

eventually to come to earth and perform great deeds. (cf. 1 Enoch 46:3-4; 48:2; 60:10; 62:5-9, 14; 63:11; 69:27, 29; 70:1, 14-17.)

It is generally believed that the Ethiopic translation of the Book of Enoch was made from a Greek translation of a book originally written in Hebrew or Aramaic. Only a few parts of the Greek translation have come to light and these do not contain any part of the Similitudes. This led some investigators to question whether the Similitudes were actually part of the original Book of Enoch, or were perhaps written in the second century A.D. Such doubts are now greatly strengthened as a result of the discoveries at Qumran, where small fragments in Aramaic of just about every chapter in the Book of Enoch outside of the Similitudes have been found, but no part of any chapter in the Similitudes has turned up as yet. This has led various writers to think it probable that the Similitudes were not written until after the time of Christ and therefore could not have been an influence in first century Judaism.⁹

A third source has often been mentioned as evidence that such a belief was widely held in first century Judaism. Near the beginning of the 13th chapter of 2 Esdras (also called 4 Ezra) it is said that a "wind made something like the figure of a man come up out of the heart of the sea" and that "that man flew with the clouds of heaven." When a great multitude of the ungodly "were gathered together from the four winds of heaven to make war against the man who came up out of the sea . . . he sent forth from his mouth as it were a stream of fire . . . and burned them all up." Verse 32 says: "then my son will be revealed, whom you saw as a man coming up from the sea." Since this person is not called "son of man" but is designated simply as "like the figure of a man," and since it is now generally believed that 2 Esdras was not written until the last quarter of the first century, most scholars no longer refer to it as an evidence of widespread belief in an apocalyptic son of man during the lifetime of Jesus.

Thirty years ago most critical scholars held that all the genuine statements in the gospels about the son of man