

The Compassion of God and the Nature and Destiny of Man

II. - The Destiny of Man as Glorified Together with Christ

“We all with unveiled face beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord are transformed into the same image from glory to glory even as by the Spirit of Christ” (II Corinthians 3:18).

We have seen that the nature of man is intrinsically tied up with the nature of Christ. He became what humans are in order that He may lift humans to become what He became in His glorification. To understand the nature of man, one must understand the work of the Holy Spirit. Adam and Eve were created as special beings. Whatever the anthropologists and paleontologists have to say about the antiquity of man, the important point is that God made Adam and Eve, perhaps as special beings, and breathed into them His Spirit. The Hebrew expression in this creation process is *hyh tmcn* (*nishmath chaya*). The word *nishmath* means something of the special breath of God or His own Spirit. So Adam and Eve were created as special beings, into whom the breath or Spirit of God had been breathed. This is what they lost in the Fall, but did retain something of the remnants of God’s own nature, which is what we see in countless examples of human compassion that go beyond the bestial nature of the creatures of earth. This was not enough to offset the implications of the Fall, but does have a lot to do with what we might call “civilized” humans. After the Fall it was necessary for God to institute the process of redemption, which culminated in the sacrifice of Christ and the subsequent restoration of the Holy Spirit to all who would participate.

In Adam and Eve we had the beginning of something of a “family” of God. There was very soon a distinction between the people of God and the *goyim* which referred to everyone else on earth. The idea of a distinct family or people of God continued with a general designation until Jacob, when the concept of the “children of Israel” first began and became synonymous with the “people of God.” When the children of Israel ultimately rejected Christ, they were replaced by the broader designation of the *goyim* or the Gentiles, from whom God selected His *ecclesia* or “called out ones.” This constituted the new people of God, which were those who identified with Jesus Christ. So from Adam to Christ we can trace a particular focus of God on the earth. We who accept the Bible as the Word of God and read it, feel quite comfortable in identifying ourselves with a “people of God” or with Christ and His *ecclesia*—the “called out ones.” What the perimeters of this “family of God” are, God only knows. That is not for us to decide. Perhaps Jesus’ own category—“other sheep have I that are not of this fold”—covers this area. As far as we are concerned, our destiny is intrinsically linked with Christ. As far as we are concerned, who are a part of the *ecclesia* our focus should be on our place with Christ—“crowned with glory and honor”—and not on the rudimentary elements of sin, humanness, and unworthiness. We are His brothers and sisters—heirs of His glory. Let us rejoice in it. Remember that the sin issue is handled, not by sacrificial lambs, but by the sacrifice of Christ, in which we participate merely by confessing our sins as they occur and keeping the line open to Christ. It is the humility that says, “I cannot save myself—I need the blood of Christ.”

He has subjected all things under His feet . . .

This is, of course, parallel to the statement in Psalm 8:6—*“Thou madest him to have dominion over the works of thy hands.”* And again in Romans 8—*“The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are the children of God. And if children, also heirs; heirs of God, and fellow heirs of Christ, if indeed we suffer with Him that we may also be glorified together”* (Romans 8:16,17). So as joint-heirs with Christ, we are with Him, heirs of all things and certainly included in the statement that God has “put all things under his feet.” So our destiny is to rule the universe.

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April 1995

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