberger and Gregory Goswell, *Biblical Theology: A Canonical, Thematic, and Ethical Approach* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2023), 33–42 for a helpful section on BT methodology. They illustrate the relationship between BT and ST as a relay race with BT handing the baton to ST.

[6]John H. Sailhamer, *Introduction to Old Testament Theology* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1995), 17.

[7]Sailhamer, worth quoting at length, carefully demarcates the importance of authorial intent. This approach to BT starkly contrasts models heavily invested with typology. "There is an important distinction between the text and the subsequent interpretations of the text. Every text of Scripture has its own history of interpretation. The meaning of the text remains that of the original author and not the interpretation of later generations. This is true even when the later interpretation happens to be within the Bible itself, that is, 'inter-biblical.' A text-oriented approach to OT theology would, then, reject the various attempts to impose later interpretation onto the original author's meaning. Examples of such attempts in the history of theology are: (a) Scripture and tradition: the tradition becomes part of the inspired meaning of the text. (b) *Sensus plenior*: the later interpretation of the NT is added to or replaces the meaning of the OT text. (c) Typology: the later interpretation of the NT overshadows the meaning of the OT text" (ibid., 84).

[8]James Hamilton makes a similar point in "The Skull Crushing Seed of the Woman: Inner-Biblical Interpretation of Genesis 3:15," *Southern Baptist Journal of Theology* 10 (2006): 30–54.

Aware of this overarching drama, successive biblical authors consciously advance that essential plot. This conclusion is deduced from linguistic and thematic connections throughout the canon, and these connections fuel the synthetic element of BT. Fruitful BT analyzes the parts of Scripture and then puts the pieces together to form a cohesive whole.

Mapping a thematic center for the entire canon is a less than simple task. Indeed, several interpreters surmise this endeavor may be unfruitful and reductionistic.[9] While they may be correct, there is still room for an interpreter to recommend a theme for testing and corroboration. As stated above, the major characters and categories of the drama of Scripture are introduced in the first three chapters of Genesis. If this is true, then one wonders about the possibility of constructing a whole-canon, thematic statement from the elements of Genesis 1–3. It is certainly true that the story of the canon ends where it began.[10] This envelope structure unifies the whole. A tentative proposal ensues: the Creator God will establish dominion over the rebellious cosmos through his image perpetuated in the seed of the woman.[11] As stated previously it will be demonstrated below that the SOM theme significantly overlaps with the concepts of image, sonship, and the divine presence. The SOM is God's agent to fulfill his purposes for creation.

Dirt, Dignity, and Dominion, Genesis 1–5

The first chapter of the Bible introduces אָדָם as the penultimate character of the entire drama. Since the roots of the SOM concept grow from the soil of the creation narrative, the first chapters of Genesis warrant significant analysis. Not only must אָדָם be understood constitutionally, but also careful attention must be given to his place within the created order. Once again, the treatment below will manifest echoes of the creation narrative throughout Scripture.

This analysis picks up the creation narrative on the fifth day (Gen 1:20), when *Elohim* populates the sea with fish (שֶׁרֶץ נֶפֶשׁ חַיָּה) and the sky with foul (עוֹף). The fish and the foul are the first creatures to receive the divine blessing, which constitutes the ability to be fruitful and multiply (Gen 1:22). Filling out the animal kingdom, the sixth day (Gen 1:24) opens with the creation of domestic animals (בְּהֵמָה), creeping things (וָרֶמֶשׂ), and wild animals (חַיְתוֹ). The importance of

[9]Naselli overviews the challenges of determining a single center and surveys the opinions of various interpreters (Andrew Naselli, "Does the Bible Have One Central Theme?" in *40 Questions about Biblical Theology*, ed. Benjamin L. Merkle [Grand Rapids: Kregel, 2020], 148–51).

[10]T. Desmond Alexander emphasizes this point in his biblical theology: "By providing a closely matched beginning and end, the opening chapters of Genesis and the final chapters of Revelation undoubtedly frame the biblical meta-story" (*From Eden to the New Jerusalem* [Grand Rapids: Kregel, 2008], 10).

[11]This proposal closely aligns with Stephen G. Dempster, *Dominion and Dynasty* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2003), 49.

these creational categories will become manifest below as אָדָם relates to his environment.

As the last act on day six, God creates man in his own image and after his own likeness (בְּצַלְמֵנוּ כִּדְמוּתֵנוּ).[12] Several factors distinguish the creation of mankind from God's other creative acts. First, the verbal form as a first-person plural (נַעֲשֶׂה) magnifies the importance of the creation of אָדָם. This divine deliberation functions as a dramatic pause, drawing attention to the pinnacle of God's creation.[13] Next, mankind's formation in the divine image results in the dominion mandate. God allocates responsibility to mankind to rule (Gen 1:26). Divine blessing follows next. Just as God blessed the fish and fowl enabling them to multiply, so also God blessed mankind enabling them to fill the earth and subdue it. It becomes plain in the Genesis narrative that a relationship of dependence exists between filling and subduing. If mankind is to fill the dry land with the image and glory of God and subdue the earth, he will need assistance.[14]

Genesis 2:4 begins with the first תּוֹלְדוֹת formula: "These are the generations of the heavens and the earth when they were created, in the day that the LORD God made the earth and the heavens."[15] The תּוֹלְדוֹת formulas of Genesis function as structural markers designating the narrative focus of the scenes that follow. These sections zoom in on the progeny of the progenitor introduced by the formula (e.g., Gen 6:9 and the generations of Noah).[16] In a sense the first תּוֹלְדוֹת section tells the story of the offspring of the heavens and the earth. The first man and woman have no normal parentage. They came to being in the creation narrative along with the heavens and the earth.[17]

An important shift occurs between the first and second sections of Genesis. The first section recounted the creation of the cosmos and employed the title for God that emphasizes his sovereignty and power, אֱלֹהִים. The second section conveys the more intimate scene of what transpires in Eden and invokes the covenant name of God, יהוה. Many critical theorists have used this observation as one of their arguments to challenge Mosaic authorship of the Pentateuch, yet the change in

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[12]Gentry and Wellum advance exegetical and cultural-historical arguments to identify mankind *as* the image of God. This position is here adopted (Peter J. Gentry and Stephen J. Wellum, *Kingdom Through Covenant* [Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2012], 181–202).

[13]Umberto Cassuto, *A Commentary on the Book of Genesis: From Adam to Noah*, trans. Israel Abrahams (1989; repr., Jerusalem: Manges Press, 1961), 55.

[14]Dempster, *Dominion and Dynasty*, 61.

[15]Unless otherwise noted, Scripture quotations are from the *Holy Bible: English Standard Version* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2011).

[16]Gordon J. Wenham, *Genesis 1–15*, Word Biblical Commentary (Waco, TX: Word, 1987), 49.

[17]Dempster, *Dominion and Dynasty*, 63.

setting seems to provide the simple and straightforward answer. The Author of creation is God (אֱלֹהִים) over the cosmos and LORD (יהוה) over his people made in his image.[18]

The story of the first man and woman is set in the garden paradise of Eden. In typical, Hebrew-narrative fashion, Genesis 1:1–2:3 functions as an overview, and Genesis 2:4 and following focus specifically on Eden and the sixth day.[19] The setting is conveyed in Genesis 2:5, which denotes the void of cultivated plants on account of the lack of rain and the absence of man to work the ground. This verse reveals important information about man's constitution. Man's name is a derivative of the noun for *ground*, and verse 5 stipulates one of his primary functions. אָדָם was made to work the אֲדָמָה. Verse 7 goes on to describe man's formation, עָפָר מִן־הָאֲדָמָה. Finally, God imbues man with the breath of life (Gen 2:7). The animation of man by God pictures a deeply intimate act: God personally interfaces with man.

In the creation narrative, אָדָם also bears the title אִישׁ. This name first appears in the presentation of the woman, אִשָּׁה, to the man, אִישׁ. The term for woman relates phonetically to this term for man. The man conferred the name אִשָּׁה to the woman on account of her source and function as his wife (2:23). The label for man אִישׁ connotes his relationship to אִשָּׁה as his counterpart and wife (2:24).[20]

The LORD promises his image bearers progeny. It has already been observed that multiplication and filling lie at the heart of God's design for mankind and creation. The fall of mankind did not alter God's plan. In fact, Genesis 3:15 forecasts the ultimate solution for mankind's plight under the curse. Progeny is the means by which God will defeat the serpent and restore mankind to his rightful dominion. In the temptation narrative of Genesis 3, the נָחָשׁ ruled the אִשָּׁה who ruled the אִישׁ—each of them scorning God. In the first act of humanity's sin the rightful economy of God turned upside-down.

Genesis 3:15, the *protoevangelium*, promises that the seed of the woman will strike the head of the serpent. The seed of the woman is referenced by the third singular masculine pronoun, הוּא. The *protoevangelium* foretells that חַוָּה, the mother of all the living (Gen 3:20), will birth male progeny, who will in turn deliver mankind from the plight of the curse and restore mankind's rightful dominion.[21] The story goes on to reveal that sadly this hope will not be realized through the first

[18]Cassuto, *Book of Genesis*, 84–88.

[19]Ibid., 90–91; Dempster, *Dominion and Dynasty*, 63.

[20]"אדם is 'mankind, humanity' as opposed to God or the animals (איש is man as opposed to woman)" (Wenham, *Genesis 1–15*, 32).

[21]Reflecting on Gen 3:15, Wenham comments, "The NT also alludes to this passage, understanding it in a broadly messianic sense (Rom 16:20; Heb 2:14; Rev 12), and it may be that the term 'Son of Man' as a title for Jesus and the term 'woman' for Mary (John 2:4; 19:26) also reflect this passage" (ibid., 80–81).

אִישׁ birthed by the woman. Like a node drawing several strands together, Genesis 3:15 sets the plot trajectory for the rest of the canon.[22] Man, the offspring of the woman, will war against the offspring of the serpent. Ultimately the man will gain victory and take dominion.[23]

The second תּוֹלְדוֹת section of Genesis traces the promise line of Seth from Adam (Gen 5:1 ff.). The first few verses of chapter 5 underscore important truths previously established in Genesis. Mankind, both male and female, bear the likeness of God (Gen 5:1). Verse 2 makes explicit that God named the male and female אָדָם, that is *mankind*. This use of the term אָדָם denotes humanity as a class.[24] Importantly, this section of Genesis also evidences the transmission of the divine image to mankind's progeny.[25] Adam was created in the likeness of God, and he fathered Seth "in his own likeness, after his image" (Gen 5:3). As mankind populates the earth, the divine image reproduces in man's offspring.

The creation narrative of Genesis establishes the foundation for the plot of the entire canon. A summary will reiterate points of significance. First, אָדָם is the pinnacle of the creative acts of God; אָדָם is the very image and likeness of *Elohim*. As such, man's life is charged with a special dignity. Mankind occupies a class below God but above the rest of the created order. Man's constitution is a strange cocktail of the profane and the divine. He is formed from the dust, yet he is animated by breath from heaven. Second, the function of the divine image is manifest. Mankind receives the divine blessing and the command to multiply, fill, and subdue the earth. Genesis 2 gives further insight concerning the outworking of this command. Man is made to work the ground from which he was taken. Upon formation of the man, God placed him in the Garden to tend and keep it (Gen 2:15, לְעָבְדָהּ וּלְשָׁמְרָהּ). Furthermore, mankind is allocated dominion over the fish, fowl, and all living things that move on the earth (Gen 1:28). Third, as the image of God, mankind stands in special relationship to God. God as the covenant Lord orders man's behavior and supplies all of man's needs. Fourth, mankind's dominion has been temporarily foiled by the serpent. Though mankind is made to rule over the חַיַּת הַשָּׂדֶה (cf. Gen 3:1, 9), the serpent subverted the woman, who in turn subverted the man.

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[22]With reference to the narrative plot of the Pentateuch, Sailhamer comments, "Consequently, more is at stake in this brief passage than the reader is at first aware. A program is set forth. A plot is established that will take the author far beyond this or that snake and his 'seed.' It is what the snake and his 'seed' represent the lies at the center of the author's focus. With that 'one' lies the 'enmity' that must be crushed" (John H. Sailhamer, *The Pentateuch as Narrative* [Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1992], 107).

[23]Hamilton, "The Skull Crushing Seed," 31–32.

[24]Fritz Maass, "אָדָם," *TDOT*, ed. G. Johannes Botterweck and Helmer Ringgren, trans. John T. Willis (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1975), 1:75.

[25]Wenham, *Genesis 1–15*,

The offspring of the serpent will war against the offspring of the woman until mankind is restored to his rightful dominion.

בֶּן־אָדָם, אִישׁ, אֱנוֹשׁ, and בֶּן־אָדָם

Having established the significance of אָדָם in his constitution and place in the created order, the compound noun בֶּן־אָדָם may be considered. The noun בֵּן boasts a broad semantic range. Commonly it references male offspring (e.g., Gen 5:4, "sons and daughters"). It can be used to convey familial closeness (e.g., Prov 2:1, "My son"). Conjoined to a collective noun בֵּן designates an individual belonging to a group (e.g., Ezek 2:1, "Son of man").[26] In this sense בֶּן־אָדָם parallels בֶּן־אֱנוֹשׁ and signifies a member of the human race.[27]

The nouns אֱנוֹשׁ and אִישׁ significantly overlap in meaning with אָדָם and are used interchangeably in various passages. As observed above אִישׁ can be used to connote man's relationship to his wife אִשָּׁה (e.g., Gen 3:6).[28] It also serves as a generic term for *mankind* or *humanity*.[29] Likewise, אֱנוֹשׁ denotes *humanity* or *mankind* and parallels בֶּן־אָדָם or אָדָם in various passages (e.g., Ps 144:3).

Poetic Expressions: בֶּן־אָדָם in Relationship to God

The phrase בֶּן־אָדָם occurs frequently in poetic expressions in the Tanakh. Several passages draw from the creation narrative and address mankind in relationship to God. Not only do these passages manifest mankind's essence sourced in the creation narrative, but they also demonstrate the unity of the canonical story. Psalm 11:4 underscores mankind's station under and accountability to God. The Psalmist identifies God's reign from heaven and his scrutiny of the hearts of men (בְּנֵי אָדָם, cf. Prov 15:11). Psalm 14:2 and 53:2 evoke the same sense; from heaven, God discerns the ways of men (בְּנֵי אָדָם). Psalms 36:7(8); 66:5; 107:8, 15, 21, and 31 all rehearse mankind's (בְּנֵי אָדָם) dependence on God for provision and protection. These psalms manifest rich creation theology. Mankind is subservient to God and totally dependent upon God for all things. Likewise, mankind is accountable to God for his life, and God winnows mankind by his judgment. Though אָדָם is

[26]This use is categorized as sense four in *HALOT*: "4. with collectives single, individual: בֶּן־אָדָם a single individual in a group, a human being" (Ludwig Koehler, Walter Baumgartner, M. E. J. Richardson, et al., *The Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament* [Leiden: Brill, 1994–2000], 137–38).

[27]H. Haag, "בֵּן," *TDOT*, ed. G. Johannes Botterweck and Helmer Ringgren, trans. John T. Willis (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1975), 2:151.

[28]*HALOT*, s.v. אִישׁ sense 2.

[29]*HALOT*, s.v. אִי

the pinnacle of God's creative acts, he is nonetheless completely subservient to and totally dependent on God.

Psalm 8 celebrates mankind's dominion and place within the created order. Several details manifest the Psalmist's reflection on the creation narrative. In verse 3, the Psalmist casts his mind to day four of the creation narrative as he recalls the placement of the moon and stars in the heavens. In verse 5 he reviews the creation of mankind on the sixth day. The Psalmist's use of אֱנוֹשׁ parallels his use of בֶּן־אָדָם, and both terms form a generic reference to mankind. These terms could be translated as *humanity*, *man*, or *mankind*. Overall, the Psalmist marvels as he considers mankind's station beneath God and above the rest of the created order. Verses 6–9 further unpack God's allotment to mankind. God made him a little lower than *Elohim* yet crowned him with glory and honor (Ps 8:5).[30] God appointed mankind the ruler over the works of his hands and put all things under man's feet (Ps 8:6). Verses 7–8 itemize the creatures under man's dominion—all flocks and herds, beasts of the field, birds of the heavens, fish of the sea, and whatever passes along the paths of the sea. This psalm reinforces mankind's dominion over the created order. The term בֶּן־אָדָם employed by the Psalmist signifies mankind as God's image bearer and vice-regent.[31]

Poetic Expressions: The Frailty of בֶּן־אָדָם

Related to the previous category, another group of texts stresses man's frailty and classifies rebellion against God as beastly and inhumane. For example, Psalm 89:47–48 bemoans mankind's (בְּנֵי־אָדָם) transience and mortality. Psalm 90:3 stresses God's sovereignty over mankind (בְּנֵי־אָדָם) and mankind's limitation; God returns mankind to the dust. Psalm 146:3–4 admonishes the reader not to put confidence in man (בֶּן־אָדָם) on account of man's ultimate frailty. In this passage, the term for *man* parallels the term for *princes*; even princes provide a false source of security. Verse four underscores mankind's frailty:

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[30]The translation of *Elohim* in Psalm 8:5 is hotly disputed. It is commonly known that the LXX renders this word ἀγγέλους (angels or heavenly beings). Judging by the clear and unmistakable connection to the creation narrative, perhaps it is best to take *Elohim* as a reference to God. "The early versions differ in their interpretations at this point. Many of the earliest versions took the word אלהים (literally, "God, gods") to mean "angels" (so *G*, *S*, *Tg*, and *Vg*), and in some texts that would be an appropriate translation. But other versions (Aquila, Symmachus, and others) translated *God*. The translation *angels* may have been prompted by modesty, for it may have seemed rather extravagant to claim that mankind was only a little less than God. Nevertheless, the translation *God* is almost certainly correct, and the words probably contain an allusion to the image of God in mankind and the God-given role of dominion to be exercised by mankind within the created order" (Peter C. Craigie, *Psalms 1–50*, Word Biblical Commentary [Waco, TX: Word, 1983], 108).

[31]"Although the term for divine 'image' does not appear here, its meaning does. Humanity—the son of man—represents divine kingship on the earth" (Dempster, *Dominion and Dynasty*,

"When man's breath goes out he returns to the ground; in that day his plans fail." These verses reflect man's composition from the creation narrative. At death, mankind returns to the ground from which he was taken (cf. Gen 3:19).

The preceding argument demonstrates that the SOM is God's agent to fulfill God's purposes for the world. God will reestablish dominion over the cosmos through the rightful reign of the SOM. בֶּן־אָדָם is the very image (Gen 1:26–27) and son of God (Gen 5:1–3). In the canonical story, the battle lines for dominion are drawn up between the SOM and the offspring of the serpent, the beasts.

Biblical-Theological Role of בֶּן־אָדָם

Abraham's Seed

In the storyline of Scripture, בֶּן־אָדָם serves as the agent by which God intends to restore his original purposes for creation. Adam's role as God's vice-regent funnels down to the seed of the woman. Genesis 12 manifests that the seed of the woman will channel through Abraham and his offspring. God promised to bless Abraham, multiply his descendants, and bring worldwide blessing through him (Gen 12:1–3, et al.). Linguistically, the terminology בֶּן־אָדָם and its derivatives are absent, yet the concept of the true humanity and humanity's war with the serpent is prominent in the Abraham narratives. Abraham and his progeny take up Adam's role as God's agents in the world.[32] Abraham's wife, Sarai, resembles and contrasts with Eve in unique ways. Sarai is barren, incapable of having children (cf. Gen 11:30), yet she is promised offspring who will in turn bless the world. Eve receives the divine promise of deliverance through her offspring, and likewise Sarai receives the same promise. The offspring of the woman will strike the head of the serpent.

As the narrative of the Torah progresses, it becomes plain that God adopts Abraham's family, Israel, as his אָדָם or his true humanity. Throughout the Torah, God relates to Israel as his son, and the concept of sonship closely parallels בֶּן־אָדָם. The book of Exodus opens by detailing the multiplication of Abraham's seed in Egypt (Exod 1:7, 12, 20). This emphasis on Abraham's offspring connects the message of Exodus with God's program in Genesis. Exodus frames the conflict of the book as the LORD's liberation of his firstborn son and prosecution of Pharaoh's firstborn (Exod 4:22–23, "Then you shall say to Pharaoh, 'Thus says the Lord, Israel is my firstborn son, and I say to you, 'Let my son go that he may serve me.' If you refuse to let him go, behold, I will kill your firstborn son.'").

As the offspring of the serpent, Pharaoh strikes out at the offspring of the woman, ordering the execution of all the male children of Israel

[32]Sailhamer, *Pentateuch as Narrative*,

(Exod 1:15–22). Ultimately, the Lord returns judgment on Pharaoh's head through the death of the firstborn in all the households of Egypt (Exod 11–12). Since Pharaoh ruthlessly oppresses the Lord's firstborn, the Lord enacts judgment against Pharaoh's firstborn. Exodus 15:17 connects God's purposes for mankind in Eden with God's purposes for Israel. The LORD will plant Israel on his holy mountain; the LORD will bring Israel into his sanctuary. Eden served as the first, elevated, garden sanctuary, and the LORD made for himself a new dwelling in Canaan.[33] Exodus 19:4–6 likewise ties in with the creation narrative. God promises to make the sons of Israel a kingdom of priests and a holy nation. This language reflects the dominion assigned to mankind in the first chapters of Genesis. Mankind was created for dominion. Exodus 19 reveals that God's purposes for Israel serve as a microcosm of God's purposes for humanity. God intended to make Israel a kingdom of priests mediating God's presence and reign to the rest of the created order. In contrast with the unbridled idolatry of the nations, Israel will serve as the image of God (cf. Exod 20:4–6). Israel will receive the word of God. Israel will house God's presence in her midst and properly relate to God in worship and servitude. Israel will be God's אָדָם.

Israel, God's Son and True Humanity

Psalm 80 demonstrates the connection between Israel as God's son and God's new humanity. This psalm rehearses God's care for Israel as a shepherd tends his flock (Ps 80:1). The Psalmist repeatedly invokes God's favor, petitioning for the light of God's face (Ps 80:1, 3, 7, 19). By means of the parable of the vineyard, the Psalmist also overviews the history of Israel; God took Israel like a tender vine from Egypt and planted her with care in her own land (Ps 80:8–9). She flourished and thrived, yet in time her walls were broken down and enemies ravaged her (Ps 80:11–13). Toward the end of the psalm, the Psalmist pleads for the welfare of Israel. He asks the LORD to regard his vine, the stock planted by God's right hand (Ps 80:14–15). In a parallel line, the Psalmist references Israel as "the son whom you made strong for yourself" (Ps 80:15). Israel is the LORD's son rescued from Egypt. Verse 17 [v. 18 in MT] describes Israel as, "the man [אִישׁ] of your right hand, the son of man [בֶּן־אָדָם] whom you have made strong for yourself." Israel is the LORD's son, which overlaps with the idea of God's new humanity.[34]

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[33]Alexander, *From Eden to the New Jerusalem*, 13–14.

[34]"In Psalm 80:15, 17 the people of Israel is personified as 'a man (אישׁ) at God's right hand' and a 'son of man' בן־אדם whom God made strong for himself. Already, then, in pre-apocalyptic tradition it seems that the Son of Man was a collective entity" (Carsten Colpe, "ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ ἀνθρώπου," in *TDNT*, trans. Geoffrey W. Bromiley, ed. Gerhard Friedrich and Geoffrey W. Bromiley [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1972], 8:407). It should be said that most commentators identify the referent of Ps 80:17 ("the man of your right hand, the son of man whom you have made strong for yourself") as a reference to the Davidic king (e.g., Frank-Lothar Hossfeld and Eric Zenger, *Psalm*

The concepts of sonship and the image of God almost completely overlap. In the sacred garden of Eden, mankind served as God's image. God walked with his people in the Garden. God charged man with the responsibility of guarding and tending Eden (Gen 2:15, לְעָבְדָהּ וּלְשָׁמְרָהּ). These roles and responsibilities define אָדָם. In the outworking of God's plan, Israel took up the roles and responsibilities of אָדָם, the true humanity. God caused his name to dwell in Israel. God mediated his presence among his people through the tent of meeting.

Several details demonstrate the connection between Eden and the tabernacle.[35] Mankind, אָדָם, was the image of God in Eden. In stark contrast with pagan worship, the tent of meeting housed no image; rather, the priests functioned as the image of God mediating God's presence to his people. The priesthood received instructions from God to keep and tend the sanctuary, which echoes the instructions given to Adam (Num 18:7a, "And you and your sons with you shall *guard* [תִּשְׁמְרוּ] your priesthood for all that concerns the altar and that is within the veil; and you shall *serve* [עֲבַדְתֶּם]"). Similarly the precious metals and stones used to craft the instruments of the tabernacle demonstrate a connection to Eden (Exod 35:4–9; cf. Gen 2:12). God's presence demands the most majestic and aesthetic environment. The fabric of the tabernacle was embroidered with cherubim, and cherubim overshadowed the mercy seat, mirroring the cherubim guarding the entrance of Eden (Exod 26:1, 31; 36:8, 35; cf. Gen 3:24). It is possible that the golden lampstand in its arboreal design pictured the tree of life (Exod 37:17–24; cf. Gen 2:9). Later in salvation-history, the tabernacle solidified in the construction of the temple, and 1 Kings 6:29 describes the inner sanctuary of the temple as engraved with cherubim, palm trees, and flowers. These pictures image the trees of Eden, which were a delight to the eyes (cf. Gen 2:9). The presence of God in the tabernacle demonstrates God's design for Israel to live in relationship to God as a kingdom of priests and a holy nation. God's desire was for Israel, his son, to serve him.

Not only does sonship overlap with the concept of the divine image, but also sonship shares domain with the idea of dominion. In a sense, the first אָדָם was a son of God fathered in God's image and likeness (cf. Gen 5:1–2); in succession, Adam fathered a son in his own image and likeness (Gen 5:3). Sonship and dynasty are interwoven with man's nature as the image of God in the designation בֶּן־אָדָם.[36] As discussed above, the LORD appointed Israel as his firstborn (Exod 4:22,

Hermeneia [Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress, 2005]). It will be demonstrated below that the concepts of the divine image, sonship, and God's true humanity converge in the theocratic king. Therefore, whether Ps 80:17 references Israel corporately or the Davidic king specifically, both interpretations manifest God's establishment of a new, true humanity.

[35]Alexander, *From Eden to the New Jerusalem*, 13–20.

[36]Dempster, *Dominion and Dynast*

בְּכֹר). Israel occupied a prominent place in God's program for the world; among all the peoples of the world, God intended for Israel to be his new בְּנֵי אָדָם, his new true humanity, exercising dominion.

The Theocratic King as God's Son

This connection between sonship and dominion localizes in the theocratic king. Not only did the nation of Israel serve as God's firstborn among all nations, but also in a heightened sense the theocratic king served as God's son mediating God's rule over creation. This relationship comes into focus in 2 Samuel 7 when God promises to build David a house, establishing his dynasty forever (2 Sam 7:11–17). God swears an oath to relate to the Davidic king as a father relates to his son (2 Sam 7:14).

Psalm 2 expounds upon the relationship between the Lord and the anointed king. The nations of the earth rebel against the Lord's reign along with the reign of his anointed (Ps 2:1–3). In response the Lord scoffs at the nations, for he has determined to enthrone his anointed on Zion, his holy hill (Ps 2:4–6). The center section of the Psalm recounts the oath which the Lord swore to establish the reign of his son, the Davidic king (Ps 2:7–9). Ultimately, the nations will come cringing to the Lord's son, and all of their hosts will be subjected under his feet. The rightful reign of the בְּנֵי אָדָם, the true humanity imaging God, will be reestablished through the Lord's son, the Davidic king.

Ezekiel: God's Submissive בֶּן־אָדָם

The book of Ezekiel employs the designation SOM 93 times; throughout the book the LORD summons Ezekiel as *son of man* (בֶּן־אָדָם).[37] Importantly, the book opens with a detailed and vivid theophany, and this theophany manifests details from the creation narrative and the Torah. Ezekiel's vision of God begins with a cloud and bursts of fire within the cloud (Ezek 1:4; cf. Exod 13:21–22). From the cloud emerge four living creatures described as possessing "human likeness" (Ezek 1:5, דְּמוּת אָדָם). The term for living creature (Ezek 1:5, חַיּוֹת) echoes terminology from the creation narrative. The LORD made all the נֶפֶשׁ חַיָּה in the creation week. In appearance, the four creatures manifest characteristics of the נֶפֶשׁ חַיָּה in the creation narrative. Each possesses four faces (Ezek 1:6, 10), One face bears the likeness of a man (אָדָם), one of a lion (אַרְיֵה), one of an ox (שׁוֹר), and one of an eagle (נָשֶׁר). Perhaps these descriptions categorically reflect the creatures of the creation narrative—mankind, wild animals, domestic animals, and birds of the heavens.[38] The mysterious *spirit* referenced throughout Ezekiel

[37]Walther Zimmerli, *Ezekiel 1: A Commentary on the Book of the Prophet Ezekiel, Chapters 1–24*, trans. Ronald E. Clements, Hermeneia (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1979), 131.

[38]Cassuto identifies the categorization of domestic and wild animals in the creation narrative (*Book of Genesis*,

guides the direction of the four creatures (Ezek 1:12, רוּחַ).[39] This reference reminds the reader of the רוּחַ אֱלֹהִים hovering over the face of the deep in Genesis 1:2. The four winged creatures bear a dais upon which sits the likeness of a sapphire throne, and a "likeness with a human appearance" occupies the throne (Ezek 1:26, דְּמוּת כְּמַרְאֵה אָדָם). Ezekiel makes plain that this human likeness is the center of the theophany (Ezek 1:28). The theophany's transposition into a human likeness unexpectedly inverts Genesis 1:26–27. Shockingly, Ezekiel's blurred vision of God reflects the likeness of man.[40]

As introduced above, the LORD addresses Ezekiel as בֶּן־אָדָם throughout the book, never using Ezekiel's name. In the main, this ascription underscores mankind's subservience and servitude to God. The LORD draws attention to Ezekiel's status as a member of humanity, emphasizing humanity's responsibly to receive and obey the word of the LORD.[41] אָדָם is created in the image and likeness of God and subject to the word and will of God. Unthinkably, Israel—God's true humanity—had continuously and brazenly rebelled against God (cf. Ezek 2:3–4). God's command of Ezekiel as בֶּן־אָדָם is a tacit rebuke of beastly Israel. Nearly every instance of בֶּן־אָדָם in Ezekiel is attached in some way to the word of the LORD. The LORD commissions his בֶּן־אָדָם as his messenger to rebellious Israel (cf. 2:1–10; et al.). In some instances Ezekiel relays God's spoken word to Israel (e.g., 3:4–11; et al.), and in some instances Ezekiel relays God's enacted word by means of demonstration (e.g., 4:1–1; et al.).

Several other details throughout the book reflect a close connection with the creation narrative. Ezekiel's second vision of the chariot of the LORD in chapter 10 identifies the four living creatures from the opening theophany as cherubim (e.g., Ezek 10:15, "And the cherubim mounted up. These were the living creatures that I saw by the Cheber canal"). Cherubim signify the presence of God in their station outside the east entrance of Eden, in their station overshadowing the mercy seat, and in their etching within the temple material. Ezekiel's lament for the king of Tyre employs descriptions of Eden (Ezek 28:11–19).

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[39]Daniel Block comments on 2:2, "And what kind of *rûaḥ* is this? A sudden gust of wind or the Spirit of Yahweh, the Holy Spirit? The text notes that the raising of the prophet occurs simultaneously with the sound of the voice, which suggests that his *rûaḥ* may be the source of the word's dynamic and energizing power. This can be none other than the Spirit of God, and the *rûaḥ* that energizes Ezekiel must be the same *rûaḥ* that had animated the wheels in 1:12, 20–21, and that will control his movements throughout his ministry" (*The Book of Ezekiel: Chapters 1–24*, New International Commentary on the Old Testament [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1997], 115).

[40]Ibid., 107–8.

[41]"In this summons the prophet was not being addressed in the uniqueness of his particular personal being, as would be expressed by his proper name, not according to his office, but as an individual within the created order, the servant, who is summoned by his master in an act of unprecedented condescension by his divine Lord" (Zimmerli, *Ezekiel 1*,

Ezekiel makes some sort of correlation between the king of Tyre and an anointed cherub from Eden (Ezek 28:14). This passage recalls the precious materials of Eden (Ezek 28:13), which is perhaps, in part, a recollection of Genesis 2:11–12.[42] Likewise the allusion to "the holy mountain of God" (Ezek 28:24) aligns with the elevated description of Eden as the fountainhead of the streams identified in Genesis 2:10–14. Chapter 31 makes two allusions to the trees of Eden (Ezek 31:18). Ezekiel's vision of dry and dead bones in chapter 37 reflects the creation of man in two phases, formed from dust of the ground and animated with breath from heaven (cf. Gen 2:7). By command of the LORD, Ezekiel prophesied and the dead bodies reformed (Ezek 37:7–9). As a distinct act, Ezekiel prophesied to the breath (רוּחַ), and the breath reanimated the lifeless bodies (Ezek 37:9–10). In a fascinating description of God's ultimate judgment on Gog and Magog, Ezekiel explicitly utilizes the categories of living things from the creation narrative (Ezek 38:20—וְעוֹף הַשָּׁמַיִם וְחַיַּת הַשָּׂדֶה וְכָל־הָרֶמֶשׂ הָרֹמֵשׂ עַל־הָאֲדָמָה וְכֹל הָאָדָם אֲשֶׁר עַל־פְּנֵי הָאֲדָמָה). Ezekiel's description of the new temple speaks of engravings reflecting the palms and cherubim of Eden (Ezek 41:15–26). Finally, Ezekiel depicts a stream flowing east from the new temple and expanding into a mighty river (Ezek 47:1–6; cf. Gen 2:10–14). Fruit trees grow on both banks of the river (Ezek 47:7–12; cf. Gen 2:9). Linguistically and thematically, Ezekiel manifests strong connections with the creation narrative.

Daniel: Beasts, the Most High, and One Like a Son of Man

The book of Daniel contains the *locus classicus* SOM text, Daniel 7:13–14. The concept of dominion, sourced in the creation narrative, permeates the book. Mankind, אָדָם, was made for dominion over creation under God.

Chapter 2 draws attention to man's limitations and frailty in contrast with the God of heaven. When Nebuchadnezzar commands the wisemen of Babylon to reveal his dream and its interpretation, the wisemen helplessly respond, "There is not a man on earth who can meet the king's demand, for no great and powerful king has asked such a thing of any magician or enchanter or Chaldean. The thing that the king asks is difficult, and no one can show it to the king except the gods, whose dwelling is not with flesh" (Dan 2:10–11). Clearly, mankind has an earthly origin, and his wisdom is limited and restricted. Daniel reflects the same affirmation in his response to Nebuchadnezzar before he interprets the dream: "No wise men, enchanters, magicians, or astrologers can show to the king the mystery that the king has asked, but there is a God in heaven who reveals mysteries, and he has made known to King Nebuchadnezzar what will be in the latter days" (Dan 2:27–28). The ascription *God of heaven* (2:18–19 [2x], 28, 44) and similar titles for the LORD are replete throughout the book

[42]Wenham alludes to this potential connection (*Genesis 1–15*,

(circumlocution *Heaven* [4:26]; *King of heaven* [4:37]; *Lord of heaven* [5:23]; *Most High God* [3:26; 4:2; 5:18, 21]; *Most High* [4:25, 32, 34; 7:18, 22, 25 {2x}, 27]; *living God* [6:20, 26]; *Ancient of Days* [7:9, 13, 22]). These titles for God underscore his transcendence and absolute sovereignty.

The book of Daniel chiefly concerns a contest for dominion, and the book asserts throughout the LORD's exclusive prerogative to confer dominion. At the beginning of Daniel, it is recorded, "the Lord gave Jehoiakim king of Judah into his hand, with some of the vessels of the house of God" (Dan 1:2). Kingdoms rise and fall by the sole determination of the Lord. In Daniel's prayer of thanksgiving in chapter 2, he asserts that God alone "removes kings and sets up kings" (Dan 2:21). Nebuchadnezzar's vision of the image in chapter 2 depicts the successive kingdoms of the world. Ultimately, "The God of heaven will set up a kingdom that shall never be destroyed" (Dan 2:44).

Enigmatically, Nebuchadnezzar is described in Adamic terms clearly connecting to the creation narrative. The image (Dan 2:31, צֶלֶם) of the vision recalls mankind as the image and likeness of God made to serve and worship God. Chapter 3 further solidifies this connection; Nebuchadnezzar commands all peoples within his realm to worship and serve the image that he sets up (Dan 3:4–5). Daniel identifies Nebuchadnezzar as "the king of kings, to whom the God of heaven has given the kingdom" (Dan 2:37). The description of Nebuchadnezzar's reign in Daniel 2:37–38 manifests several linguistic and thematic connections to the creation narrative. God confers dominion to Nebuchadnezzar as he had with אָדָם, and Nebuchadnezzar is given dominion over "the children of man, the beasts of the field, and the birds of the heavens" (Dan 2:38, דָּאֲרִין בְּנֵי־אֲנָשָׁא חֵיוַת בָּרָא וְעוֹף־שְׁמַיָּא).

Not only is Nebuchadnezzar described in Adamic terms, but also the people of God play the part of God's true humanity, אָדָם, while the enemies of God stand in the place of the beasts in rebellion against the LORD's economy. The book of Daniel presents a clear, repetitious pattern.[43] The faithful people of God, God's true humanity, refuse to compromise in the face of opposition. This nonconformity leads to intensified persecution. The cycle ends with the vindication and exaltation of God's servants along with the magnification of God's name. This pattern lays its first track in chapter 1. Daniel and his friends refuse to defile themselves with the king's food and drink (Dan 1:8), and at the time of assessment God vindicates them, granting them health, strength, and skill (Dan 1:17–21). Chapter 2 introduces the first vision of the book. Along with the rest of the wise men, Daniel and his friends are threatened with death, yet Daniel seeks mercy from the God of heaven. God reveals the mystery to Daniel, which leads to the

[43]Wright maps this cycle in Daniel 1–7 and underscores its significance for identifying the SOM figure of chapter 7 (N. T. Wright, *The New Testament and the People of God* [Minneapolis: Fortress, 1992], 293–95). Hamilton makes similar connections (*With the Clouds of Heaven*,

vindication and exaltation of the true people of God along with an ascription of praise to the God of gods (Dan 2:46–49). In chapter 3, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego refuse to worship and serve a false image. Terms for worship and service are prominent in the chapter (3:5, 7, 10, 11, 12, 14, 15, 17, 18, 26, 28). The LORD's servants worship and serve God alone. They are the true image of God, and God vindicates and delivers them, which leads to exalted positions in the kingdom and a decree exonerating the God of Israel (3:28–30).

Nebuchadnezzar's vision in chapter 4 demonstrates that prideful rebellion against God is beastly. As in chapter 2, Nebuchadnezzar is described in terms that echo the creation narrative. Daniel 4:11–12 summarizes the vision: "The tree grew and became strong, and its top reached to heaven, and it was visible to the end of the whole earth. Its leaves were beautiful and its fruit abundant, and in it was food for all. The beasts of the field found shade under it, and the birds of the heavens lived in its branches, and all flesh was fed from it." Nebuchadnezzar is depicted as a mighty tree with its top in the heavens (Dan 4:11). This description recalls the Tower of Babel (Gen 4:11, "Come, let us build ourselves a city and a tower with its top in the heavens, and let us make a name for ourselves, lest we be dispersed over the face of the whole earth").

The vision also utilizes categories from the creation narrative (4:11). Nebuchadnezzar's tree is depicted as beautiful and plentiful, a comment reminiscent of the trees in Eden (cf. Gen 2:9). As judgment for Nebuchadnezzar's pride, he is made to live like a beast of the field. This is a dehumanizing experience. His mind is changed from the mind of a man to the mind of a beast (Dan 4:16), a judgment which spans seven periods of time, another allusion to the creation narrative.

The account of the den of lions in chapter 6 further develops the theme of trust in God that leads to vindication and deliverance. Daniel puts his trust in God and is delivered from the power of the beasts (Dan 6:23). On the other hand, Daniel's accusers are crushed by the lions. The enemies of God's true humanity will one day be subservient to the true אָדָם.

Daniel 7 functions as the crux of the book and recounts Daniel's first vision. In dreams of the night Daniel observes a series of beasts receiving dominion over the kingdoms of men (Dan 7:2–8).[44] After the presentation of the beasts, Daniel experiences a theophany, which parallels Ezekiel's vision of God (cf. Ezek 1:4–28; 10:1–22). Daniel sees the Ancient of Days enthroned, and his throne takes the form of a chariot with wheels engulfed in fire (Dan 7:9–10). By verdict of the heavenly court's judgment, the terrifying beast is killed, and dominion is taken from the others (Dan 7:10–12).

[44]As potential Old Testament background for *one like a SOM* in Daniel 7, Goldingay alludes to Gen 1–3; Ps 8; and Ps 80 (John E. Goldingay, *Daniel*, Word Biblical Commentary [Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1996],

The center of the vision concerns Daniel 7:13–14. One like a son of man comes with the clouds of heaven and is presented to the Ancient of Days. Some interpreters insist upon a non-literal referent for Daniel's SOM figure. They propose that the beasts of the vision are literary figures, not literal figures. Likewise, the SOM of 7:13 must also serve as a representative, literary figure.[45] There may be weight to this argument. Yet the canonical struggle of mankind's battle for dominion points to an answer to this particular objection. The vision casts the opposing kings as beasts because, like the נָחָשׁ of Genesis 3, they are subverting the rightful dominion of God's true humanity.[46] A thoughtful reader of the Tanakh should expect that a literal בֶּן־אָדָם, that is the seed of the woman, would receive eternal dominion. Does the context of the vision or the nature of Daniel as apocalyptic literature rule out a literal interpretation for Daniel's SOM figure? It seems the opposite is true. A literal בֶּן־אָדָם is exactly what the trajectory of the Tanakh promises and projects. Throughout the book, Daniel and the faithful few have served and worshiped God alone through times of oppression, and they experience vindication and deliverance.[47] God upholds them. The vision of the SOM in chapter 7 at minimum communicates that God's people, the true humanity, will experience ultimate deliverance through the conferral of dominion.[48] The beasts will be put down, and אָדָם will be exalted.

Some hold that the SOM referent of Daniel 7 most lends itself to an angelic interpretation.[49] After all, angelic beings play a significantly prominent role in the book of Daniel (Dan 3:25, 28; 6:22; 8:15–16; 9:21; 10:1–12:12). This interpretation demonstrates plausibility. The vision of chapter 7 uses a comparative modifier, one *like* a son of man (Dan 7:13, כְּבַר אֱנָשׁ), and the supernatural figures of chapter 10 are described in similar terms (10:16, 18). Still, mankind is promised dominion, and mankind is engaged in conflict with the offspring of the serpent, the beasts. It could be possible that the SOM of Daniel 7

[45]Wright, *New Testament and the People of God*, 295–97; 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), 11–17. Ultimately, Wright identifies the figure of Daniel 7 as representative of the saints of the Most High, a collective representation of the people of God. Likewise, Hooker stresses the importance of the vision's interpretation in the second part of chapter 7 and identifies the SOM as representative of the people of God. Drawing from the apocalyptic nature of the vision and the comparative form ("*like* a SOM"), Hooker emphatically denies a messianic interpretation of the figure (Hooker, *Son of Man in Mark*, 11, n. 1).

[46]Dempster, *Dominion and Dynasty*, 215.

[47]Perhaps this is why Daniel is addressed as בֶּן־אָדָם by the heavenly being in chapter 8 (8:17). In contrast with the beasts of the book, God's true humanity (בֶּן־אָדָם) worship and serve the Most High exclusively.

[48]Both Wright and Hooker affirm this.

[49]John J. Collins, *Daniel*, Hermeneia (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1993), 304–10; Goldingay, *Daniel*,

depicts an angelic being who represents the saints of the Most High in heaven. But, as affirmed by Wright, angelic representation seems like an unnecessary step.[50]

The clouds of heaven comprise a peculiar and important element of the vision. Drawing from other references in the Tanakh, it is best to associate the clouds with a theophany (cf. Exod 13:21–22; Ezek 1:4). This aspect of the vision would seem to demonstrate the presence of God. In his vision, Ezekiel, a contemporary prophet of Daniel, describes the one seated on the throne as "a likeness with human appearance" (Ezek 1:26).[51] Therefore, it may be inferred that this text contains subtle indicators of the SOM's deity.[52]

Later in chapter 7, the SOM figure is correlated with the saints of the Most High (Dan 7:18, 22, 27). The interpretation of the vision makes plain that the people of God will inherit God's eternal kingdom. In light of this clear and explicit connection, it is possible to identify the SOM of Daniel 7 as a strictly representative figure. It is also possible for the SOM to serve as both an individual and a corporate figure. In support of this view, the Davidic king embodied Israel as the son of God in a heightened sense (cf. Ps 2:7), and Israel was restored to dominion through the reign of the Davidide.[53] A matrix of passages serves as the antecedent revelation supporting this view (Gen 1–3; 2 Sam 7; Ps 2; 8; 80; 110). Daniel references an anointed one in 9:6; although, it is not certain the anointed figure should be joined with the SOM of chapter 7. As a tentative conclusion, it seems best to identify the *one like a son of man* in Daniel 7 as the ultimate seed of the woman, God's true humanity, who both embodies and represents the saints of the Most High. When God invests his son with eternal dominion (Gen 3:15; 5:1–3; Exod 4:22; 2 Sam 7:14; Ps 2:7), the saints of the Most High will receive the kingdom; God's name will be exonerated among the nations.

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[50]Wright, *New Testament and the People of God*, 295.

[51]"God himself is described as humanlike (דמות כמראה אדם) in Ezek 1:26" (Goldingay, *Daniel*, 150).

[52]Goldingay cautiously surmises, "For the anointed one to be a heavenly figure would be a novel idea; by definition, the anointed one is an earthly descendant of David. The visionary portrayal of him coming with the clouds of the heavens might simply signify that he comes by God's initiative and as his gift, without suggesting that he is in himself other than human. Moses enters the theophanic cloud in Exod 24:18, while Ps 2, after all, describes the anointed king as begotten by God and installed by God, without implying he is other than human. Nevertheless, if the humanlike figure is the anointed, the anointed as Daniel pictures him now has a very transcendent dimension. If the idea of the anointed moves between a God pole and a human pole, this humanlike figure is at the former" (ibid., 170).

[53]Hamilton comes to a similar conclusion. He identifies the SOM of Daniel 7 as a member of the heavily council who will reign over God's kingdom forever. "The evidence points to one like a son of man being a member of the heavenly court who is distinguished from and identified with Yahweh himself" (*With the Clouds of Heaven*,

Jesus, The Son of Man

Few interpretative issues in New Testament studies have proved more perplexing and polarizing than Jesus's use of the designation SOM (ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ ἀνθρώπου).[54] Beyond dispute, the frequency of the title in the Gospels (over 80x) contrasted with the near absence of the title in the rest of the New Testament (Acts 7:56; Heb 2:6 [ἢ υἱὸς ἀνθρώπου]; Rev 1:13 [ὅμοιον υἱὸν ἀνθρώπου]; 14:14 [ὅμοιον υἱὸν ἀνθρώπου]) arrests the attention.[55] This paradox has led interpreters from various schools of thought to develop proposed solutions. Bultmann memorializes the form-critical solution of liberalism, arguing that most of the SOM sayings of the Gospels belong to the early church as opposed to Jesus himself. Bultmann holds that Jesus never claimed to be the SOM but that the early church identified him as such after his death. In the main, Bultmann divides the Gospel's SOM sayings into three groups: present ministry sayings (e.g., Mark 2:10), passion sayings (e.g., Mark 8:31), and parousia sayings (e.g., Mark 14:62). Interestingly, he identifies the parousia sayings as the oldest tradition potentially sourced in Jesus himself, and he is confident that the present ministry and passion sayings were either constructions of the early church superimposed upon the historical Jesus or that potentially some of the sayings were insignificant Aramaisms.[56]

The Synoptic SOM Sayings

It seems prudent to address the SOM sayings in the Synoptics by maintaining the conventional categorization, present ministry, passion, and parousia.[57] These groupings will be addressed presently; however, Matthew's citation of Hosea 11:1 in Matthew 2:15 ("This was to fulfill what the Lord had spoken by the prophet, 'Out of Egypt I called my son.'") should first be correlated with the SOM theme. As discussed above, Israel functioned corporately as God's son, and in a special sense the Davidic king functioned individually as God's son (Exod 4:22; 2 Sam 7:14; Ps 2:7). Matthew seems to identify Jesus as the Davidic son, and the theme of sonship nearly completely overlaps with the theme of בֶּן־אָדָם. Jesus brings this theme to its climax; Jesus is God's son *par excellence*.[58]

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[54]Hooker said in 1967, "no subject in the realm of New Testament scholarship has been more debated" (*Son of Man in Mark*, 3).

[55]Moises Silva, "υἱός," *NIDNTTE*, rev. ed. (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2014), 4:538.

[56]Rudolf Bultmann, *Theology of the New Testament,* vol. 1, trans. Kendrick Grobel (New York: Scribner's, 1951), 26–32.

[57]Most who discuss SOM interpretive issues classify the sayings in these or parallel categories (e.g., Tödt, *Synoptic Tradition*).

[58]Thomas R. Schreiner, *The King in His Beauty: A Biblical Theology of the Old and New Testaments* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2013)

Matthew's first use of the SOM title belongs with the present ministry sayings (Matt 9:6, "But that you may know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins;" cf. Mark 2:10; Luke 5:24). The context of this saying demonstrates Jesus's authority on earth. It would seem appropriate to classify Jesus's use of SOM as a messianic referent.[59] Jesus self-consciously identifies himself as the SOM who receives unparalleled dominion from the Most High. Jesus is the Son of Psalm 2, the *Adonai* of Psalm 110, and the Sovereign of Daniel 7. As such, he is conferred authority on earth to forgive sins. In the context of Matthew 11:18 (cf. Luke 7:34) Jesus is slandered for his behavior and associations, and he potentially uses SOM as a veiled, messianic self-reference.[60] Likewise, the *lord of the Sabbath* ascription (Matt 12:8; Mark 2:28; Luke 6:5) serves as a veiled messianic referent; the SOM ushers in a new epoch of redemptive history. This era of salvation is also expressed in Jesus's statement to Zacchaeus (Luke 19:10). Another of the present ministry sayings, Matthew 12:32 (cf. Mark 3:28; Luke 12:10), declares that blasphemy committed against the SOM will be forgiven in contrast with blasphemy committed against the Holy Spirit; here Jesus indirectly confirms his messianic identity. Likewise, the parable of the sower, which illustrates the gospelizing of the SOM (Matt 13:37), potentially serves as a messianic referent conjoined with an allusion to Isaiah 40:9. Finally, Jesus's question concerning the identity of the SOM serves as an indirect messianic referent (Matt 16:13). Throughout the Synoptics Jesus's indirect use of the SOM title in descriptions of his ministry bolsters his authority and furnishes him with a somewhat cryptic messianic title suitable for his purposes.[61] He is the apocalyptic and transcendent SOM of Daniel 7, but a SOM who will suffer before his vindication and glory, which leads into the next group of sayings.

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[59]"There is neither need nor warrant for these critical operations. The dependence on the apocalyptic scene in Daniel has naturally brought about a preponderance of the eschatological references, but since to all intent the phrase is a Messianic title, nothing hindered its occasional extension backward into an earlier stage of the Messianic career" (Geerhardus Vos, *The Self-Disclosure of Jesus* [New York: George H. Doran Co., 1926], 232). Silva comments, "The use of the def. article suggests that the evangelists attached a messianic significance to the Gk. phrase" (Silva, "υἱός," 4:538).

[60]"However, secondly, most scholars recognize that in at least some passages the term carries strong echoes of the tradition starting from Daniel 7 in which the Son of Man is a powerful figure who will come and exercise sovereign authority granted by God (Mark 13:26; 14:62; Luke 12:8–10). This set of associations would then also have been present where the term was used by Jesus in other contexts and indicated that he was a person already possessing authority (to forgive sins and to legislate over the Sabbath [Mark 2:10, 28]), but whose authority was rejected by the Jewish leaders (Mark 9:12). It may well be that these associations were not immediately apparent on every occasion and that therefore the term baffled some of Jesus' hearers (John 12:34) and also the readers of the Gospels" (I. H. Marshall, "Jesus Christ," *The New Dictionary of Biblical Theology*, ed. T. Desmond Alexander, Brian S. Rosner, D. A. Carson, and Graeme Goldsworthy [Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2000], 597).

[61]Schreiner, *The King in His Beauty*, 438–

The second group of sayings predicts the SOM's passion. Bultmann and other historical-critical scholars claim that these sayings cannot be original to Jesus partly because the SOM figure of Daniel 7 is a transcendent figure, not a suffering, frail figure. Yet this assessment overlooks the plain pattern established in Daniel. God's true humanity experiences intensified opposition before vindication. Seen in this light, the SOM passion sayings of the Gospels fit the Danielic pattern perfectly. Matthew contains eight (Matt 12:40; 7:12, 22; 20:18, 28; 26:2, 24, 45), Mark contains seven (Mark 8:31; 9:12, 31; 10:33, 45; 14:21, 41), and Luke contains five (Luke 9:22; 11:30; 18:31; 22:48; 24:7) passion SOM sayings. The accumulative picture displays the suffering, rejection, and betrayal of the SOM. The SOM will spend three days and three nights in the heart of the earth (Matt 12:40; cf. Luke 11:30). The SOM will give his life as a ransom for many (Matt 20:28; Mark 10:45). The offspring of the serpent will strike out at the heel of the woman's seed. Daniel will go down into the lions' den to face the beasts.

The final group of sayings, the parousia sayings, make the strongest, clearest connection to Daniel 7:13 (Matt 10:23; 13:41; 16:27, 28; 17:9; 19:28; 24:27, 30, 37, 39, 44; 25:31; 26:64; Mark 8:38; 9:9; 13:26; 14:62; Luke 9:26; 12:8, 40; 17:24, 30; 18:8; 21:27, 36; 22:69). Five of the SOM parousia texts quote Daniel 7:13 at length (Matt 24:30; 26:64; Mark 13:26; 14:62; Luke 21:27). In these passages Jesus points forward to his vindication and exaltation beyond suffering. Truly, Jesus is the embodiment of the SOM, the one who trusts God through death. The SOM will command the angelic host in his kingdom, and every lawless person will be rooted out (Matt 13:41; cf. Mark 8:38; Luke 9:26; 12:8; 21:36). The apostles will sit on thrones along with the SOM judging the twelve tribes of Israel (Matt 19:28; 25:31). The SOM will come at a time unknown (Matt 24:39, 44; Luke 12:40) and unexpected (Matt 24:37) in great power and glory (Matt 24:30). Matthew 26:64 and Mark 14:62 pair Daniel 7:13 with Psalm 110:1 to formulate the most assertive messianic claim. The referent of Jesus's claim before Caiaphas is a source of endless speculation. Is Jesus pointing to the ascension, the Parousia, or both? As Vos argues, the presentation of the SOM to the Ancient of Days in Daniel 7 views the messianic events "as yet an undivided whole."[62] The first and second advents of Christ were conflated in the Old Testament; therefore, it seems overly assertive to boast that Daniel 7:13 exclusively describes the ascension or exclusively describes the Parousia. Perhaps both events are present in Jesus's response to Caiaphas. Psalm 110:1 was unmistakably used by the early church in defense of the ascension (e.g., Acts 2:34–35), and Daniel 7:13 is clearly used in other passages to indicate the Parousia (e.g., Mark 13:26).[63]

[62]Vos, *Self-Disclosure of Jesus*, 242.

[63]Many would agree with this statement (e.g., Tödt said in 1965, "Few scholars dispute that the arrival on the clouds of heaven signifies the parousia" [*Synoptic Tradition*, 38]); however, Wright emphatically insists on an apocalyptic metaphor *vis-à*

Acts 7:56 and Hebrews 2:6

Apart from the Synoptics and Johannine literature, the New Testament contains two additional SOM texts. Conveyed in Acts 7:56, before martyrdom Stephen exclaims, "Behold, I see the heavens opened, and the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God." This reference draws from the tradition that identifies Jesus as the SOM of Daniel 7 and Psalm 110 (Matt 24:30; 26:64; Mark 13:26; 14:62; Luke 21:27). Hebrews 2:6 employs Psalm 8:4 in a section that argues the overall supremacy of Christ and God's true humanity in God's economy for the world. God has granted mankind dominion over all the works of his hands. Christ, taking on humanity, was made temporarily a little lower than the angels. Now, all things are being subjected under Christ's feet. Dominion is restored to God's true humanity in and through Christ.

Johannine Literature

The SOM ascriptions in the Gospel of John emphasize the transcendence of the pre-incarnate Christ (John 1:51; 3:13, 14; 6:27, 53, 62; 8:28; 9:35; 12:23; 13:31).[64] By way of allusion to Jacob's ladder, Jesus references the angels of God ascending and descending on the SOM (John 1:51). Jesus indirectly identifies himself as the SOM who descended from heaven (John 3:13). Jesus speaks of the SOM's ascension to his former place (John 6:62), and a few passages in John make explicit reference to the glory of the SOM (John 12:23; 13:31).

The Apocalypse of John lauds Jesus as the SOM in two passages (Rev 1:13; 14:14). These occurrences are accompanied by the comparative adjective ὅμοιος, which seems to solidify their source in Daniel 7:13.[65] The SOM passages of Revelation identify Jesus with the SOM of Daniel 7, the one who is granted eternal dominion by the Ancient of Days. In John's vision in chapter one, the SOM reflects divine characteristics. Not only does the SOM claim the divine title *the first and the last* (Rev 1:17; cf. Is 41:4), but also the figure's white hair correlates with Daniel's theophany (Rev 1:14; cf. Dan 7:9).[66] Chapter 14 pictures the SOM riding on a cloud with a crown on his head and a sickle in his hand (Rev 14:14). Some interpreters identify this figure as an angel, not Christ,[67] yet the clear Danielic allusion supports a reference to Christ.

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parousia referent (e.g., "Hope Deferred? Against the Dogma of Delay," *Early Christianity* 9 [2018]: 37–82).

[64]Vos, *Self-Disclosure of Jesus*, 241–44.

[65]Silva, "υἱός," 4:538.

[66]David E. Aune, *Revelation 1–5*, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, 1997), 116–17.

[67]For example, Charles D. Litt, *The Revelation of St. John*, vol. 2, International Critical Commentary (1920; repr., Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1950),

Conclusion

The Hebrew אָדָם was the image of God and the son of God (cf. Luke 3:38), and God made אָדָם for dominion over the created order. In the storyline of Scripture the contest for dominion rages between the seed of the woman—בֶּן־אָדָם or God's true humanity—and the seed of the serpent, the beasts. As the ultimate seed of the woman, Jesus brings the SOM theme to its climax. "He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation" (Col 1:15). Jesus is the true Son of David. He will restore mankind to his rightful dominion.