

WHAT IS MAN?

Psa. 8:4

Intro: Many of you will recognize this question as having come from David in Psa. 8.

You will also remember that this is quoted by the writer of Hebrews in 2:6-8.

But Job asked it before David did. He asked it for another reason, but he asked it. In the bitterness of his soul, wishing that God would leave him alone and wondering why God would take such thought of him even to cause him such distress, he said,

"What is man, that thou shouldest magnify him, and that thou shouldest set thine heart upon him, And that thou shouldest visit him every morning, and test him every moment? How long wilt thou not look away from me, nor let me alone till I swallow down my spittle." Cf. Job 7:

17-19).

Later Eliphaz, one of Job's friends, trying to prove to him that he was suffering because of his sin, said,

"What is man, that he should be clean? And he who is born of a woman, that he should be righteous?" (Job 15:14).

And still later Bildad echoed some of the same sentiment:

"How then can man be justified with God? Or how can he be clean that is born of a woman? Behold even to the moon, and it shineth not; yea, the stars are not pure in his sight. How much less man, who is a worm; and the son of man, who is a worm?" (Job 25:4-6).

When Solomon was getting ready to dedicate the Temple, in his prayer he said,

"Now then, O Lord God of Israel, let thy word be verified, which thou hast spoken unto thy servant, David. But will God really dwell with men on the earth? Behold, heaven and the heaven of heavens cannot contain thee; how much less this house which I have built!" (2 Chron. 6:17, 18).

And then Isaiah, overwhelmed with the greatness of God, is forced to exclaim,

"Behold, the nations are like a drop of a bucket, and are counted as the small dust of the balance; behold, he taketh up the coasts as a very little thing. And Lebanon is not sufficient to burn, nor its beasts sufficient for a burnt offering. All nations before him are as nothing; and they are counted to him less than nothing, and vanity" (Isa. 40: 15-17).

Thus, he was much like David in Psa. 8.

David gets back to it in Psa. 144 again as he thinks of the

the glory of God. These are his words:

"Lord, what is man, that thou takest knowledge of him? Or the son of man, that thou makest account of Him? Man is like to vanity; his days are like a shadow that passeth away" (Psa. 144:3, 4).

And the question has been asked in other ways in different parts of Scripture. Either through man's insignificance, or through his sinfulness, he is made to appear at times as unworthy of any mercy from God or any part in the plan of God.

How would you answer that question? We know how the world answers it. The humanists would make a god out of man. They would glorify man. To them there is no greater. He does not need to call upon God for help (if there is One) because he can do all things for himself. He may take time, but he will conquer all things ultimately.

This question needs an answer -- and it needs the right answer!  
If we are wrong here, we cannot be right any place else. Let us take the Bible for our answer.

#### I. MAN IS A CREATED BEING.

There is nothing that has ever been written that is more authoritative than Gen. 1:26, 27 when we are asking where man came from and why!

"And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness; and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth. So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them."

The words, "image" and "likeness," set man apart from all other created beings. There was a similarity between God and men that no other creatures share -- not even the angels!

He was like God. He possessed a spiritual nature. He was only a shadow of what He would eventually become, but the foundation was there for a race of people who would one day share in a greater likeness to God.

His relationship with God and his supremacy over all of creation marked out man as the greatest of all of His creatures, and destined for the greatest glory!

Ill. Sea World in San Diego. What an illustration as to what man could do at one time!

But unfortunately the story does not end there.

## II. MAN IS A FALLEN CREATURE.

What do we mean by this?

We mean two things:

- 1) That he has fallen away from God.
- 2) That he has fallen into sin -- with all of its dire consequences.

The Bible would never have been written as it is if this were not the case.

Man, when Adam sinned, became a sinner by nature.

David was forced back to this truth when he was confessing his sin to God.

"Behold, I was shaped in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me" (Psa. 51:5).

Listen to Psa. 58:3-5,

"The wicked are estranged from the womb; they go astray as soon as they are born, speaking lies. Their poison is like the poison of a serpent; they are like the deaf adder that stoppeth her ear, Which will not hearken to to the voice of charmers, charming never so wisely"

But man is also a sinner by choice.

Isaiah knew this. Cf. Isa. 53:6a. Read the first 2 $\frac{1}{2}$  chapters of Romans. And then notice:

- 1) Rom. 3:23.
- 2) Rom. 5:12.

When we add to this man's rebellion against God and his utter inability to change himself, we have the darkest possible picture to present to every man about himself -- as it is also true of each of us.

Any counsellor who ignores this truth cannot possibly be right in his solution.

But must we stop here? What a tragedy if we discover this we can say nothing else. No, there is more.

## III. MAN IS A SINFUL CREATURE WHO IS LOVED BY GOD.

"For God so loved the world" goes back, back into human history, long before the cross, to the very beginning and even before the beginning to state a marvelous truth that has never changed and will never change. Upon this one fact the only hope for men hangs.

Perhaps no place is it stated more clearly than in Rom. 5:8,  
 "But God commendeth his love toward us in that, while  
 we were yet sinners, Christ died for us."

He gets back to this same theme in Eph. 2 after telling in  
 the first three verses what man is by nature. And then he  
 writes in v. 4, and v. 5b,

"But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love with  
 which he loved us, Even when we were dead in sins . . ."

There is no better news than this.

#### IV. MAN IS SAVABLE.

In spite of the love of God, man is under divine judgment.  
 He does not have to do anything to be condemned; our Lord  
 said that he is "condemned already" (John 3:18).

John the Baptist said,

"The wrath of God abideth on him." Cf. John 3:36.

And in rebuking the Pharisees he asked that soul-searching  
 question,

"Who hath warned you to flee from the wrath to come?"  
 (Matt. 3:7).

The writer of Hebrews says,

"And as it is appointed men once to die, but after this  
 the judgment, So Christ was once offered to bear the  
 sins of many" (Heb. 9:27, 28a).

People may not like to talk about being saved, but that does  
 not change the situation at all. Christ died to save us  
 from eternal punishment. He is the only remedy for our  
 sinful condition and estate. Cf. Acts 4:12; 16:30, 31.

One more point remains.

#### V. REDEEMED MEN (and only these) WILL BE CHANGED INTO THE LIKE- NESS OF GOD.

It ought to be a source of great encouragement for us to  
 know tonight that God never gives up on anything that He  
 starts to do. He began at creation to bring into a being a  
 race of people who would be like He is, and He is going to  
 do just that!

Cf. Rom. 8:28-30; 1 John 3:1, 2.

Concl: "What is man?" We have seen God's answer tonight -- not  
 all of the details, but the main truths. And this is  
 the only answer. It is what we learn from the Word of God. And  
 only as we act on this, acknowledging our need of Christ and  
 trusting Him, that our need for God will be met.