

# The Man Christ Jesus

The Second in a Series  
of Articles by Ern Baxter  
on "Christ's Ministry  
Today."

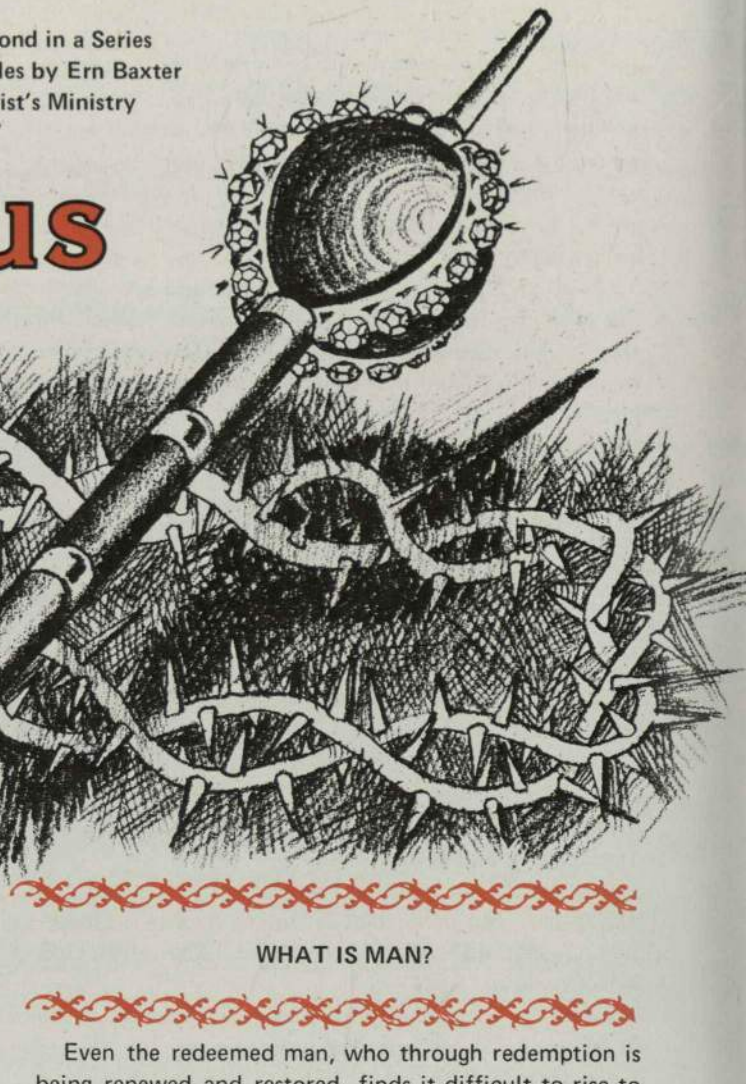
by Ern Baxter

"He became obedient  
unto death. Therefore God  
has also highly exalted  
Him and given Him a name  
above every name "  
(Phil. 2:8-9).

**G**od created man in His own image" (Gen. 1:26), but after man marred that image by succumbing to sin, God "was manifest" (1 Tim. 3:16) "in the likeness of sinful flesh" (Rom. 8:23) to redeem, regenerate, and renew man to the image of "the Heavenly pattern" (1 Cor. 15:49, JBP).

From the very beginning, man was the apex of God's creation. He differed from the other created things and beings in that he was God-like and capable of personal communication with God (Gen. 1:28; 2:16-17; 3:9-13). He was made to "have dominion [rule] over all the earth" (Gen. 1:26, 28), and as God's delegated authority, to "Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth, and subdue it; and rule over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the sky, and over every living thing that moves on the earth" (Gen. 1:28, NAS).

So in the biblical creation account, man is seen as a highly intelligent, masterful agent, capable of representing God as His viceroy over creation. Though sin has defaced the image, it has not utterly destroyed it, and thus, this crippled creature, retaining aspects of God-likeness, oscillates between flashes of creative brilliance and dark deeds of destructive degradation.



## WHAT IS MAN?

Even the redeemed man, who through redemption is being renewed and restored, finds it difficult to rise to the wonder of his being. Looking out upon the magnificent heavens and earth which surround him, humbled by their splendor and dwarfed by their vastness, he wistfully inquires of the Creator, "What is man, that Thou dost take thought of him? And the son of man, that Thou dost care for him?" (Ps. 8:4, NAS). Then, contemplating the indescribable complexities of his own person, he concludes that only God could "form his inward parts" and "weave him in his mother's womb." Grateful for the gift of life, he cries out in celebration of the mystery of this skillfully wrought workmanship—"I will give thanks to Thee, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made; Wonderful are Thy works, And my soul knows it very well" (Ps. 139:13-14, NAS).

The psalmist, representing all men, might well stand in awe and wonder as he beholds the magnitude of the heavenly bodies, and the delicate and mysterious intricacies of his own physical body. He might well feel intimidated and unimportant in the midst of such a display of divine creative genius. But whether he fully comprehends it or not, there is an answer to his query, "What is man?" It is the answer not of human investigation, but of divine revelation. Apart from revelation, human investigation becomes vain speculation when it

goes beyond the bounds of its abilities.

The psalmist's answer is one of revelation. In language reminiscent of the Genesis account of man's creation, he responds to the question and simultaneously affirms his faith in God's revealed record.

For thou hast made him a little lower than the angels [the NAS says, ". . . than God"], and hast crowned him with glory and honour.

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 sea.

O Lord our Lord, how excellent is thy name in all the earth!

(Ps. 8:5-9).

Here is the man of Genesis 1:26-28: a little lower than God but in the image of God. This man wears a crown as God's delegated king over creation. The subjugated earth pays him honor as bearer of God's glory. What better expression could be coined to describe Adam's dominion and rule than "put all things under his feet"? Finally, the psalmist verbally parades the subjects of the first man's domain past the reader to show the extent of his dominion.

A New Testament writer, quoting Psalm 8, points out what is painfully obvious as he writes, "But, as it is, we do not yet see all things controlled by man" (Heb. 2:8, Moffatt). Although the "yet" breathes hope for man's future dominion (and we'll say more about this shortly), the question to be dealt with first is, "What happened to forestall this human sovereignty?"

The man to whom this mandate was given forfeited it through disobedience to his Superior (Rom. 5:19). Another name for this disobedience is sin, and by this "one man sin entered into the world" (Rom. 5:12). The result of this is that "everyone has sinned; everyone falls short of the beauty of God's plan" (Rom. 3:23, JBP).

Falling short of God's beautiful plan may be described in many ways, but all such descriptions require words like the ones Jesus used: "evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, and blasphemies" (Mt. 15:19). These sins, practiced on a corporate scale, produce national and international malevolence and war, destruction of entire civilizations by servile slavery to sordid sins, international theft of land and property, high level perjury committed in the name of diplomacy, and last but not least, the dethronement of God as true Sovereign and Governor of human life and His replacement by blasphemous substitutes. That is not a pretty picture. But to miss God's beautiful plan is to improvise some form of ugly alternative produced by human depravity. Let us anticipate a point and remark that such ugliness has only been relieved by the influence provided by the "salt" and "light" of genuine godliness.

## MAN IN GOD'S PLANS

Despite human rebellion, man is part of God's plan—a plan God fully intends to carry out. Remember, God created man in His own image, and there is no way of improving on that. God cannot choose another creature to fulfill man's role, nor can He make another breed or strain of man better than the first one. Man is inevitably in the plan of God! Therefore, in spite of Adam's failure, He will start again with another man, "the second man" (1 Cor. 15:47), and this time success is guaranteed.

God will not, indeed He cannot, abandon the race of "the first man" for, very simply, He loves them (Jn. 3:16). This became evident when Adam first disobeyed God and attempted to establish his own creaturely godhood. God came immediately on the scene to deal with His disobedient deputy, and also to pass judgment on the seductive serpent which had precipitated the crisis of Adam's defection. King Adam and his consort Eve had to be punished along with the author of the attractive but destructive lie. But would God abandon His fallen creature? Depose him, yes; impose the penalty of broken law, yes; but He did not, nor will He, abandon him.

Even before spelling out the nature of Adam and Eve's punishment, God passed judgment on the serpent. As He did our fallen foreparents heard a word of hope as God declared His intention to use human seed to effect the devil's destruction. "I will put enmity between you and the woman," said God to the serpent, "and between your seed and her seed; He shall bruise you on the head, and you shall bruise Him on the heel" (Gen. 3:15, NAS).

But love cannot defy justice, and broken law cannot be ignored by the Moral Governor of the universe. So Adam and Eve stood shamefully naked, their useless fig-leaf aprons providing no covering before the gaze of God, and heard the ominous pronouncements of judgment. No sooner were they spoken, however, than ". . . God made garments of skin for Adam and his wife, and clothed them" (Gen. 3:21, NAS). This was undoubtedly a preview of God's ultimate redemptive act when He would slay "the Lamb of God" and clothe men with the garment of righteousness—the only robe that covers man's helpless nakedness before a holy God (1 Cor. 1:30). He had not given up on man.

Both the announcement by God to the serpent that the seed of the woman would eventually bruise (crush, trample down) the serpent's head, and the act of God in providing garments for Adam and Eve point to a great future Person and event. In fact, all of history revolves around this Person and event. Indeed, the whole Bible, in one way or another, has as its central theme the seed and the sacrifice. Genesis 3:15 is referred to in human expositions of Scripture as the "the Protevangelium,"

which means, "the first gospel proclamation." The biblical record of the divine preparation for the coming of the seed is filled with dramatic accounts of interaction between God, Satan and man as the divine purpose inexorably moved to fulfillment.

## THE SEED

We are not left in any doubt as to who the seed is. The many scriptures referring to this coming One—the "He," the "seed of the woman" who would "crush" the serpent's head—find final fulfillment in "Jesus of Nazareth, a man" (Acts 2:22). He was the "seed of the woman," and "Abraham's seed," and "the seed of David." Paul makes this clear when he writes, "Now to Abraham and his seed were the promises made. He saith not, And to seeds, as of many, but as of one, And to *thy* seed, which is Christ" (Gal. 3:16).

As the promise and prospect of the seed developed (as recorded for us in the Old Testament) new aspects of His nature and character were revealed. The prophet Isaiah makes the startling announcement that the seed of the woman would be called Immanuel (Is. 7:14). Matthew, in writing the account of the visit of the angel of the Lord to Joseph in a dream, states that Isaiah's prophecy would be fulfilled in the birth of Jesus.

"Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary as your wife: for that which has been conceived in her is of the Holy Spirit.

"And she will bear a Son: and you shall call His name Jesus, for it is He who will save His people from their sins."

[Then Matthew interjects these words:]

Now all this took place that what was spoken by the Lord through the prophet might be fulfilled, saying,

"Behold, the virgin shall be with child, and shall bear a Son, and they shall call His name Immanuel"; which translated means, "God with us" (Mt. 1:20–23, NAS).

Isaiah makes a further reference to this divine-human child when he declares:

For a child will be born to us, a son will be given to us;

And the government will rest on His shoulders;  
And His name will be called Wonderful Counselor,  
Mighty God,  
Eternal Father, Prince of Peace.

There will be no end to the increase of His government or of peace,

On the throne of David and over his kingdom,  
To establish it and to uphold it with justice and righteousness

From then on and forevermore.

The zeal of the Lord of hosts will accomplish this (Is. 9:6–7, NAS).

In the New Testament, when the angel was telling the virgin Mary about the miracle birth of Jesus, he clearly identifies Isaiah's "child" with Mary's. Let us listen to the heavenly messenger.

"He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Most High; and the Lord God will give Him the throne of His father David;

and He will reign over the house of Jacob forever; and His Kingdom will have no end" (Lk. 1:32–33, NAS).

## THE SECOND MAN

Now we begin to see how success is guaranteed for the second man, Jesus. The first man, Adam, was "the son of God" (Lk. 3:38) by creation and was the first of the human race referred to as "the offspring of God" (Acts 17:29). But our Lord Jesus was the "only begotten Son of God" (Jn. 3:18) and, as the "Word, was with God, and . . . was God" (Jn. 1:1). "And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of *the only begotten* of the Father,) full of grace and truth" (Jn. 1:14). God has become man without ceasing to be God: "Who, for us men, and for our salvation came down from heaven, and was incarnate by the Holy Ghost of the Virgin Mary, and was made man."<sup>1</sup>

My desire in this article is to emphasize the humanity of our Lord. As a young minister, I was caught up in the liberal/conservative confrontation. In my zeal to affirm the true deity of my Lord, I somehow, undoubtedly because of my preaching emphasis, personally "lost" the human Jesus. I had so deified Him that, for my own practical Christian life, I had lost touch with His being "very man." Emerging from that period of controversy, I realized how much it matters what one believes in a present-tense sense. I had not dismissed the human Jesus from my official creed, but I had de-emphasized His manhood, and in the process robbed myself of the constant supply of succor, challenge, hope and authority that derives from knowing He is "one of us." Probably there is no fact of truth where balance is more needed than in our understanding of and relationship to our Lord Jesus Christ.

We are not suggesting that we must have perfect understanding of the mystery of Christ's Person, but as Spirit-quickened disciples, we should receive the revealed data and walk in that light. "By faith we understand" (Heb. 11:1) is the language and perspective of the Christian. Paul refers to our Lord as God's "incredible gift" (2 Cor. 9:15, Goodspeed). The Chalcedon Creed, composed in A.D. 451, in which church leaders undertook to describe the "incredible," is conceded to be

<sup>1</sup>The Nicene Creed

the classic Christian definition of the Person of our Lord. A recent writer, commenting on this historic document, underlined the kind of understandable frustration Christian men feel when they attempt to define, as accurately as possible from the Scriptures, the great "revealed sacred secrets" of our faith. He wrote: "We can say more about Christ than Chalcedon says, but we dare not say less."<sup>2</sup> Chalcedon says, "He is truly God, and truly man."

In the days of His flesh our Lord was so truly man that, while people recognized that God was with Him, they considered Him to be in the category of the prophets. It was only by revelation that Peter declared Him to be "the Messiah, the Son of the Living God" (Mt. 16:16, NEB).

The great Subject of the Gospel narratives has a true human body (Lu. 24:39). He is conceived in the womb of a human mother (Lu. 1:31). He is by her brought forth into the world (Matt. 1:25; Lu. 2:7,11; Gal. 4:4). He is fed at her breast during infancy (Lu. 11:27). As an infant, He is made to undergo the painful rite of circumcision (Lu. 2:21). He is a babe in swaddling clothes lying in a manger (Lu. 2:12). He is nursed in the arms of the aged Simeon (Lu. 2:28). His bodily growth is traced up to His attaining the age of twelve (Lu. 2:40), and from that point to manhood (Lu. 2:52). His presence at the marriage feast in Cana (Jno. 2:2), at the great entertainment at the house of Levi (Lu. 5:29), and at the table of Simon the Pharisee (Lu. 7:36); the supper which He shared at Bethany with the friend whom He had raised from the grave (Jno. 12:2), the Paschal Festival which He desired so earnestly to eat before He suffered (Lu. 22:8,15); the bread and fish of which He partook before the eyes of His disciples in the early dawn on the shore of the Lake of Galilee, even after His resurrection (Jno. 21:12,13)—are witnesses that He came, like one of ourselves, "eating and drinking" (Lu. 7:34).<sup>3</sup>

This historical human, "truly man," died as no other man. We know that death is the penalty for sin (Rom. 5:12), but this man "had never sinned" (2 Cor. 5:21, Norley), had "committed no sin" (1 Pet. 2:22, NAS). On the contrary, He was "holy, innocent, undefiled, separated from sinners" (Heb. 7:26, NAS).

Why then did He die? We answer simply in the words of Scripture. God "made Him who personally knew nothing of sin to be a sin offering for us, so that through union with Him we might come into right standing with God" (2 Cor. 5:21, Williams). Because of His own personal sinlessness, He qualified to become a substitutionary sacrifice for all who have sinned (Rom. 3:23). "This man, after He had offered one sacrifice for sins forever, sat down on the right hand of God" (Heb. 10:12). "Be it known unto you therefore, men and

brethren, that through this man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins" (Acts 13:38).

His death, then, was different from that of other men because He was the only man who qualified to die sacrificially for sins, and through whom forgiveness could be secured. But it was also different and distinctive in that He had authority to handle death. The first man, Adam, died because of sin. He had no other choice. The second man, the last Adam, having no sin of His own to demand the death penalty, chose to "die for our sins" (1 Cor. 15:3).

"I lay down My life that I may take it again.

No one has taken it away from Me, but I lay it down on My own initiative. I have authority to lay it down, and I have authority to take it up again . . ." (Jn. 10:17-18, NAS).

So at the moment of His death He "dismissed His spirit" (Mt. 27:50, Berkeley), so that "in behalf of every one He might taste ['the bitterness'—Goodspeed] of death" (Heb. 2:9, Roth.).

His death, however, was no mere token death. It was a mighty mission and part of the reason God became man. "He also became a human being, so that by going through death as a man he might destroy him who had the power of death, that is, the devil" (Heb. 2:14, JBP). Having accomplished His mission, "God raised Him up again, putting an end to the agony [literally, 'birth pangs'] of death, since it was impossible for Him to be held in its power" (Acts 2:24, NAS).

## THE EXALTED MAN

When God raised Jesus from the dead, He became "the first born from the dead" (Col. 1:18). "He was the first birth out of death" (Knox). Death to Him was not the end, but the birth pangs of a new life! He was the first to enter into the new order which is called "the church of the firstborn" (Heb. 12:23), and became "the head of the body, the church" (Col. 1:18).

Most of us read Peter's pentecostal sermon in the context of subsequent revelation. This is not wrong since the ongoing revelation given to Peter, Paul, and other apostolic men is an explanation and elucidation of the great crisis events of Jesus' earth life, death, resurrection, ascension, and the outpouring of the Spirit. But it must be remembered that along with the dynamic experience they were enjoying, the disciples at Pentecost knew as well that "Jesus of Nazareth, a man" (Acts 2:22) whom they had talked to, listened to, seen and touched, was now sitting "on the throne of highest honor in heaven, next to God" (Acts 2:33, LB). Perhaps it is not possible

<sup>2</sup>"Christ's Two Natures: The Significance of Chalcedon Today," by H. Dermot McDonald, *Christianity Today*, Sept. 26, 1975.

<sup>3</sup>Liddon, H.B., *The Divinity of Our Lord*.

for us to know as keenly the kind of thrill and excitement that inspired them to daily celebrations of holy joy. But the same joy can be ours as we "fix our eyes on Jesus, the Pioneer and Perfecter of our faith" (Heb. 12:2, New International Version).

*There is a Man in the glory.* He is one of our "brethren" (Heb. 2:11) who is at God's right hand. "For there is one God, one mediator also between God and men, *himself man*, Christ Jesus" (1 Tim. 2:5, American Standard Version). "He went into heaven itself, in order to appear now *on our behalf* in the very presence of God" (Heb. 9:24, Goodspeed).

There are some things that our contemplation of the exalted Man should do for us. It should strengthen our faith in God's estimate of man and our assurance of His purpose for man. God made the first man in His image. This image became defaced and distorted. History tells a tragic tale of man's choice to create his own image for which there is no pattern. The result has been a moral crazy-quilt, made up of patches of character and conduct averse to the will of God and vulnerable to satanic manipulation.

Into this came the second man, who is "the express image of God's person" (Heb. 1:3). Living only to do God's will (Heb. 10:9), He stamped history with His holy character and conduct, which, in spite of human and diabolical attempts to destroy, continue to point up the vanity of the cursed caricature, and offer to lost men redemption from their sin, and "conformity to the image of His Son" (Rom. 8:29). God has guaranteed that, through this man whose life was a constant manifestation of His Father's character or "glory" (Jn. 1:14), "He will not be disheartened or crushed, until He has established justice in the earth" (Is. 42:4, NAS), and "the earth will be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea" (Is. 11:9, NAS).

God made the first man to "rule . . . over all the earth" (Gen. 1:26, NAS). This also was vitiated by Adam's disobedience, and the dethroned king was driven from his Edenic headquarters to toil beneath life's crushing load along a road leading to the humiliation of death. Instead of filling the earth with Eden's beauty, he has again and again raped the earth. He has "beat his plowshares into swords, and his pruning hooks into spears" (Joel 3:10) and "each fights against his brother, and each against his neighbor" (Is. 19:2).

However, the second man has been given "all authority . . . in heaven and on earth" (Mt. 28:18, NAS). "He must reign, till He hath put all enemies under His feet" (1 Cor. 15:25). In the light of His "all authority," He has bidden His followers to "go therefore and make disciples of all nations" (Mt. 28:19, NAS). The second man is on the throne of the universe and in this Messiah's day is "King over all the earth" (Zech. 14:9). "Those who receive the abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness will reign in life through the One, Jesus Christ" (Rom. 5:17, NAS).

Joy to the world!  
The Lord is come:  
Let earth receive her King;  
Let every heart prepare Him room  
And heaven and nature sing.

He rules the earth  
With truth and grace,  
And makes the nations prove  
The glories of His righteousness  
And wonders of His love.<sup>4</sup>

The first man was driven from the garden to wrestle with sin, and make his penitent return and approach to God by the blood of bulls and goats. But such sacrifices were, at best, foreshadowings of the Lamb of God and could never "give complete freedom from sin to those who draw near" (Heb. 10:1, Weymouth).

But, the coming of a better sacrifice made possible man's return to perfect relationship with God: "For by a single offering He has forever completely cleansed and perfected those who are consecrated and made holy" (Heb. 10:14, Amp.). And what about such an excellent single sacrifice? What can it be? Again, it is the beloved Man who rises to the need. "But this man [Jesus], after he had offered one sacrifice for sins for ever, sat down on the right hand of God: From henceforth expecting till his enemies be made his footstool" (Heb. 10:12-13).

Beloved Christian, "let us consider Him!" Receive a full pardon through His blood! Be assured that, since He is our Example (1 Pet. 2:21), we can be "conformed to His image"! And let us rise to the challenge of His "all authority," and lifting our vision higher, refuse to draw back from bringing nations under His loving reign and discipline! ♥

<sup>4</sup>Hymn by Isaac Watts, 1674-1748.

## Just Around the Corner

Next month, our entire October *New Wine Magazine* will be a report of the 1977 Conference on Charismatic Renewal in the Christian Churches recently held in Kansas City. In that issue, we'll focus on the highlights of the conference, including some of the most significant messages and events, with some reflections on the effects of this conference on the future of the Body of Christ.