

The Full Authority of the Son of Man, Part 2

Luke 5:21-26

Luke chapter 5 starting in verse 17, "On one of those days, as he was teaching, Pharisees and teachers of the law were sitting there, who had come from every village of Galilee and Judea and from Jerusalem. And the power of the Lord was with him to heal. And behold, some men were bringing on a bed a man who was paralyzed, they were seeking to bring him in and lay him before Jesus, but finding no way to bring him in, because of the crowd, they went up on the roof and let him down with his bed through the tiles into the midst, before Jesus. And when he saw their faith, he said, "Man, your sins are forgiven you."

We need to stop at this point and talk about that title, Son of Man. It's very, very important. It's a huge theological category in the life of Jesus Christ, and it may seem strange to us that Jesus, here, speaks about himself in the third person. Whenever we find people talking about themselves in the third person, they're usually some celebrity or politician, and we kind of say, Huh, who do they think they are? You know, talking

about yourself in the third person it's kind of pretentious. But for Jesus, he's making a point.

This is the, actually the first of the use of the title the Son of Man in Luke's Gospel, and it seems to come out of the blue in the, in this context here. There seems to be no former reference to Son of Man. Not at first glance. That title the Son of Man was Jesus' favorite self-designation. And the use of the title here in Luke 5:24, it's the first of twenty-five uses of the title Son of Man in the Gospel of Luke. We're going to get pretty familiar with the ministry of the Son of Man as we walk through the Gospel of Luke.

And every time it's used in Luke, Jesus is the one using it, and he's using it to speak and to teach about himself. In fact, throughout the four Gospels, a total of seventy-eight uses of the title of the Son of Man throughout the four Gospels. And in all but two of those instances, Jesus is talking about himself. He's teaching about himself. And even then in those two uses where Jesus isn't the one using the title Son of Man, it's in John 12:34, a single verse and the crowd is asking what Jesus meant when he told them about the ministry of the Son of Man. They said, "We have heard from the Law that the Christ remains forever. How you can you say that the Son of Man must be lifted

up? Who is this Son of Man?" So they are reacting to his teaching. And in seventy-six other uses throughout the Gospels, Jesus is the one teaching about it.

And the first chronological reference to the Son of Man comes very early in Jesus' ministry when he met Nathaniel and told him, John 1:51, "Truly, truly I say to you, you will see heaven open and the angels of God ascending and descending." Now that's a reference to Jacob. Remember when he was laying in the desert on a rock as his pillow, and he has that dream, you always have weird dreams when rocks are your pillows, right? You don't want to do that.

But he's laying on a rock, and God gives him this vision, and it's angels, dees, ascending and descending from heaven to earth on a ladder, right? Jesus says to Nathaniel, "I say to you, you're gonna see heaven opened, and you're gonna see the angels of God ascending and descending," not on a ladder, but, "on the Son of Man." He's the mediator between God and men. That's the first use. And it's the first indication of what Son of Man means.

A little later, Jesus interacted with one of the chief Pharisees named Nicodemus in John chapter 3, and he told him, John 3:13-15, "No one has ascended into heaven except he who

descended from heaven," who is it? "The Son of Man." So, he's telling Nicodemus basically, you need to listen to me because I know what I'm talking about. I came down from heaven. Have you ever been to heaven, Nicodemus? Didn't think so, so listen to me. "And as Moses lifted up," he keeps on telling Nicodemus, "As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so must the Son of Man be lifted up that whoever believes in him may have eternal life."

This is the first chronological reference we can find in the Gospels to this term Son of Man, the whole concept. But after those early references, we don't see that term showing up again until all three synoptic Gospels, Matthew, Mark and Luke, until those three Gospels record this very incident of Jesus forgiving and then healing the paralytic. Once Jesus uses the term here, it's as if the floodgates are open, and he is telling them about the Son of Man all the time.

I believe the doctrine of the Son of Man was the subject of his teaching on this very occasion. That explains the sudden appearance out of the blue of that reference in this context. It's as if Jesus is connecting what he's about to do with what he had just been teaching them. We know he had been teaching the crowd from the Old Testament, the Scripture, that was the entire

Old Testament, the Law, the prophets, the writings. According to Luke 4:18-19, Jesus was not shy about connecting Messianic passages to himself and talking about Messianic fulfillment in his own person. He's very bold in telling them about himself, and I believe that's exactly what he was teaching them on this occasion as well, about the ministry of the Son of Man.

We don't have time to fully develop the doctrine of the Son of Man, but I'll just give you an introduction. For our purposes, we just have time to mention just a few things briefly, a few main categories. First of all, turn your Bibles back to Psalm 8, Psalm 8. And we're going to see here this first category of, what does the Son of Man mean. We're going to see David's prophetic foreshadowing of the ministry of Jesus Christ, really. David is reflecting here in Psalm 8 on the greatness of God, on the smallness of mankind, and at the same time on the unique role that God had given to man.

He says in Psalm 8 starting in verse 3, "When I look at your heavens, the work of your fingers," I love that phrase, "the moon and the stars, which you have set in place, what is man that you are mindful of him, and the Son of Man that you care for him? Yet you have made him a little lower than the heavenly beings and crowned him with glory and honor. You have

given him dominion over the works of your hands; and you have put all things under his feet.”

Now, stop there. See, David says, “You have made him a lower than the heavenly beings, you have crowned him with glory and honor,” and you know, you might scratch your head and say, Hey, where’s the glory and the honor? As you look around at humanity, you see pretty bad examples of that. The writer to the Hebrews picks up on that same thought. And in Hebrews 2:6-9, he, he connects that passage directly to Jesus Christ when he wrote this, “At present we do not yet see everything in subjection to him,” that is into mankind. After quoting this section right here, he says, we don’t see everything in subjection to man, but we do see him who for a little while was made lower than the angels, namely Jesus, crowned with glory and honor because of the suffering of death.

So, by connecting Psalm 8 with Hebrews 2, we see that Jesus is that Son of Man. He fulfills what’s spoken by David, what God intended for all of mankind, he fulfills it. It’s important to point out that literally the term Son of Man, going back to the Old Testament it’s son of Adam, son of Adam. Adam could be used to be translated in some contexts as man, as referring to mankind, but it’s Adam. But this one that David speaks of, son

of mankind, that Hebrews 2 talks about, is Jesus Christ; he's representing all of mankind. He represents Adam. He represents the entire human race.

Remember when we talked about Luke's genealogy there at the end of chapter 3 of Luke? That genealogy started with Jesus and worked its way backwards, Luke 3:23-38, traced Jesus' physical lineage through Mary's father Eli, going all the way back to the son of Adam, the son of God. Remember that? We talked about that, at that time, that Adam had failed in representing the human race, he failed to fulfill all righteous. And so in him we all failed, we've all been guilty of his original sin. We're born in sin, born with a sin nature, born with a propensity and proclivity to commit sin. We don't have to teach our children to sin, they just do it. We have to teach them to obey. It's hard.

So, Adam failed in his righteous representation of the human race, and we're all suffering for it. But God raised up the last Adam. Paul calls him in 1 Corinthians 15, "The Last Adam," and it's his own son, Jesus Christ. And he sent forth this last Adam to fulfill what Adam had failed to do. So Jesus, then, he is our perfect representative. He is the representation of ideal man. What God intended from the very beginning; we're saved when we're united with him.

So this term Son of Man, it's a picture of humanity, a picture of the ideal man, the perfect representative of the human race, which is Jesus Christ. But then in Ezekiel, there's some development of that term to bring humanity into line with divine concerns for holiness. And there's almost here in Ezekiel, a foreshadowing of the fact that God is going to train that last Adam, that final Son of Man to fulfill his role as the perfect representative of the human race by preparing him to be our perfect mediator, by preparing him to be our sympathetic High Priest. And that is the very point that the writer of the Hebrews makes.

Look, there's one more use of the term, and this is really the category that is absolutely critical for understanding what Jesus taught about the ministry of the Son of Man. You're in Ezekiel, so turn over one book toward the, toward Revelation, turn over one book to the right, to the book of Daniel. And look at Daniel chapter 7 verse 9. God is giving Daniel a vision of the empires of the earth.

And that vision corresponded to an earlier vision that Daniel had, the, the image, the image that Daniel saw in chapter 2. But here in chapter 7, God shows Daniel a vision of Babylon represented by a winged lion, Medo, Medo-Persia represented by a



bear, Greece represented by a leopard. There's an indescribable beast, it's a dreadful ten-horned beast, which represents the Roman Empire.

And for Daniel, these, these represent present and then future kingdoms or empires of the world. And in verse 8, there's this little horn that asserted itself. "And behold, in this horn were eyes like the eyes of a man, and a mouth speaking great things." It's boastful. It's proud. It's arrogant. And this is perplexing to Daniel as he's considering this picture.

We understand from the rest of the reading, rest of the New Testament that this is a picture of the rise of Anti-Christ. The whole thing pictures events that are way future to Daniel, even future to us, but notice what it says in verse 9. "As I looked, thrones were placed, and the Ancient of Days took his seat." The Ancient of Days, who's that? That's God, right? "His clothing was white as snow, the hair of his head like pure wool; his throne was fiery flames; its wheels were burning with fire. A stream of fire issued and came out from before him; a thousand thousands served him, ten thousand times ten thousand stood before him; the court sat in judgment, and the books were opened."

Daniel's here, he's is considering this terrifying beast, final beast, ten-horned beast. He's, he's thinking about the perplexing nature of the power that such a little horn possessed. No doubt all of this is causing him to worry, to dread the future. Then God enters the scene. He takes his seat on the throne. What match is this boastful little horn to the Almighty power of this Ancient of Days? Nothing to worry about at all. Look at verse 11, "I looked then because of the sound of the great words that the horn was speaking. And as I looked, the beast was killed, and its body destroyed and given over to be burned with fire."

Well, that was the end of that. Smash it like a bug. Then verse 12, "As for the rest of the beasts, their dominion was taken away, and their lives were prolonged for a season and a time." Then verse 13, "I saw in the night visions, and behold, with the clouds of heaven there came one like a Son of Man, and he came to the Ancient of Days and was presented before him. And to him was given dominion and glory and a kingdom, that all peoples, nations, and languages should serve him; his dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom one that shall not be destroyed."

Paul taught about that in 1 Corinthians 15:27, that God, this Ancient of Days, he has put all things under the feet of the Son of Man. The risen Son of Man, that's the one that Stephen saw as his own countrymen, the Jews, were stoning him with stones. He said, "Behold, I see the heavens opened, and the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God," and they kept throwing rocks.

The Son of Man, who is the one, is the one who right now, according to Revelation 1:13, is walking among his churches. You know what? He's here observing this right now. Are we in line with him and his purposes or not? He walks among all of his churches, and in the end, Revelation 14:14, he'll gather a harvest from the earth. We tend to think of harvest in terms of a good thing, good food, wheat, make bread, have fun.

John wrote, "Then I looked, and behold, a white cloud, and seated on the cloud one like a Son of man, with a golden crown on his head, and a sharp sickle in his hand. And another angel came out of the temple, calling with a loud voice to him to who sat on the cloud, 'Put in your sickle, and reap, for the hour to reap has come, for the harvest of the earth is fully ripe.' So he who sat on the cloud swung his sickle across the earth, and the earth was reaped."

Folks, that's not a harvest of plenty, it's a harvest of judgment. As you read the rest of the context, you see that that's where the ungodly of the earth are gathered in, and they're gathered to drink the dregs of divine wrath. John 5:22, "The Father judges no one, but has given all judgment to the Son, that all may honor the Son, just as they honor the Father. Whoever does not honor the Son does not honor the Father who sent him."

Listen, that's just a little taste of what this term, Son of Man, signifies. This Son of Man is one who is not to be trifled with, certainly not one to be falsely accused of being a blasphemer. He's the ideal man. He's the perfection of humanity. He is the one who will represent man to God and God to man as a mediator, sympathetic with God's concerns first, even as he takes man's concerns to God. And he is also the one who wields absolute power and all divine authority.

As Daniel 7:14 says, the Ancient of Days conferred upon the Son of Man, "dominion and glory and an everlasting, indestructible kingdom, and the entire world, and every human being without exception will serve him." There's obviously a lot more here to learn about the ministry of the Son of Man, but that's a foundation. Okay? We can build a better understanding

as we move along through Luke's gospel. There are twenty-four more opportunities for that, right, as we hear the Son of Man used.

Let's get back to Luke 5 and just round out what we've learned, round out this great, great section in verse 24 there. As I said, I believe Jesus is teaching about the ministry of the Son of Man, and it's by the prerogative of his authority, granted by the Ancient of Days himself, that Jesus used that authority to pronounce a forgiveness of sins on that paralyzed man. On the basis of faith, Jesus declared him forgiven, justified by God, declared righteous, forgiven of his sins. God's prerogative was Jesus' prerogative, too.

He had every right as the Son of Man to forgive. Again verse, the Pharisees here cry foul. No, they judge him to be guilty of blasphemy, but they are way, way off. Jesus corrects that dangerous misunderstanding, verse 22, "Jesus perceived their thoughts, he answered them, 'Why do you question in your hearts? Which is easier, to say, 'Your sins are forgiven you,' or to say, 'Rise and walk'? But so that you may know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins.'" He's dealing with the spiritual and the physical, as well. "He said to the man who was paralyzed, 'I say to you, rise, pick up your

bed and go home.’ And immediately he rose up before them and picked up what he had been lying on and went home, glorifying God.”

As I said, the point of the healing is to demonstrate the extent of his authority as the Son of Man. Healing the paralytic wasn’t the larger issue; demonstrating his authority was, because that is what is saving to us. He has absolute authority, full authority to forgive sins. His authority is as high as God’s because, get this, cause it’s very important, his authority is as high as God’s because this Son of Man is also the Son of God. We’ve seen that in the passage. He’s exercised divine omniscience, divine power, divine prerogative, divine authority. Luke has shown us here that this Son of Man is at the same time also the very Son of God. That’s some clarity he’s provided, isn’t it?

The illustration of healing this paralytic clarified that sound instruction that he’d given them. And you, you might add divine Lordship to that list of attributes here because the paralyzed man did exactly what Jesus commanded him to do. He obeyed Jesus’ command to get up, pick up what he had been lying on and go home. He had to be relieved, right? Have the attention taken off of himself as everyone is now looking at Jesus. He

stands to his feet, left quietly and went home glorifying God. And I can't imagine he was too quiet about that, though.

Everyone knew, particularly these scribes and Pharisees, they knew, they knew for certain that this Son of Man does indeed have authority on earth to forgive sins. What they chose to do with that knowledge, well, that's up to them. Would they repent of their sinful judgment? Would they kneel, bow and kneel before him and ask his forgiveness? Would they respond by embracing him in faith? Or would they suppress that truth in unrighteousness and carry on?

Let's take a look at their reaction there in verse 26 because at this point, it's a, it's a bit hopeful. Because Jesus, point number three, Jesus causes sober reflection. He causes sober reflection. That's kind of what we see here. This is breathtaking for the crowd. It's absolutely stunning. It says, "amazement seized them all," that's the Greek word, *ekstasis*, from which we get the word, ecstasy or ecstatic. "And they glorified God and they're filled with awe, saying, 'We have seen extraordinary things today.'" "

Notice that Luke has told us an "amazement seized them." I love that translation in the ESV, seized with amazement. Good word. They were grabbed by it. They were held fast under its

grip. And it wasn't just some of them here, it's all of them, the watching crowd, the onlookers, as well as the scribes and Pharisees, too. All of them collectively, individually, without exception. They're totally stunned at this, display, display here of divine power, the full authority of the Son of Man. And joining in with the healed man, as it says in Matthew 9:8, "They glorified God who had given such authority to men." They are stunned. How could they not be?

When it says there that they're filled with awe in our text, the word translated, awe, is the word, *phobos*. That's the word that is usually translated, fear. They're filled with fear. Matthew tells us the same thing, but he uses the verb form. It says plainly, "They were afraid." You know why they're filled with fear? Because they realize they're not in the presence of anybody normal. They're in the presence of somebody absolutely unique, and they have committed grave sin by misjudging him right in his presence. They're filled with fear.

They're sobered in their reflection of what they've just witnessed, particularly for the scribes and the Pharisees, these guys are completely out of their depth. There they are in all their pomposity, all their pretension of self-importance, all their learning, and they're sitting there in judgment. They're



daring to condemn Jesus for forgiving a sinner. They'd impugned his motives, judged him to be a pretender who's out to trick the people. All of that bold audacity shriveled up and just evaporated in a moment, as they watched this paralytic get up, pick up his mat and leave for home. They're sobered, they're, they're filled with fear. And they should be, right?

According to Mark 2:12, the testimony of everyone here is, "We've never seen anything like this." Same thing in verse 26, "We have seen extraordinary things today." We talked about this before. The word translated, extraordinary things, comes from the word *paradoxos*, from which we get the word paradox. Really, they don't know what they've just seen. They don't have a category to fit it in. They've seen paradoxical things that don't make sense, things for which they do not have a category from their experience. This is something new.

While it's all well and good to be, as Luke tells us, seized with amazement, filled with fear, to profess to have seen extraordinary things. It's all well and good to even go on and give glory to God, which is exactly right, that's what's expected. That's natural when faced with something like this when you realize you're standing in the presence of the holy.

The real question could only be answered by time. Would they believe? It's the same question we're faced today with, folks. Will we believe? Will we bow our hearts and submit our lives to this amazing Person? Will we acknowledge right now the full, unqualified authority of the Son of Man, or will we not? We need to let the Word of God confront our sinful reasoning as well, because our reasoning apart from God and his Spirit, apart from the Word of God, our reasoning is sinful.

We tend to judge things just like the scribes and Pharisees did, from our own learning, from our own experience. We're the arbiter of everything in our lives. We think we sit on the authority seat in our own lives and judge everything according to what seems best to us. But are we willing to take that reasoning and submit it to the Word of God? Will we let God's Word have its confronting and correcting work in our thought life? We need to let God's Word teach us. We need to listen to the sound instruction that comes from the Holy Spirit as recorded on the pages of Scripture. We need to stop and consider carefully what we've learned here. We need to reflect soberly and respond like the paralytic did in faith and full obedience, glorifying God. We'd be foolish not to, right?

Let's pray. Our Father, we thank you that you have taught us so much from this passage. And we're just humbled before what we see here. We know that we, so many of us, have been just like those scribes and Pharisees, making wrong judgments. We've been so foolish. We just want to come before you collectively, individually and just repent and ask you to forgive us, bowing before you, Lord Jesus Christ, to seek your forgiveness for misjudging you, for making, taking you for granted, taking your grace for granted, not obeying you fully and completely as we should.

Dear Heavenly Father, we're thankful you have sent Jesus Christ to be our mediator, coming from your perspective, coming from heaven and not from earth, but coming from heaven to earth, to teach us about you. But then to sympathize with us in all of our weakness and coming to die on a cross for all of our sins. That every error in judgment and every sinful deduction would be forgiven as you're nailed to the cross, poured out your wrath on him. Thank you for substituting him for us, putting him our place.