

then. He could have started it then and finished it when in Rome. It could have been written and issued from Rome.

Conclusion

We have looked briefly at the man Luke and the background to his Gospel. He wrote to Theophilus "that thou mightest know the certainty of those

things, wherein thou hast been instructed" (1:4). The word "certainty" in the Greek is *asphaleia*, which carries the meaning of 'security' or 'safety'. As we read this Gospel message, may we also find our faith is strengthened and our hope made secure in the knowledge of the truth it contains concerning the life, death and resurrection of our Lord.

Jesus: The Son of man

John Nicholls

An important theme in Luke is that of Jesus as the Son of man. This article goes back to the Old Testament roots of this phrase in Ezekiel and Daniel and then shows how its use by Jesus of himself in Luke sometimes indicates his humanity and his work as saviour, and sometimes indicates his future work as king and judge.

SOME BIBLE READERS believe that the faces of the cherubim, which display the glory of our God, show us distinct aspects of the work of Christ. These four faces are the lion, the ox, the man and the eagle, and their characteristics are thought to reflect the particular slant given to the life of Christ by each Gospel writer, as follows:

Matthew, corresponding to the *lion*, gives the kingly work of Christ, emphasising how the Lord came to fulfil the promises to Israel's fathers and sit on David's throne. His Gospel has many references to the Old Testament.

Mark shows us Jesus as a servant, like the *ox* used in the service of man. His Gospel gives no genealogy, for a slave has no rights or privileges such as come with birth into a family. Mark's Gospel is characterised by the words 'immediately' and 'straightway', the hallmarks of good and faithful service.

John shows the Divine origin of the Lord, speaking of the "Word" that was with God in the beginning, and was made flesh when the Lord was begotten by the Holy Spirit in the womb of Mary. He includes many longer discourses of Jesus and his arguments and discussions with the Jewish leaders. His Gospel is symbolised by the *eagle*, which soars in the heavens and can see minute details from a great distance, both functions of the Spirit of God. John therefore depicts Jesus as manifesting God.

Luke shows us the humanity of Christ, as the *man*. His genealogy takes us right back to Adam, and his account of Mary's pregnancy and the birth of Christ emphasises that he was of our nature. Luke's Gospel contains miracles, parables and prayers not found in the other Gospels that remind us

that our Saviour was in all respects like us, but without sin.

The phrase "Son of man" occurs twenty-six times in Luke, but it also occurs in Matthew thirty-two times, in Mark fourteen times and in John twelve times. So the theme of the Son of man in Luke rests not on the greatest number of occurrences, but rather on the *content* of the Gospel. It is in the particular parables and miracles that Luke records, and the way prayers and incidents are recorded, that the human aspect of Jesus is demonstrated. Many of the articles in this issue will show this.

A table giving the full list of references to the Son of man in Luke is given opposite as a basis for further study. But before examining the passages in Luke where Jesus calls himself "the Son of man", it is necessary and instructive to look at the Old Testament occurrences of the phrase.

The Son of man in the Old Testament

In the prophecy of Ezekiel the phrase "son of man" occurs more than ninety times, from 2:1 onwards. Why was Ezekiel called by God "son of man" when, for example, Isaiah, Jeremiah and Daniel are not so addressed? The introductory vision in Ezekiel 1 was of the appearance of a man on a throne, described as having "the appearance of the likeness of the glory of the LORD" (v. 28). So this links Ezekiel with the glory of God,

References by Jesus to himself as the Son of man in Luke's Gospel	
Referring to his sufferings, and his mission to save people from sin and death	Referring to his coming again, and the judgement of his servants and the nations
5:24; 6:5,22; 7:34; 9:22,44,56,58; 18:31; 19:10; 22:22,48; 24:7	9:26; 11:30; 12:8,10,40; 17:22, 24,26,30; 18:8; 21:27,36; 22:69

which in Ezekiel's day was about to be shown in the judgements on Judah resulting from God allowing the Babylonian armies to invade and besiege Jerusalem.

The phrase "son of man" in Ezekiel refers to the fact that the prophet represented God to the people of Judah. Ezekiel warned them, and explained why God was shortly bringing His judgements upon them. So the term has to do with the judgements of God, and Ezekiel foreshadows *the Son of man*, our Lord Jesus Christ, who will also bring judgements when he comes again (Jno. 12:48; 5:26,27). The Lord Jesus, like Ezekiel, represents God to us, and particularly in the Revelation Jesus explains why God carries out judgements and warns us of things to come.

The Hebrew phrase for "son of man" is *ben adam*, and elsewhere in the Old Testament it is used in a general sense as indicating descent from Adam; see, for example, Isaiah 51:12 and Jeremiah 49:18. Psalm 8:4 is another place where *ben adam* is found: "What is man, that Thou art mindful of him? and the son of man, that Thou visitest him?". The apostle expounds this psalm in Hebrews 2, telling us that ultimately "all things" will be put under the feet of "the son of man"; not all mankind, but those who are redeemed from the Adamic race, the many sons being brought to glory whose captain is Jesus, who is *the Son of man* (vv. 5-10).

In contrast to Ezekiel's prophecy, Daniel's has only one reference to the son of man, in chapter 7. In this chapter Daniel experiences the vision of the four beasts, which we understand to parallel the four great empires of Nebuchadnezzar's image. Verses 9-14 describe the judgement of the dreadful fourth beast, and conclude, "I saw . . . and, behold, one like the Son of man came with the clouds of heaven, and came to the Ancient of days [God, or a manifestation of Him?], and they

[the angels?] brought him near before Him. And there was given him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations, and languages, should serve him: his dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed". There are parallels here with the stone that struck the image and became a great mountain filling the whole earth, clearly explained for us in Daniel 2:44 as being the Kingdom of God that would never be destroyed.

It is recognised by commentators, not only Christadelphian ones, that the "Son of man" is Messiah who comes to sit on David's throne and rule all kingdoms. "The son of man expression was current and under certain circumstances understandable as a messianic title at the time of Jesus".¹ This same article goes on to discuss the possible meaning of the phrase, and says, "This saying [the 'son of man' reference in Daniel 7:13] has had a decisive impact on the understanding of the Son of Man in the New Testament, and it is quoted or alluded to many times (see Mark 13:26; 14:62; Revelation 1:7). The imagery of Daniel 7:13,14 may be the foundation of the Son of Man sayings relating to the status of the exalted Christ". The early church fathers also saw the expression in this way, as a messianic prophecy based on Daniel.

The humanity of Christ

Having looked at the Old Testament occurrences of "the son of man", we can now look at the way it is used by Jesus and the disciples. In nearly all cases it is used by Jesus as a self-designation, and, as we have seen, it is very likely that he uses it in the sense of "I, as the Messiah". Of the twenty-six references to Son of man in Luke, many are also cited in Mark and Matthew, and about half of the uses refer to the humanity of Jesus and his work of salvation.

This was an aspect of the Messiah that the Jewish leaders either did not understand or neglected to teach because of their emphasis on keeping the minutiae of the Law. We are told in Hebrews that it was necessary for Jesus to share our nature. By doing so he could save himself

1. Article "The Son of man", *The Oxford Companion to the Bible*, edited by B. M. Metzger and M. D. Coogan, Oxford University Press, 1993, p. 710. See also *The Cambridge Bible for Schools and Colleges: St. Luke*, Farrar, Cambridge University Press; and Appendix 98, "The Son of man", of *The Companion Bible*.

and also be an effective high priest to mediate for his brothers and sisters (Heb. 2:14-18; 4:15,16; 7:24-27). The first 'Son of man' reference in Luke is about Jesus' power to forgive sins (5:24). He showed his audience, which included the sceptical scribes and Pharisees, that power, by healing the paralysed man, who had been so dramatically let down through the roof.

Moving to Luke 6:5, there is again a riposte to the petty-minded Pharisees, this time about the sabbath. The Kingdom is the fulfilment of the sabbath, which is "made for man, and not man for the sabbath" (Mk. 2:27). Also in Luke 6, Jesus says we are happy if we are hated, separated from others' company and reproached for the Son of man's sake, for Jesus himself experienced the same treatment (v. 22). In a similar vein, in 7:34,35 Jesus says that he was accused of being a friend of publicans and sinners, but that "[Divine] wisdom is justified of all her children".

Luke 9:22 makes reference to the sufferings of the Son of man, his rejection by the Jewish leaders and his resurrection after three days. These words of the Lord echo Isaiah 53, and the picture there of the despised and rejected, but righteous, servant of the Lord, who makes his soul an offering for sin. This aspect of Messiah's work was certainly not one which the Jews as a body embraced in the first century, nor have they today either. In the same chapter, in the aftermath of the wonderful healing of the epileptic son experiencing a severe convulsion, Jesus states to his disciples that his mission was to be delivered into the hands of men, and not, as they undoubtedly would have preferred, to set up the Kingdom there and then (v. 44).

Luke 9 is a rich source of references to the Son of man, for verse 56 contains the Lord's rebuke to the two sons of thunder, the brothers James and John, who wanted to bring down fire on the heads of some Samaritans because they did not welcome the Lord: "the Son of man is not come to destroy men's lives, but to save them". Would that we in our generation were as longsuffering toward our fellow men! Finally, in verse 58, Jesus underlines the total response to him and our God that true discipleship demands, by saying, "Foxes have holes, and birds of the air have nests; but the Son of man hath not where to lay his head".

Later, as they came near to Jerusalem, towards which a year previously he had steadfastly set his face (v. 51), he confided to the twelve:

"Behold, we go up to Jerusalem, and all things that are written by the prophets concerning

the Son of man shall be accomplished. For he shall be delivered unto the Gentiles, and shall be mocked, and spitefully entreated, and spitted on: and they shall scourge him, and put him to death: and the third day he shall rise again. And they understood none of these things: and this saying was hid from them, neither knew they the things which were spoken" (18:31-34).

At Jericho, on their way to Jerusalem, he became the guest of the joyful Zacchaeus, and answered the murmurers, who accused the little tax-collector of being a sinner, with these words: "This day is salvation come to this house, forso much as he also is a son of Abraham. For the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost" (19:9,10).

Chapter 22 contains the betrayal of the Lord by Judas Iscariot, and in verses 21 and 22 Jesus says, "But, behold, the hand of him that betrayeth me is with me on the table. And truly the Son of man goeth, as it was determined: but woe unto that man by whom he is betrayed!". Later, in the garden, as the multitude came to arrest Jesus, the Lord said to Judas, "Judas, betrayest thou the Son of man with a kiss?" (v. 48). Lastly, the angels on the resurrection morning reminded the fearful women: "Why seek ye the living among the dead? He is not here, but is risen: remember how he spake unto you when he was yet in Galilee, saying, The Son of man must be delivered into the hands of sinful men, and be crucified, and the third day rise again. And they remembered his words" (24:5-8).

These references to the Son of man, the Messiah, show the humanity of Jesus and his mission at his first coming to save his people from their sins by being a sacrifice, and giving them a hope of everlasting life.

The second coming and the judgement

Almost equal in number to the Son of man references about the humanity of Jesus are those concerning his return to judge his servants and the nations, and to set up the Kingdom. This is the work of the Messiah, which, as we have seen from a consideration of Daniel 7:13,14, was how in the first century the role of the Son of man would have been understood.

Luke 9:25,26 is the first example: "For what is a man advantaged, if he gain the whole world, and lose himself, or be cast away? For whosoever shall be ashamed of me and of my words, of him shall the Son of man be ashamed, when he shall

come in his own glory, and in his Father's, and of the holy angels". The echo of Daniel 7 is clear. There are further 'judgement' verses in 12:8,10, and verse 40 is worth quoting: "for the Son of man cometh at an hour when ye think not", a warning that applied prior to A.D. 70, and surely much more so today when abundant signs tell us of the nearness of Christ's return.

Chapter 17 contains four passages with the phrase "Son of man" (vv. 22,24,26,30). Verse 26 is a reminder that the days of Noah are to be replicated in the time leading to Messiah's coming: "And as it was in the days of Noe, so shall it be also in the days of the Son of man". How thankful we are to our God for these warnings as we prepare ourselves for our Lord's return!

The Olivet Prophecy contains two 'Son of man' passages (21:27,36). In a clear allusion to Daniel 7:13,14 Jesus says, "And then shall they see the Son of man coming in a cloud with power and great glory" (v. 27). And perhaps the words of verse 36 should be our fervent prayer for ourselves and

our loved ones in ecclesia and family: "Watch ye therefore, and pray always, that ye may be accounted worthy to escape all these things that shall come to pass, and to stand before the Son of man". Finally, in his trial before the Sanhedrin, as day came, Jesus calmly told the council that "Hereafter shall the Son of man sit on the right hand of the power of God" (22:69), a statement that again alludes to Daniel 7:13,14.

Surely the day is near when the Son of man will have dominion over all things (Gen. 1:26-28) in the day of the Kingdom, for the apostle says, "For he must reign, till He hath put all enemies under his feet. The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death. For He hath put all things under his feet. But when He saith all things are put under him, it is manifest that He is excepted, Which did put all things under him. And when all things shall be subdued unto him, then shall the Son also himself be subject unto Him That put all things under him, that God may be all in all" (1 Cor. 15:25-28).

Saviour and salvation in the Gospel of Luke

Geoff Henstock

One of the characteristics of Luke's Gospel is the use of the words 'saviour' and 'salvation', especially in the first two chapters. This is part of his overall theme of Jesus as the Man, seeking out those lost through sin.

SALVATION is a central theme in Christian theology. Whilst understanding that our heavenly Father is "a just God and a Saviour" (Isa. 45:21), and that there is no other saviour beside Him (43:11), we know that "God according to His promise raised unto Israel a Saviour, Jesus" (Acts 13:23).

The Lord Jesus Christ, then, is the agent through whom God extends salvation to perishing man: "there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved" (4:12). We recognise that "the Father sent the Son to be the Saviour of the world" (1 Jno. 4:14); we acknowledge that Christ "is the saviour of the body" (Eph. 5:23); we know that God exalted him "to be a Prince and a Saviour" (Acts 5:31). It

may therefore seem incongruous that the words 'salvation' and 'saviour' are so rare in the Gospel records of the ministry of Jesus. In fact, they are unique to Luke within the synoptic Gospels.¹

"God my Saviour"

It is curious that most of the uses of these words in Luke occur with reference to the infant Jesus, and all but one occur before the Lord commences his public ministry. The first reference occurs within the Song of Mary, that majestic paean about God's work in Christ. Early in the song Mary rejoiced in "God my Saviour" (1:47). This is an allusion to the name 'Jesus', which the angel told her she would give her son, meaning 'Yahweh shall save'.

God as Saviour is the theme of many prophecies, especially in Isaiah, but this particular

1. The words are used once each by John in the record of the Samaritan woman (Jno. 4:22,42).