

# **NSS Ethics and Religious Studies Curriculum Support Materials**

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**Jesus understanding of Himself  
- Son of Man (I)**

**3 - 19**

**Jesus understanding of Himself  
- Son of Man (II)**

**20 - 38**



## Topic 9

# Jesus' Understanding of Himself

Suggested teaching time: 2 Periods (1 hour per period)

Main point:

1. Son of Man

Text Interpretations:

In the Old Testament, 'Son of Man' had two meanings: 1) ordinary men who had human weaknesses in contrast to God's status and mighty power; 2) a being who descended supernaturally through pillars of clouds, having God's power to judge the humankind.

When Jesus preached, no matter how the others addressed him, he called himself the 'Son of Man', probably because he did not want people to associate him with the conventional idea of the Messiah. Since there were no standard definitions regarding the title 'Son of Man', Jesus was free to confer a new understanding on the title. He wanted people to know that the Son of Man would suffer for the humankind. Also, the Son of Man had authority so that he would judge the world in the future when he returned to the clouds riding chariots.

Jesus declared that the Son of Man possessed God-given authority—the Son of Man had the authority to pardon sins on earth. Since the Son of Man was the Lord of Sabbath, he had the authority to interpret the laws of Sabbath. Due to Jesus' love to all human beings, he often healed the sick and pardoned sins on Sabbath. As a result, he was criticised by religious leaders for violating the Mosaic Law (i.e. Sabbath is the rest day). Jesus however called himself the Lord of Sabbath. He stated that the laws were made for men, so that they knew God was willing to forgive and love the humankind.

Jesus' authority as the Son of Man was drastically different from the traditional views. The authority Jesus exercised as the Son of Man had the following features: (1) it was intended to benefit the humankind instead of oneself; (2) He wanted to liberate the humankind; (3) He cared for the needs and values of the humankind; (4) He glorified the power of God.

Jesus reiterated that the mission as the Son of Man was to suffer on earth and to be resurrected three days after death. Jesus was willing to suffer because he loved God and the humankind. He suffered and died to redeem human beings. To prove that he had victory over death, he was resurrected and ascended to heaven with God. In the future, we will see him sitting on the right of the Mighty One and coming from the clouds of heaven.

## Period 1: Jesus' Understanding of Himself–Son of Man(1)

1. Biblical reference: Mark 2:10, 2:28

2. Objectives:

- To learn the meanings behind Jesus calling himself the 'Son of Man' and others addressing him the 'Son of Man'.
- To understand why Jesus stated that the 'Son of Man' had the authority to pardon sins so that God and the humankind can reconcile.
- To understand that when Jesus stated that the Son of Man was the Lord of Sabbath, he had the authority to interpret the Law. He wanted to liberate human from understanding the Law superficially by pointing out the spirit of the Law.
- To follow Jesus, exercising authority to benefit others.



3. Teaching strategies

Background Information	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Jesus stated that the Son of Man had the authority to pardon sins so that God and the humankind can reconcile.</li> <li>• Jesus stated that the Son of Man was the Lord of Sabbath who had the authority to interpret the Law. He wanted to liberate human from understanding the Law superficially by pointing out the spirit of the Law.</li> </ul>
Issues for Explorations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What did Jesus understand about himself?</li> </ul>
Enquiry Questions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What did Jesus call himself? What was the meaning of this title in the Old Testament?</li> <li>• How did Jesus understand the status and authority of the Son of Man?</li> <li>• What insight do you gain by observing Jesus' intentions when using his authority?</li> </ul>
Learning Activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Through discussing various titles of kings and leaders, explore: (1) the relationship between title, status and authority; (2) the meaning of 'Son of Man' in the Old Testament.</li> <li>• Through Bible reading, understand the meanings when Jesus stated that the Son of Man had the authority to pardon sins on earth and was the Lord of Sabbath.</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• By observing the different intentions of and methods used by Jesus and school leaders (who have different roles at school) as they exercise their authorities, understand that Jesus used his authority for the benefits and well-being of all humankind. He wanted to liberate humans from the Law.</li> </ul>
Key Concepts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Son of Man</li> <li>• Sabbath</li> </ul>
Generic Skills, Values and Attitudes Involved	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Refer to the 'Generic Skills, Values and Attitudes' tables included in the corresponding lesson plans.</li> </ul>
High-order Questions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What is the purpose of exercising authority?</li> <li>• How can one follow the law with a free and joyful mind?</li> </ul>
Extended Activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Explore and evaluate a case of which authority is being exercised positively, e.g. the exercise of authority of government, presidents, leaders, council members, civil servants or leaders of organisations.</li> </ul>



## Activity One



Enquiry Questions	Generic Skills	Values and Attitudes
What did Jesus call himself? What was the meaning of this title in the Old Testament?	Communication skills, critical thinking skills, problem solving skills	Succession of truth, culture and civilization

### Teaching Steps:

#### 1. Teacher does warm-up exercise with students by asking them to think about the meaning behind a person's title, status and authority.

- Teacher shows PowerPoint 1 (VIP) and asks students about the titles of the people below:
  - i. Alexander the Great ('the Great' originated from the Latin word *Magnus*, meaning 'majestic'. People usually add 'the Great' after the names of splendid kings).
  - ii. President Lincoln ('President' is the title for the head of republic countries)
  - iii. Emperor Akihito ('Emperor' is the title for the Japanese king, the leader of the country. Although emperors no longer have actual power in today's Japan, they remain as a very important figure of the country for the Japanese).
- Teacher and students discuss:
  - i. What is the relationship between the title, status and authority of the people above?
  - ii. Will the meaning behind these titles change with time and context?
  - iii. What are your roles at school? (e.g. class prefect, class council member, subject leader, club president, school team member etc.) What are the rights and responsibilities of these roles?

#### 2. Teacher points out:

- A title describes a person's special role or duty.
- What is the mission behind each role or duty?
- Will a title change according to the person's speech or actions?

#### 3. Teacher carries out 'Jesus' Self-Assertion' activity with students and helps them explore the title Jesus used to address Himself.

- The Gospels were compiled after Jesus rose from death. From the title Jesus used to acknowledge himself when he preached, can we deduce Jesus' understanding of himself?

- Teacher asks students 'According to your understanding of Jesus' life, what title should Jesus use when he was alive?'
- Teacher divides the class into groups and asks each group to look for Jesus' title from the Bible selections (Mark 2:10, 2:28, 8:31, 10:45, 14:61-62). Complete the first part of Worksheet 1 (Meaning of Title).
- Teacher asks students to discuss with reference to the questions on the worksheet:
  - i. From the five sets of Bible verses, what titles did Jesus use to address Himself?
  - ii. Is there any difference between the title Jesus used and the one you thought of earlier?
  - iii. Did this title exist before Jesus was born (i.e. in Old Testament times)?
- After discussion, teacher invites the groups to present their ideas.

**4. Teacher carries out 'Meaning behind the title 'Son of Man' in the Old Testament' activity with students.**

- Teacher divides the class into groups and asks each group to complete part two of Worksheet 1 based on the Bible selection (Psalms 8:4, Ezekiel 2:1, Daniel 7:13-14).
- Teacher asks students to discuss with reference to the questions on the worksheet:
  - i. Based on the three sets of verses from the Old Testament (Psalms 8:4, Ezekiel 2:1, Daniel 7:13-14), what was the relationship between the Son of Man and God?
  - ii. Based on the three sets of verses from the Old Testament (Psalms 8:4, Ezekiel 2:1, Daniel 7:13-14), what power did the Son of Man have?
- After discussion, teacher invites the groups to present their ideas.

**5. Teacher goes further to discuss with students:**

- Now that you have learned more about the meaning of the title 'Son of Man' in the Old Testament, do you have better understanding of the reasons for Jesus to use this title from different angles? Which angles do you have better understanding? Jesus' status, authority or others?

**6. Teacher summarises:**

- Jesus called himself the 'Son of Man' when He preached.
- In the Old Testament, 'Son of Man' had two meanings: 1) ordinary man who had human weaknesses in contrast to God's status and mighty power; 2) a being who descended supernaturally through pillars of clouds, having God's power to judge the humankind.

**7. Teacher distributes Students' Reference: Material 1 (Using the title 'Son of Man' in the Old Testament), briefly explains it and wraps up the activity.**

## Activity Two



Enquiry Questions	Generic Skills	Values and Attitudes
How did Jesus understand the status and authority of the Son of Man?	Communication skills, critical thinking skills, problem solving skills	Truth, Freedom, Open-mindedness

### Teaching Steps:

#### 1. Teacher asks:

- Jesus called himself the Son of Man. Was his status noble or humble?
- Hence, what authority did Jesus have? Did He care about his own profits, the profits of others or the rights of the Israelites?

#### 2. Teacher carries out 'Status and Authority of Jesus' activity with students and helps them understand Jesus' understanding of the status and authority of the Son of Man.

- Teacher asks students to form groups of four and asks each group to read Mark 13:1-2. By understanding the status and authority Jesus as the Son of Man had, students can complete Worksheet 2 (Jesus Self-Understanding Smart Card)
  - What title did Jesus use to call himself? (Son of Man)
  - What were the corresponding status and authority of the title? (Son of Man had the authority to pardon sins on earth; Son of Man was the Lord of Sabbath)
- After discussion, teacher invites groups to present their idea.

#### 3. Teacher carries out 'Son of Man Had the Authority to Pardon Sins on Earth' and 'Son of Man was the Lord of Sabbath' activities with students, allowing students to understand the status and authority of Jesus.

- Teacher shows PowerPoint 2 (Jesus Healed the Paralytic Patients in Mark 2:1-9 and Enquiry about Sabbath in Mark 2:23-27) and guides students to understand the Bible stories which supported what Jesus said about the status and authority of the Son of Man.
- Teacher asks students to stay in the same groups and distributes Worksheet 3 (Lord of Forgiveness and Sabbath). Guide students to complete questions on the Worksheet.
  - What special authority did the Son of Man have?
  - How did Jesus exercise his authority?
  - What was Jesus' intention when he exercised the authority?



- iv. What benefits did Jesus bring to the humankind when he exercised the authority? Did he bring people physical benefits such as health or spiritual benefits such as the reconciliation between God and the humankind?

- After discussion, teacher invites groups to present their ideas.

**4. Teacher goes further to discuss with students:**

- With reference to the above discussion, what was the mission of the Son of Man when he came to the world? Did he come to heal people so they can become healthy? Were there any other reasons?
- Was it important for Jesus to liberate the humankind from sins and the distorted interpretations of the Law? Why?
- Was Jesus' power marvellous in liberating the humankind from sins and the distorted interpretations of the Law? Why? Who else in the world possessed such authority?

**5. Teacher summarises:**

- Jesus called himself the 'Son of Man'. The title avoided misinterpretation of his identity but also indicated that he himself was the Son of God. Only Jesus had the power to pardon sins. His most important task was to forgive sinners so that God and the humankind can reconcile.
- Sabbath was originally established to remind people to take rest so as to remember God's blessings. Jesus explained that 'Sabbath was set for men' because God himself was the founder of Sabbath. The disciples picked the heads of grain and ate in front of Jesus because Jesus allowed them to do so. Since they got the permission from the Lord of Sabbath, they did not violate the Law of Sabbath.
- All laws are set for the benefits and well-being of humans. We should not narrowly focus on the exact wordings of the Law because all creation comes from God. If we remember God's blessings, we will naturally love God and others from the bottom of our heart. If we solely follow what are stipulated in the Law, we will lose the joy and the freedom in abiding by it. Thus, the Law will become a religious burden to us. On the contrary, Jesus explained to us that the Lord of Sabbath liberates people from such religious burden. So we are expected to abide by the Law joyously.
- God manifests and gives Himself to the humankind out of His love. By doing so, He provides definitive and abundant answers to our questions on the meaning of life and life after death.<sup>1</sup>

**6. Teacher distributes Students' Reference: Material 2 (Authority of Jesus to Pardon Sins and to Interpret the Law), briefly explains it and wraps up the activity.**

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<sup>1</sup> "Catholicism Theology" CCC68.

### Activity Three



Enquiry Questions	Generic Skills	Values and Attitudes
What insight do people gain by observing Jesus' intentions when using his authority?	Communication skills, critical thinking skills, problem solving skills	Truth, freedom, sanctified life, human dignity

#### Teaching Steps:

##### 1. Teacher asks:

- What insight do people gain by observing Jesus' intentions when using his authority?

##### 2. Teacher carries out 'The Exercise of Authority' activity with students, allowing students to compare Jesus with other leaders in the world regarding their intentions and ways of exercising authority. Students are expected to find out the features of Jesus' authority.

- Analyse the ways school prefects, class monitors, class council members, subject leaders, club presidents or school athletes exercise their authority. Discuss if Jesus' attitude of exercising authority is applicable in their situations.
- Teacher points out:
  - Everyone has different roles at school. Some are school prefects, some are class monitors, some are subject leaders etc. Many of you do not have a specific role. If you were a school prefect, class monitor, class council member, subject leader, club president or school athlete, how would you exercise your authority?
- Teacher splits the class into groups and asks each group to play the above roles (e.g. school prefects, class monitors, etc). Teacher can adjust the above roles according to the school's actual needs.
- Teacher distributes Worksheet 4 (Jesus' Intentions of Exercising Authority as the Son of Man) to each group. Students compare the ways Jesus used his authority as the Son of Man with that of the students in the above activity. Teacher guides students to learn about Jesus' intentions of exercising his authority as the Son of Man.
- Teacher asks students to discuss with reference to the questions on the worksheet:
  - Who was the beneficiary?
  - How did they exercise their authority?
  - What were their intentions?
  - What were the features of the ways Jesus exercised his authority as the Son of Man? (He exercised his authority for the humankind instead of his own benefits. He wanted to liberate human beings; he cared about human needs and values; He glorified God's power).

**3. Teacher goes further to discuss with students:**

- What will be the differences if various student groups exercise their authorities at school with the same intentions as Jesus?

**4. Teacher summarises:**

- Different student groups have different levels of authority at school. Students are encouraged to serve at school and to learn Jesus' ways of exercising authority and his mission: do not hold onto power but to serve with humility.
- Jesus exercised his authority for the humankind instead of his own benefits. He wanted to liberate human beings; he cared about human needs and values; he glorified God's power.
- Jesus' intentions of exercising his authority: He wanted people to know that everything is in God's hands and nothing will be difficult and impossible. For instance, a crippled had four friends who consistently concerned about him, took care of him and prayed for him. It was precisely their faith in God's grace and mercy healed the crippled through Jesus. The crippled was liberated through God's grace and was able to stand up freely after experiencing God's love.
- Sabbath is a holy day, established for people to rest and to purify their hearts so that they are free to love God and others. Jesus emphasised that we should practise love and virtues on Sabbath. He opposed making the Law absolute because the completeness of the Law stems from love.

**Extended Activities:**

1. Teacher asks students to look for examples from the Internet about how an authority is being exercised properly. Students may look at the examples of governments, presidents, leaders of country or organisations, legislative members, civil servants etc.
2. Teacher asks students to discuss the following questions with reference to the materials collected:
  - a. Who is the beneficiary?
  - b. Does the person who possesses the authority have any benefits or danger?
  - c. What is his/her intention of exercising authority?
  - d. What are the features of his/her authority?
  - e. What are the impacts on the general public when the authority is being exercised?
  - f. What are the similarities and differences between the above authority and the one Jesus had as the Son of Man?
  - g. If the subject in the case were going to exercise his/her authority in the same way as Jesus did, what would the outcome be?
3. Teacher invites students to do sharing in the next period.



## **Material One: Using the Title 'Son of Man' in the Old Testament**

In the Old Testament, 'Son of Man' might mean 'part of the humankind' or simply 'man'. For instance, in Psalm 8:4, 'what is man that you are mindful of him, the son of man that you care for him?' In Ezekiel, God called Ezekiel the prophet as the 'Son of Man': 'Son of man, stand up on your feet and I will speak to you.' (Ezekiel 2:1) 'Son of Man' also indicated the difference between human beings and God. For instance, the weakness of the Israelites and God's power were incomparable. (The above two verses had this connotation as well. Other examples are Numbers 23:19; Job 25:6; Psalms 146:3; Isaiah 51:12).

The title 'Son of Man' in the Old Testament sometimes referred to a person coming from heaven, having the power of God. Prophet Daniel wrote, 'In my vision at night I looked, and there before me was one like a son of man, coming with the clouds of heaven. He approached the Ancient of Days and was led into his presence. He was given authority, glory and sovereign power...his kingdom is one that will never be destroyed.' (Daniel 7:13-14) The 'Son of Man' mentioned here was a supernatural person who belonged to heaven, coming through clouds of heavens to judge the humankind; He would enjoy eternal power and honor and would demonstrate the kingship nature of Messiah.

The above examples illustrated the application of the title 'Son of Man' in the Old Testament. The title simply meant 'human', implicating the differences between humans and God. Sometimes, it was used to refer to an extraordinary figure from heaven.

### **References:**

1. 彭培剛牧師、郭志丕牧師編（1999）：《同創新天地（第四冊，教師本）》，（頁 181）。香港：宗教教育中心。
2. 思高聖經學會（2004）：「人子」：《聖經辭典》（第 32 條）。香港：思高聖經學

## **Material Two: Authority of Jesus to Pardon Sins and to Interpret the Law**

### **1. Background**

- The Jews considered illnesses as a punishment from God due to sins. Therefore, sick people were often being discriminated by the public.
- Upon experiencing foreign rule during the time between the two Testaments, Jewish leaders had drastic changes in the ways they perceive their religion and the laws. They made unnecessary criticism on others frequently and emphasised too much on the wordings of the Law and traditional rituals. They overlooked the spirit and essence of God's laws.

### **2. Jesus' work in healing people and explaining the Law**

- Jesus exercised his authority of the Son of Man to pardon sins when He healed sick people.
- The Pharisees and Teachers of the Law always demanded Jews to live perfectly according to the law. They overlooked the spirit of the Law. Jesus responded to them by saying that the Law was created to serve the humankind. He also indicated that he himself was very close to God and had the authority to pardon sins and to interpret God's laws.

### **3. Meaning of Jesus calling himself 'Son of Man'**

- Jesus showed his identity as the 'Son of God' and his power given by God by pardoning sins and interpreting the Law of Sabbath.
- Jesus, as the Son of God, had the power to forgive sins. His most important mission was to forgive people's sins so that they could reconcile with God.
- Jesus was the Lord of Sabbath and reiterated that the Son of Man had the right to interpret the Law of Sabbath. He concerned about the real meaning of God's Law and emphasised that the Law were good of the humankind. The Son of Man cared about people's needs. He wanted everyone to be free from the strict verbiage of the Law.

### **References:**

1. Barclay, William (1954). *The Gospel of Mark*. Edinburgh: The Saint Andrew Press. pp.41-45, 57-61.
2. 思高聖經學會 (2005):《思高聖經原著譯釋版系列:福音》(頁 111、320-321)。香港:思高聖經學會。



## Worksheet 1: Meaning of Title

1. Fill in the relevant verses of how Jesus called himself.

Verses	Titles Jesus used to call himself
Mark 2:10	
Mark 2:28	
Mark 8:31	
Mark 10:45	
Mark 14:61-62	

2. Based on the Bible verses below, write down the meaning of 'Son of Man' in the Old Testament.

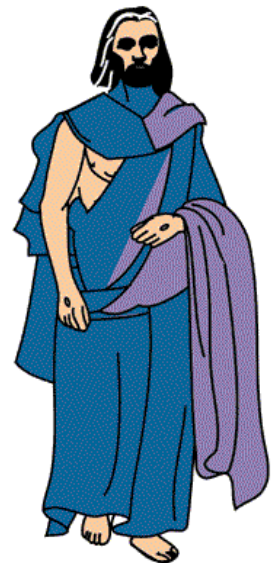
	Psalm 8:4, Ezekiel 2:1 (In original text 'Son of Man' is translated to 'Mortal')	Daniel 7:13-14
Relationship between God and the Son of Man		
Abilities of the Son of Man		



## Worksheet 2: Jesus Self-Understanding Smart Card

### Jesus Self-Understanding Smart Card

1. Title: \_\_\_\_\_
2. The corresponding status and authority reflected by the title:
  - a. \_\_\_\_\_
  - b. \_\_\_\_\_



### Worksheet 3: Lord of Forgiveness and Sabbath

#### Son of Man had the authority to pardon sins

1. Special authority possessed by the Son of Man:  
\_\_\_\_\_
2. How Jesus used his authority: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
3. Intentions Jesus had when he exercised his authority: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
4. What benefits did Jesus bring to the humankind when he exercised his authority?  
Did he bring the people physical benefits such as health or spiritual benefits such  
as the reconciliation between God and the humankind? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

#### Son of Man was the Lord of Sabbath

1. Special authority possessed by the Son of Man: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
2. How Jesus used his authority: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
3. Intentions Jesus had when He exercised his authority: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
4. What benefits did Jesus bring to the humankind when he exercised his authority?  
Did he bring the people physical benefits such as health or spiritual benefits such  
as the reconciliation between God and the humankind? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

## Worksheet 4: Jesus' Intentions of Exercising the Authority of the Son of Man

1. Compare the ways Jesus exercised his authority as the Son of Man with those of different student groups.

	Jesus	School prefects, class monitors, class council members, subject leaders, club presidents or school athletes
Beneficiary		
Ways to exercise the authority		
Intentions of exercising the authority  (e.g. Benefits received; Sustaining beliefs and ideals)		

2. What were the features of the ways Jesus exercised his authority as the Son of Man?

- ☐ Do not aim for self-benefits
- ☐ Hope to reap the most profits for oneself
- ☐ Exercise authority for the humankind
- ☐ Hope to liberate others
- ☐ Care about the needs and values of the humankind
- ☐ Exercise authority for self benefits
- ☐ Oppress others to gain profits
- ☐ Suppress the needs and values of the humankind
- ☐ Glorify God's power
- ☐ Emphasise on one's ability



## Material One: Using the Title 'Son of Man' in the Old Testament

In the Old Testament, 'Son of Man' might mean 'part of the humankind' or simply 'man'. For instance, in Psalm 8:4, 'what is man that you are mindful of him, the son of man that you care for him?' In Ezekiel, God called Ezekiel the prophet as the 'Son of Man': 'Son of man, stand up on your feet and I will speak to you.' (Ezekiel 2:1) 'Son of Man' also indicated the difference between human beings and God. For instance, the weakness of the Israelites and God's power were incomparable. (The above two verses had this connotation as well. Other examples are Numbers 23:19; Job 25:6; Psalms 146:3; Isaiah 51:12).

The title 'Son of Man' in the Old Testament sometimes referred to a person coming from heaven, having the power of God. Prophet Daniel wrote, 'In my vision at night I looked, and there before me was one like a son of man, coming with the clouds of heaven. He approached the Ancient of Days and was led into his presence. He was given authority, glory and sovereign power...his kingdom is one that will never be destroyed.' (Daniel 7:13-14) The 'Son of Man' mentioned here was a supernatural person who belonged to heaven, coming through clouds of heavens to judge the humankind; He would enjoy eternal power and honor and would demonstrate the kingship nature of Messiah.

The above examples illustrated the application of the title 'Son of Man' in the Old Testament. The title simply meant 'human', implicating the differences between humans and God. Sometimes, it was used to refer to an extraordinary figure from heaven.

### References:

1. 彭培剛牧師、郭志丕牧師編（1999）：《同創新天地（第四冊，教師本）》，（頁 181）。香港：宗教教育中心。
2. 思高聖經學會（2004）：「人子」：《聖經辭典》（第 32 條）。香港：思高聖經學會。





## **Material Two: Authority of Jesus to Pardon Sins and to Interpret the Law**

### **1. Background**

- The Jews considered illnesses as a punishment from God due to sins. Therefore, sick people were often being discriminated by the public.
- Upon experiencing foreign rule during the time between the two Testaments, Jewish leaders had drastic changes in the ways they perceive their religion and the laws. They made unnecessary criticism on others frequently and emphasised too much on the wordings of the Law and traditional rituals. They overlooked the spirit and essence of God's laws.

### **2. Jesus' work in healing people and explaining the Law**

- Jesus exercised his authority of the Son of Man to pardon sins when He healed sick people.
- The Pharisees and Teachers of the Law always demanded Jews to live perfectly according to the law. They overlooked the spirit of the Law. Jesus responded to them by saying that the Law was created to serve the humankind. He also indicated that he himself was very close to God and had the authority to pardon sins and to interpret God's laws.

### **3. Meaning of Jesus calling himself 'Son of Man'**

- Jesus showed his identity as the 'Son of God' and his power given by God by pardoning sins and interpreting the Law of Sabbath.
- Jesus, as the Son of God, had the power to forgive sins. His most important mission was to forgive people's sins so that they could reconcile with God.
- Jesus was the Lord of Sabbath and reiterated that the Son of Man had the right to interpret the Law of Sabbath. He concerned about the real meaning of God's Law and emphasised that the Law were good of the humankind. The Son of Man cared about people's needs. He wanted everyone to be free from the strict verbiage of the Law.

### **References:**

1. Barclay, William (1954). *The Gospel of Mark*. Edinburgh: The Saint Andrew Press. pp.41-45, 57-61.
2. 思高聖經學會 (2005):《思高聖經原著譯釋版系列—福音》(頁 111, 320-321)。香港：思高聖經學會。



## Period 2: Jesus' Understanding of Himself: Son of Man (II)

1. Biblical reference: Mk 8:31, 10:45, 14:62

2. Objectives:

- To learn that Jesus called himself the Son of Man and to understand his interpretations of the title.
- To understand that Jesus stated (1) the Son of Man would suffer; (2) the Son of Man came to serve; and (3) the Son of Man would return gloriously from heaven.
- To understand that Jesus' mission was to suffer, die and come back to life three days later. He willingly suffered and died to save people because He loved God and human beings.
- To understand that Jesus will return gloriously from heaven eventually.



3. Teaching Strategies

Background Information

- Jesus said the mission of the Son of Man was to suffer, die and come back to life three days later. He willingly suffered and died to save human beings because it was the salvation plan of God. Jesus was born and would die according to the plan.
- Jesus stated that the Son of Man would come back to life, rise to heaven and be with God, and that the Son of Man would return gloriously from heaven. The ending will fulfill the salvation plan and bring people to the Kingdom of God with complete salvation.

Issues for Explorations

- Why did the Son of Man the Almighty Lord, being innocent himself, have to suffer so much?

Enquiry Questions

- Why did Jesus often call himself 'the Son of Man'?
- According to Jesus, what mission did the Son of Man have on earth?
- The Son of Man clearly stated that he will return gloriously. How does such ending enlighten us on our life?

Learning Activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Through reviewing the heavenly identity and authority of the Son of Man, and the roles of the Son of Man as the sufferer and the future judge, explore the reasons why Jesus called himself the Son of Man.</li> <li>Through watching the video 'Looking for Jesus' cross', recall the harsh punishment of crucifixion that Jesus received so as to understand that the Son of Man was a suffering servant.</li> <li>Read the book 'Portraits of the Son' or watch a video to see the face of the Son of Man and learn the glorious aspect of the Son of Man.</li> </ul>
Key Concepts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Son of Man</li> </ul>
Generic Skills, Values and Attitudes Involved	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Refer to the 'Generic Skills, Values and Attitudes' tables included in the corresponding lesson plans.</li> </ul>
High-order Questions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Can we see the face of the Son of Man in our lives?</li> </ul>
Extended Activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Explore the case of 'The glorious face' and understand both roles of the Son of Man as the glorious son of man and the suffering servant.</li> </ul>

## Activity One



Enquiry Question	Generic Skills	Values and Attitudes
Why did Jesus often call himself 'the Son of Man'?	Communication skills, critical thinking skills, problem solving skills	Truth, perseverance, love, improving oneself, benefit of humankind

### Teaching steps:

#### Step 1. Teacher does warm-up exercise with students by asking:

- After the previous lesson, can you summarise the identity and authority of 'the Son of Man' on earth?
- Why did Jesus call himself 'the Son of Man' but not the Son of God or the 'Messiah', the new king anointed by God as expected by the Jews at that time?

#### Step 2. Teacher carries out 'Jesus' reasons for calling himself the Son of Man' activity, allowing students to learn the reasons why Jesus called himself 'the Son of Man'.

- Teacher hands out 'Teachers' Reference: Material 1' (Records about 'the Son of Man' in the Gospel of Mark). Summarise that Jesus had mentioned that the Son of Man had authority, would suffer willingly for human beings and would return from heaven to judge the world.
- Teacher shows 'PowerPoint 1' (The Jews' concept of the Messiah) to let students learn about the common beliefs of the Jews regarding the Messiah or Christ at that time.
- Teacher asks students to form groups of four and play the role of Jesus. According to the 'Teachers' Reference: Material 1', 'PowerPoint 1' and the Bible passages in Mk 8:31, 10:45 and 14:62, deduce why Jesus called himself 'the Son of Man' but not the Messiah.
- Teacher may hand out 'Worksheet 1' (Reasons for calling himself the Son of Man). Guide students to complete the worksheet and think about the reasons why Jesus often called himself 'the Son of Man' but not the Messiah:
  - Why did Jesus call himself 'the Son of Man' but not 'the Messiah'?
- Teacher invites students to share their ideas after the discussion. Teacher may refer to 'Appendix 1' (Reasons of calling Himself the Son of Man (Reference answers)) for the answers of Worksheet 1.

- Teacher points out:  
In the Old Testament, 'Son of Man' referred to human beings and the Future Judge. Jesus called himself the 'Son of Man', reassuring the meaning of 'Son of Man' in the Old Testament and further explained that the 'Son of Man' had the authority and was willing to suffer for people.

**Step 3. Teacher summarises:**

- Jesus called himself 'the Son of Man' but not the 'Messiah' to avoid people inferring him as a political Messiah and misunderstanding his mission.
- Jesus wanted people to know that he will be the judge during the end of days. He stated that he will return gloriously from heaven to judge the world.
- The title 'Son of Man' did not have a specific and standardised meaning. Jesus was free to confer a new meaning on the title so as to let people know that he had God's authority and was willingly to suffer for human beings etc. It could also conceal Jesus' divine identity. Thus, the meaning of 'the Son of Man' in the Old Testament was enriched during Jesus' times.

**Step 4. Teacher distributes 'Students' Reference: Material 1' (Reasons and significance of Jesus calling himself 'the Son of Man'), briefly explains it and wraps up the above activity.**

## Activity Two



Enquiry Question	Generic Skills	Values and Attitudes
According to Jesus, what mission did the Son of Man have to fulfill on earth?	Communication skills, critical thinking skills, problem solving skills	Truth, perseverance, love, improving oneself, benefit of humankind

### Teaching steps:

**Step 1. Teacher carries out 'Looking for Jesus' cross' activity, guiding students to recall the harsh punishment of crucifixion that Jesus received so as to understand the Son of Man as a 'suffering servant'.**

- Teacher shows the video 'Looking for Jesus' cross', asks students to watch attentively about the crucifixion of Jesus, and discusses with students: (Teacher can also show the excerpts of Jesus' suffering in the movie 'Jesus', <http://www.inspirationalfilms.com/av/index.html> and let students understand how Jesus suffered and died.)
  - We learned that Jesus was the Almighty God in the previous lesson. Why did he have to suffer so much while he was innocent?
  - What was the charge against Jesus? Was He really guilty?

**Step 2. Teacher points out:**

- Which one is nobler, the one with authority but without the courage to shoulder adversities, or the one who has both authority and courage to shoulder adversities? Why?
- Suggest people who have authorities but are willing to face adversities.

**Step 3. Teacher carries out 'The mission of the Son of Man' activity, explore the significance of the mission of the Son of Man on earth.**

- Teacher tells the story of 'Crossing the rushing river':
  - 'An expedition team of four was so unlucky to be caught in the pouring rain for two whole days. After much struggle, the team succeeded in reaching the foot of the hill. They would be able to find a safe place after crossing a river. All of them were stunned once they saw the flooding river which was originally easy to cross. This depth of the river was originally less than 2.5 feet. However, after two days of torrential rain, the rainwater from the upper stream hastened the flow of the river. It would be hardly possible to just stand firm in the river, not to mention crossing it.

Meanwhile, a team member said, 'There is only one method to cross this river. We tie this nylon rope to the big tree trunk on this side, and one of our team members grab the rope and swim to the other side of the river, then tie it to the tree trunk over there. Other team members can then hold on to the rope to cross the river and won't be washed away by the river currents.' All members agreed to the method but who would risk his life to swim to the other side? The team leader said, 'Let me do it!' All the team members looked at him with admiration. The leader did not use his authority to delegate a member to do the task. Instead, he volunteered to take the risk and serve his team members.'

- Teacher discusses with students:
  - The team leader was a man with authority. He chose not to evade the responsibilities but was willing to take risks. What are your comments on the leader?
  - Can you name anyone around us who possesses the personalities similar to those of the expedition leader? Are we willing to bear responsibilities?
- Teacher points out:
  - In the previous topic, we have learned that Jesus had the authority to forgive sins and deliver people from following the Law blindly. Could Jesus foresee his own fate? Did he know he would become the leader of the Jewish religion and reform the Jewish religious laws?
- Teacher asks students to form groups of four and play the role of scholars studying the New Testament. According to Mk 8:31 and 10:45, answer the questions on 'Worksheet 2' (Suffering of the Son of Man):
  - What did Jesus tell his disciples about things that would happen to him?
  - Why did Jesus tell his disciples that he would suffer?
  - As a man with great authority, why did Jesus have to suffer?
  - Why must Jesus face such adversity? Was it his own choice or was he being forced?
- Teacher points out:
  - Indeed, Jesus was like the expedition leader who stood out in times of difficulties and risks. Even though he knew he had to die, he still sacrificed his own life for others without regret.
- After finishing the worksheet, teacher invites students to present their ideas.



**Step 4. Teacher continues to raise the questions:**

- When a man with authority is willing to suffer and face adversities, how will he affect other people?
- What are our expectations on Almighty Jesus? Is He always the supreme Lord? Have we ever thought about how Jesus himself would interpret his identity? What would he expect us to understand about him?
- Teacher shows 'PowerPoint 2' (Reaction of the army officer/centurion) and asks:
  - i. What was the significance of the suffering of the Son of Man? (1. The cross symbolises love: to love God others. 2. The meaning of salvation through Jesus' suffering and death: Jesus devoted his life to fulfill God's will and to sacrifice for the humankind.)

**Step 5. Teacher summarises:**

- Jesus said that the mission of the Son of Man was to suffer and die for the humankind, and come back to life three days after.
- Jesus was willing to suffer because he loved God and the humankind very much. He would save the humankind through his suffering and death.
- Was Jesus always the supreme Lord? Jesus' viewpoint was different from ours. He thought that the power of God was not limited to being omnipotent and omniscient. His willingness to reduce his power into 'inability' and 'ignorance' enabled him to accomplish what normal people could not do. He was willing to suffer and sacrifice his life even though he was innocent.
- Jesus was willing to become 'weak', which puzzled a lot of people. No wonder when James and John requested to sit on Jesus' left and right, Jesus made his disciples understand that his power or ability did not make him the real God. His divine identity came from his willingness to humble himself, to give up everything and to suffer injustice brought by sins.

### Activity Three



Enquiry Question	Generic Skills	Values and Attitudes
The Son of Man clearly stated that he will return gloriously. How does such ending enlighten us on our life?	Communication skills, critical thinking skills, problem solving skills	Truth, perseverance, courage, benefit of humankind

#### Teaching steps:

##### Step 1. Teacher raises the questions:

- According to Jesus' self-understanding, we have learned about Jesus' godliness and his willingness to humble himself and sacrifice his life for the humankind unconditionally. Have you ever come across people who possess similar characters as the Son of Man?
- Hence, can these people only be found among the great and well-known people?

##### Step 2. Teacher carries out the 'Portraits of the Son' activity to let students understand that the Son of Man is the 'suffering servant'.

- Teacher asks students to read 'Portraits of the Son – Stories of People in Poverty' [http://www.hkbookcity.com/showbook2.php?serial\\_no=58403](http://www.hkbookcity.com/showbook2.php?serial_no=58403)
- Or watch any episode of 'Understand • Care • The Stories of a Million People'.
- Teacher points out:
  - i. Mother Teresa had told us that she saw Jesus among those who suffered.
  - ii. Life comes from unconditional sacrifice: we need to learn from Jesus in partaking of our neighbours' suffering. Jesus told us that whatever we do for the least of the brothers, we do for Him. (Mt 25:40)

##### Step 3. Teacher carries out 'The Glorious Son of Man' activity, allowing students to understand the meaning of the Son of Man being the 'suffering servant' as well as the glorious Son of Man.

- Teacher asks students to read Mk 14:62 and discusses with students:
  - i. What did Jesus foretell about the fate of the Son of Man?
- Teacher asks students to form groups of four and read Mk 8:31-33, 10:35-45 and 14:61-62. Show 'PowerPoint 3' (The glorious Son of Man) and asks students to discuss:
  - i. Which one accords most with the description in the Bible?
  - ii. Which one of the 'glorious Son of Man' resembles someone you know?
  - iii. Do you believe that the 'glorious Son of Man' is approachable?

- After discussion, teacher invites students to present their ideas.
- Teacher can refer to 'Appendix 1' (The glorious Son of Man) to guide students to think about the aspects realised by Jesus' glory.

**Step 4. Teacher summarises:**

- Jesus stated that the Son of Man would come back to life, rise to heaven and be with God, and that He would return gloriously from heaven. Jesus' glory did not refer to the glory on earth but the completeness of the future Kingdom of God.
- The Kingdom to be established by the Son of Man would not be a kingdom on earth. Kings on earth value authority and power, abuse their rights for self-enjoyment, and fear death. However, the Son of Man used his authority to serve man and bore the cross to sacrifice for sinners. He invited people to carry their own crosses. He did not ask us to seek death but asked us to grasp every chance in our life to eliminate misunderstanding, hatred and fear, and to put our limitations into the hands of God. This is the cross He asked us to take up with Him.
- The Gospel of Mark regarded the above as absolute faith, trusting God's holy plan, which is a plan of love. The Son of Man sacrificed his life, served the humankind and suffered for people so as to achieve victory. The Son of Man had only one goal: to reconcile the humankind with God and to rescue people from the slavery of sins. This salvation came from the persistence of not giving in to sins and the joy of enduring suffering. The Son on Man served the humankind so that people could serve each other.
- The Son of Man was the servant who was willing to suffer for the entire humankind. Therefore, we need not feel frustrated when we come across adversities in life because sufferings or even the sacrifice of life may be the origins of joy and the blossoms of life.

**References:**

1. 思高聖經學會 (2005):《思高聖經原著譯釋版系列—福音》(頁 182, 380-381)。香港: 思高聖經學會。
2. 蔡惠民(2003):《天國驛站—乙年主日講道》, (頁 200-204, 226-230)。香港: 論盡神學出版有限公司。

**Extended activities:**

1. Teacher shows the case of Mrs. Yung in 'It is God: The glorious face' to illustrate the idea of the Son of Man being the glorious one as well as the suffering servant at the same time.  
<http://www.hkdavc.com/god/v2-god-com4.html> (the written version)
2. Or teacher asks students to study the case of 'The two teachers who rescued students on Pat Sin Leng' on the Internet:  
<http://zh.wikipedia.org/wiki/1996%E5%B9%B4%E5%85%AB%E4%BB%99%E5%B6%BA%E5%B1%B1%E7%81%AB>
3. Teacher asks students to answer the following questions with reference to the information collected:
  - a. How do you feel about the two teachers?
  - b. Why do they give you such feeling?
  - c. What beliefs did the teachers have so that they were driven to take the above actions?
  - d. What good example did the two teachers set?
  - e. How did the two teachers impact on the society?
4. Teacher can invite students to do sharing in the following period.



## **Appendix 1: The glorious Son of Man**



The glory of Jesus can be realised through the following:

- Willingly to suffer and die for the humankind;
- To sacrifice life for the salvation of humankind;
- To rise to heaven after death, to sit on the right of the Almighty and to return from heaven.

## Material 1: Records of 'the Son of Man' in the Gospel of Mark

Content	Bible verses	Category		
		Authority	Suffering	Judgment
1. The Son of Man had authority on earth to forgive sins.	2:10	√		
2. The Son of Man was the God of Sabbath.	2:27	√		
3. The Son of Man must suffer.	8:31		√	
4. The Son of Man came in the glory of his Father.	8:38			√
5. Until the Son of Man had risen from death.	9:9		√	
6. The Son of Man would suffer much and be rejected.	9:12		√	
7. The Son of Man would be handed over to men.	9:31		√	
8. The Son of Man would be handed over to the chief priests and the Teachers of the Law.	10:33		√	
9. The Son of Man did not come to be served; he came to serve.	10:45		√	
10. The Son of Man would return with great power and glory.	13:26			√
11. The Son of Man would die.	14:21		√	
12. But how terrible for that man who betrayed the Son of Man!	14:21		√	
13. The Son of Man was now being handed over to the ones who betrayed him.	14:41		√	
14. The Son of Man would sit on the right of the Almighty and return from heaven.	14:62			√



## **Material 2: Reasons and significance of Jesus calling Himself 'the Son of Man'**

### **1. Reasons of Jesus calling himself the 'Son of Man'**

Jesus often called himself 'the Son of Man', most probably for the following reasons:

- a. The title 'the Son of Man' had no specific meaning. Jesus was free to confer a new meaning on the title, such as the Son of Man had authority and would suffer etc.
- b. Jesus wanted people to know that he would be the judge on the last day and he would return from heaven to judge the world, just as what was written about 'the Son of Man' in Daniel 7: 13-14.
- c. Jesus explained the aim of his mission by referring to the 'suffering servant' described in chapter 53 of the book of Isaiah and the concept of 'the Son of Man'. Jesus came to earth to sacrifice for people's infirmity and sins.
- d. The title 'the Son of Man' had no specific meaning so that Jesus would not be mistaken as a political king, leading the Jews to overthrow foreign rule.
- e. Since the Jews considered the 'Messiah' as a political king, Jesus purposely did not call himself the 'Messiah' so that others would not misunderstand him to be a political king, coming to rescue the Jews and free them from foreign rule.
- f. The title 'the Son of Man' meant 'human beings' and it had no specific meaning. It would be convenient for Jesus to conceal his divine identity.
- g. The title had no political implication. Jesus used this title to identify with other people and at the same time avoided conflicts with the Jewish leaders.

### **2. Significance of Jesus calling Himself the 'Son of Man'**

Jesus called himself 'the Son of Man' because the meaning of the title was implicit and had multiple meanings. If Jesus used the title 'Messiah', the Jews would consider him as a political Messiah who came to overthrow the Roman king. Jesus did not want people to misunderstand his real identity as the Messiah and hinder his preaching. Calling himself 'the Son of Man' could avoid many problems. Although people might not understand the meaning of 'the Son of Man', they would not associate Jesus with the political Messiah.

In the Gospel of Mark, there were 14 verses about Jesus calling himself the Son of Man.

The first category of verses referred 'the Son of Man' as a man with special authority, for instance the authority to forgive sins (Mk 2:10) and that to interpret the Law (Mk 2:28). The second category revealed that 'the Son of Man' had to suffer and die, which was the most important and most frequently mentioned viewpoint in the Gospel of Mark. The third category warned people about the judgment on the last day. The Son of Man would return from heaven and judge the humankind (Mk 1:38, 13:26, and 14:62).

In the book of Isaiah, a part about the 'suffering servant' mentioned that God's servant must suffer and die for the sins of human beings (Isa 52:13 – 53:12). Jesus repeatedly foretold that the Son of Man must suffer. He had probably used the concept of the 'suffering servant' in the book of Isaiah to explain that he would suffer and die.

### **3. Summary**

Jesus called himself 'the Son of Man'. On one hand, the title explained that he was 'a member of the humankind'; on the other hand, it also showed that he was the Messiah sent by God and the Son of God. The most significant part was Jesus pointed out that the Messiah must be rejected by people, would suffer and die for people's sins. After his death, he would come back to life and return from heaven.

#### **Reference:**

彭培剛牧師、郭志丕牧師編 (1999):《同創新天地》,第四冊,教師本,(頁 166, 181-183)。  
香港:宗教教育中心。

**Worksheet 1: Reasons for calling himself the Son of Man (Reference Answer)**

1. Imagine yourself to be Jesus and think about why Jesus called Himself 'the Son of Man' but not the 'Messiah'. Put a ✓ in the appropriate □.

Reasons for calling himself 'the Son of Man' but not the 'Messiah'

- ☒ a. 'The title 'the Son of Man' had no specific meaning. Jesus was free to confer a new meaning on the title, such as the Son of Man had authority and would suffer etc.
- ☒ b. Jesus wanted people to know that he would be the judge on the last day and he would return from heaven to judge the world, just as what was written about 'the Son of Man' in Daniel 7: 13-14.
- ☒ c. Jesus explained the aim of his mission by referring to the 'suffering servant' described in chapter 53 of the book of Isaiah and the concept of 'the Son of Man'. Jesus came to earth to sacrifice for people's infirmity and sins.
- ☐ d. Jesus called himself the 'Messiah', hoping to attract more followers and to be regarded as a king on earth.
- ☒ e. The title 'the Son of Man' had no specific meaning so that Jesus would not be mistaken as a political king, leading the Jews to overthrow foreign rule.
- ☐ f. The title 'the Son of Man' meant the king, meaning Jesus would be the king in the future to rule the earth.
- ☒ g. Since the Jews considered the 'Messiah' as a political king, Jesus purposely did not call himself the 'Messiah' so that others would not misunderstand him to be a political king, coming to rescue the Jews and free them from foreign rule.
- ☒ h. The title 'the Son of Man' meant 'human beings' and it had no specific meaning. It would be convenient for Jesus to conceal his divine identity.
- ☒ i. The title had no political implication. Jesus used this title to identify with other people and at the same time avoided conflicts with the Jewish leaders.

## Worksheet 1: Reasons for calling Himself the Son of Man

1. Imagine yourself to be Jesus and think about why Jesus called Himself 'the Son of Man' but not the 'Messiah'. Put a ✓ in the appropriate ☐.

### Reasons for calling himself 'the Son of Man' but not the 'Messiah'

- ☐ a. The title 'the Son of Man' had no specific meaning. Jesus was free to confer a new meaning on the title, such as the Son of Man had authority and would suffer etc.
- ☐ b. Jesus wanted people to know that he would be the judge on the last day and he would return from heaven to judge the world, just as what was written about 'the Son of Man' in Daniel 7: 13-14.
- ☐ c. Jesus explained the aim of his mission by referring to the 'suffering servant' described in chapter 53 of the book of Isaiah and the concept of 'the Son of Man'. Jesus came to earth to sacrifice for people's infirmity and sins.
- ☐ d. Jesus called himself the 'Messiah', hoping to attract more followers and to be regarded as a king on earth.
- ☐ e. The title 'the Son of Man' had no specific meaning so that Jesus would not be mistaken as a political king, leading the Jews to overthrow foreign rule.
- ☐ f. The title 'the Son of Man' meant the king, meaning Jesus would be the king in the future to rule the earth.
- ☐ g. Since the Jews considered the 'Messiah' as a political king, Jesus purposely did not call himself the 'Messiah' so that others would not misunderstand him to be a political king, coming to rescue the Jews and free them from foreign rule.
- ☐ h. The title 'the Son of Man' meant 'human beings' and it had no specific meaning. It would be convenient for Jesus to conceal his divine identity.
- ☐ i. The title had no political implication. Jesus used this title to identify with other people and at the same time avoided conflicts with the Jewish leaders.

## Worksheet 2: Suffering of the Son of Man

1. Complete the following report according to Mk 8:31-33, and 10:35-45.

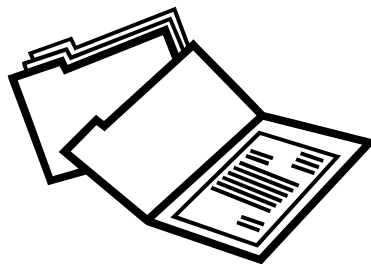
### Report on the Mission of the Son of Man

What did Jesus tell his disciples about things that would happen to him?

Why did Jesus tell his disciples that he would suffer?

As a man with great authority, why did Jesus have to suffer?

Why must Jesus face such adversity? Was it his own choice or was he being forced?





## **Material 1: Reasons and Significance of Jesus Calling Himself the 'Son of Man'**

### **1. Reasons of Jesus calling himself the 'Son of Man'**

Jesus often called himself 'the Son of Man', most probably for the following reasons:

- a. The title 'the Son of Man' had no specific meaning. Jesus was free to confer a new meaning on the title, such as the Son of Man had authority and would suffer etc.
- b. Jesus wanted people to know that he would be the judge on the last day and he would return from heaven to judge the world, just as what was written about 'the Son of Man' in Daniel 7: 13-14.
- c. Jesus explained the aim of his mission by referring to the 'suffering servant' described in chapter 53 of the book of Isaiah and the concept of 'the Son of Man'. Jesus came to earth to sacrifice for people's infirmity and sins.
- d. The title 'the Son of Man' had no specific meaning so that Jesus would not be mistaken as a political king, leading the Jews to overthrow foreign rule.
- e. Since the Jews considered the 'Messiah' as a political king, Jesus purposely did not call himself the 'Messiah' so that others would not misunderstand him to be a political king, coming to rescue the Jews and free them from foreign rule.
- f. The title 'the Son of Man' meant 'human beings' and it had no specific meaning. It would be convenient for Jesus to conceal his divine identity.
- g. The title had no political implication. Jesus used this title to identify with other people and at the same time avoided conflicts with the Jewish leaders.

### **2. Significance of Jesus calling Himself the 'Son of Man'**

Jesus called himself 'the Son of Man' because the meaning of the title was implicit and had multiple meanings. If Jesus used the title 'Messiah', the Jews would consider him as a political Messiah who came to overthrow the Roman king. Jesus did not want people to misunderstand his real identity as the Messiah and hinder his preaching. Calling himself 'the Son of Man' could avoid many problems. Although people might not understand the meaning of 'the Son of Man', they would not associate Jesus with the political Messiah.

In the Gospel of Mark, there were 14 verses about Jesus calling himself the Son of Man.

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In the book of Isaiah, a part about the 'suffering servant' mentioned that God's servant must suffer and die for the sins of human beings (Isa 52:13 – 53:12). Jesus repeatedly foretold that the Son of Man must suffer. He had probably used the concept of the 'suffering servant' in the book of Isaiah to explain that he would suffer and die.

### **3. Summary**

Jesus called himself 'the Son of Man'. On one hand, the title explained that he was 'a member of the humankind'; on the other hand, it also showed that he was the Messiah sent by God and the Son of God. The most significant part was Jesus pointed out that the Messiah must be rejected by people, would suffer and die for people's sins. After his death, he would come back to life and return from heaven.

#### **Reference:**

彭培剛牧師、郭志丕牧師編 (1999):《同創新天地》,第四冊,教師本,(頁 166, 181-183)。  
香港:宗教教育中心。