

# Seeing the Glory of Christ as Son of Man

by T. Austin-Sparks

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*Christ as Son of Man represents a new order of mankind, a new humanity that is perfect and incorruptible, and is the arch-type of this new humanity.*

**Scripture:** Matthew 3:17, Acts 26:17, Romans 8:29, 2 Corinthians 4:4, Ephesians 5:25, Hebrews 1:1, Hebrews 2:5, Hebrews 3:1, 1 Peter 1:18

**Topics:** "Christology", "Redemption"

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## Description

T. Austin-Sparks preaches about the significance of Christ as the Son of Man, emphasizing His role as the arch-type of a new humanity and the Redeemer-Kinsman. Through Christ, God has initiated a new order of mankind, free from the sinful nature that estranges humanity from God. The humanity of Jesus represents an incorruptible life that satisfies God's holiness, providing the power of redemption. As the Redeemer-Kinsman, Christ has the right, power, liberty, and willingness to redeem and unite His people to Himself in a sacred bond, symbolized by the marriage between the Church and the Lord.

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## Transcript

God, having of old time spoken unto the fathers in the prophets by divers portions and in divers manners, hath at the end of these days spoken unto us in His Son, Whom He appointed Heir of all things, through Whom also He made the worlds (Heb. 1:1-2; A.R.V.).

For not unto angels did He subject the world to come, whereof we speak. But one hath somewhere testified, saying, 'What is man, that Thou art mindful of him? Or the Son of Man, that Thou visitest Him? Thou madest Him a little lower than the angels; Thou crownedst Him with glory and honor, and didst set Him over the works of Thy hands: Thou didst put all things in subjection under His feet.' For in that He subjected all things unto Him, He left nothing that is not subject to Him. But now we see not yet all things subjected to Him. But we behold Him Who hath been made a little lower than the angels, even Jesus, because of the suffering of death crowned with glory and honor, that by the grace of God He should taste of death for every man. For it became Him, for Whom are all things, and through Whom are all things, in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the Author of their salvation perfect through sufferings. For both He that sanctifieth and they that are sanctified are all of One: for which cause He is not ashamed to call them brethren, saying, 'I will declare Thy Name unto My brethren, in the midst of the congregation will I sing Thy praise.' And again, 'I will put My trust in Him.' And again, 'Behold, I and the children whom God hath given Me.' Since then the children are sharers in flesh and blood, He also Himself in like manner

partook of the same; that through death He might bring to nought him that had the power of death, that is, the devil; and might deliver all them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage. For verily not to angels doth He give help, but He giveth help to the seed of Abraham. Wherefore it behooved Him in all things to be made like unto His brethren, that He might become a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make propitiation for the sins of the people. For in that He Himself hath suffered being tempted, He is able to succor them that are tempted (Heb. 2:5-18).

Wherefore, holy brethren, partakers of a heavenly calling, consider the Apostle and High Priest of our confession, even Jesus (Heb. 3:1).

In whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of the unbelieving, that the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, Who is the image of God, should not dawn upon them. For we preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus as Lord, and ourselves as your servants for Jesus' sake (2 Cor. 4:4-5).

In our previous meditation we were seeing the glory and significance of Christ as the Son of God, having vested in Him the prerogatives of God; firstly, the power of Life; secondly, the power of Light; and thirdly, the power of Lordship.

In this meditation we shall spend our time with another aspect of the glory of Christ, namely, the glory and peculiar significance of Christ as Son of Man. It is here also that we need spiritual sight. If men could really see from God's standpoint, with God's own knowledge and understanding, the Lord Jesus Christ as Son of Man, all the problems of this world would be solved: for really there is a sense in which all problems are solved when we see. And God's solution is His Son. Let us be found here this afternoon in our hearts waiting on the Lord that we might see. Let that be our attitude: to see Jesus in an inward way with the eyes of the heart enlightened, the Spirit of wisdom and revelation being given us in the knowledge of Him.

If I might say so here, I feel that the burden of our hearts should be that the eyes of the Lord's people should be opened first. Oh, if only their eyes were open, what different attitudes they would take, what great possibilities there would be for God, what a lot of things would disappear which are dishonouring to the Lord! If only they could see! Let us pray much that the eyes of the people of God may be opened. And then, to the end that the eyes of men at large might be opened, let us pray that there might be an eye-opening ministry like that of Paul - "...unto whom I send thee, to open their eyes, that they may turn from darkness to light" (Acts. 26:17-18). Let us pray along such lines continually.

### The Arch-Type Of A New Humanity

I think there are two or three particular aspects of Christ as Son of Man. Firstly, this is the human title of Christ, and it brings to us at once the conception of Him as man, or as humanity, and the thing needed to be seen about the Lord Jesus is the Divine meaning in His humanity. As Son of Man it is not only that He has come alongside of us, taking flesh and blood, and so becoming a man, and just being here as a man among men. Oh no, that is not it. True He is man, true He has become partaker of flesh and blood, but there is a difference, a vast and infinite difference. Humanity, yes; but not exactly our humanity. The significance of Christ as Son of Man is that He is an arch-type of a new humanity.

There are now in God's universe two humanities, whereas there was only one. The Adam humanity was the only one, but there is Another Humanity now, a different humanity; flesh and bone, but without the sinful nature of this humanity, without any of that which has estranged and alienated this humanity from God, without any of that which brought this humanity under judgment from God, a humanity upon which

God, in His infinite holiness and perfection, can look with pleasure and utter satisfaction. "My beloved Son in Whom I am well-pleased"? (Matt. 3:17). It is a Man, but such a man as is not common among men, but altogether different. The significance of Christ as Son of Man is that God has started a new humanity according to His own mind and perfect thought, and in His Son there is the arch-type of that new humanity to which God is going to conform a race - "conformed to the image of His Son" (Rom. 8:29).

The great reality about a true Christian is that he or she is progressively being changed into another, is becoming different. It is not just and only an objective matter of faith in Christ as outward. It is more than that; it is living by Christ inwardly.

So God has come into this realm of humanity in the Person of His Son as representing a new order altogether, a new order of mankind, and, by vital union with Christ, a new race is springing up, a new order. A new kind of humanity is secretly growing, and proceeding unto that day of which the Apostle speaks, when there will be the manifestation of the sons of God; and then the curse will be lifted, and the creation itself will be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the liberty of the glory of the children of God.

Now the point is the tremendous significance of the Incarnation, of the Word becoming flesh and tabernacling among us, the tremendous significance of Christ as Son of Man, as setting up amongst men a new kind of being, a new type and form of humanity. There is no hope for the creation save in that new type, that new order. If men saw this, would it not solve all the problems of this time? What are they talking about? What is the great phrase most common on men's lips to-day? Is it not a new order, a new world order? But they are blind, they talk in the dark: they are groping for something, but they see not. The only new order is the order of the Son of Man. The only hope for this world is that there shall come about this new creation in Christ Jesus.

#### The Truth Foreshadowed In Israel's History

We could dwell long upon the humanity of the Lord Jesus. There is a very great deal more in the Scripture about it than perhaps you realise. But do notice that God has laid this deep in the very foundations of history. You take Israel as God's great object lesson for past ages - and their history of the past still stands as the great book of illustrations of God's principles - and you find that the very national life of Israel of old was founded upon those things which set forth the perfect humanity of the Lord Jesus.

You go to the Book of Leviticus, and you take up those feasts: you see what a place the humanity (the fine flour) has in those symbols and types. You see that God has said there in illustration that the life of a people which is to satisfy Him is based upon a nature, a humanity: not the old broken-down humanity of Adam, but another. Right into the very foundation of the life of such a people, there is laid this reality: there is a humanity that is perfect and incorruptible: and out from those feasts must be extricated every suggestion and suspicion of leaven, which speaks of corruption, the ferment of the old nature. It has no place when it is a matter of the very basis of Israel's life God-ward.

Well, you see, there is much about it, but we are not going to explore the whole ground. I simply want to point out the fact that the humanity of the Lord Jesus as Son of Man sets forth some new kind, some new type, some new order, in God's universe which does satisfy God.

Herein lies the tremendous and wonderful meaning of union with Christ through faith, bringing us right into what He is in His acceptability to God. The practical outworking of that must be that you and I - more and

more - forsake the ground of the old Adam, of nature, our ground, and abide in Christ. That just means holding by faith to what He is and letting go what we are, and so the pleasure of God is found there. If we get on to our own ground, what we are by nature, and take account of that and try to make something good of that, or even spend our time deploring what a miserable thing that nature is, we lose all the glory of God. The glory of God is in another humanity. Dwell on Christ, abide in Christ, and the glory is there. It is the glory of Christ as the Son of Man. What are the most blessed and glorious hours in the Christian's experience? Are they not the hours in which they are contemplating and taken up with what Christ is?

### The Redeemer-Kinsman

Then the glory of Christ as Son of Man is to be seen in Him as the Redeemer-Kinsman. Firstly, as the arch-type of a new humanity; then, secondly, as the Redeemer-Kinsman. Your thoughts will at once go to that little classic, the Book of Ruth. I need not tell you the story of Ruth in detail, but it is from there that we draw the great truths and principles of the redeeming activity of the Lord.

The story in brief is this. The inheritance has been lost. The day comes when that inheritance becomes a matter of solemn, sad, but earnest concern to the hearts of those who have lost it. Now the realisation has come home to them that the inheritance has passed out of their control and right; and they are deeply exercised in heart about the lost inheritance. There is only one way, according to the law of things, in which that lost inheritance can be re-purchased, and that is that there should be a kinsman - he must be a kinsman, he must be of their own kin - who has the right to redeem, and who has the ability to redeem, and who is willing to redeem. Those who lost the inheritance, and have now become so deeply concerned about its recovery, are looking for that redeemer-kinsman who has the right, who has the ability, the resource, and who has the willingness to redeem the lost inheritance. You know how Ruth comes into touch with Boaz, and thinking him to be the redeemer-kinsman, recognising that if he has the will, he has the resource, she discovers that he has not the right, because there is another who comes first. An appeal has to be made to the one who has the right, and it is found that, while he has the right, he has neither ability nor resource: and he passes over his right to Boaz. Thus at length the one wholly fitted for the business is found in Boaz. He has now the right, he has the resource and the ability, and he has the will to do it.

But then there is one other thing in the story. According to the law of things, the redeemer-kinsman has to take to wife the one for whom he redeems the inheritance, and the way has got to be cleared for that. The other kinsman could not do it because the way was not clear for that, but Boaz has a clear way to do it.

There are the elements of the story. I am not going to take up every little detail, but just the broad outline. You see how God has placed there such an exquisite illustration of the glory of Christ as the Redeemer-Kinsman. The inheritance has been lost, and all that God intended for man has been forfeited. Man now, through Adam's sin, has lost the inheritance. In Adam, no longer is he heir of all things, the inheritance is gone. The tragedy of this humanity in Adam is just that: once an heir, made to inherit, but now bankrupt, hopeless, having lost all. That is the tragedy of this humanity. That is where we are by nature. We have it written in our beings. Our very nature witnesses to the fact that there is something lacking, something missing, something that ought to be and is not. We are groping for it. It is in the very nature of things to crave, to long for that. Every ambition of man, every quest, every passion of man, is man shouting out of his nature that there is something he ought to have but cannot get. He accumulates all that this world can give him, and dies, saying, No, I have not got it, I have not found what I am after! He is an heir with a lost inheritance.

## The Right To Redeem

And into a world like that, into a race like that, God, in His Son, in terms of manhood, comes from the outside as the Redeemer-Kinsman. He has, first of all, the right to redeem. Why? Because He is the Firstborn of all creation. He has the First Place. This is no second-place kinsman. "He is before all things" (Col. 1:17). He is the Firstborn; He has the right because of place, the place He occupies, the First Place. Oh, think again of all that there is about the Lord Jesus as coming first, as being in the First Place, as being the Firstborn, and you will see that constitutes His right, for in the very nature of things in the Bible, it is the Firstborn, who carries the rights with him always. Here is Jesus, Son of Man, the first by appointment and placing of God. He has the right to redeem.

## The Power To Redeem

He has also the power to redeem, that is, He has the resources for redeeming. Well, let us ask what is in the nature of things required for redeeming? The inheritance has to be redeemed not only for us but unto God. We in turn are God's inheritance, we are God's possession by right, and not only have we lost our inheritance, but God has lost His inheritance in us, and what we might be satisfied with as a return, God can never be satisfied with. If God is to get back in us that inheritance which He Himself has lost through man's sin and wilfulness, its redemption must be according to God, something that satisfies God: and God cannot be satisfied with just anything. It must be something that wholly answers to God's own nature. So let us say at once that "we were redeemed, not with corruptible things, with silver or gold, from our vain manner of life... but with precious blood, as of a Lamb without blemish" (1 Pet. 1:18-19). What is it that satisfies God? It is an incorruptible something. That which can alone bring back to God His satisfaction must be incorruptible, undefiled, without spot or blemish. These are words which always relate to Christ: a Lamb, without spot, without blemish. That is the redemption resource, the redemption power. Redemption means to recover the lost inheritance, and He has redeemed by His Blood, because that Blood represents His life which is an incorruptible life, a sinless life, a life which wholly satisfies an utterly righteous and holy God. That is the price of redemption. Oh, to see the humanity of the Lord Jesus in its incorruptibility, is to see the mighty power to redeem. Set aside the Lord Jesus and you set aside the whole power of redemption, the whole right of redemption; there is no hope of redemption. We can never be redeemed unto God with such corruptible things as silver and gold. To be redeemed unto God means that a life must be forthcoming which is according to God's own nature.

Oh, this is where all the blindness is. We spoke in our previous meditation of the terrible blindness which is seen in evolution. But here is the awful blindness of that terrible gospel, which is not a gospel at all, which is being preached, namely, humanism; that it is in man's own power to become like God. The roots and seeds of perfection are deep down in man's own being if only he will dig deep enough for them; there is no need for intervention from the outside at all; it is not necessary for God to intervene, for Christ to come into this world. It is in man to rise, he can improve himself. He is a wonderful creature deep down in his being. What blindness! You say, Amazing thing in the light of present happenings and present world conditions; amazing thing that any man can believe it, let alone preach it; amazing thing that with one breath they talk about the awful atrocities which are worse than those of the dark ages, and with the next breath they say it is in man to be godlike! Blindness! The real point is this: are men more noble morally to-day? Are men morally rising? Well, who can say "Yes!" in the light of what we know to-day.

And yet they are preaching this gospel of humanism, that man is steadily rising and Utopia is on the horizon; because man has it in himself to rise! That is blindness, terrible blindness. But oh! To see God's

Son, the Son of Man, is to see the hope, the direction in which redemption lies; because redemption lies in the direction of another kind of humanity, and in a power to redeem, because there is something there which satisfies God, and anything which does not satisfy God can never be a redeeming power. Has the Lord Jesus the power? We here all cry with one voice, Yes, He has the power, He has the resource for doing this.

#### The Liberty To Redeem

But another question arises. Is He free to redeem? One thing is taken for granted in this matter of the redeeming kinsman, and that is that he can only have one wife. If he is already married he is disqualified, because he cannot marry the person for whom he redeems the inheritance. That was the trouble with the other kinsman, in the case of Ruth. He was not free; he was married and had a family. But Boaz was unmarried, was free, and he could take Ruth to wife; the way was perfectly clear.

Now we come into the realm of sublime things spiritually. "Christ loved the church and gave Himself for it, that He might redeem it from all iniquity" (Eph. 5:25; Titus 2:14). "Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave Himself up for it." The redeemed is to be joined to the Lord, and the Lord Jesus - may I say it reverently? - is only going to have one wife. There is only going to be one marriage supper of the Lamb. The Church is His only Bride. His redeemed are the only ones to be brought into such a relationship with Himself; and the way is clear. He stands perfectly free to redeem, and to take the consequences of redeeming, even of marrying the one for whom the inheritance is redeemed.

Does not redemption bring us into a very sacred position with the Lord Jesus? That is the true significance of the title that attaches to Him as our Redeemer-Kinsman, that we should be joined to Him. Not redeemed as a chattel, not redeemed as a thing, but redeemed to be joined to Him forever in the holiest of all bonds. Married to the Lord. That is the meaning of the Son of Man. Yes, He is free, He can do it.

#### The Willingness To Redeem

Only one question remains. Is He willing? He has the right, He has the resource, He has the liberty. Will He? Oh, how Ruth and Naomi must have waited with bated breath and thumping hearts while that final question was being met and answered. Will he? Ah, but there may be no thumping heart here this afternoon, no bated breath. Will He? Is He willing? Well, what do we say to that? He has done it, and that answers the question. All that remains, if we are not in the enjoyment of it, is for us to accept it, believe it. He is willing!

May the Lord just ravish our hearts and enlarge our seeing of Jesus, the Son of Man.

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