

<sup>31</sup> He then began to teach them that the Son of Man must suffer many things and be rejected by the elders, chief priests and teachers of the law, and that he must be killed and after three days rise again. <sup>32</sup> He spoke plainly about this, and Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him. <sup>33</sup> But when Jesus turned and looked at his disciples, he rebuked Peter. "Get behind me, Satan!" he said. "You do not have in mind the things of God, but the things of men."

Now that the matter of his identity is on the table, Jesus turns to the issue of his disciples' expectations. Although Jesus fully accepts Peter's acclamation, he wants them to know that the God-ordained role of the Messiah will not conform to the ways and expectations of the world. His retooling of their expectations begins with the title, Son of Man. This figure in the Old Testament is exalted, the object of worship and will have an endless kingdom (Daniel 7), but was not understood as a messianic figure. By using the title for himself, Jesus signals both a change in the understanding of the Messiah and that of the Son of Man. In addition, his statement has strong echoes of Isaiah's suffering servant, which we now understand to be messianic, but was outside such expectations of the times.

It has been said that the nature of God has been revealed in the world primarily through the life of a man, Jesus Christ. It is the nature of revelation that it provides us with information or knowledge that we could not otherwise obtain. Another way of saying this is that it is information that we cannot access through human understanding. Once a revelation is received, we are no more entitled to modify that revelation to fit our expectations than we are to change the smile of the *Mona Lisa*. If you received the *Mona Lisa* and wanted to display it in your home, cropping it to fit your wall is not an option. Rather, if you were to do justice to the gift, you would need to build a room with a larger wall. That is the way of revelation. When God reveals his truth to us, we are not to whittle it down to fit our understanding or for it to fit comfortably into our lives, but we are to receive that revelation and rebuild our lives around it. Anything else would be to try to bring God down to our size...which is the very work of Satan (Genesis 3:5).

**Dear Lord, save me from the presumption of trying to fit you comfortably into my worldly categories. Cleanse my mind of any expectations that do not conform to those you have revealed through your written Word. Help me to seek understanding through your Holy Spirit and not worldly wisdom. Amen.**