



Bible Student's Notebook™

The Herald of His Grace

Presenting every man perfect in Christ Jesus. Colossians 1:28

Volume XIV
Issue 332

What Is Man?

by — Arthur P. Adams (1845-1925)

The question "What is Man?" is so important that it is five times asked in Scriptures.

What is man that You should magnify him, and that You should set Your heart upon him? (Job 7:17).

What is man that he should be clean, and he that is born of a woman that he should be righteous? (Job 15:14).

What is man that You are mindful of him, and the son of man that You visit him? (Psalm 8:4).

Lord, what is man that You take knowledge of him, or the son of man that You make account of him? (Psalm 144:3).

What is man that You are mindful of him, and the son of man that You visit him? (Hebrews 2:6).

It must be that this question is important or it would not be so many times repeated and with such variations. We will search for an answer.

THE "APPARENT" ANSWER

If we should answer the question according to a view of the condition of things in the world today, we should say that man, considered as a whole, is a poor, miserable creature. He appears to be a failure; a beast of burden; an oppressed slave; a toiling, ill-requited, downtrodden bond-servant, degraded, ignorant, godless, corrupt and wicked.

Take mankind as a whole – civilized, heathen, barbarous and savage – and the above description is not by



any means as dark as the reality. If you want to see a word picture of the race drawn out of all of its awful hideousness by an inspired pen, read the first chapter of Paul's letter to the Romans (also Romans 3:9-19). Truly, "man that is born of woman is of few days and full of trouble," he "drinks iniquity like water," and is "soon cut down like the grass." Such is man as we see him today, "like the beasts that perish."

In regard to this humiliating view of man, it is sufficient to reply that man is in the rough, not yet finished, and hence, uncouth, defective and undeveloped.

THE ORTHODOX ANSWER

There is another reply to this question – "What is man?" It is the orthodox answer, the prevailing view among Christians. It is about as follows.

Man is a dual being, composed of soul and body (some make him triune: mind, soul and body). The body is simply the house, the perishable tenement of clay, in which the deathless soul, the real man, dwells. He was created perfect in the beginning; an immortal soul in a perfect body. He fell, and now is liable to death, physical and eternal, unless he repents and believes on Christ; that is, his body will die; but his soul will live forever in bliss or woe.

Of this false and unscriptural view I have only space at present to notice briefly the immortal soul part. I will just glance at the account of man's creation and see if

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Bible Student's Notebook™

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This free weekly electronic publication (52 times a year) is dedicated to:

- the proclamation of the riches of God's abundant, exceeding grace (Romans 5:20; 11:6; Ephesians 1:7);
- the affirmation of God's purpose to save all mankind through the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ (I Timothy 2:3, 4; 4:10; Titus 2:11);
- the "preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery, which was kept secret since the world began" (Romans 16:25);
- true freedom and liberty apart from law (Galatians 5:1);
- the organic nature of the church, the Body of Christ (I Corinthians 12);
- the distinct message and ministry of Paul, the apostle to the nations (Romans 11:13);
- the importance of receiving all whom Christ has received (Romans 14-15);
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- the completeness of the believer in Christ (Colossians 2:10), with:
 - total freedom from sins (Colossians 1:14);
 - identity in His death, burial, and resurrection (Romans 6);
 - adult sonship position (Galatians 4).

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PO Box 265, Windber, PA 15963

Office: (800) 784-6010

Local: (814) 701-0063

Clyde L. Pilkington, Jr. – Editor

(clyde@studyshef.com)

André Sneider – Managing Editor

Rick Lemons – Associate Editor

Department Managers and Assistant Editors

Windber, PA: Clyde L. Pilkington, III, Nathan H. Pilkington, Janet L. Maher, Aaron Locker

Australia: Ken Joyce

Canada: Don Bast

Netherlands: Wim Janse

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MAN (continued from front page)

from that we can draw any evidence that God put an immortal soul in man when He made him. The simple account is as follows:

The Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and man became a living soul (Genesis 2:7).

The phraseology here has given some impression that after God had made man's lifeless body he put into it as the vivifying power an immortal soul; but the passage says nothing of the kind. The language implies that man was a *dead* soul before the breath of life was breathed into him, and that when he received that breath he became a *living* soul. The idea of immortality, or distinct identity of the soul, or that the soul is the real man and the body is only a casket for it – neither and none of these notions are hinted at in the most distant manner. In fact, the account rather favors the view that the body, the part that was made of dust, is the real man; for it reads.

*The Lord God formed **man** of the dust of the ground and breathed into **his** nostrils [the man's] the breath of life.*

Man was formed before the breath of life was breathed into his nostrils. I will now quote from Young's translation.

*Jehovah God formeth the man – dust from the ground, and breatheth into his nostrils breath of life, and the man becometh **a living creature**.*

Now look at :19.

*Jehovah God formeth from the ground every beast of the field, and every fowl of the heavens, and bringeth in unto the man, to see what he doth call it; and whatever the man calleth a **living creature** that is his name.*

Beasts are called the same as man, "*living creatures*," the phrase is exactly the same in the original, in both cases. From the account there is just as much evidence that beasts have "immortal souls," as that man has one; especially so if we compare with these verses, Genesis 7:22, where we learn that "*the breath of life*" is in the nostrils of beasts as well as in man and if it means an "immortal soul" in the one case it must in the other.

The fact is, *no* such doctrine as "immortal soulism" is

taught in the Bible, either here or elsewhere; it is altogether man-made. It is Babylonish in its origin, and is founded on the falsehood of the father of lies – "*You shall not surely die.*" Man is destined to *become* immortal when he is FINISHED; but that is the crowning glory of his creation and hence is the last step, the putting on of the cap-stone of perfection, to make him immortal to begin with would be like trying to make a chimney by commencing at the top and building down. In "*God's building*" (I Corinthians 3:9) He does not lay the cap-stone first, but the foundation. Immortality is the final goal, not the starting point; it is the crown of the "*perfect man*" (Ephesians 4:13), not the swaddling bands of his infancy.

I would say very emphatically that all of our theology will be wrong if we start out with this great overshadowing error of all Christendom, the immortal soul. As the phrase itself is utterly unscriptural, so is the idea, and no less is it contrary to Scripture than to common sense and reason. When man was first created he was just what the Scripture says he was: "*a living creature*;" and from that mere natural condition he will be developed into a "*perfect man*," incorruptible and immortal.

THE BIBLE'S ANSWER

Now we return again to the main question, "What is man?" We have answered this question according to the traditions of men, let us now see what the Bible says.

In the context of the passages we have noticed that there is no answer except in Psalm 144:3-4, where we are told that "*Man is like to vanity; his days are as a shadow that passeth away*" – an answer that applies to the present unfinished condition of man.

In Psalm 8, things that are not are spoken of as though they were; the as yet unfulfilled *purpose* of God is spoken of as though it was already accomplished. We are sure of this because Hebrews 2 makes it clear, where the Psalmist is quoted and explained. This latter passage we will now notice particularly. Commence at :5.

For unto the angels hath He not put in subjection the world to come whereof we speak; but one in a certain place testified, saying, "What is man that You are mindful of him? Or the son of man that You visit him? You made him for a little while [see margin] lower than the angels; You crowned him with glory and honor, and set him over the works of Your hands. You put all things in subjection under his feet. For in that he put all in subjection un-

der him, he left nothing that is not put under him.
But now we see not yet all things put under him.

In this last clause we have the enunciation of the same principle as in Romans 4:17. The Psalmist quoted speaks exactly as though man had already received dominion, but Hebrews says, “**not yet.**” Why, then, speak as though the work was already done? Because God “*calls those things that be not as though they were*” and herein is infinite comfort.

These declarations of universal dominion for man “*all in subjection under him*” – seem almost too good to be true, especially when we compare them to his slavish condition now; and yet so sure are they of ultimate realization that God speaks of them as already accomplished; they must *surely* come to pass; and man instead of being the slave shall be the master of God’s creation.

WE SEE JESUS

Now let us read on a little further.

We see not yet all things put under him, but we see Jesus.

Well what of that? What has Jesus got to do with the question, “What is man?” Jesus was pure and unsinning; it is right that He should have dominion; He is worthy of it; but what has it to do with corrupt, sinful man? Just this, *Jesus is the Pattern Man of God’s finished creation.* He is the Sample, the Standard, after Whom all the redeemed are to be fashioned. Hence we see the

significance of this reference to Jesus. We see not yet all things put under *man*, but we see JESUS, the Pattern Man, and hence we can tell what man will be when he is finished.

Suppose a man had the rough material to make a great number of machines; he first finishes off one of the machines and gets it perfectly adjusted in every part, as a pattern to go by in finishing the rest. You go into his factory and see this mass of material and you ask, “What are you making?” The artisan replies, “All this that you see is only rough material; come this way and I will show you what I am making,” and he takes you to the machine he has finished off. “There,” he says, “that is what I am making.” You would have no difficulty in understanding what he meant. You would see at once that the finished machine was a sample or pattern of what the others would be when the material was all worked up. So the writer of Hebrews points to Jesus in just the same way.

“*What is man?*” Poor, wretched slave of sin, corrupt and tending to corruption, you say. Yes, that is true, but God *intends* to make him a noble lord of creation, perfect and complete in the image of God; but now we see not yet this great work accomplished except in the case of one individual, *Jesus Christ.* He has passed through the entire process of creation, and been finished, perfected; hence He is “*the beginning of the creation of God.*” Now if you wish to know what man is – *i.e.*, what is his destiny – look to Jesus the *finished* Man, the *only* finished man, and you will see a perfect pattern of “*the perfect Man.*” ▶



Rich Man and Lazarus, The: The Intermediate State

by — E.W. Bullinger

It is the author’s contention that, when dealing with the subject of what happens at death, it is important that Christians confine themselves to what the Bible has to say and not turn to tradition. Some current views have more in common with the traditions taught by the Pharisees than with the teachings of the Lord Jesus Christ.

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To me there is blessed comfort in this. I am glad that the writer of Hebrews points us to Jesus when we ask, "What is man?" Sad, indeed, would be the answer if we had to make it up from the degraded condition of man today. Not much better would it be if we had to accept the answer that modern orthodoxy gives: man is a being made perfect and immortal; but he lost that perfection, and now his destiny is an endless heaven or an endless hell, with the chances thus far in the history of the race about a hundred to one against the former and in favor of the latter.

Such a view is sad in the extreme, and it looks as though man's Maker had made a terrible mistake somewhere; but how blessed to turn from all of this confusion and just "look to Jesus" for an answer to the question "What is man?" – i.e., mankind, the race. The answer is, "Jesus." He is the great representative Man, the "Forerunner," the "Beginning," the ultimate "Firstfruit," and "if the first fruit be holy, the lump is also holy."

Thus the ever blessed Book gives us a grand and cheering answer to this greatest problem of life, "What is man?" It is an answer that at the same time brings comfort and hope to the believer, and reflects honor and glory on the Creator. Jesus is the pattern. He passed through all of the experiences of sorrowing humanity that,

Having suffered, being tempted, He might be able to succor them that are tempted (Hebrews 2:18).

He was made in all points like unto His brethren, that He might be a faithful and merciful High Priest in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people (Hebrews 2:17).

His perfection is the type of our perfection, for "we shall be like Him." His triumph is the pledge of our victory.

For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive (I Corinthians 15:22).

As by the offence of one judgment came upon all men unto condemnation, so by the righteousness of one the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life (Romans 5:18).

Every human being is a rough jewel. God is the great Lapidary;¹ and, as in the laboratory of nature the black, unsightly carbon is transformed into a radiant, flashing diamond, so in the laboratory of grace, sinful man, under God's manipulation, comes at length to shine in all

1. One who cuts and polishes gems.

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of the glory of the divine image.

This is the Lord's doing; it is marvelous in our eyes
(Psalm 118:23).

Man cannot transform the carbon into diamond; God by His natural laws alone can do that. Man must cry out, in utter self-despair, "O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me?" (Romans 7:24). Then God lifts him from the "horrible pit," and brings him at last to "walk upon high places." But let me add that God is not obliged to wait until we are willing for Him to work in our behalf. Even when we are stubborn and disobedient, God is busy dealing with us for our good, although we do not know it. Our very sins are made in the end the means of our training and discipline. Every Christian knows this by experience; it is also a clear teaching of Scripture. Read Jeremiah chapter 2 and notice how God charges Jerusalem with their wrong-doing; notice how He pleads with them (:9), and sets forth the "two evils" that they had committed. Then He asks, "Why is Israel spoiled?" and gives the answer in :verse 19, "Your own wickedness shall correct you, and your backslidings shall reprove you."

How wonderful is God's way with man! Man by his perversity changes blessings into curses, but God alone in His goodness and might can transform curses into blessings. So the work of God shall go on in spite of all opposing forces; for by God's power all opposition will not only be neutralized so that it shall not retard the divine purpose, but it shall be transformed into cooperation so as to advance His designs; and thus "all things" shall help toward the glorious consummation – the creation of man in the fullness of the image of God. The time shall come at last, when there shall be no more anything accursed (Revelation 22).

Astronomy and the Greatness of God

by – Dan Sheridan

Science is the study of the objects in creation and what happens to them. The study of creation beyond our atmosphere is called astronomy (Gr. Star/Law).



by number: He calleth them all by names by the greatness of His might, for that He is strong in power; not one faileth (Isaiah 40:26).

He upholds the entire universe in every detail. The Psalmist said *“the heavens declare the glory of God.”*

The universe contains a bunch of galaxies. A galaxy is a star system containing billions of stars. We live in the Milky Way galaxy. The Milky Way is part of what's known as a “local cluster” of galaxies. Our “local cluster” contains 40 galaxies. The Milky Way is about 100,000 light-years in diameter and has over 400-billion stars. The sun is one of those stars. Our solar system is a tiny corner of the Milky Way Galaxy.

What is more amazing is this: the Scriptures say the very hairs of our heads are numbered. The God Who created the entire universe is concerned about every little detail of our lives. Even combing your hair! Nothing is unimportant. The God Who created and comprehends the entire universe is in every little detail of your life. He is more concerned about YOU than the Universe!

Each galaxy is identified by its shape. There are spiral, barred, elliptical and irregular galaxies. Our galaxy is a spiral galaxy and our solar system is on the edge of one of its arms.

Let's declare with the Psalmist:

Now ponder this. Current estimates say there are about 120-billion galaxies! Now do the math. Our Galaxy is 100,000 light-years in diameter and is one of 40 in our “local cluster.” Using our galaxy as an average size, multiply that by 40 and our “local cluster” is about 4,000,000 light-years in diameter. Now multiply the size of our galaxy by the total estimated galaxies in the universe.

To the chief musician upon Gittith, A Psalm of David (Psalm 8).

120,000,000,000 (Estimated amount of galaxies)
x 100,000 (The size of our galaxy in light-years)
= 1.2×10^{16}

O Lord, how excellent is Thy name in all the earth, Who hast set Thy glory above the heavens. Out of the mouth of babes and sucklings hast Thou ordained strength because of Thine enemies, that Thou mightest still the enemy and the avenger. When I consider Thy heavens, the work of Thy fingers, the moon and the stars, which Thou hast ordained; what is man, that Thou art mindful of him? And the son of man, that Thou visitest him? For Thou hast made him a little lower than the angels, and hast crowned him with glory and honor. Thou madest him to have dominion over the works of Thy hands; Thou hast put all things under his feet: all sheep and oxen, yea, and the beasts of the field; the fowl of the air, and the fish of the sea, and whatsoever passeth through the paths of the seas. O Lord our Lord, how excellent is Thy name in all the earth!

My calculator couldn't calculate the zeros!

Now, based on these facts, think about how large the universe is. It's staggering, and it operates with precision and order! We can't count the stars but God has named every one of them.

Lift up your eyes on high, and behold Who hath created these things, that bringeth out their host

“We See Jesus”

by — Arthur P. Adams (1845-1925)

We see Jesus, Who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honor; that He by the grace of God should taste death for every man (Hebrews 2:9).

Having discussed the Bible question, “What is man?” we have found that the Bible answer is, “Jesus.” He is the Pattern Man of God’s finished creation. The study of Jesus, then, in every phase of His character, is important and interesting because of His intimate and blessed relationship to man. He is the Adam of the regenerated race: and,

*In the dispensation of the fullness of times, God will gather together in one **all things in Christ**, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth, even in Him (Ephesians 1:10).*

Who is Christ? What is He? How did He enter into the world, and for what purpose? Why did He die? What is the significance of His resurrection? How did He make an atonement? etc.

Questions numberless and momentous clamor for solution as we turn to this wonderful Personage – this unique and supernatural Character – the Lord Jesus Christ. Standing at the confluence of the ages, four thousand years after the creation of man, He appears in majestic and awe-inspiring grandeur, a lone, solitary figure, unparalleled and unapproached by any other being since the world began.

We would see Jesus (John 12:21).

What think ye of Him? Whose son is He? (Matthew 22:42).

What shall we do with Him? (Matthew 27:22).

We see Jesus (Hebrews 2:9).

We see Jesus? Where? Not now, as of old, among the hills of Judea and along the shores of the sea of Galilee, but in the “Scripture of Truth” (Daniel 10:21), let us seek for Him there, until from our hearts shall go forth the glad announcement, “We see Jesus.”

*When the fullness of the time was come, God sent forth His Son, **made of a woman** (Galatians 4:4).*

When He was born of a woman He became the Son of God by creation, as was Adam (“the son of Adam, the son of God” Luke 3:38). At His resurrection he became “the Son of God (in the full, spiritual sense) with power, according to the spirit of holiness by the resurrection from the dead” (Romans 1:4). Let us notice these points in detail.

He became the “Son of God” when He became the “Son of Man” (see Luke 1:35). When the angel announced to Mary the birth of Jesus, and she asks “How shall this be?” The angel answers,



Pagan Christianity Exploring the Roots of Our Church Practices

by — Frank Viola & George Barna

(#3106) 293 pages, Paperback
\$17.95 (\$21.70 with s&h)

Have you ever wondered why Christians do what they do for “church” every Sunday morning? Have you ever asked yourself any of the following questions: Why do folks “dress up” for “church”? Why does the “pastor” preach a sermon every Sunday? Why are there pulpits and pews? Why “church” buildings, steeples, choirs and seminaries? Where did all of these things come from?

This book proposes that what Christians do in “churches” has no root in the Scriptures! It rather has its origin in pagan culture. As shocking as that sounds, the authors prove their points by documenting every claim they make.

Fully footnoted, *Pagan Christianity* documents the story of modern church practices. If you are content with status quo “churchianity,” then you will not want to read this book. It is reserved for those who are ready to embark on an eye-opening venture that challenges every aspect of their church experience.



*The Holy Spirit shall come upon you and the power of the Highest shall overshadow you, THEREFORE [notice this “therefore”] that Holy Thing which shall be born of thee shall be **called** the SON OF GOD.*

He became the Son of God at His birth by creation as Adam was a son of God. Now we will notice the force of the “therefore” in the text we have quoted above. Read the text over again and you will see that the meaning is that *because* Christ was brought forth by the “power of the Highest,” “not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man but of God,” and under the overshadowing influence of the Holy Spirit, *therefore* He is called “the Son of God.”

If the manner of his birth was the *cause* of His being called the Son of God, as is clearly taught in this passage, then of course He was *not* the Son of God before His birth. Then, and not until then, “we behold His glory,” we begin to know Him, and through Him to know God; thus to obtain life eternal [aeonian life] (John 17:3).

The Lord Jesus Christ is the *real* Adam of whom the *first* Adam was only a “figure” (Romans 5:14), and so when He was “conceived” in Mary’s womb (Matthew 1:20; Luke 2:21) it is by the brooding of the Spirit and the overshadowing of the power of the Highest, and *therefore* is He “the Son of God” – by creation, as was Adam. This view is reasonable as well as scriptural, and does away with the absurd, Popish dogma, and it also

explains how Jesus is bone of our bone, and flesh of our flesh (Ephesians 5:30), “a child is **born**” to the race of man in our own condition and estate, and yet He is “the Beginning of the creation of God” (Revelation 3:14), the beginning of a new beginning, “the first born of every creature” (Colossians 1:15).

Had He been wholly the product of God’s creative power, without Mary, He would not have been of our race at all, but of *another* race. Had He been begotten of man, He would have been no different from the rest of the fallen race of man, but simply “altogether such an one as ourselves” and the “beginning” of no new order of things. But being the joint product of God’s creative power and of natural generation, He is at the same time, the “Son of God” and the “Son of Man” – a veritable member of the human race and yet “the Beginning of the creation of God,” a “new creation,” so that we can say with the prophet,

*Unto us a **CHILD IS BORN**, unto us, a **SON IS GIVEN*** (Isaiah 9:6).

Jesus is Emmanuel, God with us, and yet “He was made like unto His brethren in all things” (Hebrews 2:17). He is “**God manifest in the flesh**” – oh, wonderful “mystery of godliness!” Such, as far as I can express it, is a glorious and blessed manifestation of “the manifold wisdom of God,” and of “the unsearchable riches of Christ” (Ephesians 3:8, 10). ■



The Book of Job

by – E.W. Bullinger

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