

THE GREAT “I AM’S” of JESUS

by

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CHAPTER ELEVEN

I AM THE SON OF MAN

“Whom do men say that I the Son of man am?” (Matthew 16:13).

Jesus spoke of Himself as Son of Man. When He asked the disciples what others thought of Him, they replied that some said He was John the Baptist; some declared He was Elias; and others said He was Jeremias or one of the prophets. Concerned about what the disciples themselves thought, He pinpointed the question, and Simon Peter came up with the answer: **“Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God”** (Matthew 16:16).

This answer pleased Jesus. He had called Himself the Son of Man, but in identifying Himself as the Son of Man, He did not disavow His claim to be the Son of God.

Scribes and Pharisees challenged Jesus in the temple. They wanted to know of Him who He was. He answered that if He really told them, they would not believe, but He declared Himself to be the witness of the Father and that His witness, though of Himself, was true because His message was from the Father. He revealed His destiny by telling His enemies that where He was going they could not follow. They wondered whether He meant to commit suicide. He answered them in another statement in which He called Himself the Son of Man: **“When ye have lifted up the Son of man, then shall ye know that I am he”** (John 8:28).

Jesus had spoken the Parable of the Tares. His hearers did not understand; the disciples were confused. When the multitude had gone away, the followers of Jesus asked Him, **“Declare unto us the parable of the tares of the field.”** Jesus answered them, **“He that soweth the good seed is the Son of man”** (Matthew 13:37).

On the occasion when Jesus and His disciples were passing through a cornfield on the Sabbath day and the disciples, because of their extreme hunger began to eat the raw grains and were severely criticized by the Pharisees, Jesus again spoke of Himself as the Son of Man. He declared, **“For the Son of man is Lord even of the sabbath day”** (Matthew 12:8).

During the trial of Jesus before the high priest, in the last week of His earthly life, His accusers blindfolded Him and struck Him, demanding that He prophesy and tell who smote Him. They asked, trying to make Him blasphemous, **“Art thou the Christ?”**

Jesus summed up His earthly ministry and His heavenly glory in the statement: “**Hereafter shall the Son of man sit on the right hand of the power of God**” (Luke 22:69).

WHY DID JESUS CALL HIMSELF SON OF MAN?

Jesus called Himself Son of Man to identify Himself with mankind, whom He came into the world to redeem. While He was man, suffering human frailties and limitations voluntarily, yet He was the perfect man, never sinning, always in the perfect will of God.

He was humble. His beginning was as a babe; that is, His human beginning was that of a babe in humble surroundings. We are not able to subscribe to all the traditional miracles attributed to Him in boyhood, the effort of some religionists to worship the image of the babe. It is true that He was perfect from the beginning of His earthly life. He grew from babyhood into childhood.

There is the beautiful story of His being as a boy in the temple in Jerusalem. He was brilliant, investigative, but completely subject to His parents. He grew normally from boyhood into manhood. He was man very man even though God very God.

Jesus was tempted. To be tempted does not mean to fall, but we are told very definitely that Jesus was tempted by Satan. The three outstanding temptations of man were faced by Jesus. Through prayer and purposive dedication He overcame temptation without yielding to sin.

He is our brother. Tempted in all points like as we are yet without sin, Jesus has traveled the path which man must travel. He has faced the problems His followers will face. He has gained the victory as a man over all the enemies of man’s life. As our elder brother, Jesus has paved the way for us. The Son of Man blazed the trail which we are to follow.

CHRIST WAS NO RECLUSE

Jesus paid tribute to John the Baptist, a man of the wilderness, rough and aloof. The people had not been satisfied with John. Would they be satisfied with one making a different approach? To Jesus the people seemed as children playing in the streets. They had heard John the Baptist; now they were comparing Jesus with John. John had come neither eating nor drinking and the people had said, “**He hath a devil.**”

“**The Son of man came eating and drinking . . . a friend of publicans and sinners**” (Matthew 11:19). None had called John the Baptist a friend; he was a rough preacher of repentance, challenging the people. Jesus was different. Though just as definite in His call to repentance, He manifested a compassion which had never been known. Because He came eating and drinking, He was called, and at the same time highly complimented, a “**friend of publicans and sinners.**” Who but the Son of Man, with experience and understanding, could be called a “**friend of sinners**”?

It is comforting to Christians to think of Jesus in the ordinary circumstances of life. He ate, drank, became tired, sat on a well curb and rested, slept. Jesus, as Son of Man, is aware of man’s weaknesses and sympathizes with his frailties.

- He does not condone sin in sinners, but seeks to relieve sinful man of his sinful ways.
- He does not overlook frailty in man but seeks to give man strength to walk in the true way.

Jesus came to fit men for this world as well as for the next. It is not enough for man to be equipped to live here; he must live hereafter. Neither is it enough for a man to be redeemed to a new life hereafter; the Christian has a life to live here in the world. Jesus came to set us an example.

- As He walked, so we should walk.
- As He talked, so we should talk.
- As He had compassion, so we should have sympathy for our fellowman.
- As He died to make men holy, we should live to make men free and happy.
- As Jesus ministered to men, so we are to be ministers of the good life.

He is our pattern: as He was, so we ought to be. Of Himself He said. **“Even as the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many”** (Matthew 20:28).

JESUS WAS THE SECOND ADAM

There have been two Adams, sons of man and sons of God.

- The first Adam was made perfect; Jesus, the second Adam, was perfect.
- The first Adam was the first son of God; the second Adam was the Only-begotten Son of God.
- The first Adam was sinful; the second Adam was sinless.
- The first Adam disobeyed; the second Adam was in the perfect will of God.
- The first Adam was evil; the second Adam was good.
- The first Adam became imperfect; Jesus was perfect.
- The first Adam was sin-infecting; the second Adam was sin-destroying.
- The first Adam begot sinners; the second Adam redeemed from sin and set man’s feet on a new path.

Dearest of all the statements identifying Himself as Son of Man is this: **“The Son of man is come to save that which was lost”** (Matthew 18:11). Here Jesus completely identified Himself with the task which brought Him into the world. He came to save mankind.

Man is lost in his sin. In himself he cannot find the way out.

Although it is a popular approach to speak of man in his groping, looking up toward God, seeking a way of salvation, the picture Jesus gives of Himself is not so much that of answering man’s call and helping man to find his way, but it is the spirit of a seeking Saviour searching for His lost sheep. The lost sheep is simply lost; it is not seeking the way home. The sinner is lost, and, whether he is seeking the Saviour or not, the Lord is looking for him. The seeking Saviour is the picture, not the groping, seeking sinner.

Jesus is not standing and simply waiting for the sinner to come to Him; He is on His way to the sinner, seeking to save that which was lost. Assuming all the responsibility of seeking, Jesus would make it easy for the sinner to find the Saviour.

Jesus is more eager to save than the sinner is to be saved. Look to Jesus now; believe in Him as Lord and Saviour; give Him your heart, He seeks it; give Him your life, He loves you.

~ end of chapter 11 ~

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