

Son of Man, a radio sermon

(John 3:13)

Jesus told Nicodemus, “*No man hath ascended up to heaven, but he that came down from heaven, even the Son of man which is in heaven*” (John 3:13). Jesus Christ is the Son of God. He is also the Son of Man. On one occasion, Jesus asked His disciples, “*Whom do men say that I the Son of man am? And they said, Some say that thou art John the Baptist: some, Elias; and others, Jeremias, or one of the prophets. He saith unto them, But whom say ye that I am? And Simon Peter answered and said, Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God. And Jesus answered and said unto him, Blessed art thou, Simon Barjona: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven*” (Matt. 16:13-17). Have you ever wondered what Jesus meant when He called Himself, “*Son of Man*?” It means more than that Jesus was a man. He was a man, and the title, “*Son of Man*” does teach that. But it teaches much, much more than that.

Jesus used this title to speak of Himself more often than He did by any other name. There is good reason for it. By “*the Son of Man*”, we learn about the person and the office of our Lord Jesus Christ. We learn about His person as God and Man. And we learn about His designated role as Mediator. His office as

Mediator is the place to which God the Father appointed Him from all eternity.¹

Scripture teaches four things, primarily, about the Son of Man. Let us summarize these four things at the outset:

1. **First, Jesus Christ had glory with the Father as Son of God and as Son of Man before He came into the world, before He was born as a man.**
2. **Second, Jesus Christ voluntarily humbled Himself and came into the world to suffer humiliation that He might accomplish the eternal will of God.** He left His place in glory to take the place of the lowest Servant, to fulfill the highest service ever performed in all of eternity: to forever take to Himself the nature of a Man -- a real body and soul -- and as Man, to be made under the law and obey God's holy law in everything (Isa. 42:21). He came to fulfill God's eternal will, to offer Himself in sacrifice on the cross, to lay down His life, to shed His blood, that He might make atonement for the sins of His people. He who had glory with the Father took the place of the lowest Servant to fulfill the highest service of all, to do the eternal will of God (Heb. 10:5-7; Ps. 40:6-8).
3. **Third, Jesus Christ, having fulfilled the will of God in His death, having conquered sin and death and the devil, having saved His people from their sins, rose from**

¹ Rev. 13:8; 1 Pet. 1:20; Prov. 8:22-31; Heb. 7:3, 17; Ps. 89:3, 19; Isa. 42:1-8; Eph. 1:4-6; Heb. 13:20; Isa. 55:3.

the dead, and ascended back up to heaven to sit on heaven's throne, with power and great glory. Only this time, not as Son of God only, but as Son of God and Son of Man, both God and Man, the one Mediator between God and men, the Man Christ Jesus (1 Tim. 2:5; 1 Tim. 3:16).

4. **Fourth, Jesus Christ, who now rules over all things as Son of God and Son of Man, will return to this world** (Acts 17:31). He will return to separate the sheep from the goats. He will return as the reigning Savior to gather His people to Himself in heaven, and to them to give the kingdom prepared for them from eternity by His Father (Matt. 25:31-34). And He will judge the world in righteousness (Acts 10:42; Rom. 14:9; 2 Tim. 4:1; 1 Pet. 4:5; John 5:21-29).

Therefore, the great conclusions are these: Jesus Christ had glory with the Father from eternity. He is the eternal Son of God. He was chosen and set up as the Son of Man from eternity. In the time appointed by God, He descended from heaven to earth. He took into union with Himself the body and soul of a man. In that human nature, He fulfilled the will of God. He suffered and died in humiliation. Having saved His people from their sins, He rose in glorious triumph. He ascended back to heaven to rule as Lord and King of heaven and earth, sitting on the right hand of His Father, on His Father's throne, in power and great glory. And He will come again at the end of time. When He comes, He will gather His people to Himself. And He

will separate them from the unbelieving world. He will then judge the world in righteousness.

He is the only Mediator between God and men. He is the only One who fulfilled the will of God. His obedience is the only righteousness on earth. All who submit to His righteousness, who come to God by Him alone, by His blood and righteousness alone, are forgiven of all their sins. They have passed from death to life. We must believe Christ. We must submit to Him as our Lord and our only Savior. We must not trust ourselves. We must not trust another. God has laid upon Him the administration of this universe, as Son of God and Son of Man.

Let us consider each of these four things more carefully. Jesus spoke of Himself more often by the title “Son of Man” than by any other title. There is good reason for that. By “the Son of Man”, we learn the following of our Lord Jesus Christ:

1. **First, The Lord Jesus Christ, as Son of God and Son of Man, had glory with the Father before time began** (John 6:62; 17:5; Dan. 7:13-14). Jesus is the Son of God, and He is the Son of Man (Matt. 16:13-17). As Son of God, He is equal with the Father (John 5:17-18; 10:30-33; Php. 2:6-8). He is God over all, blessed forever (Rom. 9:5). He is the almighty God, one with the Father and the Holy Spirit, the Maker of heaven and earth (Isa. 9:6; Rev. 1:8, 11, 17-18; Col. 1:16; John 1:3). God the Father calls His Son God: “*Unto the Son*

He saith, ‘Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever’” (Ps. 45:7; Heb. 1:8). Heaven’s armies are commanded to worship Him (Heb. 1:6). As Son of God, He is co-eternal and co-equal with the Father (John 1:1-3; 5:20; 17:24). But He who is Son of God was eternally chosen, ordained, set up, appointed, and anointed by God the Father as the Son of Man. Not as Son of God only, but as Son of God and Son of Man. He who is God the Son was set up from eternity as Son of Man, the one who alone is the image of the invisible God (Col. 1:15; Prov. 8:22-31). Creation was made to reveal Him. Adam was created as the “*figure of Him who was to come*” (Rom. 5:14; 1 Cor. 15:47). Jesus Christ is the Son of Man, the Son of the living God, the chosen and anointed of the Father (Matt. 16:13-17; Luke 23:35). He was the One chosen by God to be the son of David (Ps. 89:3, 19). He who is Jehovah God the Son, was chosen by Jehovah God the Father to save His people from their sins (Ps. 80:17, 19; Isa. 42:1-8; 1 Sam. 17:46). To do fulfill this work, in love, Christ became Servant to His Father. In love, He committed Himself forever to serve His Father and His people (Ex. 21:2-6; Isa. 52:13; 53:11; Luke 12:37). Because He was chosen from eternity to be the Son of Man, He has forever been the one Mediator between God and men (1 Tim. 2:5; 3:16). In loving obedience to His Father, and in love for His own, He gave Himself for the sheep, His people, the Church of Christ (Eph. 5:23-32; John 10:11, 15-18; Php. 2:6-8). From eternity, God looked upon

His eternal Son and chose Him as the Son of Man, one person in two natures. In the fulness of time, Christ came into the world. He was born of a woman. God prepared His eternal Son a body and joined His divine nature into union with His human nature. This is a great mystery (1 Tim. 3:16). He is “*God with us*” (Matt. 1:23). He is “*THE LORD (JEHOVAH) OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS*” (Jer. 23:5-6). All of His people own Him by this endearing epithet, “*The LORD is my Shepherd*” (Ps. 23:1; John 10:11). Every believing sinner rejoices in Him, saying, “*the LORD JEHOVAH...is become my salvation*” (Isa. 12:3). He is the Husband and Head of the Church (Eph. 5:23-31; Eph. 1:19-23). The whole family in heaven and earth is named in Him (Eph. 3:15). He is the head of the family in heaven and earth, the firstborn of God, because He was set up as Son of Man. He has preeminence in all things. It pleased the Father that in Him all fulness should dwell. As the Head and firstborn, all of God’s people were chosen in Him. They are therefore saved with an everlasting salvation (Rom. 8:29-30; Eph. 1:4-6; Isa. 45:17-25). In summary, the first thing we learn about the Son of Man, is that He had glory with the Father before time began, having been chosen in the person of Son of God. God speaks of it as done in heaven before it was done on earth (Ps. 89:3, 19; Isa. 42:1-8). Therefore, Christ was given all glory and dominion and over all things before He came into the world (Dan. 7:13-14).

2. Now, the second thing we learn about the Son of Man is His humiliation. **He who is the Son of God, came into the world as the Son of Man in voluntary submission and humiliation.** Though equal with the Father, “*He made Himself of no reputation. He took upon Him the form of a Servant, and was made in the likeness of men*” (Php. 2:6-7). He came to do the will of God, to put away the sins of His people by the sacrifice of Himself. Scripture says that our Lord Jesus spoke these words when He took our nature to Himself: “...When he cometh into the world, he saith, Sacrifice and offering thou wouldest not, but a body hast thou prepared me: In burnt offerings and sacrifices for sin thou hast had no pleasure. Then said I, Lo, I come (in the volume of the book it is written of me,) to do thy will, O God” (Heb. 10:5-7). He who had glory with the Father as Son of Man, descended from His glory to the lowest place, the place of the lowest Servant, to serve His God for His people. Though He was and forever shall be the Son of God, equal with the Father, yet, “*The Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many*” (Matt. 20:28). And, “*Being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross*” (Php. 2:8). Therefore, the second thing we learn about the Son of Man, is that He descended from heaven’s throne to Calvary’s cross in a voluntary service of love, humiliation, suffering and death. As the Surety for His people,

as the Lamb of God, He offered Himself to God for them. He answered every demand of God's justice with Himself. He fulfilled every requirement of God's law by His obedience. He willingly offered Himself. He took the sins of His people as His own (Ps. 31; Ps. 38; Ps. 40; Ps. 69; Ps. 89; Isa. 53). And bearing their sins before God, in all of the guilt and shame of them, He suffered the full punishment that God's justice demanded. He was made sin. He was cursed of God. And all of this was by the eternal will of God (Acts 2:23; 2 Cor. 5:21; Gal. 3:13; Isa. 53:10). This is what Jesus meant when He told Nicodemus, "*As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up (upon the cross)*" (John 3:14; 12:23-33). He who had glory with the Father from eternity, came into the world. He took a human body and soul into union with Himself. He took the place of the lowest Servant of all, to fulfill the highest service of all: to propitiate God with His own blood; to offer Himself for our sins; to establish our everlasting righteousness; to justify those for whom He died; to sanctify them by His blood; to perfect them forever by His one offering. And to do all according to the eternal will of God (Prov. 8:22-31; Acts 2:23; 4:28; Heb. 10:7).

3. Third, scripture reveals that **the Son of Man** who had glory with the Father, who descended to do the will of God, having finished that work, **in triumph over all enemies, ascended to heaven's throne in power and great glory.** God promised

this to Him by an eternal oath. He swore by Himself to His Son and to king David. He swore that He would exalt David's son and David's Lord to heaven's throne. "*The LORD said unto my Lord, sit thou on my right hand until I make thine enemies thy footstool*" (Ps. 110:1; Acts 2:34). In 1 Samuel 7, The LORD promised David, "*12 when thy days be fulfilled, and thou shalt sleep with thy fathers, I will set up thy seed after thee, which shall proceed out of thy bowels, and I will establish his kingdom. 13 He shall build an house for my name, and I will stablish the throne of his kingdom for ever. 14 I will be his father, and he shall be my son*" (2 Sam. 7:12-14). Without question, this prophecy refers to Jesus of Nazareth, the Son of Man, the Christ of God, the Son of God. God only calls Him "my Son" (Heb. 1:4-8). Both the OT and the NT verify this interpretation. "*For thy servant David's sake turn not away the face of thine anointed (Christ). The LORD hath sworn in truth unto David; he will not turn from it; Of the fruit of thy body will I set upon thy throne*" (Psalms 132:11). But the throne of David on which Christ would sit is not a throne on earth. It is the throne of God the Father. He is seated on the right hand of God. "*The LORD said unto my Lord, sit thou on my right hand until I make thine enemies thy footstool*" (Ps. 110:1; Acts 2:34-36; Luke 24:26; Heb. 1:3; 8:1; 10:12; 1 Pet. 1:11, 3:22; Mark 16:19)! Therefore, the third thing scripture teaches is that Jesus Christ, the Son of Man, is exalted to heaven's throne according to the eternal

will of God, according to scripture. Daniel spoke of this promise of God as a thing already accomplished in heaven before it was done on earth: *“I saw in the night visions, and, behold, one like the Son of man came with the clouds of heaven (when He ascended after His resurrection), and came to the Ancient of days (God the Father), and they brought him near before him. And there was given him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations, and languages, should serve him: his dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed”* (Dan. 7:13-14; Eph. 1:19-23). Jesus said, *“All power is given unto me in heaven and earth”* (Matt. 28:18). *“When the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, born of a woman, made under the law, that He might redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the promise of the adoption of sons”* (Gal. 4:4-5). This is He who had glory with the Father from eternity. This is He who fulfilled the will of God as the Surety, in the place of His people, fulfilling all of their righteousness (Rom. 10:4-13; 1 Cor. 1:30).

4. Fourth, scripture reveals that **the Son of Man who now reigns over all in heaven, will come again in power and great glory. He will then judge the world in righteousness** (Acts 17:31). *“When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory”* (Matt. 25:31). It is for this purpose that

He came into the world. *“To this end Christ both died, and rose, and revived, that he might be Lord both of the dead and living”* (Rom. 14:7). In all of their sermons in the book of Acts, Peter and John and Paul exhorted and warned men to believe Christ. They told the Jews that the One they crucified was both Lord and Christ (Acts 2:36). We must submit to Him in all things. He is the seed of Abraham, to whom God has given all promises, and through whom God’s elect in all nations of the world are blessed (Acts 3:25). He is the Son of God, by whose triumph over sin and by His sovereign rule, He turns His people from their iniquities (Acts 3:26). There is salvation only by His exalted name (Acts 4:10-12). He has been exalted to be a Prince and a Savior, to give repentance to Israel and the forgiveness of sins (Acts 5:31). When Stephen was stoned by the Jews, he saw Jesus in heaven, the Son of Man, standing on the right hand of God (Acts 7:55-56). Because He is Lord of all, Stephen committed his spirit into His hands (Acts 7:56, 59)! And so does every believer! Peter told Cornelius, and the Gentiles with him, that Jesus of Nazareth went about doing good, that He was approved of God, that he did miracles and wonders, and yet the Jews crucified and killed Him. But God raised Him from the dead and showed Him openly to men chosen before. And Christ commanded those chosen men to preach this message: it is He who was ordained of God to be Judge of both the living and the dead. Peter told Cornelius and the Gentiles, that by Jesus

of Nazareth, the Son of Man and the Son of God, the Christ of God, all who believe receive remission of their sins (Acts 10:36-43). Paul also preached the same things to the Gentiles in his sermons. Paul told his hearers that the rulers in Jerusalem, though they found no cause of death in Christ, desired Pilate to crucify Him. Paul said that when they had fulfilled all of God's will by killing Christ, they took Him down from the cross, and laid Him in the tomb. But God raised Him from the dead. As Peter before him, Paul said that the resurrection of Christ was in fulfillment of scripture (Ps. 16, etc.). Paul said that David spoke as a prophet. David spoke as Jesus would speak in His prayer, trusting His Father to raise Him up from the dead. Paul preached that God raised up Jesus to be a Savior, and that all who believe Him are justified from all things from which they could never be justified by the law of Moses (Acts 13:39-48). Every sermon recorded in Acts, and all of the epistles, declare the same message. The Son of Man is the Lord from heaven (1 Cor. 15:47; John 3:31). He went to Calvary's cross to make atonement to God for the sins of His people (Lev. 16:30; Heb. 1:3). He was laid in the grave. All of this was by the will of God. But He rose again from the dead. He is the firstborn from the dead (Col. 1:18; Acts 13:32-39). He ascended up to heaven. He is now seated on heaven's throne. He rules over all things to save His people to the uttermost (Acts 3:26; Rom. 5:10; Heb. 7:25), to bring them to glory, to subdue their every

enemy. In every part of their lives, by His saving victory and sovereign rule, they are more than conquerors through Jesus Christ who loved them, who is the Son of God, the Son of Man, our High Priest, our Mediator, our Surety, the Lamb of God, our Prophet, our Priest and our King!

Now, Jesus summarized all of this when He spoke to Nicodemus. *“No man hath ascended up to heaven, but he that came down from heaven, even the Son of man which is in heaven”* (John 3:13). He who ascended to heaven’s throne had to first descend from heaven’s glory in humiliation as our sin-bearing Substitute, our Surety, our Mediator. Having descended, having fulfilled the eternal will of God, He rose in triumph and ascended in glorious honor and power. Jesus speaks to Nicodemus of His exaltation as a thing already done when He says, *“...even the Son of Man which is in Heaven.”* Peter also spoke of Christ’s exaltation in his first sermon. *“David is not ascended into the heavens, but he saith himself, The LORD said unto my Lord, Sit thou on my right hand, Until I make thy foes thy footstool. Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ”* (Acts 2:34-36). Therefore, to ascend to heaven means more than to go up to heaven. Enoch and Elijah and Paul went up to heaven. But no man can ascend to sit on the right hand of God except He who came down from heaven (Ps. 110:1). This is Jesus’ meaning in John 3:13. He had

glory with the Father from eternity. He came down from heaven. He descended in the humiliation of being made lower than the angels as man that He might suffer and die. He died under the stroke of God's justice, and in satisfaction to that justice. "He that is from above, is above all" (John 3:31). Adam could not ascend to heaven's throne. Christ alone could do that. "The first man was of the earth, earthy; the second man is the Lord from heaven" (1 Cor. 15:47). The One who ascended to heaven to sit on heaven's throne, first descended to the lower parts of the earth (Eph. 4:9). He was in heaven with His Father in glory (John 17:5; 6:62). He descended in voluntary humiliation. Having descended, He triumphed over sin, death, the devil and this present evil world by His life and in His death (Gal. 1:4). He rose and ascended to take His God-ordained place as Son of Man and Son of God on the right hand of God (Heb. 1:3). By the eternal will of God, He came from heaven's throne, to Bethlehem's manger, to Calvary's cross. There, He conquered death, rose again, and ascended in exaltation and power to heaven's throne, to rule in glorious, sovereign majesty, as God and Man, the One Mediator between God and men.

Paul also wrote in Rom. 10 of the Son of Man. Paul lamented the fact that his fellow Jews would not submit to the righteousness of God. Though the Jews went about to establish their own righteousness and would not submit to the righteousness of God, Paul said, "*Christ is the end of the law for*

righteousness to everyone that believeth” (Rom. 10:4). Paul then quoted Moses when he spoke of the righteousness which is of faith. *“Say not in thine heart, Who shall ascend into heaven? (That is to bring Christ down from above.) Or who shall descend into the deep? (That is to bring up Christ again from the dead.) But what saith it? The word is nigh thee, even in thy mouth, and in thy heart: that is, the word of faith, which we preach; That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation”* (Rom. 10:6-10). Since none but Christ could ascend up to heaven to reign forever on heaven’s throne, in fulfillment of God’s promise to David (Ps. 110:1; 132:10-11; 2 Sam. 7:14; Dan. 7:13-14); since only Christ, the Son of God could do that, therefore, to speak of a man ascending up to heaven is to speak of Christ, the Son of Man, who descended from heaven to redeem God’s elect by the one offering of Himself (Heb. 10:5-7). Therefore, never think or speak in a way that suggests any but Christ could be accepted by God by his own obedience. Only Christ is the end of the law for righteousness. He alone fulfilled God’s law by virtue of what He did when He descended as Son of God and Son of Man. He made atonement for sin and justified His people by His obedience unto death (Rom. 5:19; 2 Cor. 5:21; Rev. 5:1-13). Therefore, never speak of any man redeeming his brother (Ps. 49:7). Only Christ, the Son of God

and Son of Man has done that (Rev. 5:1-13). But what we must speak of is what God has said concerning Christ. He is the One who came from heaven, went to Calvary's cross, and is now seated in heaven as Son of God and Son of Man, the King of Glory, the Lord of all. He is the LORD Jehovah (Isa. 6:5; John 12:41). And He is the King of Glory as Son of Man and Son of God, because He purged our sins (Heb. 1:3; 8:1; 10:12; Acts 20:28). This is why, throughout the book of Acts, every sermon speaks of Jesus of Nazareth, the Son of Man and the Son of God, who is both David's son and David's Lord, who rose from the dead in power and glorious triumph. He is the first-begotten from the dead, so that all for whom He died, rise with Him (Eph. 2:4-6; John 11:25; 14:6; 1 John 5:10-13).

The Son of Man is the end of the law for righteousness. Therefore, by Him, all who believe, are justified from all things that the law could not justify them (Acts 13:39). There is no other name under heaven, given among men whereby we must be saved (Acts 4:10-12). He is Judge of the living and the dead (John 5:21-29; Acts 17:31).

Do you believe Him? Do you confess that He is the Lord of all and that He is your Lord? Do you trust Him as your only Savior? All who believe Him shall never be ashamed before God. May God give you and me this mercy, to believe Christ only!