



and



## IMPORTANT STUFF ABOUT JESUS (no. 1)

His Favorite Name

### (preface)

Let's talk about names. First, God's personal name isn't *God*. It's *Yahweh*. (Check out **ISAG no. 1** for more about this.) *Jesus* is the Greek version of the Hebrew name *Yeshua*, a form of Joshua. Jesus' friends, family and neighbors would have called him *Yeshua*. *Christ* isn't his last name. *Jesus Christ* isn't like "Abraham Lincoln" or "Luke Skywalker." *Christ* is the Greek version of the Hebrew word *Messiah* which means "anointed one."

*Jesus the Messiah. Yeshua the Anointed One.* In Jesus' day, this title would have carried great significance for Jewish people. Take a look at the **B.C. Bible Flyover** for a summary of Israel's eventual exile. By the time Jesus came along, Jews had been waiting hundreds of years for the promised Messiah. They expected a national and military hero who would overthrow their enemies (often represented as Babylon), rescue them, and restore their earthly kingdom. Small-town Yeshua, a carpenter's son, was definitely not what they were hoping for.

In the gospels, Jesus never directly called himself the Messiah, though other people did. Sometimes he called himself the Son of God. Most often called himself the Son of Man. To our modern ears, that sounds plain and generic. After all, each of us is a son or daughter of some man and woman. But Jesus didn't merely call himself a son of man. He called himself **the** Son of Man, an important title that first-century Jews would have recognized from a weird and wild apocalyptic dream in the book of Daniel (chapter 7), part of the Hebrew scriptures. The dream went something like this: lots of terrible and horrifying beasts rise up from a terrible and horrifying sea and then do terrible and horrifying things to humanity. When it seems that all hope is gone, God (the "Ancient of Days") holds court, seated on a fiery throne, surrounded by millions of angels. Someone like "the Son of Man" approaches him. God gives him power and authority over all people of all nations for all time, and promises that his kingdom will never be destroyed.

When Jesus referred to himself as the *Son of Man*, he was boldly declaring his true identity, his eternal purpose, and his divine authority. He was confirming that he was indeed the long awaited Messiah who would rescue and restore his people. But he also shattered people's hopes and expectations for what rescue and restoration would look like and how it would be accomplished. Jesus often flips our expectations inside out and upside down.

### WARM-UP

- What are some common titles we use for people? What do those titles/names tell us about their identity, interests, job, purpose, etc?
- Have you ever been surprised by the accomplishments, experiences, or skills of someone in your life?
- Think about the most apocalyptic-dystopic-end-of-world movie you've seen or book you've read. Describe the heroic rescuer who saves the day. Were they what you expected? Were they surprising? In what ways?

## WATCH

"Son of God" [5:50]

## READ

Daniel 7:1-14 (Don't worry about "cracking a code." Pay attention to the main and obvious message.)

## RESPOND

Talk about the "big story" elements of Daniel 7 (good versus evil, power, oppression, destruction, fear, hope, danger, rescue, restoration, the good ending, etc.). What do you think the main "big idea" is?

What kind of person/character is the Son of Man within the "big story" of Daniel 7? If he represented a real person in a real situation, what would you expect him to look like, to be like, to act like?

## ENGAGE

Read the following verses to see how Jesus describes the character and life of the Son of Man.

- Matthew 8:20, 9:6, 12:8, 12:32, 13:37, 13:41, 16:27, 17:9, 17:12, 17:22, 19:28, 20:18, 20:28, 24:27-30, 25:31, 26:2, 26:24, 26:45, 26:64
- Mark 8:38, 9:9, 9:31, 10:33, 10:45, 13:26, 14:21
- Luke 6:22, 9:22, 9:26, 19:10, 22:22, 22:69
- John 3:13, 5:27, 6:27, 8:28, 12:34
- Revelation 1:13, 14:14

Make a list of the descriptions that fit the idea of a strong heroic rescuer and ruler (e.g. he'll sit on a throne).  
Make a list of the descriptions that are different or even opposite of that (e.g. he'll be rejected).

What do you learn about Jesus, the true Son of Man, from these verses and descriptions?

What do you think that means for followers of Jesus who are called to know him, obey him, and imitate his example?

## ERGO

The Son of Man, Jesus Christ, is our rescuer, savior, ruler, and Lord. This week, remember that you can trust Jesus to love you, forgive you, guide you, and begin to change you from the inside out. But also remember that he is the ruler of the universe, enthroned with power, worthy of our worship and honor, deserving of our respect and obedience. He is truly a man. He is also truly the Son of Man, as well as the Son of God. And he is God. He is all those things, and we must follow all of Jesus with all of ourselves. This week, make that both your prayer and your practice.

## (postscript)

"Son of Man" is used many times in Ezekiel as a title for the human prophet himself. In Psalm 144:3, "son of man" refers simply to a human being. So when Jesus used this title for himself, he was speaking the truth on two levels—he truly was a flesh-and-blood human being, like Ezekiel and all other humans. But he was also God's chosen and anointed rescuer and redeemer, our Messiah.