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THE MAN WHO WAS THE MESSIAH

“The woman said to him ‘I know the Messiah is coming (He that is called Christ); when that one comes, he will declare all things to us.’ Jesus said to her, ‘I who speak to you am he’” (John 4:25, 26). Andrew, Simon Peter’s brother announced to him “We have found the Messiah” (John 1:41). The word “Messiah” and “Christ” means “anointed one”. In Daniel the Messiah is called “the Prince” and is to be “cut off” (Dan. 9:25, 26). The earthly name given the Christ was *Jesus* and the word “*Christ*” or “*Messiah*” identifies him as the Anointed of God to be the Savior (Luke 2:11).

God’s plan to send a Savior into the world began in the garden of Eden, or more precisely before the world was created as Christ was “the lamb slain from the foundation of the world” (Rev. 13:8 KJV). All “whose name has not been written in the book of the Lamb that was slain from the creation of the world” (NIV). All “whose name has not been written from the foundation of the world in the book of life of the lamb that was slain (NASV). On the sixth day God created man and in that account we are told the purpose God had in creation: “Then God said, ‘Let us make man in our image, according to our likeness and let them rule...and God said to them ‘Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth, and subdue it, and rule...over every living thing that moves on the earth’” (Gen. 1:26, 28). As to the words *man* and *them* Eric Sauer in his classic book *The King of the Earth* states that these words “in a collective sense refers to *mankind*. We must not teach that God perhaps purposed, humanly speaking, that Adam, alone or in union with his wife, would perfectly implement the call to be the redeemer of the earth. The task with all its implications applies rather to him as the ancestor and organic representative of his whole posterity (Rom. 5:12-18; I Cor. 15:22; Heb. 7:9,10). Therefore it says first, ‘Be fruitful and multiply, and peopole the earth,’ and only then does God add, ‘and subdue it; and have dominion...over every living thing’” (Gen. 1:28).

God’s purpose is that man “subdue” the earth and “rule” over it. *Strongs Hebrew Lexicon* defines “subdue” as to bring into subjection, and “to bring into bondage”. The word is used 32 times in the Old Testament. Examples: Numbers 32:32 and Deuteronomy 9:3 where the Lord subdued the land of Canaan when Israel entered. In the New Testament it is used three times and its root sword is “lord”: Mark 5:4 the Gerasenes demoniac could not be subdued, and Acts 19:16 a man with an evil spirit subdued and over powered seven Jewish exorcists. I Peter 5:3 translates the word not “lording” it over the flock of God. Thus Adam (and his posterity) was not only to till the earth, but he was to get it under control and rule over it. God’s purpose in creation of both the earth and man is seen in the verses pertaining to God’s instruction to man as to what he was to do: “The Lord God took the man and put him into the garden of Eden to cultivate it and keep it” Gen. 2:15). The Hebrew word for cultivate is *abad* meaning to “tend or till” and the word keep is *shamar* meaning to “guard or take care of.” It is interesting that these same two words are used in Numbers 17:5-7 in describing the work of the Levitical priests. They were to serve (*abad*) in the tabernacle and to guard (*shamar*) it from any outside intruders. So since Christians are a “royal priesthood” (I Pet. 2:9) our job is the same today; to till the earth (evangelism) and guard the church and the world against the principalities of darkness (something Adam failed to do). When Adam sinned he was “sent out from the Garden of Eden, to cultivate (*abad*) the ground from which he was taken. So He drove the man out; and at the east of the garden of Eden He stationed the cherubim, and the flaming sword which turned every direction to guard (*shamar*) the way to the tree of life” (Gen. 3:23, 24). Man lost his position as guard but retained the job of cultivating, but it was a fallen world and not the garden that he was to cultivate.

The earth was not a “garden of Eden” and since Adam was not created in Eden (but Eve was) “God planted a garden toward the east, in Eden; and there He placed the man whom He had formed” (Gen. 2:8). So Adam saw the eath as it was outside of the garden. His removal to the garden is twice emphasized (Gen. 2:8, 15). One translation of verse 8 is: “The Lord God *took hold* of the man and *sat him down* in the garden of Eden.” We are not told what the earth was like outside the garden, but when Adam left Eden he was told: “Cursed is the ground because of you...both thorns and thistles it shall grow...” (3:17-19). When Adam sinned it affected all his descendants: “through the one transgression there resulted condemnation of all men...for by the transgression of one the many died...” (Rom. 5:18,15). So with the earth cursed and man could not now fulfill God’s purpose, how could this situation be remedied and God’s purpose in creation be realized? It was man’s sin that brought the catastrophe upon Adam’s race and the curse upon the earth. Because of sin and alienation from God man could never remedy the problem and restore the creation. God could destroy His creation and start over but since He had given dominion to man it was man’s problem to solve. Man, having sinned, could never bring about correction and fulfill God’s purpose. It seemed as if Satan had triumphed and God’s purpose in creation had failed and for man to fulfill His purpose he had to be redeemed from sin, and the curse on the world would have to be lifted. God’s original purpose was to be reached without sin so now it must be accomplished through victory over sin, that is, by redemption, not only redemption and restoration of man but also the redemption and restoration of the earth. Also, man had to triumph over Satan, who had caused the problem in the first place. Since man was to “rule over...every living thing that creeps upon the earth” (Gen. 1:28), he was to have rule over Satan. However, man by his disobedience to God had obeyed Satan and had “handed over” his dominion to Satan (Luke 4:6). Instead of destroying Satan along with the creation God placed everything under a curse (Gen. 3:14-19) and promised His plan would still be fulfilled by man. He declares this in these words: “I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your seed and her seed; he shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise his heel” (Gen. 3:15).

The head of Satan would be bruised by the “seed of the woman” that is a man. But man had sinned and was in no position to deal with Satan. Before he sinned man had dominion over Satan and all the earth. Now he was under the dominion of sin (and Satan) so there was no way he could fulfill God’s purpose. Yet God was to restore all things through a man and there was not, and never would be one

of Adam's posterity capable of the task. God could have created another man who, like Adam would be sinless, but he would not be "the seed of the woman" and what would keep him, in a world that was cursed and under the dominion of Satan, from doing the same thing Adam did? There had to be a man who was not of the nature of Adam because all men were "by nature children of wrath" (Eph. 2:3). In order to fulfill God's intention there would have to be a man that met the criteria of God when He said "Let us make man in our image, according to our likeness" (Gen. 1:26), or a "last Adam" (1 Cor. 15:45) who would be "holy, innocent undefiled, and separated from sinners" (Heb. 7:26). This can only refer to a perfect, sinless man. It was only after the creation of man that God declared that all He had made was *very good*. This means that all creation, including man, was perfect. So in all Old Testament History the only perfect man to have ever lived was Adam; and he is the only one during this period of history who is called "*son of God*" (Luke 3:38), so the only way a man could be perfect and restore God's creation was that he be a "Son of God". Therefore, a son of God could not be born of earthly parents. In the Scriptures it is the father, not the mother, who begets children. They are begotten by the father and born of the mother. The prophets, who did not know "what person or time the Spirit of Christ within them was indicating..." (1 Pet. 1:11) spoke of one who would be born, not of earthly parents, but of a virgin: "Behold, a virgin shall be with child, and shall bear a son and they shall call his name Immanuel, which translated means 'God with us'" (Isa. 7:14; Matt. 1:23); "For a child will be born to us, a son will be given." (Isa. 9:6). The angel Gabriel announced to *Mary* (not to Joseph as he had announced the birth of John the Baptist to Zacharias, (Luke 1:13). "Behold, you will conceive in your womb, and bear a son, and you shall name him Jesus...the Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; and for that reason the holy thing begotten shall be called the son of God" (Luke 1:31, 35). In the genealogies it always stated the birth of a son was born to the father, not the mother, but concerning Jesus it is declared: "Matthan begat Jacob and Jacob begat Joseph" but does not say "and Joseph begat Jesus" rather "Jacob begat Joseph the husband of Mary of whom was born Jesus, who is called Christ" (Matt.1:16.17). Contrast this with the announcement of John the Baptist: "Thy wife, Elizabeth, shall bare *thee* a son" (Luke 1:13). There is no *to thee* in the announcement to Joseph; rather: "...and she shall bear a son" (Matt. 1:21). Jesus was not a son born of Joseph rather, "*She* shall bring forth a son". Jesus was not a son brought forth to Joseph but to the Father in Heaven.

By his virgin birth Jesus was a new creation, a new Adam. He, like Adam was a miracle of creation directly from God, but, un-like the first Adam who had no link with any earthly human being. Christ, the last Adam (1 Cor 15:45) was linked to humanity by his birth to Mary. The first Adam was tempted in Paradise, and fell; the last Adam was tempted in the wilderness and began the restoration of what man had lost in the garden. A contrast between the two Adams is seen in 1 Corinthians 15:45-49 and Romans 5:14-21. The reason for the curse placed upon both man and the earth was the action of one man; so also the lifting of the curse and the restoration of God's purpose was by the action of one man. "Since by a man came death, by a man also came the resurrection of the dead. As in Adam all die, so also in Christ all shall be made alive." (1 Cor. 15:21, 22). "So as through the one man's disobedience the many were made sinners, even so through the obedience of one the many will be made righteous" (Rom. 5:19). We saw in Genesis 1:26 man was created in the image of God. It was God's purpose that man reflect this image upon the earth, however sin so marred this image that it was lost and man "exchanged the glory of the incorruptible God for an image in the form of corruptible man..."(Rom. 1:23). It looked again as if Satan had won and the purpose of God was nullified. However in the last Adam this image was restored. Christ was declared to be "the image of the invisible God" (Col. 1:15). This is the image the people of God are predestined to become (Rom. 8:29) and they are to "put on the new self who is being renewed to a true knowledge according to the image of the One who created him" (Col. 3:10). As Christ was at one time the only "son of God" upon the earth, He is now "bringing many sons to glory..." (Heb. 2:10). So, in Christ, the church is being created into one new man (Eph. 2:15). No wonder Peter proclaimed that "Jesus the Nazarene (is) a man attested to you by God" (Acts 2:22). The Canadian scientist and writer, Arthur C. Custance in his book *The Seed of the Woman* stated it this way: "What the first Adam might have become in an unfallen world, the last Adam did become in a fallen one. The innocence of the first Adam was destroyed and his manhood lost by his disobedience. The innocence of the last Adam was turned into virtue and his manhood was made perfect by his obedience."

It was difficult for the ruling Jews to accept that this man from Nazareth could be their Messiah. Peter, on the day of Pentecost, exposes their error by stating: " You men of Israel, listen to these words: Jesus the Nazarene, a *man* attested to you by God with miracles and wonders and signs which God performed through him in your midst, just as you yourselves know, this *man* delivered up by the predestined plan of God, you nailed to the cross and put him to death and God raised him again" (Acts 2:22-23). He then says: "Therefore let all the house of Israel know for certain that God made him both Lord and Christ—this Jesus whom you crucified" (Acts 2:36). It was the resurrection that proved Jesus was the son of God (Rom. 1:3, 4) and this became a stumbling block to the Jews (1 Cor. 1:23). All that Jesus did while upon the earth he did as a man. Peter shows how he was able to do it as a man: "You know of Jesus of Nazareth, how God anointed him with the Holy Spirit and with power, and how he went about doing good, and healing all who were oppressed by the devil, for God was with him (Acts 10:38). The life and works of Jesus shows us what man could have done if sin had not entered. C.S. Lewis in *Miracles* stated: "Whatever may have been the powers of unfallen man, it appears that those of the redeemed man will be almost impossible."

Not only was the Messiah the means of redemption of man, but also the redemption of the earth. It is through him the curse upon the earth will be lifted. "The earnest expectation of the creation waits for the revealing of the sons of God. For the creation was subjected to vanity, not of its own will, but by reason of Him who subjected it, in hope that the creation itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glory of the children of God...the whole creation groans and travails in pain together until now"

(Romans 8:19-22). God's purpose in creating both man and the earth shall be fulfilled. The earth will not be destroyed, rather it will be redeemed.