

DANIEL

Week 19, chapter 7 continued

Today will be one of those lessons that will require all of your focus and attention. It will be one of the more challenging that you will ever hear from me, but it will also be rewarding if you'll work at it.

I'll begin with quoting a person whose work I have come to admire:

“The theology in the Gospels (of the New Testament), far from being a radical innovation within Israelite religious tradition, is (actually) a highly conservative return to the very most ancient moments within that tradition; moments that had been largely suppressed.....but not entirely”. These are words (I would call it a startling admission) from one of the acknowledged greatest living Talmud and Torah scholars, Daniel Boyarin. And frankly, these are words that need to be spoken by our Christian leaders to the Church in general, and taken to heart, because it tells the truth that Christianity as it was in its earliest stages after Christ's death was a 100% Hebrew-based religion. Thus while I can't speak for all Hebrew Roots pastors, teachers, or Rabbis, I can say for myself that taking a Hebrew Roots approach to practicing our faith is anything but radical or heretical; rather it is nothing more nor less than a conservative return to our fundamental Christian faith roots, which, it turns out, are decidedly Hebrew. And, as Boyarin boldly comments that Judaism has intentionally suppressed the knowledge of ancient Israelite Scriptural tradition that actually has much commonality with the theology of the New Testament, so has Christianity tended to suppress that same knowledge because of a desire to be separate and unaffiliated with any element of Jewishness or Judaism. Our Hebrew beginnings that are recorded in the Hebrew Bible is a heritage that many within institutional Christianity have, for 1800 years, sought to disavow to one extent or another.

Professor Boyarin teaches at Cal Berkley, and is NOT a Believer in Christ as the Jewish Messiah, so far as he has publically stated. He is a Jew who believes in the God of Israel, and has quite an open mind towards the bible and even the New Testament. I'm in debt to him for so much fine research work regarding what we'll be discussing today. His research and study has led him to expose many commonly held Christian and Jewish Rabbinical sayings, customs, and seemingly immutable cultural beliefs by holding them up to the light of day and shown that it is far past time that Jews and Christians roll back our thick doctrinal veils and rediscover the true beginnings of Christianity and where its fundamental theology came from. When that happens it is straightforward and obvious that earliest belief in Yeshua as God's Messiah was born within a branch of Judaism, and then another branch of it grew into gentile Christianity (largely through the tireless efforts of the Apostle Paul), and Christianity itself has

since morphed, divided and evolved into what we practice today, in all of its various forms, in our houses of worship around the globe.

I mentioned at our last meeting that this week we'd learn that certain fundamentals of Christianity that have typically been taken for granted by Jew and Christian alike as exclusive innovations of a gentile-led Church that are quite apart from Judaism, are in many cases present in Jewish thought beginning long before Yeshua was born. The irony of this is that theological concepts like the Trinity and a Messiah that is divine (and not merely an especially "good man"), which the Church happily agrees belongs **only** to the Church, but which concepts Judaism for centuries has said is blasphemous to God and offensive to Jewish sensibility, is in reality found in the Talmud and also in other Jewish documents some of which were written prior to the New Testament. While we won't get into many of those theological concepts today, there is one that is most pertinent to our study of Daniel and so it's the one that we'll focus on: the concept of the Son of Man. This study will also lead us to a couple of other fundamental Christian theological principles that it turns out weren't new Christian inventions at all but rather were mainstream Jewish thought at one time.

Our current study in the Book of Daniel chapter 7 is indeed turning out to be the can of worms I promised you it would be, but it also one of the most critical studies we'll have because it will go a long way in determining if the New Testament is worth the paper it is written upon, and even if Jesus is the Messiah He claims to be. That may sound a little overboard, but as I've shown you in earlier lessons, and as you'll see further evidence of today, if Daniel is a hoax then the New Testament has serious credibility issues. The reason that most of us have never considered the centrality of the Book of Daniel to our faith is because modern Western Christianity mainly is interested in Daniel for its End Times connections to the Book of Revelation. Nebuchadnezzar's statue, Daniel's 4 beasts, the little horn with the blasphemous mouth.....these are what interest modern Christian Pastors, scholars, teachers and especially novelists. And so this is mostly what Church authorities and lay people know of the book.

Our extensive look, today, into the study of the concept of The Son of Man is going to help you understand just how critical it is that Daniel is real and truthful, and what fatal damage it does to the Gospels if it indeed the Book is what much of modern bible academia says it is: a well-meaning fraud that was written over 300 years after it purported to be and means something else entirely than what it seems to be saying.

Let's re-read just a few verses of Daniel 7 to get started.

RE-READ DANIEL 7:9 – 14

I mentioned last time that the theological concept of the Son of Man was slowly developed throughout the Old Testament. And that at first, the concept was virtually indistinguishable from the term "human being". The Hebrew words are **ben adam** for son of man, and we don't really find those Hebrew words used in the bible to mean something other than a mortal person, a human being, until the Psalms, and I used Psalm 80 specifically to highlight the term Son of Man. In Psalm 80 **ben adam** implies something more than merely a typical human, but what exactly it implies remains shrouded in mystery for a few hundred more years.

I think the best way to take you on this important exploration of the Son of Man is to begin with the conclusion. And the conclusion is this: the Son of Man means the opposite of what it sounds like it means. Over 80 times in the New Testament either Christ refers to Himself, or His disciples refer to Him as the Son of Man. And typically Christianity has taught what on the surface seems obvious: the Son of Man refers to Christ's humanity.

But this leads us to another title and theological concept attributed to Yeshua in the New Testament: the Son of God. And interestingly, we find that the concept of someone being called God's son occurred hundreds of years before Christ, and wasn't always referring to Christ prophetically, and in fact usually wasn't suggesting that the person being referred to was divine or God-like in nature. So I'm telling you that in the New Testament that the term the Son of Man is meant to speak of the divine nature of Yeshua, not His humanity; and the term the Son of God was (at first) meant to speak of the human nature with no divine quality whatsoever intended. However that certainly changed as the New Testament developed.

Why is this important and not just some head-hurting, onion-slicing, academic exercise? Because it will help us to far better understand the life and times of Yeshua, and will reveal how He thought of Himself, and how others of Jewish society in His day viewed Him. And this as opposed to many assumptions that we've all made about that subject as we've read those inspired words of the New Testament.

So buckle in, and let's tackle this matter head on.

To begin let's examine a word we use regularly in Christianity: Messiah. In Hebrew the term is **Mashiach**. The direct Greek translation of this word is Christos. And thus from the Greek we get the English Christ. Messiah is just an Englishized way of saying **Mashiach**. So: **Mashiach**, Christos, Christ and Messiah all mean the same thing. I don't have to work hard to prove that because the Apostle John tells us that this is the case.

^{ESV} **John 1:41** *He first found his own brother Simon and said to him, "We have found the Messiah" (which means Christ).*

The thing is that although Christians automatically assume that a biblical Messiah must have a divine nature, in fact the term Messiah has no such meaning at all. All the Kings of Israel were called Messiah (**Mashiach**) because what the word really means is anointed one, and all the Kings of Israel were anointed with oil at their coronation. And the anointing with oil is meant to symbolize God anointing (or electing and setting apart) a person for a task: in this case the task is being the earthly king over God's Kingdom. We find that King Saul was anointed with oil (as found in Samuel 10), and it is also specifically said in the bible that David, Solomon, Jehu, Joash, and Jehoahaz were all anointed with oil thus making them anointed ones, **Mashiach**. And we can safely assume that the other Israelite kings listed in the bible were anointed with oil as well as that was undisputed custom.

Therefore an Israelite King in the bible is typically referred to as the Anointed One of Yehoveh, or in Hebrew the Mashiach of Yehoveh. The idea is to confer a very close and intimate connection between Israel's human king and the God of Israel, but in no way did it intend to

convey the idea that any of those several human Israelite kings were given a divine nature. So the term Messiah, ***Mashiach***, was generally indicative of any and every King of Israel and/or King of Judah; nothing more and nothing less.

It was also believed that the Lord essentially adopted each Israelite King as His own son (mostly from a spiritual viewpoint, but in a very real way nonetheless). We get a straightforward example of this adoption as God spoke to David about the issue of David not being allowed to construct a Temple for the Lord, but that his son Solomon would.

1Chronicles 28:6 CJB

⁶ "Moreover, he (God) said to me, 'Shlomo your son will build my house and courtyards, for I have chosen him to be a son to me, and I will be a father to him.'

So the idea of a King of Israel being God's adopted son (Son of God), was at this point in history merely establishing an unusually close bond between the earthly, entirely human, ruling King of Israel and God Almighty. This king is not divine, he is not God, but he is raised up by God and given special attention, wisdom, and protection. And this adoptive father/son relationship between the God of Israel and an Israelite king generally applied to all of Israel's and Judah's kings.

The next thing to understand is that despite the Lord establishing this father/son relationship with all of Israel's kings, He decided to give Israel's throne over to King David forever, and that royal line would come through his son Solomon's line, meaning of course that some descendant or another of David's royal line would continue to rule one after the next in perpetuity. This was established as a concrete promise from God to David (and essentially this is a divine promise to the Jewish people in general) and we find statements to that effect in several places in the bible. One notable example is:

2Samuel 7:12-14 CJB

¹² When your days come to an end and you sleep with your ancestors, I will establish one of your descendants to succeed you, one of your own flesh and blood; and I will set up his rulership.

¹³ He will build a house for my name, and I will establish his royal throne forever.

¹⁴ I will be a father for him, and he will be a son for me. If he does something wrong, I will punish him with a rod and blows, just as everyone gets punished;

The particular son of David that God chose to succeed him was Solomon, and then a long line of kings over Israel and Judah came from Solomon's line, as promised. Thus we have to grasp that in the Jewish mindset of that era, it was a foregone conclusion that beginning with David and carrying forward with Solomon all "Sons of God" (anointed kings of Israel) would necessarily be from David's and Solomon's dynasty. But then catastrophe struck.

Some 3 centuries after the death of King Solomon, the Babylonian King Nebuchadnezzar attacked and conquered Judah, and installed a king he thought would co-operate with him (Zedekiah). But Zedekiah eventually rebelled. Zedekiah was captured, his sons killed, and he was blinded. Jerusalem and the Temple were destroyed and the people of Judah were exiled to Babylon. The effect was that this ended not only a series of God's anointed ones (***Mashiach***) sitting on the throne of Israel, but it also ended the promised dynastic line of King of David (the sons of God). Even when the Jews were released from exile to come back home to Judah there would be no return of the Davidic dynasty to rule over them. The people prayed that God would forgive and in His mercy supernaturally find, or create, or even resurrect a heretofore unknown member of David's royal line to rule them as an Israelite King in a reconstituted and independent Israelite Kingdom. But what they fully expected was that this hoped-for Davidic king would be just as mortal and human as all the ones that came before him.

However also understanding that it would necessarily be a miraculous act of God to bring this about since there seemed to be no one who could legally lay claim as a royal descendant of David that made them eligible to rule as king, and since there was no Israelite Kingdom since Judah and all the Promised Land was under foreign rule, then the idea of a Redeemer, a new King David who had a mysterious "deliverer" quality to him (not unlike Moses), began to take hold among the Jews. And this set the stage for the next part of God's redemptive plan.

So taking into account all that I've presented to you this morning (and I know its an awful lot), I want to give you an example of how this changes our perspective in reading the New Testament as we see it from the Jewish worldview in which it was written. It is most likely that when in the New Testament, where the opening words of Mark's Gospel book are: ^{CJB} **Mark 1:1 *The beginning of the Good News of Yeshua the Messiah, the Son of God***: the term "son of God" is meant to communicate that Yeshua is that long awaited for Davidic king, and is not really meant to refer to Yeshua's divine nature at that point. That is not to say that Mark didn't think that Yeshua was divine. It is only that the term the Son of God coupled with the term Messiah (***Mashiach***) had a long established, well understood and culturally specific meaning to the Jewish people. It spoke of the Jews' breathless expectation for not just any Hebrew who might be king, but of a **Davidic** King to once again appear. So naturally these culturally familiar terms are what Mark uses to convey to his Jewish readers that Yeshua of Nazareth is not only the anointed one (simply meaning an anointed Israelite king) but as Son of God, He is also from the line of David.

Mark saved addressing the divine aspect of this new king for a bit later in his Gospel when Mark switches titles of Yeshua from the Son of God to the Son of Man. The term Son of Man was meant to say that Yeshua was not just a new and mortal King David but was also divine, and He is the one that the Jewish people had hoped for, for so long. But where did that

concept actually come from among the Jews that the term the Son of Man (which had for centuries, and in the Torah, just meant human being) now had a divine element to it? It was in the Book of Daniel, chapter 7. Let me repeat that: for the first time in the Bible, it was in the Book of Daniel chapter 7 verse 13 that the redeemer that the Jews in Babylon hoped for was given a formal title (the Son of Man) AND it was introduced that he would have a divine nature.

So with that as a foundation, now let's talk directly about the Son of Man as described in Daniel's vision in Daniel 7. In verse 13 Daniel speaks of two distinct divine figures: The Ancient One and the "One like a Son of Man". This one like a Son of Man comes on clouds from heaven, and in verse 14 it says that the Ancient One (God) is giving him rulership, glory and a kingdom over all the inhabitants of the earth. Even more this is an ETERNAL rulership that never passes away. As if the sovereignty that never ends that is given to him wasn't sufficient evidence, the coming on the clouds is the dead give away that this Son of Man figure is divine. Every other place in the bible where heavenly clouds are associated with a being, the being is divine and not mortal.

I want to be very clear: Daniel was given a divine prophetic vision that was of profound progressive revelation. It was earth shattering and history changing. He received a vision of a future divine Messiah, but didn't realize it. A whole new theological concept was born here in Daniel in Israelite religious understanding; a theological concept that had been gestating in Hebrew culture for centuries but had only at this moment reached a major milestone: the theological concept of a human-appearing deity, who is given the title of the Son of Man, who is directly associated with Yehoveh, the God of Israel. Such a concept wouldn't have raised so much as an eyebrow of any gentile, because all gentiles saw their gods and goddesses as human-appearing deities. But the Israelites had spent centuries being punished in the most terrible ways by the God of Israel for harboring those kinds of thoughts because they manifested themselves in idolatry. And now, in what Daniel knew for sure was a vision from God, God crosses over an uncrossable line He seems to have set long ago. And as we read a little later in this chapter (starting with verse 15), Daniel knew what he saw, but didn't know what it could mean; he couldn't even wrap his mind around it when one of the holy servants of God in his vision told him what it meant. The whole thing seemed confusing and upsetting to him. In fact, even though he wasn't commanded by God to keep this vision to himself, Daniel didn't tell a soul. What would he say? How could he explain to other Jews what made little sense to him? So in time, he simply wrote the vision down and let it stand as the mystery that it was to him.

So Daniel's prophetic vision is of the divine anointed one (a king of Israel), whom Daniel labels as the Son of Man, whom we find out in the New Testament is Yeshua of Nazareth, and Daniel gives us a number of attributes that will help identify him. Those attributes are: He is human, but he is also divine. He will come in clouds. He will occupy a throne, on high, right next to Yehoveh, the Ancient of Days. He is given all dominion over the entire planet, and over everyone. In other words, the entire world's gentiles as well as all Hebrews, which together make up 100% of the earth's population, will be his subjects. And of course these attributes that we find of the Son of Man concept in Daniel 7 we find in Jesus Christ.

What we need to take special note of is the word "like" that Daniel uses in reference to the

Son of Man. We have in earlier verses of this chapter dealt with the 4 beasts of his vision of which one is like a lion, one like a bear, and one like a leopard. Thus these beasts embody attributes and characteristics of those common wild animals, but aren't fully or entirely those animals, but merely "like" them. So it is in that same context that we must consider Daniel's meaning of one 'like" a Son of Man.

No doubt in Daniel's mind when he says one like a Son of Man he is mentally picturing: "one like a human being". However this human being is not fully or entirely a human being anymore than were the lion, bear and leopard like what their animal titles normally imply. And what makes this human-like being so mysterious is that he also has a divine nature, an eternal nature, and is so perfectly pure that he can be seated on a throne next to the God of Israel, in heaven. So this is why I can say that here the Son of Man becomes a specific title for this mysterious being, even though "son of man" also retains a dual use in the bible as a rather generic term for humans. It is not unlike when we speak of pagan gods (little "g" gods) and use the same word to speak of Yehoveh God (capital "G" God). We know from the context which is which and they are decidedly not the same things.

Now there is one other attribute of the Son of Man that Daniel speaks of that is controversial to say the least. At least how various folks have envisioned it and have attempted to illustrate it over the centuries is controversial. Many fine bible academics and theologians, Jewish and Christian, starting 1800 years ago see in Daniel's vision an older God and a separate younger God. Or as one academic put it: "The Son of Man may very well be portrayed as a younger-appearing divinity than the Ancient of Days." And if we take Daniel's vision in a fully literal sense, and the Son of Man we identify as the divine Christ, then indeed we have a literal older god alongside a literal younger god, and they are distinctly two different beings. In fact what we're approaching here is the very nature of Christ and His essence and His substance and His connection with God. And there are many theologies about this matter, and the Trinity Doctrine is but one. But even the Trinity Doctrine is not one harmonized doctrine. There a number of views of how to view the 3 members of the Trinity: God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit. And generally the variable is the degree of unity and the means of unification.

For instance: some Christians say that Yeshua is God, and his humanity is only an illusion. That is, He was a human-appearing apparition just like an angel is at times portrayed in the bible. Others say he was born a fully flesh and blood human, and only later (probably upon his baptism) was he transformed into a divine being. That is, it follows Greek mythology of a regular mortal human being made into a god by some other more powerful god. Other Believers have said that He was fully human but the Holy Spirit that was in Him manifested itself in a powerful way that no other human being before or since has experienced, however all humans do have the same capabilities if only we were faithful enough. And these debates go all the way back to before the founding of the Roman Church.

And as I brought up last week, whether it is realized or not, a goodly portion of the Church has allowed itself to incorporate the concept of separation of the younger Son of Man from the older Ancient of Days, such that the Ancient of Days was the God of the Old Testament, and the much younger Son of Man became the God of the New Testament. And this is reflected in

a complete repudiation by many Christians of the characteristics of the Old Testament God that involved rigid laws, bloody sacrifices, wrath, death and severity, which is replaced by the New Testament God whose characteristics are love, mercy, life, and self-sacrifice and no particular rules or boundaries placed upon His worshippers.

In fact while depending on which if any of these interpretations of the nature and substance of Christ that we adhere to, we tend to cast disapproving looks and silently think HERETIC at those Christians who see it differently. But these are most difficult issues, and we're attempting to use finite human thought and physical earthly illustrations to gain some kind of understanding of God's nature, Christ's substance, and how they can be separate in some ways and completely unified in other ways. And we have various Scripture passages that characterize this relationship from different perspectives. So we need to tread lightly, I think, and not be overly judgmental about it (although there are boundaries, of course).

I want to deal with one final matter today. It concerns the interpretation of Daniel's vision as given by this unidentified being that is standing near to the Ancient One. Listen again to verses 21 and 22.

Daniel 7:21-22, and 27 CJB

²¹ I watched, and that horn made war with the holy ones and was winning,

²² until the Ancient One came, judgment was given in favor of the holy ones of the Most High, and the time came for the holy ones to take over the kingdom.

²⁷ Then the kingdom, the rulership and the greatness of the kingdoms under the whole heaven will be given to the holy people of the Most High. Their kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and all rulers will serve and obey them."

Here we find what seems to be a contradiction. In verse 14 the Son of Man is given the kingdom forever, and here the "holy ones of the Most High" are given the kingdom and rulership. And it is from this that many Jewish Rabbis, and modern Judaism in general, has determined that the Son of Man who comes on the clouds is the same as the holy ones who take over the kingdom. And since from the Jewish perspective the holy ones can be nothing else but Israel, then the Son of Man must also be Israel. And, from a certain sense they do have a legitimate argument.

However one needs to approach this in reverse by first asking: is Judaism saying that Israel sits at God's right hand in heaven, and they'll be coming on heavenly clouds? Answer, yes. But that goes much too far, in my opinion and essentially makes Israel and Israelites as being divine.

Now the question becomes, who are the holy ones, then? And to that, I think the Rabbis' answer that the holy ones are Israel makes sense. This certainly can only be talking about the Hebrews recovering their God-given kingdom that was lost to the pagan gentiles. Nowhere have we ever found a hint in the bible of referring to pagan gentiles as "God's holy ones", so all that is left is Israel.

However, especially since this is speaking of an apocalyptic end times scenario, then I also think that we have to define Israel in the larger redemptive sense whereby gentile Believers are grafted into Israel's covenants (according to Paul in Romans 11), and so Believers are part of Israel from the spiritual redemptive perspective, but not in the fully physical sense of gentile Christians suddenly becoming fleshly Jews or becoming naturalized, physical, political, citizens of the modern State of Israel.

Thus what I feel we have here is something that is rather typical when dealing with the bible and that is a duality, or as I have labeled it, the Reality of Duality. That is there is a spiritual side and physical side to all redemptive events (in the 7 Biblical Feasts for example). And in the case of Daniel 7 I see the Son of Man coming in the clouds who rules over the kingdom as representing the spiritual side of the equation, and the holy ones who take over the kingdom as the physical side. In fact, the New Testament speaks of a dual-rule of Christ and Believers when the Kingdom of God is brought fully in.

2Timothy 2:11-12 CJB

¹¹ *Here is a statement you can trust: If we have died with him, we will also live with him.*

¹² *If we persevere, we will also rule with him If we disown him, he will also disown us.*

Revelation 2:26-27 CJB

²⁶ *To him who wins the victory and does what I want until the goal is reached, I will give him authority over the nations:*

²⁷ *he will rule them with a staff of iron and dash them to pieces like pottery,*

1Corinthians 6:2-3 CJB

² *Don't you know that God's people are going to judge the universe? If you are going to*

judge the universe, are you incompetent to judge these minor matters?

³ *Don't you know that we will judge angels, not to mention affairs of everyday life?*

Daniel was given a vision of what these NT Scriptures teach. But we weren't far enough along in redemption history in Daniel's day for him to have a clue about it. We'll continue with Daniel 7 next week.