

CHAPTER SEVEN

UPON THIS ROCK

One of the greatest mysteries of time and eternity is found in the two natures of God and man blended in the person of Jesus Christ. Centuries before the incarnation of God, as a man in the person of Jesus, Isaiah wrote, “Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a Son, and shall call His name Immanuel.”¹ The Hebrew name Immanuel is translated by Matthew as “God with us.”² In fact, the humanity of Jesus is emphasized throughout the New Testament. The author of Hebrews wrote, “*Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, He also Himself likewise took part of the same. For verily He took not on Him the nature of angels: but He took on Him the seed of Abraham.*”³ As a descendant of Abraham, Jesus would be also a descendant of Adam. Rather than taking on the nature of an angel, He took on the human nature. Derek Prince taught that the genealogy of Jesus recorded in the Gospels is in harmony with the presentation of Him. Emphasizing His identity with Israel, Matthew traces Him back to Abraham.⁴ To stress His identity with the human race, Luke traces Jesus back to Adam.⁵ Mark gives Him no genealogy, since according to ancient custom, a slave or servant needed no genealogy. John alone captured the God-man nature of Jesus. John presents Jesus as God without any human genealogy, as the eternal Word of God, who coexisted with God before creation.⁶ However, a few verses later John emphasizes both the divinity and the humanity of Jesus by writing, “*And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us and we beheld His glory, glory as of the only begotten from the Father, full of grace and truth.*”⁷ As a result of the above, the Bible has labeled Jesus with two titles: He is the Son of God, and He is the Son of Man. It was a surprise to me when I discovered that the title Jesus applied to Himself more than any other was as the “Son of Man.”

Now let us look carefully at a conversation between Jesus and His disciples recorded in the book of Matthew. “*Now when Jesus came into the district of Caesarea Philippi, He began asking His disciples, saying, ‘Who do people say that the Son of Man is?’*”⁸ We see that in His

¹ Isaiah 7:14

² Matthew 1:23

³ Hebrews 2:14 & 16

⁴ Matthew 1:1-17

⁵ Luke 3:23-38

⁶ John 1:1-2

⁷ John 1:14

⁸ Matthew 16:13

question Jesus refers to Himself with the distinctive title mentioned above, as the “Son of Man.” By doing so, He identifies Himself with Adam (mankind), as a member of the human race. “*And they said, ‘Some say John the Baptist; and others, Elijah; but still others, Jeremiah, or one of the prophets.’*”⁹ The disciples answered Him by saying that some thought He was John the Baptist, while others said He was Elijah. As you will see later in this book, these two figures are used as hinge pins between the Old and New Covenants. Others thought Him to be Jeremiah or one of the prophets. The three persons mentioned by name, John the Baptist, Elijah and Jeremiah, were dead. This would imply that at least a number of the people were thinking that Jesus might be someone raised from the dead.

Then Jesus asked the disciples a second question: “***But who do you say that I am?***”¹⁰ I believe this to be one of the most vital questions for all humanity. Peter’s response is of tremendous importance both to us and to our theme. Simon Peter answered and said, “*Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God.*”¹¹ In answer to His question, Peter alleged that Jesus was the Christ (the Jewish Messiah), the Son of the Living God. Simply put, Peter said that the Son of Man is the Son of God. This is one of the greatest revelations of the New Covenant. Jesus Christ, the only Son of God has come into the world in flesh and blood.¹² When He did this, He emptied Himself of His divinity and became like one of us.¹³ Although Jesus was and is eternally the Son of God, He became the Son of Man. By so doing, He lived His life in this world as a son both to Joseph and Mary and to His Father God. Paul tells us, “*There is one God and one mediator between God and man, the Man Christ Jesus.*”¹⁴ Still today and forever, a man sits on the throne of God. Many of us have spiritualized our sonship and have accepted our position as sons of God. However, the majority of us refuse to live in the son of man paradigm. Jesus did both and then said, “As the Father has sent me, so send I you.” When He said, “Follow Me,” He means that we demonstrate our spiritual sonship through walking out our natural sonship. A major purpose of this book will be to support this position.

⁹ Matthew 16:14

¹⁰ John 16:15

¹¹ John 16:16

¹² John 1:14; Hebrews 4:15

¹³ Philippians 2:6-8

¹⁴ 1 Timothy 2:5

Continuing His dialogue with Simon Peter Jesus said, *“Blessed are you, Simon Barjona, because flesh and blood did not reveal this to you, but My Father who is in heaven.”*¹⁵ Jesus said that Peter was blessed, because his answer had come through a revelation from the Father in heaven. Therefore, Jesus implies that the understanding of the Son of God-Son of man paradigm does not come to us by intellectual inquiry, but rather it requires a spiritual revelation. Notice also that Jesus refers to the Father as “My Father.”

*“And I also say to you that you are Peter, and upon this rock I will build My church; and the gates of Hades shall not overpower it.”*¹⁶ The metaphorical use of this passage has been greatly misunderstood. The name Peter is derived from the Greek word “petros,” signifying a stone or fragment of a rock, whereas the term rock is “petra.” Jesus was not saying that He would build His church on Peter, since we know that there can be no other foundation than Jesus Christ.¹⁷ In fact, Jesus speaks of it as “My church.” The rock upon which Jesus would build His church was not Peter, but rather it was Peter’s supernatural confession, *“You are the Christ, the Son of the Living God.”* Peter’s confession includes two points. First, Peter understood that Jesus was the Christ, the anointed one, spoken of by the prophets as the Messiah. Secondly, and relevant to our theme, Peter realized that the church of Jesus Christ is founded upon the testimony of the natural and the spiritual sonship of Jesus. Recognizing and confessing that the Son of Man and the Son of God are embodied in the person of Jesus Christ are essential elements when we speak of the church.

When Peter made his confession that Jesus was the Christ, the Son of the Living God, Jesus gave him the keys to the Kingdom of heaven.¹⁸ Notice, Peter was given the keys to the Kingdom, not the keys to the church. Jesus said, *“I will build My church.”*¹⁹ Once again, we often see that even among Evangelical Christians we have preached the gospel of the church in an effort to advance the Kingdom of God. However, from this passage we can see clearly that we are to preach the gospel of the Kingdom, and allow Christ to build His Church. Furthermore, are amiss when we speak of the Kingdom or of the church if we disregard the issue of sonship.

¹⁵ Matthew 16:17

¹⁶ Matthew 16:18

¹⁷ 1 Corinthians 3:11

¹⁸ Matthew 16:19

¹⁹ Matthew 16:18