

What Is Man?

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Introduction

*Genesis 1:26-28 ... 26 Then God said, "Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness; and let them rule over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the sky and over the cattle and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth." 27 God created man in His own image, in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them. 28 God blessed them; and God said to them, "Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth, and subdue it; and rule over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the sky and over every living thing that moves on the earth."
(NASB95)*

The question, "What is man?" is repeated four times in Sacred Scripture, with each occurrence having a different emphasis (Job 7:17-18; Ps. 8:4; 144:3; Heb. 2:5-6).

These verses focus, successively, upon the misery, magnificence, militancy, and Messiah of life.

Job 7:17-18 ... 17 "What is man that You magnify him, And that You are concerned about him, 18 That You examine him every morning And try him every moment? (NASB95)

Psalms 8:4 ... 4 What is man that You take thought of him, And the son of man that You care for him? (NASB95)

Psalms 144:3 ... 3 O Lord, what is man, that You take knowledge of him? Or the son of man, that You think of him? (NASB95)

Hebrews 2:5-6 ... 5 For He did not subject to angels the world to come, concerning which we are speaking. 6 But one has testified somewhere, saying, "What is man, that You remember him? Or the son of man, that You are concerned about him? (NASB95)

The Misery of Life

Job reminds us of the occasional misery of life (Job 7:1-21, esp. vs. 17-18).

Job 7:1-21 ... 1 "Is not man forced to labor on earth, And are not his days like the days of a hired man? 2 "As a slave who pants for the shade, And as a hired man who eagerly waits for his wages, 3 So am I allotted months of vanity, And nights of trouble are appointed me. 4 "When I lie down I say, 'When shall I arise?' But the night continues, And I am continually tossing until dawn. 5 "My flesh is clothed with worms and a crust of dirt, My skin hardens and runs. 6 "My days are swifter than a weaver's shuttle, And

come to an end without hope. 7 “Remember that my life is but breath; My eye will not again see good. 8 “The eye of him who sees me will behold me no longer; Your eyes will be on me, but I will not be. 9 “When a cloud vanishes, it is gone, So he who goes down to Sheol does not come up. 10 “He will not return again to his house, Nor will his place know him anymore. 11 “Therefore I will not restrain my mouth; I will speak in the anguish of my spirit, I will complain in the bitterness of my soul. 12 “Am I the sea, or the sea monster, That You set a guard over me? 13 “If I say, ‘My bed will comfort me, My couch will ease my complaint,’ 14 Then You frighten me with dreams And terrify me by visions; 15 So that my soul would choose suffocation, Death rather than my pains. 16 “I waste away; I will not live forever. Leave me alone, for my days are but a breath. 17 **“What is man that You magnify him, And that You are concerned about him,** 18 That You examine him every morning And try him every moment? 19 “Will You never turn Your gaze away from me, Nor let me alone until I swallow my spittle? 20 “Have I sinned? What have I done to You, O watcher of men? Why have You set me as Your target, So that I am a burden to myself? 21 “Why then do You not pardon my transgression And take away my iniquity? For now I will lie down in the dust; And You will seek me, but I will not be.” (NASB95)

The Magnificence of Life

David affirms the breathtaking magnificence of life (Ps. 8:1-9, esp. vs. 4).

*Psalm 8:1-9 ... 1 For the choir director; on the Gittith. A Psalm of David. O Lord, our Lord, How majestic is Your name in all the earth, Who have displayed Your splendor above the heavens! 2 From the mouth of infants and nursing babes You have established strength Because of Your adversaries, To make the enemy and the revengeful cease. 3 When I consider Your heavens, the work of Your fingers, The moon and the stars, which You have ordained; 4 **What is man that You take thought of him, And the son of man that You care for him?** 5 Yet You have made him a little lower than God, And You crown him with glory and majesty! 6 You make him to rule over the works of Your hands; You have put all things under his feet, 7 All sheep and oxen, And also the beasts of the field, 8 The birds of the heavens and the fish of the sea, Whatever passes through the paths of the seas. 9 O Lord, our Lord, How majestic is Your name in all the earth! (NASB95)*

The Militancy of Life

The Psalmist confirms the requisite militancy of life (Ps. 144:1-15, esp. vs 3).

*Psalm 144:1-15 ... 1 A Psalm of David. Blessed be the Lord, my rock, Who trains my hands for war, And my fingers for battle; 2 My lovingkindness and my fortress, My stronghold and my deliverer, My shield and He in whom I take refuge, Who subdues my people under me. 3 **O Lord, what is man, that You take knowledge of him? Or the son of man, that You think of him?** 4 Man is like a mere breath; His days are like a passing shadow. 5 Bow Your heavens, O Lord, and come down; Touch the mountains, that they may smoke. 6 Flash forth lightning and scatter them; Send out Your arrows and confuse them. 7 Stretch forth Your hand from on high; Rescue me and deliver me out of great*

waters, Out of the hand of aliens 8 Whose mouths speak deceit, And whose right hand is a right hand of falsehood. 9 I will sing a new song to You, O God; Upon a harp of ten strings I will sing praises to You, 10 Who gives salvation to kings, Who rescues David His servant from the evil sword. 11 Rescue me and deliver me out of the hand of aliens, Whose mouth speaks deceit And whose right hand is a right hand of falsehood. 12 Let our sons in their youth be as grown-up plants, And our daughters as corner pillars fashioned as for a palace; 13 Let our garners be full, furnishing every kind of produce, And our flocks bring forth thousands and ten thousands in our fields; 14 Let our cattle bear Without mishap and without loss, Let there be no outcry in our streets! 15 How blessed are the people who are so situated; How blessed are the people whose God is the Lord! (NASB95)

The Messiah of Life

The Hebrew writer focuses upon Jesus, the Messiah of Life (Heb. 2:1-18, esp. vs. 6).

*Hebrews 2:1-18 ... 1 For this reason we must pay much closer attention to what we have heard, so that we do not drift away from it. 2 For if the word spoken through angels proved unalterable, and every transgression and disobedience received a just penalty, 3 how will we escape if we neglect so great a salvation? After it was at the first spoken through the Lord, it was confirmed to us by those who heard, 4 God also testifying with them, both by signs and wonders and by various miracles and by gifts of the Holy Spirit according to His own will. 5 For He did not subject to angels the world to come, concerning which we are speaking. 6 But one has testified somewhere, saying, “**What is man, that You remember him? Or the son of man, that You are concerned about him?** 7 “You have made him for a little while lower than the angels; You have crowned him with glory and honor, And have appointed him over the works of Your hands; 8 You have put all things in subjection under his feet.” For in subjecting all things to him, He left nothing that is not subject to him. But now we do not yet see all things subjected to him. 9 But we do see Him who was made for a little while lower than the angels, namely, Jesus, because of the suffering of death crowned with glory and honor, so that by the grace of God He might taste death for everyone. 10 For it was fitting for Him, for whom are all things, and through whom are all things, in bringing many sons to glory, to perfect the author of their salvation through sufferings. 11 For both He who sanctifies and those who are sanctified are all from one Father; for which reason He is not ashamed to call them brethren, 12 saying, “I will proclaim Your name to My brethren, In the midst of the congregation I will sing Your praise.” 13 And again, “I will put My trust in Him.” And again, “Behold, I and the children whom God has given Me.” 14 Therefore, since the children share in flesh and blood, He Himself likewise also partook of the same, that through death He might render powerless him who had the power of death, that is, the devil, 15 and might free those who through fear of death were subject to slavery all their lives. 16 For assuredly He does not give help to angels, but He gives help to the descendant of Abraham. 17 Therefore, He had to be made like His brethren in all things, so that He might become a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make propitiation for the sins of the people. 18 For since He Himself was tempted in*

that which He has suffered, He is able to come to the aid of those who are tempted.
(NASB95)

Conclusion

When life becomes miserable, Christ provides comfort.

When life becomes mundane, Christ provides meaning.

When life becomes tumultuous, Christ provides leadership.

When life becomes hopeless, Christ provides salvation.