

GOD'S NEW MAN, WHERE ARE YOU?

We used this title in the 2008 issue of *Living Waters Newsletter*, answering the question from the book of Acts, considering only Acts 2:42. The term "new man" is translated "new self" in Colossians 3:10 and is said to be created by God. Ephesians 4:24 states that the "new man" has been "created in the likeness of righteousness and holiness of truth," and Galatians 6:15 and II Corinthians 5:17 states that he is a "new creation." Romans 6:4 shows baptized Christians are to walk in "newness of life." Based on these scriptures "God's new man" is a subject that should not be neglected nor overlooked. However most works of theology give it little attention. Dr. Arthur G. Custance, an English Theologian and Scientist, in his book *The Seed of The Woman* makes this interesting observation on Genesis 3:9: "When God cried out 'Adam, where are you?' God was not searching for fallen man (whose whereabouts He surely knew) but for unfallen Adam who had simply disappeared. It was Adam as created, physically immortal and spiritually alive, who had vanished." In another beginning, on the day of Pentecost, God created another man. The words of Paul tell us that "...by abolishing in his flesh the enmity, which is in the Law of commandments contained in ordinances, that in Himself He might create of the two (that is Jew and Gentile) one new man" (Eph. 2:15). In the symbolism of the New Testament the church is pictured as a woman, the bride of Christ, but in this case the church is said to be God's "New Man".

When God, through His son, brought to fruition the process of restoring fallen man to his original creation physically immortal and spiritually alive, He set forth His son, Jesus, as the last Adam (I Cor. 15:45-47). Note carefully what these verses reveal to us. Paul speaks of the *first man*, Adam, and the *last Adam*. There will never be another Adam, therefore there will never be another federal head of a race of people as both Adam and Jesus were; Adam the head of a fallen and sinful race and Jesus Christ the head of a restored and righteous race. He then speaks of *first man* and *the second man* (not the last man). This says if there is a second man there will be more to come. This is seen to be true in Hebrews 2:10 where God speaks of "bringing many sons to glory." The *last Adam*, the *second man*, is creating a new race of people who will become spiritually alive and physically immortal. That which God could not find in Adam will be found in Christ and his people. Thus, God has created a new man with Christ as the head and the church as the body. God has placed His new man, not in a garden, but spiritually in heavenly places and physically in the earth. As Adam was to represent God in a world filled with righteousness, so God's new man, the church, is to represent God in a world filled with evil.

What is God's new man's relationship to the world of sin, sickness, evil and depravity? Various answers as to the church's purpose are being given today by the religious leadership and the one summed up in the letter the Apostle Peter penned to encourage first century Christians is either not understood, not taken seriously, or ignored completely. He wrote: "You are being built into a spiritual house to be a *holy priesthood*, offering spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ...you are chosen people, a *royal priesthood*, a holy nation, a people belonging to God, that you may declare the praise of Him who

called you out of darkness into His wonderful light" (I Pet. 2:5, 9). The Apostle John confirms this in writing to the churches in Asia Minor, by stating; Christ "has made us to be a *kingdom, priests* to his God and Father" (Rev. 1:6).

The revelation of God's people being a kingdom of priest is not new. The apostles knew what the Old Testament declared to be the purpose of the people of God. "Now if you obey me fully and keep my covenant, then out of all nations you will be my treasured possession. Although the whole earth is mine, you will be for me a *kingdom of priests* and a holy nation" (Exodus 19:5, 6). Israel was to be a kingdom of priests to the other nations of the world. But the Apostle Paul shows how they failed to fulfill God's purpose as priests (Rom. 2:19, 20). This idea of a priesthood did not originate with Israel, it is embodied in the nature of Adam's purpose in the beginning. "Then God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden to *cultivate* it and *keep* it" (Gen 2:15). The word "cultivate" is the Hebrew word *'abed* meaning tend or till. The word "keep" is the word *shamar* meaning to guard (from *The Hebrew-Aramaic Dictionary*). After Adam's sin God banished him from the garden and he was to "cultivate (*'abed*) the ground from which he was taken" (Gen. 3:23), but he lost his office of guardian (*shamar*) of the garden as God "drove man out, and at the east of the garden of Eden He stationed the cherubim, and the flaming sword which turned in every direction to guard (*shamar*) the way to the tree of life..." (Gen. 3:24). These two words (guard and keep) are only once used together again in scripture as descriptive of the duties of the priests of Israel. God's word to Aaron was: "So shall you attend (*shamar*) to the obligations of the sanctuary and obligations of the altar...you and your sons with you shall attend (*shamar*) to your priesthood for everything concerning the altar and inside the veil, and you are to perform service (*'abed*). I am giving you the priesthood as a bestowed service (*'abed*), but the outsider who comes near shall be put to death" (Numbers 18:5, 7). The job of the priests was to represent God to the people and guard their work against all dangers and against unlawful intruders.

Concerning Israel's failure, Jesus stated: "Therefore I tell you that the kingdom of God will be taken away from you and given to a nation producing the fruit of it" (Matt. 21:43). This nation is the people of God of whom it is said "You are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people of God's own possession, that you may proclaim the excellencies of Him who has called you out of darkness into His marvelous light" (I Peter 2:9), that is the church, God's New Man. Therefore the purpose of the church, as God's holy priesthood, is to proclaim His excellencies to the world by preaching the gospel (*'abed*, cultivate the earth), and protect (*shamar*) the world "against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual host of wickedness in the heavenly places" (Eph. 6:12). Adam and Israel failed because they did not take the word spoken by God seriously. Will the New Man make the same mistake by not taking the word of God seriously? Will God say to the New Man, "where are you?" The church in Corinth was in danger of being deceived by the serpent as Eve was deceived. Paul feared that their "minds should be led astray from the simplicity and purity of Christ" (II Cor. 11:3). He further states that "Adam, not being deceived, but the woman being quite deceived fell into transgression" (I Tim. 2:14). This means that

Adam, not being deceived, made the deliberate choice to follow Eve for reasons we do not know. This is why sin came into the world, because of Adam and not Eve. By this disobedience, they lost their fellowship with God and died spiritually which led to their physical death and physical death being passed upon all men. Thus, God called "Adam, where are you?" In plain language "do you realize where you are in relationship to my purpose and plan for your life?"

After God's work of creation in the book of Genesis, He is not said to have "created" anything else until we read of His new creation in the New Testament. He created a new man in Christ (Eph.2:15). As such Christ, being the image of God (Col 1:15, 3:10; II Cor.4:4) His people, God's new man, the church, is to "be conformed to the image of His son" (Rom.8:29; II Cor. 3:18). Therefore, the new man, the church, stands in the same place now as Adam stood in the original creation. As His new man, we are given the same mandate that God gave Adam. As the new man, we are to accomplish God's purpose by doing the three things Adam failed to do: 1. bear the image of God, 2. Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth and 3. rule over the earth. How is this to be done and is the church today, as God's new man, accomplishing this purpose?

1. Bear the image of God: To "bear the image of God" is to represent God in the world. From the beginning of creation, it was God's purpose to have a representative upon the earth, thus man was "created in the *image* of God." Because of Adam's sin there was no *image* of God portrayed in the earth until Christ came. He was the only man who could say "he that has seen me has seen the Father" (John 14:9). Jesus could say this because "I am in the Father and the Father is in me" (John 14:10, 11). The Scriptures declare that Christ was the "image of the invisible God," and "the exact representation of His nature" (II Cor. 4:4; Col 1:15; Heb. 1:3). The Believer was "predestined to be conformed to the *image* of His son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren" (Rom. 8:29). God, having reconciled the believer "to Himself through Christ, gave us the ministry of reconciliation" and made us "ambassadors for Christ, as though God were entreating through us; we beg you *in Christ's stead* be reconciled to God" (II Cor. 5:18, 20). To represent God in the world and to "*stand in Christ's stead*" is an awesome task God has given the church. Instead of Christ being physically upon the earth his people represent him and should be doing and saying the same things he would be doing if he were here in the flesh. The church, as his body, is "his presence" in the world. In the book of Acts Luke's first words were: "The first account I composed, Theophilus, about all that Jesus *began* to do and teach until he was taken up..." (Acts 1:1). The three and half years of his earthly ministry was only the beginning of his ministry. He continues his ministry through his church. I Peter 4:11 states "If any man speaks, let him speak as it were the utterances of God." The believer, as God's new man, stands in the world instead of Christ and makes it possible for God to "entreat," or speak, to the world through the believer. The new man, then bears the image of God in the world. Is this what today's church is doing?

2. Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth. As Adam was created physically immortal and spiritually alive, perfect in the flesh, in the image of God, he was to fill the earth with descendants in his likeness. However, when Adam sinned and death entered the world all his descendants were "made sinners" (Rom. 5:19), and the result is "the whole world lies in the power of the evil one" (I John 5:19). But God's purpose is not defeated. The last Adam will do what the first Adam failed to do. There

will be a new race of people who "have borne the image of the earthly" but will now "bear the image of the heavenly" (I Cor. 15:49). The earth, then, will be filled by evangelism and the obedience of "many made righteous" (Rom. 5:19). What Adam failed to do God's new man is to accomplish. Is this what today's church is doing?

3. Rule over the earth: The common belief in the church today, especially among prophesy preachers, is that Christ is not reigning. The popular belief is he will not begin to reign upon earth until he returns "to set up his millennial kingdom in Jerusalem and rule the earth for a thousand years." Then there is the idea that he could not be reigning now due to there being so much evil in the world. Satan must be reigning, not Christ. However, the Scriptures teach the opposite. When God raised him from the dead He "seated him on His right hand in the heavenlies far above all rule and authority and power and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this age but in the one to come" (Eph.1:20, 21). Daniel saw this in prophetic vision when he saw "One like a son of man coming, and he came up (the ascension) to the Ancient of Days and was presented before Him, and to him was given dominion, glory and a kingdom, that all the peoples, nations and men of every language might serve him" (Dan. 7:13,14). The Apostle Paul declares "he must reign until he has put all enemies under his feet. The last enemy that will be abolished is death" (I Cor 15:25). As to the evil in the world the learned theologians ignore the fact that he is ruling "in the midst of his enemies" (Psalm 110:2).

No wonder the idea of our fulfilling a kingly role is foreign to the church today. If we can't believe that Christ is now reigning how can we possibly say that we are reigning? We cannot believe and accept this fact because we, in common with all men, suppress the truth and believe myths (Rom. 1:18). Because of sin we believe that those who wield external power are the rulers of this world, but that simply is not the case. Only the church and the church alone has been given power and dominion (Dan. 7:18,27) and if we don't like the way things are going we have only ourselves to blame. No one nation or one man has ever been able to rule the world. The wicked just cannot get it together and rule. Everything in our experience rebels against the notion that we are kings. We like the idea of going to heaven, but rebel against the fact that we will judge (rule) the world and (get this!) angels (I Cor. 6:2,3). We hold on to the idea the world is going to be destroyed and rebel at the fact that it will be redeemed (Rom. 8:21) and restored to the subjection of man (Heb. 2:5-10). We see no need of any rule being established on earth, so we see no need of a King now, let Jesus do that when he returns. Of course, such topics as the kingship of Christ and the reign of the saints are of little interest to today's average Christian.

The Psalmist says he will "rule in the midst of (his) enemies" (Psalm 110:1-2). If the church is his body, as his new man, and he is reigning, then it follows that the church shares in his reign here and now. If our "entreaties and prayers, petitions and thanksgivings being made for all men, for kings and all who are in authority" can enable the kings and authorities to so rule "in order that we may lead tranquil and quiet life in all godliness and dignity" (I Tim. 2:1,2) are we not sharing in his reign? Proverbs 16:7 says "if a man's ways please the Lord, He makes even his enemies to be at peace with him." When the church is faithful God changes men. This is how Christ is reigning through his church. God did not create a new man so he could walk around on streets of gold, but to do what Adam failed to do.