

Son of Man

John 1:19-51

A group of priests and Levites were sent to question John the Baptist as to his identity. They wanted to know if he claimed to be Elijah, or the Prophet that Moses had spoken of in his day. John told them that he was the “voice” crying in the wilderness that Isaiah had foretold. John’s revelation from God had sent him into the wilderness to fulfill his ministry of being the forerunner of the Messiah. John knew that Jesus was the “lamb of God.” When he saw the Lord approaching he said, “Behold, the lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!” This happened twice on subsequent days. It was at this time that Andrew, one of the Lord’s disciples, brought his brother Peter to Jesus.

On the following day the Lord decided to go to Galilee and told Philip to follow him. Philip found a man named Nathanael and told him that the Messiah had come. When he identified the Lord as “Jesus of Nazareth,” Nathanael was not convinced. “Can anything good come out of Nazareth?” he asked. The confrontation that ensued between the Lord and Nathanael reveals an important truth about the Savior.

In response to Nathanael’s question, Philip said, “Come and see.” When Nathanael drew near to Christ, the Lord spoke to him. “Behold, an Israelite in deed, in whom there is no deceit.” Nathanael wondered aloud how the Lord could know so much about him. “Before Philip called you, when you were under the fig tree, I saw you” replied the Lord. With that, Nathanael confessed his belief that Jesus was the “Son of God” and “King of Israel.”

The Lord replied, “Because I said to you, I saw you under the fig tree, do you believe? You will see greater things than these.” And then he spoke these somewhat cryptic words, “Truly, truly, I say to you, you will see heaven opened, and the angels of God ascending and descending on the Son of Man.”

Nathanael had confessed the Lord to be the “Son of God.” But the Lord Jesus Christ uses another Old Testament title for the Messiah. He called himself the “Son of Man.”

The prophet Daniel had been given a word from the Lord. (Daniel 7:13-14) “I saw in the night visions, and behold, with the clouds of heaven there came on 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 a kingdom, that all peoples, nations, and languages should serve him; his dominion is an everlasting dominion which shall not pass away, and his kingdom is one that shall not be destroyed.”

This prophecy is clearly about the Messiah. He would come from heaven with divine approval. His dominion would not just include the Jewish people but all nations. His dominion would be everlasting in contrast to the nations of this world. And, his dominion would be beyond the assaults of worldly nations, or Satanic power. It would be indestructible!

This was the title that Christ Jesus used to describe himself to Nathanael. And all of these things are true of Christ and his kingdom. But there was more. He told him that the angels of God would be seen ascending and descending on the Son of Man. This, of course, is a reference to Jacob’s experience at Bethel. (Genesis 28:10-17) There he had a dream of angels ascending and descending on a ladder or flight of steps to heaven itself. Jacob had been given a word from God about the relationship of earth, the dwelling place of man, and heaven, the dwelling place of God. There is a way between the two. There is a passageway between the earth, with all its troubles

and sin, and heaven where there is eternal joy and perfection.

Do you see the point that the Lord Jesus Christ was making? He is the way between earth and heaven. By his death on the cross for sinners he would provide the way of escape from sin and death and hell. Those who believe in him would find this to be true. The scriptures teach us that one day there will be a new heaven and a new earth and that there will be no “sea” of separation between the two. It is Christ Jesus who has brought this to pass.

by Joe Nesom