

“The Son of Man”  
John 3:13  
(Preached at Trinity, September 20, 2017)

I'm supplying these notes for the benefit of busy pastors who may be engaged in bi-vocational work, feeling the pressure of preparing to preach twice on the Lord's Day while trying to balance full-time secular work as well as caring for their families. While the notes of another man are no substitute for personal study, I pray that these may aid in the process of preparing to preach.

**Disclaimer:** These are the actual notes I bring with me to the pulpit, which I follow loosely. They are not designed for publication. While I try to make every effort to give proper credit to my sources from the pulpit, adequate citations will sometimes be absent from my notes. If anyone feels their intellectual material has been used without adequate citation, please contact me and I'll make immediate correction giving credit.

1. As we entered **Chapter 3** we witnessed a Pharisee by the name of Nicodemus coming to Jesus by night. He was a man of position, of influence. He was a Pharisee, a teacher, and a ruler of the Jews.
  - A. Nicodemus knew what it meant to study the Scriptures and teach them to the people. Nicodemus had spent his entire life listening to other teachers. The scribes did nothing else but study and teach the Scriptures. He thought he knew what it meant to be a good teacher.
  - B. But never had Nicodemus heard a teacher like Jesus.  
**Matthew 7:28-29 NAU** - "When Jesus had finished these words, the crowds were amazed at His teaching; <sup>29</sup> for He was teaching them as *one* having authority, and not as their scribes."
2. Nicodemus was religious, but he was not yet born again. Lacking in spiritual understanding, many of the words of Jesus were strange and confusing to him. Jesus began by teaching him the necessity of the new birth.  
But Nicodemus could not understand: **John 3:9 NAU** - "How can these things be?"
3. Jesus keeps taking him to ever increasing heights and He gives Nicodemus a mild rebuke for his failure to comprehend—after all, he was a teacher of the Jews. But then Jesus continues His teaching.  
"If I told you earthly things and you do not believe, how will you believe if I tell you heavenly things?"
4. He begins to describe God's grand design in saving His people from their sins and His great purpose in coming. He describes His incarnation and descent from heaven.  
**John 3:13 NAU** - "No one has ascended into heaven, but He who descended from heaven: the Son of Man."
5. Jesus tells Nicodemus two amazing truths; truths that were essential for Nicodemus to comprehend. Jesus came from heaven and He is the Son of Man.  
Jesus has been systematically leading Nicodemus through the Gospel.
  - We must be born again before we will comprehend our need for a Savior. We will not see the Kingdom of God unless we are born from above.
  - Now Jesus is revealing to Nicodemus that the Savior is one who had come from heaven and that He was the Son of Man
6. We see this title used often in Scripture. I've set it before you before.  
John uses refers to the title 12 times in this Gospel.  
Matthew referred to "Son of Man" 31 times, Luke 26  
Jesus used this title to describe Himself over 80 times.

7. It is important for us to understand what Jesus meant by the title, “Son of Man?” What is the meaning of this title? It has often been a source of confusion. The Jews failed to understand.
- John 12:34 NAU** - "The crowd then answered Him, "We have heard out of the Law that the Christ is to remain forever; and how can You say, 'The Son of Man must be lifted up'? Who is this Son of Man?"
8. Some today answer this question simplistically by using the title to describe the humanity of Christ in contrast to His deity.
- Jesus Christ has two distinct natures—He is both God and man.
- A. They hold that regarding His divinity Jesus was referred to as the “Son of God” - used in 9 times in the Gospel of John.
1. It was the angel’s declaration to Mary  
**Luke 1:35 NAU** - "And the angel answered and said to her, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; and for that reason the holy offspring shall be called the Son of God."
  2. It was the declaration of the centurion who witnessed the crucifixion:  
**Matthew 27:54 NAU** - "Truly this was the Son of God!"
  3. As the Son of God Jesus is the second person of the Godhead, the eternally begotten One that came forth from the Father.
- C. Regarding His humanity, Jesus is the “Son of Man” - found 84 times in the NT, all but four being in the Gospels.
1. This bears some validity. In Hebrew the expression “Son of . . .” is an idiom to describe membership in a particular class. Peter’s title, Simon Barjona means he belongs to the family of Jonah or John. Ezekiel was referred to as “Son of man” identifies him as a creature before his Creator. Thus, it could refer to the humanity of Jesus.
  2. This is a favorite expression of Jesus in describing Himself. He seldom referred to Himself as the Son of God but often referred to Himself as the Son of Man—at least 80 times. It is interesting that, with the exception of Stephen in **Acts 7:56**, no one else ever referred to Jesus by this name. It never appears in the epistles.
  3. As the Son of Man, He was born of a virgin, conceived of the Holy Spirit. He was fully human—the second Adam.
  4. All that pertains to human nature was applied to Christ except for sin.
8. Tonight, I want to set before you that this is far too narrow a definition. It is a wrong interpretation of this title. Jesus didn’t use this title simply because He was a man. In fact, by using it Jesus intends to distinguish Himself from all other men. Jesus wasn’t using the title as recorded in Ezekiel but as it was used in the Book of Daniel. It was a Messianic title.
9. Tonight, I want us to examine this great title more carefully.
- A. It is important for you to be filled with the knowledge of who the Son of Man is.
1. Don’t forget our Lord’s question to His disciples.  
**Matthew 16:13 NAU** - "Now when Jesus came into the district of Caesarea Philippi, He was asking His disciples, "Who do people say that the Son of Man is?"

2. Many have been confused and confounded by this title  
**John 12:34 NAU** - "The crowd then answered Him, "We have heard out of the Law that the Christ is to remain forever; and how can You say, 'The Son of Man must be lifted up'? Who is this Son of Man?"
- B. Do you know Him? Who is this "Son of Man?"  
 Jesus' use of the title can be divided into three different categories:
- I. Jesus used it to describe His identity as the Christ
  - II. Jesus used it to describe His work as Christ—His suffering, death, and resurrection
  - III. Jesus used it to describe the power of His coming as the Righteous Judge
- I. Jesus used it to describe His identity as the Christ
- A. Jesus was the fulfillment of Daniel's prophecy.
1. We should notice that Daniel portrayed this "Son of Man" as one coming from the clouds of heaven.  
**Daniel 7:13-14 NAU** - "I kept looking in the night visions, And behold, with the clouds of heaven One like a Son of Man was coming, And He came up to the Ancient of Days And was presented before Him. <sup>14</sup> "And to Him was given dominion, Glory and a kingdom, That all the peoples, nations and *men of every* language Might serve Him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion Which will not pass away; And His kingdom is one Which will not be destroyed."
  2. The Son of Man was one with a heavenly origin who was given an eternal rule.  
**John 3:13 NAU** - "No one has ascended into heaven, but He who descended from heaven: the Son of Man."
- B. When Jesus referred to Himself as the Son of Man He was announcing that He was the Messiah.
1. At first, He chose His words carefully often making implicit declarations to veil His identity because His time had not yet come. The name "Son of Man" was sufficiently vague that He was never attacked on the basis of this alone.
  2. When the time was right He announced His identity clearly and explicitly and all knew the meaning of the name.  
**Mark 14:61-62 NAS** - "Again the high priest was questioning Him, and saying to Him, "Are You the Christ, the Son of the Blessed *One*?" <sup>62</sup> And Jesus said, "I am; and you shall see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of Power, and coming with the clouds of heaven."
  3. It is interesting that Jesus uses the expression with Nicodemus so early in His ministry and immediately after He had spoken of His Kingdom.  
**John 3:3 NAU** - "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born again he cannot see the kingdom of God."

- II. Jesus used this title to describe His work as Messiah -- His suffering, death, and resurrection
- A. The Son of Man was the one sent as the Deliverer of His people  
**John 3:14 NAU** - "As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up;"
1. When Judas Iscariot went out to betray Jesus Jesus declared,  
**John 13:31 NAU** - "Now is the Son of Man glorified, and God is glorified in Him"
  2. This was His purpose. It is why He came.
- B. As the Son of Man Jesus was given all authority to accomplish His mission  
**John 5:26-27 NAU** - "For just as the Father has life in Himself, even so He gave to the Son also to have life in Himself; <sup>27</sup> and He gave Him authority to execute judgment, because He is *the* Son of Man."
- C. Upon completing His mission the Son of Man would return to heaven  
**John 6:61-62 NAU** - "But Jesus, conscious that His disciples grumbled at this, said to them, "Does this cause you to stumble? <sup>62</sup> "What then if you see the Son of Man ascending to where He was before?"
- D. Jesus is now upon His throne in glory
1. Stephen saw a vision of Him  
**Acts 7:56 NAU** - "Behold, I see the heavens opened up and the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God."
  2. The Apostle John also saw Him  
**Revelation 1:13-15** - "and in the middle of the lampstands *I* saw one like a son of man, clothed in a robe reaching to the feet, and girded across His chest with a golden sash. <sup>14</sup> His head and His hair were white like white wool, like snow; and His eyes were like a flame of fire. <sup>15</sup> His feet *were* like burnished bronze, when it has been made to glow in a furnace, and His voice was like the sound of many waters."
- III. Jesus used this title to describe the glorious King who will return in His glory as the Righteous Judge
- A. The Son of Man is the suffering Savior but He is also the glorious King
1. The context has Jesus turning Nicodemus' attention towards the Kingdom of God. Jesus is the Lord of the Kingdom.
  2. Jesus has fully accomplished His work as our Redeemer and is now seated at the right hand of Majesty and we now await His glorious return  
**Matthew 25:31-32 NAU** - "But when the Son of Man comes in His glory, and all the angels with Him, then He will sit on His glorious throne. <sup>32</sup> "All the nations will be gathered before Him; and He will separate them from one another, as the shepherd separates the sheep from the goats"  
**Matthew 16:27-28 NAS** - "For the Son of Man is going to come in the glory of His Father with His angels; and will then recompense every man according to his deeds. <sup>28</sup> "Truly I say to you, there are some of those who are standing here who shall not taste death until they see the Son of Man coming in His kingdom."

- B. This is the mystery that Jesus is telling Nicodemus
1. Unless a man is born again he shall not see, he shall not comprehend the Kingdom of God.  
**John 3:3 NAU** - "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born again he cannot see the kingdom of God."
  2. Unless we look to Him by faith and follow Him as King we will perish in our sins.  
**John 3:36 NAU** - "He who believes in the Son has eternal life; but he who does not obey the Son will not see life, but the wrath of God abides on him."

#### Conclusion:

1. The Son of Man has come to save His people from their sin. The Son of Man will come to judge all men before His judgment seat. The Son of Man reigns both now and forever.  
**Matthew 26:63-64 NAS** - "And the high priest said to Him, "I adjure You by the living God, that You tell us whether You are the Christ, the Son of God." <sup>64</sup> Jesus said to him, "You have said it *yourself*; nevertheless I tell you, hereafter you shall see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of Power, and coming on the clouds of heaven."
2. The question is before you: "Who do you say that the Son of Man is?"
  - a. This was the question Jesus asked of His disciples.  
**Matthew 16:13 NAU** - "Who do people say that the Son of Man is?"
  - b. This is a very personal question. Who is He in your life? Is He your Savior? Is He your King? Is He the Lord of your life?
3. Looking to the Son of Man is of the essence of salvation.  
**John 3:13-16 NAU** - "And no one has ascended into heaven, but He who descended from heaven, *even* the Son of Man. <sup>14</sup> "And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, *even* so must the Son of Man be lifted up; <sup>15</sup> that whoever believes may in Him have eternal life. <sup>16</sup> "For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish, but have eternal life."
4. Have you trusted your soul to the Son of Man?  
Are you serving the Son of Man? Are you following the Son of Man now? Are you testifying of the Son of Man now?  
**Mark 8:38 NAU** - "For whoever is ashamed of Me and My words in this adulterous and sinful generation, the Son of Man will also be ashamed of him when He comes in the glory of His Father with the holy angels."