

Behold the Man

Part 1

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[00:00:01] I've taken a text this afternoon, and my text is, Behold the Man, Behold the Man.

These words, as we all know so well, were spoken by one who was much concerned, but, as far as we know, had no faith in the person of whom he spoke. But, no doubt, it was ordered of God that these words should be recorded, and that this afternoon we should think of them, Behold the Man. And, as a man, I want to speak of the Lord Jesus in ten, very briefly, in ten different ways, because of the wonderful way in which he fulfilled the responsibility into which he entered as a man. [00:01:07] The world is spending its time looking for heads, looking for leaders, looking for outstanding persons. But, when we come to the Bible, there is only one man, one man that's worthy, that we should consider him above all others.

First of all, in the scripture which we read this evening, we read, What is man that thou art mindful of him, or the Son of Man that thou visitest him? And, as we pause for a moment to look around, around the world in which we live, to weigh up what man is, man in the flesh is.

[00:02:07] As we see on every hand the terrible result of sin in the world stamped on men, greed, hatred, bitterness, selfishness, well might the scripture say, we feel, What is man that thou art mindful of him? But it was the sovereign purpose of God, was it not? Before the world began, it says, Then I was by him.

I was daily his delight, and my delights were with the sons of men.

And God had a purpose, a purpose in connection with men to magnify his own great name. [00:03:02] And as the psalmist speaks, and as the apostle takes up those words by the Holy Spirit, he says, Or the Son of Man, that thou visitest him. Thou madest him a little lower than the angels. Thou crowned him with glory and honour, and set him over the works of thy hands. Thou hast put all things in subjection under his feet.

And one feels as one reads those words as though looking down, God gazed and gazed until one man, one man stood out above and beyond all others, so that all the rest of the world as it were, as it is, becomes a background for the one of whom the psalmist speaks. [00:04:02] He says, Thou madest him a little lower than the angels.

Thou crowned him with glory and honour, and set him over the works of thy hands.

Thou has put all things under, in subjection, under his feet.

We read that when it says all things, it means all things. He only who has put all things under his feet is excluded from that wonderful expression. We know that as we read these words, of whom, of whom can it speak? Of whom else can the word speak? All things under his feet.

We look back as those who are privileged to have read God's word, and we look up and we see Jesus crowned with glory and honour, God's man.

[00:05:06] And I'm going to call that the seed, the seed.

And secondly, I want to speak about two scriptures which speak about the superiority in origin of God's man. Firstly, in John chapter 1 and verse 30, John the Baptist says, After me cometh a man which is preferred before me, for he was before me.

After me cometh a man which is preferred before me, for he was before me. It was in a time, as all the times of men have been, a time when men are seeking glory for their own name. But here was one of whom the Lord Jesus spoke. [00:06:02] He spoke of the greatness of John the Baptist, the greatness of that great forerunner who was ordained to come before him. John says, After me cometh a man which is preferred before me.

He has a place greater than mine, a place greater than my place, he says, for he was before me. And the Lord Jesus, as he spoke of himself, he could say, Before Abraham was, I am. He was and is the ever-existing one, the one who is from all eternity.

And he is the one who was preferred before John, for he was before him.

And then we read in the epistle to the Galatians, But when the fullness of time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law. [00:07:08] The superiority in origin of the Lord Jesus, the Son of Man, sent forth, sent forth from God.

Not one who was created in time, not one who had a beginning, but one who came forth, sent forth from God. Made of a woman, perfectly man, truly God.

Made of a woman, made under the law. Brought into a place of responsibility and trial before God, a place where he was to be perfectly tested. And in that testing place where he was to shine with all the perfection and beauty of his spotless and perfect manhood. [00:08:02] He was sent forth. God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law.

And then I want to remind you of the words of the Psalmist in Psalm 45, where we have a little of God's appreciation of the Lord Jesus.

Superior, I'm calling this in fulfillment. It says there, Thou art fairer than the children of men. Grace is poured into thy lips. Therefore God hath blessed thee forever. Thou art fairer than the children of men. It wasn't said by man who looks on the outward appearance, but it was said by God, the God who looks into the heart, [00:09:02] who looks into the heart and tries the reins of the heart. And as he looked down upon that blessed man, as he walked here, as he looked down, it could be said of him prophetically, Thou art fairer than the children of men. Grace is poured into thy lips.

We might say of men, what has been poured into the lips of men? Why, bitterness, blasphemy, and other things have come out of men's lips and have marked them before God, but of that one, it says grace is poured into thy lips.

As he was here as a man, and as he faced that hatred which surrounded him, the hatred which came against him without a cause, as he met in the leaders of the chosen people, all that particular bitterness and hatred, [00:10:07] surely there might have been something spoken by him which was brought forth in response to that which he met, but never, never in all his pathway do we find such words.

We find that grace was poured into his lips.

Even those soldiers, we remember so well, who went to take him, they could say of him, never man spake like this man.

Grace is poured into thy lips, therefore God has blessed thee forever.

God has taken up, as it were, this man and set him before him, the one whom he has exalted and honoured, the one in whom his delight is ever found. God has blessed thee forever.

[00:11:03] And then we pass on very quickly to 1 Timothy 3.16, where we find the apostle is dealing with that which is required in the assembly, that which is suitable with God, that which is suitable with God. And the apostle says, great is the mystery of Godliness or piety. Great is the mystery of piety.

If we would see that which is suitable with God, then we've got to turn to God was manifest in flesh. God was manifest in flesh.

There was no one of the sons of men who could satisfy the requirements of God or provide that which was suitable for the holiness of God or that which pleased God. [00:12:03] But God showed that which delighted him by manifesting himself in the Lord Jesus Christ.

God was manifest in the flesh, it says, justified in the spirit. His spirit was ever at one with God that sent him.

He was justified in spirit. He was seen of angels.

It was manifested here before the angelic hosts. God manifested in the flesh. The angels who had never before known the expression of God now saw the fullness of the Godhead residing in the person of the Lord Jesus Christ as he was here below. Seen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles, set forth through all the world, the declaration of God manifest in the flesh, the man, the perfect man.

[00:13:06] Preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up into glory.

There we see the one who was suitable for God, suitable for God. God manifest in the flesh, justified in the spirit.

Seen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up into glory. Final stamp of God's approval. Seen now by the eyes of faith, Jesus, the son of God, son of man, seated

in the right hand of the majesty in the heavens on high. We see Jesus crowned with glory and honor.

But there was a work in God's purposes which was to be done. [00:14:04] And where was the one to be found who should do that work? We read of Caiaphas, the high priest, as he prophesied that it was expedient that one man should die for the people.

So, as we find the fulfillment of God's purposes, it's ever centered in that one man.

Thy purposes, our time began, all centered in the son of man.

And we read, when we come to the epistle to Timothy, we read, for there is one God and one mediator between God and men.

The man, the man Christ Jesus who gave himself a ransom for all to be testified in due time.

[00:15:05] There's one God and one mediator between God and men.

The man Christ Jesus.

A deism had to be found.

One, as we have so often remembered, who could stand and be a mediator to deal with God, as it were, in the great need of man and to represent man before God. This one must be holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners.

Where could one be found?

We hear, we hear the need, as it were, set forth before God. It reminds us, doesn't it, of one in the Old Testament, says, where can a man be found like unto this one? So we find here, where can a man be found who can undertake this great work? [00:16:05] No other, no other can approach near to God to deal with God. None other from heaven could be a representative of man except the blessed Lord Jesus himself. He took not on himself the nature of angels. He took on himself the seed of Abraham.

He was here as a perfect man amongst men.

And as a man, the man Christ Jesus, he was the one mediator between God and men.

The man Christ Jesus, who gave himself a ransom for all.

It wasn't that God or any power in heaven or earth drew him down and brought him unwillingly into this place where he stood as the mediator. [00:17:04] No, it was the one who gave himself a ransom for all to be testified in due time.

Then I want to say that he was set forth as the man.

The verse with which we started this evening, behold the man.

And if we were to, if you were to say this afternoon, select a place where you will see the glory of this man shining forth, you might say, well, let's turn to the tomb of Lazarus to hear that great cry as it goes out, Lazarus, come forth. Let's turn to the scene on the hillside where the bread from that little boy's satchel was used to feed the 5,000. [00:18:05] But no, as the word comes to us this afternoon, it says, and then came Jesus forth wearing the crown of thorns and the purple robe. Pilate said, behold, behold the man.

I believe this afternoon that as we turn to God's word, this is where God would direct our hearts to see his son wearing the crown of thorns, purple robe. Behold the man set forth before the world in ignominy and in shame.

But it was the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, it was his humility, it was his lowliness which so magnified God here, which glorified his name. [00:19:03] And it was in that place when he was led as a lamb to the slaughter and as a sheep dumb before her shearers, so opening not his mouth. Taken from prison and from judgment, who shall declare his generation? For he was cut off out of the land of the living. Behold the man, behold the man set forth.

And then we turn for a moment to the epistle to the Romans, where we find, for as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous. Here we begin to see the fruit of the work of the Lord Jesus.

[00:20:05] And I believe here we see the clearance of man from sin. The one who was the subject man, obedient man, by the disobedience of one, many were constituted sinners.

We know only too well what that means, don't we? We know how that sin came in and death by sin. So death passed upon all men, for all have sinned. We know that when we're born into the world, we're born as children of sinners, a race of sinners, and we know that by not only by nature but by practice, we are every one of us sinners before God. By one man's disobedience many were made sinners, [00:21:01] and by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous.

We trace the pathway of that one who was obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.

That was the measure of his obedience, the word tells us. He was obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.

Let us pause to think, to try to understand a little of what it meant to the blessed Lord to become obedient unto death.

Not only the bitterness of man, not only the enmity of Satan hurled against him, but the hour in which he was forsaken God because of sin, by his obedience, by that which he has done, because he has restored that which he took not away [00:22:03] and has made a way back for those who were sinners, has died and suffered for our sins upon the cross, putting them away by the value of his precious blood which was shed. So through him many are constituted righteous.

God can receive us into his presence and say the claims of my righteousness have been satisfied in the cross of the Lord Jesus Christ. Your sins have been taken and laid on him and he has borne them all. He has been obedient unto death for you and you are in my presence set before me as righteous in Christ, made as though you had never sinned at all in him. By the obedience of one shall

many be made righteous.

[00:23:02] Then we go on to see the satisfying nature of his work.

In Hebrews 10 and verse 12 we read, but this man, but this man. It had been speaking of all that had gone before, hadn't it? The spirit brings before us all the multitude of the sacrifices that had been offered, the blood of bulls and goats, the ashes of an heifer. We think of the thousands of lambs and bullocks and rams that were offered continually on the altars of old and how nothing from amongst them could take away sin or make the conscience of man at peace with God but this man, but this man. Oh, the wonderful satisfaction which God has found in the work of the Lord Jesus Christ, his beloved son, [00:24:04] but this man, after he had offered one sacrifice for sins, forever sat down on the right hand of God from henceforth expecting till his enemies be made his footstool for by one offering he has perfected forever them that are sanctified.

Beloved, the work of Christ is perfect, unassailable.

The precious blood of Christ is so wonderful in its value in sight of God.

Its value will never change or in any way deteriorate throughout all the ages of the ages. The precious blood of Christ shed once for all, once for all. That's what the apostles bringing home to us, the value of the work of Christ and the person of Christ, [00:25:08] the man Christ Jesus who gave himself. So great is he, so great his work, that it's a work which only needed to be done once for all, once for all. And he's perfected forever them that are sanctified.

It's so wonderful that not only is God satisfied in that work and in his son and the Lord Jesus received back into heaven, but a poor sinner such as I am is settled in the presence of God in Christ forever, forever. Brought back, brought not only as a suppliant into his presence but brought in as a partaker of the divine nature, brought into the very family of God, into the adoption of sonship through the work of the Lord Jesus [00:26:05] and established there in a place in which no power on earth or in heaven or in hell can ever shake because it's founded upon the work of Christ once for all, once for all. He comes again, but he comes again not to give himself afresh. No, never let it be said he comes again without sin unto salvation. Blessed be his name. But then we see the saving man.

We turn on to the Corinthians where we see the glory of the fruit of his work. For since by man came death, by man also came the resurrection of the dead.

The first Adam was made a living soul, a last Adam, a quickening spirit. [00:27:01] The first man is of the earth, earthy. The second man is the Lord out of heaven, the Lord out of heaven. Now we see two races brought into contrast, those who are of the race of Adam who brought in death. Those are the descendants of the first Adam.

We see these two races brought side by side, don't we? The first Adam, the head of the first race, a mortal race. A race who heard the word of God in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die. The foe that sinneth it shall die, it shall die. A mortal race, a race who are partakers of that which was pronounced upon the head of the head of the race, Adam. By one man, by man came death.

[00:28:03] By man also came the resurrection.

So we look back and see an empty tomb.

We see a living saviour, a glorified saviour on high.

By man also came the resurrection of the dead.

It was a man who died upon the cross, a perfect man, tempted in all points, like as we are, sin of heart. It was a man who died there, whose life was not forfeit because of sin, but who laid down his life, laid down his life. And in resurrection, beloved, it was a man, remember him, in resurrection. He took of a broiled fish and honeycomb a net before them. He walked with them on the way to Emmaus. [00:29:01] He said to them, handle me and see, for a spirit hath not flesh and bones as ye see me have. A man in resurrection.

Turn to the Gospel of Luke. Read the end of the Gospel of Luke. Trace there the man in resurrection and the man ascending up into heaven. The man, Christ Jesus, glorified. The head of a new race in resurrection. The first things that were in resurrection, he says, in the midst of the assembly will I sing praise unto thee. Remember how he said, except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone. But if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit, much fruit. Blessed Lord and Saviour, who has given himself for us, and who has made us partakers of the fruit of his work, so that we too are sharers in his resurrection life.

[00:30:05] For he gives us, I give unto my sheep eternal life, and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck the nut of my hand. Yes, the first man, Adam, was a living soul.

God breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and he became a living soul. And those who follow as the children of Adam, are living souls, responsible to God. We'll have to, every man will have to answer to God. The natural death of which men are partakers is no end to the responsibility of the man of the living soul. But the second, the last Adam, a quickening spirit.

And there we see the power, the power that resided in the man, the quickening spirit. [00:31:01] The power of God which was manifest in him, that he gives life to as many as God has given him. He says he's a quickening spirit, and he's the head of the new creation. The resurrection family, you might say, the family of the new life. The first man is out of the earth, made of dust.

The second man, the Lord, out of heaven.

There's a contrast for you. The first man is out of the earth, made of dust, made of dust.

The second man is the Lord, out of heaven.

And lastly, we look for a moment at the supreme man in the Acts of the Apostles. Because he has appointed a day in the which he will judge the world in righteousness by his son, no, by that man. [00:32:05] Whom he hath ordained, whereof he hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead, that man. As we consider him, surely it is right that our hearts should bow in worship and thanksgiving to God for the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ. Who for your sakes, he says, for our sakes, became poor, that we through his poverty might be rich.