

The Compassion of God and the Nature and Destiny of Man

I. - The Nature of Man as Possessing the Spirit of Christ

"What is man that thou are mindful of him? Or the son of man that thou visitest him? Thou madest him a little [for a little time] lower than the angels; thou crownedst him with glory and honor and did set him over the works of thy hands . . ." (Hebrews 2:6,7).

One of the most critical questions in the universe that humans have to ask is, Why are we here, or Why did God make us in the first place? The next question is akin to it: What is our place in this vast universe? This passage in Hebrews, quoted from Psalm 8, gives us some very lucid answers. As the Bible delineates, we keep on a safe track if we tie everything to Jesus Christ.

We look in vain for anything but speculation in the anthropology and paleontology disciplines. But what is incomprehensible in human logic is quite lucid in the Bible. Of course, this presupposes an acceptance of the Bible as the Word of God. And this is a matter of choice. But such a choice is itself part of the nature of man. It presupposes a touch with God's Spirit essence, allowing a choice beyond the natural processes of human thought when we touch base with what the universe is all about. To understand this is a gift from God. It is what we call faith, but faith not as in human feelings and confidence but rather as a flow of divine energy akin to the energy of the very processes of the universe. To reject God and the Bible is not a mark of academic astuteness or independence but rather a mark of being outside the perimeter of God's purpose. How such a one ever comes within the perimeter, God only knows. On what basis does God make His selection? Only He knows that. But it is certainly not something to be proud of. The blasé assumption that a human can be independent from God is as idiotic as the assumption that atomic energy can function without God.

So, we must start with the presupposition that the Bible is the authentic Word of God. It is no less valid for us to make that presupposition than for the scientist to presuppose that the atom (or its components) was around forever. Once we take the Bible to be God's revelation, our place in the universe becomes crystal clear. Hebrews 2 outlines the entire issue masterfully. We must assume that Christ and His creatures are in view throughout the passage. In Hebrews 2:10-11, we read, *"For it was fitting for him, for whose sake are all things and through whom are all things, in bringing many children unto glory to bring the chief leader of their salvation to fulfillment through sufferings. For he who sanctifies [sets apart] and they who are sanctified [set apart] are all one; for which cause he is not ashamed [without the power] to call them brethren"*.

It is evident here that we are dealing with a family of God, which had its beginnings in Adam and Eve. It was through the Fall and the process of redemption that brought us to Jesus Christ. The key word in this process is Immanuel. *"Behold the virgin shall be with child and shall bear a son, and they shall call his name Immanuel, which is, being interpreted, God with us"* (Matthew 1:23). *Immanuel* is a Hebrew word that means "with us is God." The Old Testament begins with man out of favor with God, and the New Testament begins with God coming to join with man. Peter said to the believers, *"We are partakers of the divine nature"* (II Peter 1:4). There is no question about the intrinsic nature

of our tie to Christ. When we identify with Christ, we become "wholly other." John says, *"Beloved, now are we the children of God, and it does not yet appear what we shall be. We know that when He shall appear, we shall be like Him because we shall see Him as He is"* (I John 3:2). All of these statements and many more throughout the New Testament show that the ultimate destiny of man is actually to take on the nature of Christ and be part of His family. We are, in fact, now part of His family, but we have not come into our ultimate glory as yet.

There can be no mistaking that Hebrews 2 ties us together with Jesus Christ. Because of Him, we became heirs with Him in His glorification. Paul tells the Romans, with clarity, what our destiny is. *"The Spirit himself bears witness with our spirit that we are the children of God and if children, also heirs; heirs of God, and heirs together with Christ if indeed we suffer together, that we may also be glorified together"* (Romans 8:16,17).

Sometimes, to simplify the message, we focus on the redemptive aspects of the sacrifice of Christ that pertains to sin, our earthly sojourn, and the future aspects of our glorification. The truth is that when we have come to Christ, we now partake of His divine nature and are part of this description in Hebrews 2 of being crowned with glory and honor. Enter now to your place with Christ as His children and participate in His glory. Sometimes, we become burdened with guilt and our human inadequacies and fail to focus on sharing the glory with Christ. Sin is covered in our daily touch with Christ. We do not need to offer a sacrifice, as in the Old Testament, but simply come to Christ with our weaknesses and ask His forgiveness. As His children, we should be able to walk in peace and grace and thoroughly enjoy our familial relationship with Him.

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