We are not in this alone but are members of a guild. The predispositions of one jostle against the predispositions of another in a sort of communal dialectic, which enables those who so desire to enlarge themselves.

—Dale C. Allison Jr.¹

It will not come as a surprise to anyone that questions continue to emerge around the association of the expression “the Son of Man” with the person of Jesus. The issue fascinates NT scholars in a number of ways. Its role in the narrative strategies of the Gospels continues to generate conversation,² and investigation into the origins of its application to the person of Jesus and its subsequent tradition history has not died away, despite the long and intense debate that has surrounded these questions.³ Anyone even slightly familiar with these never-ending debates is aware of their complexity. I sometimes think that scholars interested in the expression and its association with Jesus of Nazareth are digging a deeper and deeper hole, out of which there is a diminishing possibility of exit. This line of thought, however, has been

¹ Dale C. Allison Jr., The Historical Christ and the Theological Jesus (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2009) 20.


³ The literature is immense. Some of it will be discussed in what follows. For a survey of this unresolved debate, see Delbert Burkett, The Son of Man Debate: A History and Evaluation (SNTSMS 107; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999). See also James D. G. Dunn, Christology in the Making: A New Testament Inquiry into the Origins of the Doctrine of the Incarnation (London: SCM, 1980) 65-97. Dunn’s argument is to reject the claim that “the Son of Man” indicated preexistence, but in doing so he provides a fine survey of the debate up to 1980.
challenged as a result of my recent careful reading of the singular, significant, and deeply satisfying 2010 contribution of Dale C. Allison Jr. to the study of Jesus of Nazareth, whose title is partly used in the title of this essay: Constructing Jesus.⁴

I. Constructing Jesus

Though Allison eschews any claims to have turned historical Jesus research in a new direction,⁵ his modesty hardly responds to the importance of the study.⁶ Allison has loosened the strait-jacket of the almost universal use of the criteria developed to “test” whether a saying or an action could be credited to Jesus or to the creativity of the later church.⁷ He claims that the data we are dealing with will not allow that form of certitude. The subtitle of Constructing Jesus, “Memory, Imagination, and History,” already suggests his approach to the strengths and weaknesses of memories and the use of imagination that led to the original testimonies to Jesus, largely found in the canonical Gospels, that we use to reconstruct Jesus’ history.⁸ As he summarizes, citing a recent study of “memory”:

We now know that “recollection of the personal past is (1) essentially a reconstruction . . . (2) prompted by a person’s affective states and ongoing beliefs and goals, and (3) constituted by the sociocultural world of the rememberer . . . . Attentive to the features of experience is selective. Furthermore, a process of revision in the light of one’s beliefs

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⁴ Dale C. Allison Jr., Constructing Jesus: Memory, Imagination, and History (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2010).
⁵ See, e.g., ibid., 461.
⁶ This volume does not come “out of the blue.” As well as numerous scholarly articles, several important studies have led to it, beginning with the published version of his Duke doctoral dissertation: The End of the Ages Has Come: An Early Interpretation of the Passion and Resurrection of Jesus (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1985). See also the following works by Allison: Jesus of Nazareth: Mil lenarian Prophet (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1998); “Jesus Was an Apocalyptic Prophet” and “A Response,” in The Apocalyptic Jesus: A Debate (ed. Robert J. Miller; Santa Rosa, CA: Polebridge, 2001) 17-29, 83-105; Resurrecting Jesus: The Earliest Christian Tradition and Its Interpreters (New York: Clark, 2005) 111-97; Historical Jesus and the Theological Christ. As Allison himself states: “I cannot recall writing anything that makes the preceding pages unexpected” (Constructing Jesus, 461).
⁷ For a description of the criteria, see John P. Meier, AMarginal Jew: Rethinking the Historical Jesus (4 vols.; vols. 1–3, ABRL; New York: Doubleday; vol. 4, AYBRL; New Haven: Yale University Press, 1991-2009) 1:167-95. They are used, in different ways, by almost all who seek to rediscover the historical Jesus, from the more optimistic Meier, to the minimalist proposals of the Jesus Seminar. See, for well-known representatives, John Dominic Crossan, The Historical Jesus: The Life of a Mediterranean Jewish Peasant (San Francisco: HarperCollins, 1991); Robert W. Funk, Honest to Jesus: Jesus for a New Millennium (New York: Macmillan, 1996). For an earlier critique of this approach, without the use of “memory studies,” but which establishes his method of recovering historical Jesus data from the NT, see Allison, Millenarian Prophet, 1-94.
⁸ Unique among Jesus researchers, Allison analyzes the conclusions of modern cognitive studies of memory and imagination to test how reliable material passed on by “memory” might be. This leads to extreme caution about making historical claims. See Allison, Constructing Jesus, 1-30, 435-62.
and expectations is almost immediate, if not simultaneous. From the first, memories are shaped . . . fitted, constructed.” Fully absorbing all this cannot but tame our historical ambitions.\(^9\)

Allison affirms (often and in different ways): “My concern is with less-than-omniscient historians, who must leave many questions unanswered.”\(^{10}\) Supported by outstanding scholarship and sometimes overwhelming detail from across many disciplines, Allison’s methodology is surprising in its simplicity. His first step is to assemble all the material, without exception, from the Gospels and allied material that deals explicitly with the issue he is discussing. As an example, and for the purpose of this article, he lists all the occurrences of Jesus’ use of “the Son of Man,” without making any prior judgment on their authenticity or their role in the history of the tradition, according to their location in the sources. In this case, he lists the fourteen sayings in the Gospel of Mark, the eight sayings unique to Q, the eleven sayings unique to Luke, the thirteen sayings unique to John, and the one saying found in the Gospel of Thomas.

On the basis of this widespread occurrence of the expression, without any further discussion of the tradition history of the sayings or an application of the criteria for historicity normally found in such studies, Allison comes to the conclusion that Jesus used the Aramaic *bar-(ʔ)a*naš(a), “at least on occasion, to refer to Daniel’s vision of the final judgment.”\(^{11}\) The historical Jesus most likely spoke of an eschatological Son of Man who would come as judge. Allison is not sure whether Jesus used the expression to speak of himself or, more likely for Allison, a heavenly twin.\(^{12}\)

For Allison, “if Jesus did use the third person to speak of the coming of the Son of Man, that is no good reason to reject the main thesis of this chapter, that is that

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\(^{10}\) Allison, *Constructing Jesus*, 460 n. 86.

\(^{11}\) Ibid., 293-94. He also claims that Paul probably knew Son of Man sayings, citing Birger Pearson, “A Q Community in Galilee?” *NTS* 50 (2004) 484-86; and George W. E. Nickelsburg, “Son of Man,” *ABD* 6:147. The latter two concentrate on 1 Thess 1:1-10; 4:13-18 (in a comparison with Mark 13:26-27); 5:1-11 (in a comparison with Q12:39-40; Luke 21:34-36), and 1 Cor 15:23-28 (an example of the early Church’s use of Dan 7:14; Ps 110:1; and Ps 8:7). Pearson can confidently claim: “Paul certainly knew the term ‘Son of Man’ as applied to Jesus, as is clearly evident in his reference to ‘the man from heaven’ in 1 Corinthians (15:47-49) (Pearson, “A Q Community?” 485). Nickelsburg is skeptical about Jesus’ having ever used the expression and insists that it comes from Daniel, via the eschatological material in the Parables of Enoch and 4 Ezra (Nickelsburg, “Son of Man,” 149).

\(^{12}\) See the development of this argument in Allison, *Constructing Jesus*, 294-303. Under the influence of more recent studies, this is a change from the position he defended in *End of the Ages*, 128-37. See p. 137: “By promising the vindication of himself and others with reference to Daniel 7, Jesus disclosed his hope that the near future would bring about the eschatological judgment.” There is no mention of a “heavenly twin.”
he was the center of his own eschatology.”

It is widely accepted that the Son of Man tradition, primarily because of its dependence on Daniel 7, began with reference to an eschatological figure: either Jesus or someone else. For most scholars, the tradition began in the early church, under the influence of Daniel 7 and other eschatological developments (the Similitudes of Enoch and 4 Ezra), and only later was applied to the present and the suffering figure of Jesus. In this way, the human Jesus was identified with the expected eschatological figure who would come on the clouds as judge (see Mark 14:62 and Dan 7:13-14, with help from Ps 110:1). For Allison, Jesus himself initiated this identification, either of himself or of an alter ego, who was at the center of his self-understanding as an apocalyptic prophet. He argues that Jesus associated himself with “the coming of the Son of Man.”

In my reading of Allison’s work, however, I trace a slight but significant shift of focus between his published dissertation, *The End of the Ages Has Come* (1985), and *Constructing Jesus* (2010). In his earlier work, Allison points out that Daniel 7 speaks to a situation of persecution (see Dan 7:21, 27). Thus, as with the one like a son of man in Daniel 7, “the Son of man first suffers and then finds vindication.”

A study of the authentic tradition that lies behind the passion predictions enables him to take this further and to argue: “Jesus promises that the Son of man, the faithful community whose representative he is, will be delivered into the hands of men, only to be resurrected after three days.” Between 1985 and 2010 he fleetingly returns to this question in his *Millenarian Prophet* (1998). In a long note he restates his 1985 position and suggests that it “deserves re-examination.” However, does not appear in *Constructing Jesus* (2010). There Allison devotes a striking chapter to “Death and Memory: The Passion of Jesus.” A section of that chapter is dedicated to Jesus’ “assent to death,” in which Allison gathers thirty-one passages from the Gospels (mostly Jesus sayings, including Mark 8:31-33; 9:31; 10:33-34, 45) and further passages from Paul, 1 Timothy, Titus, Hebrews, and 1 Peter. Allison concludes: “They obviously reflect a very widespread belief: Jesus did not run from his

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13 Allison, *Constructing Jesus*, 303.
14 A number of unproven presuppositions undergird this widely held position: Jesus made no claims for himself, and the background to the use of “the Son of Man” was apocalyptic (Daniel; 1 Enoch 37-71 [Similitudes]; 4 Ezra 13). The only authentic sayings had to be “eschatological.” On this, see Morna D. Hooker, “Is the Son of Man Problem Really Insoluble?” in *Text and Interpretation: Studies in the New Testament Presented to Matthew Black* (ed. Ernest Best and Robert McL. Wilson; London: SPCK, 1979) 155-56.
16 Allison, *Constructing Jesus*, 303.
18 Ibid., 137-40; quotation from 140.
20 Ibid., 65 n. 242.
death or otherwise resist it. On the contrary, anticipating his cruel end, he submitted
to it, trusting that his unhappy fate was somehow for the good.”

He no longer associates Jesus’ use of “the Son of Man” with his death. In his emphasis on Jesus’ use
of “the Son of Man,” Allison investigates Jesus’ role in God’s all-determining end
of time. Has Allison abandoned his earlier position, or is this simply a matter of
concentrating on Jesus as an apocalyptic prophet? What follows picks up Allison’s
suggestion that his 1985 position on Jesus’ use of “the Son of Man” deserves re-
examination.

II. The Son of Man Sayings

In order the evaluate Allison’s assessment of Jesus’ use of the expression “the
Son of Man,” my study is analogous in method to his own. I list all the Son of Man
sayings unique to each Gospel and the Gospel of Thomas. As a means to an end, I will
list the sayings in the traditional subgroups to indicate a present, a suffering yet vin-
dicated, and an eschatological Son of Man. This classification is highly unsatisfactory,
and I use it as a means to an end. I will indicate (in parenthesis) how sayings can
belong to two or more classes. Allison’s method shows how the Son of Man sayings
are articulated in the only sources that we have that report, from memory, what Jesus
said and did.

Q

The present Son of Man: 6:22 (suffering); 7:34 (suffering); 9:58 (suffering);
11:30; 12:8 (suffering/eschatological-vindicated); 12:10 (suffering/eschatologi-
cal-vindicated); 13:37.

22 Ibid., 432.
23 My comparison of Allison’s earliest work and latest book is an exercise in his methodology.
I simply do not know what Dale Allison thinks in 2012, nor is there any possibility that I can know,
unless he tells me. If that is the case with my well-published contemporary, how much more difficult
is it to be certain about what the never-published Jesus said and did?

24 This traditional and unsatisfactory classification is found in earlier studies of the Son of Man
2 vols.; London: SCM, 1952) 1:30, and its crucial use in Heinz Eduard Tödt, The Son of Man in the
Synoptic Tradition (trans. Dorothea M. Barton; NTL; London: SCM, 1965). It is used here as a means
to an end. See the summary in John J. Collins, Daniel: A Commentary on the Book of Daniel (Herme-
neia: Minneapolis: Fortress, 1993) 90-91. See his sensible criticism of this classification and alterna-
tive suggestions (pp. 92-105).

25 See also Hooker, “Insoluble?” 159-60; Collins, Daniel, 96-97.

26 The text provided for Q is taken from Luke, rather than Matthew, as is customary in current
scholarship. For the Q texts, see James M. Robinson, Paul Hoffmann and John S. Kloppenborg, eds.,
with English, German, and French translations of Q and Thomas (Hermeneia; Minneapolis: Fortress,
2000).
The suffering (and vindicated) Son of Man: There is no saying in Q explicitly referring to the suffering and vindicated Son of Man. A note of rejection is found in 6:22; 7:34; 9:58; and 11:30 and perhaps rejection and eschatological vindication in 12:8, 10. The background of persecution and suffering that is present in 6:22; 7:34; 9:58; 11:30; and 12:8, 10 has led Christopher M. Tuckett to argue that the experience of conflict is found across the so-called present sayings. The background of this link between Q Son of Man passages and suffering, according to Tuckett, is provided by Daniel 7; Wisdom 2–5; and 1 Enoch.27

The eschatological (and vindicated) Son of Man:28 12:8 (present/eschatological-vindicated); 12:10 (present/eschatological-vindicated); 12:40; 17:24 (vindicated); 17:26 (vindicated). For Tuckett, Q has a distinctive Christology: “Jesus is presented as the envoy of Wisdom, identified as one of the prophets, all of whom are seen as suffering rejection and violence; similarly, he is ‘SM’, which also evokes ideas of suffering, as well as the further idea of vindication and judgment after suffering.”29

The critical issue with the Q-material is the possibility that Jesus points to a figure other than himself as the Son of Man.30 This is especially the case for 12:8 and from there could be claimed for the other eschatological sayings (12:10, 40; 17:24; 17:26). The same impression is generated by Mark 8:38. Both Rudolf Bultmann and Heinz Eduard Tödt have argued that Jesus spoke of the Son of Man as an apocalyptic figure, but someone other than himself. These texts may also be part of the reason for Allison’s suggestion that Jesus may have referred to an alter ego who would be part of God’s eschatological intervention.31 This position faces problems on a number of fronts. In the first place, all the present Q sayings refer to Jesus as the Son of Man. Second, all Son of Man sayings (with the exception of Rev 1:13) are attributed to Jesus (John 12:34 is not really an exception) and are found in the narrative tradition. The designation is found only where “the life of Jesus” is being told. Following Allison’s method, should Q 12:8 and Mark 8:38 discount almost sixty other sayings? Finally, there are never-ending inherent difficulties with the assessment of the use of the expression in the Q material. John S. Kloppenborg has summarized the current situation in Q research as follows:

Independently of each other, and using strikingly different methods, Helmut Koester and Heinz Schürmann both concluded that Son of Man sayings did not belong to the

27 See the full discussion in Christopher M. Tuckett, Q and the History of Early Christianity: Studies on Q (Edinburgh: Clark, 1996) 239-82. For an analysis of the present Son of Man sayings in Q and their link with suffering and Daniel 7, see pp. 253-76.

28 I have added the descriptive “vindicated” to both the so-called suffering and eschatological sayings. In this, I accept the remark from Morna Hooker that the passion predictions are really passion and resurrection (vindication) predictions, just as the eschatological sayings are also about the final vindication of the Son of Man. See Hooker, “Insoluble?” 159-64.

29 Tuckett, Studies on Q, 282. Tuckett’s study is also a comprehensive survey of alternative suggestions.

30 I would like to thank my colleague David Sim for drawing my attention to this.

31 Allison, Constructing Jesus, 302-3.
earliest strata of Q. Schürmann, in addition, argued that the Son of Man sayings were not added as late as the final assembling of Q. Hence, these sayings characterize neither the formative layers of Q nor the perspective of the final redaction. This conclusion effectively overturned Heinz E. Tödt’s assertion that “Son of Man Christology and Q belong together both in their concepts and in their history of tradition.”

Mark

The present Son of Man: 2:10; 2:28; 10:45 (suffering); 14:21 (suffering); 14:41 (suffering).

The suffering (and vindicated) Son of Man:33 8:31 (vindicated); 9:9; 9:12; 9:31 (vindicated); 10:33 (vindicated); 10:45 (present); 14:21 (present); 14:41 (present).

The eschatological and vindicated Son of Man: 8:38; 13:26; 14:62.

Unique to Matthew


The suffering Son of Man: 26:2.

The eschatological and vindicated Son of Man: 10:23 (vindicated); 13:41 (vindicated); 16:27-28 (vindicated); 19:28 (vindicated); 24:30 (vindicated); 24:39 (vindicated); 25:31 (vindicated).

Unique to Luke

The present Son of Man: 19:10; 22:48 (suffering).

The suffering (and vindicated) Son of Man: 22:48 (present); 24:7 (vindicated).

The eschatological (and vindicated) Son of Man: 17:22; 17:24 (vindicated); 17:30 (vindicated); 18:8 (vindicated); 21:36 (vindicated).

The Gospel of John34


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33 Not all suffering Son of Man sayings mention the resurrection or any other form of ultimate vindication, but it is a feature of the passion predictions (Mark 8:31; 9:31; 10:32-34 and parallels. See also Luke 24:7 and John 3:14; 8:28; 12:32).

34 For the exegetical decision that there are no eschatological Johannine Son of Man sayings, despite John 1:51; 5:27; and 6:27, but only sayings referring to a present, suffering and vindicated Son of Man, see Moloney, *Son of Man*, esp. 23-41 (1:51), 68-86 (5:27), and 108-15 (6:27).

35 Suffering and the vindication on and through the cross are combined in the Johannine use of
Gospel of Thomas 86

The abundance of material from Q, Mark, M, L, John, and the Gospel of Thomas and hints of an awareness of the tradition in Paul enable an appropriation of Allison, who regularly marshals material in this fashion before proceeding to draw conclusions about Jesus. Affirmations parallel with what follows (originally applied to the eschatological material) are found throughout his study. It is here that he sets out on a bold new road in historical Jesus research.

I will nowhere attempt to demonstrate that Jesus formulated any of the sayings in my catalogue. Surely some of them are secondary; maybe many or even most of them are secondary. It does not matter. My argument is this: our choice is not between a Jesus who spoke of himself as a present, suffering and vindicated and eschatological Son of Man and some other Jesus; it is between a Jesus found in the New Testament witness and one that is not. “The pertinent material is sufficiently abundant that removing it all should leave one thoroughly sceptical about the mnemonic competence of the tradition. If secondary accretions that seriously misrepresent Jesus attached themselves to the tradition in such abundance from the beginning, then maybe he is gone for good. Some parasites kill the host.”

III. Some Tradition History

What follows depends entirely on an assumed development of the Gospels as we have them. To begin with Q and Mark, I assume that they are not related to each other in any literary fashion. Q may be taken as a tradition earlier than Mark, although we cannot be sure. What must be pointed out on the basis of the sayings

the double-meaning expression ὑψωθῆναι δεῖ. The Son of Man must be “lifted up” physically on the stake, and thus “exalted.” See, most recently, Hellen Mardaga, “The Repetitive Use of ὑψάω in the Fourth Gospel,” CBQ 74 (2012) 101-17. This applies to all three Johannine “passion predictions”: 3:14, 8:28; 12:32 (see also 12:34). See the intimate association between “lifting up” and Jesus’ death in 12:33: “He said this to show by what death [νοικ θανάτῳ] he was to die.” The same must be said about the association of “the hour” and “glory” with the Johannine cross (12:23; 13:31).

36 The passage from Gos. Thom. 86 is introduced for the sake of completeness, without any prejudice about the time or location of the origins of this document. It contains important, and early, Jesus sayings. The text is from A. Guillaumont, H. Ch. Puech, G. Quispel, W. Till, and Yassah ‘Abd al Masīh, The Gospel according to Thomas (Leiden: Brill, 1959) 47. For a recent survey of debates surrounding the date of the Gospel of Thomas and its relation to the NT, see Christopher W. Skinner, What Are They Saying about the Gospel of Thomas? (Mahwah, NJ: Paulist, 2012) 9-58.

37 Allison, Constructing Jesus, 47. The whole paragraph depends on Allison, pp. 46-47. Only toward the end have I cited him verbatim.

38 I say “assumed” because, even though the two-source theory is the majority opinion, it remains only a theory, and the dating of the sources (Q, prior to Mark; Mark, ca. 70 c.e.; Matthew, ca. 85–90 c.e.; Luke, ca. 85–90 c.e.; John, ca. 100 c.e.; Gospel of Thomas, late first–early second century c.e. but containing earlier Jesus material) also remains unproven. These issues will never be definitively resolved.
found in Q and Mark is the paucity of eschatological sayings (Q = 5 [two of which contain “present” aspects]; Mark = 3) when compared with the sayings dedicated to the suffering and vindicated Son of Man (Mark = 8) and the present sayings (Q = 7; Mark = 5). There are no “classified” suffering sayings in Q, but common to almost all of them “is the idea of conflict leading to rejection and suffering,” backgrounded, in part, by the use of the expression in Daniel 7. To assume that the seven eschatological sayings in Q and Mark indicate the origins of the tradition ignores the eight suffering and the twelve present sayings, especially if the experience of conflict and suffering also lies behind Q 6:22; 7:34; 9:58; and 12:8, 10, and the passages in Q 12 both involve vindication. As is well known, despite passages that reflect a community undergoing suffering, there is little interest in the passion of Jesus in Q.

It is also well known that Mark has a particular interest in Jesus’ death and resurrection. No doubt the suffering Son of Man sayings in Mark are the result of some serious theological and rhetorical rewriting of the tradition (see esp. 10:32-34, 45). But how “theological” is Mark 9:31ab: “The Son of Man will be delivered into the hands of men, and they will kill him”? This saying closes with a vaticinium ex eventu: “and when he is killed, after three days he will rise” (v. 31cd). Although it is impossible to be certain, it is not beyond the limits of comprehension to claim that Jesus, who certainly accepted the possibility of a violent death, referred to himself as the Son of Man who would be slain. Why he would do this remains to be seen. The Marcan indication of ultimate vindication in three days through resurrection in 9:31cd may have replaced a more general indication from Jesus that his death would not be the end of God’s way with him. We will never know, but it is not an impossible scenario, in the light of the steady association of suffering and

39 In providing numbers I am using the collection of material above, including within those numbers sayings I have described as containing two or three of the so called “categories.”
40 Tuckett, Studies on Q, 282.
41 On the absence of passion material in Q, see John S. Kloppenborg, The Formation of Q: Trajectories in Ancient Wisdom Collections (Studies in Antiquity and Christianity; Philadelphia: Fortress, 1987) 85-87. On the absence of physical suffering in the Q community, see Tuckett, Studies on Q, 283-323. His analysis of the material leads him to conclude that the community was most likely suffering not physically but from the apathy and nonreception of their proclamation.
42 See, among many, the recent work of Peter G. Bolt, Jesus’ Defeat of Death: Persuading Mark’s Early Readers (SNTSMS 125; Cambridge/New York: Cambridge University Press, 2003).
43 On this, see the excellent case made by Allison for Jesus’ willing acceptance of death (Constructing Jesus, 387-433).
vindication across so many Synoptic Son of Man sayings and its continuing presence in the Johannine use of ὑψωθῆναι δεῖ in “passion predictions” (John 3:14; 8:28; 12:32).45

The possibility that this pattern in Jesus’ Son of Man sayings originated with Daniel 7 calls for further attention. For the moment, if it does begin with Jesus’ reflection on Daniel 7, then Allison’s major claim, that “Jesus probably used the Aramaic idiom, at least on occasion, to refer to Daniel’s vision of the final judgment . . . to speak of the future coming of the Son of Man,” is very likely.46 But what of Allison’s earlier claim that the expression “the Son of Man” was used by Jesus to speak of both his forthcoming death, and his ultimate eschatological vindication?47

We cannot be certain, but, given their abundance, the present sayings in Q and Mark (at least) might contain memories of Jesus, authoritatively and confidently facing conflict (Q 6:22; 7:34; 11:30; 12:8, 10; Mark 2:10, 28), betrayal (Mark 14:21), rejection (Q 9:58; 14:41), and sowing the good seed (Q 13:37), however sophisticated their elaboration may already have been by the time of Q and Mark.48 It is also possible, however, that Jesus began the tradition by speaking of the all-determining events of the Son of Man’s death, vindication, and establishment as eschatological judge, largely on the basis of Daniel 7, in reference to his forthcoming death and vindication. Whether Jesus drew from this to speak of his human authority and experience, as suggested above, is harder to determine. I suspect he may have. But if not, it would not have taken long for very early post-Jesus tradition to draw the expression back into his life experiences.49

A cursory glance can then be given to further possible developments across the Gospels. What is interesting is the decreasing number of new sayings that refer to Jesus’ present (Only Matthew = 2; Only Luke = 2) and suffering and vindication (Only Matthew = 1; Only Luke = 1), side by side with the sharp increase in eschatological and vindication sayings (Only Matthew = 8; Only Luke = 5). Vindication is removed from the only uniquely Matthean passion prediction (Matt 26:2), but there is an increasing use of the theme in the explicitly eschatological sayings.50

45 For Allison (End of the Ages, 139-40), “after three days he will rise” may go back to Jesus, equivalent to a “little while” or “a few days,” possibly influenced by Hos 6:12 and the two times and half a time in Dan 7:25. He abandoned this argument in Resurrecting Jesus, 231-32 (“Christians found three day language appropriate because they believed that very little time elapsed between Jesus’ crucifixion and God’s vindication of him” [p. 232]). It is not repeated in Constructing Jesus.

46 For the citations, see Constructing Jesus, 294, 303.


48 The context of Mark 2:10, 28 is rejection conflict, leading to the decision that he must be eliminated (3:6). See Moloney, Mark, 60-72.

49 For similar suggestion, see Hooker, “Insoluble?” 160-65. Here and elsewhere Hooker argues that Jesus’ authority during his life was linked with his identification with “one like a son of man.” On tradition history, see Allison, Historical Christ and the Theological Jesus, 63: “What matters is not whether we can establish the authenticity of any of the relevant traditions or what the criteria of authenticity may say about them, but rather the pattern that they, in concert, create” (emphasis added).

50 The vindication of the crucified is present in the only uniquely Lucan prediction, but it is a no
This tendency no doubt reflects an increasing interest in matters eschatological in the Matthean and Lucan situations, for very different reasons, but the evidence seems to fly in the face of the accepted tradition history for the application of “the Son of Man” to Jesus. In the earliest material, there is a moderate use of “the Son of Man” across all three aspects of Jesus’ life and subsequent appearance as the vindicated eschatological judge. The explosion of interest in the eschatological Son of Man grows with the tradition, and the use of the phrase “the Son of Man” to speak of Jesus’ human experience almost comes to a stop. The data in the tradition as we now have it do not indicate that it started with an eschatological figure and developed backwards. Mark is the least “eschatological” of the Synoptic Gospels. The Son of Man tradition, like the Gospel narratives in which it was further developed (Matthew and Luke), became more eschatological as the Gospel traditions developed.

The Gospel of John must not be ignored. There are no eschatological sayings in the Fourth Gospel. Although there are locations where a traditional eschatology can be found (see, e.g., John 5:28-29; 6:39-40, 54), the only Johannine Son of Man saying that links Jesus with the act of judgment is in 5:27. In that saying, read in close association with 5:20-26, the Son of Man exercises authority now, because all authority has been given to him. In this passage John most clearly shows the continued dependence on Dan 7:13-14 for Son of Man language. But Jesus’ judgment is realized; it takes place now. The other feature of the Fourth Gospel, already mentioned, is the association of suffering and vindication in 3:14; 8:28; and 12:32. As scholars are becoming increasingly aware, there are certain fundamental elements in the Gospel traditions that have come to John relatively unscathed. I continue to believe that this is not the result of any dependence on the Synoptic tradition, but rather is the result of a vigorous and healthy independent Johannine tradition. I suggest that the application of the expression “the Son of Man” to the present, suffering and vindicated

longer a prediction. Luke 24:7 recalls for the women at the tomb what Jesus had said during his ministry (see 9:22; 18:33).


52 See Moloney, Son of Man, 68-86, on John 5:27. On the dependence of 5:27 on Dan 7:13-14, see ibid., 81-82, and the discussion referred to there.

53 Despite all the ink that has been spilled on this matter since its appearance, the contribution of C. H. Dodd, Historical Tradition in the Fourth Gospel (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1963) remains unsurpassed.
Jesus in the Johannine tradition, adds weight to the speculation that the sayings that speak of suffering and vindication played an important initial role in the history of the tradition.

IV. Daniel 7 and Jesus

If Jesus was acquainted with Daniel 7 and, if Allison is correct that he occasionally used the Aramaic of 7:13-14, he had either read, or heard read, the Book of Daniel. The dramatic scenario reported in Daniel 7 obviously caught his attention, as it did many of his contemporaries. A significant theological response to the persecution of Antiochus IV Epiphanes, Daniel is an important example of apocalyptic literature in the Bible. The narrative is set in the period of the Babylonian captivity, but it addresses the difficult situation in the Israel of 170–164 B.C.E., probably the result of a complex literary history. Like most apocalyptic literature, it addresses a situation of seeming hopelessness. Israel’s autonomy and its traditional way of relating to God are under severe threat. Indeed, they appear lost. There is no foreseeable human solution to the crisis. In this form of eschatological thinking, there is no human hope; God will stand by the people and bring them ultimate delivery from their enemies. As Allison has described the situation, “Eschatology is first of all hope in God: it knows the divinity as the only power which can bring about eschatological reversal and redemption.”

This is the context in which Jesus, the reader/listener, came to know Daniel. Living in Roman-occupied Palestine, Jesus received Daniel 7 as part of the larger promise that those who remained loyal to the God of Israel would be delivered. Unlike contemporary historical-critical exegetes, Jesus did not direct intense schol-

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54 See Allison, Constructing Jesus, 294.
55 This is the place to rehearse the complex issue of the oral and written transmission of Scripture at that time, nor to respond to the question whether Jesus could read. Like his Jewish counterparts, he would have had knowledge of major Jewish texts.
58 Allison, End of the Ages, 176.
early attention to 7:13-14 or speculate about who the “one like a son of man” might be. Nor was he interested in the possibilities that vv. 9-10 and 13-14 circulated independently or that the designation “the saints of the Most High” (vv. 18, 21, 22, 25, 27) referred originally not to Israel but to angels and was applied to Israel in a secondary addition.\textsuperscript{59} For Jesus, as for his contemporaries, Daniel was a received narrative telling of God’s ultimate authority.\textsuperscript{60} It must be dealt with as such. Jesus’ reading or hearing experience made him aware of a narrative account of Daniel’s vision in the night (v. 1) that clearly identified the dangers that had threatened Israel in the past, especially the arrogant threat of Antiochus IV (vv. 2-8).\textsuperscript{61} There can be no mistaking Antiochus: “There came up among them another horn, a little one, before which three of the four horns were plucked up by the roots; and behold in this horn were eyes like the eyes of a man, and a mouth speaking great things” (v. 8).\textsuperscript{62} But the scene changes as a court is set up. The God of Israel, the Ancient of Days, takes his place. Israel’s enemies are stripped of their power, while the most dangerous of them all, the fourth animal, is destroyed (vv. 9-12). The positive outcome of this reversal is indicated in the crucial vv. 13-14:

\begin{quote}
I saw in the night visions, and behold, with the clouds of heaven there came one like a son of man, and he came to the Ancient of Days and was presented before him. And to him was given dominion and glory and kingdom, that all peoples, nations, and languages should serve him; his dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom one that shall not be destroyed.
\end{quote}

At this stage of the night vision, it is not made clear who “one like a son of man” might be. This “narrative gap,” a form of prolepsis generated by the storyteller, has allowed historical-critical scholars to assemble an amazing entourage of possibilities: a corporate manlike figure, Israel, the archangel Michael, the archangel

\textsuperscript{59} These are but two suggestions, which are associated with Martin Noth (“Zur Komposition des Buches Daniel,” \textit{TSK} 98/99 [1926] 143-63; “The Holy Ones of the Most High,” in \textit{The Laws in the Pentateuch and Other Essays} [trans. D. R. Ap-Thomas; Philadelphia: Fortress, 1967] 215-28). For Noth, the author of \textit{J Enoch} 37–71 (the Similitudes) knew and used Daniel 7, but only vv. 7, 9, 10, and 13, unaware of v. 14. The meaning of “the saints of the Most High” must be “angels.” It has been applied to Israel because most of the interpretation (vv. 15-27) is secondary. Hartman and Di Lella comment on an original text that has been glossed (\textit{Daniel}, 000). They are influenced by H. L. Ginsberg, \textit{Studies in Daniel} (Texts and Studies of the Jewish Theological Seminary of America 14; New York: Jewish Theological Seminary, 1948). For a critique of Noth (he is following Gustav Hölsher, Bernhard Haller and Otto Proksch) and others (including Ginsberg), see Casey, \textit{Son of Man}, 11-17. For a comprehensive survey of the critical questions surrounding the interpretation of Daniel 7, see Collins, \textit{Daniel}, 274-94.

\textsuperscript{60} On the importance of reading Daniel 7 as part of the whole of the Book of Daniel (which would have been Jesus’ reading/listening experience), see N. T. Wright, \textit{Christian Origins and the Question of God}, vol. 1, \textit{The New Testament and the People of God} (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1992) 291-97.

\textsuperscript{61} On the identity of the four beasts, see Collins, \textit{Daniel}, 297-99.

Gabriel, a divine figure side by side with the “Ancient of Days,” Moses, Judas Macca-
beus, Daniel himself, the Near Eastern *Urmensch*, Marduk, and so forth.63 The inter-
vention of the Ancient of Days giving dominion, glory, and kingdom that would not
pass away to “one like a son of man” (vv. 13-14) brings the first half of Daniel 7 to a
close. It has unfolded as follows:64

- **v. 1-2a:** Introductory narrative
- **vv. 2b-8:** The four beasts, enemies of Israel bear down on the people, creating suffering, chaos and death, with specific reference to Antiochus IV in v. 8.
- **vv. 9-12:** The Ancient of Days holds court; as former enemies are rendered powerless, the fourth beast is destroyed.
- **vv. 13-14:** The situation of suffering, chaos, and death is reversed. All author-
ity, which will not pass away, is given to one like a son of man (vv. 13-14).

What might this have meant to the original readers/hearers of Daniel? What did it mean to Jesus? Who might this “one like a son of man” be? Did it cross the mind of Jesus and his contemporaries that “one like a son of man” might be a corporate manlike figure, Israel, the archangel Michael, the archangel Gabriel, a divine figure side by side with the Ancient of Days, Moses, Daniel, Judas Maccabeus, the Near Eastern *Urmensch*, or Marduk? Why is all final authority and dominion given to whoever it might be?

As is normal in apocalyptic literature, the answers to these questions are not immediately clear—not even to the visionary in the narrative, Daniel. The second half of Daniel 7 begins with a description of the visionary’s emotions: Daniel is “anxious” and “alarmed” at these visions in his head (v. 15). The reader/listener experiences the narrative tension as s/he waits for an explanation of vv. 2b-14. It is not long in coming. The second half of the diptych that forms Daniel 7 is introduced with the good news that he “made known to me (Daniel) the interpretation of the things” (v. 16).65 What follows in vv. 17-27 makes clear for Daniel in the narrative, for the original readers/hearers, for Jesus, and for any reads (or listeners) of this apocalyptic nar-
rative, what the implied author is communicating to the implied reader in vv. 2b-14. The four beasts are the kings of the earth (v. 17). But the saints of the Most High

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64 For this structure, which I have simplified, see Collins, *Daniel*, 277.

65 This is a common practice in apocalyptic literature. A figure, often an “explaining angel,” spells out the meaning of an enigmatic vision experience. See Collins, *Daniel*, 311.
will ultimately receive and possess the kingdom (vv. 17-18, anticipating v. 27, and recalling vv. 13-14). While the four beasts are dealt with summarily, considerable space is given to the interpretation of the fourth beast (v. 19-25). The identification with Antiochus IV and his persecution of Israel are spelled out in detail: the emergence of the horn with eyes who spoke arrogantly, who prevailed over the saints of the Most High, who devoured the earth, trampled it, and broke it down. Even his ascent to power is described (vv. 20-25). Unlike in vv. 2-8, the final gift of the kingdom to the saints of the Most High is anticipated (v. 22, anticipating v. 27 and recalling vv. 13-14). Already foretold in v. 18 and v. 21, the court sits in judgment and the fourth beast is destroyed and gives everlasting kingdom and dominion to the saints of the Most High (vv. 26-27).

The message and structure of vv. 15-27 largely repeat the message and structure of vv. 2b-14, despite the anticipation of the climax in v. 18 and v. 21. The narrative introduction of vv. 1-2a is closed with the brief narrative statement of v. 28. The diptych of vv. 2b-14 and vv. 17-27 is thus framed by the narrative in vv. 1-2a and v. 28 and separated by the narrative of vv. 15-16. A first-century reader/listener, and all subsequent readers/listeners, find an explanation of vv. 2b-14 in the words of the interpreter addressed to Daniel in vv. 17-27. It unfolds as follows:

vv. 15-16: Introductory narrative (see vv. 1-2a)
vv. 17-18: The interpretation of the four beasts (see vv. 2-8)
vv. 19-25: The chaos, suffering, and death inflicted on the saints of the Most High by the fourth beast (see 9-12)
vv. 26-27: The situation of suffering, chaos, and death is reversed. All authority, which will not pass away, is given to “the people of the saints of the Most High” (see vv. 13-14).

v. 28: Narrative conclusion to vv. 1-28 (see vv. 15-16 and vv. 1-2a)

Despite the attempts of many scholars to retrieve an original text that does not draw this parallel, the implied author of the text as we have it asks the implied reader to see the obvious identification between the “one like a son of man” in vv. 14 and the “saints of the Most High” in v. 27.

Verse 14: And to him [“one like a son of man,” v. 13] was given dominion and glory and kingdom, that all peoples, nations and languages should serve him; his dominion is

66 For details of this identification, see ibid., 320-32.
67 For this structure, which I have simplified, see Collins, Daniel, 277.
68 See n. 53 above.
69 See Francis J. Moloney, “The End of the Son of Man?” DRev 98 (1980) 280-90, here 284: “I remain unconvinced that the Jewish reader of Daniel 7, in a situation of death and suffering—devoured and broken into pieces, stamped under the feet of the fourth beast (v. 7)—would not see the ‘one like a son of man’ (v. 13) as a figure who had been through this experience.”
an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom one that shall not be destroyed.

Verse 27: And the kingdom and the dominion and the greatness of the kingdoms under the whole heaven shall be given to the people of the saints of the Most High; their kingdom shall be an everlasting kingdom, and all dominions shall serve and obey them.

The “one like a son of man” who emerges as the vindicated figure at the end of vv. 2b-14 is to be identified with “the saints of the Most High” who also emerge vindicated in vv. 17-27. Historical-critical scholarship has generated extensive debate around the identification of “the saints of the Most High,” as it has around the identification of “one like a son of man.” Despite the apparent application of the expression to the people of Israel who were suffering at the hands of Antiochus IV at the time Daniel 7 was written, current opinion is moving toward an identification of “holy ones” with angels, as this is the widespread meaning of the expression qĕdôšîm (“holy ones”) in the Jewish and apocalyptic material of the time. But it is not the only possibility, as the context of Daniel 7 can direct us to other places where the expression “holy ones” is applied to the people of Israel, including another passage from Daniel (Dan 12:7; see also 1QH 3.9; 1QS 11.7-8; 1QM 10.10; 15.14). In Exod 9:16, Israel is called “a holy people” (gôy qădōs). André Lacocque suggests an appropriate compromise: “In Dan. 7, the verus Israel identifies itself with the eschatological community already existing in the heavens.” In Lacocque’s interpretation, the verus Israel is made up of those suffering persecution under Antiochus IV. It has its heavenly counterpart, but the designation “the saints of the Most High” refers to the persecuted people of Israel, as does “one like a son of man.”

This link between the “one like a son of man” (vv. 13-14) and the “saints of the Most High” (v. 27) with a persecuted Israel that never wavers in its commitment to God (verus Israel) makes sense of the carefully composed context. Despite all efforts to tear the two apart, a first-century reader would identify “the one like a

70 In support of an angelic (or heavenly double) interpretation, “to the people” (lĕcam) “of the Most High” (qaddîshî ʿelyônîn) might be read as referring to two different entities: the people of Israel (“the people”) and their angelic (heavenly) counterpart (“the saints of the Most High”). In what follows “the people of the saints of the Most High” is regarded as one entity. For strong support of this reading as an “epexegetical or appositional construct chain,” see Hartman and Di Lella, Daniel, 95-96.

71 Among several, see the case argued for this interpretation by Collins, Daniel, 312-18. This is the basis of Collins’s well-known identification of “the one like a son of man” with the archangel Michael (ibid., 310, 318-19; and esp. his The Scepter and the Star: The Messiahs of the Dead Sea Scrolls and Other Ancient Literature [ABRL: New York: Doubleday, 1995] 173-94). For a detailed and strong rejection of an angelic interpretation, see Hartman and Di Lella, Daniel, 89-101.

72 See Hartman and Di Lella, Daniel, 207; Porteous, Daniel, 115-16. Casey (Son of Man, 40-44) argues aggressively that by the expression “the saints of the Most High,” “he meant the Jewish people, specifically the faithful Jews attacked by Antiochus Epiphanes” (p. 25).

73 Lacocque, Daniel, 125-26. For this identification at Qumran, see 1QH 3.9; 1QS 11.7-8; 1QM 15.14.
son of man” with “the saints of the Most High.” As is made clear in vv. 17-27, the saints of the Most High are persecuted Israel under the sway of Antiochus IV. Neither “one like a son of man” nor “the saints of the Most High” is a “mere symbol.”

This reading of the communication that takes place between an implied author and an implied reader in the dream revelation of Daniel 7 may provide a way forward to Jesus’ unique use of the expression “the Son of Man.” In both vv. 2b-14 and vv. 17-27 the context is one of suffering. In vv. 17-27 the text addresses suffering Israelites at the time of the persecutions of Antiochus IV. The same, therefore, must be said of vv. 2b-14, if “the one like a son of man” and “the saints of the Most High” are to be identified. They are to hold fast in the midst of chaos and suffering because in the end God will give them all authority, power, and kingdom, forever (vv. 14, 27).

V. Jesus as the Son of Man

Allison has argued a cogent case for Jesus’ knowledge and use of Dan 7:13-14 and his use of “the Son of Man” to speak of himself (or his double) at the center of God’s eschatological intervention into human history. In the light of my reflections above, must we settle for Jesus’ identification with “the Son of Man” as part of his self-understanding as an apocalyptic prophet who would be a major player in the eschatological drama? Is it possible that Jesus found in Israel’s Scriptures a description of suffering Israel, which was promised ultimate vindication as “one like a son of man”/“the saints of the Most High” (Dan 7:1-28). The expression “one like a son of man,” originally used to tell the suffering righteous Israelites (the saints of the Most High), to whom God would ultimately grant all authority, may have been used by Jesus and then recast by all four evangelists in a clumsy Greek expression, reflecting an original Aramaic, “the Son of the Man” (ὅ υἱὸς τοῦ ἀνθρώπου).

This may appear to be a bold move, but the expression in Daniel 7 may already reflect an ancient Israeliite notion of the “corporate personality” of the nation. The

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74 Contrary to Casey, Son of Man, 39. For my full-scale review of Casey’s study, see Moloney, “End of the Son of Man?” 280-90. My doubts about Jesus as an apocalyptic prophet (p. 290) have been resolved by Allison’s many studies.

75 N. T. Wright remarks: “The Danielic story always was one of vindication and exaltation, and was retold as such in the first century” (Christian Origins and the Question of God, vol. 2, Jesus and the Victory of God [Minneapolis: Fortress, 1996] 361). As we have seen, vindication and exaltation are also promised to the saints of the Most High in v. 18 and v. 21, but only in v. 27 is the identity between the “one like a son of man” in vv. 13-14 and the saints of the Most High in v. 27 made very clear.

76 Allison, Constructing Jesus, 293-303. For his earlier position, similar to the one adopted below, see idem, End of the Ages, 128-37.

77 What this means exactly, and whether it is the case, is hotly debated. Collins (Daniel, 306-8) regards this as a “traditional explanation” and rejects it, in the light of his angelic interpretation (p. 310), but it has been strongly argued by many recent scholars. See, e.g., Porteous, Daniel, 111; Morna D.
“one like a son of man” unifies the believing yet suffering nation. The expression “one like a son of man,” used to describe the holy ones in Israel in Daniel 7, becomes “the Son of Man” in the person of Jesus. The nation of holy ones, prepared to obey the God of Israel in the conviction that in the end—despite all apparent human wisdom and appearances—God would have the last word, is assumed by Jesus as an individual, “the Son of Man.”

Allison argues that Jesus, an apocalyptic prophet, preached a radical and disturbing notion of the reigning presence and eventual all-determining kingdom of God that both questioned the relevance of the established “kingdoms” of both Jewish and Roman authority. The apocalyptic prophet indicated that the time of all such “authorities” was at an end in the establishment of God’s imminent new world. Relating to God as a son would relate to a father, Jesus reflected, in his life and teaching, a unique immediacy with God that gave a unique authority to what he said and did. A scenario reported in the Gospel of John reflects that situation. The chief priests and the Pharisees lament, “If we let him go on thus, everyone will believe him, and the Romans will come and destroy our holy place and our nation” (John 11:48). Jesus’ person and message were troubling, and Allison has shown conclusively that he was aware of a threat to his life and he accepted it willingly. The Gospels, and other, noncanonical documents, make it clear that Jesus gathered marginal people; he and his motley entourage of followers would have created unease among both Jewish and Roman authorities. Unease with such nonaligned groups is well witnessed in Josephus’ description of both Herod’s and the Romans’ handling of opposition to their authority (for examples of Herod’s response, see Josephus, B.J. 1.33.2-4 §§648-55; A.J. 17.6.2-3 §§149-63 [incident of the golden eagle]; B.J. 1.17.2 §§325-27; A.J. 14.15.10-11 §§450-55 [the Galilean and Idumean revolt]; B.J. 1.27.4-6 §§544-50; A.J. 16.11.5-6 §§379-91 [Tiro and Trypho]; for the Romans, see B.J. 2.8.1 §§117-18; A.J. 18 [Judas the Galilean]; B.J. 2.9.2-3 §§170-174; A.J. 18.3.1 §§55-59 [Pilate and the Roman standards]; B.J. 2.10.1-5 §§184-203; A.J. 18.8.2-9 §§261-309 [Gaius Hooker, The Son of Man in Mark: A Study of the Background of the term “Son of Man” and Its Use in Mark’s Gospel (London: SPCK, 1967) 24-30, 43-47; Hartman and Di Lella, Daniel, 97-101; C. F. D. Moule, The Origin of Christology (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1977) 20-22; Casey, Son of Man, 7-30


79 See Allison, Constructing Jesus, 199-204.


81 Allison, Constructing Jesus, 387-462.

82 See Meier, Marginal Jew, 3:40-124.
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The Synoptic Gospels report that Jesus comes to Jerusalem and the temple only once, at the end of his life. He goes there to meet his death. The Gospel of John, more historically reliable in this case, reports that he goes back and forth from Galilee to Jerusalem and regularly enters into conflict with Jewish leadership (see 2:13-22; 5:16-30; 7:1–10:21; 10:22-39; 11:45-57; 12:9-36a). I have argued that Jesus’ predictions of his forthcoming passion and death (see, e.g., Mark 8:31; 9:31; 10:32-34), developed in the tradition until they reached the form in which we now have them in the Gospel texts, reporting in detail the events of his arrest, insult, death, and resurrection (see Mark 10:32-34). But we can sense, behind the most simple of them, a Semitic play on words that goes back to Jesus: “For the Son of Man is to be delivered into the hands of men” (Luke 9:44b; see Mark 9:31ab). “The Son of Man” is found in almost all passages in the Gospels when Jesus looks forward to his future suffering and his claim that he will be vindicated by God (see also John 3:14; 8:28; 12:32-34; Matt 26:2 is the only exception). But Jesus would have spoken in general terms only about how his life would end (see Luke 9:44b; Mark 9:31ab). He did not know how God would enter his story to vindicate his suffering and death, but he seemed to be convinced that such would be the case (see Mark 8:31cd). To indicate that conviction he used a term that he and his listeners understood: “the Son of Man.”

An apparent difficulty for this view of Jesus’ approach to his forthcoming death is Allison’s juxtaposition of his understanding of Jesus as an apocalyptic prophet and as someone who had a positive approach to his inevitable death. Is it possible that an apocalyptic prophet would also look forward to his death? Maybe that element in the Gospels has been constructed by the early church in the light of the fact that Jesus was crucified. We can only respond to that theoretical difficulty by reading the NT evidence, and for this I return to Allison. After an assessment of

83 As always, attention must be given to Josephus’s agenda in these reports, especially his presentation of Judas the Galilean. See James S. McClaren, “Constructing Judean History in the Diaspora: Josephus’ Accounts of Judas,” in Negotiating Diasporas: Jewish Strategies in the Roman Empire (ed. John M. G. Barclay; Library of Second Temple Studies 45; London/New York: Clark, 2004) 90-108.


85 I would like to thank my colleague James McClaren for raising this question with me.
the Pauline understanding of Jesus’ death, Allison has gathered no fewer than thirty-one texts from across the NT that point to Jesus’ positive assessment of his forthcoming death. What did the early church remember, and what did it invent? Allison concludes his analysis of this material and responds to that question: “Indeed, next to the fact that Jesus was crucified by order of Pontius Pilate, his acquiescence to his fate is probably the best-attested fact about his last days.”

VI. Conclusion

This study was motivated by my admiration for Dale Allison’s Constructing Jesus and my hesitation to accept his change of direction between 1985 and 2010 on Jesus’ use of “the Son of Man.” Yet there is another word from Allison that perhaps better explains the study’s motivation:

My guess is that most New Testament scholars form a fairly clear picture of Jesus near the start of their careers, a picture that, while it may undergo some modification in subsequent years, rarely loses its basic features. Once a paradigm about Jesus is in place, a cognitive basis will also be in place.

I pursued my doctoral studies under the direction of Morna Hooker. My conclusions on the Johannine use of “the Son of Man” were influenced by her work and that of her mentor, Charles Moule. I accept, along with Allison, that my personal paradigm is involved, my objectivity is lessened, and we cannot be certain.

On the basis of the material assembled above, however, it is possible—even if not certain—that Jesus used “the Son of Man” to speak of himself at all stages of his life, based on Daniel’s use of “one like a son of man” (Dan 7:13-14) to point toward God as the ultimate actor in the vindication of faithful yet suffering Israel (7:1-28). Jesus’ use of the expression gave authority to, and made sense of, his life, death, and vindication, as “anticipating his cruel end, he submitted to it, trusting that his unhappy fate was somehow for the good.” But there is more that would take us beyond the possibilities of this study. As Jesus used the expression to explain his unconditional commitment to God’s will, it was also a paradigm for those whom he called to follow him. As Moule suggests, “[T]he Son of Man,’ so far from being a title evolved from current apocalyptic thought by the early Church and put onto the lips of Jesus, is among the most important symbols used by Jesus himself to describe his vocation and that of those whom he summoned to be with him.”

86 Allison, Constructing Jesus, 433; see 387-433.
87 Allison, Historical Jesus and the Theological Christ, 59; see also idem, Resurrecting Jesus, 135-37.
88 See Moloney, Son of Man, 208-82.
89 Allison, Constructing Jesus, 433; see also Hooker, Son of Man, 190-91.
90 See Moule, Origin, 20-22; quotation from p. 22 (emphasis added). See also Allison, Millenarian Prophet, 66 n. 242.