

to the fulfillment of this purpose. In addition it would probably lead to a decision by the Roman rulers, who had already forcibly put down movements of this type, to attack Him and His followers. Public use of the term "Christ" in Galilee or Judea would almost certainly have aroused such immediate opposition that it would have cut short the period of ministry that He desired to have; during most of His ministry He abstained from using it.

As Jesus continued to call Himself "the Son of Man" He began to use this title in ways that suggested an authority beyond that of a spokesman for God. All three of the synoptic gospels report that He declared that "the Son of Man is Lord of the Sabbath" (Matt. 12:8; Mark 2:28; Luke 6:5). All three report that He said that "the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins" (Matt. 9:6; Mark 2:10; Luke 5:24). As the disciples pondered on these and other statements it probably occurred to some of them that there was another Old Testament passage that might also be pertinent -- Daniel 7:13-14, which speaks of "one like a son of man, coming with the clouds of heaven." As they wondered whether this might give a further clue to His reason for applying the title to Himself, they heard Him say that the time would come when men would "see the Son of Man coming in clouds with great power and glory" (Mk. 13:26; Matt. 16:27-28). At His trial before the Sanhedrin Jesus again echoed this verse from Daniel (Matt. 26:64; Mk. 14:62).

Thus Jesus' use of this title was a help in gradually leading the disciples to knowledge of His Person and His plan.

We cannot expect to understand the psychology of Jesus. In fact we cannot expect fully to understand the psychology of any person. Yet what we do understand may be very important.

Although Jesus was really God and could know all the mysteries of the universe He chose to limit Himself in certain regards. This is brought out very clearly in the story of His temptation. Satan urged Jesus to use His supernatural powers in ways that were contrary to God's plan. He could have completely eradicated wicked people from the earth