

## What Saith the Scripture?

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# What is Man?

"What is man, that Thou art mindful of him? and the son of man, that Thou visitest him?"

(Psalm 8:4).

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8-8-2001

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Any attempt to truly understand the nature of man, without the Scriptures, is to foolishly neglect the perspective of man's Creator. "What is man, that Thou art mindful of him? and the son of man, that Thou visitest him?" (Psalm 8:4). Of course, the very concept of a Creator demands an acceptance of the existence of a God that creates and intervenes in the affairs of man, while the rejection of God's existence can only be viewed as foolishness. "The fool hath said in his heart, There is no God" (53:1). As desirous as God is that none "should perish, but that all should come to repentance" (2Peter 3:9), and as willing as He is to reason with man for man's submission, i.e., "Come now, and let us reason together, saith the LORD: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool" (Isaiah 1:18), He will "not always strive with man" (Genesis 6:3), and will as voluntarily condemn the man who rejects Him to Eternal Damnation, i.e., "Then shall He say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from Me, ye cursed, into Everlasting Fire, prepared for the Devil and his angels" (Matthew 25:41), as He will gladly reward those who trust Him with Everlasting Happiness, i.e., "Then shall the King say unto them on His right hand, Come, ye blessed of My Father, inherit the Kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world" (25:34).

Only the godly can *truly* grasp the meaning of his own existence, for we have been blessed with the opportunity to fulfill the dominion God intended over the works of His hands. "4 What is man, that Thou art mindful of him? and the son of man, that Thou visitest him? 5 For Thou hast made him a little lower than the angels, and hast crowned him with glory and honour. 6 Thou madest him to have dominion over the works of Thy hands; Thou hast put all things under his feet" (Psalm 8:4-6). In a moment of testing, we may wonder why an All Wise God would create a man, so full of troubles, i.e., "Yet man is born unto trouble, as the sparks fly upward" (Job 5:7); but, it would be great disservice to the Almighty to not immediately remember that He is the "Faithful Creator" (1Peter 4:19), that lovingly guardeth our footsteps, that our "feet did not slip" (Psalm 18:36). We so soon forget the Record of what God hath wrought for us. "Remember now thy Creator" (Ecclesiastes 12:1).

**Creature.** As our Creator, He endowed us with that very image of Himself that allows us to not only choose, but reject Him. "In the image of God created He him; male and female created He them" (Genesis 1:27). Our God will not have those around Him who do not gladly, freely, and wholeheartedly choose Him. "12 And if thy brother, an Hebrew man, or an Hebrew woman, be sold unto thee, and serve thee six years; then in the seventh year thou shalt let him go free from thee. 13 And when thou sendest him out free from thee, thou shalt not let him go away empty: 14 thou shalt furnish him liberally out of thy flock, and out of thy floor, and out of thy winepress: of that wherewith the LORD thy God hath blessed thee thou shalt give unto him. 15 And thou shalt remember that thou

wast a bondman in the land of Egypt, and the LORD thy God redeemed thee: therefore I command thee this thing to day. 16 And it shall be, if he say unto thee, **I will not go away from thee; because he loveth thee and thine house, because he is well with thee;** 17 then thou shalt take an aul, and thrust it through his ear unto the door [i.e., pierce his ear lobe], **and he shall be thy servant for ever.** And also unto thy maidservant thou shalt do likewise" (Deuteronomy 15:12-17). God has revealed Himself to us as our Creator, and we, the creature, are His creation, the work of His hands. "Thou art worthy, O LORD, to receive Glory and Honour and Power: for Thou hast created all things, and for Thy Pleasure they are and were created" (Revelation 4:11).

**Subject and Servant.** What is man, without a sense of order and control that every created thing sustains to its Maker? "Order my steps in Thy Word: and let not any iniquity have dominion over me" (Psalm 119:133). For this reason, God has progressively revealed Himself to man as King and Law Giver. "And the LORD said unto Moses, Come up to Me into the mount, and be there: and I will give thee tables of stone, and a Law, and Commandments which I have written; that thou mayest teach them" (Exodus 24:12). For this reason, the Pre-Incarnate Christ manifested Himself as the King of Peace to the patriarch Abraham. "1 For this Melchisedec, King of Salem, Priest of the Most High God, Who met Abraham returning from the slaughter of the kings, and blessed him; 2 to Whom also Abraham gave a tenth part of all; first being by interpretation King of Righteousness, and after that also King of Salem, which is, King of Peace; 3 without father, without mother, without descent, having neither beginning of days, nor end of life; but made Like unto the Son of God; abideth a Priest continually. 4 Now consider how great this Man was, unto Whom even the patriarch Abraham gave the tenth of the spoils. 5 And verily they that are of the sons of Levi, who receive the office of the priesthood, have a commandment to take tithes of the people according to the Law, that is, of their brethren, though they come out of the loins of Abraham: 6 but He whose descent is not counted from them received tithes of Abraham, and blessed him that had the Promises. 7 And without all contradiction the less is blessed of the Better" (Hebrews 7:1-7). Instead of an antinomian rejection of God's rule and Law of Love in the name of Grace, we ought to willingly embrace our Law Giver and King with loving obedience. "For this is the love of God, that we keep His Commandments: and His Commandments are NOT grievous" (1John 5:3).

**Sinner.** The All Wise God knew our treachery, and still, He reached out to us, doing all that in the nature of the case He could wisely do to save us from destruction-- He manifested Himself to us as our Saviour. "And we have seen and do testify that the Father sent the Son to be the Saviour of the world" (1John 4:14). In the short time of man's existence, we have already seen nearly two millennia pass since it has dawned upon man that "God so loved the world, that He gave His Only Begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have Everlasting Life" (John 3:16). Who but a sinner and lawbreaker would need a Saviour? "For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God" (Romans 3:23). Why a lawbreaker? "Sin is the transgression of the Law" (1John 3:4). Which Law was transgressed? The "Royal Law" (James 2:8) of Supreme Love to God and an Equal Love of our neighbour has been transgressed. "Thou shalt love the

LORD thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind; and thy neighbour as thyself" (Luke 10:27). Our remedy is not to disregard the validity of that Law, but to be restored to the obedience to that Law, if provision for our repentance has been made-- which, Praise God, it has! "6 For when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly. 7 For scarcely for a righteous man will one die: yet peradventure for a good man some would even dare to die. 8 But God commendeth His love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us" (Romans 5:6-8). When we lay down our arms of rebellion and cling to the graciousness of His Gift of Repentance, then we acknowledge our understanding of Himself as our Saviour and ourselves as sinners. "Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; of whom I am chief" (1Timothy 1:15).

**Saint.** "But as many as received Him, to them gave He Power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on His Name" (John 1:12). How could such a change come over a sinful man that he could be elevated to the rank of Saint? "To them that are sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be Saints, with all that in every place call upon the Name of Jesus Christ our LORD, both theirs and ours" (1Corinthians 1:2). Only by the Saving Grace of God can we enter into this new dimension of life and existence. "8 For by Grace are ye saved through Faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the Gift of God: 9 not of works, lest any man should boast" (Ephesians 2:8-9). How does this mysterious holiness come upon us? By faith-- not in ourselves, but in Him Who sanctifies us. "And the very God of Peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our LORD Jesus Christ" (1Thessalonians 5:23). Faith sanctifies us, i.e., "sanctified by faith that is in Me [Jesus]" (Acts 26:18), because it confides in God, His Word, His Spirit, and His Promises to perform a magnificent metamorphosis from sin to holiness. "Whereby are given unto us Exceeding Great and Precious Promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the Divine Nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust" (2Peter 1:4). Then, Christ reveals Himself to us as our Sanctifier, as we comprehend that He has "called [us] to be Saints" (Romans 1:7).

**Subjects to be Judged.** Though the Saints do not fearfully look forward to the upcoming Judgment, "we must all appear before the Judgment Seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad" (2Corinthians 5:10). Man who continues apart from God-- apart from trusting the Present and Eternal God-- only prepares himself for a certain damnation. "And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the Judgment" (Hebrews 9:27). After all, would not the Almighty rightly blame any man for not trusting Him, given the Record of all that He has *already lovingly done* to warrant such trust? "Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us, and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins" (1John 4:10). Even those who have "known the way of righteousness" (2Peter 2:21), if "after they have known it, to turn from the Holy Commandment delivered unto them" (2:21), they will most assuredly be judged as sinners who never truly repented, like all the false prophets. It would have "been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness" (2:21). Their judgment will be all the greater because of the Light they have rejected. "But he that knew not, and did commit things worthy of stripes, shall be

beaten with few stripes. For unto whomsoever much is given, of him shall be much required: and to whom men have committed much, of him they will ask the more" (Luke 12:48). But, on the other hand, the Saints fear not the Judgment of God, because they presently love, trust, and obey God. The Saints know that in the "keeping of [the 'judgments of the LORD' v. 9] there is great reward" (Psalm 19:11). "17 Herein is our love made perfect, that we may have boldness in the Day of Judgment: because as He is, so are we in this world. 18 There is no fear in love; but perfect love casteth out fear: because fear hath torment. He that feareth is not made perfect in love" (1John 4:17-18). Very soon, the day will reveal the LORD Jesus Christ, Who is the "KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS" (Revelation 19:16), as the "Judge of All the Earth" (Genesis 18:25). "7 And to you who are troubled rest with us, when the LORD Jesus shall be revealed from Heaven with His mighty angels, 8 in flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the Gospel of our LORD Jesus Christ: 9 who shall be punished with Everlasting Destruction from the presence of the LORD, and from the Glory of His Power; 10 when He shall come to be glorified in His Saints, and to be admired in all them that believe (because our testimony among you was believed) in that day" (2Thessalonians 1:7-10).

*In conclusion*, man has been revealed to be a creation of God, a subject with the necessity of obeying God, a sinner for not having obeyed, possibly a Saint (if having repented), and a future subject of God's Judgment Seat. "Give thanks unto the LORD, call upon His Name, make known His deeds among the people" (1Chronicles 16:8). At the same time, the Almighty has etched upon our consciousness that He is our Creator, our Lawgiver and King, our Saviour (if we repent and receive Him), our Sanctifier (if we let Him), and our Judge. "7 But the LORD shall endure for ever: He hath prepared His Throne for Judgment. 8 And He shall judge the world in Righteousness, He shall minister Judgment to the people in Uprightness" (Psalm 9:7-8).

Maranatha!