

*"So in Jesus we get this glimpse of what humanity could have been and should have been and what they could have been in co-ruling with God, but also we get an invitation to be born again through Jesus and to become part of this humanity and to co-rule with him, to reign with him."*

Welcome to the Radically Christian Bible Study Podcast. I'm Travis Pauley, and here we have one goal: Learn to love like Jesus. Each week I visit with Wes McAdams, minister and author, and together we explore biblical passages and topics. I hope you enjoy this first part of our study on the Son of Man.

TRAVIS: All right. Well, we are back, Wes.

WES: Yeah. I'm excited about today's episode because I am at your mercy. Usually we start off these things -- in the past, we've started off by me throwing something at you, saying, "Hey, Travis what do you think about this?"

TRAVIS: I know. You get to be the guinea pig today.

WES: And today I am. I have no idea -- I have a general idea. I shouldn't say I have no idea. I do have a general idea of what we're going to talk about, but I really don't know the specifics of it, but I trust you implicitly, and so...

TRAVIS: Well, that's very nice.

WES: Now I do. We'll see if I still trust you after you --

TRAVIS: Let's get through my questions first.

WES: Yeah, exactly, after you give me all your questions.

TRAVIS: But, yeah, we talked about talking about this topic of Jesus being the Son of Man, and it's something that you preached on --

WES: Yeah, a whole series.

TRAVIS: -- here at McDermott not too long ago, and it really got me thinking. And so I'll kick it off by saying, why do you think it's important for us to understand Jesus' status as the Son of Man?

WES: Yeah. I think that that phrase, which really just means human, "Son of Man," it was used by Jesus a lot. In fact, that's the term he used most often about himself. He didn't -- his title -- he didn't use the term "Messiah" about himself often, if at all. He affirmed that he was the Messiah, but he didn't refer to himself as the Messiah. He referred to himself as the Son of Man. So even if nothing else, that itself says that it's important, the fact that that was the phrase that Jesus used about himself. When he describes who he is and what he's doing and what he's up to as the Messiah, he ties it to this idea of the Son of Man, which has roots in both Daniel and in the Psalms, and so it's superimportant, for that reason, to understand what was Jesus saying about himself during his earthly ministry, but I also think it's incredibly important -- and this was part of what I explored in the series and how I kicked it off -- for us to understand that Jesus isn't -- it's not that Jesus WAS the Son of Man, but that he IS the Son of Man, that Jesus' Son of Man role, his Son of Man title and status isn't something that ended when he ascended. We were joking before we started recording that I've got --

TRAVIS: You've got some rhymes today.

WES: I've got some rhymes today. But it didn't end when he ascended,

and he continues to be, to this moment, and will forever be the Son of Man. He will continue to be human. Now, he is human -- I like to say human 2.0. You know, he is resurrected human, he is immortal human, and yes, he is also divine. And I always want to emphasize that because I'm afraid when we say Jesus is human that somebody might think, well, are you saying Jesus isn't God? Well, no, Jesus is God and he is human. That was true during his earthly ministry and it is true today, that Jesus is both fully divine and fully human, and that isn't something that ended when he ascended to the right hand of the Father. He continues to be both fully divine and fully human. And we'll get into, I'm sure, you know, all of the implications of that truth and why that truth is so important.

But yeah, it's something I don't think we talk enough about or understand. Most Christians I've talked to -- and when I think back to my own understanding, I assumed -- I always assumed that Jesus stopped being human when he ascended to the Father's right hand, that that was -- and we even talk about his incarnation in the past tense. We tend to say "when he was human" and he still is human.

TRAVIS: Yeah, because I think it brings up -- when you say he's still human, I think of the picture given at the end of his ministry when he ascends to heaven, and I think, oh, so it wasn't just a picture of him at the right hand of the Father that they got and then that was over. I don't know why my mind would stop there, but he is someplace with the Father --

WES: Yeah, right.

TRAVIS: -- human in his new body, the resurrected body.

WES: Right. The same body that ascended -- that the apostles watched ascend didn't like somehow transform in its ascension. You know, his body that ate food with the apostles, that they touched, that he was -- and proved himself not to be a ghost, not to be a spirit, but to be a resurrected human being transformed in the sense that he is immortal and he has the human body 2.0, the new version of the human body, but he is as much human today as he was on the day that he ascended.

In fact, the Daniel 7 reference to Son of Man, which is primarily the place from which Jesus is using that language, is all about the ascension. I mean, that's what the prophecy is about. Daniel sees this vision of one who is a Son of Man, who is a human being, who ascends to the Father's right hand, who ascends to the throne to reign with the Ancient of Days, and he reigns there as the Son of Man. The Son of Man image isn't of someone coming down from heaven to Earth; it is one who reigns from the Earth, a human who represents humanity and who goes from being here with us to the Father's right hand.

So his reign really begins at the ascension, and so everything Jesus says -- everything Jesus says during his years of ministry about the Son of Man's reign, yes, he's talking about during his earthly ministry to some extent, but he's primarily talking about -- the primary application of everything he says about the Son of Man should be applied to his reign at the Father's right hand. So when he says things like, "The Son of Man has the authority to forgive sins," you know, I mean, yes, he's saying he has the authority right then, because he does, and he says, "Take up your mat and walk," or, "What's easier, to say that or to say your sins are

forgiven?" Yes, he's talking about his authority right then, but he's also talking about his authority that he will have on the Earth when he's in heaven. When he's in heaven reigning at the right hand of the Ancient of Days, he has all authority in heaven and on Earth. That's what he says before he ascends to the Father's right hand, that "All authority in heaven and on Earth has been given to me." And so the authority that the Son of Man had during Jesus' earthly ministry he continues to have as the one who reigns at the Father's right hand.

TRAVIS: Do you think it's significant that all -- I was just thinking about that phrase -- all authority is given to him. Do you think it's significant that that's given to -- again, to your point, the Son of Man because that's what he's most often called?

WES: Yes. Oh, absolutely.

TRAVIS: A human.

WES: Right. And this goes to the idea from Psalm 8, and that's really where we start to understand what it means for humanity, because it's not just -- I mean, in one sense it is a Son of Man so it's a particular human being in the case of Jesus, but -- or in the case of Daniel 7 and the vision, but in Psalm 8 -- I'll just read it. Let's see. So he says, verse 3 -- we'll start in verse 3, so this is Psalm 8:3: "When I look at your heavens" -- the psalmist says, "When I look at your heavens, the work of your fingers, the moon and the stars which you've set in place, what is man that you are mindful of him..." Now, it's said singularly, but if you read it, I mean, it doesn't take a Hebrew scholar to understand that he's using the singular to represent the whole of humanity. "What is man that you

are mindful of him?" He's not talking about a particular human; he's talking about all humanity. What is -- what is humanity that you are mindful of him? And then he uses this phrase, "...and the Son of Man that you care for him?" And, again, he's not talking about a singular human; he's talking about all of humanity. He's saying, when I look at how big and how awesome and how magnificent the heavens are and I realize how big the creator of all of those things must be, and then I look at me and all of us, we're like little ants, you know, down here and you're mindful of us. But then he says just some amazing things that we have to wrap our mind around.

He says, "Yet you've made him" -- again, "him" referring to all humanity -- "You've made humanity a little lower than the heavenly beings" -- the Hebrew word there is Elohim -- "and crowned him with glory and honor." So you've made humanity, for a while, lower than the heavenly beings, the Elohim, God or angels or heavenly beings -- there's a whole debate around that. But he says, "and you crowned him" -- again, "him" not just referring to Jesus. We've got to be really careful we don't read this and we just read Jesus. The psalmist is saying, "You have crowned humanity with glory and honor. You've given him" -- given humanity -- so, again, when you read the "him," you have to poetically interpret it as "them." "You have given them dominion over the works of your hands. You've put all things under his feet." Again, "his" being humanity's feet -- "all things under their feet, all sheep and oxen and also the beasts of the field, the birds of the heavens, and the fish of the sea, whatever passes along the paths of the seas. Oh, Lord, our Lord,

how majestic is your name in all the Earth."

So this psalm is really just absolutely phenomenal. The psalmist is saying that all authority and dominion has been given to humanity, that we have been crowned with honor and glory and dominion. And then David -- or Daniel, rather, sees this one particular human being crowned with glory and honor and being given dominion, and Jesus says, "As the Son of Man, I'm being given glory and honor and dominion. I'm ruling and have all authority." So, you know, I mean, I guess you could ask a couple different things. Like, well, is Jesus the only one of all humanity that gets that rulership? Because, obviously, it's important that he's ruling as a human because he's not fulfilling this psalm --

TRAVIS: Right.

WES: -- and the vision of this psalm or the vision of Daniel if he's ruling as deity. That wouldn't be special or spectacular for us to say you've given yourself or given your son all this glory and honor and dominion and you've crowned him and made him a ruler. That's not -- that's not what the psalmist is saying. That's not spectacular. What's spectacular is God choosing to give rulership to humans, to humanity. And, again, the psalmist isn't describing one particular human; he's describing all humans.

And, really, it's hard to have this conversation without even getting into what the Hebrew writer says because the Hebrew writer taps into this psalm and he says, but that's not what we see. We don't see all of creation subjected to humanity. We don't see us being crowned with glory and honor and dominion. But what we do see is

Jesus, and he's this forerunner. He's the one who has received the glory and honor and dominion first.

And so it's so important for us to understand this Son of Man language because we have to understand that Jesus is our older brother who has gone before us as our forerunner, and because of his faithfulness to God, because of his self-giving love, because of his fulfillment of the covenant, he has received glory and honor and dominion ahead of the rest of his brothers and sisters, his new humanity, and that Jesus not only gives us this picture of, oh, that's what humans are supposed to be. Humans are supposed to be co-rulers with God; they're supposed to rule and reign with God. More than just giving us a glimpse of that -- he does. He gives us a glimpse of that. It's like, wow, that's what Adam could have been had Adam chosen to be faithful to the covenant that God made with him, faithful to his relationship with God. That's what Adam -- "Adam" means man so "Son of Man" means the son of Adam. So Adam could have been that and he wasn't, so in Jesus we get this glimpse of what humanity could have been and should have been and what they could have been in co-ruling with God. But also we get an invitation to be born again through Jesus and to become part of this humanity and to co-rule with him, to reign with him. So everything that he has, his rulership, will be given to us. His glory -- and glory doesn't just mean like brightness; it means -- it means authority. It means weight, like a crown. Like if a king has a crown on his head, you could say that's his glory. It represents his authority to rule. And Paul says in Romans that if we suffer with Jesus, if we take up our cross and

we follow Jesus, if we become the kind of human that Jesus is -- not just was, but is -- if we become that kind of human, then we will also reign with him. We will also be glorified with him. There's a sense in which we're already glorified with him and there's also a sense in which, on the day of his return, on the day of his appearing, we will be glorified with him.

So yeah, yeah, it's important that we recognize that his rulership, his reign and his glory, go hand in hand with his status as a human being, because when he was the preincarnate word, when he -- before he was human, as the word of God, the logos, the logos of God -- before he took on flesh, he had glory with God, and he says that. He says that -- he prays, in John, that God glorify him with the same glory that he had with the Father before, before creation. And so Jesus ruled -- I say Jesus -- the second person of the Godhead, the logos of God, ruled with God before his incarnation, before he became a human. He shared glory with the Father beforehand. Now he shares glory with the Father as a human. That's what's different after the incarnation than before the incarnation.

Before the incarnation, the second person of the Godhead ruled with the Father and shared that glory but did so purely as deity, as the word who was with God and was God. But now he shares that glory with God as our representative, as a human being, which means humanity has a seat at the table because now we have a human who has been glorified with the Father, a human that sits in the divine courts. I don't know why I'm clapping my hands while I'm saying all this. I'm just

getting excited.

So yes, I think, going back to your question, it is important for us to understand that his rule and reign go hand in hand with his humanity, his perpetual humanity.

*One of the biggest problems facing Christians today is online pornography. One study says that 68 percent of church-going men and over 50 percent of ministers view porn on a regular basis. Of young Christian adults between the ages of 18 and 24, 76 percent actively search for porn. That's why I want to recommend Covenant Eyes. Their online accountability program helps those who are struggling with pornography and it also helps address the issue before it becomes a problem. So visit [radicallychristian.com/covenanteyes](http://radicallychristian.com/covenanteyes) to find out more.*

*Okay. Now back to the Bible study.*

TRAVIS: One of the things you made me think of when you were talking about, you know, Jesus sort of being the new Adam --

WES: Yes.

TRAVIS: -- the perfected Adam, is just the concept of story because you think about the gap between Adam and Jesus coming to Earth, and then that raises the question of where are we at in the story. And there's a rule -- and it's going to be the rule according to Travis, but there's a story rule.

WES: I like that. Let's write that down, "the rule according to Travis."

TRAVIS: Oh, I'm keeping a list. I will release it. No, but there's a rule in

storytelling that you open with the premise, obviously, and -- because stories can go a lot of different ways, and when you've got 2,000 years in the first act, or more, right at the middle of your story you want to remind everybody what this is all about. You want to remind them of the premise. And in the end it's fulfilled, right? Or it's not, but who wants to tell a story like that?

WES: Right.

TRAVIS: But that makes me look at creation. You see Adam and Eve and they're given authority, and just by implication of the curse that's brought down on them of, you know, Adam, yeah, you're going to work the earth and, yes, Eve, you're going to be the mother of all life but it's going to be difficult, it's going to be painful, the earth is not going to obey you. You know, we kind of had to get creative, and we still do, in terms of using the Earth's resources and stewarding over the Earth's resources, and -- but then in the middle of the story -- and I think it would be really cool if it really was the exact middle of the story, but it's not up to me. But in the middle of the story, then you see Jesus. So right at the midpoint we're reminded of what's at stake and what the premise of it all is, that we had this power, we had this authority. God gave us, you know, the authority to bend the earth and have authority over it and be stewards over it and the earth obeyed us. Jesus comes along and, to your point, he's walking on water, he's calming the storms, you know, he -- we literally see him control nature at will. And so that gives us a picture, you know -- just by kind of deduction, that gives me a picture of -- so we're going to have that.

WES: Yeah. And we're touching on several different, you know, themes and topics, and I'm glad that you brought us back to creation first because I think that's so important for us to look at and think about the creation narrative and understand that that's what it's all about. In fact, even the term "image-bearer," or that God made humans in his own image -- in ancient times, my understanding from what I've read, is that -- that the kings and queens of the world -- of the ancient world believed themselves to be an image -- and most of the time the Bible uses the term "image," it's used about an idol almost exclusively, except for in this context. So the image of the gods -- plural gods, the pagan gods -- the image of those gods was metal or stone or wood. It was a carving. And so this statue, this idol, was an image, a representative of their God so that when you're in the presence of this image, it's as if you're in the presence of their God and this image represents their God to the people.

And -- but they would also think that type of way about royalty, and that if someone is a king then he is deity in the sense that he is an image-bearer of his deity. That when you're in the presence of this king, you're in the presence of the one that this god has partnered with to rule, so he is ruling on behalf of his deity. And so the idea of being an image-bearer -- I mean, it's a radical idea -- a radical idea -- that this group of slaves from Egypt gets broken out and then they start telling this story to the world that humanity -- not just themselves; that would be radical enough, for men and women of poverty and slavery to say, "We are image-bearers of Yahweh God." More than that, they were --

their story says all humanity -- all humanity, part of our tribe or not -- all humanity is image-bearers of THE God.

And that's what we were created to be, was created to rule and reign with God. And you think about what must it have been like, what does that story of creation and what Adam was told -- and contrary to popular belief, Adam was told to work the Garden. It was like -- work is not a product of the fall.

TRAVIS: Right.

WES: Work is our vocation. But God -- God makes these two humans, man and woman, and he makes them his image-bearers so that he is partnered together with them to rule and reign over his good creation. And the creation itself is not, originally, in rebellion to humans' reign; it is in harmony. Everything -- I think that word, to me, is the best word, and I love the musical connotation to it, that all things in creation were in perfect harmony. We were in -- humans were in submission to God; the creation was in submission to man. Even the animals would come and, apparently, they would just march by and get named by Adam, you know. And so there's this beautiful picture of everything being in perfect harmony and everything being submissive to the rule and the reign of humanity, who was ruling and reigning with God, that they -- God wasn't subject to them, but he was the only thing not subject to them. Everything else in creation was subject to the rule and the reign of human beings and they ruled with complete subjection of their subjects.

But after the fall, then it's almost as if -- in my mind, the way I

picture it is that creation now -- the result of the fall is that creation is in rebellion to human rulership the same way that humans have become in rebellion to God's rulership. In the same way that we said, "I don't want you to rule over me; I want to do things my own way, eat of the fruit," God says, "Now the creation will be in rebellion to you the way you're in rebellion to me." And so the earth begins to produce thorns and thistles and he tells Adam that it's going to be by the sweat of your brow that you're going to grow products. It's not like you can't work the soil anymore, but now the soil is in rebellion to you.

What must it have been like to garden in an environment where the soil was not in rebellion, where it was in harmony with Adam's rulership, or where childbirth could have been a thing that was so harmonious and natural that it might have been painless? You know, that's the picture that we get because the result of the curse is now creation, the created world, is in rebellion to the rulership of human beings. But then this Son of Man comes, this perfect Son of Man comes, and now he has all authority. And you even begin to see -- even pre-death, burial, and resurrection, you begin to see what it's like for the world, the creation, to be subject to the Son of Man, to the second Adam, so much so that when the storm is threatening to turn the boat over and the waves are coming into the boat, he gets up and he asks his apostles, "Why are you afraid?" And then he says, "Peace, be still," and the storm is stilled and the waves cease. And not just as the creator. That's what I think we need to understand. That it isn't just that Jesus is acting as the creator with bringing things under subjection, you know, to his rule. It's

he is acting as the Son of Man. He's acting as the new Adam, the one who is in subjection to the Father. He has subjected himself to the Father's rulership and, consequently, now all creation has been subjected to his rulership. And the promise of the gospel -- as radical as it may sound to some people, the promise of the gospel is that we will rule and reign with him and that the creation will be subject to our rulership.

*I really hope you enjoyed the first part of this Bible study. We'll wrap up this particular conversation next week. Make sure you're subscribed so you don't miss part two. A big thanks to Travis Pauley, as well as our McDermott Road church family, for helping to make this podcast possible, and a special thanks to all of you for listening. We love you, God loves you, and we hope that you have a wonderful day.*