

Daniel Series Part 17

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[0 : 00] I'm going to read the Bible in the Old Testament, and we have two readings, one in Genesis and one in Daniel. So, first of all, we're going to read in Genesis chapter 1 from verse 26 to 28.

Then we're also going to read chapter 3 of Genesis. Then having done that, we will read two verses in Daniel chapter 7, which will be the verses that we will be considering this morning as we continue our study of this chapter, indeed of the book, but particularly of chapter 7 at the moment. So, first of all, in Genesis chapter 1, the very beginning of the Bible, and reading from verse 26 that speaks of the creation of men and women by God.

Then God said, So God created man in His own image. In the image of God, He created him. Male and female, He created them. God blessed them and said to them, Be fruitful and increase in number. Fill the earth and subdue it. Rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air and over every living creature that moves on the ground.

Then we'll read chapter 3 of Genesis. Now the serpent was more crafty than any of the wild animals the Lord God had made. He said to the woman, Did God really say, You must not eat from any tree in the garden? The woman said to the serpent, We may eat fruit from the trees in the garden, but God did say, You must not eat fruit from the tree that is in the middle of the garden, and you must not touch it, or you will die. You will not surely die, the serpent said to the woman. For God knows that when you eat of it, your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil. When the woman saw that the fruit of the tree was good for food and pleasing to the eye, and also desirable for gaining wisdom, she took some and ate it. She also gave some to her husband who was with her, and he ate it. Then the eyes of both of them were opened, and they realized that they were naked. So they sewed fig leaves together and made coverings for themselves. Then the man and his wife heard the sound of the Lord God as he was walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and they hid from the Lord God among the trees of the garden.

But the Lord God called to the man, Where are you? He answered, I heard you in the garden, and I was afraid because I was naked, so I hid. And he said, Who told you that you were naked?

[3 : 05] Have you eaten from the tree from which I commanded you not to eat? The man said, The woman you put here with me, she gave me some fruit from the tree, and I ate it. Then the Lord God said to the woman, What is this you have done? The woman said, The serpent deceived me, and I ate. So the Lord God said to the serpent, Because you have done this, cursed are you above all the livestock and all the wild animals.

You will crawl on your belly, and you will eat dust all the days of your life. And I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and hers. He will crush your head, and you will strike his heel. To the woman he said, I will greatly increase your pains and childbearing. With pain you will give birth to children. Your desire will be for your husband, and he will rule over you. To Adam he said, Because you listened to your wife and ate from the tree about which I commanded you, you must not eat of it. Cursed is the ground because of you. Through painful toil you will eat of it all the days of your life. It will produce thorns and thistles for you, and you will eat the plants of the field. By the sweat of your brow you will eat your food, until you return to the ground, since from it you were taken. For dust you are, and to dust you will return. Adam named his wife Eve, because she would become the mother of all the living.

The Lord God made garments of skin for Adam and his wife and clothed them. And the Lord God said, The man has now become like one of us, knowing good and evil. He must not be allowed to reach out his hand and take also from the tree of life and eat and live forever. So the Lord God banished him from the garden of Eden to work the ground from which he had been taken. After he drove the man out, he placed on the east side of the garden of Eden cherubim, and a flaming sword

flashing back and forth to guard the way to the tree of life. And we'll also read two verses in Daniel. Daniel chapter 7.

Last Sunday morning we were thinking concerning the part of the vision that is recorded for us in this chapter that speaks of the Ancient of Days. And this morning we continue considering the vision, and our concern will be to think about the two verses that we're going to read now. So Daniel chapter 7, verse 13, on page 892 in the Church Bible. And we read, In my vision at night I looked, and there before me was one like a son of man, coming with the clouds of heaven. He approached the Ancient of Days and was led into his presence. He was given authority, glory, and sovereign power. All peoples, nations, and men of every language worshipped him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion that will not pass away, and his kingdom is one that will never be destroyed. [6 : 04] The Word of God. We're going to sing again, and we're going to sing in Psalm 68. Psalm 68, and we'll sing verses 1 to 6. It's on page 85 in our psalm books. Psalm 68, verses 1 to 6.

Notice as we sing these verses how the psalmist addresses God, or how he speaks concerning God, in verse 4. Sing praise to God. Sing to his name. Extol the one who rides the cloud, for he alone is named the Lord. With joy all praise to him. Accord. We'll notice some parallels between that language and some of what we read there in Daniel, just in a few moments. Psalm 68, verses 1 to 6. We'll stand to sing.

May God alive and live in sores, each step of power and good to fly.

As snow is low before the wind, so may your foes be blown from sight. As fire is melted by the fire, may live before God's growl ex-spy. But may the righteous, may God's help us all be glad. May the righteous, may the righteous, may the righteous, may the righteous and sing aloud. Sing praise to God, sing to his name.

The Lord is in the Lord, with joy and praise to Him and all.

[8 : 26] The Father to the Fatherless, of widows, stripes, search and beyond.

His God within His holy place, He gives now hope to the far off.

He leads the captives for the song, To revels' pattern with the heart.

Now, before we turn to think about the verses that we read in Daniel, let's bow our heads again in prayer. Our God, as we come and pray to You again this morning, we stand in grateful wonder at the God that You are.

Even as You are described in this psalm that we have sung, a God who is indeed exalted, high, the one who rides the cloud, the one who inhabits heaven, the one who is altogether righteous and powerful and glorious and majestic.

[9 : 47] And yet, the one who is also described as a father to the fatherless, of widows' rights, the champion. We stand in awe at such a God.

A God who is glorious and yet a God who is concerned for the likes of us. A God who is aware and sensitive to the needs and the pain and the suffering of the likes of us.

Of those who are marginalized and cast aside and thought of no value, perhaps even by ourselves and by others. But we thank You that You are a God who rules and governs, but a God who cares and loves and provides.

We thank You for this. We thank You that we are of those who have discovered and experienced You as such a God in our own lives.

We pray that that would indeed be so. That as we come and as we pray and as we sing praises, the words that we sing would be words that reflect our own experience and our own convictions.

[10 : 54] That it would be our own personal desire to recognize You and to praise You for who You are. And as we are reminded that You are such a God, so it encourages us to pray to You on behalf of this sin-sick world where so many suffer.

Where so many are victims of violence and injustice and oppression of one kind and another. And Lord, we do pray for those who are suffering even today.

We are conscious of those countries where there is a particular presence of violence and insecurity. And where many live, feeding for their lives, we think of the continuing violence in Syria.

The violence in Homs particularly, but also in other towns and cities in that country. We think of the violence of which we have heard in Afghanistan and Iraq just in these past few days.

And we pray for those who have suffered. We pray for those who have lost loved ones. We pray for those who mourn and who look into the future with a sense of desperation and hopelessness.

[12 : 04] In the light of what they have experienced and suffered even in these days. And we pray that You would draw near to such. And that You would prove Yourself to be a father to the fatherless of widows' rights.

The champion in those very real, earthy situations that are ongoing. Even as we gather in peace and tranquility here this morning.

Lord, we do pray for those who suffer in other ways. We think of those who suffer as a result of economic hardship. Folks who have lost their jobs. Folks who look into what lies ahead with great uncertainty and insecurity.

We think of countries that seem to be particularly affected. We hear much of Greece and of the crisis that there is there. And the many human victims that we don't know.

But we do pray for those. We pray for Your church. We pray for Your people. As they would seek to be a witness for and to Jesus Christ. In the midst of uncertain times.

[13 : 08] That circumstances such as these would serve to remind us of how vulnerable and fragile we are as human beings. We think ourselves autonomous.

We think ourselves powerful. We think ourselves so capable. And yet, so often circumstances beyond our control can, in a moment, change the circumstances we find ourselves in.

And help us to realize how much we depend on You. And we recognize that that is a good thing. Even though it can be a painful thing for us to experience.

Lord, we pray that You would be with us particularly this morning as we turn to Your Word. And as we would learn more of Your Son, Jesus. We thank You for Him.

We thank You for who He is. We thank You for all that He has done on our behalf. We thank You that He does occupy that place as a mediator between ourselves and God.

[14 : 10] The God-man. The one who truly belongs in heaven, but who truly belongs on earth also. The one who stands in the breach. The one who enables us to be reconciled to You.

The one in whose name we come even now as we pray, for we can come in no other name. And so we do ask that as we consider Jesus this morning, we would be not only impressed and intrigued, but that we would be brought to our knees in humble and joyful worship.

We recognize that for this to happen, we stand in need of the work of Your Holy Spirit in our midst, and indeed in each and every one of us. And we pray that He would indeed be working in such a way.

And these things we pray in Jesus' name. Amen. Disobeying God has consequences.

Our disobedience, my disobedience, your disobedience affects and hurts others. This is a simple, though no doubt by some contested, statement of observable fact that is nowhere better demonstrated than in the disobedience of our first parents, Adam and Eve.

[15 : 36] Their disobedience, often referred to as the fall, had consequences that reverberate to this day.

We could maybe summarize, not in an exhaustive way, but hopefully in a helpful way, we could summarize some of the consequences of the fall in the following way.

By the fall, the human race, men and women were dragged down. In the fall, there was a loss of dignity.

Men and women became that which they were not intended to be. They lost the place of honor that they had been granted.

They were dragged down. It was a loss of dignity. But also, as we read in Genesis, they were driven out. Driven out of the garden. Driven out of the near presence of God.

[16 : 36] We might call it a loss of friendship. A loss of friendship with God, our loving Creator. Dragged down. Driven out, but also deluded.

There is, in a sense, a loss of sanity. Now, that is evidenced in many ways, but principally in our delusion of autonomy, something that continues to afflict us.

We think we're in charge. We think that we can do as we please. We think that we don't need to answer to anybody, and certainly not to God. And that is an evidence of delusion, a loss of sanity. And that is a consequence of the fall. Dragged down. Driven out. And deluded. Now, you might be thinking, I hope some of you are, what has all this got to do with Daniel's vision of one like the Son of Man?

Well, if you bear with me, we'll get to that. But do try and retain in your mind these foundational truths concerning fallen humanity. Dragged down from the place that God intended for us.

[17 : 46] Driven out from the garden, from the presence, the friendly presence of God and deluded. And now, as we bear these truths in mind, let's read again the verses in Daniel chapter 7, verses 13 and 14, and then proceed to consider what they teach us.

Daniel chapter 7 and verse 13. Daniel continues to record for us this vision that he has been given by God. And we read, In my vision at night I looked, and there before me was one like a Son of Man, coming with the clouds of heaven.

He approached the Ancient of Days, who we identified last week as a name for God, and was led into his presence. He was given authority, glory, and sovereign power.

All peoples, nations, and men of every language worshipped him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion that will not pass away. And his kingdom is one that will never be destroyed.

In Daniel's vision there appears one like a Son of Man. And he is the one who will occupy our attention this morning.

[19 : 03] And we want to answer the following questions concerning this character who appears in Daniel's vision. The first question that we want to pose and answer is this, What is it that Daniel saw?

What did Daniel see? Then we want to move on and ask and answer the question, Who is it that Daniel saw? And then thirdly, What is he doing?

Or what is his mission? This one who appears in the vision. What is he doing? What is the mission that he has been given? So we think, first of all, of what it was that Daniel saw and records for us here in this chapter.

And in answering this question, we want to limit ourselves to what Daniel actually saw and describes for us without bringing into consideration at this point other relevant biblical material that was not available to Daniel.

Now, really what I'm trying to say is that there is a danger. Maybe a danger isn't the right word. It's, in a sense, natural and understandable that when we come to a passage such as this, we unwittingly and maybe unconsciously bring to it our own preconceived ideas and notions as to what is being said and what is being described.

[20 : 27] And that's something that's something that's very difficult not to do. In and of itself, it's not wrong to do it. It's the way things are. We can't divest ourselves of previous knowledge or of pre-existent opinions.

But what we want to try and do at the beginning is to see what Daniel saw on his terms, as it were, and to try and imagine what is it that Daniel means by using the language that he uses.

I hope that is clear. Now, there are two parts to what Daniel saw and describes. We have, first of all, the one who appears and also the manner of his appearance or entrance.

And we also have described for us what he has given by the Ancient of Days. We want to think of these two parts of what Daniel saw. And first of all, then, the one who appears and the manner of his entrance.

Daniel describes the one who appears as one like a son of man. Then in verse 13, I looked, and there before me was one like a son of man.

[21 : 39] Now, what does Daniel understand by the language that he uses to describe what he sees? Well, the phrase that he uses, the important phrase, the central phrase, really, a son of man, is a Hebrew idiom that is essentially equivalent to saying a man.

To illustrate that from the Psalms, we are familiar with Psalm 8 and in verse 4, how the psalmist poses this question, What is man that you are mindful of him, and the son of man that you care for him?

Now, there it's very clear that the word man and the phrase son of man are being used synonymously. So, son of man is simply a way of speaking, an idiomatic way of saying man or a human being.

If anything, the phrase son of man, in distinction to simply man, serves to lay particular stress on the humanity of the one described.

Now, this ties in with the manner in which the phrase son of man is often used in the Bible to highlight the contrast between God the Creator and man the creature.

[23 : 04] So, for example, in Psalm 146 that we read at the beginning of the service, in verses 3 and 4 we read, Put not your trust in princes, in a son of man, in whom there is no salvation.

Interestingly, in the Sing Psalms version, when it is put to verse, the phrase used is mortal man instead of son of man, which really illustrates what is being suggested, that the term is being used to emphasize the humanity, in this case of ourselves.

When his breath departs, he returns to the earth. On that very day, his plans perish. Indeed, Daniel himself is addressed in this way in the following chapter, in chapter 8 and in verse 17, we read, As he came near the place where I was standing, I was terrified and fell prostrate.

Son of man, he said to me, understand that the vision concerns the time of the end. So, in summary, when Daniel describes the one he sees as a son of man, he is affirming that the one revealed to him is, as far as he can tell and describe, a man, a real man, a real human being. But why does he say one like a son of man? For that is the language that we have. Then in verse 13, I looked, and there before me was one like a son of man.

[24 : 38] Now, this little word, like, has been the subject of much speculation. But I wonder if we do not run the risk of trying to be too clever or of overanalyzing the language that Daniel is using.

It seems to me, and you are at liberty, of course, to come to different conclusions, but it seems to me that the language that Daniel is using is simply the language of observation.

Let me explain what I mean by that when I say that when Daniel speaks that the one he saw was like the son of man, he's using the language of observation. And I'll explain in the following way. Imagine if Daniel was telling you about the vision that he has had. And he's telling you about it, and he reports. He says, well, you know, then in my vision, another character appeared before the Ancient of Days.

And you interrupt Daniel, and you say to him, Daniel, yes, okay, so this other character appeared. And what was he like? What did he look like? Well, Daniel would answer you, he looked like a son of man.

[25 : 49] He simply described what he saw. This is what he saw. In the vision, there was one who appeared, and he was like a son of man. What did he look like? He looked like a man. Just as previously, he had seen a beast that looked like a lion, and he'd seen a leopard, or a beast that looked like a leopard, and so on and so forth.

I don't think, really, we need to imagine there's some deep significance in this language. Daniel is simply describing what he saw. That is what he looked like.

He looked like a man, a real flesh-and-blood man. But the vision also involves the entrance of the Son of Man into the presence of the Ancient of Days, who we've already identified last week as being God himself.

But how does he come? How is the entrance of this personage the Son of Man described? Well, we're told in the passage that he emerged coming with the clouds of heaven.

Coming with the clouds of heaven. Now, this is a grand entrance, but more importantly, it is an entrance associated in the Old Testament, and undoubtedly in the mind of Daniel with the presence and appearance of God.

[27 : 05] It takes us back to the appearance of God on Mount Sinai, when he appeared to Moses in a dense cloud. We read of that in Exodus chapter 19. It takes us back to the cloud that led the Israelites in the desert as they journeyed to the Promised Land, again, often spoken of in Exodus.

It reminds us of the words of the psalmist that we sang just a moment ago in Psalm 68. Sing to God. Sing praise to His name.

Extol Him who rides on the clouds. Is it any wonder that Daniel, there in verse 15, describes himself as disturbed?

How can this be? The one he sees in his vision comes on the clouds of heaven as one who is divine, and yet he is like a son of man.

You see, for Daniel, this is an almost impossible marriage. If he is God, so be it. And if he is a man, so be it. But he seems to be both at one and the same time.

[28 : 14] But Daniel also sees what he is given. We read there in the verse, or in verse 14, the one who enters into the presence of the ancients of days, he was given.

And what is he given? Well, he is given authority, glory, and sovereign power. He is given a kingdom that is described as eternal, and a kingdom that we are told cannot be destroyed.

So, this personage who appears is a king, a king whose kingdom is described in terms that recall for us, and indeed for Daniel, the promises of God concerning a messianic king in the line of David.

But there is a final telling detail in what Daniel sees and describes for us. We are told that all of these kingdoms and languages and nations, what do they do, all of these men?

What do they do? Well, they worshipped him. All peoples, nations, and men of every language worshipped him. For Daniel, this could mean only one thing, that he is God.

[29 : 31] But only God is worthy of worship. As God himself declares on numerous occasions, but we think especially of the words recorded for us by the prophet Isaiah, I am the Lord, that is my name.

I will not give my glory to another, and yet here, that is precisely what he is doing. He is giving glory to the one who has appeared before him. So, as we summarize this first part of our consideration of these verses, what did Daniel see?

In summary, we can say this, that Daniel saw, first of all, one who is distinct from God. You see, the Ancient of Days and the Son of Man are clearly distinct persons.

They're both in the same room at the same time. They are two distinct persons. The Ancient of Days gives the Son of Man something. There is an interchange. There's a relationship.

Two distinct persons is what Daniel sees. He also sees, or in summary of what he sees, he sees that the one who has appeared before the Ancient of Days is a man.

[30 : 39] Or at the very least, he appears to be a man. And he sees also one who is God. He is coming in the clouds of heaven, and he is worshipped by all people.

I imagine, in as much as we can speculate, but I imagine that the burning question that troubled and disturbed Daniel wasn't so much these horrendous beasts, disturbing as they were, but this that he was seeing.

This is what caused him the greatest disturbance. Who is this God-man? And it is to this question that we now turn, the second question that I had anticipated at the beginning.

So we have considered, what is it that Daniel saw? And in as much as we have been able, trying to do so on his terms, on the basis of what he would have known at that point, as he is made to participate in this vision.

But the second question is this, who is it that Daniel saw? And we'll answer this question much more briefly, in order to give ourselves a little more time for the final question.

[31 : 56] And we're able to answer the question briefly, is because in answering the question, we limit ourselves quite unapologetically to the testimony of Jesus himself in the Gospels.

The title Son of Man was far and away the preferred title that Jesus used to describe himself. We find it used by Jesus on roughly 80 occasions.

And on a number of these occasions, the allusion to Daniel's vision is unmistakable. Let me just highlight three occasions that these are not all the occasions, but they are three representative occasions where Jesus uses the language of Son of Man in a way that alludes so clearly to Daniel's vision and to the one who Daniel sees in his vision.

We begin in Matthew chapter 19 and verse 28. Matthew chapter 19 and verse 28.

Jesus said to them, he's speaking to his disciples, I tell you the truth, at the renewal of all things, when the Son of Man sits on his glorious throne, you who have followed me will also sit on twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel.

[33 : 18] Moving on to Mark chapter 13, where it becomes even more explicit, the allusion to Daniel's vision. In Mark chapter 13 and in verse 26.

Before we read verse 26, and we have to do this rather fleetingly and maybe not do it justice, but notice that in verse 5 of chapter 13, Jesus introduces what he is going on to say, making it clear that he's speaking about himself.

Notice in verse 5, Jesus said to them, Watch out that no one deceives you. Many will come in my name, claiming I am he and will deceive many. And then he goes on.

And then we come to verse 26, and we read, And then one further reference also in Mark's gospel, just turning a couple of pages to Mark chapter 14, and in verse 62.

Mark chapter 14 and verse 62. This is in the context of Jesus before the Sanhedrin, and he is responding to the high priest who has asked him, Are you the Christ, the Son of the Blessed One?

[34 : 37] And Jesus replies in this way, I am, said Jesus, And you will see the Son of Man sitting on the right hand of the Mighty One and coming on the clouds of heaven.

Why did Jesus favor this title, Son of Man? Well, this title allowed him, in a, we might say, discrete manner, and almost in a cryptic manner, to combine the two principal truths concerning his identity,

namely, that he was fully man.

The idiom, as we've already noted, is an idiom that highlights the humanity of the one so described. He was fully man, but also that he was fully God, something that only becomes apparent as we see the allusions to Daniel's vision.

And this, of course, was finally picked up on, not by his disciples, but by his enemies. In that very passage that we read in Mark chapter 14, what is it that the high priest goes on to say?

When Jesus identifies himself as the one in Daniel's vision, as the one who is sitting at the right hand of the Mighty One and coming in the clouds of heaven, what does the high priest say?

[35 : 57] What does he do and say? The high priest tore his clothes. Why do we need any more witnesses? He asked, You have heard the blasphemy. What do you think? So, who is the one like a son of man in Daniel's vision?

Well, Jesus provides us with a clear and unequivocal answer. They are the words that he himself expresses to the high priest. I am.

I am. So, we have considered what Daniel saw and the identity of the one he saw, and there remains one final question.

What is he doing? The Son of Man, what is he doing? What is his mission? Now, before we answer the question, just remind ourselves of the human condition or plight following the fall.

We touched on that at the very beginning, and we remind ourselves. Consequences of the fall, we were dragged down from the place that God intended for us. We were driven out from fellowship and friendship with God.

[37 : 05] We were deluded as to who we are and our own importance. Now, Jesus, and now when we speak of the one in the vision, we'll speak of him as Jesus, having already identified him as Jesus.

Jesus is presented in the vision as the one who will redeem fallen humanity. His mission is to redeem or save, and in the vision, we are granted some insight.

It is not, nor is it intended to be an exhaustive insight, but we are given some insight into three aspects of that redemptive work that correspond to the three aspects of our plight.

We find that Jesus is presented in the vision as the one who restores, the one who reconciles, and the one who rules. If we think of each of these in turn.

Jesus restores. The Son of Man is presented in contrast to the kings of this world that were the subject of the first part of the vision.

[38 : 18] The Son of Man is presented as exemplifying humanity as God intended. He is the Son of Man. He is the archetypal man.

He is the perfect man. He is man restored. Or to use Paul's language, He is the second Adam. Nebuchadnezzar, Darius, Cyrus, Alexander the Great, and the many Caesars, spoken of in the first part of the vision, they represent fallen man.

They were men. They were sons of men. But sons of men dragged down. And if not devoid, largely bereft of the dignity originally granted to Adam in his unfallen state.

It is important to stress, not devoid of, but largely bereft of that dignity granted to Adam. But the one in the vision, Jesus Christ is man restored.

He is man as man was intended to be. But also take note, and this is very important, He is not man restored in glorious isolation, only to be admired from afar.

[39 : 36] Rather, just as Adam, as our representative head, dragged us down with him at the fall, so Jesus exalts and restores us to a place of restored dignity in him.

This is central to God's redemptive purpose, to grant his people, to grant the saints a new status and dignity in Christ, in union with Christ.

But we can explore a little further and ask, are we simply to be returned to our pristine state in Eden? Does the restoration of men and women only involve us becoming again like Adam before the fall?

Is this what's going on? Much more is going on. God's purpose for us is higher and greater. Not that we would be like Adam, but that we would be like Jesus.

You see, it's a much greater purpose. What God is doing isn't simply saying, well, what a mess. In Jesus, I'm going to sort out the mess and we can start again where we were at the beginning. No, the purpose is higher and greater.

[40 : 53] Not that we would be like Adam, but that we would be like Jesus. Think of what Paul says as he writes to the Corinthians in his second letter, in chapter 3 and verse 18, and we who with unveiled faces all reflect the Lord's glory are being transformed into his likeness, the likeness of Jesus with ever-increasing glory which comes from the Lord who is the Spirit.

This restoration not only involves an increasing moral or ethical Christ-like purity, but also a place of shared authority or reign with Christ.

As Adam enjoyed authority and dominion over creation, certainly over the earth where he was placed, so the saints of God restored humanity will enjoy eternal dominion with Christ.

That is something that's alluded to by Jesus Himself in one of the references that we noted where Jesus uses the language of Son of Man alluding to Daniel's vision.

In Matthew chapter 19, Jesus said to them, I tell you the truth, at the renewal of all things, when the Son of Man sits on His glorious throne, you who have followed Me will also sit on twelve thrones.

[42 : 17] We think of the language of Paul as he writes to the Ephesians. And he speaks of all Christians, and he says, and God raised us up with Christ and seated us with Him in the heavenly realms in Christ Jesus.

So the Son of Man, what is He doing? What's His mission? Well, His mission is a redemptive mission, and one element of that redemptive mission is to restore. But there's another element of that mission that is touched on, or at the very least hinted at, in Daniel's vision, and that is that Jesus reconciles.

With the fall, we were driven out of the garden and suffered the loss of friendship with God. But Jesus, the Son of Man, reconciles. This aspect of His mission, of His redemptive work, is evidenced in the vision in the manner He is portrayed as both truly man and truly God.

and as such, He is perfectly and uniquely suited and equipped to serve as a mediator between God and man, between men who have been driven out of the garden, who have lost friendship with God, who stand in need of one who would stand in the breach, who would reconcile the warring parties. Here is one uniquely placed to do so. We have lost fellowship. We have lost friendship with God. God is distant and unreachable.

[43 : 57] How can we as sinners approach the Ancient of Days in all His purity as we see in the vision? How can we approach His fiery throne and not be consumed?

Well, we can't. But I know a man who can. I know a man who can. The Son of Man can. The Son of Man can approach the Ancient of Days on our behalf.

The Son of Man can stand before Him and intercede for us. He stands in the breach, the One who truly belongs in Heaven and the One who truly belongs on Earth.

He reconciles us to God. Now, Daniel's vision does not broach the manner in which Jesus reconciles us to God.

We know that He does so by His atoning death in our place at Calvary. The vision does not enter into that aspect. But the vision does present Jesus as our mediator and thus the One who can be our reconciler.

[45 : 03] by His work friendship is restored with God. A friendship or intimacy that goes beyond that enjoyed by Adam. Again, you see, it's not just that we're being taken back to Eden.

Adam, we are told, walked with God in the garden and it's a beautiful picture of friendship. But for the believer today, it's not just that we can walk with God, but that God makes His permanent dwelling within us by His Spirit.

There is greater intimacy than what Adam and Eve enjoyed even in their unfallen states. So Jesus restores, Jesus reconciles, but in the vision there is one further element of His redemptive work that is touched on and that is that Jesus rules.

With the fall we became deluded and suffered in a measure a loss of sanity. We imagine ourselves, men and women, we imagine ourselves to be in charge and autonomous.

Nebuchadnezzar serves to vividly illustrate this delusion, this delusion of grandeur, this God complex that He was afflicted by and responsible for.

[46 : 24] But though He was maybe in a measure that would not be true of us, almost to the point of ridicule, nonetheless, that basic problem is at the heart of our problem.

We imagine ourselves to be in charge, to be autonomous. We don't need to answer to God, we don't need to obey God, we don't need to bow down before God. But in the vision, the one who is presented is the one who is granted kingly authority.

Jesus is the promised and eternal messianic king. Jesus is the one before whom all will bow and before whom the saints will bow joyfully in grateful adoration, our sanity restored.

No longer deluded by a sense of our own self-importance and supposed autonomy. Again, remember Nebuchadnezzar. Remember the very language that he uses in chapter 4.

We thought about it a few weeks ago. Having been humiliated and brought down to the level of a beast. But then what happens? In Daniel chapter 4 and verse 34 we read what Nebuchadnezzar himself declares.

[47 : 36] I, Nebuchadnezzar, raised my eyes towards heaven and my sanity was restored. Then I praised the Most High.

I honored and glorified Him who lives forever. Are we brought back to where Adam was as one who gladly bowed before his Creator?

Yes, and more. For we bow before God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit not only as our Creator and King but also as our Redeemer.

Something that Adam certainly did not do in his unfallen estate. We read last week of the revelation of John recorded for us in the fourth chapter of that book.

And there we read of the elders in John's vision. And with them we gladly fall down from the thrones we have been granted as those redeemed and restored to a place of dignity and authority.

[48 : 40] We fall down from them and we worship Him who lives forever and ever. You are worthy, our Lord and God, to receive glory and honor and power for you created all things and by your will they were created and have their being.

And we sing with the heavenly choir to Him who sits on the throne and to the Lamb be praise and honor and glory and power forever and ever.

What about you? Do you gladly bow?

Do you gladly bow down before the Son of Man? Do you sing His praises with your lips and with your life?

For He is worthy. He is worthy. He is worthy. Let us pray. Heavenly Father, we would indeed come down and bow down before You.

[49 : 50] We would bow down before Your Son, Jesus. We thank You for who He is and we thank You for what He has done and we thank You for what He continues to do.

For we come to You in the only way we can come. We come in His name resting on His merits, and on His finished work on our behalf. We pray that as we have been granted in Your Word a vision of Jesus that we would indeed stand in awe and in wonder but that we would not only be impressed but that rather we would be brought to our knees and be brought to that place of worship and service that extends beyond a gathering such as this to the very lives that we live.

We pray that by Your Spirit the truth that we have been considering would be brought to bear upon us even as we leave and even as we go about our business in what remains of this day and in the days ahead.

Speak to us, we pray, and we pray in Jesus' name. Amen.