

**Zechariah (2)**

—H. Rossier

**The Book of Visions** — Chapter 1:7-Chapter 6

## The First Vision

*Time and Characteristics of the Visions*

Except for the introductory verses (1:1-6), the prophecy of Zechariah is divided into two parts. Better put: two books. The first one starts with chapter 1:7 and ends with chapter 6. The second book is found in chapters 7 to 14. Each of these two books is specially dated.

The first book starts with: *"Upon the four and twentieth day of the eleventh month, which is the month Shebat, in the second year of Darius, came the word of Jehovah unto Zechariah the prophet, the son of Berechiah, the son of Iddo, saying, I saw by night [or: this night]."* Important to note is that Zechariah apparently had all eight visions described in Chapters 1:7 to Chapter 6 in a single night. Each heart that thoughtfully considers the prophecies will find itself in the same circumstances as the prophet. To understand the future events, we must be well aware that the world in which we live is covered with deepest darkness. Yet God does not leave us in it without help: the lamp of "the prophetic word" is leading us. True, this lamp does not give us the brightest light God's Word offers us, for that same Word brings us into the full light of His presence. If, however, we want to learn about the future of the world, we cannot do without prophecy.

Before we begin to consider the first vision, we want to make a remark, significant for the right understanding the prophecy of Zechariah. We have seen how only relatively few captives from the tribes of Judah and Benjamin had left Babel for Jerusalem to rebuild the temple there. After a forced interruption of the work, they had, at the command of the prophet, resumed the work. However, the condition of those who remained of Judah — we will use the word "remnant" as little as possible to identify them — was such that God could not acknowledge them as His people. The last prophets of the Old Testament never referred to those returned from Babel as "God's people." God had not yet recalled the "Lo-Ammi" (not My people), that He had caused Hosea to pronounce as judgment. He will only do so when, in a future day, a new nation will arise out of the true remnant of Israel. Zechariah, therefore, viewed the history of the people from a very restricted perspective. He spoke only of Jerusalem in its relationship with Judah. It is as if the Lord's perspective became narrower and narrower, to finally rest only upon Jerusalem. In those days, Jerusalem was but a miserable ruin. Yet, faithful to His promises, the Lord wanted to cause the shining of His future glory to emanate from this city. In Zechariah's days the temple was built again, but it was not yet the temple of the Messiah; the city was rebuilt, but it was not yet the city of "the great King"; the people lived in the land without yet being "the willing people" that God will recognize during the glorious Millennium.

*Between the Myrtle Trees.*

In the first vision, the prophet saw *"a man riding upon a red horse."* The eleventh verse tells us that this man was "the Angel of the Lord." Throughout the Old Testament, that name stands for the figurative representation of Christ before His manifestation as Man in this world. The red horse He rode upon and the horses which followed Him were the spirits who governed the realms according to God's precepts. The spirit of the Angel of the Lord led all other spiritual powers which God used to that end.<sup>1</sup>

The Angel stood *"among the myrtle-trees."* The four places in Scripture where myrtle trees are mentioned all relate to the restoration that follows upon the judgment:

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<sup>1</sup> *The colour red covers both the idea of judgment, as well as that of cleansing through grace (Isa. 63:2; Num. 19:2). The same principle we encounter in the rams' skins of the tabernacle. The ram portrays Christ in His consecration to God (Ex. 29:22); the rams' skins dyed red (Ex. 26:14; 36:19) speak either of cleansing or of judgment. If this is correct, the colour of the Angel of the Lord's horse would portray judgment linked with cleansing by grace, which is the purpose of judgment. The red horses which followed later would sooner have the character of the cleansing through grace which follows the judgment. Then the red horses mentioned in Chapter 6:2 (picturing the Babylonian empire) would portray the judgment.*

In Nehemiah 8:15 the part of the people who have returned is called upon to bring branches of olive trees, *myrtle* trees, and palms to celebrate the feast of tabernacles.

In Isaiah 41:19 we read that the Lord will make an end to the sad condition of Israel, restoring it, and causing to grow the cedar, acacia, *myrtle*, and oleaster in the wilderness.

In Isaiah 55:13 we read that when all judgments are passed: "Instead of the thorn shall come up the cypress, and instead of the nettle shall come up the *myrtle*; and it shall be to Jehovah for a name, for an everlasting sign [that] shall not be cut off."

In Zechariah 1:11, which is thus the fourth place, the myrtles had to remind the prophet that restoration would come when the horses had fulfilled their task. First, however, *the Angel* stood between the myrtles. He had His eye uninterruptedly focused on the blessings of the last days, the true feast of tabernacles with which Israel's history will end (Ch. 14:16). The myrtles stood "*in the low valley*." This suggested that restoration was still far off, and that a lot had to take place first.

Isn't it very important for us as well to consider the Angel of the Lord who stood between the myrtles? Today we know Him in the Person of the Lord Jesus who does not continue to look at our ruin, but who rejoices at the coming moment in which He will present His bride to Himself "having no spot, or wrinkle, or any of such things." That thought contains a precious encouragement for our souls.

### *The Symbolism of the Horses*

"*Behind Him were red, bay, and white horses.*" We already observed that the horses are symbolic presentations of persons who have received a charge from God, whatever position they may have otherwise: kings, princes, governments, angels, etc. Under Christ's leadership they execute God's counsels in governing the kingdoms which they, so to speak, represent. The horses are sent to walk to and fro throughout the earth. They take notice of the condition of the nations and report their findings at the proper place. They govern the realms according to God's secret ways which no one knows than He who leads them. They do not represent the realms on behalf of men, who do not know these intermediaries, but before God. This is why we see them here as representatives of the various world powers that have succeeded each other in history. In a night vision the prophet had open eyes enabling him to see them, them and the Angel of the Lord who went before them. During the days of Zechariah the Babylonian empire had already fallen, and made place for that of the Medes and Persians. The Angel of the Lord rode upon a red horse, symbol of the grace Cyrus had shown the captives of Judah. Thence too, the red colour of the first horse behind the Angel.

The image and the four beasts in Daniel (Dan. 2 and 7) portray four world empires, beginning with the Babylonian, under which Daniel had prophesied. Zechariah, who proclaimed his prophecies during the second empire, spoke of three empires beginning with the Persian. He was the prophet of the few, humbled, remaining ones from Judah, who, through Cyrus' intervention, had returned. Yet, his view, like Daniel's, reached much farther than the time in which he lived. He saw, as if they already existed, the Greek and Roman empires that would follow the Persian. The white horse, a conquering power (Rev. 6:2), was very fitting for the Roman empire. But there is a much more important point in this presentation. In the eyes of the prophet the servitude of Judah would not end with the Persian empire, although this was the instrument in God's hand of Israel's restoration. Two other empires, the Greek and the Roman, would afterwards tread down God's people of old.

### *Comforting Words*

The prophet listened in when God's servants reported their findings about the moral condition that characterized these empires then, and will do so later. "*We have walked to and fro through the earth, and behold, all the earth sitteth still and is at rest*" (v. 11). One might think that this report would surely have been very agreeable to the Angel. To the contrary, for the rest those rich ones enjoyed was based on the humiliation and bondage of Israel. While this nation was oppressed and trodden down, the earth felt at ease, and was satisfied with its own condition, while lacking pity for the scattered people of God.

Doubtless, the missteps of this people had been the cause of God's judgments, but nevertheless Israel remained the object of God's irrevocable promises. In the end God will show mercy to Israel because His heart is moved with great inner compassion toward this people.

Then *"the angel of Jehovah answered and said, Jehovah of hosts, how long wilt thou not have mercy on Jerusalem and on the cities of Judah, against which thou hast had indignation these seventy years?"* (v. 12). This "how long" was a cry of faith and certainty that one day a time of restoration would dawn for Judah and the beloved city. In the Psalms we read that the faithful ones who have to go through the Great Tribulation will utter the same cry. In Zechariah this cry concerns Jerusalem and Judah, the main subject of this prophecy.

What was the Lord's answer to this cry of the man "standing between the myrtle trees?" *"And Jehovah answered the angel that talked with me good words, comforting words"* (v. 13). When the people of God who live in fear of death hardly dares to lift its voice to make its pain known to Him, then the heart of God is not indifferent for its misery. Judgment had been needed, but the Lord has good words for Israel: "Comfort ye, comfort ye My people" (Isa. 40). After that Jerusalem has "received double for all her sins" out of the Lord's hand, God will comfort His people.

Are we not allowed to apply these words to ourselves also? The house of God is under judgment. In the midst of its ruins we call: "How long?" Will we receive an answer lacking in pity? Exactly the opposite! The Spirit brings us good words, words of comfort and hope. God added: *"Thus saith Jehovah of hosts: I am jealous for Jerusalem and for Zion with a great jealousy, and I am wroth exceedingly with the nations that are at ease; for I was but a little wroth, and they helped forward the affliction"* (vv. 14-15). "A little wroth"! The wrath of God hid a love that was grieved because of the thanklessness of the people. Yet, His wrath was not without mixture, and His love sought for an opportunity to reveal itself without having to shortchange His holiness and righteousness.

For Israel as well as for us, the cross of Christ has satisfied God's righteousness and enabled Him to reveal His grace. The proud nations, enemies of God and His people, did not understand anything of God's ways though they were His instruments in His dealings with Israel. They had helped along "for evil" and given vent to their hatred. The great wrath of the Lord of hosts would come unmingled upon them. *"Therefore thus saith Jehovah: I am returned to Jerusalem with mercies: My house shall be built in it, saith Jehovah of hosts, and the line shall be stretched forth upon Jerusalem"* (v. 16).

Then the *myrtle trees* will blossom! When the prophet spoke, they still stood in "the low valleys," in the background. We do see a partial fulfilment in the books of Ezra and Nehemiah, but the full reality will only take place when the realms of the nations have run their course. Through prophecy we even know that the Roman empire is only "deadly wounded." In the future it will arise again in the form of a world empire. Only then it will experience its final judgment. Only then the house of the Lord and the city Jerusalem can be built upon an indestructible foundation. Then the cities of Judah will "overflow with prosperity, and Jehovah shall yet comfort Zion, and shall yet choose Jerusalem" (v. 17).

## Second Vision — Chapter 1:18-21

### *Four Horns*

*"And I lifted up mine eyes, and saw, and behold four horns. And I said unto the angel that talked with me, What are these? And he said to me, These are the horns which have scattered Judah, Israel, and Jerusalem"* (vv. 18-19). A horn is always a symbol of power. Again we find here, as we did in the first vision, the various powers that were at enmity with God's people. Now, however, Assyria, is among them. This power had scattered Israel and was later absorbed in the Babylonian empire, the one responsible for Judah's exile.

But we said already that Israel takes a secondary place with Zechariah, for it is not again mentioned before Chapter 10:7-12. Here the specific object is Jerusalem and Judah. Therefore we read in verse 21: "Those are the horns which scattered Judah," rather than, as in verse 19, "Israel," for Babel had replaced the Assyrian. Zechariah, well aware of his youth (cf. Ch. 2:4) and his inexperience, asked some questions of the Lord. And such questions never remain unanswered. The same holds true for us when we prayerfully search God's Word. God gave Zechariah visions; to us He has given His Word, and He did not do this so that it would remain a sealed book. He made it so that even a little child can understand it. But three things are needed for understanding it: Faith, dependence, and God's Spirit. These three things the young prophet possessed.

### *Four Craftsmen*

*"And Jehovah shewed me four craftsmen. And I said, What come these to do? And He spoke, saying, Those are the horns which scattered Judah, so that no man lifted up his head; but these are come to affright them, to cast out the horns of the nations, which lifted up the horn against the land of Judah to scatter it"* (vv. 20-21). These four craftsmen signify the

powers destined by God to fill the realms of the nations with fear and to destroy their power. What they have been in the past, and what they will be in the future is not spoken of in any detail in this portion. A craftsman can use several tools to do his work and cause the strongest edifice to crumble. The appearance of one man, moral conditions, trade barriers, national or natural disasters, wars especially, all are just as many tools by means of which God has destroyed the most powerful empires that ever existed. It baffles our mind to see how easily those enormous and beautiful edifices have collapsed. It was because God worked in the background. While these world empires still enjoyed rest and peace, the carpenter sawed unobserved the beams and pillars, the mason relocated the cornerstone, while the architect, unnoticed, undermined the hidden foundations. Here and there the singing of the saw, the vibrating of the roof, and tremors of the ground spread fear and anxiety. Afterward, blind trust and quietness returned, until the day when all this undermining work had been completed and everything at once fell to ruins. "Woe, woe, the great city, Babylon, the strong city! for *in one hour* thy judgment is come... Woe, woe, the great city, which [was] clothed with fine linen and purple and scarlet, and had ornaments of gold and precious stones and pearls! for *in one hour* so great riches has been made desolate... Woe, woe, the great city, in which all that had ships in the sea were enriched through her costliness! for *in one hour* she has been made desolate" (Rev. 18:10,16,19).

We, too, do well to consider what has happened to the kingdoms throughout the course of history. Just as Zechariah, we ought to lift up our eyes and observe what takes place in the world today. Everywhere the craftsmen are doing their secret work. The world powers get startled. They vain would seek to avoid the threatening demise... when the secretive craftsman has already taken hold of them, casting them far from him!

### Third Vision — Chapter 2

#### *The Man with the Measuring Line*

In a general sense, the first and second vision presented what awaited the kingdoms that had oppressed the Jewish people. Doubtless, these things have now been partially fulfilled. But God's Spirit does not rest at this, for prophecy has always the future glory of Christ in view. And this is now shown to us in the third vision.

*"And I lifted up mine eyes and saw"* (v. 1). How good would it be to apply these words to ourselves! Lifting up the eyes is the means whereby we come into communion with God, to receive His answer. It is the attitude that befits all who expect something from God. When we cast our eyes down, we can understand neither Him nor His thoughts, for then we are fixing our eyes on earthly things which have no value for our souls. "Seek the things which are above, where the Christ is, sitting at the right hand of God" (Col. 3:1).

Because he lifted up his eyes, the young prophet Zechariah saw, all God's thoughts concerning Jerusalem.

*"And behold a man with a measuring line in his hand."* The measuring line served to stake out an assigned plot of land (Mic. 2:5; Ps. 16:5-6).

*"And I said, Whither goest thou? And he said unto me, To measure Jerusalem, to see what is the breadth thereof and what is the length thereof"* (v. 2).

At the time of this vision, the city Jerusalem lay in ruins, its walls torn down; only the foundations of the temple had been laid. Yet the angel said: "I'm going to measure Jerusalem"! *"And behold, the angel that talked with me went forth; and another angel went forth to meet him, and said unto him, Run, speak to this young man, saying, Jerusalem shall be inhabited as towns without walls for the multitude of men and cattle therein"* (vv. 3-4). The future Jerusalem will reach far beyond anything it has ever been, and therefore it will be much larger than the city the returned exiles rebuilt. It will overflow with people and cattle dwelling in it (Jer. 33:7-13). The measuring line of an angel will be needed to establish its dimensions. A lot must happen before things are that far. This future city is not the city of Nehemiah, nor the Jerusalem that rejected its Messiah and King, nor even the Jerusalem in which the Jews will dwell after their return to Palestine when they will become the people of the antichrist. The walls of Jerusalem during the reign of the antichrist will not protect the city when the nations will come to besiege and plunder it in the last days. But a day will come in which the Lord will appear in Israel as the true King. Then Jerusalem will call its walls Salvation, and its gates Praise (Isa. 60:18), or, as it is put here, "I, saith Jehovah, I will be unto her a wall of fire round about, and will be the glory in the midst of her" (v. 5).

Two blessings are announced in this verse:

1. The Lord Himself will be as a wall of fire round about her and defend her against every foe who will rise up against her. He will be her protector;

2. He will be her glory in her midst (vv. 5, 10-11).

This blessing, like the previous one, lies still in the future when the glorified Messiah will make Jerusalem His habitation. "For Jehovah hath chosen Zion; He hath desired it for His dwelling: This is My rest for ever; here will I dwell, for I have desired it" (Ps. 132:13-14). We believers ought not to forget that we enjoy this blessing already now, despite the ruin of the Assembly.

In Spirit the Lord dwells in the midst of His own. This blessing excels over all others. Doubtless, it will only become full reality for us in the perfected condition, but in the midst of the ruin it remains the portion of the faithful ones, even if they are only two or three.

The Lord did not dwell in the city that still lay in ruins when Zechariah prophesied. His glory had left the temple, as Ezekiel tells us. But at the end of his book, that same prophet shows us that the glory will return in the Millennium. And this fact Zechariah pronounces with the words: "I will be the glory in the midst of her."

### *Call to Flee From Babylon*

The second portion of this chapter begins at verse 6: "*Ho, ho! flee from the land of the North, saith Jehovah; for I have scattered you abroad as the four winds of the heavens, saith Jehovah.*" The land of the North is Chaldea, where the Jews lived "scattered" and separated among the nations in all regions of the realm (Est. 3:8), spread towards the four winds. The exiles of Judah had since a short while left this land, but by far not all had gone up (Ezra 8). This call was therefore aimed directly at those who had remained behind. But as always, it also relates to the last days. In Isaiah 52:11 we read: "Depart, depart, go out from thence, touch not what is unclean; go out of the midst of her, be ye clean, that bear the vessels of Jehovah." Even more urgent is the call in Jeremiah 51:6: "Flee out of the midst of Babylon, and save every man his life; be ye not cut off in her iniquity: for this is the time of Jehovah's vengeance: He shall render unto her a recompence." The same Jeremiah, who in the past had advised the people to subject themselves to Babel's yoke, later urged them to flee from the midst of her.

One could argue that these prophecies were fulfilled when Babylon went down for good under the successors of Alexander. Yet, many years after that calamity, we hear the same cry in the New Testament: "Wherefore come out from the midst of them, and be separated, saith [the] Lord, and touch not [what is] unclean, and I will receive you" (2 Cor. 6:17). And in Revelation 18:4, "Come out of her, My people, that ye have not fellowship in her sins, and that ye do not receive of her plagues." What do these words mean? In the last days, the city of Babel will exist as little as it does today; but the godless principles that characterized her will in the last days take on a form of enmity against Christ. Thus, a system will arise in the political, commercial, and religious arenas that will be called "Great Babylon" (Rev. 17-18). The faithful believers must flee out of that "Babylon."

At the present time believers are admonished (2 Cor. 6) to separate from these principles, to walk according to God's thoughts, enjoying His communion. God gives three reasons that cause it to be imperative to leave "Babel": 1. The judgments will come over this city; 2. The faithful ones should not fall under this judgment (Rev. 18); 3. They who carry the vessels of the Lord, to whom He has entrusted His testimony, cannot walk together with the unclean idols (Isa. 52). These truths hold true for the remnant of the last days, but they are just as important and of serious actuality to us.

### *Christ in the Midst of His People*

"*Ho! escape, Zion, that dwellest with the daughter of Babylon. For thus saith Jehovah of hosts: After the glory, hath He sent Me unto the nations that made you a spoil; for he that toucheth you toucheth the apple of His eye*" (vv. 7-8). Messengers from among the remnant will announce to the nations that the Lord has revealed Himself in glory at Jerusalem to establish His kingdom there. For that reason it says here: "*after the glory.*" We find the same thought in Matthew 24:30-31: "And then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven; and then shall all the tribes of the land lament, and they shall see the Son of man coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory. And He shall send His angels with a great sound of trumpet, and they shall gather together his elect from the four winds, from [the one] extremity of [the] heavens to [the other] extremity of them." "The sign of the Son of man" signifies His appearance in glory. After this glory He will gather together the scattered elect, for these verses of Matthew, just as those in Zechariah, refer to the gathering in of Israel. Psalm 73:24 expresses the same thought: "Thou wilt guide me by thy counsel, and after the glory, thou wilt receive me."

Then the nations who have oppressed Israel will have to endure the judgment. "*They shall become a spoil to those that*

served them" (v. 9). Judah will be a sword in the Lord's hand to fight against these nations and to destroy them.

"Sing aloud and rejoice, daughter of Zion; for behold, I come, and I will dwell in the midst of thee, saith Jehovah. And many nations shall join themselves to Jehovah in that day, and shall be unto Me for a people; and I will dwell in the midst of thee, and thou shalt know that Jehovah of hosts hath sent Me unto thee" (vv. 10-11). Jerusalem is told to rejoice for Christ will then be in her midst. Many redeemed ones out of the nations will enjoy the privileged position of the holy city. "And Jehovah shall inherit Judah [as] His portion in the holy land, and shall yet choose Jerusalem" (v. 12). The holy land will be cleansed from unrighteousness.

The moment will come in which the Lord will have completed His wondrous work in the midst of His people and cleansed His city. He will once again consider it as His chosen dwelling.

Let us, like the prophet, compare the future days with the present; then we will be filled with joy. Sadness and downcastness would be our portion if we were to compare the present condition of God's house with that of earlier days. Yes, let us rejoice in the coming day. The Lord Jesus will simultaneously be the glory of the new and of the old Jerusalem, dwelling in the midst of both, while being the center of the praise of all His redeemed ones.

*To be cont'd*

### **The Impeccable Christ (3)**

—S. Hulshizer

#### Thoughts on Humanity and Deity

##### *Method of Entrance*

It is correct that coming into the world as a baby brings one into humanity. But it is also true that the method of entrance into the world does not determine whether one is human or not. The first three individuals in the world all came into it by different means. Adam was formed out of the dust. Eve was made from Adam, and Cain by birth from Adam and Eve. Christ, while born as a baby, was not the same as Cain, in that He was conceived by the Holy Spirit and born of the virgin Mary. All of these were human, but in every case the means of entrance was different. Truly, Christ had a human nature; however, His entrance into humanity was not the same as ours. Nor does the fact that He was a baby imply that He was "just like us." In fact, His entrance into humanity was completely different than our federal head's, Adam. It is helpful to remember that the incarnation is the *fact* that God took on humanity, while the virgin birth was the *means*.

##### *Spiritual Condition*

The preceding thoughts would appear to be of little significance except, as with all error, it [the idea that He was "just like us"] tends to lead to more and larger errors. From this frame of reference, individuals have gone on to *assume that since Christ was human, like us, that He could have sinned*. Again this is faulty thinking, for the spiritual condition of an individual does not determine his humanity, or lack thereof. Adam was *innocent humanity* prior to the fall. After sinning Adam was *guilty humanity*. Was he any less human in his second state? Quoting Mr. Kelly, "The state of the human nature is altogether independent of its real existence. The fall altered Adam's condition, but humanity remained as truly after as before."<sup>2</sup> In Luke 1:35, Christ is referred to as the "holy offspring" of Mary, and thus *holy humanity*. Are we therefore to assume that Christ was not true humanity because He was holy? God forbid! Taking this further, we can see that while our Lord is now glorified, He is still true humanity. He is now *glorified humanity*. Even those advocating the Kenosis theory agree that He cannot sin in this glorified state. Question: Is He any holier now than during His earthly walk?

Herein lies a very important distinction. Adam was upright (Ecc. 7:29) and innocent, but nowhere are we informed that he was holy. Christ, as holy humanity was more than just innocent. Holiness repels sin, as light does darkness. Sin *cannot* enter God's thinking or control His actions. Sin involves dissatisfaction, and God cannot be dissatisfied as He is completely self-sufficient. God manifested in the flesh could be no less. Christ was truly man and truly God in one person and thus could not have sinned. Worship Him, praise Him, serve Him, but do not divide Him.

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<sup>2</sup> William Kelly, *Christ Tempted and Sympathizing. The Bible Treasury, Vol. 20, p. 174.*

## *Biblical Illustrations*

The Scriptures contain many examples of the union of the divine and human natures in the person of Jesus Christ. In Leviticus 2 the meal offering beautifully illustrates this union, along with the purity of His life. The flour, made from the grain of the earth, speaks of His humanity. The oil, a picture of the divine nature, is *mingled* with the flower to give a vivid picture of the *inseparable union* of the two natures. The absence of the leaven, which speaks of sin, and the presence of salt, that which arrests the action of leaven, clearly indicates not only the absence of sin in His life, but the impossibility of its ever being activated therein.

The veil of the tabernacle is another splendid example. The one veil had two sides which always moved together. The one was visible and could be touched by the priest, while the other was invisible and untouchable, as it was in the holy of holies. These two sides of the one veil are clear pictures of the humanity and deity of Christ. The tabernacle and its furniture are filled with such pictures. Wood, speaking of His humanity, and gold of His deity, were used together throughout.

## *Christ's Humanity-Deity*

It is essential to understand that Christ was truly human. His mother Mary experienced a normal gestation period. He had a mind, and learned such things as walking, talking, a trade, and so on. He experienced hunger, thirst, and weariness. At no time do we want to understate His humanity. However, this humanity was in union with His deity. Some have gone to the extreme and implied that as a human He could act independently from His deity. This of course would suggest a dual personality. John 15:17-24 is often used to show how Christ was void of divine powers and had to rely on the Father. Here Christ said, "The Son can do nothing of Himself." This verse is actually glorious proof of His deity and impeccability. It shows the complete harmony and equality of the Godhead. It is impossible for the Son to act independently of the Father, and therefore impossible for Him to sin, since sin involves acting independently of the will of the Father.

It is also clear from the Gospels that Jesus Christ exhibited divine powers. He knew the thoughts of men, controlled the elements of creation, and actually performed a miracle of "creation" in the feeding of the five thousand. He was always in control, including the circumstances of His own death. Was He only a man under the power of the Holy Spirit? No, for in Him dwelt all the fullness, or deity, of God (Col. 1:19). The Man Jesus Christ revealed in the Scriptures was truly divine and was in fact crucified for claiming to be so (Mt. 26:63-66). Again, however, it is essential that we do not separate His deity from His humanity. The two natures are present in perfect union.

Mr. J. I. Packer summarizes it well. "Here are two mysteries for the price of one — the plurality of the Persons within the unity of God, and the union of the Godhead in Man in the Person of Jesus."<sup>3</sup> "We shall be wise to remember this, to shun speculation and contentedly to adore."<sup>4</sup>

## *The First Adam and Last Adam*

While Christ is referred to as the "last Adam" and the "second man" in 1 Corinthians 15:45 and 47 respectively, we must be careful in our application of these titles. There are several similarities between Adam and Christ. They both had a human nature and were heads of their respective races. However, thereafter the similarity ends. The fact that something, or someone is referred to as "second" does not necessarily mean that it is the same as the first. For example, we could have two trees and refer to them as the first tree and the second tree. They are both trees, but one could be an apple tree, while the other is a peach tree. The Apostle Paul uses a similar example in Galatians 1:6,7. In verse 6 he marveled that they were deserting Christ for "another" (*heteros*) gospel. In verse 7 he adds that it was not really "another" (*altos*) gospel. They were receiving a second gospel (message) but not another of the same kind that Paul had preached.

Adam and Christ were both human, but of different types. Adam was innocent, and later fallen, humanity. Christ was, and is holy humanity. They were also heads of races, but even their races were different, as clearly spelled out in 1 Corinthians 15:45-49. The following outline summarizes ways in which the first and second man were different.

### 1. Purposes

Adam – to live

Christ – to die – Hebrews 2:9, 14

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<sup>3</sup> J. I. Packer, *Knowing God*, Downers Grove, Illinois; InterVarsity Press, 1973, p. 46.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.* P. 50.

## 2. Means of entrance into the world

Adam – created

Christ – through the virgin birth, and conceived of the Holy Spirit

## 3. Spirit condition upon entrance into humanity

Adam – upright, innocent – Eccl. 7:29

Christ – holy – Luke 1:35

## 4. Origins

Adam – earth, dust – 1 Corinthians 15:47

Christ – heaven – 1 Corinthians 15:47

## 5. Spheres

Adam – earthly – 1 Corinthians 15:48

Christ – heavenly – 1 Corinthians 15: 48

## 6. With respect to life

Adam – receiver – 1 Corinthians 15:45

Christ – giver – 1 Corinthians 15:45

The title of "last Adam" indicates the fact that there is none to follow. This of course would be true since His race is eternal.

### *Probation*

Probation is another area where much has been assumed. It has been presented that the last Adam was the exact counterpart of the first, and therefore was under probation. Nowhere in Scripture is this presented to us. Why would the second man need to be under probation? If one were willing to receive the punishment of a convicted murderer, would we place the volunteer in the same circumstances to see if he would also commit murder? The answer of course is "No". Our only concern would be that he were not guilty himself. Certainly, the holy One of God met the requirement of being free of guilt, and thus was a perfect substitute. It was necessary that the Redeemer take on humanity, not the possibility of sinning. The voluntary death of a holy man would have far greater value than that of an innocent individual. It is helpful to see that Christ's life did not qualify Him to *become* the Lamb of God, it proved that He *was* the Lamb of God. Christ was born under the law (Gal. 4:4,5) in order to save those (Jews) under it. However, this does not constitute probation, but was a necessity, since one born outside of Israel could not have been the Messiah. Nowhere does the Scripture present Christ as one struggling to keep the law. Neither are there any terms of probation ever presented, as with the first Adam (Gen. 2: 16-17).

The following thoughts and questions are presented for the reader's consideration and study.

1. If Christ were just like Adam, then God was not in Him, since we never read this of Adam (2 Cor. 5:19)
2. If Christ merely took the place of the first Adam, He would have regained the garden and we would have no heavenly hope (1 Cor. 15:47-49).
3. If Christ was only a man under the power of the Holy Spirit, this would not be a mystery (1 Tim. 3:16) nor would He have been like Adam, since the latter is never set forth as one under the power of the Holy Spirit.
4. If Christ were under probation like Adam, would not the conditions need to be the same? To claim that Christ's temptation took place under worse conditions would carry no weight, since two other creatures (Satan and Adam) had already fallen under ideal conditions, and isn't it true that the worse the conditions the more likely one would be drawn closer to God? In addition, Christ had the opportunity to see sin and its awful effects in others before being tempted to choose it. However, if we are attempting to prove one's holiness, this could be done under adverse conditions. In fact the worse the conditions, the more the holiness would show.
5. Who suffers more from solicitation to do evil, an innocent man, or a holy man?
6. What about the redemptive plan in eternity past? Did God need to wait to see if Christ would sin or not? Certainly this was not the case (Acts 2:23), thus if God decreed that the Redeemer would not sin, then He could not. Some have suggested that God looked down through time and saw the Man Christ Jesus would not sin.

Would this not imply that God's plans were dependent on the success, or failure of a man? What if Christ would have sinned as God looked down through time? Are we to believe that God established a plan, determined its success in time,



and then continued? The Bible clearly presents the picture that God planned our redemption without any fear of failure, and then carried it out.

These questions and thoughts are not offered to muddy the water, but to illustrate the questions and numerous errors that result from the thinking that Christ was just like innocent Adam, and could have sinned.

In summary, the *only* characteristic that the two federal heads had in common was *humanity*. It was the bridge between the "earthly" and "heavenly" spheres.

What a joy to contemplate the last Adam, and in some measure begin to realize the Person who heads the incorruptible race! This race is comprised of redeemed individuals from every tribe and tongue and people and nation (Rev. 5:9). As we meditate on Him may we have His attitude (Phil. 2:5), and be transformed into the same image, one glory after another (2 Cor. 3:18)!

*"Now to the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only God, be honour and glory forever and ever. Amen."* (1 Tim. 1:10)  
*To be cont'd*

### **The Linen Workers and the Potters**

—Hugo Bouter

*"There they dwelt with the king for his work" (1 Chr. 4:23)*

#### *The Records of Judah, the Royal Tribe*

Even believers, who read the Bible on a daily basis, skip over the genealogies of 1 Chronicles. They dislike the seemingly dry enumeration of names by the author of this Book. But they tend to forget that the lists of names are alternated with several interesting reports and comments. For instance, in this same chapter we find the important prayer of Jabez (4:10), and the next chapter speaks about the power of prayer in the battle against the Hagarites (5:20). Elsewhere we find valuable statements about the worship of the people, and many details from Israelite family life and the history of the tribes. In Chapter 4:21-23 we read about a branch of the sons of Shelah, the son of Judah, who were working as linen workers and potters. We would like to focus on these few verses because of the spiritual lessons connected with these two trades, and also because of the statement that these labourers "dwelt with the king for his work".

It is also important to notice the main purpose of all these chapters: they *focus on* David, the man after God's own heart, the king who reigned by the grace of God. He is the one who is the central person in the history of 1 Chronicles. In the accounts, major attention is given to the royal tribe of Judah (Chs. 2-4) and the population of Jerusalem (Ch. 9). The tribe of Levi occupies another important place (Chs. 6 and 9), but this also fits nicely in the framework of the Book. King David is a priestly king and he is acting as lawgiver to the Levites. In these aspects, we see David as a type of Christ, the true King and Priest. Christ not only governs His people with wisdom, but He also leads them in their worship. In the same way He leads us in our worship of the Father in spirit and truth, and starts the eternal song of praise in the midst of His own (Jn. 4:23,24; Phil. 3:3; Heb. 2:12-13:15; 1 Pet 2:5; Rev. 1:5,6).

#### *Fellow Workers of the King*

Therefore, it seems a good suggestion to think especially of king David when "the king" is mentioned in 1 Chronicles 4:23 (although this verse is also applicable to his successors). We know from 1 Chronicles 27:25-31 that David had vast possessions: estates, food supplies, livestock. No doubt, manual workers would have been busy with their work in the royal domains, among their tasks was providing the needed linen and pottery. Most of the older translations render the place-names Netaim and Gederah literally, so that the impression is given that the potters lived near the royal "plantations" and "walls" or "enclosures." Maybe this also applied to the linen workers mentioned in verse 21.

It is unclear whether verse 23 refers to all of Shelah's descendants or only to those who are mentioned in verse 22. At least one of them occupied a high position: Saraph ruled in Moab. Do these old stories refer to the time that Moab was tributary to king David? Or do they refer to a previous period? Jewish tradition associates verse 22 with the story of Ruth and Naomi who returned from the country of Moab to Bethlehem. The name of Jashubi-Lehem which occurs here should then be read as a short sentence: they returned to Lehem, i.e. Bethlehem.

Bethlehem, the "house of bread," was the residence of Boaz, and the native city of king David. Yes, Christ Himself, the great Son of David, was born there (Mic. 5: 1; Mt. 2:4-6). It is a good thing to return to that town, to be back from abroad, and then to stand before the king whom God has chosen. This also holds true for us when we have left the "house of bread," the place of God's presence, where we have plenty of food. Then an inner work of the Spirit is needed in order for us to return to Him and rededicate our lives to Him and to the Man in whom He is well pleased.

### *The Linen Workers and the Potters*

Both trades mentioned here obtain a special meaning when taken in the light of the New Testament. The linen workers, makers of fine clothing (byssus), make us think of the preparation of the wedding garment of fine linen for the bride of the Lamb (Rev. 19:7,8). This fine linen, clean and bright, speaks of the righteous acts of the saints, the good works "which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them" (Eph. 2:10). The wedding garment is currently being woven as we live soberly, righteously and godly in the present age (Ti. 2:12). In this sense, all believers are acting as "linen workers" and it is very important that we are found faithful in the service of "the King," our Lord Jesus Christ.

The trade of the potters shows another aspect of our responsibility, which is of great importance to parents and educators. Like the clay in the potter's hand, so are we all in God's hand (Jer. 18:6). God acts with us according to His good pleasure, shaping us for the task to which He has appointed us. This metaphor is also very common in the New Testament. The believers are vessels of mercy, chosen vessels. God prepared us beforehand for glory (Rom. 9:23). This is our position in Christ. But in everyday life, we should be vessels for honour, sanctified and useful for the Master, prepared for every good work (2 Tim. 2:21). God is continuously shaping us and forming us after His will, until we are vessels which correspond to His thoughts. As the great Modeler He is working in us, in order to transform us into the image of His Son.

God-fearing parents and educators should carefully follow this example. They should form the children entrusted to their care as vessels for honour, useful for the Lord. They can only do so by bringing them up in the training and admonition of the Lord (Eph. 6:4). His rights should have the first place. *We* know that this is only possible in great dependence on the Lord, in close fellowship with Him. Ultimately it is His own good work. Isn't it striking, therefore, that it is said of the potters in 1 Chronicles 4:23 that they "dwelt there with the king for *his* work"?

### *Do We Continue With the Lord?*

This is in fact a principle that applies to all of us. We should be with Him and follow Him wherever He goes. When He appointed the twelve, the first aim was "that they might be *with Him*" (Mk. 3:14). The Christians at Antioch received the encouragement "that with purpose of heart they should continue *with the Lord*" (Acts 11:23). Then we are able to do His work, to serve Him to the end, and to fulfil our ministry (Col. 4:17; 2 Tim. 4:5). Of course it is a great privilege to walk close to the Lord, but at the same time it is a great responsibility. He expects us to serve Him faithfully, to recognize His authority over us, and to give ourselves completely to the work. To be in the service of "the King," to stand before Him, goes hand in hand with unconditional obedience to His will.

When we think of David especially as we read about those who "dwelt with the king for his work," many examples come to mind of people who dwelt with him and stood in his service. The most beautiful example is that of David's mighty men. In their distress, they gathered to him and knew they were safe with him (1 Sam. 22:1,2,23). After they had joined him, David became their leader. From that time on, they served him. They shared in his rejection, and afterwards in his exaltation. It is the same with us: we are united with a rejected Lord, but at His return we shall share in His glory.

Another striking example is that of Mephibosheth, to whom king David showed the kindness of God. Having brought him to Jerusalem, David allowed him to eat at his table as one of the king's sons. Likewise, by God's mercy, we — though sinners by nature — have been brought into the immediate presence of the great King. We dwell in His house, in His temple, in His city; we sit at the table of the Lord (2 Sam. 9:11, 13). We have received great privileges; we have been showered with blessings. Let us never forget this. Let us dedicate ourselves completely to the service of Him who has redeemed us to God by His blood.