

Who is the “Son of God?”: Identifying the Meaning Behind the Title

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The Faculty of the Graduate School of Arts and Sciences
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ABSTRACT

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In this paper, I explore the history and theological development of the title “son of God.” The purpose is to ascertain the significance of the title and its role in the Second Temple Period of Judaism. Emphasis is placed on the influence of Hellenistic thought and the separation of Jewish and Greco-Roman followers of Jesus. Doing this allows a greater understanding of how the title “son of God” is used in the writings of the New Testament as well as its place in the Christian religion today.

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An Introduction to the Problem¹

Who is the son of God? To many believing Christians, the answer is simple: Jesus Christ. Today, one cannot say, ‘son of God’ without the listener immediately conjuring up the image of a crucifix or a baptismal scene. The title has long been dominated by the Christian faith and the images that are part of its tradition. To the New Testament scholar, however, the answer of ‘who’ is not simple nor readily apparent. The history of ‘God’s son’ stretches back to the dawn of the Hebrew Bible and is forever a complex subject of study for scholars. What starts out as a metaphorical connection between the deity of Israel and his chosen king ends up becoming a transcendent, eschatological title of Jesus of Nazareth and his place within the Christian Trinity. The question of ‘who’ quickly becomes overshadowed by the larger question of ‘How did we come to have this title mean what it does in the Christian faith?’ Titles abound in the Gospels: ‘Lord,’ ‘Son of Man,’ ‘Messiah,’ and ‘Son of God,’ are found on almost every page. But we, as modern day readers, are far removed from the original context in which these words were uttered and are often left confused as to how we got to where we are in our interpretation. What I am most curious about, and what I hope to explain in this paper, is how a first century Palestinian Jew would have understood the title of ‘son of God’ when attributed to Jesus of Nazareth. Understanding the underlying history and the religious context in which this title is used in the Gospels is crucial to outlining how the

Gospel authors understood Jesus and his message. In other words, this will be an attempt at reclaiming a historical and contextual understanding of the term ‘son of God’ from the murky depths of history.

I want to approach this task systematically by tracing the title from its origins in the Hebrew Bible to its attribution to Jesus in the Synoptic Gospels.² To do so, I will need to focus on three areas of religious development in the historical Judeo-Christian tradition: The Hebrew Bible, the Qumran Scrolls and Jewish apocalyptic writing, and the New Testament. The influence, or perhaps lack thereof, these writings had on the ‘son of God’ title is central to my research here.

The Qumran literature and its contemporaries are critical in discovering possible threads tying the New Testament messianic titles to the religious concepts of the Hebrew Bible. It is here that much of my attention will be focused, as the literature at Qumran is both difficult to work with in its fragmentary nature and important to understanding Jewish thought in the intertestamental period. However, it will be a difficult task to remain focused on finding links in the Qumranic material to the ‘son of God’ title and to not get sidetracked into debates and squabbles over nonessential material. So first, I’d like to start at the very earliest beginnings of the Jewish ‘son of God’ title back in the passages of the Hebrew Bible. But before I begin to engage in the history and literature, I feel that a brief note on the translation of Hebrew and Greek to English is necessary.

A Brief Note on Translation

In this study, linguistically dismantling the term³ ‘son of God’ in its Greek and Semitic forms is essential to realize the complex underpinnings of this title. In the Greek New Testament ‘son of God’ is translated as υἱὸς θεοῦ, while in the Hebrew Bible it is

seen most often as בְּנֵי־הָאֱלֹהִים, or ‘sons of God.’ Martin Hengel has noted that the Greek rendering of the term, ‘son of God,’ is almost flat and one-dimensional, saying that, “The meaning of the Greek *huios*’ is almost completely limited to physical descent,” and is a constraining term to be set to a multi-faceted Hebrew word.⁴

He has often pointed out a contrast in meaning between the ‘flat’ Greek υἱὸς, and the more expressive Hebrew word for ‘son,’ בֶּן (Aram. בֵּר). Rather than being limited almost primarily to a physical meaning, בֶּן is more of an expression or phrase-idea than a word. It denotes subordination of many varieties, whether it be a father-son relationship, a membership of compatriots, prophets or a society, or younger companions and pupils.⁵ Most importantly, says Hengel, is how the word בֶּן was “used in a number of ways in the Hebrew bible to *express belonging to God.*”⁶ And these different ways that expressed a belonging to God were only used in the method of analogy, never in terms of divine descent or divine procreation.⁷ Thus we find in the Hebrew that the first half of the two-part equation ‘son of God’ can be understood beyond the simple physical sense of procreation. The relationship between the words ‘Son’ and ‘God’ will be expanded on later on in the discussion. It should be remembered that, despite our English translation, the Semitic meaning behind the title ‘son of God’ is filled with many alternate relationships besides the strictly physical Greek father-son understanding of υἱὸς θεου and this title was never used in the Jewish tradition to denote a strict physical descendent of the deity.⁸

1. 'God's Son' in the Hebrew Bible: Angels, Israel, and David

1.1. Angels and 'Celestial Beings' as 'Sons of God'

The Hebrew term בְּנֵי־הָאֱלֹהִים is used in four different ways throughout the Hebrew Bible and Judaism. The phrase can be used to refer to 'celestial beings,' or angels (Gen. 6:2, 4), the nation or people of Israel (Exodus 4:23), the Davidic king and his successors (2 Sam. 7:14), and the pious individual, also known as the 'righteous man' (*Ta'anith* 24b).⁹ I want to first address the issue of angels, or 'celestial beings,' as being 'sons of God,' as those examples are fewer, extend further back in the Hebrew Bible, and have the least impact on our later discussions. Then I'll examine the biblical references to the nation of Israel as the firstborn son and then the passages on David. I will discuss the rabbinic texts on the 'righteous man' in a later section of this paper as it seems appropriate to examine the rabbinic applications of 'son of God' in comparison to their Christian contemporaries.

The history behind the interpretation of 'sons of God' in the Hebrew Bible is long, but largely undocumented. The most literal translation of בְּנֵי־הָאֱלֹהִים is 'sons of the gods,' but the intent of the phrase in its context is highly questionable.¹⁰ The common practice of scholars today is to translate it as "angels" or "celestial/divine beings," but these two terms don't necessarily mean the same thing. It is quite plausible to interpret the Yahwist material of Gen. 6:2 in light of the sections of Deuteronomy that seem to hint

at a ‘host of heaven,’ עֲבֹת הַשָּׁמַיִם, of lesser gods that God reigns over in a divine council (see esp. Deut. 4:19, 17:3; Ps. 82, 89). But it is difficult to determine where to place the בְּנֵי־הָאֱלֹהִים of early Jewish tradition in the divine realm of a monotheistic religion.¹¹ We have no documentation of how these beings were interpreted in pre-exilic Judaism. On the other hand, the celestial beings of post-exilic 1 Enoch are a fully formed interpretative translation of the phrase ‘sons of God’ originally found in Gen. 6. This is the earliest example of the words ‘sons of God’ from the Hebrew Bible being textually interpreted since 1 Enoch 6-11 is commonly dated to the 3rd century BCE.¹² It has been supposed by scholars that the ‘sons of God’ in Genesis 6:2 had long been interpreted by its Jewish readers as ‘something,’ but Enoch is the first written proof we have of this phrase being interpreted as something specific (angels in a hierarchical cosmology). However, the only certain thing to be said about the intent of בְּנֵי־הָאֱלֹהִים is that it originally started out as an allusion to some other beings with God, but in time became synonymous with the Jewish cultural tradition of angelic beings who are subordinate to God (and some humans!) which eventually reaches its pinnacle in the advanced angelology of 1 Enoch 6-11.¹³ In other words, 1 Enoch seems to confirm a strong tradition of the ‘sons of God’ in Genesis 6 being accepted as meaning ‘angels’ in the previous centuries. This can be inferred from the developed ideas contained within the text, which indicates a thought out and practiced set of beliefs cultivated over time. Although we know little of the term in its original context, it can be surmised that it was most likely understood by post-exilic Jews as meaning the ‘angels’ of God as they are more or less understood today.¹⁴

1.2. Israel as God's Son

Now let us turn to the issue of Israel being depicted as God's 'son.' There are two salient citations for this association: one from Exodus and one from Hosea. The latter passage is one that is ritually appealed to by Christianity to bolster the claim of Jesus as the Messiah, while the former is oft overlooked because it is a very direct, but less than common declaration by God that Israel is His Son.¹⁵ The first textual citation where the term 'son' is used in direct relation to God when referring to Israel as a nation is in Exodus 4:22-23.¹⁶ Here we do not see the simple titular use of the phrase, but instead God is actively proclaiming that, "Israel is My first-born son. I have said to you [Pharaoh], let My son go, that he may worship Me."¹⁷ It is important to note here that God possesses his son actively. In other words, what we find in Exodus is 'God's son,' Israel, rather than the distinct 'son of God' titular formula of later Christianity. It is also worth mentioning that this application of 'My first-born son' to Israel as a people fades away and is replaced by the more poetic prophetic metaphors. It does experience a revival in several texts, such as in Ben Sirah 36:17, but in comparison to other, more attested ways of referencing Israel, the image of firstborn son falls by the wayside. This doesn't lessen the importance of the reference, rather it is important to admit that this title was less used as Jewish religious thought developed. What this phrase does give us is an impression of how early Judaism must have thought of itself as an elected nation in close relationship to God. While it has been argued that Jews thought of themselves as 'sons of God,' it seems that this title was not used as often as later titles such as 'nation of God,' or 'children of Israel.'¹⁸ This instance in Exodus is also important in understanding the

prophet Hosea's declaration which has long been interpreted by Christians as a messianic reference.

Hosea 11:1 is a reference to the Jewish Exodus from Egypt. "When Israel was a child, I loved him, and out of Egypt I called my son." Although later Christians would seize on the line, "out of Egypt I called my son" and apply it directly to the flight of Joseph, Mary, and the baby Jesus to Egypt (Matt. 2:13-2:15), it is clear from the lines coming after this verse in Hosea that this 'son' was not to be understood messianically, but as a simple inclusion of all Israel as God's son. When Hosea uses the words 'my son,' he is reinforcing the Exodus claim that Israel is God's son in a spiritual/metaphorical sense.¹⁹

Over time the usage of the metaphor of son and father changes, and is later reinterpreted and applied to David and his lineage as kings adopted by God as His sons. I am not saying that the metaphor is forgotten or falls into disrepair during later Jewish and Christian writings. Quite the contrary. My point is that the metaphor doesn't simply exist as an unchanging entity. It fluctuates and adapts to meet the demands of the religious writers. Sometimes this means an influx of new ideas or a move away from old ideas and sometimes this spawns a new dimension to the method of religious communication. A new dimension such as the one I will discuss below.

1.3. David: God's Chosen 'Son'

After the ascension of David son of Jesse to the throne of Israel, and the subsequent writings on his reign and life, the term 'son of God' began to take on new dimensions that had previously been alien to the Jewish tradition. The creation of a monarchical dynasty in the monotheistic nation of Israel inevitably became a monolithic

institution. David became God's מָשִׁיחַ, 'anointed one,' and in becoming so, formed a covenant with God that was to last forever.²⁰ God loved David so much that he adopted him as his son.²¹ Israel, for the first time, had a person, a mortal (Hb. בְּרֵאשִׁית) being called 'son of God': David, God's chosen ruler of God's chosen people. The impact that this would have on the Jewish faith and its concepts is far reaching indeed and the influence of the Davidic dynasty on the title 'son of God' is crucial to this investigation. When we examine the biblical passages recounting David's adoption we have to keep in mind the following two questions: 'What impact did the Davidic king have on future messianic expectations,' and 'How did David being named 'God's son' change Jewish perceptions of the title 'son of God?'

The oracle of Nathan found in 2 Samuel 7:12-16 is perhaps the most important and influential piece in understanding the relationship between God and the king of Israel. In it we find God's covenant with David and his offspring that not only will God establish his kingdom, but it will be established forever:

¹²When your days are done and you lie with your fathers, I will raise up your offspring after you, one of your own issue, and I will establish his kingship. ¹³He shall build a house for My name, and I will establish his royal throne forever. ¹⁴I will be a father to him, and he shall be a son to Me. When he does wrong, I will chastise him with the rod of men and the affliction of mortals, ¹⁵but I will never withdraw My favor from him as I withdrew it from Saul, whom I removed to make room for you. ¹⁶Your house and your kingship shall be secure before you; your throne shall be established forever.

Thus, we see already that God's promise is not limited to a specific individual, but to all the kings of Davidic descent ("I will establish his throne forever"). Part of this covenant is the declaration: "I will be his father, and he shall be my son." Arguably, this can be constrained to meaning only Solomon, but as we will see in other biblical verses, David is also called "my son" by God.²² The pattern that emerges is that for each subsequent

king of David's lineage, God's blessing will transfer to him, and, *de facto*, all Davidic kings will be seen as God's son.²³ This relationship is metaphorical in nature, and is properly translated by James Edwards as "I will be to him as a father (לֹאֲבִי לְךָ) and he will be to me as a son (לִי לְבֵן)." ²⁴ So, Nathan's oracle is not implying a genetic relationship, but rather a behavioral pattern. God would act as the father; wise, loving, strong, and authoritative, while David and his offspring would be the son; obedient, loving, and dependent on God's benevolence. With the king of Israel representing the pinnacle of piety, this relationship could be understood as how Israel should act towards God, and lends itself to the idea that the divine sonship of David came out of the concept of Israel as God's son.

Basically, the relationship between Israel and God, and the father-son relationship between God and the Davidic line are essentially the same. God has chosen Israel and its king to be his son, one who is respectful, obedient and reverent. On God's part, He will protect his elected and bless them as a father.²⁵ An interesting way to interpret this relationship would be in terms of divine power on earth, or as God designating power to a mortal to lead in righteousness, as a father would trust his son with an important task. The New Testament scholar Brian Nolan correctly notes how God is communicating his power to the Davidic line on earth, making "[The kingship] an extension of Yahweh's sway, and thus [belonging] to the 'order' of nature as a cosmic, creative (better, structuring), force."²⁶

I would be remiss if at this part of the discussion I ignored the powerful language of Psalm 2. At 2:7 the text is very explicit here in its designation of David (the assumed

author of the psalm) when it (with God as the speaker) uses the possessive בְּנִי, or literally ‘my son’: “He said to me, ‘You are my son; today I have begotten you.’” Christians will be reminded of Matt. 3:17, Luke 3:22, and Mark 9:7 when the heavenly voice decrees to Jesus “You are my Son, the beloved.” It must be stressed again how Judaism never conceived of a divine paternity like that found in the pagan world and Christianity. In Psalm 2:7 we see the re-emphasis of David’s adoption by God in 2 Samuel 7, and as such, there are no claims of actual physical descent from God, implied or otherwise. However, the verb ‘begotten’ (Hb. בָּרָא) as used here is slightly problematic. The term implies siring, begetting someone, or to use a more inventive translation ‘son-ing someone.’ God is actively siring David in Psalm 2 using a word that is used in the Hebrew Bible to discuss physical human procreation. But although the word is physical in its nature, it is understood here strictly as a metaphorical event, or an anthropomorphic idea.²⁷

The adoption covenant from 2 Samuel 7 is repeated and reinterpreted three more times in the Hebrew Bible: in Psalm 89, Psalm 132, and in 1 Chronicles. In Psalm 89 we see an extension of the covenant, allowing the throne of David to endure “as long as the heavens endure.” Also, the kingship/sonship of David and his line is raised to being infused with the power of God as long as they are obedient (“My hand shall always remain with him; my arm shall also strengthen him.” v.21-22, and “I will set his hand on the sea and his right hand on the rivers.” v. 25).²⁸ In a sense, the sonship of David in Psalm 89 is closer to God than seen in Samuel, more intimate one might dare to say, as God repeats his covenant with love and claims David and his line as his firstborn (“I will

make him the firstborn, the highest of the kings of the earth. Forever I will keep my steadfast love for him, and my covenant with him will stand firm.” v. 27-28).

In contrast, Psalm 132:11-12 seems remarkably detached. Here we see God change his wording from ‘my son’ to ‘your sons’ (Hb. בְּנֵי־ךָ) with a feeling of considerable distance when compared to Psalm 89. Also the conditional ‘if’ (Hb. אִם) is introduced to the covenant (“*If* your sons keep My covenant and my decrees that I teach them, then their sons also, to the end of time, shall sit upon your throne.” v. 12) Despite this minor change in tone, the covenant for the most part remains the same, and the steadfastness of God’s promise is restated.²⁹

1 Chronicles has three different accounts of the Davidic covenant: in chapters 17, 22, and 28. The first two accounts are very similar to that of the original promise of God to David in 2 Samuel. However the exception, 1 Chronicles 28: 7, endorses the same conditional nature of Psalm 132, when it says, “I will establish his kingdom forever if he keeps firmly to the observance of My commandments and rules as he does now.” Conditions or no, the Davidic covenant is a firmly established tradition in the history and texts of the Hebrew Bible, and the idea of David being God’s son, and God being his father, is a large piece of the ‘son of God’ background. The fact that the covenant passed on to the succeeding generations of David’s sons marks the necessary conclusion that the king was definitively human, but divinely adopted as a ‘son of God.’³⁰

What, then, does this mean to our present study? We have seen that the term ‘son of God’ has its roots in referring to either celestial beings (whether ‘angelic’ or something more vague) or the nation of Israel. Now, with the covenant of David, God chooses his

king and takes him as his first-born son and this title is passed along to the king's sons establishing a royal dynasty with divine sanction. 'Son of God' now becomes a title with which to address the ruler of Israel.³¹ The connotations of this title are strictly metaphorical, and are limited to the human realm. James Edwards phrases this exceedingly well:

We must remember that 'Son of God' was primarily a metaphor and that the effect of a metaphor consists in its ability to suggest and illuminate, but not necessarily to define. In short, the sonship of the king placed him on the summit of human capabilities and signified his unique blessing by God... Kingship in Israel never drifted into the mythical realm, but remained rather an essentially secular institution. The king himself was doubtlessly seen as divinely appointed, but his responsibility to rule as God's vicegerent caused the king as a person, as well as the monarchy, to move within the sphere of human experience.³²

There is no concept of a divine man, or an incarnate divine individual here. Rather the king is *to* God, *like* a son, and must act accordingly. 'Son of God' is not only designated for the king to imply that he will receive God's blessing and strength, but it also means that should the king stray from righteousness, God will chastise him harshly as a son.³³

1.4. Messianic Hopes in the Hebrew Bible

With this understanding of David as God's 'son' in mind, another problematical title is added into the mixture. David, as Israel's legitimate ruler-to-be, was anointed with oil (1 Sam. 16:13) in the manner of Near Eastern and Egyptian rulers to signify the initiation of their reign. This title of being the 'anointed one' is translated from the Hebrew מָשִׁיחַ to the problematical English 'messiah.' I say problematical because the term, much like that of 'son of God,' has many engrained images and meaning due to the Christian profession of Jesus as the Messiah. However, it must be asserted here that the term מָשִׁיחַ most certainly did not contain any of the transcendent, eschatological attributes that are so commonly associated with Jesus. When used in the books of Chronicles and

Samuel, they are almost always speaking of Saul, David or one of their sons. We know from the Priestly literature of Leviticus that the high priest (a descendent of Aaron) was also anointed with oil in his consecration of his occupation (Lev. 4). In this, the high priest and king shared a similar symbolic anointing upon their ascension to their positions. However, it is very clear that they were two different positions at the time of David and Solomon.³⁴

So this is how, from the very beginning, the image of ‘God’s son,’ David and his lineage, was also associated with the title of ‘messiah,’ or God’s ‘anointed,’ from the outset of the Davidic dynasty.³⁵ This is an extremely important piece of information to retain as we progress into the intertestamental period. The association of ‘messiah,’ king, ‘God’s son,’ David and his lineage, and the ‘golden age’ of Israel as a nation are crucial to understanding the later interpretations of the Qumran sectarians, Christians, and rabbis.³⁶ All of those titles are laid on one person: the Davidic king who is a human, earthly ruler. But with the destruction of Solomon’s Temple in 586 BCE, and the collapse of the monarchy, certain issues began to arise in the works of the prophets. A central problem was that God decreed the line of David would rule forever (2 Sam 7:13), yet there was no one on the throne in Jerusalem. Hopes began to arise in exilic and post-exilic writing of a restoration of Davidic king to initiate another ‘golden age.’ It is in these writings of Isaiah, Ezekiel, Jeremiah, and many of the Psalms that many scholars believe to have found evidence of a ‘messianic hope.’³⁷ Hopes that the Davidic king would not only be restored, but God would initiate the end of time in which very bad things would happen to the enemies of Israel and Israel herself would be, once and for all, free of strife and evil.

Scholars have argued about the truth behind this theory for several decades, and it would be too unwieldy and off-topic for us to get snared in this debate.³⁸ In this paper, I will align myself with Joseph Fitzmyer's arguments for now, in that I find no definitive evidence of an eschatological messianic concept in the Hebrew Bible.³⁹ While John Collins hedges away from Fitzmyer's absolute claims to acknowledge that there is "scattered evidence" of an eschatological hope, he ultimately concludes that most of the texts show "little eschatological interest" and "are relatively modest in their claims for the future king."⁴⁰ This is definitely a plausible theory and it is much preferable to William Horbury's overly-religious view that it is "clear that messianism is important *within* the Old Testament."⁴¹

I believe it would be agreeable to most scholars if I said that eschatological/divine messianism⁴² is not a large or important theme of the Hebrew Bible, while the restoration of the earthly throne of David consumed much of the attention of biblical authors.⁴³ I am also of the mind that most scholars would agree that messianism, as an eschatological-divine oriented view, only emerged as a definable, shaping force in the third and second centuries BCE.⁴⁴ With this working definition in place, I assert that the title 'messiah' held no eschatological or divinized connotations in the Hebrew Bible during the pre-exilic and post-exilic period up until the fourth century BCE (at the earliest).⁴⁵ Because of this, the associated title 'son of God' likewise held no divinized or supernatural meaning beyond the metaphorical relationship between ruler and God.⁴⁶ The question that remains is 'How did the non-messianic Hebrew Bible come to be interpreted as messianic by later readers?' To understand that question in full, we must understand the

historical context of the messianic movements. To do this, we must first broach the topic of the effects of Hellenism on Judaism from the fourth century BCE onwards.

2. Between Testaments: Oumran and Apocalypses

2.1. Hellenism and the 'Son of God'

Starting in the fourth century BCE, the Jews of Israel lived in a time of two worlds colliding. Jewish tradition had been born and flourished in the Semitic regions of the Levant, influenced by the Mediterranean and Near Eastern cultures. But when Alexander the Great conquered the kingdom of Judah in 332 BCE, he brought with him the Greek culture and a campaign of cultural assimilation for all those who had been conquered (Hellenization). After Alexander's early death, the resulting feud of the Seleucid and Ptolemy successors played out in parts of the land of Israel, with the Seleucids securing Israel for their empire in 201 BCE. Although Jewish monotheism retained its identity under the years of Greek polytheistic cultural rule, it was introduced to foreign ideas and Greek thought continuously changed the realm in which Jews exchanged ideas. According to the few texts we have describing Jewish life at this time, Hellenism eventually crept into the temple's upper echelons, until it became a place of idolatry, Greek culture ruled, and God's priests were chosen by politics. Eventually, full-blown Hellenization was pressed on Jerusalem by the upper classes during the reign of Antiochus IV, who ultimately forbade the practice of Judaism.⁴⁷ The books of 1 and 2 Maccabees describe this in detail, and how in reaction, more traditional Jews revolted under the leadership of a family called the Maccabees.⁴⁸ They fought against the ultra-Hellenized Jews until the Maccabees took Jerusalem and purified the temple in 164/163

BCE⁴⁹ and succeeded in attaining political autonomy from the Seleucids in 152 BCE with Jonathan the Maccabee becoming high priest and *de facto* ruler of Israel.⁵⁰

This extremely brief history⁵¹ of late third to mid second century BCE is important for establishing two points: First, the situation of an increasingly Hellenized Temple in Jerusalem and the resulting Maccabean war is the background against which many of the messianic texts are authored. This situation resulted in many Jewish texts exhibiting themes of restoration, purification, and war/repelling the Greek influences into Judaism. Second, even texts written after the rededication of the Temple express disgust with much of the resulting Hasmonean dynasty founded by Jonathan, finding the Temple still not adhering to proper standards. Thus many Qumran sectarians still looked forward to a time when everything would be properly restored to as it was in the ‘golden ages’ of Israel.

In sum, the encroaching foreign cultural ideas on Jewish thought and practice, the attempted forced Hellenization during the reign of the fiercely demonized Antiochus IV, the desecration of the Temple by Antiochus, the war of the Maccabees, and the less than perfect dynasty of the Hasmoneans all contributed to shaping a world in which some Jews felt God was going to intervene at any moment. The hopes of the prophets from the Hebrew Bible gave voice to hopes of a restored Davidic-king, but for the Jews of Hellenized Israel this wouldn’t be enough. They began to interpret many of these older prophecies in new ways, ways that would give voice to their current hopes and desires: to see the ‘wicked’ thrown from the holy land of Israel, to see those Jews who reveled in ‘evil’ punished and given their justice, and to see an establishment of a Jewish kingdom

that could never be overthrown by the nations again. This was all in response to the events surrounding and influencing the more pious Jews.

Now, returning to the specifics of our study, we must ask, ‘How was the Jewish term ‘son of God’ interpreted by Jews, Greeks, and (later) Romans during the Hellenistic period?’ We have seen how the nascent tradition of interpretation as ‘angels’ or the nation of Israel was expanded to encompass a native Near Eastern system of divine adoption enacted between God and the Davidic line. But how did this change with the introduction of the maelstrom of Hellenistic culture to the Jewish people? While there are plenty of Greek documents from this period, the daunting problem is that very little of it is Hellenistic-Jewish literature focused on the religious practice of Jews (aside from Philo and Josephus).⁵² Thus, we are restricted to determining what we can about Judaism at this time from the sectarians at Qumran and the mysterious communities that created 4 Ezra, The Similitudes of Enoch, and Daniel.

What is perhaps most important in our discussion of the Hellenistic culture of Israel is linguistics: Aramaic, Greek, and Hebrew (and later, Latin and Syriac) were all active languages of the time, and many of the writings of the second century BCE to the second century CE are found in one or more of these languages. Therefore, a decent amount of the time spent observing the influences of Hellenistic culture on Judaism should be allotted to the translation of words and ideas.

As I mentioned before, the Greek translation of the Hebrew ‘son of God’ and its variations result in an unusual Greek formula: υἱὸς θεοῦ. It is unusual because it hardly

appears at all in the Greek-speaking world outside of Christian writings. Students of Martin Hengel will be familiar with his classic argument:

The designation [huios theou], son of God, is relatively rare in the Hellenistic world and, with one exception, is never used as a title. The exception is the Greek translation of *divi filius*, son of the divinized, a title which Augustus took soon after the murder of Caesar and which is reproduced on Greek inscriptions as [huios theou]. But this terminology too was no more a serious influence on the conceptuality of the earliest Christianity which was developing in Palestine and Syria than the title Kyrios used of the ruler, which had become more frequent since Claudius... This official, secular state religion was at best a negative stimulus, not a model.⁵³

But Hengel fails to take into account the polytheistic nature of the Hellenistic world, where the gods had names, sometimes several. ‘Son of God’ when used in conversation with a polytheistic Hellenist would have more than likely elicited the response, ‘Son of *which* god?’ Greek gods were usually named in writings, and their sons were referred to as a ‘son of Zeus’ or a ‘son of Apollo.’ So it is not at all strange that υἱὸς θεοῦ was rarely used, as it is uninformative to a Greek audience.⁵⁴

To ask if the Jewish title ‘son of God’ came under any direct influence from Hellenism is a bit complex. Hengel is right to say that a direct translation of ‘son of God’ is absent from Hellenistic writing, but he fails to give an example of the cultural parallels. The Jewish ‘son of God’ is the ruler of Israel,⁵⁵ an anointed agent of God. Context will sometimes demand that the term be interpreted as ‘angel’ or ‘the nation of Israel,’ but by and large the title was focused on the Davidic king as a description of his position with God and Israel. This is clearly mirrored in the Greek tradition: the ruling emperor or king would often claim divine descent either to legitimize his rule or to impress his authority on the people.⁵⁶ The Ptolemies were ‘sons of Ammon’ and rulers of Egypt after Alexander. The Davidic kings were the ‘sons of God’ and the rulers of Israel.⁵⁷ The parallel is obvious, while the influence is less so. The early Christian claim

that the ascended Jesus was ruler of the world as the ‘son of God’ was in alignment with the Hellenistic and Near Eastern motif of a king ascending to his reign and being proclaimed ‘son of so-and-so-, god of such-and-such.’ However, the relationship between god and king was understood differently by Jewish and Gentile rulers. Hengel argues that the Hellenistic understanding did not influence early Christians to break with Jewish tradition and understand Jesus as a ‘son of God’ in the classical Greek method, i.e. physically descended. But this is getting ahead of the subject’s progression. Suffice it to say, as we approach the time of the Qumran literature, it will serve us to remember that the Jewish world views, which the following sections go into detail about, were formed in a world full of Greek philosophy, polytheistic religions, mythological god-men, and times of imposed cultural assimilation. Though the Jewish tradition rejected the ideas of direct divine descent and polytheism, it should be remembered the context in which we find the ‘son of God’ at this time was besieged by Greek mythological and religious ideas.

2.2 Qumran and Messiahs

The tale of the discoveries at Qumran are well-worn and I would like to skip the finer details here.⁵⁸ I will be content to remark that the texts of this community of Jewish ‘purists’ is perhaps one of the greatest finds in Jewish and Christian studies and its impact is still being felt to this day. Among the manuscripts recovered, we find details of a community (perhaps two communities with a common purpose) of pious Jews who conceived of themselves as the ‘true Israel’ and looked forward to a restoration of the Temple to proper worship and the re-establishment of the Davidic throne at the hands of an eschatological redeemer figure.⁵⁹ But all of the varying beliefs found in the scrolls

are problematical in the sense that they do not adhere to a single, coherent eschatology or even a concrete unified belief structure. However, two general conclusions can be made about their eschatological views.

1) The sectarians believed in a “day of the Lord” and “end times” in which God alone would be exalted and he would wreak much destruction on the nations except for those chosen few Jews still faithful to God. They would receive salvation for their faithful keeping of his tenets and laws. This was interpreted from texts such as Dan. 12:1, Isaiah 13, Amos 5:18-20, Ezekiel 32, and others. How specific the details of when, how, and what the end times would entail is a variable amongst the different manuscripts.⁶⁰

2) The community at Qumran believed there to be an upcoming eschatological war, most clearly documented in 1QM, “The War Scroll.” A messianic figure factors prominently into this war,⁶¹ who was sometimes conceived as an angelic individual (Michael, Melchizedek, Gabriel, Prince of Light). The bottom line of this belief is that God would vanquish wickedness in all its earthly forms.⁶²

It should be noted that a general resurrection (possibly mentioned in 4Q386 and 4Q521) and a heavenly kingdom in which the faithful would live forever is not a major strand of thought amongst the sectarian literature contrary to Christian readings of the texts.⁶³

In regards to this expected messianic figure, John Collins gives the most succinct picture:

He is the scepter who will smite the nations, slay the wicked with the breath of his lips, and restore the Davidic dynasty. Hence his role in the eschatological war. He is also the messiah of righteousness, who will usher in an era of peace and justice. He is presumably a human figure, although he is endowed with the spirit of the Lord. He is expected to restore a dynasty rather than rule forever himself.⁶⁴

While this seems to be a neat and tidy definition, it is somewhat spoiled by what we find in CD 12:23 and 1QSa 2:11-21: two Messiahs. The issue of the dual Messiahs most likely stems from the community's hope for a restoration of both the Temple to 'proper' worship and the restoration of the Davidic line simultaneously. The two offices of High Priest and earthly ruler of Israel were often complementary and worked in tandem at times of restoration or establishment, as can be seen in Num 27:15-23, Jer. 33:15-18, and Hag. 1:1, 12, 14; 2:2, 4. While distinct from each other, they were two pieces of the whole picture of idealized Israel. One could not hope for a restoration of the Temple to a purified state and not desire an ideal son of Zadok to preside over it. Likewise the same is true for the restoration of the Davidic throne.⁶⁵ This dual messiahship does not mean that the Davidic-messiah was devalued.⁶⁶ In fact it is the Davidic-messiah, the "Messiah of Israel" who is the most developed of the two and receives the most attention from the sectarian authors. In the end, I am of a similar mind of Craig A. Evans who argues that this dual messianism is not unique in any way but it's literal expression. The restoration of the monarchy and the priesthood are historically tied together, and so it should be no surprise to see a diarchic messianism.⁶⁷

Perhaps the biggest challenge presented by Qumran is the seemingly impossible task of unravelling esoteric titles, mystical texts, and unique biblical midrash to make sense of them. With over 850 original texts, it is easy to become lost in the web of biblical allusions, the intricacies of their religious thought, and their eschatological view. For this paper and its focus on the title of the 'son of God,' we must be vigilant not to be caught in tangents or side-interests. These can all be explored in another piece, at another

date. For now, we must focus our sights on finding connections, if there are any, to the ‘son of God’ title at Qumran.

To this end, the massive amount of literature available can be distilled down to four relevant texts that distinctly mention a ‘son’ character in eschatological context.⁶⁸ There are also eight additional scrolls that merit our attention. These texts mention the messiah in an eschatological sense, and it is important that we remember that the titles of ‘messiah’ and ‘son of God’ share a common heritage, meaning they have potential insight for our quest.⁶⁹ I wish I had the time and space to give an in-depth analysis of each one, and I will be referencing and commenting on them in the notes, but they are not the texts that I have been looking for. It is the infamous “Son of God” text, 4Q246, that shall form the core of my study here. It holds, I believe the missing link between the usage of ‘son of God’ in the Jewish and Christian traditions.

After this, I will make some concluding remarks and propose a few theories concerning the ‘son of God’ and Qumran before we take a close look at Jesus and his relationship with the ‘son of God’ title in the Gospels.

2.3. A Brief Excursus: The ‘Son of Man’

The figure known as the ‘son of Man’ deserves a crucial study all his own. There are shelves and shelves of books in the libraries that are dedicated to examining this figure. However, the ‘son of Man’ is relevant to this work in two simple regards: That he, as an angelic/divine redeemer, is an alternative the Davidic messiah, and he is a major influential figure in eschatological and apocalyptic writings. The influence of Daniel 7 on Jewish and Christian apocalyptic literature is well attested. Books have been written and rewritten on the subject of Daniel’s vision and exactly who the ‘son of man’ was

intended to be at the time of Daniel's creation. My wish is to skirt the issue somewhat, only picking out what is necessary from the 'son of man' tradition to further our understanding of the 'son of God.'

In Daniel 7, we are faced with a being of implicit divine status. God gives him the kingdoms to the 'one like a son of man' to hold dominion over forever. The motif of the arrival of this figure on clouds is a recurring theme in other texts when referencing this figure. Whether or not Daniel 7 is introducing a non-Jewish tradition into Jewish apocalyptic thought is up for debate.⁷⁰ It still had a decided impact in the form of influencing 4 Ezra and the Similitudes of Enoch. These apocalypses are dated to the first century CE, and are authentically non-Christian Jewish works. In these apocalypses, we see further development of Daniel's 'son of man' figure and the assumption that this figure was indeed a heavenly figure of extremely high status.⁷¹ In 4 Ezra we find out several details about the 'son of man': that he is pre-existent (7:28), that he is of Davidic descent (12:32), and he is identified with Daniel's 'son of Man' and a warrior-king (13:36).⁷² The Similitudes of Enoch add further information: the 'son of man' is equated with the messiah (1 Enoch 48:10) and is like one of the holy angels (1 Enoch 46:2).⁷³

Both of these texts agree that the 'son of man' was a pre-existent, transcendent, messiah. 4 Ezra is more concerned with the Davidic-king-warrior theme, while the Similitudes depict an enthroned judge. They are both more active than Daniel's figure, in that they both take very active hands in destruction.⁷⁴ The image then emerges of a flying, fire-spewing, king of angelic visage who will judge the earth and establish a kingdom of justice after the eschaton. Suffice it to say here that the 'son of man' was a

highly developed figure who influenced eschatological thought. We will see in our examination of 4Q246 aspects of this mystical warrior-angel-king and it should be remembered that this figure is not mutually exclusive with the Davidic messiah of the Hebrew Bible. If anything, the Davidic messiah became absorbed into the ‘son of man’ tradition creating a figure of recognizable biblical features that exhibited Danielic eschatological actions.

2.4. The ‘Son of God’ at Qumran

As it was said before, the Dead Sea Scrolls are of great value to the biblical scholar in giving insight into the shifting dynamics of the various Judaisms. These scrolls are not only a witness to the staggering variety of Jewish thought during the intertestamental period, but they are sometimes found to be a missing link between Christian and Jewish thought. However, we must ask whether or not there is any evidence of a theological shift in Judaism during the intertestamental period that accounts for the change from ‘sons of God’ to the definite, singular ‘son of God’ in reference to the Messiah found in early Christianity. There is no example from the Hebrew bible that specifically uses the singular ‘son of God’ as a title that denotes a close tie to the title of ‘messiah’ outside of implications. The gap between the Jewish textual absence of using such a messianic title and the early Christian usage of it after, and perhaps during, the time of Jesus is frustrating. We know that early Christian writers borrowed frequently from the Jewish tradition to add weight and influence to their writings, whether in quoting scriptures, using Jewish terminology or literary style.⁷⁵ And many of the religious titles used in the Gospels can be found in the Hebrew Bible, with the exception of the singular, exact ‘son of God’ construct being used in tandem with messianic

expectations. With the other titles attributed to Jesus in the New Testament (messiah, Lord, Rabbi, son of Man) having root in the Jewish tradition, why would the title 'son of God' be such an exception? I am led to believe that somewhere between the early compilations of the Hebrew bible and the writing of the Pauline letters a new understanding was given to the old title 'sons of God' and the Davidic-King sonship and then molded into a new meaning: A quasi-supernatural 'son of God' Davidic-Messiah.

There is a lack of transition from the Hebrew Bible to the New Testament for this idea of a synonymous connection between 'son of God' and 'messiah' to be easily proven. While the Hebrew tradition (in both Torah and apocalyptic writings) made use of the term 'sons of God,' it was never in any messianic, eschatological context, unlike in the New Testament.⁷⁶ I firmly believe that there in fact can be a link found in the intertestamental Dead Sea Scroll 4Q246, which, as the prominent scholar J.J. Collins claims, "is probably the oldest extant text that explicitly uses the title 'Son of God' with reference to a future messianic king."⁷⁷ What this means is that 4Q246 may be the witness of a new theological dimension given to an older title. It could well show the conception of 'God's son' as strictly metaphorical of the king and God took on a new form to include a future, eschatological, and somewhat divine/angelic messiah. The catch is that the text never actually uses the term 'messiah,' but the implications and phrasing are almost shouting the word throughout.

Published in its entirety by Emile Peuch in 1992/3 and dated to the late second century BCE,⁷⁸ 4Q246, the 'Son of God text' as it is known, has been the subject of much debate over its intentions and meaning.⁷⁹ Like many of the Dead Sea Scrolls, 4Q246 is

severely decayed and missing several parts of the text. But what remains is enough to provide a strong insight into the developmental process of the titular use of ‘son of God.’

The following is my translation of the text:⁸⁰

Column I

1. []* He fell down before the throne.
2. []* and your years
3. []* your vision, and all will come [into the world?].
4. []* trouble will come upon the earth.
5. [] and a great slaughter in the cities
6. []the king of Assyria [and E]gypt
7. [(God’s wrath?)] will be great upon the land
8. []* and all will serve
9. []will be called [g]reat, and by his (God’s?) name will he be named.

Column II

1. Son of God will he be called, and they will call him the son of the Most High. Like the shooting stars
2. that you saw, so will be their kingdom. They will reign for years over
3. the land, and all will trample all. People will trample people and cities, cities,
4. *vacat* until the people of God arise and all will rest from the sword.
5. His/its kingdom will be an eternal kingdom, and all his/its paths will be righteous. He/ It will judge
6. the earth justly, and all will make peace. The sword will cease from the earth,
7. and all cities will pay homage to him/it. The great God will be his/its strength,
8. He will make war for him/it, give people into his/its hand, and all of them
9. will be cast before him/it. His/its dominion will be an eternal dominion and all of the depths⁸¹

There are several issues that need to be dealt with when dealing with scroll 4Q246, some more problematical than others. First, the ambiguity in the third person masculine suffix attached to the nouns in lines 5-9 of column II. Here, it could be referring to the ‘son of God’ or the ‘people of God’ in the collective singular. This argument holds some water when we refer to Daniel 7:14 and 7:27 where the kingdoms are both being given to the ‘son of man’ and to the ‘holy ones of the Most High.’ Thus

we see both a group inheriting the kingdoms as well as the identification of an individual as being a representative of a group. This same type of literary understanding could be at work here, with the 'son of God' representing the 'people of God' and both inheriting the same thing. Plausible as the argument seems, I believe the text should be read as "his" referring to the 'son of God.'⁸²

The second matter is that of the positive or negative standing of the 'son of God' mentioned by the text. This stems from the fact that the text is missing half of the first column and there is a blank space (or, *vacat*) in the second column, both at crucial points to identifying the 'Son of God.' The *vacat* comes right before the line "until the people of God arises and all rests from the sword." Some scholars believe that this break indicates that the missing text was mostly acting as a negator in context. And since the lines before the *vacat* recognize the son of God and then list atrocities, the formula seems to be: [Introduction of the 'son of God'] + ["People will trample people and province, province"] + [*vacat*] + ["until the people of God arises and all rests from the sword"] = The son of God is a negative character in 4Q246 which the people of God will rise against.

This conclusion that the 'son of God' is a negative character has led some scholars to identify this 'son of God' as a negative historical figure in Jewish history, such as Alexander Balas, son of Antiochus IV, who was named *Theopater* (God-begotten, or more loosely, 'son of God'). There is no indication whatsoever in the text that the 'son of God' is viewed as a negative title or that it is inappropriately used by the one proclaimed

‘son of God.’ This notion of a negative ‘son of God’ character stands contrary to the evidence.⁸³

In my opinion, this answer lacks an appreciative understanding of the literary context.⁸⁴ To say that this *vacat* is a key turning point is ignoring the stylistic tendencies of the author. It seems clear that the author is mirroring several aspects of the visions of Daniel, esp. Dan. 7. The first column, while largely intelligible, seems to strongly imply that there is a royal vision interpretation occurring here, which is highly reminiscent of Daniel (one of the most notable dream interpreters to a king). The strict textual allusion in col. II:5, 9 to Daniel is absolute:

4Q246 f1 col.ii: 5	Daniel 3:33; 7:27
מַלְכוּתָהּ מַלְכוּת עֵלָם	מַלְכוּתָהּ מַלְכוּת עֵלָם
4Q246 f1 col.ii: 9	Daniel 4:31; 7:14
שְׁלֹטְנָהּ שְׁלֹטֵן עֵלָם	שְׁלֹטְנָהּ שְׁלֹטֵן עֵלָם

That this comes after this entrance of the “one like a son of man” in the narrative Dan. 7 and after the introduction of the “son of God” character in 4Q246 is noteworthy in its cadence. I also find the location of the phrase “Most High God” in the verse directly preceding *both* Dan. 3:33 and 4:31, which contain another usage of the “everlasting kingdom/ eternal dominion” to parallel the naming of the “Son of the Most High” in col. II:1 which precedes the “everlasting kingdom/ eternal dominion” of col. II: 5, 9. I would conclude that in the “everlasting kingdom/ eternal dominion” passages in Daniel are never more than a verse away from the citation of God as the Most High. Thus, I would claim that 4Q246 is imitating this by naming the ‘son of God’ character as ‘son of the Most High’ right before the recitation of the “everlasting kingdom/ eternal dominion”

phrase. In addition to all of this, with the exception of Psalm 145:13a, both phrases are wholly unique to these two texts, and even the Psalmist's usage isn't identical:

מְלָכוּתְךָ מְלָכוּת כָּל-עֲלָמִים וּמִמְשָׁלְתְּךָ בְּכָל-דָּוָר וְדָוָר : Granted, the Psalm is in Hebrew, but the word structure is more elaborate than that of Daniel, and not a one to one correspondence.

Such a tying of literary rhythm between two texts is impressive enough, but when we look at the actions surrounding the 'son of God' and the 'one like a son of man' we find even more parallels. Col. II:8-9 shows evidence of influence by Dan. 7:14a, while the nations in both Daniel 7 and 4Q246 destroy themselves, one through its own arrogant words, and the other through their own trampling. Also, both texts seem to imply that the kingdoms of evil "hang on" for a little while longer after their own self-destruction. In col. II:2-3: **וְאַרְכָּהּ בְּחַיֵּינוּ וְתַיִבַת לְהוֹן עַד-זְמַן וְעַדָּן** and Dan. 7:12: **יְמַלְכוּן עַל אַרְעָא**

Adela Yarbro Collins and John Collins note an even further similarity between the texts in their chronological structure, describing how both Daniel and 4Q246 follow the same pattern of: 1)Tribulation -->Deliverance 2) Interpretation/Summary by speaker 3) Tribulation and Deliverance reviewed with the repeated key phrase, "everlasting kingdom." This means that the conflict between the people in col II:2-3 is repeating col I:5's scene of carnage in the cities. Furthermore, the rise of the 'son of God' in col. I:9-II:1 is repeated by the rise of the people in col. II:4. This redundancy is, as the Collins' say, "a feature of apocalyptic style."

There is no questioning the clear influence of Dan. 7 on 4Q246, and the data gathered from 4Q246 seems to explicitly indicate the 'son of God' as a positive figure,

who is to come with an eschatological kingdom of truth and righteousness that would come after conquering the nations and freeing Judea from its foreign yoke. It is with this in mind we should examine the message of both texts.

While the text lacks the word ‘messiah,’ we should read the acts of the main character (the ‘son of God’) as messianic in content, and the overall point of the text is an expectation of a great figure come to receive the kingdoms of the people and hold an eternal dominion over the people of God. J. Fitzmyer holds the opinion that although it is a plausible idea that the text of 4Q246 depicts a messianic king, it is not absolutely the only way it could be rendered. His main argument is that while this text depicts the coming of a great man who will do great deeds, it does not mean he is automatically the messiah, as the term “appears relatively rare in the sense of a future, eschatological agent, anointed by Yahweh. Moreover, the title ‘Son of God’ is never used in any of the commonly considered messianic fragments found in Qumran.”⁸⁵

While it may be true that the title itself was never used outright, the followers at Qumran had an obvious understanding of what the messiah, in the eschatological sense, was to do and establish (an eternal kingdom as God’s chosen ruler). To combat this argument, we should turn to 4Q174 to prove that the title ‘son of God’ had a direct connection to the messiah. The text is midrashic in sense that it cites biblical passages and gives explanations and interpretations. Of particular interest to us is the interpretation of 2 Samuel 7:11-14 found in 4Q174 f1 2i:11-12: “‘I will be a father to him, and he will be My son.’ This passage refers to the Branch of David who shall arise with the Interpreter of the Law on Zion in the Last Days, as it is written...” The Branch of David

is a well-known allusion to the coming messiah who will restore the Davidic throne and it is explicitly related to the “messiah of righteousness in 4Q252 5:3.”⁸⁶ In other words, the connection follows like this: ‘son of God’/ ‘My son’ = Branch of David (4Q174) and ‘Branch of David’ = ‘Messiah of Righteousness’ (4Q252). Therefore ‘son of God’ = ‘messiah.’⁸⁷

This conclusion is corroborated by the extreme parallelism exhibited by 4Q246 to Dan. 7. It is fairly clear that the author of 4Q246 had Dan. 7 in mind when he was writing this text and was, in my opinion, aware that he was setting up the ‘son of God’ character to be equated with the ‘one like a son of man’ figure of Dan. 7. It should be recalled here that this ‘son of Man’ figure was equated with the messiah in the apocalypses.⁸⁸ It is true that the ‘son of God’ figure in 4Q246 does little from what we can make out, and does not come on the clouds like that of the ‘son of Man.’ However, the use of the ‘son of God’ figure in 4Q246 strongly argues that this individual is synonymous with the Danielic ‘son of Man.’⁸⁹ It cannot be ignored that the progressing interpretation at Qumran seemingly included an eschatological ‘son of God’ messiah.⁹⁰

A simple summary of the facts drawn from the scroll should clearly confirm that this ‘son of God’ personage is a messianic agent by means of the context he is found in. The fact that he is also associated with the roles of a warrior, a King, a righteous judge, an authorized agent of God to bring about peace, and an eschatological figure in the Jewish tradition allows the ‘son of God’ in 4Q246 to fit neatly into the classical Jewish definition of the Davidic-messiah and the various apocalyptic communities’ emerging eschatological redeemer.⁹¹ We should therefore break from Fitzmyer’s overcautiousness

and conclude firmly that 4Q246 is a messianic text that identifies the Messiah as the ‘son of God.’⁹²

Before I leave 4Q246 behind as we approach the New Testament writings, I want to make one final observation. The scroll is not only important in linking Hebrew Bible notions of sonship, God, Messiah, and the ‘End Times’ it is also important in finding links between the community at Qumran and the early followers of Jesus of Nazareth.⁹³ What is unique to this particular Qumran scroll is the very persuasive argument that the author of the Gospel of Luke was familiar with 4Q246 or a translation of it.⁹⁴

In Luke, we see an almost exact replica of the Qumran scroll’s text, in both titular use and messianic undertones. In other words, we see the same text from 4Q246 being re-used by the author of Luke to enforce a messianic idea, completing a chain of interpretation from the Hebrew Bible to the New Testament. Luke uses the terms ‘son of the Most High’ and ‘son of God’ as completely messianic. It would be reasonable to assume that the author(s) of Luke’s source(s) would not use these terms with these underpinnings if there were not a predecessor in Jewish tradition. Craig Evans notes that these similarities between the two texts are unique, both to Luke and 4Q246. This idea is further strengthened by J. Fitzmyer’s theory that the Greek expression in Luke 1:32 must have had its origin in another traditional Semitic writing.⁹⁵ The ‘Son of God text’ from Qumran is evidence of this earlier tradition, if not the original prototype:

4Q246 f1 col.i: 9	Luke 1:32a
<p>בְּשֵׁמָה יִתְקַרָּא [. . .] בְּאֵת יִתְקַרָּא</p>	<p>οὗτος ἔσται μέγας καὶ υἱὸς ὑψίστου κληθή σεται,</p>
<p>“...will be called [gr]eat, and by his name will be called.”</p>	<p>“He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Most High,”</p>
4Q246 f1 col.ii: 1	Luke 1:35b
<p>וְבָרַךְ עַלְיוֹן יִקְרֹנֶה. בְּרַחֲמֵי אֱלֹהֵי יִתְאָמֵר</p>	<p>κληθήσεται υἱὸς θεοῦ.</p>
<p>“Son of God he will be called and Son of the Most High they will name him.”</p>	<p>“...he will be called Son of God.”</p>

4Q246 gives us an example of a pre-Christian writing that uses the terminology ‘son of God’ in a way that denotes a messianic title.⁹⁶ The fact that they are similar in a rare construction and content leaves a very good possibility that Luke referenced some form of a pre-existing Jewish idea of ‘son of God’ messianism that traces its interpretive roots back to the Hebrew Bible. In short, it is plausible to follow the usage and shifts in understanding of the title ‘son of God’ from the Hebrew Bible to Qumran to the New Testament.⁹⁷

This point cannot be emphasized enough. The evidence presented here argues in favor of a Jewish understanding of a Messianic ‘son of God’ before Jesus. What this means to the New Testament scholar is that when the words ‘son of God’ are used in the Gospels, it is entirely possible that some Jews may have understood the title in this Messianic-eschatological sense, likely imagining Daniel’s vision of the ‘son of Man’ and it’s associated content. We can, with some certainty, repudiate the ideas of Hengel, and

later Vermes, that to Jews of first century Palestine, 'son of God' only conveyed the idea of a pious man, or angel. We can add that this title may have been heard and used in reference to the Davidic messiah actively. The usage of 'son of God' in the Jewish messianic sense in the New Testament is seemingly not so alien to the Jewish mind the more we delve into the content recovered at Qumran. However, the scrolls at Qumran do not indicate a god-man Messiah, like that of the later Christian church.⁹⁸

Both the titles 'messiah' and 'son of God' were applied to David, Solomon, and their offspring. It was the belief of scholars (including Peuch, Milik, Fitzmyer, Kümmel, Hengel, etc.) for a long time that the term 'messiah' had no connection whatsoever to 'son of God' and that the New Testament usage of these titles synonymously was unique. But, as R.J. Brady explains, this is largely because of a lack of evidence from the intertestamental period that links the two titles together. At least, there was a lack of evidence until the Qumran scrolls became fully translated and published. It is here in the writings of Qumran, especially 4Q246 and 4Q174, that we find proof that clearly indicate that the use of the title 'son of God' was being increasingly used to refer to a future, eschatological king-messiah.⁹⁹ Now, with this theory forged, we move into the writings of the New Testament to examine how Jesus interacted with the title 'son of God.'

3. Jesus: The ‘Son of God?’

3.1. ‘Son of God’ and the Gentiles

Many features given to us through the Gospels define Jesus as a miracle-worker, a pious man, a healer, a fervent minister, and a mysterious parable weaver. But what is most unique about the descriptions of Jesus are the titles ascribed to him by his followers and foes. It is here where the hammer hits home in our discussion. A common title that is used throughout the Gospels and Pauline writings to address Jesus is *kurios*, or ‘Lord’ (Gk. κύριος).¹⁰⁰ Another title that is given to Jesus is *christos* (Gk. χριστός), which is a translation of the Hebrew word, *mashiach*, or ‘Messiah’ (Hb. מָשִׁיחַ). Titles play a pivotal role in the climactic scenes of the Gospels and are used to reveal knowledge to the readers of who Jesus ‘really was.’ For example, when Jesus asks Peter who he believes Jesus to be in Luke 9:18, Peter answers, “The Messiah of God” (Gk. τὸν χριστὸν τοῦ θεοῦ). In Matthew 8:29, when Jesus exorcises the demon from the Gerasene man, the demon names him with a similar but distinctly different title, “Son of God” (Gk. υἱὸς τοῦ θεοῦ). The parallel story in Mark 5:7 and Luke 8:28 have the demons identify him by a slight variant on this name, when they call him “Son of the Most High God” (Gk. υἱὲ τοῦ θεοῦ τοῦ ὑψίστου).¹⁰¹ This title, ‘son of God,’ is further attested by Jesus’ own disciples in Matt 14:33 when they praise him and say, “Truly you are the Son of God” (Gk. ἀληθῶς θεοῦ υἱὸς εἶ.). What we have seen in the

previous sections is an adaptation of the Jewish tradition to expand titles such as “messiah,” “son of God,” and even to a point “son of man,” to encompass new ideas of redemption and hope for a better time to come in which God would mete out punishment for the wicked and exalt His faithful.

It must be observed that the events and language in the Gospels parallel often with Greek mythology and beliefs. And although the title ‘son of God’ used by the early Christians may have been utilized in the traditional Jewish sense, the Gentile audience, which would soon far outnumber the Jewish-Christians, more than likely understood the stories of Jesus in a completely different manner (Greek polytheism).¹⁰² It is a classic case of miscommunication between speaker and audience. While the Christian Jews spoke to Gentile Greeks about the ‘son of God,’ the two parties had two sets of meanings. A monotheistic idea being introduced into a polytheistic belief structure obviously had little in common in way of *direct translations*, so a polytheist had to translate it as best as he could to fit into his current understanding of the divine realm. It is a mistake of scholars to assume that early Christians all spoke the same theological language. The two sets of original Christians, Jews and Gentiles, formed two different Christianities founded on two different understandings of ‘son of God.’ Ferdinand Hahn identifies this fact, and realizes that, “While in the Hellenistic church Son of God was aligned first and foremost with the unique being of Jesus, it may not be assumed that the Palestinian church viewed it in this way.”¹⁰³ It is not too much of a stretch to contradict Hengel, and claim that the Palestinian church understood the title ‘son of God’ in the classical Jewish context, while the Hellenistic church had tapped into a Greek-Jewish blend of the title that raised Jesus

from being a proposed Jewish Davidic-king to a divine being comparative to Greek mythological stories. I believe that while the Jewish-Christian's concept of 'son of God' stayed true to the Jewish tradition, the fast-growing Hellenistic church's understanding was heavily influenced by Hellenism and its Greek culture of divine men.

Perhaps the classic example of the diverging differences between the Palestinian and Hellenistic Christian churches is found in the writings of Paul of Tarsus. His idea of many 'sons of God' is subject to great scrutiny and debate by New Testament scholars. What is of most interest to this study, are the epistles to the Romans and to the Galatians in which he refers to the many 'sons of God' often (Rom. 8-9, Gal. 4. . The ideas contained are fundamentally Greek: gods are gods, and humans mortal. But, as James Tabor puts it, in Paul the gulf between the immortal gods and mortal humans "is increasingly transcended by the more general idea of apotheosis as potential not only for heroes, emperors and rulers, but for anyone and everyone. Clearly Paul's notion of many glorified sons of God is related to many Jewish texts in and around the Second Temple period, which speak of the destiny of individuals and select groups in terms of heavenly transformation, glorification or even enthronement."¹⁰⁴ Thus we find that Paul's concepts, while showing a new halakhic viewpoint, is still in relative harmony with the contemporary Jewish tradition. However, the culture in which Paul was preaching this advanced form of Jewish interpretation was purely polytheistic. Adela Yarbro Collins contends that even though Paul was speaking in Greek to a Greek audience, his interpretations were firmly Jewish, thus leading to a reinterpretation of the missionary's ideas to a more comprehensible Hellenistic teaching by his polytheistic disciples. Of all

things, especially the Jewish ‘son of God’ title would be the most subject to interpretation in the Greek Pantheon, “For Greek and Roman members of the audience of Mark, the epithet ‘son of God’ would imply at least potential immortality.”¹⁰⁵ And it was also a common notion to the Greek culture to bridge the gap between immortal gods and mortal humans for the two to mate and produce ‘sons of Zeus’ or ‘sons of Apollo,’ and so on.

Being descended from a deity was a constant theme of portraying the inhuman abilities of emperors and kings of the Hellenistic period. Alexander the Great was called ‘son of Ammon,’ the Ptolemies in Egypt claimed the same title, and Augustus Caesar became ‘son of the divine.’ The title ‘son of God’ when used by a Jew or a Christian Jew would likely be understood by a Greek as being kingly, or heroic, and perhaps even being translated as ‘son of Zeus’ to fit more comfortably in the Hellenistic mind.¹⁰⁶ Adela Yarbro Collins notes an example of this that can be found during the translation of the Gospel of Mark. In Mark, chapter 5:7, the possessed man calls Jesus, “Son of the Most High God.” This title is translated from the Greek υἱὲ τοῦ θεοῦ τοῦ ὑψίστου. In the Greek Septuagint, ὑψίστος is always used to translate עליון, or Most High (God). This phrase, ὑψίστος, is also used in Gentile Greek texts as a divine name for Zeus, Zeus Hypsistos. This indicates a strong possibility for an equation of Jesus, the “son of God,” with being a “son of Zeus” by Mark’s Greek audience.¹⁰⁷

Another point of interest in the Gospel translations is one found at the end of Luke 23:47. With the death of Jesus on the cross, the gospels of Mark and Matthew both have the centurion at his feet declare, “Truly this man was the son of God!” (Mark 15:39; Matt. 27:54). The author of Luke, however, has the centurion saying, “Truly this man

was innocent.” Geza Vermes asks the obvious question, “If Mark and Matthew deliberately chose this Greek formula [“Truly this man was the son of God!”], how can it be explained that Luke, the Gentile evangelist, substitutes for it, ‘Certainly this man was innocent!’?”¹⁰⁸ Perhaps the explanation is that Luke, in dealing mostly with Gentiles unfamiliar with monotheism, opted to not use this title to be spoken by one of their own, especially at this particular highlight of his Gospel, to avoid confusing the idea of the divine man (son of Zeus) with the Jewish idea of the just man, Davidic King-Messiah, or angelic figure. It seems that this was done intentionally, with the exceptional possibility that this is a passage where Luke relied on the Q source or another source for his material. If this was the case, it further underscores the delicacies and problems of using such a powerfully interpretive title infused with centuries of Jewish monotheistic meaning in a polytheistic Gentile setting.

While much time could be spent comparing the two cultural parallels between Greek and Jewish ideas of divine sonship, it should be enough to say here that the backdrop of a Greek speaking polytheistic culture allowed for a radical new (Greek) understanding of the typically Jewish title ‘son of God.’ I will not argue that the Christian usage of title ‘son of God’ was Hellenistic in nature, in fact, I believe the contrary, and I have been trying to emphasize the Jewish history of the title in this study. However, I must agree with James Tabor, Geza Vermes, and R.J. Miller that although the title itself was a mostly purebred Jewish notion, ‘son of God’ quickly became Hellenized by the newly converted Greek Christians, whose background was filled with divine mortals descended from gods. It is not hard to make the connection between Greeks

hearing 'son of God' used in a Jewish theological lecture, and interpreting it as a pre-eminent title for Jesus as a divine being. Geza Vermes underlines this pattern of ideas when he makes his well constructed point on Gentile Christianity:

It was not until Gentiles began to preach the Jewish Gospel to the Hellenized peoples of the Roman empire that the hesitation disappeared and the linguistic brake was lifted. Paul, and that true Hellenist, the author of the Letter to the Hebrews, were satisfied with phrases such as the 'image of God', and the 'effulgence of God's splendour and the stamp of God's very being.' They would without doubt have recoiled from language such as that used by the Syrian Ignatius of Antioch in the first decade of the second century AD, who found no difficulty in alluding to Jesus as 'our God', and as 'the God who bestowed such wisdom upon you'.¹⁰⁹

It can be concluded that the title 'son of God' began taking on a godly role, more familiar to the Greeks while very alien to Jewish culture, resulting in perhaps the first two Christologies (that of the Palestinian and Hellenistic Christians) of many more to come.¹¹⁰

3.2. Jesus as 'the Son'

Geza Vermes theorizes that Jesus rejected the title 'Messiah the Son of God' each time that he is asked if he is such. He contends that this would leave no trace of evidence that Jesus called himself 'son of God' nor encouraged others to call him such.¹¹¹ Several scholars have put forth this idea that Jesus never claimed himself to be the 'Messiah, the Son of God.' These include J.J. Collins, C.K. Barrett, B.M.F. van Iersal and H. Conzelmann.¹¹² Vermes and his colleagues discount Matt. 28:19 as a formula later inserted into the text by the early Church. I agree that its blatant trinitarian Christological ideas are too developed for the text. Besides this insertion, there are only two other references in Matthew to Jesus identifying as the Son of God. In Matthew 24:36 (Mark 13:32), Vermes agrees with C.K. Barrett that the usage of the title, '*the Son*' was added to mitigate the ominous tones that are held in the passage. As for the usage of the words,

'the son' in Matthew 11:27 and Luke 10:22, Vermes states plainly that most exegetical skeptics agree "how discrepant these words are in both tone and content from the normal sayings of Jesus."

However, an early counter to this line of thinking can be found in the works of Vincent Taylor. Taylor claims that the saying found in Matt. 11:27 is genuine because of Jesus' denial of knowing 'that day.' The church would not have inserted a saying that showed Jesus admitting ignorance of God's plans, which means that it must have been an already established part of the tradition. If this saying was uttered by Jesus, it shows that Jesus called himself 'the Son' in a distinguished and unique relationship with God.¹¹³ But arguments such as these have been brushed aside by more recent scholars on the basis that textual exegesis indicates that the wording and usage of this passage is discrepant with the major corpus of Matthew. With this said, Geza Vermes concludes that, "On the basis of his surviving teaching, it turns out that it is impossible to prove, and unwise to suppose, that Jesus defined himself as *the son of God*."¹¹⁴ But this does not necessarily mean that he did not see himself in a Father-Son relationship with God.

Donald Verseput argues that there are authentic passages of the Gospels in which Jesus is named the 'son of God' and that the author of Matthew did not overlook the Jewish usage of 'son of God' as an eschatological title. He explains that it is noticeably perceptible in the myriad of connotations in the Gospel.¹¹⁵ It is completely possible that its usage could be intended to highlight Jesus' strong faith, but he further claims that no attempt is made by the author to support the usage of the 'son of God' title with any evidence or proof, that its introduction is casual and offhand in Matt. 2:15. This is

surprising, he says, for “the reality of the divine Sonship has hitherto been neither declared nor defended; it is here simply assumed – a mutually understood supposition shared by author and his intended readers alike.”¹¹⁶

This lack of evidence in Matthew to support the ‘son of God’ usage is most likely largely in part to the author’s unusual concern with Jesus’ royal Davidic messiahship. In other words, Matthew’s main goal is to not emphasize the ‘son of God’ christology, but to establish Jesus’ role as the Davidic Messiah.¹¹⁷ The titular usage of ‘son of God’ in Matthew is more of an assumed expression that would either come with the messiah, Davidic heir, or with a charismatic healer. Taylor agrees here that the titles of ‘His Son’ and ‘the Son’ were familiar to the first Christian communities, but they were used more often for teaching and less often for worship. As he puts it, “The first Christians fervently believed in ‘the Son,’ but they invoked ‘the Lord.’”¹¹⁸

It would seem that the modern consensus of New Testament scholars is that in authentic passages of the Synoptic Gospels Jesus rarely, if ever, acknowledged the title ‘son of God’ when applied to him. However, there is the caveat that it is more than likely that the title *was* applied to Jesus in his own lifetime. I must agree with this sentiment since the data seems to match up. I would add to the discussion that the authors of the Synoptic Gospels used titles in correct proportion to a) how Jesus thought of himself or b) how the author of the Gospel thought of Jesus. In either event, the result turns out to be the same.

The frequency of the various titles sheds some light onto how Jesus either viewed himself or was viewed by others. In all three synoptic gospels, “son of Man”

outnumbered any other title by about 2:1, with the second most frequent title being Messiah. “Son of God” came nowhere near the amount of frequency (with the exception of John). The picture that shapes up is that Jesus was the ‘son of Man,’ which seemed to indicate without saying that he was the Messiah. “Son of God” was either weakly attested to or inserted by the early church for some particular reason. Abnormally, Matthew seemed more interested in labeling Jesus as Son of David rather than Son of God, which would seem to indicate Matthew had a separate source that envisioned a Davidic descendent more vividly than the other Synoptic Sources. This data concerning the frequency of christological titles strongly indicate that the ‘son of God title’ was not of central concern to the Synoptic Gospels. I would suggest that it was a less fashionable, even archaic, synonym with ‘son of Man.’ But I still stress that even at its most developed, ‘son of God’ did not imply the trinitarian belief formulated by the early Christian church.

Before I conclude this study, I want to quickly pursue two last areas of relevance, that being the discussions of Paul with his Gentile audiences and the rabbinic understanding of the title ‘son of God.’ While Paul’s activity takes place after Jesus’ death, I believe that his interpretation of the events of Jesus’ life was still rooted in a Jewish mentality. His writings also take place before the formation of any clear cut Gospel, though their respective primitive communities were actively furthering their traditions during this time. What we can glean from surveying a few of Paul’s key ideas on the ‘son of God’ is an idea of what Paul thought before what I would refer to as the ‘Gentile-Jewish Christian break’ occurred. Where Christians were still Jewish in

thought, and often in heritage, and at a point in Christian development where Judaism was still the religious background, but Jesus' teachings were being grafted onto the olive tree of Judaism. This point right before the split between Judaism and Christianity became irreconcilable deserves to be examined as part of the Jewish traditional development of the 'son of God' title.

3.3. Paul and the 'Son of God'

In the person of Paul we find a traditional Jew, by his own account, converted to the teachings of Jesus, preaching the 'good news' to the Gentile communities of Asia Minor and the Mediterranean. Here we get the opportunity to see a Jewish mind working to reconcile the teachings of the budding Christian movement with both the Gentile world and Jewish history. What we find is a teaching that is not quite beyond Jewish boundaries and not quite within the limits of a high Christology like that of John and Revelations.

Paul uses the Greek *kyrios* (Gk. κύριος), or Lord, 184 times when he is admonishing, inspiring and instructing his followers in his letters, whereas he uses υἱὸς θεοῦ ("son of God") only 15 times.¹¹⁹ However, Paul's usage of κύριος and υἱὸς θεοῦ so interchangeably indicates that there seems to be a close relationship in meaning between the two titles. Both refer to the Post-Easter Christ figure, but the title of κύριος seemed to be reserved for the more common usage in prayer and the basic confession of Christianity, while υἱὸς θεοῦ was, as stated before, used "at the climax of certain theological statements." But as Hengel points out, Paul uses the title υἱὸς θεοῦ almost exclusively when he is "speaking of the close bond between Jesus Christ and God, that is of his function as the mediator of salvation between God and man."¹²⁰ It would be fair to

say that the title 'son of God' was limited to expressing Jesus' close relationship with God without fully divinizing Jesus.

When we look at the letters of Paul, we can find several pieces of information about Jesus as 'the son of God' as understood by Paul. For example, in the opening of Paul's letter to the Romans (1:3-4), we can draw three conclusions. First, Jesus was born of a man descended from David, "according to the flesh." 'Jesus had a mortal father' is what Paul seems to be saying in his opening lines of Romans. Second, Jesus was declared to be 'son of God' after being resurrected "through the spirit." This means that it is through Jesus' resurrection that he is identified as 'son of God.' Third, it can be concluded that God interfered with Jesus' resurrection, but did not intervene with his conception or birth, which was "according to the flesh," while his resurrection was "through the spirit."¹²¹ What this means is, for Paul, Jesus was only exalted by God as 'His son' at the resurrection. While this can be interpreted as an 'Only Son' christology, it is more likely that Paul believed that God's intercession at Jesus' death and resurrection was proof of Jesus' virtue and faith, something to be imitated and revered as the model for all Jews and Gentiles.¹²²

In a seemingly contradictory passage found in Galatians 4:21-30, Paul again picks up and uses this motif of being selected "through the spirit" and "through the flesh." In the passage Paul uses the story of Abraham's two sons, Ishmael and Isaac, as an allegory for explaining Jesus' virtue and sonship. Ishmael, the son of Abraham's slave Hagar, "was fathered through flesh" while Isaac, born to Abraham's wife Sarah, was fathered "through God's promise." Using this allegory, Paul can speak about how Jesus could

have a biological father, just as Isaac and Samuel did, but still be a person fathered “through God’s promise” or divine plan. Using this example, Paul could illustrate a Jewish story and then apply Jesus’ own life to it. Though Jesus was “fathered through flesh” biologically, spiritually he was “fathered through God’s promise” of the messiah.¹²³

A final note on Paul’s ideas on Jesus as God’s son, is James Tabor’s examination of Paul’s concept of many ‘sons of God’ to come. Tabor reasons that in 1 Cor. 3:21-23 and Rom. 8:32, Paul assures his followers that ‘all things’ belong to them. In the future, they will be judging the world as well as angels, similar to how magistrates conducted courts of the time, according to 1 Cor. 4:8. Tabor explains the idea of “inheriting the kingdom of God” in 1 Cor. 15:50 as meaning that the congregation would be participating in the cosmic judgment alongside Christ, who is the “first fruit” of the followers of God. After all come under the rule of Jesus and his group of “transformed, immortal, glorified sons of God who have been given power over ‘all things,’” they will bring about God’s final plan for the world. In other words, Tabor finds sufficient reason to conclude that Paul is supporting an idea that all believers shall become like Jesus. And when these ‘sons of God’ judge the world with Jesus at their head, all kingdoms and kings are turned over to God (1 Cor. 15:28).¹²⁴

It seems accurate to conclude that Paul conceptualized Jesus as a human in deed and being, but it was through the miracle of resurrection that his true identity became identified with the ‘son of God.’ This seems to be a unique construction of Paul’s: that the ‘son of God,’ who, as I presented before, had a close relationship with the

supernatural ‘son of Man,’ was only realized after the death and resurrection of Jesus. This conception of the Messiah dying and being realized in death and resurrection is wholly characteristic of the Christian faith, and is a strong point of departure from the Jewish tradition.¹²⁵

Before I move onto some rabbinic texts, I want to make a final closing observation. Perhaps the most confusing of all in this discussion of Paul and the Gospels is the relationship between the titles. It is significant that there is an absence of Paul attesting to the ‘son of Man’ sayings. The fact that Paul’s letters are silent on this title, while the Synoptic Gospels are rife with it is completely baffling. But Paul is similar to the Synoptics in that his letters rarely use the term “son of God” in comparison to his preferred title of “Lord.” I have come across no substantial explanation as to this bizarre configuration of ‘son of Man’ in the Gospels, ‘Lord’ in the Epistles, with a sprinkling of ‘son of God’ between the two (notwithstanding John’s gospel). That the central role of Jesus in the New Testament as an eschatological messiah-agent is not in question. However, the role of which the surrounding titles played in identifying Jesus is still far from clear, even now in this presentation.

3.4. The Righteous Man as ‘Son of God’

So far we’ve seen that the ‘son of God’ title has come very far indeed through the millennia. The rudimentary idea of Israel as God’s first-born son was established textually in Exodus and the notion that the divine beings of God, or angels, were also ‘sons of God’ can be found in Genesis and corresponding texts. This soon evolved into the Davidic King and his elected sonship with God and became the a common understanding of ‘son of God.’ We then saw that the Hellenistic impact on the title was

only particular to the formation of the later Greek Christian Church. The Jewish title was borrowed and reinterpreted to fit a more Greek understanding of the divine world.

During this period while the term ‘son of God’ became increasingly divinized by the Gentile converts of Christianity, the traditional Jewish understanding of the title ‘son of God’ remained a human title with royal ties. It was also seen that there is strong evidence for a Jewish eschatological “son of God” figure at Qumran. We now want to look at how the rapidly growing rabbinic tradition of the late first and early second century CE understood the title.

Although the rabbinic sources are dated after the death of Jesus in Jerusalem, they are a good foray into the Jewish tradition of the time contemporary with the crystallizing Christian church. One of the more interesting pieces of the rabbinic tradition is the interesting Jewish usage of the title ‘son of God.’ Instead of the title being restricted to the Davidic King or angels, the rabbis begin using it for extremely pious men who were close to God in mind and soul. To be a ‘son of God’ took on a different dimension in the Jewish culture in the wisdom writings of Solomon and Ben Sirah and subsequently in Rabbinic Judaism, meaning ‘beloved of God’ or, more informally, ‘God’s friend.’

I must prelude the rabbinic tradition with another set of sources that uses ‘son of God’ to refer to a righteous man similar to the rabbinic texts. The apocryphal books The Wisdom of Ben Sirah and The Wisdom of Solomon hold key insights into the tradition of the righteous or holy man as ‘son of God.’ Both texts are pre-Christian, with The Wisdom of Ben Sirah dating as early as 180 BCE while The Wisdom of Solomon being placed anywhere from 220 BCE – 50 CE.¹²⁶ The structure of both wisdom books,

especially when they refer to God as Father or as being God's son, is strikingly reminiscent Jesus' language in the New Testament. Arguably, a close match in wording and tone is Sir 4:10 and Luke 6:35.

Ben Sira 4:10

“To the fatherless be as a father,
help the widows in their husbands' stead;
then God will call you a son of his,
he will be more tender to you than a mother.”

Luke 6:35

“But love your enemies, do
good, and lend expecting
nothing in return. Your and
reward will be great, *and you*
will be children of the Most
High...”¹²⁷

The relation being in the ‘If you do X then your reward will be adoption by God’ clause. But even when Jesus' quotes Psalm 22 as he dies on the cross, “My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?”¹²⁸ we can find a considerable comparison to Sir 29:4a: “Lord, my Father and God of my life, abandon me not into their control.”

In both Solomon and Ben Sirah, virtue is addressed frequently and codes are established of how the righteous man should act. The subsequent correlation, as in Sir. 4:10, is righteousness with sonship, and sonship with fatherly care and attention.¹²⁹ Thus, the righteous man would consider God his Father, in much the same fashion as Jesus would two centuries later. But these wisdom sayings are not without grounding in the more orthodox Jewish tradition of today. Many parallels can be drawn between what is attested to in the Wisdom of Ben Sirah and Solomon and the Hebrew bible. As James Edwards rightfully points out, “Probably the most important passage in the intertestamental literature concerning the righteous individual as God's son is Wisdom of Solomon 2:12-20.”¹³⁰ Wisdom 2:12-20 is not only famous for containing the expression, “For if the just man is God's son, he will assist him and rescue him from the clutches of

his opponents.” (Wis. 2:18), but it is also a virtual minefield of parallels with the Hebrew Bible. For just a small sample, Wisdom 2:18 parallels neatly with Psalm 103:13, Wisdom 2:19 reflects Isaiah 50:6; 53:7, and Wisdom 2:20 echoes Psalm 94:21.¹³¹ It would seem that there is a strong link between the Hebrew Bible and the writings of Wisdom and we can place the interpretation of the righteous man or just man as ‘God’s son’ as being firmly based in the Jewish tradition.¹³² And as noted before, the just man was held in high esteem by God and was even “greater than the angels,” but there was no sense of him having a divine nature. In fact, it is the exact opposite in Ben Sirah and Wisdom, where the just man is elevated to being ‘God’s son’ *because* he is a mortal so subordinate to God’s will and teachings. His almost complete dependency on God was the prime reason for God’s fatherly attention: “I extolled the Lord, ‘You are my Father! My mighty savior, only you!’ Do not leave me in this time of crisis, on a day of ruin and desolation!” (Sir 51:10).

Geza Vermes in his classic historical-critical book, *Jesus the Jew*, argues that ‘son of God’ is closely tied to the Galilean miracle-worker/ Jewish charismatic. He references several Jewish commentaries and traditions of 1st and 2nd century rabbis who were spoken to, or about, by the heavenly Voice. For example, Vermes cites a commentary that the heavenly Voice was heard every day during the charismatic Hanina ben Dosa’s life saying:

‘The whole universe is sustained on account of *my son* Hanina; but *my son* Hanina is satisfied with one kab of carob from one Sabbath eve to another.’¹³³

Compared with other examples of onlookers’ accounts of Hanina ben Dosa being commanded by and proclaimed as son of God by the heavenly Voice, Vermes concludes

that this first century Galilean charismatic is remarkably similar to the stories of Jesus in the Synoptic Gospels. If, as he contests, the Hanina parallels are taken seriously and scrutinized closely, then it would seem obvious that, “The Hellenistic *son of God* ‘divine man’ then appears not as an original element in the Gospel tradition, but as one superimposed on a solidly established Palestinian Jewish belief and terminology.” This of course means that to Jesus’ Jewish audience, the term ‘son of God’ was also likely to be understood as a reputable title to be applied to men who were dear to God, and possibly used to describe Jesus during his ministry in this fashion.¹³⁴ Hengel’s understanding of the rabbinic tradition aligns with Vermes, as he notes a saying that the righteous man was “greater than the angels, for the angels, unlike the righteous man, cannot hear the voice of God without fear. The angel Gabriel followed Daniel and his companions like a pupil going behind his master.”¹³⁵

There are two points to be considered if we are to accept this theory. First, Hanina ben Dosa is a later contemporary of Jesus, so it could be possible that the rabbinic tradition tried to downplay one of the key christological titles of early Christianity by bestowing the title ‘son of God’ to non-divine, non-eschatological men of great piety. But it is more likely that the title had a combined growth in both traditions, as noted in the previous sections, where the Christians took the evolution title in the direction of deification and the Jews went in another direction, reclaiming the human aspects.¹³⁶ The second factor that must be addressed with regards to Vermes’ assessment is that he is writing before any real great advances came in deciphering the scrolls from Qumran Cave 4. The writings found in this cave indicate that the Qumran sectarians were

developing a messianic 'son of God' figure without any indication of a god-man included. And, as for the divine 'Jesus, Son of God' of the Hellenistic period, the divinity (beyond that of an angelic or superhuman figure) was a concept of a Greek church founded on a Jewish tradition that took a polytheistic theme and made it fit within the monotheistic framework. What is also striking is that in all the examples that Vermes gives, there is nothing that sustains the idea that any of these charismatics of the 1st and 2nd century CE were regarded as a 'divine man' similar to the Greek character of the same name.¹³⁷ Highly esteemed in heaven, these men were mortal as everyone else, and thus have no place being compared to the Hellenistic 'divine man.' It must be concluded that the rabbinic tradition provides another form of usage for the title 'son of God,' that must be considered when weighing the title's use in the Gospels.

With the rabbinic traditions of charismatic miracle workers such as Honi the Circle Drawer and Hanina ben Dosa and the intertestamental books of The Wisdom of Solomon and The Wisdom of Ben Sira all using the title 'son of God,' or the more accessible idea of God as 'Father,' the conclusion is strongly in the affirmative for a new usage of the title. This is perhaps the most frequent usage of the title applied to individuals during the intertestamental period, for it has a variety of texts and traditions attesting to its frequency in addition to those presented here. The relationship of the righteous man, the blessed man, and the charismatic miracle worker to God is one of faithfulness to the will of God, which in turn grants the individual the loving attention of God who bestows upon him the affectionate title of 'Son.'¹³⁸

What we see in this brief survey, is that while the Christians formulated their theologies around the new idea of the Trinity, the Jewish tradition of the ‘son of God’ held fast to its origins while developing further, including righteous men to be granted this holy title. In contrast to the increasing divinization and individualization of the title in Christianity, the Jews seem to take it in the opposite direction, asserting that any man of great faith in the Lord can become a ‘son of God.’ This formulation of juxtaposing attributes given to the title by the two religions is curious indeed. Geza Vermes notes this phenomenon in passing, commenting that “for reasons peculiar to rabbinic thinking, there was a general tendency to avoid employing the phrase, *son of God*, divorced from an actual scriptural quotation, as an independent christological title.¹³⁹ Hengel has suggested the reason for this may be in part that, “In the time of the rabbis, titles like Son of Man and Son of God could no longer be used because of competition with Christianity. Instead, Enoch [in 3 Enoch] is given by God the mysterious designation ‘*naʿar*’, young man. This could be substituted for Christological titles like ‘Son’ for ‘Son of Man’ which could no longer be used.”¹⁴⁰ It would be interesting to explore if the Jewish rabbinic tradition came as a response to the rise of Christianity, which was flirting dangerously with deifying Jesus as the ‘son of God.’ However this lies beyond our scope, and I believe that, for now, no more information should be brought forward. Instead, I think that enough has been outlined to draw my final conclusions on the meaning of ‘son of God.’

4. Conclusions

What then, are we left with at the conclusion of this work? Have I satisfactorily answered the question of “Who was the son of God?” I do not think that it is possible at this juncture to answer this question completely and comprehensively. I believe that it *is* possible someday, and I feel that it is only a matter of time until the final piece is discovered in some buried, half-decayed text. What we have at Qumran, combined with the existing texts we have, draws enough of an outline that scholars can guess more or less correctly at the identity of the ‘son of God.’

My findings, as presented above, speak of a word-phrase that has echoed through the millenia and has a long, coloured history. In short, we can conclude a few things:

- 1) ‘Son of God’ was known in the Hebrew Bible in three forms,
 - a) angels
 - b) a metaphor for Israel
 - c) an epithet for the royal line
- 2) ‘Son of God’ was most likely drawn out from the Davidic figure and woven into the ‘son of Man’ tradition, which stemmed from Daniel. It most likely was assimilated into the ‘son of Man’ tradition by its virtue of explaining the relationship between God and the redeemer. ‘Son of God’ was likely a messianic title that invoked the images of the ‘son of Man’ from Daniel 7 and later 4 Ezra 13 while recognizing the figure’s role as righteous king and fearless conquerer. 4Q246, in my opinion, proves this.
- 3) ‘Son of God’ was most likely rebuffed by Jesus when it was ascribed to him. The minimal amount of attestations to this title in the Synoptic Gospels seems to corroborate this.
- 4) ‘Son of God’ was used minimally by Paul in his addresses to his Gentile audiences, and only in times of climactic scene-painting.
- 5) ‘Son of God’ in the Hellenistic period was prone to be associated with polytheistic understandings of ‘son of Zeus’ or mythological god-men like Perseus.

My ultimate conclusion, then, is that the 'son of God,' even if my assertions that 4Q246 provides the missing link are incorrect, was a thoroughly Jewish title with a myriad of Jewish images, hopes, expectations, and ideas that was utilized by apocalyptic writers to give a voice to these emotions and thoughts. The 'son of God' was a symbol of hope and desire for eschological change that employed language and descriptions that had come to be associated with the Davidic king. At its most developed, it would refer to a heavenly redeeming messiah. At its least developed, it would be used to speak of the Davidic messiah or angels. In the end, I believe that there is no evidence of a Christian, suffering, or deified 'Son of God' Messiah at Qumran or in the Jewish religious tradition.

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Endnotes

¹ I would like to thank Bronson Brown-Devost for his invaluable contributions to this paper. Not only did he provide numerous insights through our many conversations, but his ceaseless patience and willingness to read through early editions of this paper helped form order from the chaos. *Amicus verus est rara avis.*

² I am content to limit the scope of my interest to the Synoptics for two reasons: simplicity and substance. John is a complex and questionable source of information on what scholars would call the ‘historical Jesus,’ and as such is of limited use to my efforts.

³ While English restricts me to use the term ‘term,’ or ‘phrase,’ I want to make it clear that the words ‘son of God’ are a phrase-idea or an image-phrase. The image is perhaps more important than the strict application of the words. Later in the discussion, there will be debate over the existence of the exact words ‘son’ followed by ‘God’ in the genitive. But for here, simply make note that, ‘son of God’ is never used specifically in this restricted construction in the Hebrew Bible.

⁴ Martin Hengel, *The Son of God*, (London: SCM Press Limited, 1976): 21.

⁵ 1 Kings 20:35, 2 Kings 2, Prov. 7:7, 2 Chron. 25:24, Song 2:3, Gen. 5:32, 49:22, etc. Also, note the usage in Ps. 2:11-12 of the Aramaic בַּר in the Hebrew. מִנְשָׁקוֹ בַּר פְּנֵי אֲנָנִי וְהֵאֱבִדוּ לְרִדְף כִּי־בָעַר. בְּרִאָה וְגִילוֹ בְרַעְיָה: “מִנְשָׁקוֹ בַּר פְּנֵי אֲנָנִי וְהֵאֱבִדוּ לְרִדְף כִּי־בָעַר”

“מִנְשָׁקוֹ בַּר פְּנֵי אֲנָנִי וְהֵאֱבִדוּ לְרִדְף כִּי־בָעַר” While this phrase מִנְשָׁקוֹ בַּר is either translated as ‘kiss his feet’ or ‘give homage to’, I believe these both to be incorrect. The 3ms suffix of the Hebrew verb מִנְשָׁקוֹ, “to kiss,” in this sentence refers to the Aramaic word for “son,” בַּר. Here, the *Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia* notes that the בַּר should be read and understood as dittography of בְּרַעְיָה and they replace the בַּר with a more intelligible phrase. I do not agree with this tradition. The insertion of the Aramaic בַּר is too convenient and too strategic of an accident to be a simple typographical error. Considering the scene found a few lines earlier at 2:6-7 where God has enthroned and adopted David as his son and king, I would translate מִנְשָׁקוֹ בַּר literally as ‘kiss [read ‘greet’] his son’ (referring to David). The accidental usage of an Aramaic word while writing a Hebrew Psalm is more likely, I think, than dittography. Thus I would read the edict in 2:10-12 as, “And now Kings, be wise; you have been warned, judges of the earth. Serve the LORD with fear and rejoice with trembling; greet His son (David), lest He be angry and your way be destroyed, because His anger is quick to start. Blessed are all who take refuge in Him.” This suggested reading could add further insight on later messianic readings of this psalm.

⁶ Hengel, *The Son of God*, 22

⁷ Dariusz Iwanski, “Who is the Son of God in 4Q246?,” in *Collectanea Theologica* 74 (2004): 85, 86.

⁸ Hengel, *The Son of God*, 66. Hengel suggests that it is possible that the reason the term υἱὸς θεοῦ became increasingly more central in Christian writing due to the constant back and forth translations between Greek and Hebrew. For example, “It was possible to translate the Hebrew ‘ebed [servant] with παῖς and then interpret it as ‘Son.’” This would have made it easy for the Gospel writers to combine the title ‘son of God’ (υἱὸς θεοῦ) with another title used during the period, ‘servant of God’ (παῖς θεοῦ). The word παῖς is eclipsed by the word υἱὸς, in part because of the ability of παῖς to be loosely interpreted as ‘Son’ while υἱὸς is more straightforward. Hengel admits that this is unlikely, because the title ‘servant of God’ was never that strong during the formation of the church’s early christology. However, the usage of παῖς is not restricted to being interpreted as ‘servant,’ as it also has connotations of ‘child’ and ‘slave’ (cf. Matt. 2:16; 17:18; 21:15; Luke 1:54; 9:42, Acts 20:12, et cet.). While I find that Hengel’s theory is still rather untenable, it is more probable than he believes. An example of this theory being argued in reverse (for an original reading of ‘son’ from ‘servant’) can be found in John J. Collins, *The Scepter and the Star: The Messiahs of the Dead Sea Scrolls and Other Ancient Literature*, (New York: Doubleday, 1995): 165-166.

⁹ See Hengel’s *Son of God*, 21-23, for his discussion of these four applications. Geza Vermes updated this position in his book, *Jesus the Jew: A Historian’s Reading of the Gospels*, (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1981): 194-195.

¹⁰ It is important to note the Hebrew word מַלְאָכִים is used frequently throughout the Hebrew Bible to designate angels (or human messengers) instead of the Genesis phrase בְּנֵי־הָאֱלֹהִים. The first instance of this is in Gen. 16:5 in the story of Hagar and Ishmael. However, the synonymity that 1 Enoch later exemplifies indicates that Jews likely understood the term בְּנֵי־הָאֱלֹהִים as referring to an angel, which was also known as מַלְאָכִים.

¹¹ I am intentionally avoiding taking up the examination of Ps. 82:6, 89 and Job 1:6, 2:1, 38:7 in detail for both the sake of brevity and focus. These passages contain constructions of בְּנֵי־הָאֱלֹהִים and I am of the belief that these are remnants of Canaanite religious influence. The images of divine council resonate throughout the Hebrew Bible, but by the time of Qumran they are subsequently phased out and replaced by post-exilic 1 Enoch's notion of a hierarchal angelology. See E. Theodore Mullen, *Assembly of the Gods*, (Chico, CA: Scholars Press, 1980): 189-205; Frank M. Cross, "The Council of Yahweh in Second Isaiah," *Journal of Near Eastern Studies* 12, no. 4 (Oct., 1953): 274; Peggy L. Day, *An Adversary in Heaven: šātān in the Hebrew Bible*, (Atlanta, GA: Scholars Press, 1988): 25-39, 105; Lowell K. Handy, *Among the Host of Heaven*, (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 1994): esp. 119; For a broader overview, see William Fox Albright's *Yahweh and the Gods of Canaan: A Historical Analysis of Two Contrasting Faiths*, (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 1978); Rainer Albertz' *A History of Israelite Religion in the Old Testament Period*, Vol. 1, *From the Beginnings to the end of the Monarchy*, (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox, 1994); and the archeological work of Ziony Zevit's, *The Religions of Ancient Israel: A Synthesis of Parallactic Approaches*, (London: Continuum, 2001).

¹² For an in depth dating of 1 Enoch, see J.T. Milik, *The Books of Enoch. Aramaic Fragments of Qumran Cave 4*, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1976).

¹³ Arie van der Kooij, "Peshitta Genesis 6: "Sons of God" – Angels or Judges?," *Journal of Northwest Semitic Languages* 23 (1997): 43.

¹⁴ Vermes, *Jesus the Jew*, 194.

¹⁵ Note that while the words ἀγαπητός and ἀγαπημένος are used several times in extra-biblical Greek texts indicating a connection with either the Messiah or Israel (cf. Asc. Isaiah 3:13, 4 Baruch 3:11; 4:7) they are clearly not substituted for the terminology 'son of God,' but rather emphasizes the beloved nature of the noun it agrees with.

¹⁶ Cf. Deut 1:31; 32:5-6 for more examples of Israel as God's son.

¹⁷ New Revised Standard Version, 1989. If I do not specifically make a note of my own translation, assume this translation is being used.

¹⁸ Geza Vermes, *Jesus the Jew*, 195. See also R. J. Miller, *Born Divine: The Births of Jesus & Other Sons of God*, (Santa Rosa: Polebridge Press, 2003): 224.

¹⁹ Miller, *Born Divine*, 224.

²⁰ 1 Chron. 17:12, 28:7; Ps. 89:4, 29.

²¹ The idea of divine adoption is not a Jewish innovation. In fact, it is highly likely that it was borrowed by the Jewish faith from its surrounding Mesopotamian and Egyptian neighbors. Doing this would help legitimize the Davidic dynasty in the eyes of foreign kings who, although maybe not understanding of a monotheistic faith, would have understood the concept of a divine relationship between king and his god(s). See James Hoffmeier, "From Pharaoh to Israel's Kings to Jesus," *Bible Review* 3 (1997) for a radical, yet sound explanation of the similarities between the Jewish monarchy and the Egyptian adoption ceremonies.

²² James Edwards, "The Son of God: Its Antecedents in Judaism and Hellenism and its use in the Earliest Gospel," (PhD diss., Fuller Theological Seminary, 1978): 16.

²³ C.K. Barrett, *Jesus and the Gospel Tradition*, (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1968): 25.

²⁴ Edwards, "The Son of God: Its Antecedents," 4. Note how this phrase is a variation on the relationship between God and the people of Israel, cf. most of Exodus, Lev. 26:12, Deut. 29:12, 2 Sam 7:24, Jer. 7:23, Ezek. 11:20, Zech. 8:8, etc.

²⁵ Barrett, *Jesus and the Gospel Tradition*, 4-6.

²⁶ Brian Nolan, *The Royal Son of God*, (Fribourg, Switzerland: Editions Universitaires Fribourg Suisse, 1979): 226.

²⁷ Edwards, "Son of God: Antecedents," 16-17.

²⁸ Ibid., "Son of God: Antecedents," 7-8.

²⁹ Ibid., 9.

³⁰ For more biblical examples of David or his offspring being called 'son of God' or even 'anointed,' see 2 Sam 7:11-16; 1 Chr 17; 22:10; 28:6; Ps 2:6-7; Ps. 45, 72, 110, Ps 89:26-27, Isaiah 9:5-7; 11:1-9; Lamentations 4:20.

³¹ See my comments in footnote 87

³² Edwards, "Son of God: Antecedents," 16-17.

³³ Here I find myself at odds with a group of influential scholars. Among them, most notable are Adela Yarbro Collins and William Horbury. They argue that there is evidence the central concept of the divine adoption was coupled with the belief that the king himself was exalted to the status of a god. Adela Collins cites Ps. 45:7 as the key verse to establishing the Davidic king as being of divine nature, : מִשְׁחָךְ אֱלֹהִים אֱלֹהֶיךָ שָׁמַן שֶׁשׁוֹן מִחֲבֵרֶיךָ : Trans. “God, your God, has anointed you with the oil of joy (above all) your companions.” Her reading of this is confusing, in that she believes that the first occurrence of *elohim* is referring to the addressee, who is David in this instance. It is equally reasonable, and more likely in my opinion, to read this as an Elohist redaction of the Yahwist phrase, יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ (Gen. 27:20; Ex. 6:7, 8:28, 10:8, 16 and so on). But this also ties into the larger argument of the pre-existence of the king/messiah expounded by William Horbury in his book, *Jewish Messianism and the Cult of Christ*. His argument relies heavily on a variant reading of Ps. 110:3 in the LXX, where the Davidic king is said to have been created ‘before the morning.’ Both the arguments of Horbury and A. Collins are shaky at best, relying on variant texts that have no further attestation or development in later corpii. I believe these variants to be a result of different strains of textual traditions, and in this case, to be attesting to a minority view. Further detail on their arguments can be found in William Horbury, *Jewish Messianism and the Cult of Christ*, ((London: SCM Press, 1998): 94-96; A. Collins, Mark and His Readers, *The Harvard Theological Review*, 93 (2000): 394; compared to Hans-Joachim Kraus, *Psalms 60-150: A Commentary*, (Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1989): 344-350.

³⁴ The role of the Davidic king was never confused with the office of the priest. “The assumption of high priestly roles was considered an illegitimate usurpation.” Daniel I. Block, "My Servant David: Ancient Israel's Vision of the Messiah," In *Israel's Messiah in the Bible and the Dead Sea Scrolls*, edited by Richard S. Hess and M. Daniel Carroll R. Grand Rapids, (MI: Baker Academic, 2003): 34. See 2 Chron. 26:16-23 for the disastrous results of King Uzziah who tried to combine to the two positions.

³⁵ For examples of others who have been given the title of messiah, cf. 2 Sam. 1:16, Is. 45:1, 1 Chr. 16:22. Joseph Fitzmyer gives a comprehensive review of all the figures to be “anointed” in the MT Hebrew Bible, Joseph A. Fitzmyer, *The One Who is to Come*, (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing, 2007): 8-25. Fitzmyer has in the past argued that there were Davidic kings were not *de facto* מְשִׁיחַ because they are never explicitly named such, see Joseph a. Fitzmyer “4Q246: The ‘Son of God’ Document from Qumran.” *Biblica* 74 (1993): 171. Collins rejects this roundly, and rightfully so, explaining that the title מְשִׁיחַ was “an epitaph applied to the king, in virtue of of the fact that he was anointed. Whether it is regarded as a title is a matter of definition, but the term was clearly applicable to any anointed king.” J. Collins, *The Scepter and the Star*, 164. In recent years, Fitzmyer seems to have distanced himself from his previous claim and accepted Collins’ criticism. Cf. Fitzmyer, *The One Who is to Come*, 8-25, 106-107.

³⁶ Vermes, *Jesus the Jew*, 194, 195.

³⁷ Donald Verseput, “The Role and Meaning of the ‘Son of God’ Title in Matthew’s Gospel,” *New Testament Studies* 33 (1987): 538. Vermes, *Jesus the Jew*, 197. Logically, if Messiah meant “anointed” and was commonly used to address Solomon and David, then wouldn’t it reason out that the Davidic-king of the future was therefore a son of God as well? Observe that Psalm 2 is the first time the titles “son of God” and “messiah” are used in the same dialogue, both referring to the same person. The synonymity seems blatantly inherent. C.K. Barrett seems to share the same theory when he notes that “In Mark 14.61 the term Son of God appears along with Christ [Messiah], and should be understood as a supplementary messianic title. The kings of Israel had always been sons of God, and naturally this would be pre-eminently true of the messianic king.” Barrett, *Jesus and the Gospel Tradition*, 25. This will become a problem in the evaluation of messianism in the Dead Sea Scrolls in my attempts to parse the titles of “Son of God,” “Son of Man” and “Messiah.”

³⁸ For a general overview of scholastic debates, see Adela Yarbro and John J. Collins, *King and Messiah as Son of God: Divine, Human and Angelic Messianic Figures in Biblical and Related Literature*, (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing, 2008): 25-47; Fitzmyer *The One Who is to Come*, 33-55; Edwards, “Son of God: Antecedents,” 17; Horbury, *Jewish Messianism*, 5-35; and especially the bedrock of the arguments can be found within Sigmund Mowinckel, *He That Cometh: The Messiah Concept in Israel and Later Judaism*, (Nashville: Abingdon, 1956; reprint, Grand rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 2005).

³⁹ Fitzmyer, *He Who is to Come*, 54-55. Note that Fitzmyer here builds much of his arguments based on the precedent set forth by Mowinckel. Also, while I normally strongly disagree with Fitzmyer's narrow approach to messianic titles, his overcautious nature is useful here to avoid eisegesis, especially in Isaiah 11 and 52:13-53:12. I would add that at the moment of this writing, I am still vacillating on Daniel 7 as containing a messianic figure. Daniel's composition and style distinguishes itself from the rest of the Hebrew Bible, making it tempting to treat it as something different and distinct from the Bible. However, I cannot deny that this "one like a son of man" is attributed Messianic aspects. For now, I will treat Daniel as part of the apocalyptic tradition of Hellenistic Judaism and as such, substantially different from the prophets and Torah.

⁴⁰ Collins, *King and Messiah*, 45,47. Collins view is that the divine messianism evidence is next to negligible, but the strains are there. He finds a few links to the highly divinized messianism of the second century BCE, but not enough to assert that there was a Hebrew Bible messianism.

⁴¹ Horbury, *Jewish Messianism*, 35, 63, 89-90, 92. As was mentioned in fn 29, Horbury's reading of the LXX material as being preferable to that of the MT and Samaritan Pentateuch is a shaky foundation for his arguments. I would argue against his findings that the Davidic king was conceived of as both pre-existent and divine as there is no solid textual evidence outside of his translations that this was the case. Fitzmyer rejects Horbury's theory as well, noting how the dating of the *complete* LXX is not uniform or readily established. Fitzmyer, *The One Who is to Come*, 56-57, 65, 77 n45, 81. Geza Vermes has also implicitly rejected this priority reading of Horbury's. Instead, Vermes finds in the Qumran material evidence that the LXX and Qumran material was developed as a semi-autonomous tradition from the MT, thus allowing multiple textual traditions within the fundamental scriptures of Judaism. Vermes, *An Introduction to the Complete Dead Sea Scrolls*, 177-181.

⁴² The terms 'eschatological' and 'divine' messianism are being used to denote a messianism that believed in and awaited an end times and a messianism that believed in a supernatural/angelic figure of redemption in the end times. While the messianic claims of Christians fall under the category of 'divine messianism,' I find that the term 'deified messianism' is more appropriate to denote the distinct beliefs Christians hold.

⁴³ Evans, "The Messiah in the Dead Sea Scrolls, 92-93; J.J. Collins, "A Pre-Christian Son of God Among the Dead Sea Scrolls," *Bible Review* 9 (1993): 36. summarizes this particularly well.

⁴⁴ J. Collins, *King and Messiah*, 47; Fitzmyer, *The One Who is to Come*, 57, 64; Richard S. Hess, "Messiahs Here and There: A Response to Craig A Evans," In *Israel's Messiah in the Bible and the Dead Sea Scrolls*, edited by Richard S. Hess and M. Daniel Carroll R., (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2003): 104-105.

⁴⁵ With the distinct exception of the Book of Daniel.

⁴⁶ Miller, *Born Divine*, 224. Vermes, *Jesus the Jew*, 195.

⁴⁷ 2 Macc 3-6.

⁴⁸ 1 Macc. 1-4.

⁴⁹ 1 Macc. 4-6.

⁵⁰ 1 Macc. 7-10.

⁵¹ For a much more comprehensive and more detailed history of this time period, see Elias J. Bickerman, *The Jews in the Greek Age*, (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1988) and Lawrence H. Schiffman, *Texts and Traditions: A Source Reader for the Study of Second Temple and Rabbinic Judaism*, (Hoboken, NJ: KTAV Publishing House, 1998): 121-231.

⁵² Hengel, *The Son of God*, 66. Hengel admits his own frustration with the lack of information that is available pertaining to Judaism during its period under Hellenistic influence. While we have more information than we did twenty years ago on the sectarians at Qumran, our current materials still say little on general Jewish practice and thought.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, 29-30.

⁵⁴ A.Y. Collins, "Mark and His Readers," 86.

⁵⁵ I opt to use the more identifiable term 'Israel' here, even though the northern kingdom of Israel was destroyed by the Assyrians and ceased to exist after the 8th century BCE

⁵⁶ An interesting development of the third century CE is the Sassanid Empire. The Axumite rulers of this period follow the model of claiming divine parentage with the title $\nu\acute{\iota}\omicron\varsigma\ \theta\epsilon\omicron\upsilon$ which is almost wholly unique to NT Greek. However this is too late to be considered contemporaneous with Jesus, and I suspect that Christianity influenced the Axumite rulers to adopt this title. Cf. Bronson Brown-Devost's forthcoming article, "Royal Titular Usage in Pre-Christian Axumite Inscriptions."

⁵⁷ A passage from the Aramaic section of the book of Daniel is particularly illuminating here. Dan. 3:25 has King Nebuchadnezzar uttering the phrase “דְּמִיָּה לְבֶרֶךְ אֱלֹהִין” While this is typically translated by the NRSV, NET, and NIV as ‘like a divine being’ or ‘like an angel,’ this lacks the appropriate historical context. Dated to c. 185 BCE, the author of Dan 3:25 could have been using a reference to angels (‘sons of God’) but the construction of the phrase indicates a Gentile speaker. בֶּרֶךְ is the singular form of the noun ‘son’ and lacks the absolute *qamats*. Also, דְּמִיָּה is the plural masculine absolute form of the word ‘god.’ This results in ‘like a son of the gods.’ Uttered by a Gentile like Nebuchadnezzar, this phrase takes on a whole new dimension when considering its date of writing. The understanding of the term ‘son of god’ in the Gentile world was that of a strong king, like the Ptolemies and other Near East kings who claimed divine sonship. Being a king and sired by a god was repeatedly synonymous during this period. Hence Nebuchadnezzar’s pronouncement of the fourth man in the fire being ‘like a son of the gods’ seems to strongly indicate he was referring to a kingly figure, maybe even a divinized king.

⁵⁸ For a good rendition of the story of how the Scrolls were discovered and published, see Martinez, *The Dead Sea Scrolls Translated*, xxxvi-lvii. Geza Vermes gives a comprehensive background to the Scrolls in his book, *An Introduction to the Complete Dead Sea Scrolls*, (London: SCM Press, 1994).

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, 136. Vermes gives a dating of 150-140 BCE to 68 CE for the community at Qumran.

⁶⁰ Craig A. Evans, “The Messiah in the Dead Sea Scrolls,” In *Israel's Messiah in the Bible and the Dead Sea Scrolls*, edited by Richard S. Hess and M. Daniel Carroll R., (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2003): 90-91. J. Collins, *The Scepter and the Star*, 105. Cf. Vermes, *An Introduction*, 132.

⁶¹ In opposed to Fitzmyer’s arguments that for something to be messianic it needs to be *named* messianic, Evans sees the usage of the word messiah as a guideline as to what he is, thus allowing him to infer several things about the messiah at Qumran: Three kinds of people being called messiah in the DSS: 1) the Messiah of Israel (royal messiah = drive out gentiles, restore kingdom of Israel) 2) the priestly messiah (anointed of Aaron = restore and preside over legitimate temple worship) 3) prophets like 11Q13 2:18, who are to a herald to announce and prepare the messiahs of Aaron and Israel. J. Collins, “A Messiah Before Jesus?,” 28-29.

⁶² John J. Collins, “The Expectation of the End in the Dead Sea Scrolls.” In *Eschatology, Messianism, and the Dead Sea Scrolls*, edited by Craig A. Evans and Peter W. Flint, (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing, 1997): 86-90,

⁶³ Evans, “The Messiah in the Dead Sea Scrolls,” 90. Vermes, *An Introduction*, 167-169.

⁶⁴ J. Collins, *The Scepter and the Star*, 67. Collins admits that while this is the general idea of the messiah at Qumran, it could be “filled out in numerous ways.”

⁶⁵ Block, “My Servant David,” 35. I am aware of the grammatical issue that almost all references in the DSS to the “messiahs of Aaron and Israel” use the singular form of “messiah.” I think that it has been sufficiently proven that this is a linguistic quirk that is apparent in the Qumran literature and has biblical parallels in Judg. 7:25. and Gen. 14:10 as argued by Martin G. Abegg, “The Hebrew of the Dead Sea Scrolls,” in *The Dead Sea Scrolls after Fifty Years: A Comprehensive Assessment*, edited by Peter. W. Flint and James C. VanderKam, 2 volumes. (Leiden: Brill, 1998), Vol. 1:334-335.

⁶⁶ Horbury, “Jewish Messianism,” 60.

⁶⁷ Evans, *The Messiah in the Dead Sea Scrolls*, 99-100.

⁶⁸ 4Q174 f1 2i: 11-12; 4Q246 f1:9; f2:1; 4Q254 f4:2; 4Q369 f1 ii:6. Whether or not these are messianic in purpose or not is hotly contested by scholars.

⁶⁹ CD, 1QS, 1Q28a, 4Q252, 4Q381, 4Q382, 4Q458, 4Q521. Craig A. Evans has created an excellent chart (with only a few clerical mistakes) of eschatological topics according to where they appear in the Qumran scrolls: Evans, “The Messiah in the Dead Sea Scrolls,” 86-87.

⁷⁰ A.Y. and J. Collins, *King and Messiah*, 78.

⁷¹ J. Collins, *The Scepter and the Star*, 182.

⁷² *Ibid.*, 68.

⁷³ *Ibid.*, 178-180. J. Collins, “A Messiah Before Jesus?,” 31. Horbury, *Jewish Messianism*, 84.

⁷⁴ J. Collins, *The Scepter and the Star*, 167, 184-187

⁷⁵ For more on textual and source criticism, see Edwin Freed’s *The New Testament: A Critical Introduction*, (USA: Wadsworth & Thompson Learning, 2001) and Bart Ehrman’s *After the New Testament: A Reader in Early Christianity*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999).

⁷⁶ Miller, *Born Divine*, 224.

⁷⁷ John J. Collins, “A Pre-Christian ‘Son of God Among the Dead Sea Scrolls,” *Bible Review* 9, (1993): 38.

⁷⁸ Emile Peuch, "Fragment d'une apocalypse en araméen (4Q246 = pseudo-Dan^d) et le 'royaume de Dieu,'" RB 99 (1992): 98-131. The lack of mention in 4Q246 to a priestly messiah (or a priestly concern at all) and the references to Egypt and Assyria (not Rome, indicating Seleucid and Ptolemy powers) and the similarities to Daniel all indicate a likely dating of mid 2nd century BCE. This would be the earliest interpretation of the Danielic Son of Man figure (superseding that of 4 Ezra 13 and Similitudes of Enoch) and the earliest attestation to the hope for a Davidic King messiah in an eschatological sense (preceding Psalms of Solomon). J. Collins, *The Scepter and the Star*, 166-167. Cf. J. Fitzmyer, "4Q246," 153-174 for his dating.

⁷⁹ J. Collins, "A Pre-Christian 'Son of God,'" 35. Karl Kuhn, "The 'One like a Son of Man' Becomes the 'Son of God,'" *The Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 69, (2007): 27. For an excellent summation of differing scholarly views, see the work of Dariusz Iwanski, esp. "Who is the Son of God in 4Q246?" Cf. Edward M. Cook, "4Q246," *The Bulletin for Biblical Research* 5, (1995): 43-66. John J. Collins, "The Background of the Son of God Text," *The Bulletin for Biblical Research* 7 (1997): 52. Kuhn, "The 'One like a Son of Man,'" 28, 35.

⁸⁰ While this translation is my own, I am deeply indebted to the translations and comments of Geza Vermes in *The Dead Sea Scrolls in English*, 331-332; A.Y. and J. Collins in *King and Messiah*, 67-68; Joseph Fitzmyer in *The One Who is to Come*, 104-107; and Ed Cook in Donald W. Parry and Emanuel Tov, ed. *Additional Genres and Unclassified Texts*. Vol. 6, *The Dead Sea Scrolls Reader*. (Leiden: Brill, 2005): 75. Their various translations and remarks helped push me to closely examine words I normally would not have questioned.

⁸¹ The asterisks denote fragmented words or phrases whose context was too ambivalent to translate and so they have been omitted here. I have tried to avoid postulating too much, as I wanted to avoid forcing the narrative to fit into my particular view of the text. It is important to let the text (the parts that are legible, at least) speak for themselves. I also felt it was important to leave the ambiguous third masculine suffixes of II:5-9 to illustrate how much information is hanging on this one problem.

⁸² J. Collins, *Scepter and Star*, 159. The framework of Daniel specifically brackets off the 'holy ones of the Most High' from the 'son of man' so that there is no confusion linguistically speaking, but the parallel is still made. Perhaps the author of 4Q246 was not as artistically gifted to recognize this in Daniel, and so blurred the imagery and combined image into an incomprehensible suffix. Regardless, I believe the text should read "his" referring to the 'son of God' based on Collins' convincing argument that nowhere in any extant literature is there an example of a people being given the ability to judge the nations. *Ibid.*, 161.

⁸³ J. Collins, "A Pre-Christian 'Son of God,'" 35-37. Iwanski, "Who is the Son of God," 75. Zimmerman notes that there is no basis for the usage of 'son of God' as a derogatory or negative term. Johannes Zimmerman, *Observations on 4Q246 – The 'Son of God', Qumran – Messianism. Studies on the Messianic Expectations in the Dead Sea Scrolls*, (Tubingen, 1998): 181.

⁸⁴ I am agreeing with Collins here that to assume this *vacat* is a crucial turn around of the narrative is incorrect. As he so rightly points out, "Apocalyptic texts are rarely so simply constructed." John J. Collins, "A Messiah Before Jesus?" In *Christian Beginnings and the Dead Sea Scrolls*, edited by John J. Collins and Craig Evans, (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2006): 43-44.

⁸⁵ Iwanski, *Who is the Son of God*, 75-76. J. Fitzmyer, "4Q246," 162. Despite the messianic undertones of 4Q246 and the indication of divine Sonship in 4Q174 (the Florilegium), Fitzmeyer falls into the group of scholars who believe firmly that there is yet to be any indication found in the Hebrew Bible or pre-Christian period that shows the term 'son of God' is related to the Messiah.

⁸⁶ Collins, "A Pre-Christian 'Son of God,'" 37. J. Collins, *The Scepter and the Star*, 164.

⁸⁷ Fitzmyer would be appalled by such a bold claim, and he has rejected the usage of 4Q174 as “Messianic” in Qumran. Fitzmyer, *The One Who is to Come*, 106-107. I think the crux of the disagreement comes in that Fitzmyer divorces the titles ‘son of God’ and ‘messiah’ as two unrelated entities in the Davidic passages. Indeed, it is true that there were other “sons of God” besides David and there were other “messiahs” besides David. But in the person of David, and his descendants, ‘son of God’ and ‘messiah’ (in any sense, historical or eschatological) were titles that were automatically implicit. It is impossible to divorce David’s descendants from their relationship with God of 2 Sam. 7:14 just as it is equally impossible to divorce David’s line from the kingship and their status as anointed kings. Thus, the Davidic-Messiah, either in a human or eschatological/divine form, inherits the ‘son of God’ and ‘messiah’ title by virtue of his being the *Davidic*-messiah. I concede that there is nowhere in the HB that any one human figure is called מֶלֶךְ-יְהוָה and I believe this is what Fitzmyer is after before conceding that there is an established relationship between “My son” and “son of God.” I would challenge Fitzmyer to present evidence that humans ever recognized David’s adoption by God. Nowhere in the HB do we see the relationship of Ps. 2:7-14 and 2 Sam. 7:14 being phrased by humans. The only time it comes out is when God is the speaker, thus it comes to us in the form of “My son.” How did David’s subjects speak about his relationship with God?

⁸⁸ 4 Ezra 13, 1 Enoch 48:10, 52:4; Horbury, *Jewish Messianism*, 84; J. Collins, *The Scepter and the Star*, 181-184.

⁸⁹ An argument that I share in common with Adela Yarbro and John Collins is the implicit synonymy with which the christological titles are used in the Synoptics. I cannot present the argument better than they do, so I will defer to their work in A.Y. and J. Collins, *King and Messiah*, 209-211.

⁹⁰ See Florentino Garcia Martinez, “Two Messianic Figures in the Qumran Texts,” in *Current Research and Technological Developments on the Dead Sea Scrolls*, ed. Donald W. Parry and Stephen Ricks, (Leiden: Brill, 1996) for a further discussion of acts, rather than titles, defining the messiah.

⁹¹ Iwanski, “Who is the Son of God,” 100-101.

⁹² See J. Fitzmyer, *The One Who is to Come*, 106-107. In these pages, Fitzmyer delivers his response to the assertions of Collins that a connection can be made between ‘son of God’ and ‘Messiah.’ Fitzmyer requests proof that they were applied as titles to a Davidic Messiah, either at Qumran or in the Hebrew Bible. I think that Fitzmyer is being unreasonable to expect that the relationship or synonym doesn’t exist simply because it is not explicitly stated “The messiah, son of God” in the Hebrew Bible.

⁹³ Cf. Craig A. Evans, “Appendix: The Recently Published Dead Sea Scrolls and the Historical Jesus,” In *Studying the Historical Jesus: Evaluations of the State of Current Research*, Edited by Bruce Chilton and Craig A. Evans, (Leiden: Brill, 1994).

⁹⁴ Cf. Collins, “A Pre-Christian Son of God,” 37. Evans, “Appendix,” 550.

⁹⁵ Evans, “Appendix,” 550. Fitzmyer, “4Q246,” 162. Karl Kuhn summarizes the relationship between Luke and the Dead Sea Scrolls succinctly when he observes that “Close parallels between the evangelist’s work and other Dead Sea texts have been identified and increase the likelihood that some of the materials discovered near Qumran were available to Luke.” Kuhn, “The ‘One like a Son of Man,’” 37.

⁹⁶ Kuhn, “The ‘One like a Son of Man,’” 40. See Florentino Garcia Martinez, “Qumran and Apocalyptic: Studies on the Aramaic Texts from Qumran,” *STDJ* 9 (1992) for observations on how several other Qumran scrolls show that there was a Jewish conception of an awaited, eschatological redeemer figure.

⁹⁷ John J. Collins, “The Background of the Son of God Text,” *The Bulletin for Biblical Research* 7 (1997): 59-60.

⁹⁸ A.Y. Collins, “Mark and His Readers,” 97.

⁹⁹ R.J. Brady, *Jesus Christ: Divine Man or Son of God?* (Lanham, Maryland: University Press of America, 1992): 64-65. Ferdinand Hahn, *The Titles of Jesus Christ in Christology*, (London: Lutterworth Press, 1969): 282-283.

¹⁰⁰ “Lord” is also translated from the Gk. δεσπότης but this is used rarely in the NT and is limited to the Epistles and Revelations. It is more often rendered in English as “Sovereign Lord” to denote its emphatic difference from κύριος. Cf. Luke 2:29, Acts 4:24, 2 Peter 2:1, Rev 6:10. Also see the unique occurrence in 1 Cor. 16:22 where the Greek transliterates the Aramaic word ܐܘܪܝܢܐ, “Our Lord” to μαράνα.

¹⁰¹ Note that the definite article τοῦ here is conditional on syntax, and that the title “Son of God” is also rendered as υἱὸς θεοῦ without a difference in meaning (Matt 14:33, Luke 1:35, Mark 1:1, etc.). Robert L. Mowery gives an in depth analysis of the three different variations in the formulation of the Greek “son of God” titles in the Gospel of Matthew. His conclusions point to the possibility that the author of Matthew knew of the title θεοῦ υἱός from a pre-existing tradition while the variants are a recognized formulation of Christian beliefs. While not provable to any extent of certainty, this work adds to the argument that there was a distinct and influential Son of God tradition that was known to the Jews before Jesus’ ministry. Robert L. Mowery, “Subtle Differences: The Matthean ‘Son of God’ References,” in *Novum Testamentum*, Vol. 32, Fasc. 3 (July, 1990): 193-200.

¹⁰² It may be entirely possible that the authors of the Gospels intentionally made parallels with Greek folk tales and mythology, and if this were the case it would reverse my whole argument. In fact, there is a good amount of work being done comparing the Gospels and Greek mythology, cf esp. J. Daryl Charles book, *Literary Strategy in the Epistle of Jude*, (Scranton: University of Scranton Press, 1993). However, I am not convinced that these parallels were intentionally made by the authors of the Gospels.

¹⁰³ Hahn, *The Titles of Jesus*, 279.

¹⁰⁴ James Tabor, “Paul’s Notion of Many Sons of God and Its Hellenistic Contexts,” *Helios* 13 (1986): 95. Tabor notes several Jewish writings that Paul draws his ideas from, including: Dan. 12:3; 2 Enoch 22:10; 1 Enoch 104:2, 4 Macc. 17:5; 2 Baruch 51:10; 2 Esdr. 7:97.

¹⁰⁵ A. Y. Collins, “Mark and His Readers,” 89, 98.

¹⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, 87.

¹⁰⁷ *Ibid.*, 90. See Peter Wülfing von Martitz, “υἱός, υἱοθεσία, A. υἱός in Greek,” *TDNT* 8 (1972): 336. and Petr Pokorný *Der Gottessohn: Literarische Übersicht und Fragestellung*, (Theologische Studien 109; Zürich: Theologischer Verlag, 1971), 15.

¹⁰⁸ Vermes, *Jesus the Jew*, 203.

¹⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, *Jesus the Jew*, 212-213.

¹¹⁰ Miller, *Born Divine*, 257.

¹¹¹ Vermes, *Jesus the Jew*, 146-148, 192-193. Barrett, *Jesus and the Gospel Tradition*, 29.

¹¹² See, J. Collins, “A Pre-Christian Son of God,” 38; Barrett, *Jesus and the Gospel Tradition*, 25-27; B. M. F. van Iersal, *‘Der Sohn’ in den synoptischen Jesusworten*, (Brill, Leiden, 1961), 183.

¹¹³ Vincent Taylor, *The Names of Jesus*, (London: Macmillan and Co., Limited, 1953), 65.

¹¹⁴ Vermes, *Jesus the Jew*, 200-201. Barrett, *Jesus and the Gospel Tradition*, 58.

¹¹⁵ Versepüt, “The Role and Meaning,” 538.

¹¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 537-538.

¹¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 533.

¹¹⁸ Taylor, *The Names of Jesus*, 57.

¹¹⁹ Paul seems to go out of his way to break Jesus and God into two entities, preferring to reference Jesus in a formulaic method, i.e. Gal. 4:4: ὁ θεὸς τὸ πνεῦμα τοῦ υἱοῦ αὐτοῦ (“God sent the spirit of his Son”). What I am trying to illustrate here is that Paul stays away from the concrete formula ‘son of God,’ though he does use all sorts of other methods to illustrate the sonship of Jesus, cf. Paul’s substitution of υἱοῦ αὐτοῦ (“his Son”) for υἱὸς θεοῦ when he is speaking about Jesus and his relationship to θεὸς. Hengel, *Son of God*, 7.

¹²⁰ *Ibid.*, 14, 10, 12. Taylor, *The Names of Jesus*, 57

¹²¹ Miller, *Born Divine*, 228.

¹²² This identification of Paul’s is similar to the heavenly Voice at the baptism of Jesus and the proclamation of the Voice concerning Hanina ben Dosa. Cf. footnote 49 and 50.

¹²³ Miller, *Born Divine*, 227. Please note that the language used by Paul is in no way implying a divine nature for Jesus, rather he is arguing for Jesus’ virtuous nature and his role as Messiah, a title that has no metaphysical undertones. See Matt. 23:9.

¹²⁴ Tabor, “Paul’s Notion,” 94. I find this idea of Paul’s smacks heavily of the eschatological beliefs of the Qumran sectarians (cf. Codex Damascus), where a group of transformed ‘children of righteousness’ will judge the evils of the ‘children of darkness’.

¹²⁵ I am not convinced that the Servant Song of Fourth Isaiah coupled with 1QM 16:8, 19:13, and 4Q492 1.12, indicates a “Suffering” or “Slain” Messiah. In fact, it seems to claim just the opposite, due to the grammatical syntax of the Qumran documents. Of the contested phrase in 1QM 16:8, 19:13, and 4Q492 f1:12, [ה ללוי כתיבים], Martin Abegg has the right of it when he says, “The meaning most certainly refers to the ‘slain of the Kitians’; an objective genitive rather than the subjective, ‘the Kitians have slain.’” Martin G. Abegg, “Messianic Hope and 4Q285: A Reassessment,” *Journal of Biblical Literature* 113, no. 1, (Spring, 1994): 90-91. Cf. J Collins, *The Scepter and the Star*, 126. Block, “My Servant David,” 51. See also Martin G. Abegg, “The Messiah at Qumran: Are We Still Seeing Double?” *Dead Sea Discoveries* 2, no. 2 (June, 1995): 139.

¹²⁶ Patrick W. Skehan, trans., and Alexander A. Di Lella, *The Wisdom of Ben Sira*, (New York: Doubleday & Company, Inc., 1987): 10. David Winston, trans., *The Wisdom of Solomon*, (New York: Doubleday & Company, Inc., 1979): 20. Winston notes that there is no real consensus to the dating of *The Wisdom of Solomon*, but I personally agree with Winston’s own opinion that the dating is somewhere around 50-25 BCE. For an application of ‘Son of God’ to one blessed by God, see the controversial Book of Joseph and Asenath, 6:3; 13:10; 21:3.

¹²⁷ Miller, *Born Divine*, 224.

¹²⁸ Matt 27:46/ Mark 15:33,

¹²⁹ Edwards, “Son of God: Antecedents,” 35.

¹³⁰ *Ibid.*, 33.

¹³¹ *Ibid.*, 33-34.

¹³² Though it has been noted that the authors of Wisdom and Ben Sirah are Hellenized Jews, it can still be seen that the ‘son of God’ idea is being interpreted in the Jewish stream of monotheism and does not succumb to any influence from the Greek culture.

¹³³ Vermes, *Jesus the Jew*, 206. See the following Babylonian Talmudic tractates for examples of this saying: *Ta’anith*. 24b; 3.8; *Berakhoth* 17b; and *Hullin* 86a.

¹³⁴ *Ibid.*, 209. Cf. 1 Peter 1:12: “in regard to the things that have now been announced to you through those who brought you good news by the Holy Spirit sent from heaven—things into which angels long to look!”

¹³⁵ Hengel, *Son of God*, 87. See R. Mach, *Der Zaddik in Talmud und Midrasch* (1957), 110.

¹³⁶ Ber. 28b is an example that indicates early rabbinic sources still pulled on the hopes for a human Davidic descendent to take the throne.

¹³⁷ Hengel, *Son of God*, 206-210.

¹³⁸ Versepunt, *The Role and Meaning*, 538.

¹³⁹ Vermes, *Jesus the Jew*, 197. If there is a stream of scholastic research on this subject in depth, I plead ignorant to its existence.

¹⁴⁰ Hengel, *Son of God*, 46-47