

This Sunday I was allowed to choose anything I wanted to talk about....

This was a risky decision of Jon's.

But I have reigned myself in and not gone wild; which I would love to do, on Exodus 33.

One of my favourite pieces of scripture.

Instead I considered where we are in the church calendar.

We are leading up to lent.

Years ago I followed a study on the names of God. Or more accurately, they are titles.

You may think, God is His name. That's it.

But, throughout scripture He reveals himself through various names.

These names help us because God is so much more than we can understand.

We get glimpses of His character in looking at these Hebrew names.

They demonstrate his distinctiveness and power.

For example:

Elohim - the universal creator; and it appears in the first verse of the Bible.

Yahweh-the covenant name

Yahweh Rophe- the Lord who heals

Yahweh Nissi-the Lord is my banner.

In the ancient world names functioned very differently than they do today in the western world.

Not only did they distinguish one from another, they linked people to their family heritage and were thought to reveal the essential nature and character of a person.

One example is the name of Isaac. He laughs. As Sarah, his mother said, 'he has brought me laughter.'

Esau meant hairy/red; and Jacob, he grasps the heel, meaning he deceives.

You can see why God changed people's names.

Jon talked about names on 31st of December. If you missed it I recommend you watch it.

Son of God Son of Man is one of around 600 names that have been listed from the Bible.

My pronunciation of these names in Hebrew is worrying so I won't subject you to it!

Interestingly, the **Son of God** title in the ancient world, was associated with being a king.

Jesus is God's son because he shares his nature and represents his intentions. He is fully divine and therefore perfectly capable of representing the Father on earth.

At Jesus' baptism and at the Transfiguration - a voice is heard from Heaven announcing, 'This is my Son, whom I love.'

Jesus is the only man who could bear the title without dishonouring the Father.

Our relationship with Christ enables us to become adopted children of the Father.

The title **Son of Man** is used by Jesus himself over 80 times in the new testament.

He clearly wanted the disciples to recognise him as the Son of Man.

But what does it mean? It's often confused me.

When we read this title we tend to think Jesus is being humble.

'Son of' is a Hebrew idiom that expresses the nature of someone. Sometimes it simply refers to humanity.

In the Daniel reading it clearly means the messiah, Jesus and the establishment of God's eternal kingdom.

A heavenly person who descends to this world to our lowest place - the grave in order to save us

In the Psalms the title is often related to the frail human condition.( Psalm 4v2)

Jesus is stating his divine authority and his humanity.

A human being and also the Son of God and has always existed as the Eternally Begotten One who comes forth from the Father forever. He always has and he always will.

He is the second person of the Trinity with all the divine nature fully in him.

In Mark 10v45, Jesus said, 'The Son of Man came not to be served but to serve and to give his life as a ransom for many.'

On the face of it Son of Man is an ordinary phrase for a human being.

He was born a man.

But those with ears to hear could hear Daniel 7, and him claiming a very exalted role in the history of redemption.

You can hear this title of authority in mark 2 when he forgave sins.

Jesus was very subtle in revealing his identity to those with eyes open to see the truth.

The Son of Man did not depict the image of a coming King as much as the Son of God.

So preventing the people from forcing him to be King.

And thus starting a war with the Romans.

Using the title Son of Man was a messianic reference but not as emotionally charged.

He was not blatant until he was on trial for his life.

They asked, 'Are you the Christ, the Son of the living God?'

He replied, 'I am, and you will see the Son of Man coming with great power and glory.'

He openly confessed his deity.

In Carol's talk a few weeks ago she spoke of Jesus calling Nathaniel or Bartholemew.

In that passage Nathaniel 'sees' who Jesus is, The Son of God. And in his response, Jesus refers to himself as the Son of Man. He is pointing to his preferred title.

The Son of Man is the Son of God, is the King of Israel.

Together the titles Son of God Son of Man express the incredible mystery of the incarnation.

That the second person of the Trinity came down from heaven to become one of us so that we could be one with him.

When Jesus rose from the dead, he ascended to heaven, not just as God but also as man.

I think we often forget this..

And as we approach lent and passiontide it is helpful and illuminating to remember that Jesus is both God and man.

C.S. Lewis,remarked,

'I seldom meet any strong or exultant sense of the continued, never to be abandoned, Humanity of Christ in glory, in eternity.

We stress the Humanity too exclusively at Christmas, and the Deity too exclusively after the Resurrection, almost as if Christ became a man and then presently reverted to being simply God. We think of the Resurrection and Ascension (rightly) as acts of God, less often as the triumph of Man.'

I hope that looking at these names of God this morning, specifically the title Jesus preferred, has renewed and enlarged our understanding of God's enormous love. His extravagant love for all of us - no matter our race, creed, colour, gender or sexuality.

He wants to redeem all of us.

So much so He sent part of himself, the Holy Trinity, to live a fully human life in this messed up broken world, full of sin.

The CS Lewis quote has made me see afresh that Jesus, divine and human through his trial, his death, his resurrection, ascended to sit at God's right hand, fully God and fully man.

Let's end with the words of St Paul in Philippians 2, v5-11

"Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus, who, though he was the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, but made himself nothing, taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. And being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross. Therefore God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name that is above every name, so that at the name of Jesus every knee shall bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God the Father."

The son of God became the Son of man that you who were sons of men might be made sons of God (Augustine)

**Gilly Robinson**