

## Can you comment on John 9:35 and whether the original manuscripts read 'Son of God' or 'Son of Man'?

This is our Lord and the blind man who has received his sight. Our Lord asks him, 'Do you believe on—some manuscripts have—the Son of God?' and some manuscripts have 'the Son of Man?'

This goes back to manuscript differences and is a good example of one of the principles that textual critics use. They will tell you that the reading which is liable to be original is the one that can best explain why somebody changed it to something else. And if you take that principle on this verse—some manuscripts reading 'Son of God,' some 'Son of Man'—it would be highly unlikely that any scribe in the early centuries would find the term Son of God in front of him and change it to Son of Man. Whereas it is quite possible that a scribe, finding Son of Man in front of him, would change it to Son of God.

Therefore, I would hold that the original reading is Son of Man. We have to observe, however, that when Scripture uses the term Son of Man it is not just saying that Jesus was a man born of a human mother. It goes back to the vision of Daniel 7 when Daniel was given to see the great vision of the Son of Man coming with the clouds of heaven to the Supreme God, and receiving the kingdom from him. And when our Lord said, 'you shall see the Son of Man coming with the clouds of heaven' (see Matthew 26:64), 'coming with the clouds' is a sign of deity. Son of Man is not some weak term merely saying, 'the ideal human person,' it is saying far more than that. The Jews would have been more used to the term Son of Man in contexts like this than Son of God, but Christian scribes, finding Son of Man might well change it to Son of God.

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