

On Being Human

by David Morsey

What is a human?

God made humans.
He made them in His own image and likeness.
And gave them capacities very like His own.
He breathed into them His Spirit.
And enabled them to commune with Him.
He endowed them with special powers—
The power to think creatively, and to reason;
The power to exercise dominion over the environment.
The power to choose good or evil;

To obey God, or not obey; to love, or hate;
The power to grasp abstractions;
Morality, virtue and vice;
And time and space and eternity;
The power of awareness: of God and self and the cosmos;
The power of self-replication—to reproduce after one's kind.

In short, He made us higher than the angels,
And crowned us with His glory and worth.
Intending for His humans, oneness with Himself,
To share with Him forever, His holy habitation.

What is a fallen human?

Freedom, freely given, was yet willfully despised.
The Spirit of God withdrew from His creatures,
And mortality enshrouded His handiwork.
With the absence of the Spirit of God,
Came the absence of His virtue and strength.
Free to choose good over evil,
The creature chose evil over good,
And became sated with godless passion and pride.
Forfeiting his pristine glory, the freeman of God
Became the bondsman of the “father of perdition.”
The cry of the fallen human, was voiced by Paul—

**“The good that I would, I do not,
and the evil that I would not, I do.”**

**“O wretched man that I am, who shall
deliver me from the body of this death?”**

What is a redeemed human?

Then came the Redeemer!
History endlessly records the abysmal abasement,
Of God's once glorious creature,
At the hand of the ruthless Enemy of the soul.
But God moved, invincibly, to recover His precious creation.
He sent not a "guru" to teach "celestial" ideas,
Nor yet only an example and guide.
Neither sent He a judge to mete out condemnation,
Nor an angel to shower the earth with blessings.
But rather, he sent a Son—a projection of Himself.
And not only a Son, but a sacrifice,
To atone for the ravages of sin;
And not only a sacrifice,
But a source of limitless power—
His own Holy Spirit—to heal and to make alive
The human spirit, once glorious, and done to death by sin.
So the fallen human has become the redeemed human;
Recovered by Christ, and restored in the spirit,
To flourish for ever with Him,
In the infinite reaches of God.

What are the expectations of humans?

But what, now can humans expect?
From God? From self? From others? From the world?
What claims do we have, as humans, redeemed?
As members of the family of God
Are we now entitled to renewed Edenic bliss?
To have restored, each malady of flesh?
Or have resolved, life's every complication?
Or shall we ne'er again be crushed with broken heart?
Is it our lot to live in ecstasy, sublime;
Sheltered from all want in Divinely-ordered providence?
Or what can we expect
From fallen human nature, now redeemed?
Have we at last attained perfection?
To walk the earth in flawless piety?
Are all the defects of our human personalities,
Now vanquished in regenerative grace?
Are all the virtues of the Holy Presence within, now expressed in noble deeds without?
And those who are a part of God's redeemed community,
Can they expect, among themselves, loving grace and harmony?
To find the Spirit of the Blessed Christ,
Manifest, perforce, in all who name His name?

The truth is that the flesh has come to naught,

Done to death in the sacrifice of Christ,
Whose cross we share, in the slaying of the self.
Only in the spirit is there equity and perfection.
In the flesh, there is nought but death.
No act, however pious, no thought however holy,
If it be born of the mind and not the spirit,
Can avail to purify the natural self.
Jesus said, ***“The flesh profits nothing.”***
And Paul said, ***“Confronted with the law, my flesh was slain.”***

So, what is the flesh, what is its place?

Paul said, ***“The flesh is a vessel of clay.”***
It is the earthly abode of the spirit,
Which, in turn, is the abode of the Spirit of God.
***For God, Who said, 'Light, shine out of darkness,'
is the One Who has shined in our hearts.
For the illuminating of the knowledge of the glory of God,
in the presence of Jesus Christ.
But we have this treasure in vessels of earthenware,
that the excellency of the power,
may be of God, and not of us.
(II Corinthians 4:6,7 Greek)***

As long as we are on the earth,
We will have trouble with the flesh.
Paul cried out, in the midst of his frustrations,
“In me, that is, in my flesh, there dwells no good thing.”
Through all his life, to the end,
He confessed to struggles in the flesh.
But, his constant struggles in the flesh,
Did not dull the vitality of his spirit.
In his great soliloquy of strength,
He told of his “thorn in the flesh” –
A “messenger of Satan,” to buffet him –
No doubt a part of his struggle in the flesh.
He sought to be delivered, but God said,
***“My grace is sufficient for thee,
for My strength is made perfect in weakness.”***
And Paul said,
***Most gladly therefore,
will I rather glory in my infirmities [weaknesses],
that the power of Christ may rest upon me,
for when I am weak, than am I strong.
(II Corinthians 12:7-10)***

In the same letter, he told the Corinthians:

***“Though our outward man perish,
yet is our inward man renewed day by day.”***
And to Timothy – ***“I know whom I have believed,
And I am persuaded that He is able
To keep that which I have committed unto Him,
Against that day.”***

So then, if our spirits are secure does it matter what we do in the flesh?

Yes, indeed. It matters a great deal.
It is not that behaving ourselves makes us more spiritual,
But, being spiritual, we have reason to behave.
And, we often pay dearly for misbehavior.
Nor are we without instruction
About the perils of careless conduct.
Neither are we without help to hold the line,
If we truly seek the mind of Christ,
And fortify ourselves with input from Him,
Rather than absorbing too much input from the world.

So, then, what may we expect in this world, as humans redeemed by God?

We may expect trouble in the flesh.
God has not promised to shield us from such.
Sickness and sorrow; pain and suffering;
Have been the lot of the followers of Christ,
Who, Himself, was not spared such earthly ills.
We may expect continual conflict,
As the enemy of Christ vies for our souls.
Satan cannot penetrate our spirits.
Where Christ Himself, holds the fort,
But he can batter the walls of the fortress,
And cause us much distress.
He can tempt us to indulge indiscretions,
And saddle us with wretched consequences.
He can deceive us into thinking all is lost,
Or that we are too unworthy of Christ.
Or, that he offers greater satisfaction than Christ.
(Why should we deny ourselves pleasure?)
He has not the power to snatch us from Christ,
But he can rob us of stability and peace.

**So what hope have we, with such a formidable foe?
How can we hope to win out over him?**

Our hope, indeed, our expectation,
Is the power of Christ within.
Amid the relentless struggle, our spirits are secure.
Whatever the turbulence; the failures, the heartaches;
Whatever the mistakes that shatter our lives,
The Spirit of God, within, is invincible.
He will preserve our spirits without fail.
As Jude has said,

“Unto Him that is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless, before the presence of His glory, with exceeding joy.”

Not lawless, but faultless; not barely, but joyously.
He will keep our spirits intact,
Through the unrelenting perils of Satan's savage wilderness.

But are there no benefits for us humans on the earth?

Yes, and no. It depends on what you mean by benefits.
We believe in Christ, because He is,
And not because He does nice things for us.
To be sure, His offer of eternal salvation
Is the compelling reason for our commitment to Him,
But, to come to Him because He cures our earthly ills,
Is to miss the essence of what He is all about.
It is rather true that persistent disillusionment
Compels us to look for something more meaningful.
And we find that meaning in the reality of the spirit realm,
And our eternal union with Christ, in the spirit.
And what He is, we shall become, as John said,
***“And we know that when He shall appear,
we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him, as He is.”***
Thus, to join with Christ means
To take upon us His nature, and to function as He functions.
“As He is, so are we in this world.”
Since Christ did not come into the world
To enjoy a blissful life, but to glorify God,
So are we to glorify God.

How do we do that? How can we humans glorify God?

We do it by demonstrating to Satan and his world,
The triumph of spirit over flesh.
We do it by accepting our lot on earth, as Jesus did,
And showing, thus, that whatever happens to our earthly vessel,
The spirit remains strong, and nothing can destroy it.
Satan will never again be able to do what he did in Eden.
One day we will reign with Christ,
In the everlasting kingdom of the Spirit.
Thus, unencumbered by time and space and matter,
We shall be, forever, the effulgence of God's glory.

“Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard.

***Neither hath it entered into the heart of man,
the things that God hath prepared for them that love Him,
but God hath revealed them unto us, by His Spirit.”***

But doesn't the Bible give us many promises of God's help in the world?

Certainly, and we are entitled,
By our place in His family,
To seek His help in physical and material matters.
As far as the material world is concerned,
He has promised to supply our needs,
But what He considers a need is uncertain.
Many a faithful and sincere believer,
Has remained in dire need and distress.
To merely say that such a one is lacking in faith, or piety,
Is too simplistic, as well as presumptuous.
Jesus, Himself, ***“Suffered in the flesh,
leaving you an example, that ye should follow in His steps.”***
And Paul said that he knew how ***“to suffer want.”***

Have we no earthly comfort? That sounds quite bleak.

We have earthly comforts,
Only as Christ tempers the turbulence of our testing,
Lest we be ***“overcome with too much sorrow.”***
If Christ trusts you with afflictions,
It is because He knows you can bear it.
The more you are able to accept your lot,
The more you join Christ in the ***“fellowship of His suffering.”***
Paul sought such camaraderie with Him.

***That I may know Him, and the power of His resurrection,
and the fellowship of His suffering,
being made conformable unto His death.***

(Philippians 3:10)

Ask for what you will of earthly help.
Christ may grant your request,
If He feels it is in your best interest to do so.

No detail of your life is unimportant to Him—
The very hairs of your head are numbered.
It is never that He is disinterested in you.
It is only that His chief concern for you,
Is the fulfillment of your spiritual destiny.
We are, in fact, told to come to Him, boldly.
So, boldly come, Put before Him your every need.
But leave it to Him to respond as He sees fit,
And, accept His lot for you, in quiet confidence.
If He does allow you to suffer,
Consider it an honor to share His “cup” with Him;
Thus joining Him in His triumph over Satan.

So what is a human?

A human is a creature of God,
Created in His image, to share His glory forever.
The human sojourn on the earth
Brought the tragedy of his fall,
And the glory of his recovery.
Left for a time, yet upon the earth,
Humans are subject to countless earthly ills,
As Christ, our redeemer, was subject to them.
But, filled with the Spirit of Christ, the redeemed Human
will triumph in the end,
And dwell with God throughout eternity.