

Debating Daniel's Dream: The Synoptic Gospels and the Similitudes of Enoch on the Son of Man

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The tantalizingly elusive section of Daniel that mentions 'one like a son of man' offers virtually no explanation of his background, history, or identity (Dan 7.13). This figure, however, possesses cosmic and eschatological significance: in the midst of pervasive chaos, the 'one like a son of man' receives glory, universal recognition, and a kingdom that stands impenetrable to the forces of destruction (Dan 7.14). The theological reception of this figure in Second Temple Judaism indicates that its ambiguity was enticing and inviting to the interpretative imagination. The Similitudes of Enoch (1 Enoch 37–71) and New Testament texts comprise a few of the texts that creatively develop the identity of Daniel's mysterious 'one like a son of man'. Numerous recent studies, accordingly, have sought to uncover the historical and theological relationship between the interpretation of this figure in the Similitudes and early Christianity. One growing thesis among these investigations claims that the theological community responsible for penning the Similitudes provides not just one but *the* decisive context of origin which explains the shape of early Christology. For example, Gabriele Boccaccini claims that the 'cohesion in the belief of Jesus as the "Son of Man", in an exalted heavenly Messiah, the forgiver on earth and the would-be eschatological Judge' indicates that 'Enochic Judaism' was 'the kind of Judaism to which the Jesus movement was born'.¹ After outlining some points of theological continuity between Paul and the Similitudes, James Waddell confidently asserts that '[n]ow we can say with a high degree of certainty from which stream of Jewish intellectual tradition Paul

¹ Gabriele Boccaccini, 'Jesus the Messiah: Man, Angel, or God? The Jewish Roots of Early Christology', *Annali di Scienze Religiose* 4 (2011): 193–220, at 213–14. Those who suggest that Jesus knew the traditions in the Similitudes include e.g. D. L. Bock, 'The Use of Daniel 7 in Jesus' Trial with Implications for his Self-Understanding', in *Who is this Son of Man? The Latest Scholarship on a Puzzling Expression of the Historical Jesus* (ed. Larry Hurtado and Paul Owen; London: T&T Clark, 2011), 78–100, at 90; James H. Charlesworth, 'The Date and Provenience of the Parables of Enoch', in *The Parables of Enoch: A Paradigm Shift* (Jewish and Christian Texts 11; ed. Bock and Charlesworth; London: T&T Clark, 2013), 37–57, at 53; idem, 'Did Jesus Know the Traditions in the *Parables of Enoch*? ΤΙΣ ΕΣΤΙΝ ΟΥΤΟΣ Ο ΥΙΟΣ ΤΟΥ ΑΝΘΡΩΠΟΥ; (Jn 12:34)', in *The Parables of Enoch*, 173–217.

developed his concept of the Messiah. It was Enoch.² While Boccaccini and Waddell acknowledge some notable differences between the New Testament texts and the Similitudes, they both suggest that the strong similarities between them signal that early Christology directly derived from the Jewish group responsible for the Similitudes.³

But, as Samuel Sandmel memorably warned us, the movement from similarity to dependence is a dangerous and perilous step, and we need to remain deeply sceptical of a certain double mistake which consists in ‘that extravagance among scholars which first overdoes the supposed similarity in passages and then proceeds to describe source and derivation as if implying literary connection flowing in an inevitable or predetermined direction.’⁴ Sandmel launches both a formal and material critique here: the formal problem consists in the presumptive jump from similarity to dependence; the material problem concerns overplaying similarities between texts to justify that jump. To apply the formal critique to the present topic, whereas assertions regarding ‘similarity’ between the Similitudes and the New Testament require minimal evidence (one must simply identify points of conceptual contact), claims about dependence have a much higher threshold. To conclude that New Testament Christology derived or evolved from the Similitudes, we would need to prove numerous claims: that this text is pre-Christian, that it was available to other theological communities, that the New Testament authors knew its traditions, and that they utilized them in their work. But we must acknowledge that, with the limited extant evidence, determining the provenance of the Similitudes will remain a notoriously thorny and necessarily speculative task.⁵ We can only ever say that it *might* be that the Similitudes preceded the New Testament texts, it *might* be that it was not a sectarian document, it *might* be that this text or its ideas were circulated widely, it *might* be that a New Testament author came into contact with these ideas, and it *might* be that New Testament

² James A. Waddell, *The Messiah: A Comparative Study of the Enochic Son of Man and the Pauline Kyrios* (Jewish and Christian Texts 10; London: T&T Clark, 2013), 209; similarly, Boccaccini claims that ‘Paul never uses the term “Son of Man”, yet his view of the Messiah Jesus as the *kyrios* so closely resembles the *concept* of the Messiah Son of Man of the Parables that one could look at the term *kyrios* as a convenient translation and development in Hellenistic terms of the Enochic concept’ (‘Finding a Place for the Parables of Enoch within Second Temple Jewish Literature’, in *Enoch and the Messiah Son of Man: Revisiting the Book of Parables* (ed. G. Boccaccini; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2007), 263–89, at 278). However, *pace* Boccaccini and Waddell, see Chris Tilling, *Paul’s Divine Christology* (WUNT II/323; Tübingen, Mohr Siebeck, 2012), 206–30, esp. 227.

³ Differences are acknowledged in Boccaccini, ‘Jesus the Messiah’, 212–13; Waddell, *The Messiah*, 184–6.

⁴ Samuel Sandmel, ‘Parallelomania’, *JBL* 81 (1962): 1–13, at 1.

⁵ For those who support a Jewish provenance and first-century BCE to first-century CE date, see e.g. Boccaccini, ‘The Enoch Seminar at Camaldoli: Re-entering the Parables of Enoch in the Study of Second Temple Judaism and Christian Origins’, in *Enoch and the Messiah*, 3–16 and the chapters on dating in *Enoch and the Messiah*, 415–97. More support for this dating is found in Charlesworth, ‘Date and Provenance’ and George W. E. Nickelsburg and James C. VanderKam, 1 *Enoch 2: A Commentary, Chapters 37–82* (Hermeneia; Minneapolis: Fortress, 2012), 58–62. However, Ted Erho has problematized the confidence of an early dating in various essays, namely ‘Historical-Allusion Dating and the Similitudes of Enoch’, *JBL* 130 (2011): 493–511; *idem*, ‘Internal Dating Methodologies and the Problem posed by the Similitudes of Enoch’, *JSP* 20 (2010): 83–103; *idem*, ‘The Ahistorical Nature of 1 Enoch 56:5–8 and its Ramifications upon the *Opinio Communis* on the Dating of the Similitudes of Enoch’, *JSJ* 40 (2009): 23–54.



authors appropriated these ideas into their work. Even if we considered all of these assertions to be *mostly* probable, the multiplication rule of probability means that when these numerous yet indeterminate possibilities are taken together, any confidence that the similarities between early Christological concepts and 'Enochic Judaism' indicate a relationship of direct dependence ends up standing on dangerously thin statistical ice.⁶

My intention here, however, is to concentrate Sandmel's material objection onto some of the recent comparisons between the Synoptic Gospels and the Similitudes. Sandmel's recognition of interpreters 'overdoing supposed similarity', I think, aptly captures some of the latest scholarship which attempts to connect the Similitudes to early Christology. While I would not deny the real similarity between these two texts (as noted, they comprise some of the texts which explicitly develop Daniel 7.13–14), I do want to problematize the extent of the stated similarity between them. The two edges of my thesis here are, first, that the interpretation of the 'Son of Man' figure in the Synoptics presents a reading of Daniel 7 which in some respects deeply contrasts with the image of the Son of Man in the Similitudes; but, second, these dissimilar elements have been downplayed because studies on the relationship between 1 Enoch and the canonical gospels regularly utilize a *religionsgeschichtlich* method which is unable to recognize such differences. Here I tackle these two claims in reverse order: I begin by reviewing the method of some select recent approaches and suggesting a new model which might deepen our understanding of the theological relationship between 1 Enoch and the Synoptics. I then illustrate instances in which the 'Son of Man' epithet in the canonical gospels directly conflicts with the theology proffered by the Similitudes.

A paradigm shift?

John M. G. Barclay suggests that New Testament scholarship has generally moved away from what he calls the 'genealogical' approach to the relationship between early Christianity and Judaism. In his own words,

There was a time when Christian scholars saw the study of pre-Christian (including early Jewish) literature as the search for the roots of Christian language and ideas – a genealogical exercise concerned first and foremost with tradition-history, founded on the capacity to set texts in a clear chronological sequence ... The hermeneutical traffic in this exercise was always one-way: one travelled from earlier sources to illuminate later texts and traditions. There was always a temptation to *underplay* difference, in order to discover similarities and thus connection ...⁷

⁶ Even if we attributed a generous 80 per cent probability for every item in this list, the resulting probability would be 32.768 per cent.

⁷ John M. G. Barclay, 'Constructing a Dialogue: 4 Ezra and Paul on the Mercy of God', in *Anthropologie und Ethik im Frühjudentum und im Neuen Testament* (ed. M. Konradt and E. Schläpfer; WUNT 322; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2014), 3–22, at 4 (emphasis original).



Barclay recalls this approach as if it were from a bygone era of scholarship existing only in distant memory. While this might well be true for most subsectors of studies comparing Jewish and Christian texts, this genealogical method has been the default *modus operandi* deployed by many investigations into the relationship between the Similitudes and the gospels. For example, Leslie Walck's study comparing Matthew and the Similitudes sets out to 'to bring Literary, Redaction, Sociological and Narrative Criticism to bear on the question to elucidate the relationships,' but the investigation into these relationships is explicitly limited to the 'positive relationship' between the two texts.⁸ When Walck arrives at the Matthean material, he therefore deems any differences between the two texts hermeneutically irrelevant: 'The earthly sayings and the suffering sayings can be excluded a priori since the Enochic view of the Son of Man is of a future, non-suffering Figure.'⁹ James D. G. Dunn introduces one essay by claiming that he is inquiring (only) into 'possible influence of the Son of Man imagery in the Parables of Enoch upon the Gospel of Mark.'¹⁰ In the preface to *The Parables of Enoch: A Paradigm Shift*, James Charlesworth lays out a list of ten questions which the volume seeks to answer, but whereas two of them ask whether the Similitudes exerted any influence upon the historical Jesus, virtually *none* of their stated questions concern potential theological divergence between the texts.¹¹ Charlesworth takes this methodological approach because he 'consider[s] it paradigmatically important to discern "Who influenced whom?"'¹² These kinds of genetic, linear analyses which only look for positive similarities could be listed *ad nauseam*.¹³

The restricted scope of this genealogical method can produce two specific problems. First, the studies which concern themselves primarily or solely with drawing out the presence of 'similarities' or 'parallels' in order to discover 'influence' can end up eclipsing and avoiding most, if not all, other potentially fruitful lines of historical inquiry. If explaining the origin of a thing is never sufficient for understanding it (a contrary position would commit a historical version of the genetic fallacy), then the scope of these genetic investigations has problematically limited *a priori* the range of historical and theological questions and thereby also radically constricted the range of possible conclusions. Second, the narrow vision of this method can result in distorting the textual and theological relationship between the canonical gospels and the Similitudes. The confident assertion that early Christology derived from 'Enochic Judaism' can easily emerge from a self-confirming methodological feedback loop: investigations which only look for similarities or 'positive influence' are already on track to find no notable or significant differences. Screening out differences *a priori* from the scope of

⁸ L. W. Walck, *The Son of Man in the Parables of Enoch and in Matthew* (Jewish and Christian Texts in Contexts and Related Studies 9; London: T&T Clark, 2011), ix, 2; cf. 252.

⁹ *Ibid.*, 165.

¹⁰ J. D. G. Dunn, 'The Son of Man in Mark', in *The Parables of Enoch*, 18–34, at 18.

¹¹ Charlesworth, 'Foreword', in *The Parables of Enoch*, ix–xi, at x.

¹² *Ibid.*, x; cf. his similar statement in 'Did Jesus Know?', 173.

¹³ For some more examples, see Walck, 'The Son of Man in the Parables of Enoch and the Gospels', in *Enoch and the Messiah*, 299–337; Charlesworth, 'Did Jesus Know?'; G. Macaskill, 'Matthew and the Parables of Enoch', in *The Parables of Enoch*, 173–217; L. M. McDonald, 'The Parables of Enoch in Early Christianity', in *The Parables of Enoch*, 329–63.



an investigation, or considering divergence mostly irrelevant, can too quickly give way to announcing complete conceptual overlap between texts in places where there is, in fact, only superficial similarity or even none whatsoever.

The persistent genealogical approach exhibited by these studies thus calls into question the claim that the general acceptance of a Jewish provenance for the Similitudes at the 2005 Camaldoli Enoch Seminar inaugurated a 'paradigm shift'.¹⁴ According to the seminal work by Thomas Kuhn, who coined this term, a paradigm shift signals that a change in *method* has occurred, not just a shift in *conclusion*.¹⁵ Even if radically divergent from what preceded, the emergence of a 'new consensus' cannot automatically be equated with a new paradigm.¹⁶ While the generally positive reception of the Jewish provenance of the Similitudes remains important for the study of Judaism and Christian origins, the fundamental methods utilized to evaluate the relationship between the Similitudes and early Christology have not changed: scholarship prior to this consensus also focused mostly on the question of influence.¹⁷ Because most studies still utilize a *religionsgeschichtlich* approach which sets its eye only on similarity and downplays dissimilarity – put another way, because *there is no substantial methodological discontinuity between pre-2005 and post-2005 scholarship* – the 2005 Camaldoli Enoch Seminar did not trigger a paradigm shift, at least in the Kuhnian sense.

I am not suggesting that these kinds of genetic investigations are *ipso facto* inappropriate or unfruitful. But I am suggesting some of the scholarship on this issue has been unbalanced insofar as it has neither sufficiently considered the differences between the Similitudes and the gospels nor what possible conclusions these divergences might produce. To ask a new question with Charlesworth's words, might it not also be of 'paradigmatic importance' to press deeply into how the Similitudes and the gospels *differ*? And might these differences in fact help us understand each of these texts in more depth? To produce an affirmative answer to these questions requires an alternative method which can interpret and evaluate where the gospels theologically stand vis-à-vis the Similitudes. The model proposed below, I think, promises to yield some fresh interpretative results and might – to use Kuhn's words – push us towards a methodological 'crisis'.¹⁸

A dialogical model

The method of some of the studies on the Son of Man in the Similitudes and the gospels can be depicted as such:

¹⁴ Charlesworth, 'Preface: The Books of Enoch: *Status Quaestionis*', in *The Parables of Enoch*, xiii–xvii, at xiii.

¹⁵ T. S. Kuhn, *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions* (4th ed.; Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2012), 43–53, 111–34.

¹⁶ These are conflated in Charlesworth and Bock, 'Conclusion', in *The Parables of Enoch*, 364–72, at 364.

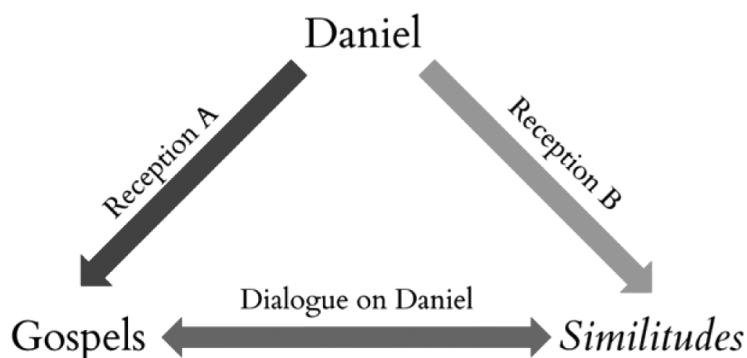
¹⁷ See e.g. J. Theisohn, *Der auserwählte Richter: Untersuchungen zum traditionsgeschichtlichen Ort der Menschensohngestalt der Bilderreden des Äthiopischen Henoch* (Studien zur Umwelt des Neuen Testaments 12; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1975), 161–81.

¹⁸ Kuhn, *Structure*, 52–76.





But investigating the holistic relationship between these two bodies of literature necessitates more than focusing solely on positive influence. We need, as Francis Watson suggests, to look beyond ‘unilinear movement’ by moving into the realm of ‘interaction’, into the world of *dialogue*.¹⁹ Dialogue, of course, is only possible if two parties stand on some common ground, and in this case the shared space is the fact that the Similitudes and the gospels exist in a ‘single intertextual field’ as they receive, interpret and deploy the Son of Man figure from Daniel 7.²⁰ Placing them on this common hermeneutical territory thus positions them in enough proximity for us to construct a conversation between them regarding the meaning, significance and implications of Daniel’s dream – to have them question, confirm, interrogate, and even object to one another. In this model, the gospels and the Similitudes have their own appropriation of the material from Daniel, which opens up the possibility to bring them to engage each other precisely *qua* interpreters of Daniel. A complex model that incorporates these aspects looks like this:



If Sandmel’s objection regarding ‘overdoing supposed similarity’ applies to some of the scholarship on the Similitudes and the Synoptics, then this imbalance calls for a focus on the points of disagreement between them. To state the thesis of the rest of the chapter in Watson’s language, the Similitudes and the gospels read the same text about the Son of Man in Daniel 7, but they read it differently, realizing the semantic potential of Daniel’s dream in divergent directions and utilizing this figure for different purposes within their distinctive theological visions. To illustrate this, we can listen in on a hypothetical conversation between the Son of Man in the Similitudes and the gospels on three issues: 1) the function of the Son of Man’s authority; 2) the nature of the Son of Man’s representation of his people; and 3) the object of the Son of Man’s salvific activity.

¹⁹ F. Watson, *Paul and the Hermeneutics of Faith* (London: T&T Clark, 2004), 4; cf. the proposed dialogical method in Barclay, ‘Constructing a Dialogue’, and J. A. Linebaugh, ‘Debating Diagonal Δικαιοσύνη: The Epistle of Enoch and Paul in Theological Conversation’, *EC* 1 (2010): 107–28.

²⁰ Watson, *Paul*, 3.

The function of authority

As a textual reaction to horrific injustices, the Similitudes wrestles with the theological possibility of hope in the face of suffering. In this text, a group of elites identified variously as those who possess the land, the mighty (*ḥayyālān*), the kings (*nagāst*), the strong (*ṣənuān*), the powerful (*ʿazizān*) and the exalted (*lāʿulān*) have committed acts of violence against the righteous and possess unjustly acquired land from which they exploit and persecute the author's community (1 Enoch 46.7; 47.4; 53.7; 55.4; 62.11; 63.10).²¹ As Suter notes, the author speaks to a community that perceives a cosmic injustice in 'the world that does not seem to be structured according to the laws of their God' and that challenges 'their belief in a God who, as the divine lawgiver, rewards in concrete ways the community of his chosen ones when it is faithful to his law'.²² Responding to the utter theological disorder presented in the prospering of the wicked over against the persecuted righteous, the Similitudes hopes, expects and predicts a soon-to-be massive political upheaval of cosmic proportions consisting in 'the overthrow or fall of the oppressive order and the establishment of a new society'.²³ In the midst of the theological tension between the disenfranchisement of the righteous and the success of those who exploit them, the promise of radical eschatological reversal provides hope for the righteous and a theological defence of divine justice: God will invert the fortunes of sinners by evicting the mighty from their place (38.2) and will thereby vindicate the righteous, enabling them to judge their oppressors and to dwell in their rightful land (38.4). In the end, God will neither abandon the righteous nor permit the victory of their oppressors.

The author of the Similitudes does not simply state that those who have committed such radical injustices and horrific acts of oppression will be judged; the author also explicates the means by which this judgement will come. Drawing from the deep well of the Jewish scriptural heritage, the text holds out the promise that the one to enact these eschatological upheavals will be the Danielic Son of Man (e.g. 46.4). One such section of the Similitudes that retrieves the vision from Daniel 7 is Enoch's vision in 52.1–9. The salvific figure here is called not 'the Son of Man' but 'the Chosen One' (*ḥəruy*), yet, since the author consistently weaves together scriptural lexemes and motifs to describe Daniel's Son of Man in various terms – such as 'his Anointed One' (*masiḥu*) or 'the Righteous One' (*ṣādāq*) – the lack of 'Son of Man' should not deter us from seeing Daniel's figure here.²⁴ One piece of evidence suggesting that this section

²¹ For the various identifiers for these elites see 38.4–5; 48.8; 62.1, 3; 62.6, 9; 63.1, 12; 67.12. On this theme see Pierluigi Piovanelli, 'A Testimony of the Kings and the Mighty who Possess the Earth: The Thirst for Justice and Peace in the Parables of Enoch', in *Enoch and the Messiah*, 363–79, at 372–3.

²² David W. Suter, *Tradition and Composition in the Parables of Enoch* (SBLDS 47; Missoula: Scholars Press, 1979), 164.

²³ *Ibid.*, 164.

²⁴ On the identity between these figures, see VanderKam, 'Righteous One, Messiah, Chosen One, and Son of Man in 1 Enoch 37–71', in *The Messiah: Developments in Earliest Judaism and Christianity* (ed. Charlesworth; Minneapolis: Fortress, 1992), 169–201 (pace the questioning of Tilling, *Paul's Divine Christology*, 213–14). The use of the epithet 'The Son of the Offspring of the Mother of all Living' (62.7; 69.26, 27; 69.29; 71.17) is also equivalent to 'Son of Man'. On this see Jan Dochhorn, 'Die Menschen als 'Kinder der Mutter der Lebenden' – eine etymologische Parallele zu ʿem kol-chaj in Gen 3,20 aus dem Altäthiopischen', *Zeitschrift für Althebraistik* 12 (1999): 2–20.



pulls from Daniel 7 is that it imitates the language and structure of Daniel's judgement scene:

And in those days, none will save himself either by gold or silver, and none will be able to flee. And there will not be iron for war, nor a garment for a breastplate; copper will be of no use, and tin will be reckoned as nothing, and lead will not be desired. All these will be rejected and be destroyed from the face of the earth, when the Chosen One appears before the Lord of Spirits (*soba yāstar'i ḥəruy ba-qədma gaṣṣu la-'əgzi' manāfəst*).

1 Enoch 52.7–9

The definitive moment when the Chosen One appears (*yāstar'i*) before the Lord of the Spirits draws from the scene in Daniel 7 in which the Son of Man 'comes' (מטה) to the Ancient of Days and 'they present' or 'offer' the Son of Man (הקרבוהי) before him (Dan 7.13; cf. 1 Enoch 49.2). To strengthen this connection, in both Daniel and 1 Enoch the presence of each figure before God is closely tied to divine judgement over the world and its injustice: in Daniel the offering of the Son of Man is preceded and followed by the judgement and dethroning of the beasts (7.11–12, 17–18) and thus parallels how in 1 Enoch the appearance of the Chosen One before the Lord of Spirits happens concomitantly with the Son of Man purging the cosmos (52.9).

The beginning of this scene in 1 Enoch 52 draws on a more specific element of Daniel 7 – the 'authority' of the Son of Man:

And he said to me, 'These things which you have seen are for the authority of his Anointed One (*la-šəltāna masiḥu*), so that he will be powerful and mighty on the earth (*ya'azzəz wa-yəthāyyal diba mədr*).'

52.4

Although he is called 'his Anointed One' (*masiḥu*), the invocation of 'authority' (*šəltān*) in a scene which recounts the judgement of Daniel 7 hearkens back to the 'authority' (שלטן [= same root]) given to the Son of Man in Daniel 7.14.²⁵ Two more points can be made about this. First, the 'authority' belonging to the Son of Man establishes his power and might *on earth* (*diba mədr*) (52.4); second, that this authority that makes him 'powerful and mighty (*ya'azzəz wa-yəthāyyal*)' strikes an intentional contrast to the unjust kings described as both 'powerful' (*'azzizān*) and 'mighty' (*ḥāyyālān*). Applying these descriptors to the Son of Man signals that by receiving divine authority he will be 'powerful and mighty' so as to displace the sinful 'powerful and mighty' kings who have oppressed the righteous.²⁶ This becomes clearer in the repetition of this material in 1 Enoch 53, in which the author predicts that 'the kings of the mighty of the earth' will 'perish' (53.5) by the 'instruments of Satan' (53.3), which happens when 'the Chosen one will cause the house of this congregation to appear' (53.6), giving them 'rest from

²⁵ So also Nickelsburg and VanderKam, 1 Enoch 2, 189–90. However, the Ge'ez translations of Dan 7.14 use *makwannən* for שלטן.

²⁶ Nickelsburg and VanderKam, 1 Enoch 2, 190.





the oppression of the sinners' (53.7). To reiterate, these elements from Daniel are retrieved to instil hope: the authority identified in Daniel 7.14 is not just an ambiguous, static authority; it is rather hermeneutically specified and applied to the author's present situation to promise that by this authority the Son of Man will vindicate the righteous from their present experience of oppression. The Similitudes here engages in a hermeneutic of theodicy by invoking Danielic authority to defend God's commitment to justice: the function of the eschatological authority of the Son of Man is to overturn sinful structures by destroying the unrighteous and reinstating the rightful prospering of the righteous. This brings us to Jesus' appeal to that very same authority in Mark.

In Mark 2 a paralytic man unable to access Jesus is let down from the roof just in front of him (Mk 2.4). Seeing this, Jesus declares that the paralytic's sins are forgiven (ἀφιενταί σου αἱ ἁμαρτίαι) (2.5), but the scribes and Pharisees accuse him of blaspheming. Jesus retorts to this challenge by exhorting his audience to 'know (εἰδῆτε) that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins (ἐξουσίαν ἔχει ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ ἀνθρώπου ἀφιέναι ἁμαρτίας ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς)' (2.10).²⁷ A few factors point to the conclusion that Jesus here appeals to Daniel 7.13–14. First, the phrase 'the Son of Man has authority', like 1 Enoch 52.4, strongly evokes the language of Daniel that the Son of Man 'was given authority'.²⁸ Second, the Similitudes claims that Daniel's Son of Man has authority *on earth* (*diba mædr*); thus, there is another text that weaves together 'Son of Man', 'authority' and 'on earth', which points to Daniel 7. Third, an appeal to authoritative scripture fits the context of conflict here: given that Jesus elsewhere appeals to scripture when he is accused of wrongdoing (Mk 2.25–27), it would not be a stretch to suggest that he responds to the accusation of blasphemy by arguing that he can forgive sins because the Danielic Son of Man can forgive sins. Fourth, Jesus clearly appeals to Daniel 7.13 elsewhere (e.g. Mk 14.62), which strengthens the hypothesis that the language would also evoke Daniel 7 here.

Jesus asserts that his possession of this Danielic divine authority permits and enables him to forgive sins. It is possible, of course, to try to decipher how this interpretation of Daniel 7.14 in Mark 2.10 came about and what parallels or precedents there are for this reading.²⁹ But this way of interpreting the Son of Man is only one *possible* way of

²⁷ For a grammatical solution to the confusing ἴνα-clause here, see T. Daiber "Wisset!" Zu einem angeblichen Anakoluth in Mk 2,10 bzw. zum ὅτι recitativum, *ZNW* 104 (2013): 277–85, esp. 282, who suggests that ἴνα . . . εἰδῆτε functions as an imperative; Daiber's analysis gives some grammatical foundations to the treatment in M. Wolter, "Ihr sollt aber wissen . . .: Das Anakoluth nach ἴνα δὲ εἰδῆτε in Mk 2,10–11 parr., *ZNW* 95 (2004): 269–75.

²⁸ Some have doubted whether there is any appeal to Daniel here (e.g. Larry W. Hurtado, 'Summary and Concluding Observations', in *Who is This Son of Man?*, 159–77, esp. 166; R. Leicester, 'Exit the Apocalyptic Son of Man', *NTS* 18 (1971–72): 243–67; Geza Vermes, 'The Son of Man Debate Revisited: 1960–2012', *The Parables of Enoch*, 1–17. But see the critique in Crispin H. T. Fletcher-Louis, *Jesus Monotheism*, 120–3, 179–82). Those who do see an appeal to Daniel here include J. Marcus, 'Authority to Forgive Sins on Earth', *The Gospels and the Scriptures of Israel* (ed. C. A. Evans and W. R. Stegner; JSNTSup 104; Studies in Scripture in Early Judaism and Christianity 3; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 1994), 196–211; idem, *Mark 1–8: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary* (AB 27; New Haven: Yale University Press, 2002), 208, 531; D. Boyarin, 'How Enoch can Teach us About Jesus', *EC* 2 (2011): 51–76, esp. 75–6; A. Y. Collins, *Mark: A Commentary* (Hermeneia; Minneapolis: Fortress, 2007), 187–9.

²⁹ So Marcus, 'Authority to Forgive Sins on Earth', 205–6.





theologically receiving and realizing the authority bestowed upon the Son of Man in Daniel 7.14, which is neither realized in the Similitudes nor demanded by Daniel in the first place. We cannot assert, as Walck does, that simply because ‘authority’ is mentioned in 1 Enoch, ‘Authority to forgive must be assumed as part of the depiction [of the Son of Man] in the *Parables*’.³⁰ There is just no reason to state that any such appeal to ‘authority’ and judgement in the Similitudes automatically implies anything about the power to forgive, and we cannot assume that everyone would have found this interpretation of the ‘authority’ the Son of Man plausible and acceptable.

In fact, here the Similitudes and Mark radically diverge in their application of the authority from Daniel 7.14. The point of contention between the Similitudes and Mark’s Jesus has less to do with the *location* of his authority – both texts say that the Son of Man has authority on earth – and more to do with the *shape* and *function* of that authority. In the Similitudes, the authority given to the Son of Man is the means by which he is empowered to vindicate the righteous and displace the kings and mighty on the earth by himself being powerful and mighty on the earth; in Mark, it is the basis for his ability to forgive such sinners.³¹ My point here is not that the Similitudes has a theological stance against forgiveness (it does not) or that Mark’s Jesus has nothing to do with judging sinners (he does). My point is that the use and explicated function of the Son of Man’s ‘authority’ from Daniel 7.14 runs in a divergent direction in each text: whereas in the Similitudes this Danielic authority empowers the Son of Man to displace sinners, in Mark it permits him to forgive them. To the author of the Similitudes, the use of the Son of Man’s ‘authority’ for the purpose of forgiveness would appear theologically superfluous. The Son of Man comes to solve the present empirical-theological mismatch of the suffering righteous and prospering oppressors. Jesus’ invocation of Daniel 7 in Mark 2 stands within a theological contention agreeable to the Similitudes (namely, that God forgives), but the Enochic author might object to the use of Daniel 7 to argue for this point. Right doctrine, wrong text.

Representation or identification?

Daniel correlates the Son of Man with the ‘holy ones of the most high’ by claiming that the Son of Man and the people of God both receive the kingdom (7.14, 19).³² This

³⁰ Walck, ‘The Son of Man’, in *Enoch and the Messiah*, 316. There is an offer for forgiveness in 1 Enoch 50.2, but the Son of Man does not participate in this scene. As for the kings and the mighty, their repentance and confession is met with rejection (63.1–12), and their faces are ashamed in the presence of the Son of Man (63.11). So Boccaccini recognizes that ‘The Book of Parables does not attribute forgiveness to the Messiah, who remains the judge and destroyer of evil’ (‘Forgiveness of Sins: An Enochic Problem, a Synoptic Answer’, in *Enoch and the Synoptic Gospels: Reminiscences, Allusion, Intertextuality* (EJL 44; ed. Loren T. Stuckenbruck and Boccaccini; Atlanta: SBL, 2016), 153–67, at 161).

³¹ This contrasts with Savino Chialà’s assertion that the point of contention in Mark 2 concerns the location of the Son of Man’s authority (‘The Son of Man: The Evolution of an Expression’, in *Enoch and the Messiah*, 153–78, at 163–4).

³² This should not, however, lead us to equate the ‘Son of Man’ with the people of God, especially since that reading of Daniel 7 is attested nowhere in early Jewish readings of Daniel, *pace* e.g. N. T. Wright, *The New Testament and the People of God* (Minneapolis, Fortress: 1992), 291–9.





correlation is taken up and expanded in the Similitudes as it consistently portrays the Son of Man as the 'heavenly representative' of the righteous: the Son of Man is called 'the Chosen One' (*ḥaruy*), and the community is called 'the chosen ones' (*ḥaruyān*) (39.6; 40.5; 45.3); when he appears before the Lord of Spirits, they appear as well (45.3; 52.9; 53.6); they will live together in the land (45.4–5) and the salvation of the righteous is contained within the eschatological victory enacted by the Son of Man (51.5; 61.4–5).³³

Paul Owen suggests that the correlation between the righteous and the Son of Man implies that the Son of Man is also a 'suffering figure', especially given the association between the Son of Man and Wisdom (e.g. 46.3), the latter of which is sent into the world but finds no place in which to dwell (42.1–2).³⁴ But this stretches the text well beyond its breaking point, and the eagerness to suggest a suffering Son of Man in 1 Enoch likely exhibits a tendency to collapse this text into the theology of the gospels as opposed to respecting its own theological integrity. To reply to Owen, Wisdom responds to finding no place on earth by simply returning to heaven to dwell with angels, and this rejection does not hint toward any experience of suffering; on the contrary, those who reject the Lord of Spirits (38.1; 45.2; 67.8) and his messiah (48.1) bring God and his agent no grief. These sinners are simply obliterated by the Son of Man for rejecting him (52.9).³⁵

In this connection, we should note how the Similitudes receives and interprets Isaiah's servant songs. Nickelsburg, VanderKam and Theisohn point out striking parallels between 1 Enoch and the Isaianic servant passages (specifically 1 Enoch 62–63 and Isa 52.13–53.12).³⁶ But, curiously, the Son of Man in 1 Enoch, albeit apparently identified with the Isaianic servant, shows no hint of suffering. Here we need to be cautious as to how we interpret one text's use of another. Utilizing the suggestion of Richard Hays – that if text A 'echoes' the language or themes of text B, it signals that text A is retrieving the broader context of text B – would in fact obscure the unique reception of Isaianic material in 1 Enoch.³⁷ It is always possible that the reception and use of one text in another will not be naturally intuitive. If we applied Hays' method here, should we not conclude that the multiple echoes of Isaiah 52–53 imply that the Son of Man is also the servant, who undeniably suffers in Isaiah 53? But what makes the interpretation of Isaiah in 1 Enoch so interesting is that the author identifies the Son of Man as Isaiah's servant *without* suggesting or even implying that he suffers. And we should not try to read this theme into the text where it is not.³⁸

³³ This list and the phrase 'heavenly representative' are taken from H. S. Kvanvig, 'The Son of Man in the Parables of Enoch', in *Enoch and the Messiah*, 179–215, at 192.

³⁴ Owen, 'Aramaic and Greek Representations of the "Son of Man" and the Importance of the Parables of Enoch', in *The Parables of Enoch*, 114–23, at 123.

³⁵ So Nickelsburg rightly states that 'Wisdom not finding a home is not suffering' ('Did Jesus Know', 203).

³⁶ Nickelsburg and Vanderkam, 1 Enoch 2, 258; Theisohn, *Der auserwählte Richter*, 118–26.

³⁷ As suggested in R. B. Hays, *Echoes of Scripture in the Letters of Paul* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1989).

³⁸ So rightly E. Sjöberg, *Der Menschensohn im äthiopischen Henochbuch* (Skrifter Utgivna av Kungliga Humanistiska Vetenskapssamfundet i Lund 4; Lund: GWK Gleerup, 1946), 116–39, esp. 139; Nickelsburg and Vanderkam, 1 Enoch 2, 259; cf. Walck, 'The Son of Man in the Parables of Enoch and the Gospels', 319.





Thus, the Son of Man in the Similitudes, while he *represents* the righteous and acts on their behalf, does not *identify* with them by participating in the pain of their oppression (notwithstanding the numerous other correlations between the Son of Man and the righteous). In fact, it may be that the lack of a suffering Son of Man in the Similitudes fits perfectly within its theological logic: that the Son of Man will overcome but not experience their suffering gives readers hope that one day their oppression will be reversed when he victoriously triumphs in forcefully displacing the wicked rulers.

Luke, however, has a different vision. Although many have debated the presence of Isaiah 52–53 in Mark, that Luke interprets Jesus as the Isaianic servant is clear when he explicitly ties these Isaianic texts to Jesus' life (e.g. Lk 22.37; Acts 8.32–33).³⁹ What is peculiar, however, is that the theme of suffering, taken from the language and theology of Isaiah, is often connected with the epithet 'Son of Man' as opposed to 'servant' (9.22, 44; cf. 22.22). For example, Jesus claims that

everything that is written about the Son of Man by the prophets will be accomplished. For he will be delivered over to the Gentiles and will be mocked and shamefully treated and spit upon. And after flogging him, they will kill him, and on the third day he will rise.

18.31–33

But where is it *written* that he will endure such suffering? Searching through the Hebrew Bible would produce no direct result; the Son of Man is never said to experience any adverse situation or hardship in Daniel 7. However, if Luke's Jesus has already identified the Son of Man from Daniel 7 with the suffering servant from Isaiah 53, then this claim makes sense: it is, in fact 'written' that the Son of Man will suffer (cf. Lk 24.25), because the figure from Isaiah 53 is also the Son of Man from Daniel 7.

In one section retrieving Isaianic material, Jesus claims that 'this scripture must be fulfilled in me, "And he was counted among the lawless"; and indeed, what is written about me is being fulfilled' (Lk 22.37). Because his suffering is portrayed as 'being counted with' sinners (Isa 53.12) – and this is precisely what happens when Jesus is crucified alongside two other criminals (Lk 23.32–33) – we can say that Luke's Jesus, as the figure from Isaiah 53 and the Son of Man, *identifies* with the lawless and thus shares with and participates in their experience of suffering.

One suggestion in this regard is that the suffering Son of Man is 'grounded in a concept that is common to both the Parables of Enoch and the Synoptics: identification of the savior figure with the oppressed and action on their behalf'.⁴⁰ But we have to be wary of reading the gospels back into 1 Enoch here. That the Son of Man represents the suffering saints in Daniel 7 does not need to imply that he also suffers: *representation does not necessarily entail participation*. The Similitudes, through interpreting Isaiah and Daniel, gives hope to its readers by promising to the righteous that the Son of Man

³⁹ On this theme see more recently H. Beers, *The Followers of Jesus as the 'Servant': Luke's Model from Isaiah for the Disciples in Luke-Acts* (LNTS 535; London: T&T Clark, 2015).

⁴⁰ Walck, 'The Parables of Enoch and the Synoptic Gospels', in *The Parables of Enoch*, 231–68, at 242.





will represent them and act on their behalf by displacing their sinful oppressors; Luke's Jesus claims that part of his salvific action as Daniel's Son of Man includes the Isaianic motif of direct identification with and *participation* in the experience and punishment of sinners. Thus, both Luke's Jesus and the Similitudes weave together the identities of the figures from Daniel 7 and Isaiah 53, but their readings of these texts and the soteriological actions of this composite figure starkly diverge within their own theological parameters. For the Similitudes, the Son of Man acts on behalf of the suffering righteous by overcoming their enemies – that is, by *not* being overcome by the exploitative kings and mighty. The hope of the righteous thus hangs on the essential asymmetry between their present experience and the experience of the Son of Man. He will be the one righteous individual who, when met with rejection, will experience no exploitation or defeat but rather dethrone those who perpetuate injustice in the land. For the suffering righteous, victory is found in the Son of Man's use and demonstration of his absolute power over those unjust kings. Jesus' participation in the judgement of sinners would actually appear disheartening to the author of the Similitudes, since this would mean that the Son of Man experiences the judgement which he is meant to enact upon others. Here the Similitudes' conversation with the gospels thus moves from a somewhat minor hermeneutical quibble into a deeper theological question regarding the nature of eschatological victory. What is the mode by which the Son of Man accomplishes eschatological redemption? From the perspective of the Similitudes, if the Son of Man is counted among the sinful, it unhinges the possibility of eschatological redemption, which is to be accomplished through the realization of the *antithesis* between the Son of Man and the condemned sinful kings doomed to be overthrown by him. In this respect, Luke's Jesus would appear to our Enochic author as coming dangerously close to uprooting the foundation of any and all eschatological hope.

Whom does the Son of Man save?

On the one hand, the Similitudes regularly characterizes moral deviants as 'sinners' (1 Enoch 38.3; 41.1; 45.2; 45.6; 46.4; 50.2; 53.2, 7; 56.8; 60.6; 62.2, 13) who will receive judgement directly from the Son of Man (69.27). On the other hand, the Son of Man has an explicit positive relationship with the righteous: he is 'a staff for the righteous' (48.4), preserves 'the lot of the righteous' (48.7), chooses the righteous out of Sheol (51.1–2), establishes peace for the righteous (71.17) and is revealed to the righteous (48.7). The Son of Man comes therefore to be 'the vindicator of their lives' (48.7) and accomplishes this by concomitantly displacing sinners and giving them into the hand of the righteous (38.5). The Similitudes presents a bipartite structuring of humanity made up of the sinners as the bearers of judgement and the righteous and the beneficiaries of salvation.

In Luke 19, Jesus runs into a rich (πλούσιος) chief tax collector (ἀρχιτελώνης) named Zacchaeus with whom he plans to reside (19.5), but this act is not welcomed by the others, who 'grumble' that 'he has gone in to be the guest of a man who is sinful (ἀμαρτωλός)' (19.7). In response to Zacchaeus' announcement that he will restore





anyone whom he has defrauded in his tax-collecting position (19.8), Jesus rejoices at his repentance (19.9) and declares about himself that ‘the Son of Man came to seek and to save the lost (τὸ ἀπολωλός)’ (19.10; cf. 5.30).

As Walck reads Jesus’ encounter with the tax collector Zacchaeus, he identifies a theological similarity between Luke’s Jesus and the Similitudes’ Son of Man: in the Similitudes, that the Son of Man sends out angels to ‘gather the scattered righteous ones’ expresses similar ‘theological dynamics’ to Luke’s scene in which Jesus cares for ‘those outside the bounds of the mainstream society’.⁴¹ But identifying this parallel is only possible at a high level of abstraction which obfuscates the theological thrust of both texts. Classifying Zacchaeus as ‘marginalized’ obscures Luke’s claim that he is a wealthy leading tax collector who manipulated his position of power to defraud and to steal from others (19.8). In the Similitudes, the kings and the mighty murder, disenfranchise, dispossess and consistently exploit the righteous and thus acquire ‘ill-gotten gain’ (63.10) and ‘devour’ what the righteous produce (53.2).⁴² In a solemn turn of events, the confession of their sin is met by a God who refuses to heed their pleas for mercy and responds with eschatological rejection (63.1–12). In the justice-seeking eyes of the Similitudes, Zacchaeus would belong to these oppressors destined for condemnation, and thus for the Son of Man to ‘rejoice’ at the repentance of one of the ‘mighty’ who have exploited the people of God is therefore just a category error; his perpetuation of injustice should instead ensure his ultimate overthrowing by the Son of Man.

To press this further, Jesus’ self-declaration that he has come for the ‘the lost’ (τὸ ἀπολωλός) responds to those who grumble about how he has joined the sinful Zacchaeus (ἄμαρτωλός) and thus signals that the ‘lost’ refers to *sinners* (cf. 5.30). Drawing a parallel between the two texts through the concept of the ‘marginalized’ overlooks both the fact that in the Similitudes the mission of the Son of Man is to vindicate the righteous *from* their oppressors – not just *qua* the marginalized but precisely *qua* the righteous – and that Luke’s Son of Man inverts the function of the Similitudes’ Son of Man. Jesus’ self-announcement that he seeks the sinful lost presents a deep challenge to and even a critical inversion of the essential theological logic of the Similitudes, by claiming that he has come to save precisely those whom Enoch’s Son of Man comes to destroy: ἄμαρτωλοί.

But for the Similitudes, Jesus’ act towards Zacchaeus counts as neither just a hermeneutical difference nor a disagreement over the mode of divine victory: it is a fundamental rejection of divine justice. The divine act that characterizes God *as* God in the Similitudes is his promised instantiation of cosmic equilibrium in which sinners receive judgement and the righteous receive blessing, and the present theological discord – in which the unjust kings prosper at the expense of the righteous – places a question mark over (we could say) the Godness of God. The theodical impulse of the Similitudes is therefore to claim that the future event of cosmic and juridical

⁴¹ Walck, ‘The Parables of Enoch and the Synoptic Gospels’, 260.

⁴² There is a translational issue here regarding *šamawa* in 53.2. Daniel Olson takes *hātā’an* as the subject of *yāšāmewu*, which would therefore imply nothing about exploitation of the righteous (*Enoch: A New Translation* (North Richland Hills, TX: BIBAL, 2004), 27, 98–9). But I follow the suggestion of Nickelsburg and VanderKam that the subject is implicitly the righteous (1 Enoch 2, 196).





restabilizing protects the integrity and identity of God himself. From the Enochic perspective, a divine agent who comes to forgive the likes of Zacchaeus implicates God in a judicial scandal which only intensifies the problem that the Similitudes hopes to reverse and resolve. The 'Son of Man' is the very figure that the Similitudes retrieves to promise that God *will* resolve this present injustice, but it is all the more scandalous that Luke's Jesus utilizes the same 'Son of Man' to support the opposite contention – that through this figure God forgives *these* exploitative, sinful oppressors.

Alleged parallels

Charlesworth insightfully suggests that 'the concept "Son of Man" is attractively ambiguous': the eschatological material in Daniel 7 contains a high degree of semantic potential which can be realized and utilized in variegated ways depending on an interpreter's setting and theological imagination.⁴³ We have seen this phenomenon both in the Synoptics (at least Mark and Luke) and the Similitudes. While reading the same text, they at times interpret the somewhat ambiguous material of Daniel in divergent ways, and permit us, utilizing a dialogical method, to uncover the extent of the disagreement between them. The 'authority' in Daniel 7.14 is interpreted by the Similitudes as the Son of Man's ability to displace wicked rulers, but Mark interprets that same authority as Jesus' power to forgive. Whereas the correlation between the Son of Man and the people of God in Daniel does not imply suffering for the Similitudes, Luke's Jesus is portrayed as a Danielic and Isaianic figure who identifies with and participates in the suffering of sinners. The Son of Man's act of benefitting the people God in Daniel 7.13–14 is retrieved by the Similitudes to mean that he will vindicate the righteous over against their sinful oppressors, but Luke suggests that the Son of Man comes for those sinners.

As we saw above, in some cases scholars attempt to stretch the gospels and the Similitudes to manufacture parallels which, on second glance, are found wanting. The differences between the gospels and the Similitudes should not be downplayed by projecting the gospels' reading of Daniel into the Similitudes (e.g. stating that the gospels' reading must have been 'assumed' or obvious from the text of Daniel), and neither should we ignore these differences by abstracting the texts from the theological context within which they are embedded. In the rush to discover a precedent for early Christology, we need serious caution when looking for similarities between the New Testament and the Similitudes (and other texts, for that matter), lest we claim to have discovered parallels which are more our own constructs than anything else. And if the similarity between the Similitudes and the New Testament is in fact strikingly weaker than previously imagined, perhaps we should seriously scrutinize the asserted 'Enochic origins' of early Christology, since – to end where we began with the words of Samuel Sandmel – it is too often the case that 'we have not a true parallel, but only an alleged one.'⁴⁴

⁴³ Charlesworth, 'Did Jesus Know', 202.

⁴⁴ Sandmel, 'Parallelomania', 3.

