

Why did Jesus Refer to Himself as the Son of Man?

If Jesus is the Son of God, why did He call Himself the **“Son of Man”**? Jesus is called the Son of Man 85 times in the New Testament. During His earthly ministry, Jesus refers to Himself as the **“Son of Man”** more often than as the “Son of God.” He only used the title “Son of God” 7 times. In this study, we will take a closer look at why Jesus preferred **“Son of Man”** over “Son of God” during His earthy ministry.

“Son of Man” is a Messianic title from the Old Testament. This title is a direct reference to what the prophet Daniel prophesied in **Daniel 7:13-14**. This description matches the descriptions of the Messiah found in other passages in the Old Testament.

Moses prophesied about Jesus in **Deuteronomy 18:15,18**. The Apostle Peter and Stephen identify Jesus as the fulfillment of this prophecy. (**Acts 3:22-23, Acts 7:37**)

The Prophet Jeremiah also wrote of a coming Messiah through the seed of David. (**Jeremiah 23:5-6**) Isaiah also prophesied a coming Messiah who would bring healing from sin death. (**Isaiah 53:3-5**) Samuel also prophesied about the coming Messiah through lineage of King David. (**2 Samuel 7:12-13**)

Jesus called Himself the **“Son of Man”** to emphasize His physical human form and His identification with humanity. At His trial, Jesus used this title as a direct claim to divinity, leading to accusations of blasphemy.

The high priest knew exactly what Jesus was claiming by calling Himself the Son of Man. They knew that Jesus was claiming to be the Judge which made Him God. They immediately accused Him of blasphemy. (**Matthew 26:64-66**)

From this passage, we can understand the weight of the title **“Son of Man”**. Jesus used the title **“Son of Man”** to demonstrate His divine authority to forgive sins on Earth and His role as Lord of the Sabbath. (**Mark 2:8-12, Mark 2:27-28**) Jesus also used His title **“Son of Man”** to refer to His future return in glory to judge the world. (**John 5:27**)

During His earthy ministry, Jesus chose to use the title **“Son of Man”** to avoid political misconceptions. The titles “Messiah” and “King” would have carried heavy political connotations of a military leader in first-century Judaism. The title **“Son of Man”** highlighted His humble earthly ministry, His role in suffering, and his future authority as judge.

It is very interesting to note that the title **Son of Man** is never used in any of the Pauline Epistles or General Epistles. We see only the title Son of God used after the resurrection of Jesus.

This is because it was crucial for the early Church to proclaim His divinity and victory over death.

Now the focus has shifted from the earthly ministry of Jesus and His humanity to His divinity and His role as the Redeemer of Mankind. One of the few places where we see Jesus claiming to be the Son of God is found in **Luke 22:70-71**.

From a Jewish perspective, the Son of God could only mean that Jesus was claiming to be God. This is why they accused Him of blasphemy. Notice that this is right at the end of the earthly ministry of Jesus.

It is very clear that the Jewish leaders knew exactly what the title “Son of God” meant. They knew that Jesus was claiming to be God which, in their eyes, made Him a blasphemer.

The opening verses of the Gospel of John make it clear that Jesus was God manifest in the flesh. (**John 1:1,14**) Notice that after the Day of Pentecost, those who believed and obeyed the Gospel are called **“Sons of God”**. When we are born again and continue to be led by the Spirit of God, we too become the **“Sons of God”**. (**Romans 8:14, Galatians 3:26, Galatians 4:5-6, 1 John 3:1-3**)

The title **“sons of God”** carries huge significance: born-again Christians are born into God’s family which makes them joint heirs with Christ. (**Romans 8:17**) The title **“sons of God”** signifies a spiritual rebirth where believers walk in newness of life. (**2 Corinthians 5:17**)

Therefore, the term **“sons of God”** denotes intimacy, identity, an inheritance for those who have been born again by believing and obeying the Gospel message of Jesus Christ. (**Acts 2:37-39**)

All the Epistles were written after the Day of Pentecost. In the Epistles, we can read very plain claims as to who Jesus really is. **Colossians 1:14-15**, we read that Jesus is the image of the invisible God.

In **Colossians 2:9**, we read how Jesus is the fulness of God bodily. In **Hebrews 1:1-3**, we read that Jesus is the express image of God. In **1 Timothy 3:16**, we read that Jesus is God manifest in the flesh.

Even in the Gospel of John, after the resurrection of Jesus, we read the revelation of Thomas: **“My Lord and My God”**. (**John 20:28**) How could God purchase His Church with His own blood if He never became a man? (**Acts 20:28**)

Conclusion

The title **“Son of Man”** was a title that represented, humanity, humility, suffering and the fulfillment of Old Testament prophecy. Its main focus was on the fact that Jesus came as a man, as a part of the human race.

He came for one purpose, to die on the cross for our sins. By Jesus using the **title “Son of Man”**, He is saying He is the Messiah and He is fully human. This is what Jesus put the emphasis on during His earthly ministry.

The title **“Son of God”** strongly claims that the invisible God was manifest in the flesh. This title refers to the authority and deity of Jesus. Jesus was more than just a man; He was the image of the invisible God. The title **“Son of Man”** highlights His humanity; the title “Son of God” highlights His divinity. Together they affirm that Jesus is both fully man and fully God.

[BACK](#)