

Catford Lectures 2014-2015

Part 11

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[00:00:00] Let's turn to Daniel chapter 7 and then just read a verse from that chapter, in fact a fragment of a verse in opening this meeting. Daniel chapter 7 and verse 13, as I said we'll just read a fragment of the verse. Daniel chapter 7 verse 13. I saw in the night visions and behold one like the Son of Man came with the clouds of heaven and came to the ancient of days. If one were going to give advice to a newly converted believer as to things which would be helpful for them to study so that they might be built up in our most holy faith. There are many things that [00:01:07] could be suggested to them as being worthy and very profitable for study. John's gospel might be an example because of its wonderful depiction of the Lord Jesus as the Son of God. Romans might also be suggested for the foundation truths of the gospel. But something else that might be very profitable for study would be the names and titles of the Lord Jesus and I guess going further than that perhaps his offices as well and other descriptions that are given to him in God's Word. For those of us who have been believers for some time we might challenge ourselves as to how much we know of these things and whether our knowledge of them is as it should be. Could [00:02:03] we for example give an outline of the epistle to the Romans and the things that are taught there. Even if we have been a believer for a long time and know these things very well I'm sure there is much to be gained by consideration of these sorts of foundational truths and the things that are involved in them are the sorts of things that will refresh our hearts every time we turn to them again. Perhaps it's in view of those sorts of considerations that I can be forgiven for taking up a subject which might overlap a little bit with recent Plumstead, Canterbury, Yarnfield conferences although perhaps the overlap might not be too much and that topic is the Lord Jesus as the Son of Man. Time is always a constraint and the subject of the Lord Jesus as the Son of Man [00:03:10] is rather a vast one and in the time that's available this afternoon I propose to look at the meaning of the title Son of Man then some of the truths that are associated with the Lord Jesus being the Son of Man and then some of the glories that he has as the Son of Man. This title Son of Man is one that is of some significance and the Lord's position as Son of Man is a special one. If we consider the Lord's life on earth and his verbal ministry to men he most frequently referred to himself as the Son of Man and not by any of his other names or titles and some of the [00:04:04] most plaintive ways in which he speaks about himself make use of this title the Son of Man and the Son of Man for example has nowhere to lay his head. There must be a particular reason why the Lord Jesus refers to himself in that way in the context of that verse. Daniel's vision that we read a fragment about his vision was of one who was like a son of man. We know that this is the Lord Jesus but the point I want to emphasize here is that the way in which Daniel saw the Lord Jesus when he

had this vision was as a son of man again not in any of the other characters that he might have and when it comes to for example the hymns that we have in our hymn book admittedly [00:05:05] not many of them use the expression Son of Man but those that do it's clear that the hymn writers have deliberately chosen that expression for a particular purpose when they use it. In the hymn that we started with hymn 109 we have the words as Son of Man it was thou gavest thy life for us. We might also think of hymn 438 which begins how wonderful that thou the Son and that is the Son of God has come but here for us as Son of Man a change in expression there has died. As I said there must be some significance to this title Son of Man and hopefully we will get some help this afternoon towards seeing what that significance is. So turning firstly to the [00:06:05] meaning of the title or the words Son of Man that phrase Son of Man and sometimes in the plural Sons of Men is used elsewhere in the Bible to denote what the expression literally means Son of Man, Man there when the phrase is used in the Old Testament in the Hebrew Man is the word Adam speaking of mankind in general or men generically. So Son of Man, Son of Mankind the phrase on its own means literally that someone who is a son of mankind someone who is a man himself or generically someone who is a member of mankind or a person. Just to give one example demonstrating [00:07:08] this in Numbers chapter 23 verse 19 we read God is not a man that he should lie neither the Son of Man that he should repent. There's an example there of the literary device that is often used in Hebrew writing and that is the repetition of a thought in different terms and so we have God is not a man that he should lie and then the thought repeated but in different terms neither the Son of Man that he should repent and putting the two together that we see that there is a correlation between man and Son of Man the two essentially meaning the same thing. When we come to the Lord Jesus one of the things that the title Son of Man encapsulates is his humanity and perhaps in [00:08:07] discussing this subject of the Lord's manhood I can be forgiven if I sometimes describe his or describe the Lord as being fully man or truly man or things like that. Certainly those expressions fully man and truly man and they're not found in the scriptures but the truth is there and we'll come back to that and I think or I fear that sometimes other non-scriptural expressions which are sometimes used amongst us to describe the Lord's manhood perhaps inadvertently take something away from his manhood and sometimes there seems to be an application of expressions or statements which are made about the Lord Jesus in resurrection sometimes they are perhaps not [00:09:04] entirely correctly applied to him in his life as a man before his death and perhaps that can be misconstrued as taking away something from his manhood. That the Lord Jesus was and still is a man is a truth that is taught in many ways in the Bible and not just through the expression Son of Man. In John chapter 1 verse 14 we have the statement the word was made flesh and dwelt amongst us that's just one example. When it comes to the incarnation and the birth of the Lord Jesus we have it stated in genealogical terms that the Lord Jesus was the son of Adam and that is in chapter 3 at the end of the chapter. So the Lord Jesus did become part of Adam's race and now in [00:10:08] addressing this subject we need to recognise that the Lord Jesus was not physically descended from Adam as that would have involved him inheriting Adam's sinful condition and nature but rather as we have a bit earlier in Luke's Gospel chapter 1 verse 35 the angel speaking to Mary saying unto her the Holy Ghost shall come upon thee. At this point it's perhaps also worth emphasising that the Lord Jesus as a man was wholly harmless and undefiled throughout his life and he did no sin as we have in 1st Peter chapter 2 and knew no sin as we have stated in 2nd Corinthians 5 and also [00:11:01] in John's writings 1 John chapter 3 in him was no sin. So in those senses the Lord Jesus was different from us and different from all other men and clearly very different but that does not make him any less of a man. The rest of Luke 1 verse 35 goes on to say that holy thing which shall be born of thee. The holy thing the Lord Jesus would be born of Mary and Galatians chapter 4 confirms this when it says at the right and proper time that God sent forth his son come of woman. These expressions mean that the Lord Jesus as a man was a man and to use my own [00:12:05] expression the Lord Jesus was fully man. I think that over emphasising the

ways in which the Lord Jesus was different from us as a man perhaps risks taking something away from the fact that he was truly man. That's a necessary truth that the Lord Jesus was man because man was ruined, man was at enmity with God. All of us had sinned and fallen short of the glory of God and to address all of these things and for them to be addressed in a righteous way there needed to be a mediator. One who was one with God but one who was also one with man and could therefore bridge the gap between the [00:13:03] two of them and meet our needs before God and this mediator as we have stated in 1 Timothy chapter 2 verse 5 was the Lord Jesus but he is there described as being the man Christ Jesus. Okay it doesn't say fully man but surely that is implicit there in the verse otherwise it would be rather misleading for him to be described as the man Christ Jesus. In God's righteous ways it was also necessary for propitiation for our sins to be made by the Lord Jesus as a man in his sacrifice upon the cross. We have this stated in Hebrews chapter 2 in verses which we'll come back to so I'll just refer to them briefly now but it says in verse 17 in all things it behoved him to be made [00:14:06] like unto his brethren that he might be a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God to make reconciliation or propitiation as it should be for the sins of the people it behoved him. It was a necessity for the Lord Jesus to be made like unto us in order for propitiation for our sins to be made so it was very much necessary for the Lord Jesus to become man. The fact that the Lord Jesus became man also reveals to us something of the loving and gracious character of God in that God wanted to make himself known and make himself fully known to men and the best way to do that, a way which was even far superior to God speaking in time past through the prophets [00:15:06] was for God to speak in his son, to speak through his son, to send his son even in the likeness of flesh and sin so that God would be with men, God could be seen, God could be heard, God could be understood. Wonderful to see that God wanted this to come to pass so that he might be fully known by men. The Lord's manhood is also something which can provide encouragement for us in the difficulties of our Christian walk. Returning to the verses in Hebrews chapter 2 it says in verse 17 it behoved him to be made like unto his brethren that he might be a merciful and faithful [00:16:03] high priest in things pertaining to God and then verse 18 for in that he himself hath suffered being tempted he is able to succor them that are tempted. The Lord Jesus being man just as much as we are able is able to understand and give comfort and support when we are put through trials and difficulties because he went through the very same things as a man in the same condition as we were although again obviously very different in many ways but yet he went through these experiences and so he is able to help us as we go through them. So the Lord's manhood is a truth that is taught in many ways in Scripture but I think it's covered by this title son of man because the [00:17:02] literal meaning of those words son of man is one who is a man and the Lord Jesus could not have spoken of himself as the son of man if this were not true of him and the Lord Jesus in his life and in the words that he spoke didn't shy away from the fact that he was a man and he said who do men say that I the son of man am not who do men say that I the son of God am or I the king or many other titles that he could have used but who do men say that I am the son of man am and the Bible the gospel records make it clear that he experienced the frailties of the human condition just as much as we do he hungered as we read in Matthew chapter 4 and he had to sleep because he was tired in Mark chapter 4 and he sorrowed and wept in sad circumstances as we see an example [00:18:07] in John chapter 11 and the list could go on. Perhaps just the last thing I would say in respect of the Lord's manhood is that it reveals his condescension that he would come into our condition and experience all of these things and of course on top of this take our place in judgment and take our sins upon himself to bring us into blessing a wonderful thought and that the Lord Jesus would humble himself empty himself of all of the things that were rightfully his and take upon himself and the form of a man. This perhaps leads into one of the truths connected with the title son of man [00:19:07] as it's applied to the Lord Jesus and that is that this title refers to the way in which he humbled himself again if we look at Hebrews chapter 2 we get some helpful statements in connection

with this Hebrews chapter 2 as we probably well known well know that contains a quotation of Psalm 8 but also a bit of a divine exposition of the psalm and if we just read verses 6 to 9 we see there one has testified somewhere saying what is man that thou remember rememberest him or son of man that thou visitest him thou has made him some little inferior to the angels [00:20:04] thou has crowned him with glory and honor and has set him over the works of thy hands thou has subjected all things under his feet for in subjecting all things to him he has left nothing unsubjected to him but now we see not yet all things subjected to him but we see Jesus who was made some little inferior to angels on account of the suffering of death crowned with glory and honor so that by the grace of God he should taste death for everything if we follow through the verses we see that the one who that is referred to at the end of verse 6 the son of man is the one who in verse 7 is made some little inferior to the angels but then has been crowned with glory and honor and set over the works of God's hands all things subjected under his feet although we do not yet see that verse 9 who this person is is expressly stated for us there it is the Lord [00:21:09] Jesus but in terms of him humbling himself as the son of man that we have it stated in the 7 that he was made some little inferior to the angels and then verse 9 gives us the reason for this made some little inferior to angels on account of the suffering of death now there's no doubt that the angels served the Lord Jesus in his life we see one example of that in Matthew chapter 14 sorry Matthew chapter 4 after he had been tempted of the devil and as Hebrews chapter 1 tells us all the angels worshipped him at his birth but I think these things had to do with the fullness [00:22:05] of the person of the Lord Jesus and the fact that he was son of God when it comes to the position of men and angels we read in 2nd Peter chapter 2 that angels are greater than men in might and power we also read in Luke chapter 20 that angels do not die and from this perspective from the perspective of the order of things in creation and angels are therefore above men the Lord Jesus though wanted to save us from our condition wanted to deliver us from the fear of death and so he had to take a form where he was capable of dying and they're not subject to the sentence of death for [00:23:03] the reasons and that we have already noted and he was not physically descended from Adam and he was always sin apart but yet he took a form where he was where it was possible for him to die he became so that he could dismiss his spirit and so that through his death we would be delivered from the fear of death and so that he might taste death for everything becoming a man wasn't just an experience or an experiment for the Lord Jesus to see what it would be like to be like a part of his creation for a little while and he became man to suffer and to suffer death to lay down his life and he did this all for us a son of man in becoming man the Lord Jesus humbled himself greatly during his [00:24:12] life and he was also humble in his attitude and his interactions with men and that's something else that we see from the way in which the title the son of man is used particularly by the Lord Jesus himself one example of this is in Matthew chapter 8 and this is an encounter that the Lord Jesus had with a scribe Matthew chapter 8 verses 19 and 20 and the Lord Jesus has just been healing various people and then we read in verse 19 and a certain scribe came and said unto him master I will follow [00:25:02] thee with us however thou goest and Jesus saith to him saith unto him the foxes have holes and the birds of the air have nests but the Son of Man hath not where to lay his head the scribe in verse 19 verse 19 thought it would be a great thing and probably an easy thing as well to follow wherever he would go one who had this great power to heal people of their diseases one who perhaps he had some idea might be the promised Messiah the one who would come with healing in his wings but the Lord Jesus had not come in that character at that time if we think of what the Lord Jesus ought to have had in his life by rights he ought to have had a noble birth and not a birth [00:26:07] in a manger he ought to have enjoyed honor and wealth all of his life and seen people being obedient to him but in fact he came not demanding any of those things but came in entirely the opposite way in verse 20 and he says the Son of Man hath not where to lay his head not just that the Lord Jesus was poor but he didn't even have so much as a patch of ground that he could call his own where he could rest when he was weary and the Lord

Jesus took absolutely the lowest amongst man when he came here as the Son of Man the expression Son of Man also brings before us [00:27:08] the service of the Lord Jesus to men in his life and particularly during his three years of public ministry again the Lord Jesus did not come to receive the honor of men or to use his own words as we have been Matthew chapter 20 verse 28 and the Son of Man came not to be ministered unto but to minister and to give his life a ransom for many the Lord Jesus didn't come to be ministered unto he also didn't come to this earth simply for the purpose of going straight to the cross even if perhaps not wanting to speak irreverently but even if that might have been possible still [00:28:06] to bring about redemption the Lord Jesus also came to minister unto the needs of men and of course as it says at the end of the verse to give his life a ransom for many and there were these three years when the Lord Jesus was not thinking of himself not thinking of his own needs at all but displaying grace and truth to men and what better way was there for the love and grace of God to be demonstrated towards men and to be shown to be unlimited love and grace without any condition without any expectation of men doing anything to deserve it than having the Lord Jesus the Son of God among them as a man serving them diligently and without thinking of himself the [00:29:12] title Son of Man is also associated with the Lord's rejection by his earthly people the Jews but also his greater work following that towards all men in Matthew chapter 16 we have the question that the Lord Jesus asked his disciples in verse 13 whom do men say that I the Son of Man am if we take up the answer to the question as it's given in one of the other Gospels in Mark chapter 8 let's bring it up the connection that I want to make a little bit more clearly that we have in the second half of verse 29 of Mark chapter 8 Peter's answer thou art the Christ and then we [00:30:04] see that the Lord charged them that they should tell no man of him and he began to teach them that the Son of Man must suffer many things and be rejected of the elders and of the chief priests and scribes and be killed and after three days rise again the Lord Jesus was going to be rejected by his people and then in fact to be killed so he could not announce himself and he could not be announced by others as the Christ as God's anointed one that the one that the Old Testament Scriptures had told the Jews and to look for and rather he could only describe himself as one who had been rejected by his people and the Son of Man and going back to Matthew and to some earlier chapters of that gospel we see in chapter 12 of Matthew the Lord being rejected by his own and [00:31:07] then in chapter 13 we read about his new work as the sower sowing good seed in the field and the first two parables in Matthew chapter 13 referring to this and it being stated later in the chapter that the sower of the good seed is the Son of Man and the field is the world wonderful to see that when he was rejected by his own the Lord Jesus I'm sure it hurt him greatly and caused him much sorrow but it didn't cause him to react in in some petulant way but rather it's inspired him to start a new work of which we are the beneficiaries a work ministering grace to the [00:32:05] world at large including the nations of which we form a part but he did this as the Son of Man just mentioned two more things briefly as Son of Man the Lord Jesus is presented as the Savior of course the Lord Jesus is the Son of God is also presented as the object for the faith of men as we have in John chapter 3 verse 16 God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son whosoever believeth in him the only begotten Son of God should not perish but should have everlasting life the preceding verses though referred to the Lord Jesus as the Son of Man and in verses 14 and 15 of John chapter 3 we read and as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness even so must the [00:33:07] Son of Man be lifted up that whosoever believeth in him this is the Son of Man this time should not perish but have eternal life the Lord Jesus being lifted up there and that is a reference to the cross when he was physically lifted up from the earth but if we go back to numbers chapter 21 which is what the Lord Jesus is referring to here when he refers to Moses lifting up the serpent in the wilderness in verse 8 of that chapter we see that when the people looked at the serpent on the pole then they would live and the Son of Man lifted up is the object of faith for men and perhaps along similar lines in John chapter 6 verse 53 we have the words of the Lord Jesus [00:34:08] verily verily I say unto you except he eats the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood ye

have no life in you so the Lord Jesus is saying here that one must appropriate his death one must make it good for oneself in order to be saved but it is the death of the Son of Man that is referred to here and I just dwell on this because perhaps it illustrates the fact that God is not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance in that he has made the way of salvation very easy we're not required men are not required to have faith in some abstract or [00:35:03] some supernatural principles or things that we can't describe with human words or things that we as men and women living on this earth simply have no conception of and our salvation was accomplished and by a person and in a way which of course we can't enter into all of the details of it but which any of us can readily understand our faith is in a person the Lord Jesus and the Son of Man and our faith rests on his death the death of a man of course one who was also the Son of God the Lamb of God and all of these things but to be able to believe in a person and believe in him laying down his life for his friends I think that is a relatively easy thing [00:36:02] for men to do and it demonstrates one of the ways in which God desires that all men might be saved that he has made the way of salvation the person who is at the center of it all as well very easy to grasp. One final thing in terms of truths connected with the Lord Jesus as the Son of Man is the fact that he is the Son of Man and that is the way in which he referred to himself who do men say that I the Son of Man am and perhaps in the fact that the Lord Jesus consistently refers to himself as the Son of Man he is he's not drawing attention to him not trying to glorify himself of course but he is and perhaps there is a reminder there of the fact that he was unique in his person and in his life and in everything he did as hymn number 50 says all thou speaking of God the [00:37:12] Father didst air desire of man that we see in him and he was the perfect man. Now moving to some glories of the Lord Jesus as the Son of Man one of them we see in John chapter 13 verse 31 when the Lord Jesus is with his disciples Judas having just left the room to go out to betray him the Lord Jesus can then say to his own in verse 31 now is the Son of Man glorified and God is glorified in him. This verse is looking on to the work on the cross and the way that the words of the Lord [00:38:07] Jesus are recorded here it's as if that work has already taken place and is fully accomplished. This is a manner of expression that we see a number of times in John's gospel. Now when we consider the cross I think we need to have a right and proper and reverent balance of feelings because on the one hand the cross was the place where the Lord Jesus God's only begotten Son but begotten Son the perfect Lamb of God it's where he bore our sins where he was made sin for us where he endured such agony during those three hours of darkness. In that respect the cross is a very solemn thing to consider in some ways also an awful thing to think that the Lord Jesus went [00:39:07] through all of that there. It's also the place where he was made a curse as we have stated in Galatians where he was lifted up and made a spectacle for men and subject to their mockery. The list of those sorts of things goes on and when we think about the cross there must be sorrow in our hearts when we think of all of the untold things and that the Lord Jesus suffered there. But at the same time we can also sing of surveying the wondrous cross and as it says in the verse that we've read from John chapter 13 as the Lord Jesus himself said that the Son of Man was glorified there not glorified in an outward or visible way and very much the opposite but glorified in a moral way because it was the perfect and most perfect possible and the complete display of [00:40:08] the love of our Savior and every aspect of his character really that he should lay down his life for us for those who at that point in time were enemies of God for us who were alienated from God and all of those sorts of things he laid down his life for us and he bore our sins in his body his perfect body on the tree he suffered death that we might never know death it brought us into such wonderful blessing when we consider that side of things again we don't want to take away from the suffering and our reverent appreciation of that but there can also be amazement when we consider [00:41:05] what the Lord Jesus did for us praise and worship no doubt will flow from our hearts when we consider how the Lord Jesus the Son of Man was glorified at the cross the Lord Jesus as Son of Man also enjoys great glory now in heaven at God's right hand we see this in the verses that we've read

from Hebrews chapter 2 just returning to them briefly verse 7 after saying thou has made him some little inferior to the angels that says thou has crowned him with glory and honor and then verse 9 we see Jesus crowned with glory and honor and this is God's response to the work of the Lord [00:42:01] Jesus and all that he did upon the cross man awarded the cross to him but God was glorified in the Son of Man God has raised him up and set him at his right hand and crowned him with glory and honor already the Lord Jesus has abundant glory and honor at God's right hand I'm reluctant to say much more about this or to try and put it in my own words because I think I would just mess things up but we as the verse says we see Jesus there we can consider him and by faith we can look up and realize all that he enjoys now at God's right hand the place of nearness to God the place of honor the place where there are pleasures for evermore as a result of his work upon the [00:43:05] cross the Lord Jesus will also enjoy further glory in the future as the Son of Man we also see this referred to in Hebrews chapter 2 the end of verse 7 now thou has set him over the work over the works of thy hands thou hast subjected all things under his feet for in subjecting all things to him he has left nothing unsubject to him although as it says at the end of the verse but now we see not yet all things subjected to him this is really the purpose for which God created this earth and so that the Lord Jesus as the Son of Man should have dominion over it wasn't really created for Adam to have dominion over it and God even when he created the heavens and the earth and had the [00:44:03] Lord Jesus in view but the Lord Jesus will not just rule over this earth he will rule over all things this is a reference to his millennial reign it is literally all things and something which is also explained in Ephesians chapter 1 and 1st Corinthians 15 and those chapters don't refer to the Lord Jesus as the Son of Man but they take up the same truth it is literally all things except God of course that the Lord Jesus will reign over and when we consider the vastness of this universe and all created things in it really is amazing that one man will be capable of ruling over all of these things and doing it in a absolutely perfect and righteous way and [00:45:02] there's also being visibly witnessed by all things and there will be great glory for the Lord Jesus as the Son of Man in this future day. I'm reluctant in some ways to conclude by making some remarks which might be described as practical ones I say this for two reasons one it kind of feels a little bit perhaps demeaning to divine things to have to bring them down to our level of weakness and failure but secondly and perhaps more importantly any consideration of the Lord Jesus is inherently practical we shouldn't think that consideration of these sorts of things is not practical. John chapter 6 tells us that the Lord Jesus meditating upon the life of the Lord Jesus as a man on this earth is bread is our spiritual food and 2nd Corinthians chapter 3 tells us that [00:46:09] when we consider the Lord Jesus in glory we are changed in a moral way from glory to glory. Perhaps though I can just make two remarks which may be helpful the first is that when we consider the humility of the Lord Jesus as the Son of Man he sets the perfect example for us perhaps one that is very needful for us as well and think of his expression that the Son of Man came not to be ministered unto but to minister a good example for us there to not look for things to be done for us but to consider how we might be able to dedicate our lives to serving our brethren. The second and [00:47:03] final practical remark is one along the lines of encouraging us to consider these things further and perhaps especially when we consider our position compared to Daniel's position and going back to the verse that we read at the beginning of the meeting Daniel was a godly man and one who had this special revelation from God but his knowledge of the Son of Man was limited because all he had were two scriptures to go by Psalm 8 and one verse in Psalm 80 both of which present the Lord Jesus as the Son of Man but that was all his knowledge of the Son of Man and as a result when he had this revelation that's recorded in Daniel chapter 7 he didn't have a full understanding [00:48:02] of what it was and he could only see one who was like a Son of Man and by contrast we've been blessed greatly in particular we have the full revelation of the New Testament and also the help of the Holy Spirit to understand the things that are recorded in God's Word and it really places a responsibility upon us to look into these things to consider all of the truths concerning

the Lord Jesus that God has presented to us. It won't be an abstract study though as we do it I'm sure that our hearts will be warmed and that we will want to as a result express our great appreciation to the Lord Jesus for all that he is and for all that he has done. Could we finish with hymn 219? [00:49:02] 219 Lord what is man? It is he who died and all their nature glorified. Thy righteousness and grace displayed when he for sin atonement made.