

THE DIVINE NAMES AND TITLES.

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This is one of the most significant titles given to the Lord Jesus Christ.

It is difficult to define it, on account of all that it means, and all that it contains and teaches.

As applied, without the article, to men, it means merely a descendant of Adam—a human being.

But as used of Christ (with the article—"The Son of Man") it is different, for He was not a descendant of the first Adam, at any rate on the father's side. He was man "of the substance of his mother," but His generation was by the Holy Ghost. Herein lies the difference between Christ and mere man. He was "the second Man—the Lord from heaven." We can never dissociate this thought from "the Son of Man." He is "the Last Adam"—not another man like all the other sons of Adam, but a different man. "In the likeness of sinful flesh" of course, with the "infirmities" of the flesh, but not with its sins! We must not confound "infirmities" with sins.

The first man fell by one sinful act, and the second man in righteousness and grace stood under more severe temptation, and by one act of obedience bore the penalty of sin at the

Cross. Thus He became the head of a new race. He is the glorified man in resurrection.

Now, to understand the significance of the title, we must go to its first occurrence. In Psalm 8 we have it. And here we are taken back to Genesis 1 and 2. We have God's purpose concerning man: "Thou madest him to have dominion over the works of Thy hands" (Psa 8:6). But man fell, and lost that dominion—yes, and lost it for ever had not God made a new provision in another—the Second Man!

With regard to the first man—who and what was he? "When I consider Thy heavens, the work of Thy fingers, the moon and stars which Thou hast created, What is man, that Thou art mindful of him?" As regards sentient beings, he trembles in the presence of an angel. As for the animals, the ox is stronger; the eagle more acute of vision, soaring aloft into the heavens while man creeps upon the ground; the lion can rend and tear him in pieces; the fish can go down as man cannot into the depths of the sea and live! and yet, marvellous purpose!—dominion in the earth is for man!

In the structure of the Psalms, Psalm 8 corresponds in subject matter with Psalm 2, but it stands in contrast with it. In Psalm 2 Man sets himself against the Lord's anointed. We see his thoughts and his counsels, and they are "against Jehovah and against His anointed." In Psalm 8 we have God's thoughts and counsels about man. He is nothing, and less than nothing. He has lost dominion in the earth, and now all is to be restored in Christ, "the Son of Man"—"the Second Man." He, too, was made a little lower than the angels, but He came to do the will of His Father, and He did it, and now all things in heaven and earth are put under His feet. In Him—"the Son of Man," "our Adonai"—man regains dominion in all the earth! In Him, God's purposes to exalt man above the earth and above the glittering heavens will yet be carried out; and it is this thought and the sight of this wondrous purpose which calls forth the exclamation, "Lord, what is man?" The question is not

answered! We can only, like the same David, sit before the Lord and say, "Who am I?"

Psalm 8 thus contains and gives us the essence of the meaning of this title. It begins and ends with the words, "O Jehovah, our Adonai, how excellent is Thy name IN ALL THE EARTH." This is the point. The title, wherever it is used, has reference to Christ's right to dominion "in all the earth." It is His special title as "the Heir of all things." It is the title, in virtue of which "all things shall be put under His feet" in reality as well as in purpose.

"But now we see not yet all things put under Him. But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels...that He, by the grace of God, should taste death for every* man" (Heb 2:8,9). Dominion in the earth is in abeyance until He comes again to claim His rights.

* I.e., Every man, without distinction, not without exception! Before His death the sacrifices were slain only for Israel. But His death was for all, without any such distinction or limitation.

In this view the first occurrence of the title in the New Testament is deeply significant: "The Son of Man hath not where to lay His head" (Matt 8:20). That is the first thing spoken of "the Son of Man." It refers to the earth in which "foxes have holes and the birds of the air have nests."

The second likewise refers to the earth, but it sets forth the fact that the Son of Man—"the second Man—the Lord from heaven," is God as well as Man, for "the Son of Man hath power on earth to forgive sins" (Matt 9:6). It is this forgiveness of sins that is the basis of all future blessing for man in the earth, and the secret of his restored dominion in it.

The third occurrence refers to the time when this forgiveness shall be proclaimed, and how that proclamation shall go forth and not be finished "till the Son of Man be come" (Matt 10:23).

Thus in beautiful harmony the teaching is carried on. Every occurrence is worthy of deep and patient study. Our object is rather to point out the lines on which such study should be pursued.

The use of this title teaches us that it has nothing whatever to do with the Church of God, and only slightly with Israel. It has to do special with the earth, judgment, rule and dominion in the earth.

As contrasted with the title, "Son of God," it is most significant (see John 5:25-27): "Verily I say unto you, the hour is coming, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the SON OF GOD, and they that hear shall live. For as the Father hath life in Himself, so hath He given to the Son to have life in Himself; and hath given Him authority to execute judgment also, because HE is the SON OF MAN!"

As the Son of Man He had not in this sense life in Himself. Before the hour can come when "the Son of Man should be glorified," that precious "corn of wheat" must fall into the ground and die (John 12:23,24). But having died and brought forth much fruit in resurrection life and on resurrection ground—as "the Lord from heaven"—then all judgment is committed unto Him because He is "the Son of Man" (Acts 10:40-42). And "God hath appointed a day in which He will judge the world in righteousness by THAT MAN whom He hath ordained, whereof He hath given assurance unto all, in that He hath raised Him from the dead" (Acts 17:31).

Thus it is clear how carefully and divinely and exactly these titles are used by the Holy Spirit of God.

How incongruous it would be! How confusing to the thought and the teaching if the title, "Son of Man," were used in connection with the Church of God, or with reference to Christ as the Head of the Body!

No, the fact is that it is never once so used! Not once in all the epistles! Only in Hebrews 2:7 is Psalm 8 quoted to prove that Psalm 8 is spoken of Christ.

The title occurs 84 times.* Seven times twelve (7 x 12). Twelve the number of governmental perfection and seven of spiritual perfection. Thus the number of the occurrences corresponds with the meaning and teaching of the title, for it will be as the Son of Man that His name will be excellent in all the earth, and that He shall judge the world in righteousness.

* This is omitting with RV, Matthew 18:11, 25:13 and Luke 9:56.

It is interesting also to notice how these 84 occurrences are distributed.

Out of the whole number, 80 are in the four Gospels! And the number in each Gospel is also significant.*

* In Matthew it is 30, which is 5 x 6. The number of grace and the number of man, for it was in perfect grace that the King had not where to lay His head.

In Mark it is 14, which is twice seven. The two of testimony and seven of spiritual perfection, for the Servant is spiritually perfect.

In Luke, which is the special Gospel setting forth Christ as the Perfect Man, this is balanced by the number 25, five times five, or the square of five—the number of grace.

While in John it occurs eleven times, a number which stands associated with Divine designs. It is the fifth prime number, and stands alone.

Then we have one occurrence in the Acts (7:56), one in Hebrews (2:6), and two in the Apocalypse (Rev 1:13, 14:14). It was "the Son of Man" whom John saw in the midst of the seven golden lamp-stands, showing that the Lord from Heaven was there in judgment and not in grace. And it is "the son of Man" whom John saw, "having on His head a golden crown and in His hand a sharp sickle"—for the vision has reference

to the time when it shall be said "the harvest of the earth is ripe," "and He that sat on the cloud thrust in His sickle on the earth, and the earth was reaped" (Rev 14:14,15).

Thus we see that the Lord Jesus, when He is first named as "the Son of Man" in Matthew 8:20, "had not where to lay His head." Yet in this last mention of Him in the New Testament, that head has upon it "a golden crown."

Similarly significant are the first and last occurrences in each of the four Gospels.

In Matthew, where we behold the King, the first (8:10) shows Him as the Son of Man, with nowhere to lay His head, while the last (26:64) proclaims Him coming hereafter in the clouds of heaven.

In Mark, where we behold the Servant, the first (2:10) shows that He is no mere Servant, but is the Lord of all, and has power on earth to forgive sins, while the last (14:62), as in Matthew, shows Him sitting at the right hand of power.

In Luke, where we "behold the Man," the first (5:24) shows Him, as in Mark, to be God, with power on earth to forgive sins, and the last (24:7) the Son of Man proclaimed as betrayed, crucified, and risen again from the dead.

In John, where we behold our God, the first (3:13,14), shows the Son of Man, which was in heaven, lifted up as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, while the last (13:31) shows Him in the darkest hour of that last "night," saying, "Now is the Son of Man glorified, and God is glorified in Him"!

In the Acts, the only reference (7:56), Stephen sees "the son of Man standing on the right hand of God"—the pledge that He will one day rise up to avenge the blood of His servants; while in the Epistles the only occurrence is, as we have seen, in Hebrews 2:6, where Psalm 8 is quoted to connect it with the Lord Jesus as the Son of Man.

In all this we have a key to and a help to the rightly dividing of the Word of Truth; and, if we heed the lesson thus taught us, we shall never be found interpreting of the church of God any passage (such as Matt 24) where this title is used. It is a finger-post pointing us to the fact that we are to interpret it of Christ as the One whose right it is to exercise universal dominion, and Whose name shall one day be excellent in all the earth, and His glory above the heavens.