

The Full Authority of the Son of Man

Luke 5:21-26

October 23, 2016

We want to refresh our memories of the context here by reading that portion. So follow along as I read what we covered last week in 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, and 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."

When that paralytic was lowered into the room, hot, stuffy, packed house, room full of people, and as we talked about last

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time, the dust and the particles and everything was filling the air, choking people out, a great interruption. There was a large delegation that day of skeptical Jewish leaders. They had come from the Jewish religious establishment. There were many other onlookers there as well, they, some that were there really just to see the controversy that might stir up with Jesus being with them.

But also some others there to see Jesus himself, to hear his teaching, to see what they might see about his miraculous power to heal. And when those four faithful men lowered their paralyzed friend into the room right in front of Jesus, Jesus took one look and he saw their faith and he pronounced on that man the fulfillment of Gospel promise. "Man," Friend, you might better translate it, "your sins are forgiven you."

Because we understand New Testament doctrine and how the New Testament unpacks what happened that day, we realize that that, what he said there, that pronouncement, is an acknowledgment that the greatest miracle of all had happened. It started with regeneration by the Holy Spirit. It led to

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repentance and saving faith. It resulted in justification, a declaration by God that that man is justified, forgiven of his sins. It was an incredible proclamation. And it really took the air out of the room as everybody was stopped short, expecting one thing and seeing something that frankly perplexed them.

And it's the, what happens next that is really the larger point of the narrative. The greatest point in the narrative comes in the second half of the narrative, starting with the skeptical thoughts of the scribes and the Pharisees there in verse 21. Take a look. Notice their reaction. "The scribes and the Pharisees began to question, saying, 'Who is this who speaks blasphemies? Who can forgive sins but God alone?'"

The tension that was caused by the interruption of this paralyzed man and his four friends, that tension had been resolved when Jesus absolved the man of his sin. But as Jesus' words, as they started to settle on the people who were there, settle on the spectators, the implications of what he had just said created an entirely new kind of tension. This was a deeply theological tension that got down into their hearts about what

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they believed and did not believe. It was caused by the presence of someone they had never seen before.

Jesus' words, his teaching, his actions, his behavior, they did not have any category to put this man in. The tension that we see here with this holy person in the midst of an unholy roomful of people, his presence there forced the decision about the nature, the identity, and the claims of Jesus Christ. And that's what Jesus intended. What Jesus is forcing this roomful of people to consider, what he presses them to acknowledge, is the full authority of the Son of Man.

So with that in mind, let's look at the first point in our outline for today, which is this point, Jesus confronts sinful deduction. Jesus confronts sinful deduction. Let's look at verse 21 a little more closely because it really gives us some insight into how these religious leaders were thinking, how they were processing what they had just witnessed with Jesus forgiving this man. "The scribes and the Pharisees," again, verse 21, "began to question, saying, 'Who is this who speaks blasphemies? Who can forgive sins but God alone?'"

There's a sense in which the scribes and the Pharisees are not altogether wrong here, are they? I mean they're not, they're wrong in the judgment they've made, the conclusion that they've come to, but they did have the right starting point. We want to acknowledge that right from the beginning.

But what we see emerge from the right starting point to their sinful deduction, what becomes clear is this, that their, their sinful hearts are really revealed here in their sinful reasoning. And that sinful reasoning, that deduction, that process of deduction, leads them to a sinful conclusion. What they deduce about Jesus, the conclusion that they come to, it's not going to result in salvation for these men. They're cutting off from themselves the only hope of eternal life, which is Jesus Christ in front of them. So this is very, very serious.

The scribes, the same group there that Luke, Luke introduced us to in verse 17 is, as law teachers, scholars. They're the law experts, they're the scribes and the Pharisees there and they represent the theological and popular leadership

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of Israel. These men are men of great influence. And as we said, their starting point was sound. Their question was even reasonable. And if they'd stopped there, they would have been fine. For example, if they had simply said, "Who is this?" And then had they said, "Who can forgive sins but God alone?" And that's all they had said, they would have been on the right track because forgiveness is exclusively a divine, a divine prerogative, right? Only God can forgive sins.

Even David, when he confessed the matter of his sin in his adultery with Bathsheba, Psalm 51, you remember that? You can also read about it in 2 Samuel chapter 11 and 12, but remember that sin of adultery with Bathsheba, that involved a lot of other sins as well, including deception, conspiracy to commit murder, actual murder, getting a guy drunk, conspiracy to cover it up, conspiracy to deceive the entire kingdom, but when David confessed that sin in Psalm 51, he prayed this, Psalm 51:4, "Against you and you only have I sinned and done what is evil in your sight." How could he say that?

After all that he had done, after all the consequences spilling out of that sin, how could he say, "Against you and you alone have I sinned and done what is evil in your sight?" Well, that's because God is the lawgiver. And he's the only lawgiver. And every sin that David had committed in that whole endeavor, which not only was the adultery, but everything spilling out after that and all the cover-up of the birth and everything else. I mean it lasted over a year. All of that, every single sin involved in that, no one but God gave the laws about those things.

All sin is a violation of God's holy standard, not man's standards. It wasn't Bathsheba or Uriah who gave laws about adultery, that was God's law and David sinned against it. It wasn't Joab, the commander of the armies who gave laws about murder and deception and fair play, God gave all those laws. David sinned against those laws. The consequences abounded most certainly, terrible consequences, lasting consequences. David's sin hurt many, many other people. David's sin defiled many people. It sullied the entire kingdom, got somebody killed.

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Technically speaking, God is the one, theologically speaking, God is the only one against whom sin was committed. Because God, not man, gave the laws that David violated. And that means God and God alone is the only one who has the right to forgive sins. Listen, that's why none of us, none of us, beloved, has the right to withhold forgiveness from other people who have sinned against us. Even though God is the one against whom we sin, in an ultimate sense, we must ultimately reconcile with him first and fundamentally. It is a right thing when we commit sin that hurts another human being, it is right for us to go to that person, confess our sin, ask that person to forgive us. As James says, James 5:16, "Confess your sins to one another and pray for one another that you may be healed."

And if you've been hurt or offended by someone else's sin, you must forgive. You have no right whatsoever to withhold forgiveness from other people. In fact, as Jesus often taught, and most pointedly from Matthew 18:21-35, if you don't forgive, it's an indication that you may not be a Christian at all. If God offers you the complete and total remission of the sins you've committed against his standards, against his law, against his holiness, he's offered you complete and total remission of

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those sins and then you refuse to forgive your fellow man, in his anger, God will hand you over to the jailers until you should pay all your debt.

Which is an unpayable debt, by the way, because every sin from the smallest to the greatest is a sin against an eternal being, so every sin has an eternal consequence. You can never repay it. That's why hell is eternal. And Jesus said he'll, God will hand you over to the jailers if you don't forgive. "So also my heavenly Father will do to every single one of you," Matthew 18:35, "if you do not forgive your brother," and get this, "from the heart." Not just speaking it, not just an external show, but from the heart where only God can see.

This is serious, this matter of forgiveness. And the scribes are correct about the principle, about the seriousness of it. They're biblical scholars. These guys are careful theologians. They got this right. They had the correct theological starting point, namely that forgiveness is exclusively a divine prerogative. And they asked the right

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question to follow up from that, "Who is this?" Literally, "Who, who is this man, who is this one?" They were stymied about Jesus, that's understandable.

I mean, who of us is not overawed and perplexed by Jesus Christ? Every time we read the Gospels we're just puzzled and have to learn and understand. Sometimes, what is he talking about? Why did he do that when I expected this? Look, they didn't stop with the principles of good theology. They didn't stop with admitting their perplexity about Jesus Christ. They went further. They came to a sinful conclusion in their hearts.

In fact, I'll speculate here, I think it's justified by the context. I think these scribes and Pharisees entered the room that day with their conclusions already in hand. I think their minds were pretty well made up. And I say that because their deductions were not based on necessary inference from what they saw in front of them. Their conclusions had been predetermined by a prejudiced starting point. They were already biased against him. In other words, they, they came to Capernaum ready to

conclude what they already had determined. That this man is not to be trusted.

That's how Luke recorded it, too. They lead with their conclusion here, "He is speaking blasphemies." And then they followed up with their theological justification, "Who can forgive sins but God alone?" There was nothing restraining their judgment. Their heart was unbound. Nothing to keep them from concluding that Jesus is here a blasphemer, which is exactly the opposite of what they should've have concluded. This is an unbiased reasoning here, not in any sense. This is a sinful deduction on their part, and Jesus confronts it head on. Look at verse 22, "When 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?'"

Now, as the readers of Luke's Gospel, we are given here a very privileged perspective, from our vantage point, we not only see how the religious leaders here were sinful in their reasoning, but Luke, he also shows us here an insight into the deity of Jesus Christ. And notice he doesn't just tell us Jesus

is divine. It's not just a propositional statement. He records the facts in such way, such a way we can't avoid coming to that conclusion for ourselves. I mean if we take this seriously, that's all we can conclude, is that Jesus is divine.

Look at the way verse 21 reads. You, you might be tempted to think that the scribes and the Pharisees, they're reasoning out loud, like they're questioning, and their questions and comments are coming out loud, and Jesus overhears it. They weren't. In verse 21, we're reading about their thoughts, not their spoken words. Two indications of that there, come in verse 22, "Jesus perceived their thoughts," it says, and then also he asked them, "Why do you question in your hearts?" It's pretty clear here, he's reading their minds. Mark's gospel confirms that by saying in Mark 2:6, "Some of the scribes were sitting there questioning in their hearts."

So, we need to understand that's where the questioning is taking place. This is internal reasoning. And to make that fact plain to us, as Luke writes it, he has kept this part of the scene connected by threading it together with the same word and

it's the verb *dialogizomai*. The ESV translates it in verse 21 as to, to question, but more foundationally, what's going on here, the word means to think, to reason, to consider, to ponder.

First and foremost, this is something that happens internally. This is internal reasoning. There are times, in certain contexts when the word is used to refer to something that, that is known on the outside, but when it's used to refer to something that moves from internal pondering to external, outside reasoning, something discussed out loud, something you could actually hear and listen to. In those cases, when the word is used in those contexts, the word *dialogizomai* refers to discussing the matter in great detail. It tells us about a rather lengthy exchange, like some kind of an open debate where there's a back-and-forth argument. That's clearly not happening here in this context.

The scribes and the Pharisees, according to what Luke tells us here, they had just begun to question, to reason, to question and think about things in their hearts. And then in verse 22, when Jesus turned to address them openly, you know what he was

doing? He was exposing their thinking. Can you imagine sitting in that room, and you're the one asking those questions about Jesus? You're the ones coming to that conclusion, and he talks about what's in your heart and exposes it to everybody else? You're looking around the room like, "Is anybody else seeing this? Am I the only, is he talking about me?"

They had just begun to question, so he's exposing their thinking. You may recall at this point back in chapter 2 of Luke, Simeon's words to Mary in the temple court that this one, "this child in your arms," he's, he's gonna be one that God uses that "the thoughts from many hearts may be revealed." That's happening already right here in this text right now. A sword of division is cutting into their thinking, filleting them open and opening up their hearts to everybody else. So, having perceived their thoughts, which is the word *dialogismos*, the same root word, having perceived their internal reasoning, he asked them, "Why are you *dialogizomai*? Why are you questioning in your hearts" same word again. See how Luke has threaded this together so we cannot come to any other conclusion?

And this had to be unnerving for these guys, right? This is just unsettling to have someone expose your thinking to the outside. But don't miss the fact, Jesus isn't here embarrassing them. He's not even like overtly indicting them for their thinking. Before Jesus demonstrates his own prerogative to forgive sin, he's even answering their question by reading their hearts. They said, "Who but God alone?"

Listen, if forgiving sin is exclusively a divine prerogative, and it is, what about omniscience? Isn't that a divine attribute? Didn't he just teach them something? The basis of their judgment against him is that they believe he's not God, and he has said something that only God has the right to say, but now he has just done something that only God can do. He's read their minds and he's exposed their thinking to everybody in the room.

You will remember that God told Samuel, "The Lord sees not as man sees." The word translated, Lord, in 1 Samuel 16:7 is the divine name Yahweh. So, Yahweh told Samuel, "Yahweh sees not as man sees. Man looks on the outward appearance." It's not a

judgment against us, it's just what we can do. We can't see anything on the inside. We look on the outward appearance. Man looks on the outward appearance, but Yahweh, Yahweh looks on the heart. So, Jesus has just done something very Yahweh-like.

Each one of the scribes and the Pharisees knows it. Jesus has invaded their private thoughts. He's exposed their hidden thinking, their sinful thinking, and he's revealed it openly. But he didn't just reveal their sinful deduction, he confronted it directly. He dealt with it head on, and, in fact, he, he clarifies the real nature of their question in verse 23. He says, "Which is easier, to say, 'Your sins are forgiven you,' or to say, 'Rise and walk?'" Again, by asking that question, Jesus is here showing mercy. He's showing grace because he's challenging them here to reason differently, to forsake their sinful reasoning and to reason correctly, to reason righteously.

There are only two ways to answer the question that he posed in verse 23, and how you answer depends on your perspective, human or divine. It depends on the resources and the power you have at your disposal, whether human or divine. If

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you're a man, if you're a creature with creaturely limitations, you know you have no power to make a paralytic walk. So to answer Jesus' question, a man has to answer the question and think about it this way. Well, it's much easier to say, "Your sins are forgiven you" because that's something you don't have to prove.

But notice that even to come to that and say that, to admit that, that assumes a bit of duplicity on your part, right? And here's where Jesus is exposing yet another sin that they are committing. He's revealing something in their heart. Without any evidence, the scribes and the Pharisees are here assuming that Jesus is just saying the easy thing, that he is saying something that no one in the room can prove or test. And they're essentially here accusing him in their hearts of being a deceiver, being a false teacher, trying to deceive the people in the room by claiming to forgive a man, something that no one could prove one way or another.

A righteous man wouldn't say that, would it, would he? Your sins are forgiven you; no one would say that if you're

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righteous. You wouldn't even dare. You wouldn't dare to say, Rise and walk, either because you, you know that's impossible. You'd be proven false right away, right? So righteous man would avoid both statements. You wouldn't utter either one of those things, but for a sinful man, someone who wants to deceive, he may very well speak the unprovable thing, the untestable thing to deceive other people. That's what the scribes are insinuating about Jesus. Can you believe it?

Jesus though, he's no mere man. He's not an unrighteous man, either. He's utterly unique and as the God-man, both statements are easy for him to say. To the Almighty God, all acts are effortless. Nothing he does involves the depletion of any energy. The omnipotence of his divine nature means comparisons like hard and easy, utterly meaningless. Forgiving sins, though it is a far more complex, far more costly endeavor, though it involves the greatest of all paradoxes, that a holy God can justify a sinful creature, there's no true effort involved for an Almighty God. So it's a, in a very real sense forgiving sins is just as easy as healing a paralyzed man. It's not a matter of effort, it's a matter of divine wisdom, solving this great paradox.

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By Jesus' omniscience and by this provocative question that forces the people in the room to wrestle with divine omnipotence and also to reveal their own hearts, Jesus here, he has confronted the sinful deduction of these religious leaders, along with everybody else in the room. Don't miss the mercy. Don't miss the mercy in this confrontation. As I said, he's not trying to embarrass them. He's even not overtly at this point trying to indict them, even though his words are, as their thoughts are revealed, they are embarrassing. He didn't have to bother with them, did he? He wasn't obligated at all to show mercy, to answer their, their mental objections, but he confronted it anyway. Why? Because he loved them. Because he cared and also to make a larger point to the entire crowd.

That's point one. Look at point two. Jesus clarifies here sound instruction. He clarifies some sound instruction. From Jesus' perspective, healing this man's paralysis is really kind of incidental to the larger point that he intended to make. It's not that he's cold, calculating, doesn't care about this man and his paralysis. He does care. In fact, he went and healed the

deeper issue first. He pronounced the forgiveness of sins, which ensures eternal life, heaven with God forever, apart from the presence and power of sin, no longer to struggle with it. That's the greater, he showed greater love already. He cared about his paralysis, that's part of the point here, but what happens next is really a dramatic sermon illustration to clarify his teaching. Let's back up to verse 22 again, and we'll start reading from there.

"When 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 that you may know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins,' he turned and 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."

It's important to note here that this is the heart of the narrative. This is the main point that Luke wants us to see here. It's the central focus of the other parallel accounts as

well. Matthew and Mark each draw attention to precisely the same point, and that's because it was Jesus' main point in performing the miracle. The purpose of healing the man's paralysis wasn't primarily about showing compassion. It wasn't primarily because he felt for the guy who couldn't walk around and, and, and support his own weight. It was about demonstrating the fullness, the absolute, unqualified fullness of his authority.

You can see there at the beginning of verse 24 there is a purpose clause. Jesus commanded the paralyzed man to get up and go home for the purpose of making this larger theological point, namely, that they "might know for certain that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins." It's the same thing that accords with Luke's purpose in writing this to Theophilus. He says, "I want you to know with certainty about the things you have been taught about Christ."

Here we see the same, this or, it falls right in line with Christ's purpose. "I want you to know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins." Why does he want them to know that? Is it a matter of being in love with principles? No.

He wants them to know he has authority to forgive sins. Why? Because he wants to define forgiveness of sins. It's all a demonstration here of the mercy and the compassion and the kindness of our God revealed in Jesus Christ.

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 is kind of pretentious. But for Jesus, he's making a point.

This is one of the, 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. Because, as I told you last week, 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.

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Now 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 ascending and descending from heaven to earth on a ladder, right? Well, 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 in John 3:13-15, "No one has ascended into heaven except he who

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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

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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 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

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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 the representa 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.

The second category, we, we can call it about, is the teaching of the Son of Man. Turn to Ezekiel 2, you're in Psalms, so go to your right toward the end of your Bible to Ezekiel, Ezekiel chapter 2. And this is the calling of Ezekiel. If you want to have a fascinating study some time, study the whole book

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of Ezekiel, but go to that chapter 1, just get a cup of coffee and, and put on your seatbelt because that is a weird chapter. It is talking about this revelation of the glory of God in that chapter. And then after that revelation of God's glory, his divine glory, we see the calling of Ezekiel. And this connects here with the first category, that Jesus is the representation of mankind in being the last Adam. But there's also some other uses of this title Son of Man in the book of Ezekiel. You remember, this post-exilic prophet, Ezekiel, he was in Babylon. He'd been taken away from Israel like all the rest of his kin. And he was in Babylon, and he's standing by the Chebar Canal, it's one of the major well-known canals coming off of the Euphrates River just south of Babylon. And that's where the Lord called Ezekiel and he showed him this astounding vision of the glory of God.

In fact, as you read that, the vision that Ezekiel saw, it rivals Isaiah's terrifying experience in the very throne room of God. And at the end of chapter 1, you can look at it there if you see it in Ezekiel 2 and look back at chapter 1. Ezekiel said, "When I saw the appearance of the likeness of the glory of the Lord, I fell on my face, and I heard the voice of the one

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speaking." He, he reacted just like Isaiah did. He's, he's undone here, he's utterly baffled, he's stymied, he's perplexed.

He fell on his face and then notice what happens right at the beginning of chapter 2. "The voice speaking said to me, 'Son of man, stand on your feet, and I will speak with you.'" He didn't have the power to stand on his feet. "And he spoke, as he spoke to me, the Spirit entered into me and set me on my feet, and I heard him speaking to me. He said to me, 'Son of Man, I will send you to the people of Israel, to nations of rebels, who have rebelled against me,'" and it continues on.

Those two uses of the Son of Man, that title are the first of ninety-three uses of that term, Son of Man, in Ezekiel. In fact, it's the exclusive term of address that God used whenever he spoke to that prophet. God referred to him as Son of Man, and that's all he called him.

As you read the rest of Ezekiel's prophecy, God speaks to him as Son of Man, as a member of the human race, as a member of

the people of, the sinning people of Israel. But it's clear that throughout Ezekiel, God is pulling Ezekiel out. He's extracting the Son of Man kind of like out of sympathy with the human race. God is extracting from Ezekiel a sense of sympathy for his own people by showing, showing him the sins of his people. He doesn't want Ezekiel anymore to sympathize with the sins of the sinful leadership. In all of that, he's helping Ezekiel to develop a sympathy from the divine perspective instead. God wants Ezekiel as the Son of Man to sympathize with God's concerns, not man's.

You can see this happening over the entirety of the book, but it's especially clear in Ezekiel 8. Go ahead and turn to Ezekiel 8. Because God took, I'm just going to show you one of these because there's a lot we could talk, talk about. But God took Ezekiel by a vision to see the sins that were committed in Israel by its leadership. And Ezekiel, by the way, he's sitting as he's transported by a vision to see the sins of the leadership of Israel. Do you know who's sitting in front of him? The elders of Israel. They're all sitting in front of him, and God, in that moment, takes him out of that moment and takes him into the very heart of the temple.

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Look at Ezekiel 8:7, start, starting there. "God brought me to the entrance of the court, and when I looked, behold, there was a hole in the wall. And then he said to me, 'Son of man, dig in the wall.' So I dug in the wall, and behold, there was an entrance. And he said to me, 'Go in, and see the vile abominations they are committing there.' So I went in and saw. And there, engraved on the wall all around, was every form of creeping things and loathsome beasts, and all the idols of the house of Israel."

What's the very first command in the Ten Commandments? "You shall have no other gods before me." What's the second? "You shall not make for yourself an idol, an image of anything that's created." What does he see? A violation of the first two commandments in the heart of the temple! What in the world is going on? Verse 11, "Before them stood the seventy men of the elders of the house of Israel, and Jaa, Jaazanah, Jaazaniah the son of Shaphan standing among them. Each had his censer in his hand, and the smoke of the cloud of incense went up. And then he said to me, 'Son of man, have you seen what the elders of the

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house of Israel are doing in the dark, each in his room of pictures? For they say, 'The Lord does not see us, the Lord has forsaken the land.' He said also to me, 'You will see still greater abominations that they commit.'"

And then he goes on. It's as if God wants Ezekiel to really feel all of this. God wants Ezekiel as the Son of Man to, to learn to see human sinfulness, not from his own sympathies, not from his own sentimentality toward his fellow human race. God wants Ezekiel to see human sinfulness from God's perspective to, so he can learn to hate it as much God hates it.

In fact, I commend the study of Ezekiel to you for that reason, and, and for all the prophets. Study all of the prophets. There is nothing like the prophetic genre in Scripture to help you gain a divine perspective on sin. So you can learn to fear God and not man. It's a very, very healthy study for you.

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That passage in Ezekiel 8, it continues in verse 14. I'm not going to read it all, but God shows Ezekiel women weeping for Tammuz. Men in the inner court of the house of the Lord and their bowing before the sun, not the S-o-n, but the s-u-n, the, the star in the sky. They're bowing before it in worship. And the indictment is thorough, and as God is relaying it, the indictments never exaggerated. It's utterly devastating and the whole time God is telling Ezekiel, Son of Man, look at this. Son of Man, look at that.

As I said, it's as if to say to him, What is wrong with your people, Ezekiel? What is wrong with the human race, Ezekiel, of which you are a representative member as a Son of Man? At the same time, God is calling Ezekiel out of their midst, teaching them to see the situation from God's perspective, teaching them to sympathize, him to sympathize with God's concerns, to feel God's indignation for the sins that the people were committing.

So this term Son of Man, as we said, it's the first picture, first category. It's a picture of humanity, a picture

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of the ideal man, the perfect, representiv, 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

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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."

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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; 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."

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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

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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. As we read earlier, Scripture reading, 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, paraliz, 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. And Jesus corrects that dangerous misunderstanding, verse 22, "When 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

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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.

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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

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before you, Lord Jesus Christ, to seek your forgiveness for misjudging you, for making, taking you for granted, for 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.