

Rise Up And Build

"So They said, 'Let us rise up and build,' Then they set their hands to do this good work," Neh. 2:18

May 16, 2021

What Is Man...?

By Everett Hardin

Some of the questions which frequently occur in the human mind are, "Who or what is man?" "Where did he come from?" "Why is he here?" and "Where is he going when this life is over?" These are questions which cannot be ignored by thoughtful people—by those who have any regard for their eternal welfare. The Bible is the only book which can give the true answers to these questions. Neither science, nor philosophy, can aside from revelation, tell us what we should know about these things. Turning then to the Bible, let us consider:

God Is Mindful of Man

"What is man, that thou art mindful of him? And the son of man, that thou visitest him?" (Ps. 8:4). Man is the object of the deepest concern and greatest of love by Almighty God. As a shepherd David had opportunity to study the heavens, he was impressed with their beauty, magnitude, glory, and grandeur (Psa.19:1). He realized the greatness of God, the vastness of the universe, and his own littleness by comparison.

We today know many space facts. The earth revolves around the sun annually covering 558,000,000 miles at more than 63,000 miles per hour. The earth is only one of nine that make up our solar system, each of which also revolves around the sun. Earth makes her journey in one year; Neptune 164 1/2 years; Pluto 248 years. Each of these has its satellites (e.g. Earth has the moon); Jupiter has 12. Yet our solar system is only one of more than three hundred million. We are told that the Sun is so large that if it were hollow like a coconut with a shell 100,000 miles thick, one could still put the earth and the moon at their distance apart from the other (240,000 miles) on the inside! (Adapted from "**The Fool Hath Said...**" By Luther Blackman). Space is beyond man's ability to comprehend! This makes the earth only a little spot in God's great universe of worlds, and man only is a tiny speck on this spot. Yet, God is mindful of him. There must be something about man unspeakably great and of great value! David's question was

“What is it?” The answer is not to be found in the worth of the chemical compounds of man’s physical body nor in anything about the physical body itself, although it is *“fearfully and wonderfully made,”* (Psa. 139:14).

One Who Has An Immortal Soul

Man has an immortal soul made in the image of God (Matt. 16:26). Man is a twofold being of body and spirit — an outward and an inward man (2 Cor. 4:16). According to Jesus one can kill the body but not the soul (Matt. 10:28). Materialists claim that man is wholly mortal and that he is a completely physical being. The body is the fleshly part of man in which the soul or spirit dwells. The soul and spirit refer to the spiritual entity that dwells in the fleshly body...Job stated, *“There is a spirit in man; and the inspiration of the Almighty giveth him understanding”* (Job. 32:8). Zechariah also said, *“The burden of the word of the Lord for Israel saith the Lord, which stretcheth forth the heavens, and layeth the foundation of the earth, and formeth the spirit of man within him,”* Zech. 12:1. Man is not only flesh, blood, and bones, but man is in the image of God. *“And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness,”* Gen. 1:26). God is not like unto material images (Acts 17:29). Our spirits are as immortal as God.

Death is the condition that follows the separation of body and spirit. *“For as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also,”* Jas. 2:26). The spirit doesn’t leave the body and return again. *“Man that is born of a woman is of few days, and full of trouble. He cometh forth like a flower, and is cut down; he fleeth also as a shadow and continueth not,”* Job 14:1-2.

Where Does The Spirit Go?

The spirit does not enter into the grave. Since death is the separation of the body and spirit, the spirit is no longer in the body following death. How can the spirit enter the grave when it is already gone from the body? Paul stated that the body is a tabernacle. Tabernacle is the ordinary word for tent, meaning that the body is a temporary dwelling place (2 Cor.5:1). Our bodies are shells for our spirit. The body returns to the dust, but the spirit doesn’t. *“Then shall the dust return to the earth as it was; and the spirit shall return unto God who gave it* (Eccl. 12:7).

Hades, Paradise, And Tartarus

Two of these words, Hades and Tartarus, together with the word Gehenna, are, in the King James Version, translated by the single term *“hell,”* notwithstanding the fact that they represent three distinct ideas. Gehenna always refers to the place of eternal punishment. Hades, according to Thayer, is the realm of the dead, or the common receptacle of disembodied spirits, and Tartarus, is the place where the wicked are held in the intermediate state. *Gehenna* occurs twelve times in the New Testament; *Hades*, ten times; and *Tartarus* one time (2 Pet. 2:6).

In Acts 2:27, Peter stated that Jesus was not left in Hades, the place of disembodied spirits... Peter also stated in Acts 2:32, *“For David is not ascended into heaven; but he saith himself, the Lord said unto my Lord, sit thou on my right hand.”* David had been dead for nearly a thousand years. If he did not go to heaven, where did he go? He went to the same place that Christ went for those three days. He went to Hades, the realm of disembodied spirits.

In Luke 16:22-31, we are told of two men that lived and died. The poor man, Lazarus, died and went to Abraham’s bosom and was comforted, the rich man died and was tormented. In

Luke 16:23 it is said, “*and in hell (Hades) he lifted up his eyes, and seeth Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom*” Hades, therefore, is divided into two different parts — one part for the righteous dead and one part for the wicked dead (Luke 16:24). The part for the righteous dead is called *Paradise* (Luke 23:43), and the part for the wicked dead is called *Tartarus* (2 Pet. 2:4). Hades, at the last day, will give up the dead which are in it. (Rev. 20:13).

There are three states of man’s conscious existence, the fleshly, the intermediate, and the eternal. In Mark 9:2-5 we have the account of the transfiguration of Jesus. All three states are here represented; the fleshly — the three apostles; the intermediate— Moses; the eternal — Elijah. The meeting and conversation confirm the existence of personality beyond this earthly life, both in the case of Elijah who was taken in a chariot of fire by a whirlwind into heaven and Moses who died, and was buried in the mountains of Moab. The spirit can be “*in*” or “*out*” of the body (2 Cor. 12:1-4).

Man’s Primitive State And Fall

Psalms gives a picture of man’s primitive state. The scope of the dominion given compares with Gen. 1:27,28). Thus man was crowned with the honor of universal supremacy. This is contrary to the concept of the Idolater who bows before earthly creatures, the materialists who reckon man as a chance product of natural forces and related to the ape and gorilla. This contradicts the theory of both organic and theistic evolution. Man was crowned with dominion, glory, and honor at the beginning.

Unfortunately, man fell and thereby lost this crown, at least in a great measure. Read and study his transgression and the changes that followed as a consequence of it (Gen. 3:17-19). Man was separated by his sins. “*Your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid his face from you, that He will not hear*” (Isa. 59:2). He died (spiritually) the day of his transgression. Sin enters the world as a consequence. “*All have sinned and come short of the glory of God*” (Rom. 3:23). Hence, man stands in need of God’s scheme of redemption.

The fleshly state is the state of responsibility. Every responsible person must make a choice between right and wrong when the gospel is heard. “*Be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves*” (Jas. 1:25). While in the fleshly state man has the power of choice, and he may choose his own pathway. “*Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven*” (Matt. 7:21). Jesus warns against formal and mere external worship. The kingdom, or church, where Christ rules in the heart, must be entered *by doing God’s will*; all who remain in that kingdom must do His will. False pretenses are of no avail!
