

**Towards a strategy to achieve a biblical and effective operative
theology at Damascus Baptist Church with reference to Jesus'
use of the Son of Man Motif**

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The opinions expressed in this thesis are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect the views of the South African Theological Seminary or the supervisor(s) of the research.

Declaration

I hereby declare that the work contained in this thesis is my own original work and has not previously in its entirety or in part been submitted to any academic institution for degree purposes.

Signed: David B. McFather
2017

Date: March 7,

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Dedication

I dedicate this work to the church family of Damascus Baptist Church, my beloved brothers and sisters in Christ, who never cease giving me their love and prayers. They have truly modelled to me the selfless service of the Son of Man. I look forward to many more years of proclaiming and emulating our Lord as we await his return.

““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 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 one that shall not be destroyed.”

(Dn 7:13-14, ESV)

Contents

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction.....	1
1.2 Objectives.....	2
1.3 Design.....	3
1.4 Methods.....	7

CHAPTER 2: INTERPRETING THE OPERATIVE THEOLOGY OF DAMASCUS BAPTIST CHURCH WITH REGARD TO JESUS' USE OF THE SON OF MAN MOTIF

2.1 Introduction	9
2.2 Background.....	10
2.3 Methods used in the qualitative study	13
2.4 Results of the qualitative study	15
2.5 Discussion of the results of the empirical study	21
2.6 Summary and Conclusion.....	24

CHAPTER 3: DETERMINING AND DEFENDING AN OPERATIVE THEOLOGY FOR DAMASCUS BAPTIST CHURCH OF GOD WITH REGARD TO JESUS' USE OF THE SON OF MAN MOTIF

3.1 Introduction	26
3.2 Different perspectives on the Son of Man motif	27
3.3 A biblically faithful operative theology with regard to the Son of Man motif.....	61
3.4 A biblically faithful operative theology with regard to the Son of Man motif for Damascus Baptist Church.....	63
3.5 A defence of the proposed new operative theology with regard to the Son Man motif for Damascus Baptist Church	65
3.6 Conclusion.....	66

CHAPTER 4: DEVELOPING A STRATEGIC PLAN TO IMPROVE THE OPERATIVE THEOLOGY OF THE DAMASCUS BAPTIST CHURCH WITH REGARD TO JESUS' USE OF THE SON OF MAN MOTIF

4.1 Introduction	67
4.2 Communicative plan for Damascus Baptist Church for gaining its acceptance of the new operative theology with regards to the Son of Man motif.....	67
4.3 Actions required in crucial areas for achieving the new operative theology with regards to the Son of Man motif at Damascus Baptist Church.....	70
4.4 Conclusion.....	79

CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSION

5.1 Review of Objectives	81
5.2 Tracing the Argument	82
5.3 Summary of findings.....	84
5.4 Conclusion.....	86

APPENDIX	88
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BIBLIOGRAPHY.....	91
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Chapter 1

Introduction

1.1 Background

Damascus Baptist Church is a small sized congregation situated in Randolph County, Georgia. I have been serving as Pastor here for almost seven years. Though no church is perfect, the people here are friendly, loving and very giving. Most of the congregation is made up of agrarian families. Some are crop farmers and others herd and sell cattle. Those who are not farmers themselves either have their own garden to tend or they have a family member who is a full-time farmer. If there is any criticism to be levied against our church (and many others in this community), it is the lack of motivation to engage the whole community with whole gospel. More to the point, there is lack of refinement in their understanding of the biblical storyline, which, I believe, affects the task of taking the gospel into the community with any kind of deliberateness. There are many possible reasons for this, but to name just a few I would list the following: 1) Lack of clarity on the biblical storyline of the Bible, especially with reference to the *Missio Dei*, 2) lack of conviction on the unity of the human race (racial tension), and 3) a division between theology and action.

My reason for initially choosing the Son of Man motif as the subject for my mini-thesis was due to the enigmatic nature of the phrase. I had never been exposed to any detailed explanation of it by a preacher or teacher in the church, and I wanted to know the significance of the most frequently used designation by Jesus of himself. What I've come to discover in my research that is presented in this mini-thesis is that the title provides numerous important insights for the church, both theological and practical.

Further, my belief that this subject must be of utmost importance for the improvement of our current practice at DBC has been confirmed. The Son of Man motif is concerned with Jesus' incarnation and his role as redeemer of human beings. It is the climactic moment in the storyline of redemptive history,

and it cannot be appreciated fully without a working knowledge of biblical theology (in the technical sense). It is thus an inspiration to re-examine our dealings with the community where DBC members live (and beyond) in light of Jesus' mission to redeem sinful humanity – to put the emphasis where it belongs, not simply on social institutions or structures, but on people who need to be reconciled to God.

Another reason for this motif's significance for DBC, is that it can help deal with racial tensions that serve as roadblocks for effective ministry and evangelism intended to lead to reconciliation across ethnic boundaries within his new community. The Black-American and White-American demographics in Cuthbert are approximately 80 percent Black to 20 percent White (<http://www.city-data.com/city/Cuthbert-Georgia.html>). Yet, while there may not be much in the way of vocal opposition to those of different ethnicities, there is much lacking in the way of outreach to these people groups. In biblical theology we see Adam is the head/representative of fallen humanity. Jesus, as the last Adam, represents a new humanity, a redeemed one united to Christ. This applies to individuals from every tribe and tongue. Racial reconciliation should be a fruit of the gospel.

Finally, dividing practice and theology is nothing new, and it always needs correction if we are to remain biblical. Jesus, as the Son of Man, is both unique and exemplary. This means we are to worship and imitate/follow him. Jesus did and does things that only he can do, but we are also called to imitate him in other areas. The Son of Man motif, I believe, helps resolve this tension so that we can see the beauty and necessity of being faithful in both areas (worshipping him and becoming like him).

1.2 Objectives

1.2.1 Primary Objective

The primary objective of this study is to formulate a theologically-informed strategic plan to ensure that the operative theology of Damascus Baptist Church with respect to Jesus as the Son of Man is faithful to God and optimally relevant to its ministry context. Operative theology refers to some area of praxis in the

life of a church and its underlying theology/doctrine/theory. Sometimes a church claims to believe a certain theology but its praxis does not reflect it but effectively reflects another theology/belief. In this case, if the church is honest, the operative theology constitutes the praxis and the actual underlying theology. The evangelical church aims, or should, for a biblically faithful theology and a praxis that faithfully expresses it.

1.2.2 Secondary Objectives

The primary objective will be achieved by dividing it into three secondary objectives, each of which serves as the objective for a chapter of the mini-thesis. The three secondary objectives are:

1. Interpret the operative theology of Damascus Baptist Church with respect to Jesus as the Son of Man.
2. Determine what faithful operative theology ought to look like for Damascus Baptist Church in its context with respect to Jesus as the Son of Man.
3. Develop and defend a strategic plan to improve the operative theology at the Damascus Baptist Church with respect to Jesus as the Son of Man.

1.3 Design

The research design for this mini-thesis is Don Browning's (1991, chap. 3) four-step approach to strategic practical theology. Some discussion of the reasons for using Browning will now be provided. However, to appreciate these reasons some attention needs to first be given to the South African Theological Seminary's (SATS) position on practical theology, the field in which this thesis fits.

SATS understands Practical Theology as the branch of theological reflection that seeks to understand the beliefs and practices of the people of God, and to ensure that their beliefs and practices are faithful to God's nature, will, and purposes. It is the branch of theology that firstly studies Christian praxis, what Smith (2011:11) calls "Christian action in service of Christ, the church, and the kingdom of God". The complex relationship between Christians' beliefs and actions—how their beliefs inform their practices, and how their practices reflect their beliefs—takes centre stage in practical theology.

However, the vision of SATS in practical theology is not content to understand Christian practice – the actions and underlying theory. It also seeks to reform or transform theory and its praxis to ensure that the praxis is faithful to God and relevant to the world.

Smith (2011:14–15) lists six points of scholarly consensus in the field of practical theology which is reflected in Browning's vision:

1. Practical theology studies Christian praxis, especially actions performed in service of the gospel.
2. Practical theology seeks to understand theory-laden present practices; that is, how beliefs and traditions shape current praxis.
3. Practical theology seeks to understand the current social context in which Christians act in service of the gospel; that is, the praxis of modern society.
4. Practical theology aims to produce a theologically and contextually informed *theory of action* that will improve Christian praxis. The goal is to transform praxis.
5. Practical theology brings theory (belief) and practice (behaviour) into dialogue; it also correlates the past (tradition), present (praxis), and future (theory of action) to help believers to practise their faith in ways that are faithful to God's mission and purpose.
6. Practical theology takes empirical data seriously in formulating its understanding of the present praxis and society. It also takes authoritative religious sources (scripture and tradition) seriously in evaluating and changing present practices.

Ultimately, practical theology empowers Christians to extend the kingdom of God in the world. The traditional evangelical concern for believers' spiritual needs is included, but placed in the broader context of God's mission for the church and the world.

As stated above, the particular approach to practical theology that SATS has selected to facilitate this vision comes from Browning. He is widely considered the father of American practical theology, and his methods are presented in his seminal work, *A Fundamental Practical Theology*. Browning argues that all theology is fundamentally practical, and follows a four-stage

process or four movements. The fourth movement is strategic practical theology which flows from the previous three movements. It entails answering four questions:

1. How do we understand the concrete situation in which we must act?
2. What should be our praxis in this concrete situation?
3. How do we critically defend the norms of our praxis in this concrete situation?
4. What means, strategies, and rhetorics should we use in this concrete situation?

This comprehensive vision of how theology should be done mirrors the vision of integrated theology on which this master's programme is built, though the details differ in places on aspects of methods because SATS and I hold evangelical convictions. Browning has clearly provided an excellent blueprint for using the fruits of intensive theological reflection to inform, reform and transform the practice of a particular community of God's people.

In Browning's vision of theology, as in Smith's (2013) approach to integrative theology, strategic practical theology is the climactic movement of his four movements. The first of the four movements cover descriptive theology, which results from an interpretation of some practice and its embedded meanings (Smith 2011:38, 39). The second movement is historical theology, which involves taking the questions raised by an examination of our practices to our normative texts to determine what those texts really imply about our practices (39). In this movement, we have 'the traditional disciplines of biblical studies, church history and the history of Christian thought' (Browning 1991:49). The third movement is systematic theology which is 'the fusion of horizons between the vision implicit in contemporary practices and the vision implied in the practices of normative Christian texts' (Browning p. 51). The fourth movement is strategic practical theology which overlaps the previous three movements or draws on them to answer the four questions in the fourth movement.

Clearly Browning's strategic practical theology provides the ideal thesis framework for achieving the major and minor objectives of my mini-thesis.

Though this mini-thesis follows this four-step approach, it treats the second and third steps together, resulting in three content chapters. This yields the following structure for the thesis:

Chap.	Title	Notes
1.	Introduction	The chapter introduces the research by providing the background, objectives, design, methods, and structure.
2.	Interpreting the operative theology of the Damascus Baptist Church with reference to Jesus' use of the Son of Man motif	This chapter covers Browning's first question, namely, interpreting the present praxis (the concrete situation) of the Damascus Baptist Church in relation to Jesus' use of the Son of Man motif, particularly in its teaching ministry and praxis.
3.	Developing and defending an operative theology for the Damascus Baptist Church with respect to Jesus' use of the Son of Man motif.	This chapter covers Browning's second and third questions, namely, developing and defending a vision of what ideal understanding and related praxis should look like with respect to Jesus' use of the Son of Man motif for the Damascus Baptist Church in its ministry context and discipleship ministry with respect to Jesus' use of the Son of man motif.
4.	Developing a strategic plan to improve the operative theology of the Damascus Baptist Church with respect to Jesus' use of the Son of Man motif.	This chapter covers Browning's fourth question, namely, formulating the means, strategy and rhetoric to be used at Damascus Baptist Church to achieve the implementation of the new praxis developed in chapter 3 with respect to Jesus' use of the Son of Man motif, especially in DBC's

teaching ministry.

5. Conclusion

This chapter reviews the objectives and whether achieved, traces the argument, and summarises the findings and their significance.

1.4 Methods

Chapter 2

In chapter 2 my concern is to discover the present understanding of DBC's members regarding the Son of Man motif. It is also to discern any significant effects of the current beliefs and praxis of DBC regarding the subject. Finally, it is to explore whether the members feel the discipleship programme of the church integrates the meaning and implications of Jesus' use of the title.

This information is gathered by means of an open-ended questionnaire administered to a specially chosen and representative number of members in the congregation best suited to provide the required information. Another method I use to source necessary information is my pastoral insight into the present beliefs and behaviours of the parishioners. This information results from my role as the pastor of DBC for over seven years. In short, I aim to provide a thick description (Browning) by using both qualitative and quantitative kinds of research.

Chapter 3

Having uncovered the relevant data that provided me with the current belief and praxis of DBC with reference to the Son of Man title for Jesus, I move toward an explanation of what proper belief and resulting practice should look like with reference to Jesus as the Son of Man. In chapter 3, therefore, I grapple with the disciplines of exegetical, church history, biblical and systematic theology. I aim to provide detailed exegesis of relevant passages, as well as a broader biblical and systematic theology description of the biblical narrative as it relates to the Son of Man. I also include some evidence from the sciences, especially from

the realms of sociology and anthropology, where they might have bearing on this topic as well.

Chapter 3 then lays out in systematic fashion the evidence and conclusions. I take care to evaluate possible objections to my position. I also defend my own viewpoint as the most valid. Thus this chapter presents the normative position on the topic.

Chapter 4

In chapter 4 I will be detailing the possible avenues that need to be explored for DBC to have its operative theology with reference to the Son of Man title for Jesus improved. With the current state of affairs covered in the second chapter and the proper praxis explained in the third, we can now move into the concrete scenarios that will begin the process of implementing and solidifying a better course of action.

I utilise a number of different materials in this chapter. First, I make use of helpful books and articles that can contribute to more effective communication, that is, books on preaching and ministerial teaching and on effecting behavioural change, to winsomely communicate the new direction of DBC. Second, I design material that will help with the structure of discipleship training and small group study to facilitate the new operative theology with reference to the Jesus as the Son of Man.

Chapter 2:

Interpreting the Operative Theology of Damascus Baptist Church regarding Jesus' use of the Son of Man Motif

2.1 Introduction

Jesus is the Son of Man. What does that mean, exactly? While there has been no shortage of scholarly ink spilled on this topic, the significance of Jesus' moniker, in my opinion, remains either overlooked or oversimplified (or both) among many laypersons in the evangelical community, including DBC. Granted, this conclusion was drawn initially from my own religious experience, but, as this study will hopefully demonstrate, this is not merely an anecdotal phenomenon.

This present chapter articulates the first step in Browning's strategic practical theology by answering the question, "How do we understand the concrete situation in which we must act?" (1991:55). The concrete situation refers to, in this case, the operative theology of Damascus Baptist Church (DBC) with respect to Jesus' use of the Son of Man motif. In answering this question, the chapter fulfils the first of the three secondary objectives of this mini-thesis: describing the operative theology of DBC with respect to Jesus' Son of Man motif. This sub-objective thus fulfils one aspect of the primary objective of the thesis, which, as noted in chapter 1, is "Formulating a theologically-informed, communicative and strategic plan to ensure that the praxis of Damascus Baptist Church with respect to Jesus' use of the Son of Man motif is faithful to God and optimally relevant to its ministry context". The third and fourth chapters of this mini-thesis will fulfil the second and third sub-objectives respectively.

This chapter brings to light the present, concrete situation in terms of beliefs and practices of DBC as they relate to the Son of Man motif. The

following chapter will propose and defend a biblically faithful position using the integrated theology paradigm recommended by Browning with respect to this motif for DBC. The fourth chapter will provide a communicative and strategic plan to transform the existing situation into one that represents the more faithful understanding of Jesus as the Son of Man and response that is relevant to DBC's present state and context.

This chapter starts with a brief overview of the background of DBC, encompassing the practical, theological and community context of the congregation. This information is important as it will have impacted, at least to some degree, DBC's understanding and response to the Son of Man motif. Next, I discuss the methods utilized in the researching of DBC's present understanding of the Son of Man motif. The last three sections respectively entail the presentation of the results of the research, discussion of them and conclusions.

2.2 Background Information

a. The History of DBC

If you happen to be driving on Highway 27 through southwest Georgia, a detour on a narrow country road will take you to a small white building situated three and half miles southeast of the town of Cuthbert. A dirt parking lot and a wide variety of plant life (consisting mostly of pine and oak trees) surround this meeting place. Rich in local community history, DBC was established as an organised body of believers in 1869 just after the close of the United States' Civil War (Randolph County Historical Society 1977:50). The original founders chose the name "Damascus" due to its association with the Apostle Paul's conversion. Damascus, therefore, signifies a place where God is "honoured and glorified, where people are obedient to God's calling, and the spiritually blind are healed" (p. 50). DBC is an autonomous local church in friendly cooperation with the Bethel Baptist Association, the Georgia Baptist Mission Board (formerly, the Georgia Baptist Convention) and the Southern Baptist Convention.

b. The Theology of DBC

The theology of a single congregation is difficult to pin down. Given the fact that the church's existence reaches back nearly one hundred and fifty years, it is to be expected that the beliefs and praxis of the congregants (not to mention the pastors) will have varied from generation to generation. Moreover, the church does not possess a detailed statement of faith – something we are looking to rectify in the coming months.

However, in 2015 we adopted a mission statement that I felt encapsulated our goals as a church. We settled on a threefold purpose of gathering and maturing *biblically literate, gospel driven, and action oriented* followers of Christ. We seek to be biblically literate in the sense that we are able to interact with the major interpretive disciplines for biblical study. This means exegesis, systematic theology, biblical theology and historical theology are all brought to the table whenever the Scriptures are engaged. We desire to be a church that is devoted to rightly handling God's truth.

Gospel driven simply means that we want to be a church that not only knows the content of the gospel, but also is affected holistically by it and where the gospel is connected to every area of the church's life. We want to be capable proclaimers of God's message of hope to the community. In short, we desire to be so seasoned with gospel flavour, so to speak, that we by default share and live the good news of Christ's redeeming work.

Finally, we desire to be oriented around actions. In church life terms, we mean to be oriented around committed ministries in service of the people of God and the community in which we live. Anyone can *talk* about good things to do, even to the point of having a mission statement in written form, but without following through with *actions*, what good will be achieved?

c. The Community Context of DBC

With an agrarian culture and topography surrounding the church, it is no surprise that the majority of the families who have made up DBC down through the years have been farmers. The community is by and large a farming one. Those who may have been employed by the state (e.g., the education system, postal service, civil service, etc.) or involved in retail (car dealers, insurance

salesmen, furniture sales), were limited to the families who lived “in town” where the jobs were severely limited.

Most of the descendants of these farming families have moved on to other places, finding towns and cities where access to more lucrative jobs is abundant. Young and vibrant individuals quickly seize the opportunity to get themselves educated and out of Randolph County. What remains is a populace that is largely undereducated (theologically speaking), poor, unhealthy and somewhat suspicious of outsiders and/or change. These factors will come into play more pointedly in chapter 4.

d. The Ministries of DBC

Since my arriving at DBC in the fall of 2009, an increase in ministry development has been lacking. This is due in part, I believe, to the lack of younger generations being involved in the church’s life. As noted above, there have been many factors that have contributed to this, such as economics, social demographics, location and resulting migration from the area. The lack of “manpower,” whatever the reasons, needed to generate ongoing ministry has taken a downward turn. As of 2017, the ministries of DBC consist of a typical Sunday schedule (worship services and Sunday school) and a Wednesday night prayer gathering. There is currently no ministry specific to children, youth or any other age group. The tenor of our meetings amounts in many ways to a mere hopefulness that *someone* shows up.

However, there are items of positivity to be noted. Our Sunday evening sessions have been refocused upon our threefold mission statement mentioned above. We spend one third of the year on each of the aspects of the church’s mission. In other words, we are integrating these aspects into a Sunday evening discipleship training format. We hope to expand this method to include more classes in the future, with an age specific curriculum for each group. Therefore, new and old members alike can benefit from understanding what drives us as a local assembly of believers.

e. Conclusion

Based on the above information it can safely be assumed that the average church member of DBC will not be overly familiar with the advanced argumentation for the significance of the “Son of Man” moniker used by Jesus. However, I think it is pertinent to point out that several members of DBC are not your typical “small-town church-goer”. I base this assertion on the many conversations I have had with Pastors in our area. It seems to me that some of the most well-informed and theologically balanced minds reside at DBC, and I praise God for that.

Therefore, my expectations for the group of interviewees in my qualitative research (see below) was realistic but positive. I believed that every respondent would be able to, at the very least, read and comprehend the questionnaire I designed and give responses that were legitimate attempts to answer the question at hand. Further, I expected a basic knowledge of systematic (organized) theology to be in place for each member of the group. Put another way, I was confident that they would interact and respond to the questions using biblical jargon, categories and concepts.

As members of DBC we want to remain appreciative of the rich heritage of our church and community while also looking forward to the Lord’s future direction leading to greater spiritual and numerical growth. Though our congregation may not presently have a detailed viewpoint on the “Son of Man” aspect of Christology, my hope is that this thesis will be another building block in our efforts to increase biblical literacy, gospel-driven action and committed ministries.

2.3 Methods used in the *Qualitative Study*

The purpose of the research described in this section was to answer Browning’s first question, “How do we understand the concrete situation in which we must act?” Inherent in answering this question is the desire to stimulate answers to more general questions such as “What, within a particular area of practice, are we doing?” (Browning 1991:49). Further, this investigation flows into one of seeking answers for why this action or situation is taking place (pp. 48-49). According to Swinton and Mowat, “interpreting situations is an important

‘missing dimension’ of the theological enterprise” (2006:Loc 357). For my research, I primarily used qualitative research to unpack the present situation of DBC with respect to the Son of Man moniker. Qualitative research can, and probably should, be done through a variety of methods. However, regardless of the method chosen, the focus is always upon investigating “the social world in an attempt to access and understand the unique ways that individuals and communities inhabit it” (Swinton and Mowat 2006:Loc 643-644). The primary tool I used for probing the present understanding of the Son of Man motif at DBC was an open-ended questionnaire, which is a form of the interview method.

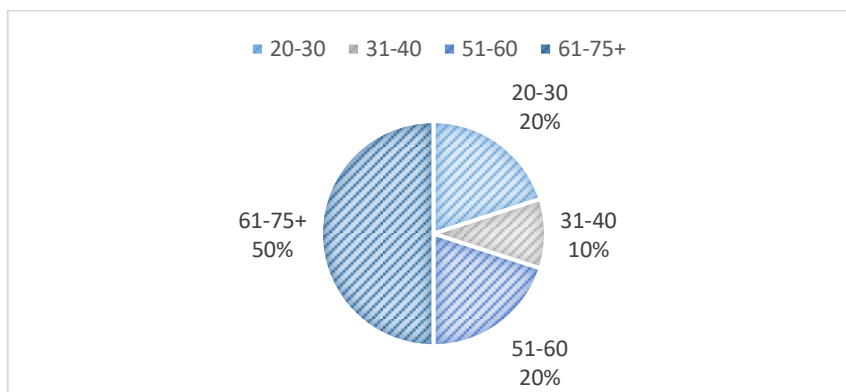
The questions in the open-ended questionnaire were subdivided into two sections: 1) The Son of Man motif in the four Gospels, and 2) the Son of Man motif and broader implications. The questions were styled and arranged in such a way as to discover four things about the interviewees and church’s knowledge of, and response to, the Son of Man motif: 1) What was their present understanding of the motif considering their previous exposure to biblical teaching? 2) Were they capable of recognising thematic continuity pertaining to the Son of Man motif in relevant biblical texts? 3) Did they see any relevance of the term for understanding Jesus’ redemptive work? 4) Has the motif had any practical implications for the interviewees and DBC?

The questionnaire was comprised of thirteen questions. The interviewees were given very specific instructions regarding the answering of the questions. All respondents were asked to refrain from using Study Bible notes, commentaries or other interpretive aids for the duration of answering the questions in the questionnaire. This was to ensure that they recorded their own beliefs and actions and the underlying reasons. Beginning with question 3, each query was paired with a selection of Scriptural references to be read by all members of the group. The reasons for the selection of particular passages will be discussed in more detail in section 2.4.

The questionnaire was administered to eight members of DBC who had been a part of the church for at least two years. The group was comprised of five females and three males of different ages, Christian experience and biblical

knowledge. Graph 1 below shows what age categories the interviewees belonged to. The majority were 50 years or older, have been Christians for a decade or decades, and thus should have encountered the Son of God moniker in their private reading and study of the Bible and through some Bible studies and sermons. This means that their curiosity about, and interest in, it should have been aroused with some attempt to know what it means and the implications for their faith and Christian actions (praxis).

Graph 1: spread of ages among the respondents



I informed the group of the purpose of this study and what I hoped to gain from their participation before I secured their voluntary agreement to answer the open-ended questionnaire. They appreciated the place and necessity of the qualitative research regarding my mini-thesis project.

2.4 Results of the Qualitative Study

2.4.1 The Son of Man Motif in the Four Gospels (Questions 1-5)

The first question posed to the interviewees probed their *current understanding of the phrase “Son of Man” when it is used by Jesus in the four Gospels*. This question was to be answered strictly based on their present knowledge of the title/phrase. Bible passages, commentaries and/or study notes were not to be consulted at this point. All the interviewees’ responses to question 1 included some emphasis on the fullness of Jesus’ humanity.

In the second question, the respondents were asked if they thought *Jesus used “Son of Man” for a particular reason*. If they answered in the affirmative,

they were asked to explain what reason or reasons they thought motivated Jesus' use of the term.

In this question, the responses went in one of two directions. Either they repeated the previous question's answer or they asserted a didactic purpose on the part of Jesus. In other words, Jesus used the term to teach or clarify his character and role. As one respondent put it, Jesus used the phrase "to explain to people he was born [as] a man". However, one member of the group stressed the humanity aspect to the point of asserting that Jesus used the phrase to deny "he was a god" (which, in fairness, could be referring to Jesus' desire to communicate his *true* humanity as opposed to merely *seeming* to be human). Another in the group balanced the deity and humanity by stating that "even though he can cure and do other miracles, he can also hurt and be human, because he is the Son of Man *also*" (emphasis mine). Though still asserting a didactic purpose behind the phrase, this response reveals the two natures of Christ being presented to people through a combination of Jesus' actions and moniker.

The third question introduced the first wave of biblical material that was to be explored by the interviewees. In question 3 a number of verses were chosen (Lk 19:10; Mk 8:31; Jn 3:14-15; Mt 25:31; Mk 2:10; Mk 14:62; Jn 5:27) that juxtaposed Jesus' use of "Son of Man" to one of three essential aspects revealing his identity (his redemption of the lost, his death and resurrection, and his divine authority). The respondents were asked to read these passages and observe how the Son of Man title relates to each of these aspects. This was to see if the context could throw some light on the meaning of this title Jesus used.

What ensued in the majority (6 of 8) of the responses was essentially a rephrasing of the biblical passages – that is, Jesus came to give eternal life, he foretold his death and resurrection and his authority comes from God. One point of interest to me was the use of the phrase "even though he was the Son of Man" by one member. This caught my attention because it may be an indication of an understanding that "Son of Man" does not *always* or *only* denote humility and lowliness. One respondent stated that "'Son of Man' relates to Christ's

purpose in coming to earth". This was also intriguing as it may highlight an understanding of the redemptive purpose that is embedded in the motif.

In the fourth question the interviewees had to read Mark 10:45, where the Lord used the moniker to refer to himself and his self-giving service, which the context (vv. 43-44) shows they were to follow. The respondents were asked to reflect on what nuance the title has here and the implication for Christ's followers. I wanted to see if they felt the title sometimes implied some areas of Jesus' life and ministry were unique to him but nevertheless set principles of behaviour that his followers could and should emulate.

Unfortunately, the nuance was mostly not taken up in the group (which may be because the question lacked clarity on that point). What was emphasised, however, was our need to imitate Christ's selfless service to others. One response seemed to vaguely pick the nuance I had in mind that the Son of Man was unique as Lord but yet performed something we can and should imitate: Jesus "is Lord, yet he served others and paid for our sins."

The fifth question focused on the respondents' opinions regarding the utilisation of "Son of Man" phrase to describe and/or clarify Jesus' messianic status. For reference, the group was presented with three biblical texts which exemplify the thrust of the question (Peter's confession in Mk 8:27-33, Nathaniel's confession in Jn 1:49-51, and Jesus' pronouncement during his trial in Mt 26:64). The purpose of this question was to probe the group's awareness (or lack thereof) of the illuminating nature of Jesus' self-given title for his messianic office.

Some responses were focused primarily on Jesus' effort to inform people of his true identity. Put another way, Jesus used the title to give insight into who he really was and what he came to do. One respondent replied as follows: "I think he wanted to remove all doubt that he was who he said he was. [Jesus did this with] those who accepted him and those who rejected and condemned him". Another member replied even more succinctly: "Jesus used this phrase to tell his followers that he is the Messiah". These responses, however did not speak to how "Son of Man" sheds light on Jesus' messianic office.

Some did pick up on the specific nuance of my question. I had asked why Jesus used the motif to clarify his role as Messiah. One female respondent said that Jesus used the phrase to denote the reality of his suffering, that he would be “treated like a man and not like God”. One member demonstrated a much better grasp of the question than the others. She responded by stating, “Jesus did not want to be seen as a political figure. He used ‘Son of Man’ language to bring people back to the teaching of what God sent him to do as Messiah”. This was the type of answer I was hoping to receive, one that saw the significance of Jesus mostly referring to himself as the Son of Man rather than, say, Son of God or Messiah.

2.4.2 The Son of Man Motif and Broader Implications (Questions 6-13)

In the second section of the questionnaire the respondents were asked to consider the wider range of biblical data regarding the Son of Man motif. It is in this portion that the second wave of biblical passages was introduced.

Question 6 utilised a selection of Jesus’ statements in the Gospels that draw heavily upon texts in the Old Testament (OT). This question, then, functions as a kind of bridge that allows travel from the New Testament (NT) back to the OT, while also familiarising the respondent with the concept of intertextuality. The question was written as follows: “Did you know that Jesus combines various OT themes when referencing his role as the Son of Man (e.g., Mt 26:64; Mk 8:38; Mk 10:45)?” The follow-up question introduced the OT passages alluded to by Jesus (Is 52:13-53:12; Ps 110; Dn 7). The interviewees were asked if they had previously read these OT passages with Jesus’ words in mind (or vice versa).

Two out of the eight responded with a simple “no”. I received one “yes” without any qualification as well as one who conceded that her awareness of the passages was “not on [her] own accord”. Rather, her study was initiated in a Bible study setting “led by a minister”. Another respondent mentioned Daniel 7’s influence on his reading of Matthew 26:64, stating that he believed this referred to the second coming of Christ. Two other members mentioned that they had only been aware of Isaiah’s prophecy and its relevance for Jesus’ suffering.

Question 7 was one of the more straightforward on the list. It simply asked each respondent to give their opinion on the identity of the “one like a son of man” in the vision of Daniel 7. To probe further, the group was asked how their identification of the Danielic “one like a son of man” affected their viewpoint of the Son of Man in the Gospels.

This question, due to its subjective nature, was intended to ascertain and/or jar any thoughts on the background of Jesus’ moniker. As such, it was a question I found to be very critical to the study.

As expected, all members identified the “one like a son of man” as Jesus. Unfortunately, despite the question’s straightforward nature, most did not elaborate on how the Son of Man motif in Daniel affected their reading of the Gospels. However, one respondent gave her opinion as follows: Daniel’s vision “shows that ‘Son of Man’ [used by Jesus in the Gospels] reflects *more than just a man*, but instead a God that had been predicted to come way before his time” (emphasis mine). I found this to be the answer that most closely touched upon the meaning of Daniel’s vision and its impact upon “Son of Man” in the Gospels.

In the eighth question, the interviewees were asked to consider the letter to the Hebrews, the second chapter’s discussion of mankind’s role in creation being the focus of the query. The group was asked to consider why the author of Hebrews would delineate humanity’s failure to fulfil God’s intended purposes while immediately offering a rejoinder in the form of Jesus’ redemptive work. Why are these two concepts brought together? The responses were focused upon the eternal life, such as going to heaven or being saved from sin, won for us by Christ. However, two of the eight did respond with references to Jesus fulfilling mankind’s role in creation. One member put it this way: “Jesus completes mankind’s role in God’s creation”.

This question was an important part of discerning the intertextual insight of the interviewees, as it is a passage that contains OT quotations, Christological interpretation and an oblique allusion to the Son of Man motif. Moreover, I wanted the question to probe their understanding of salvation’s purposes (i.e., not only redemption but restoration as well).

Question 9 was to ascertain the group's understanding of Paul's "man from heaven" motif in 1 Corinthians 15. Unlike the other questions, this one provided a graded scale of possible answers. The respondents were asked to what degree they thought Paul's "man from heaven/last Adam" paralleled the Son of Man statements in the Gospels. The possible choices were scaled as follows:

- ☐ *Not at all*
- ☐ *Very little*
- ☐ *Somewhat*
- ☐ *Completely*

Interestingly, all but one member voted for "completely". Quite possibly this could be the result of the group guessing at which response they felt was the "right" choice, but this is merely speculation on my part. The fact that someone checked "not at all", however, is perhaps a piece of evidence demonstrating that, for some of DBC's laypeople, themes of biblical and systematic theology have not been introduced and/or explained. This will be extrapolated even more in the questions below.

In question 10, the interviewees were given a comparison between Daniel's vision (Dn 7) and Jesus' Olivet Discourse, wherein Jesus identifies his own coming in similar Danielic terms. The group was asked if they thought that, taken together, these passages demonstrate that the title Son of Man emphasises both Jesus' humanity and deity, as well as the uniqueness of his redemptive ministry. The responses ranged from a succinct "yes" to some of the most confusing answers in the entire exercise. No one followed the "explain your answer" instructions. Based on the responses, there was no familiarity with connecting the Old and New Testament texts in a meaningful way. It seems many in the group have not been exposed to or interacted with the discipline or implications of biblical theology.

Question 11 moved the discussion into personal reflection. The respondents were asked to describe what impact, if any, Jesus' Son of Man title had on their Christian life prior to answering the questionnaire. These responses, as might have been expected, were some of the most varied in the

questionnaire. One member's response, which my teenage self would have mirrored, confessed to the title having no impact whatsoever on her life. In fact, she had never really thought about the significance of it. Another response drew attention to the fact that the exercise had "refreshed [his] thoughts" on Jesus' humanity. He noted that he usually focuses on the divinity of Christ. Yet another interviewee stated that all her beliefs hung on the reality of Jesus "being both God and man". Two others made reference to the impact of Jesus' servanthood as the Son of Man (i.e. Mk 10:45).

In the twelfth question it was put forward that the Son of Man title is a sign of solidarity between Christ and all of mankind. The respondents were asked how this fact influenced their view of other ethnic groups in the community. Typical responses emphasised the need for us to love others as Christ did, but no one touched upon the significance of Jesus' Son of Man/Last Adam motif for the multi-ethnic nature of God's elect people on earth or in eternity.

Finally, question 13 probed the current praxis of Damascus Baptist Church's (DBC) discipleship ministries. Does DBC integrate subjects such as Jesus' Son of Man title into both the teaching and reaching aspects of ministry? If so, how? This question elicited a total of about 6 different responses. I'll just mention a few. One response flatly stated that 'we don't'. Another member said that Jesus' title is integrated into all parts of our ministries. Yet another pointed to the actions of the church as a community of servants who bear one another's burdens. Only one response focused upon the teaching ministry of the church. The member made explicit reference to the pastor (myself) and the sermons that had been delivered in recent memory. There is clearly some level of confusion on how the topic of Jesus' titles in general (and Son of Man in particular) are taught and applied in our ministries.

2.5 Discussion of the Results

Many possible trajectories could be taken from the evidence listed above. I will attempt to chart the most helpful course in the following discussion. First, a tentative conclusion for the interviewees' confusion over the Son of Man motif is a lack of a robust biblical and systematic theology. The questionnaire given to the eight-member group demonstrated the under development in these areas.

This became evident especially in the responses to questions 5, 7 and 8. Another tentative conclusion is that the respondents' lack a holistic Bible interpretation, which has hampered their ability to see some of the critical thematic connections embedded in the biblical narrative. Another way to put this is that there is a disconnection between biblical exegesis and biblical and systematic theology. Whereas most of the participants could rehearse previous information they had gleaned from their years in the faith, they seemed to be unaware of the multiple themes that are interwoven into the Son of Man motif.

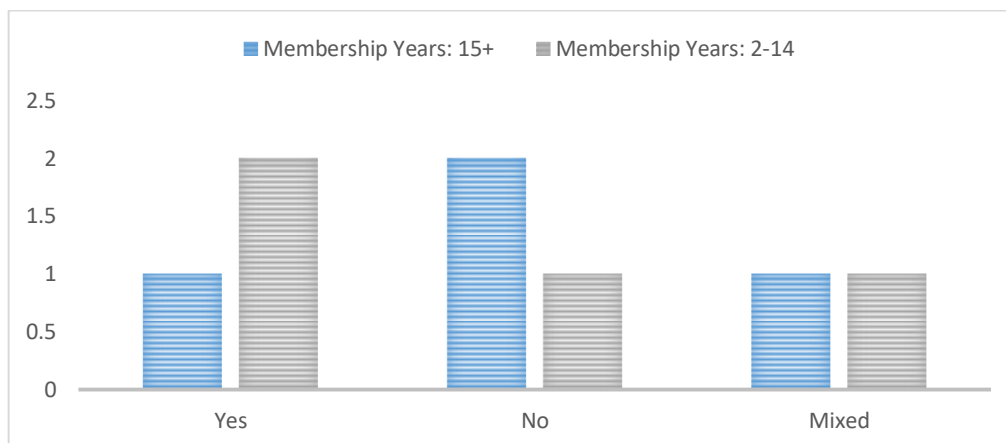
Second, the implications of the Son of Man motif for the respondents' current praxis as individual Christians and it seems for DBC were not as significant as I would have hoped. Questions 11, 12 and 13 conjured up answers that were indicative of a more general understanding of ministry. Judging by the responses, another tentative conclusion is that there was nothing directly related to the Son of Man motif that enlightened and influenced the group's praxis. Further, I wanted to discern whether or not, the Son of Man motif had any bearing on the spiritual life of the respondents. Integrating Jesus' redemptive work with his identity as the Son of Man was a bit difficult for them.

Third, one of my more pointed suspicions was confirmed through the responses to the questionnaire. This was that my own experience of confusion over Jesus' moniker was not unique, that it is a common problem for many who read and study the Bible. While all eight of the respondents agreed that the title/phrase was indicative of Jesus' humanity, they were unable to define the significance of the frequency, roundaboutness and canonical context of the phrase.

Furthermore, upon examining the responses in conjunction with the ages of the interviewees, there was no clear connection between age/membership and familiarity with the Bible's teaching on the Son of Man. As seen in the graph below giving an analysis of the results to question 6 ("Did you know that Jesus combines various OT themes when referencing his role as the Son of Man, e.g., Mt 26:64; Mk 8:38; Mk 10:45?"), some who had been members and, presumably, Christians for many years were unaware of the OT passages related to the Son of Man. Others were only aware of Isaiah. To the point, there

was no direct correlation between being a Christian or member of DBC for many years and being fully aware of all or most of the OT passages related to the motif.

Graph 2: Responses to question 6



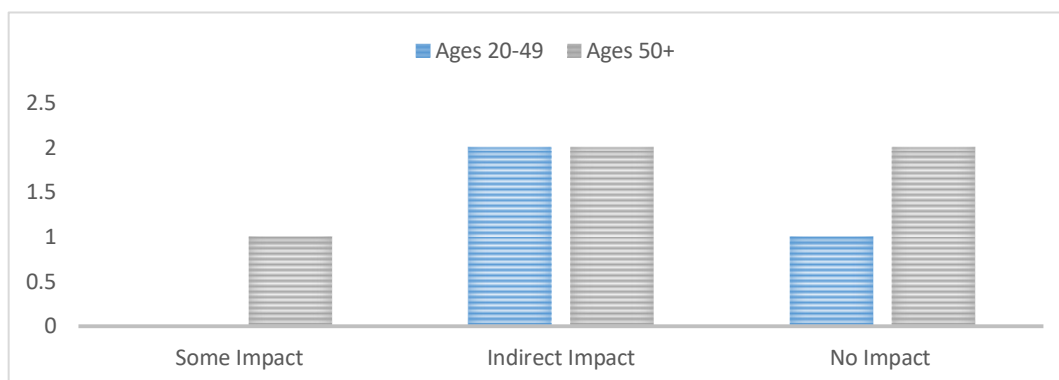
Perhaps the larger picture should be discussed at this point. In my judgment, the lack of integrated knowledge of the Son of Man is due to a deeper issue. I am referring to the lack of any substantial categories of biblical theology (in the technical sense) and systematic theology amongst the group. I wanted to utilise the questions in such a way that the respondents were pushed to explain biblical themes, particularly those that are embedded in the Old Testament and fleshed out in the New or captured in the New in a way that required some hermeneutical skill. The questionnaire revealed that the respondents, regardless of age, gender or length of time as members, possessed an underdeveloped awareness of or training in holistic Bible interpretation.

Question 7, asking for the respondents' opinion on the identity of the "one like a son of man" in Daniel 7, elicited a response 100% in favour of Jesus being the figure in the vision. However, when asked how this impacted their reading of the Son of Man in the Gospels, there was only one response that explained how the two connected in a meaningful way.

Question 11, as mentioned above, was designed to elicit information regarding the impact of the Son of Man motif in the respondents' Christian lives. Once again the responses were not easily demarcated by age or membership years. Young and old, new and veteran members, gave answers that reflected

ignorance or limited exposure. Only one respondent, a long-time and faithful member in her late fifties, answered in the affirmative. These results are captured in graph 3 below.

Graph 3: Impact of motif on respondents' lives



The results of the small-scale qualitative study have demonstrated that for a topic like the Son of Man motif to be effectively appropriated by the respondents (and it would appear DBC as a whole), there should be a broader presentation of the nature, nuances and practice of biblical theology and systematic theology in general – with the Son of Man motif being a case in point.

2.6 Summary and conclusion

This chapter firstly presented pertinent background information regarding DBC. This background information included the history, theology, ministries, and cultural context of the congregation. This information was vital to better interpreting the results of the qualitative research into the current situation regarding the DBC's understanding and experiential application, if any, of the Son of God title Jesus applied to himself.

The method used in the qualitative research (an open-ended questionnaire) was mentioned in the next section of the chapter, with specific attention to the layout of the questions and the four goals I hoped to achieve through the process: 1) their present understanding of the motif in light of their previous exposure to biblical teaching; 2) whether they capable of recognising thematic continuity pertaining to the Son of Man motif in relevant biblical texts; 3) whether they saw any relevance of the term for understanding Jesus'

redemptive work; and 4) whether the motif had any practical implications for the interviewees and DBC?

The results were then presented for each of the thirteen questions. This was followed by a discussion of the results. At the end of the background section on DBC I concluded that the results of the qualitative small-scale research would reveal some acquaintance with the Son of Man moniker – why Jesus most likely used it and the possible theological themes behind the choice or those that would throw light on its wider theological purpose and pastoral implications. My discussion of the results showed that they did not live up to these expectations.

The eight interviews were generally Christians of longstanding with many years at DBC and yet still did not seem to have reflected meaningfully or at any depth on 1) why Jesus used an apparently indirect reference to himself, 2) a canonical integrated theological approach, and 3) the practical personal and ministry implications of this moniker. Due to the selection of the eight with their substantial experience of DBC, it seems a probable conclusion that they represent the majority of members at DBC concerning views on the Son of Man title.

Looking ahead, what I hope to construct in chapter 4 is a strategic plan to address 1) the possible reasons in more depth why Jesus referred to himself in this way, and 2) the appreciation of theological categories (with the Son of Man motif as our catalyst) that seemed to be underdeveloped in the interviewees and no doubt many others at DBC. However, before developing this strategy, it is vital to first conduct a study of the Son of God moniker in order to better establish the biblically most faithful understanding of the title and the impact it should have on all Christians, including those at DBC. This is the concern of chapter 3, which answers Browning's second question in his strategic practical theology that is being used for the design of this mini-thesis: "What should be our response to this situation?" This is the step where the normative position is sought for some concern about a situation in a local church. In this mini-thesis the area of concern was the apparent, or likely, lack of appreciation of the Son of God title with corresponding spiritual and ministry deficiency and loss.

Chapter 3

Developing and Defending an Operative Theology for the Damascus Baptist Church regarding Jesus' Use of the Son of Man Motif

3.1 Introduction

In the previous chapter I discussed the results of the qualitative analysis of the operative theology of Damascus Baptist Church (DBC) with reference to the Son of Man moniker Jesus used, which was conducted via an open-ended questionnaire. The results identified a common thread of underdeveloped knowledge regarding biblical and systematic theology. There was also an apparent lack of awareness of the significance of "Son of Man". This was not limited to a certain gender or age group, either. Rather, it was present in both young and old, "veteran" and new members. Clearly this limited understanding impacted the praxis regarding this matter.

This present chapter seeks to develop and defend an operative theology for DBC with reference to the Son of Man title which considers the variegated perspectives of the theological disciplines and the implications for the Christian life. According to Browning's model, we need to move from praxis to theory and, then, back to praxis (1991:7). All practice is essentially theory laden (p. 6) and should be evaluated as such. Therefore, it is incumbent upon a community of faith to not only regularly revisit its praxis and the underlying theology, but also its normative traditions and texts to discern if any changes are necessary in the praxis. This chapter will therefore examine the next two questions in Browning's process of strategic practical theology (pp. 55-6): *What should be our praxis in this concrete situation*, and *How can we defend it?*

The first section of this chapter is an examination of the Son of Man as understood in church history. This is followed by a presentation of some key

modern scholars' views. Then there are perspectives on the moniker from the Gospels. The next section presents biblical theology perspectives. Additionally, non-biblical sources are finally consulted to demonstrate the value and applicability of the Son of Man motif to "non-theological" questions. The following section synthesises the findings based on the previous sections to arrive at a comprehensive conclusion on the possible meaning of Son of Man. The final section develops and defends a biblically faithful operative theology with regard to the Son of Man moniker for DBC based on the conclusions drawn from chapter 2 and what has been presented up to this point in chapter 3.

3.2 Different perspectives on the meaning of the Son of Man moniker used by Jesus

3.2.1 Church history perspectives

In seeking a biblically faithful operative theology regarding the Son of Man motif, the logical place to start the investigation is church history. The great leaders and theologians in church history may have helpful insights on the matter and therefore their views need to be noted. Many of the statements in the early church regarding Jesus' identity as the Son of Man were explanations of his incarnation and human nature. Several fathers asserted that Christ is called the Son of man because he has descended from Adam (cf. Paul's "last Adam" in 1Co 15:45) or because of the simple fact of his virgin birth (e.g., Justin, *Dialogue with Trypho*, 100). Either way, they had in mind the simplicity of the phrase as it related to Christ's humanity. There are also comments made on the Son of Man passages that exist as far back as Ignatius' letter to the Ephesians and the Epistle of Barnabas (Hare 1990:43). As one might expect, both references are somewhat ambiguous and they do not explicate any primary position of the authors. However, what they do convey is in accord with other writers – an understanding of "Son of Man" as a description of (at least) Jesus' human nature.

Tracing the lineage of this viewpoint will reveal that it remained the dominant position through and beyond the time of the Reformation. Calvin also distinguished between Christ's two natures by means of the titles "Son of Man"

and “Son of God” (*Institutes of the Christian Religion* 2.14.6). Although the assertion of inter-dependence would perhaps be overstating the case, there remains a common thread of exegetical methods in the pre-twentieth century realm of scholarship. Patristic conclusions on the Son of man were adopted and repeated by many of their successors.

3.2.2 Some modern scholars’ perspectives

What have some modern scholars across the theological spectrum had to say about the Son of Man moniker? Their views need careful consideration, considering they have studied this matter and thus their relevant writings should be reflected upon. Firstly, I present a review of scholars that have been the least convincing to me. This is followed by a review of scholars whose arguments have been more convincing for me and therefore have carried greater weight in formulating my understanding of the Son of Man motif.

There is the idea of Wrede (1901) of the messianic secret, namely that Jesus did not want his disciples to spread the news that he was the promised Messiah (though he claimed this was not historical but the work of the author of Mark, a position I do not take). A probable reason for this secrecy was that the word “Messiah” in official Judaism of the time had a far more limited meaning than the messianic ministry Jesus’ life would show. Describing himself as the promised Messiah would have prevented a full understanding of a true messianic ministry and drastically shortened its time span, thus also preventing the proper discipleship of the twelve and thus the future growth of the church. Hence this could explain why Jesus avoided using the title of Messiah and preferred rather Son of Man. But this would not fully account for why he used this title instead of the personal pronoun. What seems certain is that the disciples understood the title to refer to Jesus.

Karl Barth continued to echo the patristic, incarnational interpretation of Son of Man. He saw the relationship between “Son of God” and “Son of Man” as instrumental in describing the two natures of Christ. In other words, Jesus is the Son of God who *became* the Son of Man (Barth *CD IV.I* 2004:20-1).

Barth’s contemporary, Rudolph Bultmann, added a potent interpretation to the mix. When studying the writings of Bultmann, it is important to keep in mind

that he is working from an increased focus upon reinterpreting (demythologising) essential Christian doctrines. Bultmann concludes that Jesus' message was purely an apocalyptic warning of immanent catastrophe; a catastrophe that would entail the intermediary work of a future figure known as the Son of Man. Perhaps the most striking of his conclusions is his bifurcation of Jesus and the Son of Man. For Bultmann (1951:5-7), Jesus and the Son of Man were two distinct individuals, with the Son of Man acting as Jesus' representative. Furthermore, Bultmann denies (due in large part to his radical scepticism about the biblical authors' grasp of Jesus' true message) the authenticity of any non-apocalyptic Son of Man sayings. He presupposes that Jesus' religious beliefs stemmed almost exclusively from Jewish apocalyptic writings (Hare 1990:6-7). The early Christian community ignored Jesus' Kingdom-centred message and, instead, preached the person of Jesus (Hill 2003:281). Hence, any statement attributed to Jesus that described a suffering or ministering Son of Man (such as the passion predictions) cannot be regarded as a genuine reconstruction of his beliefs. Passages about the immanent suffering of Jesus must have been later developments retroactively transposed into the accounts.

A response to contemporary Bultmannian exegesis has been offered by Douglas Hare. His conclusions fall into two main categories: (1) a denial of Bultmann's apocalyptic premise and (2) an affirmation of scepticism toward all apocalyptic references. After a lengthy examination of the Gospel accounts, Hare concludes that all evidence points toward a favouring, on the part of the Evangelists at least, of a non-apocalyptic Son of Man. It was, however, a self-designation of Jesus, but, even so, it did not connote any information about his nature or status (Hare 1990:257).

Found in the writings of Dalman, Casey, Lindars and Vermes are some of the so-called philological trajectories on the Son of Man debate. These three scholars share many of the same presuppositions and much of the same methodology, albeit with a few important distinctions. Anchoring the arguments of these scholars is their emphasis on the Gospels' underlying Aramaic linguistics. It is argued that the Aramaic idiom behind "Son of Man" is a cryptic

circumlocution, an ambiguous self-reference (with varying levels of application for the speaker). Although this is their starting point, each scholar has added his own flavour to the theory. For example, Casey has written in favour of the viewpoint that Jesus was utilising “Son of Man” to denote a truth that applied generally to all people but obliquely to the speaker. Since “Son of Man” can be used to signify a human being in general (so Dalman 1902), Casey sees this usage as congruent with Jesus’ own reasoning and self-understanding. Furthermore, it allowed a speaker (like Jesus) to humbly make comments about himself (Casey 1987:52). So passages like Mark 2:27-28, for example, are not speaking about Jesus’ identity (Lord of the Sabbath) as much as they are an attempt to communicate something that is true of all human beings (including Jesus) in general (Casey 1987:38; Marshall 1992:779).

Vermes identifies a certain sense of exclusivity inherent in the Aramaic phrase’s roundabout nature (circumlocution), but nevertheless maintains its ambiguous nature (1978:23-24). The idiom was not primarily generic, as Casey asserts, but indefinite. That is, the Aramaic phrase translated into English as “Son of Man/a son of man” could be used by a speaker to refer specifically to himself, but in an ambiguous way. Hare offers the following example of Vermes’ position: “Can’t a man have any privacy?” (Hare 1990:23). Casey, as mentioned above, was in opposition to this particular portion of Vermes’ argument. He opted for the strictly generic sense of the idiom.

Meanwhile, Lindars advocates what has become the most accepted of the three positions. Jesus used the “Son of Man” term as a way of modestly referring to himself, though within a certain class of individuals. Jesus was not calling himself *the* Son of Man in any titular way, but in a way, that included others who shared a similar vocation or calling (Lindars 1981:297).

In a similar vein as the writings of Vermes, Lindars and Casey, Morna D. Hooker discerns a self-referencing use of the Son of Man idiom. But she is quick to acknowledge her adherence to Lindars’ particular distinction – the Son of man is a reference to “someone in my position”. As she puts it, Jesus utilized this idiom “not because he was claiming to be the messianic Son of man, but

because he accepted for himself the role of obedient faith...and because he called others to share that same calling with him" (1981:93).

I turn now to examine some of the literature that has been the most influential in my study of the Son of Man title. The following are in my opinion the most critical to a systematic and biblical theology formulation and conclusions on the Jesus' moniker.

I. H. Marshall shares the conviction that Jesus used the Son of man title, and he did so purposefully. Marshall advocates the notion that "Son of man" was the perfect "vehicle" to transport Jesus' self-references (1966:351). The alternative term, Messiah, says Marshall, was too laden with political and revolutionary connotations to be used effectively. Jesus could employ the Son of man idiom with both communicative and concealing results.

George Ladd (1974:157-8) also believes that Jesus appropriated and employed the Son-of-man term as a definite, though intentionally ambiguous, messianic title. Where others emphasised the contrasting elements of the Son of Man and suffering, Ladd introduces the concept of coupling (much like Witherington mentioned below). Put another way, Jesus was consciously synthesising Old Testament motifs – the Son of Man in Daniel 7 and the Suffering Servant of Isaiah 53 (p. 156). This is echoed by Beasley-Murray (1986), who also recognises an intrinsic link between God's kingdom and the Son of Man's redemptive work. Using similar argumentation as Ladd, Beasley-Murray stresses that this link is drawn into focus only when the Danielic background is supplemented with other Old Testament texts.

A review of the works of several scholars now follows under two headings: (a) Jesus' use of the term Son of Man, and (b) its possible relationship to the last Adam.

(a) Jesus' use of "Son of Man"

Darrell Bock in his work on the New Testament has been most helpful in my hunt for the Son of Man's significance. Bock's strength lies in his desire to wrestle with many of the issues raised by more liberal scholars, but doing so from a conservative, evangelical perspective. It must be remembered that DBC is an evangelical church and hence the importance of his work. Bock's article on

the Son of Man in *Dictionary of Jesus and the Gospels* (2013) neatly summarises his view on the subject. Regarding meaning and origin, Bock sees the Son of Man title as partly, but not exclusively, deriving from the vision in Daniel 7:13-14 (p. 895). Jesus at times makes use of the Son of Man idiom to present his own uniqueness, but Daniel 7 is not necessarily the background of every “Son of Man” occurrence. For example, texts such as the passion predictions (e.g., Mk 8:31), where Jesus is harkening back to the OT theme of a suffering servant who is also Messiah, cannot be so easily posited into the narrative of Daniel’s vision, says Bock. Jesus’ use of “Son of Man” was therefore not always drawn directly from Daniel 7. Oftentimes it was intended to simply show Jesus’ unique status among all other human beings. Consequently, Bock concludes, the articular usage of “Son of Man” is simply communicating Jesus’ uniqueness, and every occurrence of the phrase need not be subsumed under Daniel 7’s context.

This line of reasoning helps us see how “Son of Man” is relevant to passages that do not connect the phrase to explicit Danielic imagery (e.g., Mt 26:64). When Jesus uses the phrase to denote his ability to forgive sins (Mk 2:10), for example, he was implying his status as an utterly unique human being (Bock 2013:897).

Though I agree with Bock that the Son of Man’s connection is not always exclusively tied to Daniel 7, I believe that Daniel’s vision of the “one like a son of man” is compatible with all the other Messianic motifs of the OT. But Bock’s treatment of the title compels interpreters to see how Jesus may have fused together more than one OT allusion in his use of “Son of Man”.

Ben Witherington (1990:243-248) stands among those who see a direct link between Daniel 7 and Jesus’ moniker. Witherington examines all possible allusions to Daniel in both the *Similitudes* of 1 Enoch and the Gospels. He proposes a precedent established in the *Similitudes* (1En 37-71), wherein the author references *that* or *the* son of man (see, e.g., 1En 46:3; 48:2). The emphasis seems to be on recalling the “one like a son of man” from Daniel’s vision. So it is possible that Jesus used this term in this titular way, not because it was originally a title, but because he, much like the author of *1 Enoch*, wanted

his audience to make a connection with the vision in Daniel. This evidence leads Witherington to conclude that Jesus intentionally alluded to Daniel 7 when he employed the Son of Man moniker. In doing so Jesus saw himself as the one sent by God to suffer (pp. 256, 262). This may, perhaps, seem to be contradictory to Daniel's vision, but Jesus was correcting a common assumption about the *kind* of Son of Man he came to be. He did not come to be served but, rather, to lay down his own life (Mk 10:45).

(b) "Son of Man" as the Last Adam

In researching the Son of Man in the Gospels, it became apparent that the use of this term had to have some sort of broader significance than merely identifying Jesus as a human being. To be sure, that will be shown to be part of the meaning of "Son of Man", but why was Jesus so keen on communicating his humanity? Why use the phrase in contexts where the humanity of Jesus was already assumed or obvious, or where the surrounding description seemed to indicate a "more-than-human" status (e.g., Mt 25:31)?

Greg Beale in his work on biblical theology gives fresh perspective to questions related to the interwoven themes of the canon. Beale's prolific and comprehensive *A New Testament Biblical Theology* (2011) provides many keen insights regarding the "last Adam" motif and its relation to "Son of Man." His book on God's dwelling place, *The Temple and the Church's Mission* (2004), is helpful in connecting Jesus' redemptive work to the restoration of creation as God's abode. I agree with Beale's assessment that the Adamic-Kingship theme seems to fit the background of "Son of Man" best (2004:81-86). It further explains how the phrase denotes humanness and "more-than-humanness".

Along similar lines, Brandon Crowe has recently published a work on Jesus' connection to Adam. In, *The Last Adam* (2017), Crowe seeks to demonstrate the interpretive significance of the Adam motif within the Gospel accounts of Jesus' life. More specifically, he seeks to show how the "last Adam" motif helps explain the salvific nature of Jesus' obedient life. Crowe, like Beale, sees the Son of Man moniker as a nuanced way of describing Jesus as the final Adam, the federal head of a new race of people (2017:52).

This brief review of several modern scholarly writings on the Son of Man phrase in 3.2.1 alerts one to the fact that deciding on why Jesus used the title is not a simple matter. To throw more light on the matter I now proceed to consider perspectives from the Gospels themselves.

3.2.3 Perspectives from the Gospels on the meaning of the Son of Man moniker used by Jesus

3.2.3.1 Overall perspectives

If one peruses the literature on the Son of Man in the Gospels, one will undoubtedly encounter the term's categorisation that is standard in scholarly circles. Most scholars organise the Synoptic (John is usually dealt with separately) "Son of Man" sayings of Jesus into three groups. The wording may differ depending on the scholar, but the three categories usually remain the same (Bock 2013:896, 898; Crowe 2017:43; Guthrie 1981:275; Hooker 1981:89; Witherington 1990:245; Ladd 1993:147-149; Richardson 1958:132-135; see also Bock 1994:925 for alternative groupings). First, there are the sayings related to Jesus' ministry on earth (seventeen passages). That is, passages that seem to be functioning as a circumlocution for Jesus. Examples would include texts such as Matthew 8:20 and Luke 6:22 wherein Jesus is describing the uniqueness of his own ministry. Second, the Son of Man is predicted to undergo rejection, suffering and death (the so-called passion predictions; twenty-six passages). Finally, the Son of Man will experience vindication and future glory (twenty-seven passages). While the trifurcation of the phrase's occurrences might not be the most accurate, and the origin was likely rooted in the source criticism of the post-Enlightenment period, it is a helpful way to organise the material in a neat, if not always fool-proof, manner. The ubiquity of the references to the Son of Man signals its importance for the exegete.

(a) The Synoptic Gospels

The Synoptic Gospels provide readers with the most extensive use of Son of Man in the NT. This title is always emitted from the mouth of Jesus, and, outside of a few other NT passages (see section 3.2.3), does not appear

outside the four Gospels. Though the passion predictions are coupled with Jesus' moniker in each Gospel, it will prove helpful to examine the emphases of each writer.

Mark

Mark's Gospel contains sixteen references to the Son of Man. The passion predictions by the Son of Man (Mk. 8:31; 9:31; 10:33-34), which fall into the suffering category, are referenced more in Mark's Gospel than the other two. For Mark, the sufferings of Jesus are to be viewed as the path to victory. So, what we see imbedded in the suffering statements is an obvious stress on the paradoxical nature of Jesus' ministry and his mission, none more paradigmatic than the three passion predictions.

Mark situates the passion predictions within his recounting of the journey to Jerusalem. In this section (Mk 8:31-10:52) Jesus is constantly restructuring the disciples' understanding about their Master's purposes. The pattern is essentially a prediction followed by an error on the part of the disciples. Then finally Jesus rebukes the error and provides the proper course of action. The prescribed action always entails a note of similarity with Jesus' own destiny. Though there are no doubt elements of Jesus' destiny that are unique to him (cf. Mk 10:45; also, his resurrection "after three days"), Mark's emphasis seems to be on the necessity of following in Christ's footsteps. In other words, the cost is great, but so are the rewards (Mk 10:29-31). Thus, Jesus' prediction in Mark of his future sufferings, and therefore the sufferings themselves, are presented as the example his disciples must follow. Mark seems to be using Son of Man here as a representative of the sons of men who will be followers of Christ when it comes to suffering for Christ and putting the kingdom and will of God first.

Matthew and Luke

Matthew and Luke both include the passion predictions of Mark's Gospel (Mk 8:31 = Mt 16:21 = Lk 9:22; Mk 9:31 = Mt 17:22 = Lk 9:44; Mk 10:33 = Mt 20:18 = Lk 18:31). Similarly, structurally speaking, they locate them within the same time frame of Jesus' life. Regarding the broader spectrum of the Son of Man, Matthew contains about seven unique references, the majority of which highlight the Son of Man's role in the eschatological judgment (e.g., Mt 25:31).

Luke, on the other hand, while not differing too much from Matthew reports six unique statements, with a spectrum much wider than that of Matthew (Bock 2013:899). A reference to Daniel is clearly seen in several of Jesus' teachings on God's kingdom. For example, Jesus clearly identifies the kingdom with his own person and work in Matthew 16:28 (note the phrase "in *his* kingdom"). Daniel's vision is clearly being used as the backdrop here and other places like it (see, e.g., Mt 25:31 and the Son of Man's throne).

Perhaps the best example of Luke's particular Son of Man emphasis is found in 17:24-25. He reports Jesus commenting on his role as eschatological judge (Matthew's main emphasis), while immediately pointing to his role as a suffering Son of Man. Jesus, the Son of Man, is a heavenly figure of great authority who has come, paradoxically, to be rejected. Yet Jesus' demise is not to be construed as failure. Rather, it is God's will for him to die and rise again. As Witherington (1990:251) remarks, Jesus' death "was neither an accident nor an inevitable consequence of his rejection, but God's plan for him". Therefore, both the Lord's heavenly origin and his earthly mission are subsumed under his favourite self-designation.

One thing is clear, the Synoptics are virtually unanimous that the moniker Jesus uses covers his authority as the Son of Man, his paradoxical but predetermined suffering, his exaltation and return as king/judge. So counterintuitive is the notion of a rejected Messiah/Son of Man that Jesus' disciples are unable to grasp this concept until after the resurrection. Yet, despite this confusion, Jesus is diligent to point to his sufferings as the necessary and prescribed path that leads to his exaltation, and the path that all his followers must also be willing to take.

(b) The Gospel of John

It is no secret that when it comes to historical information about Jesus' life, John's Gospel is viewed with suspicion by many critical scholars (but see Dunn's more *mild* assessment of John's historical value in Dunn 2003:165-167). There is no denying that John's account differs radically from the Synoptics (see Ladd's summary, 1993:251-253). However, I believe there is reason to think that the conclusions drawn from these differences have been somewhat

overstated. Biblical students should consult Blomberg's treatment of the subject (2009:178-184) as it is most helpful in this instance.

John's organisation of the Son of Man motif involves features that are unique to his Gospel, but there are other elements that invoke a strong degree of similarity with the Synoptics. John includes thirteen "Son of Man" statements, all of which fall under the divisions of apocalyptic and suffering. In fact, John's Gospel may contain the most explicit connections between Jesus' identity as the Son of Man and his destined path to the cross (Jn 3:14; 8:28; 12:34). Though John records the more cryptic reference of the Son of Man being "lifted up", it is clear that Jesus is referring to his death. Interestingly, the heavenly origin of the Son of Man is juxtaposed with the crucifixion in Jesus' discussion with Nicodemus (Jn 3:13-14).

Though many of the Johannine passages are without parallel in the Synoptics, the concept is nonetheless present in both traditions. The Son of Man pre-exists in heaven (admittedly, this is not as explicit in the Synoptics), and has come not to victoriously conquer militarily, but to be rejected, killed and resurrected. John's account, though containing unique statements on the Son of Man, records Jesus once again merging the Son of Man motif with other OT themes. The first use of the phrase in John 1:51 is a fusion of Genesis 28:12.

One conclusion we can draw from this data on the Son of Man moniker from the Synoptics and John's Gospel is that although John's "Son of Man" statements may be somewhat unique, they supplement rather than contradict the Synoptic tradition (Ladd 1993:282).

I turn now to an exegetical treatment of three representative Son of Man references that appear in all the Synoptic Gospels. It will be seen that this inevitably will take us into the realm of biblical theology (see especially section 3.2.3 for this) in our search for an understanding of the moniker.

3.2.3.2 Exegetical perspectives from the synoptic Gospels

This section considers a representative example from the categories into which the Son of Man sayings are placed by scholars/commentators. With each example I will not only be expounding generally on all three synoptic

occurrences, but there will at times be more specific focus on a particular nuance within one Evangelist's account.

(1) *The Son of Man's Ministry (Luke 5:24 and pars.)*

<p><i>Luke 5:24</i> But so that you may know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins" - he said to the paralyzed man – "I tell you, stand up, take your stretcher and go home." (NET)</p>	<p><i>Mark 2:10-11</i> But so that you may know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins," - he said to the paralytic – "I tell you, stand up, take your stretcher, and go home." (NET)</p>	<p><i>Matthew 9:6</i> But so that you may know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins" - then he said to the paralytic- "Stand up, take your stretcher, and go home." (NET)</p>	<p><i>Lk 5:24</i> ἵνα δὲ εἰδῆτε ὅτι ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ ἀνθρώπου ἐξουσίαν ἔχει ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς ἀφίεναι ἁμαρτίας - εἶπεν τῷ παραλελυμένῳ· σοὶ λέγω, ἔγειρε καὶ ἄρας τὸ κλινίδιον σου πορεύου εἰς τὸν οἶκόν σου. (NA28)</p>
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a. Context

This familiar pericope takes place early in Jesus' ministry and, according to Matthew and Mark, in Capernaum. The amount of attention Jesus was receiving at this time is amazing. Clearly, he was generating a great deal of excitement. This is not surprising. Luke tells us that the power of the Lord was present with Jesus – evidenced by his healings and authoritative teaching (Lk 5:17).

As the scene unfolds, the mass of people engulfing the house where Jesus was teaching prevented some men and their paralyzed friend from entering. This in turn prompted their desperate manoeuvre involving the tearing apart of the house's roof (vv. 18-19). After the paralytic is delivered at the feet of Jesus, the scene shifts its focus to the Lord's reaction. Jesus, seeing the faith of the men, pronounces forgiveness of sins upon the man.

Present in the crowd were the *Φαρισαῖοι* (Pharisees) and the *νομοδιδάσκαλοι* (teachers of the law). Luke takes care to make his readers aware of their presence from the beginning of the episode (v. 17). Incidentally, this is Luke's first mention of Jesus' opponents in his Gospel (Bock 1994:479). Luke directs our attention to the opponents from the outset since the subsequent healing miracle will engender their displeasure.

After supernaturally perceiving the thoughts of his opponents, Jesus adds an explanatory statement to his already impressive pronouncement. So that

they will know that “the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins”, Jesus commands the man to stand up. Having been healed, the paralytic (no longer a paralytic!) stands before the crowd healed of his infirmity (Lk 5:25).

b. Implications for the meaning of “Son of Man”

The significance of this event is not lost on the crowd, the religious leaders or even many of modern day readers of the Gospels. What *is* often lost is the significance of Jesus’ use of “Son of Man” in this text. This story contains the first occurrence of “Son of Man” in both Luke and Mark, and it is the only time that the phrase is associated directly with a miracle event (Bock 1994:486). Interestingly, no one in the audience takes issue with the use of the term. This, according to Dunn, is evidence against the theory that the (heavenly) Son of Man was a “well-known figure in first-century Jewish expectation” (2003:740; cf. Hare’s comment on the episode in Mark’s Gospel 1990:186).

What connection exists between Jesus’ moniker and his expressed authority to forgive sins? Opinions abound. Meanwhile, Hooker (1991:87) makes the point that although “Son of Man” could be interpreted as referring to mankind in general, the use of the articular *ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ ἀνθρώπου* (*the Son of the Man*) and the context of the pericope in the Synoptics mitigates against this view. The head noun *υἱὸς* and the genitive noun *ἀνθρώπου* are accompanied by definite articles (*ὁ, τοῦ*), which is generally insignificant from a semantic standpoint. However, as Wallace and others have argued (Mole 1995:277-278; Wallace 1997:240) this phrase might be an exception to the rule. Jesus may have intentionally used the articular construction to conjure up the background of Daniel’s “one like a son of man” (Dn 7:13). The statement is clearly intended by Jesus and the Gospel writers to communicate a truth about Jesus himself. The self-given moniker, however, remains vague enough that it seems to go unnoticed or perhaps even misunderstood (see Mt 9:8).

Another way of getting at this question may be to examine the charge of blasphemy posited by the Pharisees and teachers of the law (Lk 5:21). What exactly was the blasphemous content uttered by Jesus? I believe it seems best to interpret the reaction to Jesus’ authority in light of the Jewish understanding of sin and forgiveness, especially the relationship between forgiveness and the

temple. Beale (following Wright) makes mention of the temple's role in acquiring forgiveness from the Lord (2004:177; cf. Wright 1996:273, 406-412). Jesus, then, in pronouncing forgiveness is not only treading on ground that is reserved for God alone, he is also bypassing the temple and its sacrificial system (Bock 1994:484).

The crowd most likely heard the phrase as a cryptic way of referring to oneself. That is, Jesus was simply saying that “*someone* has authority on earth to forgive sins” or “*this man* has authority on earth to forgive sins” (Bock 1991:117, 1994:486; see also Guthrie 1981:272). But even though Jesus is not trying to be coy or overly ambiguous, he *is* clearly communicating something unique about himself in this statement (Blomberg 2009:468; Hooker 1981:87). However, the full significance of the moniker will be spelled out in more detail only as Jesus' story unfolds. Jesus really is revealing something true about himself, but the crowds are not ready to accept the kind of Messiah Jesus is. So, he avoids using the word ‘Messiah’ as it would only get the people swept up in seeing him as leading a political deliverance from the yoke of Rome and prevent them pondering his unique miracles and teaching and the need to go to the cross.

Moreover, a human being wielding this kind of authority makes little sense in light of the universal sinfulness of those fallen in Adam (Crowe 2017:44). With Jesus' use of ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς (upon the earth) a possible allusion is made to Daniel's vision of the “one like a son of man” who is given authority over all the earth (Hooker 1991:87; Osbourne 2010: Kindle Loc. 8730). If we see the Adamic motif overlapping with “Son of Man” then it is perhaps a harkening back to the entrance of sin into the world through the first Adam. Jesus, as the sinless last Adam (i.e., Son of Man), has the authority and dominion on the earth to pronounce forgiveness and reverse the effects of sin. The healing is proof of his power while remitting of sins apart from the temple demonstrates his unique authority as the Son of Man.

(2) *The Son of Man's Suffering and Vindication (Mark 8:31 and pars.)*

<p><i>Mk 8:31</i> Then Jesus began to teach them that the Son of Man must suffer many things and be rejected by the elders, chief priests, and experts in the law, and be killed, and after three days rise again. (NET)</p>	<p><i>Mt 16:21</i> From that time on Jesus began to show his disciples that he must go to Jerusalem and suffer many things at the hands of the elders, chief priests, and experts in the law, and be killed, and on the third day be raised. (NET)</p>	<p><i>Lk 9:22</i> ...saying, “The Son of Man must suffer many things and be rejected by the elders, chief priests, and experts in the law, and be killed, and on the third day be raised.” (NET)</p>	<p><i>Mk 8:31</i> Καὶ ἤρξατο διδάσκειν αὐτοὺς ὅτι δεῖ τὸν υἱὸν τοῦ ἀνθρώπου πολλὰ παθεῖν καὶ ἀποδοκιμασθῆναι ὑπὸ τῶν πρεσβυτέρων καὶ τῶν ἀρχιερέων καὶ τῶν γραμματέων καὶ ἀποκτανθῆναι καὶ μετὰ τρεῖς ἡμέρας ἀναστῆναι· (NA28)</p>
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a. Context

Although scholars are not unanimous in their assessment of each Gospel's outline, there are at least some indicators that they intended, at the very least, a two-stage layout. Regarding Mark's account, Peter's climactic confession of Jesus is to be seen as a literary "halfway point"; this is virtually undisputed. Though there are numerous versions of Markan outlines, France (2002:11-15) offers perhaps the best and most persuasive of the available options.

The second Act of Mark's Gospel is a discipleship-focused section revolving around Jesus' three passion predictions (Mk 8:22-10:52). Act two will obviously receive most of our attention in this section, especially as to how the larger emphasis of the narrative impacts the reading of the passion predictions. The passion predictions are all situated within this second section of the Gospel. Upon examination, a common pattern surrounding the predictions becomes strikingly apparent. In each case the three-pronged sequence's beginning point is the prediction itself (Mk 8:31; 9:31; 10:33-34), followed closely by some type of erroneous behaviour on the part of the disciples and concluding with a rebuke and correction by Jesus. In the first case, it is Peter's rebuke of Jesus (8:32). Several verses later, Jesus' second prediction is followed by an argument about which disciple was the greatest (9:33-34). Finally, the third prediction precedes the selfish request of James and John (10:35-40).

Immediately following the profession of Peter's belief in Jesus as Messiah, Jesus moves the discussion to his impending rejection and death. The

beginning phrase, *καὶ ἤρξατο διδάσκειν* (and he began to teach them), signals a change in the narrative's focus and alerts the reader to a new sequence of events. The verb *ἤρξατο* is the aorist middle form of *ἄρχω* ("to rule" or, in the middle voice, "begin"), and coupled with *διδάσκειν* (teach) it gives the sense of significant change associated with Jesus' present instruction (see e.g., France 2002:327; Hooker 1981:205; Stein 2008:401).

The content of the teaching involved an undoubtedly abrasive statement about Jesus' immanent rejection and death. In keeping with other statements about the inevitable nature of God's predetermined plan (Mk 9:11; 13:7, 10), Mark uses the indicative verb *δεῖ* ("it must be") to impress the absolute necessity of Jesus' death (Crowe 2017:103-107; Evans 2001:16). As Grundmann points out, Jesus viewed the *δεῖ* of the Father's will as "a rule of life" (1985, s.v. *dei, deon esti* 2.).

The necessitated outcome for Jesus is much (*πολλὰ*) suffering (*παθεῖν*). The phrase can be taken to modify the proceeding description of Jesus' opponents and their actions (i.e., the "much suffering" is the acts of being rejected and killed), or it can be seen as a broader statement (the suffering includes being rejected and killed). Noteworthy is the active usage of *παθεῖν*, which could possibly imply that Jesus is the active rather than passive agent. Put another way, *παθεῖν* could be rendered as "bear" or "endure," signifying that Jesus will voluntarily choose to endure rejection and death as opposed to being a passive recipient (Michaelis 1985, s.v. *pascho* C.2.a). This interpretation fits well in light of the understanding of *δεῖ* as God's predetermined plan for his Son. Jesus' predictions end, of course, with his promise of vindication (resurrection) on the third day. This portion seems to have been constantly overlooked or misunderstood by many of Jesus' followers.

b. Implications for the meaning of "Son of Man"

Obviously, for the purposes of this chapter, the most intriguing aspect of Jesus' statement is the use of his enigmatic moniker, *τὸν υἱὸν τοῦ ἀνθρώπου* (the Son of Man). At this point in Mark's narrative, readers have come across this phrase only twice (Mk 2:10 as discussed above and 2:28 [in the nominative]).

The question of how “Son of Man” relates to Jesus’ suffering is an interesting one. Hooker (1991:205) rightly observes that if “Son of Man” is simply an idiom for “me” (meaning Jesus), this does nothing to explain the necessity of Jesus’ suffering. If we grant Daniel 7 as the most likely background of the “Son of Man” title, does this aid in our understanding of Jesus’ rejection and suffering? Some scholars affirm a direct linkage between suffering and Daniel 7 (e.g., Evans 2001:16; Hooker 1981:205-206; Witherington 1990:239-240; Wright 1996:576), while others do not see suffering as inherent in Daniel’s “one like a son of man” (e.g., Bock 1994:953; France 2002:334).

At this point it is enlightening to note the emphasis by some scholars who see in Jesus’ use of “Son of Man” an amalgamation of different OT motifs. France, for example, sees the primary background of the passion predictions as Isaiah 53 (2001:334). Daniel 7, then, provides only a portion of the full background of “Son of Man”.

However, with Beale (2011), Crowe (2017) and others, I have come to believe that the figure in the vision of Daniel 7 is himself to be interpreted in light of the rest of the OT. That is, the “one like a son of man” does not arise in a vacuum, but is anticipated by other thematic elements in the OT, most especially, the Adamic motif. So even if Daniel’s vision does not specify the suffering of the Son of Man, this is understood when the figure is seen as the Messiah who appears as the last Adam, the true Israel, the suffering Servant and the Davidic king. The Son of Man must suffer and be vindicated because he is the fulfilment of the Messianic OT types and shadows. He sums up the predictions that began in Genesis 3:15, with God promising a *הַמְּלִיךָ* (“seed/offspring of her”) who will crush the head of the serpent.

(3) *The Son of Man’s Future Glory (Matthew 24:30 and pars.)*

<i>Mt 24:30</i>	<i>Mk 13:26</i>	<i>Lk 21:27</i>	<i>Mt 24:30</i>
Then the sign of the Son of Man will appear in heaven, and all the tribes of the earth will mourn. They will see the Son of Man arriving on the clouds of heaven	Then everyone will see the Son of Man arriving in the clouds with great power and glory. (NET)	Then they will see the Son of Man arriving in a cloud with power and great glory. (NET)	καὶ τότε φανήσεται τὸ σημεῖον τοῦ υἱοῦ τοῦ ἀνθρώπου ἐν οὐρανῷ, καὶ τότε κόπονται πᾶσαι αἱ φυλαὶ τῆς γῆς καὶ ὄψονται τὸν υἱὸν τοῦ ἀνθρώπου ἐρχόμενον ἐπὶ τῶν νεφελῶν τοῦ

with power and great glory. (NET)			οὐρανοῦ μετὰ δυνάμεως καὶ δόξης πολλῆς· (NA28)
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a. Context

The literary context of this passage is well-known to many. Jesus is concluding his speech on the Mount of Olives, a speech that has numerous exegetical difficulties and enigmas. This “Little Apocalypse”, so-called, has generated no small amount of scholarly arrogation (Hooker 1991:297; Wright 1996:139-140), and its interpretation quite often reveals where an interpreter is on the theological spectrum.

With the confines of space and time, I will not be able to devote much of either to the interpretation of the passage as a whole. I will, however, be attempting to show the relevance of the Son of Man motif for this climactic scene in Jesus’ prophetic speech.

Daniel 7’s background of the phrase’s occurrence in the Olivet Discourse is conceded by many. Even the most hesitant scholars believe that it is *this* passage (along with Mk 14:62 and pars.) that explicitly unites Jesus’ use of “Son of Man” with Daniel’s vision (e.g., Casey 1979:28; Dunn 2003:748; Hare 1990:170; Hooker 1981:319). But exactly how the OT text is being utilised and developed in Jesus’ speech is a matter of debate.

As the Gospel writers reach the climactic moment of their respective recordings of Jesus’ discourse, each includes the Lord’s prediction of his (the Son of Man’s) return. All three also reference Jesus’ allusion to the OT prophecies of Isaiah 13:10 and 34:4 (LXX) as well as Joel 2:10. Matthew adds his unique reference to the *σημεῖον τοῦ υἱοῦ τοῦ ἀνθρώπου* (the sign of the Son of Man) which will appear in heaven just prior to the appearance of the Son of Man himself. Immediately following, Matthew’s account includes another OT allusion, this time to Zechariah 12. This citation, however, contains the

universalising modification that is so prevalent in the NT's development of the OT theme (Zechariah 12 refers to the clans of Israel while Jesus here refers to all the clans [*φυλαί*] of the earth. cf. Rev 1:7). All three of the Synoptics record Jesus' statement concerning the appearance (i.e., *ὄψονται* = "they will see") of the Son of Man in heaven. Jesus' coming is the moment of finality, wherein judgment and salvation are brought to pass (Beasley-Murray 1991:298; Witherington 2001:348).

b. Implications for the meaning of "Son of Man"

Jesus' unique status among all other men reaches its fullest expression in the latter parts of each Gospel account. Each of the Synoptics record Jesus' prophetic teaching about the temple and his return, as well as his statement before the religious leaders. The most explicit claims of our Lord come in the predictions of his "coming" (Dunn 2003:748).

Whether or not Jesus' *ἐρχόμενον* ("coming") is referring to his ascension/enthronement (Dunn 2003 [with reservation]; France 2001; Wright 1996) or his return on the last day (Adams 2005; Beasley-Murray 1991; Bock 1996; Osbourne 2010; Stein 2014) is debated. I will not enter the minutiae here, but suffice to say that I hold to the "traditional" interpretation that this is referring to the final day of this age, when Christ returns to raise the dead, judge the world and create a new heaven and new earth. But even if this passage refers to the ascension and enthronement of Jesus, the implications for "Son of Man" remain unchanged.

As mentioned previously, an aspect that again comes to the fore when we examine the discourse in Matthew is the combining of different OT passages/motifs. Though Daniel 7 is the most likely choice for the background of "Son of Man" and *ἐπὶ τῶν νεφελῶν τοῦ οὐρανοῦ* ("on the clouds of heaven"), the preceding description of worldwide mourning is taken from Zechariah 12. The prophet Zechariah describes the coming day of Yahweh and the subsequent mourning that will ensue from those who have *ἰγῶν* ("pierced") the Lord (Zech 12:10). This pattern is repeated in Revelation 1:7, demonstrating that it was a well-known aspect of Jesus' teaching. Language reserved for the coming of Yahweh has been transferred to Jesus the Son of Man. This provides

crucial insights for the early church's (and Jesus') understanding of Jesus' true nature. Clearly Jesus is a very unique man, one who can be described in terms that were originally meant for God. Jesus' appearance, then, is nothing short of the return of Yahweh himself. This is also evidenced by the possessive pronouns used by Jesus in Matthew 24:31 (ἀγγέλους αὐτοῦ = "his angels") and 25:31 (θρόνου δόξης αὐτοῦ = "his glorious throne").

In summary, Jesus is once again mixing together different strands of OT themes in his presentation of the Son of Man moniker. This is not because, in my opinion, Daniel 7 was deficient in its description. It was because the "one like a son of man" was the individual representative of God's people who would sum up in himself the OT covenantal promises and bring them to fulfilment.

(4) Summary of exegetical data

To sum up the discussion of 3.2.2, we can say that Jesus' moniker is used in different contexts to allude to his Messianic office predicated by the themes of the OT. The passages above indicate that the Son of Man is one who mysteriously embodies perfect humanity as well as heavenly deity.

One might reasonably ask whether Jesus ever uses the phrase to denote only one aspect of his person. Though there are examples we could cite, such as Jesus' warning about the implications of his itinerant ministry (Mt 8:20), we should be careful in trying to pigeonhole Jesus' statements too aggressively. The Son of Man moniker is utilised to encompass the full range of the character of Jesus and his ministry. Hence there we find echoes of Jesus' uniqueness among and his solidarity with the human beings he has come to save in each category of "Son of Man" utterances.

3.2.4 Biblical theology perspectives

In this section, my interest and focus is to explore the topic from biblical theology perspectives. This means attempting to see if a biblically wider and specifically biblical theology approach will contribute to a better understanding of the underlying implications and nuances of the title that Jesus used of himself. In the section on the Gospels, some of the theological dimensions of the moniker were anticipated or even addressed. For the sake of space, I will

limit myself to four broad theological themes that provide much illumination for the Son of Man motif.

It seems best first to pause and expound briefly on my definition and method of biblical theology. In my view, biblical theology is rooted in the presupposition of God's inspiration of the Scriptures. Put another way, I believe that there is one divine mind/author behind every word of the Bible. As such, there is one story-line that the Lord, the divine author, is telling in his revelation. This storyline can be traced through the Bible in several different ways. Therefore, biblical theology is utilised to understand the Scriptures on their own terms, with the belief that God's story is a unified story flowing through the entire canon (Smith 2013:137).

My own method falls in line with traditional Reformed theologians such as Greg Beale (2011), D. A. Carson (2015), Richard Gaffin (1976) and Geerhardus Vos (2014). Though there are similarities among the various schools of conservative biblical theology (for a comparison see Klink and Lockett 2012), I am persuaded that the history of redemption approach is the most congruent with the biblical testimony. As Carson (2015, online) puts it, "BT answers the question 'How has God revealed his word historically and organically?'" Also, crucial to this method is paying close attention to the major turning points in redemptive history. I will be surveying the Son of Man references within this framework.

(a) *The Son of Man and the Adamic kingship/priesthood theme*

Aside from the philological point that "son of man" in Hebrew is, in fact, "son of Adam" (בֶּן־אָדָם = *ben adam*; see also the LXX rendering in texts such as Ps 8:5), there are numerous inferences that "son of man" derives much of its significance from Adam himself (see, e.g., Beale 2011; Crowe 2017; Gentry and Wellum 2012; Marcus 2003a; 2003b).

When we examine the specifics surrounding mankind's creation (Gen 1 and 2), it is imperative to pay close attention to not only the physical and biological aspect but also to the exact role and commands given to humanity by God. The Creator God gives Adam and Eve three distinct but interrelated commissions in Genesis 1:28: (1) be fruitful and multiply, (2) fill the earth and

(3) subdue and rule over the earth. Mankind was therefore given the task of reigning as God's vice-regents on this earth (Beale 2011:30; Horton 2011:397; Merrill 2006:136; Wenham 1987:33). Adam functions, then, as a kingly figure – one who rules from the garden temple of Eden under the lordship of Yahweh the Great King.

What is more, this role in creation is to be shared by all who descend from Adam and Eve (hence, “be fruitful and multiply”). Though Adam is unique, by virtue of being the first created human and the one entrusted as the head of our race, the image of God is not limited to him but includes Eve and all their progeny. Herein we find an instance of both unique and shared qualities within Adam. What is also imperative to keep in mind is the uniqueness of Adam as our representative and how that parallels with Christ's headship of the new human race. Adam, of course, failed at his task of governing the world and entering the joys of God's eternal Sabbath (Gentry and Wellum 2012:710-711; Horton 2011:397). So, it must be noted, both mankind's relationship with God *and* role in God's creation were forfeited when Adam and Eve disobeyed God's command, resulting in banishment and exile (Gen 3:23-24). Christ's mission, then, must be seen in light of God's purpose to both reconcile the broken relationship and restore humanity to its former role. This is in keeping with what was lost in the original creation. Luke's genealogy juxtaposed with the temptation narrative, to name one NT example, emphasises Jesus' recapitulation (and supersession) of Adam's sonship (Lk 3:38; 4:1-13; cf. Peterson 2012:468-469).

The Psalter, along with the other books of wisdom, provides a fresh perspective on the actions and character of God that is somewhat different than other forms of OT genre. As Merrill (2006:569) notes, the wisdom literature of the OT is primarily made up of subjective reflections. That is, the authors are responding to the Lord's work and/or the circumstances that they are presently experiencing. Even so, this should not deter us from gleaning valuable truth from the content, nor should it influence the Christian to doubt the inspiration of these texts. Though the Psalms speak of individual experiences, they are no less God-centred than the rest of Scripture (Schreiner 2013:250).

In Psalm 8 David is contemplating the grandeur of God by juxtaposing it to the frailty of humanity. As the beginning verses illustrate, the majesty of God should bring joy to the hearts of God's people (vv. 1-3). In the midst of reflecting on God's majesty, the Psalmist transitions to the role of mankind in God's creation. It staggers him to think that God has not only created humans but has also chosen to grant them honour and majesty (v. 5). It would seem that "son of man" (v. 4) in this context, and in Psalm 146, denotes all of mankind, the human race in general (cf. the NET and NIV's [2011 edition] rendering of v. 4).

But perhaps there is more to the description than is apparent at first glance. We must keep in mind that Psalm 8 is situated within Book 1 of the Psalter (comprising Ps. 1-41). Books 1 and 2 are collections of Davidic prayers, which specifically concentrate on the reign and rule of King David. What conclusion can be drawn from these facts? It seems to me entirely plausible to assert that, given Psalm 8's location in the Psalter, that David, the anointed one, sees God's rule manifested in his own earthly reign. That is, the Davidic king and his descendants (the Davidic dynasty) will be the conduit through which God's righteous rule will be exercised (Schreiner 2013:254). Therefore, credibility can be given to the assertion that David focuses on both humanity in general and himself in particular. We may have here an instance in which there is an "individual" element present in the expression "a son of man". Furthermore, this interpretation provides this passage with a more cohesive fit with Psalms of a more messianic flavour (e.g., Ps. 2; 110). So, when Jesus utilises "Son of Man" during his trial before the Sanhedrin, he combines the kingship theme of the Psalter and the vision of Daniel 7.

When we encounter Daniel's vision in chapter 7, the prophet begins with a description (reminiscent of Dan 2:31-45) of succeeding kingdoms. In this vision, as opposed to the statue in chapter 2, the representative elements are ferocious beasts. This beastly portrayal of each kingdom's respective king is illumined by the beast-like affliction of Nebuchadnezzar in chapter 4 (Lucas 2002:234). In dramatic contrast to these creatures is the vision of 'one like a son of man' (Dan 7:13-14). What is clear, from the context of Daniel at least, is this king, the one like a son of man, is intended to be considered as something completely

different than the kings/kingdoms that have come before. This is evident not only by his appearance but by his reception into the presence of the Ancient of Days. The Son of man is given authority and sovereignty that exceeds the boundaries of the former kings, for all the inhabitants of earth will serve him. Finally, again contrasting the beastly kingdoms, the Son of Man's authority and kingdom will never be destroyed.

In the NT, we see the synthesis is made by Jesus through the combination of "Son of Man" and the suffering servant motif. This is clearly seen in Jesus' statements about the nature of his death. For example, The Son of Man will give his life as a ransom for "many" (Mk 10:45 and pars.), which echoes the language of Isaiah 53:12 (cf. also Mk 14:24). In his discussion with Nicodemus, Jesus refers to the bronze serpent in the time of Moses and compares it to the death of the Son of Man (Jn 3:15). Carson comments on the fact that Jesus "himself shapes [the phrase's] content, and under its rubric fuses the authoritative figure of Daniel 7 with righteous sufferer motif from the Old Testament" (1991:164).

Additionally, Jesus combines the Son of Man motif with the kingship of David from Psalm 110 (Mk 14:62 and pars.) and righteous judge returning to earth in the Olivet Discourse (Mk 13 and pars.). In John's Gospel, Jesus even equates his ministry as the Son of Man to the vision of Jacob in Genesis 28. The Son of Man motif unites "power, glory, and kingdom together in the person of Jesus" (Klink 2016:155).

When we turn to the Pauline epistles, an anticipated preliminary objection needs to be addressed at the start. Why include Paul in a discussion on the Son of Man when he never uses the title in his letters? I think there could be a few responses to that question. First, though Paul never uses the actual phrase "Son of Man", it would be short sighted to conclude that he therefore was ignorant of it. Paul clearly demonstrates knowledge of the Gospel traditions (e.g., 1Co 7:10, 12). Second, and more to the point, though Paul never explicitly utilises the title to describe Jesus, his emphasis on Jesus' role as the 'last Adam' has significant parallels with the various nuances surrounding the "Son

of Man” motif. Therefore, it strikes me as highly probable that Paul’s “last Adam” Christology functions as an idiomatic equivalent of “Son of Man”.

Not surprisingly, Paul’s most thorough delineation of the Adam/Christ contrast comes amid his teaching on the eschatological resurrection (1Co 15:20-23, 45-49). The initial point of contact, when it comes to contrasting Adam with Jesus, is found in Paul’s epigram in verse 22. Sin was introduced into the world through the original man, Adam. Now, Salvation has been ushered in through the same means. That is, a human being has brought about the restoration of God’s purpose for the world. What follows (v. 22) is a description of two contrasting humanities; one in Adam, the other in Christ. Later in the chapter (vv. 42-49), Paul provides the theological grounding for the end-time resurrection that will consummate the inward work already present in believers. Once again, the contrast is between Adam and Christ. More to the point, the contrast involves the disparity between the natural and the spiritual. What is natural belongs to the realm of the first Adam, along with the consequences that come with it, namely, death. Conversely, Jesus now functions as the life-giver. As Beale (2011:440) has noted, “Adam’s death-bringing sin ultimately necessitated its reversal in another Adam, who would perform a life giving act”. Yet Paul’s most meticulous distinction comes near the end of his discussion. “The first man is from the earth, made of dust; the second man is from heaven” (1Co 15:47, NET).

What can apparently be construed from this is that Paul is functioning within a similar conceptual world as the four Gospels. In other words, both Paul and the quotations of Jesus in the Gospels, as noted above, seem to convey an understanding of “Son of Man” as a descriptive term referring to Jesus’ heavenly origin and his earthly mission (with slightly more emphasis on the former). His mission includes the restoration of the image of God. In Christ, and him alone, men and women are restored to their proper relationship with God.

(b) The Son of Man’s redemptive work and the Kingdom of God

The Son of Man also has relevance for the theme of the kingdom. As alluded to previously, the Adamic kingship/priesthood theme highlighted in Genesis is meshed with the concept of God’s established kingdom on the earth. This

kingdom is ruled by God and stewarded by his vice-regents, those created as his image. Of course, Adam failed to remain faithful to God and was thus expelled from the garden, plunging all of creation into a state of decay (Gen 3). Jesus, then, is seen taking up the mantle of “last Adam” when the Spirit *drives* him into the wilderness. Reminiscent of when God *drove* Adam and Eve out of Eden, Jesus is being lead into the wilderness to face the enemy of God. In converse fashion, however, during the Lord’s confrontation with Satan he overwhelmingly conquers the temptations levied against him. This point is that Jesus seizes victory where Adam failed.

The Evangelists are keen on highlighting Jesus’ unique and righteous character. Much of this is drawn from the OT’s prophetic vision of a king of righteousness who will serve God and his people in unparalleled fashion (e.g., Is 9:7; 11:1-5; 42:1-4; Jer 23:5-6; Zch 9:9). The Gospel (and other NT) writers are clear: Jesus’ redemptive work demonstrates his fulfilment of the OT as both righteous king and suffering servant (e.g., Mt 12:18-21; Mk 1:1; Lk 4:18-21; Ac 2:32-33; 3:26).

Jesus’ redemptive work dovetails nicely with his preaching of the good news of the kingdom’s arrival. His salvific actions (life, death and resurrection) are the methods of establishing God’s redemptive reign on earth. Jesus’ exorcisms, healings, “nature” miracles and pronouncements of forgiveness were all intended to point to the kingdom’s arrival in his ministry. Statements about the “binding of the Strongman” (Mk 3:27 and pars.) reveal our Lord’s power as the “Stronger One” (Mk 1:7) who could reverse the effects of Satan and sin (Crowe 2017:161; Marcus 2000:283). Of course, the climax of Jesus’ life of obedience is his willingness to go to the cross. In the death and resurrection of Jesus, we see the Son of Man giving his life as a ransom for his people and, consequently, being eschatologically raised from the dead. Ladd correctly notes the mingling of the Son of Man’s sacrifice and the inaugurated kingdom of God (Ladd 1974:324).

In the moments immediately following Stephen’s blistering rebuke of the religious leaders in Acts 7, we see the vindication of Jesus and his reign as King on display. Although the anger of the Jewish council was no doubt at its

breaking point, it seems as if Stephen's vision of the exalted Son of Man pushes them over the edge. As heaven is opened Stephen sees the very one who has been the subject of his speech, Jesus, the risen and reigning Son of Man. As the description of the vision continues, there are numerous parallels to Daniel's vision. Additionally, and perhaps more poignant given the circumstances, this heavenly scene reiterates Jesus' statements made during his own trial (cf. Mt 26:63-64; Mk 14:62; Lk 22:69). In a scenario eerily, similar to Stephen's, it was the "Son of Man" statement pronounced by Jesus that caused the high priest to erupt in anger (Mk 14:63-64 and pars.).

The most plausible explanation of this scene is that Stephen is given visual evidence of his own innocent status. That is, though the Sanhedrin finds him guilty, Jesus has ruled in his favour. Additionally, the irony of Jesus' own trial is now brought to its completion. Jesus was found guilty of blasphemy, though he was innocent, and his proclamation to the authorities was an affirmation of his exalted status as the Son of Man who would, ironically, sit as king and judge over them. What has now become clear is that Stephen (and Jesus) was right – Christ has been vindicated by being resurrected and brought into the presence of the Father. The accusers are judged as guilty for their sin against the saints and, consequently, Jesus himself (see further discussion in Bock 2007:311-313; Polhill 1992:207-208). One of the primary emphases in Acts seems to be Jesus' vindication (i.e., resurrection and ascension) and his establishment of the kingdom of God.

The initial vision in Revelation takes place in the first chapter (1:10-20), where the disciple hears the voice of the risen Jesus. Turning to see the Lord, the disciple is given a spectacular vision of Christ amid seven lampstands. John does not *call* him *the* Son of man; rather he *describes* who he sees as "one like a son of man" (Rev 1:13). Though this form is different than Jesus' quotations in the Gospels (anarthrous rather than articular), it has derived connotations from Daniel 7.

John's comprehensive description of Jesus' appearance is even more intriguing when one realises it bears more resemblance to the Ancient of Days in Daniel than the Son of Man. Given that Daniel sees the one like a son of man

receiving authority and power from the Ancient of Days, it makes sense to consider that there is a mutual sharing of divine glory (manifested in Jesus' majestic appearance). As Osborne (2002:88) notes, "this provides us with emphasis on the unity between God and Christ in the Apocalypse". What is more, the link between Jesus and his sufferings is explicitly conveyed by Jesus in the immediate context. "Do not be afraid! I am the first and the last, and the one who lives! I was dead, but look, now I am alive – forever and ever – and I hold the keys of death and Hades!" (Rev 1:17-18, NET).

The theme of the Son of Man as King and Judge will also surface in John's vision (Rev 14:14). Here there is clear assimilation between Daniel's vision and Jesus' teachings on the kingdom of God (e.g., Mt 13:36-43; 24:30-31). As Jesus, the Son of Man, appears in the vision on a white cloud (cf. Dan 7:13), wearing a golden crown (perhaps Davidic kingship in Ps 8; 110), and holding a sickle with which he will "reap" the earth (i.e., judgment). As the visions are wont to do in the book of Revelation, they are, in similar fashion as with the title Son of Man by Jesus, integrating several aspects of Jesus' person into a single portrait. It has hopefully become apparent, in light of the above information, that "Son of Man" cannot be condensed into a one-dimensional phrase.

(c) The Son of Man and the restoration of humanity's original role in creation

How does the Son of Man motif affect the subjective portion of salvation? Put another way, what are the applicable implications of Jesus' moniker? The biblical testimony is quite clear: Jesus as the last Adam (i.e., Son of Man) is the head of new race of people, the inaugurator of the new creation (Rom 5:12-21; 1Co 15:45-49; 2Co 5:17; Col 1:15, 18).

Even in Daniel's vision of the "one like a son of man", the implications within the context of the vision are pointed in the direction of a new/true humanity reigning with the exalted king (Wright 1992:296; though Wright sees less of an "individual" element in the "one like a son of man" than I do). The new race of people is summed up in the Messiah, the last Adam. The cohesion between the creation narrative in the OT and the redemption accomplished in the NT is evident in themes such as eschatology, resurrection and the new

heavens and new earth. This is because, as Gentry and Wellum point out, “Israel’s doctrine of *salvation* is based on her doctrine of *creation*” (2012:221).

The NT highlights the Son of Man’s perfect and necessary obedience. Just as in Adam all fell, so in Christ all united to him will be made alive (Rom 5:17), implying Christians should follow his example of obedience. The Gospel accounts draw out Jesus’ submission to the Father by pointing to his unique conception by the Spirit, his battle with Satan in the wilderness and his perfect conformity to the will of his Father. Moreover, the NT presents Jesus’ obedience as vicarious and unified (Crowe 2017:202-206). In other words, Jesus’ obedience has implications for our justification. This emphasis is expatiated within the doctrine of the imputation of Christ’s righteousness/obedience (Vickers 2006:221).

Hebrews 2 picks up on this theme by highlighting the failure of mankind to exercise perfect dominion over the earth as God intended (Heb 2:5-10). This failure is only rectified in the person and work of Jesus, the second Adam (note the phrase *βλέπομεν Ἰησοῦν* = “we see Jesus”), who did what Adam, and all his progeny, failed to do. Consequently, then, those united to the last Adam in his death and resurrection share in the glory and honour given to him (Peterson 2012:493).

Expositing the contents of Psalm 8:4-6, the writer of Hebrews delineates the proposition attested to in 1 Corinthians, namely, the restoration of humanity in Christ. In Adam humanity failed to fulfil God’s purposes, but Jesus has come and obediently submitted himself to the will of his Father. Once again, the emphasis here is on Jesus’ victory over death and his subsequent exaltation (Heb 2:9). The compilation of the previous citation of Psalm 110:1 (Heb 1:13) with the exposition of Psalm 8, echoes Jesus’ own synthesis of Daniel 7:13-14 and Psalm 110:1 (cf. Mk 14:62 and pars.). Apparently, the author of Hebrews believes the notions of authority, incarnation and suffering are all pieces to the Son of Man puzzle. Moreover, the author proceeds to detail the reasons for Christ’s incarnation, essentially highlighting the element of humanness intrinsic to the Son of Man. It was necessary for Jesus to become human so that he might experience death for his people (2:17). Jesus, then, becomes the

ἀρχηγός (leader/pioneer) of the Christian's faith. Though Hebrews may focus more on the human aspect of the title, it is obvious that other elements from the OT and the Gospels are interwoven into the description (Bruce 1964:35-36).

The afore-mentioned passages have implications for our view of salvation. Firstly, believers are called to live lives of righteousness and love, exemplified by and made possible through the Son of Man because he encapsulates both human perfection, obedience, suffering, death, resurrection and ascension. Secondly, when the variegated nature of salvation's effects becomes clear, believers see their redemption as more than merely going to some ethereal place to live a body-less existence. Rather, what God has planned is the full restoration of his creation and his image bearers.

Section 3.2.4 has provided additional perspectives on the meaning of the Son of Man title. Working only from the Gospels could initially suggest little more than that Jesus was emphasising his humanity. But that would have been obvious. However, when also taking into account the high number of occurrences of the phrase in the Gospels and Jesus' reluctance to use the term "Messiah" because clearly in the popular usage messiah would not capture the full range of his ministry and prevent its necessary length, there must be further significance to the title. The biblical theology exploration has helped explain the fuller implications of this title Jesus used of himself. These will be fully summarised in 3.2.6.

3.2.5 Non-biblical perspectives

An appropriate element of biblical research and application is the interaction with those who specialise in the sciences that fall outside the typical religious disciplines. In such cases there are frequent opportunities to engage with those who do not hold to Christian convictions. Though we may disagree with their conclusions, we can nevertheless find much in their work that exudes critical thought. Often their goals for human existence and society bear resemblance to the aims of the Christian gospel; and therefore their works can provide a defence of biblical morals, ethics and ideals and ways of achieving them.

3.2.5.1 Humanity's Unity

The unity of humanity is the subject of an article written by McFarland, which, obviously has bearing on my topic of Jesus' redemptive mission as the Son of Man. This thesis has dealt with the concept of Christ's identification with humanity in order to solve the universal problem of sin. Moreover, I have discussed the paradigmatic effects of Jesus' victory – that is, the sharing of his glory and the restoration of humanity's fellowship with God, unity with each other, and their primal place in creation.

McFarland's article examines the slow process by which the world at large began to recognize humanity as an undivided family – beginning around the fifteenth century but making more significant strides in the twentieth century (McFarland 2011:1,8). His method of presentation revolves around the survey of several key individuals who contributed to the positive outlook on humanity's unity. Interestingly, but perhaps not surprisingly, McFarland seems to overlook the influence and teaching of Scripture on this matter. In the Old Testament and (even more explicitly) in the New, the Bible emphasizes God's mission for his people, and that people has always had a multi-ethnic component to it (cf. Isa 2:2-4; 25:6-8; 42:1, 6; Jer 3:17; Zech 8:3; Mt 28:19; John 12:32; Acts 15:14-19; Rev 7:9).

Finally, the topic of Jesus as the Son of Man unveils the fact that we need someone from the 'outside' to redeem us – we cannot save ourselves. McFarland, like many secular thinkers, believes that we create our own destiny, future, and deliverance. If we want to have a better concept of humanity, we must do it ourselves (2011:18). The Scriptures tell us something different – the Creator, the offended party, has intervened on our behalf. He has come in the person of Jesus Christ the Son of Man, the unique human, who can restore us both as persons and relational beings. I believe, furthermore, that without a transcendent and self-revealing God who has created the human race, there is no reason to pursue a conception of a unified humanity. What gives humanity transcendent value anyway? It is in the incarnation of the Son of Man that we see that God takes delight in redeeming human beings, the pinnacle of his creation (see Heb 2:16).

3.2.5.2 The Human Condition

Henry Maslow's hierarchy of human needs is a well-known theory postulated in the 1940s. Greene and Burke are seeking to undo some of the misapplication of Maslow's theory, specifically the belief that Maslow intended self-actualization to be the goal of all human existence. Greene and Burke argue that Maslow intended a further step in the process of needs, one that was indeed the goal of each individual. This final step was characterized not by a self-obsessed attitude but by self-less behaviour and a focus on the needs of others (Greene and Burke 2007:119-120).

This relates to the topic at hand primarily because of its focus on the 'betterment' of mankind. The process by which we can achieve a higher level of existence, no matter the means and nature of the end goal, is the concern of many in the world. But this process is always given as a plan that ignores the problem of sin and the proper goal of worshipping and being in fellowship with our Creator, the essence of Christianity. However, in Jesus' coming as the unique Son of Man, we have the solution not just to our separation from God, but to our lost and divided state in God's creation. As the author of our faith, Jesus forges a path that we could not actuate, but a path that can now be followed by those who belong to Jesus.

I find it intriguing that Maslow referred to people who have gone beyond self-actualization as those who bring the future to the present – in other words, the preferred state of affairs is already made present (Greene and Burke 2007:121). However, this description is one that I would only confer on Jesus and his people. Jesus has indeed brought the future resurrection age into the present through his redemptive work, and all who repent and embrace him share this eternal life in the present age (waiting, of course, for its consummation in the age to come).

In attempting to answer the "why" question (that is, why one should focus on the needs of others as a "selfless-actualized" person), Greene and Burke can offer only pragmatic reasons (2007:122-123). There is no hint that they see humans as created in God's image, and therefore should be recipients of reciprocal service. Rather, what we find is that the authors focus upon restating their own premise: societal experience indicates that we need to focus on the

needs of others, therefore, we need to focus on the needs of others (p. 122). Here is where an explicit command from Christ would be helpful, backed up by his supreme example of sacrificial service for others that they might experience abundant and eternal life (Jesus, as the Son of Man, did not come to be served but to serve us through his death, Mk 10:45). This aspect of Jesus' mission cannot be completely duplicated by us, but it is an attitude that we should share as we identify with our Lord (see also 1Jn 3:16).

3.2.4.3 The Goal of Humanity

P. N. Haksar's article on the future of humanity is intriguing because of his unique perspective as a citizen of India. His views on the progress of humanity and the world, however, are in line with many other secular thinkers.

The article has some potential overlap with the Son of Man theme with Christianity's goal of bringing humanity to utopia. This is due in part to the article's emphasis on the desired destiny of the human race and what can be done to achieve that goal. Furthermore, Haksar touches on religious issues (at least in passing) several times (e.g., Haksar 1992:177), and his handling of those issues is typical of secular thought, regardless of the country of origin.

Haksar's main premise is that for society to flourish it must feed the mind and the body (1992:175). In other words, the needs of the whole person must be met. There is much to be commended about this position. I too agree that this is how human beings must be treated – as complete persons possessing needs within both the physiological and psychological realms. But that is where my agreement ends with Haksar. As a humanist (in the modern sense), Haksar places the needs and happiness of humans as the primary objective of our race (p. 177). He believes we should give up mind sets which only hamper our progress (p. 178). And, finally, Haksar believes we are capable of our own solution, and that solution is pluralism (p. 178).

What we find in this article is a common trait shared with the other articles mentioned above: a hope devoid of God and resting completely on our own strengths. Herein lies the problem with these ideas – if a worldview (which Haksar possesses, though he may contend that he does not) does not account for the Creator, sin, and the incarnation, then there is no way to communicate

any real hope for the humanity. Haksar talks of pluralism (however he defines that we do not know) as the reason for our survival and the hope for our future. But how does pluralism do this? We are not told.

As the reader might expect, I believe the answer lies in Jesus, the Son of Man, who has come to both redeem *and* restore us. There is no way for us to solve this problem; we need something outside ourselves to enter our domain and set everything right. Jesus' redemption does reveal that a plurality of persons will be saved and united, but that this diversity is united under the banner of Christ's Lordship. I agree with Haksar that we need to feed both body and soul. Jesus, as the Son of Man, did just that in his ministry, death and resurrection. It is only through his redemptive work that we are enabled to pass these blessings on to others.

3.2.5.4 Summary and conclusion

Section 3.2.4 has shown many overlapping areas between Christianity and the human and social sciences. They have therefore provided Christianity with greater plausibility and legitimacy and even possibly provided some ideas for improvement in human and social functioning and achievement. From my Christian perspective, it would seem though that these extra-biblical perspectives either imply the rejection or the truncation of the truth claims of the Christian faith, with hollowness left in their wake. What we see in the philosophy of the world's system is a mere "motivationalism", a bombastically issued oratory of attempted inspiration: try harder, do better, band together. The virtues that many so desperately tout, are regarded as perfectly attainable, provided we simply work with moral effort and stamina. But such perspectives are not only out of sync with the biblical testimony of mankind's fallen nature; they also fail to square with the reality of our personal experience of evil in the world.

The Son of Man theology is the living proof of our primordial status, subsequent desperate condition and our redemption (present and through eternity). Jesus through his life and ministry and thus as the head of the new human race, the people of God, blazes the trail by which he brings us to glory. For the Christian, real unity, true human identity, deep meaning, ultimate fulfilment, and teleological hope depend on Jesus' perfect work done on behalf

of fallen human beings. Thus, though insights from the other sciences need to be examined and can prove helpful at certain levels, they cannot replace the achievements of Christ or make them redundant.

3.3 A biblically faithful operative theology regarding the Son of Man motif

In light of the above data, there are four final conclusions that can be made regarding the meaning of the Son of Man moniker. They are therefore necessary for a biblically faithful operative theology regarding Jesus' moniker. They are, however, briefly and in a general way stated as the research has clearly demonstrated that dogmatism needs to be avoided.

3.3.1 "Son of Man" was a self-designation used by Jesus

That Jesus used the title Son of man as a self-designation may seem painfully obvious to many of my readers. However, the evangelicals' high view of Scripture, which would take another mini-thesis to argue, means that they are persuaded that we have an accurate record of the statements of Jesus in the Gospels. They are therefore not considered to be statements made up by the early church and retrofitted onto the lips of Jesus (Evans 2003:163). Neither is it taken that Jesus was speaking about someone else who would come and vindicate his mission at a later time (contra Bultmann 1963:112). The abundant use by Jesus of this somewhat oblique title and its use generally clustered around certain themes provide a strong case for its special significance and therefore theological overtones.

3.3.2 "Son of Man", though primarily drawing from Daniel 7, is someone that encapsulates all the OT Messianic prophecies that point to a "human" figure endowed with divine authority

Seeing the title in its various contexts of use, for example, his ministry, authority, suffering, glorification or future return, enables the interpreter to grasp the significance of Jesus' use of the phrase. Jesus is not simply using "Son of Man" to obliquely refer to himself, though that is included at times. Rather, he is making the statement that he is *that* Son of Man, the one envisioned by Daniel.

The messianic victor over all God's enemies in Daniel is like "a son of man" who not only foreshadows Jesus' ultimate triumph, but also unites the other prophecies of the OT related to the coming Messiah, for example, his powerful healing ministry and sufferings culminating in his death (and of course resurrection and ascension to the right hand of God the Father in heaven). It is not surprising, then, to see Jesus using the Son of Man moniker as a title that captures all the different OT messianic passages and motifs.

The moniker, firstly, clearly emphasises Jesus' humanity. Jesus' early statements about his work as the Son of Man, for example, forgiving and healing the paralytic in Mark 2, are also designed to show that he, and not just anyone, has divine authority. It is an illustrative title for the doctrines related to the two natures of Christ, that is, the incarnation, the hypostatic union and his unique empowerment of the Holy Spirit (without measure) for his messianic ministry (Jn 3:34).

3.3.3 The Son of Man is the head of the new humanity and creation through his salvific work

In direct contrast with Adam who is the head of the old and fallen humanity, Jesus is the last or new Adam who fathers a new humanity. This point is not as explicit in the Gospels (except perhaps in John 3), though I have tried to show that it can be inferred. It is picked up, however, by Paul as he details the effects of Jesus' salvific acts. Jesus, through his life, death, resurrection and ascension, has formed one *new humanity*, one *new man*, out of Jews and Gentiles. In Hebrews Jesus exemplifies the role God designed for the human race and by implication pioneers a way for many other sons of men to share in their foreordained role, now in a more limited way, but fully in the coming new earth. As Gentry and Wellum correctly point out, "it is difficult to overestimate the importance of the Adam-Christ typological relationship for understanding the storyline of Scripture" (2012:616).

3.3.4 As our Federal Head and perfect example, elements of Jesus' ministry are to be emulated by the church

What part should our discipleship and ministry play in response to the contours of Jesus' Son of Man moniker? As was noted in Jesus' passion prediction (Mk 8) and in Stephen's trial (Ac 7), Jesus calls his redeemed people to follow his example. Christians are biblically mostly referred to as disciples – disciples of Jesus. This does not mean that we earn our right standing with God through our imitation of Christ. It *does* mean that we are called to live out the righteous status we have been given in Christ. Being united with the Lord means that we will be conformed to his image. This surely includes our thoughts, words and actions – that is, our daily lives. Jesus and the apostles made it clear that those who follow the way of Christ are sure to experience persecution (Mk 10:38-39; 2Ti 3:12). However, the promise of vindication – a vindication parallel to Christ's – is given to those who persevere (e.g., Rev 2:26-28).

3.4 A biblically faithful operative theology regarding the Son of Man motif for the Damascus Baptist Church

This chapter's conclusion about the operative theology regarding the Son of man title has arrived at a faithful biblically operative theology. The results of the current operative theology presented in chapter 2 now needs to be critiqued and thus an operative theology tailored for DBC. This section therefore presents an evaluation of the situation at DBC in terms of the conclusion to section 3.3 to isolate areas where the old operative theology (i) matches the new, and (ii) where it falls short. It then formulates what positive and negative aspects of the current operative theology with reference to the Son of God moniker need strengthening and correcting respectively. Chapter 4 develops a strategic communicative and structural plan to achieve this.

As was evident from chapter 2 above, the situation at DBC was seen to be somewhat deficient (in the group of respondents, at least) in biblical theology and systematic theology and therefore in deliberately working out the implications in daily life and the church's ministry. It has hopefully been made clear, however, that to faithfully interpret and respond to the significance of Jesus' role as the Son of Man one cannot neglect these theological and its

relevance to the current context of DBC itself and the context in which it operates.

It has been noted that the Son of Man is the most frequent title ascribed to Jesus in the Gospels. It was Jesus' favourite self-designation, with eighty-two occurrences in the four Gospels. It then surely has great significance for understanding Jesus' life and ministry and every effort should be made to "decipher" the words. But why then was it so unfamiliar to the members of DBC and so many other Christians? Why had I never heard any explanation about the significance of the phrase other than its "human nature" connotation? This mini-thesis has pointed to the lack of biblical theology (the discipline of putting the whole Bible together as one story) in many Baptist (I cannot speak for other denominations) circles as the primary culprit. This, in fairness, can be linked to the overtly "liberal" flavour of biblical theology for much of the late eighteenth to twentieth centuries (Scobie 2000:13-14). Nevertheless, conservative scholars from as far back as Irenaeus have demonstrated that it is not only possible, but preferable to interpret the Scriptures in a holistic manner (Gaffin 1976:282-283; Gentry and Wellum 2012:27-34). This implies that a faith community like DBC – though they are not, thankfully, a church *filled* with biblically ignorant believers – must be systematically taught to read, study and interpret the Bible in the light of the overarching biblical theological themes like covenant and the *Missio Dei*. Church leaders should never be satisfied with simple lip service to the Bible's authority and contents. Many profess the Bible as God's Word and yet do not know the basic tenets that it teaches, and thus cannot be clear on what God's will is for their lives and his church.

The early debates in church history about the nature of Christ were not relegated to the academy, but were of utmost concern for the people of God. Why? Because the heart of the Christian faith is centred in Christ, worship and service. Having a better understanding of the person and work of Christ is foundational for Christian devotion and service. This cannot be minimized in the life of the believer. Therefore, merely knowing biblical facts, isolated stories and a few dogmatic categories is not enough to give the Christian a robust theology, one that enraptures the believer into a God-glorifying lifestyle centred in worship

and that can also wade into conversations and situations that are hostile to the Faith.

To move to a biblically faithful operative theology regarding the Son of Man motif, DBC will need to be better equipped to understand biblical theology and engage in biblical theology discourse. The group survey, detailed in chapter 2, revealed that the members were not resistant to Biblical Theological categories but were simply, in my judgment, unaware of them. Given that fact, it is no wonder that the Son of Man motif is perceived as mostly irrelevant in the discipleship life of the church. To mitigate against this trend at DBC, I will need to develop an operative theology regarding the Son of Man motif that is tailored for the church. To ensure this, it will require appropriate preaching and discipleship in the five elements demarcated in 3.3. The strategic plan to both communicate this need and formulate a strategic plan to achieve the new operative theology is tackled in the next chapter.

3.5 A defence of the proposed operative theology regarding the Son of Man motif for the Damascus Baptist Church

Evangelicals seek to be faithful to the revealed will of God. They believe that the Scriptures alone are the only infallible rule of faith for the believer and as such should be cherished and studied with appropriate lifestyle response. Therefore, the biblically faithful operative theology with reference to the Son of Man moniker developed in 3.3 and tailored for DBC in 3.4 is legitimate and vital and therefore defensible.

Further, it can be argued that the major biblical theme of the Bible, namely its plot-line, is reasonable, even convincing. And it is this theme that is encapsulated and fleshed out in the Son of Man moniker and therefore so important for believers at DBC to fully grasp. Also, it can be argued that the Bible is not an indiscriminate, accidental, unrelated, manipulated and unauthoritative compilation of writings with no historical grounding. Its view of its own inspiration can be argued to make better sense of the formation and nature of the Scriptures, especially its authority for faith and life.

As Light argues in his book (2012), the Bible's storyline is not only riveting from a literary standpoint, but also entirely reasonable. This reasonableness of the biblical narrative is evident from the storyline's place in space-time history, from the *imago Dei* shared by all humanity, and the answers given by the Bible, specifically its plot-line, to specific human questions (e.g., the problem of evil, our origins, social dysfunction, our purpose in the world, and solutions to the human predicament). It is therefore not only logical, but also necessary for our worship of God and service in the world, to grasp the full sweep of redemptive history presented in the Bible's storyline (Light 2012:28; cf. also Horton 2011:15-19). The quest for the meaning of Son of Man is undeniably an exercise in storyline analysis, that is, in robust biblical theology where we uncover the interwoven threads that bind together the Son of Man motif.

3.6 Conclusion

The present chapter has argued from (i) literary, exegetical, biblical theology, and non-biblical perspectives, and (ii) from chapter 2 to arrive at a biblically faithful operative theology regarding the Son of Man motif in the Gospels for DBC.

The chapter also demonstrated the areas where most attention would be necessary to achieve an improved and strengthened operative theology at DBC. The major area needing attention is intentional training in the areas of biblical and systematic theology as well as how best to move from theology to practice. The following chapter will develop a strategic plan to achieve a more biblically faithful operative theology regarding the Son of Man title.

Chapter 4

Developing and Defending a Strategic Plan to Improve the Operative Theology of the Damascus Baptist Church with Regards to Jesus' use of the Son of Man Motif

4.1 Introduction

In this chapter, the stage in this study has been reached that seeks the most effective strategy to bring about the more biblically faithful operative theology regarding the Son of man moniker at DBC developed in chapter 3. In terms of Browning's approach to strategic practical theology that is being used for the design of this mini-thesis, this involves answering his fourth question: *What means, strategies, and rhetorics should we use in this concrete situation?*

The strategic plan to achieve the implementation of the new operative theology will need two parts: a communicative strategy and a strategy programme. The first section of this chapter therefore deals with how to communicate the new operative theology to achieve the greatest chance of its acceptance at DBC. The second part covers steps that need to be taken to entrench it, so that the church faithfully understands and responds to the theological and practical implications of Jesus' moniker.

4.2 Communicative plan for the Damascus Baptist Church for gaining its acceptance of the new operative theology with regards the Son of Man motif

Two steps will be recommended for communicating the new operative theology with reference to the Son of Man: (i) working within the present ecclesiastical structure, and (ii) persuading the core members of the need for change.

4.2.1 Working within the present ecclesiastical structure

A “family congregation” model is essentially a family governed church. This can have a double meaning. First, the business of the church is governed *by a particular family*, specifically the family (or families) who have been members of the church for decades. Second, the church functions *like a family* in that it often holds to a congregational model and every member feels “at home” in the church. That means every member is aware of how the “family” does its business (Osmer 2008:44). DBC, according to the description in Osmer, can be loosely labeled a *Family Congregation* in which most of the conflicts arise from “outsiders’ (the pastor or new members) who want to introduce new ways of conducting the church family’s business” (p. 44). Though I have not experienced this kind of negative reaction to “new” ways, it would not surprise me to see the “pot stirred”, so to speak, by a new face introducing “foreign practices”.

With that in mind, then, I will want to draw upon my nearly eight years of committed and loving pastoral service as a basis for confidence in the changes I will recommend. I am hopefully not going to be perceived as an outsider who wishes to evoke change for change’s sake. However, as Bryant and Brunson suggest, it is wise to provide necessary course corrections and slight adjustments in a church about every two years or so (2007:66). As I seek to continue to steer this local body of believers towards greater faithfulness to God’s directives, now regarding the Son of Man title, I hope to model a servant’s heart before my congregation in the process. Any other leadership style will undermine success.

Working within the “family congregation” model has its challenges, but I believe that it can lead to great results if the hurdles are dealt with efficiently and faithfully within this model. This involves intimate communication that clearly defines the actions and goals of any ministry endeavor (Rainer and Geiger 2006:109-112), especially one that requires change. The notion of cognitive adjustments on certain biblical topics, like the Son of Man motif, may seem innocuous enough, but the implications of changing one’s mind on such a

subject can be rather dynamic. Once this step is achieved, there remains the challenge of the practical implications that also needs to be addressed.

4.2.2 Persuading the leaders and core members of the need for change

a. Reflection on the present status of DBC's operative theology regarding the Son of Man motif

After traversing through chapters 2 and 3, the reader will have a somewhat solid appropriation of the situation at DBC and the desired changes that need to be made. What the descriptive research revealed in chapter 2 is that some level of ignorance of integrated theology in general and biblical theology in particular is present in various members of our church. Confusion over some aspects of the Son of Man motif were clearly due to a lack of "biblical narrative" categories. In other words, the discipline of putting the whole Bible together as a unified story that progressively unfolds the revelation of God is not as well developed as it should be. Unless DBC becomes familiar with the science of *biblical theology* (defined in chapter 3 above), it will not be able to handle subjects like the Son of Man. If divorced from this discipline, the Son of Man motif will not receive the explicit attention it deserves. What is more, the layperson needs to see that biblical theology is like a "tool that hangs from your work belt. It's one of the most practical tools a [believer] can have" (Lawrence 2010:179).

Armed with this knowledge, then, I wish to first present to the leaders of the church (deacons, a few other "leaders" [influential core members], the pastor – the latter being me in this case) these findings wisely and sympathetically. It is my hope that our need for intensive and deliberate exposure to the theological disciplines, specifically the technical exercise of biblical theology will be evident from this information. I want to do this by not only presenting the information found in chapter 2 but also by highlighting the areas where the Son of Man motif is an aid for Christian praxis (see section 4.3 below).

b. Communicating the Need for the New Operative Theology regarding the Son of Man motif

Communication can be a tricky thing, especially when you are dealing with the subject of change. Even when change is needed, many do not enjoy being confronted with a deficiency (or *crisis*, to use Browning's [1991] term) that is present in themselves or in their community. Communication, nevertheless is the foundation for all areas of church development (p. 292). Habermas (1981) sees, rightly I think, that free and respected communication, which requires an atmosphere of sympathetic listening to one another and rational evaluation of positions and rational discussion by all, stands the best chance of a lasting consensus decision. So, in a church context he would favour, all members being able to access the same information and discuss it rationally without any coercion and the result would bring the greatest agreement and unity. Habermas argues that it is the interpersonal situation in which we converse that provides the necessary context for informed opinion and rational dialogue leading to the best outcome for all.

Moreover, it is important to remember (especially for church leaders) that the prudence in "over-communicating" the specific need for change, the new change required, and the steps to successfully bring about the change. Lencioni, though coming from a business perspective, insightfully notes that leaders often "confuse the mere transfer of information to an audience with the audience's ability to understand, internalize, and embrace the message that is being communicated" (2012:142). Therefore, it is my responsibility as a leader to overcome my dislike for repeating myself. Deliberate, respectful, repeated and cascading (Lencioni's term – referring to word of mouth dialogue that extends from the leaders of an organization to the employees/congregation) communication are the tools to the congregation's successful appropriation of the information.

Once the leaders are clear on the objectives, clear communication will transpire as they communicate the church's need and the remedial strategy for the change in their own words to both the "outer rim" members.

4.3 Actions required in crucial areas for achieving the new operative theology regarding the Son of Man motif at Damascus Baptist Church

4.3.1 Introduction

Chapter 3 has already revealed that behind understanding a concept like the Son of man moniker, there is a substantial theological foundation, including knowledge of biblical theology, required. This means that facilitating the new operative theology regarding the Son of man title will entail substantial planning leading to a plan consisting of several clearly spelt out steps and their implementation, and significant time. The areas covered in the strategic plan are: expository preaching, an educational programme, the Missio Dei, and evangelism.

4.3.2 Expository Preaching

At the heart of the Lord's Day service is communication with God. As we worship the Lord and beseech him for his goodness and blessings, we hear him respond to us in and through his Word. There is simply no substitute for faithfully and consistently proclaiming the richness of God's truth to the congregation.

In the current liturgical format at DBC, I generally preach twenty-five to thirty minutes each Sunday morning. My primary method of preaching is expositional. I typically take a book of the Bible and preach through it chapter by chapter. Of course, I do not mean to imply that "running commentary" is the only way to preach expositional sermons (I rarely engage in simple running commentary). As Stott clarifies (1982:126-132), expositional preaching consists of setting the limits of the sermon, keeping as faithful to the text's original meaning, enabling us to identify and avoid pitfalls and, finally, giving us the confidence to proclaim the text to God's people. It is in this type of setting that a topic like the Son of Man will have to be addressed and explained. If I am to be faithful to the biblical testimony, I will not have the option of skirting the difficult passages or concepts in the text.

I have found that the deeper I go into the nuances of the biblical storyline, the more clearly, I see the text I am expositing. So much "fluff" can be avoided in our sermons if we labour to dig out the interrelated themes of God's rich story recorded in the Bible. The preaching ministry at DBC, with the Lord's

enablement, will need to include sermons teeming with Biblical and Systematic Theology.

With that in mind, then, not only will sermons in general be more deliberately laced with biblical theology realities and implications, but I propose that a series of sermons dedicated to (i) a definition and defence of biblical theology, and (ii) clear homiletic examples of biblical theology in action. The latter will consist of illustrating to the congregants the practice and benefits of biblical theology using specific texts. This series can be done over approximately two to three months (four to six Sunday morning sermons for both i and ii). The details of such a plan can be delineated as follows:

Step 1: definition and defence of biblical theology (4 weeks)

Goal: Clarify and convince the congregation of the importance of biblical theology

Week 1 – What is biblical theology?

Week 2 – The need for biblical theology

Week 3 – Role of biblical theology in the process of integrated theology

Week 4 – Use of biblical theology in the ministries of the church

Step 2: Biblical Theology in action (4-6 weeks)

Goal: Demonstrate the necessity of biblical theology for hermeneutics and homiletics utilising the Son of Man motif

Week 1: How does the Old Testament relate to the New? The Son of Man and the use of the Old Testament Scriptures in the New Testament (selected Scriptures)

Week 2: The Son of Man and the storyline of redemption (Dn 7:13-14)

Week 3: Who is this Son of Man? Jesus and Adam (Ro 5:12-21; 1Co 15:42-49)

Week 4: Implications of a biblical theology of “Son of Man” – pt. 1 (Jn 1:51)

Week 5: Implications of a biblical theology of “Son of Man” – pt. 2 (Mk 8:31-33)

4.3.3 Education

As should be obvious, one cannot attain a firm grasp of theology with a mere single sermon per week. There should be more to biblical training than the

sermon. Here is where Sunday school, age-defined study groups, and other training forums come into play.

At DBC we have a Sunday school programme that functions fairly well. I am pleased to note that the classes for children have been utilising Lifeway's, *The Gospel Project* (<http://www.lifeway.com/n/Product-Family/The-Gospel-Project>). This I believe is an improvement over many other curriculum formats. *The Gospel Project*, as the name implies, is an effort to recover the gospel-centredness of the biblical storyline. Additionally, the young adult class (taught by myself) is now making use of Graham Goldsworthy's excellent work *According to Plan* (2002). Goldsworthy's book is essentially a steady walk-through of the Old Testament and the progressive revealing of God's grace within that storyline. In a succinct and efficient way, Goldsworthy demonstrates what many Christians easily forget that the Bible is a unified story. In addition, he faithfully expresses the Christo-centric principle in his presentation of the biblical narrative. As he points out early on in his book, "In order to know how any given part of the Bible relates to us, we must answer two prior questions: How does the text in question relate to Christ, and how do we relate to Christ?" (2002:Loc. 694-695).

All of this is an excellent start to building more Christ-centred and biblically literate believers at our church. In addition, I would like to see this trend continue into the Sunday morning and evening services, where our attendance is more substantial. I propose a three-month introductory study course that will be helpful in introducing our people at DBC to the concepts of integrated theology. This could be rotated each year to focus more in depth on each part of the integrated process of theology – exegesis, biblical theology, historical theology, systematic theology, and practical theology. Integrated theology provides the most effective way to establish how to faithfully understand God's will and respond appropriately to his glory. My hope is that this would become a staple of our ministry at DBC, with perhaps a minimum of three months each year focused on shoring up our basic understanding of the Bible and obedience to it.

A sample outline of this kind of study is represented as follows:

Month 1 (Initiation): Foundations of Integrated Theological Interpretation (Exegetical, Biblical, Historical, Systematic and Practical)

This month is simply an introduction and broad overview of the nature, components and value of integrated theology. It would remain essentially the same every year, with one week devoted to an overview of each discipline (with week 4 combining systematic and practical theology). In the remaining Months below, the headings will apply to biblical theology.

*Month 2 (Intensification): The Role of **Biblical Theology** in relation to various biblical themes (progressive revelation, thematic overlap, and Christocentric fulfilment)*

This month will rotate each year to focus more in depth on each aspect of integrated theology. So, for example, in the first year we would cover exegetical theology; in year two, biblical theology; in year three, historical theology, and so forth. This means every four-year period, then, the entire integrative process would be covered (combining systematic and practical in one year). The heading covers the year when biblical theology is covered in more detail.

Month 3 (Implementation): How to use biblical theology to interpret and apply the Son of Man motif

In this month, the members are shown how all the information they have gained thus far leads to a more biblically faithful interpretation and application of the Son of Man motif. There is, obviously, some overlap between the disciplines. Application and practicality should be present in every doctrinal endeavour we undertake. This month will hopefully demonstrate not only the benefits of one of the disciplines (in this case, biblical theology), but also how the disciplines need to be used together (hence, integrated) to effectively lead us to orthodoxy and orthopraxy.

4.3.4 Missions

In addition to being biblically literate, we desire to be missions-driven in the light of the *Missio Dei* at DBC. Herein lies another practical emanation from Jesus' Son of Man motif. As the Son of Man, Jesus does not merely deliver us from sin and its consequences but also restores us to a proper relationship with our Creator

and the world he has placed us in. This is the mission God has been on since the beginning of world history. The salience of that truth has at least three finer implications for how we think about our mission as God's people.

a. Human solidarity

There is always a strong tendency to segregate people according to certain parameters, and this is not always a negative exercise. The Bible certainly recognises differences according to gender, age and geographic location. However, overemphasising the differences can come at the cost of stereotyping or neglecting altogether a particular group based on arbitrary standards.

Within the narrative structure of the Bible, there is a unity of the human race that is seen clearly in the incarnation of Jesus, the Son of Man. Though he was certainly a Jewish man of the first century (in dress, appearance and custom), he nevertheless is the representative head of all human beings who are united to him by faith. With Paul's contrastive statements in places like Romans 5:12-14, the most acute division among humans is between those in Adam and those in Christ.

b. Proclaiming the unique Son

In connection to the element of the church's mission, there has been an increased emphasis on defining "mission" as merely "living out the gospel" in our community. By this most advocates embrace a view of mission that is focused on "being" the church in our world, not so much on proclaiming the message of salvation to the world. We're to be concerned about making the works of Jesus visible through our actions in all spheres of our society, not necessarily on communicating the good news about Jesus (Lawrence 2010:205; cf. Guder 1998; Wright 2006).

It will be shown below that it is important for Christians and the church as a body to also proclaim verbally the message of salvation through Christ alone. But some comment is pertinent about the social gospel where Christians seek to transform society through human effort without recourse to the bringing in the key role of the gospel of Christ to first transform lives from sinful, self-centred ones into ones seeking the will and glory of God. Yes, there can be some

positive transformation of society's culture as Christians seek to bring it more in line with God's righteous will, as Christians intersect with people and places that coincide with their occupation, hobbies and the like. Yet this is not the mission of the church *per se*. I would label these cultural improvements as "side effects" of gospel-focused Christians living their lives in the power of the Spirit. The mission of the church is not to simply "be" the church in the so-called "third spaces" (coffee shops, gyms, market places) of life, silently "living the gospel" day by day.

Rather, the church is to firstly proclaim Jesus' unique life, death and resurrection. This will include the message of the mission of God to restore the world to righteous government and righteous standards in society. But the message will be centred in the gospel as the only way to achieve this. This is because evangelicals believe that such a righteous paradigm is only possible as sinners are transformed by the grace of God through the gospel. The church "does not usher in the kingdom of God. These are ministries uniquely given to the Son" (2010:207).

Proclaiming God's mission in the world, a mission made possible only through the person and work of Christ, thus does not mean that the Christian life can be reduced to straightforward imitation and that therefore society can be transformed through human effort alone. This is because the Christian and the church are not created through acts of imitation (Horton 2011:898, 901). The process of societal change is only possible through increasing numbers of citizens being radically changed through the salvific work of Christ that only he can perform.

Proclaiming Christ then in the world calls for announcing his unique redemptive work as the only way to a righteous society and world. This proclamation must therefore include the declaration of the righteous requirements of God, repentance from breaking his standards of righteousness, and acceptance by faith of the unique justifying and sanctifying power of the gospel. Thus, the message about Jesus is that he is king over God's world and calls for a restoration of righteousness in his kingdom and will one day be everybody's judge, hence highlighting the importance of his redemptive work.

c. Following orders

To borrow the apostle Paul's often used phrase, "what, then?" How does the church understand her mission considering biblical-theological themes like the Son of Man motif?

First is the foundational concept of the authority of the risen Son of Man. This authority, prefigured in Old Testament visions like that of Daniel 7 (Osbourne 2010: Loc 28763), is spelled out in graphic detail for us in the ascension of Jesus (Mt 28:18-20). Jesus' *ἐξουσία* (authority) is revealed as absolute and causative. Its exhaustive nature gives rise to the task given to the disciples – to go into all the world and make disciples of all nations. This is the mission of the church: obediently testifying to the perfection of the person and work of Christ. This command to penetrate the nations with the gospel is the marching orders of the believer. As Beale summarises: "Believers express their identification with Christ's Adamic kingship when they spread the presence of God by living for Christ and speaking his word" (2004:396-397).

Second is the nature of the relationship between the church and culture. Even as there has been a tendency to overemphasise or deemphasise a certain aspect of the person of Christ (either his deity or humanity, his uniqueness or exemplary character), there is a great tendency to force a dichotomy between the church as a *place* where ministry happens and a *people* who minister in the world (Horton 2011:898-899). The extensive literature that has been written on this subject cannot be assessed in this mini-thesis (for more contemporary perspectives see, e.g., Boot 2016; Newbigin 1995; Plantinga 2002; VanDrunen 2010; Wolters 2005). Though only touched on briefly in chapter 3, the notion of Jesus' unique and paradigmatic nature and ministry should be carefully applied at this juncture. As Horton (2011:898) maintains, the church is not simply the continued "incarnation of Christ", rather we witness to the uniqueness of Christ.

Nevertheless, as those who are united to Christ via the Spirit's regenerating power and indwelling presence, we are to display virtue both personally and in our interaction with the world. We cannot simply resume the original creation mandate of Genesis 1 – as though sin could be overcome

through social and civil action. The kingdom of God will be consummated only when the Son of Man returns, when the final intervention of God occurs in the world. Our mission in the meantime is primarily the preaching of the gospel (see next section), with social and civic action seen as secondary (though still important). “Resting comes before working. Justification comes before sanctification. God’s decision and activity comes before ours” (Horton 2011:898).

The Great Commission, then, is not simply a “Christianised” restatement of Genesis 1:28 (i.e., the creational mandate). Neither is it to be seen in complete isolation from it. Rather, the primary mission of the church is to witness to what the Triune God has accomplished in the person of Jesus (who fulfils the creation mandate as the last Adam), while also lovingly advocating for peace, justice and the “good of the city” until the Son of Man returns. Carson (2008:227) offers clarity here: “Instead of imagining that Christ against culture and Christ transforming culture are two mutually exclusive stances, the rich complexity of biblical norms, worked out in the Bible’s story line, tells us that these two often operate simultaneously”.

4.3.5 Evangelism

Section 4.3.4 emphasized the importance of God’s mission of redemption – his plan to deliver sinners from his wrath and restore them eternally in a world transformed to its former, if not greater, glory and perfection. Section 4.3.4 focused on faithfully and accurately covering this truth in evangelism. So, what is the answer to the question, “How does or should Jesus’ moniker affect our presentation of the good news?” The answer lies in the nature of the gospel itself. God’s glory displayed in the salvation of sinners is the centrepiece of the biblical-theological narrative of Scripture. As such, we would do well to notice how any theme of biblical theology (in this case, the Son of Man) is developed in relation to the redemption of God’s creatures.

The gospel only makes sense biblically if we place it into the storyline of the Bible. Detaching the person and work of Christ from the surrounding canonical context only aids in muddying the waters. Jesus’ significance, and the significance of his work, is always proclaimed in conjunction with the Old

Testament's storyline. Jesus is overcoming the sin of Adam and his posterity, he is restoring us to our role in God's creation, he is destroying the works of Satan, and he is ushering in the new creation and God's kingdom. In short, the Son of Man is the one "who bears in himself the fullness of the kingdom in that he is God, man, and created order, all existing in perfect relationship" (Goldsworthy 2000:88).

Rather than peddle a pragmatic "gospel" that is merely *advice* masquerading as *news*, we must deliver to our congregations and our communities the full-orbed gospel of Jesus Christ. Though we may not always use the title "Son of Man" in our gospel presentations, we at least must emphasize the covenantal and creational status that all people in all places possess. We must address the promise-fulfilment structure of the Bible in a way that causes our listeners to be swept up in the cosmic vision of redemption.

4.4 Conclusion

The present chapter has attempted to lay a strategy for equipping the members of DBC with a biblically faithful operative theology of Jesus' use of the Son of Man motif. It involves a communicative strategy and a strategic programme.

Communicating the need for change with the leaders (deacons and several core members) of the church is to be my first and primary task as Pastor of DBC. Without their support and motivated action, successfully launching the new operative theology regarding the Son of Man moniker will never come to fruition or be successful. After presenting a case for our need to focus more on biblical theology, the heart of the new operative theology, I will be tasked with bringing to light this necessity to the entire church. If accepted, the next phase of the strategic plan will encompass adjustments and additions to the internal areas of the church (such as preaching and teaching) and the external ministries of the church (missions and evangelism). These are spelt out in the strategic plan to achieve the new operative theology with reference to the Son of God moniker.

Understanding the Son of Man motif entails integrative theology which includes biblical theology. The strategic plan to implement the new operative theology concerning the Son of Man identity therefore includes teaching biblical

theology, whose relevance is demonstrated powerfully when seeking a proper understanding of this title Jesus used of himself. When integrative theology is used properly, concepts like “Son of Man” are not only better understood but are also used to develop a more biblically faithful praxis in obedience to the Lord.

Chapter 5

Conclusion

5.1 Review of Objectives

The primary objective of this mini-thesis was to formulate a theologically-informed, communicative and strategic plan to ensure that the praxis of Damascus Baptist Church (DBC) with respect to Jesus' use of the Son of Man motif is faithful to God and optimally relevant to its ministry context. This main objective was met by breaking it into three secondary objectives. A chapter was devoted to each sub-objective. This structure was taken from Browning's model for strategic practical theology which answers four questions: How do we understand the concrete situation in which we must act? What should be our praxis in this concrete situation? How do we critically defend the norms of our praxis in this concrete situation? What means, strategies and rhetorics should we use in this concrete situation? The answer to the first question achieved the first secondary objective; the answers to the second and third questions, the second secondary objective; and the answer to the fourth question, the last secondary objective.

The first secondary objective, "interpreting the operative theology of Damascus Baptist Church with respect to Jesus' use of the Son of Man motif", was met in chapter 2: firstly, through my preliminary research on the doctrinal and social position of DBC, and, secondly, through a qualitative study utilising an open-ended questionnaire to determine DBC's beliefs and practices regarding the Son of Man motif.

The second secondary objective, "determining and defending a more biblically faithful praxis regarding Jesus' use of the Son of Man motif" for DBC in its context was fulfilled in chapter 3. Theological perspectives and imperatives developed through the study were mapped out over the empirical perspective of chapter 2 to form the preferred praxis for DBC in relation to Jesus' use of the Son of Man motif. Some attention was given to defending the new praxis.

The third and final secondary objective, “developing a strategic communicative plan to strengthen the operative theology of DBC in relation to Jesus’ use of the Son of Man motif” was fulfilled in chapter 4. This objective was achieved by presenting, firstly, a communicative strategy to gain acceptance of the new operative theology, and, secondly, a strategy to ensure the successful implementation of the new operative theology for DBC. Fulfilling these three objectives means that the primary objective of the study has been achieved.

5.2 Tracing the Argument

This second section of my closing chapter traces the argument of the mini-thesis. Several steps were needed to achieve the secondary research objectives. Chapter 2 focused on the first secondary objective which was to establish the beliefs and practices of DBC in relation to Jesus’ use of the Son of Man motif. Even after believing that I and DBC lacked suitable understanding of the Son of Man moniker and its relevance to the individual Christian and the local church, I needed to be certain of DBC’s position. It would be unwise to consider any changes before ascertaining with a reasonable measure of certainty the actual situation. This required specific research. The first step involved sourcing essential background information to clarify the history, tradition, theology, context, vision and ministries of DBC. This information was acquired through personal observation as the Pastor and literary research. The next step was the undertaking of a small-scale qualitative empirical study covering eight members of DBC. An open-ended questionnaire was used as the tool in this research. The data collected was organized, analysed and interpreted under the following two headings: 1) the Son of Man motif in the four Gospel, and 2) the Son of Man motif and broader theological implications. The discussion of the data led to some conclusions concerning the beliefs and practices regarding the Son of Man motif at DBC in its context. The finding of chapter 2 was that the doctrinal position of DBC was at least “under-informed” about the Son of Man. I identified the primary impetus as a lack of knowledge concerning Integrated Theological categories, specifically biblical theology (in the technical sense).

Chapter 3 took up the second secondary objective which was to seek and defend a biblically faithful theology of the Son of Man motif for DBC. Browning rightly views this as the next logical step in strategic practical theology. For the evangelical, which I am, this was most important as Scripture is taken as the ultimate authority for faith and practice. This presentation of the Son of Man motif needed to consider the results of chapter 2 to ensure an optimal impact. The desired praxis of missions, therefore, had to be one that is deliberately faithful to the nature, will and purposes of God. It was thus important to begin chapter 3 with establishing a normative theological perspective on the Son of Man motif before tailoring the praxis to DBC's unique context. This was achieved through research into biblical, historical and systematic theology perspectives on the Son of Man. This is covered in Browning's second and third movements. The fourth movement is strategic practical theology which seeks to dovetail the other three movements. Next, this normative theological perspective was brought into dialogue with the findings of the empirical perspective (chapter 2) to form a theory of praxis for DBC related to the Son of Man motif. The more faithful operative theology developed was then defended in the light of DBC's ministry context, Scripture, Jesus' person and work, and the writings of some contemporary theologians.

Chapter 4 brought the argument of this mini-thesis to its intended goal. The aim of this study was to present a communicative and strategic plan to successfully implement the normative theology and praxis regarding Jesus' use of the Son of Man motif established in chapter 3. This chapter first considered the best ways by which I (the Pastor) and the key leaders (Deacons and core members) could effectively communicate the need for change. As the Pastor, I accept the responsibility of being the key person in the communicative process, firstly, to the leaders, and then, secondly, with them, to all the other members at DBC.

It was shown that the introduction of the new "Son of Man" praxis needed specific structures, programmes and a curriculum for improvement in DBC's grasp of the doctrine underlying this moniker. This is especially true if the church desires to achieve maximum implementation of the preferred praxis and

its success. The strategic plan includes preaching, education, the church's mission, and gospel-proclaiming activities of DBC to fully grasp the Son of man motif and its practical applications for DBC and the individual members.

The argument of this mini-thesis thus followed the generally accepted praxis-theory-praxis paradigm for practical theology. This means whenever an area of concern about some aspect of a church's life calls for attention and intervention, the logical and most effective way to seek a solution that is faithful to the traditions of the church is through this threefold model of study. In the wording of Cowan's (2000) model, this entails *Interpreting the world as it is*, *Interpreting the world as it should be*, and *Interpreting our contemporary obligations, acting accordingly and evaluating our action*.

5.3 Summary of findings and their significance

The research has brought to light several major findings. It was found that although DBC has a strong foundation in conservative presuppositions regarding Scripture's teachings, many members do not have firm footing in the integrative theological disciplines. Further, the research revealed that the church was not opposed to any of the theological methods but merely ignorant of them. Biblical theology was shown to be both the most helpful for interpreting the Son of Man and the most absent from the respondents' theological repertoire.

Chapter 3 responded to this situation by presenting more biblically and theologically faithful beliefs and practices regarding Jesus' use of the Son of Man motif. First, "Son of Man" was used by Jesus to refer to himself. They were not inventions of the early (or later) church and retroactively applied to Jesus' speeches. Second, "Son of Man", though primarily drawing from Daniel 7, is someone that encapsulates all the OT messianic prophecies that point to a "human" (Adamic) figure endowed with divine authority. Third, through his redemptive work, the Son of Man is the head of the new humanity and new creation. Fourth, and finally, as our Federal Head, the paradigmatic elements of the Son of Man's ministry should be imitated by the church. Thus, through scrutinising several NT passages that present Jesus' utilisation of the Son of Man moniker, it was concluded that Jesus' unique authority was underpinned by

a synthesising of numerous OT prophetic themes, not least of which was the role of the Son of Man as the last Adam. This tentative conclusion was further substantiated by a sampling of the larger canonical contribution to the Son of Man motif.

Chapter 3 presented the minimum requirements for understanding and applying the Son of Man motif at DBC. The latter entailed developing from the biblical and theological perspectives on Jesus' use of the Son of Man to a theory of praxis. To achieve this, two broad steps were developed:

1. The communicative plan for gaining acceptance of the new operative theology regarding the Son of Man moniker at DBC.
2. The key areas that will facilitate the implementation of the new operative theology at DBC.

The first step deals with the necessity to convince the leaders and through them the rest of the church of the need for the new operative theology with reference to the Son Man and how to do this. The second step covers four key areas where attention is required to achieve an understanding and application of the new operative in relation to the Son of Man motif: preaching, education, missions, and evangelism.

At this point it would be prudent to remind the reader that my research was limited. I deliberately limited the study by focusing on one local church (DBC) and its beliefs and practices related to Jesus' use of the Son of Man motif. This study, as all others, has intentional limitations of breadth, seeing as it did not explore all concepts and arguments presented in scholarly works on the Son of Man motif. This is especially evident when one considers the vast ranging implications of properly applying the paradigmatic and unique aspects of Jesus' person and work. This also entails that it was selective in terms of literature consultation. Obviously, the study would have grown too long if further literary research had been attempted. There is therefore an opportunity for future research on the Son of Man motif, particularly with reference to how our restored relationship with God (i.e., the new humanity) relates to our creational mandate and the Great Commission.

Of course, I should mention here that the limited number of interviewees affects any conclusions about how the church as a whole, understands the moniker. I think one aspect here is that I have been a pastor of this church for many years and have a reasonably good understanding of how well church members generally understand the moniker. At the very least, I am aware of their limited understanding of biblical and systematic theology, so essential to a proper grasp of the moniker. As mentioned in chapter 2, there is some speculation on whether it is possible to extrapolate the findings with the reference to the eight respondents to the whole membership. At the end of the day, however, the eight interviewees are representative of at least some of the other members. For the sake of all these members the new operative theology is necessary. The others can only benefit from the remedial interventions proposed in this thesis, especially regarding further training in biblical theology.

5.4 Conclusion

Jesus is the Son of Man. What does that mean? Why does it matter? This mini-thesis has reasonably demonstrated the cognitive and practical dimensions to a biblically faithful operative theology regarding the Son of Man motif. Jesus' moniker can be considered as the summation of all the Old Testament messianic prophetic types and shadows, culminating in the human figure, who ushers in the kingdom of God. The last Adam is also the divine Son of God, who condescended to identify with us in the incarnation. He takes on the mantle of our new federal head and redeems those given to him by the Father. He restores us to our intended role in God's creation and guarantees our future resurrection in the age to come.

The practical implications of the doctrine of Jesus as the Son of Man are significant to faithful Christian living so that we participate in the *Missio Dei*. Whether it be answering sociological questions regarding the goal of human existence or wondering how best to live considering God's will, Jesus' role as the head of the new humanity is more than pertinent. At DBC, we wish to not only understand the significance of Jesus' moniker, but also how we are to live in light of its truth. Indeed, there seems to be an implicit question from the world – a question asked once before: "Who is this Son of Man?" As God's people at

DBC, we want to be able to respond as our Lord once did, “Come, and you will see”.

Appendix: Questionnaire

Instruction:

Please answer the questions strictly in the order given. As you progress through the questions your knowledge of the “Son of Man” title/motif in the Bible will likely increase and new thoughts will come to you about this term. This will tempt you to want to go back and add additional information to answers to previous questions. But please do not do this as it will undermine the value of the research.

From question 3 please read the Bible passages referenced in each question. But do not read any commentaries or Study Bible notes on these verses. For this research to be accurate, all the people answering the questionnaire must either not read any of the verses or read all the verses. I have chosen the latter. This means it will take a little longer to complete the questionnaire. But it can be completed over two sittings/sessions.

The first two questions are intended to probe your understanding right now of the title Son of Man that Jesus frequently used. The remaining questions are meant to provide your understanding after reading key and other potentially relevant Bible verses. In other words, your answers to questions 1 and 2 might be sketchy, but that is fine and possibly to be expected. Your views after reading the verses referenced in the remaining questions will naturally reflect a deeper understanding of the title.

Section 1: The Son of Man in the Four Gospels

1. What is your current understanding of the phrase “Son of Man” when it is used by Jesus in the four Gospels (remember to answer *this question* and *question 2* before reading any of the Bible passages in the remaining questions)?

2. In the Gospels, do you think “Son of Man” is used by Jesus for a specific reason or reasons?

If you answer yes, what reason or reasons?

3. In the Gospels, Jesus uses “Son of Man” to talk about three different aspects of his identity: (i) His ministry to the lost (Lk. 19:10), (ii) his death and resurrection (Mk. 8:31; Jn. 3:14-15), and (iii) his divine authority (Mt. 25:31; Mk. 2:10; 14:62; Jn. 5:27). In your opinion, how does the Son of Man title relate to each of these aspects?

4. In *Mark 10:45*, Jesus states that his followers should imitate his service as the Son of Man, who did not come to be served but to serve by giving his life as a ransom for many.

What nuance (i.e. range of meaning) does the title have here in this passage?

What are the implications for Christ’s followers?

5. In your opinion, why would Jesus use “Son of Man” language to speak on and clarify his role as Messiah (e.g. after Peter’s confession in Mk. 8:27-33, after Nathaniel’s confession in Jn. 1:49-51, or during the inquisition in Mt. 26:64)?

Section 2: The Son of Man and Broader Implications

6. Did you know that Jesus combines various OT themes when referencing his role as the Son of Man (e.g. Mt 26:64; Mk 8:38; Mk 10:45)? If so, have you ever studied some of the background passages (e.g. Is. 52:13-53:12; Ps. 110; Dn. 7) with that in mind?

7. Who do you think the “one like a son of man” is in Daniel’s vision (Dn. 7:13-14)? How does this impact your reading of the Son of Man title Jesus used of himself in the Gospels?

8. In the letter of Hebrews, the author **refers** to the “incomplete” state of mankind’s role in God’s creation (note “son of man” in Heb. 2:5-8), but immediately follows with a description of Jesus’ saving/redemptive work on our behalf (v. 9). Why do you think the author put these two concepts together? Does this add anything to your understanding of the effects of salvation?

9. To what degree do you think Paul's "last Adam/man from heaven" in 1 Corinthians 15:44-56 parallels Jesus' "Son of Man" title? Choose the option that equates with or comes closest to your answer:

- ☐ Not at all
- ☐ Very little
- ☐ Somewhat
- ☐ Completely

10. If "Son of Man" merely means that Jesus is human, how would you interpret passages such as Matthew 24:14, 30-31, where we have the theme of Jesus as the Son of Man coming in power on the clouds at his return? Keep in mind, this phraseology parallels the vision in Daniel where "one like a son of man" appears before God the Father *with the clouds* and is given authority over all nations. This "one like a son of man" also establishes his eternal kingdom that will never be destroyed (Dn. 7:13-14). What do you think these passages, taken together, show about the relationship between Jesus' humanity and his divinity? Explain your answer.

11. Before you received/answered this questionnaire, what impact, if any, did Jesus' use of the Son of Man title have on your Christian life (your beliefs and practices)?

12. Jesus, by using the title Son of Man, identifies with the whole human race and as the eternal saviour for all peoples/nations. (a) How does this affect your attitude towards people from other ethnic groups? (b) How should this affect your attitude towards people from other ethnic groups?

13. How, if at all, does the Damascus Baptist Church integrate the teaching and implications of Jesus as the Son of Man into its discipleship ministry?

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