

Understanding the new man in Christ

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Introduction

In relation to our life and predestination, the Scriptures refer to the first man, Adam, and the second man, Christ. They also refer to old man, new man, and carnal man. These can be grouped into two categories: natural and spiritual.

- The *natural* includes the first man, old man, and carnal man.
- The *spiritual* includes the second man and new man.

This can appear confusing at first, but there are some key points to note that help us to understand the main distinctions.

Adam was the first man, and in his seed were all of the identities of mankind. 1Co 15:45,47. Whilst we are *of Adam*, who is the natural, first man, we are not the same as the first man. The first man was not created with another law within his heart. This other law was established in the hearts of the sons and daughters of men when Adam disobeyed God and ate the fruit from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. Because of the disobedience of Adam (*the Fall*), man fell from relationship and fellowship with God. Adam's disobedience disconnected all of mankind from the predestination that God had for them to become His sons and daughters. This fallen condition is described in the Scriptures as the *old man*.

The natural, old man who is separated from fellowship with God, is already dead and forgotten. The good news is that all of the names of the sons of God that were lost to the Father through the disobedience of Adam are 'found' again because of the offering of Jesus Christ. They are brought forth from the life that is in Jesus Christ who is the Seed of the Father.

The first man can only be recovered through new birth. When the word of God is preached to the natural man, and that word is received and believed, he is illuminated to see his predestined name and identity as a son of God. He is born again to see the kingdom of God. Joh 3:3. He is reconnected to the predestination of the first man. His capacity to see his calling demonstrates that his identity is being regenerated. Tit 3:5. 1Co 1:26. However, the full recovery of his predestination is only possible when he, as an identity, is born of water and the Spirit and made alive in Christ. It is through baptism that a person is properly joined to the offering of Christ. The natural man must be born again to become a spiritual, new man. In Christ he has become a new creation. 2Co 5:17. He has gained access to enter the kingdom of God and receives resurrection life – exanastasis. The old man is then able to be put off through the offering of Christ. Eph 4:22.

The law of God has been resident among all men since the time of Moses. For this reason, all men to some extent are motivated by their other law to misappropriate and use the law of God as a resource to enhance the quality of their own life. Rom 5:18. Tit 2:11. This activity defines carnality. All natural men are carnal because they live according to the desires of the flesh and mind, according to their natural senses. They are earthly, sensual and under Satan's dominion. Jam 3:15. The carnal man, not realising that he is already spiritually dead, tries to convince himself that he is alive spiritually. Because of this delusion he can even believe that he is in fellowship with God, which is an

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even greater deception. He has actually through this activity, made himself an enemy of God. Rom 8:7. The law, which is spiritual is not making him spiritual. Rather, the more he tries by the flesh to fulfil the law of God, he is becoming more and more carnal – sold under sin. 1Co 3:3. Rom 7:14.

The New Testament describes another dimension of carnality, called lawlessness, which is the source of the spirit of the Antichrist. 1Jo 4:3. Those who are of this spirit are called antichrists. 1Jo 2:18-19. They misappropriate the name of Christ to themselves. Mat 24:5. The apostle John noted that many antichrists have already come. 1Jn 2:18. These are Christians (ones who were born again and received the divine nature as a son of God), who refuse to live and walk by the Spirit. They choose rather to live in disobedience through self-projection and carnality. They can, even in Christ's name, do many amazing religious works. However, after their death, when they come to the judgement seat of Christ, He will deny that He ever knew them. This is despite the pressure that they will try to exert on Him at His judgement seat. However, at that time, they will not be known to Him by the name that the Father predestined for them in Christ. Christ will then send them from His presence and consign them to eternal damnation. Mat 7:21-23.

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It is written in the Scriptures, 'The first man Adam became a living being.' Gen 2:7. 'The last Adam [Christ] became a life-giving spirit.' Rom 5:14. 1Co 15:45. The apostle Paul explained to the Corinthian church – 'The spiritual is not first. The natural is first. The spiritual is after the natural.' 1Co 15:46. 'The first man was of the earth, made of dust.' He is *natural*. 'The second Man is the Lord from heaven.' He is *spiritual*.

'As was the man of dust, so also are those who are made of dust; and as is the heavenly Man, so also are those who are heavenly. And as we have borne the image of the man of dust, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly Man.' 1Co 15:47-49. Joh 5:21. Joh 6:57. Rom 8:2. Phi 3:21. Col 3:4. Paul is explaining that each one of us begins our life as a *natural* man. When we are born of God, He abides in us and we abide in Him, and so each of us becomes a *spiritual* man.

Before we consider what this means for us, it is important to note that references to 'man', 'sons of men' and 'sons of God' in the Scriptures are all inclusive of men, women, boys and girls. 'In the day that God created man, He made him in the likeness of God. He created them male and female, and blessed them and called them Mankind in the day they were created.' Gen 5:1-2.

All life is sourced from God. 1Ti 6:13. Joh 1:3. God created man and then, through the process of procreation from generation to generation, we are here, alive, today. We are all 'of the first man, Adam'. We all have biological life. We all partake of the same natural, human life. However, God has opened up a way by which we can be born of God and, therefore, become sons of God who are all growing up into the image of Christ, as members of the body of Christ and partakers of His eternal life. 1Jn 3:2. 2Pe 1:4.

When we join the cross of Christ, we receive His eternal life. We, who are sons of men, are born again as sons of God, and become brothers and sisters of Christ, and members of His body. We are born of the Spirit of God and become participants of the same spiritual, heavenly, eternal life. We all partake of resurrection life.

Even though we still live in our biological bodies, which are mortal, meaning that they can still die, we are no longer living only natural lives. We are spiritual, growing from immaturity to maturity. We are growing up into 'the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ'. Eph 4:13. In Christ, our

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mortality is putting on immortality, and our corruptible bodies are putting on incorruption. 1Co 15:53-54. We are no longer of the world, even though we are still in the world. Joh 15:19. Joh 17:16.

As we seek to further understand how we join the cross of Christ and live as sons of God, we shall consider the meaning and implication of some of the key terms used in the Scriptures, in relation to the identity and nature of a person – such as ‘first man’, ‘natural man’, ‘old man’, ‘new man’, ‘carnal’ and ‘spiritual’. On our journey from immaturity to maturity, these terms help us to identify and address various stages and cultures of life. These terms are specifically relevant to each of us individually, and also to all of mankind collectively, across all of the ages. The purpose in all of this is not to establish character ‘profiles’. Rather, it is to understand the great love and mercy of God as He fulfils His Eternal Covenant purpose of bringing us into everlasting fellowship with Him and with those who are His people.

First man / second man

‘The first man was of the earth, made of dust; the second Man is the Lord from heaven.’ 1Co 15:47. Although the first man was ‘of the earth’, this is different from living according to the flesh, or being worldly. The term ‘first man’ refers to Adam before he ate of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil and became mortal, or ‘fell’, because of disobedience to God. The first man was created on the sixth day and, in God’s eyes, he was ‘good’. The first man dwelt in the presence of God. He had relationship with God and he had access to God. After the Fall, man was driven from the presence of God, and access to the tree of life was prevented and guarded. Gen 3:24.

The ‘second man’, or second Adam, is Christ. He is the Son of God and the Son of Man. Christ is the Son of Man according to the flesh, in that He came in the likeness of our human flesh with biological, or *bios*, life, and soul, or *psuche* life.

Natural man

In his first epistle to the Corinthian church, the apostle Paul explained that ‘the body is sown in corruption, it is raised in incorruption. It is sown in dishonour, it is raised in glory. It is sown in weakness, it is raised in power. It is sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body. There is a natural body, and there is a spiritual body.’ 1Co 15:42-44. The natural body comes first and is the body that was given to the first man.

Note, however, that scriptural references to natural man describe the first man after the fall of Adam and Eve in the garden of Eden. The Scriptures also often refer to natural men as ‘sons of men’. Sons of men do not have the divine nature. They are different from ‘sons of God’. In his letter to the Ephesian church, Paul described the fallen condition as having ‘conducted ourselves in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind’. Eph 2:3.

The natural man has no natural knowledge of God and no natural desire to know God, and so the natural man has no relationship with, or access to, God. The apostle Paul wrote, ‘Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; nor does corruption inherit incorruption’. 1Co 15:50. ‘The natural man does not receive the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; nor can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.’ 1Co 2:14. ‘For what man knows the things of a man except the spirit of the man which is in him? Even so no-one knows the things of God except the Spirit of God.’ 1Co 2:11.

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A natural man who hears and receives the word of God receives illumination and the capacity to turn from his own way. He receives faith. As he humbles himself and turns to the Lord in repentance and faith, he is born to see the kingdom of God. When he joins the cross of Christ, he is born again, of water and of the Spirit. Joh 3:3-5. He receives the Spirit of God and becomes a spiritual man. He then proceeds to be baptised into the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus Christ. Rom 6:3-6. In this way, a natural man is born again as a spiritual man. He is a new creation. 2Co 5:17. Jesus said, 'That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit.' Joh 3:6.

Carnal man / old man

'Carnal' simply means 'of the flesh'. The carnal man has his mind set on the things of the earth and is motivated to serve the desires of his flesh, which include being disobedient to the word of the Lord, desiring status and reputation, covetousness, sexual immorality, and being led by emotions and passions. Col 3:2,5. Paul instructed those who are carnal to put off anger, wrath, the desire to hurt and cause trouble, reproachful speech, and obscene language. Col 3:8-9.

The apostle Paul wrote, 'For where there are envy, strife, and divisions among you, are you not carnal and behaving like mere men? For when one says, "I am of Paul," and another, "I am of Apollos," are you not carnal?' 1Co 3:3-4.

The *first* man, who had eternal identity, became a *carnal* man when 'the other law' was fathered in him by Satan. The other law, and the law of sin, became the controlling elements of the identity of the first man, bringing him under the dominion of Satan. Paul identified the first man, controlled by sin and the other law, as 'the *old* man'. Rom 6:6. Now living by the controlling principles of the other law and the law of sin, the old man is deluded and self-centred. 2Co 5:15. His heart is deceitfully wicked, and his mortal body is controlled by sin. Jer 17:9. Rom 7:23. Rom 6:12. In this state, he is cut off from the life of God. The Scriptures define the mortal body of the old man who lives in this carnal, or fleshly, condition as 'the body of death'. Rom 7:24. (*The Steps of Salvation, Part 8, 'New Creation', p28*).

Paul wrote to the church in Rome, 'For those who live according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who live according to the Spirit, the things of the Spirit. For to be carnally minded is death, but to be spiritually minded is life and peace. Because the carnal mind is enmity against God; for it is not subject to the law of God, nor indeed can be. So then, those who are in the flesh cannot please God.' Rom 8:5-11. 'For if you live according to the flesh you will die; but if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body, you will live.' Rom 8:13.

The carnal, or old, man lives by the principles of law, thinking that he has the capacity within himself to be able to please God through the works of his flesh, which he defines as 'good works'. He is known as 'the old man' because there is a 'new' man.

Spiritual man / new man

'The new man' is the man who has joined Christ and has received of His eternal life. He is new creation. He lives by the Spirit and, by the Spirit, he puts the deeds of the flesh to death. The new man is spiritual.

A spiritual man is born of the seed of the divine nature. A spiritual man is a son of God. A spiritual man is the man who receives God's word and Spirit, and lives by them. He is able to minister

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according to the Spirit, showing forth the fruits of the Spirit. Gal 6:1. The spiritual man has had the love of God poured into his heart by the Holy Spirit.

The 'spirit' reveals the nature, or the principle of life, of a man. The nature of something reveals its beginning, or its birth. The nature of a natural man reveals that he, and all mankind, is 'of the earth', born of natural mothers and fathers. The nature of a spiritual man is the divine nature, and it reveals that he, and all who are spiritual, are born of the Spirit of God. God is his Father.

Jesus explained this when He taught that 'every tree is known by its own fruit'. Luk 6:43-45.

A spiritual man will be known by the fruit of the Spirit. Gal 5:22-23. This is the evidence that he is spiritual. Similarly, a carnal man will be known by the works of the flesh. Gal 5:19-21. These behaviours and attitudes are the evidence that he is carnal.

Paul wrote to the Colossian church about the character of the new man. Col 3:12-17. The new man has been renewed in the spirit of his mind and has 'put on the new man which was created according to God, in true righteousness and holiness'. Eph 4:23-24. He will seek the things of the Lord and will love the Lord with his whole heart, mind, soul and strength. Mar 12:29-33. Col 3:1-2.

Conclusion

We, as sons of men, are born anew as sons of God, born of the divine nature. Having joined the cross of Christ, we have died with Christ, and we are raised with Him. We receive resurrection life in our mortal body through fellowship in the offering and sufferings of Christ. Resurrection life is bringing us back from the dead; it is redeeming us from the death of sin. We are everlastingly redeemed by the blood of eternal life as we continue to be joined to the cross of Christ and continue 'steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, in the breaking of bread, and in prayers.' Acts 2:42.

We, as sons of God, abide, and participate, in the fellowship of the body and blood of Christ – the offering and sufferings of our Lord Jesus Christ. The substance of this fellowship is expressed, and witnessed, by the love we have one for another. The apostle John wrote, 'If we say that we have fellowship with Him, and walk in darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth. But if we walk in the light as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin. He who says he is in the light, and hates his brother, is in darkness until now. He who loves his brother abides in the light, and there is no cause for stumbling in him. But he who hates his brother is in darkness and walks in darkness, and does not know where he is going, because the darkness has blinded his eyes.' 1 Joh 1:6-7, 9-11. The apostle Paul wrote, 'I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me.' Gal 2:20.

'From now on, we regard no one according to the flesh. Even though we have known Christ according to the flesh, yet now we know Him thus no longer. Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new.' 2Co 5:16-17.

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Natural man		Spiritual Man	
Before the Fall	After the Fall	Christ	All who are born of the Spirit of God
Adam	Adam & Eve & all mankind		Whoever <i>lives</i> and <i>believes</i> in Christ John 11:26, John 3:16.
First man	Old man Carnal man – <i>controlled by sin and the other law</i>	Second man New man	New man – old man put to death (crucified with Christ) – made alive together with Christ (born anew) – received faith and illumination, are born again, born of water and the Spirit, and are joined to Christ's death, burial and resurrection (baptism)
... of the dust / ... of the earth	... of the dust / ... of the earth ... of the flesh	The Lord from heaven	heavenly
son of God	sons of men	God the Son (YHWH Son) Son of God Son of Man (with bios & psuche) – made in the likeness of sinful flesh	sons of God
Living being - bios (biological life) - psuche (soul life)		Life-giving spirit - eternal life - resurrection life	One spirit with God - He who is joined to the Lord is one spirit with Him. 1 Corinthians 6:17

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Natural man		Spiritual Man	
Mortal Corruptible - <i>sown in dishonour and weakness</i>	Mortal Corruptible - <i>sown in dishonour and weakness</i> - having 'conducted ourselves in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind'. Eph 2:3.	Melchizedek – without father, without mother, without genealogy, having neither beginning of days nor end of life, but made like the Son of God. Hebrews 7:3 "I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End," says the Lord, "who is and who was and who is to come, the Almighty." Revelation 1:8	Immortal Incorruptible - <i>raised in glory and power</i> We are spiritual, growing from immaturity to maturity. We are growing up into 'the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ'. Eph 4:13. In Christ, our mortality is putting on immortality, and our corruptible bodies are putting on incorruption. 1Co 15:53-54. We are no longer of the world, even though we are still in the world. Joh 15:19. Joh 17:16.
Eternal Identity			
In fellowship with God	Alienated from God	In the fellowship of YHWH	In fellowship with the Father, Son and Holy Spirit