

**Jesus of Nazareth:**  
 Jesus in historical context  
 The Son of Man

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This presentation series is dedicated to the memory of Jim Kettlewell, a lifelong learner and an inspiring friend.

## Historical approaches to scripture

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- **Deep study of historical context to mentally recreate the world of the text through focusing on**
- Outside verification
  - Josephus; Roman records, etc.
- Number of sources
  - all four gospels = more evidenced
- Lack of fit with tradition or overall message
  - "I do not bring peace but a sword"
- Earliest documents
  - Mark, Q, Paul's letters

## Who was Jesus of Nazareth?

Series:  
What can we learn about the historical Jesus from the period history and his use of rhetoric? How can this enhance our understanding of Jesus and the Early Church?

### Last Week:

- What does it mean that the early church referred to Jesus as Jesus of Nazareth?
- Why did he forbid others to call him "Messiah" or "King"?
- What did it mean in his time to call oneself "Messiah" or "King"?

### This week

- Why did he refer to himself until his trial as "the Son of Man"?
- How were his words and actions related the powers of his day?

### The Next Two Weeks

- What was the role and function of his miracles?
- How is this related to the Early Church leadership as focused in James, his brother?

## Jesus of Nazareth: The Galilean

The time before and after Jesus was a period of **revolt, rebellion, claims to kingship, and claims to be messiah.**

Most revolts against Rome came from Galilee.

"The framework of Mark's Gospel is partly geographical:

- Galilee (Mk 1:14-9:49),
- through the area "across the Jordan" (Mk 10:1)
- and through Jericho (Mk 10:46-52),
- to Jerusalem (Mk 11:1-16:8)."

[http://www.conformingtojesus.com/charts-maps/en/map\\_of\\_israel\\_at\\_the\\_time\\_of\\_jesus.htm](http://www.conformingtojesus.com/charts-maps/en/map_of_israel_at_the_time_of_jesus.htm)



Mark - Introduction. The Gospel According to Mark. *United States Conference of Catholic Bishops.* <http://www.usccb.org/bible/mark/0>

## The “Messianic Secret”

**Mark 4:11** He told them, “The secret of the kingdom of God has been given to you. But to those on the outside everything is said in parables ...”

- **Mark 1:14** “And after John had been taken into custody, Jesus came into Galilee, preaching the gospel of God, 15 and saying, “The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand; repent and believe in the gospel.”
- “After the call of the first four disciples, all fishermen (Mk 1:16–20), we see Jesus engaged in teaching (Mk 1:21, 22, 27), preaching (Mk 1:38, 39), and healing (Mk 1:29–31, 34, 40–45), and exorcising demons (Mk 1:22–27, 34–39).”

Yet, “The content of Jesus’ teaching is only rarely stated, and then chiefly in parables (Mk 4) about the kingdom.”

Mark - Introduction. The Gospel According to Mark. *United States Conference of Catholic Bishops*. <http://www.usccb.org/bible/mark/0>

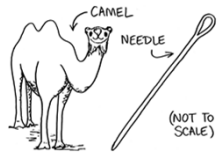


<https://www.usccb.org/the-gospel-according-to-mark/lessons-from-the-parables-the-parable-of-the-sowing-and-seed>

## The Kingdom of God: Mark 4

<http://pixgood.com/mustard-tree-faith.html>

- A farmer went out to sow his seed. <sup>4</sup> As he was scattering the seed, some fell along the path, and the birds came and ate it up...
- “This is what the kingdom of God is like. A man scatters seed on the ground. <sup>27</sup> Night and day, whether he sleeps or gets up, the seed sprouts and grows, though he does not know how. <sup>28</sup> All by itself the soil produces grain—first the stalk, then the head, then the full kernel in the head. <sup>29</sup> As soon as the grain is ripe, he puts the sickle to it, because the harvest has come.”
- <sup>30</sup> Again he said, “What shall we say the kingdom of God is like, or what parable shall we use to describe it? <sup>31</sup> It is like a mustard seed, which is the smallest of all seeds on earth. <sup>32</sup> Yet when planted, it grows and becomes the largest of all garden plants, with such big branches that the birds can perch in its shade.”



<http://printabledouringspages.co.uk/>

## Bad news for the rich

BTW: there is no evidence for ... a gate in Jerusalem called the eye of the needle through which a camel could not pass unless it stooped and first had all its baggage first removed. ...

<http://www.biblicalhebrew.com/nt/camelneedle.htm>

- Mark 10<sup>17</sup> As Jesus started on his way, a man ran up to him and fell on his knees before him. "Good teacher," he asked, "what must I do to inherit eternal life?"
- <sup>18</sup> "Why do you call me good?" Jesus answered. "No one is good – except God alone. <sup>19</sup> You know the commandments: 'You shall not murder, you shall not commit adultery, you shall not steal, you shall not give false testimony, you shall not defraud, honor your father and mother.'<sup>[a]</sup>"
- <sup>20</sup> "Teacher," he declared, "all these I have kept since I was a boy."
- <sup>21</sup> Jesus looked at him and loved him. "One thing you lack," he said. "Go, sell everything you have and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven. Then come, follow me."
- <sup>22</sup> At this the man's face fell. He went away sad, because he had great wealth.
- <sup>23</sup> Jesus looked around and said to his disciples, "How hard it is for the rich to enter the kingdom of God!"
- <sup>24</sup> The disciples were amazed at his words. But Jesus said again, "Children, how hard it is<sup>[b]</sup> to enter the kingdom of God! <sup>25</sup> It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for someone who is rich to enter the kingdom of God."

### Similar Concept

Old English Cyning  
 "possibly related to Old English cynn "family, race" (see kin), making a king originally a "leader of the people." Or perhaps it is from a related prehistoric Germanic word meaning "noble birth," making a king etymologically "one who descended from noble birth." ... "The exact notional relation of king with kin is undetermined, but the etymological relation is hardly to be doubted" [Century Dictionary].  
 Online Etymological Dictionary.  
 "cyning"

## King and Kingdom

- **Mark 9:1** And he said to them, "Truly I tell you, some who are standing here will not taste death before they see that the kingdom of God has come with power."
- **Matthew 16:28** "Truly I tell you, some who are standing here will not taste death before they see the Son of Man coming in his kingdom."

Matthew implies that the kingdom belonging to the Son of Man is one and the same as the Kingdom of God.

Wiki "Son of Man"  
[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Son\\_of\\_man\\_\(Christianity\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Son_of_man_(Christianity))

## The Son of Man

- The expression "the Son of man" occurs **81 times in the Greek text of the four Canonical gospels, and is used only in the sayings of Jesus.**
- The singular Hebrew expression "son of man" (בן-אדם i.e. ben-'adam) also **appears in the Hebrew Bible over a hundred times.**
- **The use of the definite article in "the Son of man" in the Koine Greek of the Christian gospels is novel, and before its use there, no records of its use in any of the surviving Greek documents of antiquity exist.**

All scriptural quotes from Bible Gateway NIV  
<https://www.biblegateway.com/>

## The Messiah in the Hebrew Bible

A liberator who will release the Jews from bondage  
 (Deuteronomy 18:15-19;)

Though others refer to Jesus as a prophet, in Mark he only references himself as such once: "Jesus said to them, "A **prophet** is not without honor except in his own town, among his relatives and in his own home." Mark 6:4 see Luke 4:24; John 4:44.

<sup>15</sup> The LORD your God will raise up for you a prophet like me from among you, from your fellow Israelites. You must listen to him. <sup>16</sup> For this is what you asked of the LORD your God at Horeb on the day of the assembly when you said, "Let us not hear the voice of the LORD our God nor see this great fire anymore, or we will die."

<sup>17</sup> The LORD said to me: "What they say is good. <sup>18</sup> I will raise up for them a prophet like you from among their fellow Israelites, and I will put my words in his mouth. He will tell them everything I command him. <sup>19</sup> I myself will call to account anyone who does not listen to my words that the prophet speaks in my name.

Luke 7:26 "But what did you go out to see? A **prophet**? Yes, I tell you, and more than a **prophet**." Luke 13:33 "In any case, I must press on today and tomorrow and the next day – for surely no **prophet** can die outside Jerusalem!"

Stephen refers to Jesus as this prophet in Acts 7:37: "This is the Moses who told the Israelites, 'God will raise up for you a **prophet** like me from your own people.'

The Messiah in the Hebrew Bible  
A liberator who will release the Jews from bondage  
Isaiah 49:1-7

All scriptural quotes from Bible Gateway NIV  
<https://www.biblegateway.com/>

- Listen to me, you islands;  
hear this, you distant nations:  
Before I was born the LORD called me;  
from my mother's womb he has spoken  
my name.
- <sup>2</sup> He made my mouth like a sharpened  
sword,  
in the shadow of his hand he hid me;  
he made me into a polished arrow  
and concealed me in his quiver.
- <sup>3</sup> He said to me, "You are my servant,  
Israel, in whom I will display my  
splendor."
- <sup>4</sup> But I said, "I have labored in vain;  
I have spent my strength for nothing at  
all.  
Yet what is due me is in the LORD's hand,  
and my reward is with my God."

#### Mark 10:45

<sup>45</sup> For even  
the Son of  
Man did not  
come to be  
served, but  
to serve,  
and to give  
his life as a  
ransom for  
many."

- <sup>5</sup> And now the LORD says –  
he who formed me in the womb to be his servant  
to bring Jacob back to him  
and gather Israel to himself,  
for I am<sup>[a]</sup> honored in the eyes of the LORD  
and my God has been my strength –
- <sup>6</sup> he says:  
"It is too small a thing for you to be my servant  
to restore the tribes of Jacob  
and bring back those of Israel I have kept.  
I will also make you a light for the Gentiles,  
that my salvation may reach to the ends of the  
earth."
- <sup>7</sup> This is what the LORD says –  
the Redeemer and Holy One of Israel –  
to him who was despised and abhorred by the  
nation,  
to the servant of rulers:  
"Kings will see you and stand up,  
princes will see and bow down,  
because of the LORD, who is faithful,  
the Holy One of Israel, who has chosen you."

- In Mark 11 Jesus enters Jerusalem on a "colt" (young horse).
- In Luke 19 he rides a donkey, but this verse is absent.
- In Matthew he arrives on a "donkey" and this verse is paraphrased:
- <sup>4</sup> This took place to fulfill what was spoken through the prophet:
- <sup>5</sup> "Say to Daughter Zion,  
'See, your king comes to you,  
gentle and riding on a donkey,  
and on a colt, the foal of a donkey.'"

## The Messiah in the Hebrew Bible

### A royal claimant who will recreate the Kingdom of David

#### Zechariah 9:1-10

All scriptural quotes from Bible Gateway NIV  
<https://www.biblegateway.com/>

- <sup>9</sup> Rejoice greatly, Daughter Zion!  
Shout, Daughter Jerusalem!  
See, your king comes to you,  
righteous and victorious,  
lowly and riding on a donkey,  
on a colt, the foal of a donkey.
- <sup>10</sup> I will take away the chariots from Ephraim  
and the warhorses from Jerusalem,  
and the battle bow will be broken.  
He will proclaim peace to the nations.  
His rule will extend from sea to sea  
and from the River<sup>[b]</sup> to the ends of the earth.

In John 12 the entry occurs at the beginning of Jesus ministry:  
"Do not be afraid, Daughter Zion;  
see, your king is coming,  
seated on a donkey's colt."

Mark 6:34 When Jesus landed and saw a large crowd, he had compassion on them, because they were like sheep without a shepherd. So he began teaching them many things. (Matthew 9:36)  
 Mark 14:27 [Jesus Predicts Peter's Denial] "You will all fall away," Jesus told them, "for it is written: 'I will strike the shepherd, and the sheep will be scattered.' (Matthew 26:31)

All scriptural quotes from Bible Gateway NIV  
<https://www.biblegateway.com/>

## The Messiah in the Hebrew Bible

A royal claimant who will recreate the Kingdom of David (Micah 5:1-5;

- 5<sup>[a]</sup> Marshal your troops now, city of troops, for a siege is laid against us. They will strike Israel's ruler on the cheek with a rod.
- 2<sup>[b]</sup> But you, Bethlehem Ephrathah, though you are small among the clans<sup>[b]</sup> of Judah, out of you will come for me one who will be ruler over Israel, whose origins are from of old, from ancient times."
- 3 Therefore Israel will be abandoned until the time when she who is in labor bears a son, and the rest of his brothers return shepherds,
- even eight commanders,
- to join the Israelites.
- 4 He will stand and shepherd his flock in the strength of the LORD, in the majesty of the name of the LORD his God. And they will live securely, for then his greatness will reach to the ends of the earth.
- 5 And he will be our peace when the Assyrians invade our land and march through our fortresses. We will raise against them seven

Matthew 2:6 "But you, Bethlehem, in the land of Judah, are by no means least among the rulers of Judah; for out of you will come a ruler who will shepherd my people Israel."

All scriptural quotes from Bible Gateway NIV  
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## The Messiah in the Hebrew Bible

An eschatological prophet who will usher the End of Days (Daniel 7:13-14)

- 13 "In my vision at night I looked, and there before me was one like a son of man,<sup>[a]</sup> coming with the clouds of heaven. He approached the Ancient of Days and was led into his presence.
- 14 He was given authority, glory and sovereign power; all nations and peoples of every language worshiped him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion that will not pass away, and his kingdom is one that will never be destroyed."

## “Who do you say I am?”



- “In the entire first gospel there exists not a single definitive messianic statement from Jesus himself”
- This is true also of Q, a source used by Mark, Luke and Matthew.

(Reza Aslan . *Zealot: The Life and Times of Jesus of Nazareth*)

All scriptural quotes from Bible Gateway NIV  
<https://www.biblegateway.com/>

### Mark 8

- 8: <sup>27</sup> Jesus and his disciples went on to the villages around Caesarea Philippi. On the way he asked them, “Who do people say I am?”
- <sup>28</sup> They replied, “Some say John the Baptist; others say Elijah; and still others, one of the prophets.”
- <sup>29</sup> “But what about you?” he asked. “Who do you say I am?”
- Peter answered, “You are the Messiah.”
- <sup>30</sup> Jesus warned them not to tell anyone about him.
- <sup>31</sup> He then began to teach them that the Son of Man must suffer many things and be rejected by the elders, the chief priests and the teachers of the law, and that he must be killed and after three days rise again. <sup>32</sup> He spoke plainly about this, and Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him.
- <sup>33</sup> But when Jesus turned and looked at his disciples, he rebuked Peter. “Get behind me, Satan!” he said. “You do not have in mind the concerns of God, but merely human concerns.”

## What did Jesus mean by the phrase “the Son of Man”?

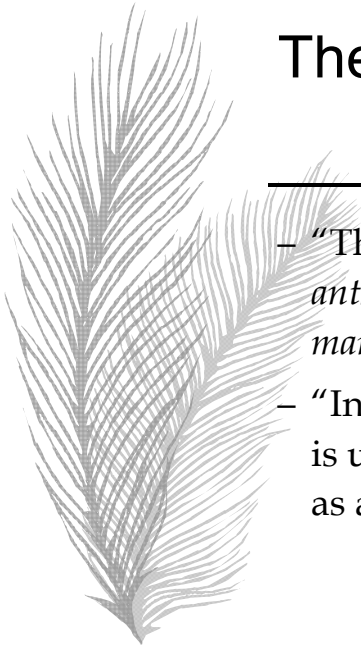


- One theory: Jesus was purposely emphasizing that he was “in fact, a human being.”
- But that assumes that people in Jesus’ time doubted Jesus was human, and there is no evidence of that.
- And the idea that he was God incarnate would have been anathema to the Jews of his day.

(Reza Aslan . *Zealot: The Life and Times of Jesus of Nazareth* 138)



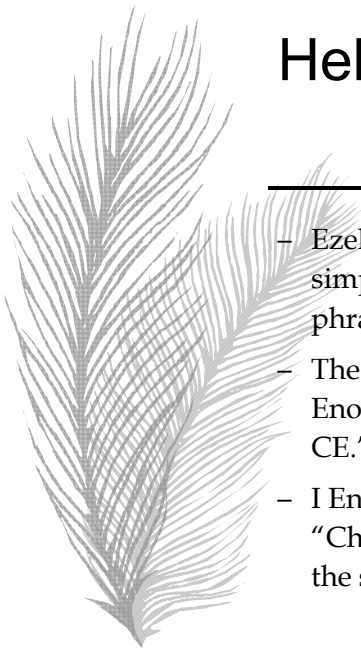
## The Son of Man



- “The Greek version of the phrase is *huios tou anthropou*, which can only be translated as “THE son of man.”
- “In employing the definite form of the phrase, Jesus is using it in a wholly new and unprecedented way, as a *title*, not as an idiom.”

(Reza Aslan . *Zealot: The Life and Times of Jesus of Nazareth* 138)

## Hebrew Bible References



- Ezekiel is referred to as son of man “nearly ninety times.” It simply means “man” or “human.” [Much like C.S. Lewis uses the phrase in *The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe*.]
- The terms also appears in the Apocryphal books, 4 Ezra and 1 Enoch, but both were written “near the end of the first century CE.”
- I Enoch sees “the son of man to whom belongs righteousness” the “Chosen One.” “At the end of the passage, the reader discovers the son of man is actually Enoch himself.”

(Reza Aslan . *Zealot: The Life and Times of Jesus of Nazareth* 139-40)

## Hebrew Bible References



©JewishEncyclopedia.com

In 168 Antiochus placed "the abomination of desolation" "on the altar of burnt offering in the Temple, and the Jews required to make obeisance to it. This was probably the Olympian Zeus, or Baal Shamem." This resulted in the revolution led by the Maccabees, "Antiochus IV, Epiphanes." Jewish Encyclopedia. <http://jewishencyclopedia.com/articles/1589-antiochus-iv-epiphanes>

- The book of Daniel was written "during the reign of the Selucid King Antiochus Epiphanes (175-164 BCE) - the king who thought he was god."
- Daniel reports a series of visions; in one of them (7:13b-14) "one like a son of man" appears before the "Ancient of Days": "coming with the clouds of heaven. He approached the Ancient of Days and was led into his presence. <sup>14</sup>He was given authority, glory and sovereign power; all nations and peoples of every language worshiped him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion that will not pass away, and his kingdom is one that will never be destroyed."

(Reza Aslan . Zealot: The Life and Times of Jesus of Nazareth 139)

## The Son of Man

### Mark 12

<sup>35</sup> While Jesus was teaching in the temple courts, he asked, "Why do the teachers of the law say that the Messiah is the son of David?"

<sup>36</sup> David himself, speaking by the Holy Spirit, declared: "The Lord said to my Lord:

"Sit at my right hand until I put your enemies under your feet."<sup>[1]</sup>

<sup>37</sup> David himself calls him 'Lord.' How then can he be his son? The large crowd listened to him with delight.

- Daniel's version must be "Jesus' main, if not sole, reference to the Son of Man."

### Psalm 110 Of David. A psalm.

<sup>1</sup> The LORD says to my lord: "Sit at my right hand until I make your enemies a footstool for your feet."

<sup>60</sup> Then the high priest stood up before them and asked Jesus, "Are you not going to answer? What is this testimony that these men are bringing against you?" <sup>61</sup> But Jesus remained silent and gave no answer.

Again the high priest asked him, "Are you the Messiah, the Son of the Blessed One?"

<sup>62</sup> "I am," said Jesus. "And you will see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of the Mighty One and coming on the clouds of heaven."

<sup>63</sup> The high priest tore his clothes. "Why do we need any more witnesses?" he asked. <sup>64</sup> "You have heard the blasphemy. What do you think?"

They all condemned him as worthy of death. <sup>65</sup> Then some began to spit at him; they blindfolded him, struck him with their fists, and said, "Prophecy!" And the guards took him and beat him.

(Reza Aslan . Zealot: The Life and Times of Jesus of Nazareth 140)

## The Son of Man



- Jesus' reaction to Peter's declaration that he was the messiah at Caesarea Philippi, and Jesus response to the High Priest affirm:
- **"Jesus conception of the Son of Man is to take precedence over other people's assertion of his messianic identity. Even at the end of his life, when he stands in the presence of his accusers, he is willing to accept the generic title of messiah only if it can be made to fit his specific interpretation, á la the book of Daniel, of the Son of Man"**

Jesus' connection with Daniel sheds light on his motivation to cleanse the Temple .

He also interprets Daniel's prophecy as to be again fulfilled: "*But when ye shall see the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, standing where it ought not, (let him that readeth understand,) then let them that be in Judea flee to the mountains"* (Mark 13:14 KJV)

(Reza Aslan . Zealot: The Life and Times of Jesus of Nazareth 142)

## The Son of Man



### Powerful

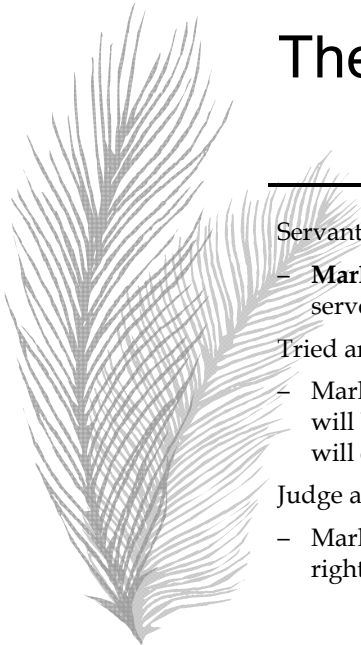
- Mark 13 24 "But in those days, following that distress,
- *"the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light; <sup>25</sup> the stars will fall from the sky, and the heavenly bodies will be shaken."*<sup>[c]</sup>
- <sup>26</sup> "At that time people will see the Son of Man coming in clouds with great power and glory. <sup>27</sup> And he will send his angels and gather his elect from the four winds, from the ends of the earth to the ends of the heavens.

### Yet suffering

- Mark 8: 31 "He then began to teach them that the Son of Man must suffer many things and be rejected by the elders, the chief priests and the teachers of the law, and that he must be killed and after three days rise again."

## The Son of Man

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### Servant

- **Mark 10:45** <sup>45</sup> For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many."

### Tried and Rejected

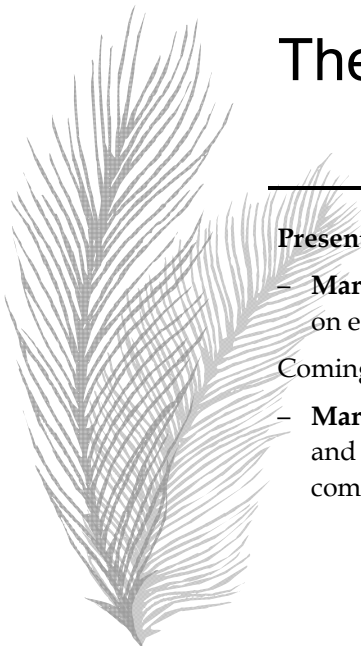
- **Mark 10:33** <sup>33</sup> "We are going up to Jerusalem," he said, "and the Son of Man will be delivered over to the chief priests and the teachers of the law. They will condemn him to death and will hand him over to the Gentiles,"

### Judge and Ruler

- **Mark 14<sup>62</sup>** "I am," said Jesus. "And you will see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of the Mighty One and coming on the clouds of heaven."

## The Son of Man

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### Present on Earth

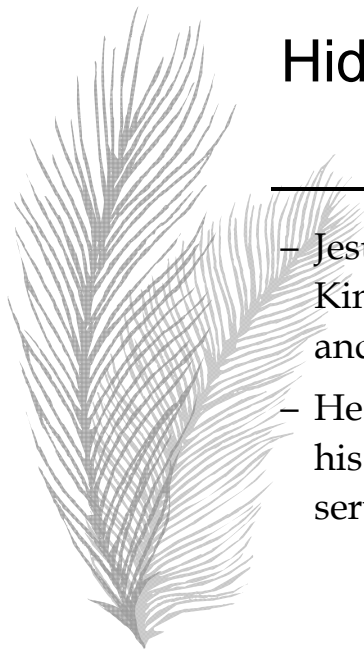
- **Mark 2:10** <sup>10</sup> But I want you to know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins."

### Coming to Judge

- **Mark 8:38** <sup>8</sup> "If anyone is ashamed of me and my words in this adulterous and sinful generation, the Son of Man will be ashamed of them when he comes in his Father's glory with the holy angels."

## Hiding in Plain Sight

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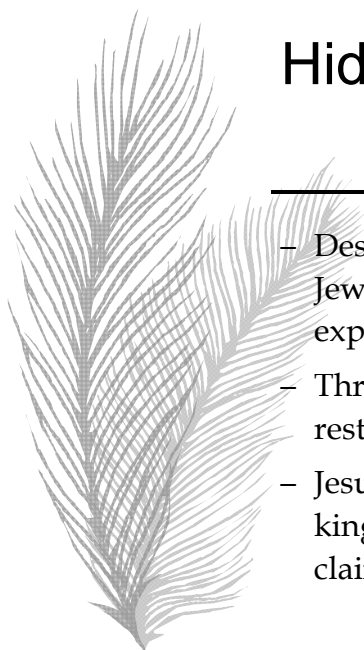


- Jesus *embodies* the “new social order” of the Kingdom of God - where the poor are honored and honorable; the rich must become poor to enter.
- He is “a peasant king. A king with no place to lay his head. A king who came to serve, not to be served. A king riding on a donkey.”

(Reza Aslan . *Zealot: The Life and Times of Jesus of Nazareth* 143)

## Hiding in Plain Sight

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- Despite a thousand years of written history and scripture, Jewish interpretations varied and, for the most part, no one expected a messiah like Jesus.
- Three men in Jesus lifetime had revolted against Rome to restore the Kingdom of Israel and they were all executed.
- Jesus recognizes “the obvious danger “ of claiming to be king, fully cognizant of “the fate of others who dared to claim that title.”



## Adding it up

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- Jesus purposely sets up two different chains of thought concerning his ministry - "The Son of Man" and the "Kingdom of God."
- Only those who pay careful attention would see that he indirectly claiming to be the king of that kingdom.
- Both the king and kingdom are not what people expected, so his message is hidden in plain sight.
- This "messianic secret" is the most clearly evidenced in the gospel of Mark.



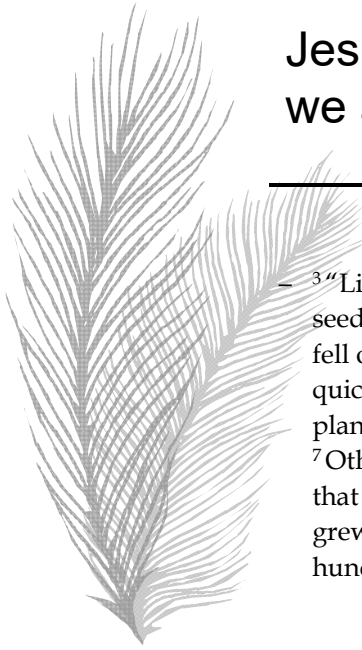
## Jesus' Rhetoric

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### **Kairos**

The right time  
 The right place  
 The right speech  
 The most receptive moment

- **Speaks in parables**
- **Resists the name messiah**
- **Refers to himself as "the Son of Man," a title still being debated as to its meaning.**
- **Relates his concept of The Son of Man the title to the book of Daniel and to the Davidic Kingdom.**
- **Makes mysterious references to the kingdom of God, a reversal of the present order.**
- **Allies the idea of the Kingdom of God to the analogy of the seed.**



**Jesus was the sower;  
we are the ground.**

<sup>9</sup> Then Jesus said,  
“Whoever has ears  
to hear, let them  
hear.”

– <sup>3</sup>“Listen! A farmer went out to sow his seed. <sup>4</sup> As he was scattering the seed, some fell along the path, and the birds came and ate it up. <sup>5</sup> Some fell on rocky places, where it did not have much soil. It sprang up quickly, because the soil was shallow. <sup>6</sup> But when the sun came up, the plants were scorched, and they withered because they had no root. <sup>7</sup> Other seed fell among thorns, which grew up and choked the plants, so that they did not bear grain. <sup>8</sup> Still other seed fell on good soil. It came up, grew and produced a crop, some multiplying thirty, some sixty, some a hundred times.”

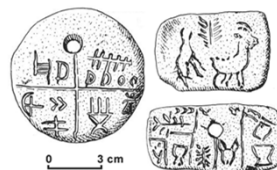
# Orality and Literacy in Ancient Israel/Judea

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Oral World and Written Word Susan Niditch

## Orality/Literacy

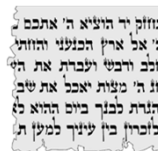
- Historians have assumed from the Hebrew text-based religion that ancient Jews were literate.
- We now know literacy was and is a continuum:
  - Unable to read or write
  - Able to make and interpret marks and signs
  - Able to read but not write
  - Able to read and write simple texts
  - Able to read and write complex texts
- Most ancient Jews were of the first three categories; mostly scribes and teachers were capable of the latter kind of literacy.
- We know almost nothing about the *teaching of writing* in the Jewish context.



"Tartaria tablets"  
6500 years old



Sumerian record keeping



Hebrew Writing

[The Oldest Human Skeletons And Writing Discovered! The Greek ...Humans Are Free](#)  
[The Sumerian invention of writing Sumerian Shakespeare](#)  
[Hebrew Writing Styles - Biblical & Modern Hebrew World](#)



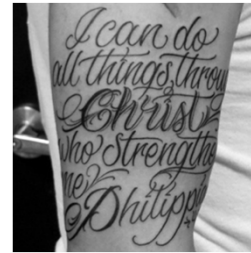
Both are widely evidenced in all periods of Jewish and Christian history, as well as today.

## Orality/Literacy



Page 57/Shavei.org

- Signs of an **oral culture**:
  - Texts seen as magical, powerful, symbolic, ritualistic, incantational
- Signs of a **“literate” culture**
  - Writing conveys information (data)
  - Writing used to preserve history
  - Writing used as “witness” for events
  - Writing used as cultural memory



50 Bible Verse Tattoos For Men - Scripture Design IdeasNextLuxury

## Orality/Literacy



- In the ancient world, writing was kept on **scrolls**, so access was clumsy and limited. Writing was kept, but **rarely referenced**.
  - Libraries and archives were collections, but **not open to the public or accessible**.
  - Texts were kept for both oral and literate reasons:
    - as a **“witness,”**
    - as a **symbol** of the activity and presence of the deity,
    - to **magically shape events**.
  - Written texts were to be read aloud and memorized.
- Scripture was mostly quoted from memory.
  - Paraphrasing was common.
  - Passages were re-interpreted to fit the times.
  - Passages were used “out of context.”

torah scrolls in the arc | Eitz Chaim- Tree of Life- Torah ...Pinterest

*Oral World and Written Word* Susan Niditch

## Orality/Literacy

- Written works were “**freeze frames**” (77) rather than full narratives; they were expected to be **read aloud and filled in by the teller**.
- **Whole books** were recognized as **authoritative**, *but not any one version*.
- **Oral traditions were as legitimate as written**.
- Texts were **refined through oral delivery**.
- Written texts were to be
  - Read aloud
  - Interrogated
  - Interpreted
- For example, Josiah’s reform did not occur until these three steps were accomplished.
  - Read aloud
  - Experts consulted (Huldah)
  - Collectively interpreted



Josiah's Reforms - Hit the Mark | Sabbath School NetSabbath School Net

## Rhetoric

- The process of choosing language
- recognizing and understanding the **situation** surrounding the communication
  - recognizing and addressing the **needs and beliefs of the auditors**
  - recognizing the **importance and significance of the communicator’s message**
  - recognizing and activating a **positive and trustworthy image for the messenger**

**Kairos**  
 The right time  
 The right place  
 The right speech  
 The most receptive moment

